

design  
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is  
cook  
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a museum of  
gastronomy

by  
alwalam



# Designing is Cooking: A museum of Gastronomy

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Thesis submitted to the faculty of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

## Master of Architecture in Architecture

<b>committee</b>	Susan C. Piedmont - Palladino Paul F. Emmons Paul J. Kelsch David Y. Jameson
<b>date</b>	may 09, 2011
<b>location</b>	alexandria, va
<b>key words</b>	in-between spaces experiences forces intersection epicurious



# abstract

Designing is Cooking: A museum of Gastronomy by alwan lam

Those who eat share a relationship with design. **The Museum of Gastronomy**, a museum located at the Washington D.C. National Mall, would dedicate a space to a full-sense experience pursuing a relationship between food, culture, and design. The National Mall is a symbolic setting dedicated to U.S. heritage via museums, memorials, and the honoring of legacies accessible to the public. As the U.S. is a **melting pot** of different nationalities, **this museum would fill an open niche devoted to celebrating the cultural heritage of cooking throughout the cycle of food consumption.**

As consumers, regardless of notice or intention, **we have an intimate relationship with food as means of survival.** Cooking, the method for preparing this vital element, is also an expression of culture, style, and use of available resources. In essence, **cooking is an everyday design:** a crucial aspect of our very survival.

Therefore:

food → cooking → **design** → **survival** → food → cooking

Similarly, **it is the architect's mission to reach an effective design with available "ingredients," forces, or kit-of-parts within a project.** In the Museum of Gastronomy, the architect would become the unifying source between a relationship literally built between food, people, and design in an interactive experience. This would result in **a space dedicated to showcasing and combining the concept of "cooking is designing."**

Incorporating these components into a museum located at the National Mall would personify an experience of the cooking processes as a building block of every-day observation of design.



## acknowledgment

I would like to express my **gratitude** to the following for **encouraging, guiding,** and **supporting** my project from inception to completion. **It has been an honor** for me to work with them and I hope this book reflects well on the investments they have made in me.

Lastly, I offer **my regards and sincere thanks** to all those who have supported me in any respect during the completion of this project.

**Committee** . Susan Piedmont-Palladino + Paul Emmons + Paul Kelsch + David Jameson

**Family** . Loc Lam + Nadra Taher + All my brothers & sisters

**Friends** . Heather Stewart + Chris Winnike + Myhoa Polk + Gözde Çatıkkaş + Meg Ryle





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## definitions

**epicurious** *adj.* describing the activation of senses in the pursuit of connoisseurism; in this case, the open-minded adventure and exploration of cooking as design

**experience** *n.* the interaction between the observers and their observations

**forces** *n.* the pressures that restrain and define design capabilities

**in-between** *n.* the overlapping area linking spaces that build a new understanding of boundaries and their relationships

**intersection** *n.* the physical form of where spaces attach or meet, connecting different experiences



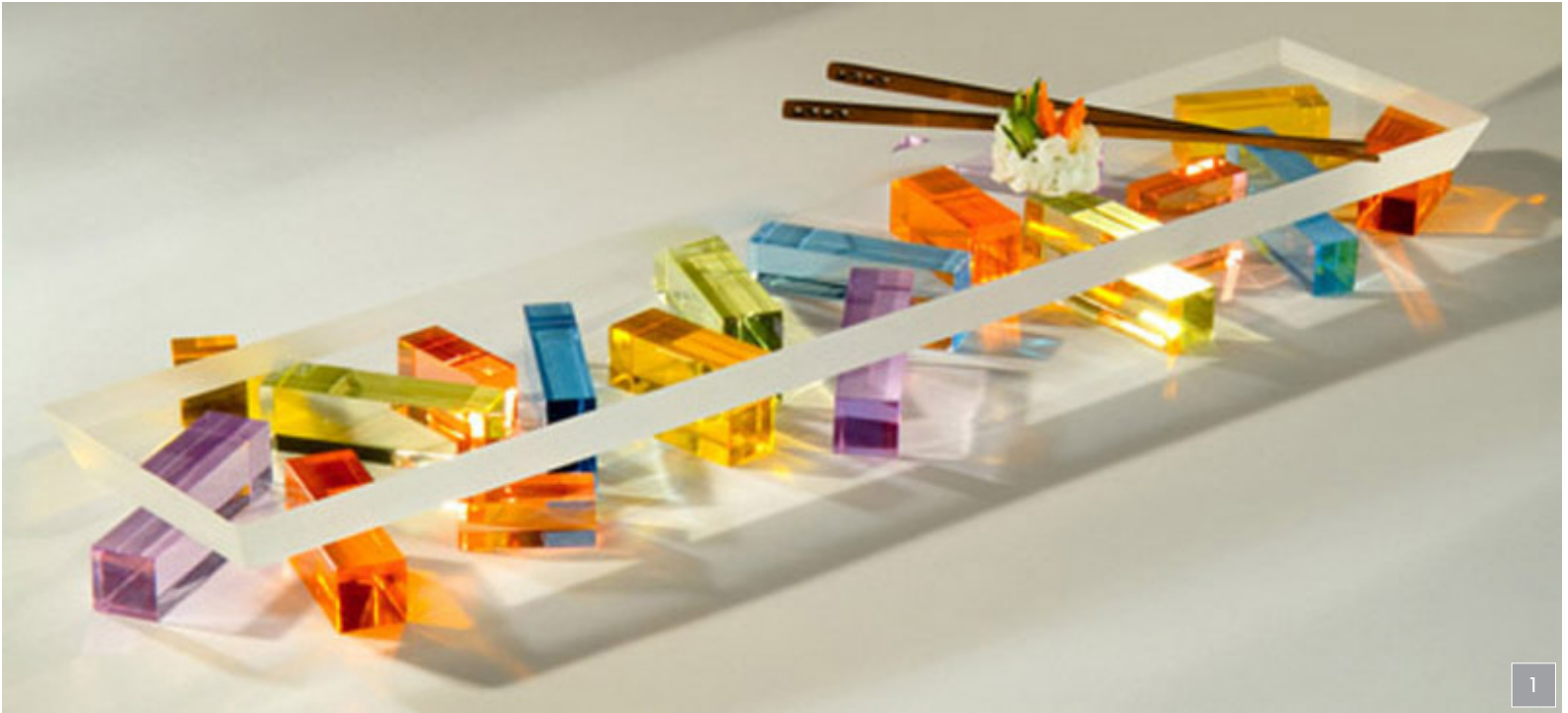
# RESEARCH Phase

part 01

t o p i c s e l e c t i o n  
s i t e m e d i u m  
p r o g r a m c h o i c e



**TOPIC** **Selection**  
r e s e a r c h p h a s e  
part **01A**





Inspired by the image on the opposite page, I would like to **focus** on a topic in which I call “**the architecture of desire.**” This topic will explore the **feelings** and **emotions** of being in a particular space. These feelings and emotions are enhanced by the human senses, **with attention to touch and smell of materials, tasting the deliciousness of that design, and finally enjoying the noise and the voice that penetrate or reflect a particular material.**

Integrating these two concepts - **the architecture of desire** and **the experimentation of different materials** - I would like to design and investigate a museum. A **museum** where one can experience a variety of emotions through different spaces and through a set of materials.

testing ingredients

set of cookwares

mixing spices

cooking techniques

delicious execution

**to get a desirable sense**

testing materials

set of equipments

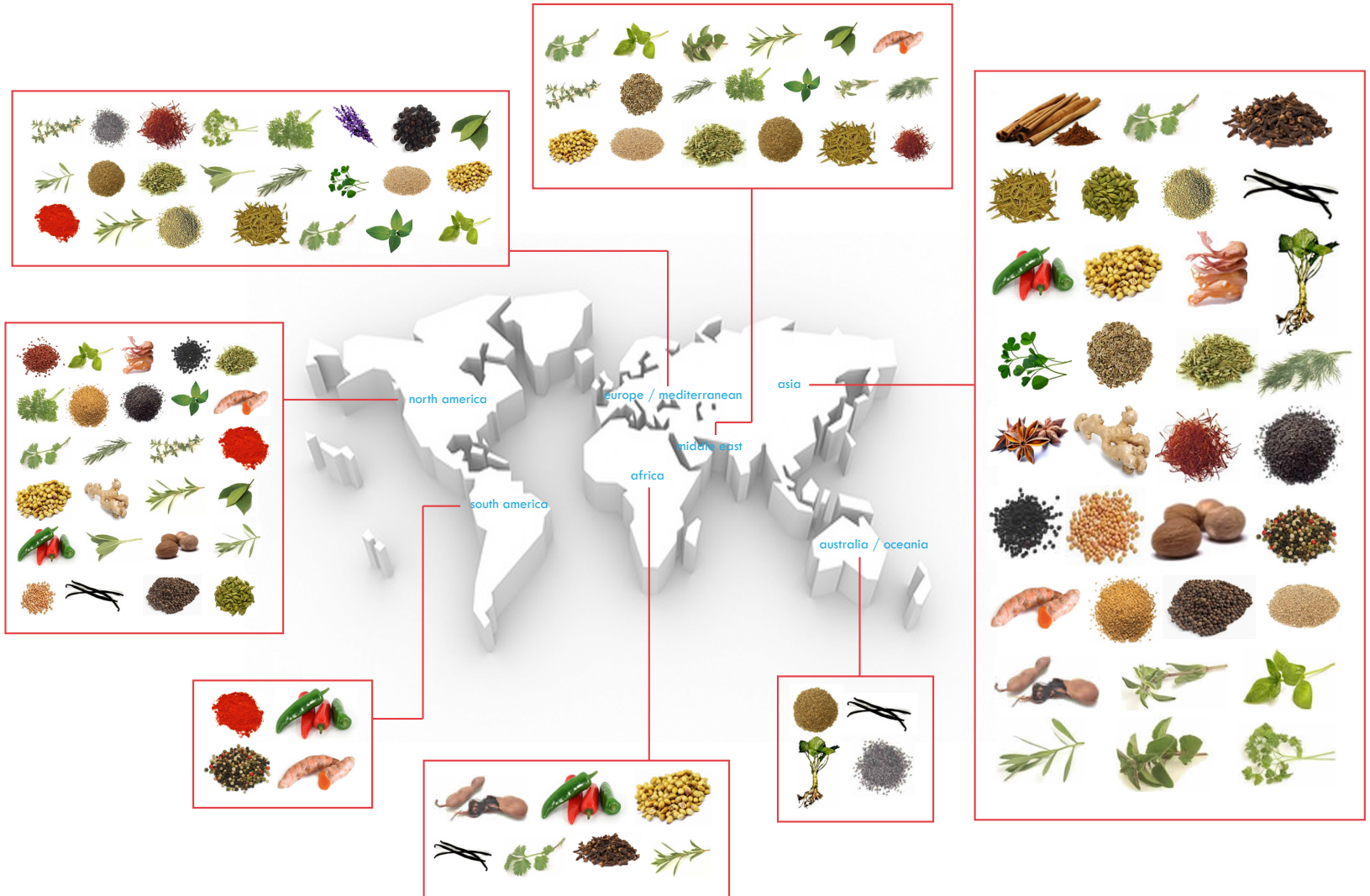
programs arrangements

building techniques

desirable space

**to reach an effective design**

# Map of the World Herb + Spices



personal  
**interpretation**  
while  
in the  
city of  
**New Orleans**





**SITE** **Medium**  
r e s e a r c h p h a s e  
part **01B**

# site selection phase

01



02



03





## potential locations

### **01 [Midtown, New York City, New York USA] --**

- 1 New York City boasts a large and diverse population with a rich cultural heritage.
- 2 Known as a hub for innovation, New York City embraces creativity and unique concepts.
- 3 A lot adjacent to the United Nations Headquarters provides an excellent location as a landmark promoting international relations.

### **02 [Fishermans' Wharf, San Francisco, California USA] --**

- 1 Wedged along the San Francisco Bay, Fishermans' Wharf is home to a kaleidoscope of restaurants and stands that serve fresh seafood, organic vegetables, and fluffy breads.
- 2 The area is a recognizable attraction to foodies around the globe.
- 3 Picturesque location with panoramic views of the Bay, Alcatraz, the Golden Gate Bridge.

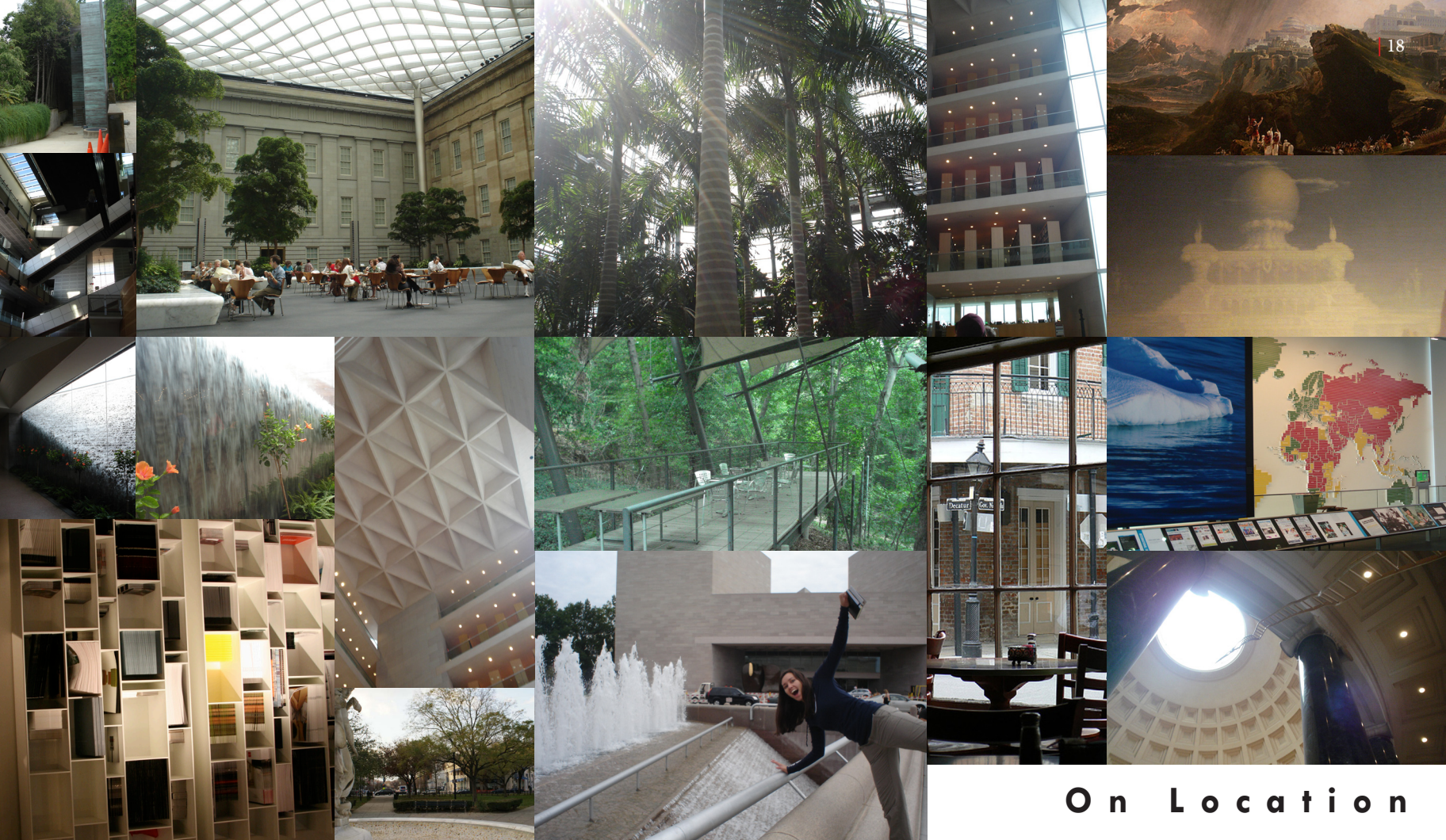
### **03 [National Mall, Washington DC USA] --**

- 1 As the Capital of the nation, Washington DC represents the United States as a "mosaic," of different cultures with varying experiences as exemplified by the museums chosen to represent the nation at the National Mall.
- 2 The National Mall is home to a variety of museums that embodies a variety of cultures symbolizing both separate pieces of American heritage and a homogenous American culture, but not one that combines them multiculturally.
- 3 A Museum of Gastronomy at the National Mall would add a new dimension by adding a global element to DC as a center for education on national heritage and the American identity.

