



**A MUSEUM
ABOUT THE CITY:
AN AIR RIGHTS PROPOSAL
FOR BOSTON**

By
Peter M. Furgiuele

Design Thesis submitted to the faculty of
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State
University in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARCHITECTURE

Approved

Jaan Holt, Chairman

Gregory K. Hunt

Raj Barakumar

August 1985

**A MUSEUM
ABOUT THE CITY:
AN AIR RIGHTS PROPOSAL
FOR BOSTON**

By
Peter M. Furgiuele

(ABSTRACT)

The John F. Kennedy Expressway, commonly known as The Central Artery, is an elevated highway running north-south through downtown Boston. It is an immense structure which cuts its way through the urban fabric, is a considerable source of noise and pollution, and visually segregates the city's downtown from its vital waterfront.

Recently a study was undertaken to explore the possibility of removing the elevated Central Artery and replacing it with a tunnel in order to alleviate traffic congestion and noise, curtail pollution and reunite the downtown with the waterfront. If this proposal were carried through, fifteen air-rights parcels (approximately twenty acres) would become available for development in Boston's inner core. This thesis explores one possible way of using a specific air-rights parcel above the proposed tunnel.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The way one does things is private, but what one does can belong to everybody. Your greatest worth is in the area where you can claim no ownership, and that part that you do that doesn't belong to you is the most precious. It is the kind of thing you can offer because it is a better part of you; it is a part of general commonality that belongs to everybody. You feel that what you truly have to offer is in your next work, and that what you have done is always incomplete. I believe that even a great composer like Bach, who did everything as though it belonged to everyone else, died thinking he did nothing, because a person is greater than his works. He must continue.

I believe it takes a long time to be an architect; it takes a long time to be the architect of one's aspirations. You can become an architect professionally overnight. But to feel the spirit of architecture from which one makes his offering takes much longer. And where does the architect sit? He sits right there; he is the one who conveys the beauty of space, which is the very meaning of architecture. Think of meaningful space and you invent an environment, and it can be your invention. Therein lies the architect.

Louis I. Kahn

First we must be free to see that joy and happiness do not come through effort. Is creation through effort or is there creation only with the cessation of effort? When do you write, paint or sing? When do you create? Surely when there is no effort, when you are completely open, when on all levels you are in complete communication, completely integrated. Then there is joy and then you begin to sing or write a poem or paint or fashion something. The moment of creation is not born of struggle.

J. Krishnamurti

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
EXISTING CONTEXT	2
DEVELOPMENT	4
DEFINITION	7
REFINEMENT	10
BIBLIOGRAPHY	23
VITA	24

INTRODUCTION

SITE

The site is located between the Blackstone Block and the North End. Both places contain buildings and sites significant to Boston's development and identity. Between these two areas passes a significant volume of pedestrian traffic; tourists, shoppers, residents, making their way from the downtown business district to the shops, restaurants and homes in the North End. The North End is characteristic of the many neighborhoods which are part of Boston's heritage, ethnic (Italian), mostly blue-collar workers whose families have lived in the neighborhood for generations and who are wary of city government or any external forces which they feel might threaten the stability of their lifestyle.

WALLS

The intensity and pace with which Boston is changing, especially in the conversion of apartment buildings to condominiums, has alarmed many long-time residents of Boston's neighborhoods. For many people, such intense development has meant the loss of an apartment or multi-family dwelling and the overall depletion of available rental property in the city.

The removal of the Central Artery would, in the minds of many North End residents, pave the way for development in their neighborhood and result in the loss of their homes. Therefore, the physical barrier which the Central Artery presents is seen by the North End residents as being an effective obstacle to development and many oppose any plans to remove it.

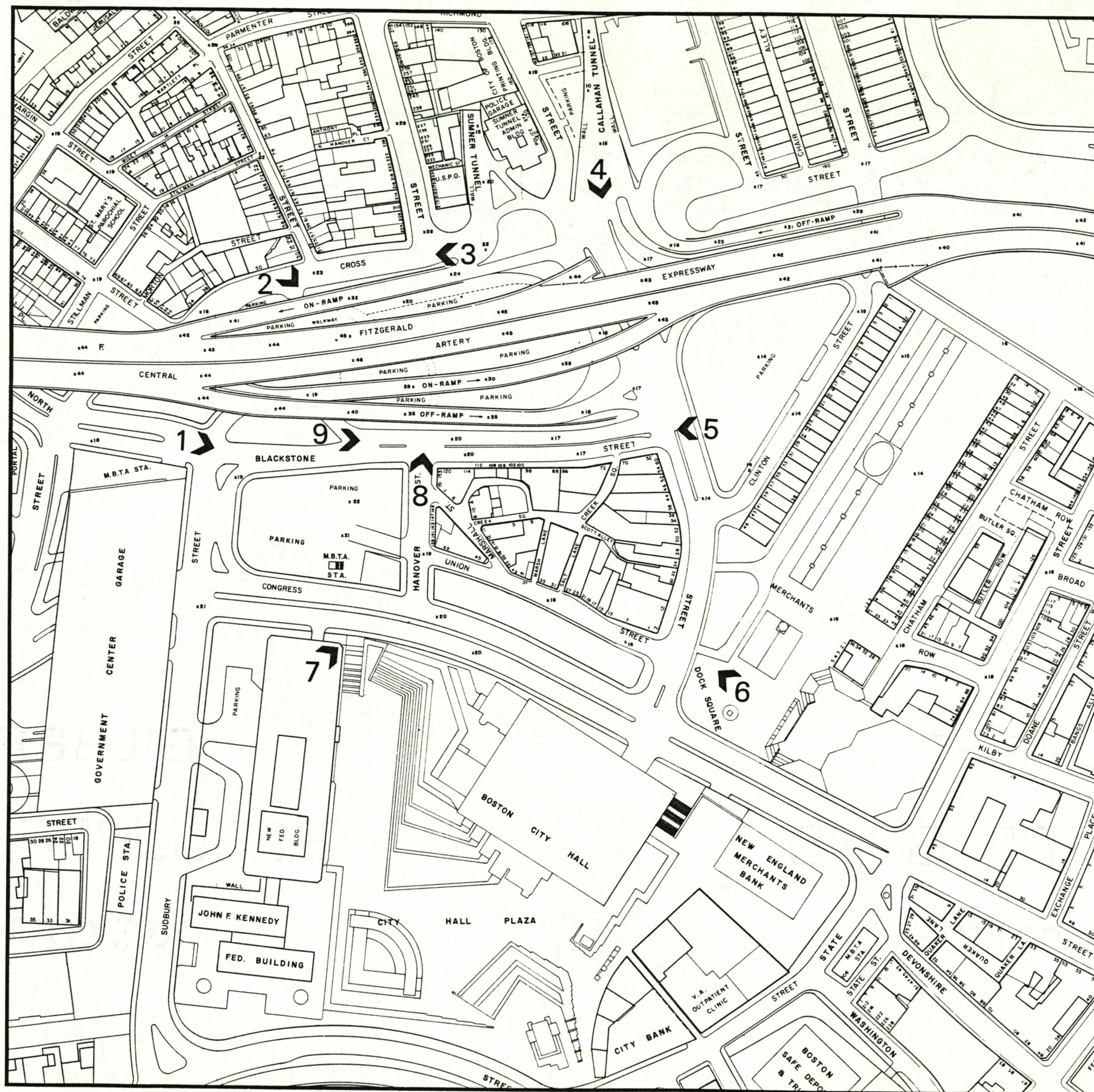
The use of the walls of the proposed tunnel to support a building on the air-rights parcel is the result of both symbolic and architectural considerations. These are the desire to maintain the sense of physical separation and unique identity which the North End enjoys and to make some architectural significance of the tunnel's considerable slice of the urban fabric.

BUILDING

The building is a result of the elements that have come before; the site and the walls. Given the vicissitudes of urban morphology and the often acrimonious relationship between City Hall and its constituency, I propose a museum about the city in an effort to provide a sort of living archive where people can see, evaluate and discuss past and future changes to the urban environment. The building is also intended to provide the city with an "urban room" where people from all parts of the city can gather year round and use the building's great interior space.

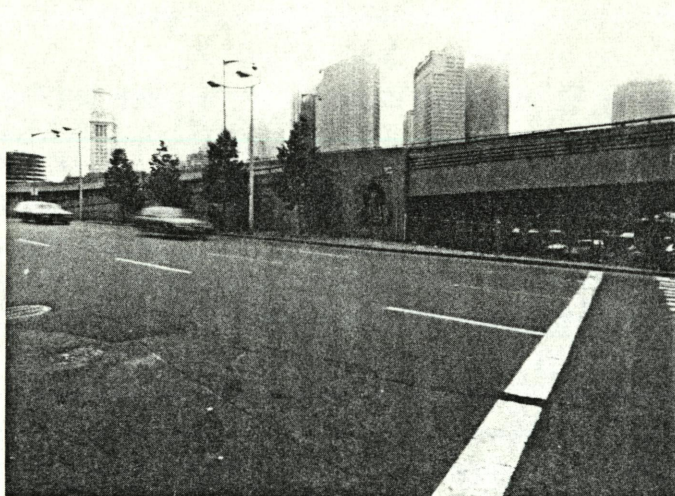
The museum is divided into six "neighborhoods," each being devoted to one subject significant to the shaping of city form. The subjects are stratified vertically by time within the neighborhood, that is, as one moves up through the building, he would find out about the single topic that neighborhood is devoted to, starting from the founding of Boston in 1630 up to the present day. Should one choose to move between the six neighborhoods on the same level, he would learn about the different topics in all the neighborhoods but occurring within the same time span.

The concept of an urban museum was a valuable organizing tool for me during the development of this project. I am not so much devoted to making this building strictly a museum as I am in providing Boston with a flexible structure and an enduring urban statement.

