

Ru(m)inations

A Project in San Lorenzo

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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 Master of Architecture.

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As someone once said to me- I can't remember now who it was-it is really remarkable that when you wake up in the morning you nearly always find everything in exactly the same place as the evening before. For when asleep and dreaming you are, apparently at least, in an essentially different state than that of wakefulness; and therefore, as that man truly said, it requires enormous presence of mind or rather quickness of wit, when opening your eyes to seize hold as it were of everything in the room at exactly the same place where you had let it go on the previous evening. That was why, he said, the moment of waking up was the riskiest moment of the day. Once that was well over without deflecting you from your orbit, you could take heart of grace for the rest of the day.

-A passage deleted by Kafka from *The Trial*, 1935

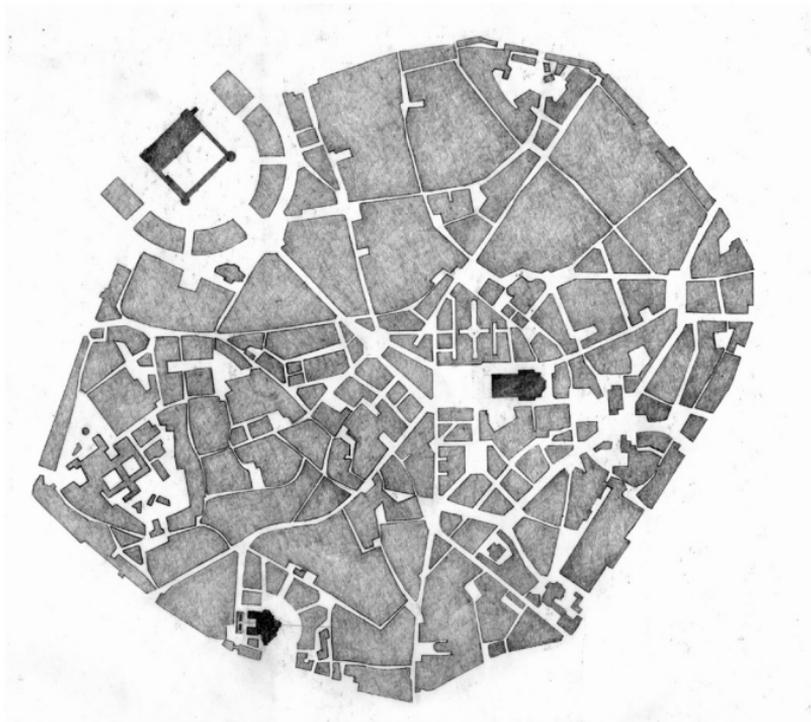


Table of Contents

- I. Abstract
- II. Proposal
- III. Coda
- IV. Bibliography

Abstract

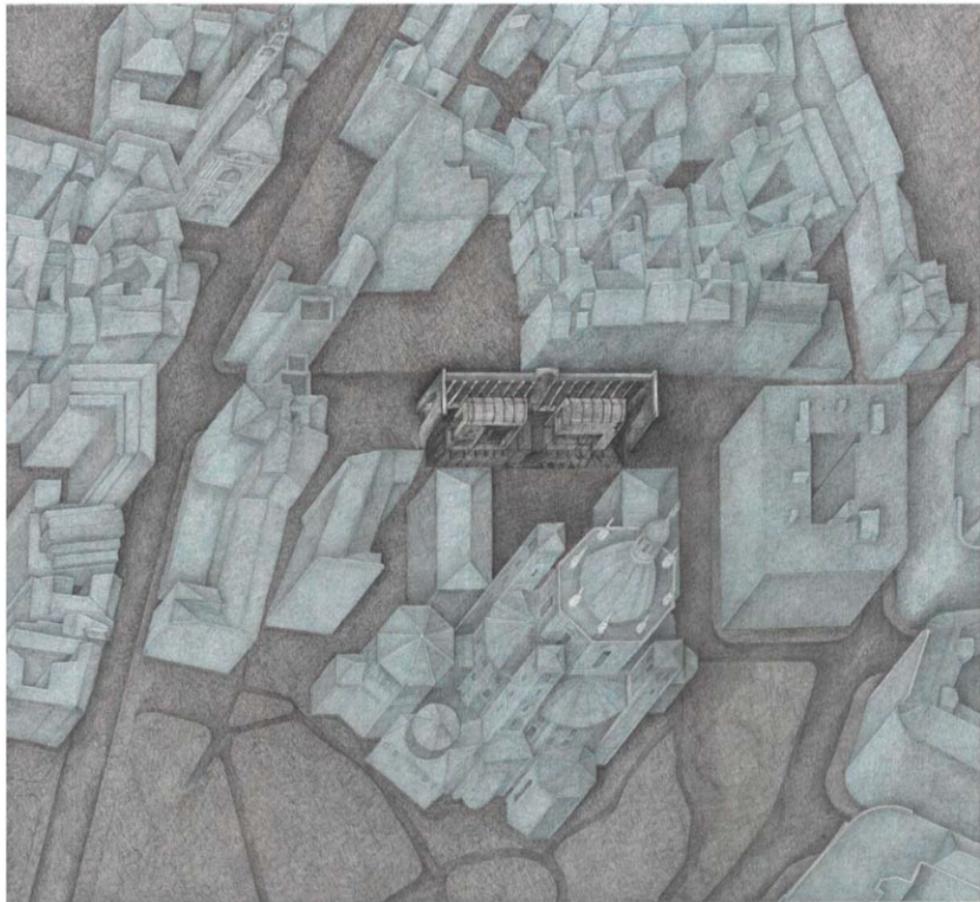
I began with a place, the Roman ruin of San Lorenzo in Milan. This place has been a *provocateur*, not an object or a set of parameters from which I responded. Architectural readings of the city are contaminated with foreshadowings or hints of what is yet to appear. One may read the city as "Janus" who pulsates back and forth leaving traces of past cosmogonies which look forward to being remembered. As a *haruspex* regards the liver in order to auspiciously found a city, distinct bodies of the city may be read as "mirrors of the world at the moment of sacrifice."