## site analysis phase

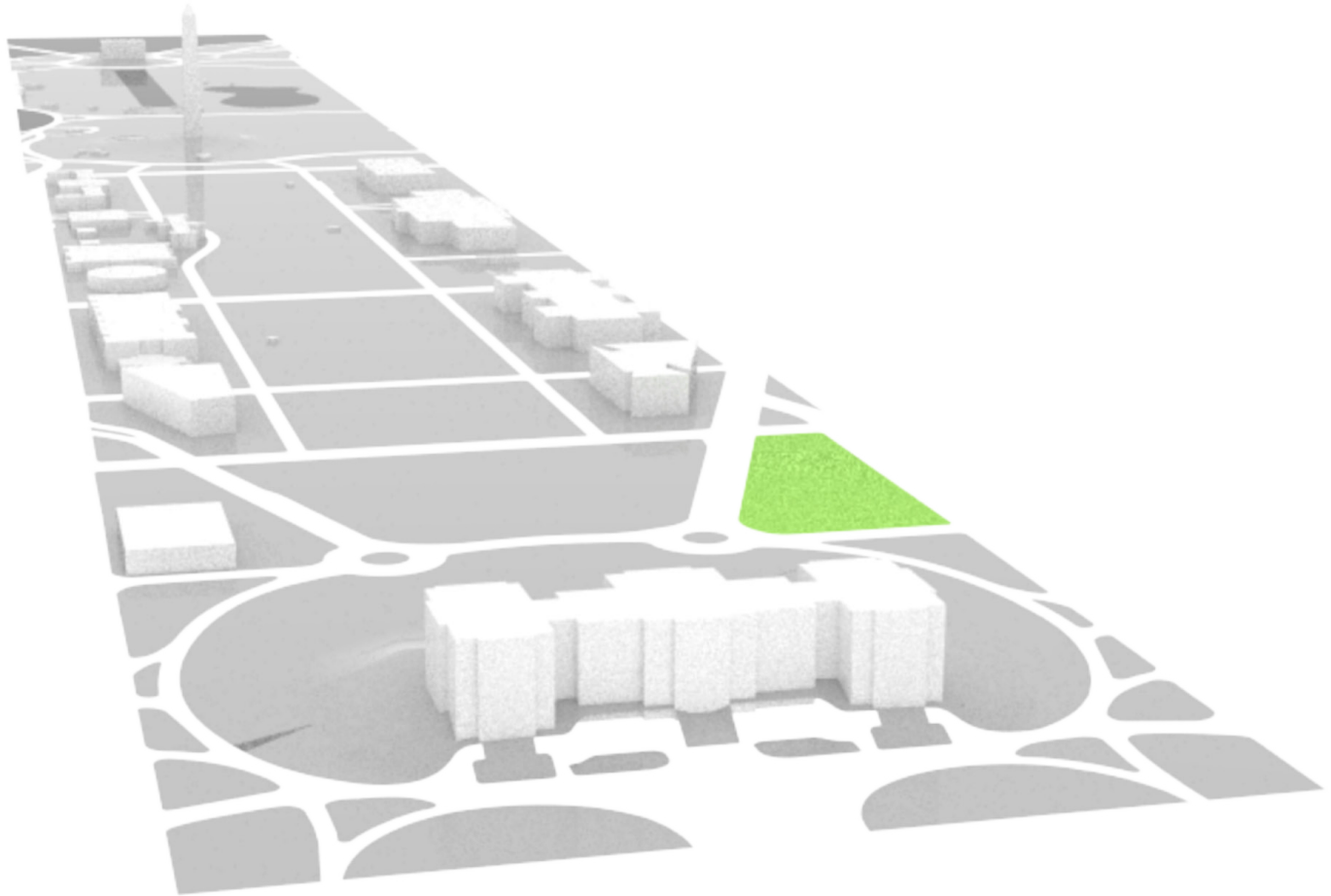
### the objectives :

- 1 create an **experiential understanding** of the city and the site through visitation, **analysis**, and precise documentation.
- 2 obtain an overview of **architectural elements** in regards to skin, space, and structural relationships.
- 3 possess a sense of **scale** and **spatial** relationships between existing buildings.
- 4 understand the **social conditions** between different identities within and without the site.



On Location





national mall washington DC

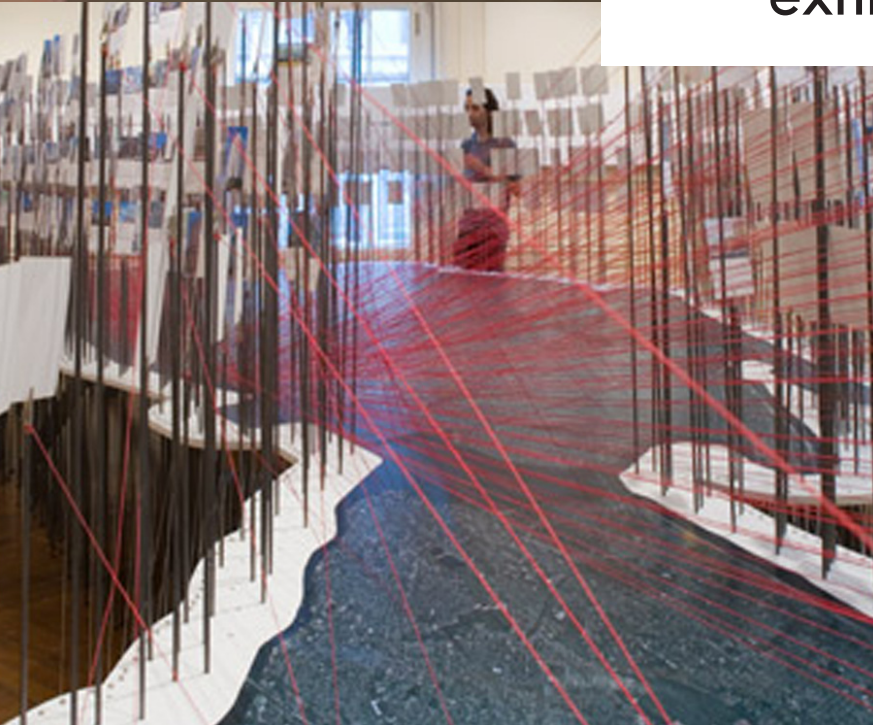




**PROGRAM** **Choice**  
r e s e a r c h p h a s e  
part **01C**



exhibitions







interactiveexhibitions



3



**Walking Blanks**  
Watch as his (over) and (over) screen across the wall. It is the smallest unit in the computer universe, right like an atom in the physical world. Everything that goes out over the Internet is made of different combinations of "bits" - whether it's simple text or complex software packages with sound, video, and imagery.

## analyzing existing programs

In this phase I analyzed the social reactions of how people interact with the varying exhibitions and programs offered at the National Mall in Washington DC. Given that the National Mall receives approximately 24 million visitors from around the world each year <sup>[1]</sup>, I wanted to observe the various reactions of these visitors as they experienced cultural showcases. Responses varied from emotional outbursts of happiness, remorse, distress, and celebration, experienced through contemplation, touching, tasting, smelling, and hearing the different exhibits.



how does the **art of cooking**  
define **culture** ?



4



5



6



7



8



9

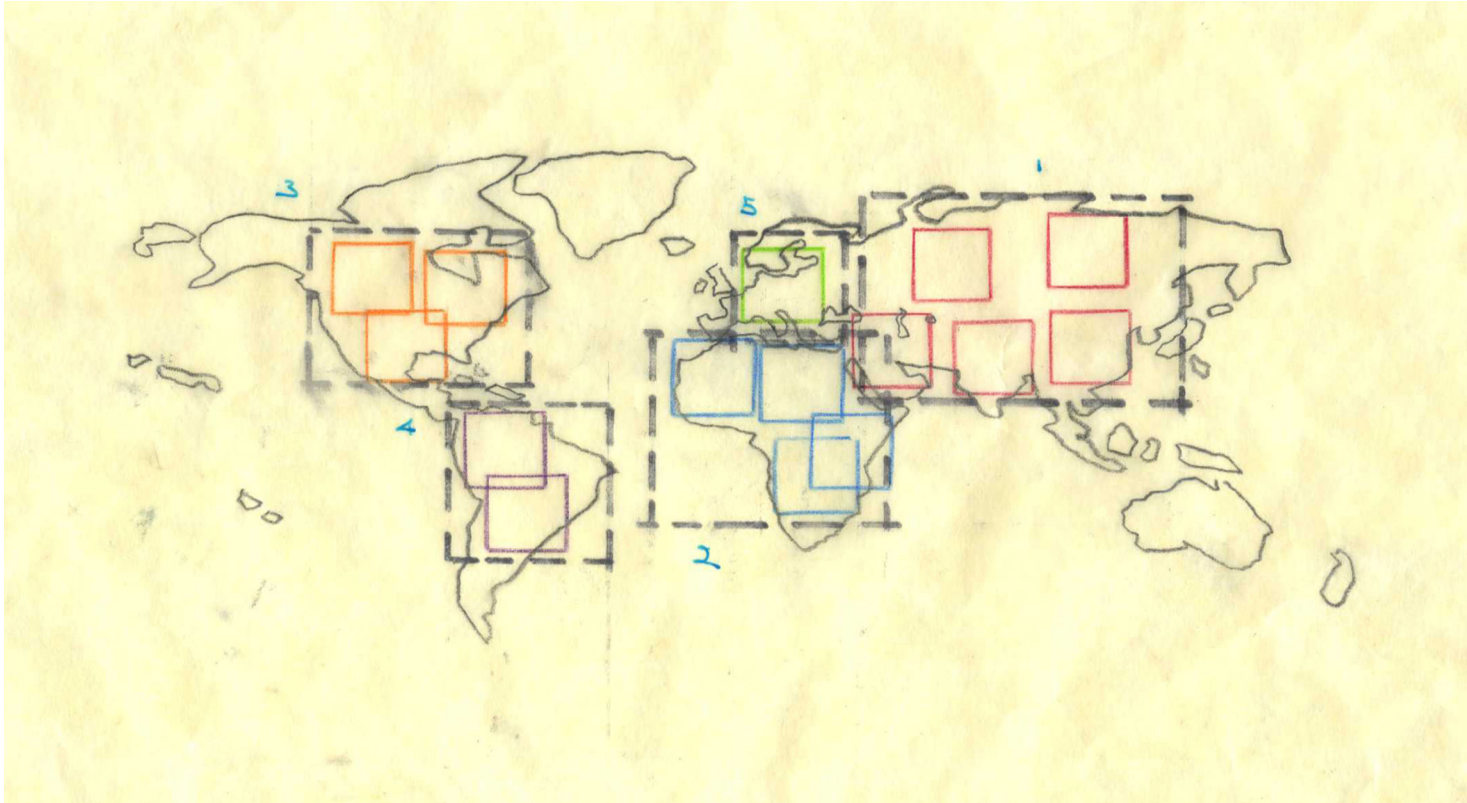


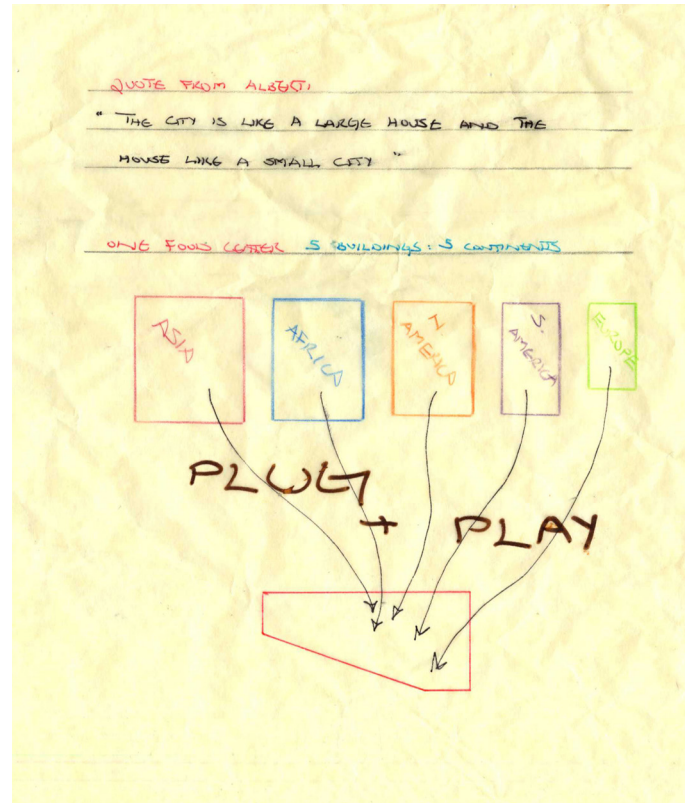
10



11

# initial programming





LAND AREA % OF 5 CONTINENTS	# OF KITCHENS
+ ASIA 30%	5
+ AFRICA 20%	4
+ NORTH AMERICA 17%	3
+ SOUTH AMERICA 12%	2
+ EUROPE 7% <span style="color: blue;">RATIO →</span>	1

**PROGRAMS (AS OF 11.17.2009)**

- + OUTDOOR SPACE (FOOD FESTIVAL)
- + MAIN LOBBY (ENTRY)
- + 15 KITCHENS
- + 5 GALERIES . 5 LIBRARIES . 5 GIFT SHOPS
- + RESTROOMS , MECHANICAL ROOMS
- + INDOOR GARDEN
- + WATER PONDS



how does the **art of cooking**  
help me think of and understand  
the **art of architecture** ?



# DESIGN Phase

part 02

r e a d i n g t h e o r y  
d e f i n i n g b o u n d a r y  
g a s t r o n o m y m u s e u m



**READING**  
design

**Theor**y  
phase

part **02A**

“Cooking, like architecture, manifests itself in building. The cook, like the architect, draws on an infinite array of creative resources, which make it possible to create wonders from basic construction materials. But even using the finest marble or the best caviar, success is not guaranteed. Architecture, like cooking, evolves and lasts in the form of memories, tastes, and temperatures.”

