

COMMON BEAUTY

HISTORY OF THE PHYSICAL FORM AND USES OF MOORE SQUARE



CIRCA, INC.

By CIRCA, Inc.

For Raleigh Historic Districts Commission, Inc.

05.2009

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PUBLICATION INFORMATION

“Common Beauty: History of the Physical Form and Uses of Moore Square” was produced by CIRCA, Inc. and AGILE Design Studios for the Raleigh Historic Districts Commission, Inc. The document and its elements were created utilizing AutoCad 2010, Adobe Photoshop CS, and Adobe Illustrator CS with final assembly in Word 2007. For more information on its development and/or content please contact:



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INTRODUCTION



AERIAL PHOTO OF MOORE SQUARE | 2009

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this research is to develop the history of Moore Square's physical form and past programmatic uses from its origination in 1792 forward. The research will inform the *Moore Square Design and Public Process*, an initiative that will be undertaken by a project team organized and led by the Raleigh Department of City Planning Urban Design Center and the Parks and Recreation Department. The initiative will include an *Open Call for Ideas* and a *Juried Conceptual Design Competition*. Both events will identify ways to enhance the Square's capacity as a destination and, in that context, make Moore Square a stronger economic force in the city.

STUDY METHODOLOGY

Numerous methods of investigation were undertaken for the purpose of this study. This included traditional research methods such as examination of all available mapped, photographed, written, and oral histories related to the site. This research was undertaken at the University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill Archives, the North Carolina State Archives, the North Carolina State University School of Design Archives, Shaw University Archives, and the City Museum of Raleigh. Non-traditional investigative sources included Hunter Associates, Inc. (property managers of the City Market), the North Carolina State University African-American Cultural Center, the American Society of Landscape Architects Historic Landscapes Bibliography, National Park Service databases, and composite imagery available from online aerial/satellite imaging. In addition, numerous site visits were undertaken to inventory and measure the site and surviving historic elements. After analysis this information was used to develop a Historic Landscape Palimpsest.

By developing a Historic Landscape Palimpsest, a method to identify periods of a landscape’s life via overlay mapping, specific periods of use in the life of Moore Square was identified. Using this method, all known data from historic maps, photographs, text, and oral histories was mapped both visually and textually. Following analysis, 5 Palimpsests, or Periods of Use, were identified for Moore Square. The data from each period was then used to develop a single layer map for each period. The 5 final layers were combined into a single composite overlay to reveal significant historic landscape elements, their location in relation to each other, established contextual links, and their survival.



1792-1812: Origin | **1812-1866: Institutional** | **1866-1914: Transitional** | **1914-1964: Commercial** | **1964-2009: Communal**

PERIODS OF USE

The 5 Palimpsests, or Periods of Use, as defined for the study are:

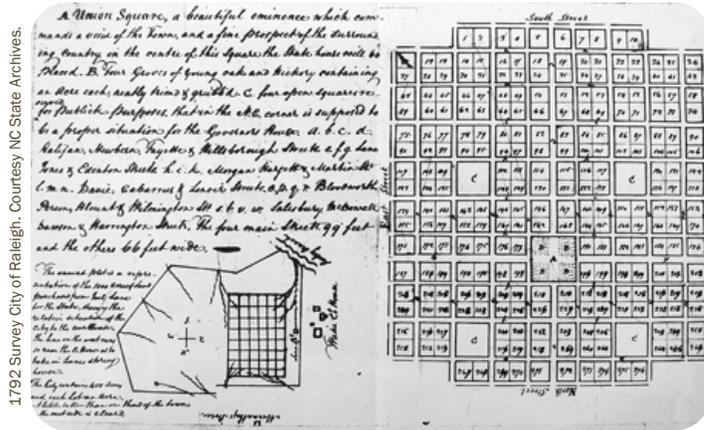
- 1792-1812 Origin
- 1812-1866 Institutional
- 1866-1914 Transitional
- 1914-1964 Commercial
- 1964-2009 Communal

PERIOD: ORIGIN

Survey Authorized

1792

William Christmas, a surveyor from Franklin County, authorized by the General Assembly to survey an area for the new state capital.



1792 Survey City of Raleigh. Courtesy NC State Archives.

Survey Complete

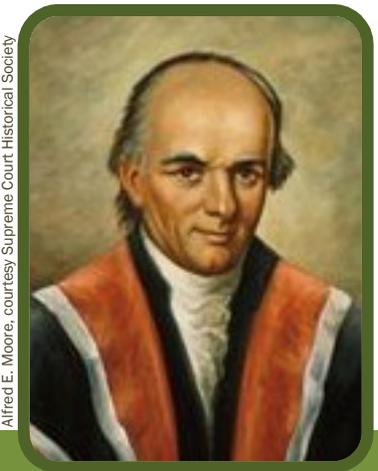
3.31.1792

Christmas completes survey and signs first official plat for the City of Raleigh, approved by state legislature on December 31, 1792. Plat includes four, four-acre squares, un-named, designated for public use and a central six-acre Union Square as the location of the state capitol.

Moore Than A Square

12.06.1799

President John Adams nominates Alfred E. Moore to the Supreme Court of the United States. Moore serves three years, resigning on January 26, 1804.



Alfred E. Moore, courtesy Supreme Court Historical Society

A Revolutionary Name

The Square was named in the 1790s in honor of Alfred E. Moore (B: May 21, 1755 – D: October 15, 1810), N.C. State Attorney General and U.S. Supreme Court Associate Justice. Moore also served as a Captain in the Continental Army (Capt., 1st North Carolina Regiment, 1775–77). He also helped found the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. His summer home, Moorefields, built around 1785 in Orange County still stands, and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places (Source: Supreme Court Society).

A CITY CREATED

The City of Raleigh was created in 1792 when the State of North Carolina purchased 1,000 acres from Joel Lane. The purchase was driven by a decision at the 1788 State Convention that a permanent and centrally located capital city was advantageous for the state. While some of the State's larger cities were considered, Wake Cross Roads, later named Raleigh after Sir Walter Raleigh, was selected. The land was a forest of oaks at the time of purchase with a nearby courthouse and tavern.

