

Meridian International Contemporary Culture Center  
Proposed Addition to Meridian International Center

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ABSTRACT

Located just off of Sixteenth Street NW in Washington, D.C., the Meridian International Center complex sits on an elevated, crescent-shaped swath of land opposite Meridian Hill/Malcolm X Park. On the site are two neoclassical residences, both designed by John Russel Pope in the early 20th century. Initially designed as diplomatic residences, when Meridian International Center purchased the site in 1960, the houses were converted into facilities for the organization. Today, having recently undergone extensive renovations the buildings are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Meridian International Center is devoted to the exchange of people, ideas, and art. The organization aims to promote international understanding through diplomatic exchanges, arts programs, lecture series, and educational programs. The majority of operations is devoted to the International Visitors Program, however in recent years, the organization has expressed a desire to expand their other programs, specifically the Arts & Culture and World Affairs divisions. A primary intention of Meridian International Center is to open its doors to the city, to invite and engage the public in international matters through a variety of expositions.

Currently lacking sufficient space to accommodate such programs, this thesis proposes a new facility for Meridian International Center's building complex. This facility is to function as a Contemporary Culture Center. With the intention of opening the institution to the public, both literally and figuratively, the building is to act as a beacon in the city for the sharing and mixing of cultures.

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The following project and book were possible because of the continual support of my friends and family.

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My committee

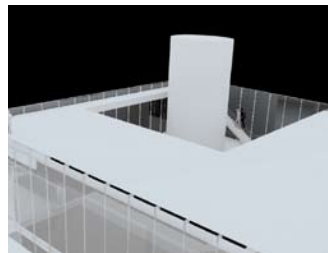
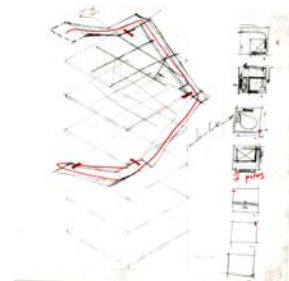
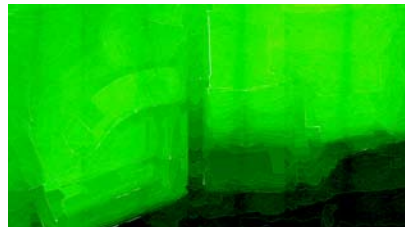


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## Chinese Art and Greek Art

By Jalaluddin Rumi

The Prophet said, "There are some who see Me  
by the same Light in which I am seeing them.  
Our natures are one.

Without reference to any strands  
of lineage, without reference to texts or traditions,  
we drink the Life-Water together."

Here's a story  
about that hidden mystery:  
The Chinese and the Greeks  
were arguing as to who were the better artists.

The King said,  
"We'll settle this matter with a debate."  
The Chinese began talking,  
but the Greeks wouldn't say anything.  
They left.

The Chinese suggested then  
that they each be given a room to work on  
with their artistry, two rooms facing each other  
and divided by a curtain.

The Chinese asked the King  
for a hundred colors, all the variations,  
and each morning they came to where  
the dyes were kept and took them all.

The Greeks took no colors.  
"They're not part of our work,"  
They went to their room  
and began cleaning and polishing the walls. All day  
every day they made those walls as pure and clear  
as an open sky.

There is a way that leads from all-colors  
to colorlessness. Know that the magnificent variety  
of the clouds and the weather comes from  
the total simplicity of the sun and the moon.

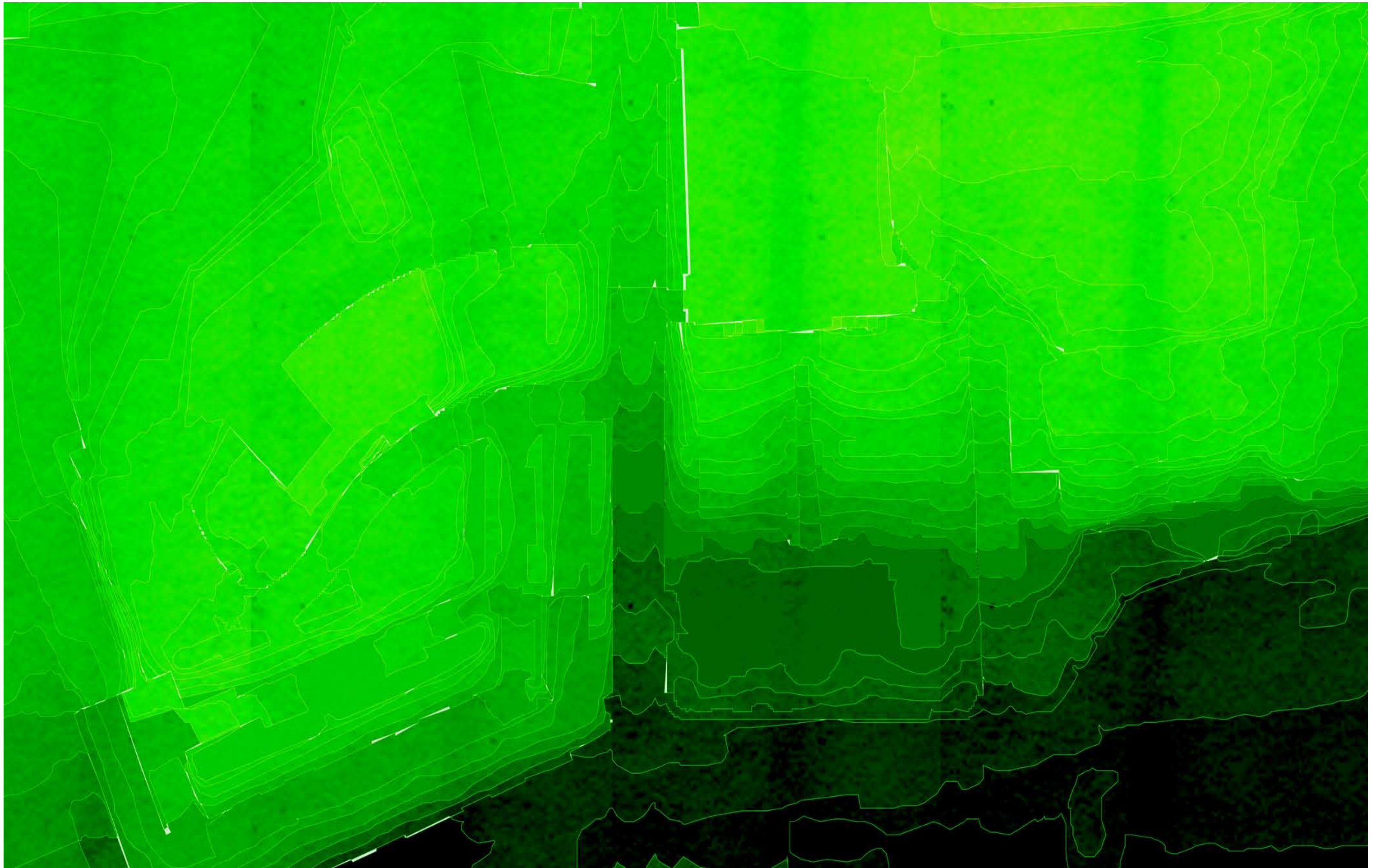
The Chinese finished, and they were so happy.  
They beat the drums in the joy of completion.  
The King entered their room,  
astonished by the gorgeous color and detail.

The Greeks then pulled the curtain dividing the rooms.  
The Chinese figures and images shimmeringly reflected  
on the clear Greek walls. They lived there,  
even more beautifully, and always  
changing in the light.

The Greek art is the Sufi way.  
They don't study books of philosophical thought.  
They make their loving clearer and clearer.

No wantings, no anger. In that purity  
they receive and reflect the images of every moment,  
from here, from the stars, from the void.

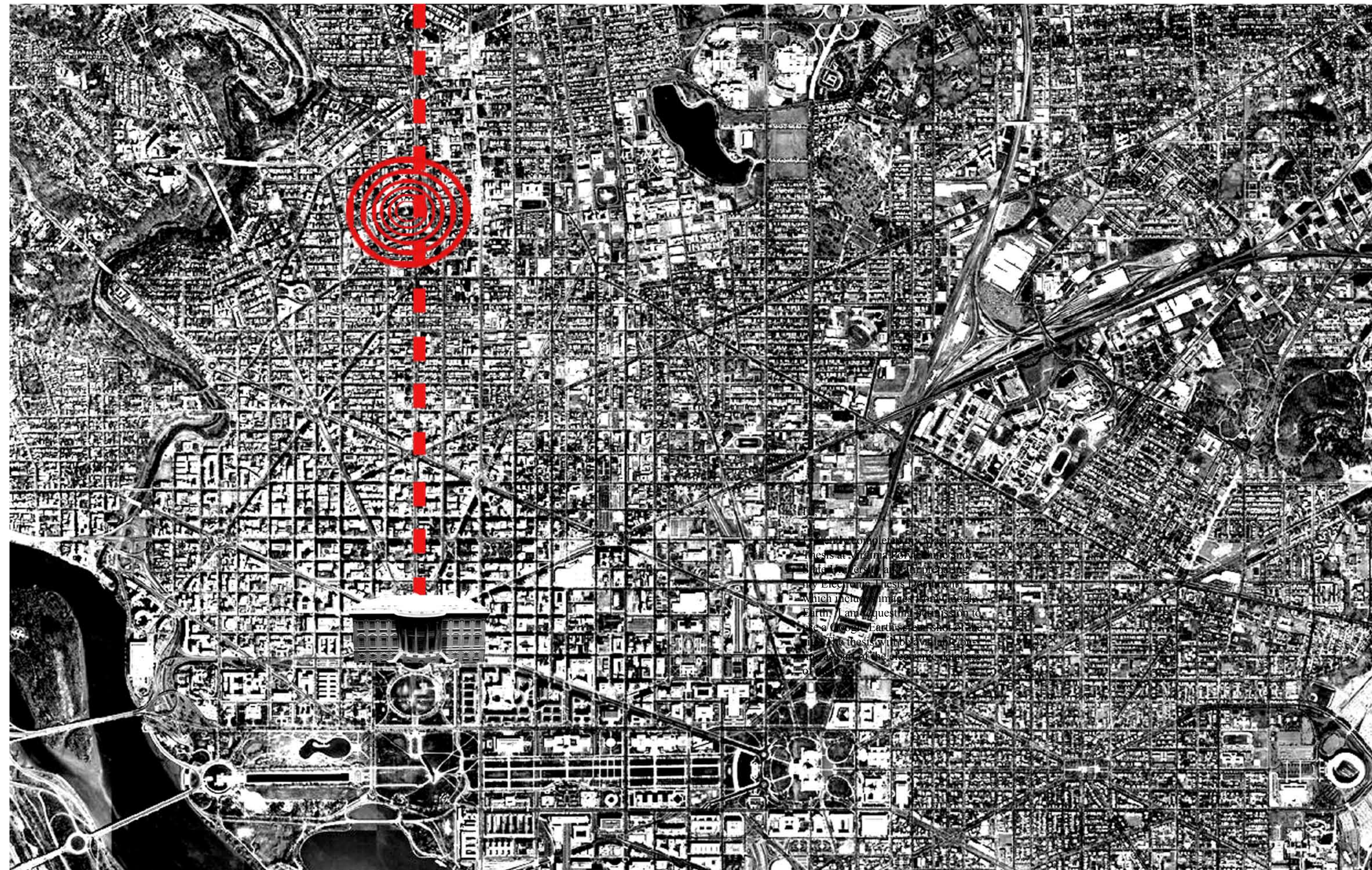
They take them in  
as though they were seeing  
with the Lighted Clarity  
that sees them.



