

A design thesis by James M. Garden submitted to the Graduate Faculty of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in partial fulfillment of the degree of Master of Architecture.

January 27, 2005

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Steve Thompson, Committee Chair

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Jane Aiken, Committee Member

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Kay Edge, Committee Member

# Harmony and Counterpoint

An Adaptive Reuse of Frank Lloyd Wright's A.D. German Warehouse



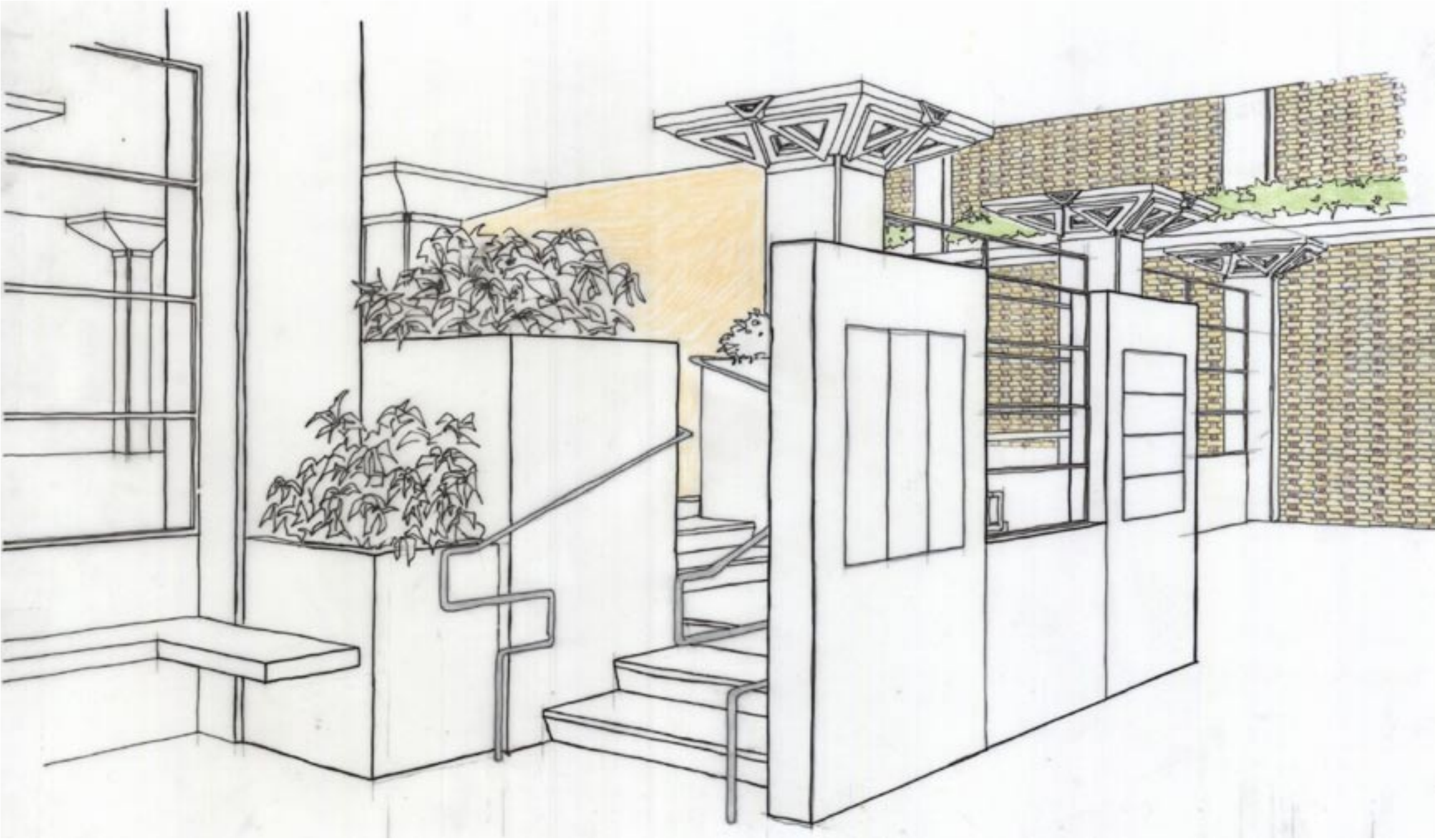


Watercolor by Frank Lloyd Wright, Copyright The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation 1504.0001.

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Photograph by Harvey Glanzer, 1981

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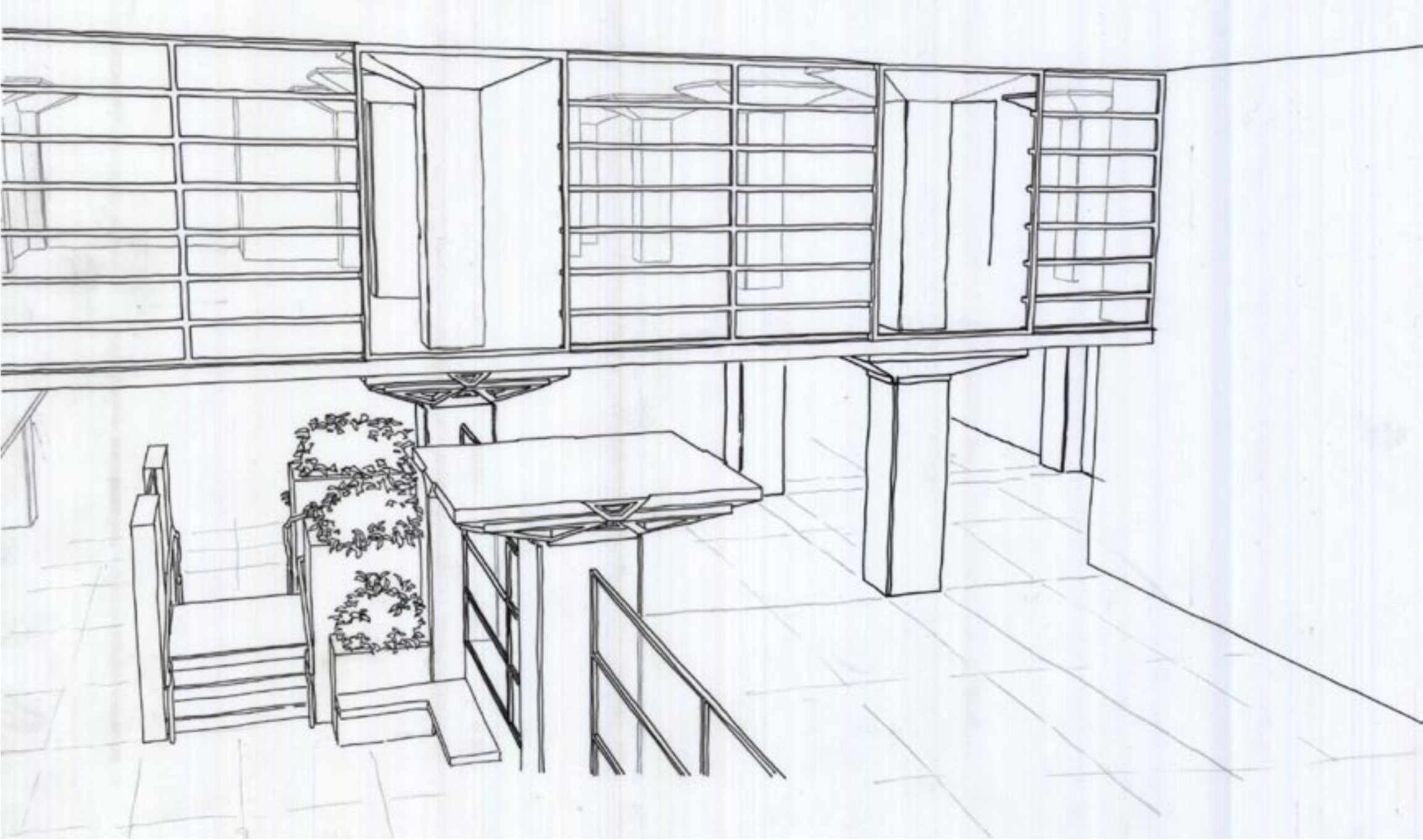
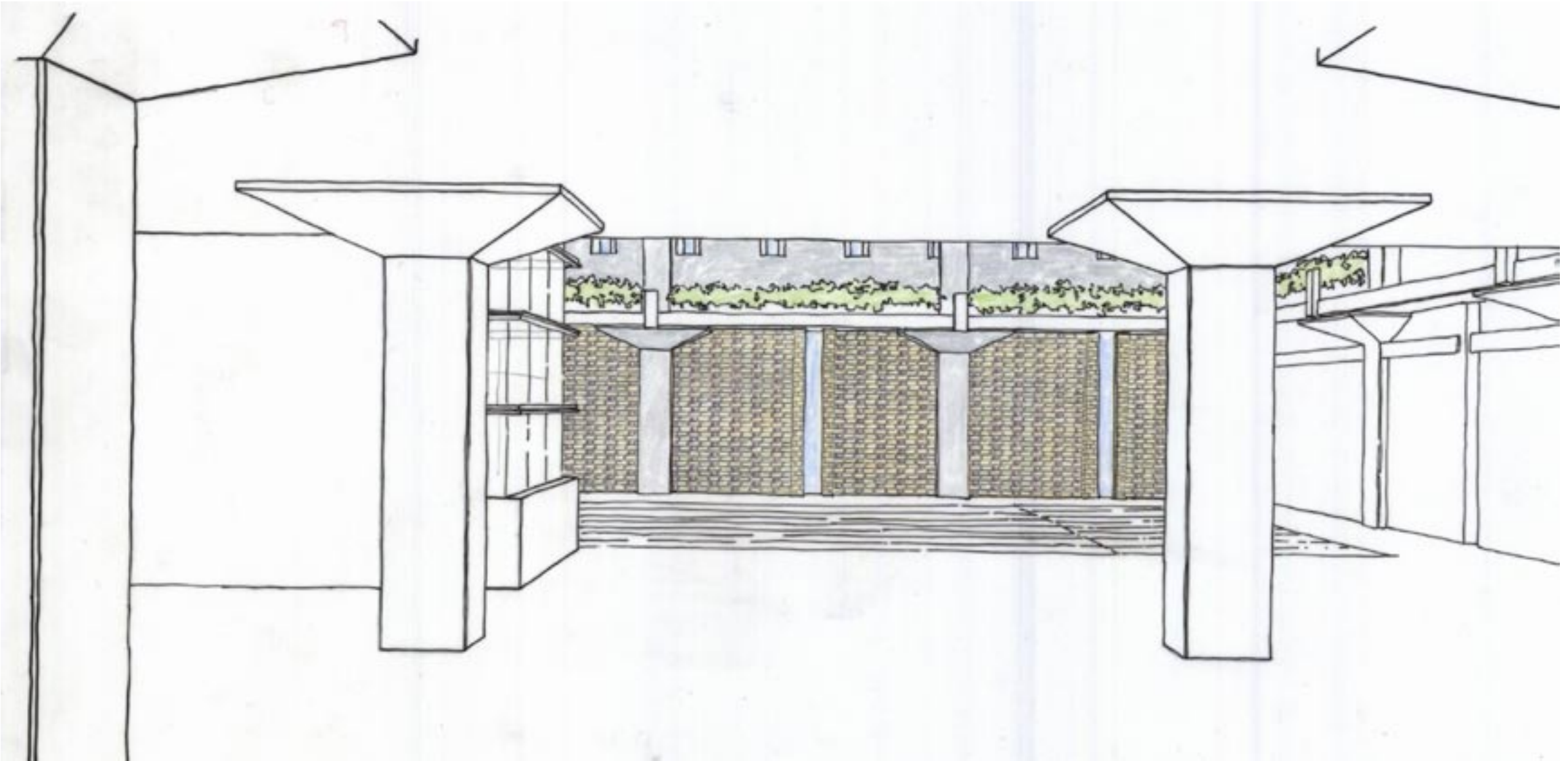


