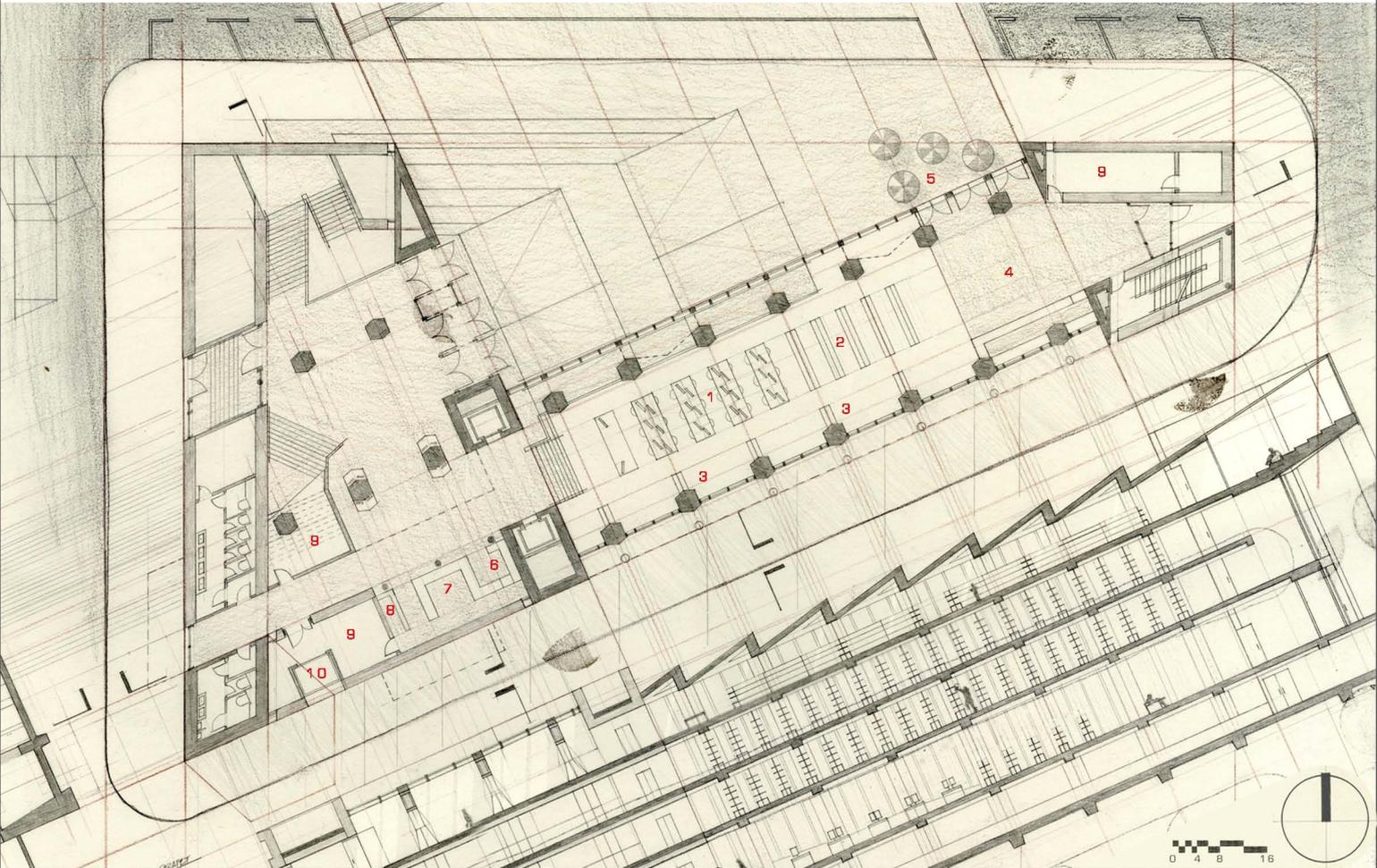


context of a library

The library spaces themselves are arranged in four floors in the long zone to the east of the Piano Nobile. The ground floor of the library is accessed from the Piano Nobile by descending down to the plaza level. In this space are the main computer lab, reference materials, periodicals, and a small café, which opens up to the plaza to allow for outdoor seating. In the Piano Nobile are the circulation area, with areas for re-shelving and inter-library loan, as well as storage space and a small loading dock.

Piano Nobile/Ground Floor Plan

1. Computer Lab
2. Reference Materials
3. Periodicals
4. Café
5. Outdoor Seating
6. Re-shelving
7. Circulation Desk
8. Inter-Library Loan
9. Storage
10. Loading Dock



