

Thesis

Dear Reader,

When the question of creating a thesis topic is first brought to mind, one must ask oneself the following:

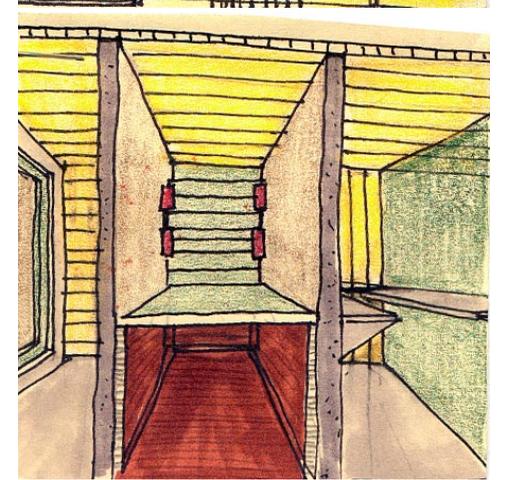
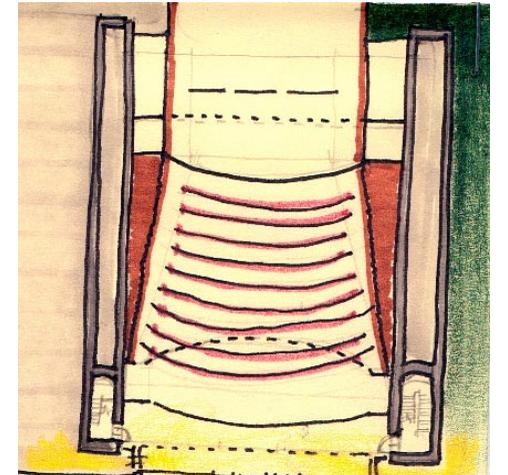
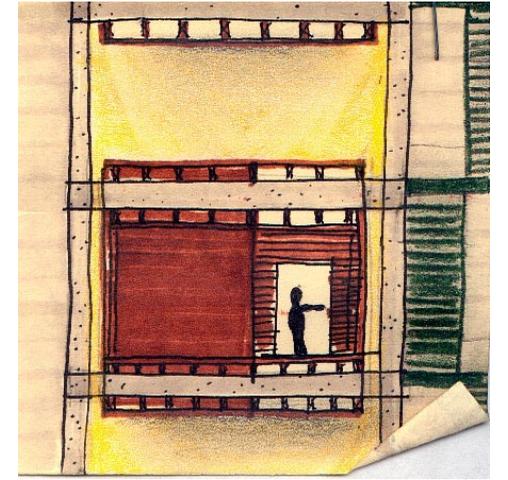
What am I passionate about?

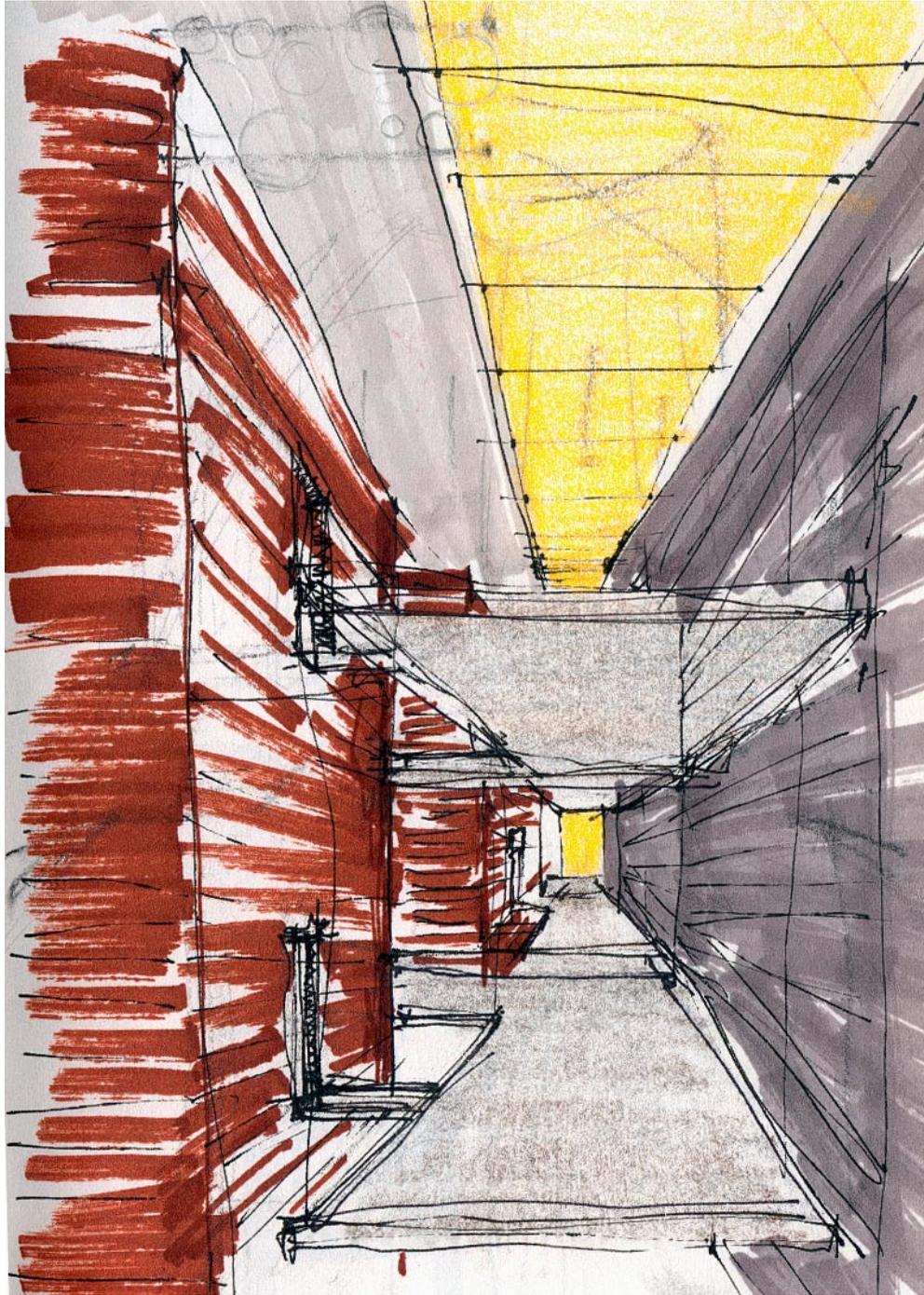
In my particular case, my passions lie in music: the creating, listening to, collecting, and witnessing of musical performances. I moved to Alexandria, in part, to finish an academic degree but also to live in an urban setting that could provide weekly (if not daily) music resources above and beyond my former locale; consequently, the topic for my thesis became "music" and "the city" or an attempt to place a musical 'something' within an urban setting. Combining that with my readings from the site/community and previous professional experience, an educational institution was the project-type of choice.