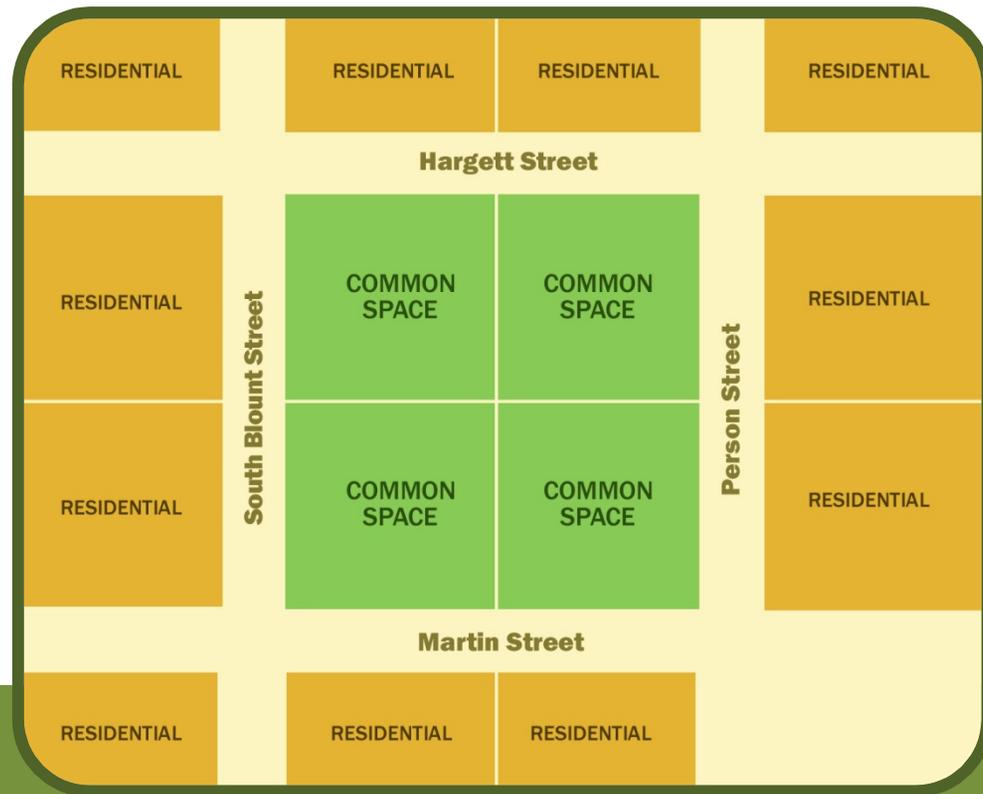
The original plan for the City of Raleigh was drawn by surveyor William Christmas in 1792. Focused on the six-acre Union Square, which would house the State Capitol, the four-hundred acre tract was laid out in a grid with four four-acre squares anchoring each quadrant of the city. When the legislature adopted the plan later that year the squares were named after prominent state officials: Caswell Square after Richard Caswell, NC Governor (1776 – 1780); Nash Square after Abner Nash, NC Governor (1780 – 1781); Burke Square after Thomas Burke, NC Governor (1781 – 1782); and Moore Square after Alfred E. Moore, State Attorney General (1782 – 1791). These squares became the centers of Raleigh's early residential neighborhoods.



Common Ground

Early 1800s

The newly named Moore Square springs to life. A partially wooded site with open ground, it serves the newly born city and its pioneering residents as common ground.



1812

1792-1812

- Surrounded by residential uses
- 4 acre block (400'x400') subdivided into 1 acre lots
- Undeveloped
- Serves as common open space
- Mix of woodland and open field
- Perimeter defined by colonial street grid

Moore Square anchored the city's southeastern district. Bounded by Person, Hargett, Blount, and Martin streets, the Square was surrounded by one- and two-story frame residential dwellings for the majority of its first 100 years. The Square itself was basically an open space with groves of oaks, grassy areas, and footpaths criss-crossing the four acres. The lack of formal design in the Square was not uncommon for the time. Late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century squares, or parks, were intended to serve as public gathering spaces - a public common. As such, these spaces were left unstructured to allow multiple uses like camping, rallies, markets and religious services.

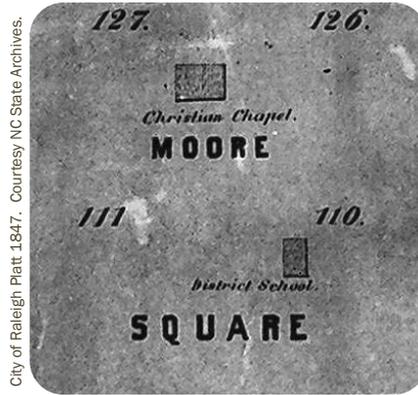
Moore Square's design during the early years supported these passive activities. Locals would meet there for picnics, walks, or other social gatherings. It was not uncommon for travelers to set up camp in the Square under the canopy of oaks. As the population of the city grew the demand for gathering spaces for religion, education, and politics began to occur on the squares.

PERIOD: INSTITUTIONAL

1st Congregation

1812
Baptists begin meeting at the Square, an association that will last for several decades and result in secondary name of “Baptist Grove”.

1812

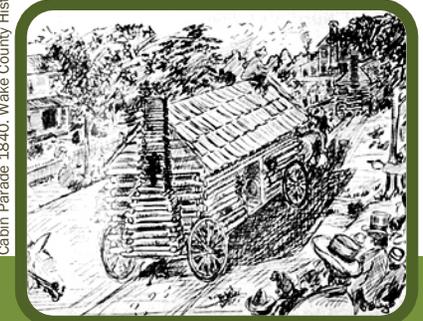


“A Small Wooden Church“

1822
A church located across Person Street is moved to the Square, with permission from the state. It was described as a “small wooden church lighted by tallow candles in tin sconces and a bell which was no more than a cow bell.”
(Source: Wake: Capital County of North Carolina)

Boy’s School

9.1842
The southeast lot becomes home to the Eastern District’s new school, the NC Classical, English and Mathematical School (a day school for boys) with approximately 30 students enrolled.



TIPPACANOE + TYLER TOO!

In 1840 supporters of Whig candidate William Henry Harrison use the Square as an encampment during the state convention and hold a parade featuring “cabins on wheels” in honor of their candidate’s supposed heritage. The cabins reside temporarily at the Square (Source: Wake: Capital County of NC).