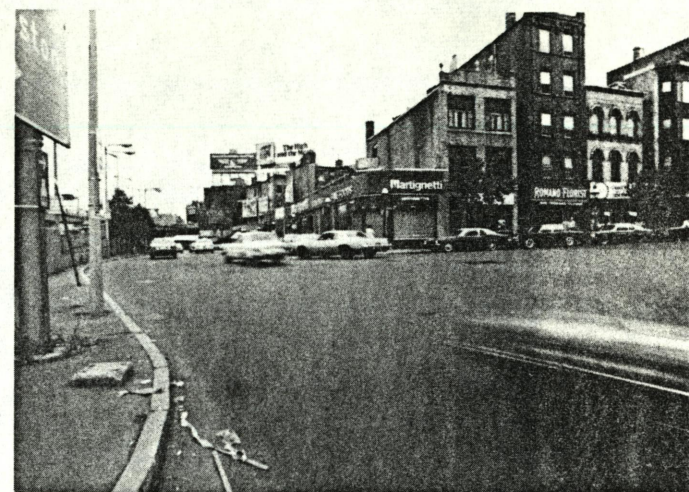




1



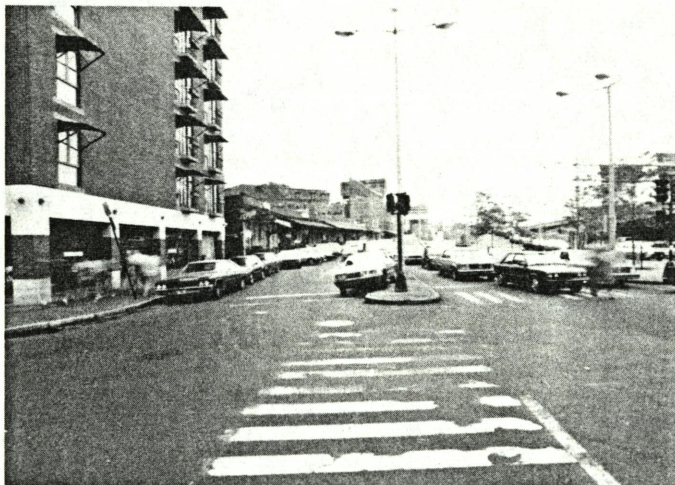
2



3



4



5



6



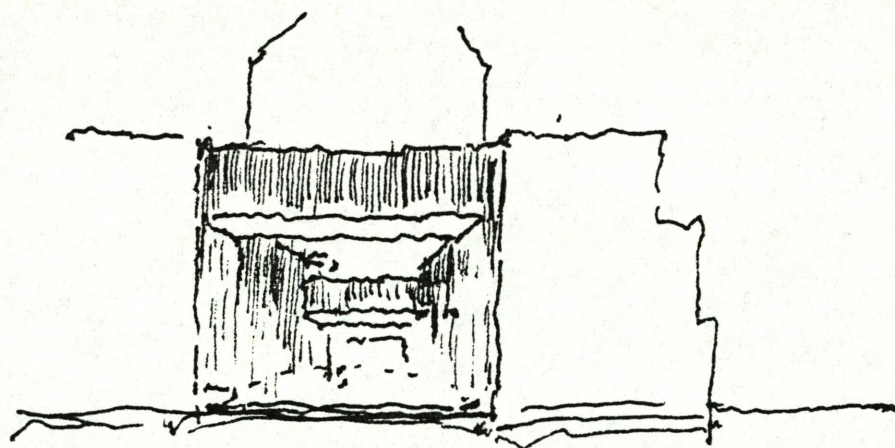
7

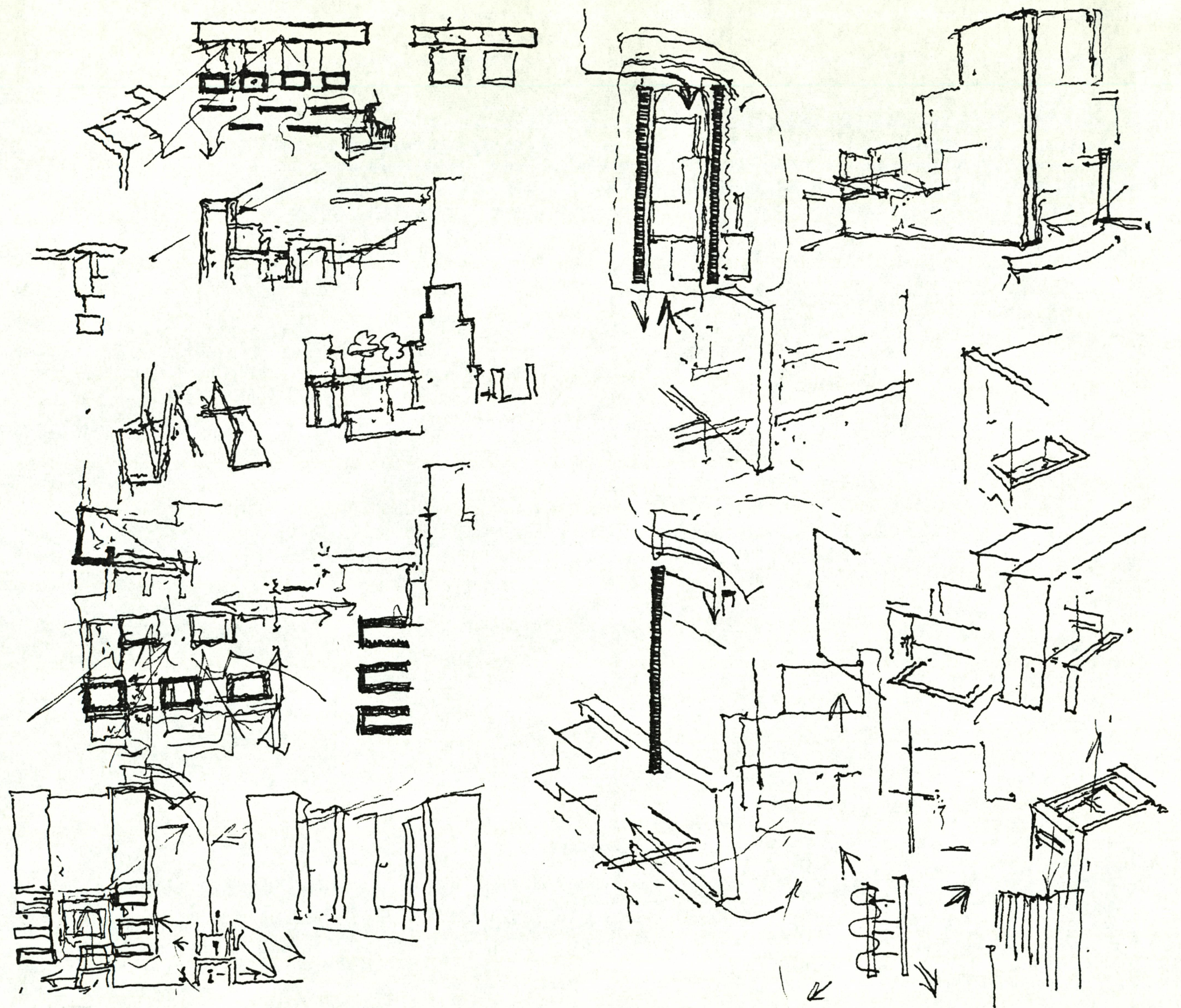


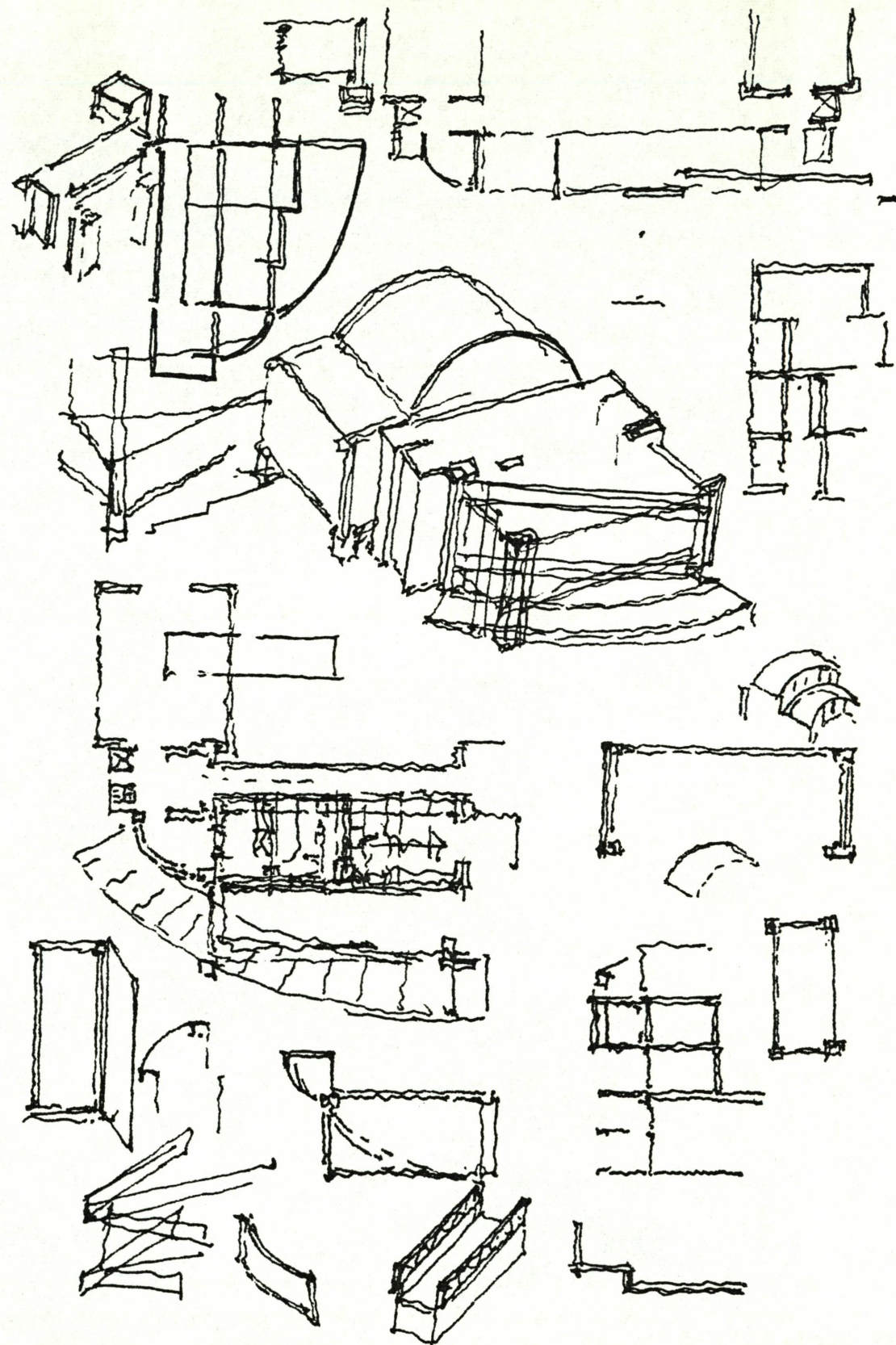
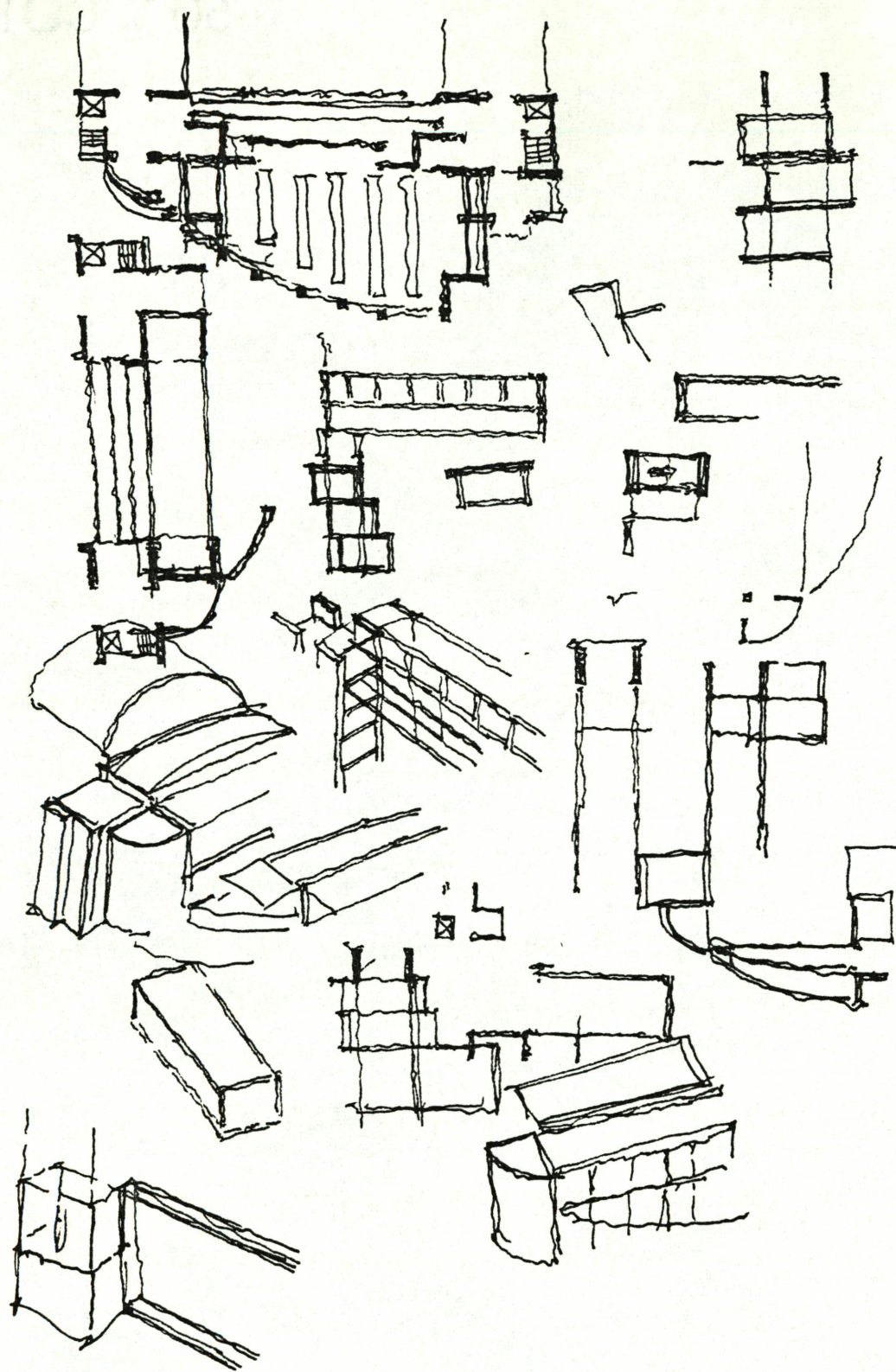
8

