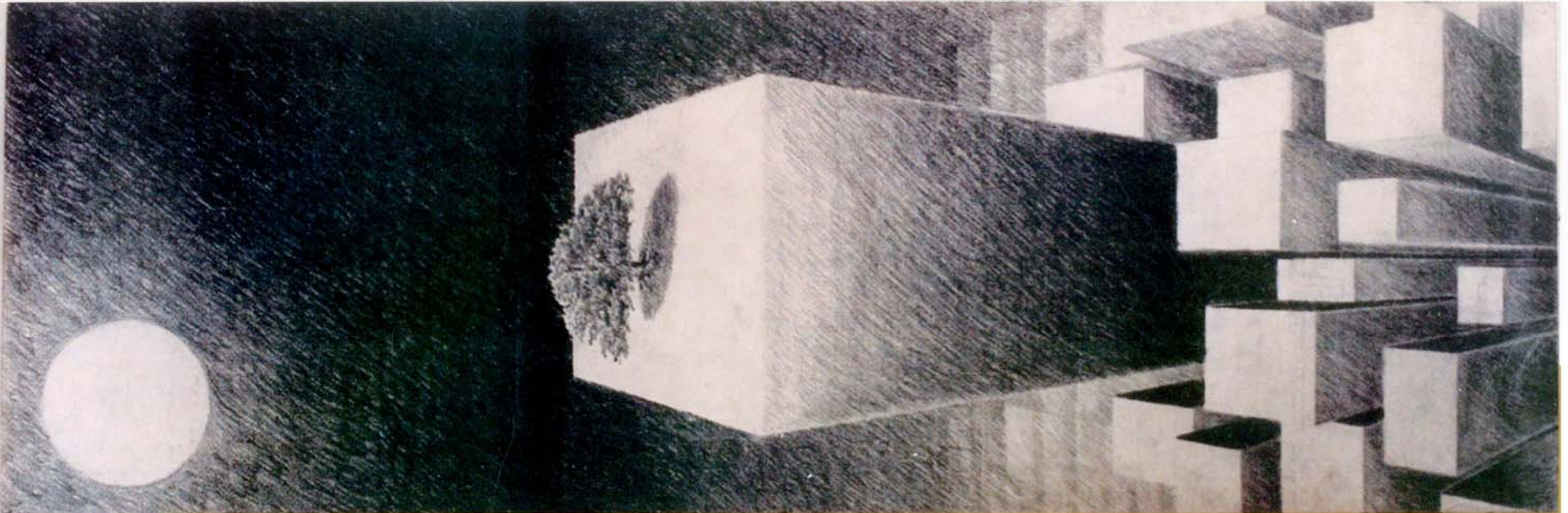


An Urban Park Pavilion as a Sense of Place:
A Community Theater and Water Taxi Terminal at the Foot of King Street
Rok Seong

Thesis submitted to the faculty of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Architecture In Architecture and Urban Studies



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Oct. 29th, 2014
Washington-Alexandria Architecture Center
Alexandria, Virginia

Keywords: Waterfront, Open Space, Public Activities, Pavilion

An Urban Park Pavilion as a Sense of Place: A Community Theater and Water Taxi Terminal at the Foot of King Street

Rok Seong

ABSTRACT

My thesis is regarding the regeneration of identity and a sense of place on the unappealing nature of public open space, in terms of its urban context and architecture.

A “sense of place” is related to the quality and character of making a place unique or special. It could be described as the established atmosphere or character of an individuals’ relationship with a place. So a good sense of place becomes a place that people would like to be a part of and enhances a human’s positive emotional attachment making people feel connected to a place. So creating a “sense of place” should be based on understanding the cultural identity, social activity, physical environment and heritage of a place.

Shown on the left are two images captured from the movie “Lost in Translation,” an American comedy-drama film directed and written by Sofia Coppola in 2003. The film revolves around an aging actor, Bob Harris, and a recent college graduate actress, Charlotte. These two Americans develop empathy after meeting by chance at their hotel bar in Tokyo. The movie explores themes of loneliness, insomnia, existential boredom and culture shock against the surroundings of a modern Japanese city. Both images from the movie show an unbalanced scale of the environment around the actor.

These images reminded me of the first impression of “disconnected” or “disappointed” that I had of the atmosphere at the end of King Street in Alexandria, Virginia. The place was not comfortable to be in with its own character and the access to the water was hard to be sense visually. The first impression of this place still occupied my mind rather than any other attractive aspects within the area. This unpleasant experience arose from my own individual relationship with the place but later I figured out that it had already been seen as a public issue. These circumstances motivated me to think about how to regenerate a strong local sense of place in the area.

The site of the project is an entire block from the Old Dominion Boat Club at the King Street Park to the Waterfront Park on Prince Street along the Potomac River in Old Town, Alexandria, Virginia. The main access to the site is at the end of King Street. King Street has been the dominant connection to the water and the main corridor, carrying most of the entertainments in Old Town. Currently though, it lacks designated routes to the water at the end of the street.

This project, an urban park pavilion, is composed of four different programs: the roof park, plaza, community performance Theater and boat taxi terminal which will be treated as equal value by a juxtaposed arrangement and interconnected street grids. My thesis will narrates how to develop a “sense of place” through the interaction of quality of architecture, infrastructure, cultural identities, social activities and the environment.



Movie Lost in translation Moment # 1: Shower (P1)



Movie Lost in translation Moment # 9: In the hospital (P2)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To my Committee. Jaan, my chair, I respect your creative feedback and wisdom that always inspire me. Thank you for sharing your insights with me.

Susan, I appreciate your pinpoint suggestions at the exact right time. You helped me to overcome my weakness and to become confident with my project.

Jim, thank you for your guidance on the direction of the project at the very beginning. Your warm encouragements helped me to persevere.

Henry, thank you for all your help and taking care of everything.

Tao, thank you for always reminding me of the thesis schedule in order to have a complete project.

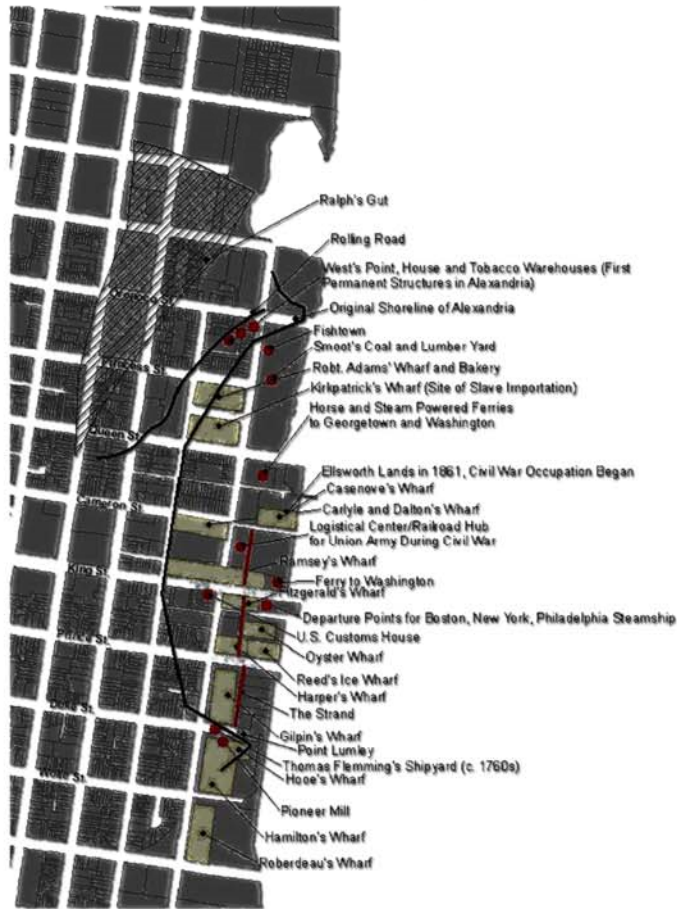
Jea, thank you for sharing your time with me to make my book better shape.

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Site and Approach

ALEXADRIA WATER FRONT HISTORIC SITE MAP



MAP BY OHA / ALEXADRIA ARCHAEOLOGY
CITY OF ALEXADRIA VIRGINIA

Background History of the site

Located at the eastern and southeastern area of the City of Alexandria along the Potomac River, Old Town Alexandria was originally placed in 1749 making it the oldest section of the City and is considered a historic district.

On this page, the map and the images of the waterfront on the right show the character of the area in the past. The area was involved in civilian service and was a transportation hub. The images on the opposite page represent the circumstances of the Alexandria at the time.

Currently, Old Town is well known for its diverse mix of antique shops, art galleries and restaurants as well as historic buildings and landmarks. King Street serves as the dominant connection to the water and preferred corridor.

On King Street, Market Square is believed to be one of the oldest continuously operating marketplaces in the United States since 1753 and was once the site of the second-largest slave market in the U.S. Today, Now it serves as a place for the farmers' market every Saturday morning.



Slave ship taking on slaves at the Alexandria waterfront in 1836 (P3)



A bird's eye view of Alexandria from the Potomac in 1863 (P4)



Waterfront at Foot of King Street with Ferry Boat, circa 1900.
Alexander J. Wedderburn's *Souvenir Virginia Tercentennial 1607-1907 of Historic Alexandria, Virginia, Illustrated* (P5)

The Arch at the end of King Street was interpreted as a symbol of the main gate to the waterfront during that period.



BACKGROUND IMAGE - FOOT OF KING STREET SHOWING ARCH OF FERRY BUILDING 1900 ALEXANDRIA LIBRARY -LOCAL HISTORY / WILLIAM F. SMITH COLLECTION (P6)



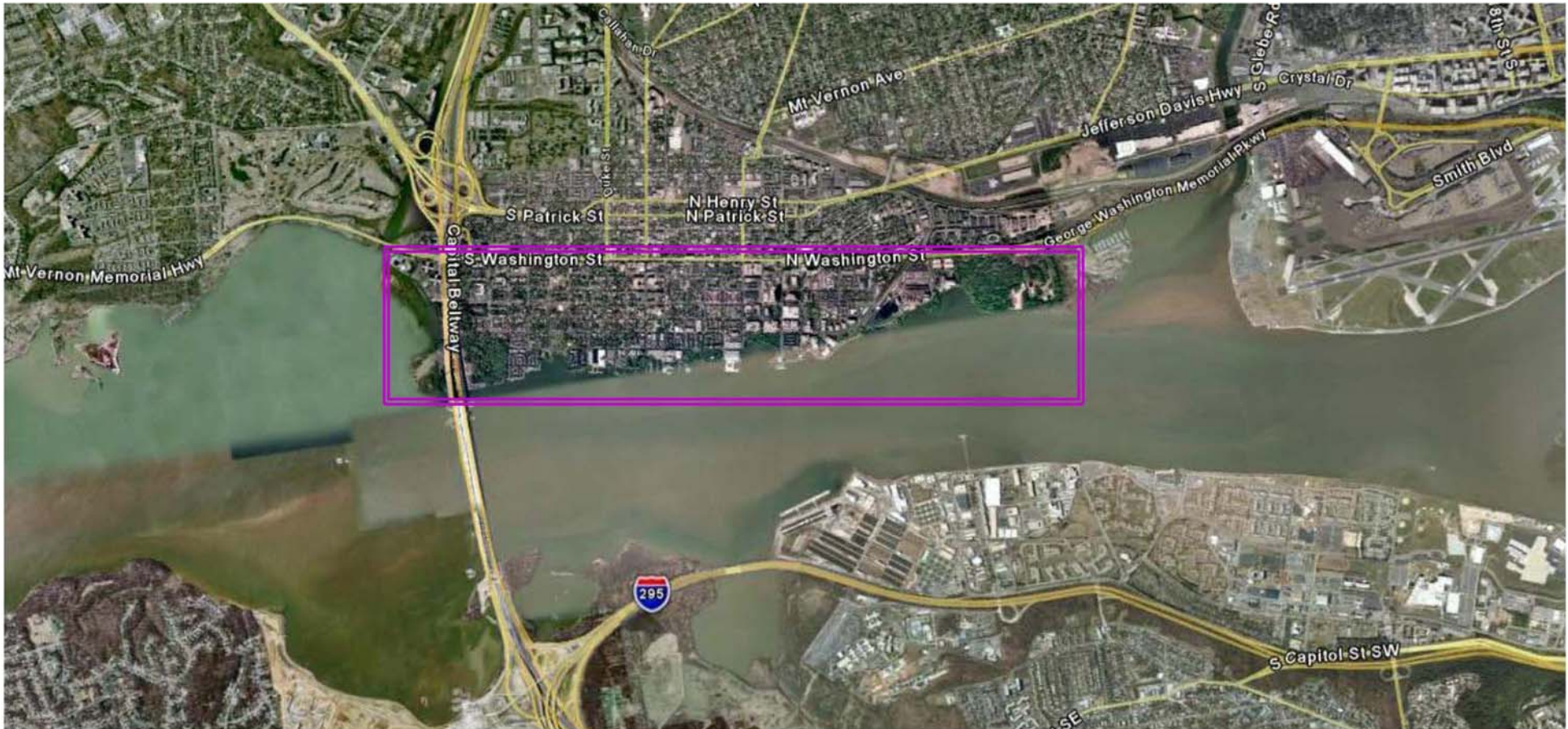
AERIAL VIEW OF KING STREET, 1935 (P7)