BAPTIST GROVE

In 1812 a congregation of Baptists began meeting on Moore Square. They located a small frame church on the Square sometime between 1812 and 1814. Maps and drawings differ on the location of the church, but most seem to place it along Hargett Street at the north end of the Square. The integrated Baptist congregation would continue to worship on the Square until 1860 and their continued presence at the site is what gave the Square the nickname Baptist Grove.

Baptists were not the only congregation to worship on the Square. In 1826 the Baptists were joined by an Episcopalian congregation. Reports indicate that the Episcopalians shared the frame church with the Baptists. An 1822 map labels the structure “Christian Chapel” indicating it may have served more than one denomination. There are no records to date when the Episcopalians left Baptist Grove, but it was likely in the 1830s when the first Christ Church was built across from Union Square.

The disbanding of the Baptists in 1860 ended religious activities on the square for almost twenty years. After a decades long dispute over the ownership of the church, the frame structure was sold in 1879 and moved to the Hayti suburb in southern Raleigh. In 1879 the Baptists returned to the Square, this time fronting it, with the construction of Second Baptist Church at the northwest corner of Hargett and Person streets. Following its second renovation in 1910, the church changed its name to Tabernacle Baptist Church and remained at this location until 2001 when the congregation moved to north Raleigh.

Early Integration

1840-59

Square becomes home to area's first integrated church when the Christian Chapel begins services for blacks and whites.

Military Drills

1844

Military drills held in open space adjacent to school due to Mexican War.

Civil War

1860-65

The buildings on site sit empty.

1812-1866



1866

- First presence of structures
- Christian Chapel (40'x55'/west orientation/NW Lot)
- District School (40'x30'/west orientation/SE Lot)
- Woods define eastern edge
- Open space defines western edge
- Surrounded by residential (95%) and occasional institutional (5%)

EDUCATION

During the nineteenth century all four of Raleigh's perimeter squares were the sites of schools: Raleigh Academy, founded in 1801 on Burke Square; the North Carolina School for the Deaf, Dumb, and Blind founded in 1849 on Caswell Square, and the Western Ward School, a district (public) school opened in 1858 on Nash Square. Moore Square's educational service began in 1842 with the construction of the Eastern Ward School, also a district school. The Eastern Ward School was a school developed by the City of Raleigh and was a companion school to the Western Ward School on Nash Square, each serving its local population. In 1844 the Eastern Ward School was changed to the NC Literary, Scientific, and Military Academy. Students were furnished with arms and equipment by the General Assembly (due to the Mexican War) and drills and military exercises were carried on the Square. Due to increased enrollment a larger building was constructed on the Square in 1850. The Academy remained in operation until the Civil War when all structures on the Square were vacant.

The presence of education on the Square would return briefly after the Civil War when DL Hubard opened a private school in the former Christian church. The school ceased use of the church structure sometime before it was sold and moved in 1879. The Eastern Ward School was never returned to educational use and was rented out as housing prior to its demolition (date unknown). Almost fifty years later education returned to Moore Square with the construction of Hugh Morson High School built catty-corner to the Square at the northeast corner of Person and Hargett Streets. Constructed in 1925 Morson High was an impressive brick building-- three-stories high and seventeen bays wide with a four-story central tower. The building served as both a high school and middle school before its demolition in 1955.



PERIOD: TRANSITIONAL

Adaptive Use

1866

A school opens in the old church building. Anyone with the funds to buy books may attend.

1866



1872 Raleigh Map. Courtesy NC State Archives.

Temporary Farmer's Market

1868-1870

The Square is used as a temporary farmers market, complete with temporary stall structures, after the existing one located elsewhere is destroyed by fire.

Temporary Homestead

1870

The old school house becomes a residential rental.

Interior Oaks Planted

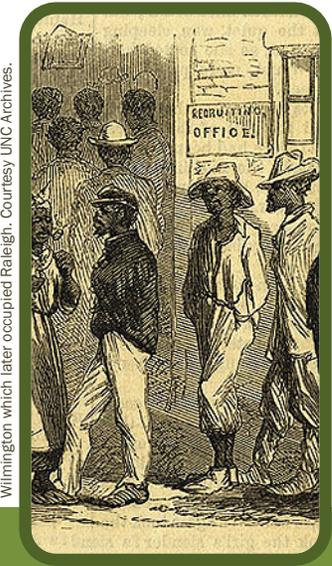
1871

The city is given authority by the state to beautify the Square and several stands of oaks are planted.

Church Moved

1896

State allows black former members of Baptist Grove Church to move the structure elsewhere for their use – with the condition it always be used for worship by blacks.



1865 Engraving of freed slaves joining the US Colored 37th Regiment in Wilmington which later occupied Raleigh. Courtesy UNC Archives.

THE AFTERMATH OF WAR

After their victory over the Confederate States of America Union Soldiers occupied the capital to prevent any attempts at uprising and to enforce efforts at Reconstruction. This included a billet (barracks) of African-American soldiers. They utilized the square as their sleeping quarters for 5 years, from 1865-1871, most likely using the old school and church structures that had been abandoned during the war (Source: Wake: Capital County of NC).

GROWING USES

The late-nineteenth to early-twentieth century in Raleigh was a period of significant growth and transition for the city. Where its first seventy-five years were a slow evolution from rural community to State Capital, the decades that followed the Civil War were defined by rapid growth, in population and physical size. This was largely driven by the state's efforts to rebuild and improve the capital city and the expansion of its commercial sector.

