

The following design thesis is submitted to the faculty of Virginia Polytechnical Institute and state University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of **Master of Architecture.**

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# Architecture and the Crisis of Place

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*“ In a world more and more consumed by the artificial realities of electronic technology, architecture serves not just as the physical construct embodying the essence of our time, but more importantly as an experience of the elements of reality to which our responses, both physical and psychological, make us human.”*

*Karsten Harries in “The Voices of Space”*

Throughout time architects have created buildings and spaces imbued with meaning and significance. The desire to achieve that *meaningfulness of place* inspires both the creative process and our passion to build. But what is it that makes a place meaningful? For architects, especially young architects, grappling with this question causes as much consternation as it does inspiration.

As individuals, we assess the meaning of things through a model of perception based on our own experience and understanding of the world around us. Every age and culture has a predominant model of perception shaped by the forces of the *zeitgeist*, the spirit of the age. From Stonehenge to St. Peter's, from the fortified cities of the middle ages to the steel and concrete canyon megalopolis of modern urbanity, architecture has always embodied its particular "spiritual" context. For architects and all the creators of our built environment, the process of design and the making of place, have often been a way of reconciling ourselves with the world around us. It is a way of making tangible a diversity of ideas rooted in social critic. Like cultural anthropologists, we look at society and its evolution to inspire and guide us in determining the role and meaning of architecture in a constantly changing world. We now live in a very complex time where meaning and value in the experiences of our daily lives are difficult to discern. It is an age of simulation, of projected realities, of image. This is the so-called *information age*.

How then does the architect contend with our current social condition? From what do we draw guidance to create meaningful places? Ultimately, what is the role of architecture in this emerging information age?

## Introduction

### Observations:

To adequately address these questions it is important to understand the predominant model of perception taking shape in the minds of modern (*wo*) man. Let us paint a brief portrait of our cultural landscape.

According to IBM<sup>1</sup> since the late 1970's information technology has developed as if all of the canals, railways, cars, and airplanes in history had been invented and commercialized in 15 years. This rate of change, this continuous flux, has made the world a very complex place. From telecommunications to 'soft-form' networking, new information technology is revolutionizing industry, commerce, and the activities of everyday life, and is creating a global community, electronically interconnecting virtually the entire planet. It is truly a revolution, and with change like this, perceptual and cosmological paradigm shifts seem eminent. To paraphrase Michael Benedickt<sup>2</sup>- our current environment is a place where the inner landscapes of our minds are being shaped by the images and messages carried by the various communication media. Electronic media, especially television and increasingly the vast digital world of computers, are the windows and walls of this new environment. These simulated worlds

are threatening the necessary spiritual and concrete connections human's have with our immediate physical environment. Some critics believe we who live in the US already inhabit the worlds first 'technopoly' in which all forms of cultural life have submitted to the sovereignty of technique and technology.<sup>3</sup>

I wouldn't paint quite such a dystopic vision of things. I would, however, agree with Marshall McLuhan when he said media is an extension of our senses and described the effect of new media technology as steadily and without resistance altering consciousness by changing what he called our "sensory balance"<sup>4</sup>. This sensory balance helps shape our model of perception by which we interpret our experiences in this world. Certain deleterious effects of the emerging new age are causing shifts in our sensory balance, and should be of utmost concern to architects.

The experience of life in modern society is increasingly occurring in the realm of artificial realities, image, and simulation. There is, as a result, a crisis of authenticity which is pervasive in our culture. It is a crisis rooted in unchecked technological development, developments not truly concerned with the essence of what it is to be human.

The first issue stems from the intangible nature of this electronic world and the illusion and simulation that is the nature of experiencing it. Cyberspace, the internet and that entire realm where electronic information resides and travels, is not a physical phenomena but rather a vast ethereal spectrum of ones and zeros. It is an infinite parallel cosmic plane forever expanding with intersecting highways of information. It is a vast space,

a construct only of the mind, with no perceptible shape, form, or boundaries. Yet it is a space within which we humans spend more and more time psychologically emmersed.

There is a global movement to connect all places and cultures in this electronic web, a kind of net which will wrap the earth in a continuous time/place fusion. The experiences we have in our minds are no longer predicated on our bodies location in space. Increasingly, business is conducted through the internet or over phone lines and no longer via person to person physical interaction. You can witness the atrocities of war on another continent, visit the plains of the Serengeti, or enjoy the best view of the Super Bowl without leaving your living room couch. Our immediate environment seems less and less relevant as we spend more and more time emerged in this digital world of information. Being here, there and everywhere at once can be quite useful but the price we pay for removing some of the limitations imposed by our bodies and time is a devalued and diminished importance of the real experience of place.

On a broader social scale, are the effects of information technology fueling the engines of consumption. Capitalism coupled with this technology creates a focus on the commodification of virtually everything around us. This need to some how *sell*, both literally and implicitly, all products, places, ideas, and ourselves places an emphasis on economic and utilitarian factors, on image and perception, and very little on what we consider real 'content'. The importance then becomes the packaging of this commodity, of giving something, including architecture, a false 'skin', a soulless image determined only by fashion or some

other consumptive criteria. Through all of this, our sense of reality and our sense of true worth are increasingly becoming distorted. We seem to put more emphasis on how something looks on the surface than whether it works well, on the perception of value rather than true value. This great consumption machine that is mass media will never rest. It will remain unrepentant about its incessant bombardment of images and ideas aimed at the erosion of individuality and self-awareness. Its goal is total submission.

Without a clear sense of place, without the ability to discern real from imitation, without an honesty in what is projected and received in the experiences of our daily lives, we lose touch with that qualitative measuring stick within us all which helps determine meaningfulness in the every day. We lose a sense of phenomenological grounding which is essential to the essence of "Being" in the world.<sup>5</sup>

#### Direction

So how then does the architect deal with the spirit of this age? How do we create meaningful architecture in an environment of placelessness, lacking in true meaning and authenticity, which is increasingly indifferent to the essence of being human?

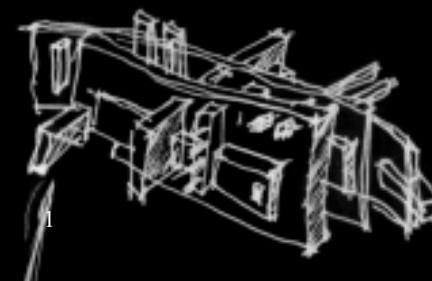
A myriad of different theories and esoteric notions have been brought forth on the subject. The body of today's rhetoric on architecture seems to reflect the fragmented, chaotic, and desperate nature of its cultural context. Architecture has no single clearly discernible meaning or purpose. Architects are grasping for meaning wherever they can, rehashing icons of the past as if they still have validity today, or constructing convoluted pseudo-cosmological models of reasoning in an attempt to give greater validity to their work. This very frequently amounts to mere idiosyncratic intellectual masturbation and, more often than not, bad architecture.

The semiotic theorists of the Postmodern movement, for example, preach a kind of *talk-itecture* in which the imagery of a building conveys certain meaning. There was a time when people were much more attuned to and aware of to their physical surroundings because they had to be. Buildings have historically been seen as important communication devices especially in cultures with low literacy and few outlets for the dissemination of information. Buildings conveyed certain specific ideas through the use of cultural and cosmological signs and symbols whose meanings depended on a perceptible and commonly understood belief system. In this light, architectural meaning is something which is essentially *read* from a building by a person whose model of perception includes a deeply rooted understanding of its imagery. Today, however, (wo)man communicates primarily with spoken and written words, as well as images, which are globally disseminated electronically in an instant. Technology has thus superseded architecture as a literal communication device. In this global society signs and symbols are not universal in their interpretation and cannot be applied to convey specific

meaning. We don't look at architecture to convey specific ideas because it no longer has to and can't.

Designing buildings which attempt to embody the essence of the time or the spirit of the age have long been a noble architectural goal. All too often, however, this pursuit proves more narrow minded than all encompassing. Much of today's trendy architecture, particularly that which we call "Deconstructivist", seems to fall into this category. The creation of chaotic and fragmented architecture as expressive of our chaotic and fragmented time is short sighted at best and more often than not amounts to nothing more than a one liner.

I believe we must confront and resist the deleterious effects of this information revolution from spilling over into what is becoming one of the last vestiges of real experience. In this chaotic world architecture needs to be a stabilizing force. This can be achieved not by denying that complexity but by emphasizing an honest and poetic experience of reality which reinforces our physical sense of place and our sense of humanity to give, us as Norberg-Schultz says, an existential foothold on life<sup>6</sup>. We must see architecture as a concrete phenomena, giving place a character which makes us aware of our Heideggerian "sense of Being"<sup>7</sup>. Good architecture is honest. It reveals beauty and meaning through the rugged expression of its reality not by playing semiotic or illusionary games or by pandering to superficial consumptive criteria. Good architecture moves us, inspires us, teaches us and touches the soul.



## HOW

That's a fine idea, but how is that achieved? There is no formula. I believe it can be achieved through poetic acts of revelation incurred through the experience of the built environment. The experience of place becomes revelatory of three primary things: SITE/BUILDING/SELF.

The physical and psychological experience of a particular place *reveals* something poetic about the particular nature of each of these items.

**SITE** - It is very important for a building to recognize its context. The experience of architecture should reinforce and express the nature of its site - its topography, urban condition, role in the community, etc. This has very little, if anything, to do with stylistic contextuality. It is about capturing the bigger essence of its place in an attempt to reinforce the notion 'here and only here'. Every building has its own unique response to its particular place. A good building should respond to a wide range of very contextual conditions, growing from its site, from its particular place, and truly belonging there and only there.

**BUILDING** - The issue of *building* is two-fold. First the design of a building must accommodate all its pragmatic idiosyncrasies. Good buildings must work well. Besides ingeniously accommodating its users, a building should attempt to reveal something more about the greater intangible nature of its function. It should attempt to express the nature or spirit of its function.

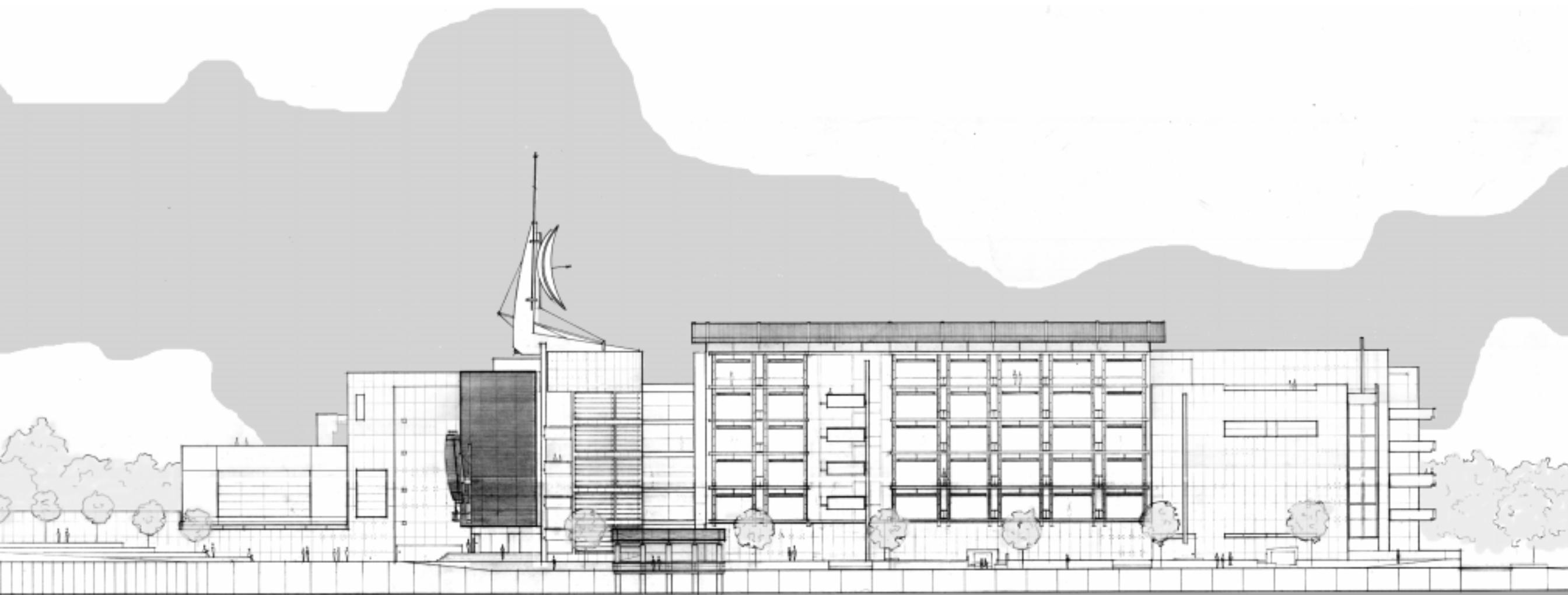
Secondly, architecture should reveal the nature of how it is built. The creation of architecture is the process of making. A tectonic expression is crucial for honest

architecture. Architecture asserts itself for what it is - being beautiful by being honest and expressive about its materials, how it is built and how it operates. A good building reveals rather than conceals, being true to and celebrating the nature of every material and method of construction.

