

A Study in Connection:

**Ossining Municipal Center
Ossining, New York**

**by
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**Thesis submitted to the
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of**

MASTER OF ARCHITECTURE

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**May 1989
Blacksburg, Virginia**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to give a special thank you to my family for all of their encouragement and support.

To my father and mother, and my brother, for having the courage to leave their homeland and family, to give my brother and I a better life.

To my father and mother for their pep talks when I had lost sight.

To my father for his incredible cutting ability and of course support.

Abstract

"It is one thing to delimit space by structural devices such as walls. It is quite another to infuse the space with a spirit which relates to the activities that take place in it and which stirs the senses and emotions of the people who use it. Architecture encompasses both."

Edmund N. Bacon, Design of Cities

This quote reflects how I feel about architecture and anything I do. A building can be made of four walls and a roof, but that is all it is. Architecture occurs when you as a designer create spaces in which people can experience a whole range of emotions, learn something not only about architecture, but about themselves and go away feeling more intune with what is around them. I wanted to convey an attitude about architecture: the idea of how architecture can express the function of a building. In this case the government of the Town and Village of Ossining, New York.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SITE AND PROGRAM	1
PROCESS	3
BUILDING, MATERIAL AND SPACE	15
FINAL SKETCHES AND DRAWINGS	28
CONCLUSION	31
LITERATURE	41
VITA	42

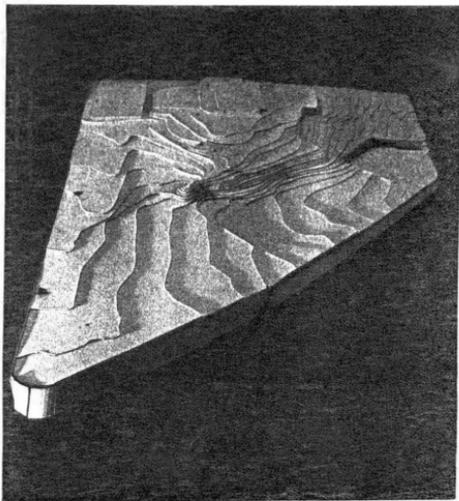
SITE AND PROGRAM

Ossining is located in Westchester County, New York State, 30 miles north of New York City. The town was established in the 1700's on the banks of the Hudson River.

"Benson J. Lossing, an editor, businessman, and historian, recounted his visit to Sing Sing in 1866 in *The Hudson: From the Wilderness to the Sea*. 'Sing Sing is a very pleasant village, of almost four thousand inhabitants. It lies upon a rudely broken slope of hills, that rise about one hundred and eighty feet above the river, and overlook Tappen Bay, Tappanese Zee, as the early Dutch settlers called as expansion of the Hudson, extending from Teller's or Croton Point on the north, to the northern bluff of the Palisades. The origin of the name is found in the word Sint-Sinck, the title of a powerful clan of the Mohegans or river Indians, who called this spot *Ossin-ing*, from *ossin*, a stone, and *ing*, a place-- stony place. A very appropriate name."

Carl Oechsner, Ossining, New York

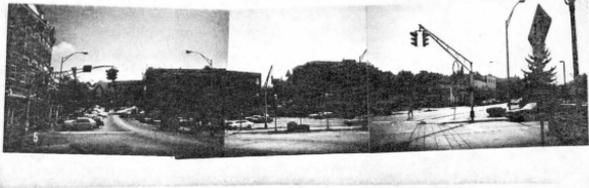
The site itself is located in the original center of town called the Crescent after the shape of Main Street. The site is surrounded on its Main Street side by buildings on the historic register, on the Spring Street side by more modern buildings and on the other remaining streets by single-family houses. On the site remain three buildings, a church which is also on the historic register, a recently built retail store, and offices housed in the old blacksmith's shop. The remaining portion of the site was cleared in an "urban renewal" process in the early 1970's and has served as a parking lot for the downtown area since that time.



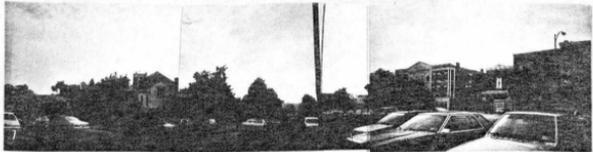
The program that I worked with was an actual project made available to local architects. The program consisted of a municipal building which was to unite all the town and village functions: a new police station, court, retail/office space, housing and parking. I revised the program by focusing on the municipal functions and designing a courthouse as the central piece within the scheme.

View looking down Main St. towards a corner of the site. (Intersection of Main St., Spring St., Brandreth St., and Central Ave.)

Panoramic view of Main St., Spring St., and corner of site from across the street.



Panoramic view from the bottom of the site on the corner of Main St & State St.

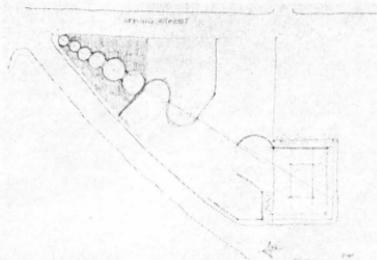
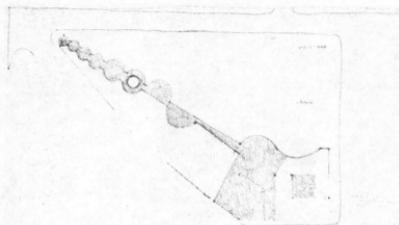
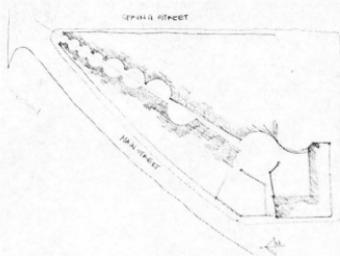


View of site taken from the center of the site with views of Main St. facades and existing buildings on the site.

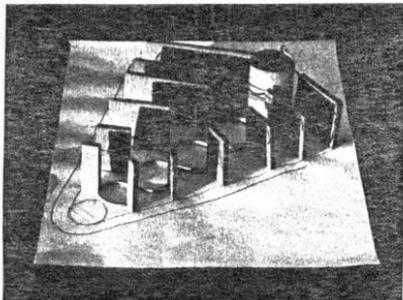
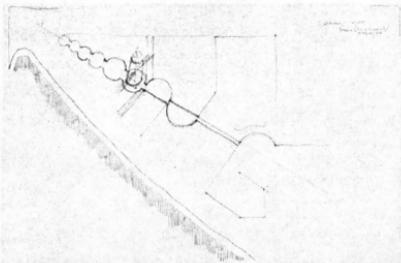
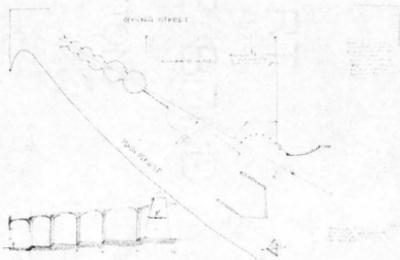
View of the corner of State St. & St. Paul's St.

PROCESS

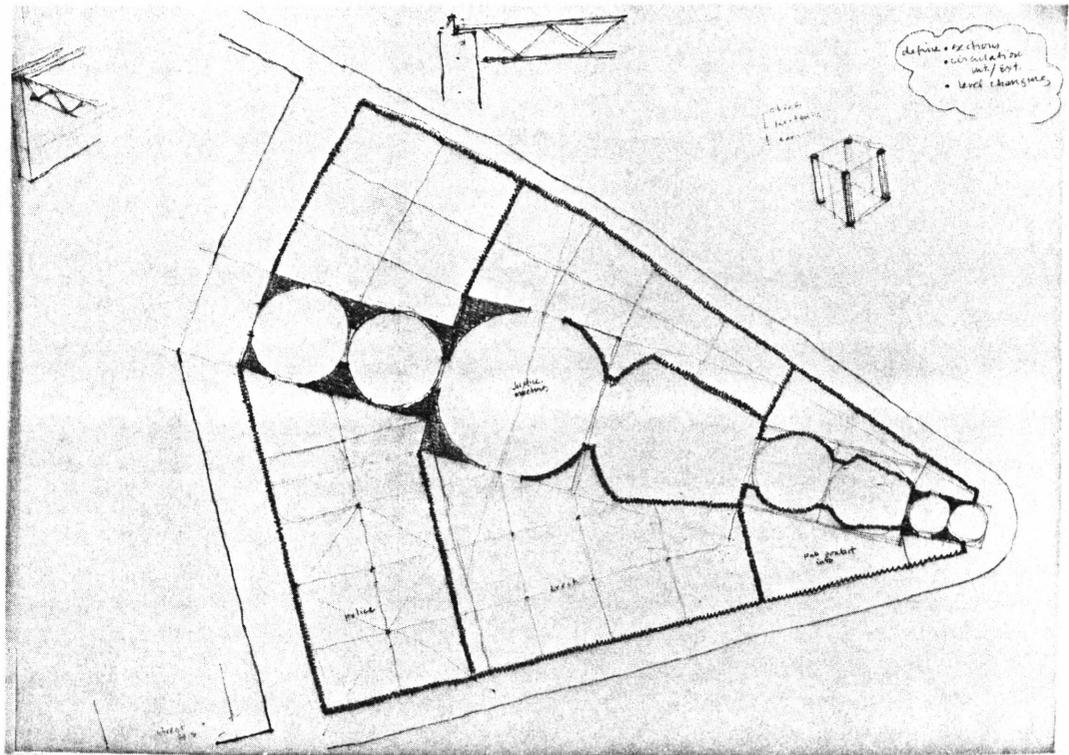
My initial design ideas focused on developing a spine cutting through the site connecting the corners of Main St. & Spring St. and State St. & St. Paul's St. These two diagonally opposite corners act as gateways. Main St. & Spring St. is a commercial gateway to a public oriented corner; the corner of State St. & St. Paul's St. is a gateway to a residential area (more private) in which people know each other. The contours of the site accentuated the idea of the spine because as the one edge of the site increased in elevation the other decreased. The spine follows this ridge and also accentuates the differences in elevation. This spine or connectional device orginated from my research into the history of Ossining and the fact that the program specifically divided Ossining into the Town of Oss. and the Village of Oss.. Because the two divisions had basically the same functional needs, the idea of seperating them was superceded later in the design process for a simpler organizational design.



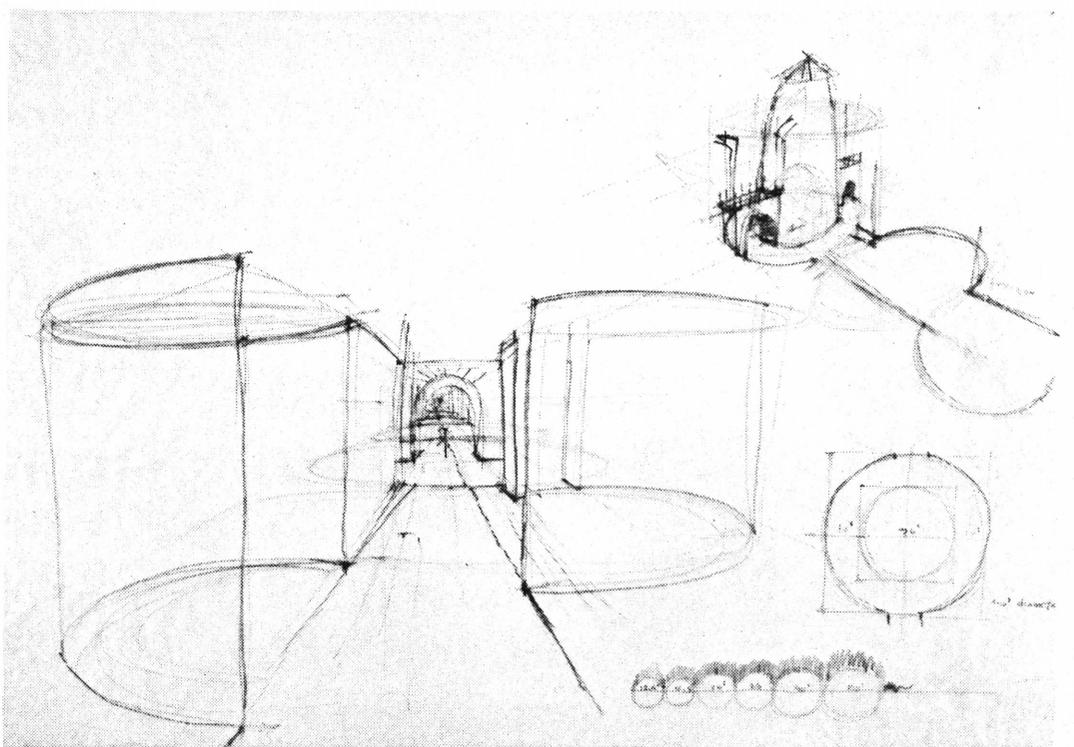
In reviewing books written about Ossining and the County there were two aspects I found important in regards to the site and the initial development: the Hudson River and the Croton Aqueduct, which runs nearby the site. Both the river and the aqueduct are path(a spine) for transporting not only water but also people. The river is a path(a spine) for transportation by boat and the aqueduct provides a route for pedestrians from one side of town to the other. From the aqueduct there are views of the Hudson River and of a corner of the site. Although the tie is not a directly physical one it is a visual and spiritual one. This idea of progression through the site by creating a spine was followed by the use of geometric forms, such as the circle, to delineate spaces within and around the spine. The central circle eventually became the Courthouse, one of the main generators along with the spine in the development of the design.



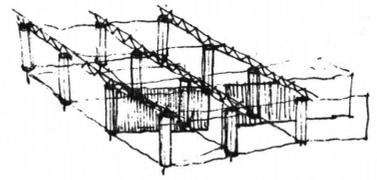
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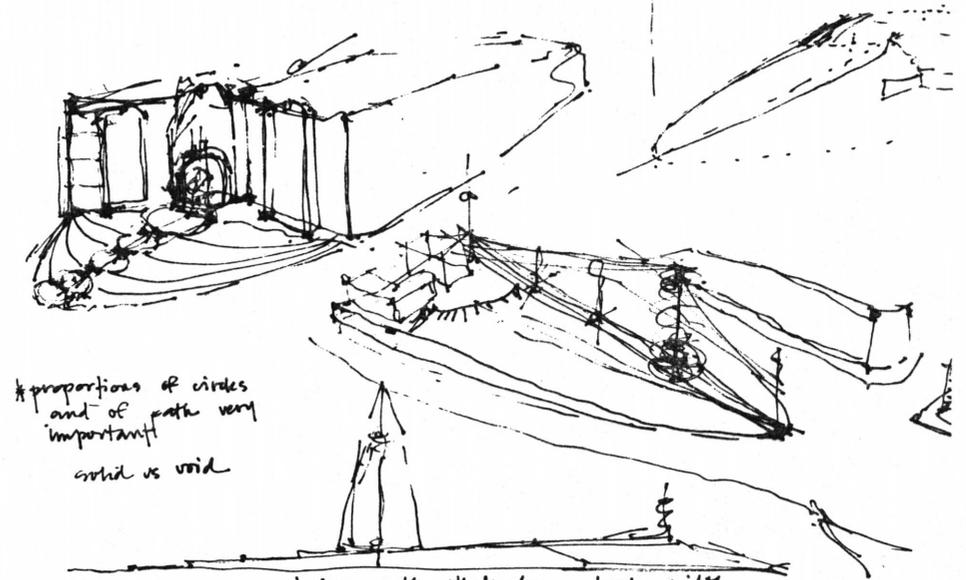
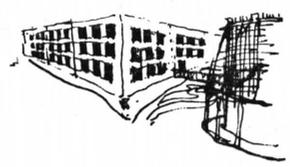
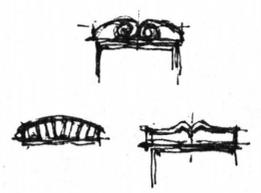
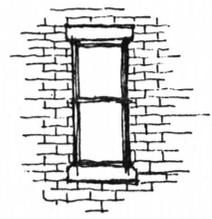
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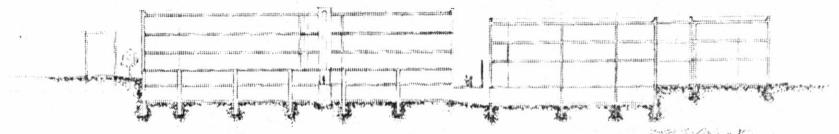
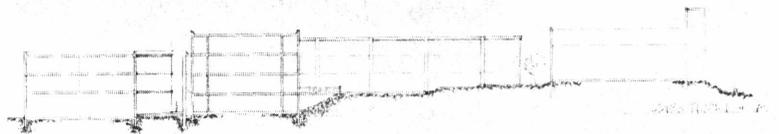
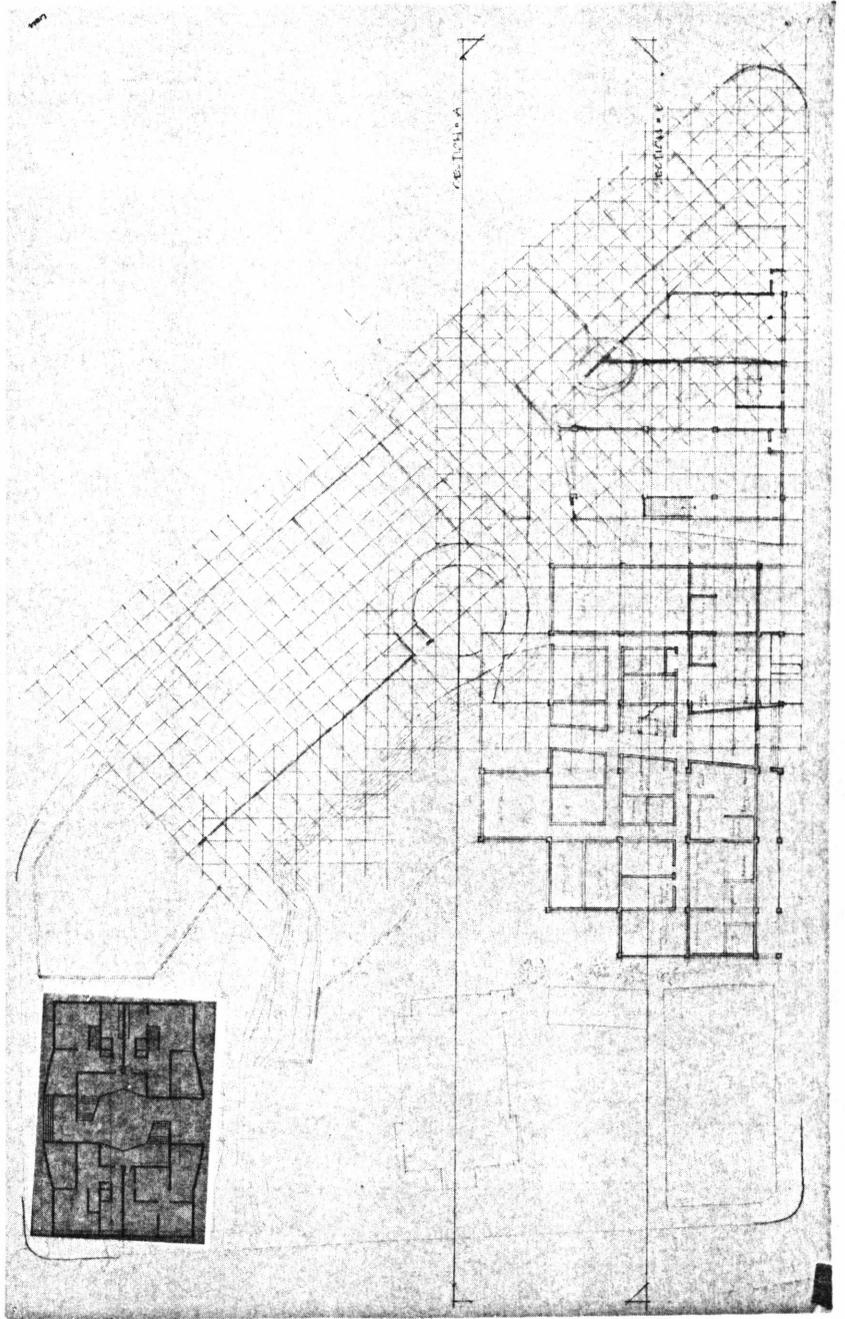


