CHAPTER 2
MASTER PLAN

The program for the site includes an urban inn, retail stores, offices, multifamily residences, and off-street parking. The city block encompasses two building zones which are well defined in a sector plan developed by the community and can be developed by right to almost a half million square feet. The master plan design for the site evolved through numerous stages of considering natural forms. An initial reaction is to group and shape the buildings in such a way as to emulate a natural setting like mountains.

The initial scheme defines the plaza facing the main street and prominent intersection at the Metro station as if the flow of traffic had eroded the larger building masses down. Conceptually developed is a pathway through the block since people historically oriented their activities around natural passes.
Following the mode of geological development underneath, the master plan evolves out of the various urban forces involved in the block. The development is separated into veins of main street retail running under the inn and the offices, an inn addressing the sociable intersection, offices in the middle of the block opposite the large office building across the street, residences sloping back to the scale of the neighborhoods to the north, and parking buried underneath in the new mode of the subway and underground parking in the area.

Below is an initial massing sketch of the front veins including the inn and retail.

The existing conditions of climate and seasonal change are also considered as active forces. The orientation of the buildings to the sun and the wind is considered.

With modern heating and cooling to mitigate the extremes, the goal is to extend the use of the outdoor space into the marginal seasons. Unlike the Anasazi, it is not necessary to orient to the south for winter survival. Instead, the curved overhanging form of their protective cliffs is copied and oriented southeast to warm up in the mornings, but shield from the hot sun in the afternoons in this hot southern climate, making the focal plaza on the street more inviting.

The central plaza and the residential courtyard use more typical southern orientation for winter warmth, but they work their way back from open westward exposure to shade behind structures on the west. Eastward facing terraces allow for morning warmth and afternoon shade as well as some southern exposure for a longer gardening season.

The buildings are massed to the north and west to buffer the cold winds.
A paper sketch model of the master plan.

Study of the appropriate orientation and scale of internal spaces.

Approximate shadows cast during winter solstice.
The master plan executed in a paper model.

The plaza between the inn and the office building opens to the south-southwest.
Summer solstice.

Winter solstice.