The following documents that process and its results. I hope you enjoy.

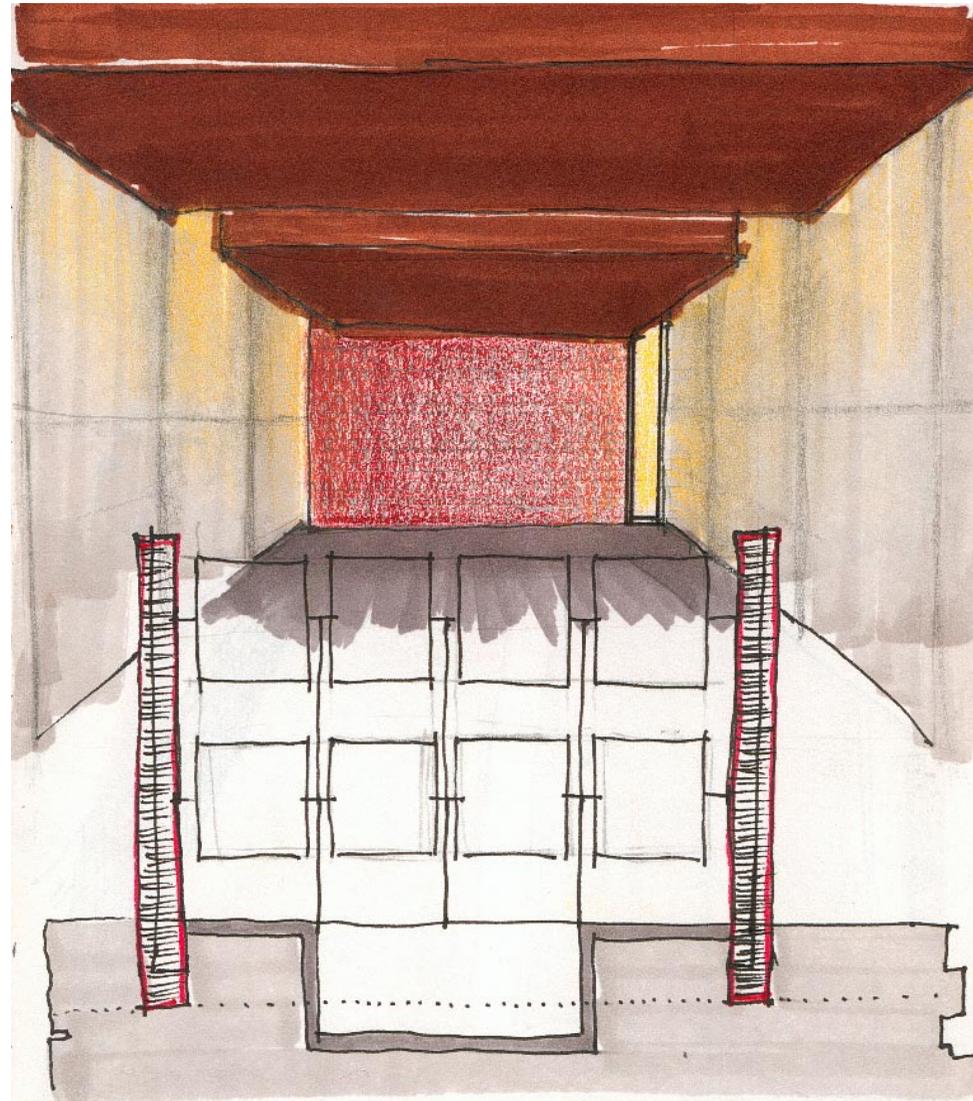
Warm Regards,

Evan Mann





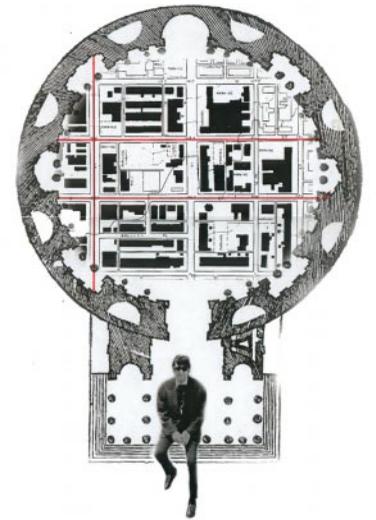
Conceptual Sketch / Music box towers and connecting walkways

