

Search for a standard for the
engenderment of local architectural
heritage

(Khalid T Khriesat)

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of the requirements for the degree of

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Khalid Khriesat

ABSTRACT

This thesis project is about the educational process of design by which one learns to see the human potential in the situation of the built environment. That I believe is the universal message of this work communicated through the language of architecture. In terms of the local conditions, the project seeks to achieve this through reintroducing the architectural heritage of the city of Salt Jordan to its local and foreign audiences, engendering new appreciation for its history.



Table of contents

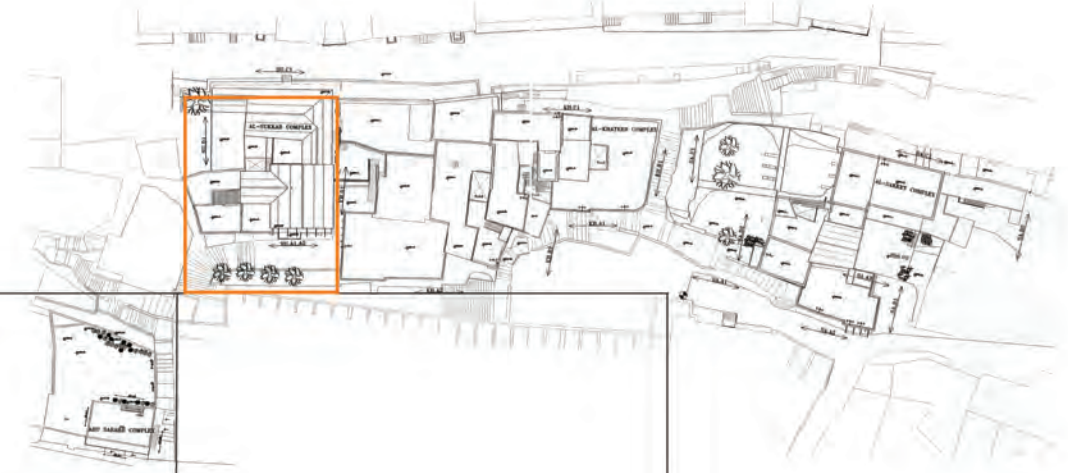
Introduction	1-3
Components of design: The site as a cradle for life	4-7
Components of design: Accessibility	8-11
Components of design: Entering the mountain	12-15
Grotto	16-17
Mezzanine	19
Comparison	19
Hillside Theatre	20
Vertical garden	22-23
Discovery	24



1 fair use guidelines

Introduction

Salt is a city of living heritage and a place of unique urban situations that contain massive potential for urban renewal. The circumstances that the city had to endure through its history are worth recognizing since they lead to this unique character. Salt's settlement dates to B.C. and was encouraged by the relatively moderate climate caused by the mountain valley breezes. Agriculture took place on the flatter hill tops, nourished by the seasonal rain, as urban development slid down the hillside. The valley became the meeting place where the clans from the various hillsides sought to mutually benefit from trade and commerce, as well participate in social rituals that represents the unity of the city and its people. Today the city's children scattered all over the country flock to every major occasion in an effort to maintain and nurture the family bonds created by their forefathers. Weddings, special ceremonial dinners and funerals are among the occasions held at such a scale. These rituals however continue to retreat up the hillsides into abandoned school yards due to mounting commercial pressure. This together with the lack of municipal regulation has resulted in vandalism and negligence of many of the city's cultural resources. Walking through Salt's main streets one can catch a glimpse of a lasting rich architectural heritage hidden behind an ephemeral commercial veneer. This project located in what used to be the town's historic square is about reclaiming the site in the spirit of its original historic social and civic role, while meeting the reality of contemporary urban demands.

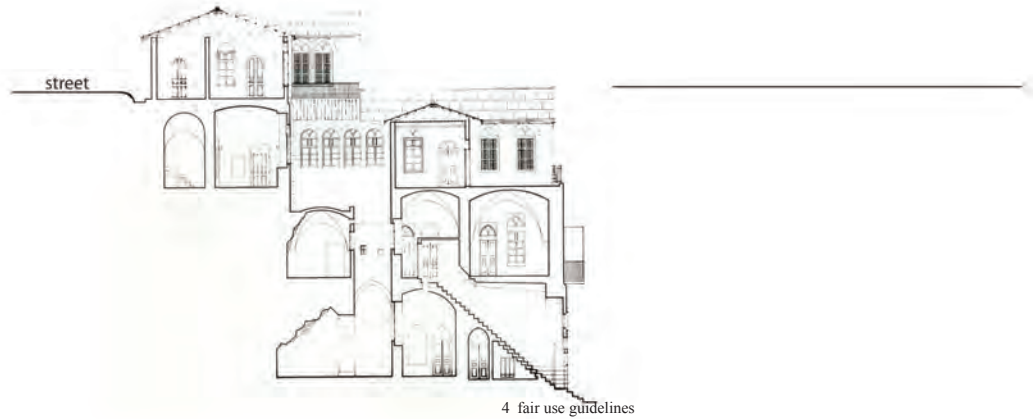


2 fair use guidelines

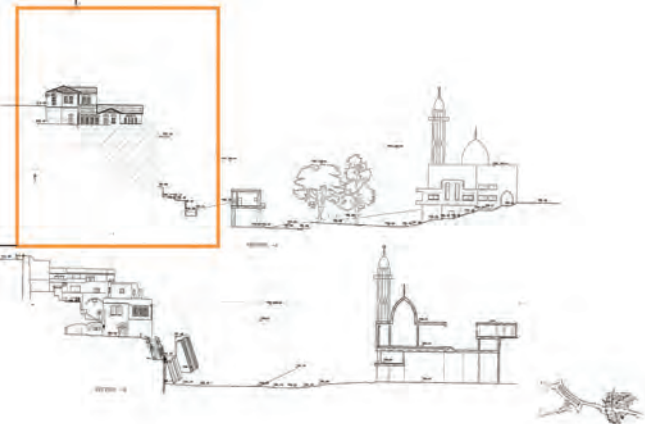


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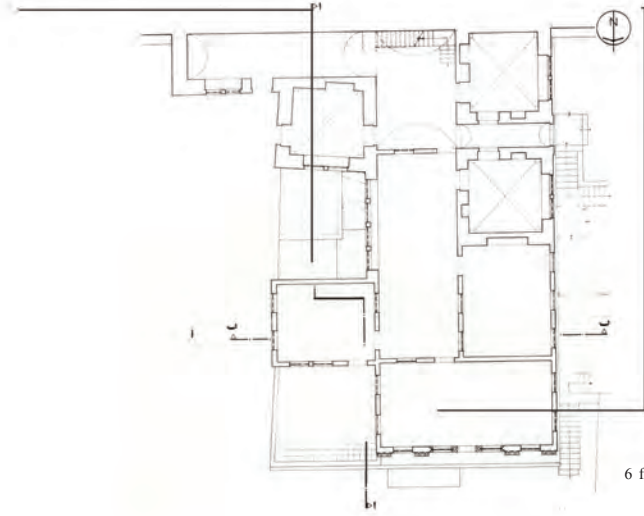
The architectural character of the city can be attributed to its history of political prominence, the most relevant of which being its status as the capital of the southern region of the Ottoman Empire. This rich past was enough to warrant the city's rebirth as a potential UNESCO world heritage site under the banner of urban renewal. Such attention will in due time place higher demands on the city in the form of tourism. The site is at the center of this attention where three government buildings were recently demolished to reveal a back drop of the city's more important historical buildings. Thus the projects main concern will be to streamline the touristic experience in such a way that does not override the potential social benefit to the indigenous culture. It is in this vein that an attempt will be made to integrate the architectural heritage into the city's everyday fabric resulting in an example of living heritage which visitors will have the opportunity to experience. There have already been efforts in an important neighboring building, which has been renovated and due to its diverse and generous space is set to become a visitor center. The site's facade back drop is also on course to receive due renovations, while no such plans currently exist for the interior spaces.



4 fair use guidelines



5 fair use guidelines



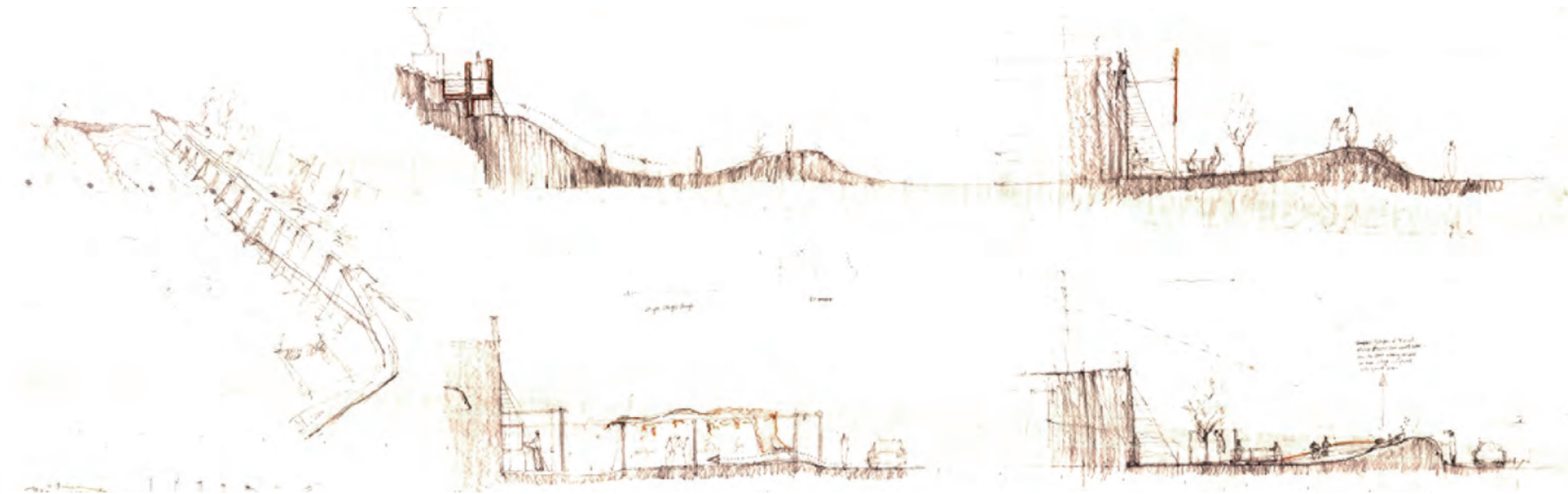
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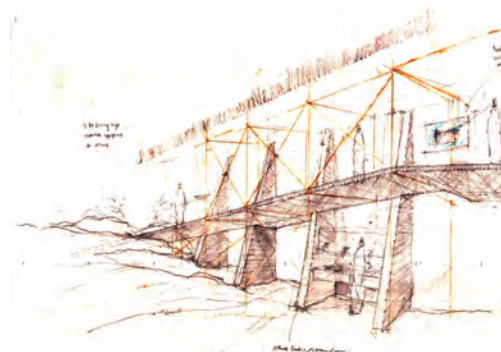
This leads to the condition of a very unique building, which I had the opportunity of intimately examining. It is the tallest building in the sites back drop and from its third storie allows greater revealing views of the city. Such conditions are appropriate for receiving the public in venues that offer a vantage point on the cities rich architectural heritage. Furthermore it sits against a higher backstreet, which endows it with the potential of spatially and programmatically linking the residential presence up the hillside with social functions below



