

ARCHITECTURAL TALES

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Thesis submitted to the Faculty
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and State University as partial
fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

MASTER OF ARCHITECTURE

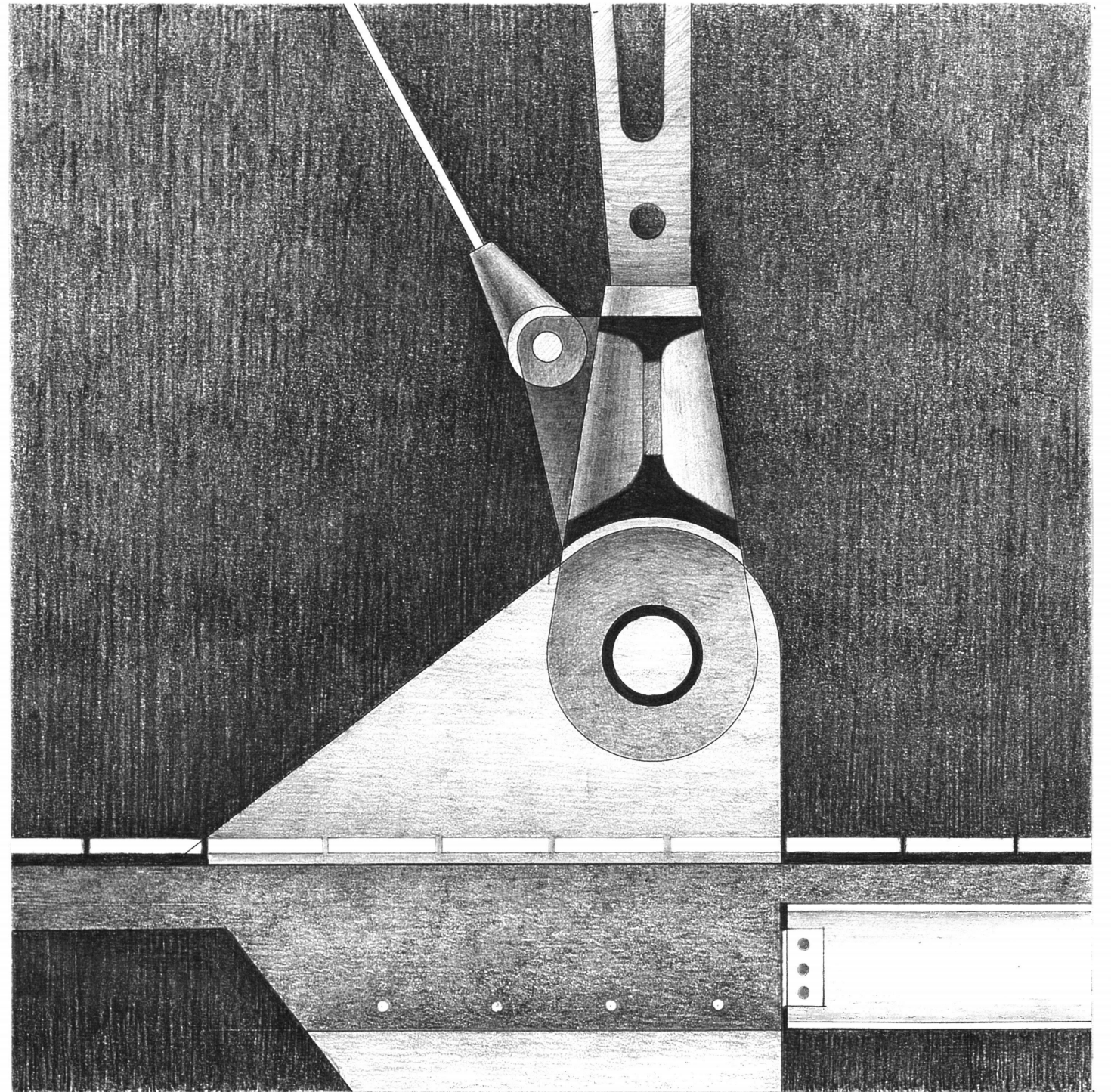
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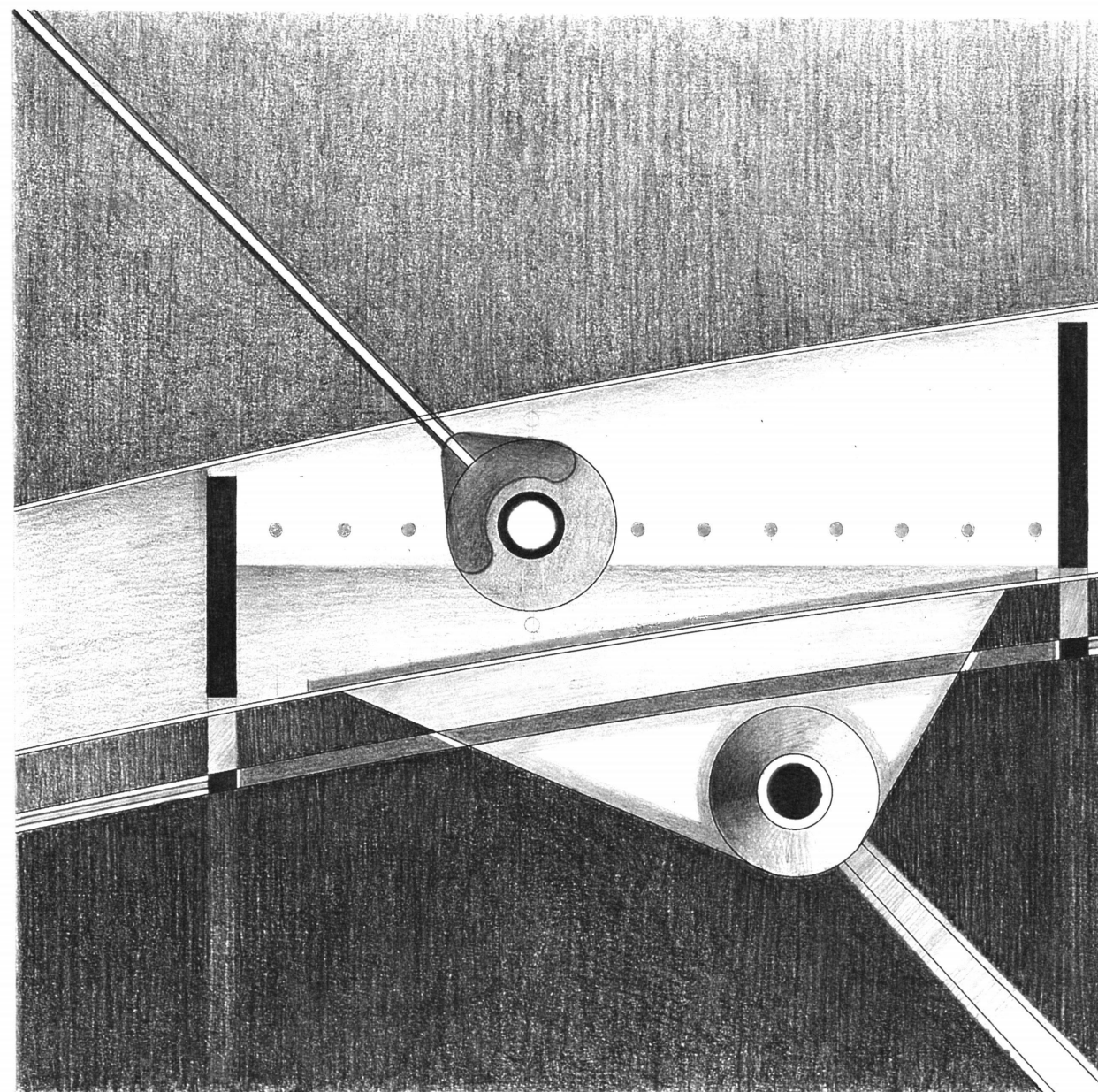
March 27, 1996
Blacksburg, Virginia



ABSTRACT

"Images haunt...
Images are not quite ideas, they
are stiller than that, with less
implication outside themselves.
And they are not myth, they do
not have that explanatory power;
they are nearer to pure story.
Nor are they always metaphors;
they do not say this is that,
they say this is. In the
nineteenth century one would
have said that what compelled
about them was a sense of the
eternal. And it is something like
that, some feeling in the arrest
of the image that what perishes
and what lasts forever have been
brought into conjunction, and
accompanying that sensation is
a feeling of release from the
self."

ROBERT HASS



preamble:

along the ogden slip the old warehouse was revived to bring to new life commercial, recreational and cultural activities...

tracing the face of the altered structure, a pedestrian street unraveled along the water - a hint or maybe a desire for venetian voyages on water...

the concrete cast body of the lake shore drive spans a decisive gesture...a snake with skin of tarmac... encrusted with diamonds of street lights, and halogenous flashes, and ruby tail lights...

breathing...whirls of exhaustion, speeding north and south to make a threshold, to cut away the water from the city...

the city, where morning fumes give birth to action and building matter crawls east...in the beginning low, but gradually gaining a momentum... to culminate in slender towers, and beat the smog to capture better view of the horizon...

where human sight beholds lake michigan...and white collars enjoy a daily portion of golf, a lunch time of leisure in a nine-hole oasis, amidst a skyscraper jungle...

an organism will emerge, a life form...like some primordial phantom of romance to come under a cascade of neon pollen. not the poor, misguided, directionless...but the desired regal creature of border caves:

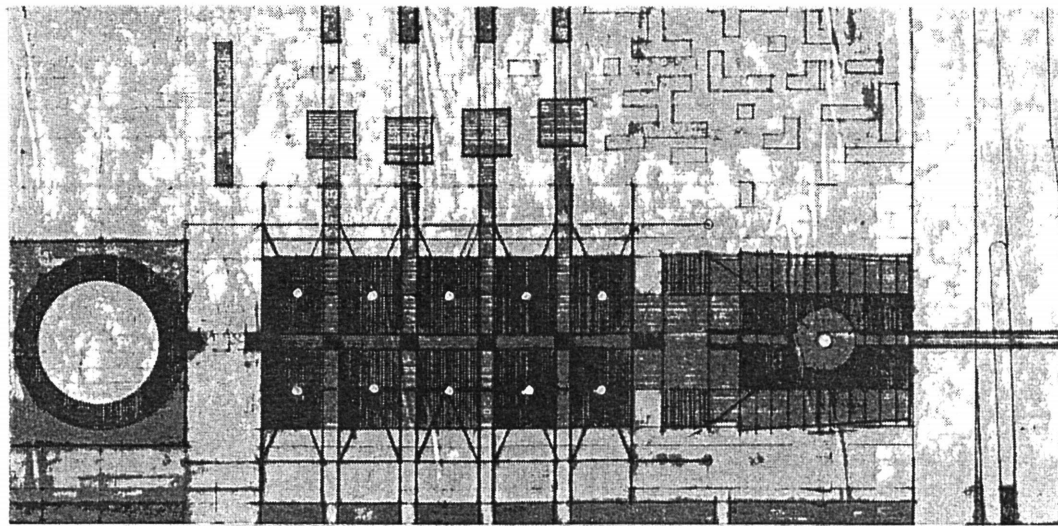
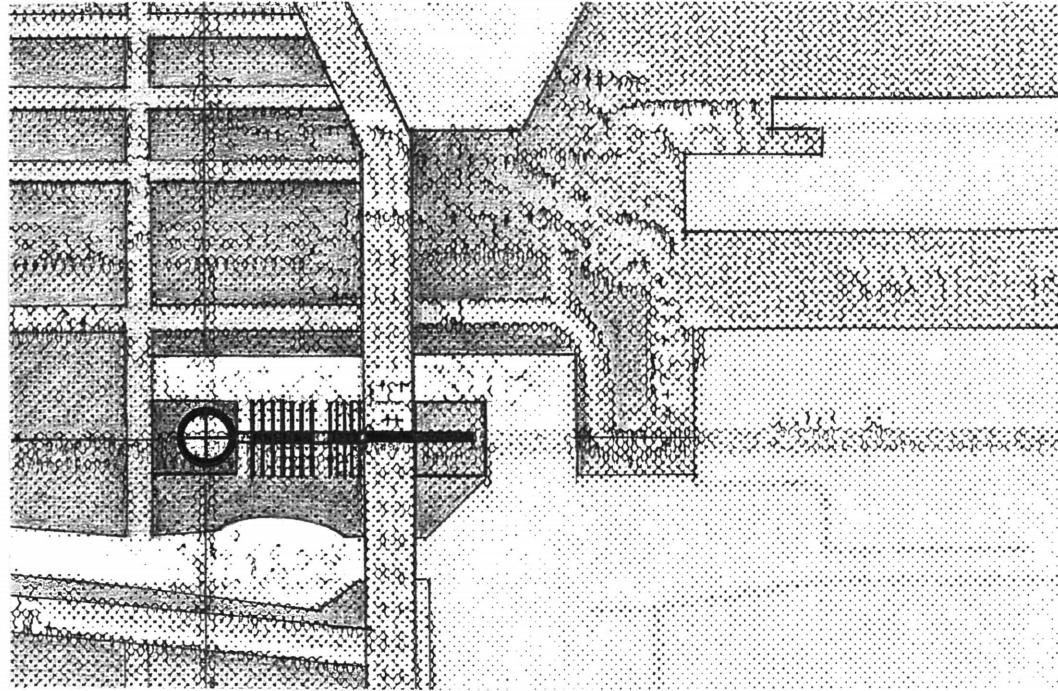
due west it will project onto the mainland, to bury giant concrete carcass deep into the earth...

to extend battalions of steel limbs far out into the ether, embrace and touch the sky...

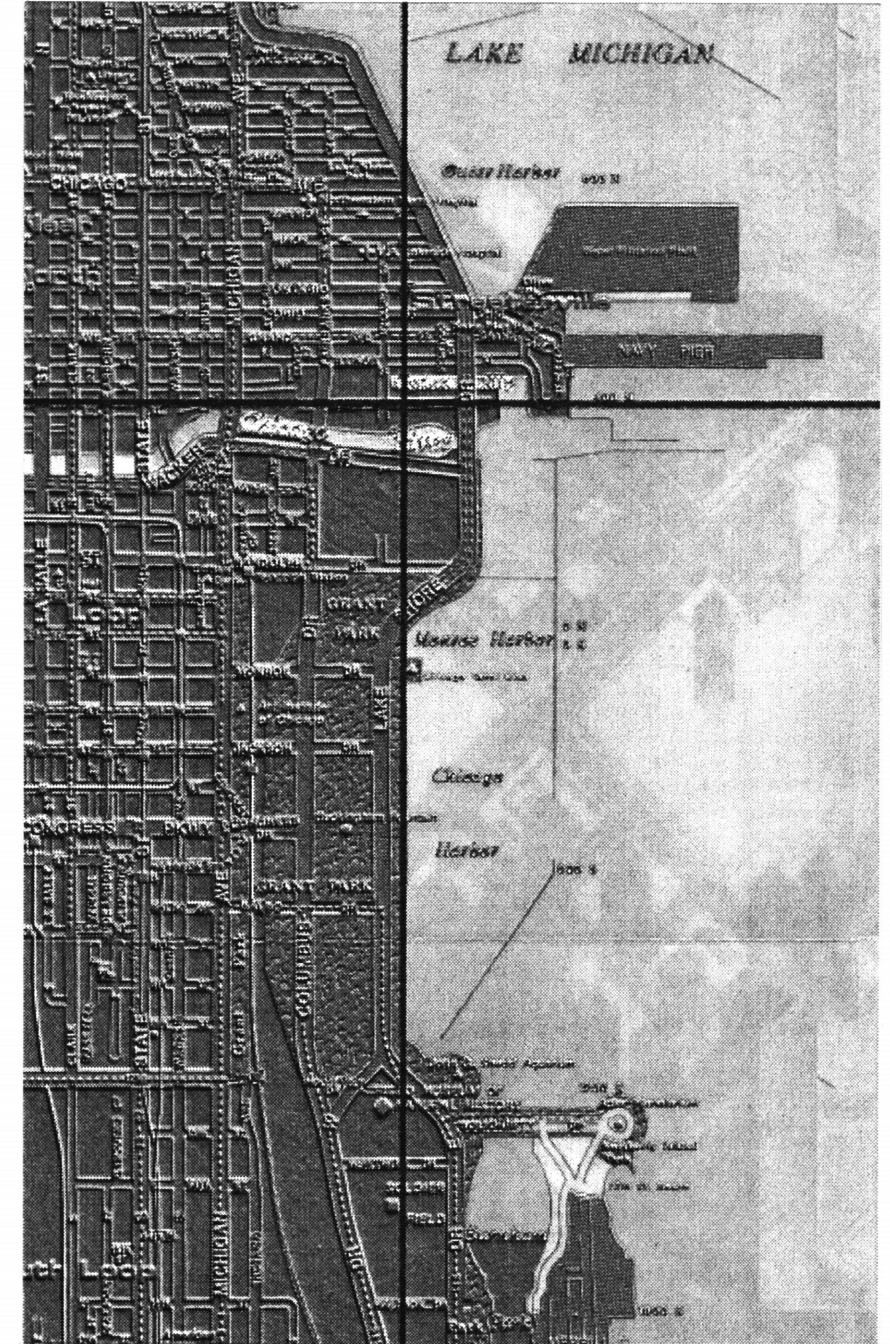
to house plants, and fish, and people...

computers, ducts and other vectors of the technological irruption...

art, shopping, entertainment - a mall, an exhibition of transparencies...