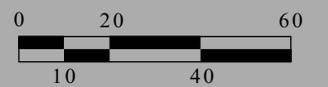
**SELF** - By its very nature architecture requires engaging the body to move through space. All too often this experience negates any cerebral interaction as we are channeled through space designed only to optimize utility and efficiency. Architecture needs to reinforce the interdependence of mind and body as essential to the essence of being in our world. A sensual emphasis on the experience of moving through and dwelling within space would engage us both physically, psychologically and emotionally. This in turn would make us more aware of our presence in a particular place at a particular time.

Good and meaningful architecture comes from making tangible a multiplicity of ideas about site/building/self which poetically coexist to create a moving experience of place, an experience which enlightens the mind and touches the soul.





*south elevation*



## **The Center for Advanced Media**

Washington, D.C.

## Project Intro / Site

The vehicle chosen to explore these architectural ideas is the design of a public high tech information facility, the Center for Advanced Media . This project provides a place for the general public to keep up with the fast pace of evolving information technology. It is a place of access, learning, research, and exhibit of the latest information software and hardware.

The program for the Center for Advanced Media (CAM) includes: extensive exhibition space for the display of information products as well as the work of media related artists; a conference center with a 160 seat auditorium; flexible research laboratory space; public learning facilities; an “Information Exchange” facility which provides the public with access to computers with the latest software and connections with the internet; and exterior public gathering and display space(s).

The challenge of this building type is how to make space the experience which reinforces the notion of place, fostering our phenomenological sense of being in the world, in a building which functions to essentially undermines this premise. If the design of sensual, poetic and humanly provocative architecture can be achieved in this building type it can be achieved in any building type.

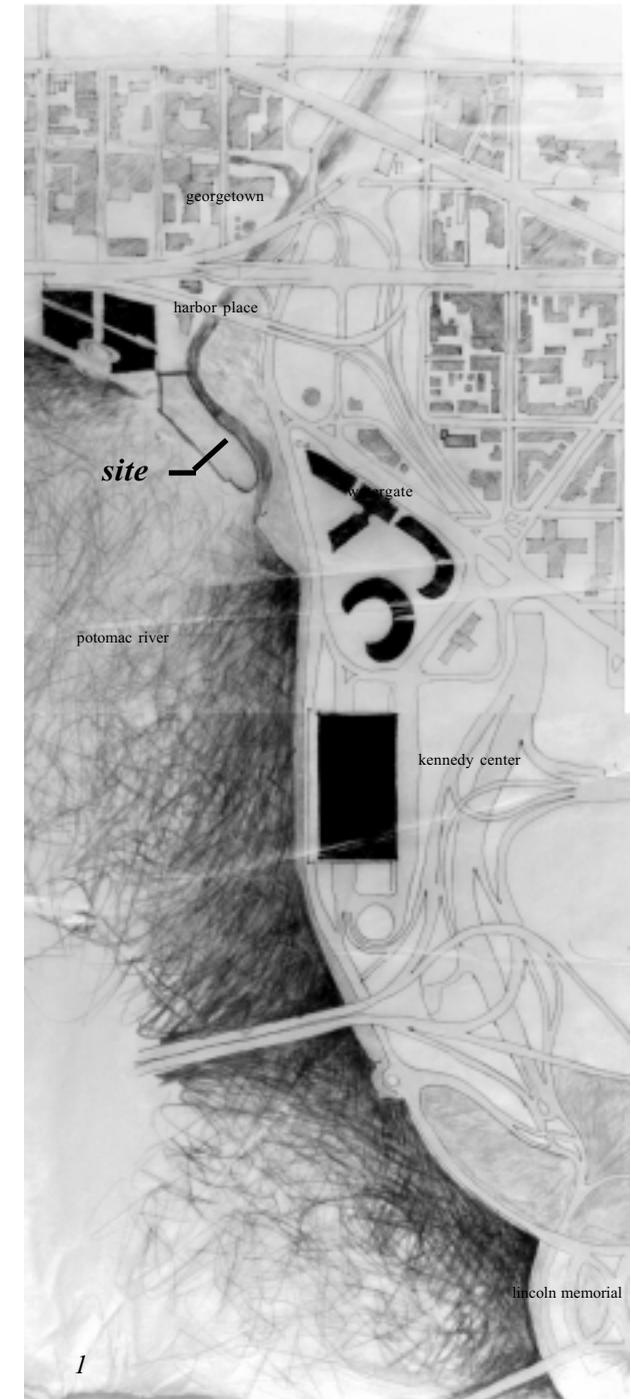
### The Site

The site chosen for the CAM is a sliver of land located on Washington D.C.'s developing harbor front near Georgetown. The roughly 150 by 800 foot site is situated at the tributary juncture of Rock Creek and the Potomac River. It is surrounded by water and park land

on three sides and connects at its north end with the existing Washington Harbor development, a popular gathering spot of restaurant, shops and businesses. Although located within walking distance of many universities and technology based businesses, this prominent location was chosen as an attempt to attract the general public, those who may not have access to the technology or are intimidated by the bewilderingly fast developments in the field.

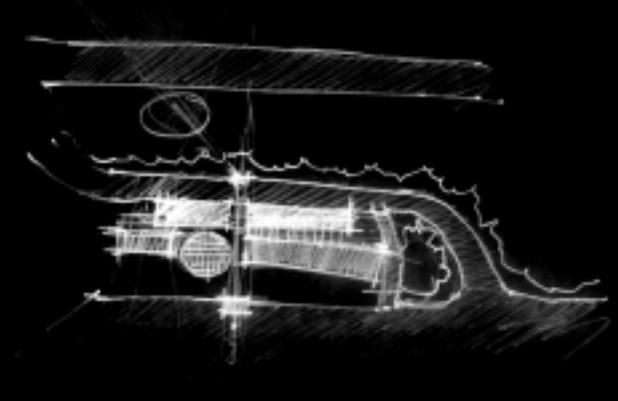
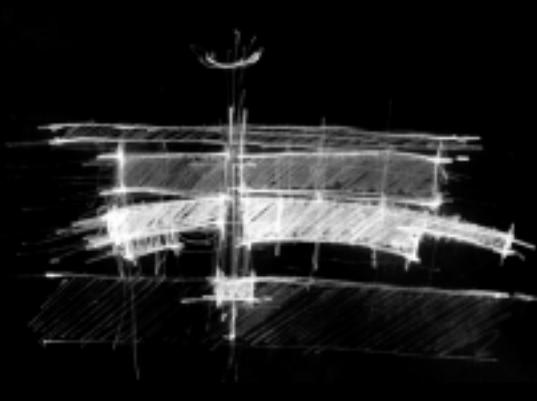
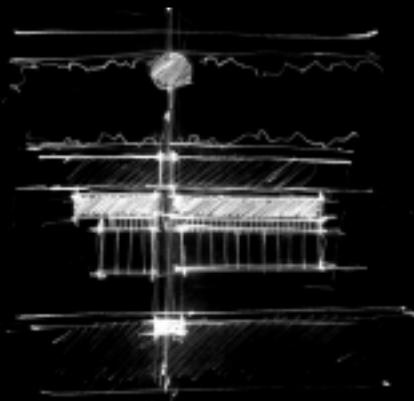
The site's urban condition can be described as layered edges. It physically exists at the edge of the city on the edge of the water. But just as important to its contextuality are the urban layers and edges which surround it and are unavoidably crossed and passed through on route to this site. These edges and layers are defined by a variety of dense commercial and residential neighborhoods, imposing roadways, active park land, and flowing streams.

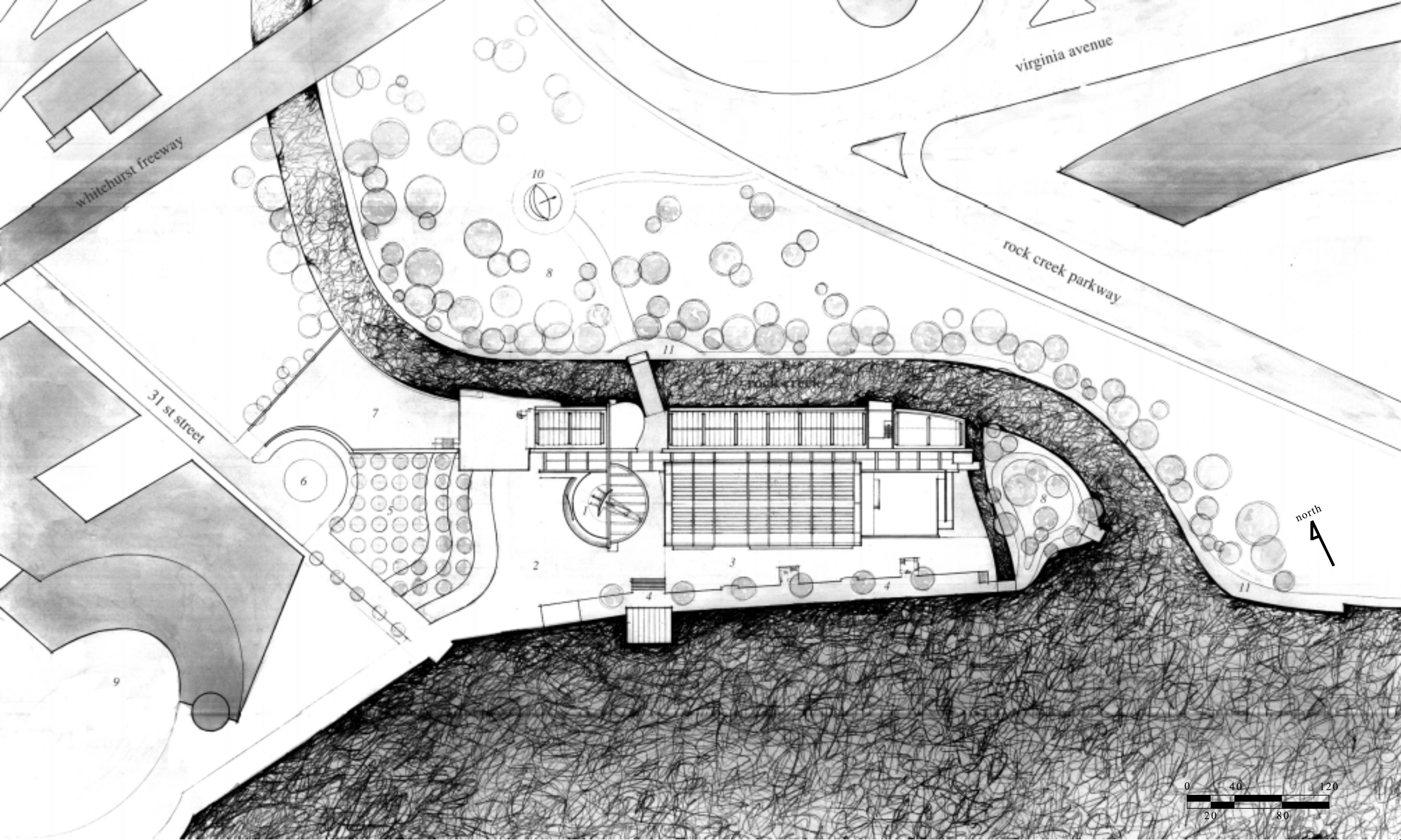
The building is situated along the Rock Creek edge of the site allowing for an uninterrupted continuation of the existing pedestrian boardwalk along the Potomac. A large exterior gathering space frames the nodal cylindrical entry form. The primary functions within the building are organized as a series of long linear spaces whose experiences echo the layered edges of its urban context. Towering poured concrete walls and articulated glazing systems are the thresholds and edges between a wide variety of volumetric layers. A central circulation spine connects the entry space with the conference center and auditorium at the north end of the building, the east orientated research, learning, and exhibit facilities; and the west oriented Information Exchange center.



