

A BOOKSTORE
by
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Thesis submitted to the faculty of the
Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARCHITECTURE
in
Architecture

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May 1991

Blacksburg, Virginia

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(ABSTRACT)

The project, a bookstore for a vacant site within the Pinch Historic District in downtown Memphis, Tennessee, develops an architectural concept of design compatibility that maintains the continuity of the existing architectural vocabulary rather than creating a literal historic replication.

By using this philosophy, the design of an urban infill project that respects the history as well as the existing character of the district is developed. At the same time, the Bookstore meets the needs of the residents and visitors of the area through the provision of residential, commercial and entertainment space, thus contributing to the comprehensive revitalization of Downtown Memphis.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To my husband for his love,
support and understanding.

And to Hans C. Rott for his guidance and
encouragement and for sharing his
knowledge and love of architecture.

I also wish to thank Bob Dunay and
Frank Weiner for their guidance and
direction.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

The City - Memphis	1
The Neighborhood - The Pinch	2
The Project - A Bookstore	4
Conclusion	16
Bibliography	17
Vita	18

THE CITY - MEMPHIS

Memphis is located on the banks of the Mississippi River at the southwesternmost part of Tennessee. With Arkansas across the river to the west and Mississippi to the south, Memphis is the center of commerce for the multi-state Mid-South Region.

The original city of Memphis was laid out in 1819 and included approximately 1300 acres. The town plan consisted of north-south streets crossed at block intervals by east-west avenues, each paralleled by alleys which quartered the blocks. The plan also designated four public squares and a public promenade on the river bluff.

Its founders, Judge John Overton, General James Winchester and General Andrew Jackson, took the name Memphis from the ancient capitol of Egypt. The name Memphis means "good abode" roughly translated from Greek.

The site chosen for the city was not a result of chance. Rather, its location high upon the Fourth Chickasaw Bluff provided a commanding view of the Mississippi River, well drained land on which to build, and was at the convergence of the Chickasaw and Cherokee Traces.

Memphis prospered as a frontier town and in the 1850s, primarily as a result of the cotton industry, was one of the fastest growing cities in the United States. By the end of the nineteenth century, Memphis had a population of over 102,000, despite the setbacks of the Civil War and Yellow Fever epidemics.

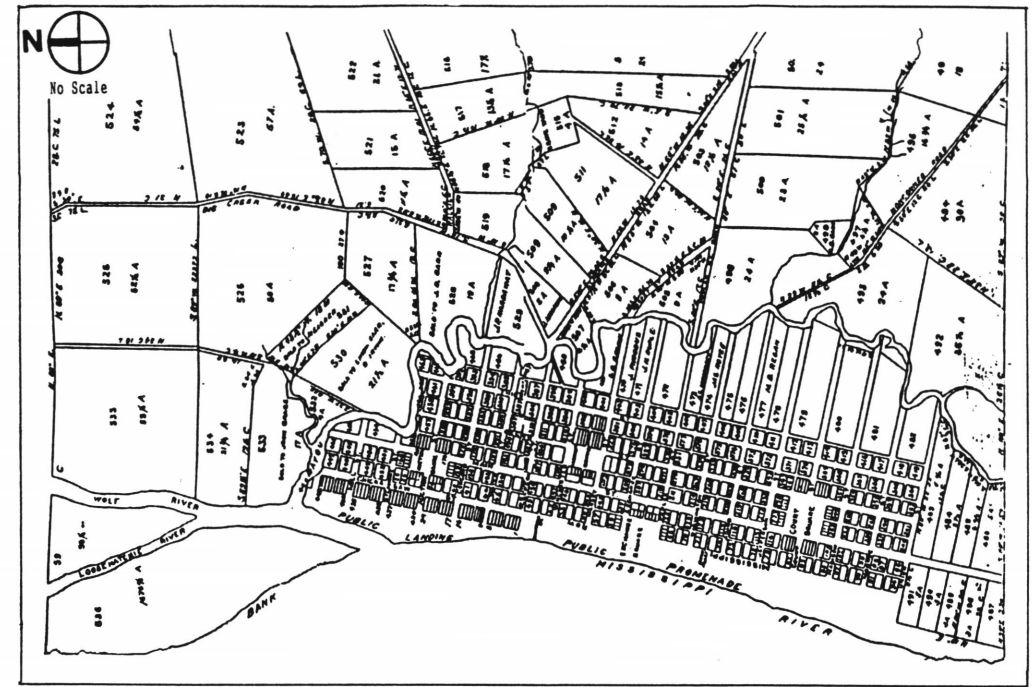
In the twentieth century, Memphis, not unlike most cities in the United States, experienced periods of growth tempered with periods of decline. However, the multi-faceted economy of the region spared Memphis the periods of substantial decline and the metropolitan area maintained a steady growth rate.

Nevertheless, Memphis experienced national trends such as urban sprawl and suburban migration resulting in the flow of people and jobs from the inner city to the suburbs.

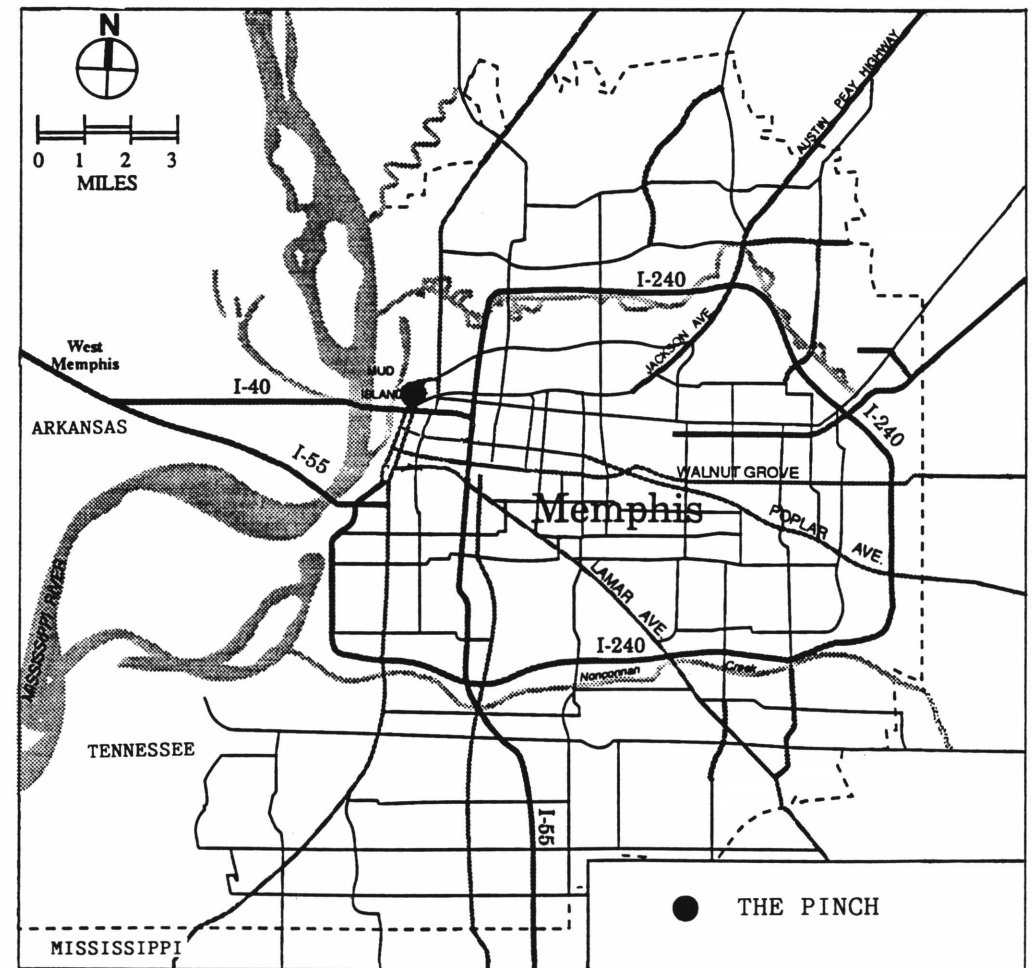
To protect the investment in the inner city, and primarily in the downtown area, a comprehensive revitalization program was initiated in the late 1970s. Special tax incentives, innovative financing mechanisms, infrastructure improvements and other programs designed to protect and encourage investment were created and implemented.

