

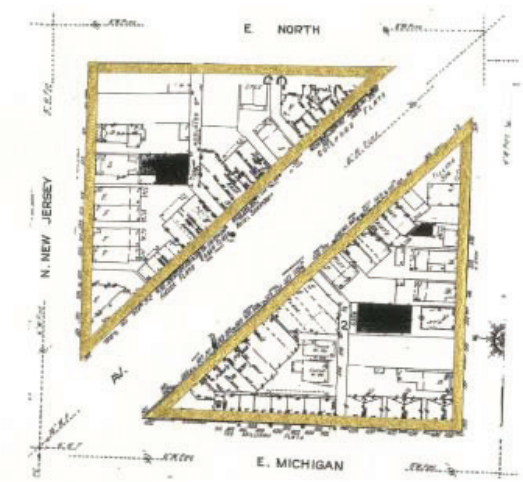
United States



Midwest



Massachusetts Avenue



500 Block

Architectural Regionalism in Indianapolis



Architectural Regionalism in Indianapolis

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v

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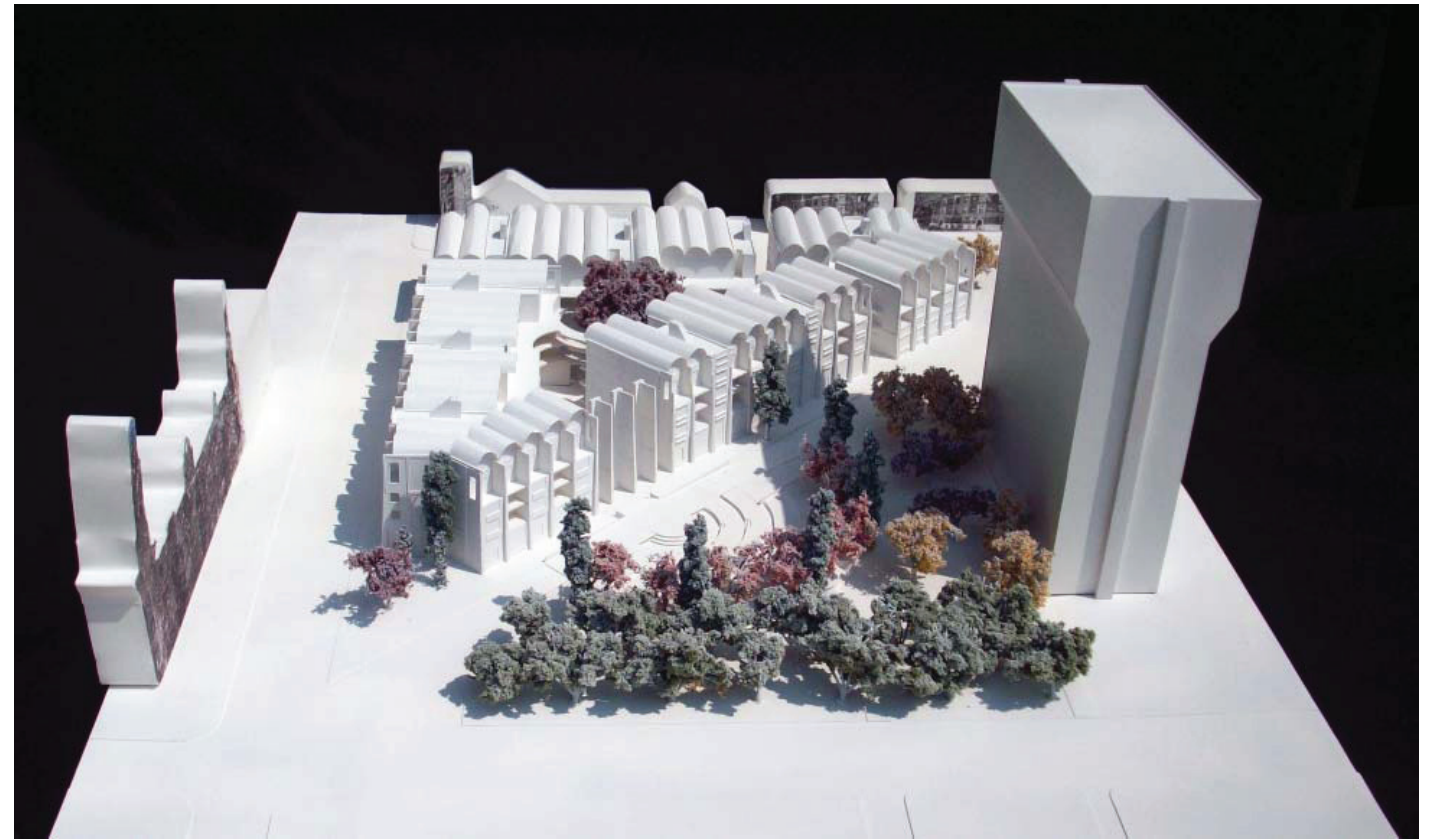
Cover Artwork by Jessica Turrin

Regional Architecture in Indianapolis
Jessica Turrin

Abstract

Regional architecture defines a type of architecture that adapts to the everyday needs of a people and is constructed by the building methods and materials of the region. Regions do not have clear boundaries, but are largely defined by the conditions of nature: climate, soil, topography, vegetation, water. Through this thesis project I have tried to create a regional architecture in Indianapolis, Indiana that embraces the surrounding context, but does not imitate the architecture of the past, through a mixed-use building for everyday life.

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² View of the Elevation from the Plaza

Dedication

The evolution of this project is dedicated to all those who have encouraged and inspired me to follow through with my commitment to this architectural education. I give many thanks to God, my family, all of the faculty members - especially my committee, the WAAC community, and most especially Gustavo de Jong. I owe my desire to graduate and discover the meaning of this architectural education to all of you.

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Introduction

Property abandonment is a national phenomenon that reflects economic and demographic shifts within American society. In the Midwest, the loss of manufacturing jobs, construction of the interstate system, and changing consumer demands helped fuel residential growth toward the periphery of cities which resulted in the abandonment of many inner-city homes - jeopardizing many neighborhoods. The purpose of this thesis project is to build upon Indianapolis' efforts to revitalize inner-city neighborhoods by focusing on a site that will have a great impact on the community; I found this potential on the near eastside along Massachusetts Avenue.

The character of Massachusetts Avenue reflects the small town nature of the City of Indianapolis. It is like a main street. Unlike the narrow storefronts that decorate the colonial towns of the East Coast, Massachusetts Avenue was originally aligned with mixed-use buildings that were much wider - some possibly taking half a block - and ranging from two to five stories. Directly off of the avenue are wood frame single family homes, a living choice that eliminated the possibility of a building typology that would support a more gradual transition in population density such as townhomes or rowhouses. This choice was a result of the landscape and culture at the time: flat fertile land for westward pioneers. Massachusetts Avenue developed into a small live-work community that reflected the regional nature of the architecture.

The regional architecture of Massachusetts Avenue is immediately revealed in the solid brick buildings that adorn the street with their decorative brick forms or limestone patterns. The economics and process of making brick has changed, resulting in the relocation

of brick manufacturing. However, a few inches below your feet on Indiana land is clay and about an hour and a half south is quarried

limestone. These were the materials of the time, but today's materials and building methods seek to integrate the wonders of steel, concrete, and glass. The choice of materials became a great challenge in this project, but as the design evolved, the materials revealed themselves.

The architecture of today, especially in Indianapolis, unfolds a cultural preference to economic efficiency and immediate comfort. Through the exploration of this thesis project, I have designed a building that is responsive to the climate, cultural values, and programmatic needs of downtown Indianapolis. Such a specific response to the local needs of a place is defined as regional architecture. An awareness of regional architecture in Indianapolis can inspire future designs in the greater metropolitan area to become spaces and places that celebrate life, community, and nature through a strong architectural language. In the following essay written to the citizens of Indianapolis, I will further explain the necessary role of regional architecture in Indianapolis, which has served as the foundation for the choices I made throughout this architectural exercise.



³ Monument Circle

Architectural Regionalism in Indianapolis

It is through our leadership and mentality that this most beloved Hoosier Capital shall succeed economically in order to also flourish as a vibrant city in conjunction with its architecture. Mindful of our role, may my thoughts be long, and my written words short with respect to time.

Indianapolis' inner city has been struggling to maintain a vibrant population and it is because of this concern that I address the local citizenry. Architecture is born of its age and environment. Our city was born through the hard labor of immigrants and was nurtured by industrialization. Industrialization was not a time of glamour and beautification, rather of industrial innovation, mechanical power, and efficiency. Our fertile flat land and transportation advancements created a breed of Mid-Westerners, who deserted the vision of a city environment with dense housing, but rather chose to create a city of predominantly single family houses.

Beautiful buildings adorn our streets, however there are many gaps in-between that prevent community life from emerging; for a building is brought to life when set between others abutting the street, thus creating a stage ripe for action. To maintain a vibrant population, there is a need to balance public and private spaces through the forthcoming architecture of Indianapolis; this architecture should emerge from the inherent nature of the region. The Mayor's distinguished authority grants him the power to guide development worthy to go down as one of his many achievements and it is for this reason as citizens of Indianapolis, we must foster and understand how regional architecture will contribute to the identity and future care of this city.

Human character is a product of its environment. First, at the most influential and intimate scale, character is a product of the family; second, a product of the community; and third, a product of the region. These three most defining character groups have no definitive physical boundary and are ever-changing in composition. It is important to clarify that while the neighborhood, city, county, state and nation influence character, their influence is based on more permanent physical boundaries which are purposefully separated for governance and provide for a definite place of origin. Regionalism itself "assumes no all inclusive or single exclusive force or panacea; rather as a comprehensive tool, it assumes approximation and direction in the sum total of achievements of which it is itself a part."¹

The origin of the word "region" dates to the early 14th century Latin word "regionem", meaning: direction, boundary, district and its Latin root word "regere", meaning: to direct or rule. In essence, these two words describe a region as an area of land that is under the direct rule of distinct character, not necessarily political governance.² The greatest governors of a region include "a complex of land, water, air, plant, animal and man regarded in their spacial relationship as together constituting a definite, characteristic portion of the Earth's surface"³, simply said, the greatest governor of a region is nature. The modern (1985) interpretation of regionalism "carries implications of a valuably distinctive way of life, especially in relation to architecture and cooking."⁴ However, we have endured a period of development in the past century that divorced itself from its region wherever possible in order to achieve a new scale of economic efficiency achievable through technology. The dominance of artificial environments and the subsidized costs of transportation have subjected architecture to

uniformity and sterilization, diminishing the true architecture of the region.

Through this account, we must come to understand the reasons and consequences for reconsidering an architectural regionalism in Indianapolis. My hypothesis is: If man is able to embrace nature and use it as the primary influence of his creation, then the physical character of the environment should exhibit a stronger connection to place. When there is a strong connection to place, one can assume that there would be a greater permanence to place. As one who was dearly loved and cared for in his childhood will never abandon his parents until their death, so will there be a similar connection to a place that has cared for its inhabitants: its inhabitants will care for it.

True regionalism is created by accentuating and building upon the inherent strengths of a place. In the following discussion, I will reveal why we deviated from designing with nature, how the historic and most influential architectural treatises of Vitruvius and Alberti address regionalism, and what architects should reconsider when designing for a regional architecture today.

Religion and Nature

In the Christian, Islamic and Judaic faiths God created everything out of love for humankind. God invites his creation to use the flora and fauna for their survival when He says in Genesis 1.28, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.” Ian McHarg, an influential Scottish landscape architect of the 20th century, believes that the failure of cities

in the western world is a result in our “prevailing values...that the world consists solely of a dialogue between men and God, while nature is a faintly decorative backdrop to the human play. If nature receives attention, then it is only for the purpose of conquest, or even better, exploitation.”⁵ However, it is my belief that this passage in Genesis is often mistaken for what really has degraded our environment: the human error of greed and gluttony.

God does invite humans to live off of the flora and fauna for survival and to subdue the earth in order to form communities that provide protection and food, but in no way can man subdue the power of the water, wind, or sun, or survive without the flora and fauna. God offers us these gifts to meet our daily needs of food, shelter, clothing, and beauty with the responsibility to be stewards of nature. In the Bible, He says in Jeremiah 2.7, “I brought you into a plentiful land to eat its fruits and its good things. But when you entered, you defiled my land and made my heritage an abomination.” The origin of our destruction is the result of greed and gluttony, God encourages moderation, almsgiving, and to dispose of our earthly desires.

Humankind and Nature

It is important to also go back in time and understand the primitive hunter-gatherer society which McHarg praises as the most sustainable example of a balanced relationship with nature. The Iroquois tribe had great respect for Mother Nature, specifically for the bear which provided them excellent hide, meat, and oil for cooking. When the bear was found, the men would “precede the kill by a long monologue in which the needs of the hunter were fully explained and assurances were given that the killing was motivated by need, not the wish to

dishonor.”⁶ This deep understanding of the animal to their survival and the respect that they exhibited to the animal is rarely present in our consumptive culture today, because we have no relationship to the animal or to the person who prepared the animal for our needs.

The primitive societies of South and Central America also balanced their needs with the limitations of nature in order to protect their children’s future which was imbedded in the agricultural productivity of the land.⁷ When man is aware that his survival is based on nature, he treats it with respect; however, a life void of a relationship with nature can lead to a mentality of exploitation. Modern buildings in the city are stripped of the laws that govern nature and their energy consumption is now a great concern of cities today. No longer is a building the product of its region, rather it is solely the product of man’s desire.

Technology and Nature

An in depth explanation and analysis of the development of our values and technology would be an ideal contribution to our understanding of how architecture has reached its current state, but in lieu of a lengthy explanation I will jump directly to my observation: artificial lighting and heating and cooling systems dominate our architecture today because we have given them complete control of the elements, which has encouraged us to design buildings staged in our imagination without the qualities of the site; if wholly considered, each building would bring out the true character of the region. The economic desire for efficiency has guided us to use technology as architecture rather than complementing architecture with technology.

In 1955, Lewis Mumford wrote, “Instead of the architect’s paying

attention to exposure, natural circulation, and direct daylight, and making a layout which will achieve these necessary ends, he is forced to center his efforts on the maximum exploitation of land. Where the natural factors are flouted or neglected, the engineer is always ready to provide a mechanical substitute – ‘just as good as the original’ and much more expensive.”⁸ Since the advent of artificial light and ventilation, the architect has lost control of the most important design elements –light and air – surrendering to technology experts and clients. McHarg, identifies the architect as the mediator between man and nature, he says, “The engineer’s competence is not the design of highways, merely of the structures that compose them – but only after they have been designed by persons more knowing of man and the land.”⁹

A Regional Architecture

There needs to be a shift in how we coexist with nature. We must attune our needs to fit in with those of nature too. “The sun, moon and stars, the changing seasons, seedtime, and harvest, clouds, rain and rivers, the oceans and the forests, the creatures and the herbs are all essential partners in survival and involved in the creation of the future.”¹⁰ God gave humankind nature for their needs, not for the endless satisfaction of our desires. A balance needs to be found between the natural environment of the region and technology. Revisiting the architectural treatises of Vitruvius (80 BC-15 BC) and Leon Battista Alberti (1404-72) will allow us to reconsider our methodologies of design within the Indianapolis region today.

Climate

Vitruvius, a Roman architect and father of the architectural treatise, and Alberti, an Italian architect and rebel son to the original treatise, both revealed that the architect’s primary objective before designing a building was to choose a region that would support and contribute to the health, safety, demeanor, materials, and the potential for a prosperous community. The choice of a healthy and safe site was determined by the climate, for “it is no doubt that any defect of land or water could be remedied by skill or ingenuity, no device of the mind or exertion of the hand may ever improve climate appreciably.”¹¹

The ideal climate described in both treatises suggests a temperate climate, with average rainfall, void of marshes, because Vitruvius finds that the mist of the marsh “will mingle with the poisonous breath of the creatures which will waft into the bodies of inhabitants, making the site unhealthy.”¹² If a temperate climate is not possible, then let the locality be somewhat cold and arid than too hot and humid because Alberti claims that moisture will “make a man’s body languid, and heat will cause it to wilt.”¹³ Each person has a natural tolerance for certain climates, however a temperate climate is the most tolerable of all.

Health

After the choice of an agreeable climate comes the test of a healthy site. The water and soil were tested for its ability to produce food that “made the liver sound and firm.”¹⁴ The liver of a cow on site would be inspected for its color and any abnormalities. If the animal liver was deemed ill then the assumption was made that the people would suffer from a similar illness. The health of the natural environment is reflected through the health of its inhabitants.

People

Once a man settles a region and claims it for the future of his own people, they will – with time – adapt physically and mentally to that region according to the climate and landscape. Even as far back as Vitruvius, people have recognized that the differences among groups of people are a result of their climate. Vitruvius clarifies why we must construct according to the climate and characteristics of a region, when he says, “Now if it is a fact that countries differ from one another, and are of various classes according to climate, so that the very nations born therein naturally differ in mental and physical conformation and qualities, we cannot hesitate to make our houses suitable in plan to the peculiarities of nations and races, since we have the expert guidance of nature herself ready to our hand.”¹⁵ Architecture reflects our relationship to nature and technology, as well as, shares with each new generation an interpretation of the region. The true architecture of a region will withstand and adapt to changing times.

Refinement

Unlike today, the ability for a self-sustaining community was necessary in determining the future of an area. Alberti confirmed that “the authors of antiquity considered the ideal location for a city to be one that provided for all its requirements from its own territory and would not need to import anything, as far as human needs could be calculated and circumstances would allow.”¹⁶ Through the response of one’s own needs through one’s own means, the character and culture of the region developed. The dependence upon one’s region to produce basic needs – such as food, shelter, and clothing – rendered distinct materials and methods of production that refined overtime. The refinement of a skill or trait develops culture and defines the region.

Material

Once the fertility and comfort of a place were determined favorable, the site and materials of the new building were considered. Alberti recommended that buildings “should be made of whatever is available, and care must be taken to ensure, first, that only the most manageable and convenient materials are procured, and second, that in the process of construction all the right materials are used in the right places.”