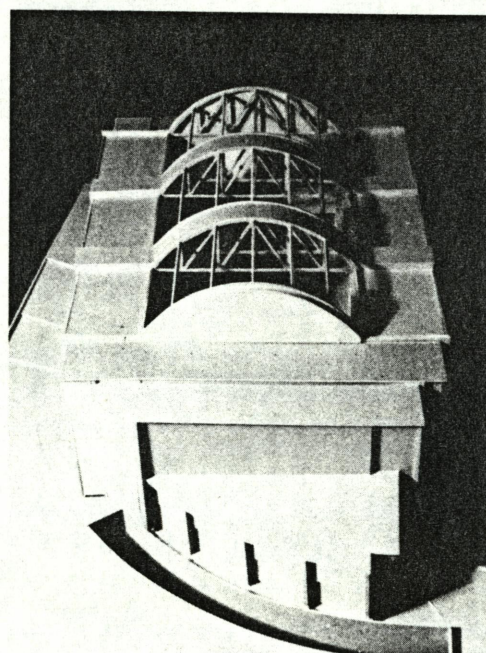


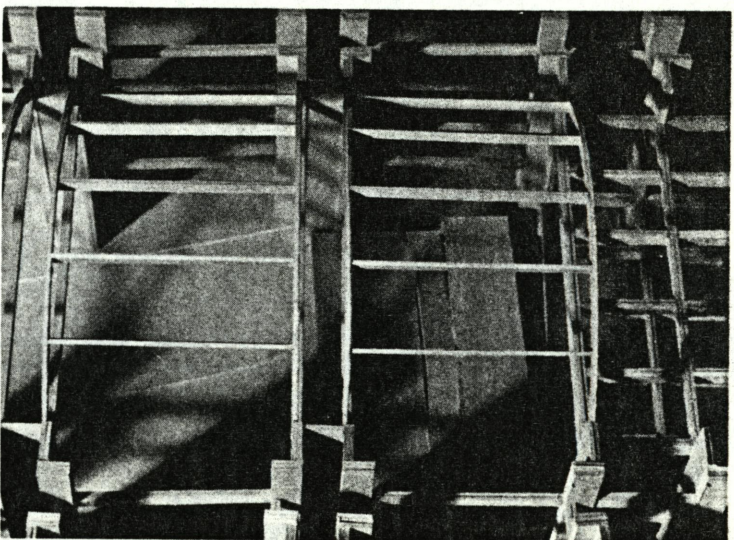
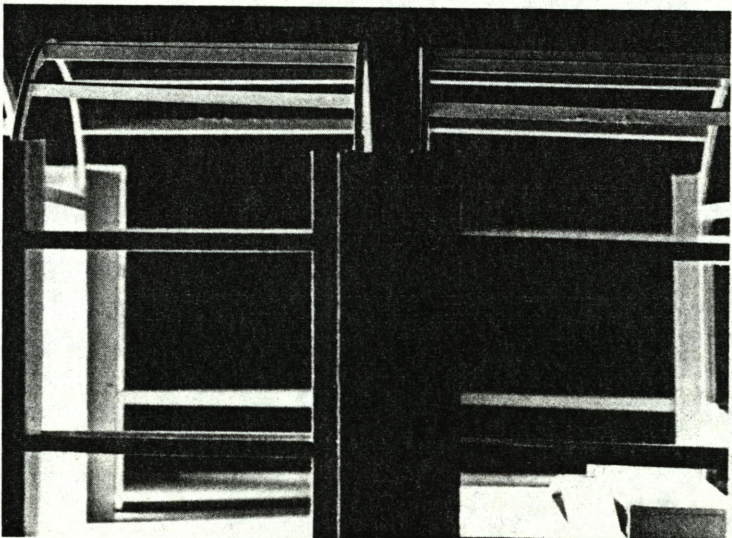
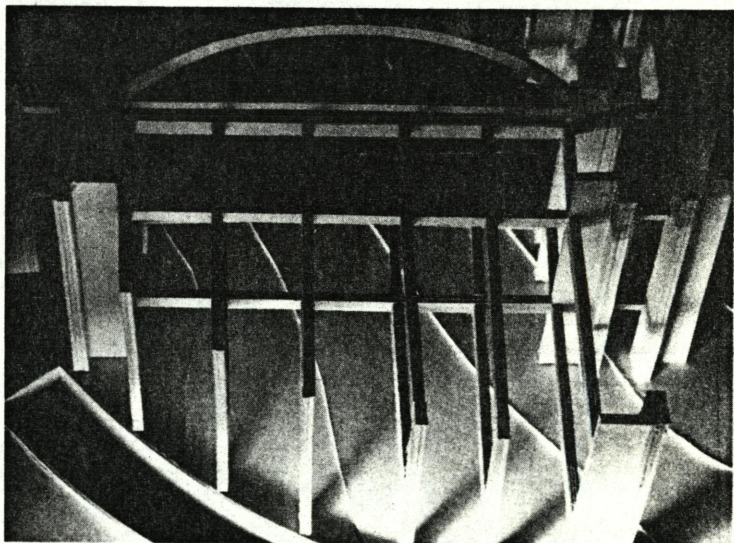
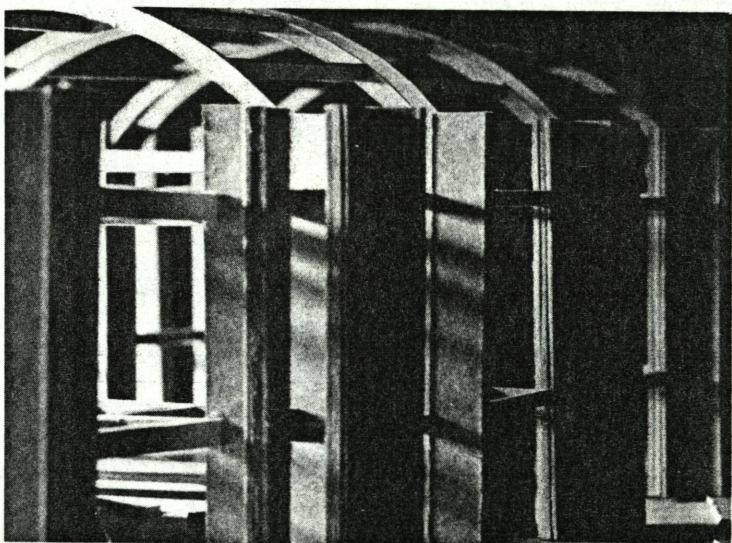
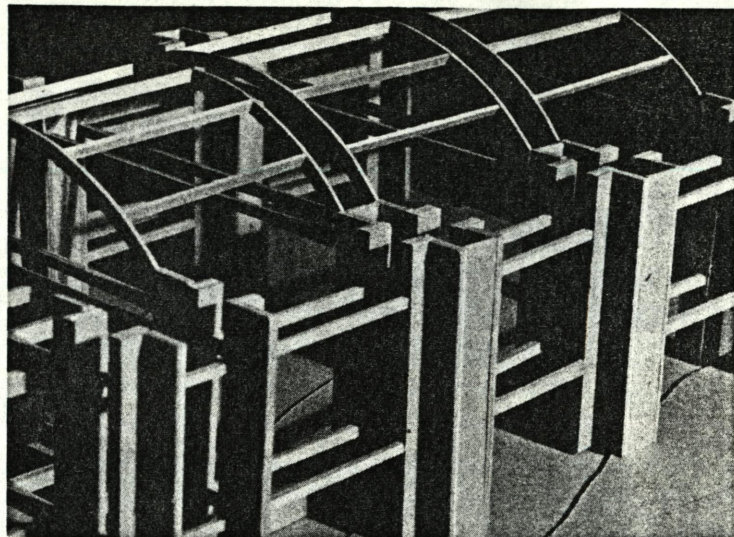
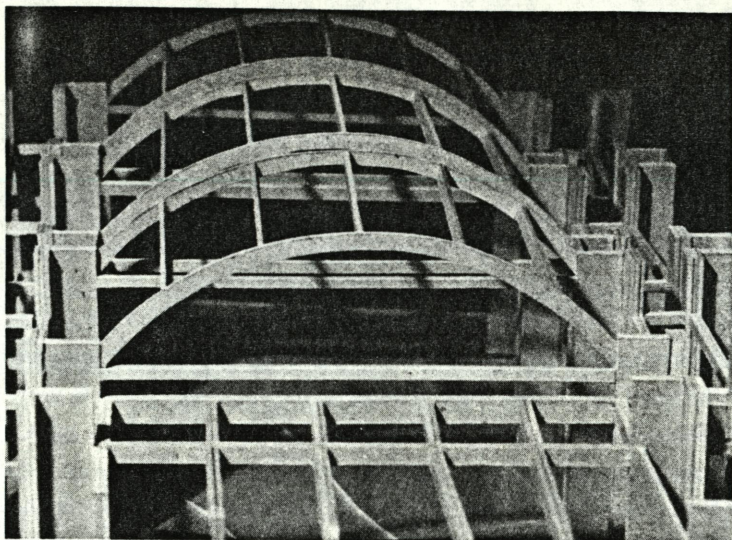
9

