

# Washington, D.C. Center for Filmmaking

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GREG HUNT, Committee Chairman, Virginia Tech

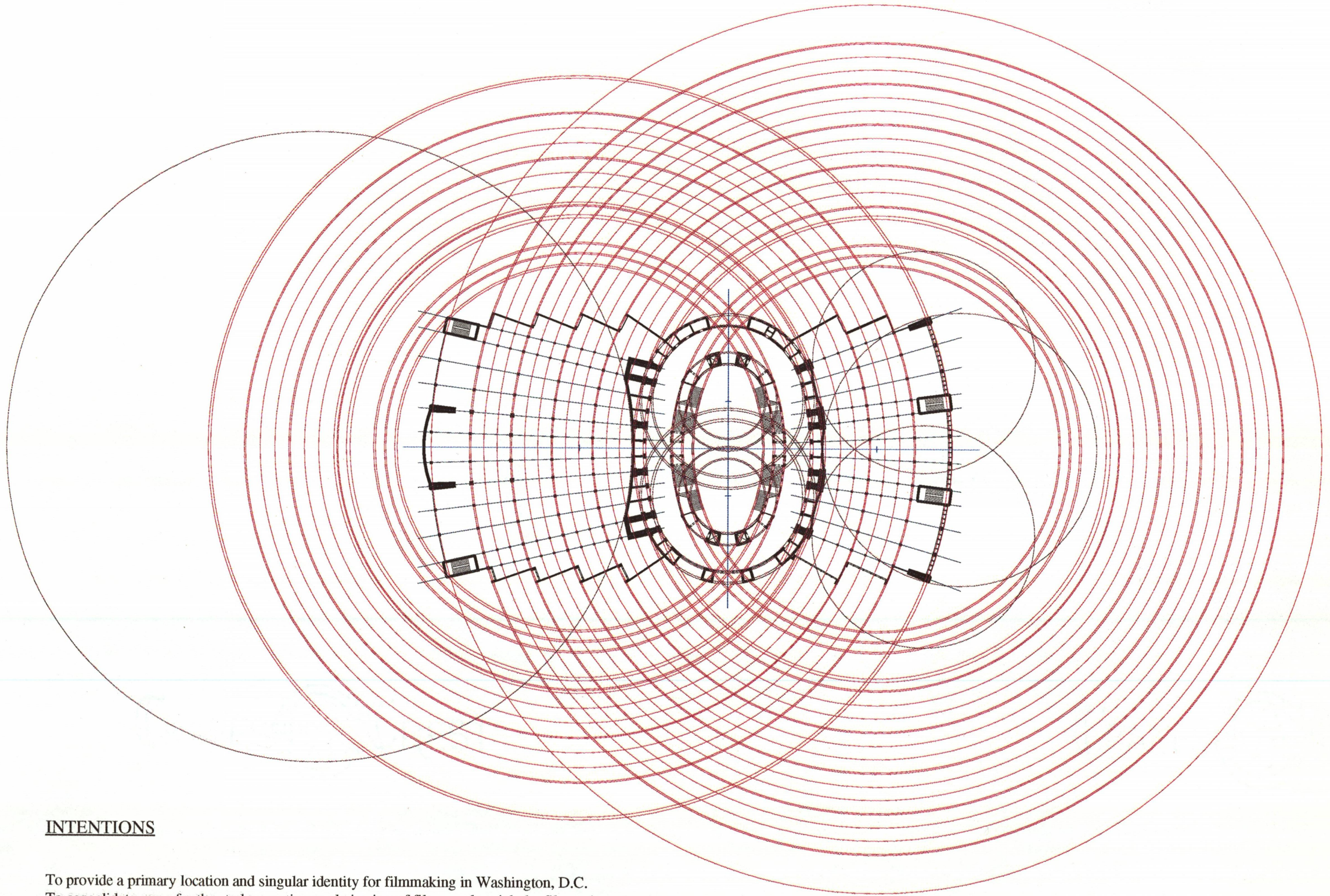
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JAAN HOLT, Virginia Tech

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PAUL CLARKE, Miami University of Ohio

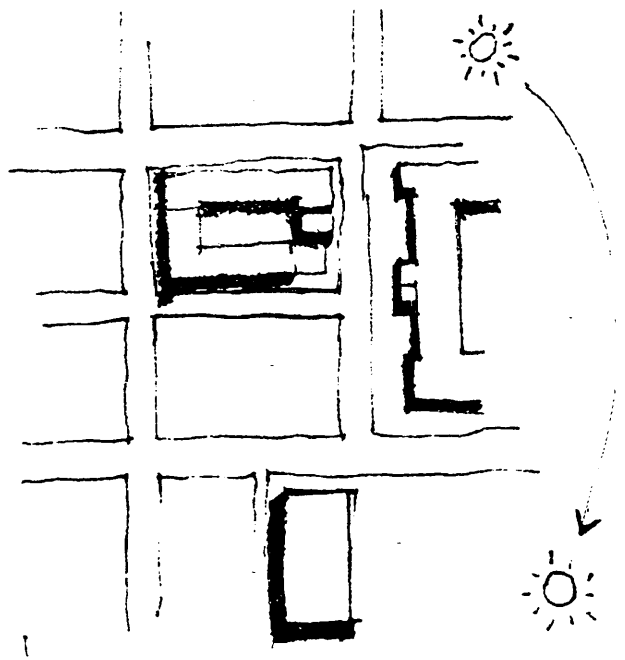
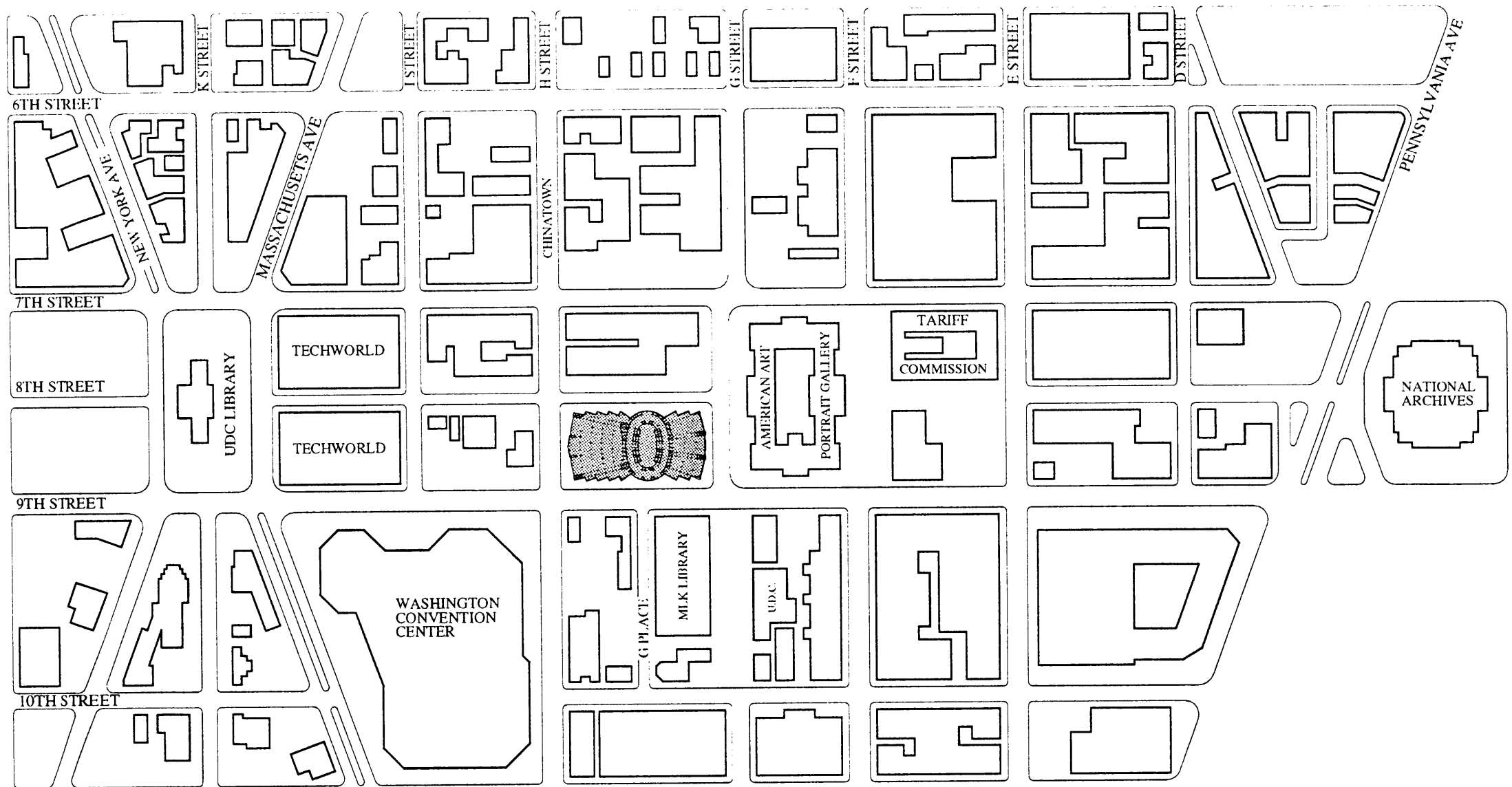
RICHARD MARKUS  
Master of Architecture, Virginia Tech  
Washington-Alexandria Center for Architecture



## INTENTIONS

To provide a primary location and singular identity for filmmaking in Washington, D.C.  
To consolidate areas for the study, creation, and viewing of films, and enrich the film-going experience.

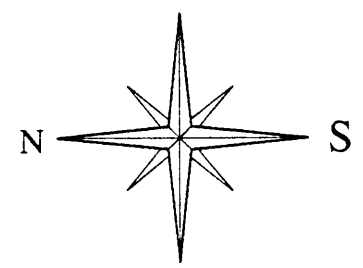
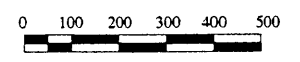
Film viewers enter the central gathering space and mingle with students studying at the Film Institute and filmmakers working in the Film Production studios. The enclosure of this grand gathering space is formed by the wall supporting the screens of the third floor cinemas and is lined with exhibition rooms which address the history of film and the process of filmmaking. Film viewers purchase tickets on the ground floor of the gathering space where they can investigate film-related shops or purchase food at a cafe. With ticket in hand, the filmviewer ascends the stair to the second floor where the Film Production sound stages can be accessed to observe films currently under production. On the third floor, silent images of films past and present are projected onto screens on the interior of the gathering space. Film viewers pass under these screens and through the screenwall to access the cinema where their film is being presented.

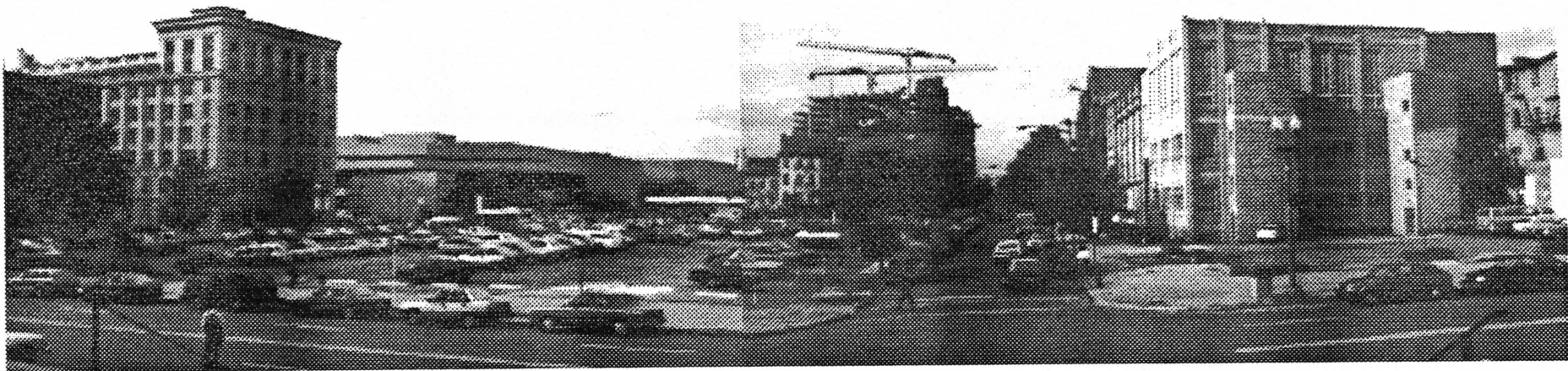


The Washington, D.C. Center for Filmmaking is placed in the middle of a growing area of different uses, on the block bordered by 8th, 9th, G and H Streets. Across G Street, the old Patent Office now houses the National Museum of American Art and the National Portrait Gallery. Churches, schools, and other buildings for study exist in the blocks directly surrounding the proposed building, including University of the District of Columbia buildings and the Martin Luther King Library. The Washington Convention Center and Techworld allow space for large exhibitions and trade shows. Also, office space and the shops and restaurants of Chinatown are just one block east. Access to the site by Metro is across G Street at the Gallery Place Metro stop.

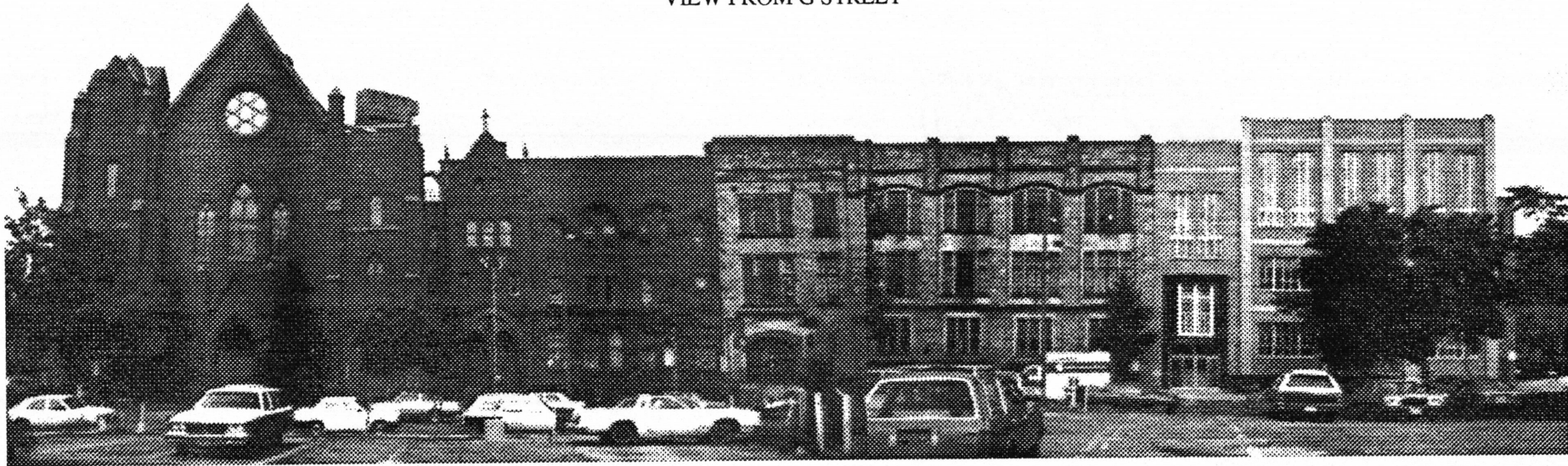
The Center for Filmmaking addresses the street with commercial storefronts of shops or restaurants, accessible from the street as well as from the interior gathering space. The building attempts to embrace the framework of the city openly. The main entry into the Gathering Space is off the major street of the site, 9th Street. Service access is off of the least traveled street, 8th Street.

