



AN URBAN PRISON REHABILITATION CENTER

by

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The making of a prison presents a unique architectural situation—a building or massing of buildings which must accommodate and enforce a prescribed routine, incorporating most of the facets of human existence, while aspiring to correct deviant behavior within a hostile population. The physical presence of a prison is abhorrent to most of those who live

and work within its proximity, although almost all would accede to the necessity of such facilities. The twentieth century trend has been to locate prisons in the countryside away from the urban areas that contribute heavily to their populations. These facilities function with varying degrees of success, but perhaps suffer most in rehabilitation of their urban charges; the rehabilitative process is stifled by isolating the prisoners from their families and the types of employment skills found in cities.

The urban prison rehabilitation center in downtown Washington D.C. will be a low security step between prison and freedom. The facility will aspire to reintegrate the prisoner into society by exposing him to marketable skills, allowing accessibility to family, and endowing him with greater responsibility for his actions.

Architecturally, the project will seek to establish an understandable order and separation of functions by drawing from the context ideas of scale, form, and rhythm while maintaining the homogeneity of a single organism. This harmonizing of architecture and idea will hopefully initiate in its inhabitants a realization of the potentials of their minds and production.

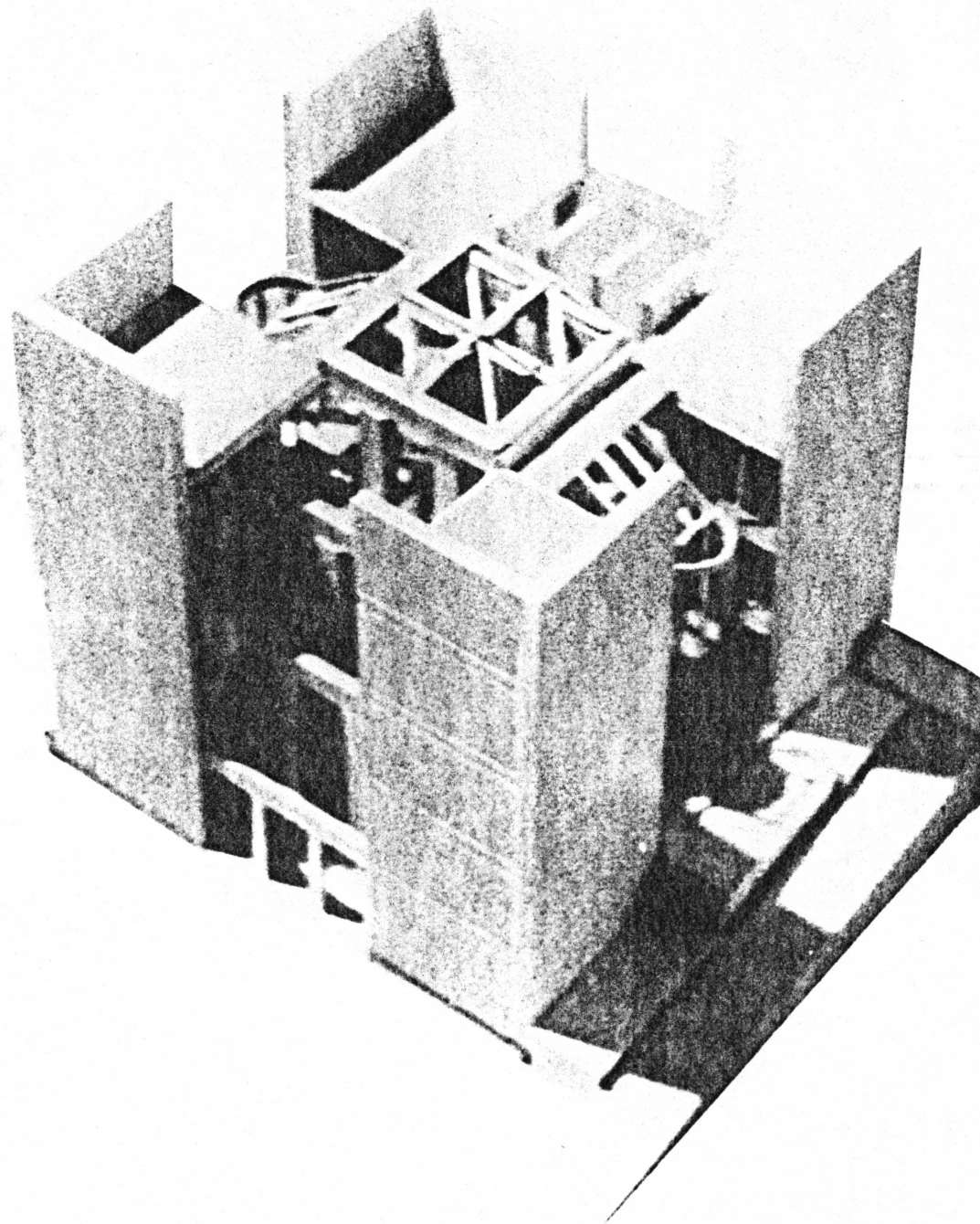
ABSTRACT

To my parents for all of their affection and support, and to the friends who encouraged me to continue.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Judiciary Square is located in a netherworld of Washington, D.C.—where federal fades into District government, and single row houses stand steadfastly in isolating seas of asphalt. The buildings composing the boundaries of the square are placed symmetrically along the north-south axis, and affect the appearance of order amidst the chaos of a devastated land-

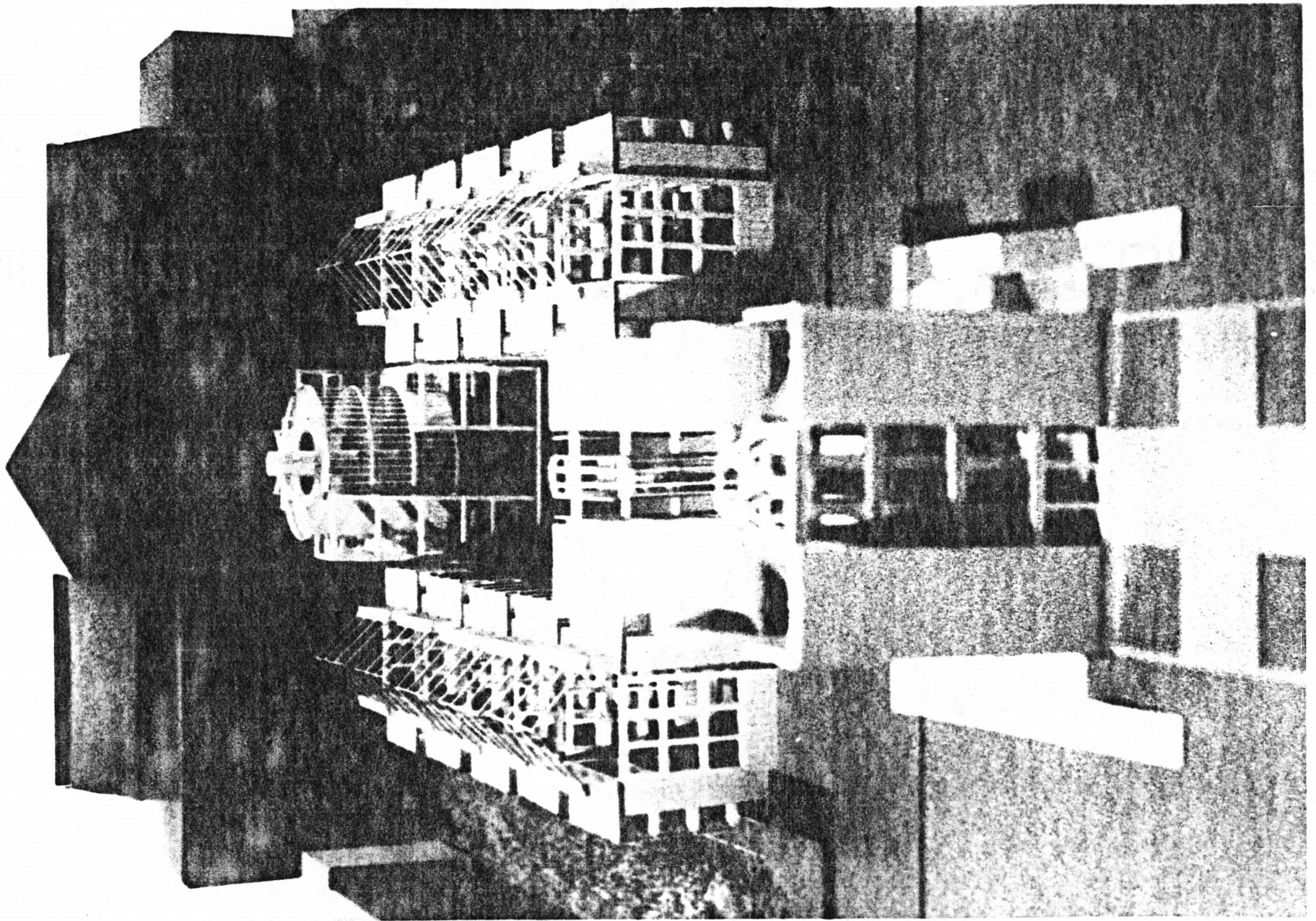
scape. The square is bound on the east, west, and south by five courthouses, sheathed in ubiquitous stone, and of an unassuming style that perfectly expresses the faceless, unmoving bureaucracy that leers behind it. The brick Pension building, once disaffectionately known as “Meig’s big red barn,” rises on the north side, bears a striking resemblance to an elongated Palazzo Farnese surmounted by a large pediment, and hides within it one of the truly grand interior spaces of the city. The land enclosed by these six buildings is an area of nearly four and one half acres, crossed by two small streets—charitably, the resulting space could be deemed one of monumental emptiness.

