"We're Still Here"
Culturally Sensitive Design and Planning

A Thesis Presented for
The Master of Landscape Architecture Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Ezekiel Craig Cooper entitled "We're Still Here: Culturally Sensitive Design and Planning." I have examined the final electronic copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Landscape Architecture.

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(Original Signatures on file at Graduate School)

To Curtis, thank you for all your guidance. It has been a blessing to have you as a mentor and friend.

To my parents, for whom I could not repay all of the love and support you have given me.

Finally, to Krysta, my wife. Thank you for all the love, support, patience and understanding you have given me throughout the last three years. I love you.

Abstract

"In the 1700's it was impossible to visit what is now known as western North Carolina without encountering the Cherokee. For the well traveled, it still is."

In 2007, the above quote was used in a marketing campaign by the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians to attract tourists to the town of Cherokee, NC. Beginning in the early 1900's, Cherokee evolved into a tourist destination because of the beautiful location, the historical importance and the offering of authentic cultural attractions. Millions of people traveled to Cherokee throughout the 1900's just to get a glimpse of Cherokee life and be exposed to the Cherokee people of today. However, over the past few years, most visitors are attracted to Cherokee for the chance of striking it rich at Harrah's Cherokee Casino.

The purpose of this thesis is to redevelop a strategic site in Cherokee that will serve as a central marketplace for the town. This area should be designed in a way that is respectful and reflective of the Cherokee people, their history and their culture. This site will serve as a hub to visitors and a location for local residents to utilize on a day-to-day basis. This site will serve as a template for future development and redevelopment in the town that in hopes will restore a very special "Sense of Place."

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Chapter 1 – We're Still Here

Introduction

"In the 1700's it was impossible to visit what is now known as western North Carolina without encountering the Cherokee. For the well traveled, it still is."

In 2007, the above quote was used in a marketing campaign by the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (EBCI) to attract tourists to the town of Cherokee, NC. Beginning in the early 1900's, Cherokee evolved into a tourist destination because of the beautiful location, the historical importance and the offering of authentic cultural attractions. Millions of people travel to Cherokee just to get a glimpse of Cherokee life and be exposed to the Cherokee people of today. However, over the past few years, most visitors are attracted to Cherokee for the chance of striking it rich at Harrah's Cherokee Casino.

With the huge influx of revenue stemming from the casino, the EBCI has been able to invest millions of dollars into the local community. Every year casino profits are spent for infrastructure improvements, various community programs, local employment and numerous other ways that benefit the town of Cherokee and the Cherokee people. The EBCI has also been able to invest millions back into the town by upgrading dilapidated retail structures, improving existing cultural attractions and pedestrian circulation while also creating an emphasis on advertising throughout the southeast to attract tourist. The vast majority of these funds have been used to really make a

difference in the appearance and attractiveness of the town. However, most visitors are now coming just for the casino. They either do not realize the importance of the history and culture of the area and its people, or simply do not care. This could be contributed to past development practices and implementation in Cherokee.

Currently the town lacks visual and functional cohesiveness. In the past there has been a lack of development guidelines and regulations for new structures and site development. This has caused many areas in and around the town to seem disconnected. Without development guidelines and regulations, Cherokee has begun to lose its "Sense of Place." Recently guidelines and regulations have been put into place to regulate new development, however old, unsatisfactory development still exists.

The purpose of this thesis is to propose the redevelopment of a strategic site in Cherokee that will serve as a central marketplace, area of cultural and historic reflection, and become an important strategic area for the rest of the town. This proposal will present a design that is respectful and reflective of the Cherokee people, their history and their culture. This site can serve as a hub to visitors and a location for local residents to utilize on a day-to-day basis. It can also serve as a template for future development and redevelopment in the town in hopes of restoring a very special "Sense of Place."

Along with the above, another purpose of this proposal is to create a site that increases economic development in Cherokee. The site will also create a "Gathering Place" for locals and visitors alike. There are different considerations that must be taken into account to make sure the project accomplishes the above three items (Figure 1).

Sense of Place

"It is place, permanent position in both the social and topographical sense, that gives us our identity."

When asked what "Sense of Place" meant, one of the greatest landscape writers of all time, J.B. Jackson, stated the above quote. In some areas of Cherokee today one

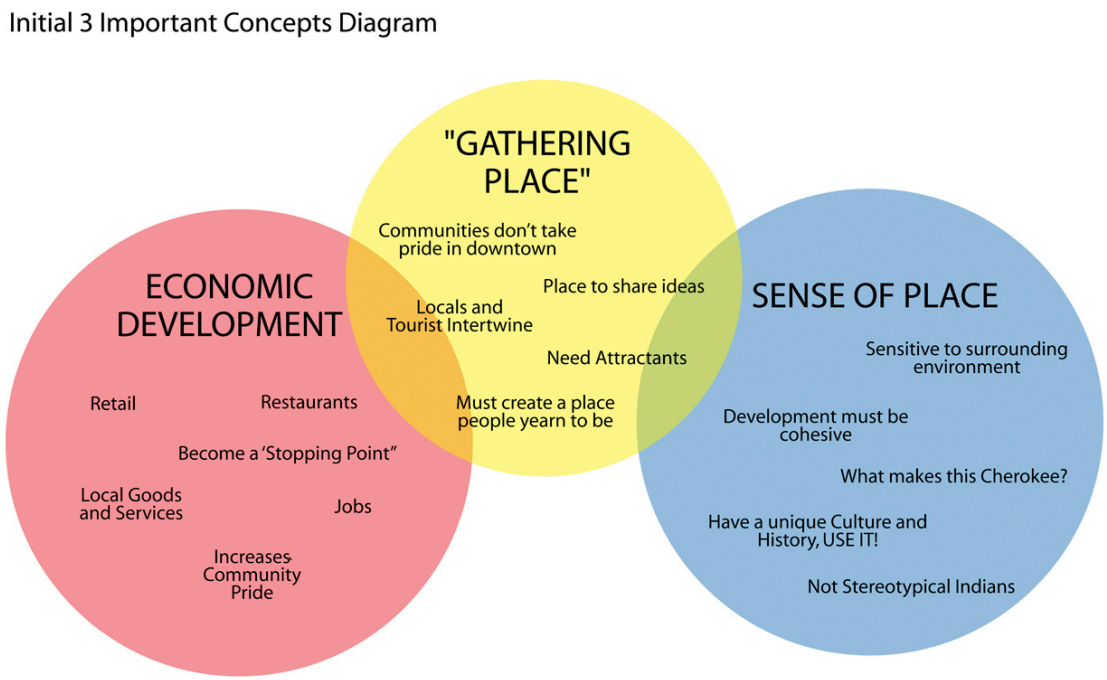


Figure 1: Three Goals of Project Diagram. Source: Zeke Cooper

May glimpse elements of a "Sense of Place," however, they are few and far between. Locations such as the Museum of the Cherokee Indian, Unto These Hills Outdoor Drama and a few other culturally related areas give the town a distinct identity. However, most of the town is littered with cookie-cutter buildings marketing 'Authentic Cherokee Goods' that are made in foreign countries. With the redevelopment of the thesis site,

creating and expanding a "Sense of Place" is the number one priority. Through this project, the redevelopment should create a space that is uniquely Cherokee and impossible to be mistaken for another location. To create this "Sense of Place," Cherokee history and culture must be implemented. Most importantly, the Cherokee people of today must take ownership of this new site and make it their own. This can be achieved by creating a space that locals take deep pride in and feel a deep connection with.

Questions

When designing for a small town there are many questions and concerns to be taken into consideration. The author asked each question to himself, his thesis committee and to local citizens and decision makers in Cherokee. Numerous different answers were given throughout the process, so the author was tasked with deciding upon the best. In chapter 5, the answers to these questions will be addressed.

1. Why do this project?
2. How do we create a "Sense of Place?"
3. How do we attract tourist and get them to stay in Cherokee?
4. How do we get the local community to take ownership in the proposed development?
5. How do we incorporate the history and culture of the Cherokee people?
6. How do we expose visitors to Cherokee people of today?

What will be the story told?

Every memorable landscape tells a story. We leave these areas with thoughts and pictures in our heads that repeat themselves far after we have left. As you walk through a memorable landscape you either create the story with your own imagination based on what you see, or someone or something tells the story.

Telling a memorable story for this project is very important. It sounds easy; just tell the story of the Cherokee people. However, if someone wants to know the history of the Cherokee, they can simply go to the museum or search for it on the Internet. So to make this project successful and memorable, what story do we want to tell?

To be successful, the story must tell the visitor about Cherokee history and culture of the past. It must also tell about modern day Cherokee culture and people. Finally, the story must give the reader the ability to envision what the town of Cherokee and the Cherokee people of tomorrow will be like. With that said, the story that will be told through this project will be,

"This is who we are. This is where we've been. This is where were going."

Chapter 2: Present Day Cherokee, NC and the surrounding context

Located in the mountains of western North Carolina, Cherokee, NC (Figure 2) sits at the foot of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park (Figure 3). Today, the town of Cherokee is home to the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. The EBCI is composed of descendents from Cherokee people that hid in the Appalachian Mountains during the Forced Removal of 1838. Today over 8,000 EBCI members live on the Qualla Boundary. At one point tourism was the driving force behind the Cherokee economy, but over the past 15 or so years that industry has severely declined. Currently the EBCI is undergoing vast expansion and development thanks to a large revenue stream from their Indian owned casino; Harrah's Cherokee Casino.