Photo by Harvey Glanzer, 1981

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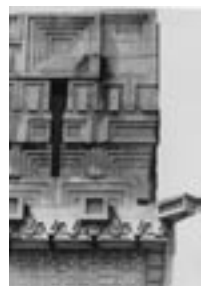
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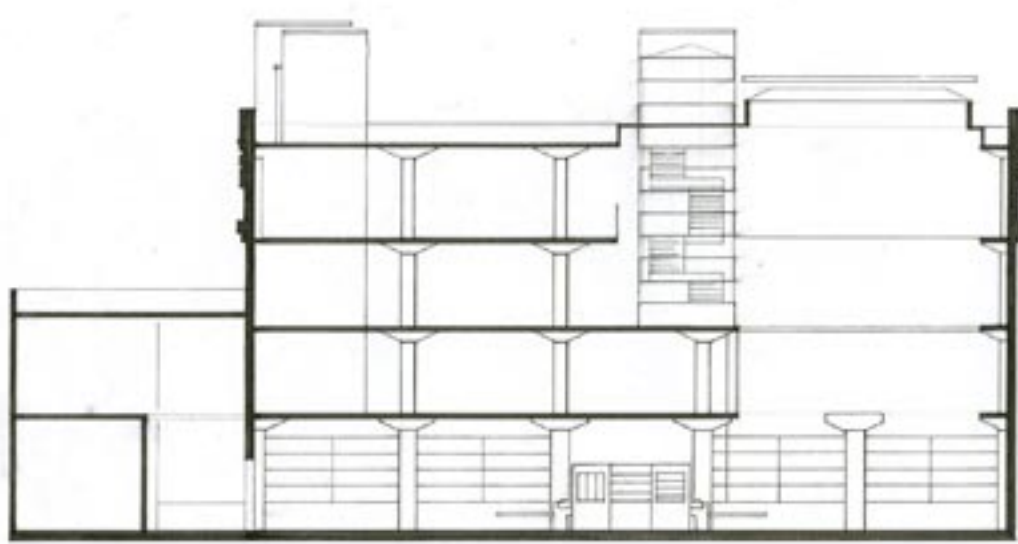
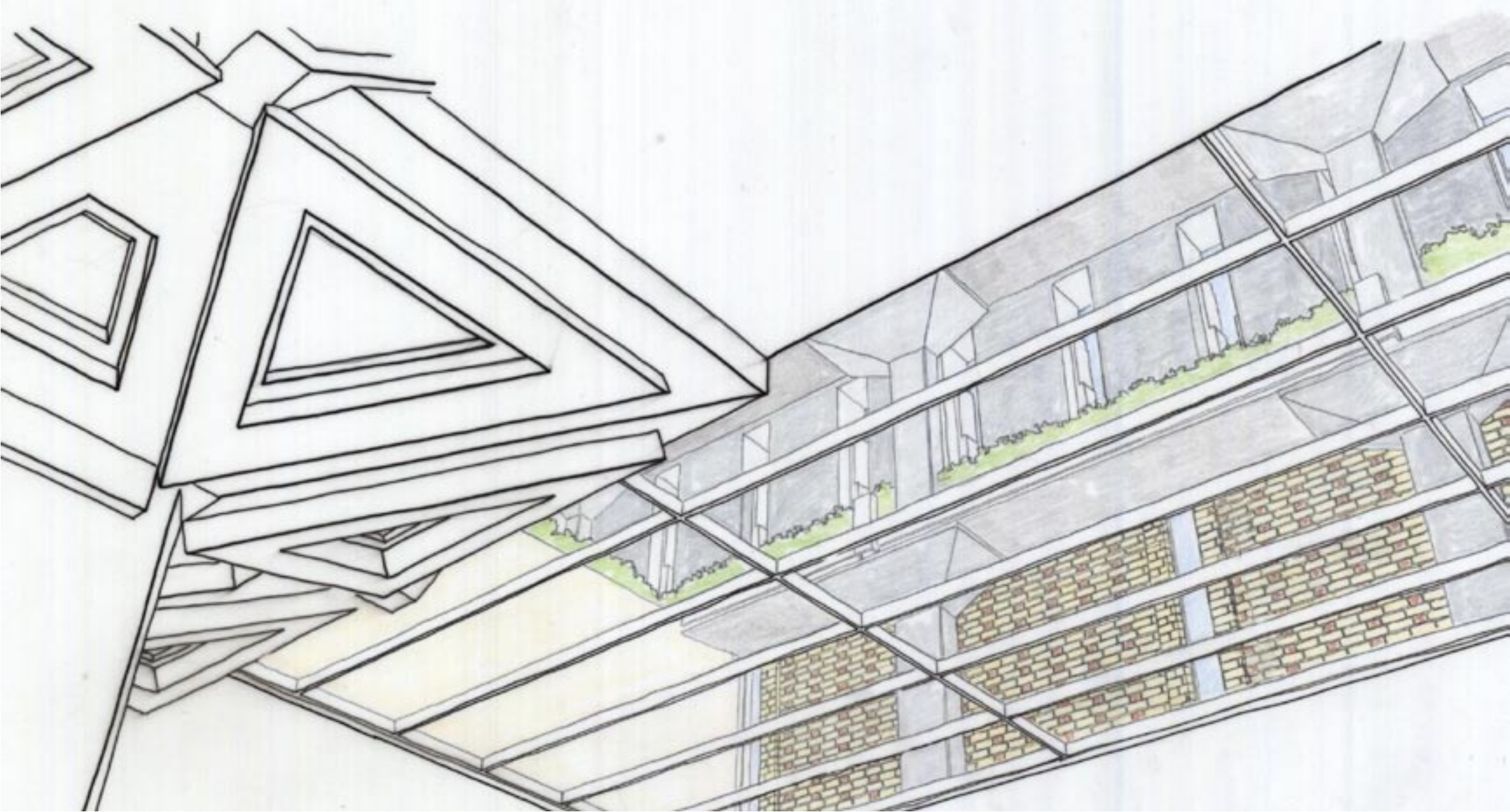




