



DESIGNING DOWNTOWN

The heart and soul of a city lie in the streets, businesses and people of any downtown. Come explore Knoxville's beauty in downtown design. See and feel the rejuvenation happening all around. Witness a vibrant redesign of a changing city.

BY RAVEN TONEY

FROM THE BEGINNING OF CIVILIZED TIME, THE PRIMARY GATHERING PLACE FOR TRADE WAS CALLED THE MARKET PLACE.

As market places evolved in the central business districts of each community, buildings were erected around the area, and the word "downtown" became synonymous with "community center." Residential dwelling places directly surrounded the central hub; there has always been a certain constituency of residents who made downtown their home. For the most part, these were usually tradesmen who lived upstairs from their businesses. Time passed, and downtown areas in most cities became bigger and more important in the identification of "community." Competition among rival businesses led to the design of storefronts that would catch the eye of passing residents. From this marketing competitiveness, "design" became a great factor in the life or death of each downtown business.

Knoxville's downtown is no exception to this rule. Businesses in downtown Knoxville have been born, and they have died. The city has seen its fair share of hard times and, as with many downtown areas throughout the country, Knoxville's center is

quarries of Knoxville's own earth adorns many structures, evoking an impression of prominence and strength the way that only marble can. Handmade bricks envelope the facades of a majority of the rest of our historic buildings. Time did not just stand still in Knoxville; buildings made of steel and glass started to express their presence in a coming-of-age city. A testament to the people of a city and a pride in their heritage, this marriage of new and old buildings has established an identity of modern resurgence.

Determined to reclaim their downtown, the people of Knoxville have breathed new life into an area that throughout history has functioned as the heart and soul of this city "Knoxville." One brick at a time, our city was built...and so it is the same for the revitalization that is underway. Starting decades ago, a man by the name of Kristopher Kendrick had a love affair with downtown and laid the groundwork for many to follow. David Dewhirst and Buzz Goss, to name just two, had their own vision and style. Today, residents of downtown and tourists visiting the area reap the benefits of

"I PURPOSEFULLY CHOSE A CAREER THAT I COULD HAVE THAT WOULD NEVER FINISH."

-KRISTOPHER KENDRICK

PIONEERING DOWNTOWN PRESERVATIONIST

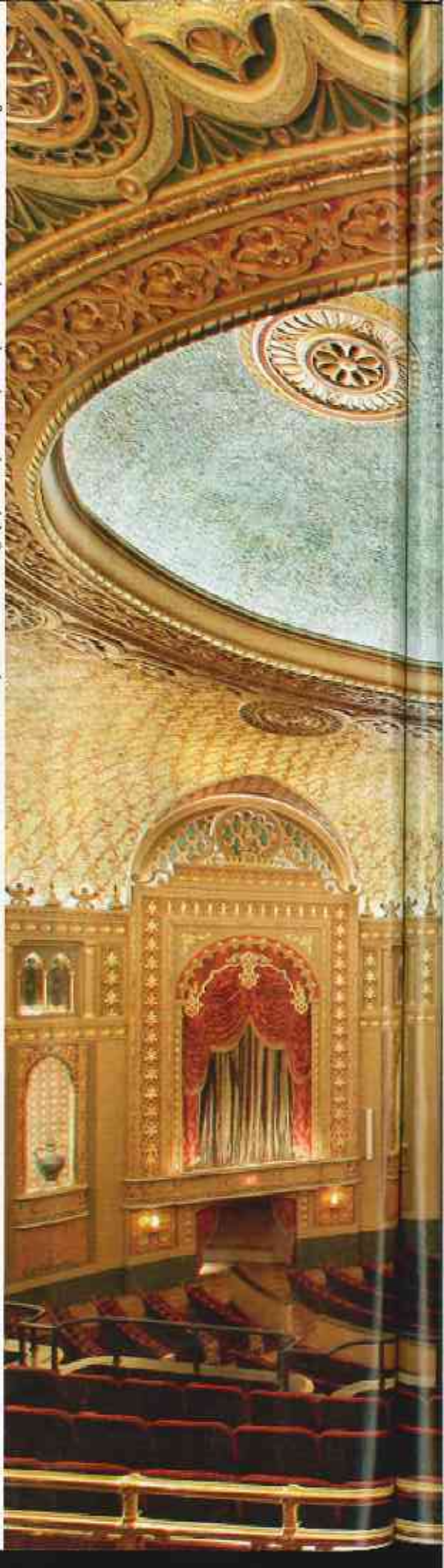
now headed towards a beautiful and prosperous upswing. Knoxville's politicians, land developers, architects, business owners and civic-minded residents have been the catalyst driving a city on the move to a rebirth of profound proportions.