Ferran Adria, head chef, El Bulli Restaurant, Roses, Spain <sup>[2]</sup>

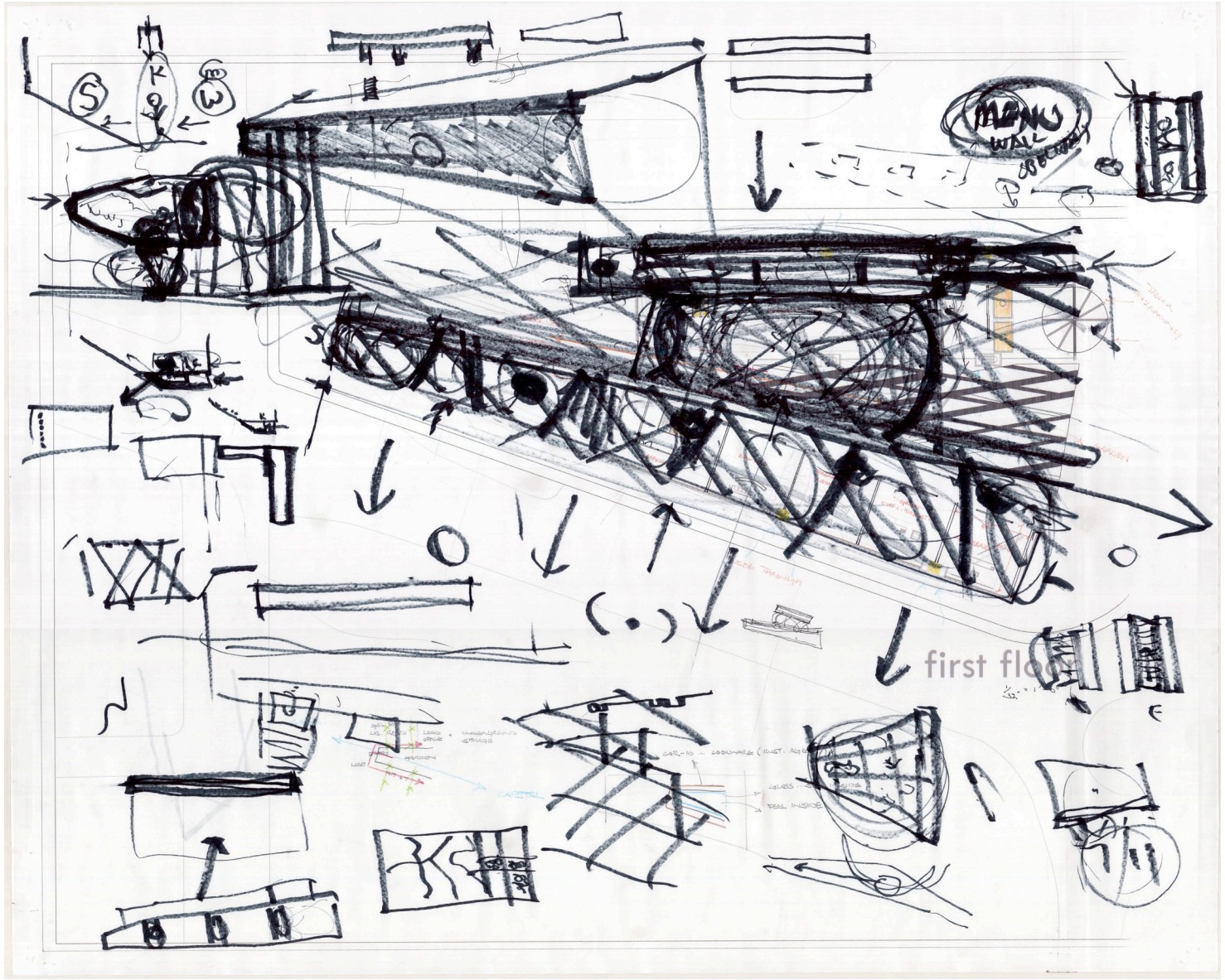


designing **and** cooking

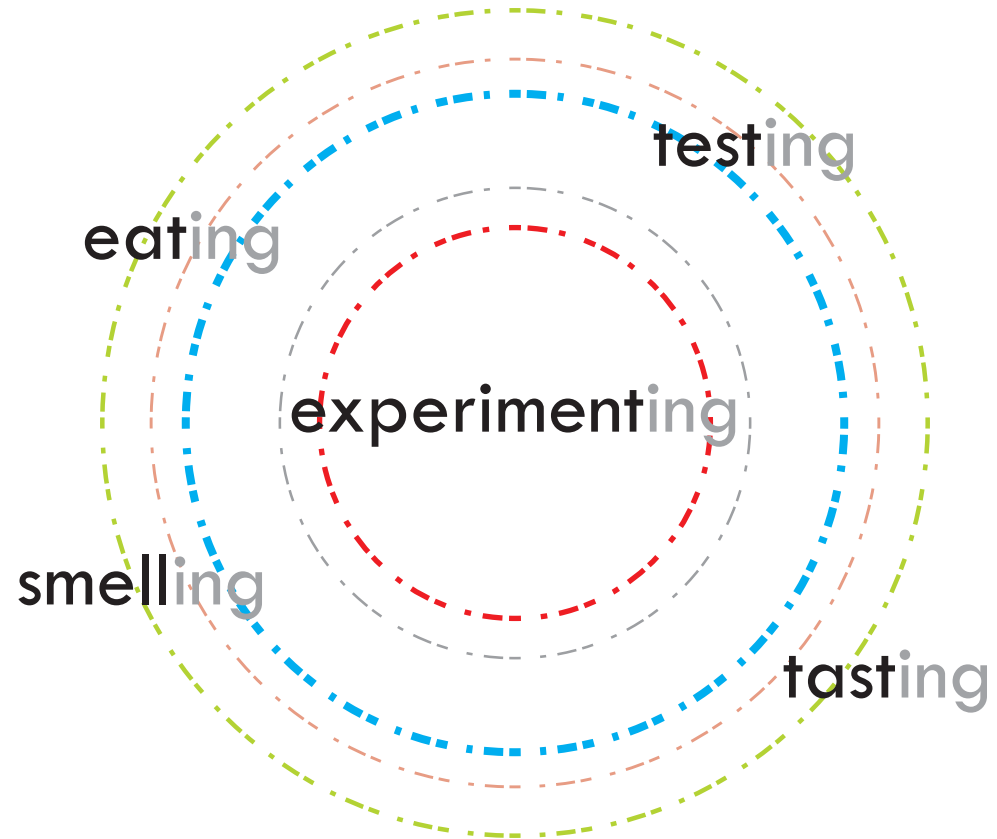
designing **vs** cooking

designing **IS** cooking









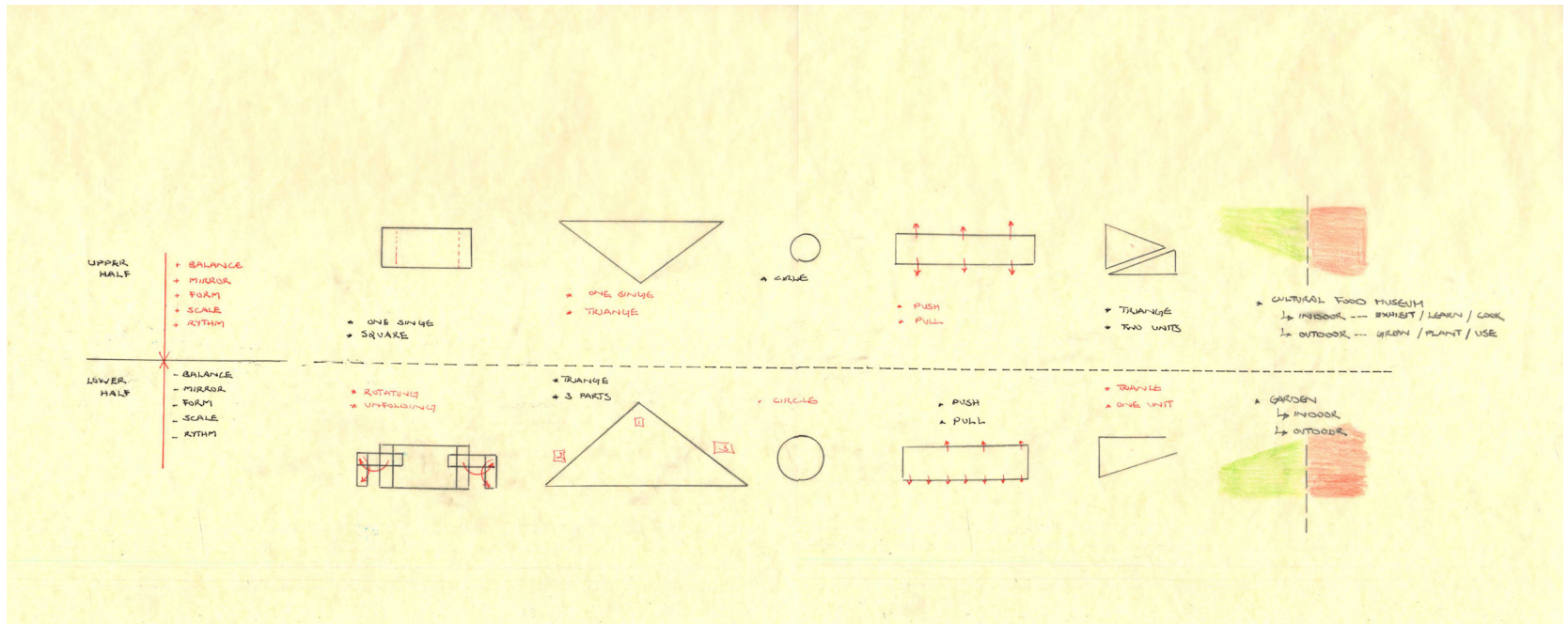


**DEFINING**  
design

**Boundary**  
phase  
part **02B**

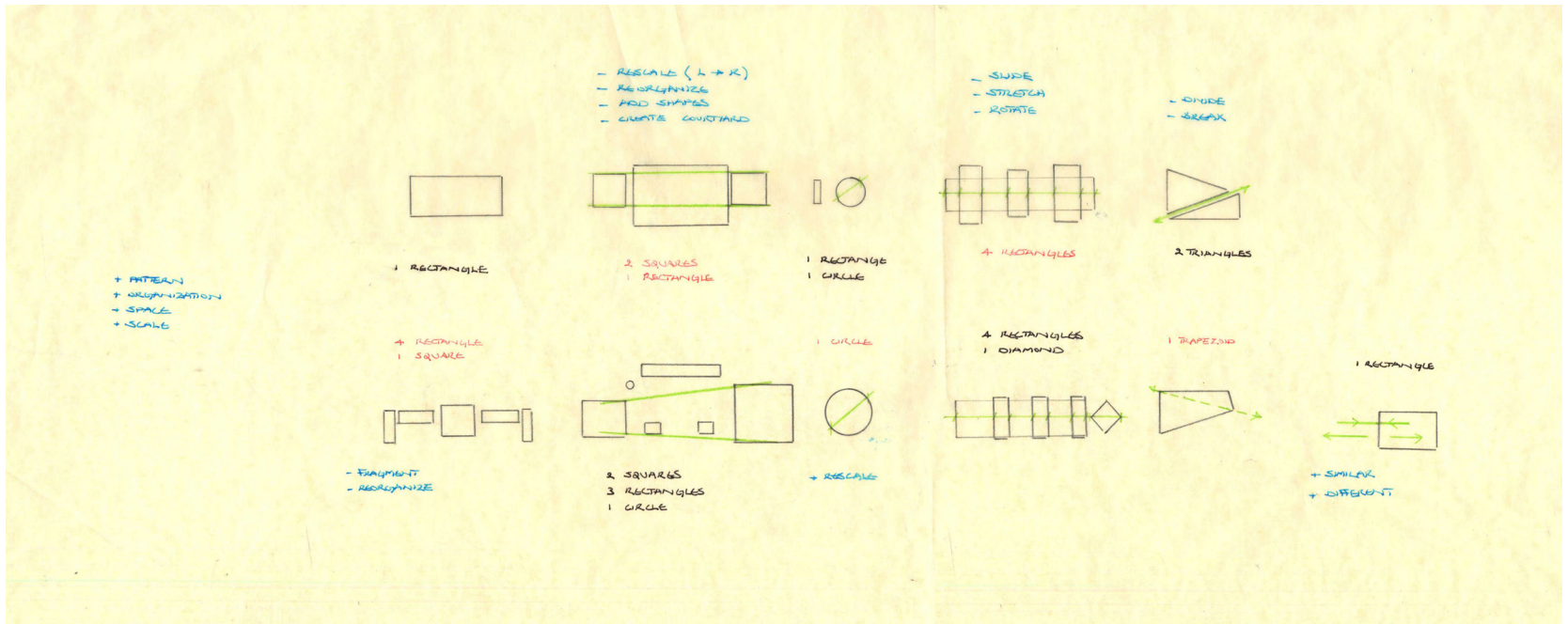
## configuring shape + form

**current:** the Museum of Gastronomy must fit into the patterns already laid out at the National Mall

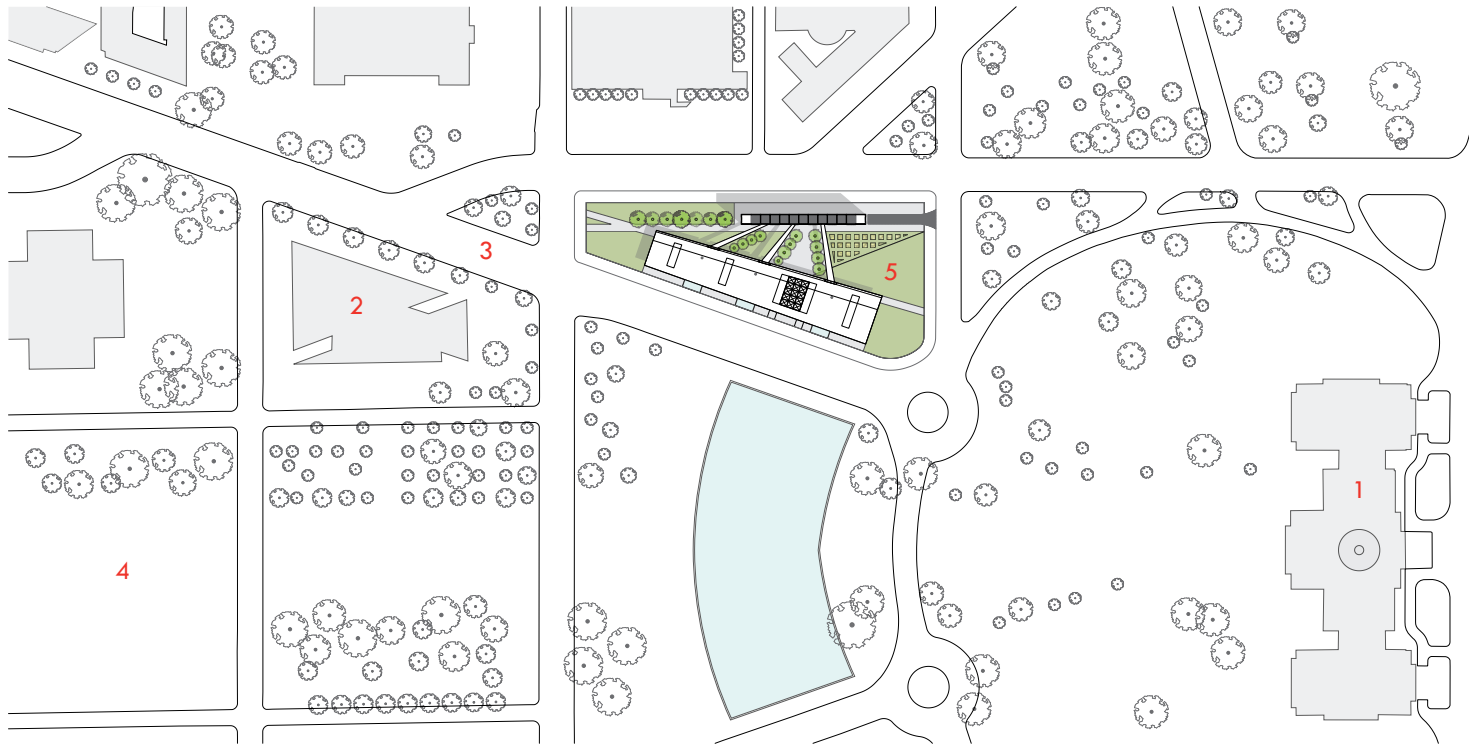


# extracting rhythm + pattern

**objective:** create a unique volume that would retain the characteristics of the current site perimeters



# existing site conditions



## key

1 US capitol 2 east building of national gallery 3 PA avenue 4 national mall 5 museum of gastronomy



I believe that **architects** are always doomed to **cook** with ingredients that were purchased by others !!!