Raleigh was occupied by Union forces on April 13, 1865. While the war ended that year, the presence of Union soldiers did not. A billet of African-American Union soldiers settled on Moore Square and remained there until 1871. The billet was the first organized use of the Square since the onset of the war when both the school and the church on the Square were vacated. In 1868 the soldiers were joined by the City Market. Previously located on a block of Hargett Street bounded by Wilmington and Fayetteville streets in a structure shared by the Market and Town Hall, the building was destroyed by fire in 1868. The Market was relocated to Moore Square in 1868 and remained at its temporary location until a new market was constructed in 1870 at Fayetteville Street and Exchange Place. The presence of the billet and the City Market deteriorated the physical condition of the Square as they had been its most intensive users since its creation. When, in 1871, the city asked the state, as owner of the Square, to make improvements the state was resistant. The state responded to the city's request by shifting the majority of physical decisions regarding maintenance, grading, plantings, and management of layouts to the city, but the state retained ownership (Public Laws of North Carolina, Regular Session, 1871, Chapter 205, page 369). The state was resistant to financing improvements on the Square because it was already involved in a number of public improvement projects to rebuild and improve the capital city. To finance these ventures

1912 Photo Looking West from North End of Moore Square. Courtesy NC State Archives.



Island Oaks

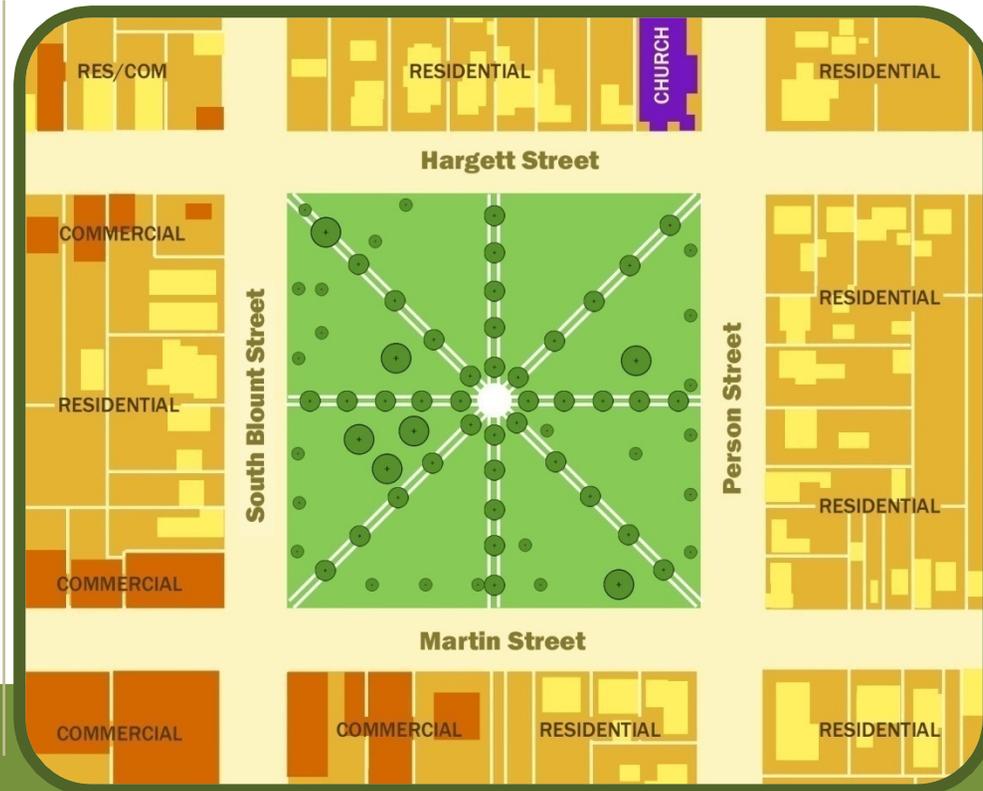
1899

A state bill entrusts the Square’s maintenance to the city of Raleigh. A more permanent path system, including islands with oaks, is laid down.

Streetscape

1910

The Square becomes the city’s most popular park due to new commercial growth on nearby Hargett and Wilmington streets. Perimeter oaks are planted.



1914

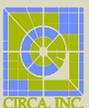
1866-1914

- Foot paths formalize as cross + diagonal walks
- Walks include 10’ wide islands + oaks 35’ on center
- Interior oaks dominate
- Perimeter oaks planted 50’ on center
- High branching oaks allow full view into and through site
- Surrounded by residential (80%) and commercial (20%)

there was pressure to sell all developable land, which included the public squares. Fortunately by 1879 support and subsequent litigation was adequate to repeal the state’s authorization for the sale of both Moore and Nash Squares (Laws of North Carolina, Regular Session, 1879, Chapter 246, page 413). The city’s management of Moore and Nash Squares was made permanent by legislation in 1899.

The expansion of the city’s central business district along Hargett and Wilmington Streets in the 1870s and 80s would change the look and use of Moore Square. By the 1890’s the Square had become one of the city’s most popular parks due to its proximity to an enticing range of retail offerings, saloons, eateries, blacksmiths, boarding houses and office space. The Square thrived as a central public resource through the remainder of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and was witness to an ever-increasing shift to commercialization of the surrounding area. The surrounding environs saw significant physical shifts to provide facilities for these new uses, many of which remain today. Residential structures gave way to the creation of several of Raleigh’s most prominent structures of the time, such as the Carolina Boarding House (1870), the Tabernacle Baptist Church (1879), Commercial National Bank (1912), and the Montague Building (1912). The announcement of the location of the new City Market, to be constructed at the south end of the Square in 1914, was the most significant and would have a lasting effect on the Square.

Shortly after 1900 Raleigh’s Jewish population formed the Hebrew Sunday School which met on an upper level of Mr. Rosenthal’s store at the corner of Wilmington and Hargett Streets. Less than two decades later, in 1914, the group split and the House of Jacob was established on South East Street. These two locations, flanking Moore Square, suggest a significant Jewish population in southeast Raleigh in the early-twentieth century.



PERIOD: COMMERCIAL



1920s City Market.
Courtesy NC State Archives.

City Market Opens

10.01.1914

The City Market opens across Martin Street from the Square. Pull-in parking bays are added on the south end of the Square to accommodate customers but soon find use as overflow booths where vendors sell products from the back of their trucks.

1914



1940s Hargett St.
Courtesy NC State Archives.

“Black Main Street” Emerges

1920s

An explosion in black owned businesses on Hargett St., along with the City Market, results in strong use of the park for social events.

1935

The Richard B. Harrison Library (Negro Library) opens across from the Square and foot traffic increases through the site.

