

Dignity In Palliative Care

The Hospice at Skogafoss Falls

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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

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May 4th, 2011
Blacksburg Virginia

Keywords: Hospice Healthcare Iceland Hospital

abstract

**Dignity in Palliative Care:
The Hospice at Skógafoss falls
By John Jaskiewicz**

Hospice is a place of caring, a place where life is measured in quality, not quantity. During a terminally ill patient's final weeks, days or hours, it is important that hospice facilities provide comfort through any and every means possible. The physician administers pain relief, the building has the ability to administer a kind of relief the patient may not even cognitively perceive. Through the eyes of a terminally ill patient, the architect should consider the views, connections and relationships the patient has with their surroundings. Keeping the patients' experiences at the forefront of all design decisions, the architect can promote a sense of dignity within the patients that seems to be lost in most modern health care facilities.

This thesis proposes a 30-bed hospice to be built along the Skógafoss falls in Skógar, Iceland. The hospice design addresses the patients' connections to the physician, structure and natural surroundings through articulation of spaces based on these relationships. The placement of every element within the hospice, from the patients' bed to the physicians' offices, can have a drastic effect on the patients' experiences in many ways. Exploring layouts and forms not common in traditional health care design, the hospice at Skógafoss falls provides an experience unique to any hospice in the world. The spatial connections and materiality of the hospice allow the patients to determine their own relationships to the facility and the natural world beyond. Through simplicity and mindfulness, the hospice can be more than a place to die. Rather it is a place for one to spend their final hours with both comfort and dignity.

acknowledgement

Thanks to every friend, family and faculty member that played any part in my life over the past eight years...specifically the last three, which have been something of a roller coaster. There is no way I could have made it this far without the love and aid of the supporting cast of my life.

Specific thanks to, in no particular order...

Mom and Dad...for listening to me complain, understanding my sometimes irrational logic, and bailing me out of almost every mistake I've made the last eight or twelve years (emotionally and financially). Most importantly, thank you for trusting me to make those mistakes and letting me learn from them. I wouldn't have made it this far without your support and trust.

Jeremy and Jordan...you guys inspire me more than you can imagine. If it weren't for your visits, late night phone calls, funny e-mails and texts about new zombie movies and baseball cards, I would have gone insane.

Aunt Kim, Uncle Kevin, Aunt Amber, Grandma and Grandpa, Grandma Vicki and everyone else in the family...although I haven't been able to see you all much the past few years, thoughts of you have pushed me through the tough times. I appreciate all your support and everything you have done to help me achieve my goals.

Mark, Scott, Rachel, Mandi and Evan...where to start. All it takes is a quick flip through old pictures to remind me how lucky I am to have friends like you in my life.

Mike Wendt...WE DID IT. I truly appreciate all of your support and help, both academically and personally. The years would have been much different without our conversations, The OC, playing catch wherever we could find light and all the late night studio shenanigans. I wish you nothing but the best in life and your career, you deserve it.

My committee; Scott, Hans and Bill...for being nasty when you had to, and constantly challenging me to think, re-think, and think some more. I appreciate every conversation we have had.

Lastly, Steve Thompson...for giving me a chance. I don't think I can describe the impact you have had on my life.