**GASTRONOMY** **Museum**  
design phase  
part **02C**

forces

pressures

experiences



intersection

epicurious

in-between

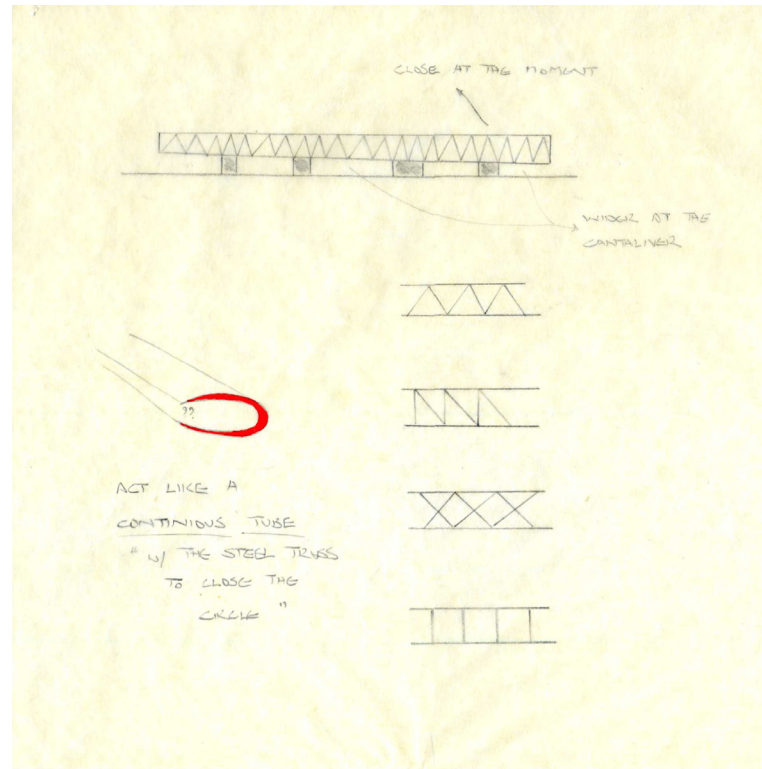
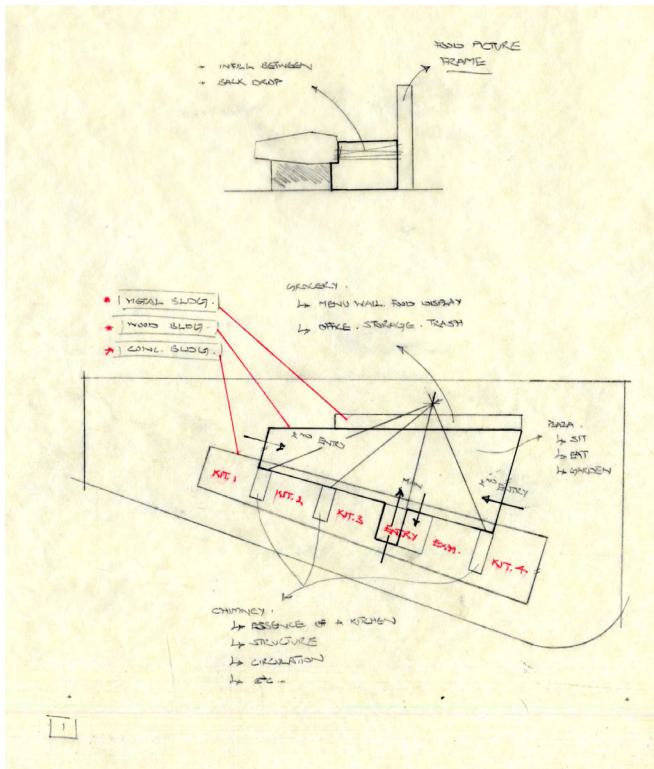
## The museum of gastronomy

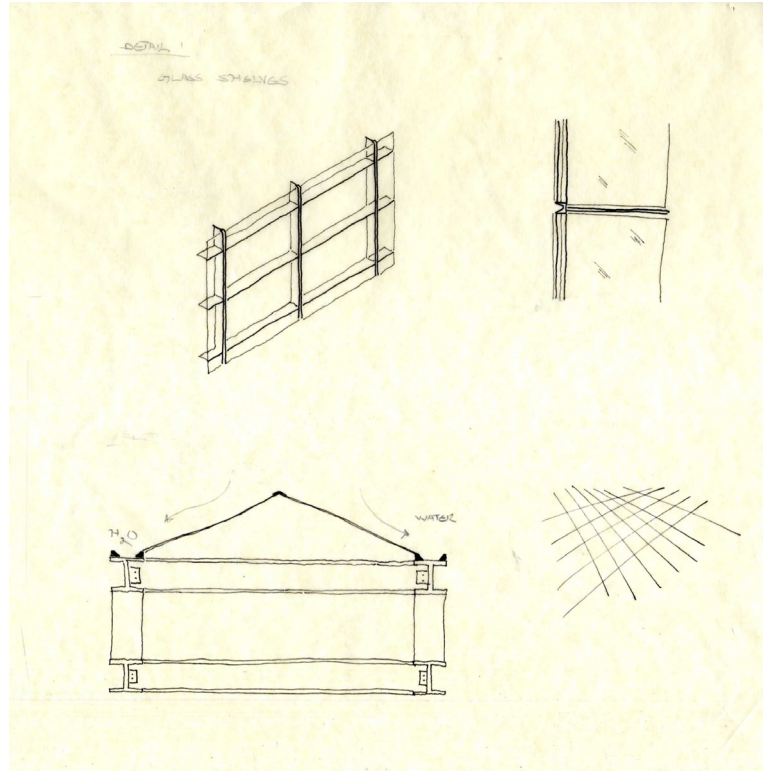
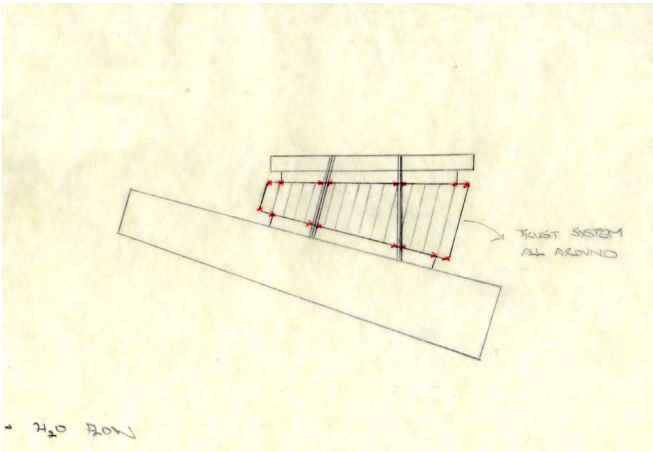
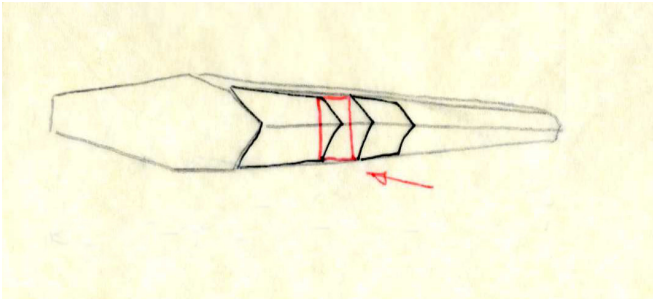
is located in the Washington D.C. National Mall. Dedicated to a full-sense experience connecting the relationship between cooking and designing, **this museum celebrates the cultural heritage of cooking throughout the full cycle of food consumption.**

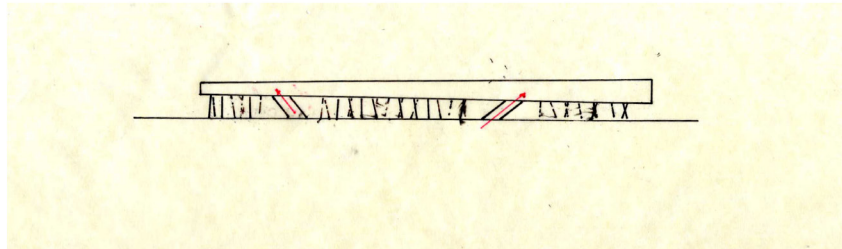
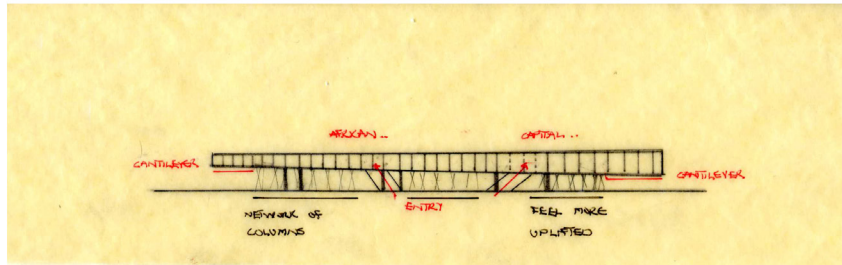
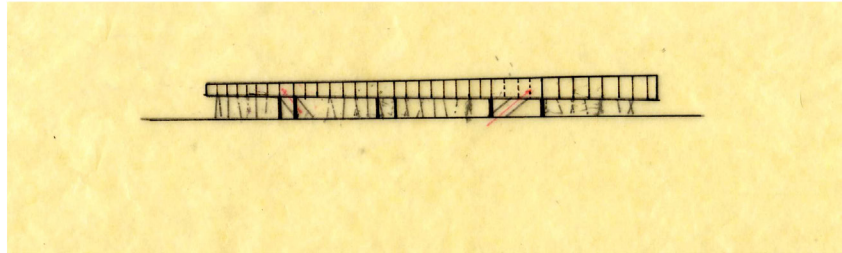
The subsequent pages illustrate the process of accepting and overcoming the following design challenges:

entry / circulation . structure / skin . facade / layout

# design sketches









menu wall

herbs + spices garden

office space

loading area

exhibit area

dining space

food garden

theater building



“Finding the right suppliers and building the right relationships has taken many years and is an on-going pursuit. I invite you to join me in the experience of defining and growing the concept of Canadian Regional Seasonal Cuisine as each new discovery leads to its own unique rewards”

Jeff Tylor, chef, Domus Cafe, Ottawa, Canada <sup>[3]</sup>

“The process of lime-burning, the first step in making lime for architectural use is carried out in several ways. Whether done in the simplest manner, or in kilns constructed on the most scientific principles, it will still depend (both as regards the quality and quantity of lime produces) upon the kilnsman”