1940 Photo Looking Southeast from Moore Square. Courtesy NC State Archives.



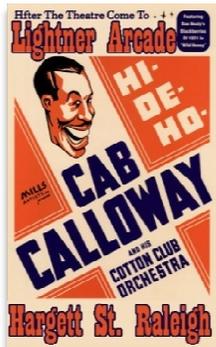
SATURDAYS AT THE GROVE

“They had big groves out there, Moore Square, and you would see the wives or the mothers and children, they would spread a picnic and have the time of their life. You see, you did not have all this entertainment. People had to make their own fun. On Saturday, because they did not really have anywhere to go in particular, they would go and would sell around there. And just for an outing they would bring their picnic baskets and their food. In the Grove they had a fountain out there – you would step on a little old pedal and it would shoot water up. They did not have an electric pump.”
- Rufus D. Hodge (*Culture Town - Life in Raleigh's African-American Community*)

AT THE HEART OF THE ECONOMY

The transition of Moore Square from residential enclave to commercial hub was solidified on October 1, 1914 with the opening of the City Market. The Market anchored the Square both physically and figuratively. Located in the center of the block on the south side of Martin Street between Blount and Person streets the Market faced north, looking out over the Square. The sheer size of the structure as well as the volume of patronage and product that circulated through it changed the focus of Moore Square from neighborhood gathering spot to city-wide destination. The City Market was a massive structure for its era. Consisting of more than 12,000 square feet the one-story brick mission-style structure was constructed with wide eaves to shelter patrons. From its opening in 1914 up to World War II nearly two-thirds of Raleigh's population visited the Market regularly. The sale of products at the market was approximately 4.5 million dollars annually. Equally significant as its role as commercial engine was the fact that the City Market was integrated. The City Market, with its spill-over location at Moore Square, was one of few, if not the only, public facilities in the city that was integrated during the era of segregation. This influenced the development that came to the Square following the opening of the Market.

As the presence of City Market drew commercial development east along Hargett Street toward the Square, a large number of black-owned businesses lined Hargett, an area now historically referred to as Black Main Street. The attractive two- and three-story brick buildings constructed in the 1910s and 20s housed black grocers, retailers, barbers, pharmacists, physicians, lawyers, and real estate developers. At the heart of Black Main Street was the Lightner



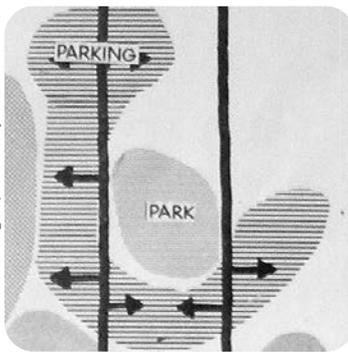
The Peak

1930s

Black Main Street reaches its peak, bringing social and economic growth to the Square, despite the Depression.

1914-1964

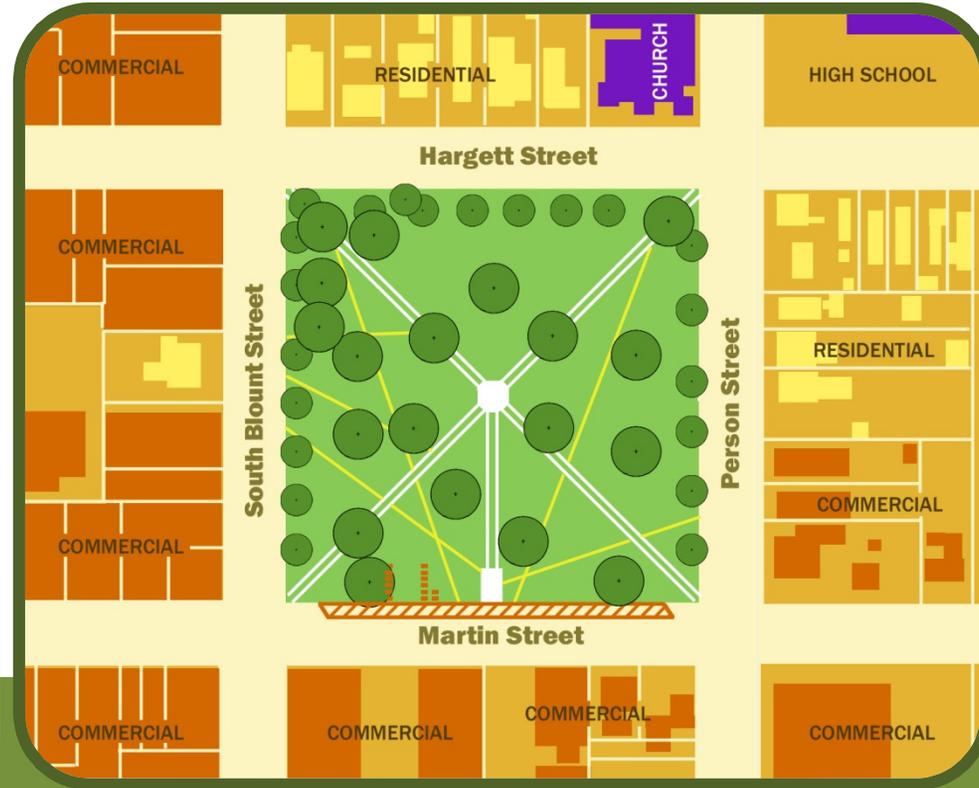
1957 COR Planning Dept. Courtesy NCSU Archives.



The Short Ride Down

1957

The Square finds itself surrounded by nearly half a million square feet of leasable and emptying space, a shuttered City Market, and a proposal to wrap it with parking lots.



1964

- Maturing of interior oaks
- Impromptu paths linking surrounding uses appear
- Decline of cross form walk for pedestrians

- Vendor spill over along parking bay/lawn fronting City Market
- Surrounding building masses create strong view sheds from park radius point
- Surrounded by commercial (60%), residential (35%) and institutional (5%)

Arcade (now destroyed), located on the south side of Hargett Street between Blount and Wilmington. Erected by Calvin Lightner in the early 1920s at a cost of \$25,000, the arcade provided a hub for African-Americans. The Arcade Hotel was one of few hotels available to blacks between Washington DC and Florida. Cab Calloway, Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Don Reading, and others all stayed and performed at the Arcade.

