An aerial photograph of a city grid, likely Washington, D.C., showing a dense arrangement of buildings and streets. A specific building footprint is highlighted in a light blue color, located in the center-right portion of the image. The surrounding area is filled with various building shapes, streets, and green spaces. A large highway interchange is visible on the left side of the image.

Mixed-use building Washington Circle

Jakob Bang
September 2004

Mixed-use building at Washington Circle inspired by the Situationist ideas

by
Jakob Bang

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Master of Architecture

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Jaan Holt, Chair

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Paul Emmons

September 15, 2004
Washington Alexandria
Architecture Consortium
Alexandria, Virginia



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Acknowledgements

For everything, thank you, Christina.





Abstract

The project is a mixed-use building based on three main Situationist themes:

1. The creations of situations - creating a foundation for the spontaneous interaction between users of a building and people randomly passing by.
2. The Labyrinth – a playful structure that is not necessarily rational and leaves scope for new discoveries that are not evident when you enter the building.
3. Unitary Urbanism - avoiding the sharp distinctions between workplace, residential housing and leisure, the building aims to integrate all aspects of human endeavor. The building should reflect all aspects of the city, hence

being a condensed image of the city. The building contains shops, cafes, restaurants, apartments and movie theatres. The building is open and invites the users to explore.



The Situationist Movement

Of all the 20th-Century “isms”, Situationism is probably the one that has left the least clear traces, partly because it put more emphasis on raising questions than on providing consisting answers.

The questions were burning ones, as valid now as when they were first raised by the Situationists. What is the future of the city? Will it survive the wounds inflicted upon it by the scalpels of modernism?

Could a radically new city be invented? A city made of a complex network of distinct sites, a labyrinth, a series of fragmented situations, singularities, rather than the uniform hygienic models inherited from Cartesianism. Could zoning be abandoned in favor of a unitary urbanism with no boundaries, where all activities would mix within a

compact urban form? Could emotions, desire, passion, rather than the demands of traffic engineering and functional urbanism, become generators of urban form?

The Situationists asked for a city that would be conceived not as a whole but as a series of distinct sites with strongly individual identities and atmospheres.

The Situationists asked why urban sites should not be related to different moods, feelings and emotions rather than to functional activities. They wanted an urban topology based on love, fear, melancholy, desire.

The identity of sites is considered by the Situationists to be more important than the medium that unites them. Their maps show sites as discontinuous fragments, floating in a void.

To further stress the importance of discontinuity, the underlying physical structure of the Situationist city was to be a labyrinth, offering no simple clues as to location and orientation.

Urban sites in the Situationist city were to be notable not only for their distinct architectural identity but also for the events and situations that would take place in them.

The Situationists asked for a city that would not be zoned functionally, where there would be no spatial separation of home and workplace.

The sites of the Situationist city were to be discovered through a process of aimless drifting. Drifting was to be a playful, nonproductive activity, opposed to the work ethic.

The site

Dupont Circle is, in my opinion, one of the few places in Washington D.C. that fulfills the ideals of the Situationists. There is no other place in the city where the cultural, racial, and social diversity of Washington is reflected to such an extent. At Dupont Circle, people tend to drift by – whether in their lunch break or just out of curiosity – and momentarily participate in the activities taking place at the circle, let it be the chess playing, a demonstration, sun bathing in the grass, listening to music etc.

The Circle is influenced by its extremely varied users that again reflect the abundant supply of activities in the area – let it be government officials working in the city, scholars and students from nearby universities, users of the metro, residents of nearby apartment buildings, patrons of the numerous cafes, restaurants and bars in the area, customers of the low-scale and high-scale shops in the adjacent streets, moviegoers etc.

Washington circle

In spite of many of the same features – a major university, a much used metro stop, abundant residential housing and proximity to the downtown area – Washington Circle just one mile from Dupont Circle is nowhere near having the same atmosphere and life as Dupont Circle. The place in no way encourages the passers-by to stop and use the area, let alone hang out.

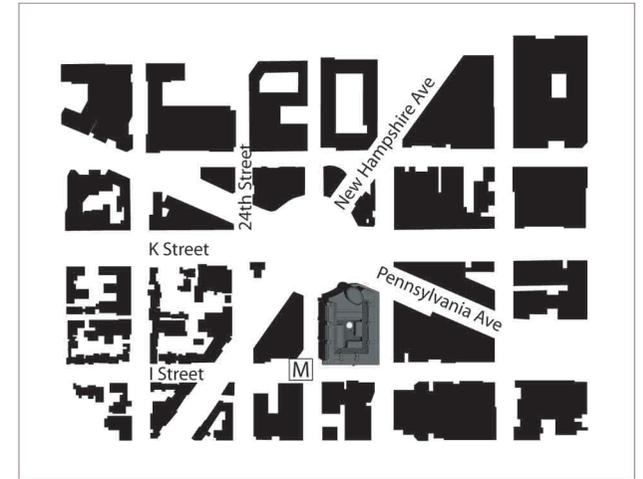
I saw it as a challenge to make a project that could enhance the area's character and add some of the qualities that characterize Dupont Circle.

My projekt is a mixed-use building at the corner ground next to George Washington University Hospital. The building contains shops, cafes, restaurants, apartments and movie theatres. The building is open and invites the users to explore.

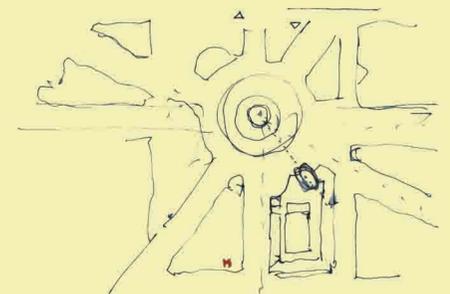
My project is based on three of the main Situationist themes:

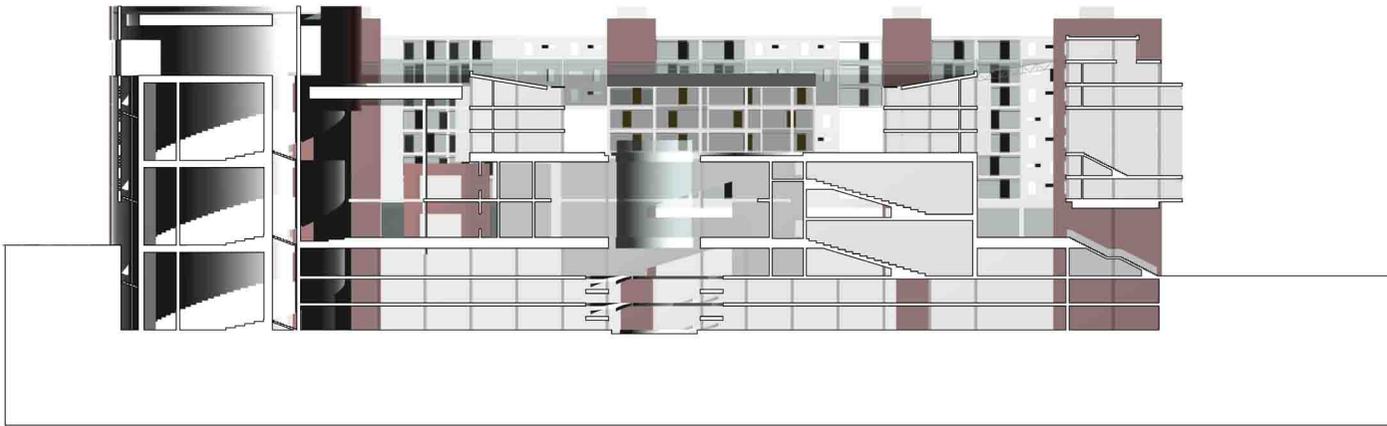
1. The creations of situations - that is creating a foundation for the spontaneous interaction between users of a building and people randomly passing by.
2. The Labyrinth – a playful structure that is not necessarily rational and leaves scope for new discoveries that are not evident when you enter the building.
3. Unitary Urbanism - avoiding the sharp distinctions between workplace, residential housing and leisure, the building aims to integrate all aspects of human endeavor. The building should reflect all aspects of the city, hence being a condensed image of the city.