Fred T. Hodgson <sup>[4]</sup>

APPLE TREES

HERBS AND SPICES GARDEN

FOOD GARDEN

# MENU WALL

**DINING SPACE**

STORAGE SPACE

**FRIDGE BUILDING**

**CHOOSING  
INGREDIENTS**

**DEFINING  
PROGRAMS**

# THEATER BUILDING

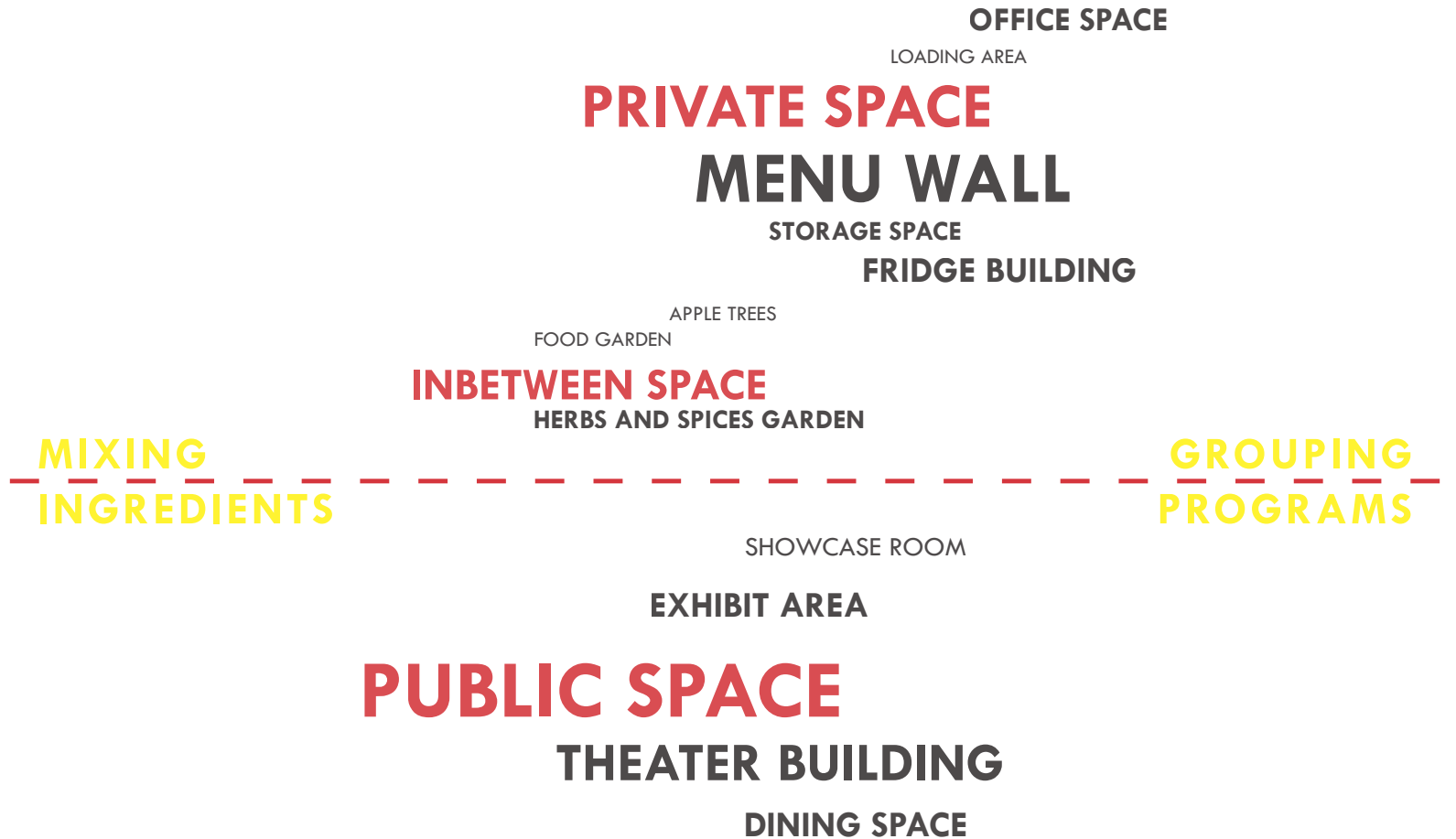
**EXHIBIT AREA**

OFFICE SPACE

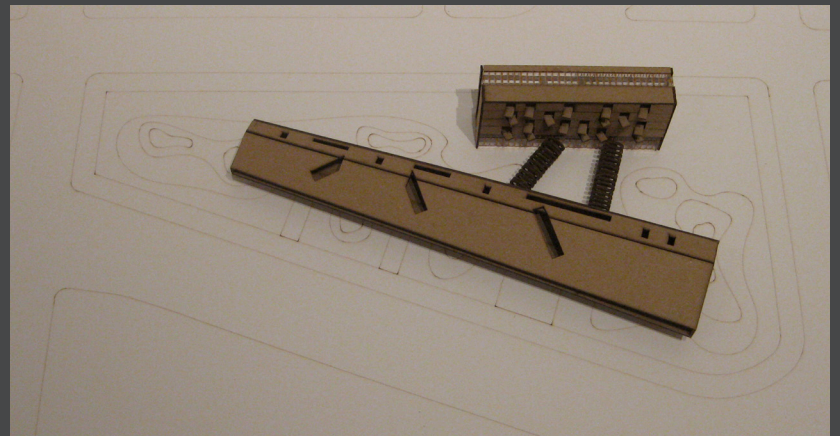
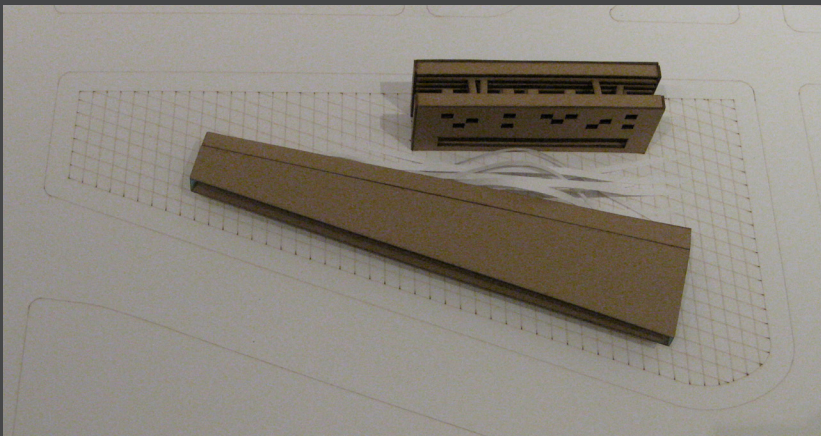
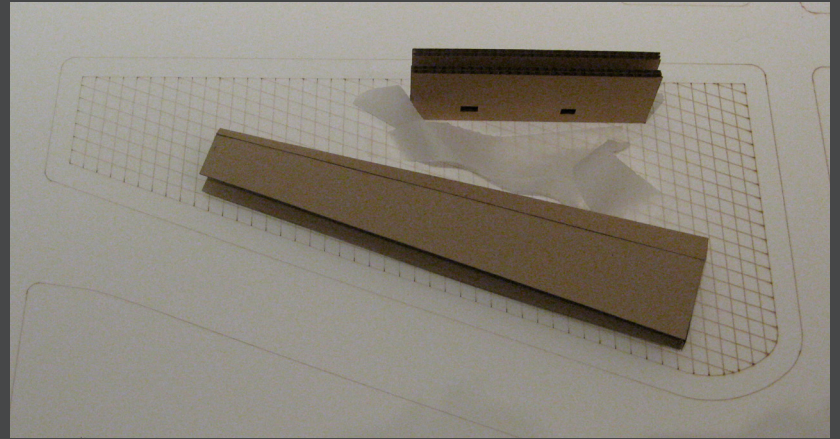
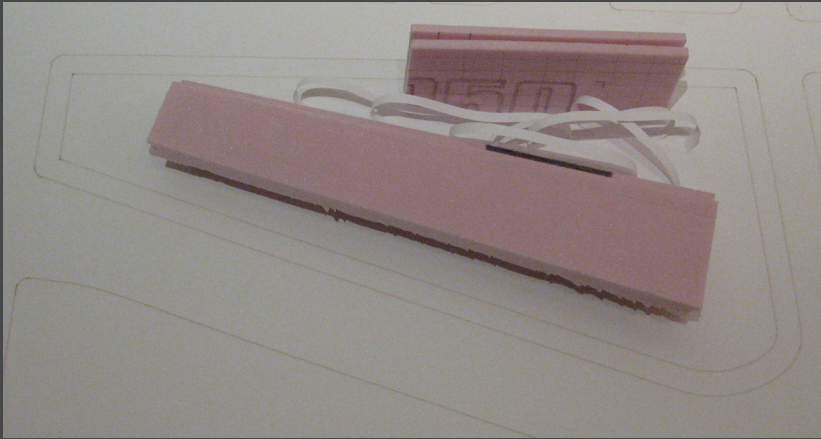
SHOWCASE ROOM

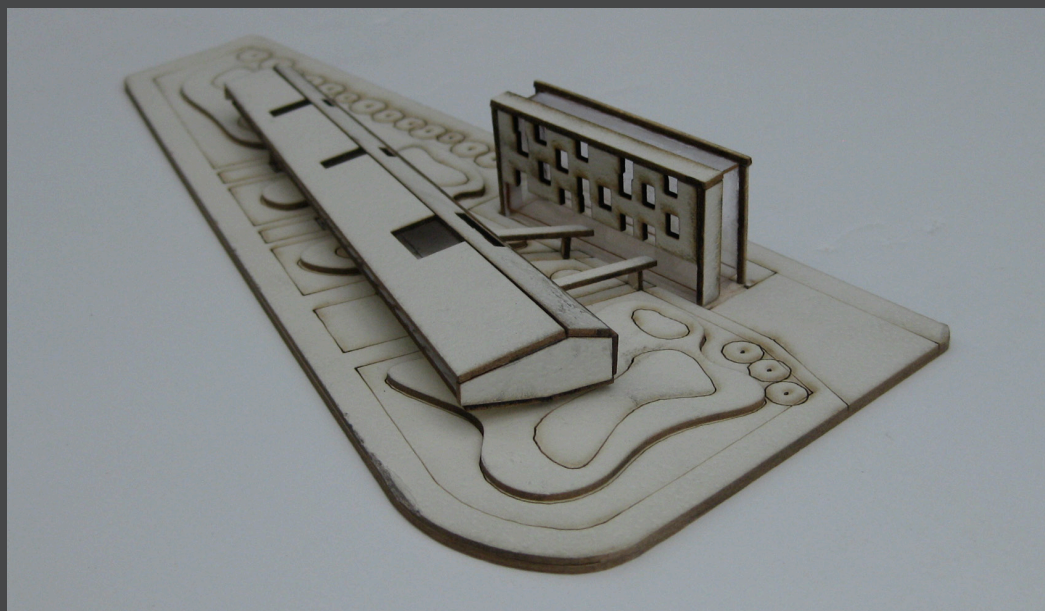
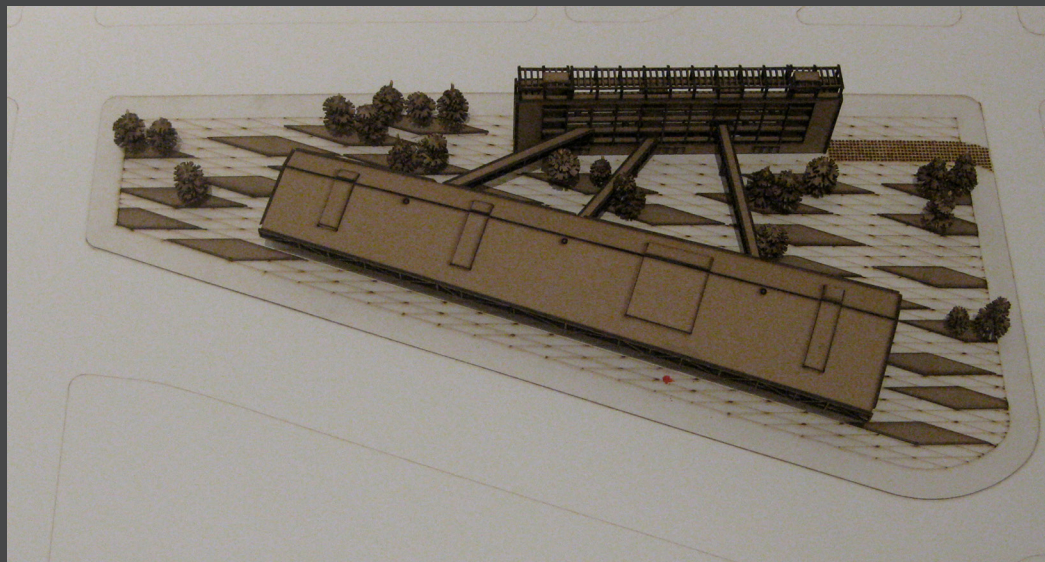
# INBETWEEN SPACE