Reading the city as a Janus-faced entity suggests a slippery liminal zone between what is often clearly separated as existing and intervening. The act of drawing the site is also an act of remaking the site. The section of the city is a hieroglyph to be deciphered and "completed." This "completion" is necessary but not absolute.

The principle act of intervention was to replace the stone floor with a six meter deep water basin. This basin is not only a reference to the old navigli(the skein of canals which once permeated Milan), but more importantly a visceral imagining of water, deep water in this particular place



Nested within the basin are two buildings elevated on pilings.

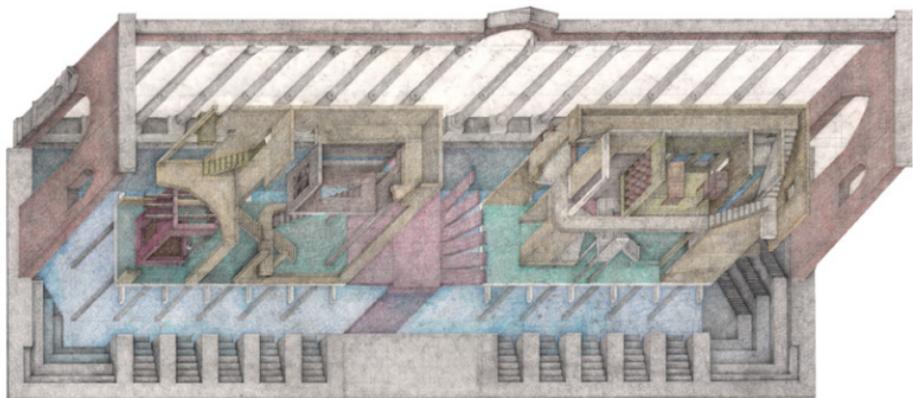


One houses a cafe and an archive for the church of San Lorenzo.

The other houses a playground and a priests' meeting room.



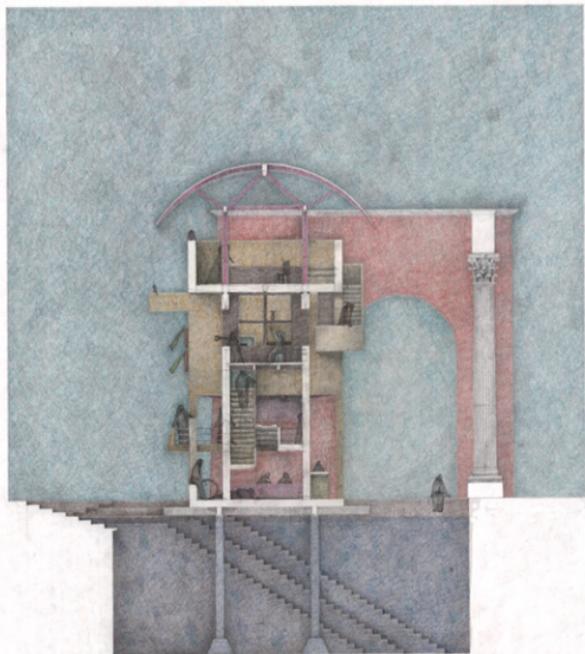
Passing under the central arch and allowing entry to either of the two buildings is a drawbridge.



