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## Informal Brand

Casey Allen

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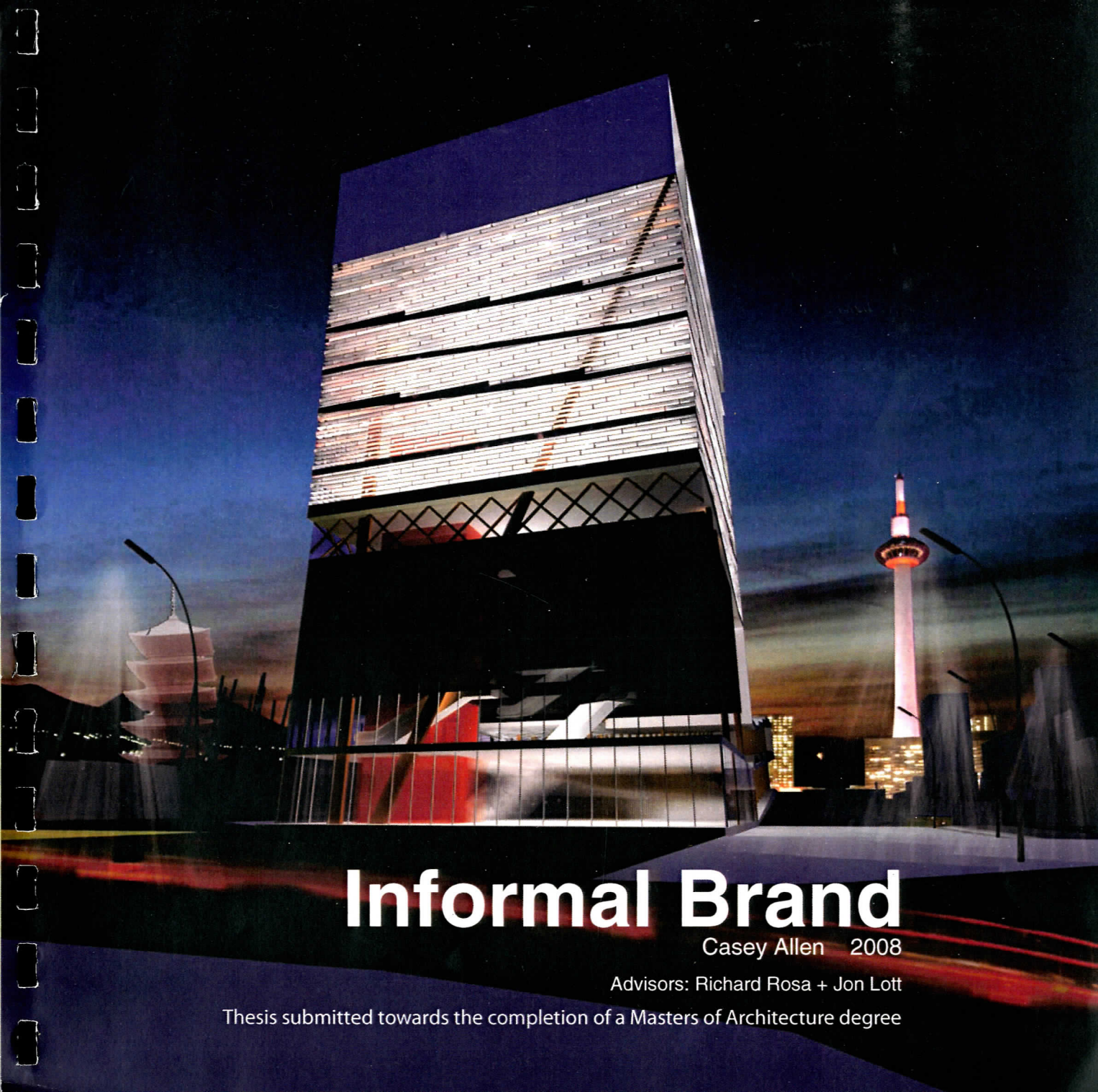
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# Informal Brand