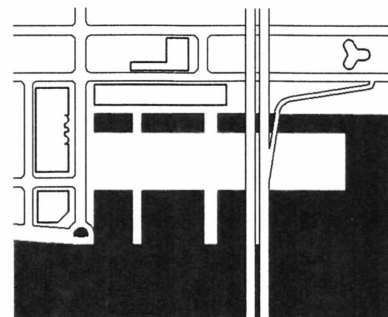
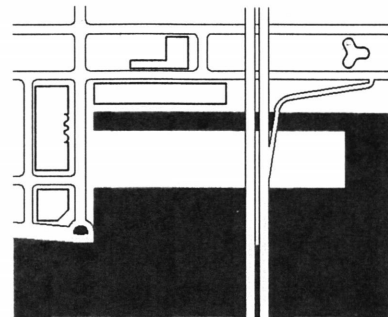
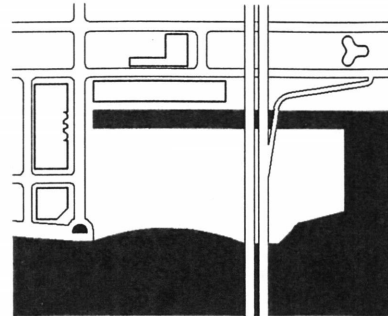
A: LOCATION MAP & SKETCHES



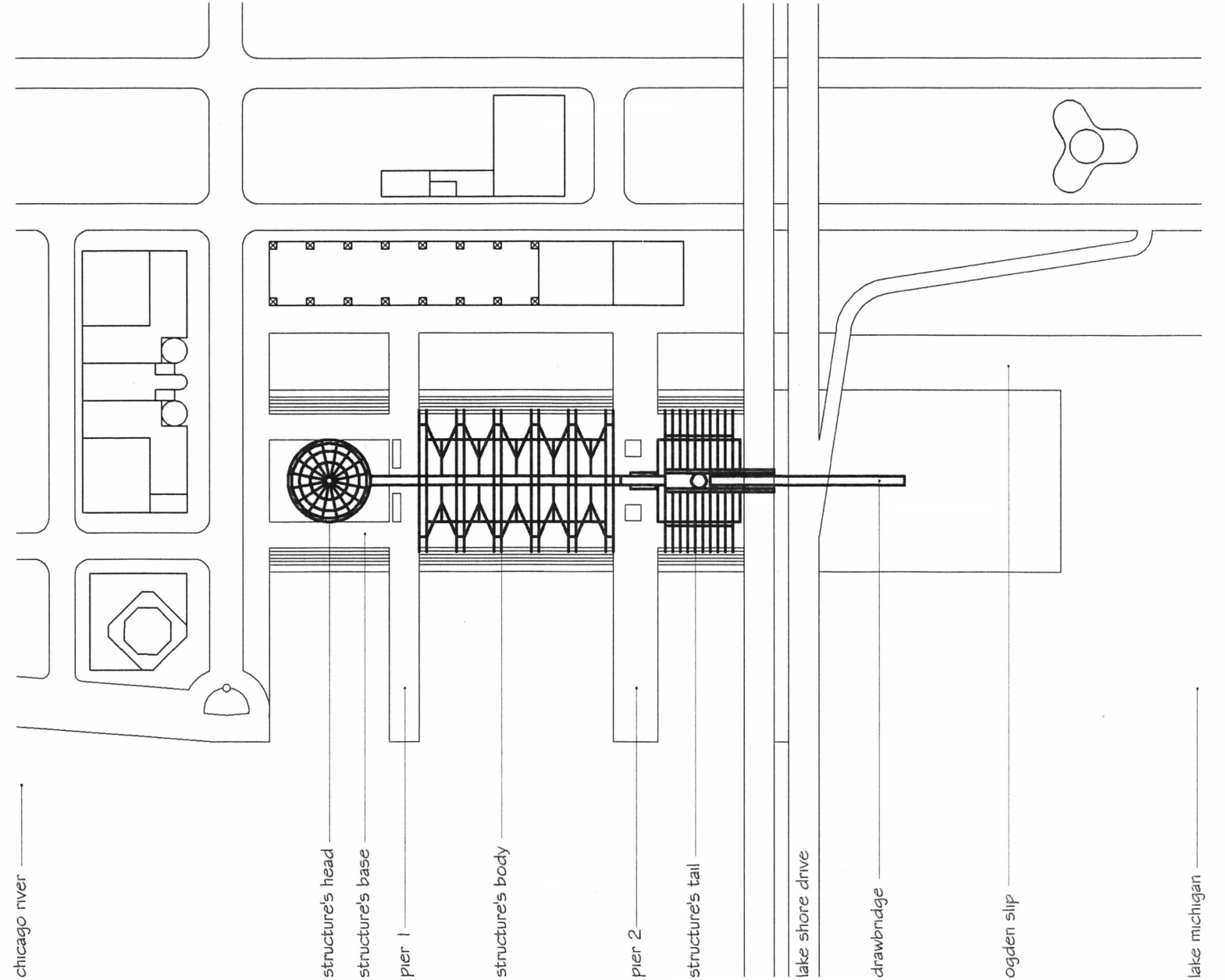
a lake:
 the lake is what the city craves... an eternity of water, another world-a mirror. it would seem that fascination with the mysteries of that other world carry thoughts of intricately colored bottles, catalogue containers... full of glittering marbles life forms in other places below the surface neither man nor woman can be... fluids must be brought into the interiors of solids, they must be brought closer, made touchable and observable.

a river:
 it provides its istuary-ready, open for exploration. a river flows, surrounds and shores a river makes a place to sail... curiosity brings a dilemma: does the river run into the city or does the city speed along the river to embrace it? the venturer on sails craves destination; the river is a vector to a harbor.

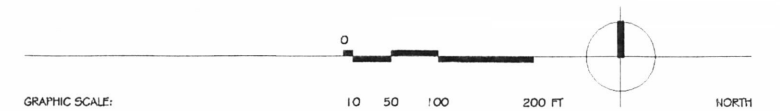
a freeway:
 i recall the sight of chicago's lake shore drive-a snake of concrete with scales of diamond head lights at night; with ruby eyes-emerging and receding... fast lanes speeding whirls of exhaust fumes communication axes is this highway bringing us together or is it just an... interruption?



A: SITE GENESIS



B: SITE PLAN



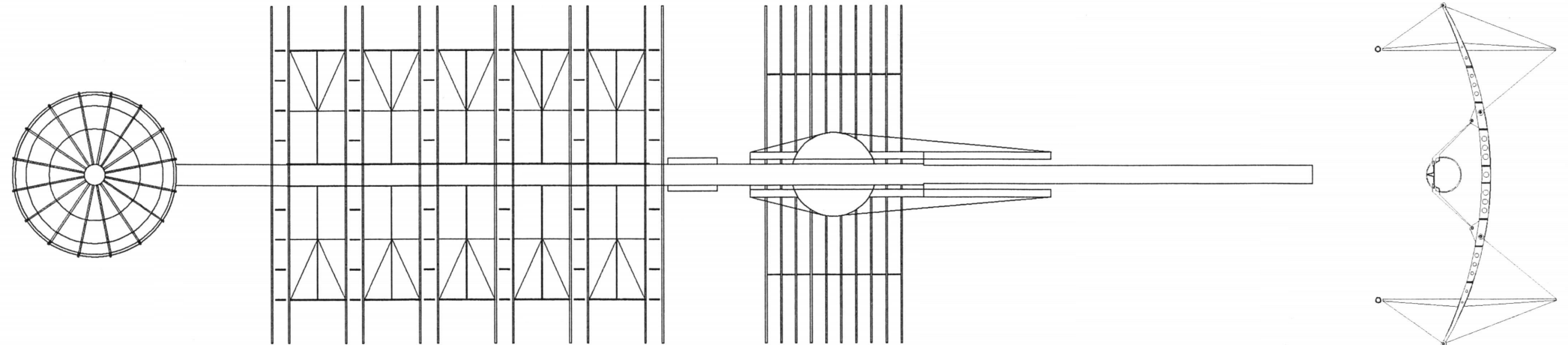
almost impermeable...
 it seems reasonable to conceive
 of the lake shore drive as a
 barrier...
 it cuts away the city from the
 lake,
 obstructing views, denying a
 reflection...

a building's base:
 a platform from which to launch a
 bridge into the space over the
 lake...
 a pedestal for a monumental
 structure.

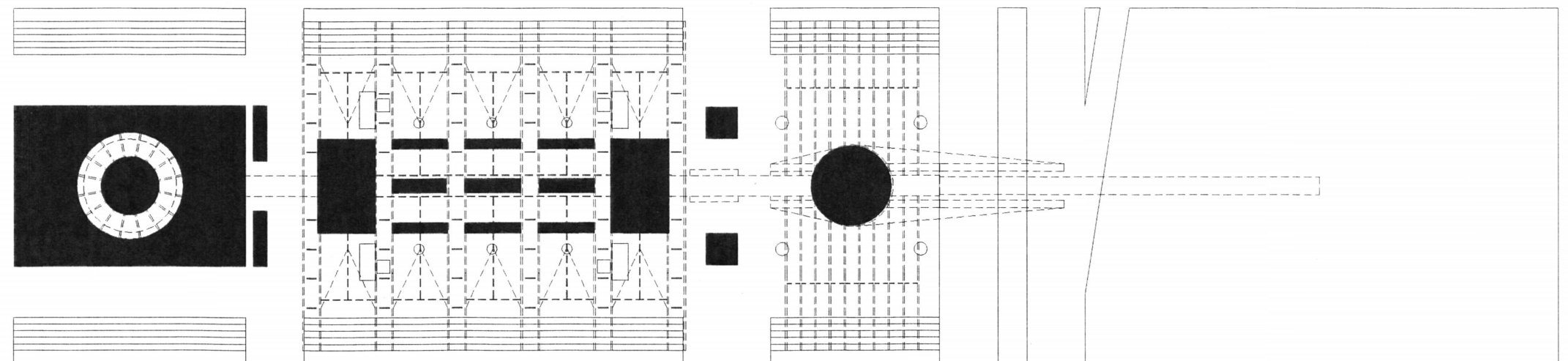
it seems that the appropriate
 gesture is one of soft transition
 between the building base and
 the water surface.
 a series of steps bring the
 stranger down to the looking
 glass...
 images from distant lands hover
 to reveal rituals of people
 meeting water.
 tales of men and women of faith
 who gather to collect the
 precious moments of the sunrise
 and touch the healing
 moisture...

the base is like a giant imprint.
 like the one left behind the boot
 of a conqueror...
 the soft earth matter forms
 edges and water streams to
 stay in tiny puddles...
 later when the sun rays touch
 the soft soil the clay will harden
 to maintain the signature of the
 print, and the followers to come
 will wonder how and why the
 pattern of water pools was
 created...

maybe piers will project into the
 lake and sailors will recognize
 welcoming signs-a promise for a
 rest...



A: CANOPY STRUCTURE



B: WATER BASIN LAYOUT WITH CANOPY PLAN

GRAPHIC SCALE: 0 10 50 100 FT NORTH

it seems appropriate to provide access for those who sail.

existing structures:

it is what i find that brings an inspiration - an urge to make and imitate...

tall, slender residential towers... stories upon stories of living quarters and office cells, jutting out into the sky, competing for height and better views...

a low structure
what the eyes see when twilight comes and it is dark and lonely becomes a puzzle:
from the eleventh floor the glass roof and the structure are still distinct; the outlines sharp, the building made of glass allows you to observe activities:
aquarium...

from a higher observation point the picture will become blurry and the observer witnesses a play of shadows.
from above it seems attractive. he wonders whether there are familiar faces below, strolling among congregations of light - a handful of gems...
compelling urge to go into the rooms full of curious strangers and be close to whispering water...

a channel:

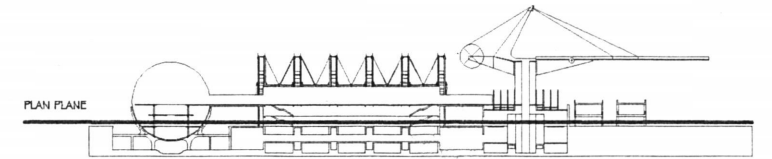
the ogden slip provokes the memory to play back images of venetian walks on water.

bridges rise above gondollas where unfaithful lovers whisper stories of promise...
smells and laughter echo in the tunnels of building elevations...
labyrinths...

