

On The Right Path

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abstract

The practice of double-loaded corridors and circulation cores only serves to segregate spaces and develops no relationship between one space and another. In a contemporary society based on human interactions, should the conduit for delivering human-to-human connections be confined simply to notions of “horizontal circulation” and “vertical circulation”? Do we deserve better?

This thesis proposes that a measure of continuity can unify disparate spaces. This continuous architecture can join these spaces in series resulting in an instant and direct relationship of one space to another. Continuity can facilitate not only the interaction of spaces but also the interaction between occupants.

Acknowledgements

There are several people without whom this thesis could not have been completed.

Thanks are in order for my committee members, Heiner, Hans, and Bill. Without your assistance in identifying inconsistencies and weaknesses in ideation, execution, and presentation this project would have only existed in my imagination.

I am especially thankful to Anne for being ever-present throughout the process and encouraging me to be satisfied with only my best efforts. Your help has made this a project that I can continue to be proud of for years to come.

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the ubiquitous and the continuous

Ordinary corridors are discontinuous. There is not a seamless connection from one floor to another or one space to another. Typical circulation through buildings is segmented and discontinuous. Firm distinctions are made between horizontal circulation and vertical circulation that lead to fragmented, disconnected spaces.

This project re-imagines building circulation. Dramatically different spaces can be achieved through small architectural moves.

This proposal for a business incubator and entrepreneurs' residences calls for a departure from the standard layout of office buildings in order to encourage and facilitate the interaction of the business owners so that they might share their experiences and help each other succeed. Rather than stacking identical floors of double-loaded corridors on top of one another, a continuous Path is introduced to link all of the offices in series so that businesses are not isolated from each other.

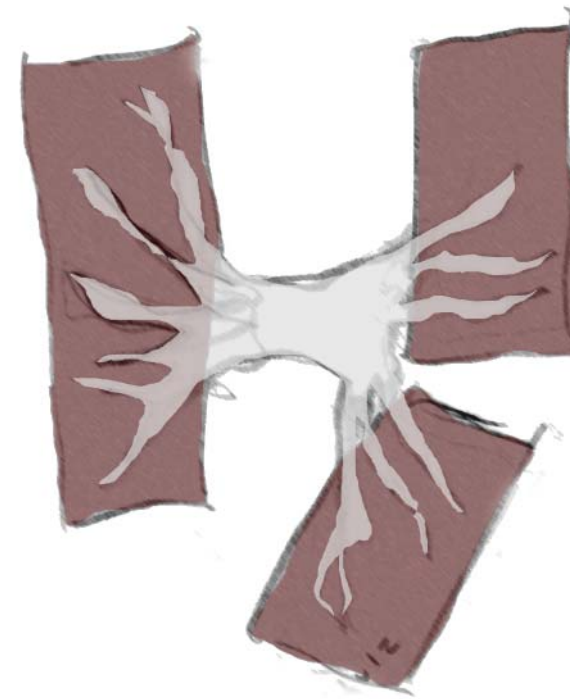
The Path unifies distinct places otherwise left with no connection, physical or otherwise, to any other space.



introduced continuity

Four assertions were made to guide the development of an incubator and residences that promote interaction and shared knowledge:

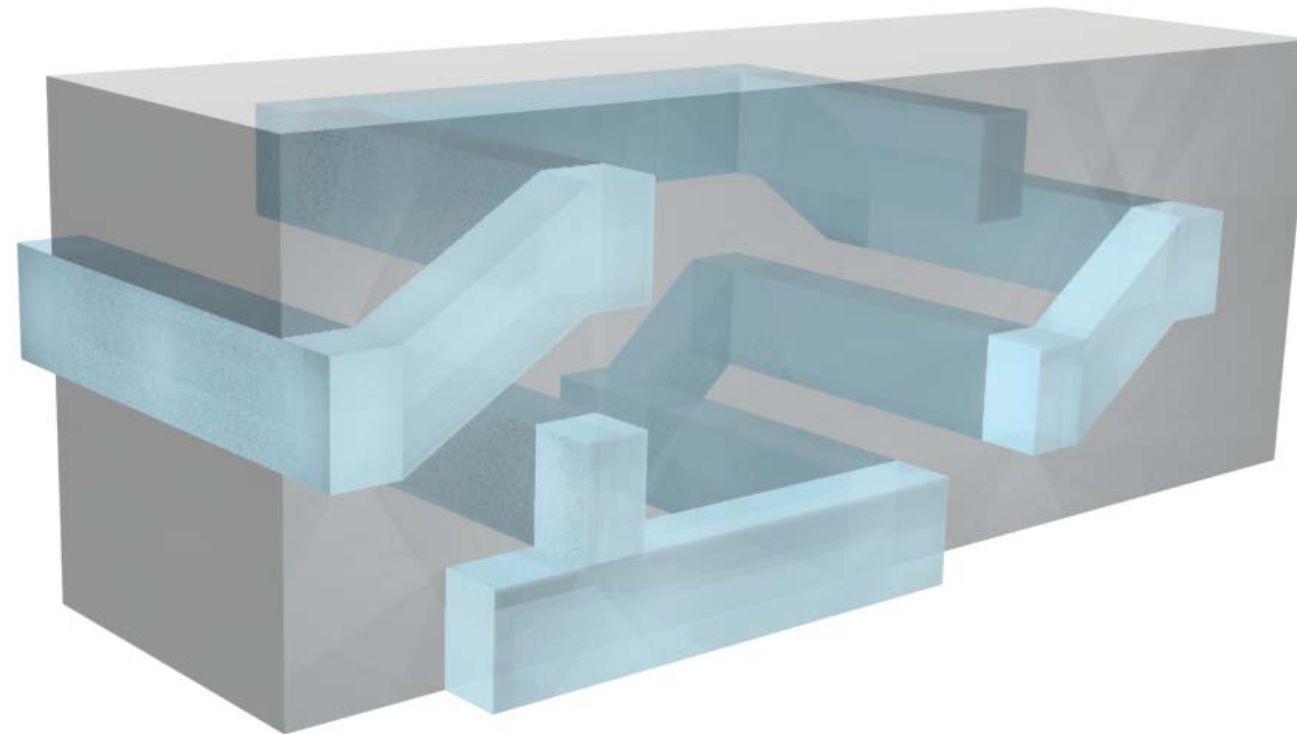
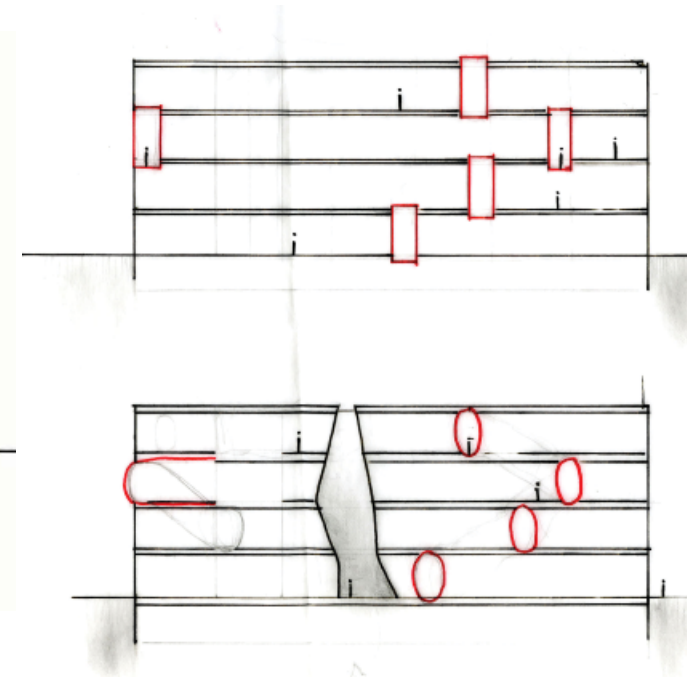
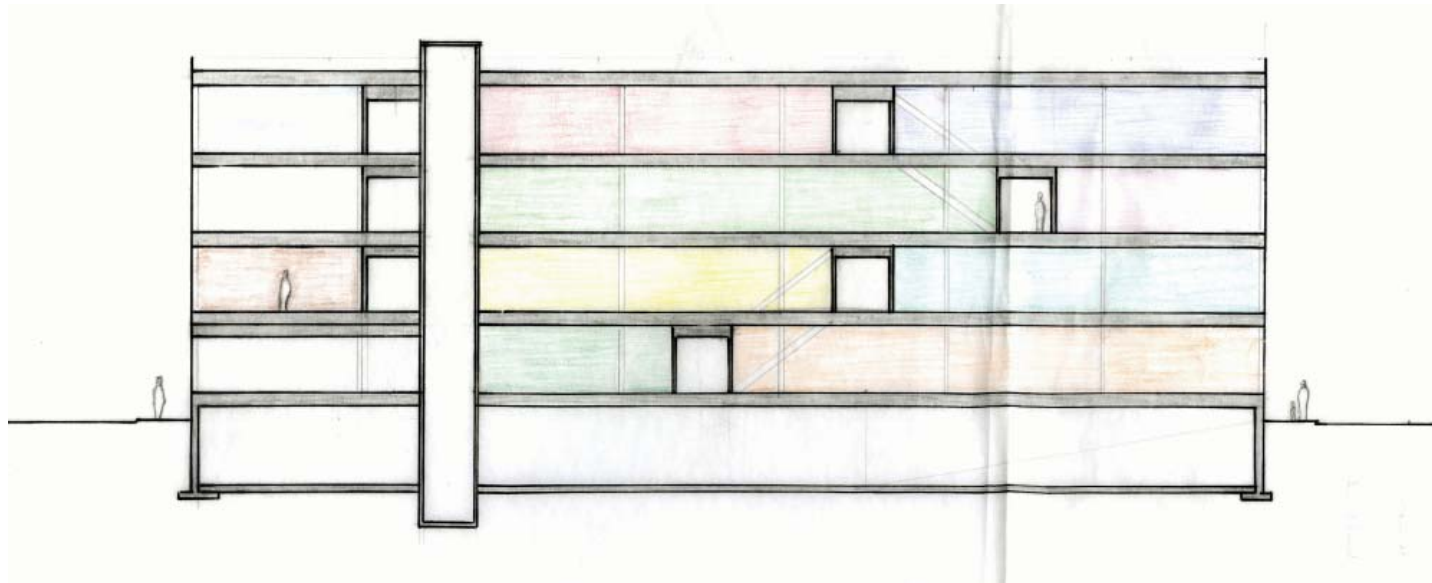
- 1 Shared knowledge is critical to the development of both business and family
- 2 Darkness connotes mystery. Lighting plays a crucial role in open information exchange.
- 3 A continuous path, a physical connection, will encourage and facilitate impromptu interaction.
- 4 As a continuous element the consistently lighted Path will unite home to office, business to business, and family to family.



early sketch depicting the intended connectivity of the Path

an office less ordinary

The ordinary division of an office building into identical floor plates stacked one on top of the other produces identical offices with no spatial identity to within the building as a whole. The introduction of the Path breaks up the floors into a series of unique scenarios that allow for each office to have its own distinct presence in the building as a whole.



The path is a new entity, imbedded within a conventional building volume. The resulting combination produces offices and buildings that are wholly unique.

a case for something new

dutch embassy, berlin

The notion of a single pathway weaving itself through a collection of spaces is not in itself a breakthrough. In 2004 the Office of Metropolitan Architecture (OMA) realized a similar idea with the construction of the Dutch Embassy in Berlin. Within the embassy's cubic volume a series of "trajectories" snake their way through the building from the ground floor entrance all the way to a roof top terrace.

While there is a single source of circulation through the embassy there is not a sense of continuity to unify the trajectories. In fact, the trajectories are themselves unique spaces within the building.