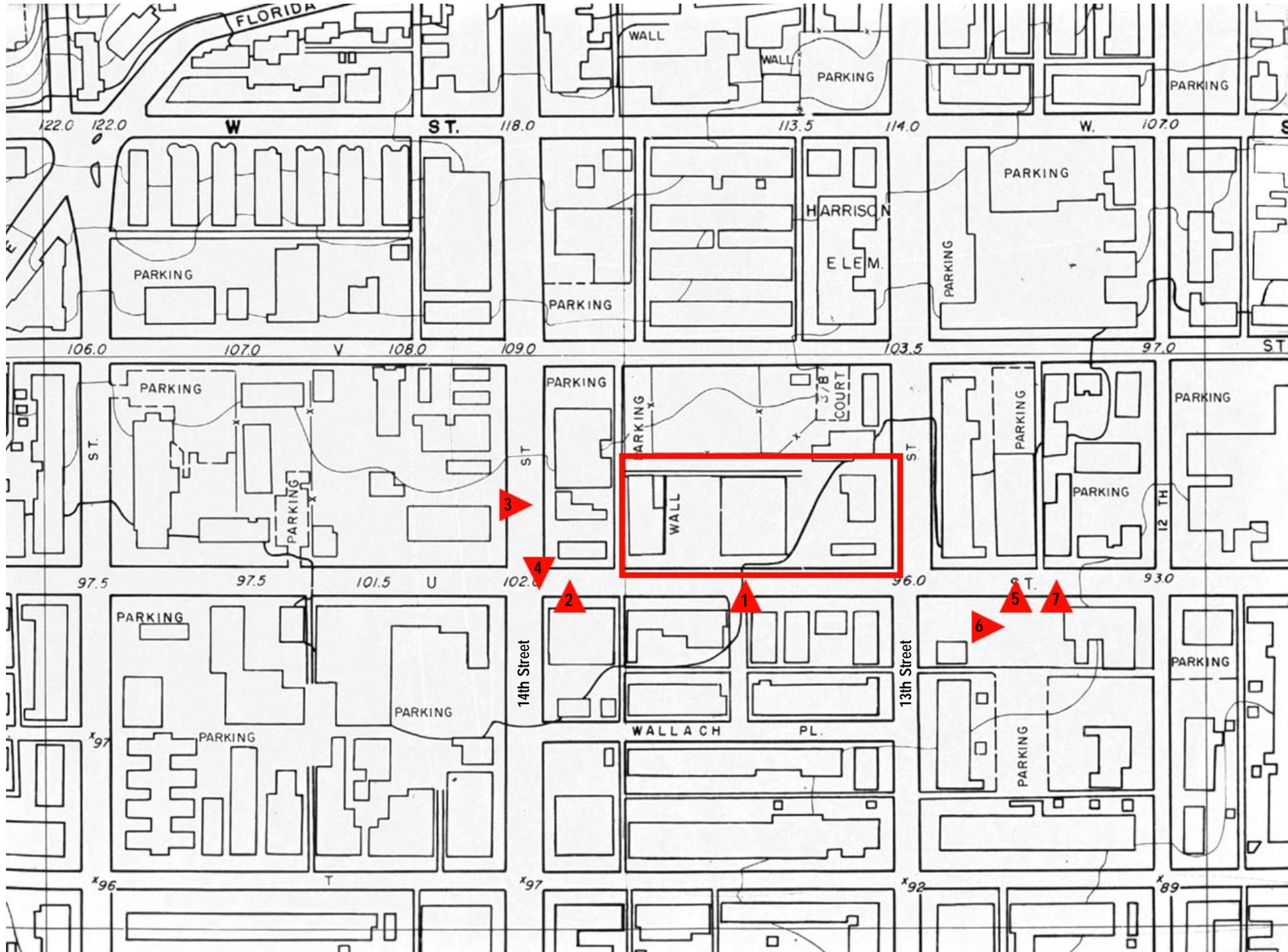


Conceptual Sketch / Isolated Music Boxes and In-between space

Program

The program calls for an educational institution related to music; specifically, a music conservatory. Music conservatories traditionally place a much greater emphasis on the performance aspects of the musical curriculum rather than the study of music itself; consequently, space needs to be provided for both formal and informal rehearsals. Spaces that lend themselves to sound and the presentation of that sound to people: recital halls, auditoria, traditional classrooms, practice spaces, nooks and pockets, benches, places for silence (a library), atria with echoes, amphitheaters, reverberant corridors (think of the clicking of heels down the terrazzo floor of a high school), etc. Spaces made to promote relaxed gathering and camaraderie - a community of musicians sharing ideas as good neighbors. This "front-porch" concept, in reflection of the area's past as a hot-bed for musical creativity, serves to re-anchor the U Street District within Washington as a contributor to the city's cultural fabric, while simultaneously providing the local community with a literal front porch for gathering, sharing, and chewing the musical fat.





