

*“It is dangerous for man to hide, to flee, to plunge back into nostalgia for bygone days. In the same way that super highways cross mountains or that utility poles march across the great plains, a new poetry is born out of unavoidable meeting of technology and nature. A poetry of reality”*

Jean Nouvel

## THE PROGRAM

Cameron Station as an urban center that will complement Old Town Alexandria and offer what Old Town doesn't have.

Comments from Alexandria official:

- West Alexandria is unanchored, no place to gather, needs institutional components, libraries, schools, government agencies...
- No comfortable surrounding, no pedestrian oriented retail.
- Backlick Run is highly unattractive, purely utilitarian, Just a concrete flume.
- City government would consider locating the recreational department if the environment of the development is right.
- Lack of multi-purpose destination for local as well as regional visitors.
- 40% of the population of Alexandria is a single person household. Therefore a residential component with a diverse dwelling unit type is very desirable.

The following program is developed to parallel a proposed density on the site by a local developer as well as desired major components of the city of Alexandria.

- Diverse Residential communities
  - Mid-rise apartment housing – 800-1200 unit
  - Townhome housing - 800 units
  - Single family housing – 100 units
  - Transitional housing facility – 100 units
- Commercial & retail center.
- Public library – 100,000 SF
- Ice skating facility – 30,000 SF with out door option – 20,000 SF
- Civic building (Department of Parks and Recreations) – 40-50,000 SF
- Arts and Cultural Center 100,000 SF
- Entertainment & performing Art Center 100,000 SF
- Public elementary school
- Recreational Passive and active
- Sports facilities

This program is developed in support of reversing the process of suburban sprawl. It proposes a model for suburban transformation or urban infill as an alternative to the endless and seemingly inexhaustible growing suburbs. It advocates the process of reducing distance and increasing density.

Urban design



## DESIGN TOOLS

Particular elements and components were utilized to devise a system to integrate the site in to the City. Some of the presented organizational tools were proposed due to their general and proven historical success. They represent a continuation of organizational influences on American cities. Some of these are:

- **The Grid**, from the Roman military camp
- **The Boulevard**, from Napoleonic France
- **The Parkways**, G. W. Parkway (suburban setting), Boston Common (urban Setting)

All of these models were used because they are capable of supporting an expandable order.

Other tools represent more specific mechanism to the site, and played a prominent roles as events responsible for the second overlay of organization.

- **The Street** - Unifier -Event recurring in cities.

Streets and active building edges as elements of continuity are organizational system that adjust and respond to its surrounding.

- **The Plaza** – organizer – Event magnifying and celebrating a place. Green and Open space network. Open spaces are also connections between blocks. One big space in the middle of a neighborhood linked to other smaller spaces that leap into other neighborhoods.

- **The Threshold** – Connector - Event integrating other events and with edges

*“Threshold is a sacred thing”*

Phorephorus – a Greek philosopher

Thresholds are the events where transitions and movements between and through spaces and between and through inside and outside. They are also the limits and boundaries of things. Thresholds on the planning, urban design and architectural levels are emphasized and celebrated. Threshold is the area of overlap between the three related disciplines. This thesis focuses on what happened in the threshold whether as a functional planning diagram, an urban plaza, a gateway to a building or a doorway to a private space. It uses the movements and transitions from and in between the public, the semi public, the semi private and the private to explores ways of using the threshold as an organizer and a driver of design solutions

The proposed block size, while varies, is comparable the block size in Old town Alexandria which is:

246x 353 center of right of way

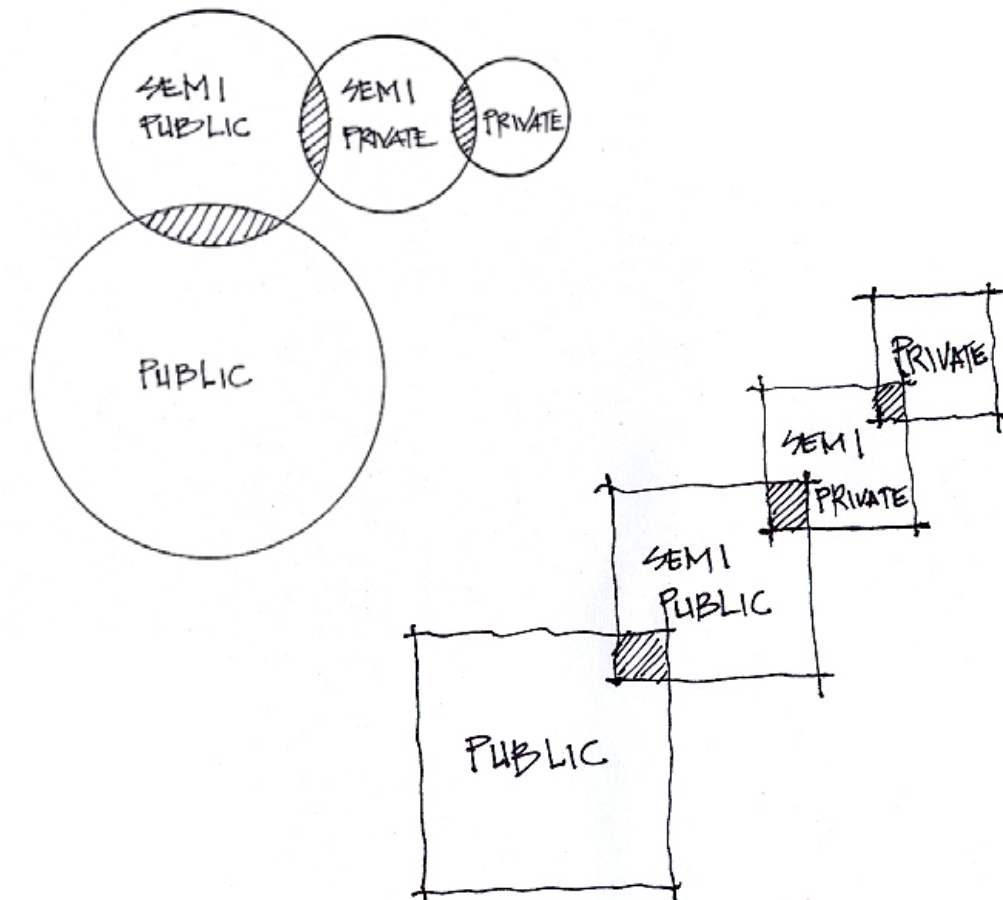
40' of payvment

8' sidewalk

The proposed typical town house block configuration is the invert of the standard layout and is designed to contrast that of Old Town Alexandria.

Compendium streets were developed and modeled after the methods adopted by the book “Great Streets” by Alan Jacob.

A secondary network of streets and open spaces are introduced for maximum connectivity, integration and flexibility in the choice of the mode of transportation.



## Public Realm

*“In the past, the street was the place where social classes and social uses mixed. It was the stage of solemn ceremony and improvised spectacle, of people watching, of commerce and recreation. In its changing architecture, its slow shifts and adjustments, in its sometimes wholesale reincarnation, the street was also the our communal register – the safeguard of those continuities of culture and place that made us as street users vastly and substantially older than our age and infinitely wiser than our natural gifts...*

*In all this the container mattered, of course, but it was not what mattered most. If a street design took certain turns, it is because that is how we wanted to live. “A street is a street,” wrote Maurice Culot and Leon Krier, and one lives there in a certain way not because architects have imagined streets in certain ways.” That is why I cannot see the point of reviving the container without a solemn commitment to reinvest it with true urban vigor, with urbanity.”*

Spiro Kostof – The City Assembled

This project assumes that fundamental to the life of a city is the existence of urban *PUBLIC REALM*, a place where people who don't know each other can be, congregate, interact, share experiences... In this project the public realm consists of streets, squares, plazas and parks.

In an era when public realm is reduced to fragmented aspect of itself (public spaces are either highly restricted or privately owned, parks, libraries, malls, sports arenas, churches, convention centers, theatres...)

Active public streets are the only remaining true public realm and are the backbone of a striving urban center. They belong to no one and to everyone simultaneously. They are the container where public life, public gathering and public debate take place. They are the place where human exchanges take place, not just active exchange as in the case for commerce, but also passive exchange for spontaneity and leisure. They are the steps of the Metropolitan Museum in New York, Piazza Fontana in Rome, the café in Paris and the Bazaar in Damascus.

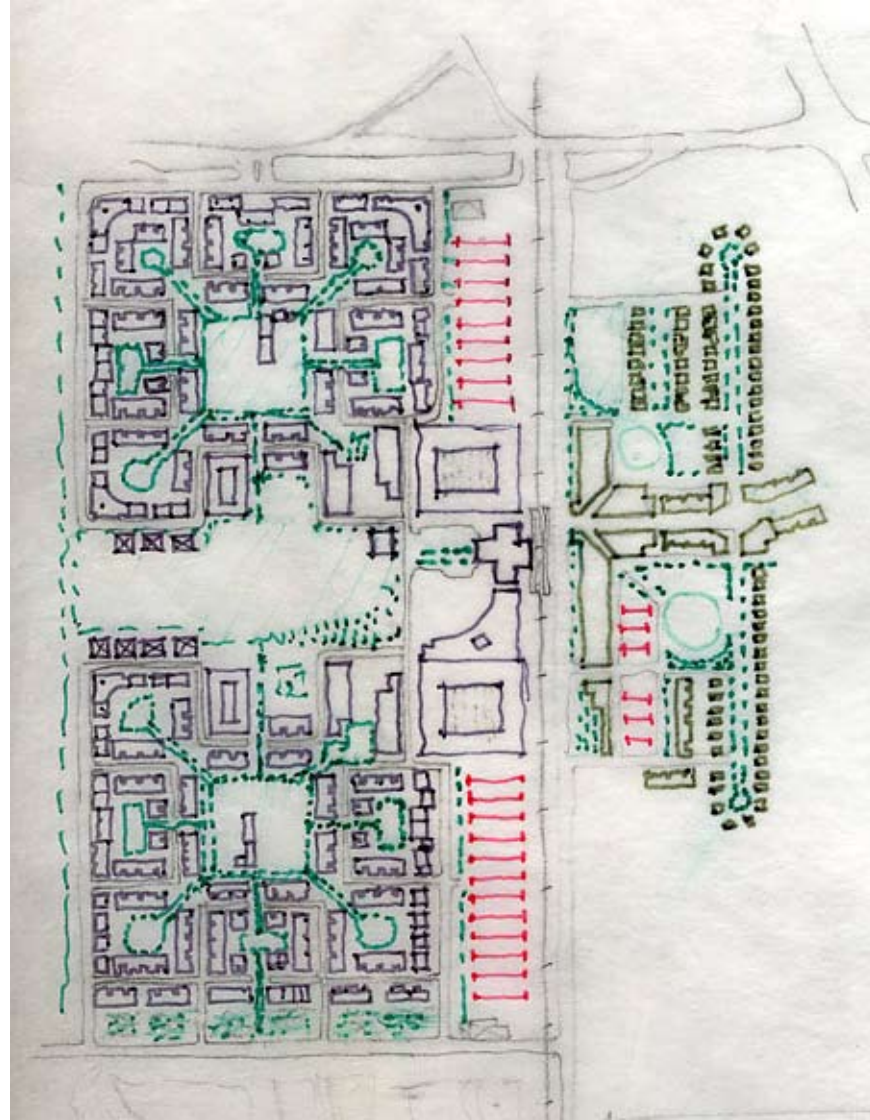
To sustain active Public Street, two things have to happen:

1. **Continuity of experience** – this is achieved by minimizing interruption of street walls and sidewalks, and by making the open spaces in the retail district an extension of the street.
2. **Continuity of use over time** – This issue is addressed conceptually & programmatically. It explores ways of introducing a design with a level of flexibility which allows for a variety of mixes and uses; spaces that are easily convertible from one use to another. For example, the school is extended into the park in order promote its function as a community center.

case study

pedestrian pocket book

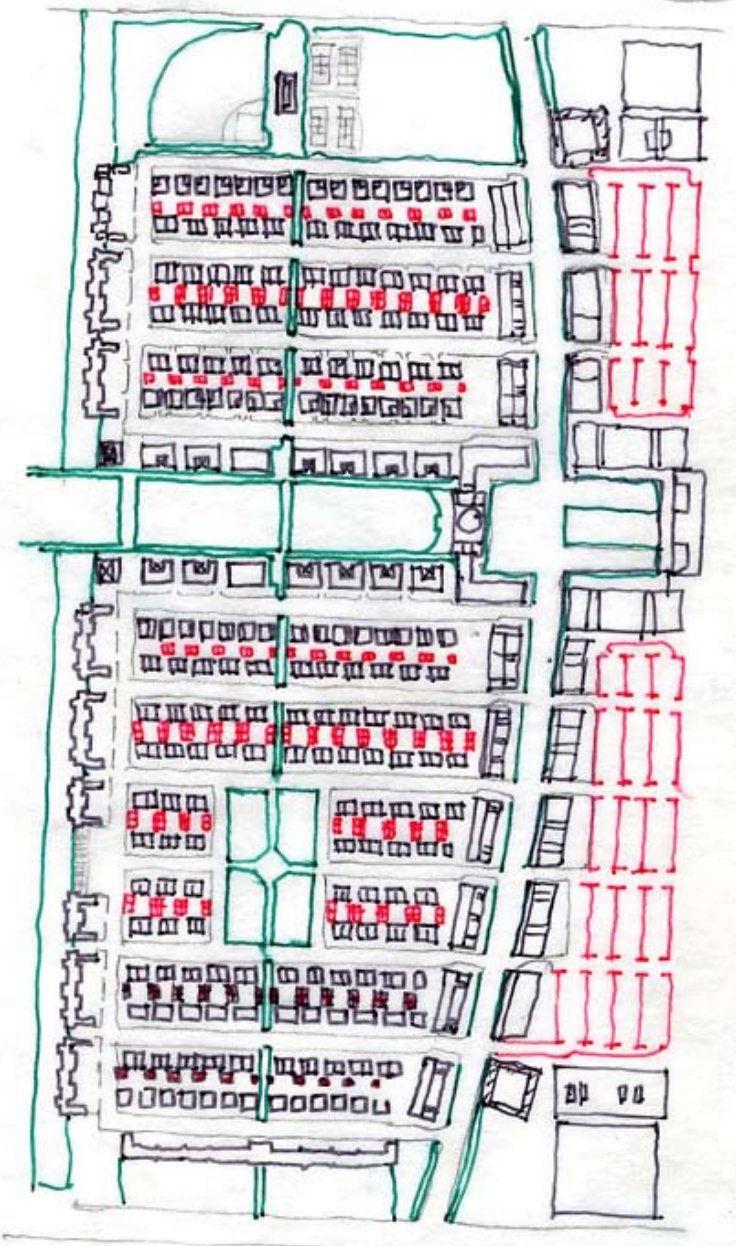
the marriage of the human scale & the automobile scale