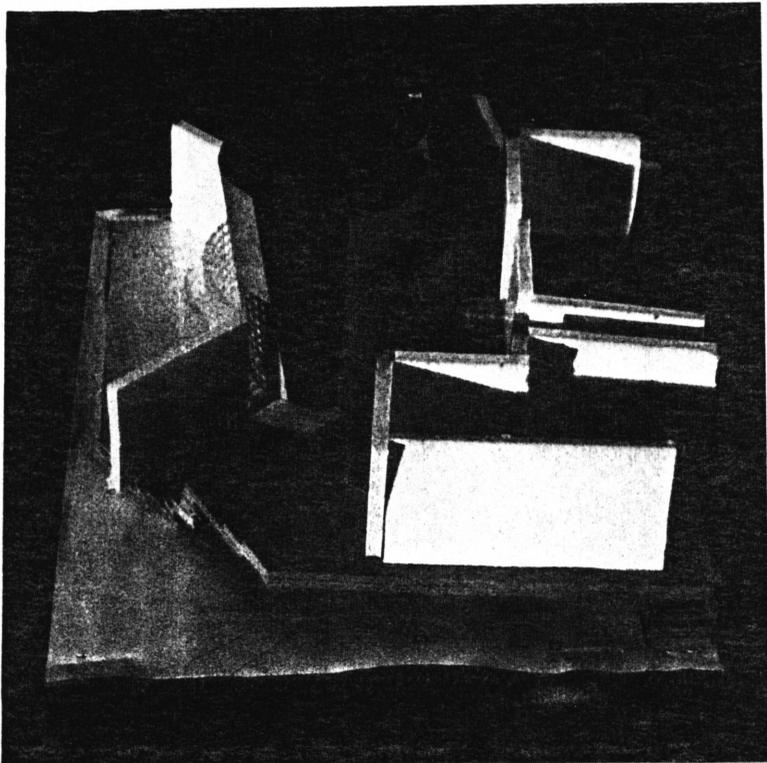
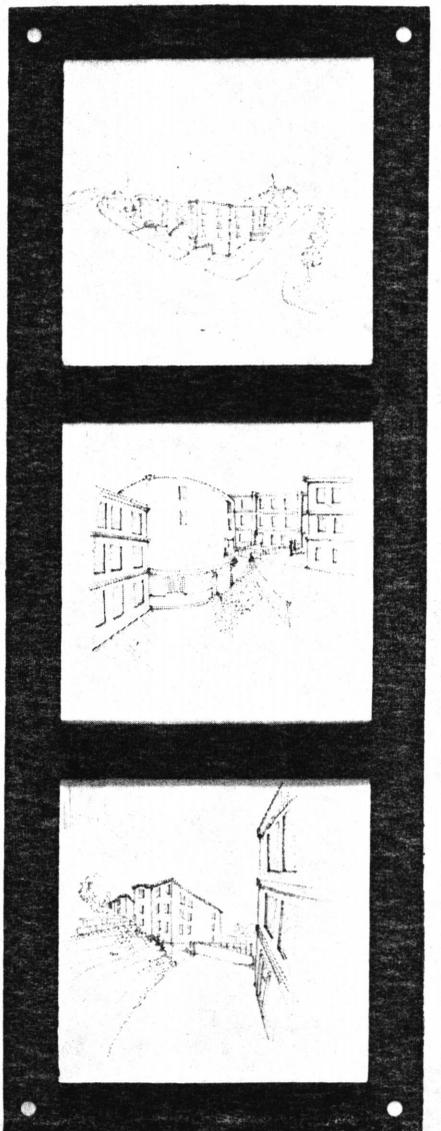
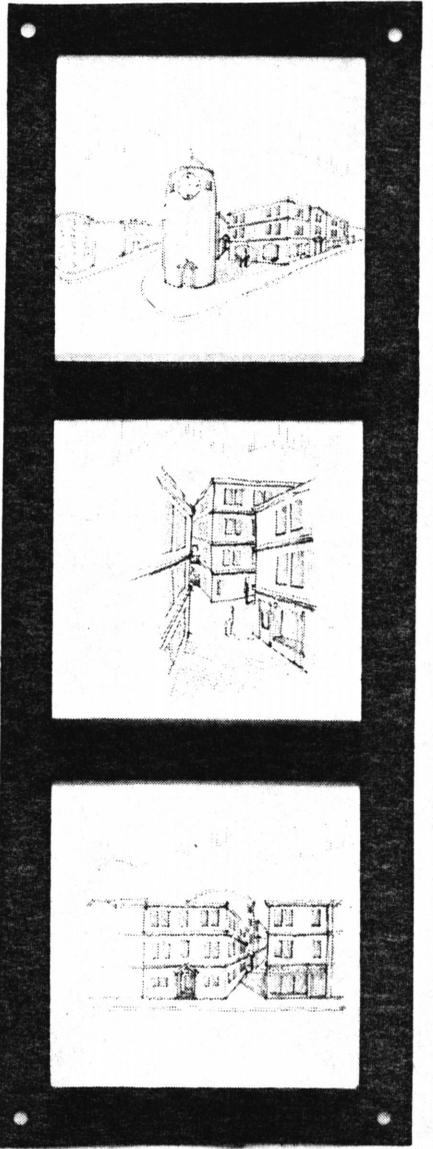
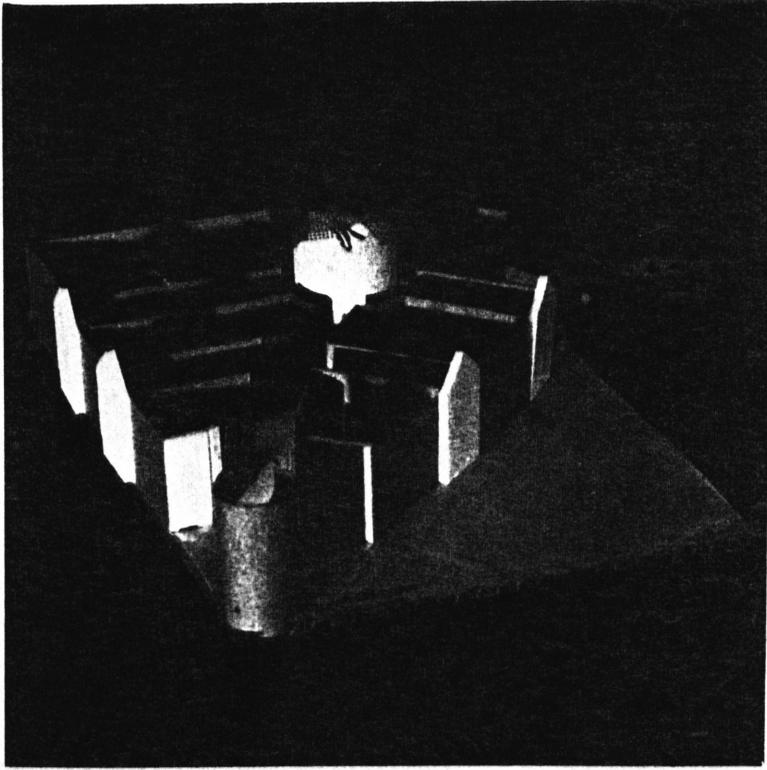
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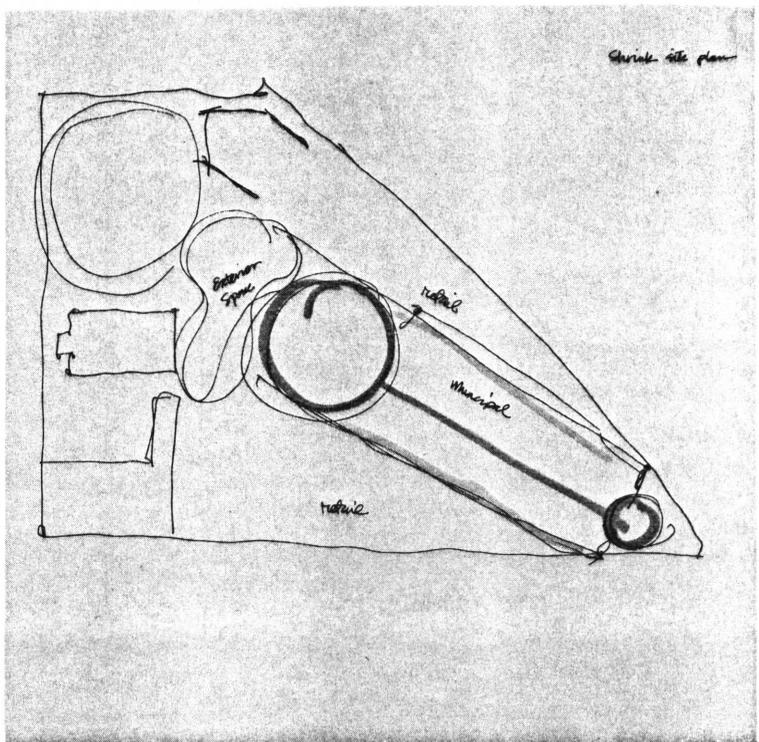
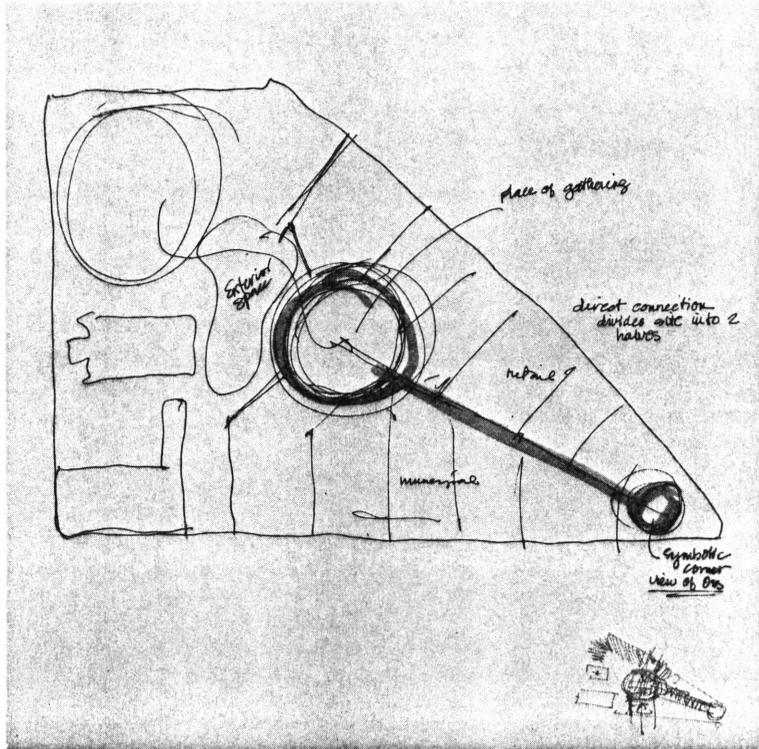


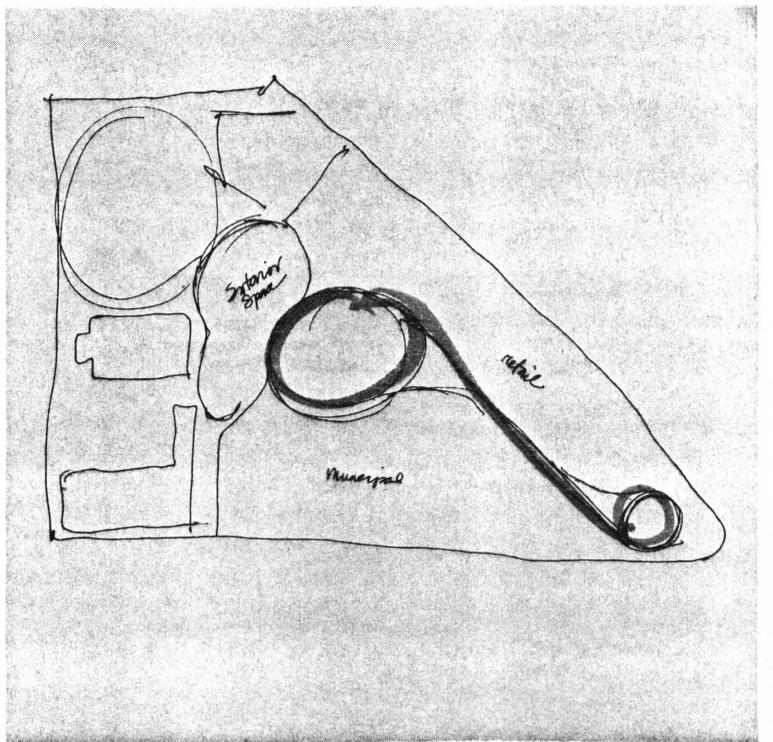
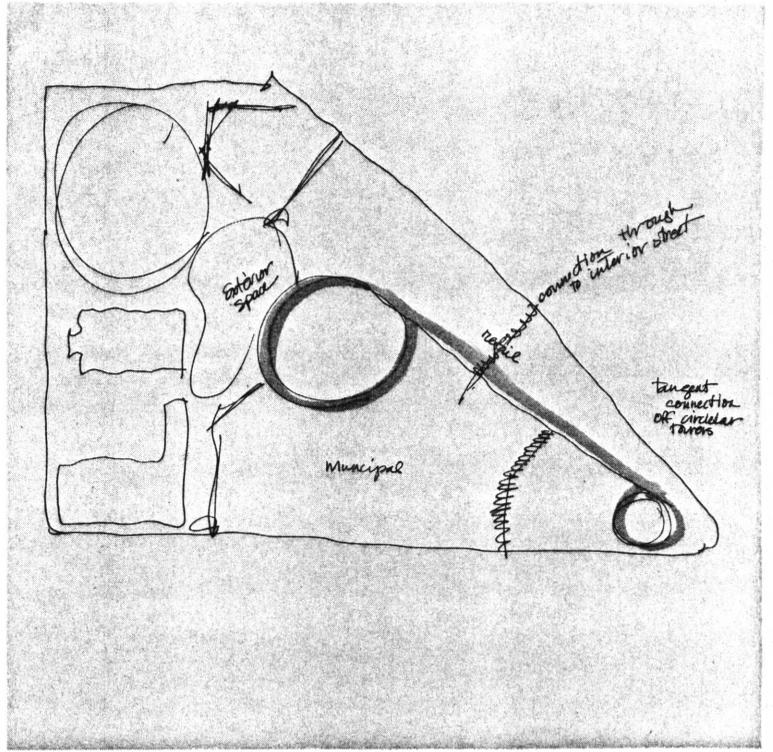
* proportions of circles
and of path very
important
solid vs void

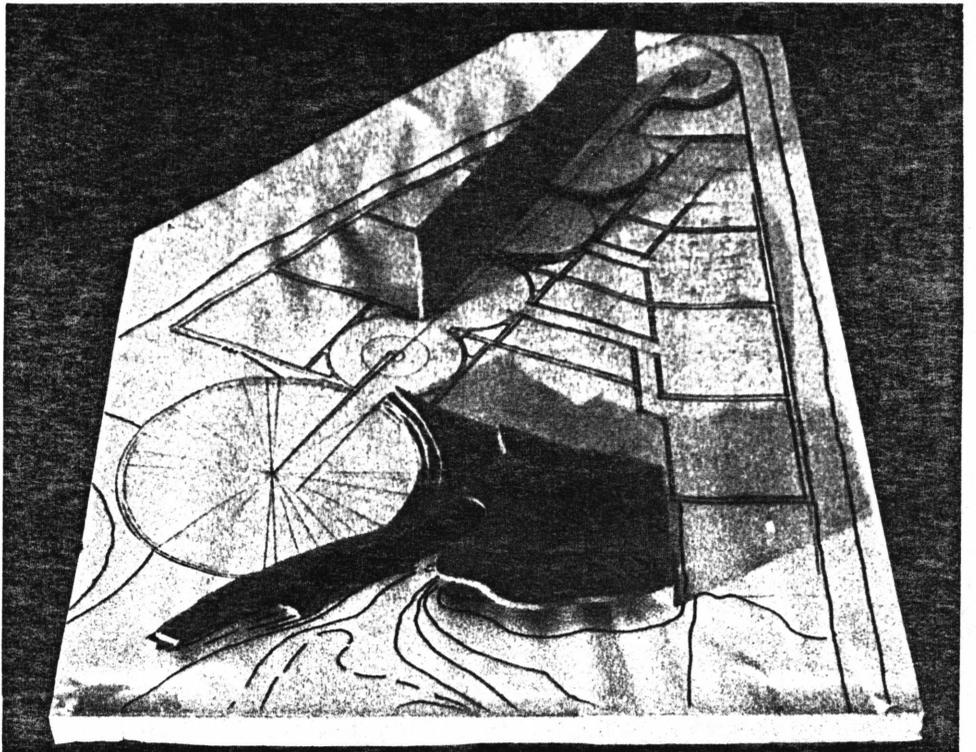
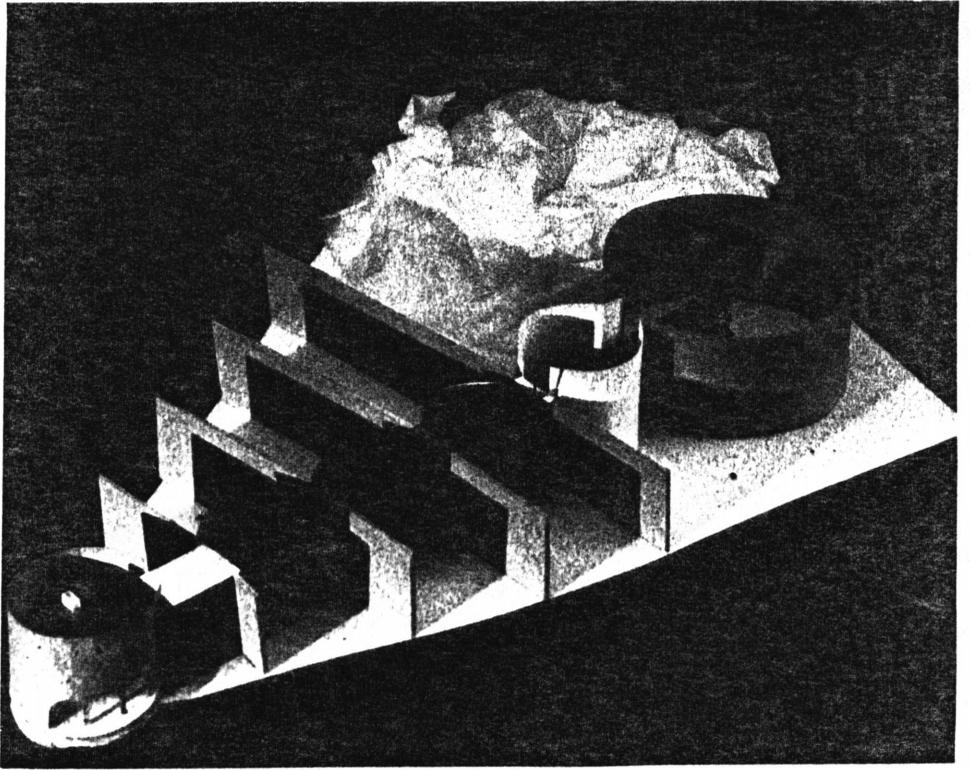
linear path that changes level, width
of enclosure — experiences that occur
through-out the path — images that evoke
history of area & surroundings.