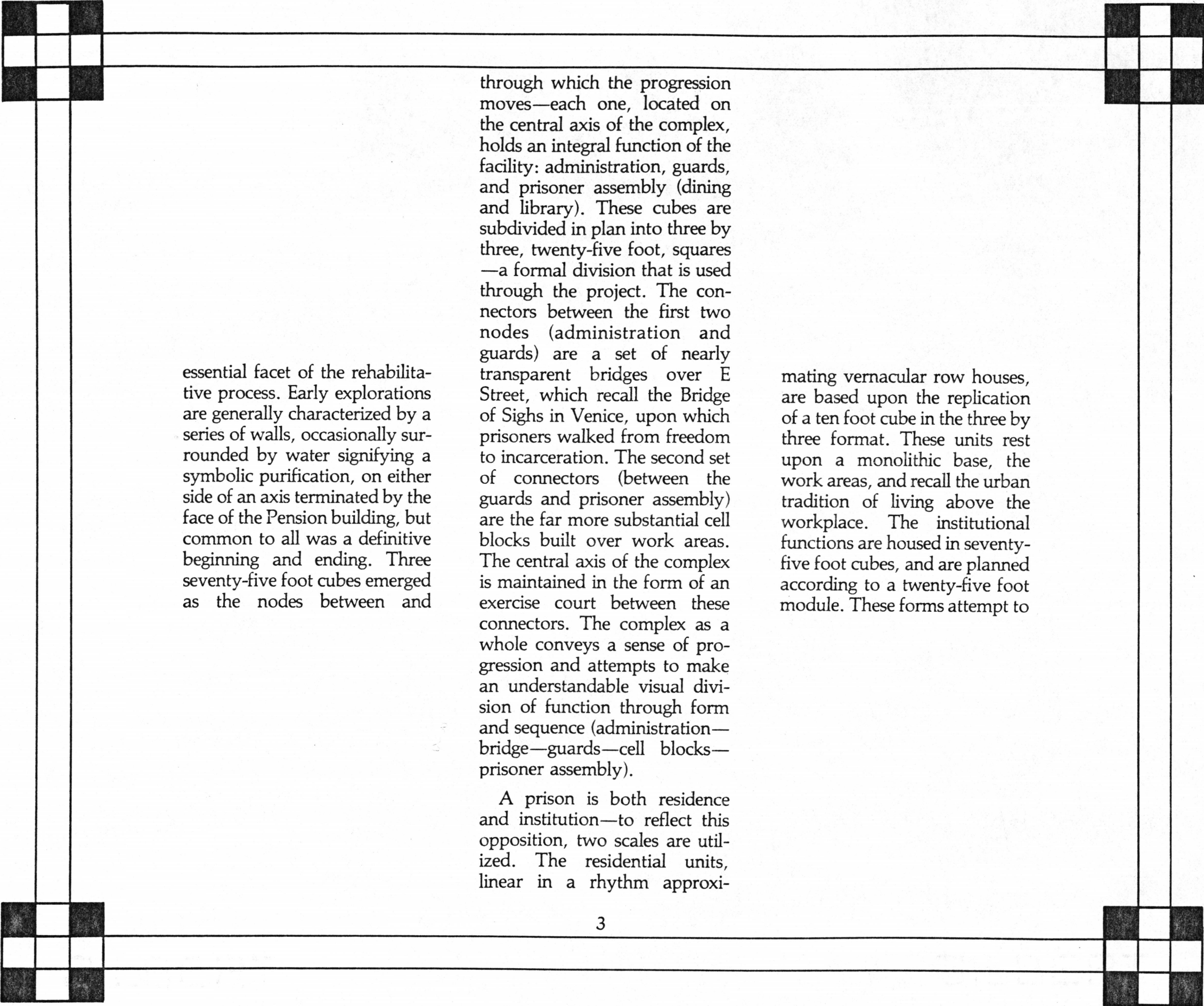
Judiciary Square as a site was chosen for a number of reasons. First, the act of locating a prison complex amidst the halls of justice was a symbolic one—a reuniting of an end of the judicial system with its means. Second, the square presented a relatively constricted urban space in highly ordered surroundings. Third, the proximity of the newly prominent Pension Building (e.g. the National Building Museum) allowed for the opportunity to design in the face of a landmark. Finally,

Judiciary Square seemed an overblown and sterile plot of land; it was hoped that all aspects of the site would be enhanced both by the new buildings and the resulting variety of urban spaces.

The most prominent part of the design is progression. Inherent in this concept are the ideas of time, movement, and direction; each representing an

INTRODUCTION



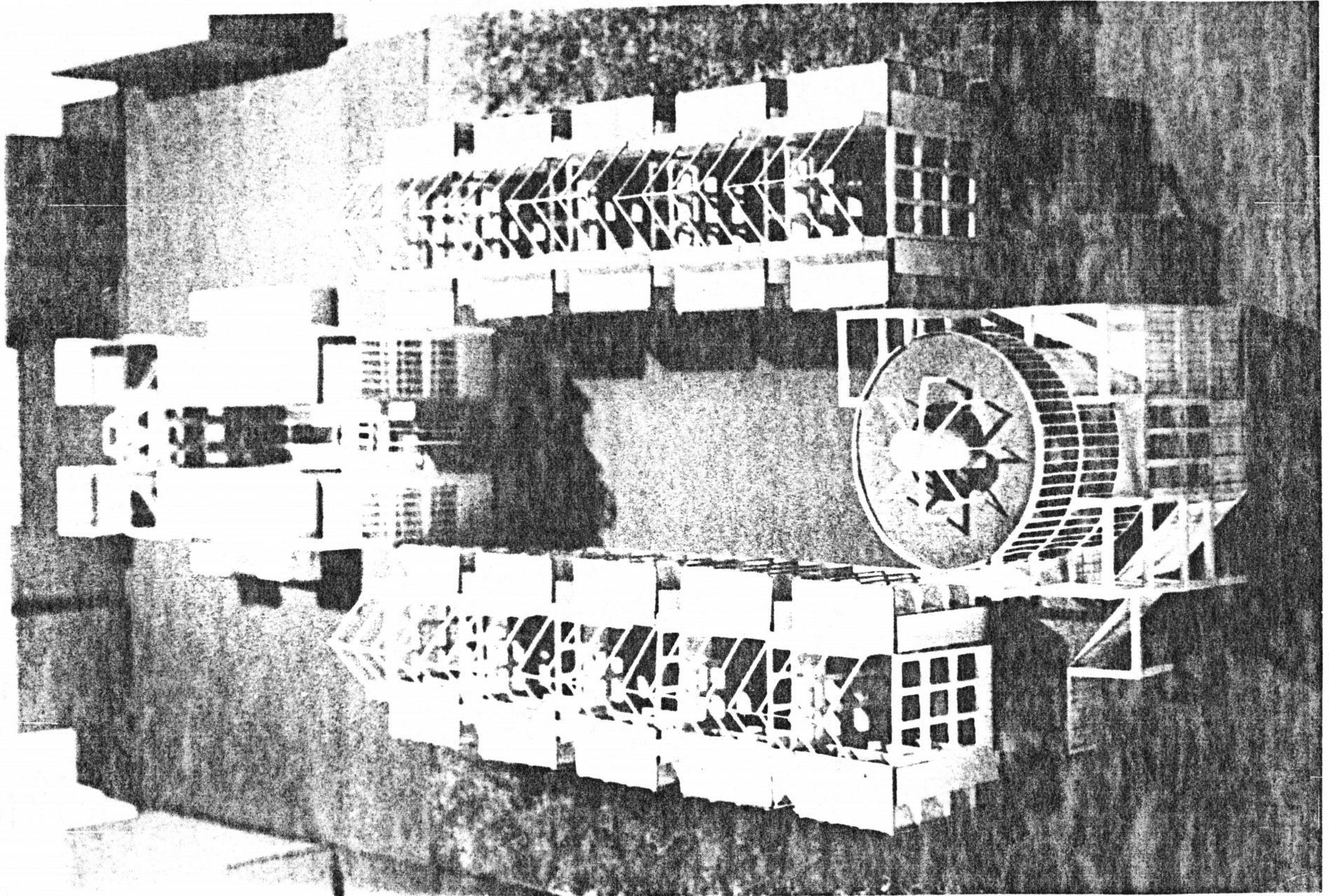


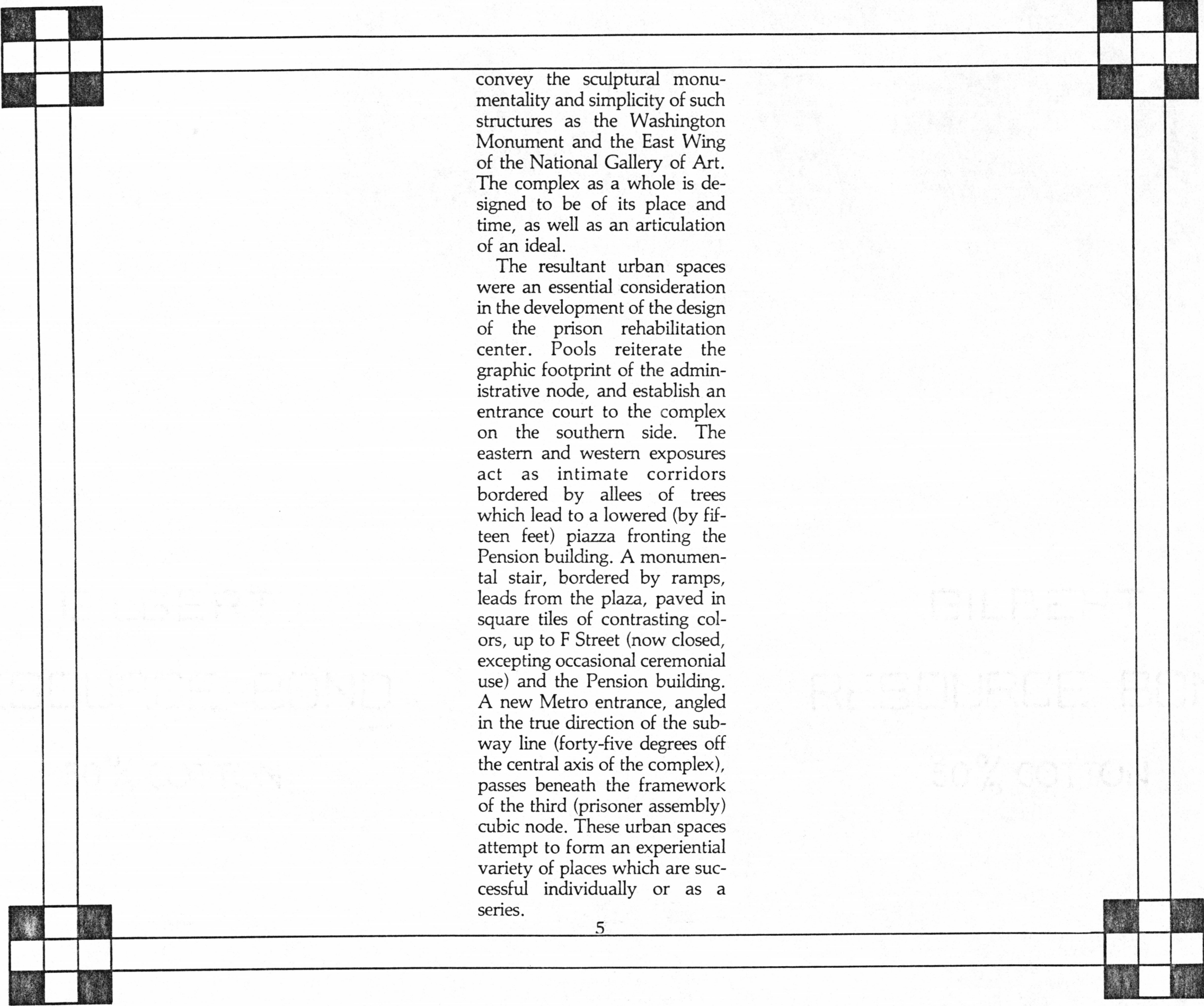
essential facet of the rehabilitative process. Early explorations are generally characterized by a series of walls, occasionally surrounded by water signifying a symbolic purification, on either side of an axis terminated by the face of the Pension building, but common to all was a definitive beginning and ending. Three seventy-five foot cubes emerged as the nodes between and

through which the progression moves—each one, located on the central axis of the complex, holds an integral function of the facility: administration, guards, and prisoner assembly (dining and library). These cubes are subdivided in plan into three by three, twenty-five foot, squares—a formal division that is used through the project. The connectors between the first two nodes (administration and guards) are a set of nearly transparent bridges over E Street, which recall the Bridge of Sighs in Venice, upon which prisoners walked from freedom to incarceration. The second set of connectors (between the guards and prisoner assembly) are the far more substantial cell blocks built over work areas. The central axis of the complex is maintained in the form of an exercise court between these connectors. The complex as a whole conveys a sense of progression and attempts to make an understandable visual division of function through form and sequence (administration—bridge—guards—cell blocks—prisoner assembly).