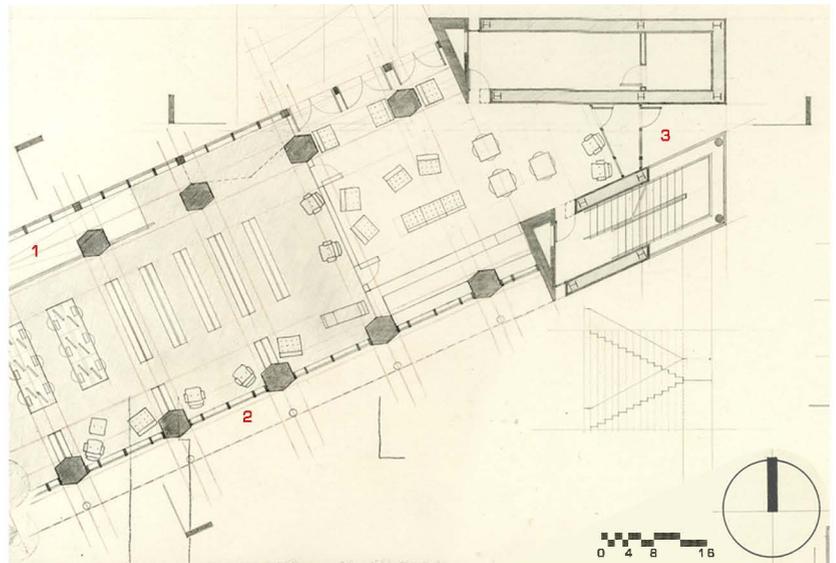
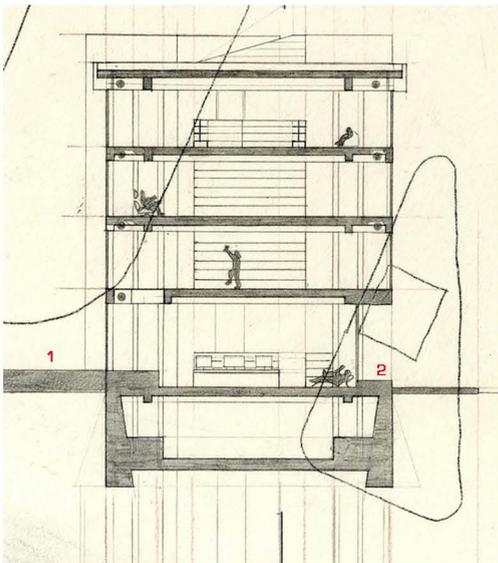
The library's relationship to the street is played out at the ground floor. Along the north façade, the glass curtain wall finishes flush with the floor and the entry ramp continues inside the building producing strong visual connections between the interior space and the plaza. The south façade steps back from the street and up from the sidewalk, to create a long bench and alcove, which act as a human-scale invitation for pedestrians to participate in the library experience. Off of 7th Street, a secondary entrance into the café allows the business to operate when the library is closed. In the tradition of commercial architecture in Shaw, this entrance happens at the sidewalk level, with the sidewalk itself seeping into the building to create another sheltering alcove.

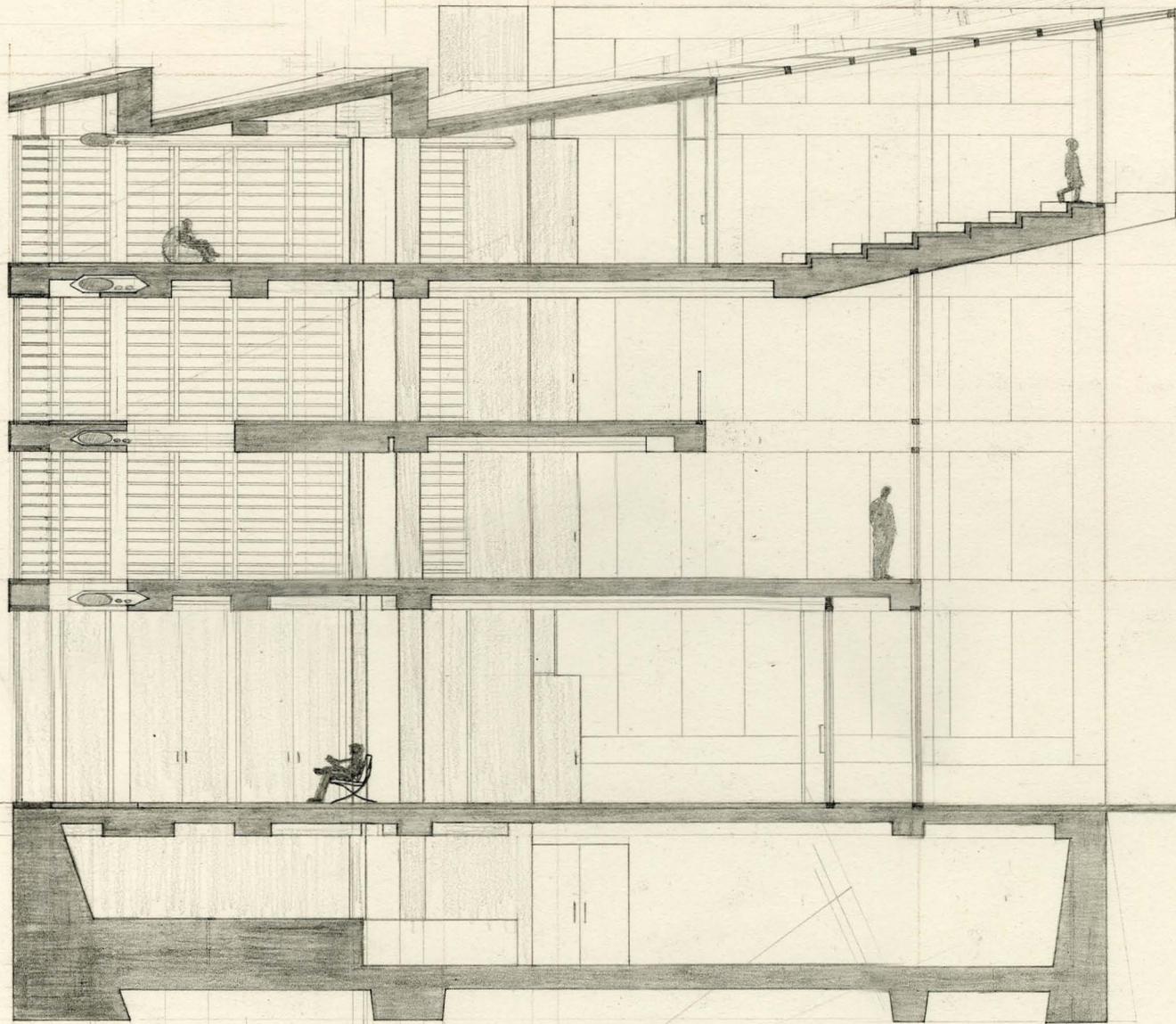
[Left] Section through Library, view to the East