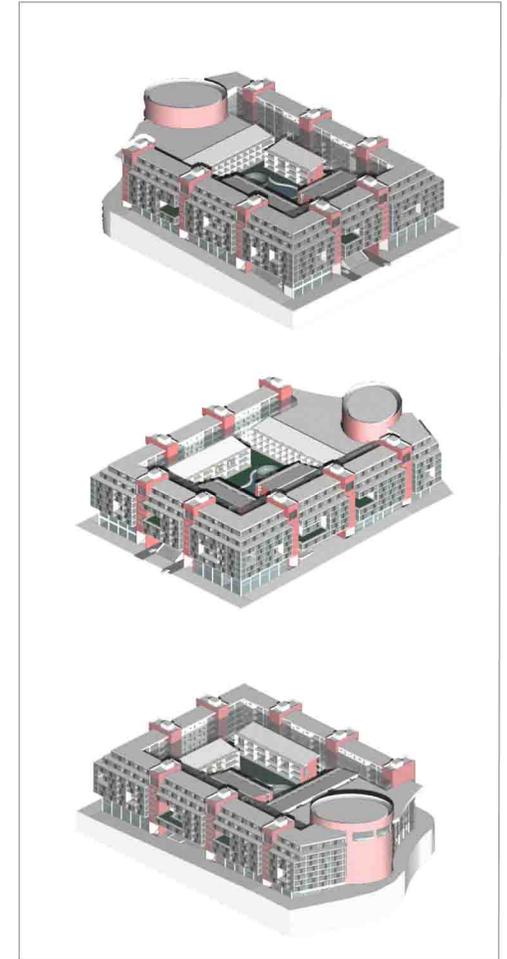


Siteplan: Washington Circle

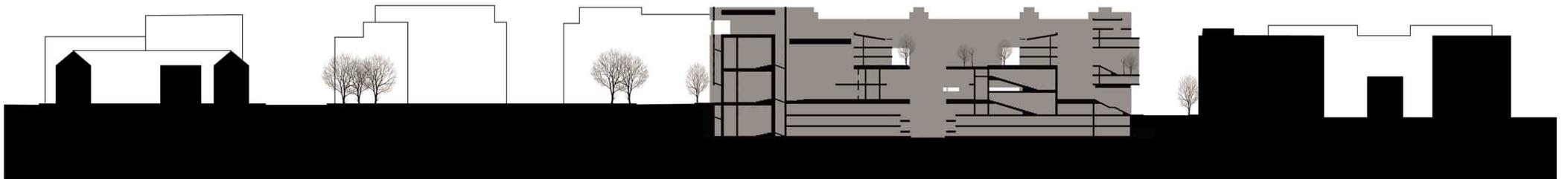


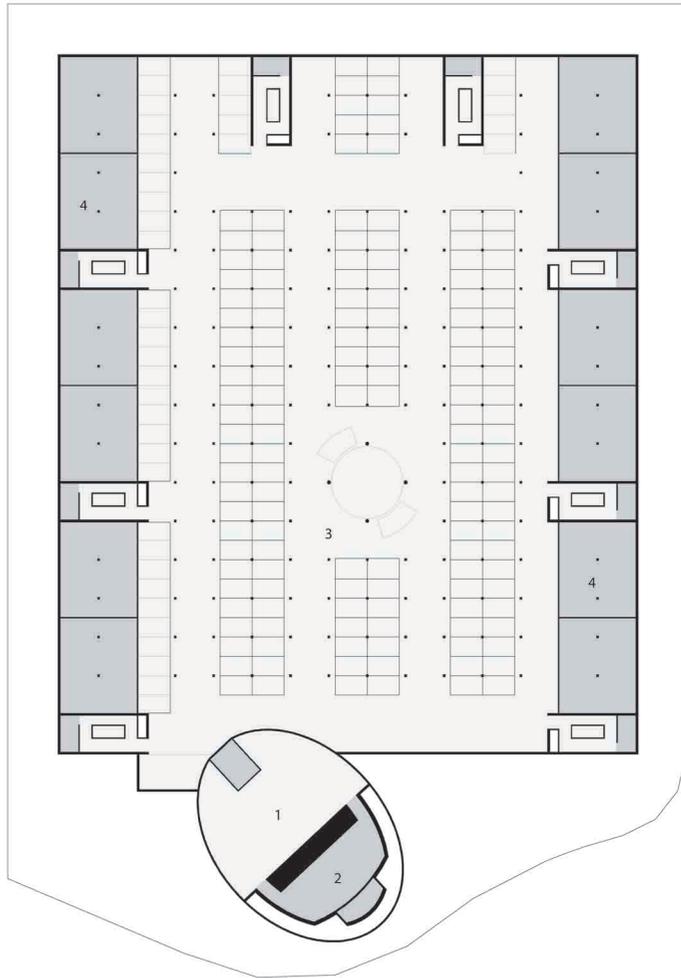


Longitudinal sections



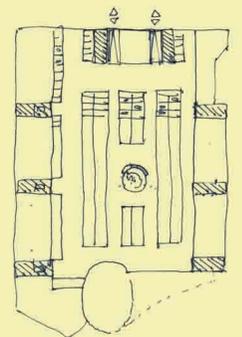
Isometric views

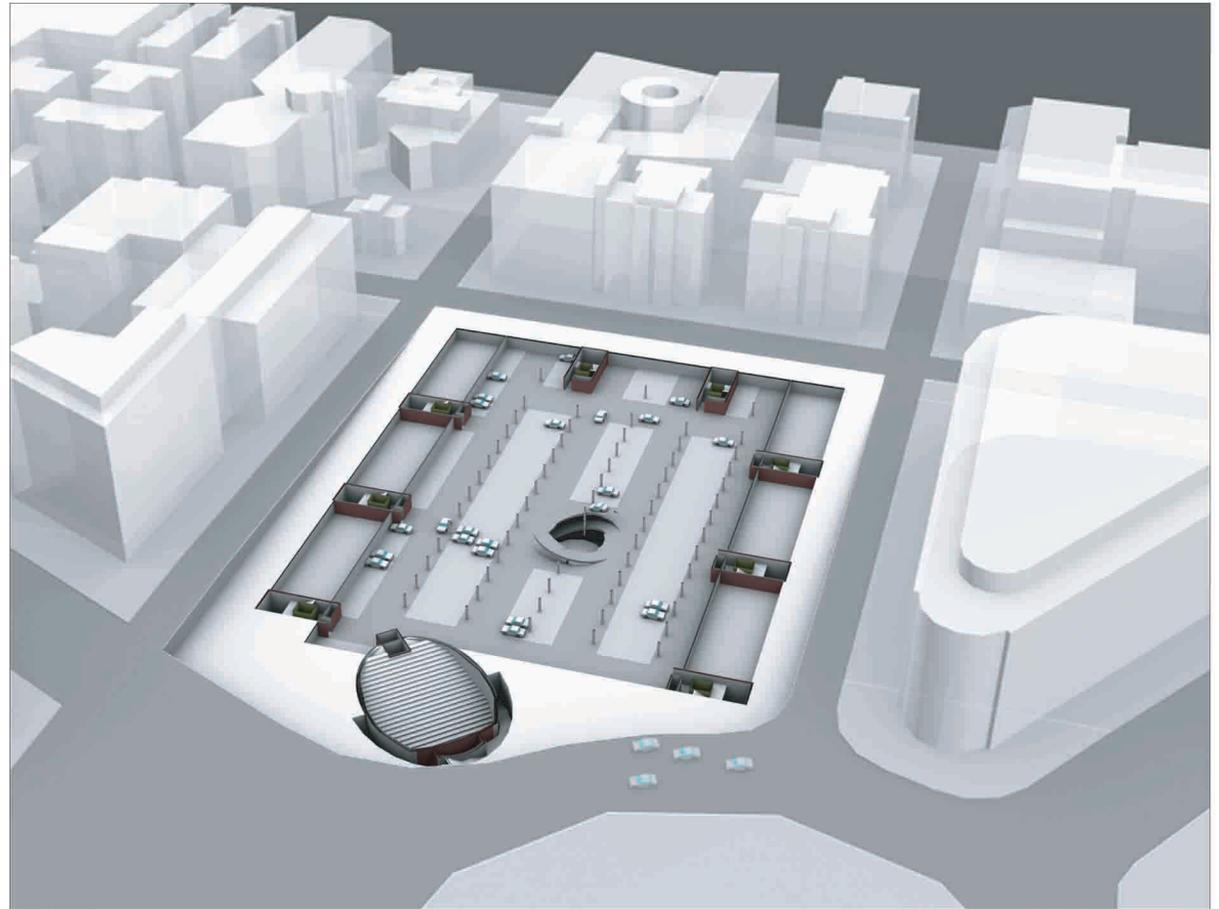
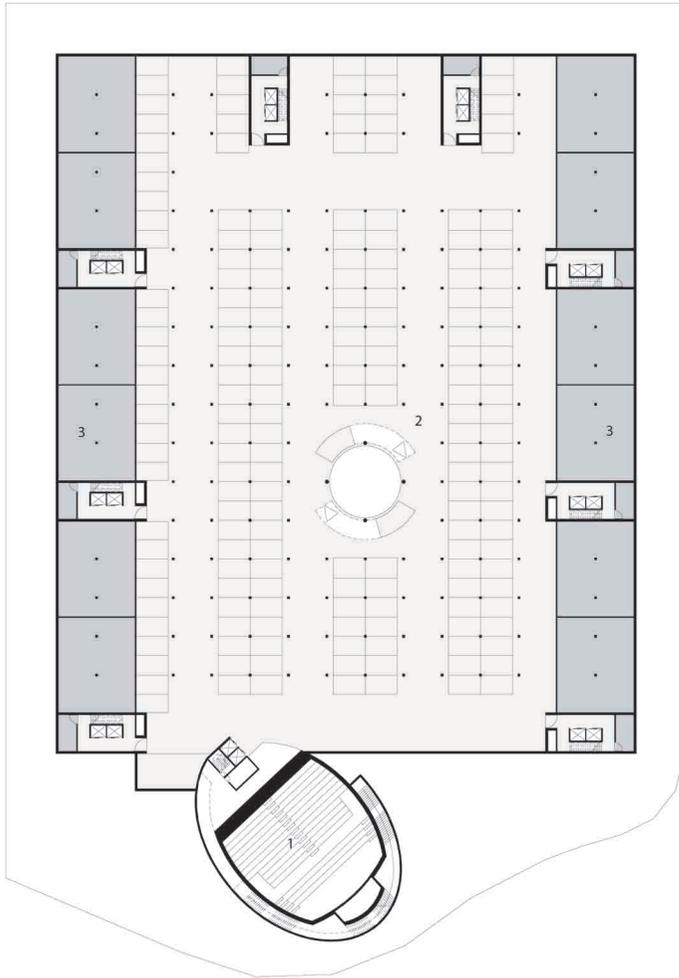