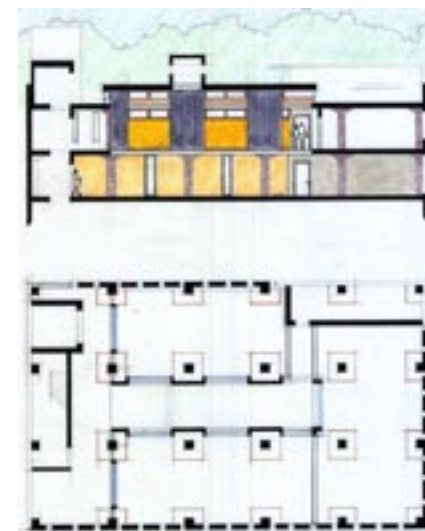
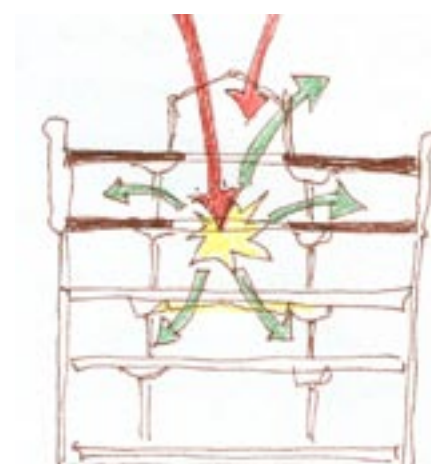
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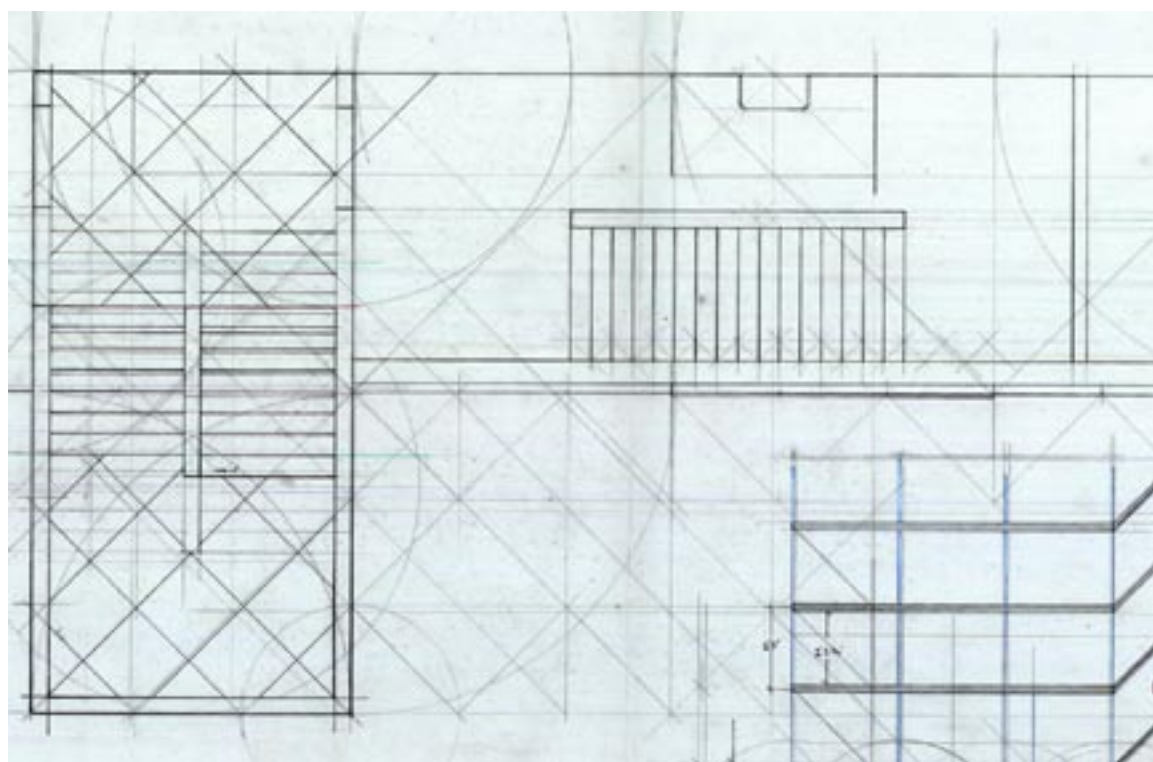
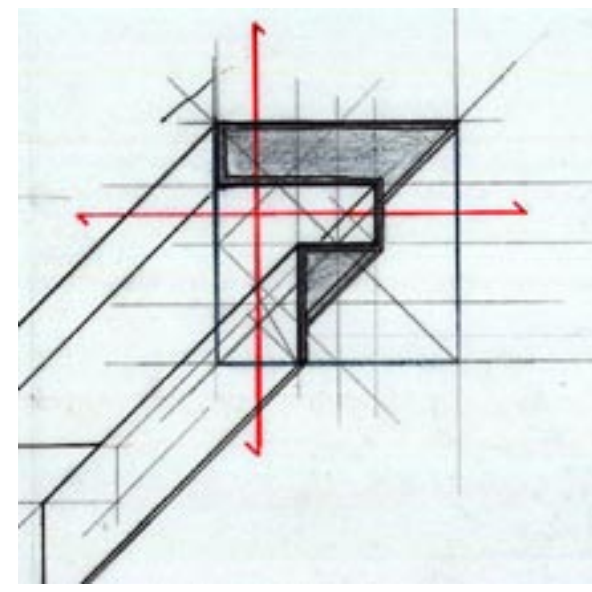
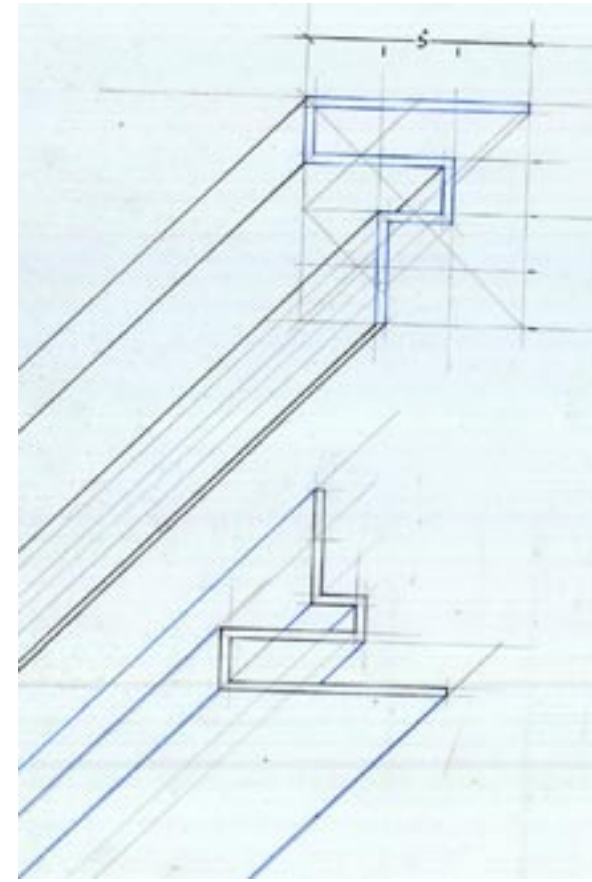
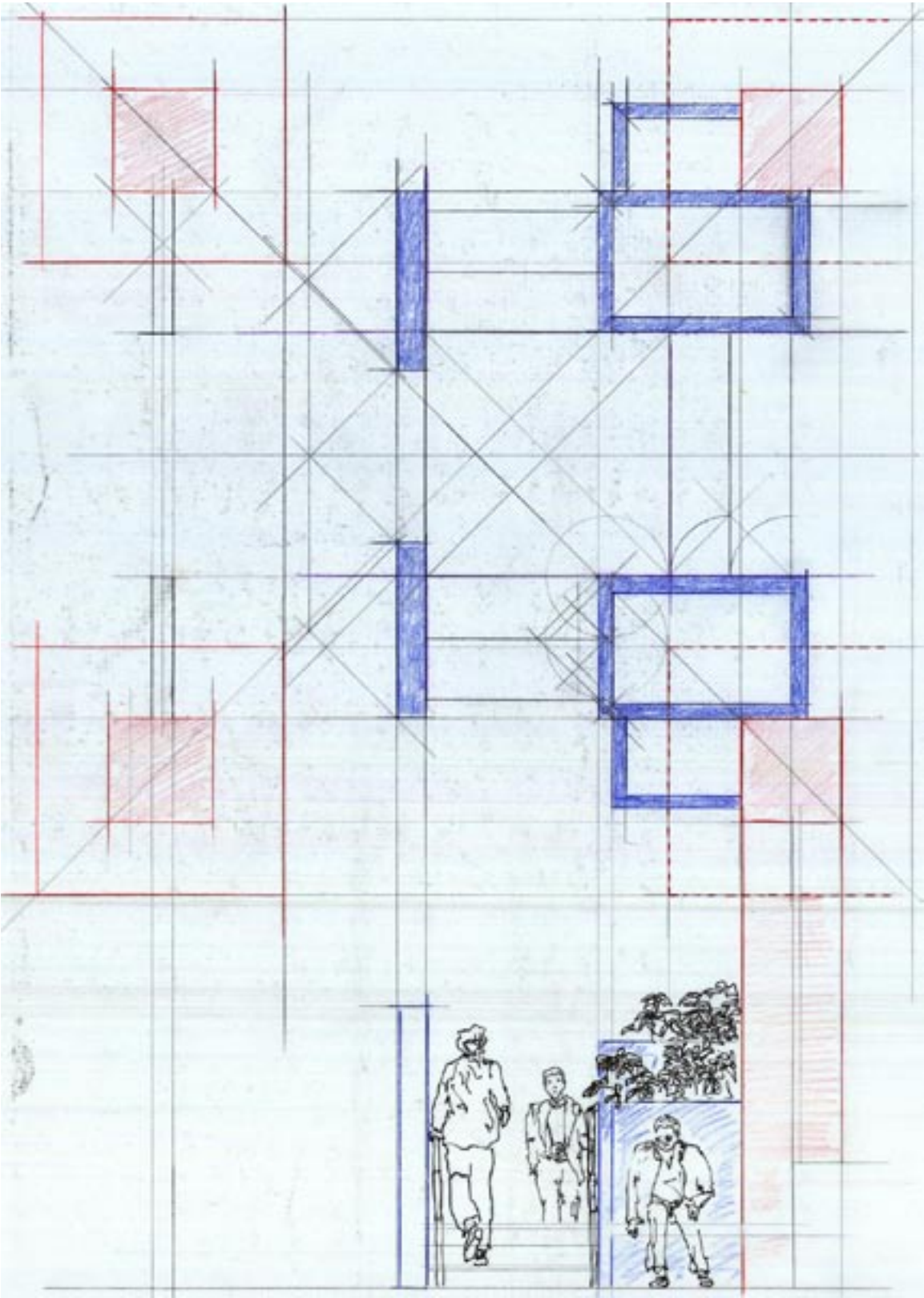
Section AA, 2005, Jim Garden