A prison is both residence and institution—to reflect this opposition, two scales are utilized. The residential units, linear in a rhythm approxi-

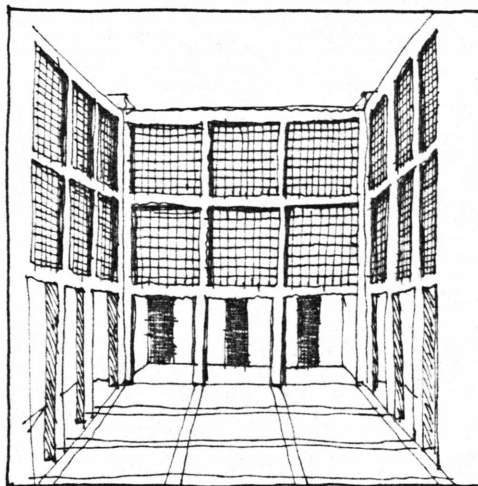
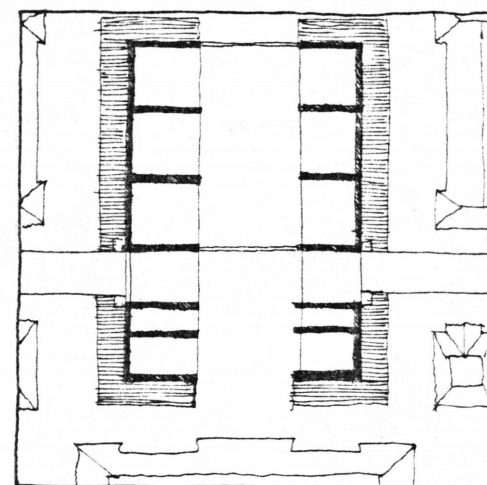
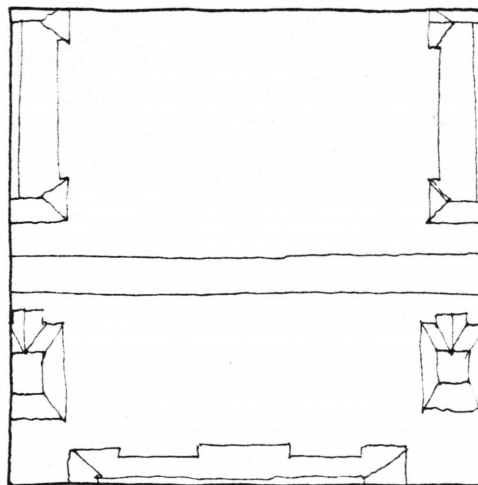
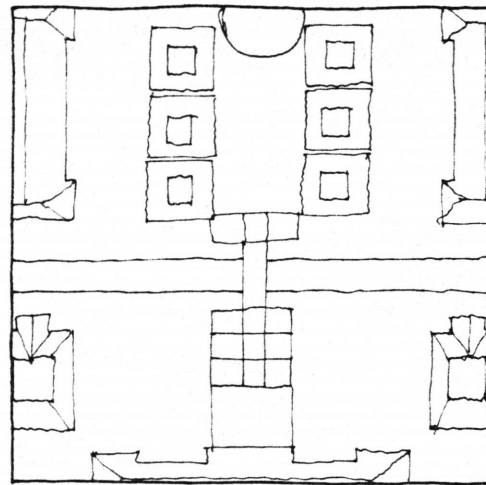
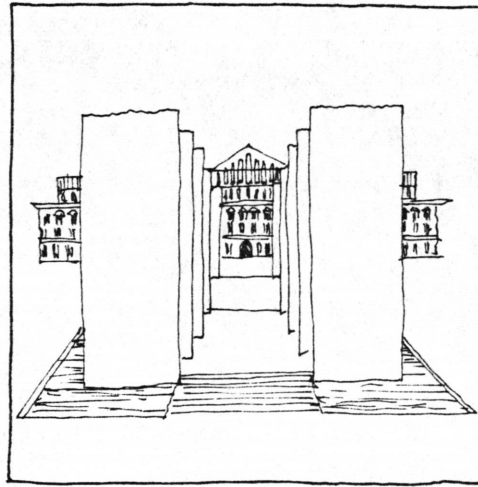
mating vernacular row houses, are based upon the replication of a ten foot cube in the three by three format. These units rest upon a monolithic base, the work areas, and recall the urban tradition of living above the workplace. The institutional functions are housed in seventy-five foot cubes, and are planned according to a twenty-five foot module. These forms attempt to



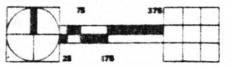


convey the sculptural monumentality and simplicity of such structures as the Washington Monument and the East Wing of the National Gallery of Art. The complex as a whole is designed to be of its place and time, as well as an articulation of an ideal.

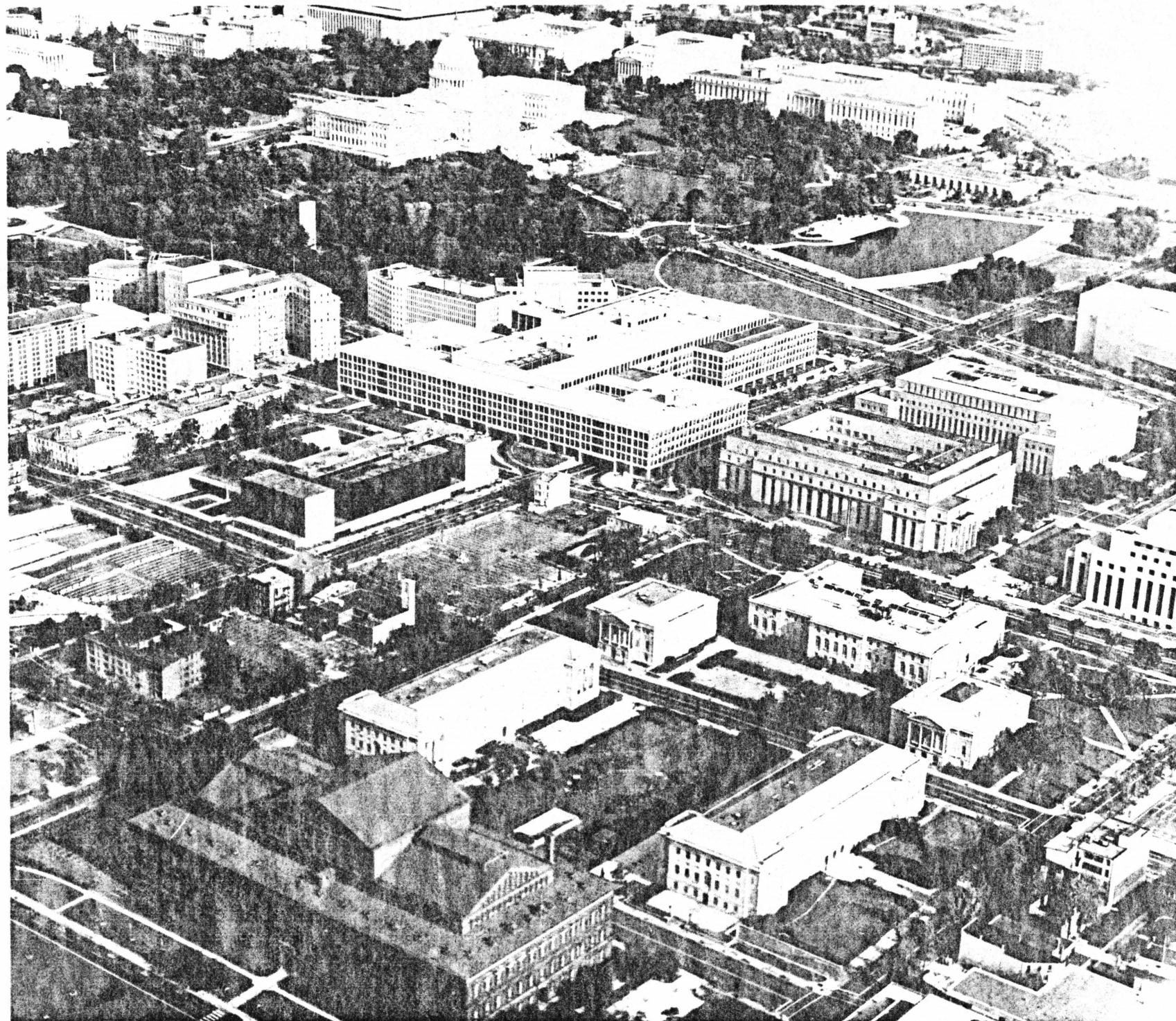
The resultant urban spaces were an essential consideration in the development of the design of the prison rehabilitation center. Pools reiterate the graphic footprint of the administrative node, and establish an entrance court to the complex on the southern side. The eastern and western exposures act as intimate corridors bordered by allees of trees which lead to a lowered (by fifteen feet) piazza fronting the Pension building. A monumental stair, bordered by ramps, leads from the plaza, paved in square tiles of contrasting colors, up to F Street (now closed, excepting occasional ceremonial use) and the Pension building. A new Metro entrance, angled in the true direction of the subway line (forty-five degrees off the central axis of the complex), passes beneath the framework of the third (prisoner assembly) cubic node. These urban spaces attempt to form an experiential variety of places which are successful individually or as a series.

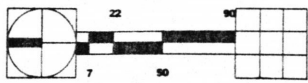
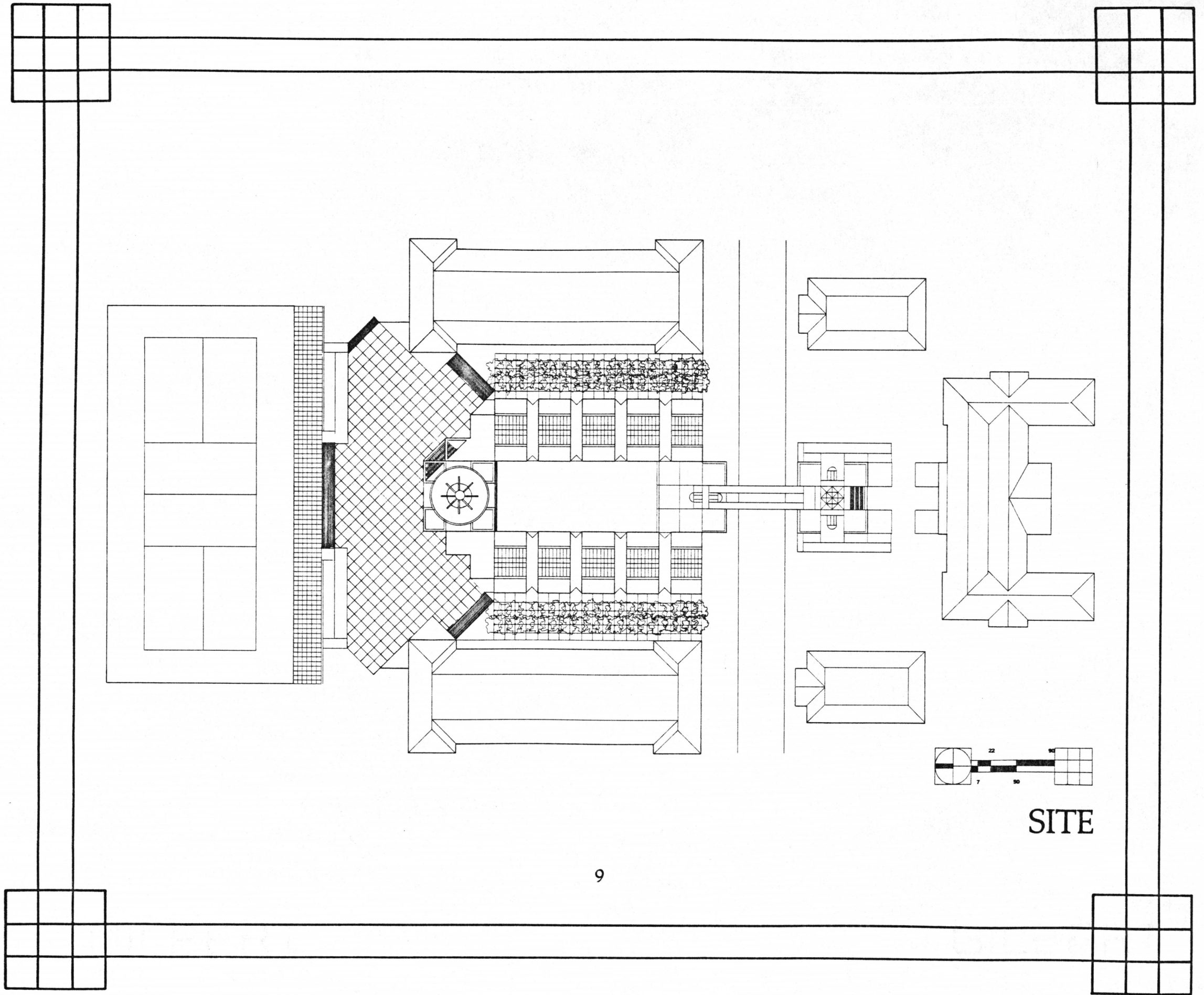