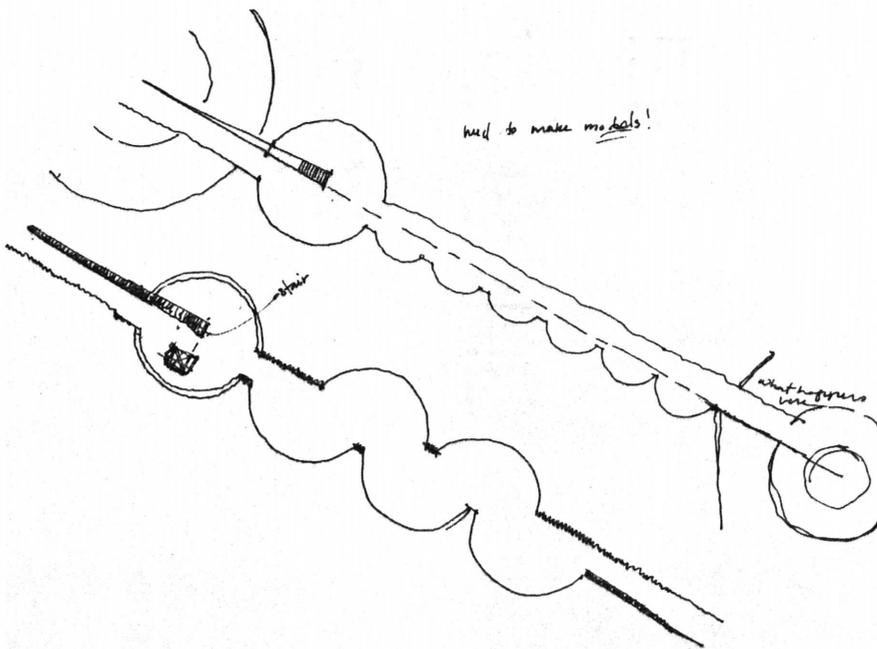
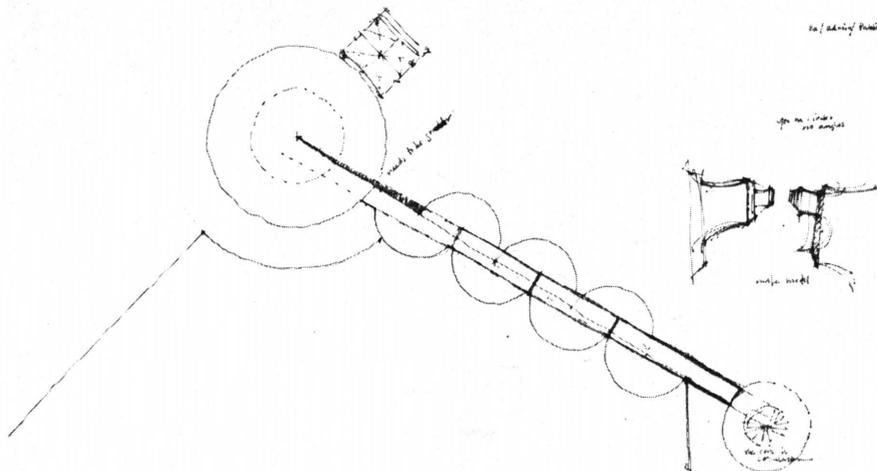
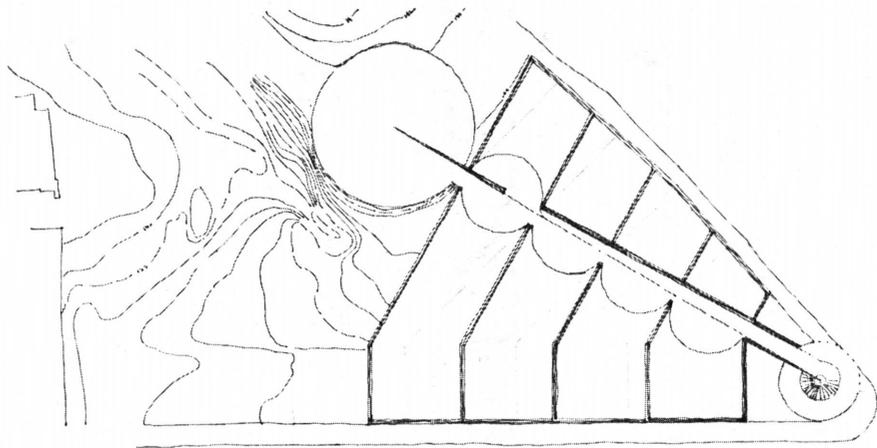


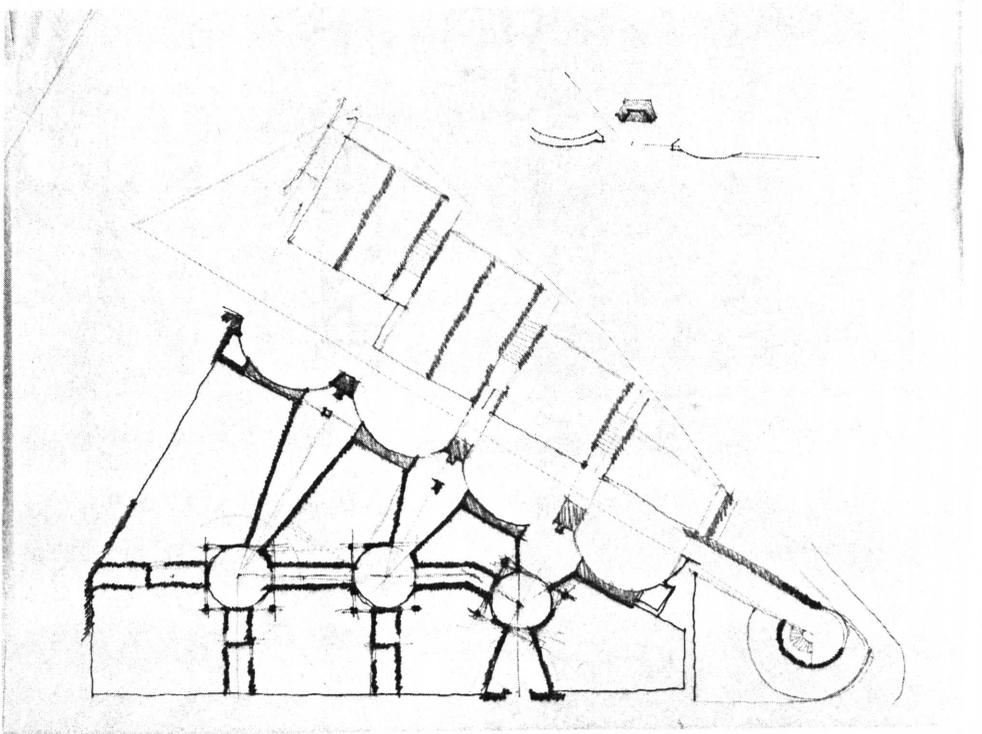
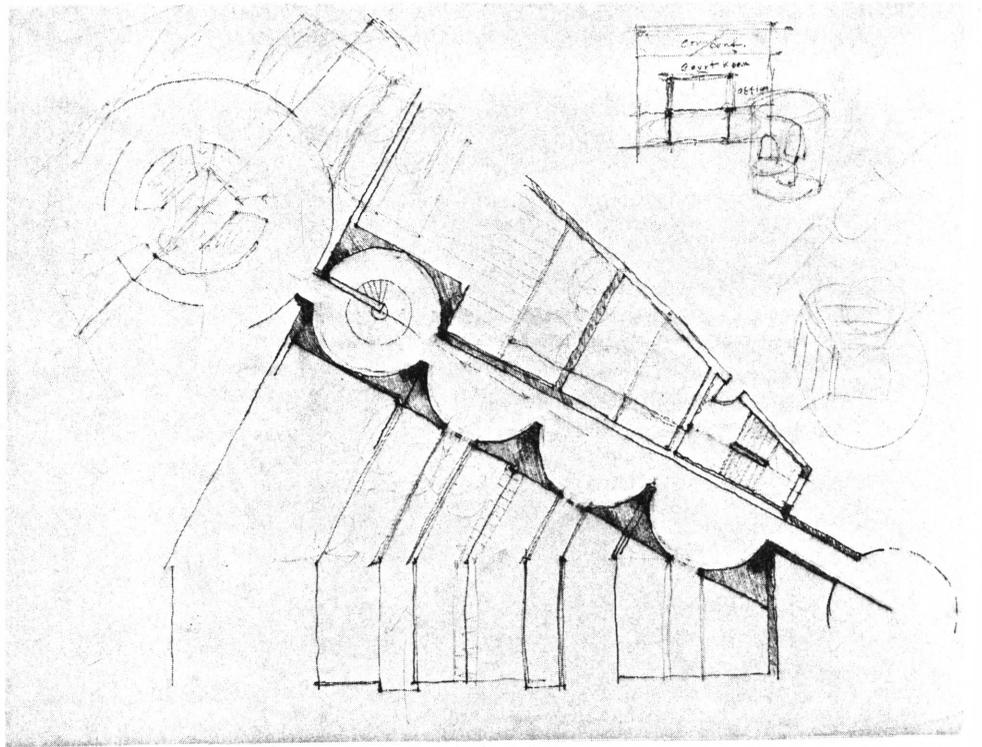
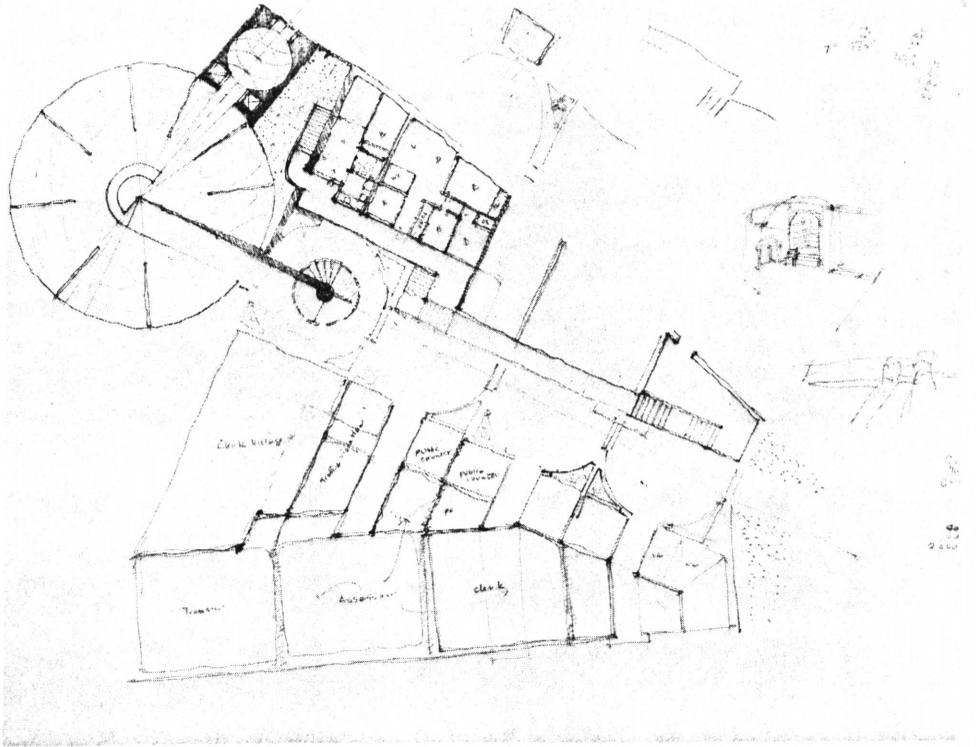


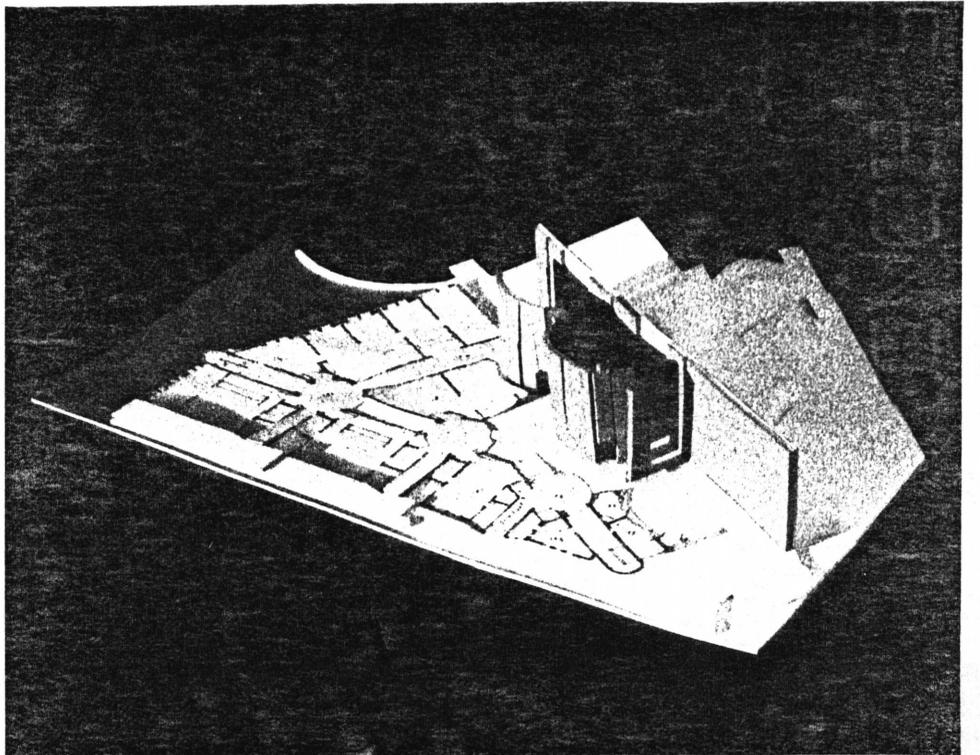
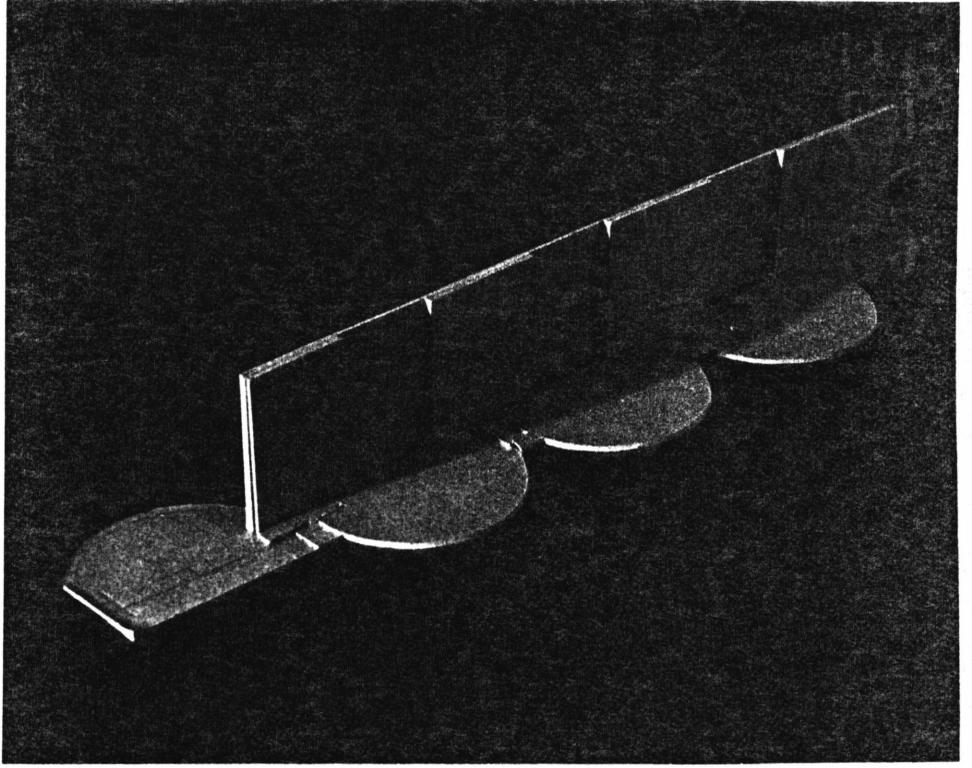






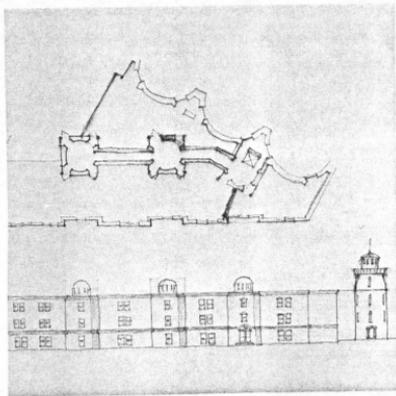
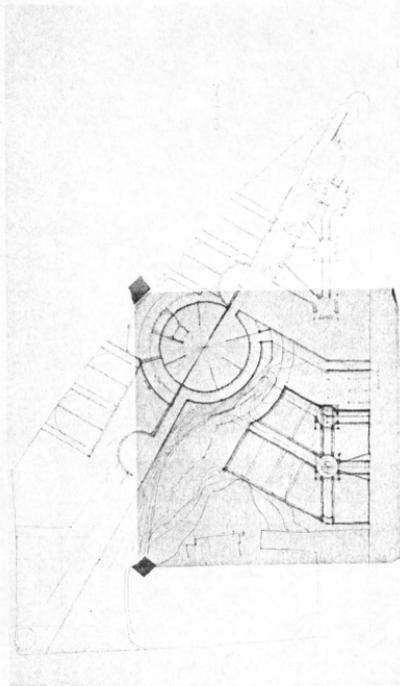




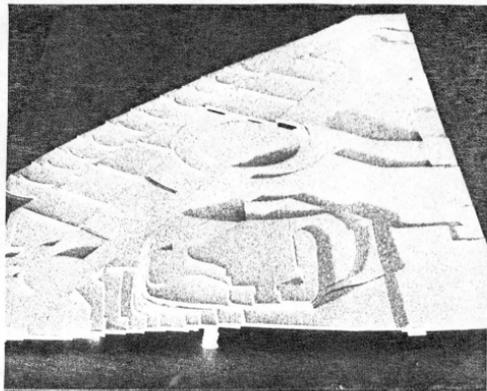
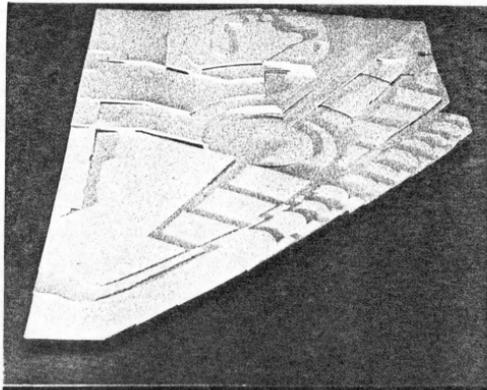


The entrance into the Municipal Center is at the corner of Main St. & Spring St.; however there are three separate entrances to the Municipal Building itself off of Spring St. At this intersection of Main St. & Spring St. one proceeds into the tower, and then may either pass through the tower and proceed onto the spine, or climb to the top of the tower and view the town and its many points of interest.