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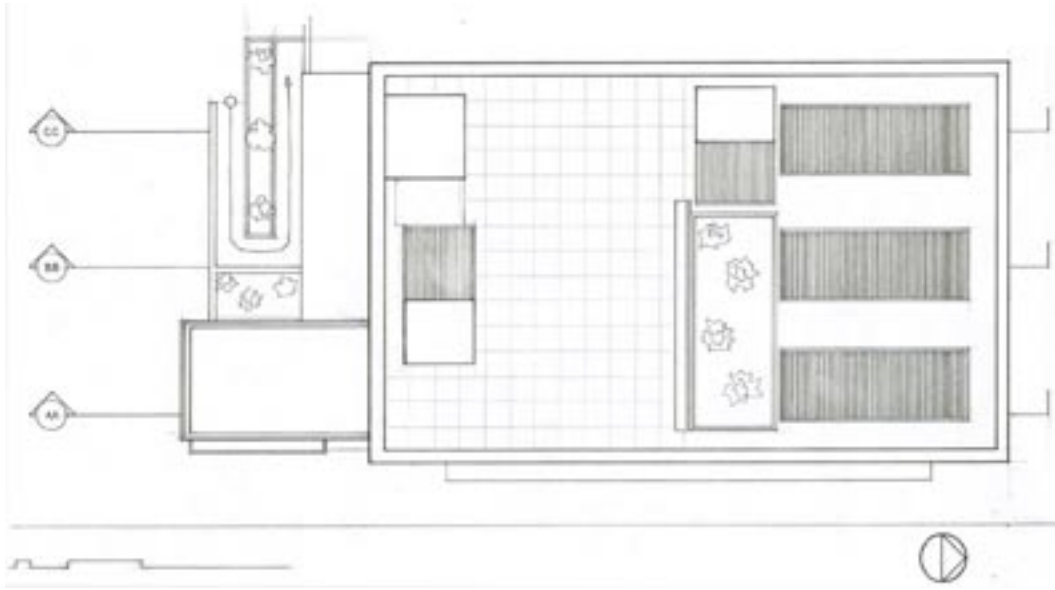
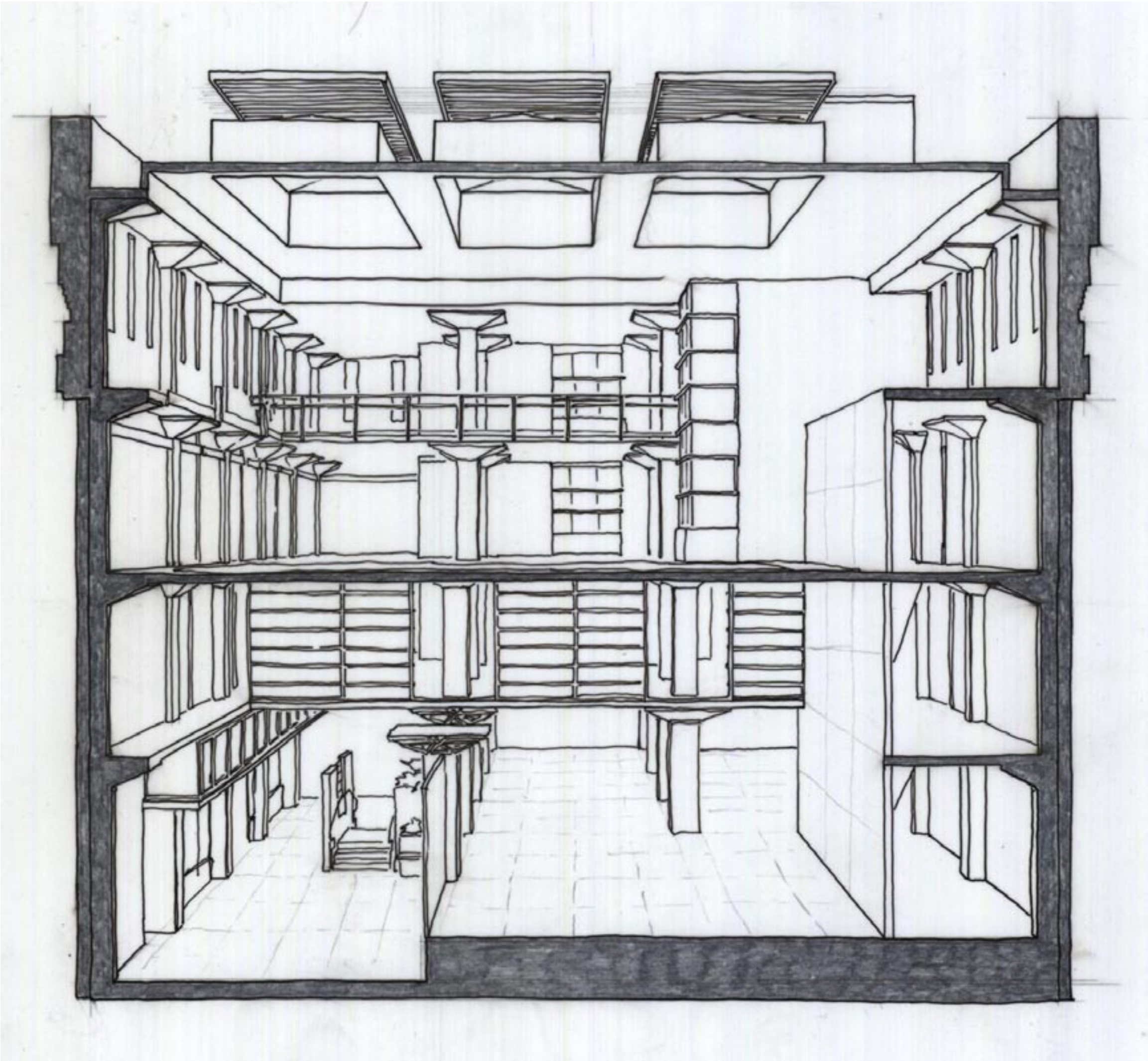