Site Topography



Washington, D.C., United States of America



Site in Washington, D.C. Image courtesy of TerraServer

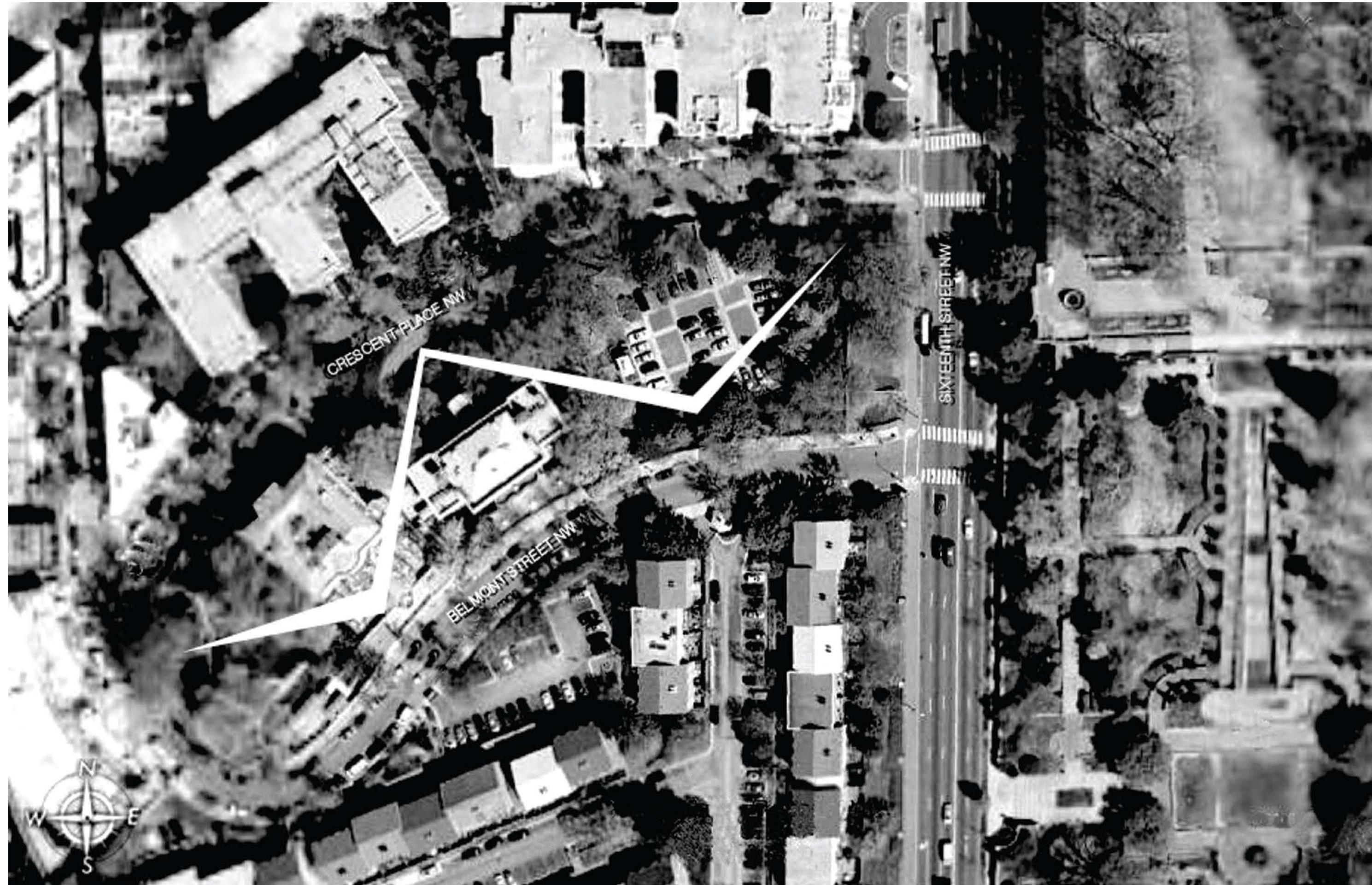


Site Vicinity Map showing Active Corridors



Site Map with Meridian Hill/Malcolm X Park





Site Map with Outdoor Space Rhythm Image courtesy of Google Maps



HENRY WHITE HOUSE

MERIDIAN HOUSE

JOHN RUSSELL POPE'S HOUSES

1910-1922



Henry White House - Crescent Street entrance

Interior Exhibit Space

Rear Terrace

View to Belmont Street



Meridian House - Crescent Street entrance

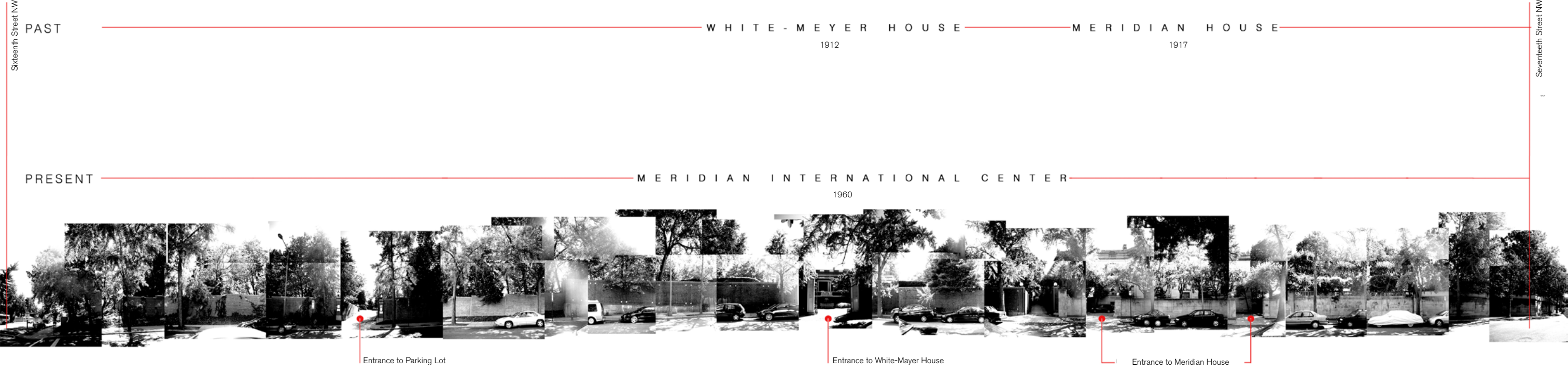
Linden Grove

View to Belmont Street

Existing Buildings of Meridian International Center



FUTURE  
EAST ELEVATION



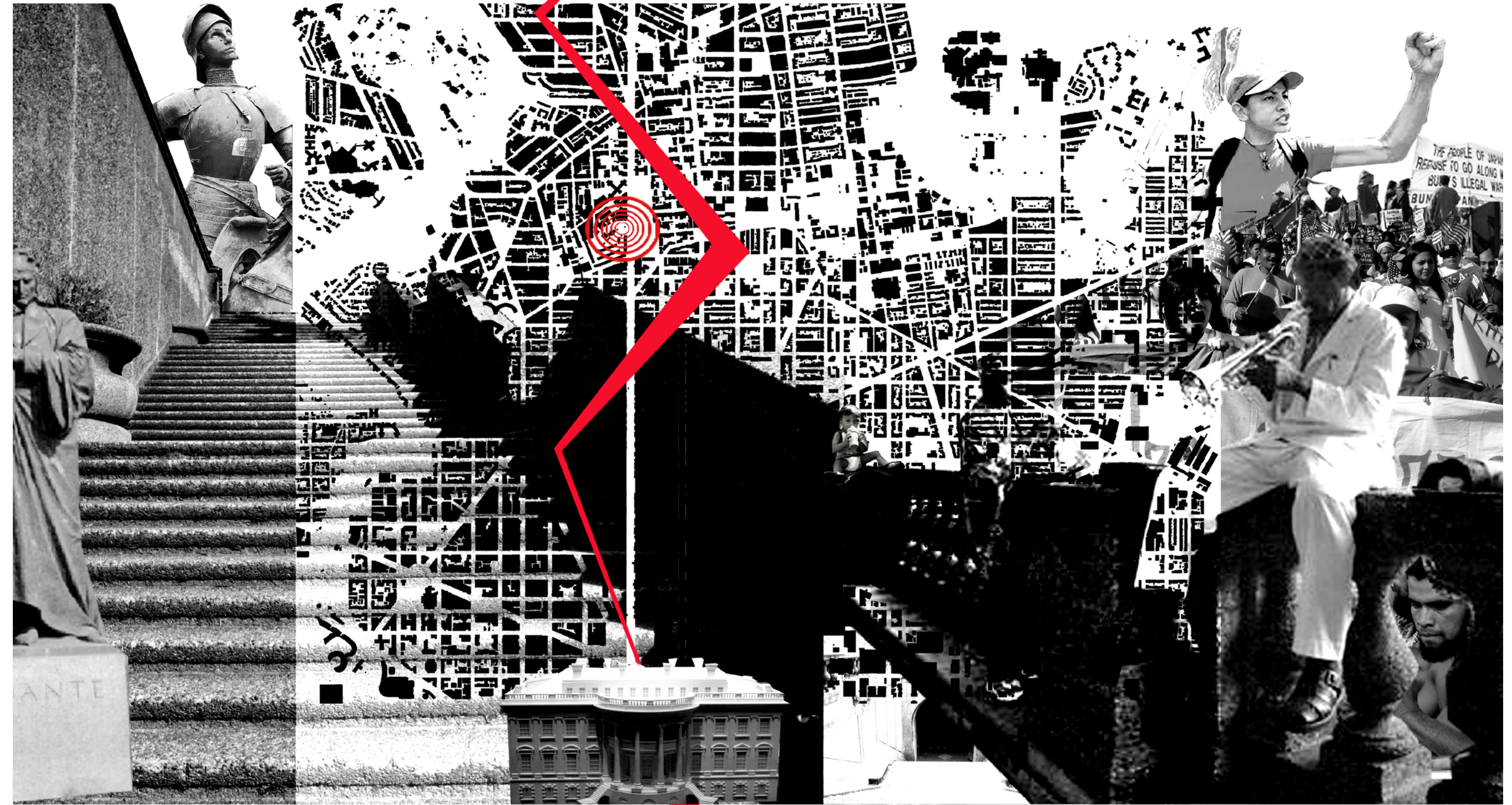
C R E S C E N T P L A C E N W

FUTURE  
NORTH ELEVATION



B E L M O N T S T R E E T N W

FUTURE  
SOUTH ELEVATION





CHILDREN'S SPACES

# CONTEMPORARY

"Where the air is fresh and pure"  
"No evil spirits enter here"

INTERSECTION OF CULTURE

# ARTS & CULTURE INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Art  
Cinema  
Photography  
Painting  
Sculpture  
Dance  
Music  
Literature  
Poetry

Manifestations of Culture

*As time shifts a city evolves ever changing elements of technology and scale evolve our to communicate remains*

International Classroom  
Languages

...Garten...jardín...jardim...庭...Сады...

*garden as connecting divide, linking all buildings*

the theatre of daily life

Rethinking relationships to establish new ways of seeing

Between the site and newly defined program have the languages represented in institution act as a threshold to entering program, a metaphor for communication across cultures, taking all of these languages into one place, a central forum for exchange and dialogue.

**WORLD AFFAIRS**

ENGLISH  
FRANÇAIS  
ESPAÑOL  
DEUTSCH  
PORTUGUÊS  
ITALIANO  
中文  
日本語  
русско/русский  
ελληνικά  
HRVATSKI  
ČECH  
MAGYAR  
ÍSLENSKA  
POLSKI  
ROMAN  
SLOVENSKI  
TÜRK

**PERFORMING ARTS**

MERIDIAN HILL PARK COEKISTS MALCOLM X PARK







CURRENT PROGRAMS

INTERNATIONAL VISITORS

Exchange Programs

Designs and implements exchange, technical assistance, and training programs for international professionals. Participants include business leaders, government officials, scholars, etc.

Hospitality Services

Hosts international visitors to Washington, D.C. and U.S. Organizes visits by providing airport reception, bilingual tours, translation services, etc.

WORLD AFFAIRS

Seminars on Global Issues

Hosts international and national lecturers for talks, lectures, and briefings. Speakers include ambassadors, policy makers, journalists, scholars, and authors. Receptions for in-depth discussions.

INTERNATIONAL CLASSROOM

Educational Outreach

International visitors go to local public schools to talk about their culture. Interactive presentations. Hands-on activities.

ARTS & CULTURE

Exhibitions

Produce, present, and circulate art exhibitions from around the world.

Music

Musical performances. Annual Countries in Concert series.

Cultural Outreach

Lectures, performances, readings, and other cultural activities. Artists discuss their work, dancers demonstrate their traditions, speakers give perspective on cultural relationships.

Arts Education

Arts education for young people to learn about a country's culture, history, and people. Guided tours of exhibitions. Storytelling, dance, musical performances.

DEVELOPMENT

Funding

Raises money for all divisions. Aside from U.S. State Department, funding through grants, donations, sponsorships.

MERIDIAN  
INTERNATIONAL CENTER



EXCHANGE OF PEOPLE, IDEAS, & ART

E  
D  
U  
C  
A  
T  
I  
O  
N

EXPANDED AND NEW  
PROGRAMS & FACILITIES

INTERNATIONAL VISITORS

Guest Suites

Provide on-site suites for international guests.

WORLD AFFAIRS

Auditorium

300 seats

Reception Area  
Preparation Rooms  
Storage

\*Free spaces within building to accommodate small lectures

INTERNATIONAL CLASSROOM

Children Spaces

Free spaces within building to accommodate groups of children.

ARTS & CULTURE

Art Exhibition Spaces

For temporary/traveling exhibits to accommodate large-scale sculpture and two-dimensional art.

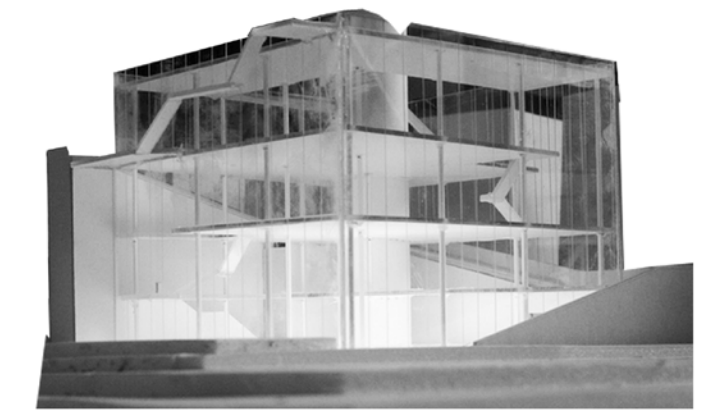
Auditorium

Cafe & Restaurant

Catering to visitors and general public.

Flexible Use Spaces

Spaces within building are designed to be open to accommodate a variety of media and performance art.