¹⁷ The materials of the building would be based upon the necessity and materials available. Wood, stone, and brick are the most basic building materials and are particular in composition and character to every region. Trees are unlike one another in composition. Vitruvius describes various types of wood based on their composition of the elements: earth, moisture, air, and fire. The varying proportions of the elements makes some wood better for carving, others for framing, and a select few for foundations. The qualities of stone and brick vary too. The color, density, strength and availability of stone and clay are particular to their region and allow for creative applications and uses. Building materials should respect and reflect the character of the region in order to be in harmony with its climate.

Design Today

We must begin to change the way we design today! Our architectural decisions should be made with the intention of balancing the light and air to create a temperate climate within our buildings. Instead of using mechanical systems to acclimatize our homes, we should rediscover how to provide comfort naturally. Our modern errors are due in part to how we situate our buildings, incorrect proportions, and a lack of architectural elements.

The location of our buildings to the sun and seasonal winds are no longer considered because technology has intervened. In a cold climate the greatest amount of glazing should not face north, nor should all the bedrooms face north, rather libraries and summer rooms should. The bedrooms of children and grandparents should be bathed with sun for they will use their rooms more on a daily basis, and so on.

The proportions of our buildings and their spaces often do not contribute to a regional architecture. Ceiling height, room depth, and the dimensions of openings are often unbalanced. The reintroduction of functional architectural elements should also be studied in depth; two examples are roof overhangs and window shutters. Depending on the climate, roof overhangs and porches should not be designed for style, rather for sun protection. If the architect is addressing the sun through a purely functional element, then a deep roof overhang should be built, and if for recreation – a covered porch or balcony should be built. Window shutters today are solely an adornment nostalgic of the past; however, shutters have a distinct purpose for protection from the natural elements. These examples show succinctly how we have deviated from a regional architecture and how we can reconsider our architectural choices. For if every building were designed with consideration to its region, then our present architecture and development patterns would grow in relationship with our inmost personal and community needs that physical environment can offer.

My Request

For a built environment that exhibits high standards of quality and regional innovation to emerge we need clients and developers with a

willingness to invest in architecture; this has been an issue for ages. Alberti explains the importance of investing in architecture when he says, “All care, all diligence, all financial consideration must be directed to ensuring that what is built is useful, commodious, yes – but also embellished and wholly graceful, so that anyone seeing it would not feel that the expense might have been invested better elsewhere.”¹⁸ If we can create a greater connection between people and place, then people will exhibit greater care for their environment and heritage.

All regions, however defined, have their particular character which is influenced by climate. Technology has transformed our lives to such an extent that it would nearly be impossible to continue our daily lives as we do now without it. The introduction of the mechanical system is a technological advancement that drastically altered architecture; it created a new form of architecture that cannot survive otherwise. Most of the new American architecture today cannot function without an artificial environment, which to a certain extent has divorced us from nature, while also creating sterile and uniform environments. Both Vitruvius and Alberti, authors of the oldest architectural treaties, nurtured a regional architecture because it was necessary. While our global economy has nearly made regional architecture inconvenient and uneconomical, Alberti reminds us why we are still attracted to it today:

“The pleasures in life are sweeter when available at home than when they must be sought from somewhere else.”¹⁹

Regional Art

The regional artists of the Midwest and South - who began to receive attention and praise in the 1930's - were seeking to express the values and culture of their region. Their motives and inspiration were a reaction to the avant-garde New York and Parisian art scenes.

Mynard Walker, an art dealer in New York City, concisely described the objective of Regional Artists when he stated in 1933:

“One of the most significant things in the art world today is the increasing importance of real American Art. I mean an art which springs from the American soul and seeks to interpret American life... much of the most vital art in America is coming out of our long backward Midwest.”²⁰



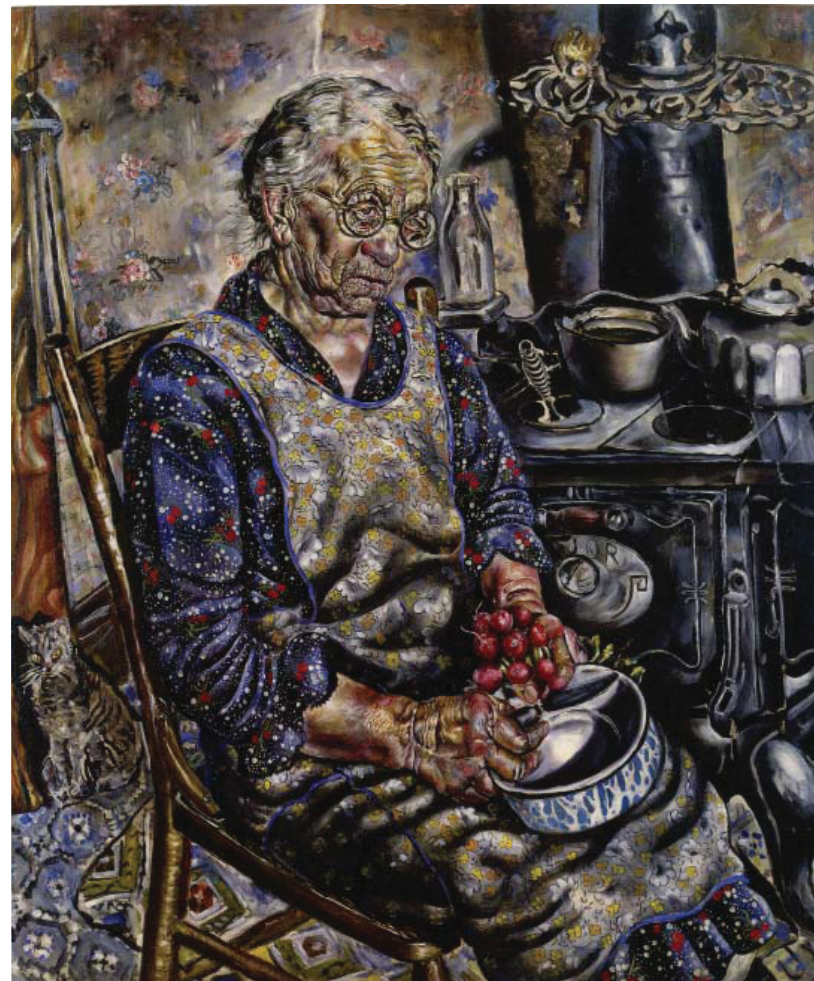
⁴ Achelous and Hercules

“Thomas Hart Benton, always provocative and controversial, had become an outspoken opponent of abstraction and New York museums, and he left New York and moved back to Missouri in 1935... Benton claimed that New York had lost its soul; the city he said, was ‘feeble and querulous and touchy’ and was marked by ‘snobbishness and superiorities.’ By contrast, the Midwest, Benton argued, was home to honest, hard working citizens who represented the ‘real’ America: ‘I had in mind,’ he wrote, ‘...to show that America had been made by the operations of people who as a civilization and as technology advanced, became increasingly separated from the benefits thereof.’”²¹



⁵ Stone City

“The painting also reveals something about Grant Wood’s attitudes regarding industrialization, for Stone City had once been a bustling town, home to many limestone quarries, but that era passed and the city reverted to its sleepy past. Wood depicts the city as a verdant farm town distinguished by pastures and rolling hills, thus implying that progress in the Midwest is measured differently than in places like New York.”²²



⁶ The Farmer's Kitchen

“The Regionalists attempted to describe America as a nation beholden to metropolitan values. Equally important, however, was that Wood and Benton redefined what it meant to be an artist in modern America; they demonstrated that artists could be independent, both ideologically and geographically of New York.”²³



⁷ Cultural Panel 9: Colleges and City Life

“Regionalism...I think that most people will agree, is less self-conscious, less abstract and philosophical. It is often a conscious program, but it’s turned upon itself; a cultivation of the local characters, the local customs, of the community for their own sake.”²⁴

- Allen Tate, Southern Agrarian Poet, 1931

Imagine Indianapolis

The physical image of Indianapolis has changed drastically within the last century. The following images will provide a sense of what Indianapolis was like when there was a greater regional dependence and inspiration for building methods and materials, as well as a preview into its transformation as a modern city. Although the city has created a modern image, the mentality of Indianapolis being a big town rather than a small city remains.

The accompanying excerpts are from *The Magnificent Ambersons* (1918), written by Booth Tarkington, a nationally renowned fiction novelist of the early twentieth century who was born and raised in Indianapolis. The most important aspect of this book is that it takes place on the Near Eastside neighborhood of Indianapolis, about a quarter mile from the thesis site. Tarkington spent most of his childhood and adolescent life in Indianapolis and thereafter moved to-and-fro the city until his death in 1946, so his description of the architecture and the culture of the time are accurate of what an active Indianapolis life was like before the multitude of technological and social aspects of the mid-twentieth century transformed downtown into a desolate place.



⁸ Corner of Meridian and Washington Streets

“It isn’t the distance from the center of a town that counts,’ said Eugene, ‘it’s the time it takes to get there. This town is already spreading; bicycles and trolleys have been doing their share, but the automobile is going to carry city streets clear out to the country line.”²⁵



⁹ Farmers Market

“They (the immigrant’s prosperous offspring) were happiest when the tearing down and building up were most riotous and when new factory districts were thundering to life. In truth, the city came to be like the body of a great dirty man, skinned, to show his busy works, yet wearing a few barbaric ornaments; and such a figure carved, colored and discolored, and set up in the marketplace, would have done well enough as the god of the new people.”²⁶



¹⁰ 1908 Hoosier Motor Club Meet at Monument

“Nor could its (automobile) passengers have endured such a thing, because the faster they were carried the less time they had to spare! In the days before deathly contrivances hustled then through their lives, and when they had no telephones - another ancient vacancy profoundly responsible for lesiure - they had time for everything: time to think, to talk, time to read, time to wait for a lady!”²⁷

“The city was so big, now, that people disappeared into it unnoticed, and the disappearance of Fanny and her nephew was not exceptional. People no longer knew their neighbors as a matter of course; one lived for years next door to strangers - that sharpest of changes since the old days - and a friend would lose sight of a friend for a year and not know it.”²⁸



¹¹ Washington Street, ca. 1900



¹² Washington Street, ca. 1970



¹³ Yant Apartments

“That is as bum as a house as any house I ever saw! Well, for instance, that house - well, it was built like a townhouse.”²⁹

“It was a house meant for a street in a city. What kind of house was that for people of any taste to build out here in the country?”³⁰



¹⁴ Man and Woman Stand in Front of Their Queen Anne Style Cottage

“Houses in the midland town were of pleasant architecture. They lacked style, but also lacked pretentiousness, and whatever does not pretend at all has style enough.”³¹



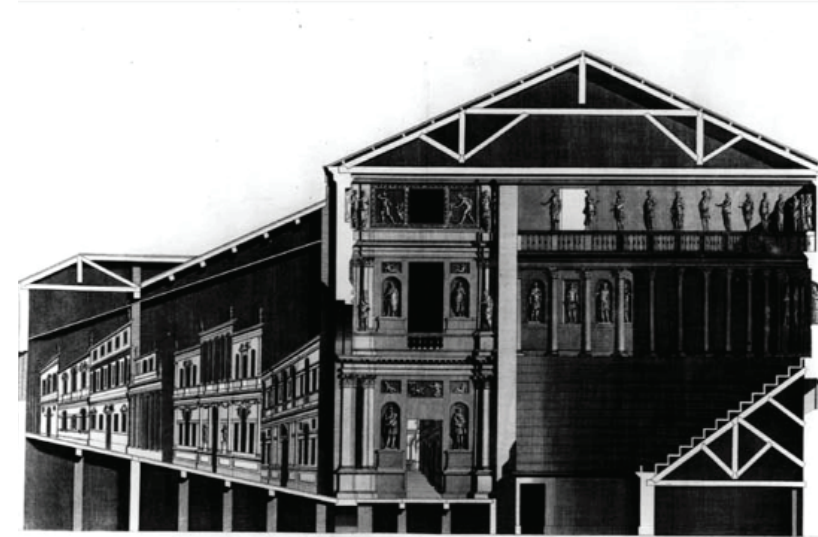
¹⁵ Abandoned Bates Hendricks Home

“The major was skeptical. ‘Dream on, fair son,’ he said. ‘It’s lucky for us that you’re only dreaming; because if people go to moving that far, real estate values in the old residence part of town are going to be stretched pretty thin.’”³²

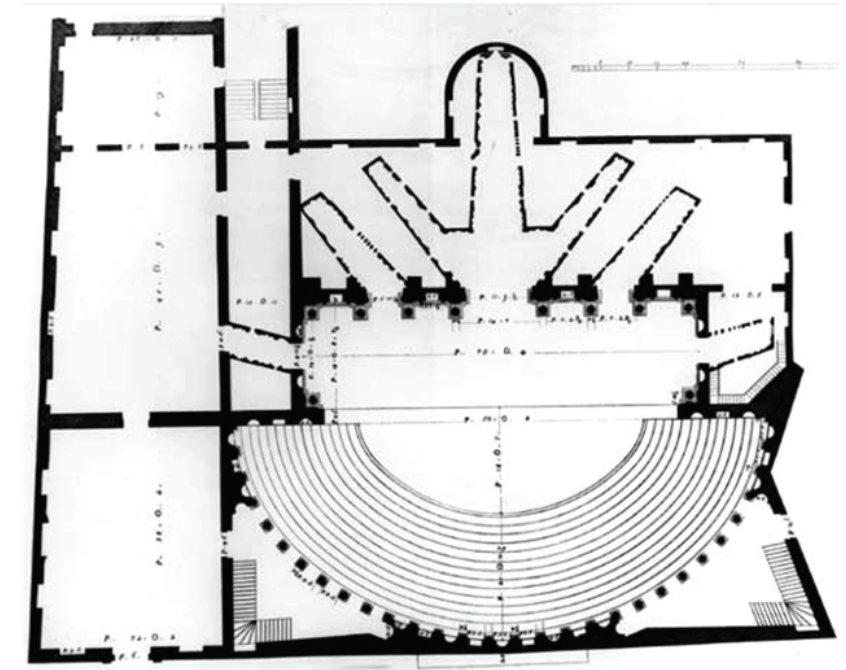
“I’m afraid so,” Eugene asserted. “Unless you keep things so bright and clean that the old section will stay more attractive than the new ones.”³³

Inspiration

Indianapolis is not known for its townhouses, rowhouses, or charming streets, rather it is known for its industrial character incarnated through the brick, steel, concrete, and glass that defined “industrial” in the early twentieth century. This industrial character is also reflected in the use of public and private space. Public spaces along commercial streets include the sidewalks and alleys -designated for trash, while private space is restricted to the interior building. Moving forward into the twenty-first century, we want our cities to orchestrate a wonderland where we can intertwine work, live, and play with safety, beauty, and public space. I was inspired by the intentions of the following architects to incorporate an element of wonder into my project that would allow Indianapolis residents to drift in and out of my theatrical set.

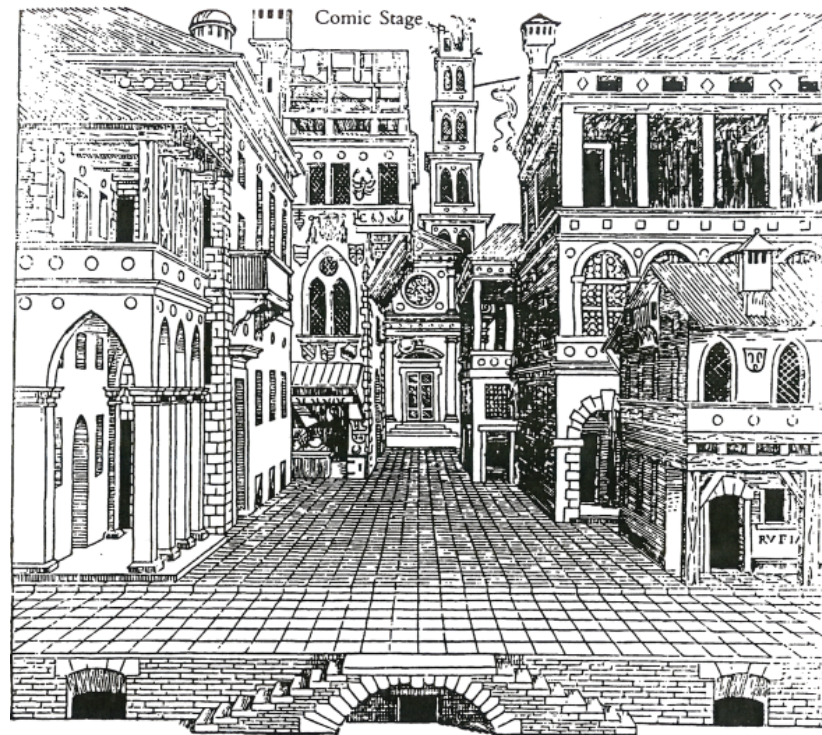


16 Teatro Olimpico Section



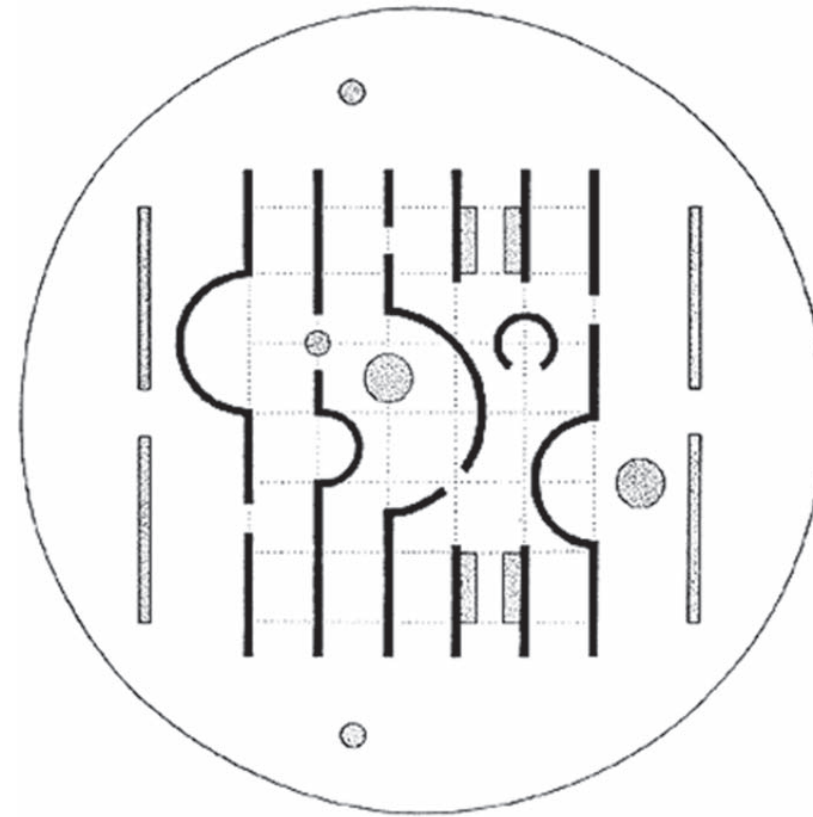
17 Teatro Olimpico Plan

The Teatro Olimpico, designed (1580) by Andrea Palladio, is an ingenious solution to the needs of the tragic and comic stage set because it is designed with a built in perspective of city streets. I imagine the interior courtyard spaces of the thesis project to have a similar purpose as the city streets in this stage set.