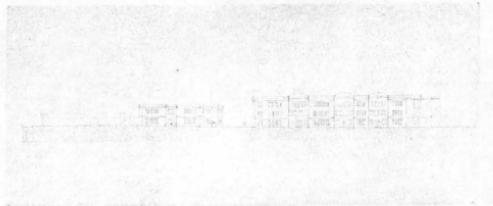
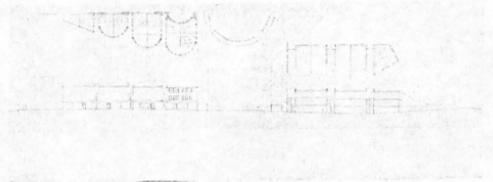
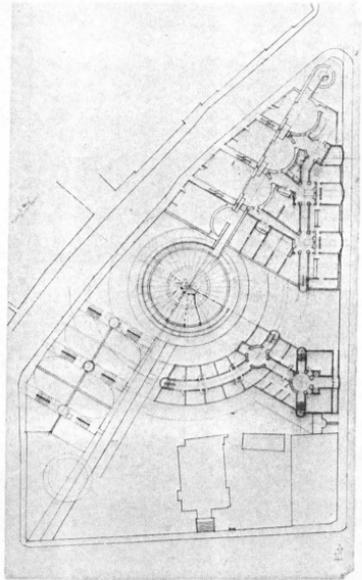
Once in the spine, one experiences a change in spacial quality. The spine is a clear thirty feet in height with skylights accentuating the semi-circular spaces and the the glass showcases. These glass showcases display memorabilia of the town and its history, and are carved out of the concrete wall that separates the retail/housing from the municipal building. This was an important separation because of the character of Main St., which is that of retail space on the first floor with housing on the upper floors. This character is maintained in the new retail/housing building facing Main St., which has entrances straight off the sidewalk for the retail stores, while the housing is entered through hallways between the different buildings providing a private entry.



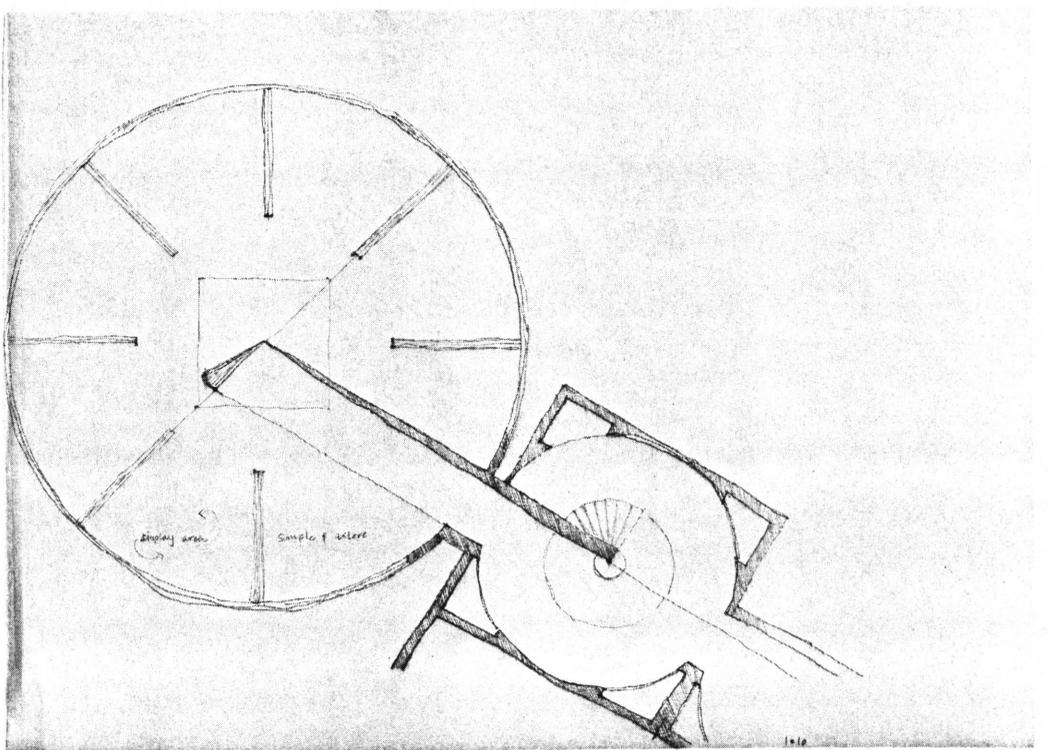
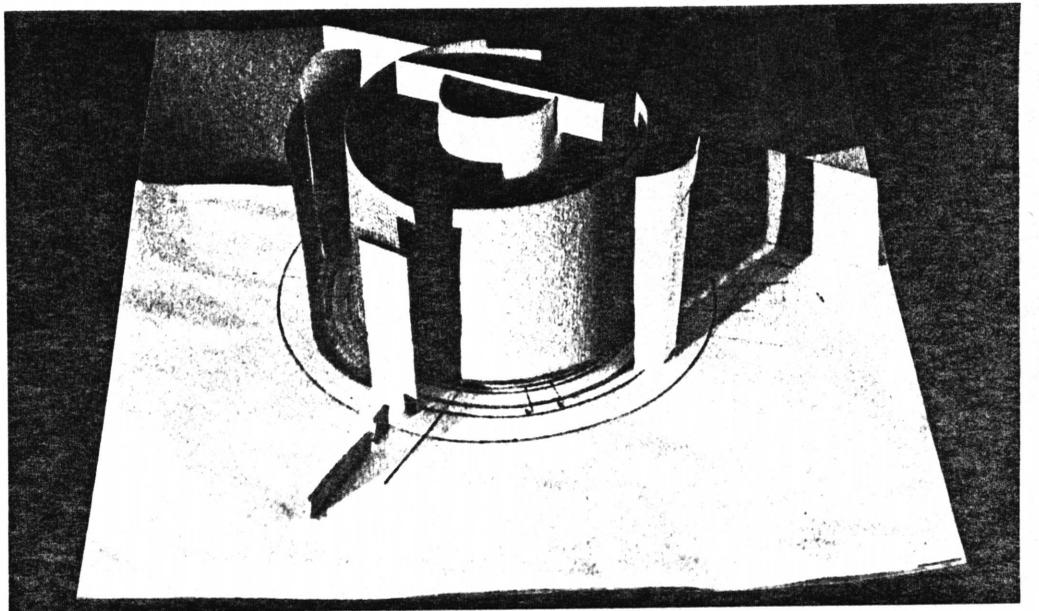
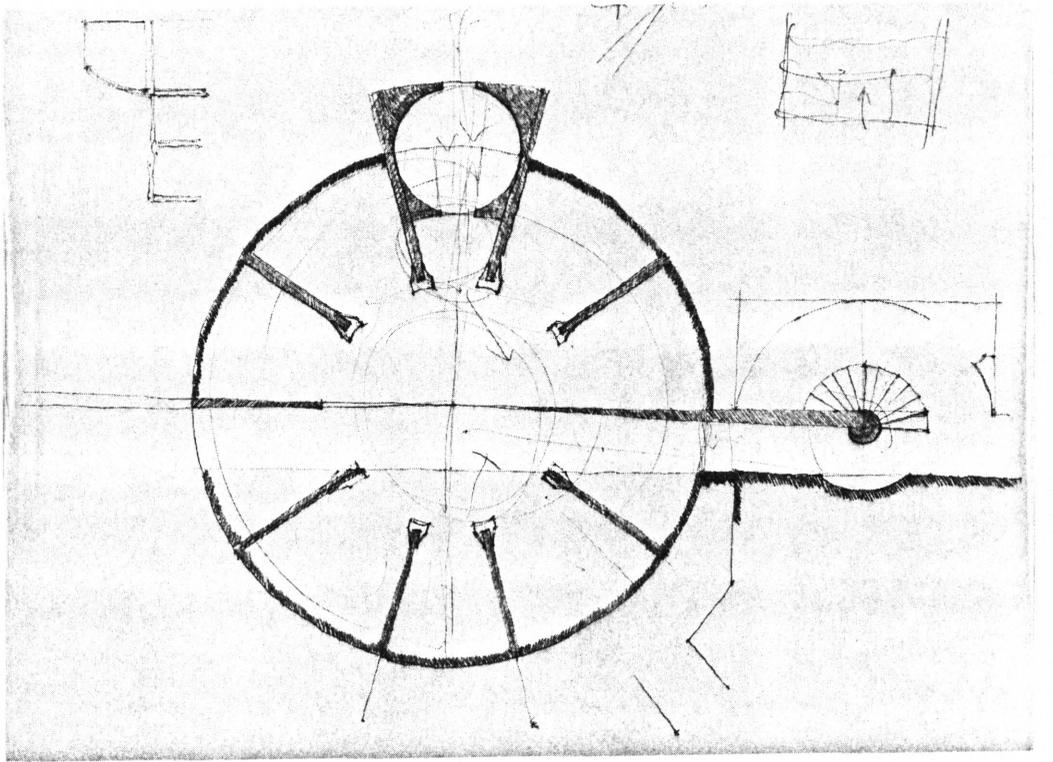
At the semi-circular spaces there are places to sit for passers-by who wish to look at the many objects being displayed, people-watch or wait for someone who has gone into the municipal building to take care of business. There are three entrances off the spine into the municipal building which connect to its interior hallways. The hallways directly off the spine are also 30 feet in height with skylights that provide light for interior offices having no outside-facing walls. There are also level changes within the spine and municipal building: the spine rises up to the Courthouse with one foot increments at the points where the semi-circles meet. These level changes reinforce the hierarchy of the spine, leading pedestrians up to the Courthouse. However the spine does not go straight through the Courthouse, but instead succumbs to the circular geometry of the Courthouse and proceeds around it. One always has glimpses of where one is going; however, one never has the ability to proceed directly through the space. This, in turn, creates a tension between the different parts of the complex.

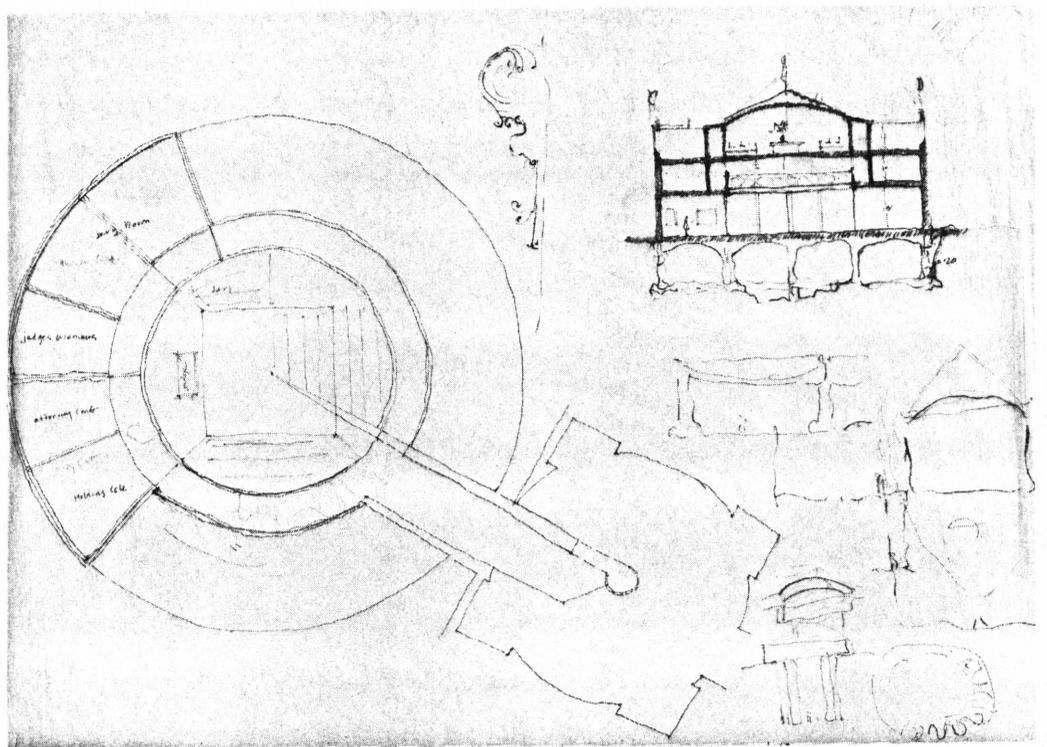
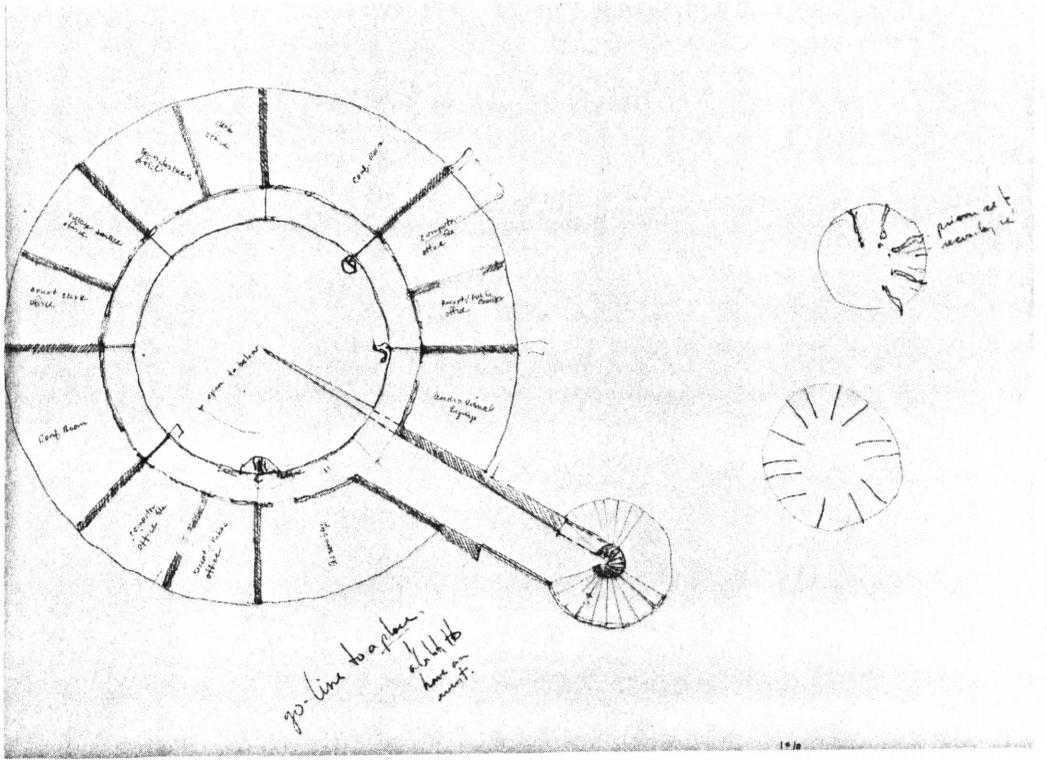


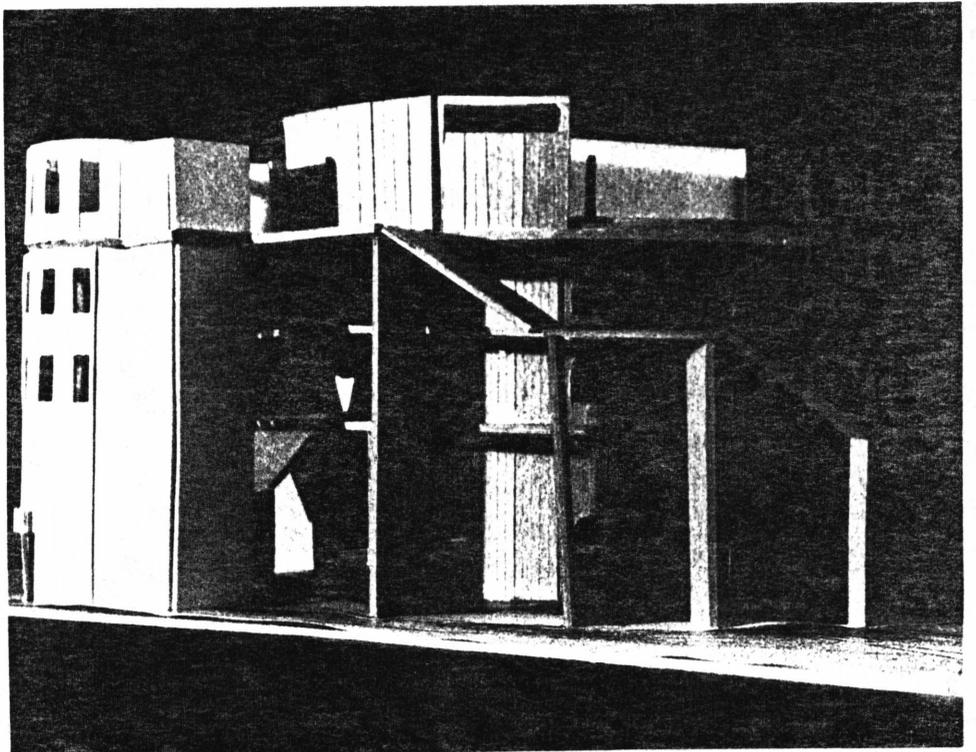
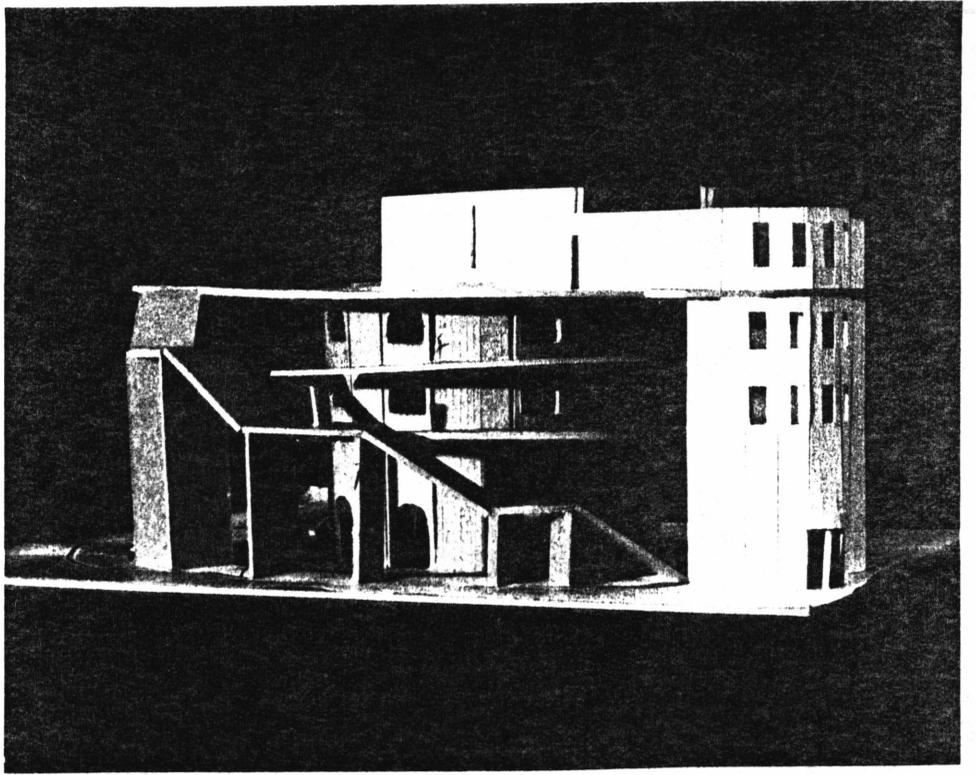
Once one has reached the Courthouse entrance from the spine one can either go into the main hall, which is visible from the spine, or one can proceed outside and walk around the Courthouse to the continuation of the spine which is outside at this point. The spine then leads one past the second housing building and into a public park which is a gateway into the residential area surrounding the site on the corner of State St. & St. Paul's St.