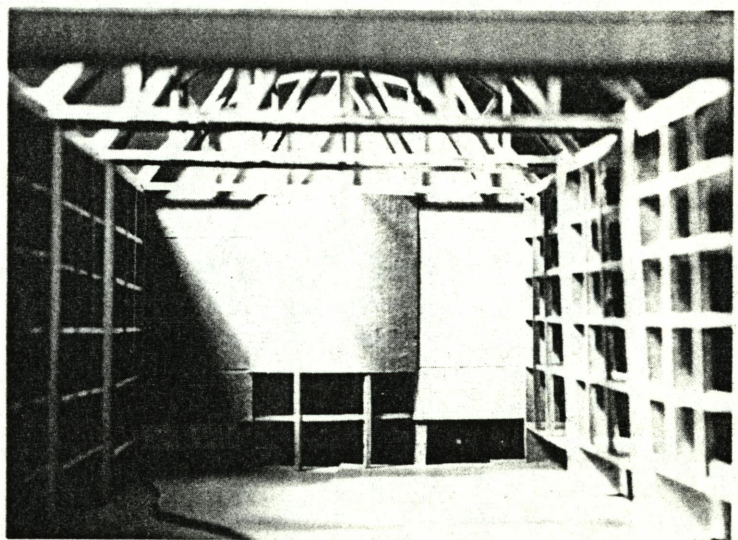
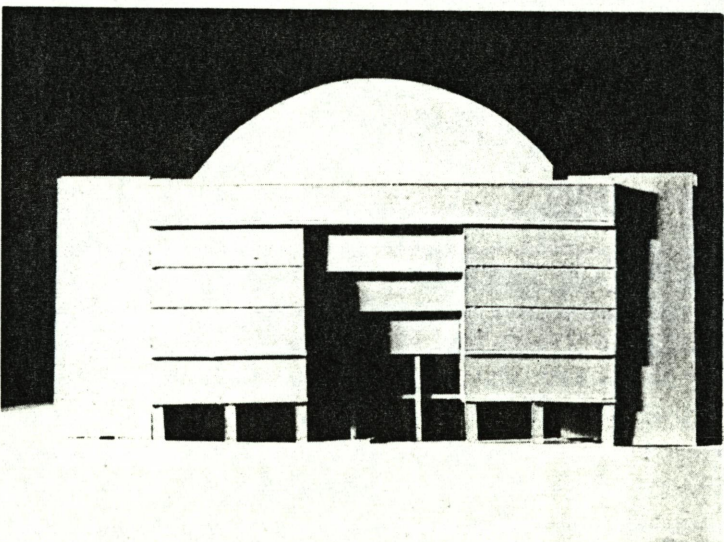
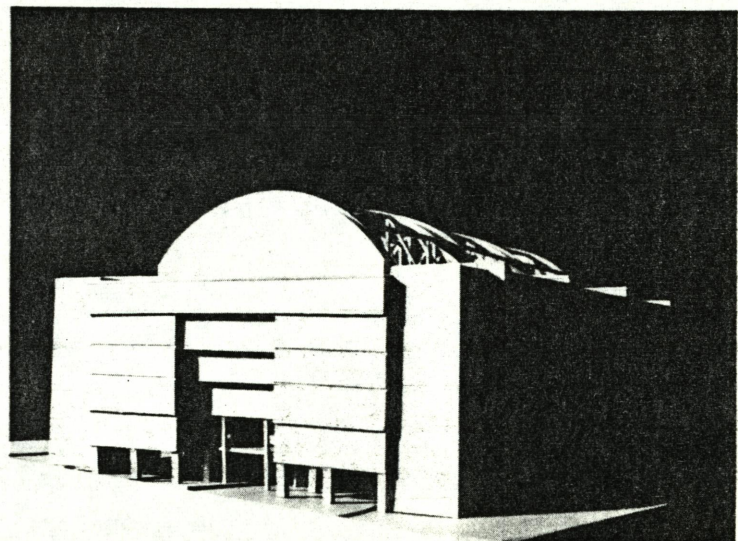
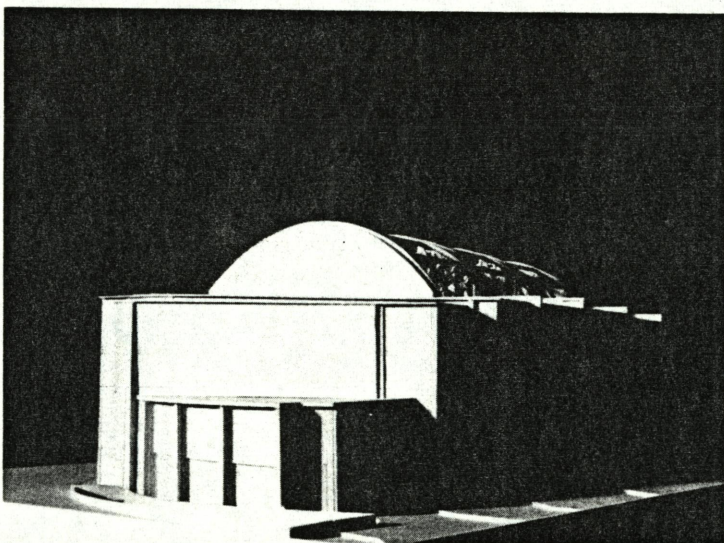
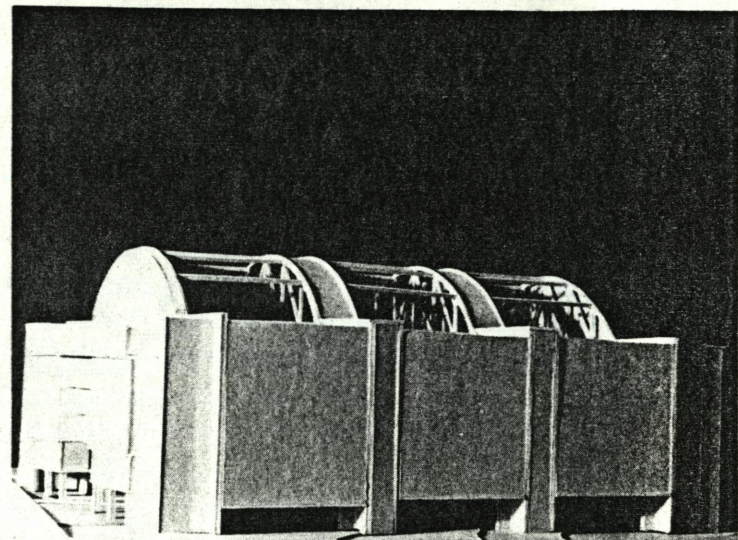
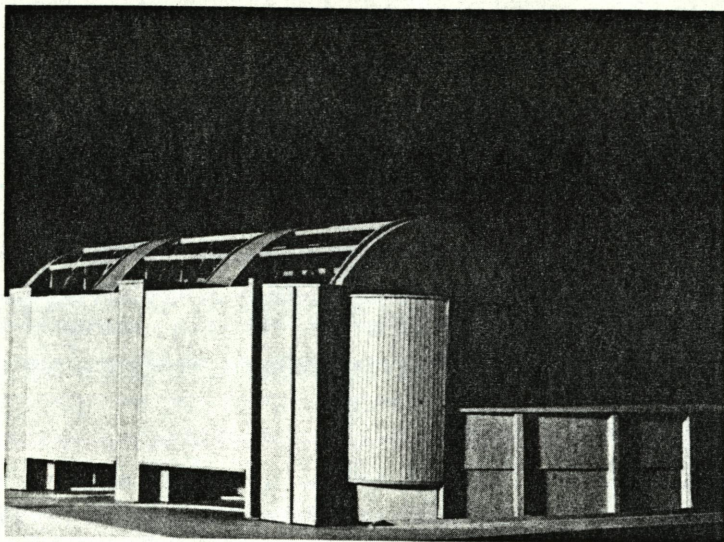


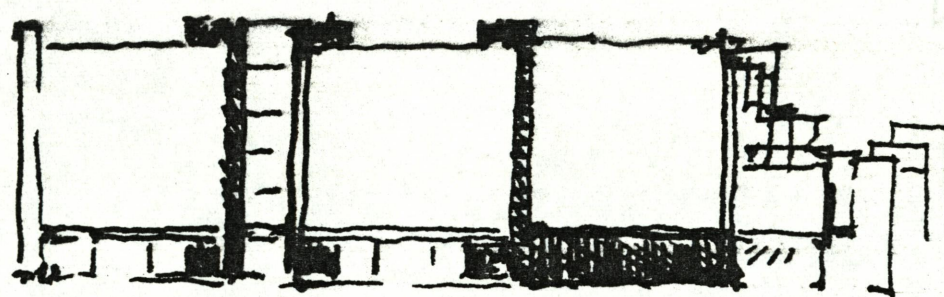


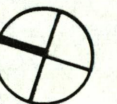
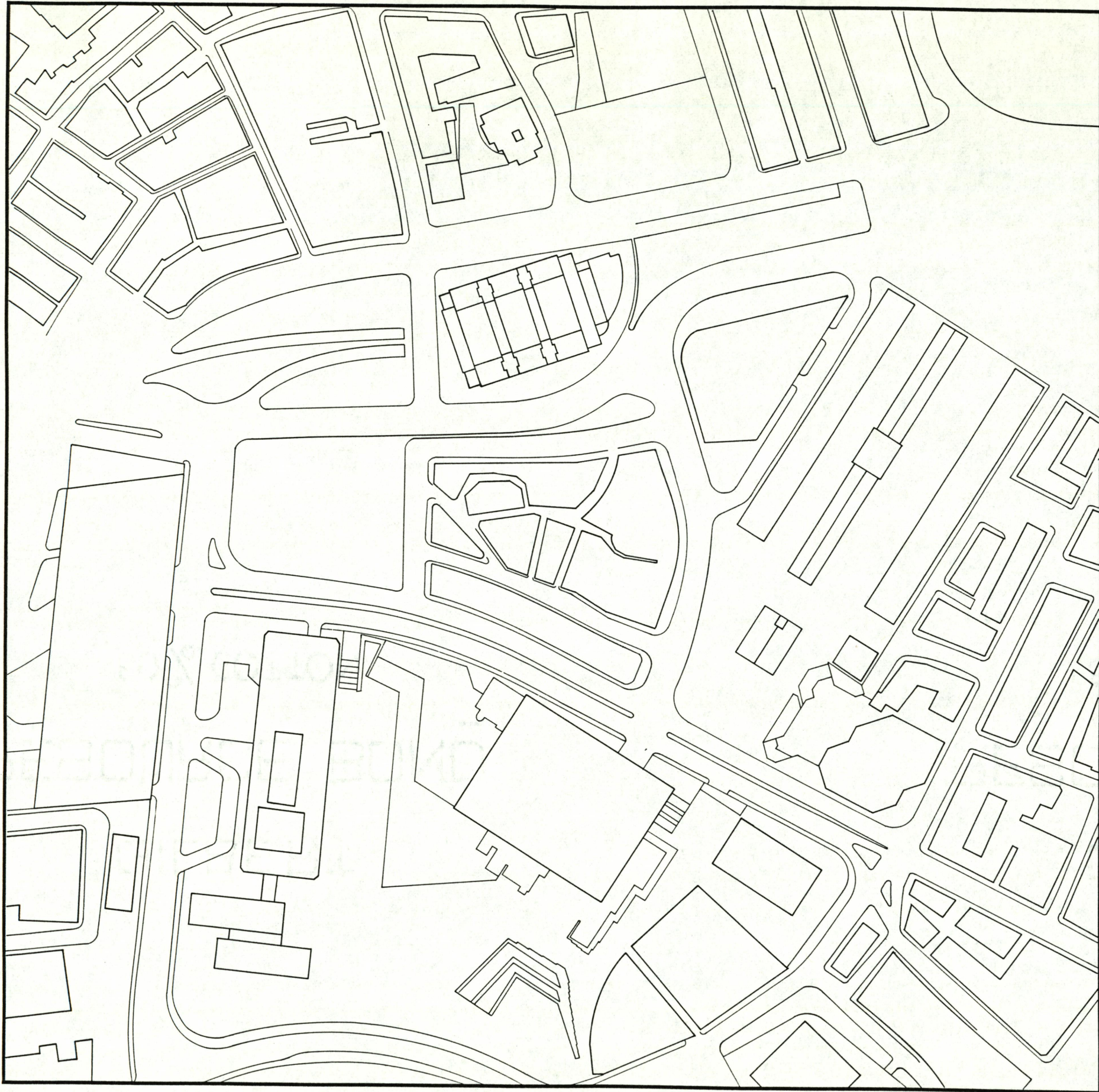