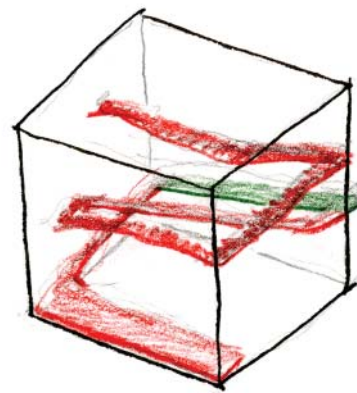
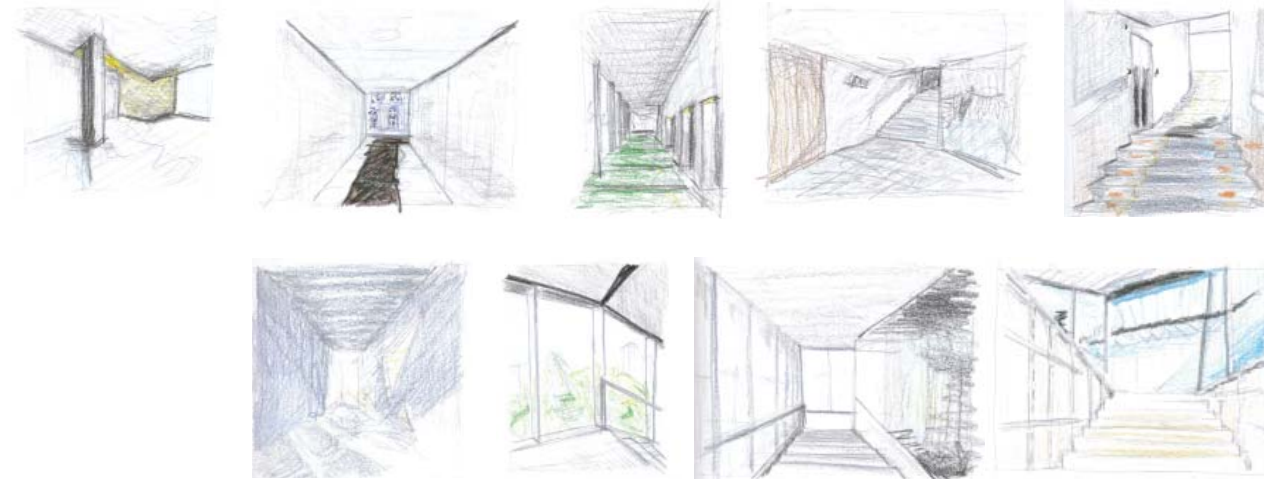


diagram of trajectories within building volume



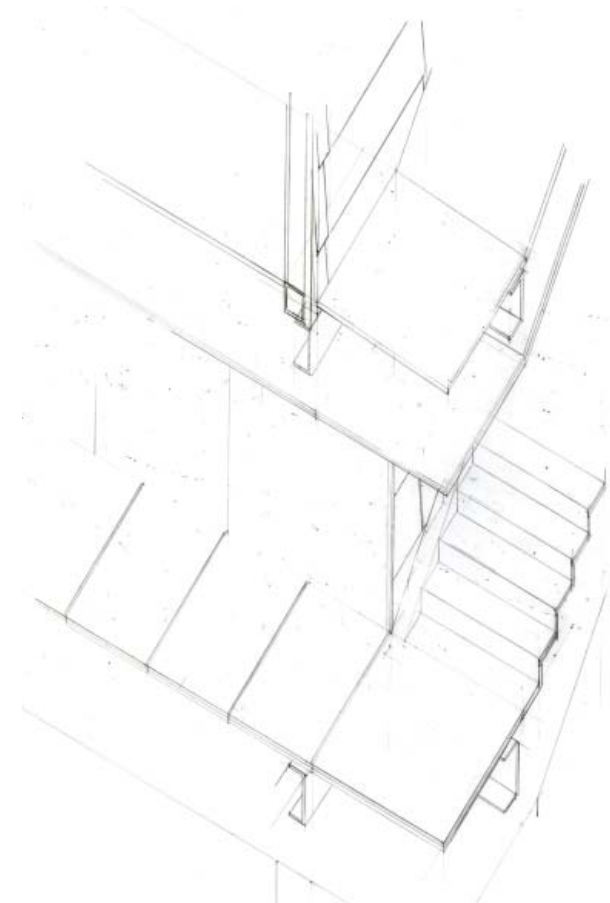
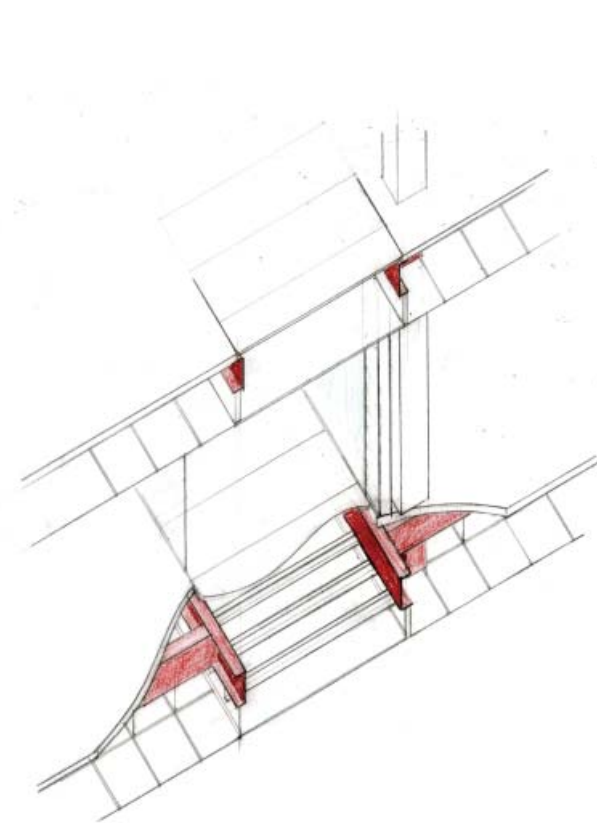
perspectives of trajectories



building continuity

The Path achieves continuity by creating a linear environment with a uniformity of material and light. The lack of spatial and experiential interruptions makes for an environment that remains continuous.

In an effort to make the Path as unlike any traditional notions of hallway as possible the decision was made to make a uniformly illuminated floor and ceiling with frosted glass both above and below an occupant. The effect is such that the Path is perceived not as "hallway" or "corridor" but as an intrusion wholly unique to the building itself.





panorama of Centennial Olympic Park

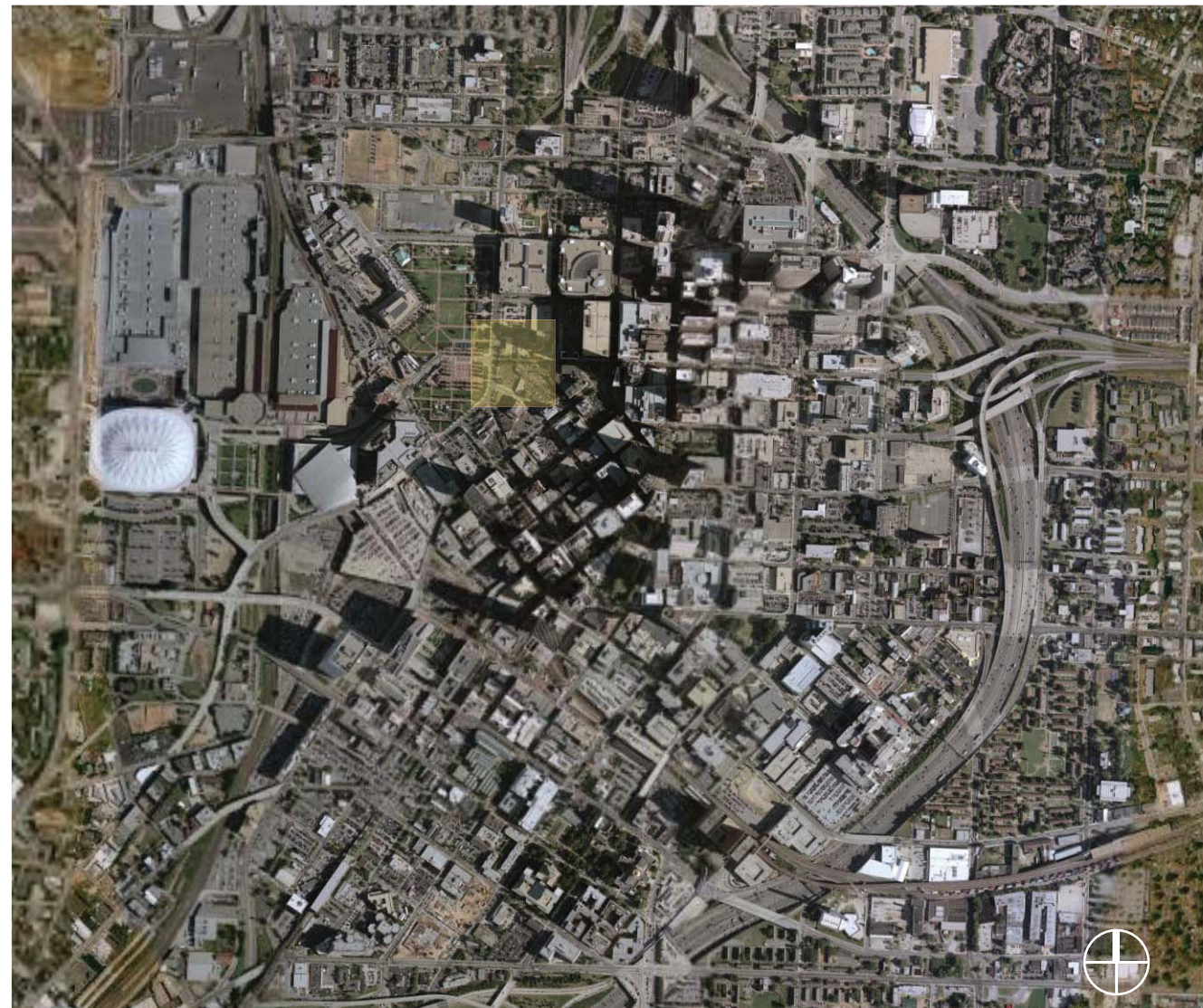
locus

Centennial Olympic Park in downtown Atlanta, Georgia was once the home to numerous small locally owned and operated businesses. Known as Techwood Park, this neighborhood was considered by the cities business elite to be unsatisfactory for its proximity to the central business district.

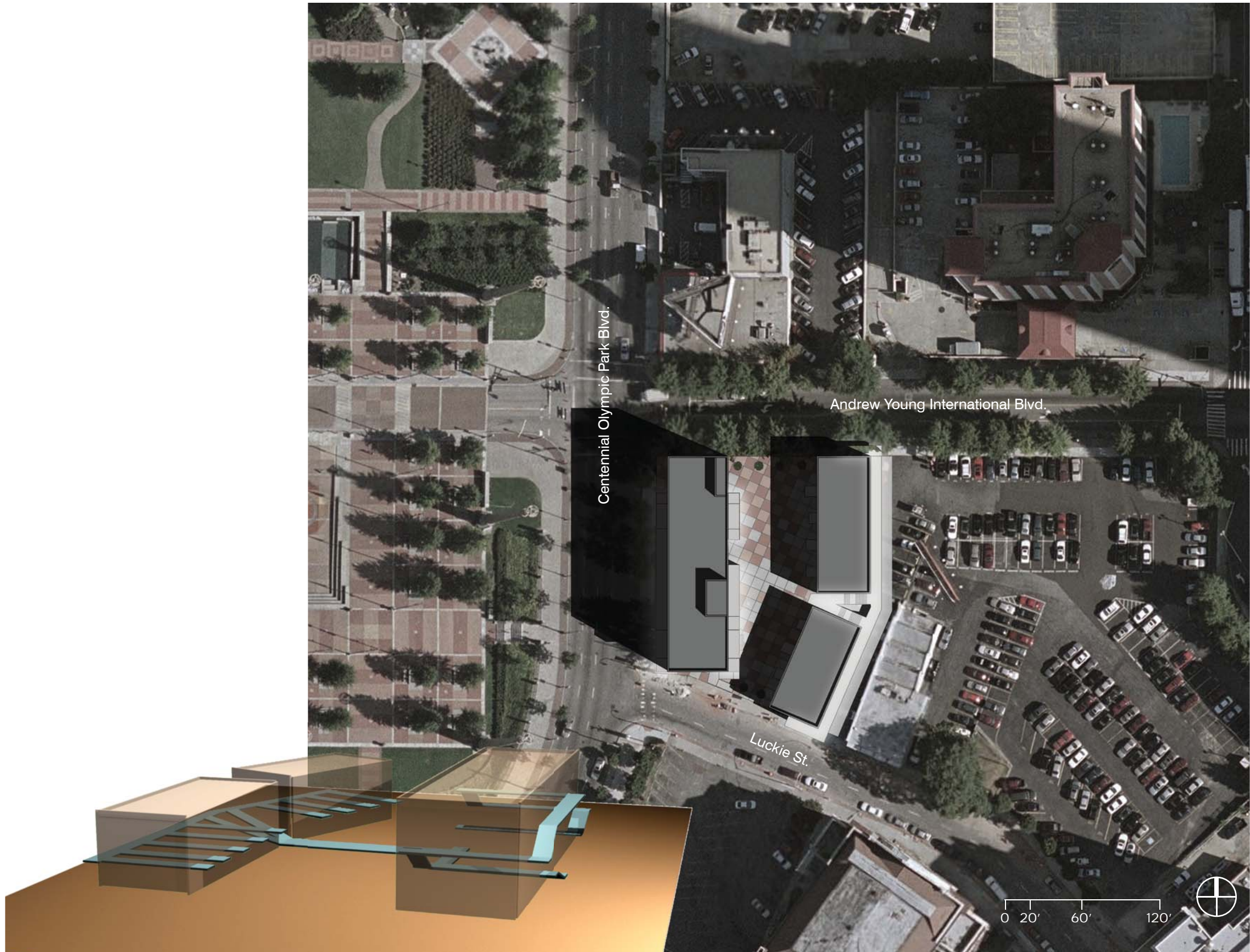
When Atlanta won its bid for the 1996 Olympic games the business community in the high-rises nearby successfully lobbied to redevelop the area as a park district, a destination for civic functions. From that time forward the area formerly known as Techwood Park has never experienced the same unity that existed pre-Olympics.