In 1935 the Richard B. Harrison Library for blacks was opened by the Wake County public library – known then as the Olivia Rainey Library. The library was located in a storefront of the Delany Building on East Hargett Street. Harrison Library established itself as a central feature in local African-American culture, serving as a repository of black history and culture, and promoting black literature and music. Footpaths connecting the library to the City Market and residential neighborhood southeast of the Square can be seen in aerial photographs and maps from the period. The presence of these paths reinforces the importance of these facilities in the community. The library was later relocated to the Koonce Furniture Building at 214 South Blount Street before moving again in 1967 to its current location on New Bern Avenue. The success of the Square and its surroundings declined after World War II. The rise of construction in suburban communities and the subsequent loss of residential populations in urban cores led to a decline in cities across the nation. When the City Market was closed in 1957 and later declared surplus by the city, the Square’s role as a commercial hub was diminished. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 also weakened the Square’s commercial vitality as integration dramatically affected the district’s black businesses and eventually Black Main Street dispersed.

PERIOD: COMMUNAL

1976 COR Map. Courtesy NCSU Archives.



Awaiting Renewal

1970s

As decline bottoms out, the Square finds itself home to occasional festivals in an attempt renew interest in downtown.

1964

2009. Moore Square Art District.



Revival

1980s

The Square attracts artists and their wares as the old City Market becomes home to Raleigh's art colony.

2007 Courtesy Goodnight Raleigh.



Exploris + IMAX Premiere

1999

A Historic Square

1983

Moore Square Historic District placed on National Register of Historic Places.

2008. James Taylor at Moore Square. Private Photo.



A PLACE OF COMMONALITY

Over time Moore Square has become a place of commonality. From its beginnings as a space used to express our faith and educate our children to a place impacted by the happenings of war Moore Square has evolved as have its users, the very people who imprinted their needs and desires for a public square upon it through their uses and attitudes. And as it once reflected the energy of a segregated people so it now brims with the optimism of youth and the hope of redevelopment. As a space of worship, education, commerce, and celebration Moore Square has become our commonality – and the physical definition of Raleigh and her people.

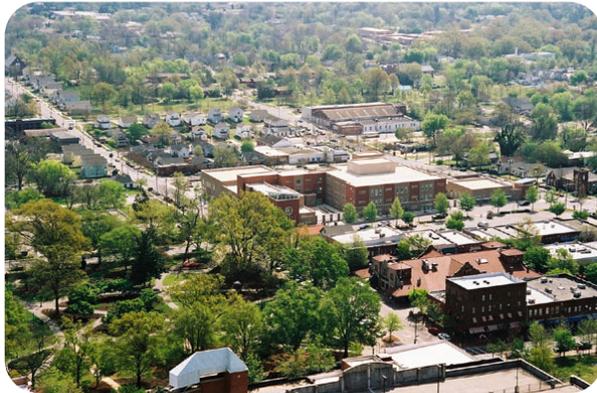
FESTIVALS

By the late 1960s to early 1970s the decline of Raleigh's urban core was leveling out and efforts to revitalize the city had begun. The 1972 Odell Plan was the first in a series of plans that would focus on revitalization strategies for downtown Raleigh. Each of these plans involved either Moore Square, or the City Market, if not both. The continued focus of efforts in and around Moore Square illustrated how integral the area was to downtown.

The first tangible efforts came with the creation of Artsposure in 1979 and their first festival, held on the Square in 1980. This was followed in the early 1980s with the creation of the Moore Square Art District. The Moore Square Art District was created to establish a community of artists in the available space surrounding the Square, defining the Square itself as a destination for art shows and festivals. This effort helped fill empty storefronts and created a new type of destination. The listing of the Moore Square Historic District in the National Register of Historic Places in 1983, followed by designation as a Raleigh Historic District, signified the importance of the Square in the context of the city's history. The boundaries of the historic district are broader than the Square and its immediate surroundings, expanding north to Morgan Street, west to Wilmington Street and south to Davie Street. This boundary further emphasizes the relevance of the Square outside of its footprint.

In 1989 Greenshields pub and restaurant opened in the City Market building, the continuation of the Square's evolution into an entertainment venue. By the 1990s the Square was lined by a collection of restaurants, bars and retail shops in addition to galleries and artist workshops. Again, the City Market building

2003 Magnet School Aerial. Courtesy Wake County.



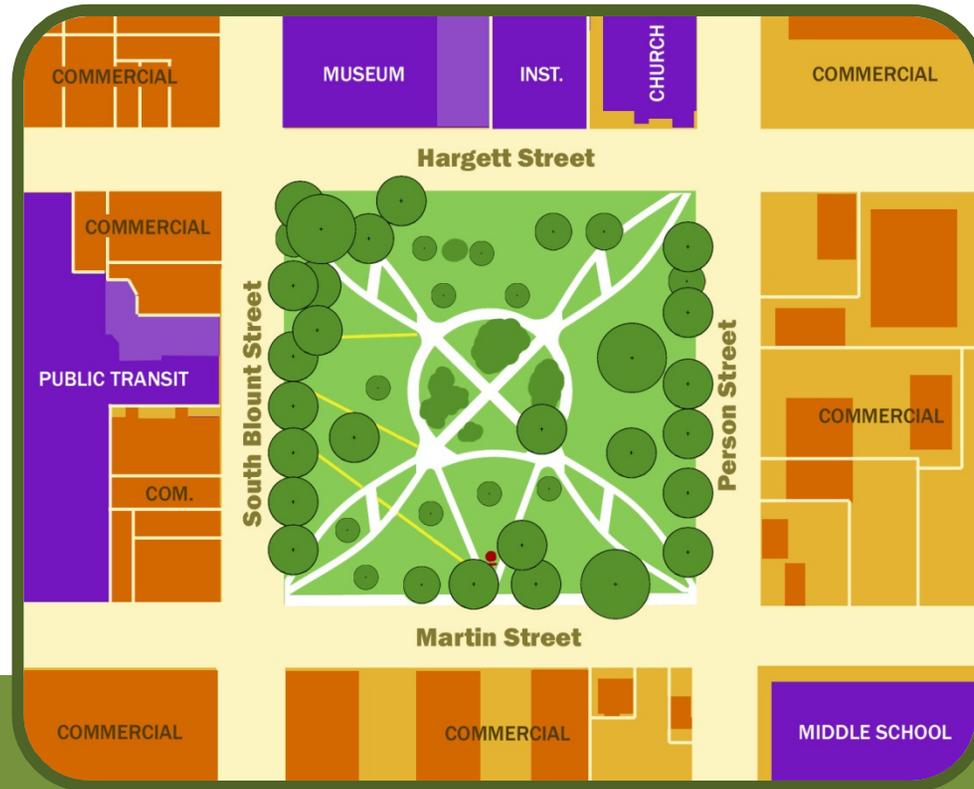
Moore Education

2002

Moore Square Middle School campus opens, reviving education as one of the Square's neighboring uses as students visit the Square for various projects.