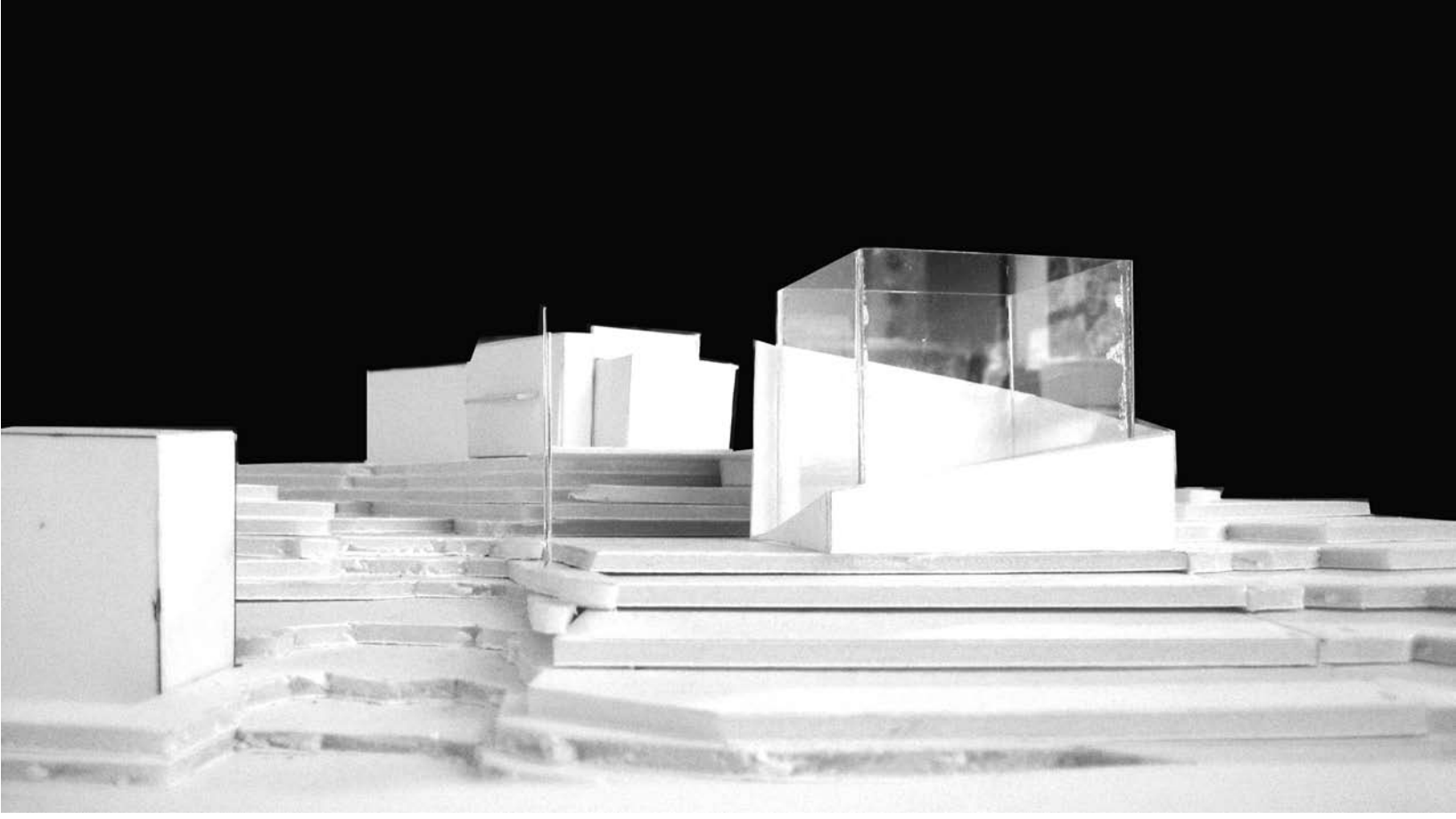


International Visitors Program  
60%

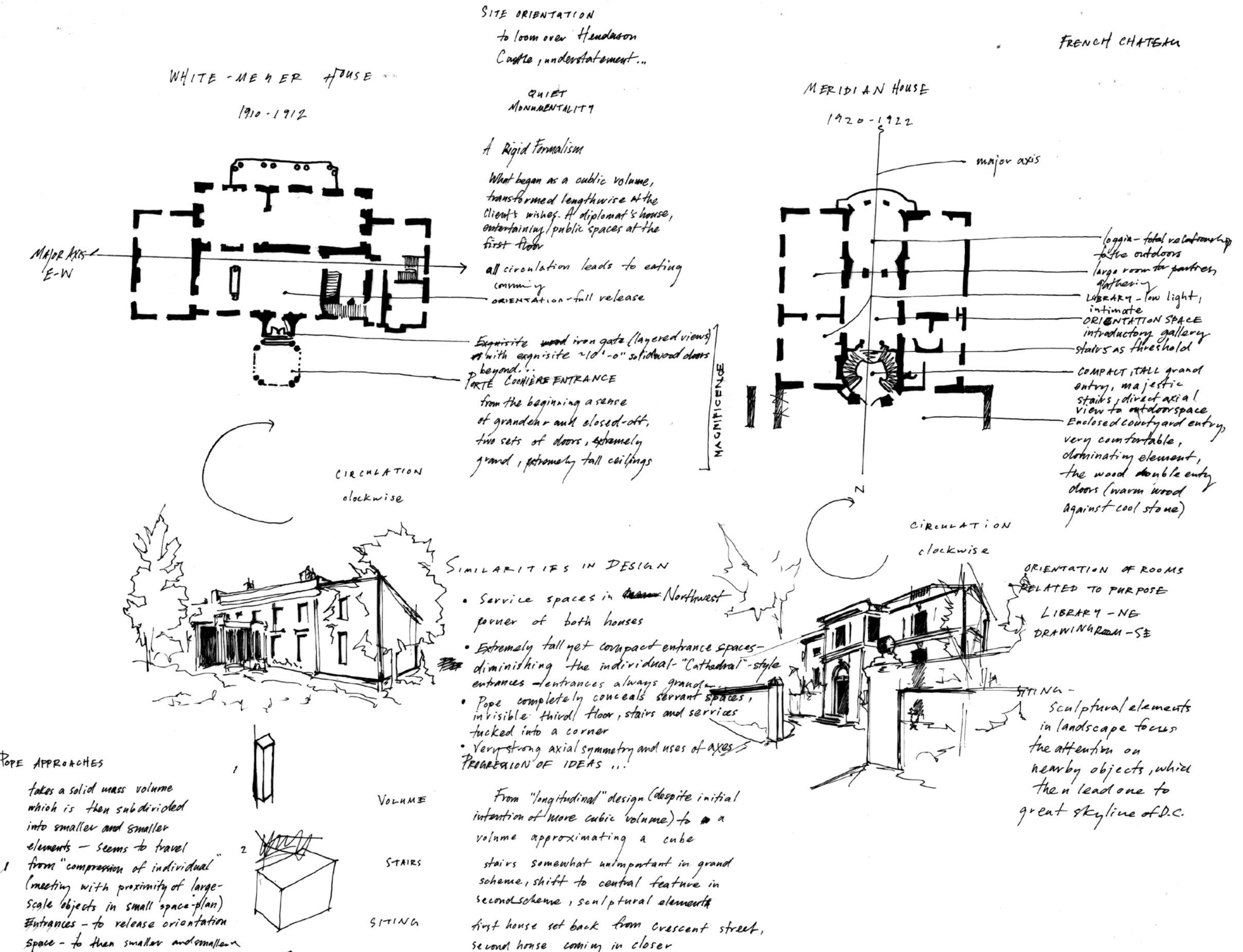
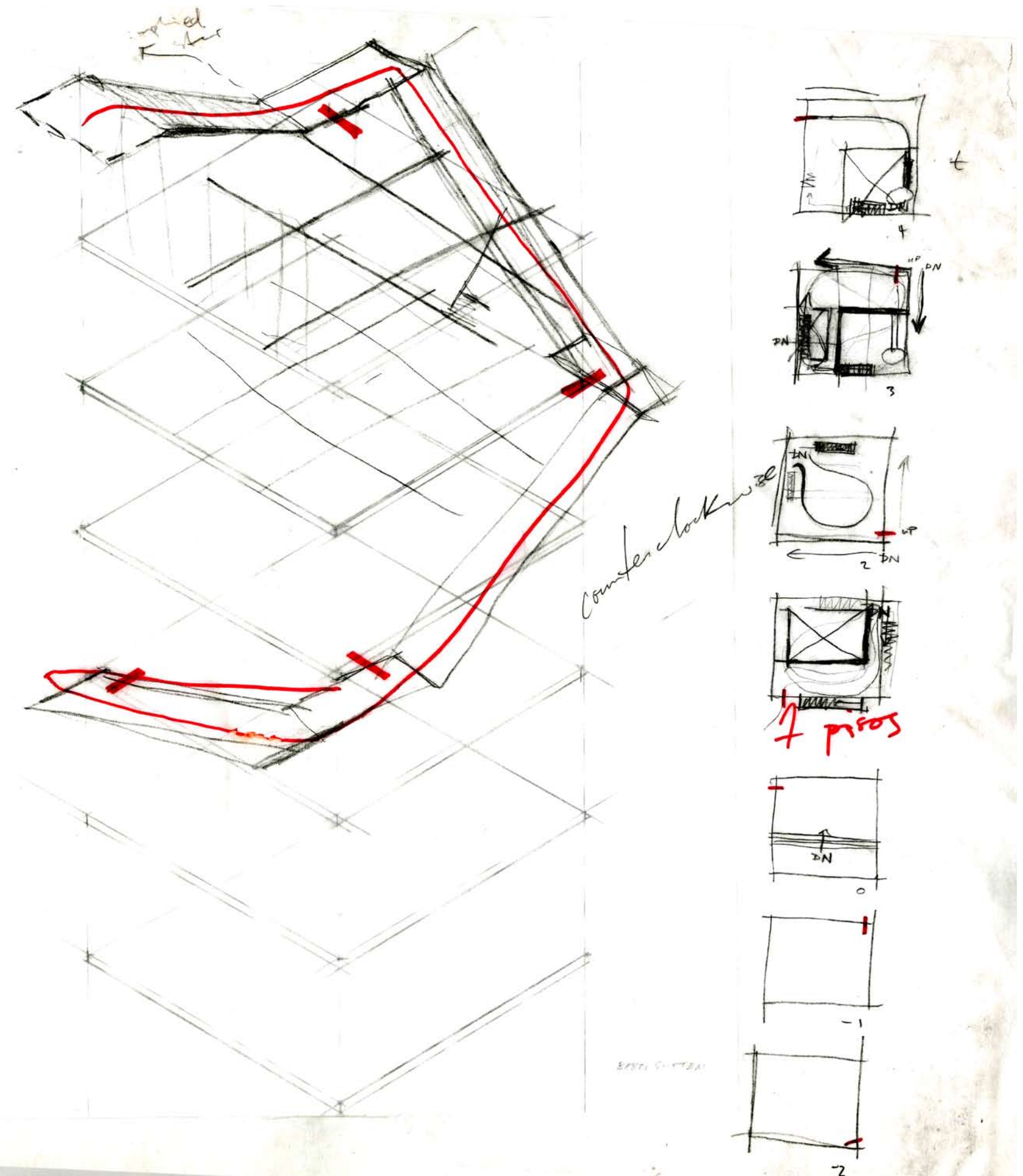
International Classroom  
Arts & Culture  
60%

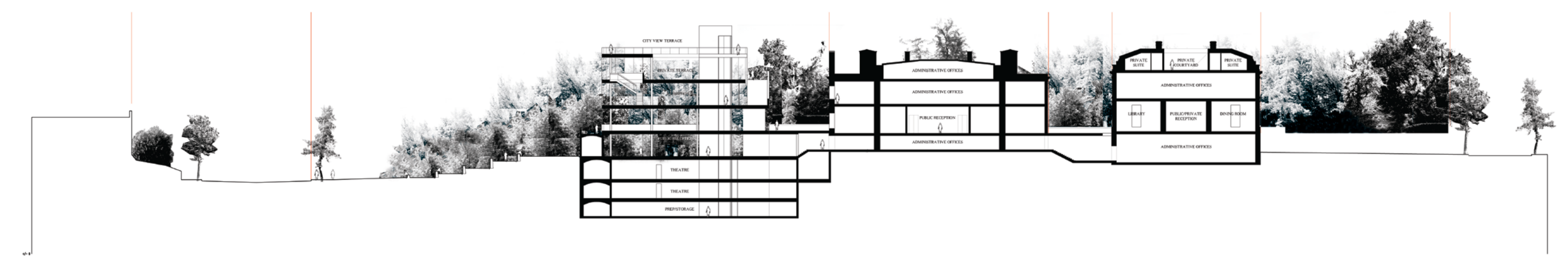
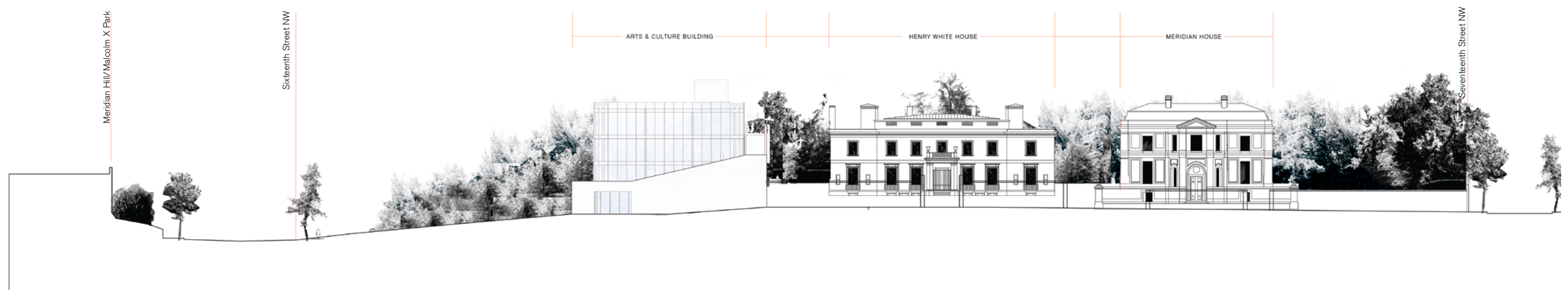
International Visitors Program  
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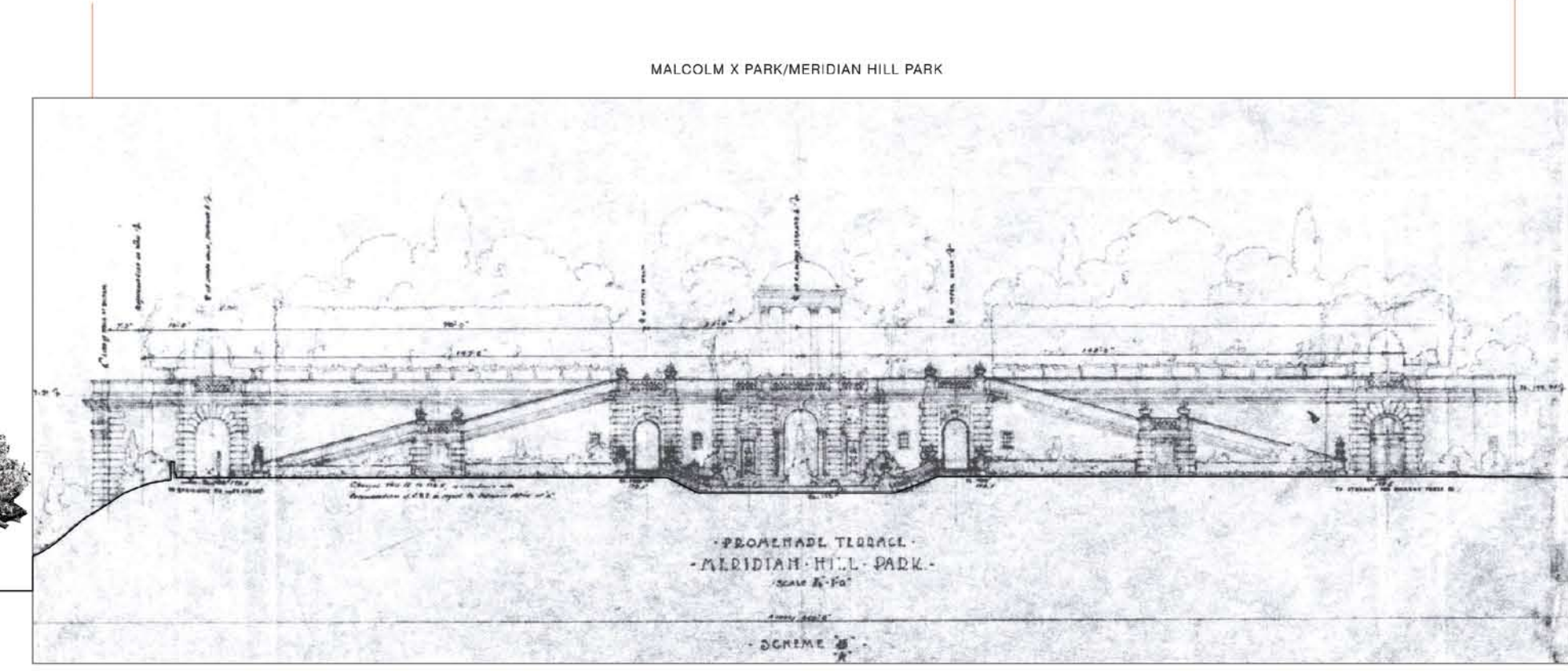
Cultural Information  
International Classroom  
Arts & Culture  
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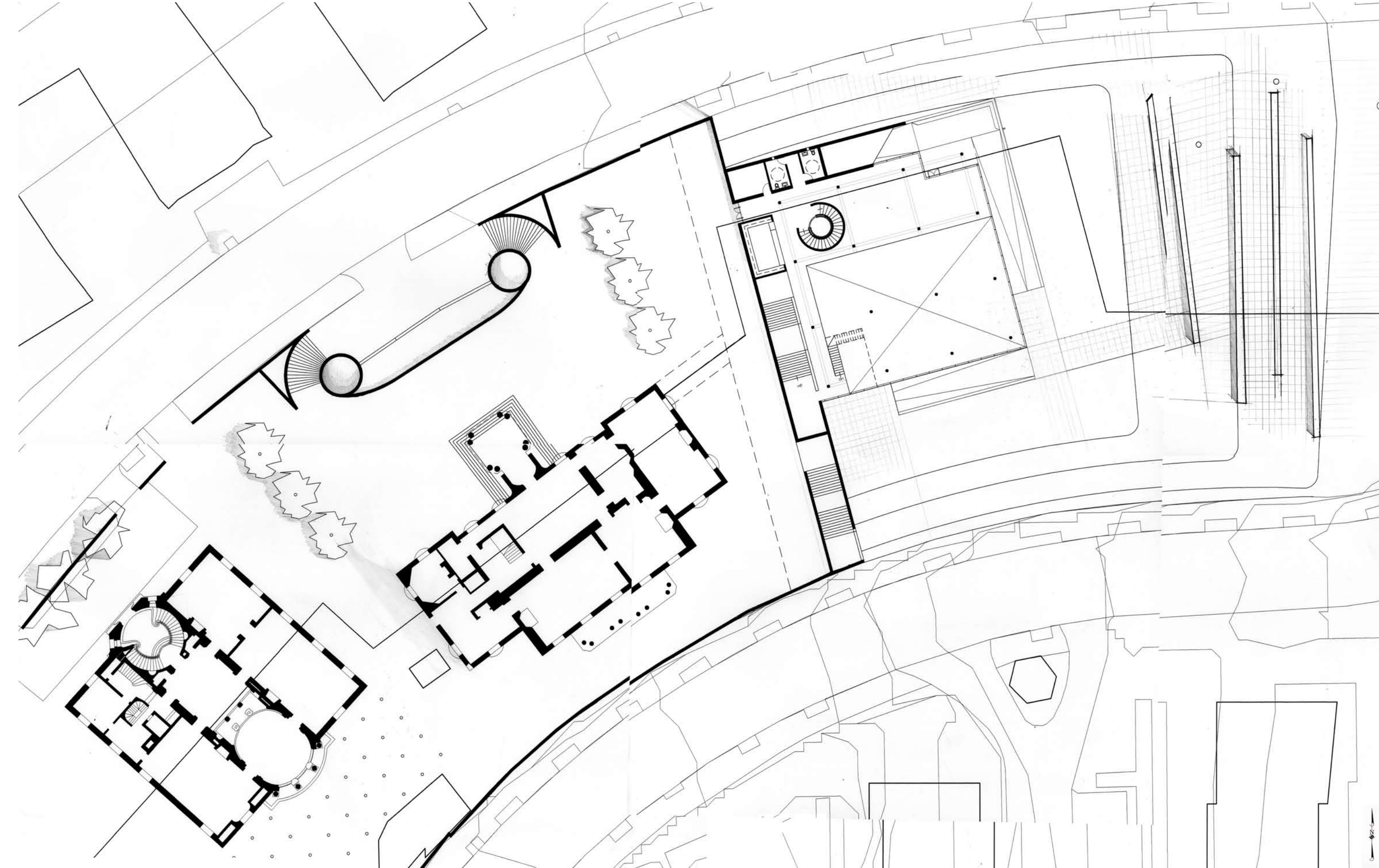
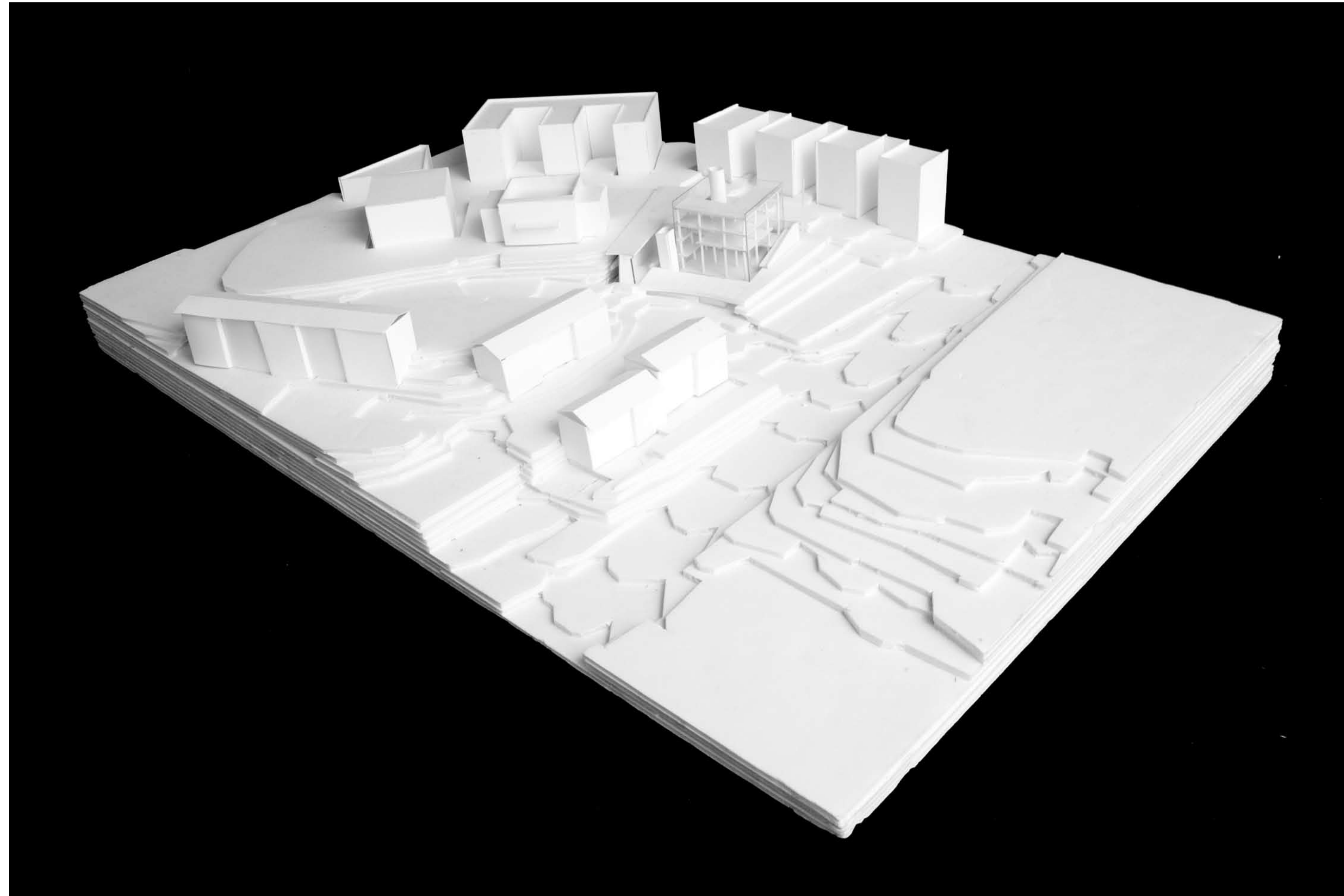