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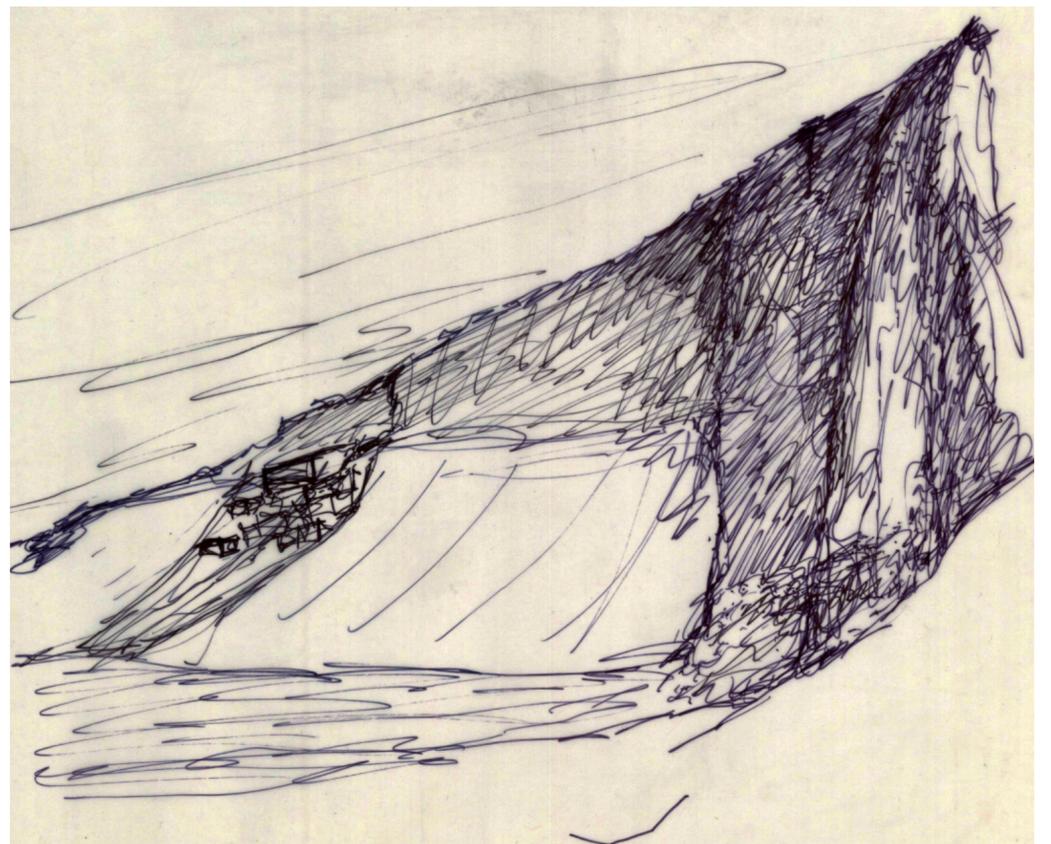
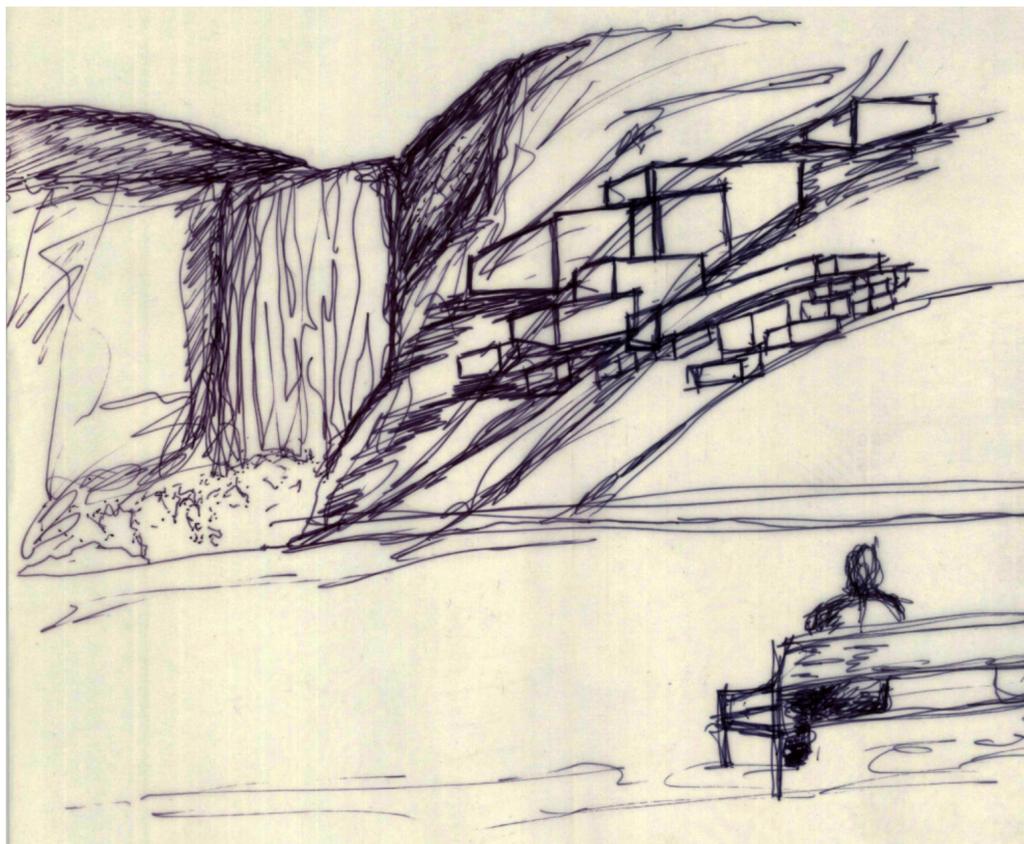
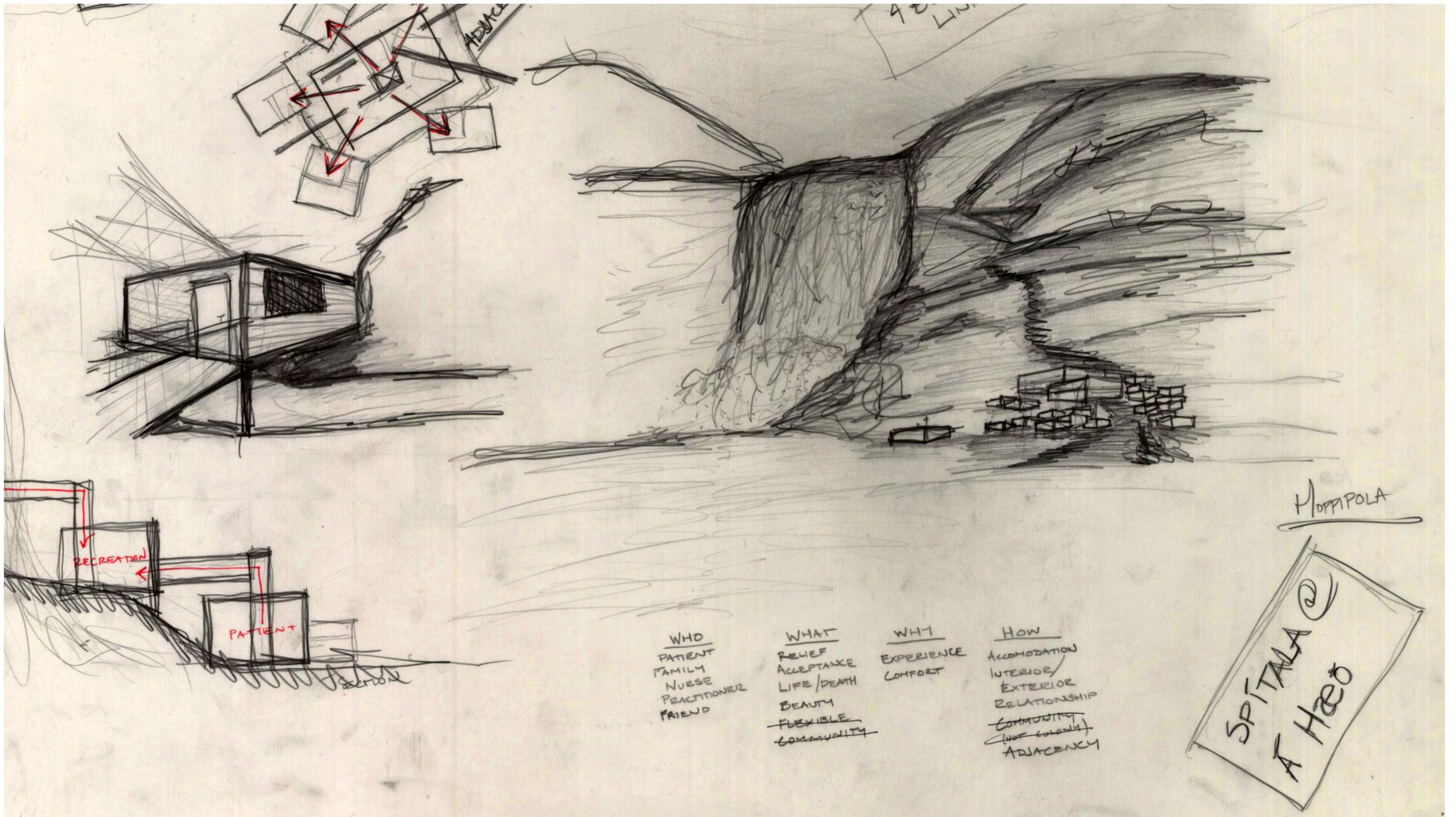
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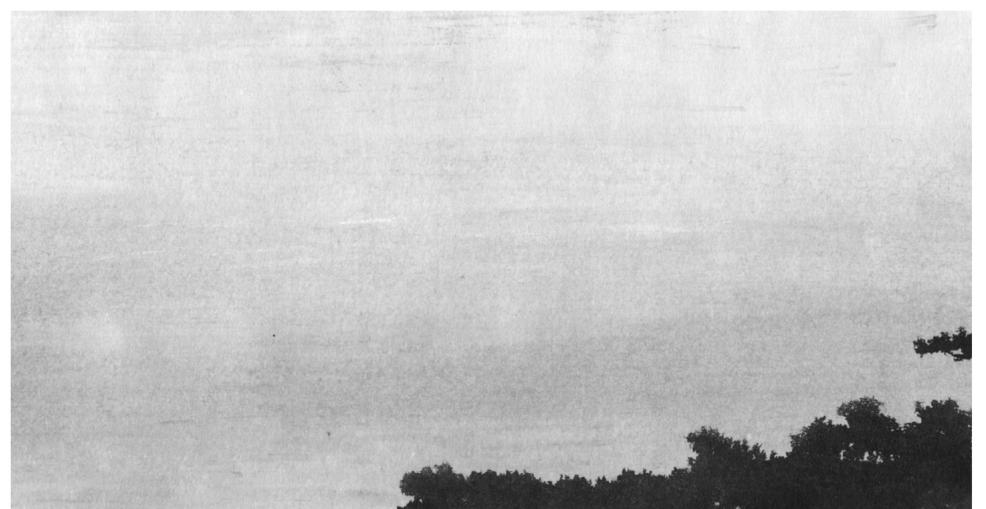
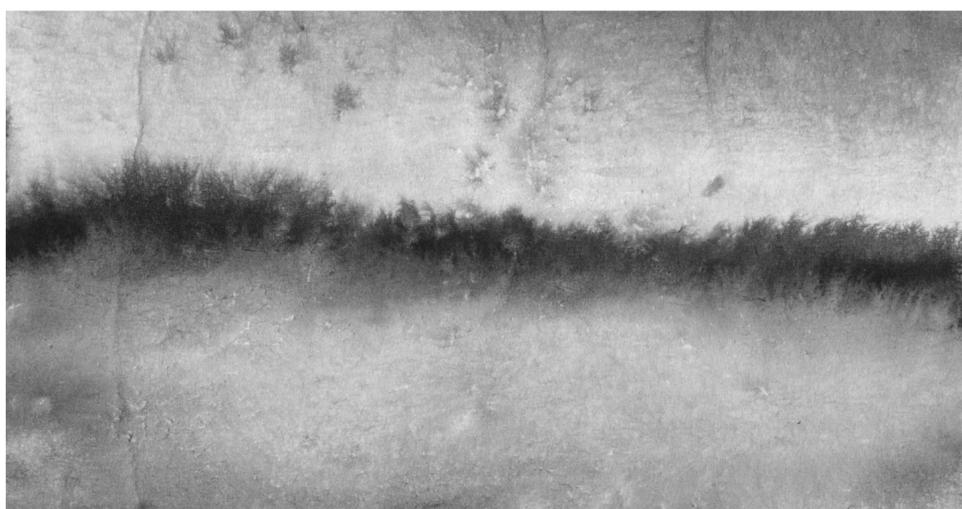
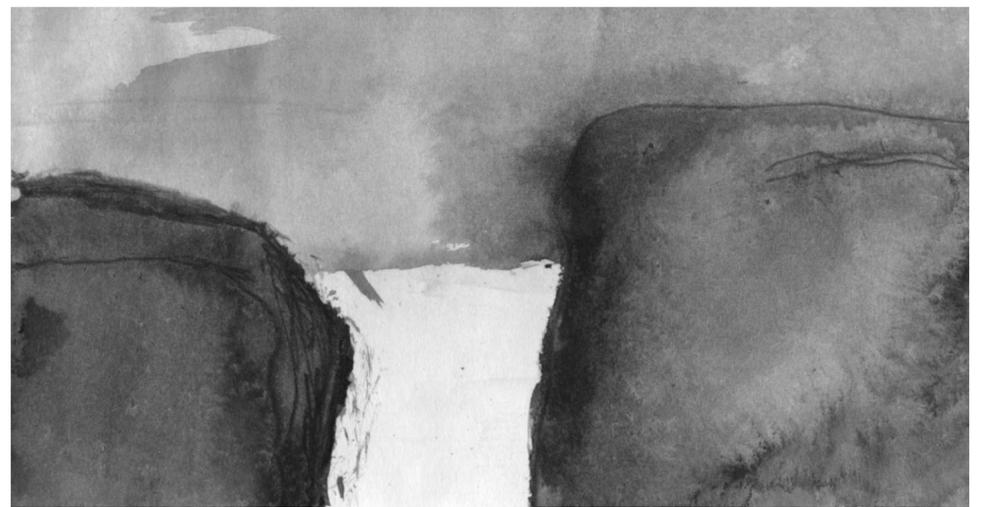
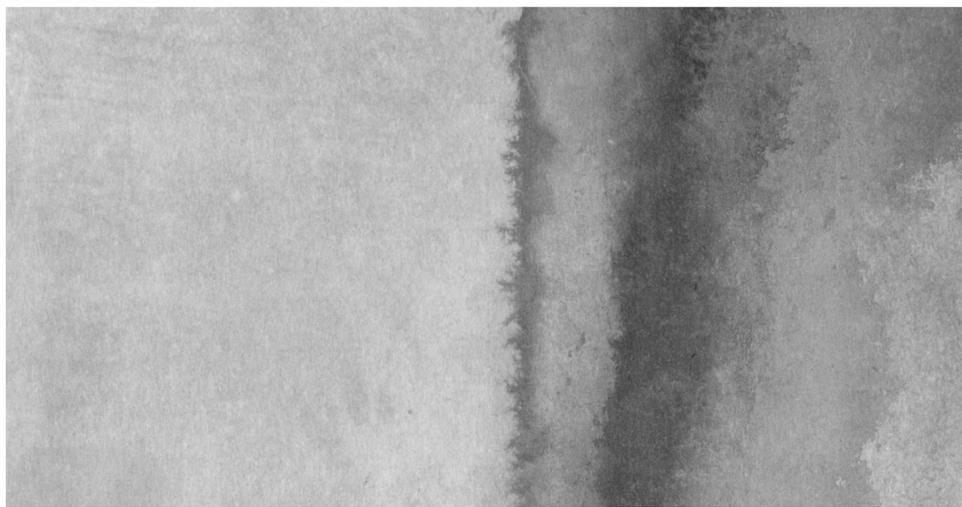
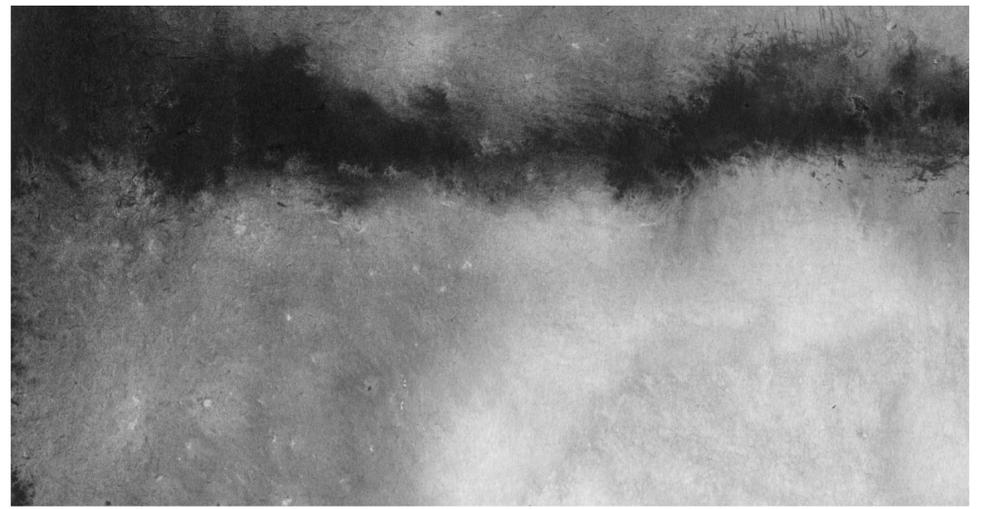
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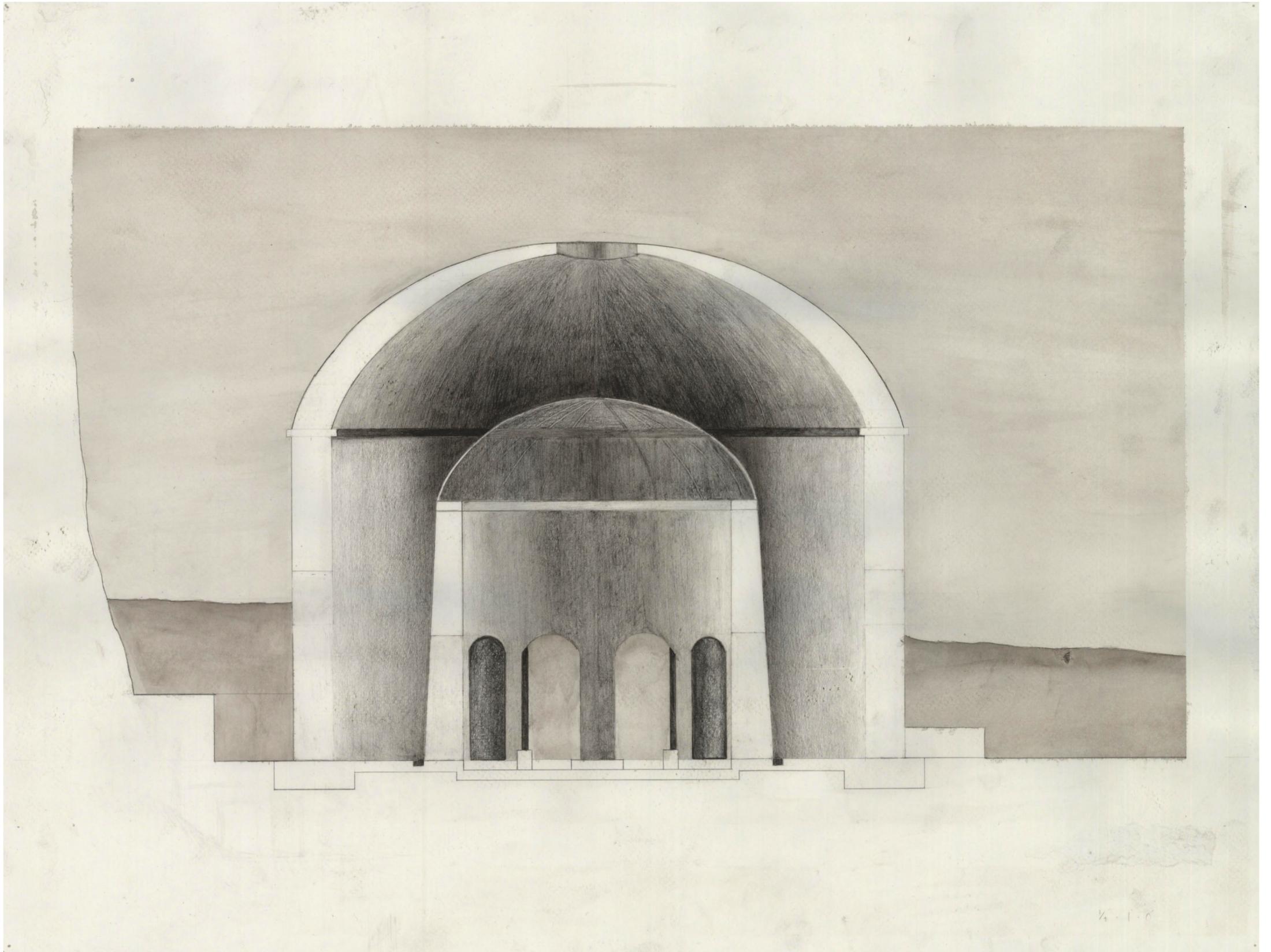
concept