Third Basement

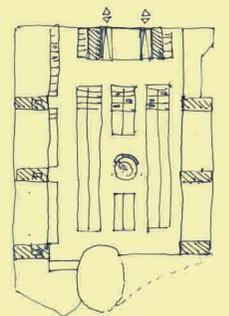
- 1. Theater lobby
- 2. Theater
- 3. Parking
- 4. Storage and technical installations

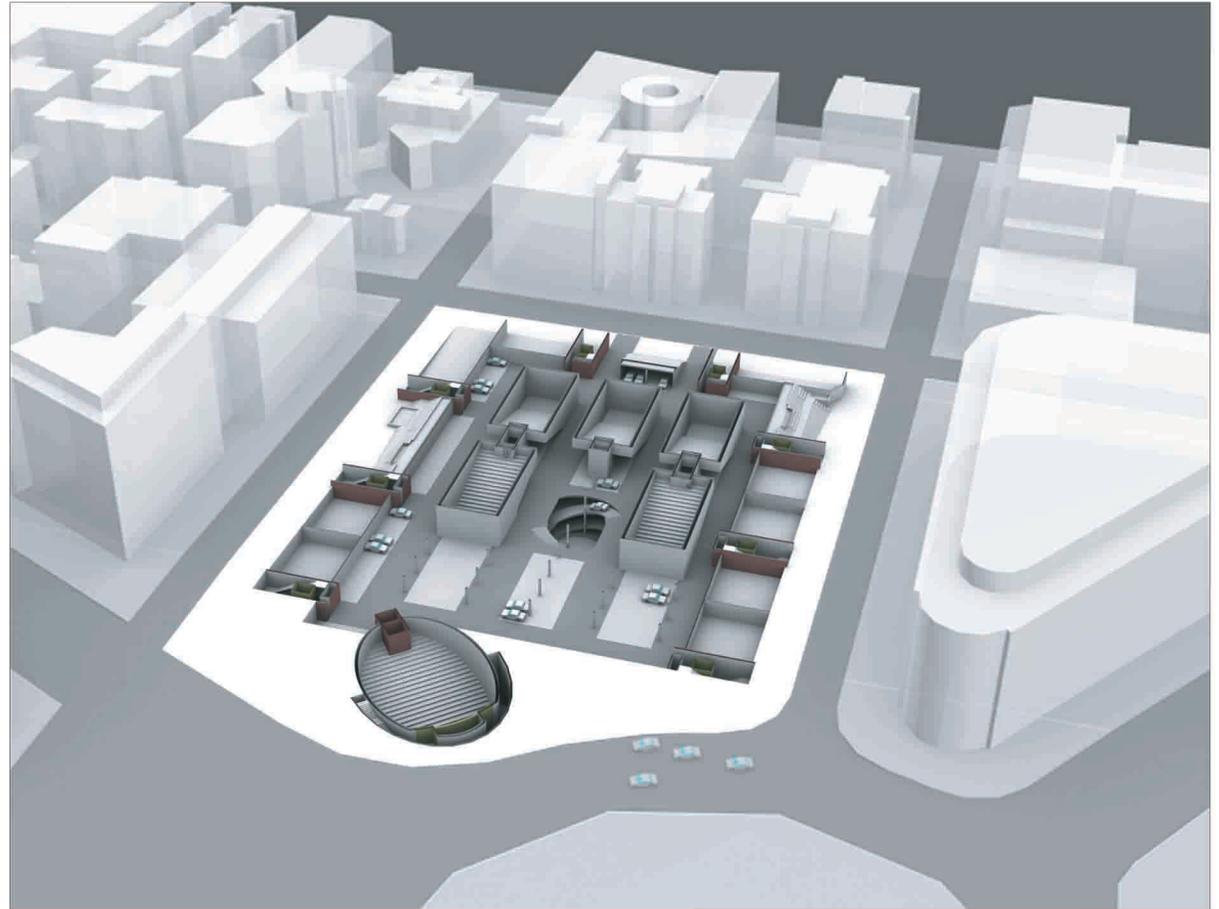
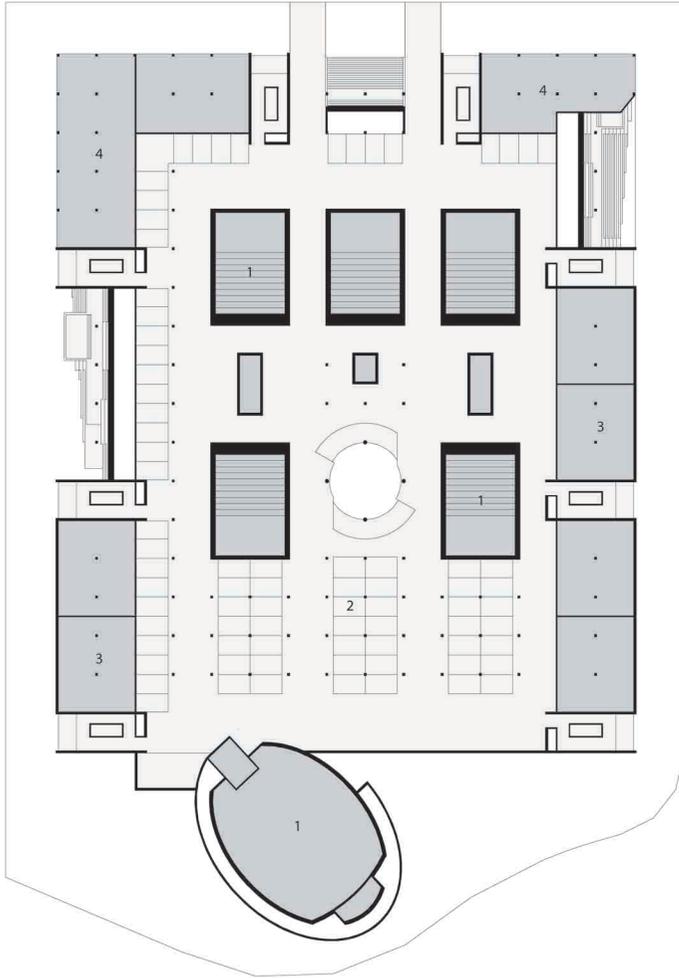




Second Basement

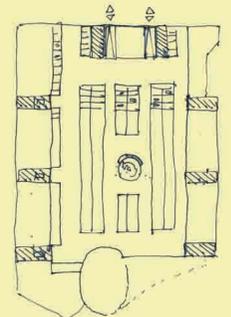
- 1. Theater
- 2. Parking
- 3. Storage and technical installations

