

ARCHITECTURE AND DIALOGUE

A MASTERS THESIS BY BENJAMIN SHEALY

ARCHITECTURE AND DIALOGUE

BAR AND APARTMENTS AS SETTING FOR POLITICAL AND PUBLIC CONVERSATION

BENJAMIN SHEALY

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.

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dialogue

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ABSTRACT

Human beings by nature are social creatures capable of intelligent and complex interactions. Unfortunately, planning and implementation of the built environment has not always influenced or created opportunities for social exchange and conversation. The thesis explores how architecture can influence the interconnection between people at various scales in order to promote interaction.

The mixed-use building includes a social coffeehouse and bar above which is a small apartment complex. These apartments would house a small number of politicians and their interns from each political party. This setting becomes a vehicle within which various players from the political spectrum could interact and commune together. By creating a variety of both public and private spaces, different experiences and relationships between inhabitants create opportunities for social dialogue and interaction. This architectural narrative, then, is the conversation between the reader and writer.

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To God, for each and every blessing.

To my loving parents, for their constant support in my academic endeavors.

To my beautiful Mandy, for all her love and companionship through the ups and downs of thesis.

To my brother James: you can accomplish anything through knowledge and hard work.



THE "FAMOUS NINE" SENATORS

(collage) From Left to Right: Roger Sherman, John C. Calhoun, Robert Taft, Robert La Follete, Robert Wagner, Daniel Webster, Henry Clay, Oliver Ellsworth, Arthur Vanderburg.

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PREFACE

OR, AT LAST, MY FRIEND, WE MEET AGAIN

This book is the final chapter, perhaps the Afterword, of my academic career (so far). It primarily tells the story of the last year and month, of my thesis exploration and how I came to develop my thesis project. The classic book format is very strict in scope and presentation, and for that I apologize. In my mind I am tempted to write this as a Choose-Your-Own-Ending narrative, because perhaps that is a more literal way of demonstrating the non-linear thought processes involved in getting me to this moment and place in time. Though this is presented in a linear format, I must acknowledge the many weeks in which I engaged in mental and theoretical explorations that returned me to the very spot I had started. It is hard to convey that, but I admit the struggle, though stressful, was extremely rewarding.

This book and all that it contains also reflects the education and understanding I have picked up along the six years of collegiate education. Taking the time to re-present my thesis in a book format becomes a manner in which Me-The-Present can speak for and have an indirect conversation with Me-The-Past. I hope to be true the original intentions of the different images and theories as best I can be; for as my committee member Susan always used to say, “You are never the same designer as you were before.” I have included a Reflections section that I hope to capture most of the anecdotal comments that will arise as I retell this thesis.

Pallasmaa writes:

“Similarly, during the design process, the architect gradually internalizes the landscape, the entire context, and the functional requirements as well as his/her conceived building: movement, balance, and scale are all felt unconsciously through the body as tensions in the muscular system and in the positions of the skeleton and inner organs. As the work interacts with the body of the observer, the experience mirrors the bodily sensations of the maker. Consequently, architecture is communication from the body of the architect directly to the body of the person who encounters the work, perhaps centuries later.” –67

In the same manner, as the writer I hope that through this book I can dialogue with you, the reader. Let me tell you my story, make you think, make you wonder, and in turn make me ponder your response. Let this book be my part of our conversation. Should you think it appropriate (as I often do when reading thesis books), I encourage you to grab a good beer (better known as “design fluid”), settle down in a comfortable chair, perhaps at a shady outdoor cafe, and listen to my design narrative.

Thanks for listening (reading / thinking / daydreaming).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

OR, A QUICK WORD WITH SOME FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES

Marcia Feuerstein, thank you for providing a delightful perspective on the thesis process and for recommending excellent references and challenging my ideas with further reading and ideas.

Susan Piedmont-Palladino, for instilling me a desire to understand the urban and political landscapes, both in and out of architecture, thank you. Architecture should always consider its relation to public space and the rights and freedoms of people within them.

Paul Emmons, one of the best teachers I've ever had, thank you for the opportunities you presented to me during my thesis exploration. I know I've only skimmed the surface of architectural theory, and your lectures continue to inspire.

Raj Parikh, thank you. There were countless times when your fertile feedback re-inspired me. You have given me a much more encompassing understanding of architecture and life and I am very thankful to have included you on my thesis committee. Thank you so much.

Patrick Foley, a fellow thesis student with me, for all the times brainstorming and pushing each other on, thank you for all your patience and help. You have been a great friend and colleague, and I am grateful for sharing the graduate experience with you. Thank you, my friend.

Eric P., for using his computer to export some renderings, thank you. I've always enjoyed discussing architecture with you. Mainly about your projects, but regardless, always interesting.

John F., for quite literally always being there in studio, and for providing a very sensible and intelligent perspective on the many questions I asked, thank you.

Noel H. and Suzette P., for your help in pinning up and with printing paper, respectively, thank you.

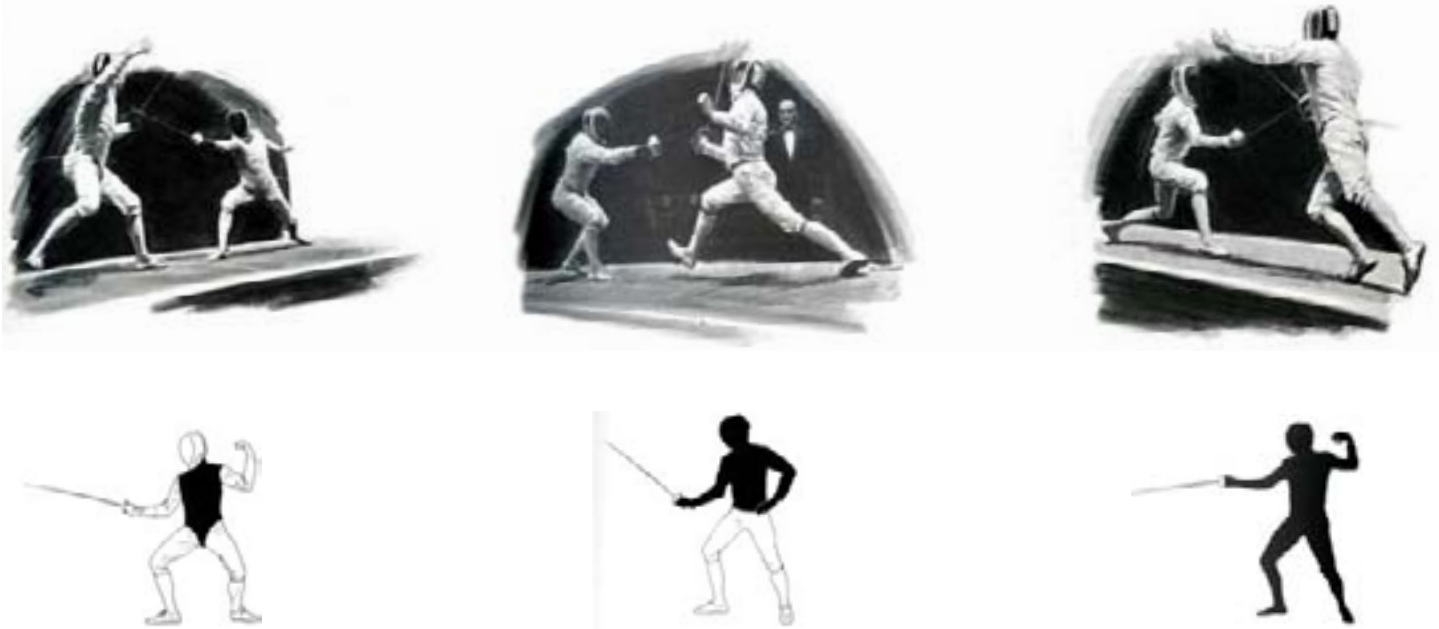
“The average sports-loving American does not know that fencing is the fastest of all sports. He may think it consists merely of boring technicalities, while it is, instead, a sparkling exchange of wits, with action and counter-action taking place at an almost unbelievable speed. Nor does he know that more than fun, it is excitement, exhilaration, pure joy of spirit. And that a fencer in action is a free man.”

- Nadi, p. 8.



THEORETICAL EXPLORATION

OR, THE REALLY HEADY STUFF AND HOW I GOT STARTED



"The fencing strip is the mirror of the soul. Unerringly, it portrays the character of the individual. From the psychological viewpoint, you may learn more about a man fencing with him a couple of times than through hours of conversation. Rather useful, don't you think? Such subconscious and almost uncanny prying is demonstrated by the fact that in a lesson or two the good fencing master can easily detect the moral qualities, good and bad, of a new pupil." - Nadi, p. 11.

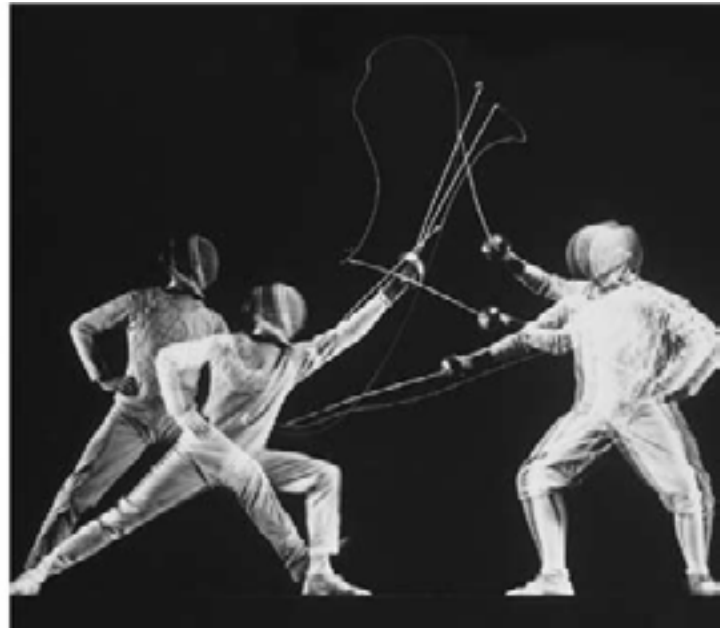
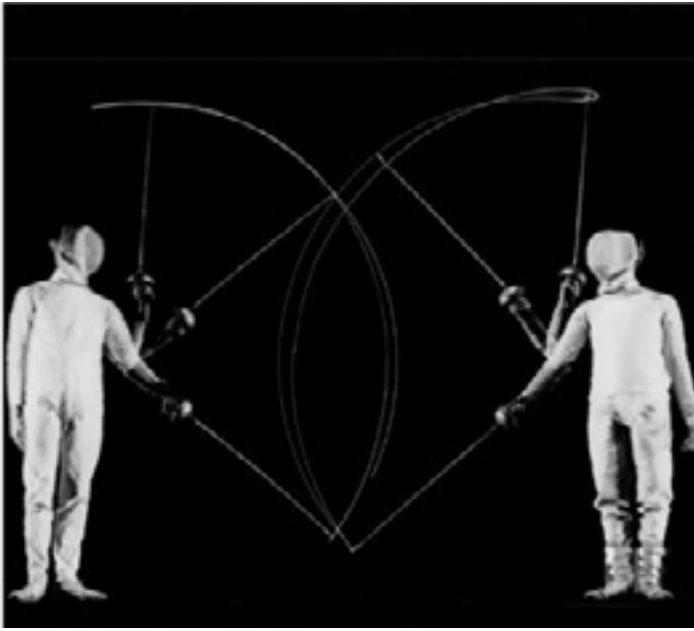
FENCING AS INITIAL INSPIRATION

Fencing is, in my opinion, an absolutely fascinating sport. When two opponents are engaged, thoughts and actions are smelted together in a blur of movement accented by the sound of steel clashing against steel. A game of mental and physical agility, it challenges the participant in a full range of processes that is extremely satisfying to engage in and master.

Fencing is made up of three main categories of engagement: foil, saber, and epee, shown above left to right, respectively. In each type, the sword (or foil as it is called) is used in a different manner and is used to only score points on the specific target area, shown in black. In foil, the chest is the only place in which an opponent can score a point against you. Foil is considered the more fundamental of the three, and points are

also only scored by engaging the tip of blade against your opponent, creating a much more linear movement and engagement. In saber and epee, however, the length of blade can be used to cut or slash an opponent on the larger target areas, thus creating a multi-dimensional level of engagement. This is often what is seen in movies, often in a fairly crude manner.

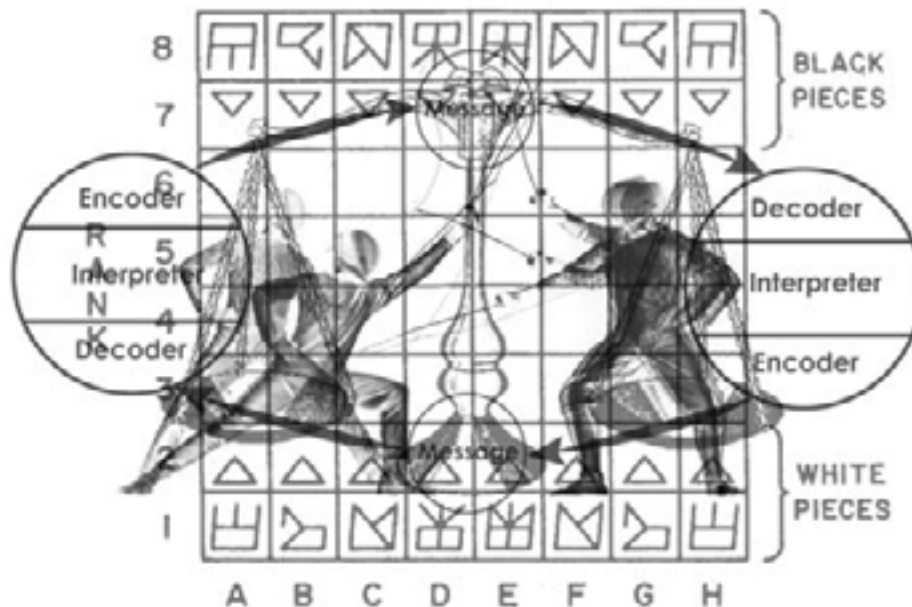
As one can imagine, there a vast number of moves that can be combined in a string to present complex attack sequences. A thrust is when a fencer attacks his opponent, while a defensive maneuver is called a parry. By using and even modifying upon the fundamental thrusts and parries, opponents engage each other in a rapid dance until one or the other scores the point.



"Pure strength, although not useless, loses its intrinsic value against the more efficient element of physical and mental reflexes. These reflexes are intimately involved in giving the fencer the kind of balance that will allow him to react at a speed that makes fencing action barely visible on a television screen. At the time of action, a fencer has 1/20th of a second to think up a proper move and 1/20th of a second to carry on that action. The demand for instant analysis, decision making, and speed in carrying out the action require almost computerlike response from the mind." - Alaux, p. 1.

It became clear in the initial explorations that there is a beautiful positive-negative relationship expressed in various dimensions within fencing. There is obviously, the fencer and his opponent, his negative to your positive. As captured so beautifully by the above images, there is also a positive-negative spatial relationship between the fencers. This space changes dynamically and instantaneously during the course of a match, or bout, as it is called. Even when one is fencing, there at times when one would *feint*, or fake moving in a particular direction with body or blade, while actually moving in another. In this instance, spatial implications are made present to the defender, and the void becomes something the defender must defend against in addition to the actual positive space of the opponent.

The other beautiful aspect about the images above is the level of information that is contained within them because they are time-lapse photographs. On the left, the two fencers stand opposite and engage in the customary salute that takes place before the bout begins. On the right, an entire play sequence is captured and can be analyzed. In this instance, one can conjecture that this is series of movements is perhaps a word or sentence of demonstrated fencing technique. One can also see how the positive-negative space of the fencers' bodies changed over the course of this maneuver, changing both the environment and causing each fencer's perception of that environment to change as well. This constant action and re-interpretation of the instant environment became a critical idea I wished to explore in my thesis.



THE COMPLEX CONVERSATION OF FENCING

"Above everything else, fencing develops mental agility. Indeed, it is one of the few human activities in which, most of the time, lightning conception and execution are simultaneous. The fencer's blade becomes an extension of his fingers (see technique), but the often expressed thought that it is also an extension of the mind is clearly an understatement. Rather, the steel is the medium through which the fencer is able to not only read at a prodigious speed his adversary's brain, but to look into his heart as well. All fencer's are bound to learn how to do this. In fact, within the first minute of combat the greater fencer can read an opponent's thoughts as in an open book, and evaluate his daring, even though he has never seen the man before." - Nadi, p. 11.

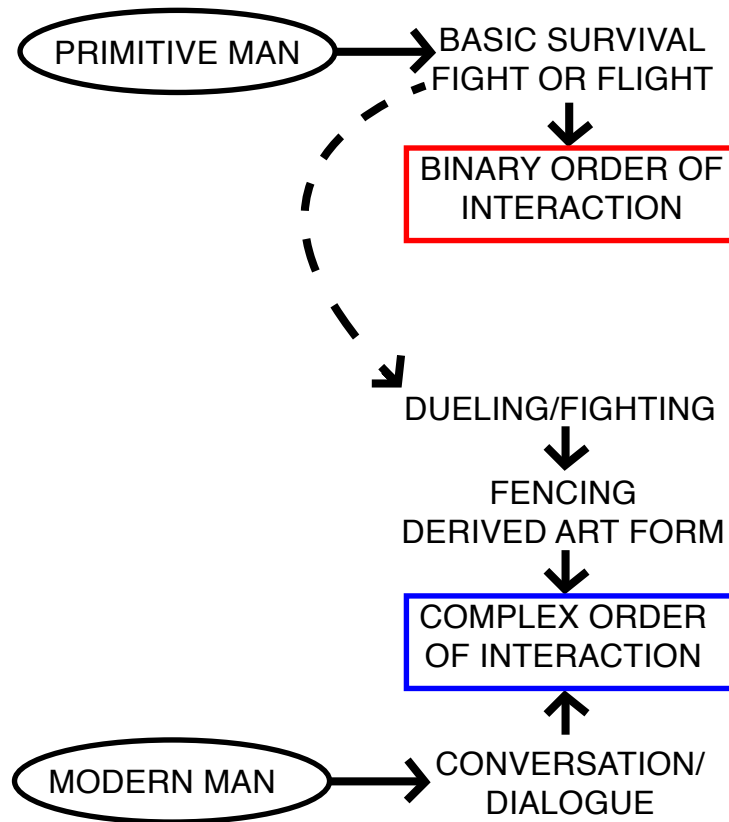
Fencing, then, is a form of movement, much like dance, in which the participants act and react to each other's movements (and even thoughts, see above quote). It is no stretch of the imagination to see that within a fencing bout, the two fencers are engaging in a conversation with each other. They learn both about the other but also a bit more about themselves through this conversation.

This higher level of engagement was not always present in the history of sword fighting. When fighting to the death, there is no such lightness of sport that can be found in fencing; there are lives on the line, and in those days, honor too. In fencing, there is a point system, and he that gets the most points first is the winner. In dueling, there is only one point: you lose it or you make him lose his. Dueling, then, is a lesser

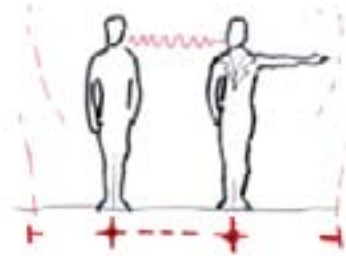
form of engagement that does not allow for the various levels of engagement to happen between two opponents. In my limited experience with fencing, often when a fencer is scored upon, he changes his defensive style to a new tack, one to better defend against the style of his opponent. Likewise, the attacker has the opportunity to try different modes of attack to hone his abilities as well.

In this light, fencing is an evolved form of engagement reflective of conversation and dialogue. It is a language, filled with complex interaction and terminology that allows each fencer to communicate with the other. This realization of the complex interaction propelled the thesis forward to explore the same concept in architectural terms.

Fencing Photograph
Balance
Boris Talking Chess Computer
Osgood-Schramm Model of
Communication



"Today, the non-fencer is inclined to associate fencing with dueling. A fencer does not. The former sees glamour in dueling while the latter knows it is only a grim business [...] The duelist's objective is to injure his adversary as soon as possible (any delay would enhance the enemy's morale) without being wounded at all; the fencer's, to defeat his opponent with no particular hurry, as long as he scores at least a fraction of a second before he may be touched himself. In a duel, the fencer is compelled to execute an ultra-careful form of fencing which, indeed, is an almost unworthy expression of the vast science he knows. [...] In other words, and paradoxically enough, modern dueling lacks almost entirely the color and action of modern fencing." - Nadi, p. 24.



INTIMATE

1.5'

Whisper
Scold
Love
Kiss
Aid/Help
Bed
Family

Coffee, Table,
Elevator,
Plane, Bar,
Lines, Hot tub

Legal door
width, Legal
hallway

PERSONAL

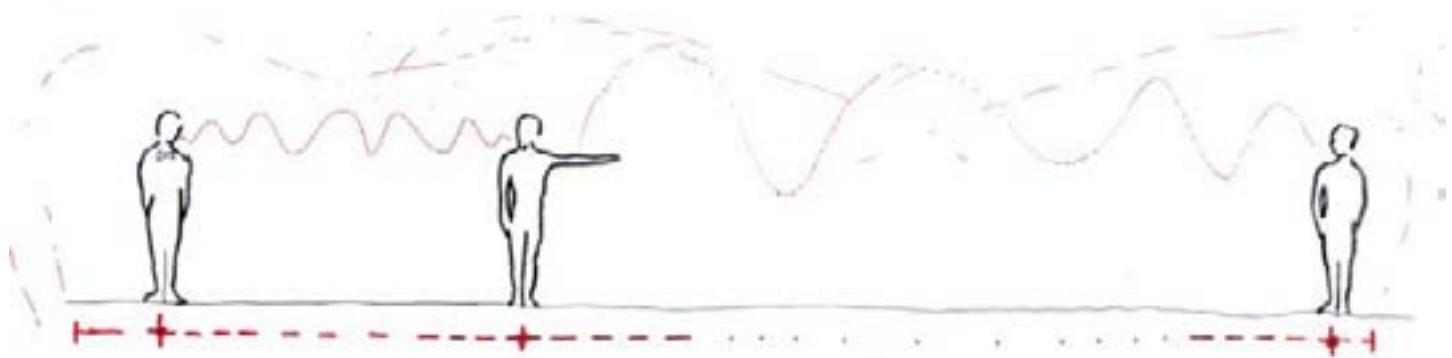
4'

Sidewalk, Sofa, Air-
port, Uncrowded bus,
Sales, Transactions,
Large Table, Academic
Teacher, Office dis-
cussion, stairs (legal),
Small library stacks

Outdoor walkway,
Comfortable hallway,
Desk spacing, Public
hot tub, Sidewalk,
Park, Comfortable
Stairs

EXPLORING PROXEMICS

My early explorations took me into the study of proxemics and human relationships. Outside of the engaging nature of fencing, we are constantly engaging in each other all the time. Proxemics is the study of human interaction and the spatial distances and relationships involved. On a daily basis, we subconsciously interact with the people around us through the proximity and type of interaction we may have with them at any given point. Much like in fencing, if the opponent is too far to engage in properly, the distance between the two fencers must be shortened. Likewise, talking to someone happens within a certain proximity, as opposed to shouting or talking louder. Exploring this field of study became important to the thesis because it helped fuel the study of human interaction, this time on a body-spatial-action level.



SOCIAL

12'

Carrying loads/heavy,
Different cars (indirect),
Pool hall, Activity room,
Perceived authority/
inferiority, Shouting,
Separate function,
Spatial privacy, 2 cell
phones

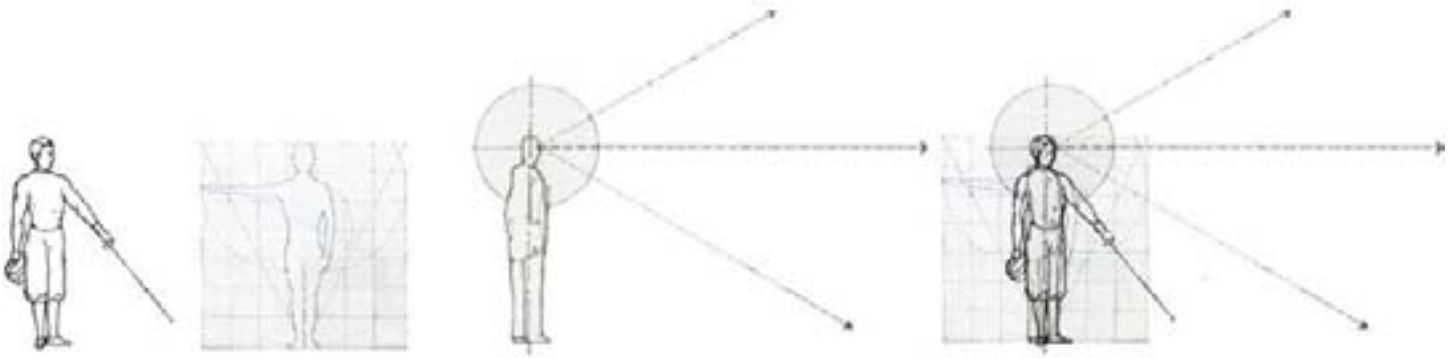
PUBLIC

25'

Empty plaza/park, Dog
walking, Opposite side
of street, Security/
authority, Shouting/
screaming, Sports/
activity

"Sensory experiences become integrated through the body, or rather, in the very constitution of the body. Psychoanalytic theory has introduced the notion of body-image or body-schema as the center of integration. Our bodies and movements are in constant interaction with the environment; the world and the self inform and redefine each other constantly. The percept of the body and the image of the world turn into one single continuous existential experience – there is no body separate from its domicile in space, and there is no space unrelated to the unconsciousness image of the perceiving self."