Preliminary studies of site and form allow for ideas to generate without boundaries of functional requirements. Use of ink wash, pencil and charcoal create the gestural form of the site while demonstrating the natural forces of the stone and water that define the natural surroundings.

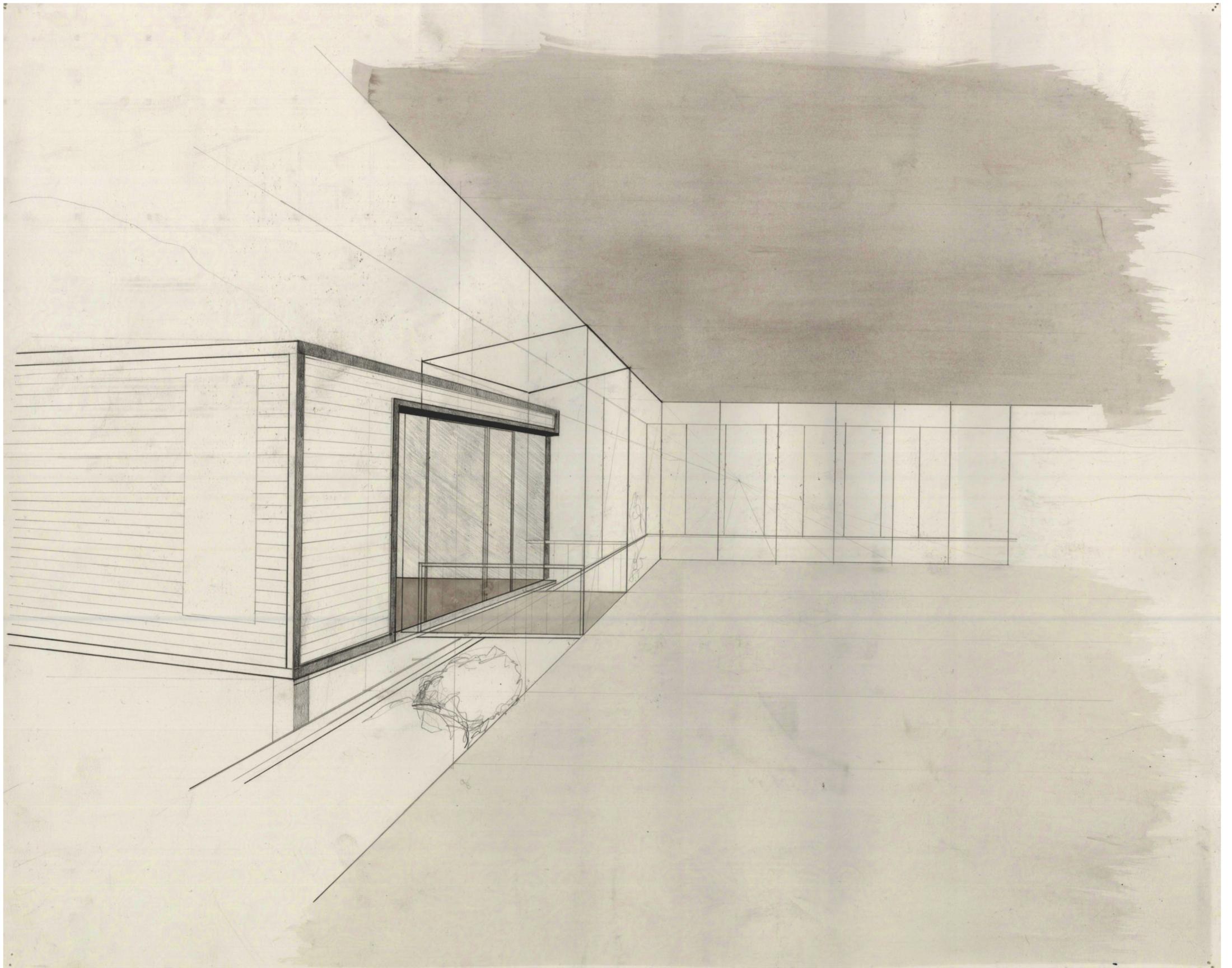
Understanding the essential needs of the hospice, studies of spatial relationship help determine the adjacencies of the functions. These studies, as seen on plates four and five were used to develop the progress of space through the facility. Spaces are articulated based on need, not placed out of separation and division.







1/8" = 1'-0"



site

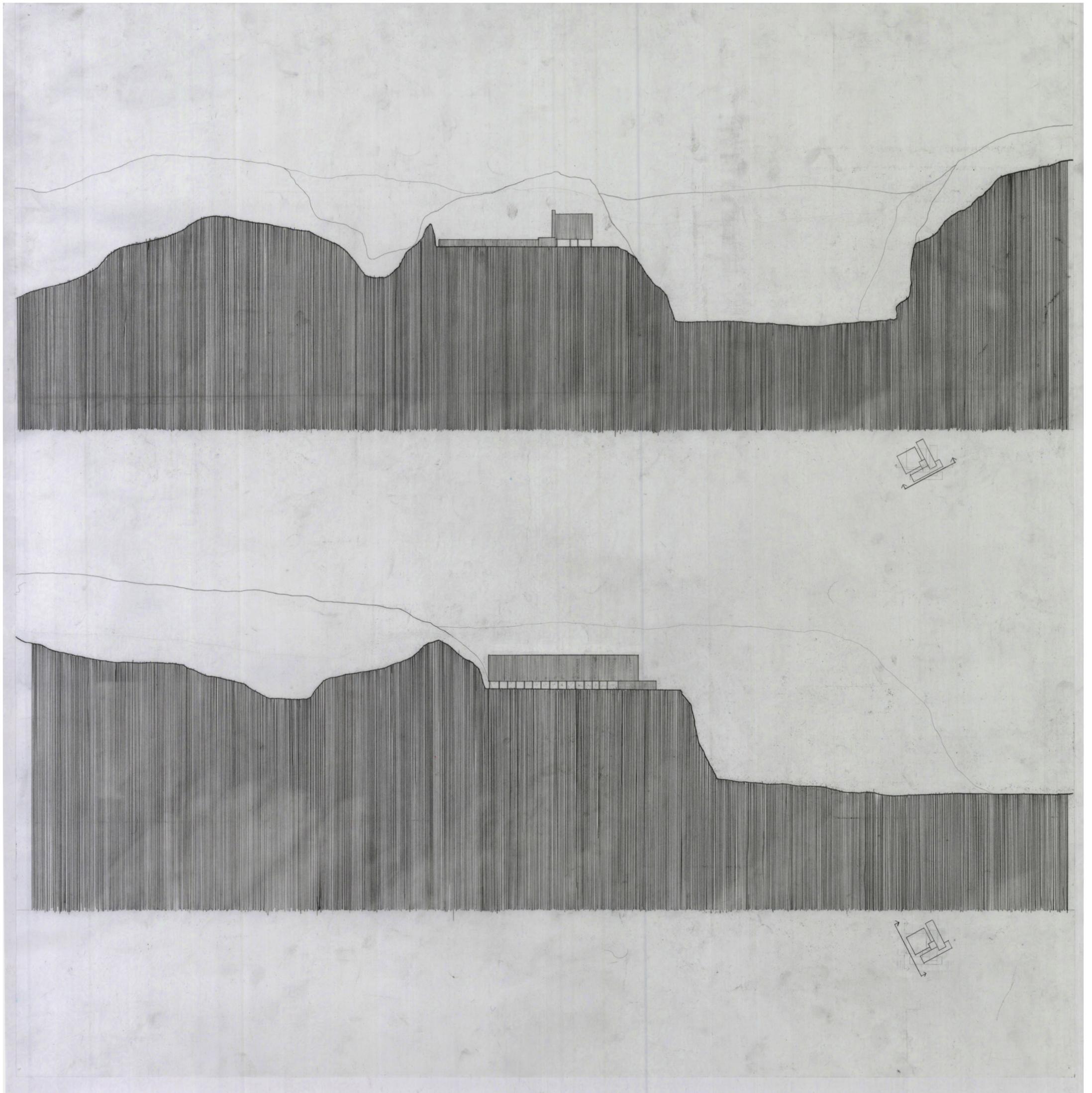
Located on Skógafoss falls in Skógar, Iceland, the facility sits 350-feet above sea level and cuts into a cliff projecting adjacent to the waterfall. To the south, the coast is less than two miles from the site with no obstructing landmarks. The Skógafoss falls are located about 20-miles southeast of Reykjavík, the capital of Iceland, and are one of the most visited tourist attractions in the country.

The elevation and location of the site offers direct views of the waterfall and surrounding cliffs, mountains and rivers. Locating the facility on the south side of the hills provides the opportunity for maximum solar exposure.