- 1 area plan
- 2 development sketches
- 3 opposite page- site plan

2





*site plan legend*

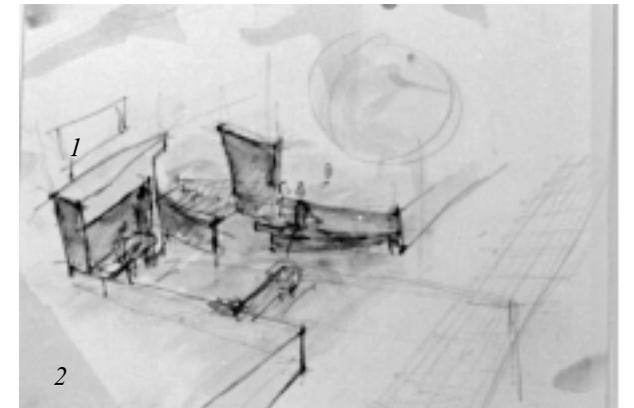
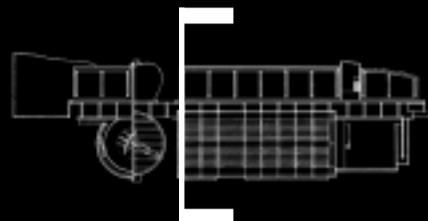
- |                         |                 |
|-------------------------|-----------------|
| 1 Advanced Media Center | 7 parking       |
| 2 plaza                 | 8 park / garden |
| 3 lawn                  | 9 Harbor Place  |
| 4 boardwalk             | 10 satellite    |
| 5 orchard               | 11 bike path    |
| 6 vehicle drop off      |                 |

## Approach

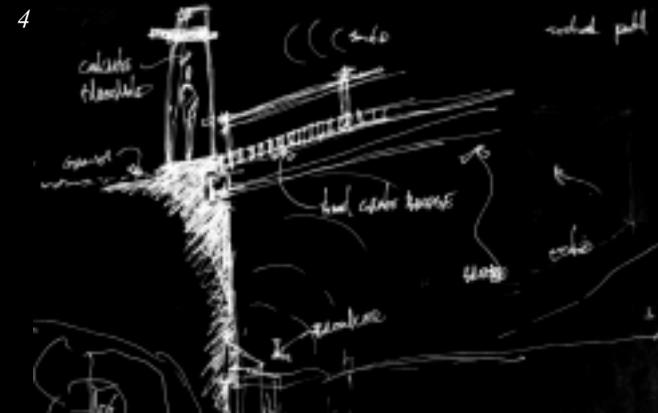
The CAM is approached via several primary routes. First is the site's connection with the existing waterfront development. A pedestrian walking along the Harbor Front boardwalk toward the CAM would be directly on axis with the dynamic and powerful cylindrical entry form and its towering satellite mast. An oblique view of a large exterior video screen and the mysterious translucent nature of the form's perforated metal facade draws people along the path toward the CAM's open plaza space and amphitheater. Recognizing the waterfront as a favorite place for people to gather, the Potomac edge is given over to pedestrian use. A tree lined boardwalk runs the entire length of the site. A covered wooden dock and several intimate gathering spaces of sculpted concrete and sensuous wood carved into the landscape are along a path leading to the gravel walk of a small island garden at the southern tip of the site. A plush grassy lawn mediates the space between the boardwalk and the building.

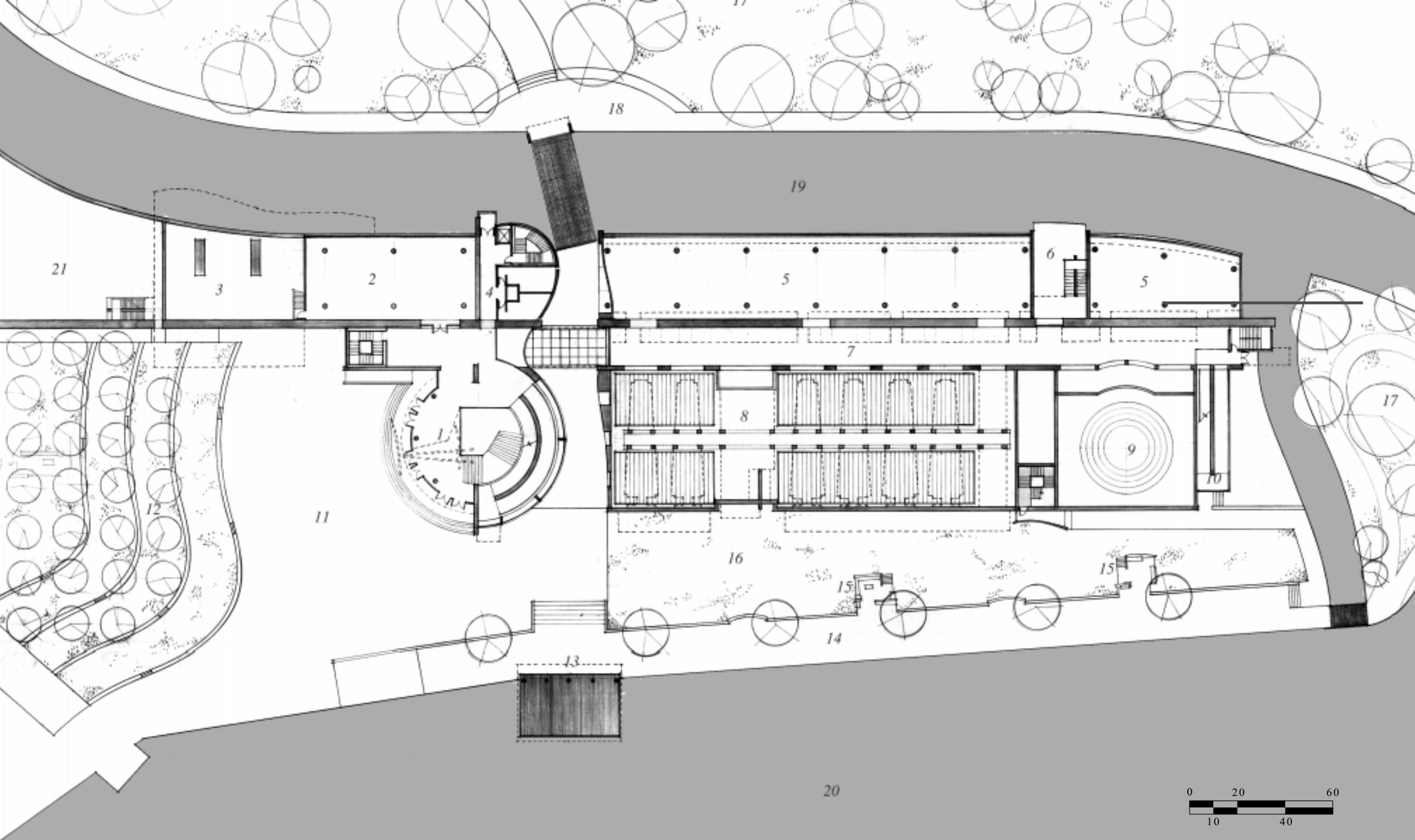
The second approach to the CAM is along 31<sup>st</sup> street from Georgetown. This is primary vehicle approach to the site as well as a pedestrian path. Vehicles get no closer than the circular drop off area at the site's northern most point. From here pedestrians either walk down a gently sloping continuation of 31<sup>st</sup> street toward the river or pass through a terraced grove of trees along gravel paths and over stone thresholds. Both paths allow only intriguing glimpses through the trees at the entry cylinder and its flickering screen. The terracing grove of trees with all its intimate and screened nooks and crannies opens up to become an amphitheater for the activities in the plaza and on the river.

- 1 development sketch - waterfront path
- 2 development sketch - waterfront sitting area
- 3 section thru path
- 4 development sketch- threshold



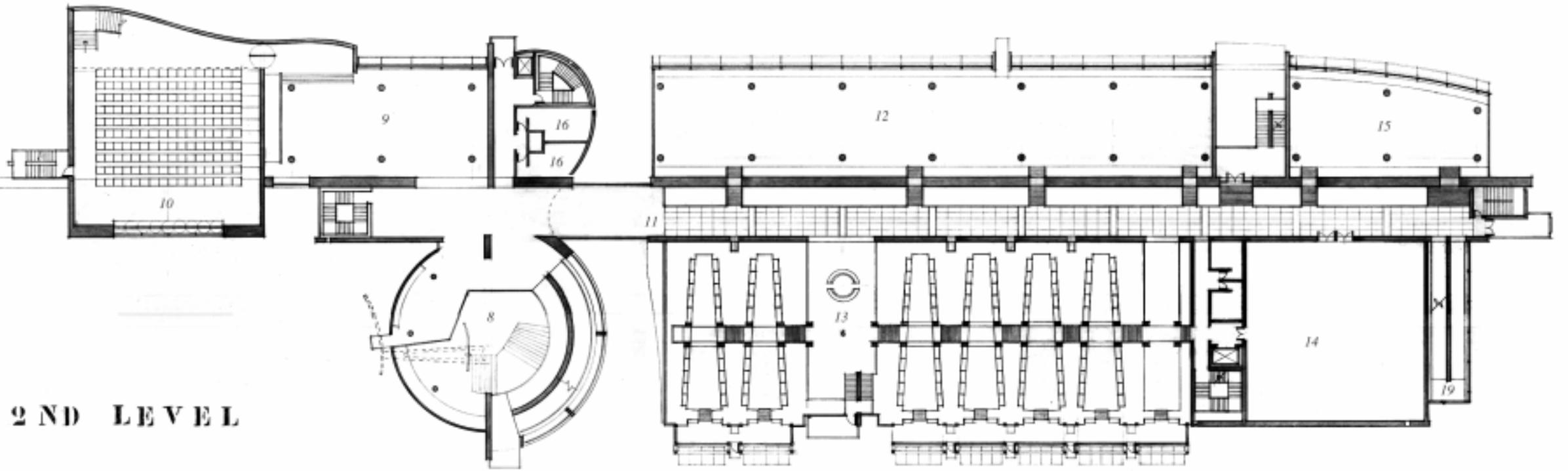
The third important approach is along Virginia Avenue from the heart of downtown D.C.. A large satellite dish perched on a concrete pedestal acts as a beacon in the park directly on axis with Virginia Ave. Crossing the speeding traffic of Rock Creek Parkway to the dish leads one along a meandering gravel path through the trees to the concrete retained edge of Rock Creek. Here the east elevation with its highly articulated glazing system and smooth poured concrete walls begins to reveal itself. Passage through a sculpted concrete portal takes one over a steel grate bridge, the sound of the flowing water rushing below, and along a large curved concrete form. The contrasting nature of this heavy curvilinear form and the light and more ordered curtain wall which primarily characterizes this elevation helps define the path to the other side of the site. Walking around the curvilinear form reveals a framed view of the river beyond. Continuing toward the Potomac, the various spatial layers and physical edges of the building are expressed through glimpses into spaces and clearly articulated materials and thresholds along an undulating the path.