Casey Allen 2008

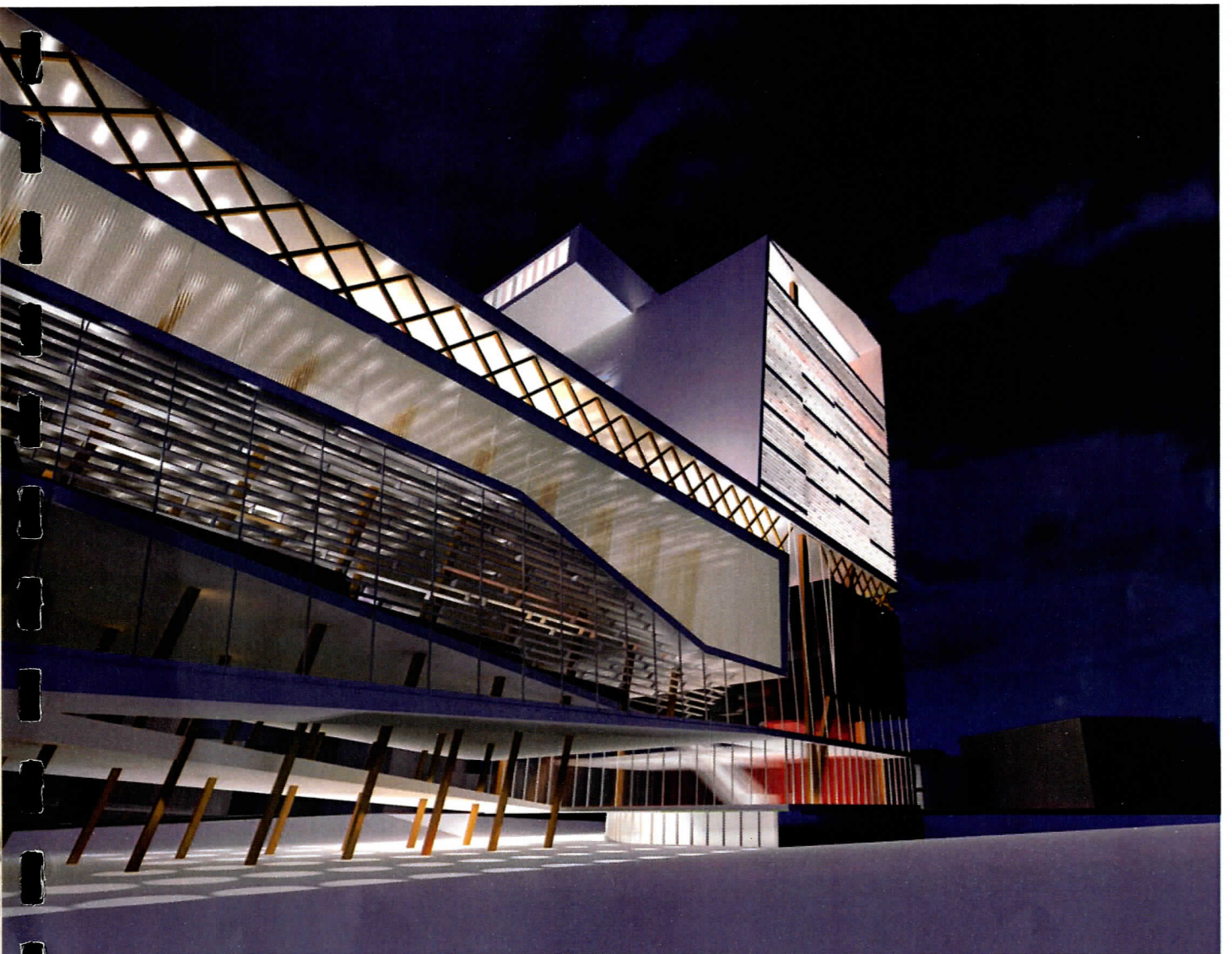
Advisors: Richard Rosa + Jon Lott

Thesis submitted towards the completion of a Masters of Architecture degree

## Introduction

The **informal brand** aims to become a process of design that answers questions of identity in architecture. By establishing a methodology for design with an emphasis on program, context, and performance a building will be able to become a "brand" for the company it represents, the context the project is situated in, and the typology of program it represents. The following pages set out to document this design process through site and program analysis derived from case studies and text reference. The preceding analysis will result in a speculation of programmatic relationships and their implications on the site.





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## Logo, Icon, and Identity

In today's fast paced consumer driven society, a product's image is the single most important asset towards its future. A single image can create a sense of desire and fantasy that is an essential part of any branding or marketing strategy. As a form of communication, a brand constantly focuses its energy on creating attention. The buying, selling, capturing, holding, tracking, quantifying, and of course manipulating attention can only create a volatile environment where media saturation becomes corrosive towards the notion of identity.

In recent years, architecture has become a main focus within "brand communication". Architecture and built form in general have the ability to situate themselves within a physical context as well as becoming an iconic symbol constantly creating attention. The issue here has become the over use of symbolic form in architecture. How is identity even a possibility in architecture when the most extravagant forms lie in a manic state of sameness?