EXPLORATIONS

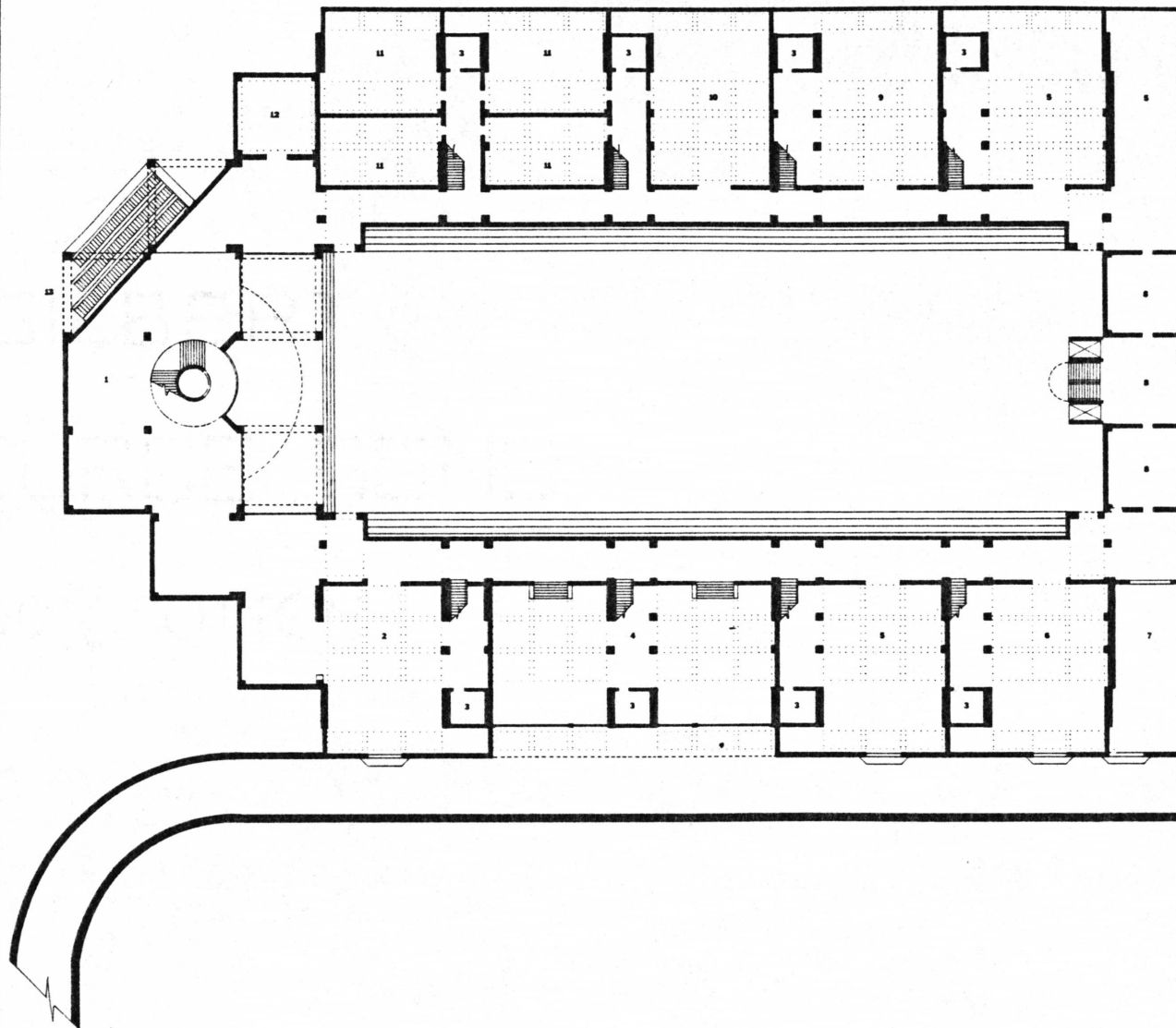


SITE PLAN URBAN SCALE



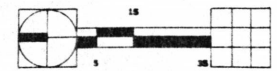


SITE

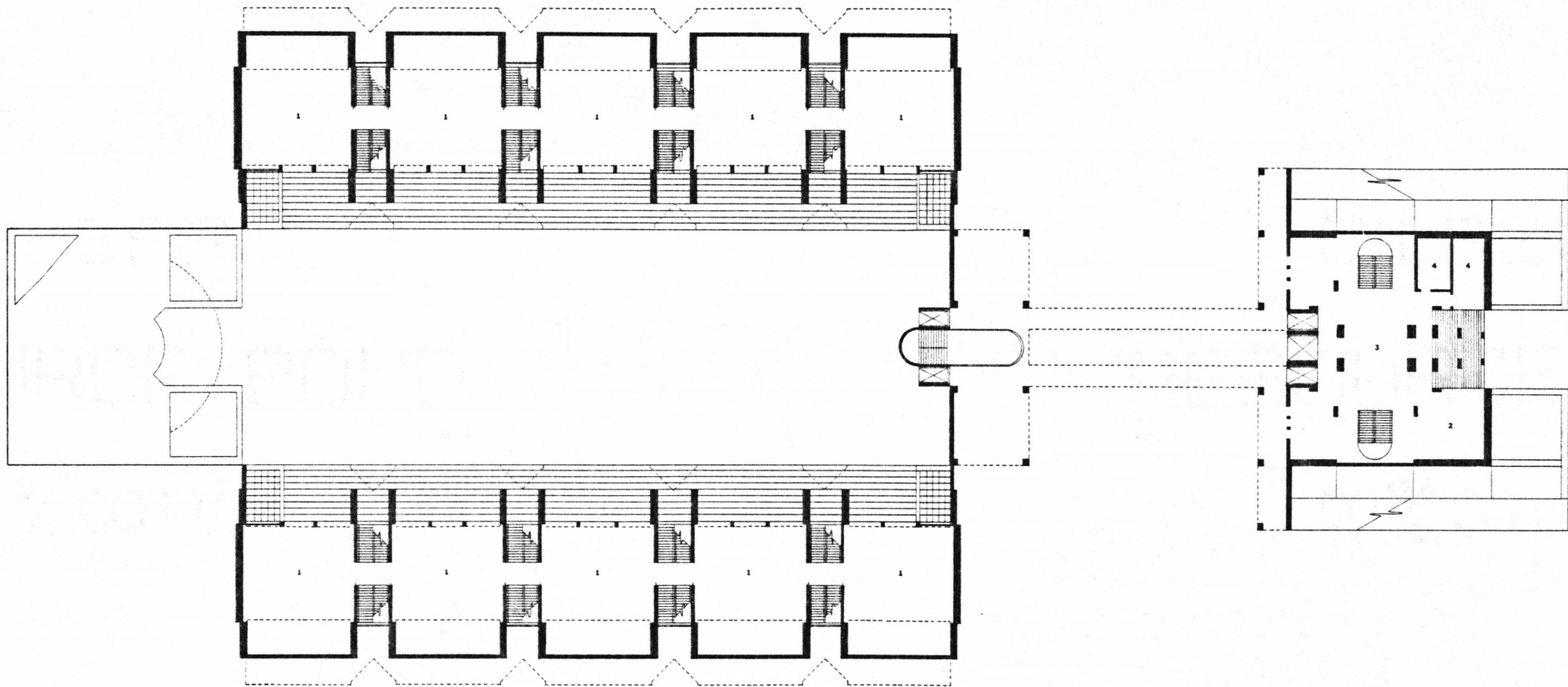


LEGEND

- 1. Dining
- 2. Kitchen
- 3. Bathroom
- 4. Garage
- 5. Mechanical Systems and Storage
- 6. Printing
- 7. Supply Store
- 8. Processing
- 9. Infirmary
- 10. Bank
- 11. Classroom
- 12. Chapel
- 13. Metro entrance