[Right] Plan of Café

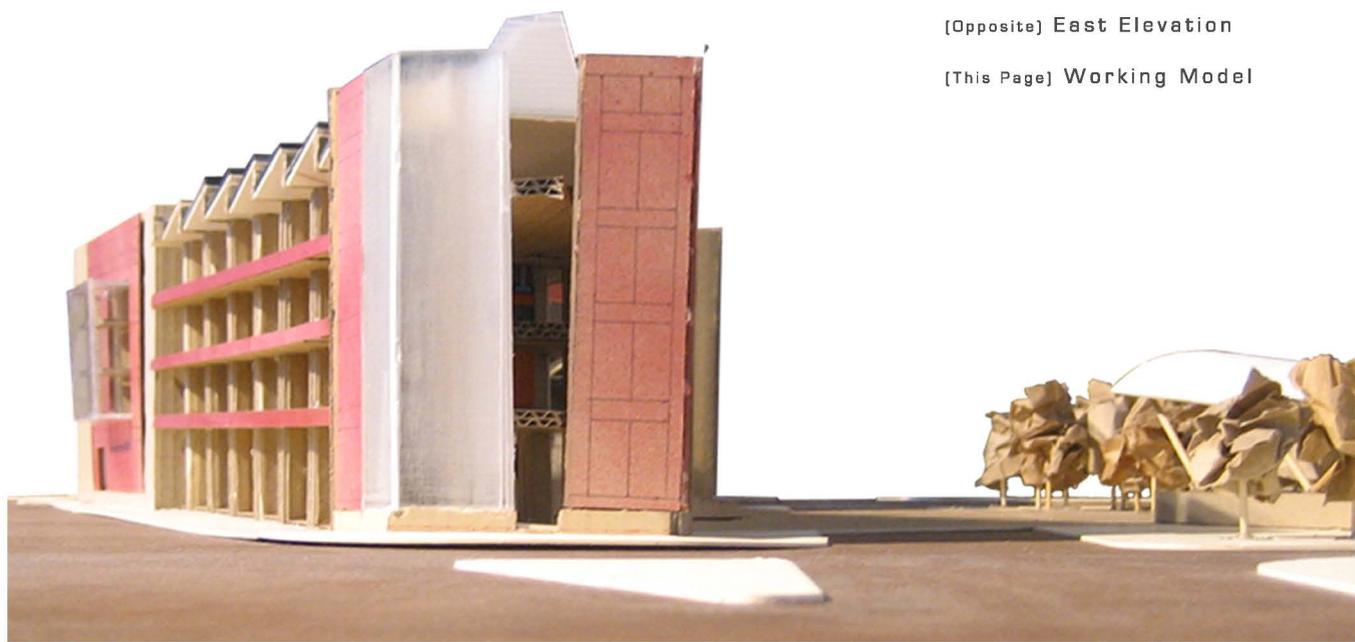
1. Entry Ramp
2. Rhode Island Ave. alcove
3. 7th St. Entrance

