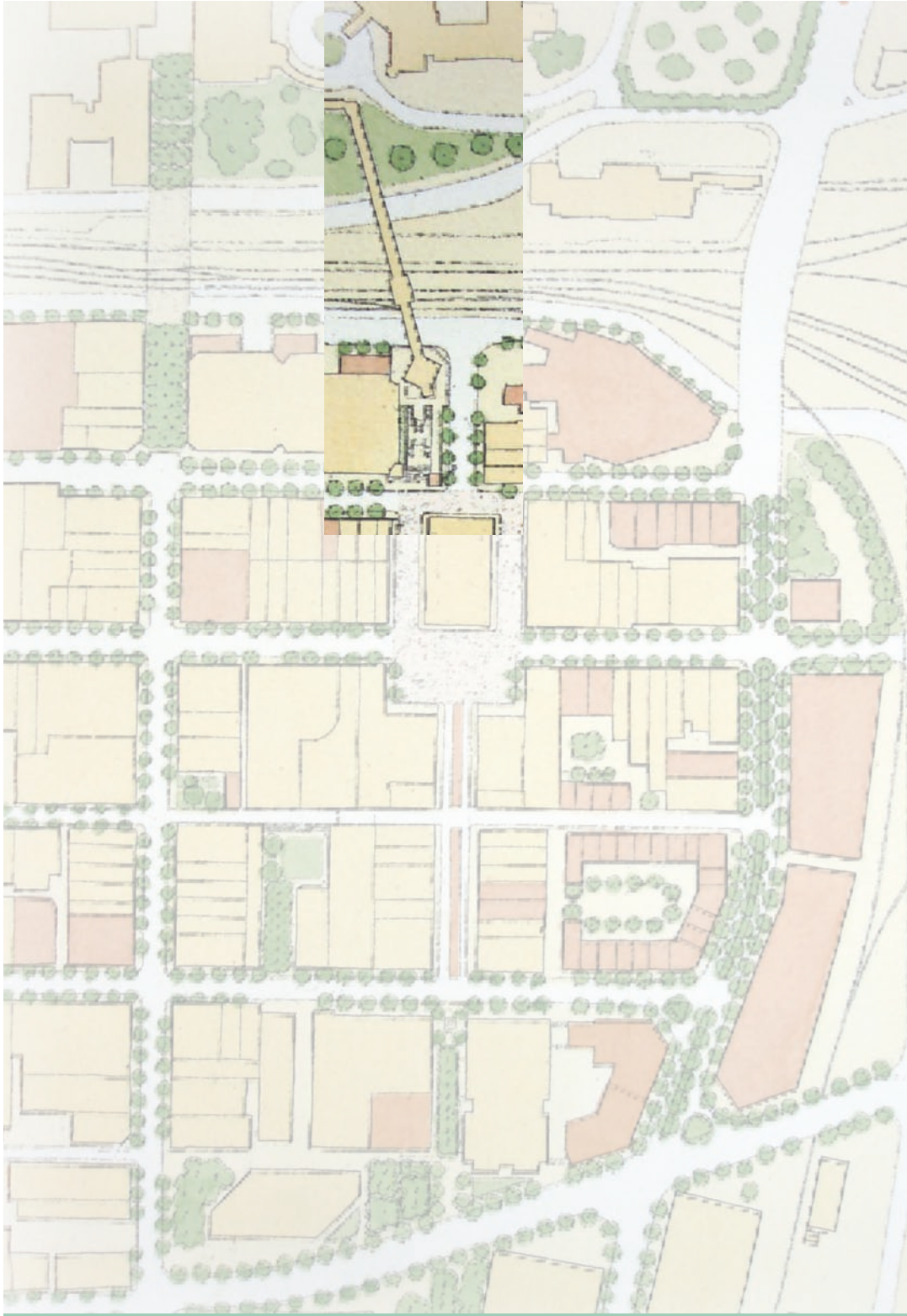


STEPPED PLAZA



STEPPED PLAZA

OBSERVATION:

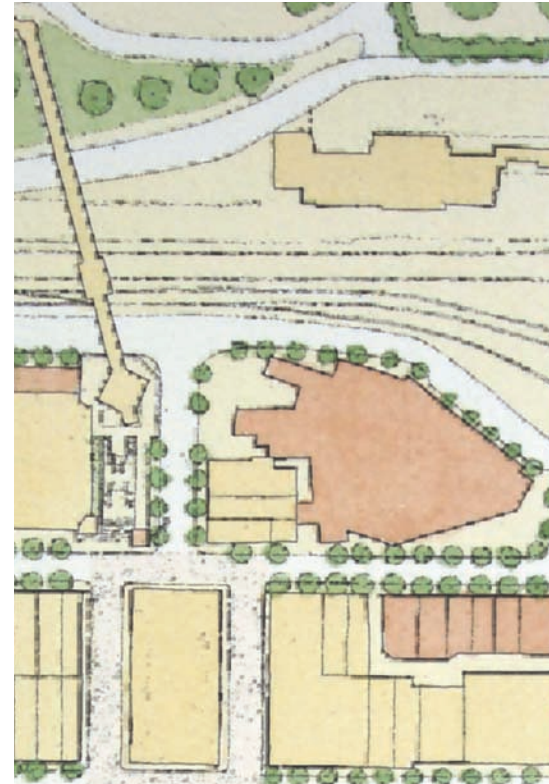
Create cascading stair steps to draw people from the pedestrian bridge over the railroad tracks into the City Market. This idea is similar to the Spanish Steps in Rome albeit on a smaller scale for Roanoke. The stepped plaza will become a destination for social interaction between Roanoke's citizens and tourists. It would serve as a public plaza and forecourt for the new art museum. The stepped plaza would be a perfect site for political rallies or a grandstand for performances and parades passing down Salem Avenue.

DISCUSSION:

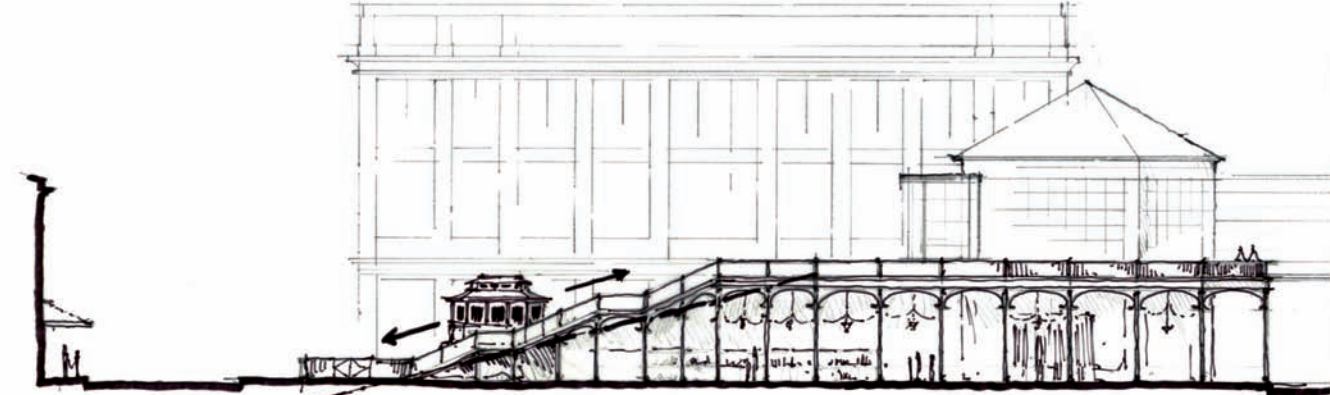
This idea originated through discussions with charrette participants regarding the need for the City Market to better connect with surrounding areas of Roanoke especially those to the north. Specifically, the design addresses the connection over the railroad tracks to Hotel Roanoke and to new development taking place in the Henry Street neighborhood.