Because formal ambition has resulted in an architecture of novelty, identity and the new icon now need to be created through a process of graphic expediency. This process of graphic expediency begins with the inherently informational "logo". A "logo" is an intrinsically graphic shape that has the ability to travel across the global community quickly, catering to the quick image conscious consumer. The logo has the ability to create a sense of identity towards an idea, but not a place. By creating a reconciliation between the logos graphic system of information and the icons contextual presence, an enhanced form of brand communication is possible. The collaboration of these two opposing sides can establish identity within a local context, as well as reach out to the global community.



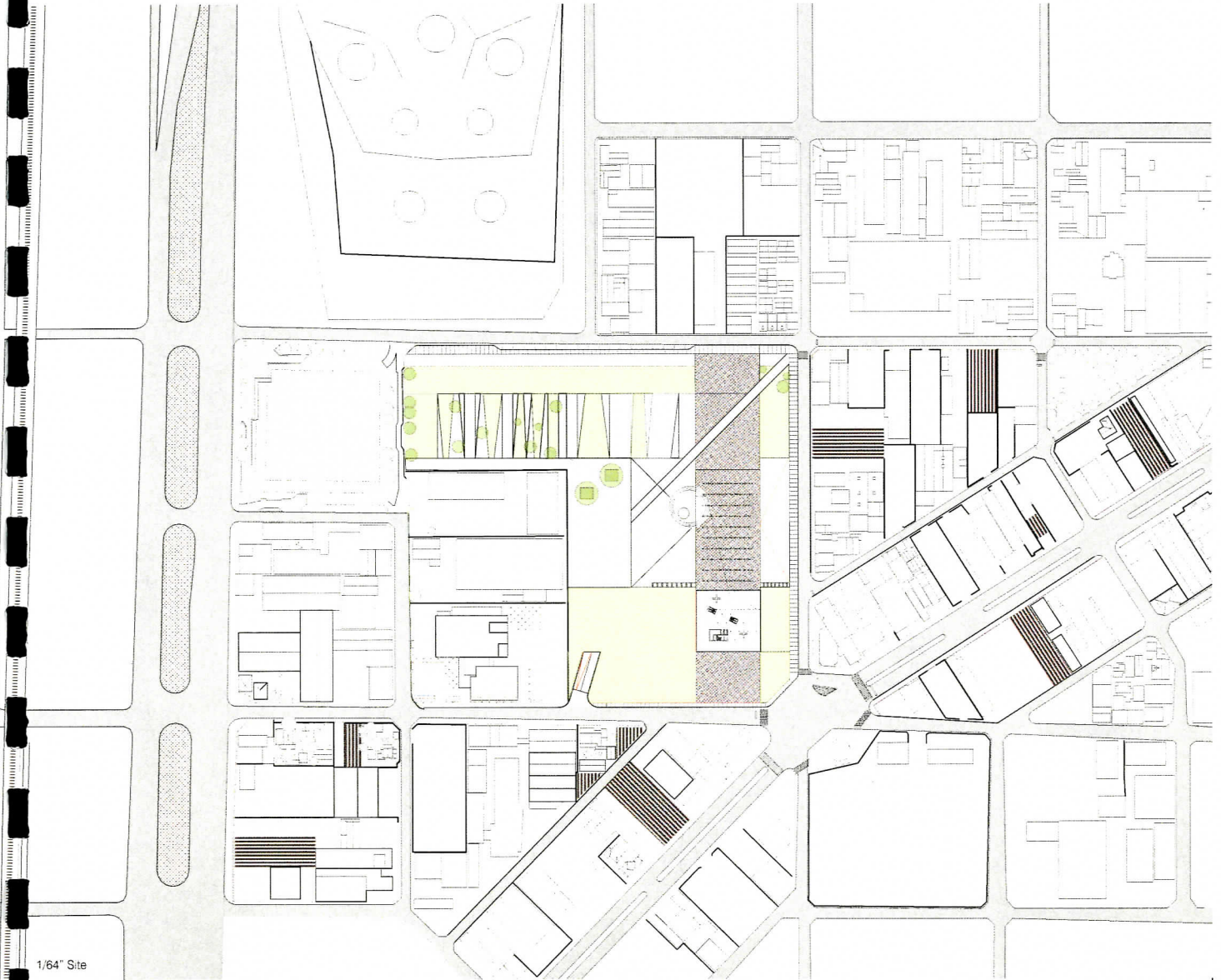
In a corporate society that has a seemingly infinite amount of competition in every conceivable market, how is it possible to create an identity for yourself? This problem is extremely apparent in the entertainment industry where every company is fighting over the same idea, product, and market. In cinema, one company always wins. Two studios never make the same movie and release it at the same time to the same audience. But in the world of virtual interactive entertainment, or video games, gaming platforms cater to game developers and therefore different platforms play the same game. Of the three main companies that supply gaming platforms, Sony, Microsoft, and Nintendo, only Nintendo is completely dedicated to the video game industry.