the grid iron model



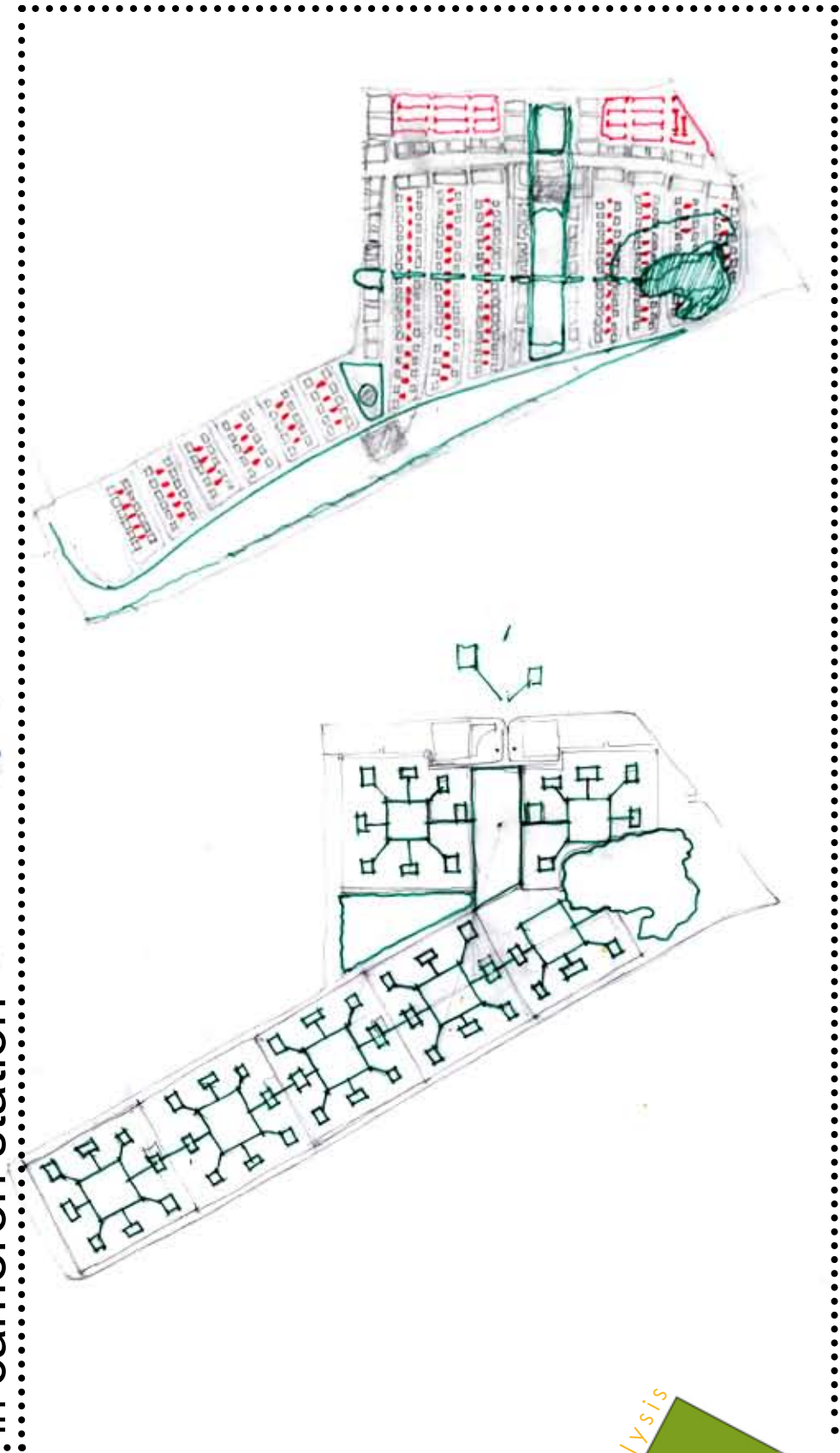
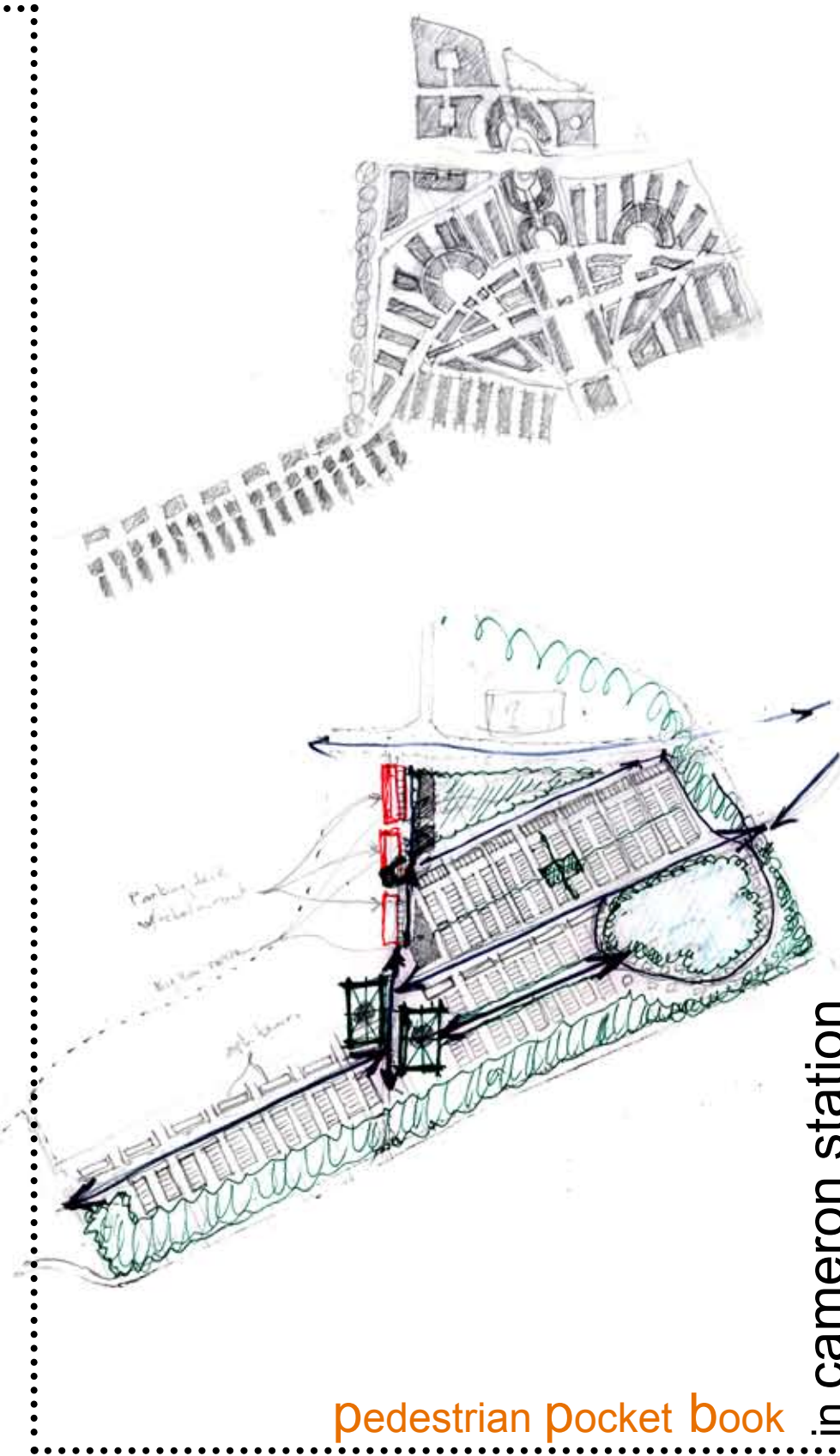
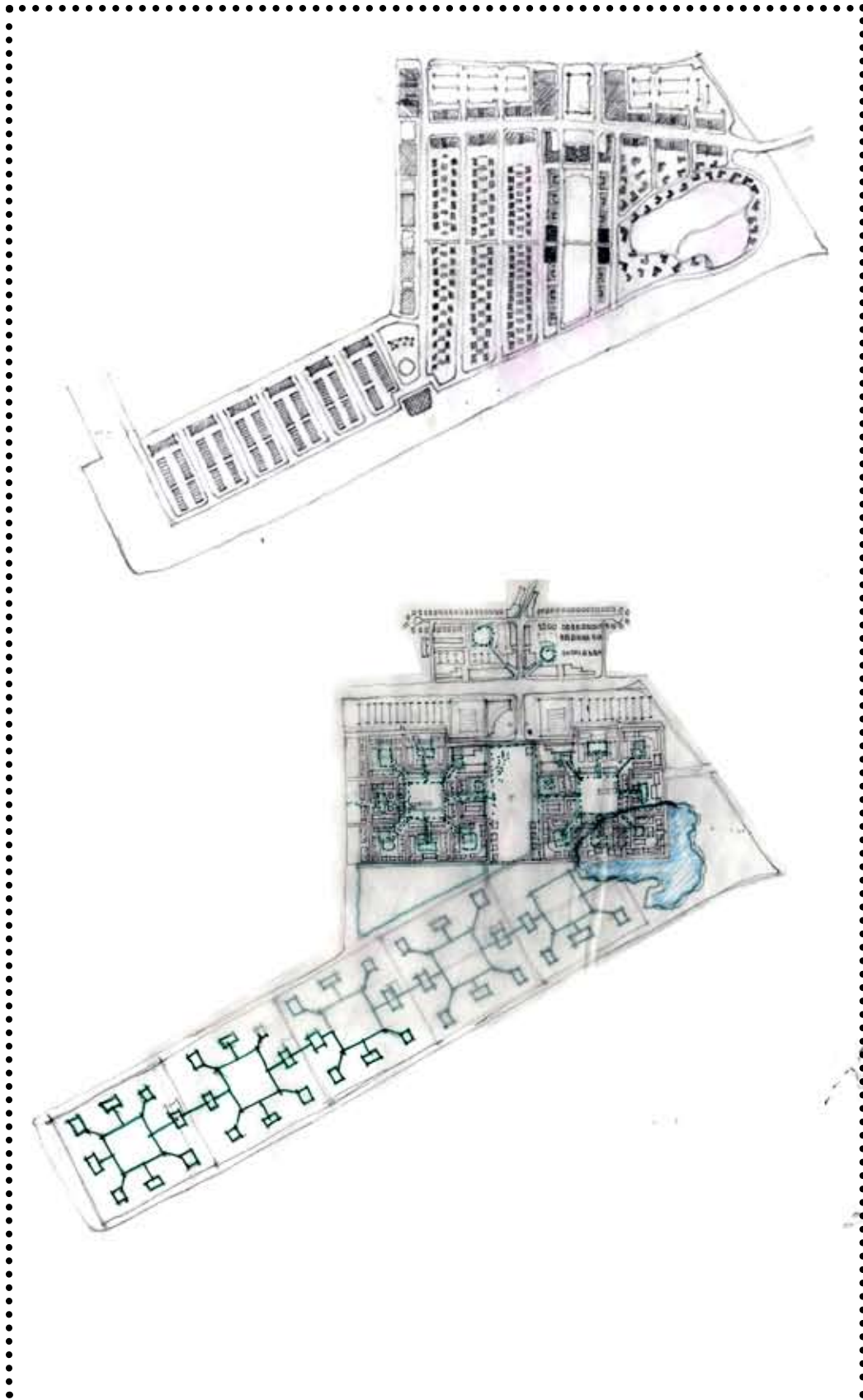
from urban sensibility to suburban one



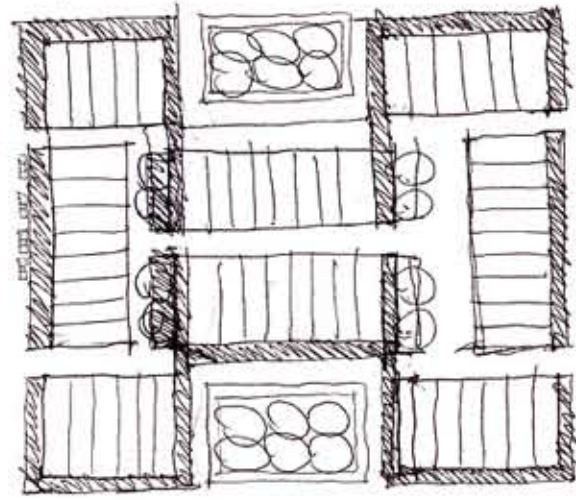
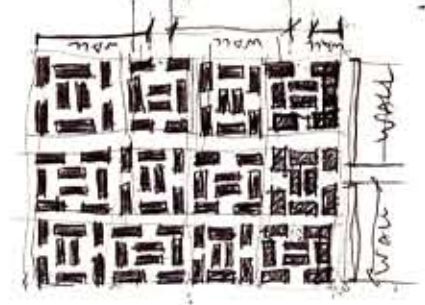
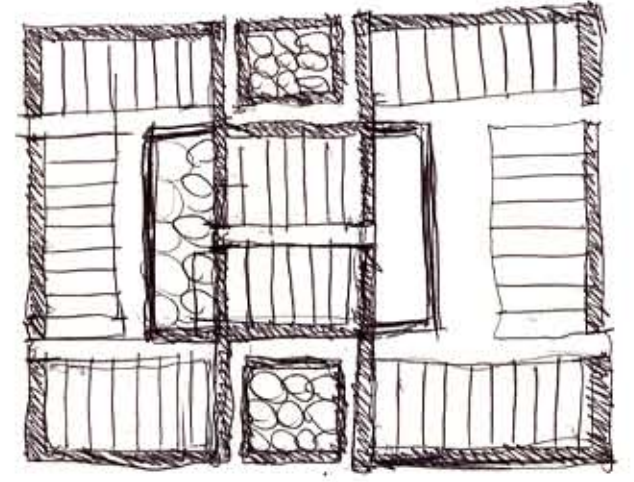
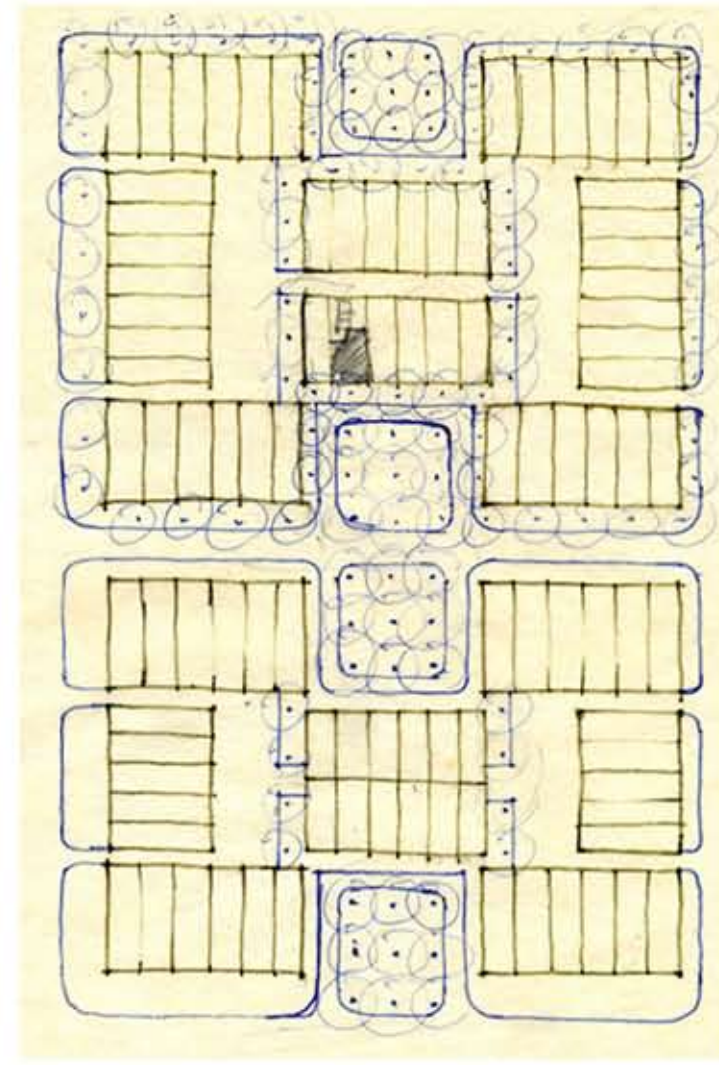
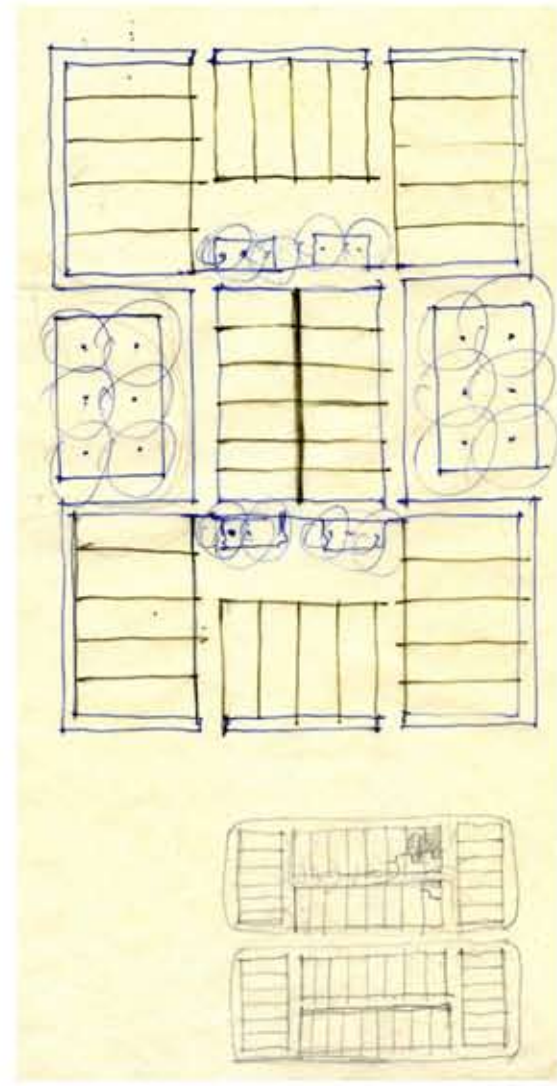
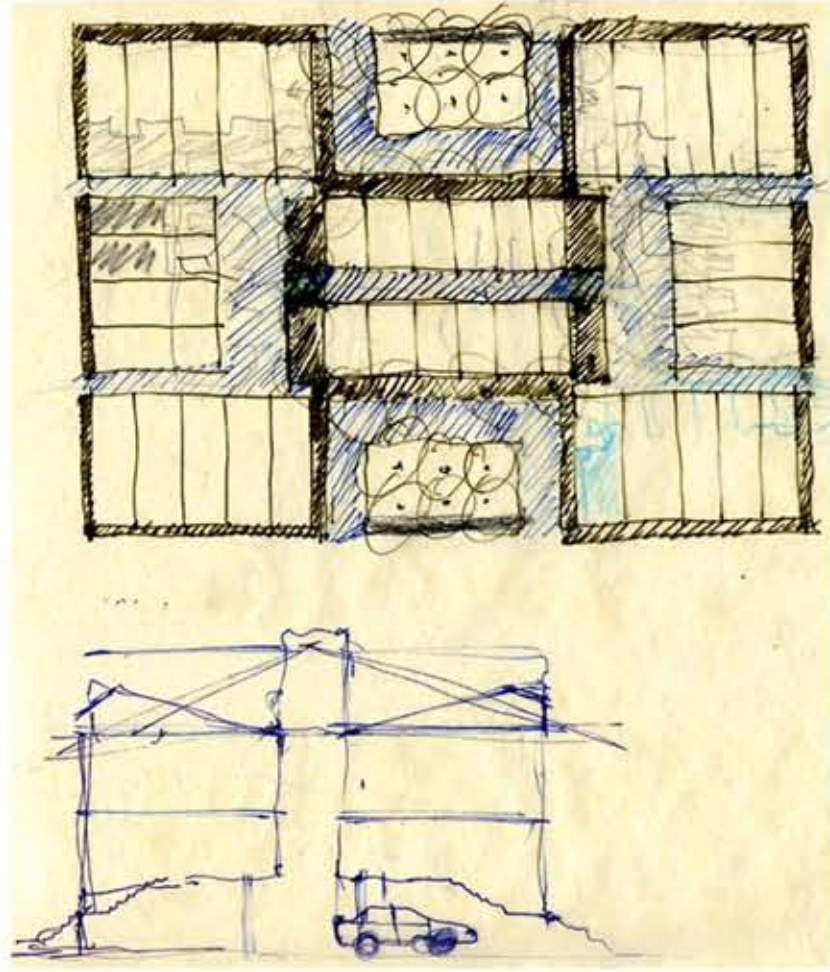
- inward quality, disconnection and isolation
- common open space
- dual system for cars and pedestrians
- complete separation of the automobile from semiprivate open space.