[Opposite] Section through Library, view to the North



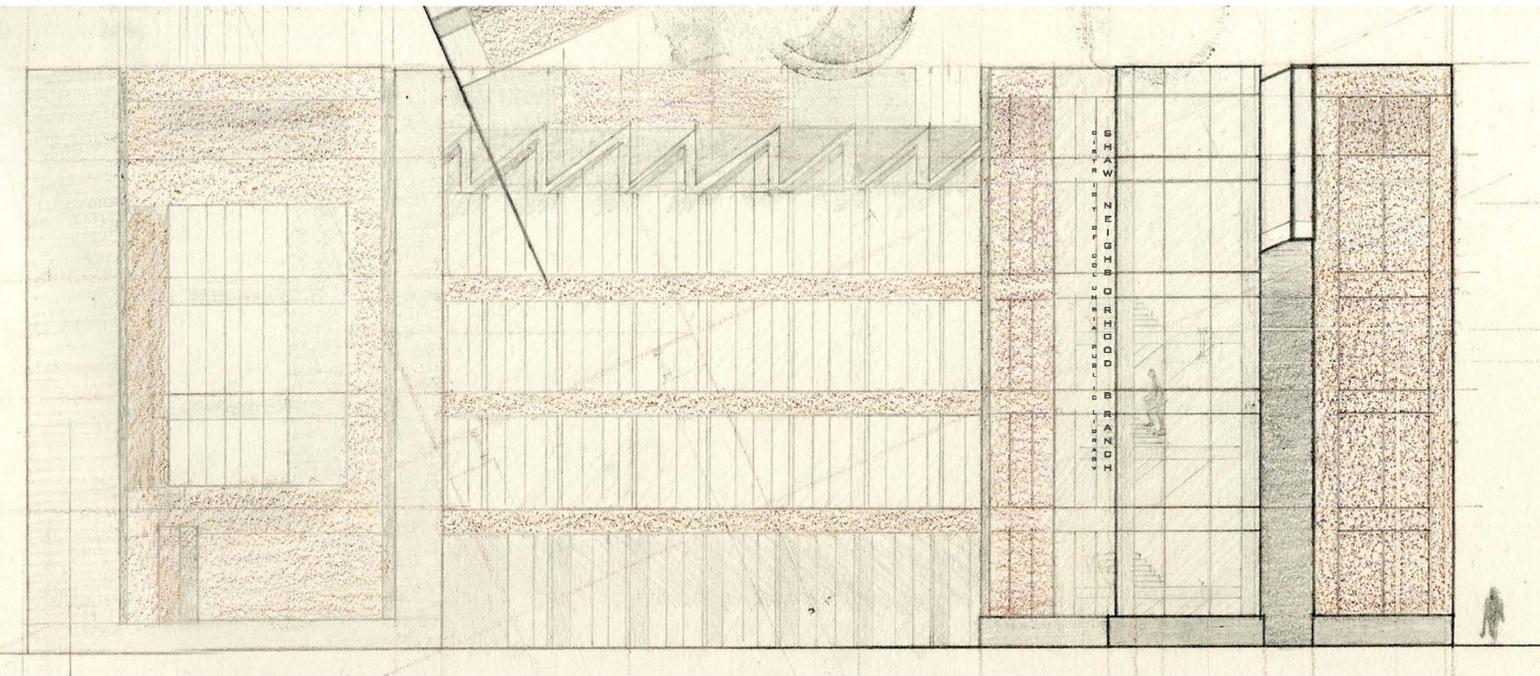


A glass-enclosed stair tower terminates the library at 7th Street, taking command of the intersection. An imposing form by day and a lantern by night, the tower acts as a signal to the neighborhood.



[Opposite] East Elevation

[This Page] Working Model



"I felt the reading room would be where a person is alone near a window, and I felt that would be a private carrel, a kind of discovered place in the folds of construction."

--Louis Kahn, on the Phillips Exeter Library¹⁰

The Second and Third Floors each are home to rows of stacks in the center of the room, with circulation along either side. Flanking rows of massive columns produce a multitude of small, individual reading spaces along floor-to-ceiling glass curtain walls. Voids in the floors permit visual and audio connections across different levels of the building and allow northern daylight to penetrate deeper into the spaces.