This comprehensive revitalization approach has resulted in the construction of new office buildings and residential developments, renovation of numerous historic structures, many adaptive reuse projects, and improvements in the public facilities throughout the downtown area.

Of particular importance in the program is the subject area of this study, The Pinch.



ORIGINAL PLAN OF MEMPHIS - 1819



MEMPHIS - 1991

THE NEIGHBORHOOD - THE PINCH

At present, residential development, entertainment and tourism are the most important elements of the Downtown Memphis revitalization policy. The area that provides unique opportunities in these elements is The Pinch.

The Pinch Historic District is located immediately to the north of the central business district. The Pinch is the northernmost part of the original city of Memphis.

The Pinch is one of the few areas of the original city of Memphis that remain significantly unaltered. The area is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and has been designated a local historic district. Seven historic markers are currently located in The Pinch and the area contains over forty significant structures, most of which are listed as contributing to the historic designation.

The buildings within The Pinch are good examples of mid-to-late nineteenth century architecture that originally served two purposes. The ground floor in these buildings was used for commercial purposes while the upper levels served as residential space for both shop owners and tenants.

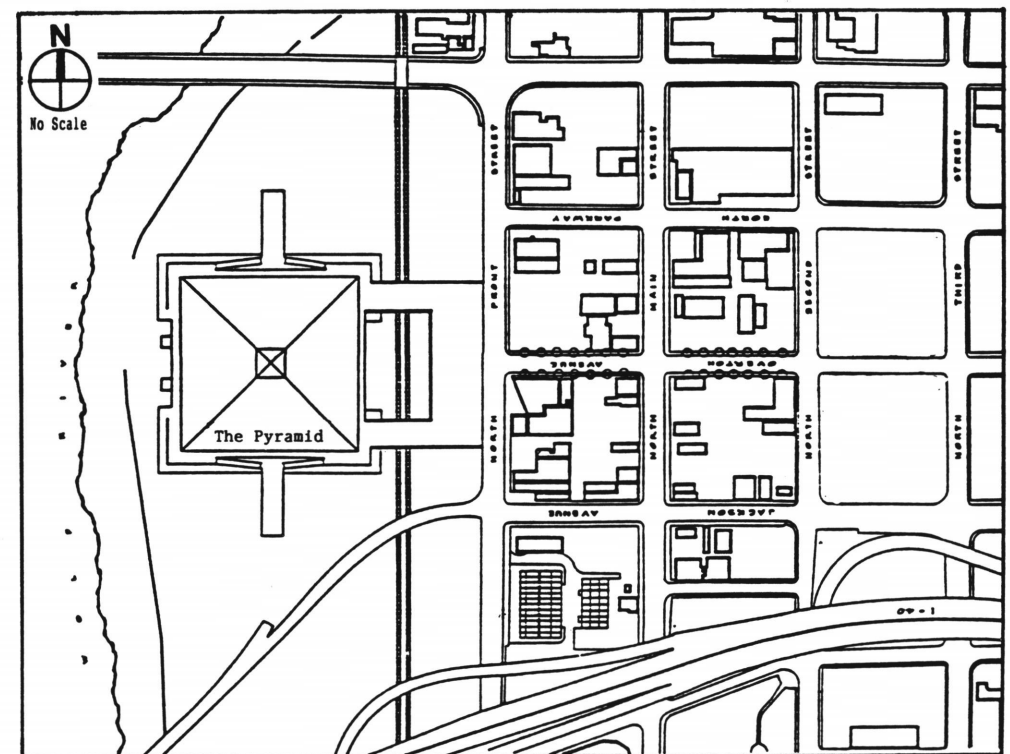
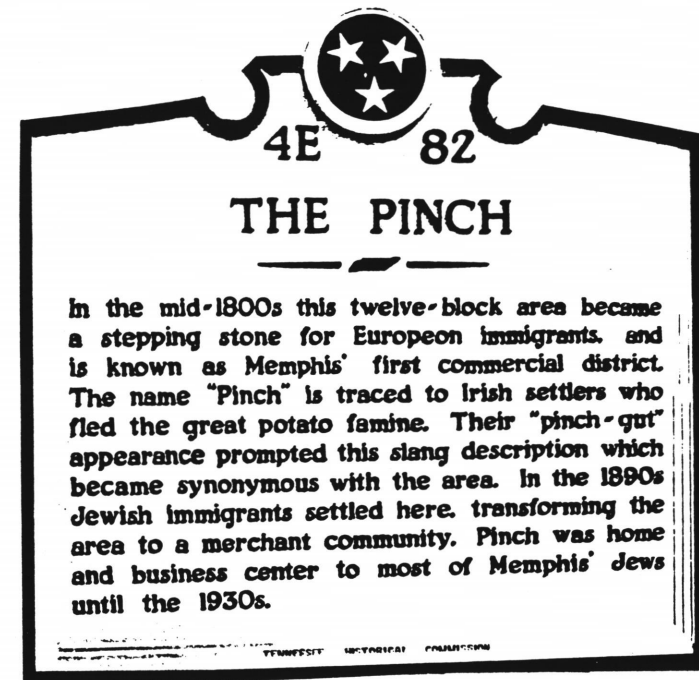
The buildings are mainly two and three story brick masonry structures with flat roofs. Commercial type store fronts are found at ground level while the upper floors have rhythmically and proportionally spaced windows. Elements such as wood or metal storefronts, stone lintels and sills, stone or brick bandings, wooden or metal brackets and cast iron vent grates are commonplace.

The name "Pinch" is an abbreviated version of the term "Pinchgut" which was used to describe the poor, undernourished settlers of the area in the early 1800s and later, to the neighborhood in which they resided.

The Pinch evolved over the next century from an Irish neighborhood to a Jewish neighborhood to a heterogeneous district comprised of Catholic, Protestant and Jewish European-Americans and African-Americans. In this form, The Pinch flourished until the 1960s, when it became the victim of suburban migration and central city deterioration.

Now, with its rich history, numerous historic structures in sound condition, and strategic position as the northern anchor of a Downtown in the midst of a comprehensive revitalization program, The Pinch offers an opportunity for an urban neighborhood ambiance unlike that which may be found or created anywhere else in Memphis.

The Bookstore represents a key element in the fabric of The Pinch as a revitalized historic and functioning urban neighborhood.



THE PINCH

THE PROJECT - A BOOKSTORE

The Project is the design of a bookstore on a vacant parcel located in The Pinch. The site is the northeast corner of the intersection of North Main Street and Overton Avenue.