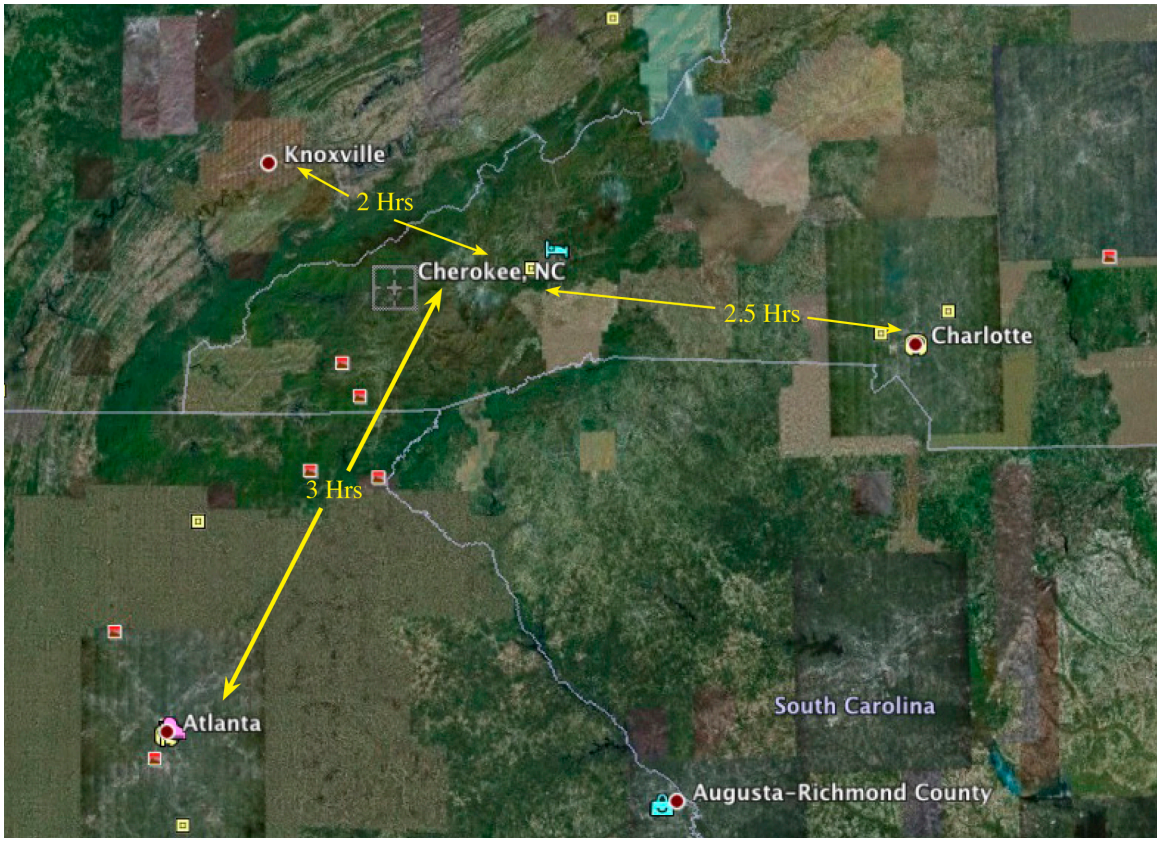


Figure 2: Cherokee, NC Regional Location Map *Source: Google Maps, www.maps.google.com*

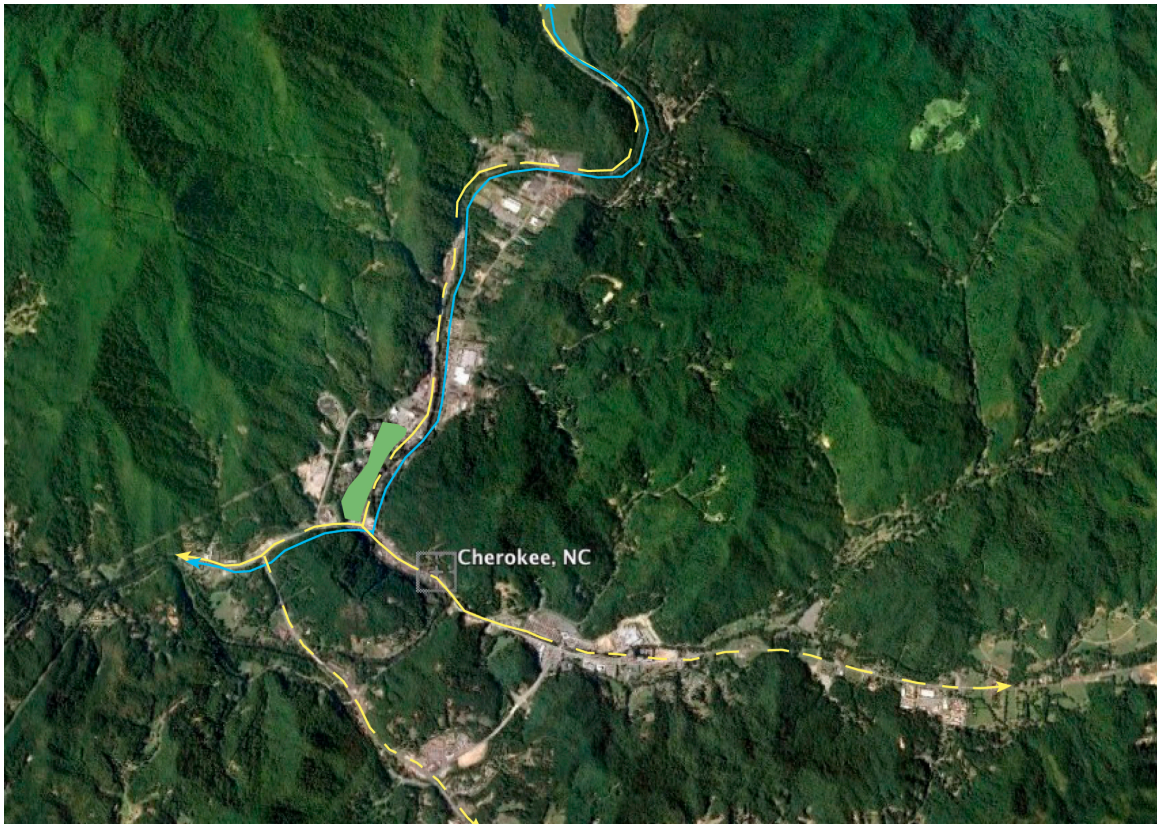


Figure 3: Cherokee, NC Aerial Map *Source: Google Maps, www.maps.google.com*

Tourism

The tourism industry was born in Cherokee, NC with the opening of the GSMNP. People from surrounding areas wanted to see this vast expanse of pristine wilderness, but in order to do so, they had to travel by dirt roads through Cherokee. In the late 1930's and early 1940's, the tourism industry had officially begun in Cherokee. A small gift shop was built in what is now downtown Cherokee. Cherokee "Guides" would bring visitors to the store and take these tourists to other Cherokee peoples homes to buy pottery. When World War II ended automobile travel was beginning to rapidly increase. The road between Cherokee and Gatlinburg, TN was finally completed for automobile travel, and other roads were being built to access the Boundary.

In the 1950's and 60's, Cherokee was a booming tourist town. Serving mainly tourist from a 50 to 100 mile radius, Cherokee became a main draw for tourist to experience the beautiful natural scenery and Indian people (Beard-Moose 2009). Tourism was the main source of income for Cherokees for many years. The 1980's saw a decline in tourism, and with the addition of the Casino in the 1990's, tourism had officially lost its luster in Cherokee. There are still many tourist attractions throughout the Boundary, however many have been unchanged for years and others promote and sell items that do not represent true Cherokee culture. The gift shops have long been packed with foreign made gifts for tourists, simple supply and demand. Authentic Cherokee arts and crafts are pricey so the average tourists would rather spend their money on novelty items from cheap gift shops. This has given a Cherokee a bad image in the past because many of these stores sell cheap souvenirs and outdated and unattractive. Which in turn makes the entire area in which they are located suffer.

Even though there are some horrible "tourist traps" that makes some of the landscape unsightly in Cherokee, there are a few attractions that make Cherokee a great place to visit. These attractions offer visitors an inside look at Cherokee culture and explain the history of the Cherokee people. They also give visitors a chance to interact with Cherokee people of today.

Featured Tourist Attractions

Great Smoky Mountains National Park

The Great Smoky Mountains National Park was commissioned by Congress in 1934 and officially dedicated in 1940 by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

The park is one of the largest protected areas in the eastern United States, encompassing 814 square miles. The GSMNP was the first national park in which land and other costs were paid in part by federal funds. Over 9 million tourists and 11 million non-recreational visitors traveled to the park in 2003, twice as many as any other national park in the country. Surrounding towns located in western North Carolina and east Tennessee, receive significant revenue from park visitors (Great Smoky Mountains National Park 2010). Cherokee is strategically located to gain even more tourism revenue from the park, because the only North Carolina entrance to the GSMNP is in Cherokee. Any visitor wishing to access the park from North Carolina must travel directly through Cherokee in order to enter the park.

Unto These Hills Outdoor Drama

The "Unto These Hills" outdoor drama was founded in 1948. Located in the heart of Cherokee, the mountainside theater seats almost 3,000 guests. This production is the 3rd oldest outdoor historical drama and 2nd longest-running outdoor drama in the United States. Over 6 million guests have attended the drama during its tenure. The drama tells the story of the Cherokee people throughout time. It begins in the pre-contact era, goes through the Forced Removal of 1838, and ends in what is now the modern world of the Cherokee (Cherokee Historical Association 2009).

Oconaluftee Indian Village

The Oconaluftee Indian Village is modeled after a 1760 Cherokee village.

Visitors are able to take self-guided tours to explore the authentic working Village with dwellings, residents, and artisans right out of the 1760's. Visitors can experience traditional medicine and interact with villagers as they hull canoes, make pottery and masks, weave baskets and beadwork, and participate in their daily activities. The Village also hosts live reenactments, interactive demonstrations, and Hands-On Cherokee Pottery for Kids classes (Cherokee Historical Association 2009).

Qualla Arts and Crafts Mutual, Inc.

The Qualla Arts and Crafts Mutual, Inc. is a community co-op for Cherokee artists. Basket weavers, wood and stone carvers, sculptors, and other local Cherokee artist sell their artwork to the co-op, which in turn sells it to tourists. This is the one place on the Qualla Boundary where you know exactly what you buy came from the hands of a local, authentic Cherokee artisan (Beard-Moose 2009). Former Chief Joyce Duggan made this statement about the successes of the Qualla Arts and Crafts Mutual, Inc.:

> *"The Qualla Arts and Crafts Mutual, Inc. has experienced remarkable financial success in tapping into the mass tourism market that burgeoned in Cherokee, NC after World War II. The organization's ability to recognize traditional economic and social values that underlie and reinforce continued production of Cherokee crafts has contributed significantly to its emergence as the oldest and most successful Native American crafts cooperative in the United States. In both aspects, the Co-*

op provides a fine example of the positive economic and social benefits that tourism can engender when it is culturally informed and indigenously controlled." (Public Indians, Private Cherokee 2009)

Museum of the Cherokee Indian

The non-profit museum tells the story of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, whose ancestors lived in the western North Carolina mountains for more than ten thousand years. One of the museums goals is to "Preserve the past and link visitors to the Cherokee people today." In addition to preserving the past through exhibits, collections, and archives, the museum connects visitors with the living traditions of the Cherokee people of today (Cherokee Museum 2010).