The design team looked at historic photos from the 1920's showing a connection to the rail station from the City Market. The original connection between the rail station and downtown was a big wooden boardwalk system that came down directly into the

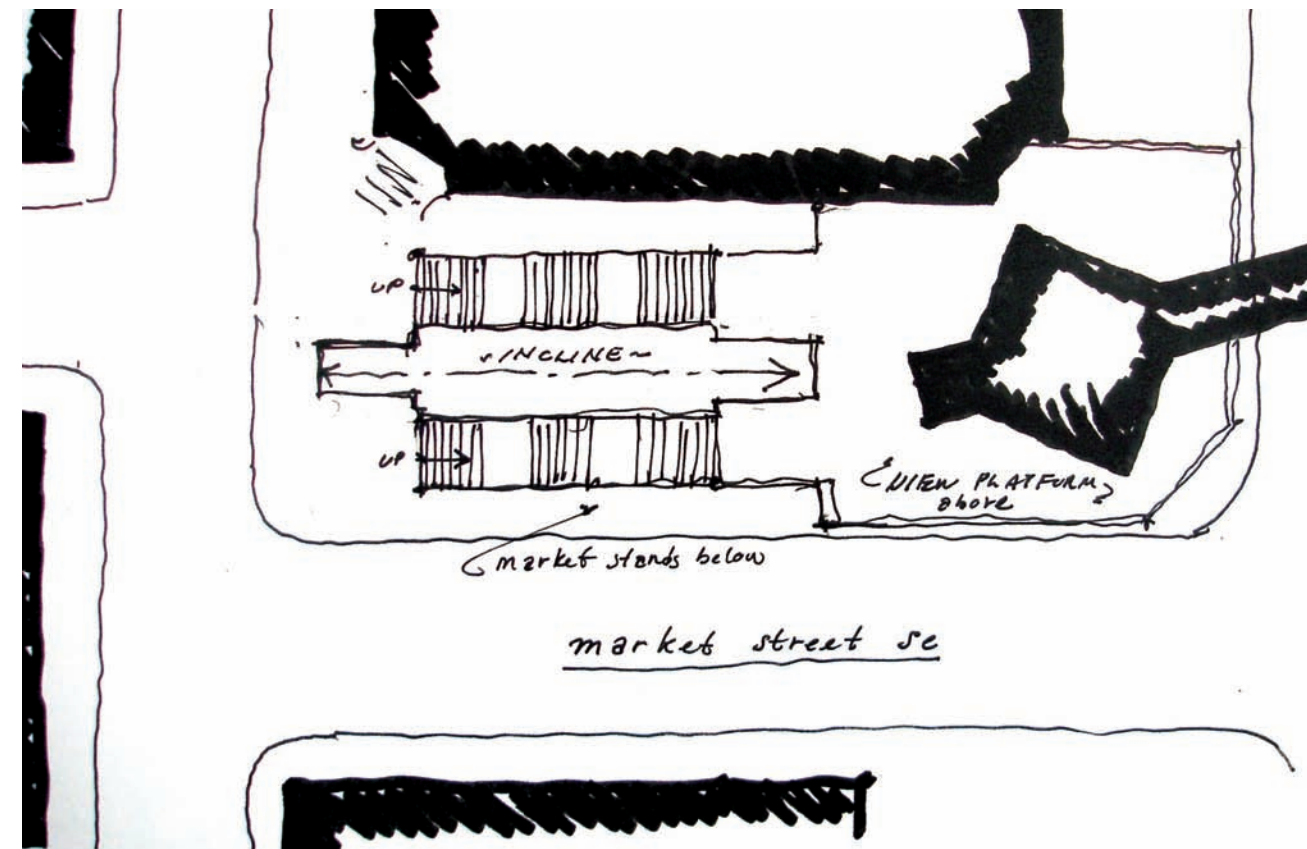
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Key map



Section study of stepped plaza with trolley incline



Plan study of stepped plaza with trolley incline

market. The existing pedestrian bridge has an abrupt ending that brings pedestrians out of the stairway facing the railroad tracks instead of the City Market.