The remarkable thing about Knoxville's downtown area is that it is multifaceted in its beauty and location. Historic buildings that have been maintained with their impeccable design and charm align the streets of this easily pedestrian city. The waterfront property and the topography of rolling hillsides add a charm that only the forefathers of Knoxville could have envisioned. Marble from the

their work (and the work of so many others) in aesthetics and functionality. There's such a multitude of beautifully designed new buildings and remarkable rehabilitations of historic ones that it's difficult to ingest in a single day's visit.

CityView tried to take it all in, but there's simply no way to see, learn, and report on all that is "Designing Downtown." What follows is by no means a definitive guide encompassing every new project, each restoration... It's an encouragement, a nudging if you will, to explore downtown and witness the redesign of a city.

Photo by Vels Akerland Photography courtesy of McCarty Tolisaple McCarty Architects and Interior Designers





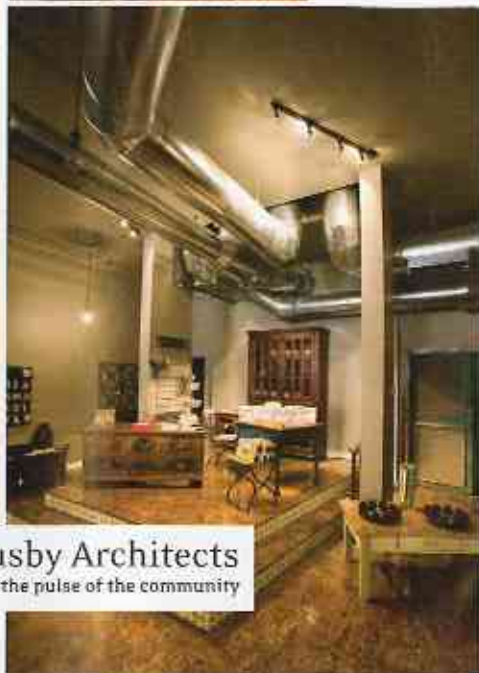
The Tennessee Theatre Restoration.

McCarty Holsaple McCarty Architects and Interior Designers (MHM)





Photos courtesy of Smee & Busby Architects



Smee & Busby Architects

Market Square firm captures the pulse of the community

"YOU CAN'T DESIGN A DOWNTOWN WITH BRICKS AND MORTAR ALONE; THE PEOPLE AND ACTIVITIES ARE JUST AS IMPORTANT AS THE INGREDIENTS IN THE DESIGN."