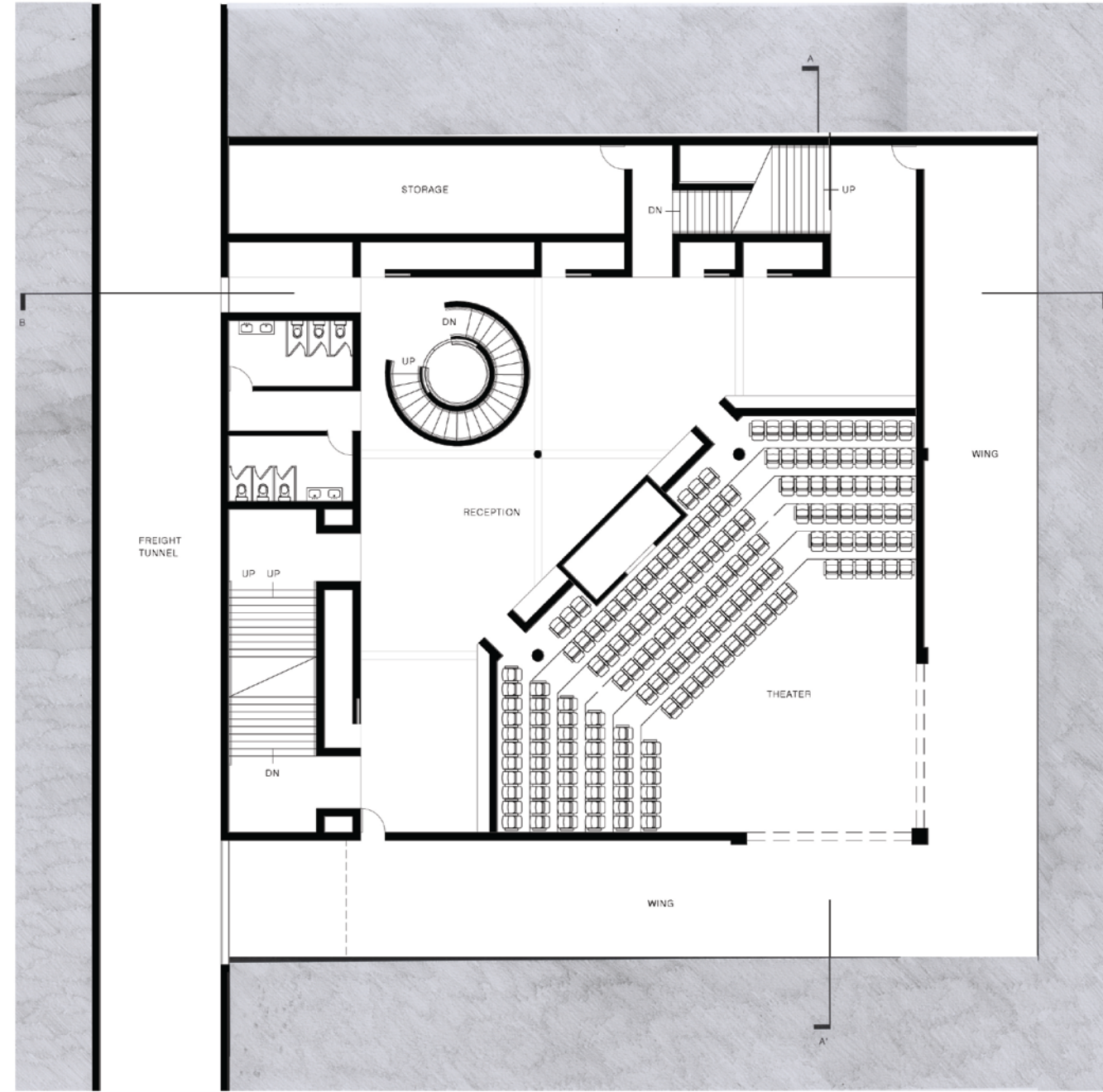
Circulation as a wrapping, holding the cube, at each level offering access to program, the journey leading to the top, the roof, the view...



