

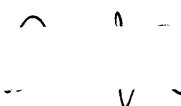
municipal maintenance facility

by
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May 1989


submitted to the Department of Architecture
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Architecture
at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology
June 1997

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MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE
OF TECHNOLOGY

JUN 20 1997

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Municipal Maintenance Facility

by Alan Rainen Barlis

Submitted to the Department of Architecture
on May 27, 1997 in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Architecture.

abstract

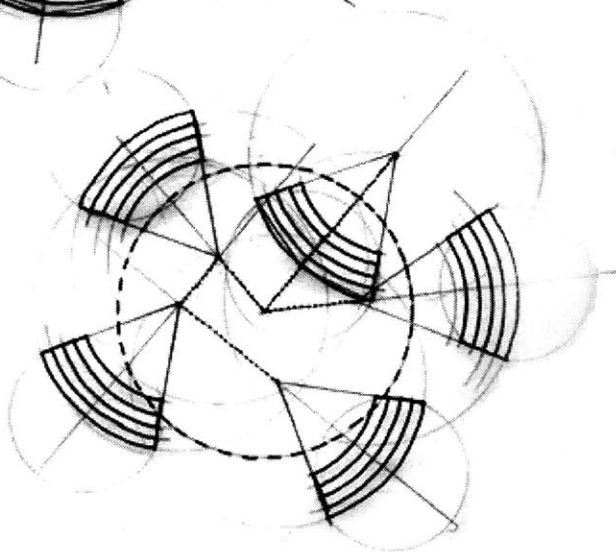
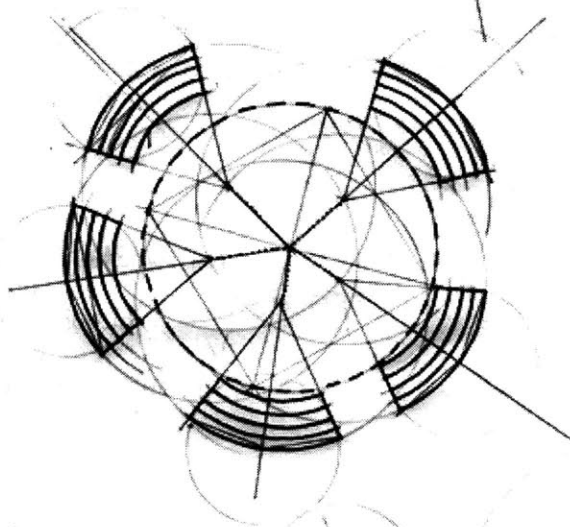
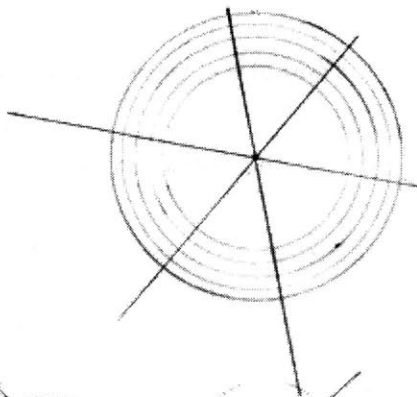
a structure is placed in tompkins square park
it is part of a network of civic spaces intended for civil contribution

to the passer-by or the passer-through
this distraction, this construction, occupied by some others
involves me somehow

at the end near the branch library is a clustering of facilities
facilities related to political activity, organizational offices, places for discussions
ones begun by two people yesterday or ones on-going for generations by countless many
ones that started in this area (neighborhood? community?) or somewhere else
pressing issues, burning desires, casual comments, silent observations
the right to speak nonsense

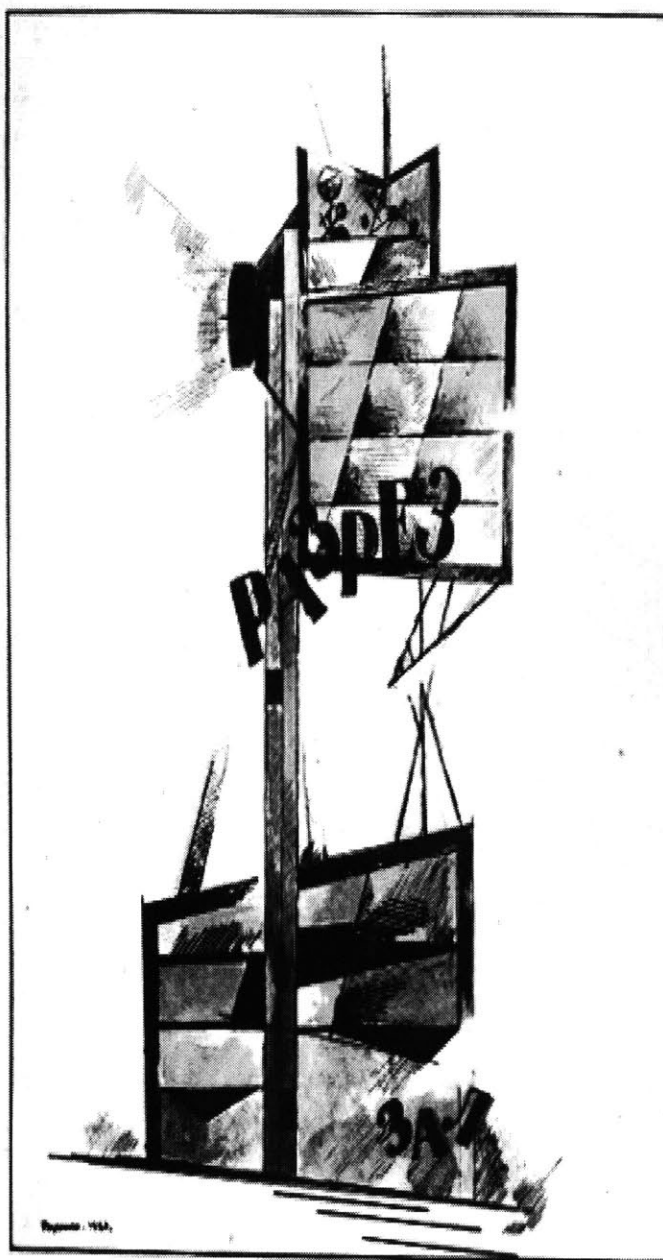
voices
whether i listen or not, are there
with or without mine
but with consequence for me
my absence will be noted
with my presence, i will be held accountable

Thesis Supervisor: Ann M. Pendleton-Jullian
Title: Associate Professor of Architecture



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introduction

I propose to redress two simultaneous retreats: the political sphere from physical space; and architects, the arbiters of physical space, from the political. The deterioration of the physical component of the public sphere has endangered the practice of politics. Acting on the belief that the design of the physical environment influences human interaction, this project will develop the design of a network of public gathering spaces for political activity in New York City.

The space of true democratic interaction allows for spontaneous undetermined plural expressions of antagonisms. Though potentially agonistic to its own foundations, the legitimate governing entity should incite these expressions, from which, taken as a whole, it derives its right to leadership. The framework that allows and enables these activities exists at a meta-structural level.

The program will be determined through an investigation of existing politicized public facilities, with the intention to discern that which is lacking in terms of gathering. The void space of political action will be apprehended, defined, and built. This will then contextualize the development of particular elements on particular sites. The issue of site is problematized by democracy's fundamental condition of equality. Since focus on any one location undermines this aspect of the project, this project will define a programmed network of spaces, spread across a conception of unified territory, like 'city'. Three sizes of nodes will comprise the network, with emphasis on the middle, neighborhood size, at approximately 25-35K sq. ft. Attention will particularly be given to program, access, material, structure, light, and information technology.

Development of these premises will be based on readings, studies of relevant architectural precedents, observations of various civic forums, wanderings through Cambridge and New York, and other processes of design.

a note on the design process and plan for the present book

The introduction on the previous page was taken verbatim from my proposal document written in the fall semester. Several sections follow that also come directly from that document, and are recognizable as the text sections accompanied by quotes from that introduction streaming across the top of the page, as seen on the next page.

I view the work of the fall semester as the formative stage of the project. In it I addressed the purpose and scope of the project that I was to carry out in the spring semester. While it is impossible for me to disentangle these modes of designing, the *mens* and *manus*, distinct conceptual frameworks did guide the work of the two terms. The first semester saw the concoction of a new program and a site strategy through which to investigate the issue of politics in architecture and in the city. The second semester more or less accepted this program and site assignment. As an architect, I developed the themes of the assignment through the design: questioning, criticizing, improving, manipulating, adding, and deleting, as I feel falls within the scope of any commission.

Certainly, the nature of the theoretical work continued into the second semester, just as design work found its way into the first semester. It was precisely this relationship between aspects of the design process that I sought to explore through this thesis. Those lessons will be distilled over the course of many years, and are not explicitly treated in the present document.

Unfortunately, in the time remaining, much of the other lessons from this endeavor will also not appear distilled in this book, and many will not appear at all. At the beginning of this whole affair, one of my distinguished professors shared this insight with me: you cannot make love and read the paper at the same time.

I have been doing much of both, perhaps at the expense of each. This book attempts to recall some of the investigation and lessons learned with this project. Though, as the project is unfinished, these are mere snapshots, juxtapositions, aggregated bits. The project was designed to be but a moment within my continuing project as a student, as an architect, as a person in the world.

...deterioration of the physical component of the public sphere...

i
Politics, here, is understood as institutionalized interaction toward peaceful coexistence through attention to common issues. The difficult definition of this term, and others like 'democracy', will receive further attention throughout the semester.

ii
This project will critically engage the utopian implications of the internet espoused in the writings of Bill Mitchell and other cyber-philicacs. While professing the inherent democratic aspect of the new digitized rugged individualism, much of their work focuses on the autonomy of actors, leaving the network between them unaddressed. Other trends of separation will come under scrutiny, such as object-architecture, gated-communities, and the New Urbanism.

iii
Current excuses for political apathy in architectural practice fault design ("Architectural form is always paradoxical. It remains estranged and autonomous because it escapes the cultural categories by which it is assimilated and situated"¹); construction (the 'architects only design two percent of the built environment' mantra); politics ("the least effective way to change social situations is through architecture"²); and the difficulties of mediating between the two.³ Some part of this is frustration with the failed optimism of our recent past. However, from a secure position of critical retrospection, we can take advantage of that more hopeful generation of architects' efforts and attitudes. Of particular interest to this project will be understanding the architect as facilitator, enabling the indeterminacy of everyday life.

1
Preston Scott Cohen "Stereotomic Permutations" published in Darell Fields, ed. Appendix: Culture/Theory/Praxis (Cambridge: Appendix, Inc., 1996) no. 3, p. 46. He also, like many contemporary architects, has retreated from clarity of written language.

2
From a recent conversation with a GSD Professor.

3
Paul Goldberger's 'no' response to Margaret Crawford's pessimistic 1991 essay, "Can Architects be Socially Responsible?"

Politicsⁱ is dependent on communication. Though always a mediated activity, its operations have grown more complicated as technology has diversified the means of communication. Various media have replaced, rather than complemented, physical space as arenas for political action. Of great consequence is the emphasis on selectivity and remoteness in the relationship of the individual to the social.ⁱⁱ Broadcasts can be made to specific audiences and audiences can turn specific broadcasts off. This political distance more easily extends in the absence of the physical component of the body politic. The location of the content, form, and symbol of people's ability to gather, hear, and be heard must be within grasp of the community it serves.

Architectural and urban form reflects structures of human interaction, or power structures, and therefore can, in turn, influence these structures. Design of the physical environment can, and does, play a role in the reinvigoration of an active political life.

In this age of hyper-skepticism, the urbanistic and architectural reinforcement of community is seen as a naive preoccupation best left in the junk pile with everything else from 1960's architecture.ⁱⁱⁱ Though 'crisis' is no longer a buzzword, our cities and civic realms continue to face the same problems, many of which have escalated. A revisiting of the intentions and experiments of the post-war period is in order. We should once again investigate architecture's role in the political realm, and again establish at least the hope that the built environment can enhance and allow an active public sphere. Better, perhaps architecture is in a position to encourage and instigate an active public

...spontaneous undetermined plural expressions of antagonisms...

sphere.^{iv}

This project will attempt to build the 'field of conflict' as described in the writings on democracy by recent political theorists.^v Much of this writing uses architectural language, e.g. 'space,' 'the field,' 'the stage,' 'the open plane,' to describe its vision of political interaction. I believe architecture can serve as more than a metaphor for the descriptions of this functionality. Though, as Lefort points out, the locus of power in a democracy is an "empty place, ... and it cannot be represented,"⁴ I believe its description can be approached through architecture. This description, though always incomplete and inadequate, can contribute to the symbolic realm in which Lefort acknowledges democratic power to operate. Architecture can, and therefore should be asked to, play a major role in making manifest the superstructures of political activity. I will attempt to join the discussion through design.

To delve directly into the dialogical problematic position architecture and politics have created for each other, the project at hand attempts to move beyond the specific building or specific issue to a meta-level, or framework, that subsumes these concerns.^{vi} This idea of the framework serves both the architecture and the politics of this project.

As a pedagogical exercise, it becomes explicit that this thesis will engage the workings of architectural production in general in their relation to generic politics. Consequently, design investigations and proposals will operate as tests. Problems or successes relate directly to the assumptions made about the practice of architecture, rather than needing to extrapolate lessons from a specific project

iv

The design approach known as Structure/Infill calls for a polarization of the construction of space into two categories, the temporary and the permanent. Ordering systems are manifested that, in their security and definition, announce and allow for elements of more particular systems to be realized. A stable blankness is presented, defining the playing field, but necessarily not the rules or the players. These principles are applicable at all scales, from furniture to urban design. Examples of this approach are most often associated with mega-structures of the 1960's, though the concept was in varying degrees in conscious use for over one hundred years; and, similar to structuralism, can be applied analytically to almost anything. Today these ideas are receiving new attention through the work of Rem Koolhaas, though without any acknowledgment of this heritage.

v

This line of thinking, known as radical democracy, engages a set of writings by Henri Lefebvre, Chantal Mouffe, Claude Lefort, and others. They emphasize conflict realization over resolution, which is never in fact completely reached.

vi

Consideration of several recent projects distinguishes two approaches toward issues of public space and politics in design. One common approach taken by recent theses at MIT pursues the design of a single building that consciously constructs its political agendas, then to extrapolate the lessons learned to diverse situations (see for example "The Boston Federal Courthouse: Institutional Places and the National Face" by June Williamson, 1994, or "Mexico...Space/Nation...USA" by Eric Mar, 1994.) Another demonstrates architectural responses to politicized programs, an approach pursued by several recent competitions about public space and social programs (e.g. Head Start Facility 1994, Boston City Hall Plaza 1995, Juice 1995, San Francisco Civic Center 1996, etc.) I have chosen a third route.

...the framework that allows and enables these activities...

to the larger field. This approach also prioritizes the polemic over the project.

Regarding politics, the only way I see to address seemingly unresolvable conflicts is on a structural level.^{vii} Only when all attention is upon these structures and all players realize their unavoidable involvement can these structures be addressed (and hoped to be fixed.) This shift in attention is the realization or creation of a framework that encompasses these structures, which in turn encompass the variety of perspectives within them. To put it quite simply, “we’re all in it together.”⁵

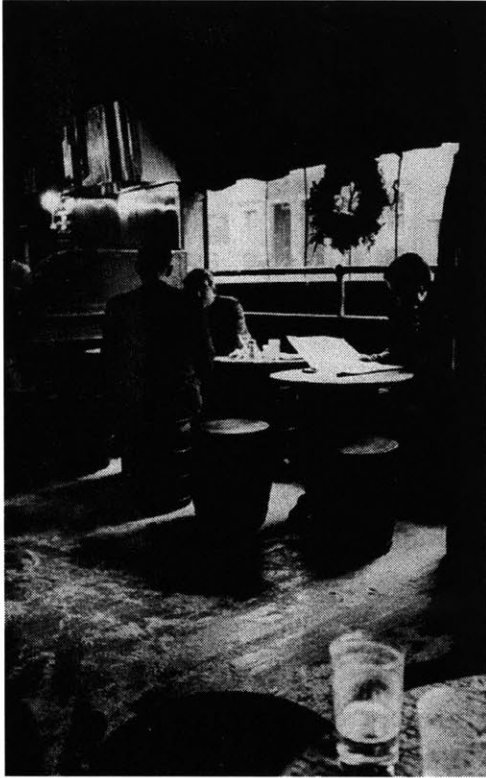
This project as built must not only serve to house, hold, and transmit local debate and community presence, it should also instigate such activity. In answer to the question, ‘why would someone go there?’ it must say ‘you are already there!’ It is precisely the aim of this project to denounce the singularity^{viii} of any one problem or set of problems of the city/community and enforce an understanding of the shared responsibility and inevitable and a priori participation of all of its members. And to use architecture, otherwise trying to run off, to do that.

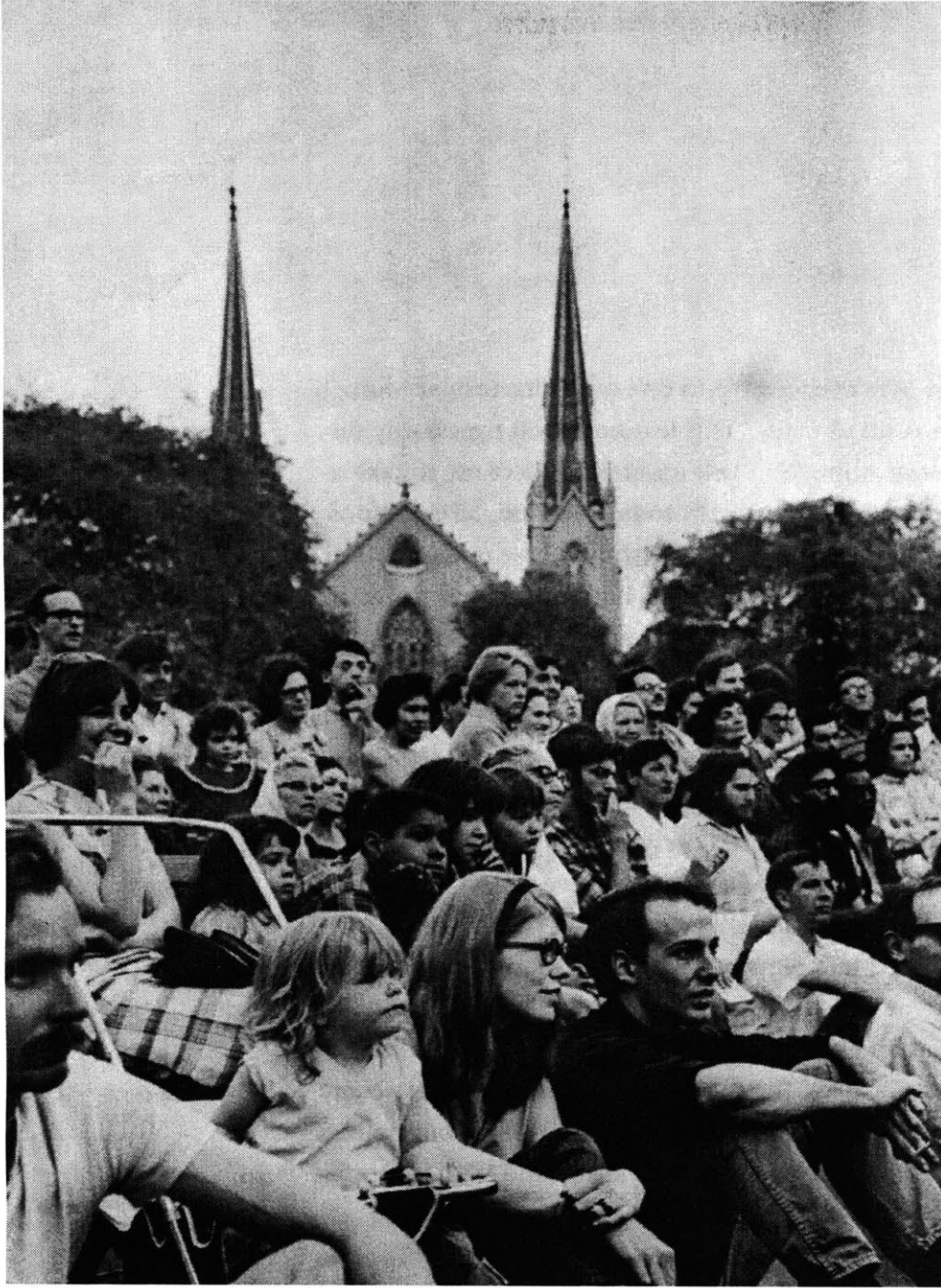
^{vii}
Two antagonistic parties interact at a meta-level when they employ the critical distance necessary to recognize their mutual responsibility and common dilemma. Questions of one party's worth or ability for biological or historical reasons become irrelevant to the discussion. Blame must also be redirected from the individual and group level toward historical trends, geographical coincidences, power structures, etc.

^{viii}
As seen in the characterization of the inner-city community center as a beacon of hope in a terrain of despair, the singular facility allows itself to be stigmatized by those considering themselves outside of the problem. This is not to be critical of the value of such facilities, but this approach seems to have failed to gather a diverse population, not just those already marginalized.

⁴
Lefort, Claude “The Question of Democracy” (1983) published in *Democracy and Political Theory*, p. 17.

⁵
The much repeated call of Robert de Niro's rebel character in Terry Gilliam's dystopic visionary film *Brazil*.





politics as a vocation

This was the title Max Weber gave to one of his lectures at Munich University in 1918.⁶ He opened with, "This lecture ... will necessarily disappoint you in a number of ways. You will naturally expect me to take a position on actual problems of the day.... In today's lecture, all questions that refer to what policy and what content one should give one's political activity must be eliminated. For such questions have nothing to do with the general question of what politics as a vocation means and what it can mean."

As if continuing to require such a defense, the many discussions about democracy going on today always seem to end in a demand for specific policy approaches, no matter the venue. Whenever the floor was open to Cornel West's and Roberto Unger's class on American Democracy, the professors were probed for their opinions on affirmative action, immigration, or the Middle East. Michael Sandel's presentation of his book, *Democracy's Discontent*, ended in a request for his fully elaborated platform were he to run for president.

Granted, 1996 was an election year, and not only have the headlines been particularly provocative, the role of government itself has come under tremendous scrutiny. Yet, there must be a way to talk about politics without politicking. The attention to politicians aside (and it's hard to put aside, with 'The President' as a required character in today's big action movies,) the American public has gained a sense that we need to talk about something called 'the issues.' So now there's increased pressure on those, like West, Unger, and Sandel, who have been talking about how we are going to talk about those issues.

It was clear to Weber, as it needs to be to more of us today, citizenship demands that politics be an avocation for everyone.

images previous pages:

12.1 (left)
bar near
Tompkins Square
Park

12.2 (right)
within
Tompkins Square
Park

13.1 audience at old
amphitheater in
Tompkins Square
Park, St. Brigit's
Church beyond



15.1

The debates on ending welfare on a national level were paralleled by the dissolution of housing regulations here in Cambridge. Similar to legislative measures being considered now in New York, statewide proposition number nine brought an end to rent control in Massachusetts, which means voters around the state were deciding the fate of the residents of Cambridge. This decision sent shock waves through this already politically active community, with particular reverberations among those with lower incomes, particularly centered around Central Square, where I was living.

"Central square is a good place to shop, but you gotta get outta there fast. There's too many different kinds of people up there."

— a landlord of several houses five blocks away from Central to (me) a prospective tenant

This stir exhibited itself to the casual passerby on the street in the forms of an occasional march or postering, but more constantly one overheard the din of frustration that accompanies disempowerment. The shallow benches near the subway stop provided a momentary locus for the spontaneous meetings of those soon to be uprooted, and those who cared to join them. The discussions often labored over logistics, what type of meeting could be held where and with whom.

Such is the space of the street, perhaps the most public city form of all. The seemingly simple gesture, flat and monotonous, achieves most of what architects and city planners have dreamed of for communal form. It is accommodation and chaos, whilst (and because of) being organization and order. The street most approximates the impossible dream of neutral space. People may throw rocks through the windows of the Red Bookstore or taunt the Thursday night clients of Man Ray, but no one tries to burn up Brookline Street.

thug life

Capitalism's support of community is suspect. Community, or whatever mechanisms people employ to realize they have common interests, allows people to find ground for coexistence in the face of difference and division. At its further extensions, the understanding of a community that includes both the (suburban) elite and the (inner city) poor would enable these groups to realize their inevitable involvement with each other. Rather than be allowed to flee from problems seen as separate from each other, these groups could actualize their role in problems seen as shared.

Capitalist economic structures rely on separation of class, and thereby of class consciousness, to adhere to the striated modes of production. Upward mobility is a movement away. Living conditions of the poor are presented as something to get out of, the 'escape from the ghetto.' Today one hears a different phrase on the street, the demand for 'keeping it real.'

The alternative to fighting the uphill battle of upward mobility, and the rejection of its rewards, is to remain in a (black) culture perhaps seen as parallel to or not participating in the larger (white) establishment. Yet, this culture of poverty was formed in the face of simultaneous rejection and exploitation by the elites, built around the consistency of elements like a low standard of living.

Now this underclass, in rejection of such status, is left to adhere to a particularized community that can only remain poor, its position among inevitable in-place macro-economic structures solidified. What better for the functioning of capitalism than a permanent working-class, especially one that calls for its own continuance, and even believes it to be the only acceptable alternative. (These relationships are further exhibited in the white suburban demand for 'the real' granted them through Gangsta Rap. It was thug life that both graced and cursed Tupac Shakur. His death was one of the more marketable scenes from the ghetto to the action-thirsty mainstream media.)

"A city is composed of different kinds of men; similar people cannot bring a city into existence."⁷

"Something there is [in democracy] that doesn't like a wall."⁸

⁷ Aristotle, *The Politics*, cited as the frontpiece of Richard Sennett, *The Conscience of the Eye*.