The Tarpedo Factory in the 1920s
Library of Congress (P8)



FOOT OF KING STREET 1931 (P9)



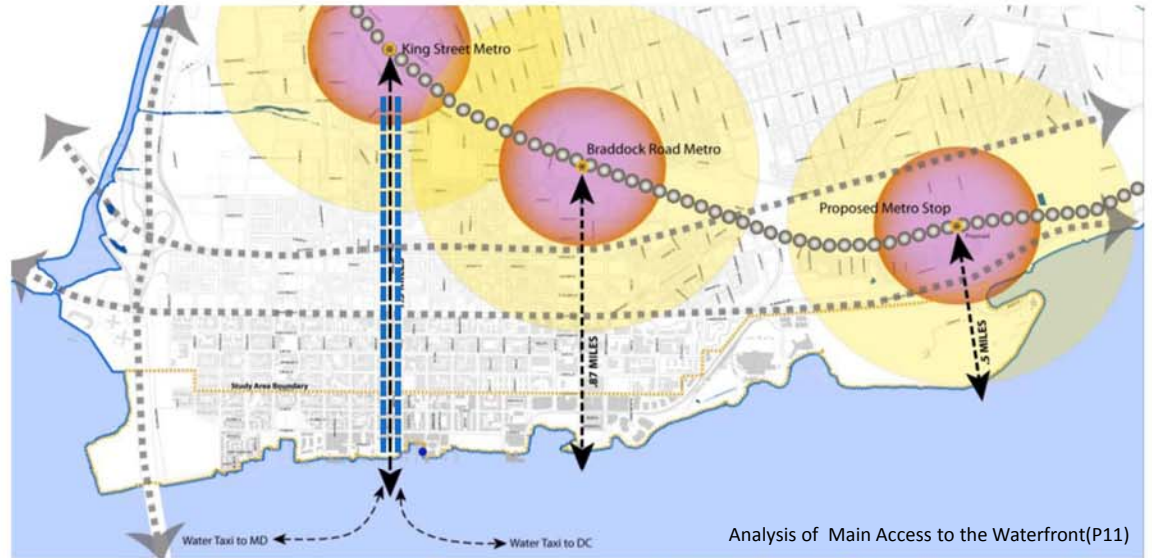
ALEXADRIA WATER FRONT AERIAL MAP (P10)

The City of Alexandria in Virginia is considered a part of the Washington D.C. Metropolitan Area and the adjacent jurisdictions are Arlington County, Virginia to the north, Fairfax County, Virginia to the west and south, District of Columbia to the northeast and Prince George's County, Maryland to the east.

The Washington Metro System opened a new commuter stop on King Street in 1983 and trolley buses run between the metro station and the waterfront along King Street in Old Town Alexandria. The opening of the Washington Metro's King Street Station led to a spurt of new hotels and office buildings in the western end of Old Town.

At foot of King Street, current river cruise boats and water taxis stop at wharfs that were once part of a bustling colonial and Civil War seaport. The boat taxi runs to different ports in D.C. and to Mount Vernon. Recently, another boat line was started to stop at National Harbor in Maryland

*PROXIMITY TO METRO STATION
-KING STREET IS DOMINANT CONNECTION TO THE WATER
AND PREFERRED CORRIDOR
CHARACTER, AMENITIES, INTERMODAL*



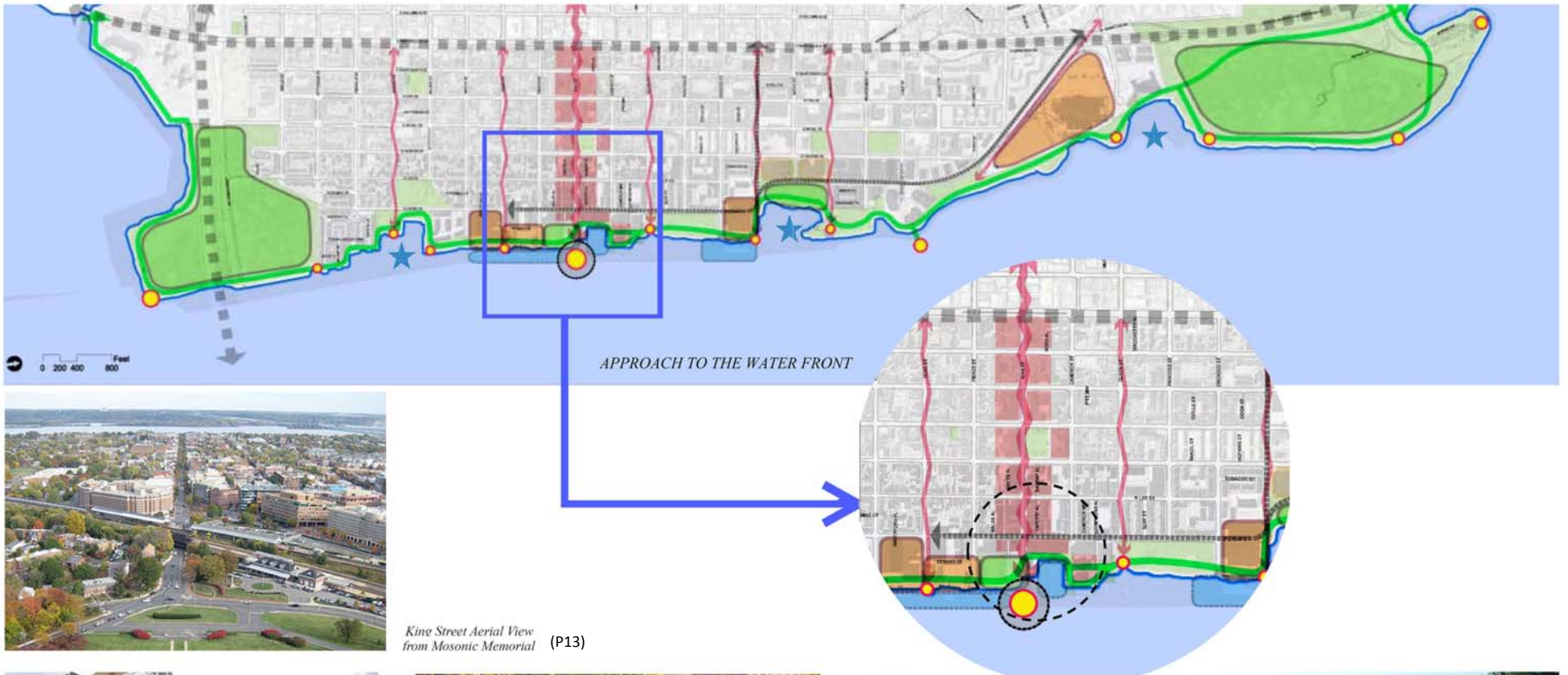
Analysis of Main Access to the Waterfront(P11)



Analysis of Traffic on King Street



Map of Water taxi route (P12)



King Street Aerial View from Masonic Memorial (P13)



Cultural Festival in Old Town (P14)



Art Festival in Old Town (P15)



Farmers Market (P16)



Farmers Market at City Hall (P17)



View of Torpedo Factory @ night (P18)



View of the existing Waterfront area (P19)



Bike trail (P20)



View from the site to National Harbor (P21)

The Mount Vernon Trail also passes through the area. The bike paths are connected along the shore line from D.C to other green spaces in Alexandria. This factor made me think about how to preserve green space with new developments and to treat Waterfront Park as a green focal point, connecting all the green area .



Concept and Development





The main Entrance to the Waterfront at Torpedo Factory (P 22)



The Entrance Alley of the Waterfront (P 23)



Movie Lost in translation Moment # 1: Shower (P1)



Movie Lost in translation Moment # 9: In the hospital (P2)

The main components that the project deals with are displayed on this page. The programs of the project were decided by improving the condition of the existing place.

Water Taxi Terminal, Mitigate the Flood

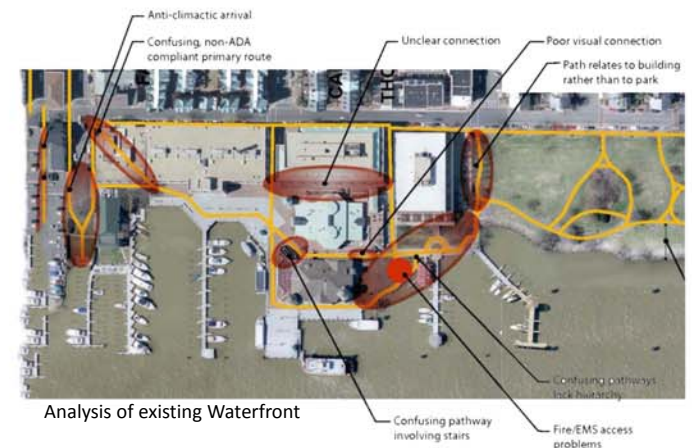
A place needs to be easy to access from surrounding attractions through a good transportation network but also connected to the wider area. Improved infrastructure at an urban scale will give the place better access and connections. The proposed new Water Taxi terminal at the extended King Street will give a better and more important connection to the area on the Potomac River. One of the priorities of the site design is to mitigate the flood, making the site habitable. The four foot raised site with the storm water system along Strand street still provides the trolley, bicycles, and pedestrians a chance to access the area even in the event of a flood. The site and sidewalk design should be legible and permeable.

The Community Theater, Water Activity Area

A place should have a range of uses and activities occurring from day to night, from season to season. It needs to be convenient for both daily local activities and unique events. Currently, the area becomes very quiet during the nighttime and empty during the wintertime. The special performances, learning program and cafeteria in the community theater will invite people during the night time. Current water activities are passive unless you are on the boats. Inviting the water into the site increases the character for the project. When the water is invited into the site, people has more chances to interact with the water. The seasonal water activity area between King Street and the theater will become a vivid memory for users.

Plaza, Roof Park with the Access Steps

A great place connects people with other people. An open space needs to be safe, aesthetically pleasing and comfortable to be in, while also being attractive and appealing with its own character and sense of history. The place should promote social connections and benefit the neighborhood. It should be welcoming and approachable. The convenient access to paths helps the plaza be safer. Also, the plaza layout interconnects with the existing street grid and contributes to the open views from the plaza out to the street, the adjacent area and even the alley. The plaza and the roof park with the access steps will hold diverse festivals, street performances, art vendors, farmer's market and other gatherings. The place will develop a character where multiple different events, performance and other happenings will take place naturally.