"Chiefing"

During the twentieth century, "Chiefing," became the most visually prominent and most explicit gendered tourist feature in Cherokee. Men over the age of 35 usually perform Chiefing for millions of tourist each year (Beard-Moose 2009). The concept is simple. A man dresses up in authentic Indian attire, sets up on a main roadway in Cherokee, and waves at passing motorists. The so-called "Chief" gets tourists attention. He urges them to stop their vehicles in order to take a picture with the "Authentic Indian Chief" for a small fee. These Chiefs are usually dressed in stereotypical Indian attire and stand in front of a teepee that does not reflect on anything within the Cherokee culture. However, tourists get to take home a photo taken with an "Authentic Cherokee Chief." Even though Chiefing is still abundant on the Boundary, many Cherokee people have begun to

dress and perform in authentic Cherokee attire, making the profession of Chiefing authentic to the Cherokee culture. In a passage from "Public Indians, Private Cherokee," the author states the following observation of "Chiefing" in 2006:

> *As soon as a group of kids came out of the store that Chief Red Hawk was working in front of, he was no longer telling me about problems. He was, in an instant, a great entertainer. The kids asked questions rapid-fire: Do you go hunting? Do you live in a teepee? Are you a real Indian? He answered their questions one at a time and ended up with a little lesson in Cherokee history. "To be a Cherokee is great! Now, we never did live in teepees. That house is out west where they had to travel around a lot. We stayed here, in the mountains. We have seven clans: Wolf, Blue, Paint, Wild Potato, Long Hair, Bird, and Deer. Now the clans are tied to the women, so when any of us boys get married, we have to make sure we're outside of our mother's clan." The kids were amazed. They all had their picture taken with Chief Red Hawk before spotting another Chief down the road in front of a huge teepee. The last thing we heard as they were walking away was, "Well, I bet that one isn't as good as Chief Red Hawk! Anyway, Cherokees didn't live in teepees!" He looked very pleased.*

Fairs and Festivals

There are numerous fairs and festivals held on the Qualla Boundary throughout the year. Holiday Powwows, the Festival of Nations, and a few other events are held at different times of the year. The events offer visitors a glimpse into the

past and present culture of the Cherokee. These festivals include dancing and singing competitions, authentic Cherokee food, Stickball games, beauty pageants, and countless other Cherokee exhibitions are on display during these festivals.

Harrah's Cherokee Casino

On November 13th, 1997, Harrah's Cherokee Casino opened on the Qualla Boundary. After nearly ten years of negotiations among tribal, state and federal officials, the casino was a reality. The EBCI had previously controlled a multi-million dollar Bingo Hall, but they felt the need to offer visitors better forms of gambling.

Many tribal members heavily opposed gambling on the reservation. The EBCI's spiritual leader, Walker Calhoun, stated in 1995 that, *"Gambling would be Cherokee's damnation."* However, gambling prevailed and the Cherokee haven't looked back. Millions of dollars in revenue are made each year, $155 million in 2004 and over $200 million in 2008. Half of the casino profits are used by the EBCI to fund their operating budget, while the other half is split amongst all tribal members and paid out in two yearly payments averaging around $4,000 a piece. The casino has been a financial blessing for the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. It has given them access to funds that they never could have imagined. These funds have been used to improve the infrastructure of Cherokee, create numerous cultural and historical programs, fund three new schools and countless

other benefits. Most importantly the creation of the casino has led to the employment of hundreds of Cherokee people.

With the good however come the bad. Since the casino opened, tourism has declined drastically. The demographic of visitors to Cherokee has changed dramatically. Families no longer stop in Cherokee, they continue through the park and spend time and money in Gatlinburg or Pigeon Forge, Tennessee. Millions of dollars have been spent revamping community programs and infrastructure, but tourism based attractions have been left out. Some money has been used to redevelop a small part of the original downtown of Cherokee, but the Cherokee have yet to create a much needed "Tourist Hub" or "Town Center." (See Current Land Use Map, Attachment 1)

Chapter 3: History and Culture of the Cherokee

History of the Cherokee

When designing a site for a specific culture of people, the history of those people must be taken in, studied and implemented. For this project it was imperative to deeply study where the Cherokee came from and how they evolved into the people they are today. Obviously the Cherokee people were drastically changed by European settlement, so it was important to look before European contact to really grasp who these people were.

Cherokee people and their ancestors have inhabited parts of the southeastern United States for thousands of years. Here is a quick timeline taken in part from the Cherokee Museum website:

- Pre 8000 BC *Paleo-Indian Period*
    - Nomadic bands hunted large game, but also relied on smaller game animals and plant foods that could be foraged as they traveled.
- 8000 BC to 700 BC *Archaic Period*
    - Characterized by the development of stone tools that represent a significant change from the Paleo-Indian stage. It was during this time that there was a marked increase in population, which led to the establishment of more permanent sites.
- 2000 BC

- Cherokee people began to develop their own language different than their Iroquoian relatives

- 1000 BC
  - Cherokee people lived in permanent villages along rivers and creeks throughout the Southern Appalachians. They began making and using pottery.
- 700 BC to 1000 AD *Woodland Period*
  - Characterized by the addition of ceramics and increased flood plain horticulture. In addition to gardening, the Woodland populations continued hunting both large and small mammal species, as well as gathering seasonal wild crops such as hickory, acorns, and chestnuts.
- 500 AD
  - Cherokee people began hunting with bows and arrows. Many of their towns had a central mound with a council house on top.
- 800 AD
  - Cherokee women developed a agricultural system based on growing corn in large fields
- 900 AD to 1540 AD *Mississippian Period*
  - Time that indigenous cultures reached their zenith with multi-mound towns, intensive maize horticulture, and a stratified socio-political structure based on kinship. Archaeologically, shell-tempered ceramics, rectangular buildings and triangular projectile points/arrowheads represent

it. Copper ornaments, effigy pipes and marine shell ornaments suggest a widespread trade network among adjacent Mississippian regions.

- 1200 AD
    - Cherokee women started to include beans and squash in their agricultural fields
- 1540 AD
    - De Soto Expedition visits Cherokee territory
- 1700 AD
    - Cherokees begin trading with British and French
- 1776 – 1785 AD
    - Cherokees fight with British against Americans
- 1789 – 1839 AD
    - Cherokees follow George Washington's "Civilization Policy" creating schools, written language, police force, supreme court and model capital city at New Enchota
- 1832 AD
    - Worcester vs. Georgia. The US Supreme Court says that Cherokees are a sovereign nation, providing basis of sovereignty today.
- 1838 AD
    - Forced removal of Cherokees from homeland to Indian territory in west
- 1868 AD

    - Eastern Cherokee are recognized as a tribe by the US government. They elect a new chief and create a written constitution.
- 1898 – 1948 AD
    - Boarding schools take Cherokee children away from their families in order to eliminate Cherokee culture
- 1930 AD
    - Eastern Cherokee gain US citizenship through Act of Congress
- 1934 AD
    - Great Smoky Mountains National Park was commissioned. Thus beginning the tourism industry in Cherokee
- 1946 AD
    - Eastern Cherokee are allowed to vote
- 1988 AD
    - Congress passes Indian Gaming Regulatory Act
- 1997 AD
    - Cherokee open Harrah's Cherokee Casino
- 2010 AD
    - Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians face nine million dollar budget shortfall

Before European settlers arrived, the Cherokee had advanced agriculture practices, built hundreds of small villages and even larger towns. The Cherokee people had also creating a trading network with other native tribes, so from as far south as Louisiana, to as far north as the Great Lakes region (Cherokee Museum 2010).

The impact of European settlers on native people was drastic. First, the Europeans befriended these people and became valued trading partners. Native Americans taught the Europeans how to hunt and grow food in the region and how to use the surrounding natural resources to survive. Europeans introduced natives to guns, written language and enhanced trade commerce opportunities within European settlements and overseas. Many Natives and Europeans worked together and helped each other prosper, however, one the Europeans also introduced an entirely new set of devastating conditions. First, Europeans rapidly spread diseases that native people weren't immune too. This caused a huge outbreak of diseases such as smallpox, measles and others that killed hundreds of natives. However, the most devastating idea that the Europeans brought with them was the idea of private land ownership. Settlers would stake their claim to land and then it belonged to them and them only. All others, native or European, were told to not infringe on that property anymore. This was a very radical thing for natives to understand because they had always communally owned land within the tribe. One native didn't own parcels of land. The tribe didn't even own the land. Mother Earth owned the land, the natives just used it respectfully to farm, hunt and live (Hudson 1976).

Native people were pushed by settlers to adopt their own European way of life. Whether it be clothing, religious beliefs or countless other European ideals, the "new" Americans would constantly pressure Native Americans to adapt to the culture they brought from Europe. Of course this led to many disagreements, altercations and even wars. Native Americans wanted to continue to live in the way they had for thousands of

years. However, new "Americans," believed the natives lived as savages and wanted them to conform to their European culture. Many tribes vanished due to disease or war, while others, like the Cherokee, began to evolve and become more "civilized." Tribes, such as the Cherokee, realized that if they wanted to be respected by the "new" Americans, that they must at least make an attempt to accept the European culture and customs. The sad thing is, European Americans didn't feel the same way.

In the late 1700's, George Washington and Henry Knox proposed a cultural transformation for Native Americans. They encouraged Native Americans to become more civilized by integrating aspects of European-American culture. They felt that the tribes should be literate, become formal and well mannered, accept Christianity, and live under the new laws they were drafting (Five Civilized Tribes 2010). The Cherokee and Choctaw were the most successful at integrating pieces of European-American culture. Members of these tribes found that some European made simple everyday things easier more useful and especially more efficient. European Americans and their new government labeled the Cherokee, Choctaw, Chickasaw, Creek and Seminole Indian nations the "Five Civilized Tribes". These tribes were labeled this because of their adaptation of many earlier settler customs and generally had good relations with their white neighbors.