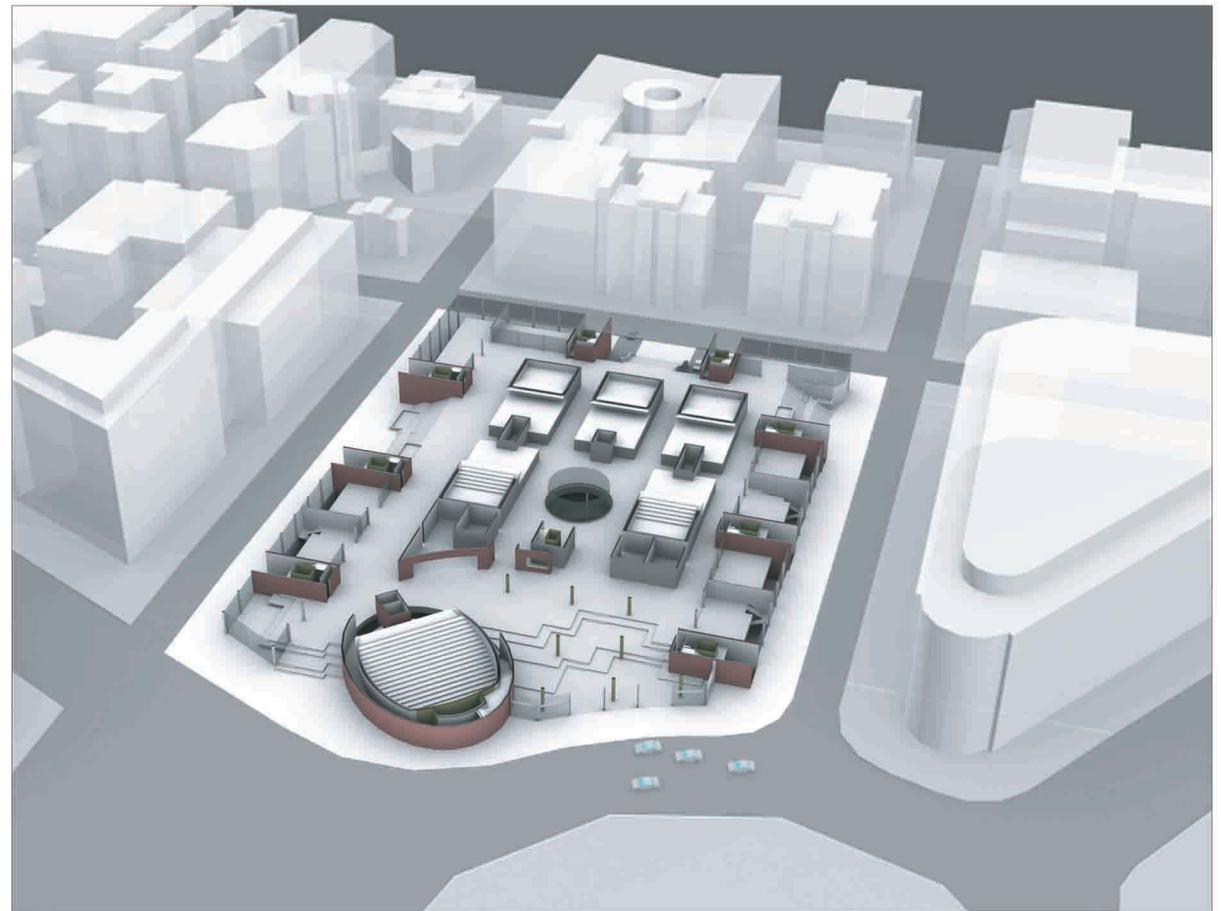
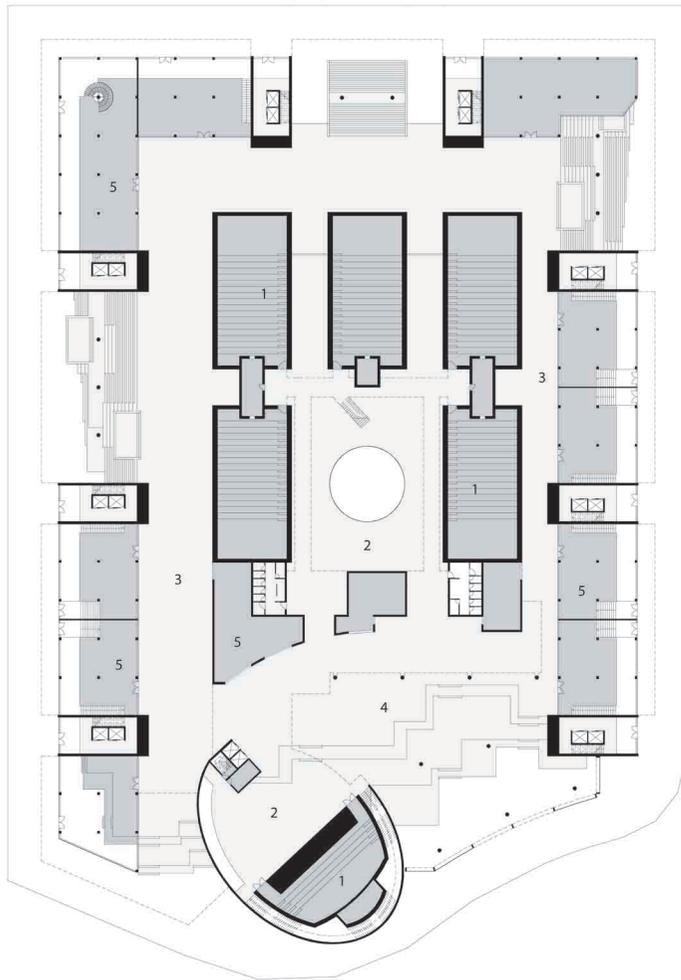




Basement

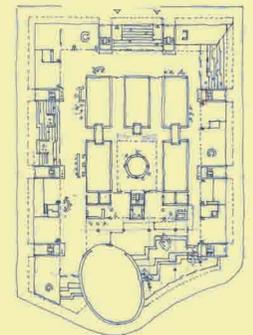
- 1. Theaters
- 2. Parking
- 3. Storage
- 4. Retail

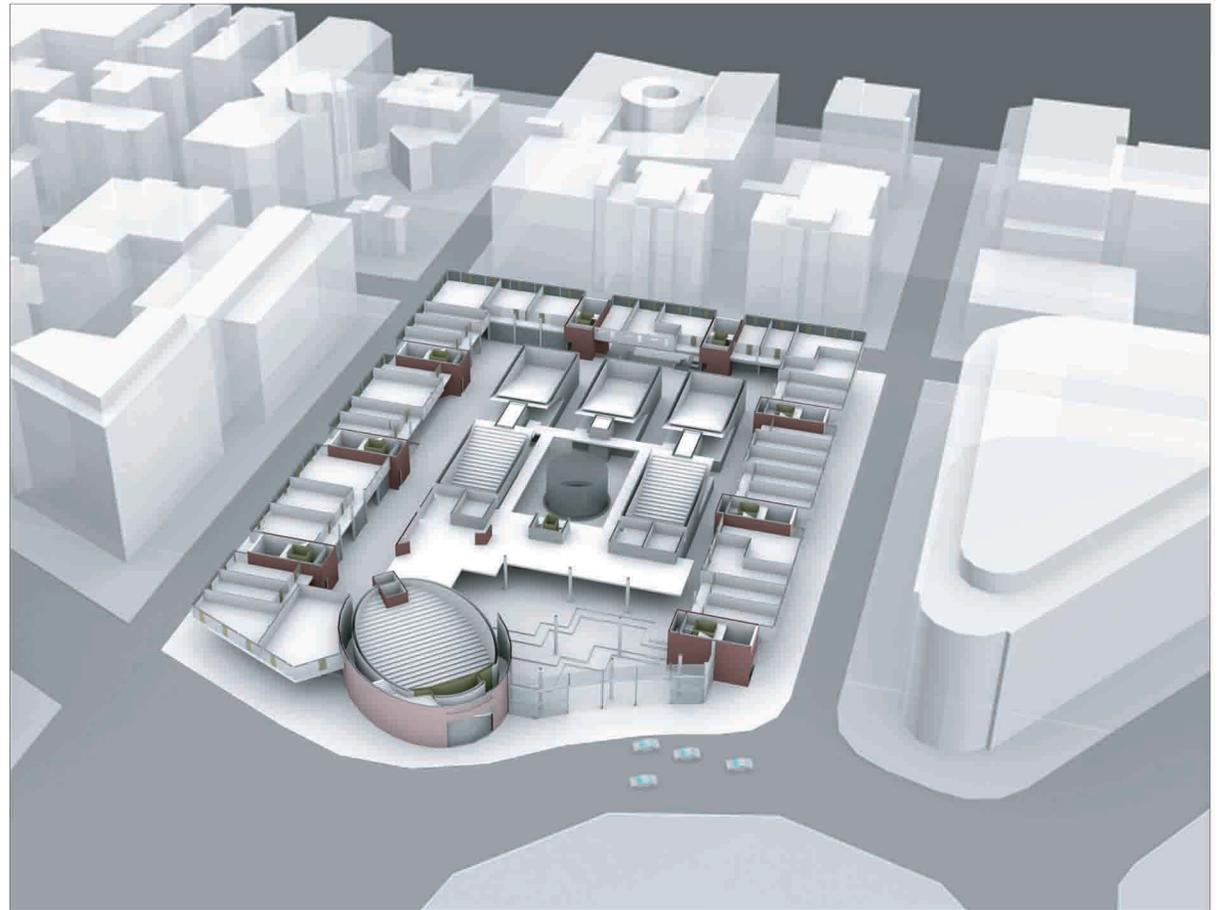
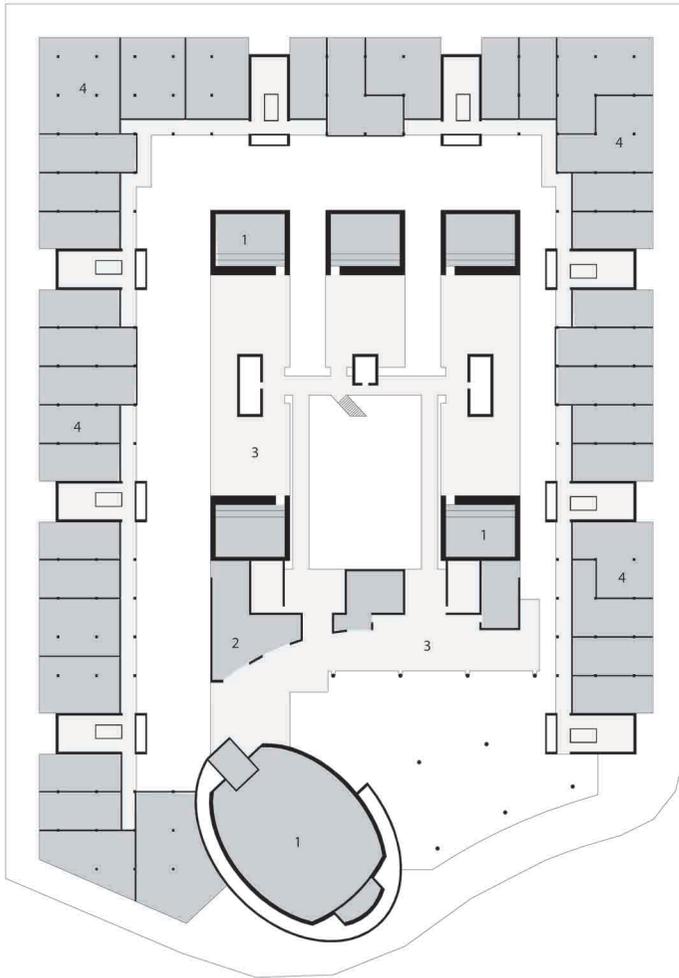