⁸ Robert Frost, "The Mending Wall." The "in democracy" was added for the title of an article in *The New Republic*.

radical democracy

Following is the (paraphrased) beginning of a discussion between bell hooks and Cornel West at the Cambridge Forum.¹⁵ This open gathering took place on November 17, 1996 and was the first time the two had seen each other since exchanging some critical words regarding the 'Million Man March.'

bh: we need a space for disagreement, to say i still love you through disagreement, we construct community wrongly, disagreement can lead to a deeper love

cw: love is about struggle, we must escalate our struggle, can this be such a space?

<<radio interruption, the crowd is upset that a non-present audience is taking precedence>>

bh: we must be willing to have a little moment of chaos, not insist on the smooth running of our systems, don't respond negatively to the moment of process, conflict leads to challenge, so we don't remain in our little villages

cw: marginalization as a form of sacrifice, we must move not beyond racism or around or over but through

"The individual spirit struggling with impersonal collective form [Simmel], ... these sociologists [of the Chicago School] had a brilliant, counter-intuitive insight; provocation occurs in the very loosening of strong connections between people in a city."⁹

17

9

Richard Sennett, *The Conscience of the Eye*,
p. 126.

10

The Cambridge Forum is not a place but an organization. Its constant features are its staff, its advertising, its radio broadcasts, its flag that it hangs behind the speakers, and its tradition for some 30 years or so.

chance encounters

[Speaking of prewar Europe and United States:] "It is this visibility and continuity of the class model, from the daily experience in the home and on the street all the way up to total mobilization itself, which is no longer available today. ... But for the most part, and particularly in the United States, the development of postindustrial monopoly capitalism has brought with it an increasing occultation of the class structure through techniques of mystification practiced by the media and particularly by advertising in its enormous expansion since the onset of the Cold War. In existential terms, what this means is that our experience is no longer whole: we are no longer able to make any felt connection between the concerns of private life, as it follows its own course within the walls and confines of the affluent society, and the structural projections of the system in the outside world..."¹¹

18

"In Baudelaire's Paris misery and wealth were inextricable; [and in Engel's England] everywhere he walked he encountered aggressive beggars and spontaneous fights, his lapels were grabbed by men selling watches while his pockets were picked by men stealing them. These disorders stimulated his muse. The civilized man must, somehow, take into account pain he can do nothing about. But now that accounting does not occur. Baudelaire's inflamed poetic voice no longer conjures an observer's impression of the woe of drugs, for the sight of these human beings [in Washington Square Park on the authors' routine walk] whose bodies are short-circuiting on cocaine, while disturbing, is not too disturbing if I keep moving."¹²

11

Frederic Jameson, *Marxism and Form*, p. xvii-xviii.

12

Richard Sennett, *The Conscience of the Eye*, p. 124.



<p>street patterns physical boundaries zip codes</p>	<p>subway stations traffic circles fossil entrances</p>	<p>park system library buildings school yards</p>	<p>historic meeting grounds lost local monuments</p>	<p>housing complexes</p>	<p>large residences abandoned lots</p>
<p>use</p>	<p>infrastructure</p>	<p>network</p>	<p>memory</p>	<p>form</p>	<p>void</p>

site strategy

proposal excerpt

the conception of a unified territory

the field vs. the object

21

...this project will define a programmed network of spaces...

All particular elements of this project will be designed to various extents in order to further define a larger network to which they belong/comprise. This is partly in response to the predominancy of object-oriented design, which allows architecture to become esoteric,ⁱ overemphasizing its qualities not so evident to an audience beyond architects, denouncing its inherent connectedness to larger issues.

Beyond issues of aesthetics, geography, and history, the element of architectural design most implicated by the argument for connectedness is program. Interesting that, since modernism, this has been the role least attended to by architects.ⁱⁱ

Most conceptions of the physical city, the organic model, the machine model, use networks or subsystems to describe the functionality of the whole. The city provides a park system, a road network, a transit infrastructure, library branches, and a consistent set of laws. Just as the city has found it worthwhile, if not imperative, to create and maintain these systems, it should consider its ability to provide a political framework. As people are ensured access, safety, education, leisure opportunities, they should find an environment conducive to their political involvement.

This project will confront our means of conceiving the city,ⁱⁱⁱ an operation which we undertake collectively, if not consciously, employing the monument as well as the ephemera of everyday life. The space of political action, seen as a network, operates always and already at several scales and in several locations. This network will be designed as a context for the major design project (itself only an example describing this context).

i

One way architects retreat from the political realm is to conceive of architecture as autonomous. By definition this cannot be so. The fundamental characterization of architecture that differentiates it from other art forms is the explicitness of its responsibility to the social realm. Philosophy has pointed out that no action can be separated from its historical situation,¹³ this is especially evident in architectural production. Several postmodern movements within the field remind us of this fact, such as typology, critical regionalism, even deconstructivism. Autonomy is a myth employed to make the overwhelmingly complex task of architecture easier.

ii

The programmatic network emphasized by many building types is not often discussed in academic discourse. Especially today, many programs demand buildings that can only exist within a larger systems, such as banks, fast food chains, and even churches. The extent that connectedness is manifested falls along a scale, from the repetitive bus stop to the invisible web of the building envelope. A network can also be recognized if a node grafts onto another infrastructure for its connections, as in the case of the monastery.

iii

Architectural or urban design will not be considered as separate acts here.

...spread across a conception of unified territory, like 'city'...

iv

Related problems of this sort are seen in the extremely difficult debates over voting districts and tax zoning. The difficult questions raised in these discussions will burden this thesis.

v

To say a public space project in New York is like "preaching to the converted" ¹⁴ treats lightly the contested nature of public space in New York. A relatively high amount of public space exists in New York because of a tremendous need and attention. This atmosphere ensures a thorough testing of the premises here.

13

The philosophical developments known as the Sociology of Knowledge, concerned with epistemology and social movements, and particularly the writings of Kurt Wolff, will be engaged in this thesis.

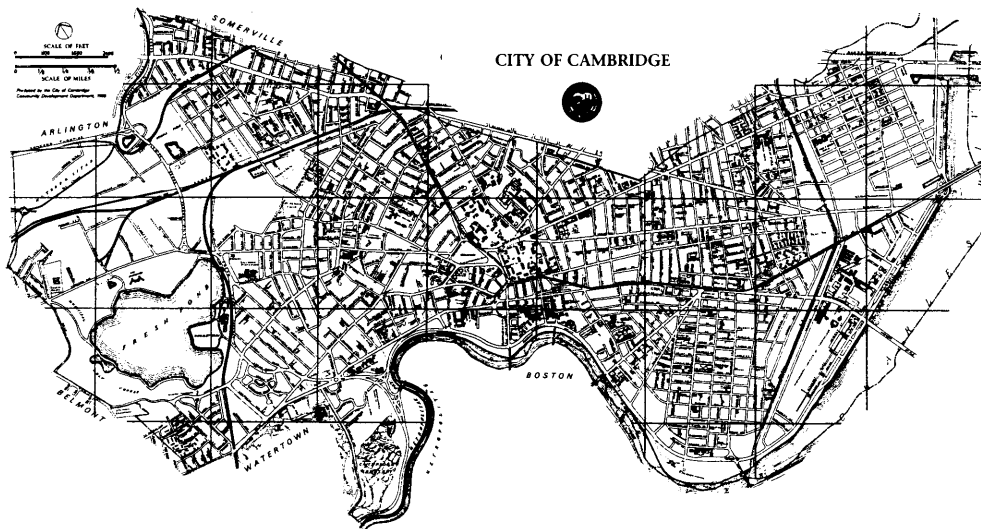
14

Karrie Jacobs "Public Spaces" review of Gianni Longo's "The Search for Great American Public Places," in *Metropolis*, May, 1996, p. 95.

The network strategy is also a response to the varied characterizations of socio-geographic sites as either central, integrated, or marginal, which problematize the issue of site with regard to democracy's fundamental condition of equality.^{iv} Walks around the city of Cambridge, atypical for its variety of means of political activity, will lead to maps that investigate the geographical functioning of politicized programs.

Perhaps the primary challenge to the political functionality of American cities is suburban sprawl, as evidenced by the fierce battles for metropolitan-wide taxation, battles which question civic responsibility and city image. The city of New York, atypical in its extent of urban density,^v is chosen as the location for the testing of the thesis. The structure of New York becomes a framework that positions the issue of suburban betrayal as one among many other conditions, downplaying its otherwise overwhelming significance.

The project, particularly during the thesis preparation term, will attempt to describe this network, its possible locations, scales, functionality, etc. For the thesis semester, these suppositions will inform the task of designing their examples. Primary focus will be given to a mid-size project, approximately 25-35K sq.ft., that serves the politically loaded neighborhood of the Lower East Side. Sketches will develop examples of nodes at other locations and sizes.

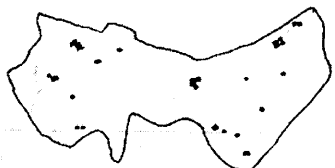


24



centralizing

city hall
municipal office buildings
senior center



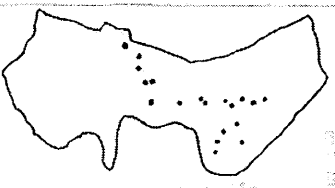
clustering

branch libraries
schools
community centers
youth centers



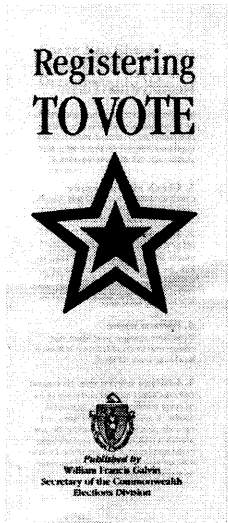
covering

poster columns
newspapers
local TV news



clinging

bars
galleries
café bulletin boards
social welfare organizations



25.1 Voting Brochure

24.1 (opposite)
Cambridge Map

the conception of a unified territory

Is voting enough for democracy?

First of all, who is voting? In America, not many of us. The infamous low voter turnout is merely a percentage of those participating in the low voter registration. Beyond this, new questions of suffrage have arisen: 14% of black males are barred from voting altogether. (Though blacks make up only 14% of the American population, they make up over 50% of the prison population, which excludes them from voting in many states.)¹⁵

Then, about what do we vote? Michael Lewis' campaign journal caught "The Doles ... buying their [movie] tickets for themselves not because they are having an ordinary experience, but in an effort to pretend that they are having an ordinary experience. They have come full circle in a process that removes the players from ordinary life."¹⁶ We can no longer tell if they are pretending or even what pretending is because they cannot

not pretend, their lives are entirely falsified under the constant electronically-enhanced scrutiny of the public. And they are supposed to represent us, we are to be involved in our decision-making-life through them.

The premise of this project is that these two questions can be positively addressed by the third: where? Currently, the televised presidential debate is more public than voting day. Regardless of how much (or little) attention people pay to them from the comfort of their own homes, at least they know at that moment much of the nation is watching. The live polls and remote cameras from Anytown, USA enhance this sense.

I curiously await the next advance in separation strategies that makes the internet seem intimate. True, people tend to get very personal on the web, but accountability is completely absent. Michael Sandel¹⁸ claims that the lost civic voice of the American public springs from our own replacement of shared responsibility with "supermarket" freedom. The desire for freedom to choose from the best possible choices loses sight of the

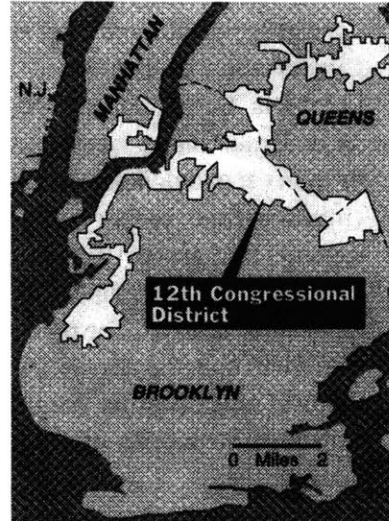
*"...there is no tactical or political question which is not first and foremost theoretical, no form of action which is not inextricably entangled in the sticky cobwebs of the false and unreal culture itself, with its ideological mystification on every level. Not whether the street fighter or urban guerrilla can win against the weapons and technology of the modern state, but rather precisely where the street is in the superstate...."*¹⁷

¹⁵
The New York Times, January 30, 1997.

¹⁶
The New Republic, August 19&26, 1996.

¹⁷
Frederic Jameson, *Marxism and Form*, p. xviii.

¹⁸
The Cambridge Forum, February 26, 1997.



world of negotiations and sacrifices that allow all those options. Today's real and virtual gated communities fulfill the sense of place and place among others we still require, but subject our interaction to strict controls, e.g. personalized newspapers and stadium skyboxes.

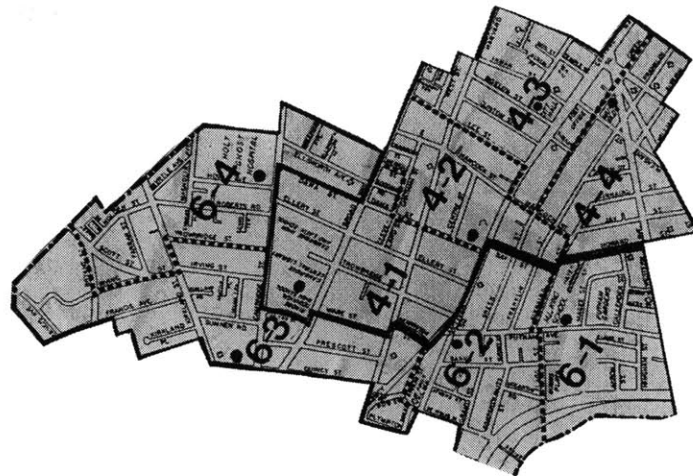
Sandel wonders what can cultivate the character that participates and finds a voice in the life of the larger community, and directs our efforts to our schools, public spaces, and general civic atmosphere. We need to allow competing visions in order to broaden our idea of freedom. Beyond these visions we must recognize that there is always a larger scale: the family, the neighborhood, the city, the state, the nation.

Geography, and real estate, has always posed the difficult problem for proposing this project. The reader will soon note the difficulty in creating such simple distinctions between categories of 'site' and 'program.' Where has everything to do with who and how. Our conception of the city is inextricably linked up with our conception of ourselves, our unities and disunities, allegiances, disregard.

Those with the 'not-in-my-backyard' (NIMBY) attitude, or even its reverse when it comes to investment, have a limited sense of what their backyard is. This project evolved out of a desire to address this misconception through a proposal for a homeless shelter or AIDS hospice house or other such program typically unwelcome in 'our neighborhood.' I felt a return of the alms-house would be an appropriate counterresponse to social welfare cuts, a manifestation of the safety-net, located in a central (civic) location, exhibiting its function and use, claiming an active position in

- 26.1 Voting District including the Lower East Side in New York City
- 27.1 (opposite) (Author's) Voting Precinct in Cambridge with designated polling locations

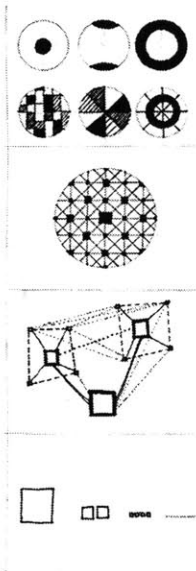
"What then will bring the body to moral, sensate life? What will make modern people more aware of each other, more physically responsive? ... If a theater in a suburban mall is a meeting place for tasting violent pleasure in air-conditioned comfort, this real (or great?) geographic shift of people into fragmented spaces has had a larger effect in weakening the sense of tactile reality and pacifying the body."¹⁹



daily life. There was for a long time a building like this on the property of City Hall Park in New York City. It sat directly across from the landing of the Brooklyn Bridge, which it predated, as a piece of the city one would pass by daily, not merely occupying the site over the anchorperson's shoulder on the local news.

Of course, the difficulty here lies in the discriminatory effects of holding a group of users on exhibit. The strong argument for the concealed or contextual shelters embedded 'in the day to day fabric of the city,' is one of 'fitting-in,' of going unnoticed until that which made these users different in the first place is 'corrected.' (Though this specificity of place and host is also why these project often never get sited at all.) The end goal in this approach is the least disturbance of the rest of the population. The mechanism is temporary concealment (with a bandage or cloak) so as to go unnoticed until the difference is gone... so as to go unnoticed. The opposite strategy of the alms-house project.

The present project, a general meeting hall, took the specific stigma out of the gesture of making a civic presence, so as to explore more easily the conceptions and prejudices of public-ness itself. The transition from the alms-house to this project was actually gradual and unintended. It seemed appropriate that this new civic structure could have attached to it other communal functions. This notion grew, adding to the seed of a permanent voting center a mutable layer of 'residue,' showing traces of previous activity, which too grew more and more complex.



the field vs. the object

*"I call a strategy the calculation of power relationships that becomes possible as soon as a subject with will and power can be isolated. It postulates a place that can be delimited as its own and serve as the base from which relations with an exteriority composed of targets or threats can be managed. ... a tactic is a calculated action determined by the absence of a proper locus. No delimitation of an exteriority, then, provides it with the conditions necessary for autonomy."*²⁰

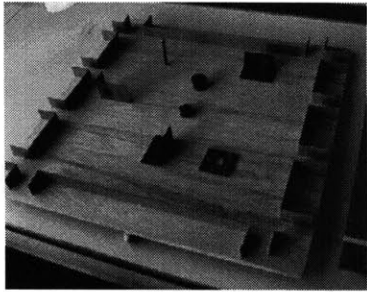
28

This project exists in the experience of everyday life. The *dérive* is a walk around the city, consuming its objects in fashions they were not necessarily intended for. Does the object have to be alien to ourselves, imposed from without, to carry with it a strict agenda that can then be transformed? If we first dilute the object, or recognize instead the field it is within, the forcefulness of the object recedes and the relationships it has emerge. Are we then left with a weak object, nearly stripped of its agenda, re-readable, open for interpretation, depoliticized, that is then difficult to transform because it is always in a state of transformation? Are we left with mud, material for continuous construction, rather than a construction? But that's okay too.

The object and the field have implications for addressing the idea of boundary. The object maintains its own boundaries, requiring no exterior definition, or preferring radial emissions of limitless length to add to its definition. The field, on the other hand, requires, and thereby describes, an exterior definition to exist, or be recognized, else its extensions could be limitless and its entity unknown.

29.1 (opposite)
matrix of gradations of experience between the field and the object

²⁰ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, pp. 35 -37.



field

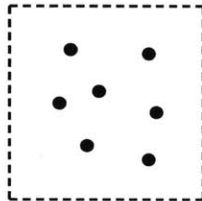
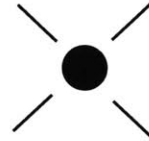
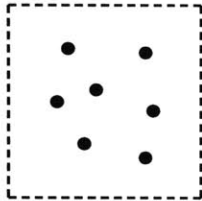
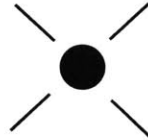
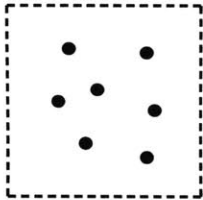
object

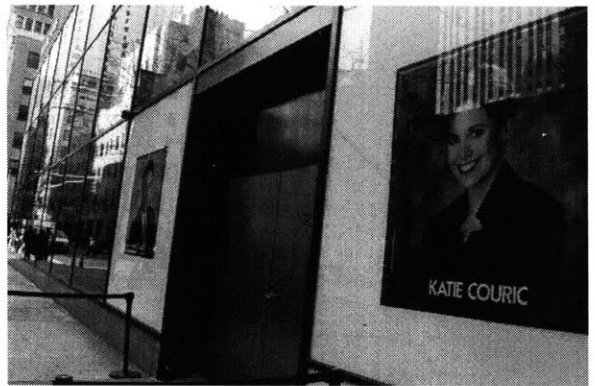
city

area

hood

group





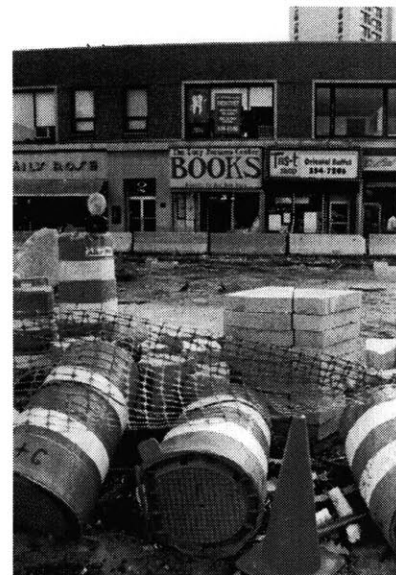
images opposite page:

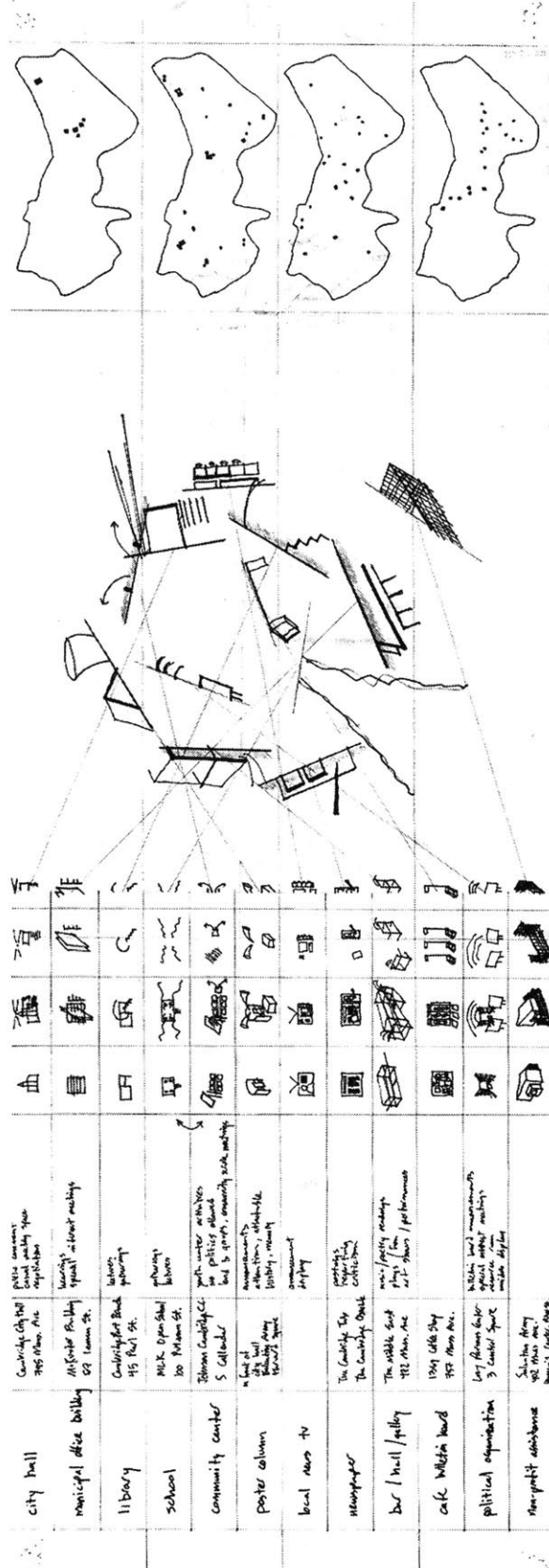
- 30.1 (top left)
Mid-Cambridge
meeting
sign-post
- 30.2 (top right)
home of the
Gordon Elliot
Show, New York
- 30.3 (center left)
Cambridge park
structure
- 30.4 (center right)
home of the
Today Show,
New York
- 30.5 (bottom left)
empty lot, mid-
town, New York
- 30.6 (bottom right)
Cambridge news



images this page:

- 31.1 (top left)
Central Square
placemaking
- 31.2 (top right)
Central Square
pin-up board
- 31.3 (bottom left)
a café pin-up
board in Central
Square
- 31.4 (bottom right)
Central Square
placemaking at
the entrance to
The Lucy Parsons
Center for Poli-
tical Agitation
and Bookstore





program derivation

proposal excerpt

supplement

the void space of political action

performance

...the void space of political action will be apprehended...

In order to distill the elements of the program, various current embodiments of the political sphereⁱ will be apprehended, interrogated, and subjected to designs of their supplements.ⁱⁱ The 'lack' found in each of these existing spaces will thereby be discovered, defined, and built.

The final project's space itself is considered to be just that, a definition of the 'lack' among the physical spaces for political activity. These 'lacks,' or perhaps the 'edges',ⁱⁱⁱ of each of the existing facilities' abilities, join to construct a void, the center of which is probably inaccessible, and perhaps even indescribable. The constructed, thereby defined void is then only a framework for apprehending this situation, becoming aware of it and then confronting it.

34 Understandings of the way the 'center' works will be developed through attendance at political events and community meetings, involvement with radical debate techniques, readings about public space and theater, and current experiments in information technologies.^{iv}

A precedent study is underway that follows conceptions of public space and attitudes toward gathering, from the Greek theater and agora to New England Town Halls to current conceptions. Relevant construction techniques will also be studied, particularly those enabling indeterminacy. A full-scale project will investigate the functionality of these ideas.

ⁱ

These spaces include city hall, municipal offices, community centers, the commons, parks, pin-up boards of cafés, newsgroups in cyberspace, overheard conversations on the street, the space of the newspaper, and so on.

ⁱⁱ

The supplement, according to Derrida, is a part added to what was already conceived of as a whole, thereby betraying the fact that it was indeed not whole.

ⁱⁱⁱ

Emanating from the void is a terrain of negotiation, small stands from which to throw things into it or across it. Around these stands people can gather to debate common goals, all in the face of the void. Eventually, toward the outer more stable terrain, one can find more stable functions of the framework, such as reading and writing, hearing and saying. These edges take on the characteristics of a student center, supporting resources, storage, exhibition, solicitation, amplification. The whole takes on characteristics of the Talmud.