Nintendo has become a laboratory of innovation, where current trends are melted with tradition. Their ability to focus on quality/creative products and not gadgetry is what establishes them as innovators towards the gaming industry. Even though the presence of Nintendo is currently established in the global community, their future development will be dependent upon the creative and inspiring environment that the company offers its employees.

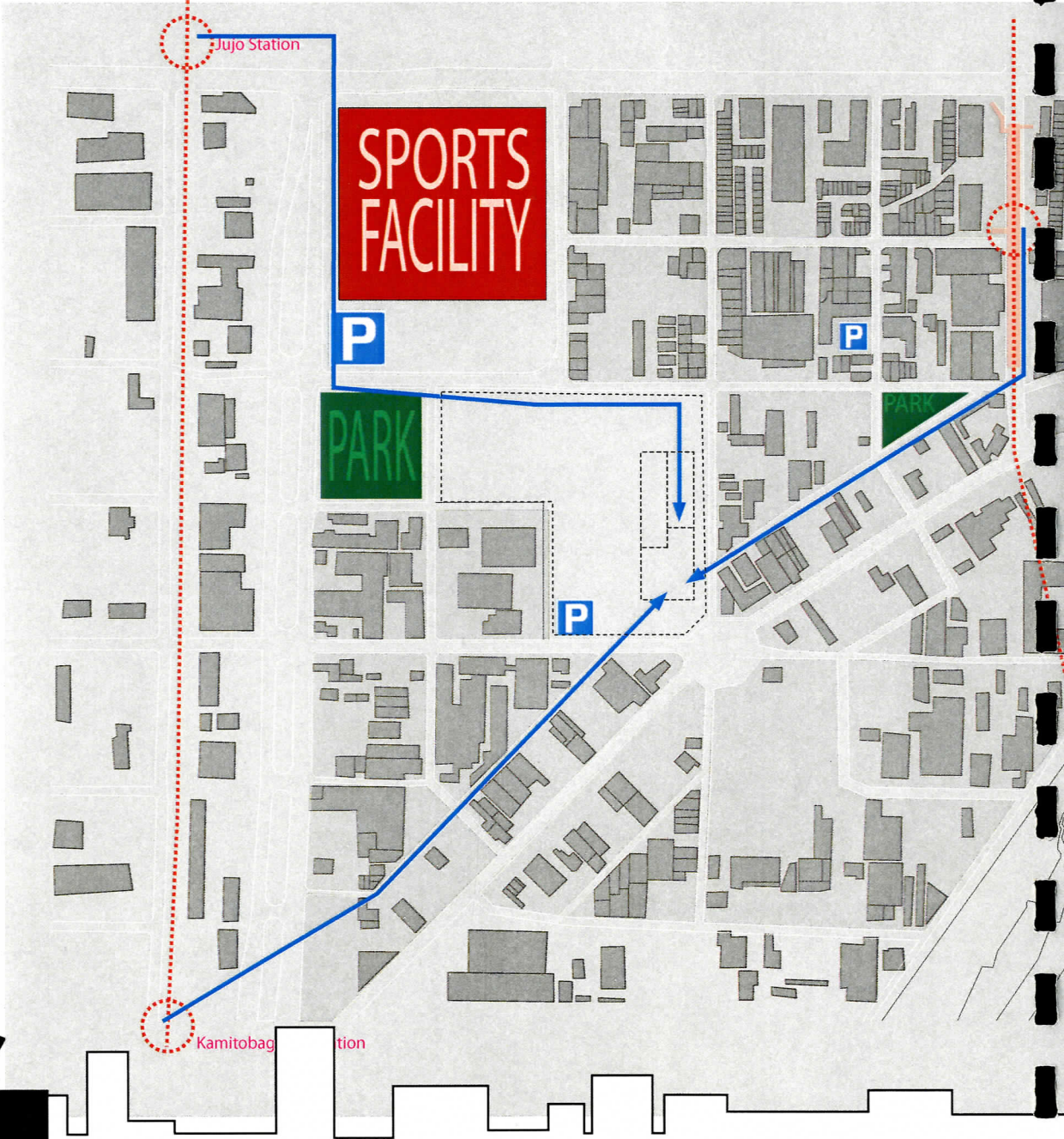
This thesis proposal will act as a critique on the current condition of the Nintendo Headquarters building in Kyoto Japan and its subsequent re-design. The criticism stems from the restrictive environment of the fortified box that separates itself from the community. The socially, programatically and historically diverse site where the building is constructed will remain the same.

The process of a creation of a new headquarters for the Nintendo Co. will be driven by identity. The establishment of identity towards the private (employees), public (local context), and global community will insure future innovations from Nintendo.