**SITE PLAN**



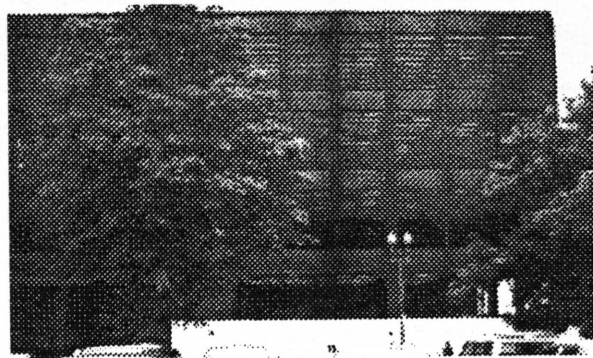


VIEW FROM G STREET



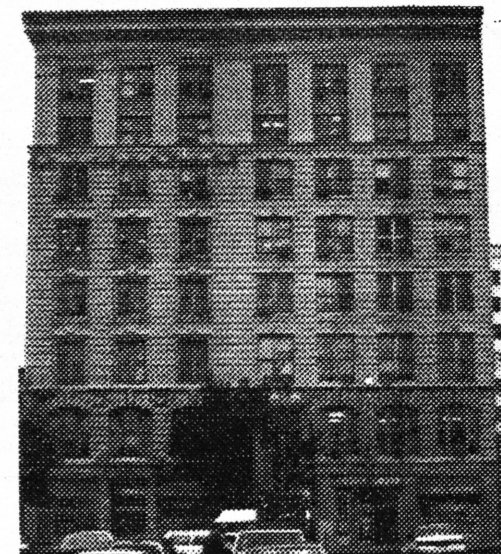
8TH STREET ELEVATION

SITE PHOTOS

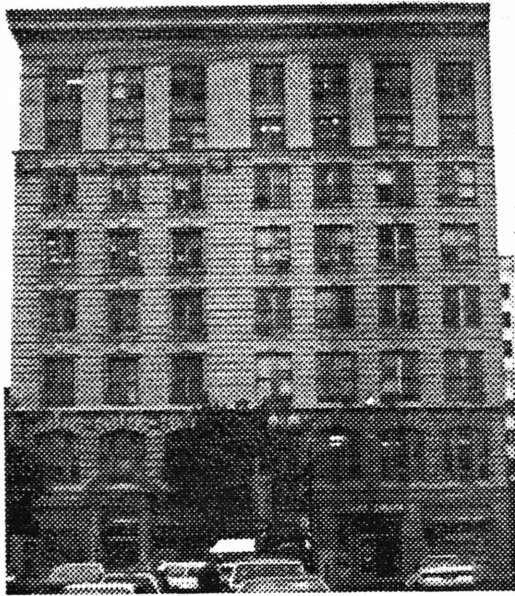


9TH STREET ELEVATION

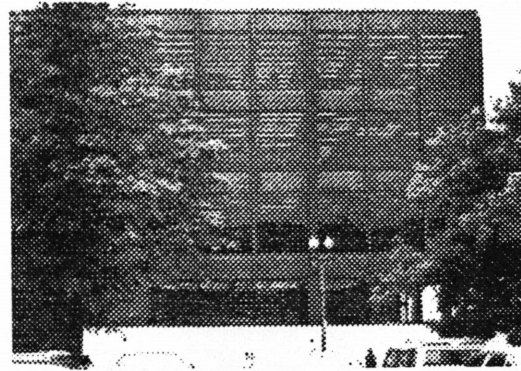
The site is currently a parking lot prime for development. The buildings directly around the site vary greatly in height, mass, and articulation. The National Museum of American Art, formerly the Patent Office, by John Russell Pope recalls the neoclassical core of the city. Classical detailing is also apparent on the Central Liquor building at 9th Street. Brick and stone facades line 8th Street with a school and an intricately detailed church.



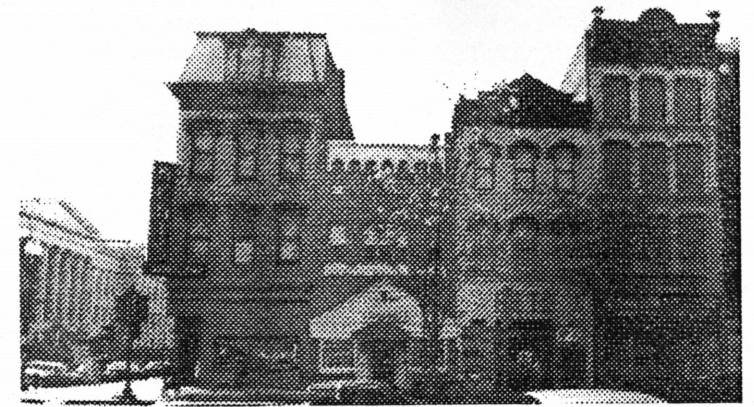
9TH STREET ELEVATION



CENTRAL LIQUOR



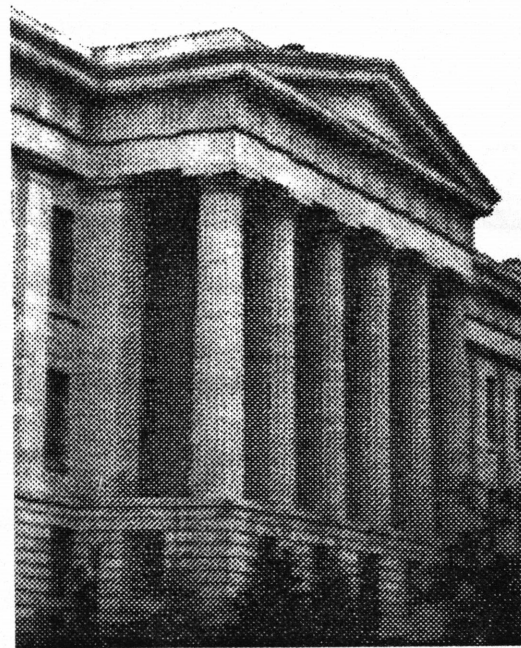
MLK LIBRARY



7TH STREET SHOPS



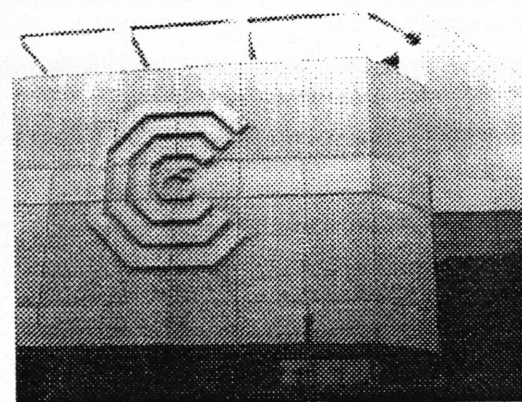
GREATER NEW HOPE BAPTIST CHURCH



NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART



H STREET SHOPS



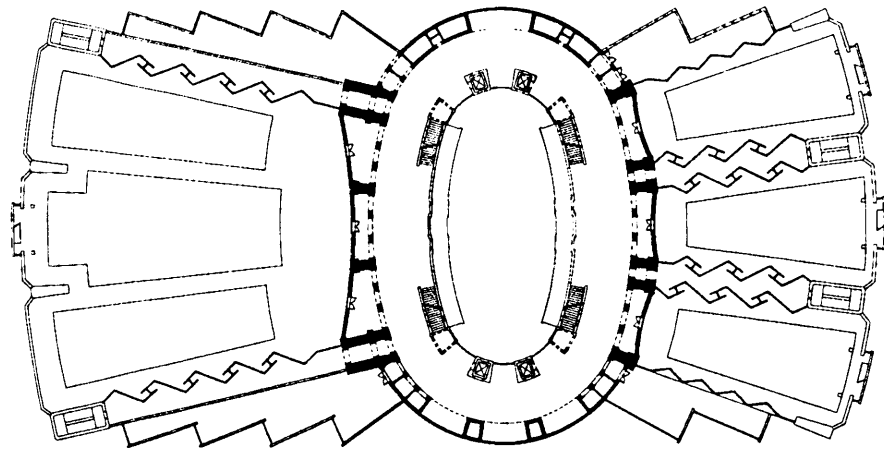
WASHINGTON CONVENTION CENTER

SITE PHOTOS

An intimate scale is characteristic of the shops and offices of Chinatown on 7th and H Streets and the strong stone facade of the Greater New Hope Baptist Church on 8th Street. The MLK Library by Mies van der Rohe invests a clean modern image while the massive Washington Convention Center leaves its mark with large solid walls and ribbon windows. Techworld and its awkward eclecticism span 8th Street with a glass enclosed bridge. Outside the neoclassicism of the city's core, this area is not dominated by one architectural approach but is full of diversity.

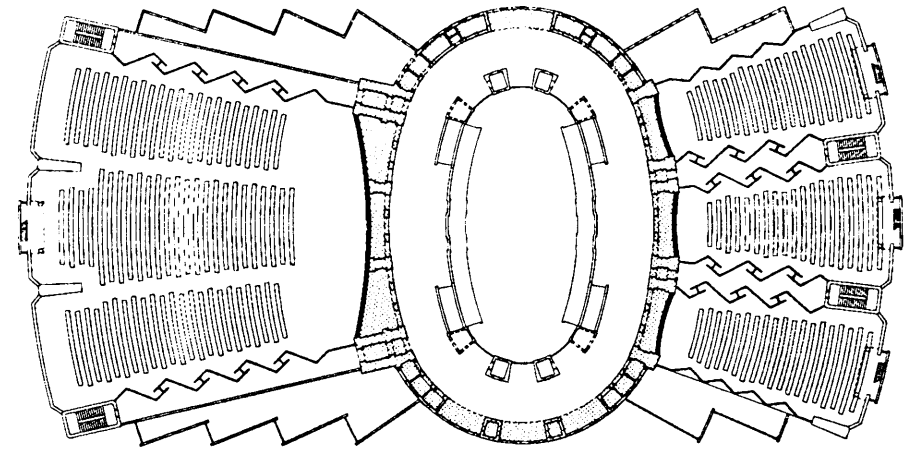


8TH STREET WITH TECHWORLD BEYOND

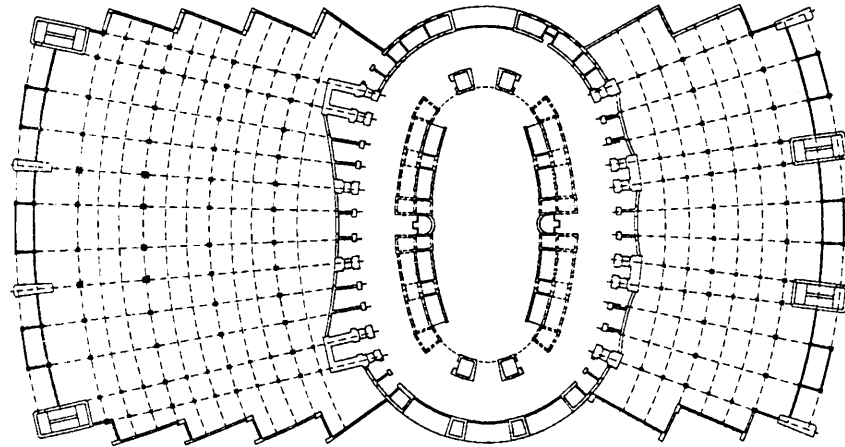


GATHERING SPACE

The cinemas of the third floor are positioned around a generous shared space. The wall created by the cinema screens forms this communal area - the Gathering Space. All elements of the building exist in direct relation to this main space and the entries to the different uses are directly from the Gathering Space.

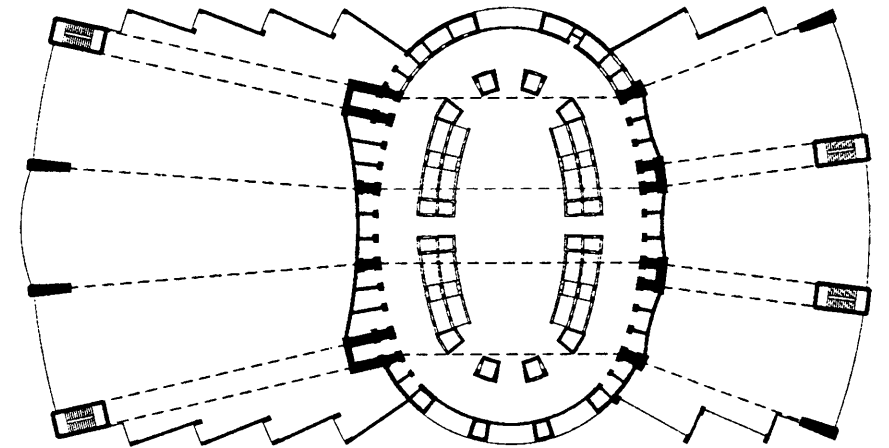


SCREEN WALL

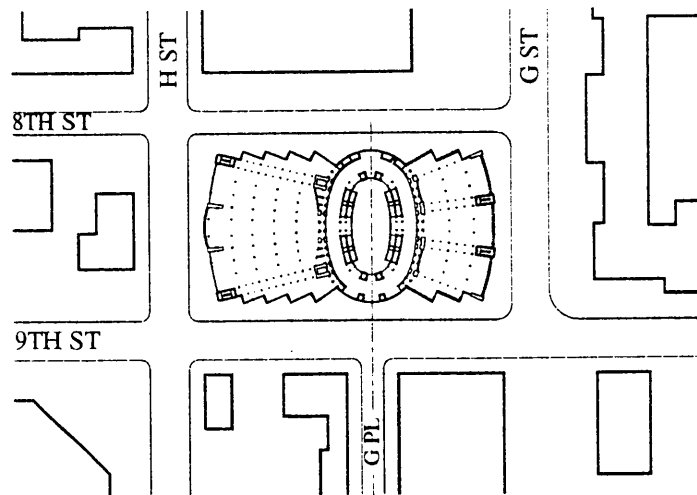


COLUMNS

The roofs over the open viewing areas for the cinemas are spanned by large trusses supported by the screen wall and by the eight piers which define the rear wall of the cinemas. The central gathering space is enclosed by a glass space frame roof, the load carried mainly by four trusses also supported by the screen wall. The radial column grid which carries the floor loads below is concentric with both sides of the screen wall.



