

A
M U S E U M O F V I K I N G
E X P L O R A T I O N

by

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A B S T R A C T

T A B L E O F C O N T E N T S

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THE PAST
WITH YESTERDAY
THE PRESENT
AND THE DREAMS OF
TOMORROW

THE FORD PLANT ON UNION STREET PROVIDES AN OPPORTUNITY TO EXPLORE THE CONTEXTURAL RELATIONSHIP OF THE URBAN GRID AND THE NATURAL EDGE FORMED BY THE WATER (THE POTOMAC RIVER). ALBERT KAHN'S BUILDING IS A SPRING BOARD OF SOLID, SENSITIVELY DESIGNED ARCHITECTURE WHICH CAN LEAD TO A CONTINUATION OF HIS IDEAS OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND HUMANISTIC CONCERNS.

JUST AS IN NATURE'S SELECTIVE SURVIVAL METHODS, ARCHITECTURE DEMANDS THE APPROPRIATENESS OF BUILDINGS FOR THE WELFARE OF THE SITE AND ITS INHABITANTS. THIS EVOLUTIONARY PROCESS IS THE UNDERLYING METAPHOR FOR MY THESIS PROJECT. THE DESIGN WAS GENERATED FROM THE INVESTIGATION OF THE PHYSICAL AND SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT, AS A SYNTHESIS AND UNEARTHING OF MATERIAL AND IMMATERIAL INFLUENCES.

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"THE SPIRITUAL IS NOT TO BE SEPARATED FROM THE MATERIAL
NOR THE WONDERFUL FROM THE ORDINARY.
WE NEED
ABOVE ALL
TO DISENTANGLE OURSELVES
FROM THE HABITS OF SPEECH AND THOUGHT
WHICH SET THE TWO APART
MAKING IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR US TO SEE
THAT THIS
- THE IMMEDIATE, EVERYDAY..EXPERIENCE-
IS IT,
THE ENTIRE AND ULTIMATE POINT FOR THE EXISTENCE OF A UNIVERSE.."

A L L A N W A T T S

REFLECTIONS
OF
WHO WE
ARE



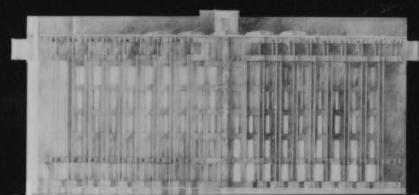
"WHILE THUS HE TALKED WE DID NOT SLOW OUR PACE,
BUT MOVED ON THROUGH THE PRESS OF ANCIENT SHADES
AS THICK AROUND US AS TREES IN A WOOD.
NOT LONG FROM MY AWAKENING WE WALKED
ERE I BEHELD A GLOWING RADIANCE
THAT SHOWN ABOVE THE CIRCUMSCRIBING DARK.
THOUGH SOMEWHAT DISTANT STILL, I COULD PERCEIVE
AN HONORABLE COMPANY DWELT THERE.
'O ORNAMENT OF WISDOM AND OF ART'.."

LOOKING OUT ACROSS THE VAST SEA AND SKY
THEY DREAMT OF FAR AWAY PLACES.



S H O R T D A Y S W I T H L O N G N I G H T S ,

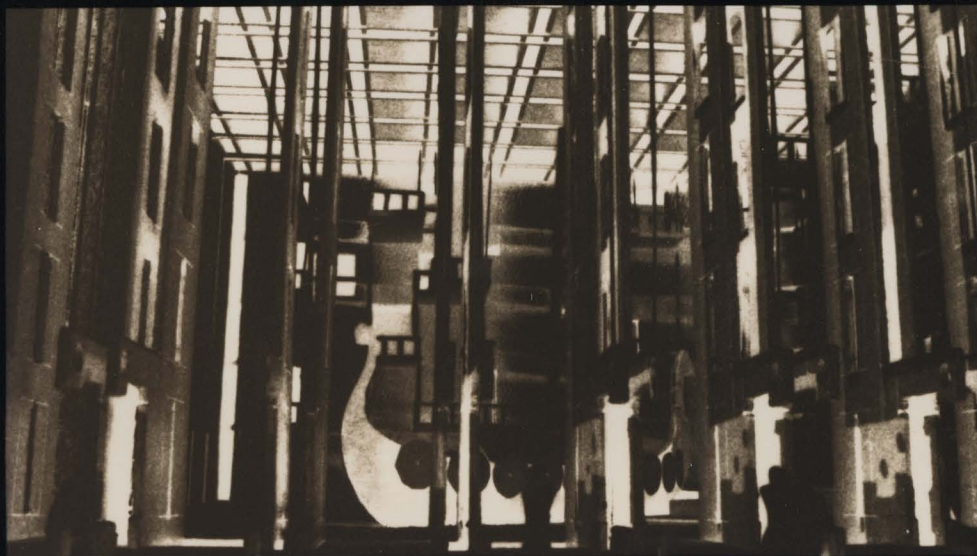
D A R K N E S S P E N E T R A T E D T H E D E P T H S O F T H E I R S O U L S .



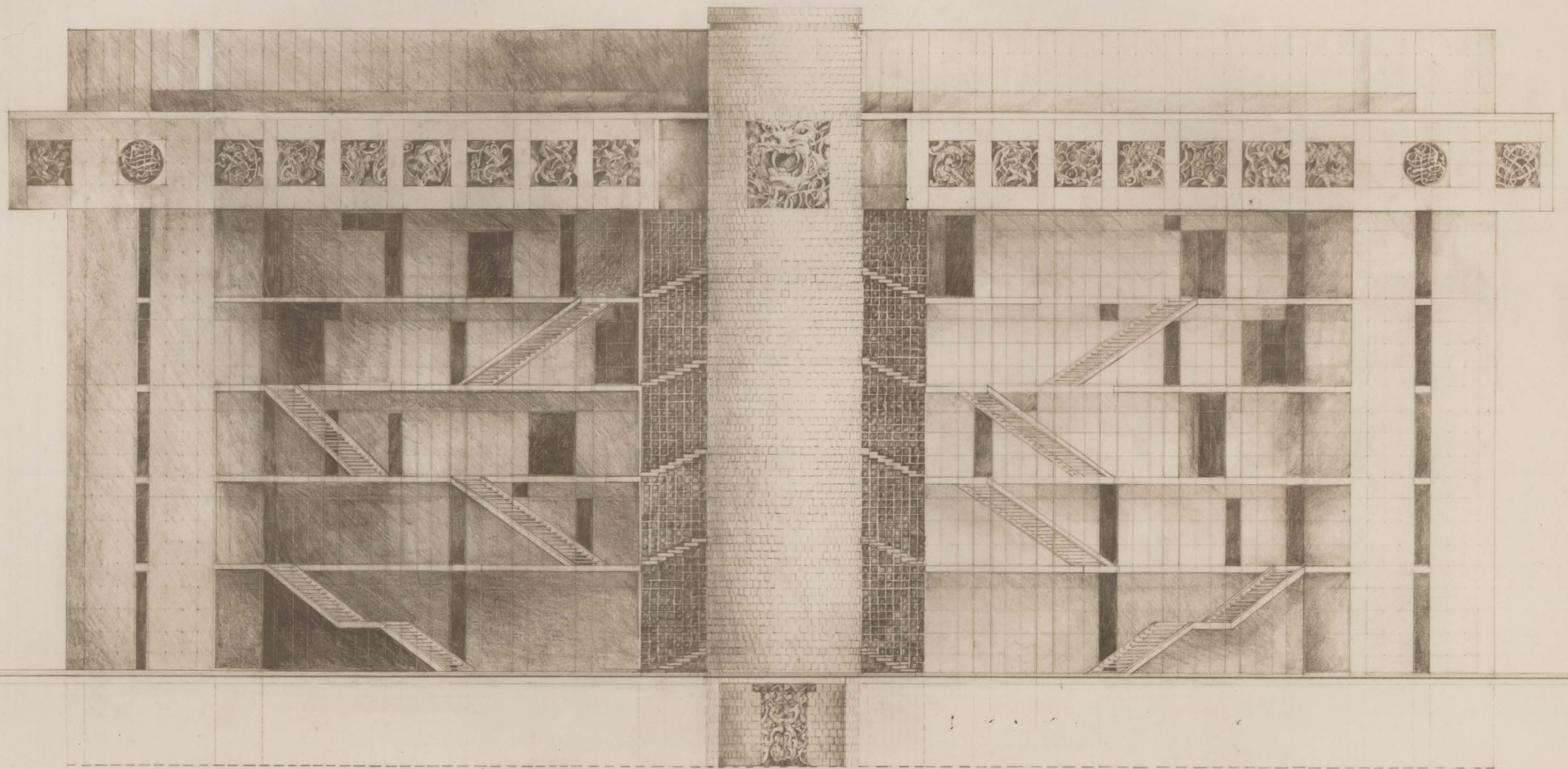
CONTINUALLY THE MYSTERIOUS SEA BADE THEM
TO GATHER COURAGE AND STRENGTH TO VENTURE FORTH.