- 1. steps to water
- 2. head's structure
- 3. circular walk
- 4. circular pool/aquarium

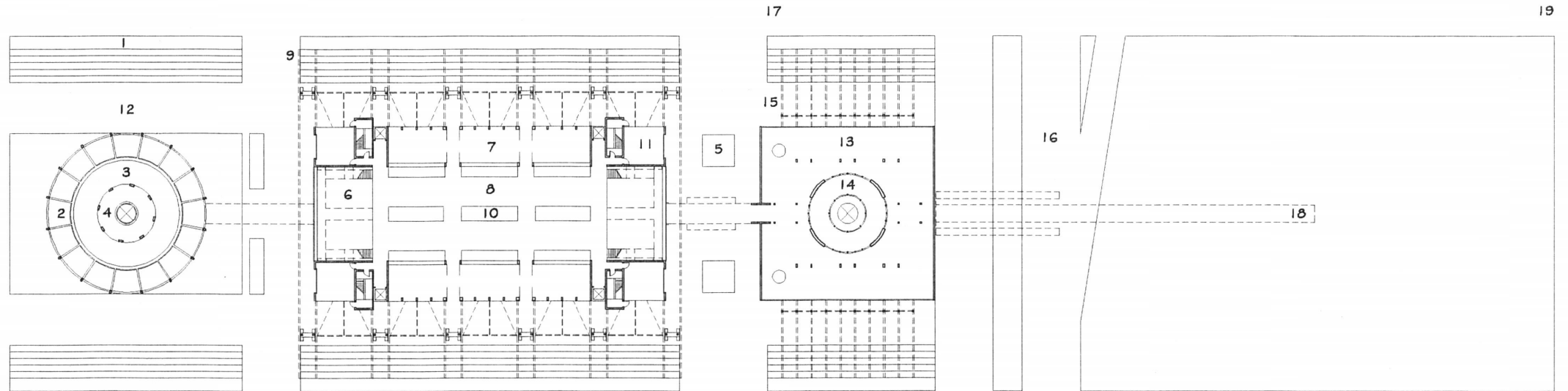
- 5. water basin
- 6. pool/aquarium with stairway above
- 7. retail unit
- 8. interior boardwalk

- 9. body's structure
- 10. surface of aquarim tunnel below
- 11. service space
- 12. building's base

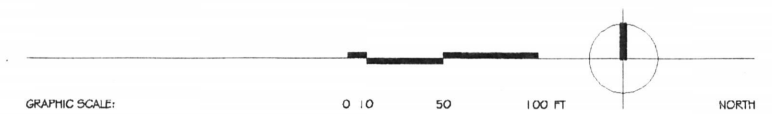


- 13. exhibition space
- 14. cylindrical aquarium with elevator
- 15. tail's structure
- 16. lake shore drive

- 17. ogden slip
- 18. drawbridge above
- 19. lake michigan



A: GROUND FLOOR PLAN



restaurants are full on a summer night and owners take advantage of the breeze: tables and chairs are being scattered along the boardwalk as if under the command of a skillful magician...

a head:
think of it as the head of the creature who once emerged from the waters of the lake... like some primordial phantom of border caves

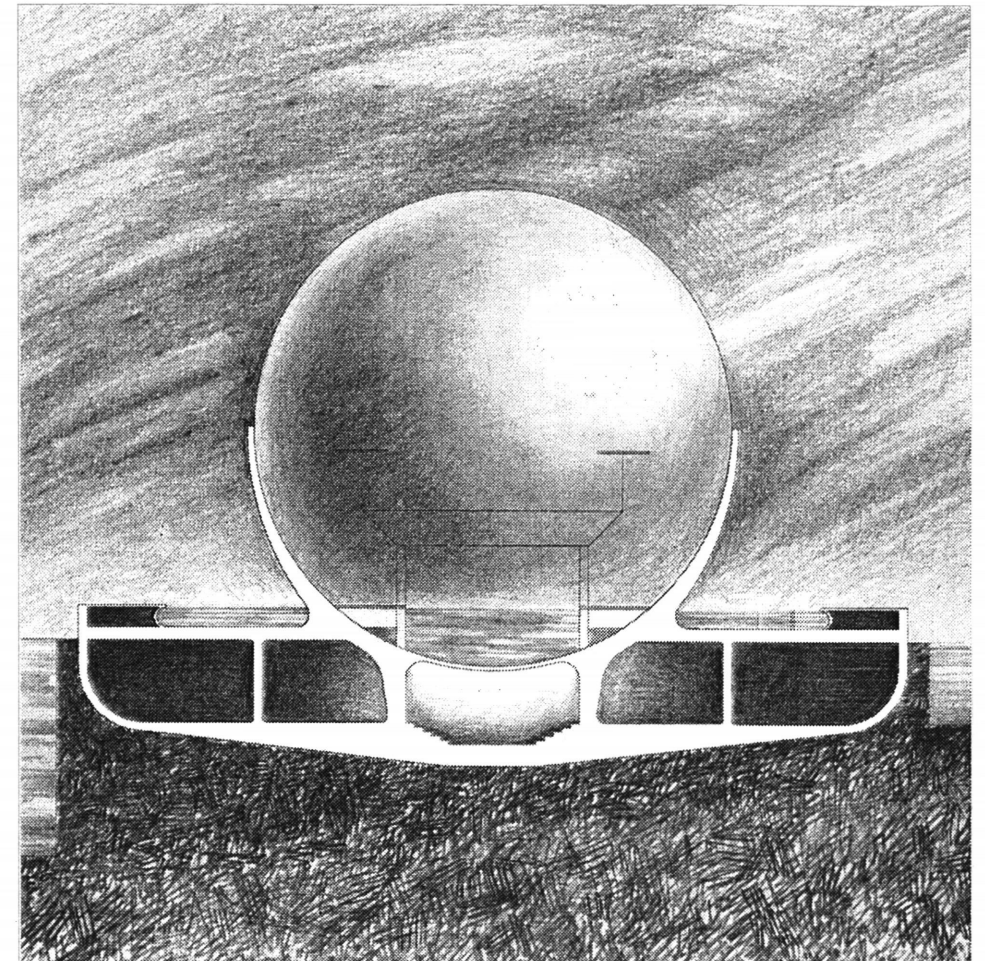
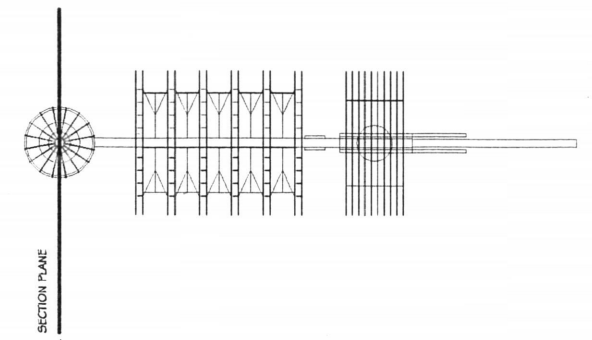
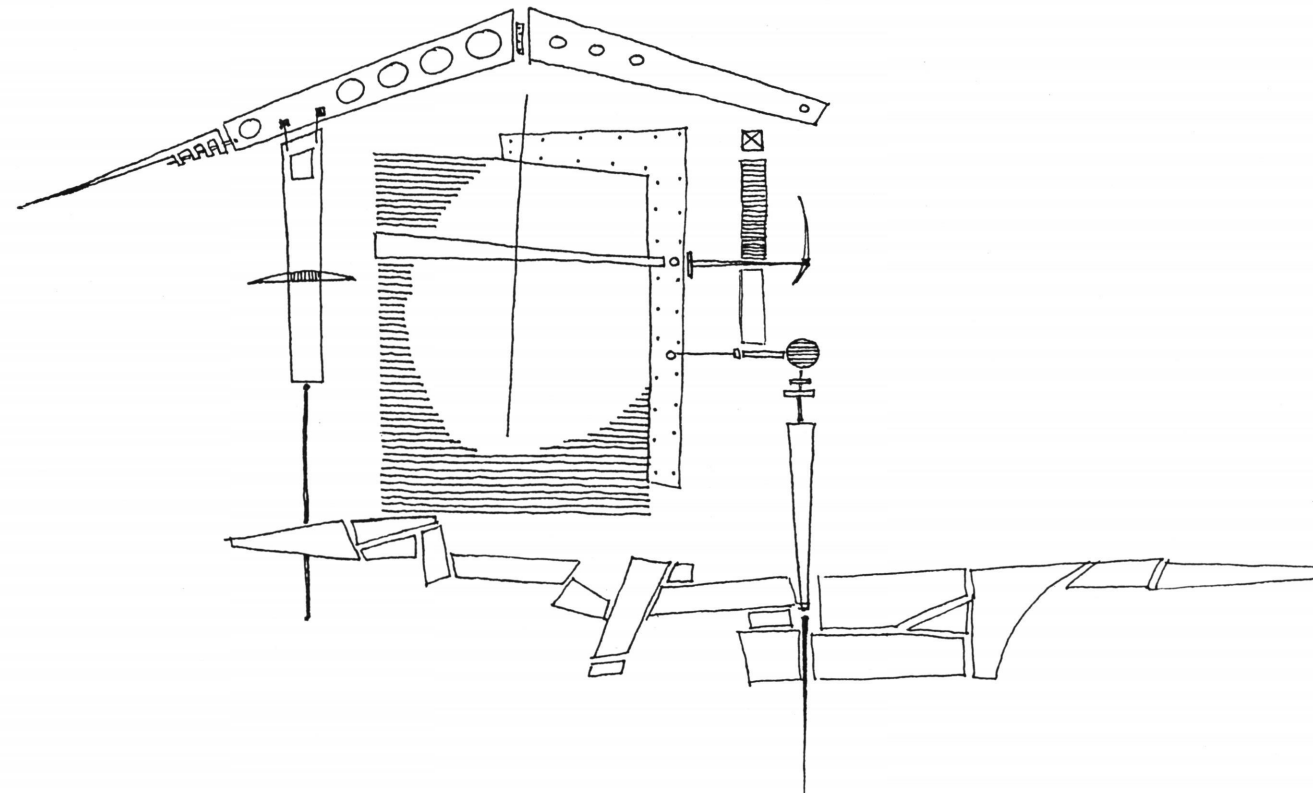
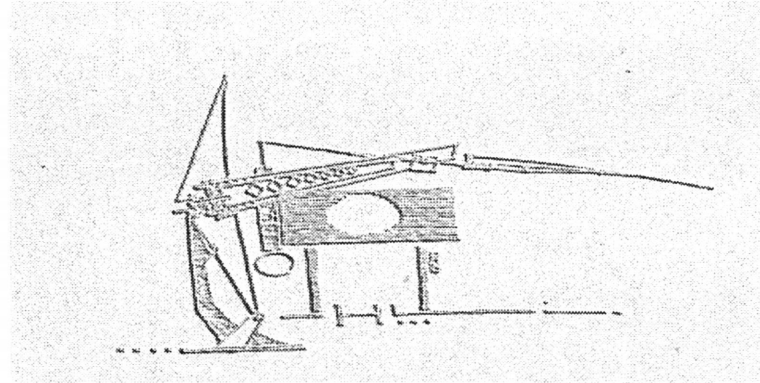
or like a jewel that exhibits the insides beneath its glass skin... a sphere constructed of steel arches, a show window. below, just where the bottom portion of the ball penetrates the ground, the glass becomes a water container.

an aquarium is conceived inside the hi-tech structure; for those whose curiosity never stopped inquiring about the way aquatic creatures look from below. a chandelier of fluid reflections, a fantasy...

it is the vision of day light from beneath the ocean surface that is denied to people. below a rough textured arena of stone steps will provide the comfort for midnight observation; up into the belly of the creature, through windows of steel mullions.

no loud voices, just whispers...

and to prevent the echoes of steps, sand finishes the chamber's floor - a cave



A: HEAD - CONCEPT & SCHEMATIC DESIGN

to complete the illusion of the sphere's continuity below the ground, the platform on which the structure stands may provide a reflecting pool.

the globe is afloat - an island.

what does it feel like to believe that earth is just a piece of land surrounded by the sea?

a body:

a skeleton of steel limbs will project onto the mainland. it is a vehicle, a machine to carry out a program of activities. if architecture is the search of an image, this one aims at an illusion of an insect.

the structure will expose outside the skin to pay homage to the notion that buildings must look interesting and provide the audience with provocative environment to question, comprehend, or hate.

a structure must remind of things, it must recall events. do you remember down escapes from moon washed college halls, ...through labyrinths of rooms onto the top landing of a fire escape?

fire escapes crawl up and down, attached like giant insects onto the skin of a building.

it is the image of a steel creature, clutching at a structure...

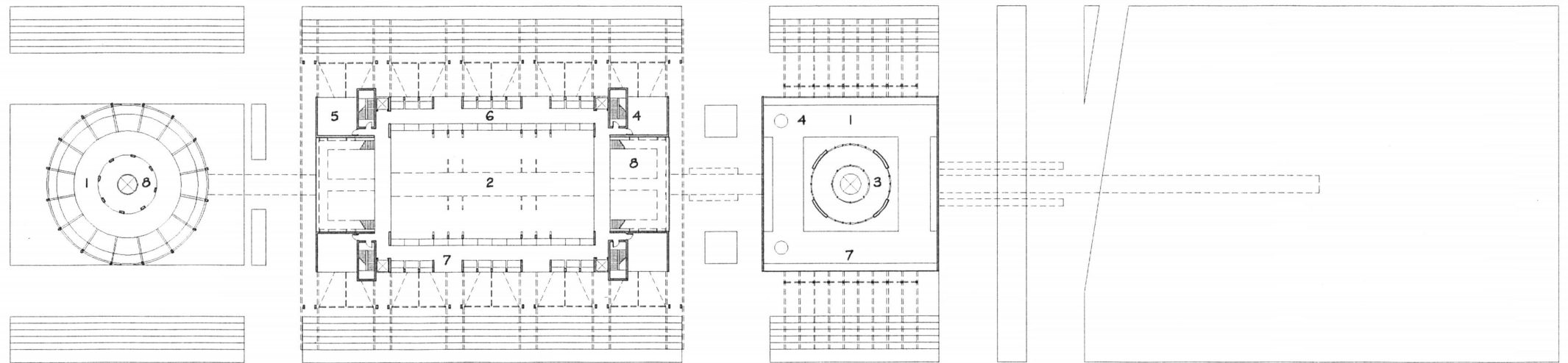
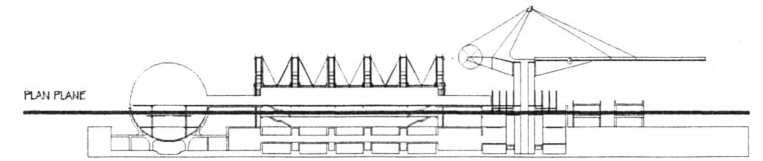
not a creature ascending but one that crawls out of lake michigan, to come under a cascade of neon pollen and rest its torso on the ground, bending giant limbs of bones, and tendons, and hinges...

- 1. gallery
- 2. open to ground level

- 3. aquarium with elevator
- 4. vertical communication

- 5. service space
- 6. aquarium tanks

- 7. glass curtain wall
- 8. open to pool on ground level



A: FIRST FLOOR PLAN

GRAPHIC SCALE:

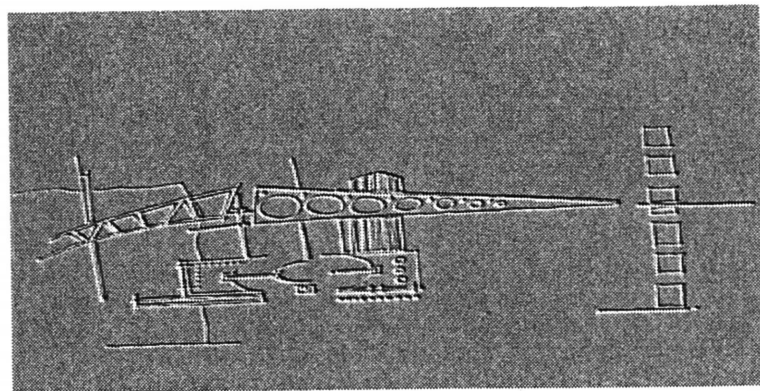
0 10 50 100 FT



NORTH

an urban gesture of arrival...
 destination...
 does stepping onto the ground
 reveal an intention to remain or
 just to stay a while?
 a step is an announcement. if
 the supports are buried into
 the ground the structure speaks
 of staying for ever; if they are
 designed like steps, a departure
 is expected, a feel of something
 being transient.

as if the beast will move again
 some day to cast shadows of
 fantastic intersections in
 another place...