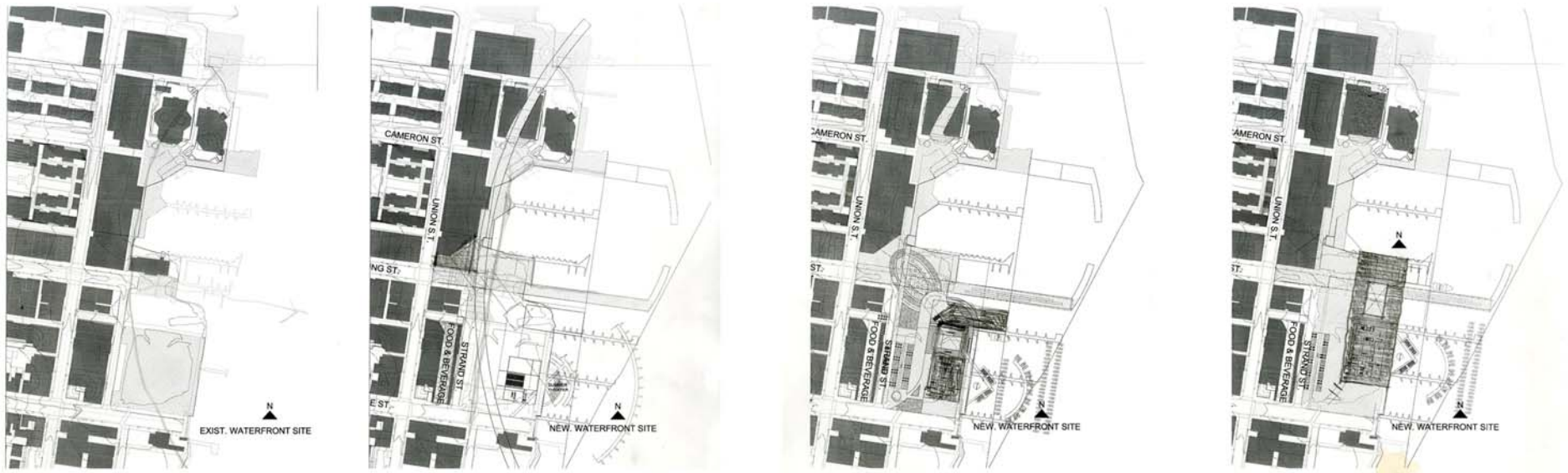




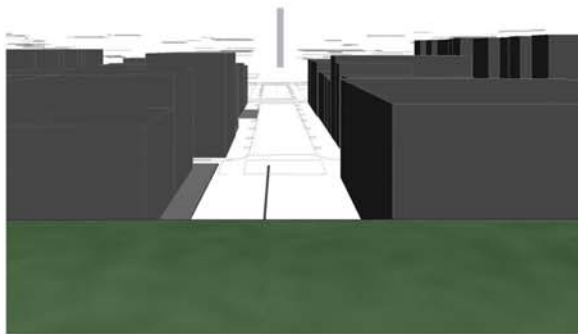
PROJECT SITE - FOOT OF KING STREET (P 24)



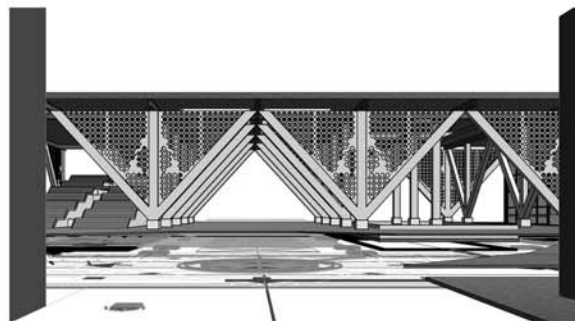
Flood at the end of King Street (P 25)



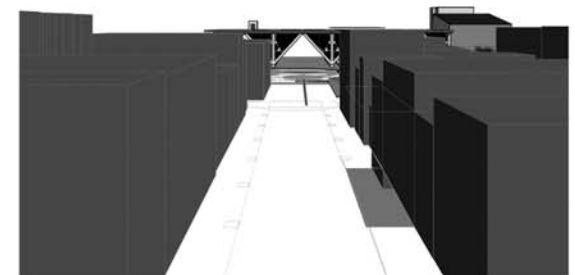
The end of King Street embodies a strong desire to reach the water but lacks a place to attract people at the end of the street and along the shore line. My initiate approaches were about how to create a visual and physical connection towards the water. Thus, this connection to the water serves as the focal point and access to the main hub of the water front. Both new developments and the existing Torpedo Factory area are combined by eliminating the Old Dominion Boat Club, extending King Street into the water and providing the linear plaza which extends a walkable Strand Street to the Waterfront Park and preserves the existing parks as green space. Also, parallel to Strand Street, an outdoor café alley opens into the plaza.



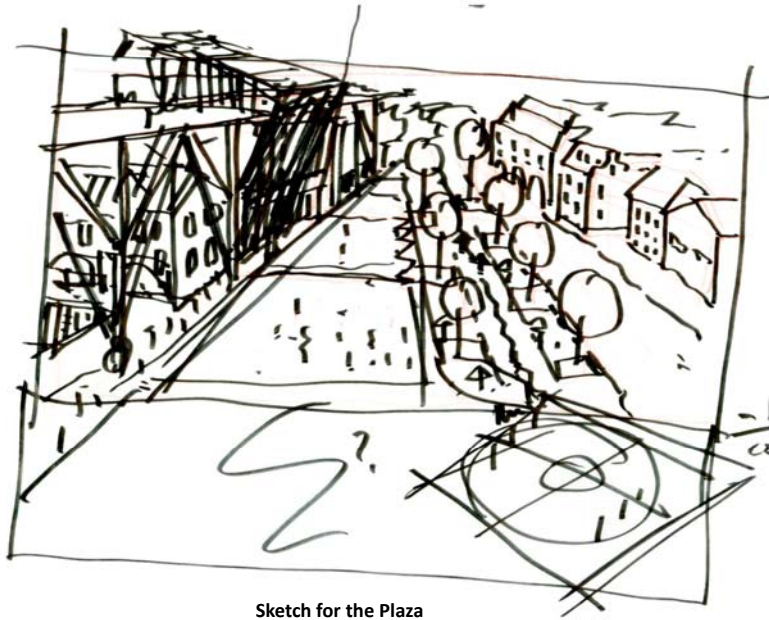
View Study 1: To Masonic memorial from the Green Roof Park



View Study 2 : At the end of King Street



View Study 3 : Approaching on King Street



Sketch for the Plaza

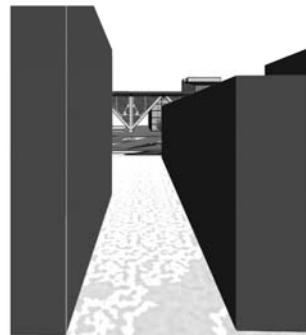
The view of this sketch is from the end of King Street towards Prince Street, along Strand Street. The plaza is designed as a public open space formed by the proposed pavilion, the surrounding site which includes surrounding architecture, streets, and alleys. The open space will tie the new development area and the existing waterfront area. This place will be accessible from all the surrounding streets, alleys, and the area around the Torpedo Factory.

The open space cannot be considered as a void space. The proposed space is full of natural light, nature, activities and people who have a desire to inhabit. The public open space should be a pleasant surprise and a joy to people. You can enjoy street performances or football games of your favorite team through the outdoor big screen with your friends. You can treat your thirst with orange juice while strolling through the outdoor cafe alley. You can get fresh vegetables on Saturday morning. You can celebrate all kind of events with others. You will have personal interest and feel a sense of belonging.

The plaza integrates itself into the community, while also inviting more diverse experiences to occur.



View Study 4 : To the Water front on King Street

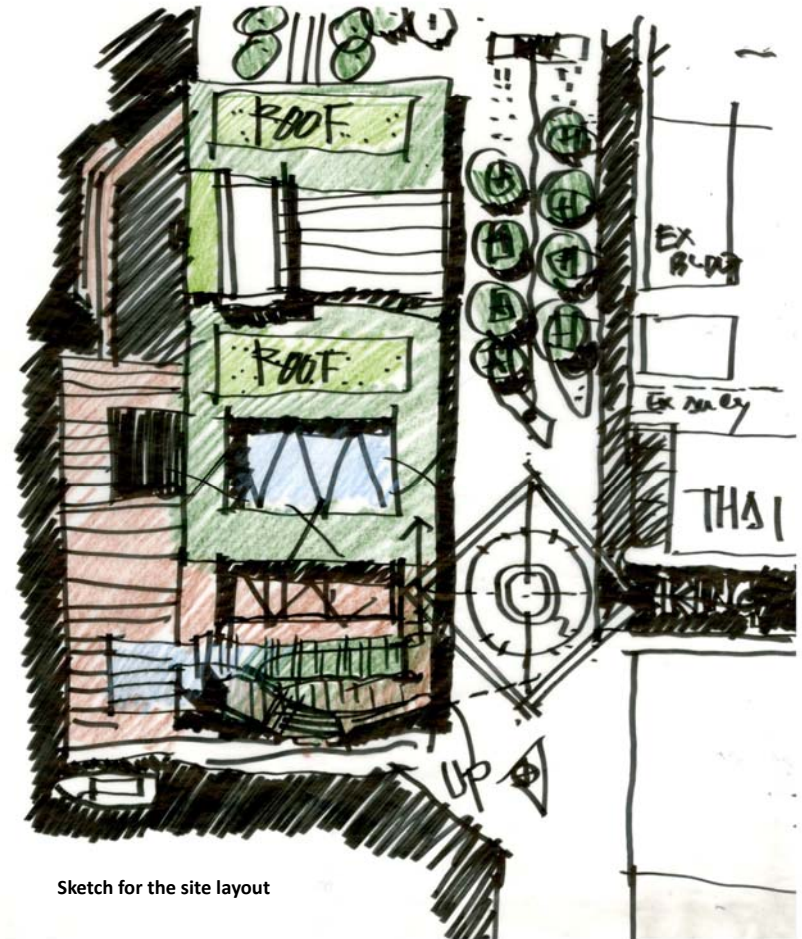


View Study 5 : View from Wales Alley

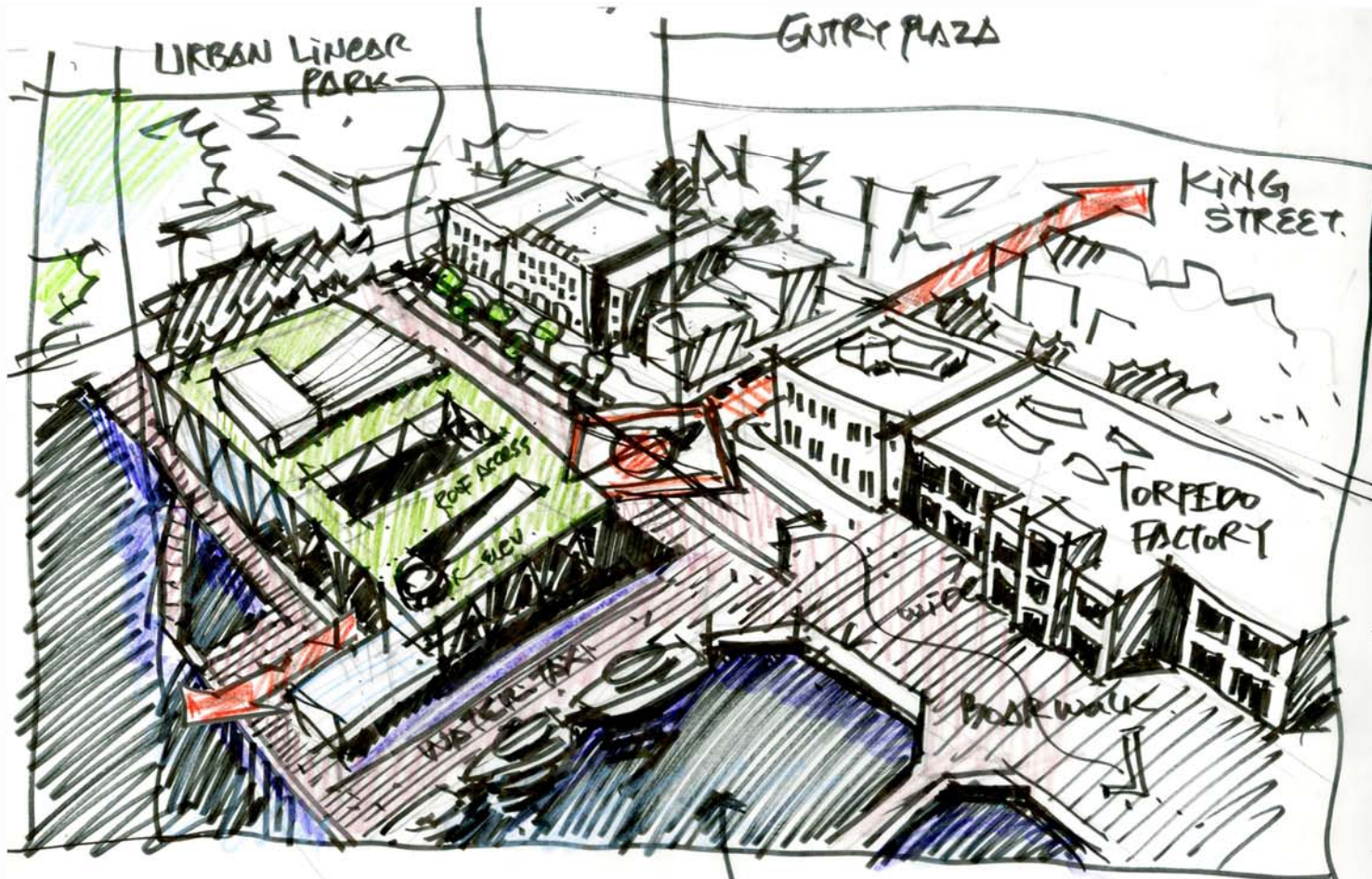
Designed as part of the plaza, the proposed Green Roof Park elevates the green space in order to preserve ratio of green area. It implies the Arch as the urban context, which is used to be at the end of King Street in the past. The area is accessed by the Water Taxi Terminal building, designed as a set of wide steps at the end of King Street.