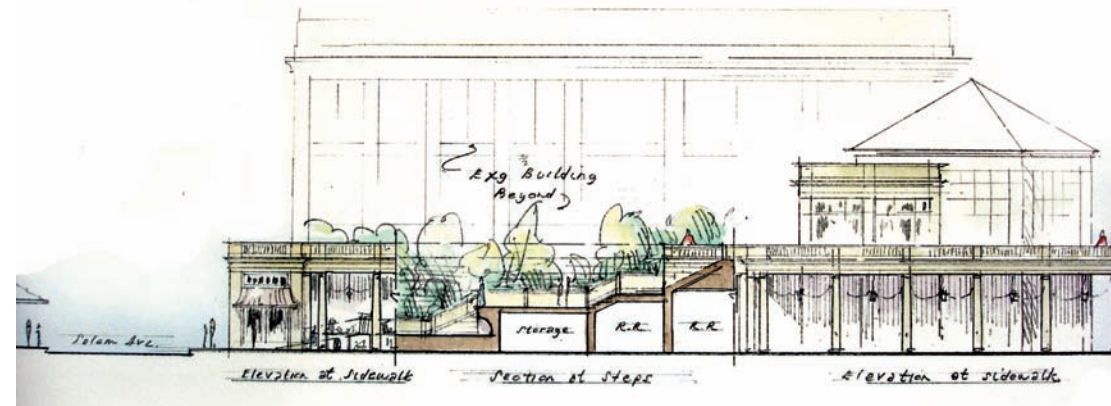
After discussion, the design team conceived an idea similar to the area in Rome known as the Spanish Steps. The concept recognizes that this might not be simply a place to cross over the railroad tracks. It could easily create a lively space suitable for many social activities.

The stepped plaza would provide a place to hang out with friends and strangers. It could become Roanoke's most exciting place to see and be seen. A person could sit on the steps, meet friends there, enjoy a snack, and simply socialize.

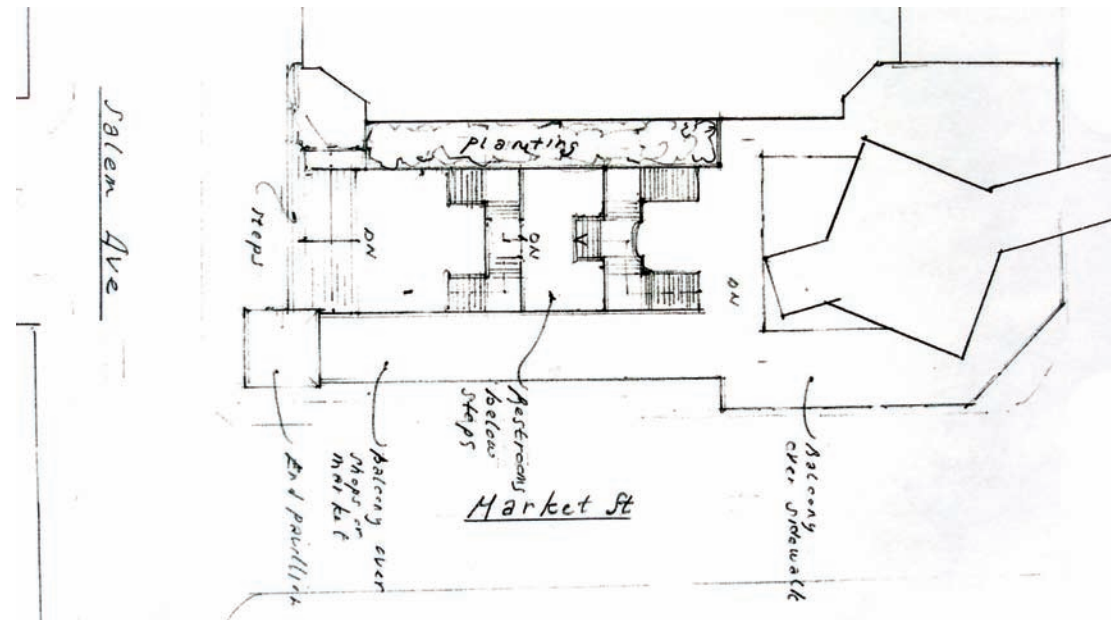
Many of the conceptual sketches produced provide a closer look into the details of this potentially wonderful place. One option could be to design a little anchor pavilion on the corner of Salem Avenue and Market Street with a roof top bandstand. It could be an observation platform for people to look out over the street intersection and the City Market Building.