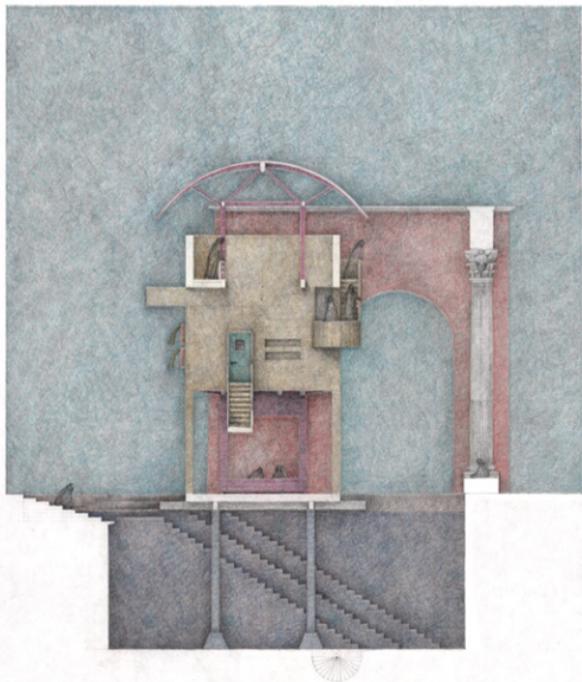
city section facing south



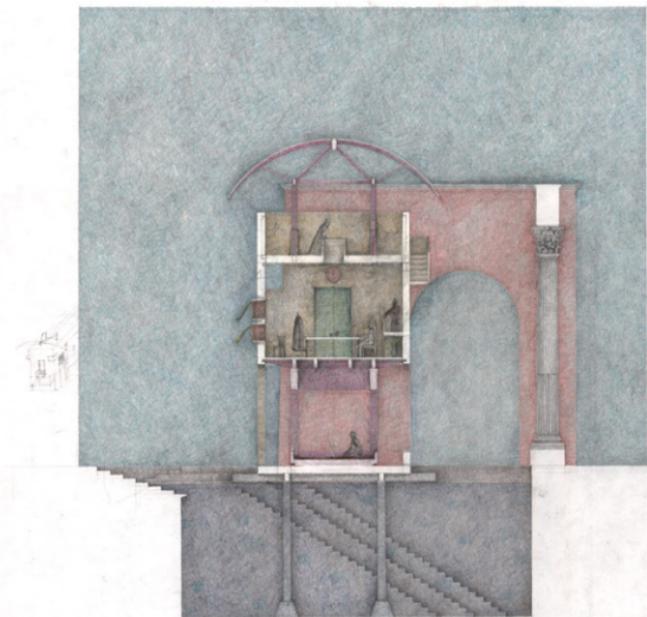
section through playhouse



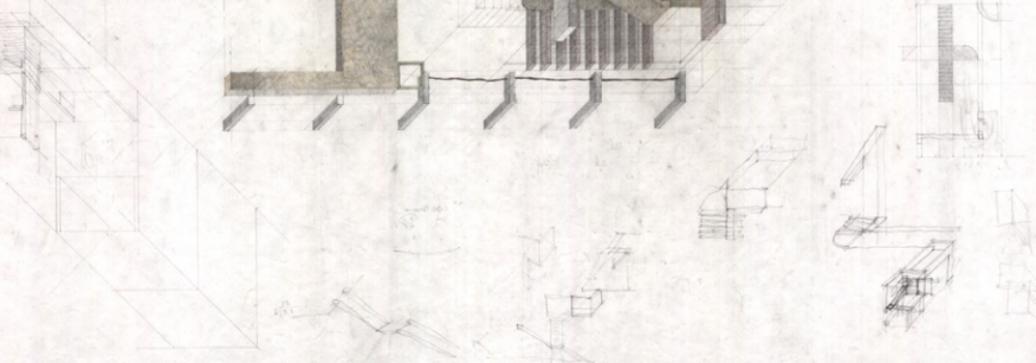
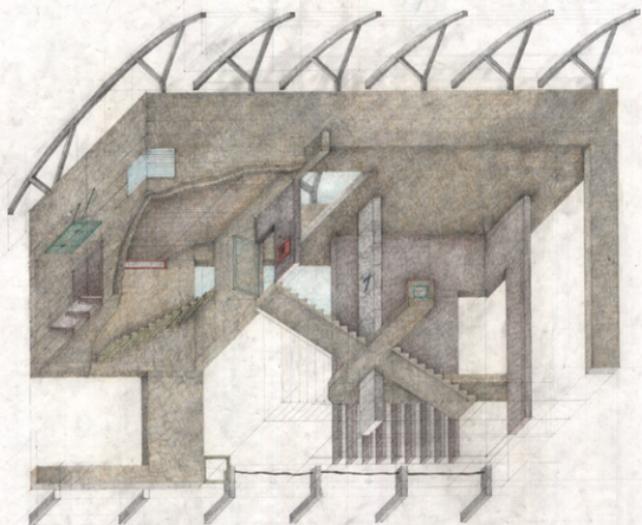
section through stair to priests' meeting room