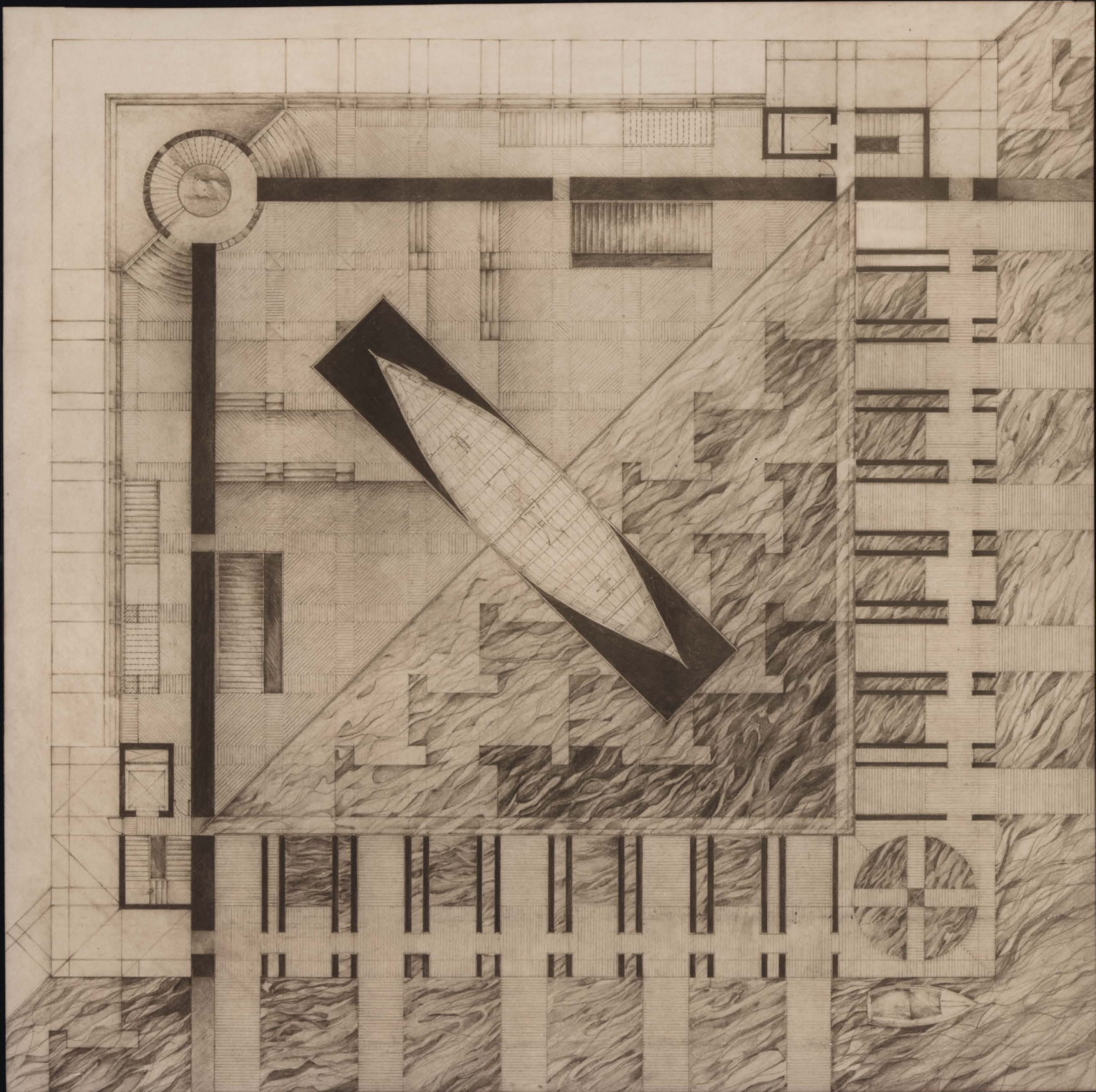
T H E F O R E S T W A S C A R V E D A N D M O L D E D I N T O A P E R F E C T
F O R M T O W I T H S T A N D T H E R E L E N T L E S S , T H R A S H I N G W A V E S .