SITE

Located in downtown NW Washington DC on U Street between 13th and 14th streets, the site is currently a parking lot and community weekend bazaar space. An elementary school on a nearby block has a green playfield on the site's northern edge, 2-3 story leasable commercial space is located immediately to the west, and residential townhouses and a local church line 13th Street on the site's eastern side. 14th Street to the west is a busy four-lane traffic artery for the District.

The neighborhood is rich with musical history, from the restored and functioning Lincoln Theater to the U-Street/Cardozo Metro stop's Duke Ellington mural, to the numerous jazz bars/lounges in the area. As reads the DC Heritage Tourism Coalition's website: "For half a century, during the years of segregation, U Street was the nation's *Black Broadway*, and the heart of African American business and culture in Washington, D.C. Located near Howard University, the U Street neighborhood was home to Edward Kennedy "Duke" Ellington. Its theaters and clubs hosted some of the great names in American jazz -Cab Calloway, Pearl Bailey, Sarah Vaughn, and Jelly Roll Morton, to name a few."

The historically close-knit aspect of the community is in fear of being overrun with development and gentrification as progress and "renovation" march northward up 14th street. It's this 'front-porch' aspect of the site that was important for the conception of a reaction to the influx of developer monies and projects.





Image 1



Image 2



Image 3



Image 4

Neighborhood consists predominantly of early 20th century, 2-4 story load-bearing brick structures serving a multitude of functions from bars, restaurants, and lounges to apartments, houses and retail space. Later additions (early 1990's commercial strip on eastern quarter of U and 14th Streets; 8 story government building on the northwest corner of U and 14th; late 80's brick and concrete church on 13th Street) are scattered throughout with more high-end, multi-story mixed use development forecast for construction.

Image 1: View into site from U Street (weekend bazaar visible)

Image 2: View from corner of U Street and 14th looking north

Image 3: View from 14th looking east towards corner of 14th and U Streets

Image 4: View from corner of U and 14th Streets looking SouthWest

Image 5: Lincoln Theater, a once active concert hall, now a movie house

Image 6: Portrait of Duke Ellington near entrance to U-Street Cardoza Metro Station

Image 7: Ben's Chili Bowl, "Black owned and operated since 1958"