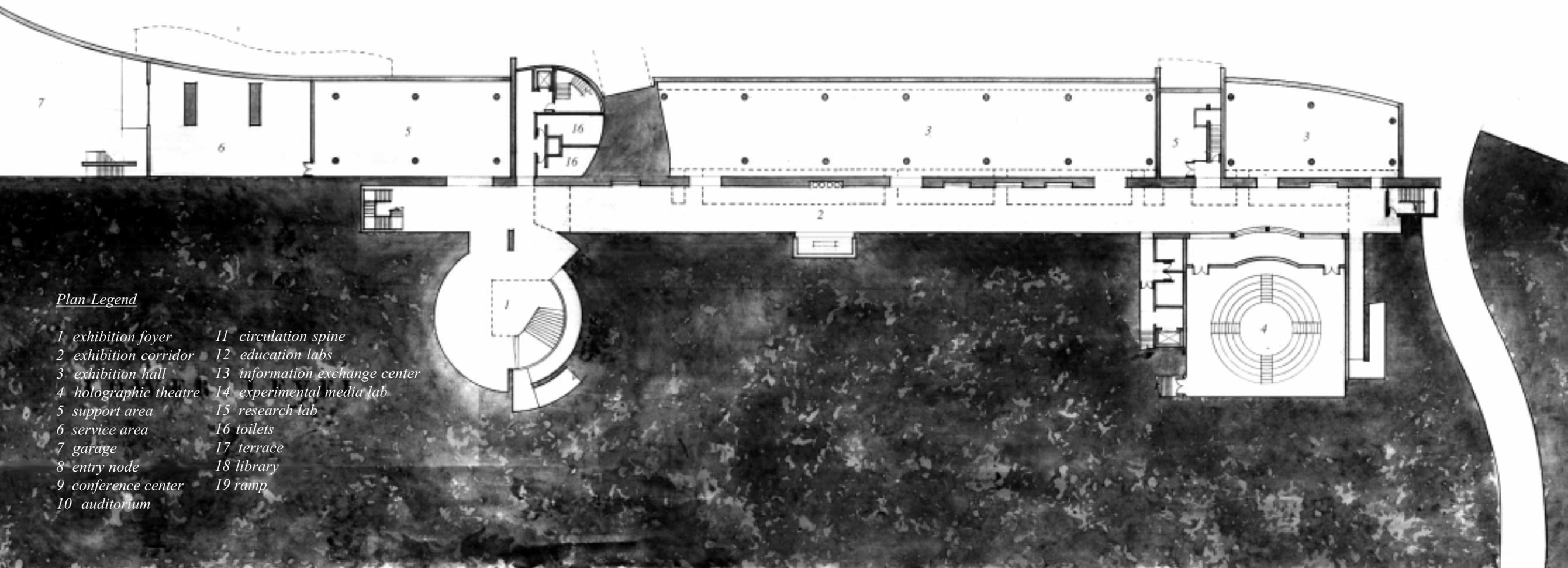


*Enty Level Legend*

- 1 main entry
- 2 admin / reception
- 3 storage
- 4 toilets
- 5 exhibition area below
- 6 terrace
- 7 exhibition corridor below
- 8 "the brain"- data / hardware hub
- 9 hologram theatre below
- 10 ramp
- 11 plaza
- 12 orchard
- 13 dock
- 14 path
- 15 sitting area
- 16 lawn
- 17 park / garden
- 18 bike path
- 19 rock creek
- 20 potomac river
- 21 parking

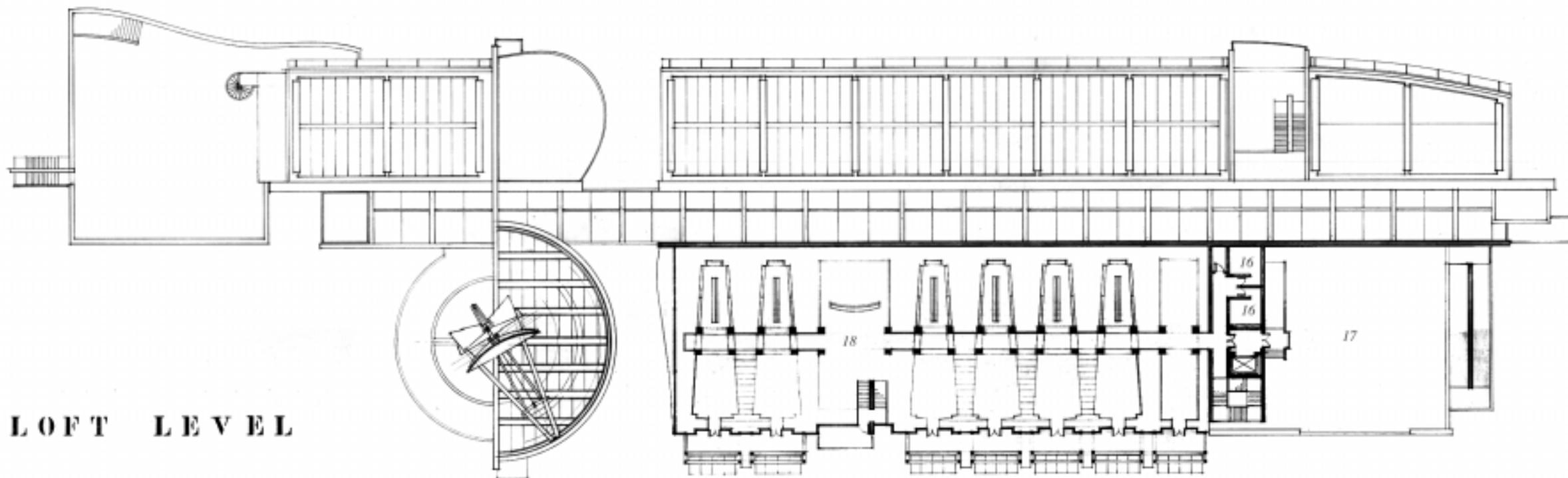


**2 ND LEVEL**

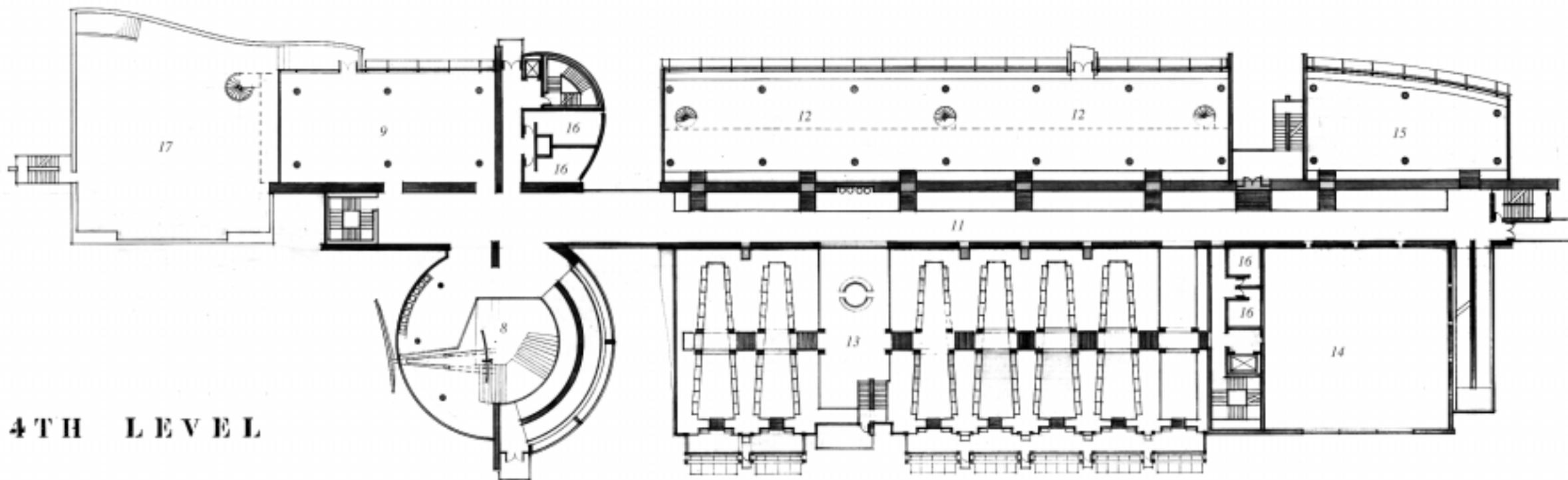


*Plan Legend*

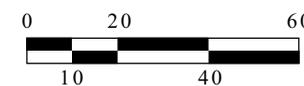
- |                       |                                |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 exhibition foyer    | 11 circulation spine           |
| 2 exhibition corridor | 12 education labs              |
| 3 exhibition hall     | 13 information exchange center |
| 4 holographic theatre | 14 experimental media lab      |
| 5 support area        | 15 research lab                |
| 6 service area        | 16 toilets                     |
| 7 garage              | 17 terrace                     |
| 8 entry node          | 18 library                     |
| 9 conference center   | 19 ramp                        |
| 10 auditorium         |                                |



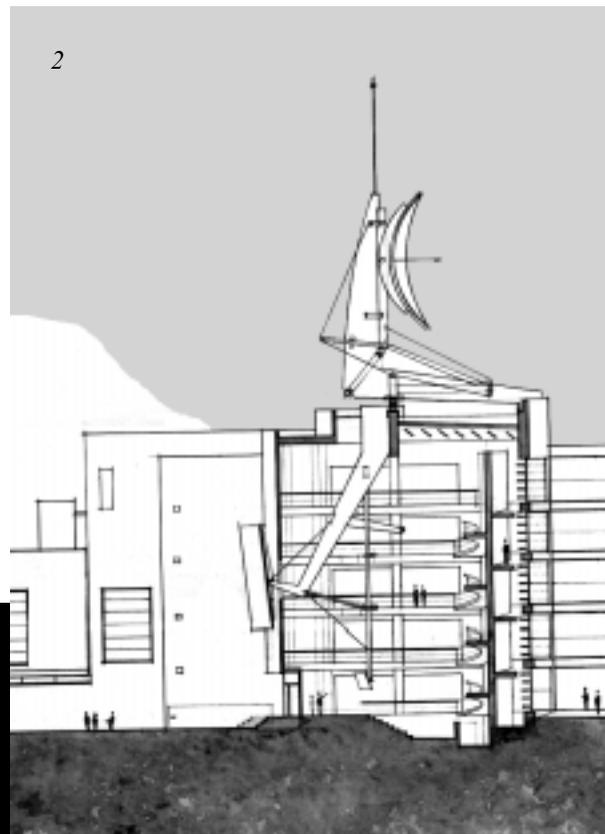
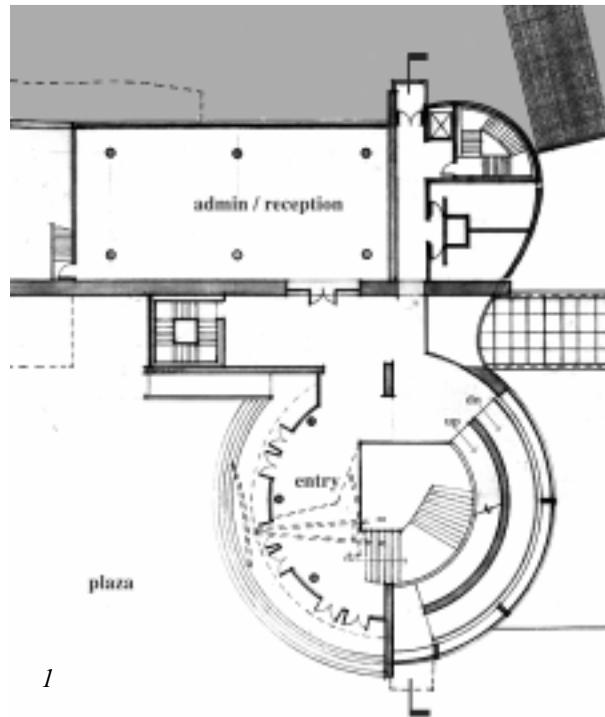
LOFT LEVEL



4TH LEVEL



## Entry



- 1 main entry plan
- 2 section thru main entry node
- 3 development sketches
- 4 opposite page - section thru main entry node

### Entry

The cylindrical form stands apart from the nature of the rest of the building. The circle, in effect, defines a point in an otherwise linear arrangement of spaces. A towering communications mast rotates atop the cylinder. The vertical nature of the mast and the curved form of the cylinder define a point of entry for people and information.