1:1000



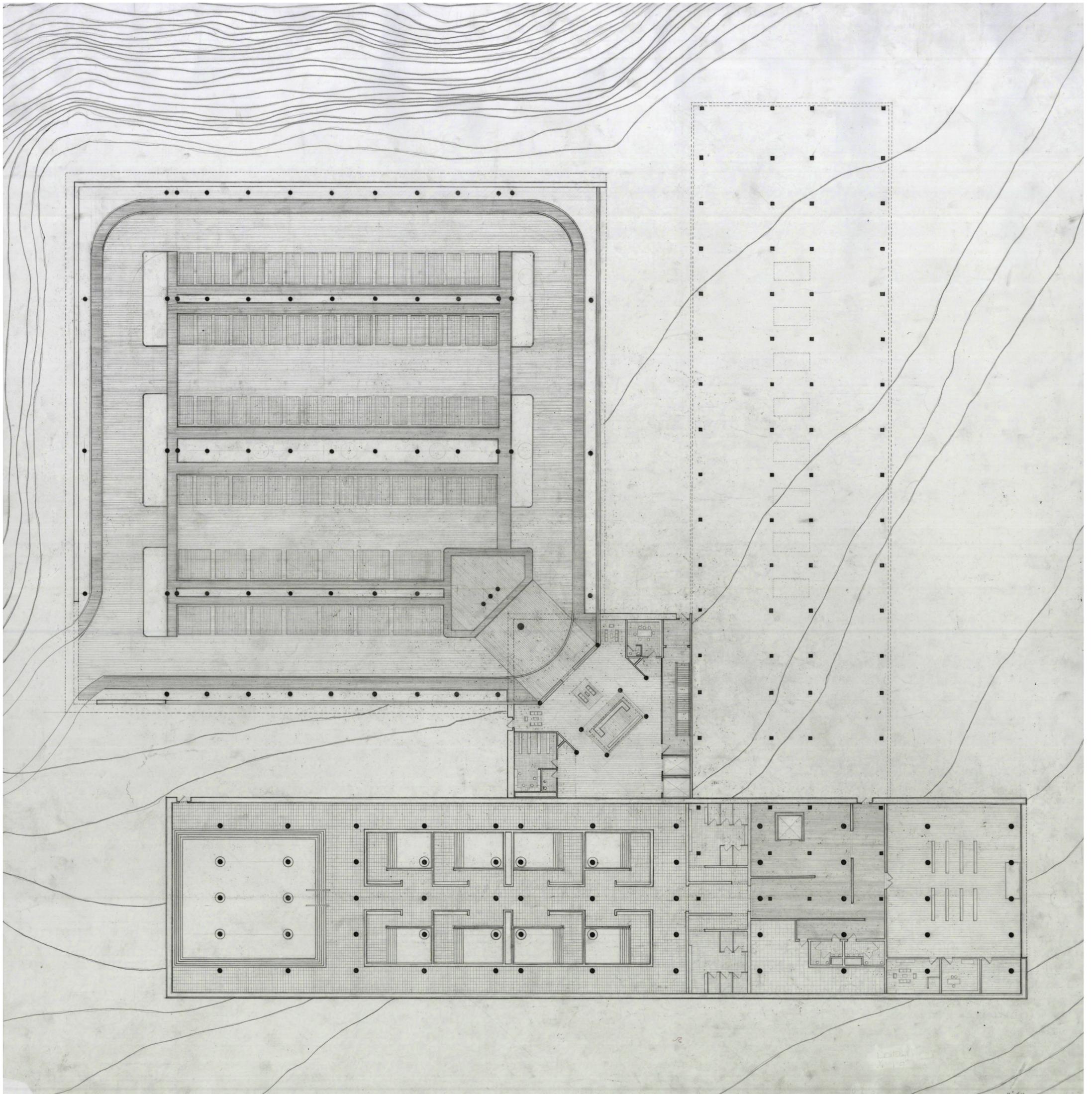


plan

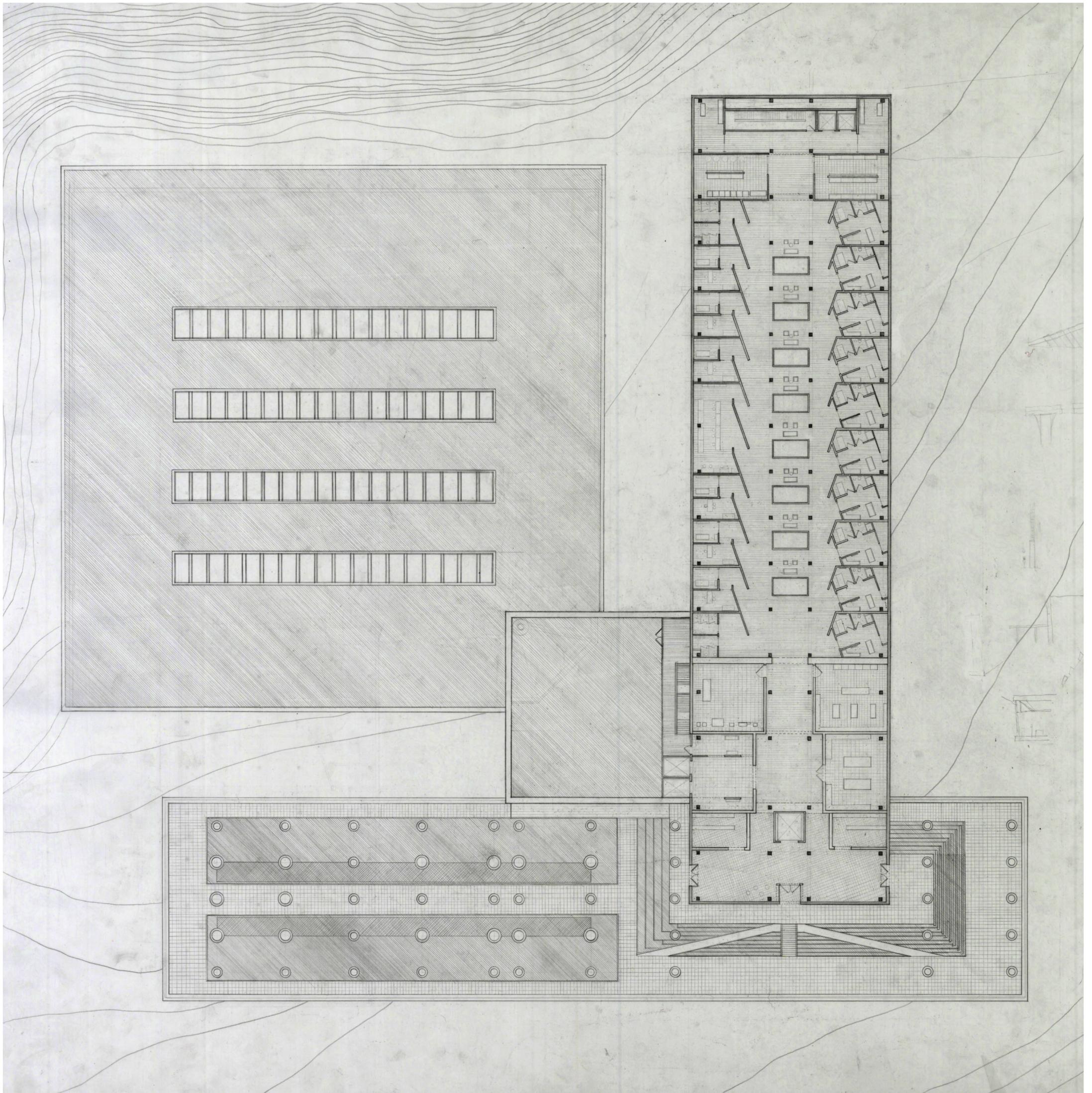
The plan for the campus can be broken into four levels and four components; the garage, lobby, thermal bath and hospice. Level one, the ground level, is occupied by the garage, lobby and thermal bath. Levels two through four are the main hospice building.

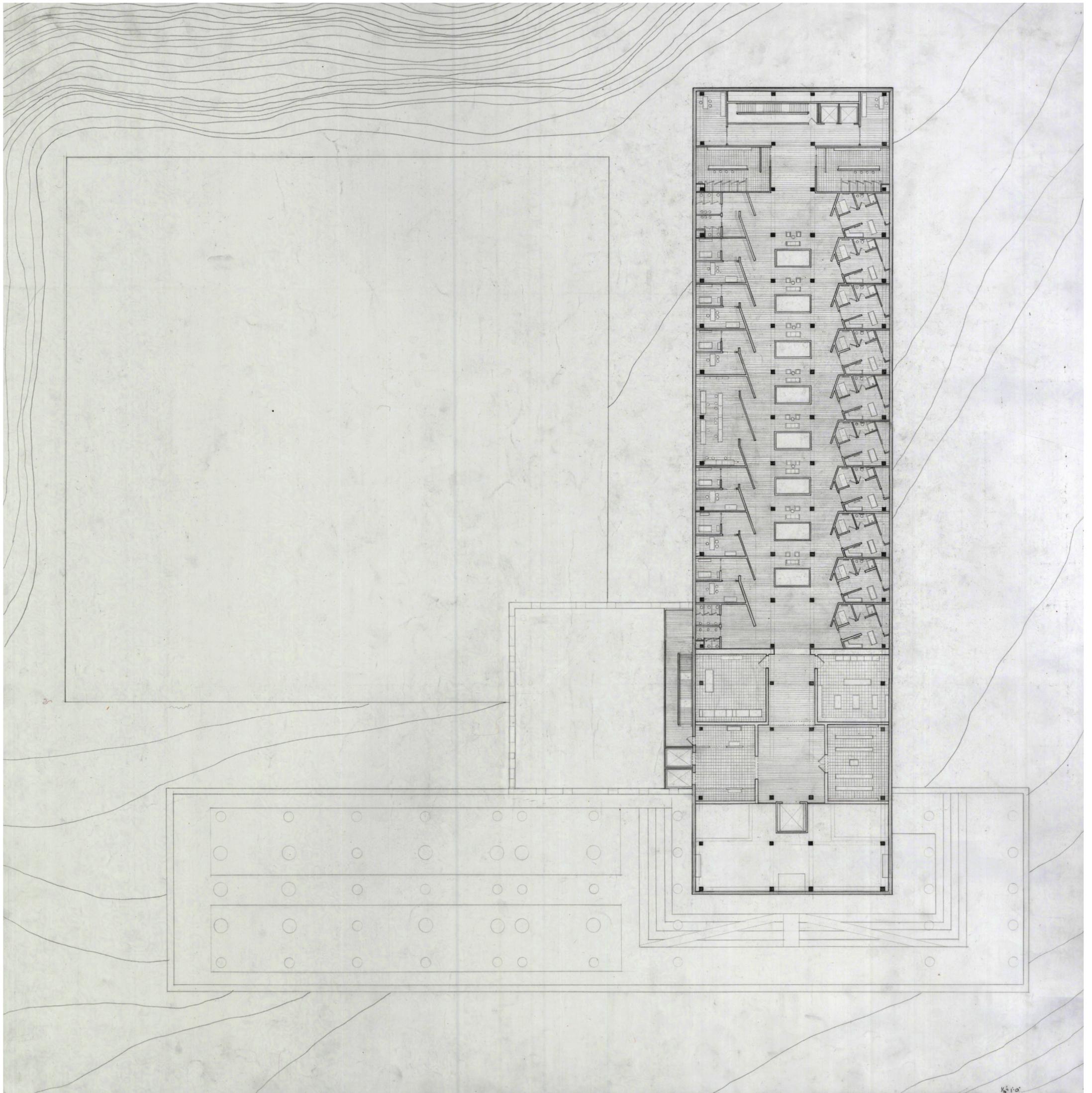
The thermal bath building is broken into two functions separated by the elevator lobby. To the West of the lobby, the thermal bath houses changing rooms, eight private baths and one large communal bath. To the East, a small chapel opens to the only unobstructed panoramic view of the waterfall.