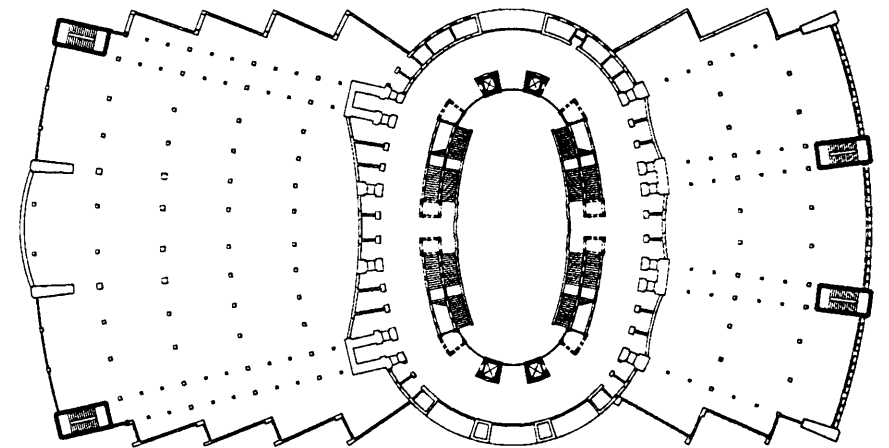
PIERS / WALLS



SITE

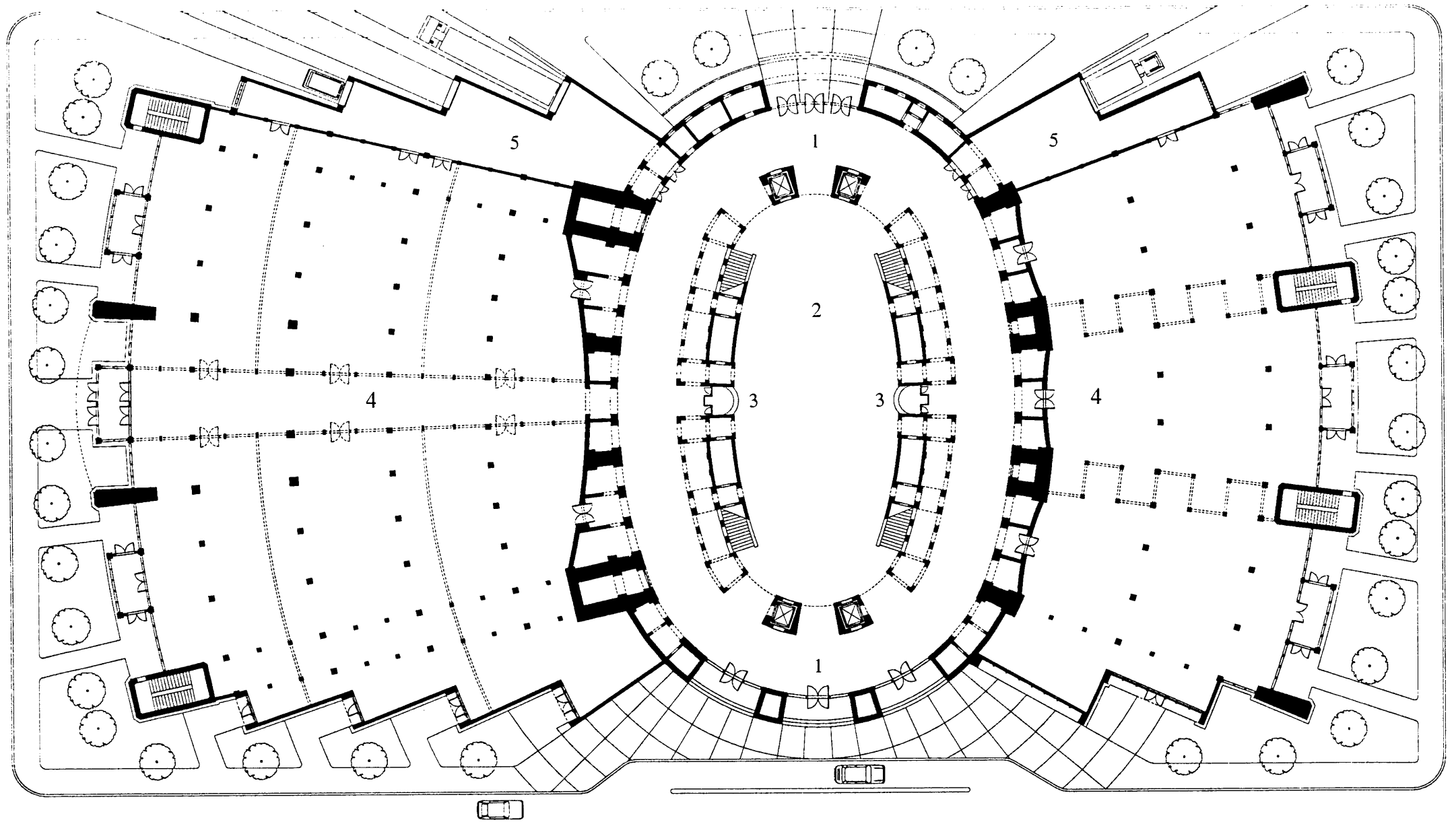
Main entry into the Gathering Space is accessed off the busiest street, 9th Street. The elliptical central gathering space is placed on axis with the side street, G Place, creating a formal end to the small street which runs next to the MLK Library.

Within the gathering space a smaller ellipse, concentric with the screen wall, holds the main circulation. Additional exit stairs for the cinemas and the second floor exist within the end piers.



CIRCULATION

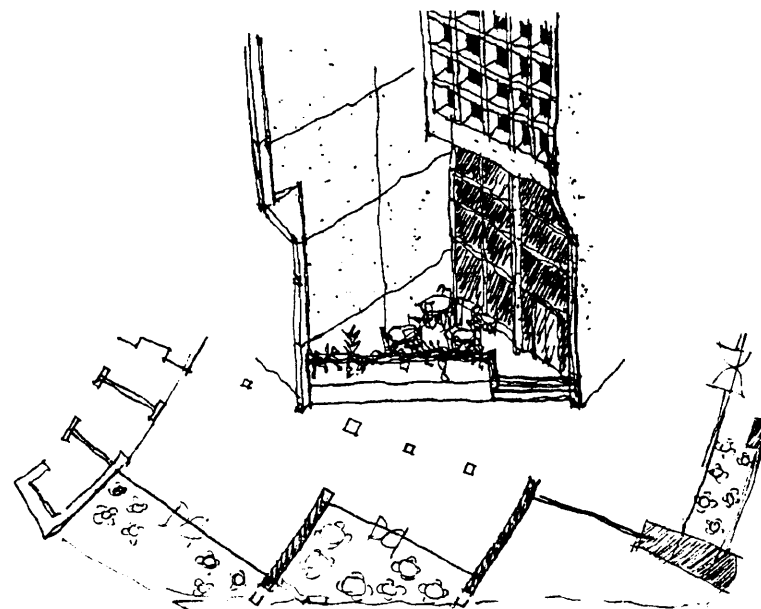
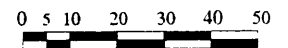
DIAGRAMS



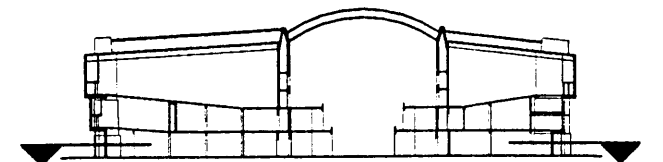
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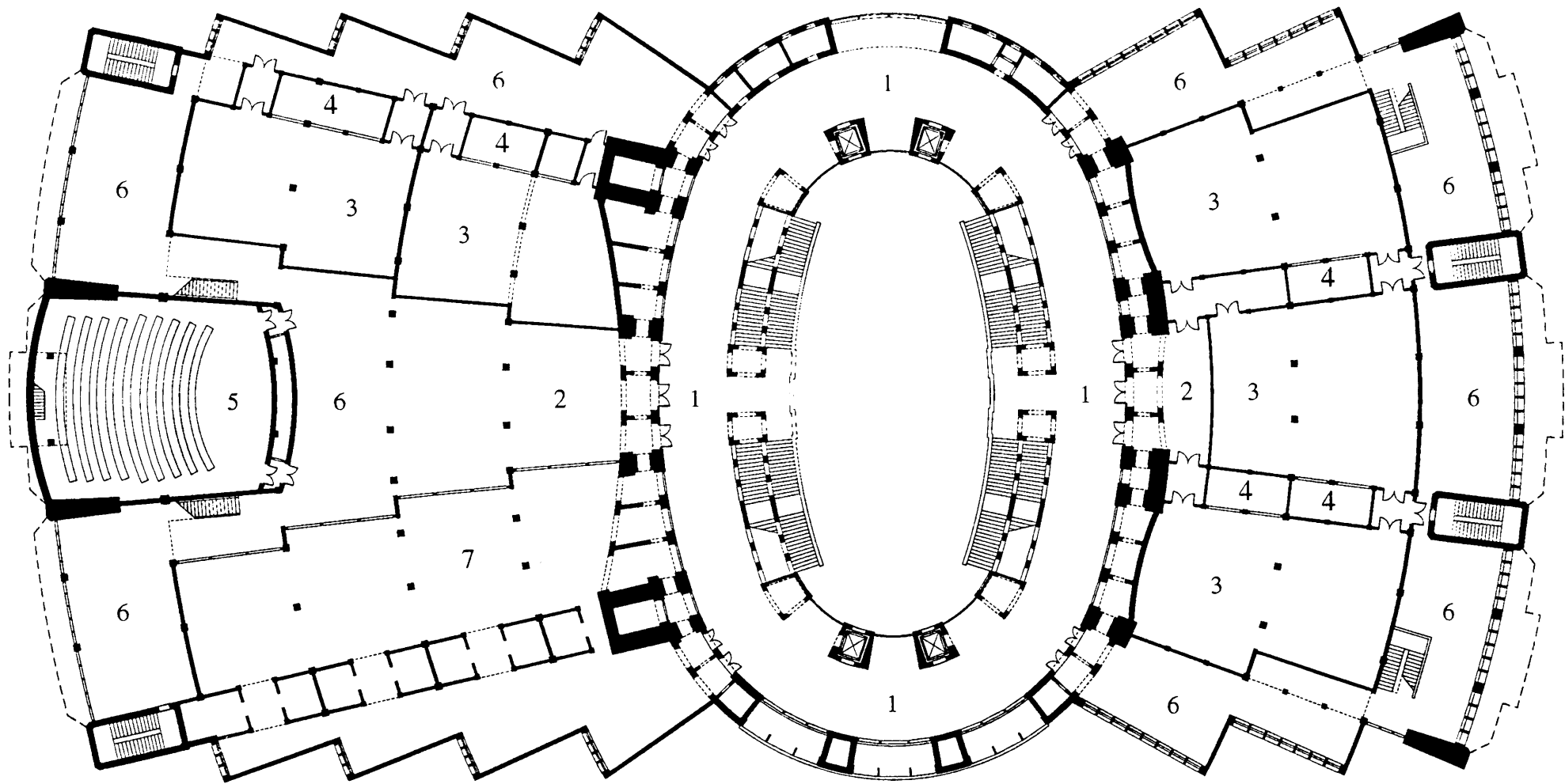
- |             |                    |
|-------------|--------------------|
| 1 Entry     | 4 Commercial Space |
| 2 Gathering | 5 Loading          |
| 3 Tickets   |                    |

GROUND FLOOR PLAN



The structure of the building is clearly revealed in the ground floor plan. The screenwall encloses the elliptical gathering space and contains exhibition rooms within its thickness. Columns and walls radiate out from the screen wall to define open commercial area. A circulation zone echoes the curves inside the screen wall. The ends of the building are anchored by structural piers, half of which house exit stairs. Entry is on axis into the gathering space, from which the user can easily access any part of the building.





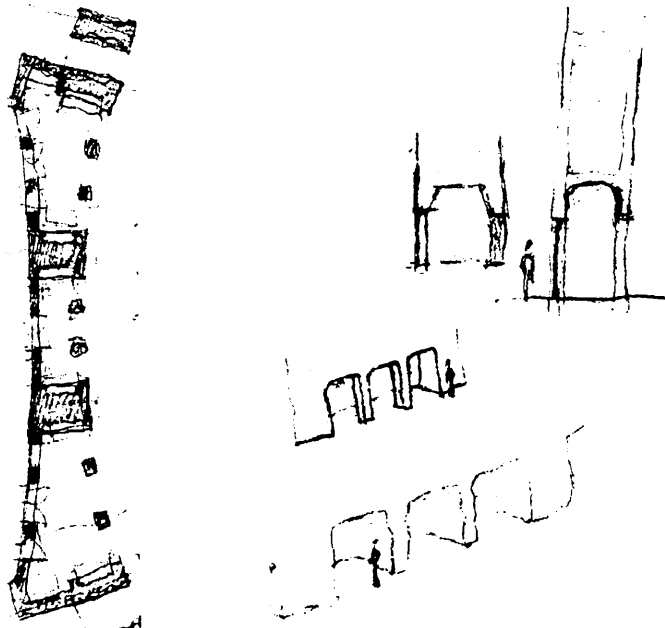
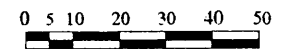
FILM INSTITUTE

FILM PRODUCTION

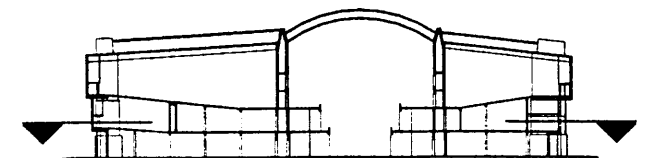
LEGEND

- |                |                  |
|----------------|------------------|
| 1 Gathering    | 5 Student Cinema |
| 2 Reception    | 6 Work Space     |
| 3 Sound Stage  | 7 Library        |
| 4 Control Room |                  |

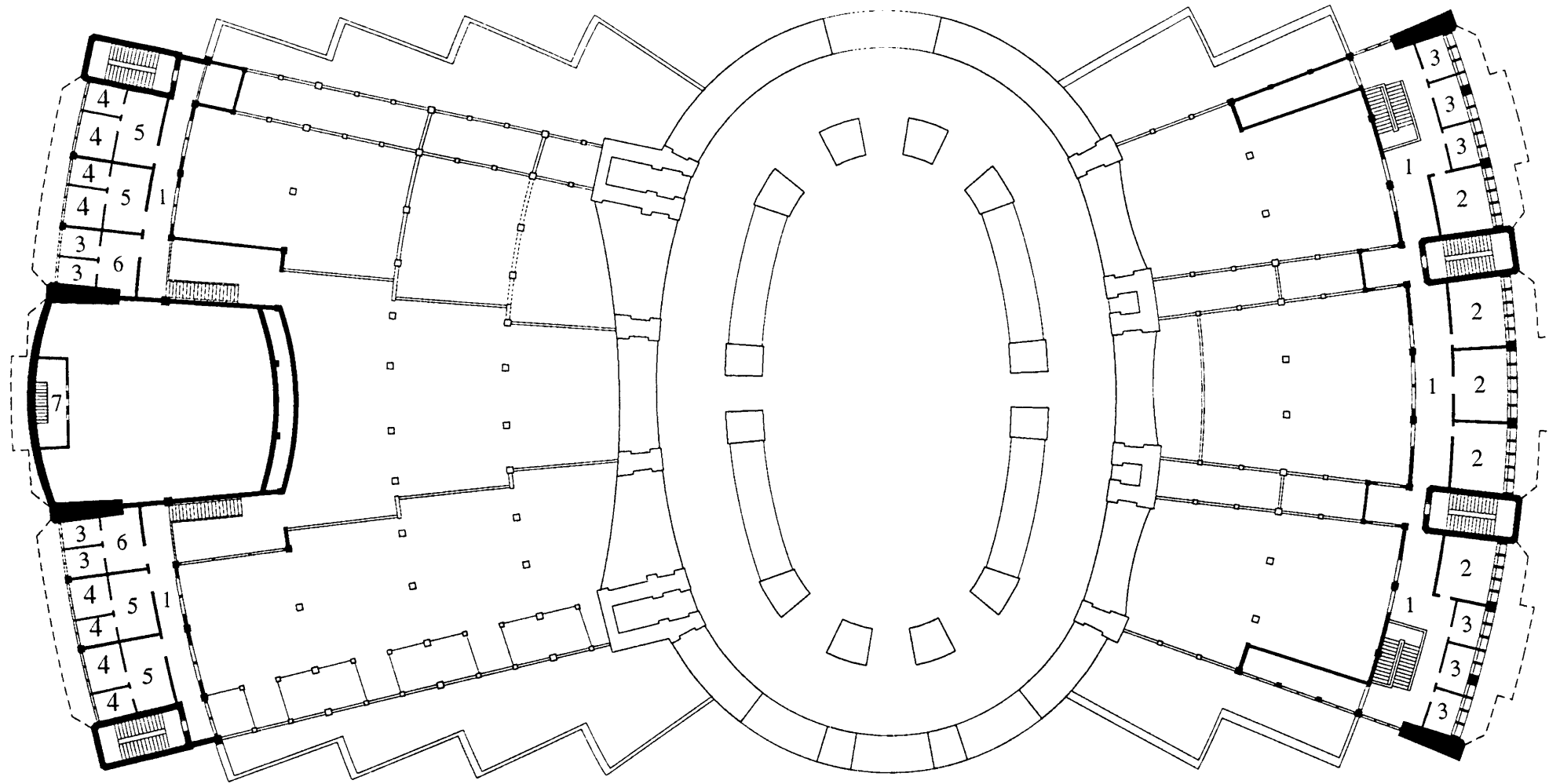
SECOND FLOOR PLAN



The central gathering space continues up through the second floor. The open stairs from the ground floor turn and continue, ascending inside a wall penetrated on both sides by a regular series of framed openings. Off of the gathering space, the Film Institute is laid out in the north end of the building. Prominence is given to the student cinema which is surrounded with areas to study and create films. At the south end of the building, sound stages fill the commercial Film Production space. Reception, galleries, and work space surround the studios.