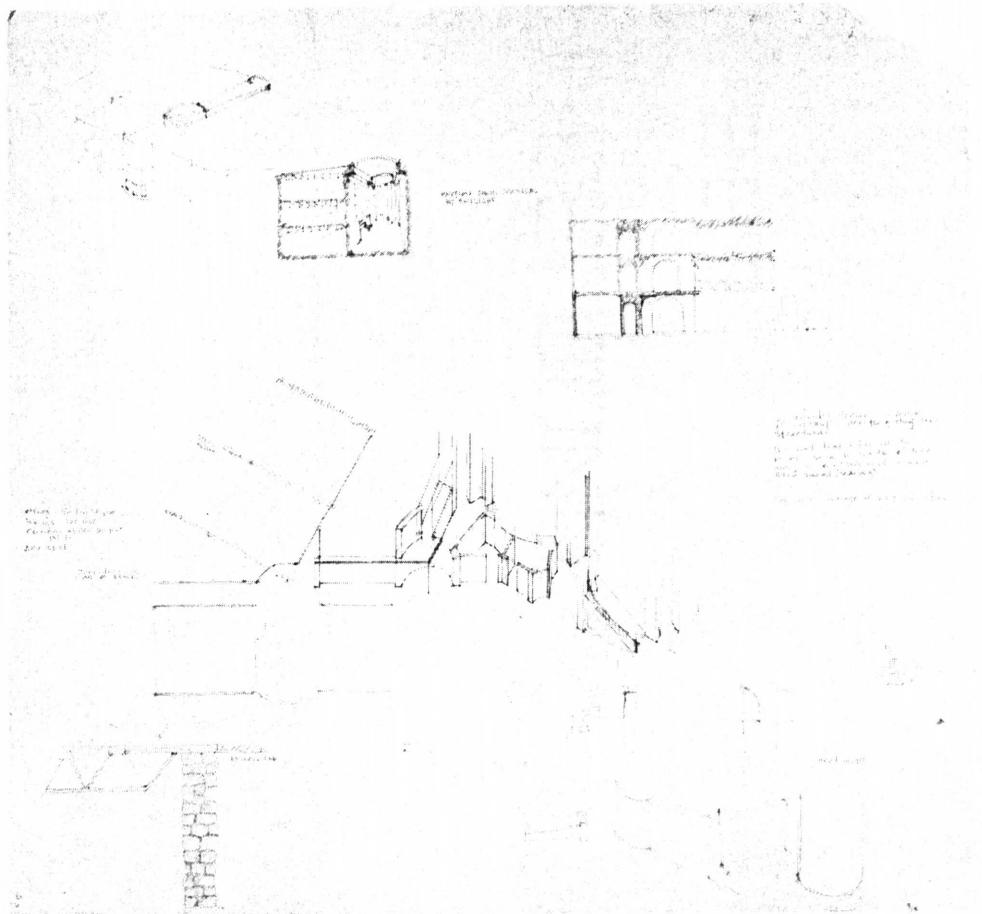
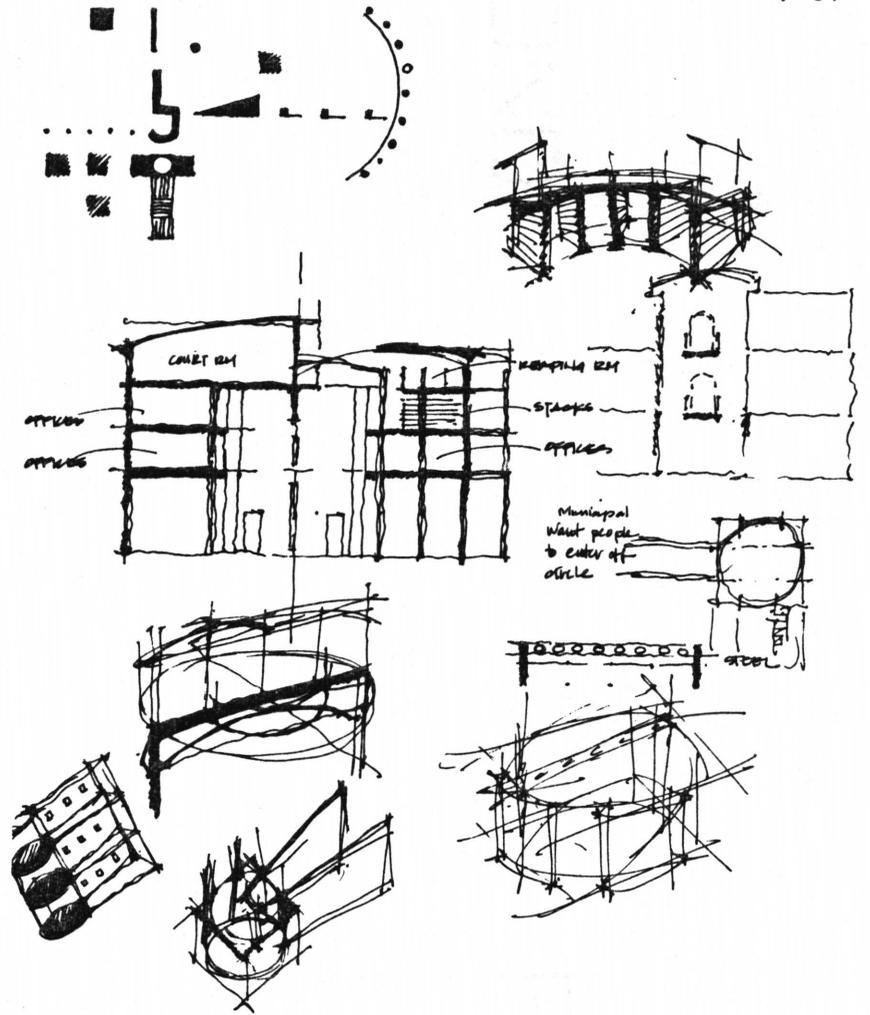
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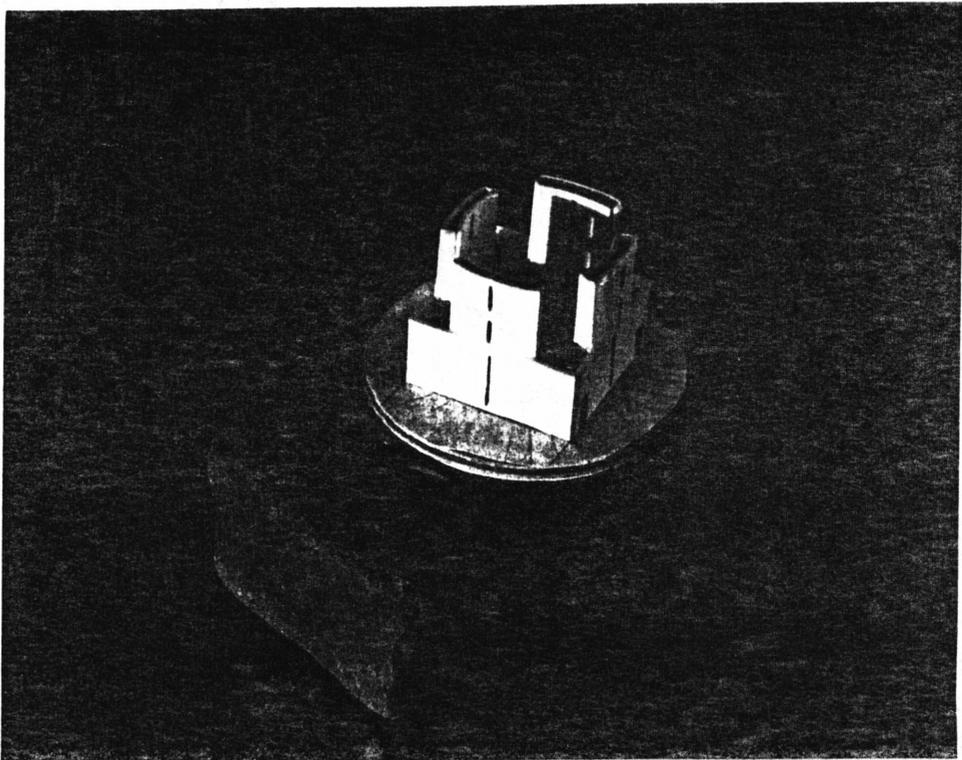
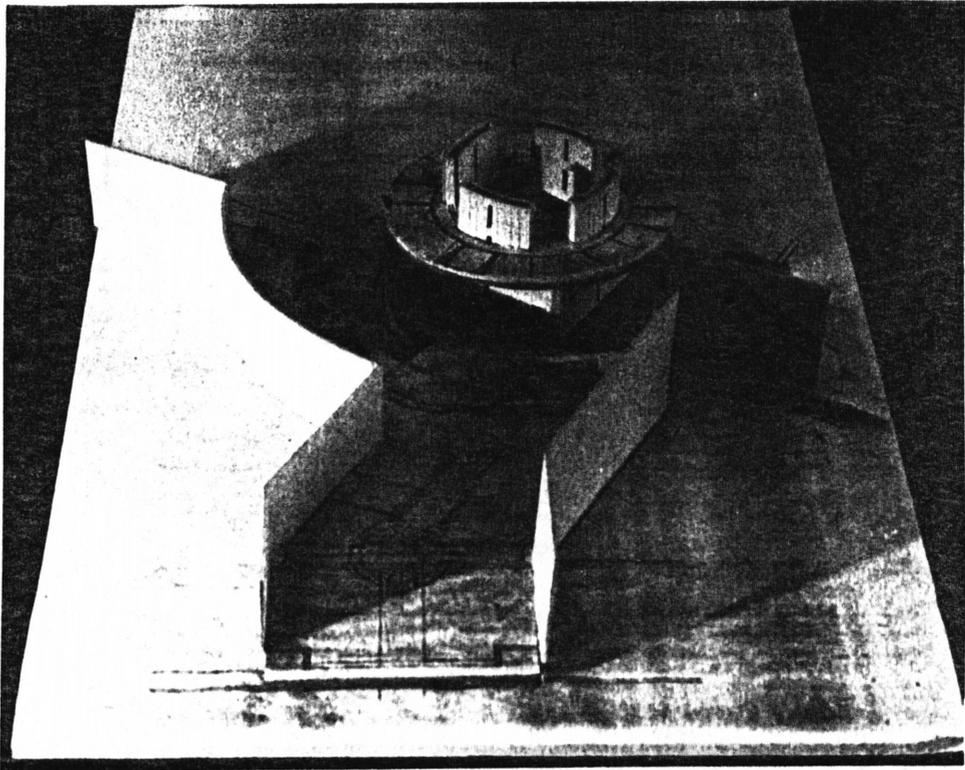


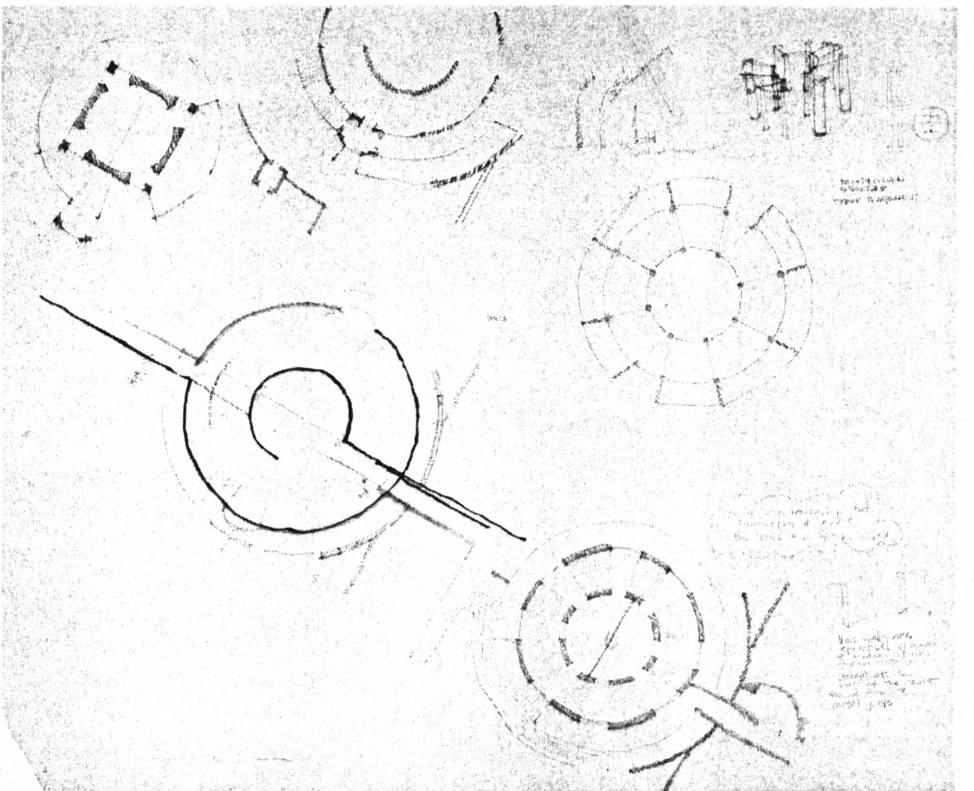
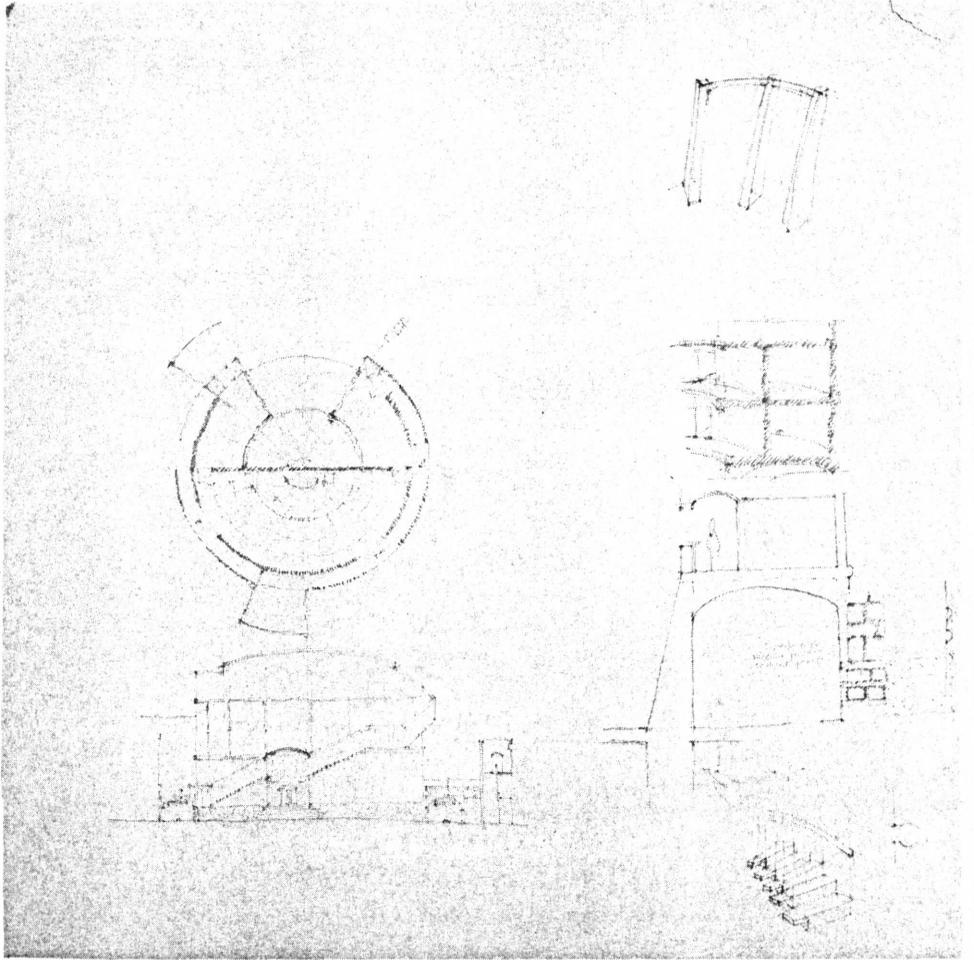


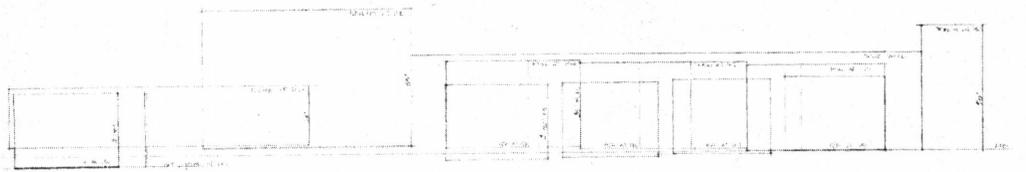


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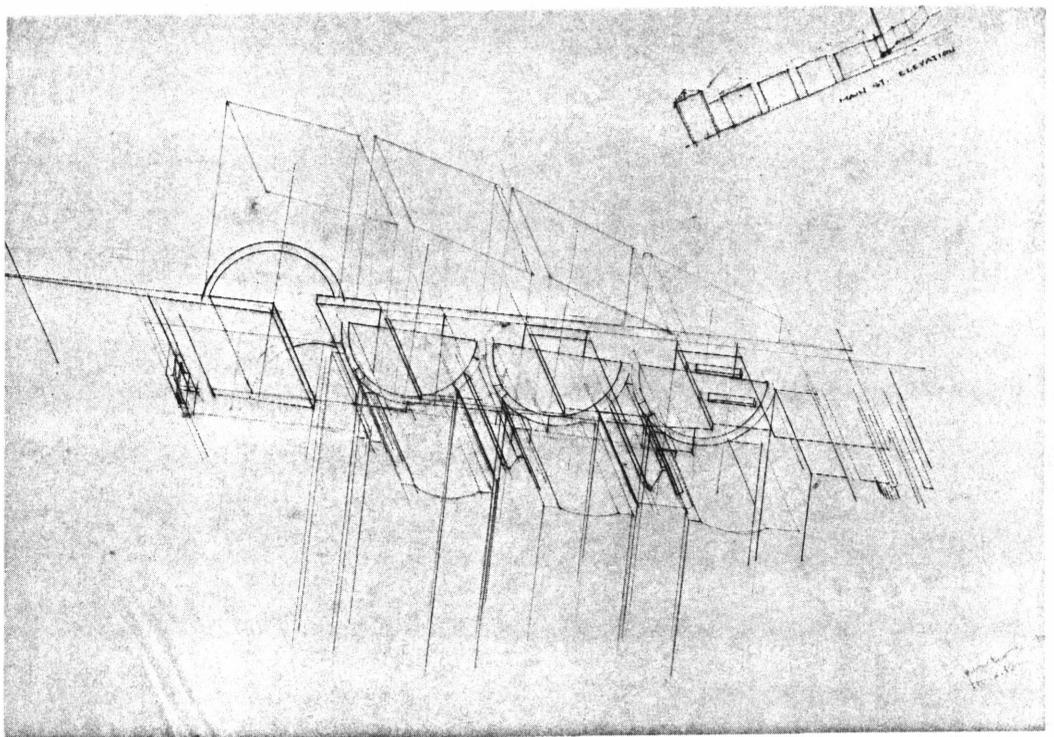
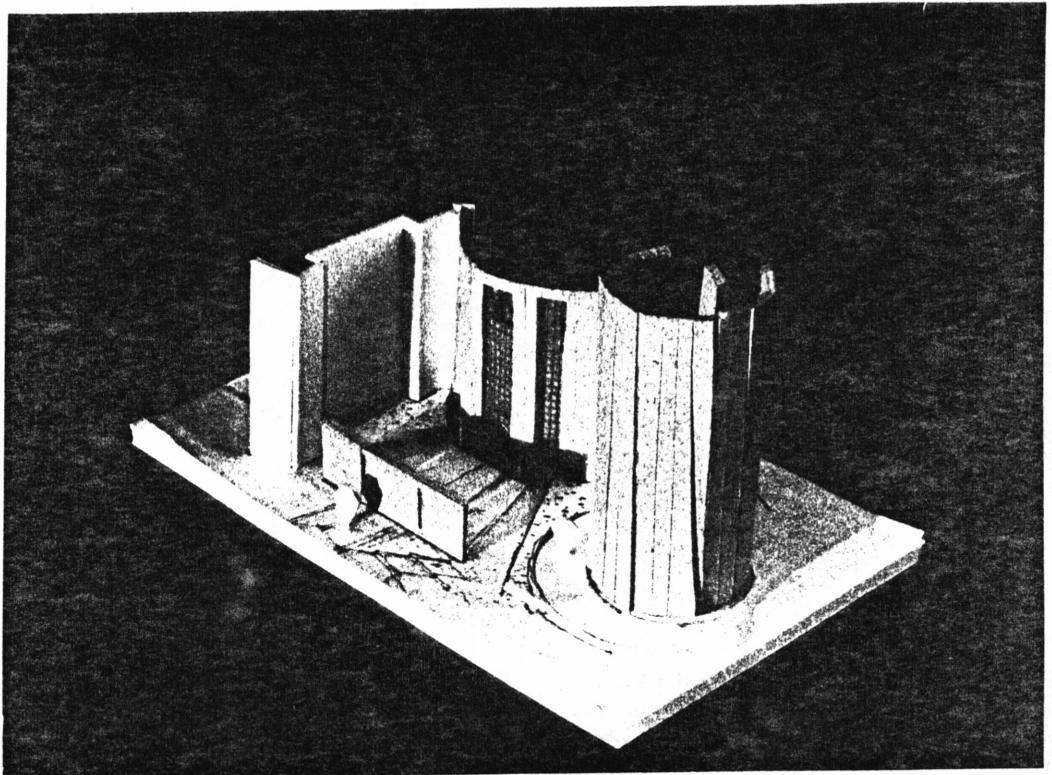