Construction in this area should support the growth of new local businesses and increase the vitality of the area.

The choice of building function, a business incubator and residences for budding entrepreneurs, was the logical next step towards developing a new crop of locally owned businesses downtown.



aerial photography of downtown Atlanta



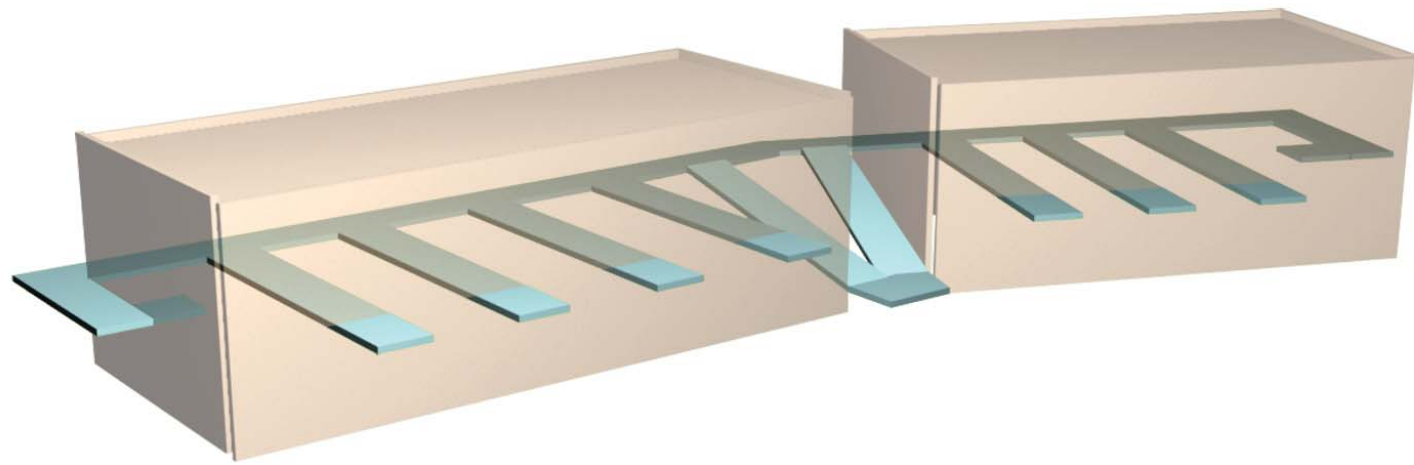
continuity in two parts

The proposed Path links the numerous necessary spaces for the incubator and residences. The proposal calls for the division of the site into two portions, the incubator to the west and residences to the east, separated by a courtyard.

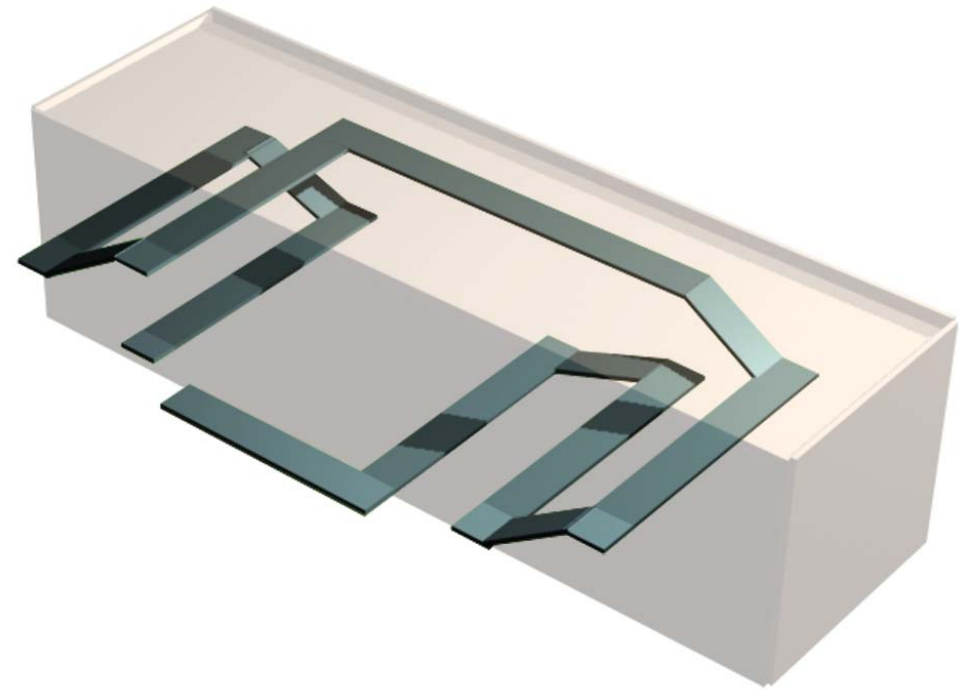
The Path begins as a balcony for each residence and then slides through the entry level directly to the front door. Each residence's entrance joins the common Path of all residences as it wraps the east facade and steps down to the courtyard level.

The Path terminates at the courtyard but then picks up again at the entrance to the incubator. From the entrance the Path weaves through the building alternating between interior hall and exterior stair without barriers to interrupt the continuity.

The Path, as it occurs in the residences, divides so that it can infiltrate each residence simultaneously.



As it occurs in the incubator, the Path crisscrosses the building to connect all of the offices in series.



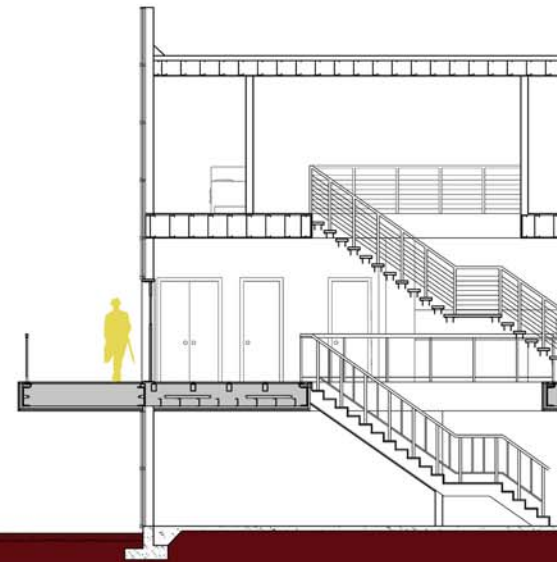
Path & residence

the Path runs through the middle of each residence, tying them to one another.



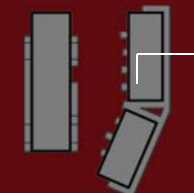
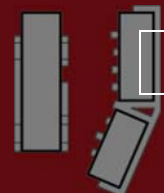
residence inside & outside

as an elevated walkway, the Path connects inside and outside.



Path Sequence

A series of sections is the best way to fully describe the relationship of the Path to the residences and offices as well as to the Path itself. The Path can be seen in relation to a resident's daily trip from bed to office. It remains constant, guiding a person through his daily routine, developing unique and varied interactions with the building, the offices, and the occupants.



from residence to courtyard

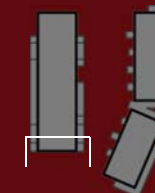
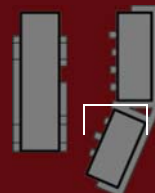
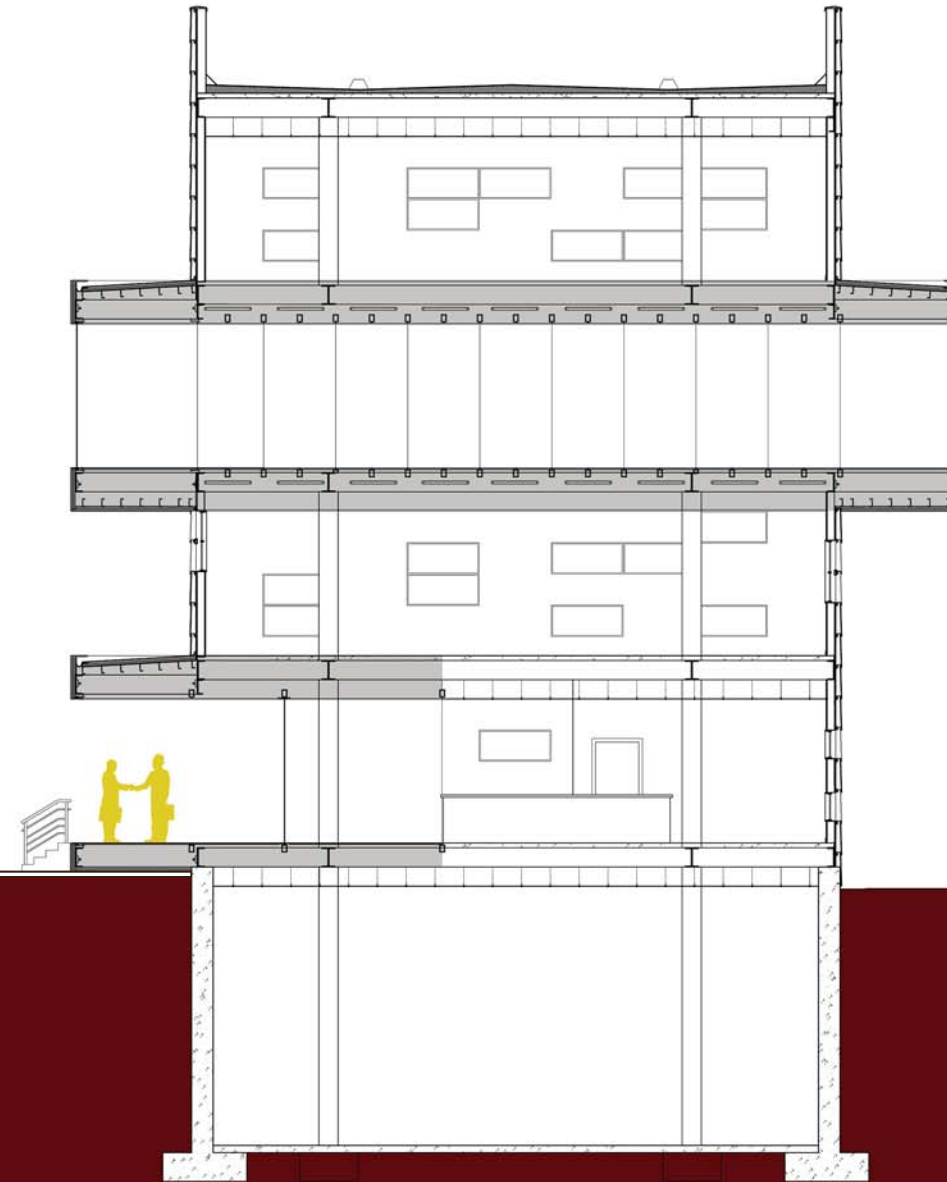
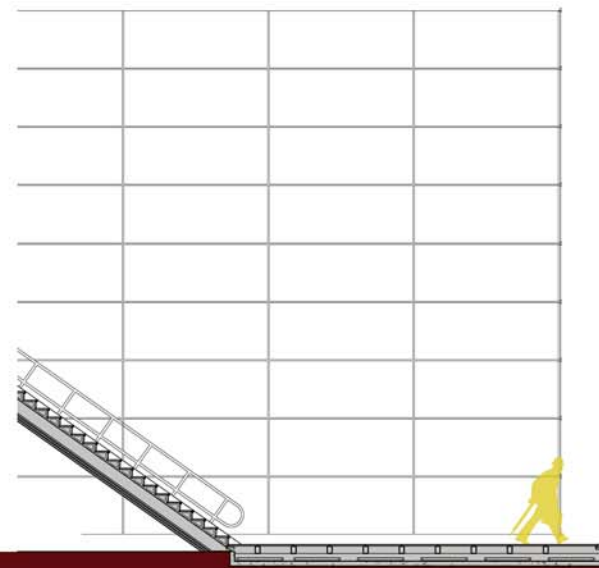
travelling to the courtyard requires descending lighted stairs to perpetuate the continuity established in the residences.

courtyard

the Path's absence from the courtyard makes the action of stepping on and off the Path more deliberate and consequential.