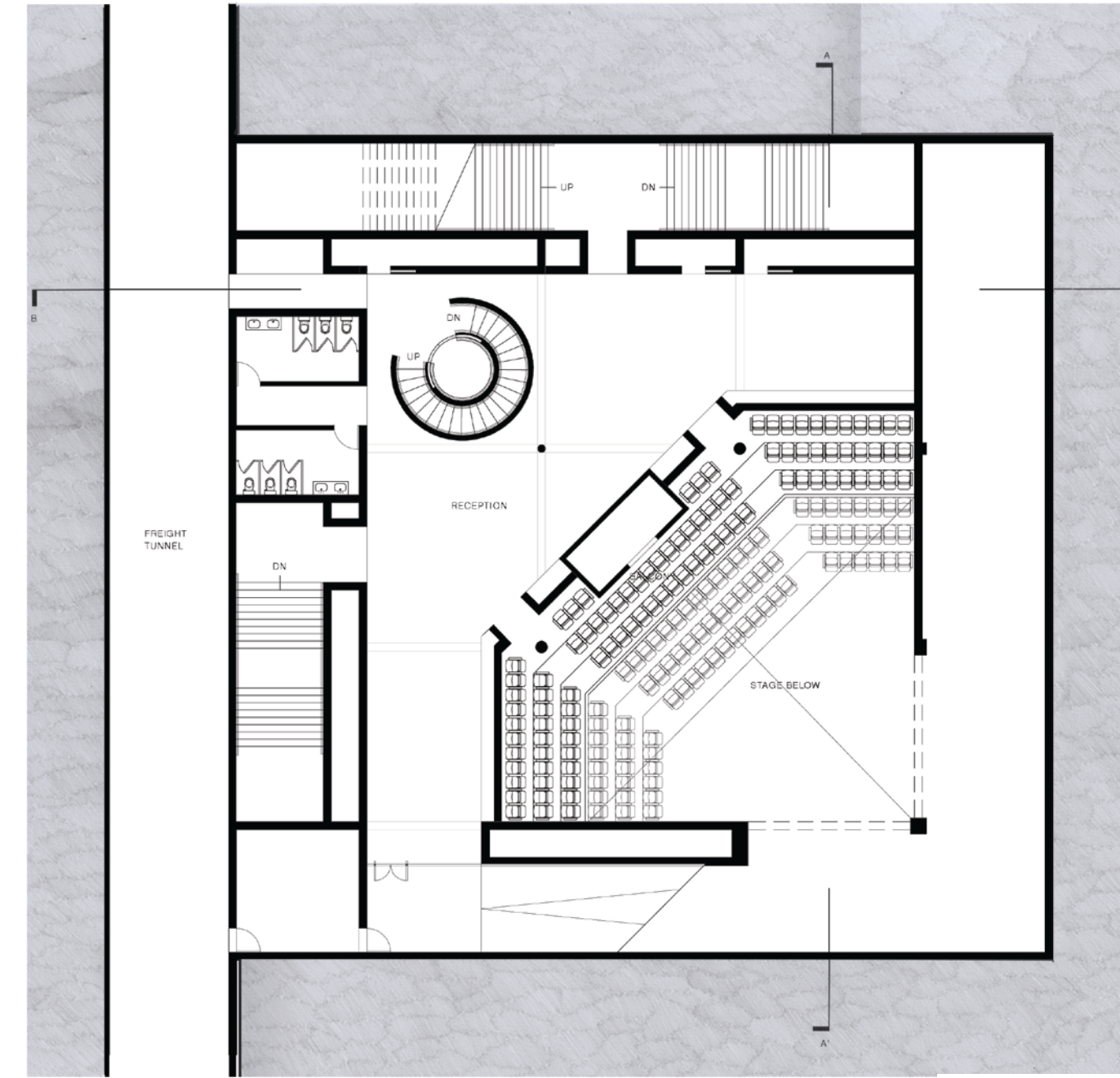




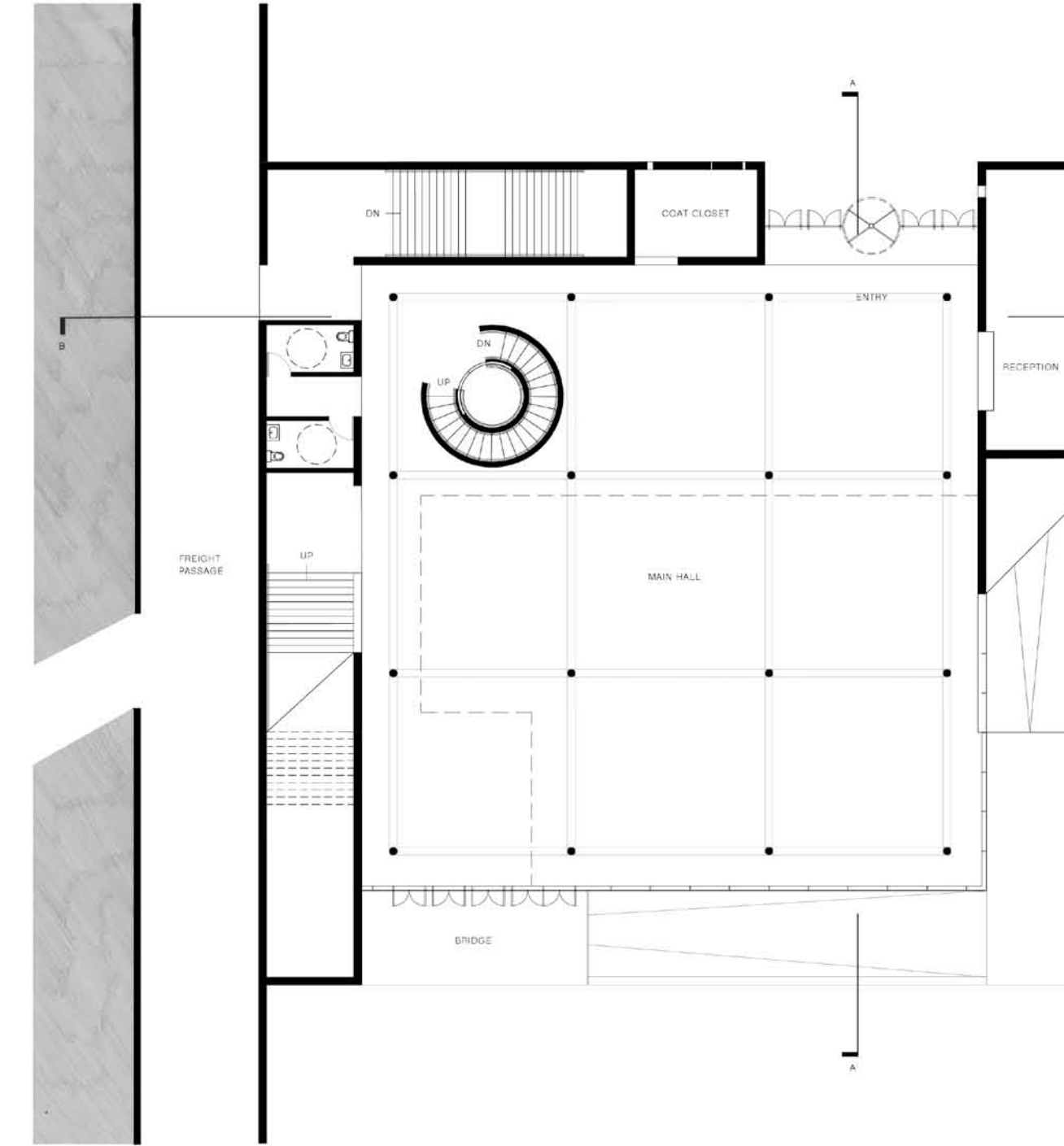




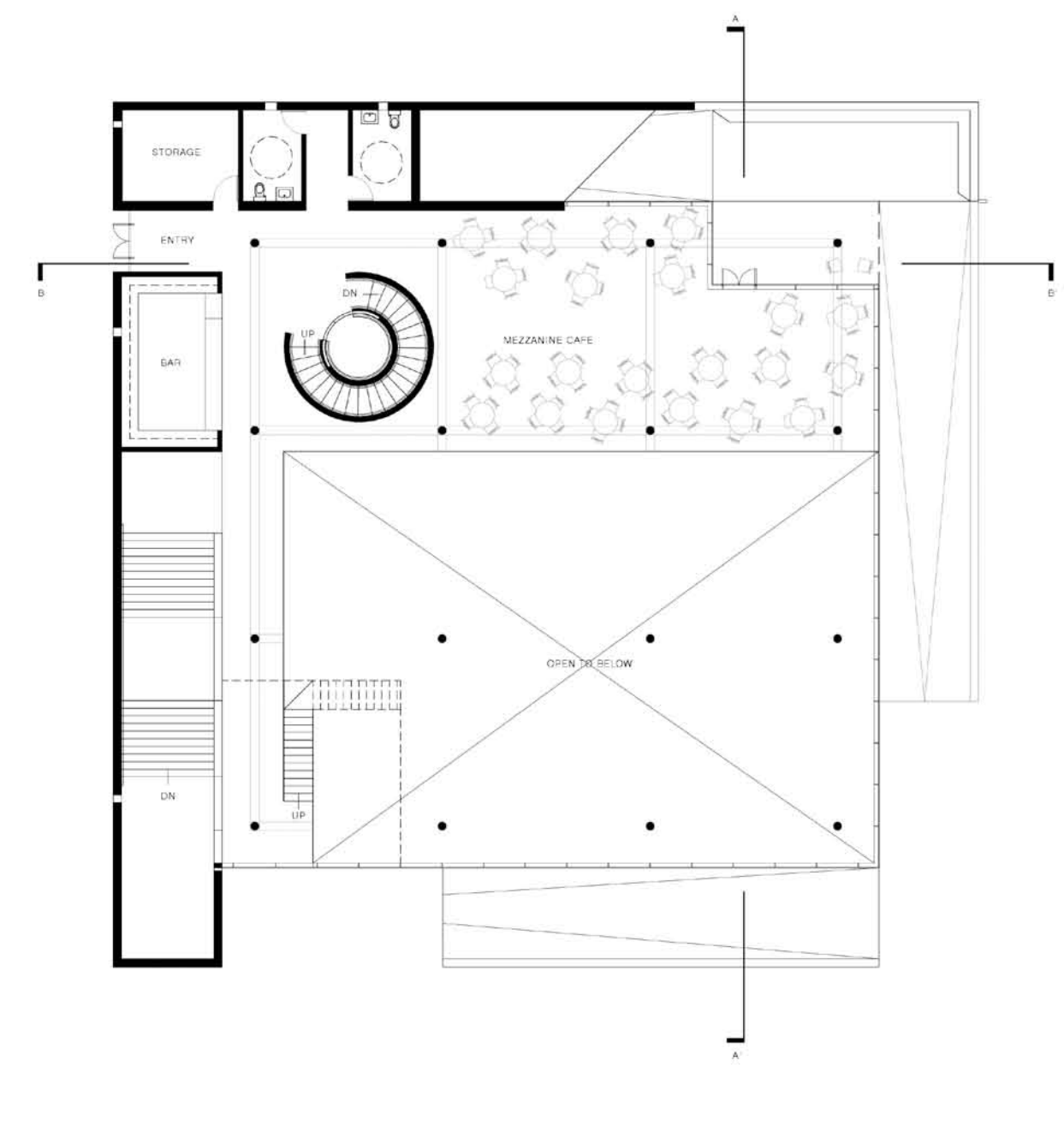
Lower Level Plan -2



Lower Level Plan -1

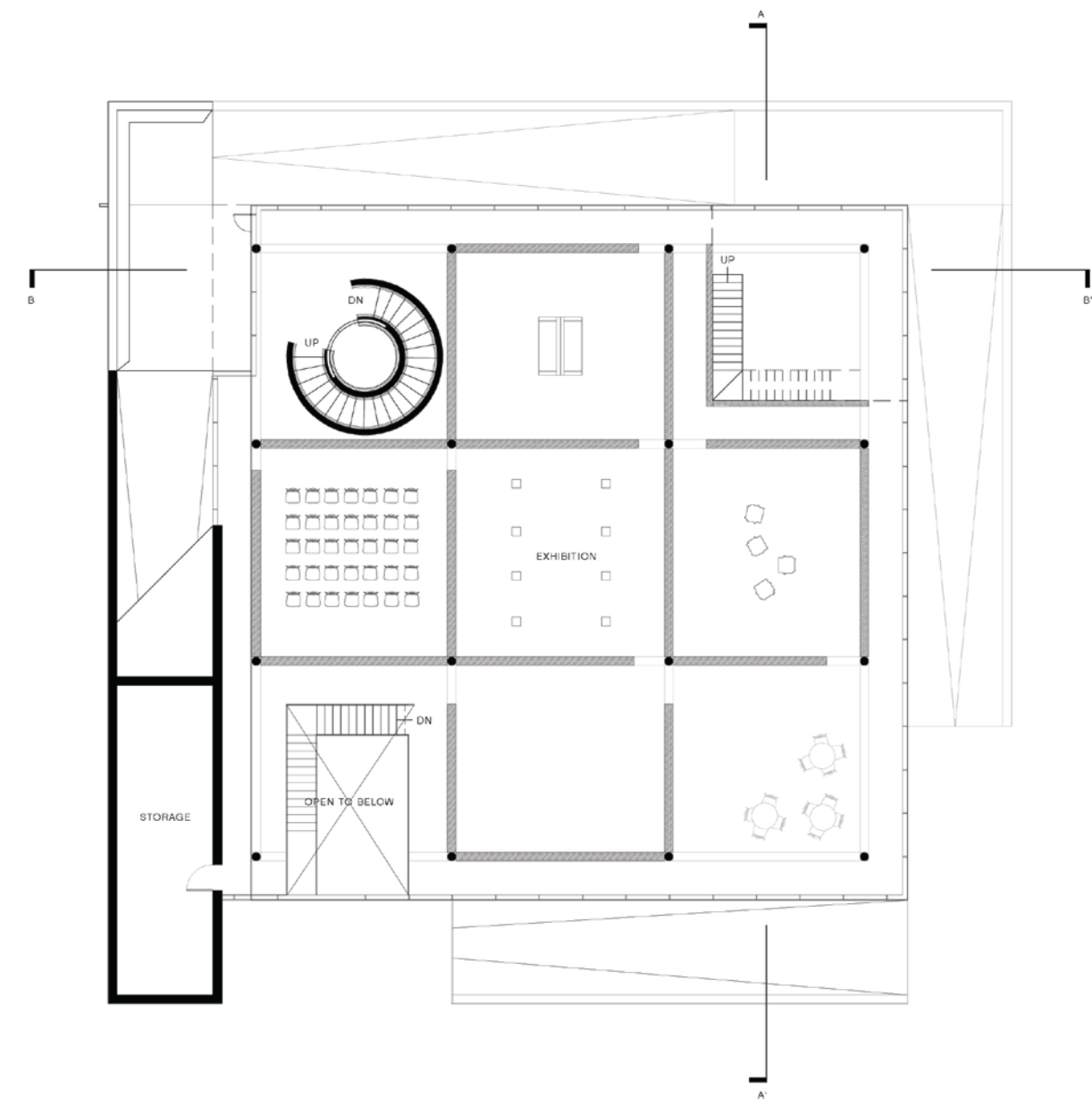


Ground Floor Plan

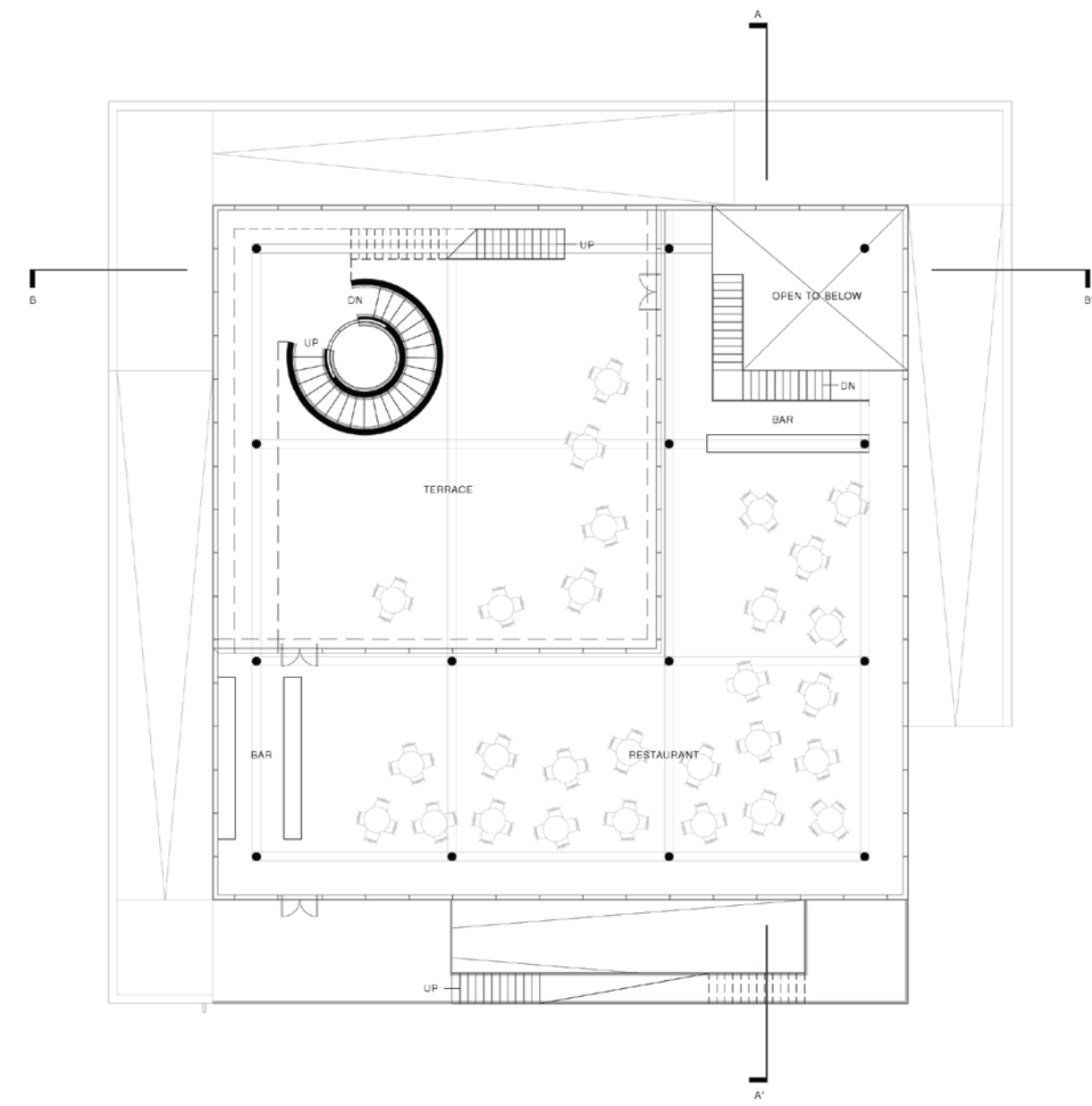


Mezzanine Floor Plan

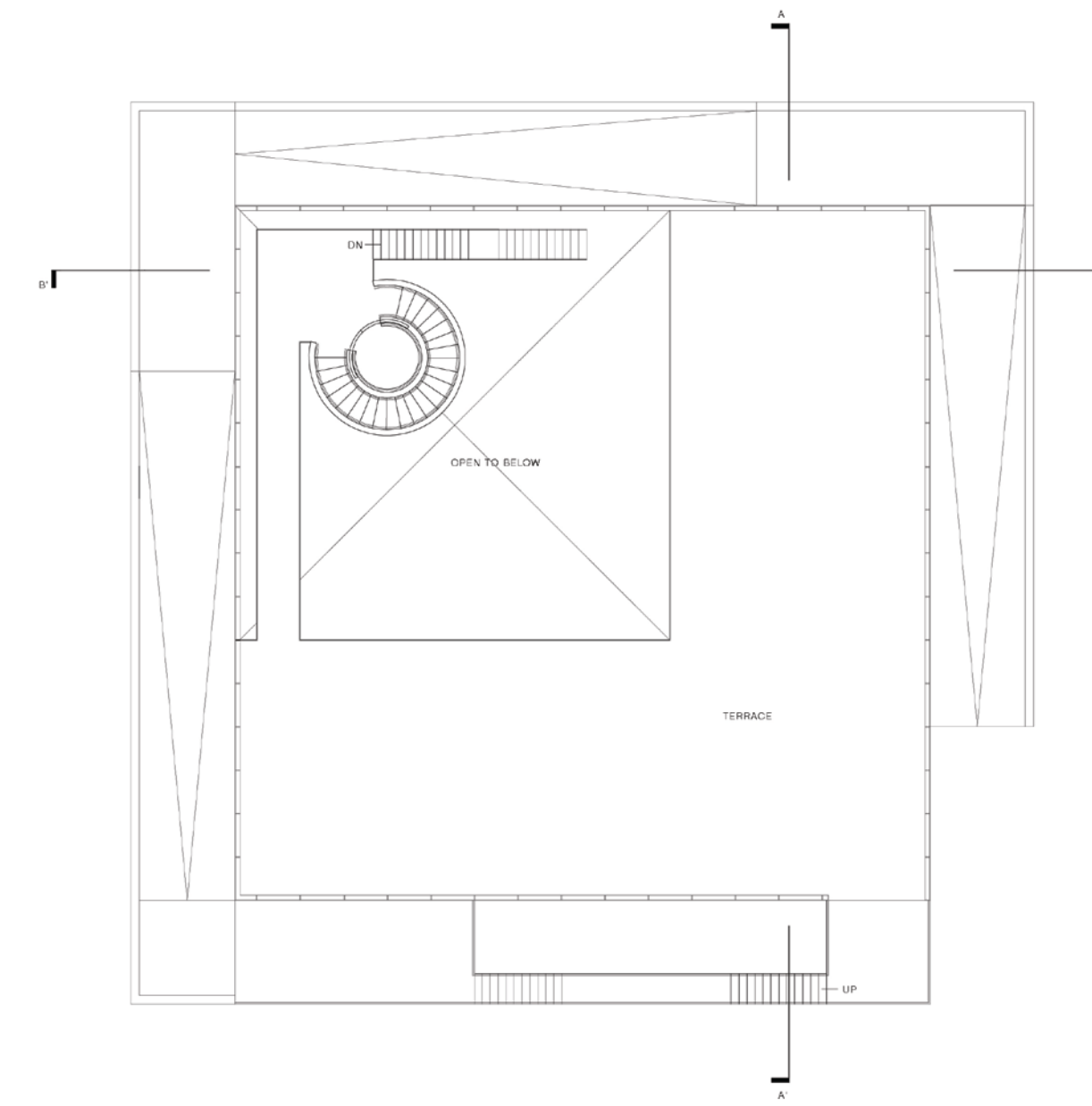