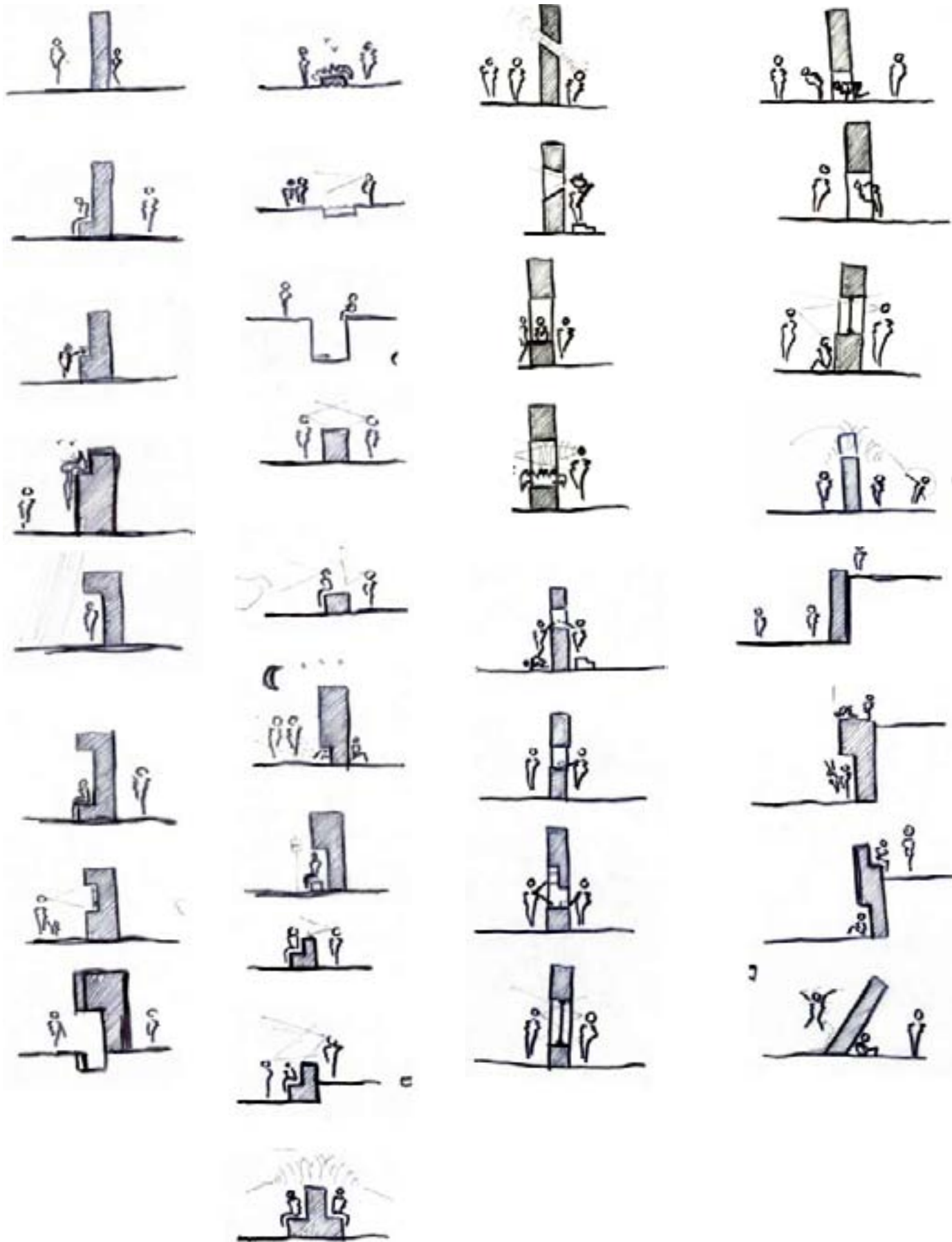
- Pallasmaa, p. 40.

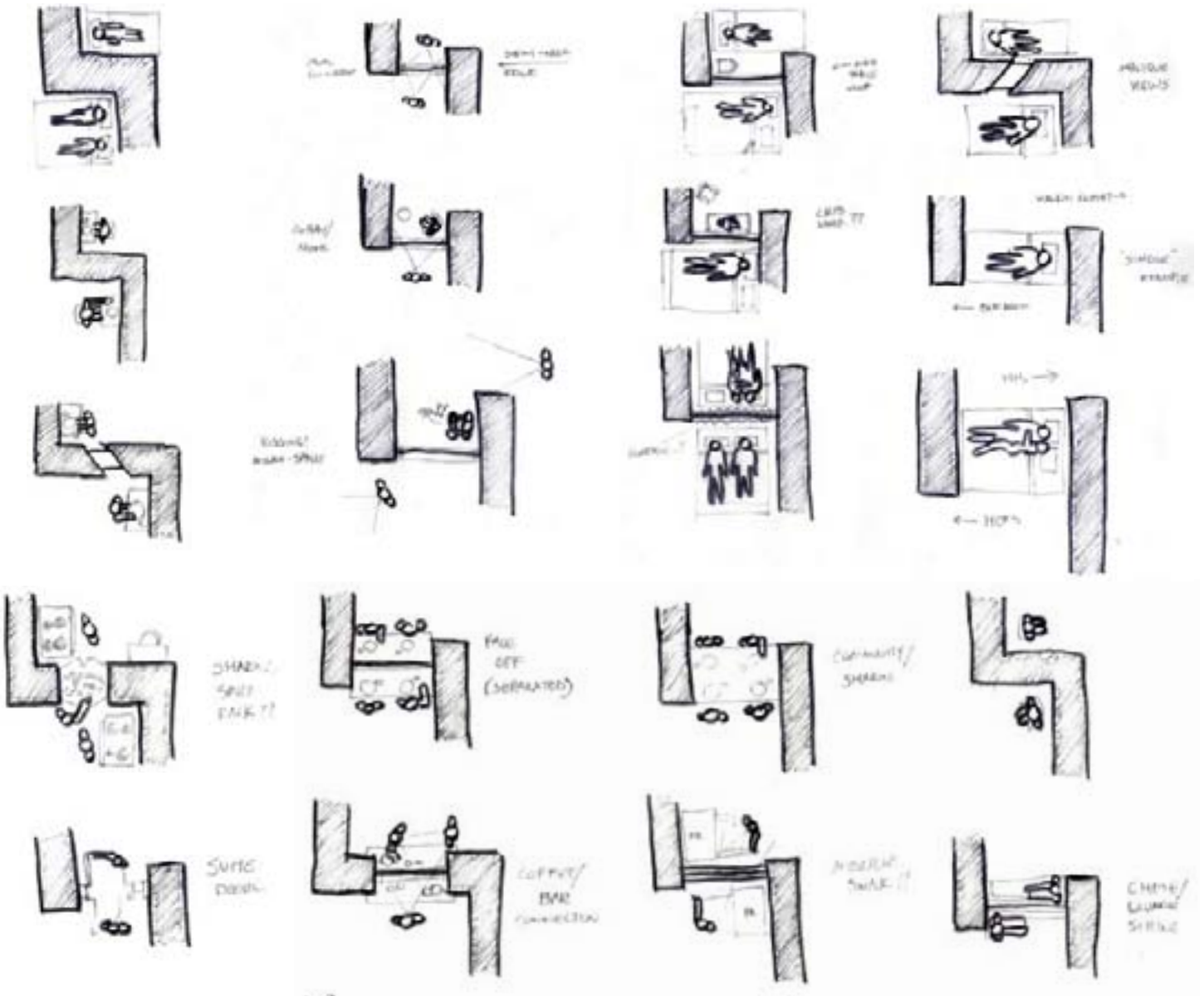


"A building is not an end in itself; it frames, articulates, structures, gives significance, relates, separates and unites, facilitates and prohibits. Consequently, basic architectural experiences have a verb form rather than being nouns. Authentic architectural experiences consist then, for instance, of approaching or confronting a building, rather than the formal apprehension of a façade; of the act of entering and not simply the visual design of the door; of looking in or out through a window, rather than the window itself as a material object; or of occupying the sphere of warmth, rather than the fireplace as an object of visual design. Architectural space is lived space rather than physical space, and lived space transcends geometry and measurability." - Pallasmaa, p.63-64.

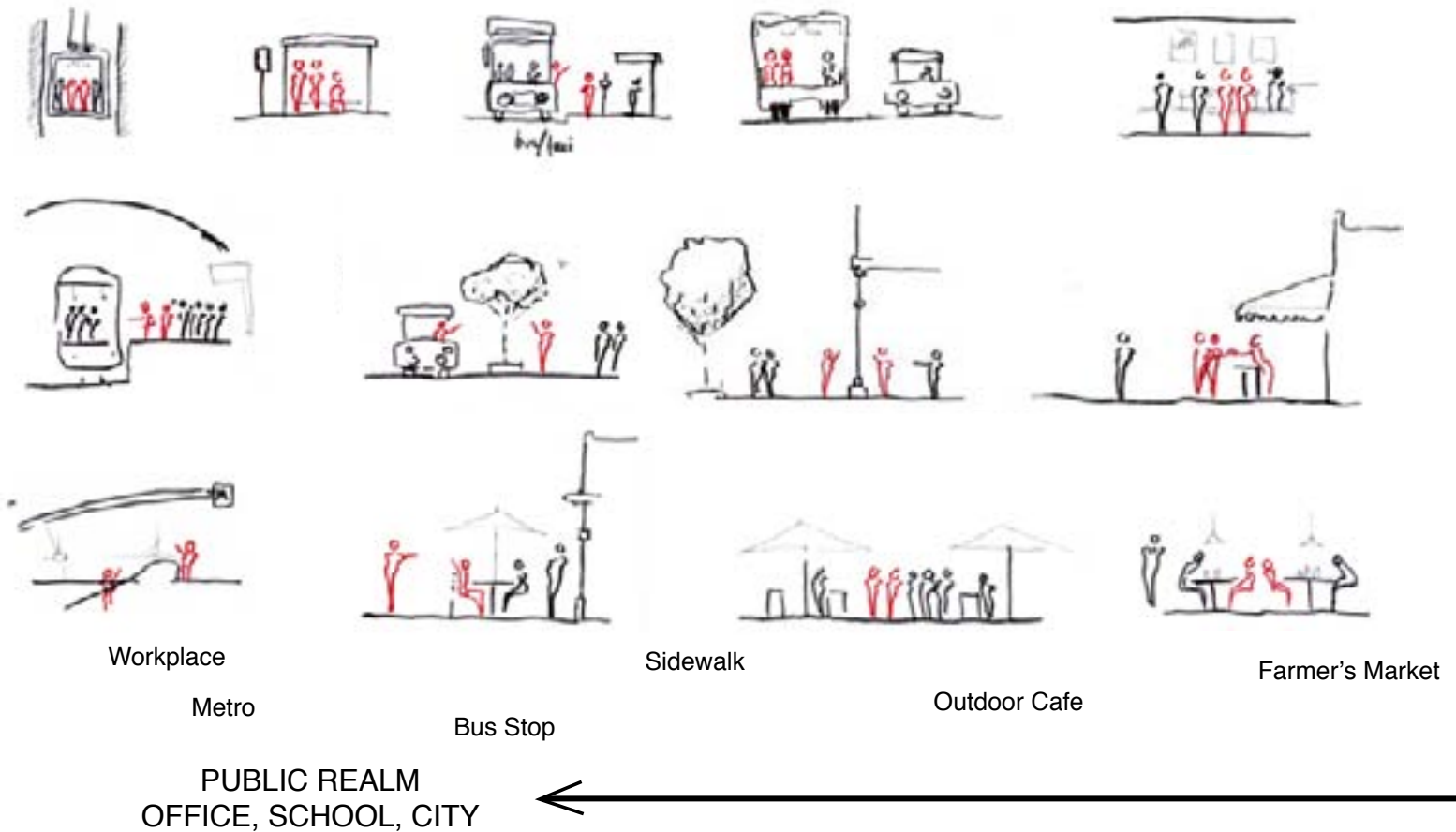
The interpretation of fencing as a complex interaction and conversation led me to begin thinking about the same concept in an architectural manner. I began exploring through several series of sketches the "conversations" between two people with an architectural element influencing the interaction, in this case, a wall. Shown here in section, I explored how different wall configurations could reflect and display a variety of experiences and interactions for persons on either side of the wall. The approach also delved into how openings in the wall could influence or change the interaction, much like a particular type of a parry is needed to defend a specific thrust. How could the architecture begin to make one-sided interaction, no interaction, open interaction, and what does that imply for the experience? All of these things I began to explore.

The following pages show the same explorations in both plan and section. They focus on the "jagged wall," which through the most minimal use of elements can create micro-spaces within which people could interact. How people inhabit and interact within architecture became an important consideration for the thesis.





THE JOGGED WALL IN PLAN

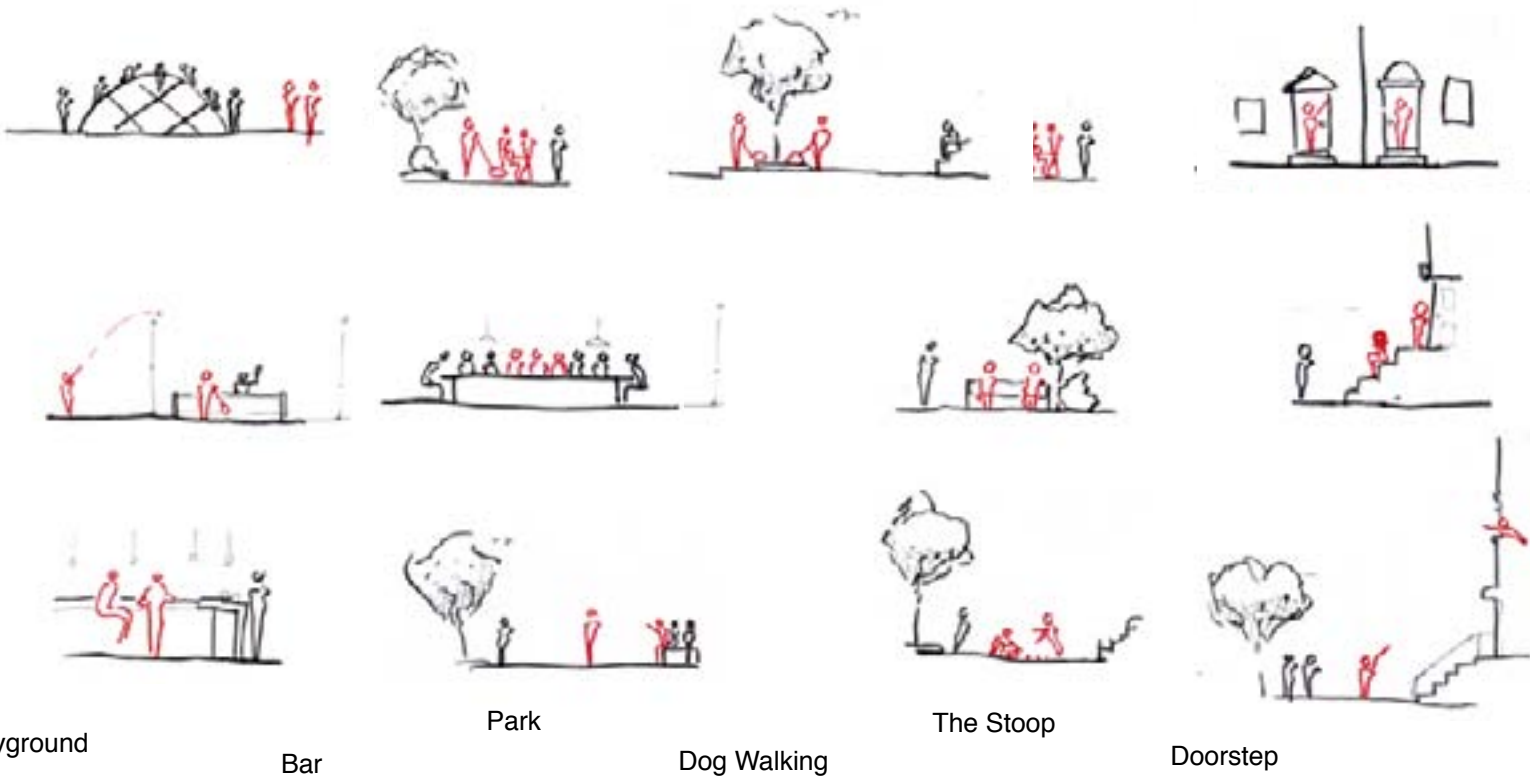


Through more quick sketches I began to explore the levels of interaction on a city level, ones that would happen by chance on any given day. I started thinking about the more public and outdoor space, or the places one could interact with on the way home from work.

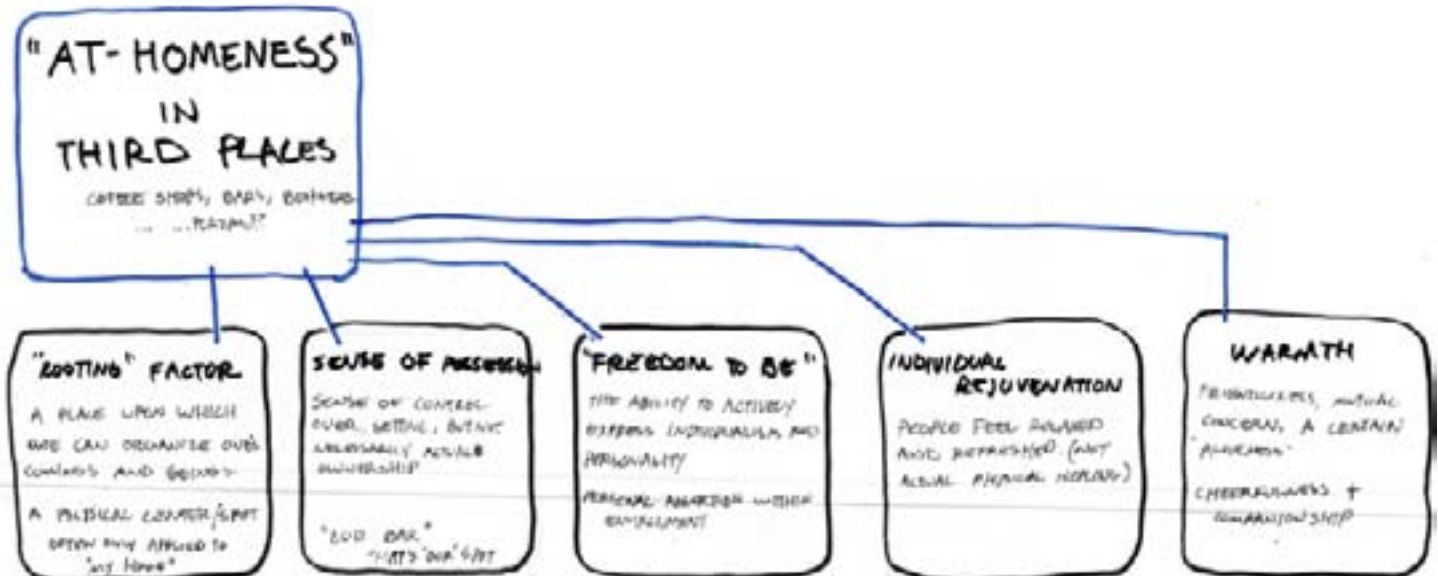
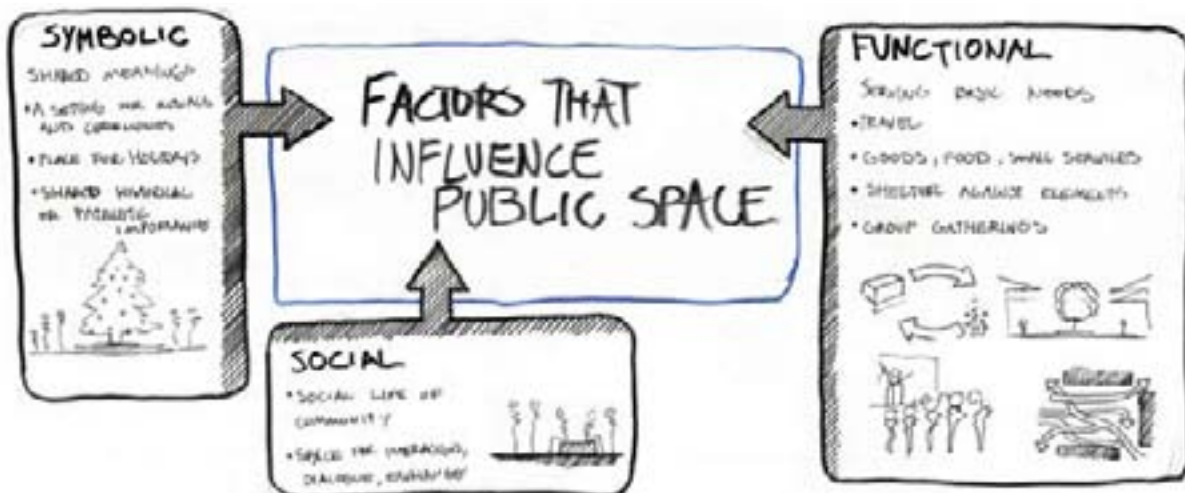
Within this context, it becomes clear that the city dweller's commute in many ways is less of a commute and more of a (potentially) happy sequence of interactions with other people along the way. These interactions fundamentally shape the experience of going home, and demonstrate the importance for individuals to use public space. All of these strung out next to each other, presented here linearly, actually would be happening simultaneously between different people. And when that happens, a community and a sense of place is formed. By promoting a healthy amount of interaction and dialogue be-

tween people, public space can be properly used and provide social services that create a lively experience to all who partake. The built environment, then, is fully responsible for engagement, to foster and nurture social and public interactions between people.

These realizations led me to explore the critical and determining factors that surround public space. Also, within the context of an individual building or space, what factors would help influence people to interact more with each other. Ray Oldenburg coined the phrase "third place" to refer to that location where social interaction is nurtured. In both cases, interaction and conversation became desirable outcomes of properly designed spaces, and these principles would later influence and guide the important design decisions.



"Public spaces afford casual encounters in the course of daily life that can bind people together and give their lives meaning and power. They also can be the source of disagreements and conflict. Open disagreements, however, may be healthier and easier to resolve than those kept in private. Public spaces not only can serve daily needs but also can be places to gather for special occasions." - Carr, et. al., p. 45.