LOADING AREA

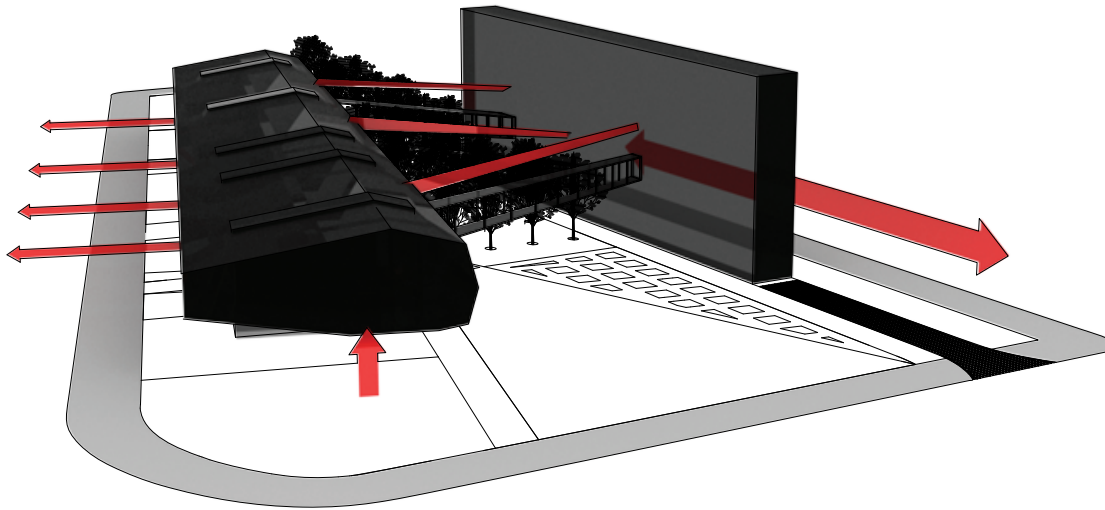


# study models



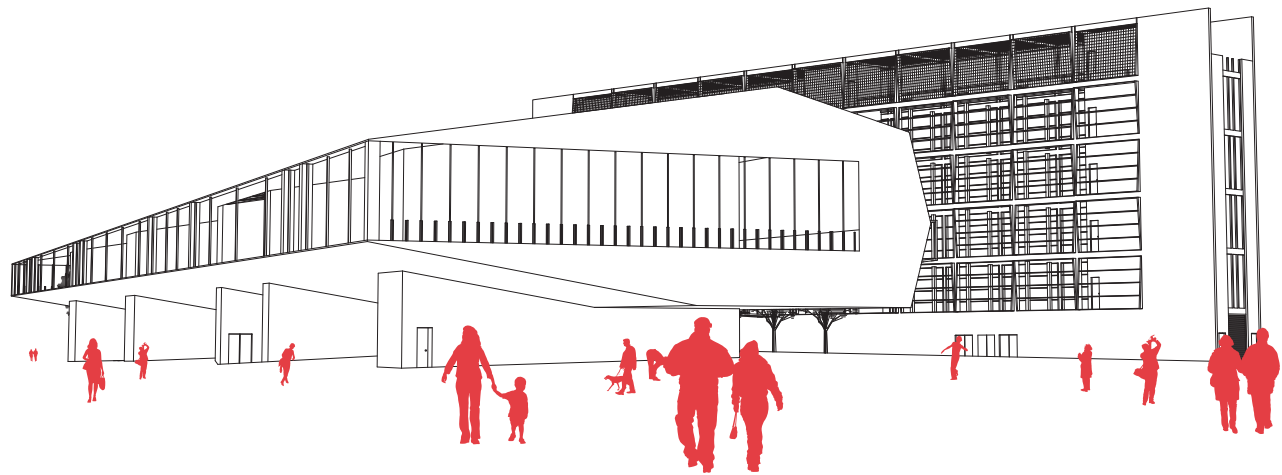


# building elements

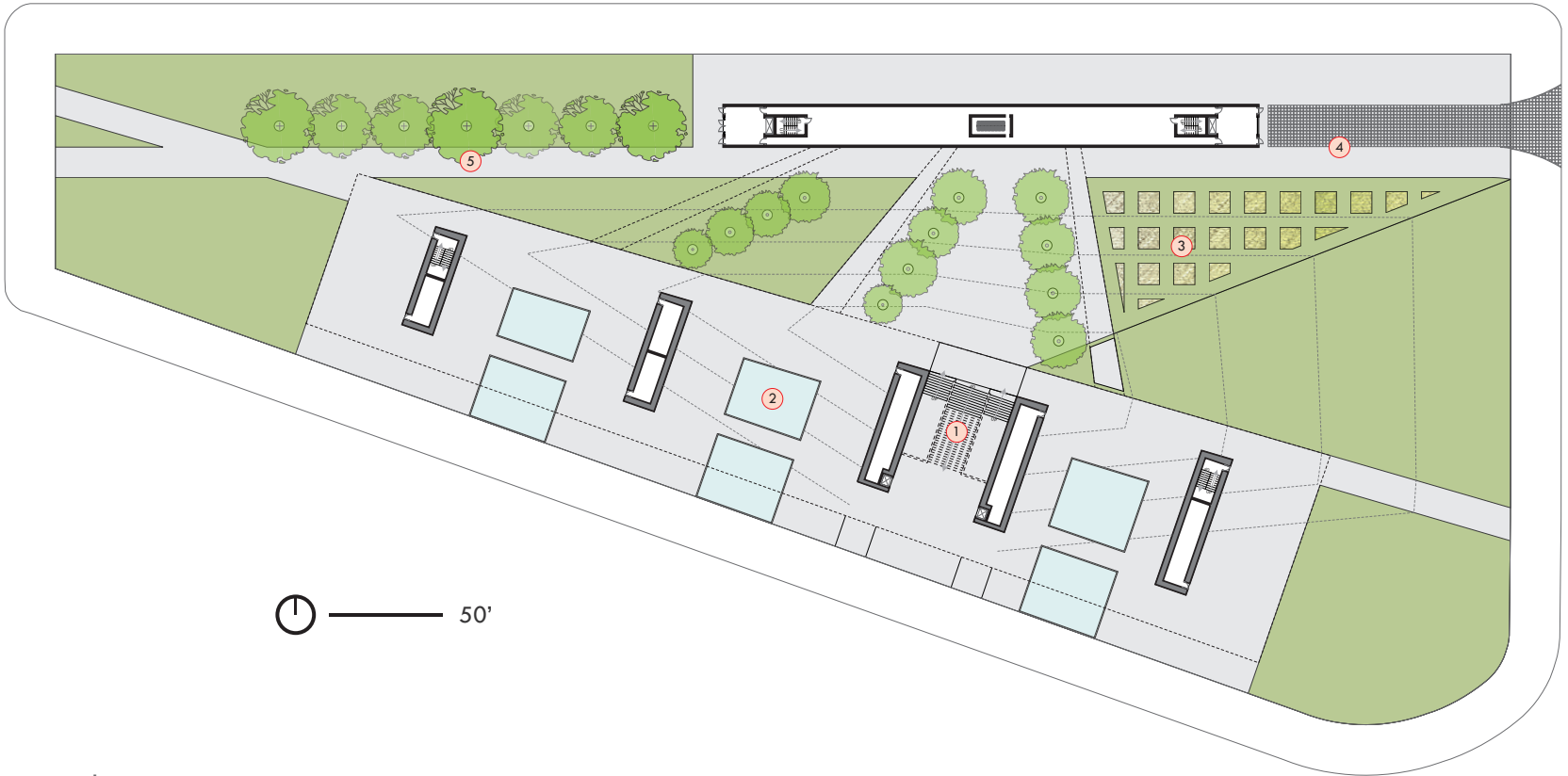




perspective looking northwest



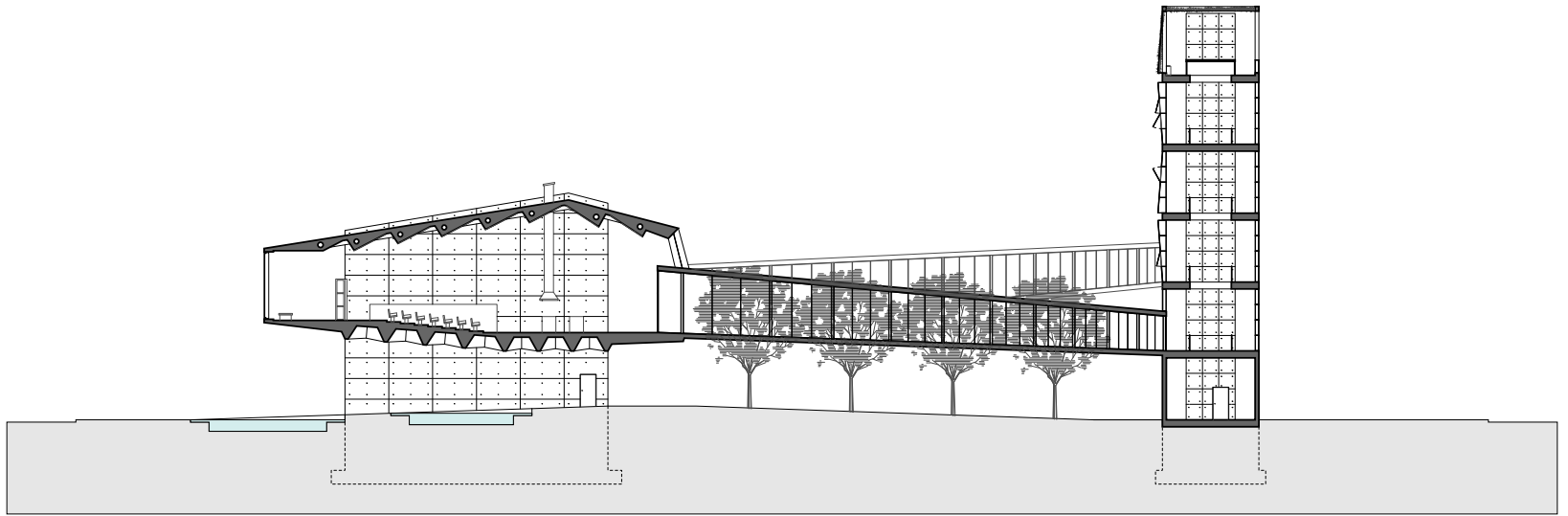
# first floor plan



key

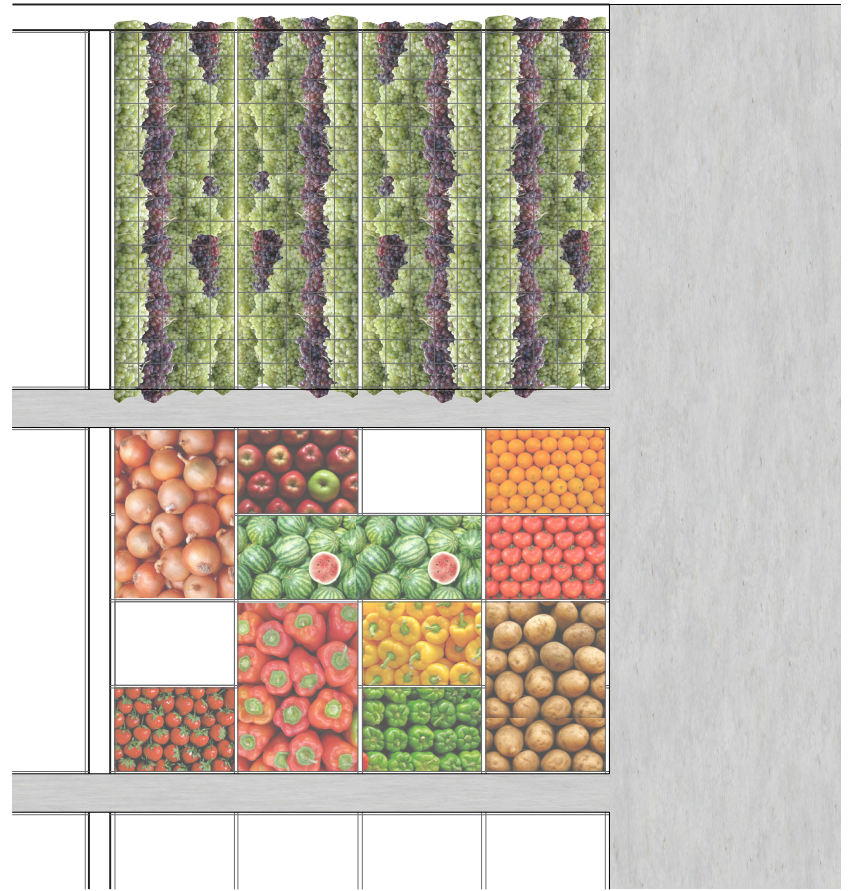
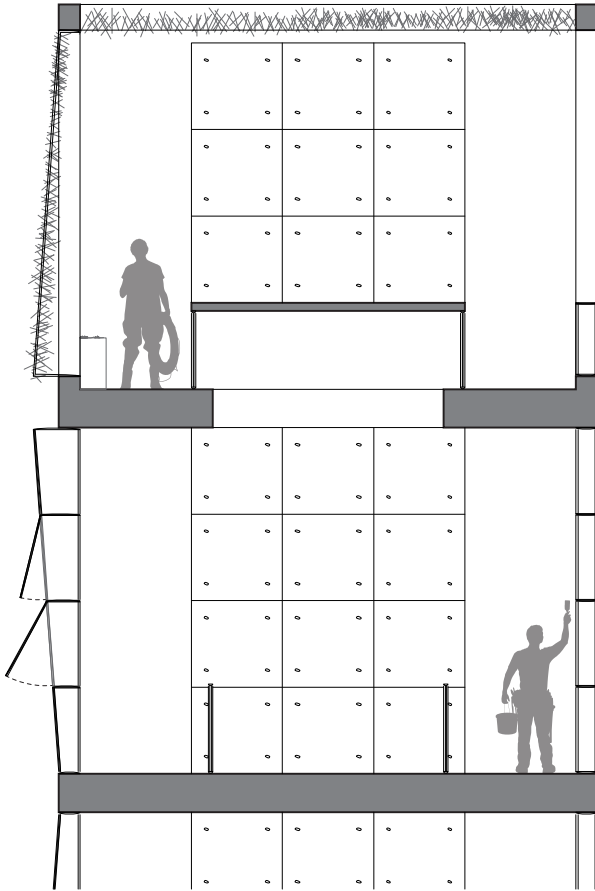
1 main entrance 2 fish pond 3 spice garden 4 loading driveway 5 apple trees

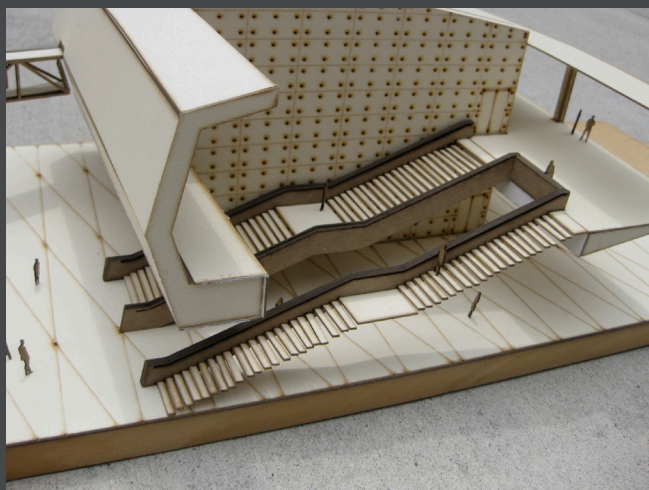
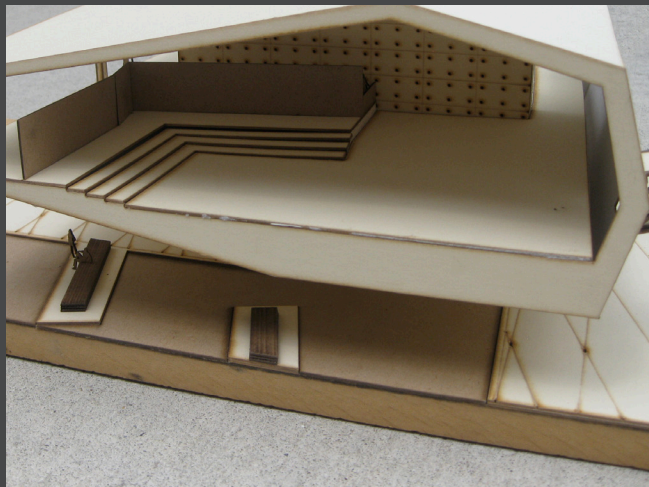
# section 1



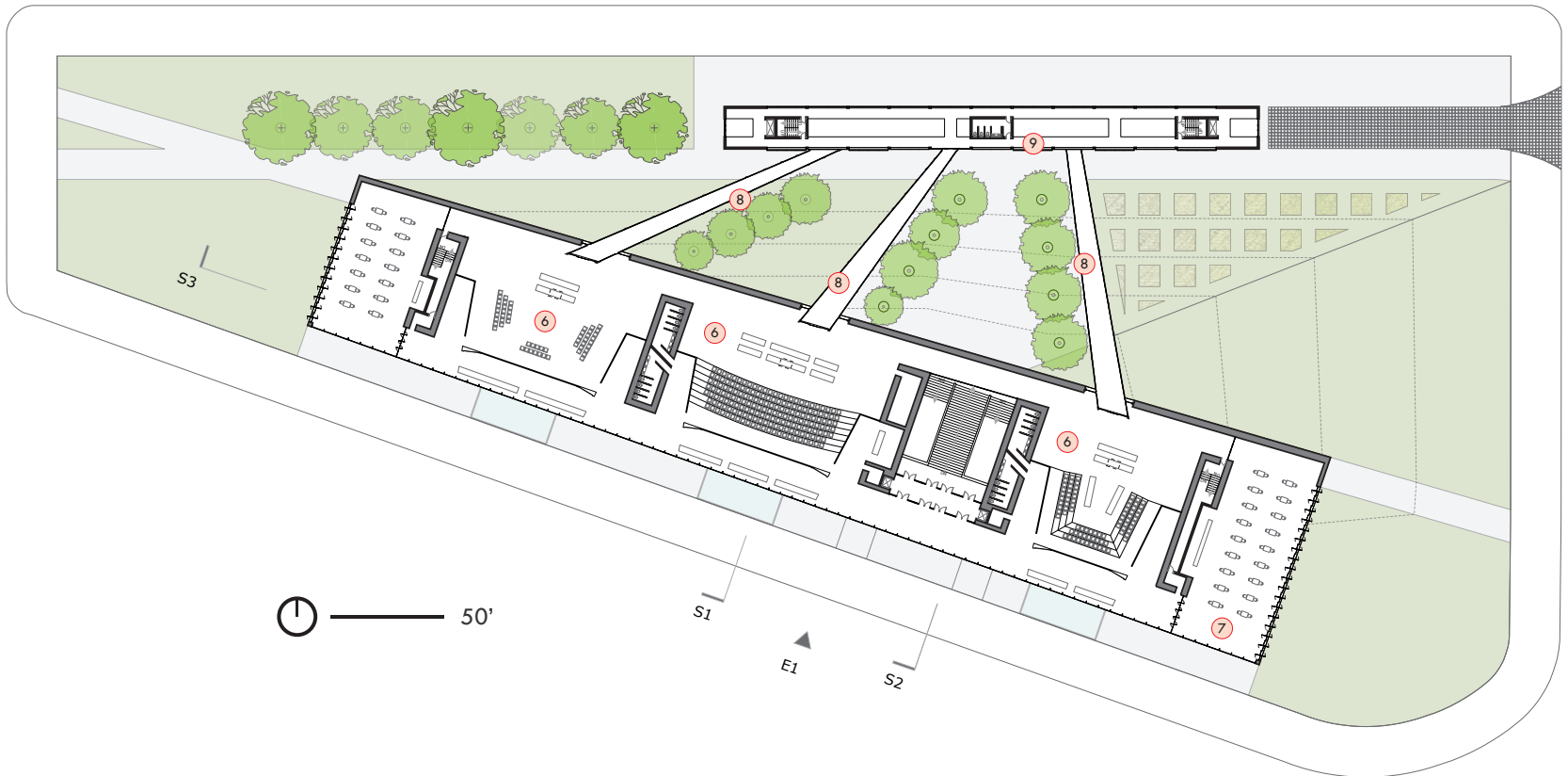
————— 30'

# partial section + elevation , menu building





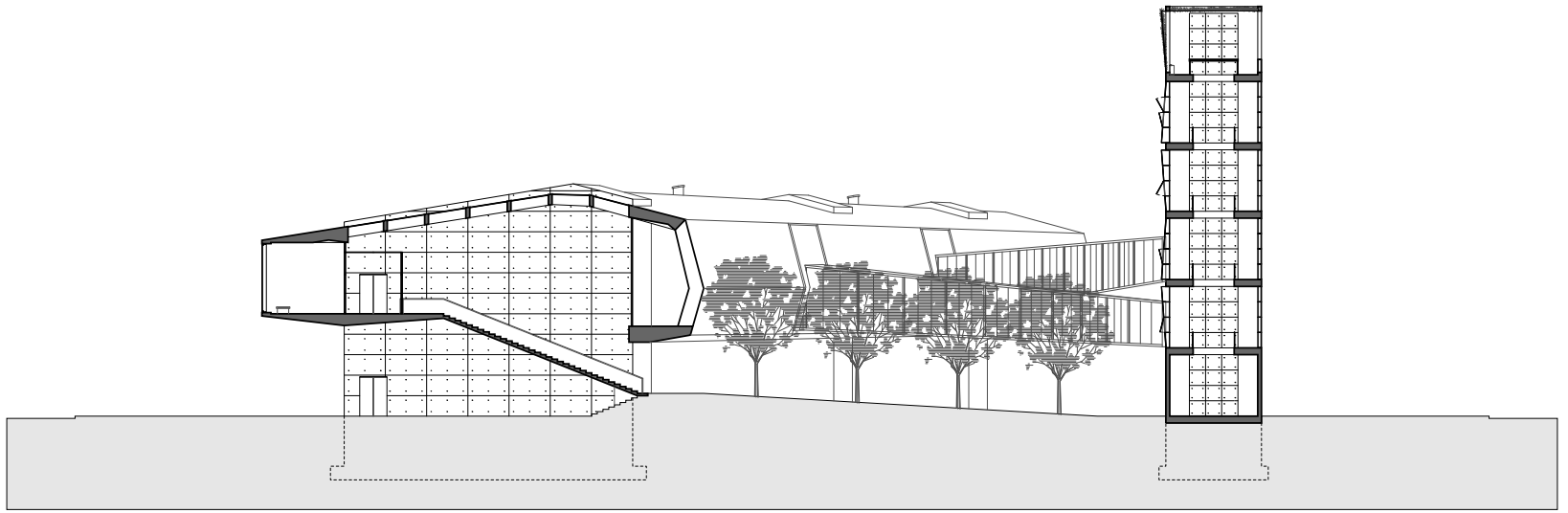
# second floor plan



key

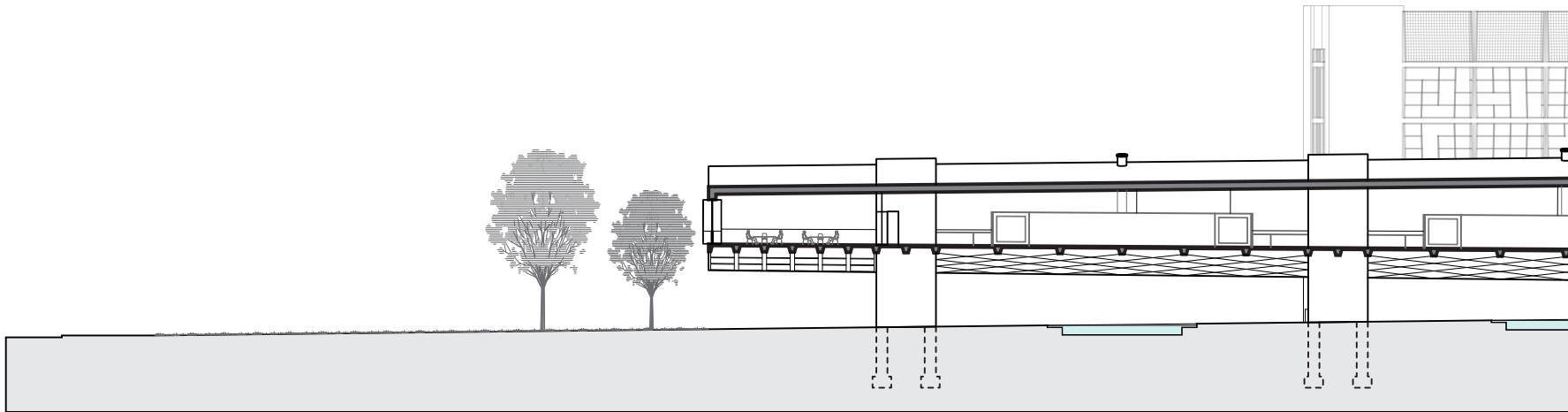
6 cooking theater 7 open restaurant 8 bridge walkway 9 menu building