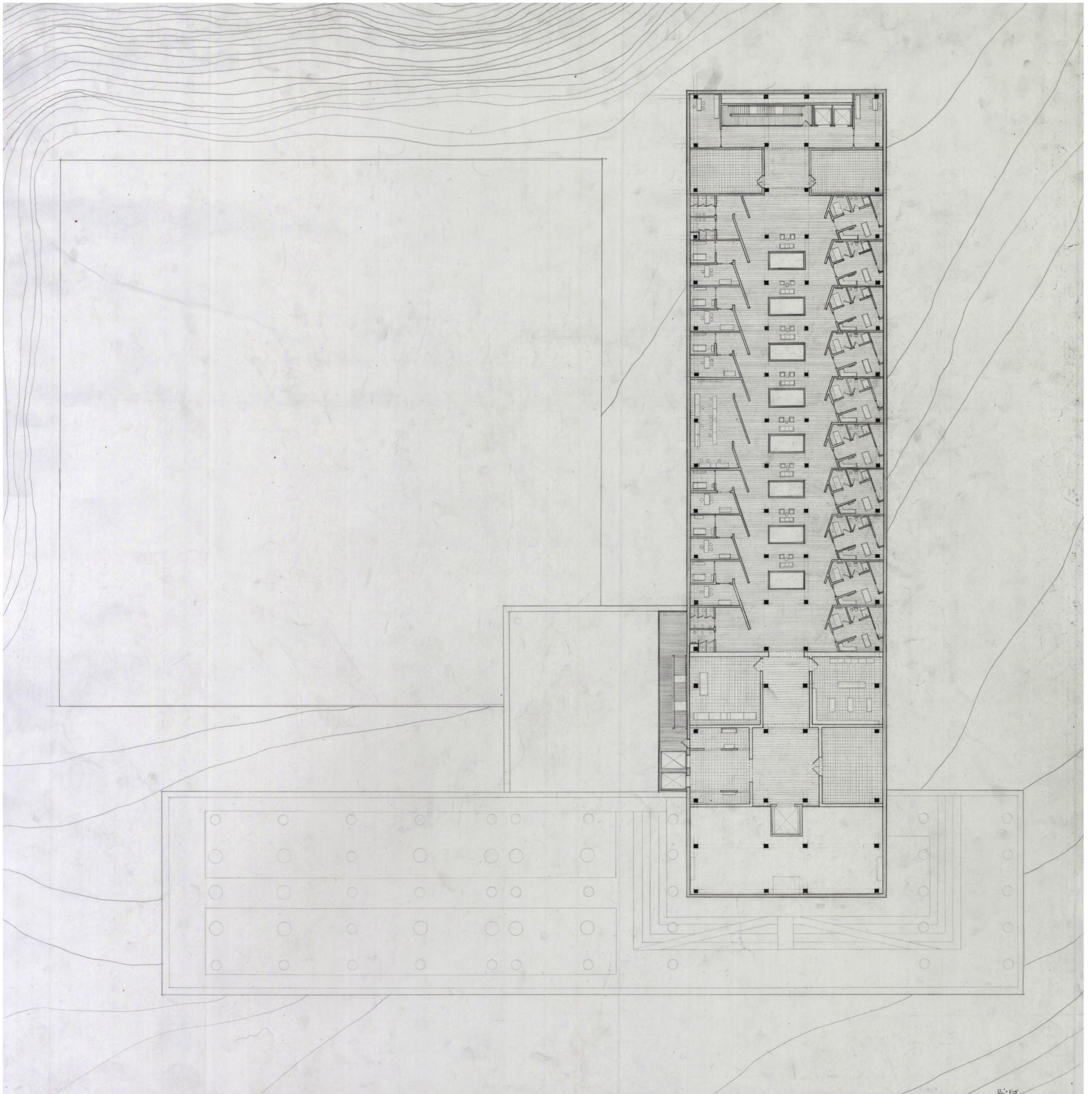
Each level of the hospice houses ten patient rooms, six physician offices with private observation rooms, two administrator offices, medical storage, and public space for entertainment. A public kitchen is also provided on each floor for patient and visitor use. Public spaces include a library and recreational room located on the south end of each level. Unique to the first level, a cafeteria on the southernmost end opens vertically to all three levels, and exits to the roof of the thermal bath featuring a terrace with public gardens.



First Level Plan
Parking Garage, Lobby, Thermal Bath/Chapel
Scale : 1/32" = 1'-0"