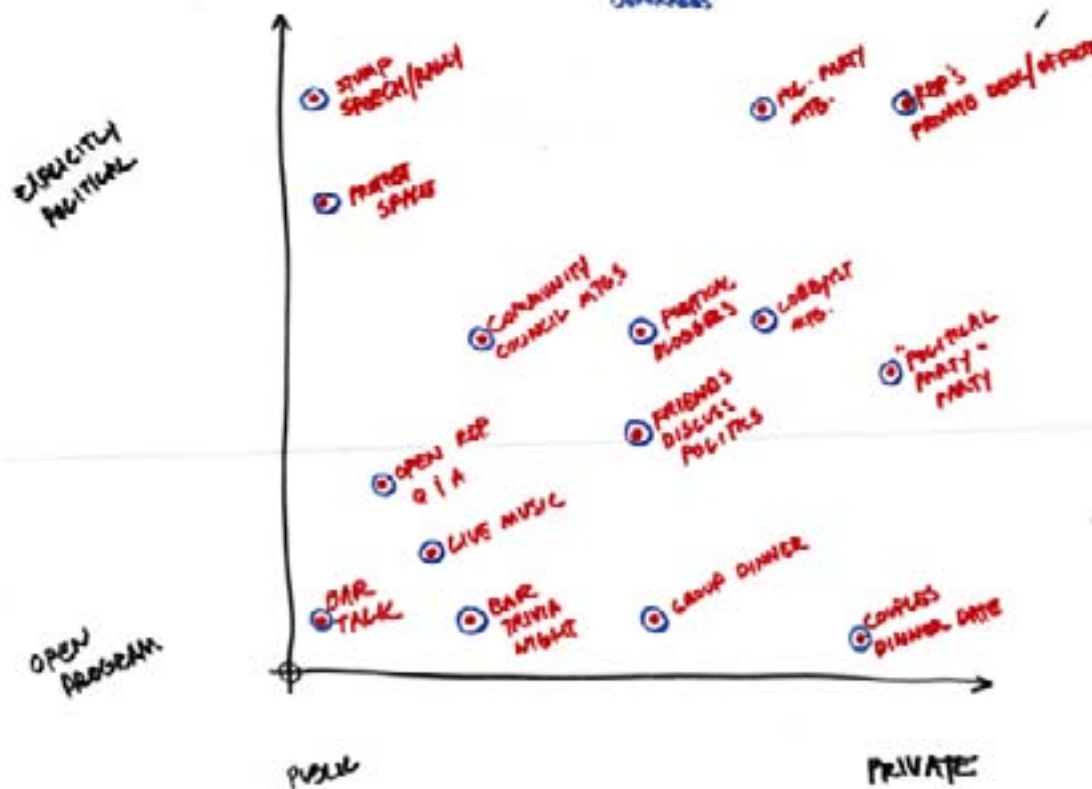
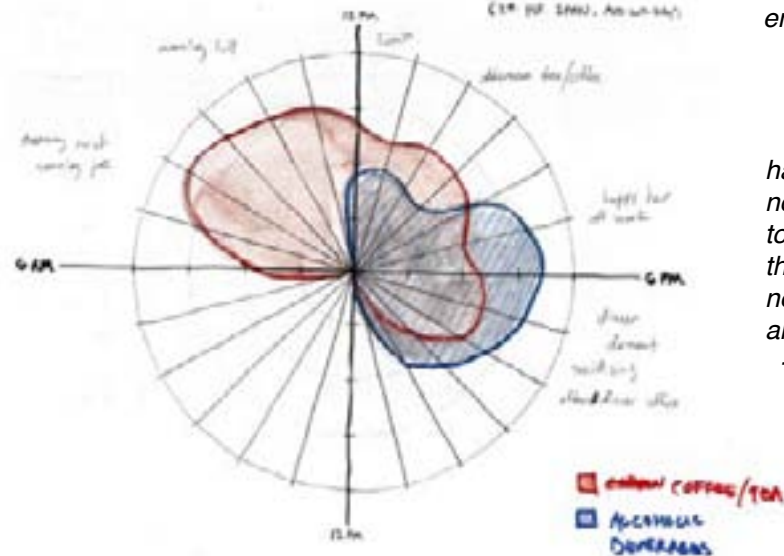
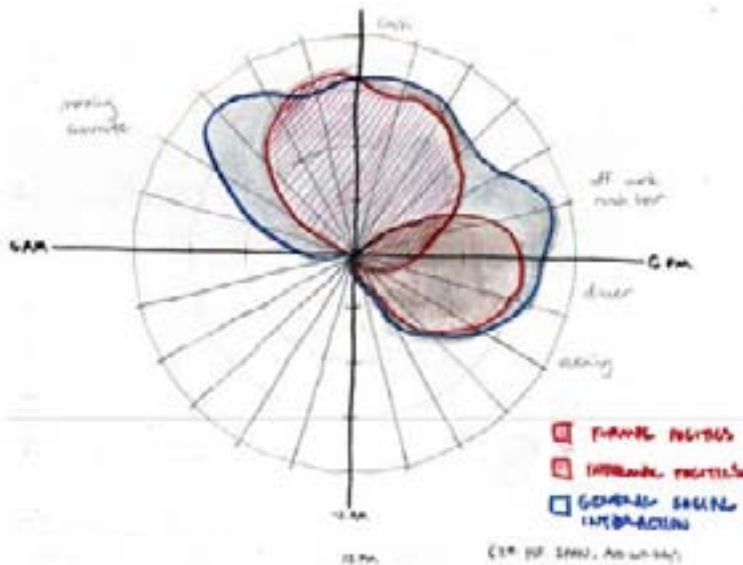


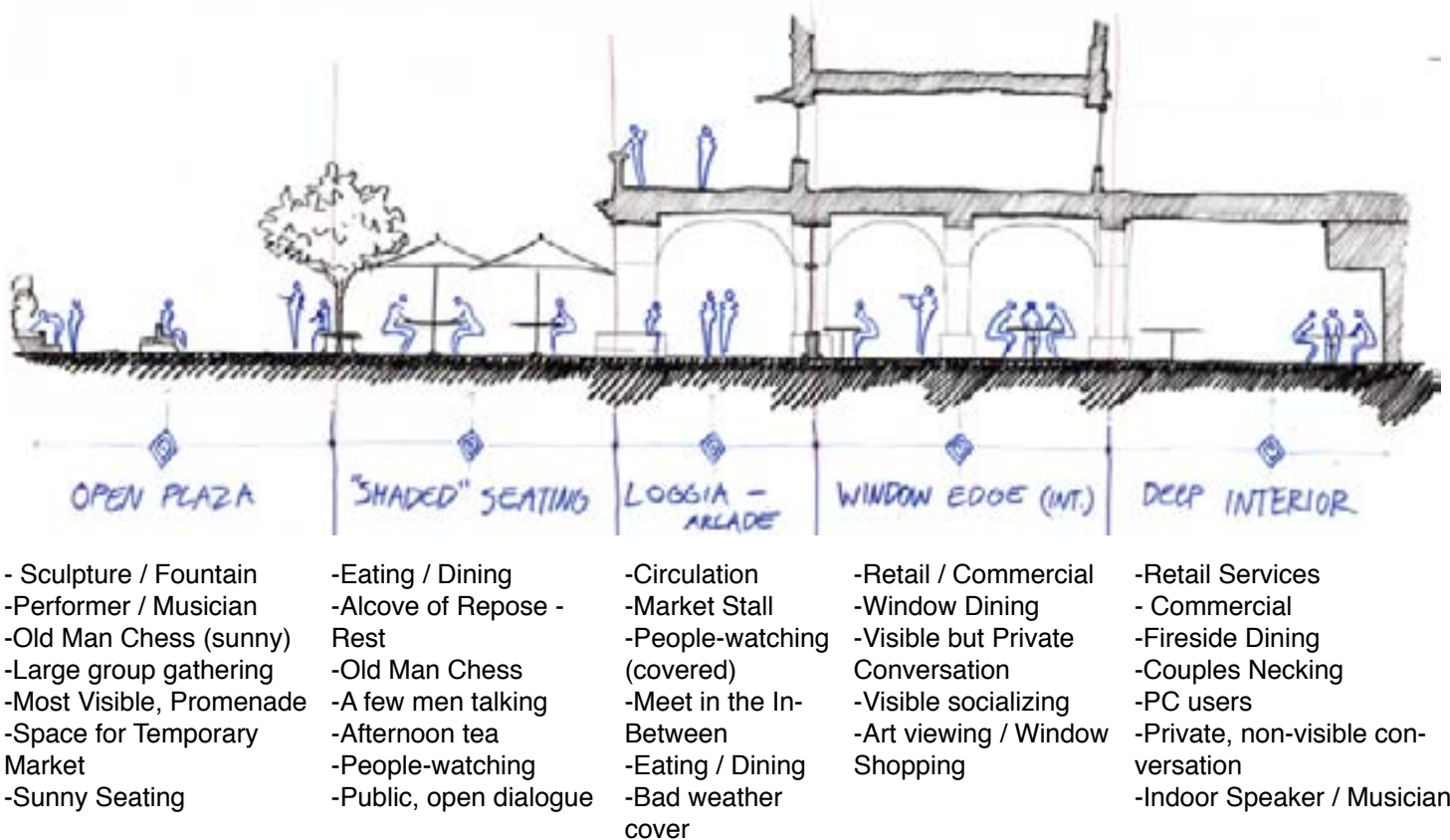
"For want of a suitable existing term, we introduce our own: the third place will hereafter be used to signify what we have called 'the core settings of informal public life.' The third place is a generic designation for a great variety of public places that host the regular, voluntary, informal and happily anticipated gatherings of individuals beyond the realms of home and work." - Oldenburg, p. 16.

INITIAL PROGRAM STUDIES

"Just as third places run counter to the type of political control exercised in totalitarian societies, so they are essential to the political processes of a democracy. There can be no better example of this than offered by our own dear land for, as much as the mere idea may upbraid the sensitivities of some, our democracy had its own origins in the local taverns of the revolutionary era. More than anywhere else in colonial America, the taverns offered a democratic forum. There protest gelled into action and the organization of the revolution and of the society to follow were agreed upon. Within them, as the historians Carl and Jesse Bridenbaugh put it, "there existed that full and free interplay of spontaneous and responsible group association which appears to be a necessary condition of a healthy social order." " - Oldenburg, p. 69.

"The casual environment, finally, is the natural habitat of the third place. Third place settings are really no more than a physical manifestation of people's desire to associate with those in an area once they get to know them. The same measure of diversity that satisfies needs locally and thus brings people in contact with one another also welcomes third places." - Oldenburg, p. 290.

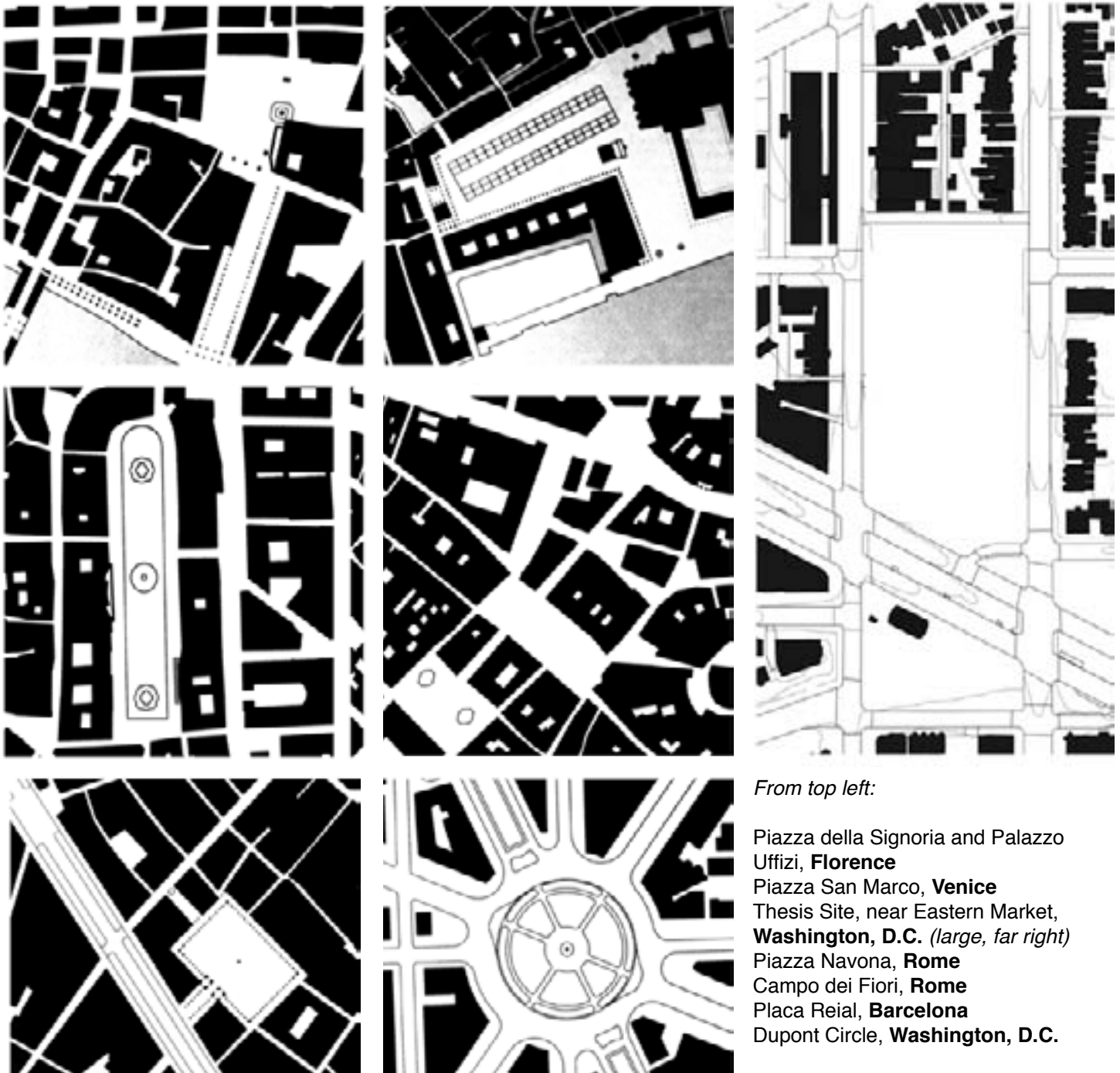




"The need for face-to-face grass-roots participation in the political process is essential in a democracy. Television has obscured that need, but it has not obviated it. [...] What the tavern offered long before television or news papers was a source along with the opportunity to question, protest, sound out, supplement, and form opinion locally and collectively. And these active and individual forms of participation are essential to a government of the people."
 - Oldenburg, p. 70.

On the opposite page are displayed a few of the brainstorming approaches I took to thinking about and defining the issues involved with the program and its potentially political target users. Within the context of American politics, there has always been a perception that the representatives are a bit removed from their constituents and even the common man in general. By exploring ways in which they could be "re-integrated" into a social community, I determined that this would help promote healthy conversation for all parties involved.

The above conceptual section was developed in order to begin exploring and presenting opportunities for diverse forms of conversation and interaction. There are certain levels of privacy that at times are desirable, and conceptually I wanted to make sure I did not lose those spaces as I moved further into the design.



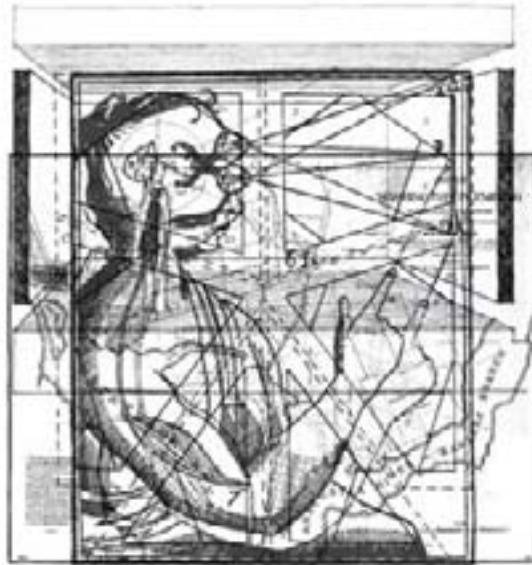
From top left:

Piazza della Signoria and Palazzo Uffizi, **Florence**
 Piazza San Marco, **Venice**
 Thesis Site, near Eastern Market, **Washington, D.C.** (large, far right)
 Piazza Navona, **Rome**
 Campo dei Fiori, **Rome**
 Placa Reial, **Barcelona**
 Dupont Circle, **Washington, D.C.**

"Cities are inviting and uniting, the place where everything happens—both space and place. We are continually preoccupied with measuring, monitoring and pitting ourselves against each other. It is not we that determine who we are, but mainly others, meaning the social system and the roles we play in it. Our environment, built as it is, can not avoid being an influence, even though buildings as often as not are mere backdrops to the action."

The aim every time, one that the city as a whole but also in its smallest built parts should aspire to, is to provide the opportunity for us to inspect, assess, keep an eye on and bump into one another.

In short, it is all about seeing and being seen. The city as spatial model for society is about social space. In making it we have to adjust continually so as to safeguard the coherence of it all." - Hertzberger, p. 120.



SEEING AS TOUCHING CITY PATTERNS

CITY FABRICS AND TEXTURES

Finally, it dawned on me that it was important not to lose the diverse social spaces or zones on an urban level. At right are the Nolli plans of several cities, demonstrating a diverse range of streetscapes, nooks, and mini-plazas that have developed. Although these trace their origins back to the Medieval origins of these European cities, I firmly believe that it is important to not lose these qualities in urban design. Medieval cities were not designed as much as they were developed organically, but in either case they were built at a pedestrian scale. This scale is obviously the scale that promotes the largest amount of human interaction and engagement. I

feel that it would be a critical design objective to keep the sense and scale of pedestrian discovery within the scope my project as well.

Creating positive human interaction and conversation became the design objectives for the thesis project. A diverse set of architectural experiences focused at the pedestrian scale is the best bet for encouraging healthy human interaction. The textured edges and buildings of the city, like the people we encounter along the street, interact with us (as the experiencer) in a fuller, more engaging manner. This mentality became the focus of the project, and one that would continue to inspire me along the entire thesis journey.

“Paralleling the decline in the core settings of informal public life is a more generalized loss of interest in public facilities. It has been noted that the greatest difference between the present generations of Americans and that which framed the Constitution centers on this issue. Whereas our colonial forebears were deeply preoccupied with the public good, we have ceased to be concerned.”
- Oldenburg, p. 285.



SITE DEVELOPMENT

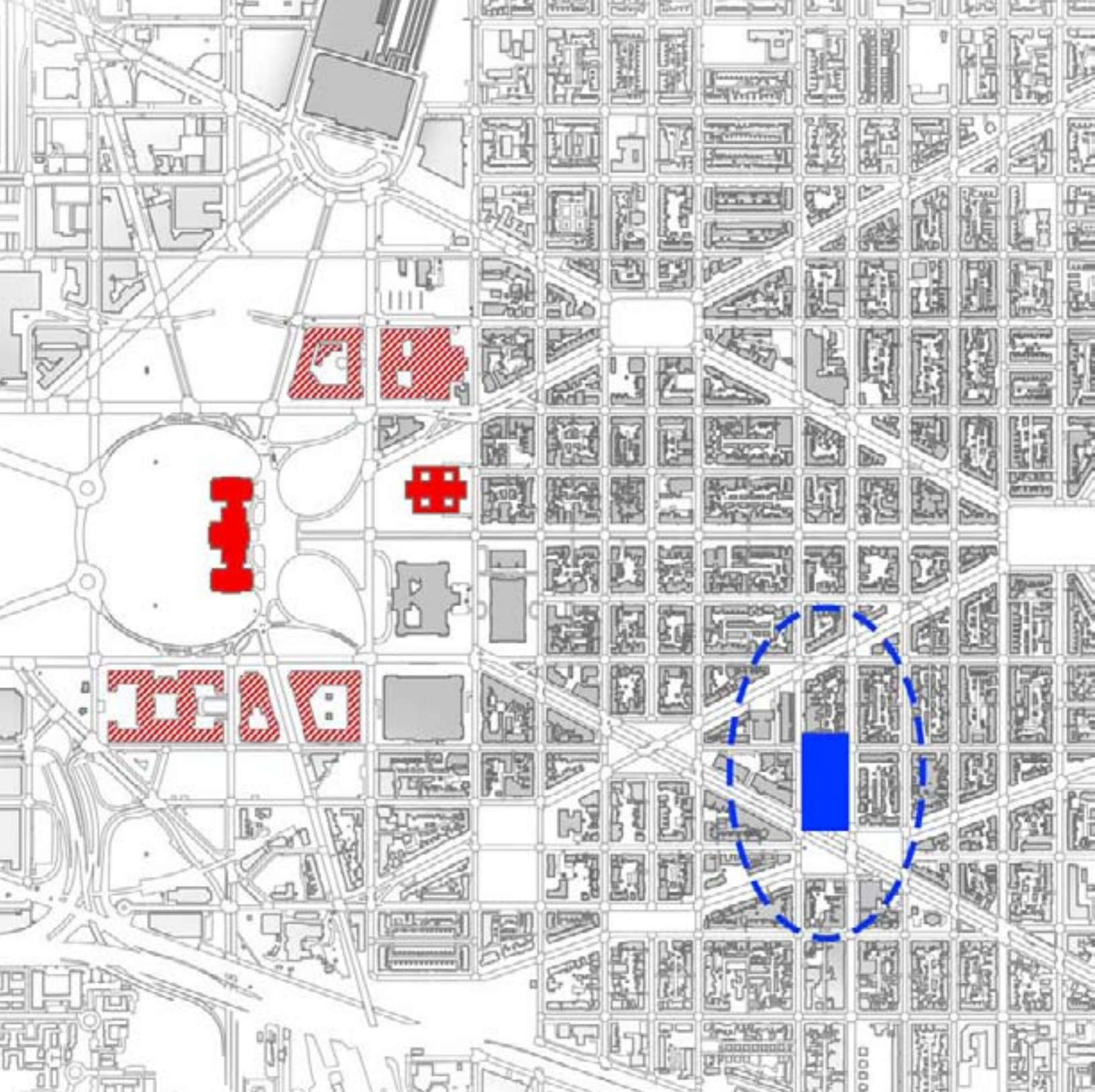
OR, THE SETTING, WHERE IT TAKES PLACE



**PROXEMIC REGIONS
WASHINGTON, D.C.**

-  Primary Government
-  Government Support
-  Eastern Market Neighborhood
-  Project Site

MONUMENTAL - MUSEUM CORE



CAPITOL COMPLEX

EASTERN MARKET

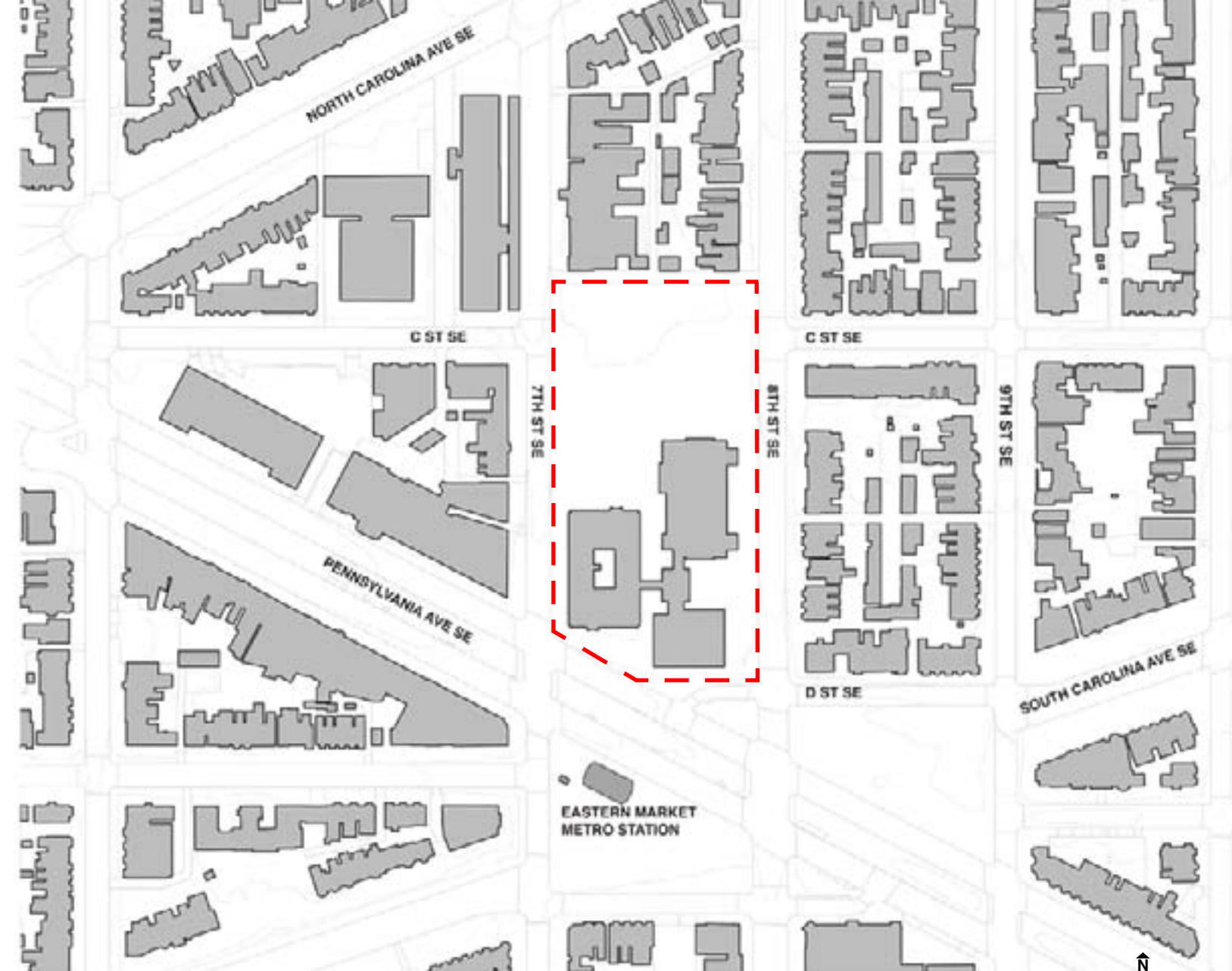
CAPITOL HILL NEIGHBORHOOD



SITE INTRODUCTION

A thesis project involved in exploring political interaction better have a site fit for politics and conversation. Washington, D.C. was the top choice. On the previous pages is a map of central Washington, D.C. showing culturally and politically relevant regions of the city. The Capitol Hill area is located east of the Capitol building and has always been home to a politically minded population. A few of my committee members were aware of a site in this neighborhood that proved to be the ideal location.

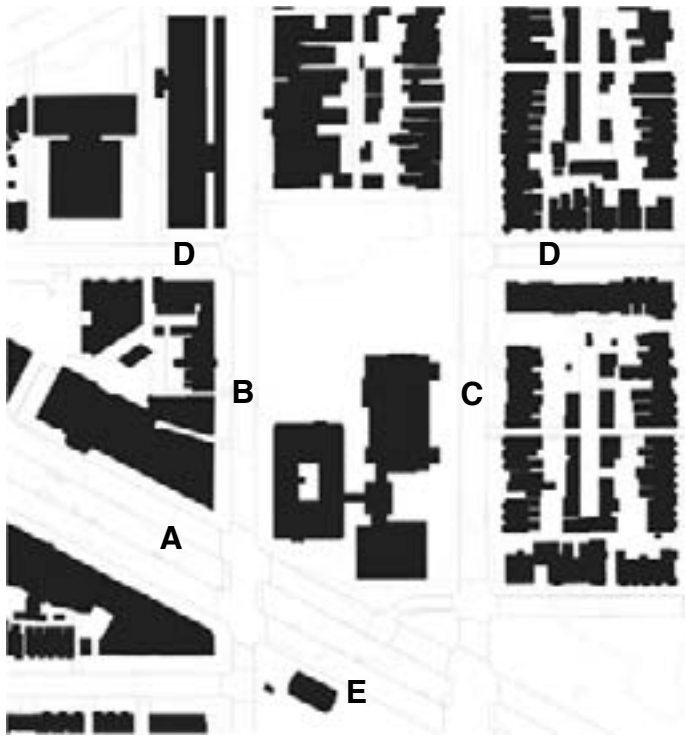
The Eastern Market neighborhood is a vibrant part of the city due to its diverse neighborhood areas and a real gem of a building, Eastern Market. Eastern Market still functions as a fresh food market as well as a cultural and historic landmark. On weekends, a lively farmer's market lines the streets and attracts visitors from all over the city. A fair balance of local shops and cafes with outdoor seating ensure an enjoyable atmosphere throughout most of the year, helping to create a healthy, desirable sense of community and place.