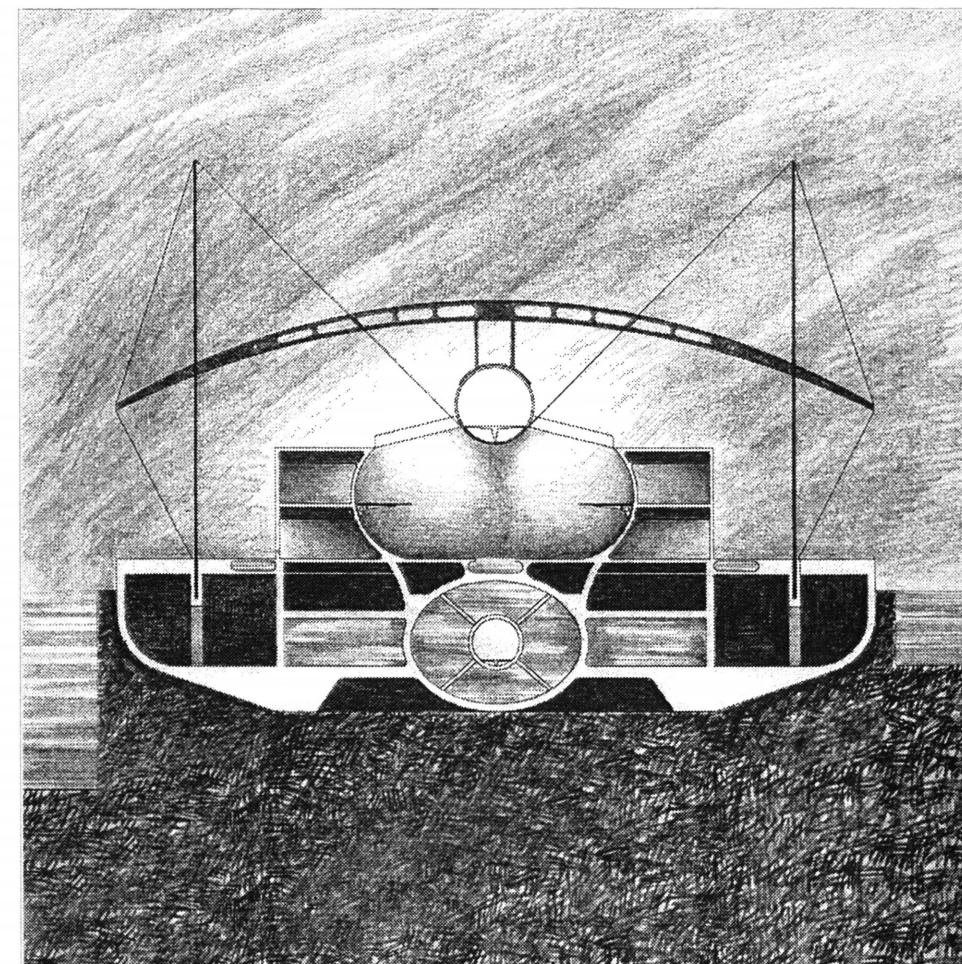
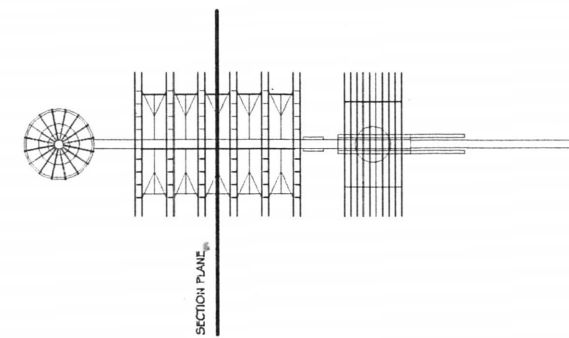
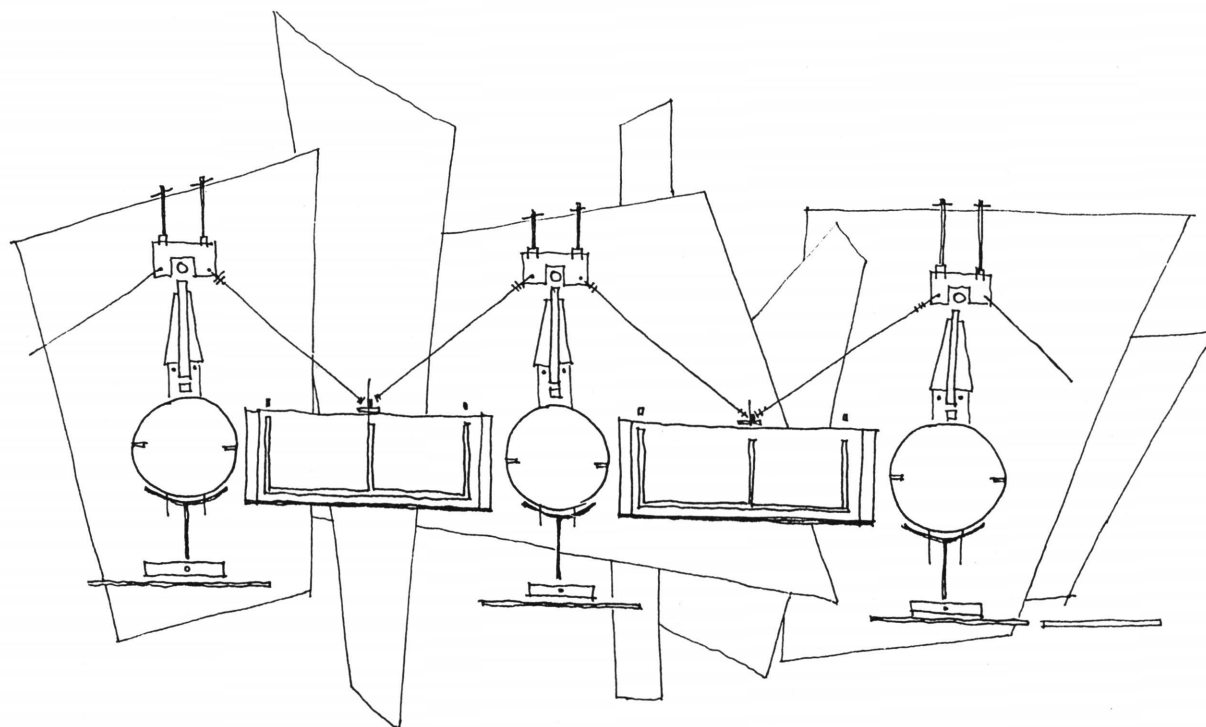


a tail:
 to continue the linear ensemble,
 one witnesses a tail which
 thrusts its vector into the space
 above the lake...
 a structure reminiscent of
 construction cranes and heavy
 industry... a reminder of ship
 yards and loading docks, a
 mooring mast - an observation
 point which extends to visually
 establish the connection
 between the water and the city.

or can it be an allusion to stage
 design and performance?

in the seventies, sting
 introduced cherry pickers on
 stage during a concert. a chair
 was attached to the end of one
 and the performer hovered
 above the audience - a
 spectacle, a demonstration of
 suspension ...

is it important that the
 experience may provide the
 ones who will walk over the lake
 shore drive with the feeling of a



A: BODY - CONCEPT # SCHEMATIC DESIGN

momentary acquisition of amazing powers of observation?

can the gesture of providing a bridge be stopped abruptly, in midair? unfinished bridges...

for those away from the structure, its importance will be in the fact that it is conceived to be a drawbridge: mighty wheels turn to lower the walk in the morning, just as the first rays touch the sky. a clock for the city is the haunting image...

to predict fresh bagels and smell of coffee in the air... at twilight the bridge will rise - an urban scale time piece... a beacon, at night...

some see it as a spear, extending for battle in the morning, steered by the hand of an invisible knight, to rest the night and point to the sky.

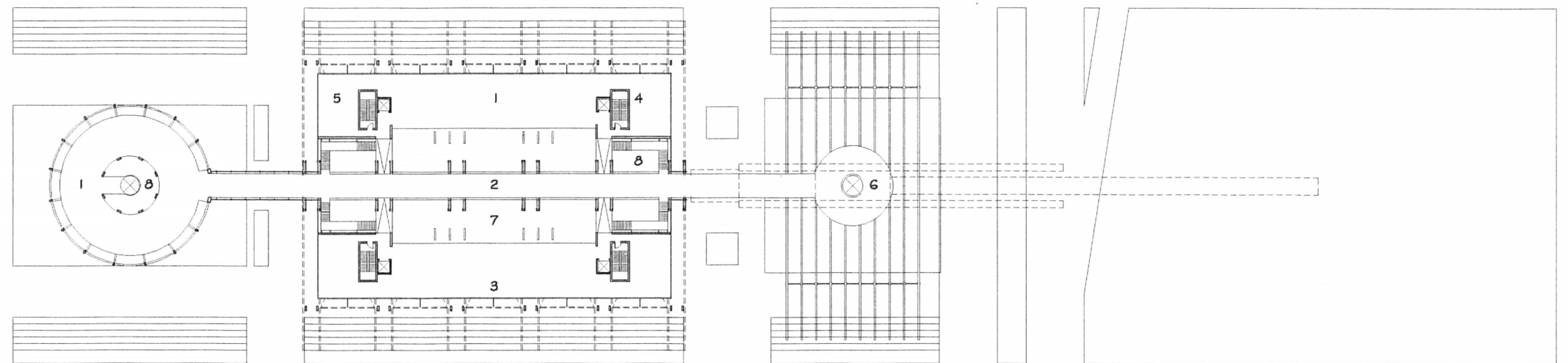
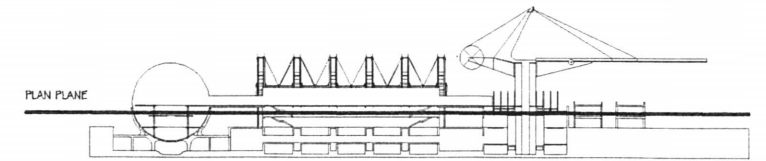
land:
the land beyond the lake shore drive is like the last evasive piece of a puzzle... gestures are dormant as the thing to come is not dreamed of, not desired... a bare rectangle witnesses the silence of an expectant father and thoughts of interpretations dictate the solution that design must stop and there have been enough gestures made, enough challenges... there are no rules in architecture, other than the rules coined in the play of experiments and experiences... education is a game of trial and error.

- 1. exhibition gallery
- 2. suspended bridge

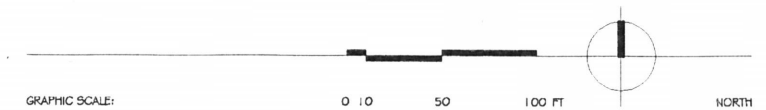
- 3. glass curtain wall
- 4. vertical communication

- 5. service space
- 6. elevator to bridge above

- 7. open to ground level
- 8. open to pool on ground level



A: SECOND FLOOR PLAN

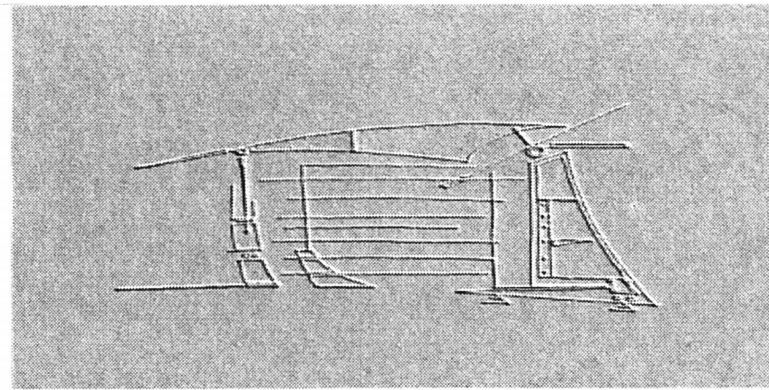


a circular gallery:

the moment shared with strangers on a circular walk becomes an awareness of presence - a dedication to a ritual of silence...

echoes murmur and facets of transparent matter share views with strangers. eyes see fantasies of light bouncing off a circular mirror.

intricate spirals painted in violet and blue climb to levels above to hide among bunches of orange and green. perhaps it is the array of steel arches that reminds you of outstretched hands with gently curled fingers - a handful of rain drops.

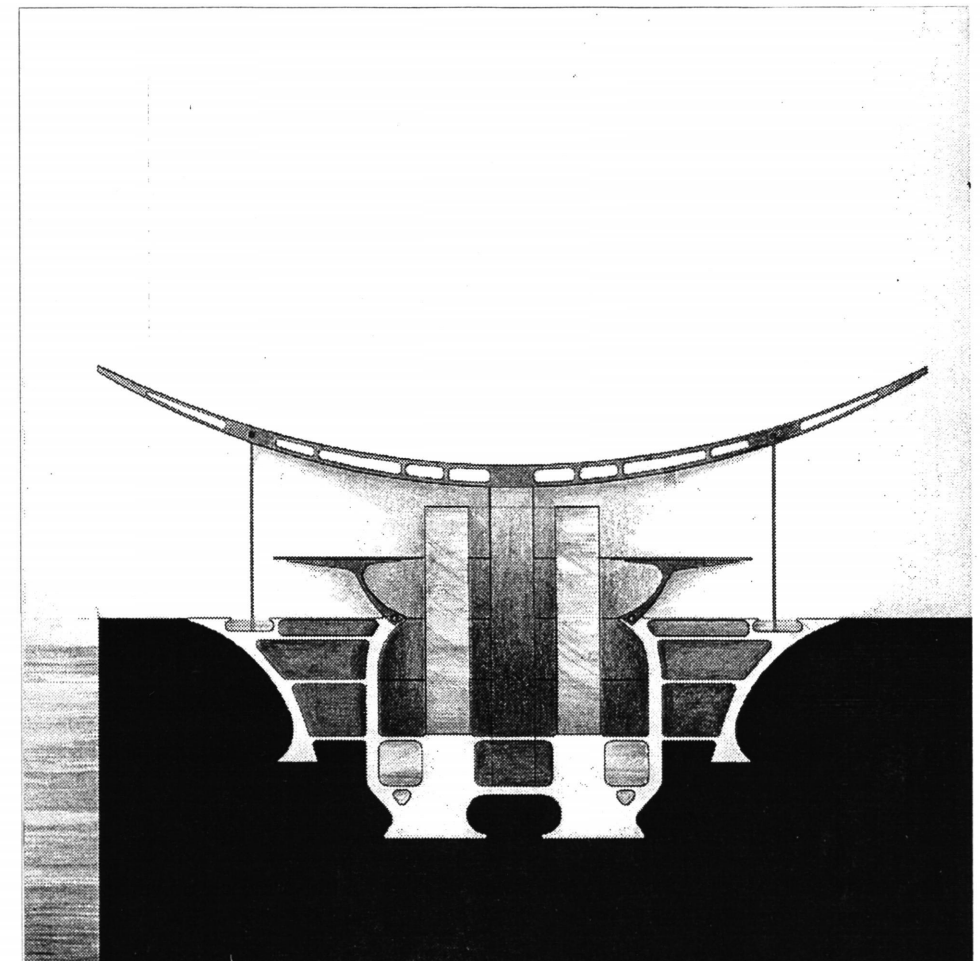
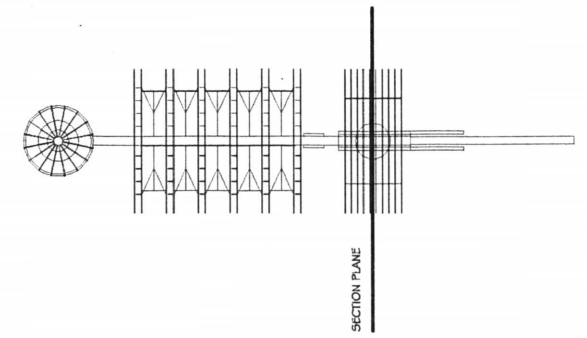
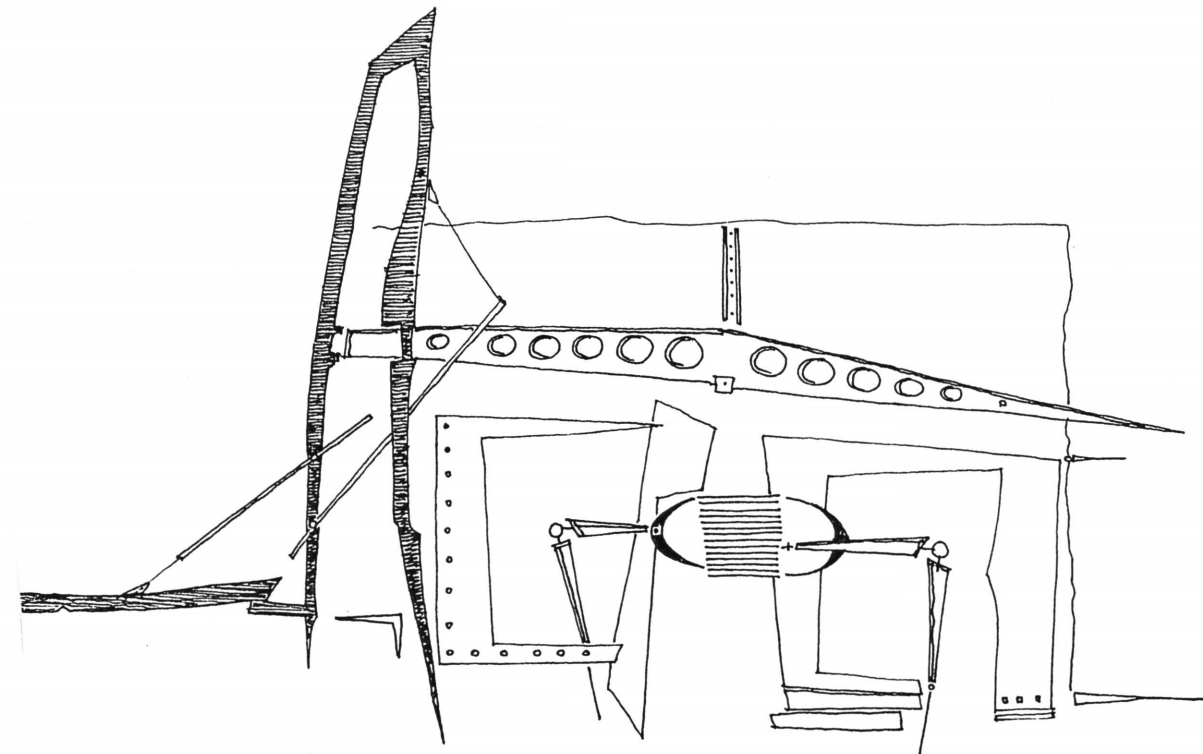


a round pool:

a study in geometrical perfection - the circle: sharp outline of stone holds a mirror. seen from above, most fish appear dark. their colors blend with the intensity of a blue-green thickness. flames throw fragments of silhouettes onto planes of fluids. currents bathe in gazes of dry eyes... curiosity will not interrupt its journey on wings of vapors... ricochets of luminous projections...

icicles...

a building of form: architecture is image, the search for image. is it possible to conceive of architectural design as series of gestures, aiming at the production of pure form? is architecture bound to utility? are buildings justifiable?