The following goals and issues provided guidance during the design process:

To create an urban infill project that respects the existing character of the neighborhood;

To utilize the basic architectural vocabulary of the existing architecture to develop a compatible design that maintains continuity rather than creates a literal historic replication;

To provide a land use compatible with the present day needs of residents and tourists and in keeping with the historic mixture of residential and commercial uses;

To build upon the historic past of The Pinch while creating the foundation for a successful future;

To contribute to the preservation of The Pinch while at the same time, contributing to the economic and physical revitalization of Downtown Memphis.

Existing conditions relative to the site include:

A vacant parcel on a corner of an intersection with historic structures located on the other three corners;

A non-contributing structure located to the north and an alley to the east;

A concrete sidewalk with granite curb on both the western and southern property lines to the streets;

The southern boundary on Overton Avenue, on axis with the Pyramid Arena and designated as the major pedestrian access point through The Pinch to the Pyramid;

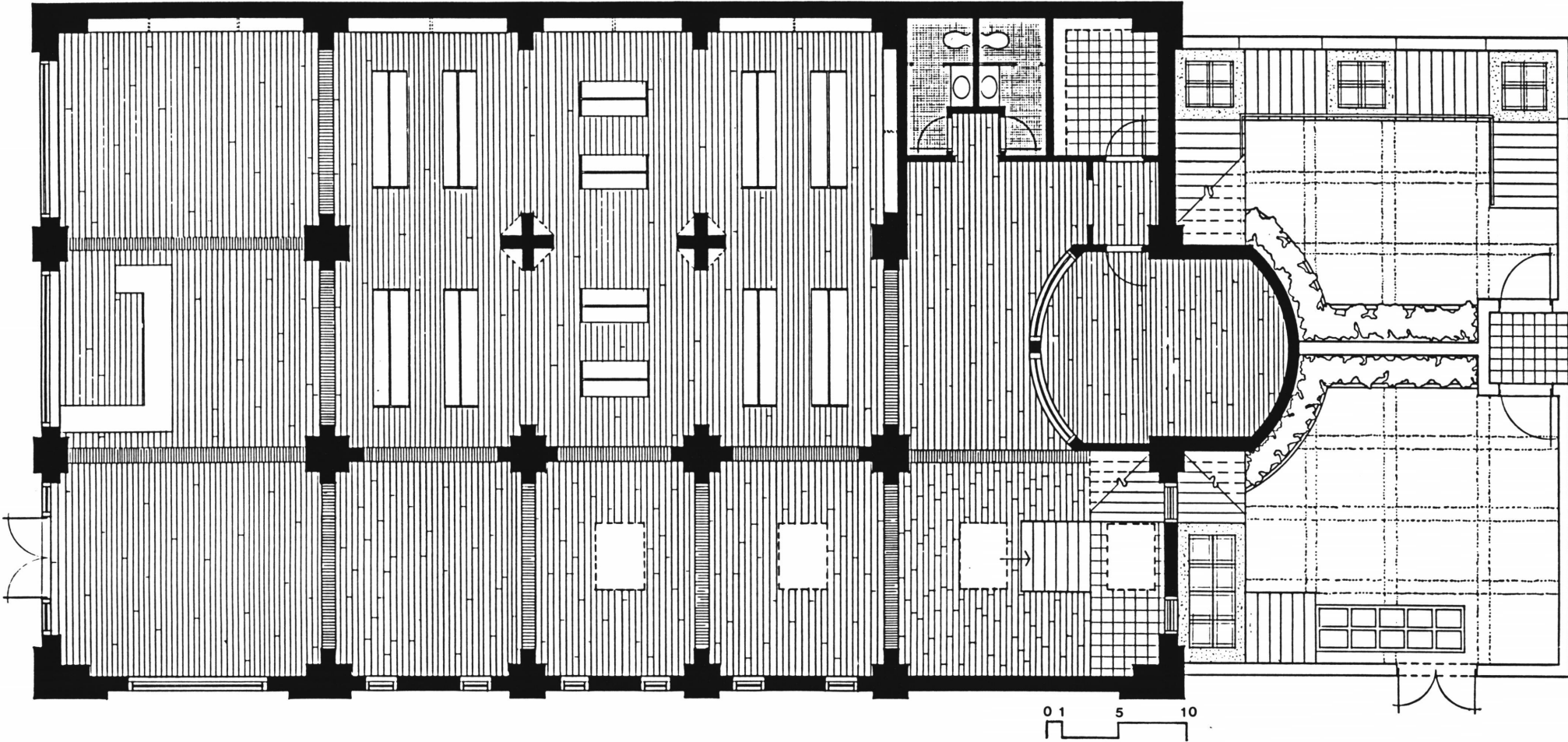
The western boundary on North Main Street, the major vehicular transportation corridor through The Pinch and the location of the northern segment of the Downtown Trolley route.

The design of the Bookstore is represented on the following pages.