^{iv}

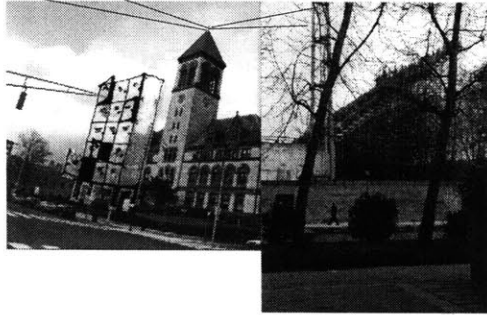
The latter is seen as one element among many. Telecommunication advancements have contributed greatly to sprawl by emphasizing instruments that allow distance. Today, certain advancements hold the promise of contributing to connectedness in complex ways. Some current projects at the Media Lab may be enlisted to support this thesis project.

city hall	Cambridge City Hall 795 Mass. Ave.	public comment social public space negotiation					
municipal office building	Moffett Building 97 Lamm St.	hearings special interest meetings					
library	Cambridgeport Branch 45 Paul St.	lectures performing					
school	M.K. Open School 100 Putnam St.	performing lectures					
community center	Johnson Cambridge CC 5 Callender	youth center activities for politics allowed lead to groups, community work meetings					
poster column	in front of city hall Building Along Parade Space	announcements actions, visible posting, assembly					
local news tv		announcement sharing					
newspaper	The Cambridge Tab The Cambridge Opener	reporting reporting criticism					
bar / mall / gallery	The Middle East 482 Mass. Ave.	music / poetry readings plays / film art shows / performances					
cafe bulletin board	1269 Little Ship 350 Mass Ave.						
political organization	Long Adams Center 3 Center Square	bulletin board announcements special interest meetings resource room media display					
non-profit assistance	Salvation Army 482 Mass Ave. Bancroft Center North						

I sought the gamut of venues associated with politics, attempting to recognize both the formal and informal, the consistent and the sporadic, the passive, the aggressive, the legal, etc. The grille, below, hosted the distilled observations, suggesting categories and juxtapositions among this list. The design of supplements to these found spaces melded critical and proactive responses. In other words, the critique drove the design, the design embodied the critique.

The process and the resulting forms are very useful. The 'palette' at the right of the grille is made up of abbreviated supplements. This is an example of many such sketches (or models or notes) operating (stimulating/suggesting/provoking) sometimes in plan, section, sometimes both or neither. Each diagrammatic formal bit contains information about, firstly, its own form, additionally the manipulations performed on the original formal configurations. Therefore, it includes the critique of past uses, or prohibitions, simultaneously with the proposed or suggested new uses. This information is triggered when the pieces are placed in relation to each other, and/or in relation to site information. These palettes helped organize and edit and discover the program, and lead to the first designs of the project.

This grille contains icons, mere diagrammatic abbreviations, of the studies for the supplements (developed to various extents in sketches, notes, drawings, and models; the city hall example follows on the next page.) The palette was tested with more and less complex representations of supplements, and seems to be the most suggestive with the most basic and simplified information.

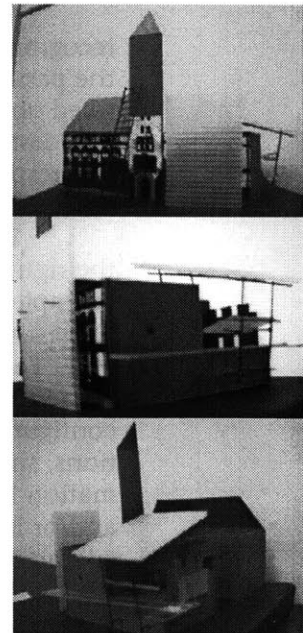


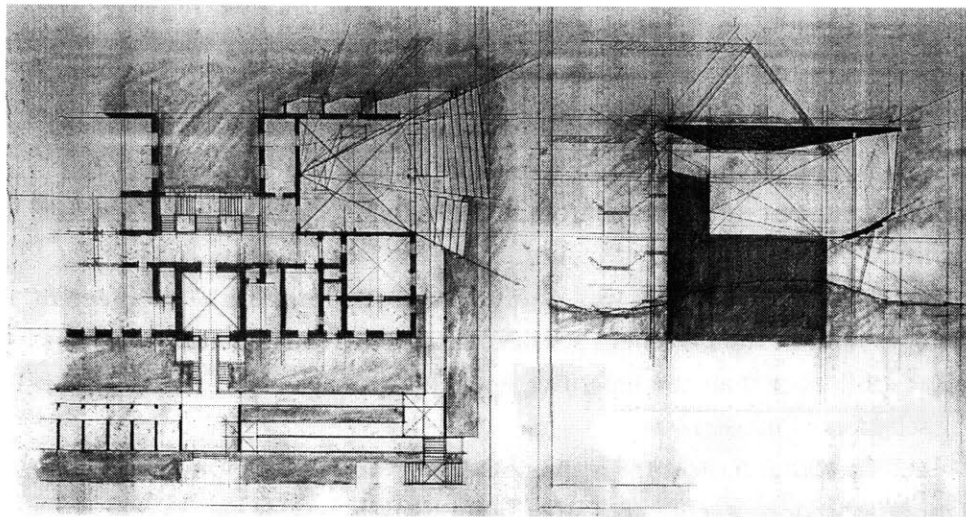
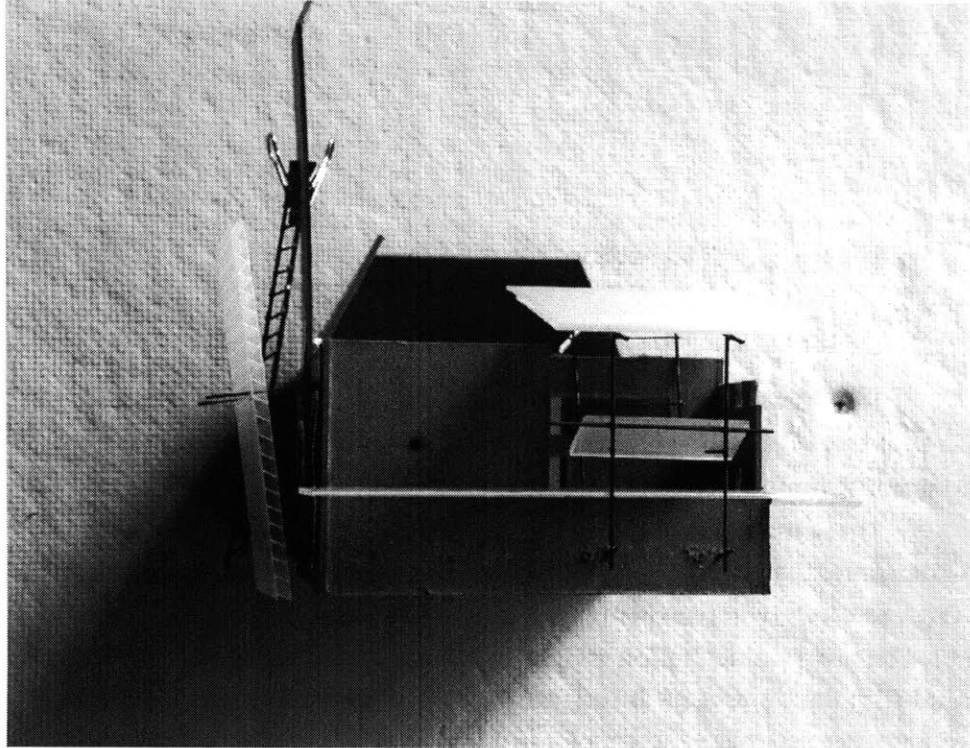
case: city hall

36

The City Hall in Cambridge, upon approach, reveals very little of its civic functions other than its provision of an image of **strength** (the entire visible structure until the roof is load-bearing sandstone,) **centrality** (the 160 foot tower on axis with the entrance centered on the lot,) and **domination** (tall tower, stone structure, all at the top of a slight hill set back from Massachusetts Avenue, the main thoroughfare of the city.)

This supplement to city hall attempts to reveal, and indeed emphasize, the moments where this public facility does and can accept, and perhaps enable, an expanded public voice. The City Council Chamber, to the right and rear of the building, is expanded, seating and television cameras reoriented, to accommodate and invite a curious public. Other forms of announcement are added to the structure. A public use office building of sorts is added on the front lawn.





36.1 (opposite, top)
photocollage

36.2 (opposite, right)

37.1 (this page, top)
views of the
model with
supplement

37.2 (this page, right)
plan and section

the void space of political action

It is illegal to demonstrate or carry any kind of banner on the property of a polling location on election days. It is illegal for non-profit community centers to host political events.

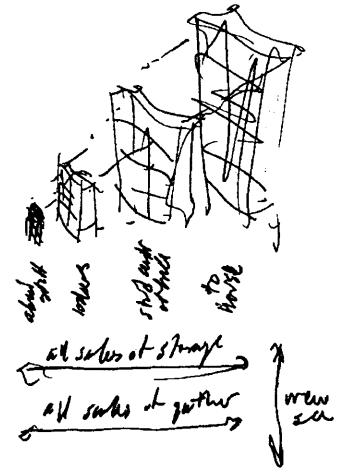
These examples are merely more explicit, and therefore usually less bothersome, than the types of prohibitions discovered from the supplement design research (where existing politically-relevant facilities were interrogated.) The program derivation sought to counter such disempowering, never-mind stimulating, forces. It sought spaces and functions (again difficult to separate) that enabled and encouraged multiple and conflictual activities.

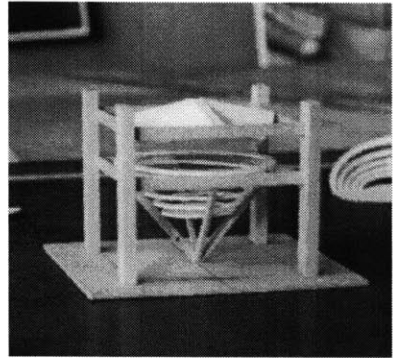
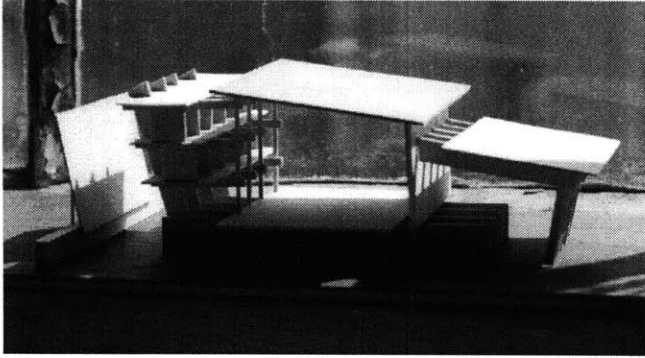
A recurring analogy was the functionality of the university student center. [Though an already restrictive building type, open only to students, these limits to the analogy can be overcome by suggesting a change in scale: the container only gets harder to maintain when the community is increased and diversified.] Particularly the hanging banners, the desks full of pamphlet propaganda, every inch of student group office windows filled with messages.

This variety translated to the abstract idea of lockers, as in public lockers, but of varying sizes and accessibility. Almost all elements of the program are seen in this way: from actual public lockers to rentable street furniture pieces to organizational offices to the large meeting halls themselves. The locker, or shelf, was an often surfacing form in the supplement sketches (and in the precedent studies, p. 49,) with possibly no more (or less) significance than the repetitive equal dimensions of the socialist housing schemes of modernism.

The other basic form is the plane, be it an information screen, negotiation floor, or protective roof, that bounds space but is open to manipulation by the participants.

These basic formal/programmatic elements, seen on the opposite page, recur in a variety of sizes and combinations to make up the more specific proscriptive programs of the project. A following section describes an actual program and a programmatic discussion particular to the Tompkins Square project.



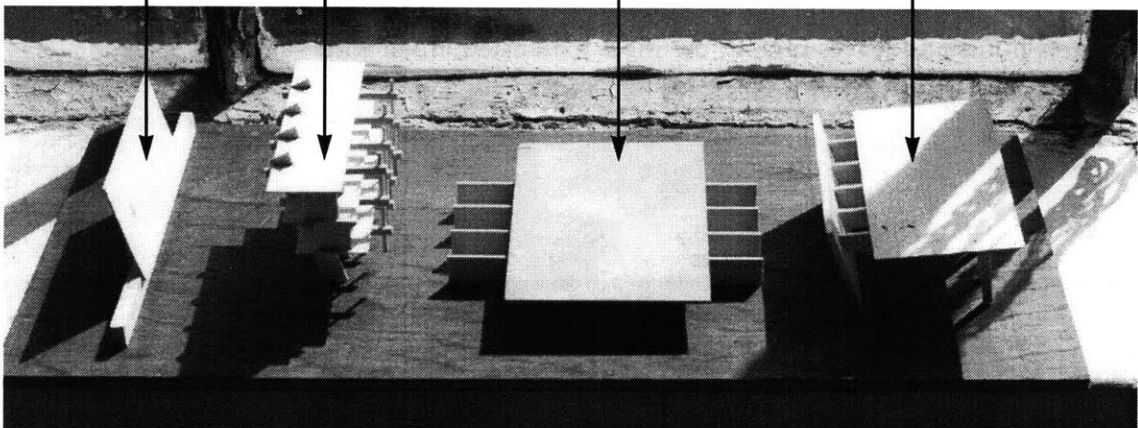


information screen

organizational offices

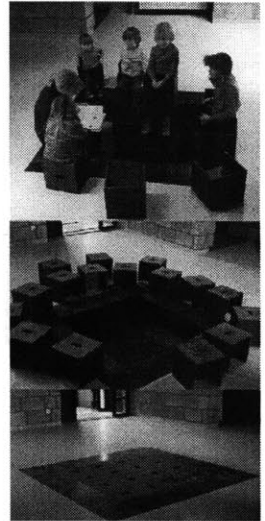
negotiation floor

discussion hall



performance

Gathering has come under scrutiny. Margaret Crawford is right to suspect the Michael Sorkins and Richard Sennetts of holding a restrictive ideal of community in their minds when they bemoan the loss of public space.²¹ Though, rather than await and try invention, perhaps we can use known forms of gathering, ones based on once-secure and once-central ideas, and transform them into places/forms where gathering can occur in a different way. This can be a caption to the image 40.1.



John Cage says that theater occurs everyday all around us, and that it is art's job to point it out.²² Political relationships, clashes, negotiations, schemes, and deals, also are constant, and our spatial relationships can make it their job to point these out as well.

Everyday we have an audience of each other. We create the spectacle of ourselves that draws us in to bonds with each other. We have "the right to speak nonsense"²³ and others should listen if they too want to be heard.

"democracy is a habit of the heart"²⁵

Brecht's epic theater sought to engage, even create, a non-passive audience, "...to keep a social drama free of the effects which empathy produces and which the audience was accustomed to. ... 'We have been asked: Will a worker understand this? Will he

"democracy doesn't just add up preferences but changes them"²⁶

be able to do without his accustomed opiate, his mental participation in someone else's uprising, the rise of others; the illusion which whips him up for a few hours and leaves him all the more exhausted, filled with vague memories and even vaguer hopes?"²⁴

21
Crawford, "Contesting the Public Realm," p. 4.

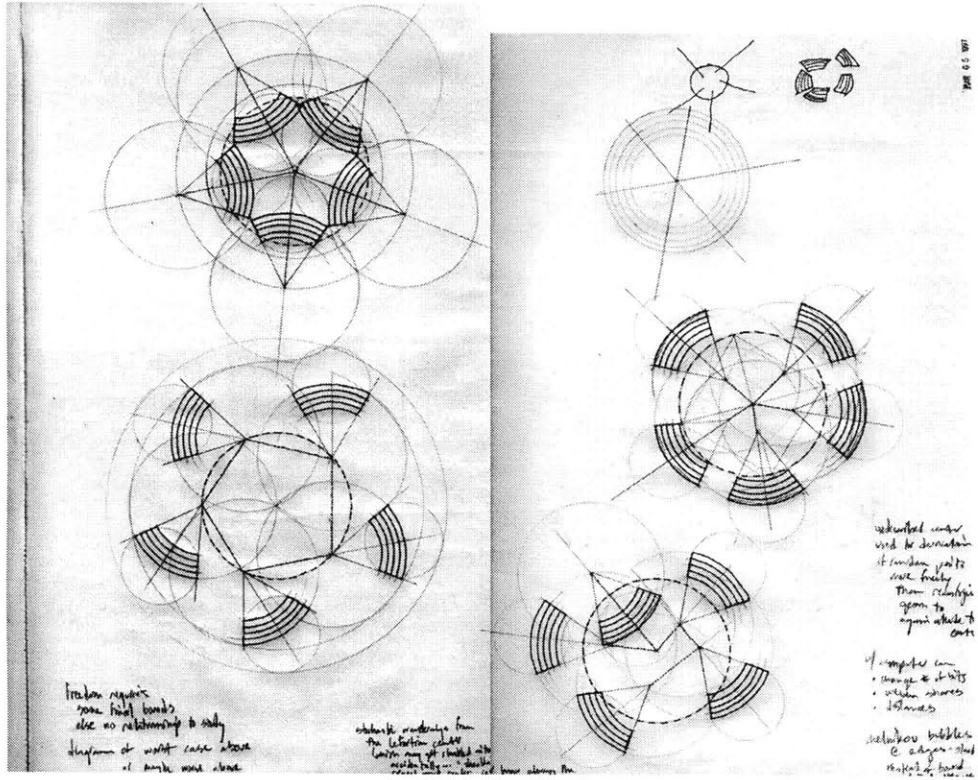
22
in McLuhan, *Medium is the Message*, p. 119.

23
Cornel West on opening day of the class, "American Democracy," at Harvard.

24
Walter Benjamin [quoting Brecht] from Arendt, p. 152-3.

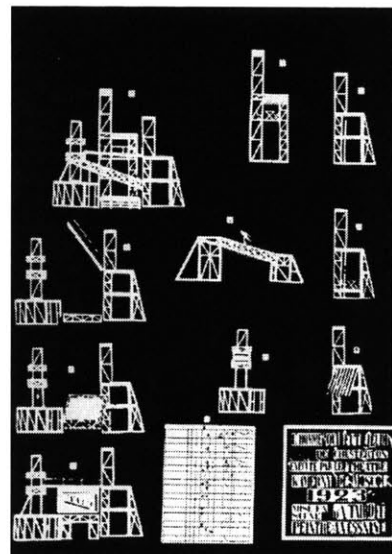
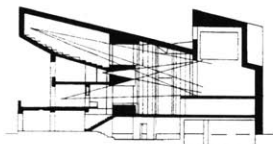
25
Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*.

26
Thomas Jefferson., quoted by Michael Sandel at the Cambridge Forum lecture.



40.1 (opposite, top)
 chair/floor by
 Herman
 Hertzberger

41.1 (this page)
 forum trans
 formed



	<p>framed</p>	<p>iron away vs</p>							
	<p>read / write</p>	<p>manely read stage manification</p>							
	<p>write / read</p>	<p>group / project make certified</p>							
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	<p>accomodate</p>								

formal approach

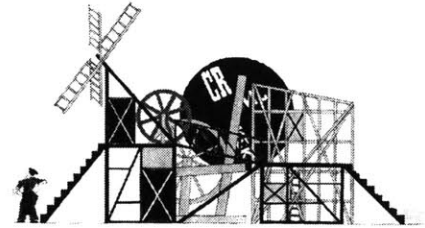
the trouble with translation

the line and the circle

facility

43

the trouble with translation



I hoped to come away from this semester with at least one new trick: I wanted to gain a few reliable techniques for making the leap from behavioral observations in the field to formal drawings in the studio. I suppose I will always seek that trick.

This trouble demonstrated itself with particular force in this project. While my colleagues were taking measures of their sites and dimensioning their programs, I was making casual observations of activity in the park and on the streets. I thought maybe a map, a messy painting, some blurry photographs, and I could have that formal clue, that opening between two lines or in the shadows of a two-inch high model, that initiates the whole project.

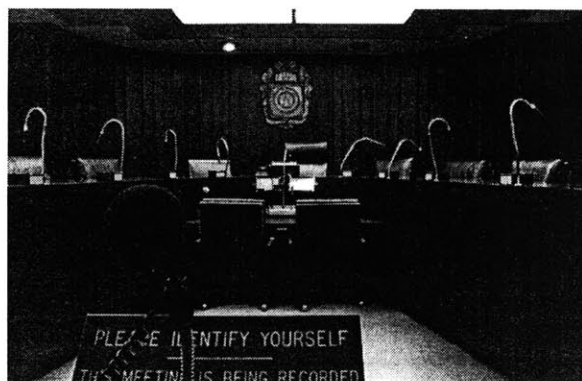
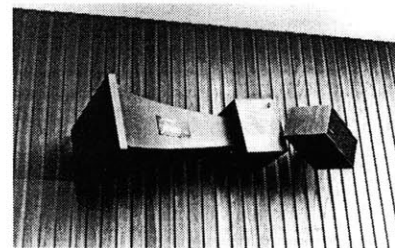
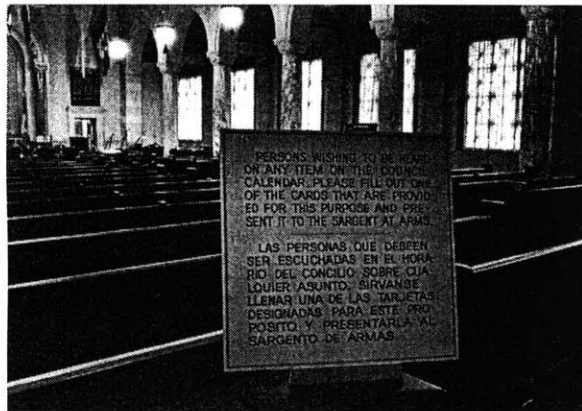
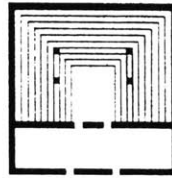
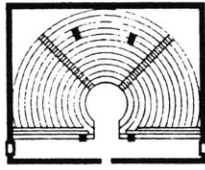
First of all, the public doesn't want to be photographed (even William Whyte had to hide a camera atop the skyscraper next door for his Seagram's Plaza observations.) Architecture may be only a more intense manipulation of space than other gestures, physical or spatial or ephemeral; but its relationship to its occupants is not singular.

"let's be undecided ... let's turn up our amps" 27

44

The more public, the more diverse and unpredictable the occupants and the occurrences does not necessarily mean the less architecture, but it does in fact demand flexibility, a built-in uncertainty in the structured environment.

With our hypercomplex awareness of the issues of architecture, indeterminacy today can be applied as a principle not only to program and space (physical mobility) but to our conceptions of the space binding us. People are empowered with an understanding of architecture as a tool for their environment; aspects of play, whimsy, and the surreal should surprise even the architects; landscape is urbanism is architecture is landscape; etc. Fantasy can accompany imagination in the design process. It will more closely reach dream, and thence on to idealism (though not idealism that only prepares us for the best, but that prepares us for the ability to struggle through the likely worst.)