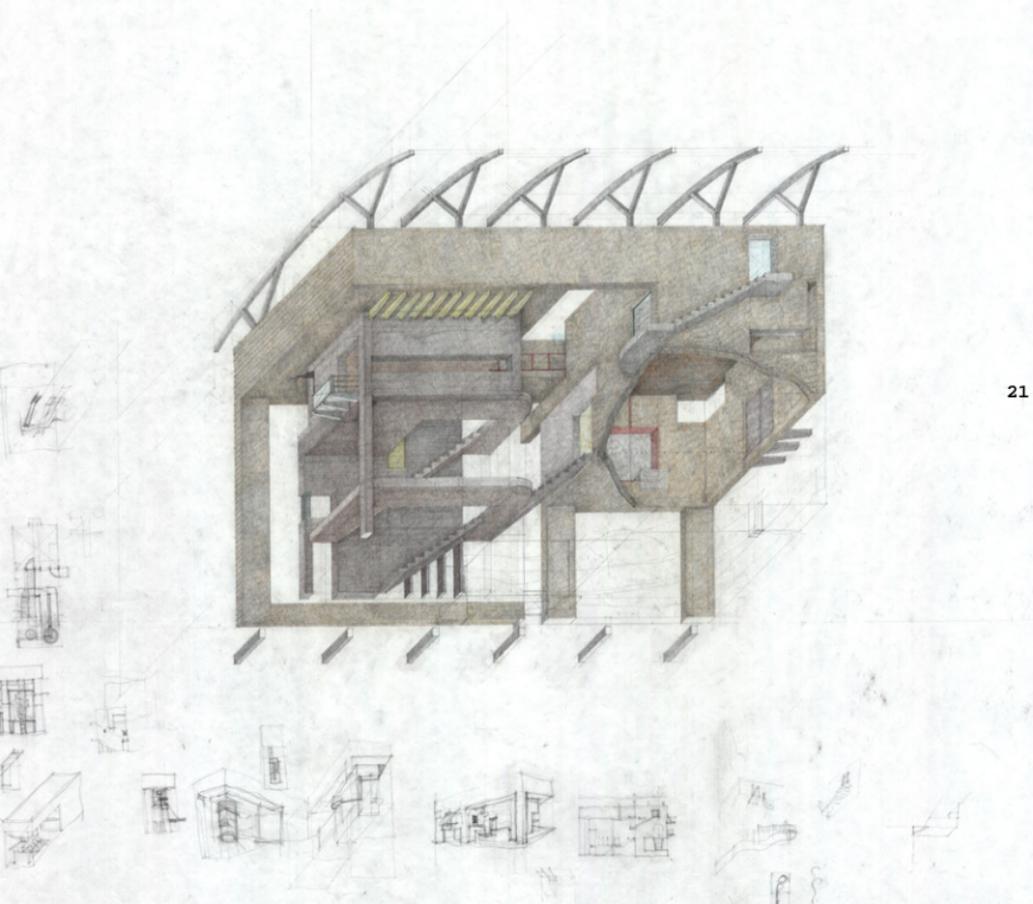
section through priests' room



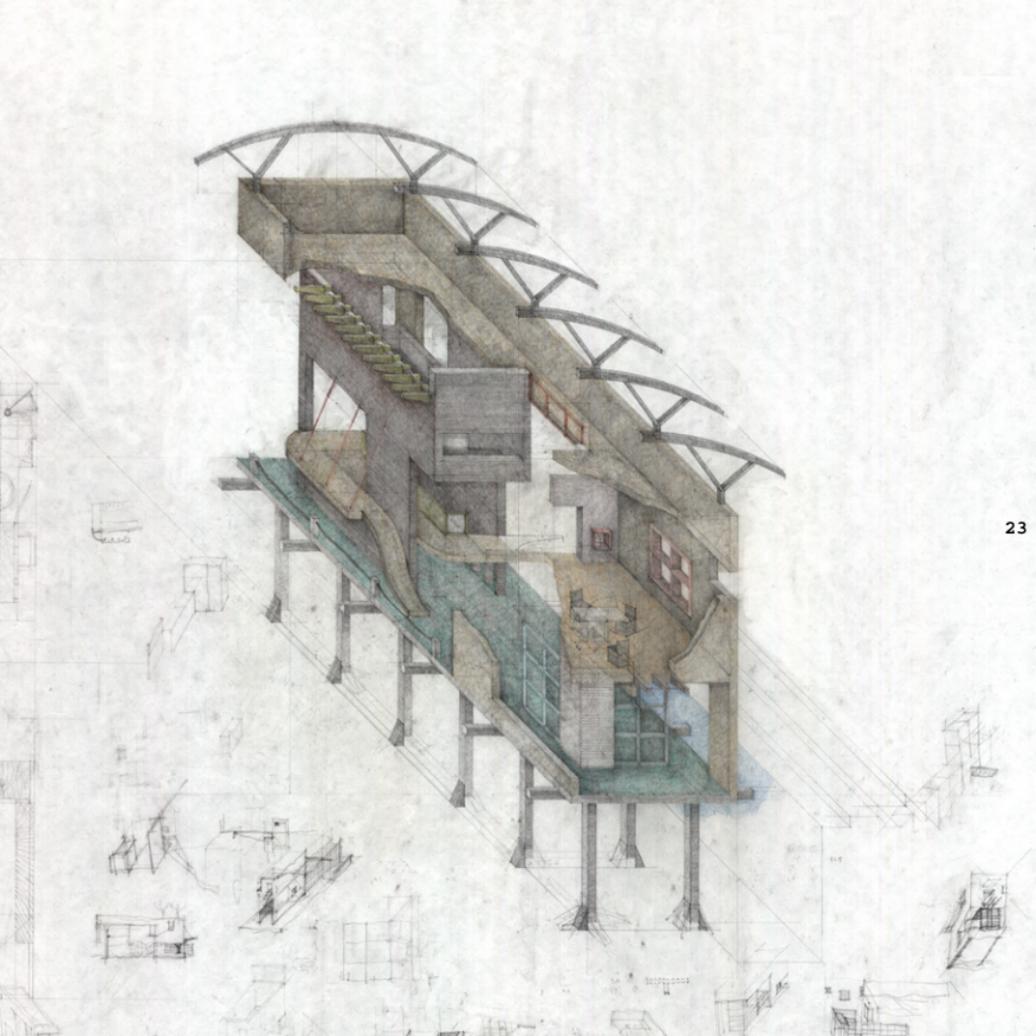
drawing cutting through floor of priests'
meeting room showing stair to roof garden



