

Experiencing Inebriation in Place

Plans, Elevations, Sections, Models,
and Perspectives of a
Brewery and Bar for
Old Town Alexandria

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of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State
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Industrial Area on the Strand in Old Town, Alexandria

Experiencing Inebriation in Place

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Abstract

Sitting in a pub in Dublin, I tried to understand the architectural qualities of my so-called watering hole. The stylish wood and spatial divisions were pleasant but were not the full reasons behind why I loved being apart of the place.

I started to think why architecture is not valued through our sensibilities? Or a better question, how can architecture be valued through our sensibilities?

Our emotions are developed through our experiences. The movement through the pub, my actions within the space, and the senses being formed from my surroundings helped my understanding of why I enjoyed the pub. There was a function, a process, and an interpretation of senses.

Our senses are developed from our immediate environments. We know ourselves in relation to other things. We know how certain things make us feel. Things have histories and we evaluate these things in relation to our own timeline. When these relationships and feelings meet we understand our surroundings through placement. Here is where we dwell in a place. Place is the building, within the building, and around the building. Place and dwelling are more cognitive than physically inhabiting within a location.

Our understanding of how we love a building starts with place.

How do you design a place?

How do things and people belong to these places?

Can a bar and brewery become one of these things on the banks of the Potomac in Old Town Alexandria? And, will it make a new and better place? Will it be loved?



Crowded O'Neil's, Dublin. Drawn without People
Crowded Whisky's, Edinburg. Drawn with People
Ink

CHEERS TO THE FOLLOWING

First and foremost, special thanks to the Reynolds family where their support helped me to find my place in the world.

Amanda Mich and the Mich family for providing meals and encouragement during my late nights.

My committee for bearing with me. The Taj Manhal and Mathew Shuba for listening to my rants. Luke W Sterns, Abbott Adesso and Taylor Rogers for dealing with me in Europe. The Argentinian roommates + one silly Israeli.

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The bartenders @ Murphys, Chadwicks, the Cellar, and O'neils.

Yeast, Barley, and Hops for shedding some light on what it means to make magic.

Lastly, to my new and future barstool friends and to anybody who has shared a drink with me over the past couple of years.



Night Time on King Street Alexandria, Virginia

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Note: All images, drawings and models were created by the author.



Time Passing @ Typical Neighborhood Row House on Prince Street Alexandria, Virginia

FINDING PLACE

My decision to design a brewery for Old Town, Alexandria was one of understanding and ideally enhancing my local place. I wanted a building to serve and be served by the local public. This engagement establishes an intrinsic value due to the interpersonal relationship it has with its surrounding dwellers.

Today, modern man tends to be nomadic. We rarely stay in a place long enough to dwell. A lot of houses and neighborhoods are designed to make us feel comfortable but rarely do we feel at home. These structures are temporary and devoid of our personal attachment. We must learn to dwell through our building.

When we build and dwell, we truly care for our environments and surroundings. We are associated as being a part of the surrounds instead of being within. Topophilic notions about our places form when we settle and dwell. We establish it as our place and it establishes us as its citizen.

But how can we design a place? How can we design a place that fits into another place, especially in a district like Old Town, Alexandria? Old Town is known for its colonial style and sense of nostalgia. Contemporary design in Old Town has to support and integrate itself within an already established place. Old Town is viewed as a holistic image first and foremost then we focus on the monuments within it.

The bar and brewery design contain personal feelings and attitudes that have been developed through an immediate contextual relationship with Old Town. I studied traditions, paths, places, monuments, material significance, histories and other entities found in planning. I frequented bars, restaurants, and events in order to socialize with



Time Passing @ Old Town Waterfront Park
Alexandria, Virginia

my surroundings. Only when you understand the existing place can you start to design a new one that belongs and supports the existing. I move for design to be integrative not destructive.

Even the pragmatic functions of the building need to correlate with an existing place. Old Town is full of bars and upscale restaurants that need to be served. A brewery can serve these institutions beer that expresses the local character. Yes, taste is developed through place. When you brew beer you take a taste of the barley and hops of an area and mix it with water of an area. Each beer has a distinct flavor due to its place. Architecture follows these same guidelines.

I brewed to understand process and find the relationship between man and creation. Only experience and time develop senses. Beer reveals what went right and wrong in the process through its taste. Aesthetics of a purely crafted beer, the function of the equipment used to craft the beer, and the style of the beer mingle in order to develop character and feeling.

My process of design worked the same way. Instead of pot full of wort, I used architectural drawings to express my experience and time in Old Town. This is not a formulaic approach to architecture. However, it is a personal understanding of the tools I can use to determine a design for a particular place. The tools of plans, elevations, sections, models, and perspectives helped me find a place but it is not a guarantee for another to find it. Remember architecture is objective and subjective. Also, this is not a sequential approach. Plans did not come first nor are they last. The development of each tool helps to understand other tools therefore there is a collaborative building of a place. This building provides a chance for a designer to dwell within a newly created world. Only when we find value in this world can it have the potential to belong and create places that contribute to our dwelling.



Beer and Place Study
Collage

PLANS

By pointing, we locate. "Here is where I want to be." We understand plans by finding relationships of lines used to identify a moment. Thus far, these moments do not have a mass, just a location. The only measure found in plan is distance from one thing to another. Distance implies path and path is a witness to the passage of time.

Plans tell stories of old rivers cutting away at the waterfront or things that existed or may still exist. Tracing a path tells a short story of a tourist promenading down King St. in Old Town, Alexandria, or a woman out for a stroll in her neighborhood down by the water. There is an inherent narrative in plan.

Good stories come from people who know an area. They vividly describe for us in order to recreate the world they witnessed. To use a plan, you must know the area.

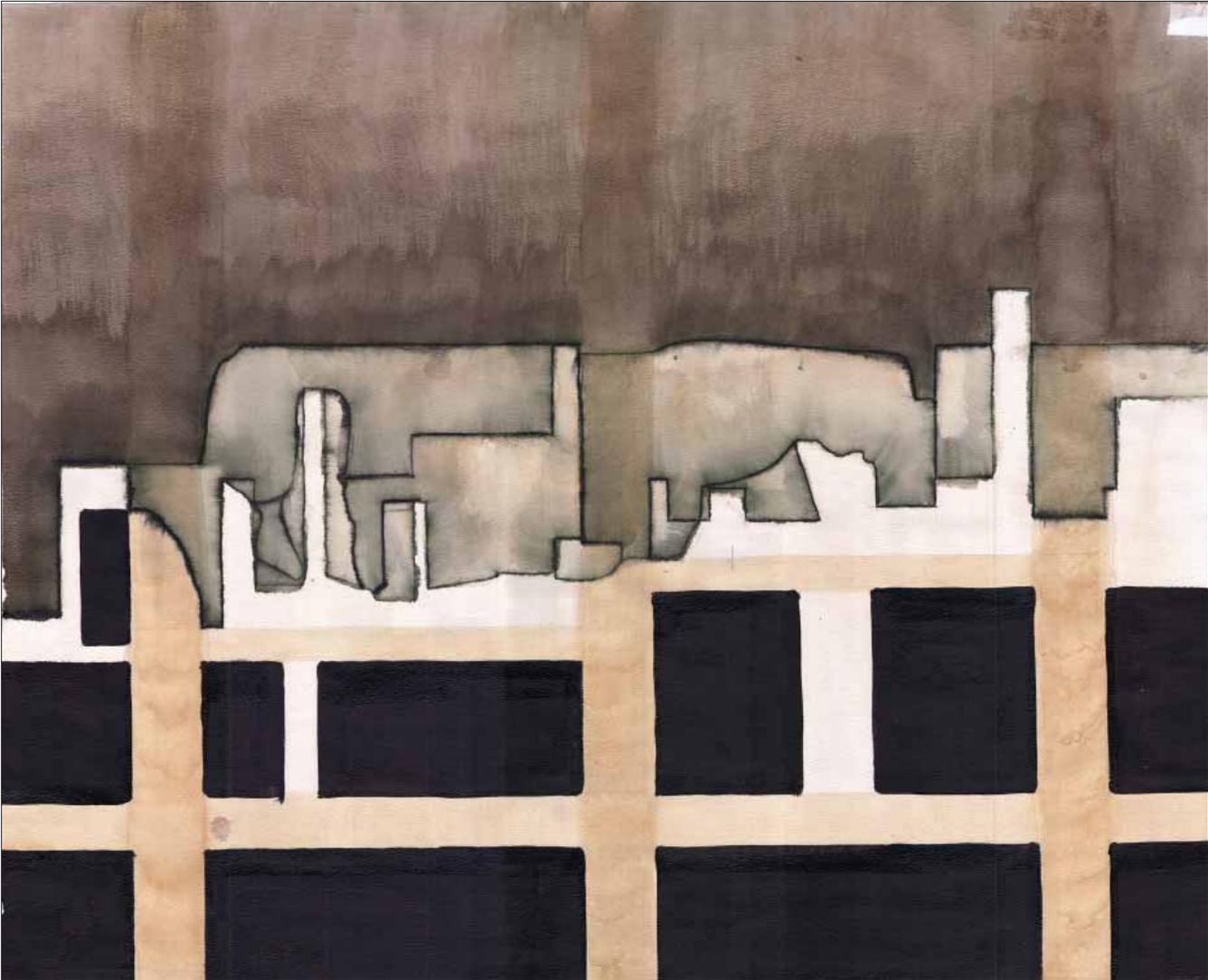
When starting my design I simply started walking. I was engaged with Old Town. I studied habits, paths, processions, districts, and the relationships between them then I translated it into plan. It was only then that I could start to find a place.

My site, or initial place, is located at the end of Prince St, along the Strand and directly on the Potomac. Here I decided to locate a brewery and bar for the citizens of Old Town. The site is located at the intersection of two main paths and in one neighborhood. King St is known as a promenade, but this brewery is not only for casual tourists. The brewery must be a part of a neighborhood. The river trail is interrupted at the site by parking lots and old warehouses that have fallen into disrepair. This intersection is perfect for a civic structure.

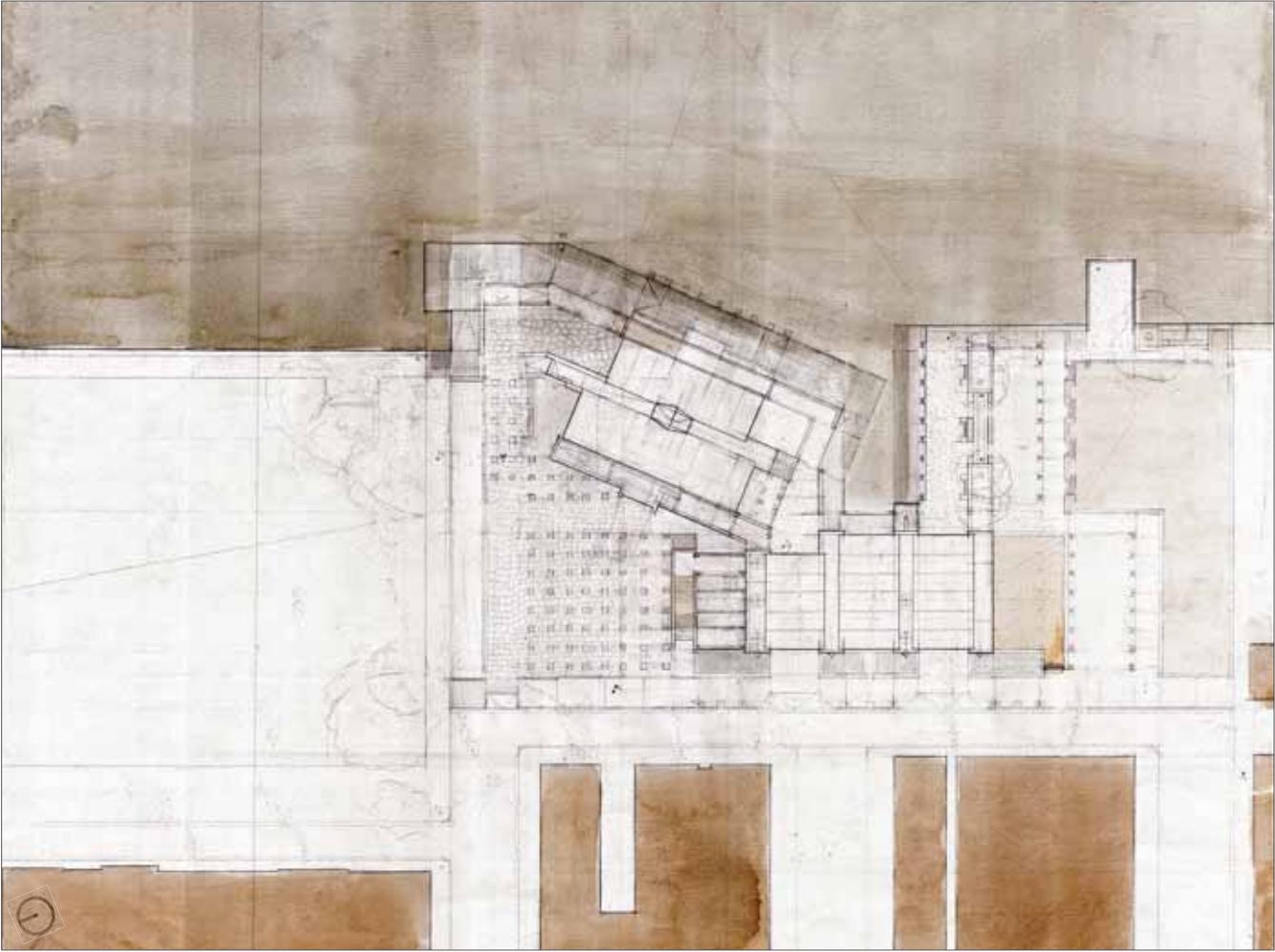


Old Town Alexandria Plan and Path
Pencil

Brewery and Bar Site Between Prince St and Duke St
on the Strand in Old Town Alexandria, Va