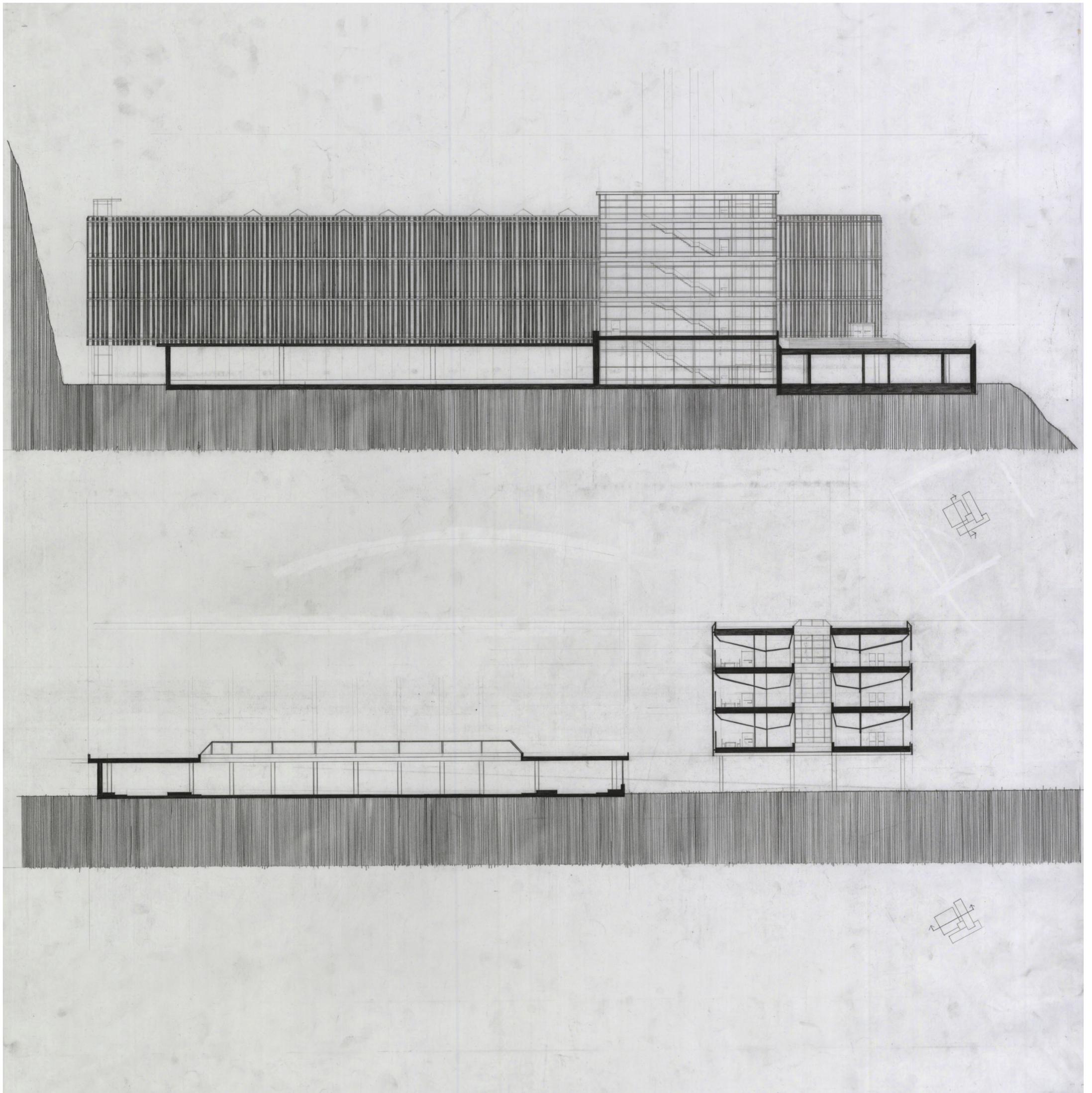


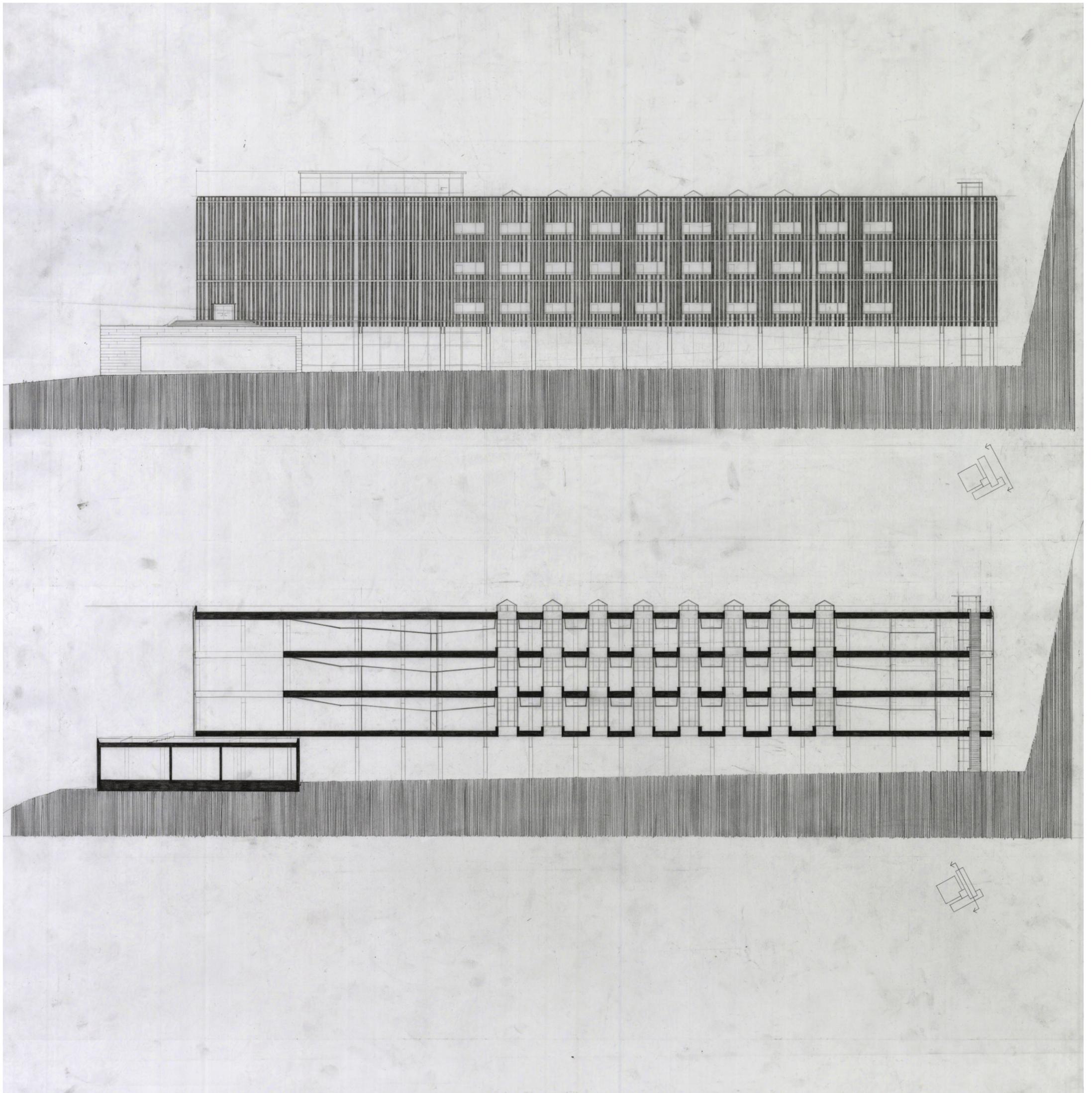


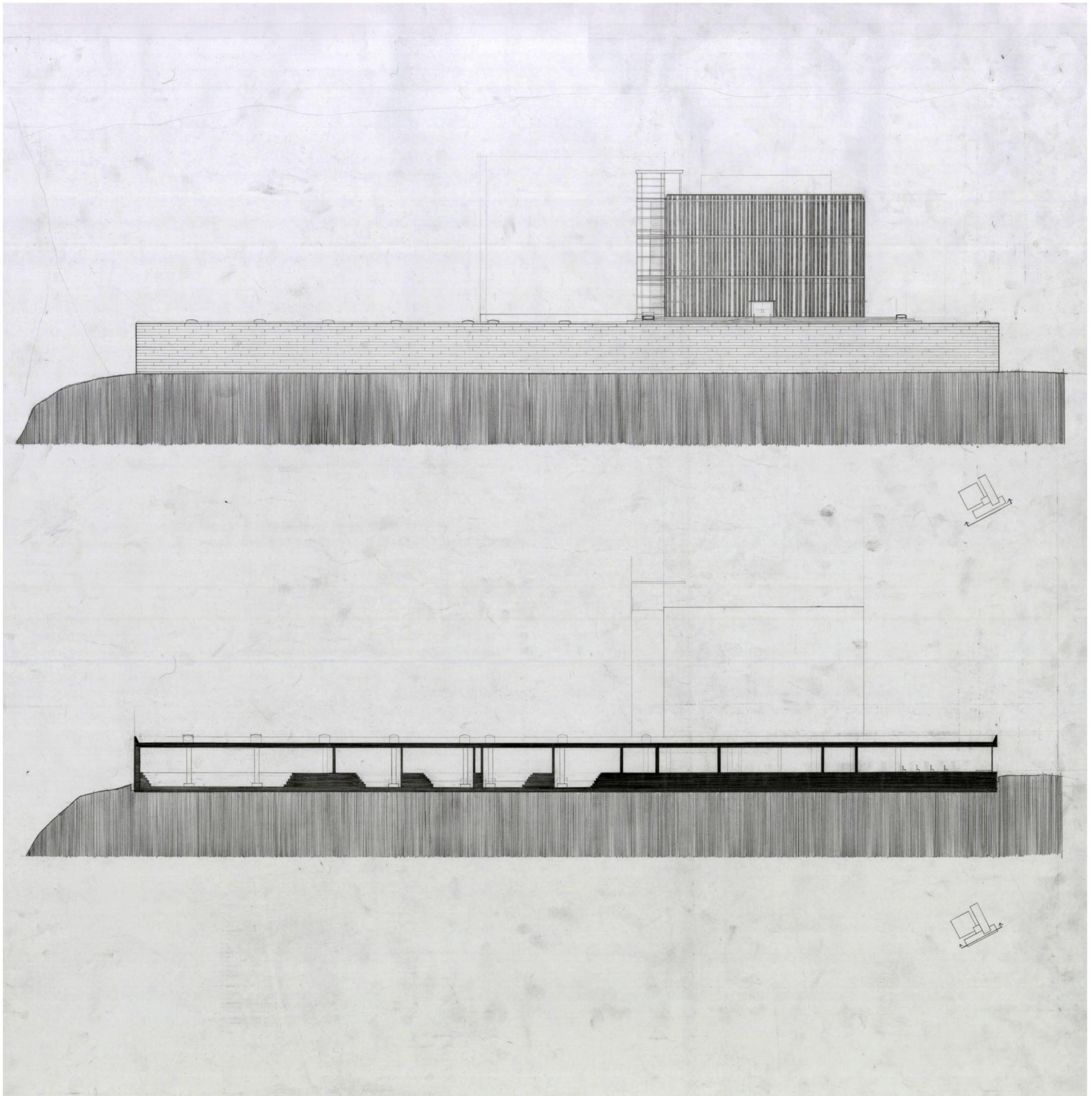
section/elevation

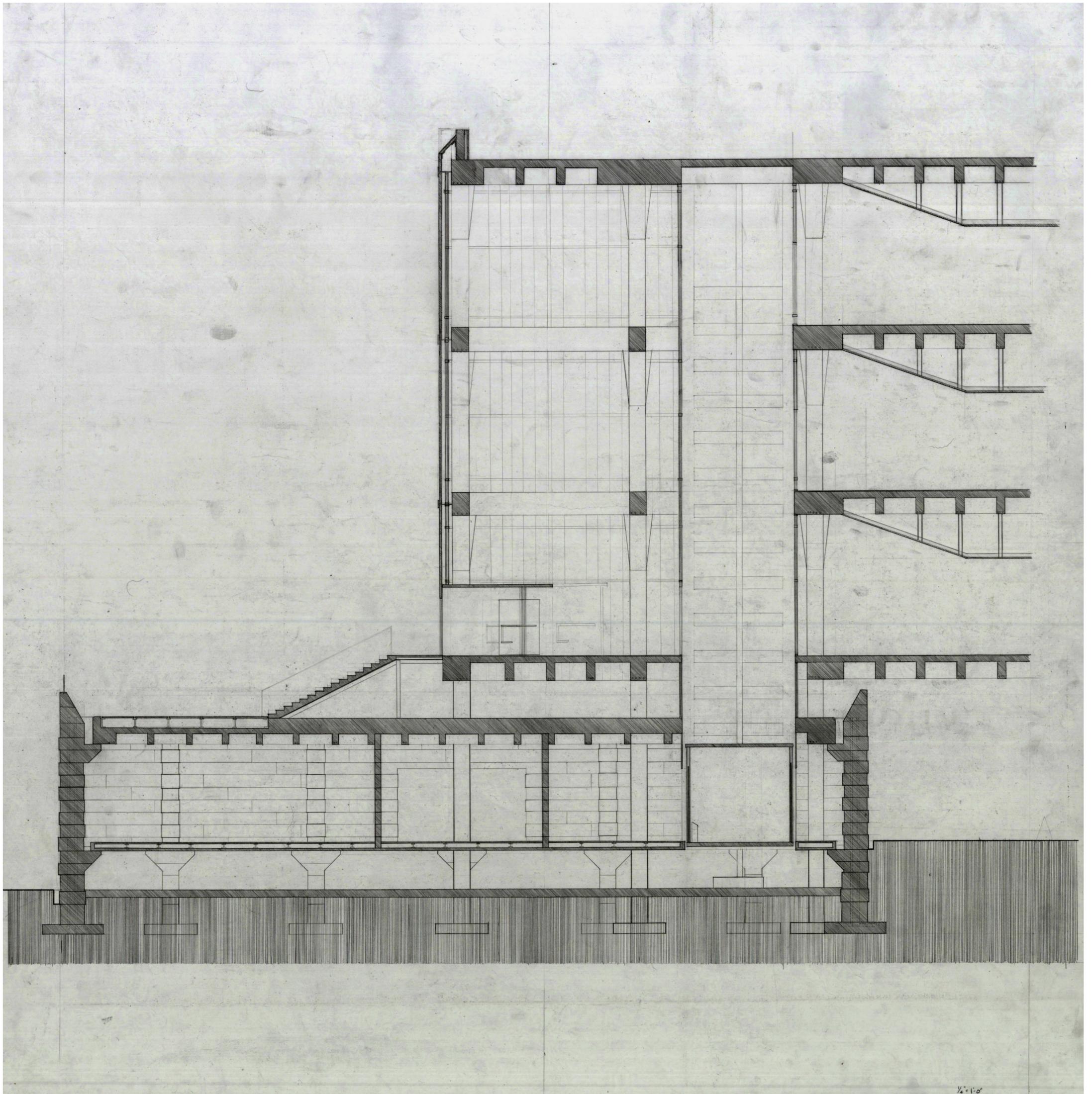
The structure of the hospice and thermal bath can be seen in the enlarged section on plate 19. The Hospice is all concrete construction, the slabs concrete waffle formed set on 30" x 30" concrete columns free from the facade. The roof of the thermal bath is supported by interior 36" diameter structural slate columns as well as 36" thick exterior walls of the same slate. The structure is expressive of energy and strength, and never concealed with cladding.