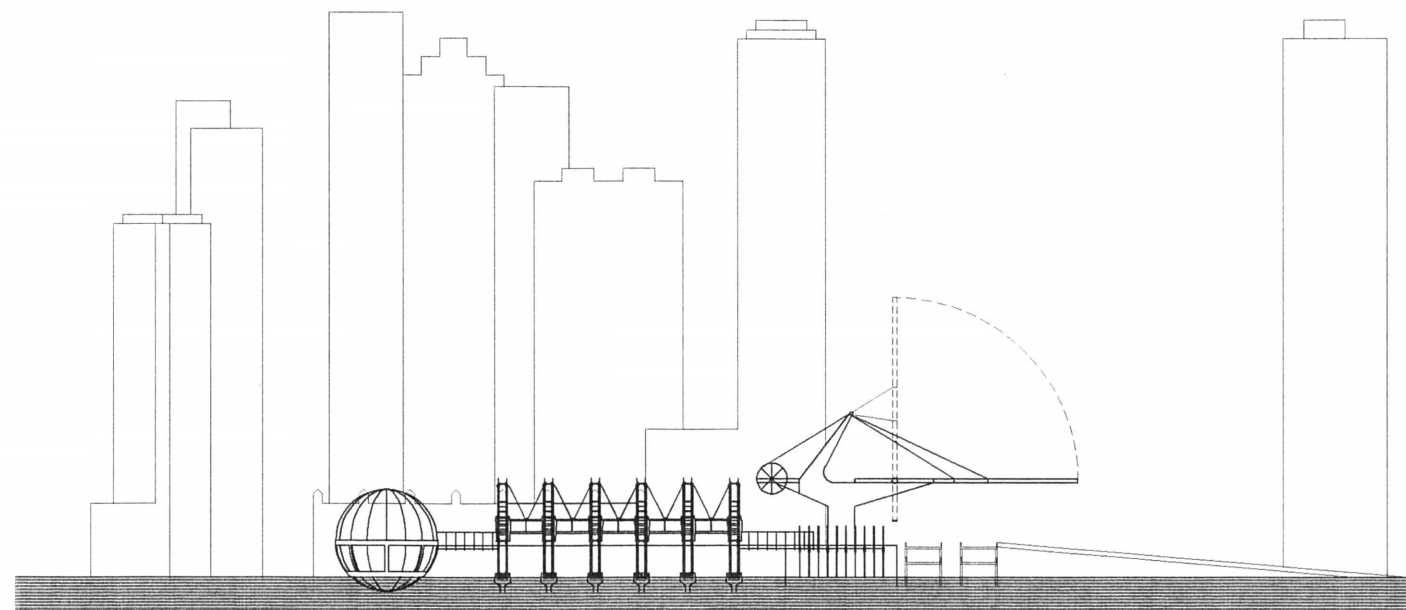
A: TAIL - CONCEPT & SCHEMATIC DESIGN

a stairway above water:

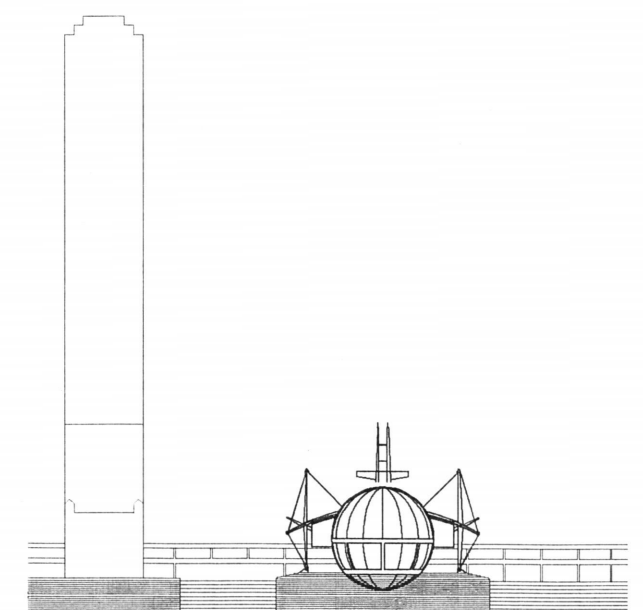
the gesture is one of crystal steps suspended over mirror pools...
the presence of a shadow of a stranger on the surface is disturbed by moving creatures.
the fluid is stirred into motion and the shadow dissipates shattered into an array of pixels...
eyes are motion detectors.
occasionally the peripheral vision captures a fantasy:
a story is remembered...

retail units:

to shake off the magic, layers of the building group to form a commercial oasis...
the impulsive decision to imitate the environment around the estuary of the chicago river results in a filter of retail units to develop along the perimeter of the structure.
leased spaces become home to vendors of small articles: jewels and books, inconspicuous wonders and antique silver objects, collections of colored bottles and incense, maps and other geographical devices...
open stores draw sunday shoppers. greedy eyes hold visions of enterprising merchants who trade stories for meticulously crafted violins...
through walls of glass one sees beyond bookshelves into the belly of the beast. transparent skin becomes the curtain, revealing attractions - and when the light is just the right amount, it will invite the eyes to see through.



A: SILHOUETTE-SOUTH



B: SILHOUETTE-WEST

a boardwalk:

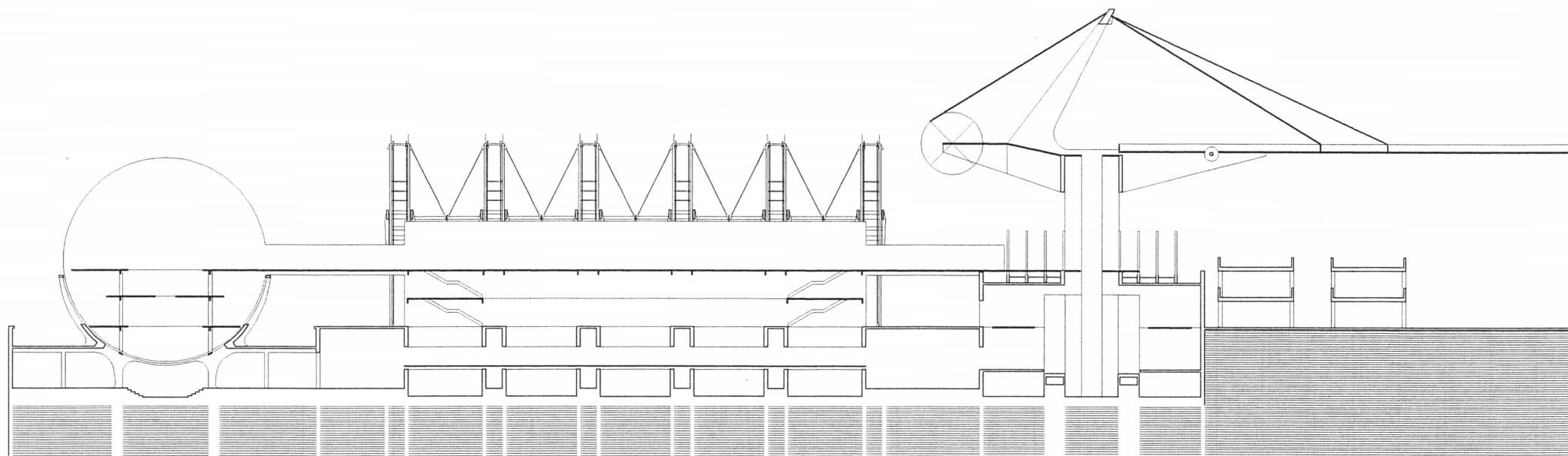
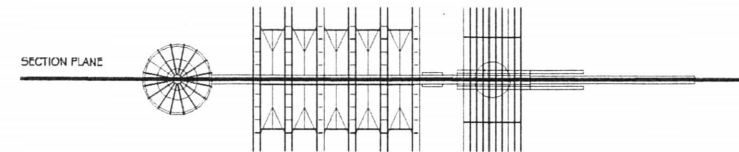
fragile moments and commercial vectors meet with credit cards... scrutinized by omnipresent networking processors, ubiquitous lenses, and electronic article surveillance units, travelers enter the shell of the aquarium: shoppers' dialogue introduces memories of the crystal clear waters of the baltic sea... a carpet of aquatic creatures unfolds below a structure of carefully aligned timbers - a boardwalk. light streams through joints, ripples roll to speak of softness...

an aquarium tunnel:

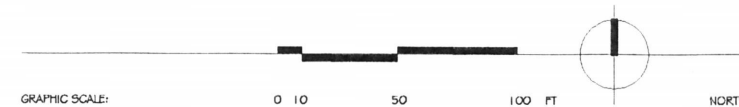
those pools reveal the sequence of tanks below...

a tunnel through the water sentences the visitor to moments of wonder and helplessness as he or she strolls through the glass structure, surrounded by water. the enclosure holds a hint of the water bodies surrounding the structure... as if the fluids have eaten the earth to pierce clay and stone and build caverns - exhibition halls... containers occasionally water emerges through slots in the boardwalk and through layers of transparency one sees blurred silhouettes of creatures: some walk and some are busy swimming...

on both sides of the procession slender brackets pull shiny wires: a skeleton,... perhaps a harp.



A: LONGITUDINAL SECTION



an aquarium ride:

no cameras are welcomed in the building...

official orders have not been issued, but those who choose to bring along documentation devices soon abandon them in favor of some moments of devotion to experience...

friends ride the elevator in a glass tube, ascending through a cylindrical aquarium full of tiny creatures.

later when they try to tell their relatives about the experience, the stories are always slightly different. colleagues and acquaintances exhibit signs of frustration with facts that do not match...

occasionally one will ask for photos from the visit, or a movie...

helpless, the tellers find comfort in sharing fragile memories from the place, and plans for future visits. the structure opens its enormous hull for guests around the clock, and all can enter...

a balcony:

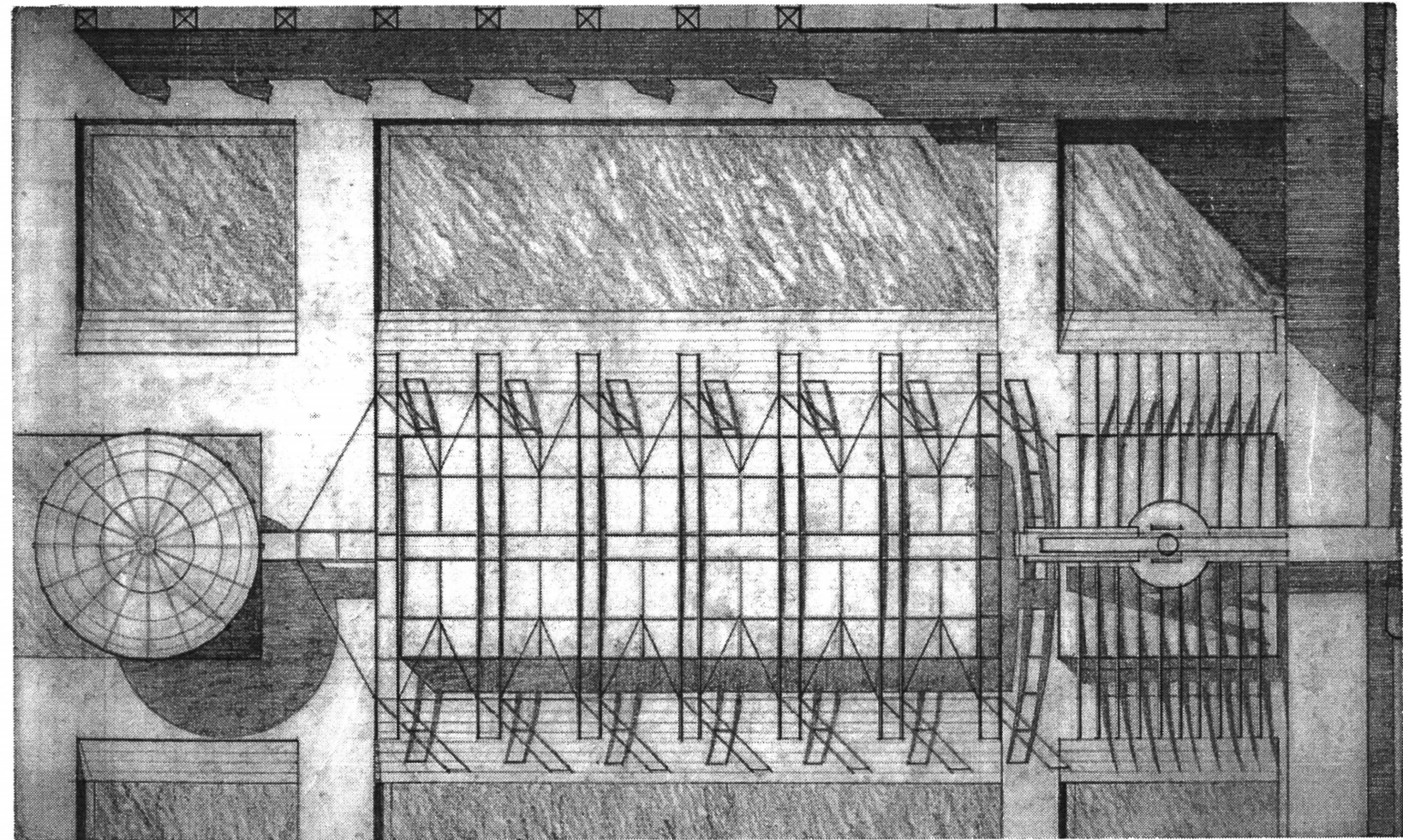
a round, flat platform runs in a circular ritual around a void...

a view is offered at the pool from a higher elevation...

for those who chose to bring their favorite books of stories the place turns into a lounge.. visitors choose from an array of moon chairs... to spend some time with fiction, or watch the traffic from inside the facets of the transparent sphere.

decision making faces a dilemma of an elevator versus spiral stairs...

yet there may be an entirely different solution...



A: ROOF PLAN

aquariums:

along a gallery, in a void of glass and stone, the vast openness of the torso welcomes an awareness of grids of small containers...

each container holds a rainbow. thousands of small eyes spy on pedestrians, who curiously inquire into the shallow tanks. children extend tiny hands as if to gather handfuls of sea jewels. some laugh in ecstasy as moving creatures stir the water, casting spells of water colors onto cheered faces. some frown with the feeling of cold glass; the experience can be compared to looking into sun dried shells long after their inhabitants are gone...