1964-2009

- Decline of island plantings + interior oaks
- Removal of cross form walk
- Impromptu paths made permanent with edging material
- Decline of view sheds due to new raised planters + plantings
- Installation of curvilinear walks
- Surrounded by commercial (70%), residential (5%) and institutional (25%)



2009

served as the anchor to this effort. Purchased by a private developer in the 1990s, the City Market was home to restaurants, retail shops and office space, which transitioned the use of the Square to focus on entertainment. The opening of Exploris Museum and the adjacent IMAX theatre on the north side of the Square in 1999 introduced yet another entertainment-based destination on the Square.

In many ways, what's occurring on Moore Square today is a culmination of all the phases of its past. The lack of defined space on the Square continues to allow the user to re-create the space without radically altering the original design. The increase in housing units downtown is creating a larger population with a need for open space. While Tabernacle Baptist Church no longer worships in the 1879 structure, Unity Church of the Triangle now worships in the space. The opening of Exploris Middle School in 1996 and Moore Square Middle School at the southeast corner of Person and Martin streets in 2002 continued the Square's educational link. And, in 2006 the Farmer's Market returned to Moore Square every Wednesday in the late spring, summer and early fall.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

DESIGNED BY THE COMMUNITY

Over time the lack of a defined plan has allowed the park to evolve with its users and as the needs of the community require. For example, during the Institutional Period the need for group activities such as worship and education presented itself. The Square, a large and centrally located open space with no constructed hardscape to limit activities proved an ideal place to gather. In addition, its open lawn allowed activities such as recreation and drills that were part of the desired curriculum. These could be accomplished without restructuring of the square and while allowing continued use as a commons for area residents. Later the Commercial Period resulted in surrounding retail via the City Market and development of significant numbers of black owned businesses on Hargett Street. The construction of the Richard B. Harrison Library for Negroes to the west of the Square and the Lightner Arcade & Hotel (drawing notable black musicians) also emphasized the area's dominance as social core. As the area grew into a major ethnic district the Square, centrally located, became a natural crossroads from one business to another. As users cut through the Square impromptu paths were created. These often became permanent, adding to the accessibility provided by existing walks. As businesses grew the pedestrian traffic in the Square became significant, to the point that it became a natural congregating spot along the way to somewhere else and as a result a resting and/or entertainment venue featuring picnickers, overflow vendors from the City Market, and street musicians. Again, this was not accomplished through a conscious site plan or designed landscape but by the users themselves, imprinting their behavior and attitudes upon the existing Square.

A PLACE OF CULTURE AND OF THE PEOPLE

“During the early thirties there was a variety of entertainment on Saturdays at the Grove, like Old Man Moe Watson and that string band, a black group of men that used to play the violins. Others played guitars and washboards. A little short doctor and another fellow named K.C. played the guitar. People would be around these groups like bees. They would give them a little money and the groups picked up good change like that too.”

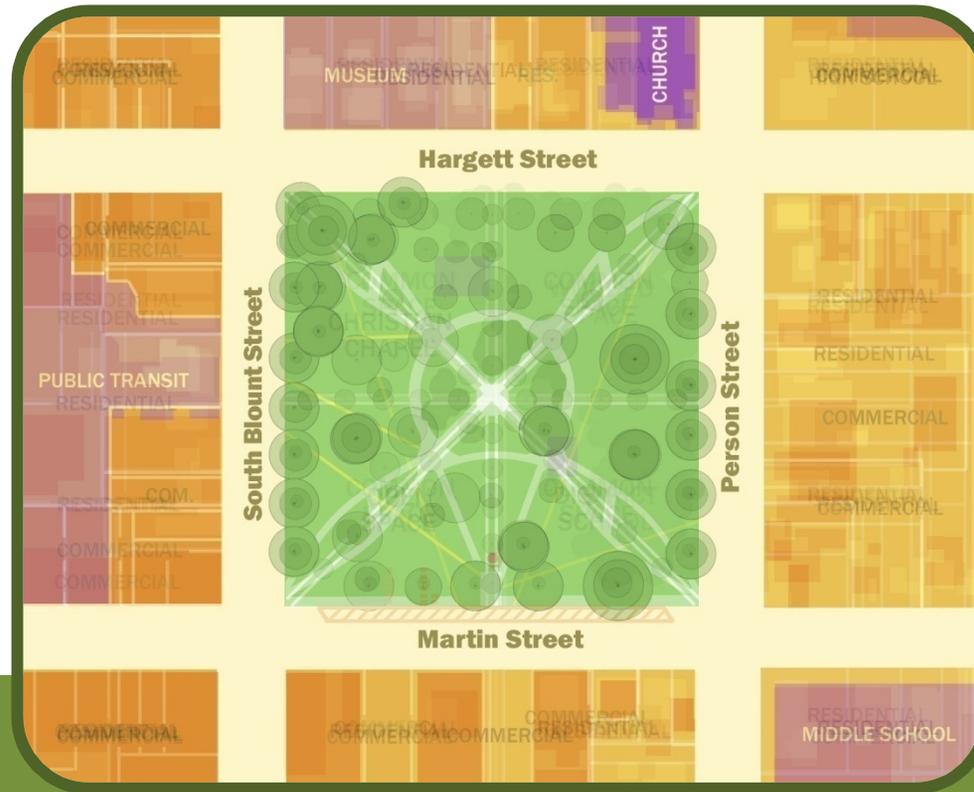
- Rufus D. Hodge (*Culture Town - Life in Raleigh's African-American Community*)

IMPORTANCE AS HISTORIC LANDSCAPE

Moore Square retains significant importance as one of two remaining squares currently unbuilt upon from the 1792 William Christmas plan for the City of Raleigh and serves as an example of Colonial era town planning. There appears to be no customary evidence (site plans, significant man-made elements, or noted relation to a historically significant designer) that Moore Square as it exists today is a Historic Designed Landscape. However, there seems to be very strong evidence, via mapping, aerial photography, and oral histories, that the square is an ethnographic landscape due to its key location in a major ethnic neighborhood (Black Main Street) and the presence of a culturally significant plant community (oak grove used by the same residents).