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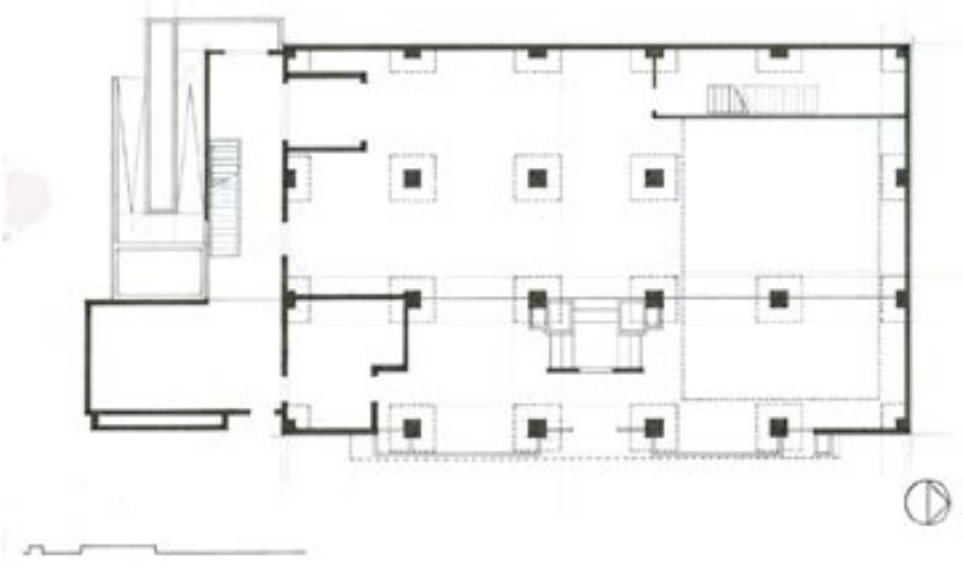
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Jim Garden 2005



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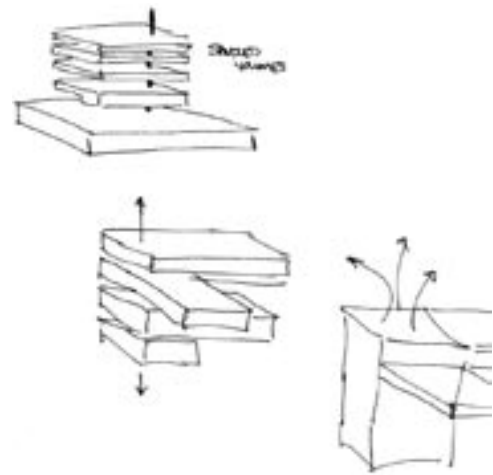
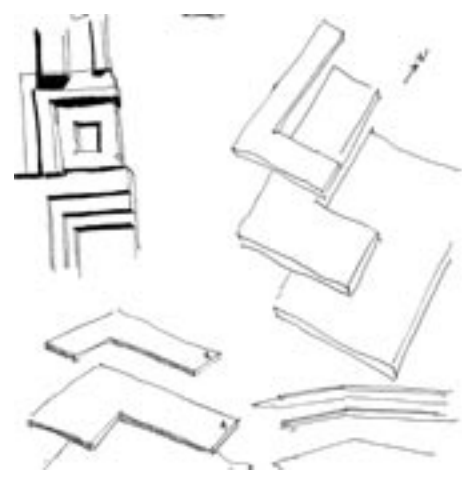
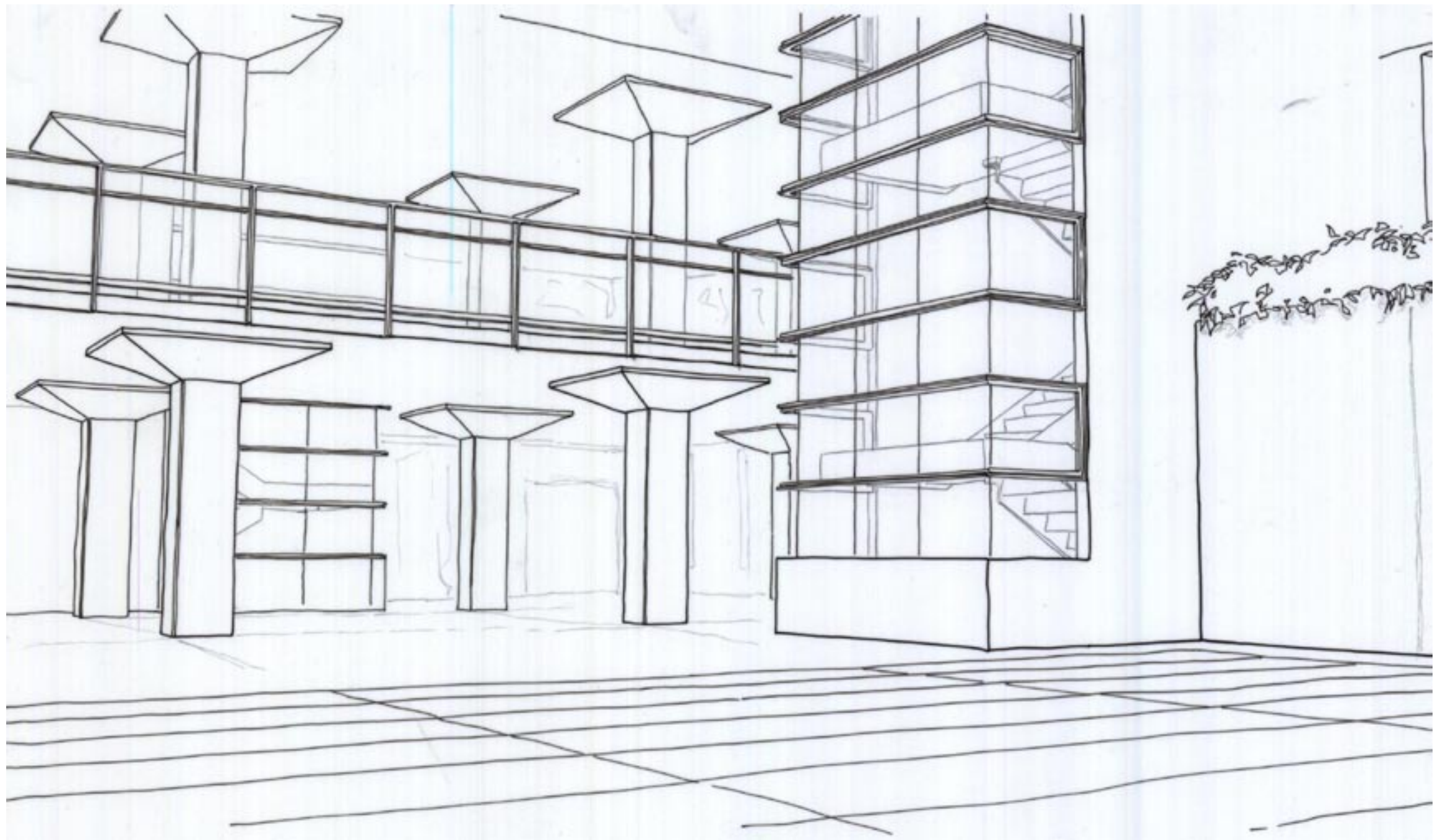
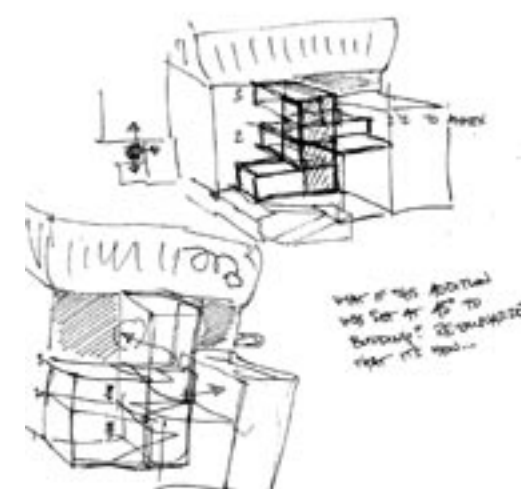
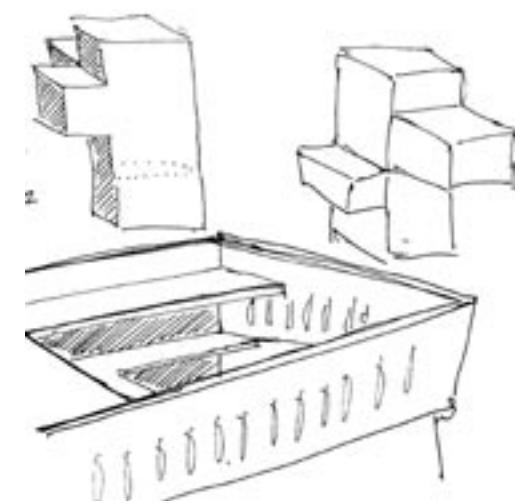