Native Americans and Europeans had many conflicts with one another. Most of these conflicts were created because of land ownership issues. However, natives would continue to inhabit areas of the southeast United States until the early 1800's. It was in the early 1800's that encroachment of Europeans into native territory would reach the

breaking point. By this point, natives were beginning to resist new European settlement. The natives had conceded land when more settlers arrived from Europe, while other natives had moved their villages to get away from these "new," unwanted people. When natives began resisting European land acquisition, the Europeans began to forcibly remove the natives. At first they would try to intimidate the natives to move. The Europeans would burn villages, create conflicts between opposing tribes and even recklessly kill natives. However, the worst way the Europeans would acquire land was by tricking the natives. Europeans would convince the natives to leave areas in exchange for worthless goods, little money, and false promises. The Europeans took advantage of illiterate natives by convincing them to sign contracts that would be very lucrative for the Europeans and worthless to natives. Natives would sign over hundreds of acres for fractions of what it was worth because they trusted the Europeans. This went on for years, until many native people began to resist anymore-European encroachment.

Despite constant encroachment, rapid spread of deadly diseases and conflicts with other tribes, the Cherokee were prospering in the southeast up until the forced removal of 1838. The Cherokee people had evolved into highly successful traders of furs, pottery and agriculture items, very successful farmers, and a few members had even attended new settlement schools and became educated. The Cherokee people benefited heavily from new settlers coming to the area and needing goods. The Cherokee continued to build new towns and villages, even though the land they controlled was drastically decreasing. Some of the towns and villages built between 1540 and 1838 were

fascinating examples of Cherokee traditions and cultures. However, many of these villages were heavily influenced by European culture.

In order to understand Native American development patterns, we will explore Native American towns and villages of the Mississippian Period throughout the 10th to 17th centuries. These examples will ensure that the villages and towns constructed were entirely of Native American influence. Some historians argue that the Cherokee people didn't arrive in the Southern Appalachians until the 19th century, while others believe that the Cherokee are direct descendents of natives inhabiting the area during the Mississippian Periods. In truth, both are probably correct. The Museum of the Cherokee Indian in Cherokee, NC, explores and relates to ancestry well before the Mississippian Period, so in this thesis we will accept their expertise and opinions.

Design of Mississippian Towns and Villages

When designing, precedent studies are one of the most important tools a designer can have. What one learns from past similar projects is crucial to the success of new ones. Precedent studies give us valuable information about the successes and failures of similar projects, while giving us a solid foundation to complete our own design. For this project it was important to learn as much as possible from the past. However, this is such a unique situation, that not many similar projects exist. It was decided to research how Cherokee towns and villages of the Mississippian Period were laid out and functioned. The Mississippian Period was chosen for a few reasons. This was the period in which Cherokee people prospered the most. Also, this was the period in which the land

occupied by Cherokee people was at its height. Most importantly, this was the last period of Cherokee culture without any sort of European influence.

Mississippian Period Native American towns and villages were spread all over the southeastern United States (Figure 4). Usually located along major rivers or streams, these towns all shared common architectural traits. Some of the main architectural elements they shared were plazas, platform mounds, earthworks, entryways, public buildings and spaces, and seasonal residential houses (Lewis 1998). Many of the larger towns of the southeast were surrounded by palisades, either in a rectilinear layout, or laid out according to the surrounding topography. Inside the palisade there were many houses, large public spaces and public buildings (Hudson 1976).

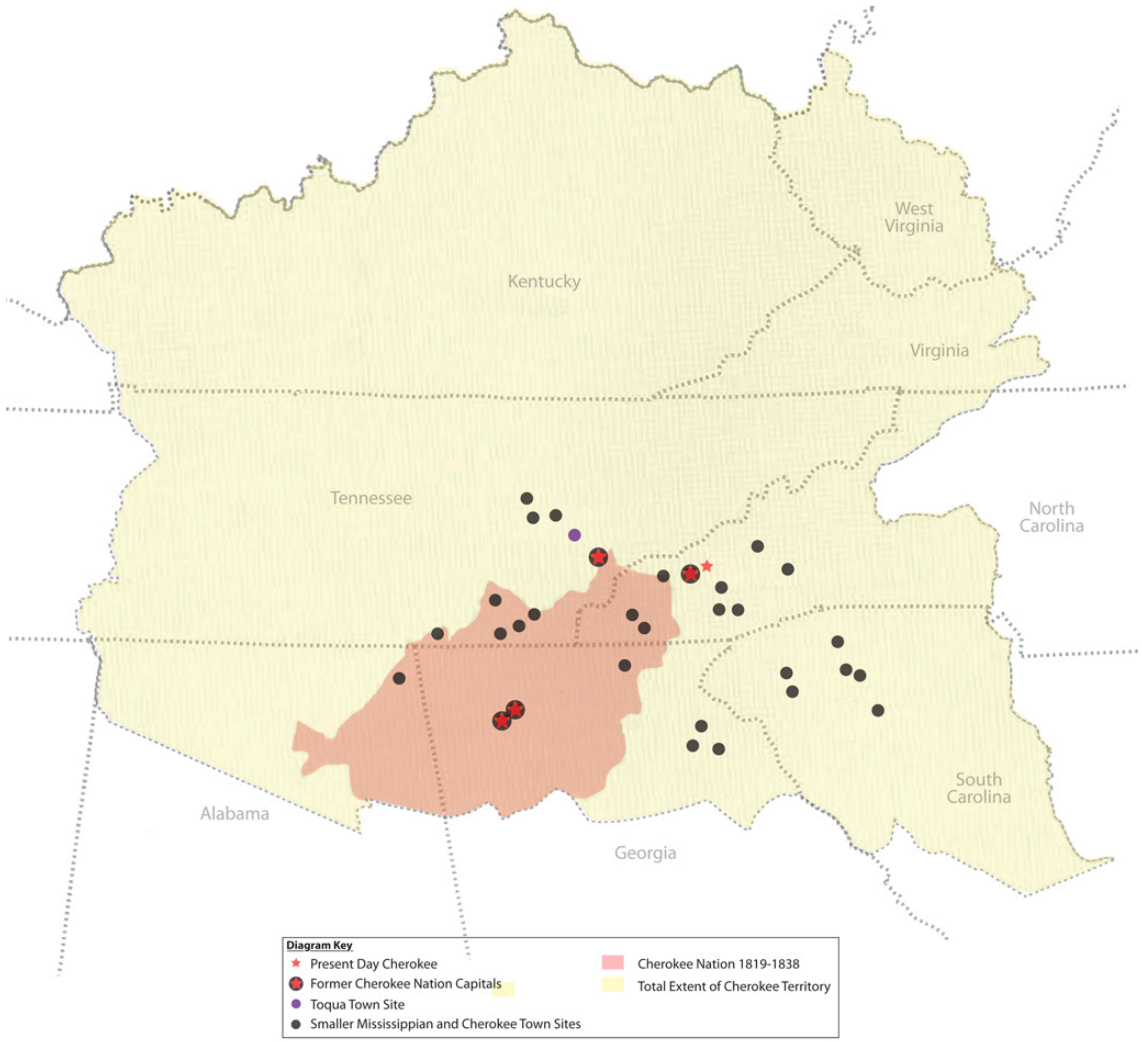


Figure 4: Mississippian Period Cherokee Territory Extent. Source: *Mississippian Towns and Sacred Places: Searching for an Architectural Grammar. R. Barry Lewis, 1998*

The Mississippian towns were viewed as a habitation centers by historians rather than random villages with no purpose as the Europeans viewed them. These villages and towns were very well thought out and organized in a way that directly related to everyday life. They had large and small public areas, plazas or courtyards, which were flanked by one or more earthen mounds. Archeologists say these plazas and mound centers weren't just for ceremonies like many earlier researchers believed, but instead they were used as

"Trade Centers." Archeologists now believe that these large public open spaces were the center of native life. The natives would spend countless hours in these spaces interacting with one another in countless ways. These areas were used for leisure, ceremonies, trade markets, all sorts of other social interaction by community members (Lewis 1998). Within the town, the largest public plaza would be surrounded by public buildings and other important structures (Hudson 1976). Through extensive research, archeologists have found that many of these plazas held a distinct relationship with adjacent rivers. Presumably, these plazas were laid out in a fashion where they were close enough to the water for goods to be easily transported back and forth from canoes. It has also been found that these plazas were all oriented according to the cardinal directions and almost always lying on the east side of the town 'primary' mound (Lewis 1998).

In the "Design of Mississippian Towns," by R. Barry Lewis, Charles Stout and Cameron B. Wesson, the authors describe "Basic Mississippian Design Elements," of a Mississippian village or town (Lewis 1998) (Figure 5).

Plazas

The plazas of a Mississippian town were integral part of the Native American world. One cannot view these plazas just as spaces with structures around them. These plazas and adjacent mounds were intimately linked through the very nature of the building enterprise. These plazas were places of the people. No matter one's status, one could interact with others and enjoy time there. These plazas were communal spaces that allowed all members of society to share in

ceremonies, rituals and daily life experiences that united and defined each community.