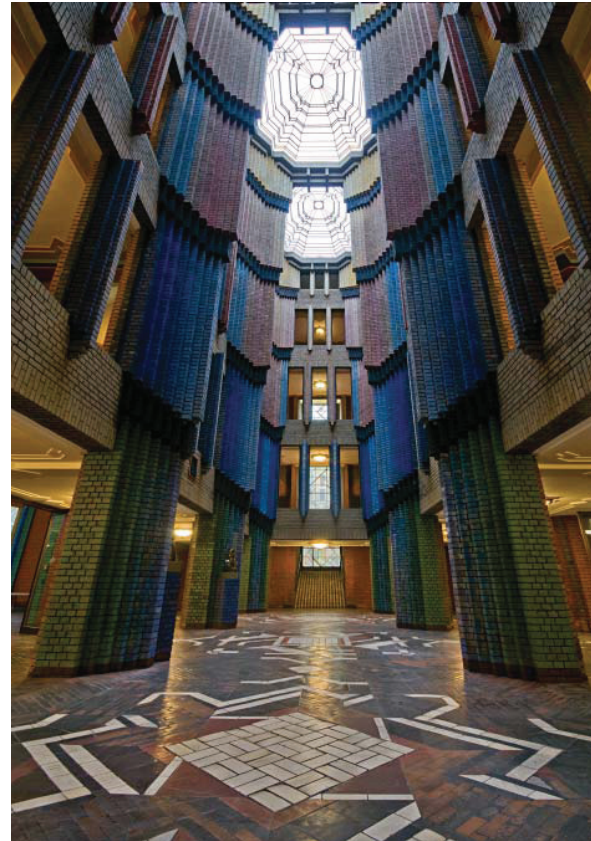
¹⁸ Comic Stage

Sebastiano Serlio devised three types of stage sets for the three traditional kinds of drama: tragedy, comedy, satire. The comic stage shown above, is a typical middle-class architecture from the Renaissance Italian cityscape. In this scene daily life occurs; merchants' houses, the church, balconies, watchtowers, and common building materials compose this set. In the thesis project, the relationship of the public plaza to the mixed-use development is like the relationship of an audience to this stage set.



¹⁹ Aldo Van Eyck Pavillion

The plan of this pavilion, housed at the Kröller Müller Sculpture Garden in Otterlo, Netherlands by Aldo Van Eyck, was my greatest inspiration. It is this plan graphic that encouraged me to see and use the wall as an architectural element and a priority - rather than an afterthought. The walls above follow one path, yet they have the opportunity to curve, break, or end. In this plan there exists an architectural language that I desired for my project.



²⁰ Farbwerke Hoechst

Peter Behrens designed the Farbwerke Hoechst in Frankfurt, Germany in 1920. It is a profound example of the beauty of brick. Although today's building materials have stripped brick of its structural and decorative qualities, this image reminds us that there is still much to explore in the world of brick.



²¹ Church of Christ the Worker at Atlántida, Uruguay

Fazlar Khan states that Eladio Dieste's work "...resulted in a significant architectural statement based on reason and the laws of nature in such a way that the resulting aesthetics may have a transcendental value and quality far beyond arbitrary forms and expressions that reflect the fashion of the time."³⁴

Site and Program

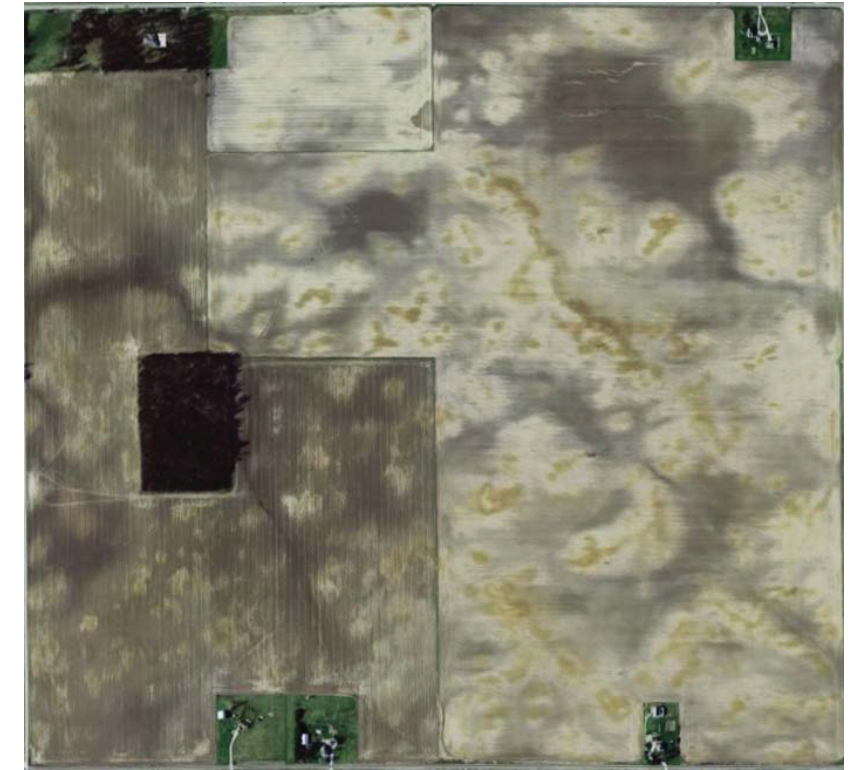
Indianapolis was masterplanned by Alexander Ralston, the assistant to Pierre L'Enfant for the Washington D.C. masterplan of 1791. A gridded street plan with four diagonals radiates from the central public space, known as Monument Circle. This plan covers one mile square, which was once assumed to be enough space for the city to grow; now it has sprawled to incorporate 372 square miles. Downtown Indianapolis has struggled to maintain healthy and vibrant inner-city neighborhoods, nonetheless the city's continuous efforts are showing results - especially around Massachusetts Avenue.

Massachusetts Avenue is Indianapolis' most promising commercial corridor. Since the 1980's there have been great efforts by business owners and the city government to nurture a thriving community long this avenue, and their efforts are showing significant results. Thinking about a site, I thought it would be wise to build upon Indianapolis' existing assets and choose a location that would be prime for redevelopment. The void created by the existing fire station resting on the 500 block of Massachusetts Avenue seemed ideal from many reasons. First, it is in the middle of one of Indianapolis' most popular arts, entertainment, and theatre destinations for residents and tourists. Second, two of the most visited performance venues downtown face the site: The Murat Theatre and The Rathskeller (German House). Third, the small park in front of Barton Tower is an ideal space to improve and expand upon as a public plaza. It was obvious that if this void was filled properly, then the connectivity of Mass Ave would significantly improve.

Two other factors that influenced major programmatic and design decisions were: 1) the need for an outdoor performance space - especially

for Fringe Fest and 2) the acknowledgement that the avenue is not a major thoroughfare, rather it is a local access street that runs eight blocks and funnels into 10th Street. For these reasons I have closed Massachusetts Avenue to through traffic and re-programmed the 500 block to serve as a public gathering and performance space where people can rest, meet their friends, people watch, and simply enjoy a beautiful day on the avenue.

The following images reveal the site.



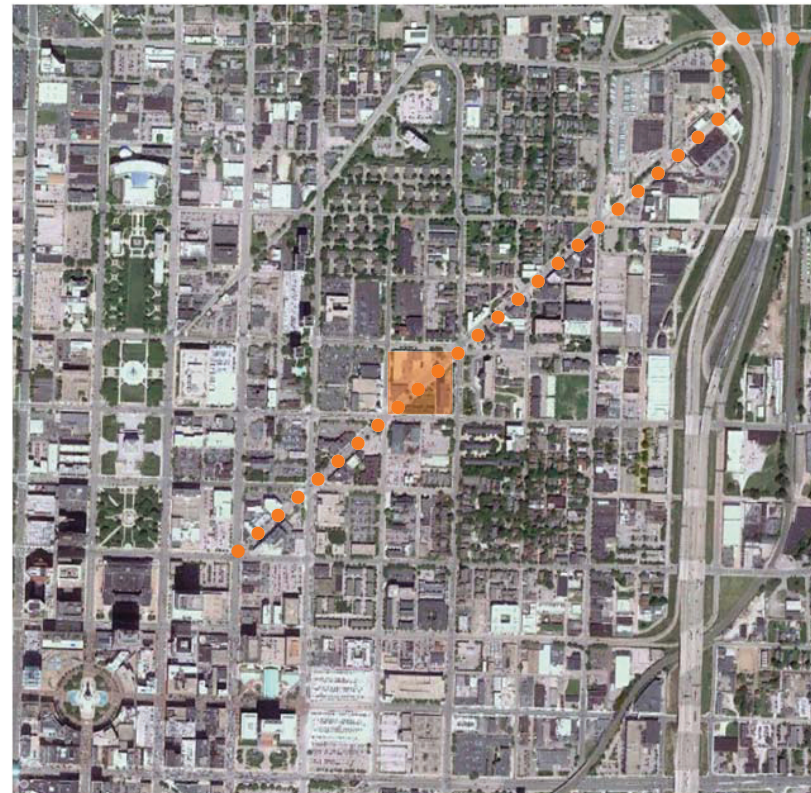
²² Indiana Farmland

One mile square showing Indiana farmland as compared to the one mile square plan of Indianapolis.



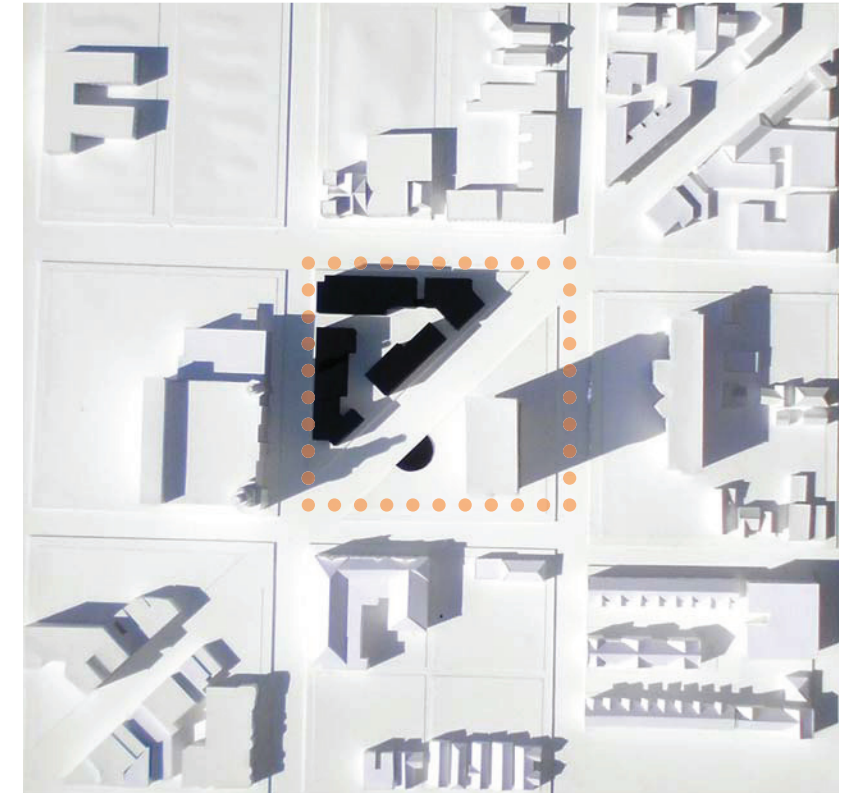
²³ Plat of the Town of Indianapolis, 1891

The Massachusetts diagonal designed in the Ralston Plan evolved as a mixed-use live-work avenue. Overtime, the factories left and so did residents, but over the past 30 years the Riley Area Development Corporation - in conjunction with merchants and residents - has used redevelopment grants and other funds to revive the corridor and re-engage residents.



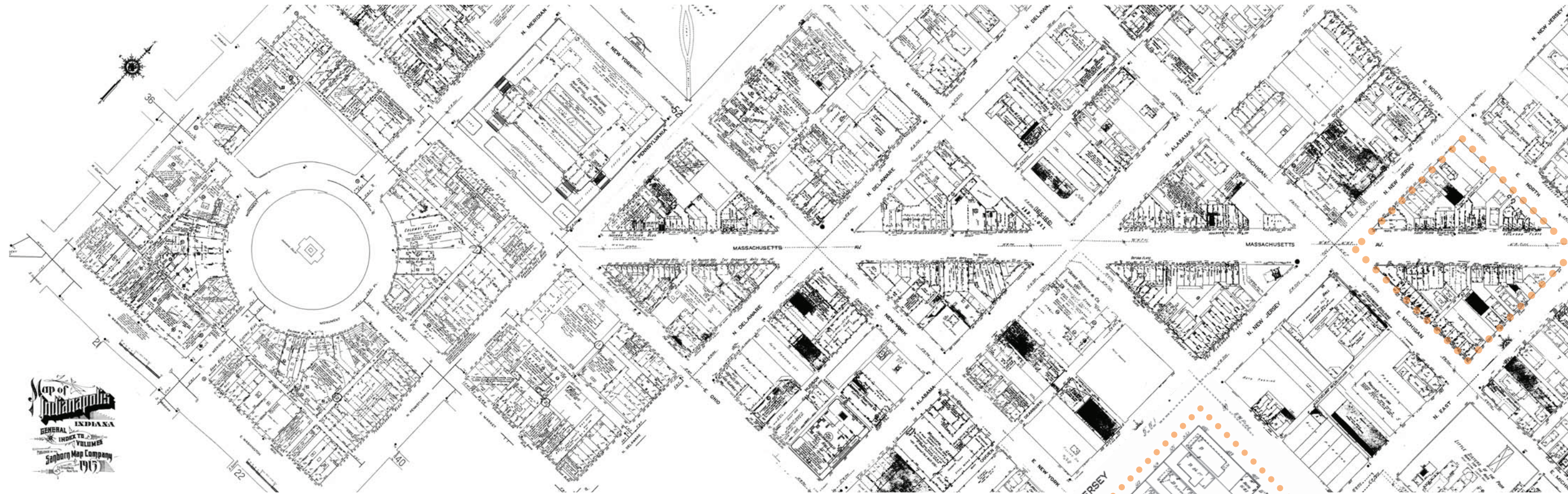
²⁴ Massachusetts Avenue

Massachusetts Ave. is no longer a thoroughfare it is a local access street. First, the interstate forever cut off the direct connection that Massachusetts Ave. had with the Cottage Home Neighborhood. Second, the 200 block has unincorporated the avenue and it is now a large tower. Third, the current entry to Massachusetts Ave. is off of Delaware St. and has been designed to calm traffic with the presence of a large pedestrian median and sculpture. Fourth, there are few public benches or public areas to rest, gather, or meet along the avenue. Fifth, the large void on the 500 block the avenue faces the two largest entertainment venues. Lastly, the end of the avenue -800 block- funnels traffic on to 10th street.



²⁵ Massing of Proposed Development

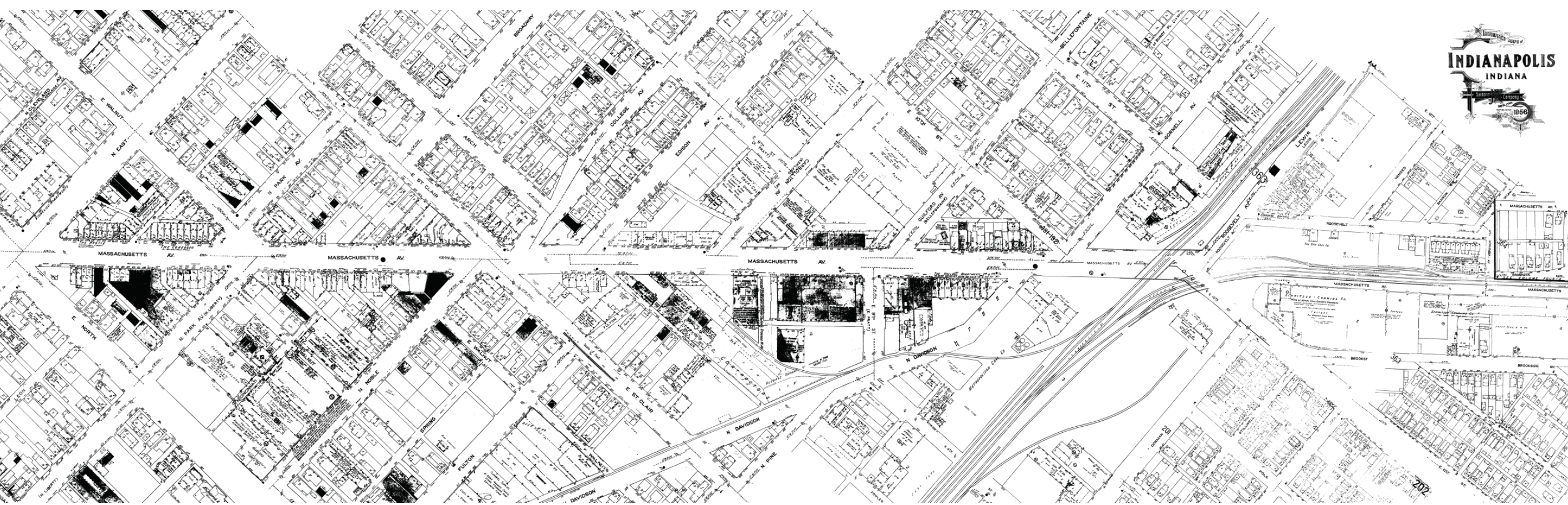
If the conditions listed prior are acknowledged - as well as the fact that Massachusetts Avenue is Indy's premier arts, entertainment, and theatre district - I propose that the avenue become a pedestrian via with a public performing plaza on the 500 block. This public plaza would also be complimented by a mixed-use development on the old fire station site.