Ground floor

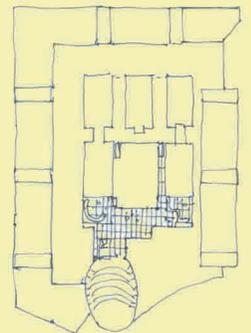
- 1. Theaters
- 2. Theater lobbys
- 3. Internal streets
- 4. Main lobby
- 5. Retail

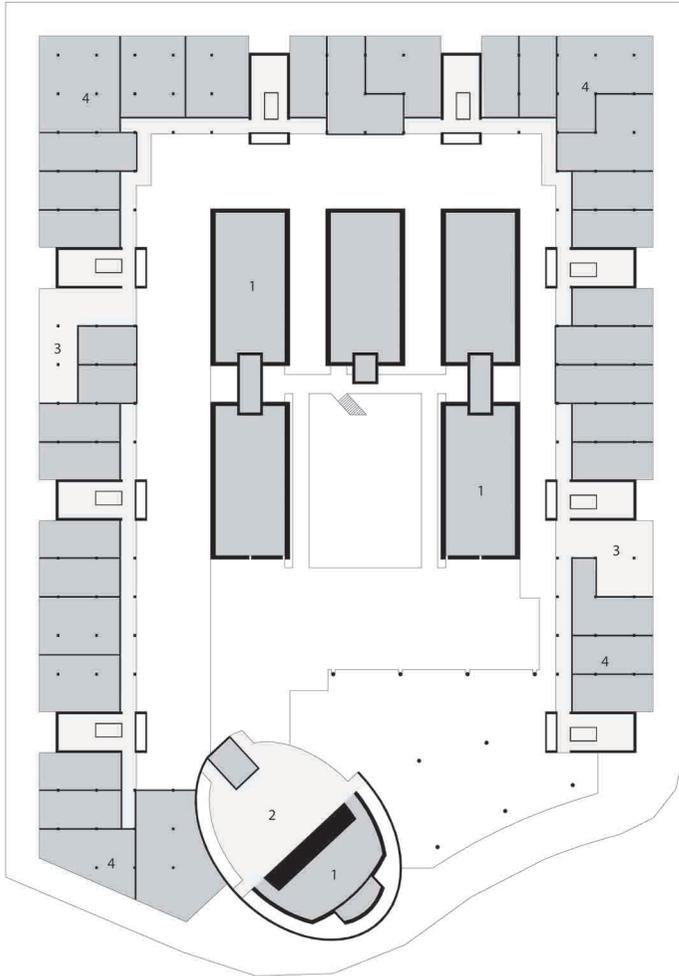




Second floor

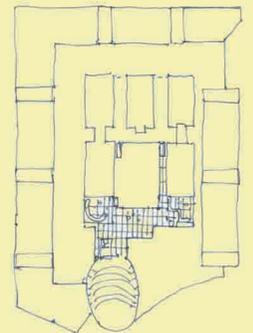
- 1.Theaters
- 2.Retail/Restaurants
- 3.Balcony
- 4.Apartments

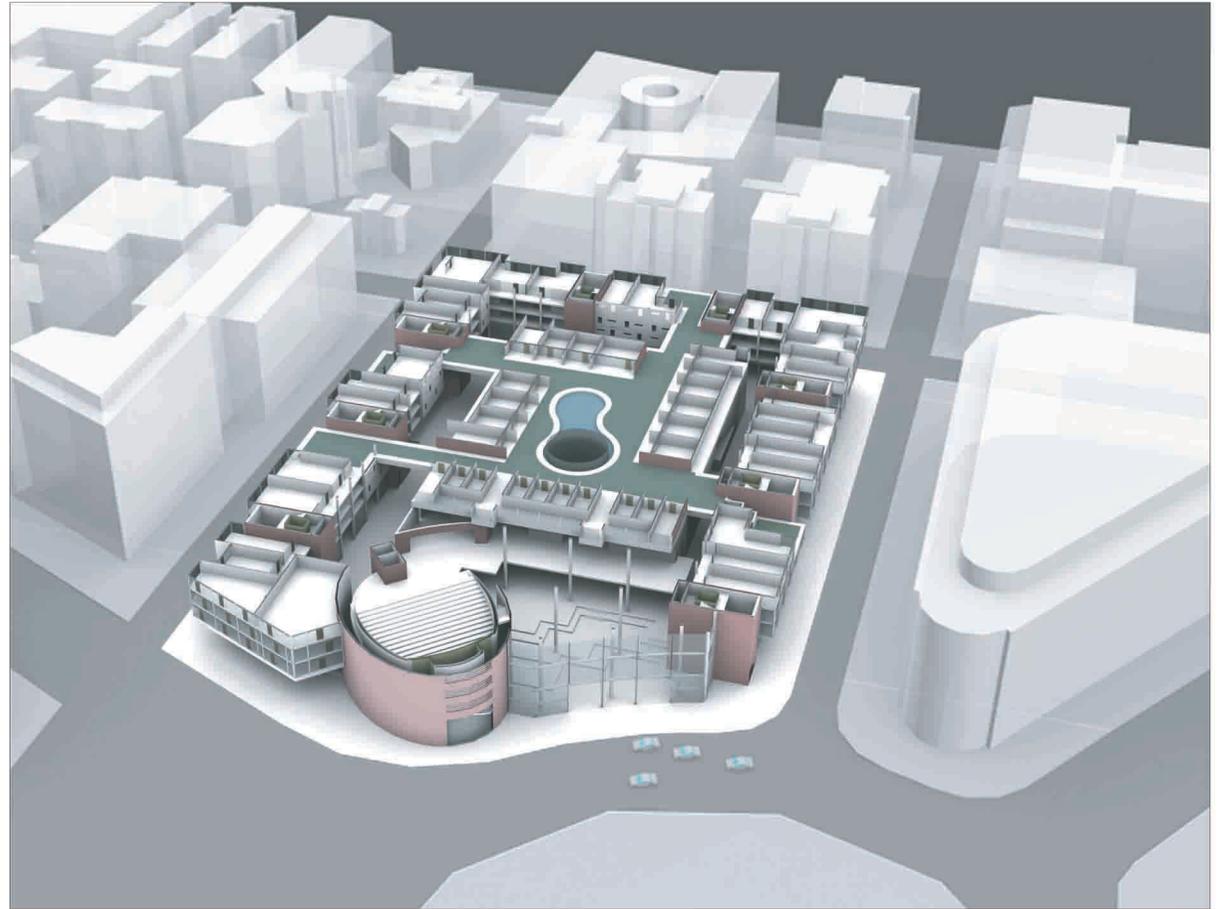
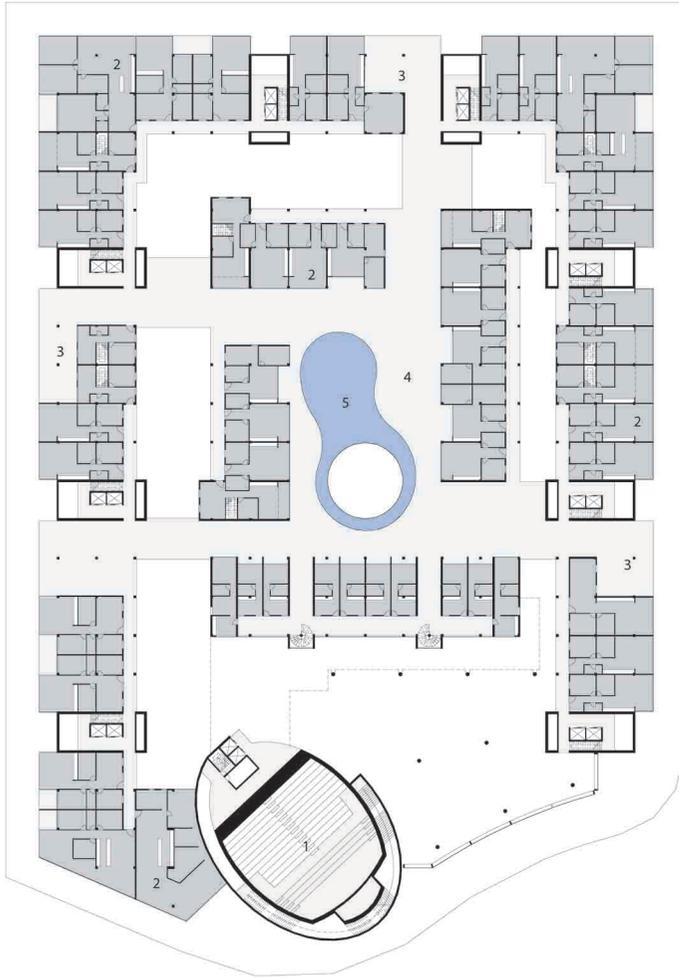