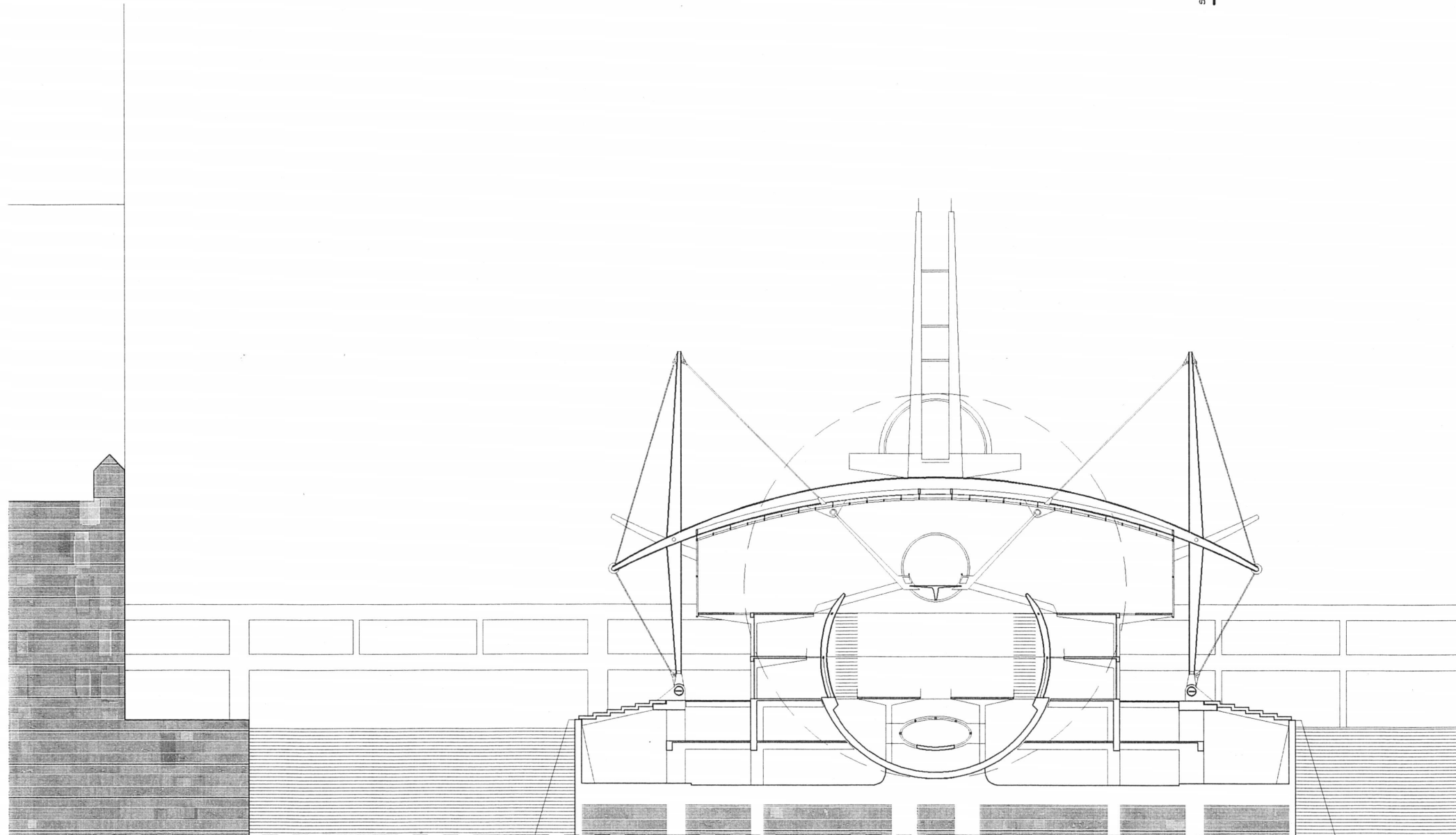
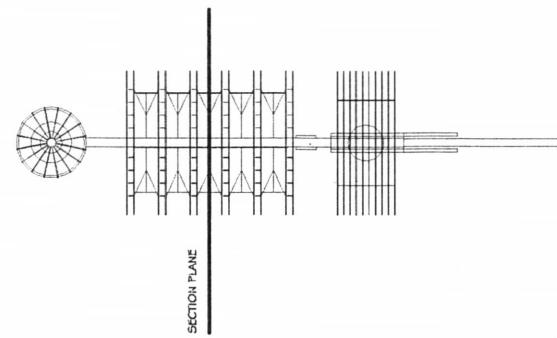
galleries:

vectors of communication will bring the stranger to a mall where two walls of aquariums embrace two galleries...

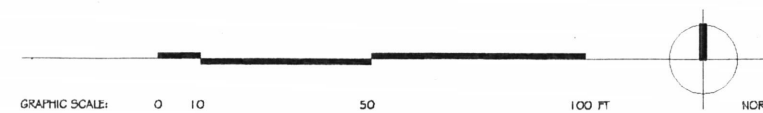
two arrays of stainless steel brackets support the galleries and project into the space above... to remind people of the ribs of a long forgotten species.

exhibition space:

the platform under the glass dome is a landing below fantasies of suspended floral species: mythical gardens although the plants find an abundance of light, it still remains a mystery how their roots reach the soil. the picture moves away from science...



A: CROSS SECTION

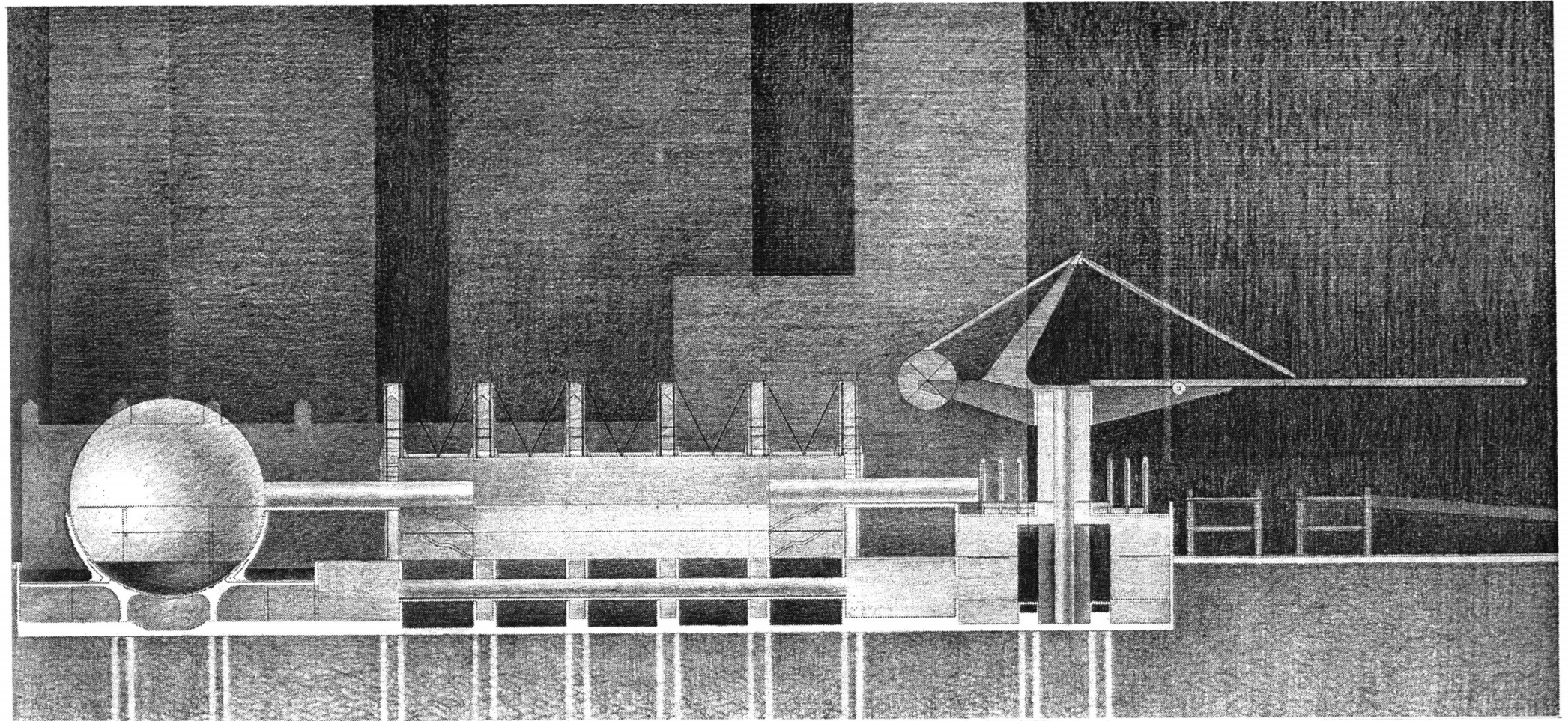


communication:

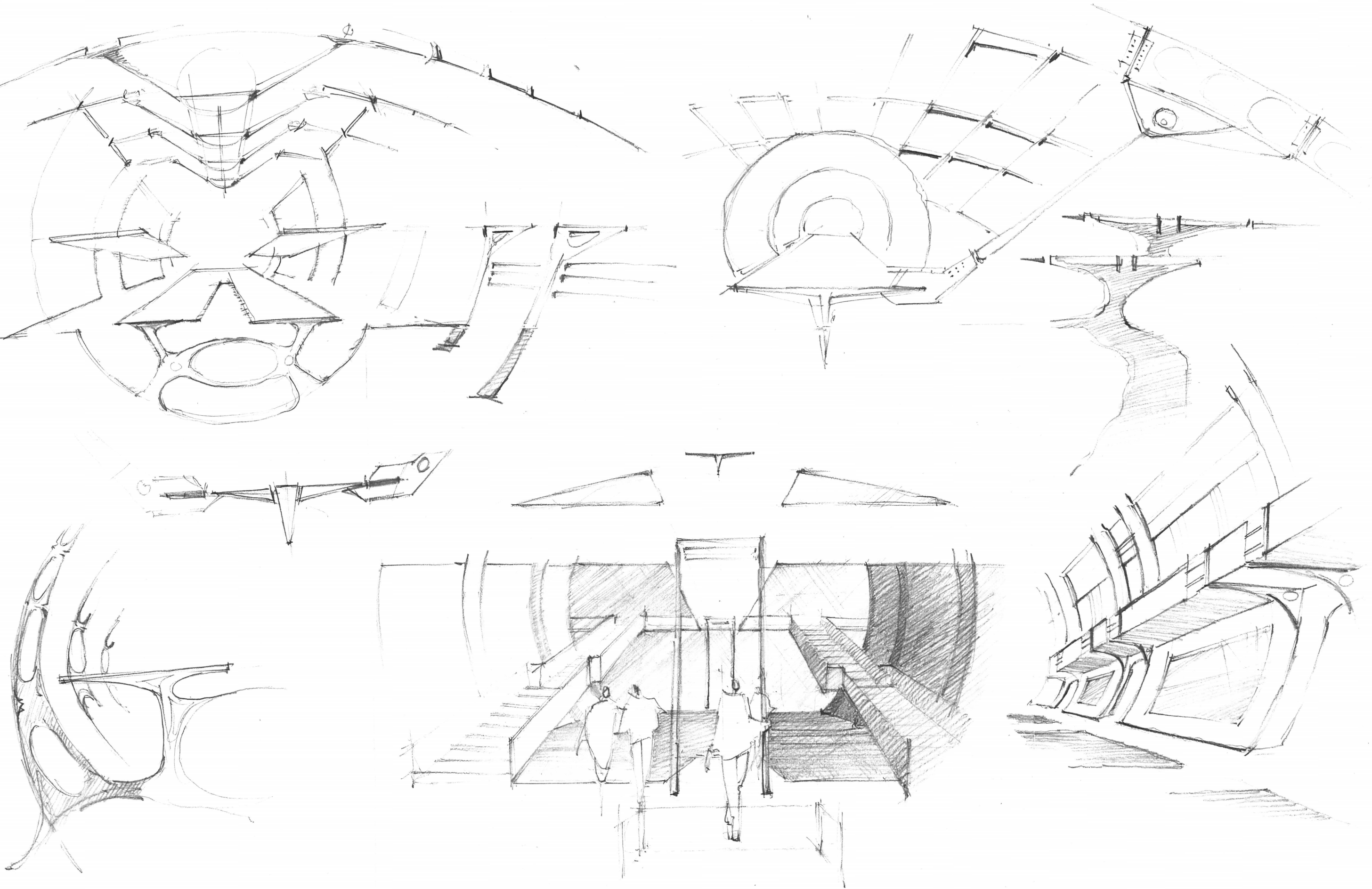
two lanes of traffic remind two strangers of chestnut trees and autumn shadows... sap scent and crawling insects are pieces of the setting under glass panels suspended from a canopy of steel: tension and compression... the foliage sprays moisture and my face bathes in shadows of obscurity...

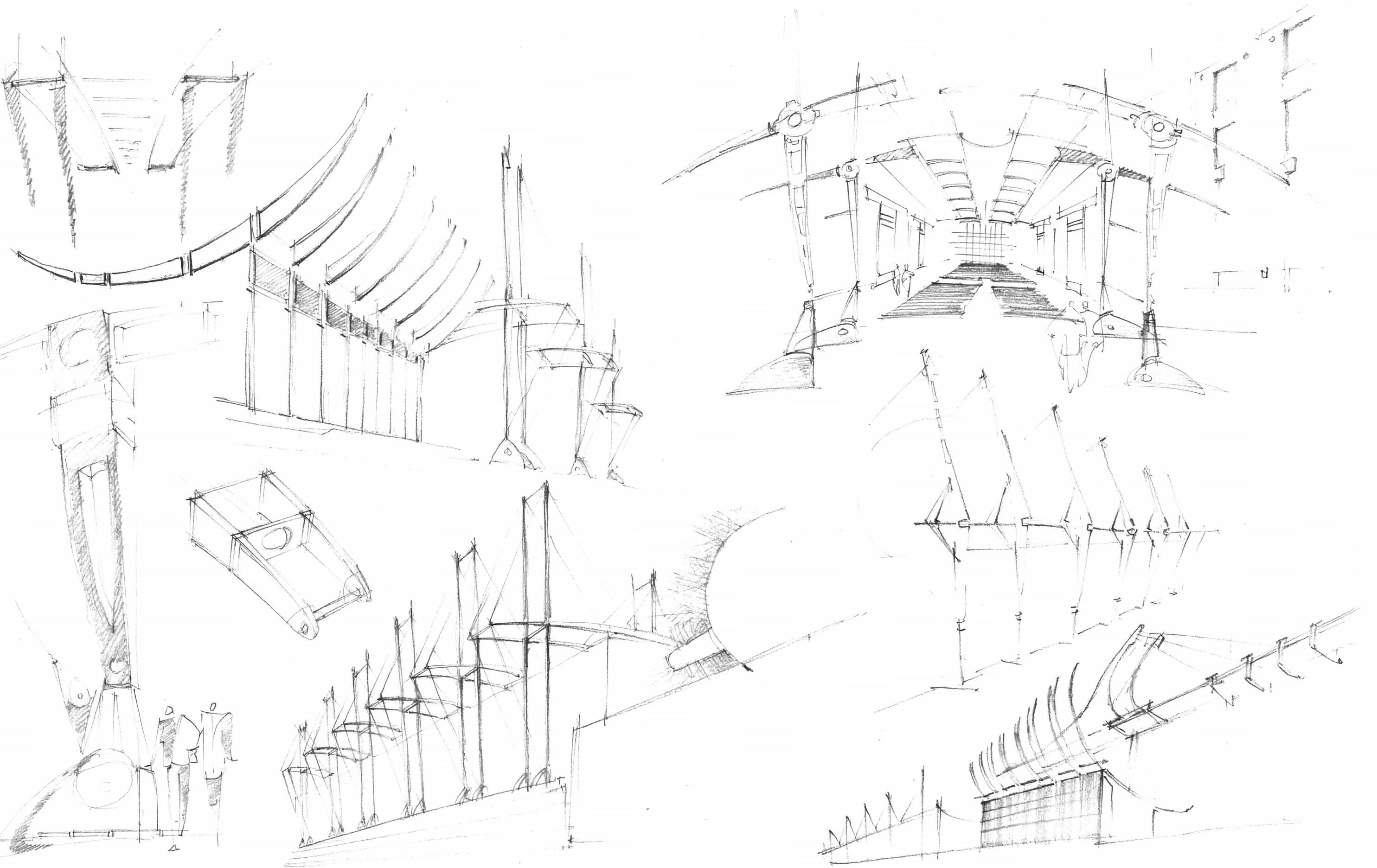
suspended bridges:

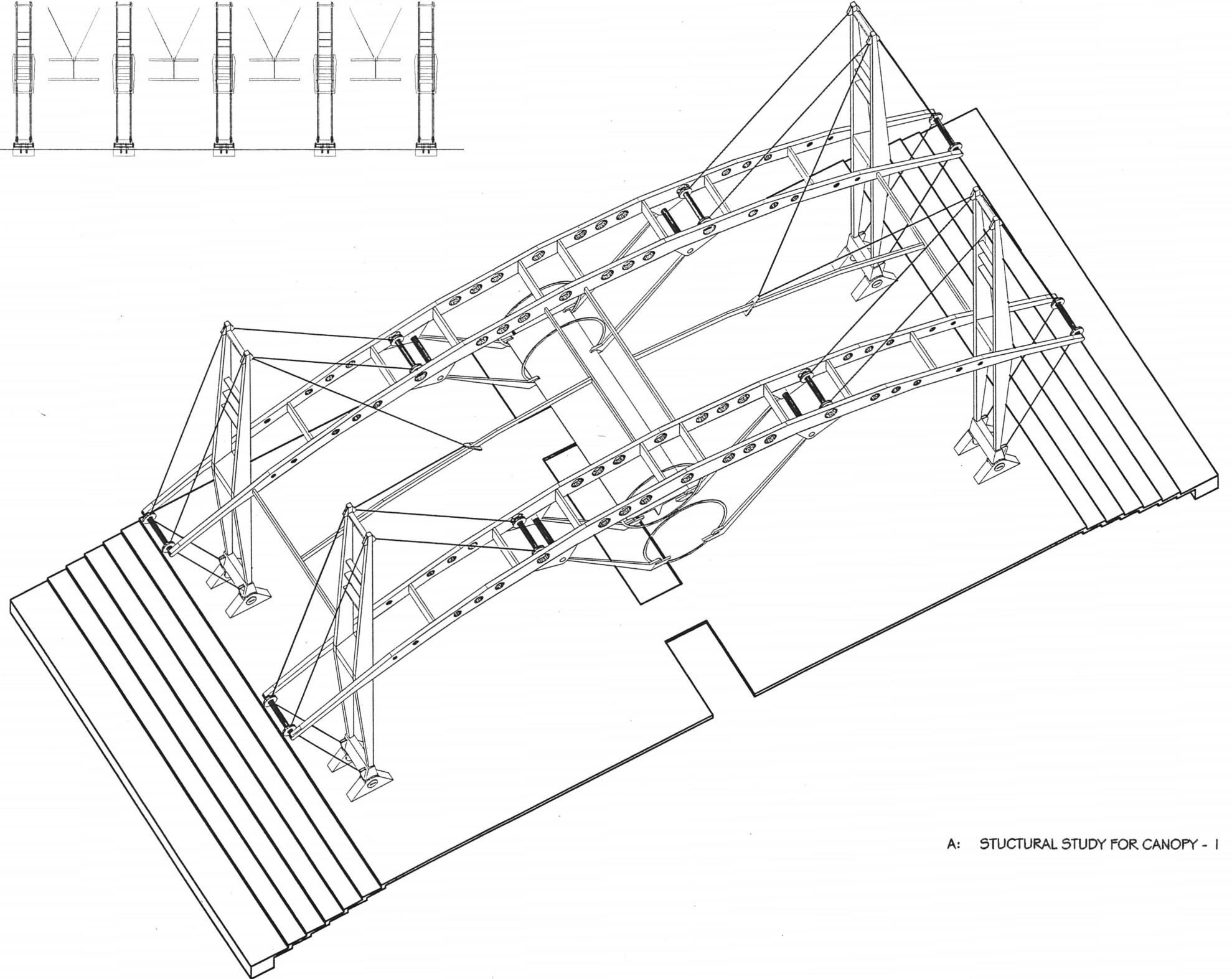
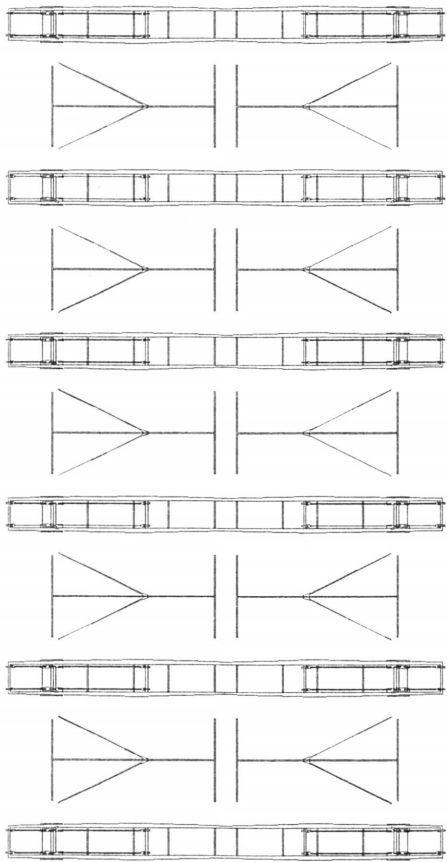
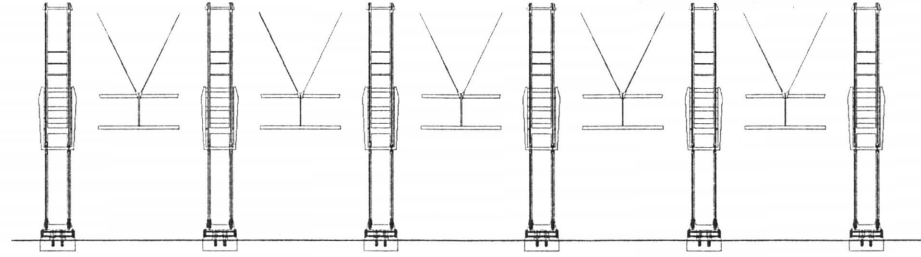
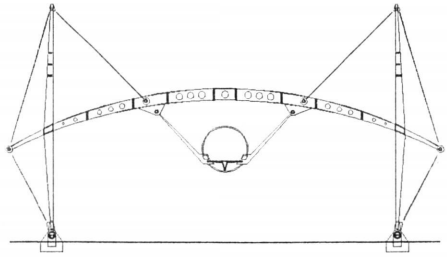
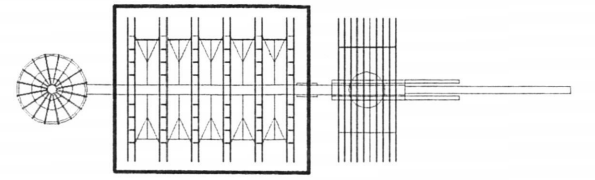
to explore all rooms of the palace, guests walk through wheels of structures. curiosity leads from one room of illusions to another, as the bridge extends to span the structure in an inevitable gesture



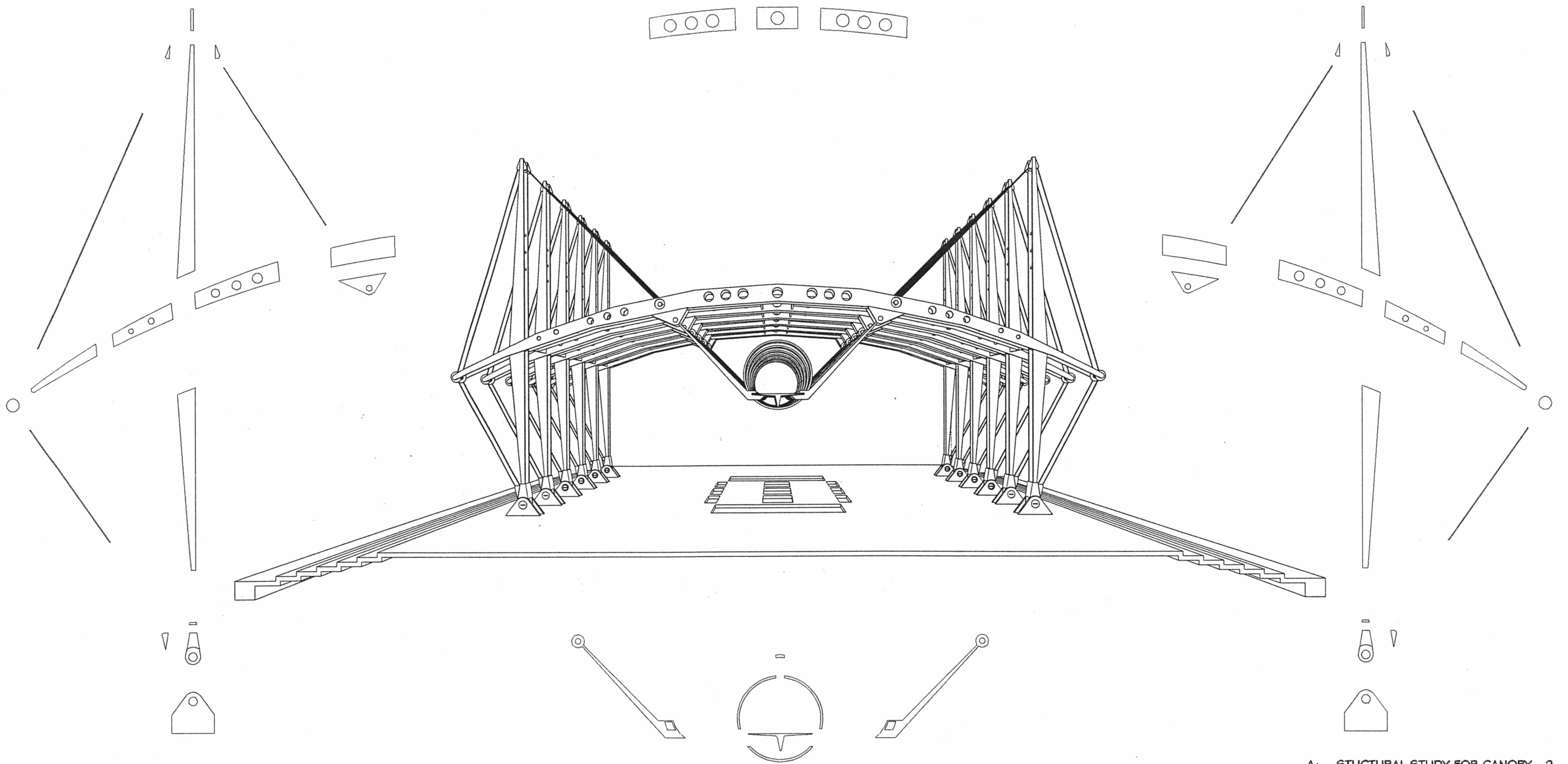
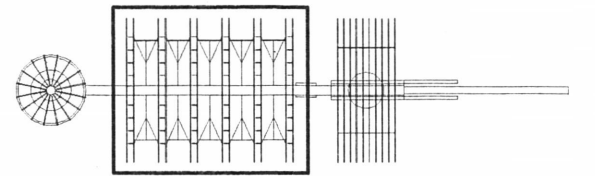
A: SECTION STUDY