- 45.1 (top left)
- 45.2 (center left)
- 45.3 (bottom left)
- 45.4 (top right)
- 45.5 (bottom right)

Images of the traditional and retrofitted traditional Chamber typically found in city halls and municipal buildings across the country. These are the images and barriers that confront the participating citizen .

precedents

classicism

Andrea Palladio	Palazzo della Ragione, Vicenza, 1549
Andrea Palladio	Teatro Olimpico, Vicenza, 1580
Giorgio Vasari	Gli Uffizi, Florence, 1560

constructivism

Vladimir Tatlin	Stage set for Zangezi, 1923
Alexander Rodchenko	Project for a Street Kiosk, 1919
Konstantin Melnikov	Rusakov Club for Transit Workers, Moscow, 1927

modernism

Nizzoli and Persico	Nautical Exhibit, Hall of the Gold Medals, Milan, 1934
Jan Duiker	Cineac, Amsterdam, 1934
Walter Gropius	Total Theater Project, 1927
Ragnar Ostberg	Town Hall, Stockholm, 1923
Victor Horta	La Maison du Peuple, 1897.

late modernism

Le Corbusier	The Palace of Assembly, Chandigarh, 1956
Le Corbusier	Millowners' Association Building, Ahmedabad, 1954
Frank Lloyd Wright	Opera House and Gardens, Baghdad, 1957
Frank Lloyd Wright	Community Center, Point Park, Pittsburgh, 1947
Alvar Aalto	Town Hall, Synatsalo, 1952
Giovanni Michelucci	Church of the Autostrada, Florence, c. 1958
Piano and Rogers	Pompidou Center, Paris, 1972-1977

critical modernism

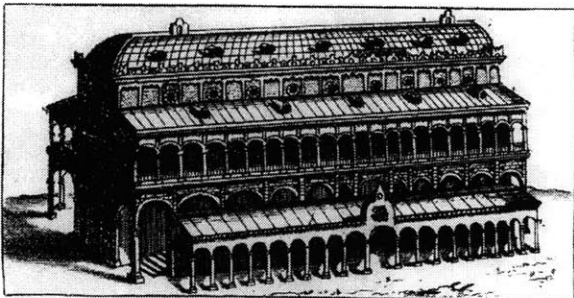
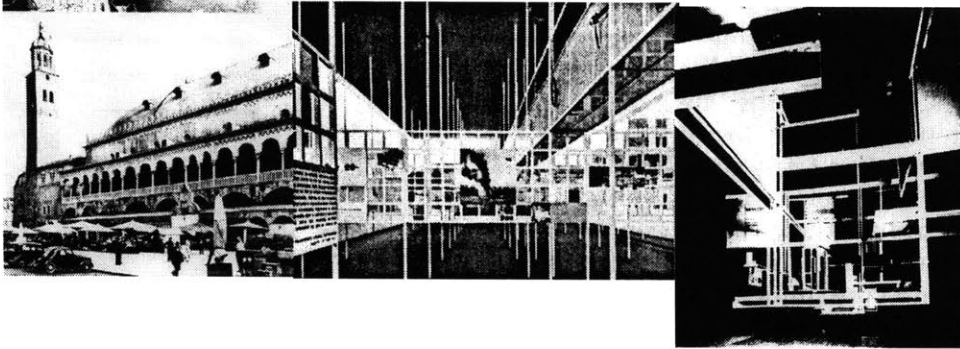
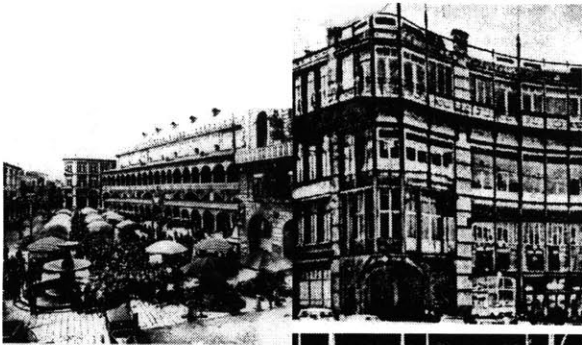
A + P Smithson	Hauptstadt Competition Entry, Berlin, 1958
Aldo van Eyck	Orphanage School, Amsterdam, c. 1954
Giancarlo de Carlo	community participatory planning, Urbino, c.1970
Lucien Kroll	Student Dormitories
Cedric Price	Fun Palace, London, 1961
Micheal Webb	Sin Centre, Archigram, 1962
Peter Cook	Plug-in City, Archigram, 1964

deconstructivism

Rem Koolhaas	Agadir Convention Center, Morocco, 1990
Rem Koolhaas	Center for Art and Media Technology, Karlsruhe, 1989
Asympote	Project for Monument over Highway, Los Angeles, 1990

various

Hans Haacke	MOMA Poll, MOMA, New York City, 1970
Dennis Adams	Bus Station Series, Various, 1983-1992
Dennis Adams	Public Commands / Other Voices, Miami, 1988
Jane Addams	Hull House, Chicago, 1920's
various	Town Halls and Meeting Halls, New England
various	Boston City Hall Plaza Competition, 1995



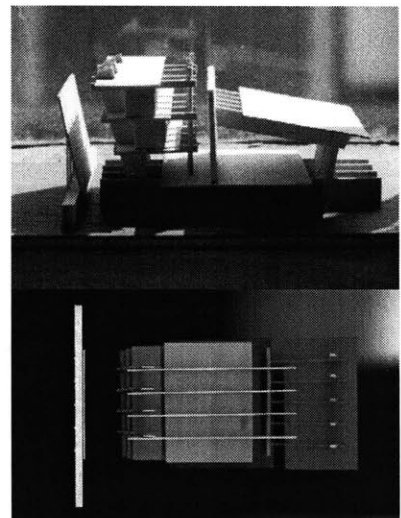
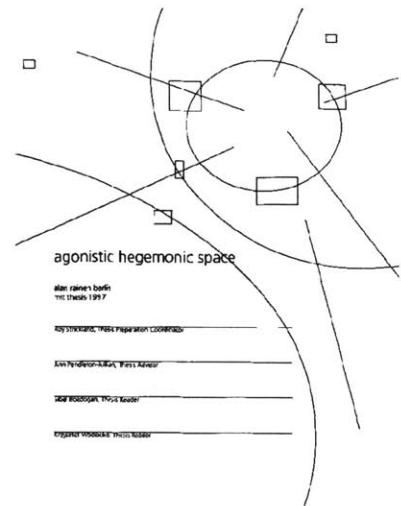
the line and the circle

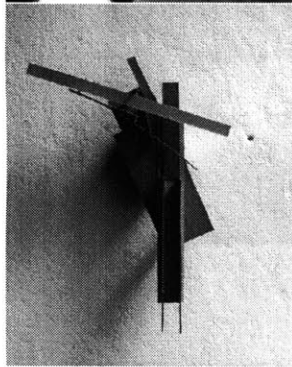
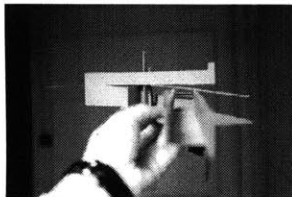
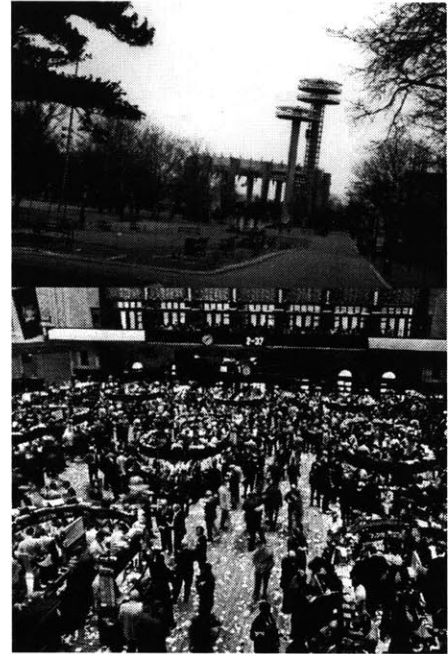
The preferences Jefferson spoke of that we bring with us into the democratic arena are hopefully transformed by the habit of the heart that de Tocqueville proclaimed. This project also becomes a critique of existing park design (the lowest common denominator green lawn of Copley Square or the surveillance designed Bryant Park or Union Square,) as well as our continual dependency on parks as the 'last great democratic spaces' (as Herbert Muschamp insists.)

In light of the 'trouble with translation' just described, two abstract formal signifiers were attached to the various spaces we inhabit and to the way we inhabit them. The line, linear movement, allows escape, allows crossing but momentarily, allows observation. Travelling the line may allow possible confrontation, but only because the two parties thought themselves freely travelling ahead. Hence, the ramblas of Barcelona or the rippling lines of Miami Beach's strip are the greatest people watching places... encounters with the most people but safe from any form of containment with them, particularly if you are on rollerblades.

The circle is often deceptively a curving line. The many circles seen from an airplane are actually high speed offramps on the ground. Most new park designs are combinations of lines (fences) and voids (fenced in or otherwise foreboding.)

Several studies for this project investigated the way form can influence the turning off a line, the way a line can meet a (true) circle, the merits of allowing lines to continue in the face of the need to establish some circles. This dilemma is not unlike those taken up by radical democracy, when it asks, "how can we defend the gains of the democratic revolution and acknowledge the constitutive role of liberalism in the emergence of a pluralistic democracy, while trying to redress the negative consequences of individualism?"



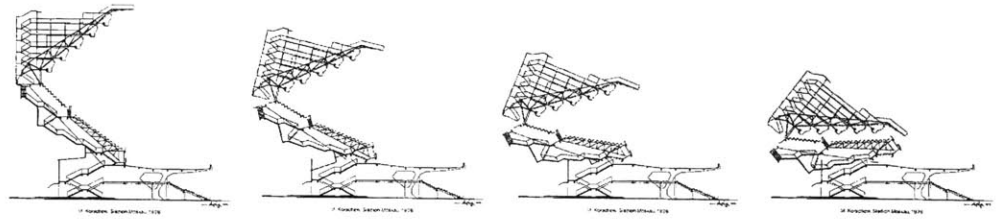


images opposite page:

- 48.1 (top) early sketch
- 48.2 (center) proposal cover
- 48.1 (bottom) facility model

images this page:

- 49.1 (top left) Madison Square Garden
- 49.2 (top right) Phillip Johnson's Pavilion for the 1964 New York World's Fair
- 49.3 (near top right) NY Stock Exchange
- 49.4 (center left) model for turning corner
- 49.5 (center middle) highway interchange
- 49.6 (center right) suburban townlet
- 49.7 (bottom right) NYC Subway

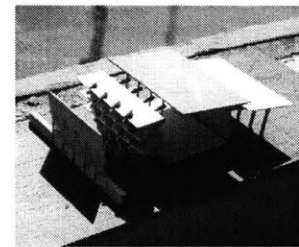
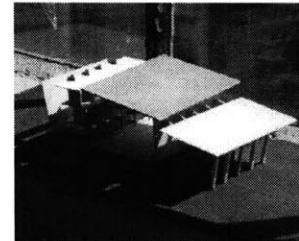


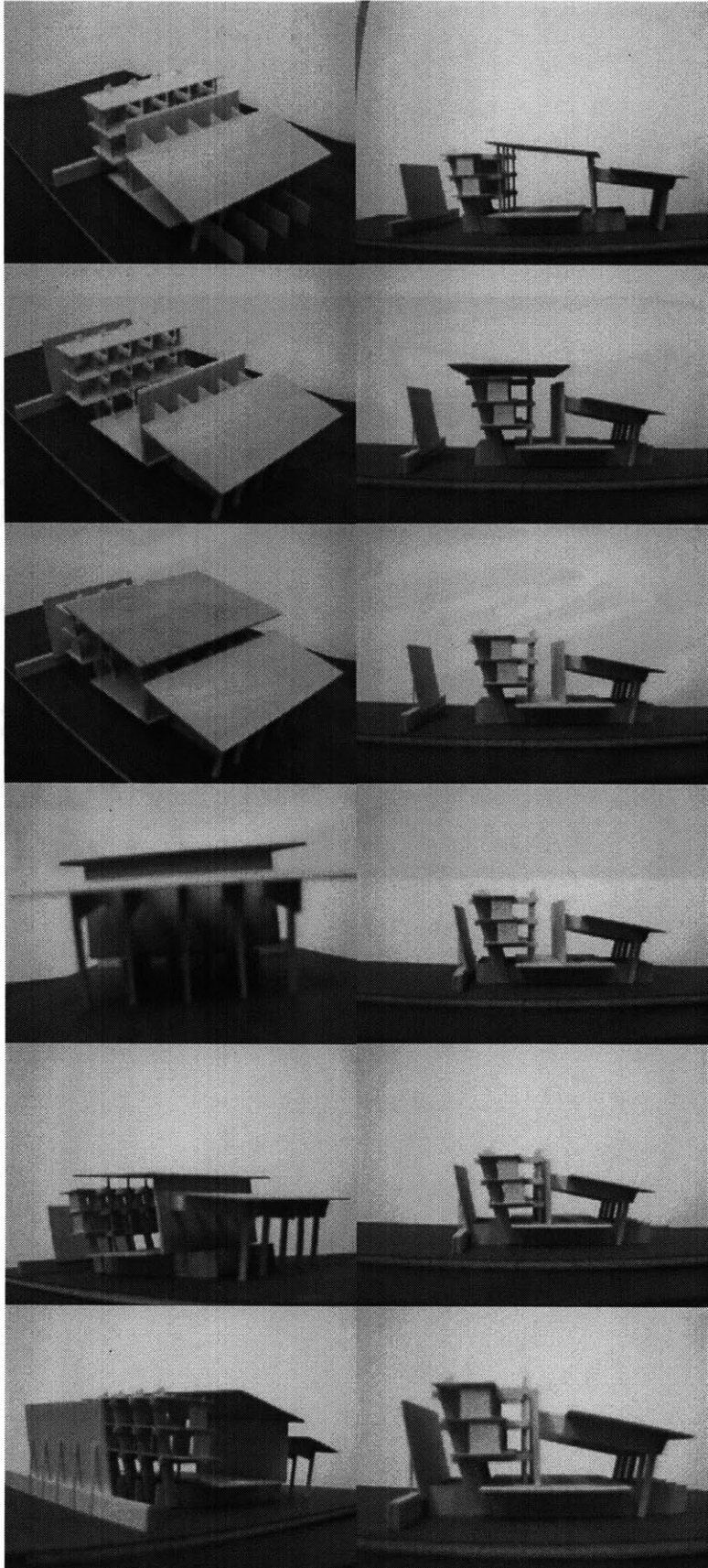
facility

50

Nature is landscape is cityscape is architecture is all our external material for experience for existence. Someone else may or may not have had more or less of a hand in manipulating it before we get there when we want to manipulate it, and do, more or less **inside** or **outside** ourselves.

We have a relation to this stuff. The 'we' is the public, the 'stuff' is public space, the stakes are high. Someone put this hulking machine into our park. It looks like it does something, we don't care what anyone else meant for it to do. But we know it could do something, so if we left it there to rot it wouldn't be its fault, we'd never have tested its potential. So we are already responsible. We could throw it away. We could try it out. If we pull it out, deciding concessions for its requirements, we can make of it what we will, and we will, and we are (acutely aware) **responsible**.





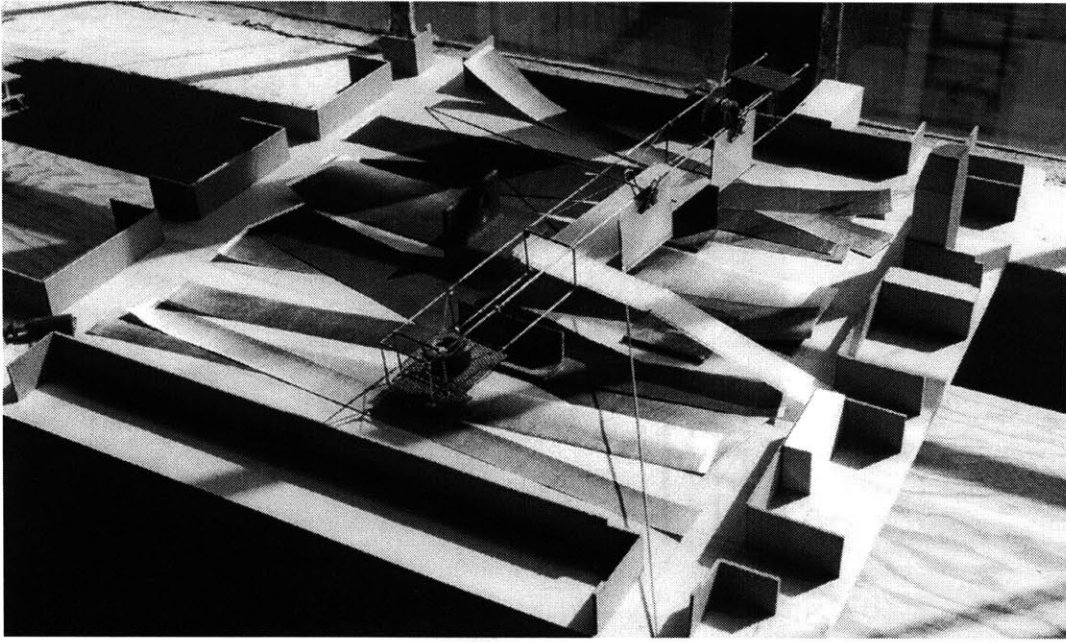
images opposite page:

50.1 (top)
velnikov?

50.2 (center)

50.3 (bottom) and

51.1 (this page)
facility model



a municipal maintenance facility
in tompkins square park

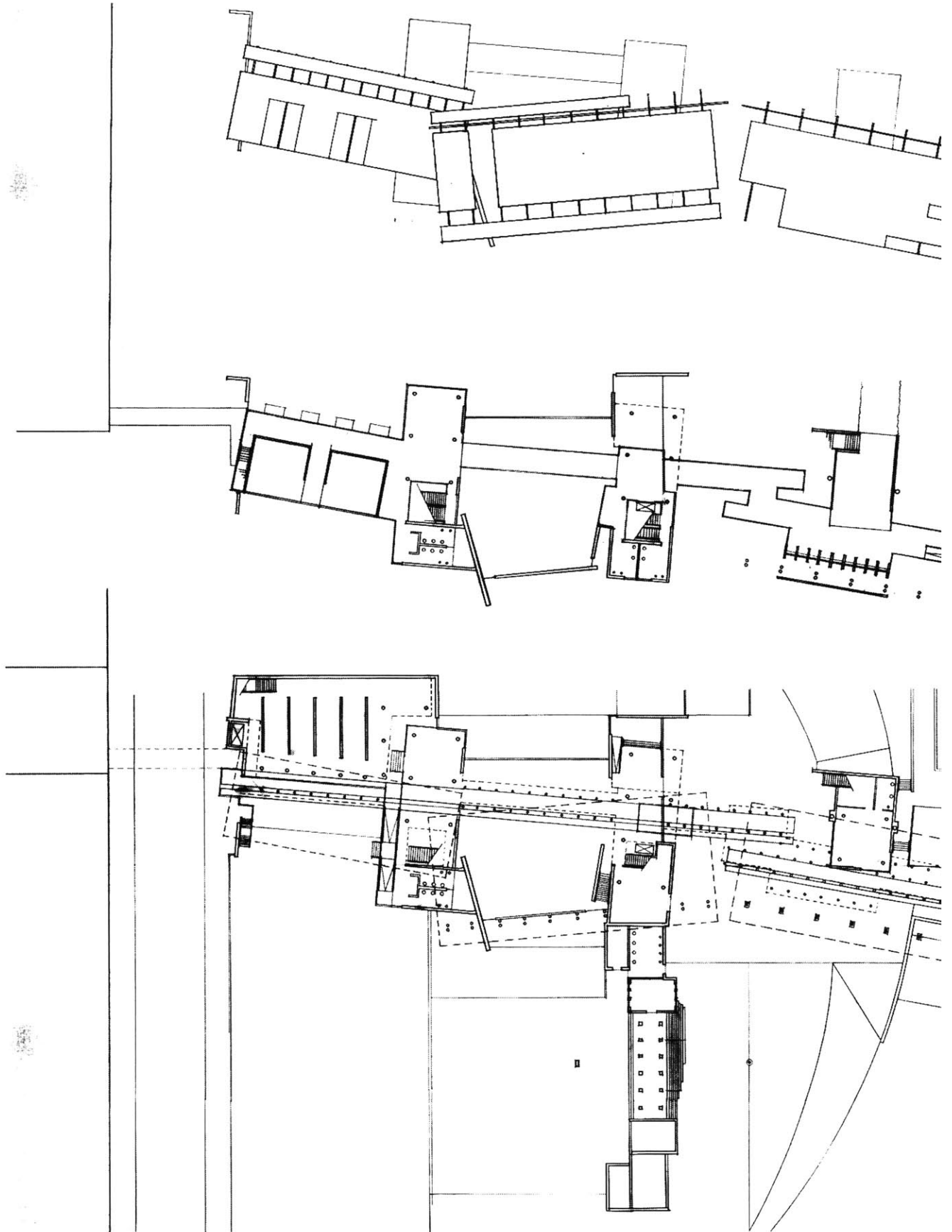
plans

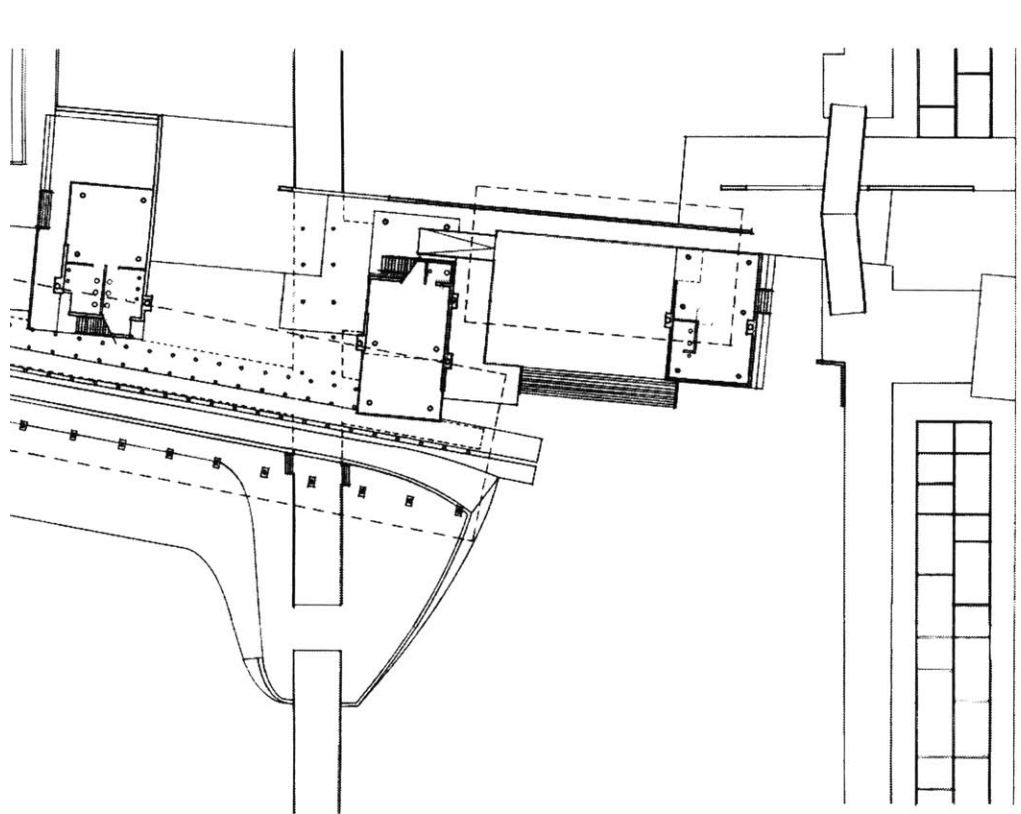
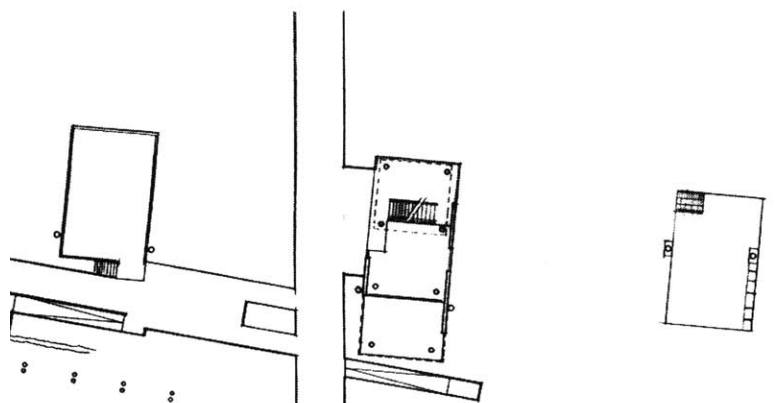
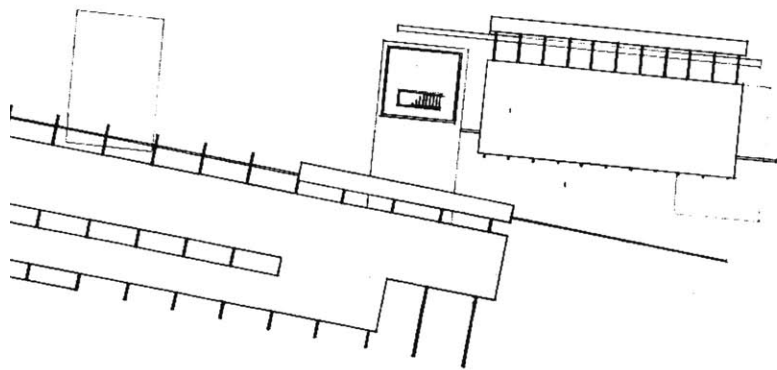
sections