Third floor

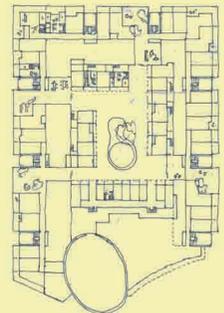
- 1. Theaters
- 2. Theater lobby
- 3. Balcony
- 4. Apartments

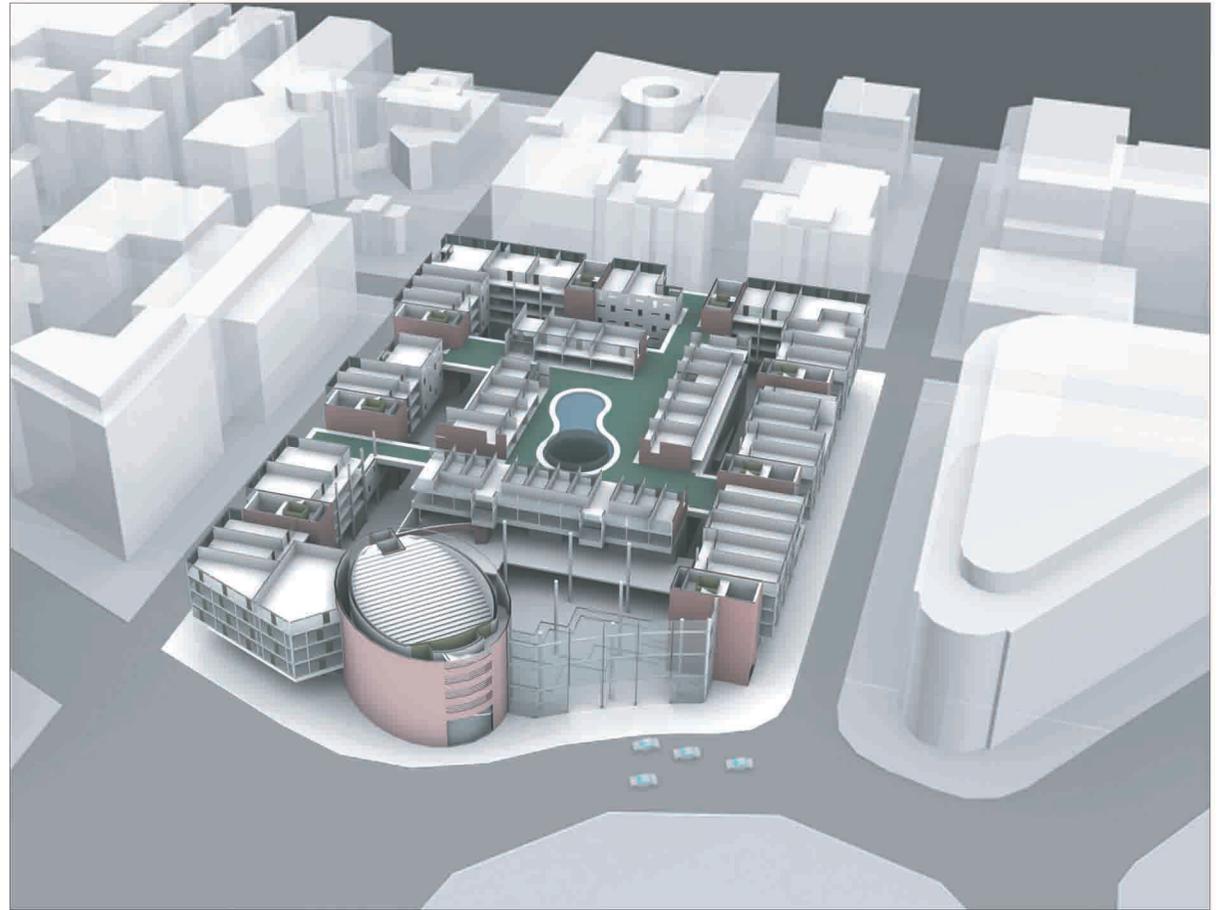
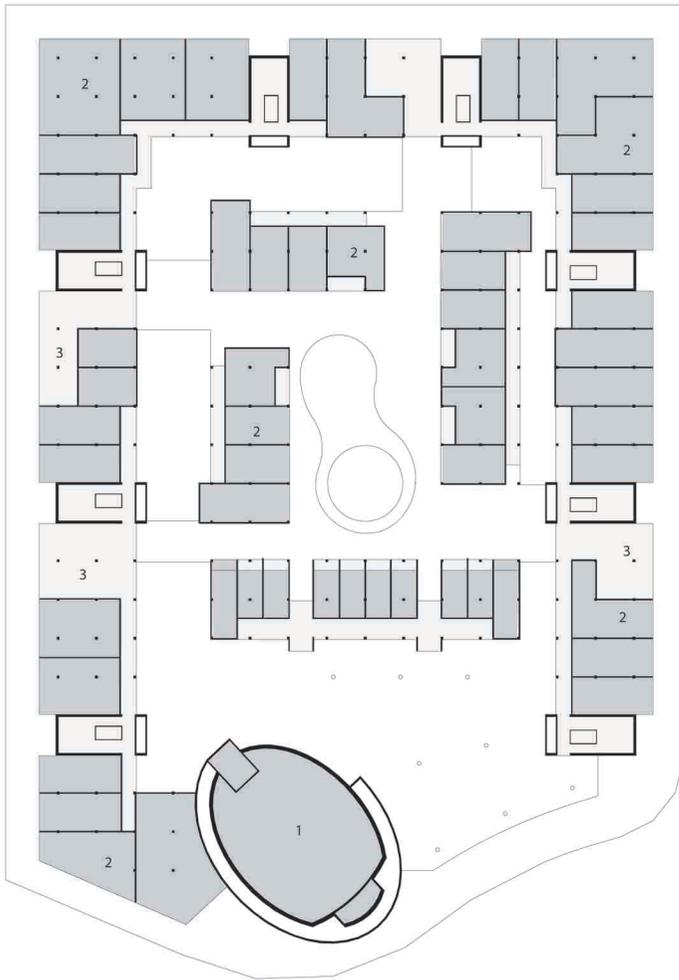




Fourth floor

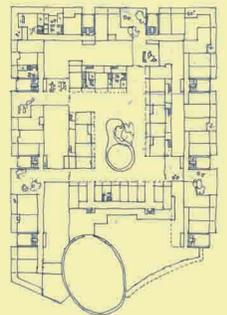
- 1. Theater
- 2. Apartments
- 3. Balconys
- 4. Courtyard
- 5. Water

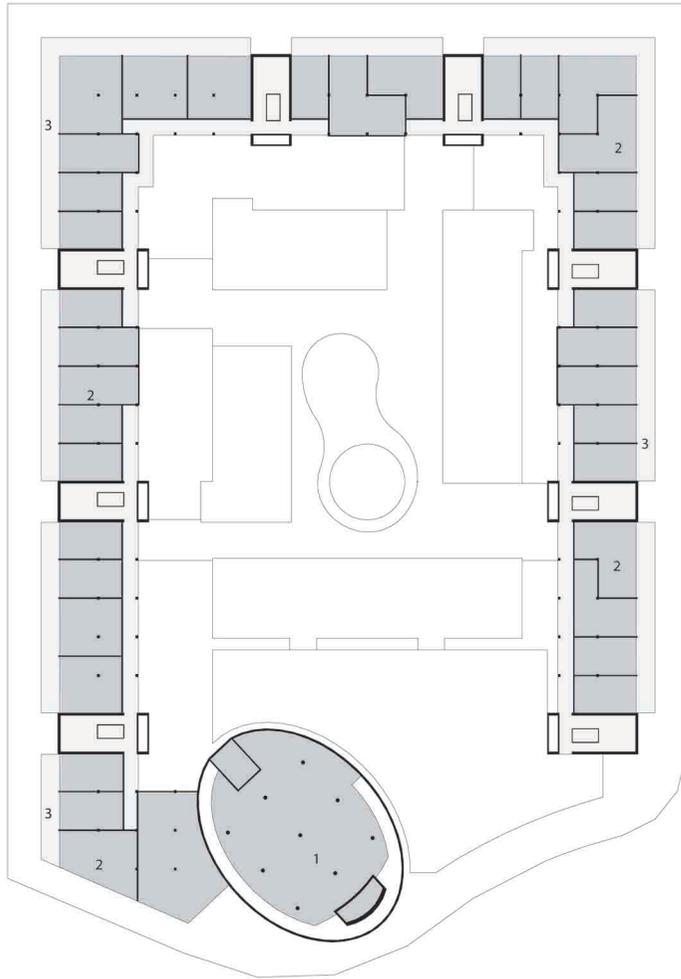




Fifth floor

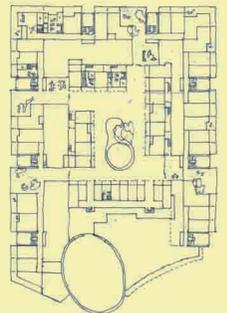
- 1. Theater
- 2. Apartments
- 3. Balconys