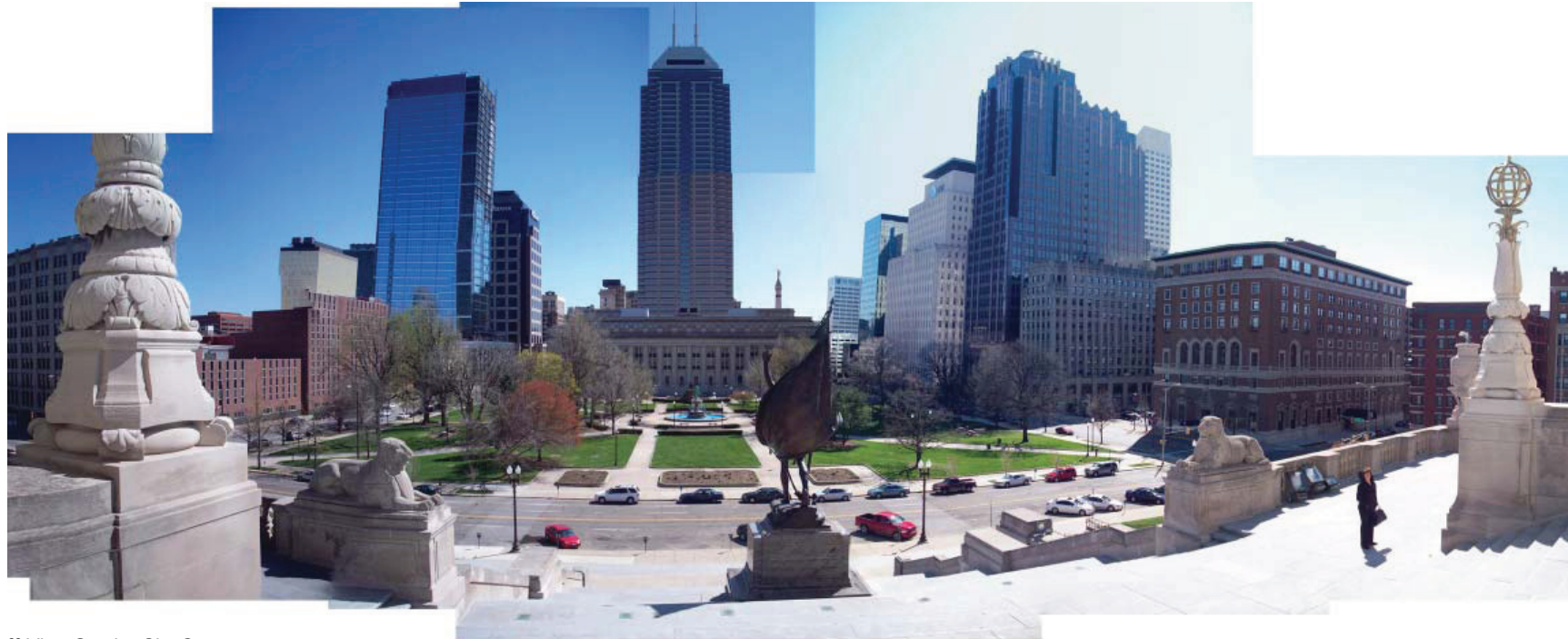


26 Massachusetts Avenue Sandborn Maps, 1915 - 1956
Before the Interstate and 200 Block Intervention



27 500 Block, 1915
The original site program supported flats, houses, and a hotel.





28 View South - City Center



29 View North - Away From City Center

1



30 German House

2

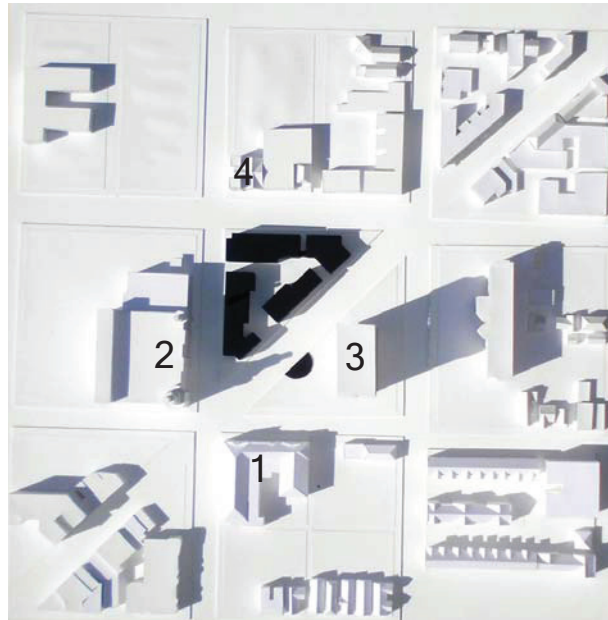


31 Murat Temple and Theatre

3



32 John J. Barton Apartments



33 Zion Evangelical United Church of Christ

4

34 300 Block NW



35 400 Block NW



36 500 Block NW





37 300 Block SE



38 400 Block SE



39 500 Block SE

40 600 Block NW



41 700 Block NW



42 800 Block NW





43 600 Block SE



44 700 Block SE

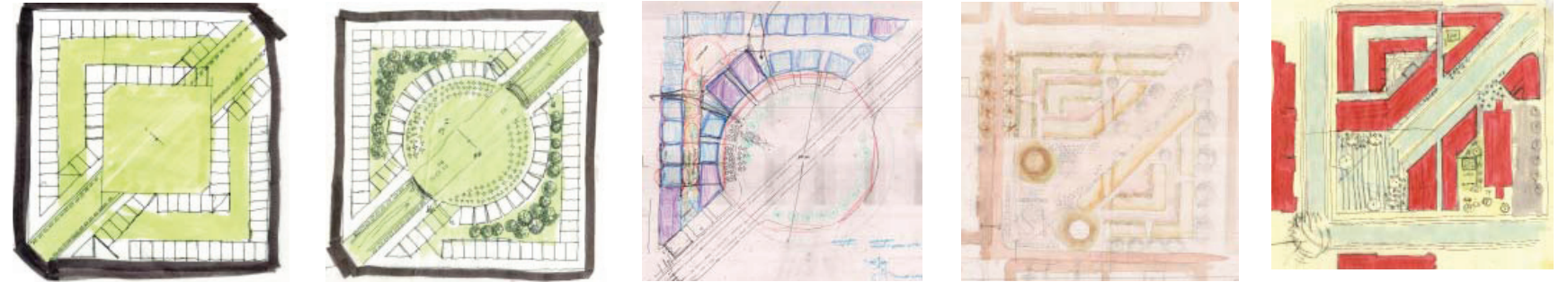


45 800 Block SE

Design Development

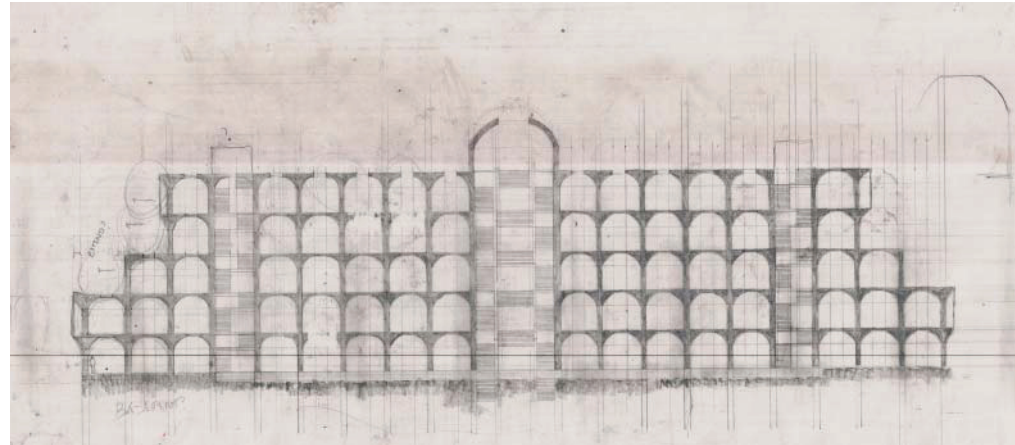
This project developed over a two year period, initially with much consideration to the site and later to the structure and details of the building itself. A mixed-use program, retail and apartments, with a public plaza and performance space was chosen in response to the character and needs of the avenue itself. Indianapolis is rich in formal public spaces that commemorate specific events and people, but it lacks public spaces programmed to meet the needs of everyday life. The plaza was designed to meet these everyday needs for gathering and entertainment. It was an obvious choice to continue the retail along the avenue in order to carry people's leisurely stride to-and-fro the full length of the avenue. Lastly, there is a need for more residents to support the retail business in the area, and for such a great location in the downtown, residential seemed key to its success.

The following images document the pivotal drawings and sketches that led to the final drawings.

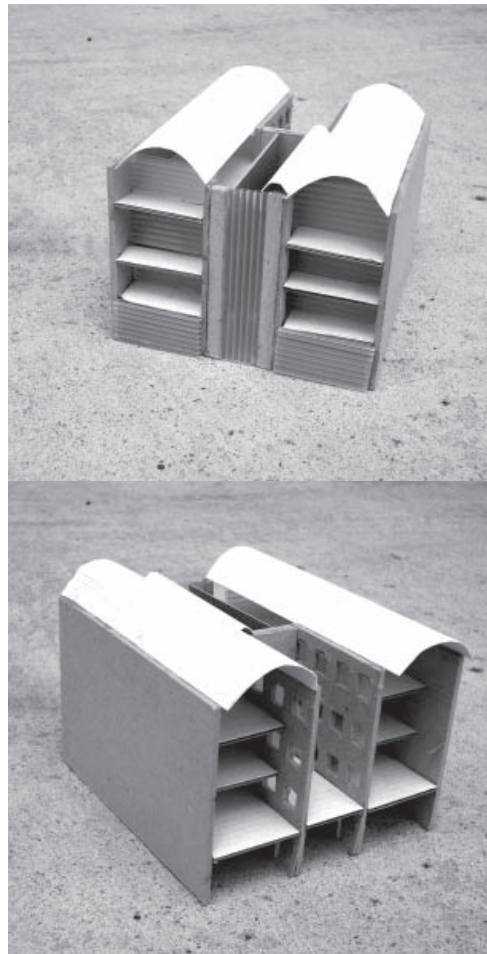


46 Schematic Plans and Study Models

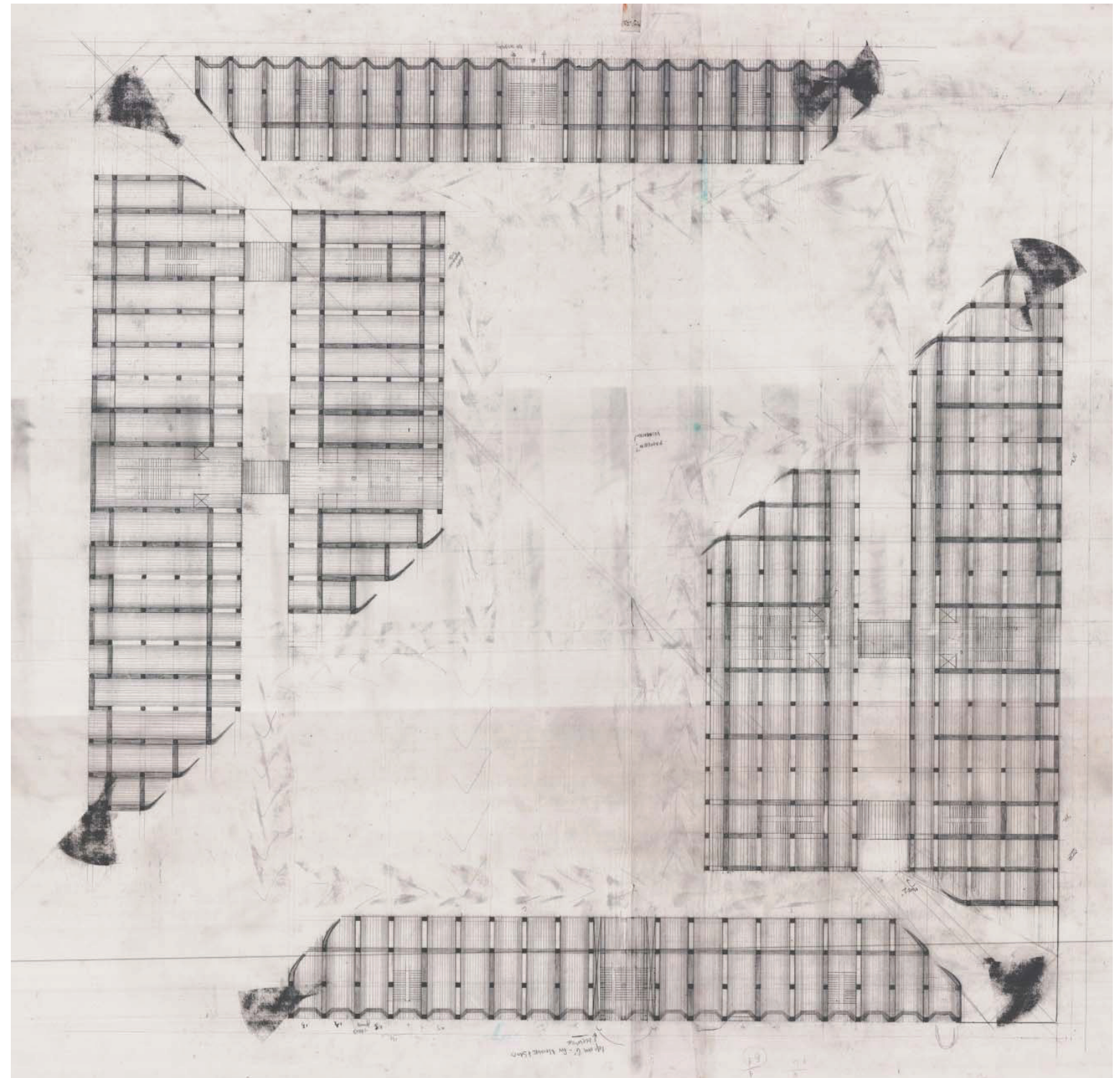
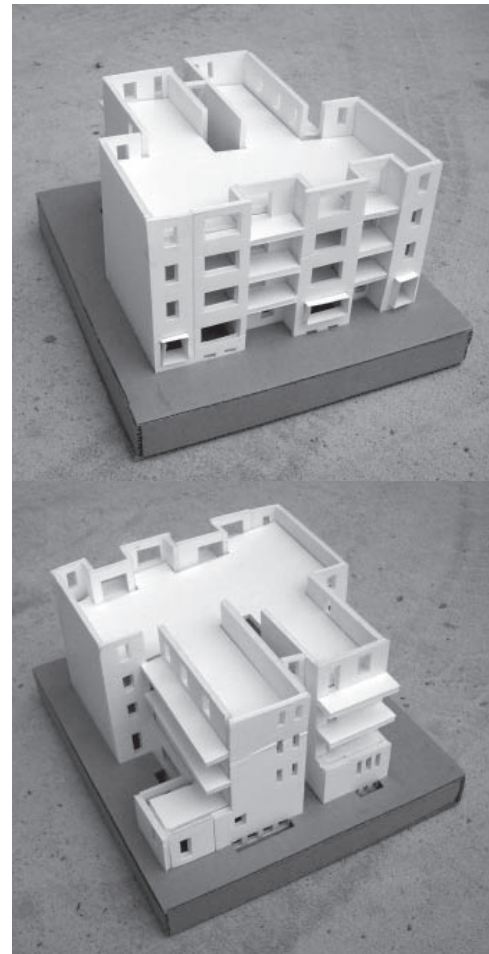




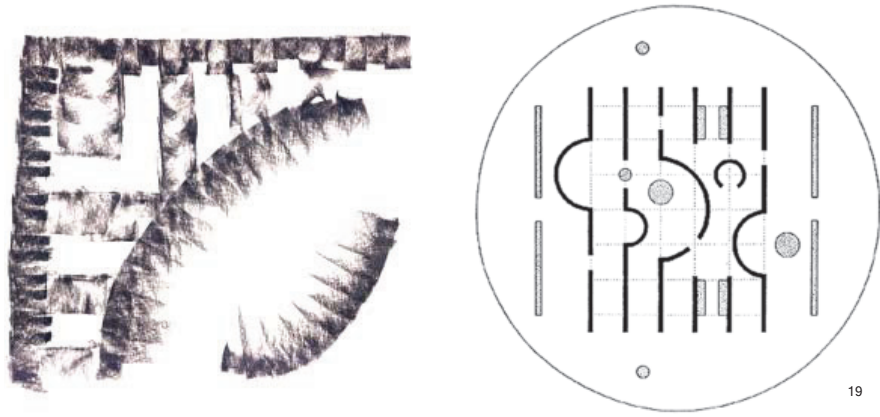
47 Building Section



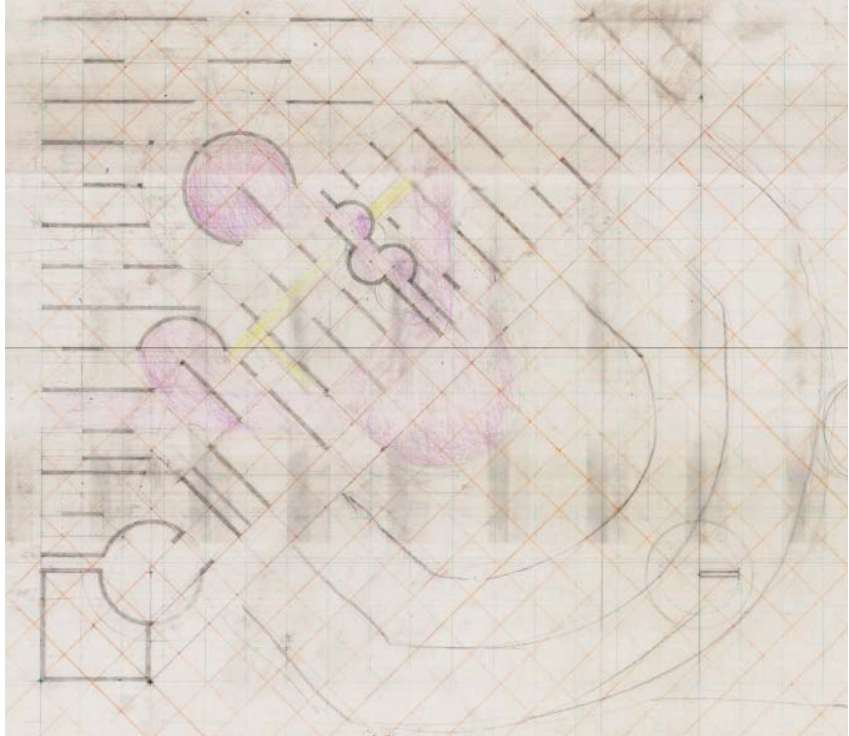
49 Study Models Revealing Potential Vaulted Spaces and Bay / Balcony Relationships