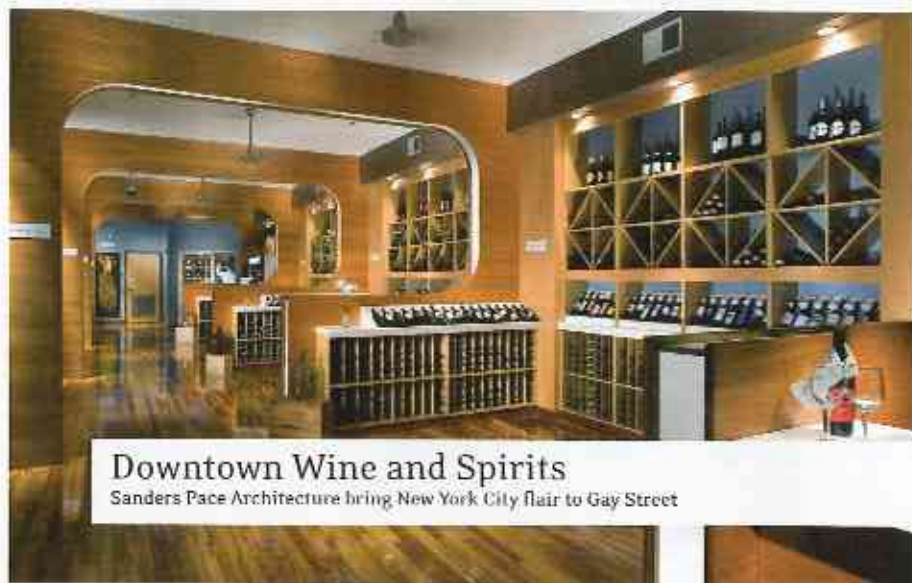
—SCOTT BUSBY

SMEE AND BUSBY ARCHITECTS

One of the most notable, prominent and definitive driving forces in the downtown revitalization is the exquisitely rehabbed Tennessee Theatre. The firm responsible, McCarty Holsaple McCarty Architects and Interior Designers (MHM), truly has something to be proud of. The Tennessee Theatre rehabilitation is a gem in the city of Knoxville and is the recipient of national, state, and local awards. Jeffrey D. Johnson, of MHM, feels that this in itself is a major catalyst in the revitalization of downtown. A traditionalist, he believes that in designing, it is important to keep things in context. Those who have visited the Tennessee Theatre can see first-hand the care that was taken to restore, not replace, the original vision of a grand old theater. Whether this one restoration project is the major catalyst for downtown's recent revival is subjective, but it's certain that McCarty Holsaple McCarty has played a major role in the newly designed downtown. (Many longtime Knoxvilleans know the MHM name well: World's Fair Park Amphitheatre, City County Building,

Bank of America, Knoxville Convention Center. The firm has been involved in all of these downtown projects, as well as those further from town, such as Neyland Stadium's skyboxes and the McGhee Tyson Airport redesign. It's hard to walk across Knoxville without stepping in the footprint of MHM's designs.)

Partners Gregor R. Smee and Scott Busby, of Smee + Busby Architects, moved into their Market Square location several years ago because of the desire to be in the very heart of the city. The pulse of the community is best felt in Market Square, the only dedicated pedestrian area downtown. Market Square has seen its fair share of changes over the years, and Smee +



Downtown Wine and Spirits

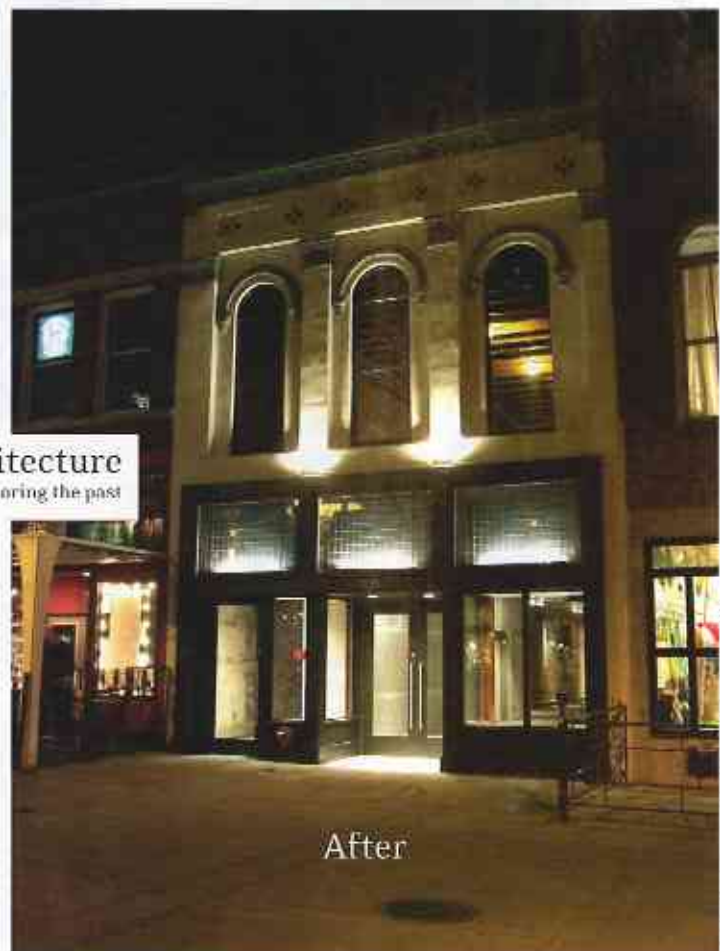
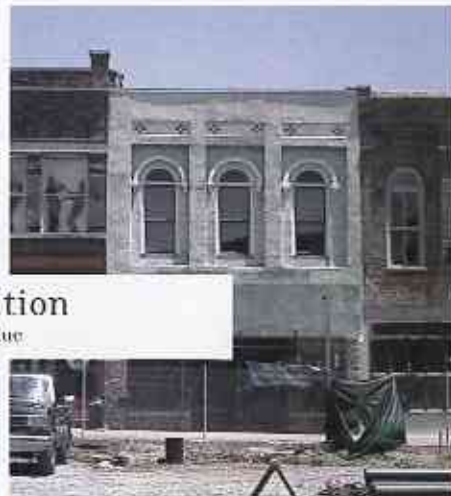
Sanders Pace Architecture bring New York City flair to Gay Street