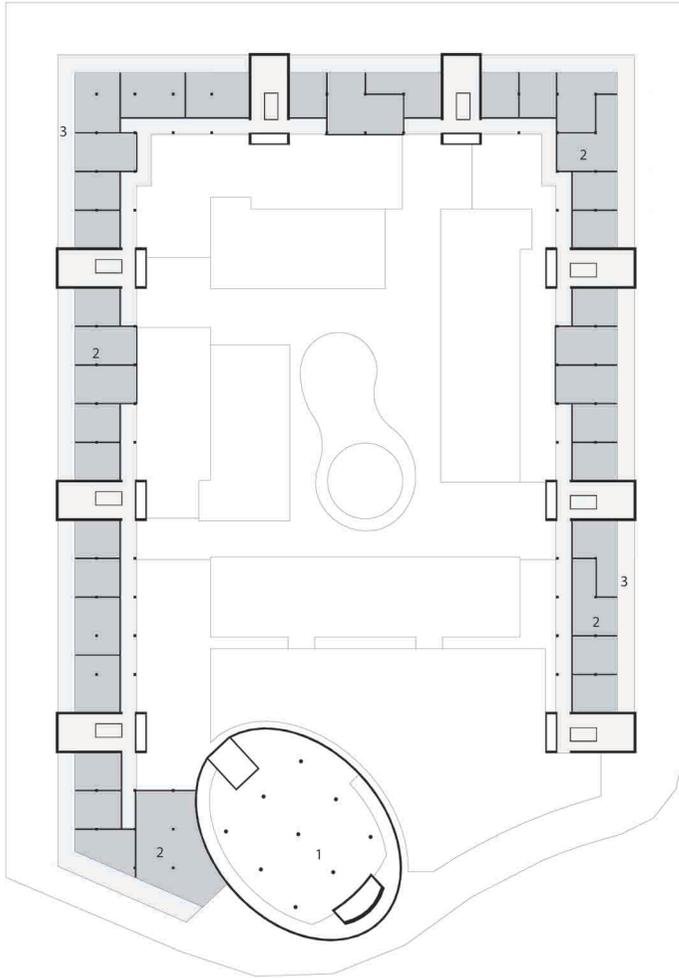




Seventh floor

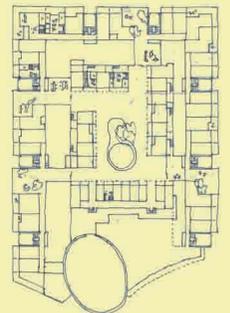
- 1. Restaurant
- 2. Apartments
- 3. Terrace



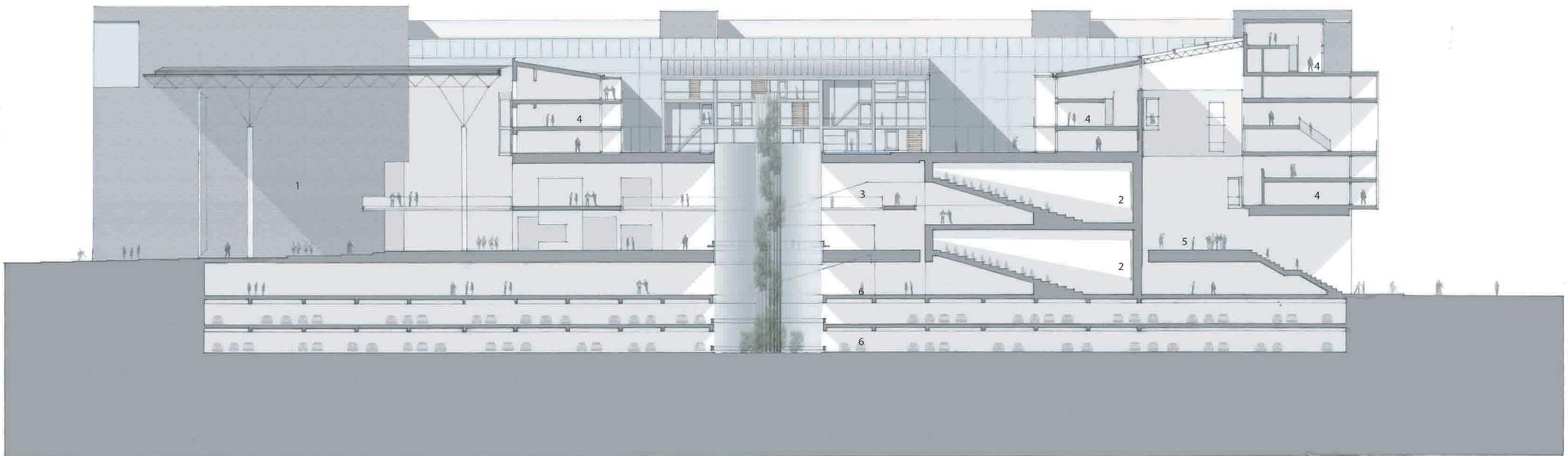


Eighth floor

- 1. Restaurant
- 2. Apartments
- 3. Terrace



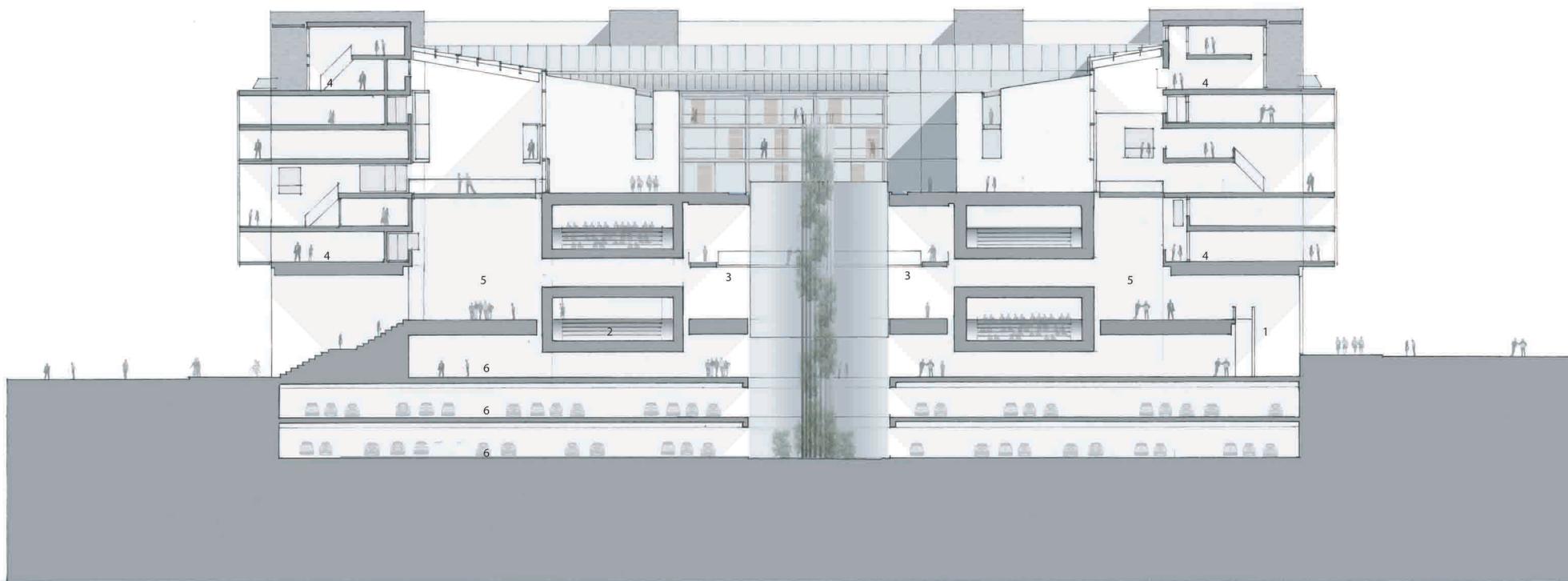
- 1. Main lobby
- 2. Theaters
- 3. Theater lobby
- 4. Apartments
- 5. Internal street
- 6. Parking levels



Longitudinal section



- 1. Retail
- 2. Theaters
- 3. Theater lobby
- 4. Apartments
- 5. Internal street
- 6. Parking levels