Kyoto, Japan is an area known for its deep tradition and devastated past. The center of the city was once saturated with sacred shrines and temples but natural disasters have removed all but 14. These remaining 14 are now considered world heritage sites. The tradition of Kyoto is important to the validity of the icon because of the high standing to which the locals hold these remaining sacred landmarks. The icon/design must not impose its own will onto the city, but rather rise from this urban carpet.



1/64" Site



Jujo Station

SPORTS FACILITY

P

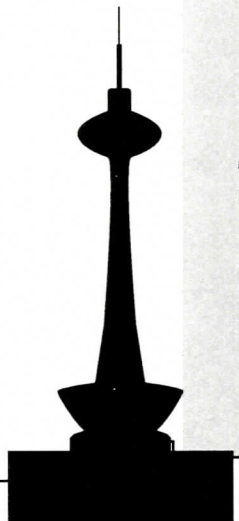
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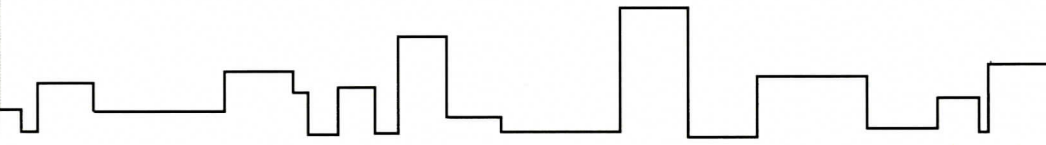
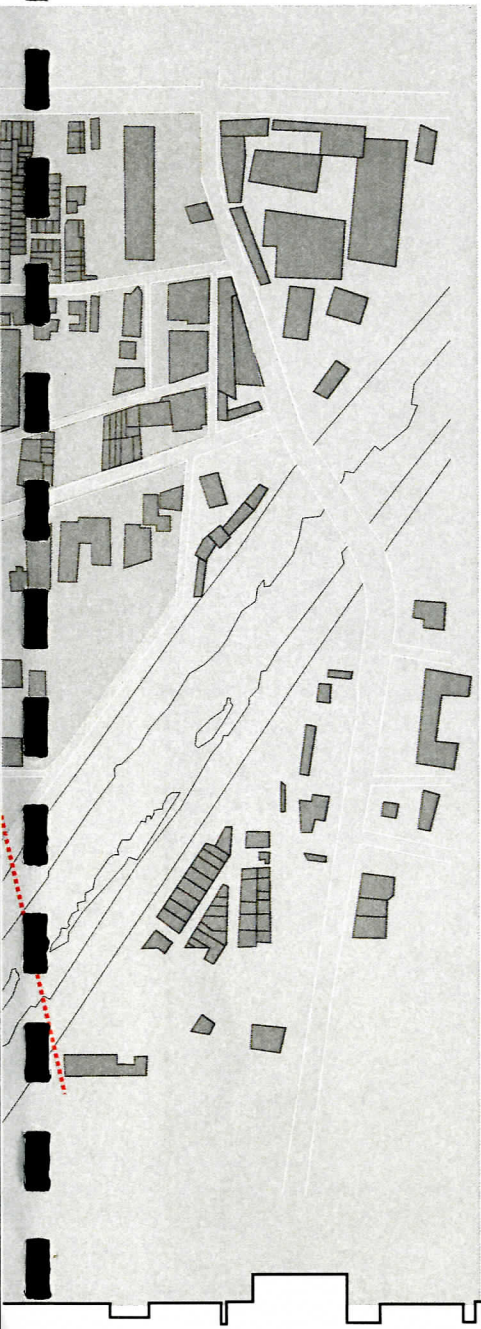
PARK

PARK

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Kamitobag Station



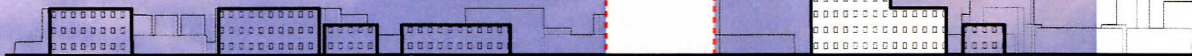


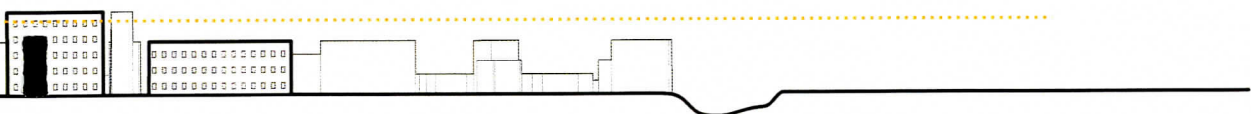
Tower height 131 m./430 ft.

Maximum height/modern 65 m./220 ft.

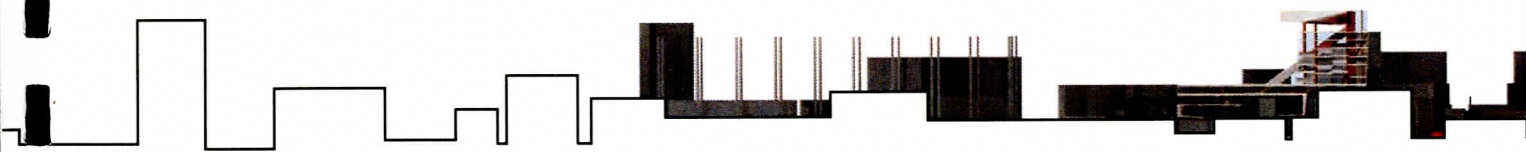
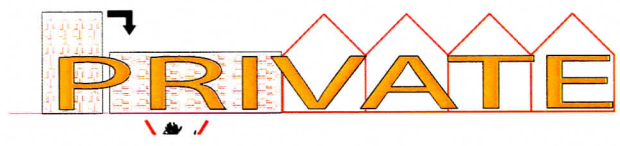
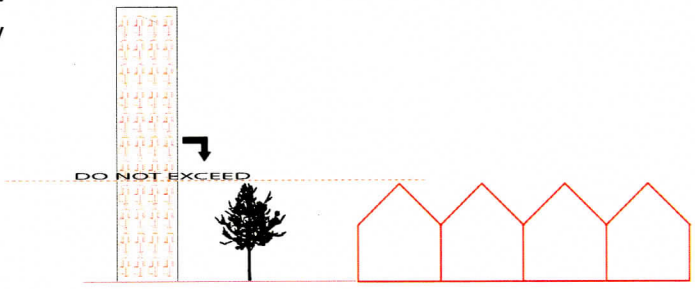
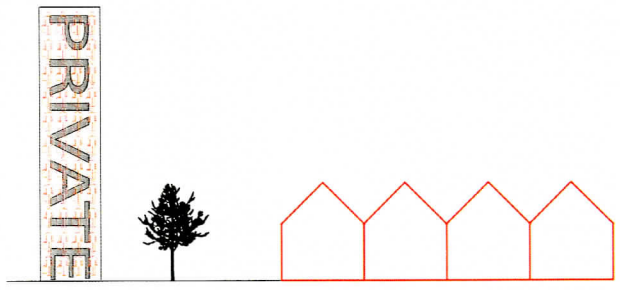
Maximum height/traditional 45 m./150 ft.