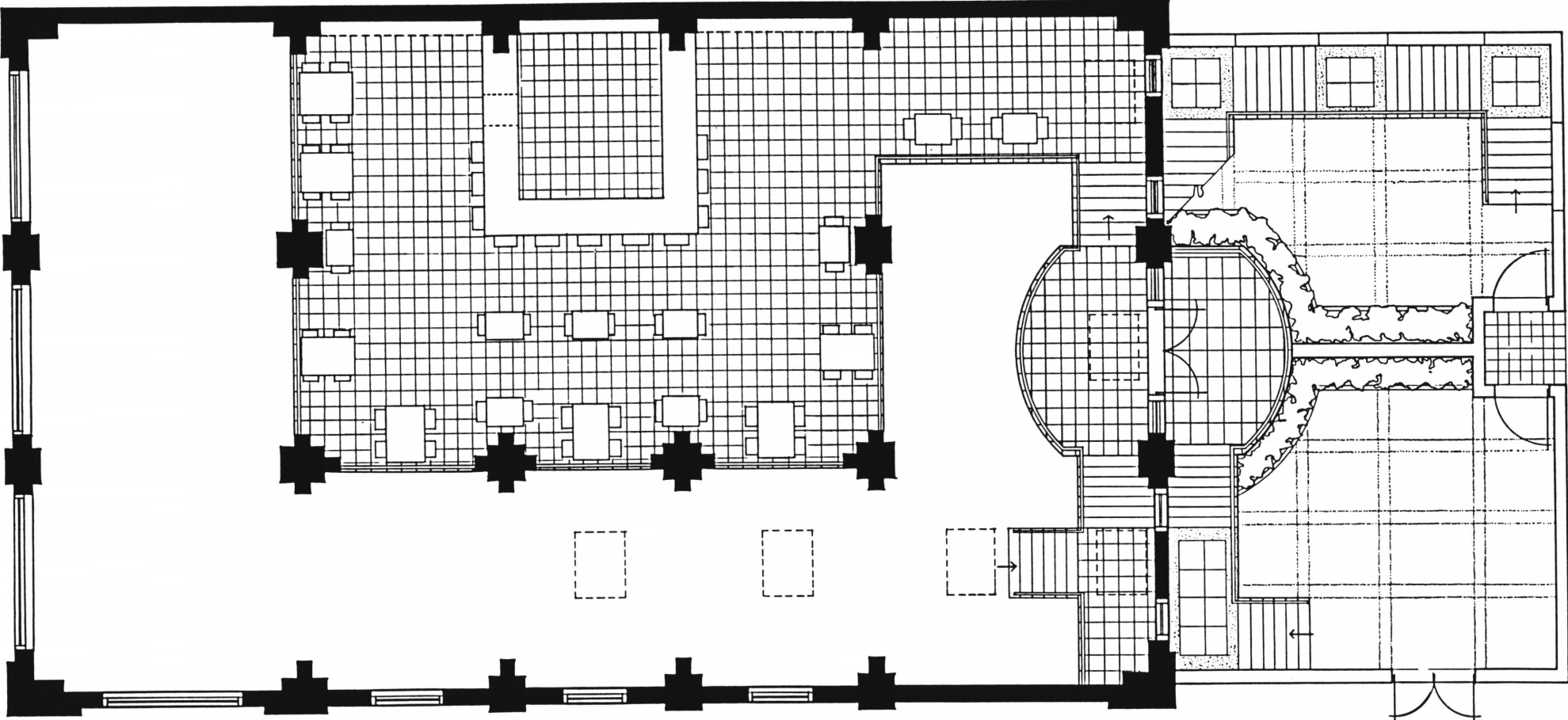


SITE LOCATION

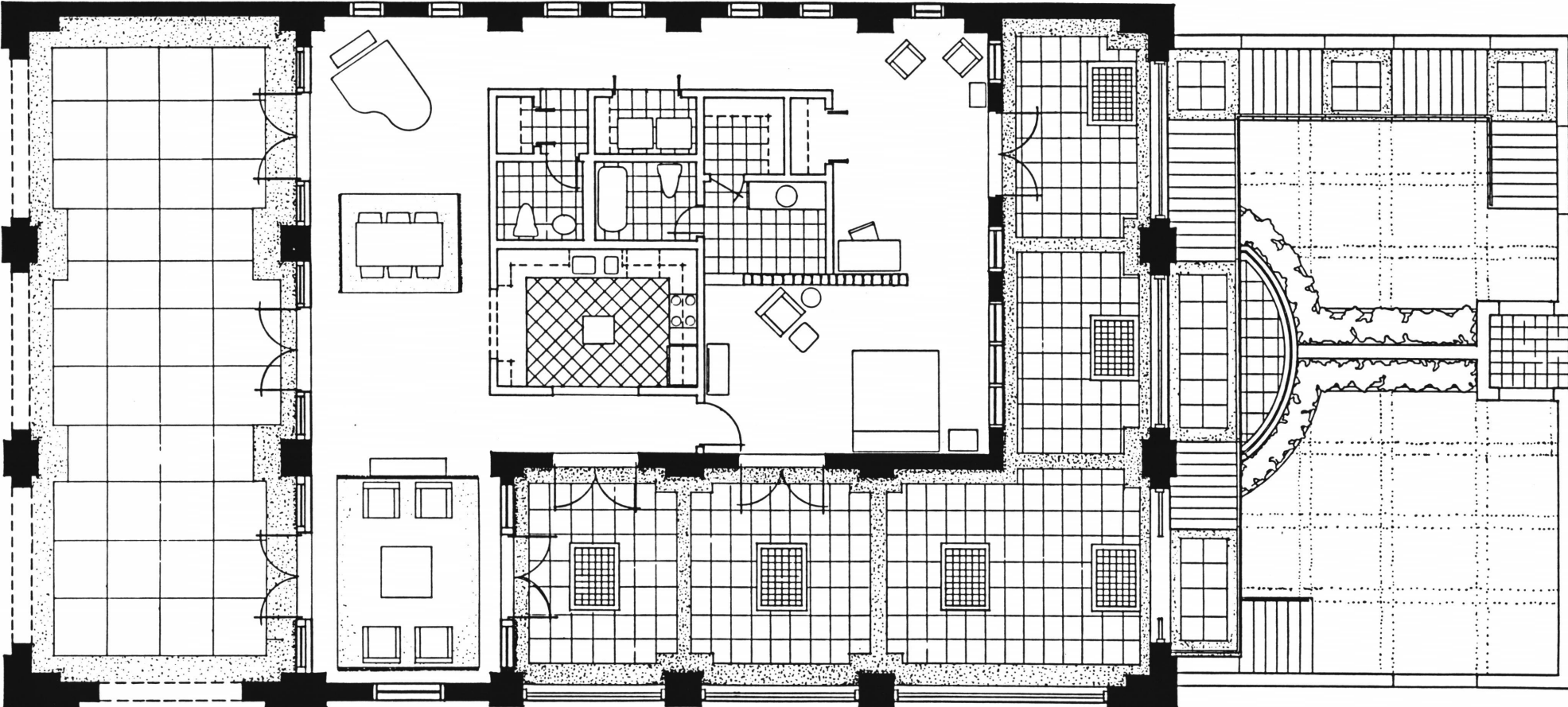
FIRST FLOOR PLAN - A BOOKSTORE



SECOND FLOOR PLAN - A COFFEE SHOP



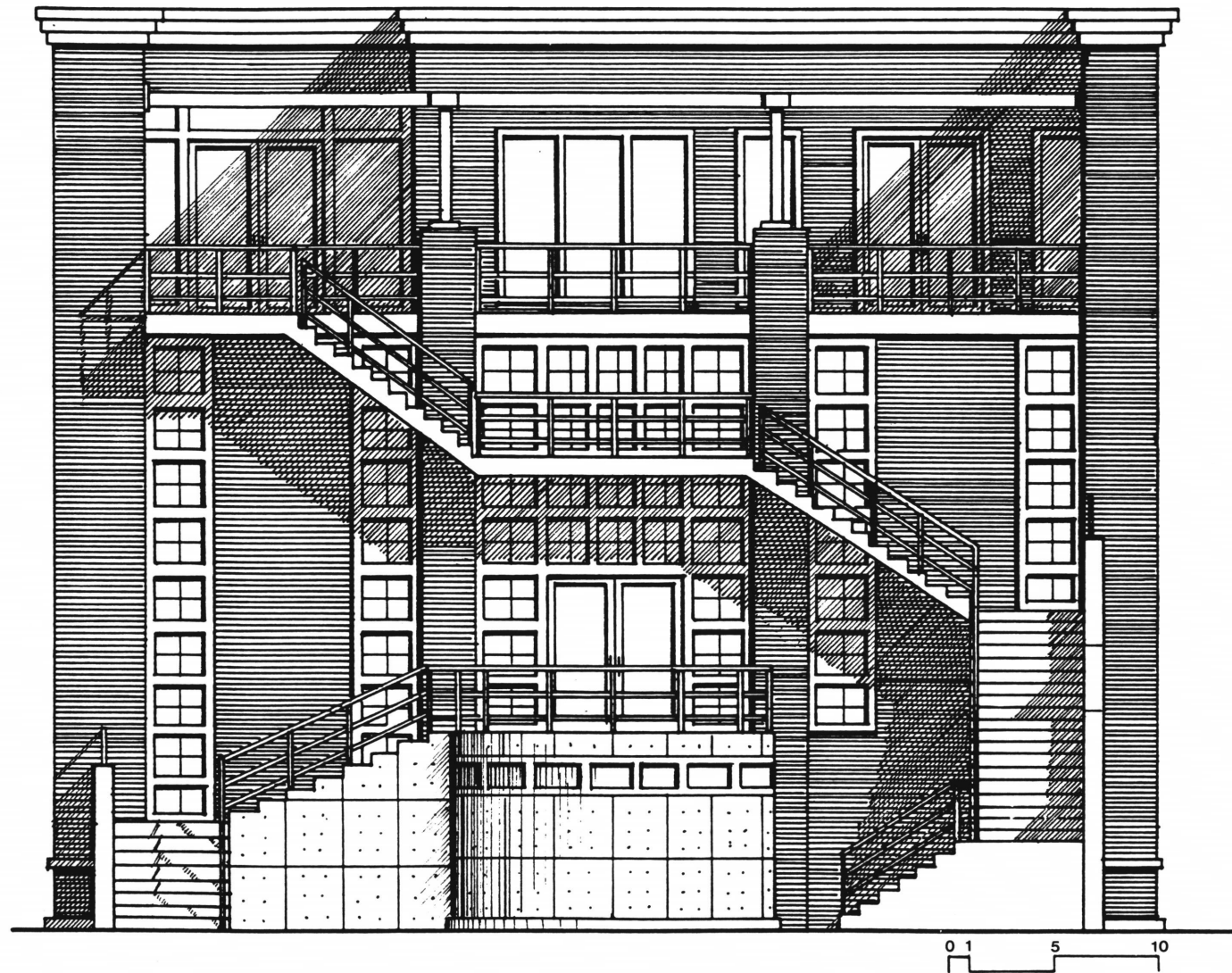
THIRD FLOOR PLAN - A RESIDENCE



