

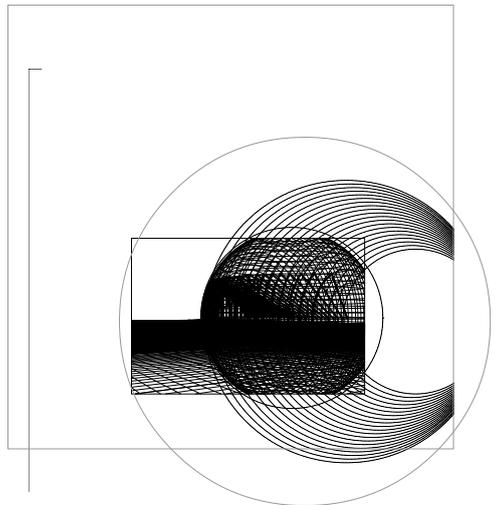
Between Synergy and Synesthesia

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Between Synergy and Synesthesia

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MASTER OF ARCHITECTURE

William Brown

(committee chair)

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...for their spiritual support, this book is dedicated to all of my soldiers

Book I

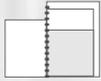
Chrysalis
Investigation

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Abstract

Procession

We live in a world where most people are inundated with information on a global scale. The world has become smaller and more homogenous, whereas the social composition has become more and more complex, and extremely hierarchical.

In such a society, the only way for one to define oneself could be to expand himself/herself beyond all social frames. Through close and dynamic interaction with the outer world, and coexistence with heterogeneous elements around us, we are able to define intrinsic factors within us, within our society. This process challenges openness and full understanding of the world beyond oneself. Only through this process, we might be able to establish a “global culture.”

Every action we take has some kind of impact on this world. Like the river flows into the bay, it seems that social values on our life and culture are constantly in a state of change. It is very important for me to read this changing flow of social consciousness to understand our world and allow it to inform architecture.

Architecture is a great tool for me to expand myself toward society, and people. It allows me to become infinite in a timeless journey in human life searching for the truth.

“synergy” and “synesthesia”

synergy

- a. Joint working, co-operation.
- b. Combined or correlated action of a group of bodily organs.
- c. Increased effectiveness, achievement, etc., produced as a result of combined action or cooperation.

synesthesia

1. a. A sensation in one part of the body produced by a stimulus applied to another part.
- b. Agreement of the feelings or emotions of different individuals, as a stage in the development of sympathy.
- c. Production, from a sense-impression of one kind, of an associated mental image of a sense-impression of another kind.
2. The use of metaphors in which terms relating to one kind of sense-impression are used to describe sense-impressions of other kinds; the production of synesthetic effect in writing or an instance of this.
3. a. The expression of more than one kind of sense-impression in the same word.
- b. The transfer of the meaning of a word from one kind of sensory experiences to another.
- c. The relationship between speech sounds and the sensory experiences that they that they represent.

Source: The Oxford English Dictionary
Second Edition, Volume XVII
Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1989

Image of the city

A city is...

A city is iridescent. Like a kaleidoscope, as you move, the city changes expression on the surface. A city is irradiative. This luminous creature, the city, incessantly attracts people and often steals people's mind.

Like human beings, every city's aspiration wavers between an implicit ideal and an explicit reality. It is my joy to understand this silent and invisible intention of the city moving towards an ideal goal selected out of fragmented information, the identity of the city.

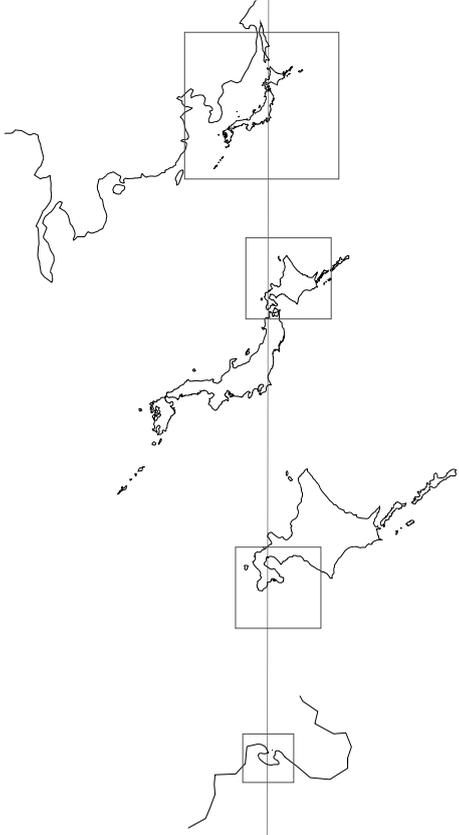
Designing a visitors center provided me the vehicle to explore the source of my fascination about cities. The visitor's evaluation of a city is aesthetic and highly sensitive to what and how one sees, as well as what and how one experiences. I am always interested in how and what forms primary images of the city in one's mind. It was challenging and exciting to deal with such issues in the realm of architecture.