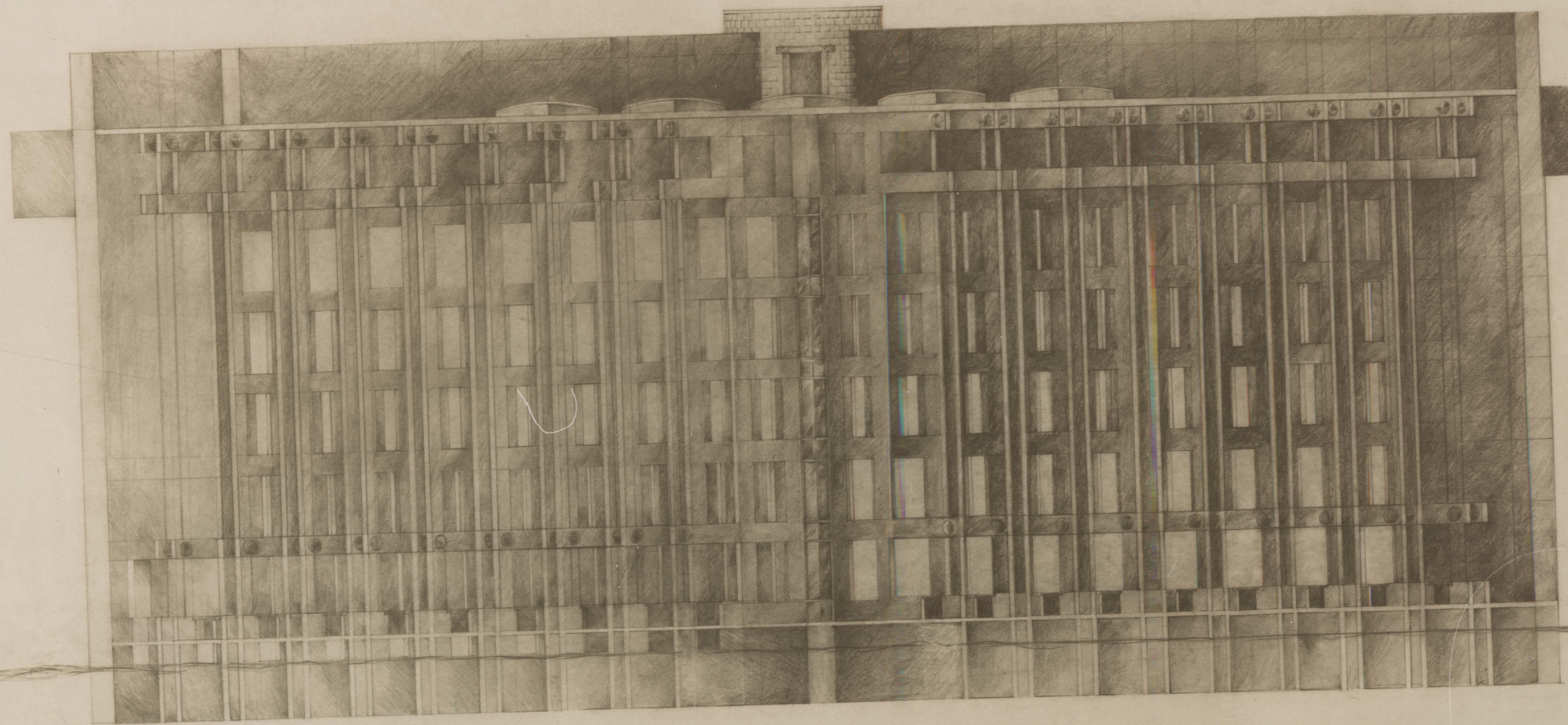
S H I E L D S W E R E D O N N E D , T H E B R A V E G R I P P E D T H E O A R S W I T H V I G O R ,
S T R U C K O U T W I T H T H E P R O T E C T I O N O F T H E G O K S T A D H E A D P O S T



DRIVEN UPON THE SHORE THE VESSEL IS PROTECTED BY TWO MASSIVE WALLS THAT SHIELD IT FROM NORTHWESTERLY WINDS.

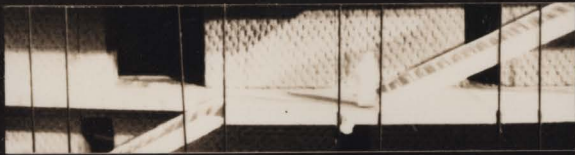
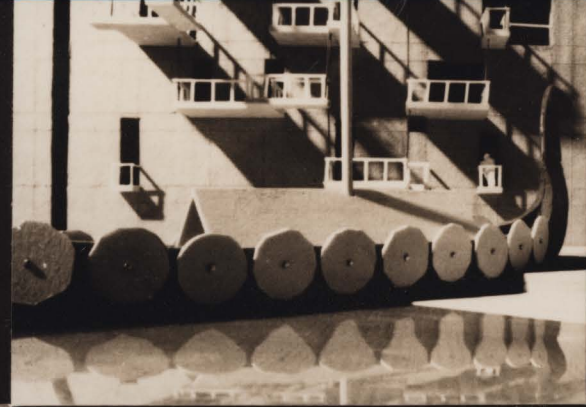
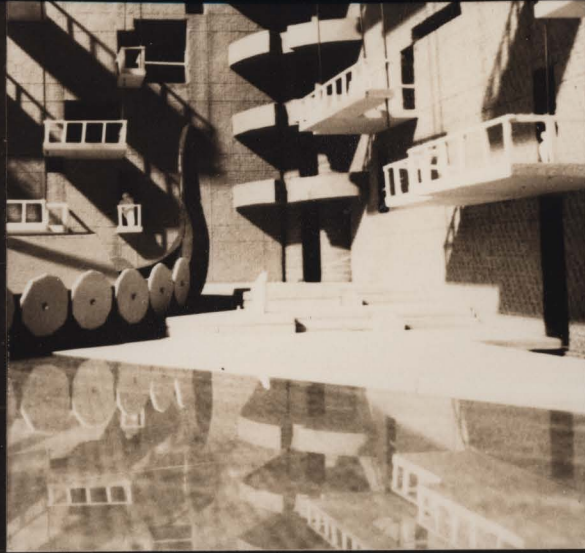


O P E N P I E R S C O M P L E T E T H E E N C L O S U R E W I T H T H E
H E R O I C I N S T I N C T T O S T R I K E O U T I N T O T H E W A T E R



P R E C I O U S L I G H T P L A Y S A N O R C H E S T R A O F S U N

A S I T P E N E T R A T E S T H E M A S S .



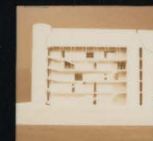
OUT OF THE SHADOWS FROM WITHIN THE WALLS
WHAT MYSTERIES SHALL BE REVEALED.