The project, Urban Park pavilion is designed by following Le Corbusier's architectural principles, "Five Point of a New Architecture". However, the horizontal window idea was not applied. It is supported by its own columns which justify the main elevations of the entire architectural building so that all the functions under the roof are arranged without any conflicts on the ground.

The size and elevated height of the Green Roof Park has a similar foot print to the Torpedo Factory building in order to have a balanced development. The two buildings and existing surroundings are connected by the new plaza. The expanded the Waterfront area will become unique place, hosting most of the cultural and social activities in Old Town.



Sketch for the site layout

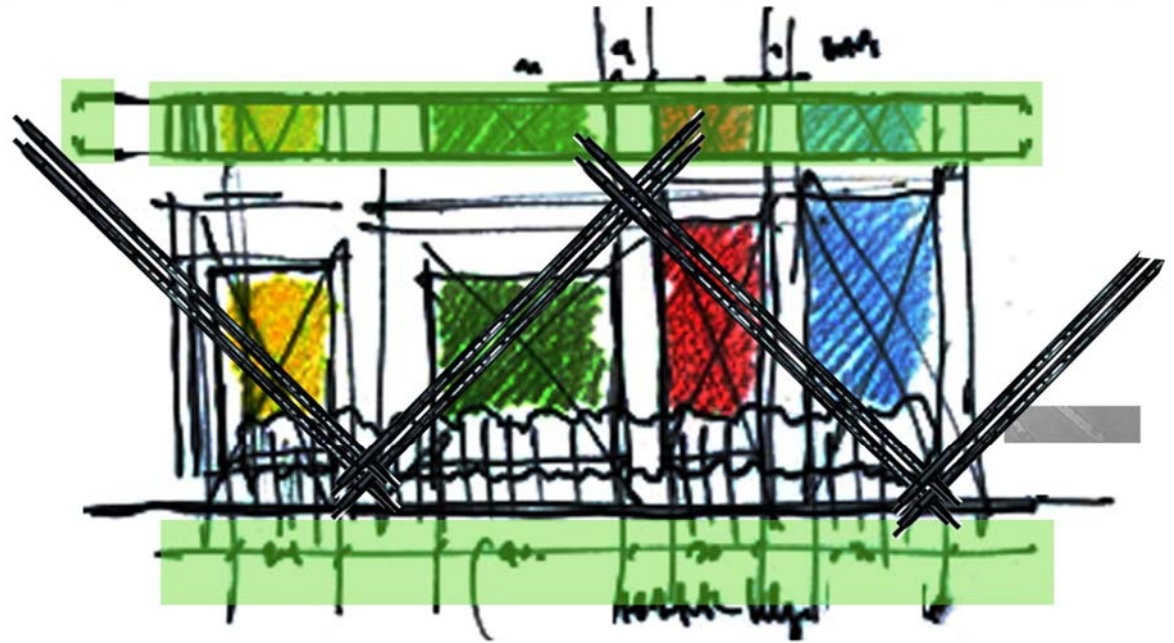


How to create a clear path to the waterfront? King street leads pedestrians towards the waterfront. The end of street should be accessible to the water. The street can be extended to the water by passing under the Green Roof Park.

The existing King Street Park becomes an entry plaza to reach the entire waterfront development and the access steps to the Green Roof Park.

Sketch for the relationship with the surrounding area

Two levels of the green space are connected by independent concrete columns. The tilted shape of the columns becomes open gate to invite people into the space.

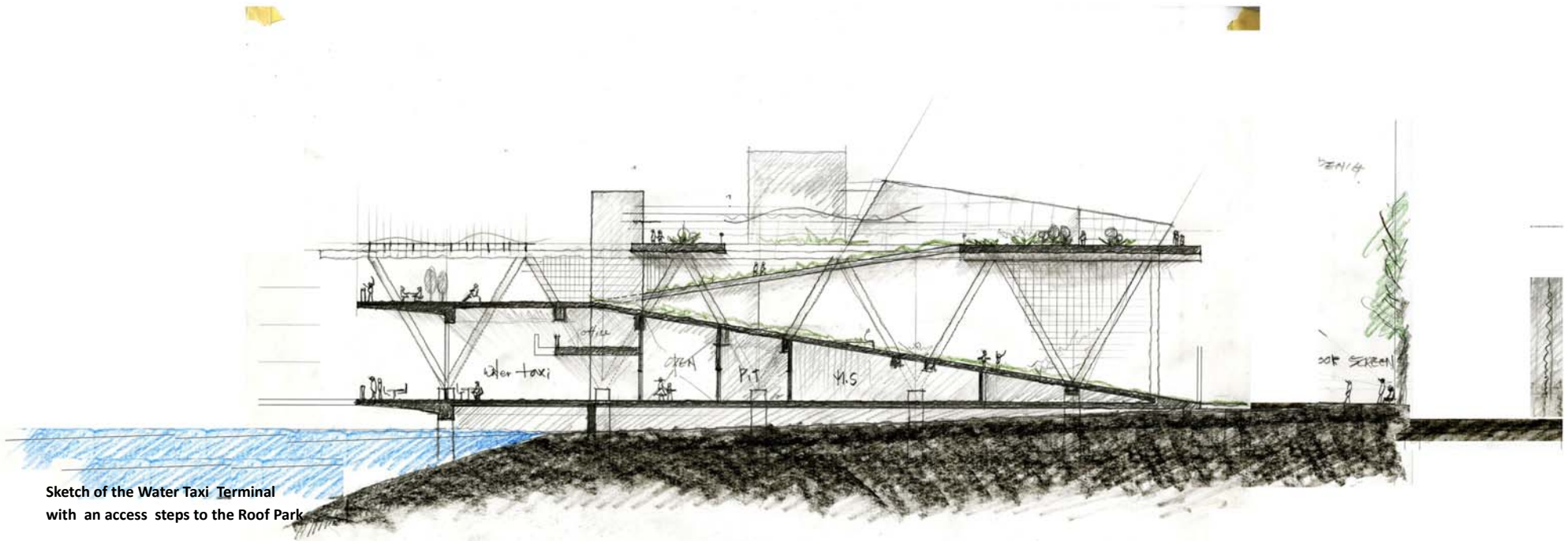


Elevation Concept sketch

The Water Taxi Terminal with the extended King Street is adopted as a method of improving the infrastructure. It connects the waterfront to surrounding cities to reveal urban connections.

The building is designed as wide steps to connect to the Green Roof Park from the plaza on the ground level. The open steps provide a visual connection to the area while people travel the stair way.

I would like to call the place "Spanish Steps" in Alexandria same as the Spanish Steps in Rome. People can expect romantic happenings on here like in the movie, "Roman Holiday". The place will remember as a vivid memory.

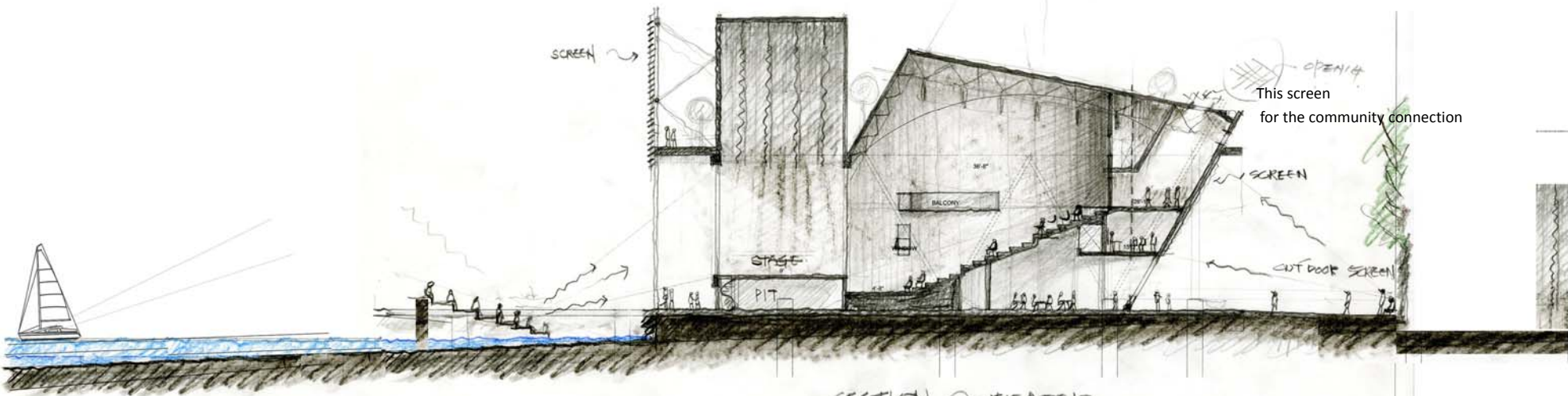


Sketch of the Water Taxi Terminal with an access steps to the Roof Park

On a beautiful day, I am seating outside. I am the one of the audience. I enjoy the great performance amidst the beautiful Sun, nice breeze, and clear water . What a joyful life!

The screen
for the urban connection

This screen
for the community connection



SECTION @ THEATER

Sketch for the relationship between the Community area to Urban area



Final presentation

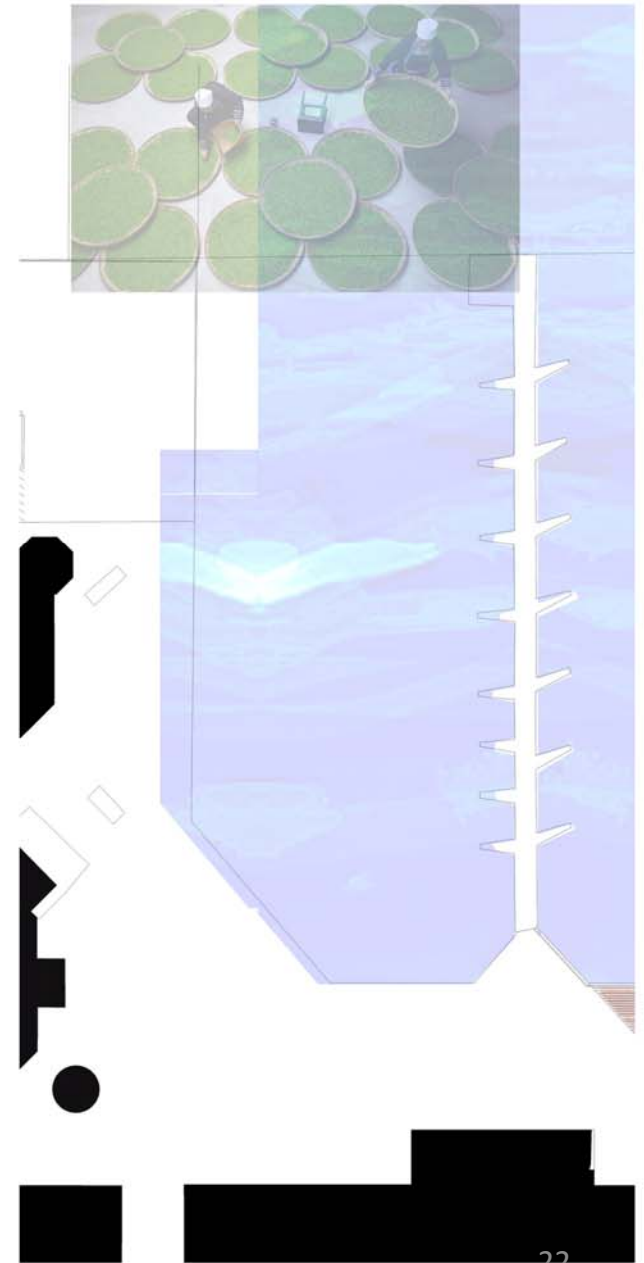
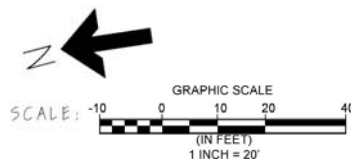