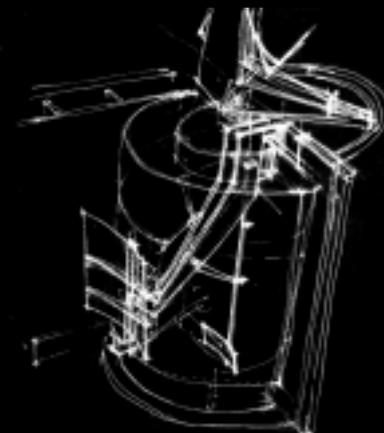
As approached from the plaza the entry is reminiscent of the monumental character of many Washington landmark buildings: a sizable open public area and expansive steps lead to the entrance. The somewhat dim entry space rises six stories to a louvered skylight. A gentle diffused light filters through the perforated metal cladding and around a towering curved concrete wall adorned with circulation ramps.

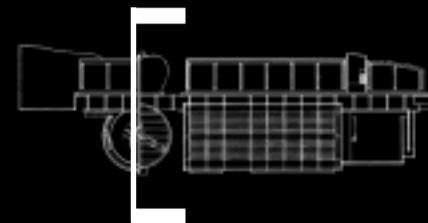
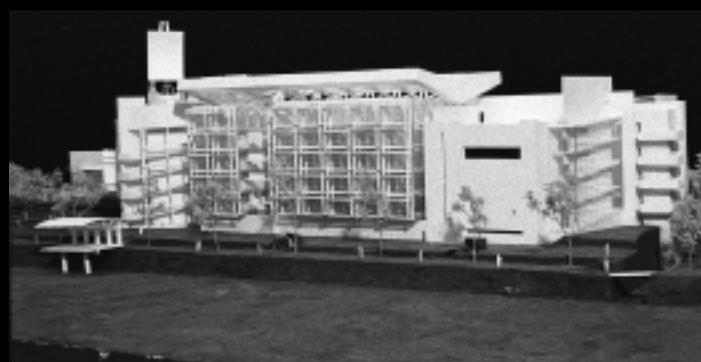
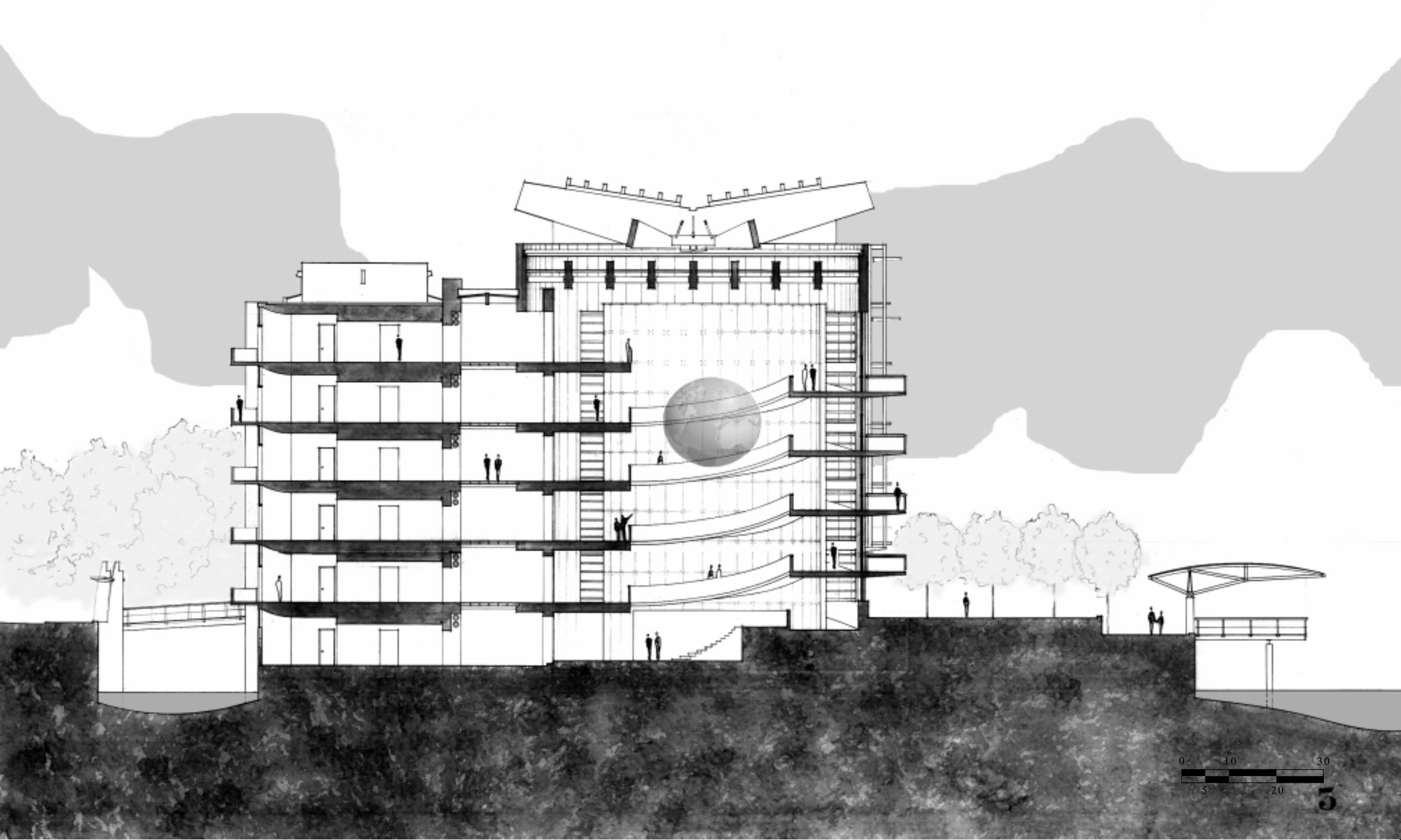
A skeletal amorphous entity hangs in the open space. A parasitic outgrowth of the communications mast, the structure appears to crash through the skylight, its irregular tentacles stretching and reaching through the open space and penetrating the exterior wall plane to support the plaza video screen. This titanium display structure, holding video display screens and hologram projectors seems a violent intruder in the otherwise pure form of the cylinder. It reminds us of the aggressive and unavoidable nature of technology.

The ramp system acts as primary vertical circulation within the building. Floor to floor the ascension of the ramp begins along the bright glazed outer wall of the cylinder. A large curved concrete plane separates this portion of the ramp from the interior of the entry space. Here the focus is outward, through the layered exposed concrete structure and steel glazing system, across narrow outside space with views of the mysterious forms rising up beyond the Information Exchange curtain wall. Views of the waterfront and river further elongate ones visual focal point. A balcony at the landing allows one to step outside and peruse the activities on the plaza. The second half of the ramp runs along in inside of the curved concrete wall looking into the dim open six story volume. Floating holograms fill the core and different perspectives of these three dimensional images are revealed as one progresses higher in the space.

It is through the experience of getting to and passing through the entry space that the building begins to reveal one of its primary architectural premises carried throughout the structure. True to the nature of its function, the building is conceived as a communication machine. It communicates about itself as architecture. Like the many developing vectors of information, the experience is characterized by light and movement, particularly the movement of the human body through space. The body's passage through a wide range of volumes and lighting conditions, the feel and sound of walking over and through different materials and textures, the curious intrigue of an unusual form or compelling glimpse of a mysterious space beyond are all part of this engaging movement through space. The body and mind become aware of their place.

3



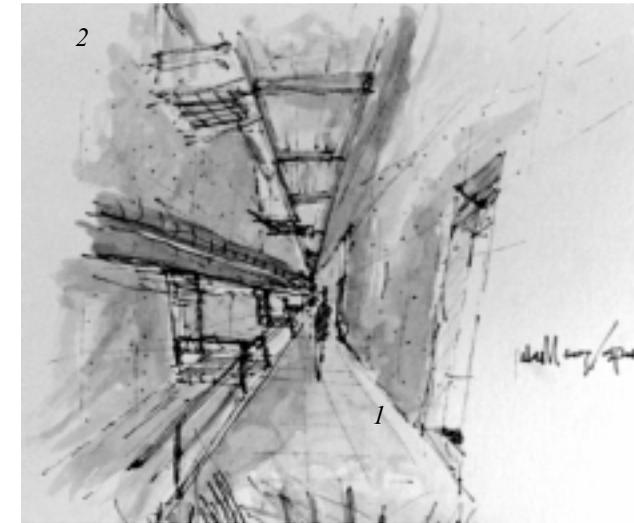
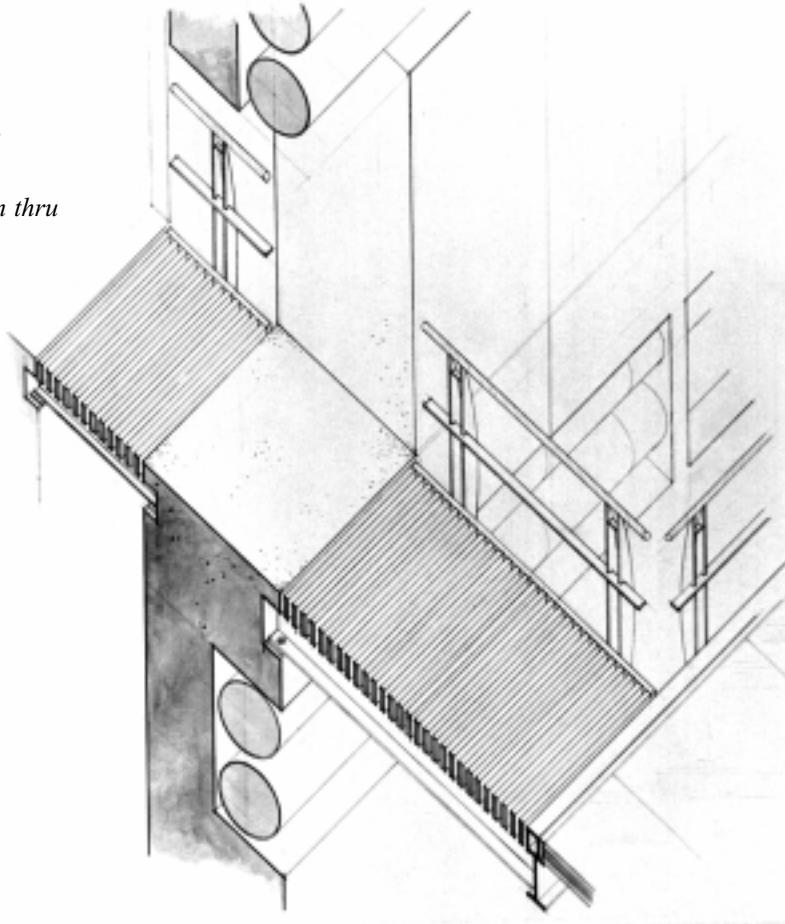


## Circulation spine

The main circulation spine of the building is a 16 wide by 80 feet high volume which runs the length of the structure. Translucent paneled steel structured walkways hang from one of two enormous poured concrete walls that enclose the space. Mechanical duct work and an elaborate system of pipes and cables run exposed in controlled channels along the opposite wall. This massive wall is the buildings 'support artery'. This spine is for the circulation of people, information, as well as the support system for the entire building. Light filters down the walls and through the walkways from a continuous skylight above. A series of bridges seem to randomly cross from the walkway to the opposite wall leading to spaces in the volume beyond. Portholes in the concrete wall along the walkway offer glimpses into adjacent spaces.