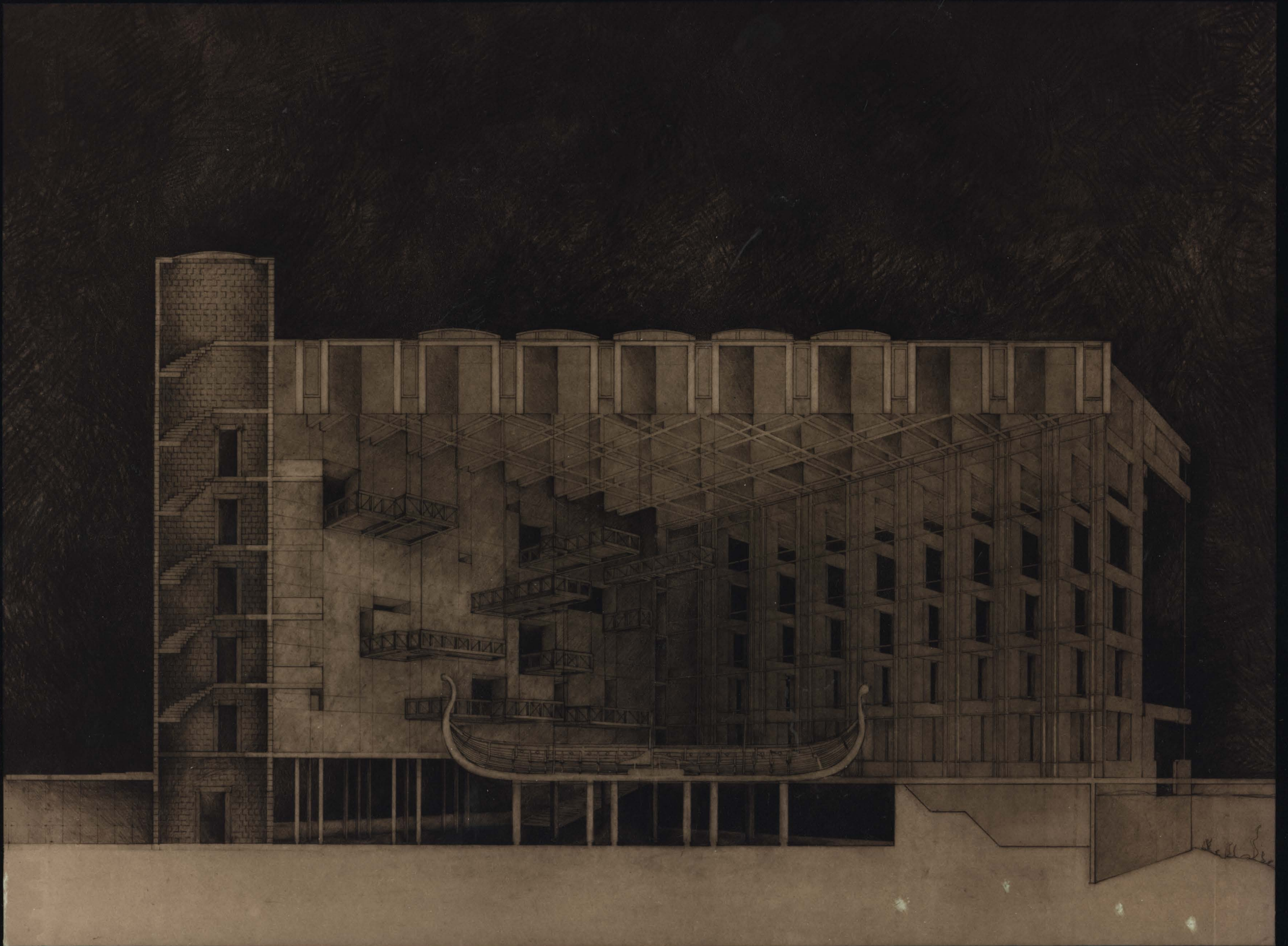
RIPPLES REFLECT SUN TO HIGHLIGHT THE CRAFTSMANSHIP.

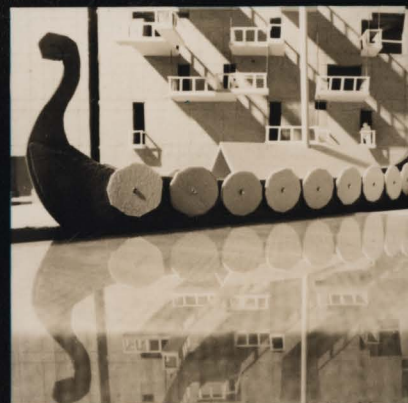


WITHIN THE COOL AND INERT OF A CONCRETE SHELL..

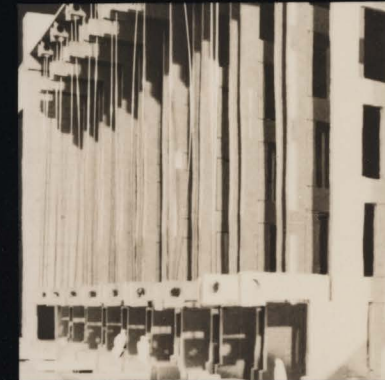
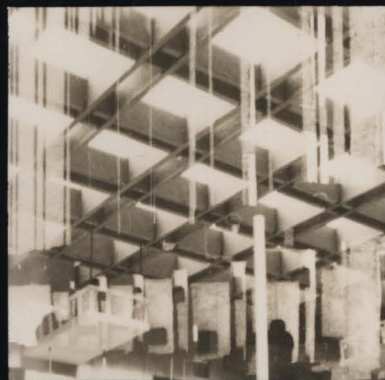
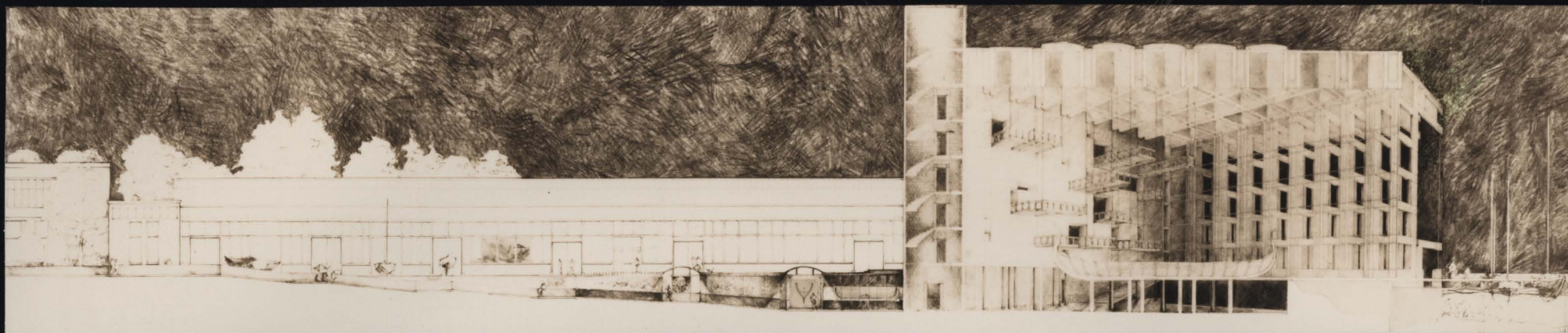


THE WARMTH AND LIFE OF WOOD GUIDE YOU



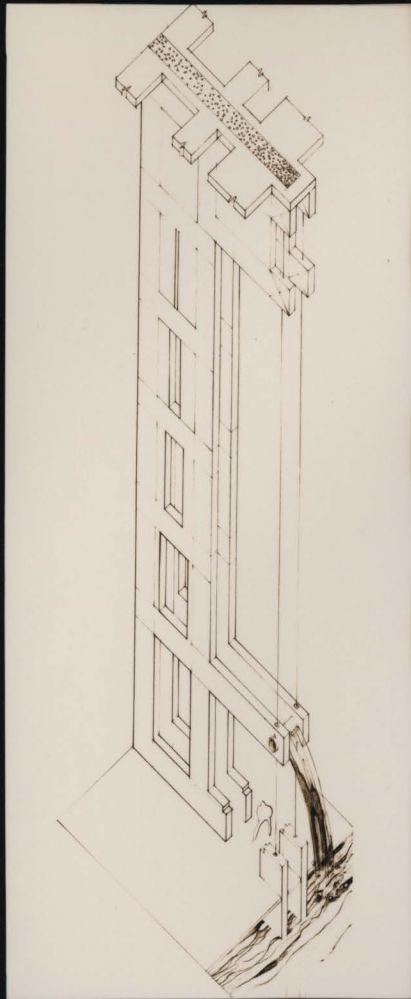


A MUSEUM HAS A DUALITY OF FUNCTIONS : PRESERVATION AND PRESENTATION. THE OBJECT MUST BE IN A CONTROLLED ENVIRONMENT WHERE IT IS SAFE FROM DAMAGE AND WHERE THE TEMPERATURE, HUMIDITY, AND VENTILLATION ARE SUITABLE. EQUALLY IMPORTANT IS THE DISPLAY, FOR THE PAST TO MAKE ITS IMPACT ON THE PRESENT THE OBJECT MUST BE SEEN AND UNDERSTOOD. JUST AS ARCHITECTURE IS TO REVEAL THE TRUTH ABOUT A SITE, THE PURPOSE OF THE MUSEUM ENCLOSURE IS TO REVEAL THE TRUTH ABOUT THE OBECTS ON DISPLAY. THE ENCLOSURE THEREFORE MUST RELATE SIMULTANEOUSLY TO THE SITE OUTSIDE AND THE OBJECTS INSIDE.