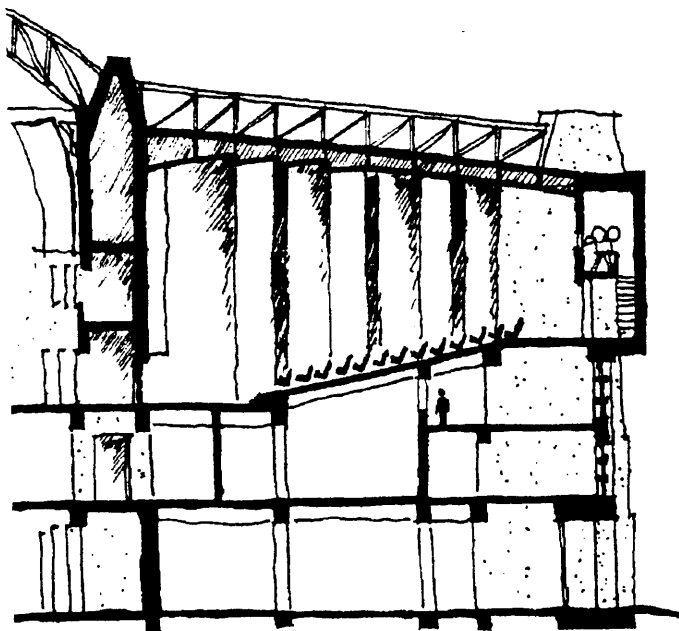
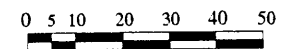
FILM INSTITUTE

FILM PRODUCTION

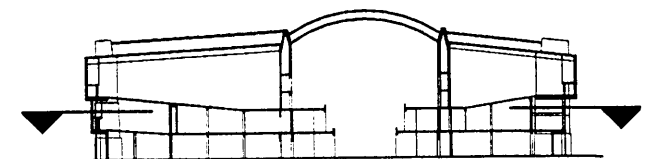
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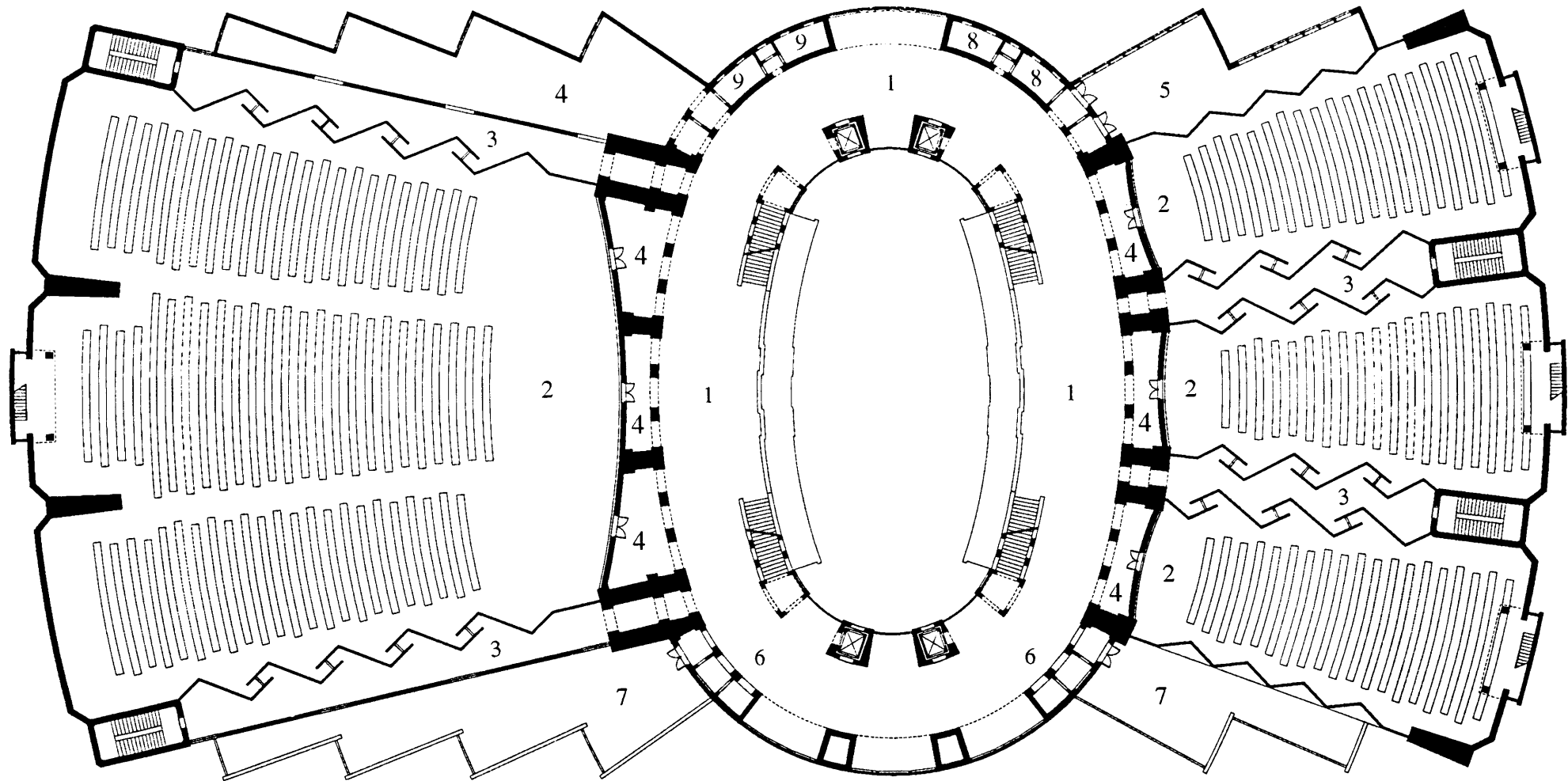
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|----------------|-------------------|
| 1 Viewing Area | 5 Workroom        |
| 2 Meeting      | 6 Lounge          |
| 3 Office       | 7 Projection Room |
| 4 Classroom    |                   |

SECOND FLOOR  
MEZZANINE PLAN



The mezzanine of the Film Institute at the north end includes small workrooms, classrooms, and observation areas to view filmmaking in the studios. The projection room for the student cinema is accessed by a small internal stair. The mezzanine of the Film Production area includes offices, editing rooms, meeting rooms and production observation areas.

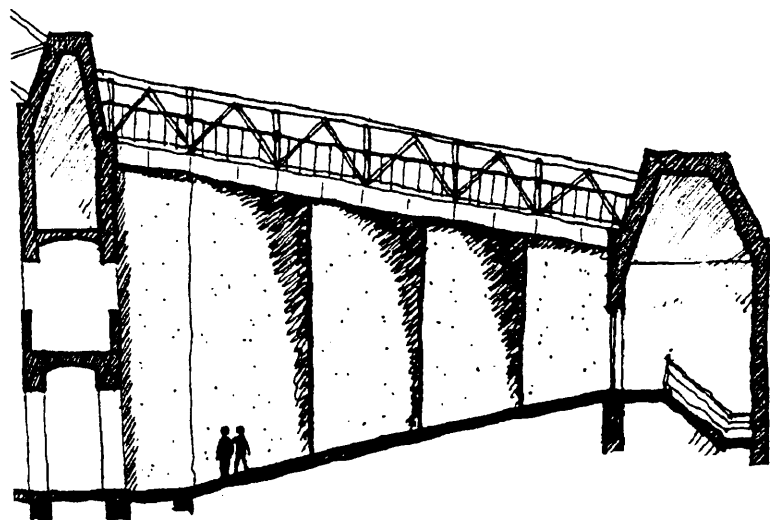
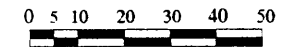




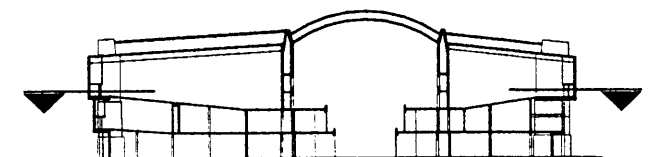
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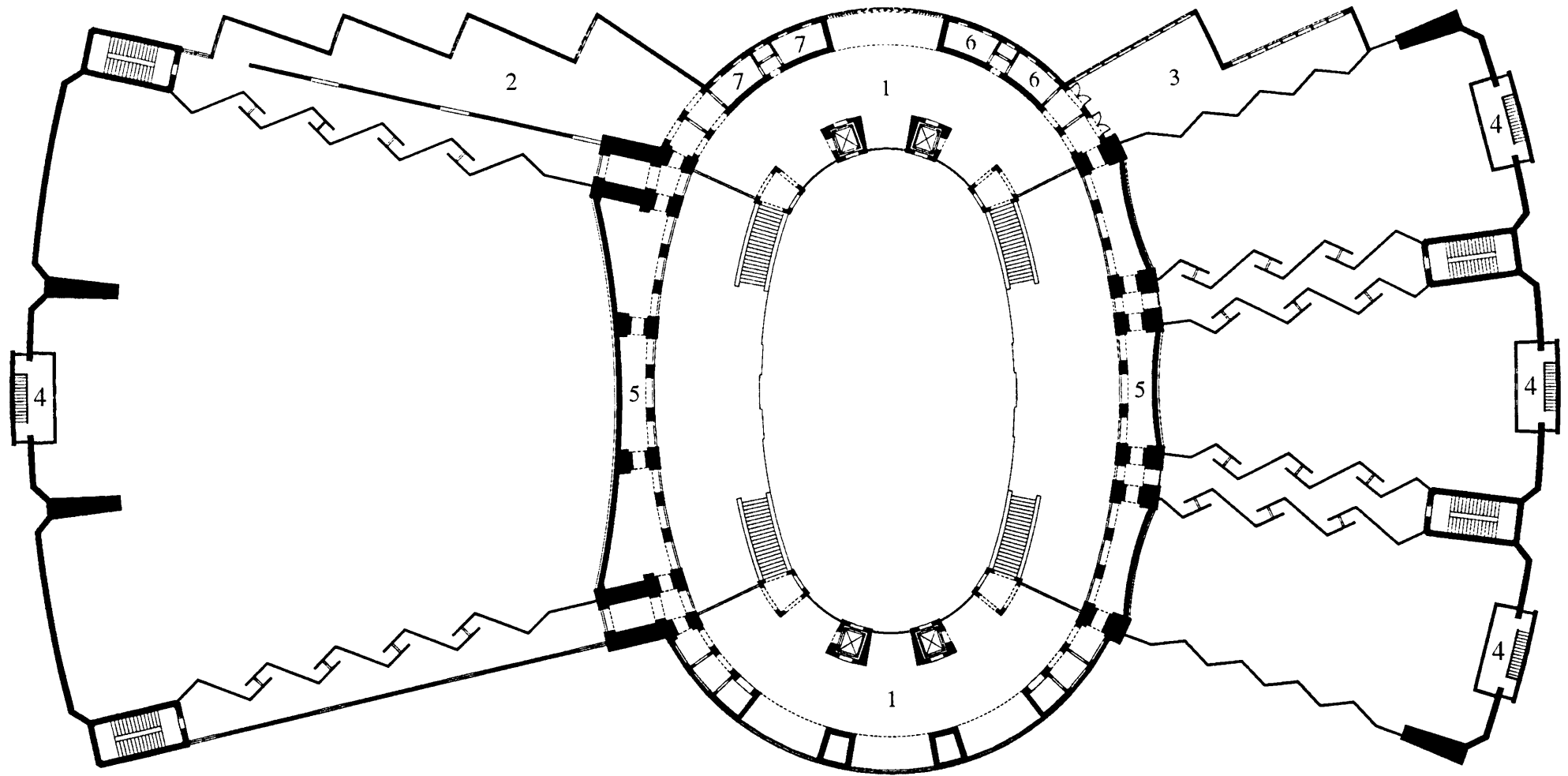
- |             |                   |
|-------------|-------------------|
| 1 Gathering | 6 Concessions     |
| 2 Cinema    | 7 Outdoor Terrace |
| 3 Passage   | 8 Storage         |
| 4 Gallery   | 9 Mechanical      |
| 5 Restrooms |                   |

THIRD FLOOR PLAN



Four public cinemas surround the gathering area of the third floor. The largest cinema contains 850 seats and the other three seat 300 people each. After ascending the stairs through the the gathering space from the ground floor, each cinema is entered by walking through the screen wall into a corridor, and filtering into the viewing area from the side doors. The cinema is exited through the same doors or through the doors directly under the screen and back into the gathering space. Terraces and gallery spaces facilitate casual discussion and study of film exhibits.

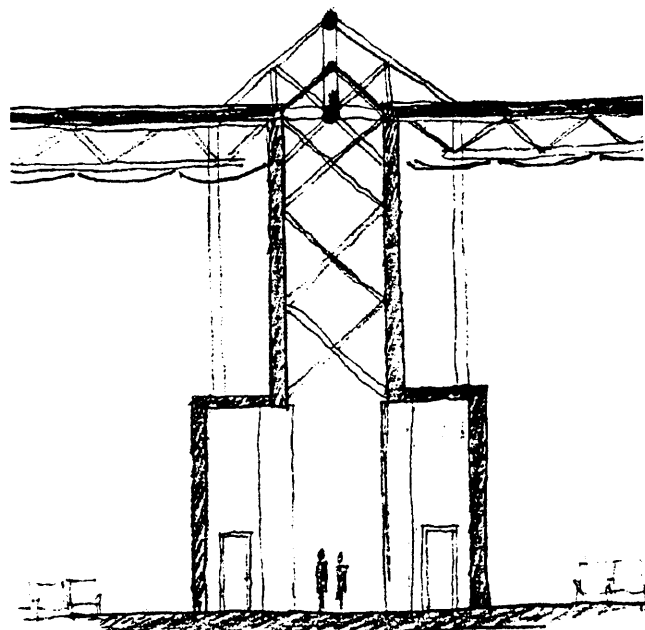
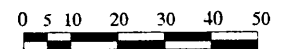




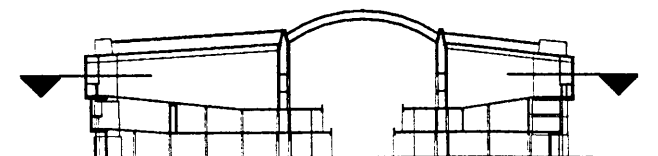
THIRD FLOOR  
MEZZANINE PLAN

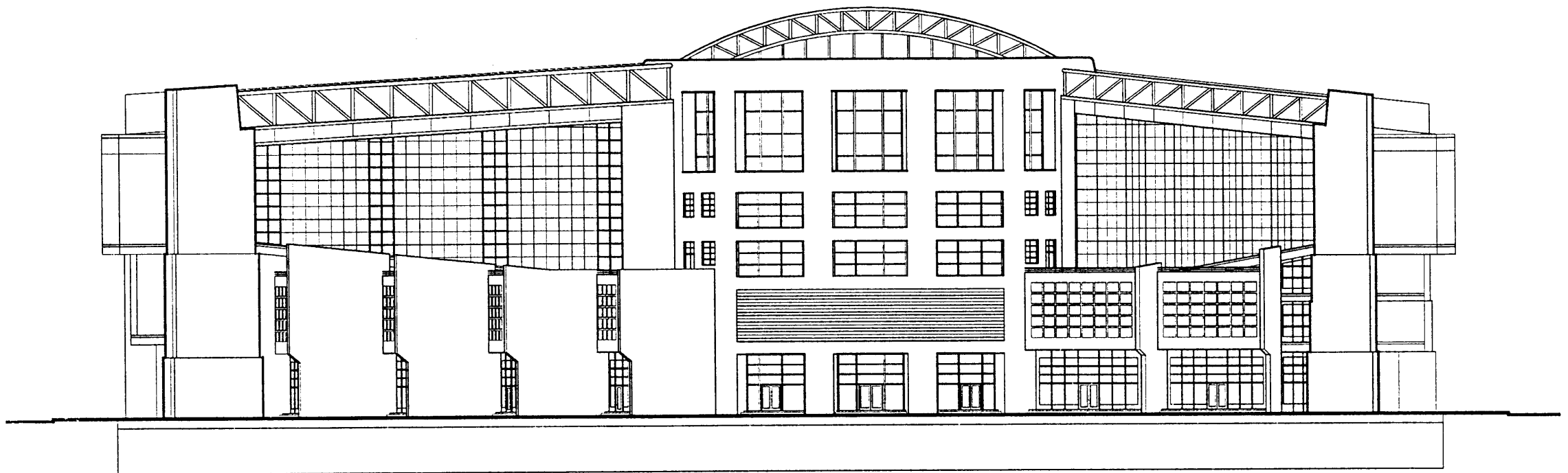
LEGEND

- |                   |              |
|-------------------|--------------|
| 1 Gathering       | 5 Passage    |
| 2 Gallery         | 6 Restrooms  |
| 3 Offices         | 7 Mechanical |
| 4 Projection Room |              |