WEST ELEVATION - NORTH MAIN STREET



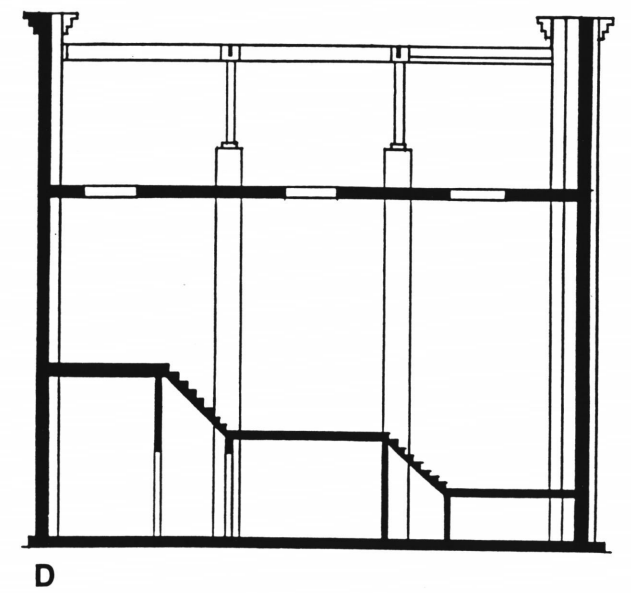
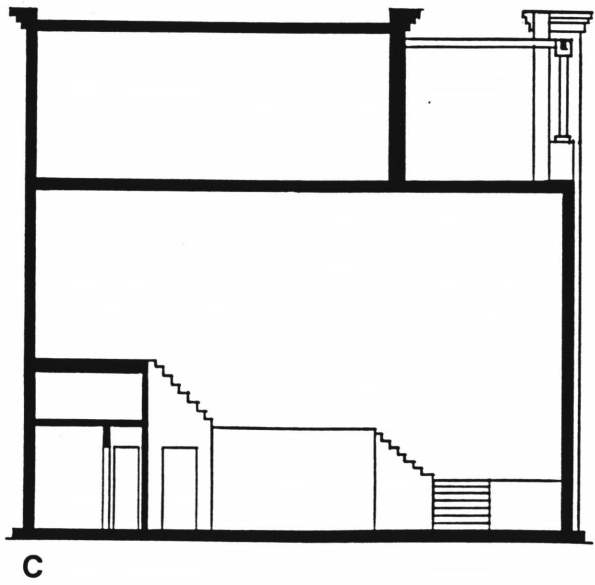
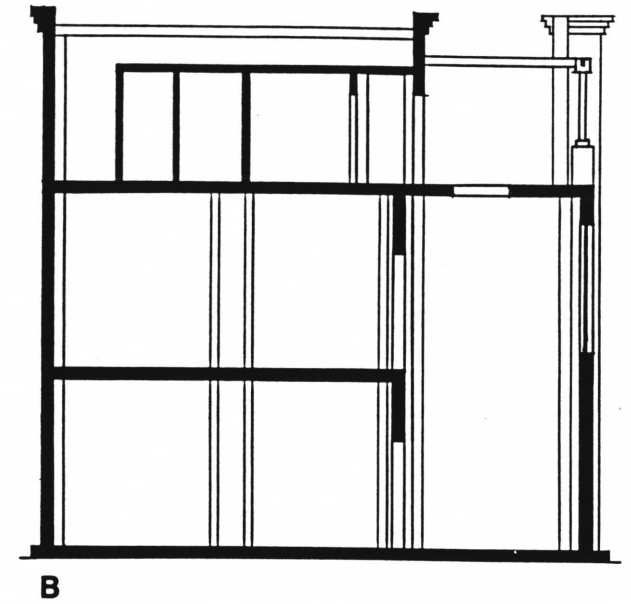
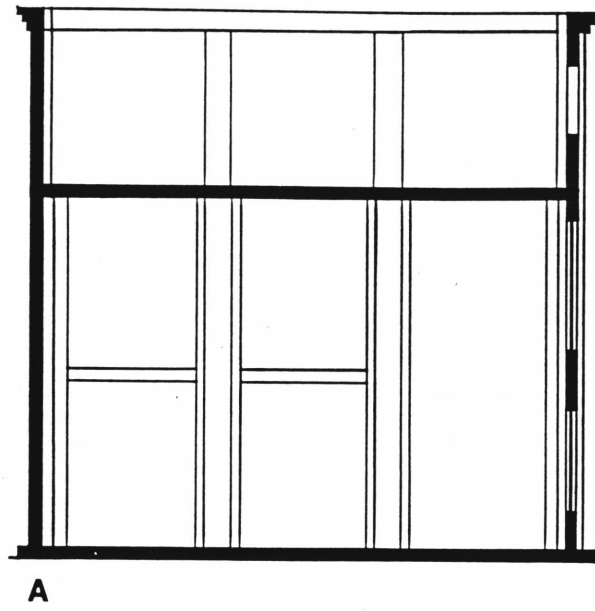
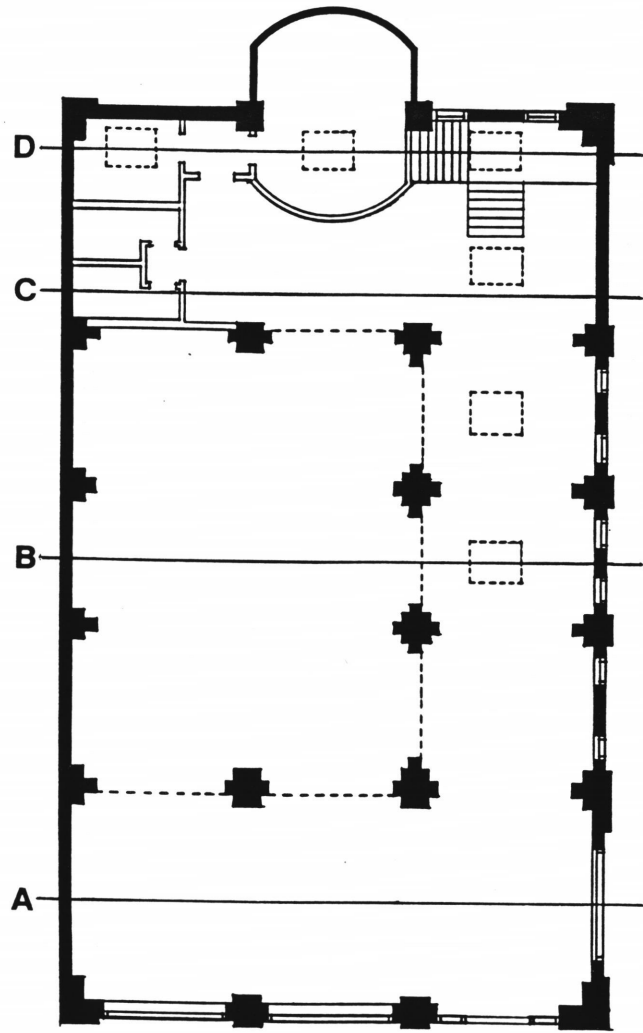
EAST ELEVATION - ALLEY