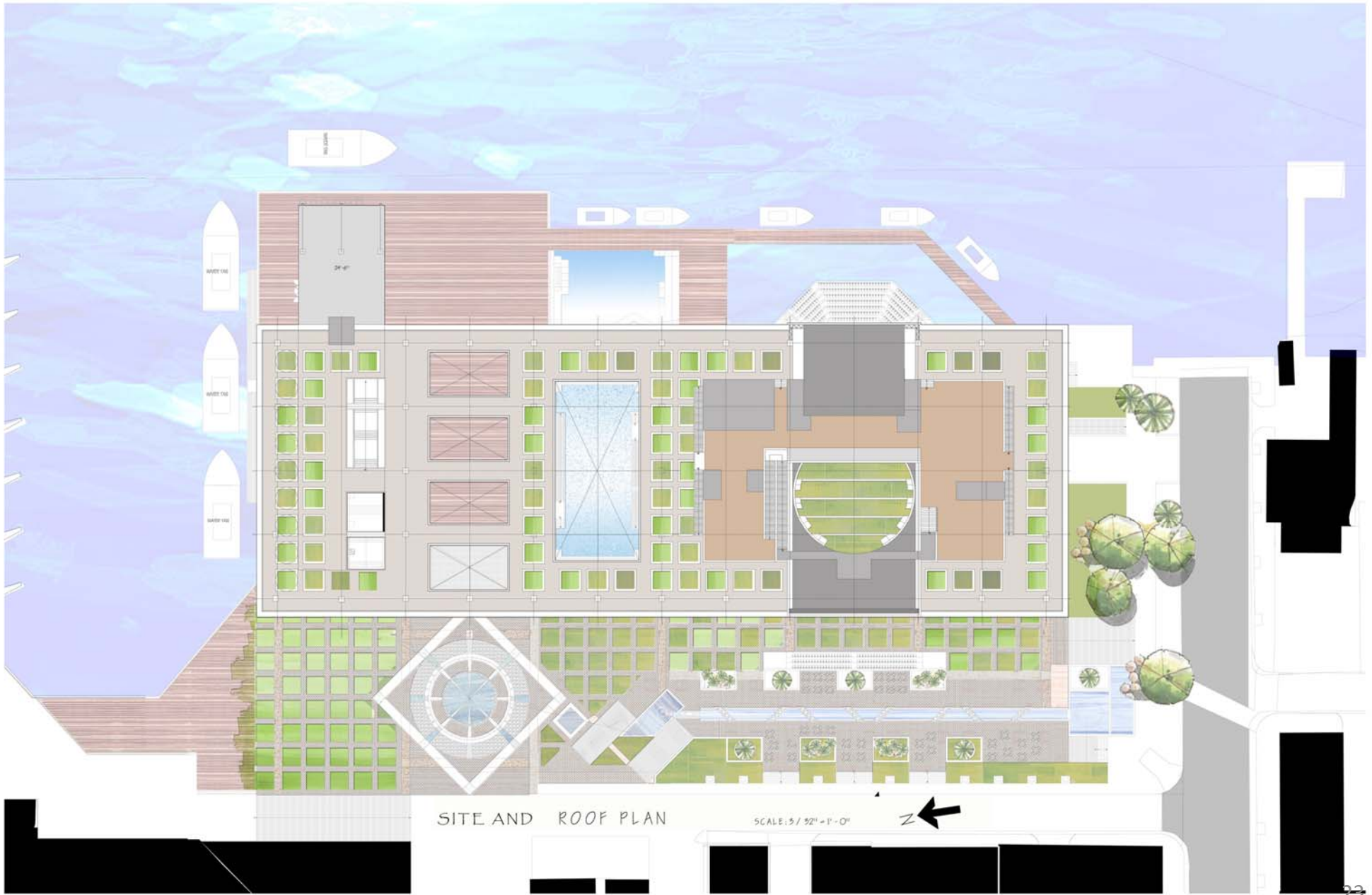
PROPOSED WATERFRONT PLAZA PERSPECTIVE

“There need to be places and times for re-unions, which shall be so attractive to the nature of all but the most depraved men, that the rich and the poor, the cultivated and well-bred, and the sturdy and self-made people shall be attracted together and encouraged to assimilate.”

Frederick Law Olmsted

SITE AND ROOF PLAN

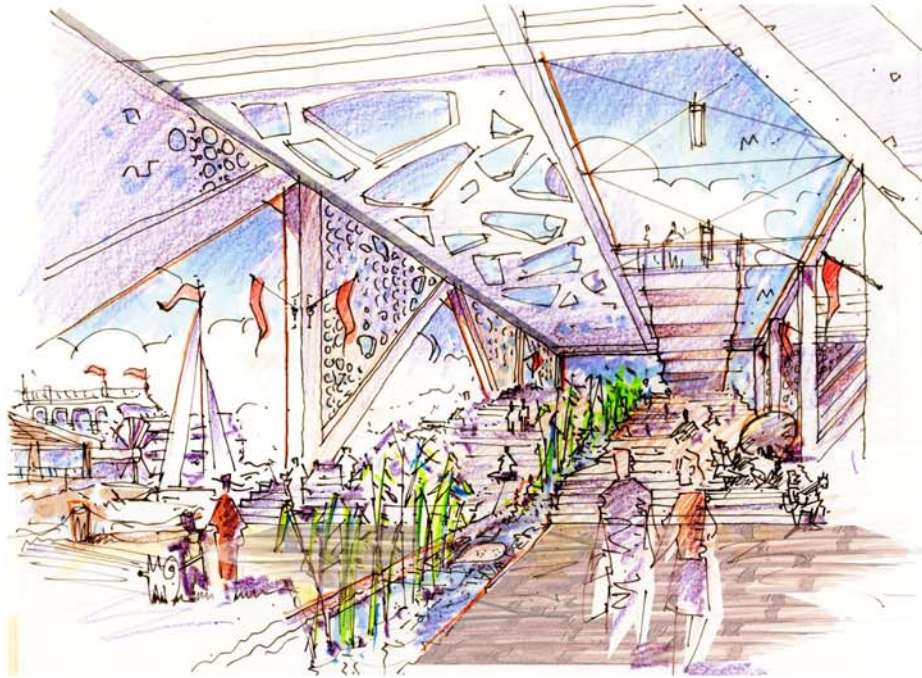




SITE AND ROOF PLAN

SCALE: 5 / 32" = 1' - 0"

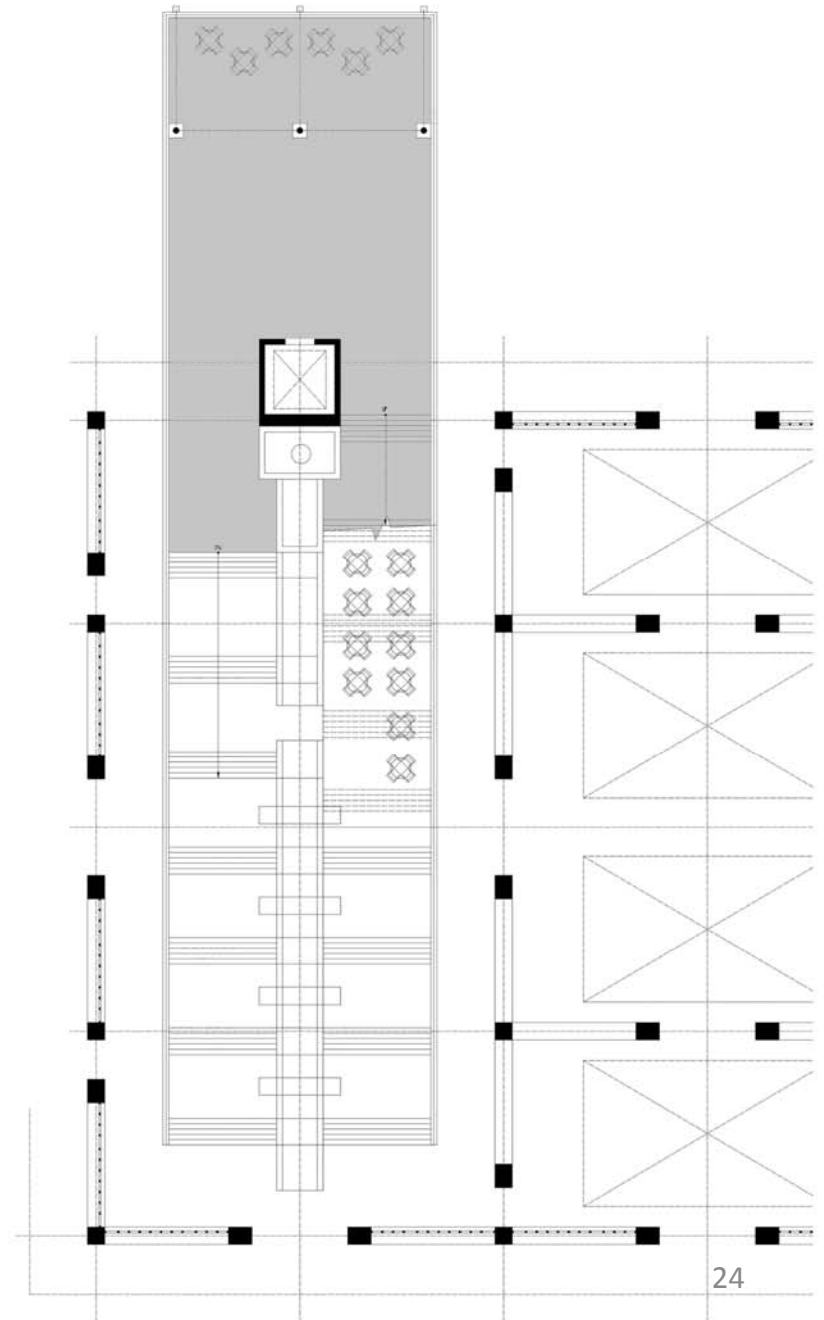
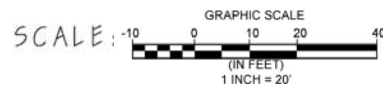