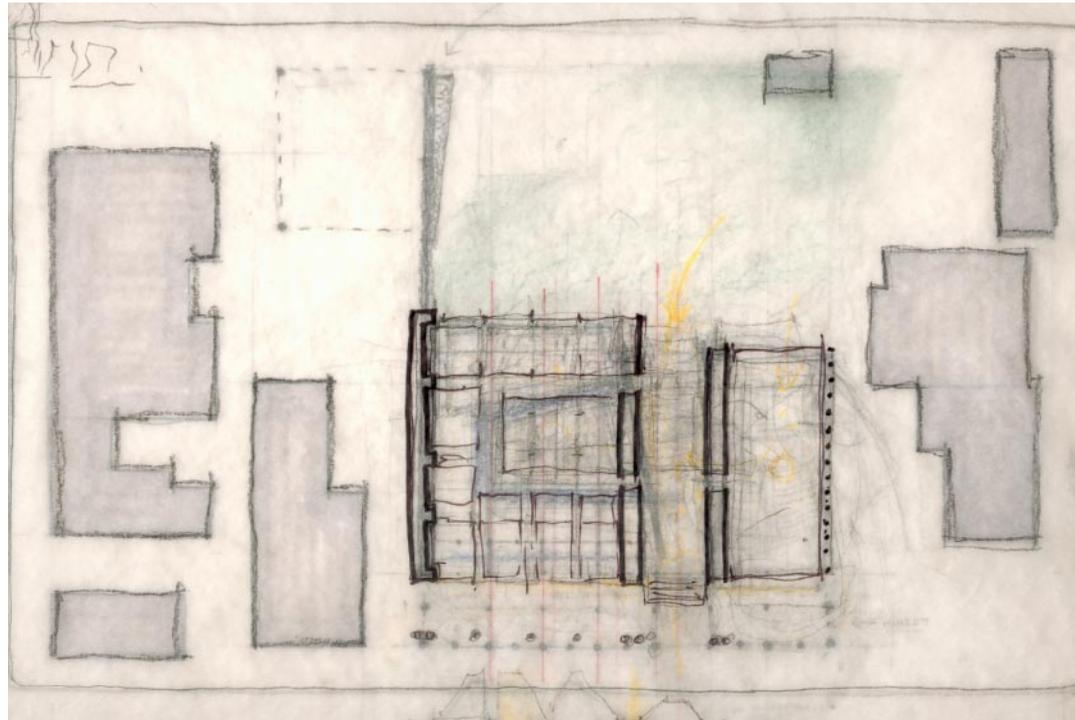
Image 5



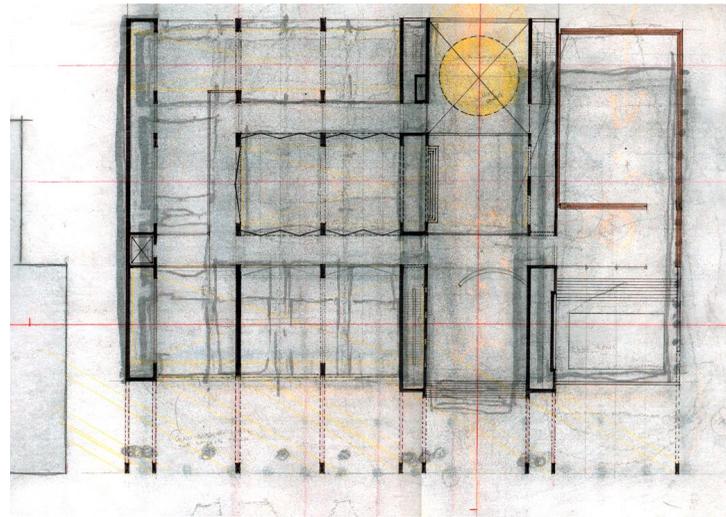
Image 6



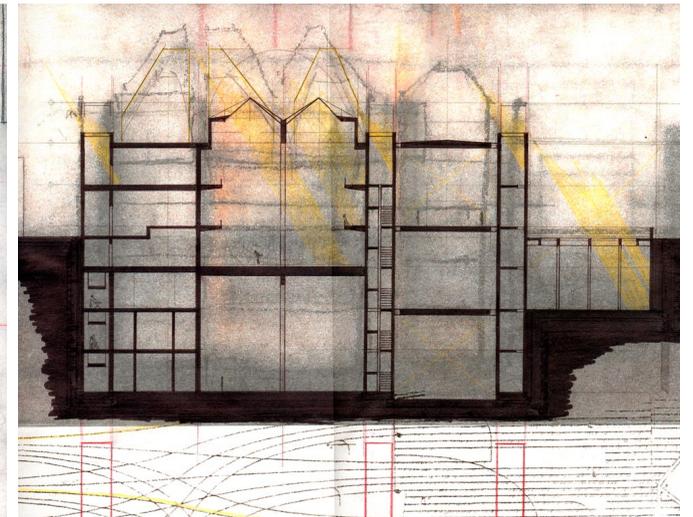
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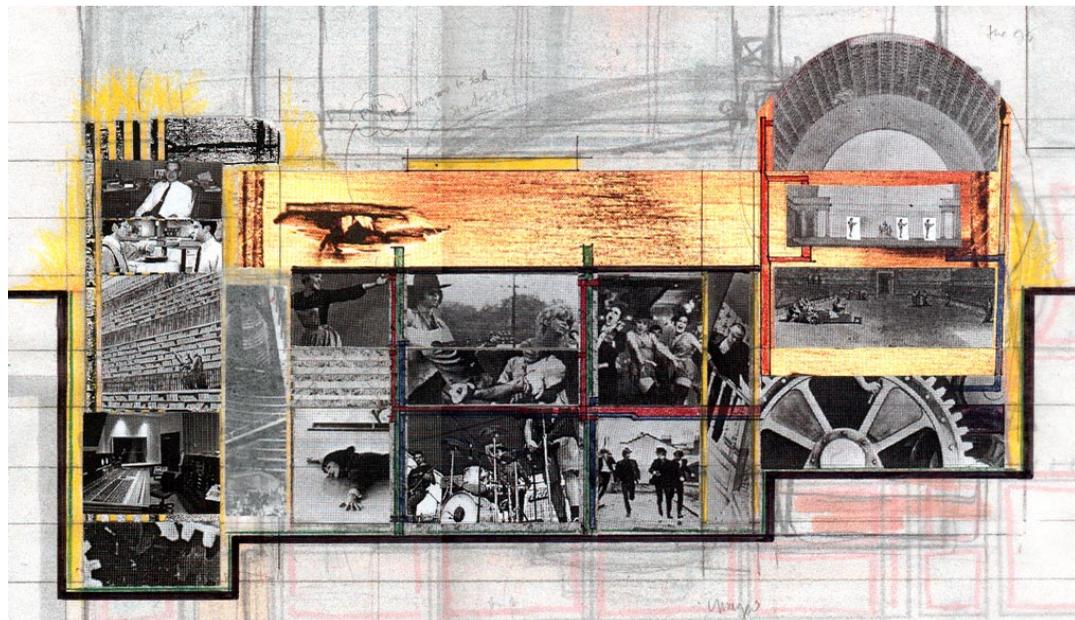
Sketch Site Plan