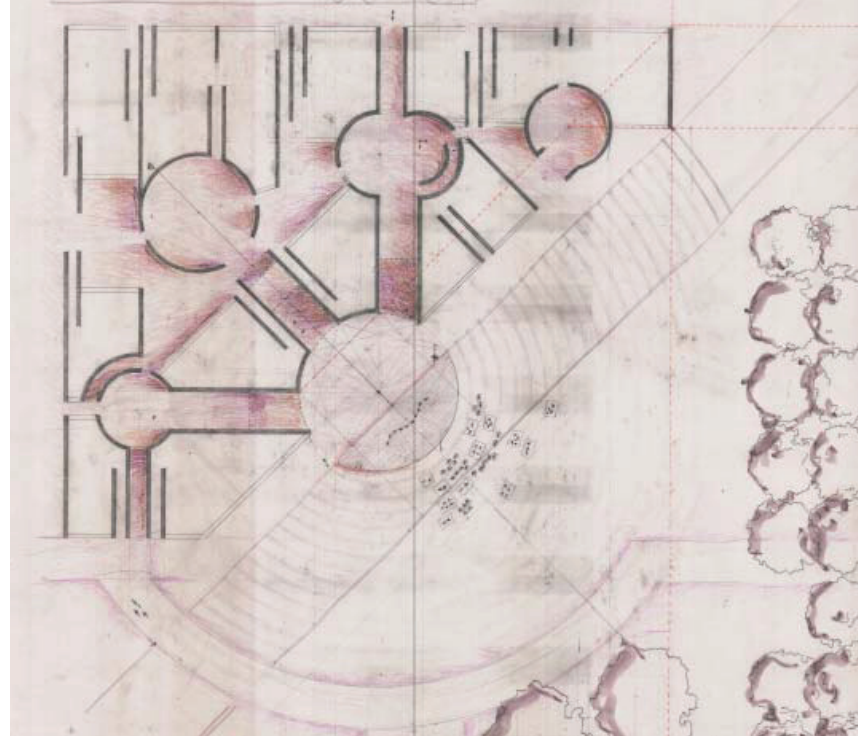
48 Plan Showing Two Distinct Public Spaces



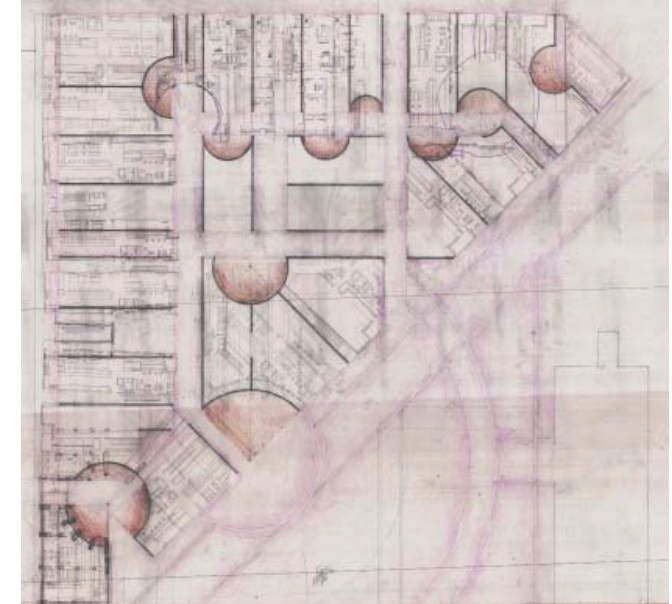
26



50 Birth of the Plan



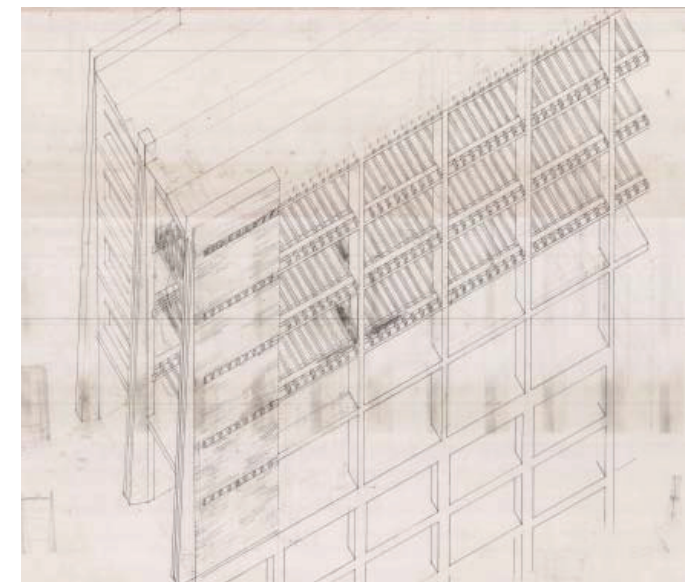
51 Second Iteration



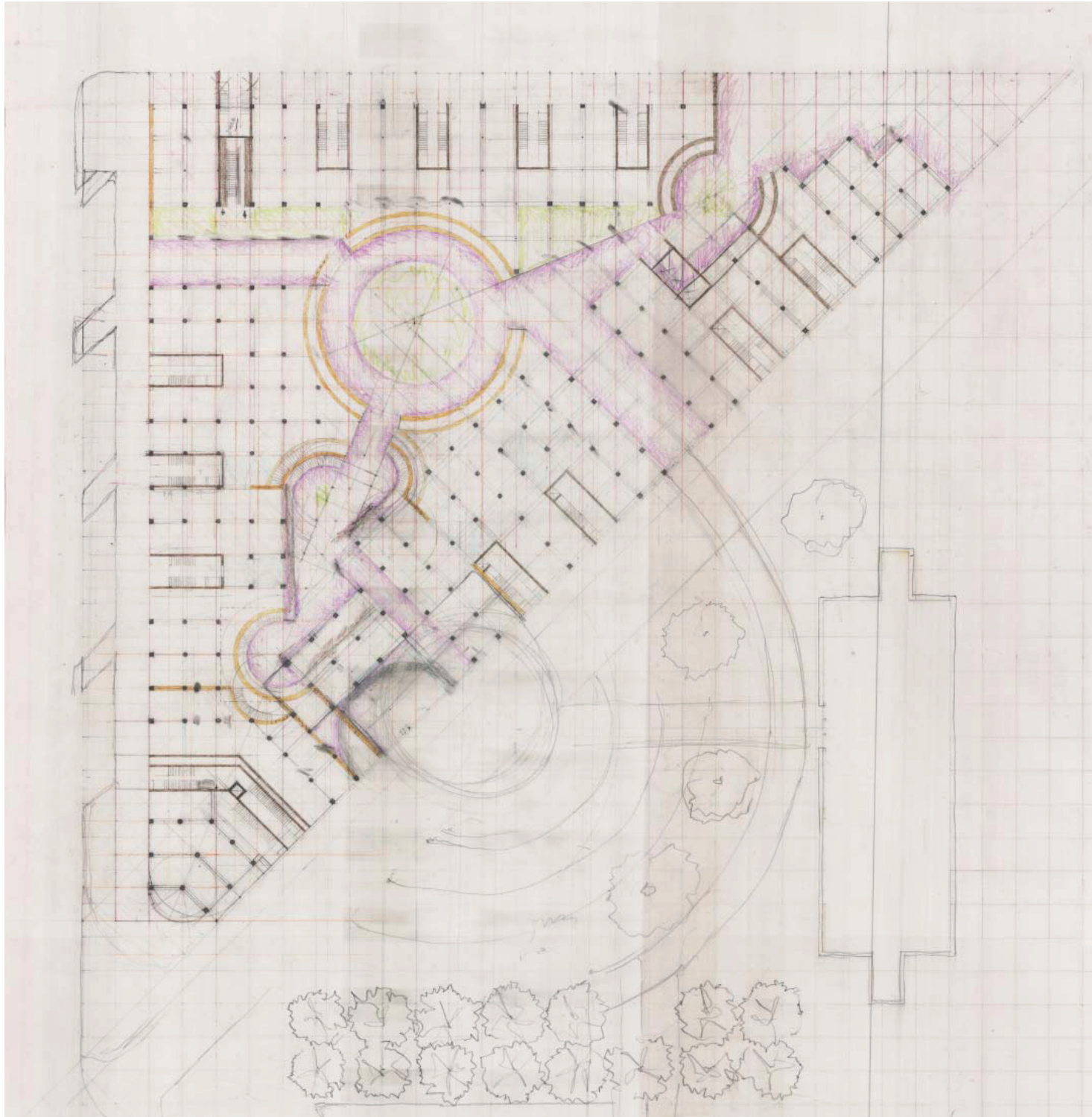
52 Third Iteration



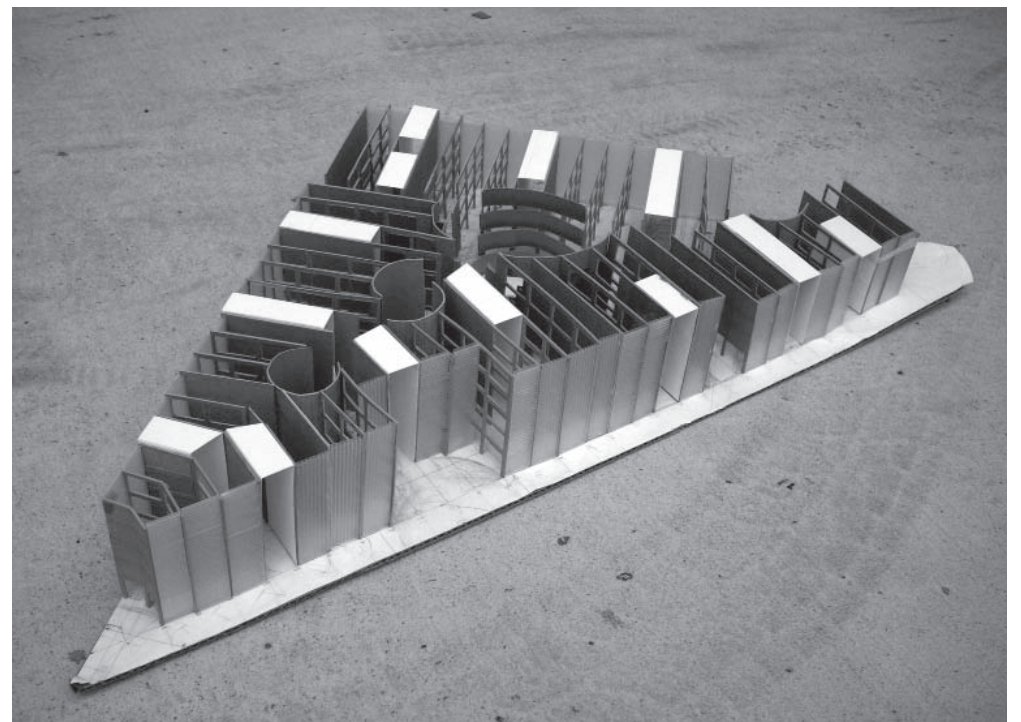
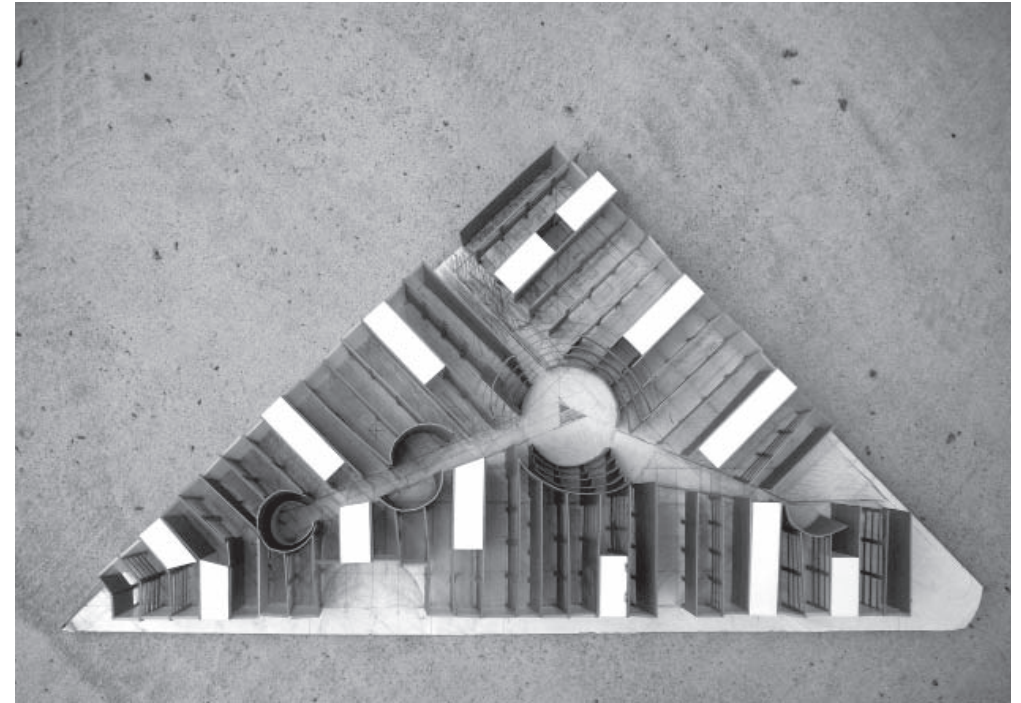
54 Early Interior Living Room Concept



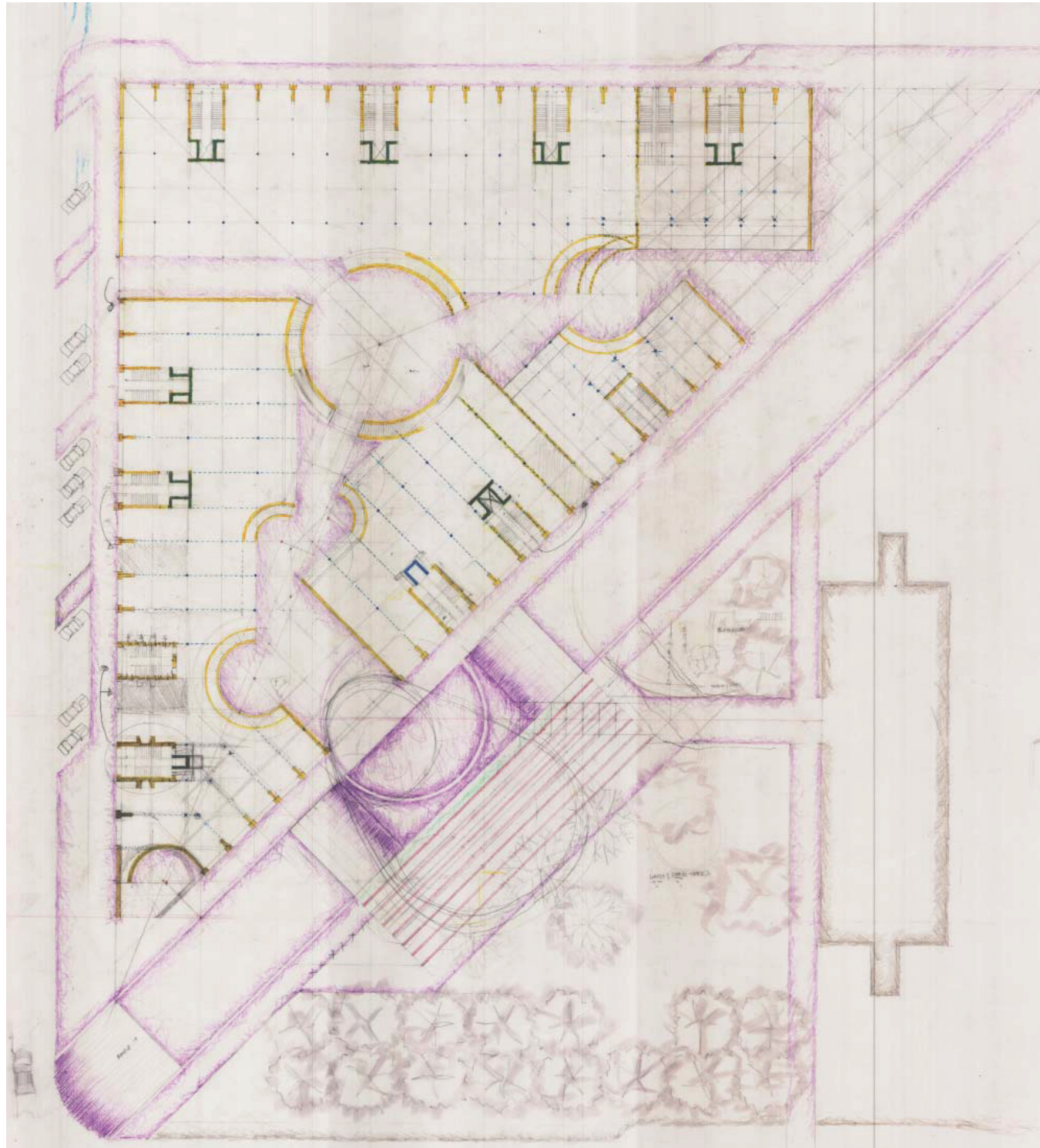
53 Exploring Material and Structural Possibilities