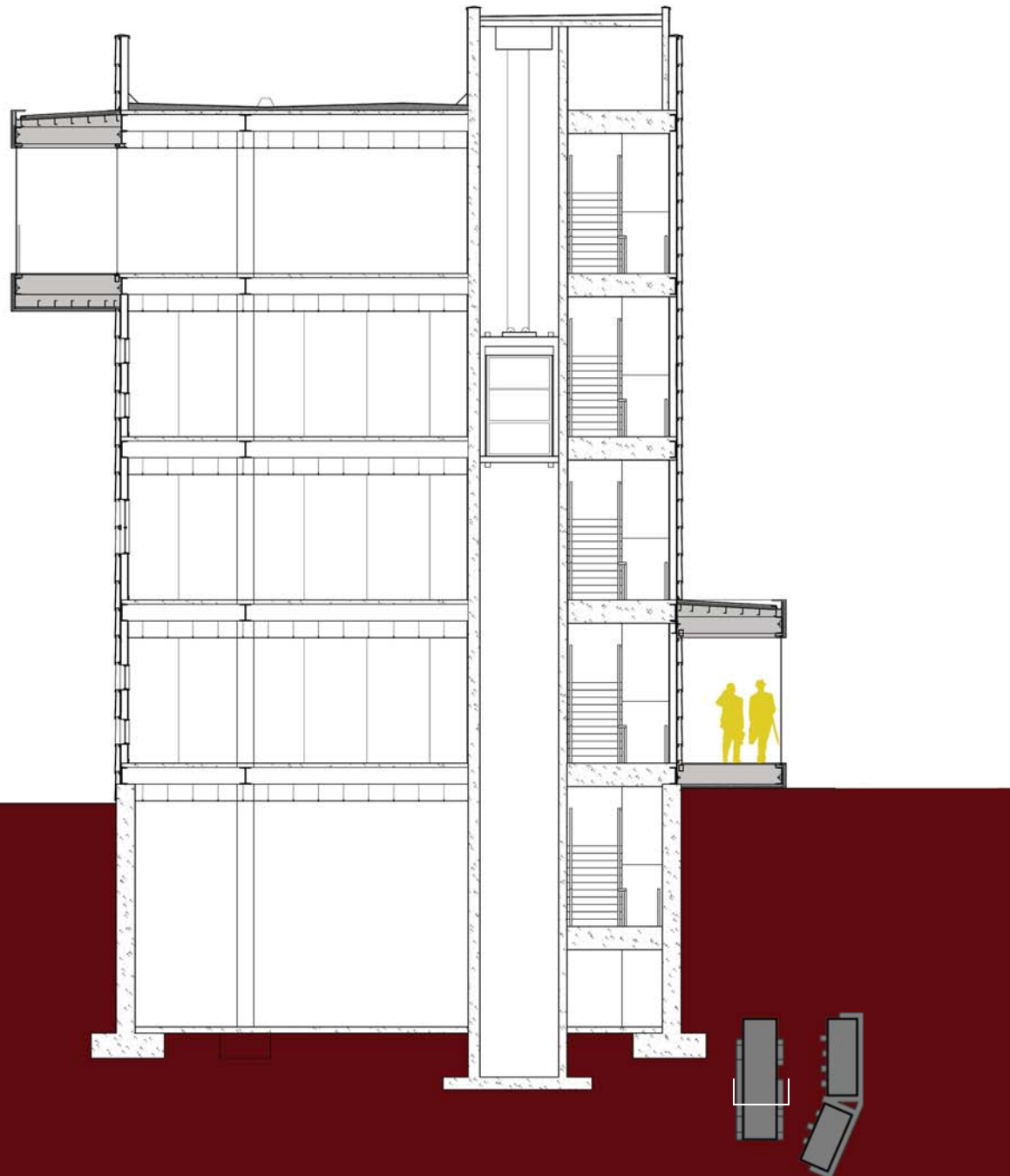
incubator entrance

entering the incubator requires rejoining the Path and then moving inside the building.



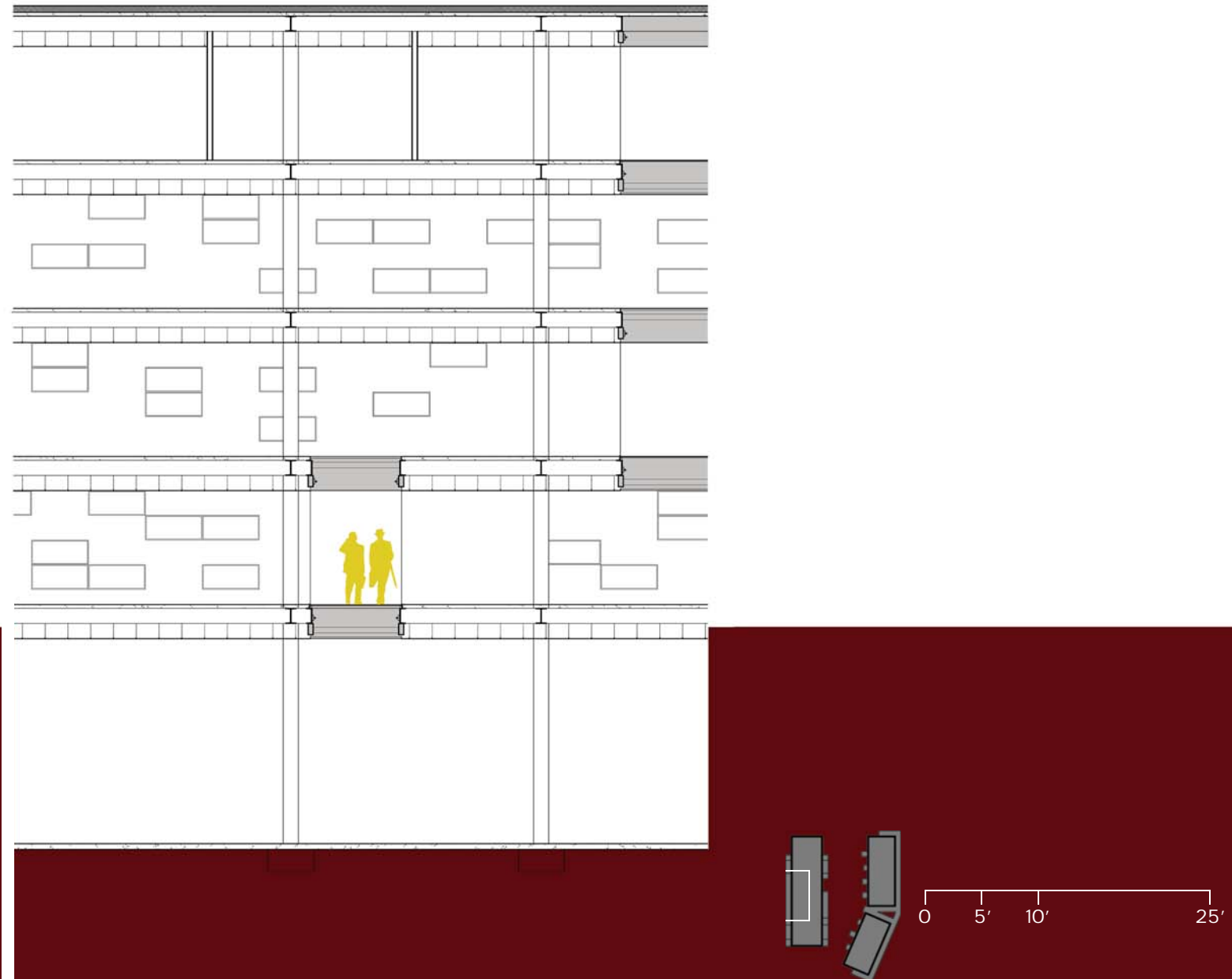
Path at the first floor

The Path runs both inside and outside the primary building volume.



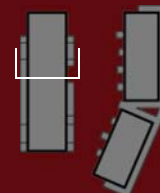
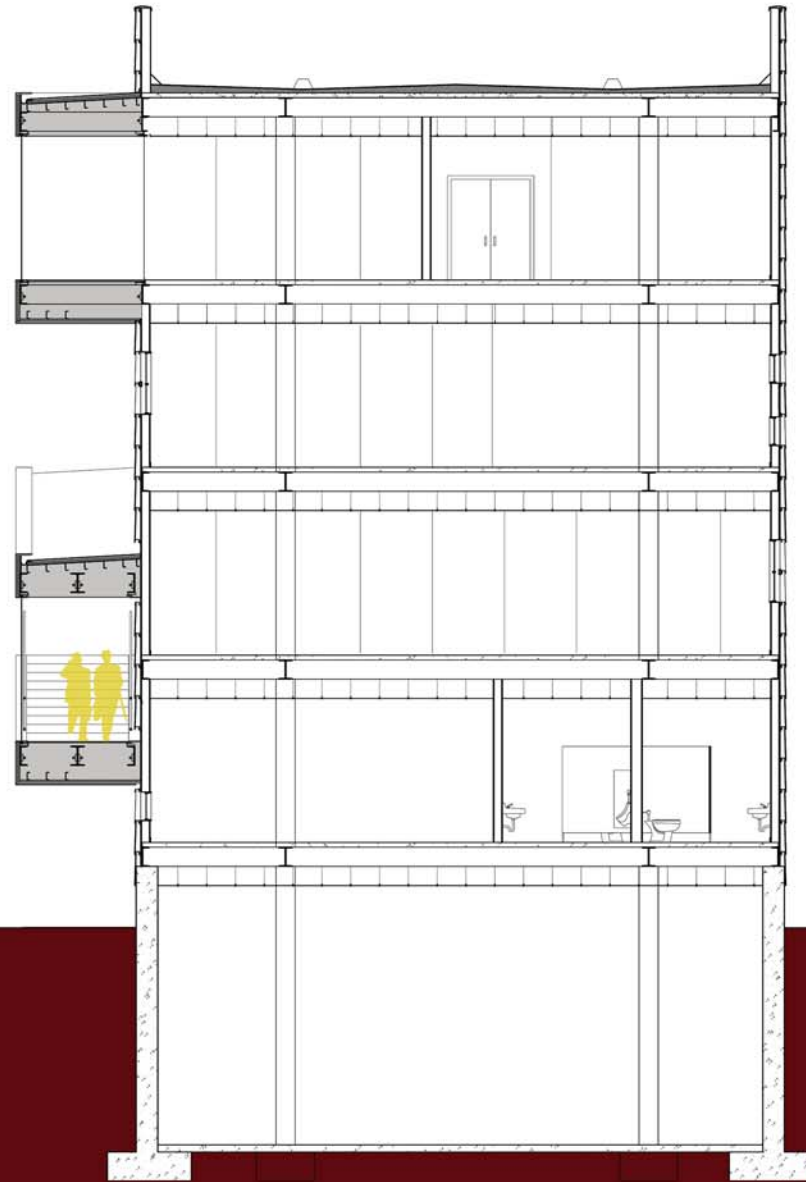
first floor corridor

crossing the incubator, the Path accesses the offices.