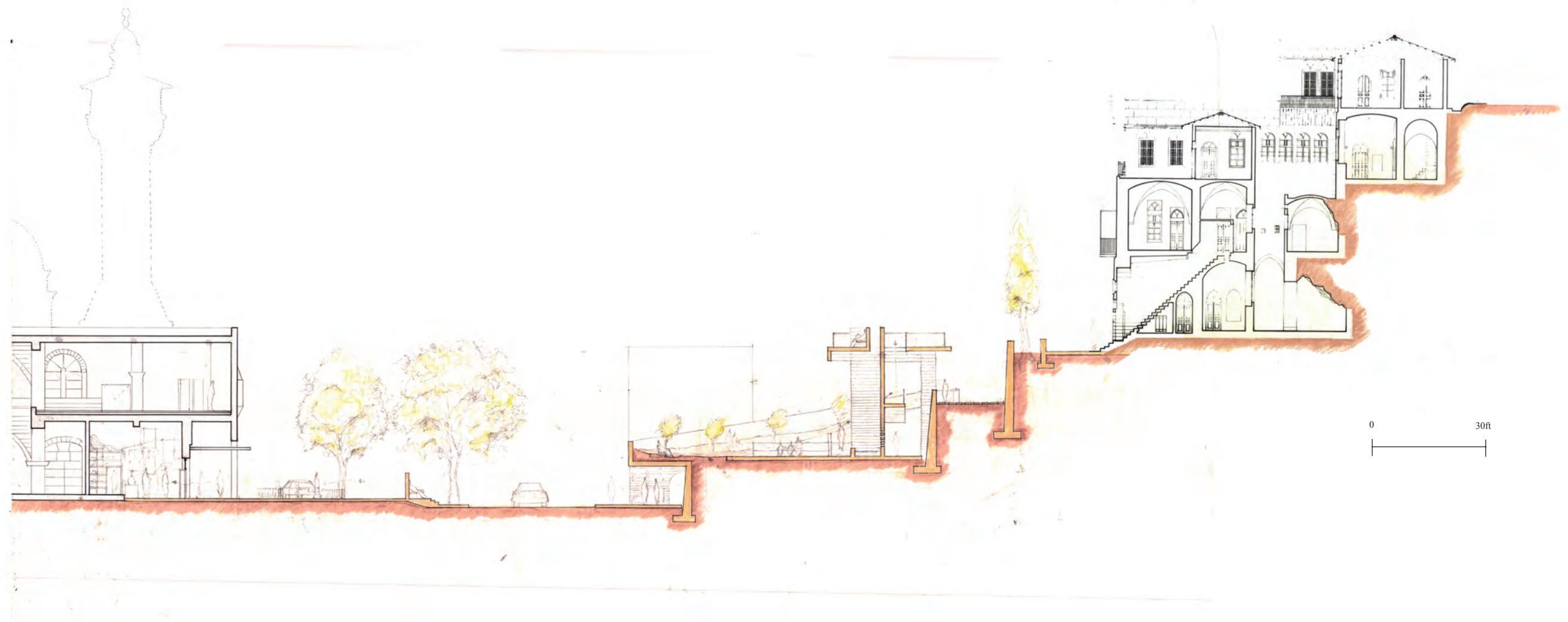
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Components of design:
Stitching the city and
the site



There are several other components which constituted the complexity of the site besides the presence of the historic building and excavation site. It was through an architectural dialogue that I first intuitively attempted to unravel and understand the nature of these components and the potential they hold towards the areas social and civic needs, and it is through the dialogue of these components with one another that the architecture was gradually molded. The first of these components is the exploration of the land as cradle for social and civic life as it relates sectionally to the street. Which includes the existing retaining wall which was under investigation to determine what kind of contribution if any it would make in supporting the city's civic life



Section cutting through the fabric of the city and an elevated historic building with the site as a mediator

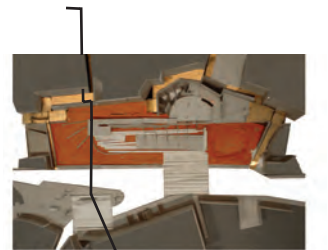




diagram a

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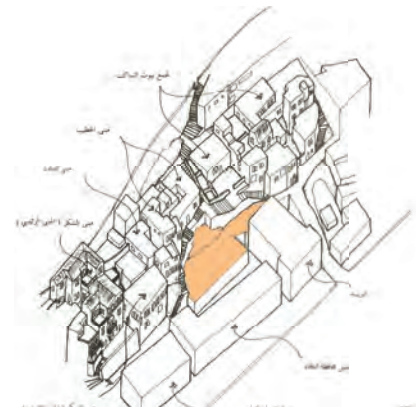


diagram b

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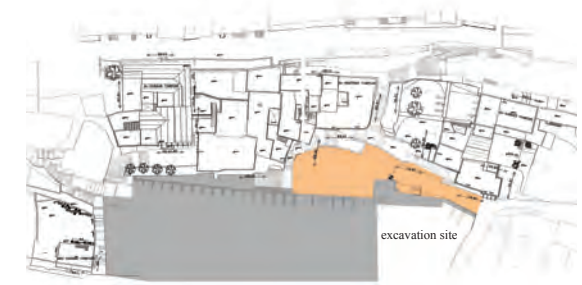


diagram c



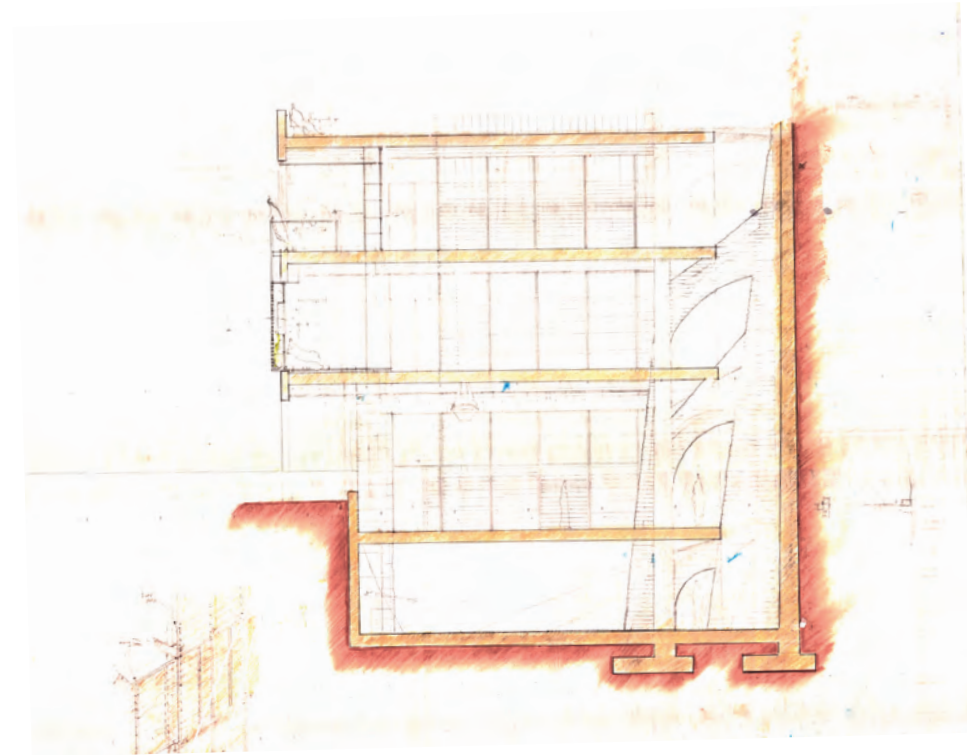
model photo of general site layout



Photograph of historic complex taken from the top of previously existing police station

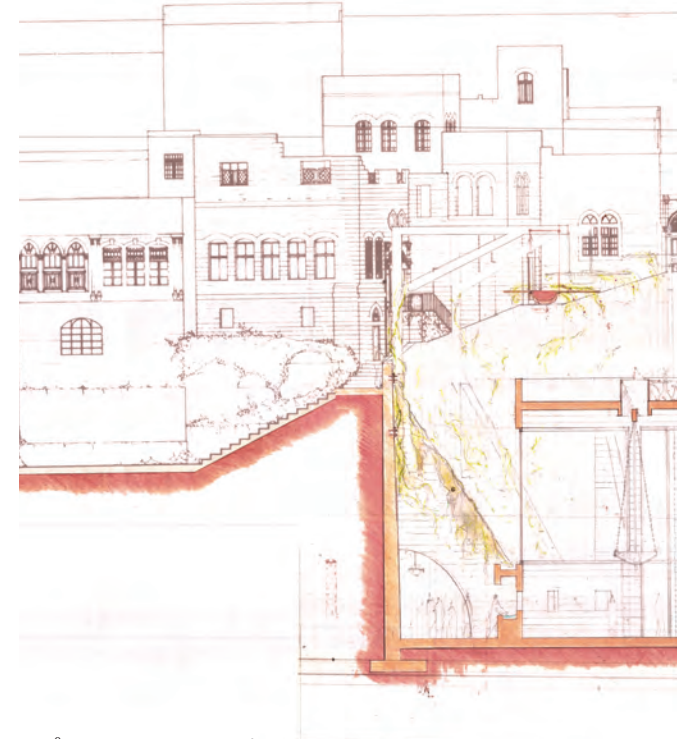
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The previous positions of the demolished buildings are highlighted in white in diagram a, and represented in wire frame in diagram b. As mentioned in the introduction the removal of these buildings was in line with the city's intent to preserve the sight lines to the architectural heritage from the main street below. It is in this vein that after examining the existing retaining wall a decision was made to remake the order of the retaining structure and make an incision into the hill side in the vacant areas not occupied by the historic buildings, to provide the facility to meet the community's social and civic needs without blocking the sight lines from the street towards the historic backdrop. This particular area later to become the nucleus of the project and the main civic hall is represented in orange in all of the above three diagram and is dug out right up to the paths which give access to the historic buildings, represented in orange in the model photo left, while the rest of the area of intervention is represented in gray in the diagram c. The result of this intervention in concept established the foundation for a holistic understanding of the site, in which later ideas could be integrated and refined This is represented in the model photograph with the earth represented in red.