site plans

elevations

studies



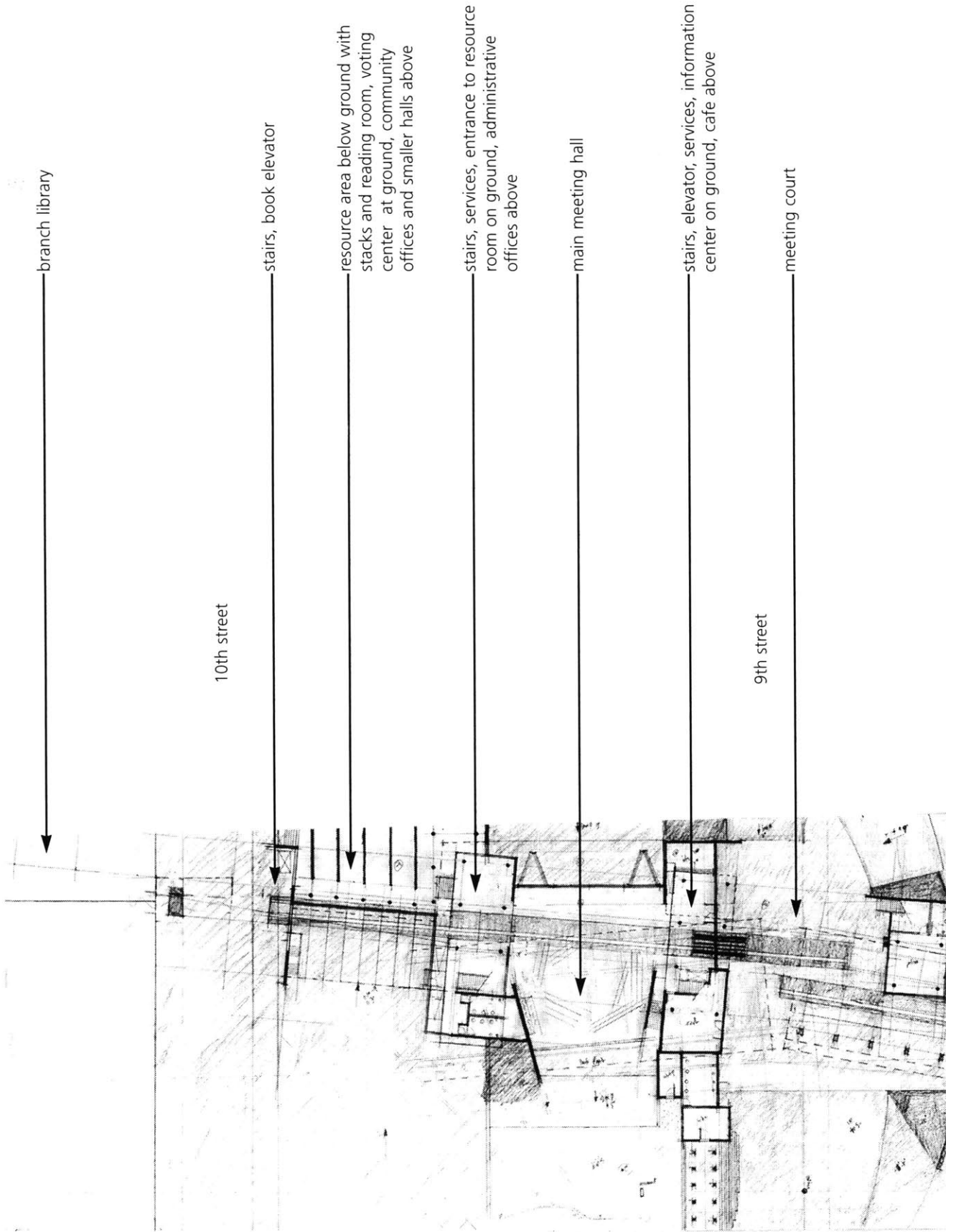


54.1 (top)
roof plan

54.2 (center)
path plan

54.3 (bottom)
ground plan



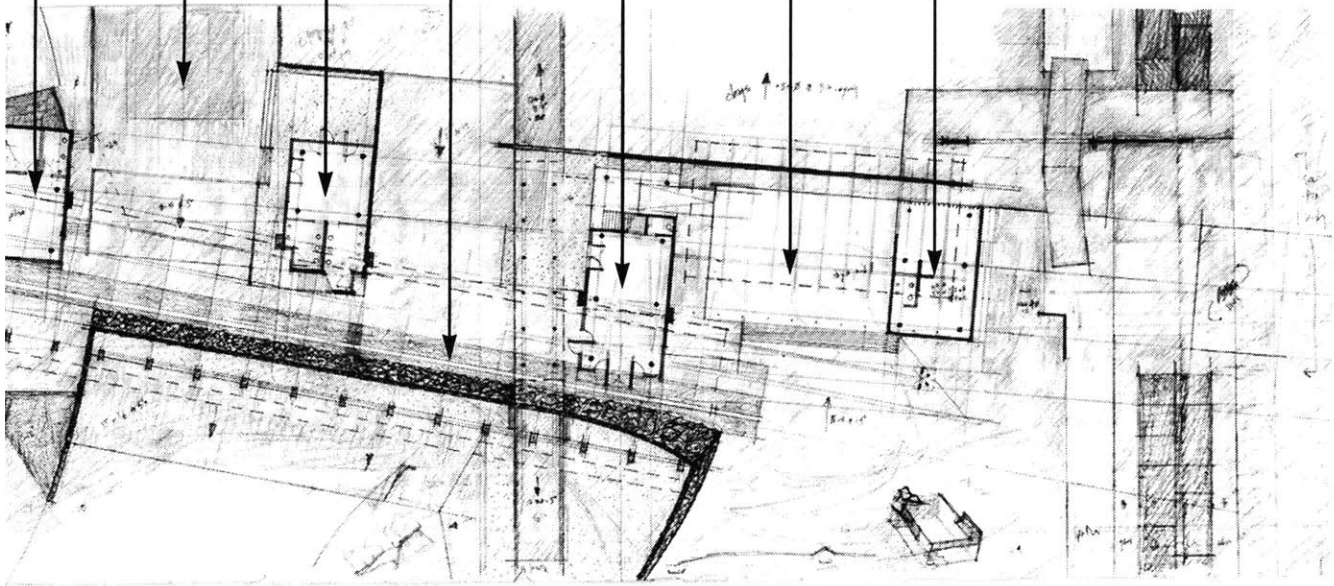


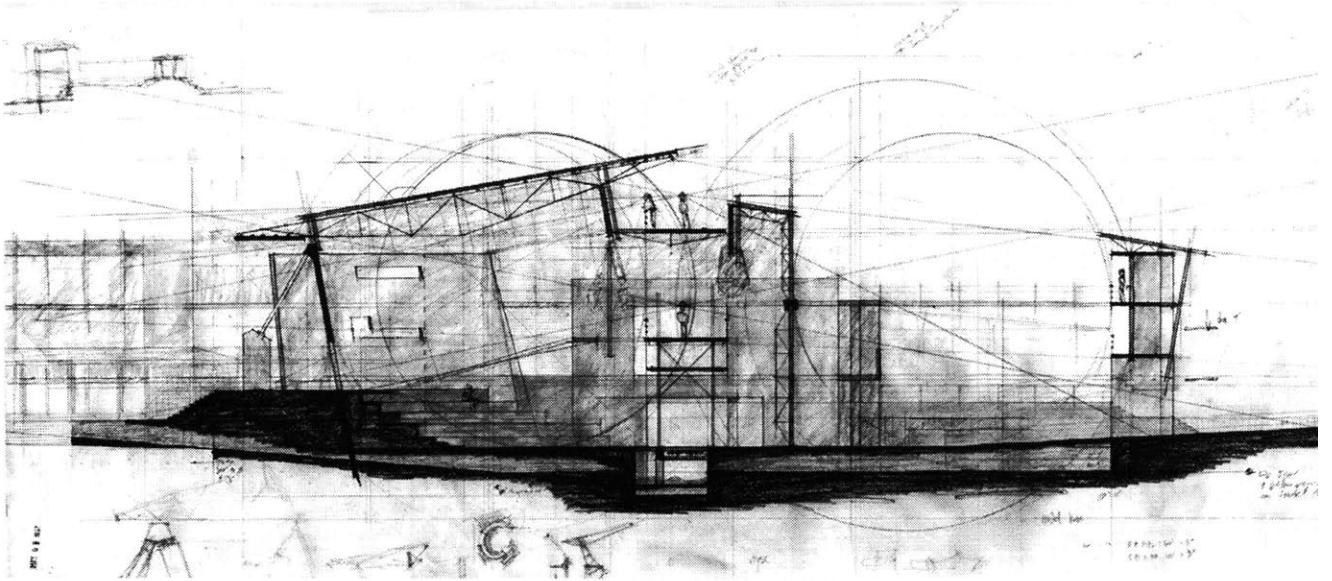


- police booth, lifeguard
- municipal pool
- changing rooms, services
- trench with drainage, 14 cabling, service pipes, metal grating above and sloping granite wall along
- gallery, observation tower above
- amphitheater
- backstage and storage for amphitheater below ground

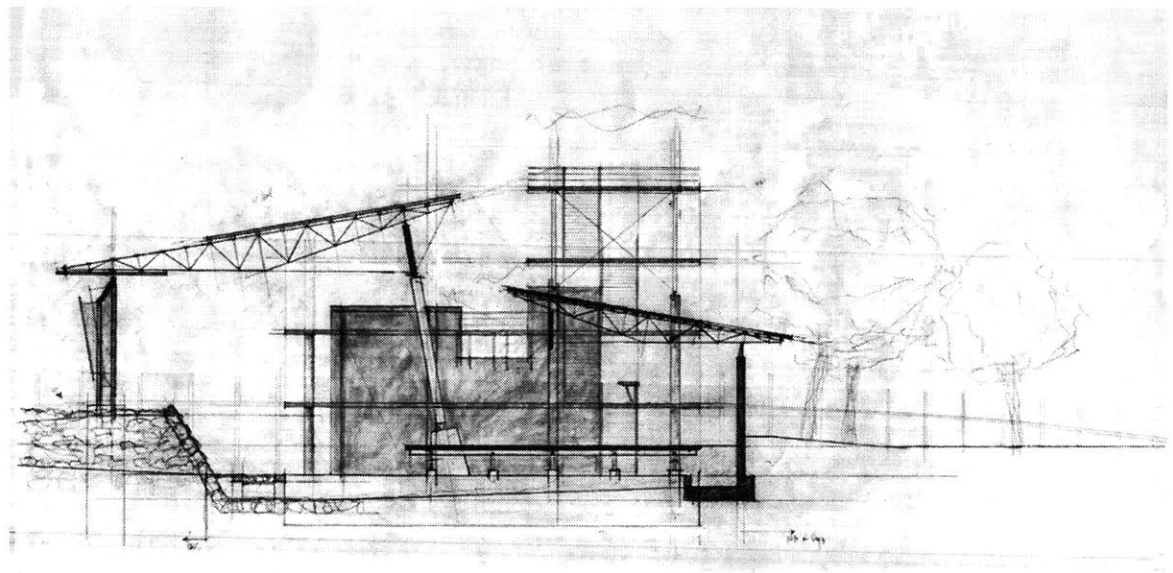
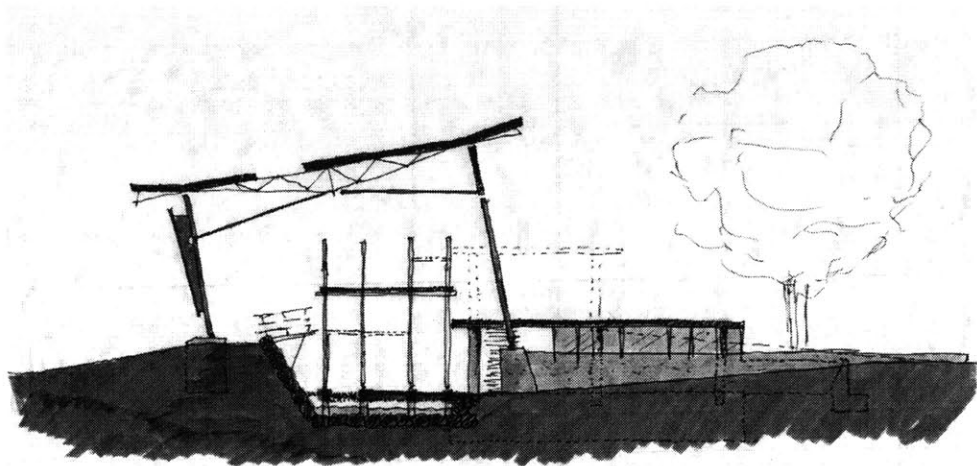
8th street

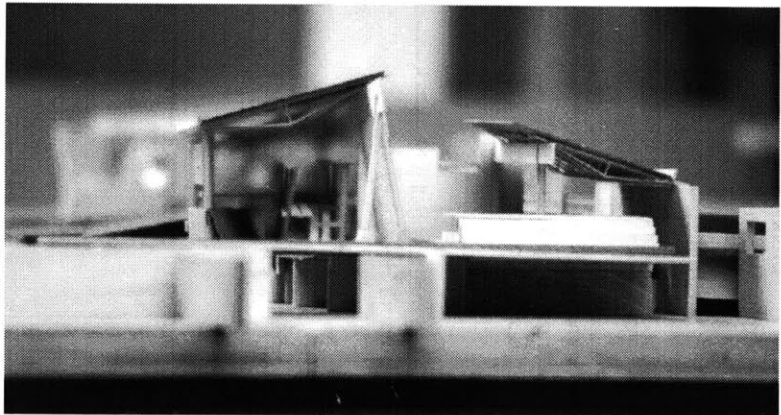
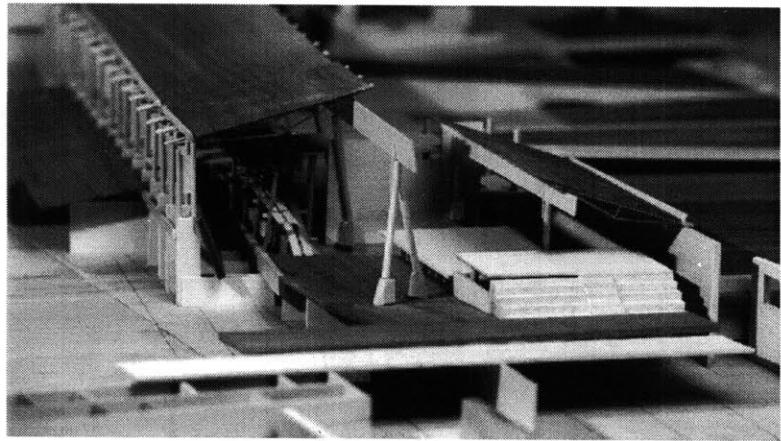
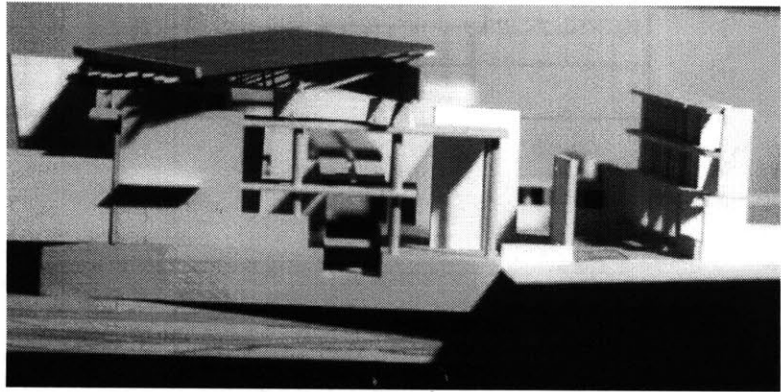
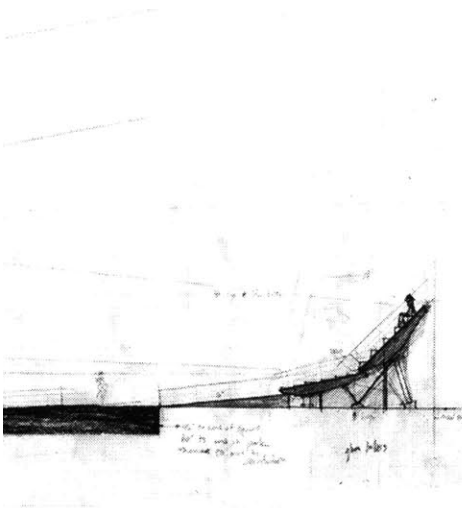
7th street





58



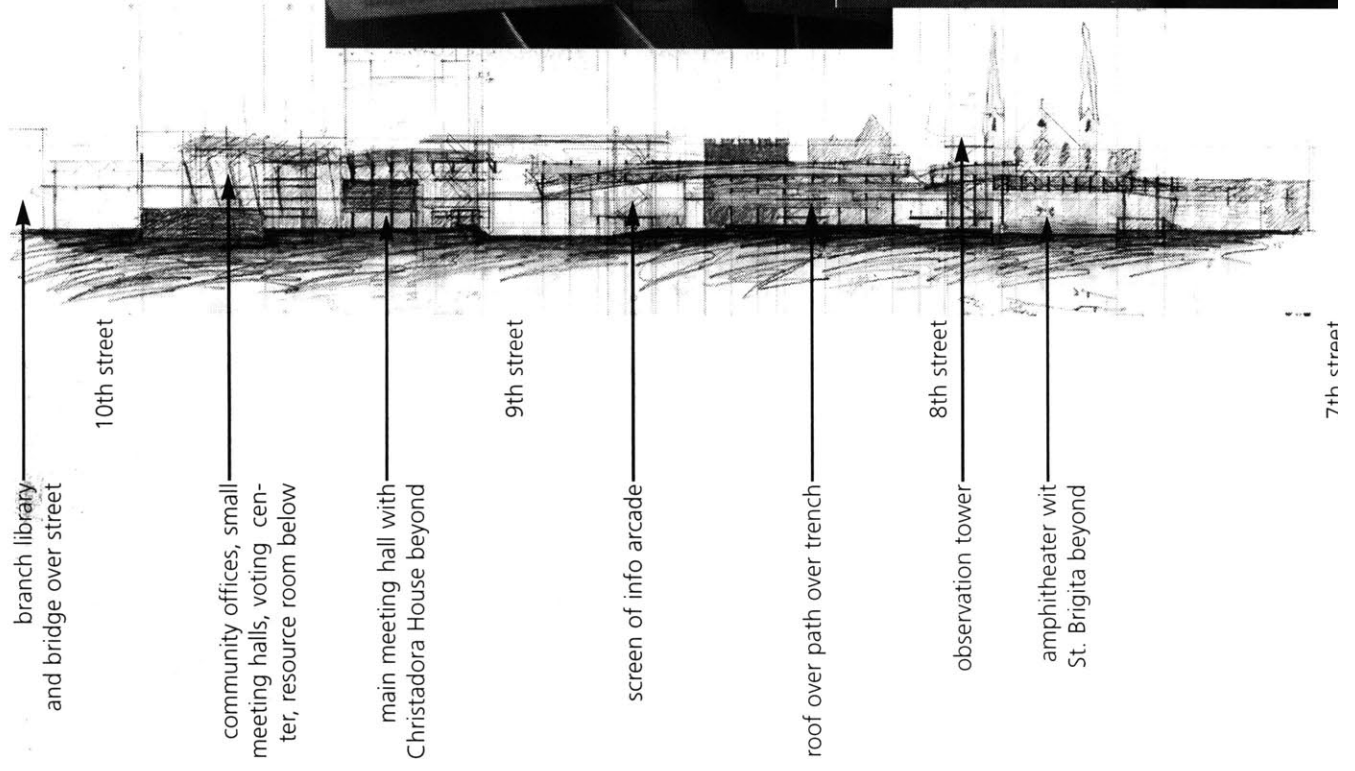
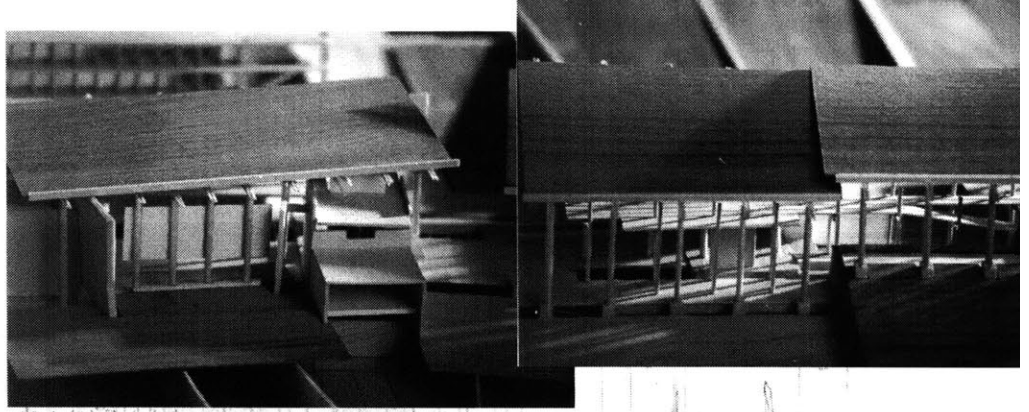
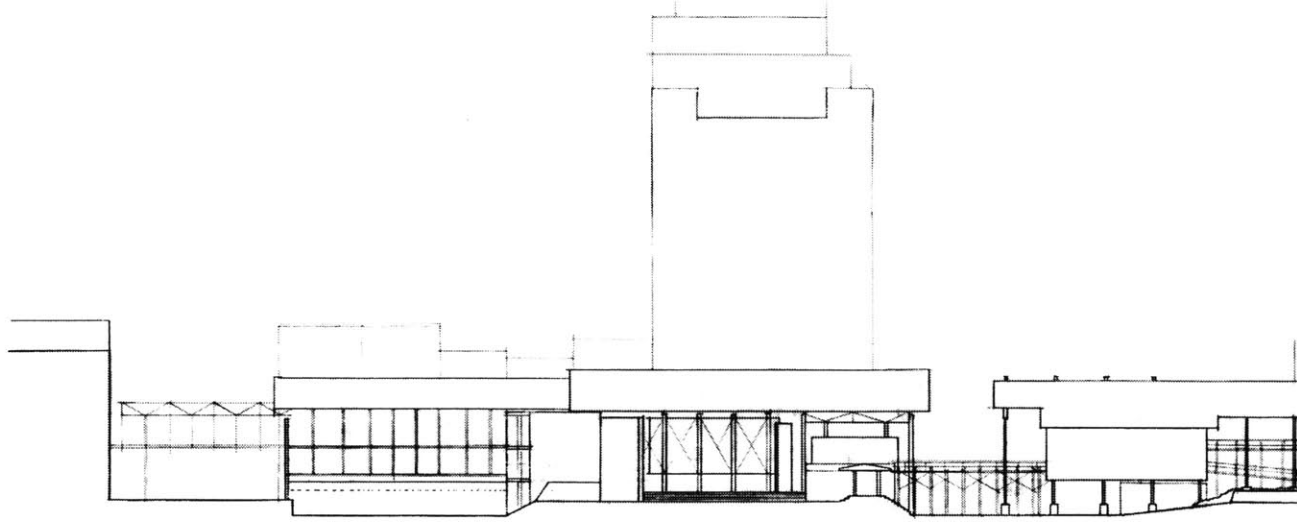


images opposite page:

- 58.1 (top)
section through
main hall with
organizational
offices at right
- 58.2 (center)
section through
trench with the
changing rooms
- 58.3 (bottom)
section through
amphitheater
with observation
tower beyond

images this page:

- 59.1 (top)
- 59.2 (center)
- 59.3 (bottom)
all model views
approximating
sections at left



branch library
and bridge over street

10th street

community offices, small
meeting halls, voting cen-
ter, resource room below

9th street

main meeting hall with
Christadora House beyond

screen of info arcade

roof over path over trench

8th street

observation tower

amphitheater wit
St. Brigita beyond

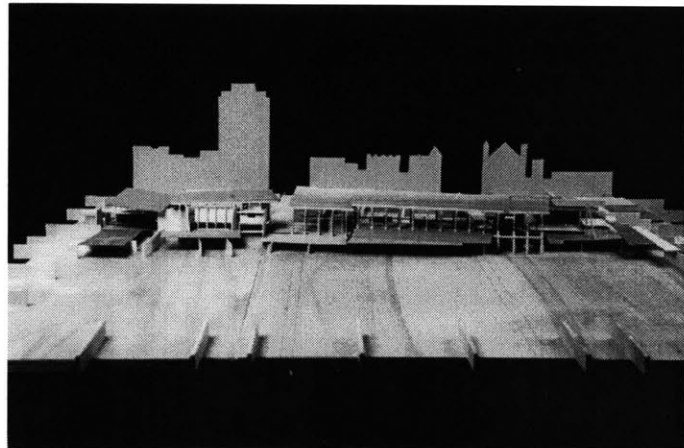
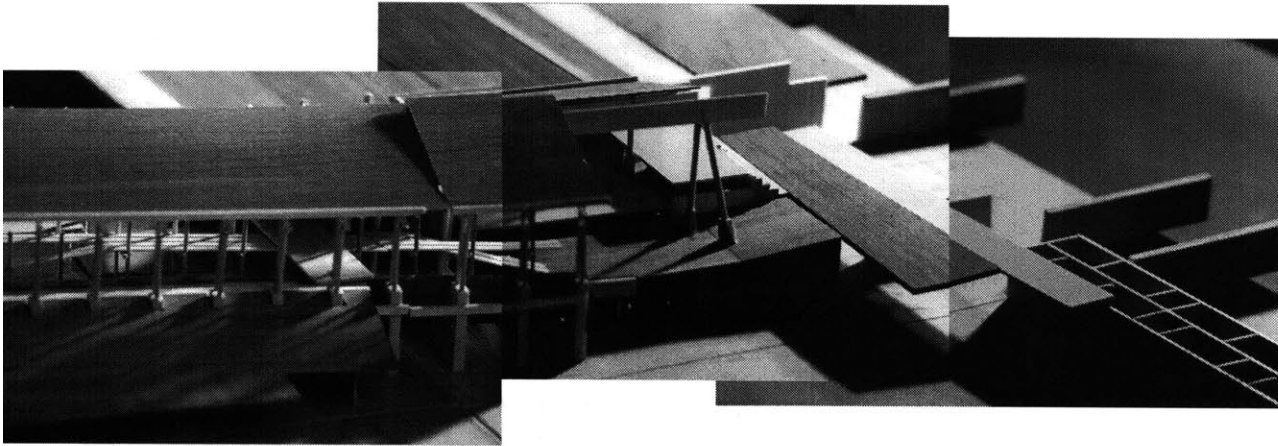
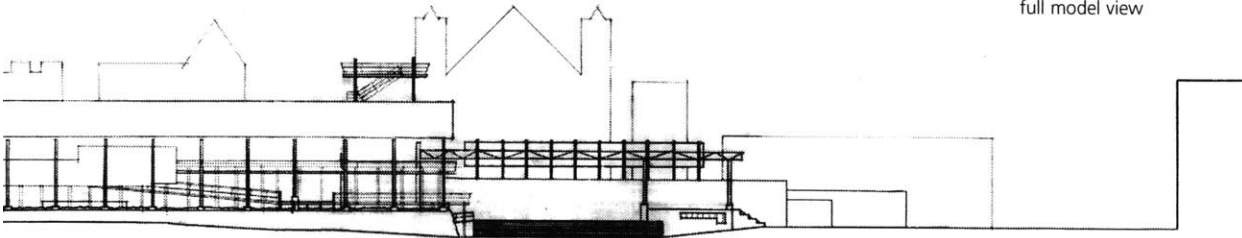
7th street