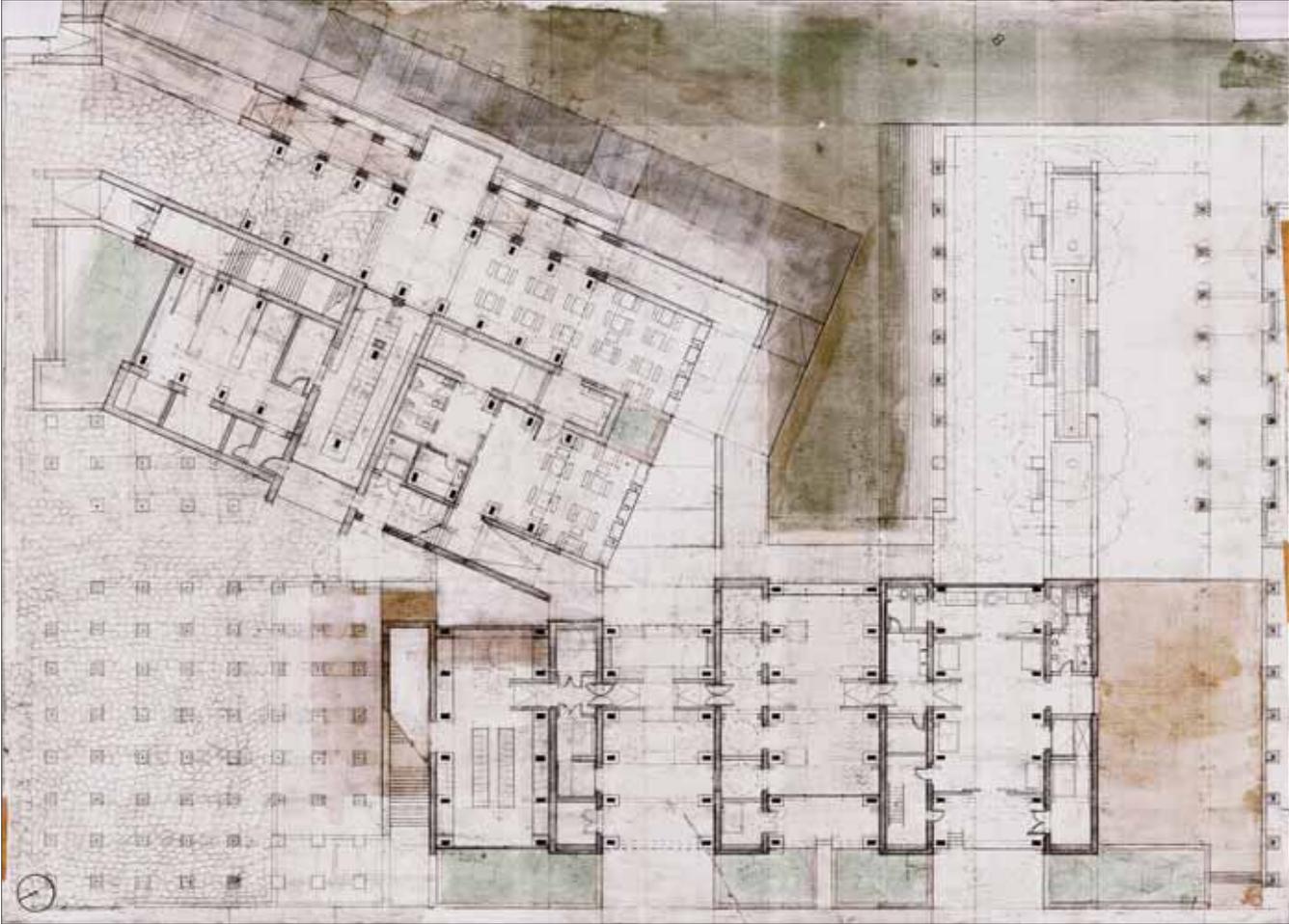


Site Plan Study of Potomac Over 150 years
Beercolor



30'

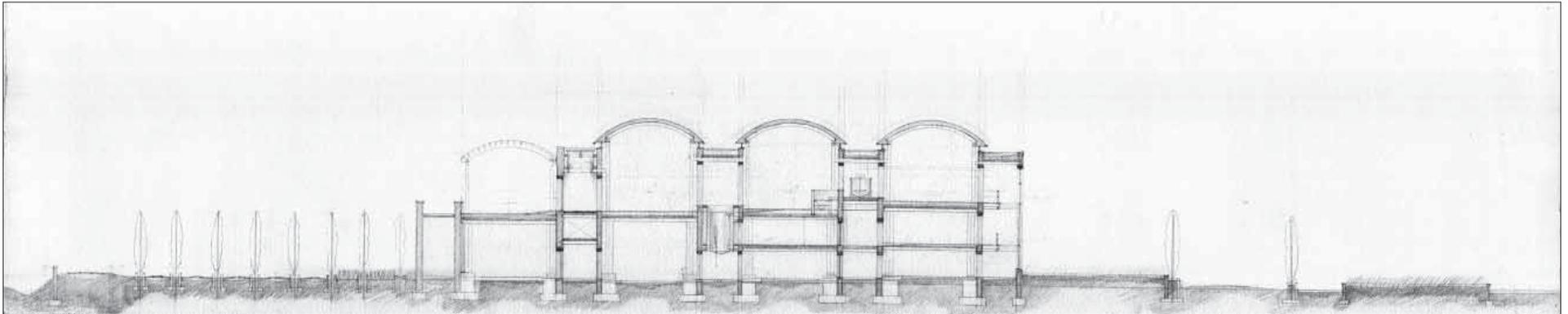
Neighborhood Plan of Brewery, Bar, and Beer Garden
Beercolor/Pencil



30'

Site and Ground Plan
Beercolor/Pencil

ELEVATIONS/SECTIONS



Section Through Brewery
Pencil

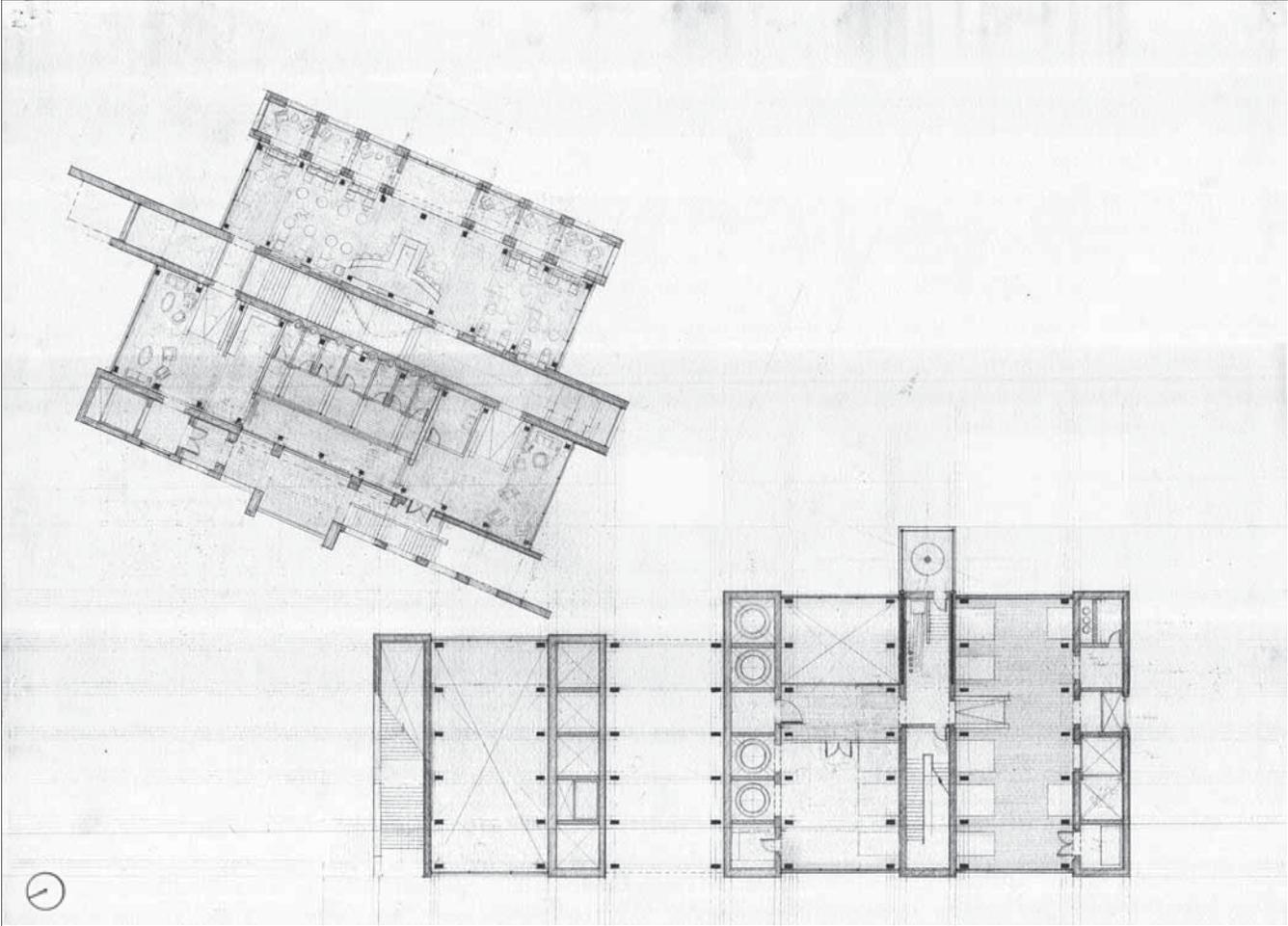
Elevations and sections use the moments found in plan to pronounce objects in a field of objects. These objects have a height, width, and depth. Each drawing reveals a fragment of dimension. Only when plan, elevation, and section are studied together do they imply a three dimensional sense of space.

Our bodies are capable of knowing three dimensions. Architectural drawings break down these dimensions into separate parts for us to focus and study them individually. To alter one has direct influences on another. There must be a harmony between each drawing or one of the three will show the flaw. A prime example of harmony between the three drawings is found in materiality

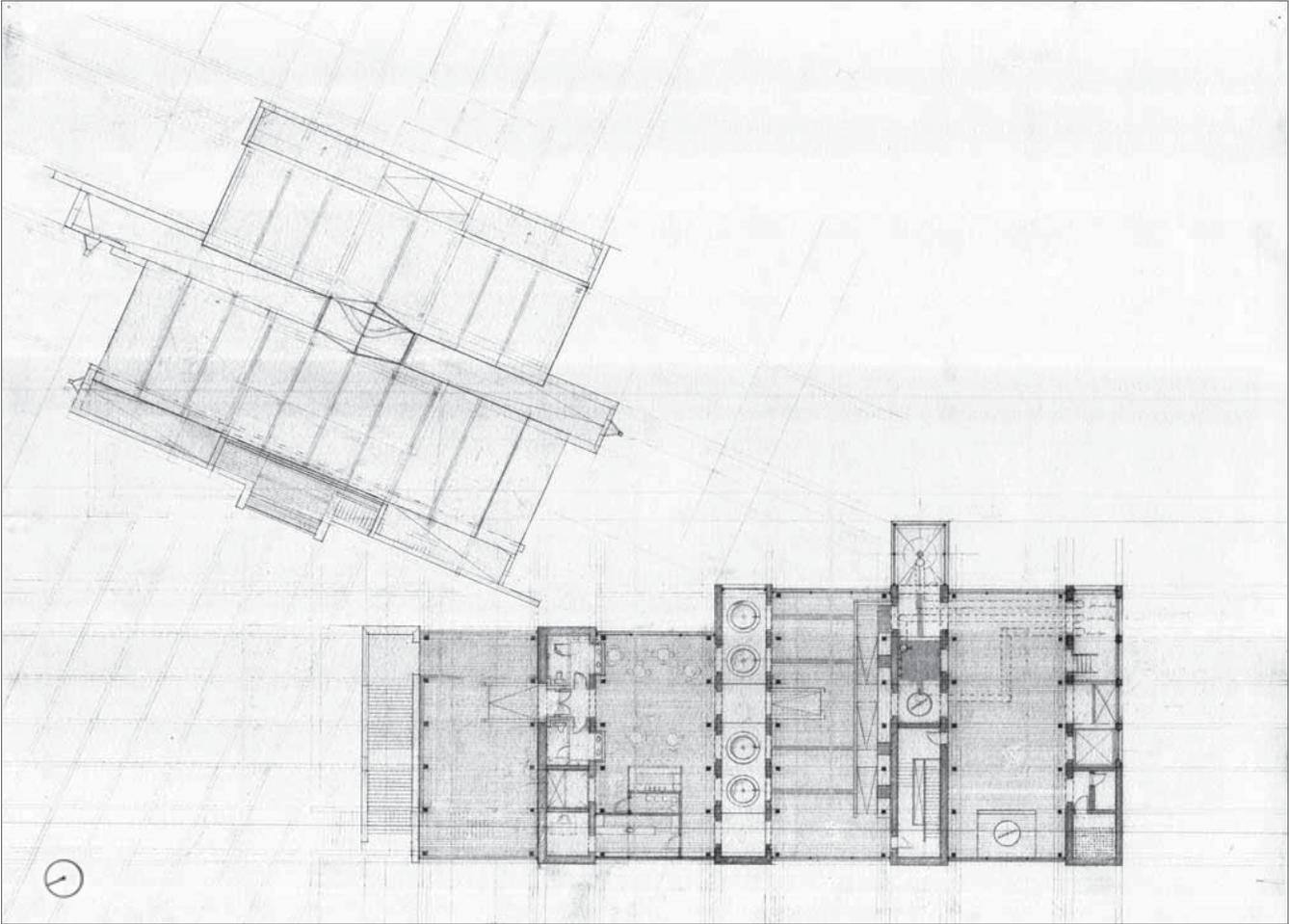
In elevation, materials are represented but only at the surface. Modern representations in architectural elevations show initial feelings of materials developed through vision. Surfaces represent materials but sometimes they are not the same materials they represent. Wood feels like wood, smells like wood, ages like wood, etc. Brick follows these same laws of characterization. Some contemporary brick facades feel flat and light because they are only a skin covering. Ceramic wood grain does not age and tell the same story of a growing tree. Elevations reveal the visual effect of materials thus making this beauty skin deep.

Sections show weight and composition. The materiality shown in elevation is expounded upon. We know the true depth of a material and the purpose of the material. Is the material only for a facade? Does it carry a load? Can this material span the distance found in plan? When we recognize the function of a material then we understand and have a feeling towards it. The 2" thick stone facades found under poorly designed porches carry the meaning of falsehood and it is readable on the surface.