10. Rommer, Heinz and Sharad Jhaveri. Louis I. Kahn: Complete Work 1935 - 1974. Boston: Birkhauser, 1987. p. 301.

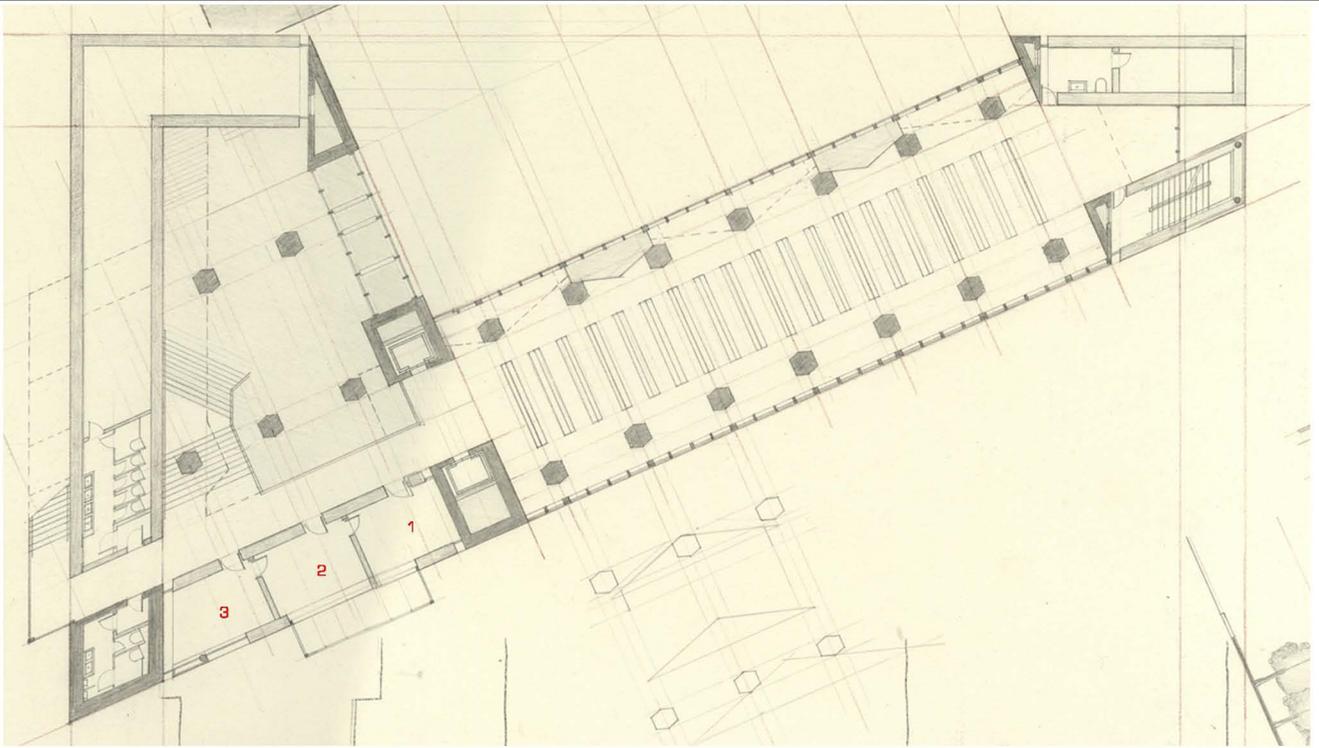
Kahn described his library as two concentric "donuts"; the outer of well-lit reading spaces, and the inner "where the books are stored away from the light."