- interior courts, exterior plazas
- natural feature
- urban elements
- variety of housing with
- accessibility for cars and pedestrians
- variety of experiences urban\rural
- exterior (public) and interior (private) solutions
- high density, mix use, integrity of building facade
- creating a boundary for the street
- connection to transportation

- grid-iron plan avoids a theme like artificiality of a self contained entity
- main street comm\loss the east side, housing on the west side
- continual vista of pedestrian network gives a sense of agrarian setting
- parking as a buffer

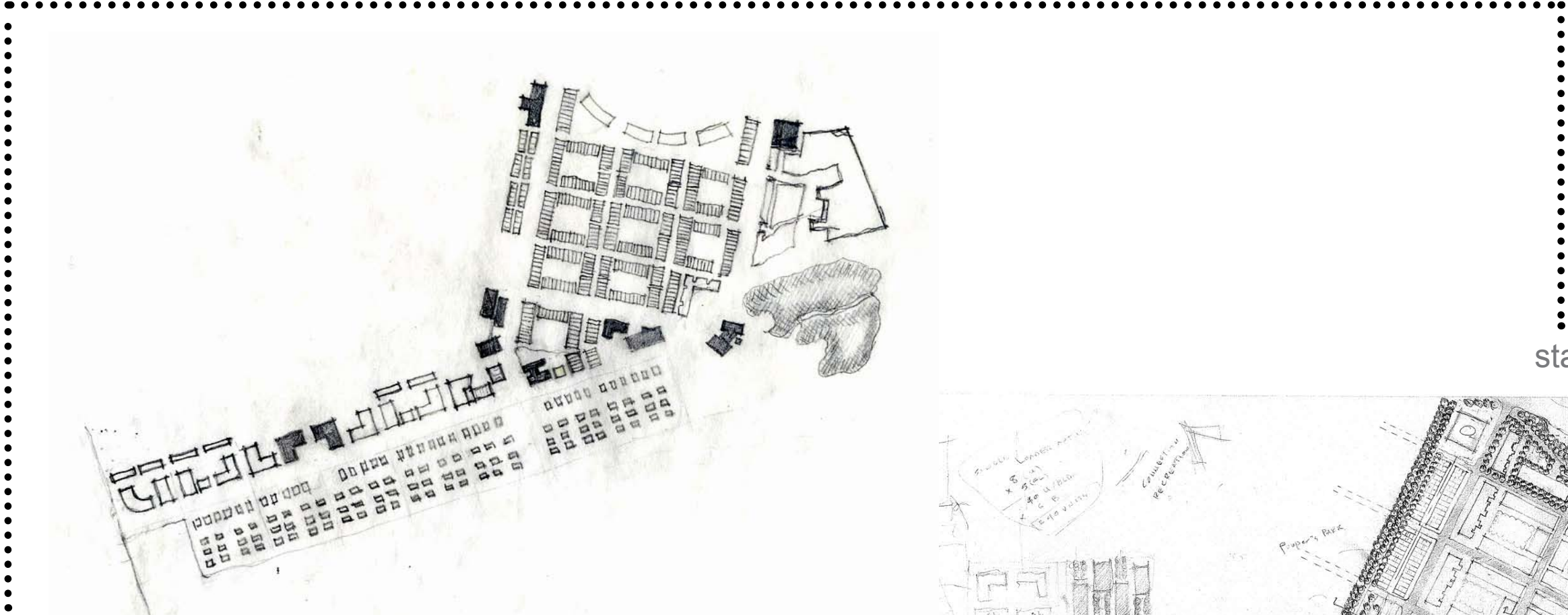


pedestrian pocket book in cameron station



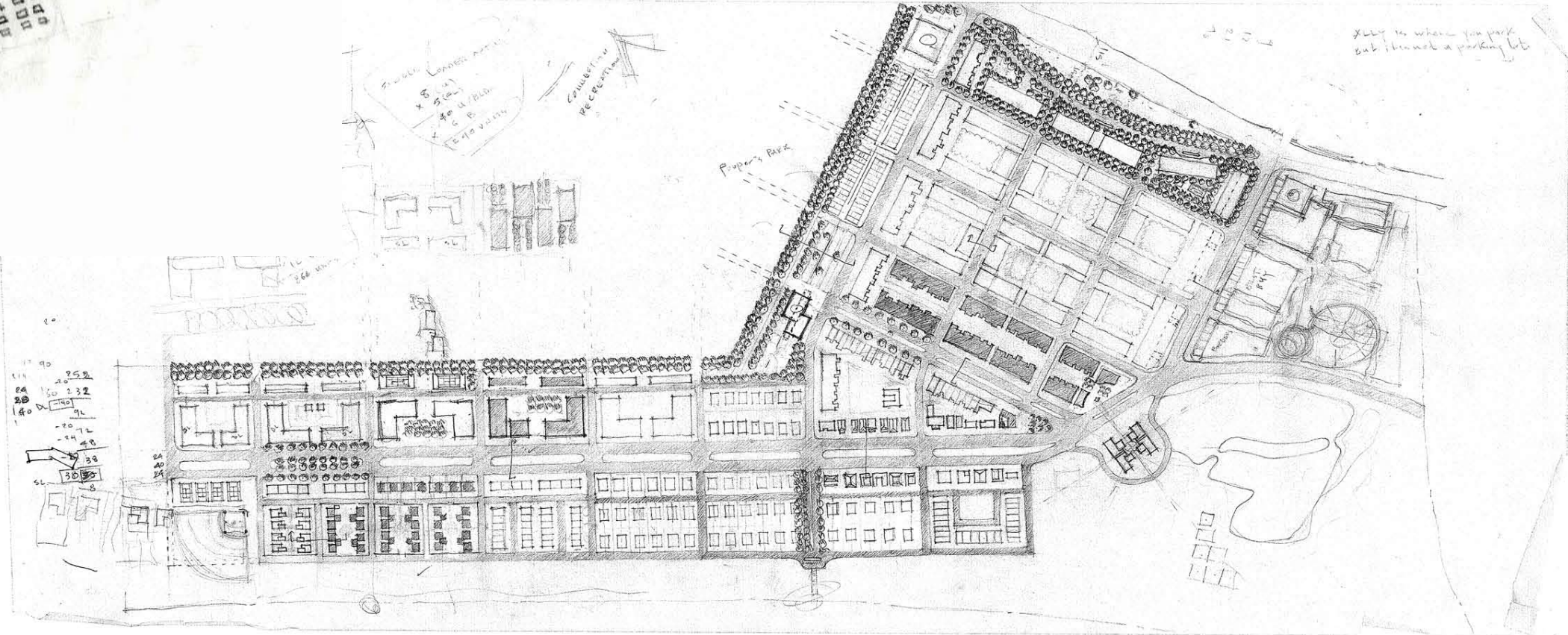
ideas for typical block

the generator



stage 2.

stage 1.



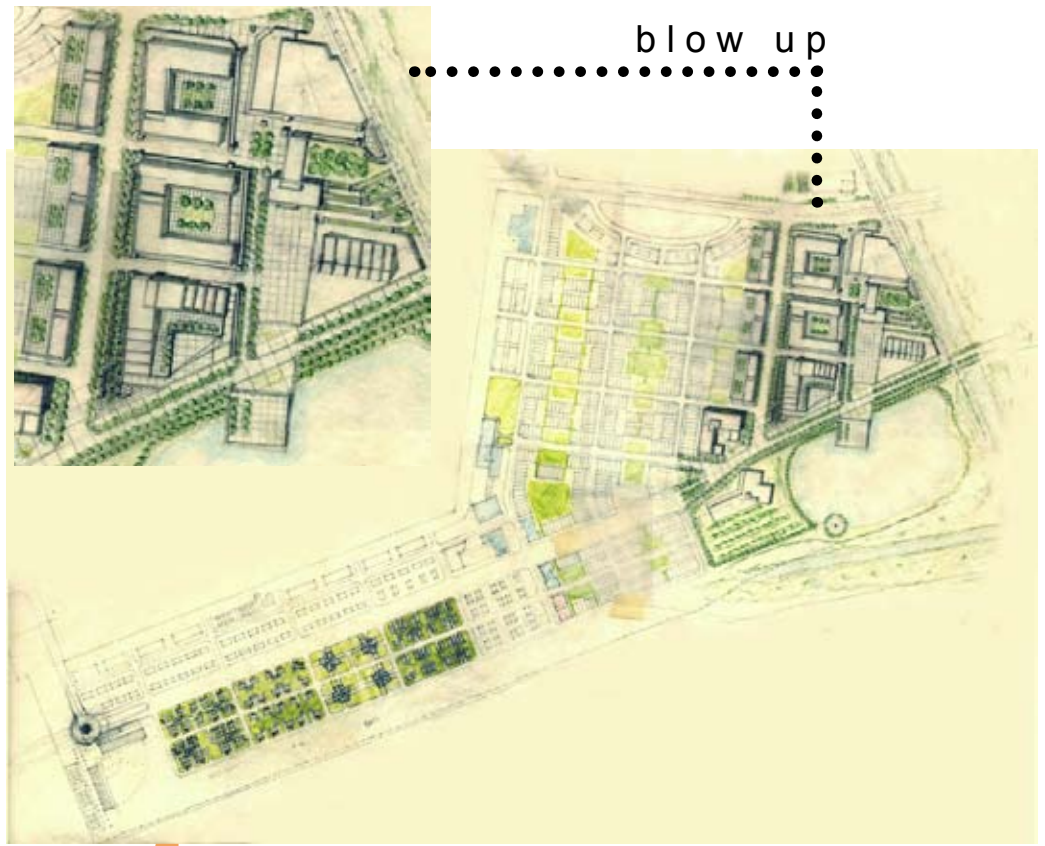
typical block layout study



study of block with internal public space



stage 4.



stage 5.





proposed plan



partial masterplan town houses and sectional housing blocks



partial masterplan single family house district & recreational sport center



partial masterplan mixed-use power center



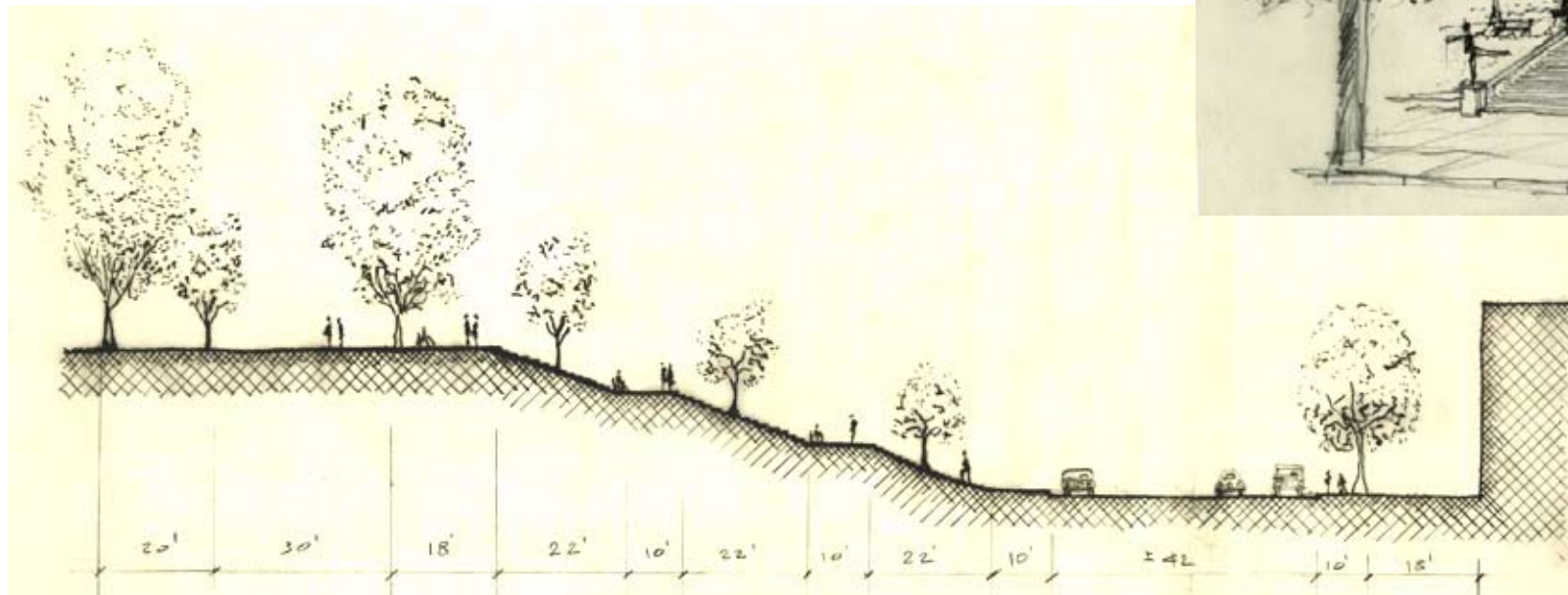
partial masterplan duke street green with highrise residential