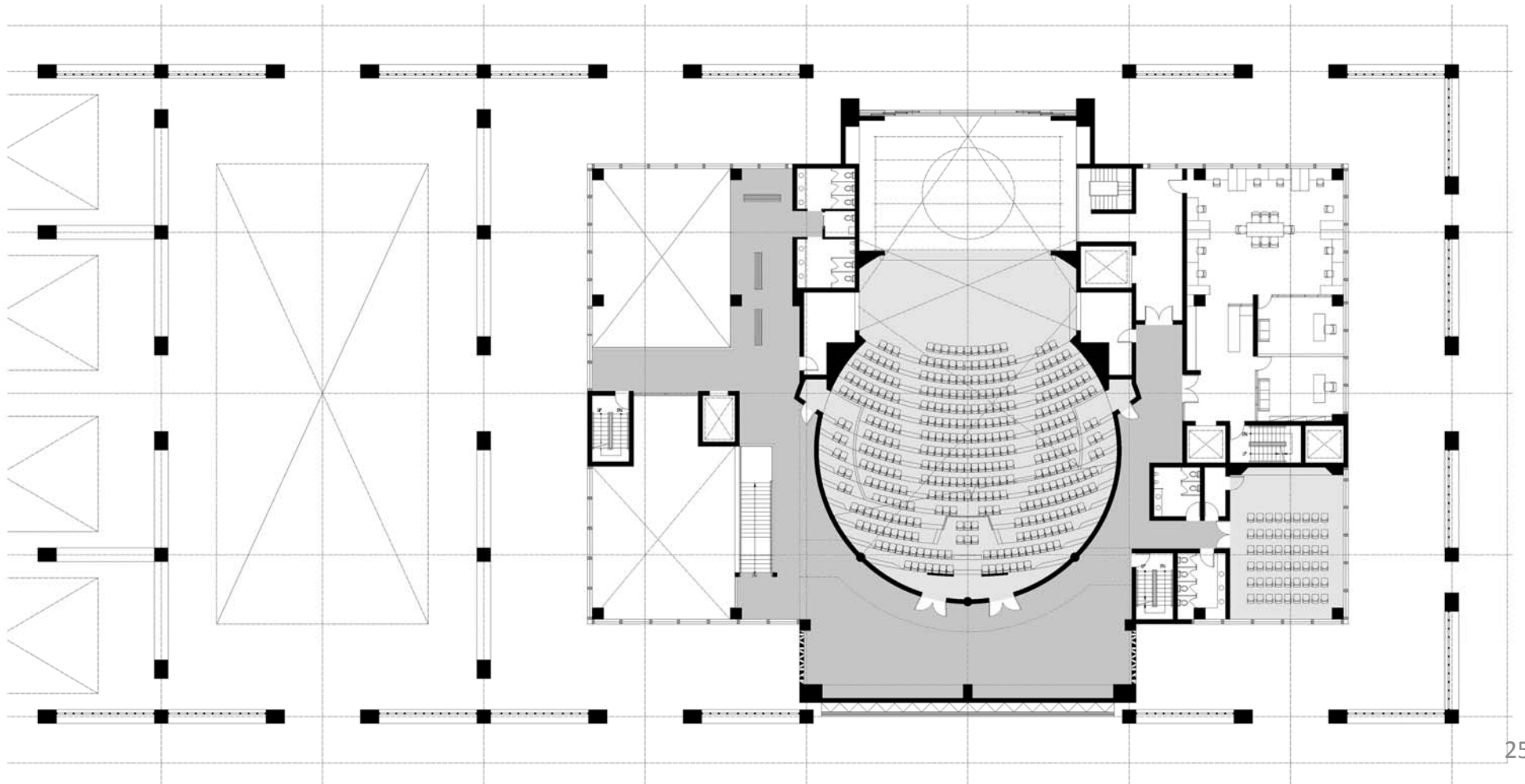


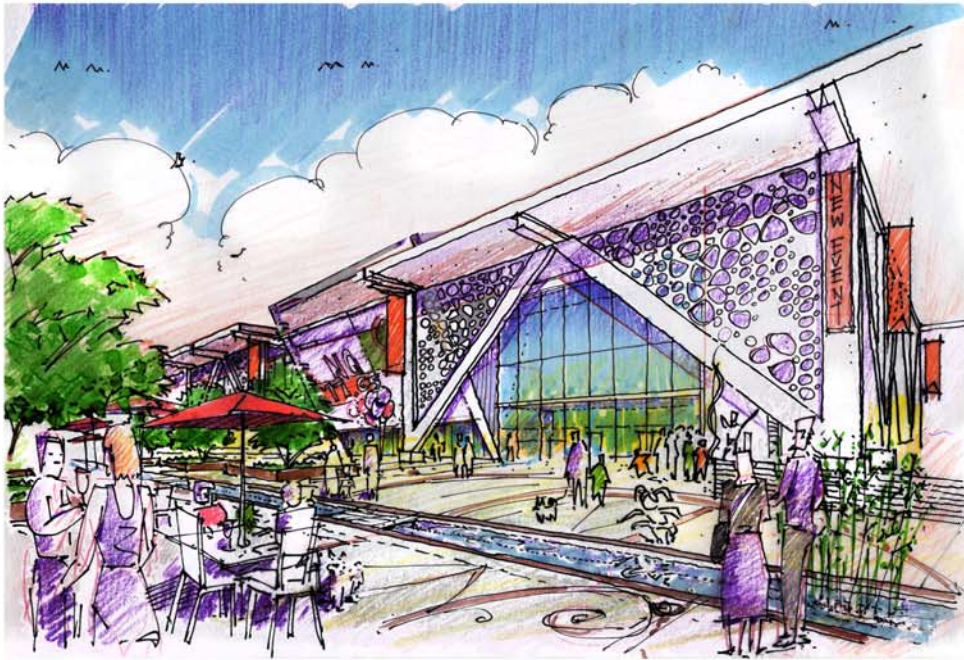
PERSPECTIVE @ STAIRBUILDING TO ACCESS URBAN ROOF PARK



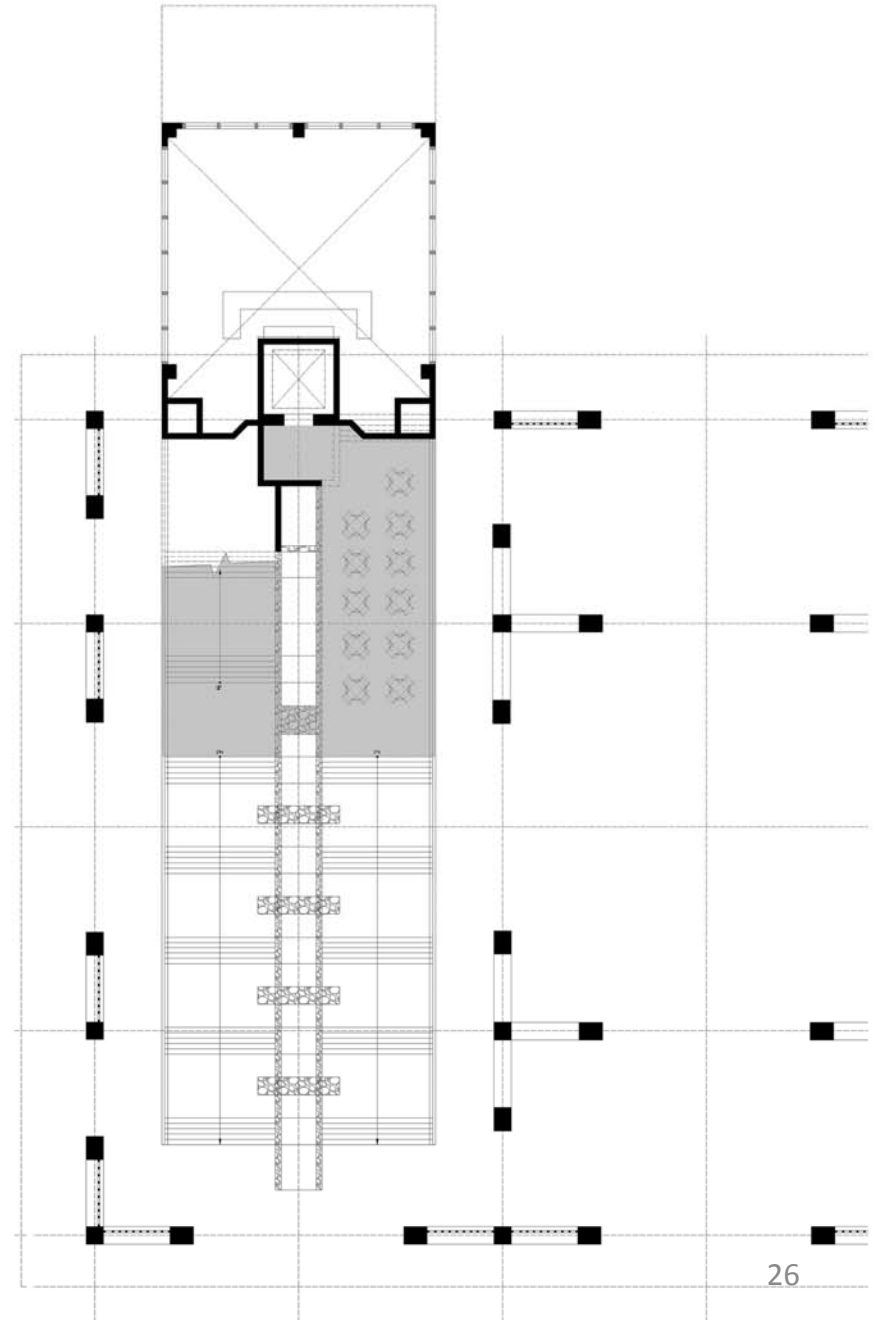
3RD FLOOR PLAN



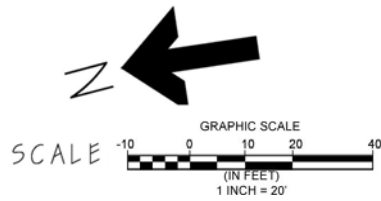


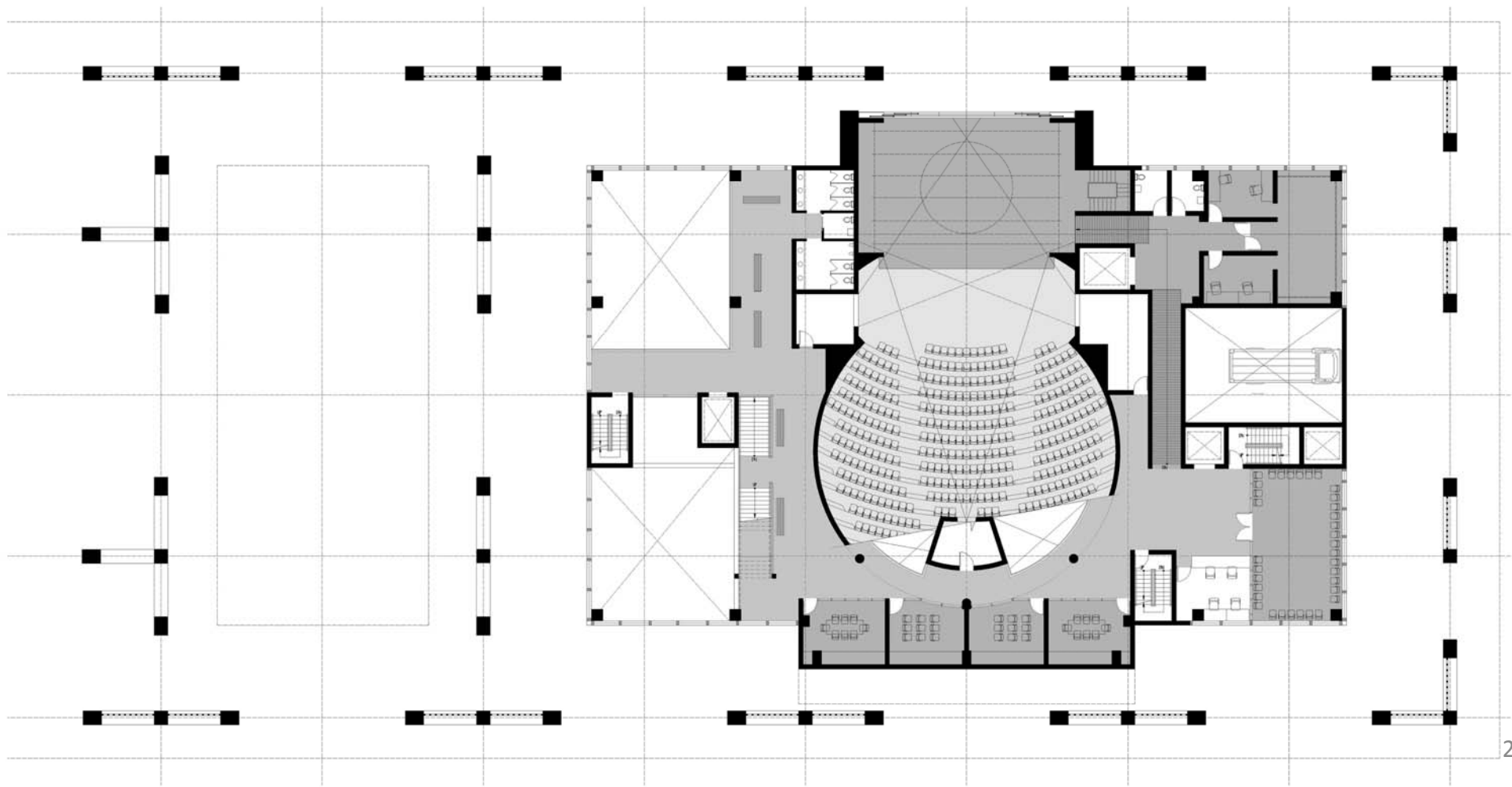