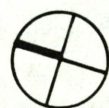
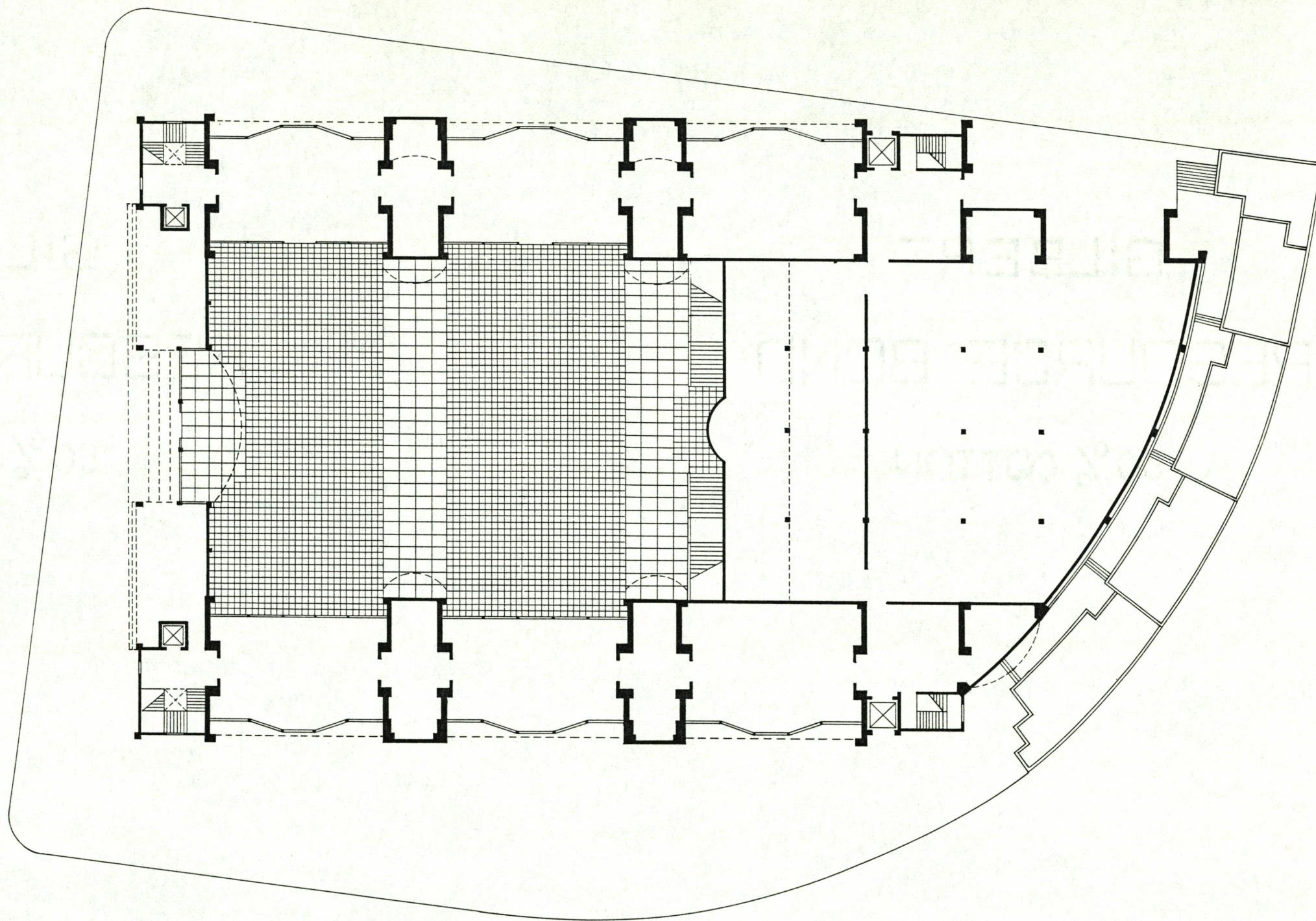






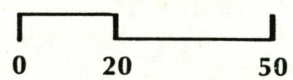
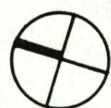
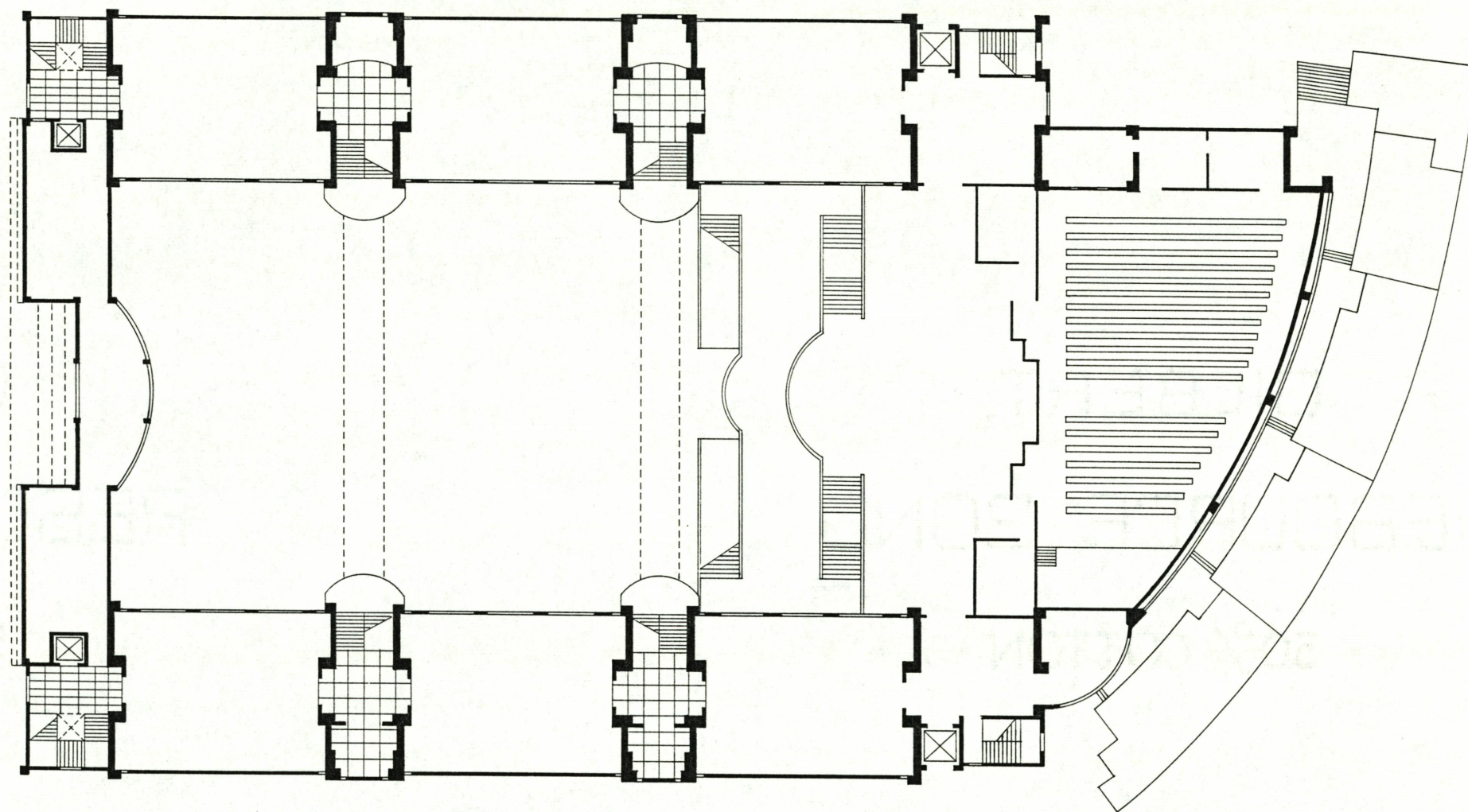




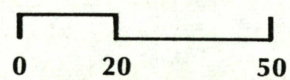
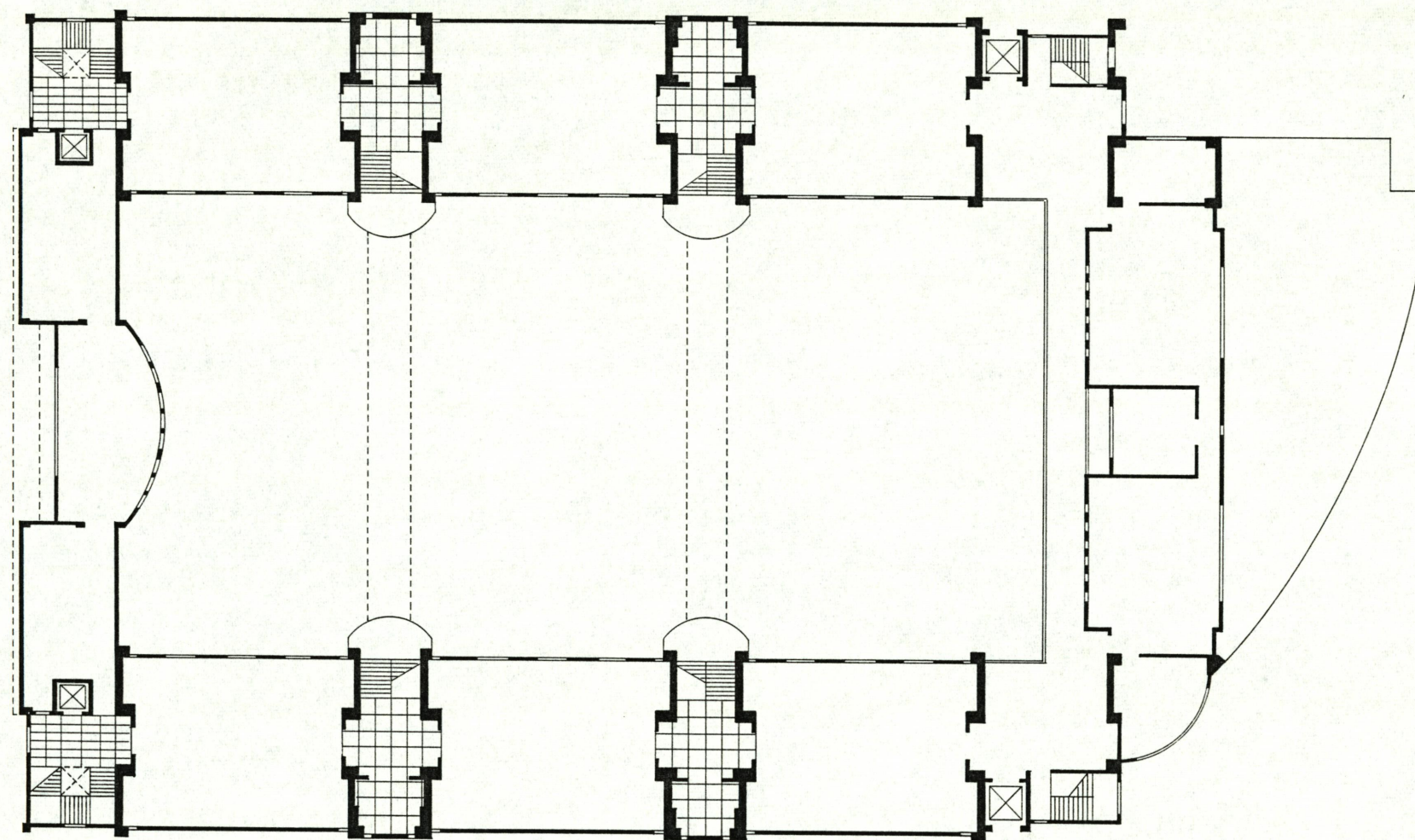