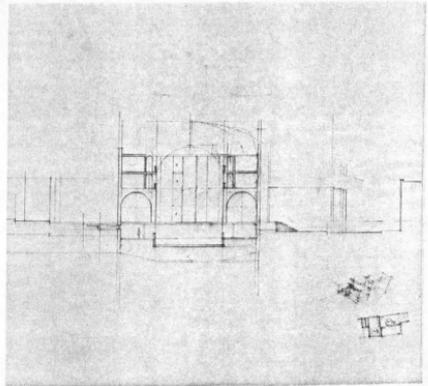
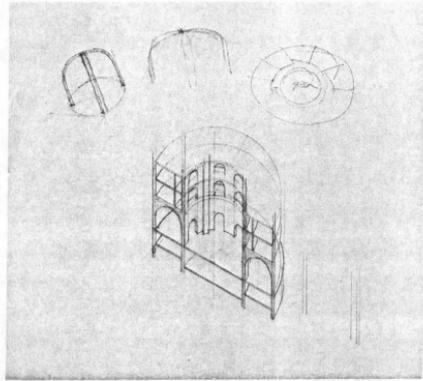




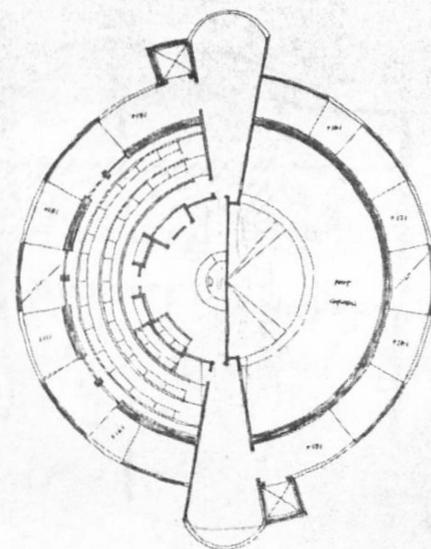
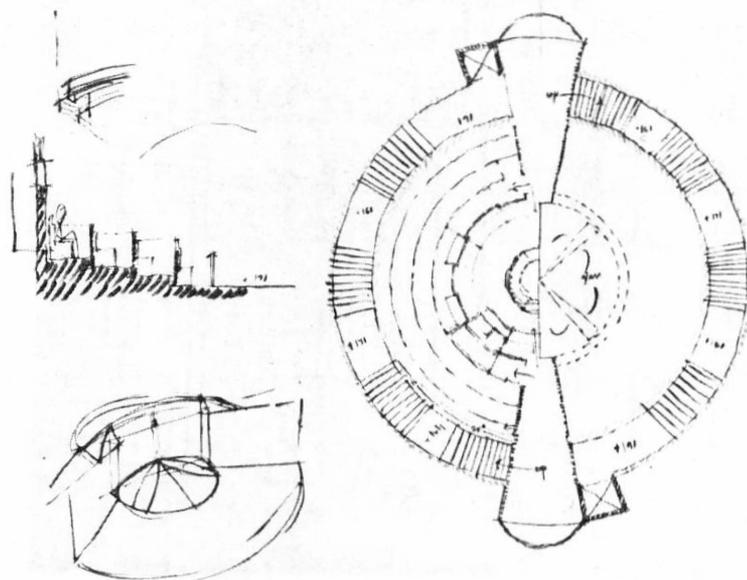
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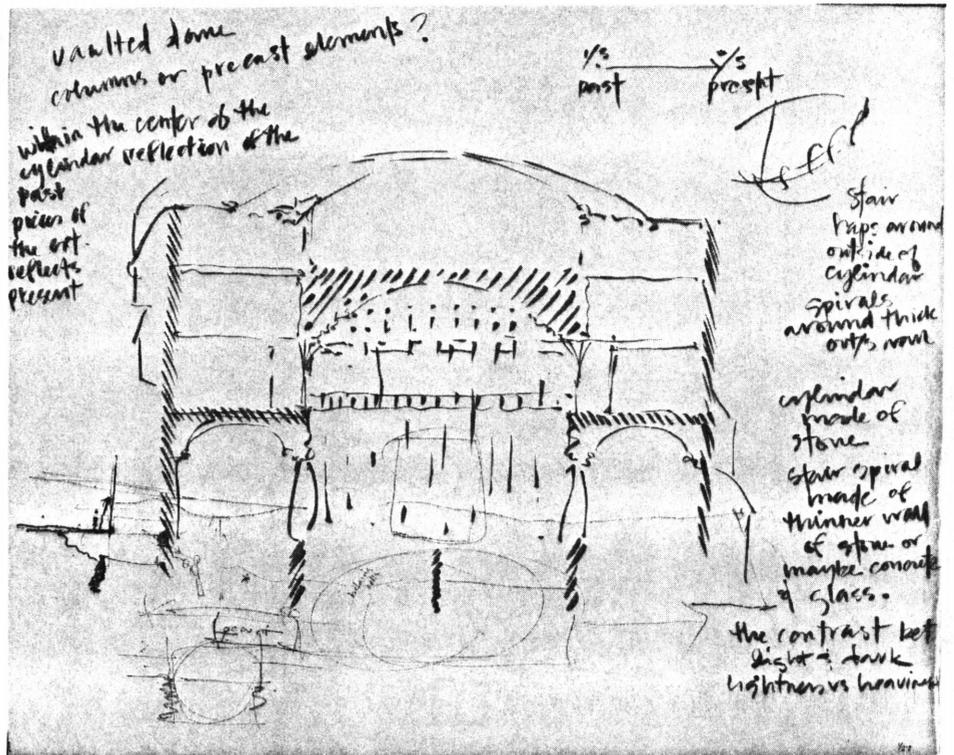
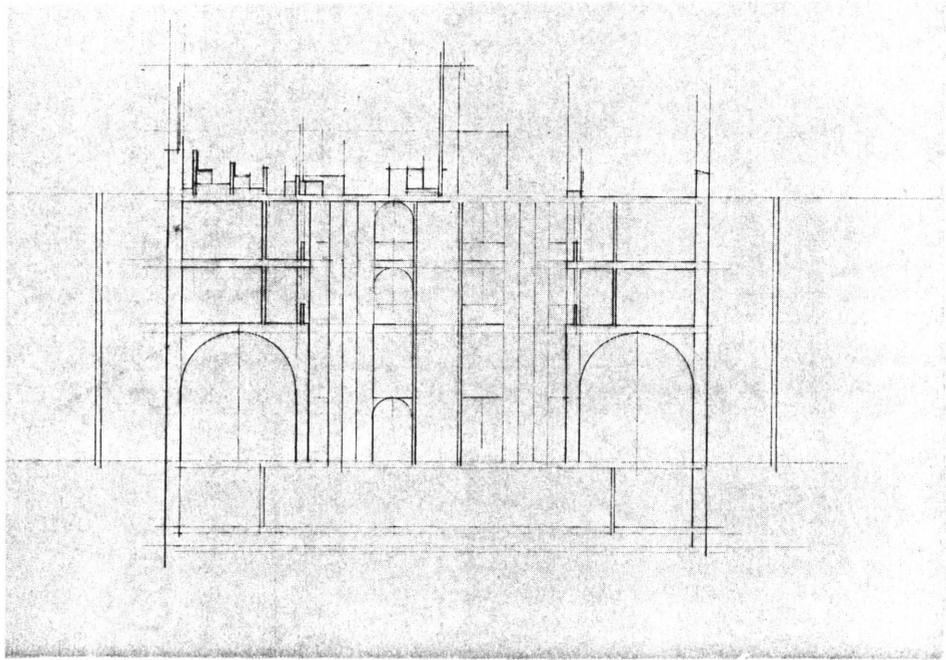


The Courthouse is the central piece of the project with the remaining functions (the police station, municipal building and retail/housing) related to it by either connection through the spine or by the geometry of the circle. Just as the New England Meeting Houses were important to the town as a central source of information for the citizens and a symbol of government, so I wanted this Courthouse to maintain a similar character. The lower level of the Courthouse contains the holding cells for the police. The main floor is a public hall in which the town can display local art or hold civic functions and is directly connected to the spine. The second and third floors contain the offices and the library which are accessed by elevator or by the stairs which wind themselves around the exterior wall. The court itself is at the upper most level. This not only provides easy access into the court from the holding cells but a hierarchical order is created, not only in functional spaces but also through light. As one proceeds up to the court the light becomes much more intense due to the semi-circular skylight which provides north light into the central space of the courthouse, the public hall.

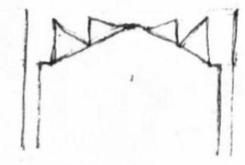
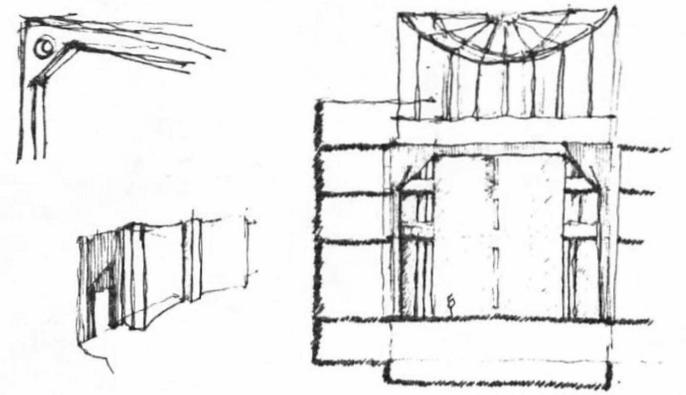


The courtroom itself is a semi-circle of the entire Courthouse, and the skylight is a semi-circle of the central circle. The semi-circular courtroom which cantilevers into the central space is supported by a large steel truss which transfers the loads to two thirty-five foot high columns within the central space. This again emphasizes the importance of the the court and its functions. The judge's bench has a wall of glass block behind it allowing north light to penetrate the area. As can be seen from the roof line the skylight reaches high into the sky relating to the spires of the churches surrounding the site. I wanted it to be a symbol of government in the same manner that the spires are a symbol of religion. The remaining floors are based on a geometry of circles within circles and circles within squares. The offices are radially organized spaces around the central space, which is forty feet in height, and into which light filters down from the great skylight. The materials of construction would be poured-in-place concrete with the use of local Sing-Sing stone, as a further reference to the importance of local elements in the character of the design.



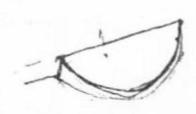
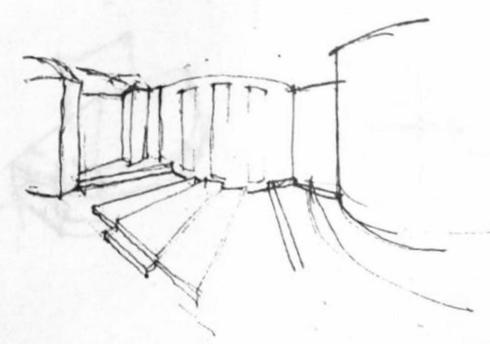
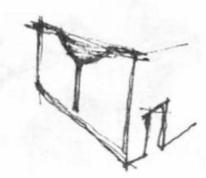
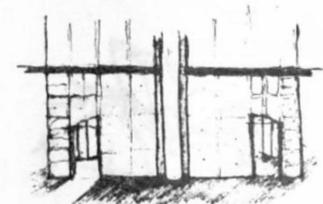
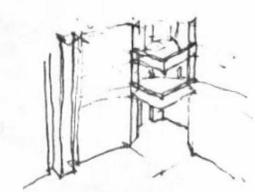
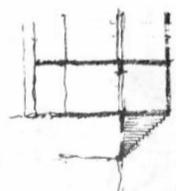
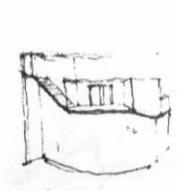


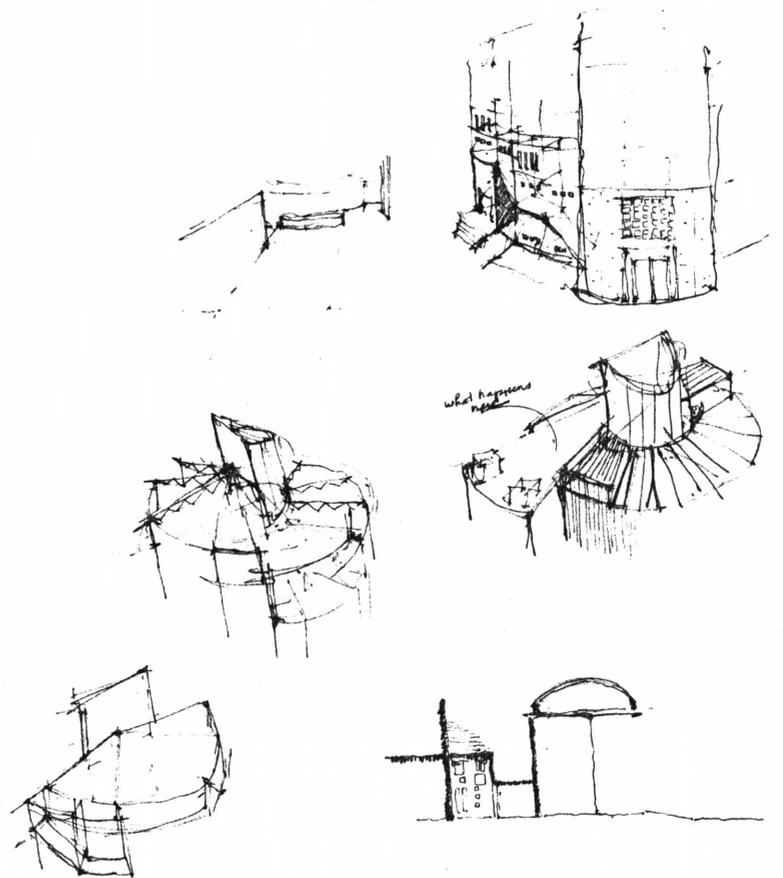
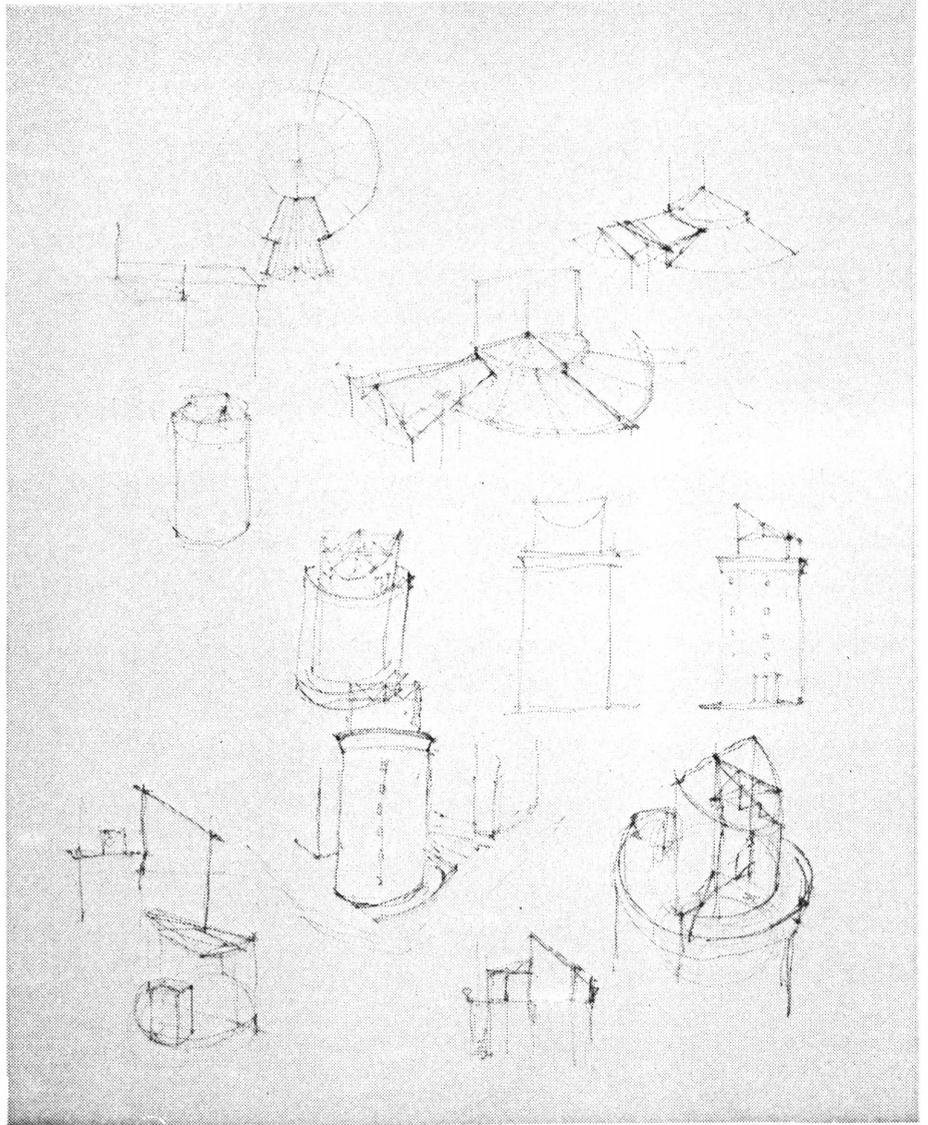
Final Sketches and Drawings