In addition to its development as an ethnographic landscape the Square has significance in the cultural landscape of the City of Raleigh and has been the scene of numerous events and activities that are central to the day-to-day lives of citizens. These include religious, educational, military, political, and agricultural components, some of which have left their mark on the Square.





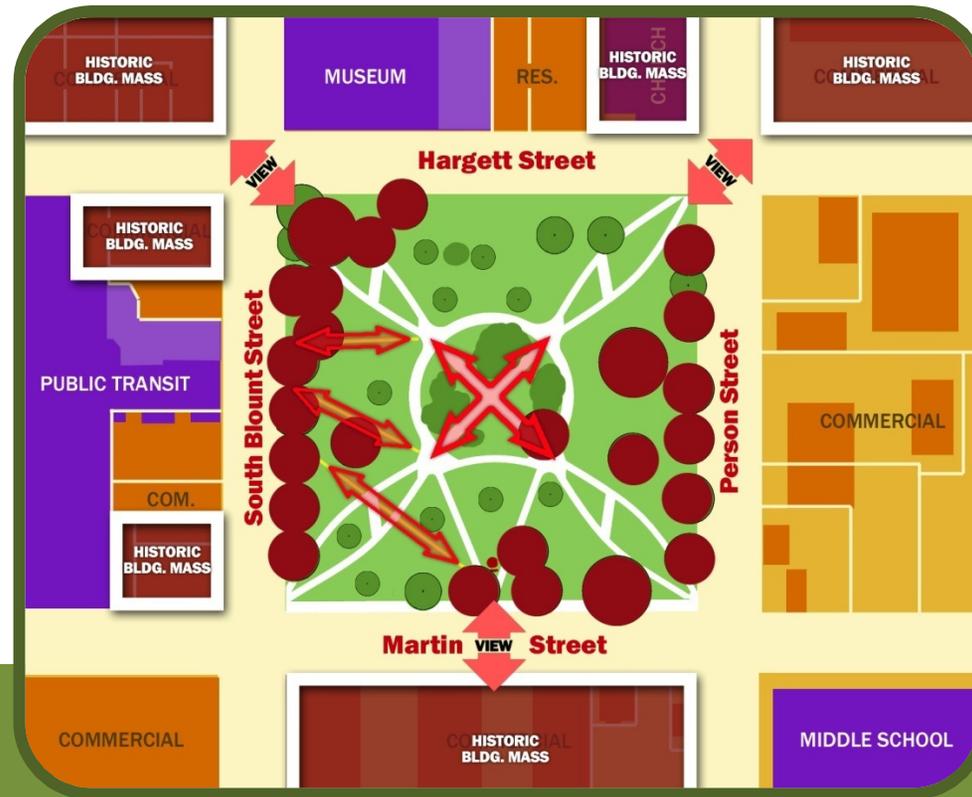
COMPOSITE OVERLAY | 1792-2009

SURVIVING HISTORICAL LANDSCAPE ELEMENTS

Through the creation of a composite overlay based on the 5 Palimpsests it is possible to define three key human impacts on the evolution of Moore Square that survive. Remnants of the three elements are still evident today and could be utilized as the genesis of any future design solution. The three historical landscape elements are:

- Pedestrian Paths:** Impromptu paths created by the Square’s users over time. Most are the result of direct travel across the Square despite obstacles such as lawn or low plants. They provide keys to what surrounding businesses or activities the users were most utilizing. They also provide a time stamp that supports additional findings. For example, heavy use of impromptu or “cow” paths on the west side of the Square match almost perfectly with pedestrian tendency to cut from the City Market to the Richard B. Harrison Library and major Hargett Street businesses. The path development is parallel to the development of Hargett Street and surrounding environs into a major black business area. Fortunately, many of the paths have been saved as the Square has evolved. In addition, the location of the convergence of the 1910 walks remains, although altered.
- Vegetative Cover:** Two levels of historic vegetative cover exist in the Square. The first is the interior stand of oaks. Average diameter at breast height (DBH) is 48-60", consistent with mapping that dates their existence to the late 1800s to early 1900s. This interior cover provides a large primary canopy for the Square’s users and was present during its existence as an ethnographic landscape.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS



PEDESTRIAN PATHS | VEGETATIVE COVER | VIEW SHEDS

The second is the perimeter streetscape; primarily oaks with an average DBH of 36-48". This perimeter cover provides a large secondary canopy for the Square's users and those passing by on the surrounding streets. They are spaced on average at 50' on-center. Through aerial photography and on-site observation they appear to date from the 1910s. Some have suffered damage and been removed. Oral histories suggest that the interior stand of oaks was referred to as "The Grove" and was a prominent place of rest, recreation, and entertainment for Raleigh's black community during the age of Black Main Street. None of these specimens appears to be listed on local, state, or national databases for historic and Champion Trees.

- **View Sheds:** Various histories of the Square strongly suggest that its openness in plantings has been a key element of its structure throughout its entire history. From initial use for education (drilling/recreation) to use in the age of the Black Main Street there has been a consistent stressing of open views or view sheds. For example, during the age of Black Main Street the use of oaks provided a high canopy with the ability for users to see clearly through the Square without obstruction; a relatively clear view was possible beneath the entire understory of the interior and perimeter oaks, uninterrupted by any known built structures. These open view sheds within the Square also extended to the surrounding streets and building facades (building masses). In combination with the very direct pedestrian paths radiating from the northeast and northwest corners to the middle of the south property line and retention of the original street grid, it becomes clear that the user's vision would be focused on key architectural or cultural icons, such as Morson High School, the City Market central structure, or Hargett Street attractions. The view sheds opened the Square to Black Main Street and connected the entire Square and surrounding blocks into one visual and physical space.

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