Photo by Jim Garden 2003



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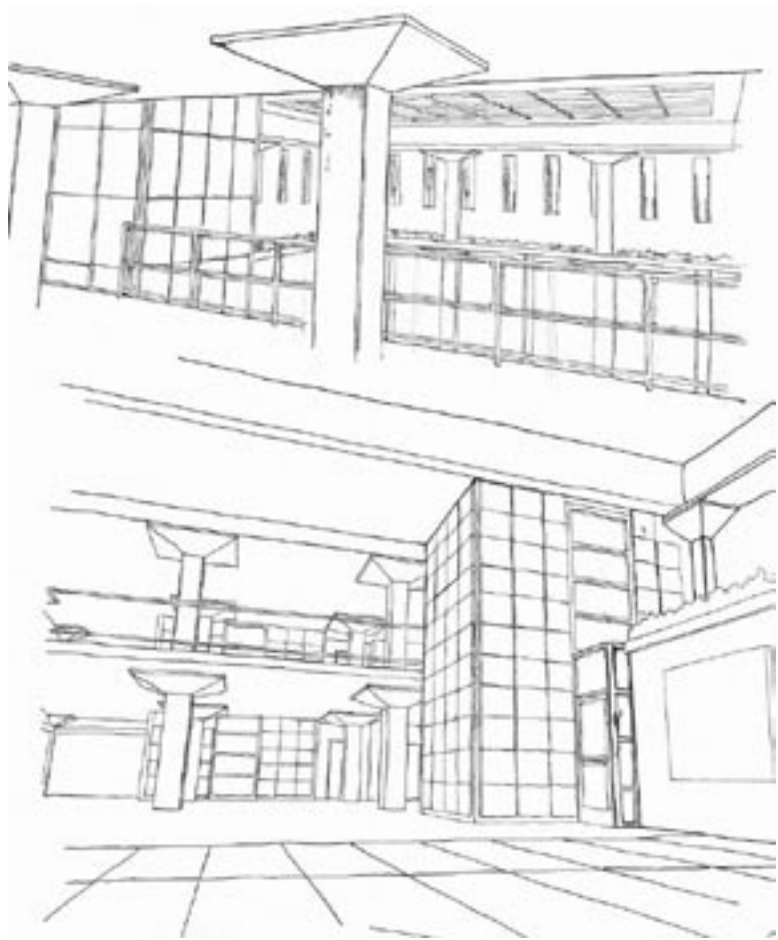
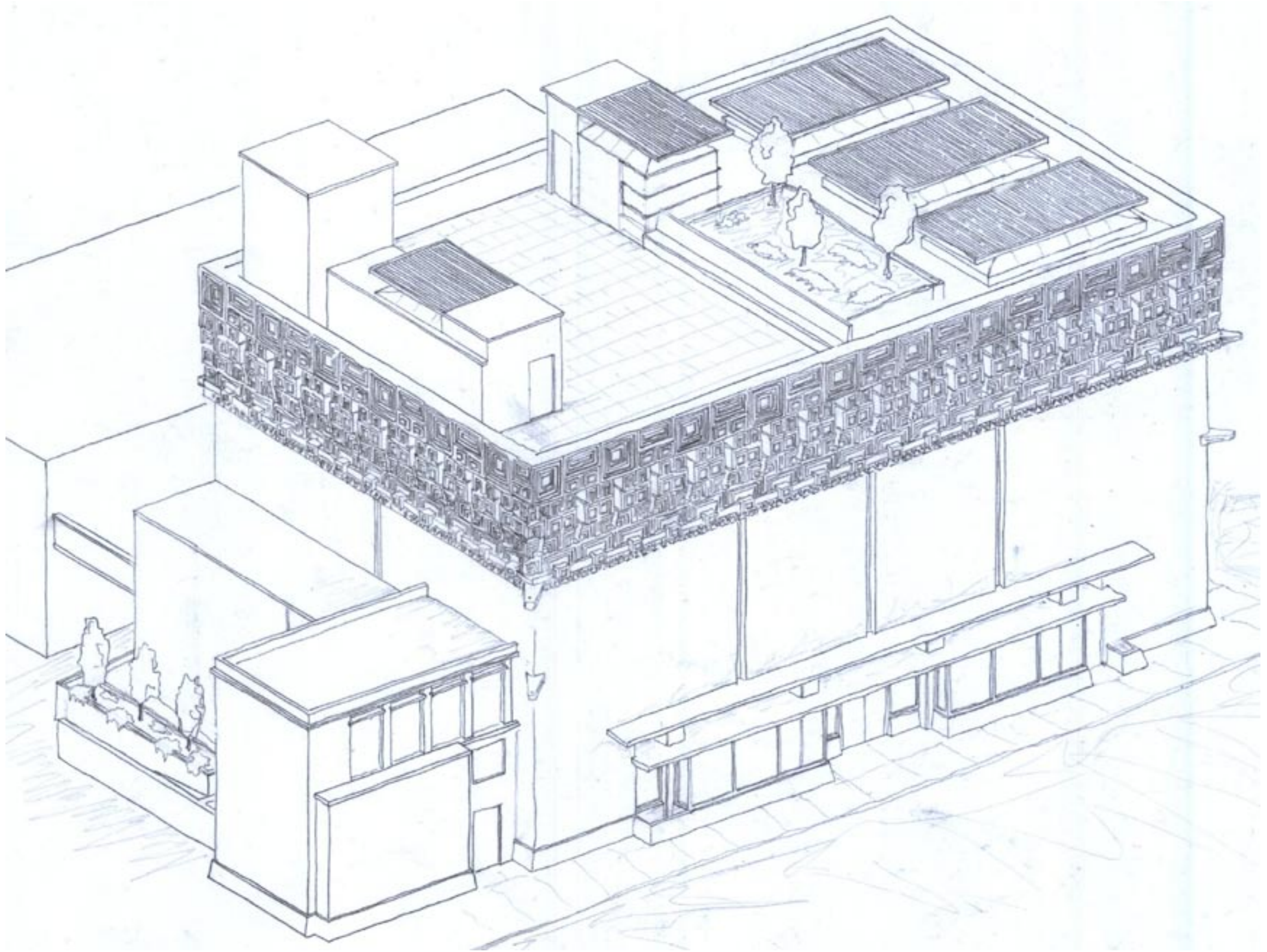


Photo by Harvey Glanzer 1981

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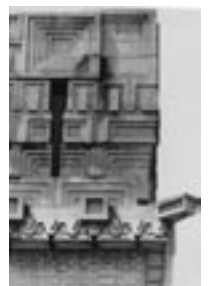