Photo courtesy of Sanders Pace Architecture



Market Sqare Readaptation
 Delicately maintaining historical design value

Before



After

Photos courtesy of Sanders Pace Architecture

Sanders Pace Architecture
 An edge of newness while honoring the past

Busby Architects have been a driving force in the design and changes that have happened there.

To quote Busby, "You can't design a downtown with bricks and mortar alone; the people and activities are just as important as the ingredients in the design." Knoxville's Market Square is as diverse in its building designs as it is with its businesses that align the square and the different types of people that are entertained daily.

Smee + Busby's design of the newly refinished Market Square performance stage roof adds a graceful flare of modernism to a historic, old-town feeling. In this context, its elegance gracefully looms over the square, bringing a modern hint to a new era in this part of the city. Smee and Busby say that being downtown in a city that is

predominantly rehabbed has made them assimilate to the way of historic preservation. They have truly done that with the high-end Salon Visage on Market Square and the up-and-coming 4 Market Square

project. Their designs are a beautiful and tasteful readaptation of space. Also, be on the watch for the new Holston Building project on Gay Street that Smee + Busby is working in tandem with Dewhirst Properties and architect Mark Hines. This is sure to be a new hot spot for city dwelling.

John Sanders and Brandon Pace, of Sanders Pace Architecture, believe in putting your money where your heart is. Sanders has lived downtown since

1997, and the firm has been downtown since 2002. Their readaptation of several Knoxville hot spots, including Gregg White's Nama Sushi Bar on Gay Street, and the ultra modern and exquisitely designed Downtown Wine and Spirits, have brought a touch of New York City