The only current urban “eyesore” is the Hines High School, located in the center of the map shown above. Having been closed down for a number of years and ringed with a tall chain link fence, it has been a pseudo-no-man’s-land, not providing for or interacting with the urban experience. A new plan for this large city block would help contribute to the Eastern Market context, instead of detracting from it, and provide a pleasant location for a socially and politically driven architectural program.

“The thing that turns space into place is the infill given it by its occupants/users. A location then becomes a ‘particular’ place colored by occurrences past and present which lend it associations. When we say we are making a place, we in fact mean making the space in such a way that the conditions for its infill endow it with the quality of place.”

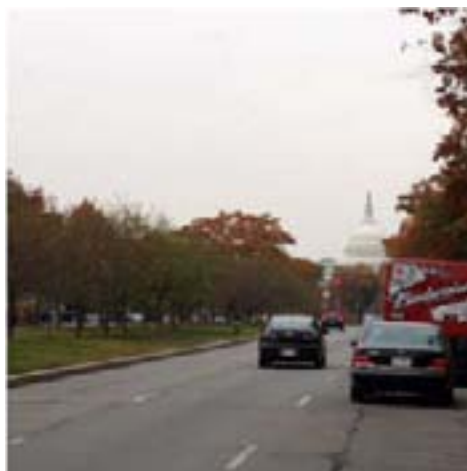
“If place is an ultimate emotional appropriation of a space that originally was unsigned but is potentially signifiable, we can then say: space is a quality that contains the new, that can be filled in to make a place, so that space and place can relate as ‘competence’ and ‘performance.’ Space and place are interdependent in that each brings the other to awareness, enables the other to exist as a phenomenon.” - Hertzberger, p. 24-25.



- A - Pennsylvania Avenue SE
- B - 7th Street SE
- C - 8th Street SE
- D - C Street SE
- E - Eastern Market Metro Stop

SITE ANALYSIS

The site is well suited for the pedestrian because of its proximity to the Eastern Market metro stop, located in the plaza just south of Pennsylvania Avenue. Pennsylvania Avenue is a fairly busy street bordering the site; two lanes of traffic separated by a generous median create a large psychological barrier for the pedestrian. Both 7th and 8th streets are pleasant, pedestrian oriented places lined with shops (7th) and residences (8th). The density of the surrounding blocks provide a good urban edge, clearly defining the space for the user. The entire block has a gentle, nearly imperceptible slope south towards Pennsylvania Avenue but for all intensive purposes is non-existent. (For the technical buffs, the slope is under the legally accepted slope for use of handrails or accessible ramping, less than 1:20.)



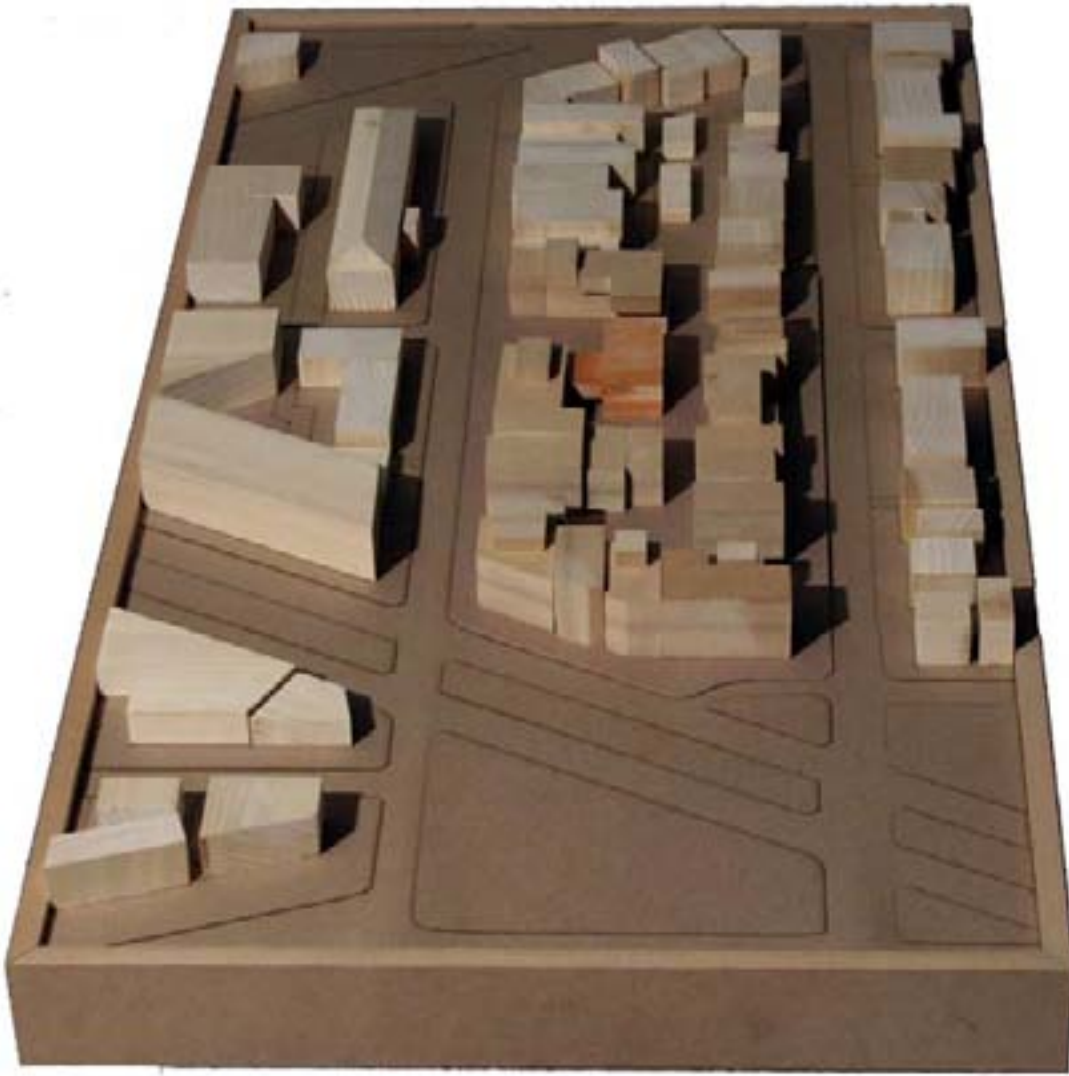




MASSING MODEL OF EXISTING PLAN

The site plan on the opposite page plays a definitive role in the proposal for the urban block plan. The use of the buildings surrounding the site is already differentiated and grouped properly. By proposing a plan that incorporates mixed use buildings, the site would in turn resolve itself by becoming the blend and mix necessary to re-integrate the two types of programs. The existing condition, especially in its closed down state, reinforces polarization and creates a large psychological barrier between the two sides of the community. The urban proposal should help reconnect these two sides and provide meaningful public space.





MASSING MODEL OF PROPOSED PLAN

URBAN BLOCK PROPOSAL

Diagrammatic Block Development

- A - Super Block
- B - Connecting C Street
- C - Plaza for Eastern Market
- D - Courtyard, Spatial Definition
- E - Reconnecting Alley as Corridor
- F - Pedestrian Routes of Discovery

The proposal employs full, lively use of public space around which buildings can organize themselves. Designating social space oriented toward Eastern Market was a key design intent, as well as providing several interior courtyards for residents and visitors to relate to and use.



A



B



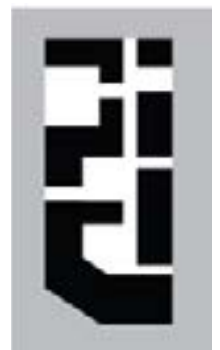
C



D



E



F

THE EXISTING SITE
CONDITIONS



3D MASSING OF THE
PROPOSED PLAN

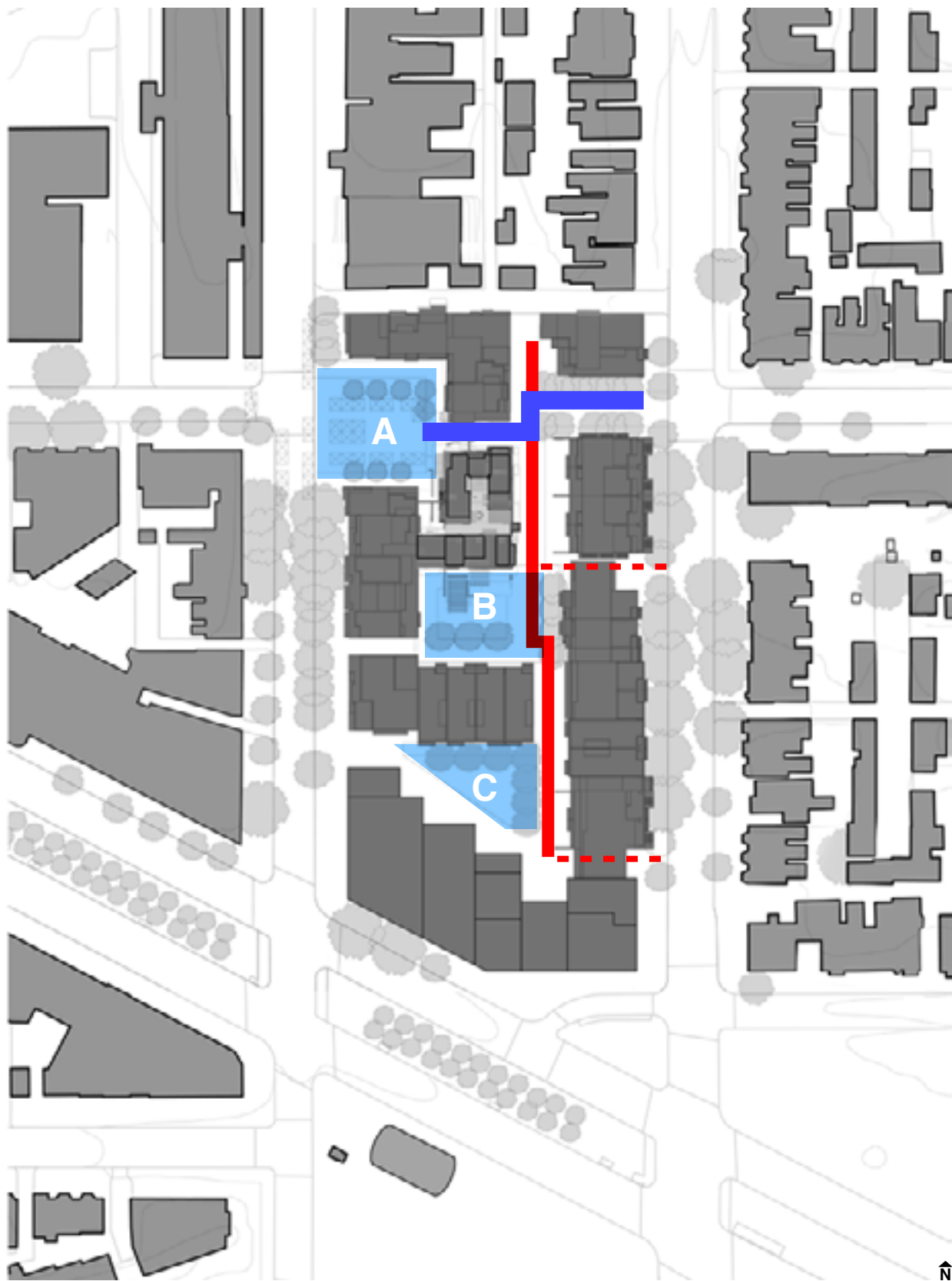


DETAILED VIEW OF
PROPOSED PLAN



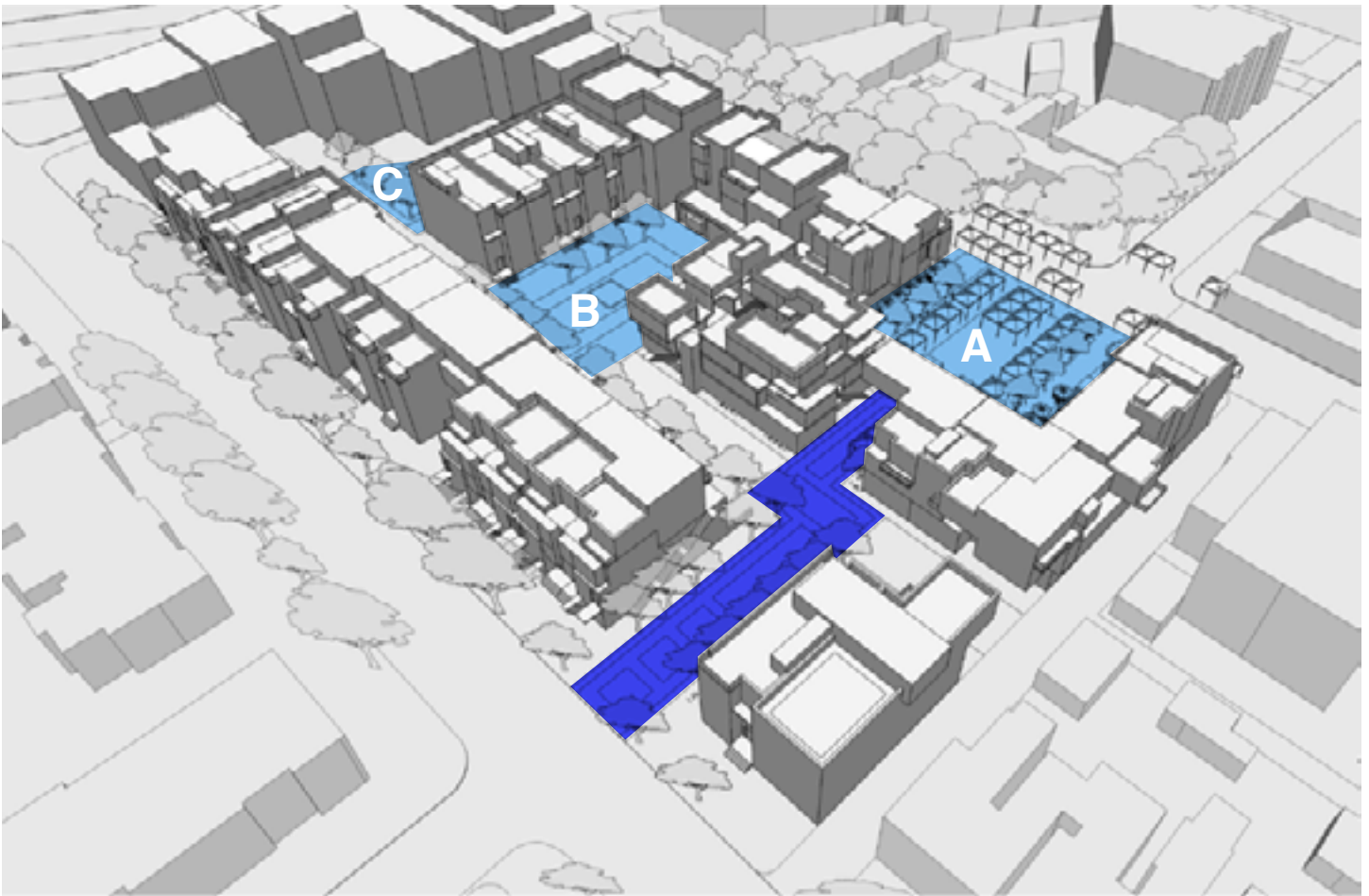


Reaching the finalized urban proposal was achieved through 3D and physical models in tandem. In both cases, rough massings were created and then organized according to the spatial concepts. Further articulation was then more fully realized in the virtual model. This virtual model became the initial starting point and testing ground for creating the building of the thesis building project, as well as studying the organizational strategies for secondary programs, such as how the weekend market tents could be laid out, and possible building forms for various buildings in the plan.



- PUBLIC PLAZA OR COURTYARD
- PEDESTRIAN "GREEN" STREET

- "LIVING STREET" ALLEY
- SEMI-COVERED BLOCK PASSAGEWAY



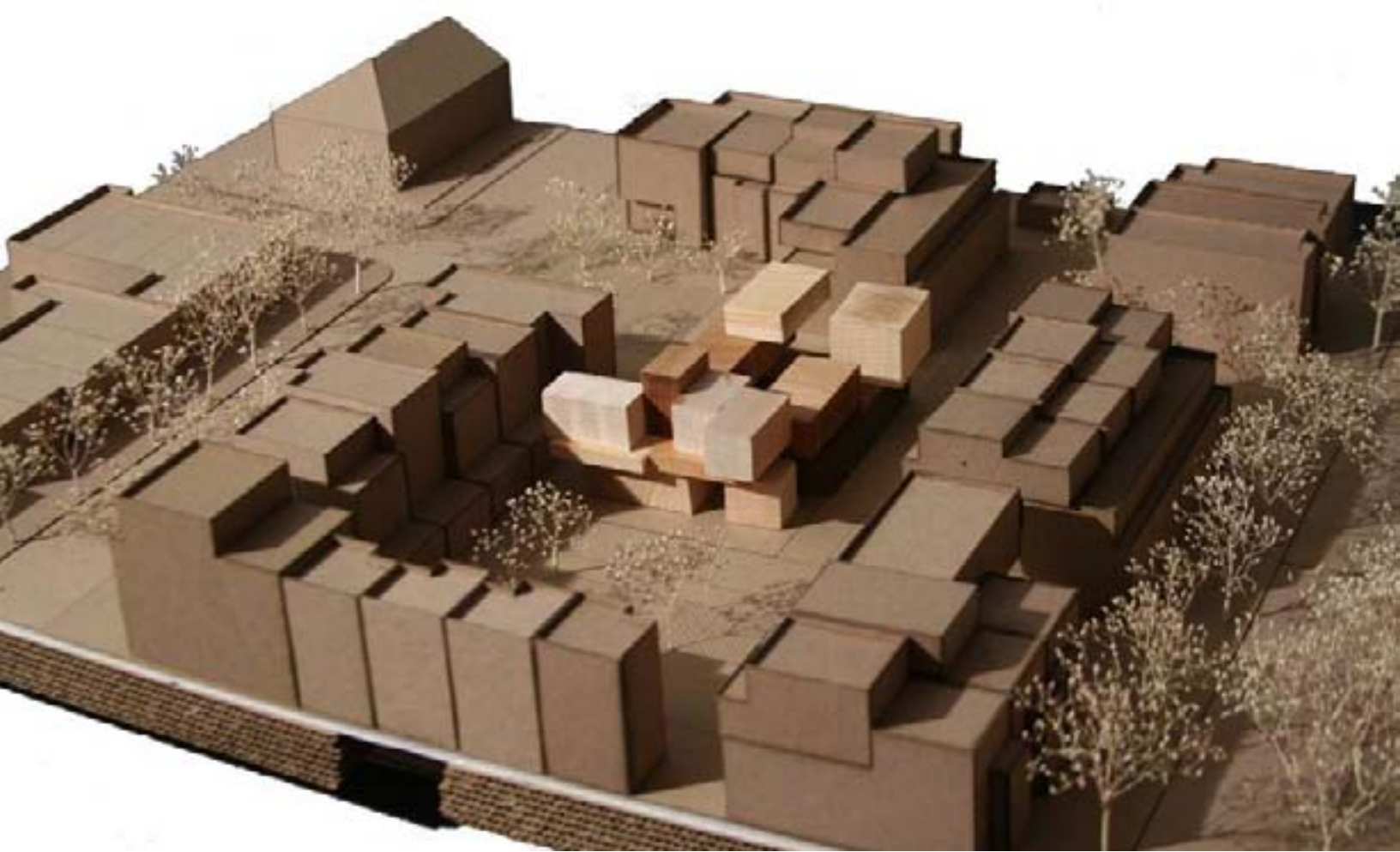
A - EASTERN MARKET PLAZA
 B - INNER BLOCK COURTYARD
 C - SHARED BLOCK COURTYARD

Organized public space was central to the urban design proposal. The plan must include and be oriented to the visitors and residents alike. It must provide spaces that have “place-making” opportunities for the user experience. By creating a variety of public spaces and pedestrian corridors, the plan allows for users to create their own experience and find their own comfortable niche.

The public spaces were carved into several distinct spaces. The Eastern Market plaza is oriented close to the market and on market days would provide ample space for vendors to set up their tents and sell their wares. The inner block courtyard is holds a small green garden, and is

where the bar’s best outdoor seating is. There is ample space and even a plot for a community garden. This would be the courtyard where the building residents could gather as a community, for block parties and the like. The shared block courtyard to the south belongs to both residents and office employees and is a shady place to sit and have an outdoor lunch.

The alley was reintroduced to the block, in keeping with the context of the nearby city blocks. In contrast, this alley is not meant to be a back-of-house place. Instead, it is a pedestrian “living street,” a place where children can play without cars and within a safe distance to the watchful parents. Though car (and trash truck) accessible, it would not have car parking, but could be used to help access apartments (such as moving in or out.) Underground parking would be included for residents.



As stated previously, massing models, both real and virtual, were extremely helpful and directly related to the development of the project. This massing model zooms into the upper portion of the block plan and looks at the spatial organization and character of the proposed plan in relation to the surrounding neighborhood. At this scale there was also explorations into how different building types could stack and overlap to create different uses and layouts.

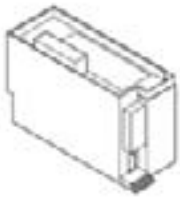
The building model in the middle is primarily conceptual, and is meant to be interpretative rather than actual form. It presents the notion of stacking, overlapping and intersecting units, and how this “unit shifting” allows for different private and communal spaces to be created. These variations reflect how cities historically were created: piecemeal, organically, and in a lively manner that creates a lovely texture and variability.





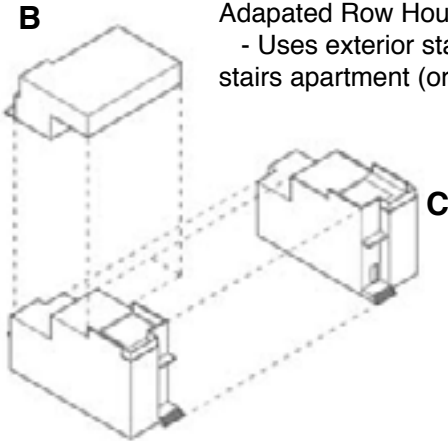
VIEW DOWN C ST. TOWARDS NEW MARKET PLAZA





A Standard Row House Configuration

- Single unit, internal stair
- Rooftop garden patio access

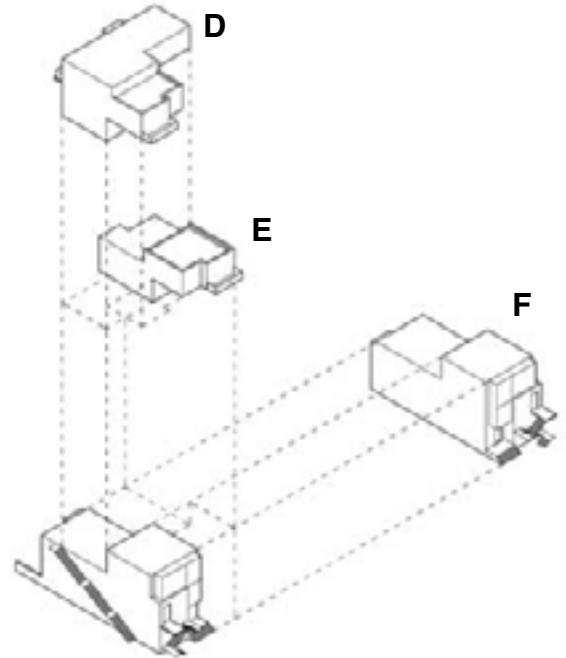


B Adapted Row House Pair with Loft Apartment

- Uses exterior stair approaches to enter upstairs apartment (or dedicated lobby unit)

Adapted Row House Pair with Overlapping Apartments.

- Creates 4 units, spatially distinct and overlapping
- Uses exterior stair approaches to enter upstairs apartments on the inside of block



The above apartment unit configurations were designed to be potential housing units within the proposed block plan. As interaction and engagement were key concepts in the thesis exploration, I felt that the units could reflect the overlapping and intersecting nature of good conversation. I was also very interested in the concept of “back of house.” In the new block plan, the alley is embraced by making it a place, more of a living green street for pedestrians. For some apartments, a stair that opened on the street led up to mezzanine public deck that overlooked this green alley. By having multiple entrances, front doors, stoops, balconies, and overlooks, the block plan creates a sense of community, that there is always someone nearby. If the building units overlapped, built on top of, or around each other, than perhaps the residents could learn to do likewise, and depend on and interact with each other more fully.

At right is a simplified version of the new block plan exploded to expose the levels of use and how they fit. Following the existing gradient of use from east to west, I aligned residential units along the residential side, and combined various forms of mixed used along the commercial corridor (7th Street, western side of block). The upper levels of these shops and businesses would house either more offices, retail or residences, depending on location along the block. A mixed use solution is necessary because it allows for the block to have presence and life at all hours of the day, which is important in creating a sense of community.

The picture at right demonstrates how some of the unit configurations above were explored in model form. For example, Unit B, instead of bridging two units, cantilevers off of one in order to create a public passage underneath.