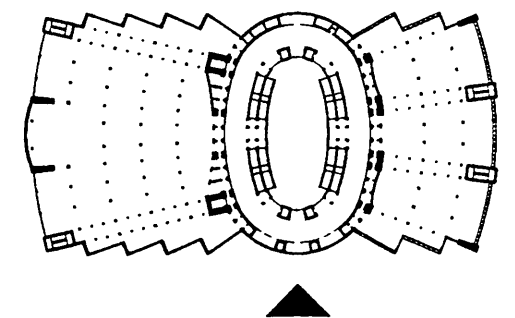
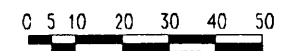
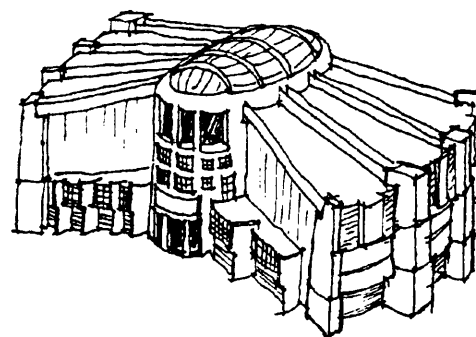
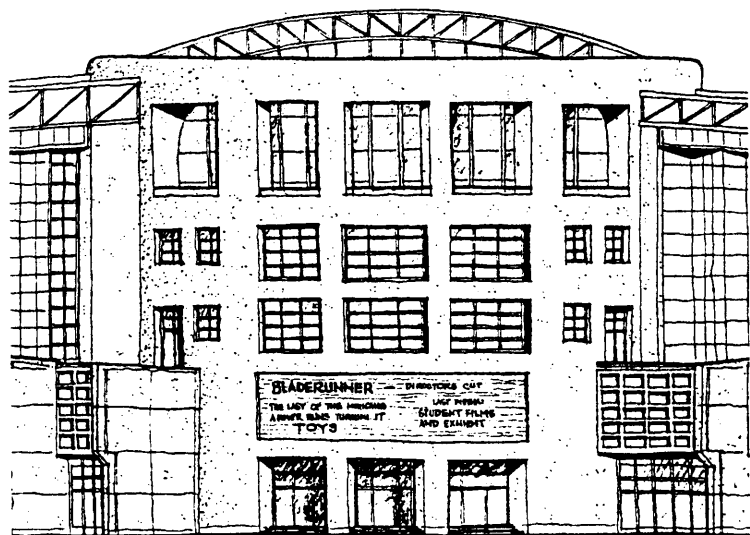


The third floor Mezzanine carries the gathering space vertically to a lounge area and a continuation of the exhibition area. The screen wall can be walked through using the bridges which connect the far ends of the gathering space. Four structural piers which house exit stairs anchor each end of the building.

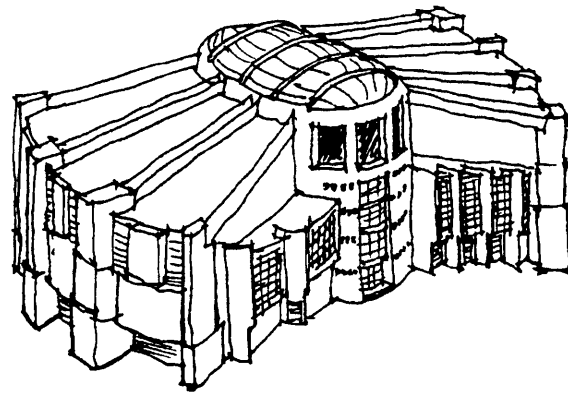
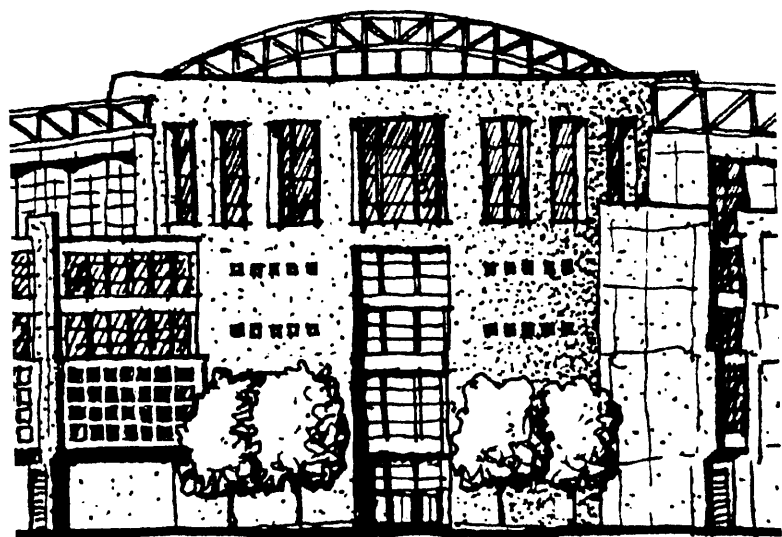
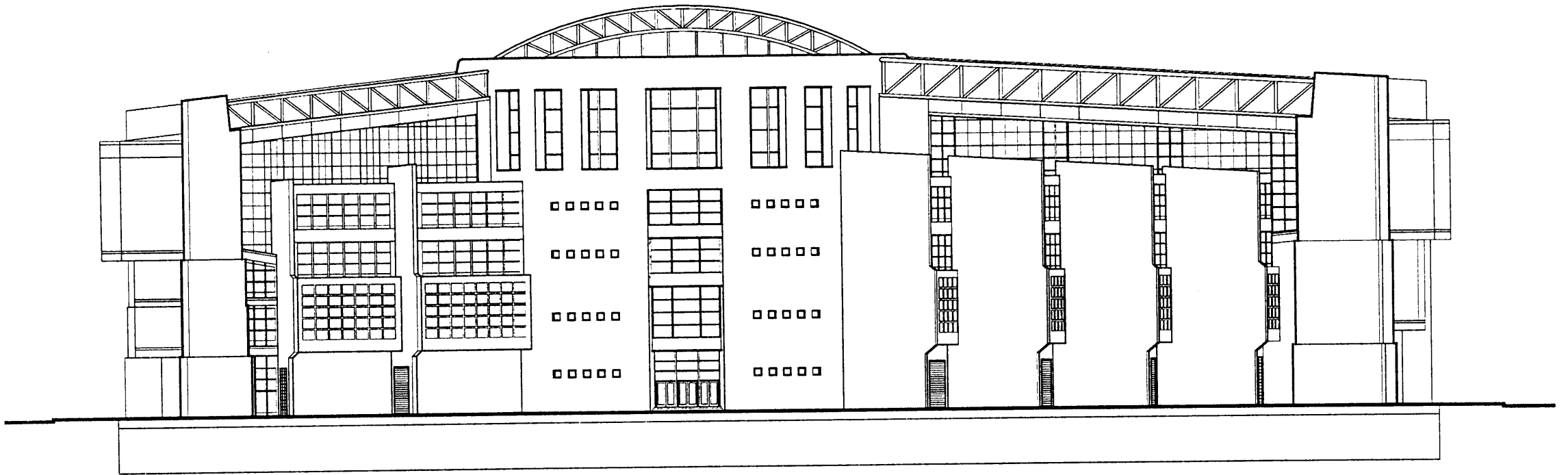




9TH STREET ELEVATION

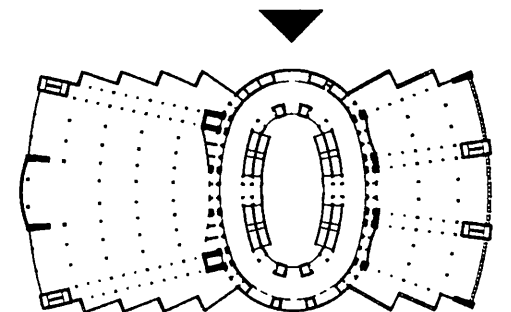
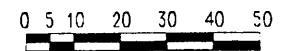


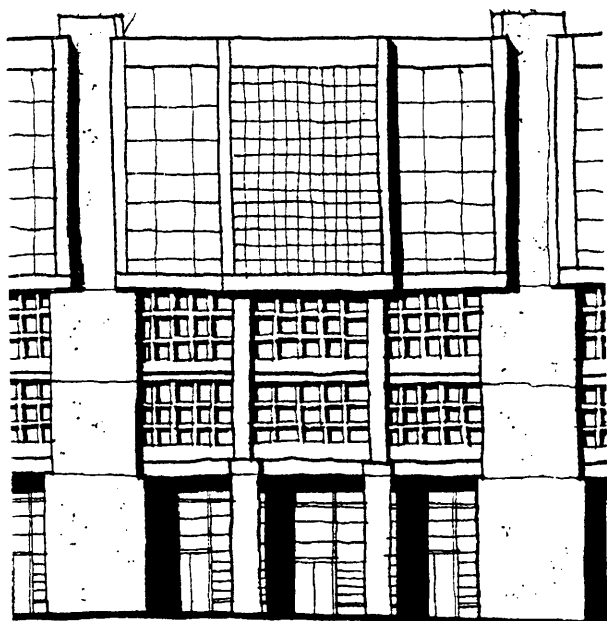
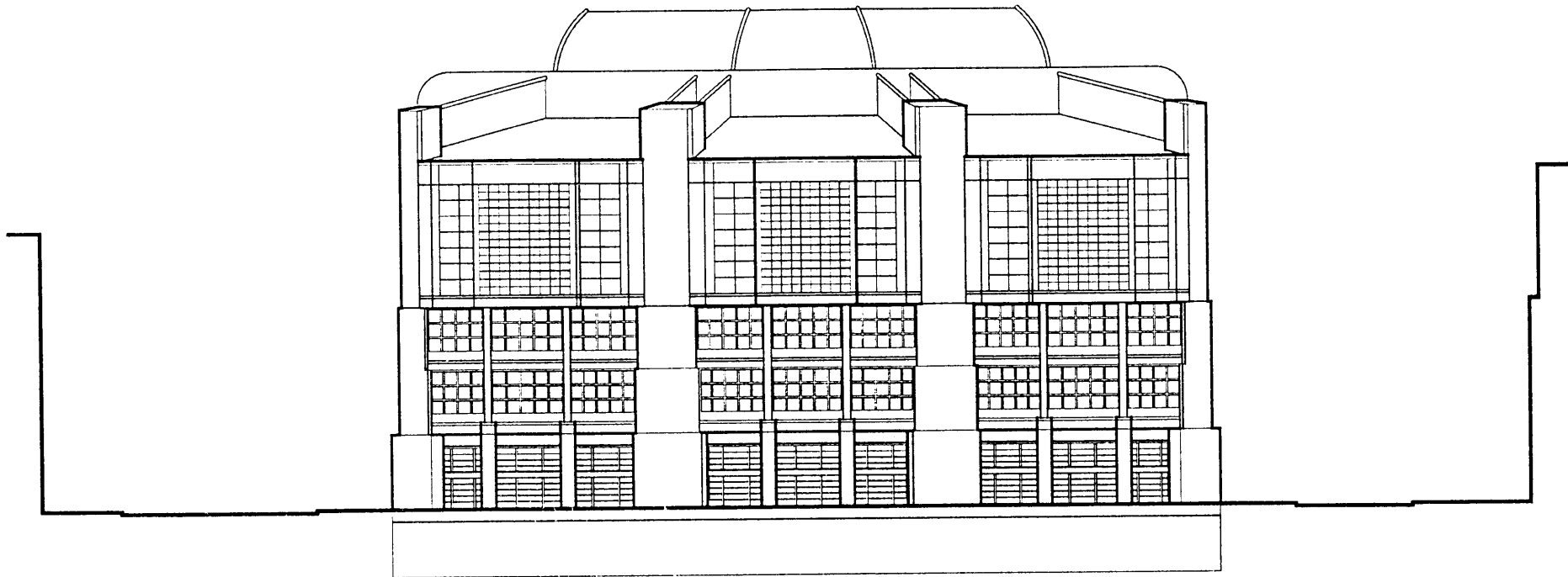
The main elements which form the building are expressed on 9th Street. The small commercial storefronts of the ground floor rise to the work areas of the Institute to the left and the Production area to the right. Above, the theaters create their own sculptural entities. All parts grow out of the elliptical wall which defines the gathering space. Main entry to the complex is through this wall and under the marquee.



The elliptical wall which defines the gathering space dominates the 8th Street elevation. The commercial storefronts become service entrances and loading docks. The cinemas are downplayed as the secondary uses express themselves in front of the cinema walls.