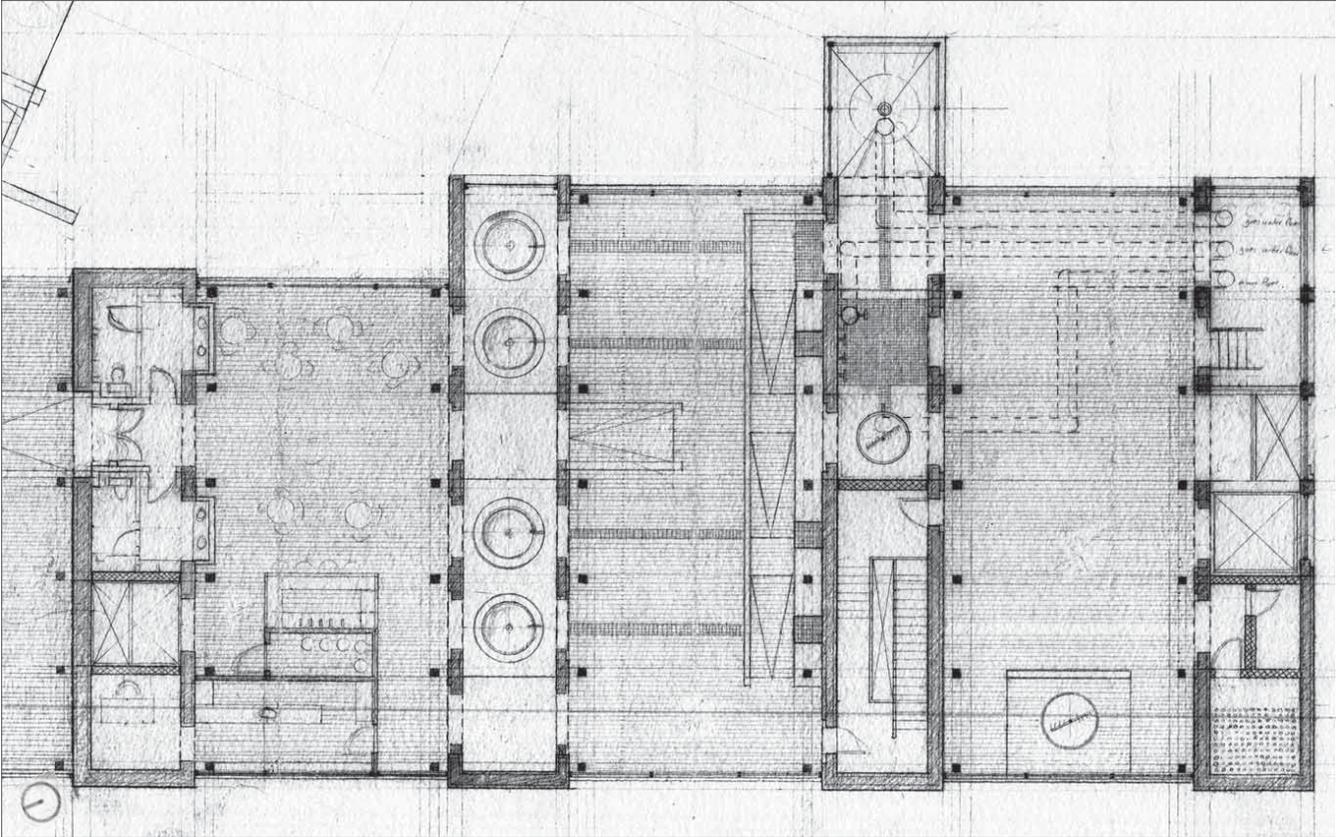
Additionally, there needs to be a harmony between ourselves and the dimensions found in plan, elevation, and section. We compare ourselves by forming a relationship of proximity to objects and surfaces. This comparison develops proportion where proportion is mathematical as well as empirical. A bar is proportional to a man drinking, not a child stretching to try his first sip of alcohol. A brewery is proportional to the coppers, mash tuns, and to the act of fermenting large quantities of beer. Proportion is subjective because no object or person is the same as another. Likewise, our spaces and designs change proportion to fit its typical dwellers, namely people.



Second Floor Plan, Bar Level
Pencil

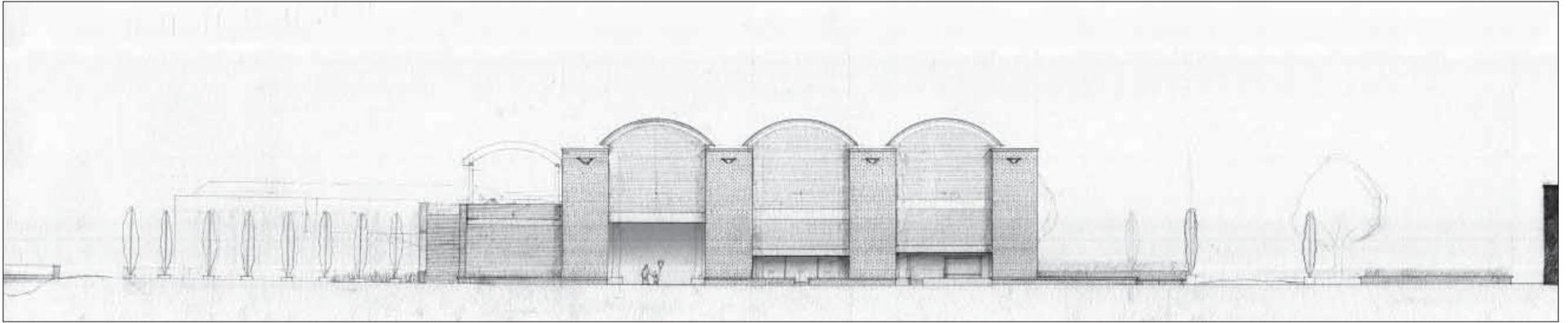


Roof plan of Bar and Third Floor Plan of Brewery
Pencil

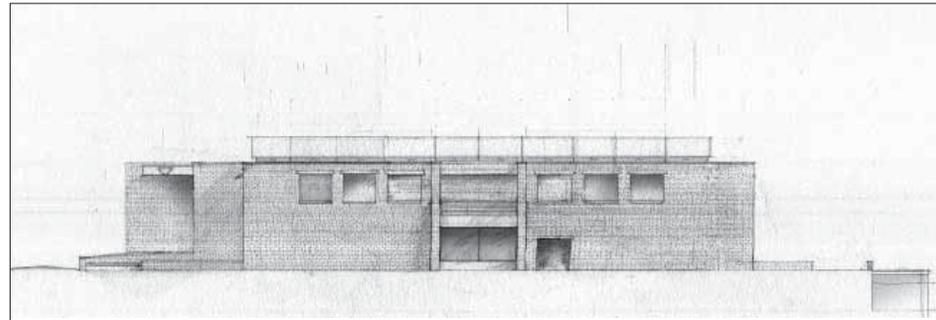


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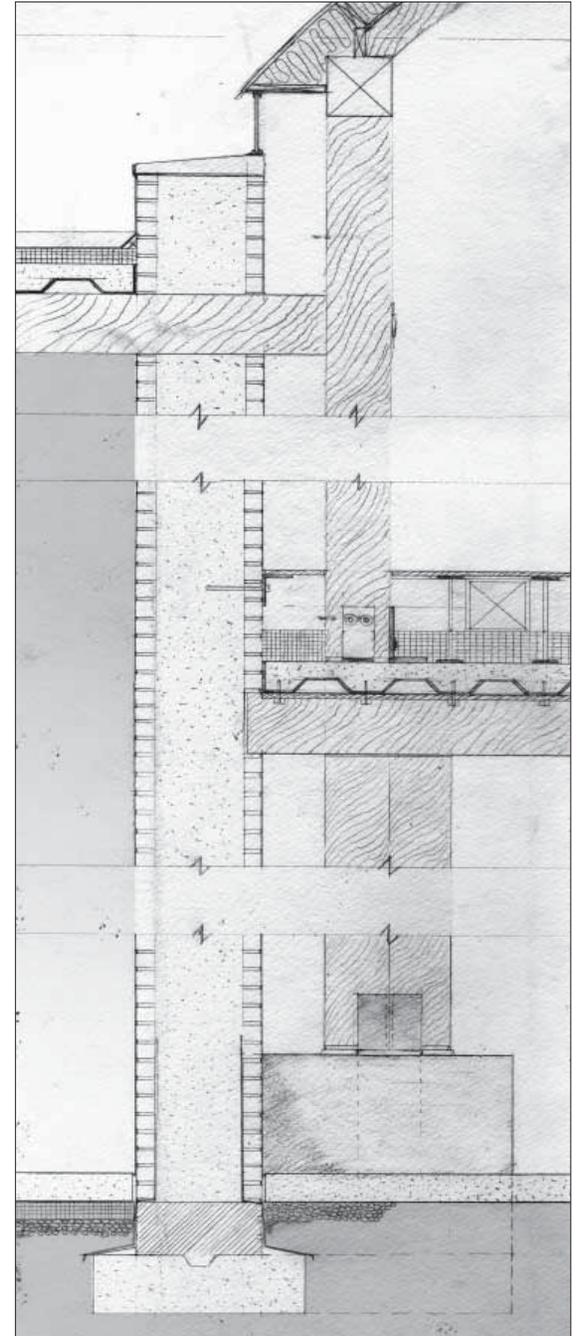
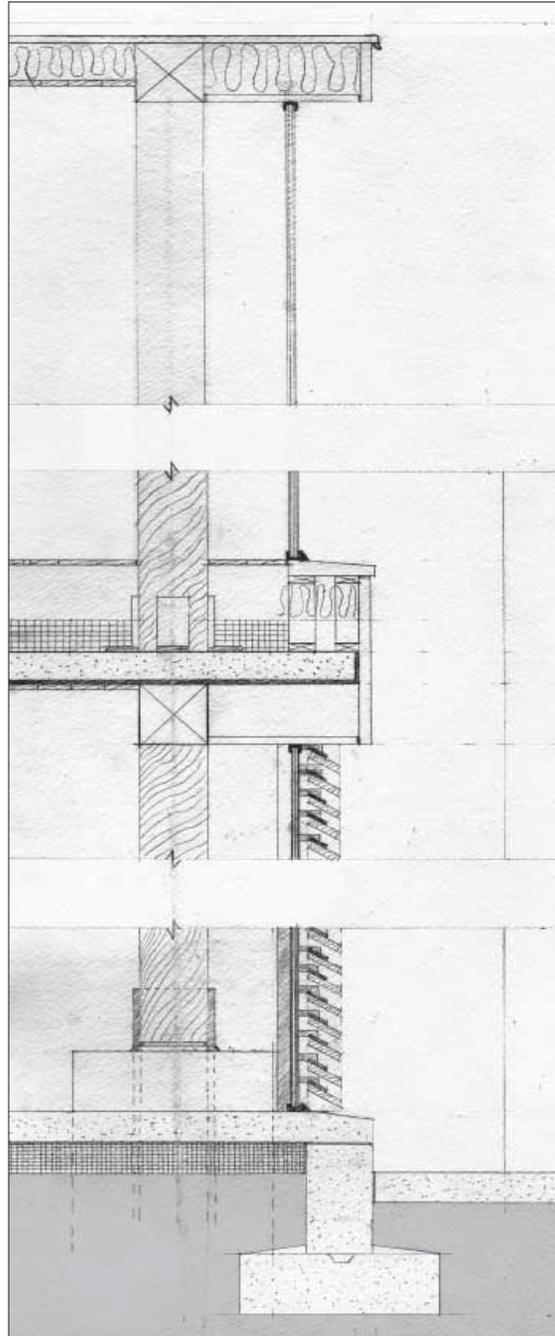
Brewery Flow, Brewery Third Floor Plan
Pencil



West Elevations: Brewery
Pencil



West Elevations: Bar
Pencil



Typical Wall Sections of Bar and Brewery
Pencil

MODELS

I created a world in model. Kids see it. Sometimes we fail to see it. A model is a place. A smaller place for action figures to fight villains. Only in model can one set a stage.

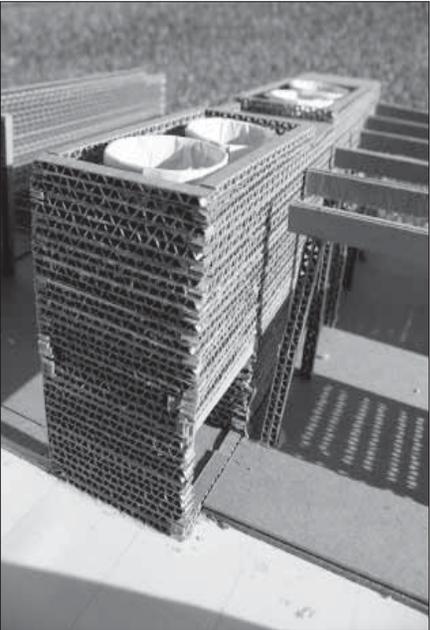
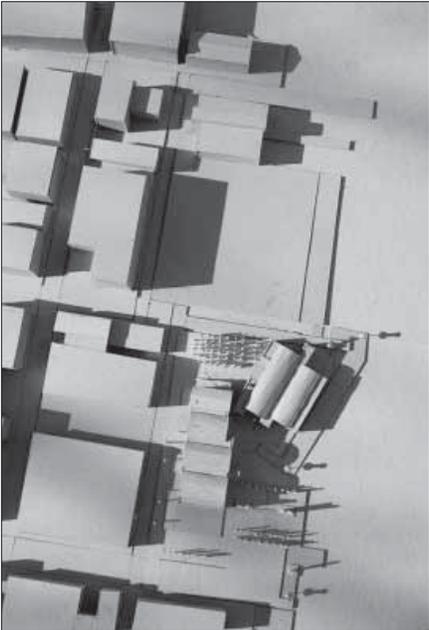
When making a model, we tend to retreat into our childhood. We play, we stack, and we create. What sets us apart from our junior counterparts is a better understanding of the implications our designs have on a wider scale of objects and people. We set a stage for the life of citizens.

The stage is constructed through our studies of plan, elevation, section, and modeling. Modeling clarifies our understanding of the moment where material becomes reality. Roofs become heavy/light or oppressive/expansive. Brick is heavy and sturdy. Wood is light and has great tensile strength. Models reveal these feelings about materials and elements by expressing their capabilities and attributes. We define these materials through our perceptions and our relationship to these surfaces and masses.