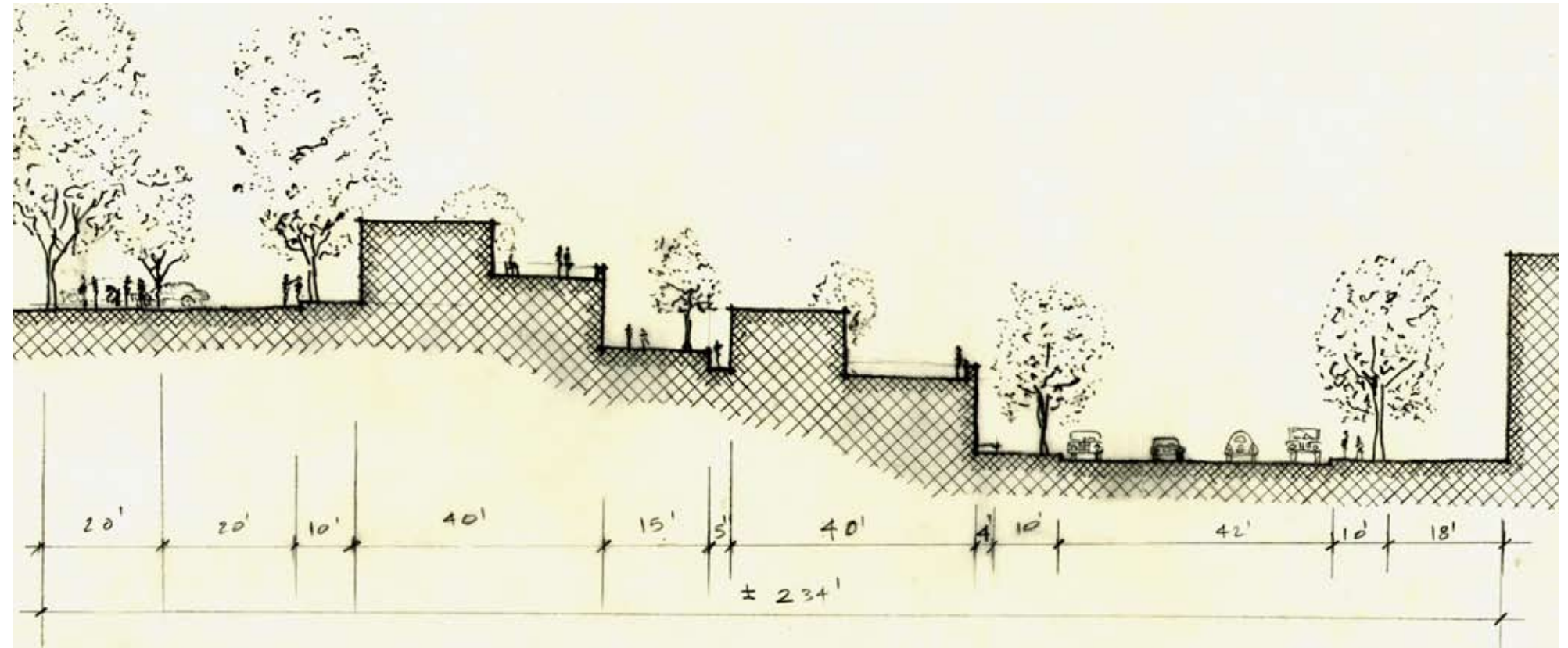
- 1. Public Library
- 2. Art Galleries
- 3. Performing Art Center

partial masterplan cultural center

sectional park  
sectional housing



sectional park  
sectional housing



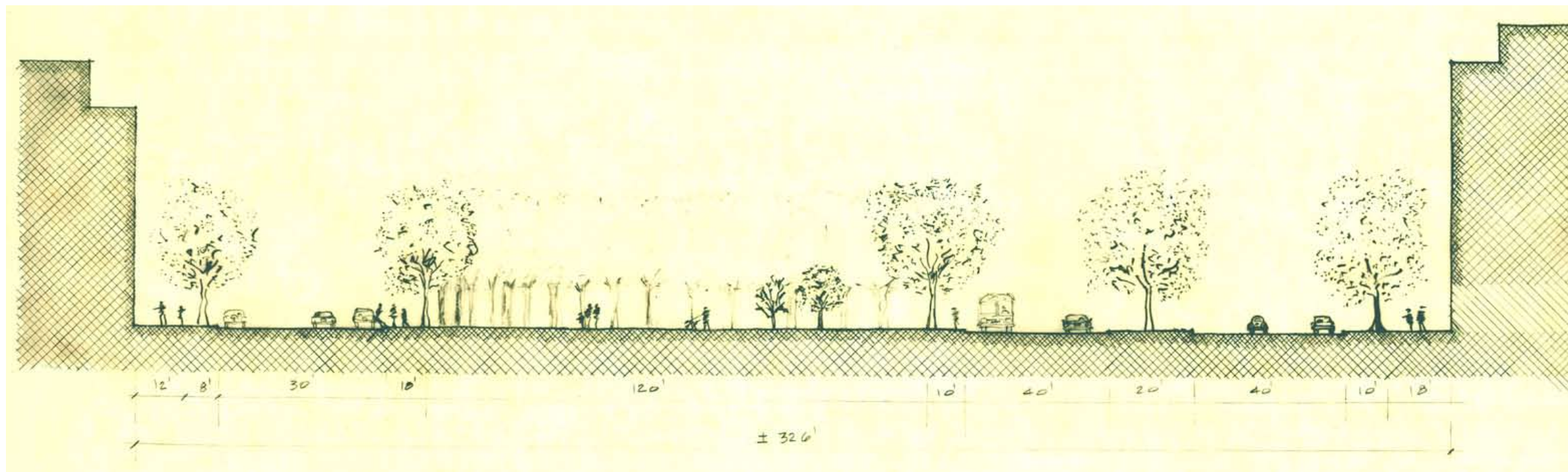
London, England

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duke street edge  
multi-family residential



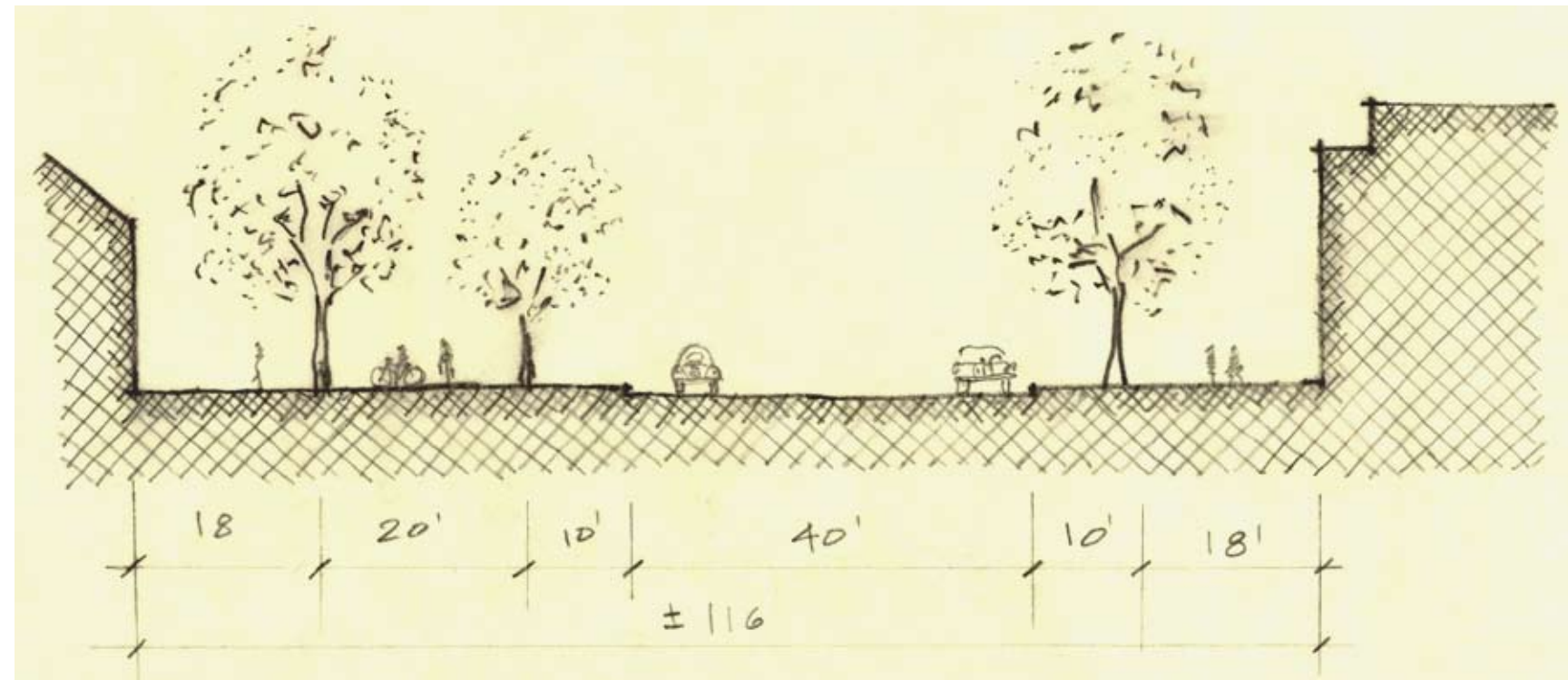


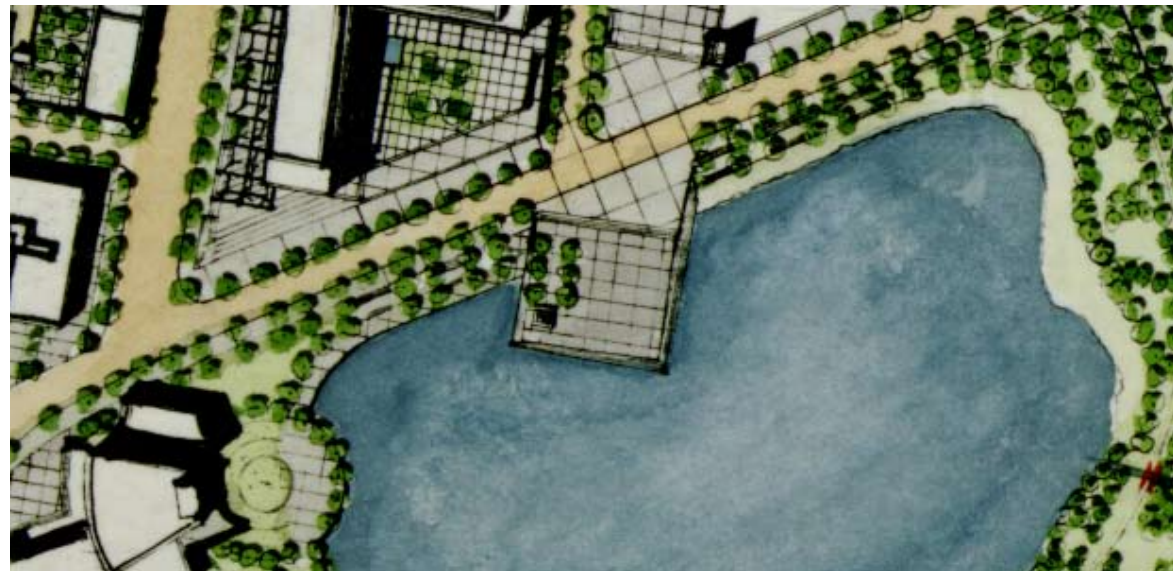
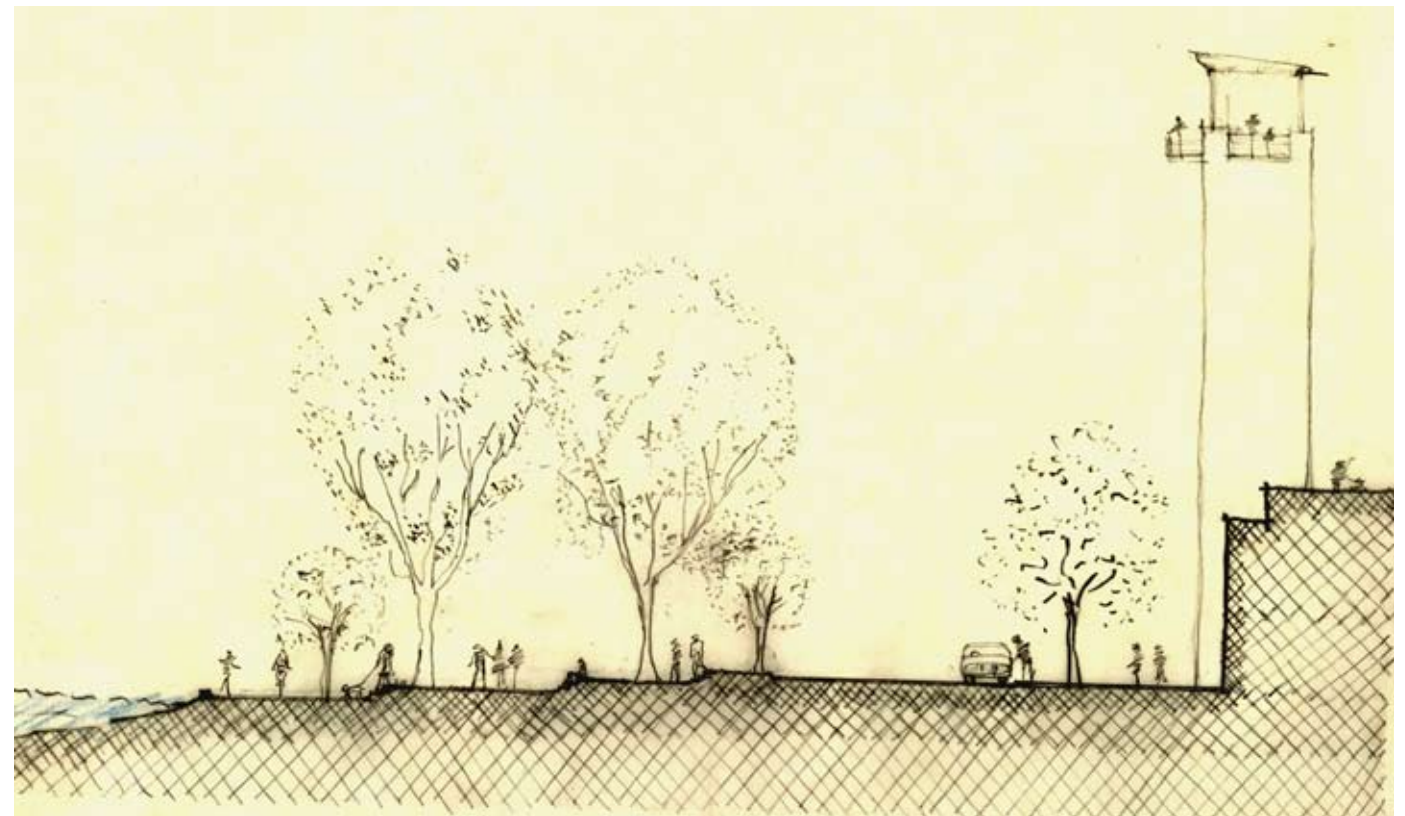
modeled after  
Prince Street, Alexandria, VA