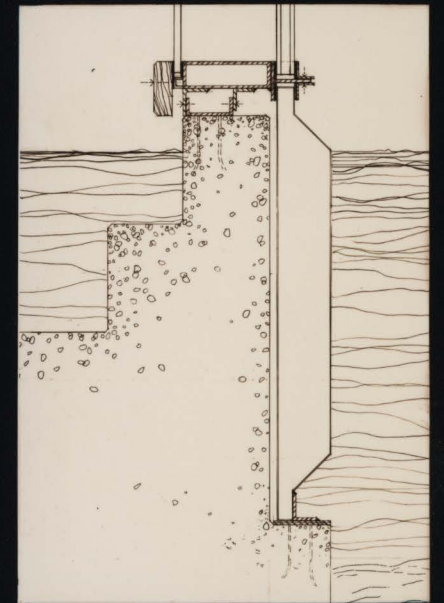
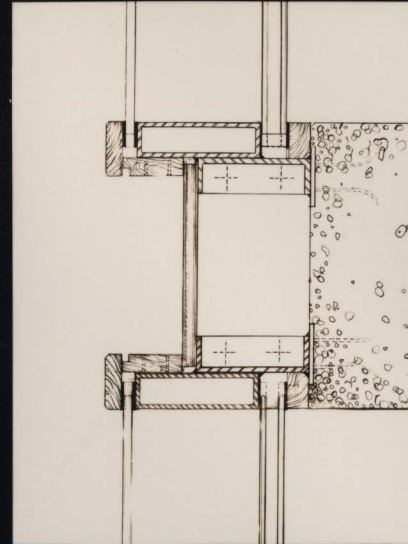


THE ENTRANCE RAMP GENTLY BRINGS THE VISITORS BY A BOATYARD TO BELOW GRADE WHERE THE INITIAL VIEW OF THE BOAT IS AMONG A FOREST OF COLUMNS. LIGHT FILTERS FROM ABOVE, ALONG THE EDGE OF THE GOKSTAD TO ACCENTUATE ITS CURVILINEAR FORM AND FOCUSES ON THE STRUCTURAL SPINE, THE KEEL. A TARTAN GRID IS A REPLICATING ELEMENT USED IN THE PLAN, THE ELEVATION, AND THE DETAILING. NATURE BASES HER LIVING CREATURES ON THE PRINCIPLE OF REPLICATION- AT ONE LEVEL REPLICATION OF STRUCTURAL ELEMENTS WITHIN A SINGLE BODY, AND AT ANOTHER, REPLICATION OF THE BODY OF THE ORGANISM AS A WHOLE. VARIATIONS OF THE REPLICAS CREATE INTEREST THROUGH LAYERS OF COMPLEXITY: LEAVES OF A TREE, SPOTS ON A LEOPARD, NUCLEOTIDES OF DNA, CELLS OF A HONEYCOMB.

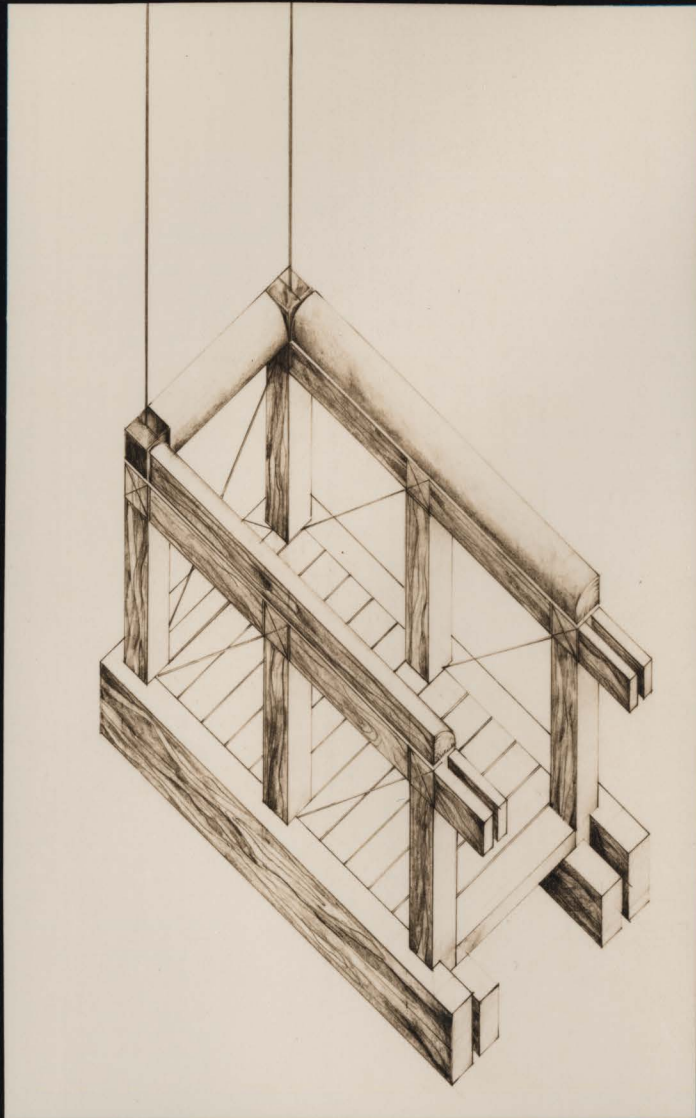
WITHIN THE ORDER OF THE GRID, THE ANCHORING NORTHWEST WALLS PLAYFULLY AND DARINGLY EXTEND A VARIETY OF BALCONIES SUSPENDED FROM THE CEILING OVERLOOKING THE GOKSTAD. THE MASS WALLS CONTAIN THE EXPLORATION PATHS OF THE VISITORS WITH THEIR DIRECTION OF VIEWS ALWAYS LOOKING TOWARDS THE POTOMAC. THE CHANGING PERSPECTIVES FROM THE BALCONIES COMBINED WITH THE SOUTHEAST PIERS' MODULATION OF LIGHT (FILTERING SUMMER SUN AND DRAWING IN THE LOW ANGLED WINTER RAYS) RESEMBLE THE DYNAMIC ENVIRONMENT OF THE SEA. THE ROOF INVITES EXPLORERS FOR FURTHER VIEWS LOOKING OUT ACROSS THE WATER AND TO THE SHORE BEYOND. A FLOATING WALKWAY WINDS ITS WAY AROUND THE BUILDING WITH ALTERNATING PLATFORMS TO PROVIDE A CLOSER VIEW OF THE BOAT ALL WITHIN THE NATURE OF ITS DESIGN: THE CHURNING, TUMBLING WATER.