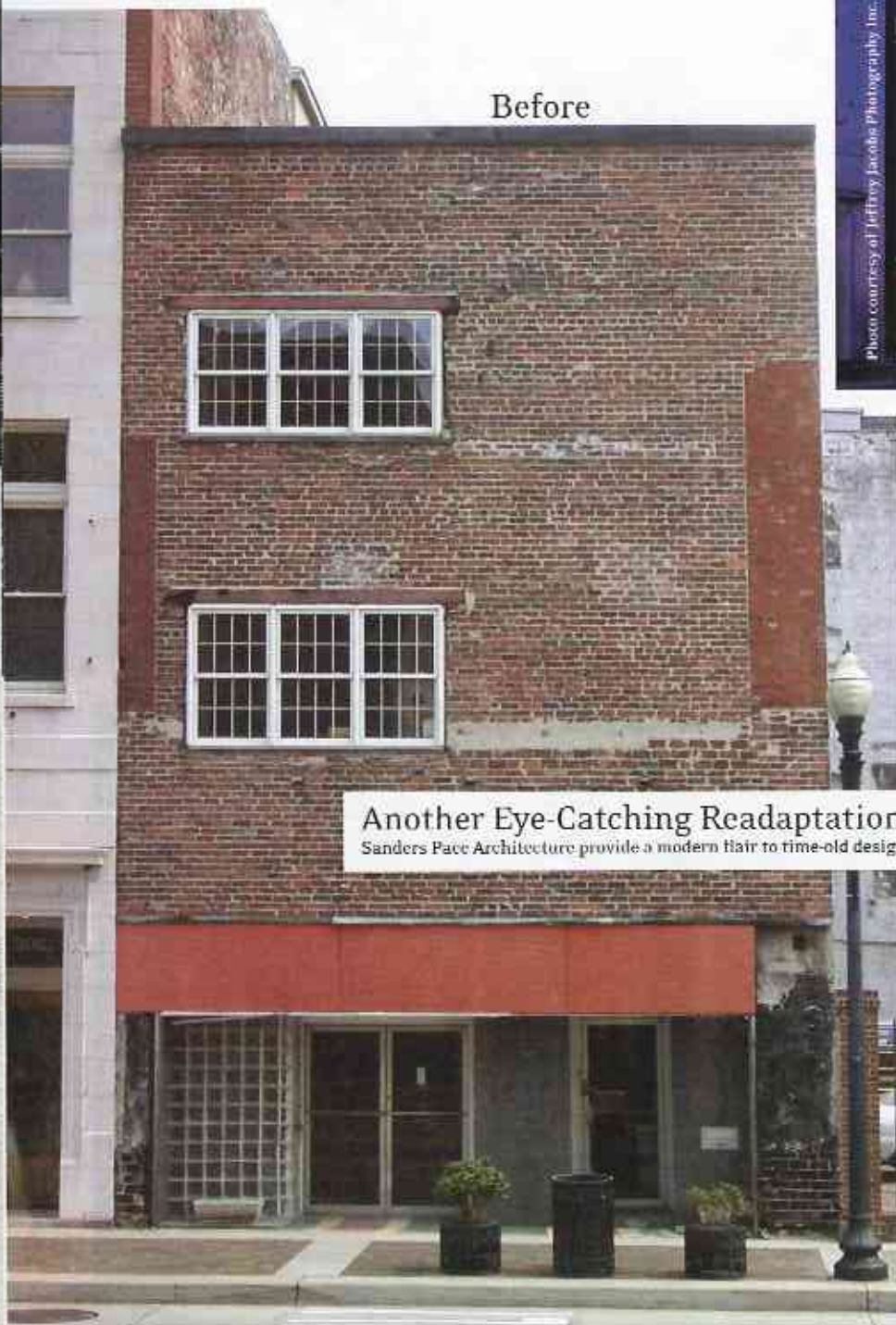
"A WALL STREET JOURNAL REPORTER ONCE CALLED KNOXVILLE "A SCRUFFY LITTLE CITY" --WSJ OR NOT, WE RESPECTFULLY DISAGREE.

After



Photo courtesy of Jeffrey Jacobs Photography, Inc.

Before



Another Eye-Catching Readaptation

Sanders Pace Architecture provide a modern flair to time-old design.

Photos courtesy of Sanders Pace Architecture

"HISTORICALLY, COMPETITION AMONG RIVAL BUSINESSES LED TO... "DESIGN" BECOMING A GREAT FACTOR IN THE LIFE OR DEATH OF EACH DOWNTOWN BUSINESS."

flair to what was once, as a reporter said and others have repeated, our "scruffy little city." (A Wall Street Journal reporter, musing about Knoxville's serving as host of the 1982 World's Fair, then called Knoxville "a scruffy little city on the banks of the Tennessee River." Some Knoxvilleians have been referencing that quote ever since.)

The former Max Friedman Building on South Gay Street is another example of the quality in design work that Sanders Pace Architecture display. The building embraces a new era compared to the structures on either side of it, but the assimilation flows beautifully. It's yet another example of the marriage of old and new that Knoxville is embracing. Keep your eyes open for their up-and-coming project that will likely be the catalyst for the West Jackson Historic District's revitalization.

Buzz Goss, of Goss Piery Group Architecture, is almost synonymous in Knoxville with the notion of downtown dwellings. His loft conversions in downtown are on the high-end scale and have proven popular. His current project is the Crimson Building, which burned twice in the last century. The three-story building will contain elegant penthouse suites; and the building's history will be marked with an eternal flame in the entrance. The Sterchi Lofts, for which he and partner Leigh Burch won a Metropolitan

Planning Commission 2003 Excellence Award, have been a pioneering force in the move to a more livable downtown.