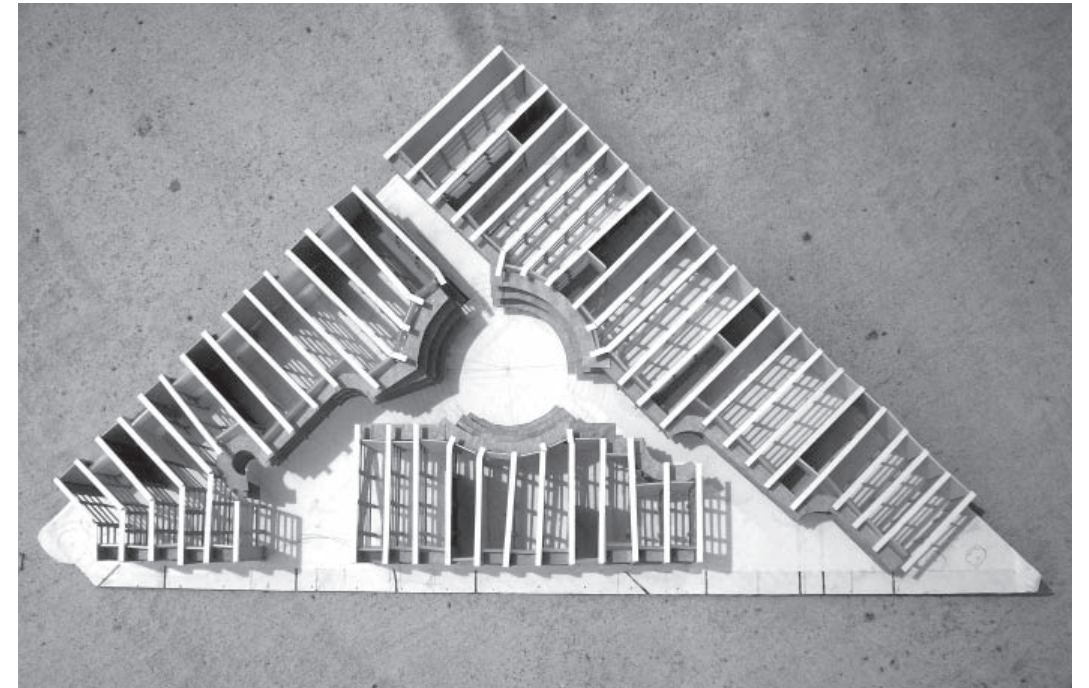
55 Detailed Plan Incorporating Structure



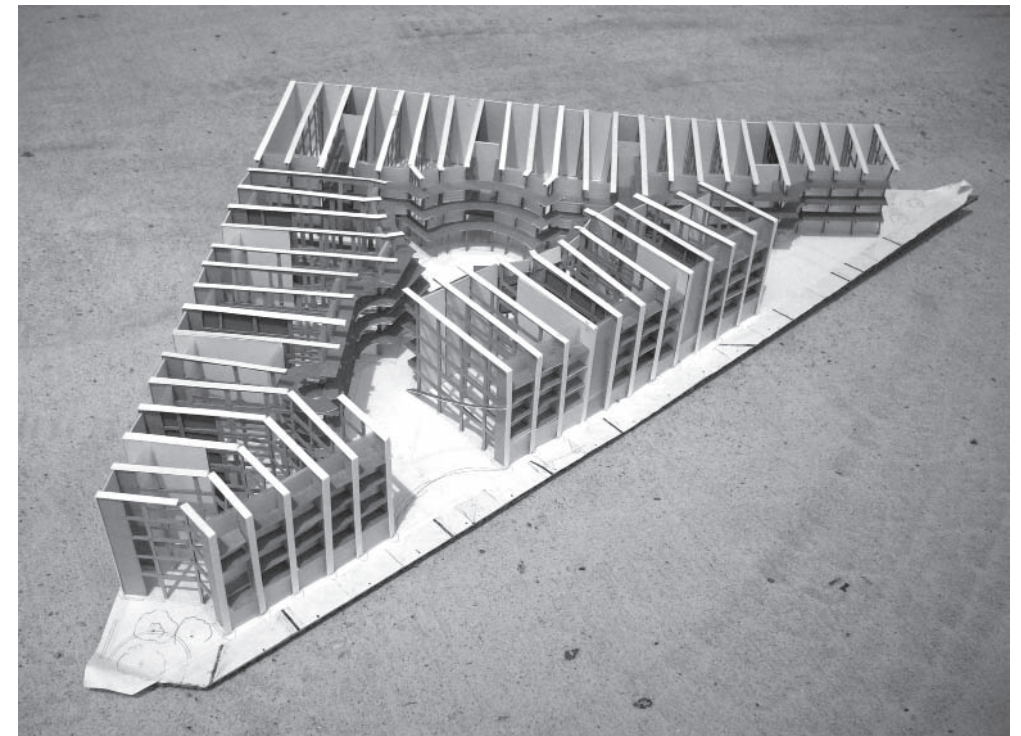
56 Revealing the Plan Through a Study Model

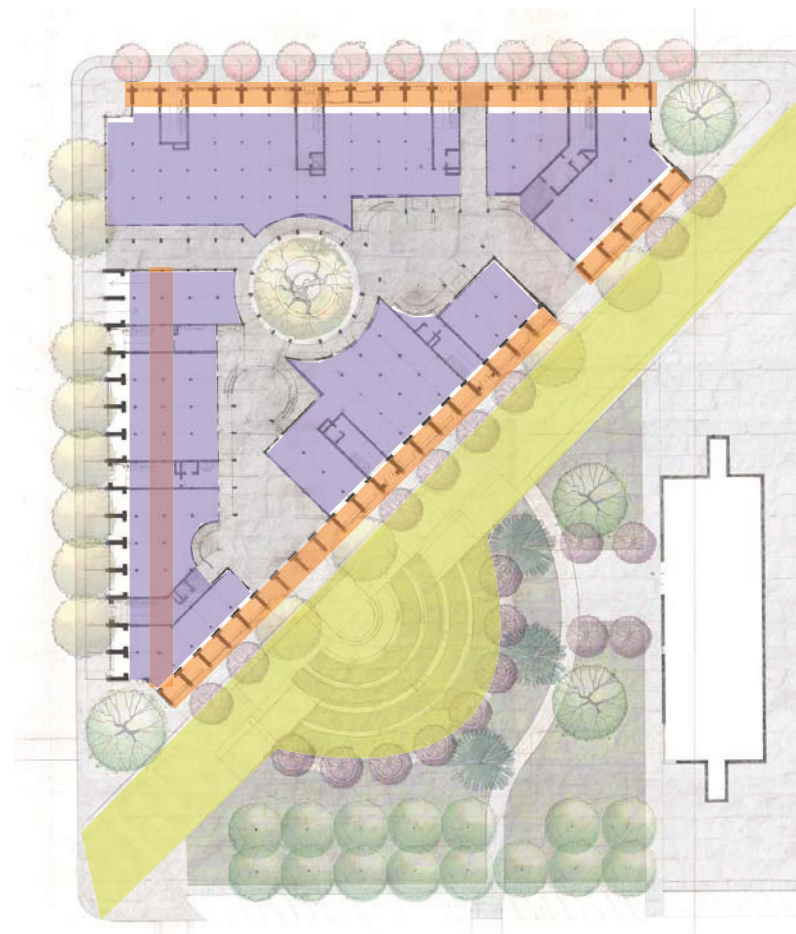


57 Detailed Plan 2 Incorporating Structure



58 Refining the Plan Through a Study Model





Design Diagram

Final Drawings

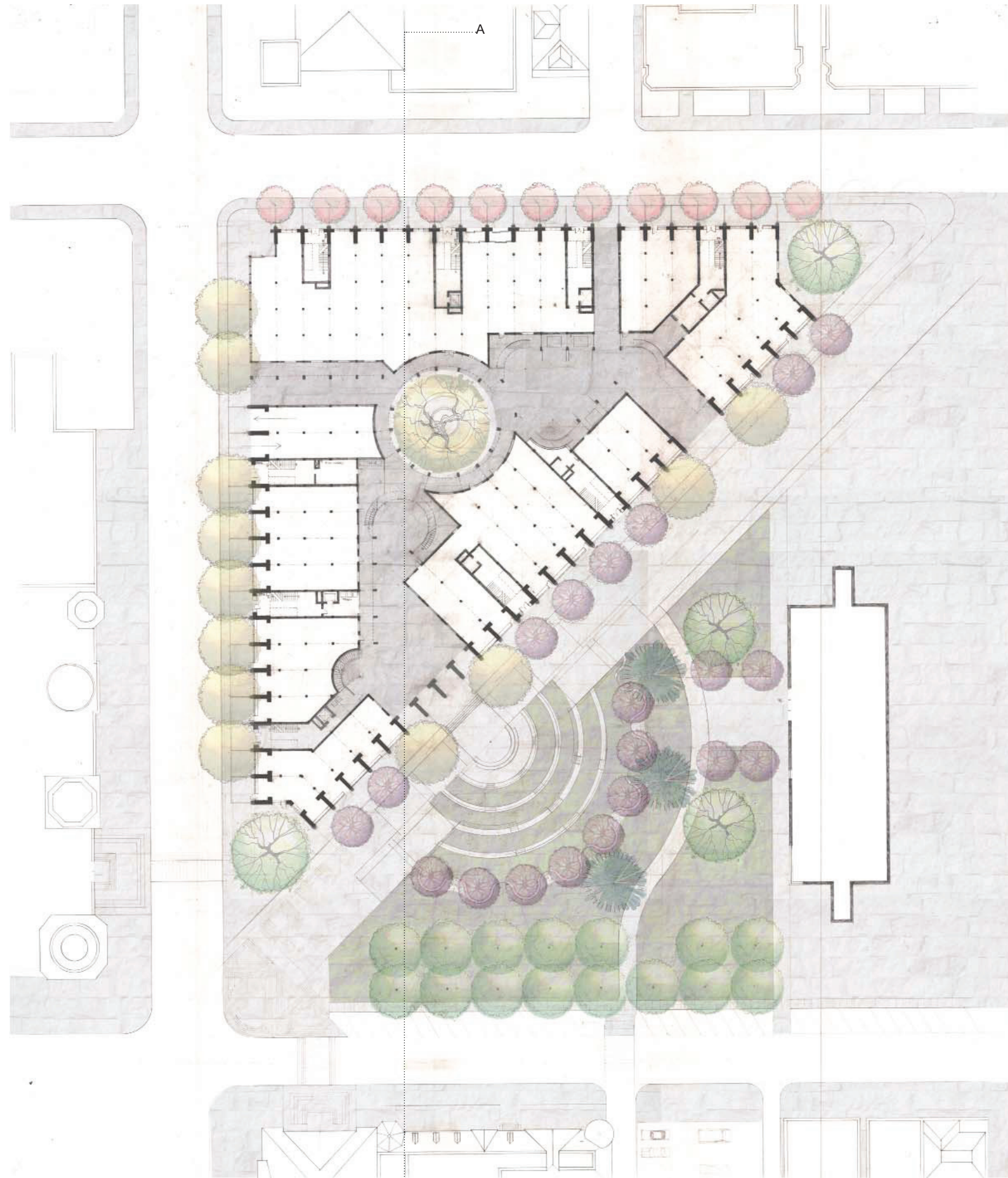
“Architecture is, like every other art, born of its age and environment. So the new type will be found by us, if we do find it, through the frankest possible acceptance of every requirement of modern life in all of its conditions, without regret for the past or idle longing for a future and more fortunately; this acceptance being accompanied by the intelligent and sympathetic study of the past in the spirit of aspiring emulation, not servile imitation.”³⁵ - John W. Root

The final design responds accordingly to its surrounding context, climate, and regional resources. The building is composed of two structural systems. The exterior system (in orange) - ranging in depth from 10 to 12 feet - is composed of a series of structural brick pillars. These pillars are spaced 15 feet on center and create spaces for the retail entry, window display, residential balcony, and interior multipurpose space. The pillars also carry rain water elegantly down the facade by means of a copper gutter. This brick system also creates as a thermal break from the interior concrete structural frame.

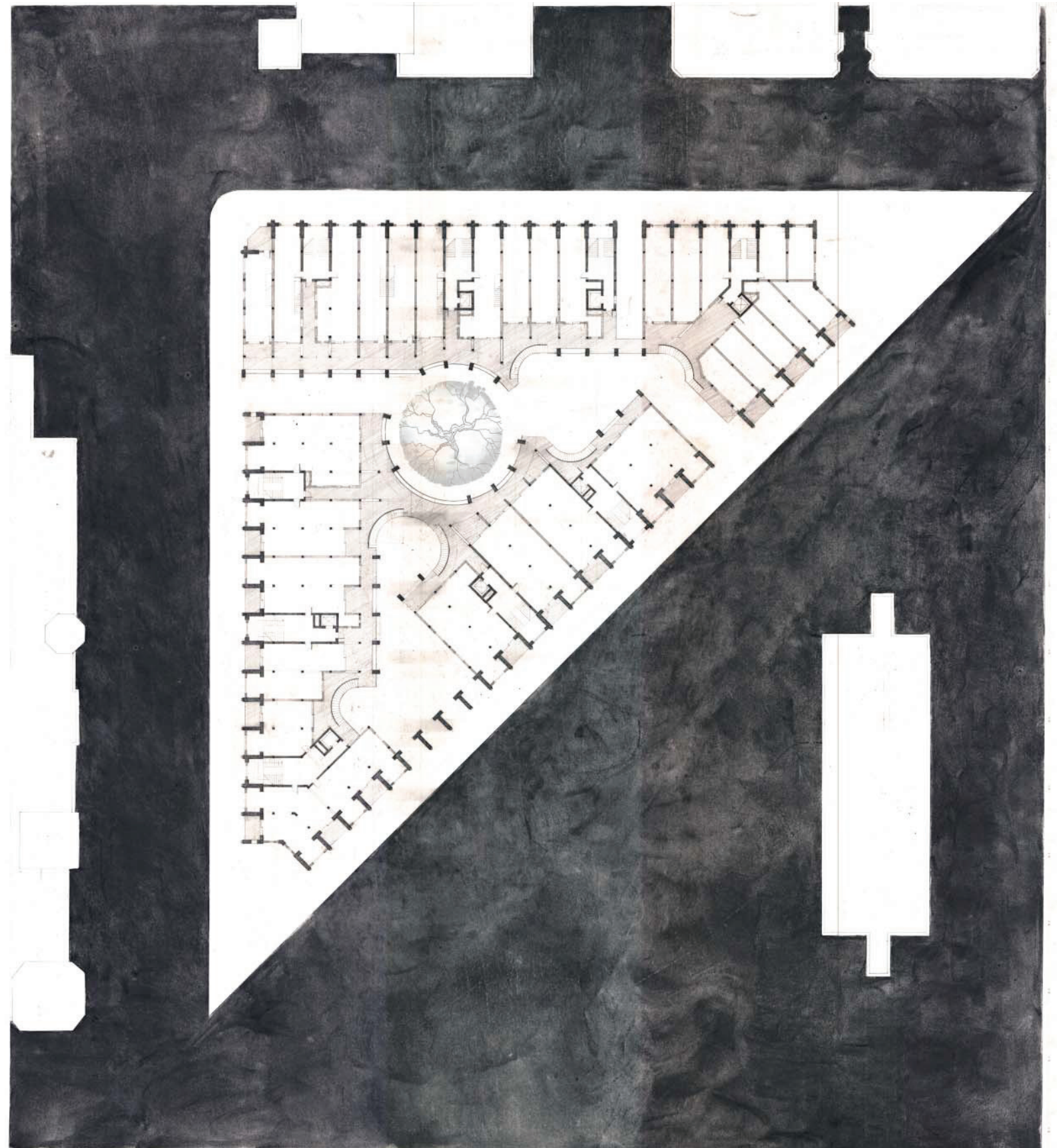
The interior structural system (in purple) is a concrete grid frame. The floor slabs are also concrete and the walls that separate apartments are composed of brick cavity walls. There is one formal entry for every 8 to 10 apartments. Apartments are also serviced by a rear balcony accessible by interior courtyard staircases. The possibilities for heating and cooling deserve more consideration, however I suggest a central air system with radiant heat or a combined heating and cooling radiator.

In response to the public space needs of the downtown community and the need to program existing downtown open space, I assessed the

needs for the theatre community around Mass Ave. Pauline Moffat, executive director of Indy Fringe Fest, confirmed that there was a need for a permanent outdoor performance space and this is what I created on the existing park area (in yellow).