Investigation in time

About the city

The site of my thesis project is situated in Hakodate, Hokkaido prefecture in Japan. With a population of 300,000, Hakodate is well known as one of the oldest port towns in Japan which attracts five million tourists a year from all over the world.





Geographical location of
Hakodate, Hokkaido, Japan

41°46' north latitude
140°44' east longitude
Area of the city 346.87km²





The city created by the ocean

Hakodate is located on the tip of the southern peninsula of Hokkaido island. The land where this city stands has been formed as a sand reef between the Hokkaido island and a small mountain after a long spell of tidal movement. The area around the site was a part of the ocean long ago. After the intense effort to expand the land into the waters edge of the city, the area around the site was filled with soil in the late 19th century. It formed the current water's edge. Since then, this city has welcomed ships from all over the world and has flourished as a port town.



Russian Orthodox Church



The Old Post Office



The Old Public Hall



Mosaic image from its romance with foreign cultures.

Hakodate was one of the first port towns that introduced foreign cultures to the Japanese people. During the Tokugawa era, Japan experienced a long period of isolation from the early 17th century through 19th century. During this period, Japan had minimal interaction with foreign countries.

By responding to political and economic pressure from the United States, the Japanese government finally decided to open two ports in 1854. Hakodate was one of these two ports. In 1859, Hakodate became one of Japan's first international free trading ports with two other Japanese cities. From then on, foreign traders, sailors, missionaries from America, Russia, England, Holland, France and other countries visited this town. As a result, the adoption of foreign cultures can be seen in a fragmented form across the city. Gothic churches, "Japanese Western-style buildings," a foreign cemetery, all these things are blended nicely with local culture and express an exotic mood in the city.

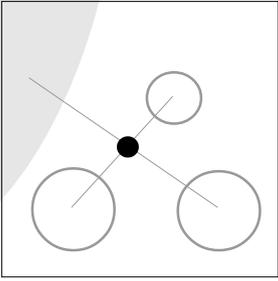
Architecture in Hakodate established a unique style combination with heterogenous elements which reminds us of earlier days. Its eclectic quality reflects our sense of passion and curiosity for foreign culture.

At one time the city itself was a market place where local people traded information and products with foreigners. My attempt in this project is to create space which facilitates engagement between people and expresses the richness of the city through elements of architecture. Ultimately the visitors center encourages interaction not only between the city and the tourist, but also between local people and tourists, in order to reenergize the city.