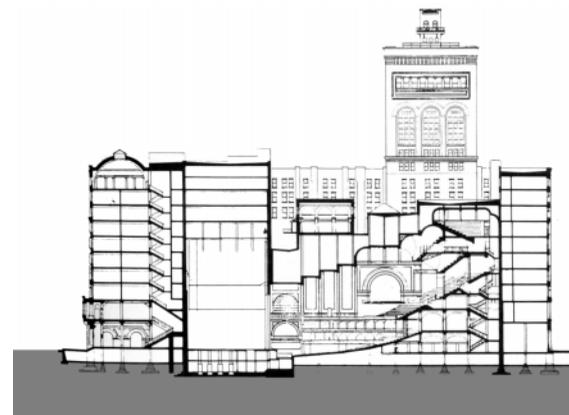
Floor Plan



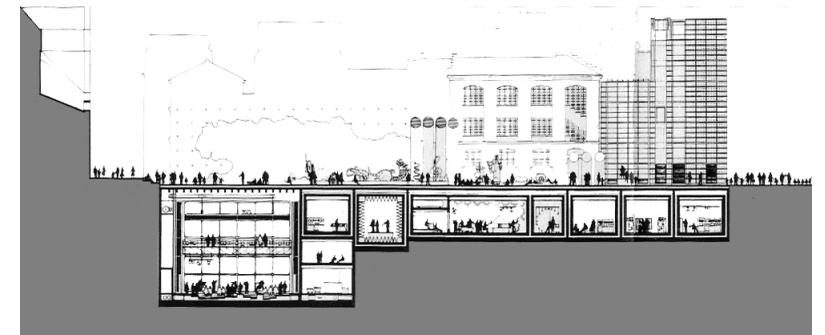
Section looking North



Conceptual Section

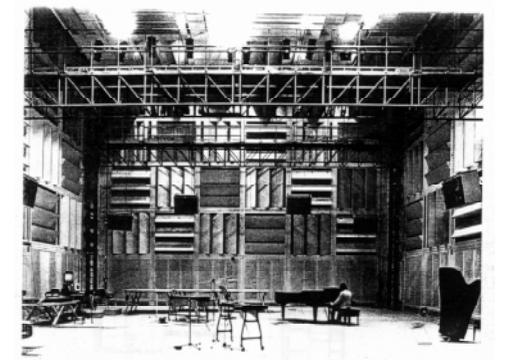


Case Study: Auditorium Building in Chicago, Illinois (1887-1889) by Adler & Sullivan

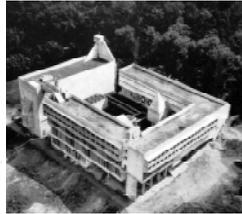
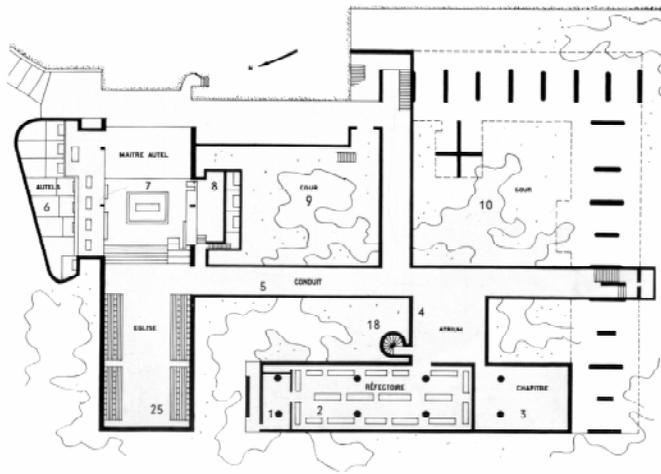


Case Study: Section, Institute for Research and Coordination in Acoustics & Music, Paris, France by Renzo Piano

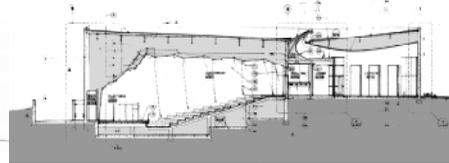
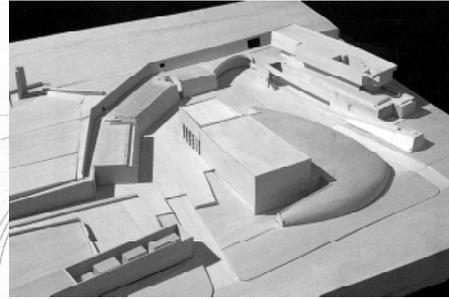
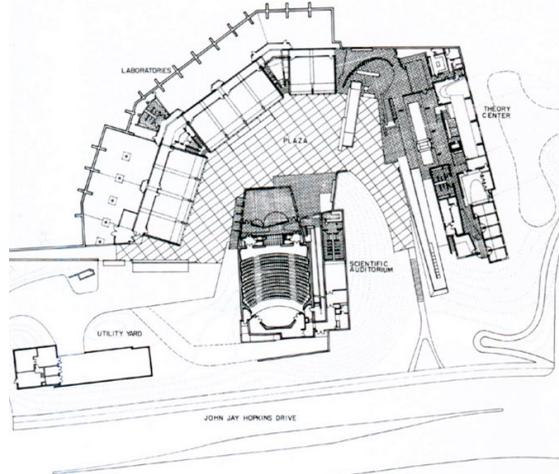
The initial gesture gave the complex a public space in the form of an open breezeway/porch to the street that offered some shade and invitation to the facility, rather than a flat facade constructed to the edge of the property. With the development of the program, the breezeway became an outdoor performance plaza/amphitheater (a particularly grand attraction during summer evenings) hugged on three sides by the facility's components (a classroom tower, library, and administrative connecting wing). To accommodate both the plaza and a large auditorium, the main performance hall was placed underground. The added benefits of this move shouldn't go unnoticed: better sound isolation, better heating/cooling and insulation potential, and a constant temperature conducive to keeping acoustic instruments true and in tune.