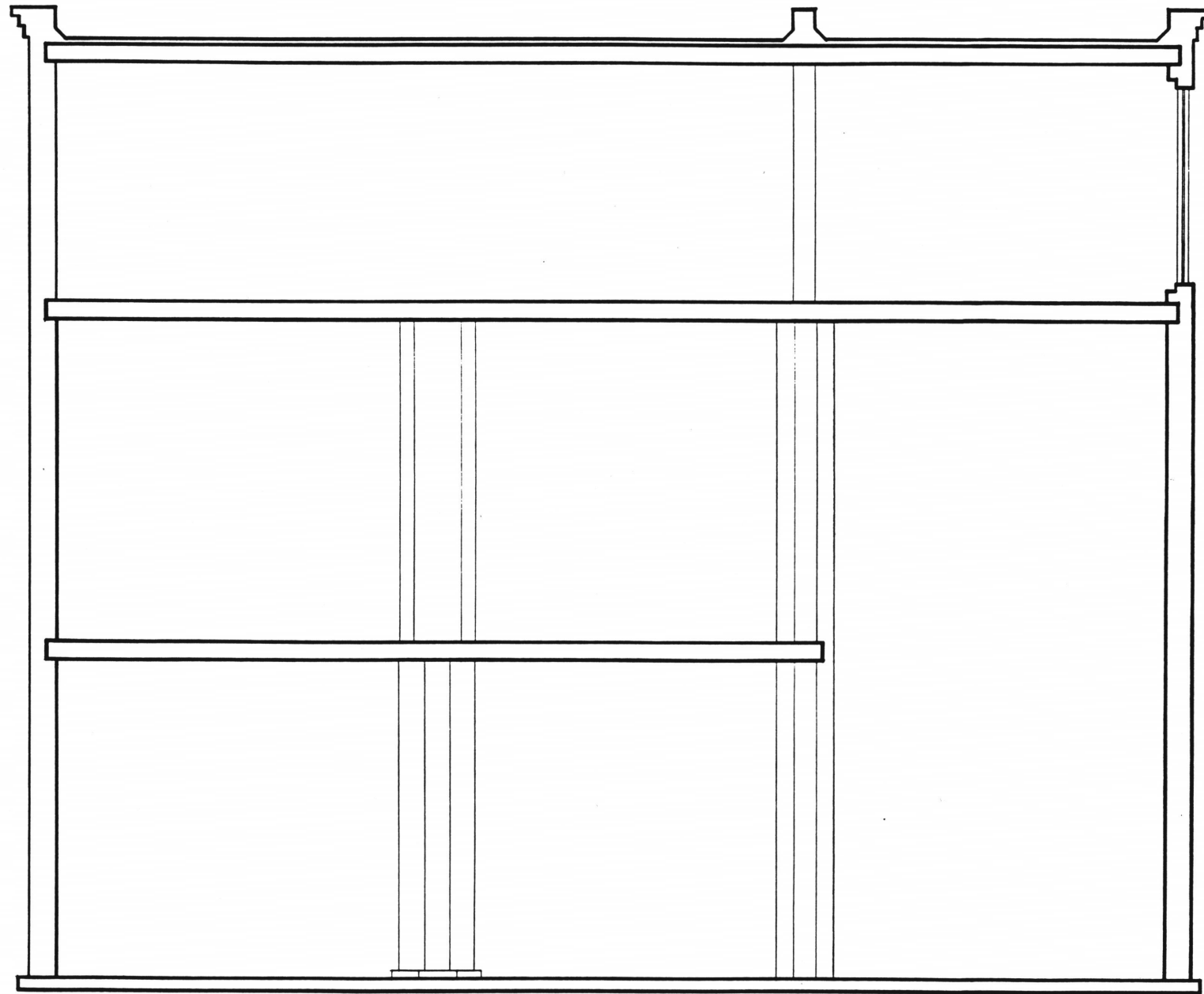
SOUTH ELEVATION - OVERTON AVENUE



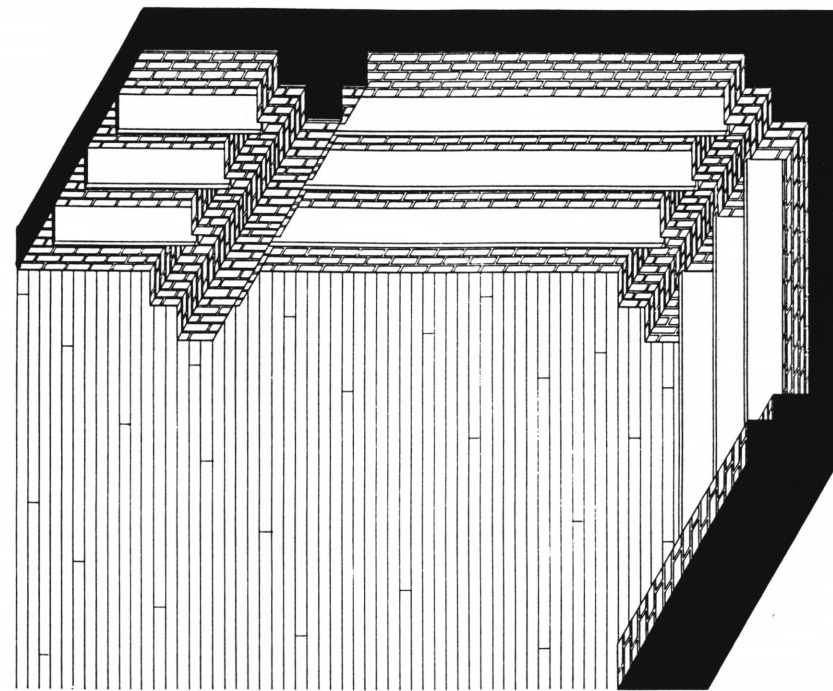