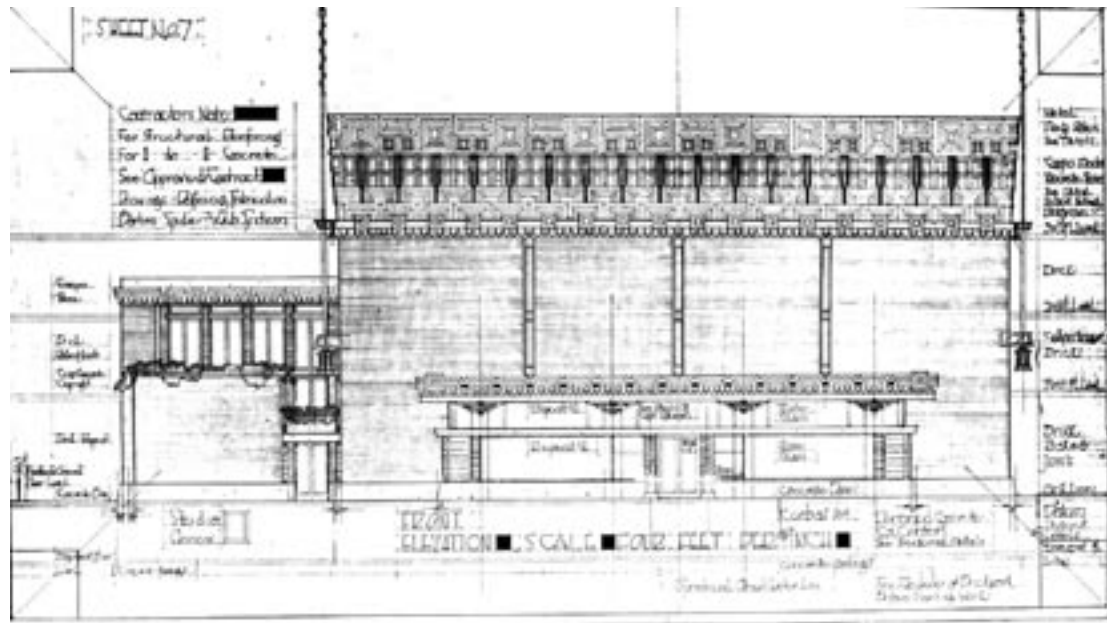


Photos by Randolph Henning 1980

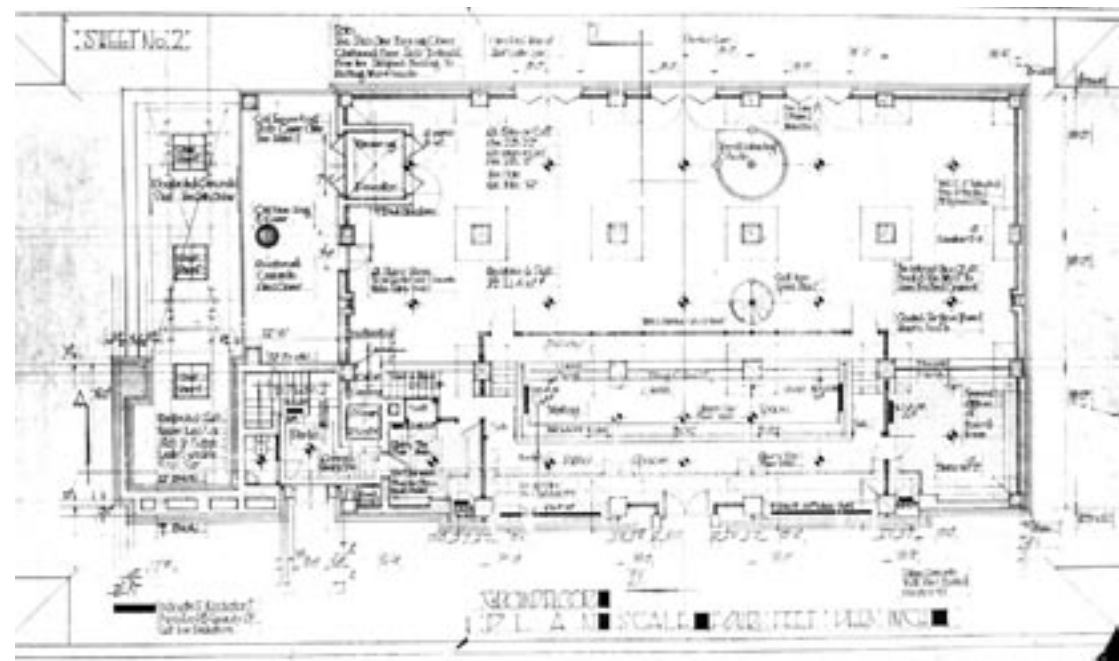
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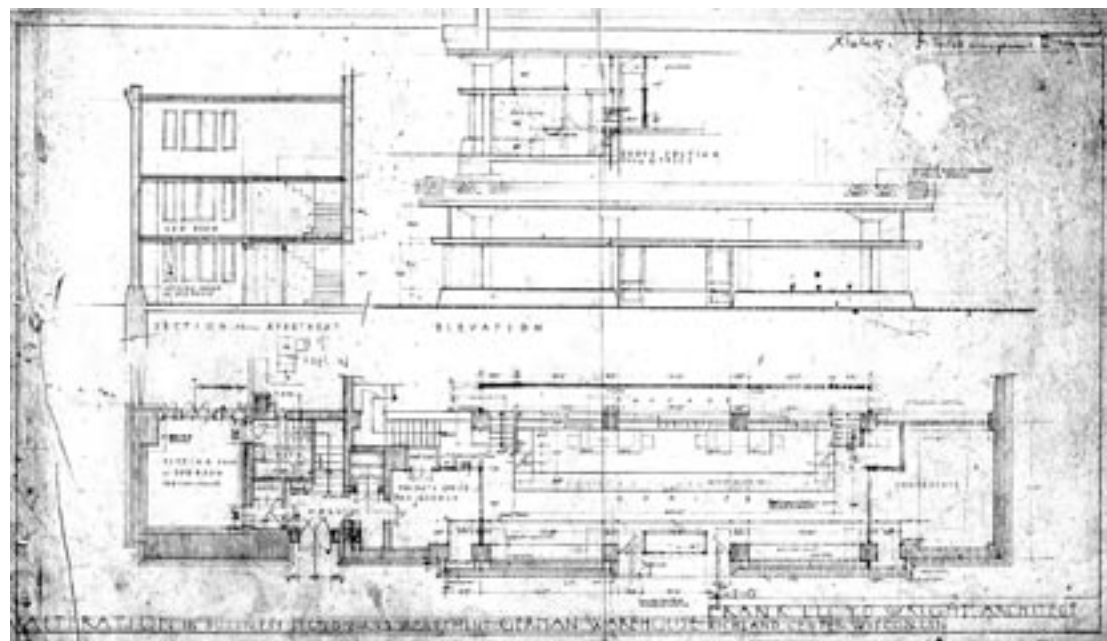


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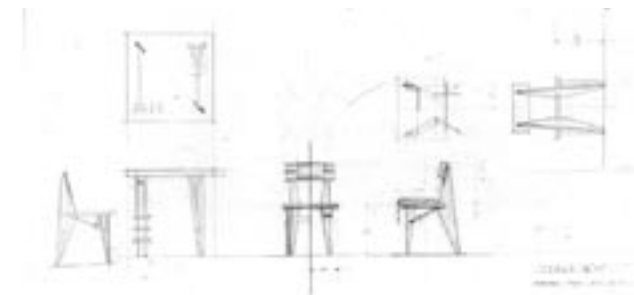


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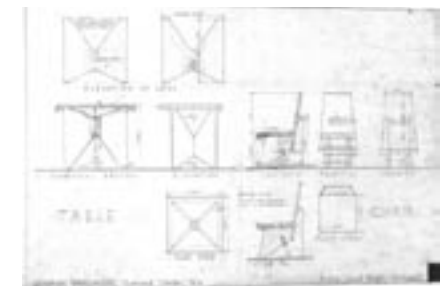
Drawings by Frank Lloyd Wright, 1915, Copyright The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation



Business Office Plan  
3504.021

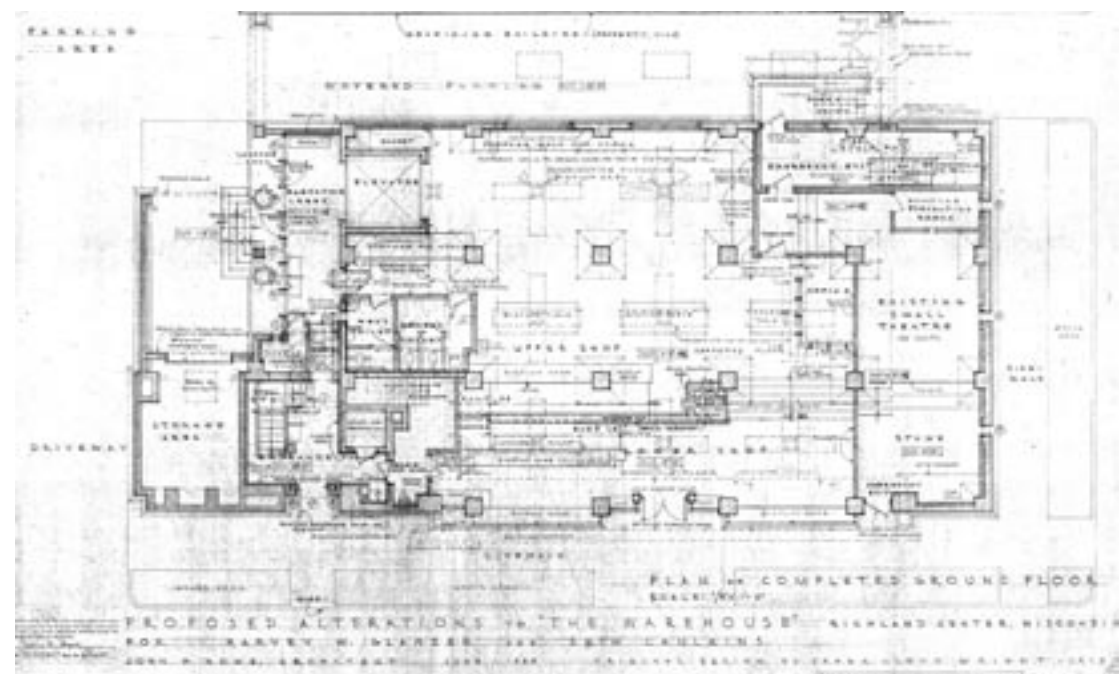
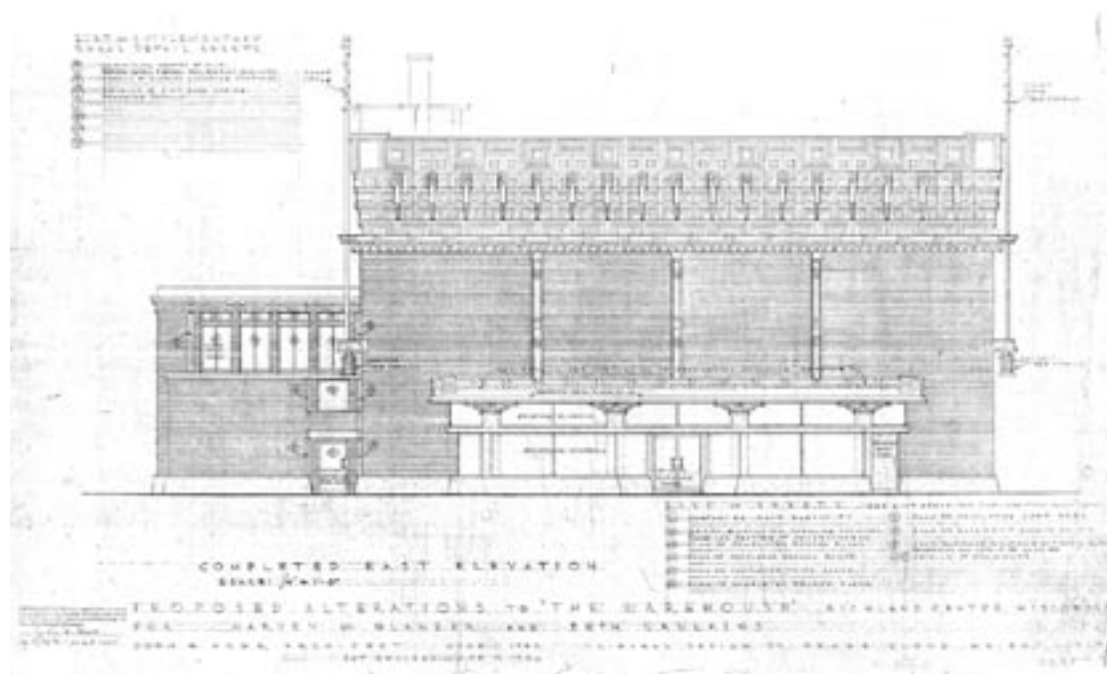