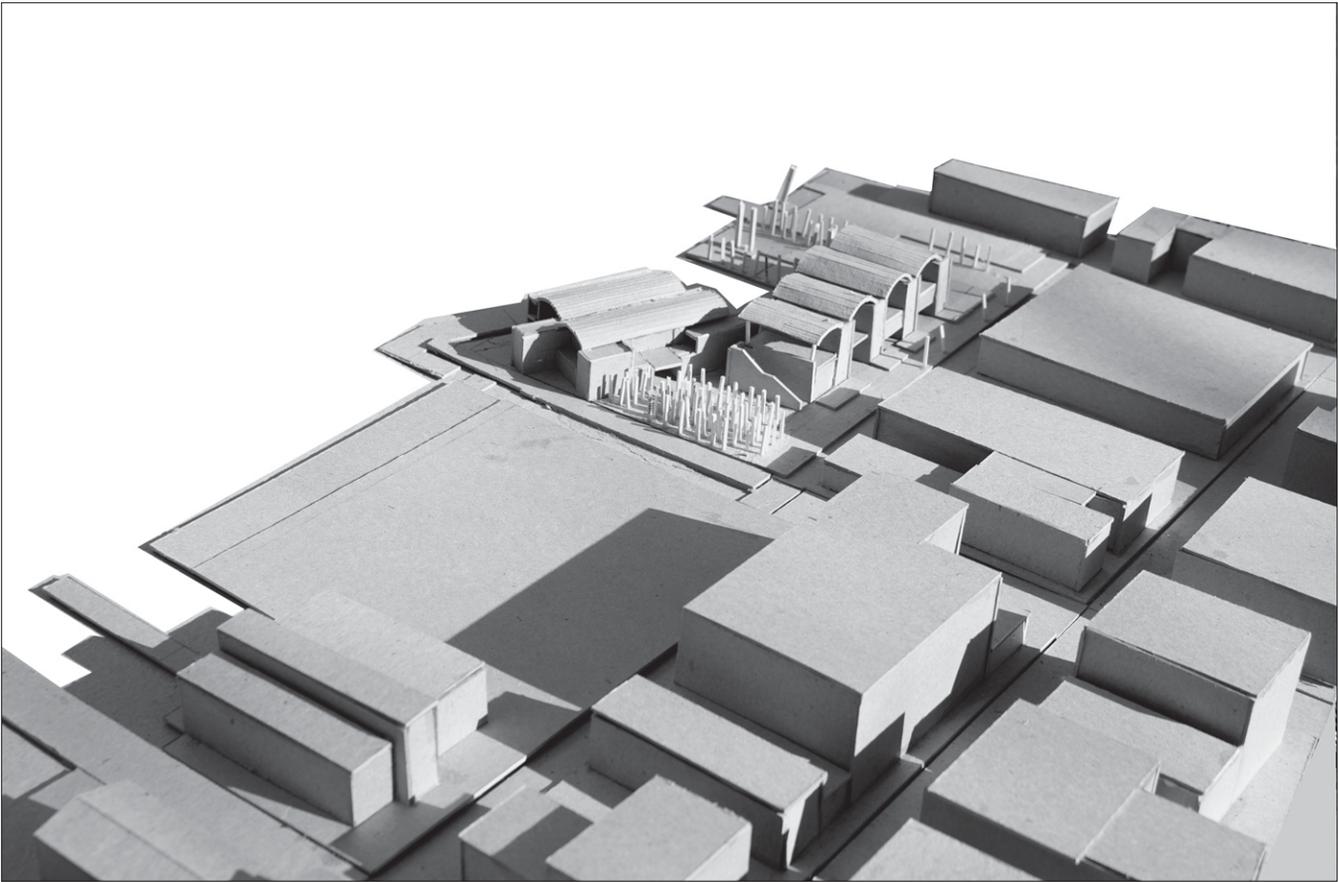
Unlike plans, elevations, and sections, models have a tendency to physically give us presence and significance. We build them thus we acknowledge their existence as objects. Significance is expressed in relation to our nearness to the things we build. When we build we start to dwell, not in the sense of inhabit but in the cognitive sense of dwelling within. Spatial proportion and materiality starts to form a stage or a place for our own stories. With modeling, our drawings become realities and they are no longer just two-dimensional architectural representations.



Even Walls Get a Little Inebriated

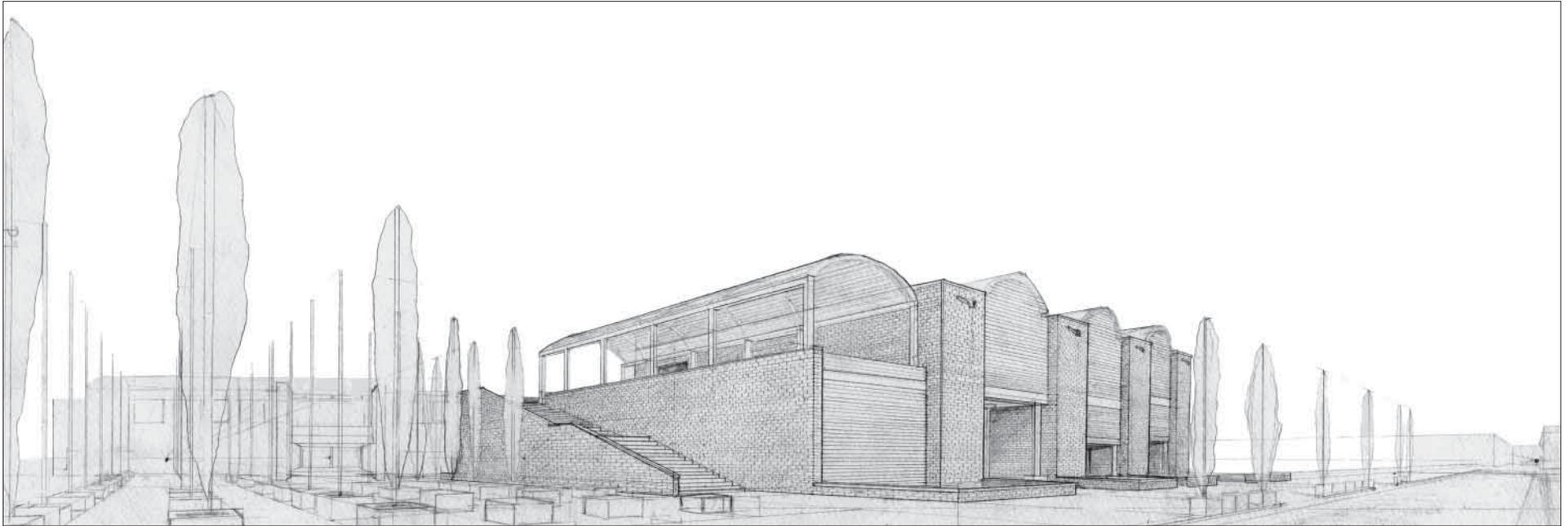


Massing of Brew Complex and Fermenter Wall Study



Massing around Waterfront Park

PERSPECTIVES



View from the Strand and Prince St
Pencil

The best way from me to understand what it means to dwell within a place was to represent it through perspective. The construction of perspectives involves collaboration between all the findings of the conventional modes of design. The ideas of distance from plan, massing and material from elevation, and composition and space from section develop a picture of potential reality. The model becomes a reality. For me, perspective places you within this newly formed reality.

In perspective, I can approach an object. I can see potential material qualities. There is a movement from one thing or surface to

another. There are characters living and engaging. Men sit and drink away depression. Sorority girls stumble down stairwells and grab onto the wall that appears to be stable. Another man is taking new kegs to the bar early in the morning. Perspectives drawn at eye level give a relative view of how things can be in a sense of idealism. With all these combinations there is a developing atmosphere. Serene, isolated, crowded, etc are examples of these atmospheres we find in perspectives. Atmosphere sparks feeling and with these feelings we complete a narrative set in our minds. Objects have histories, things have characteristics, and people are living in and around them.

I found place in the process of representing architecture through our conventional drawings and models. Without the information of each drawing set I could not find a place to dwell within. I had

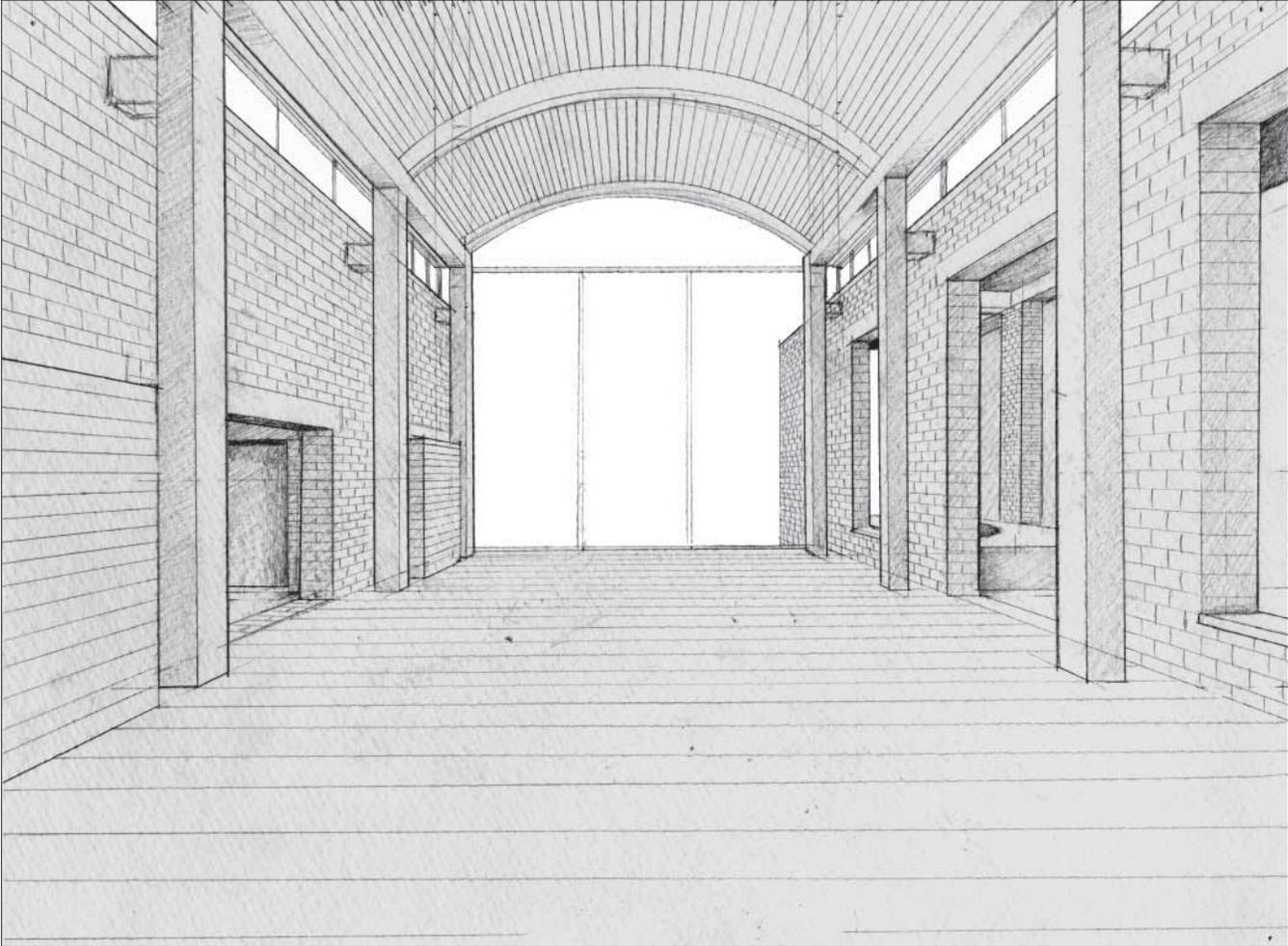
to engage myself fully in my drawings and models. Therefore, I was a character in my own narration of place. I had to drink at my bar, brew in the brewery and get drunk with the drawings and models themselves. Only when I collected my represented senses in my fictitious world could I fully find an affectionate bond to the designed spaces. The structure now has a life and a legitimate place where it belongs and in return the place belongs to the Bar and Brewery of Old Town, Alexandria.



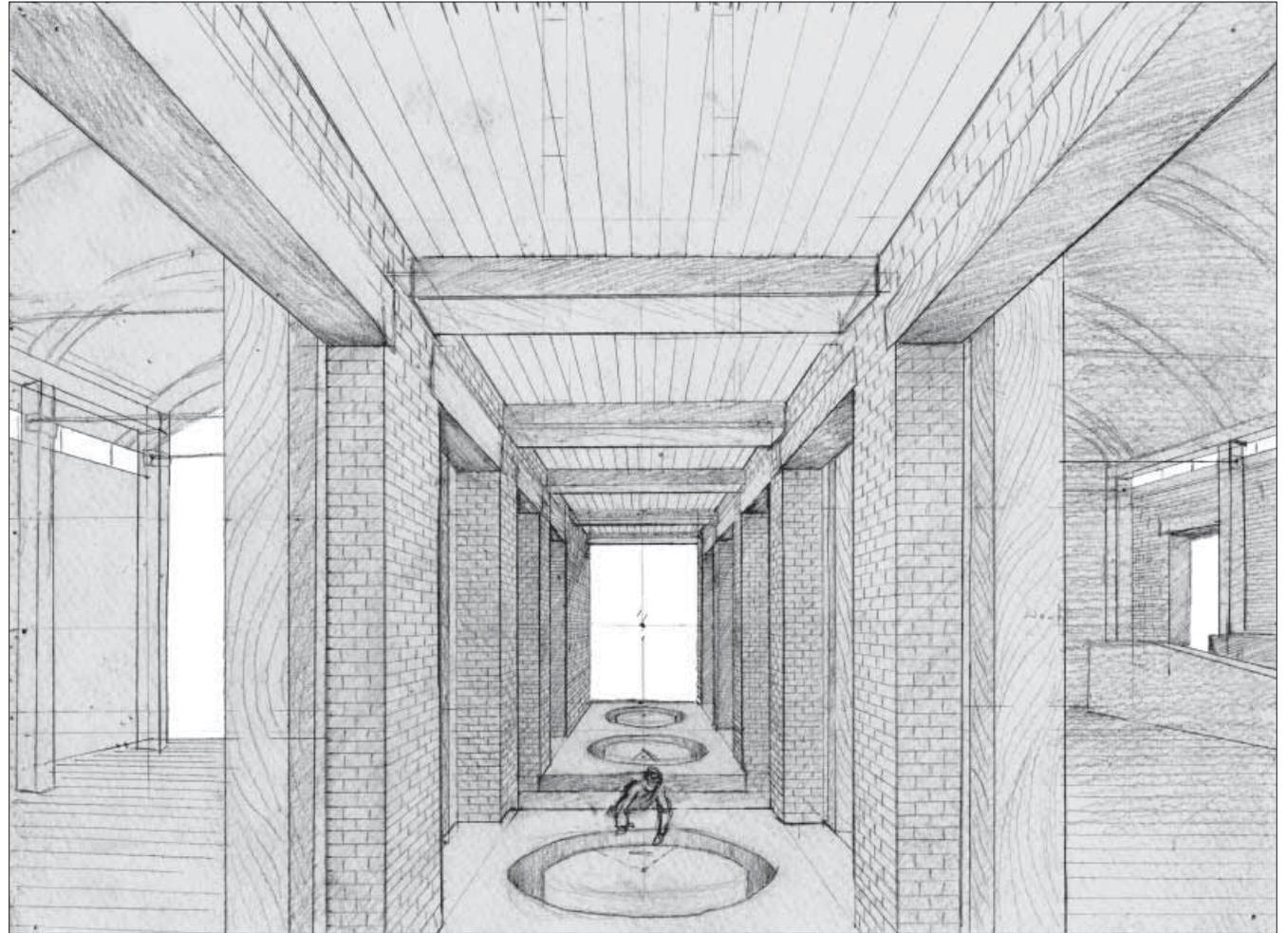
Experience of Brewing: Approach from the Strand