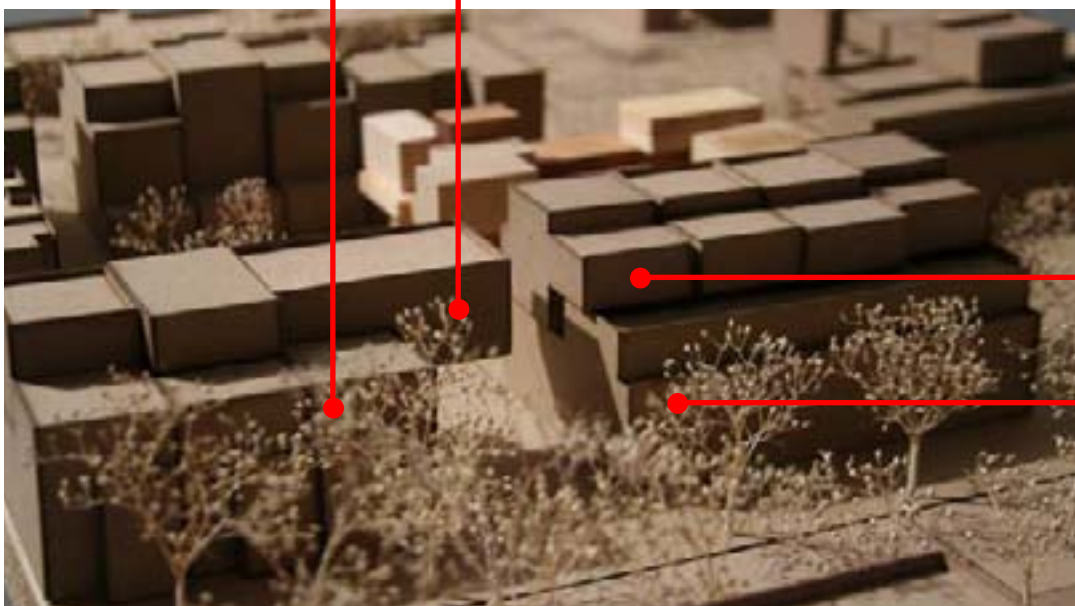
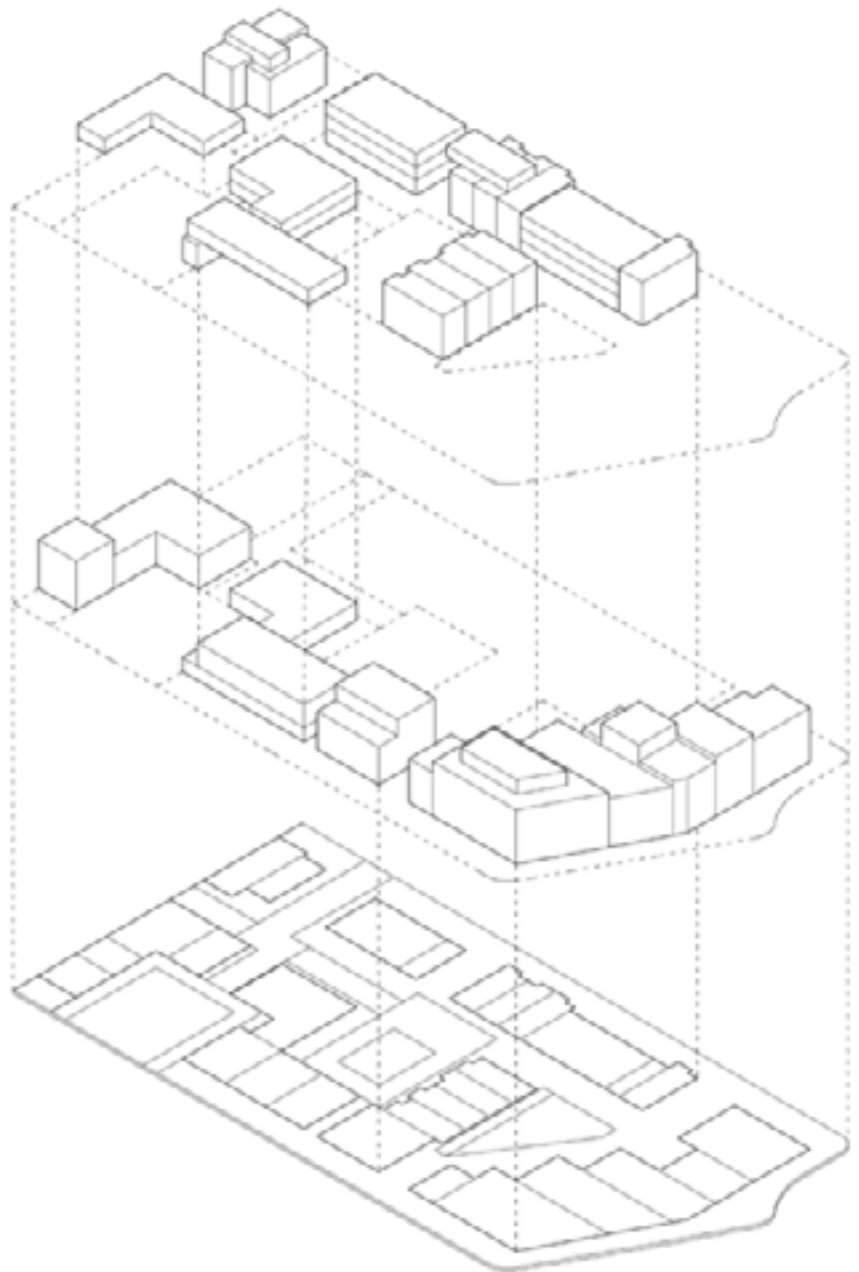
RESIDENTIAL

--Located along eastern edge of block
--Upper levels of various office and commercial buildings

RETAIL / COMMERCIAL

--Located along western edge of block, on 7th Street.
--Large office and commercial space placed along south edge on Pennsylvania Avenue

EXPLODED PROPOSED BLOCK PROGRAM



“In a recent plea for the promotion of what he calls “civic intelligence” in America’s schools, David Mathews reminds his reader that the word idiot comes to us from the ancient Greeks, who equated privacy with stupidity. Idiots were those who only understood their private worlds and failed to comprehend their connection to the encompassing social order. And how does one avoid becoming or remaining an idiot? Primarily through frequent engagement in the most basic of all political activities –talk. It is clear that the main activity of the third place is essential to the containment of idiocy. Mathews writes:

“Good political talk creates and reflects an “enlarged mentality.” It is where we recognize the connectedness of things – and our own connectedness. It is where we develop the capacity to understand the structure and functioning of the whole social body, which is the capacity to govern ourselves democratically...Good political talk is also where we discover what is common amidst our differences.” ” – Oldenburg, p. 72.



THE BUILDING

OR, WHAT IT ALL IS

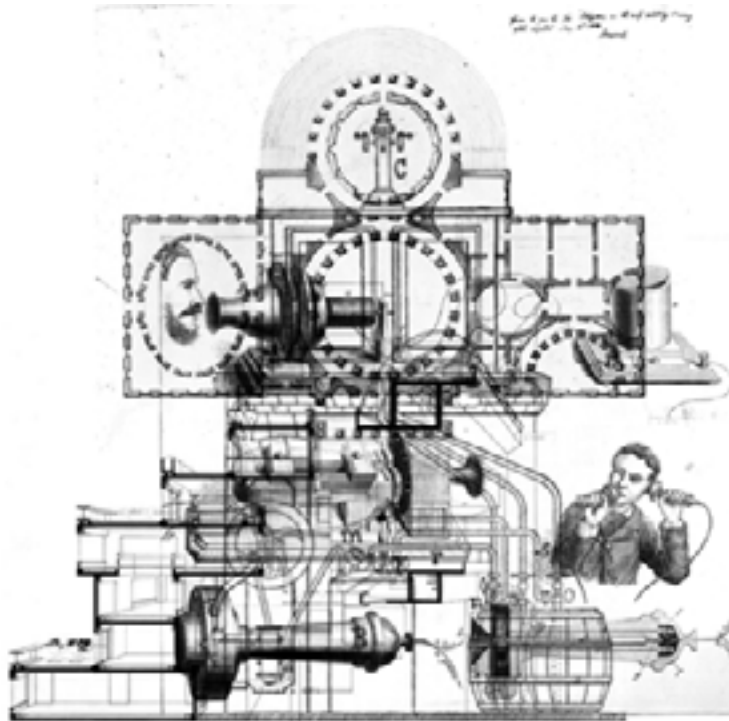


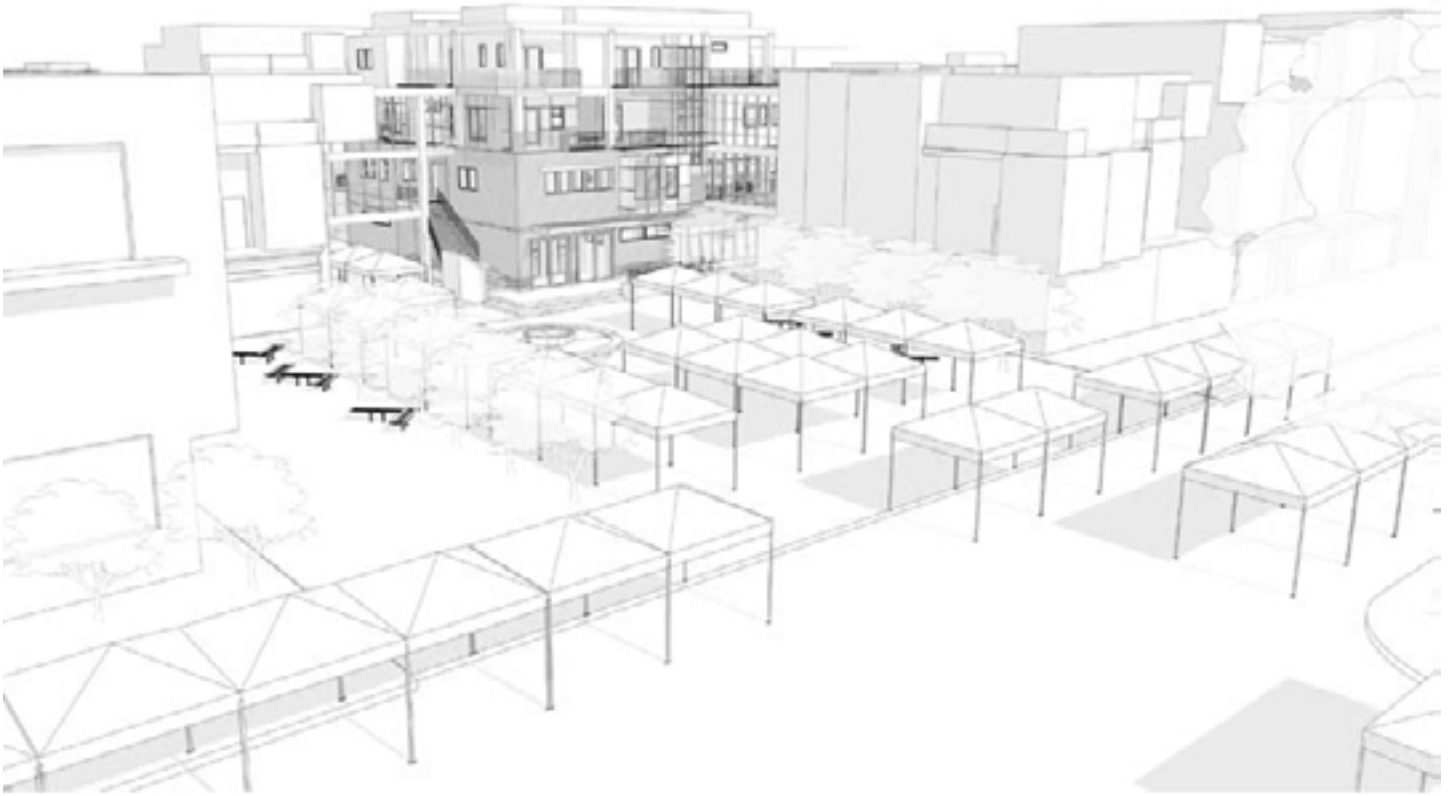
Fig. 1.
SOCIO-POLITICAL NATURE OF BUILDING

INTRODUCING THE BUILDING

The preceding pages define the proposed block plan for the project. Within that plan, a variety of urban spaces and forms were created to implement space that would help foster a sense of community. Key to that plan is a responsive design oriented to the nature and neighborhood of Eastern Market.

This chapter presents the focused building of the thesis project. The readings and research has been centered on interaction, dialogue, and conversation between people in urban space; the next question becomes how to inform a building design around these principles. What is the nature of this building? How does it interact with its immediate setting, with the neighborhood?

The building design is based upon a desire to provide a variety of spaces within which different levels of formality (or informality), political conversation, and social interaction could happen, for the benefit of the politician/resident. (This concept was also applied to the proposed block plan, albeit at a larger scale, and for the benefit of the visitor.) Included in the building design is a private courtyard for the apartment residents, implying a semi-private space where the politicians and interns could congregate and discuss political issues within a closed, more private setting. The representative or senator is always in front of the camera and public scrutiny; the building would provide an opportunity for them to, at various stages, remove themselves from a more public view, while still having the ability to socialize and interact with their peers. The ability for the politicians to unshackle them-



PERSPECTIVE VIEW OF THE MARKET PLAZA

selves from their public role within a proper social space, in my opinion, is critical to their sanity and socialization, allows them to breathe a bit, and to interact freely, beyond mere soundbites and photographed handshakes.

Within the scope of the building, the thesis explores how architecture can influence and promote healthy interaction and communication of various types between very different groups of people, for the benefit of all. How does a building fit into and foster community? How are the users given opportunities to discover, bump into, make conversation with, and meet others in the building? How can users interact with the building itself and what might that look like? What would that conversation look like? All of these questions are central to my exploration.

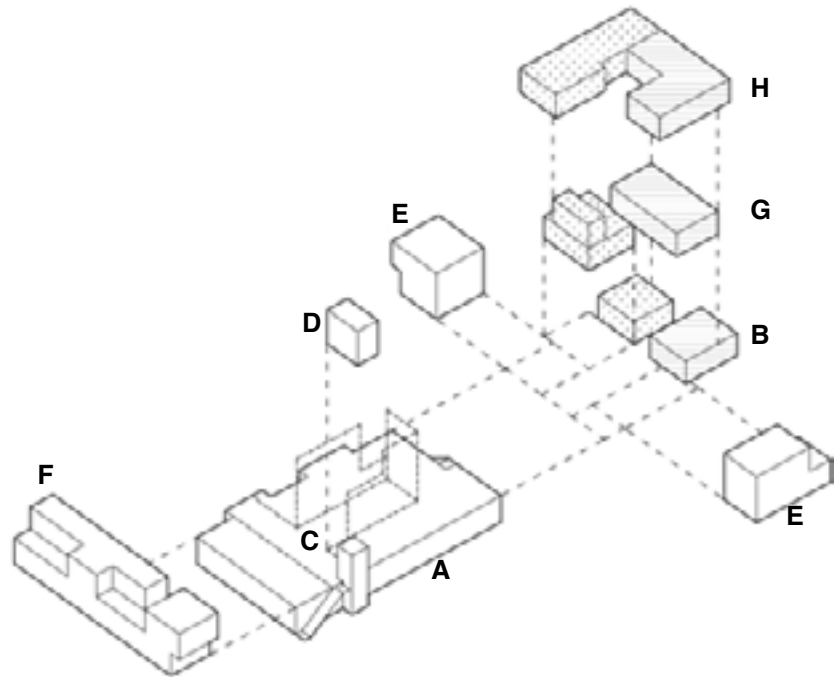
"In contrast, what George Simmel referred to as "pure sociability" is precisely the occasion in which people get together for no other purpose, higher or lower, than for the "joy, vivacity, and relief" of engaging their personalities beyond the contexts of purpose, duty, or role. As Simmel insisted, this unique occasion provides the most democratic experience people can have and allows them to be more fully themselves, for it is salutary in such situations that all shed their social uniforms and insignia and reveal more of what lies beneath or beyond them." - Oldenburg, p. 25.



VIEW TOWARDS MARKET PLAZA ALONG COURTYARD PASSAGEWAY

EXPLODED SCHEMATIC DIAGRAM

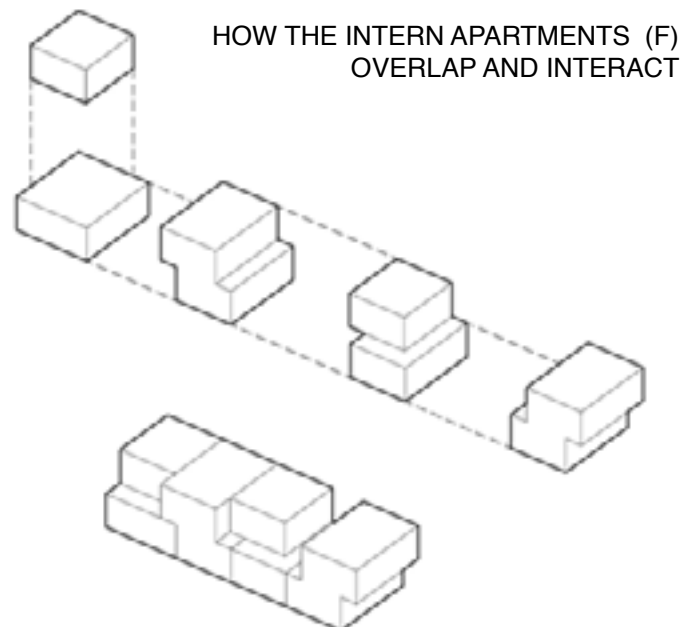
- A COFFEEHOUSE / BAR
- B POLITICIAN HOME OFFICES
- C POLITICIAN COURTYARD
- D POLITICAL BOOK COLLECTION
- E SENIOR INTERN APARTMENTS (2)
- F INTERN APARTMENTS (5)
- G POLITICIAN LIVING SPACES
- H POLITICIAN PRIVATE SPACES



The building program focused in scope to have two program typologies: a commercial social space and an apartment complex above. After various readings about the “third place” and ideal socially-nuturing places, a bar-coffeehouse program became the clear choice. It would provide the proper setting on the ground level to create the interaction and social space that the thesis exploration demanded. Here the politician and the local community could meet and converse in various organized and impromptu settings, providing better understanding on each others’ behalf.

The apartment complex above, then, is designed to be where the politicians live. The complex is made up of interlocking units suggesting the interconnection of the different parts of the political landscape. This concept would programmatically manifest itself in the residents; the apartments are divided along the American political party lines, forcing opposing politicians to commune and interact with their counterparts. This close proximity to each other would force the politicians to realize the inherent humanity

in their opponents, and in turn help redirect their pursuits to addressing real issues instead of political bickering and nit-picking. In addition, a number of the apartments developed into small studios and lofts. By integrating a number of political staffers or senior interns into the complex as residents, the building would reveal issues of hierarchy and formality, as well as allow interaction and responsibility vertically within an organizational structure.



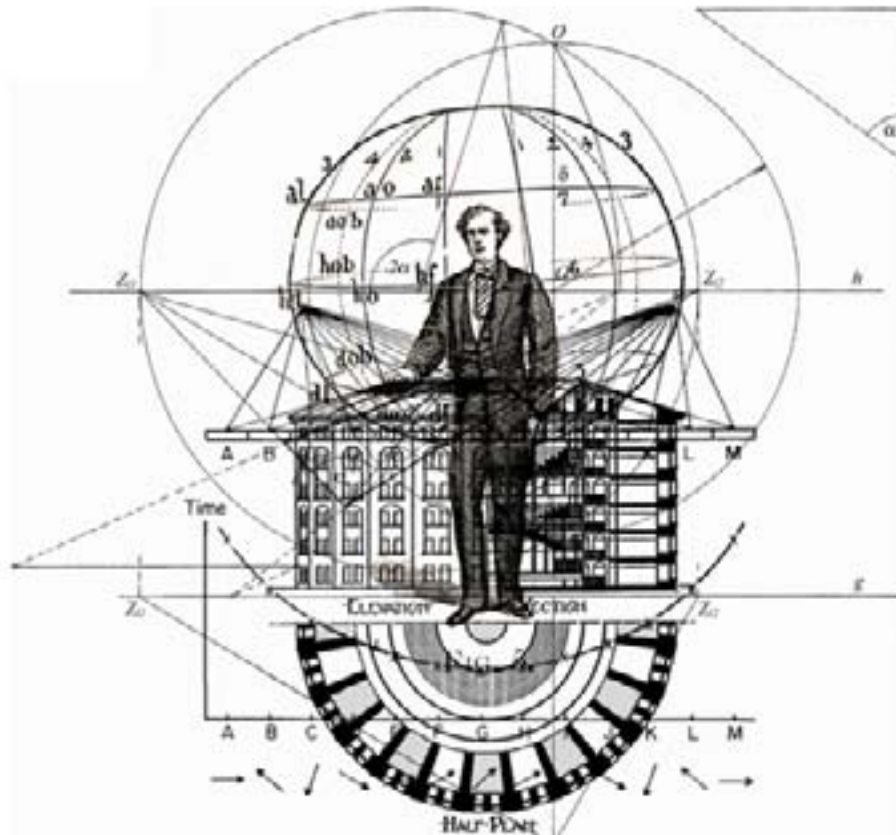


THE NATURE OF THE POLITICIAN

As the project progressed and the building took shape, the design posed new questions about the users. Specifically, what about the politician makes him/her different than the typical resident? What inferences can be made about their lifestyle or habits? Where does design help, hinder or improve upon these?

I began to explore what came to be referenced as the “faceted politician.” Because of the importance and public pressure of the job, there are a significant amount of everyday factors that

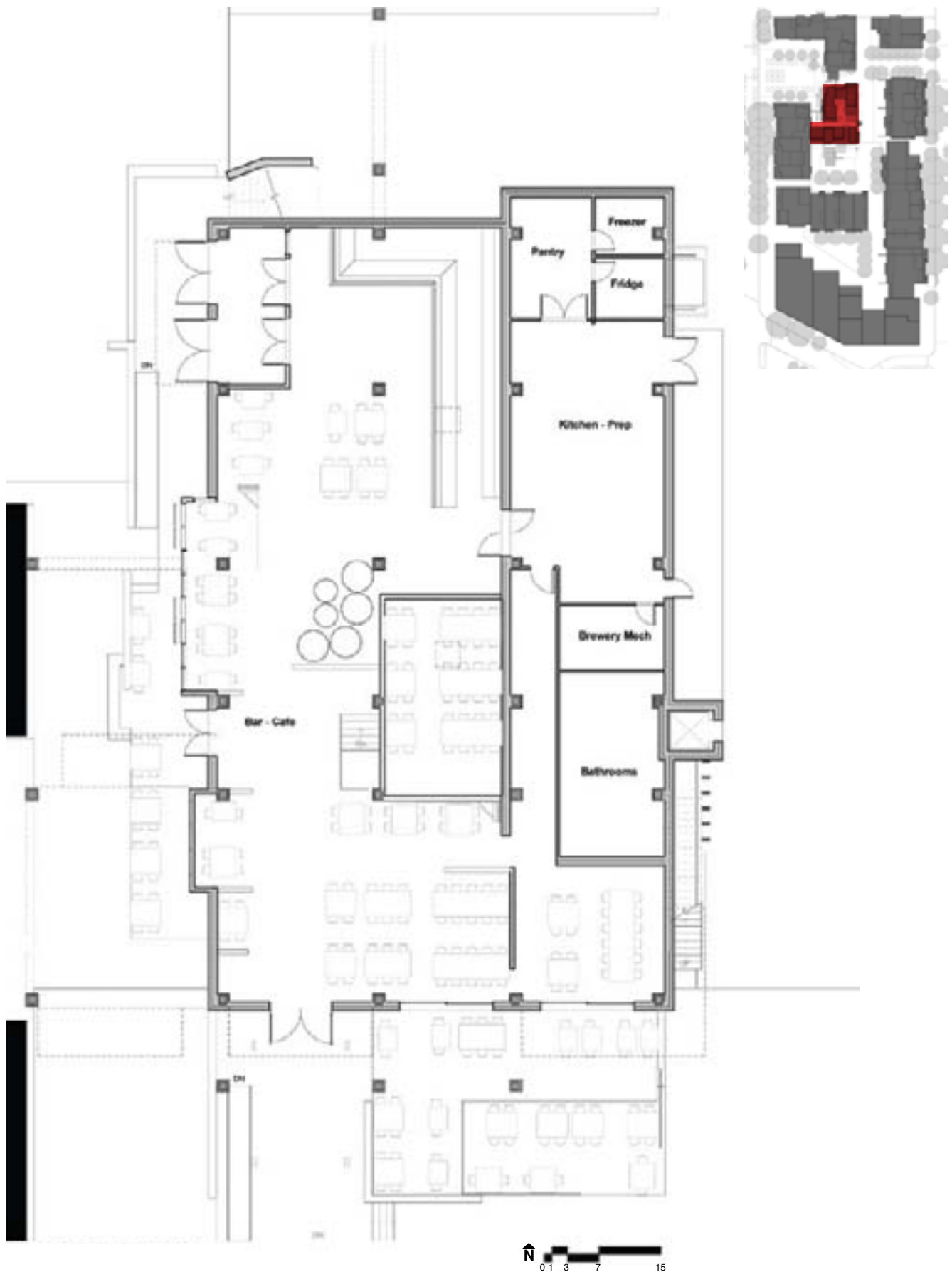
weigh heavily on the politician. There are also many desirable characteristics and personality-based expectations that are demanded of the politician. The public image and what his/her words and deeds reflect about his/her character is very important. How his/her life experience has shaped his personal character, for better or worse, is always being evaluated. Balancing these issues with a private life can be difficult at best, oftentimes nearly impossible. The many faces and hats the politician has to wear in his/her job is daunting.



THE PERSPECTIVE AND REFLECTION OF THE POLITICIAN

Understanding this nature of the politician led to several important reflections. It was clear that the notions of proper levels of social space and private space were beneficial for the politician. The backdrops for photoshoots, press-rooms, meeting constituents, defending party lines, and stump speeches are all very different places that the politician must use to do their job. The various spaces of this residential complex then would them unwind all these “spatial pressures” by creating places where they could enjoy being themselves.