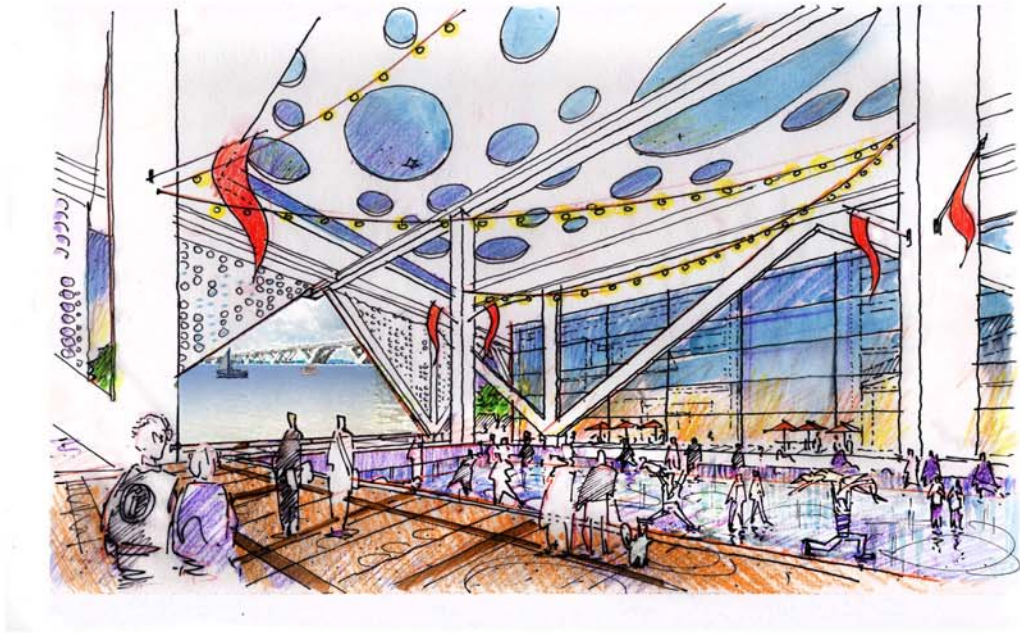
OUTDOOR CAFE PLAZA PERSPECTIVE @ PRINCE STREET



2ND FLOOR PLAN

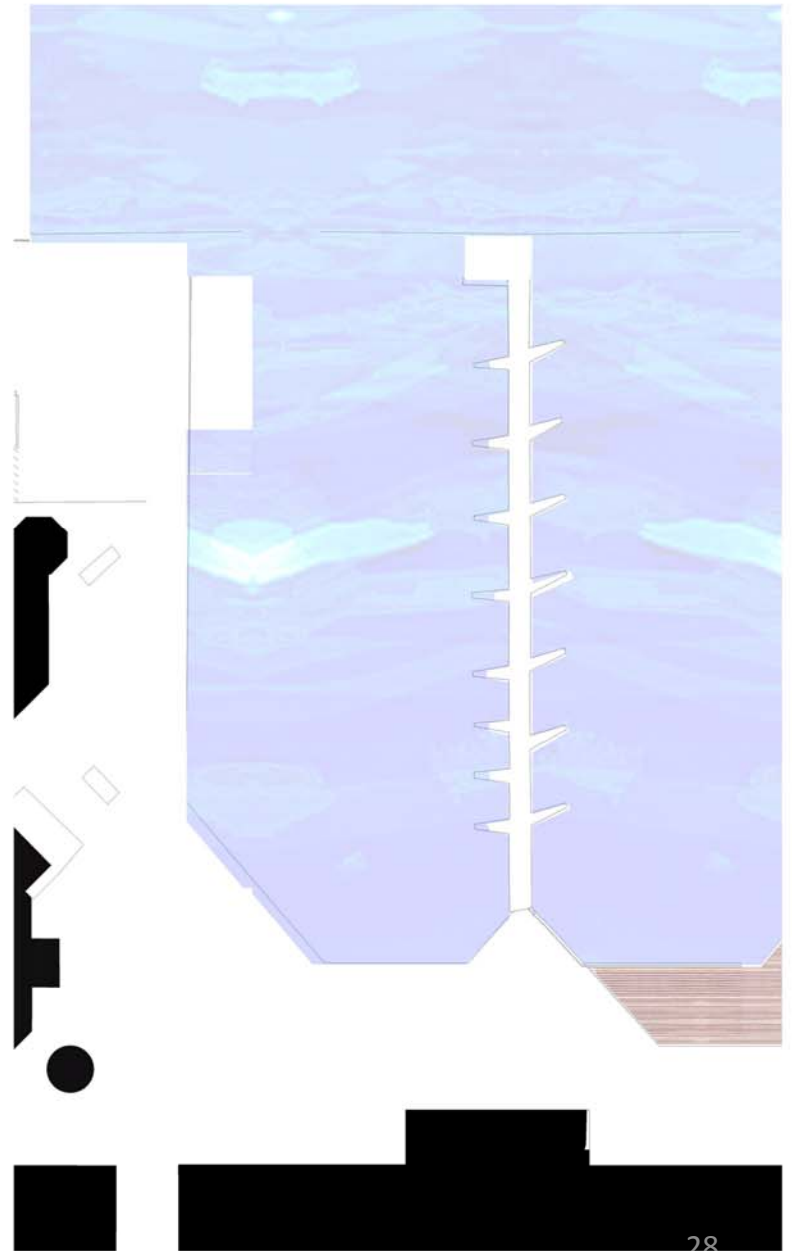


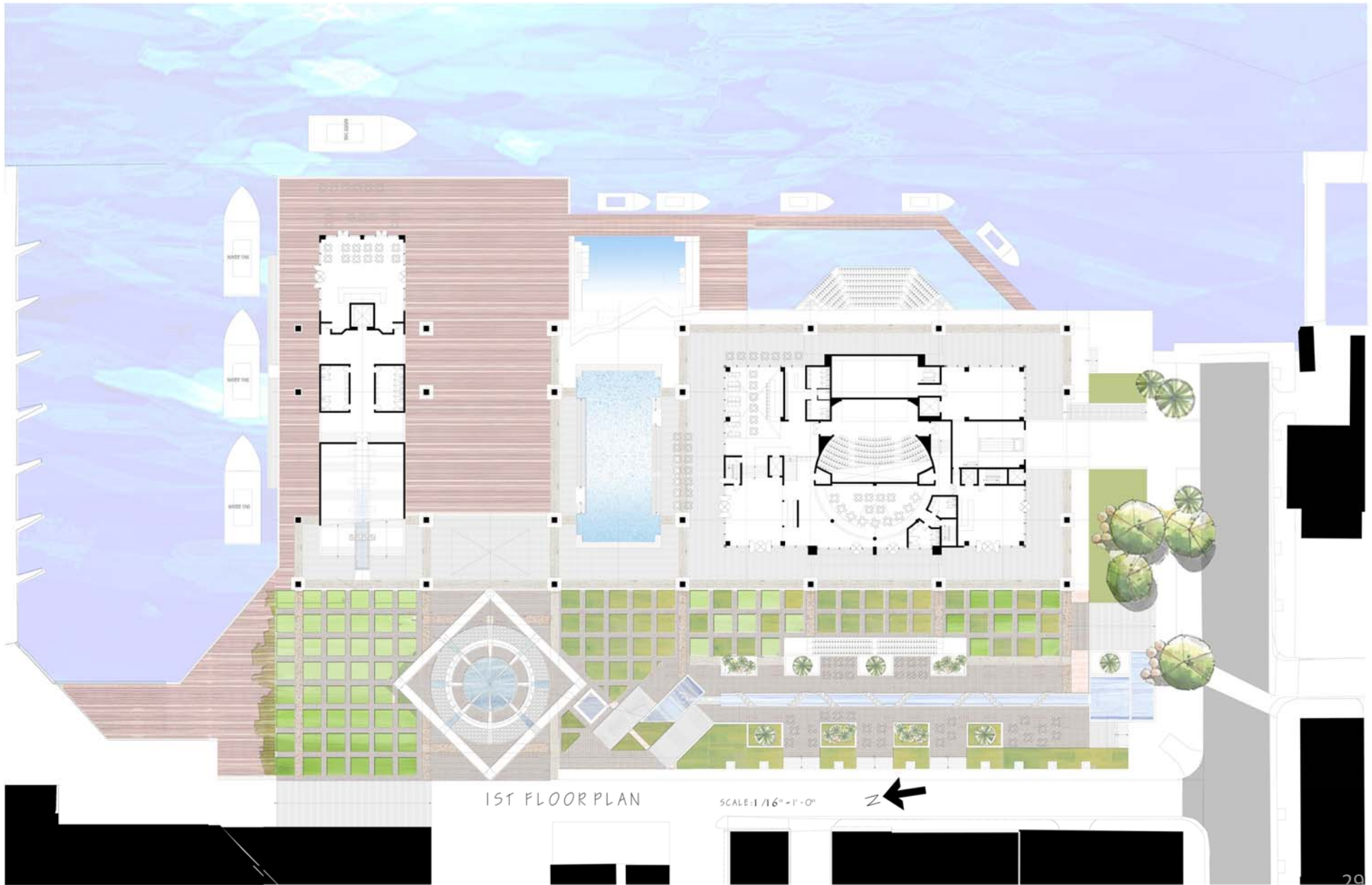




PERSPECTIVE @ WATERACTIVITIES PAVILLION

1ST FLOOR PLAN





1ST FLOOR PLAN

SCALE: 1/16" = 1'-0"