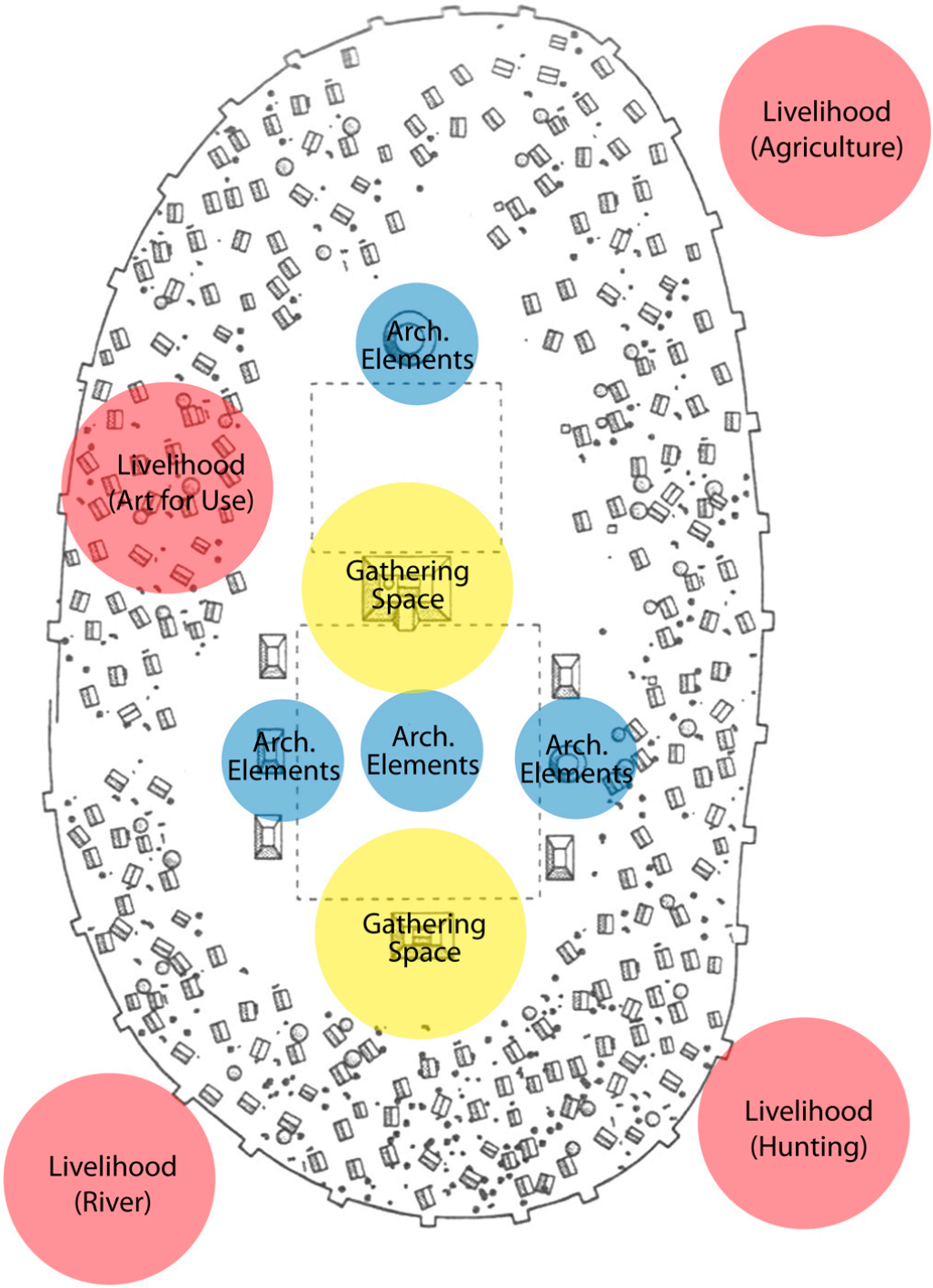


Figure 5: Architectural Elements of Mississippian Villages . Source: *Mississippian Towns and Sacred Places: Searching for an Architectural Grammer. R. Barry Lewis, 1998*

The plazas of the Mississippian Period can be compared to the typical development pattern of many European cities. These cities have been traditionally organized around a network of interconnecting streets and squares. The city's open spaces are considered as important as the buildings that surround them. Most cities have several open squares or plazas. As cities developed across Europe, plazas were the first spaces to be dedicated to the interests of the entire community.

Throughout history and city development, plazas and their structural counterparts were flexible, dynamic settings for human activities. Plazas have found architectural forms that express individual cultural needs, while simultaneously expressing universal desires for communal spaces in human settlements. Above all, plazas are public spaces where individuals interact and community consensus is built.

Mississippian plazas come in a variety of shapes and sizes. No two plazas are alike; some are circular or irregular, while others are square or rectilinear. Though they may not be shaped alike, earthen mounds create the boundary edge for virtually all of them.

Mounds

The manipulation of earth to create topographical mounds has been an important aspect of almost every historic society. These types of mounds have been found on every continent. Although the form and function of these mounds vary greatly, they all share many elements of construction and assigned cultural

meaning. We as human's desire to rise above the earth's surface on built or natural supportive structures. A mounds height is not important. What is important is that the mound creates a visible difference between itself and the surrounding context. Large and small mounds were built around the public spaces of Mississippian towns. Some of these mounds had structures built upon them, while others simply served as barriers.

Boundaries

Barriers were constructed to separate public, private and ceremonial spaces within Mississippian towns. Several different types of barriers were used. Some of these include ditches, palisades or natural terrain. Barriers were created to separate interior spaces of the town, as well as to create an external boundary to

help protect the town (Figure 6).

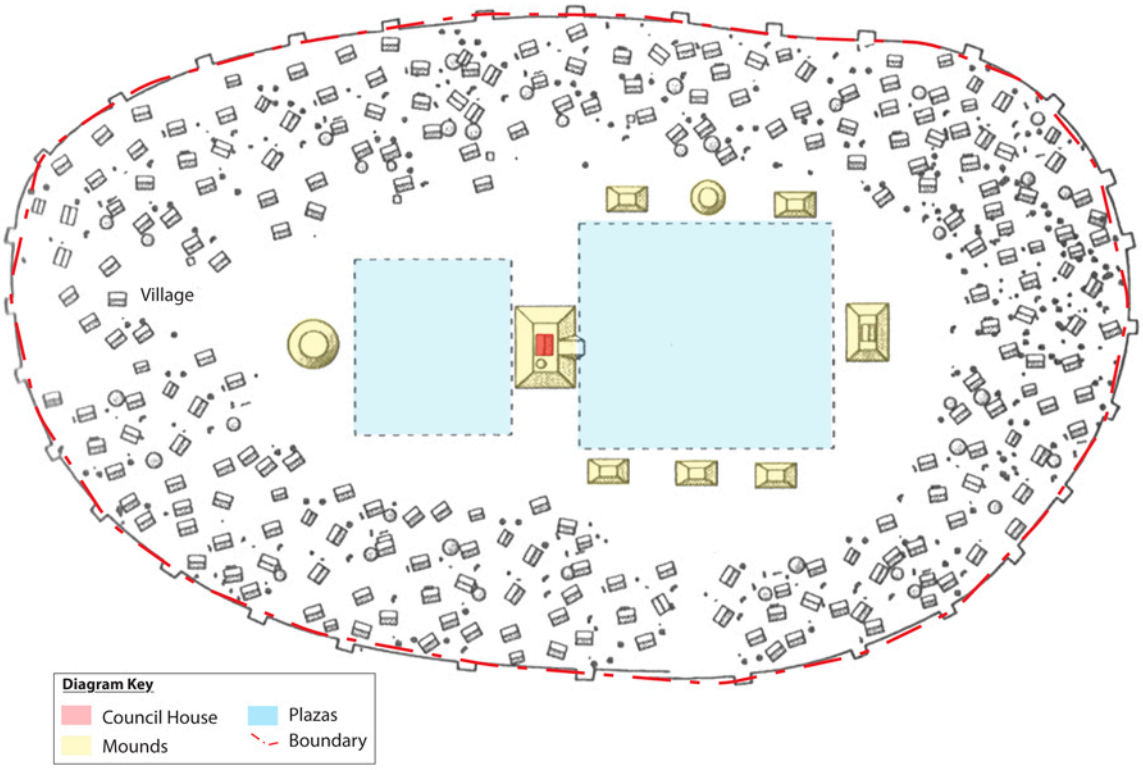


Figure 6: Architectural Elements of Mississippian Villages Plan View . Source: *Mississippian Towns and Sacred Places: Searching for an Architectural Grammer. R. Barry Lewis, 1998*

Cherokee Culture

"The traditional customs of Native Americans originated not only as a means or survival in response to the demands of difficult conditions, but also in response to the various needs that comprise what it means to be human."

J.T. Garrett and Michael Garrett, 2002

Cherokee culture has changed drastically over the thousands of years Cherokee people have inhabited the southeast. Cherokee traditions and customs were developed over time as a means of survival for the Cherokee people. These techniques and

traditions became a way of life for the Cherokee as well as every other Native American tribe. Some traditions may have been in response to survival, but they were all deeply rooted in a pride and respect for the gift of life (Garrett 2002). For example, Cherokee men would only take game during a hunt that was needed for food for the tribe or their family. There were no excessive amounts of animals killed just for sport. The Cherokee men would then process the animal and the tribe or family would use all parts of the deceased animal. The meat for food, skin for clothing, bones for tools, internal organs for drums and so on. The people respected the animal and their god enough that they felt each animal killed was a gift to the tribe. In thankfulness of the gift, the people must honor the animal that sacrificed its life and honor god for giving it to them.

Cherokee culture is born from beliefs and traditions that draw people together with a sense of "oneness" through the unity of family, clan and tribe (Garrett 2002). A Cherokee elder once said:

> *"You are not Cherokee because you have a BIA (Bureau of Indian Affairs) enrollment card. You have to live and be the culture that is based on a unique heritage. You have to know what it means to gift with the sacred tobacco and to give thanks to the Great One each day. It is a way of life with values that are uniquely Cherokee (Garrett 2002)."*

Many Native Americans believe that their traditional values consist of sharing, cooperation, noninterference, being, family and tribe, harmony with nature, a time orientation toward living in the present, explanation of a natural phenomena with a supernatural being, and a very deep respect for elders. In contrast, Native Americans

believe that current American mainstream values emphasize domination, competition, aggression, doing, individualism, mastery over nature, saving and greed, a time orientation toward living toward the future, scientific explanation of things and a reverence of youth. Native Americans have always stressed the importance of cultural ways and traditions as taught by the elders their ancestors (Garrett 2002).

> *"It is time for us to renew our cultural ways so the young people will not forget. We have lost to much, and in one generation we could lose it all."*
>
> *Cherokee Elder in 1984*

Many traditions have been passed down through the years. Sadly, countless others were lost during the European-Americans civilization crusade. Nowadays, Cherokee culture is very similar to the culture of most American citizens. However, there are still many ancient traditions and principles that the Cherokee people still practice and teach. Even though the Native American population compromises only 1% of the entire United States population, it is believed that Native Americans comprise over 50% of the cultural diversity that exist in America (Garrett 2002).