# section 2

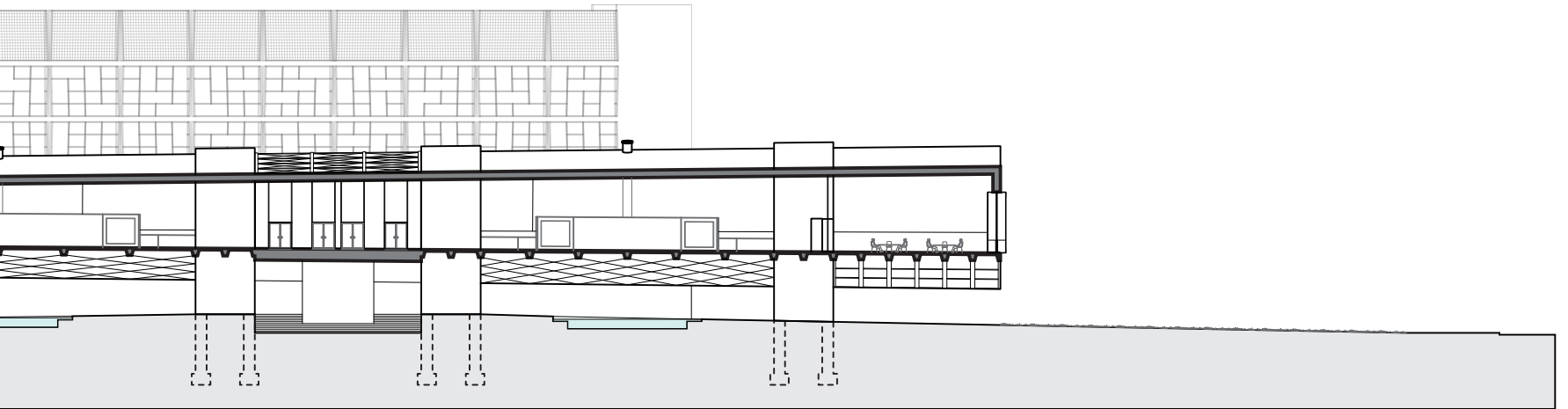


————— 30'

# section 3

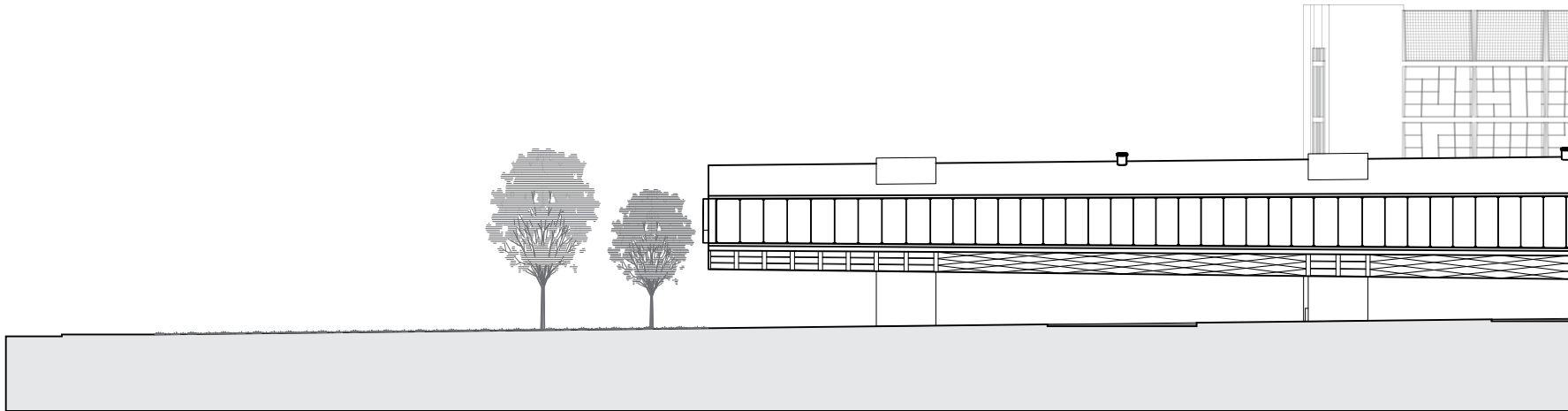


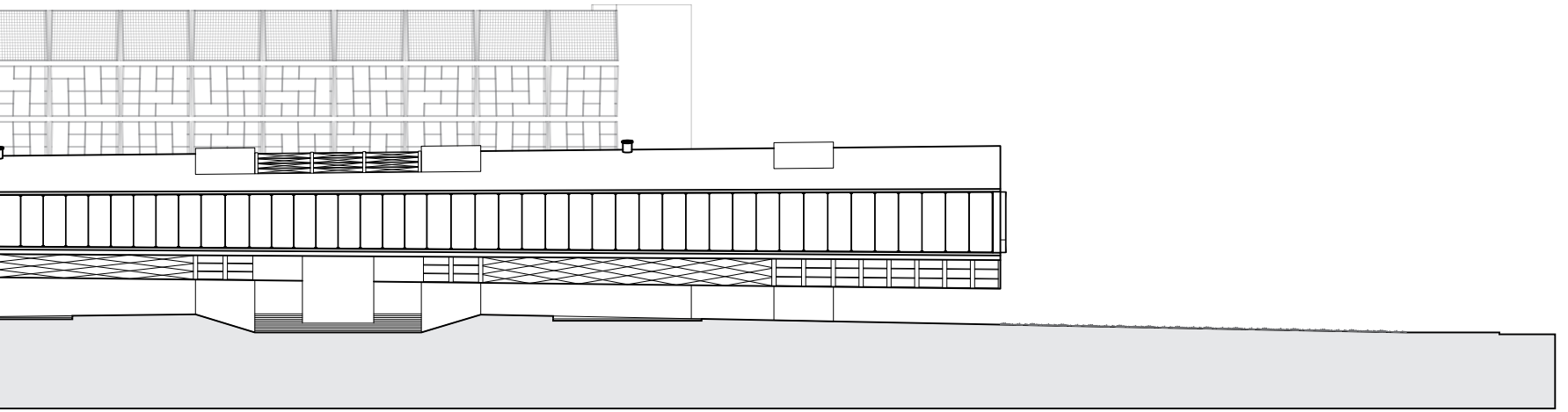




————— 50'

# south elevation





————— 50'