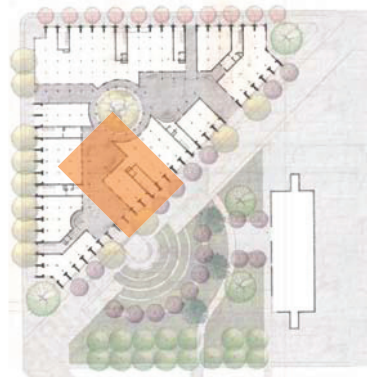
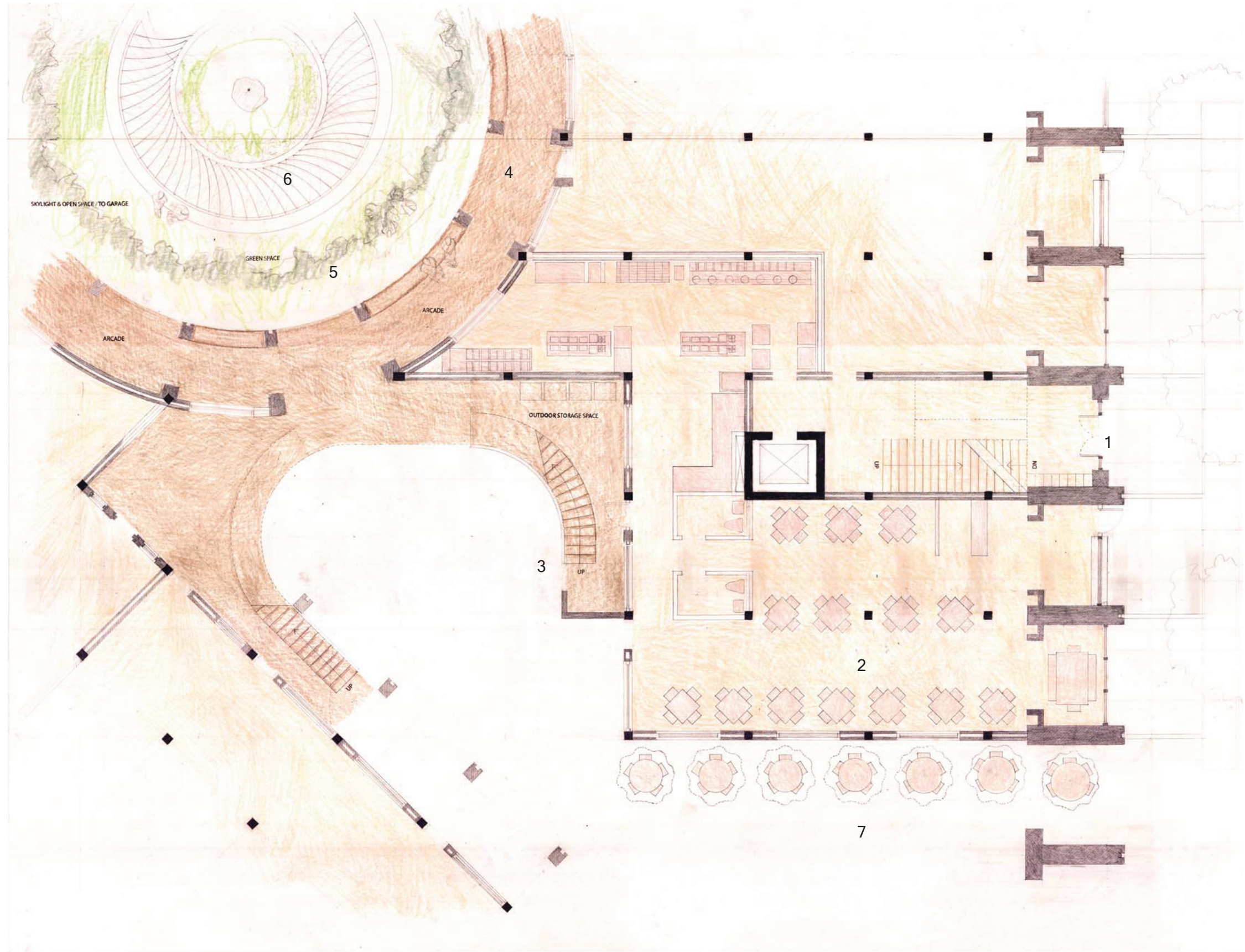


▲ 59 Overall Ground Floor Plan Showing Retail Space



▲
60 Overall Third Floor Plan Showing Flats and Townhouses

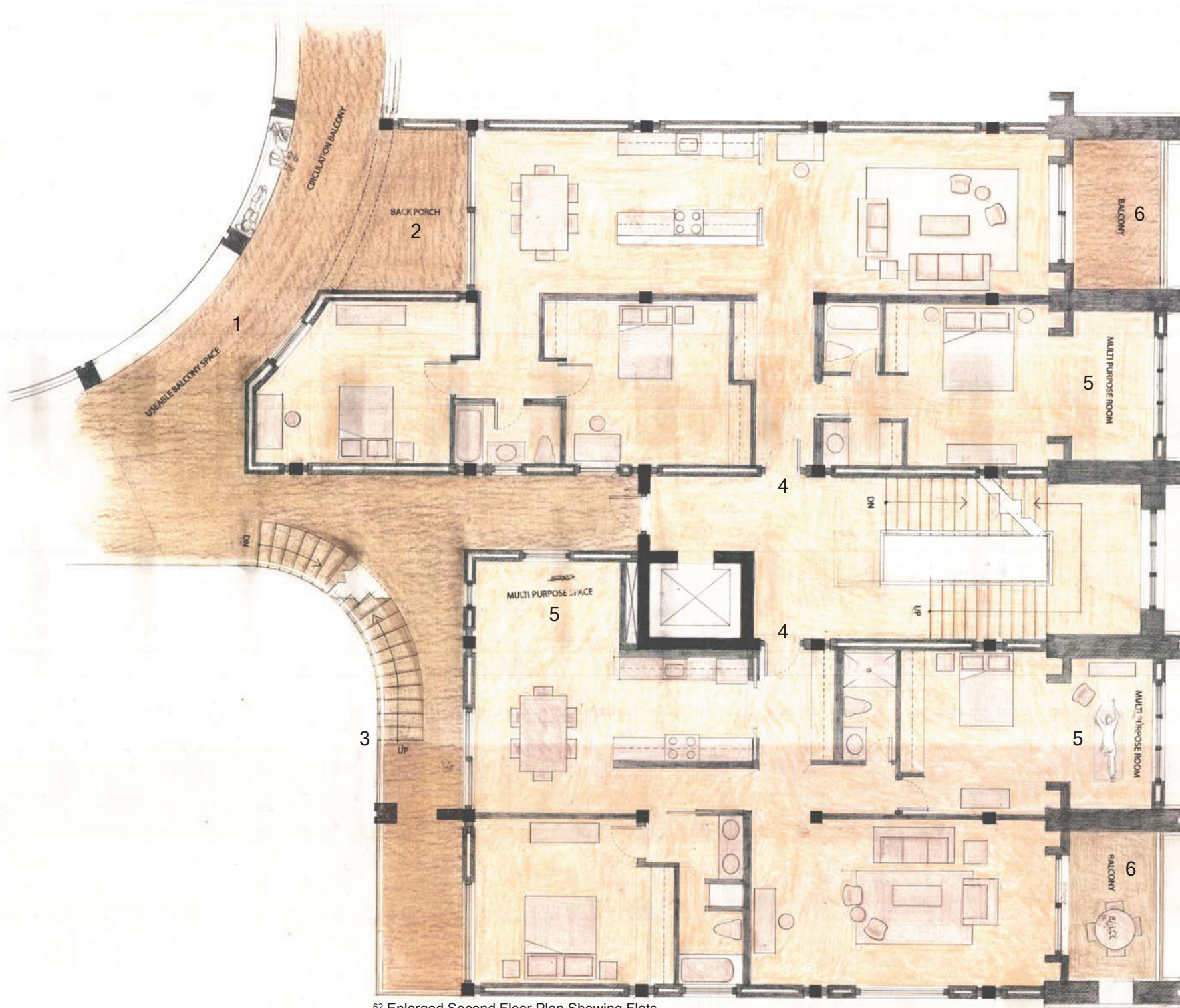
- 1 Residential Entry
- 2 Flexible Retail Space
- 3 Back Stair
- 4 Courtyard Arcade
- 5 Courtyard Green Space
- 6 Underground Parking Lot
Skylight and Ventilation
- 7 Public Space



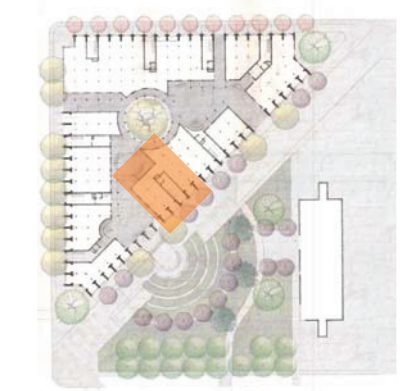
Key Plan

61 Enlarged Ground Floor Plan Showing Retail

- 1 Circulation Balcony
- 2 Back Porch
- 3 Back Stair
- 4 Flat Entry
- 5 Multi-Purpose Space
- 6 Front Balcony

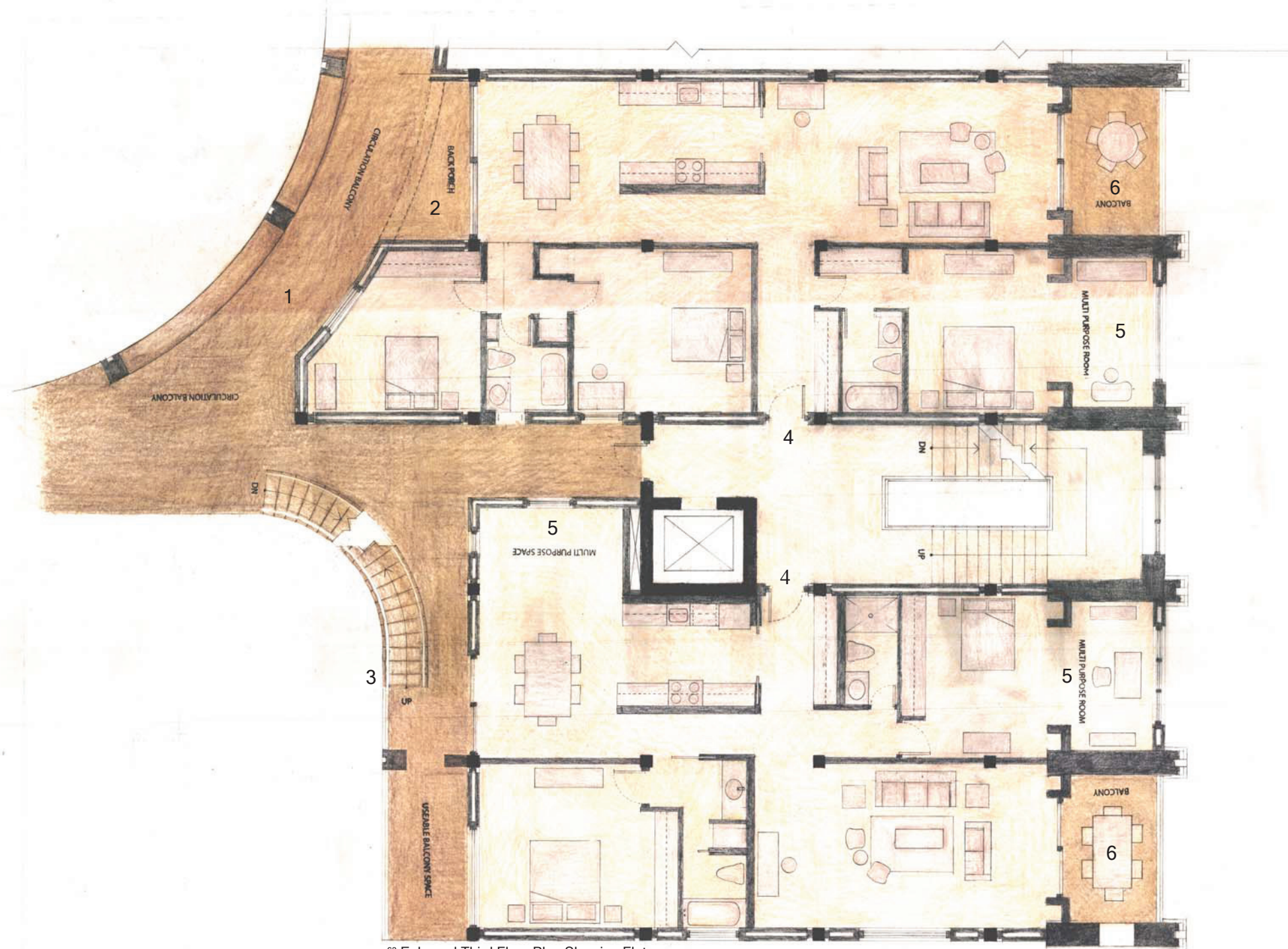


62 Enlarged Second Floor Plan Showing Flats

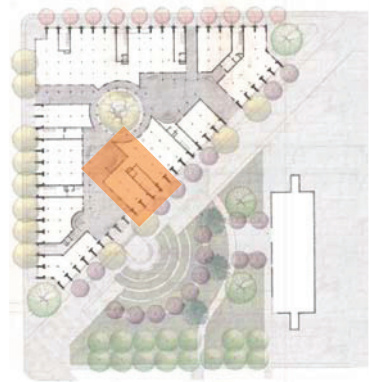


Key Plan

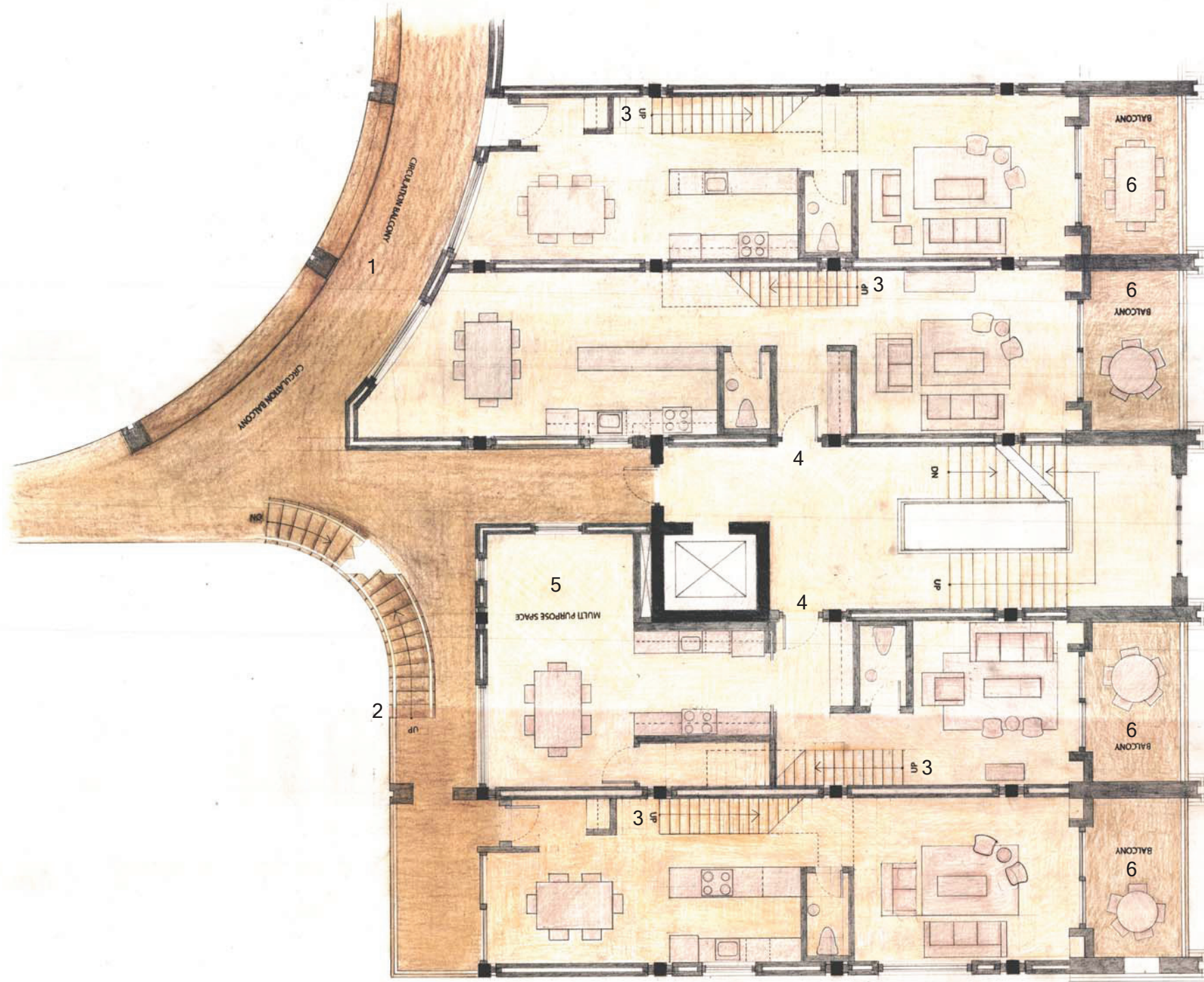
- 1 Circulation Balcony
- 2 Back Porch
- 3 Back Stair
- 4 Flat Entry
- 5 Multi-Purpose Space
- 6 Front Balcony



63 Enlarged Third Floor Plan Showing Flats

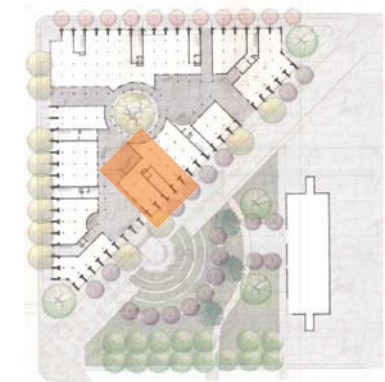


Key Plan



64 Enlarged Fourth Floor Plan Showing First Floor of Townhouses

- 1 Circulation Balcony
- 2 Back Stair
- 3 Interior Stair
- 4 Townhouse Entry
- 5 Multi-Purpose Space
- 6 Front Balcony