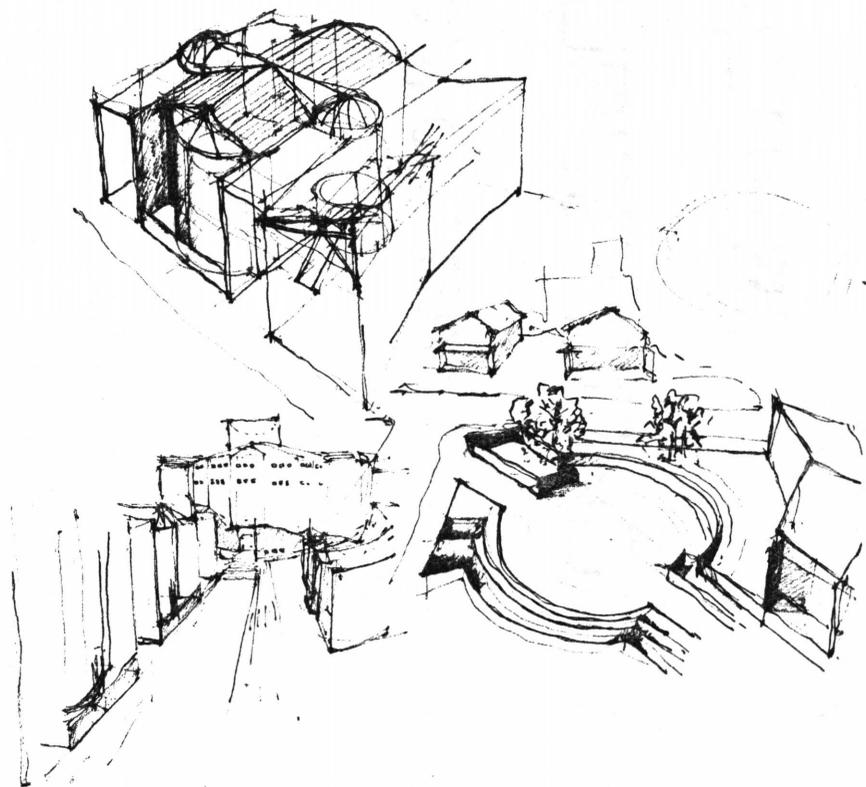
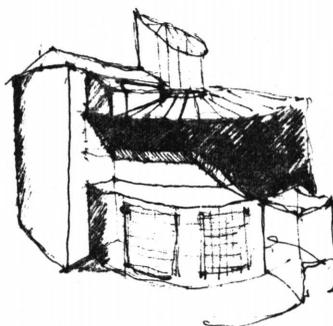
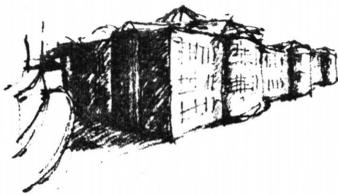
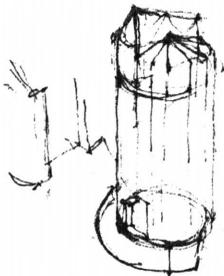
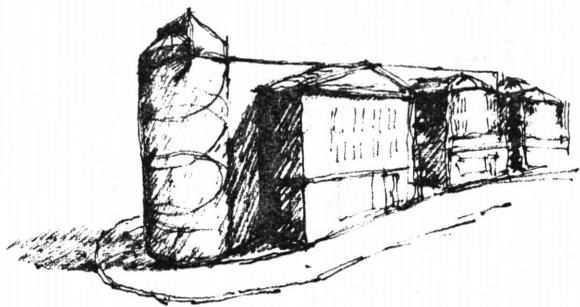


truss is made from ~~concrete~~ concrete

why a truss?
 a truss because of the significance of the courtroom, the truss holds the weight literally & figuratively of the court. It is like monumental (the truss) because of the symbolic nature of the court of justice. The shape of the truss - simple

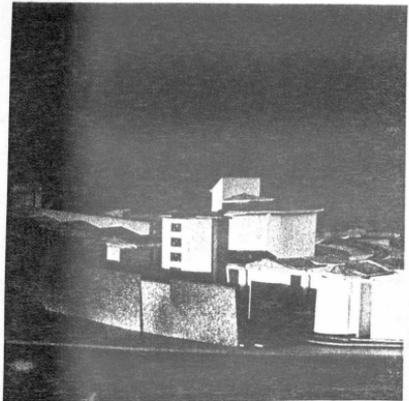
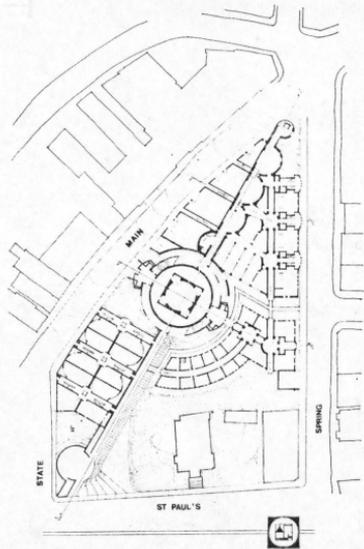






Conclusion

What I wanted to accomplish with this project was an overall composition in form and function. The use of the topography, the geometry of the circle and the linear spine as the generators of the design. I wanted to be sensitive to the existing building surrounding the site and not overshadow them with a high rise. Therefore I set limitations on the height of the buildings near the edges of the site to no more than three stories. The Courthouse and the Tower which serve as symbols are greater in height.



REPORT

REPORT

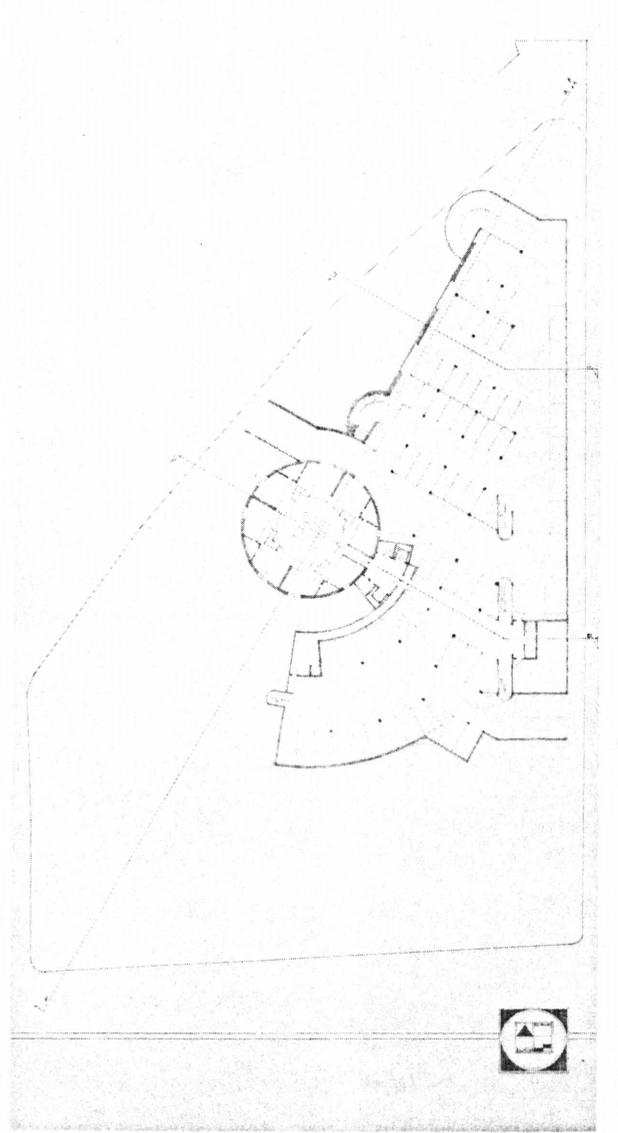
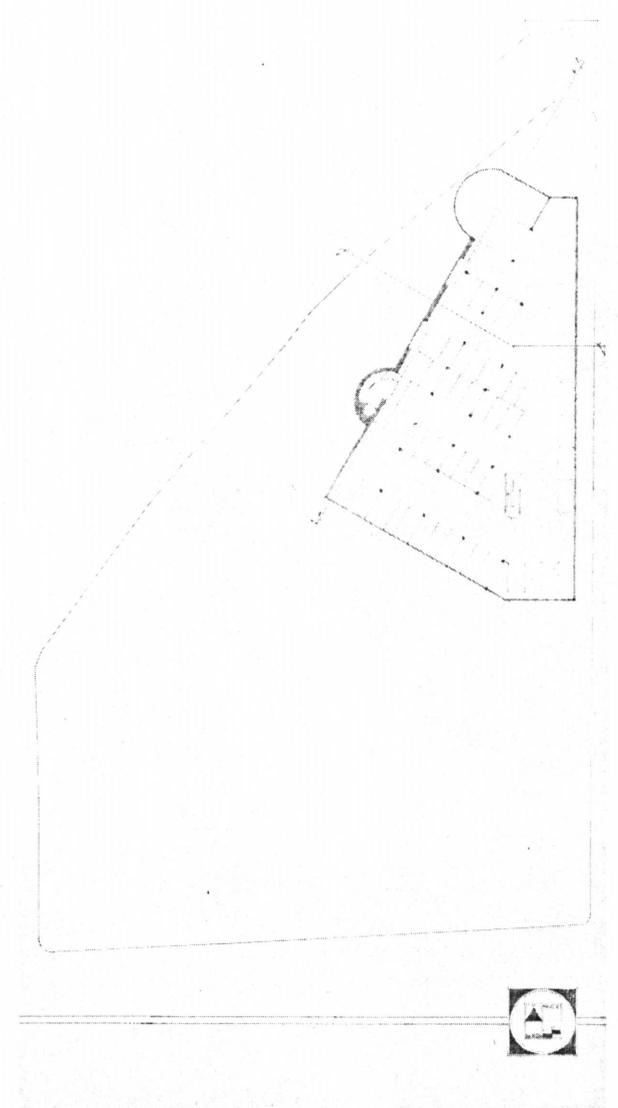
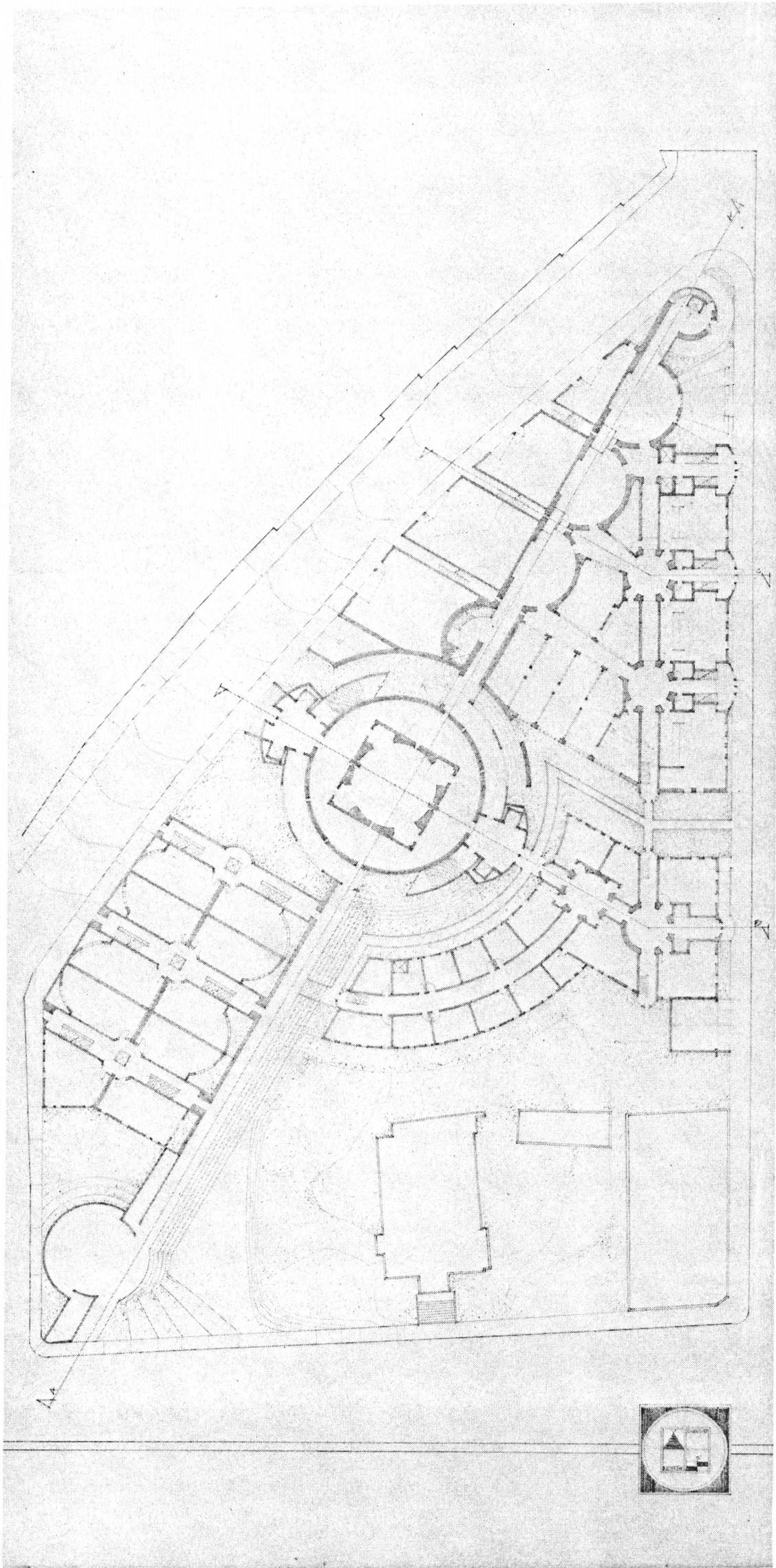


PLATE 1

PLATE 1



COTTON

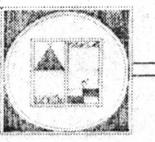
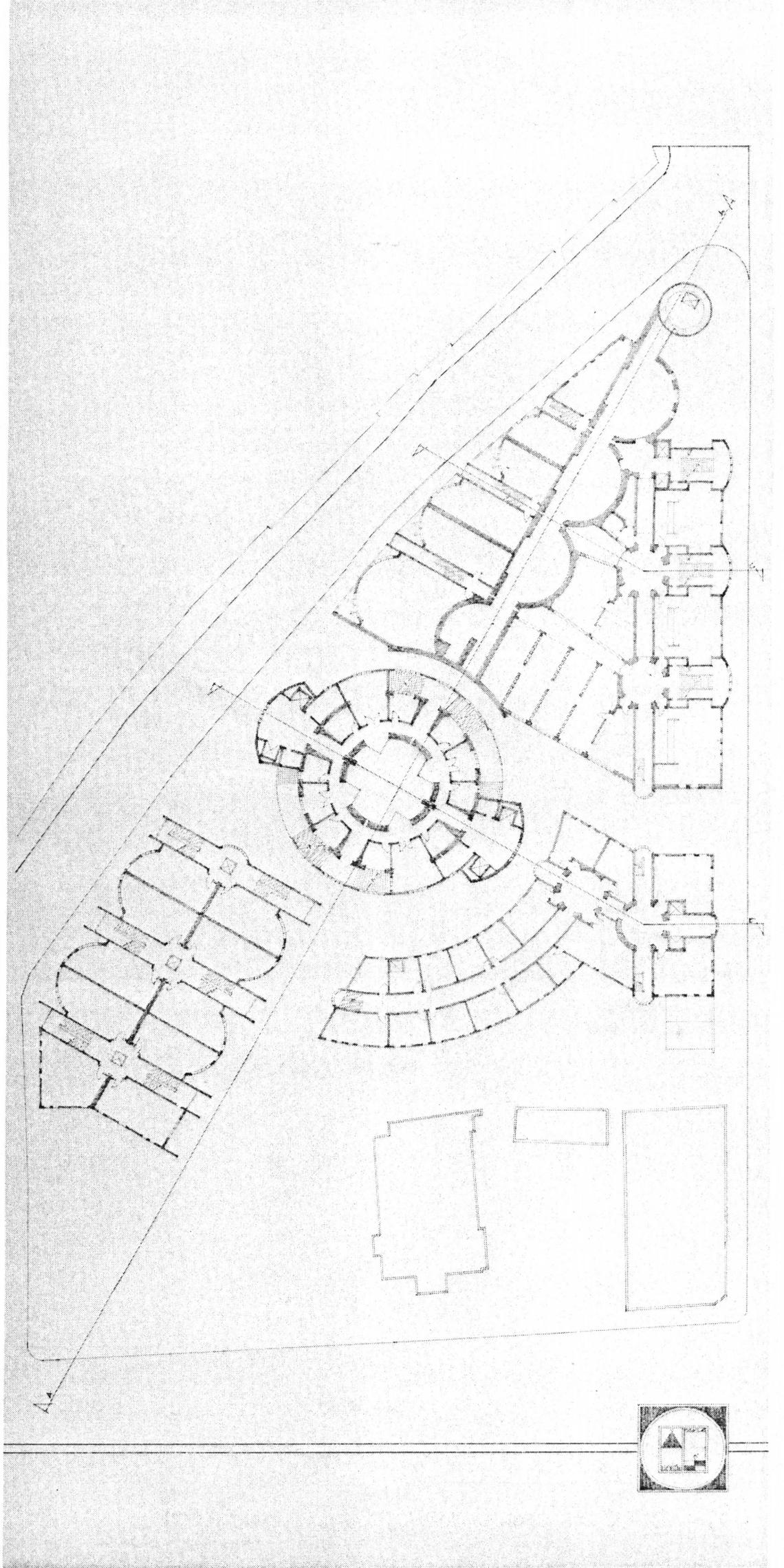
BOND