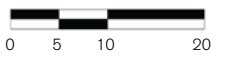
Exhibition Level Plan



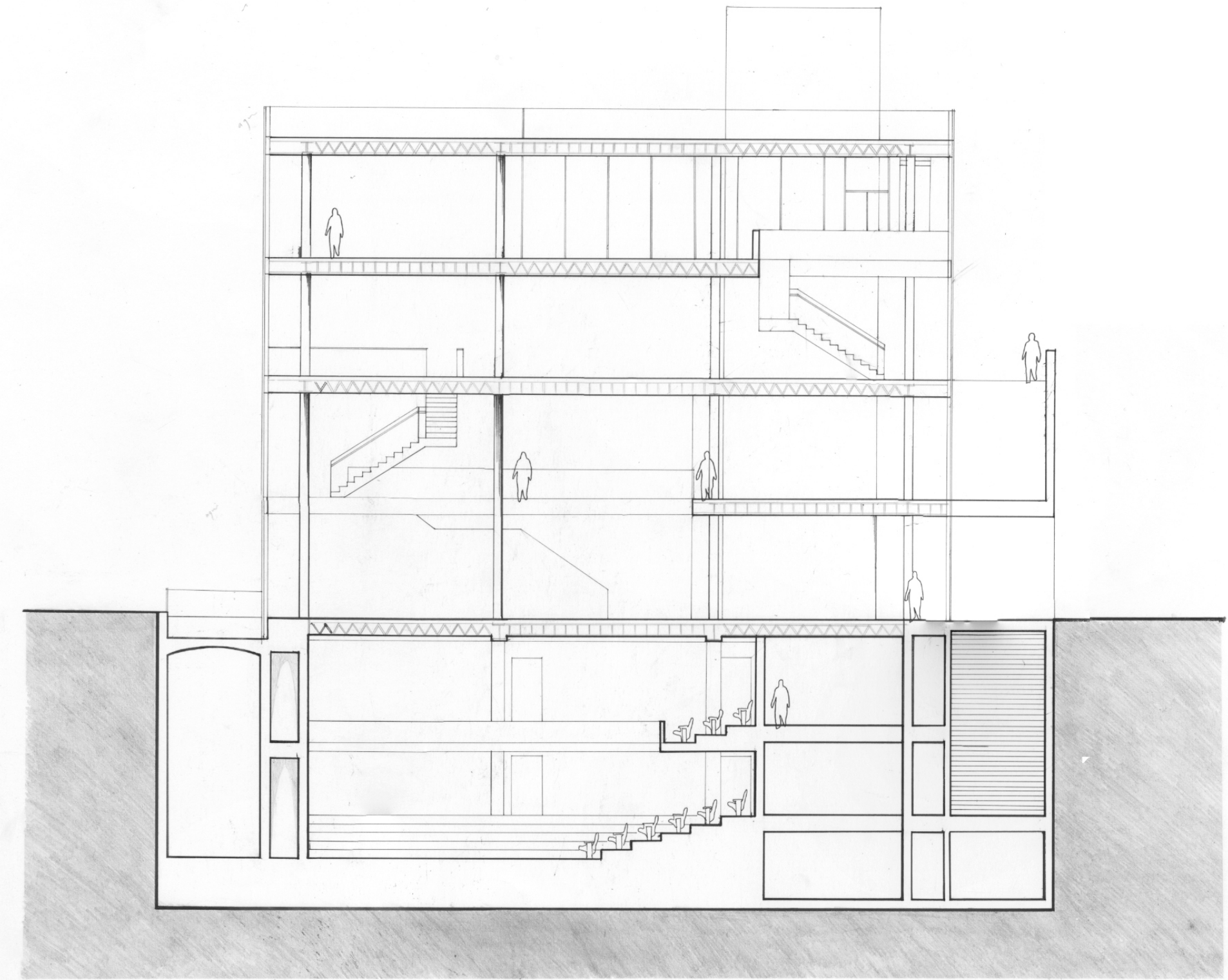
Restaurant Level Plan

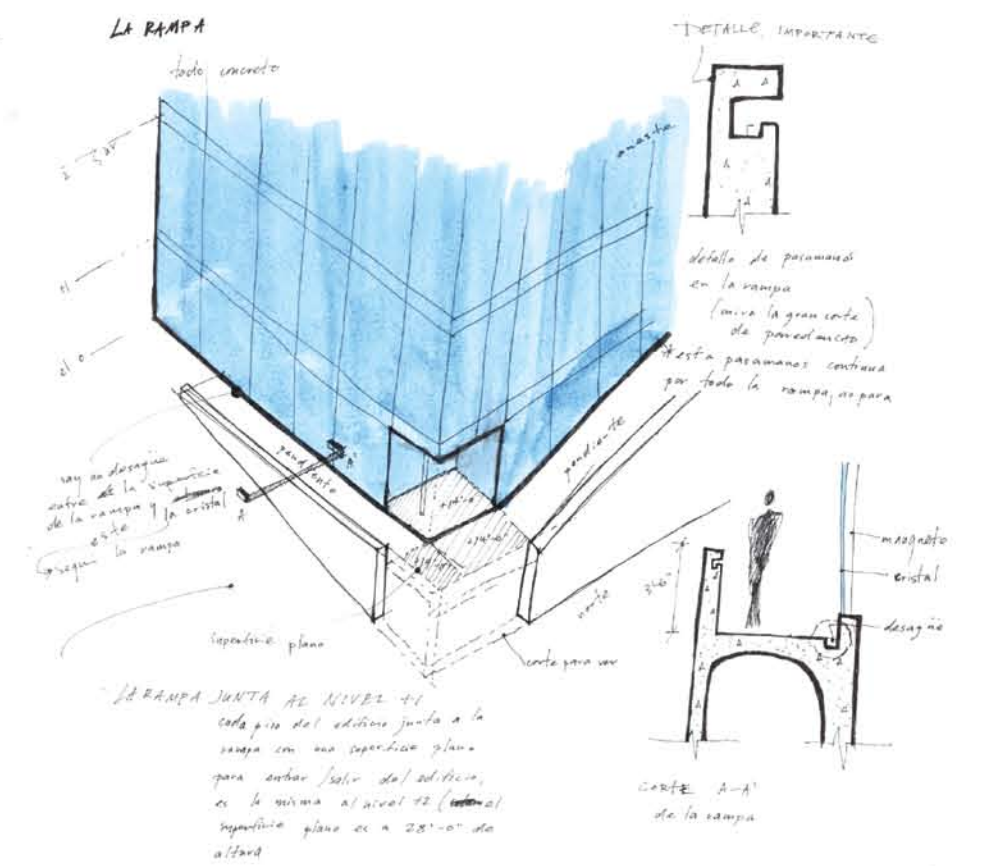
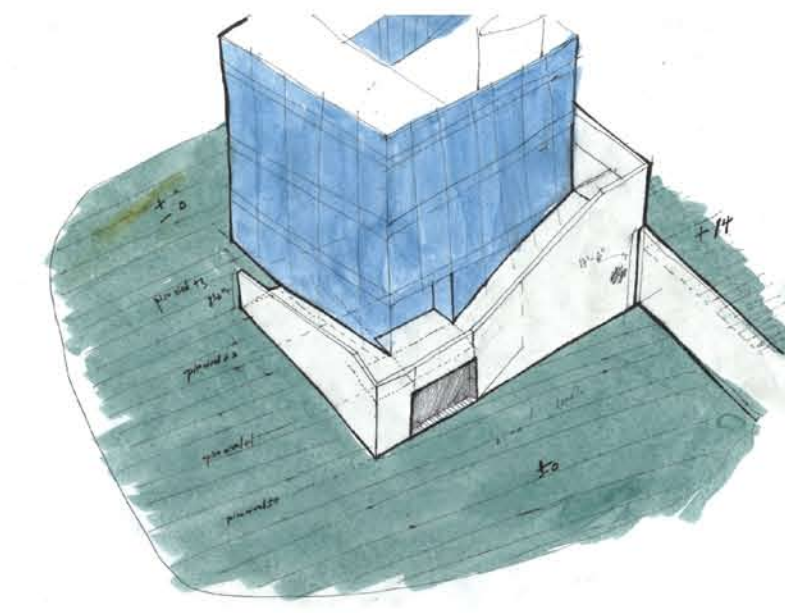
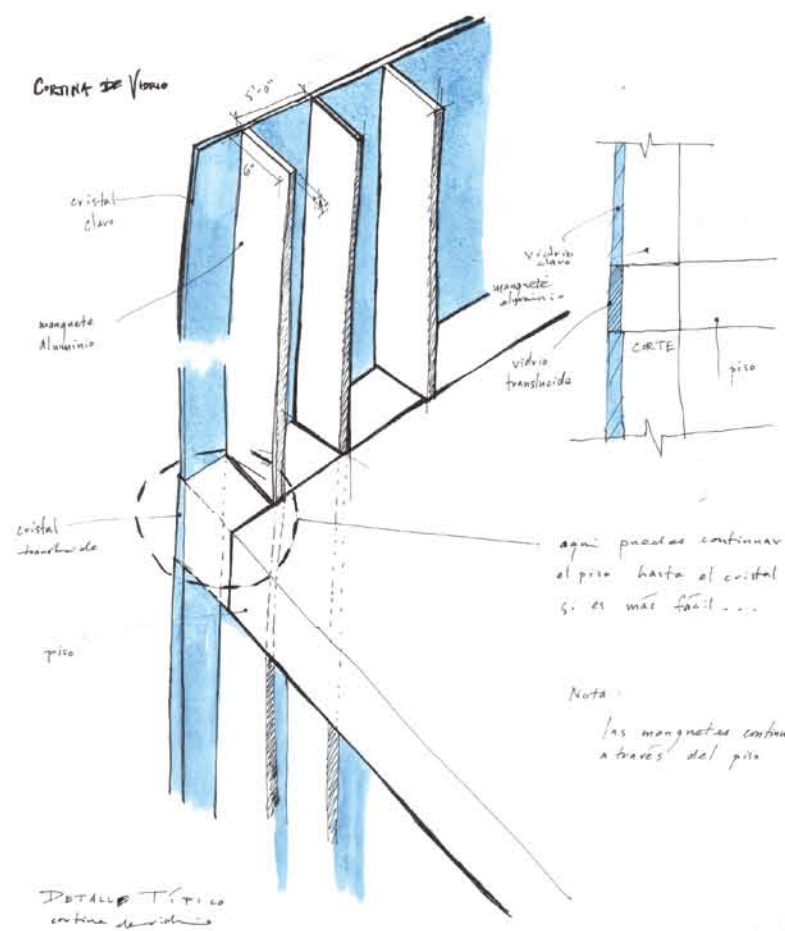
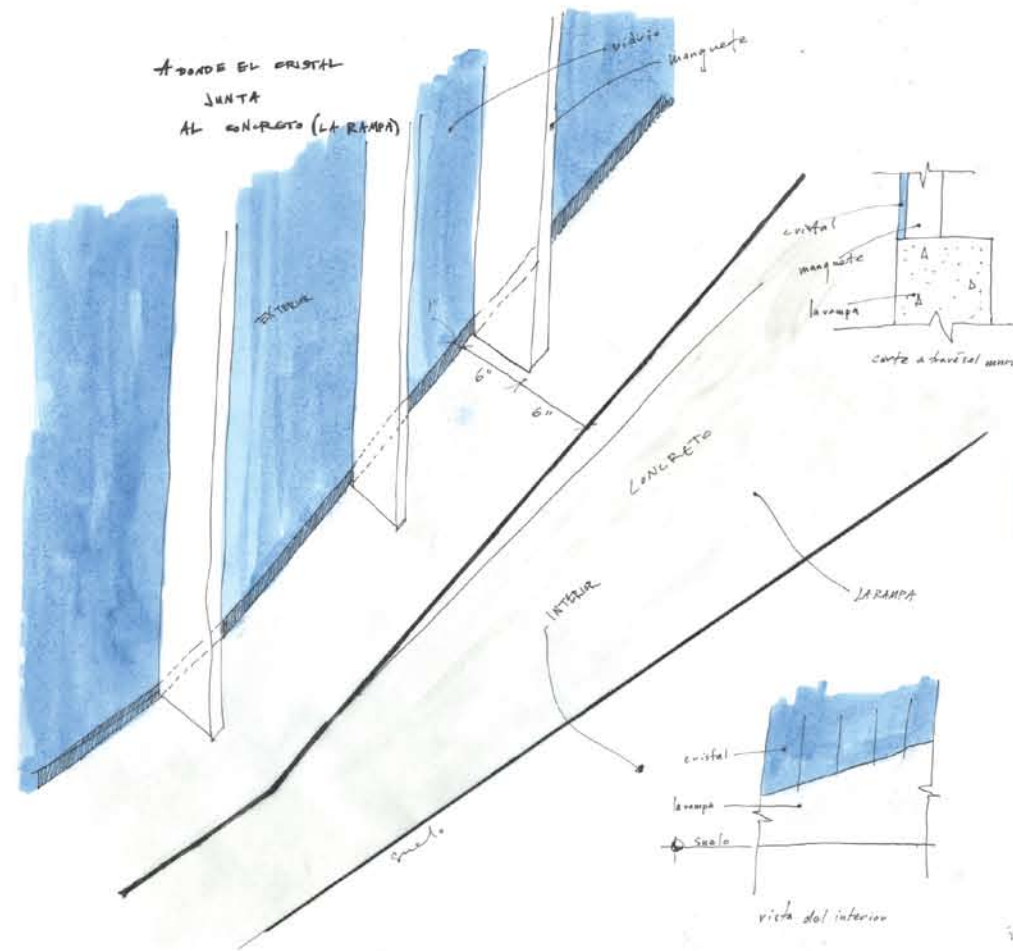
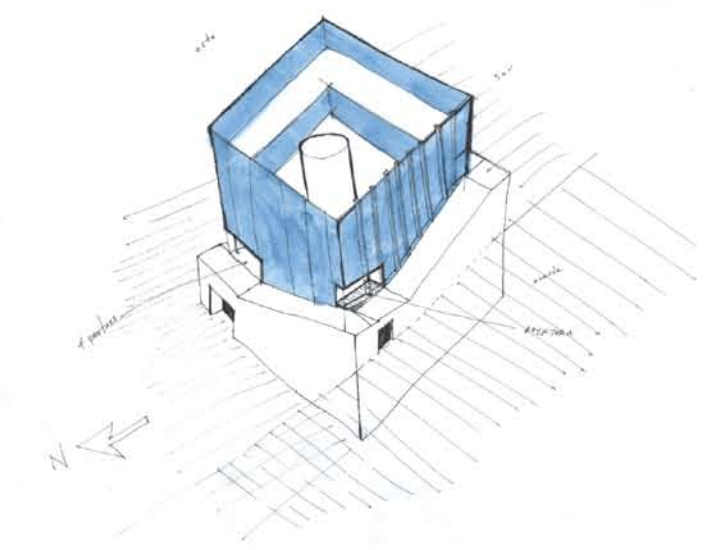


