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The following is a report on a gateway project for Blowing Rock, North Carolina. It was prepared for the Blowing Rock Appearance Advisory Commission (BRAAC) by representatives of Appalachian State University at the request of the Blowing Rock Chamber of Commerce. This report revolves around the foundational problem of any gateway project: defining the character of the place in which it resides. The town’s background information and the methods utilized by the research team, as well as their findings, are outlined within.

In the fall of 2013, the Blowing Rock Chamber of Commerce approached Dr. Terence Milstead, Assistant Professor in the Department of Geography and Planning at Appalachian State University, about a preliminary background and planning report on the potential of a gateway project for the town, particularly along highway US 321. That meeting resulted in a studio course opportunity for ASU’s graduate planning students.
This report intends to identify the gateway areas of Blowing Rock and provide solutions to improve the functionality and aesthetics of those locations to more clearly reflect the spirit of the town.

**Contextual Information**
- Historical Background
- Demographic Statistics of Blowing Rock

**Methodology**
- Case Studies
- Empirical Research
- Interviews
- On-site observations
- Focus Group

**Design Concepts**
This section presents the final design concepts for Blowing Rock's gateways. A description of each design is given as well as how the characteristics of the town and the research results influenced the gateway designs.

**Conclusions and Recommendations**
Found in this section are the research findings and data results of the report process. These outcomes provided information for designing the conceptual gateway entrances within Blowing Rock and suggestions for future actions.

**Problem statement**
The Town of Blowing Rock lacks an identifiable visual theme to promote a sense of place within the community. The NCDOT widening of the Highway 321 bypass creates the opportunity to create a gateway plan that incorporates design elements to strengthen a number of determined weaknesses.
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Pre-1800

The first recorded mention of the area surrounding Blowing Rock dates from the mid-eighteenth-century when August Gottlieb Spangenberg, a Moravian Bishop, traveled through the colonial backcountry and recorded his experiences (Buxton, A Village Tapestry).

In 1790, the Greene family, later proprietors of the Green Park Inn, became the first settlers in what is now Blowing Rock (History, n.d., http://www.blowingrock.com/history.php).

1800-1900

By the mid-nineteenth-century, Blowing Rock served as a vacation destination for many Southern elites, due in part to its mild summer climate and the construction of the Caldwell-Watauga Turnpike in 1851 (National Register of Historic Places Inventory, Green Park Inn). Many wealthy families who chose to build summer homes in the area referred to themselves as “cottagers” (Buxton, A Village Tapestry, p. 4). Some of the notable individuals to frequent Blowing Rock were Moses Herman Cone, Elliot Daingerfield, James William and Charles Albert Canon, and Robert Sloan Mebane. Blowing Rock developed to the point that it became officially incorporated as a town by the North Carolina General Assembly in 1889 (Buxton, 91).

1900-2000

The Roaring Twenties in particular ushered in the greatest degree of change in Blowing Rock: the creation of an eighteen-hole golf course in 1920; the construction of the commercial brick buildings along Main Street in 1923; and the annexation of the Green Park and Mayview Park communities in 1926 (Buxton, 30-31; National Register of Historic Places Inventory, Green Park Inn).

By the mid-twentieth-century, Blowing Rock had successfully established itself as a premier destination for mountain vacation, as well as a picturesque family-oriented town which still persists into the present.