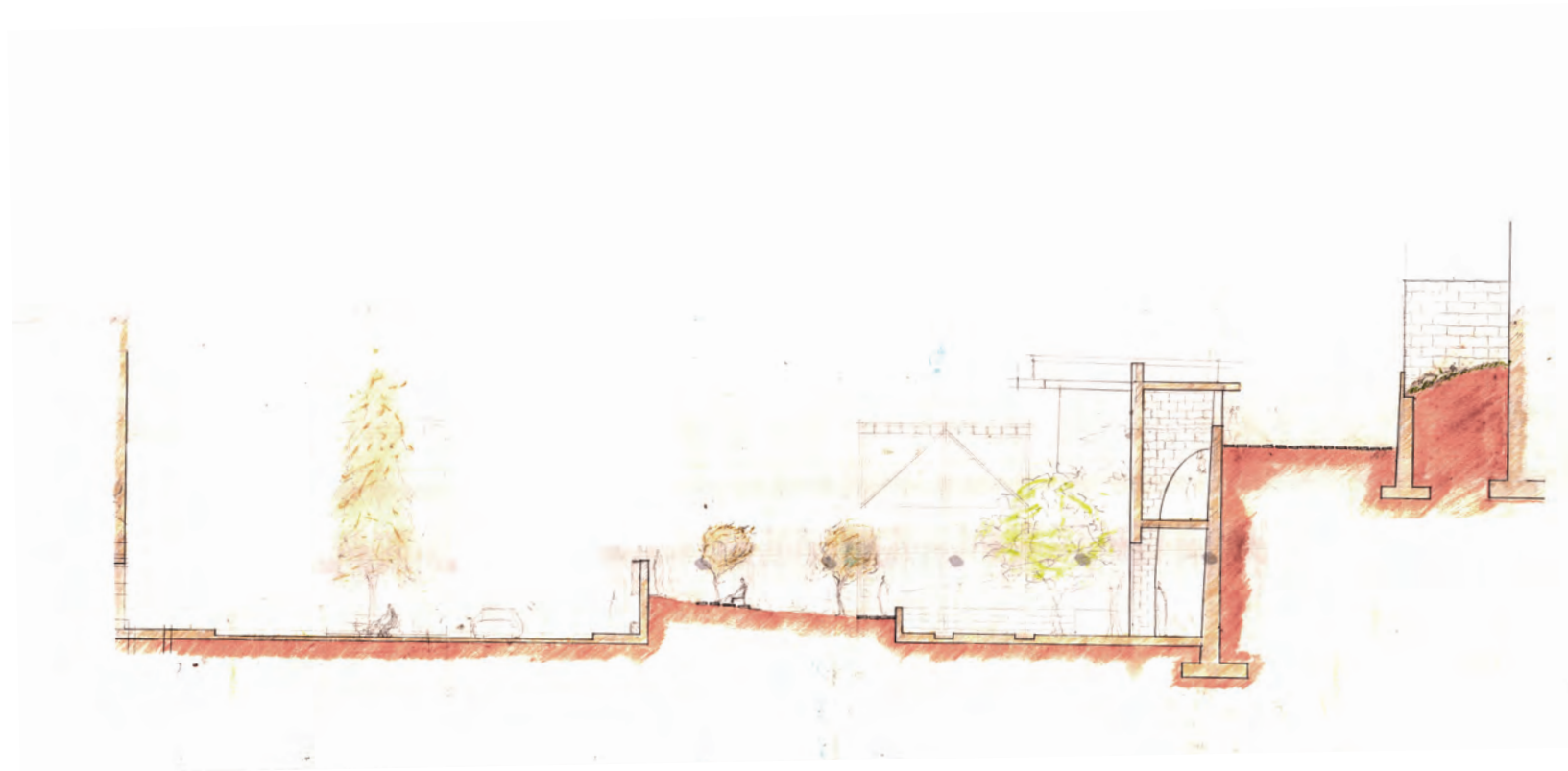
0 25ft

Section a



0 35ft

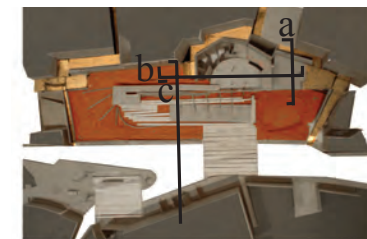
Section b



0 25ft

Section c

Allowing the retaining element of the site to become a malleable component of the design process that is in dialogue with projects other priorities gave the opportunity for it to be reintegrated within the new design scheme as an architecture that cradles life within the project, as can be seen in the examples above.



Components of design: accessibility

The second component is the flow of circulation throughout the site. The decision had been made to allow the landscape to terrace in a curved pattern and connect the site with existing paths and terraces in a presentation that gradually elevates the participants towards the city's rich backdrop and gives access to its precious architectural heritage where they would finally reach an area of repose in the midst of all that history on the roof cafe of the main hall. The architecture on the site becomes a vehicle to engender maximum participation with the city's heritage, where it once concealed it. It became clear however, as the circulation patterns of the visitors and the local ritual participants were being drawn that the design of the main hall needed to negotiate the presence of both. It needed to be responsive to the privacy of the local rituals while sustaining the continuity and choice in the visitors' experience. Diagram "a" shows an early design of the main hall portion that hosted incidental abrupt exposure of both local ritual participants and heritage visitors, highlighting the delicacy needed in designing the spatial sequences of their engagement. This was handled through breaking the direct lines of sight. An important example of this was rather than providing an atrium like experience with a center opening the decision was made for capping the main hall giving rise to the grotto space as part of the retaining structures order for light and air access. From there procession through the building was conceived through a series of buffer spaces in which different interest groups could gradually grow accustomed to each others presence, spaces which could be enjoyed on their own merits. The concepts of movement and gathering between these different interest groups constituted the architectural frame work in which later ideas would take hold, and formed the core of the project. Diagram "b" below was an initial exploration of such concepts.

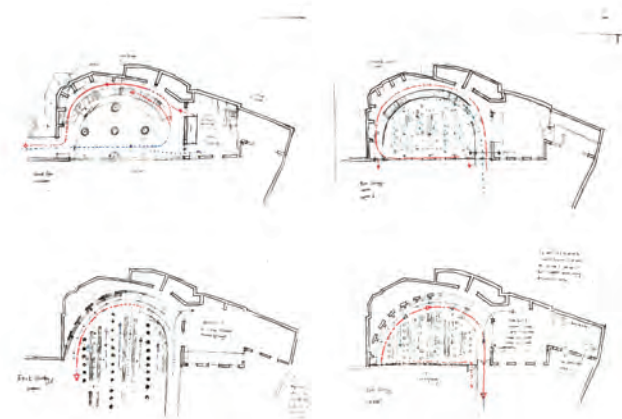


diagram b

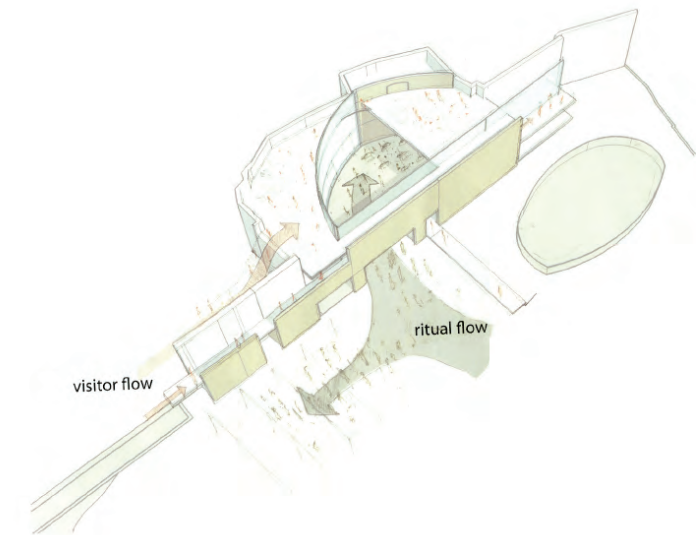


diagram a



model photo showing earth ramp ascent

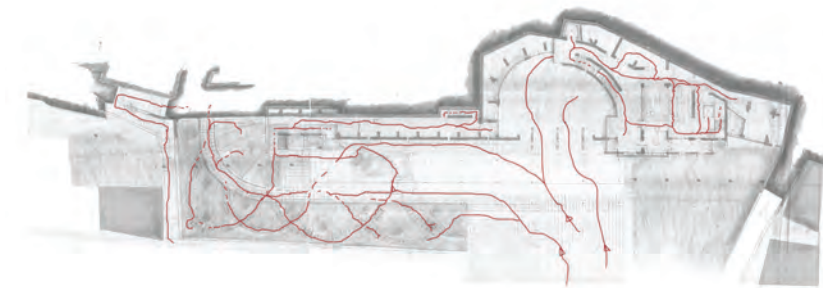
roof access 2



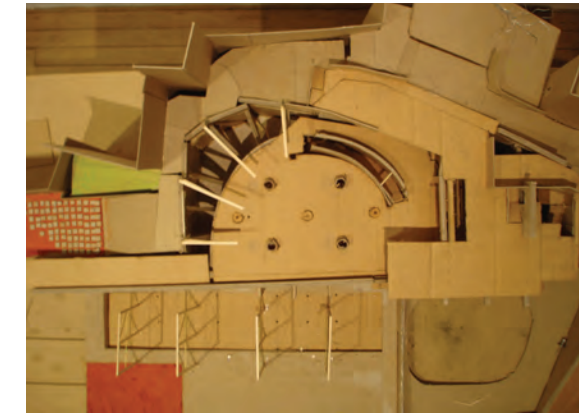
roof access 1



mezzanine access



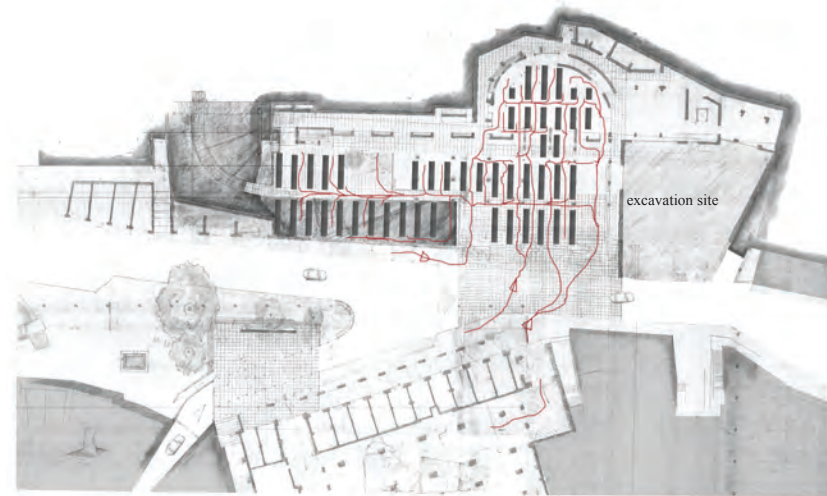
street level access



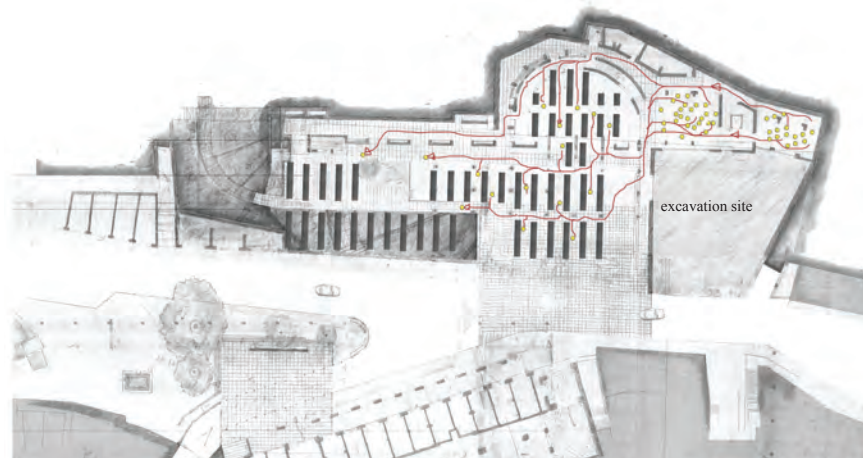
Model Photo of top view of the main hall

The circulation throughout the site is one where the participants can craft their own experience of the site by choosing many of the branching paths that are available at several points of the project. This empowers the project with a sense of discovery, which is mostly emphasized in the curved ascending ramp. The ramps articulation presented an opportunity to provide a variety of choices in the nature of the paths giving access to the historical buildings. At the center there is a stair cutting through the land to provide immediate access to the platform above, the further on moves along the radius of the ramp the greater the potential for a slower paced, less busy and less direct journey. The choice of procession disperses the density of traffic moving up the hillside. In light of this an understanding of ramps occupation at its various stages as an area of leisure and recreation emerges allowing for it to be developed as the park element of the site. By seeing the potential in this particular situation the site is molded through the design to address the needs of the city.