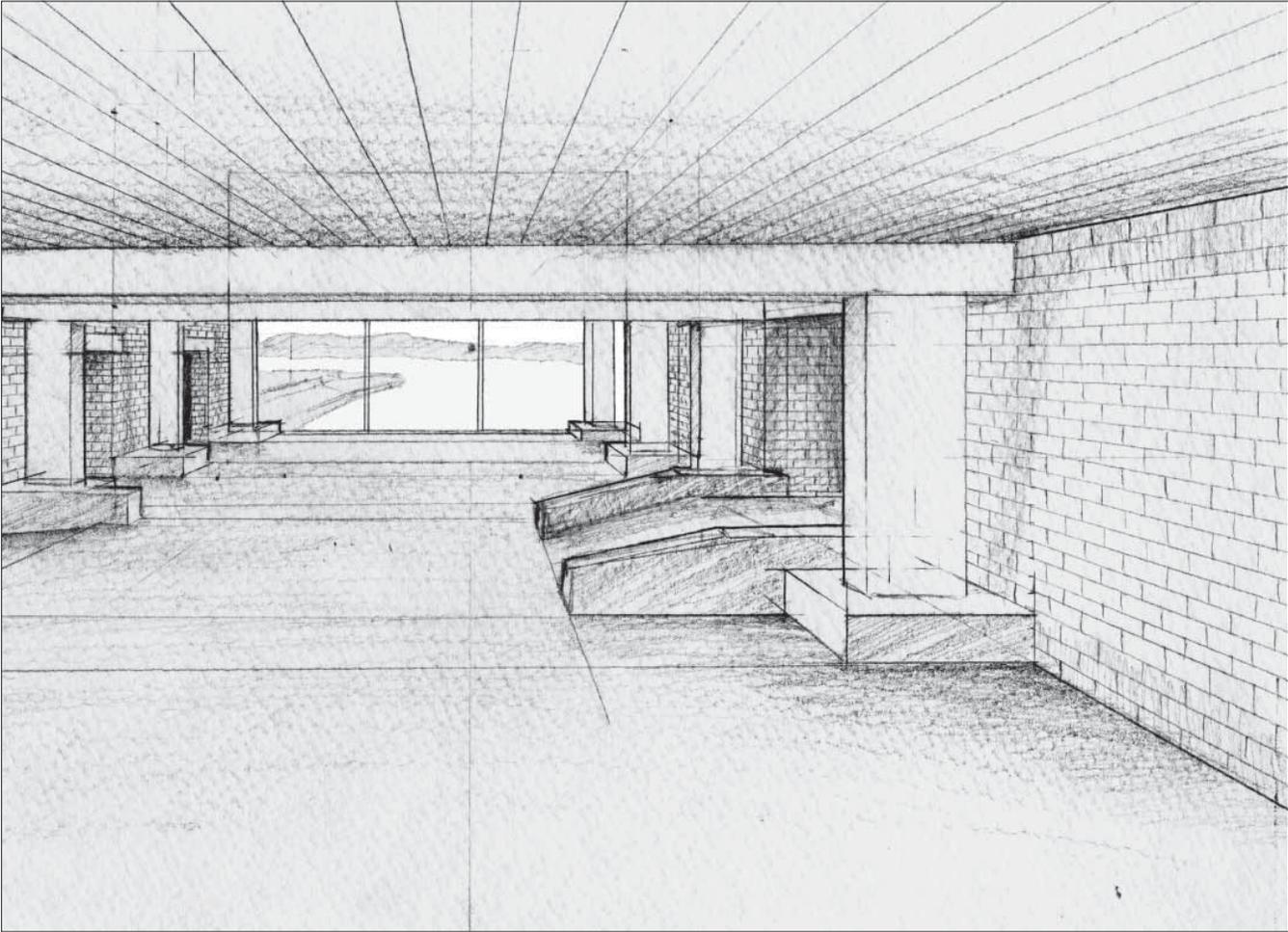
Experience of Brewing: Tasting Porch, Tasting Room
Breezeway, Cooler



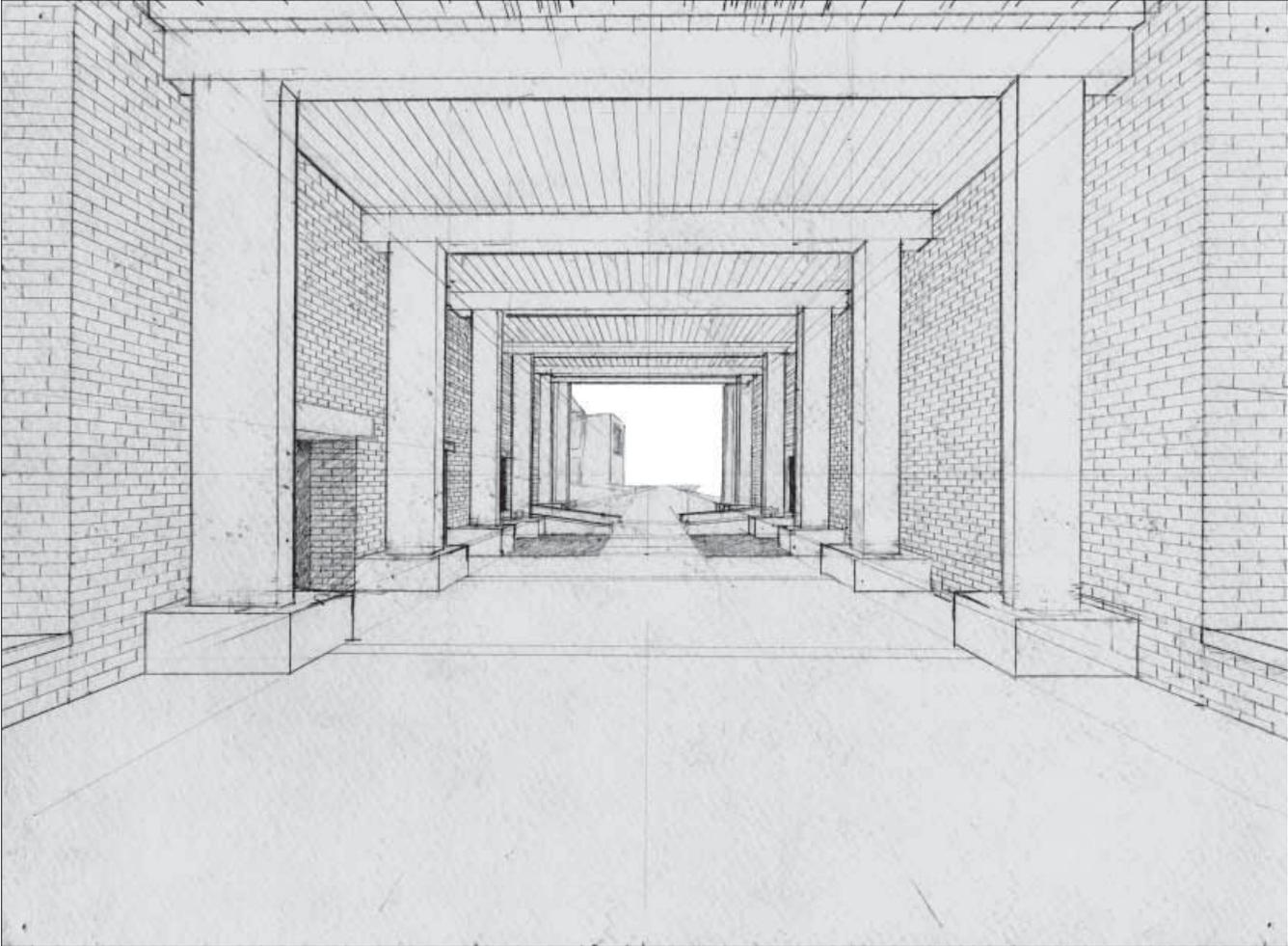
Tasting Room Floor
Pencil



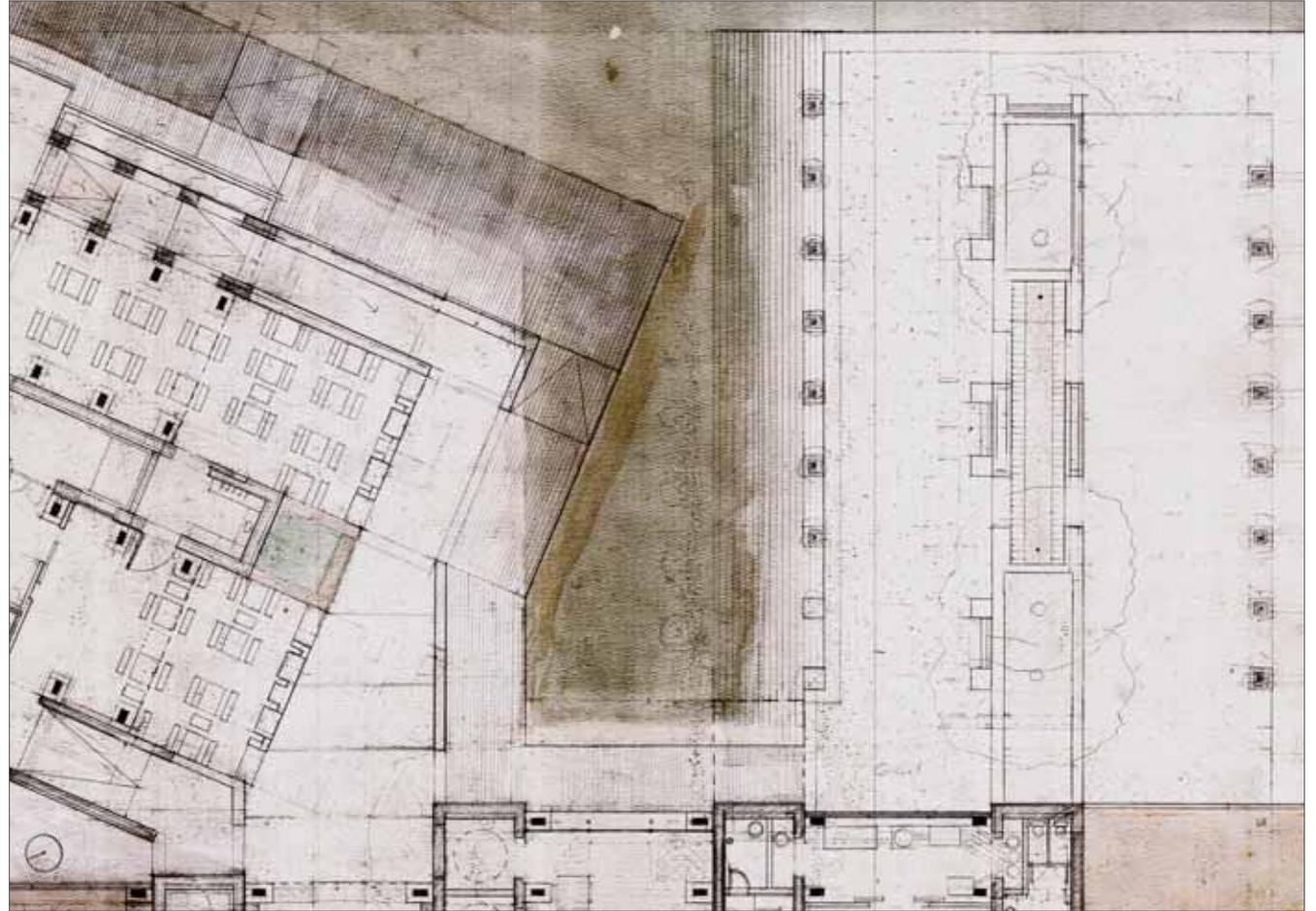
Fermenters Dwelling Within the Wall
Pencil



Bottling Floor
Pencil

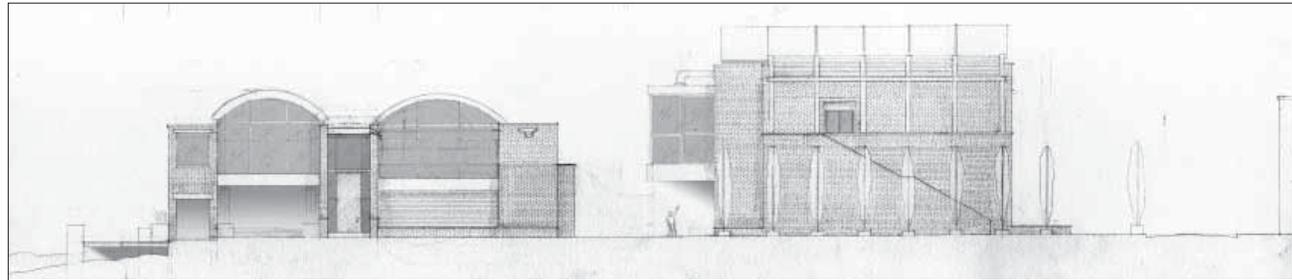


Brewery Breezeway
Pencil

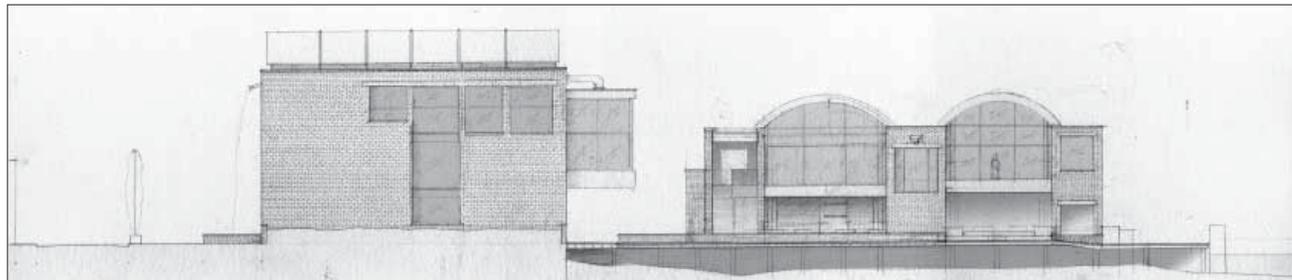


15'