0 20 50

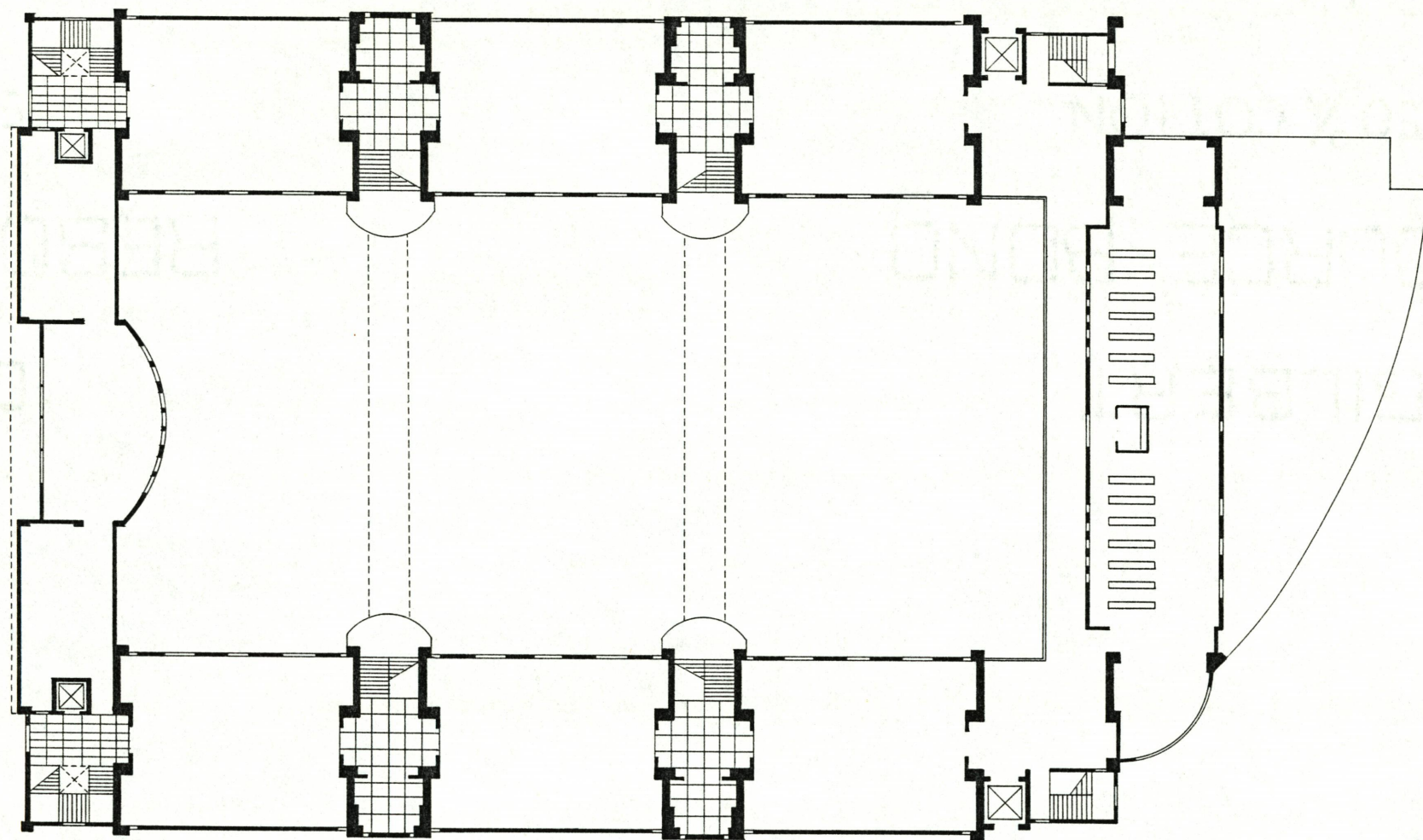
GROUND FLOOR



MUSEUM LEVEL

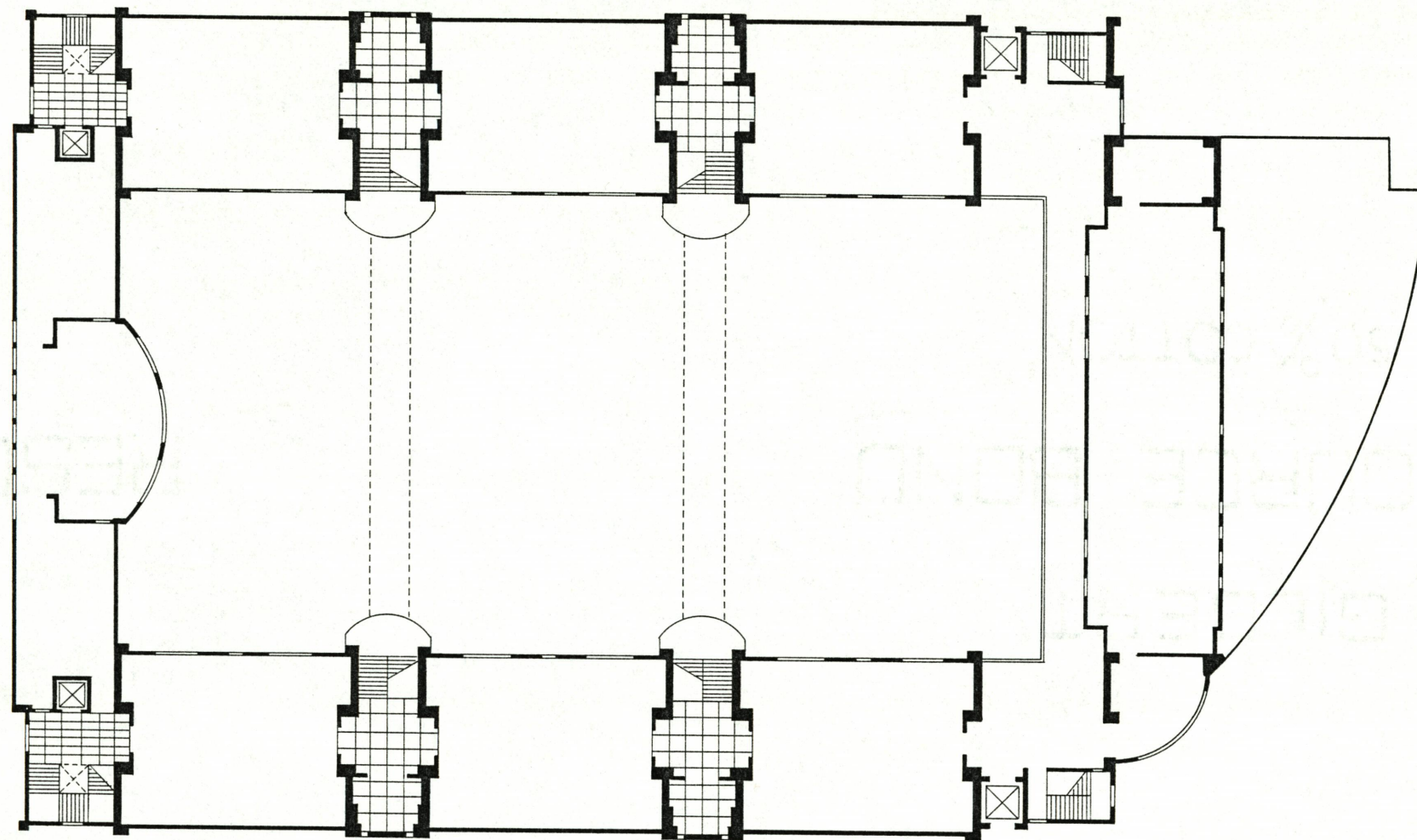


OFFICE LEVEL



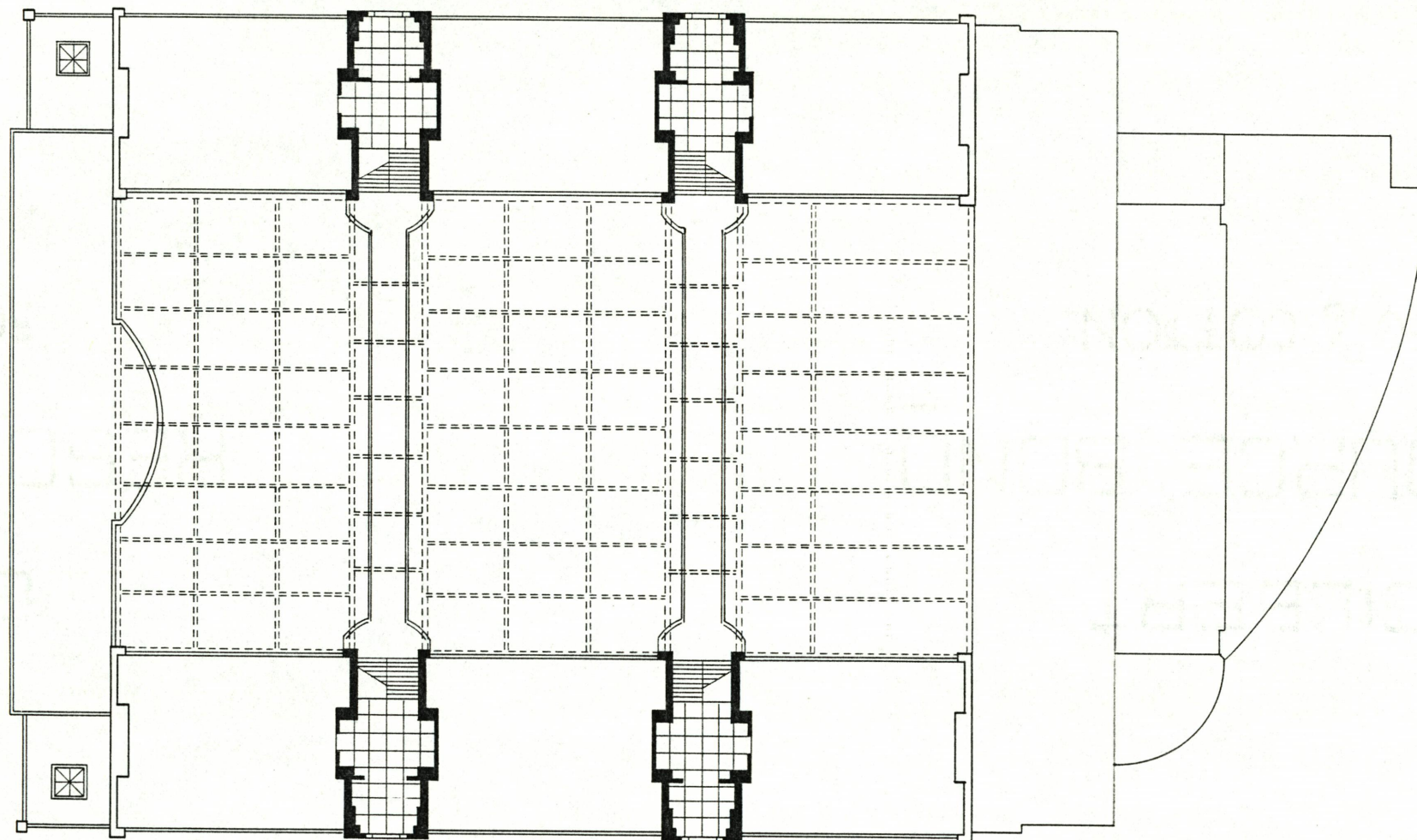
0 20 50

LIBRARY LEVEL



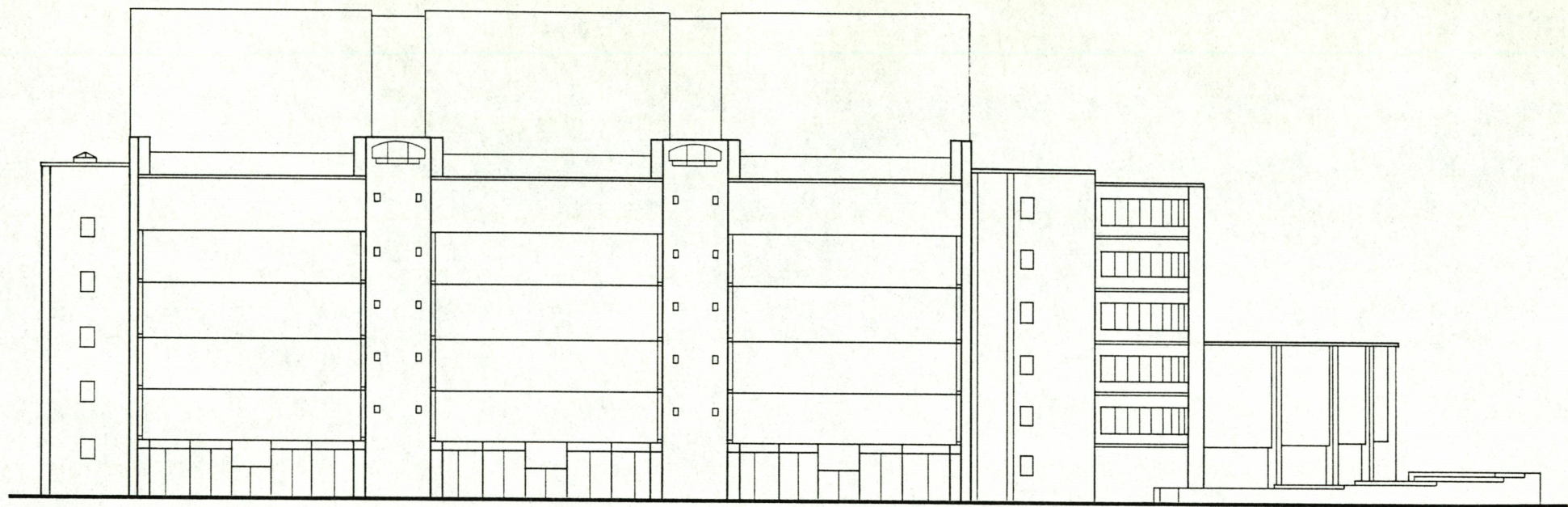
0 20 50

CAFE LEVEL

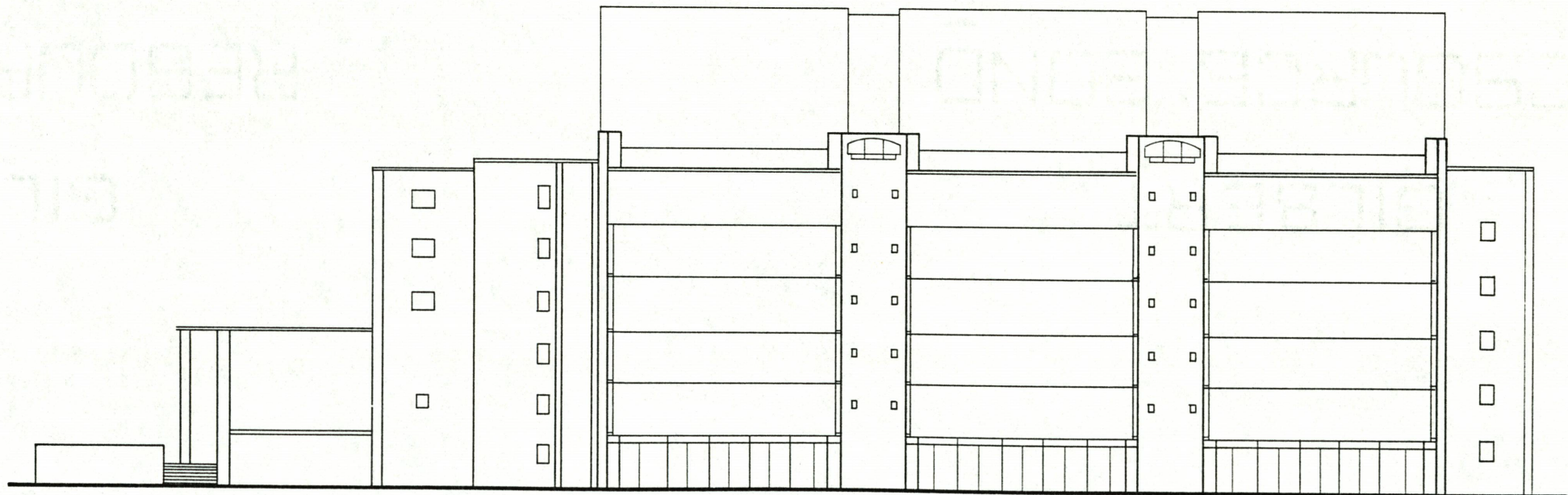


0 20 50

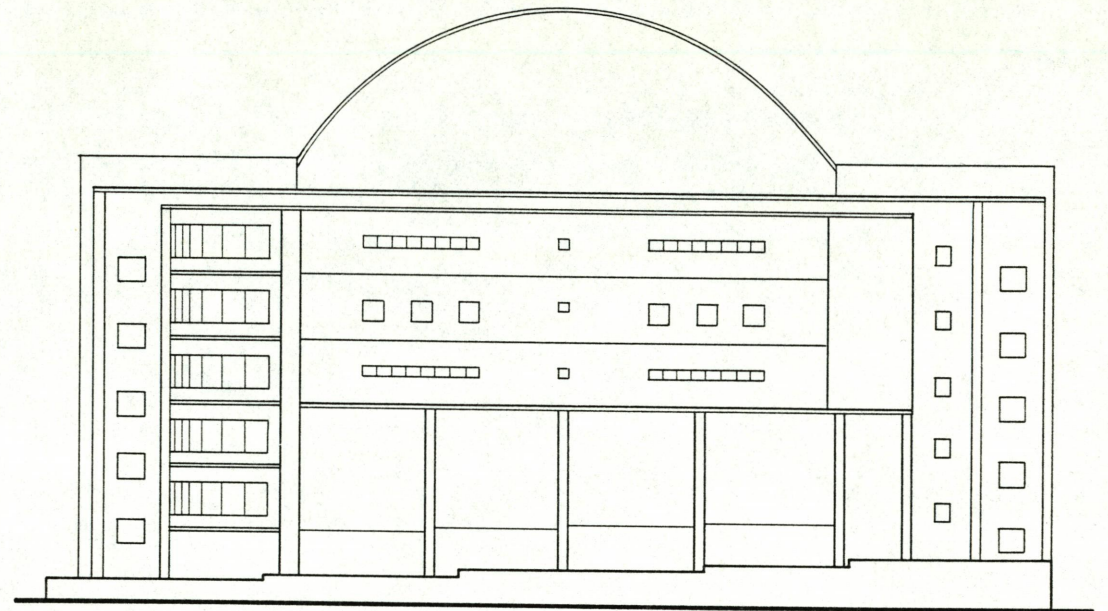
BRIDGE LEVEL



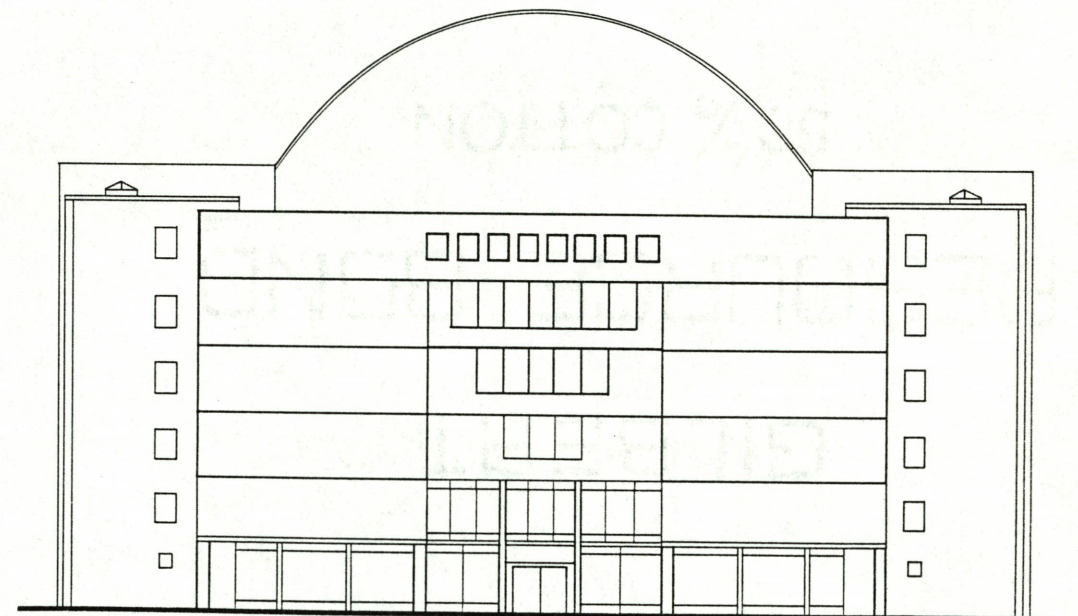
SOUTH ELEVATION



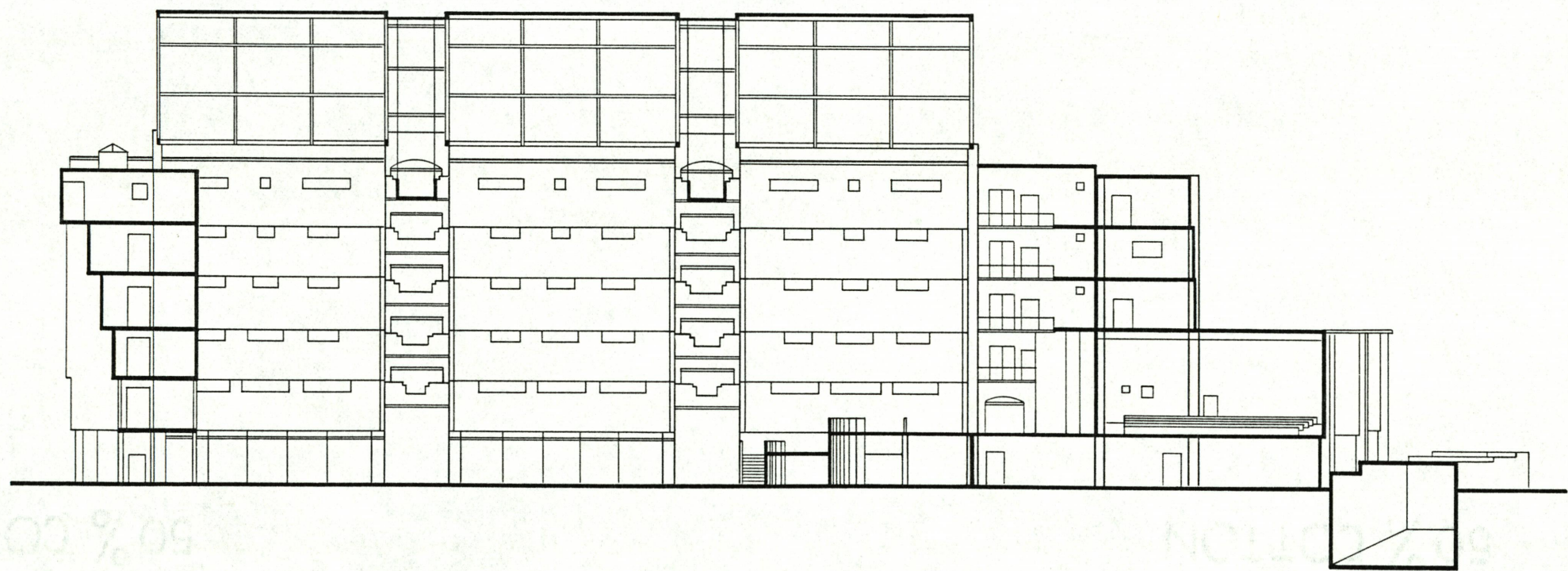
NORTH ELEVATION



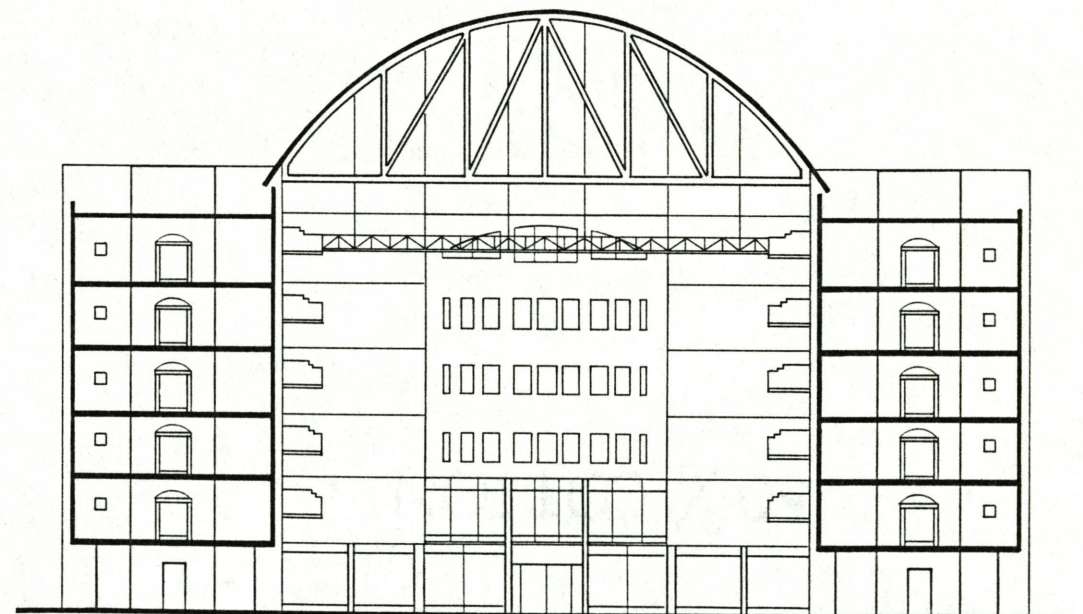