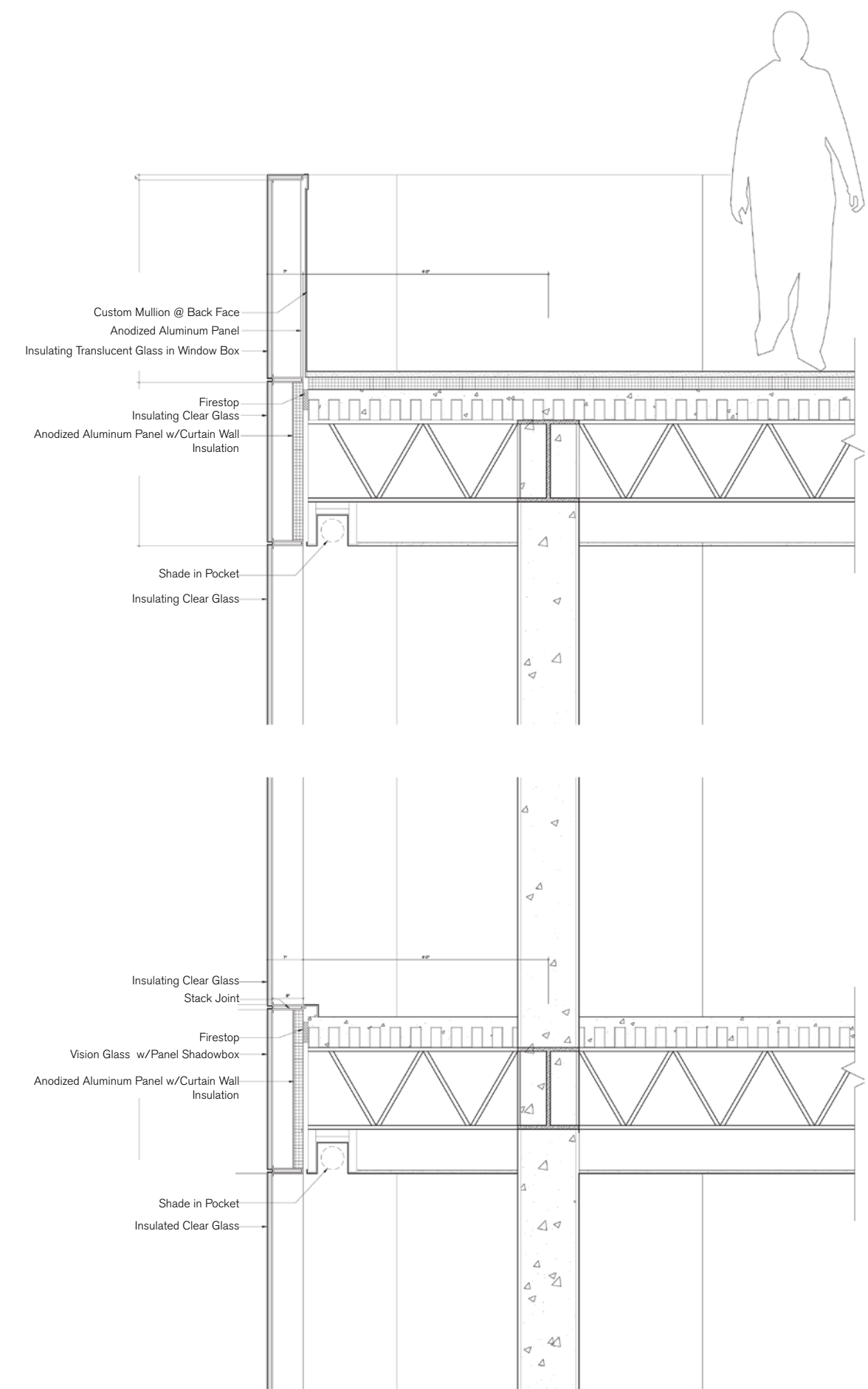
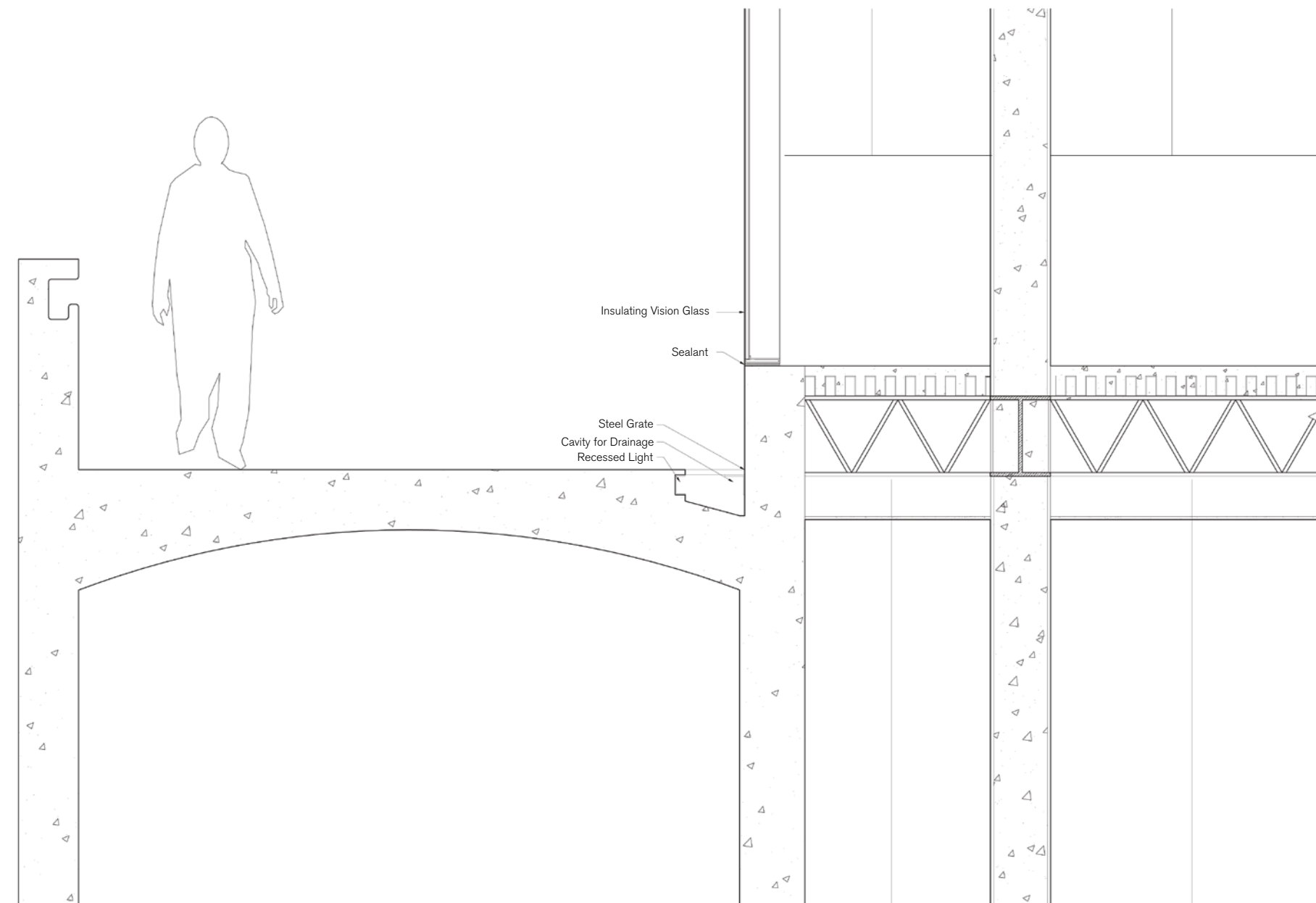
Roof Terrace Level Plan