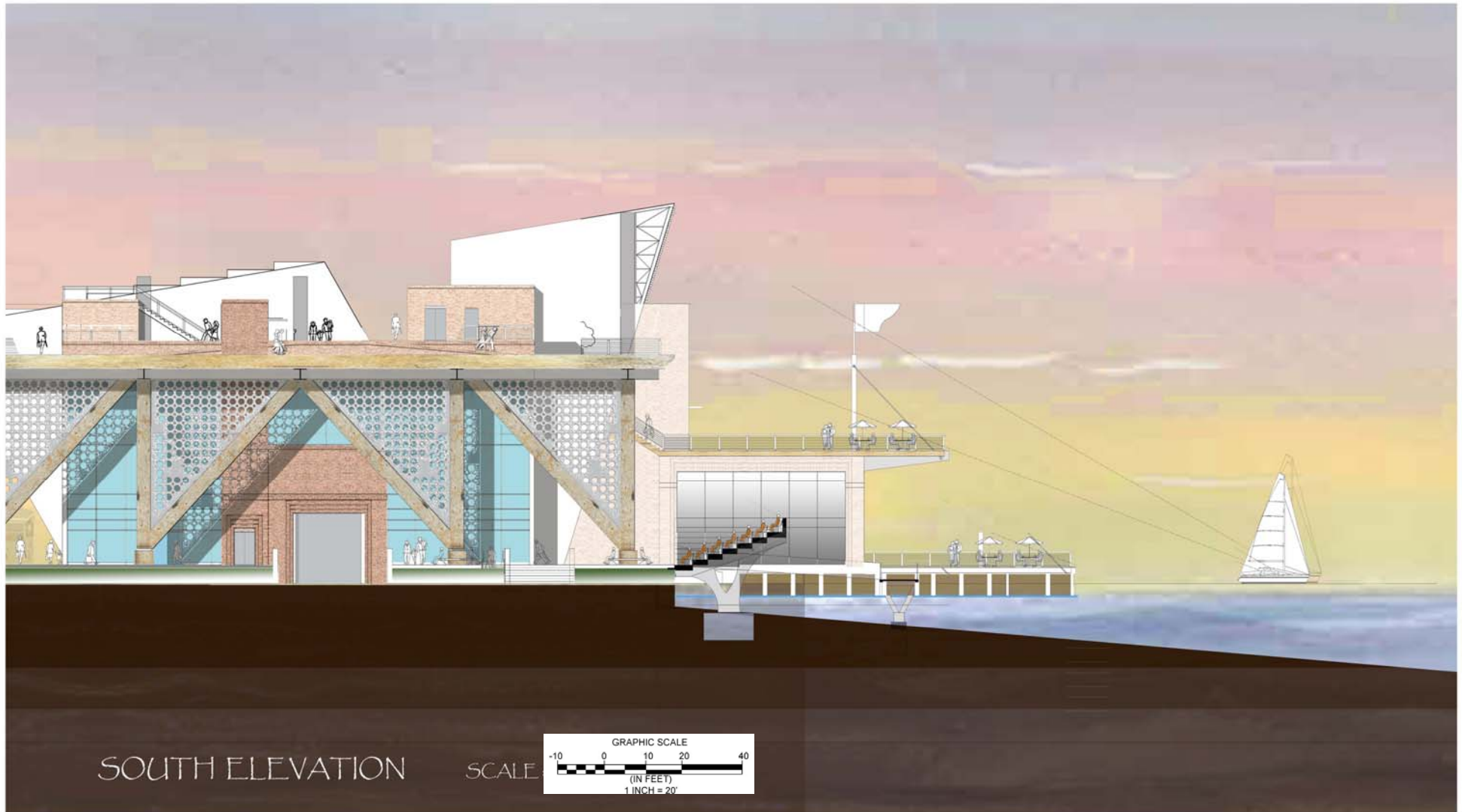














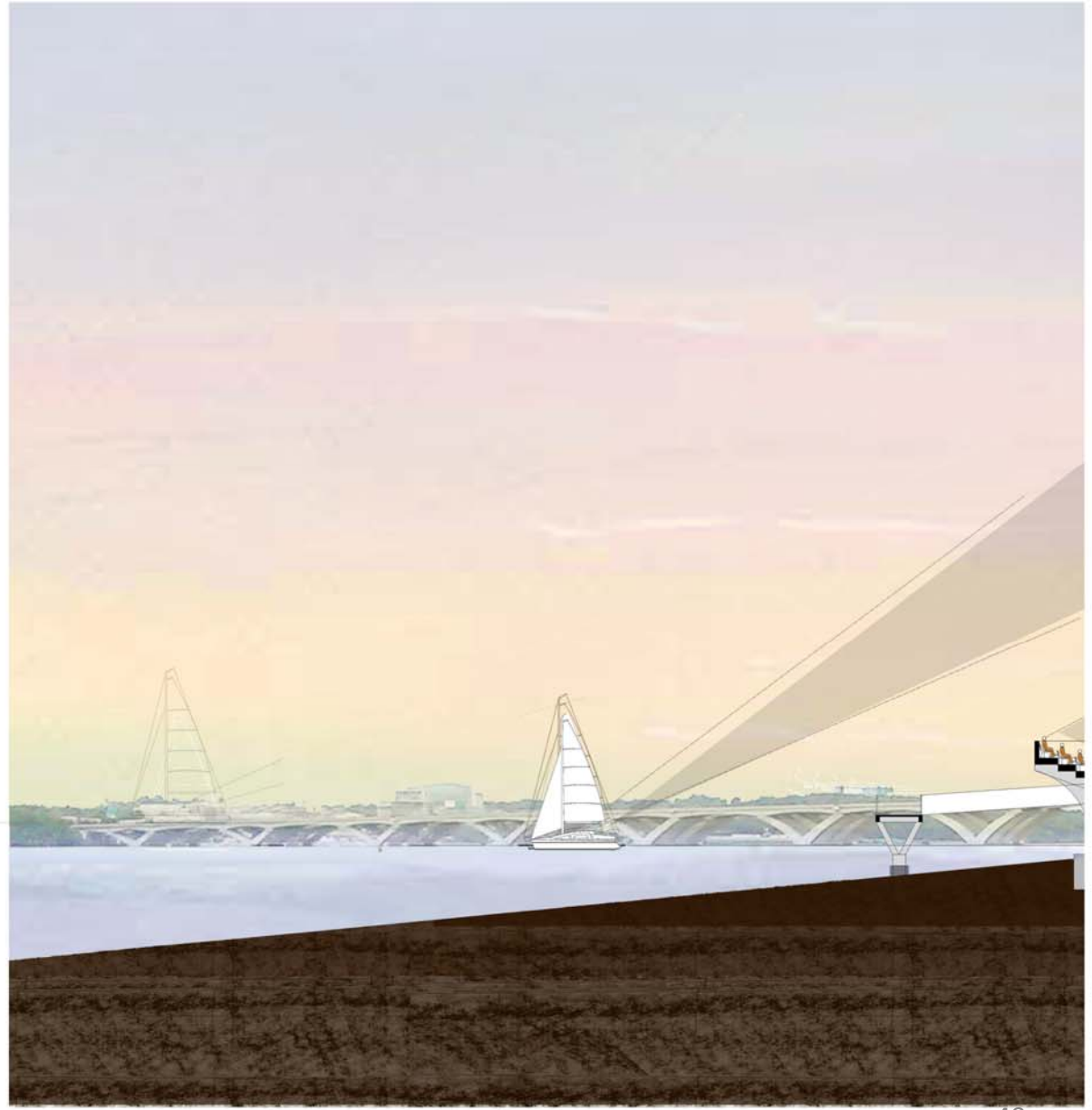
WEST ELEVATION







"pleasant openings and outlooks, with suggestions of refined domestic life, secluded, but not far removed from the life of the community."
Frederick Law Olmsted

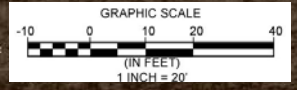




- LEVEL 4
51'-0"
- ROOF LEVEL
44'-0"
- LEVEL 3
22'-0"
- 15'-2"
- LEVEL 1
0'-0"

SECTION @ THEATER (EAST THRU WEST)

SCALE:





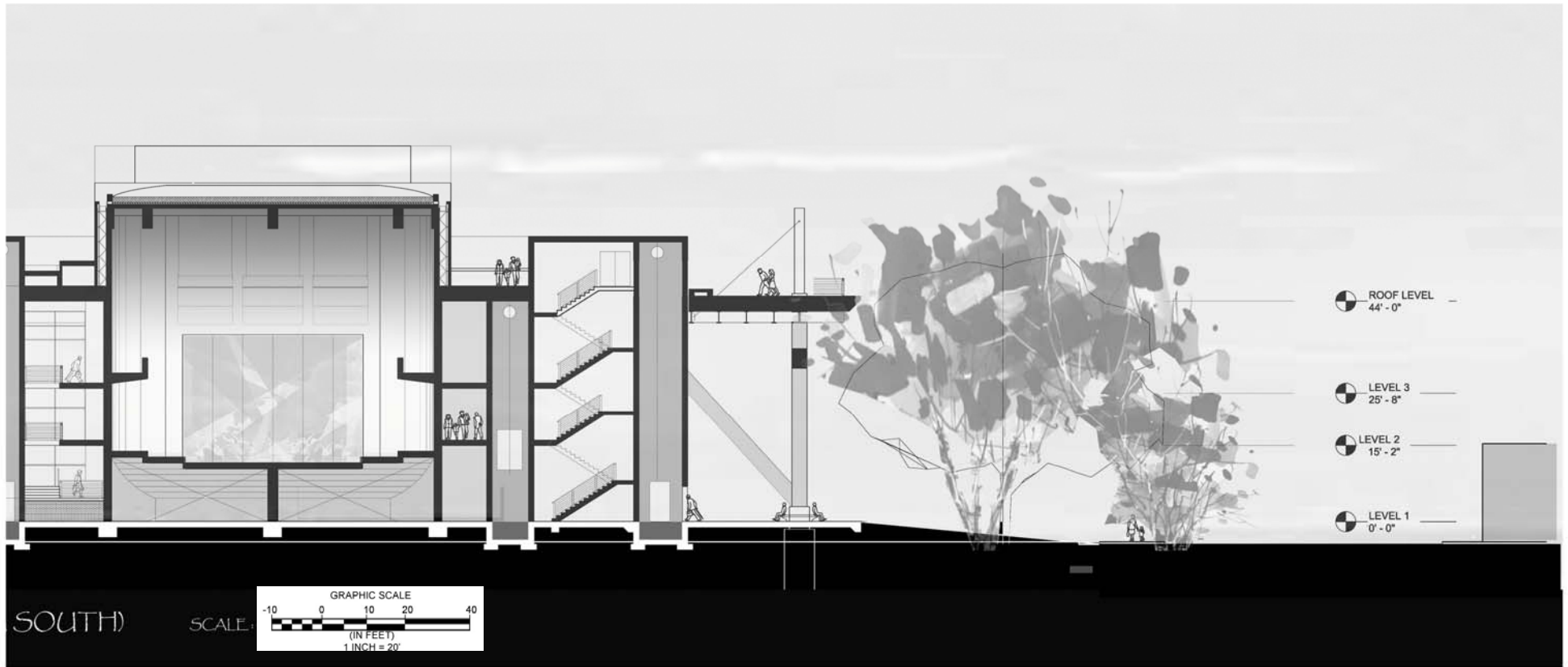


Image Credit

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Movie Lost in translation Moment # 1: Shower (P1)

<http://joyce-octobersky.blogspot.com/2012/02/movie-moments-lost-in-translation.html>

Movie Lost in translation Moment # 9: In the hospital (P2)

<http://joyce-octobersky.blogspot.com/2012/02/movie-moments-lost-in-translation.html>

Slave ship taking on slaves at the Alexandria waterfront in 1836 (P3)

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexandria,_Virginia#mediaviewer/File:Alexandria_Virginia_slave_ship.png

A bird's eye view of Alexandria from the Potomac in 1863 (P4)

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexandria,_Virginia#mediaviewer/File:Alexandria_Bird%27s_Eye_View_1863.jpg

Waterfront at foot of King Street with Ferry Boat 1900 (P5)

<https://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/planning/info/Waterfront/AACWaterfrontHistoryPlan.pdf>

Page 3

Foot of King Street showing Arch of Ferry building 1900 (P6)

<https://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/planning/info/Waterfront/AACWaterfrontHistoryPlan.pdf>

Aerial view of King Street (P7)

<https://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/planning/info/Waterfront/AACWaterfrontHistoryPlan.pdf>

The Torpedo Factory 1920'S (P8)

<https://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/planning/info/Waterfront/AACWaterfrontHistoryPlan.pdf>

Foot of the King Street 1931 (P9)

<https://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/planning/info/Waterfront/AACWaterfrontHistoryPlan.pdf>

Page 4

Alexandria Waterfront Aerial map (P10)

Google map image

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Analysis of Main Access to the Waterfront(P11)

City of Alexandria Waterfront Plan and Design implementation

Route map of Water taxi (P12)

Alexandria Tourist map

Page 6

King Street Aerial View current from Masonic Memorial (P13)

<https://www.gotrains.wordpress.com>

Cultural Festival in Old Town (P14) <http://daycationdc.com/st-patricks-day-old-town-alexandria/>

Art Festival on the King Street (P15)

http://artfestival.com/Festivals/Alexandria_Festival_of_the_Arts_Alexandria_Virginia_September.ASPX

Farmers Market at City Hall (P16) (P17)

"SNAP Double Dollars at Old Town Farmer's Market." The Zebra.

<http://www.thezebra.org/old-town-farmers-market-introduces-double-dollar-deal-for-snap-beneficiaries/>

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View of Torpedo Factory @ night (P18)

<http://www.cpoldtownalexandriahotel.com/specialty/torpedo-factory.html>

View of the Waterfront (P19)

Google map Street image

Bike trail (P20)

Google map Street image

Water Front Park to National Harbor (P21)

Google map Street image

Page 10

The main Entrance to the Waterfront at Torpedo Factory (P 22)

Google map Street image

The entrance alley of the Waterfront (P23)

Google map Street image

Page 11

Bird eye view of the Site (P24)

Google map

Flood at the end of King Street (P25)

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/liveblog/files/2012/10/old-town-flooding-pic1.jpg>

All other images produced by author

All images used solely for educational purposes.

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