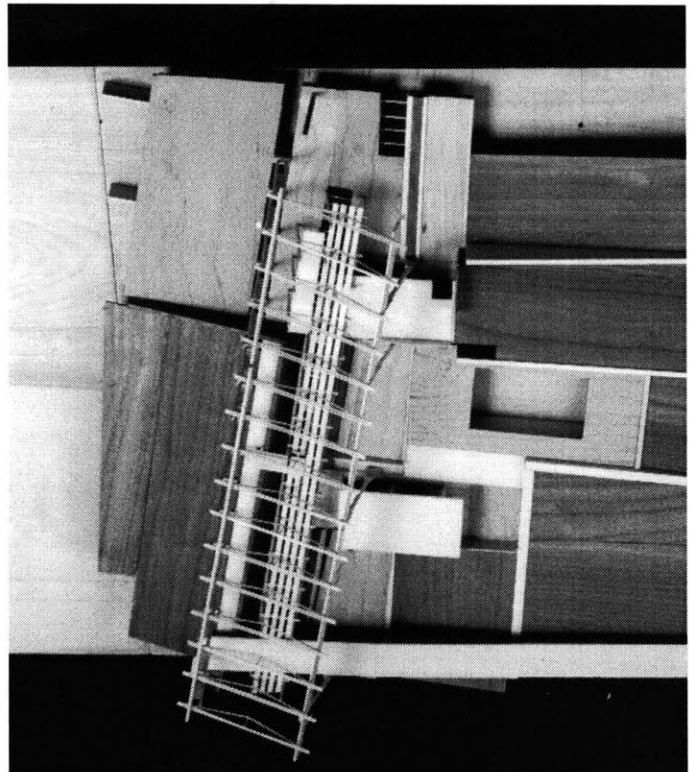
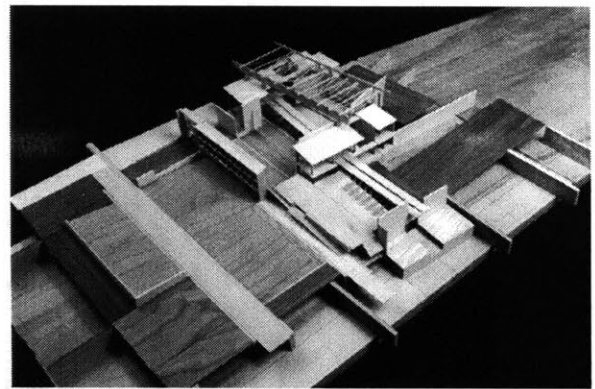
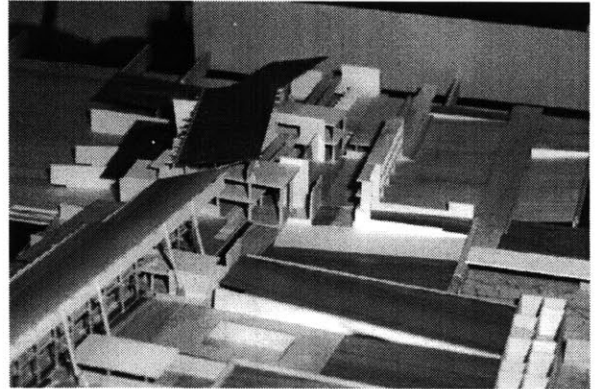
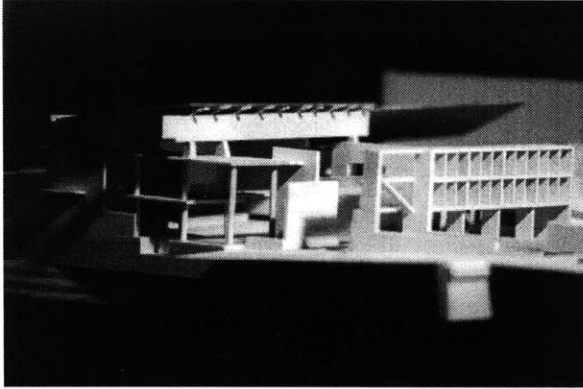
60.1 (top)
elevation looking
east from ave. A

60.2 (center)
model view

60.3 (bottom left)
elevation looking
east from ave. A

60.4 (bottom right)
full model view



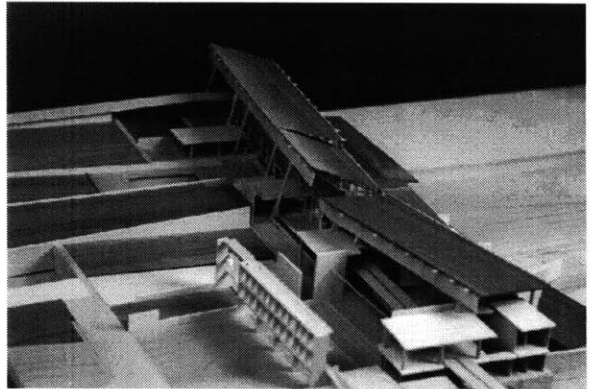
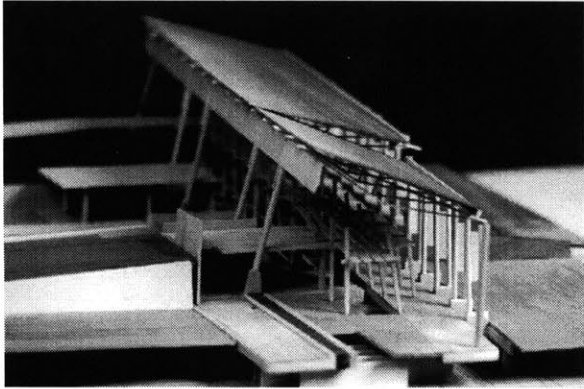


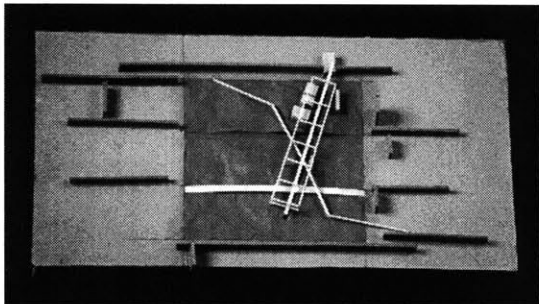
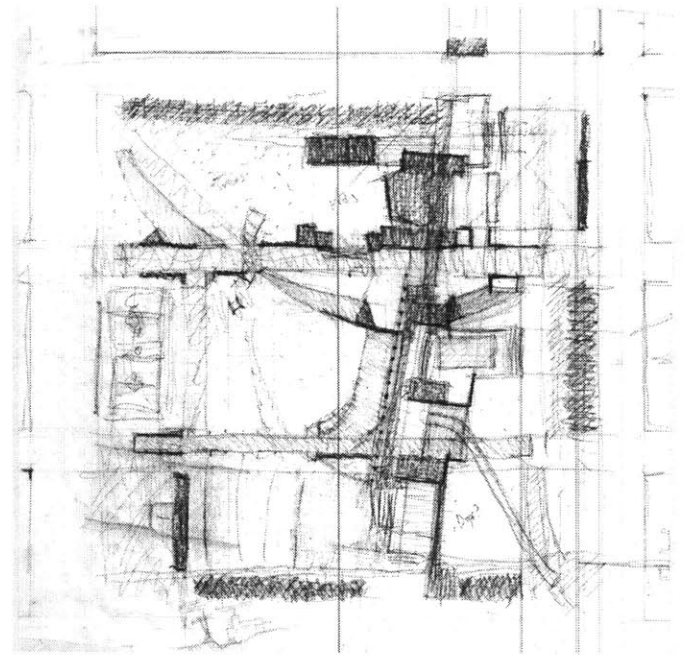
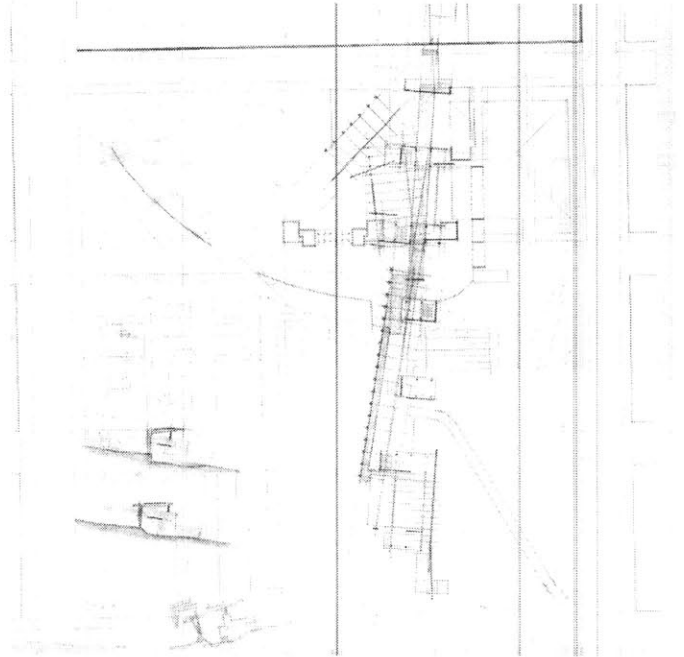
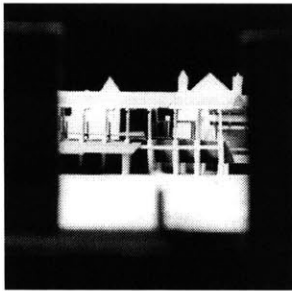
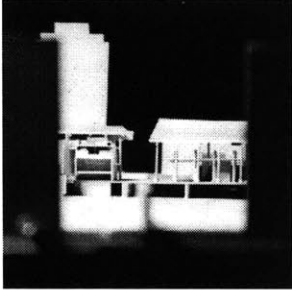
- 62.1 (top left)
- 62.2 (top right)
- 62.3 (center right)
- 62.4 (bottom right)

images opposite page:

- 63.1 (top left)
- 63.2 (top right)
- 63.3 (bottom right)

 all model views





65.1 (opposite)
site plan

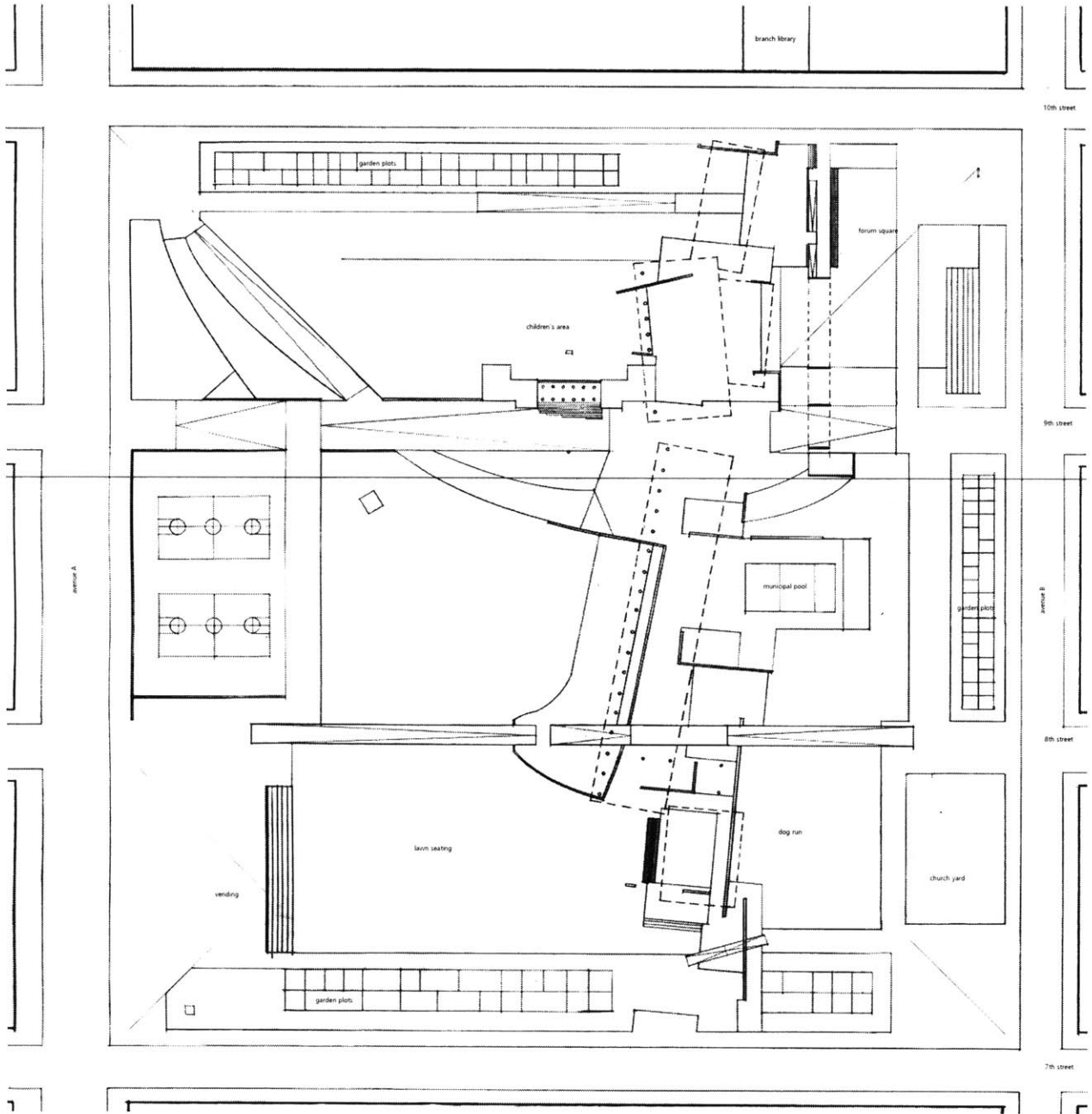
64.1 (top left)
model view east
down 9th street

64.2 (bottom left)
model view east
down 8th street

64.3 (top left)
sketch site plan

64.4 (center left)
sketch site plan

64.5 (bottom left)
early site model
responding to
fig. 72.1 analysis
model of park,
here is the cage,
the forum at the
end near the
library, 9th street
is sunken, 10th
street is raised



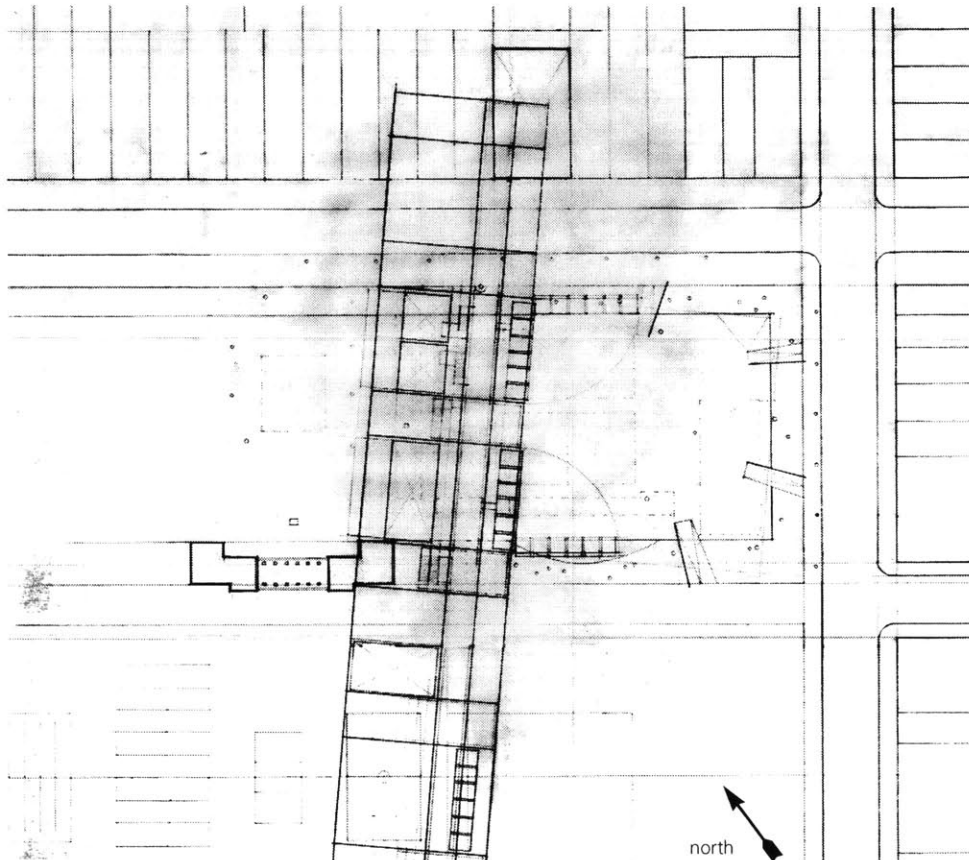
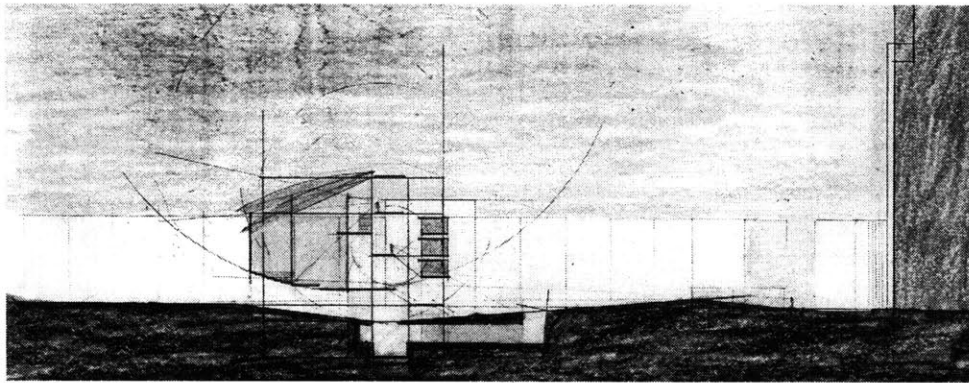
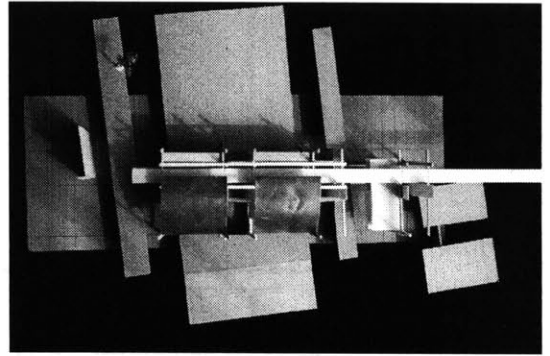
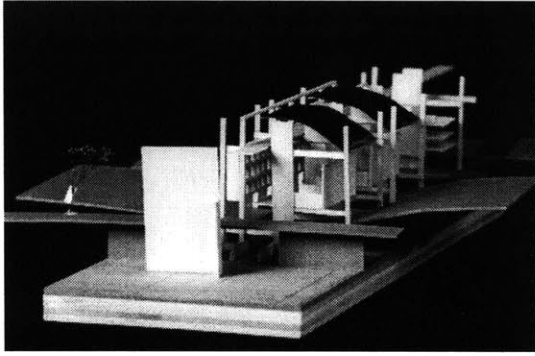
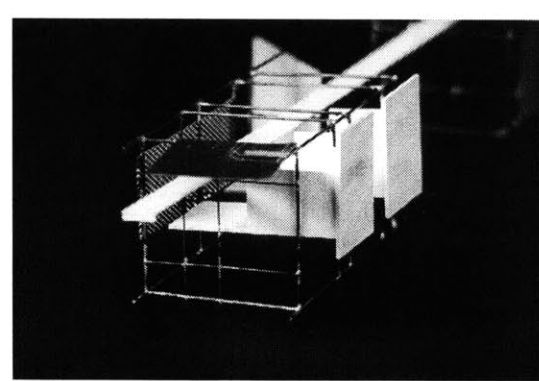
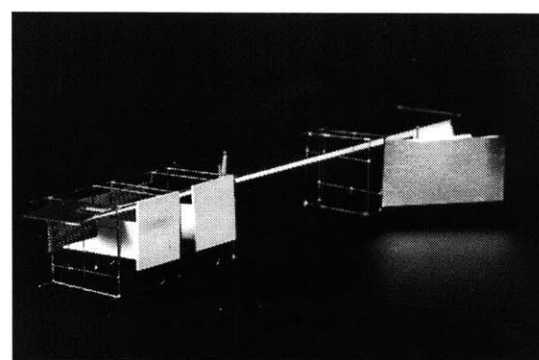
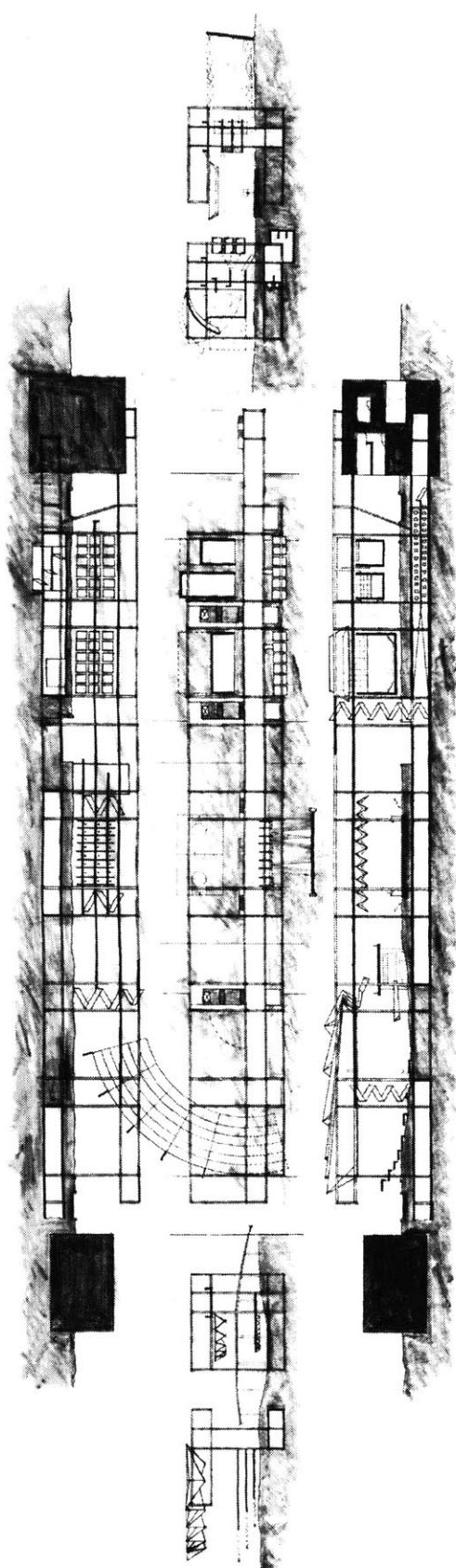


image opposite page:

- 67.1 (left)
drawing with
plan in center
and sections at
sides and ends
(library is black
box at top end;)
earliest bar
scheme with sev-
eral mobile parts
- 67.2 (top right)
- 67.3 (bottom right)
model views of
same scheme

images this page:

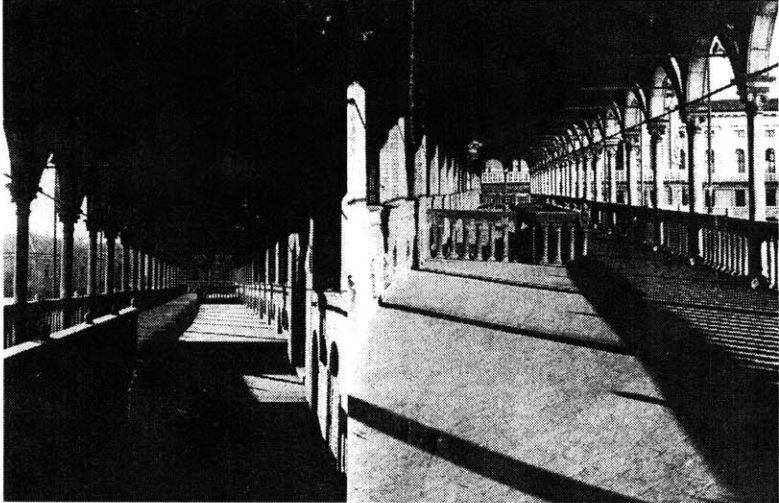
- 66.1 (top left)
- 66.2 (top right)
early model of
forum area
- 66.3 (center left)
early section
through a hall
- 66.4 (bottom right)
early site plan
of forum area



By the way, yes, its big. This democratic armature need be large in the face of its adversaries, which are often much, much bigger. Another proposal this project descended from was to cover Boston Common with a canopy structure higher than the trees, with housing units in the top. Those needing housing would ascend lifts in the giant supports, which were regularly spaced. The canopy could be taken down between various groups of supports as the sustenance levels of sun needed to rotate through the park; and then the canopy-units could come down as they were not needed. Eventually, wanting their park back, Bostoners would resolve the crisis for these among them, and take all the units down. Some of the giant supports would remain in testimony of what was done here, and also should they be needed again.



68



site: new york

the city grid

a network for new york

village(s)

a node in tompkins square park

68.1 (top)
vertical burial
ground in Spain

68.2 (bottom)
loggia at the
basilica in Padua

the city grid

We can freely walk horizontally on the ground plane. If you want to go up you either have to pay or you have to know somebody. This project is like a felled skyscraper, infested and bored out while laying in the dirt, its floors become vertical access, its elevator shaft is a walkway in the air. Public space conquers the city in section.

Back to the real ground plane: generally we go north/south to get places, get out of this neighborhood or even borough (somehow even Queens to Manhattan gets forced north/south.) North/South travel is faster. The east/west walk is for moving within the neighborhood, or at most to the one right next door, because eventually you'll hit a river. You get off the north/south subway and choose left or right, otherwise the inertia from the subway will trip you up.

70 This is all especially true for the Lower East Side, which bulges into the East River, its own eddy off the stream of the Avenues. There's not much movement north/south. Stuy Town forces you back west until First Ave. Going south, if you get by Houston, Delancy will get you.

Home is almost always a turn north or south. A zig or zag a little but that's fine-tuning the east movement until your block, then a privacy move up the stairs to a north/south hallway and into a north/south apartment (probably a railroad flat at that.)

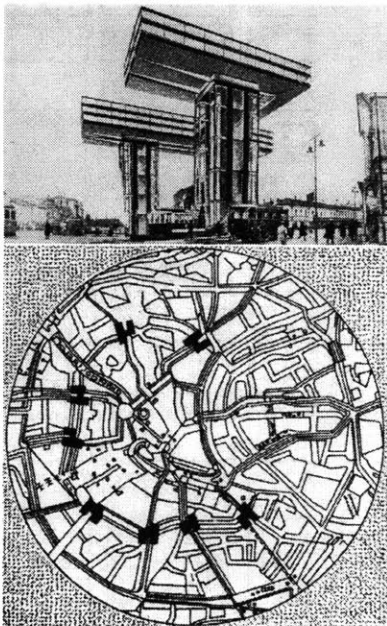
This project surprises these expectations. In Tompkins Square Park, itself a microcosm of these patterns with two cross-streets and dead-ends at the top and bottom, it places a new street-like apparatus north/south, running into the dead-ends so not running at all but slowing, making the east/west passages for faster travel-through, travel-past. With this, the strata within the public spaces are more clearly marked. This allows for opportunities to clearly misuse them.