IRCAM underground studio



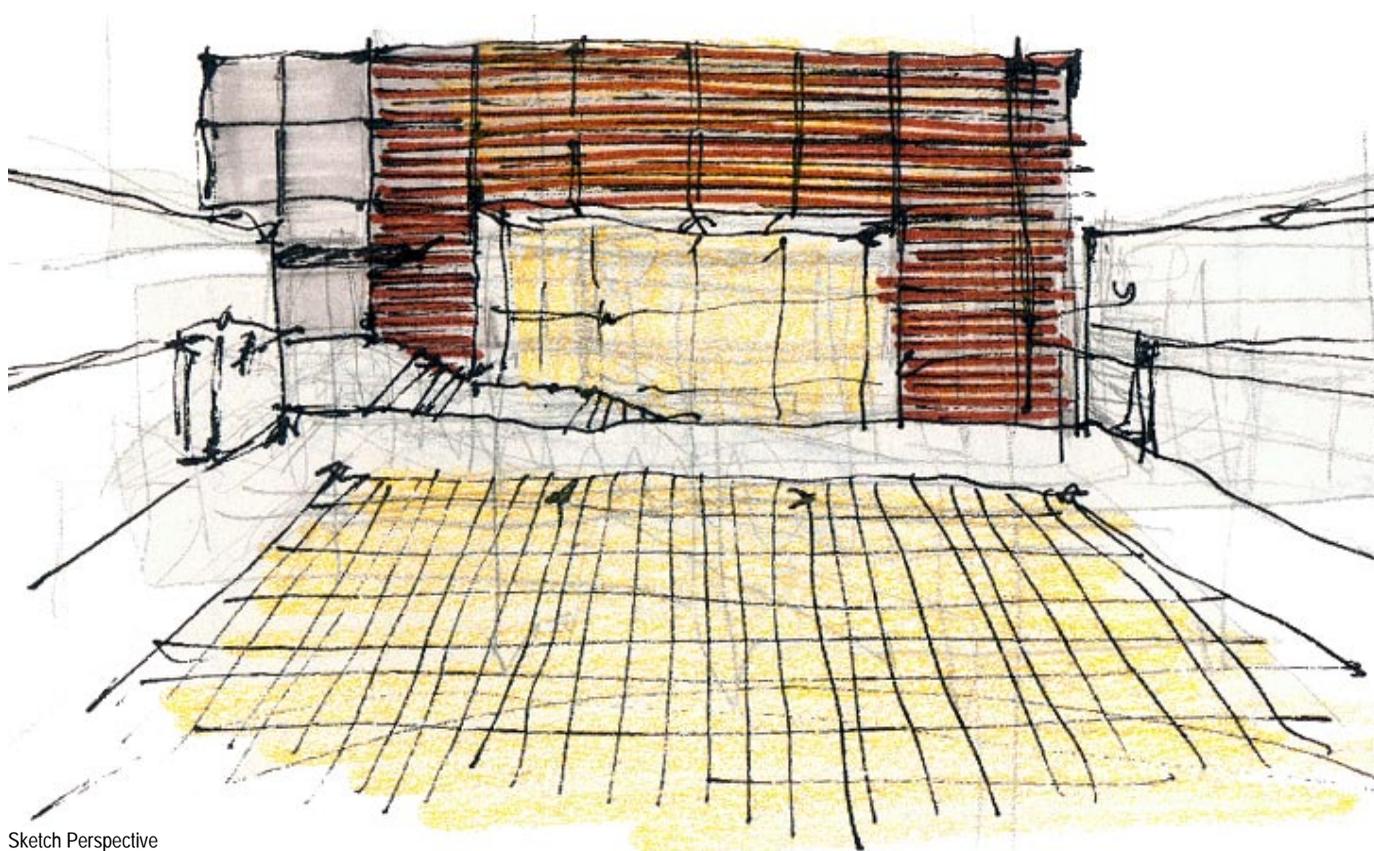
Case Study: Ground Floor Plan, Monastery of La Tourette (1957-1960) by Le Corbusier, near Lyons, France.



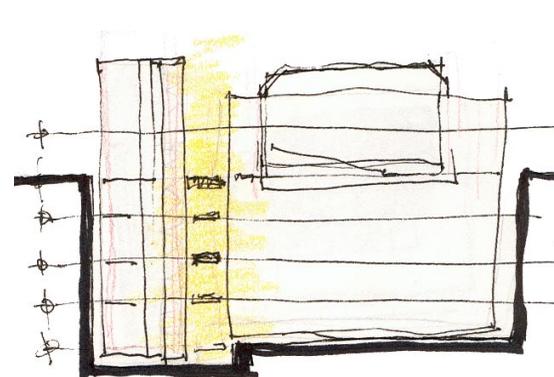
Case Study: Site Plan, Neurosciences Institute (1992-1995), La Jolla, CA by Williams and Tsien Architects.



Case Study: Courtyard Level Plan, Town Hall in Saynatsalo, Finland (1949-1952) by Alvar Aalto