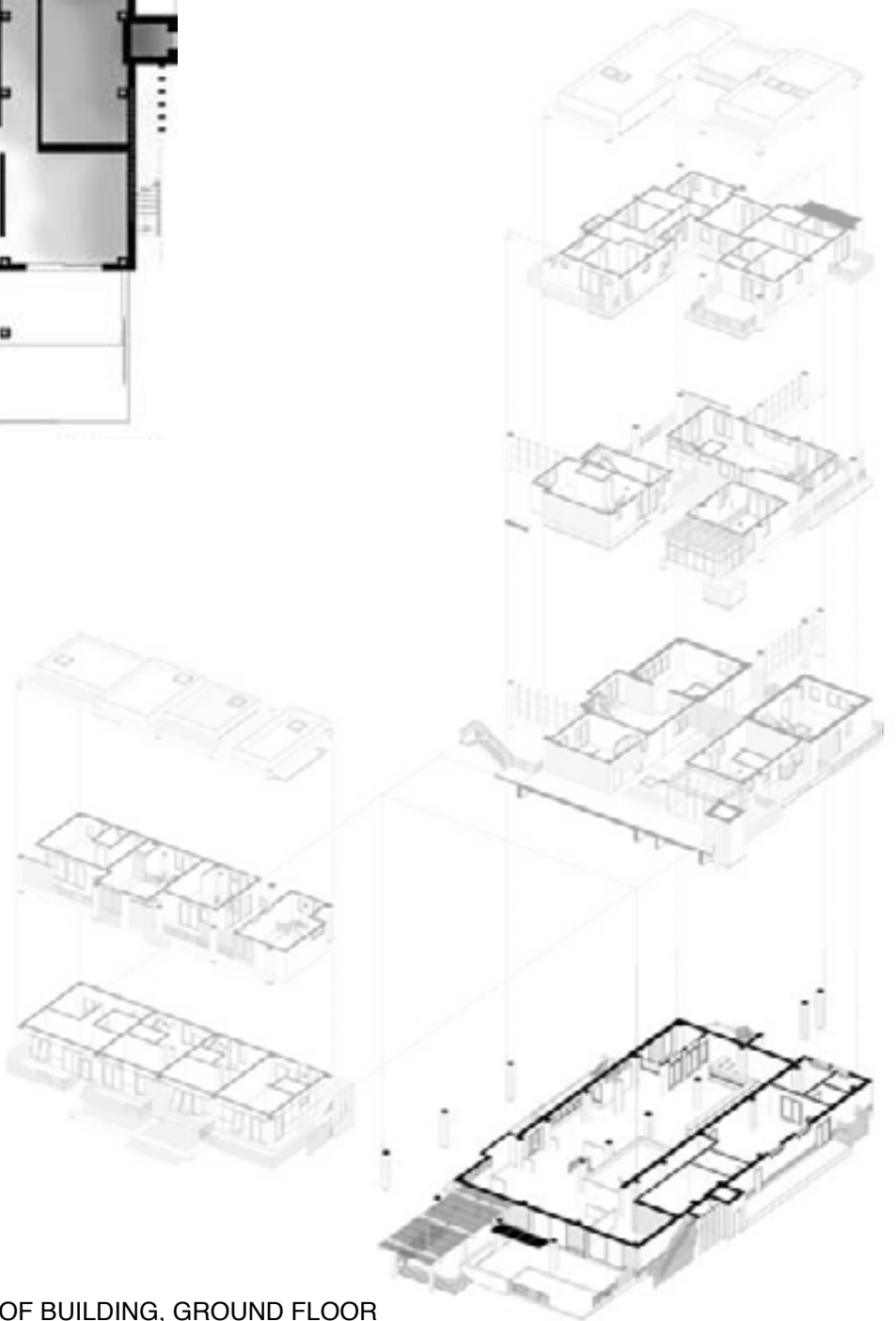
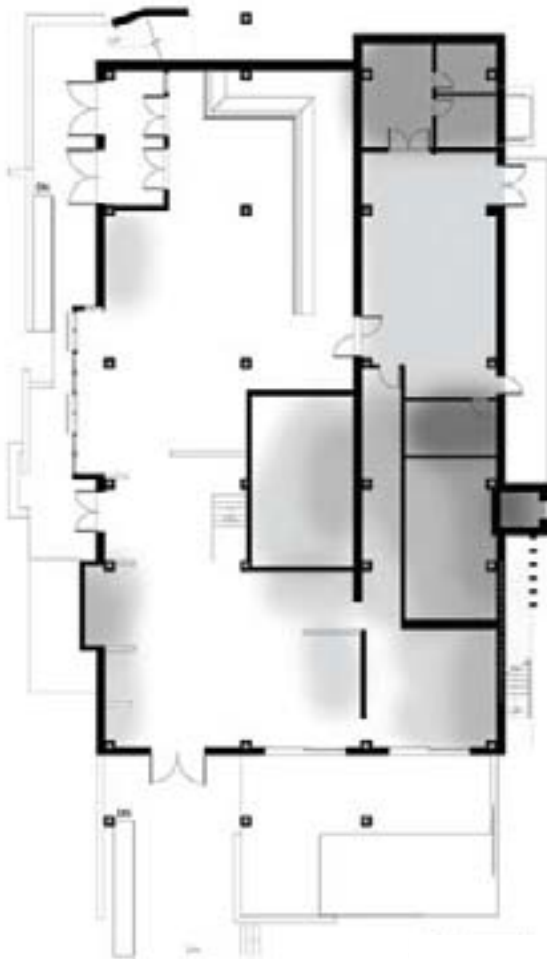
The following pages present the plans of the building in succession. In addition, a “shadow of privacy” plan was also created to demonstrate how the public-private visibility mapping changed depending upon the level, facade elements, and proximity. An exploded axonometric drawing also shows how the level is composed three dimensionally relative to the other levels.



GROUND FLOOR PLAN

“SHADOW OF PRIVACY” PLAN, GROUND FLOOR
Darker areas designate areas more removed from public view.

The ground floor houses the bar-coffee house. Instilling a sense of community and localization, the bar brews a few of its own beers. The southern spaces open up to an outdoor deck area, perfect for sunning while sipping on a cold beer, or relaxing with a good book.



EXPLODED VIEW OF BUILDING, GROUND FLOOR

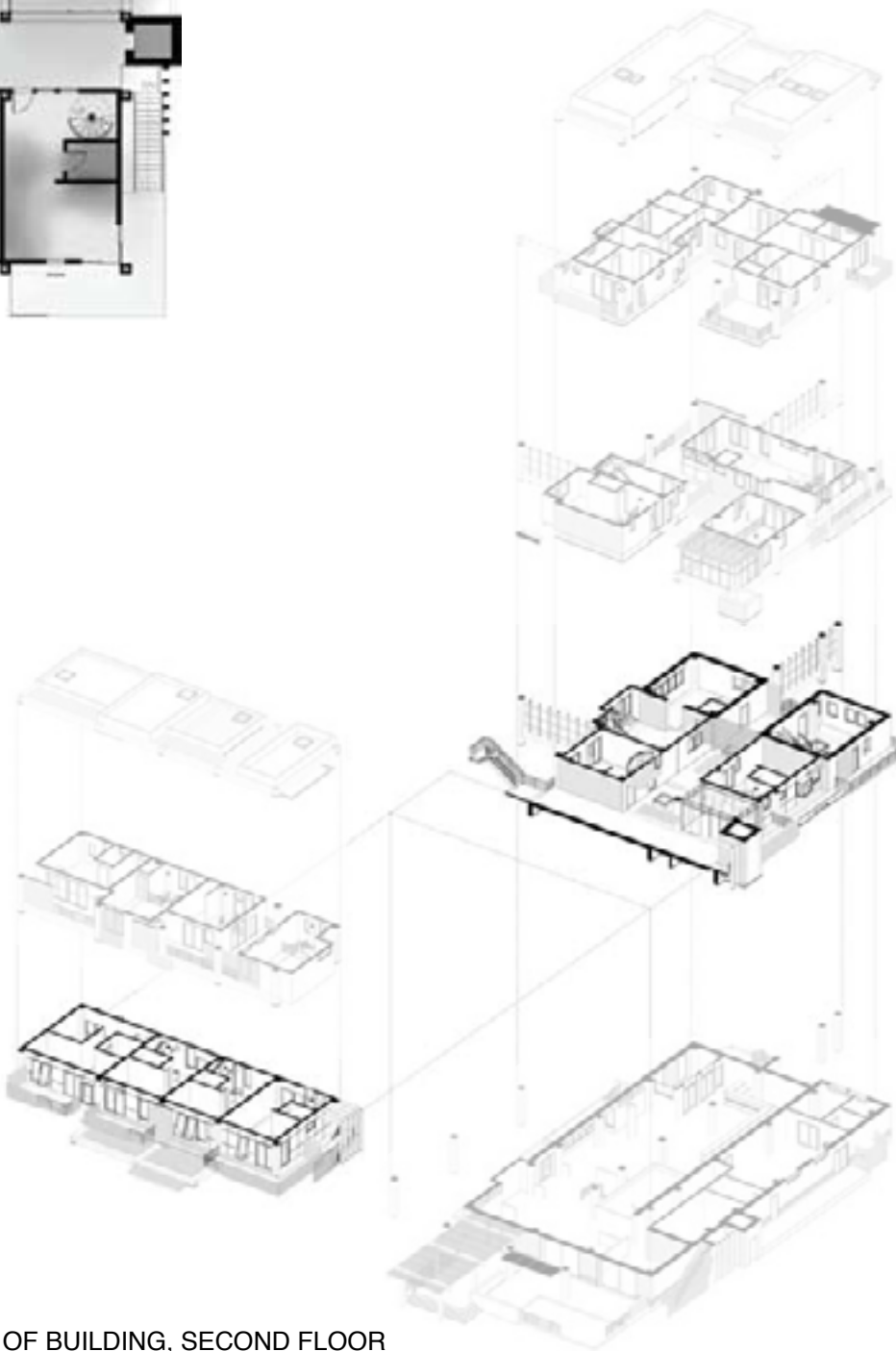


SECOND FLOOR PLAN



“SHADOW OF PRIVACY” PLAN, FIRST FLOOR
Darker areas designate areas more removed from public view.

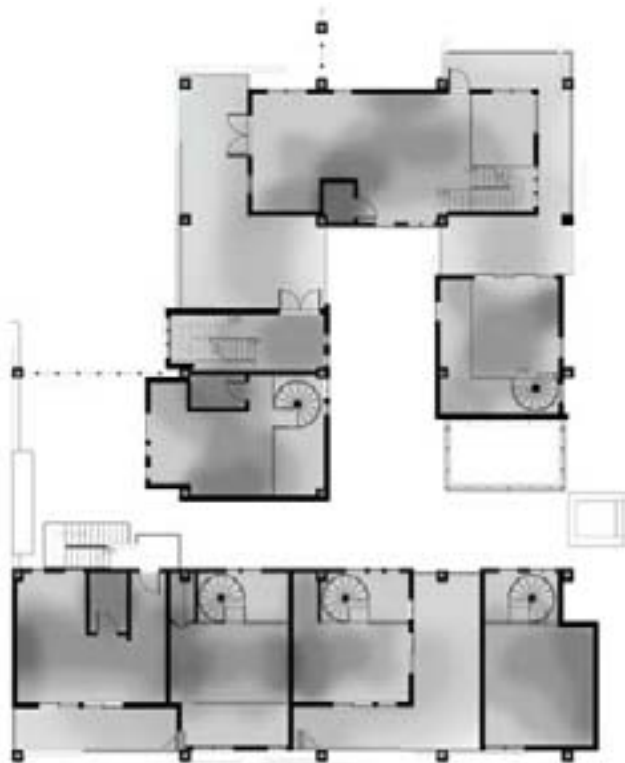
The second floor begins the more private space for the apartments. This floor hosts the courtyard space for the residents, and includes a small common space, purposed as a small library, for communal use. The politicians could share their private collections and provide a diverse group of reading material that would collect and expand over time, itself becoming a timed collection of those who lived there.



EXPLODED VIEW OF BUILDING, SECOND FLOOR

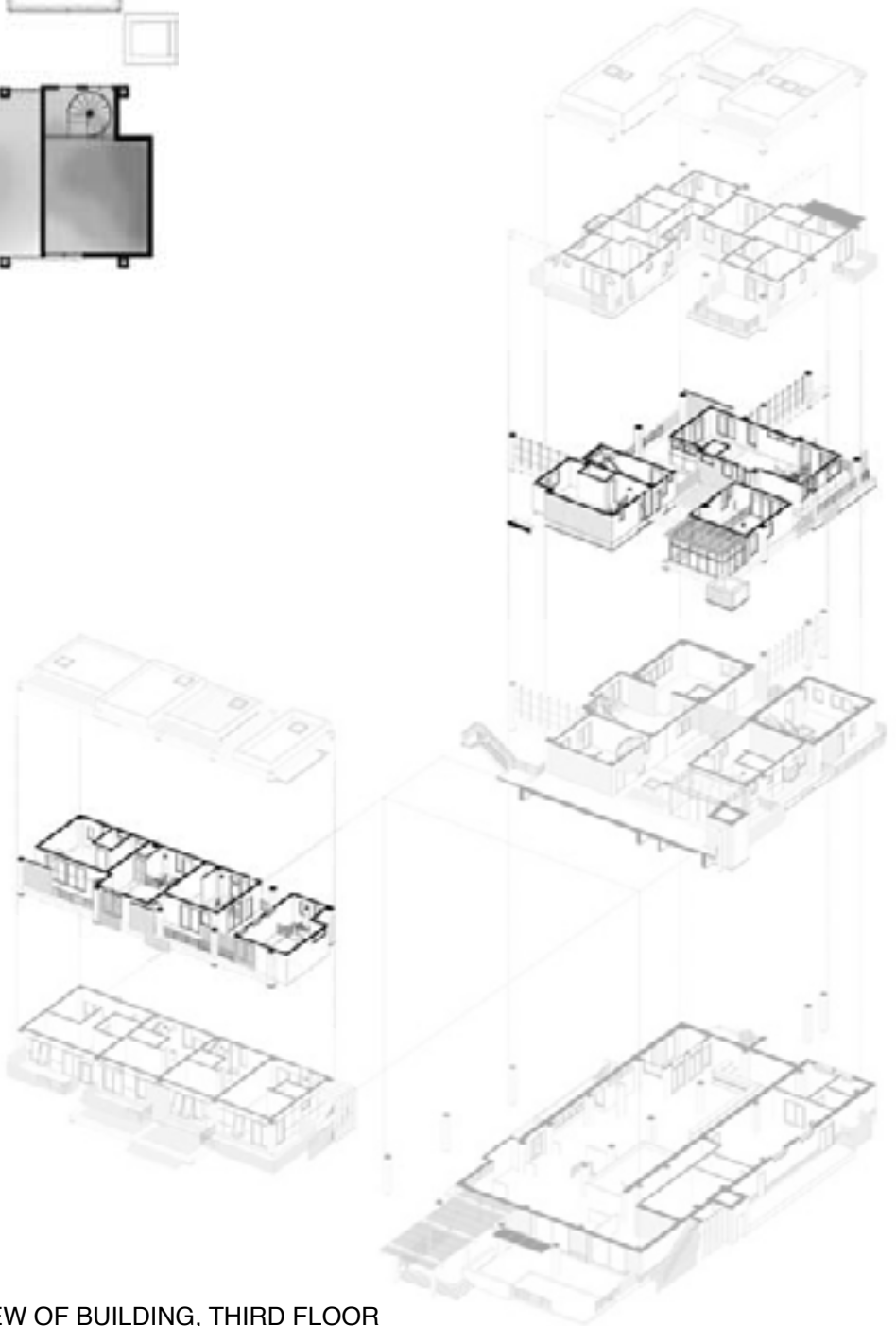


THIRD FLOOR PLAN



“SHADOW OF PRIVACY” PLAN, THIRD FLOOR
It should be noted that the higher floors are less exposed to the general public due to perspective angle.

The third floor hosts a large shared balcony for the politician apartments (located upper left corner), along with several other balconies for individual apartments. Many of them have overlook opportunities into the central courtyard, creating open connections for communication and interaction.



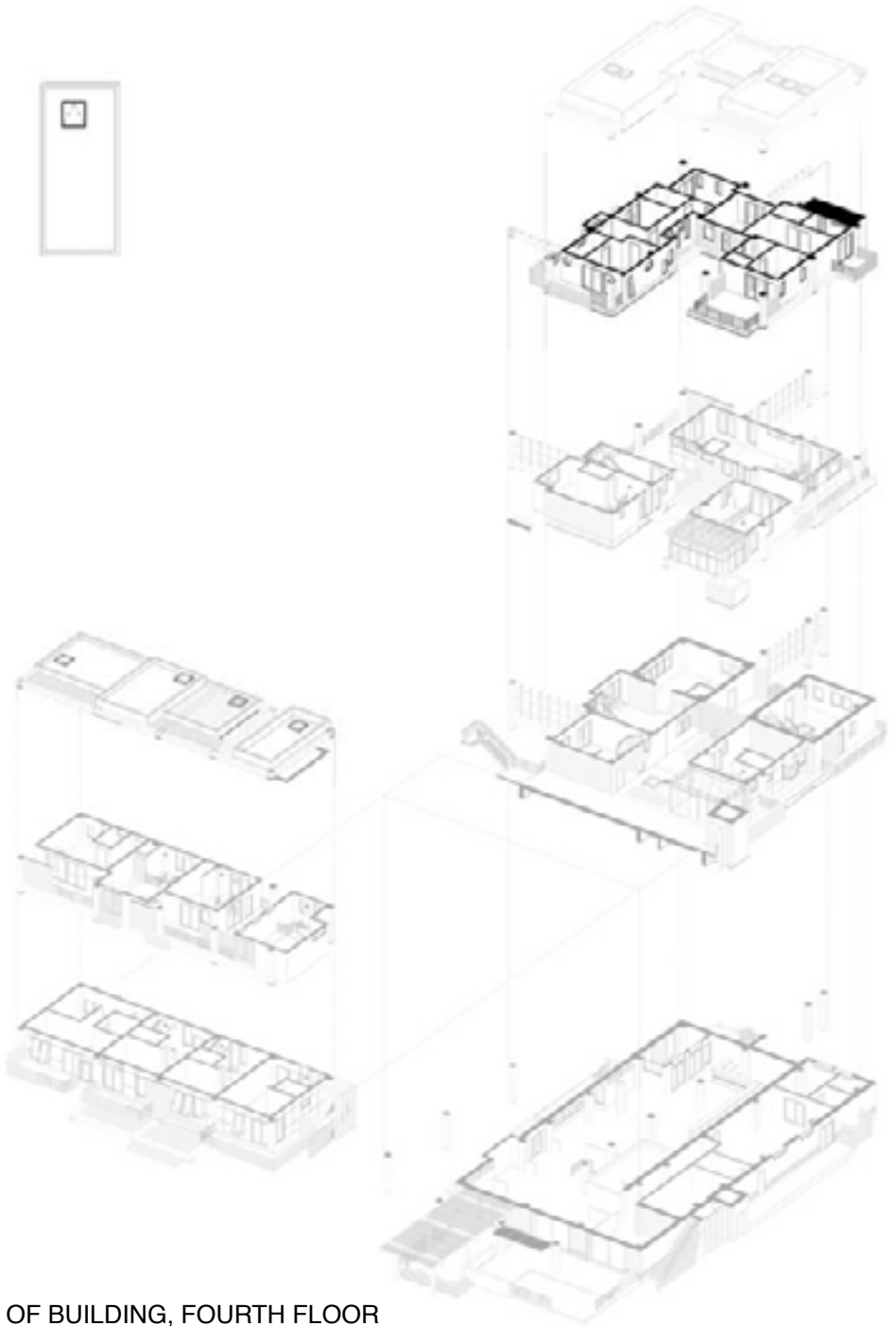
EXPLODED VIEW OF BUILDING, THIRD FLOOR



“SHADOW OF PRIVACY” PLAN, FOURTH FLOOR

It should be noted that the higher floors are less exposed to the general public due to perspective angle.

The fourth floor rises above the rest of complex and hosts the private sleeping quarters of the politician apartments. The intern apartment flat roofs have ample room for vegetative roof systems, creating a wildflower-fauna vista for the residents to reflect on. Many of private rooms also have balconies, creating new thresholds of visibility and publicity for the politicians.



EXPLODED VIEW OF BUILDING, FOURTH FLOOR

THE PUBLIC PLAZA FACADE

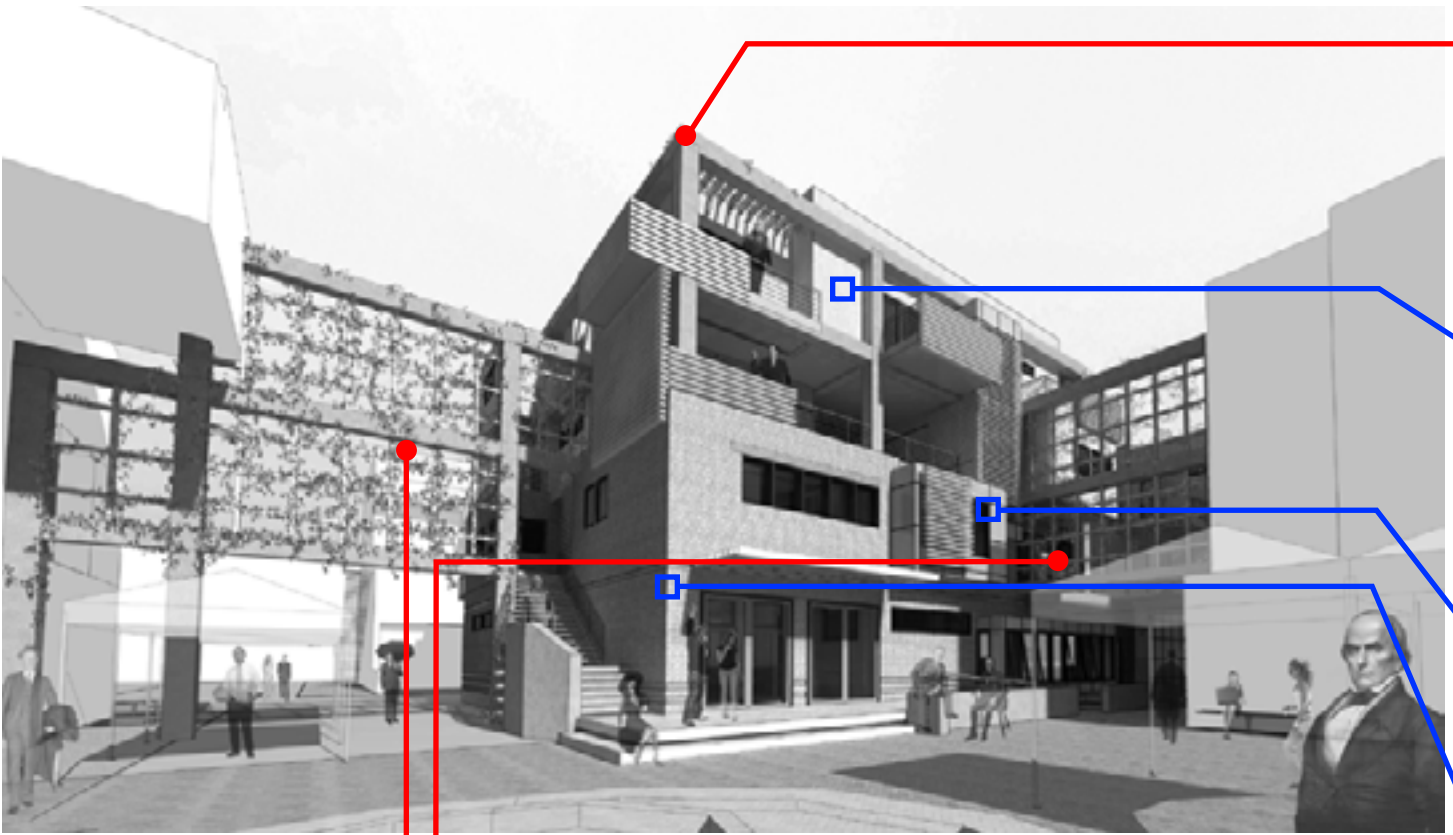
The view at right shows the north western corner of the building that sits on the Eastern Market plaza. This corner presents itself to the public space and provides a series of inviting and overflowing spaces to bring the visitor in. A low deck at the entrance doors to the bar is at just the right height to encourage sitting and gathering, before or after getting a fine, cold beverage from the bar. The large, inviting trellis “arms” touch and embrace the adjacent buildings, drawing the eye across the facades and screen elements.

Critical to the design of this building corner was the notion of creating spaces within the apartments that are both private and semi-public. The large inset balcony on the third floor, for example, is shared between the two politician apartments. It was conceived as a place where the politicians could open up the mini bar and have a drink together, muse over the latest news while looking out across the plaza, waving at friends that pass by. Or, using the sliding louver screens, could be enclosed, and a small gathering of like-minded pundits could hash out a few more hare-brained solutions (or schemes, depending) without the meddling eye of the public. The driving notion to this part of the design was creating the architectural opportunities within which diverse types of interaction and socializing could happen, with varying levels of public interaction included in the possibilities.





"Necessarily, a transformation must occur as one passes through the portals of a third place. Worldly status claims must be checked at the door in order that all within may be equals. The surrender of outward status, or leveling, that transforms those who own delivery trucks those who drive them into equals, is rewarded by acceptance on more humane and less transitory grounds. Leveling is a joy and relief to those of higher and lower status in the mundane world."
– Oldenburg, p. 25.