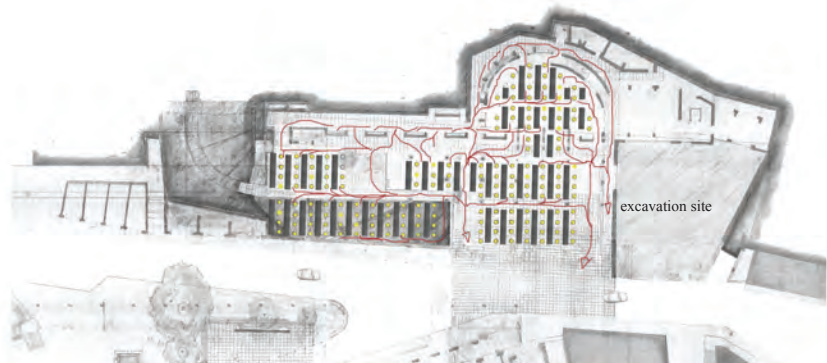
Entrance access strategy of mansaf ritual



Distribution access strategy of mansaf ritual



Exit access strategy of mansaf ritual



The relationship of the circulation patterns to the architecture explored in the previous pages is like a river, branching and changing course to fit the purpose of the spaces it runs through. It becomes paramount to reveal then how, during a major event, the now specific and established circulatory patterns of the town rituals' various stages are hosted by the architecture, and its spaces. The stage of arrival is one where invited guests which could range anywhere from 200 to 1000 people, filter in within an hour prior to a predetermined lunch date, which is often on Fridays after prayer. After informal greetings the guests then proceed to find a seat of their choice.

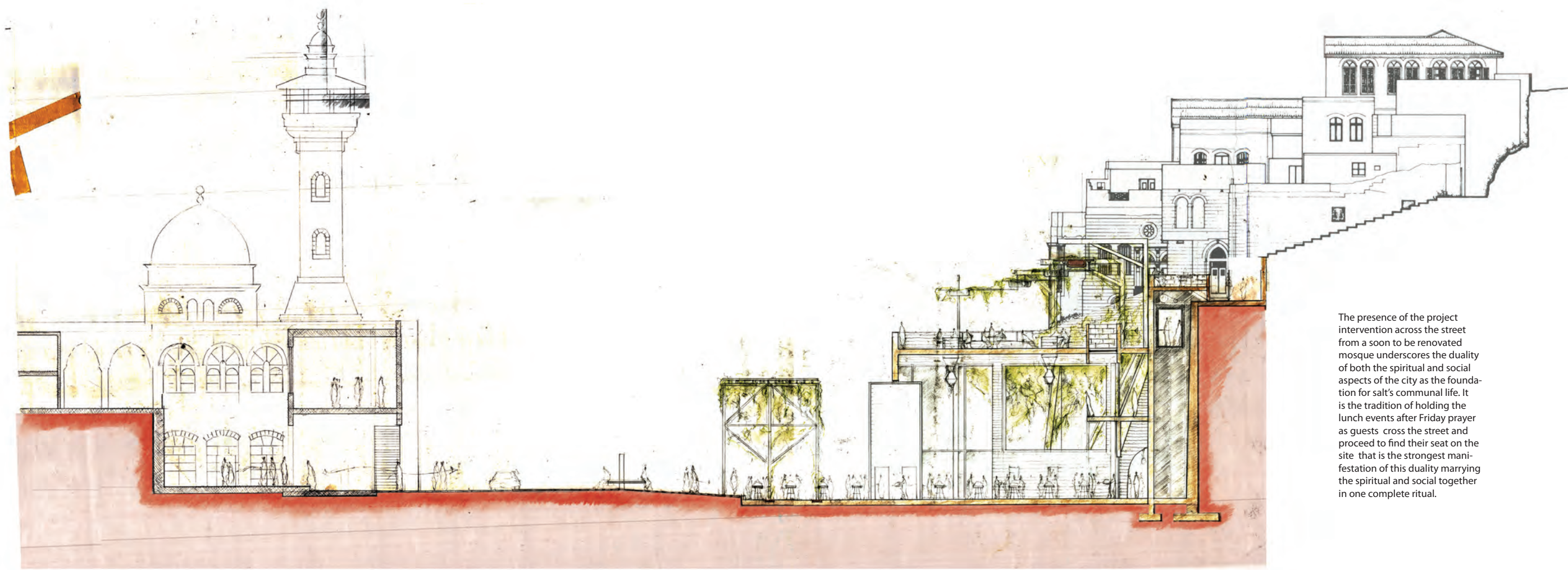
After an elapsed period of time where guests greet each other and socialize, the distribution of the feast begins by the host family using a number of different servers. The design recognizes the importance of providing branching routes of access for distribution in order to cover the extensive ritual ground as quickly and efficiently as possible, an understanding of accessibility that extends to all phases of the ritual. It is out of mutual respect and equality that no one is to begin eating until all meals are distributed and all platters uncovered. The moment in time where the guests wait for the host to welcome them to their respective platters is captured in the photograph above.

Once the host family makes the gesture for people to begin enjoying their feast every one gets up from their seats and proceed to the platter nearest to them. Three to Five is often the number of people per platter to comfortably occupy a sector of the dish. The guests begin eating with their cleansed palms while welcoming each other to the most tender portions of meat and biggest chunks of fat as a sign of generosity and brotherhood (Natural fat is good when in Salt). This is the climax of the event where the beauty of the ritual is personified through the breaking down of boundaries, and reinforcing of kinship bonds. It has been a personal honour to have had the opportunity to partake in such an event on several different occasions.

Finally there is the departure phase of the event which logistically is the most complex for several reasons, The first reason is because every one is prepared to leave within a constricted time frame once they are finished with their meal. The second reason is because most everyone makes their way to water basins which on the site are stretched out along its length to allow for easy access and prevent congestion. The third reason is that most every one funnels into a single file to formally thank the hosts before leaving who stand side by side in a single line to accept appreciation for their efforts. The longitudinal space adjacent to the excavation sites half wall buffer is suited for this, as it is elevated and therefore easier for the guests to identify from a distance.

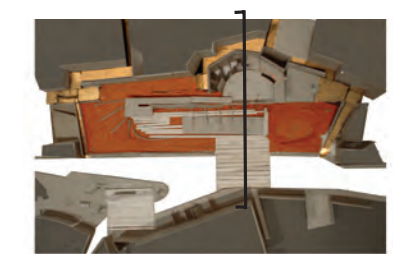


picture of distribution phase of mansaf ritual



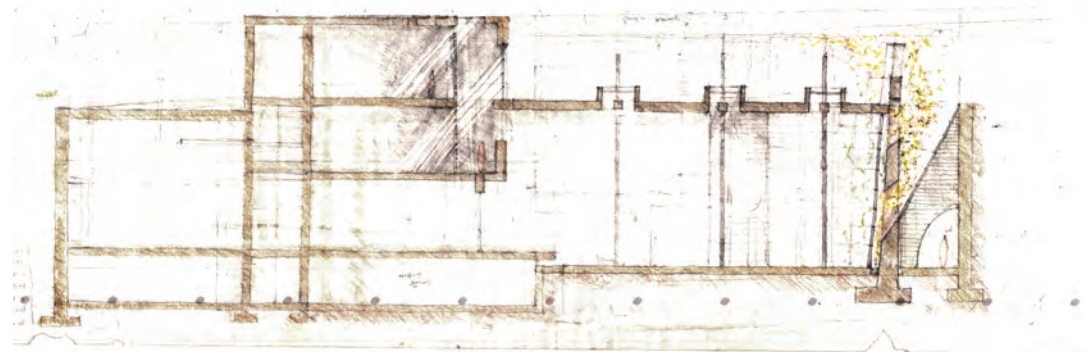
The presence of the project intervention across the street from a soon to be renovated mosque underscores the duality of both the spiritual and social aspects of the city as the foundation for salt's communal life. It is the tradition of holding the lunch events after Friday prayer as guests cross the street and proceed to find their seat on the site that is the strongest manifestation of this duality marrying the spiritual and social together in one complete ritual.

section a through main hall and adjacent mosque across the street

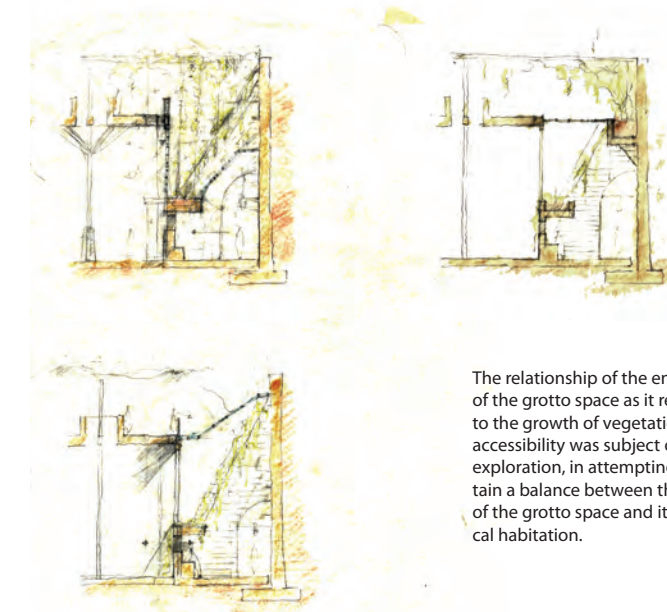
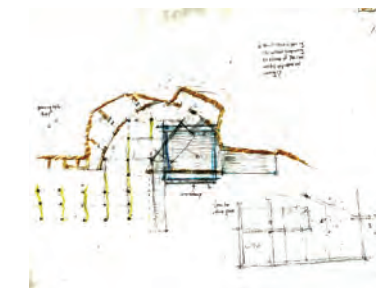
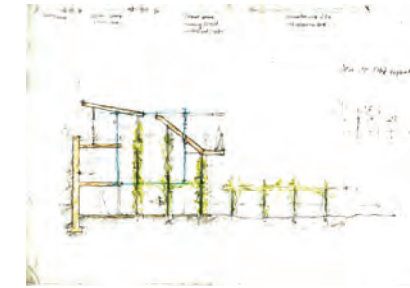