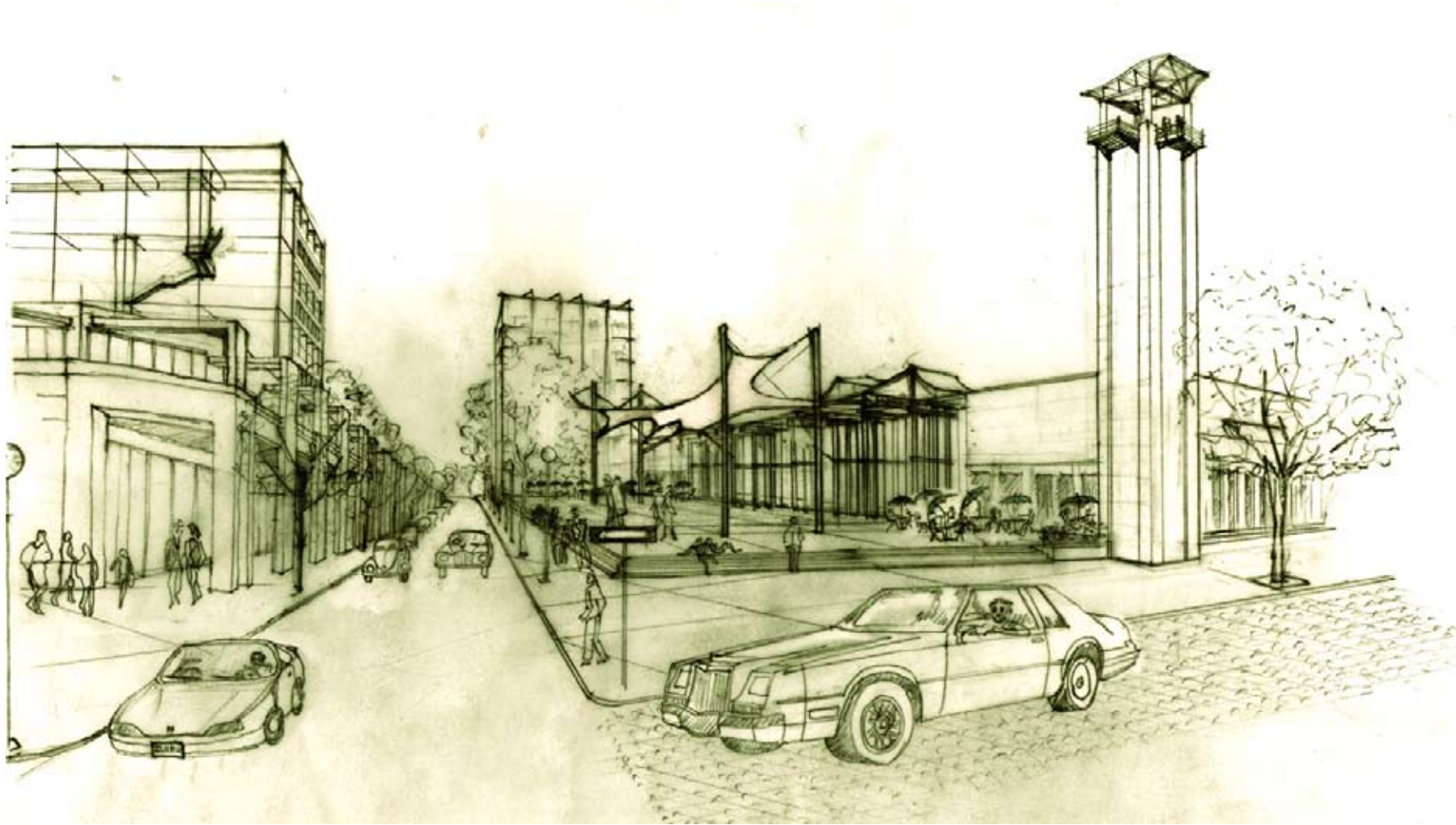


modeled after  
P Street, Georgetown



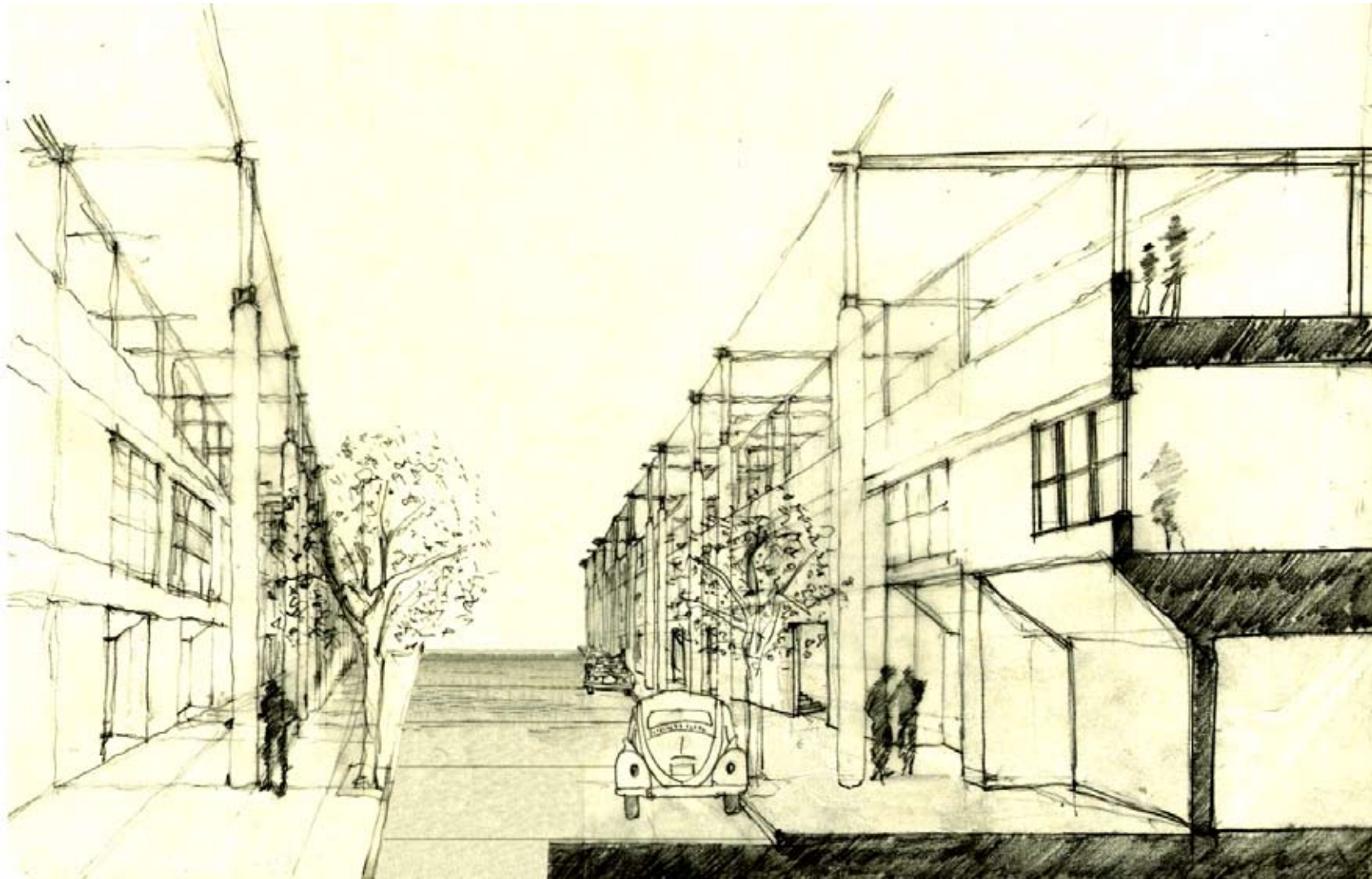


plaza and waterfront

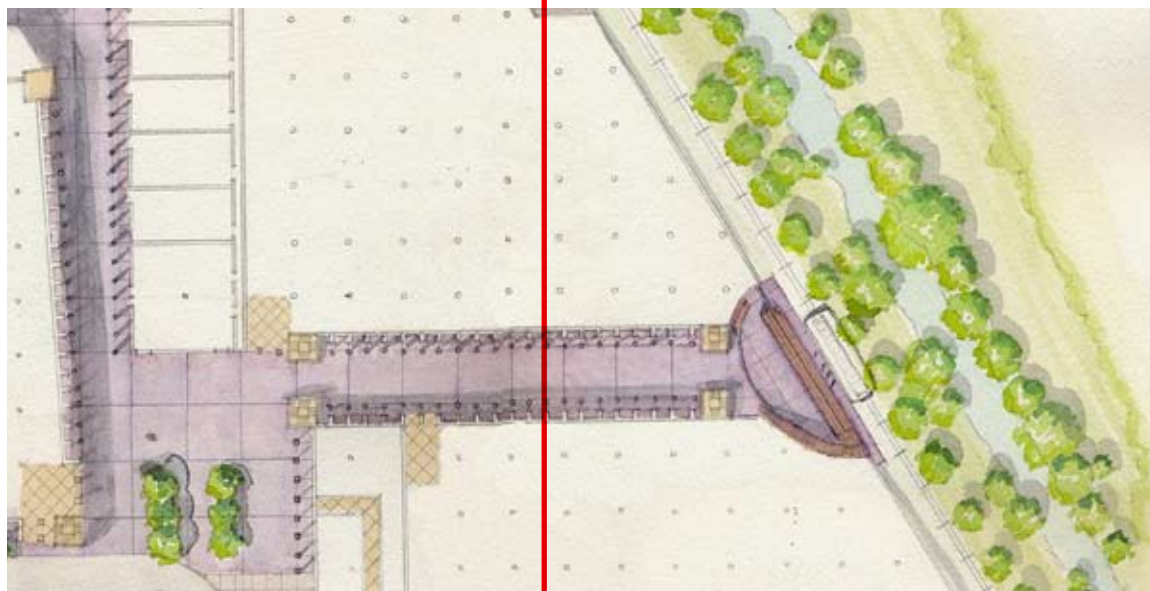


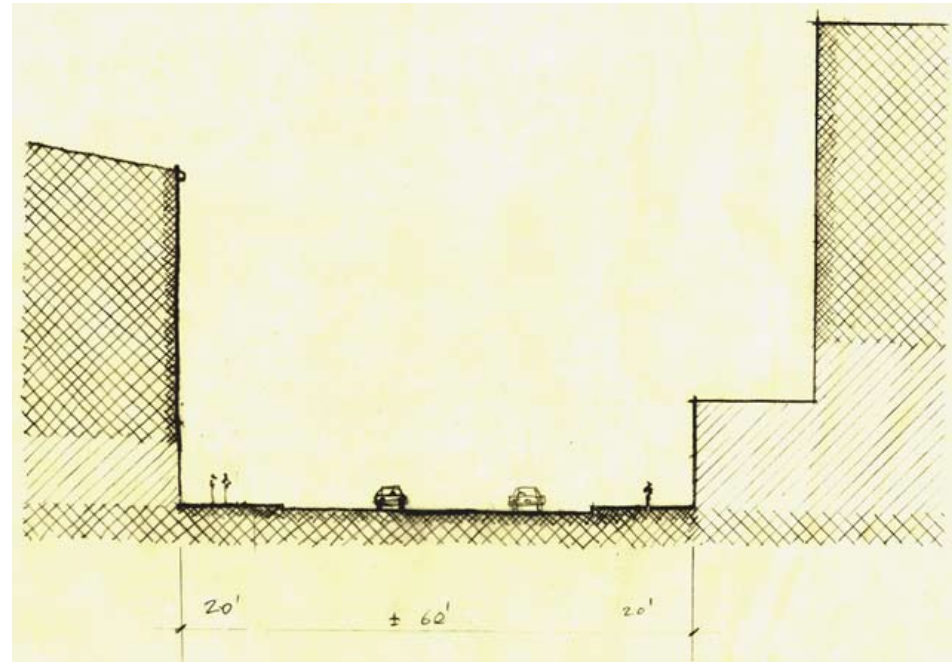
the plaza



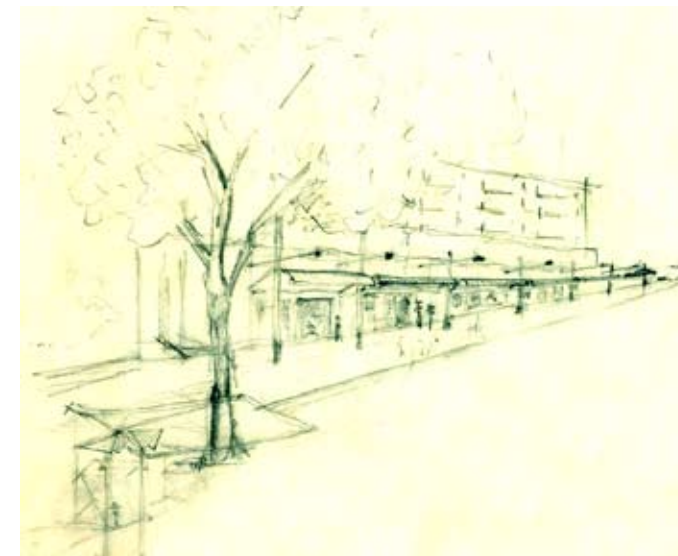


the vender street  
&  
vender wall



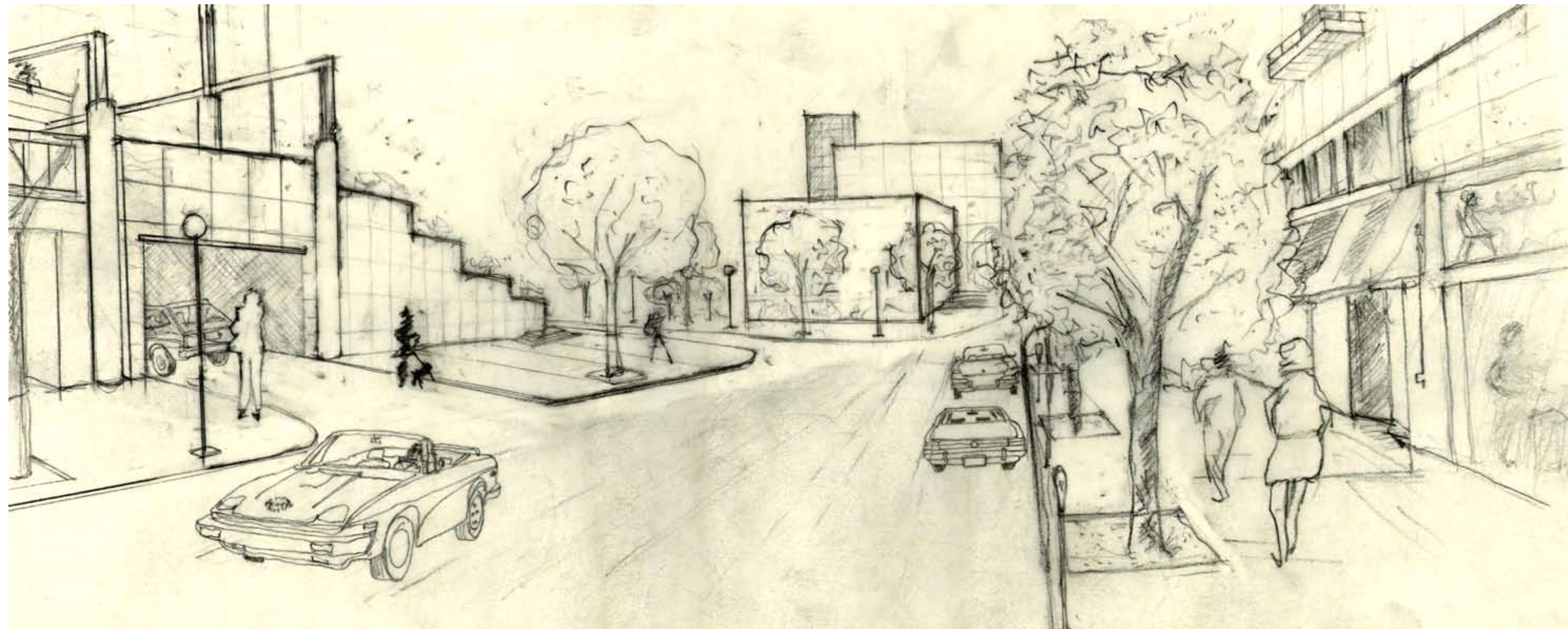