Average height 31 m./101 ft.

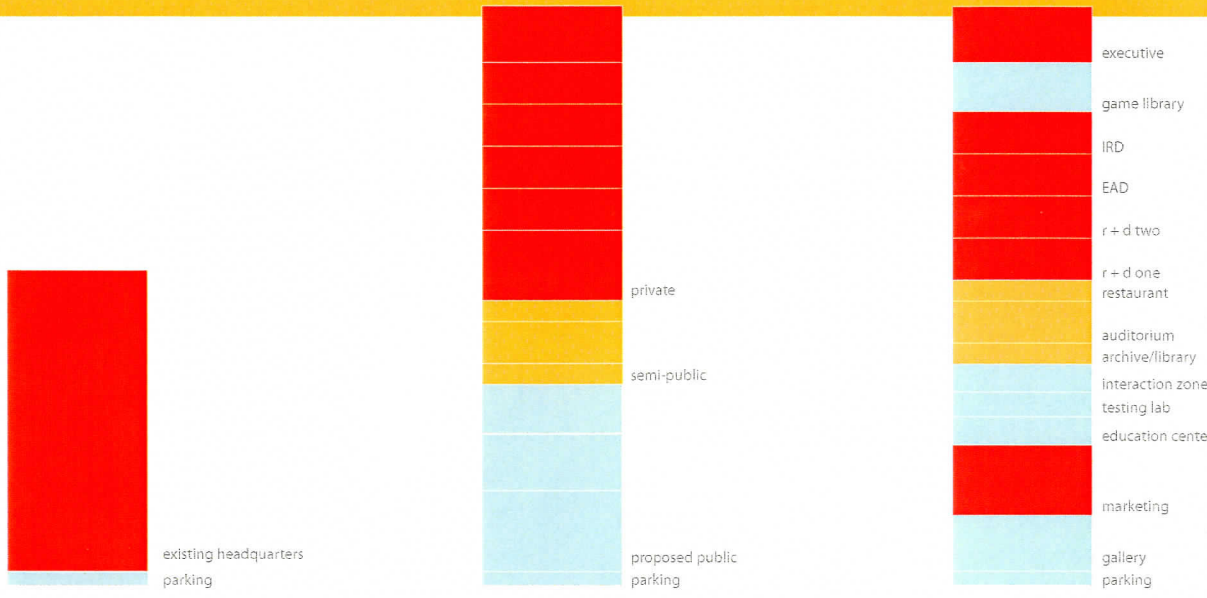




An essential goal of the thesis is to understand the issues concerning the site and program and not to create new problems based on aesthetic aspirations. The diagrams to the right describe primary site issues that deter tall building, but consequently remove valuable public space.







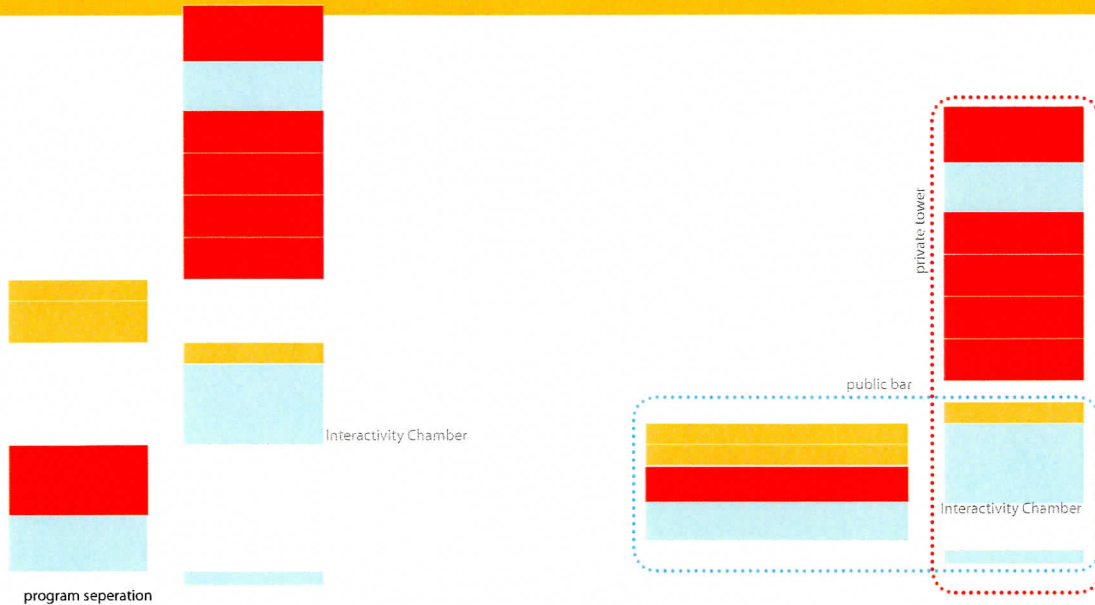
existing program

proposed addition

Interactive stacking



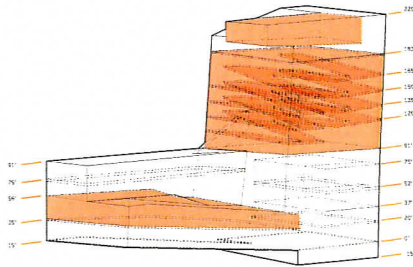
existing program (pri-



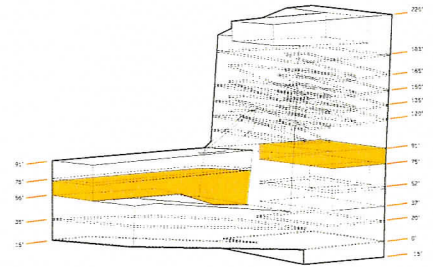
Entry/Lobby	12,690 ft <sup>2</sup>
Exhibition	12,000 ft <sup>2</sup>
Cafe	
Education center	21,750 ft <sup>2</sup>
Testing lab	
interactive zone	
Restaurant	4,000 ft <sup>2</sup>
lobby	
seating	6,000 ft <sup>2</sup>
kitchen	
Game Room	
arcade	
new game exhibition	15,000 ft <sup>2</sup>

proposed program (public)