The existing pedestrian walkway extending over the railroad tracks to the City Market is shaped like a glass cube with an internal elevator and escalators. With this new proposal, pedestrians would have the option

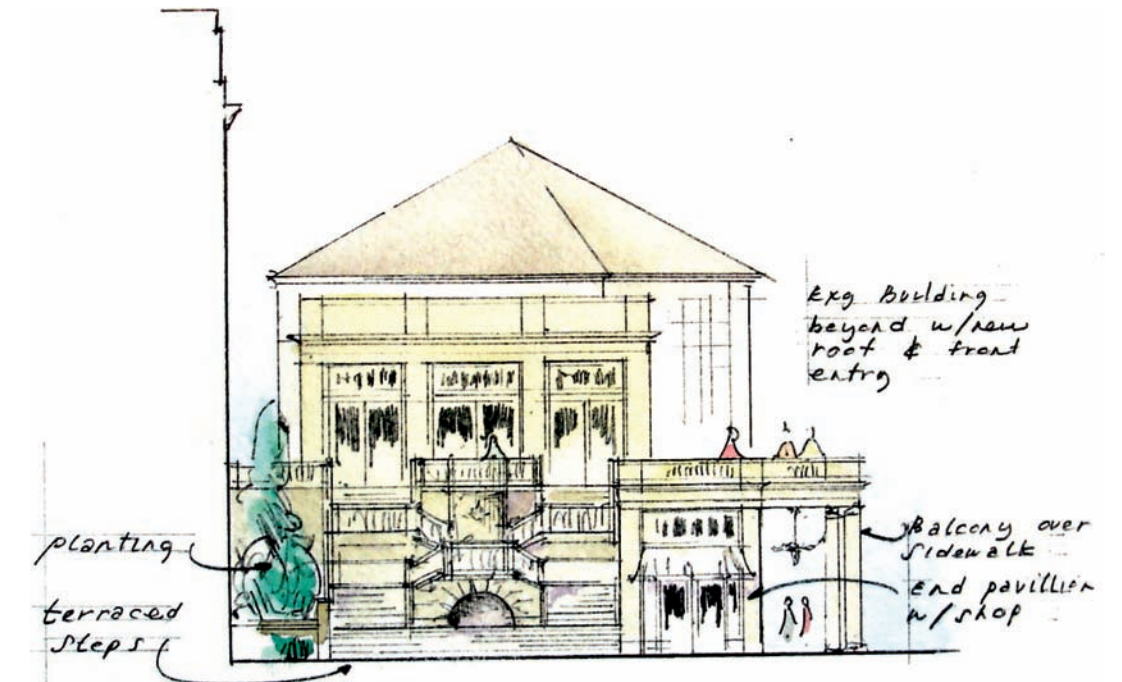
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Market Street elevation, stepped plaza



Plan view of stepped plaza



Salem Avenue elevation, stepped plaza



Remodeled Market Building and stepped plaza at bridge crossing

of coming out on a podium-like area and walking down either gradually or directly. One high-ranking city official said, “You know, we could even do a miniature trolley incline like the one originally on Mill Mountain.” This would be a unique way to handle accessibility issues without forcing those who are physically challenged to seek a hard to find elevator within the parking deck. The incline could even be marketed as a ride for children.

The rendering included in the study shows how the stepped plaza would look from the City Market Building. Additional sketches of plan development and other concepts were included for this proposed project to more fully explore all the exciting possibilities.

FINDINGS:

Create a set of cascading stair steps similar to the Spanish Steps in Rome. It has been conceived as a destination for socializing, a public plaza and forecourt for the new art museum, a site for political rallies, and a grandstand for performances and parades passing down Salem Avenue. As an option, include a miniature incline for accessibility and to serve as a tourist draw.



Approaching the stepped plaza