modeled after  
Typical mixed-use downtown street

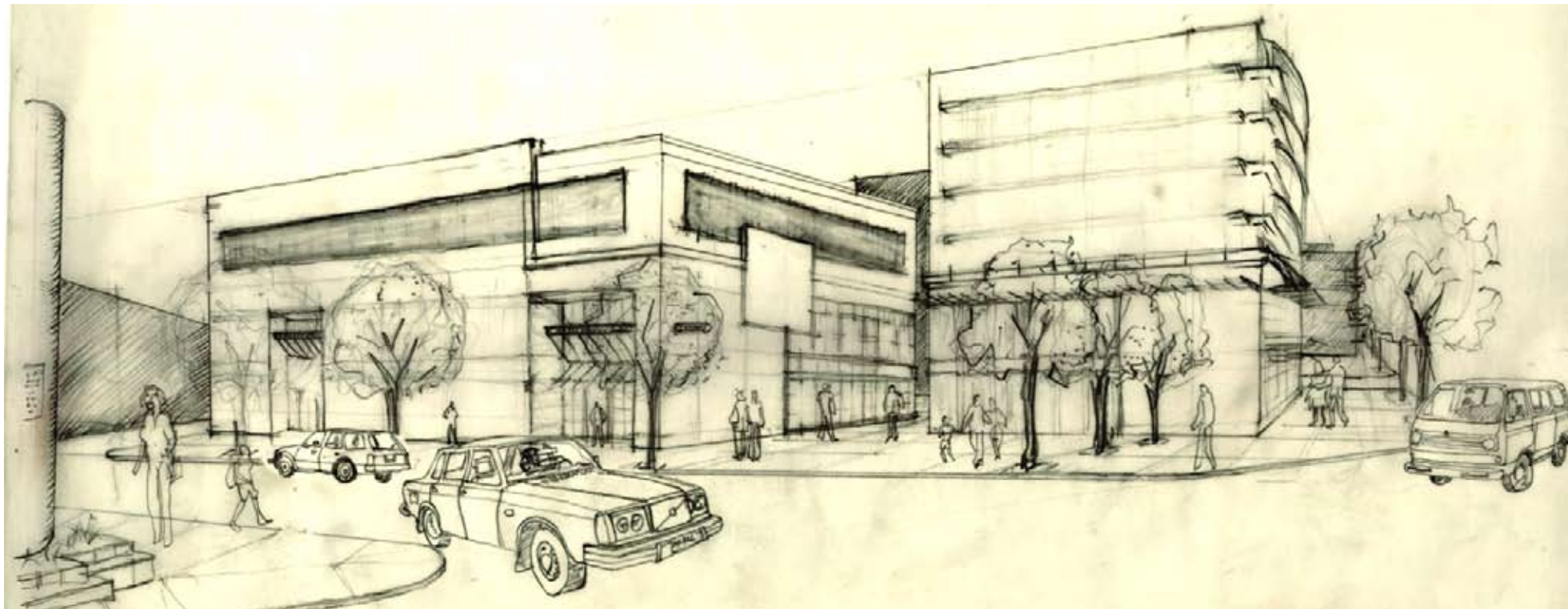
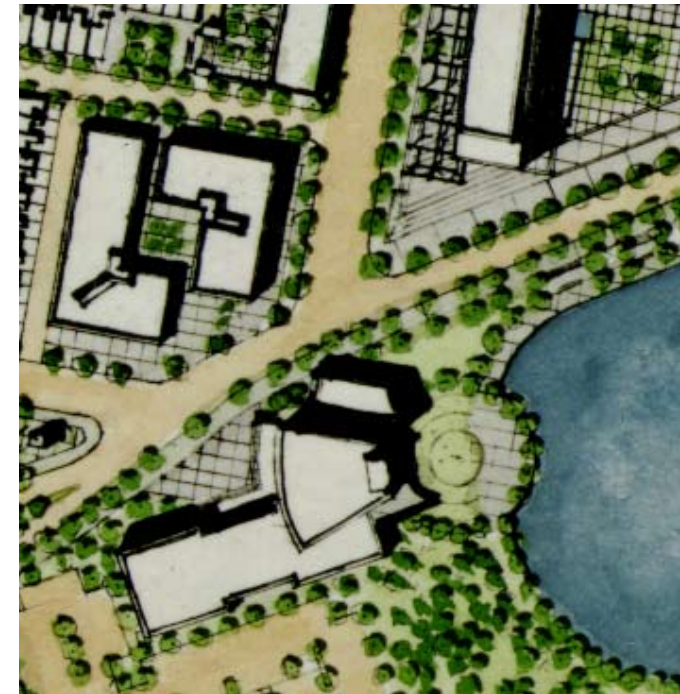




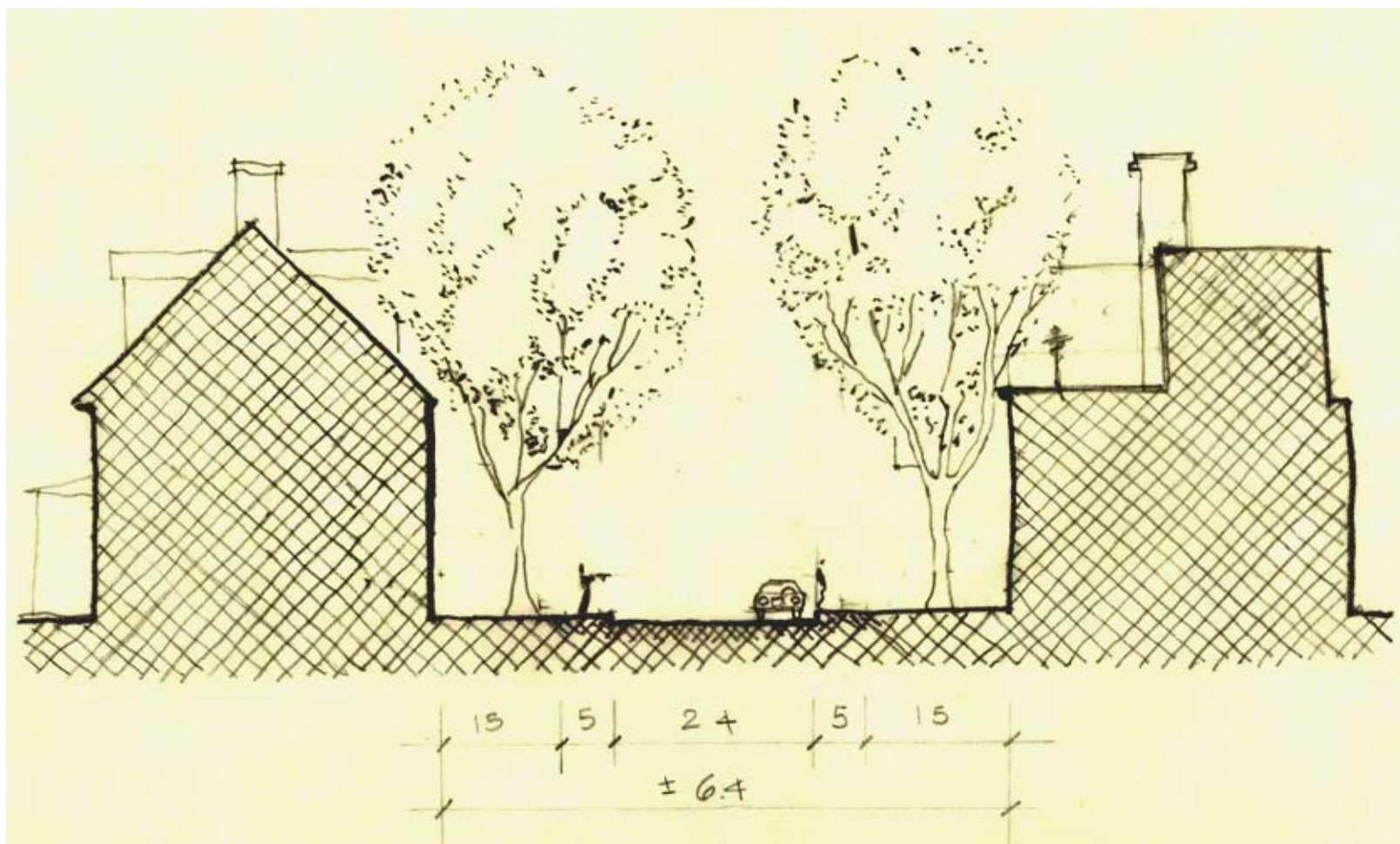
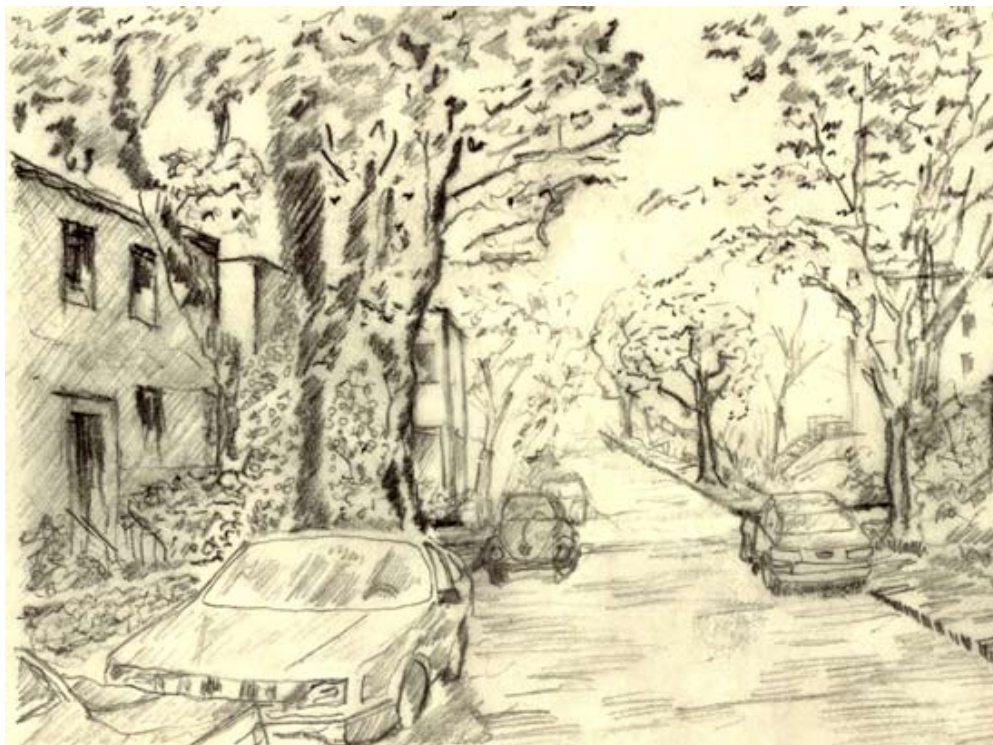
modeled after  
Typical mixed-use downtown street



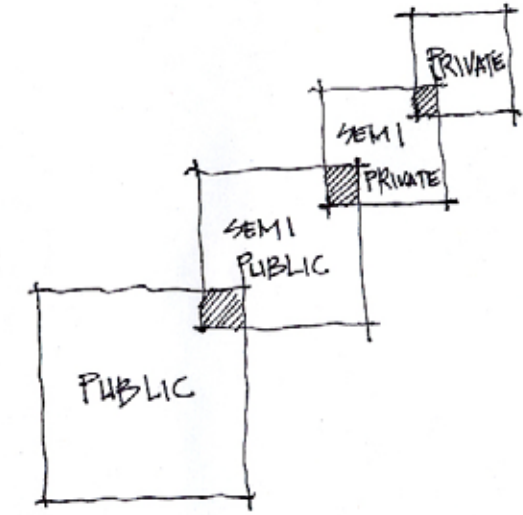
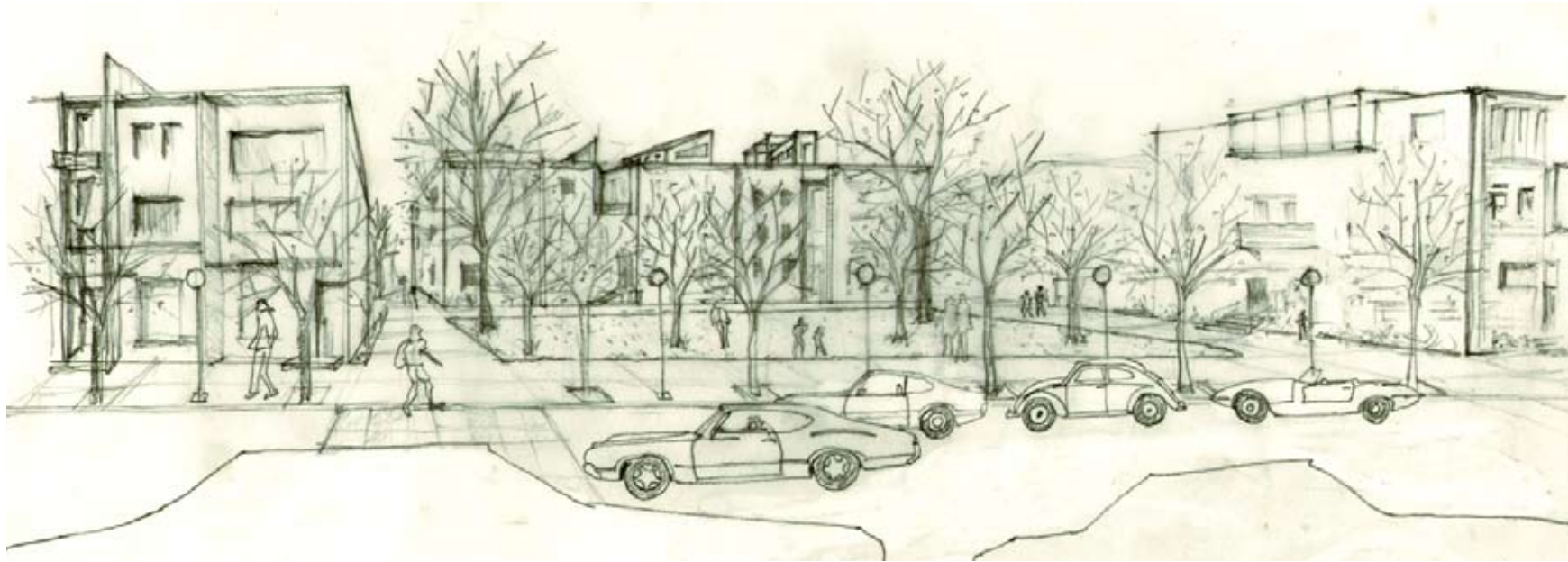