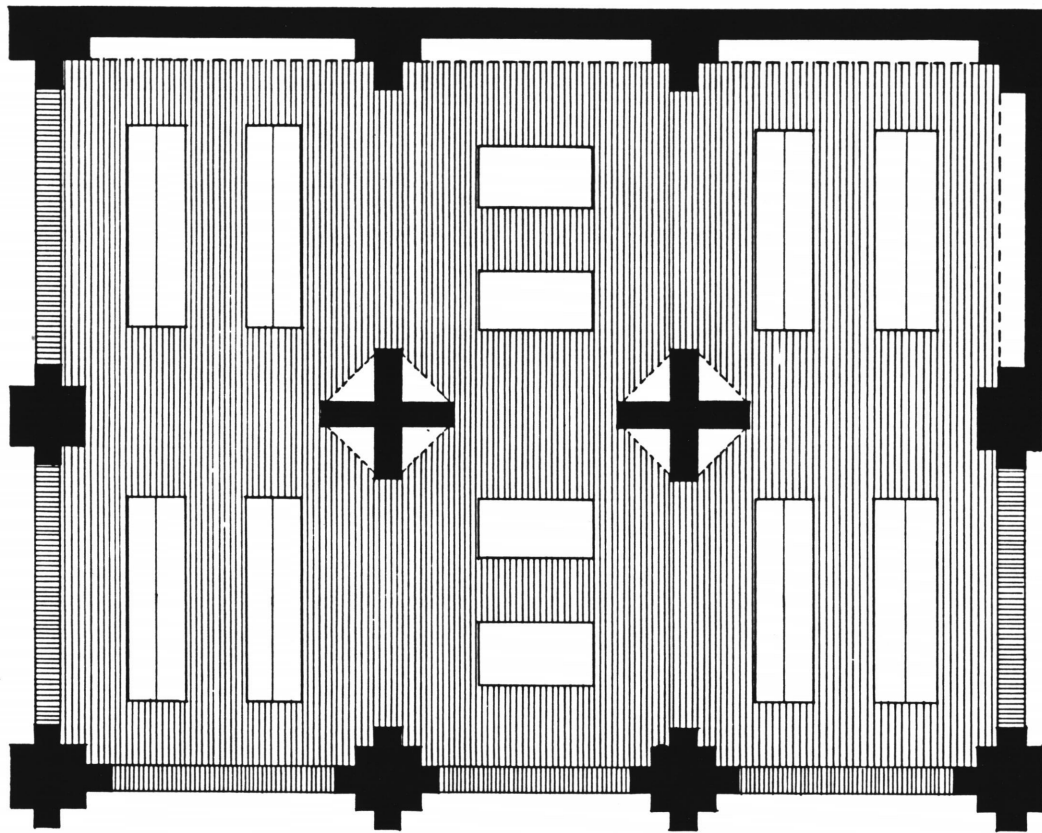
SECTIONS



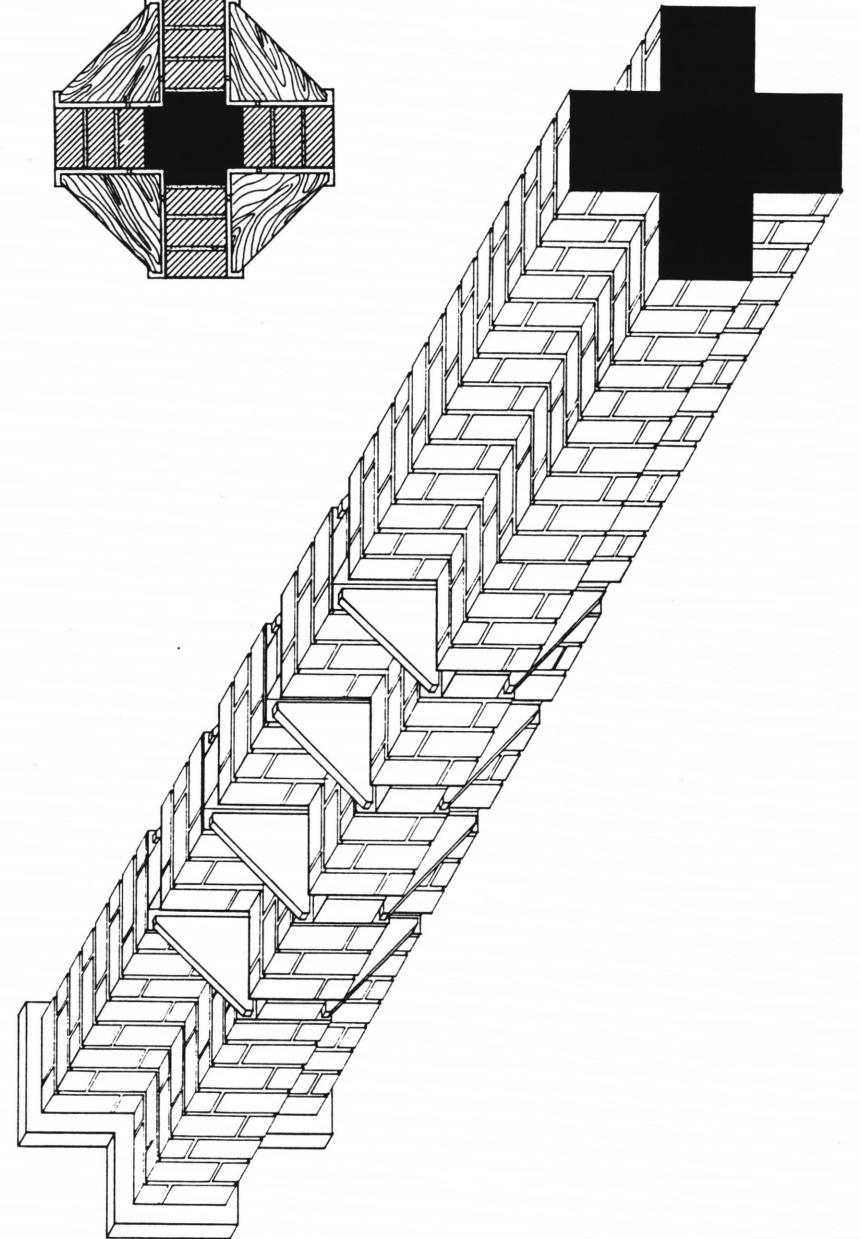
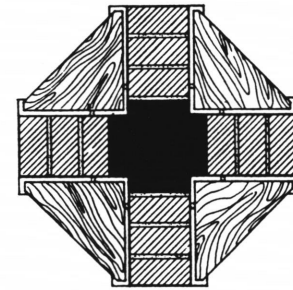
SECTION