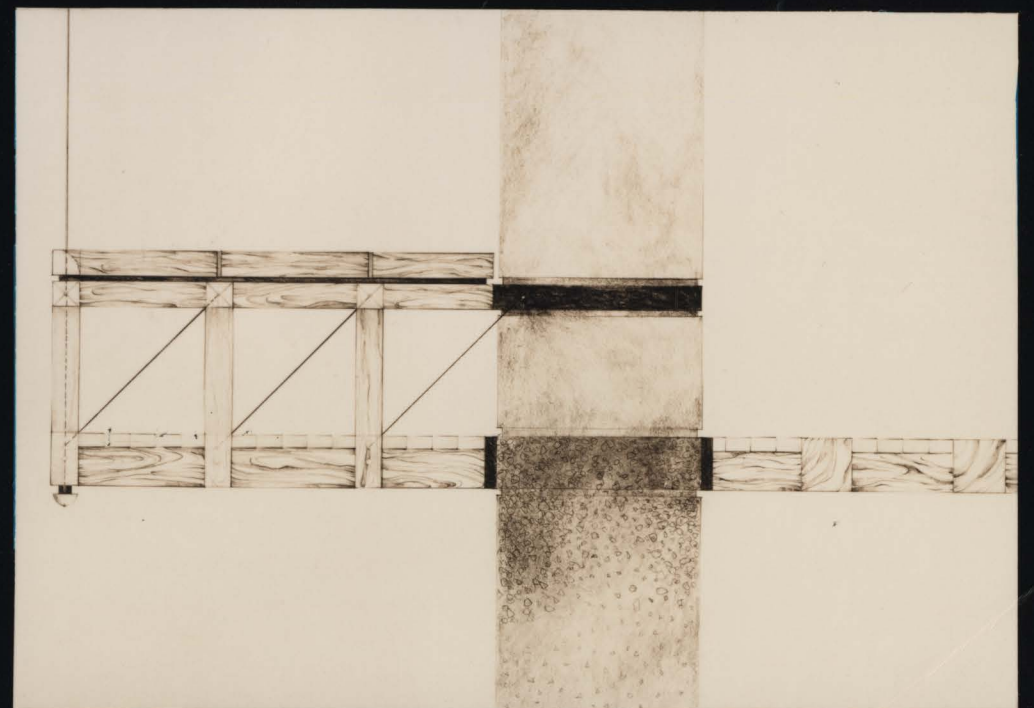
THE INTEGRITY OF THE DESIGN IS STRENGTHENED BY UNIFYING ITS PHYSICAL STRUCTURE AND MECHANICAL SYSTEMS. WATER ON THE ROOF IS CHanneled ALONG THE TARTAN GRID TO THE PIERS WHERE IT IS DRAINED INTO A STAINLESS STEEL TUBE. THEN IT IS DISPURSED ALONG 2 CABLES CARRYING IT DOWN INTO ANOTHER STAINLESS STEEL TUBE WHERE A SLIT DRAINS THE WATER IN A TWO FOOT WIDE SHEET INTO THE POTOMAC. WALKING ALONG THE PIERS ON A RAINY DAY MAY BEGIN TO SIMULATE A FRAGMENT OF A FOUL WEATHER SAILING.

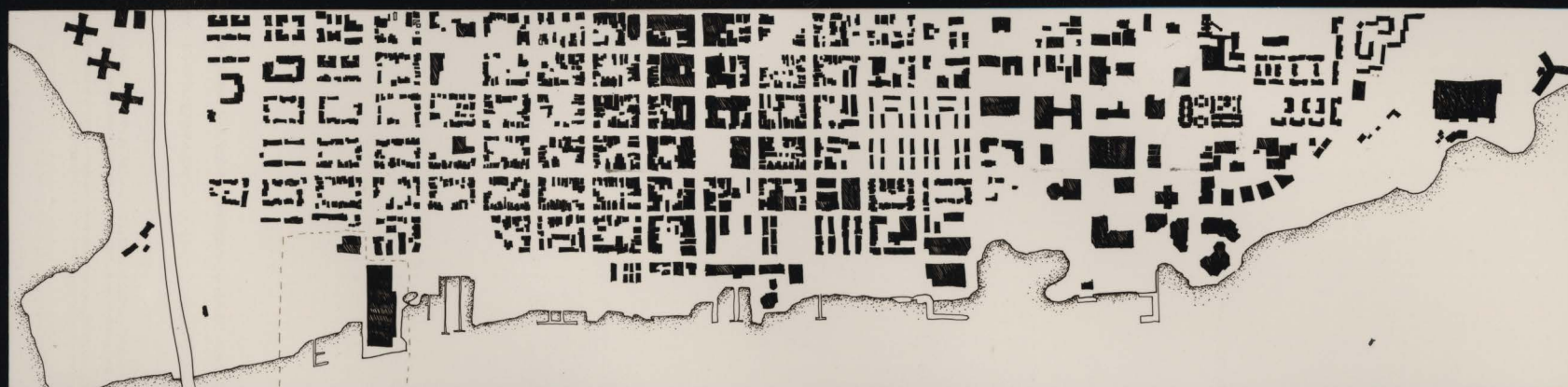
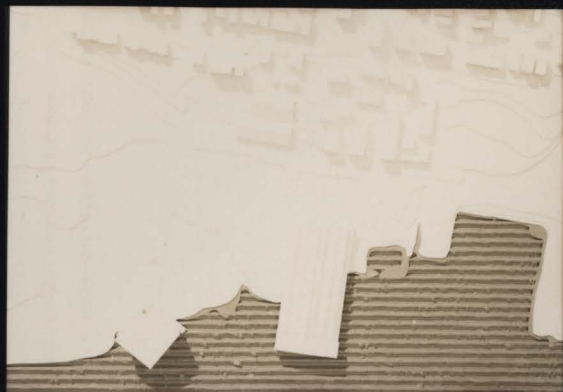


WITHIN THE CEILING GRID OF THE STRUCTURE IS WOVEN THE HVAC DUCTS AND ELECTRICAL CONDUITS. ON COLD DAYS THE MUSEUM WOULD APPEAR TO BE BREATHING.. THE NOSTRILS ON THE FACIA EXPELL AIR FROM THE SYSTEM. THE GLASS ENCLOSURE ON THE SOUTHEAST WALLS RADIATE WARMTH FROM A WATER PIPE THAT RUNS ALONG THE BASE. CONTROLLING THE TEMPERATURE WITHIN THE 5 INCH AIR SPACE BETWEEN THE OUTER DOUBLE GLAZING AND INSIDE GLAZING STOPS CONDENSATION FROM FORMING.