model photo 4: of grotto space from within the main hall



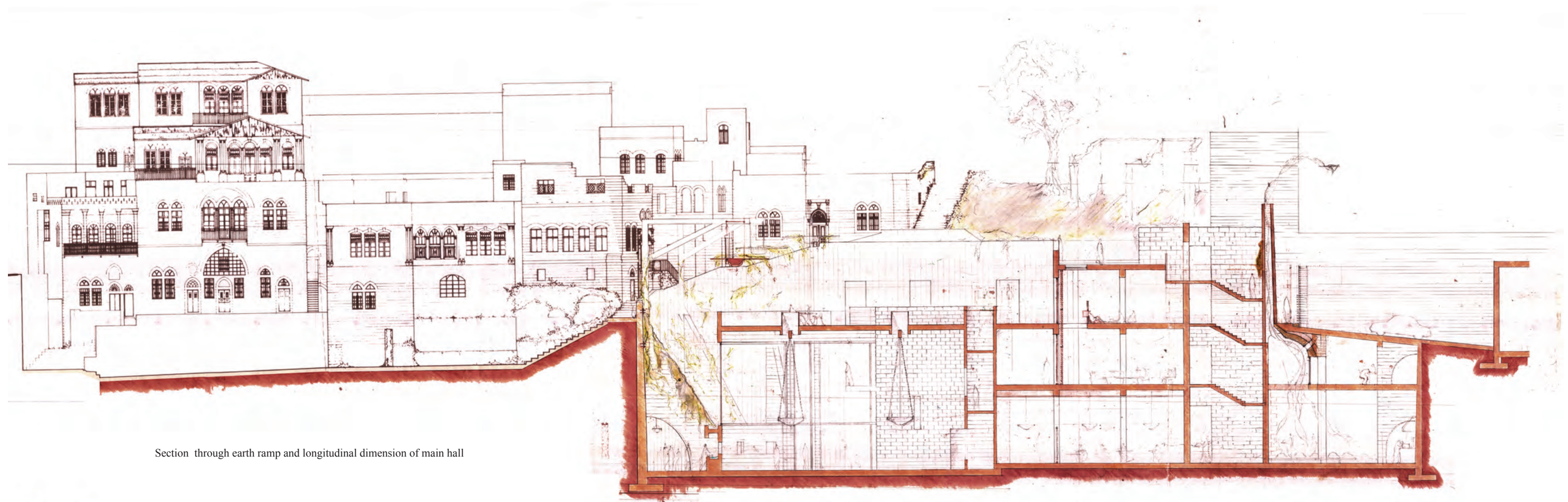
concept section of grotto space as it relates to the main hall and the rest of the civic center



The relationship of the enclosure of the grotto space as it relates to the growth of vegetation and accessibility was subject of intense exploration, in attempting to attain a balance between the theme of the grotto space and its practical habitation.

Components of design: entering a mountain

The third major component of the design process was the drive to create a sense of continuity between the outdoor and indoor spaces on the site, the goal of which being a sense of openness and community. This is especially important with regard to the major rituals on site would occupy the sites indoor and outdoor spaces. From this desire several ideas were born, one of which was to allow the landscape into the building via the vertical garden grotto, that is integrated with circulation scheme of the ritual, and is the wash space of the main civic hall. In this instance the desire for light and landscape as part of the inner spaces of the project was particularly great to counteract the oppressive sensation of what was essentially entering into a large cave. This approach was a means to reconcile the need to build the program in to the mountain side to preserve the view of the historic background with the civic and social purpose of the spaces within.

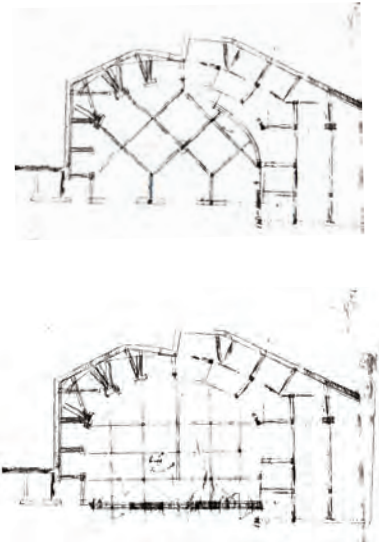


Section through earth ramp and longitudinal dimension of main hall



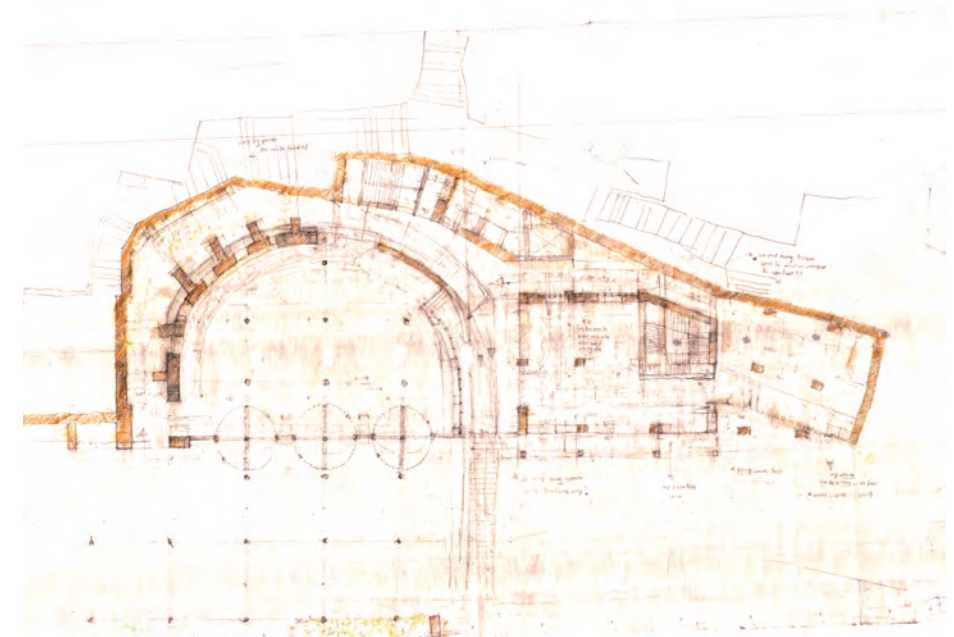
.....in a presentation that gradually elevates the participant towards the city's rich backdrop and gives access to its precious architectural heritage. where they would finally reach an area of repose in the midst of all that history on the roof of the main hall that was carved out of the mountain side. The architecture on the site becomes a vehicle to engender maximum participation with the city's heritage, where it once concealed it.





explorations of roof support structure

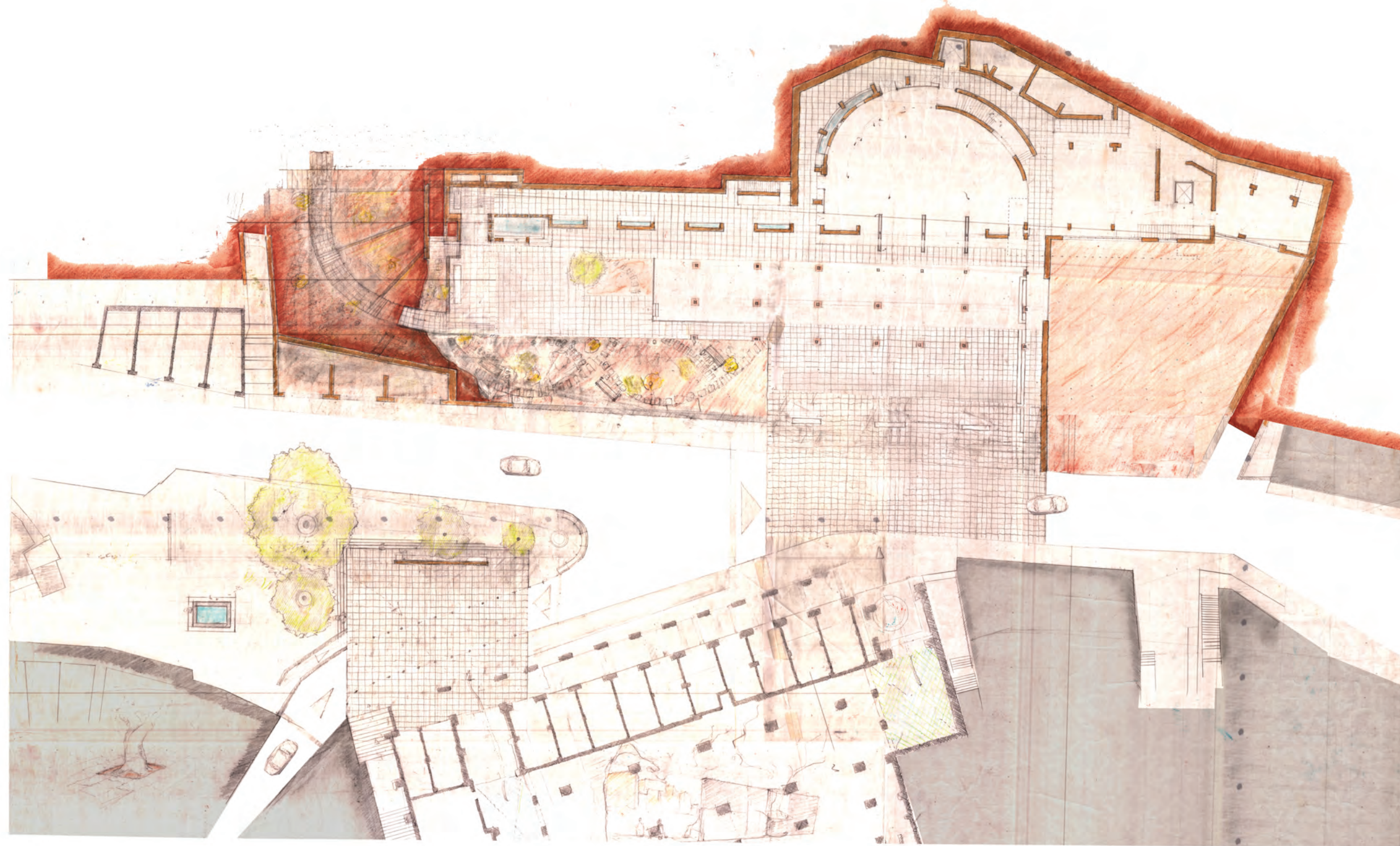
A second idea was to extend the grid of the grape vine support into the building as the structural support of the roof of the main hall to align the exterior and interior grid's, further strengthening the connection between the spaces on either side of the building envelope. This concept had momentum at first, but when it hit the reality concerning the structural complexities of having to reconcile the grids structure with the curved semi-circular volume of the main hall the limitations of this idea began to appear. The idea was discarded when new ideas filled the space of the main hall and the composition of its curved back drop grew in complexity. The columns began to clutter the spatial composition which was focused on giving clear views to the vertical vegetation of the grotto space and facilitating the social rhythms of the main hall. A set of large revolving doors followed by low hung lanterns were what was left from the initial inner column of grids to usher ones experience from the rhythm of the grape grid into the grand openness of the main hall, as an open invitation for participation.