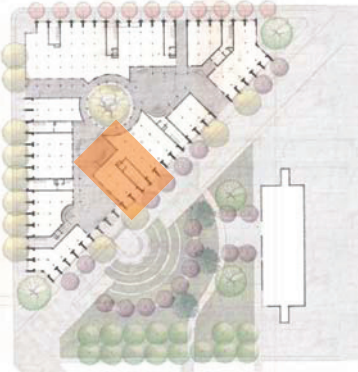


Key Plan

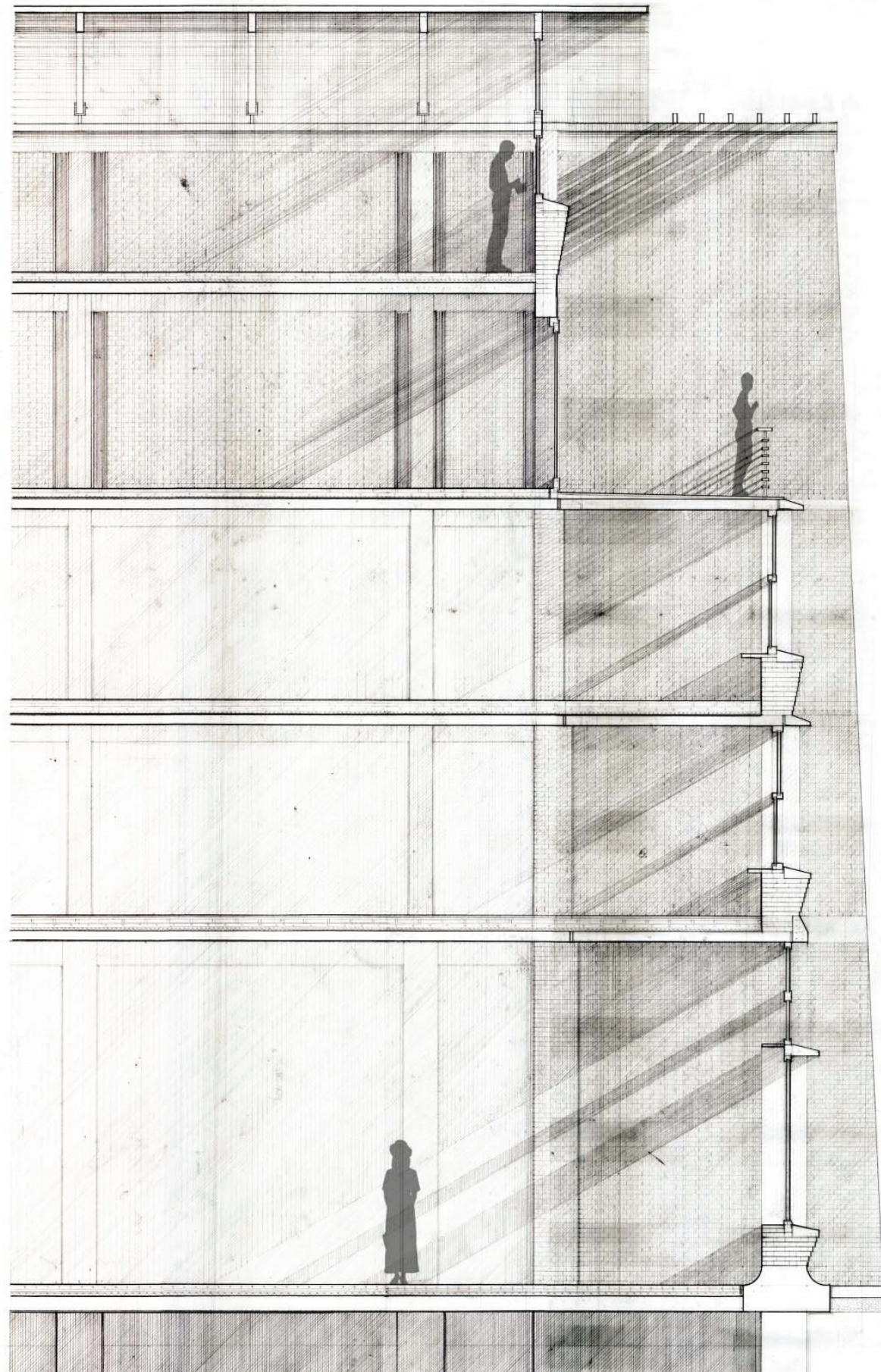
- 1 Interior Stair
- 2 Back Porch
- 3 Balcony Below



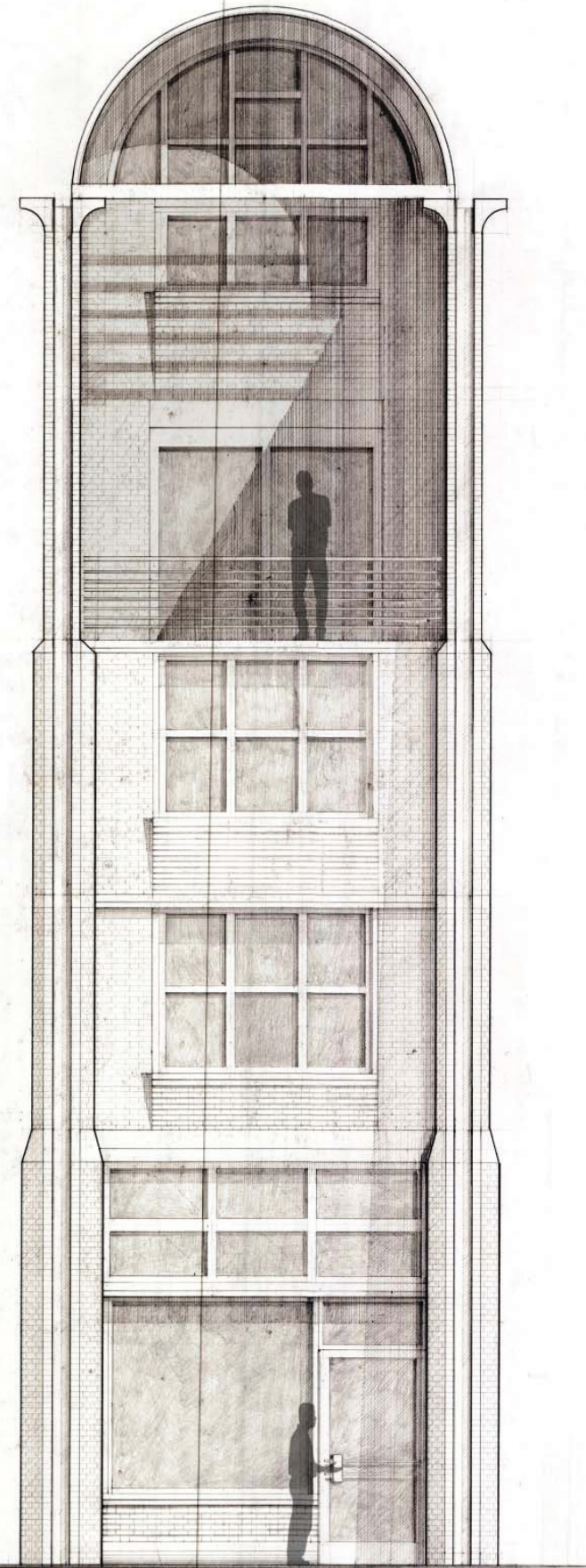
65 Enlarged Fifth Floor Plan Showing Second Floor of Townhouses



Key Plan



66 Five Story Facade Wall Section



One Variation of a Five Story Facade

Metal Roof

Wood Trellis
Concrete Coping

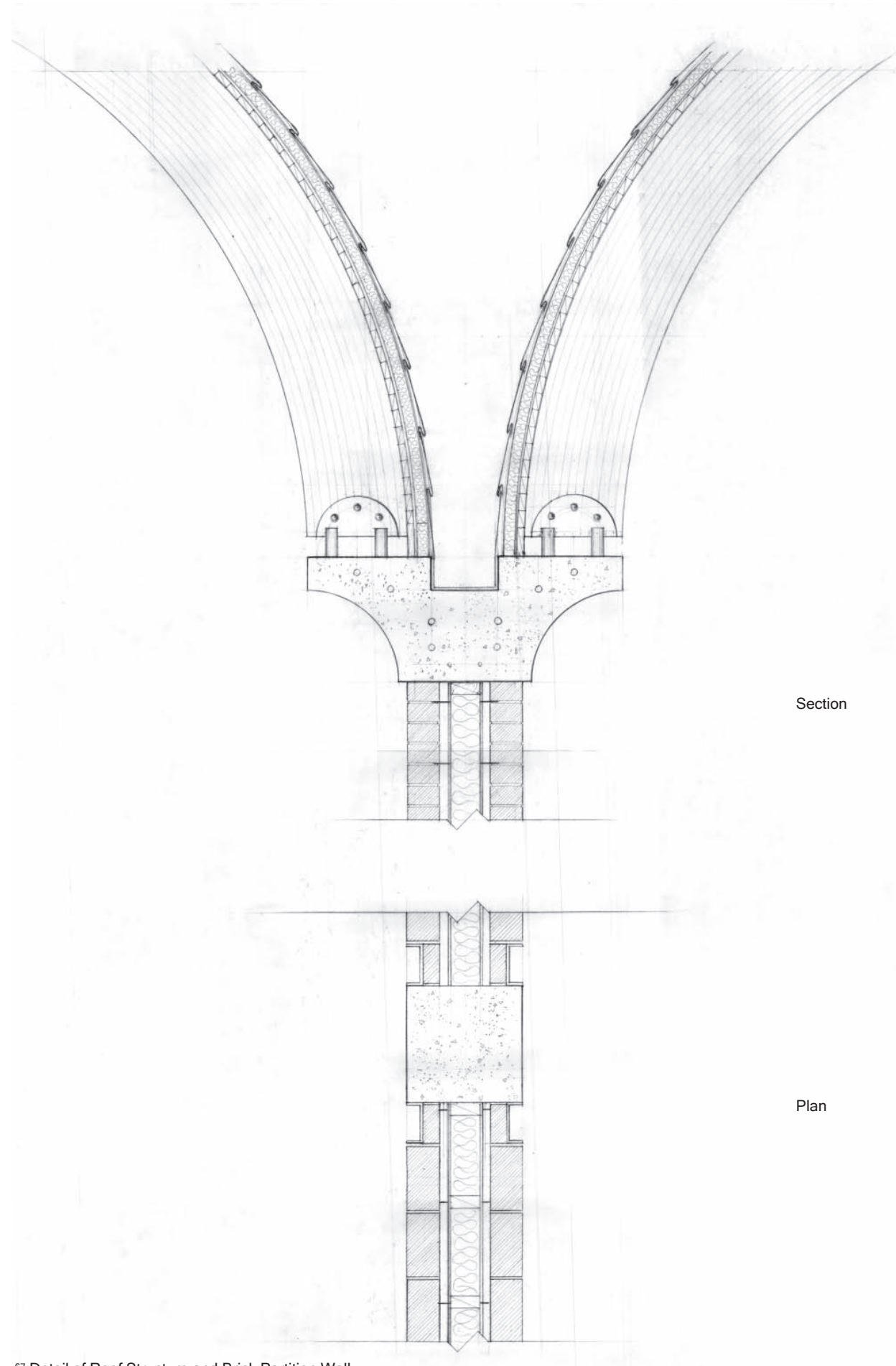
Structural Brick Pillar

Copper Gutter

Wood Railing

Wood Framed Openings

Corbelled Brick Under Windows

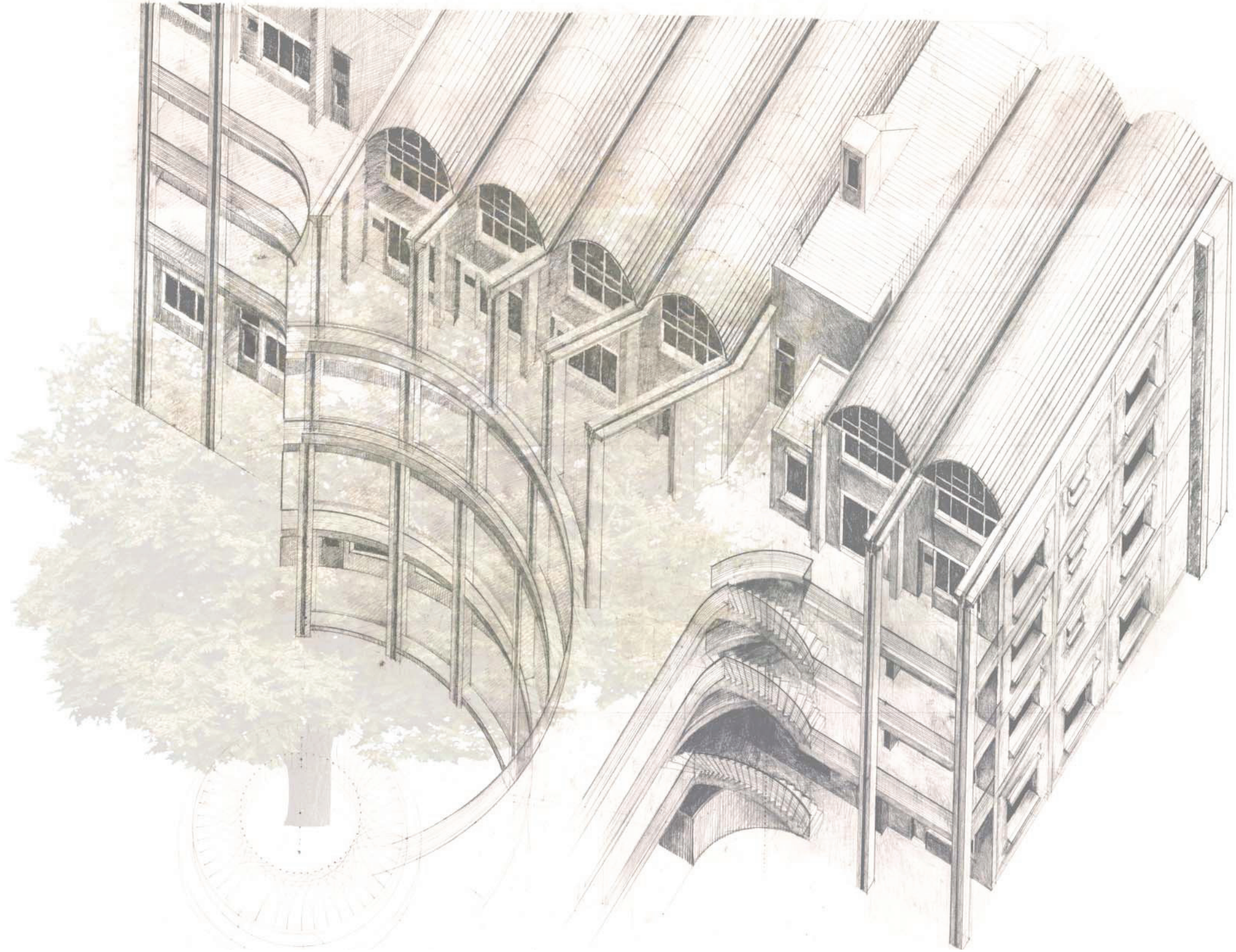


Section

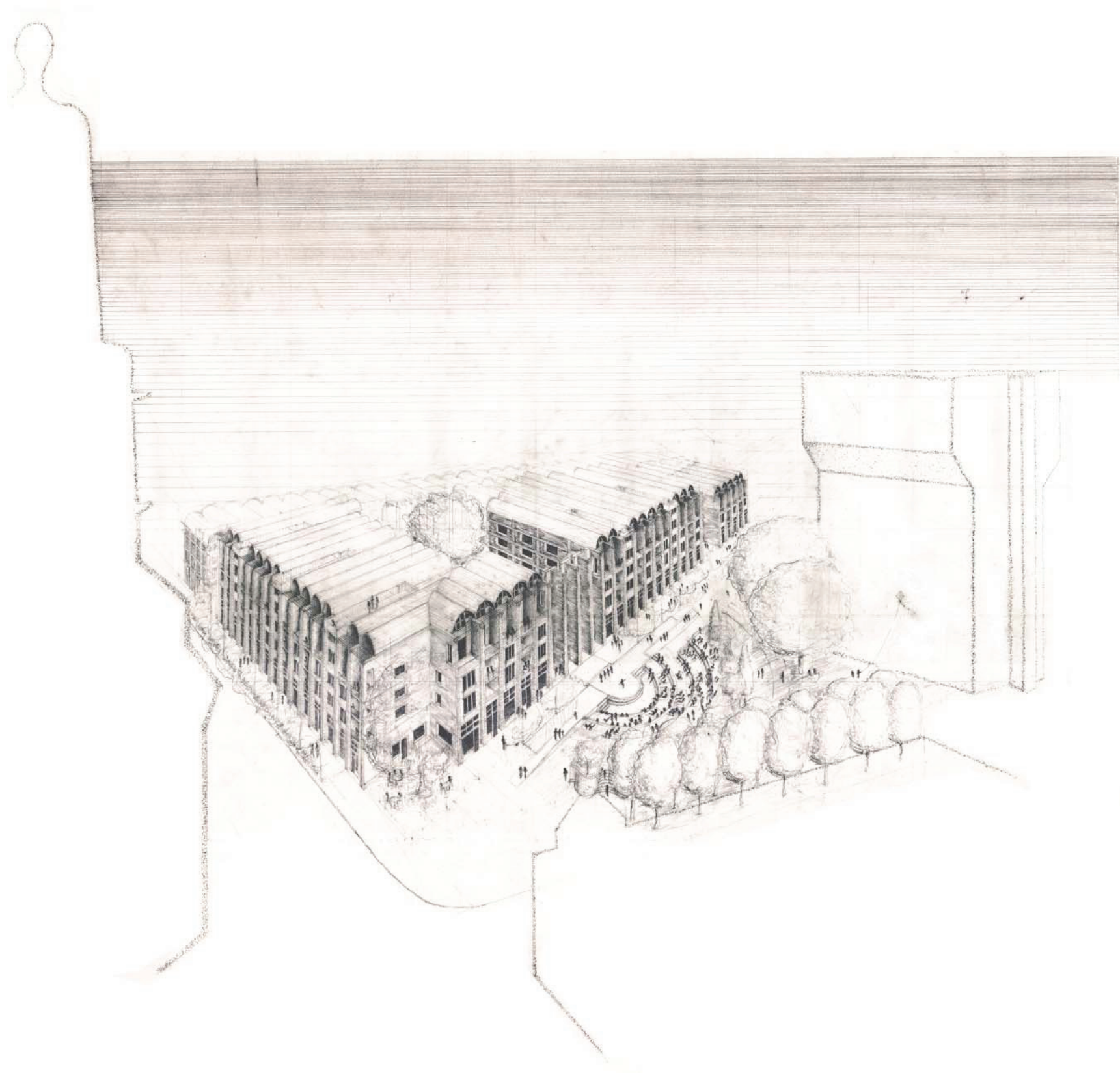
Plan



68 Site Section A



69 View of Interior Courtyard Balconies



⁷⁰ Bird's Eye Perspective of a Performance in the Plaza



71 Northwest Facade as Seen From Plaza





72 Plan View of Model



73 New Jersey Street Elevation



74 North Street Elevation



75 Final Presentation

End Notes

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