DETAILS

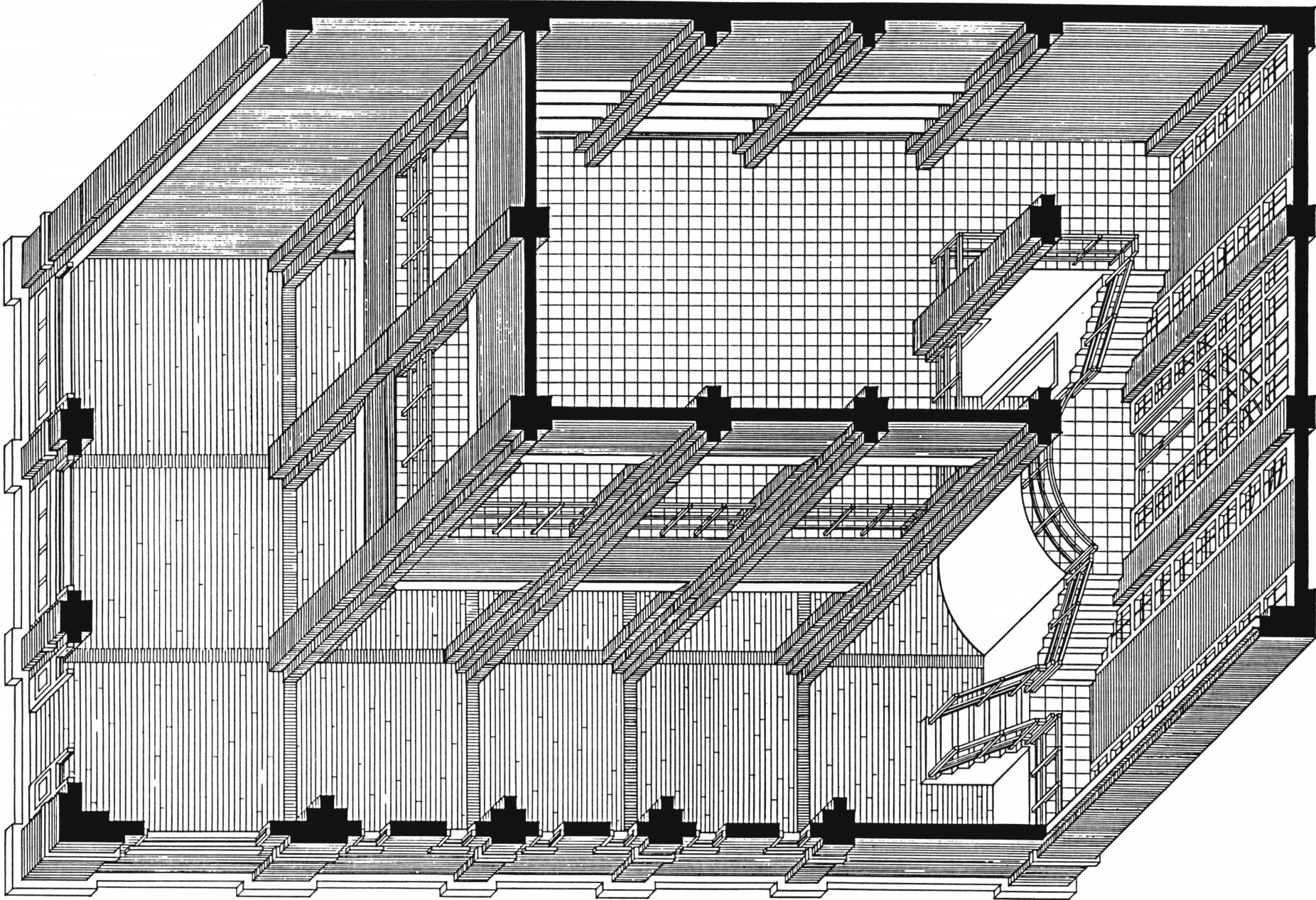


WALL AS BOOKSHELF

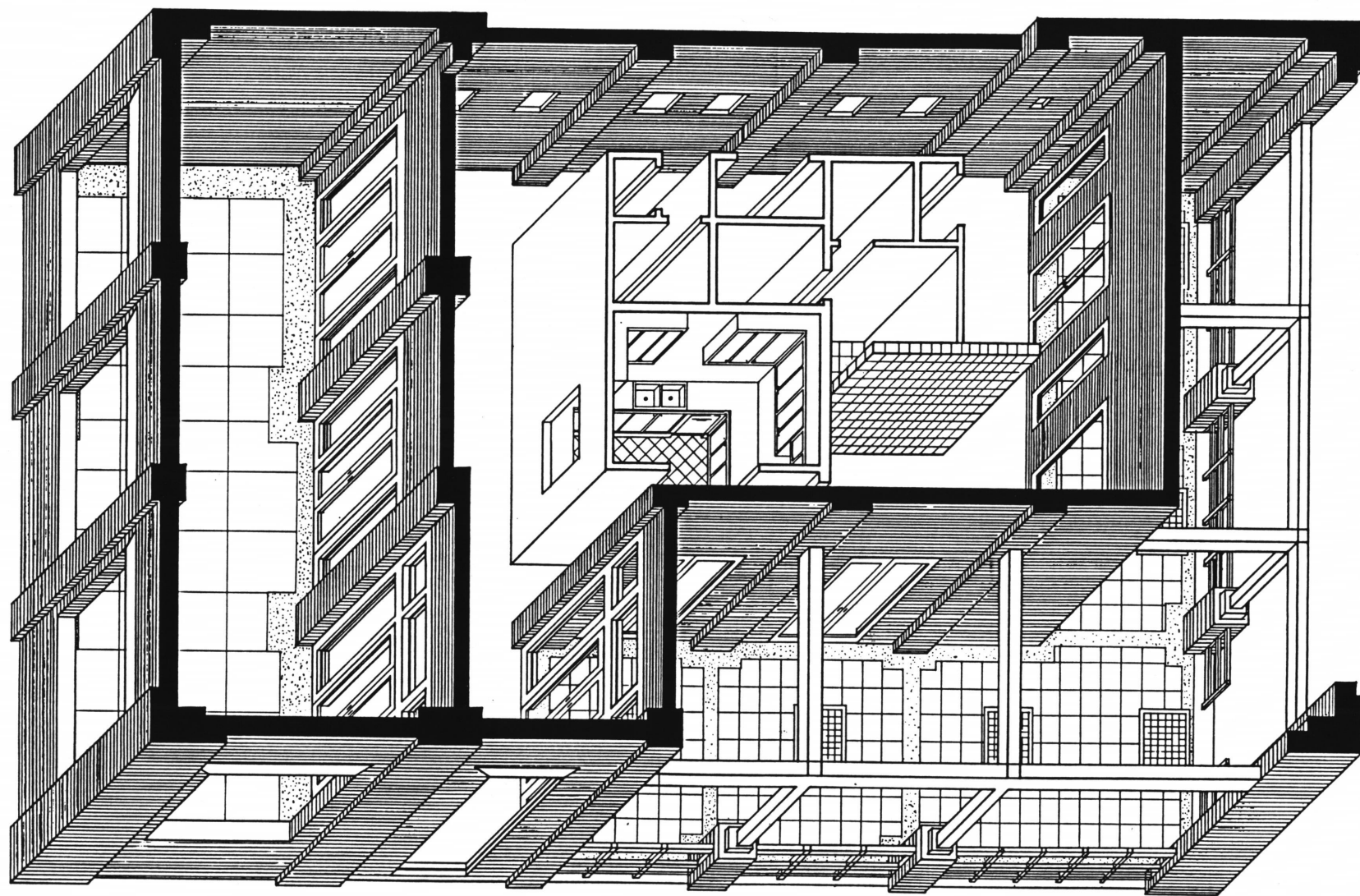


COLUMN AS BOOKSHELF

CUT-AWAY AXONOMETRIC



THIRD FLOOR AXONOMETRIC



CONCLUSION

"That no Man ought to begin a Building hastily, but should first take a good deal of Time to consider, and revolve in his Mind all the Qualities and Requisites of such a Work: And that he should carefully review and examine with the Advice of proper Judges, the whole Structure in itself, and the Proportions and Measures of every distinct Part, not only in Draughts or Paintings, but in actual Models of Wood or some other Substance, That when he has finished his Building, he may not repent of his Labour."

Leon Battista Alberti

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