Finally, the action is in the not-the-grid. The grid is the great equalizer, but its insistence renders it background (and private,) home of the (relatively) ordinary. The cranks and gaps in the grid are for the extraordinary.

a network for new york



*"For the bankruptcy of the liberal tradition is as plain on the philosophical level as it is on the political: which does not mean that it has lost its prestige or ideological potency. On the contrary: the anti-speculative bias of that tradition, its emphasis on the individual fact or item at the expense of the network of relationships in which that item may be embedded, continue to encourage submission to what is, by preventing its followers from making connections, and in particular from drawing the otherwise unavoidable conclusions on the political level"*²⁸



71.1 (top)
from grille no. 2

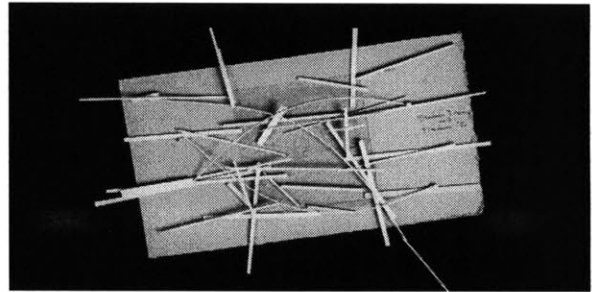
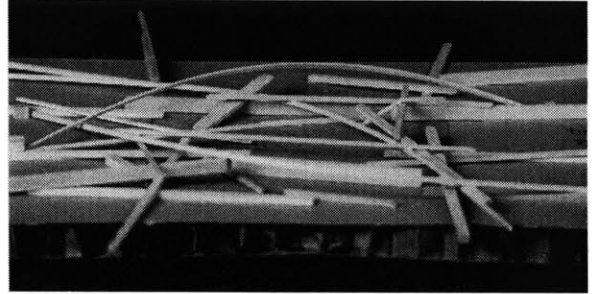
71.2 (left above)
El Litzisky,
Fotomontage
at the Nikitsky
Gate, Moscow

71.2 (left below)
El Litzisky,
8 "Grattacieli"
along the major
boulevards of
Moscow, 1925.

28

Frederic Jameson, *Marxism and Form*, p. x. He goes on to request dialectical intellectual life and indeed a dialectical culture.

village(s)



node

a locus in the network raising and contesting issues of neighborhood, serving as physical grounding / landing place for the city-wide political interactions, allowing me to land as well

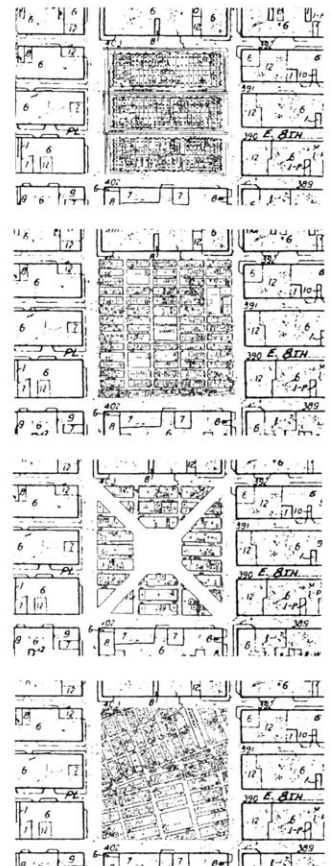
case: tompkins square park

72

Even the naming of the neighborhood is contested: the Lower East Side (reference to its counterpart, the Upper East Side), Loisaida (expanding the territory of the avenue by the same name), East Village (or EVil, manifest destiny of the West Villagers), Alphabet City (versus the numbered city, where the rules of New York don't hold anymore).

Tompkins Square Park is the central open space of one of the most continually reinvented neighborhoods of the city. In relation to itself, it always includes groups "on the way out" and "on the way in." In relation to the city, it has always been predominantly poor, therefore without much voice. Understandably, it has been the site of much civil unrest.

The park's redesigns over the years reflect various intentions to pacify its public, whether voluntary or otherwise. Currently, most of the park is restricted to particular users or completely inaccessible. Metal fences are its main design feature. The remaining space is linear paths.



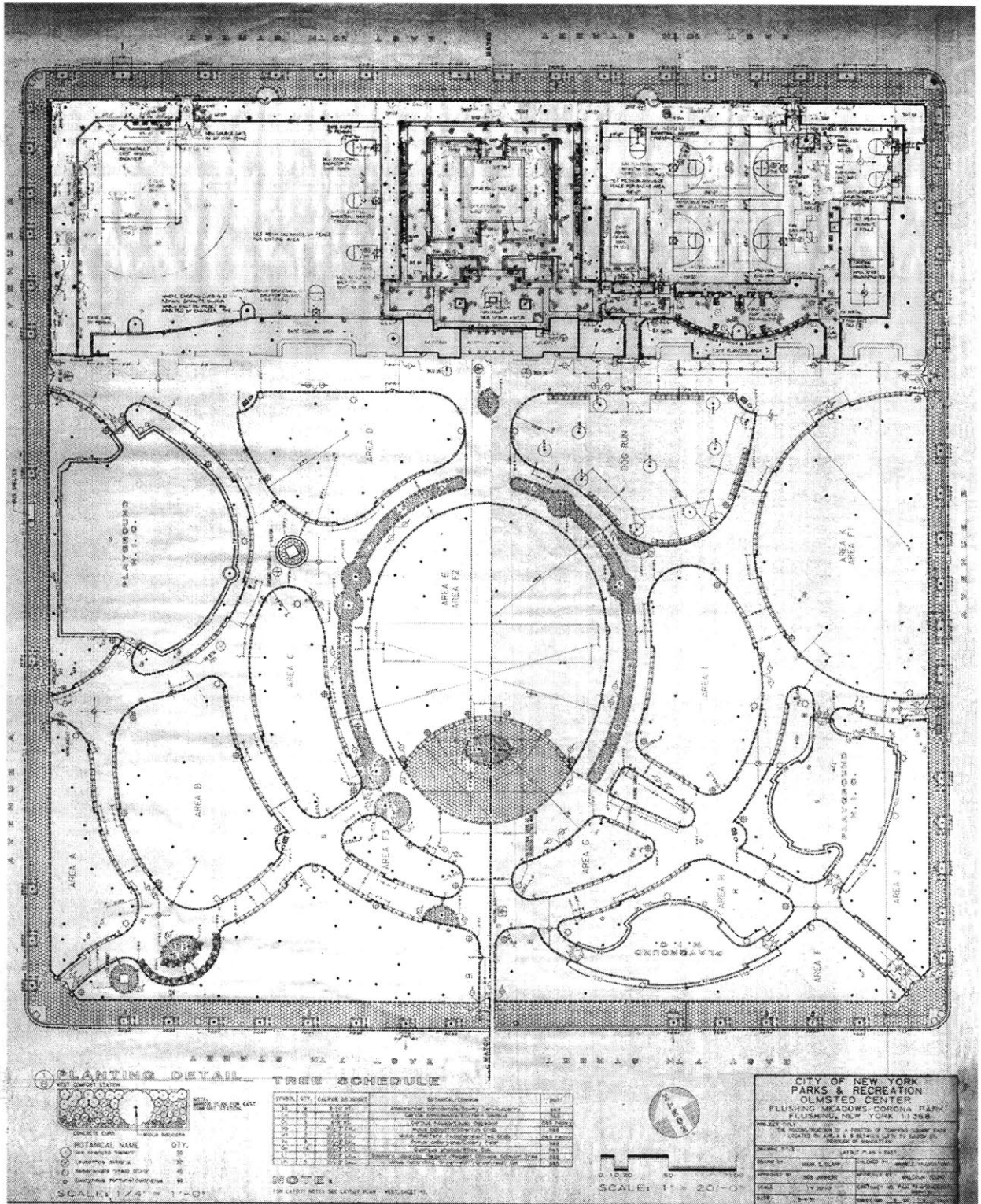
72.1 (top two photos) analysis model of park activity

72.2 (right) early studies for park redesign

73.1 (opposite above) Tompkins Square Park aerial view with "Tilted Arc" by Richard Serra

73.2 (opposite below) aerial park view with amphitheater of Arles





PLANTING DETAIL
 WEST CONDUIT STATION
 1" = 1'-0"

CONCRETE CURB
 18" HIGH
 12" WIDE

ROTPUNICAL NAME QTY.
 1. 10' x 10' x 10' 10
 2. 10' x 10' x 10' 10
 3. 10' x 10' x 10' 10
 4. 10' x 10' x 10' 10
 5. 10' x 10' x 10' 10

SCALE: 1" = 1'-0"

TREE SCHEDULE

SYMBOL	QTY.	CALIPER OR HEIGHT	BOTANICAL COMMON	NOTE
1	10	12"	Amelanchier canadensis	12" DBH
2	10	12"	Amelanchier canadensis	12" DBH
3	10	12"	Amelanchier canadensis	12" DBH
4	10	12"	Amelanchier canadensis	12" DBH
5	10	12"	Amelanchier canadensis	12" DBH
6	10	12"	Amelanchier canadensis	12" DBH
7	10	12"	Amelanchier canadensis	12" DBH
8	10	12"	Amelanchier canadensis	12" DBH
9	10	12"	Amelanchier canadensis	12" DBH
10	10	12"	Amelanchier canadensis	12" DBH

NOTE:
 FOR LAYOUT NOTES SEE LAYOUT PLAN - WEST SHEET 73.

0' 10' 20' 30' 40' 50'

SCALE: 1" = 20'-0"

**CITY OF NEW YORK
 PARKS & RECREATION
 OLMDSTED CENTER
 FLUSHING MEADOWS-CORONA PARK
 FLUSHING, N.Y. 11355**

PROJECT NO. 10-10-10-10
 LOCATION: 43RD ST. & 66TH ST. (EAST SIDE)
 BOROUGHS OF QUEENSBORO

DESIGNED BY: [Firm Name] DRAWN BY: [Firm Name]
 CHECKED BY: [Firm Name]
 SCALE: 1" = 20'-0"
 DATE: 1-1-10



75.1 (above)
photos Tompkins
Square Park,
Winter, 1997

74.1 (opposite)
Tompkins Square
Park map of the
existing design

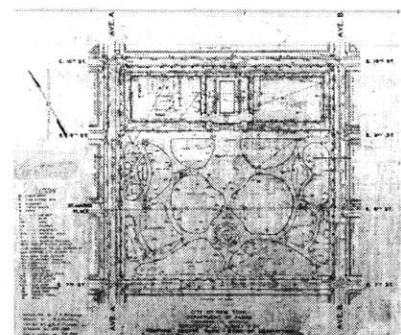
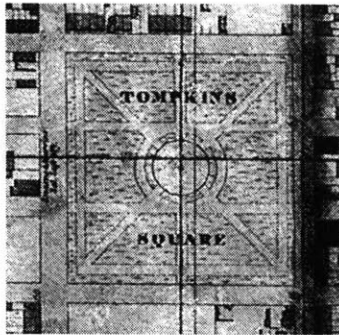
a node in tompkins square park

A friend told me that I might be better off to site the project in a place with a history of discussion, of conflict resolution or sustained discourse. Nearby Union Square hosted oration when it was getting its name as a marching field during Civil War days, and continued to be a hotbed for debate in the thirties for labor unions and socialists.

Certainly the atmosphere of discussion (conflagration) is the association to place that this project seeks to establish, and indeed continue the tradition of these places. But how is that tradition of place actually continued? A bronze General Washington on horseback becomes as banal and expected as the defunct water fountain fifty feet away. The plaque to the "shot heard 'round the world" in Lexington is not so impressive as the line of tourists still trickling to that site. Yes, memory, however marked, but primarily if reinforced in required reading history books, is the prime security for the continued place-marking of events.

76

But this is history. The Lexington park is primarily another suburban New England town common most often used for driving by or parking along, and Union Square, though still centrally located and therefore at several crossroads between neighborhoods, stands probably less a chance to perform as backdrop to a heated discussion as does its cavernous subway station platforms below it. This is not only due to forgotten tradition but also to deliberate design. Union Square, like Tompkins Square Park and Bryant Park, was subject to the type of park redesign prevalent recently (and continuing?) where it is made safer by several seemingly passive measures. I was witness to the finishing touches of this alteration over the course of about a year in 1992. The changes were subtle and gradual, but effective, and began in 1984 under Mayor Koch at \$3.6M. Koch said "first the thugs took over, then the muggers took over, then the drug people took over, and now we are driving them out."²⁹ Who can be this 'they' the mayor speaks of, and who remains. What responsibility does a city have to its inhabitants?



images of Tompkins Square Park:

77.1 (left)
pre-19th century
swampland

77.2 (center)
1830, post grid-
ding of the city

77.3 (right)
1879, after the
first big riot, this
map shows the
recreation strip
that was added
under Robert
Moses in 1934;
the next major
restructuring was
1954 giving the
Park roughly its
present form

At Union Square, brush was removed, half seats facing each other were removed, central large areas were walled off at first with temporary 'save the grass' boundaries and finally by more solid fences, lines cut across as at cross streets for surveillance sight lines, curfews, thinning of trees, more lights, less access, no sleeping benches. And now the square is host to the suburban invasion of big box stores (all this after Zeckendorf Towers, NYU expansion, etc.)

Tompkins Square Park provided not a distant link to a history of discussion but a current link to an ongoing history of conflict. This I felt would test my project well, supplying the raw material of antagonism and edginess (present in all new york but flowing overtly here) and the claustrophobia that forces people to deal with one another that the project would use as a raw material.



images of Tompkins Square Park:

78.1 (top left) S. Brigit's Church

78.1 (near top left) comfort station

78.3 (near bot. left) kid's only area present form

78.1 (bottom left) dog run

78.5 (top right) The Charas Foundation and Community Center, now being kicked out of this abandoned public school by Mayor Guiliani

78.4 (center right) The Christadora

78.4 (bottom right) The Tompkins Square Park Branch Library



79.1 (top)
remaining central open area in the park

79.2 (bottom)
graffiti on the Charas building



program: centers
for civic contribution

a program

adjacencies and forms

a building

81

a program

	quantity		dimension	square feet	total sq. feet	height	cubic feet (in thousands)
meeting halls							
	1	large	60x60	3600	3600	60	216
	1	medium	30x60	1800	1800	30	54
	2	small	30x30	900	1800	20	36
offices							
	36	organizational	10x12	120	4320	10	43
	1	CB3	25x100	2500	2500	10	25
	1	CDC	25x100	2500	2500	10	25
	1	BID	30x50	1500	1500	10	15
	2	arbitration	25x50	1250	2500	10	25
	1	administration	20x30	500	500	10	6
resources							
	1	storage	50x100	5000	5000	15	75
	1	reading area	(included in above)				
	1	administration	(included in above)				
other							
	1	bar / cafe	30x60	1800	1800	20	36
	1	voting center	20x80	1600	1600	10	16
	3	info arcade	10x40	400	1200	10	12
	1	police booth	20x40	800	800	10	8
	1	information	20x20	400	400	10	4
	1	newsstand	20x20	400	400	10	4
	5	outdoor decks	(not included)				
services							
	1	toilets	(add 5%)		1600	10	16
	1	mechanical	(add 5%)		1600	10	16
total					35420		632



The program diagrams/building on following pages are from a proposal midway through the term. This was extremely useful for understanding relations interior to the site and programmed areas, but quickly external relationships regained the center of focus.

The following structure was designed as a modular 100x100 foot unit meant to seek open bits of properties, gaps in the grid, of new york city, where the typical lot size is 100 feet deep and 25 feet wide.

The dimensions for program were researched and and borrowed. For instance, the resource area, meant to take over the never fulfilled charter of public libraries to house and make available local information, requires a floor area about that of the Tompkins Square Branch's basement, where they told me the records were kept. The community board office allowed me to tour and inventory their facility and needs. The number of organizational offices comes from the number of posted requests for temporary space. And so on.

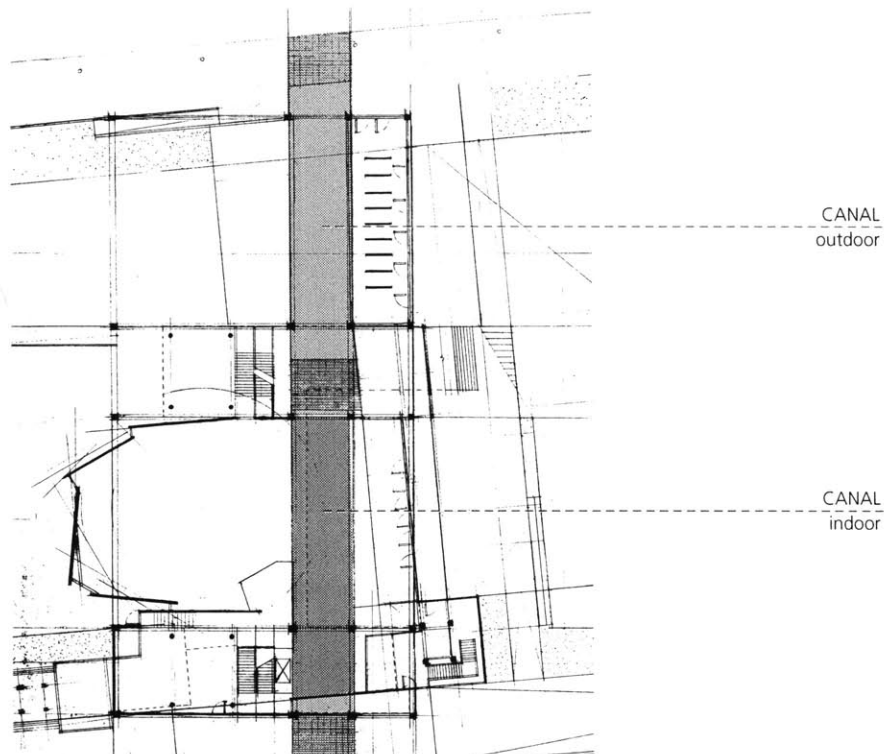
And of course... there is so much more to tell....

[11:42 a.m. Tuesday, May 27, 1997.]

83.1 (top)
street scene in
the Lower East
Side

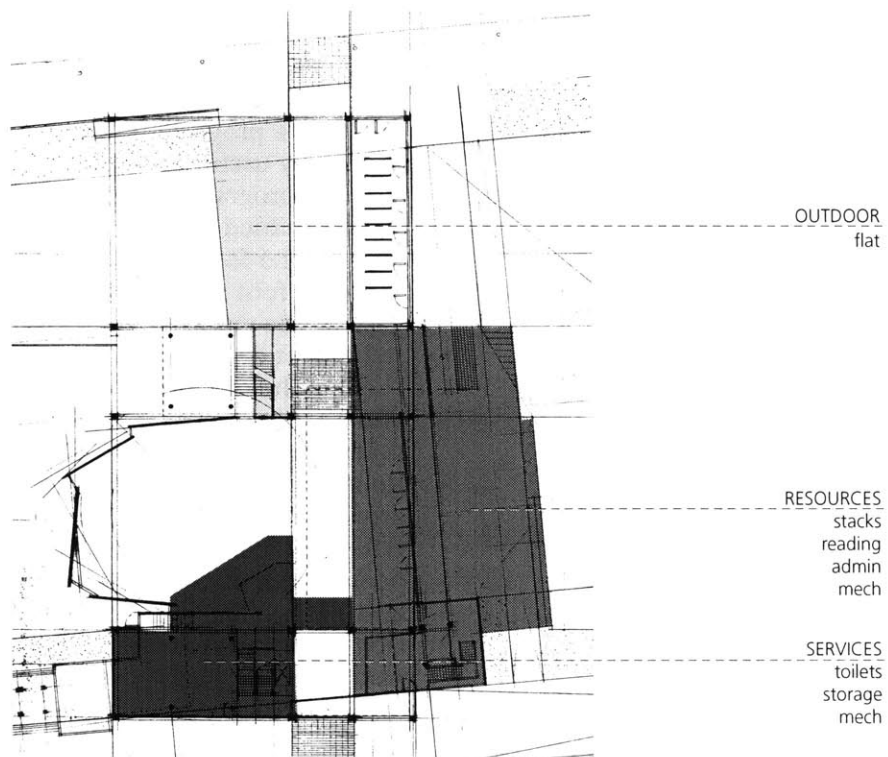
83.2 (bottom)
current offices of
Community
Board #3