initial column layout within main hall



view of main hall from above with roof removed

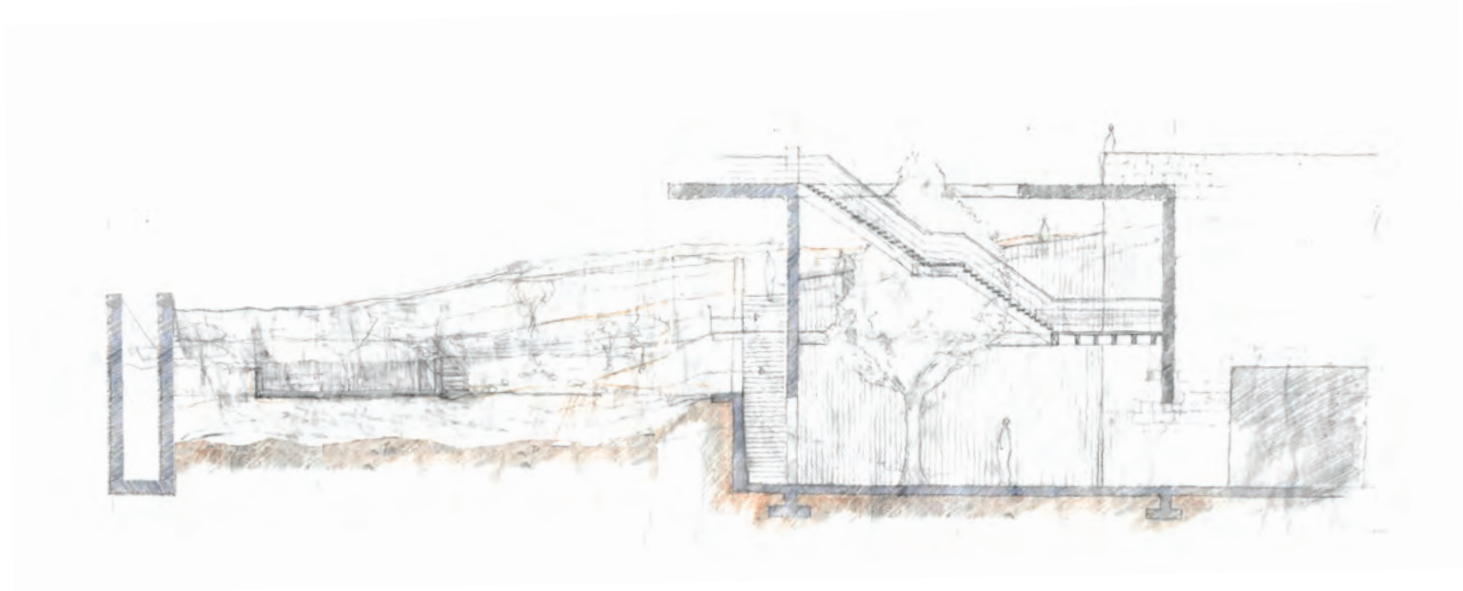


Beyond the initial area of the intervention developed an understanding for the need to reclaim parts of the street to give priority for pedestrian access and habitation. This was especially needed in the street area between the mosque and commercial retail establishments and the community center aspect of the project across to facilitate pedestrian access. It became evident that by the same means that potential of the pedestrian nose that defines the fork in the road, would be unlocked as a area of gathering for the mosque. The strength of this approach is further reinforced by the presence of magnificent trees over the area that act as beautiful shade canopies. Ramps have been put in to place to mediate the height difference of these newly paved areas with the street.

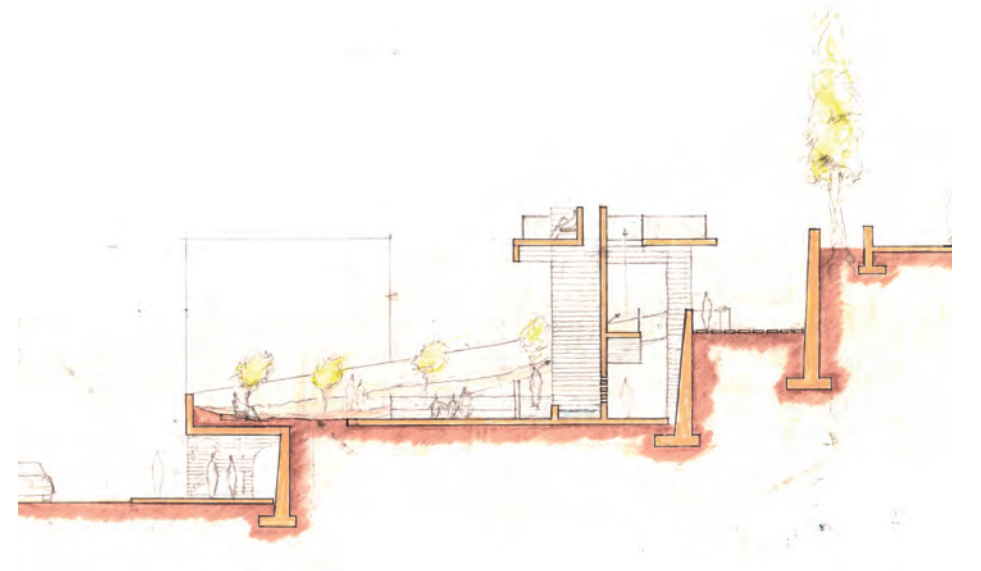
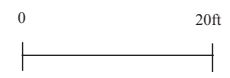
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street level plan