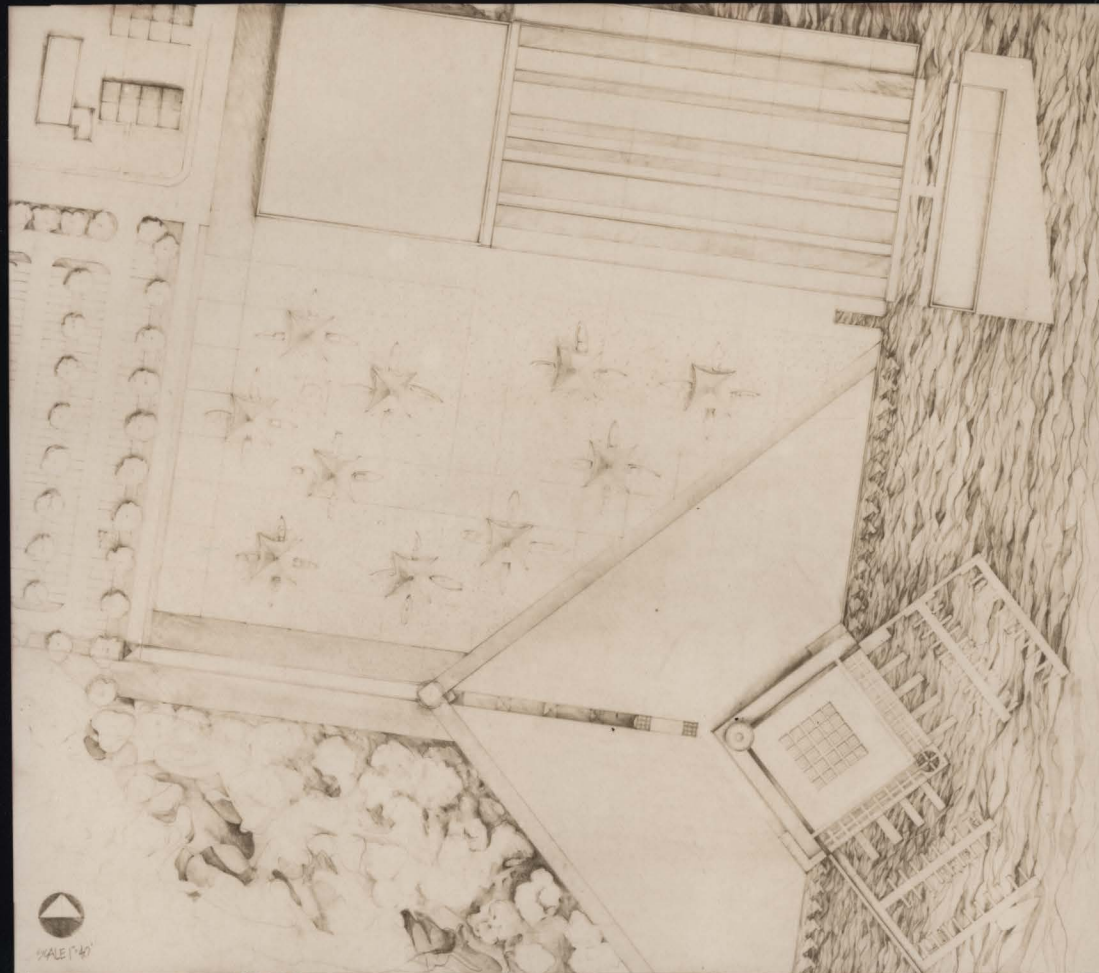


THE MATERIALS FORM A LANGUAGE IN THEMSELVES. STONE IS THE BASE OF THE STRUCTURE. Poured concrete with reinforcing steel make up the four foot deep monolithic northwest walls while blocks of concrete and glass form an integrated cylinder that speaks of the singular amid the mass. The internal tensile steel becomes expressed as the only material that touches these surfaces. Wood now can link into the system which is a warm surface for hands and feet. The technology of steel again is utilized in its great capacity to resist tensile forces, so in the balconies material is reduced by using steel instead of wood for those functions. Glass is used to maintain a sense of spaciousness within the corridors, to offer views outside and inside, and dissolve the southeast pier wall into the water.





THE EDGE OF THE URBAN GRID AND THE BEGINNING OF THE NATURAL LANDSCAPE, FROM THE RESIDENTIAL TO THE WAREHOUSE WATERFRONT BUILDINGS.. MELTING THESE FORMS TOGETHER THE MUSEUM STANDS WITH A DIAGONAL ORIENTATION THAT SEPARATES IT FROM THE ORTHOGONALLY SITUATED COMMERCIAL AND RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS SIGNIFYING ITS IMPORTANCE AND PARTICULAR RELATIONSHIP TO THE COMMUNITY. THE MUSEUM INVITES THE PUBLIC TO THE WATER ALONG THE BIKE TRAIL WITH PIERS FOR DOCKING, FISHING, AND VIEWS ACROSS THE POTOMAC. THE ACTIVITIES AT THE NATIONAL PARK DIRECTLY TO THE SOUTH AND THE CITY PARK ADJACENT ON THE NORTH MESH WITHIN THIS AREA.



ALBERT KAHN'S FORD PLANT ADJACENT TO THE MUSEUM WOULD BE USED FOR BOAT RESTORATION AND RETROFITTING, UNALTERING THE SPACIOUS 40 FOOT BAY STRUCTURE. THE HEADHOUSE EASTERN PORTION OF THE BUILDING WOULD BE SET OFF BY ALLOWING THE WATER THAT FLOWS BENEATH IT TO CARVE A CANAL BETWEEN THE BAYS. THIS CANAL WOULD THEN PROVIDE A MEANS FOR LIFTING THE BOATS OUT OF THE WATER TO BE REPAIRED. THE HEADHOUSE WITH ITS SPECTACULAR VIEWS ACROSS THE POTOMAC OF THE CAPITAL COULD BE USED FOR DINING WHILE THE MAIN LEVEL WITH ITS FIVE LARGE OPENINGS COULD BE USED FOR A FISH/FARMER'S MARKET.

THE YARD BETWEEN THE FORD PLANT AND MUSEUM WOULD BE FILLED WITH WORK STATIONS NECESSARY FOR PAINTING AND SANDBLASTING. BACKYARD BOATS, A COMMERCIAL BUSINESS ON THE RESIDENTIAL SIDE OF UNION STREET, WOULD BE MOVED INTO THE TORPEDO ADDITION OF THE FORD PLANT TO CREATE A CENTRALIZED FACILITY. THE RESIDENTIAL AREA THE BUSINESS PRESENTLY OCCUPIES WOULD BE ENHANCED BY ELIMINATING THE BUTLER BUILDINGS' OBTRUSIVE SCALE AND REPLACING THEM WITH A THICKLY TREE LINED STREET, INDICATING THE PARK THAT LIES BEYOND, AND A LANDSCAPED PARKING AREA FOR THE MUSEUM AND BOATING FACILITY.

I SAVE THIS AS AN EPILOGUE NOT BECAUSE IT IS UNIMPORTANT, BUT BECAUSE THE ARCHITECTURE SHOULD SPEAK FOR ITSELF. ARCHITECTURE IS AN ELABORATION. IT IS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR ART..A NECESSITY FOR WELL BEING..A CULTURAL EXPRESSION IN OUR TIME IN HISTORY AND PLACE IN THE WORLD. ONLY UGLINESS AND STUPIDITY DISINTEGRATE, INTELLIGENCE AND BEAUTY REMAIN FOREVER. AS SOCRATES SAID: "THERE ARE MUTE BUILDINGS, BUILDINGS THAT SPEAK, AND BUILDINGS THAT SING." LIKE THE FRAGRANCE OF THE FLOWER, WE BEST UNDERSTAND THROUGH EXPERIENCE, NOT THROUGH THE TRANSLATION OF 2-DIMENSIONAL WORDS. HOWEVER DISTILLED THIS MAY APPEAR, I WILL ATTEMPT TO DESCRIBE THE PREMISE OF THE IDEAS THAT WERE REVEALED IN THE MUSEUM.