## Circulation / Auditorium

- 1 spine threshold detail
- 2 development sketch
- 3 opposite page - section thru plaza and auditorium

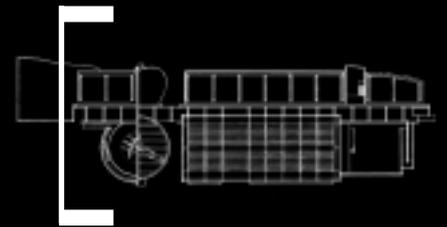
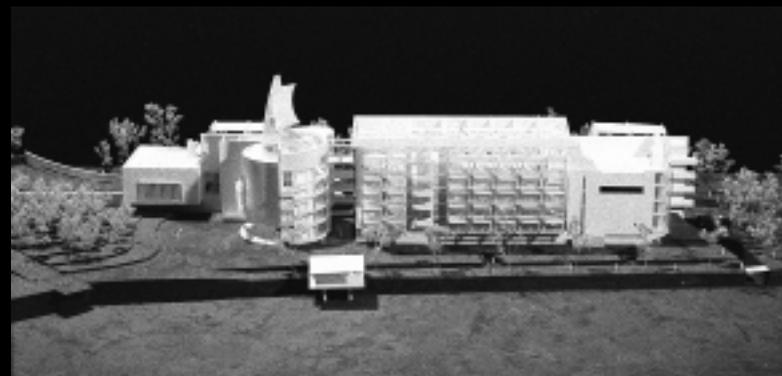
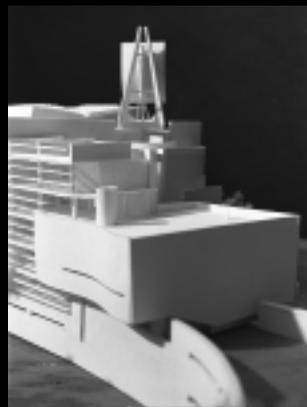
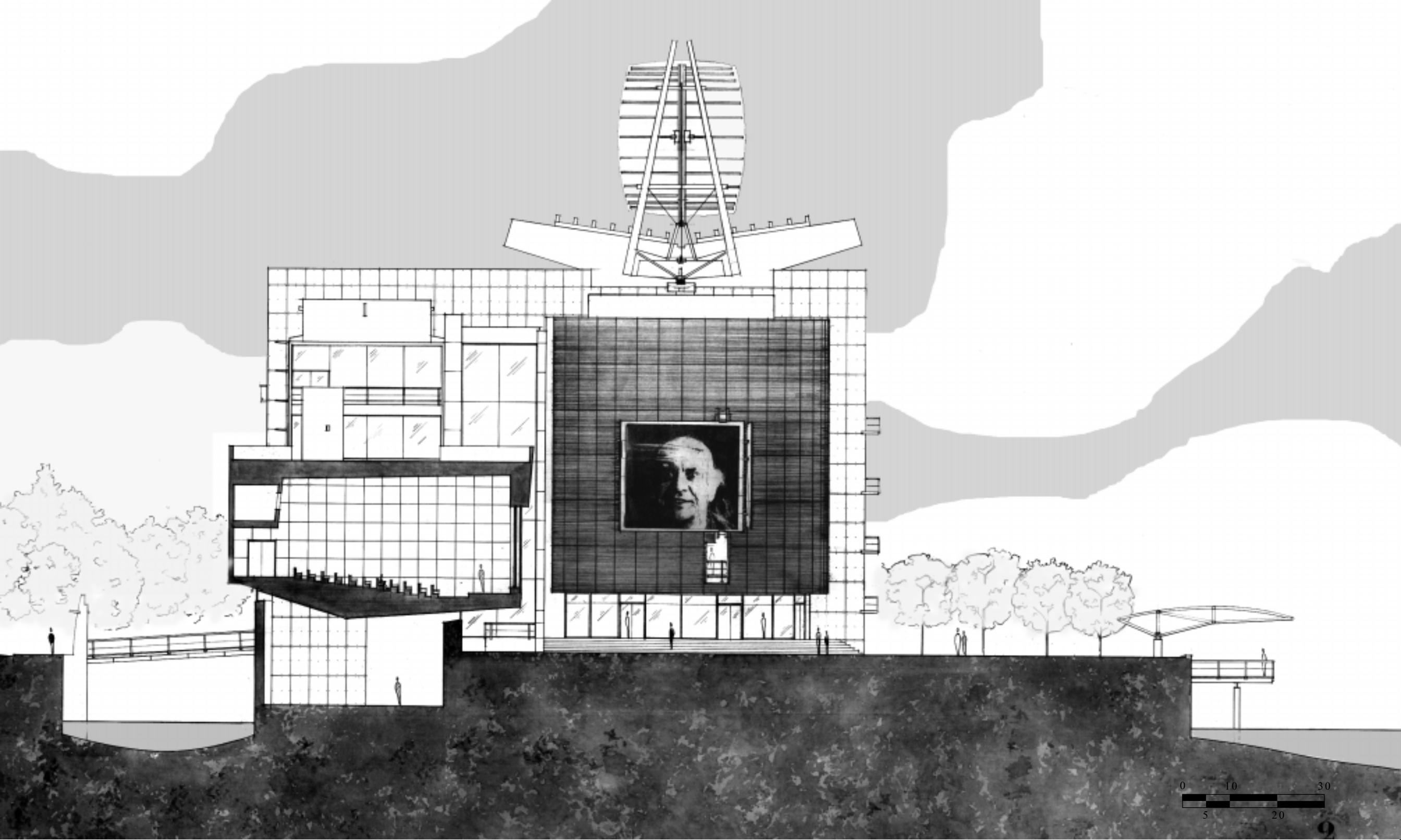


## Auditorium and Conference Center

The north end of the building includes several stories of flexible conference space and a 160 person auditorium. The roof of the auditorium is a terrace for outdoor receptions and events. The volumes free flowing curvilinear form echoes the adjacent meandering stream. The large display screen in the auditorium is constructed of a series of smaller swiveling panels. Prior to a viewing, the video panels rotate to reveal the performances occurring in the plaza below and frame a beautiful view of the river beyond.

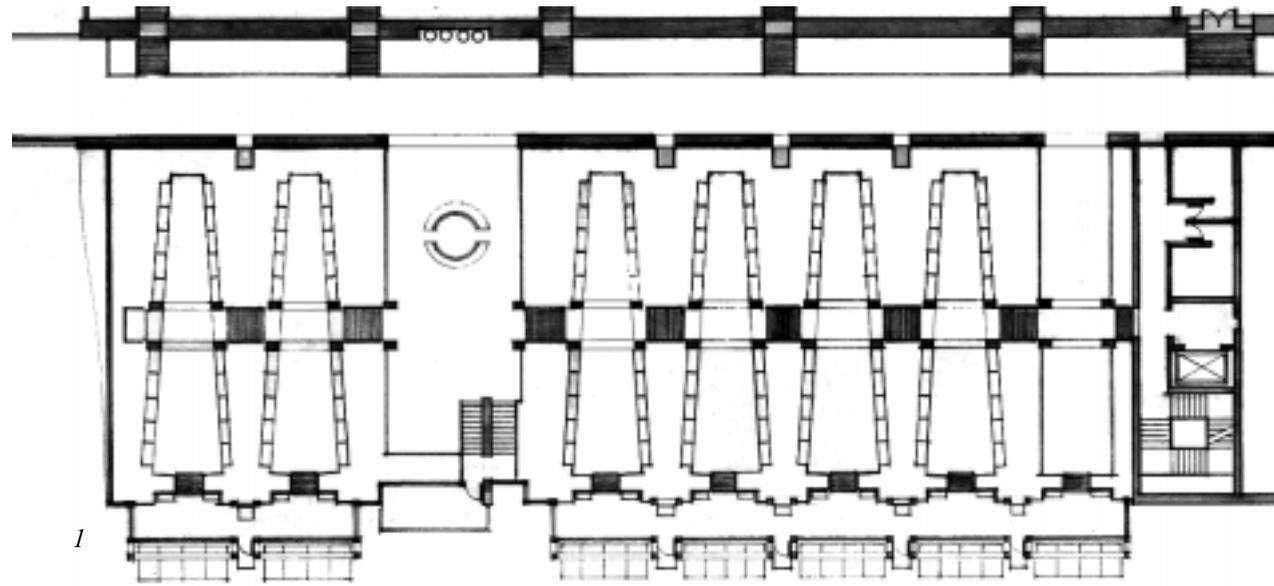
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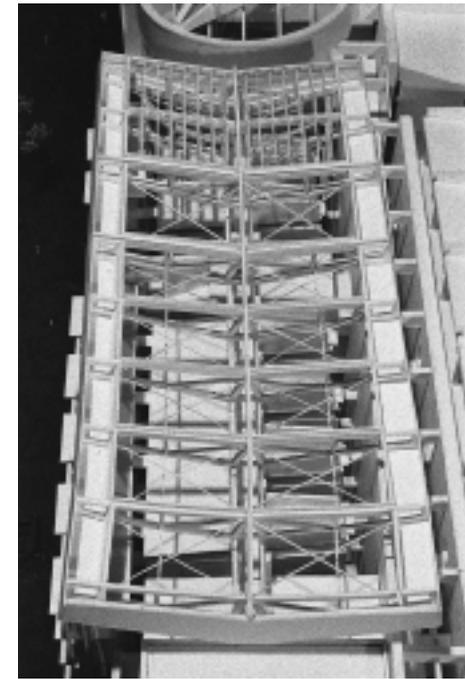


## Information Exchange

- 1 plan detail
- 2 model of roof
- 3 view from spine into information exchange center
- 4 study model
- 5 development sketch



1



2

### Information Exchange Center (IEC)

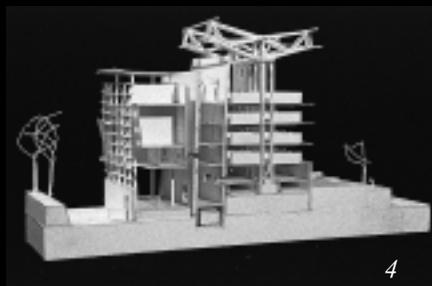
The IEC is the most expansive and dramatic space in the Center for Advanced Media. It is here that the general public gains access to the world through computers. It is, in a way, a library of the future. Nearly five hundred individual work stations are linked to a massive software and information pipeline. The work stations are situated on a series six multilevel 'information trees' which spring from the earth and branch out within the volume's edge walls. Concrete piers rise 90 feet in the space from a ground level bed of high density databases. Cables and wires rise like veins in a tree trunk and extend out to the individual stations cantilevered on steel structured branches. These branch-like platforms open up toward the large glazed wall facing the Potomac as if reaching for the light. This tapering effect gives every individual station a view of the distant horizon and a good retinal divergence from the eye wearing effects of staring at a monitor for extend periods of time.