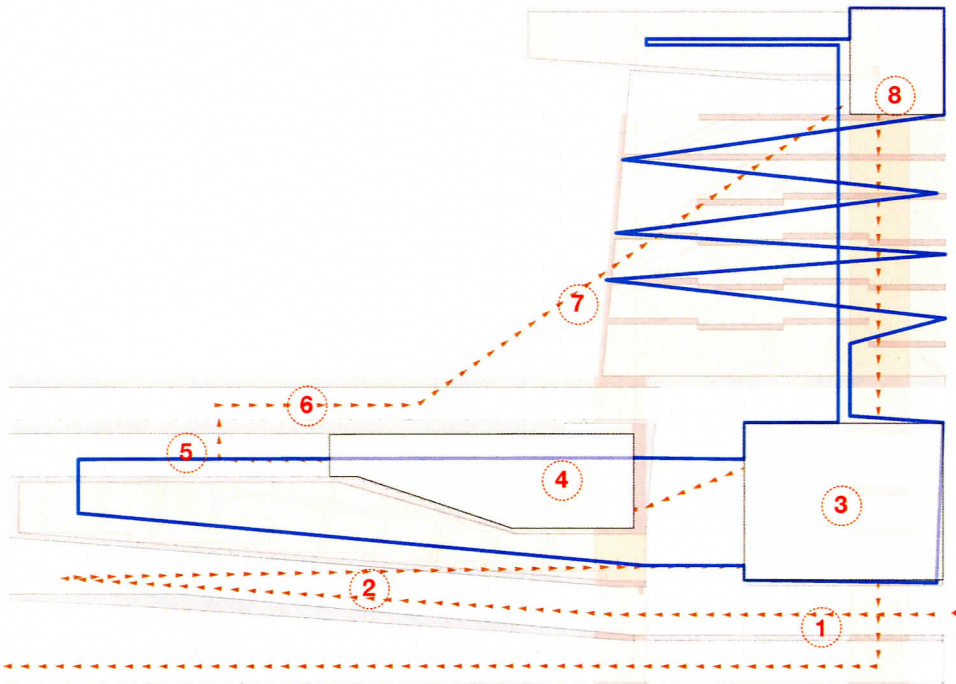
Total = 207,440 ft<sup>2</sup>

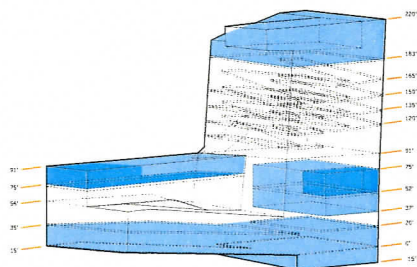


private

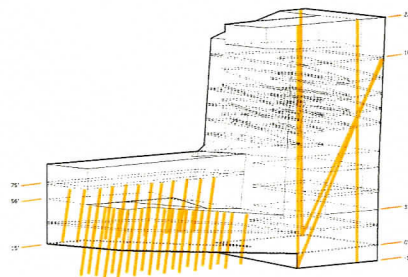


semi-private



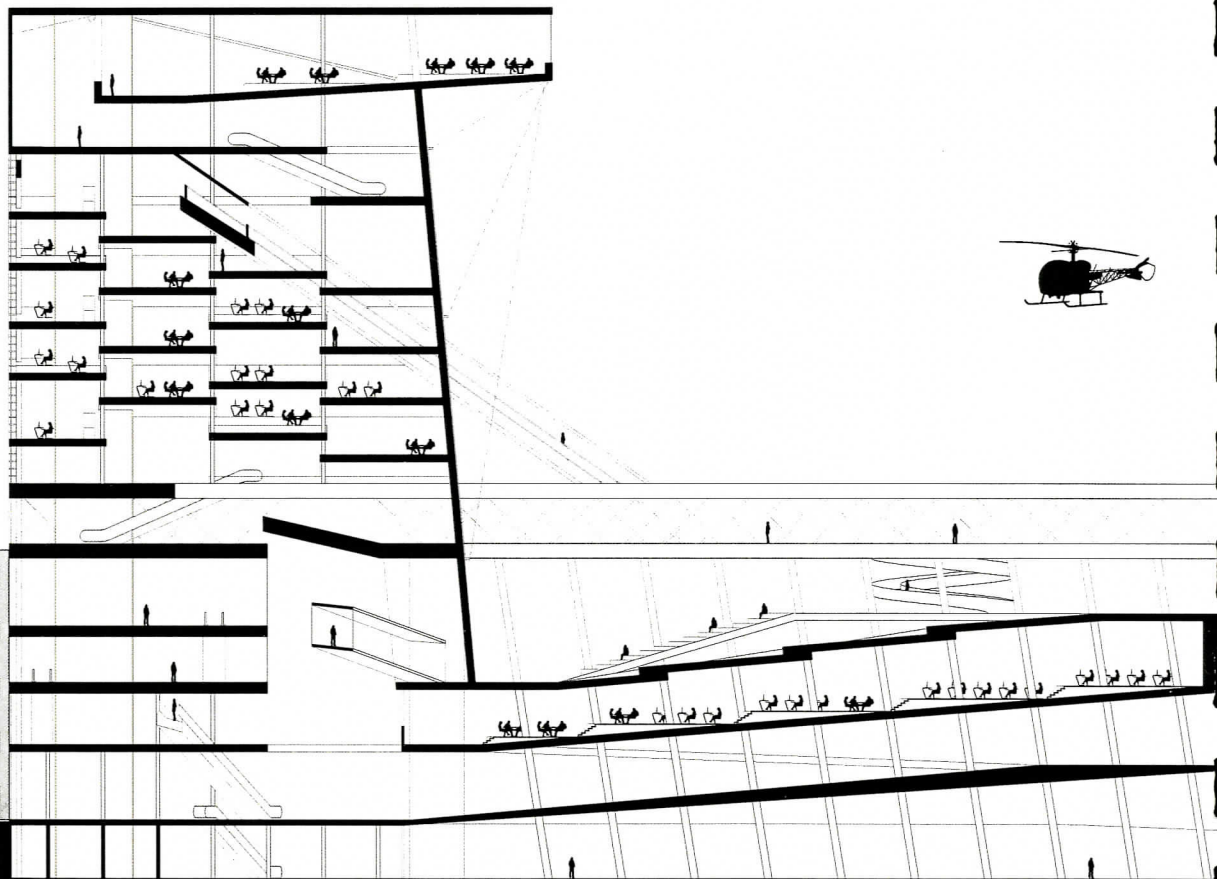


public



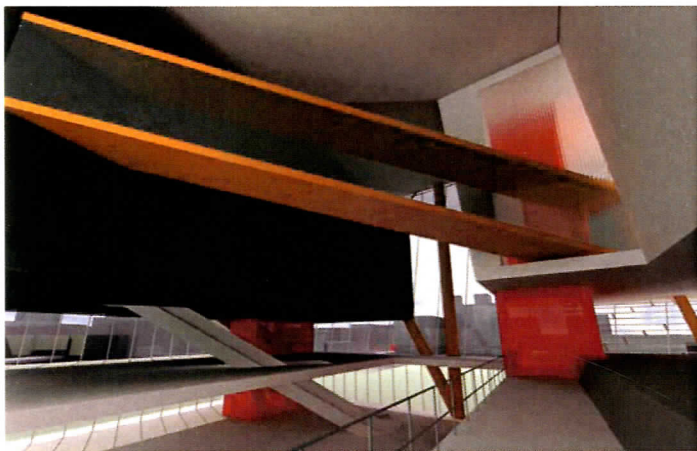
structure

- 1 Lobby - public street extension
- 2 Gallery - linear exhibition space maintaining the street extension and offering a history of Nintendo
- 3 Interactivity Chamber - central hub of Nintendo's information loop that tests new products and ideas. In this space public response to new items are relayed to the research and development teams as well as the marketing department
- 4 Auditorium - Meeting;presenting;learning
- 5 Restaurant
- 6 Nintendo's "urban sofa" that allows the community to enjoy events at a broader range
- 7 Transcendence - The only opportunity the public will have to witness the research and development teams is through the glass enclosed escalator piercing the office in route to the game lounge.
- 8 Game Lounge - The grand finale of public interaction that features the newest creations from the creative labs.