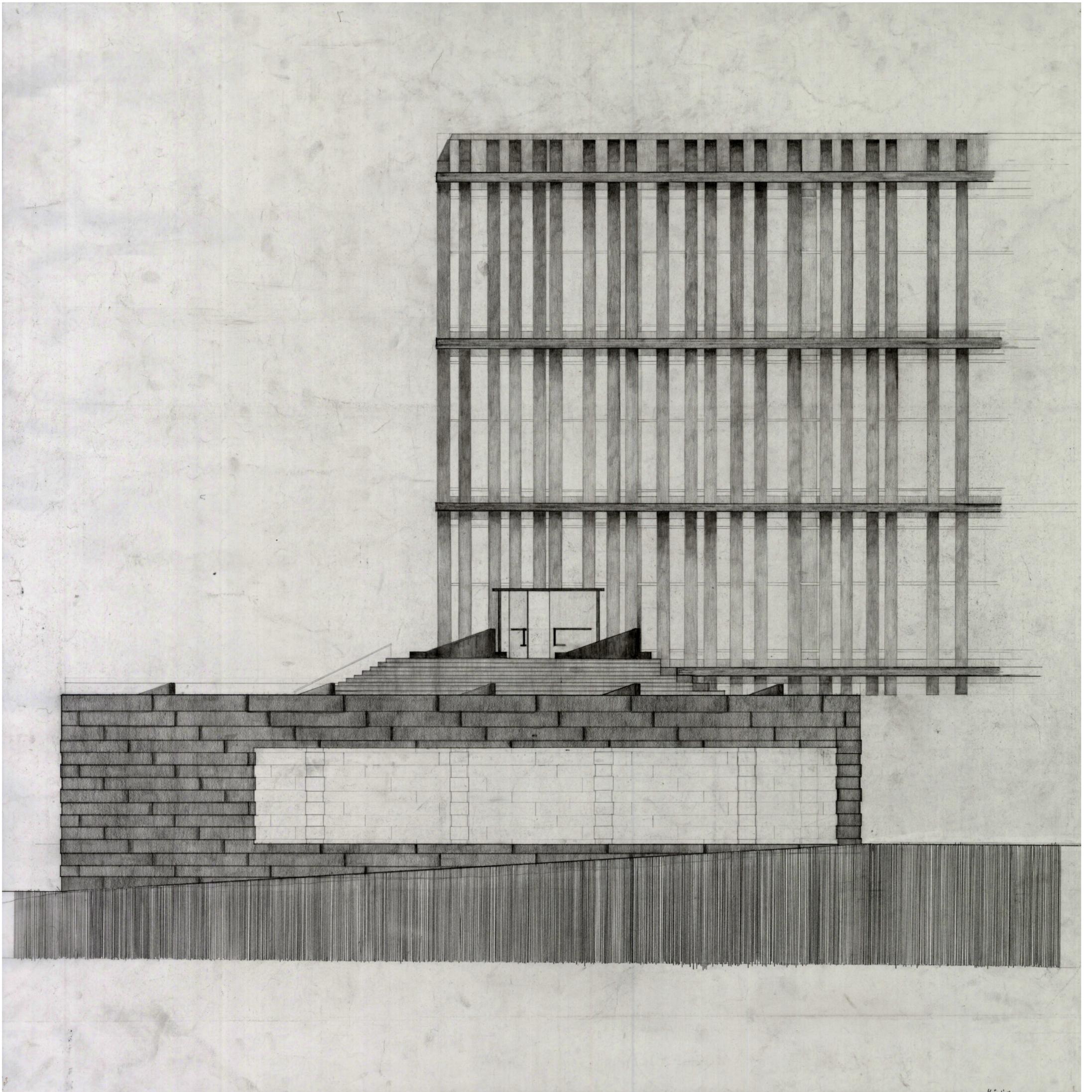
In elevation, the hospice and thermal bath take on two distinct characteristics. The hospice is sealed with two layers of insulated glass cladd with 18" wide wood panels wrapping the entire building. The wood symbolizes an organic, vertical element in the landscape due to the lack of trees or shrubbery in the area. The slats set 12"-30" apart provide private interior views of the landscape, creating intimate moments where visitors are drawn to engage with the building to see the beauty beyond. As if it was part of the earth, the thermal bath slate resembles the volcanic stone of the surrounding site. Note the elevation on plate 17, the roof of the thermal bath acts as a foundation for the hospice, as it is the only point where the hospice connects to the earth through solid material.









