phase one

phase two

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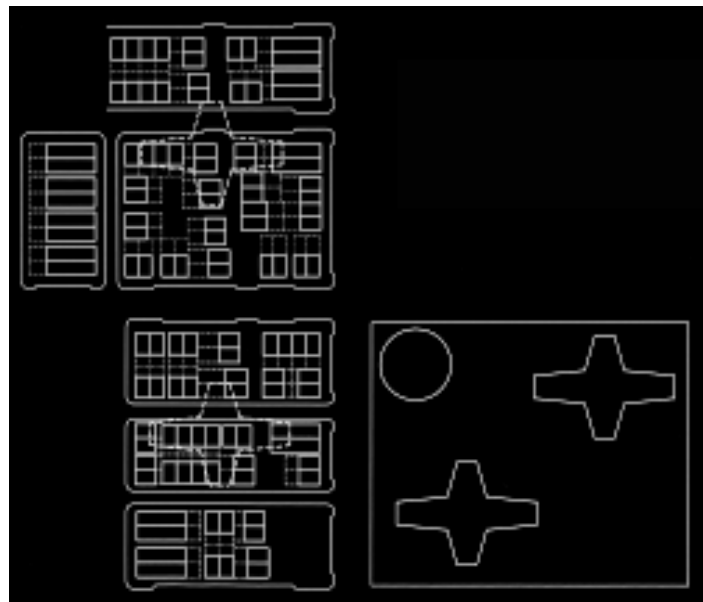
phase three

My persuits in Architecture had begun to leave me dissatisfied. Desires were no longer rooted in theory, but in programs tackling a greater complexity and diversity of issues. This did not necessarily require an architecture of complexity, but a more enriched architecture. Urban environments rather than rural communities provided the necessary cross sections through culture and landscape, economics and politics, precedence and posterity.

This thesis project began with the mere recognition that a problem exists. MLK Plaza is more than a icon for poverty, it is an indication of legislative negligence, 30 years in the making.

Threading the site into the surrounding context was my immediate response to the lack of place-making apparent in the housing towers of the 60's. Rowhousing dating back to the early 1700's characterizes much of the neighborhood that encircles this site. Philadelphia has a long established urban language of order, material, scale and craft. The scope of this exploration would ultimately be driven by the interpretation of these timeless ideas.

At a larger scale, reestablishing an environment that supports a more tightly knit community would require a complete restructuring of the site. Some consideration had been given to reusing the towers, but the negative image they convey to the rest of the city far outweighed their potential to save cost. Hence, the towers would come down. But destroying the towers also displaced its 932 tenants. From the onset of this project, it was my determination to shape the architectural landscape without damaging the communal ties. The execution and completion of the project would be done in 3 phases. The phases allowed various parts of the site to be worked on while others remained untouched. The scope of the project and its phases would be to reintegrate or reknit the site with its historic, adjacent neighbors, define new street edges, stimulate the growth of new businesses and prouder communities, and create safe, pedestrian-friendly streets.