MARKET PLAZA PERSPECTIVE, WEST ELEVATION

PLAZA TRELLIS

As the building is situated on the south-eastern corner of the market plaza, and bordered on both sides by passageways to other interior spaces, the urban character needed a little more spatial definition. By extending the concrete grid structure out into the passageways, the trellis becomes open arms that help define the plaza edge. The trellis uses wood and wire supports to create a tighter grid upon which ivy can be grown. This, in time, would effectively create a dense, yet semi-permeable facade for the passageways. In combination with small trees and landscaping, the vegetative areas would help denote what is public space. Upon passing through the trellises, one would be aware that he/she has passed beyond the tourist perspective and is beginning to explore the city in its own right.





STRUCTURE

After much deliberation, a structural concrete column and floor system was developed as a grid, rigid and uniform, with many interpretations and metaphors. It is the grid of structure, emphasizing solidarity through uniformity and it reflects the strength and security that good government provides. It acts as a strong frame within which the parts of the various facades, screens and railings can be juxtaposed, demonstrating the variability of ideas and peoples within government, and the various facets of the politician and his public life.



MATERIAL 3: PRIVATE: FLUSH FACADE

In the most private of spaces, the wall construction is as seamless as possible. This smoother facade is indicative of the private bedrooms of the residents, the place where the all public burdens are removed; it is a sanctuary of respite from the critical eyes of enemies on all sides. The lower programmatic spaces have more detail and texture, comparatively, and this gradient concept is a subtle nod to the Renaissance Palazzos found throughout Italy. The public level of these buildings had rough-hewn stone, while the upper floors became progressively more refined relative to height.



MATERIAL 2: SEMI-PRIVATE: METAL PANEL SYSTEMS

As the programmatic spaces become more public, the facades of the different rooms vary to reflect the privacy level. For the semi-private spaces of each apartment, which primarily are the living spaces (kitchen, dining, living), a panelled wall system is employed to reflect a reserved nature, reflecting a space that is removed from the public's access but still visible. Panel wall systems are not as directly proportional to the everyday man, and unlike the brick, is not as democratic as it requires more work and a more specialized workforce.



MATERIAL 1: PUBLIC: BRICK

Brick was chosen as the base material for the public space. Bricks, by nature, are shaped and sized to fit in any man's hand. Using this material in the most public program areas reflects the democratic nature of both the space and the material. The walls made of brick also wrapped around the exterior of the structural grid, enclosing the concrete structure and symbolizing the public's foundational and supportive presence in the political landscape. Finally, the rougher texture of the base of the building reflects the historical motif of rustication of older styles of architecture.



The western elevation, shown in the previous page as a part of the Eastern Market Plaza, is presented here as the first of a series of building sections and elevations that begin to graphically present the life and interactions of the politicians that live there. These drawings are collaged with their corresponding plan views in order to present another form of conversation: the dialogue between two drawings and how they can help inform and speak to each other.

Screening elements became central to the project for a variety of reasons. In standard architectural practice, and in the current trends today, screening or louvering a window facade is important in order to reduce solar gain on a building. Within this project, a portion of the louver slats were added for this reason. More critical to the thesis exploration was the desire to create permeable facades that are semi-private and/or semi-public. The louvered railings and screens, in combination with both hung and inset



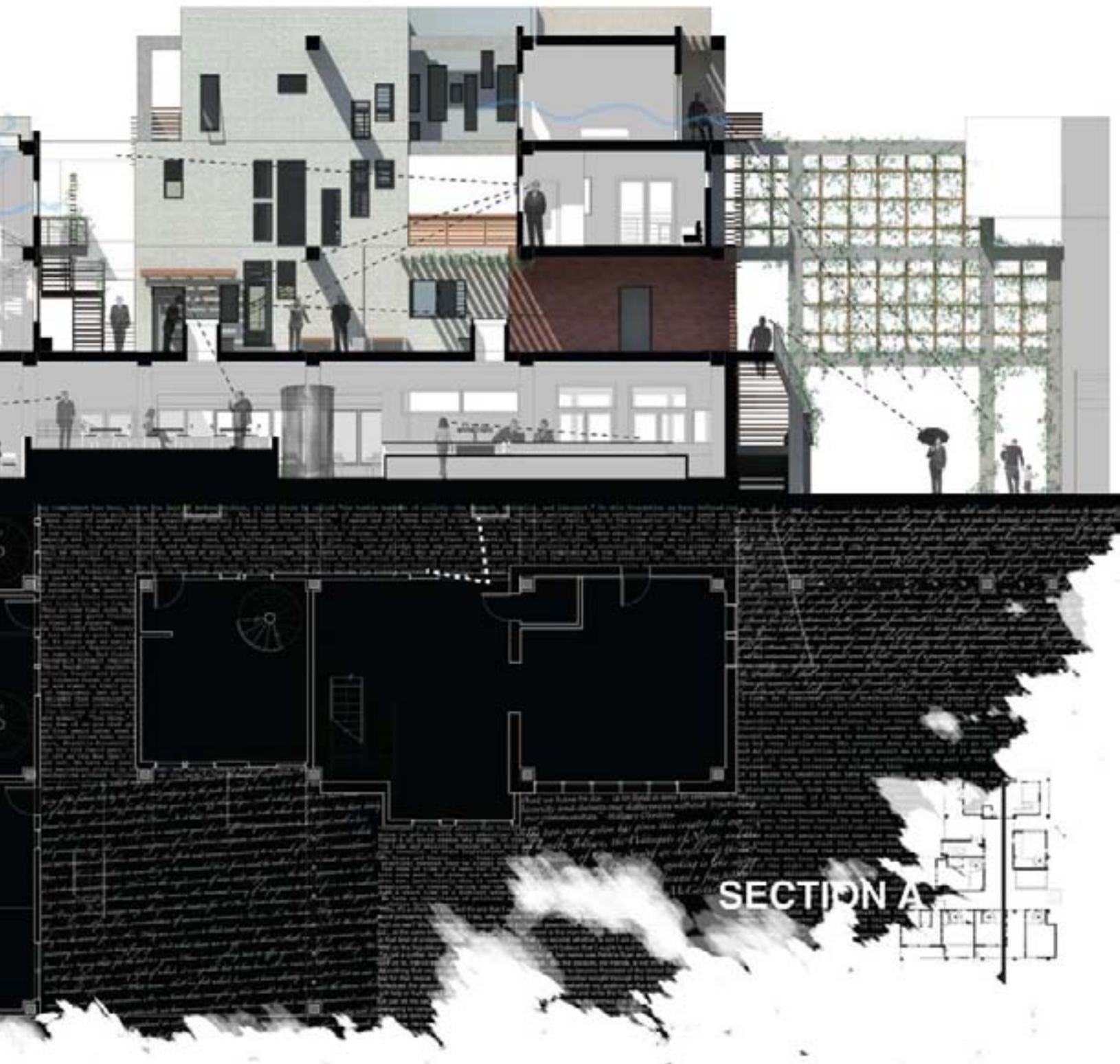
balconies, create a level of interplay between private and public that allows for the different types of interaction to take place. Expanding and creating a depth to the exterior skin of the building became critical in creating these spaces. Where the building cantilevers, it creates a shade below and a deck above. The 7-10 feet on both the inside and outside of the facade became the place most critical to exploring the thesis questions. Is he visible? Can she be heard? Who is she with? Where did he go? Who's up there? There he is...

These sorts of questions are attuned to the environments that this building wishes to create. Diagrammed here as dashed lines, possible connections (verbal, visual, or auditory) are presented on the drawings to best convey the overlaps, interconnects, and the possibilities of communication and dialogue in the building. In addition the interaction between the environment and the building are also indicated in places related to specific environmental design systems. (for example, natural ventilation strategies)

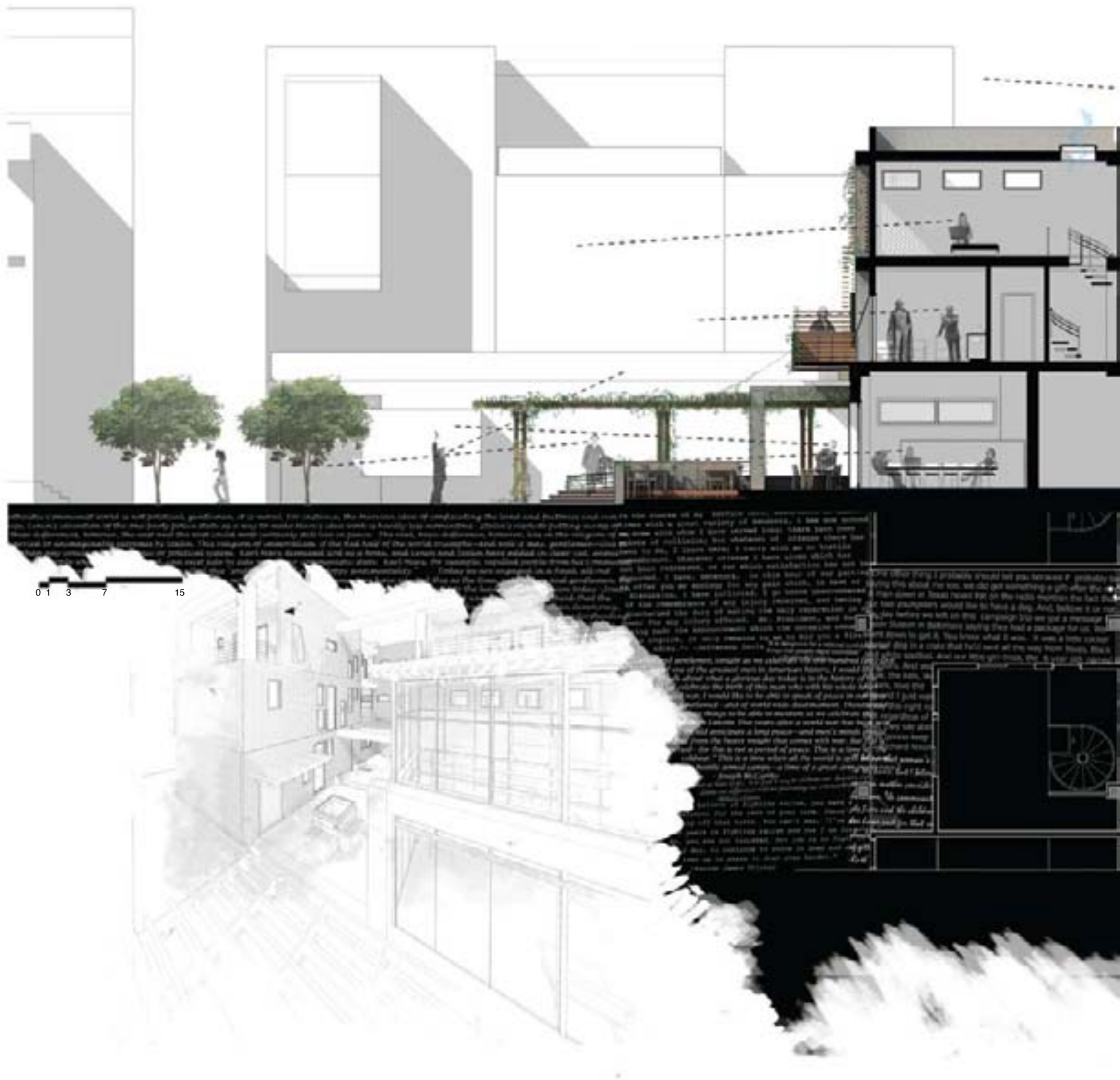


LOWER LEFT: PERSPECTIVE VIEW OF POLITICIANS' COURTYARD 1

64



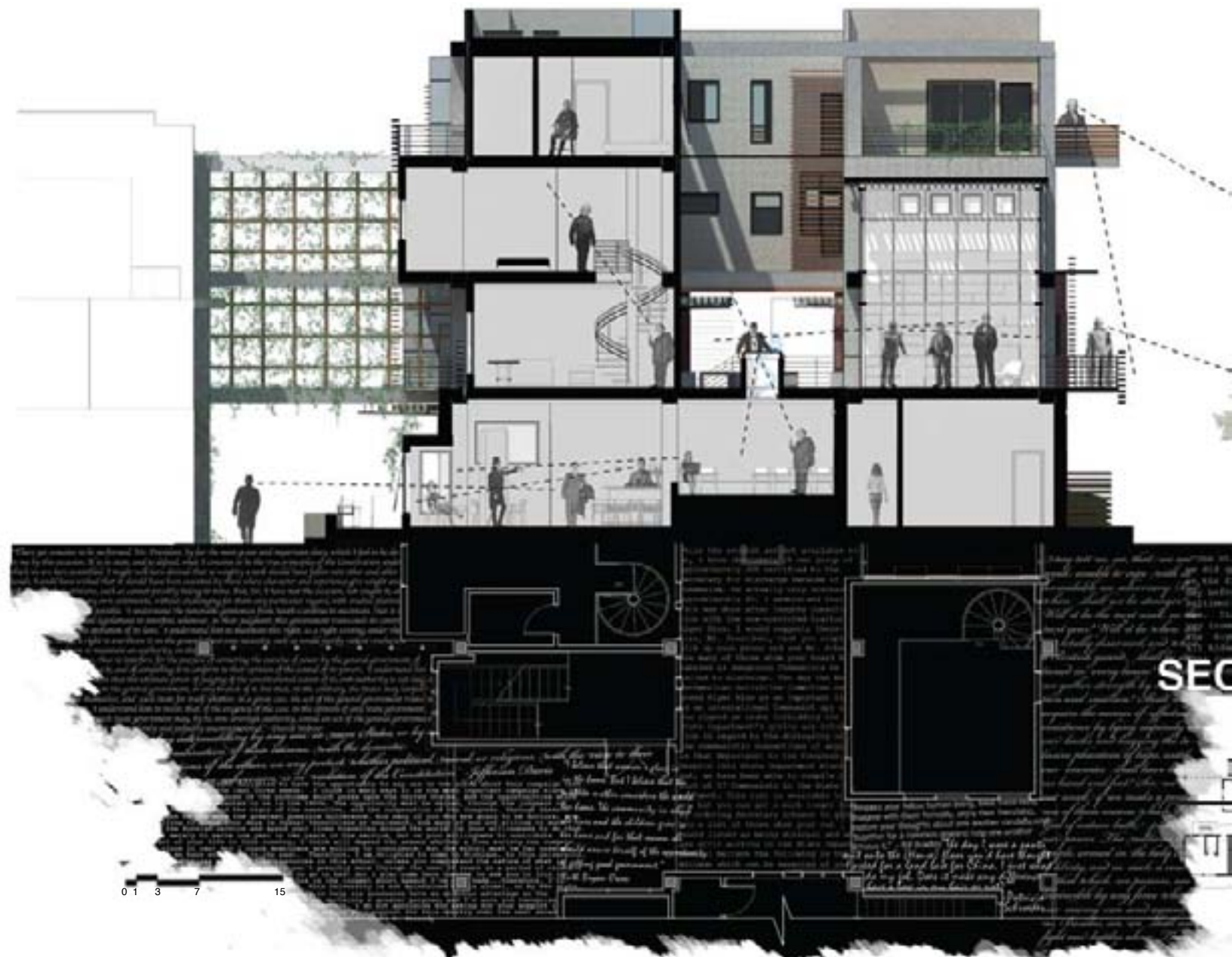
LONGITUDINAL SECTION RUNNING NORTH-SOUTH, SECTION A



LOWER LEFT: PERSPECTIVE VIEW OF POLITICIANS' COURTYARD 2



LONGITUDINAL SECTION RUNNING NORTH-SOUTH, SECTION B

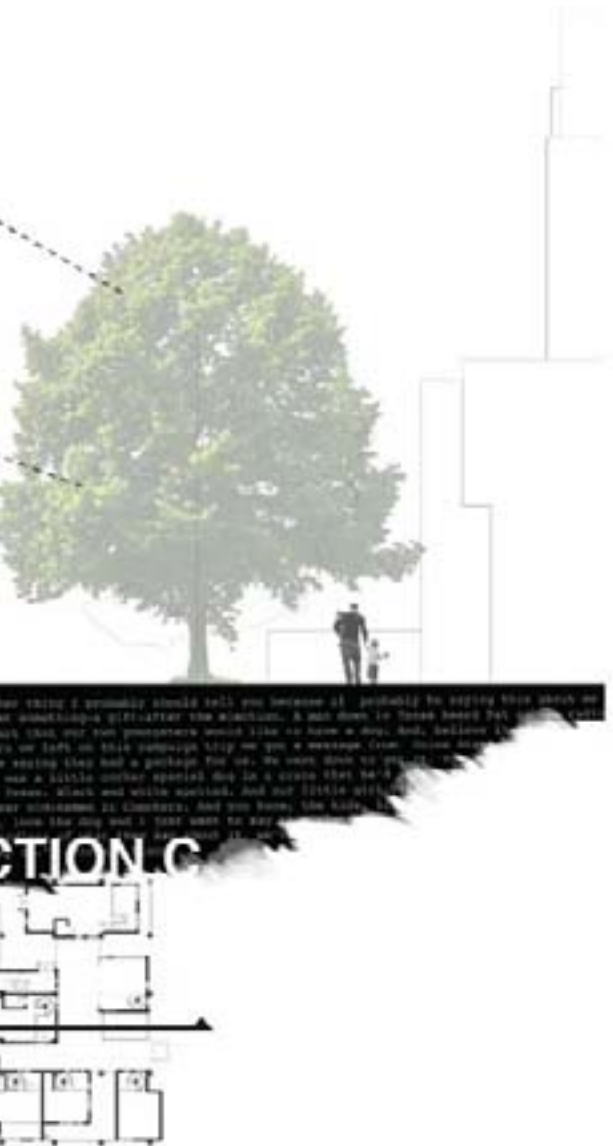


FAMOUS QUOTES AND SPEECH EXCERPTS USED IN DRAWINGS

Second Reply to Hayne, Daniel Webster, 1830
Checkers Speech, Richard Nixon, 1952.
The Cause Endures, Ted Kennedy, 1980.
Give me Liberty or Give me Death, Patrick Henry, 1773.
Enemies From Within, Joseph McCarthy, 1950.
Remarks about the Peace Corps, John F. Kennedy, 1960.
Farewell Address, Jefferson Davis, 1861.

Quotes from:
 Cardiss Collins, Patricia Schoeder, Hillary Clinton, John McCain, Eugene McCarthy, Parren James Mitchell, Bill Bradley, Arthur Wergs Mitchell, Calvin Coolidge, Lloyd Bentsen, Tom Daschle, Julia Butler Hansen, Ruth Bryan Owen

TRANSVERSE SECTION RUNNING EAST-WEST, SECTION C



"A place that is a leveler is, by nature, an inclusive place. It is accessible to the general public and does not set formal criteria of membership and exclusion. There is a tendency for individuals to select their associates, friends, and intimates from among those closest to them in social rank. Third places, however, serve to expand possibilities, whereas formal associations tend to narrow and restrict them. Third places counter the tendency to be restrictive in the enjoyment of others by being open to all and by laying emphasis on qualities not confined to status distinctions current in the society. Within third places, the charm and flavor of one's personality, irrespective of his or her station in life, is what counts. In third place, people may make blissful substitutions in the rosters of their associations, adding those they generally enjoy and admire to those less-preferred individuals that fate has put at their side in the workplace or even, perhaps, in their family."

- Oldenburg, p. 24.



SENATORS USED AS SCALE FIGURES
IN DRAWINGS:

“Famous 9” Senators

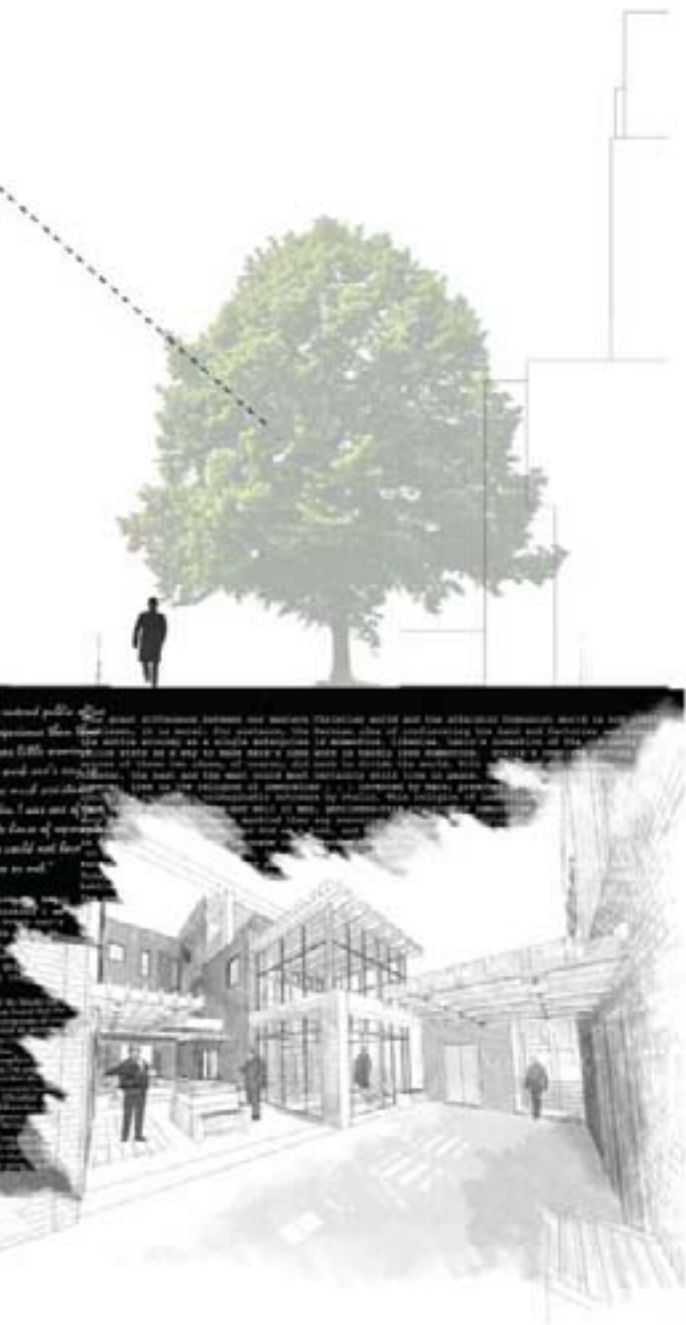
Arthur Vandenburg
Robert Wagner
Oliver Ellsworth
Roger Sherman
Robert Taft

Henry Clay
Robert La Follette
Daniel Webster
John C. Calhoun

Other Notable Senators

Richard Nixon
John F. Kennedy

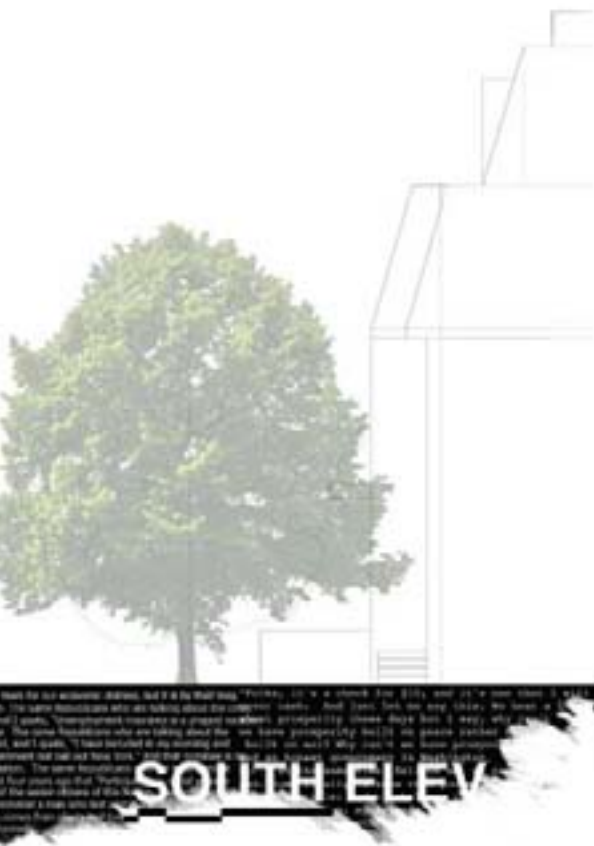
TRANSVERSE SECTION RUNNING EAST-WEST, SECTION D



LOWER RIGHT: PERSPECTIVE OF POLITICIANS' COURTYARD



The south elevation faces into the interior block courtyard, and is a bit more removed from the public that is present in the Eastern Market Plaza mentioned previously. Here, the bar opens up to a large outdoor deck with seating area for patrons and guests. The concrete column structure extends out of the building to provide a ivy trellis for the seating area. Another longer and more predominant wooden trellis extends from the interior courtyard to the entrance door, creating a new language and conversation with courtyard, and blurring the lines where public space and commercial lot lines are configured. This is done for the sole purpose of creating a greater number of places and opportunities of interactions and engagements. Strict confinement, in contrast, isolates conversation; overlapping spaces and uses promote conversation.



The following perspective rendering presents a view of the interior block courtyard and the outdoor seating area for the bar. It also shows a secondary staircase, one very different from the stair on the Eastern Market plaza. Tucked away and louvered for limited visibility, this is the private stair, with nearby elevator access. The many facets of politics often demand elected persons to act in a variety of different manners depending on the social condition at the time. This stair has many potential uses that acknowledge the less-savory parts of politics: it is the less known stair, for security reasons; the late night escape-from-annoying-constituents stair; the I-am-innocent-but-going-for-a-run stair; the shady-friend stair; the we-can't-be-seen-in-public stair. It is a plethora of interactions simply oriented along a stair.



PERSPECTIVE VIEW OF SOUTH FACADE AND BLOCK COURTYARD



“The transformation in passing from the world of mundane care to the magic of the third place is often visibly manifest in the individual. Within the space of a few hours, individuals may drag themselves into their favorite club or tavern a few hours later with a broad grin and an erect posture.” - Oldenburg, p. 26.