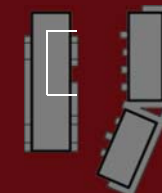
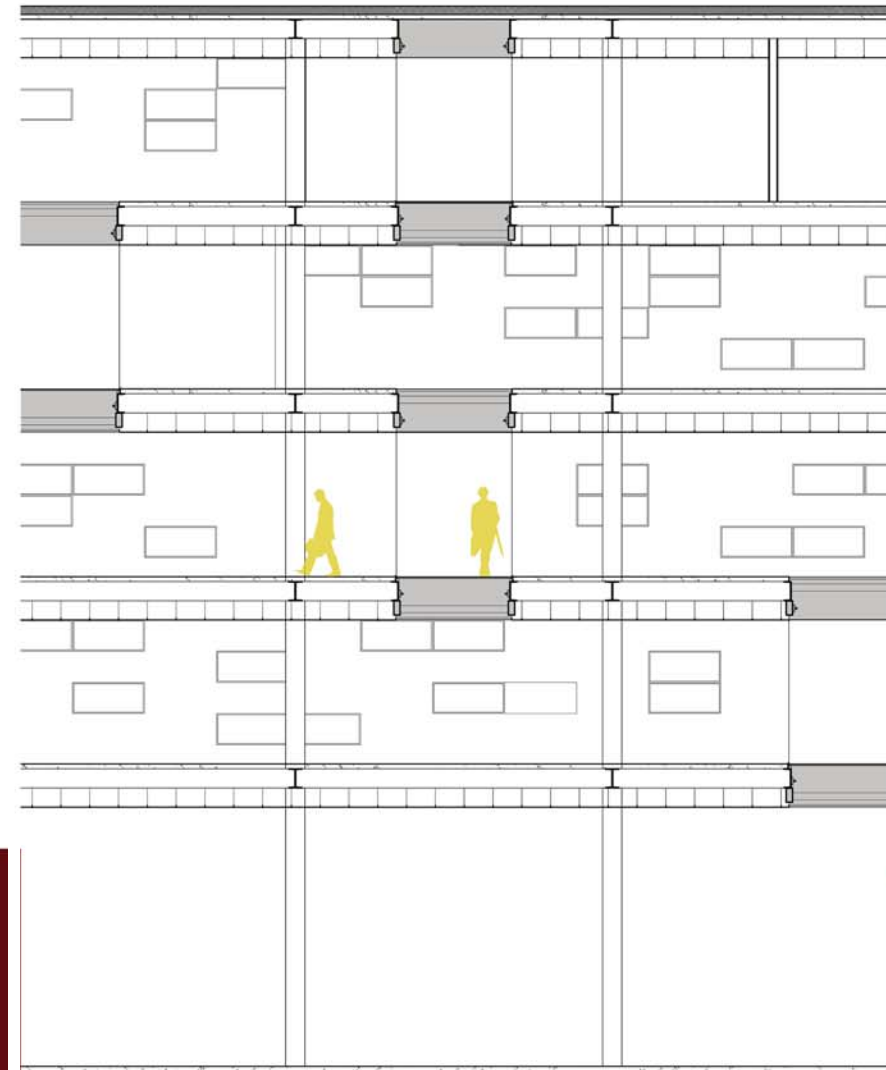
transition from first floor to second

transitioning between floors, the Path is unencumbered by the uniform stacking of the office floors.



second floor corridor

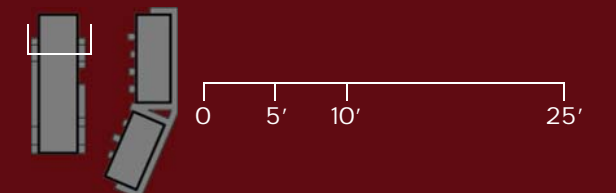
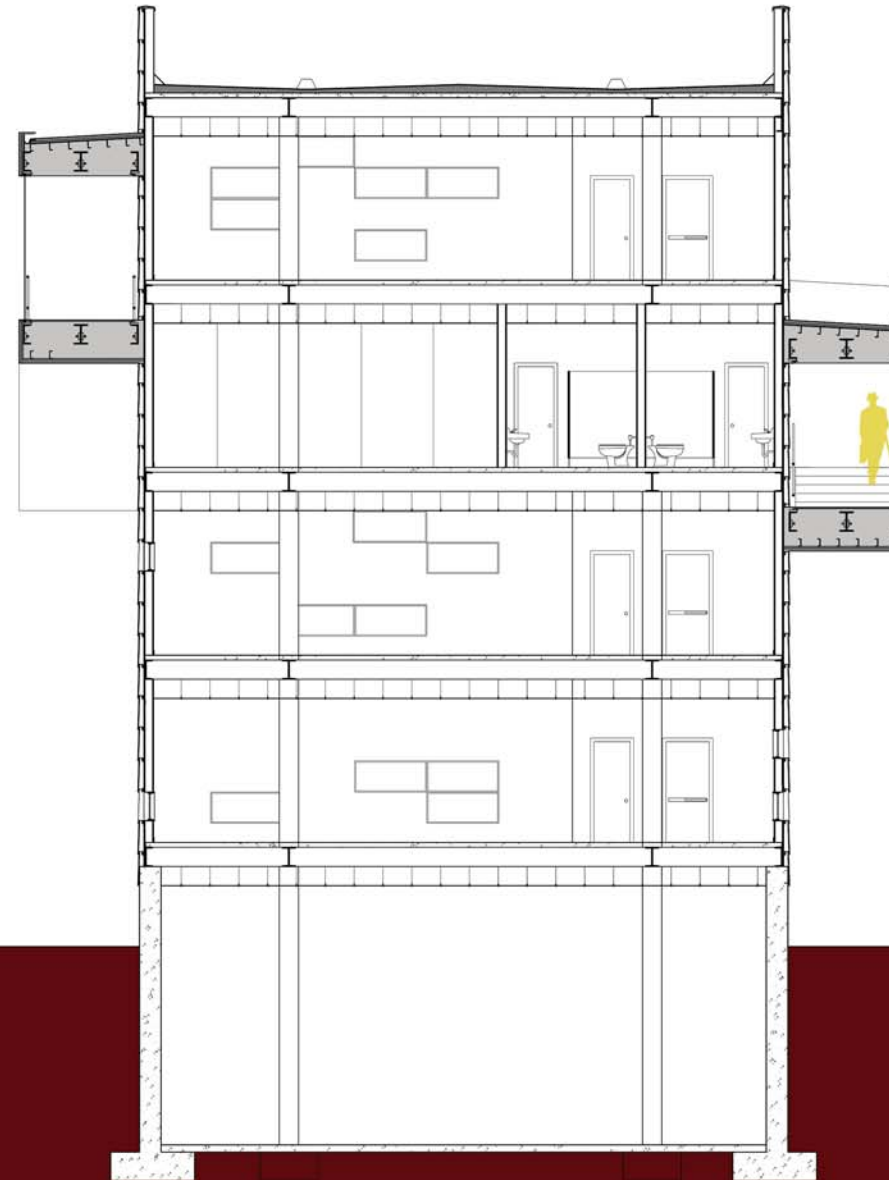
the Path is ever-present in the activity of the incubator.



0 5' 10' 25'

transition from second to third floor

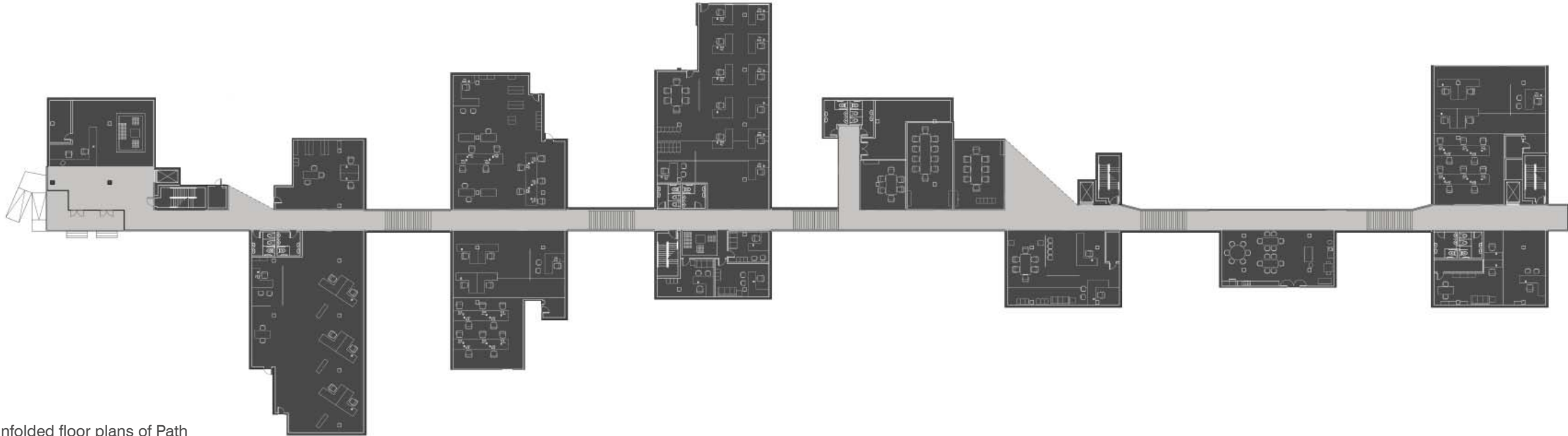
position on the Path determines not only the occupant's position horizontally within the building but vertically as well.



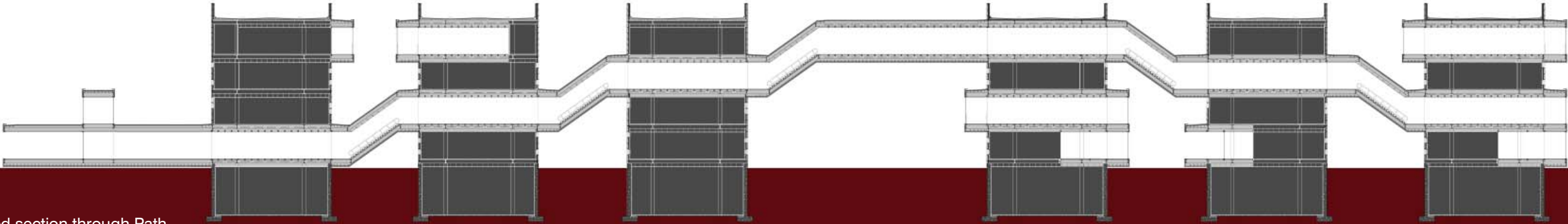


- 1 entrance / reception
- 2 small suite
- 3 medium suite
- 4 large suite
- 5 copy / break room
- 6 managerial offices
- 7 conference room
- 8 building storage



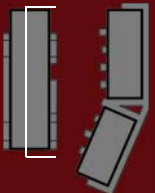


unfolded floor plans of Path



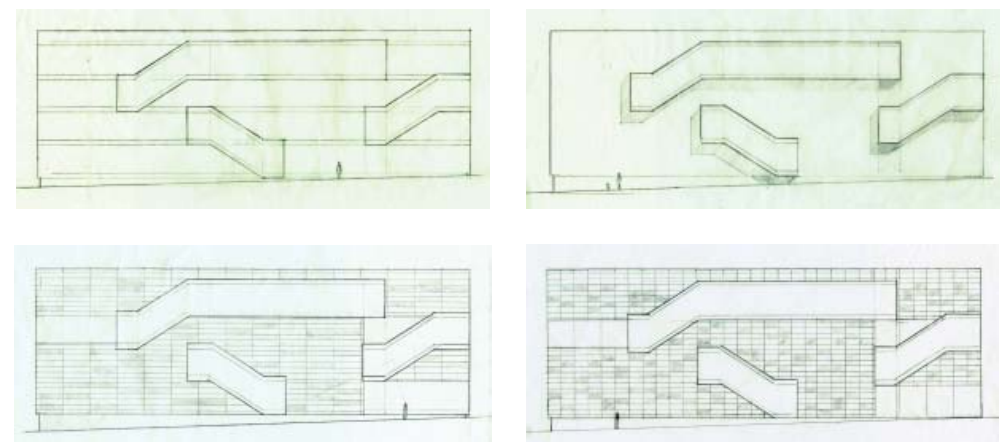
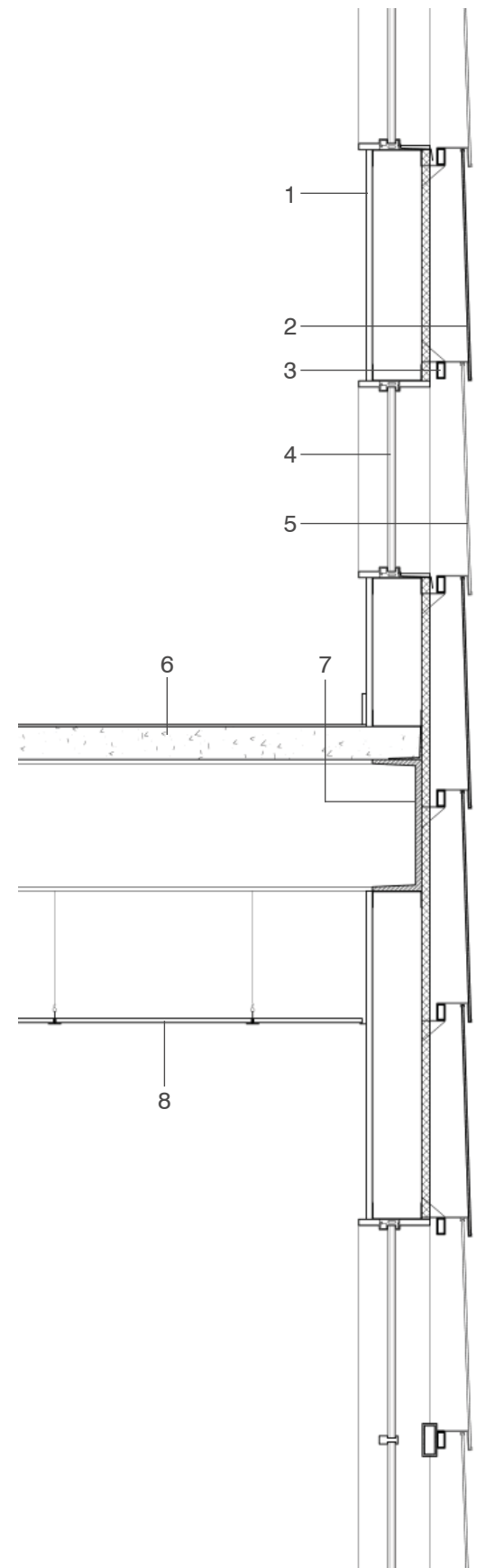
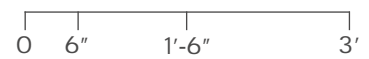
unfolded section through Path