Probably the most important value passed down from elders is the notion of family. The family holds a prominent place in the Cherokee community because historically the survival of the individual was synonymous with survival of the community. Cherokees define family differently from most Americans however, because family in Cherokee extends well beyond one's immediate family. Family members to a Cherokee are those in one's clan and numerous members of the community. Historically

all living creatures in the world, nature as a whole and the universe were also considered family (Garrett 2002).

The following list and descriptions offer a glimpse into certain aspects of Cherokee culture from the past and present. They should be incorporated into final design in some aspect.

Arts and Crafts

The Cherokee people have long been known for their beautiful arts and crafts abilities. Cherokee people have crafted baskets, carvings, and other pieces of art not only for commerce, but also for everyday use.

Baskets and their weavers were very important to ancient Cherokee. Women weaved baskets out of river cane, white oak and honeysuckle. These baskets were traditionally used to carry corn, beans and other agricultural products from he fields to home, or to markets for trading. These baskets were the only way that Cherokee people could carry excess amounts of goods at one time. Baskets were also woven for peace gifts to encroaching settlers. These baskets were so well made and beautiful, that they also became an important way for the Cherokee to make money. Settlers would buy or trade baskets, and then resell them to other settlers or export them for sale in England. Today, many basket weavers still exist. These baskets are woven for sale to visitors of Cherokee at varying places on the Qualla Boundary. The traditional style of basket weaving is still used by the newer generation of basket weavers because of its effectiveness, strength and beauty (Basket Weave Patterns - Attachment 2).

Carvings from stone and wood are also a very important to the Cherokee people. Traditionally, Cherokee people carved items such as hand tools, arrowheads and other items for everyday use. Many ancient arrowheads can still be found when agricultural fields along rivers are plowed each spring. Today, many Cherokee carvers live on the Qualla Boundary. They carve animals and other important Cherokee items out of wood and stone. Visitors can purchase these items at varying locations on the Boundary as well. The detailed carving techniques used today have been passed down from generation to generation (Pottery, 2010).

Pottery has also been a very important craft of the Cherokee people. The Cherokee have the longest continuing pottery tradition of any tribe in the United States. Over 2,000 years ago, Cherokee potters began creating pieces of pottery from clay found along rivers and creeks. Pottery was very important to the early Cherokee because it gave them a way to transport water, store food and also trade with. The potters used wood and stone to carefully carve designs in the pottery, a technique that is still used today. Presently there are many potters on the Qualla Boundary. They also create elaborate works that are sold at varying locations on the Boundary (Carvings, 2010).

Language

The Cherokee spoken language is said to have evolved from the ancient Iroquoian spoken language around 2000 BC. Cherokees would communicate solely by Cherokee until the influence of European-Americans in the 1700's.

European Americans encouraged the Cherokee to learn the spoken and written English language. Many Cherokee resisted, while others chose to learn English so that they may communicate with new settlers. The European Americans encouraged the Cherokee people to develop a written Cherokee language, to accommodate the spoken Cherokee language, or abandon the spoken language altogether. In 1821, a Cherokee man named Sequoyah, created the Cherokee syllabary. This was the first and only time in recorded history that a member of an illiterate people, independently created an effective writing system. After seeing its worth, the Cherokee rapidly began to use his syllabary. They wrote books, letters, and even created a newspaper. The Cherokee officially adopted his system in 1825. Within months, the literacy rate of Cherokee rapidly surpassed that of the surrounding European-American settlers. In 1830, over 90 percent of the Cherokee people were literate in the Cherokee written language. The language is still used today, however it is now a second language to the Cherokee people (Sequoyah 2010).

Pressured in the early 1900's from the federal government and missionaries to learn English, the Cherokee began to lose their language. Today, the language has made a dramatic recovery. Cherokee children are taught the Cherokee language all throughout their schooling. Western Carolina University offers Cherokee language classes within their Cherokee History program. There are also many community and tribal programs to teach the spoken and written Cherokee language to tribal members and nonmembers. The language is also

displayed on street signs, buildings and other tribal resources throughout the Boundary (EBCI, 2010).

Religion and Symbolism

Cherokee historically believe in a single "Creator" of Earth and the universe. This creator is often referred to as 'The Great Spirit." When Europeans first arrived in America, they noticed that Native Americans prayed to the sun, moon, stars, rivers, lakes, trees, wind, thunder and basically everything else that one encounters in nature. The Europeans thought Native Americans were pagans, heathens and savages. Europeans could not understand that Native Americans did believe in one "God," but they also respected and communicated with all of God's creations (Lake-Thom 1997).

Native American religion is the topic of many books and other publications. One could begin an entirely new thesis on the topic, so for the sake of this project we will leave religion at the above statement. However there are many sites located in the southeast that are very sacred to the Cherokee (Figure 7).

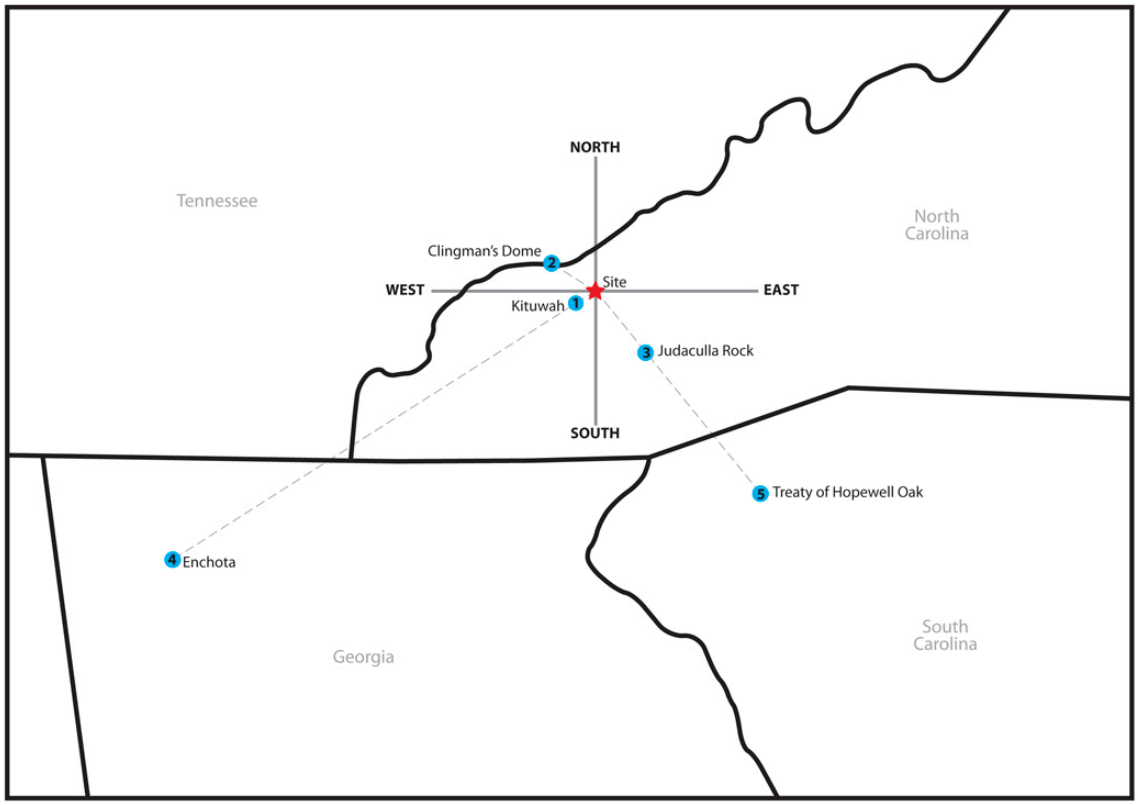


Figure 7: Sacred Sites and Directions of the Cherokee Diagram . Source: *Cherokee Heritage Trails Guidebook. Barbara Duncan, 2003.* See Attachment 5 for location and directional descriptions.

Myths and Legends

The Cherokee people have passed down many myths and legends throughout the years. There are different types of Cherokee myths and legends. James Mooney classifies these myths and legends as sacred myths, animal stories and local legends, and historical traditions. Mooney spent several years living and observing the Cherokee people in North Carolina during the late 1800's (Mooney 1888).

Sacred Myths – Genesis type myths that deal with the creation of the world, the nature of the heavenly bodies and elemental forces, the origin

of life and death, the spirit world and the invisible beings, the ancient world, and the hero-gods. Some examples are the "Cherokee Creation Story" (Creation Story – Attachment 3), "The First Fire," and the "Origin of Disease and Medicine."

Animal Stories – At one point these myths were sacred in character, but overtime they began to be told as humorous explanations of certain animal peculiarities. Some examples are "How the Rabbit stole Otters Coat," "How the Deer got his horns," and "The Ballgame of the Birds and Animals."

Local Legends – As with other tribes, almost every prominent rock and mountain, every deep bend in the river, in the old Cherokee country has an accompanying legend. Some example of local legends in close proximity to the Qualla Boundary, "Fire's Relative," "Buffalo Place," and "Where they are afraid of each other."

Games and Recreation

The ball game, also known as Stickball, was played in one form or another by most Indian tribes across the eastern United States (Stickball – Attachment 4). The ball game is similar to modern day lacrosse. Cherokee used two sticks that were 2 ½ feet long pieces of hickory wood with deerskin loop at the end to create a loop for the ball to rest. The balls used in the game were made of deerskin stuffed tightly with deer or squirrel hair. Teams were assembled from Cherokee towns and villages and tribes would travel to play one another. The players were

young athletic men, and being a good ball player offered the much prestige within the community. The players, as well as the community took the "ball game" very seriously. It gave the community a great sense of pride and accomplishment to be on the winning side (Hudson 1976). Today, the ball game is still played amongst the Cherokee, but usually only during certain festivals throughout the year.

Clans

The Cherokee had a traditional social organization known as "The Seven Clans of the Cherokee." Customs of the Cherokee clans have evolved since ancient times; however, traditionalists still observe clan customs regarding marriage and certain social events.

The Cherokee society is historically a matrilineal society; meaning clanship is passed through the mother. Among the Cherokee, women were considered the head of household, with the home and children belonging to her should she separate from a husband. The knowledge of a person's clan is important for many reasons; one of those reasons being that among Cherokee traditionalists today, it is forbidden to marry within your clan as clan members are considered brother and sisters. Knowledge of a person's clan is also important when seeking spiritual guidance and traditional medicine ceremonies, as it is necessary to name the clan. Clan also delineates seating at ceremonial stomp dances and other gatherings.