REFLECTIONS

OR, LET'S TALK ABOUT IT MORE

A SHORT HISTORY

And there you have it, my friends: that was the journey of my graduate thesis exploration. As I stated at the beginning, I thoroughly enjoyed the entire process, though in retrospect, there were a lot of headaches. I am pretty sure that during my thesis year, I checked more books from the library (via inter-library loans) than in the previous five years of collegiate education combined. If any of my committee members suggested a book, I immediately attempted to locate it and at least flip through it. I admit this really opened a number of tangent paths and ideas that never made into the project or this book, and perhaps that is best.

The sketch shown here at right I drew about three quarters of the way through the entire process. I feel it accurately describes my thesis path. As the drawing shows, I originally had a very different project initially planned. When project submittals were due at the beginning of the academic year, I originally wrote that I wished to pursue solely fencing as inspiration, with a fencing center being the desired program, perhaps in a wooded or natural setting. I don't think I could have ended up with anything closer to the opposite.

The original inspiration to use fencing as my point of theoretical exploration came at the end of my first year of graduate school. While one of my friends was defending his thesis, I noted that he was using a three foot brightly colored dowel to point at his drawings that covered the entire wall. I remembered back to the year of fencing I had taken while in high school and decided that this would be a great topic to explore the architectural implications of.

Pos. 3
Progression
in a
Nutsell



FENCING
LEADER



NAAAAA
AHHHH!!!

INTERACTION

SPACE

WALLS

PUBLIC/
PRIVACY

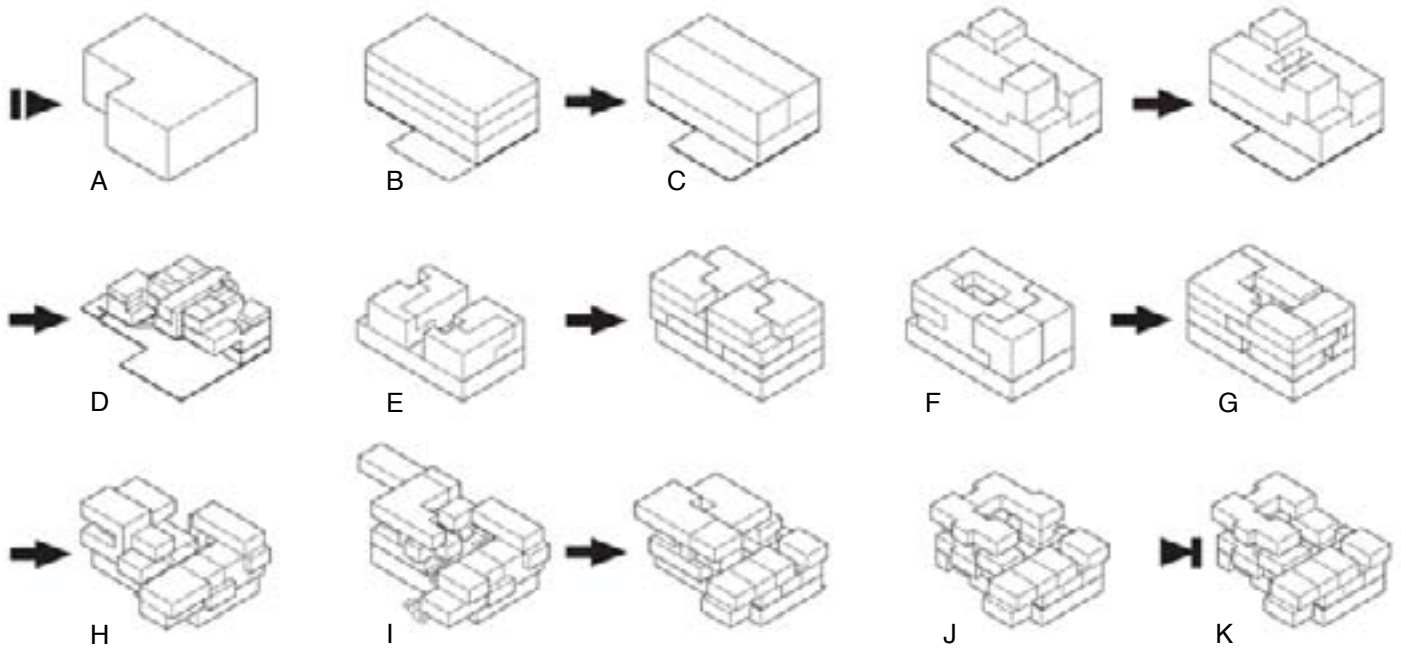
POLITICS.

WHERE
AM I?

SOCIAL
INTERACTION
AND
ARCHITECTURE

WOW,
COOL...

YES,
I'LL
TAKE
A
DEER...



A - Massing Footprint
 B - Courtyard Passageway
 C - Twin Apartments concept
 D - Presented at Midterm
 E - 4 unit complex
 F - Overlap/Intersect Apartments

G - Communal Atrium
 H - 7-10 Apartments
 I - Split Mass for Light and Air
 J - Creating Hierarchy
 K - Designated Communal Study

Under the practically unanimous recommendation of my committee, fencing would be an inspiration and not as target program. This led to exploring fencing as a binary language of opening and closing, as wall and window. From this the wall sketches in plan and section were generated. This only got me so far and by keeping everything on the drawing board, eventually the concept of politics was introduced. The door really opened up for me once I fully embraced the idea. I really struggled with some of the wall-window theory and where that would lead me. But as I stated, upon exploring ideas such as ideal public and social space and how they relate to conversation and dialogue, everything really opened up.

Originally, and even now at the end of this journey, I am still very interested in the original idea I conceived involving politics. As you can see above, the progression of the project began from a twin apartment configuration. I was fascinated by the idea of having the politicians living next door to each other and that the parti wall between them could then develop as a conversation between the two apartments. I still find the idea intriguing.

In any case, the design pushed down a different path, and then it was suggested to consider developing several units and even developing units within the neighboring buildings in my urban plan. There were several weeks of meddling with interlocking apartment configurations



that aren't shown here in the book and exist only in a lost virtual state. The better of these explorations were pushed into reality when I created a wide variety of paper models to use like Lego building blocks upon the massing model to understand how the apartments and spaces could be configured along the site.

You may have noted that the urban block scheme varied slightly in the various massing models, 3D models, and drawings. This was an intentional move to help convey the possibilities of what could exist rather than defining in a rigid fashion what it has to be. What mattered most was the importance of texture and variability within the urban proposal. This variation of forms allows the nooks and crannies to be-

come places of discovery and habitation, and not homogenized. This idea in my opinion is critical to creating spaces for social interaction. Every space cannot and should not be the same experience. (Sorry Wal-Mart...)

An interesting experiment I used for the first time in my thesis was the "composite ideogram." Coined by Douglas Darden and used extensively in his book, "Condemned Building", it juxtaposes several chosen images with that of a combined transparent collage. Though for his projects he used them to literally influence (or reflect) the building form, I used the concept to think about related interpretations of the theoretical ideas. What is fencing? What is the building? What is the city? What is the politician?



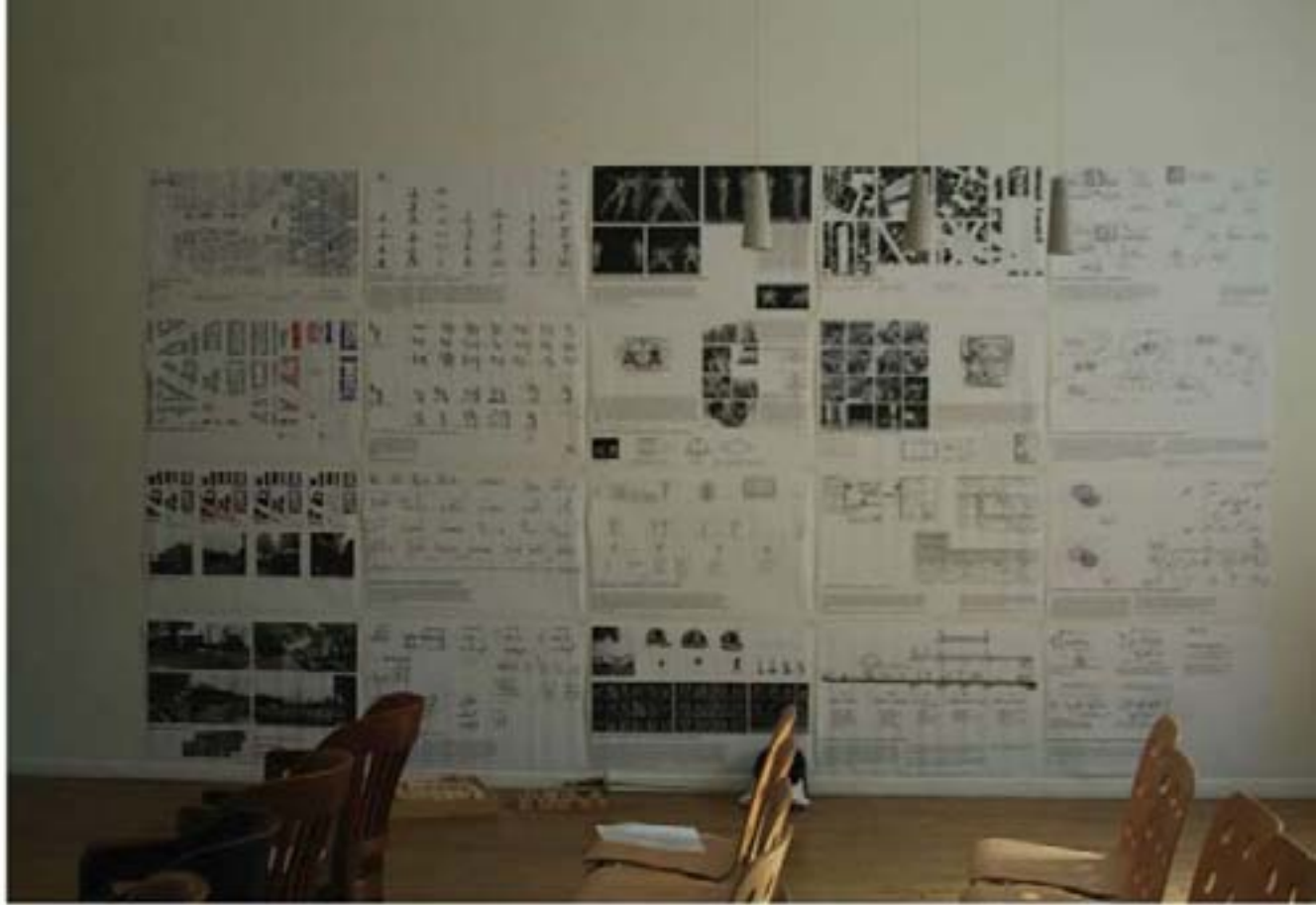
WHERE IT GOES FROM HERE

I felt it extremely important to include a section that discusses what is left for the project, the feedback from the defense, and the major struggles I had along the way. The following paragraphs will attend to these points for your contemplation.

The largest issue by far that I struggled with was the theoretical exploration of the project in relation to structural and architectural material. The project, from my perspective, was always an exploration of space and people in that space, and less directly on form. (Obviously, they go hand in hand.) The overlapping and interlocking units were originally conceived spatially and in relation to each other. I knew based on the dimensions that I was not creating any sort of impossible form that could not stand up in reality; the question became how can the thesis exploration itself be explored by the structural system.

As mentioned previously, when the project was smaller in scope (twin apartments) I was very much interested in direct connections and the language of the architecture creating its own interaction and discussion. As the project and theory developed, the notion became how people interact with each other and what space can be designed to create interaction. I guess the nature of the question veered in an offshoot direction.

The building, in its final iteration, employed an organized grid of concrete columns that tied into structural floor slabs, creating the structural and visual uniformity that the rooms, windows and facade elements then were juxtaposed against. As it was, with the many insets, offsets, loft apartments and two story spaces within the various units, this was a struggle organize, but it ended up working nicely.



The structural exploration did not begin in this manner however. One of the first directions I explored was in creating large, massive concrete walls that intersected the complex in a seemingly haphazard manner. These thick concrete walls would do several things. Structurally they created a place for floor slabs to connect into and cantilever off of, and for a while, the rest of the structure was going to be light steel framed. These walls, in addition, created a new language within the apartments, and because of the various points that they intersected the apartments, began to morph to meet the needs of each unit. In one, the wall separated public from private, another, it framed the kitchen entrance, or the bathroom wall; the walls became carved up, used, and stitched together. The metaphor of using these walls as a weaving stitch was explored, even into extending them out and stitching the building to the site and the city.

The problem with this architectural solution was that it felt a bit forced, and as the complex is already a relatively small square footage, these thick concrete walls cramped many of the units. The concept is still beautiful in my opinion, and one could be explored in another project. But for me to continue with this solution would require me to go back to square one in terms of unit organization, and in turn would be a completely different project. As my thesis explorations were primarily in human use of spaces, it was decided that the structural question should be considered and needed to be tightened, but that it cannot be the kill-switch for the project. As I wrestled this question at length, I went through several iterations of structure before settling on that which was presented.

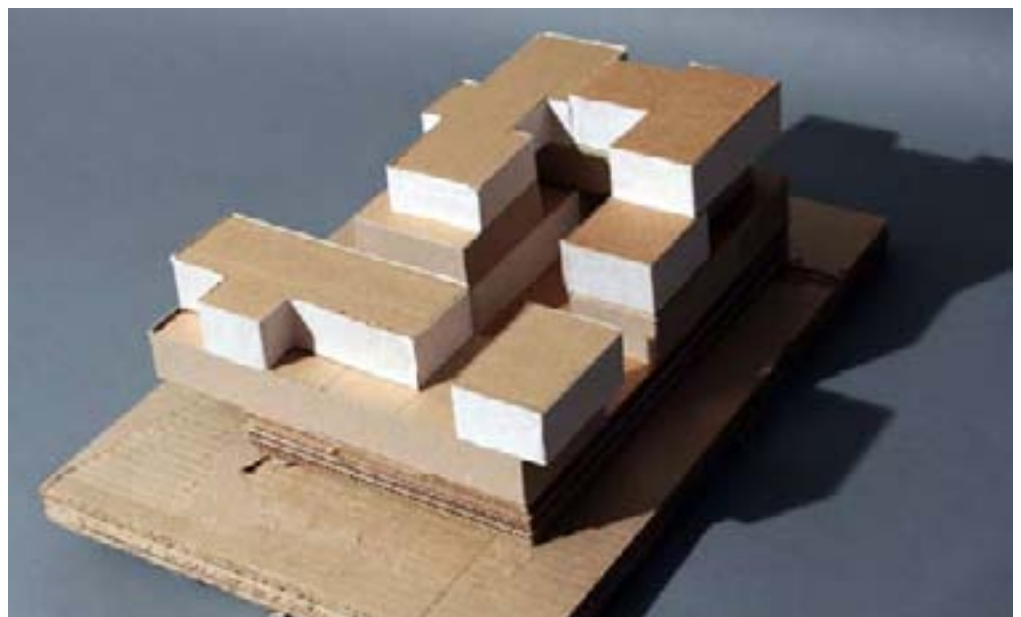
At right are photographs of the different massing models. The massive-wall structural solution, found in the top image, was now out. I needed to find a solution that would work. The next step came in the second image, when the notion of using an all frame system to support the building. This proved problematic, however, due the various overlaps, and two-story loft spaces; in this solution, the structural grid was an absolute mess. Also, there was a general fear that because of its rather unorganized grid, the building would not stand up to shear winds. All of these were pertinent issues.

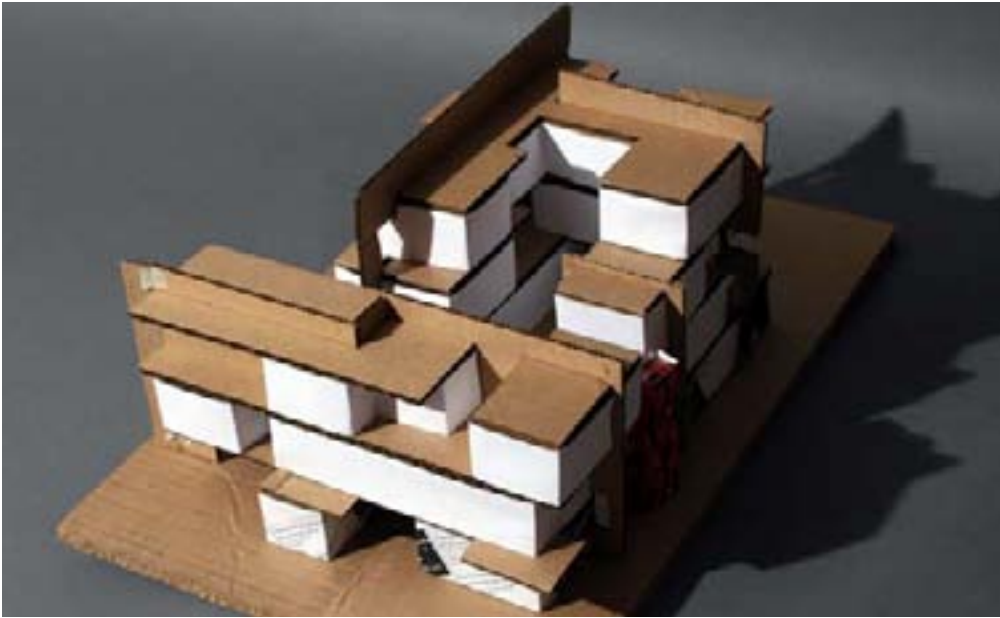
The direction shifted finally to using a monolithic concrete structural system. By tying the vertical columns into the horizontal structural slabs, the “shear fear” was resolved. More shifting and reorganizing the units led to a simpler, refined structural grid. This cleared up the “reality of gravity” in the project. About the same time of this solution, the revelations of the politician as a faceted figure were surfacing. By emphasizing the structural grid in the facade created an opportunity to juxtapose variable elements; in the end, this notion was embraced and played up in both the structure and in the facade elements.

The final defense continued to contemplate this question of how the structure embraces the theoretical direction. The next step, all parties agreed, would be to begin morphing the concrete structure to help distinguish the space and the uniqueness of certain places. How could a thickened or double hung slab increase security for sensitive senatorial discussions? How could the columns reflect the private-public nature of particular portions of the building? Further exploration was suggested in how the private-public relationship within each unit was organized, how it would change over time (day, night, year, decade) and how the life of the spaces would change after it is no longer a politician apartment complex. These suggestions and comments helped me in reflecting on the parts of the presentation that I did not fully flesh out or present in an effective manner.

This book documents what was accomplished in the thesis exploration. These questions, though partially unresolved, are left unanswered, so that you and I may contemplate the next iteration in our own way. Where will that conversation lead us?

MASSING MODEL EXPLORING
LEVELS OF PRIVACY BASED
ON PROGRAM AND LEVEL





EARLIEST MASSING MODEL
EXPLORING THE MONOLITHIC
SHEAR WALLS AS CONCEPT



MASSING MODEL EXPLORING
COLUMN AND FRAME STRUCTURE



MASSING MODEL EXPLORING
CONCRETE COLUMN AND
FLOOR SLAB STRUCTURE.
(FINAL ITERATION)

ON WRITING THIS BOOK

I apologize to the lone reader still engaged in my long winded narrative. One could argue that my rambling reflects the nature of the orator-politician, the primary user of my project. If you believe it, then that's just grand. I simply wish to explain as best I can the many facets to project and the process that shaped it. One of my committee members made a point of telling me multiple times that a graduate architectural thesis project is (or should be) academically equivalent to a term or thesis paper for other graduate degrees. This would imply that clearly defining the problem, approach, and solution is critical to the success (academically) of the thesis. I may have also interpreted that to include plenty of writing. Again, my apologies.

I had initially always wished to include a large reflection section for a plethora of reasons. For one, I have read many thesis books in which I always wondered what the author would say if they could or had to say more. More importantly, what they would say about their own process and the dead-end ideas they decided not to pursue within their projects. What we choose throw away is just as important as what we keep, and by explaining a bit about my process, perhaps another student will pick up something useful.

If you are that student reading this in hopes of collecting some useful tidbits, I hope I have been helpful. They said (at every stage of my project) that I would never stop thinking about my thesis despite it being "done." This is very, true. Even right now I am redesigning the whole thing in my head. There is no right or wrong answer, and, in a sense, there is only your answer, so make sure you do it right. (if that even makes sense.)

I realize now that this is not just my story. Since the beginning I had created a growing list of seemingly important quotes from the various readings I traversed. I realize now that these are the interjections of other authors into the conversation between you (the reader) and I (the writer). They have helped form the direction of my thesis narrative and in turn, our "conversation." Other people involved in conversation are my committee members. Unfortunately, I didn't think to write down their quotes or statements relating to the thesis ideas, but they have definitely been a critical piece to my exploration, and one that I am extremely thankful for.

All in all, this thesis project was a good experience to grow and learn from. There is no doubt in my mind that I will continue to mull over both the design and theoretical concepts for a good deal longer than the time it takes to finish this book. Again, thank you for reading, thanks for listening, and if your just finishing that beer in the shady outdoor cafe, don't forget to tip your waitress on the way out.



IMAGES DURING DEFENSE.
EXPLAINING FENCING AND RESEARCH (TOP 2)
A SMALL UNIT MASSING MODEL WAS CREATED FOR
THE AUDIENCE TO PASS AROUND AND PUT TOGETHER

SOURCES CITED

(BY SOURCE, IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE)

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RECOMMENDED READING

NOT REFERENCED BUT WAS READ OR LOOKED OVER DURING THE THESIS PROJECT

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Barbasetti, Lugi. The Art of the Foil. 1932.

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Nobbs, Percy. Fencing Tactics. 1936.

IMAGE CREDIT

(BY CHAPTER)

FAIR USE STATEMENT

This book is documentation for partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Masters degree. The intention of this book is for scholarship and research. The cited images and quotations in this book are used as supplementary material (in terms of size, number, and use). They are used to provide an educational interpretation of the creative theoretical work of the author. This book in no way attempts to compete with or harm the market value of the cited sources. All sketches, diagrams, renderings, and photos were created by the author, unless otherwise noted.

p. v Conceptual collage created by the author. (original pictures modified more than 50% for artistic use) used for educational purposes.

THEORETICAL EXPLORATION

-p. 1 Fencing Image. from the internet public domain for educational purpose.

source: <http://images.google.com/hosted/life/f?q=source:life+fencing&prev=/images%3Fq%3Dsource:life%2Bfencing%26um%3D1%26hl%3Den%26safe%3Doff%26client%3Dsafari%26rls%3Den%26biw%3D1402%26bih%3D764%26tbs%3Disch:10,2165&imgurl=e7eca54b5ef2dced>

- p. 2 Fencing Sketches and diagrams. from Alaux. (see Sources Cited) used for educational purpose.

-p. 3 Fencing Images. from the internet public domain for educational purpose.

source: <http://images.google.com/hosted/life/l?imgurl=774341c14d4dcce4&q=source:life%20fencing&prev=/images%3Fq%3Dsource:life%2Bfencing%26um%3D1%26hl%3Den%26safe%3Doff%26client%3Dsafari%26rls%3Den%26biw%3D1402%26bih%3D764%26tbs%3Disch:10,2880>

source: <http://images.google.com/hosted/life/l?q=source:life+fencing&prev=/images%3Fq%3Dsource:life%2Bfencing%26um%3D1%26hl%3Den%26safe%3Doff%26client%3Dsafari%26rls%3Den%26biw%3D1402%26bih%3D764%26tbs%3Disch:10,2880&imgurl=56bcc2f5db51b8a5>

- p. 4 Conceptual collage created by author.

-p. 5 Diagram created by the author.

- p. 6-14 Drawings by the author.

- p. 15 Conceptual juxtaposition collage created by author.

- p. 16-19 Drawings and diagrams created by the author.

- p. 20 City plans (except of Washington D.C. site) (used for educational purposes) are from:
Jenkins, Eric. To Scale: one hundred urban plans. Routledge: 2008. assorted scanned pages.

IMAGE CREDIT

(BY CHAPTER)

THEORETICAL EXPLORATION (CONTINUED)

- p. 20 Washington D.C. site image created by the author.
- p. 21 Conceptual collage created by the author.

SITE DEVELOPMENT

- 23-41. For these pages:

All pictures were taken by the author.

All drawings and renderings were created by the author using a variety of software. (Revit, CAD, Sketchup, Illustrator, Photoshop)

THE BUILDING

- All model pictures were taken by the author.
- p. 43. Image created by the author.
- p. 44. Conceptual collage.
- p. 47. Diagrams created by the author.
- p. 48. collage embodying conceptual notions. (original pictures modified more than 50% for artistic use) used for educational purposes.
- p. 49. Conceptual collage.
- p. 45, 46, 50-75. Diagrams and images created by the author. All drawings and renderings were created by the author using a variety of software. (Revit, CAD, Sketchup, Illustrator, Photoshop)

REFLECTIONS:

- p. 77-87. For these pages:

All sketches and diagrams were created by the author.

All pictures are taken by the author or with his equipment.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Benjamin Shealy hopes this thesis has contributed to your life's experience in some way, no matter how small. He really enjoyed the process and hopes that it shows in the work presented. He received his Bachelors of Science in Architecture from the Catholic University of America and defended this thesis at the Washington Alexandria Architecture Center, a satellite architecture program of Virginia Tech. At the time of this printing, he resides in Alexandria, VA.

He firmly believes that architecture and politics will both positively influence humanity if they are engaged properly, but he naturally trusts architecture a bit more than politics...