010' 30' 60'



0 10' 30' 50'

- 1 wall assembly:
3/4" gypsum
6" metal stud
rigid insulation
vapor barrier
- 2 metal panel
- 3 extruded metal bracket
- 4 aluminum frame window assembly
- 5 tempered glass panel
- 6 floor assembly:
finish floor
lightweight concrete
4" steel decking
- 7 structural steel framing
- 8 suspended acoustical tile ceiling

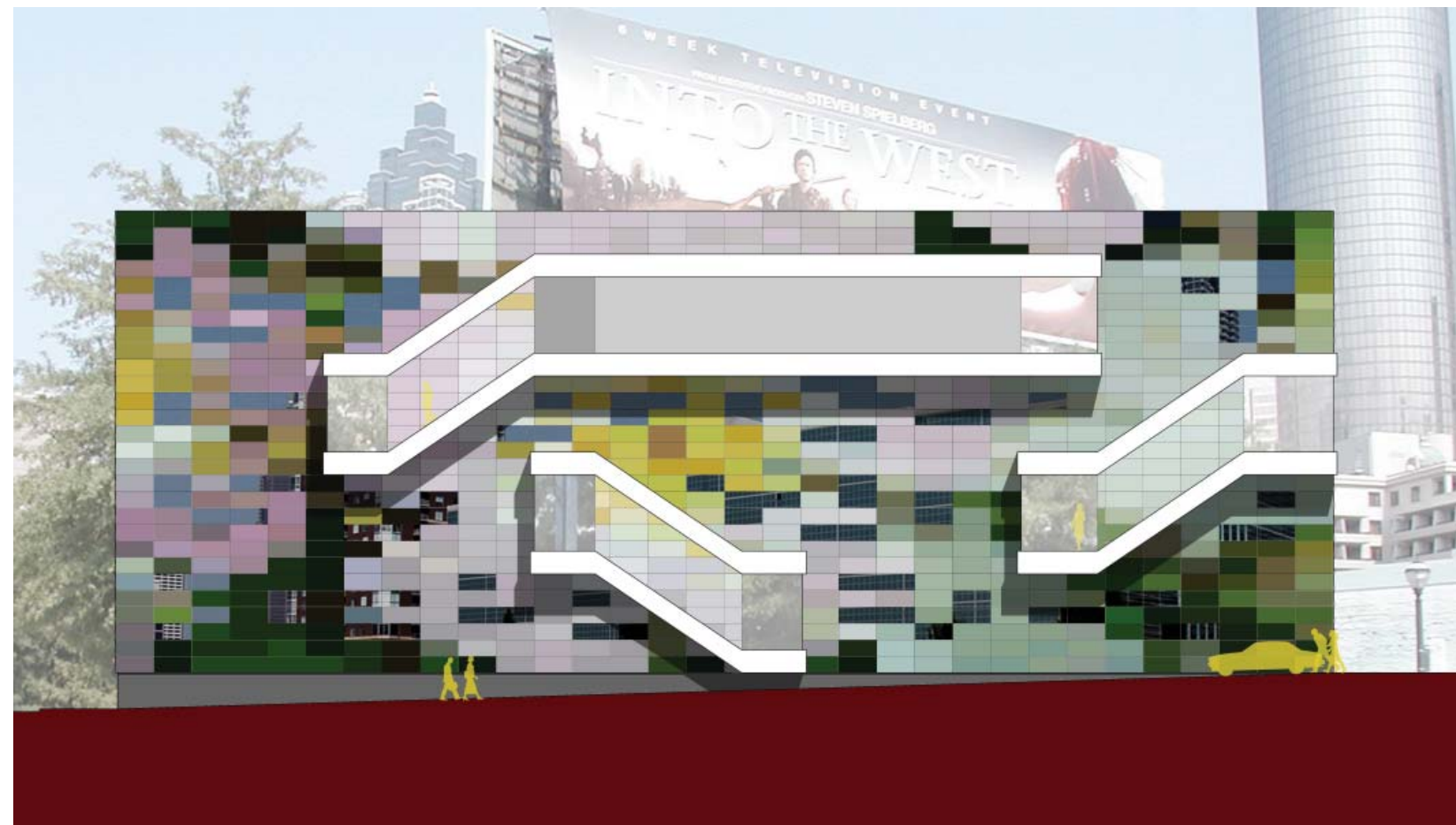


an image of the Path

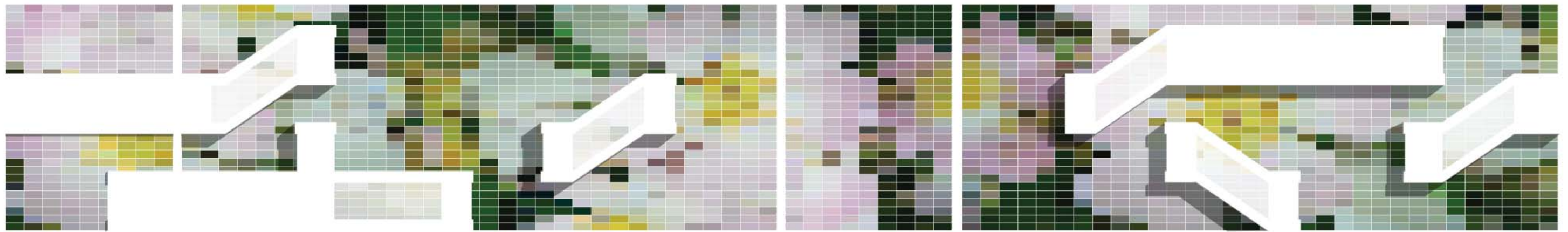
The facade of the incubator is designed to give the greatest visual impact to the Path. A uniform field removes any reference to the floor plates and allows for the Path to stand in opposition to the rectangular form of the building. The Path contrasts the field and projects beyond the face of the building, giving the Path autonomy from what is otherwise an ordinary building form.

The field is formed of overlapping painted metal and glass panels arranged to depict a floral image. This particular image was chosen for its range of colors, greens, pinks, and greys, which are present in the park and the surrounding buildings. By replicating the color palette of the immediate site the primary building volume fades leaving the Path as the primary visual element.

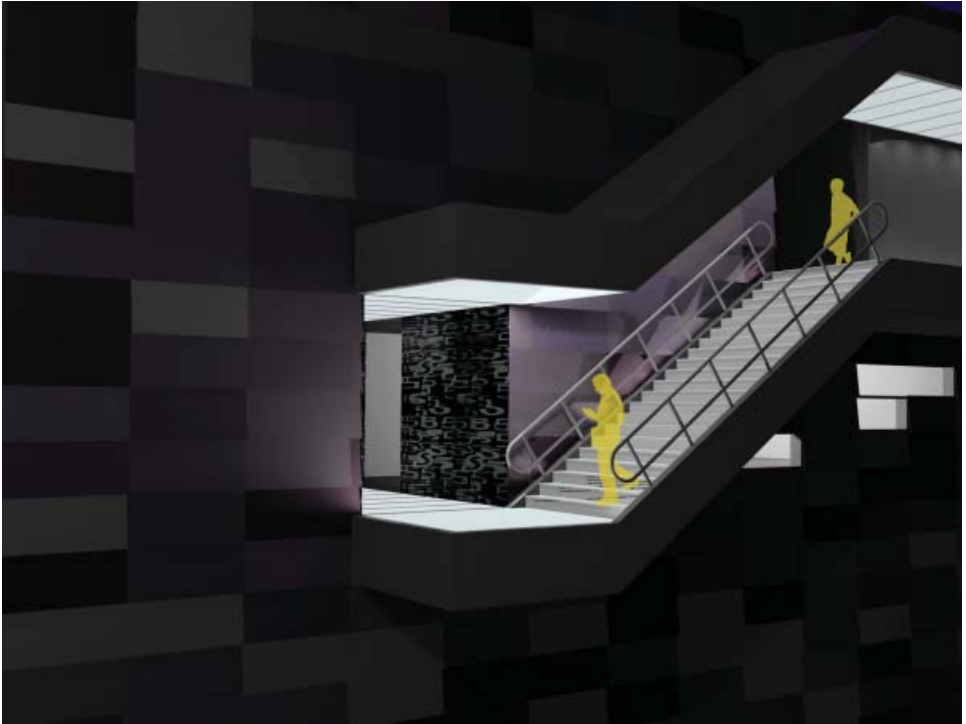
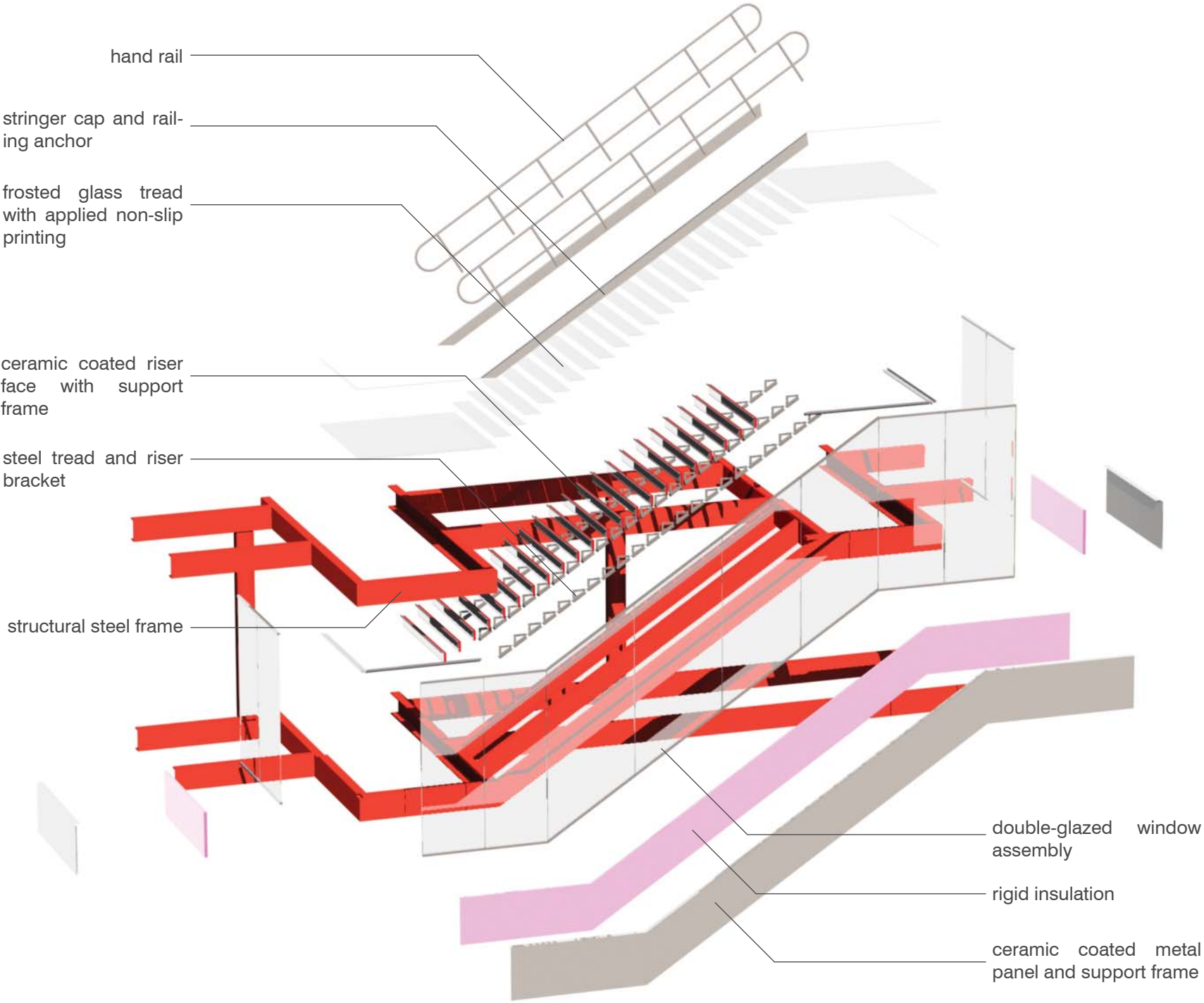
Metal panels are selectively removed and replaced with glass creating windows anywhere on the facade without interrupting the uniform pattern or exhibiting the horizontal lines of the floor planes.