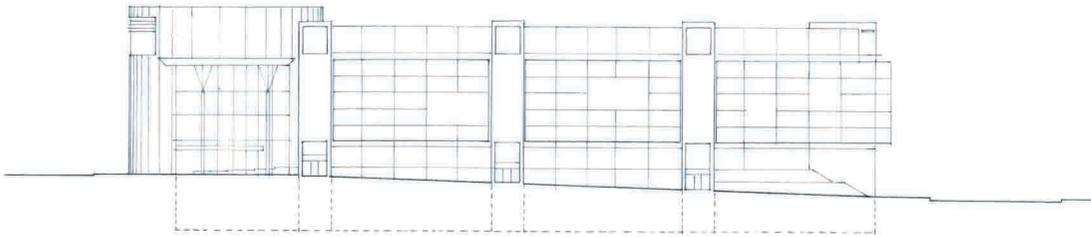


Cross section

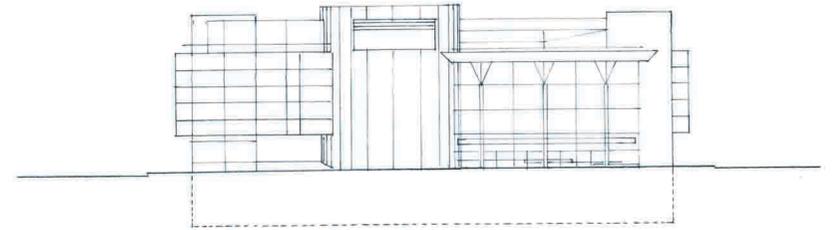




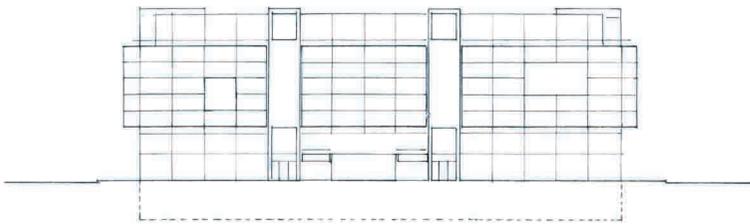
Facade: 23rd Street



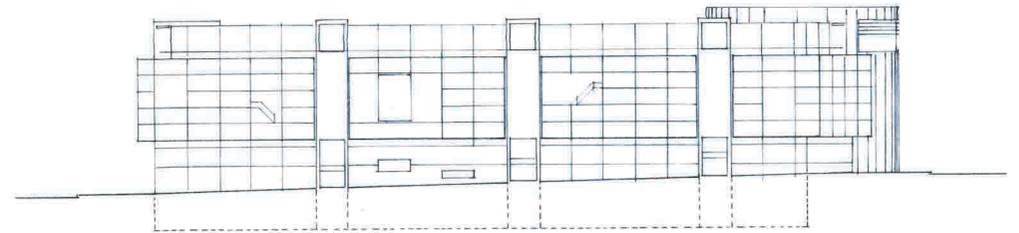
Facade 23rd Street 1:1000



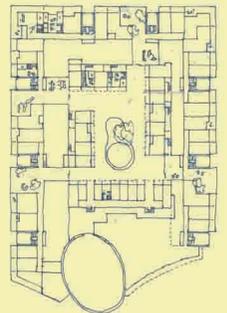
Facade Washington Circle 1:1000

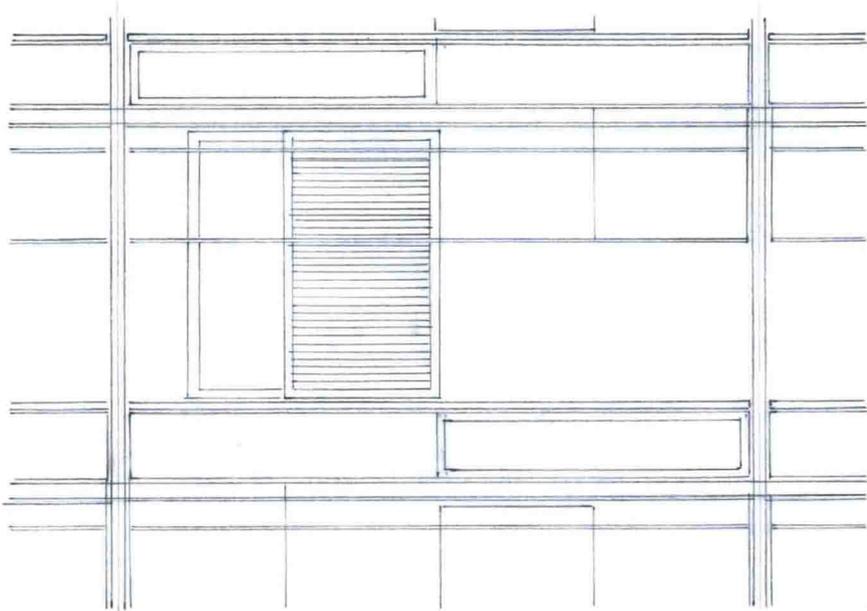


Facade I Street 1:1000

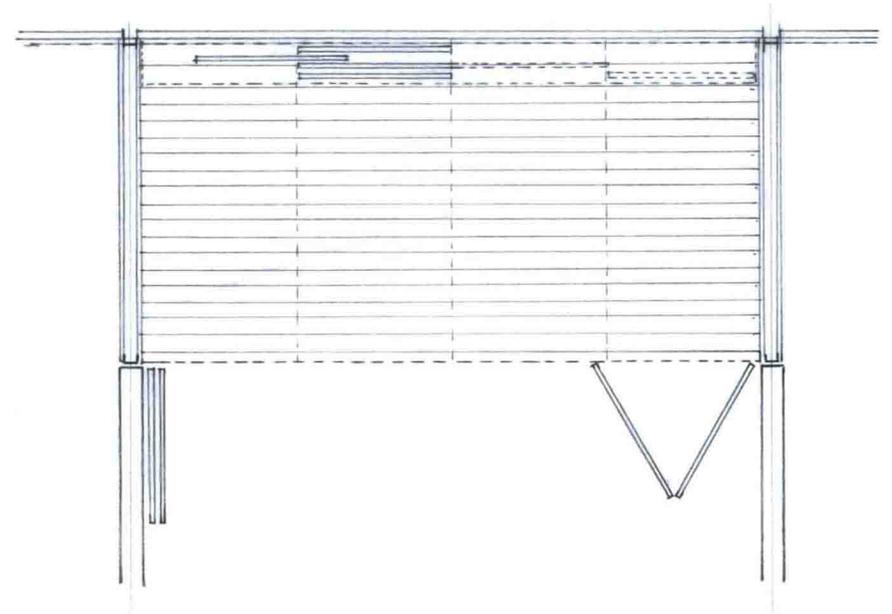


Facade 22nd Street 1:1000

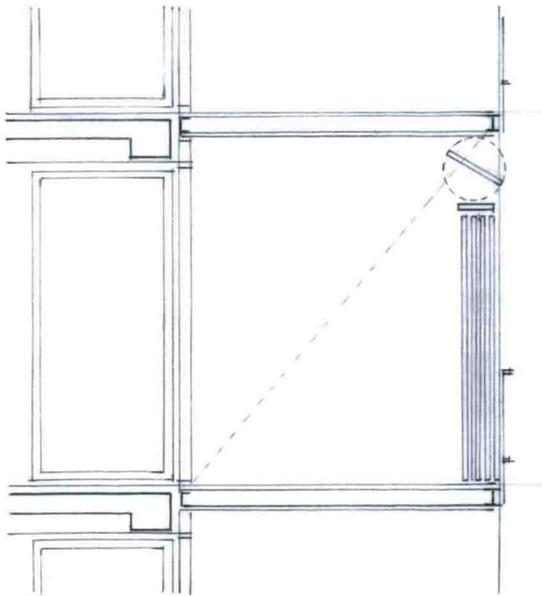




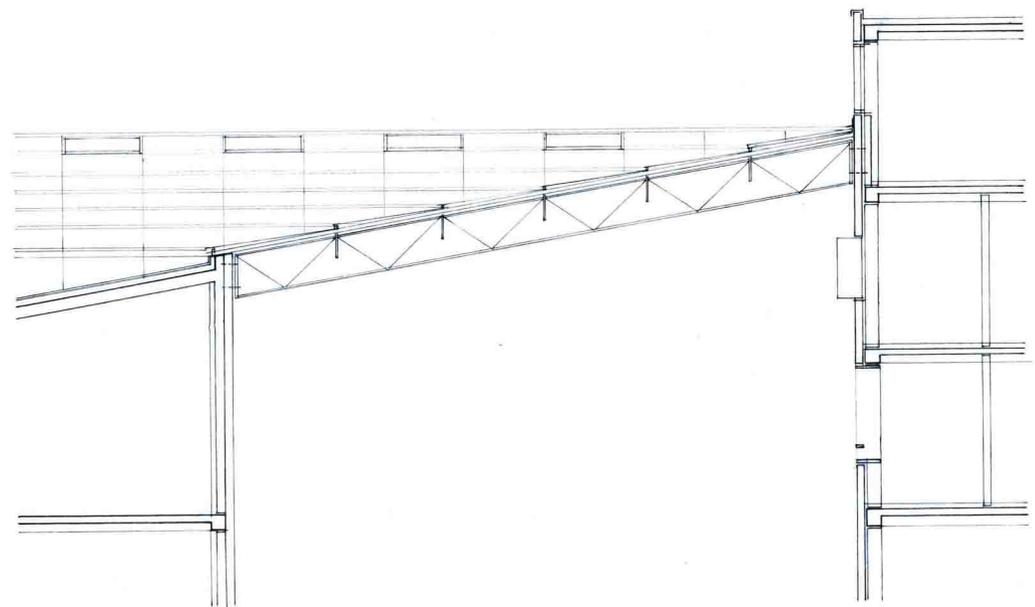
Detail: Facade



Plan detail: Facade



Section detail: Facade



Glass roof detail: Internal street



Facade 22nd Street

Vita

Jakob Bang was born on May 30, 1969 in Denmark. He attended The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts School of Architecture in Copenhagen from 1995-2000 where he obtained a Bachelor of Architecture and began studying for the M.Sc. in Architecture, Advanced Professional Studies. He left for Washington D.C. in 2000 to follow his wife Christina on her posting at the Royal Danish Embassy. In the United States, he began his graduate studies at Virginia Tech's Washington-Alexandria Architecture Center. He defended his Master's thesis in September 2004. Before moving to the U.S., Jakob worked for several Danish architecture firms, among them Henning Larsen Architecture and Frederiksen & Knudsen Architects. In Washington, he worked for Studio 27 Architects. He thoroughly enjoyed his stay in Washington and hope to come back later in his career!