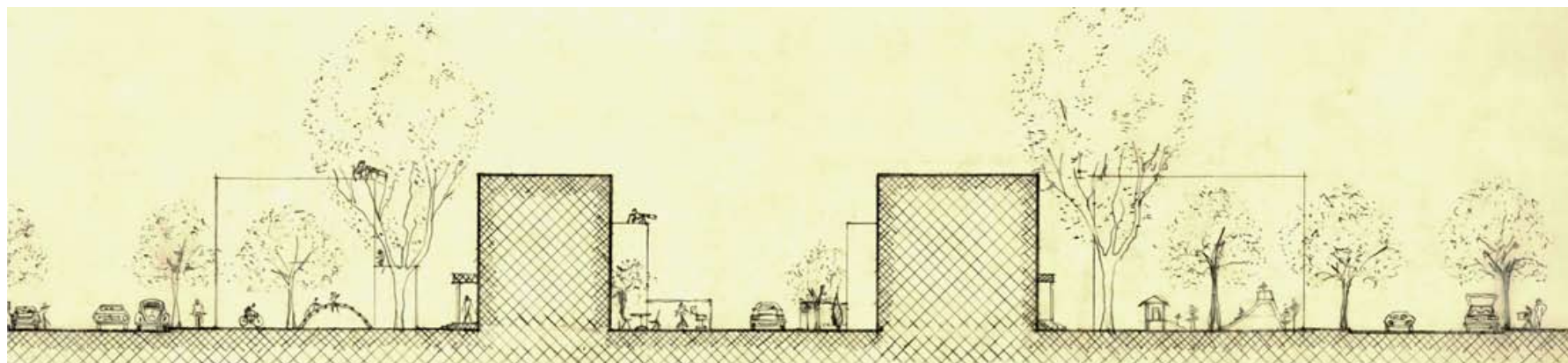
the cultural center  
art galleries



typical single family neighborhood street

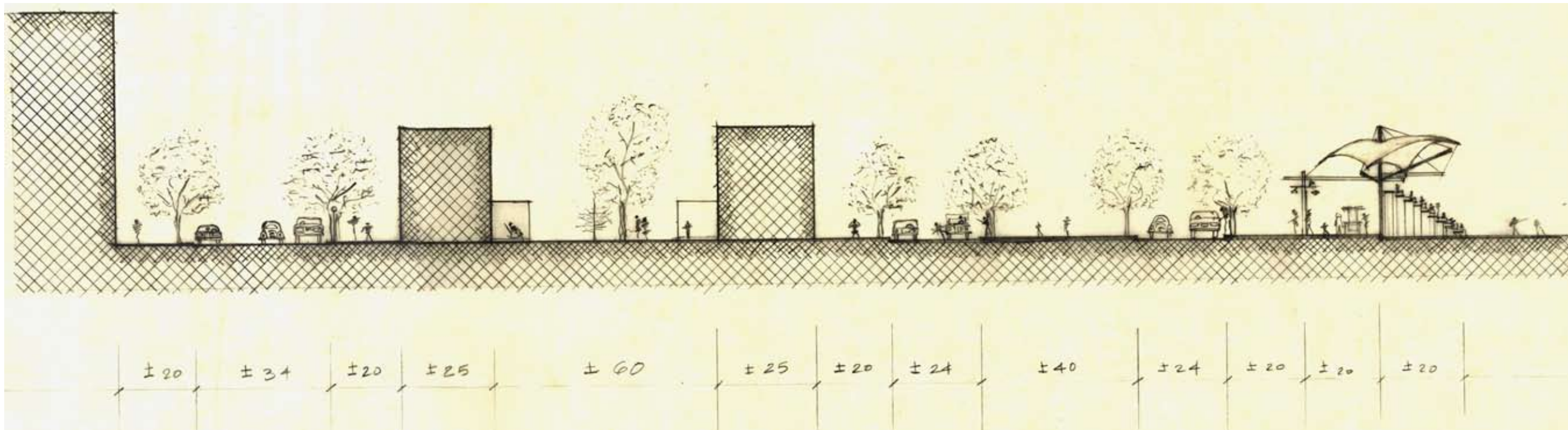
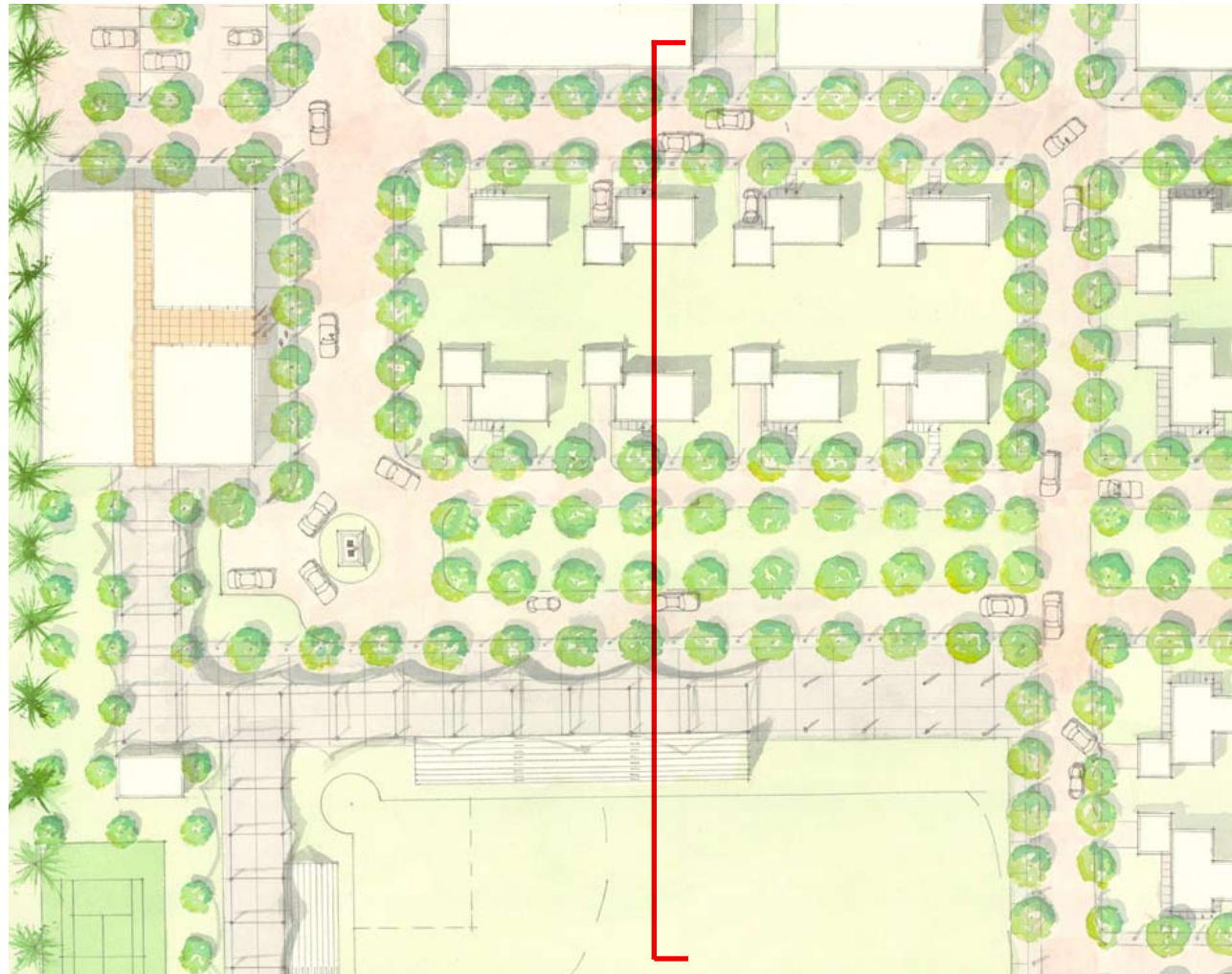


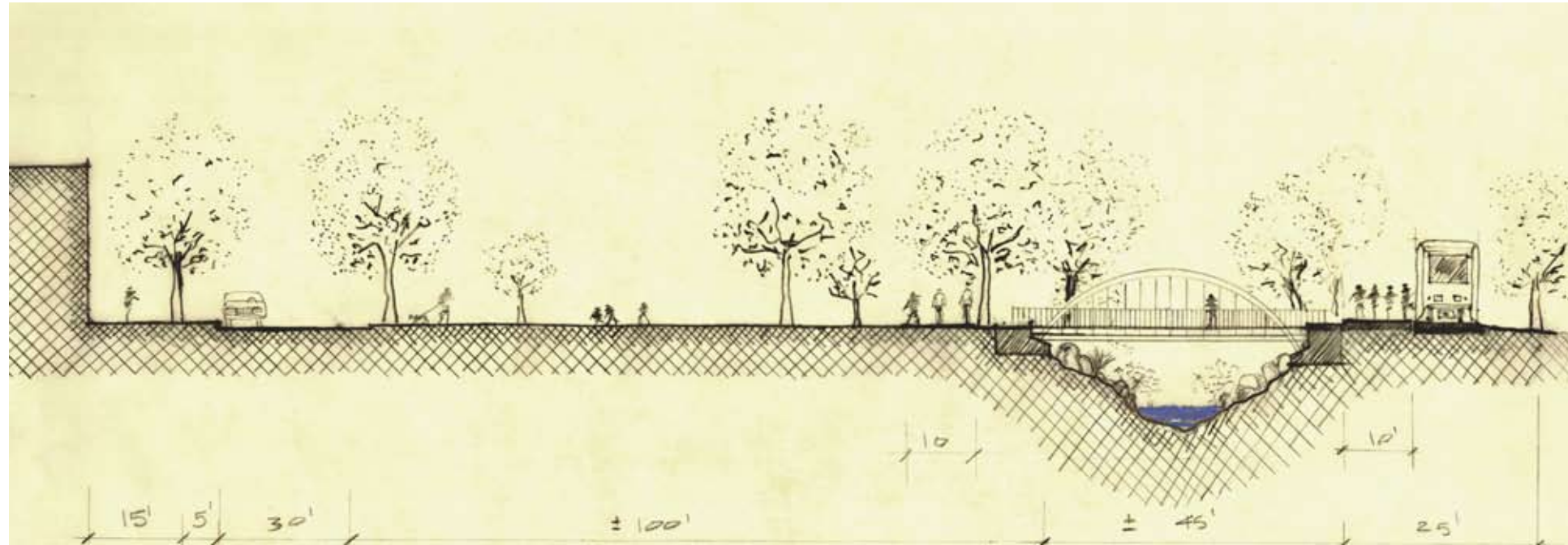
typical rowhouse block green  
public / private space