If a Cherokee was born outside of a clan, they had to be adopted into a clan by a clan mother. The clan mother could also adopt outsiders into the clan if see felt they were deserving. For those Cherokee men marrying Cherokee women, the

man had to leave his clan and join the clan of his new wife. If a “white” woman married a Cherokee man and gave birth to a Cherokee child, she could then be taken into the clan. “White” men who were not Cherokee but married into a Cherokee household, had to be adopted into a different clan by a clan mother because he could not take his wife’s clan.

Blue (ANISAHONI), historically this clan made medicine from a blue-colored plant to keep the children well. They are also known as the Panther or Wild Cat Clan.

Long Hair (ANIGILOHI), are also known as The Twister, Hair Hanging Down or Wind Clan. They wore elaborate hairdos and walked with a proud, twisting gait. Clan members are regarded as peacemakers and Peace Chiefs would often be from this clan. Prisoners of war, orphans of other tribes, and others with no Cherokee tribe were often adopted into this clan, thus a common interpretation of the name 'Strangers.'

Bird (ANITSISKWA), were historically known as messengers. The belief that birds are messengers between earth and heaven, or the People and Creator, gave the members of this clan the responsibility of caring for the birds.

Paint (ANIWODI), were historically known as a prominent healers medicine people. Medicine is often 'painted' on a patient after harvesting, mixing and performing other aspects of the ceremony. They made red paint and prepared teas for vapor therapy specific to each ailment.

Deer (ANIKAWI), were historically known as fast runners and hunters. Even though they hunted game for subsistence, they respected and cared for the animals while they were living among them. They were also known as messengers on an earthly level, delivering messengers from village to village, or person to person.

Wild Potato (ANIGATOGEWI) historically, members of this clan were known to be 'keepers of the land' and gatherers of the wild potato in swamps along streams. They are also known as the Bear, Raccoon, or Blind Savannah Clan.

Wolf (ANIWAYA), is the largest and most prominent clan throughout time. During the time of the Peace Chief and War Chief government setting, the War Chief would come from this clan. Wolves are known as protectors.

(EBCI 2010)

Chapter 4: Site Selection and Analysis

Site Selection

The site chosen for redevelopment in this project is the Old Elementary School Site located at the intersection of Highway 441 and US 19 (Figure 8). The elementary school site was chosen because of its strategic location. The site is within short walking distance to downtown and cultural attractions such as the ceremonial grounds and Museum of the Cherokee Indian. The site is also adjacent to one of Cherokee's largest attractions, the Oconaluftee Island Park.

The site was used as an elementary school for nearly 40 years. In 2010, the school was demolished and the site is currently vacant and under extreme pressure to be developed by local decision makers.

Figure 8: Chosen Site Aerial Photo. Source: *Google Earth.*

Analysis

Topography

The area's topography is typical for the ridge and valley region of western North Carolina. Steeply sloped mountains frame the valley floor and the Oconaluftee River. The Slope Analysis Map (Figure 9) clearly illustrates the dramatic changes in topography around the edges of the site, but the gentle slope found within our site boundaries. Most of the land within the site is a 0% to 5% slope (BWSC, 2001).

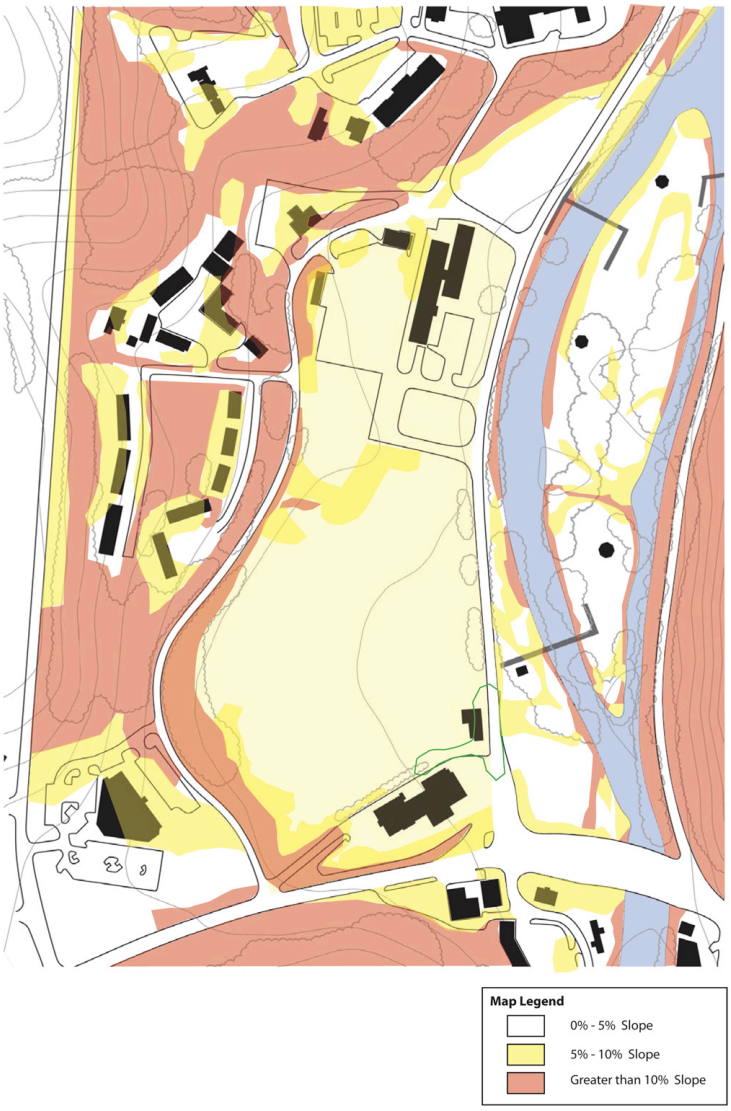


Figure 9: Site Slope Analysis Map. Source: *Cherokee GIS Department Files. David Wyatt, 2010.*

Existing Vegetation

The vegetation of the site is typical for the mountains of western North Carolina. The dominant over story species are hardwoods (oak, hickory, and maple), mixed with groupings of pine (BWSC 2001). There is little if any understory vegetation left on this site.

Figure 10: Existing Vegetation and Structures Map. Source: *David Wyatt, 2011.*

Existing Circulation

The existing pedestrian circulation on the site is nearly non-existent. There are no sidewalks or walkways located on the site and very few usable walks adjacent to it. Pedestrian traffic flow is something that really needs to be addressed in the design phase because it is dangerous at this point for people to try to access the site on foot.

The site was definitely designed around the car in the past. There are a few vehicular access points and also throughways running throughout the site. However, vehicular circulation is a problem on Highway 441 because of heavy traffic flow, narrow roadways and visitors trying to get to the Island Park. Currently visitors park their vehicles along Highway 441 when visiting the Island Park, which creates a safety risk because of people crossing the road and parking so close to moving traffic. Highway 441 also creates a physical boundary between the site and the river (Figure 12).

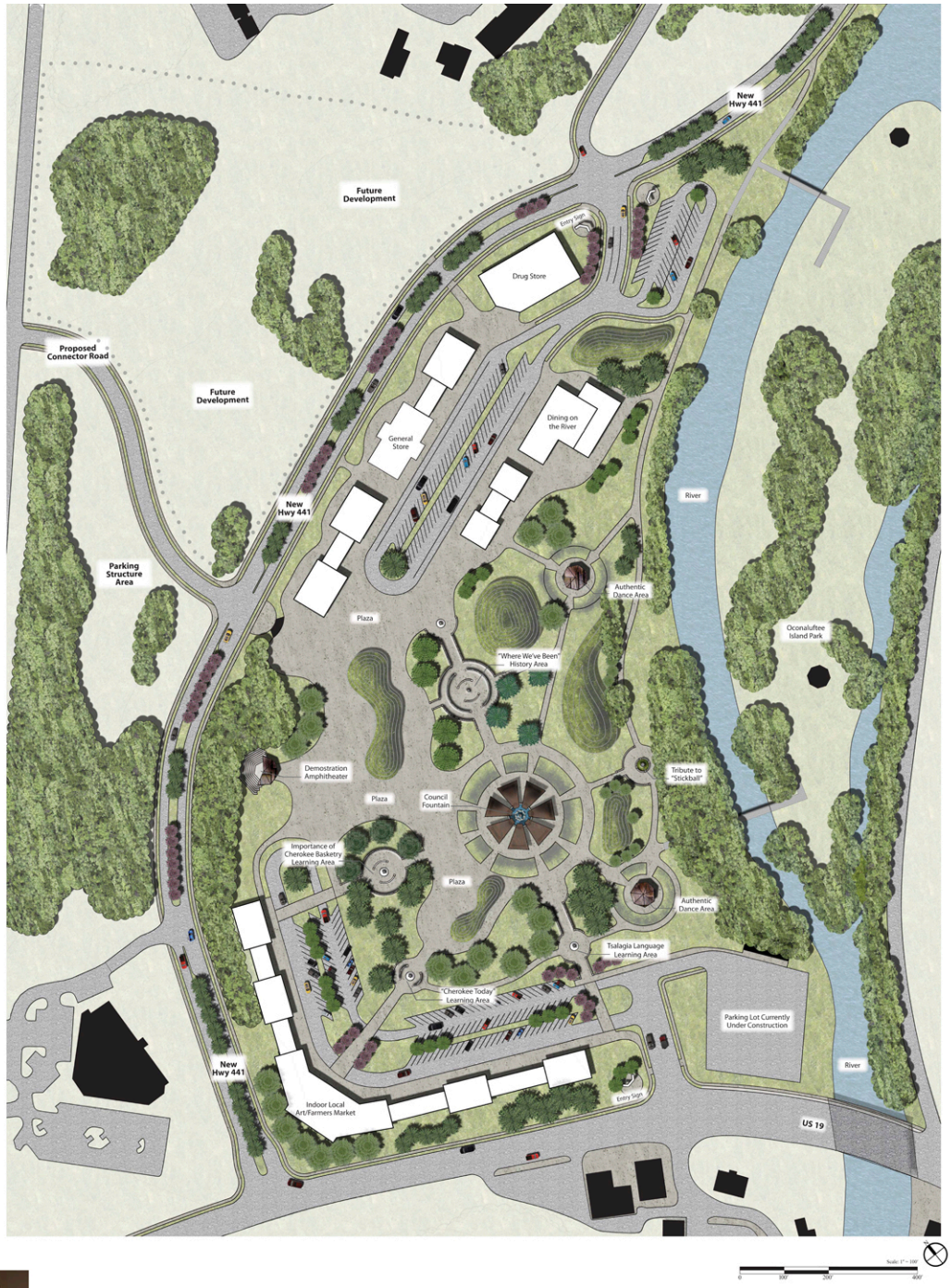
(See Attachment 6 for Site Images)

Figure 11: Existing Site Circulation. Source: *Zeke Cooper, 2011.*

Chapter 5: Design Solution and Discussion

For the purpose of this thesis, a detailed master plan was created for the chosen site. The completed plan offers visitors and locals a place to gather, interact and learn from one another. The plan is separated into many small spaces, but connected well enough that the entire site serves as the large central marketplace that we desired in the beginning (Figure 12).