From the pier's apex springs the delicate translucent paneled steel roof canopy. The solid versus void nature of the space allows diffused light to filter down and between the information trees bringing natural glow through the frosted glass plane of each workstation.

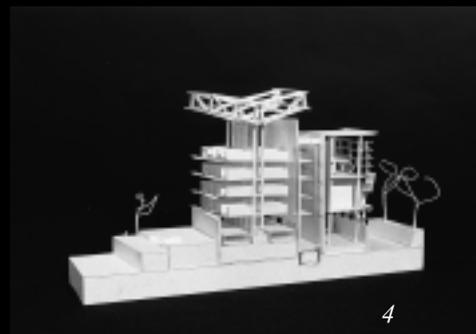
The outer wall is a layered structure of catwalks, glazing, balconies and *bris soleil* overlooking the waterfront area. This provides an area for small group meetings and individual contemplation with beautiful views. The upper most loft level, existing within the canopy, is given over to the world of books. Here a library of technologically oriented publications and spacious open reading areas open up to an open balcony.



3



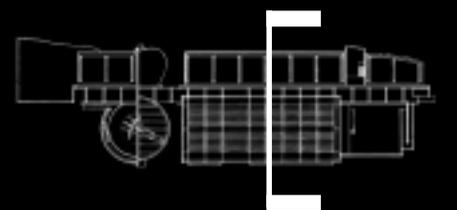
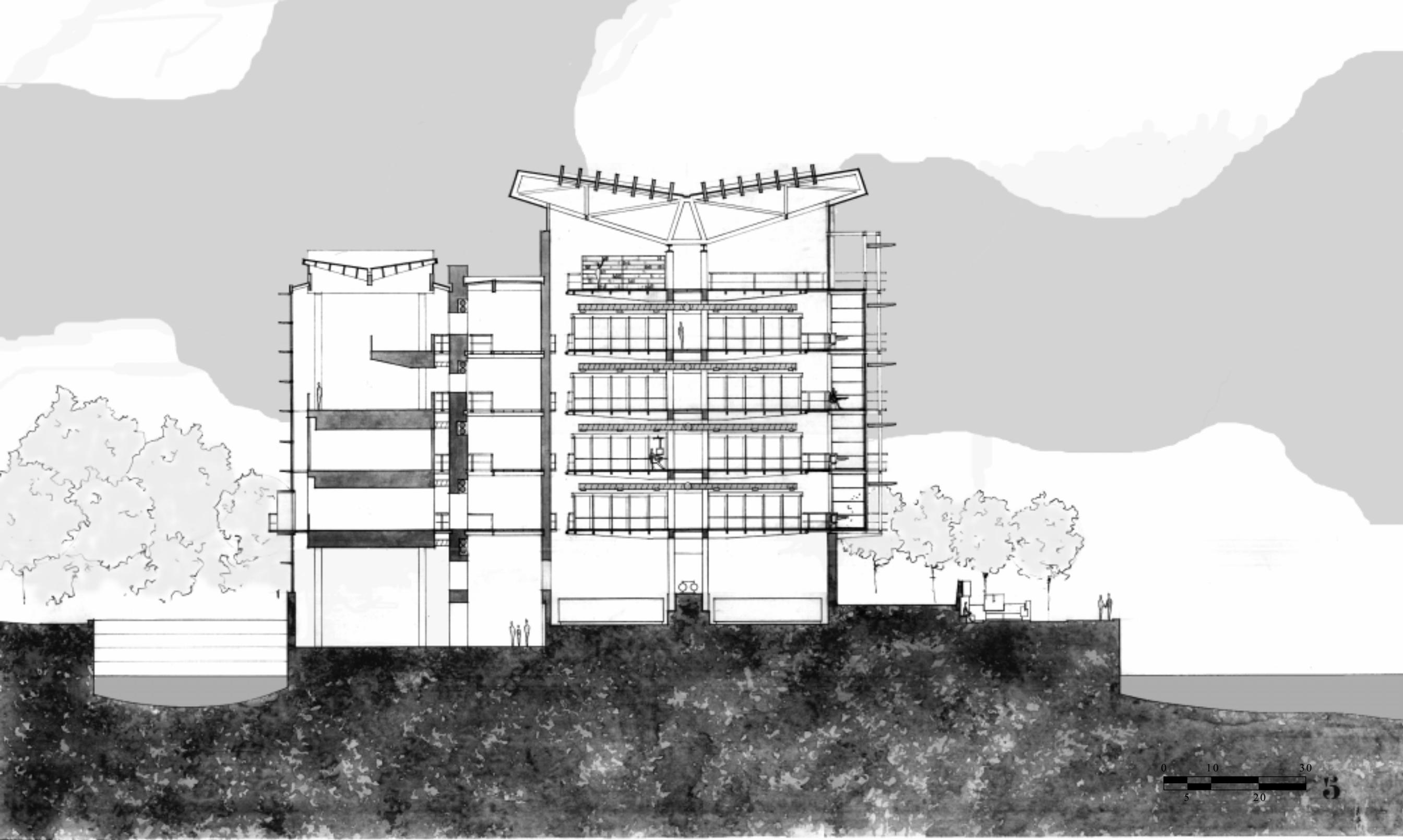
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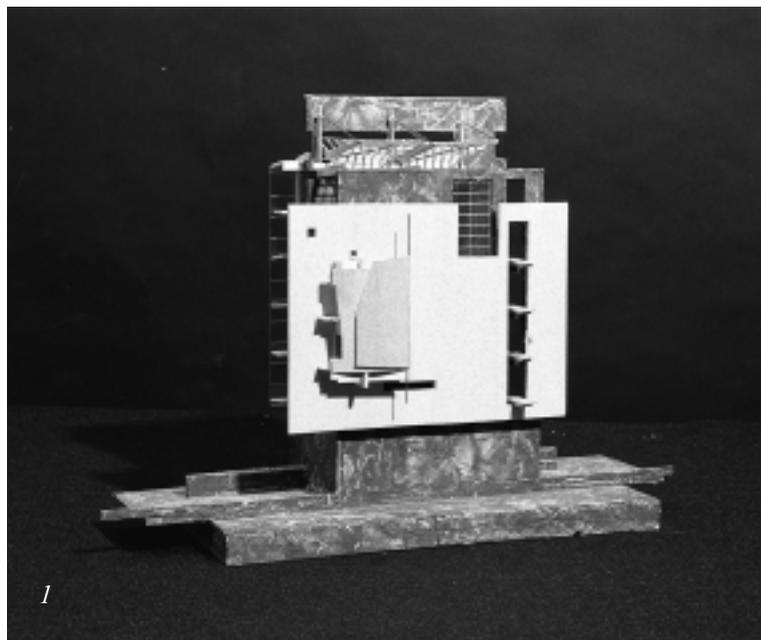
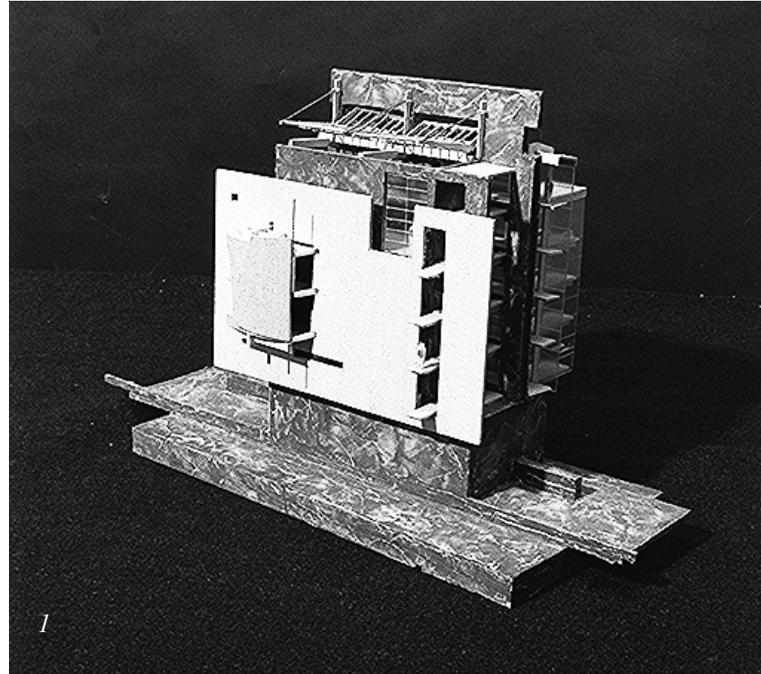
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5



**Learning / Research Labs**

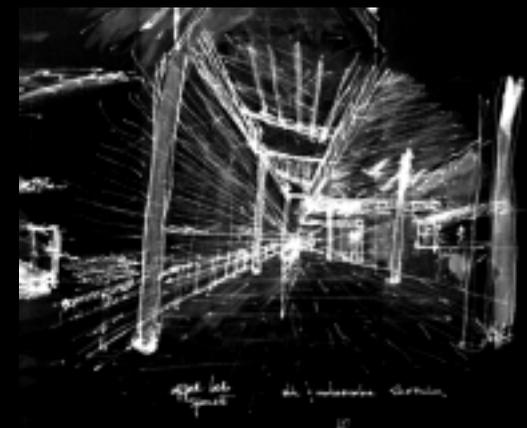


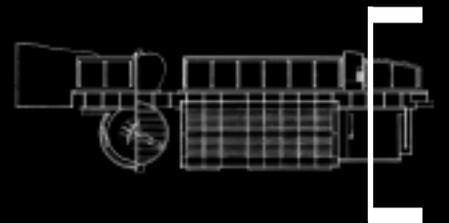
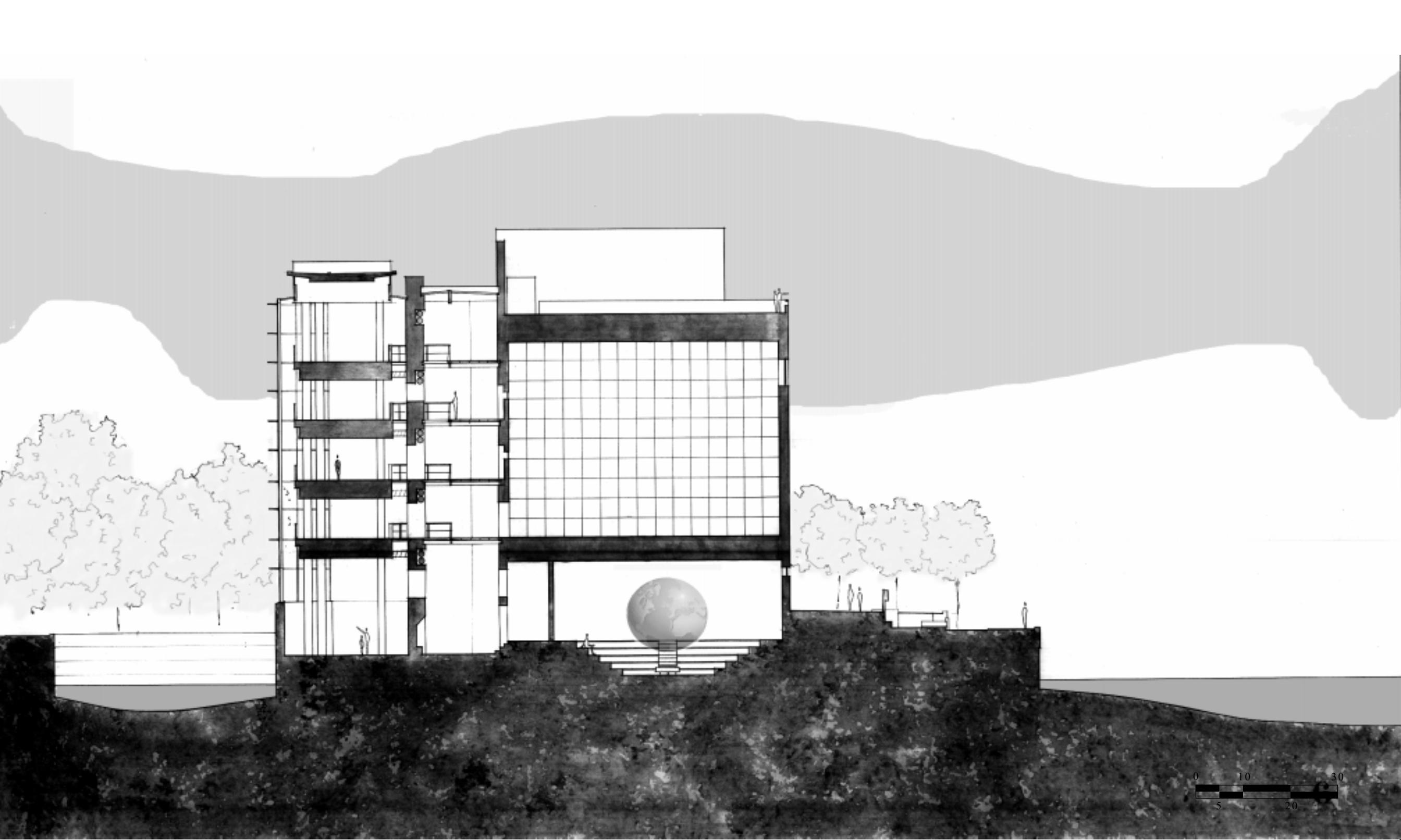
- 1 study model
- 2 development sketch
- 3 opposite page - section thru research labs and exhibition space