Beer Garden/ Drunk in Public
Beercolor/Pencil



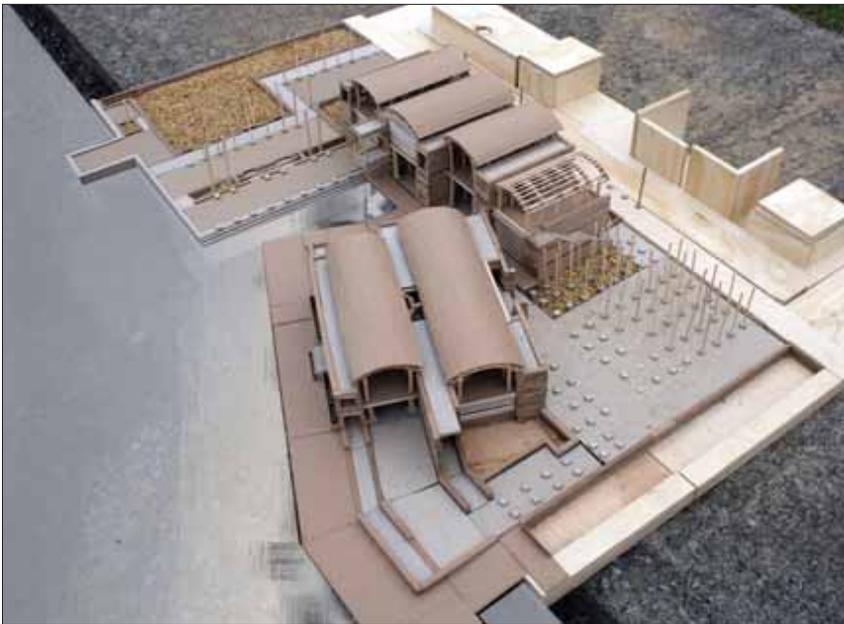
North Elevations
Pencil



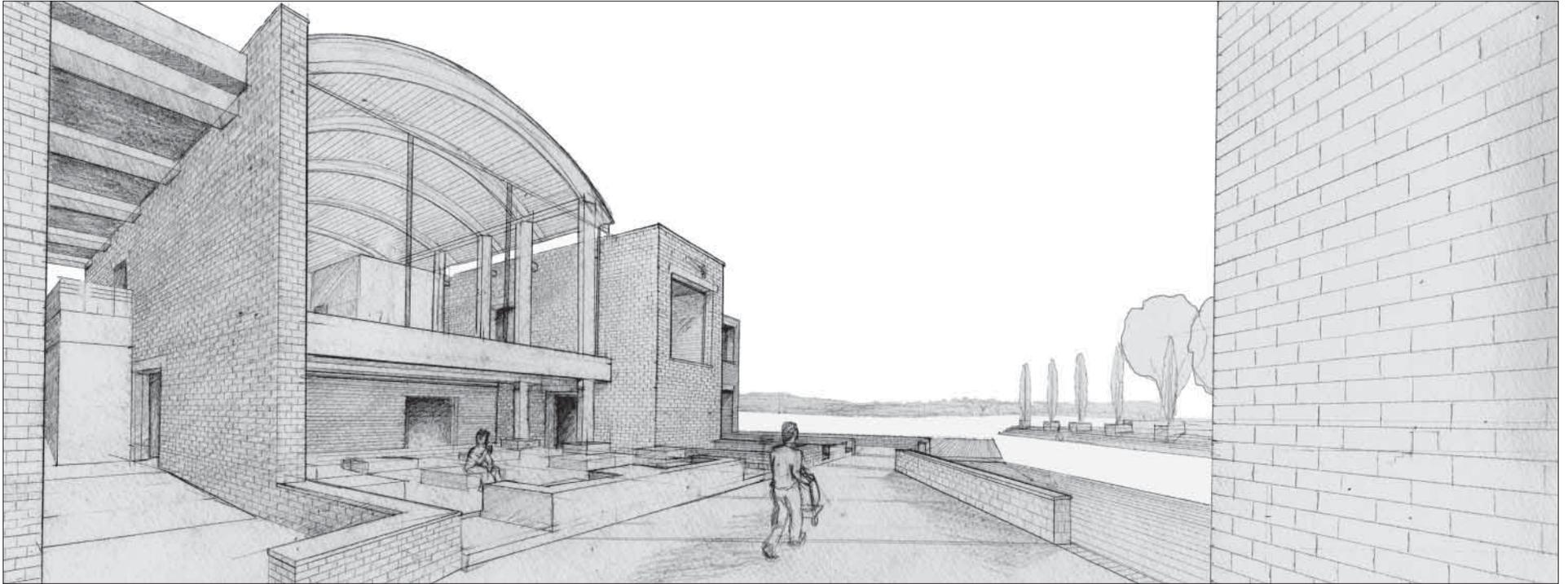
South Elevations
Pencil



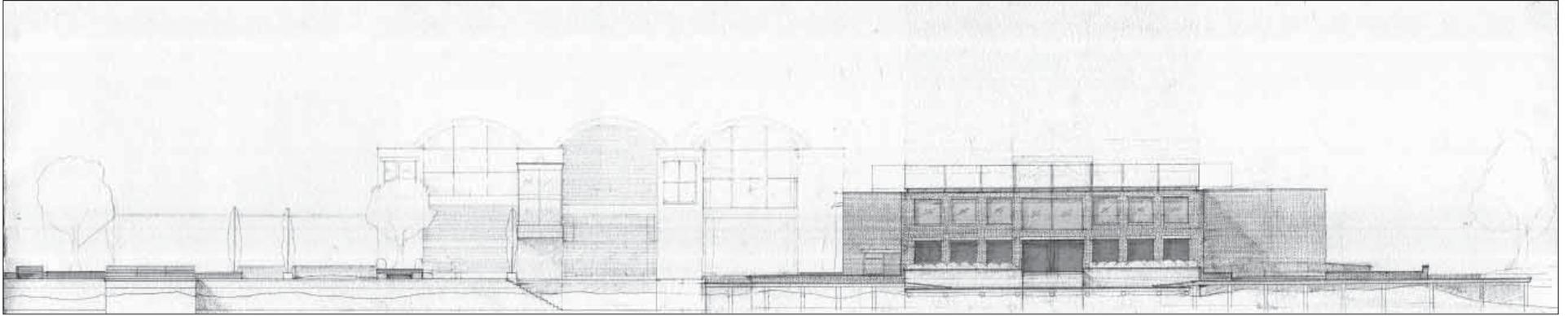
Waterfront View of Beer Garden And City Park