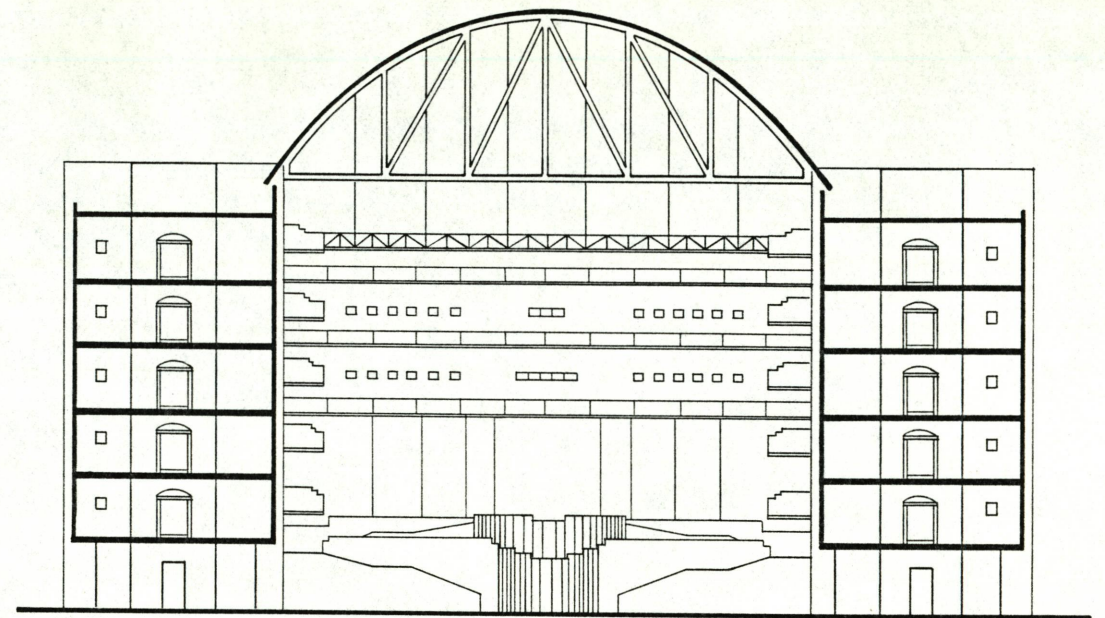
EAST ELEVATION



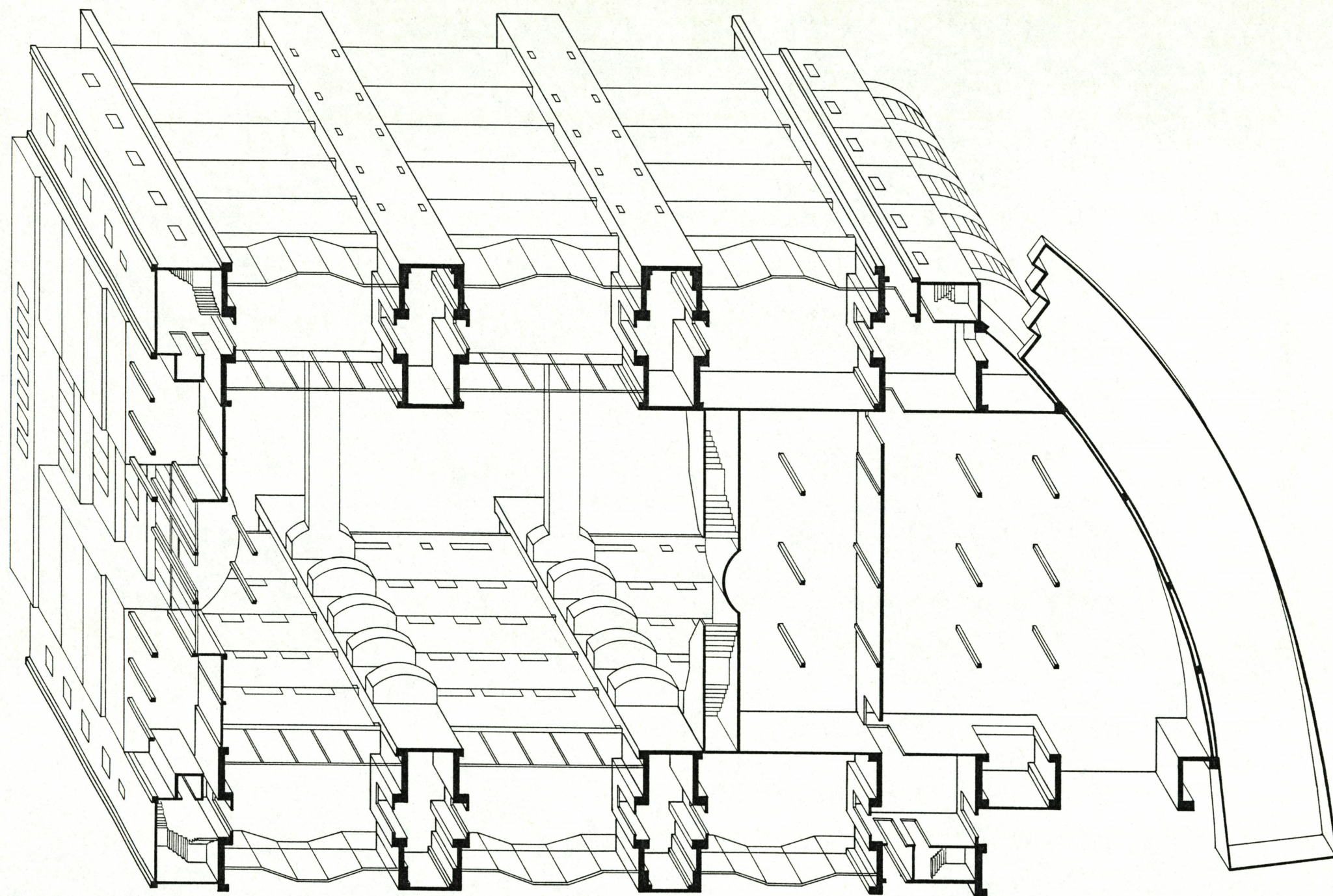
WEST ELEVATION



LONGITUDINAL SECTION



TRANSVERSE SECTIONS



WORM'S EYE AXONOMETRIC

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Hughes, Robert
The Shock of the New
Alfred A. Knopf
New York, New York 1980
2. Krishnamurti, J.
The First and Last Freedom
Harper and Row
New York, New York 1975
3. Le Corbusier
Towards a New Architecture
Architectural Press
London 1927
4. Lobell, John
Between Silence and Light
Shambhala Publications
Boulder, Colo. 1979
5. Lupo, Alan
Rites of Way
Little, Brown
Boston, Mass. 1971
6. Lynch, Kevin
What Time Is This Place?
MIT Press
Cambridge, Mass. 1972
7. Lynch, Kevin
The Image of the City
MIT Press
Cambridge, Mass. 1960
8. Miller, Henry
Remember to Remember
New Directions
Norfolk, Conn. 1947
9. Smithson, Alison and Peter
Team 10 Primer
MIT Press
Cambridge, Mass. 1968
10. Whitehill, Walter Muir
Boston: A Topographical History
Harvard University Press
Cambridge, Mass. 1982

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