Learning and Research Labs

Four levels of learning and research facilities are located in the building's eastern volume. Concrete columns rise from the ground below to support the floor plates. These spaces exist *between* the outer curtain wall and the concrete 'support artery' wall. The Laboratory volumes are set back from these walls leaving tall empty slots, the voids intended to further emphasize the notion of edges and spatial layers. Only narrow bridges and support related piping cross the void at the support artery. A series of narrow balconies extend into the open space and through the glazing at the outer curtain wall. The floor plan is open for flexibility in accommodating the changing needs of evolving technology. Laboratory space can be laid out as needed and support devices literally plug into the channels of the 'support artery'. As seen through the curtain wall screen, the evolving and changing layout of these spaces animates the east elevation of the structure. The three story experimental media facility provides an expansive volume for large scale work in holography, performance, lasers, and acoustics. A ceiling hatch gives access to a roof top lab space for experiments and shows in the sky above the Potomac.

2





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2 Benedikt, Micheal; *Cyberspace: First Steps*  
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3 Postman, Neil; *Technopoly: The Surrender of Culture to Technology*  
A. Arknopf, 1992

4 McLuhan, Marshall; *Understanding Media*  
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5 Heidegger, Martin; *Basic Writings*  
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6 Norberg-Schulz, Christian;  
*Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture*  
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7 Heidegger, Martin; *Basic Writings*  
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Beniger, James; *The Control Revolution*  
Harvard University Press, 1987

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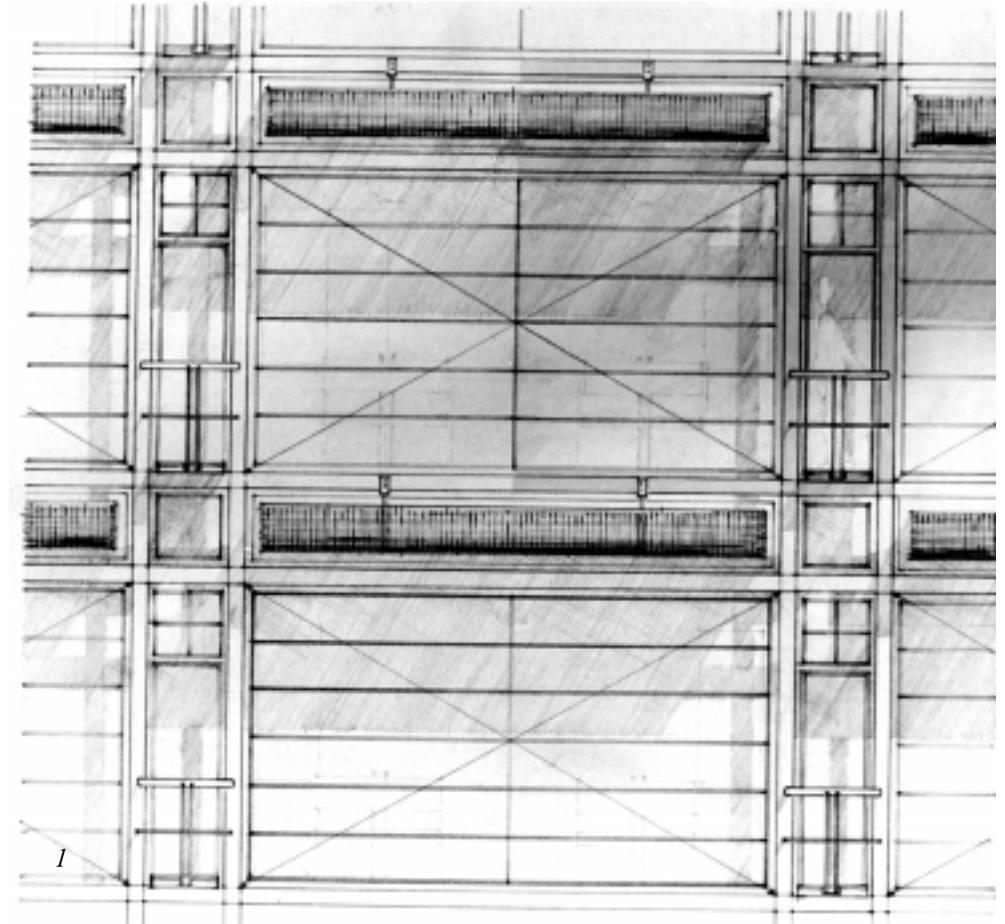
Perez-Gomez, Alberto; *Architecture and the Crisis of Modern Science*  
MIT Press, 1983

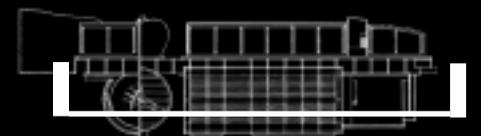
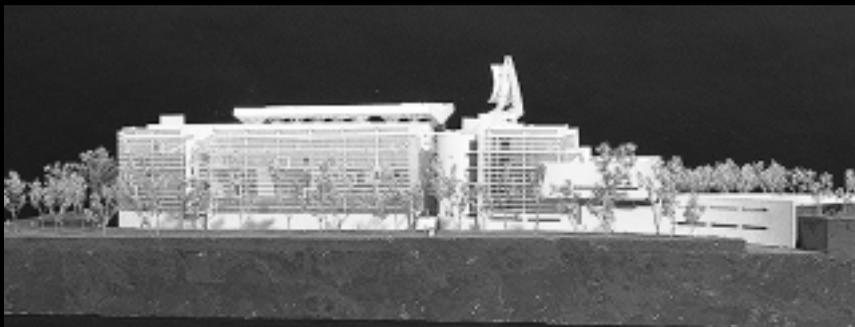
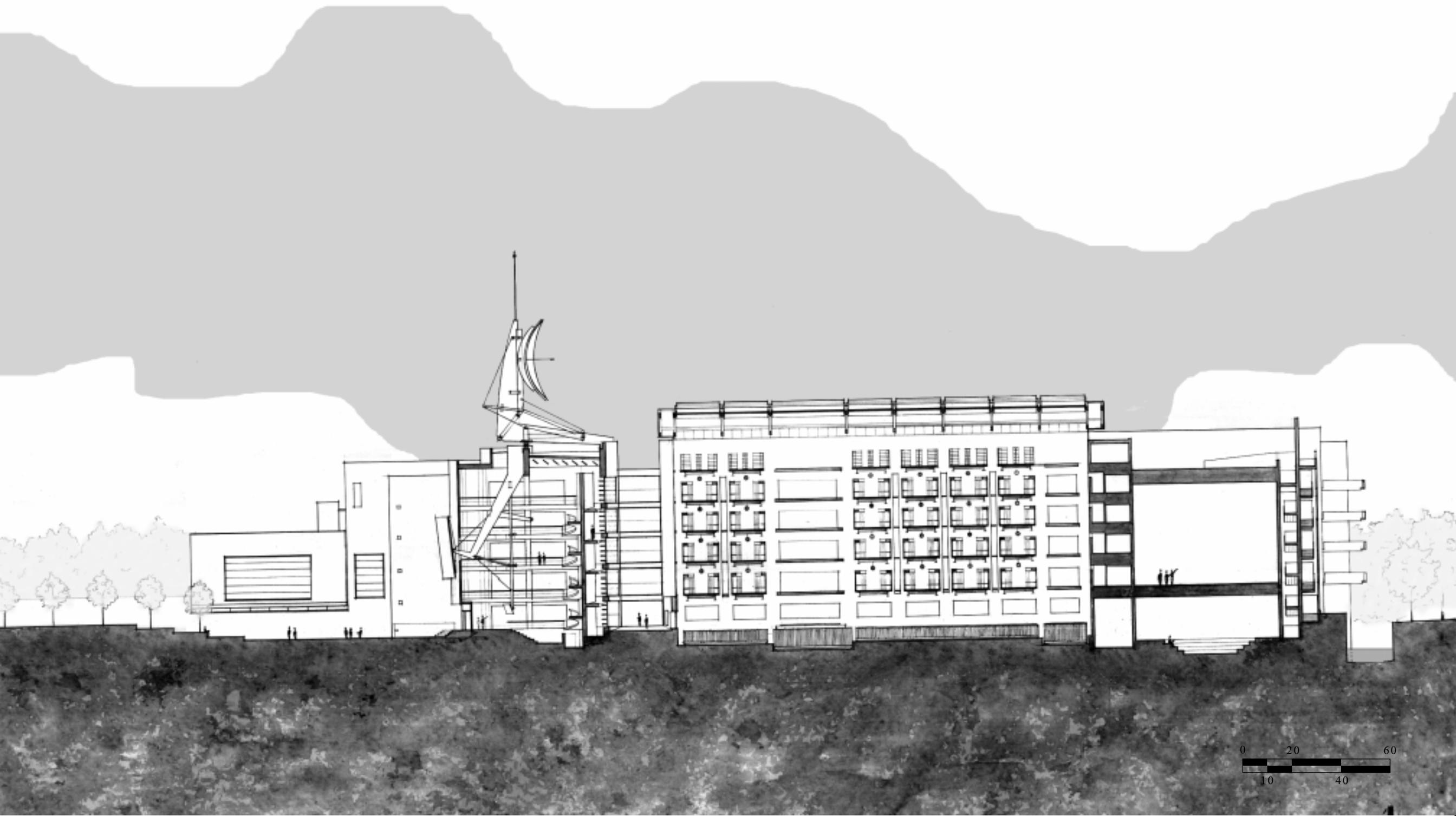
## End Notes

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1 facade detail

2 opposite page - long section thru  
building





**Derek Mason Norton**

**Education**

Masters of Architecture  
Virginia Tech, Washington Alexandria Architecture Consortium  
1991-1994

Bachelors of Profesional Studies in Architecture  
State University of New York at Buffalo  
1987-1991

**Experience**

James William Ritter Architect  
Alexandria, Virginia  
1993-present

Heffner Architects  
Alexandria, Virginia  
1993

Birchall Design Group  
Washington, DC  
1992-1993

Vann Construction  
Albany, New York  
1988-1990 (summers)

**Honors / Awards**

1993 Washington Alexandria Architecture Consortium Design Competition  
First Prize

1993 WAAC AIAS Design Competition  
First Prize