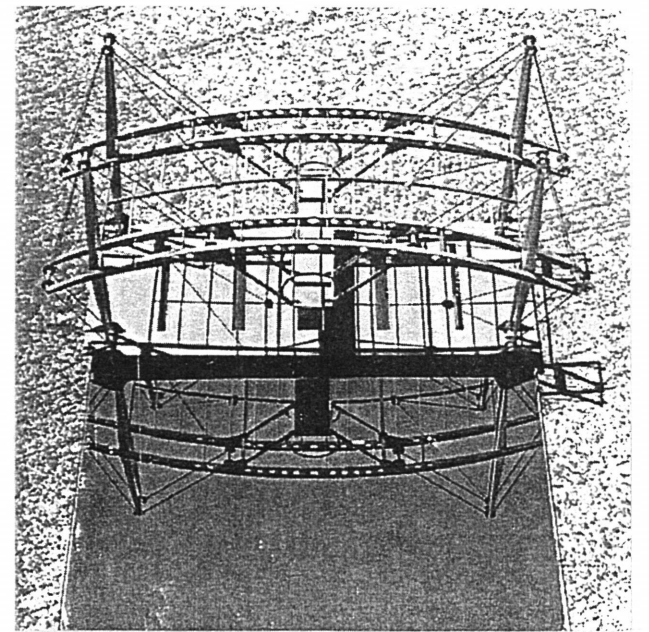
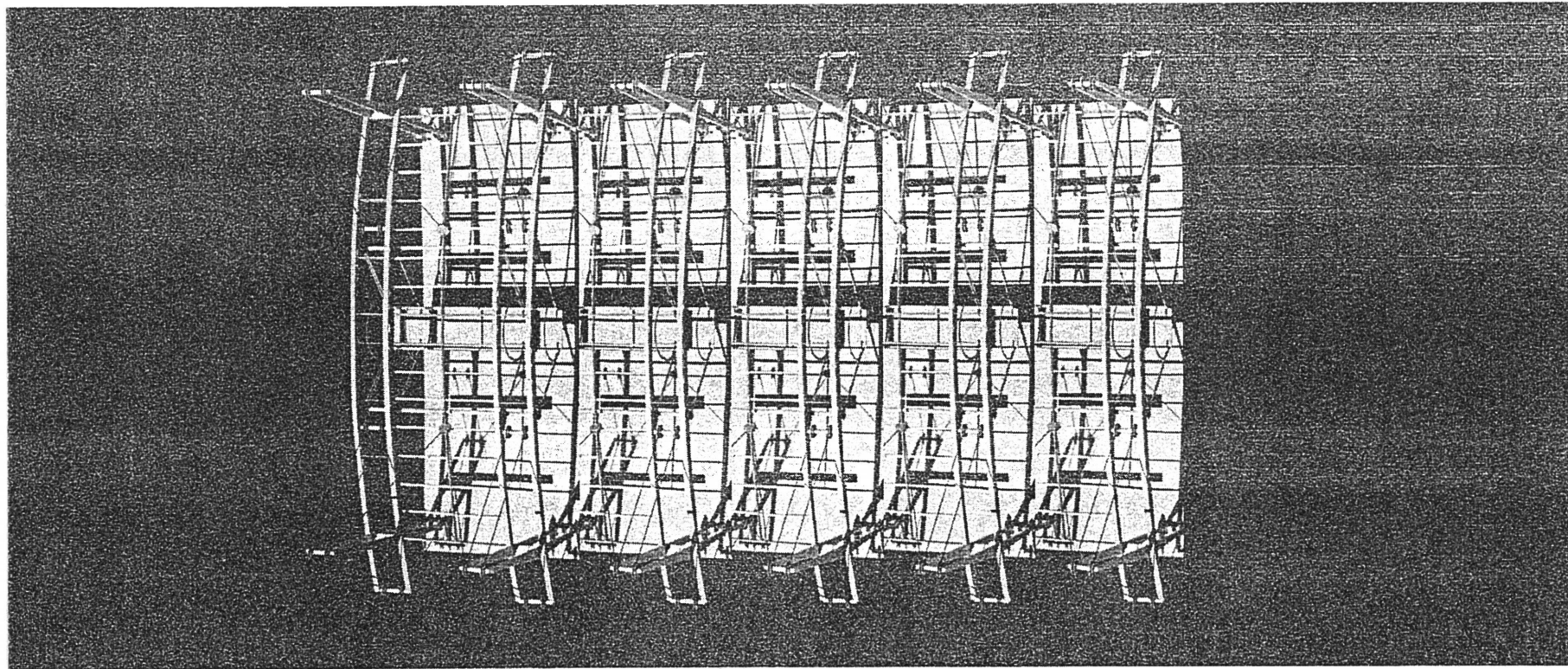
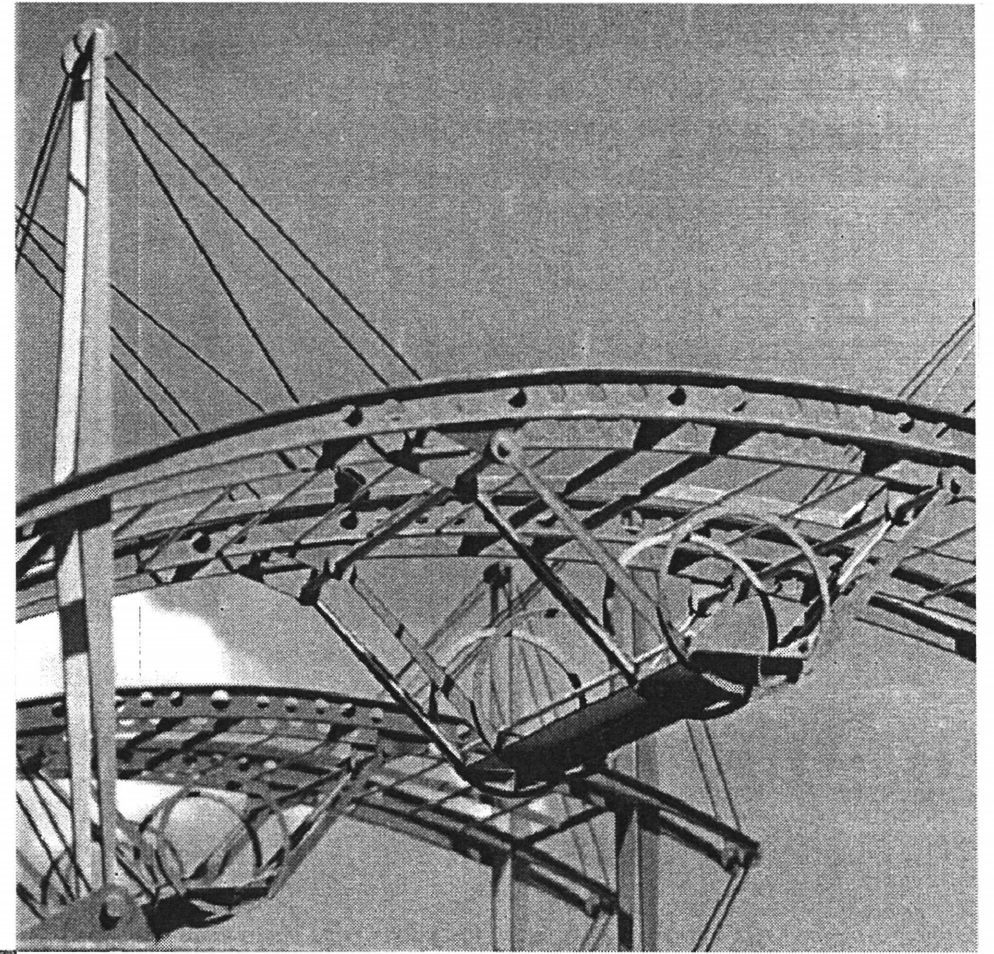
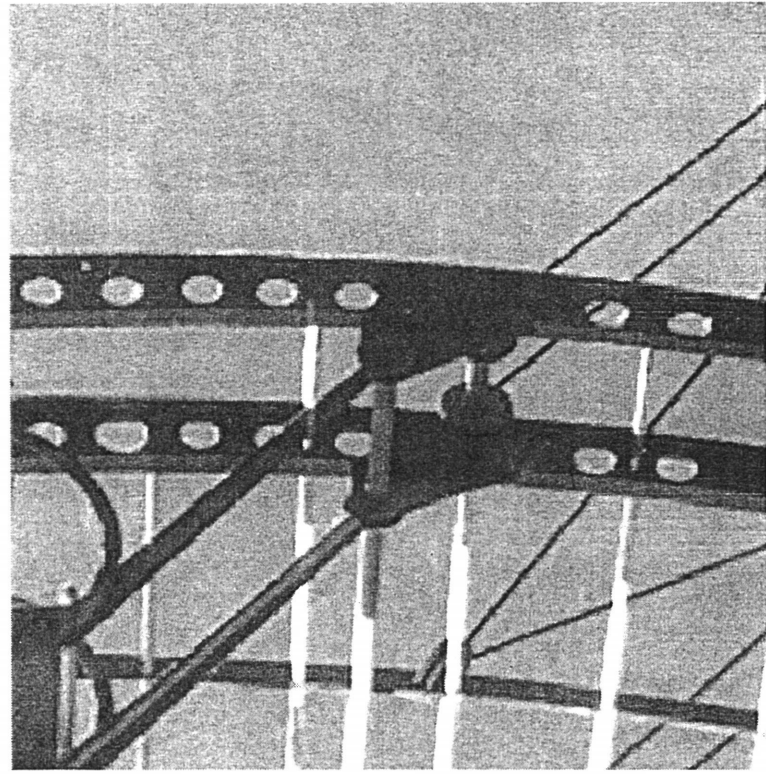
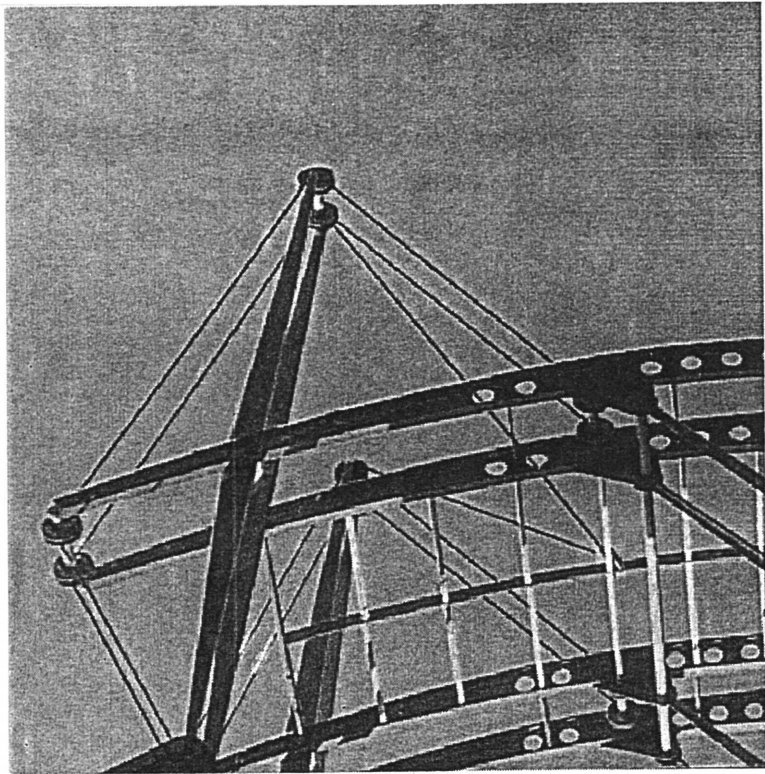


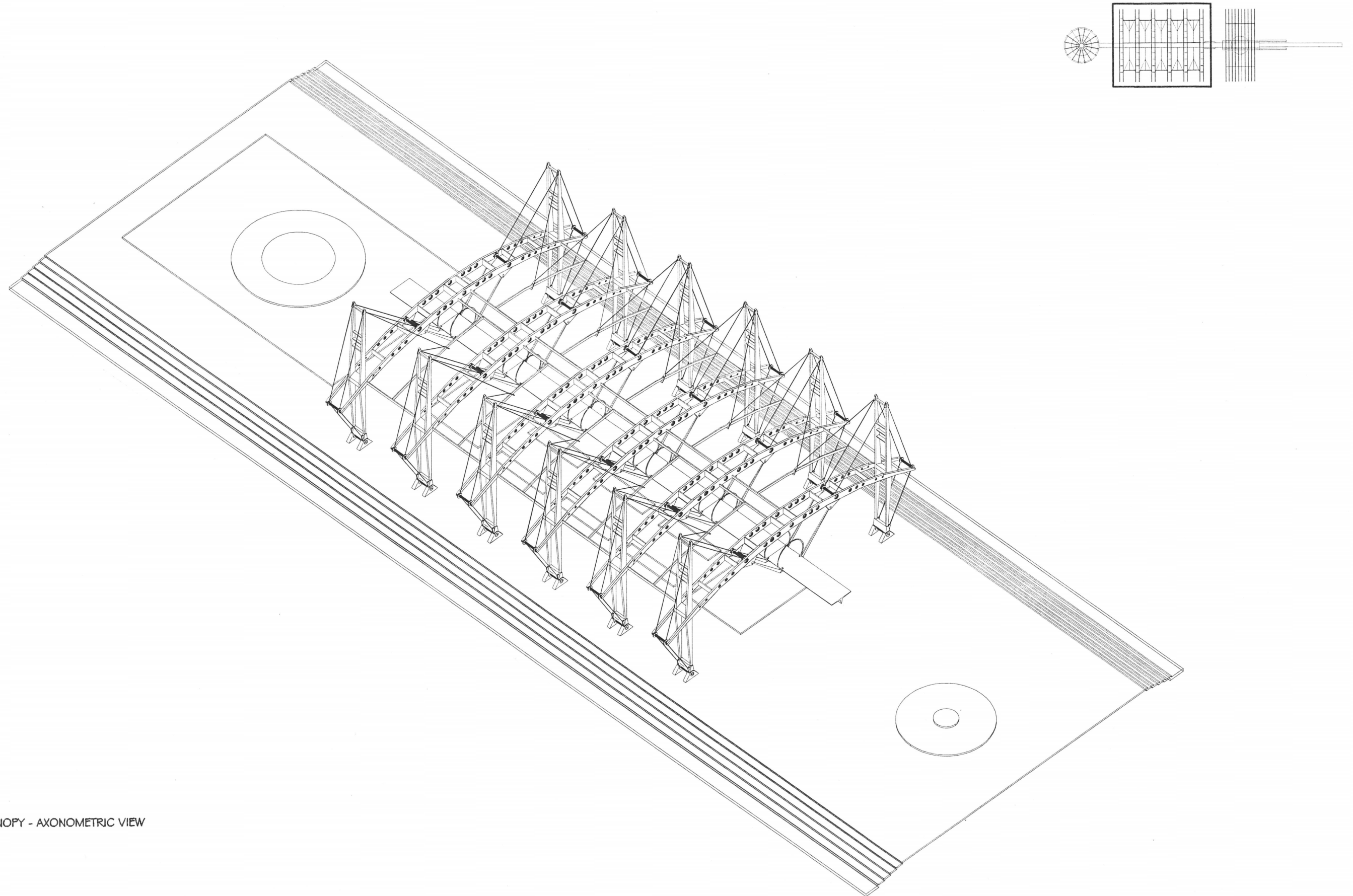


A: STRUCTURAL STUDY FOR CANOPY - I



A: STUCTURAL STUDY FOR CANOPY - 2





A: CANOPY - AXONOMETRIC VIEW

Coventry Cathedral

Nothing prepared us for it
Not the lookalike streets
traffic snorting and stopping
punk hanging outside the pubs
pints in hand celebrating Sunday

Some people hate the structure
Even the guide books hedge

We climb a rise
note smooth red walls, tall slit windows
Saint Michael slaying the devil
A lady of good works selling raffles
Children in mummer's costumes
Nothing prepares you

For the lurch of heart,
the spurting tear
as we swallow whole
the skeletal shell
empty apse and altar
a charred wood cross
crudely tied

Two words on the wall:
Father forgive

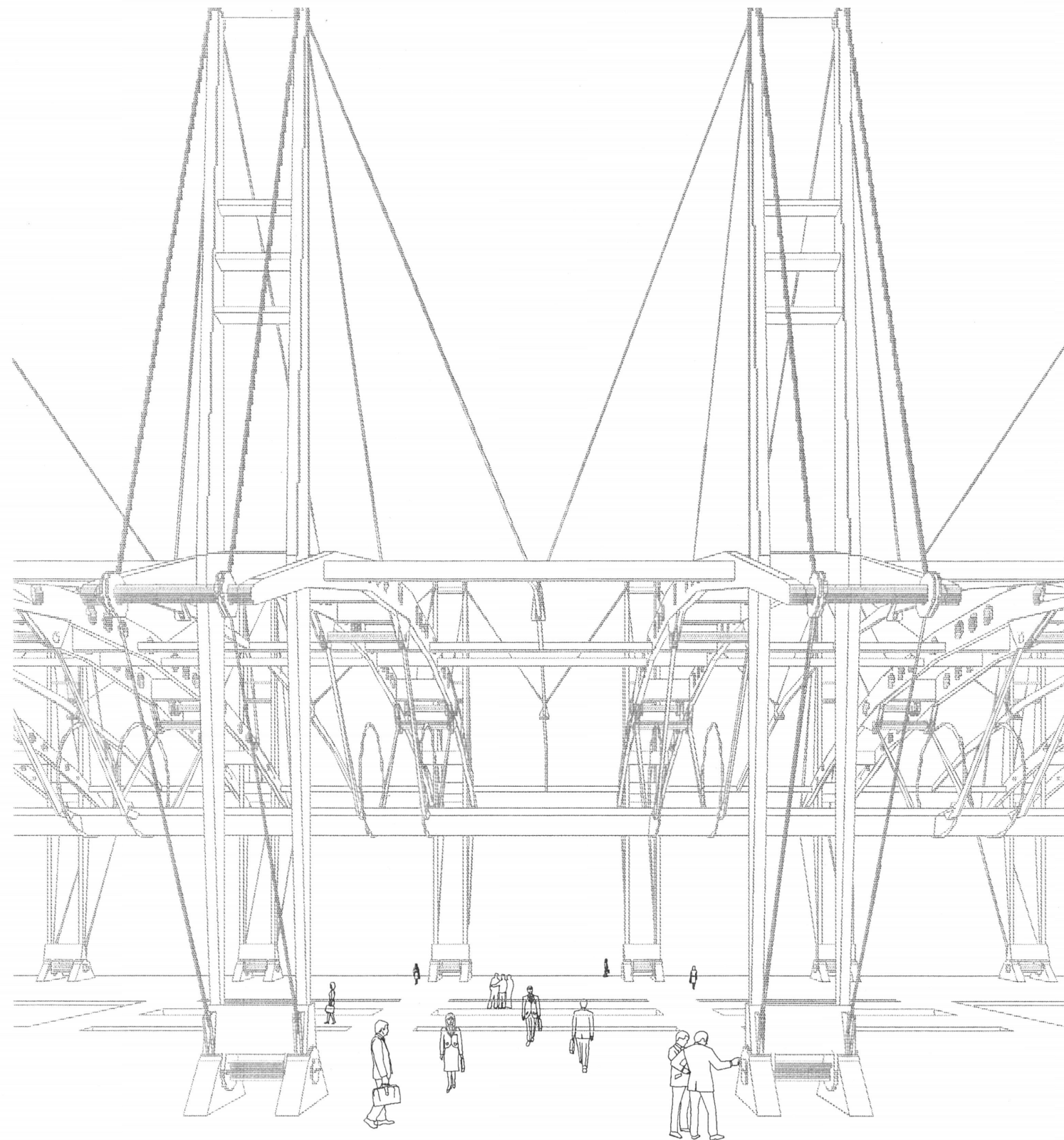
Nothing prepares us
The wall of light
clear etched glass
antic angels dancing and trumpeting
the glory of faith and the faithful

The effulgent flood
of stained glass, of gold light

At Chartres the eye is drawn up
through a far distant window
toward heaven

At Coventry heaven swathes earth
and we share the radiance
in this tabernacle
whose cement is love
whose foundation is forgiveness

RUTH F. EISENBERG



**The vita has been removed from
the scanned document**