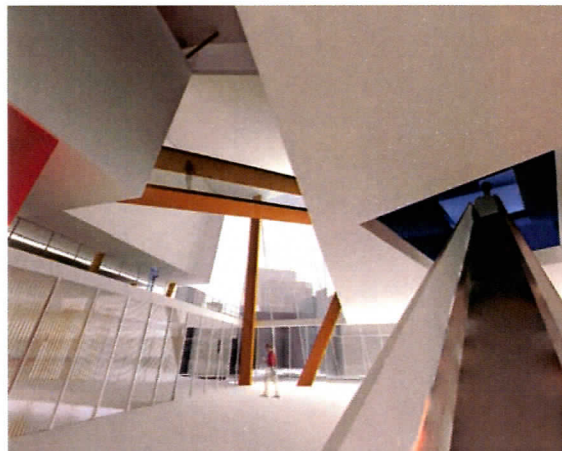


south/north section



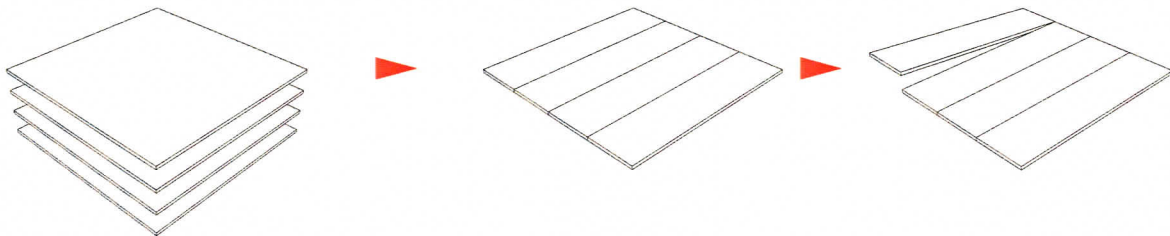


View down into lobby

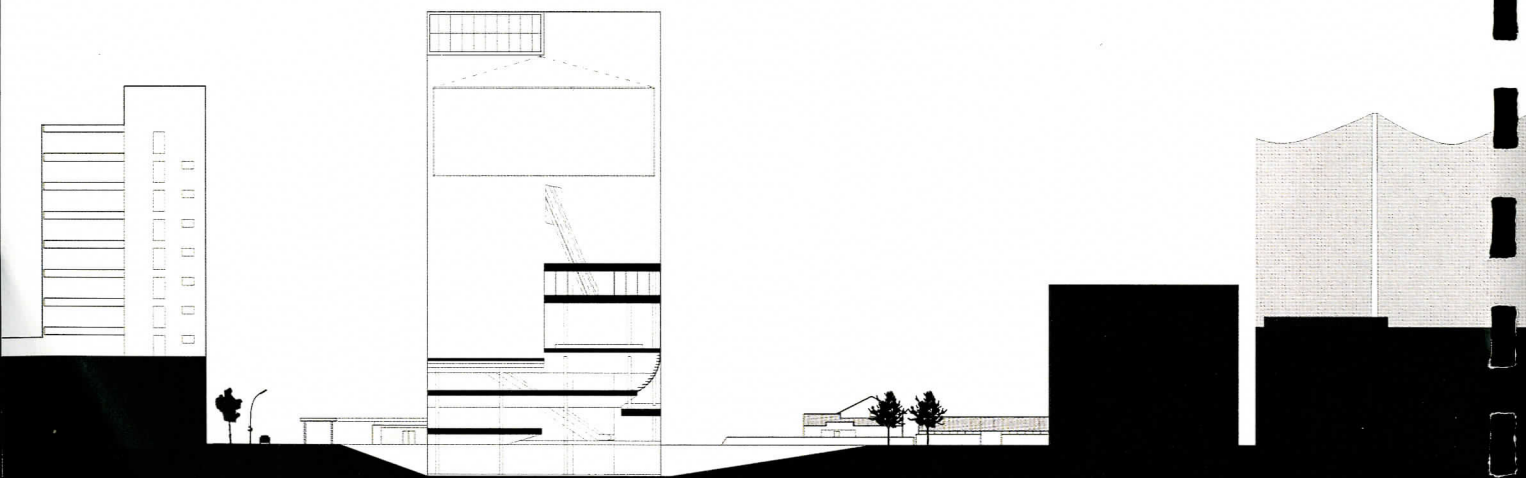


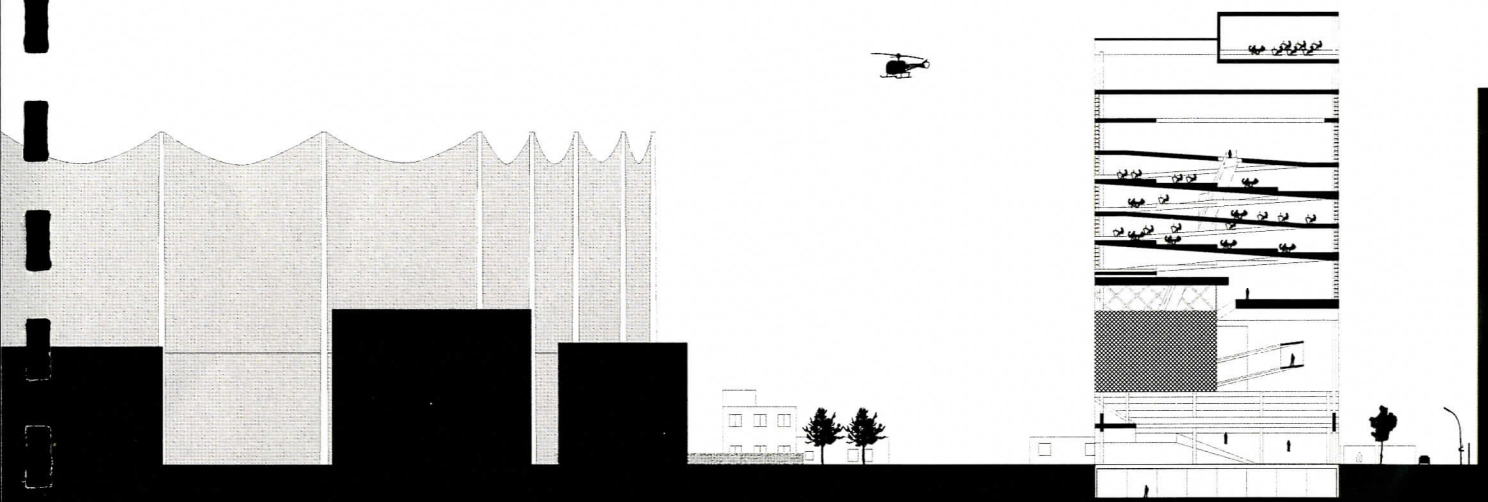
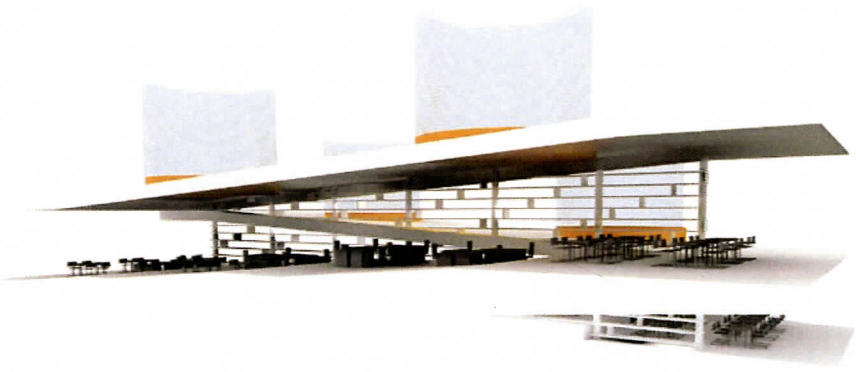
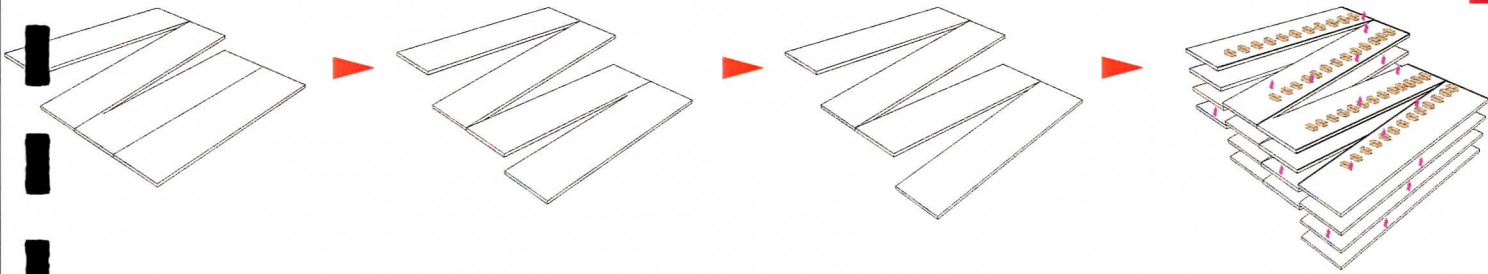
View up from lobby





By bending and stacking the floor plates, the buildings levels are able to connect and interact in a way that was previously prevented.







Urban sofa establishing  
a connection back to  
the historic center of  
Kyoto

Interior view of the transformed office space