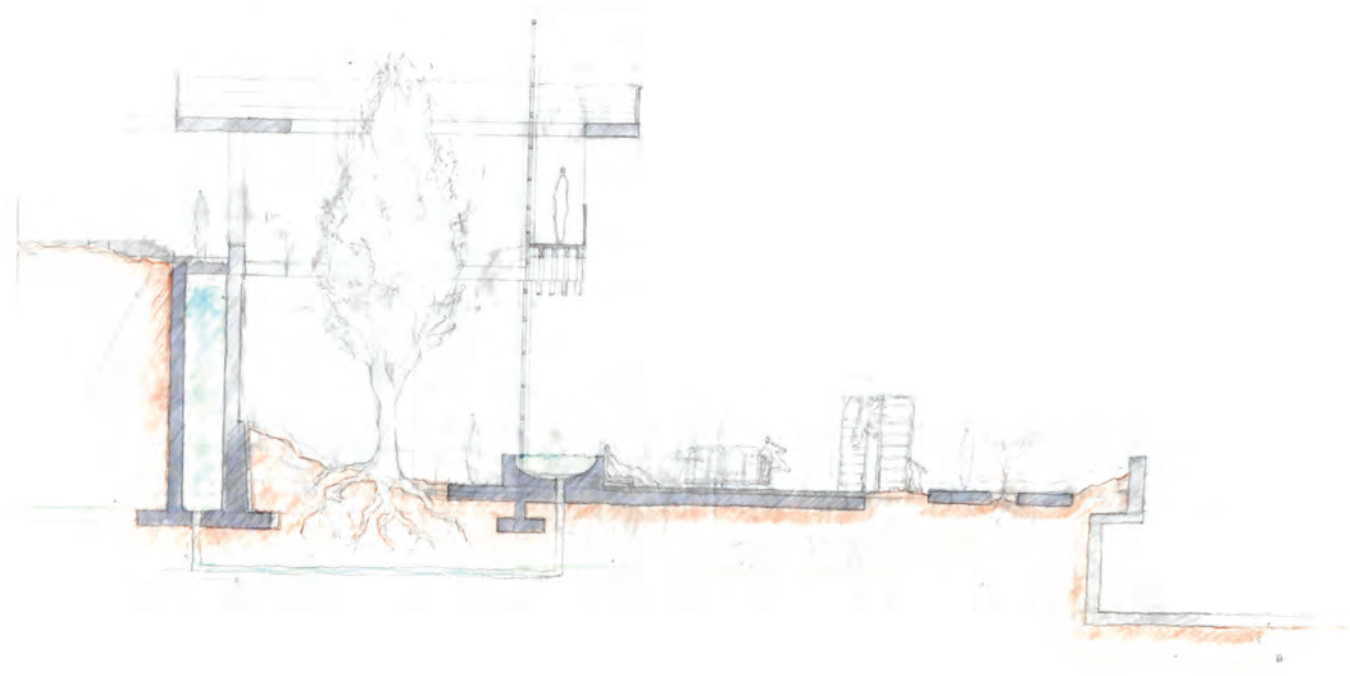
→ N



section a



section c

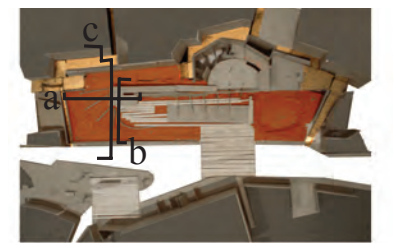


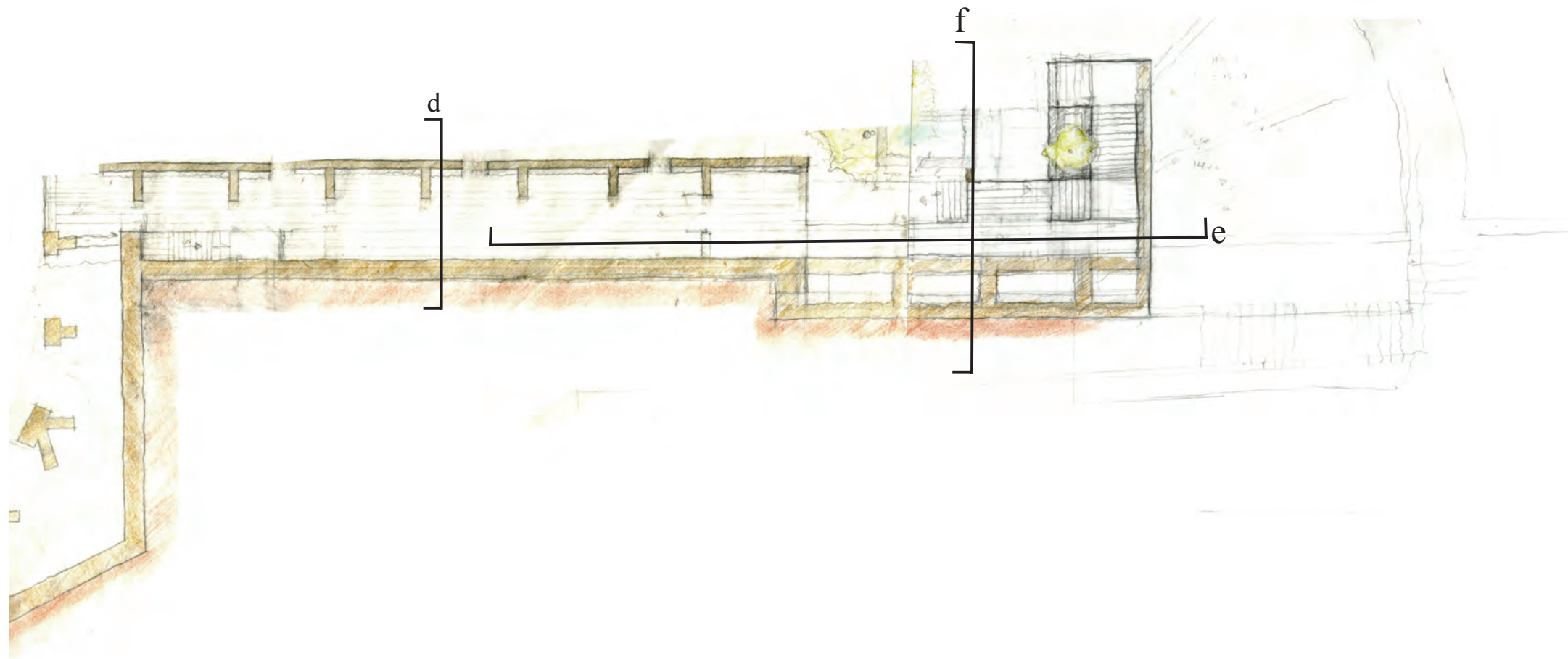
section b



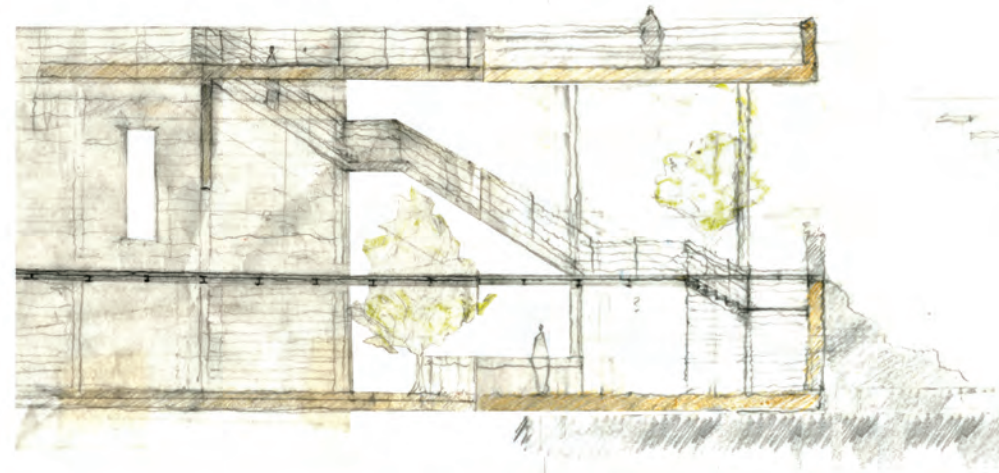
Grotto

The second grotto space around which the landscape curves and ascends was an exploration of how the walls which gave shape to the retained earth would allow for the opportunity of a pavilion like experience where landscape inhabits the architectural elements like a precious object on display for the passing participants. The explorations above were an attempt to negotiate the scale at which this relationship is expressed. Sections a and b are early concepts which demonstrate a large scale for the landscape while the rest are developed finished schemes that are spatially generous allowing less cramped setting for the landscape installations to be appreciated in. This idea was wrapped with vertical circulation through the grotto space to reach the upper platform which gives access to the roof level cafe.

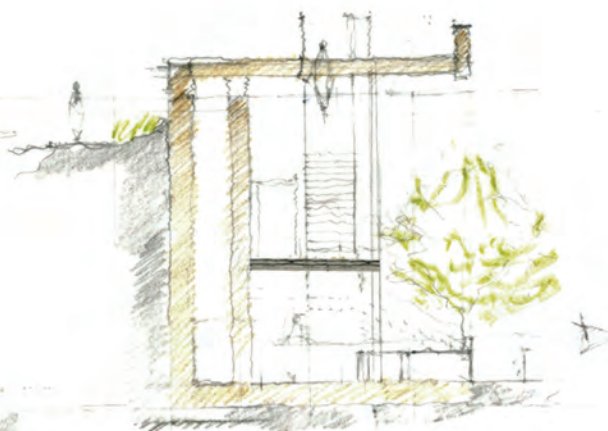




section d

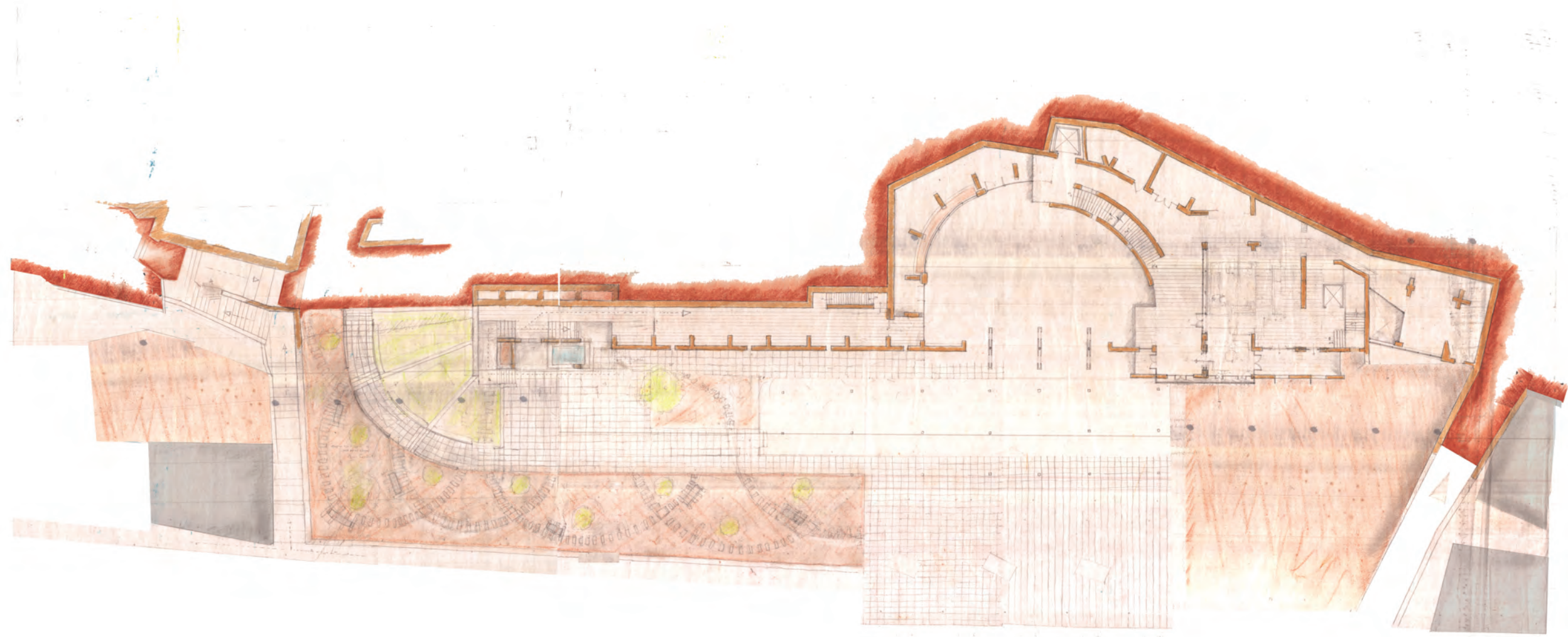


section e



section f





Mezzanine

The idea of constricting sight lines and establishing buffer areas within the building permitted the development of fairly open and inviting schemes while retaining the intimacy and privacy of personal space. This is especially significant for the mezzanine floor level where despite people being free to pass through to and from roof level access, the floor can also be closed off to operate independently as a suite in the time of special events such as women's private gatherings

