

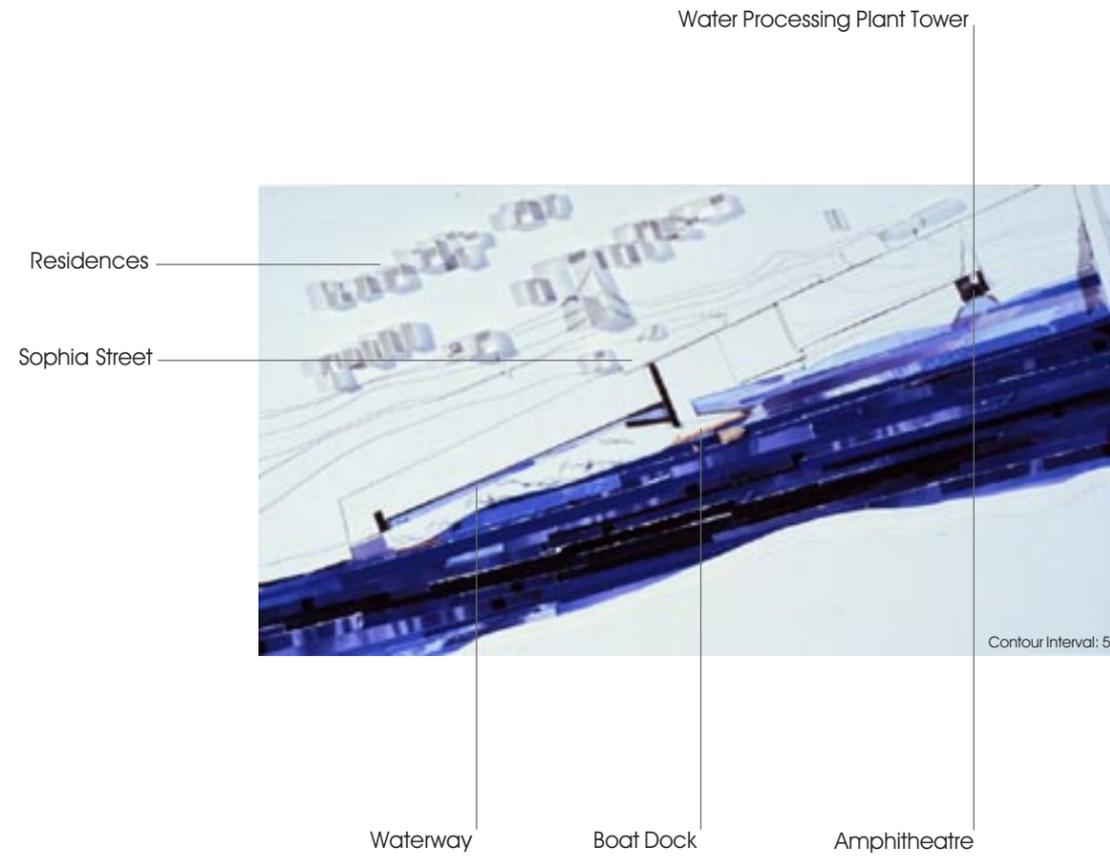
Character

ROMEO:
If I profane with my unworhiest hand this holy shrine. . .
l.v

Staging a scene by the river gives opportunity for the river and its tides to become a part of the play. The water rises behind the actors to heighten tension. The water then flows through a channel to isolate an actor or actors on a small platform. The spaces within the amphitheatre can be used to isolate or group, much like the two spaces created by the waterway in the field at the opposite end of the site. The architecture is a response to and a stage for the river.



River as a character



Entrance:

In the middle of the site, the river slices into the land at the place where the land had been pushed back to allow larger boats to turn around. The river cuts the boat dock from direct access to the mainland. A bridge and a walkway join the parking lot to the dock, so that a part of the river must be crossed before launching a boat into the water. This area is the transitional space because it sets the stage for the rest of the river's interaction with the land. Concrete pavers are the transitional material of the parking lot as they allow a mingling of ground surface with the man-made.

Conflict:

The water divides the field into two distinguishable parts: a broad space at the base of a residential street, and a narrow island shaded by trees along the bank. To emphasize the presence of the water, the waterway slopes up one foot to allow only the waters of the high tide into the channel. The high tide arrives in its entirety approximately every six hours and twenty minutes; the water rises between two and three feet (Virginia Institute of Marine Science Webpage). The portion of the field closer to the residences possesses a character which invites more activity than the island. The island embraces privacy. Past the ruins of a dock from the Civil War, the river rejoins itself.

Resolution:

The existing water processing plant becomes an amphitheatre. The two rectangular buildings which are attached to the tower are removed in this project, leaving the three-and-one-half sided tower. It remains as a ruin and as the backdrop for the activity of the site and the action of the play. At the amphitheatre, the river can now literally interact with the play. The character of the tides can be used in a performance: a scene can be staged at a time when the tide rises to surround the platform by the river's edge. By isolating an actor or actors, heightening tension, and providing a metaphor, the river can bring more of an understanding to the audience about an idea in a play.

Staging the river