Unfolded, the elevation continues the same floral image in order to reinforce the Path as the primary visual element on all faces of the building.

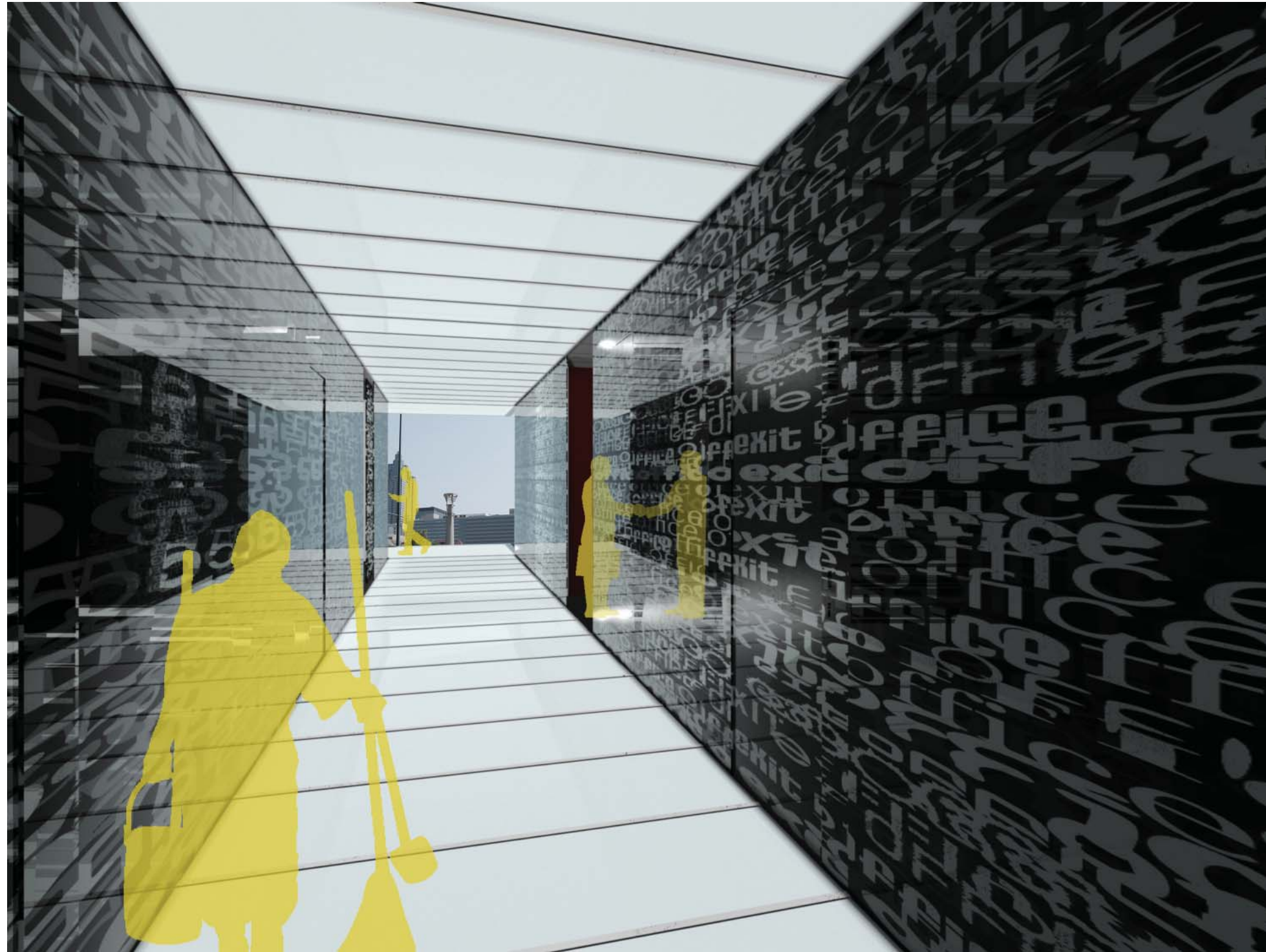


unfolded incubator elevations

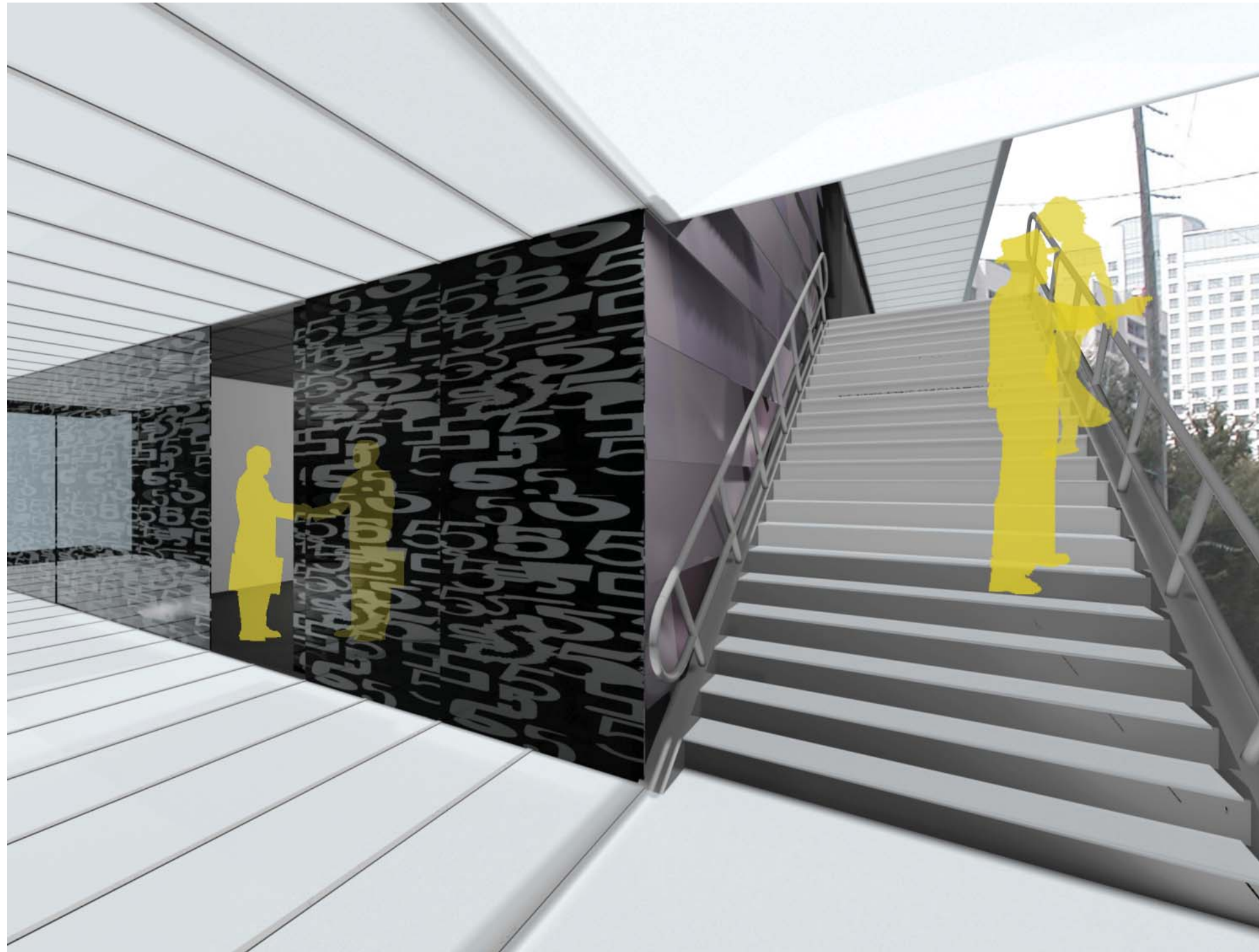




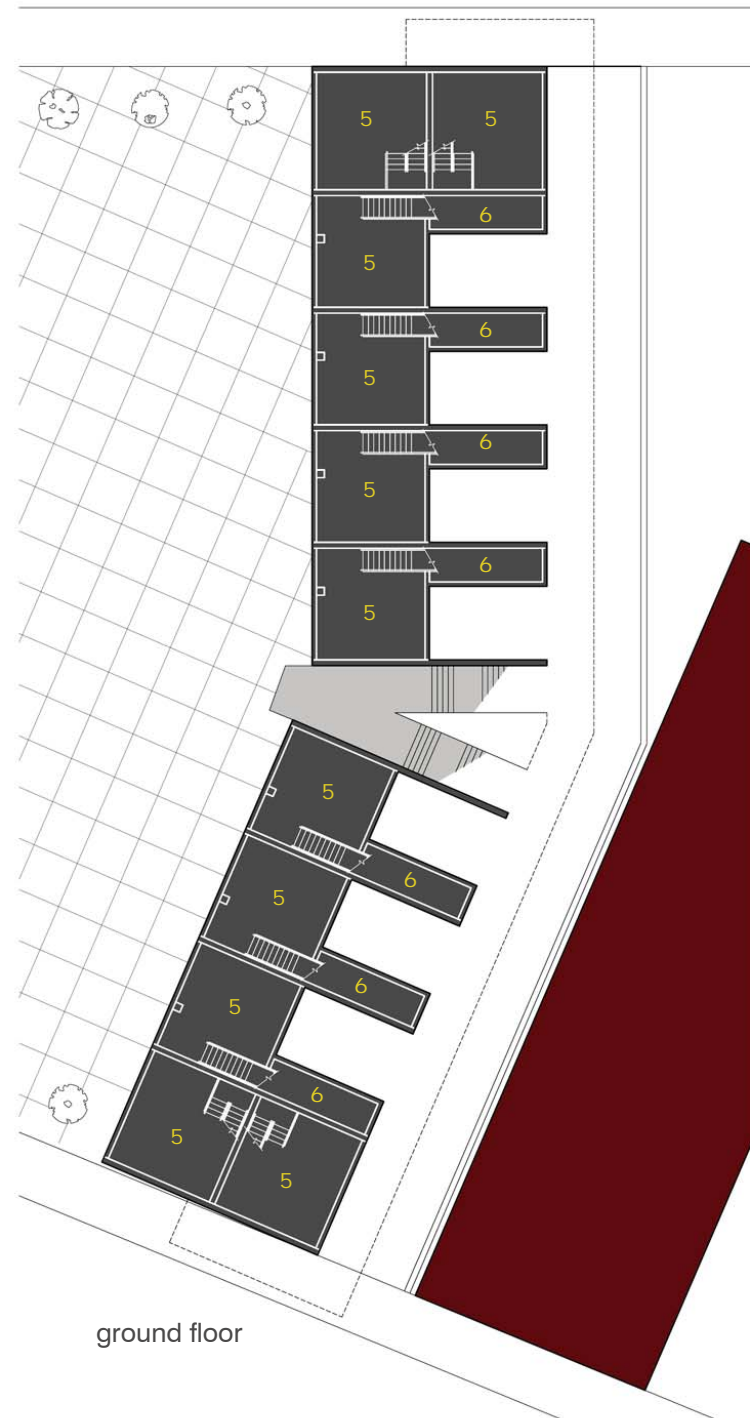
Each office is very closely tied to the Path. The Path is not only present as it crosses each floor but traces of the Path are present in the floor and ceiling and exterior portions of the Path can be seen through the windows. These all provide continual reminders of the Path's influence on the building.