LOWER FLOOR PLAN

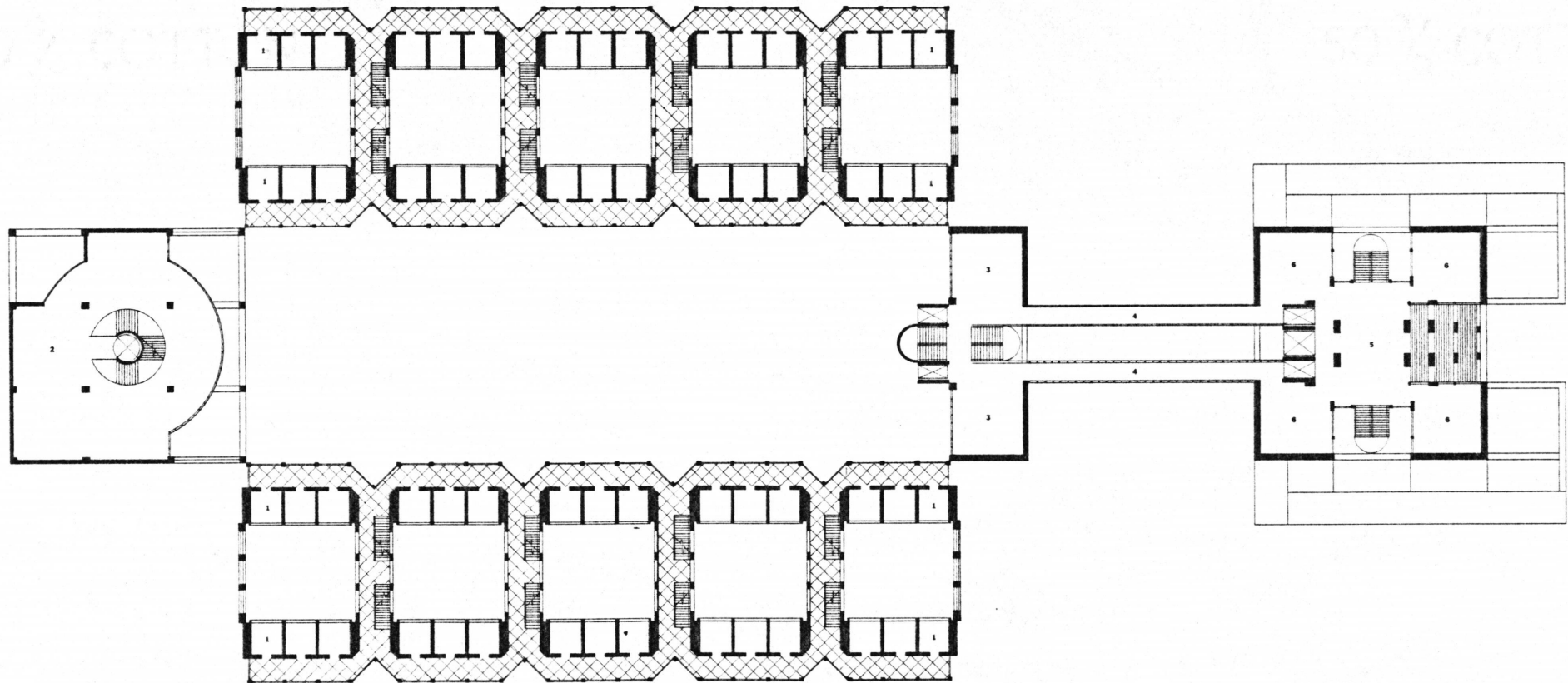


LEGEND

- 1. Recreation court
- 2. Mechanical
- 3. Vestibule
- 4. Bathroom

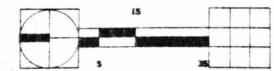


GROUND FLOOR PLAN

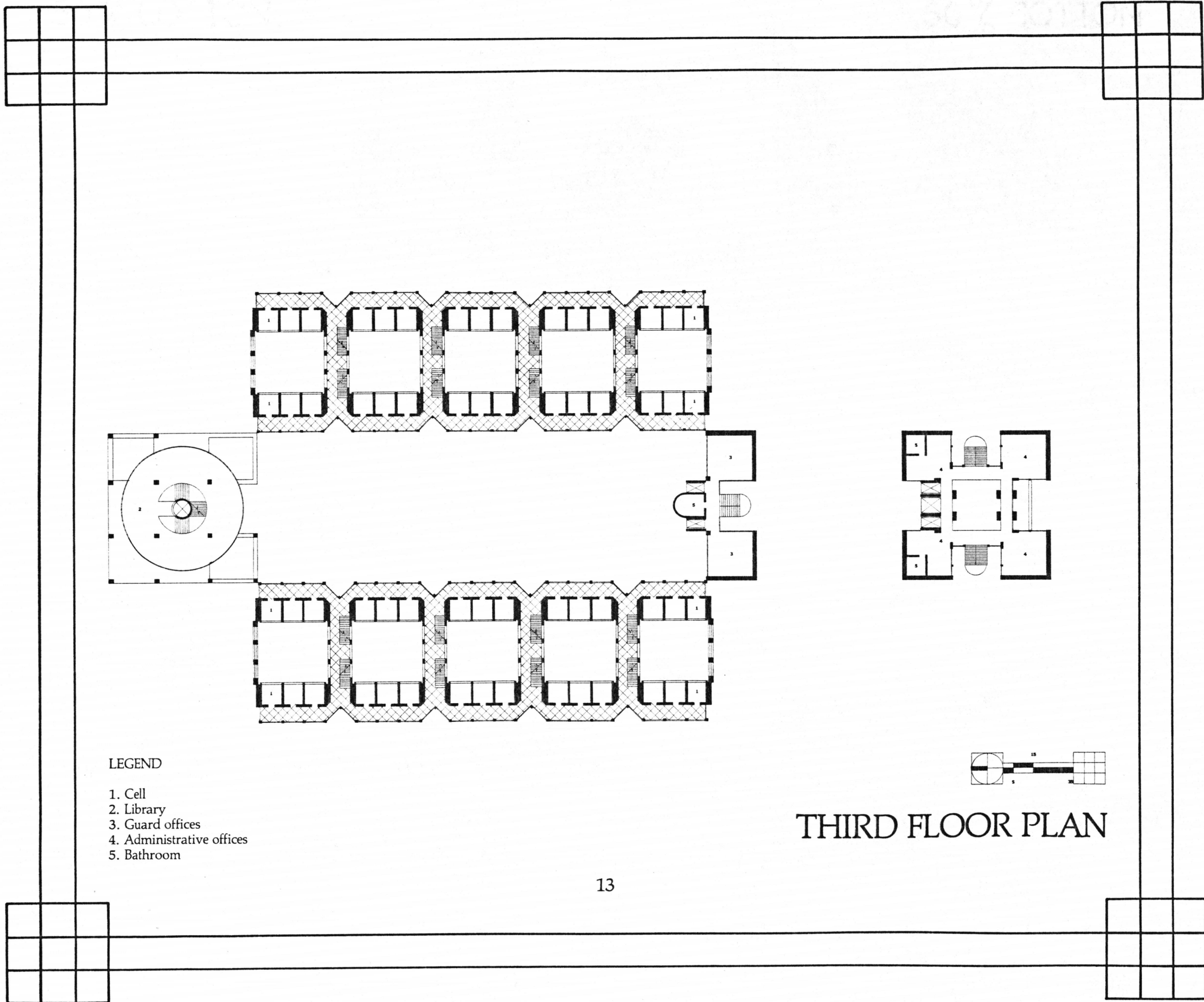


LEGEND

- 1. Cell
- 2. Library
- 3. Processing
- 4. Bridge to prison
- 5. Reception hall
- 6. Administrative offices



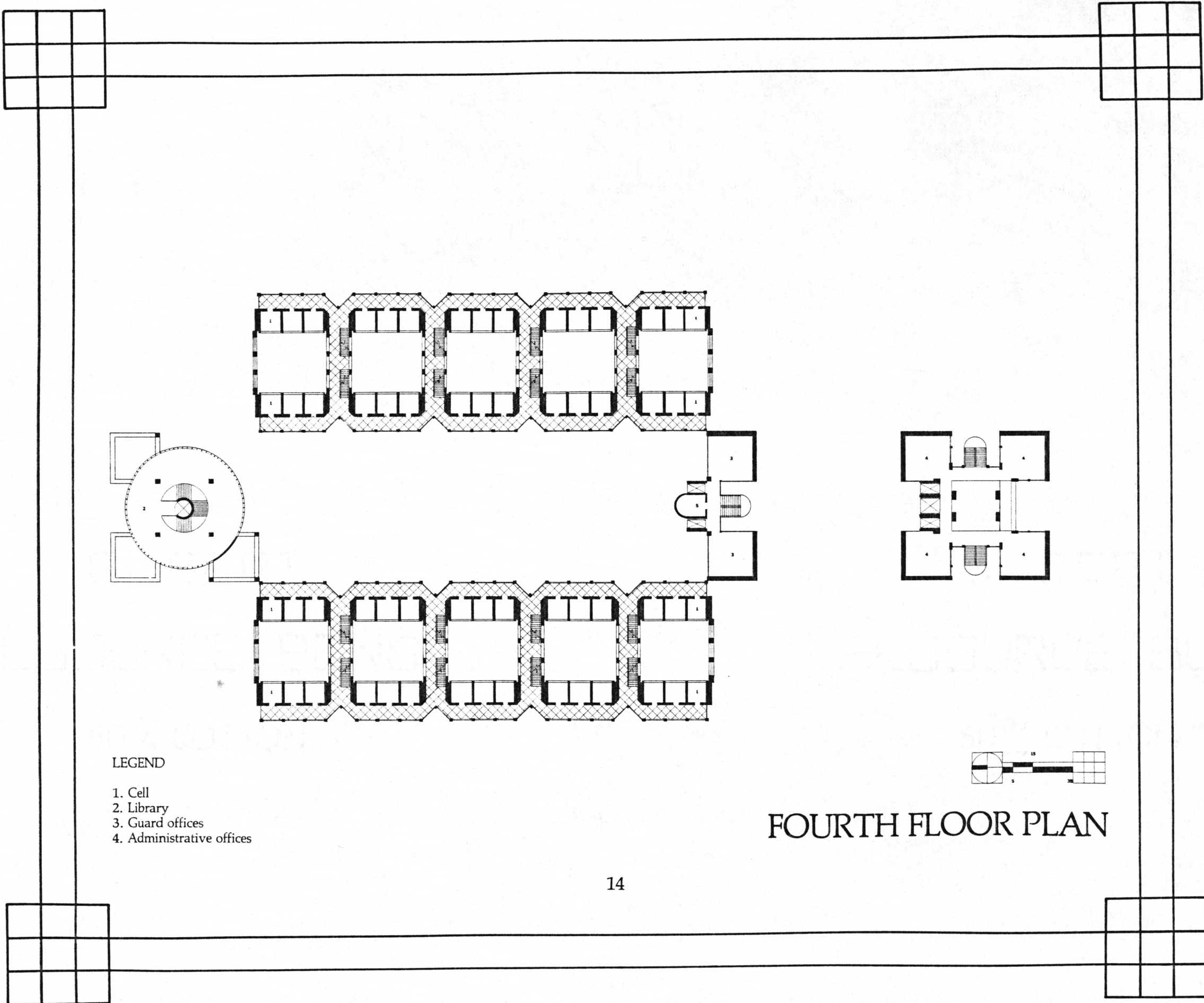
SECOND FLOOR PLAN



LEGEND

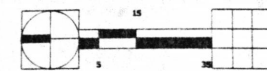
- 1. Cell
- 2. Library
- 3. Guard offices
- 4. Administrative offices
- 5. Bathroom