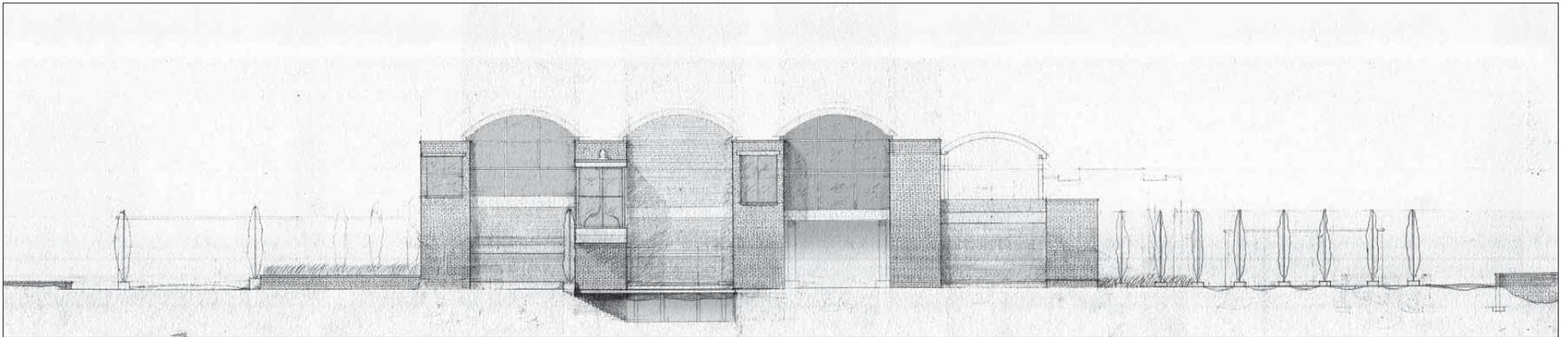
Airplane Views



Beer Garden
Pencil



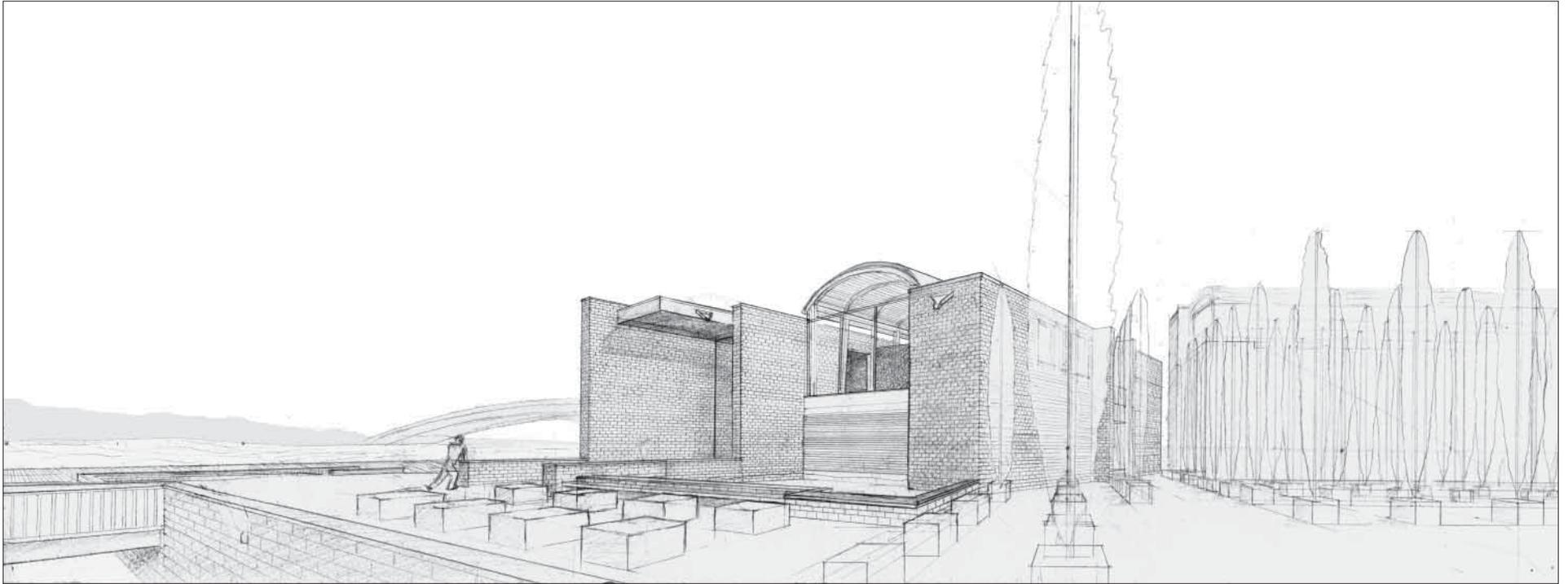
East Elevations: Bar
Pencil



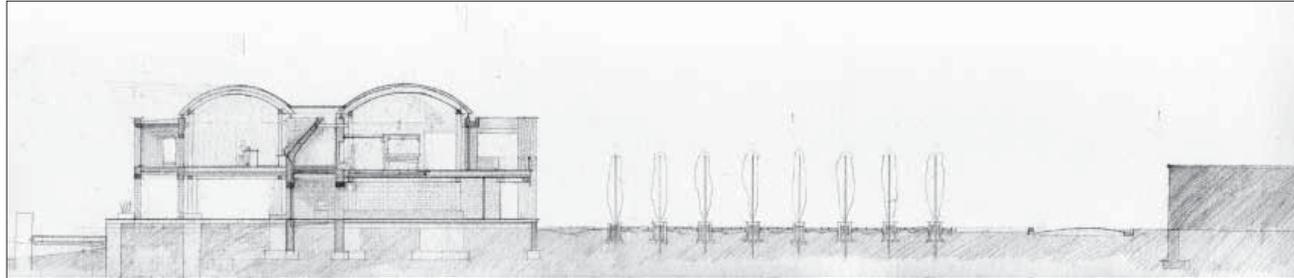
East Elevations: Brewery
Pencil



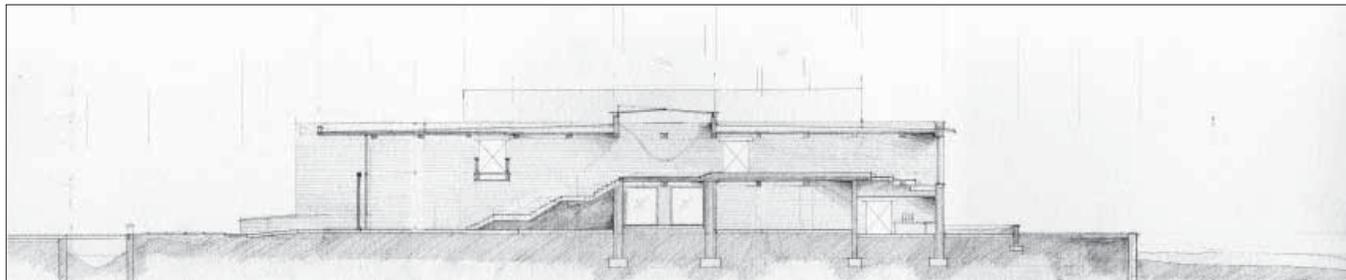
Bar from the Potomac
Pencil



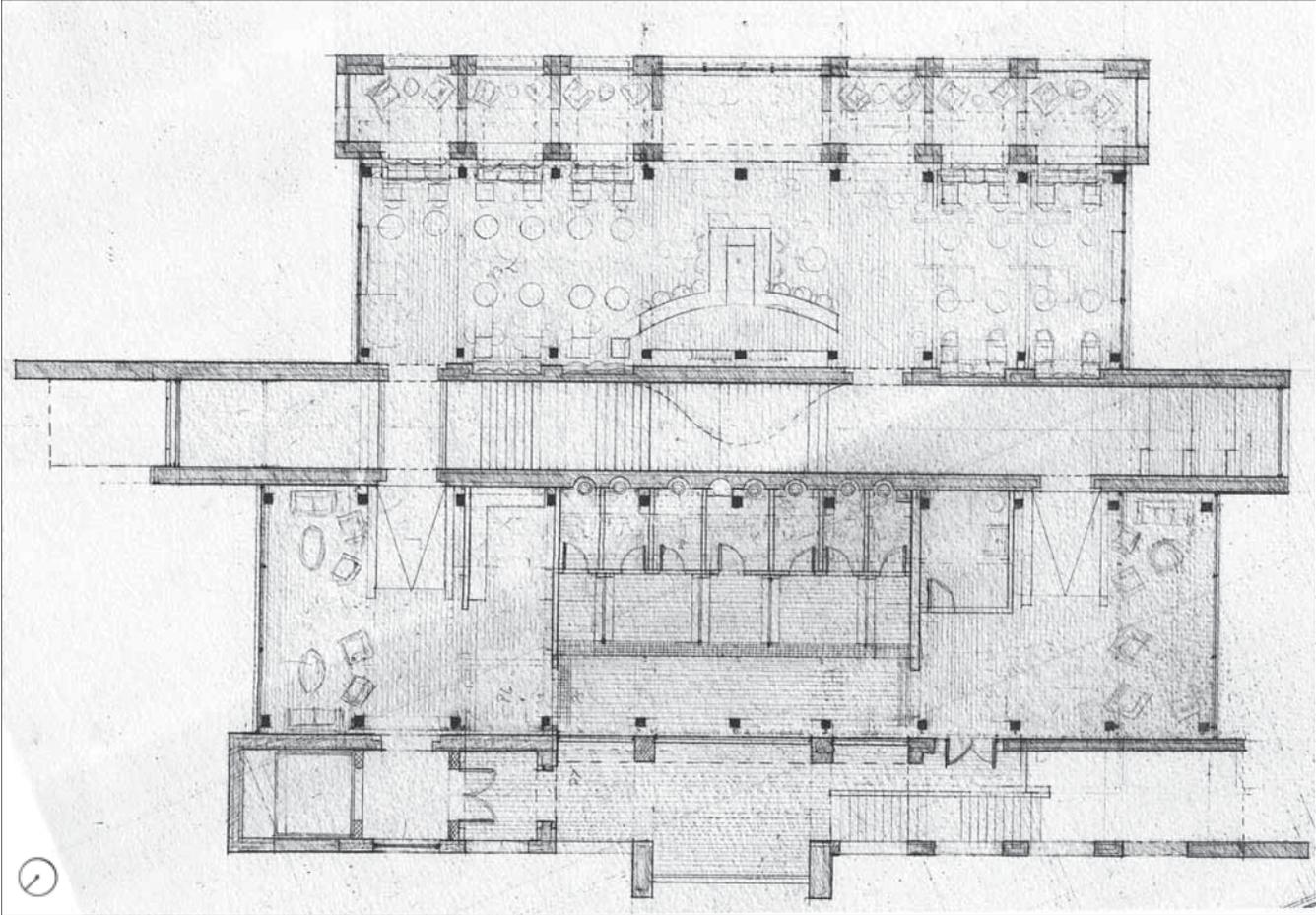
Hop Garden and Bar Entry w/ I-495 in the Distance
Pencil



Section Through Bar, Restroom, and Coolers
Pencil



Section Through Bar's Entry Stair and Coolers
Pencil

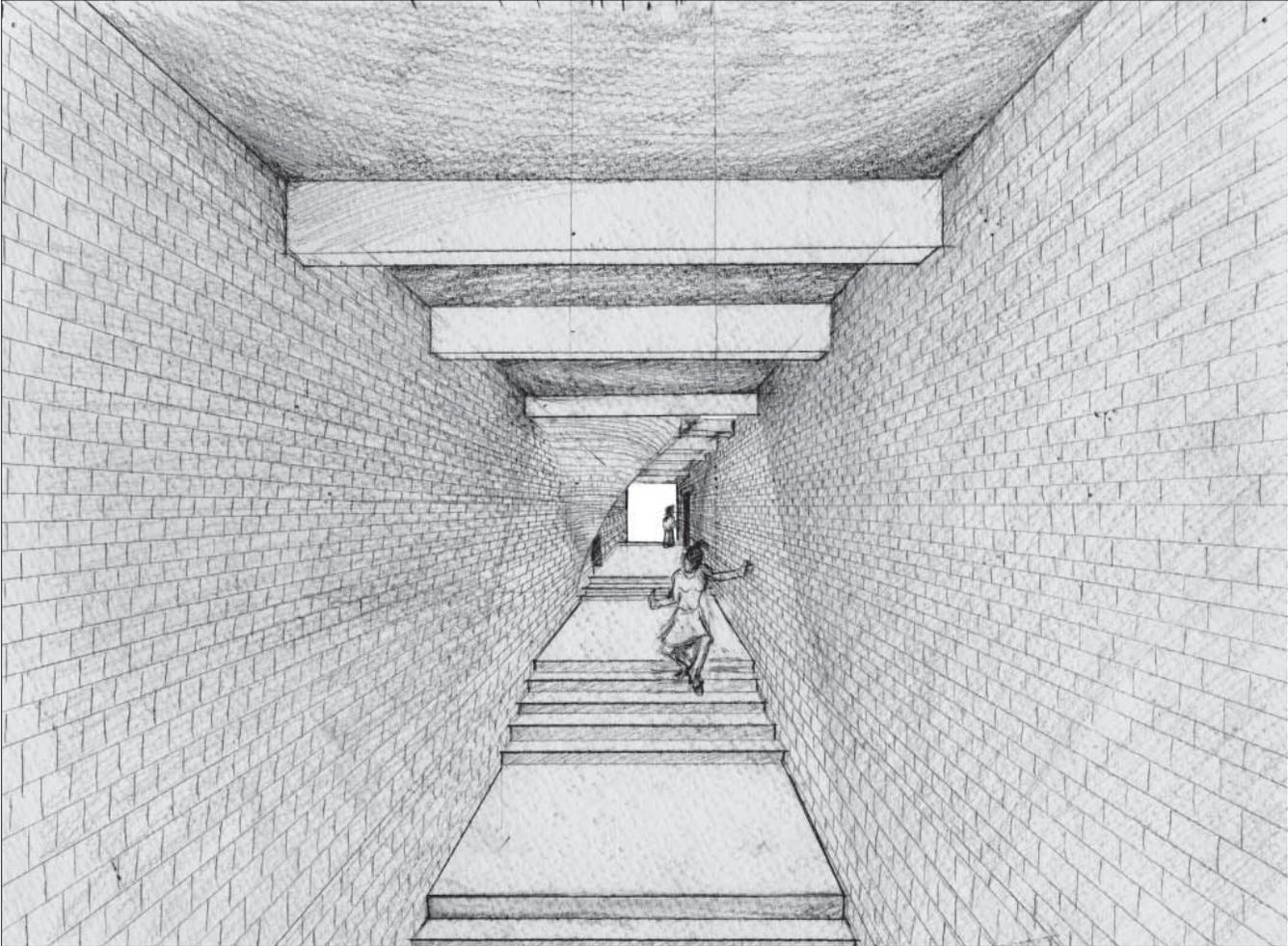


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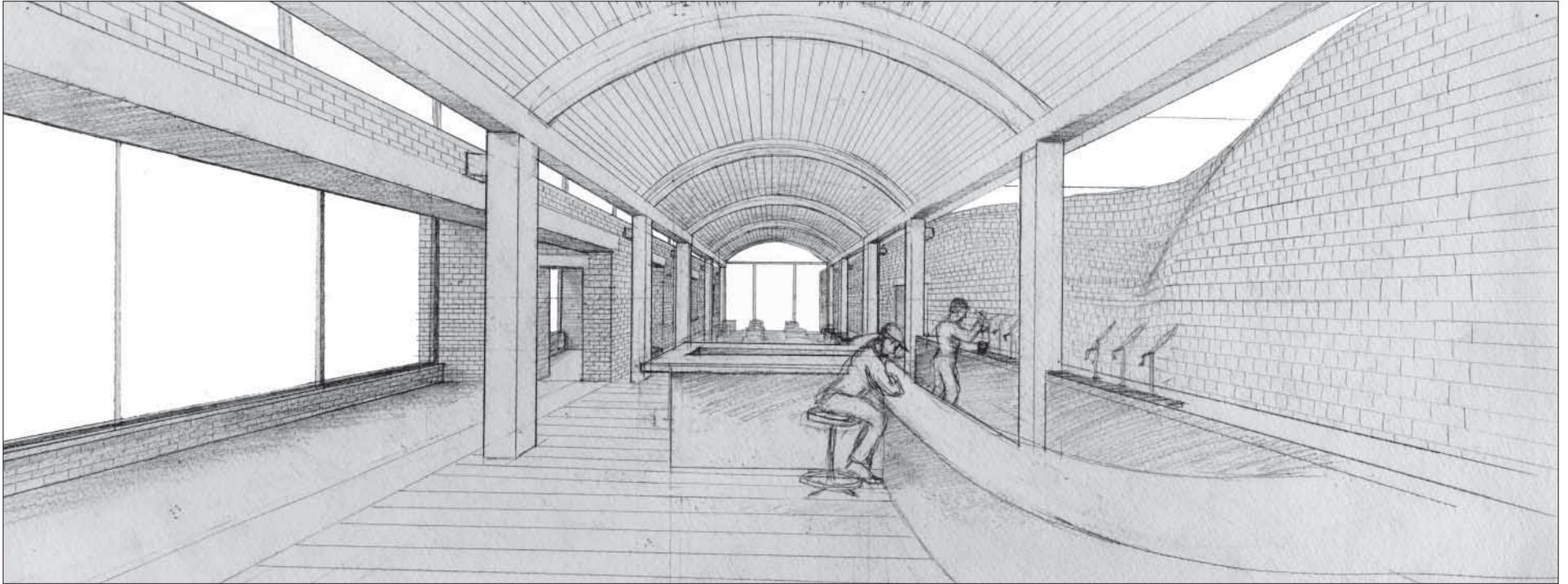
Bar Level and Bathroom Plan
Pencil



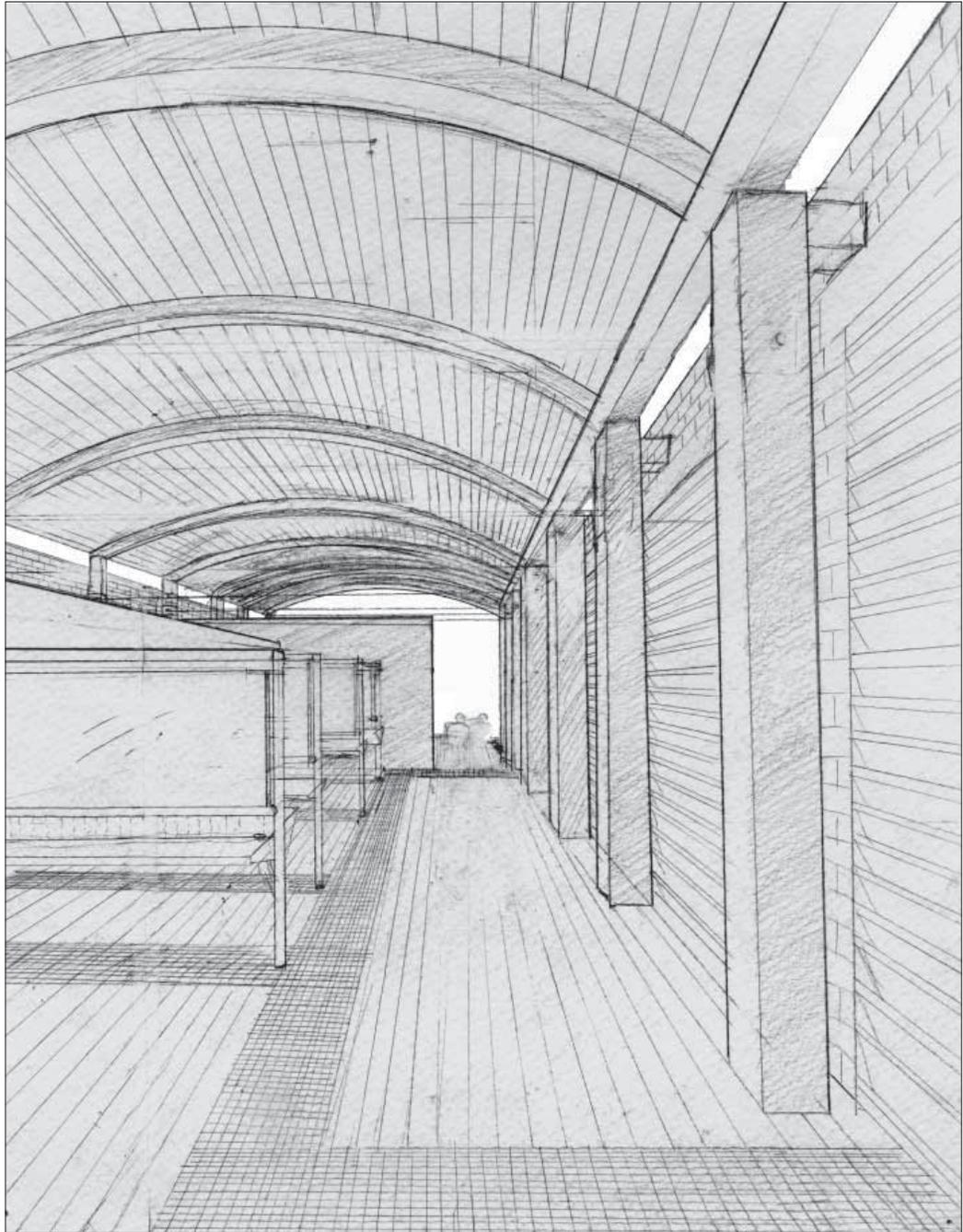
Experience of the Bar:
Approach from Prince St, River View
Entry Hall w/ Drunken Wall, Bar, Bathroom



Bar Entry Stair w/ Drunken Wall
Pencil

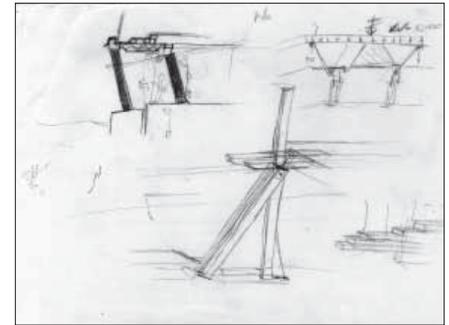
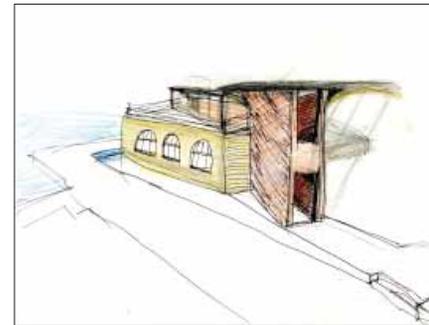
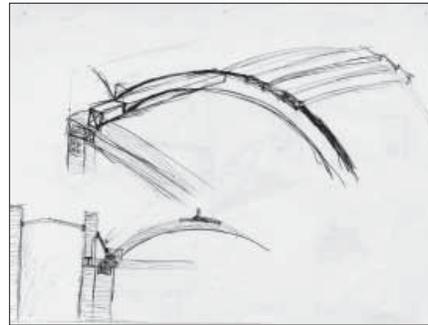