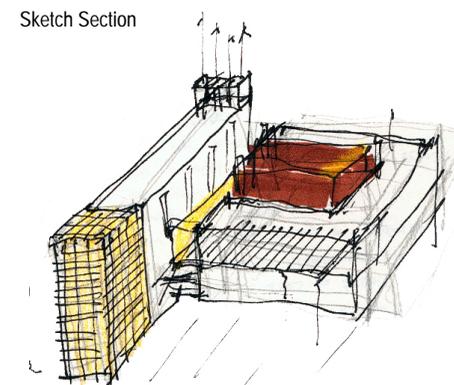
Sketch Perspective



Sketch Section

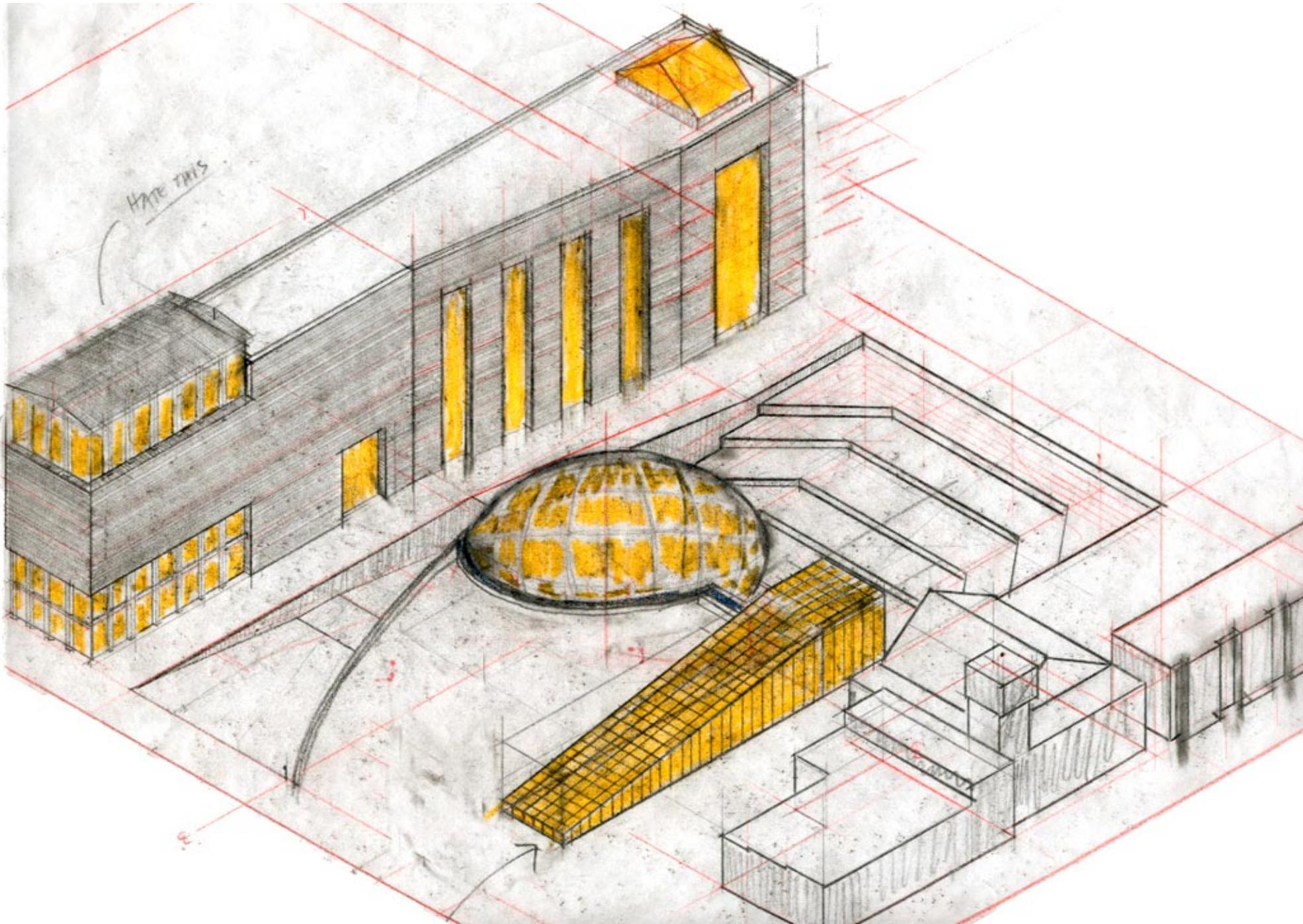


Sketch Plan Organization

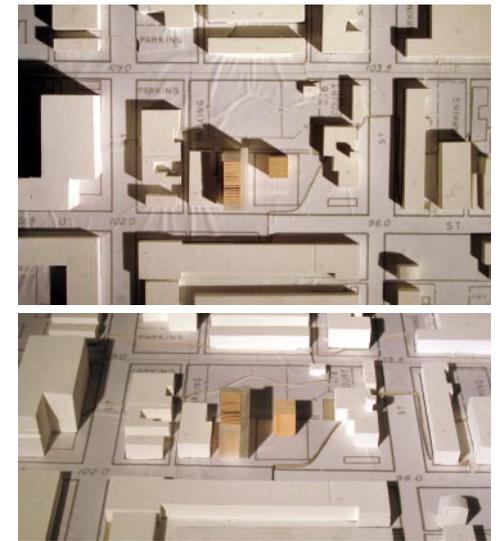


Sketch Axonometric

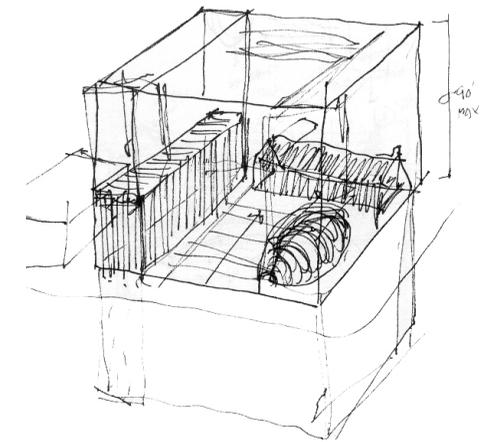
In light of courtyard building precedents, where the empty space between structures is just as important as the structures themselves, the conservatory site plan developed as the plaza took shape, giving place to the various components of the facility (practice/instruction, performance, and quiet study) around a central void.



Study Axonometric for use of entire block's depth



Concept Study Model



Sketch showing allowable building height



Concept Study Model