THIRD FLOOR PLAN

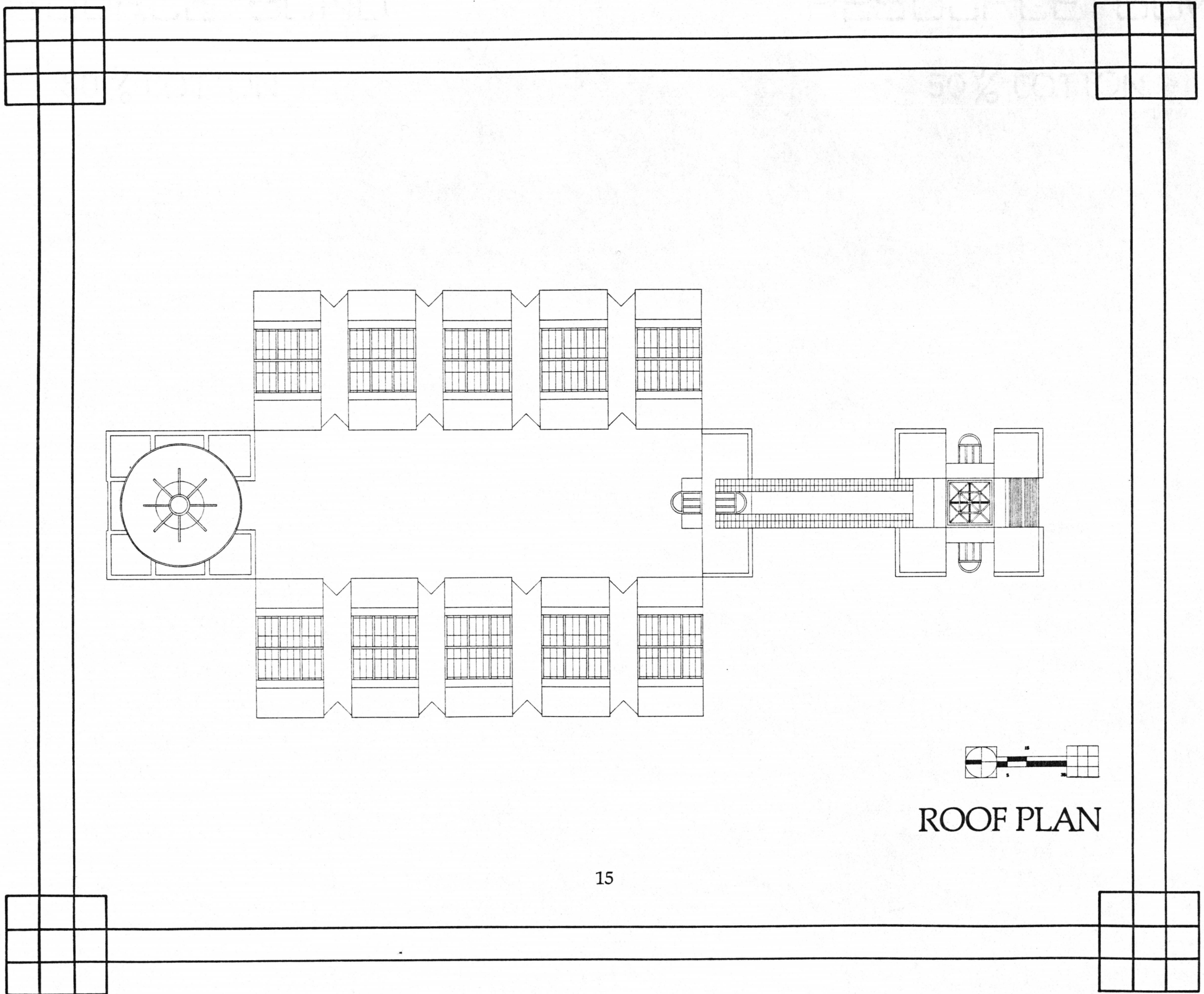


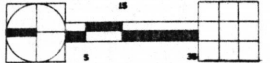
LEGEND

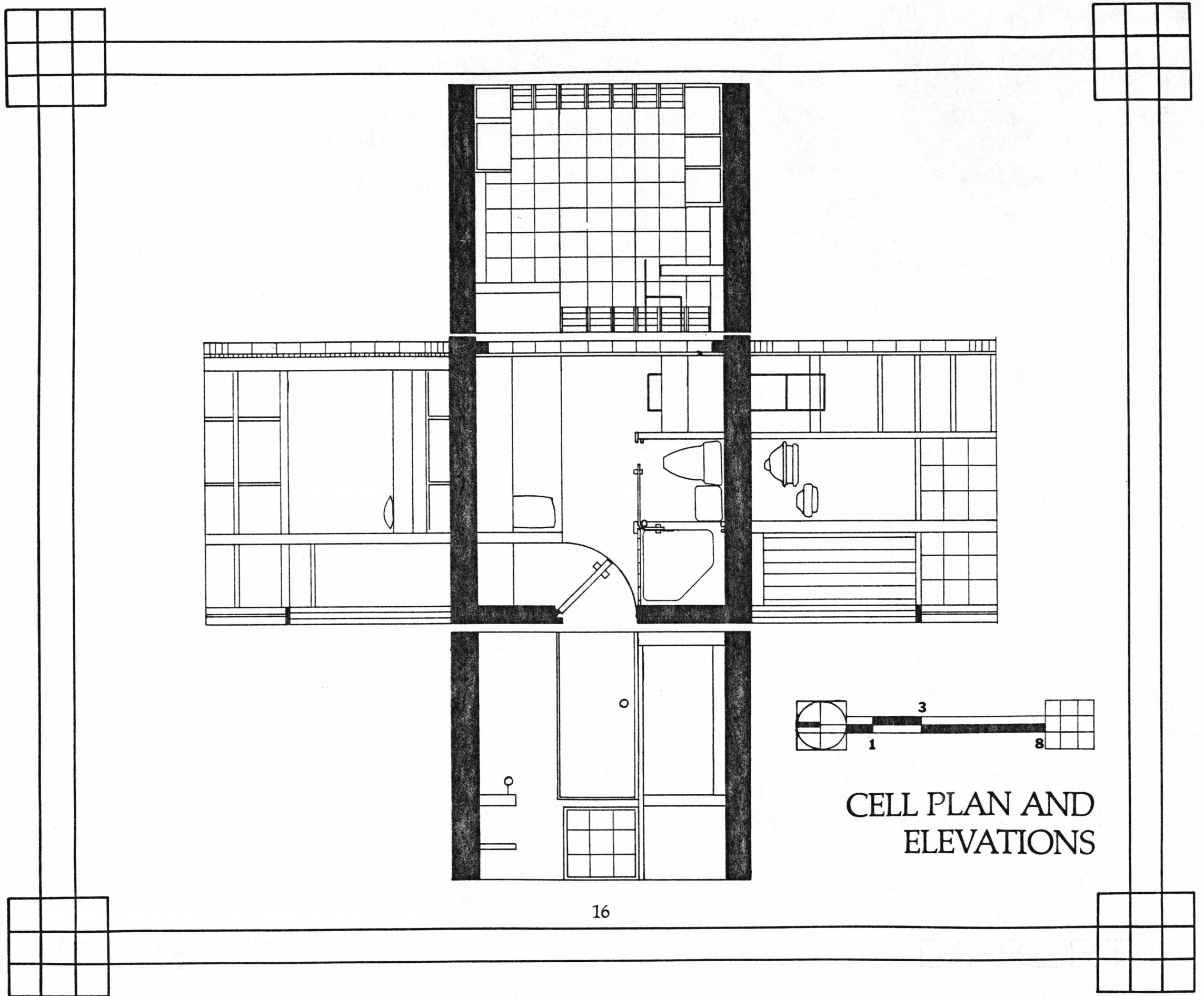
- 1. Cell
- 2. Library
- 3. Guard offices
- 4. Administrative offices



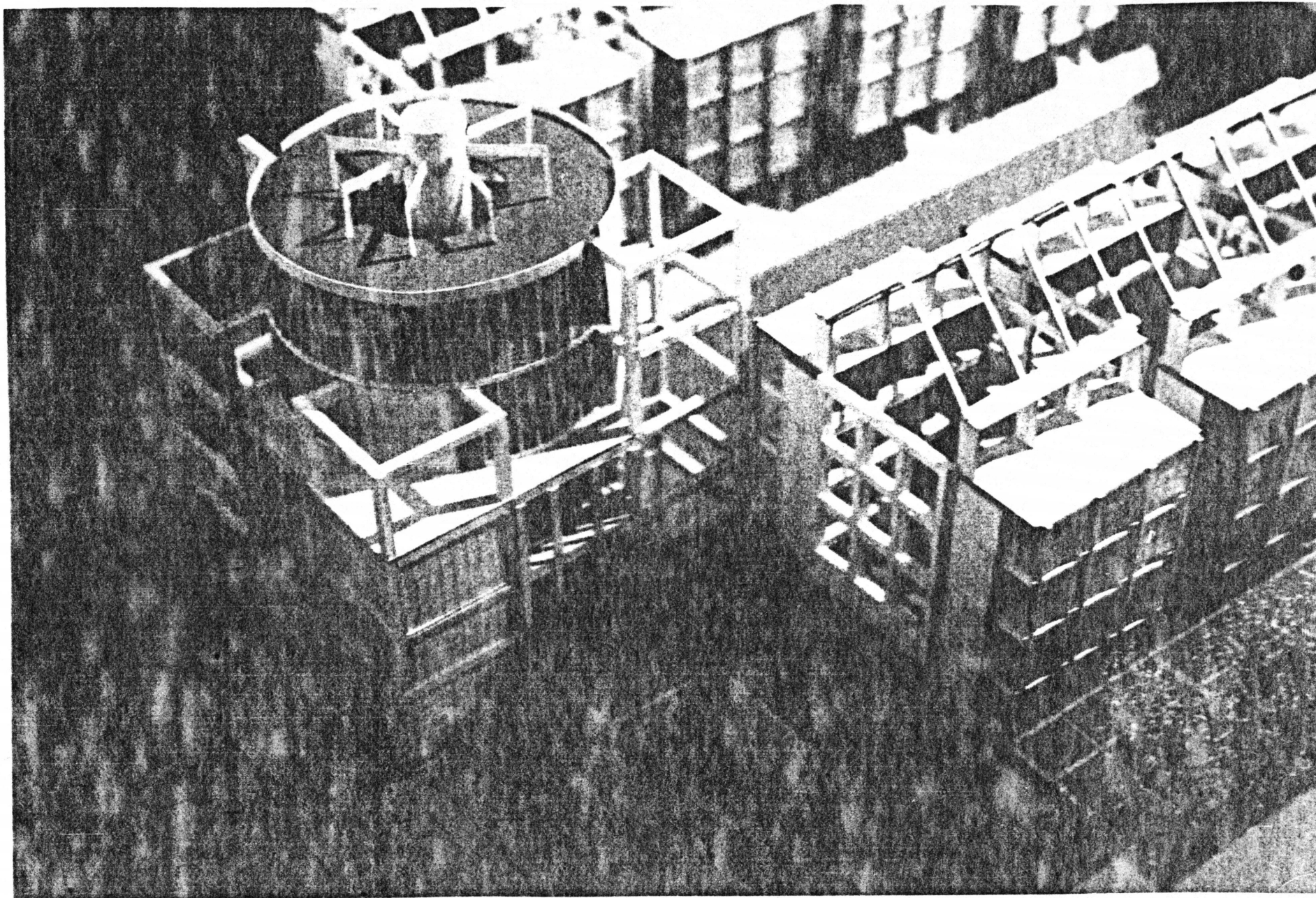
FOURTH FLOOR PLAN

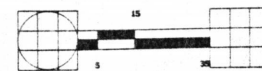
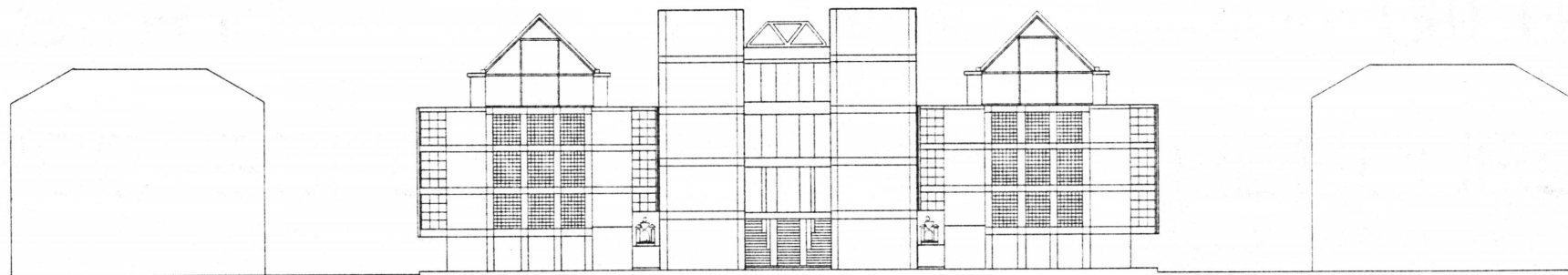



ROOF PLAN

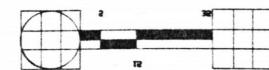
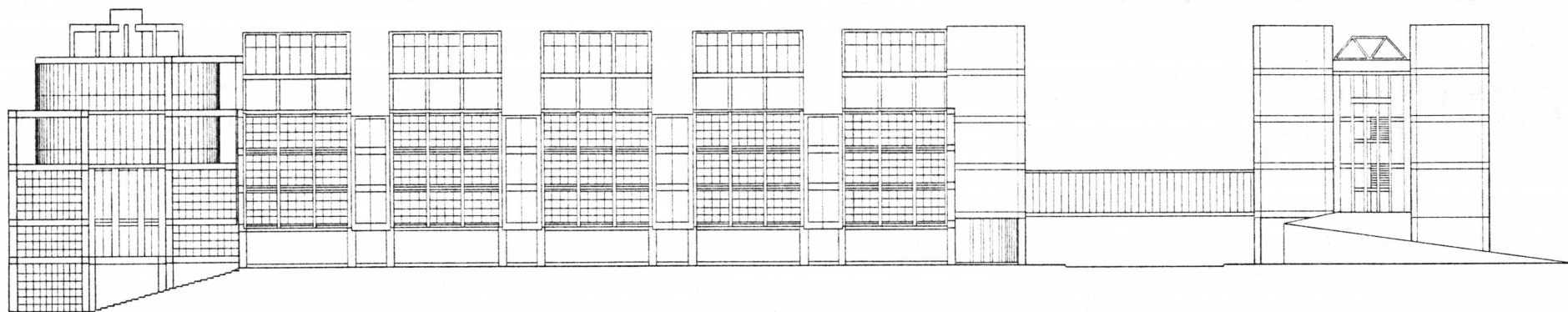