DEPT

BIBLIOTHEQUE

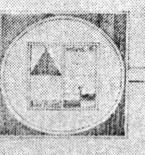
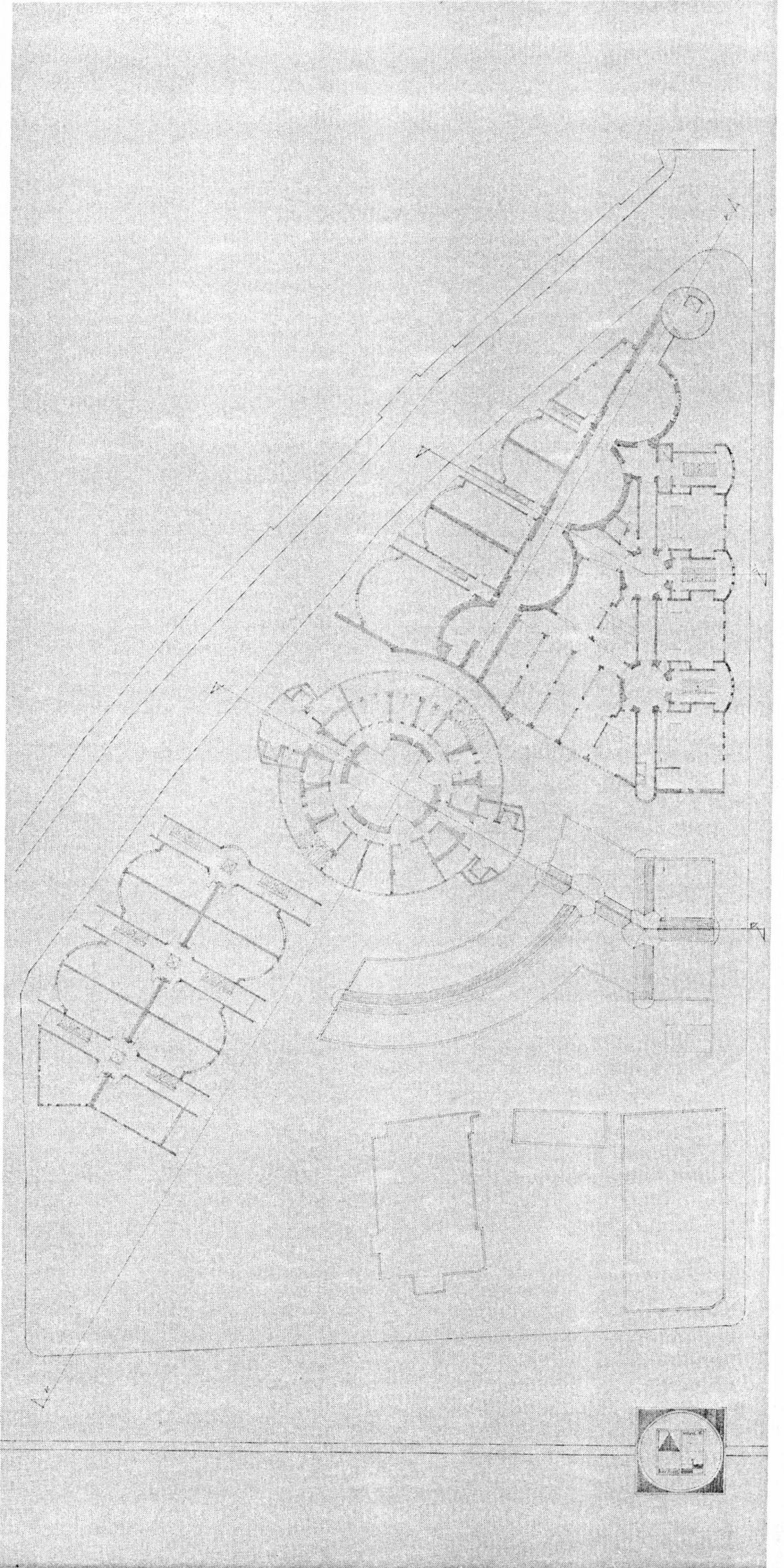
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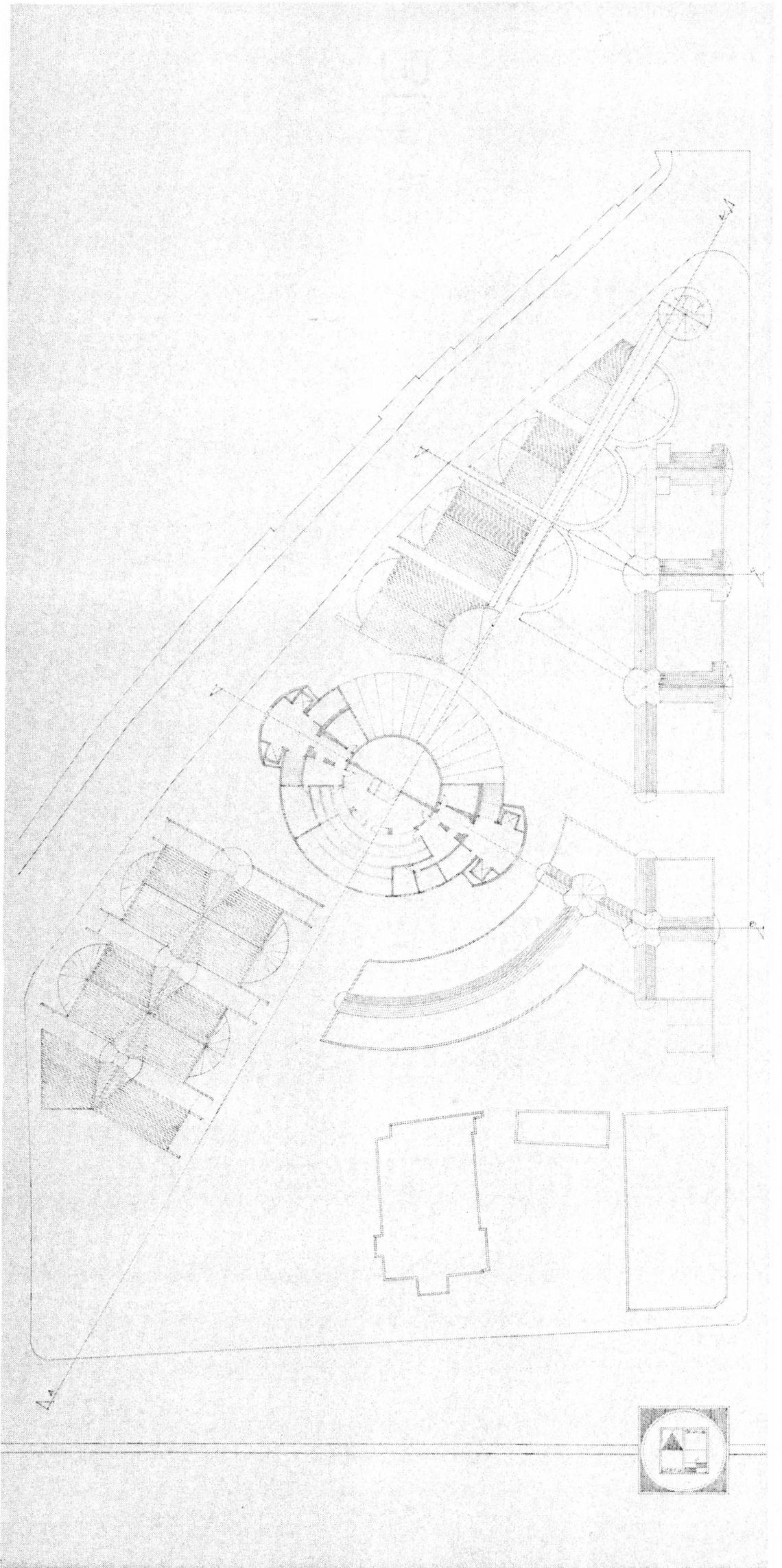
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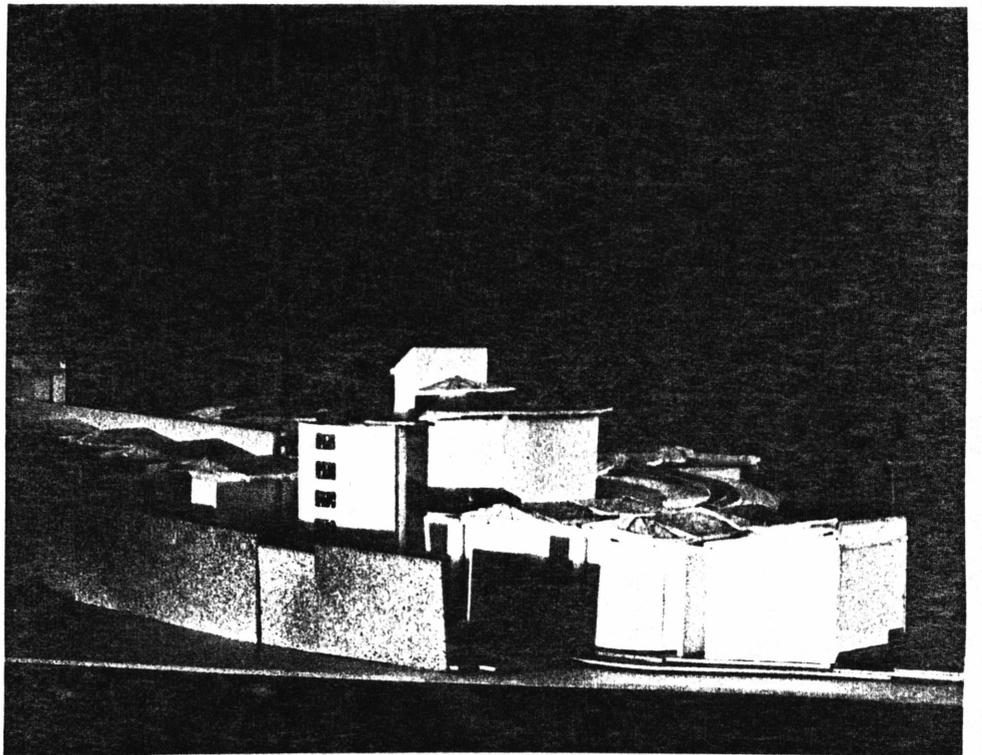
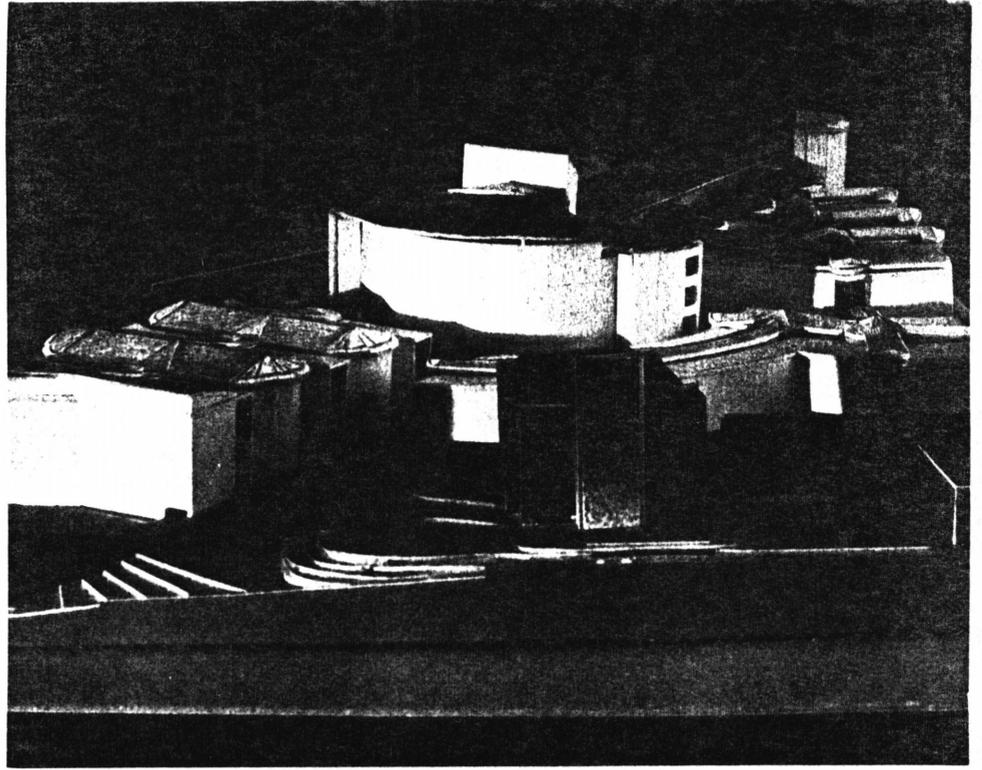


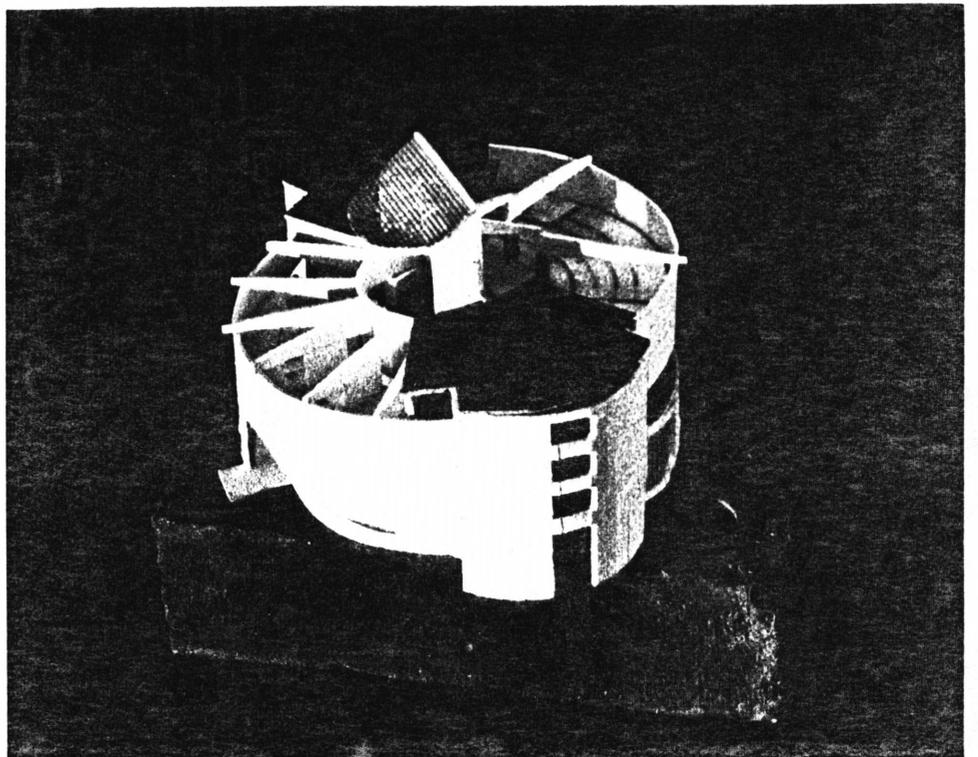
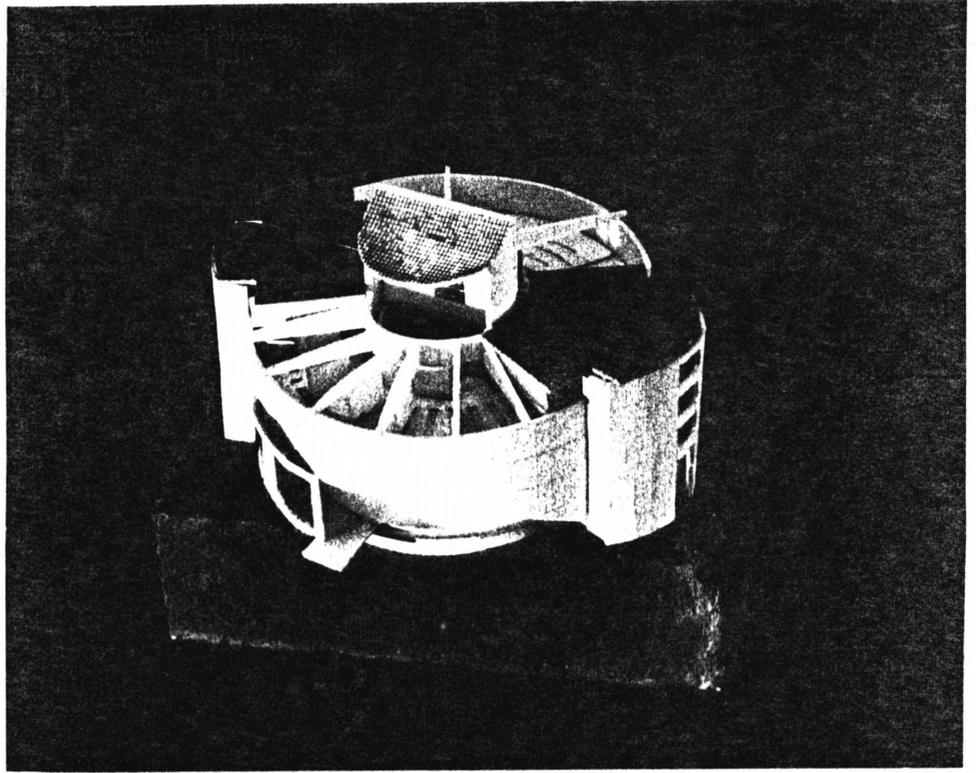
BRIT
PAPER BOND
COTTON

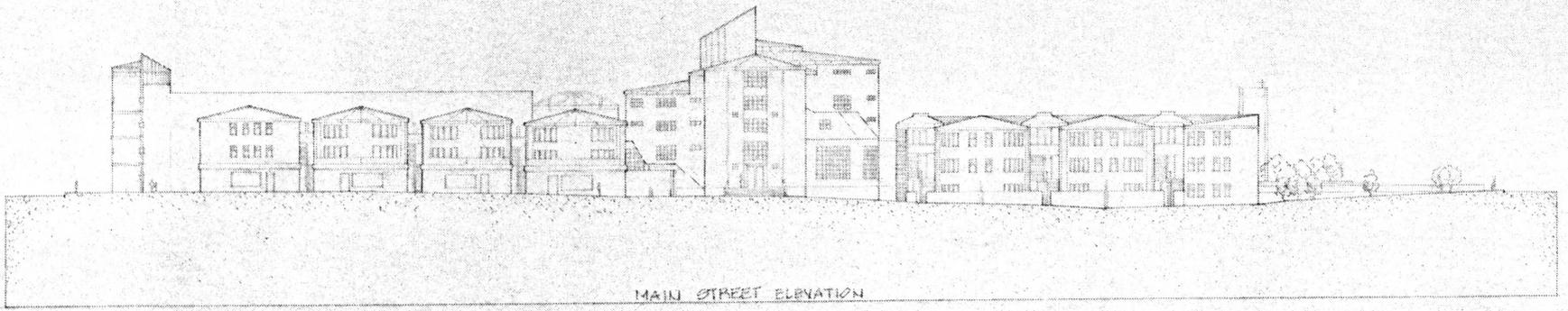
REED JOURNAL
COTTON



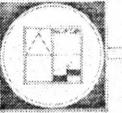




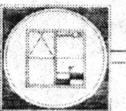


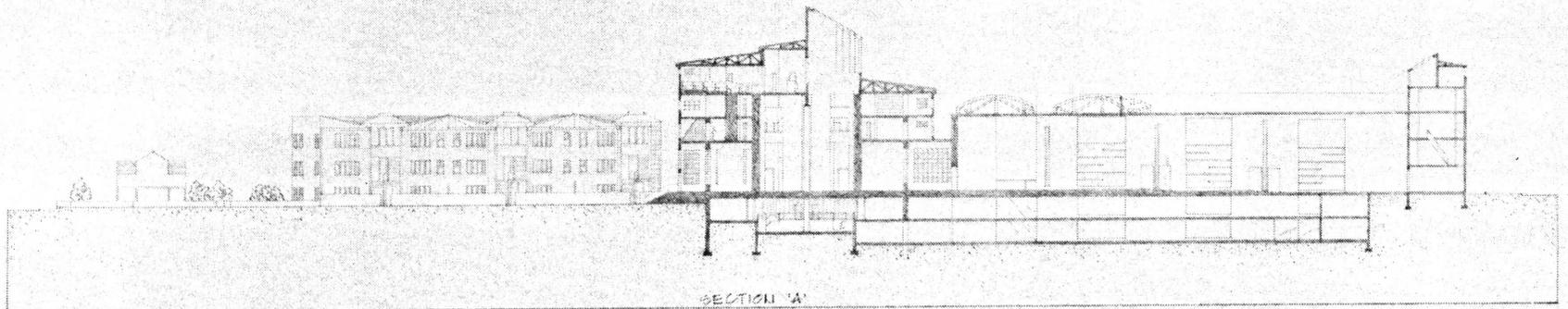


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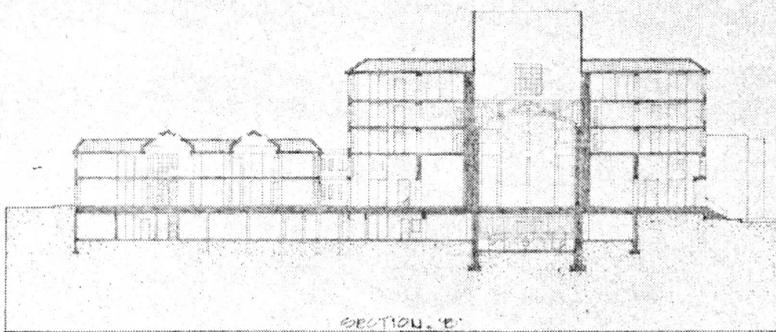
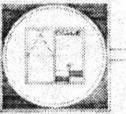


SPRING STREET ELEVATION

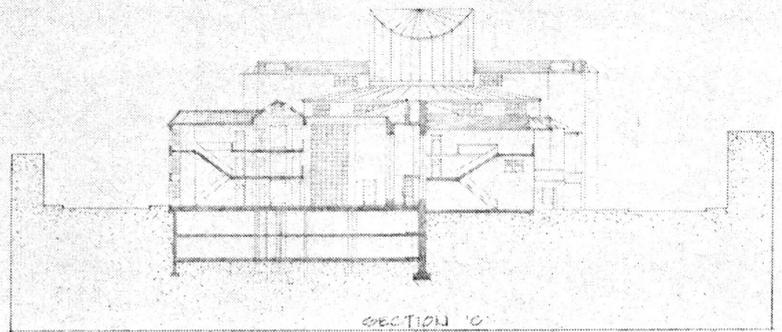




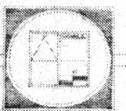
SECTION W



SECTION B



SECTION C



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