8TH STREET ELEVATION

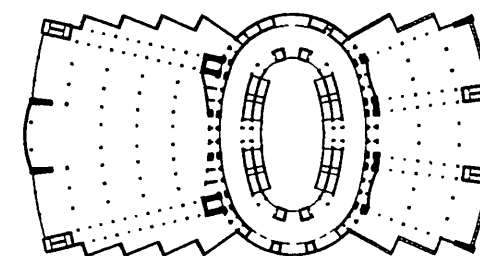


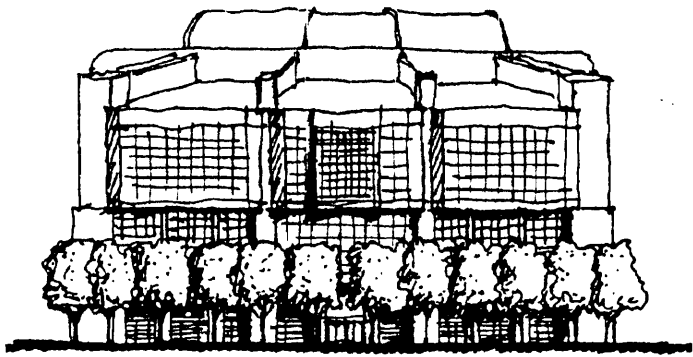
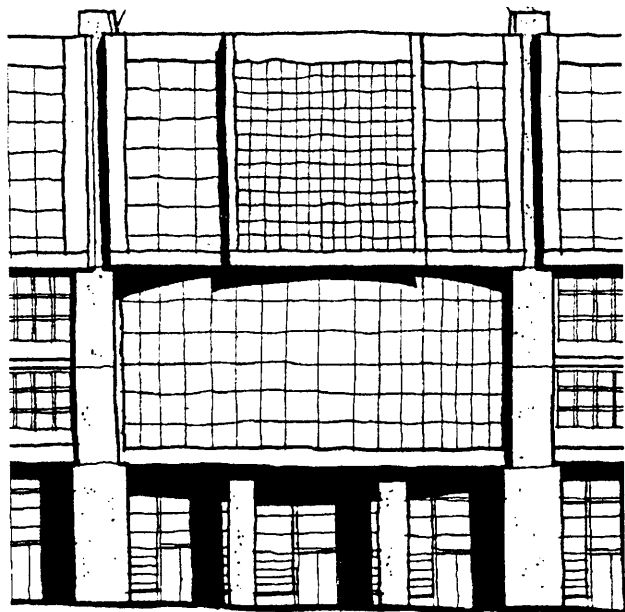
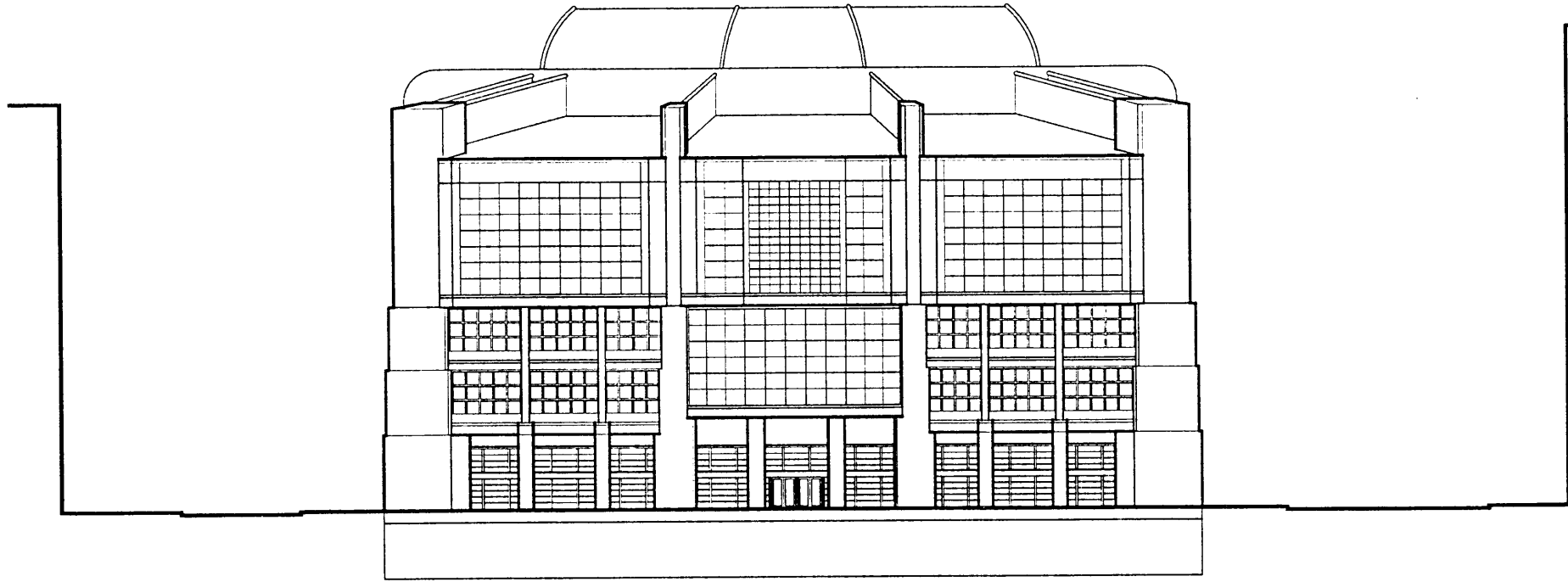


G STREET ELEVATION

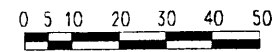
0 5 10 20 30 40 50

The G Street and H Street elevations express the Film Center's vertical layering of uses. Glass storefronts define the commercial ground floor. The second floor and second floor mezzanine windows to the Film Production area are set back in depth to shade the workspaces from direct southern sun. The solid walls of the 3rd floor cinemas and projection rooms are expressed as a grid of aluminum panels. The four main structural piers which carry the roof trusses rise through all floors uninterrupted.

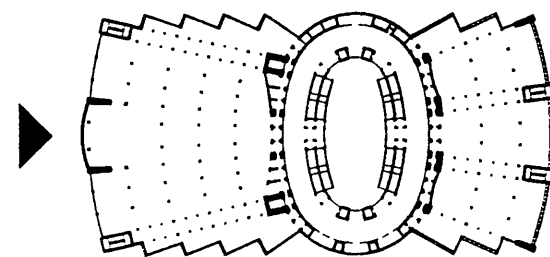


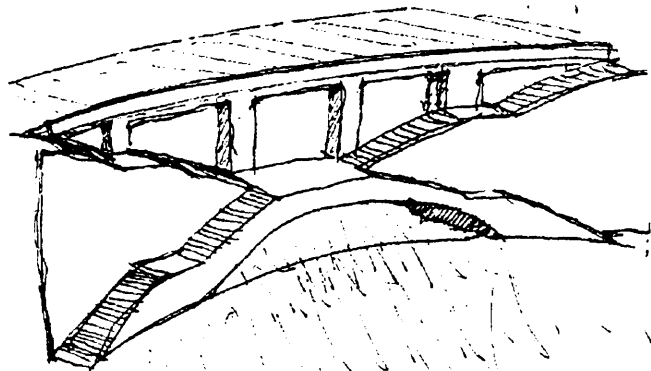
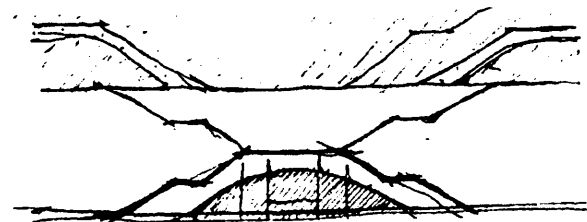
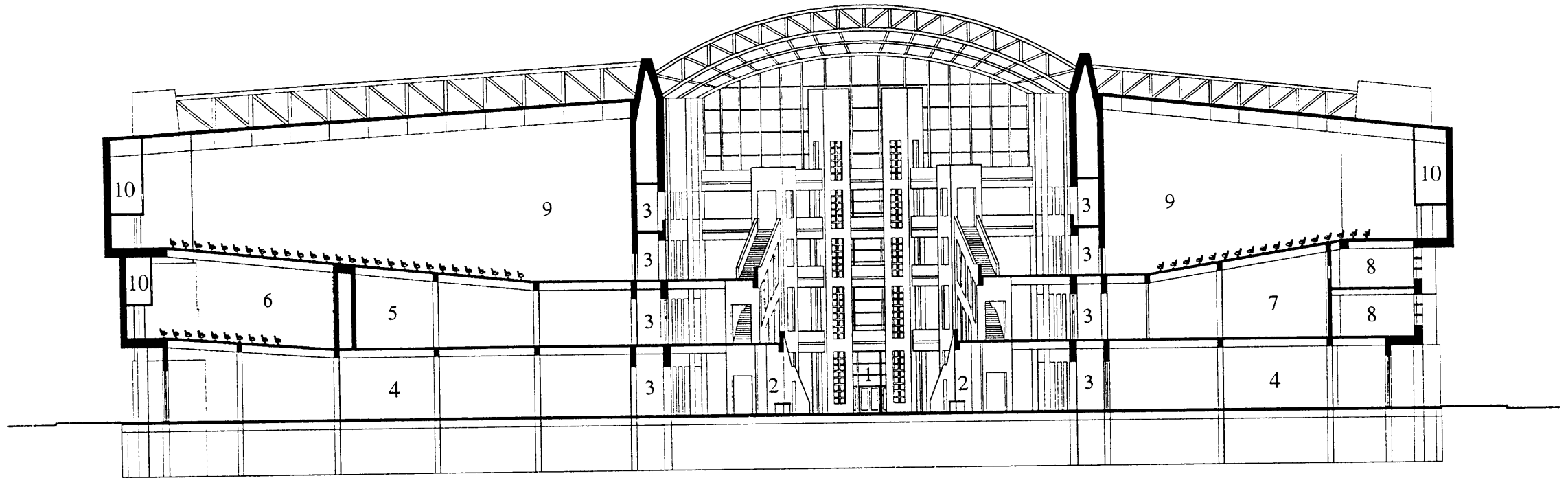


H STREET ELEVATION



A more centralized emphasis is created on the H Street elevation with the student cinema of the second floor and the single projection room of the large cinema placed in the center bay. The windows to the Film Institute on the second floor and the second floor mezzanine are rendered flush to allow entry of northern light.

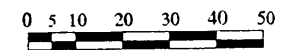




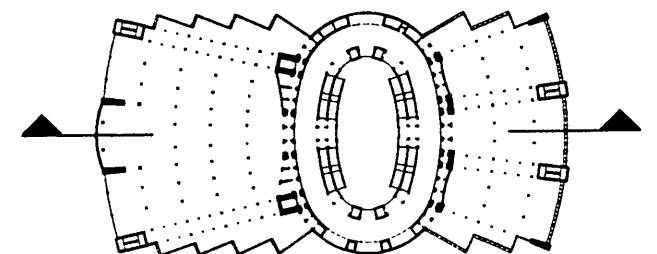
LEGEND

- |                      |                         |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 Gathering          | 6 Institute Cinema      |
| 2 Tickets            | 7 Production Studio     |
| 3 Gallery            | 8 Production Work Space |
| 4 Commercial Space   | 9 Public Cinema         |
| 5 Student Work Space | 10 Projection room      |

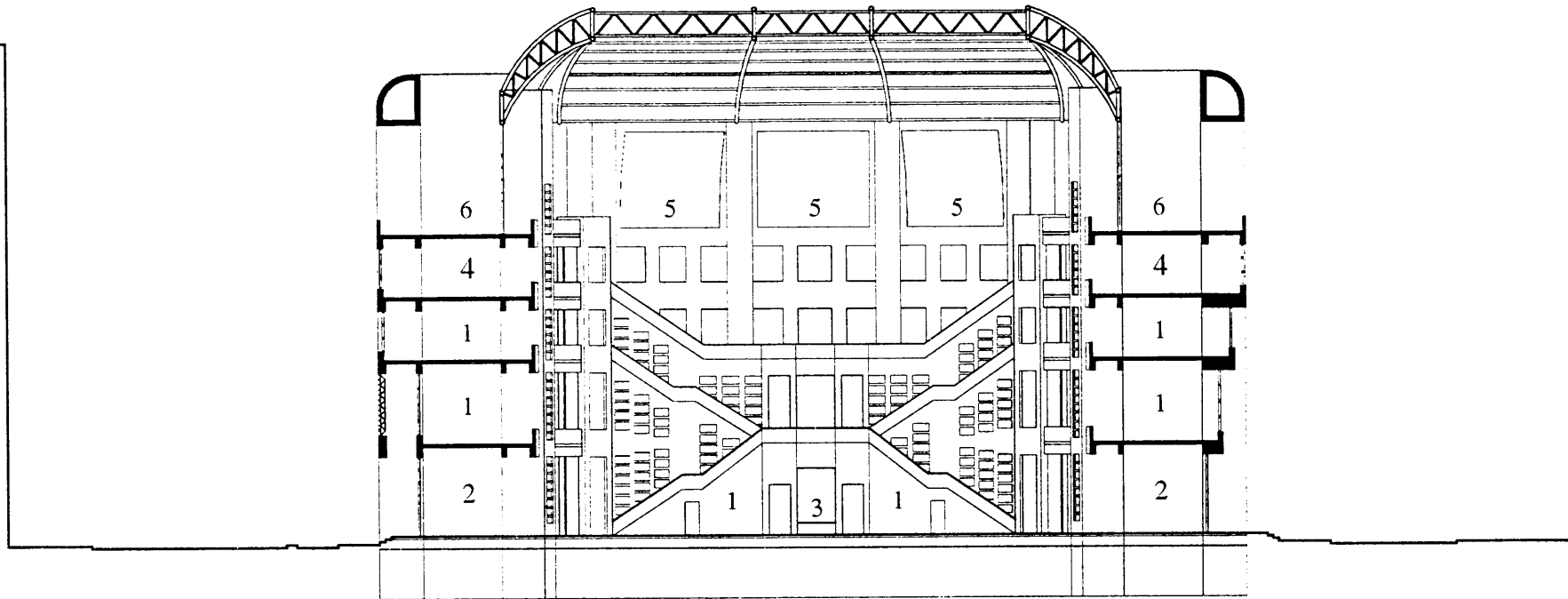
BUILDING SECTION



The wall which holds the screens of the public cinemas defines the gathering space on all floors of the building. All elements of the building exist in direct relation to this main space. The trusses which carry the cinema roof structure are anchored in the screen wall and in the piers at the ends of the building. The trusses which span the gathering space are also anchored in the screen wall. Second floor mezzanine area is made possible by the sloping cinema floors above. Structurally, the roof is hung from the bottom chord of the large trusses and the floor loads are carried by a radial grid of columns.



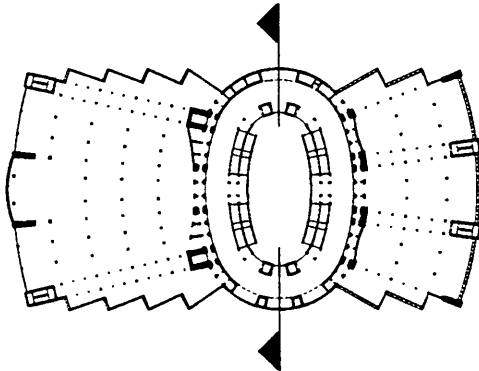
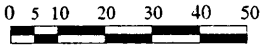




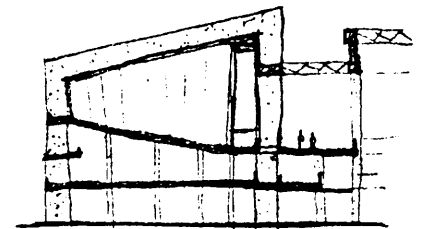
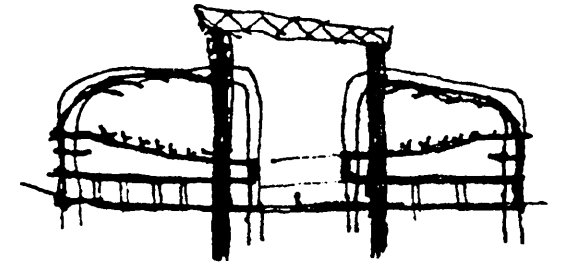
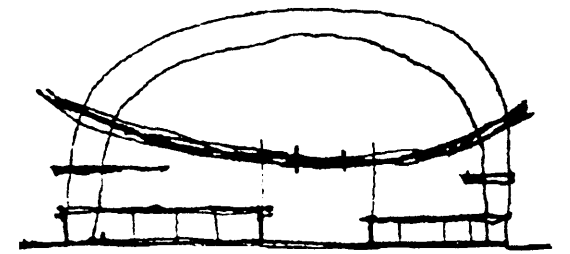
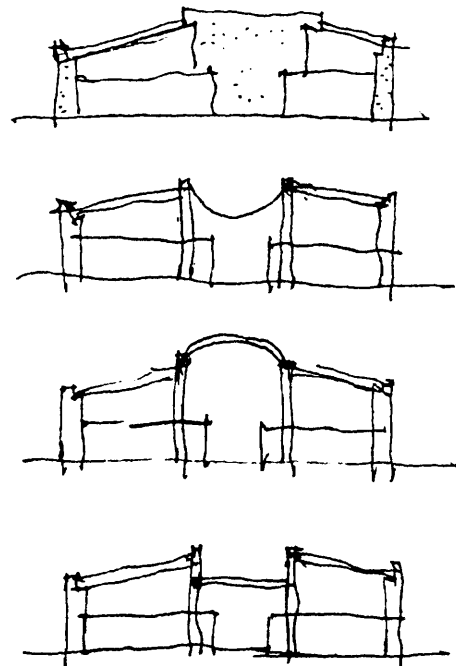
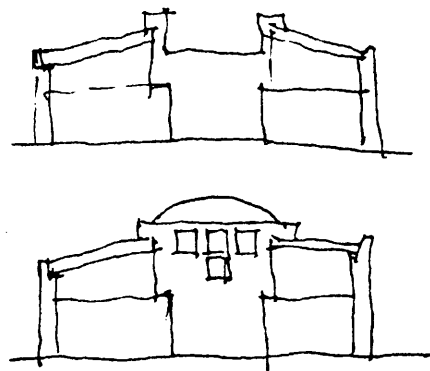
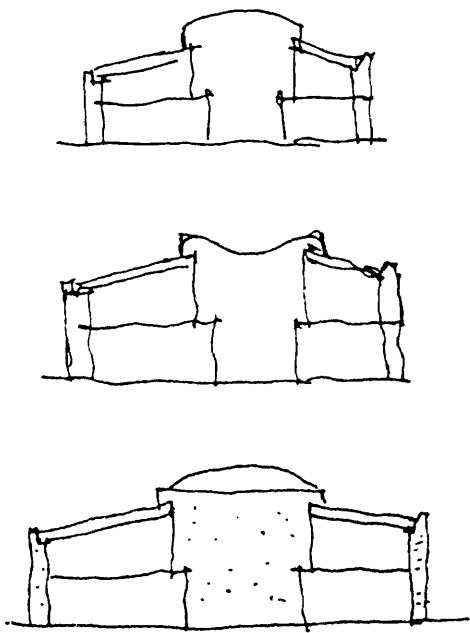
**LEGEND**