view from spice garden

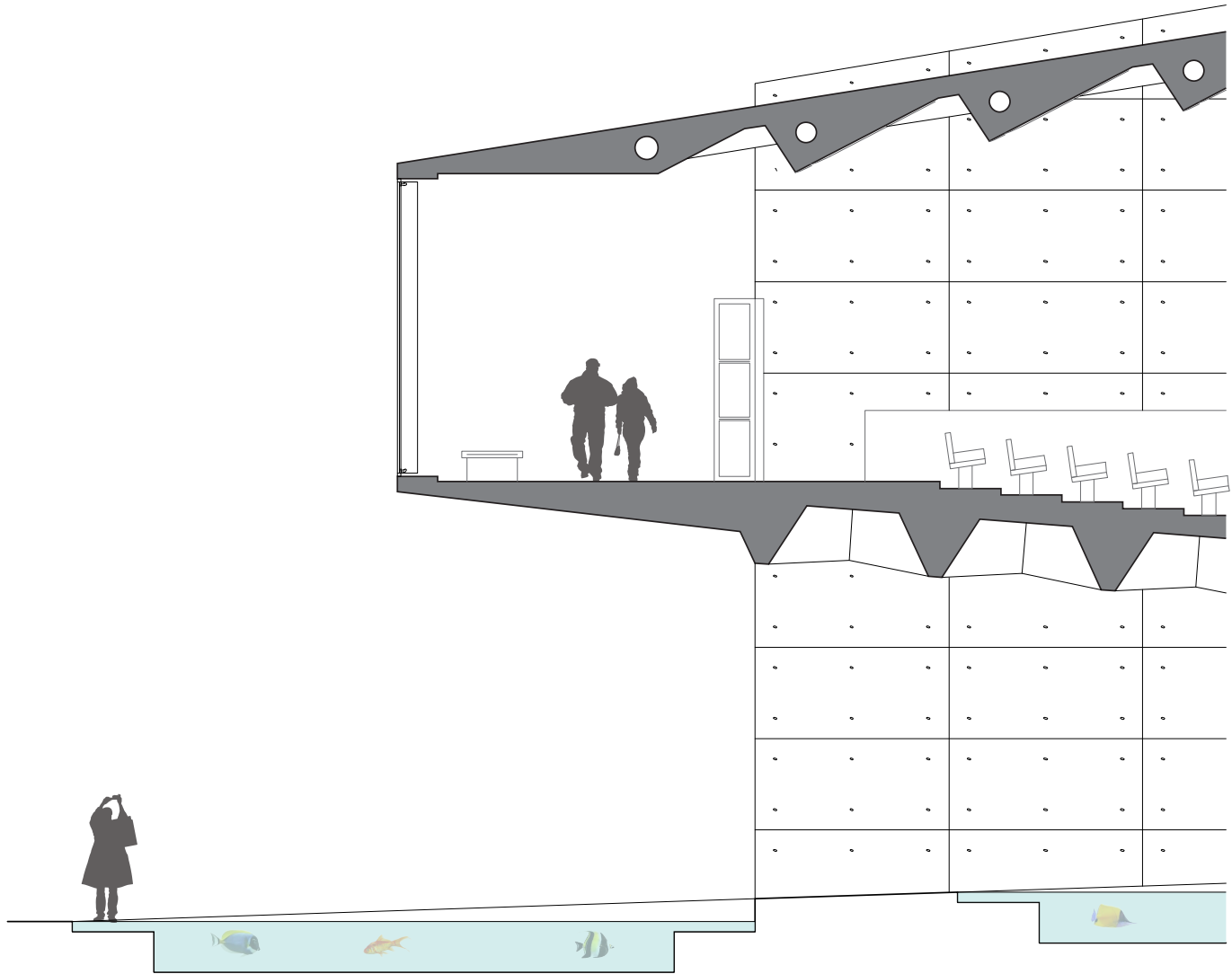
perspective looking northeast



# section at restaurant B , theater building

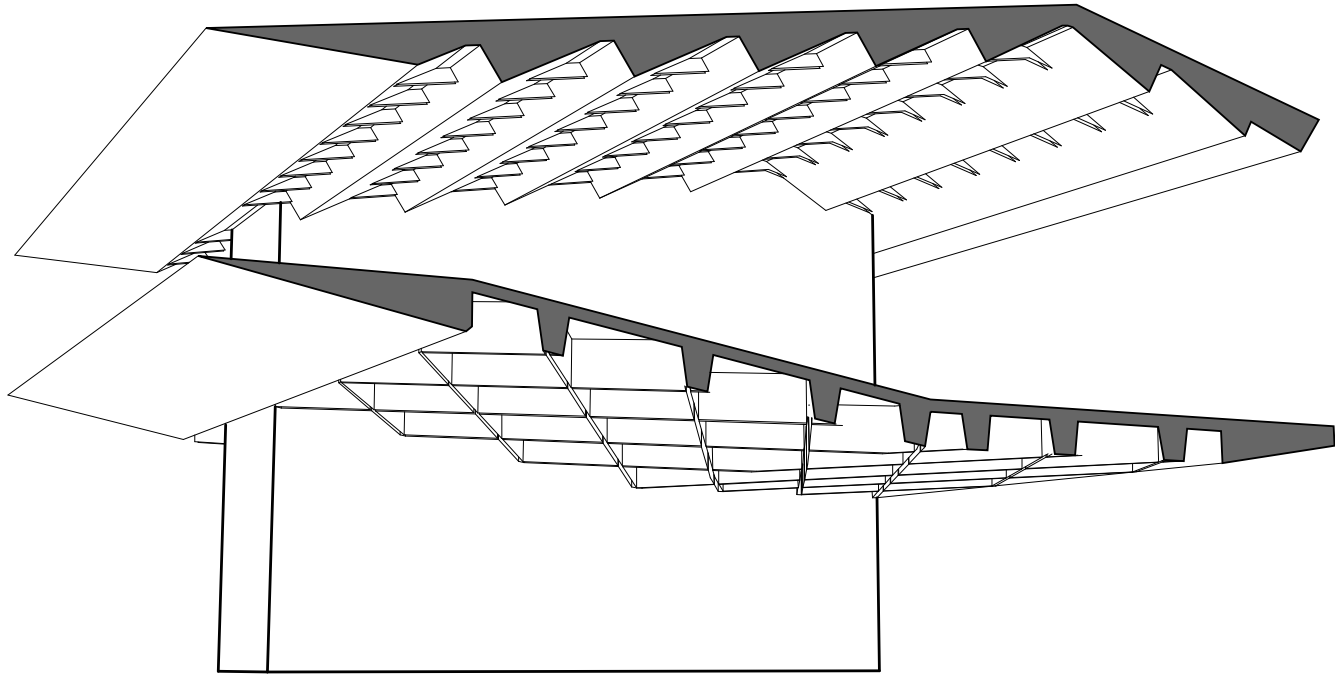


# section at main corridor , theater building

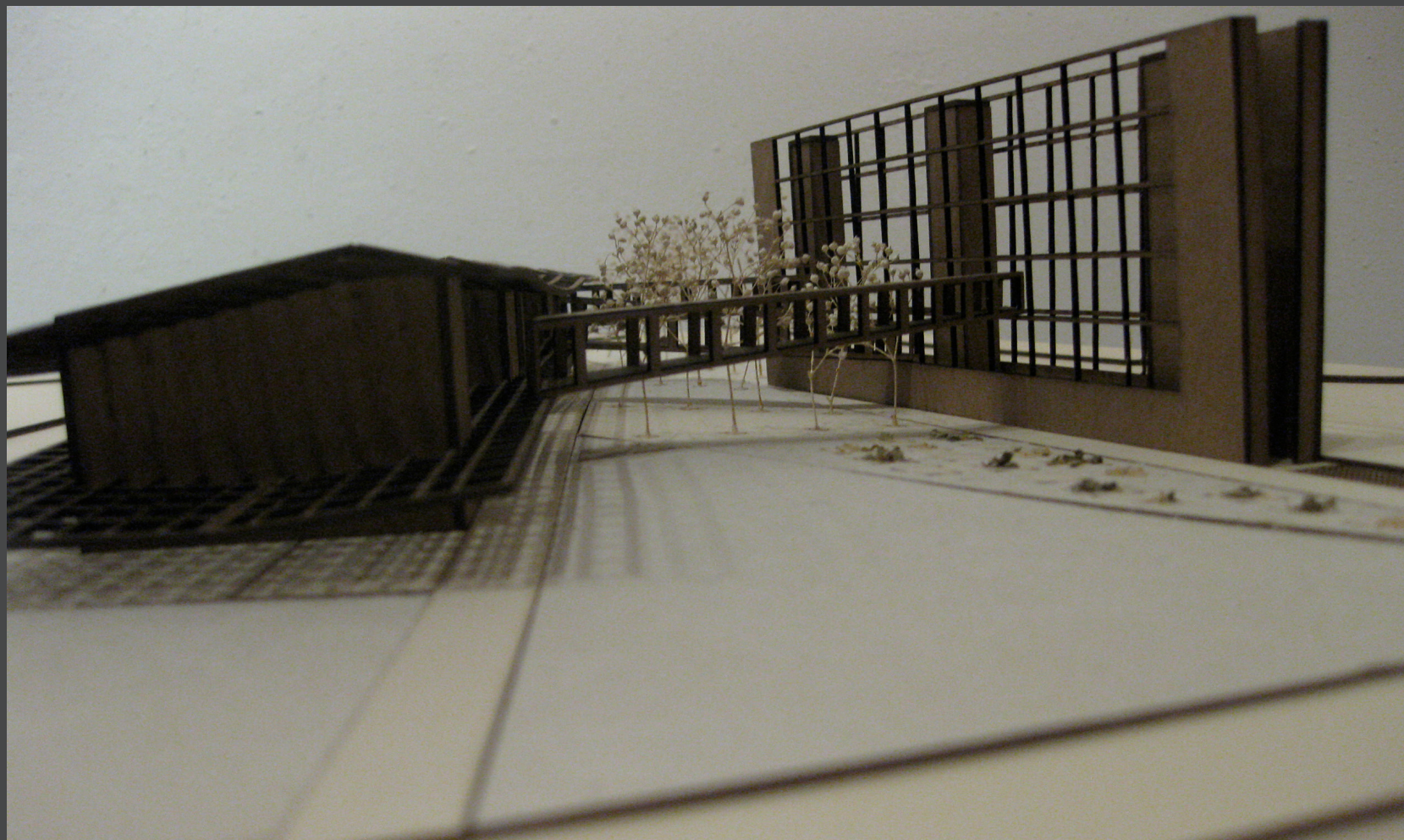


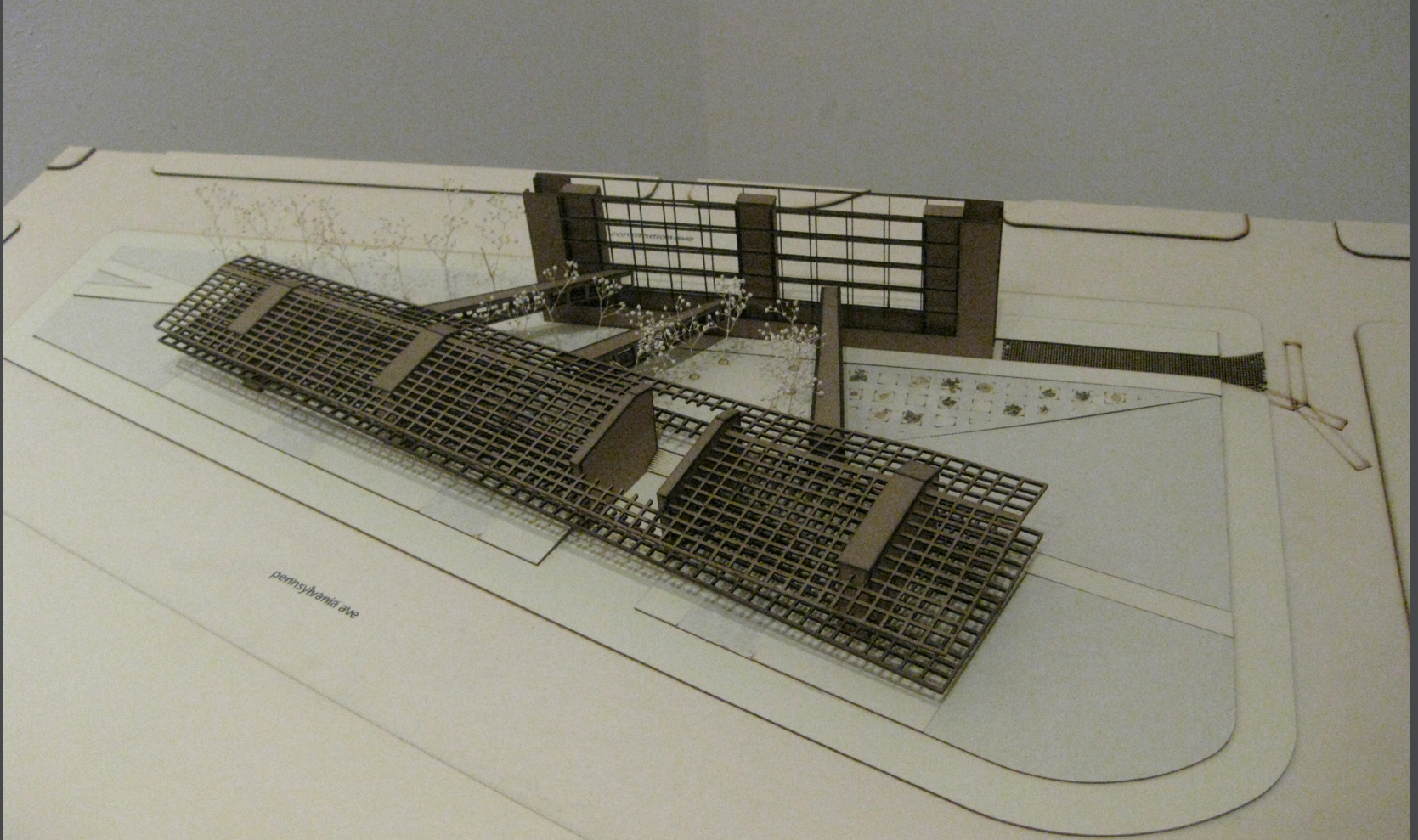
10'

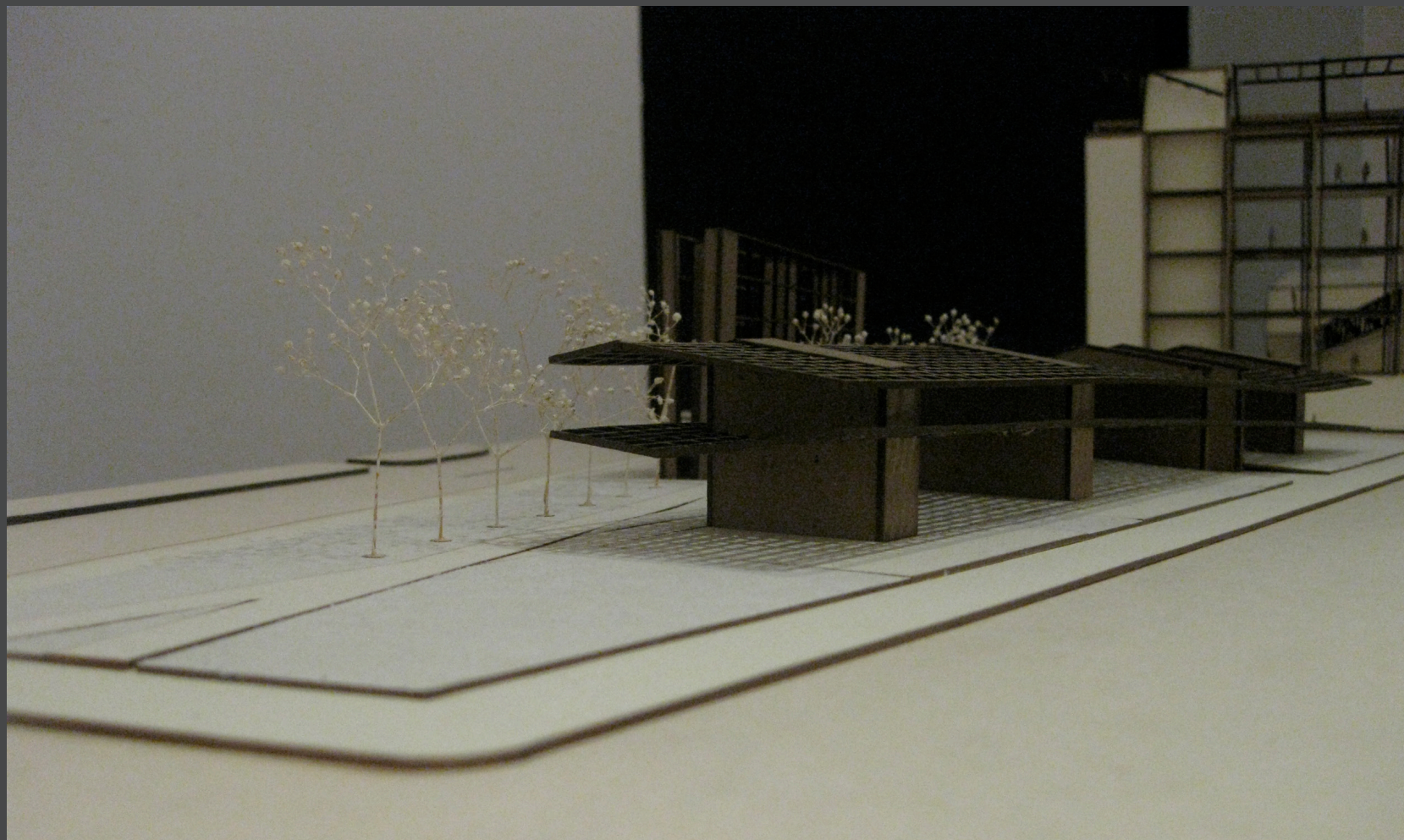
# partial framing plan , theater building







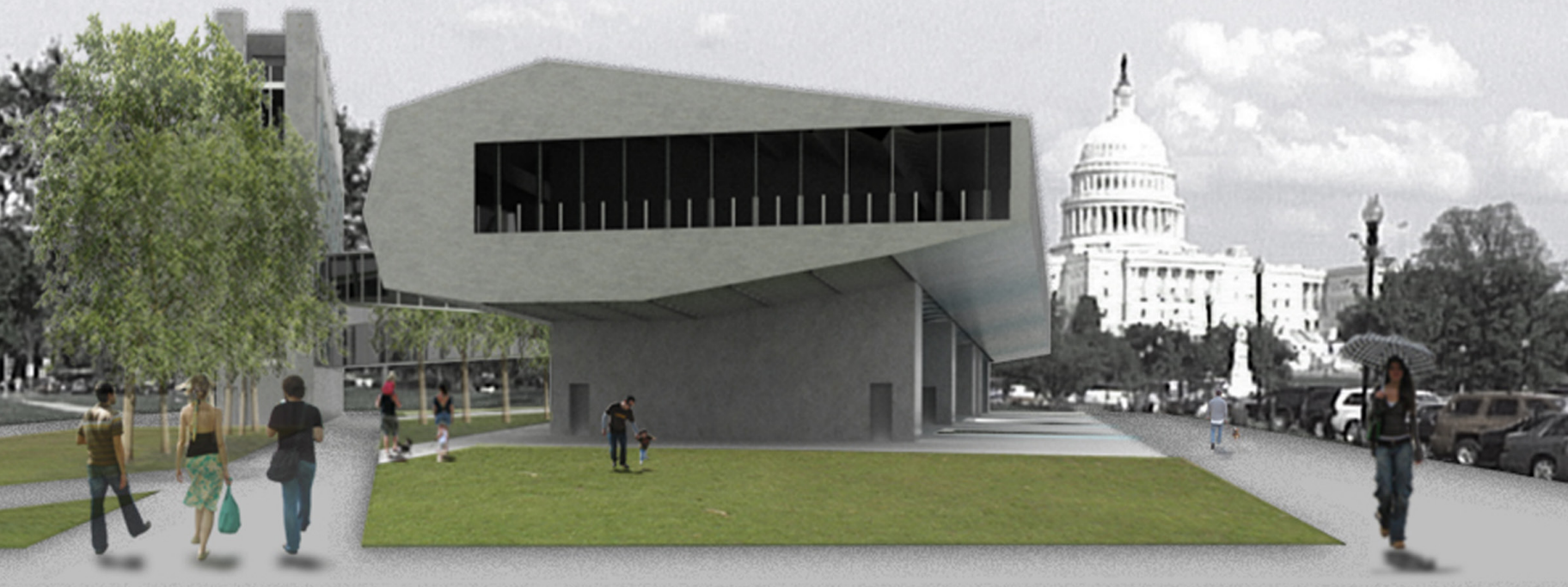




perspective looking southwest



view from PA avenue











## SOURCES

- + Alex Pasternack, “National Stadium: Herzog and de Meuron,” in *Architectural Record*, July 2008.
- + Donald J Willcox, “Contemporary Weaving: New Frontiers,” in *New Design in Weaving*, page 10
- + Gottfried Semper, “The Basic Elements of Architecture,” in *Gottfried Semper: In Search of Architecture*, by Wolfgang Herrmann, page 198 (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989).
- + Gottfried Semper, “The Four Elements,” in *The Four Elements of Architecture and other Writings*, page 102, translated by Harry Francis Mallgrave and Wolfgang Herrmann (Cambridge University Press, 1989).
- + Mario Manieri-Elia, “The Years of the Auditorium Building: 1886-1890,” in *Louis Henry Sullivan*, page 40 (Princeton Architectural Press, 1996).
- + Robert C. Twombly, “The Metaphor of the Brick,” in *Louis Sullivan: The Poetry of Architecture*, page 52 (W. W. Norton & Company, 2000).
- + Vitruvius, “The Origin of the Dwelling House,” in *Ten Books of Architecture*, Book II, Chapter I, translated by Morris Hicky Morgan (New York: Dover, 1960).



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2. Ferran Adria, editorial review on Amazon.com site of J. Horwitz, P. Singley, eds. *Eating Architecture*, [http://www.amazon.com/gp/productdescription/0262083221/ref=dp\\_proddesc\\_0?ie=UTF8&n=283155&s=books](http://www.amazon.com/gp/productdescription/0262083221/ref=dp_proddesc_0?ie=UTF8&n=283155&s=books).
3. Domus Cafe, Ottawa, Owner Profile Details, Jeff Tylor, Chef, <http://www.domuscafe.ca/Contact/OwnerProfiles/tabid/2451/vid/95705cdd-e7d7-48bf-9ad6430a9c50f142/Default.aspx> (accessed August 9, 2009).
4. Fred T. Hodgson, *Concretes, Cements, Mortars, Plasters & Stucco - How to Use and How to Prepare them* (Frederick J. Drake & Co., Chicago: 1906), 69.



## image credits

\* All images, sketches, and illustrations created by the author unless otherwise noted.

[1] Scharm, Heike. Sushi Plate. 2008. Photograph. Design Spotter, Japan. Web. 01 Oct 2008. <<http://www.designspotter.com/product/2009/09/Sushi-plate.html>>.

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