2nd Floor Plan

1. Accessioning
2. Book Repair
3. Staff Lounge/Kitchen

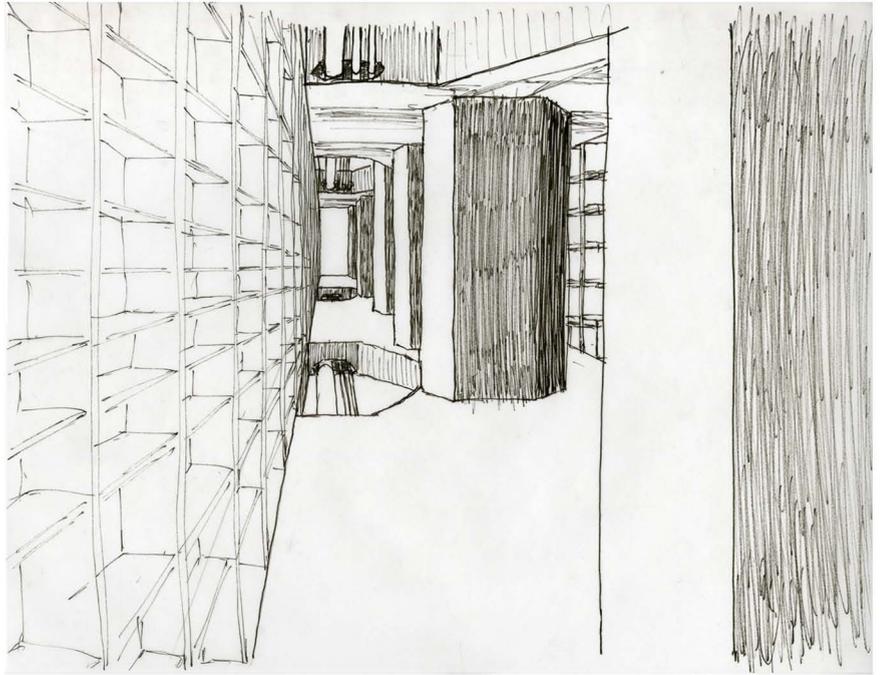
3rd Floor Plan

4. Staff Offices
5. Staff Conference Room
6. Computer Lab/Classroom
7. Public Conference Room



[Right] Sketch of 2nd floor
reading spaces, North side

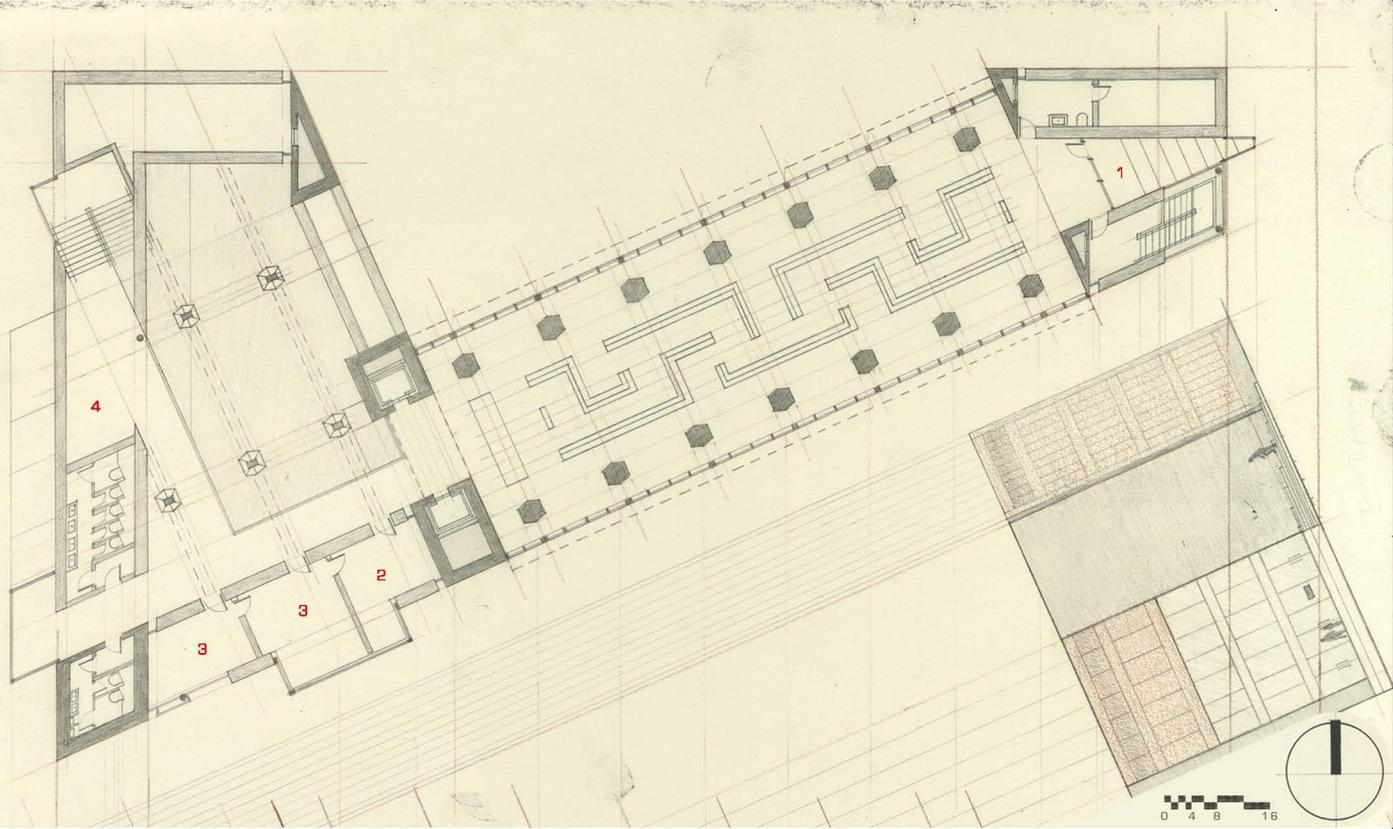
[Left] Working Model



The Children's Library on the fourth floor features maze-like stacks that lead young visitors to the storybook room, whose stepped floor pokes out over the sidewalk below. More reading spaces, for both children and parents, surround the columns. The office wing will accommodate space for classrooms and homework help programs.