- |             |           |
|-------------|-----------|
| 1 Gathering | 5 Screen  |
| 2 Entry     | 6 Terrace |
| 3 Tickets   |           |
| 4 Stair     |           |

**SECTION AT GATHERING SPACE**

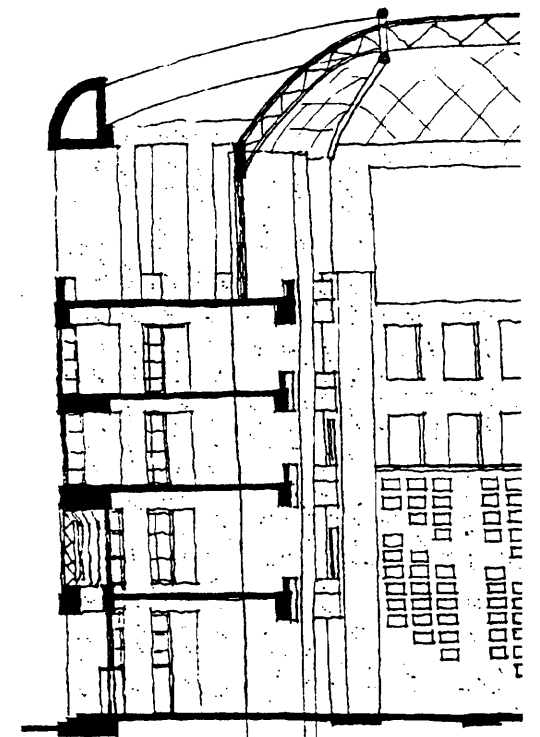
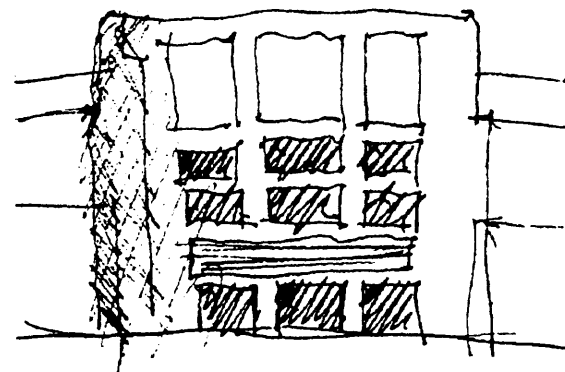
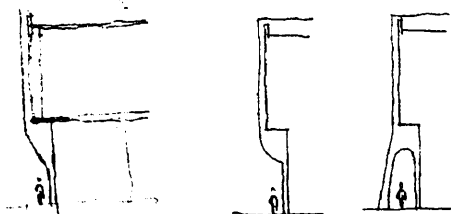
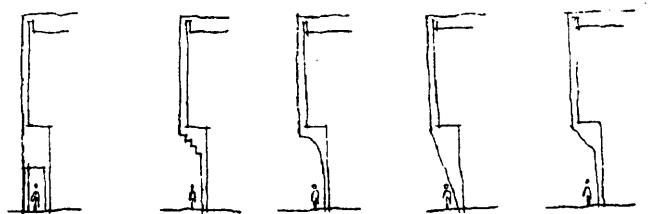
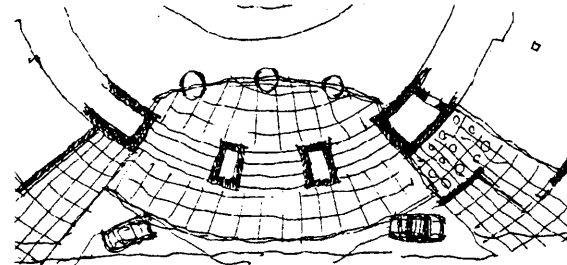
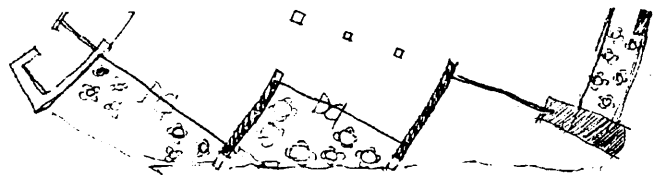


This section describes the gathering space of the Film Center. Tickets to films are obtained at the center of the space on the ground floor. An open stair rises to the second floor then turns to rise to the third floor inside a wall penetrated by a series of framed openings. An open stair then rises from the third floor to the third floor mezzanine. Images are projected onto screens tilted down and hung on the elliptical wall which holds the screens of the cinemas on the opposite side. A space frame above encloses the gathering space.



EXTERIORS

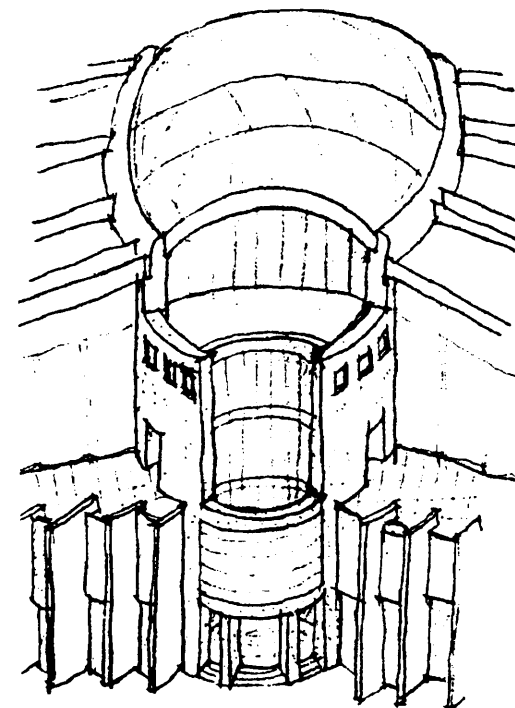
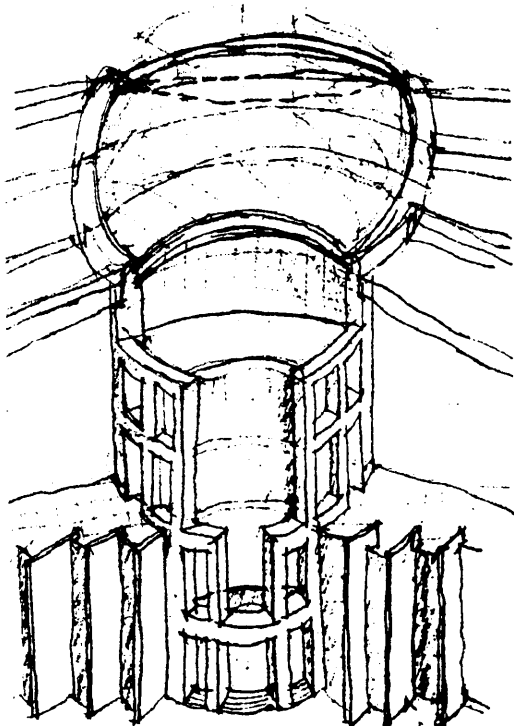
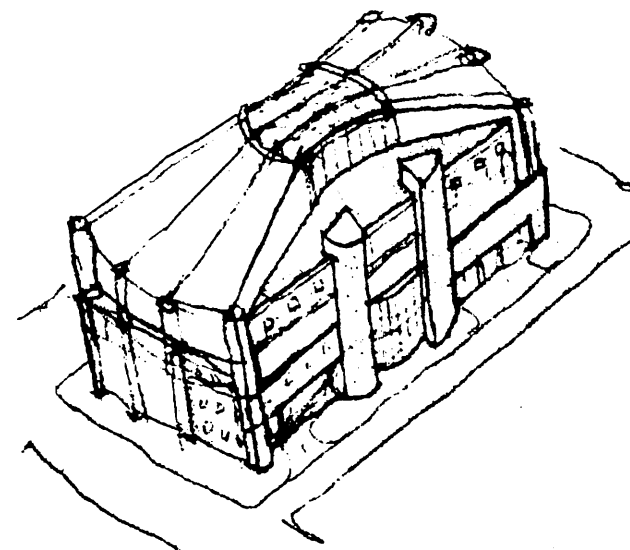
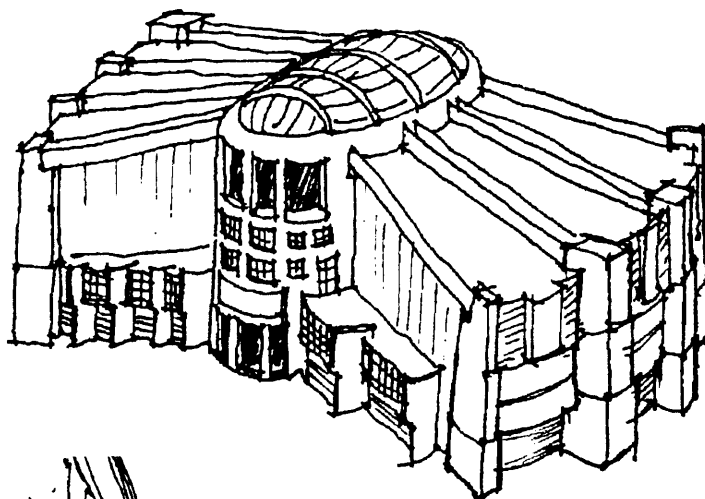
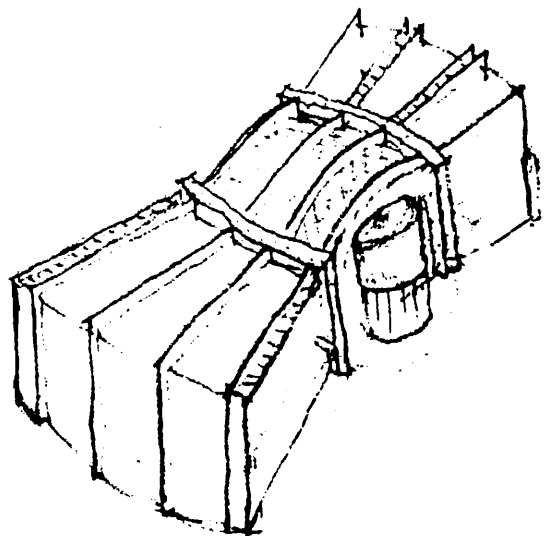
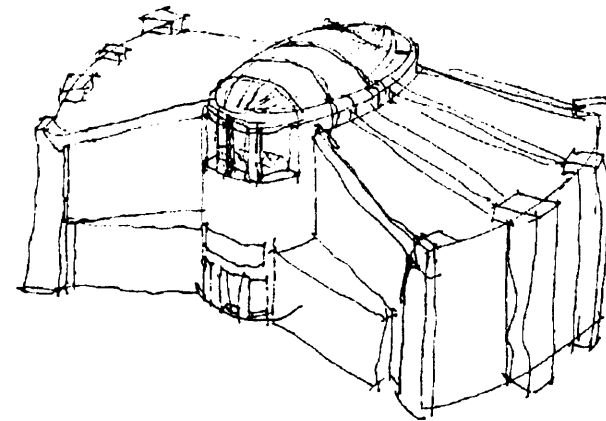
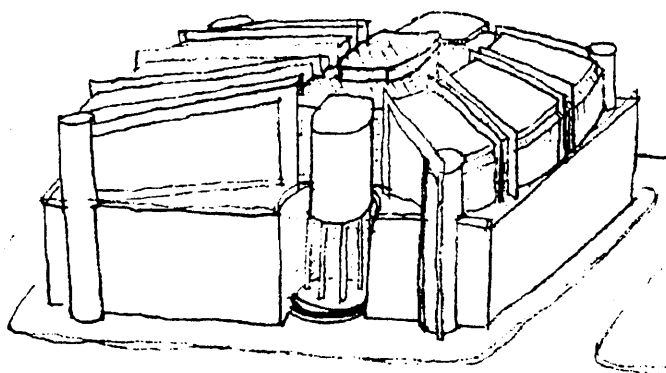
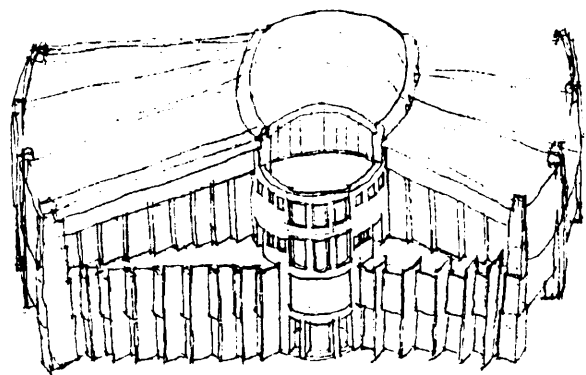
SECTIONS