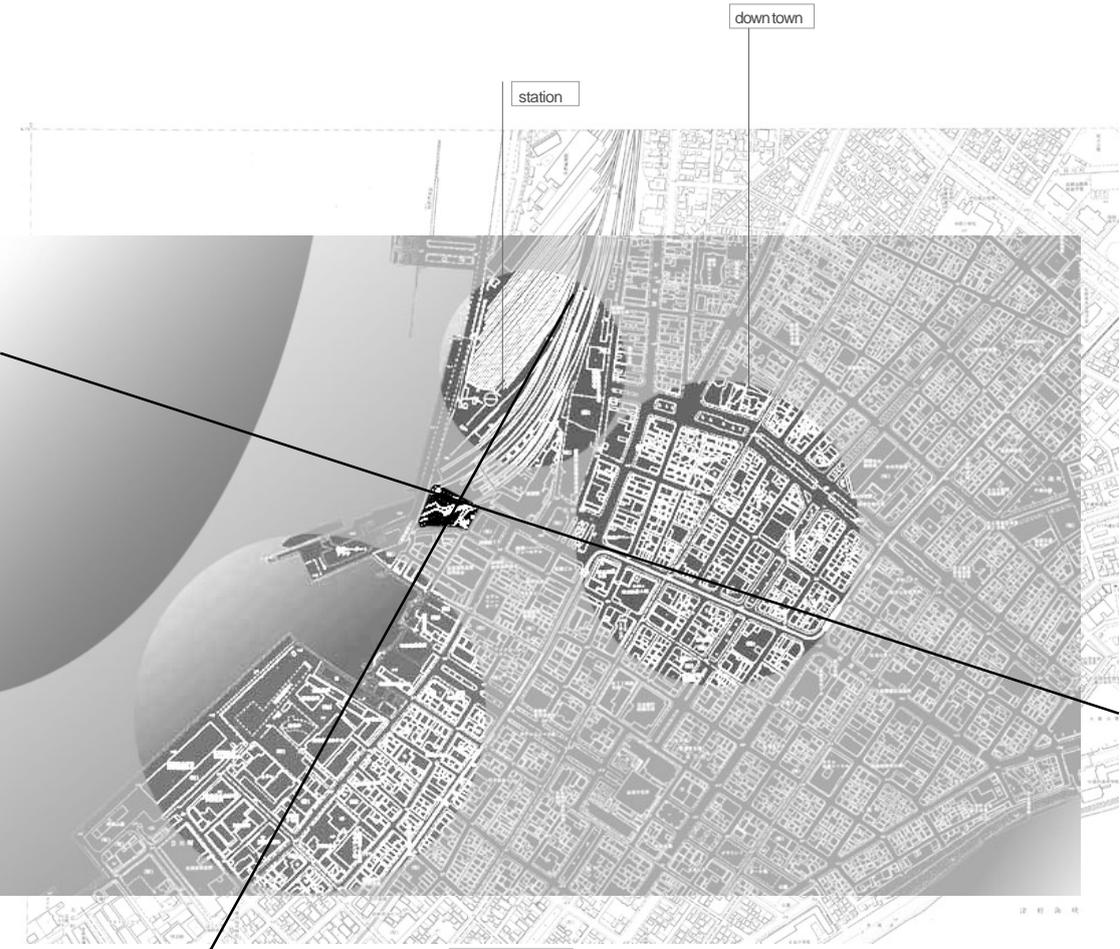
Eclectic Local Style in Residential Buildings





Investigation in place

Site observation



downtown

station

bay front
and market place

historical district

~~Intersection in the urban grid~~

The site is located in the middle of downtown, between the commercial district and the historic district.

The site is the urban nodal point between four different districts: industrial, commercial, market and historical area, and the waterfront. The site is also the intersection of four different cultural, social and commercial activities.

The current master plan proposes the construction of five new public institutions in the district surrounding the site. These institutions include an art museum, a concert hall, a science museum and a port ferry terminal.

My intention was to tie all the districts together including scattered public institutions with a centripetal gesture.



View toward the site across the elevated road

Around the site



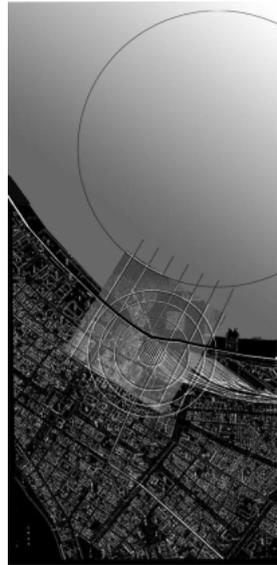
View toward commercial district from the site