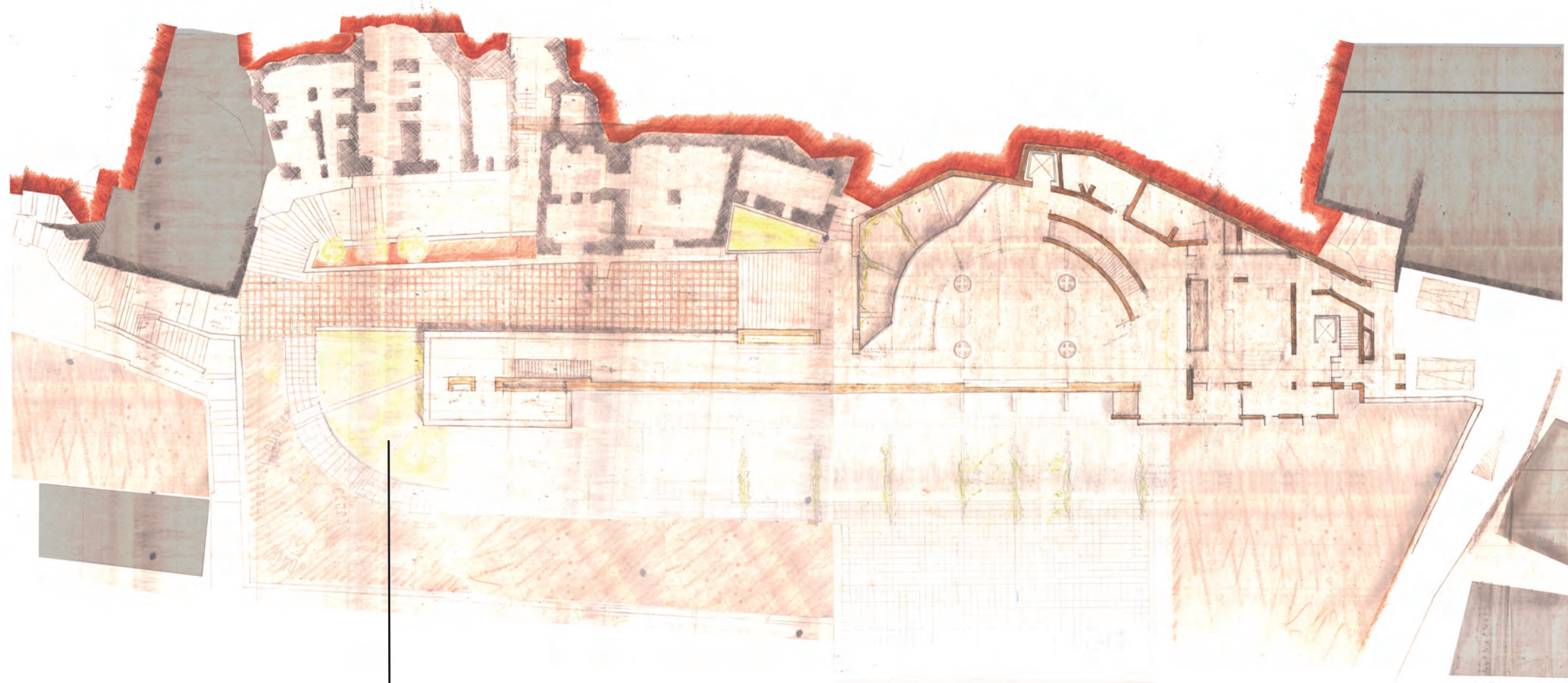
Mezzanine level plan





Comparison

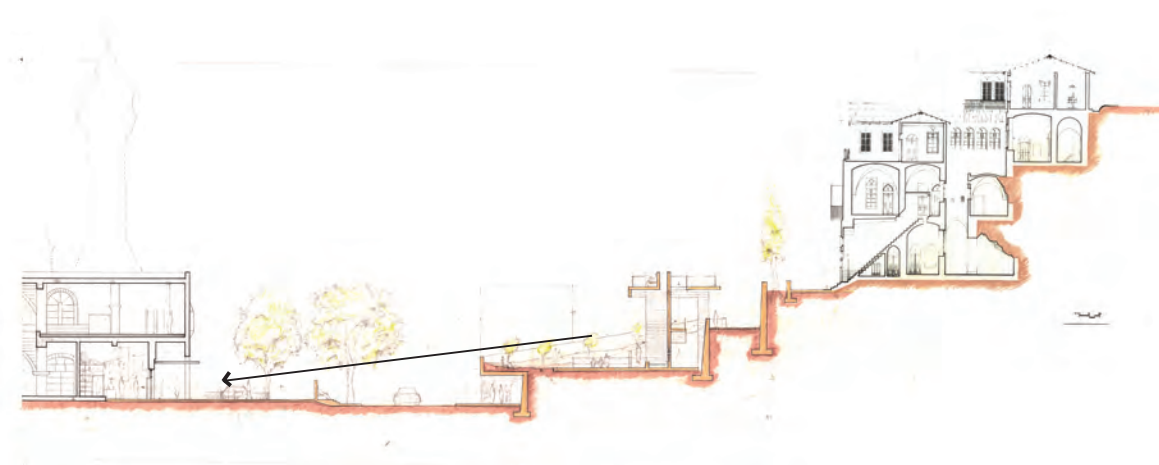
The main hall architecture in many ways represents the synthesis and convergence of the three site components discussed initially melted and stirred through the processes described above and made into a mold that is balanced in addressing each component and harmonious in its spatial composition. In providing dual examples showing the project model with and without the roof of the main hall the pair of photographs become a visual reference to one another. This is the key by which ideas surrounding the architecture can be revealed and appreciated within their proper context.

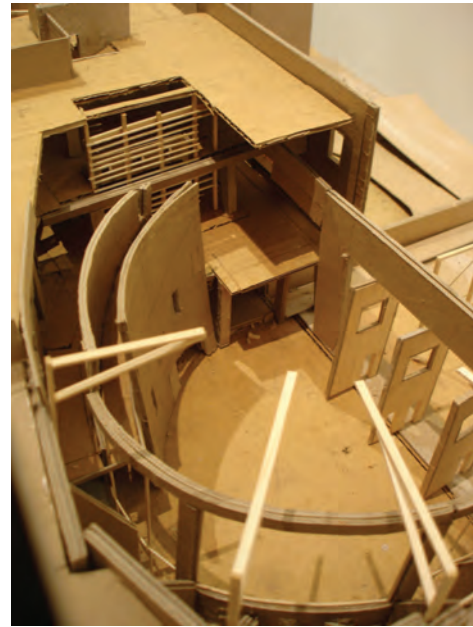


roof 1 level plan

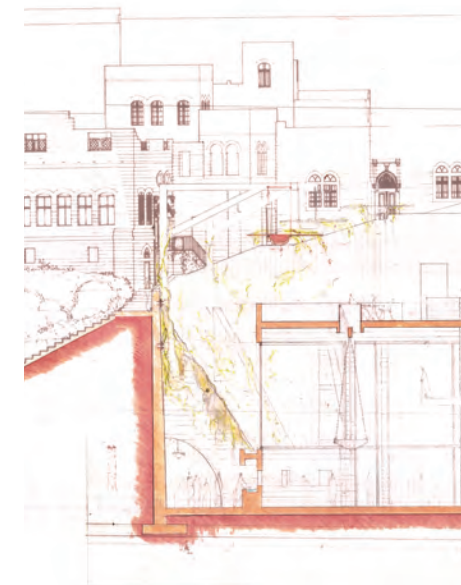
Hillside Theatre

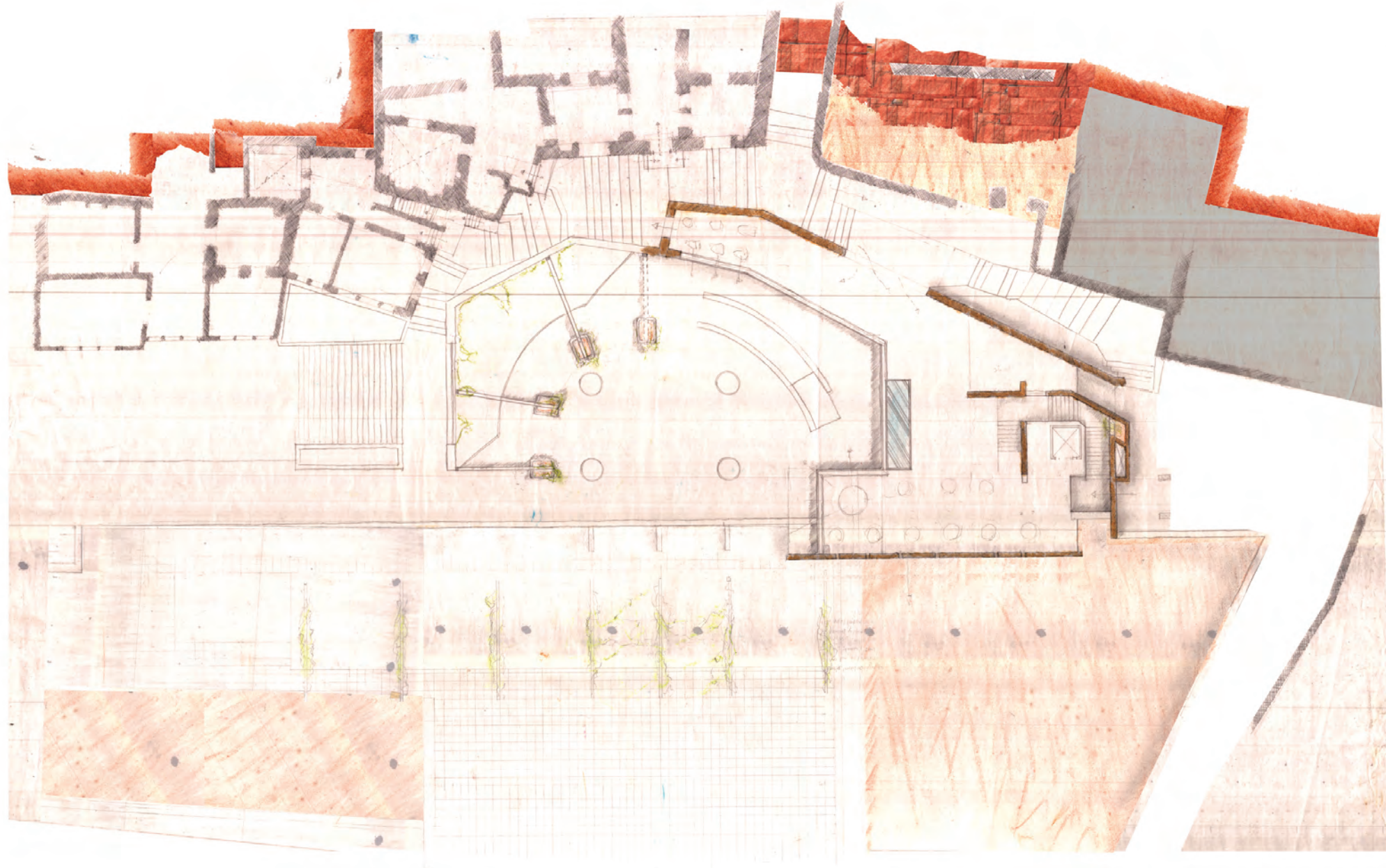
The areas in green represent areas of repose that arise as an opportunity because of the circumstantial relation between solid and void as well as preestablished circulation paths. The areas along the circumventing ramp are of special significance as one can settle along the slope to watch the theatre of the city unfold beneath them. This relationship is an example of how the project has the purpose of extending its influence into the fabric of the neighborhood as it strives to reconnect the city with its people and its heritage.





vertical garden

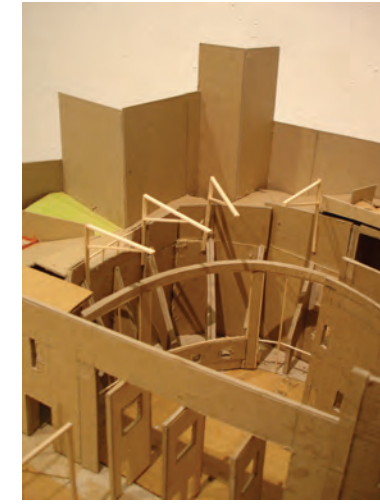




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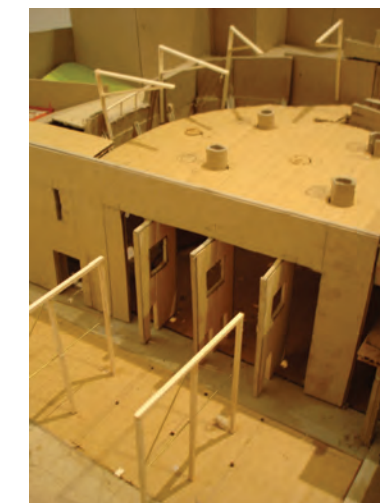
roof 2 level plan





Discovery

The grotto space access from the site is one that is unsuspecting in its redundancy along the facade of the building, which empowers it with a sense of discovery as one crosses the mundane threshold in compression and then is released into a vertical garden space grotto.



Graphics

All images are by the author unless stated otherwise:-

1 The royal science organization, *the architectural heritage of the Hashemite kingdom of Jordan: salt .18*

2 document granted by the ministry of tourism and antiquities for the purpose of educational use

3 The royal science organization, *the architectural heritage of the Hashemite kingdom of Jordan: salt .88*

4 The royal science organization, *the architectural heritage of the Hashemite kingdom of Jordan: salt .107*

5 document granted by the ministry of tourism and antiquities for the purpose of educational use

6 The royal science organization, *the architectural heritage of the Hashemite kingdom of Jordan: salt .103*

7 The royal science organization, *the architectural heritage of the Hashemite kingdom of Jordan: salt .99*

8-Bitarconsultants Architects Engineerings Project Managers Amman, Jordan,*THIRD TOURISM DEVELOPMENT PROJECT Cultural Heritage, Tourism And Urban Development Project.02*

9-The royal science organization, *the architectural heritage of the Hashemite kingdom of Jordan: salt .75*

10-The royal science organization, *the architectural heritage of the Hashemite kingdom of Jordan: salt .75*

11-<http://travel.webshots.com/photo/1486874864029106565iMBqsy>





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