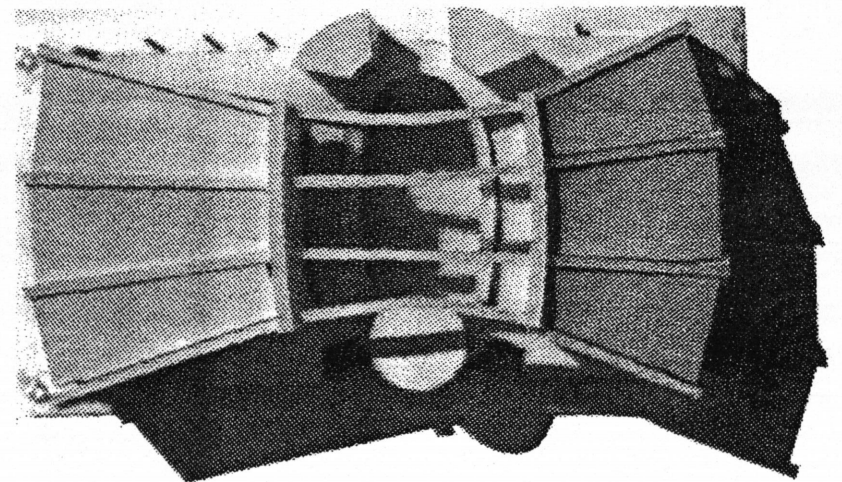
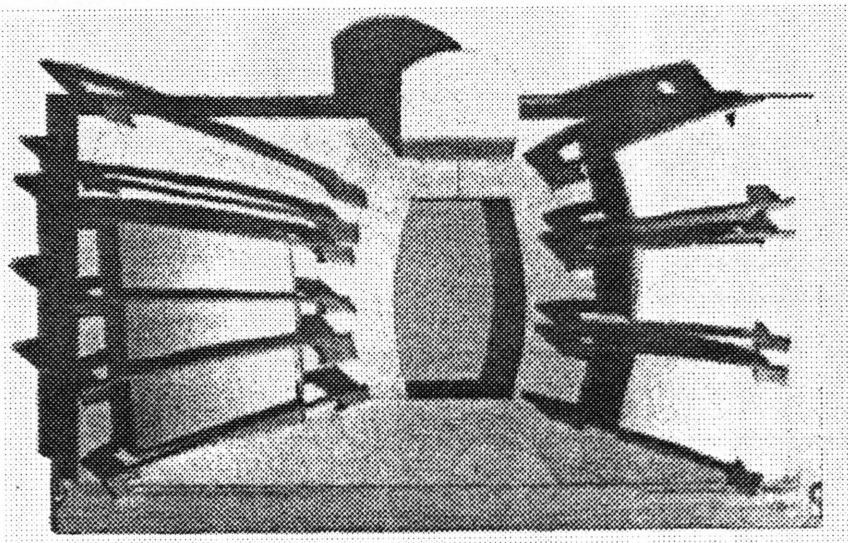
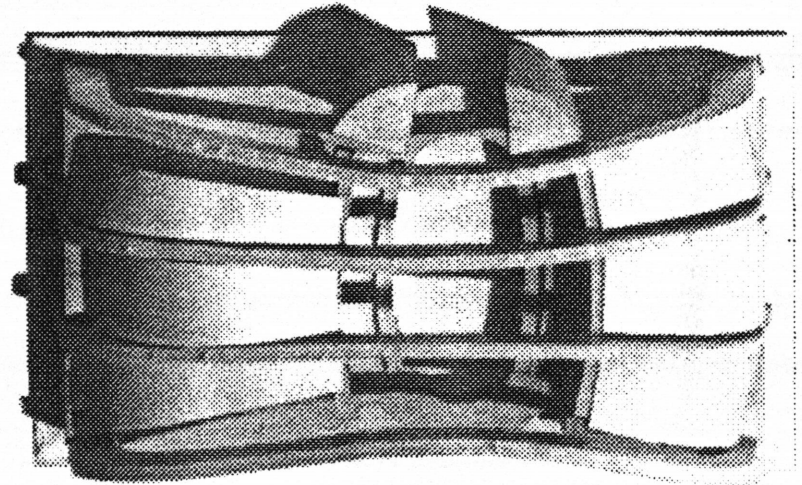
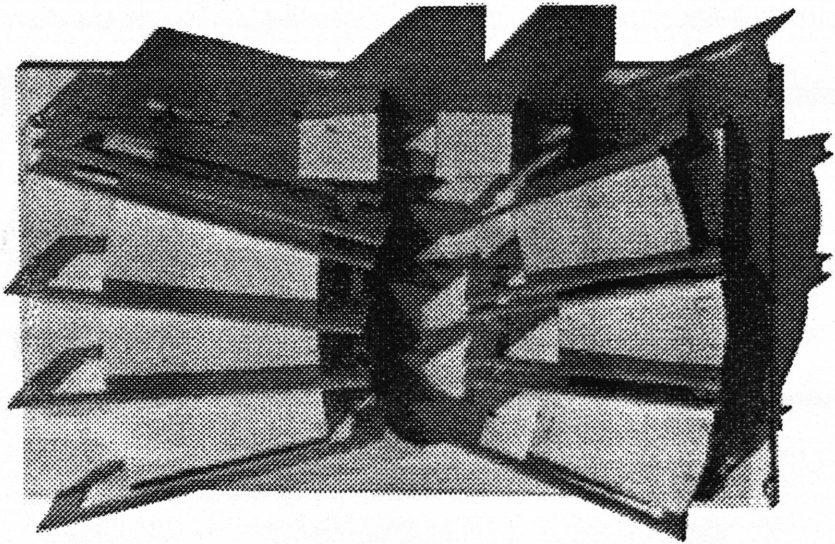
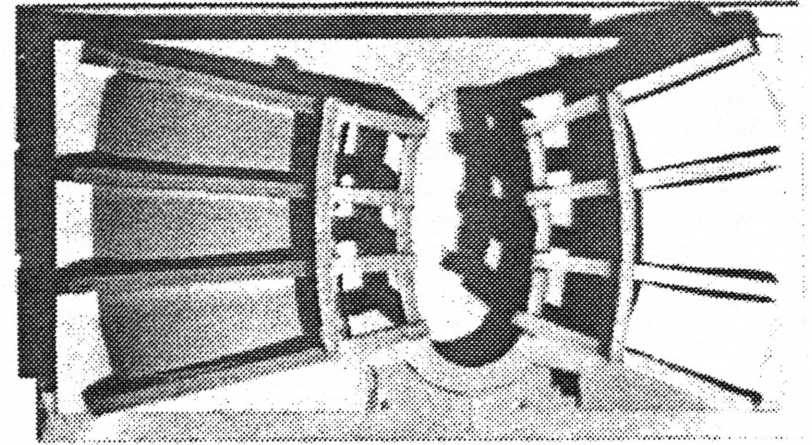
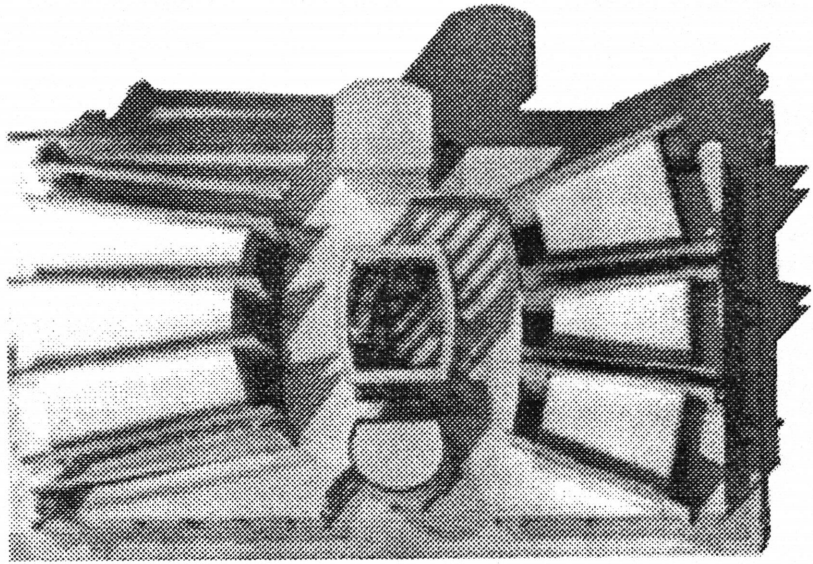
FIN WALLS

BUILDING STUDIES

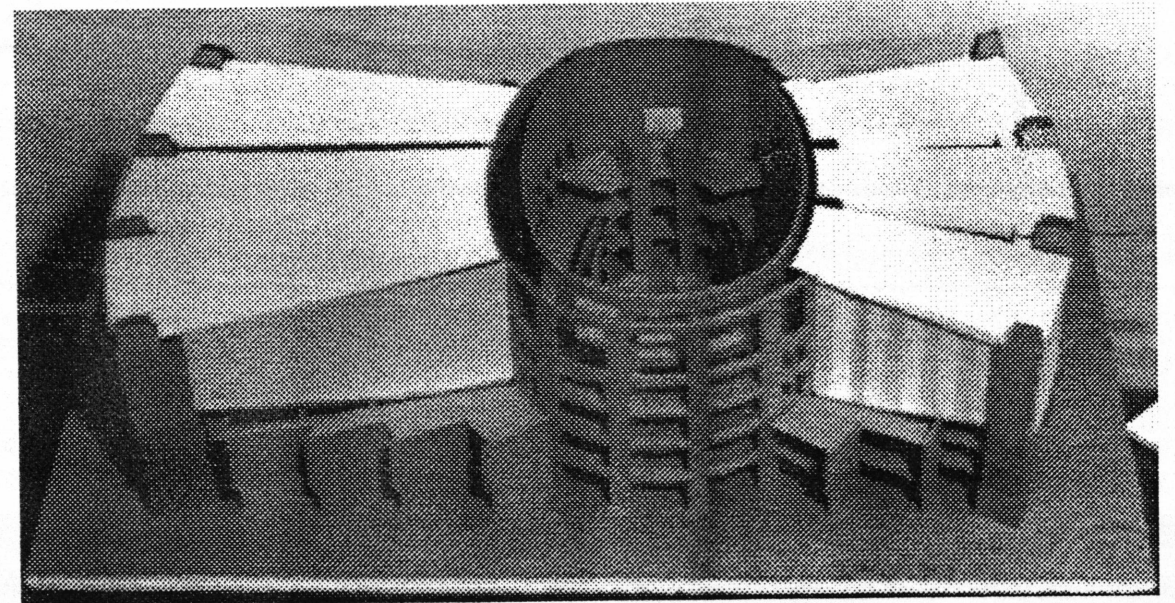
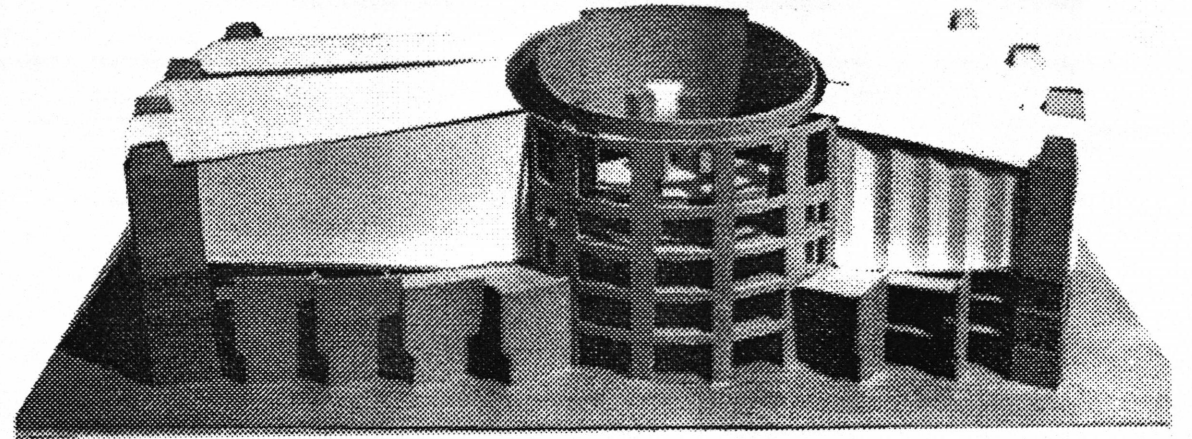
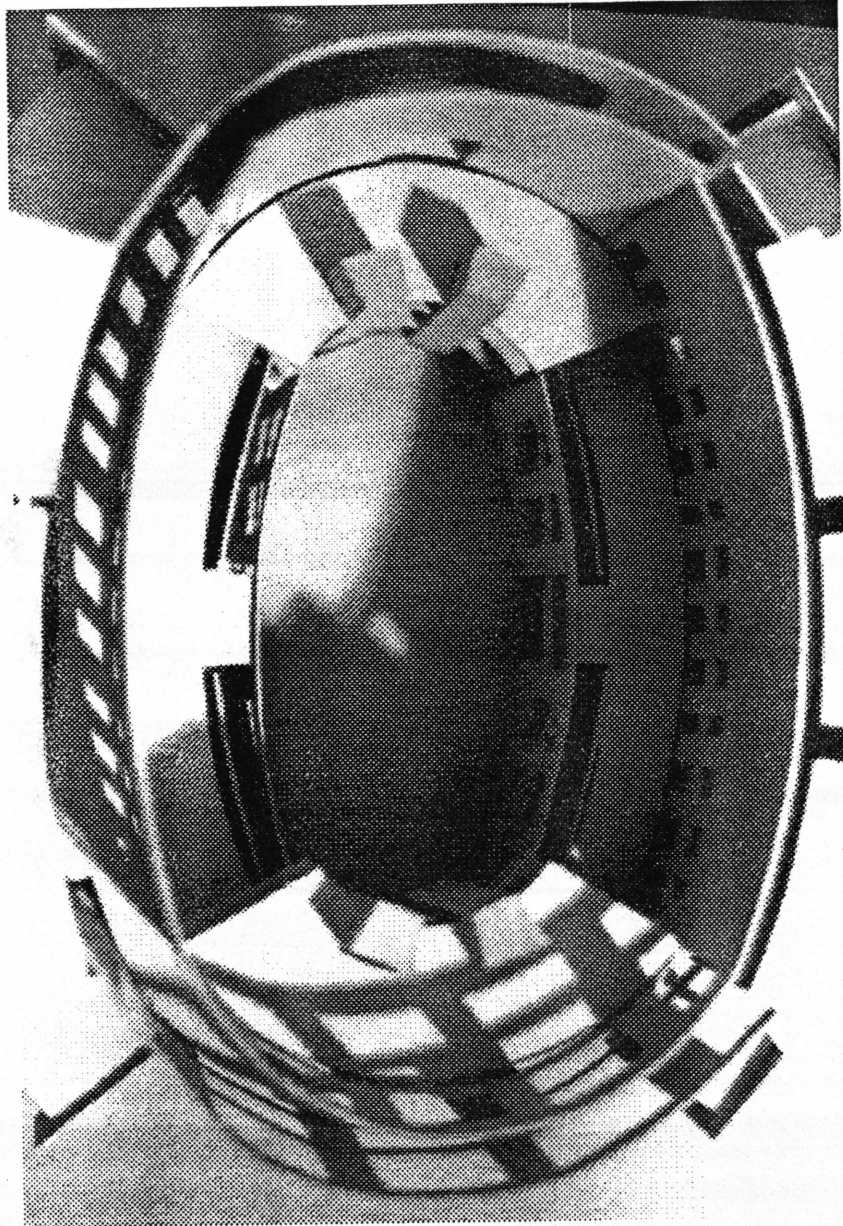
ENTRY SECTION



EXTERIOR STUDIES



MODEL STUDIES



FINAL MODEL

## PRODUCTION INFORMATION

The two-dimensional hardline drawings of this thesis were produced in ARCHITRION CADD software, version 5.5, on a Macintosh IIfx. The written portions were formatted in Aldus Pagemaker, version 4.2. Hand-drawn sketches in ink and pencil, color photographs of the site, and black and white photographs of models were scanned in using a Mitsubishi hand scanner and Pagebrush software. The scanned images were saved as TIFF files and then imported into Pagemaker to be formatted with the text. The documents were printed on a Tektronics Phaser III color laser printer. The pages with CADD drawings were printed twice, once for the CADD drawing and once for the Pagemaker information.

I would like to thank Lucarelli, Montes & Wells Architects for the use of their equipment and software, and World Resources Company for the use of their printer. Also thanks go to \_\_\_\_\_ for her hardware expertise and special thanks go to \_\_\_\_\_ for her time and effort.

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the scanned document**

# WASHINGTON, D.C. CENTER FOR FILMMAKING

by

Richard J. Markus

Committee Chairman: Greg Hunt  
Master in Architecture

(ABSTRACT)

The Washington, D.C. Center for Filmmaking was designed to provide a primary location and singular identity for filmmaking in the nation's capitol. The design enriches the film-going experience by consolidating areas for the study, creation, and viewing of films into one building.

A central elliptical gathering space serves as the entry to the various uses of the building. Public cinemas, film production studios and a Film Institute exist independently within the building, but relate directly to each other and the Gathering Space.

Four public cinemas form sculptural entities on the top floor of the building. The central Gathering Space is formed by the concrete wall which supports the cinema screens and continues down through the second floor to the ground floor. The open viewing areas of the cinemas are created by hanging the roof from large trusses which span from the screen wall to large piers that define the ends of the building.

One floor down from the cinemas, the Film Institute and the Film Production Studios are located on opposite sides of the Gathering Space. The ground floor consists of the main building entry into the Gathering Space, ticket purchase area, service access and open commercial space reserved for restaurants and film-related shops. The columnar structure of the second floor and ground floor radiates out concentrically from the elliptical shape of the central Gathering Space.

Photographs of the site, sketches and models describing the design process, documentation of the final drawings and written comments are included in this thesis.