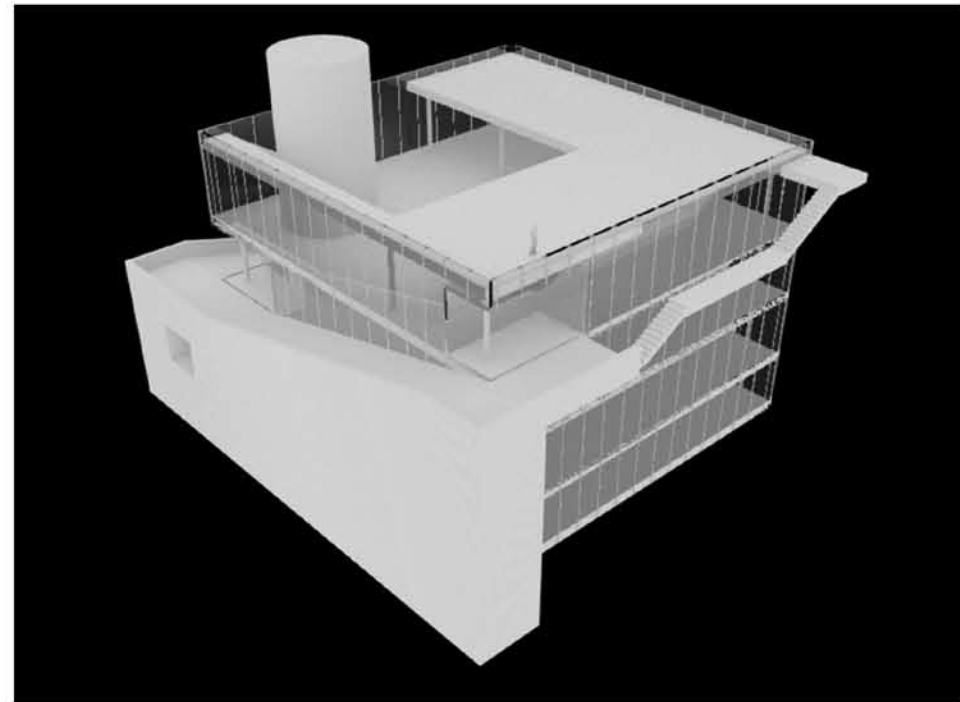




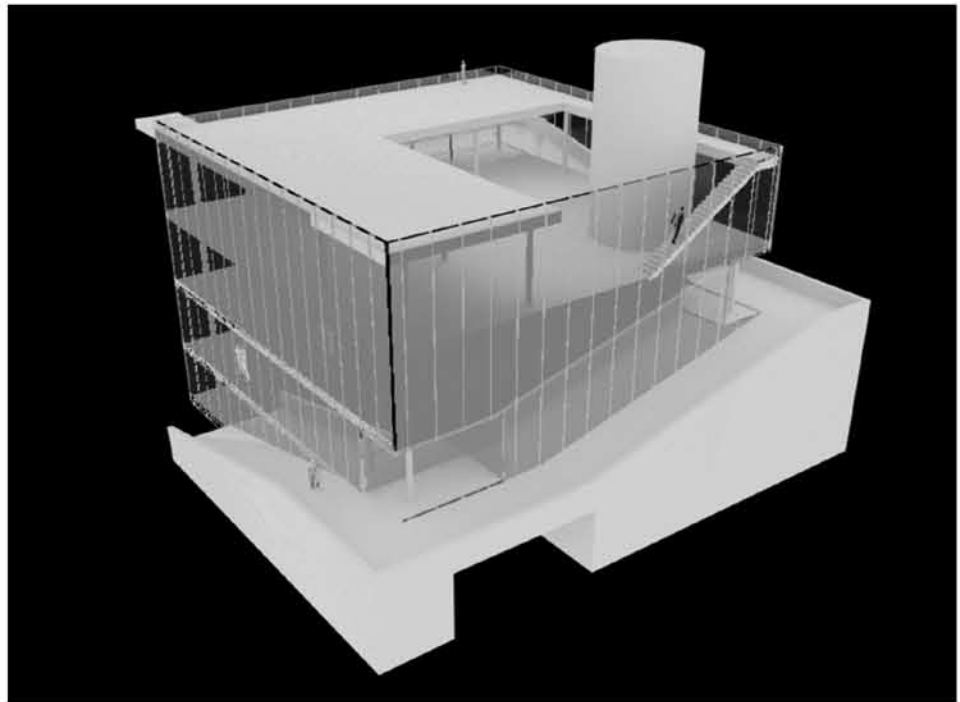




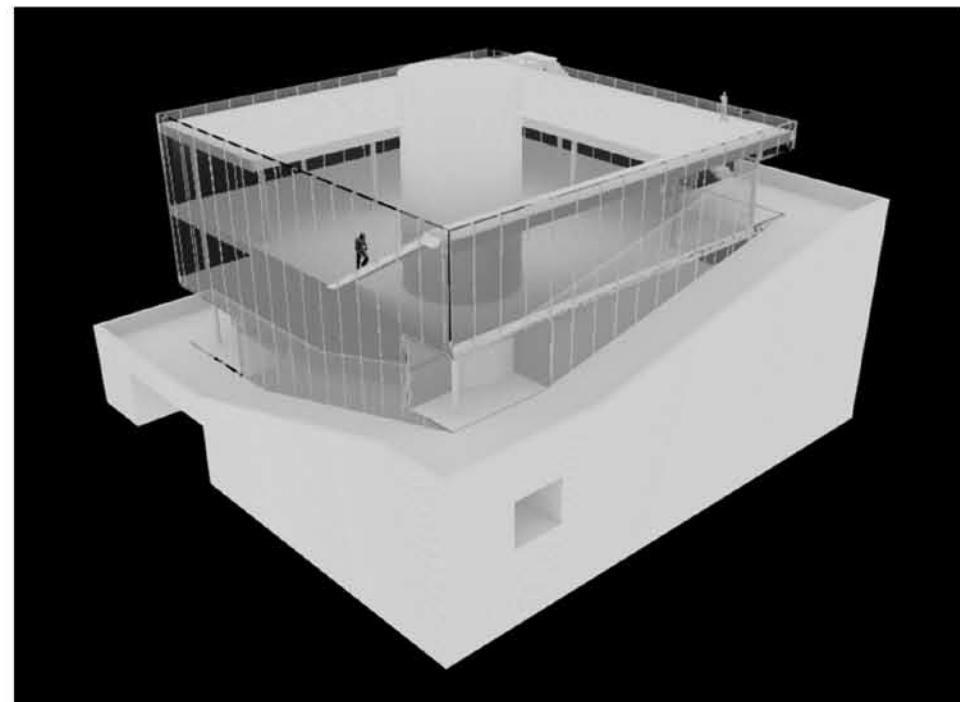




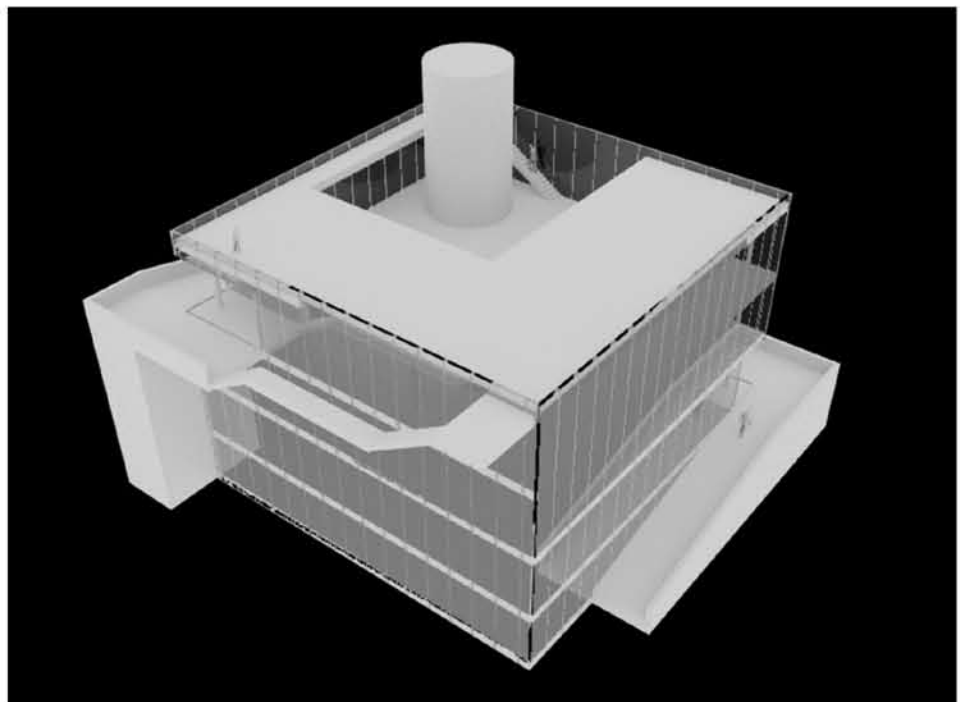
View of Southwest Corner



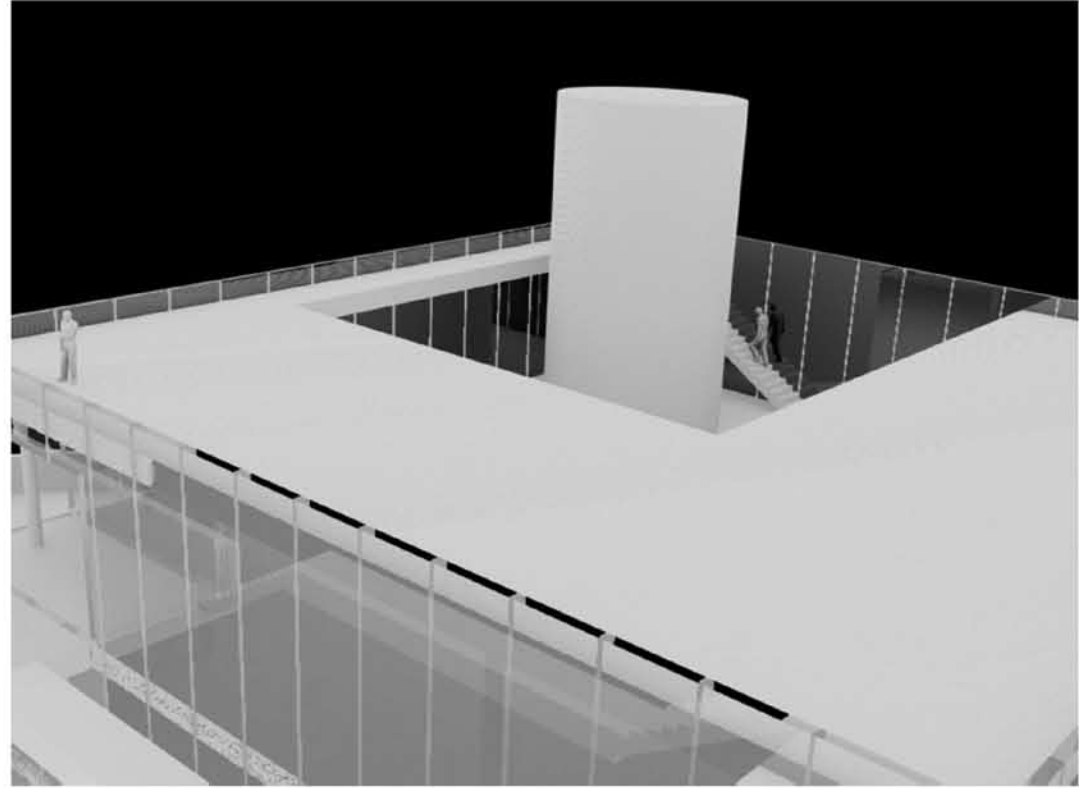
View of Northwest Corner



View of Northeast Corner



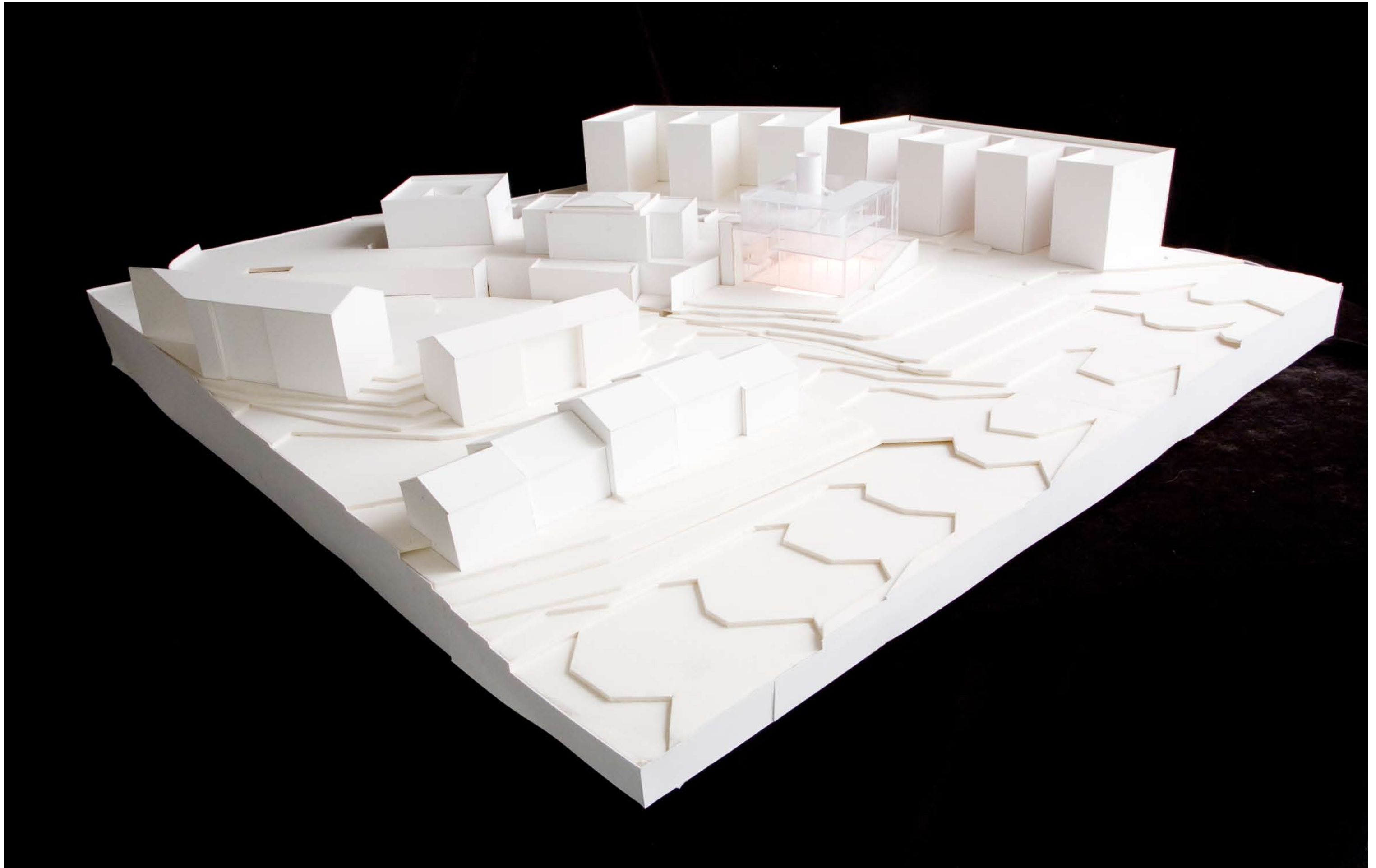
View of Southeast Corner

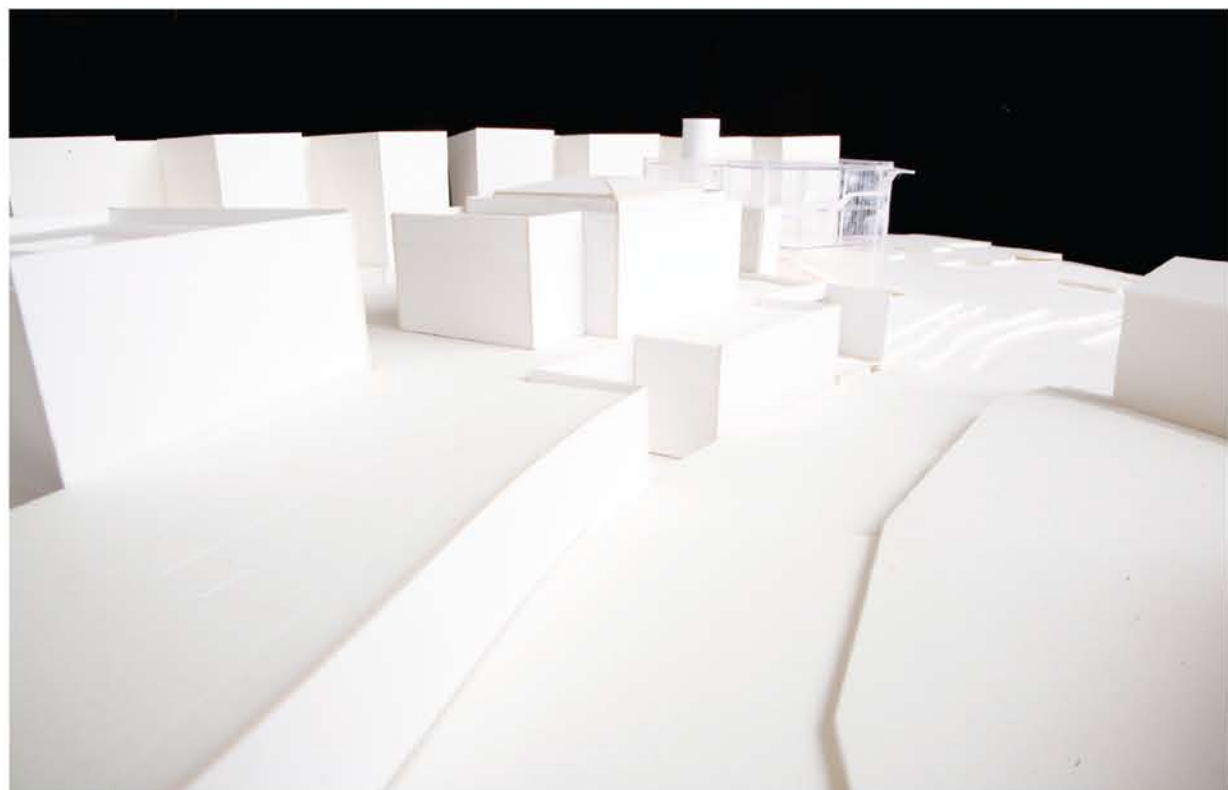
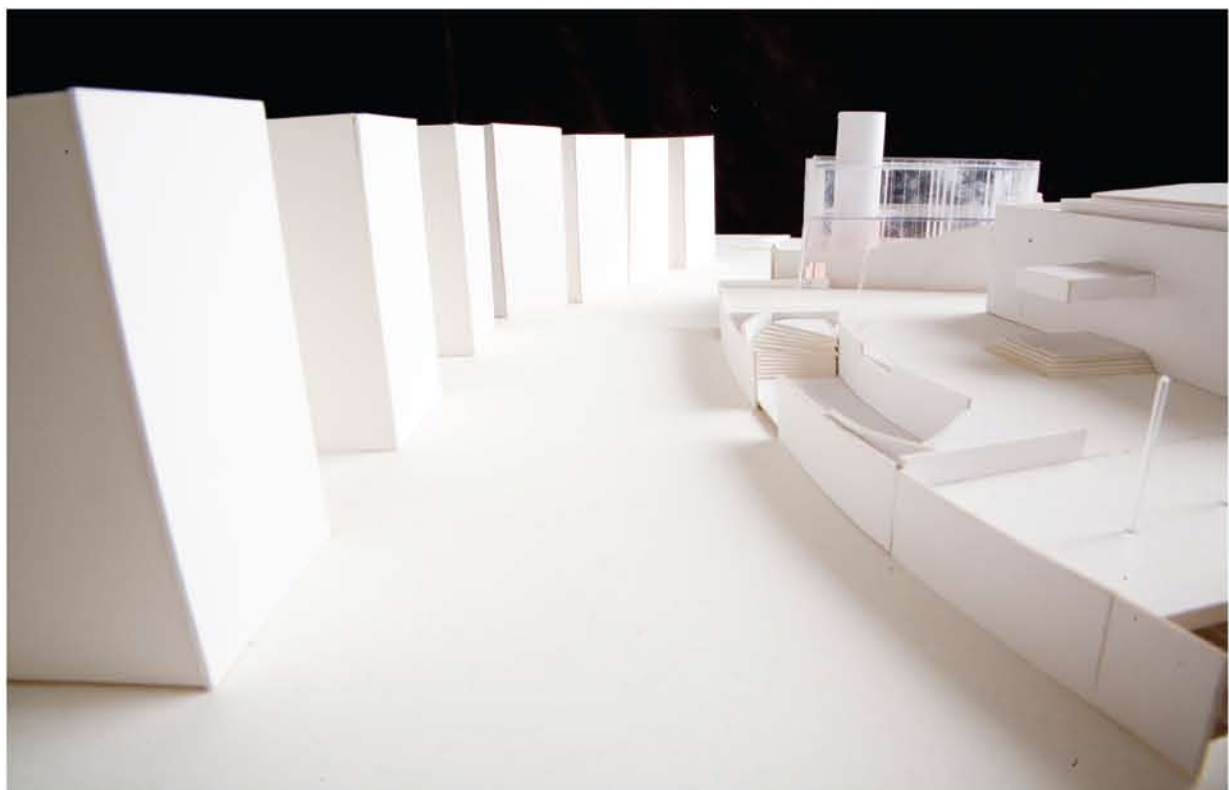


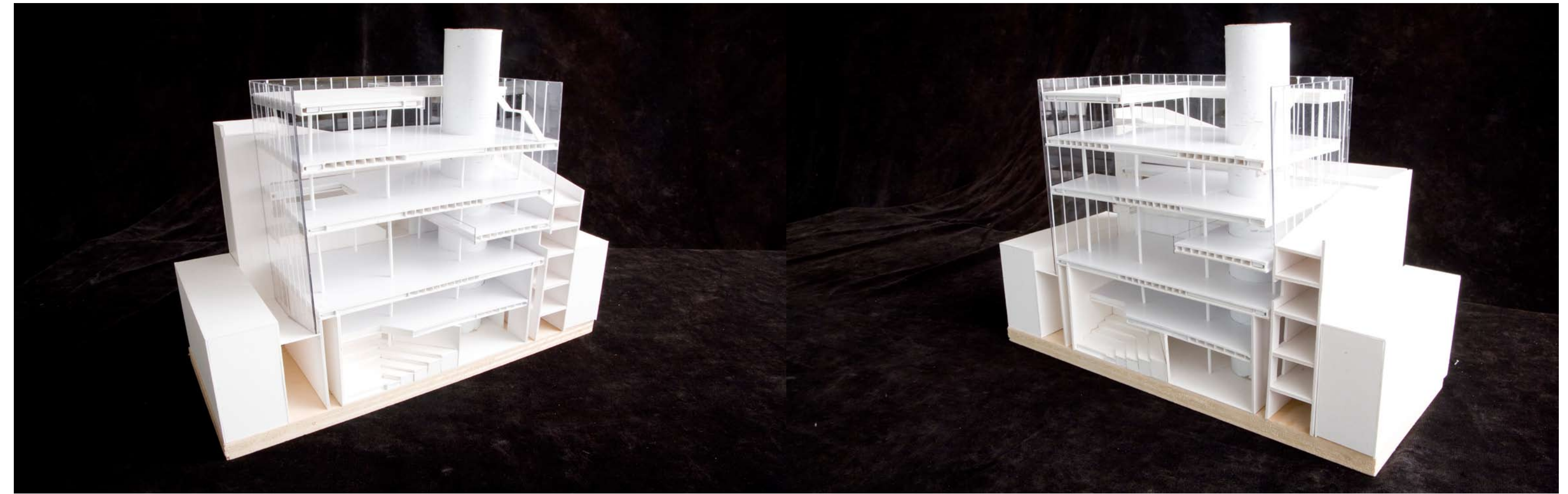
Roof Terrace



Exterior Ramp



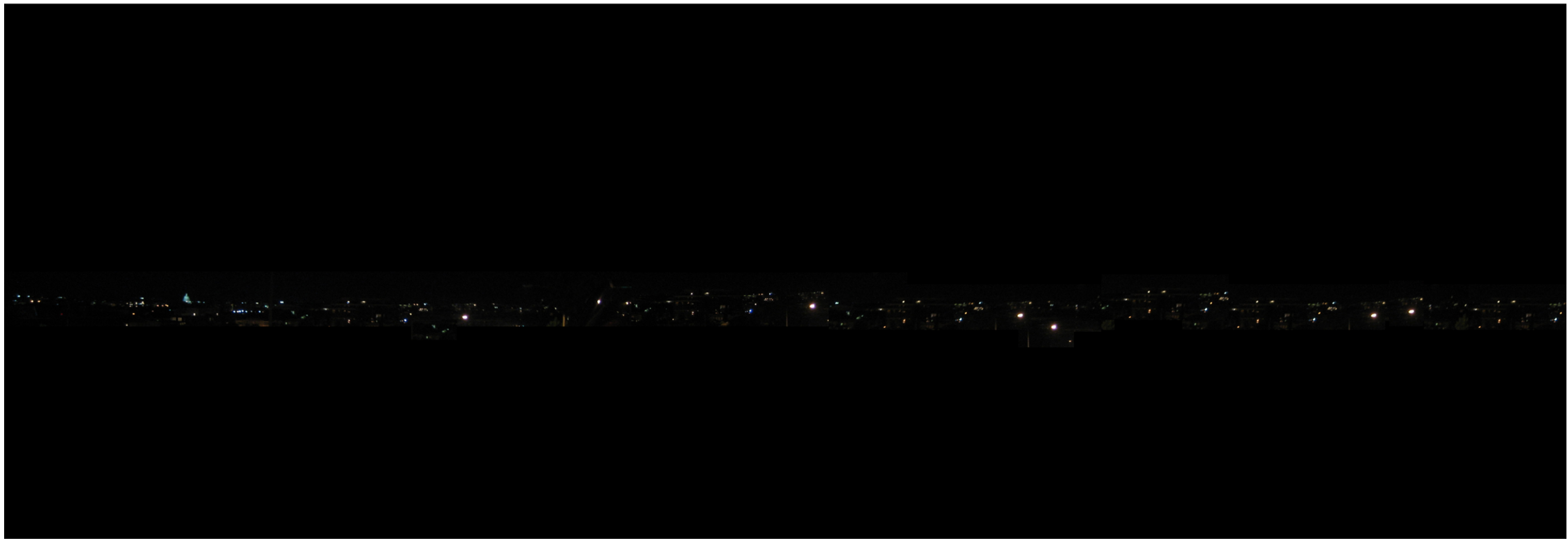




Section looking West 1

Section looking West 1





View of City from Rooftop Terrace

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13	Program Poem Image Type/Source: Digital Collage/Author Pg 17	26	Section looking West A-A' Image Type/Source: Drawing/Author Pg 39		

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