CELL PLAN AND
ELEVATIONS

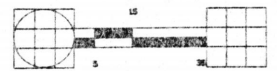
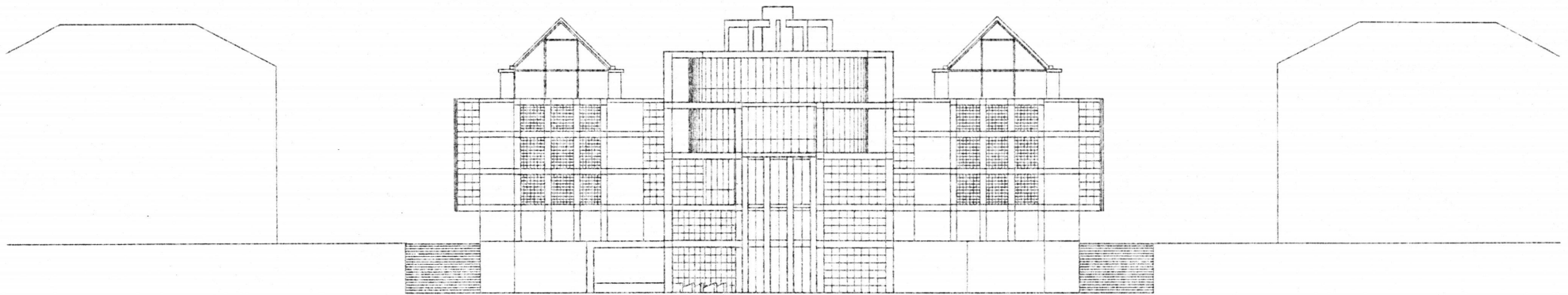




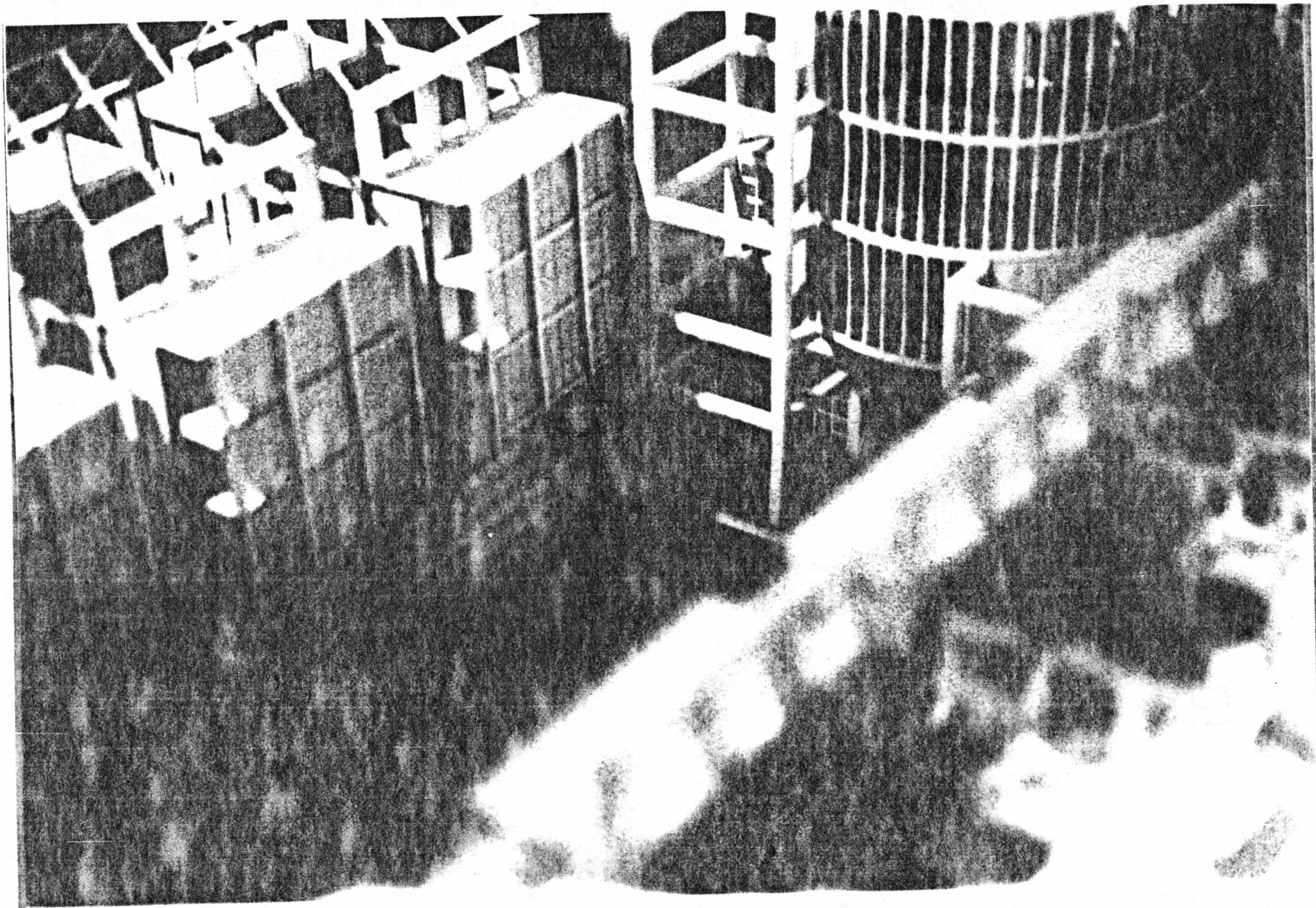
SOUTH ELEVATION

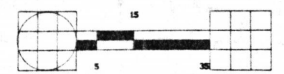
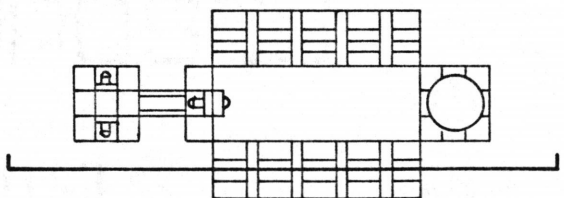
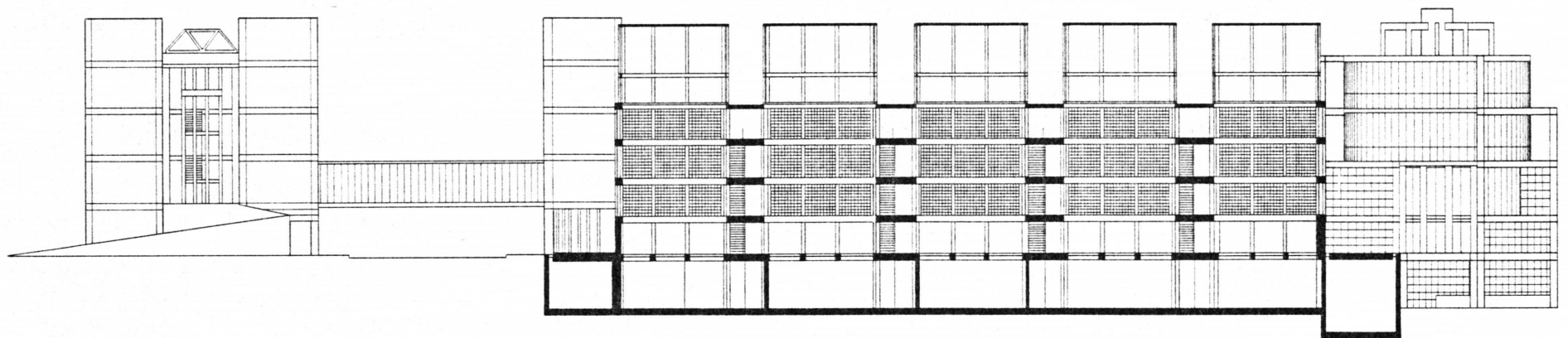


WEST ELEVATION

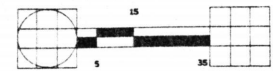
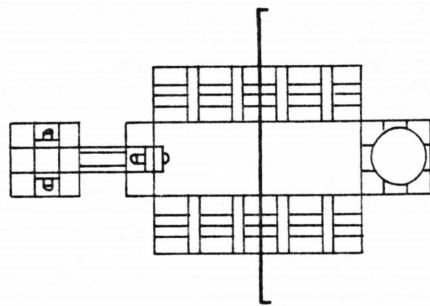
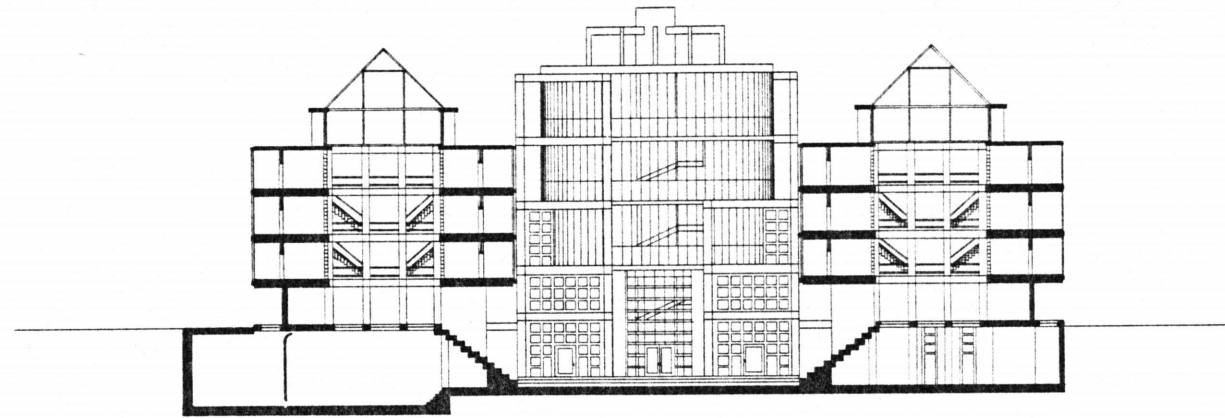


NORTH ELEVATION

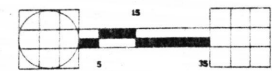
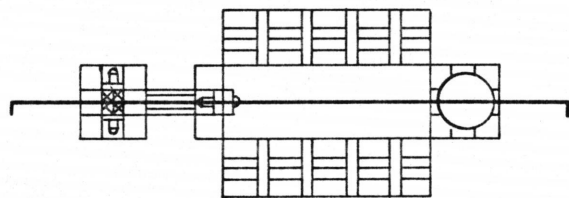
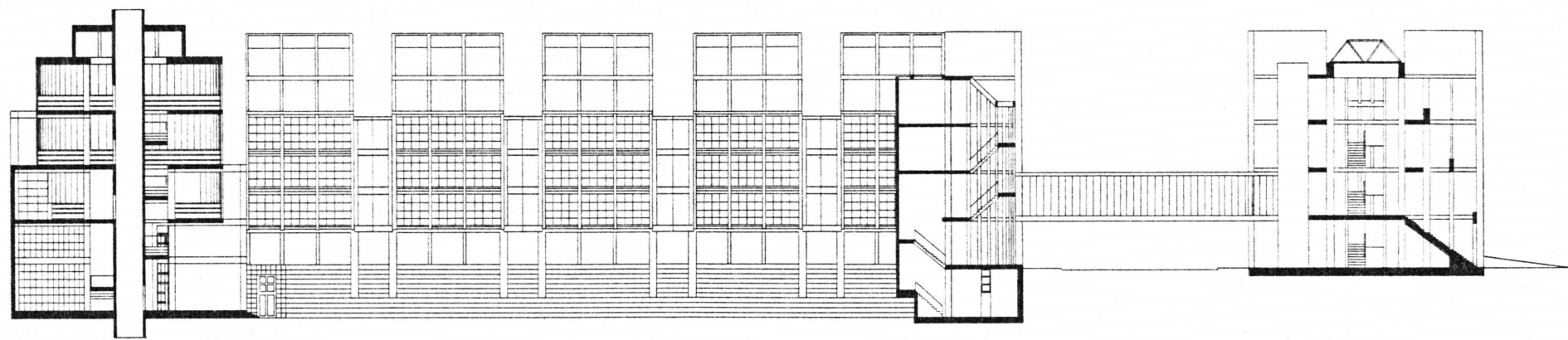