The playhouse supports the roof garden and is made of wood.



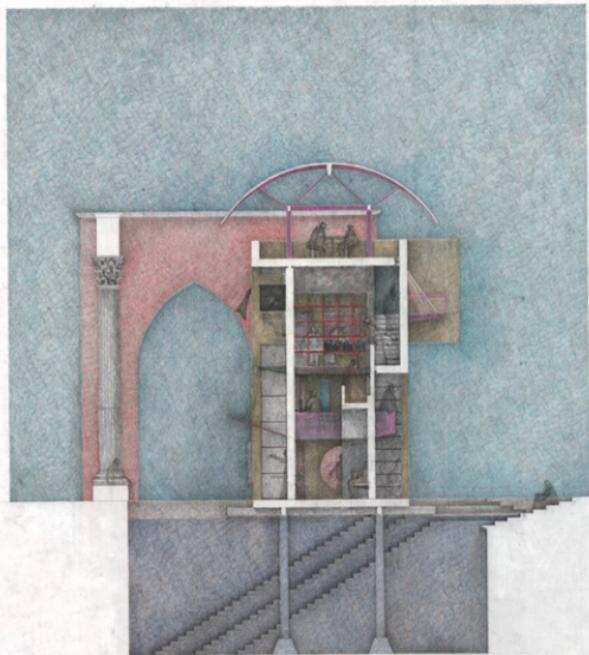
drawing showing suspended slide and priests' table