View toward the ocean across the site

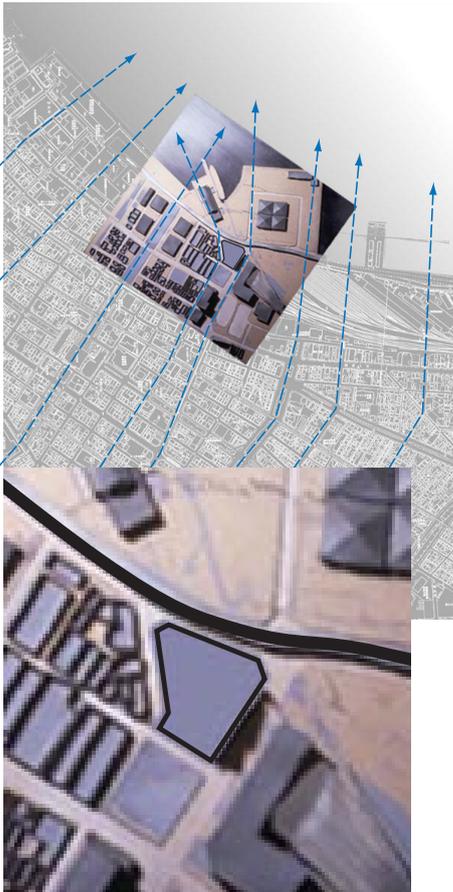
Investigation in place

Site analysis



Site analysis 1 - Plan

I



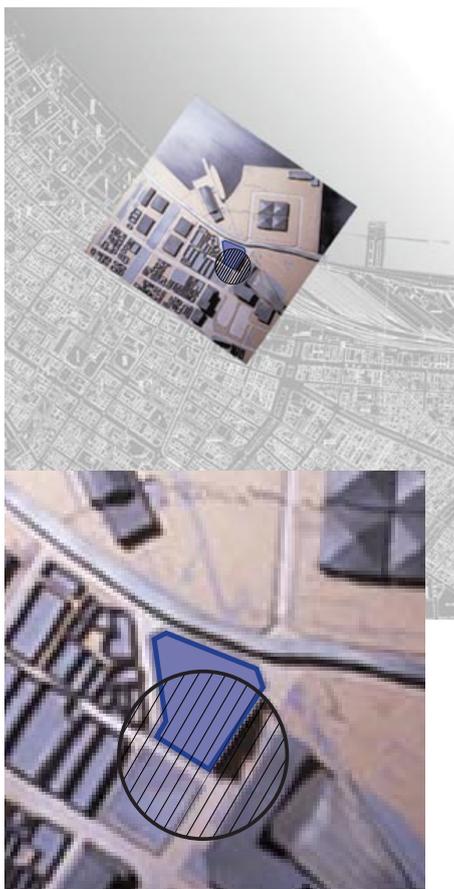
The grids of the town have an axis towards the ocean. The surrounding buildings' rectilinear form strengthen this axis.

II



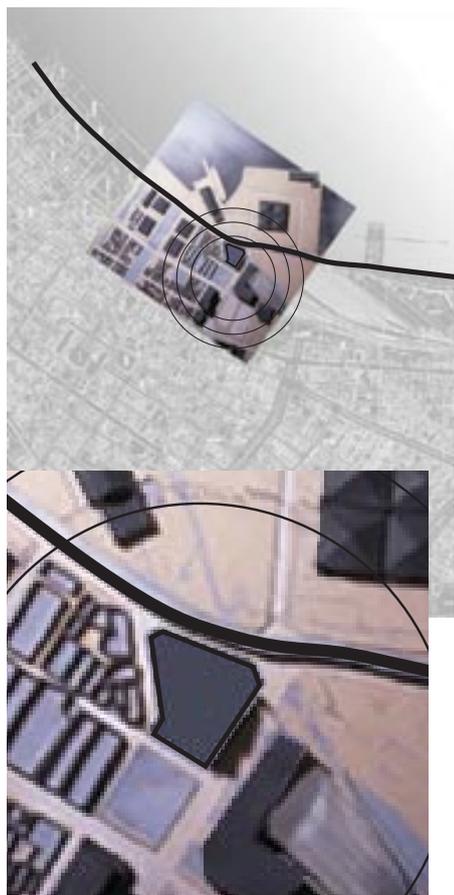
The site is adjacent to an elevated road. The dynamic curvature accentuates the water's edge.