WE HAVE COME UPON A TIME WHEN WE ARE NARCISSTIC. INSTEAD OF REFLECTING WHAT WE IMAGINE THINGS TO BE, WE OUGHT TO REFLECT WHAT THEY ARE. BUILDINGS HAVE A SOUL. THIS IS THEIR FUNCTION, THEIR LIFE-SUPPORT SYSTEM, THEIR STRUCTURE, AND THEIR MEANING WHICH SHOULD BE REVEALED ON THEIR FACE AND IN THEIR EYES. IT IS THROUGH THE INTERPRETATION OF THE PAST THAT WE DERIVE THE PRESENT. THE PAST IS THEREFORE ESSENTIAL IN HAVING ITS NOTICE IN THE PRESENT. IT IS ABSURD TO BE IGNORANT OF THE FIBERS THAT MAKE UP OUR ENVIRONMENT. IT IS EASY TO MISS THE POINT IF WE ARE ONLY SURROUNDED BY NAMELESS SURFACES THAT BELIE WHAT EXISTS UNDERNEATH AND WITHIN. SURFACES MUST REVEAL AND EXPRESS WHAT THEY ARE PART OF, CONNECTIONS OF DIFFERENT MATERIALS MUST BE LOGICAL, NEW TECHNOLOGIES MUST NOT CONQUER (DESIGNS TOO SOPHISTICATED TO BE USED EFFECTIVELY) OR BE SUBMISSIVE (NEOCOLONIAL). A UNION MUST EXIST AMONG THE PAST AND PRESENT TECHNOLOGIES.

OVERWROUGHT WITH ECONOMIC LIMITATIONS AND DEMANDS, ARCHITECTURE IS TOO OFTEN THE SLAVE OF THE FINANCIAL PUPPETEERS AND RESULTS IN A BUILT ENVIRONMENT THAT WILL TOO QUICKLY DECAY BECAUSE IT HAS NO ATTACHMENTS TO OUR CULTURE. LOWEST BIDDER CONTRACTING DEMONSTRATES THAT YOU GET WHAT YOU PAY FOR. THE SPACES ARE CONCEIVED IN TERMS OF SQUARE FOOTAGE AND MARKET VALUE WRAPPED IN A FACADE TO BE JUDGED FROM A HIGHWAY TRAVELING 65 MPH . THE RESULTING ARTIFICIALLY LIT CELLS WITH LAYERS OF PLASTICS IN VENEERS ABUSE THE EARTH BY USING 60% OF OUR ENERGY WITH ITS GLUTTONOUS MACHINE SYSTEMS THAT ARE INDIFFERENT TO SOLAR GAIN AND WIND PATTERNS. PREVIOUSLY "PRIMITIVE" CULTURES KNEW FAR MORE ABOUT DWELLING THAN WE (AS WE SIT IN A LAND OF UPSET ECOSYSTEMS, UNALTERABLE NUCLEAR RADIATION DAMAGE, OUR OWN WASTE POLLUTING OUR WATER, LAND, AND AIR, AND AN OZONE LAYER THAT IS CONTINUALLY BEING DESTROYED BY OUR MACHINES). THE INDIANS PERCEIVED THE EARTH AS A MOTHER, TO REPLACE WHATEVER WAS TAKEN, TO LOVE AND GIVE BACK AS THEY ENJOYED HER GIFTS.

ARCHITECTURE CAN BE SEEN AS EXTREMELY COMPLEX IN ITS NEED TO RESPOND TO THE ENVIRONMENT, CONTEXTUALISM, ARTISTIC AND INTELLECTUAL CONCERNS, SENSORY EXPERIENCE, HUMANISM, TRADITION, AND HISTORY. HOWEVER, IF APPROACHED IN THE RIGHT WAY, THE MIND OF THE ARCHITECT CAN BE SEEN AS SIMILAR TO THAT OF THE POET, AND SUDDENLY EVERYTHING BECOMES ATTAINABLE. "THE POET'S MIND IS IN FACT A RECEPTACLE FOR SEIZING AND STORING UP NUMBERLESS FEELINGS, PHRASES, IMAGES, WHICH REMAIN THERE UNTIL ALL PARTICLES WHICH CAN UNITE TO FORM A NEW COMPOUND ARE PRESENT TOGETHER."(2) HARMONY WILL COME FROM ACCEPTING THE IMPORTANCE OF TRADITION.. THE COLLECTIVE MIND.. THAT EXPRESSING EMOTION IS NOT POETRY BUT AN ESCAPE FROM THE PERSONALITY.(3) TO MAKE THIS MORE TANGIBLE IN ARCHITECTURAL TERMS IS TO UNDERSTAND MATERIALITY; WHAT SOMETHING IS, IS DISTINCT FROM WHAT IT COMMUNICATES. "WE ARE NOT CONSCIOUS..OF REFERENCE, ALLUSION OR INSTRUCTION. THESE PROCESSES BECOME TRANSPARENT AS THEIR MATERIAL CARRIERS EITHER DISAPPEAR, LIKE WORDS, OR LIKE BELLS AND OLD TREES, COLLAPSE UPON THEMSELVES TO BECOME CRISP AND REAL AND, SOMEHOW, MORE THE THINGS THEY ARE."(4)

THIS LEAVES POSTMODERNISM AND CARDBOARD STAGESETS FOR BILLBOARDS AND MTV. THE MASS MEDIA CAN HAVE ITS TIMELY RENDEZVOUS WITHOUT DISRUPTING OUR BUILT ENVIRONMENT, SO THAT AS WINSTON CHURCHILL SAID "WE SHAPE OUR BUILDINGS JUST AS OUR BUILDINGS SHAPE US". IT IS ARCHITECTURE THAT IS REAL, THAT HAS PRESENCE, THAT PROVIDES A DIRECT AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE THAT IS "...AS LUMINOUS AS A FRESHLY WASHED WORLD AFTER A STORM".(5)

"GRAY-PINK IRRIDESCENT AIR LIKE THE ENAMEL INSIDE A SHELL.
WE INHALED PARIS WITH OPEN NOSTRILS, CUTTING ACCROSS IT ON FOOT..
THE MOIST FLOWERS, THE VEGETABLES, THE COFFEE, THE DAMP PAVEMENT,
THE MINGLING ODORS OF NIGHT AND DAY..WE LOST COUNT OF STREETS,
WE FORGOT ABOUT OUR OWN EXISTENCE..
THE PROMISE WAS INFINITE,
IT WAS THE PROMISE OF LIFE."(6)

1. DANTE ALIGHIERI, *THE DIVINE COMEDY* (TRANSLATED AND EDITED BY THOMAS G. BERGIN, YALE UNIVERSITY PRESS, 1955) CANTO IV, VS. 64-73.
2. T.S. ELIOT, *TRADITION AND THE INDIVIDUAL TALENT*.
3. OP.CIT.
4. MICHAEL BENEDICT, *FOR AN ARCHITECTURE OF REALITY* (NEW YORK: LUMEN BOOKS, 1987) P.4.
5. ALEXANDRIA TYNG, *BEGINNINGS : LOUIS I. KAHN'S PHILOSOPHY OF ARCHITECTURE* (NEW YORK : JOHN WILEY & SONS, 1984) P. 26.
6. CZESLAW MILOSZ, *NATIVE REALM: A SEARCH FOR SELF DEFINITION* (NEW YORK : DOUBLEDAY, 1981) CITED IN OP.CIT, P.66.

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