Finally, no discussion of the design of downtown Knoxville would be complete without mentioning Kristopher Kendrick, the gentleman widely regarded as the visionary who started our redevelopment ball rolling back in the 1970's. Folks new to the area might not even recognize his name, as he's not often mentioned in the press any longer. Seventy-three and facing health challenges for the past couple of years (including a broken back), Kendrick lives in a penthouse suite in the Hotel St. Oliver at Market Square. From here, he is still active in his beloved arena of downtown Knoxville restoration and preservation, albeit from the phone rather than on a job site.

To say that at one point, Kendrick has owned a good portion of the buildings in downtown Knoxville (including the Old City) would not be an exaggeration. Even he couldn't tell you exactly how many he has owned. Posing this question, he responds, "When I look back, it's amazing. My object was to save beautiful architecture. I wanted to save the buildings, and the only way I knew to do that was to own them. I felt that eventually the powers-that-be would see that we shouldn't destroy our heritage."

As Kendrick recalls, it was on a trip to Europe in 1976 that he decided he would return to Knoxville and begin saving the buildings he so loved. In his early 40's then, divorced and "with the kids basically grown and with me being young enough to have the energy," he threw himself into reviving the Knoxville that he so fondly recalled from an earlier day. Originally from nearby Rockwood, Kendrick moved at the age of 17 to Knoxville, "the only city I ever really related to...I consider myself a Knoxvillean."

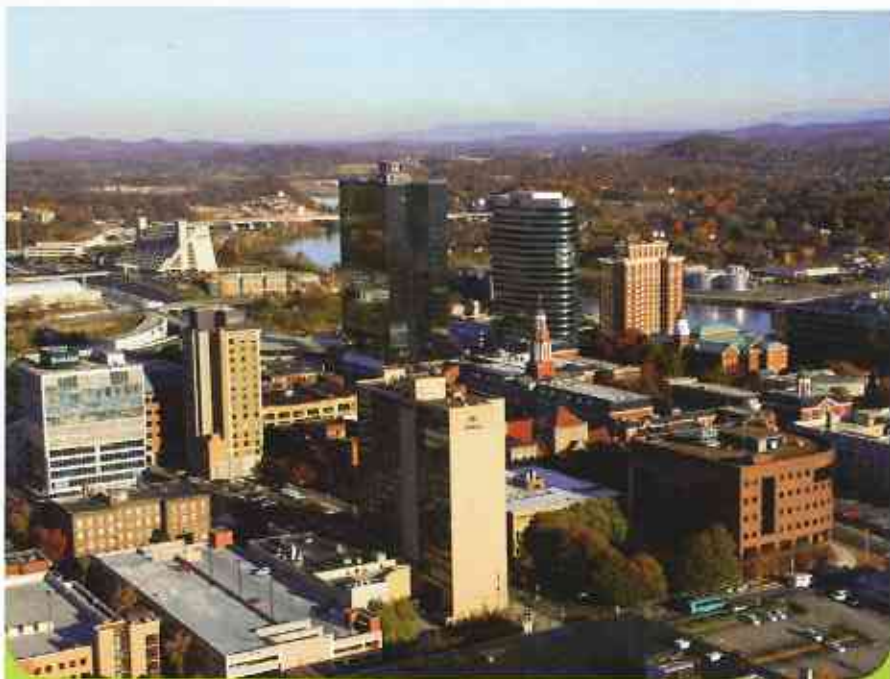
Some may think that a man who's owned so many buildings must be rich. Kendrick puts a reality spin on that notion: "In '76, I had done well enough, had enough to retire. But it wasn't that I had as much money as you might think. I'd make a down payment on one building...kept my payments staggered. A banker once asked me if I had any income other than what was showing

Specializing in Commercial Real Estate Brokerage,
Development, and Consulting.

Conversion Properties, Inc. is based in Downtown
Knoxville and meets the needs of its clients
throughout the Southeast region.