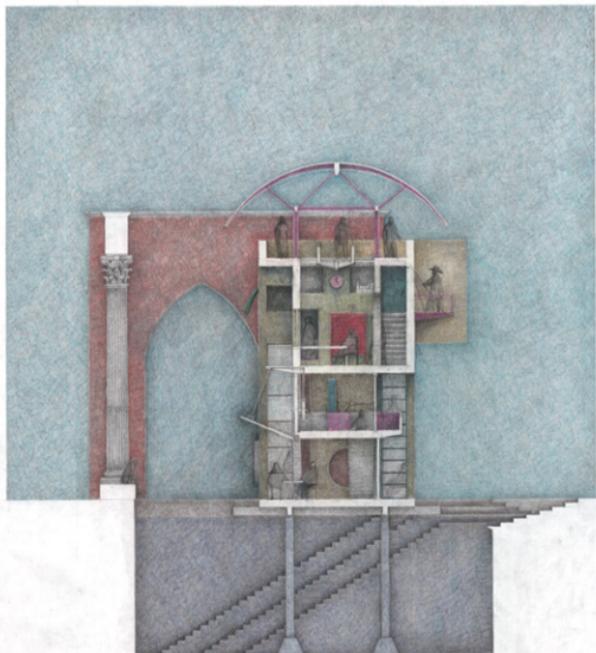


city section facing north

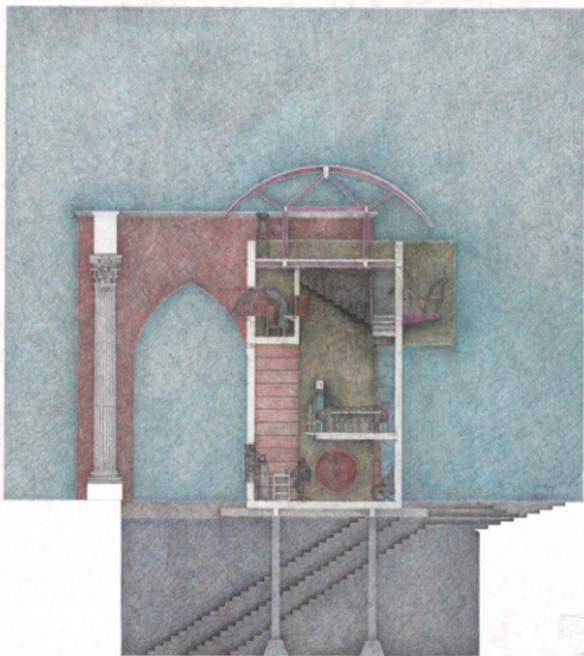


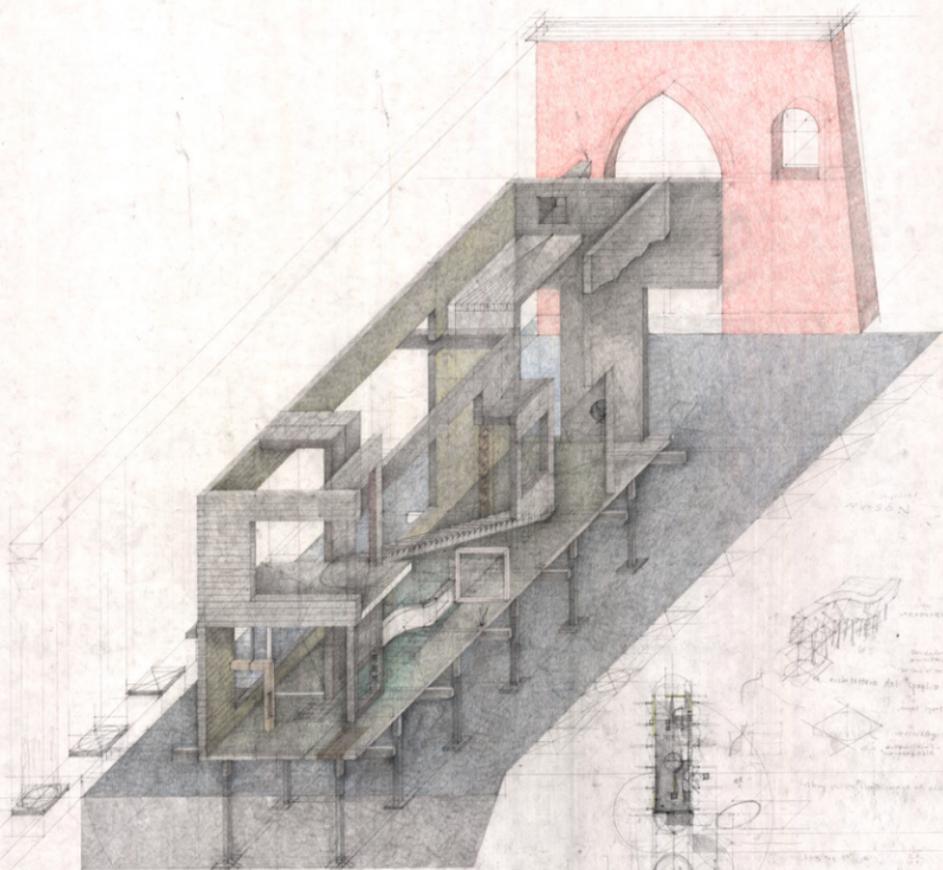
section through corridor to archive



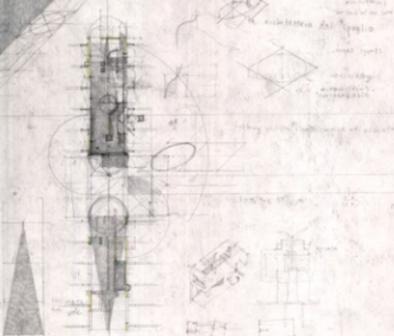


section through archive keeper's chamber

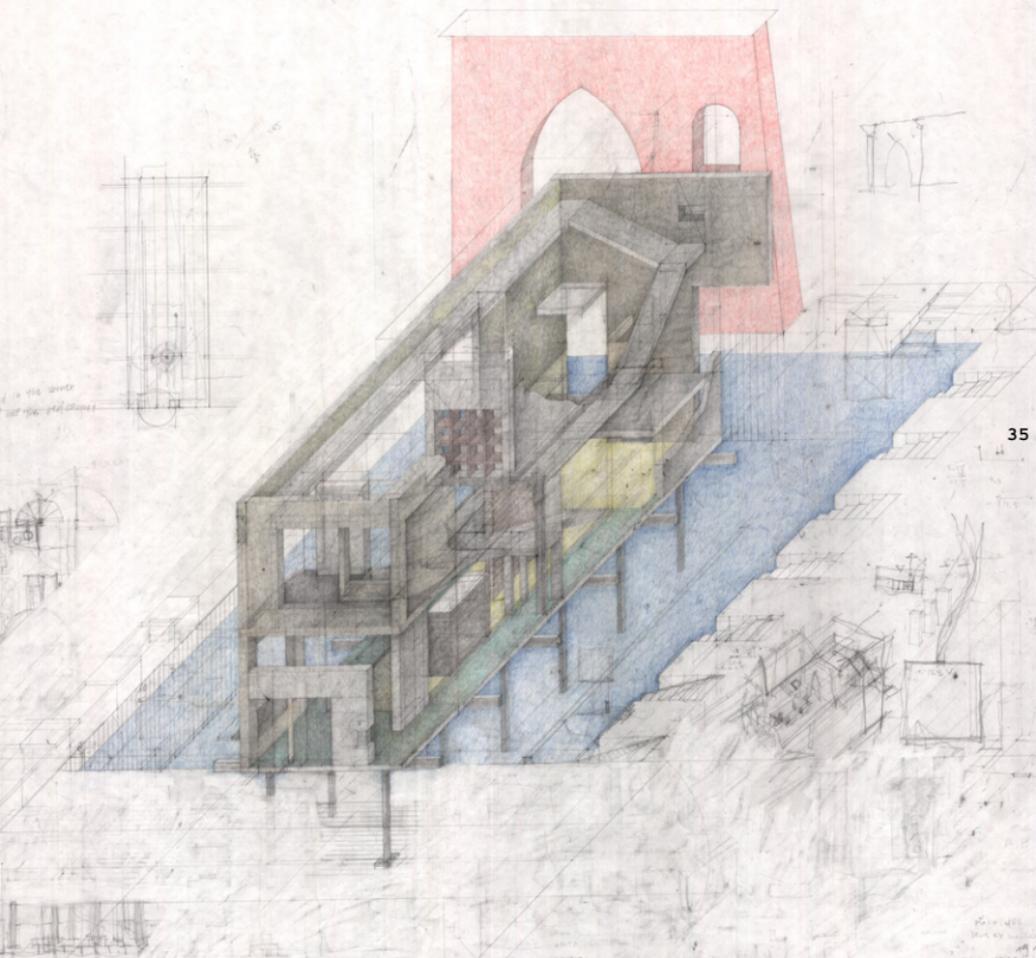




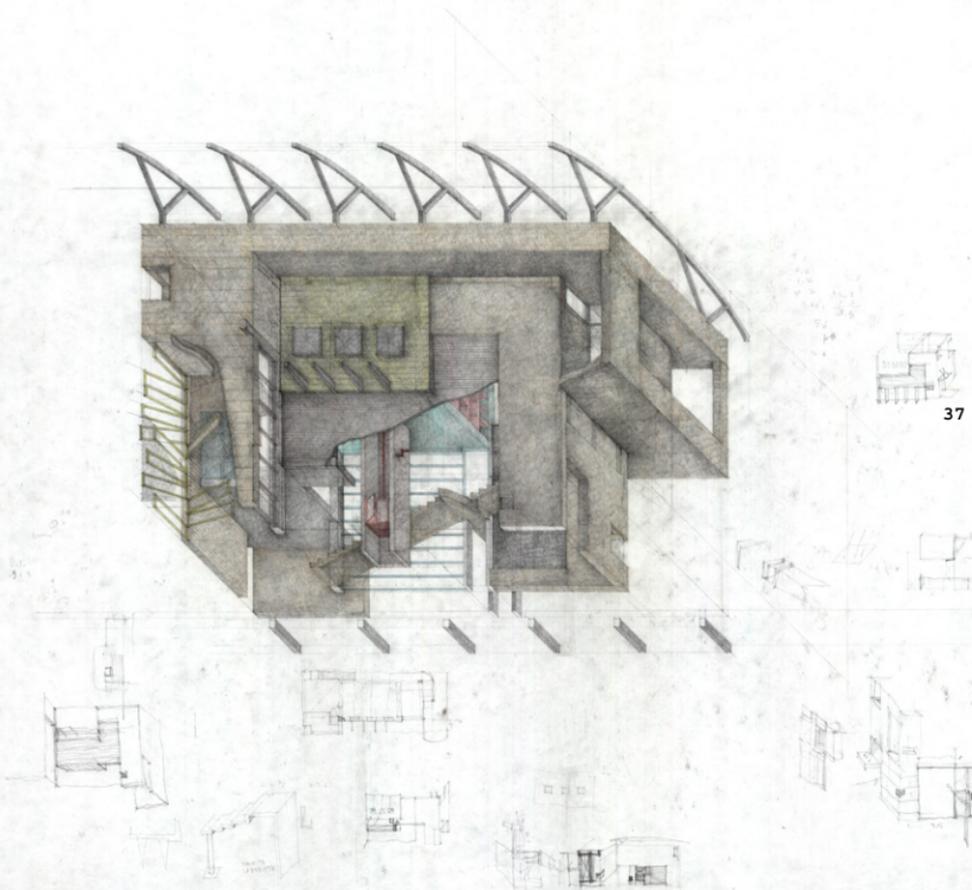
SECTION
PLAN
SECTION DEL TEMPIO
PLAN DEL TEMPIO



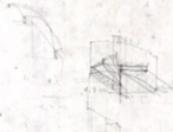