community center

residential:  
multi-family &  
single family





modeled after  
P Street, Georgetown. Washington DC

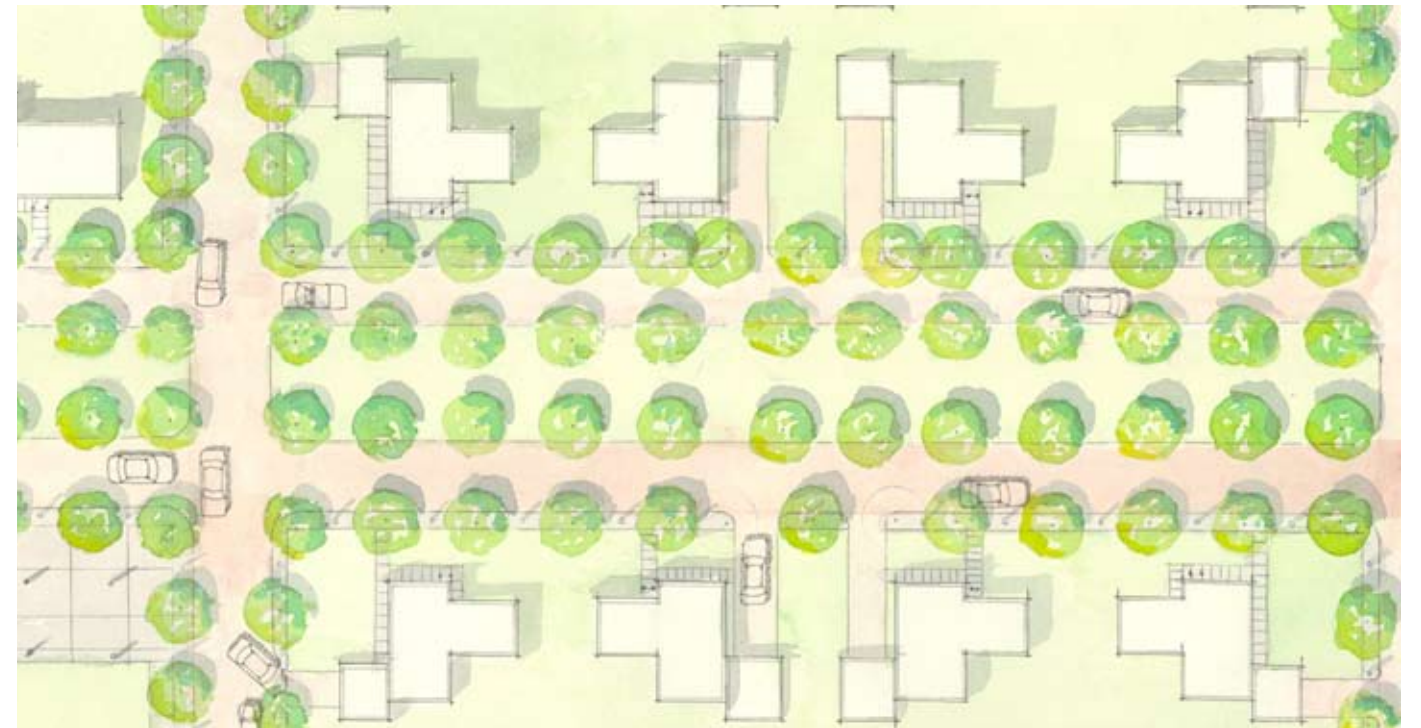


Baltimore city rail system



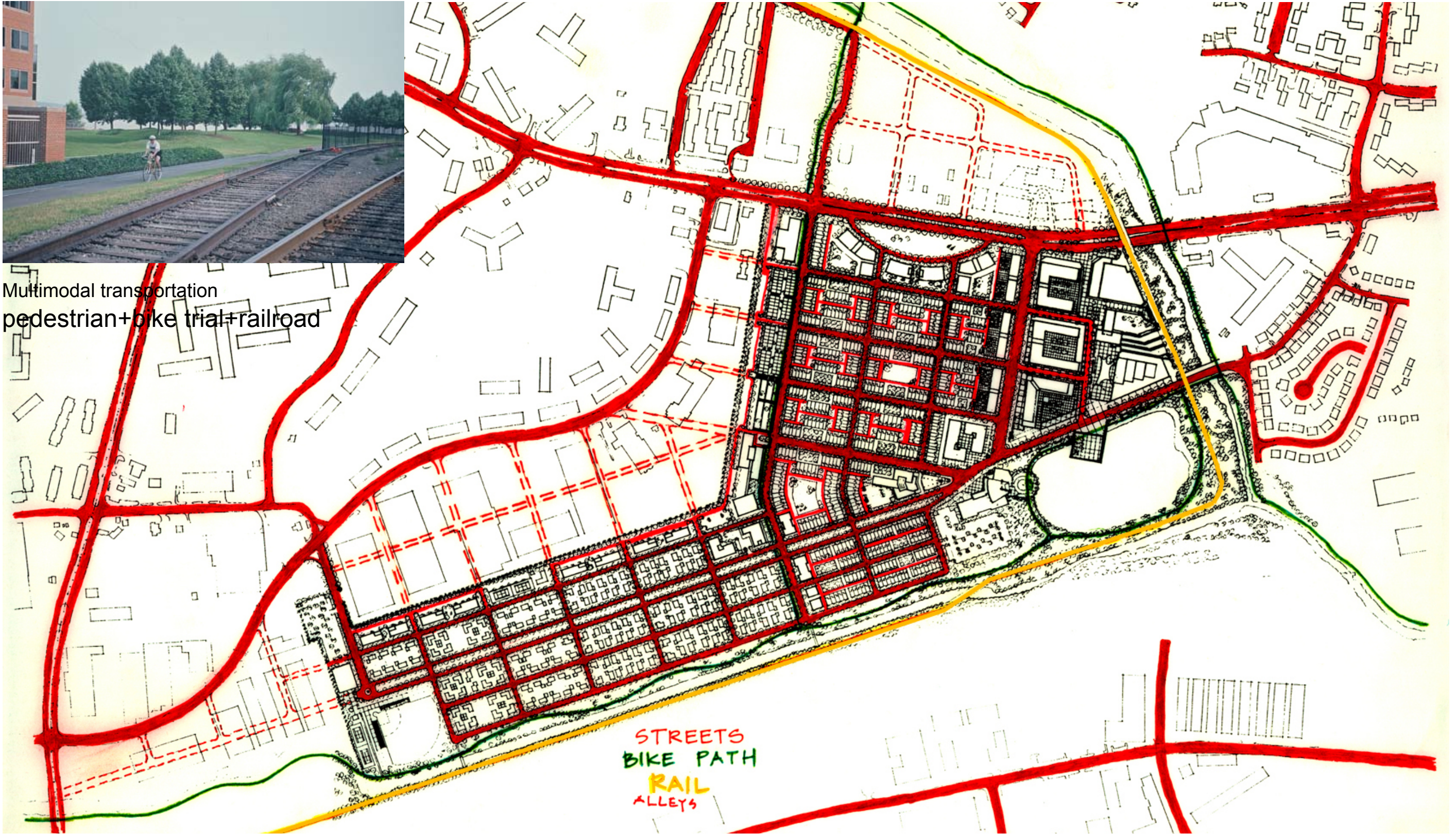


modeled after  
Commonwealth Ave - Alexandria, VA  
Monument Ave - Richmond, VA



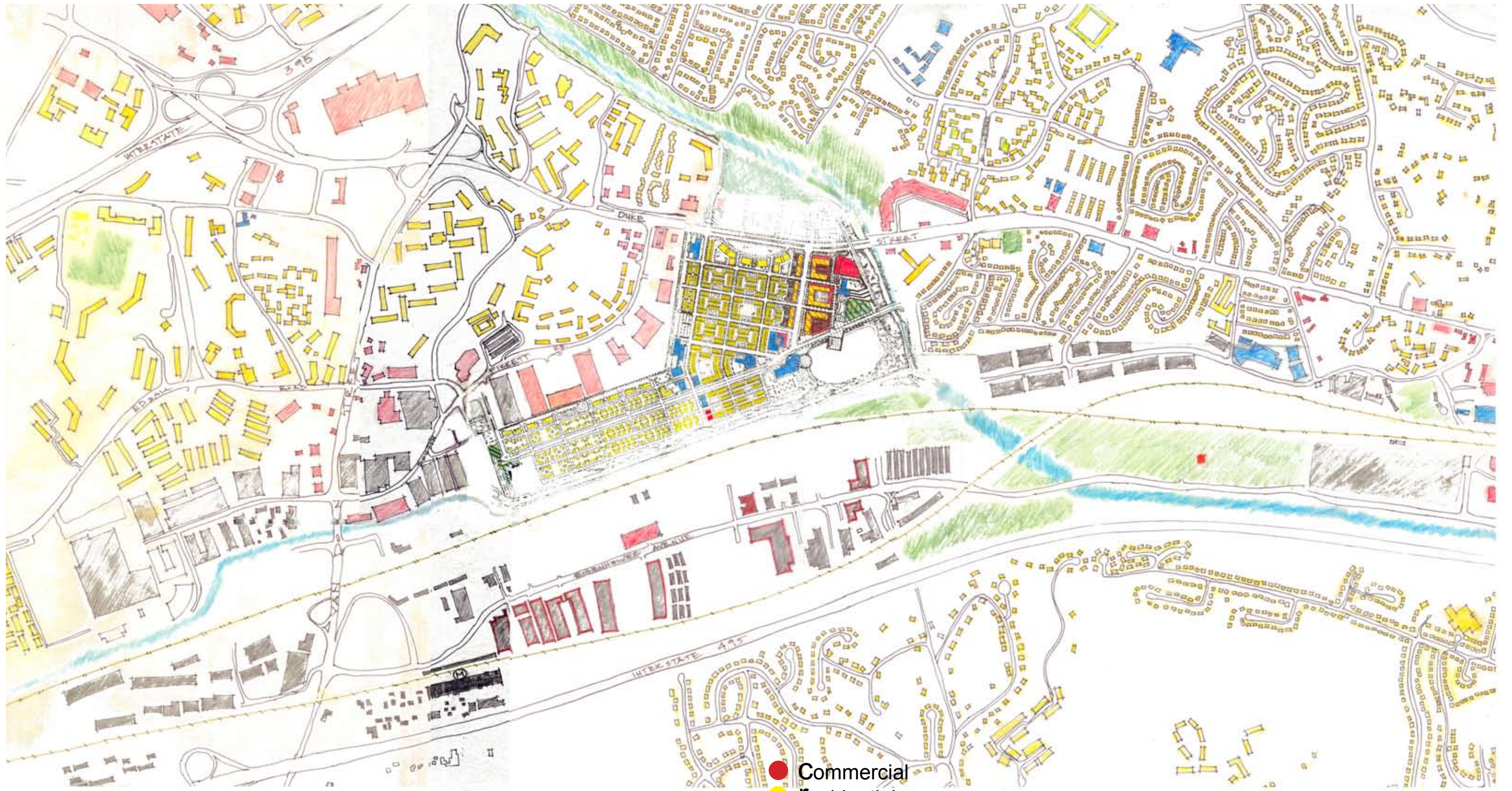


Multimodal transportation  
pedestrian+bike trail+railroad



STREETS  
BIKE PATH  
RAIL  
ALLEYS

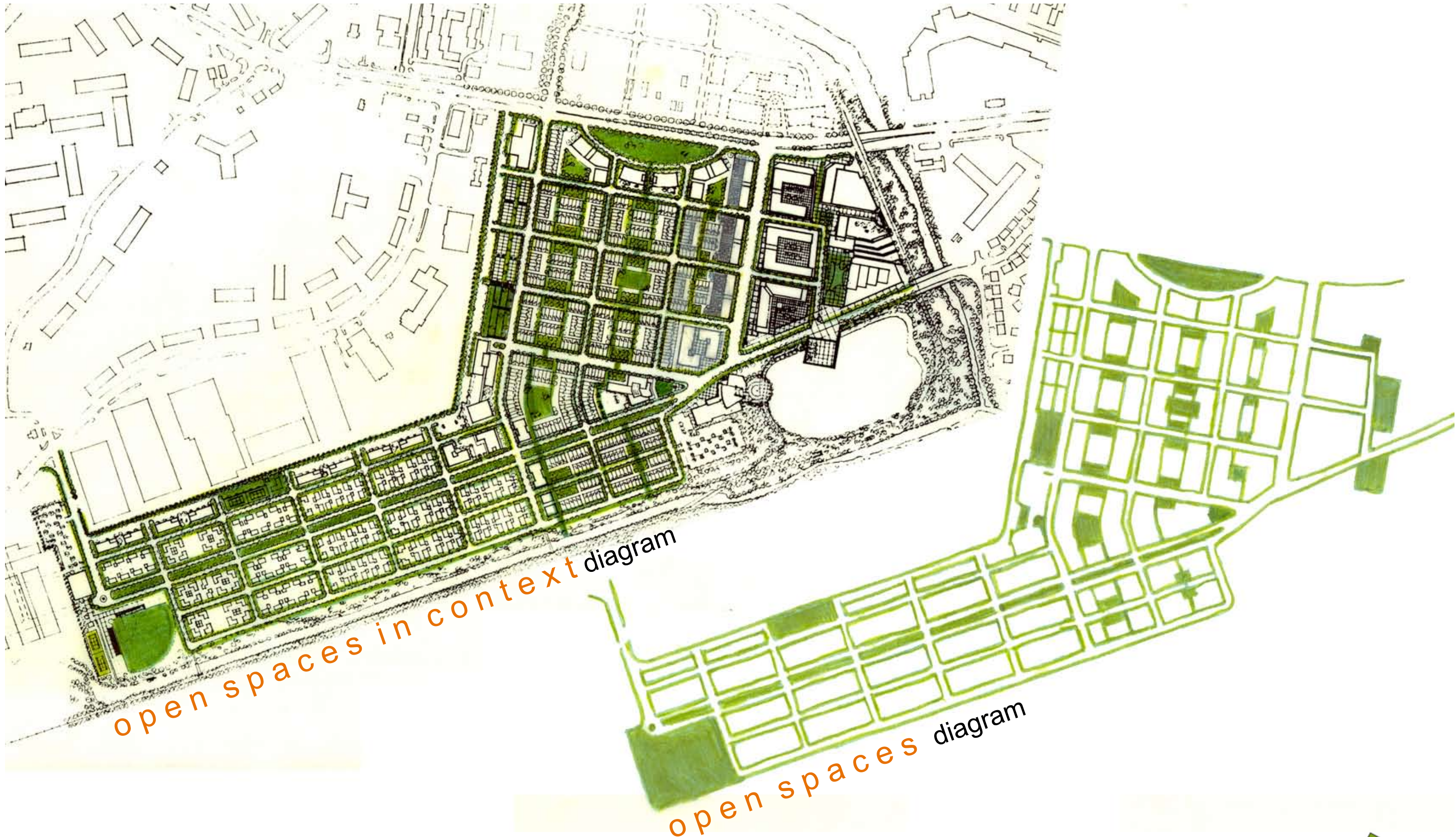
circulation diagram



- Commercial
- Residential
- Civic
- Industrial
- Recreational
- Mix

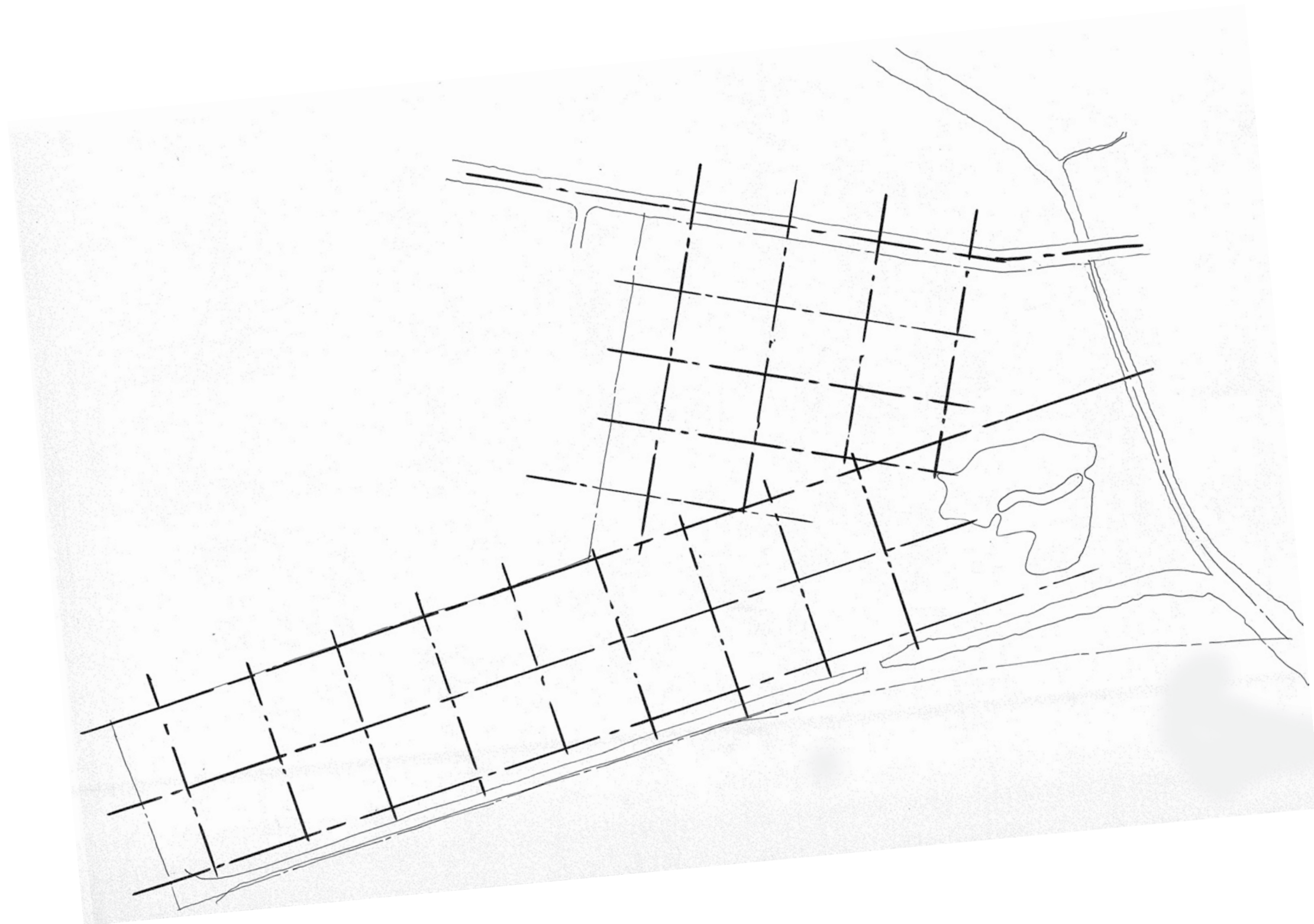
land-use diagram





*open spaces in context* diagram

*open spaces* diagram



cameron station, alexandria virginia

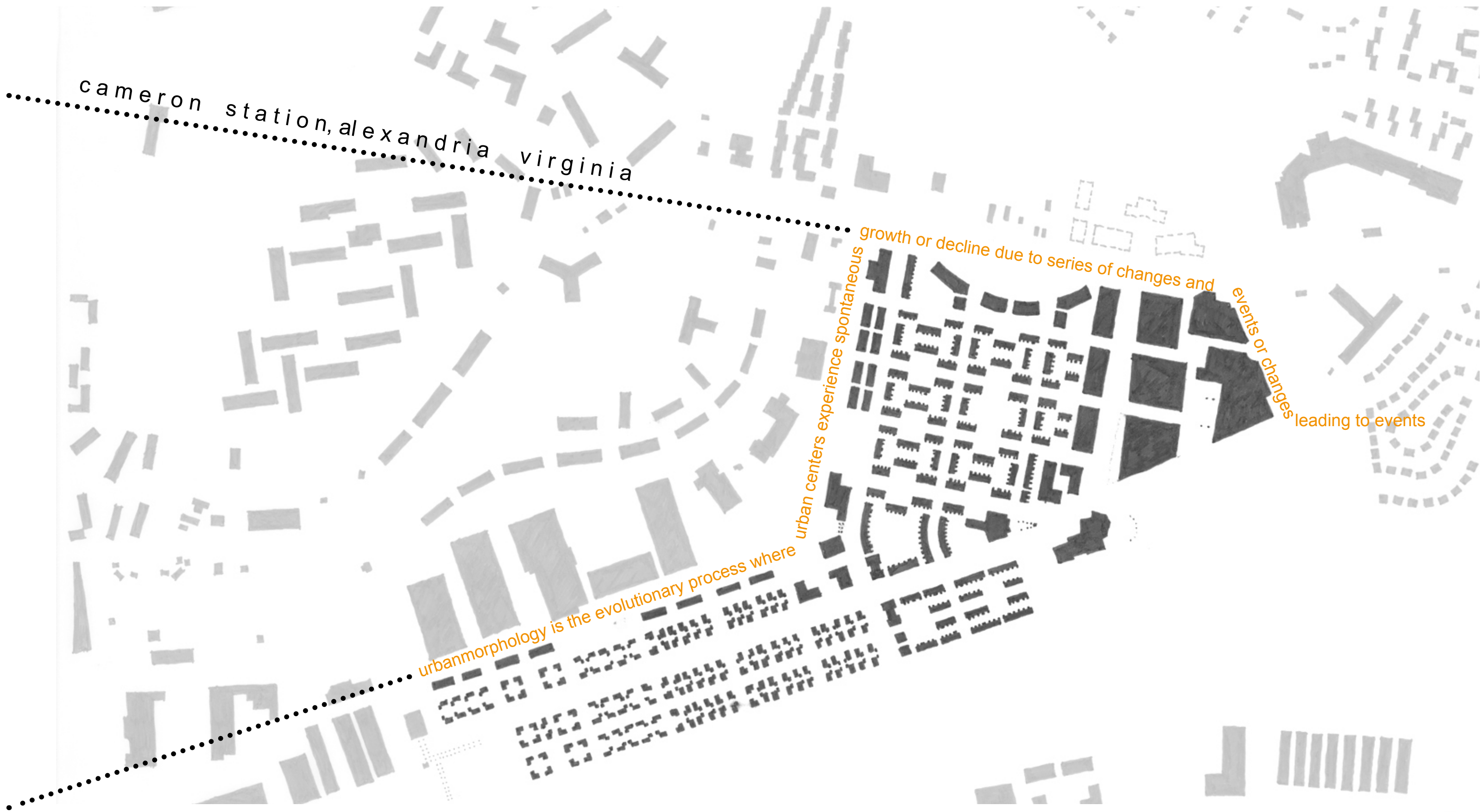


figure-ground diagram



open spaces & parks diagram

examples for flume beautification