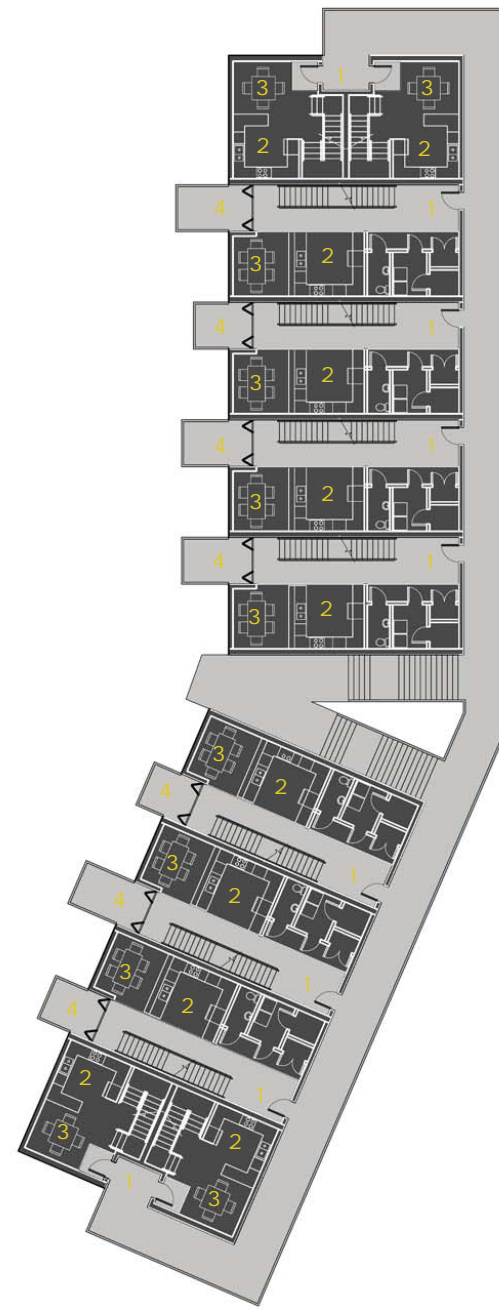
The Path, as it crosses the building and becomes an interior corridor, uses glass panels emblazoned with text identifying the space beyond to deliver a continuation of light and material while informing the occupant of his location on the Path and within the building.



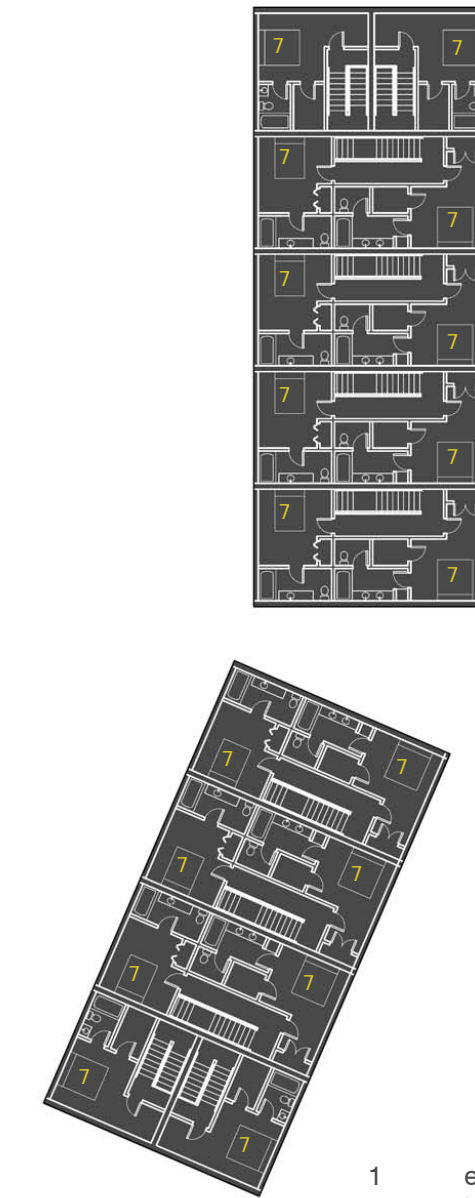
The space of the staircase is external to the main volume of the building. As an occupant follows the Path he is repeatedly turned inside and outside of the proper building volume creating the sense of travelling on a course entirely separated from the space of the offices.



ground floor

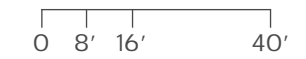


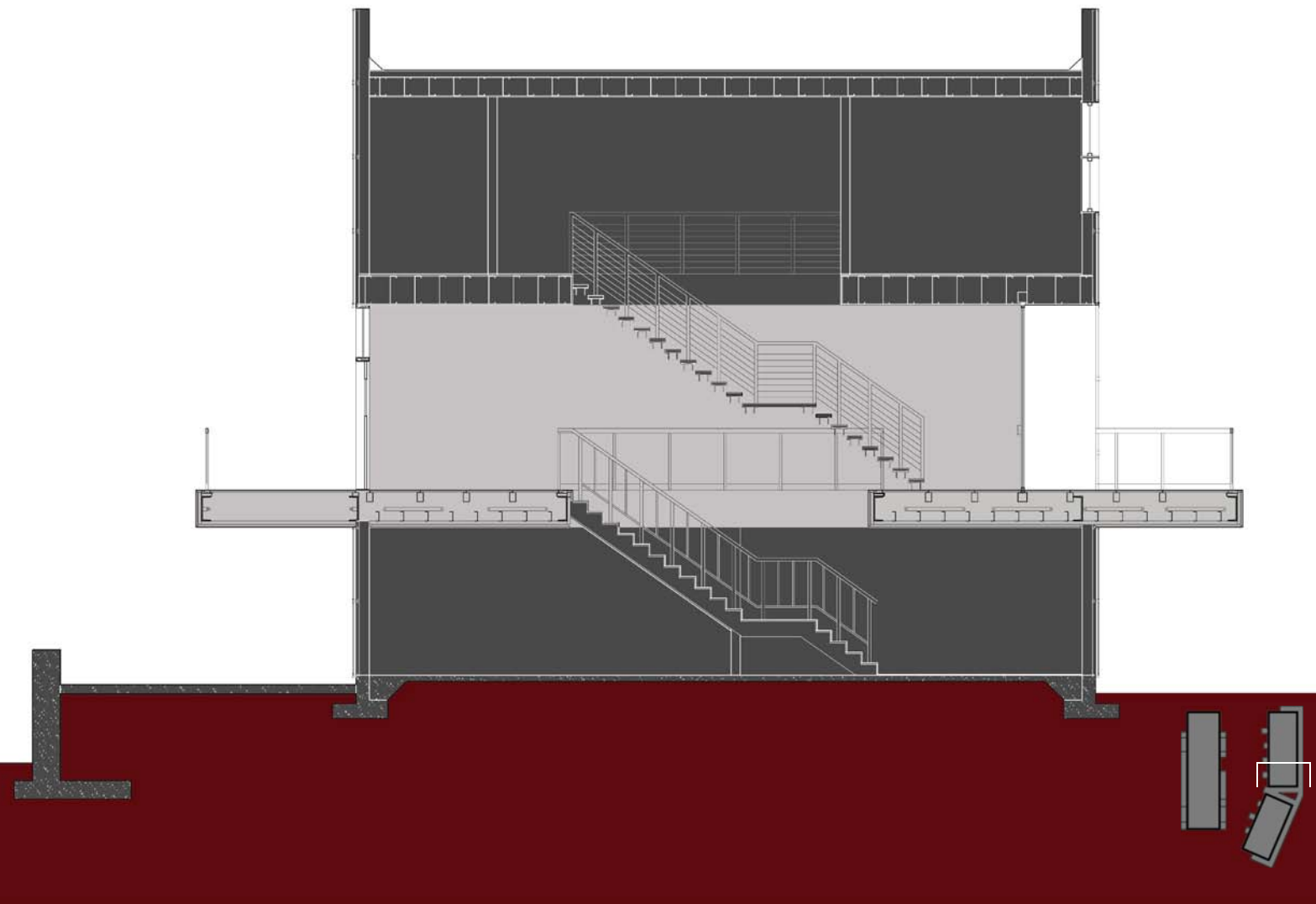
entry level



second floor

- 1 entry
- 2 kitchen
- 3 dining room
- 4 patio
- 5 living room
- 6 storage
- 7 bedroom

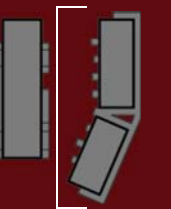




0 5' 10' 25'



residence elevation from courtyard

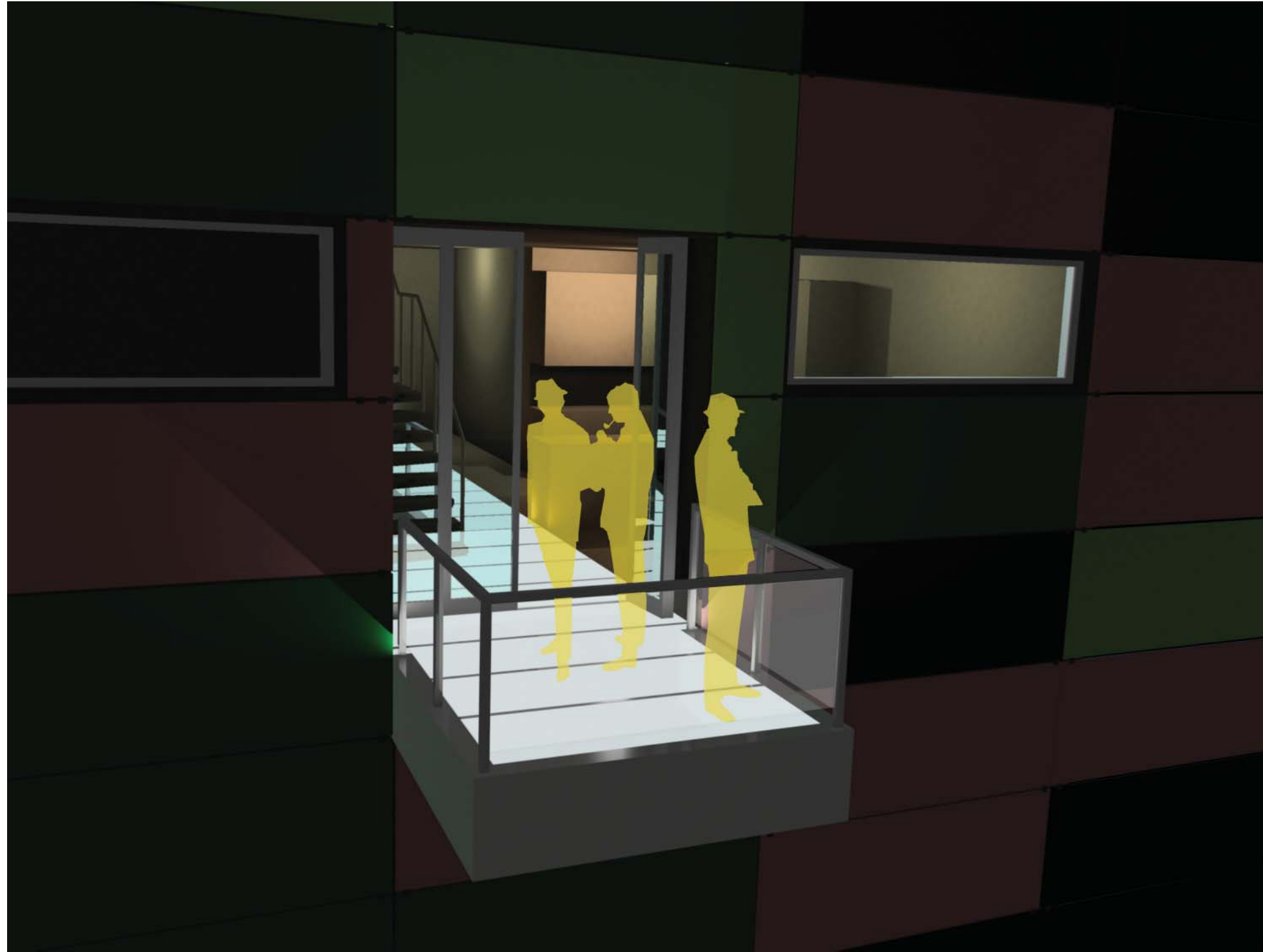




From the entry, the Path becomes the focal point of the home. The organization of the homes is predicated first and foremost on the Path's location in the home and its role as primary circulation.



The steps from the upstairs are anchored to the wall. The Path maintains its independence from the home and makes the action of stepping on and off the Path noticeable and consequential.



Once through the residence, the Path terminates as an elevated patio facing the courtyard. By occupying space in the courtyard the patio is a visual cue to the unifying nature of the Path.

The introduction of the Path is only one of a myriad of possible ways to invigorate office spaces. In many cases the direct, physical relationship of one office to another may not be desirable. In the case of a business incubator the constant connection to those going through similar struggles can be a useful asset.

The strength of this project lies in the reinvention of the typical office building organizational structure. By deviating from the tradition of double-loaded corridors, offices can be organized in a manner that better addresses the needs of the occupant by promoting connection and collaboration.

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