The proposed master plan was designed with the ancient Mississippian Era villages in mind. There is a large central plaza, mounds, and small private areas that are comparable in their locations and prospective uses to those of the Mississippian Era.


New Hwy 441
Future Development
Entry Sign
Drug Store
Proposed Connector Road
Future Development
General Store
Dining on the River
New Hwy 441
River
Parking Structure Area
Authentic Dance Area
Plaza
Oconaluftee Island Park
"Where We've Been" History Area
Demostration Amphitheater
Tribute to "Stickball"
Plaza
Council Fountain
Importance of Cherokee Basketry Learning Area
Plaza
Authentic Dance Area
Tsalagia Language Learning Area
"Cherokee Today" Learning Area
Parking Lot Currently Under Construction
New Hwy 441
River
Entry Sign
Indoor Local Art/Farmers Market
US 19
Scale: 1" = 100'
0
100'
200'
400'

"WE'RE STILL HERE"
Presented by: Zeke Cooper
Culturally Sensitive Planning and Design
Thesis Project April 25th, 2011
University of Tennessee Master of Landscape Architecture
Major Advisor: Curtis Stewart Committee Members: Sam Rogers and T.K. Davis

Figure 12: Final Master Plan. Larger view see Attachment . Source: *Zeke Cooper, 2011.*

Important Components of Proposed Master Plan

Relocating of Highway 441

As mention earlier, Highway 441 created a physical boundary between the site and Oconaluftee River. The existing roadway was dangerous for visitors to the Island Park and pedestrians moving about the site and adjacent sites. The road also created a bottleneck at the intersection of US 19 because of its close proximity to other traffic signals and pedestrian crossings. The decision was made to relocate Highway 441 to the west side of the site because there is currently a roadway located there, however it would need to be widened to hold the proposed boulevard (Figure 13).

Figure 13: Proposed Highway 441 Section. Source: *Zeke Cooper, 2011.*

It would greatly benefit the site and Cherokee to relocate the existing roadway because it creates a larger site that has un-obstructed river frontage and access. It also allows visitors to the new marketplace and Island Park to move back and forth

effortlessly without creating a safety hazard. The new road would also make vehicular move more freely because drivers wouldn't have to constantly slow down for pedestrians or illegal parked vehicles. It also lets traffic move more freely because drivers aren't distracted from the road by looking at the river or visitors within it.

The new roadway would be designed as a boulevard with a large landscaped median. Sidewalks would also be placed along the new road to allow for easy pedestrian movement (Figure 14).

Figure 14: Proposed Site Circulation. Source: *Zeke Cooper, 2011.*

Visitor Learning Areas

Located around the site are areas in which visitors can be exposed and learn from local residents. Some of these areas will teach about the history and culture of the ancient Cherokee, while others expose visitors to what the Cherokee people are doing

today. One such learning area will be an Oconaluftee Indian Village, Unto These Hills and Museum of the Cherokee Indian Amphitheater. This amphitheater will be reserved for these organizations at peak tourist time in order to give them an area to advertise and market their attractions to visitors. This amphitheater could be very valuable to these current attractions, because it will give them the opportunity to reach out to visitors that may have not been previously interested or known about their venues. Visitors will watch as individuals from the above organizations put on demonstrations and answer questions to promote their respective attractions (Figure 14).

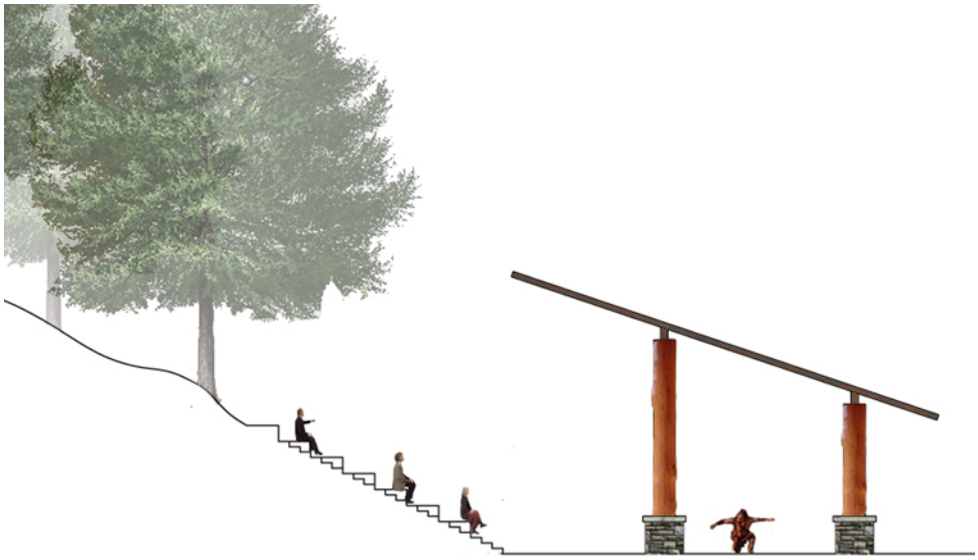


Figure 15: Proposed Cultural Attractions Amphitheater. Source: *Zeke Cooper, 2011.*

Other learning areas include authentic dancing venues (Figure 15) and special display areas. The dancing venues will be reserved for local dancers that dress in authentic historical Cherokee attire and perform traditional Cherokee dances. These venues will also be available to authentic Cherokee singers, storytellers and "Chiefs."

Figure 16: Conceptual Rendering of Proposed Performance Venues. Source: *Zeke Cooper, 2011.*

There special display areas will offer visitors a chance to learn about past and present Cherokee people. Areas such as the "Stickball Memorial" (Figure 16) will be permanent, while areas such as the "What are we up to now?" displays will be ever changing.

Figure 17: Proposed Stickball Memorial. Source: *Zeke Cooper, 2011.*

Council Fountain

The centerpiece of the entire site will be the Council Fountain. The design of the fountain will be based on ancient Cherokee Council Houses that were seven sided; one side for each clan. The historic Cherokee Council House was elevated above the village on a mound and contained an eternal flame in the center. The purpose of the Council Fountain is to reflect upon Cherokee history and culture, but to also become a symbol of the path the Cherokee's have lived. As you walk around within the structure, there will be areas of personal reflection, historical significance and tributes to past Cherokee people who have put the tribe before themselves. This area is meant to be a highly sacred location that visitors are welcomed to enter. The sound of flowing water, crackling fire and wind above, are intended to create a very spiritual and memorable experience for the visitor (Figures 17 and 18).

Figure 18: Conceptual Rendering of Proposed Council Fountain. Source: *Zeke Cooper, 2011.*

Figure 19: Section of Proposed Council Fountain. Source: *Zeke Cooper, 2011.*

Retail, Restaurants, and Much Needed Parking

The new site plan also includes upscale retail areas, multiple restaurants and the addition of much needed parking for the site, Island Park and downtown area. The retail areas include space for local community retailers such as a pharmacy, organic grocery, etc., while also having space for tourist retail. The tourist retailers will provide only authentic Cherokee goods such as carvings, basketry, art, etc. This area will also include a large art market for local artisans to display their work, and a large local farmers market. During peak visitation times, the above will spill out along the large plaza and create an outdoor market. Hopefully all of the before mentioned will create a site where locals and visitors are constantly intertwined with each other.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Although it is highly doubtful that the completed master plan will be implemented, hopefully it will provide an alternative option to any proposed development on the site. This project should give local decision makers a clear interpretation of how a landscape architect would design the site. The development of the site is inevitable, so this project can help serve as a template for this sites development and other sites development. If local leaders start to realize the importance of creating a "Sense of Place," Cherokee can evolve into an elite tourist destination.

There were many aspects to this project and numerous details were considered. It was important to include the history and culture, as was it important to include retail and eateries. However, no matter what is built upon this site, or what all it includes, the single most important aspect of any future development in Cherokee is the people themselves. We must strive to design for the Cherokee people of today and tomorrow.

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Vita

Zeke Cooper was born in Cherokee, NC to the parents of Steven and Ann Cooper. He is the first son and second child, the first being Natalie Cooper Case. He attended Smoky Mountain High School in Sylva, NC, then continued his education to Western Carolina University. After three miserable years of Business Law study, he transferred to the University of Tennessee – Knoxville to pursue an undergraduate degree in Plant Science with a Landscape Design and Construction concentration. Upon completion of his Bachelors Degree, Zeke enrolled in the first class of the Master of Landscape Architecture Program at the University of Tennessee – Knoxville. During his three years of graduate school, Zeke had the opportunity to study abroad in Italy, attain a graduate fellowship, attend national and local ASLA conventions, and work for the professional design firm of Barge Waggoner Sumner and Cannon, Inc. Upon graduation of the MLA program, Zeke has partnered with two other individuals to form Aniwaya Design and Planning, Inc. and Cooper and Stewart Landscape Architecture. The focus of their partnership is long-term master planning for western North Carolina and east Tennessee. Aniwaya is also a Tribal Employment Rights Office Certified Landscape Architecture firm in Cherokee, NC. Hopefully, Zeke will be able to turn this thesis project into a life long career of rehabilitating his hometown of Cherokee, NC.