Conversion PROPERTIES INC



- OFFICE
- INVESTMENT PROPERTIES
- URBAN CONDOS
- RETAIL
- LAND ACQUISITION
- DEVELOPMENT
- CONSULTING
- CORPORATE RELOCATION
- SITE SELECTION

(865) 246-1331

Riverview Tower | 900 South Gay Street | Suite 1901
Knoxville, TN 37902

www.ConversionProp.com | jpetre@ConversionProp.com



Modern, Eclectic and Open

Goss Piery Group creates a fresh view of downtown.

Photo by Shoko Ito



Goss Piery Group Loft Design

Elegance above our city's streets

on my accounts. I told him I was very frugal in my living; you can spend too much money living high on the hog."

It wasn't long before Knoxvilleians heard the name Kristopher Kendrick in association with one after another in a long line of restoration projects. Kendrick Place. Sullivan Arms. Riverhouse. The Stewart. The Cunningham. Ryan's Row. The Emporium. Patrick Sullivan's. Park Place. There are more, some in the UT area, others (including Knoxville's landmark Orangery) scattered further west. But it's downtown and the Old City which became synonymous with the Kendrick name.

His style? "Unlike today's developers, I did one building at a time," Kendrick recalls. "Any buildings I was in a position to acquire, I did, but they had to sit and wait on me. I wanted to keep them from being torn down, but I couldn't do them all at once." His approach was decidedly hands-on. "I was there with my workers from 7:00 am until 4:00 pm every day. That's how I got

things done the way I wanted. My very presence kept the work going; it kept the cost affordable."

And his approach to design? Again, his take on "design" was very different from that of current developers, many of whom are involved in planning every detail, even down to the granite

vision that he would one day need an easy-access, centrally located residence-within-hotel. It's from here that he now observes the renewed growth and vitality that is downtown Knoxville, from here that he sees those who are following in his path, such as Dewhirst, Pace, Sanders, and Burch.

preservation, the continuing design and redesign of Knoxville continues.

Design in downtown Knoxville has gone through many changes, and many more are expected to follow in the near future. The borders of downtown will continue to be redefined, as new businesses and residences



Taking Flight at Night

A Knoxville evening vista as interpreted by Goss Piercy Group

Photo by David Massingill courtesy of Goss Piercy Group

countertops inside loft kitchens. Kendrick's Park Place Condominiums is a perfect example of his belief in the vision of others to bring their passion to historic gems. "Park Place was such a beautiful piece of architecture. I ran electricity and heat/air to huge classrooms (Park Place was formerly used as a school), then let the buyers design their own interiors, subject to my approval," he explains. The result is a unique restoration that pays homage to a gorgeous exterior while allowing individual expression for the interior.

Bottom line, Kendrick was in the restoration "business" for his love of the buildings, for his love of the city. Granted, he benefited financially from indulging his passion, enough so that he purchased his Hotel St. Oliver about 10 years ago with the

(It should be noted that Kendrick has served as guide and mentor to some of today's active preservationists, such as Dewhirst, who actually abandoned his former career to follow Kendrick's original mission and put his own unique stamp on a changing downtown. Kendrick's son Kent also continues in his father's path, renovating historic homes primarily in the near-downtown neighborhoods of Park Ridge and Fourth and Gill.)

Many longtime Knoxvilleans can recall when Kendrick was regarded as insane, not visionary. "When I was buying up all of downtown, everyone thought I was crazy. I look out the windows now and think how crazy I am," he smiles. "I purposefully chose a career I could have that would never finish." And he's right - the

continue to spring forward: Smce + Busby homes in Mechanicsville; the Sanders Pace Architecture Emory Place neighborhood development for Shelton Communications; Jeffrey Nash's company The Courtland Group's condominium project at North Central Village. The downtown revitalization is at full speed ahead and is growing beyond the strict definitions of what was once considered "downtown proper." Speaking as a person who has moved to Knoxville after living in urban centers throughout the United States and Europe, Knoxville has an aesthetic beauty and a charm that I've yet to find anywhere else. It has a wonderful humanity that, as architect Scott Busby so eloquently said, is all part of the downtown design that is the TRUE design of Knoxville.