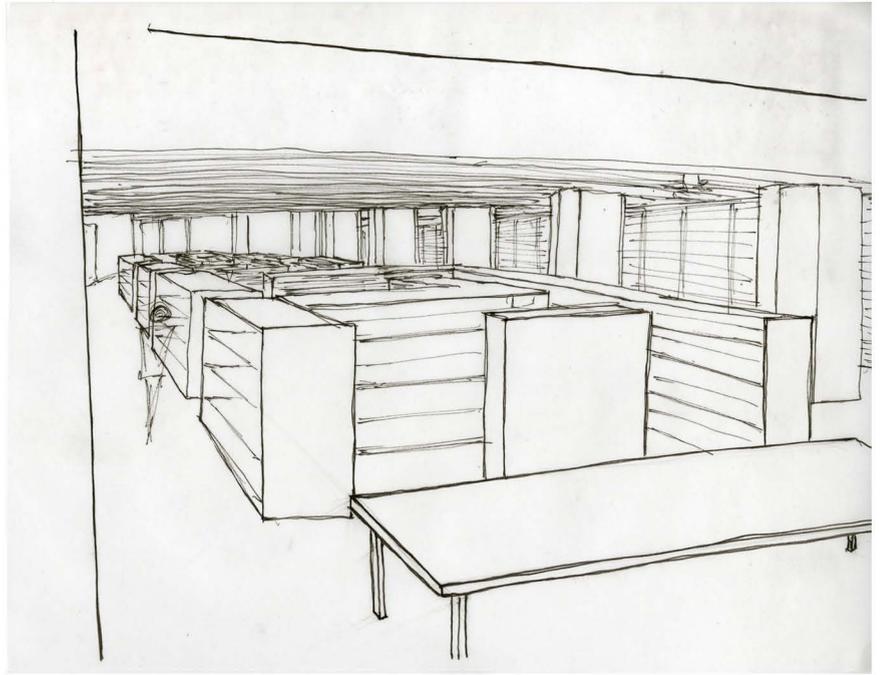
4th Floor Plan

1. Storybook Room
2. Staff Office
3. Homework Help/Classroom
4. Parent Lounge

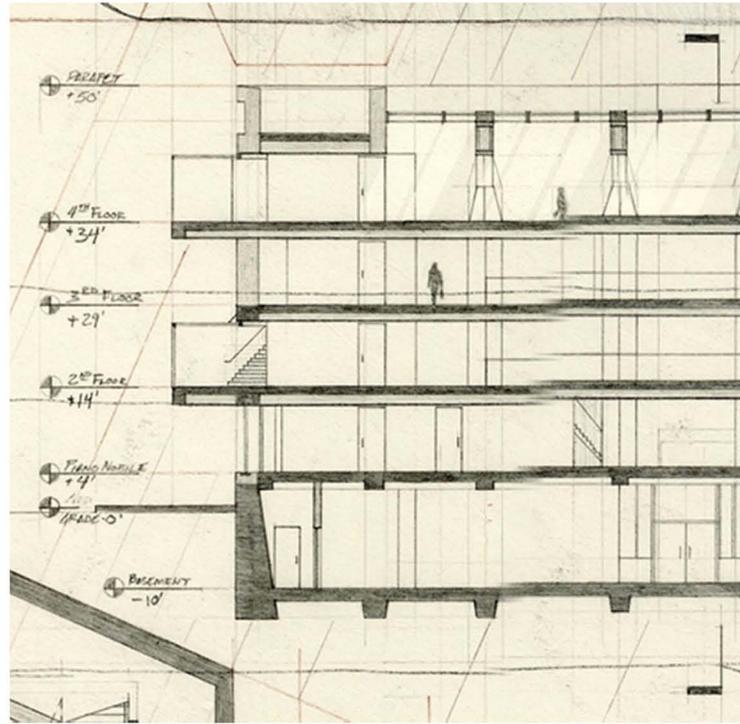


{Right} Sketch of Children's
Library, from West

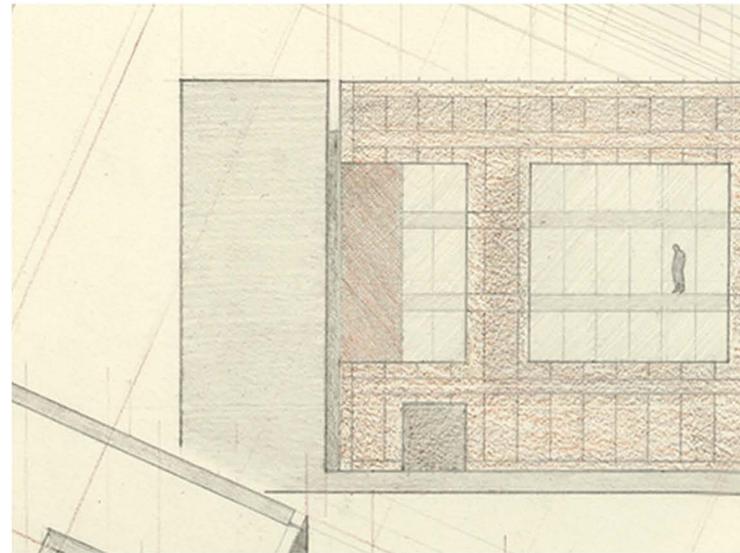
{Left} Working Model

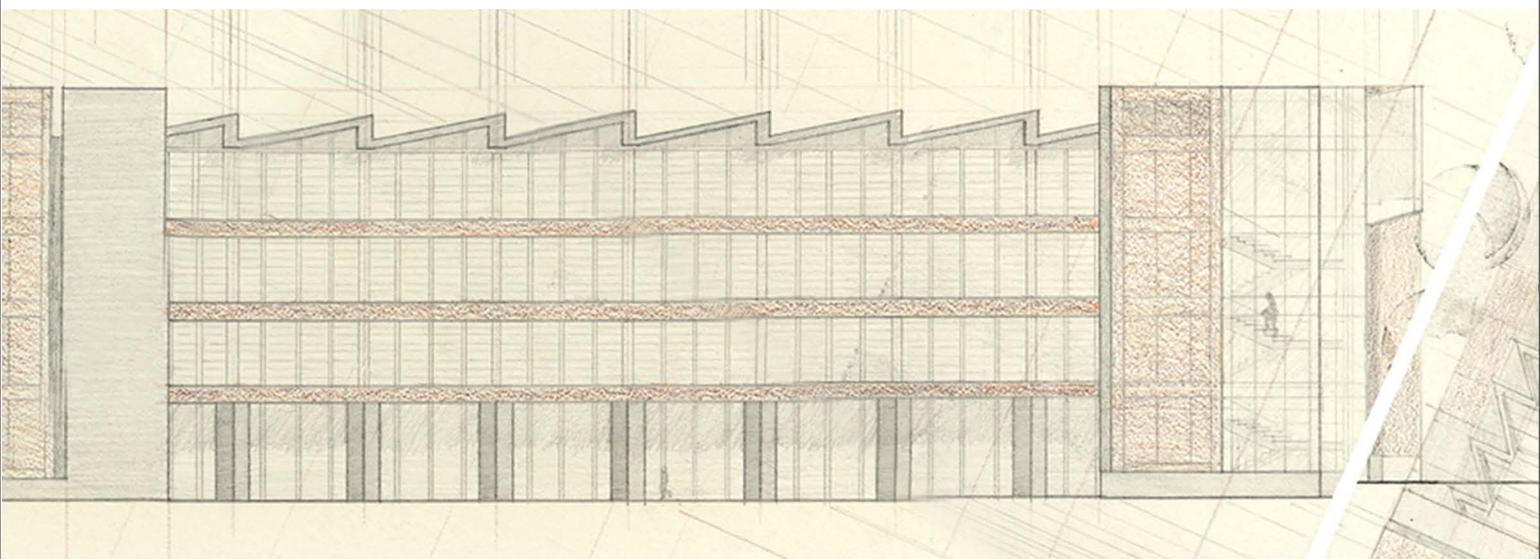
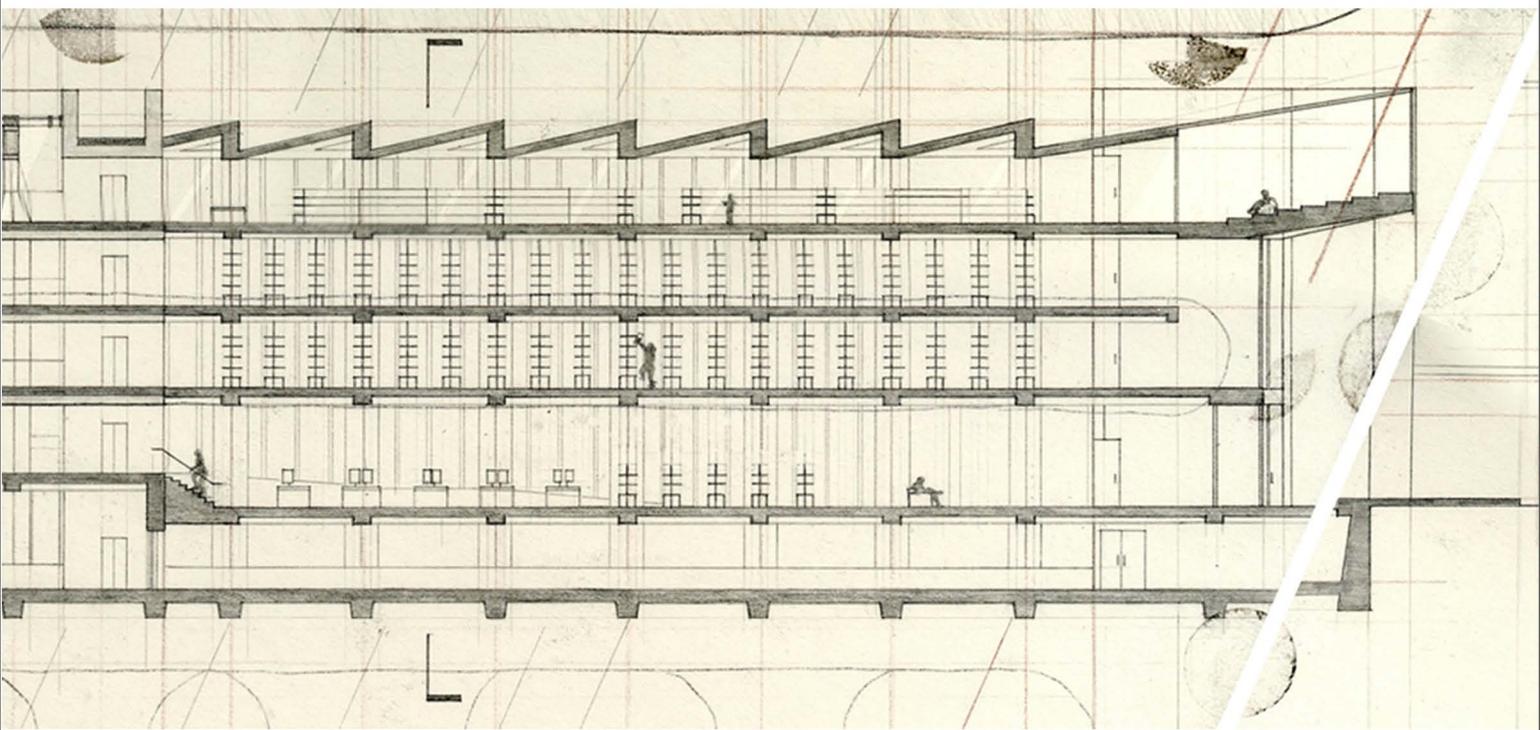


A saw-toothed roof covers the Children's Library, while clerestory windows in the concrete beams bring daylight into the room. One of the great challenges of the site is that, as a large "traffic island", the building cannot turn its back to any of its four sides. The saw-toothed roof helps bring variety to the Library's longest façade along Rhode Island Avenue. Additionally, a large "urban window" allows views into the office wing, while the loading dock below is recessed and partially hidden from view.



Long Section, view to the North
South Elevation





A final component important to a public library is a place for community members to assemble. At the assembly level, the Neighborhood Meeting Room is situated just below the Piano Nobile, with the remainder of this level available for storage and mechanical equipment.

Assembly Level Plan

1. Neighborhood Meeting Room
2. Coat Room
3. Mechanical/Storage Space