Bar w/ Drunken Wall and Drinking Rooms
Pencil

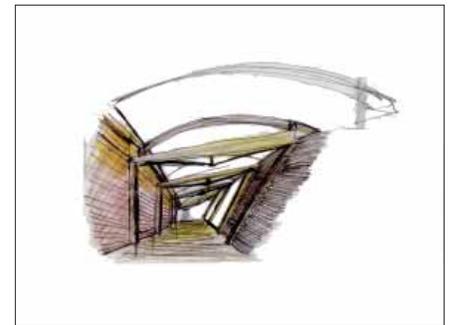


Wash Room
Pencil

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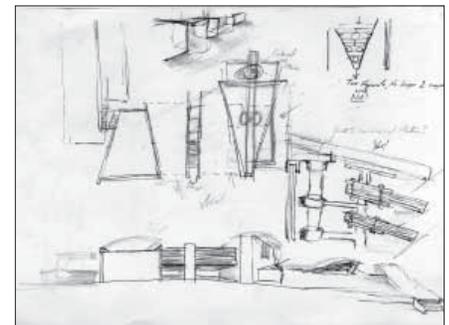
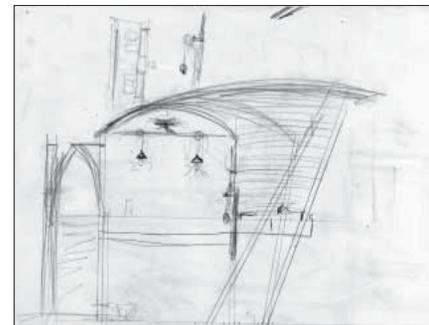
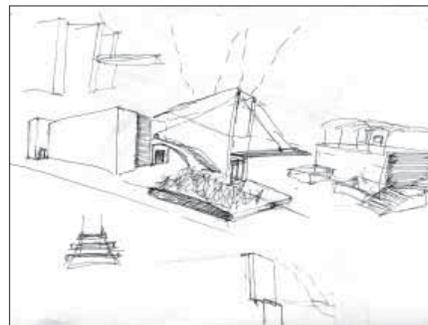
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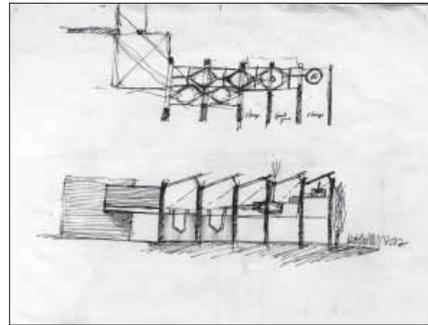


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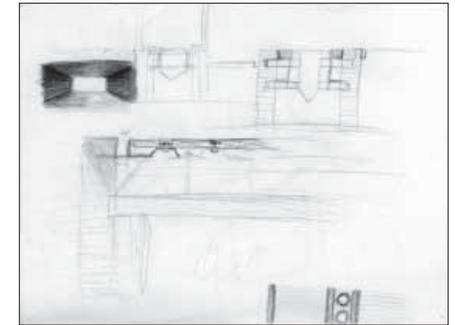
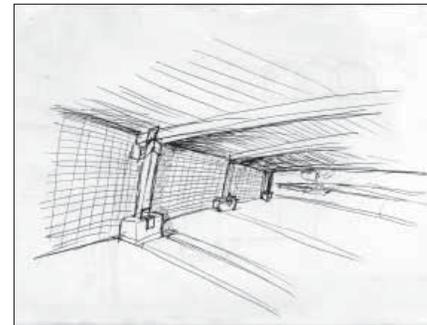
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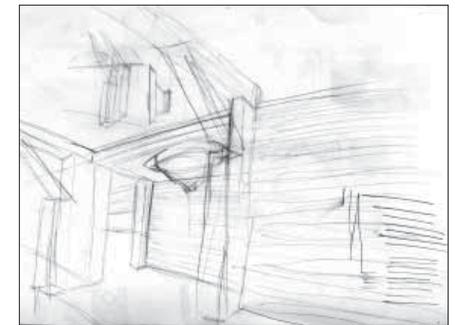
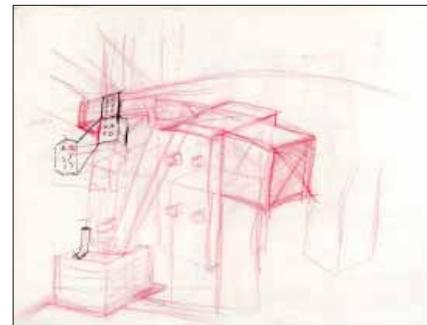


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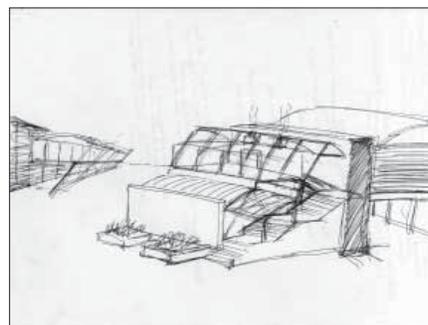


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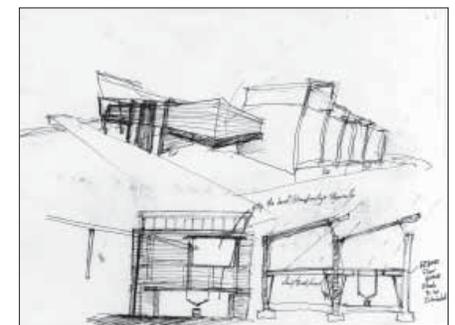
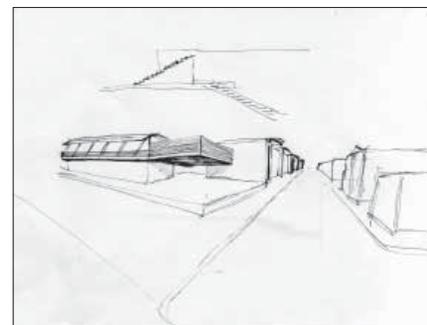


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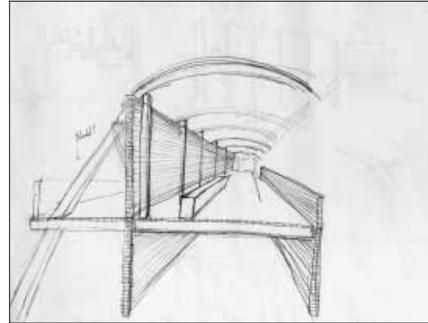


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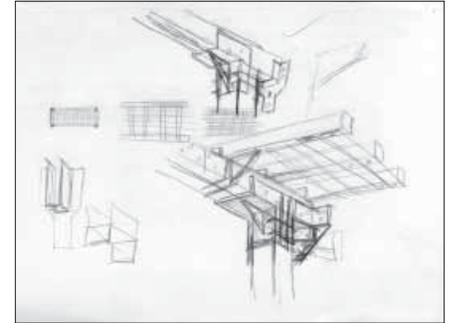
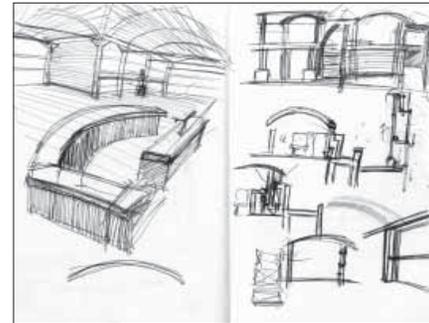


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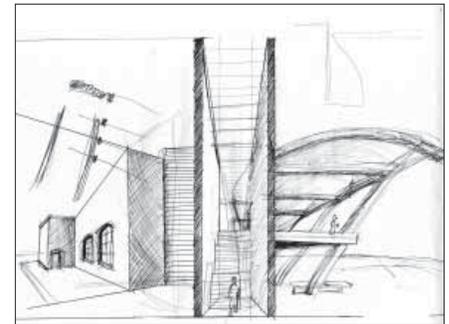
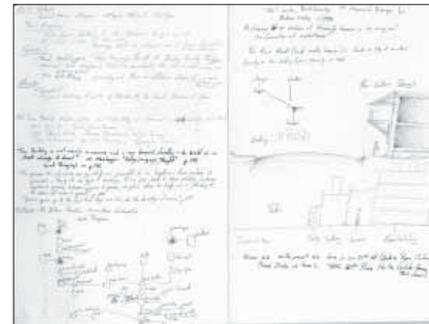
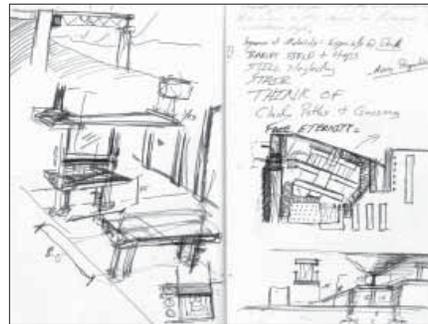


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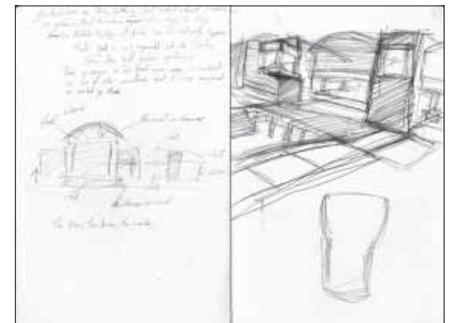
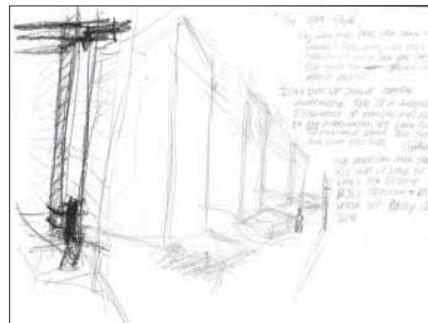
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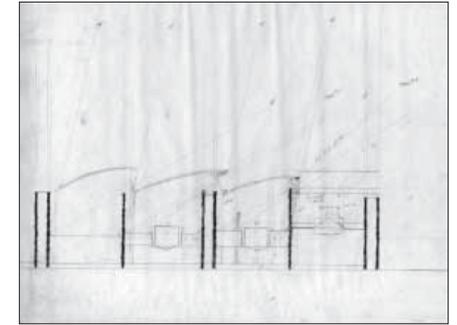
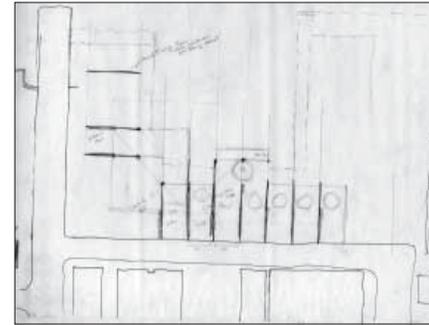
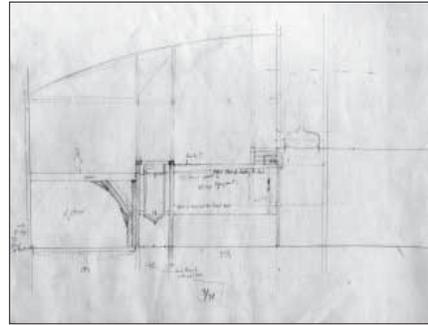
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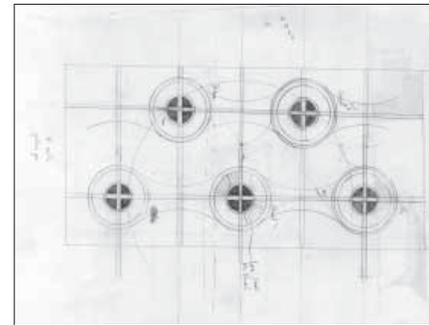
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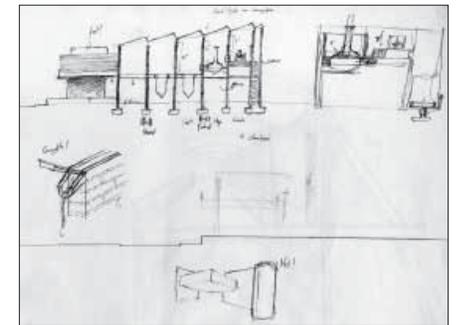
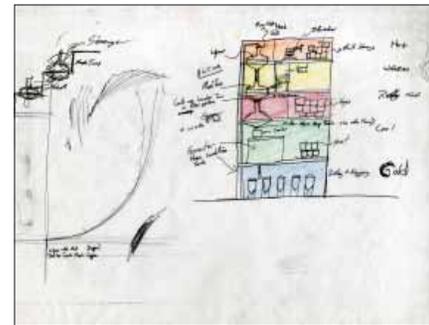
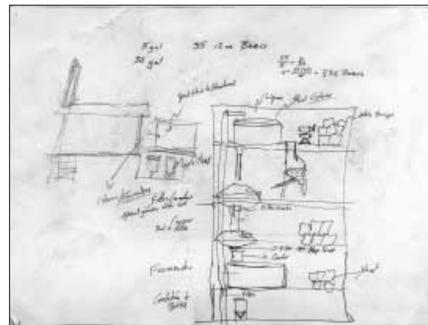
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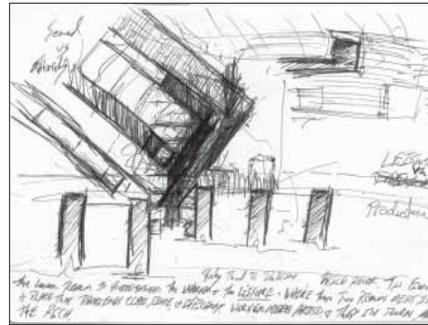


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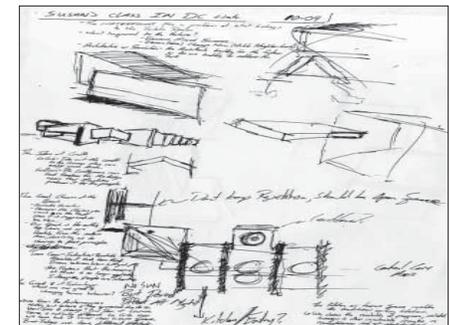
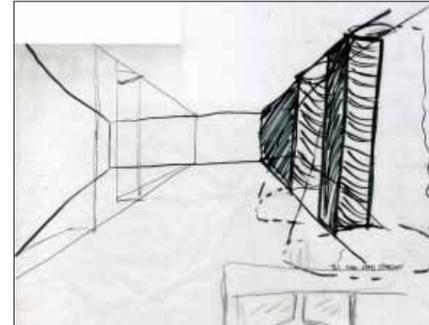
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