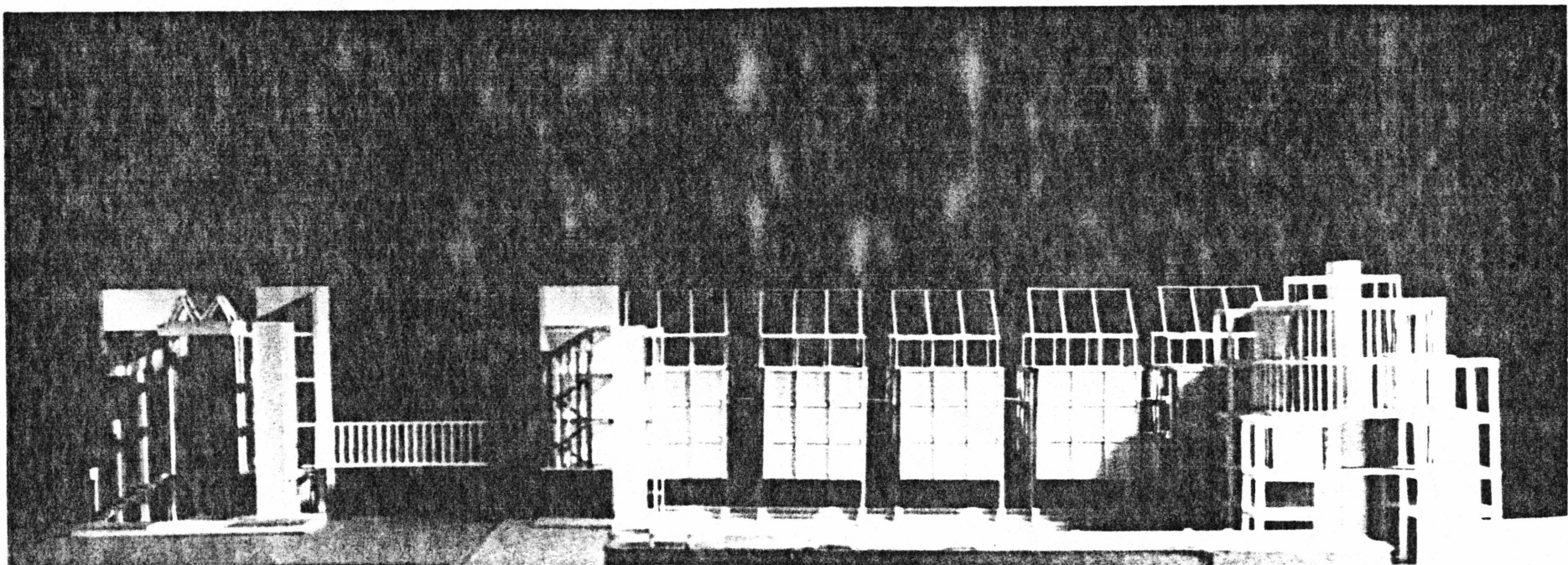
SECTION

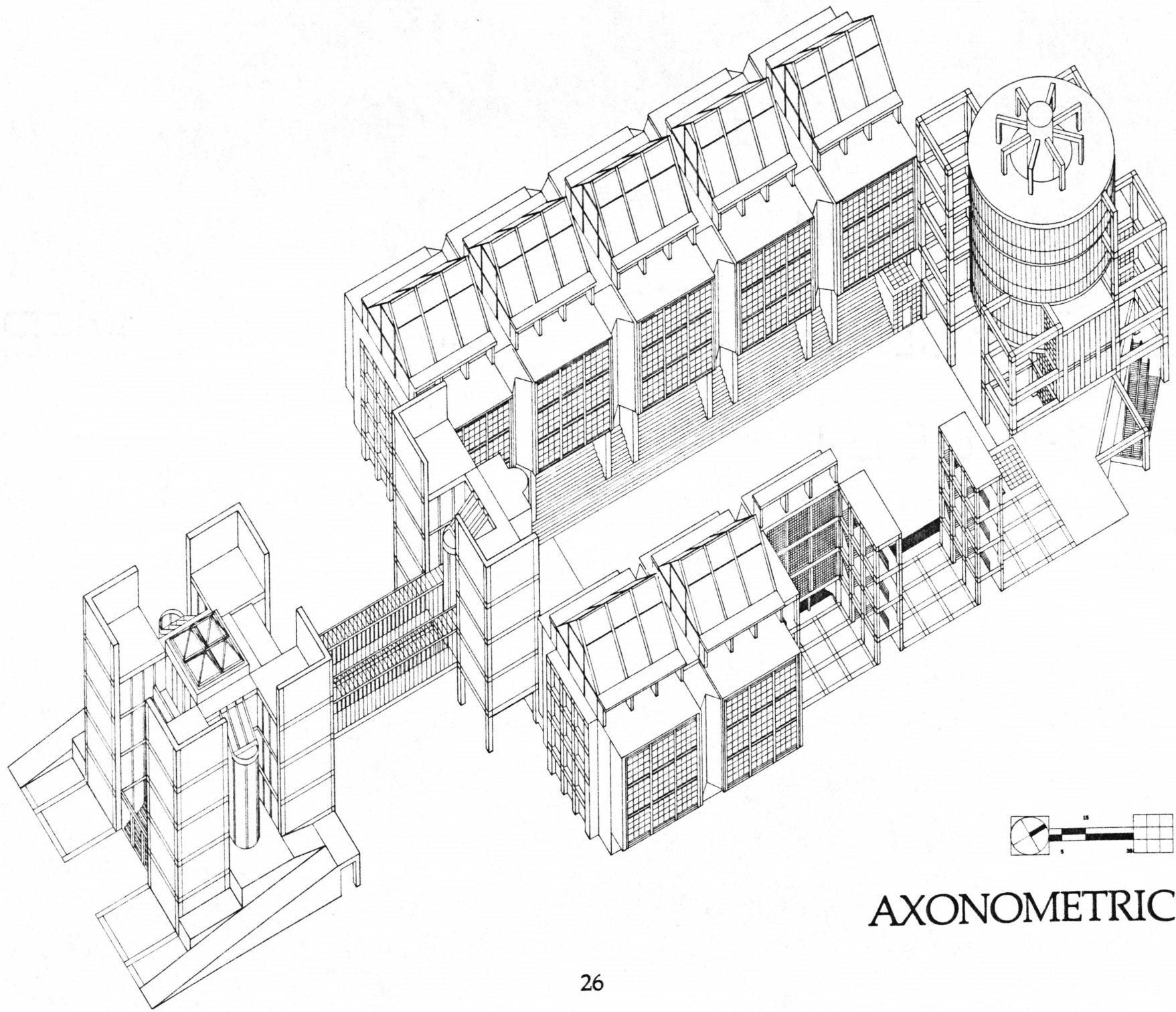


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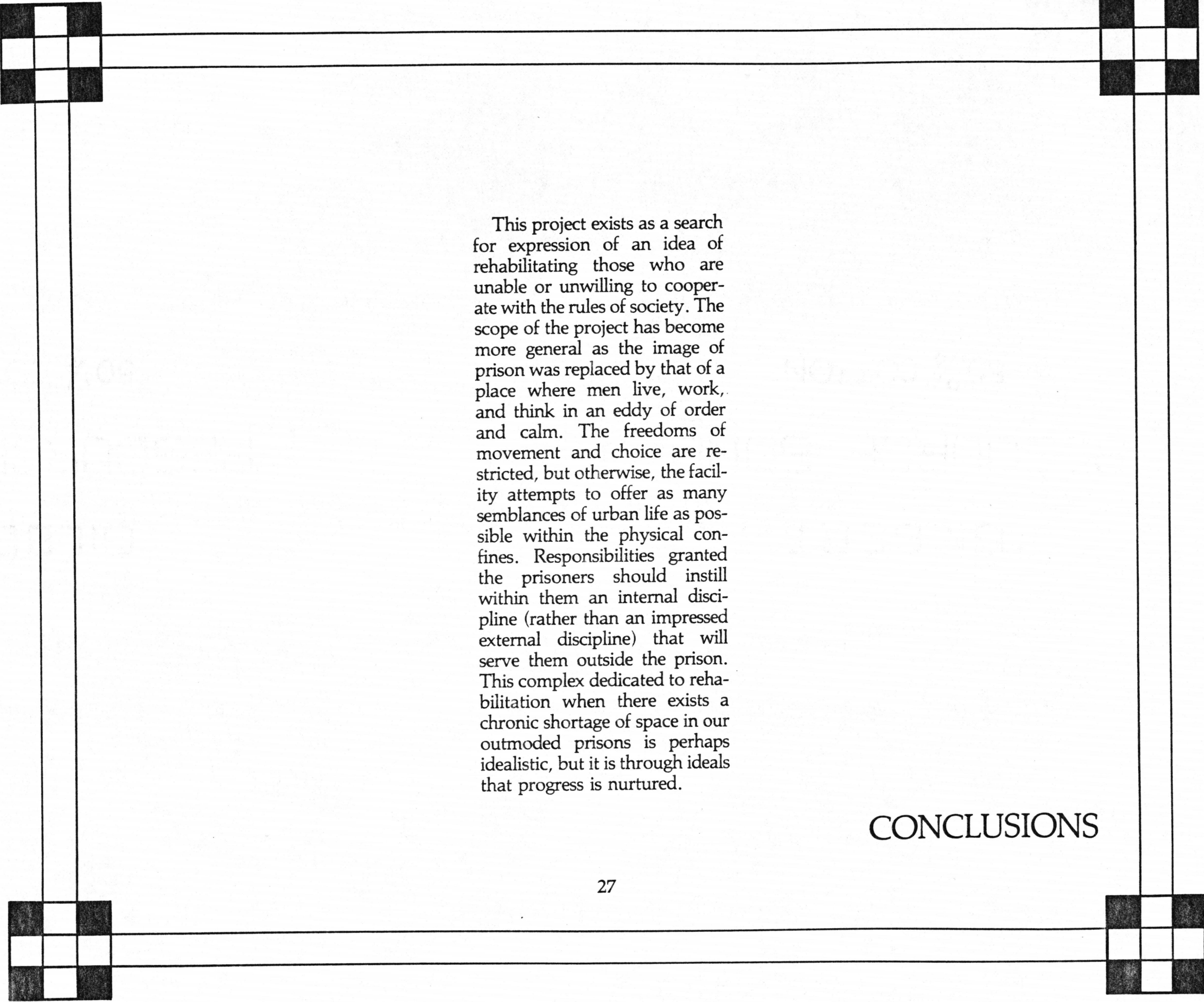


SECTION





AXONOMETRIC



This project exists as a search for expression of an idea of rehabilitating those who are unable or unwilling to cooperate with the rules of society. The scope of the project has become more general as the image of prison was replaced by that of a place where men live, work, and think in an eddy of order and calm. The freedoms of movement and choice are restricted, but otherwise, the facility attempts to offer as many semblances of urban life as possible within the physical confines. Responsibilities granted the prisoners should instill within them an internal discipline (rather than an impressed external discipline) that will serve them outside the prison. This complex dedicated to rehabilitation when there exists a chronic shortage of space in our outmoded prisons is perhaps idealistic, but it is through ideals that progress is nurtured.

CONCLUSIONS

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