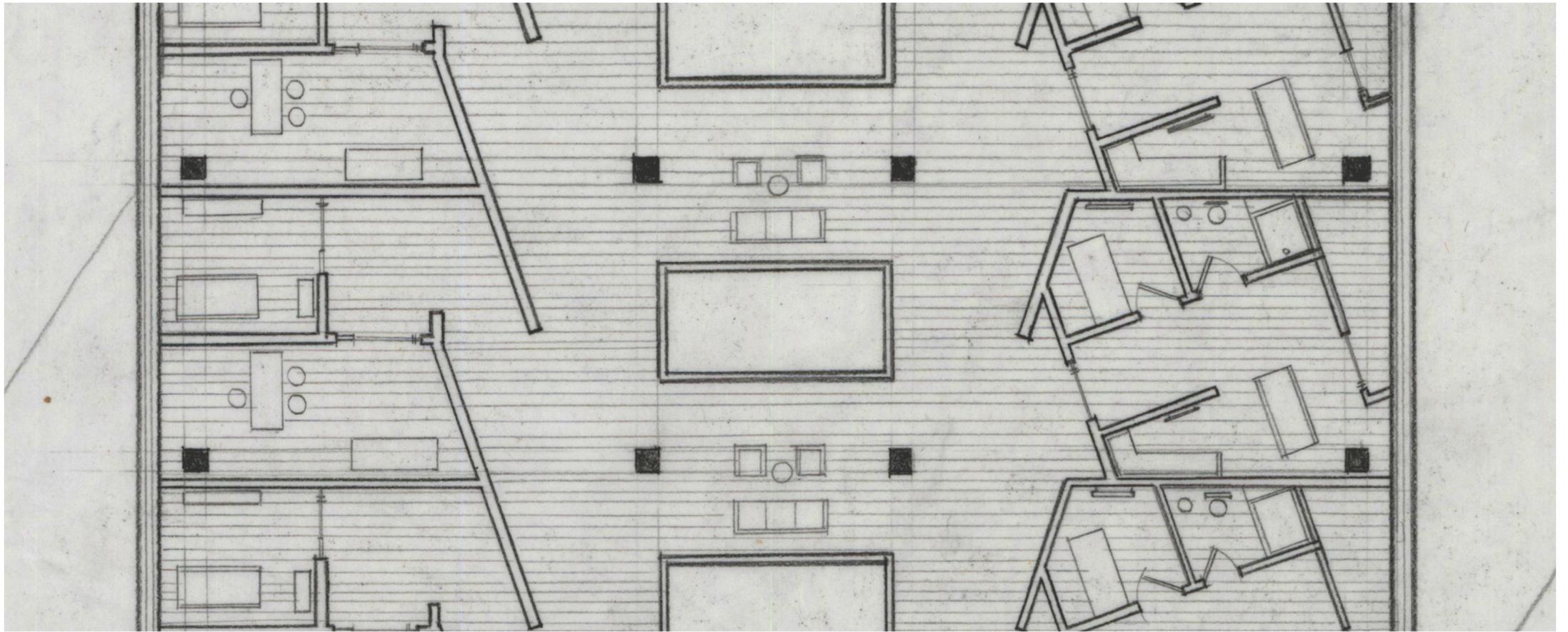


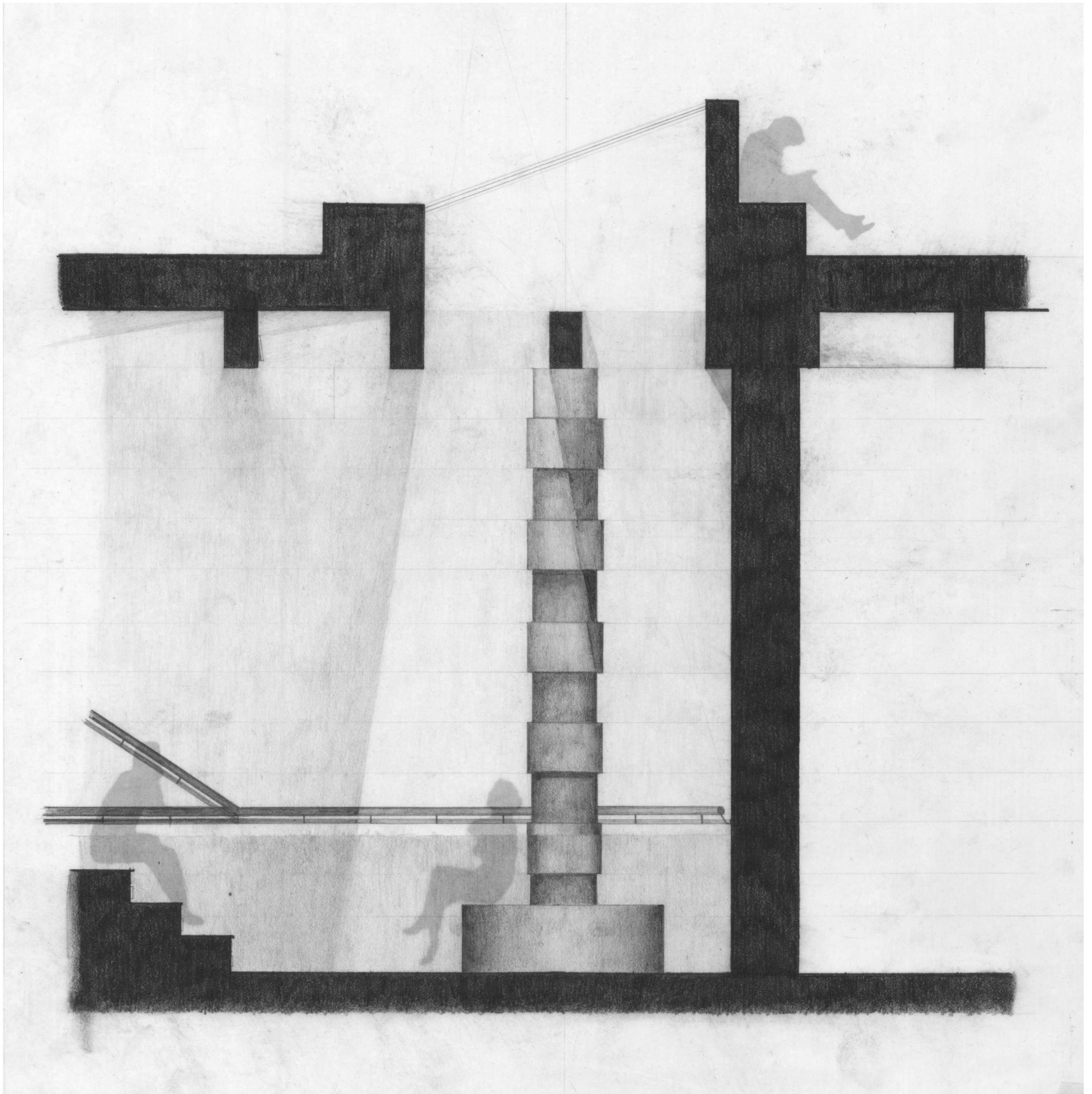
detail

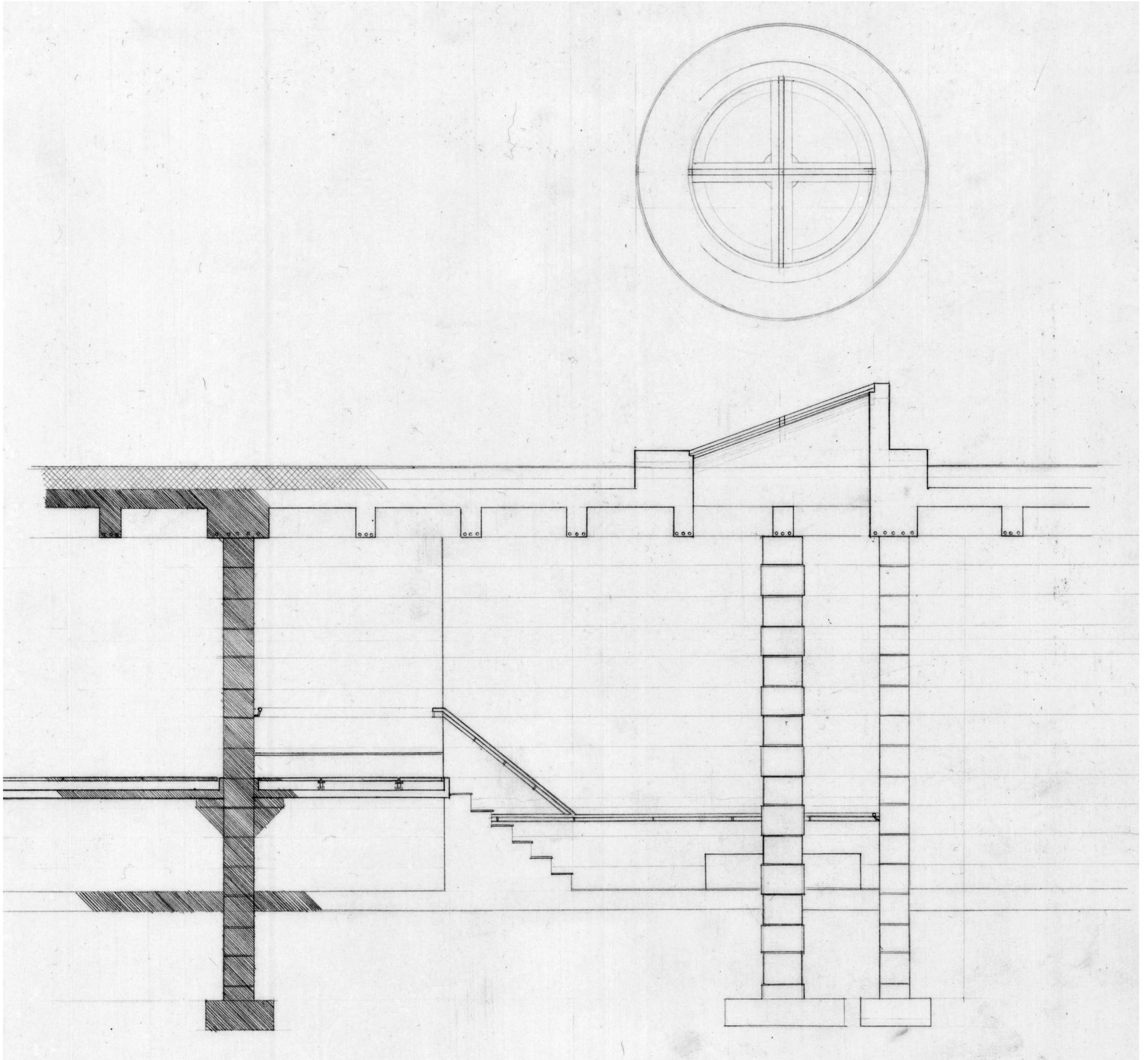
Viewing certain elements of the hospice at several scales is integral in understanding volumetric and spatial relationships.

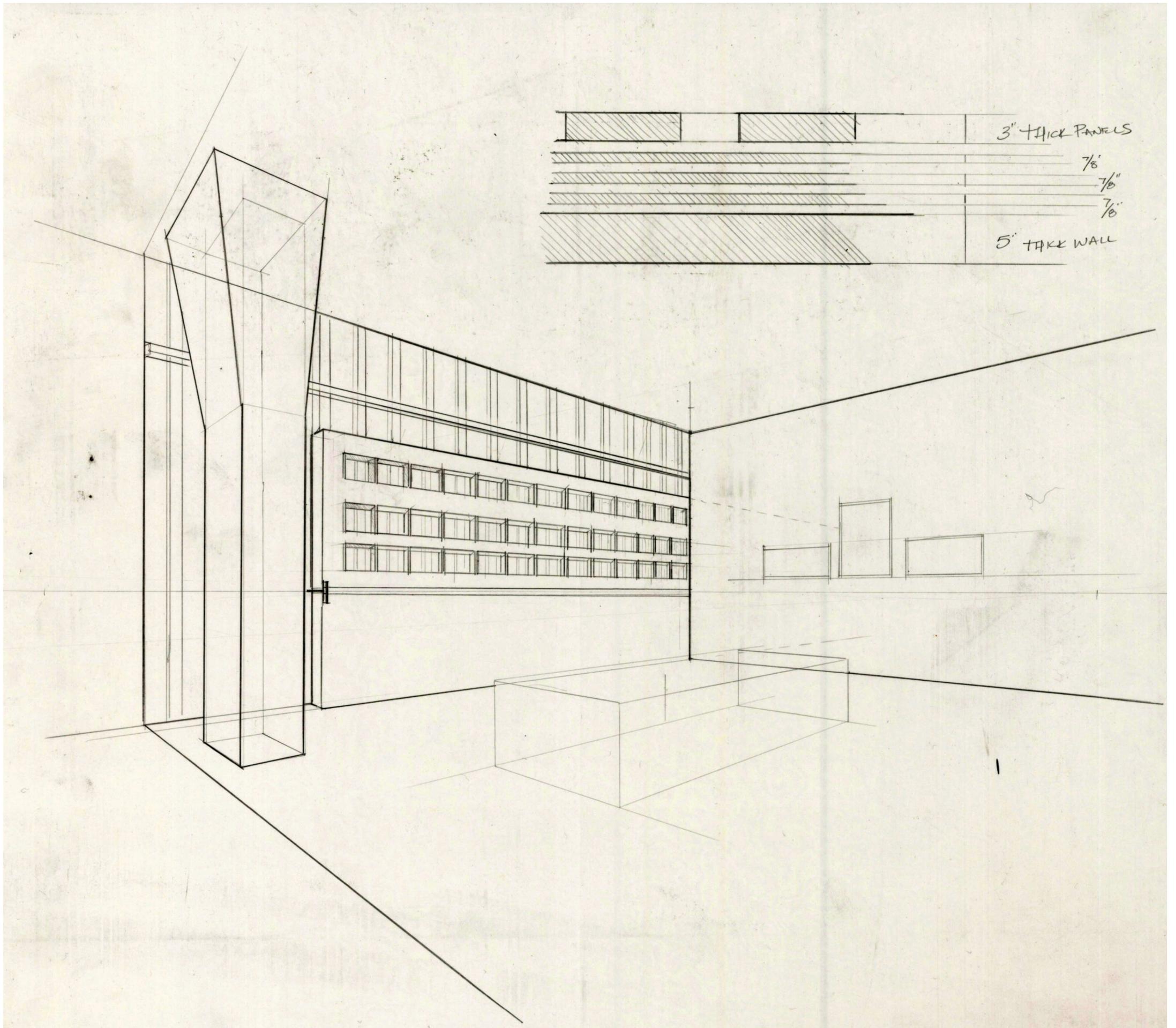
Plate 22 displays a partial plan demonstrating the relationship of the patient to the physician. Entering the patients room, a corridor directs the line of sight to a view of the waterfall. The patients bed is out of sight while entering the room, as the bed is typically surrounded by mechanical devices, gas lines and other unsightly medical objects. A guest room is introduced to provide overnight visitors with a comfortable place to sleep instead of a chair next to the patients bed. From the patients room, physician office doors are obstructed visually by the offset walls. When a patient passes the physician offices, there is no direct line of sight into a physicians office or treatment room. Private treatment rooms are provided adjacent to all physician offices. Glass light wells line the center of the corridor to create smaller interior volumes breaking up the space between the patient rooms and physician offices.

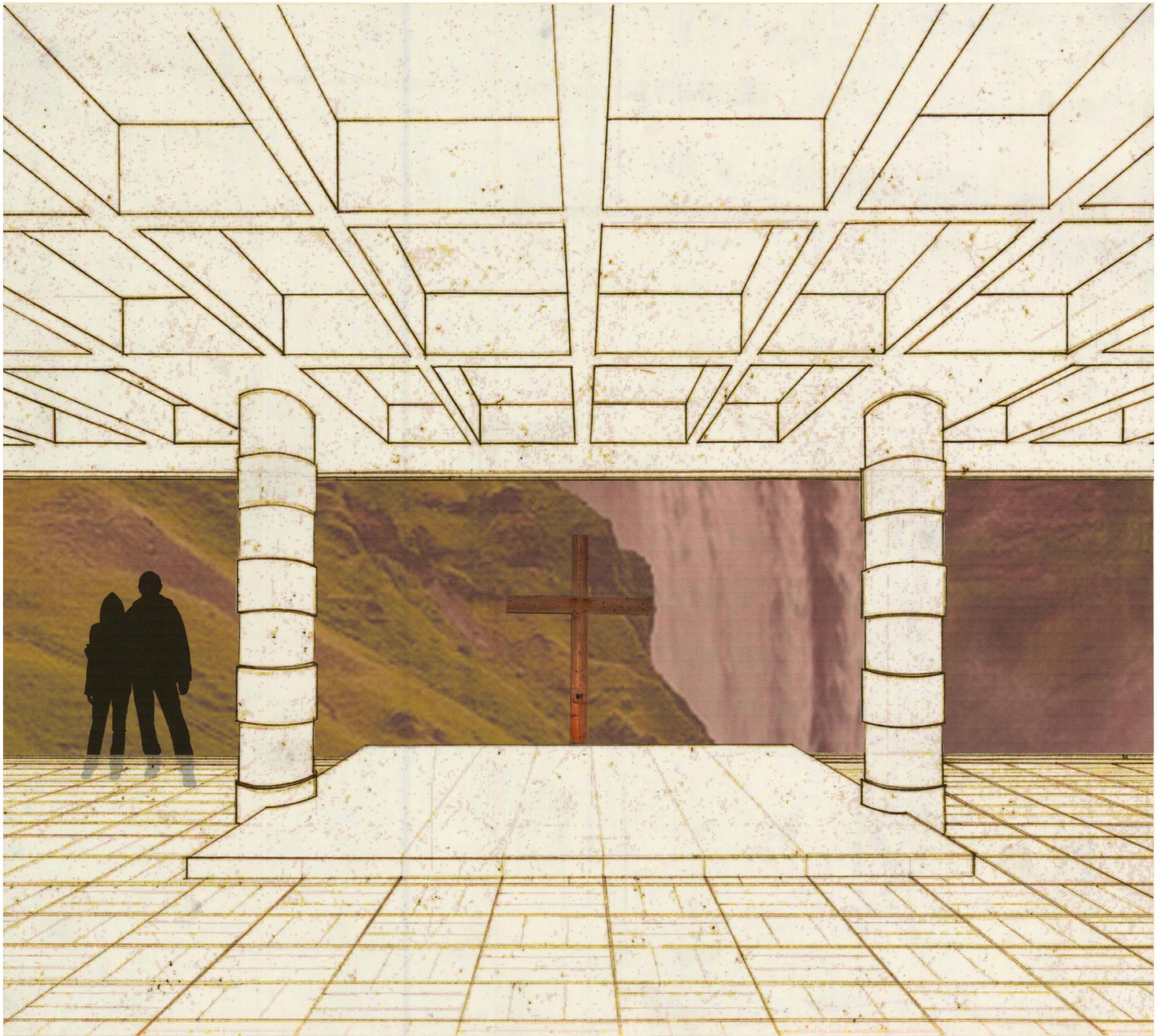
Plates 23, 25 and 26 exhibit the relationship of the column to each respective space. Columns play an important role in their placement and materiality and are expressive of energy and strength. Each office, patient room and bath has at least one solid stone or concrete column anchoring the space to the earth. Offset from all walls and left unfinished, the column in the patient room and office are set in the corner closest to the bed, a constant reminder of the forces of the natural and built world. In the thermal bath, the column is the source of light, as a light well is directly above each.











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