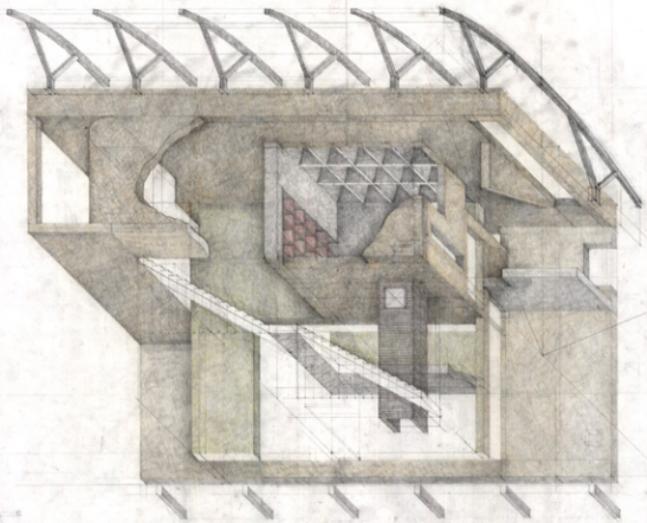
The archive is nested in the building.



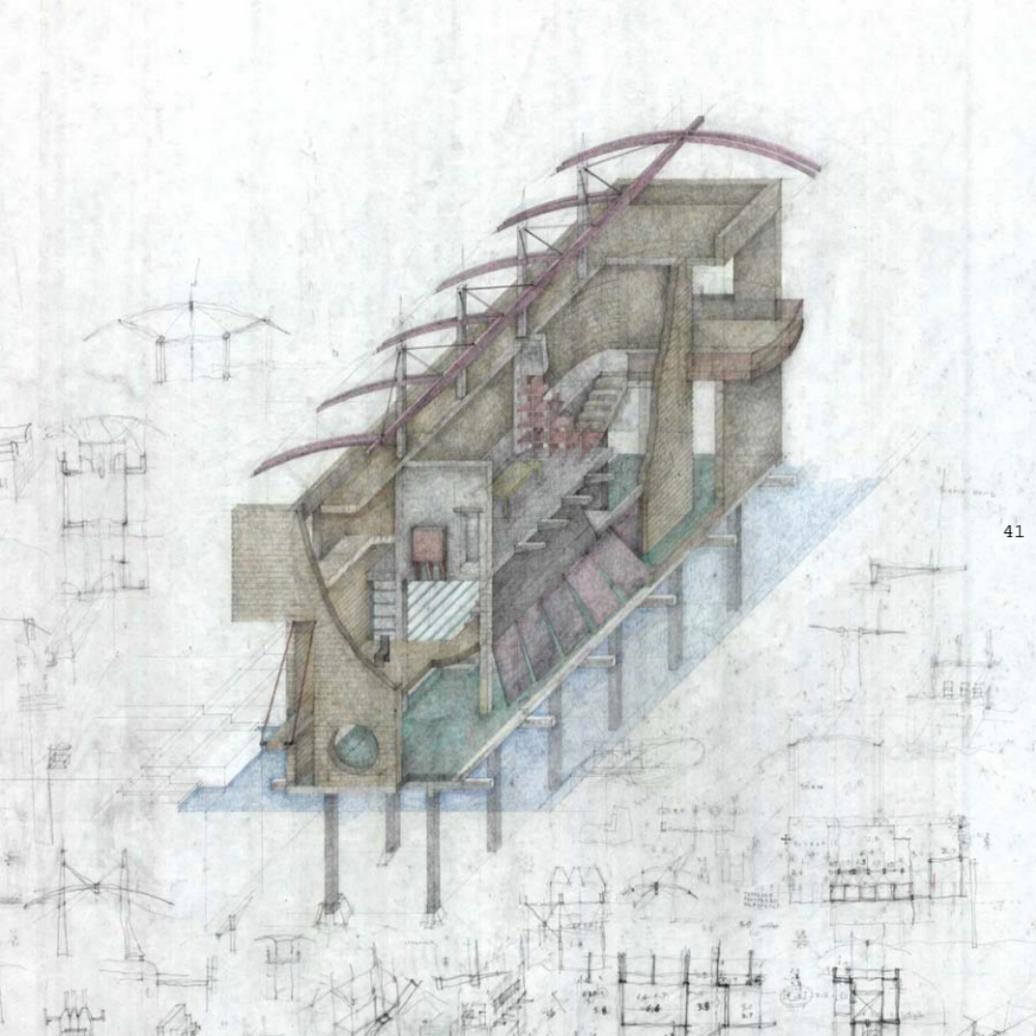
The dumbwaiter allows for convenient delivery to the upper level of the cafe.



The archive keeper's chamber is one meter higher than the archive and is connected by a spiral stair that is not shown in this drawing.



The flatfile protrudes from the archive and
is visible from the upper level of the cafe.



Coda

42

Finzione! Realta! Andate al diavolo tutti quanti! Luce! Luce! Luce!

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Vita

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1994

Bachelor of Architecture, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

1995

Studies abroad in Ticino, Switzerland.

1996

Italian Studies at Michelangelo Istituto di Lingua e Cultura Italiana, Florence.

1997

Internship in Chestnutt and Niess Architekten, Berlin.

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