Chair and Table, 3508.006



Chair, Table 3504.008

Drawings by Frank Lloyd Wright, 1934, Copyright The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation



Drawings by John "Jack" Howe, 1981

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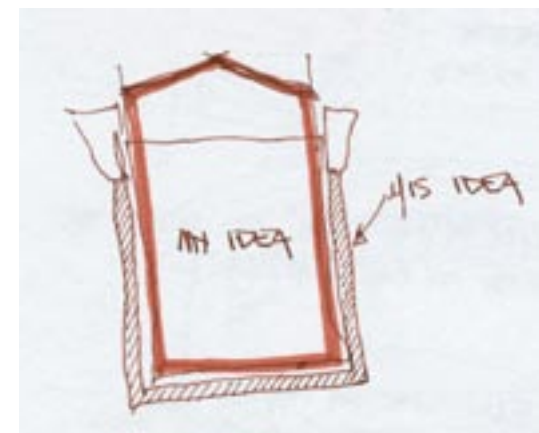


The A.D. German Warehouse was designed by Frank Lloyd Wright and constructed from 1917 to 1921 in Richland Center, Wisconsin. After a business failure, Albert Dell German asked Wright to develop plans for a new use for what had become an abandoned building. By 1934 Wright had completed 85 sketches representing an adaptive reuse involving a restaurant, office space and apartments. Since that time the Warehouse has been used intermittently for warehousing and light manufacturing, as well as a fallout shelter. In 1980 the structure was purchased by current owners Harvey Glanzer and Beth Caulkins. Upon acquisition, they employed John "Jack" Howe, longtime draftsman for Wright, to envision a new life for the building. This second adaptive plan, completed in 1981, has been partially implemented. No major changes have been made in the last decade.



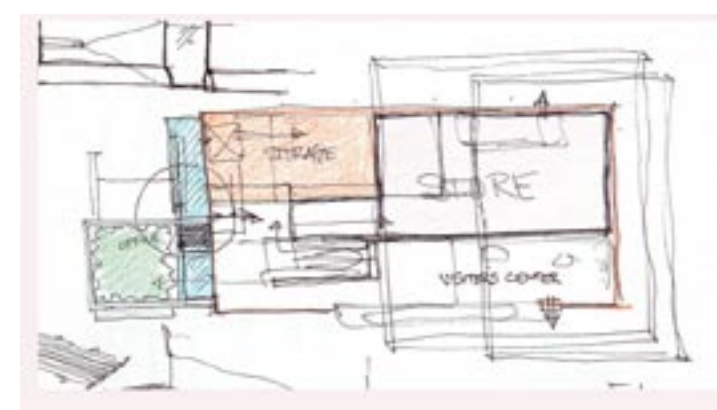
A Richland Center grocery wholesaler, possibly A.D. German, 1909

My thesis is the next iteration of adaptive plans for the Warehouse. I first entered the dark, dusty spaces of the Warehouse in 2001 and found an impressive, but oppressive building littered with dirt, debris and animal carcasses. Windows were broken or missing; water damage was evident in the ceiling of the fourth floor. After thorough research into the history of the building, I augmented my investigation with three visits to the building with owners Glanzer and Caulkins, written and verbal communications with the archivists at Taliesin, two meetings with the experts at CTL (responsible for the Unity Temple restoration), and conversations with local officials in Richland Center.



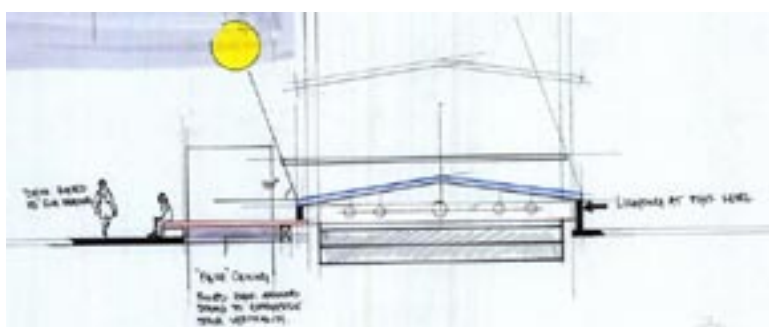
With an understanding dependent upon this investigation, I developed a design intention that includes: (a) a natural-light filled gallery and atrium, (b) a major stair penetrating the gallery, as well as a second set of stairs on the south end of the building, and (c) the addition of a major entranceway on the south facade.

I developed my design with the programmatic intention of relocating the nearby Richland Center visitor's center to the first floor of the Warehouse and adding a gift store with a focus on Frank Lloyd Wright's career. The second floor is to be converted to storage space and curator workspace for support of a museum/gallery located on the third and fourth floors. These exhibition spaces are intended primarily for the display of Wright's drawings and models as a complement to the collection of Taliesin in nearby Spring Green. These spaces may also be used for displaying local or travelling exhibitions, as well as for large gatherings.



An early programmatic sketch

Architectural design involves both conscious and unconscious processes as well as a set of interdependent issues. The major design problem I attempted to solve was how to bring life to the building through the introduction of more light, and thereby once again making the Warehouse a vibrant part of the community.

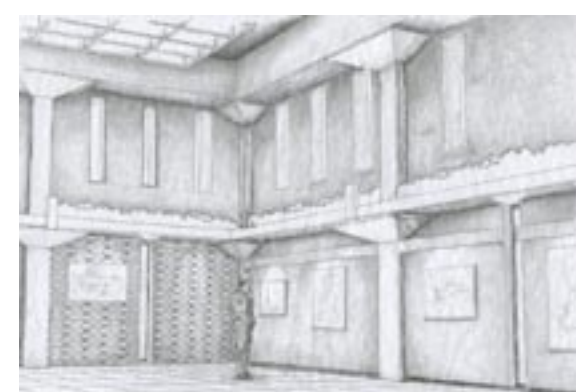


Working out the details of delivering light into the gallery/atrium spaces.

A careful study of the exterior frieze allowed me to extrapolate a working method I call "step & rotate" for generating relationships among the forms and shapes of the original building and its new design. The design rules I developed from this method were: divide elements vertically into thirds; then, where appropriate subdivide these new elements into fourths.

In addition, my "step & rotate" method led me to discover what I call a transformational geometry that became absolutely clear when I freed myself from the "tyranny of the computer" by embracing the tools of Wright (pencils, T-square and triangles). In the course of using these tools and embracing this geometry, I also encountered what some have termed "the tyranny of the square". This required an altering of the fundamental proportional framework since a successful design resolution required the inclusion of a square.

Beyond the clear contrasts and juxtapositions produced by the above design elements, I have found that the interrelationships of these elements produce a harmony marked by counterpoint. The musical characteristics of harmony and counterpoint, having found powerful expression in the pairings of vertical and horizontal, light and dark, and new and old. These relational tensions resonated with the internal structure of the transformational geometry and created a powerful resolution between the enclosing massive forms of the original Warehouse and my new design.



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