III

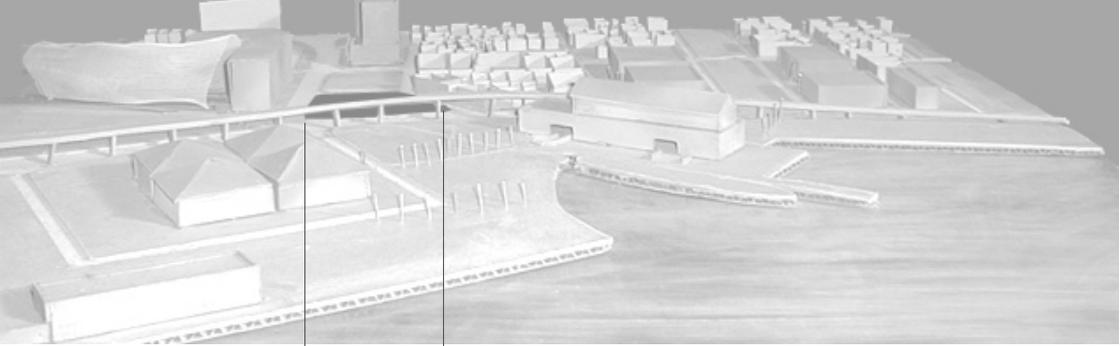


The sphere which contains grids is introduced.

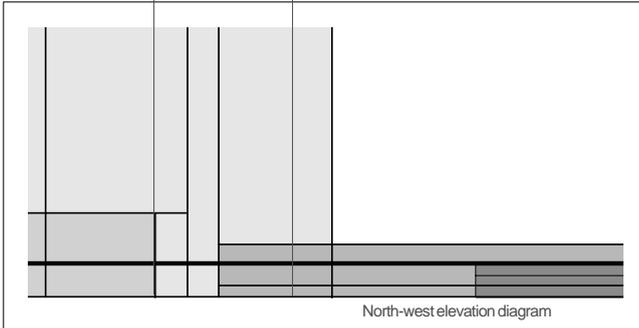
IV



The centric form also connects scattered surrounding public institutions.

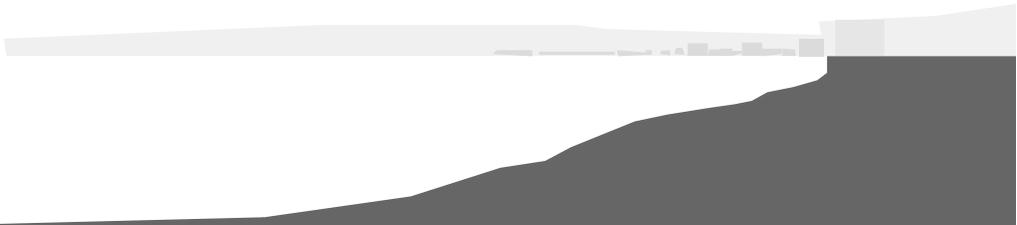


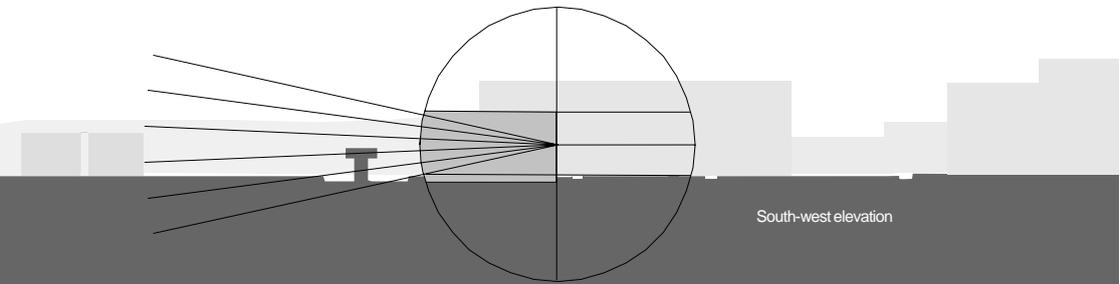
Site



Site Analysis 2 - elevation

As the diagram(above)shows, the elevated road's horizontal line is visually dominant around the site. The scale of buildings drops from the eastern commercial area to the market place in the west. It clearly reflects the contrast in activities within the downtown.





Genesis of form

A "Gridsphere"

Contextural forces from both place and time dictated a reconciliation of these often conflicting forces, and the establishment of a new urban form for the city. My response to this question is to introduce an "ambivalent" form, a "Gridsphere" to this site.