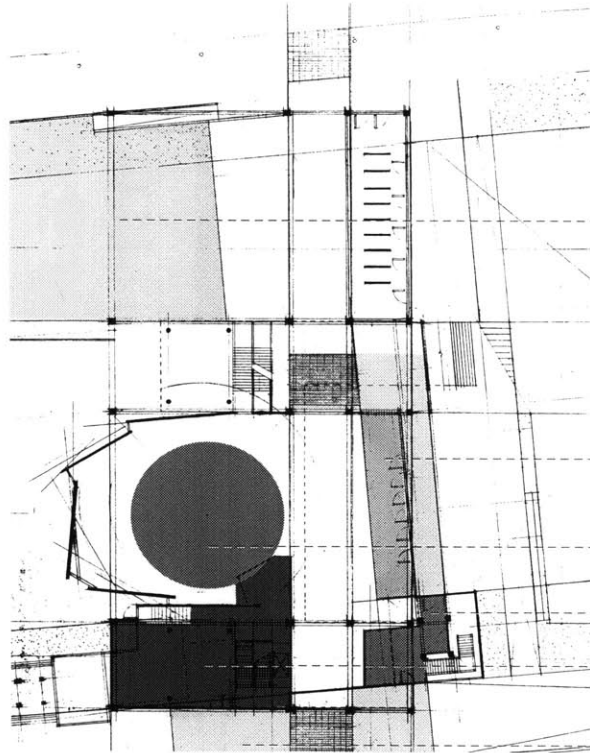
- 30



84

- 20





OUTDOOR
sloping

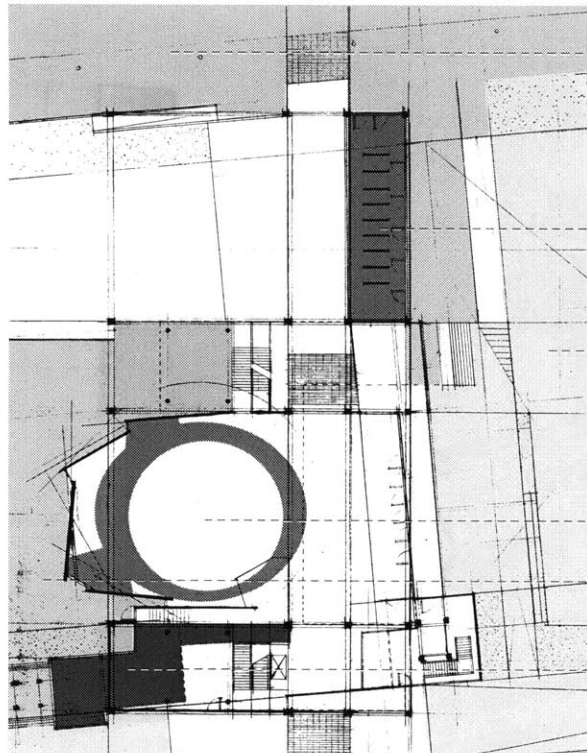
PLAZA
indoor
outdoor

HALL 1

RESOURCES
lobby

SERVICES
info
police

OUTDOOR
flat



OUTDOOR
street
sidewalk
flat

VOTING

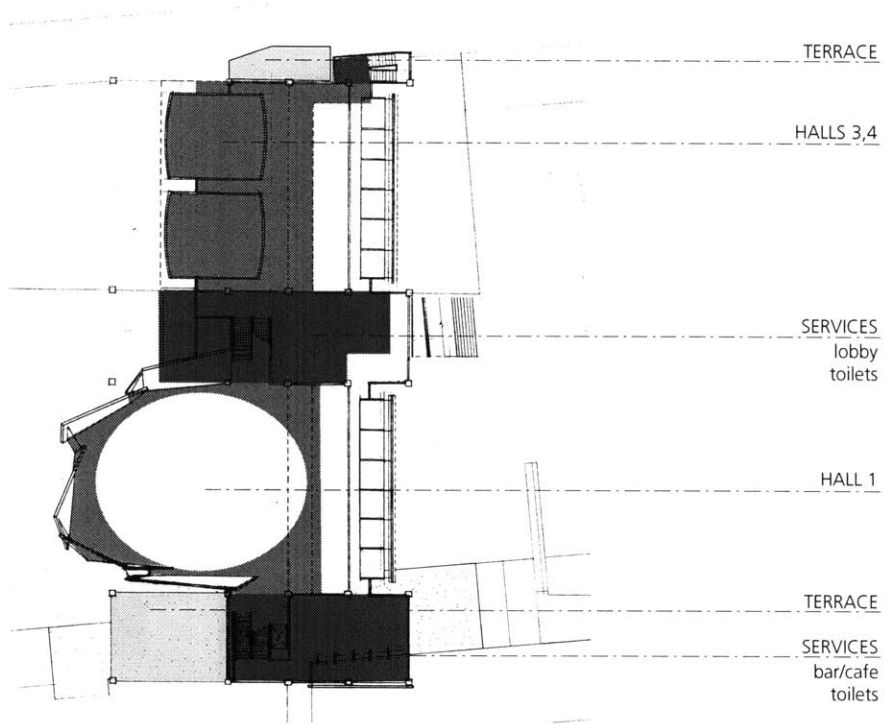
PLAZA
sloping
landscaping
skylights

HALL 1

OUTDOOR
flat

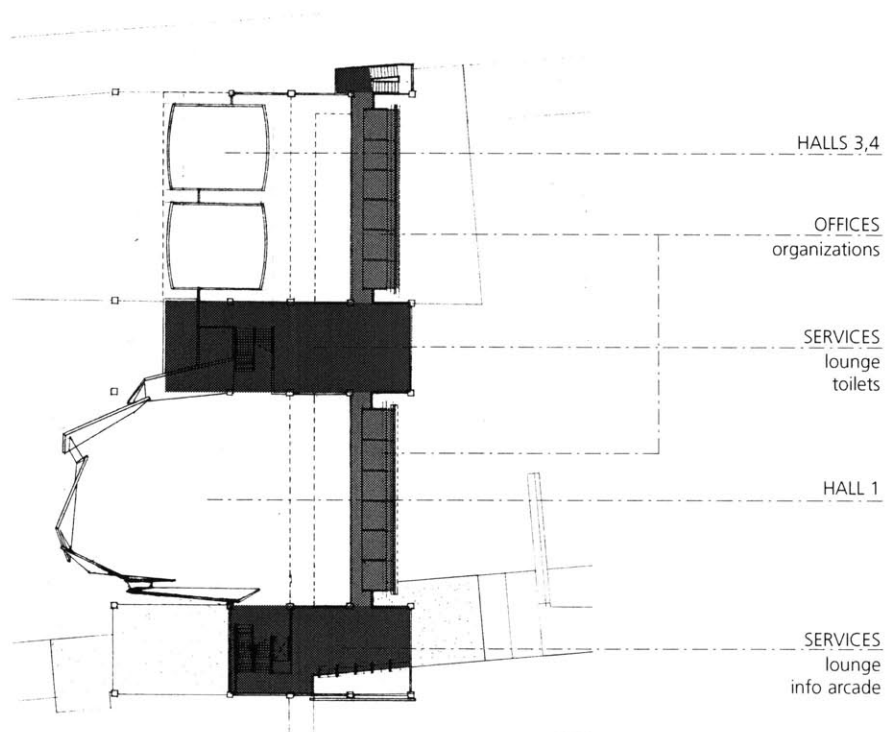
SERVICES
toilets
parks office

+ 10

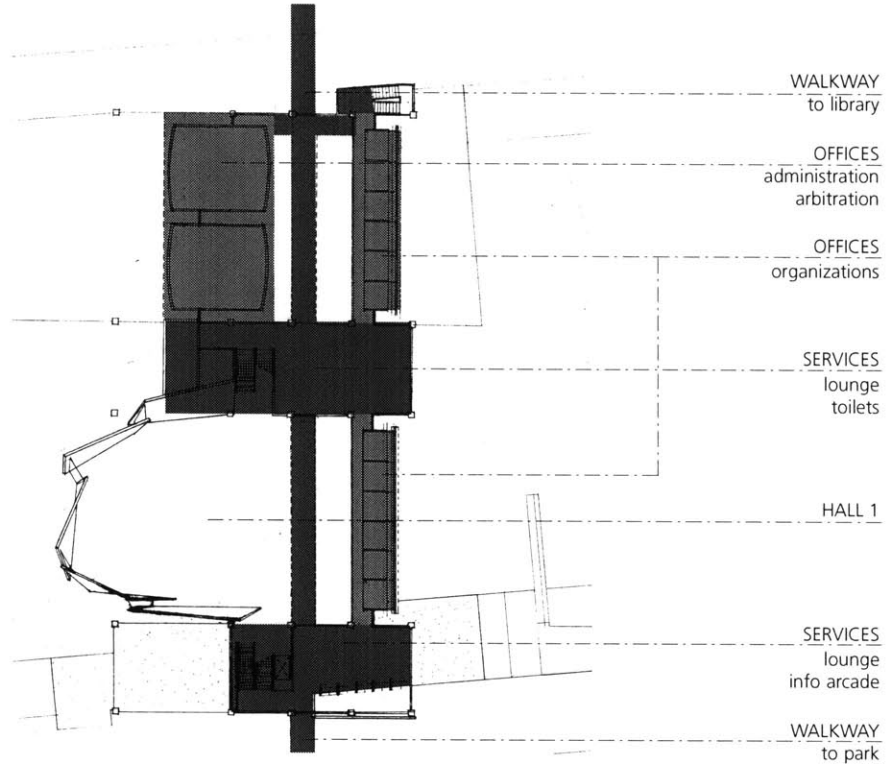


86

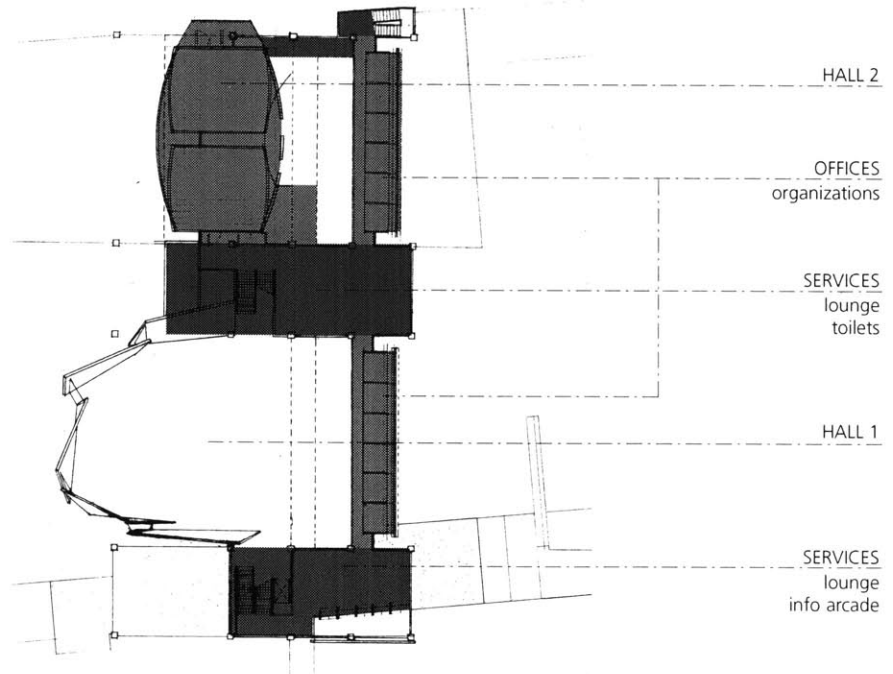
+ 20



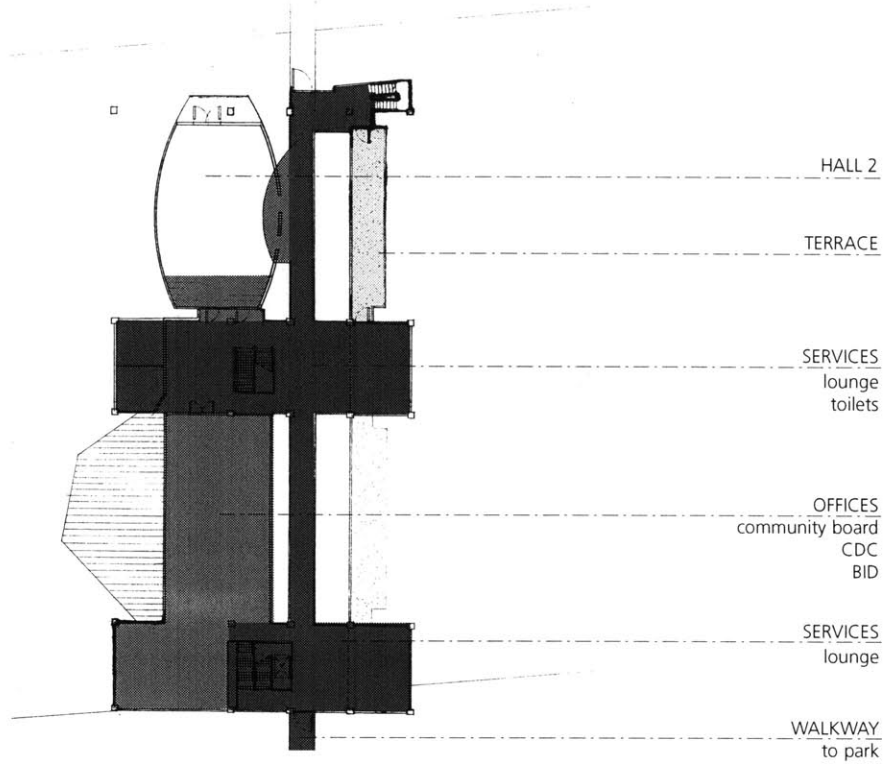
+ 30



+ 40

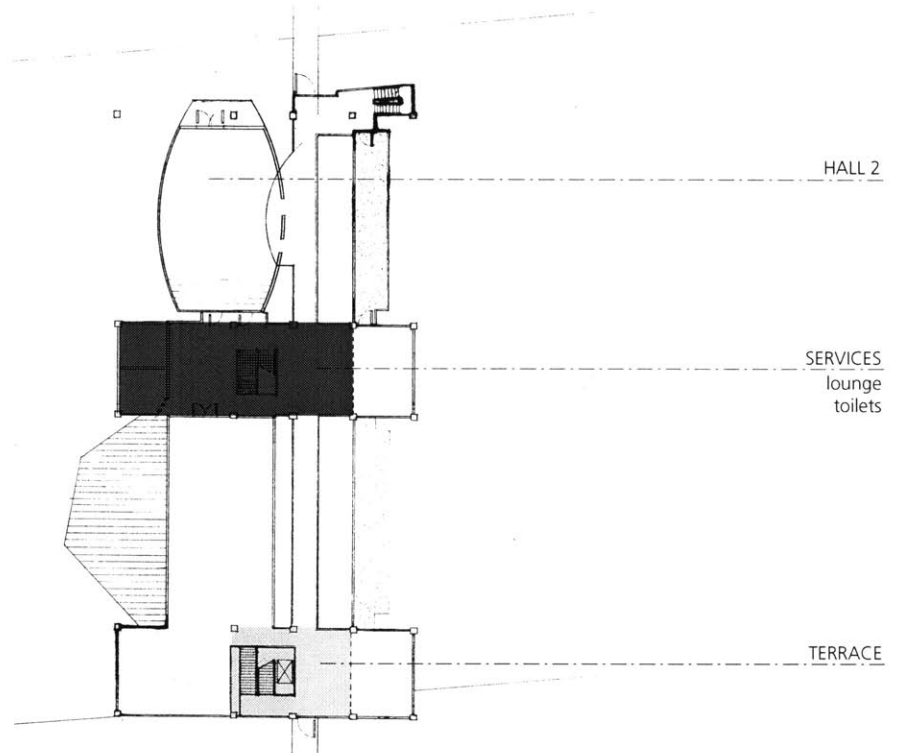


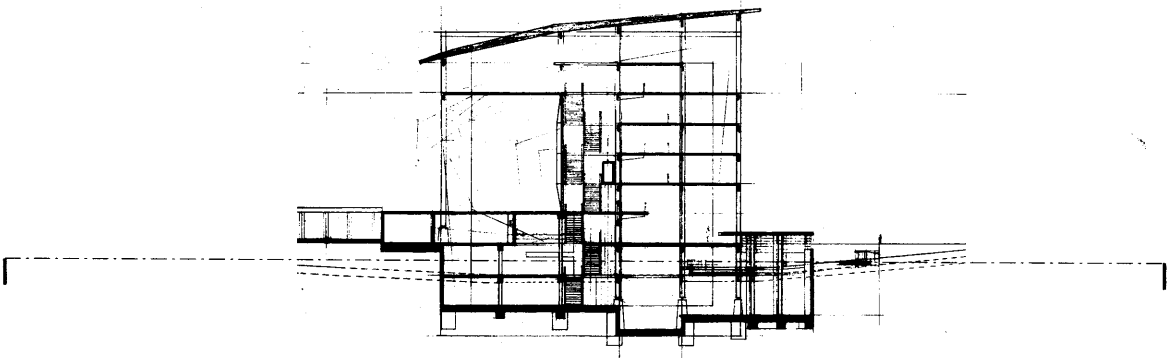
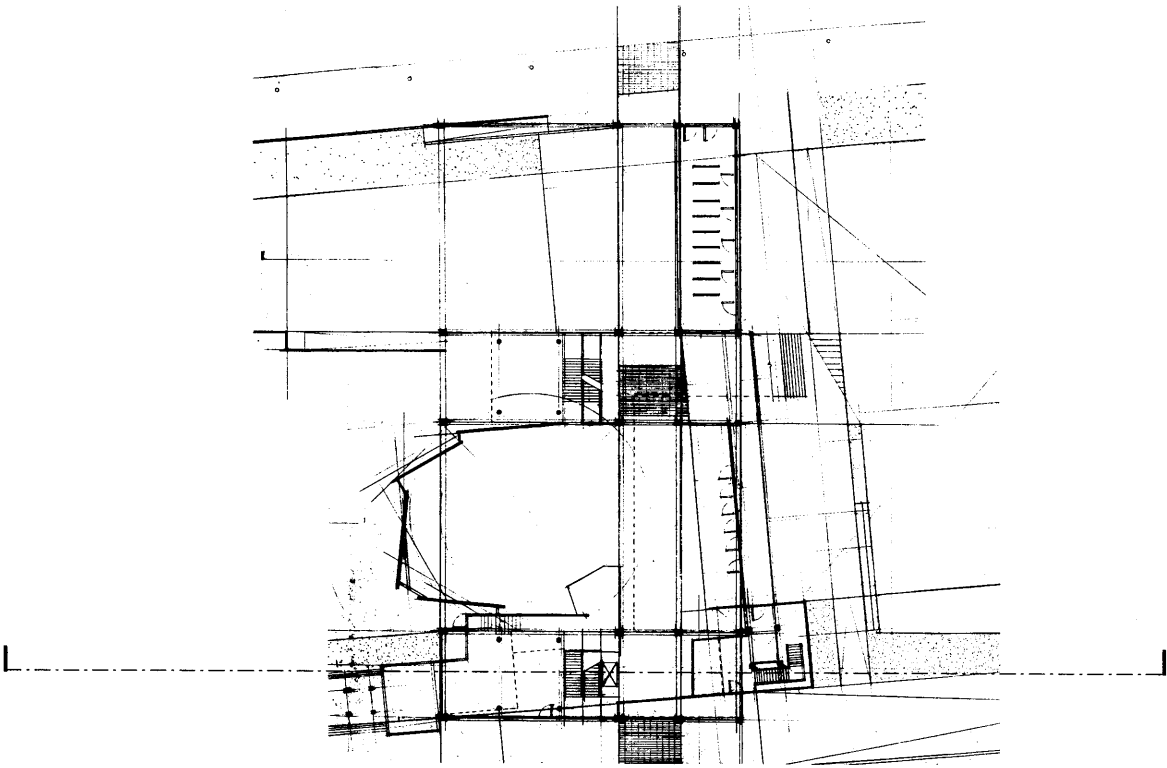
+ 50

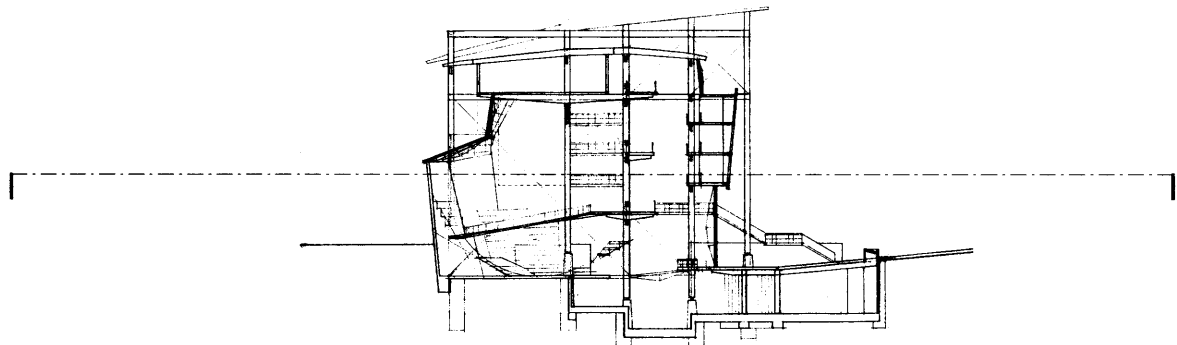
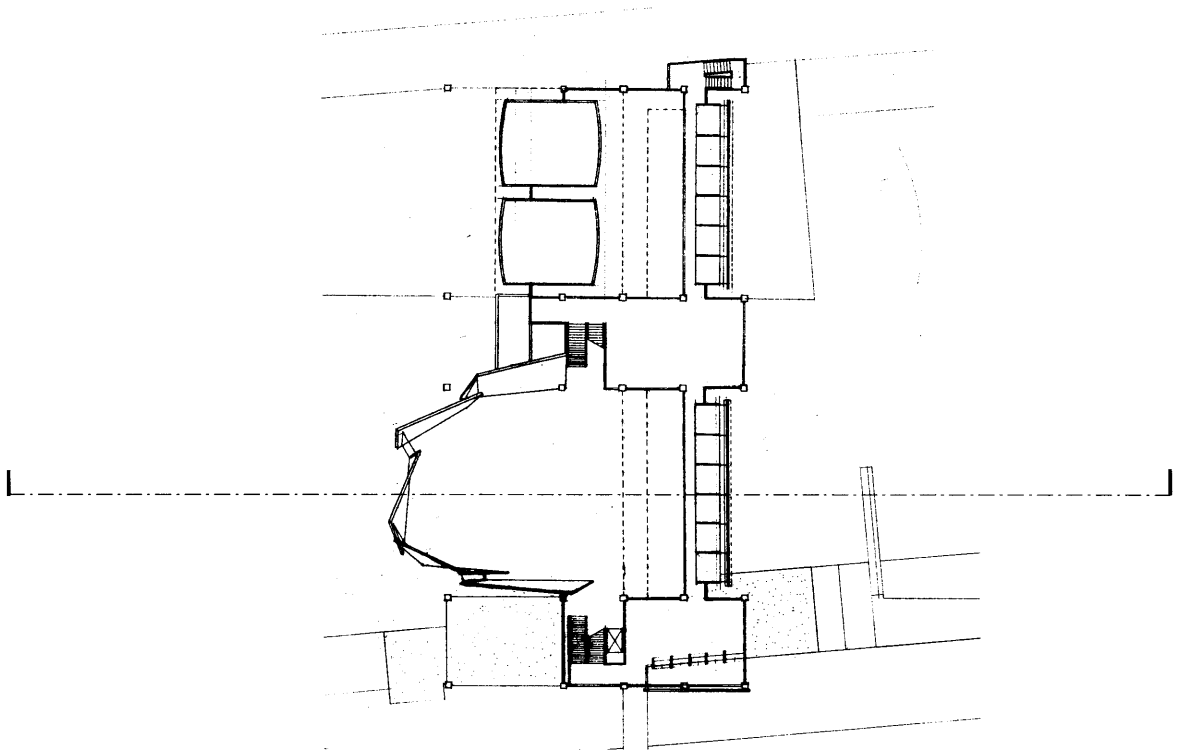


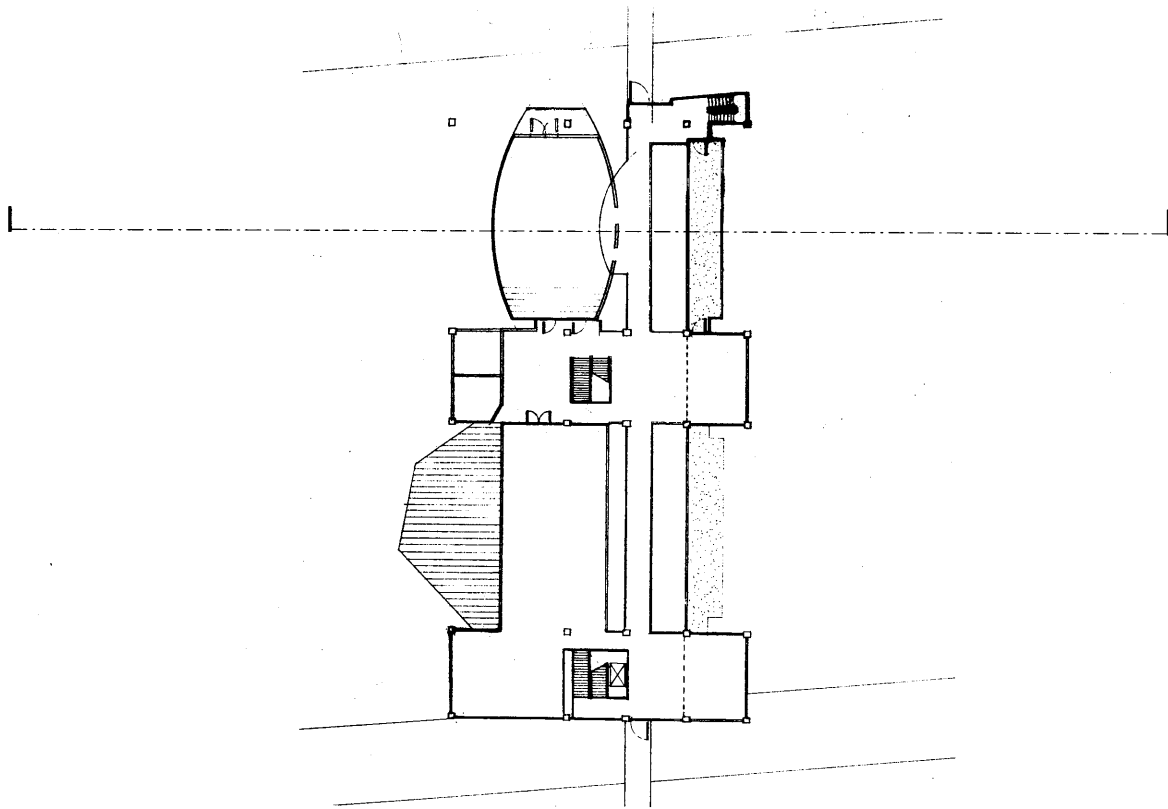
88

+ 60

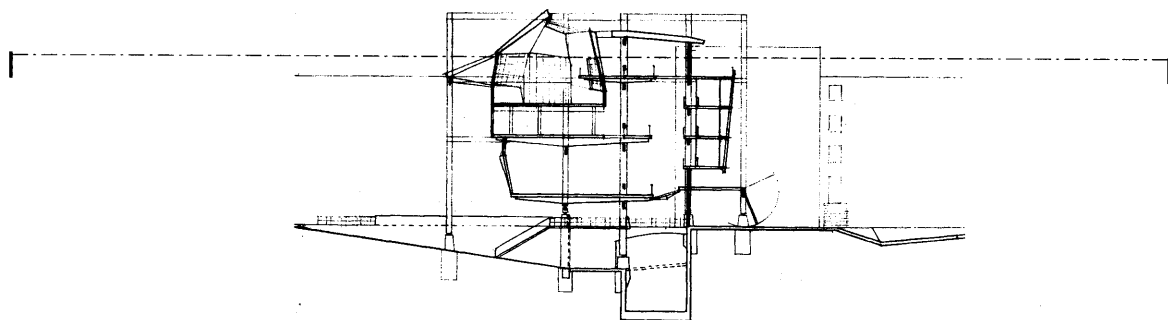


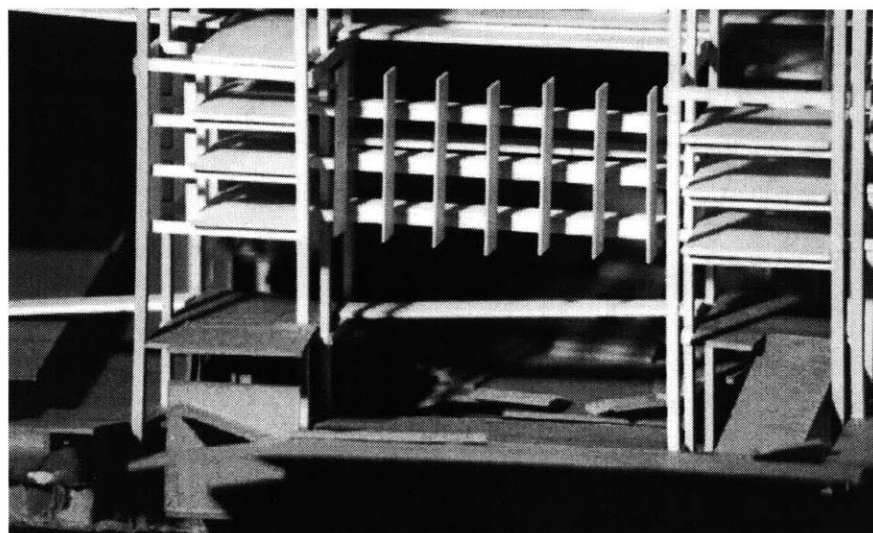
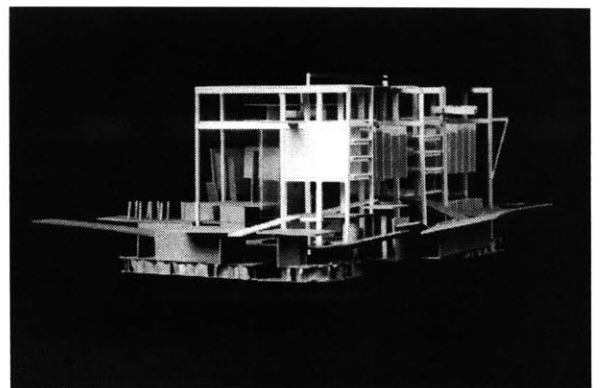
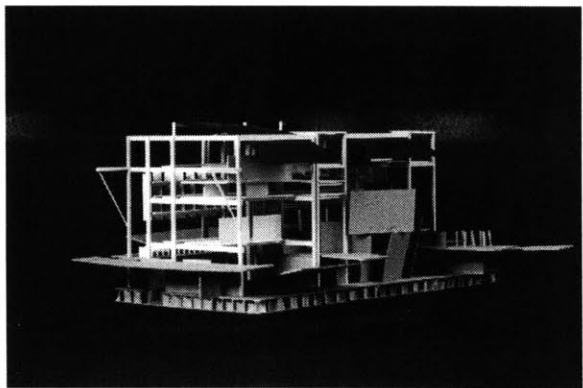
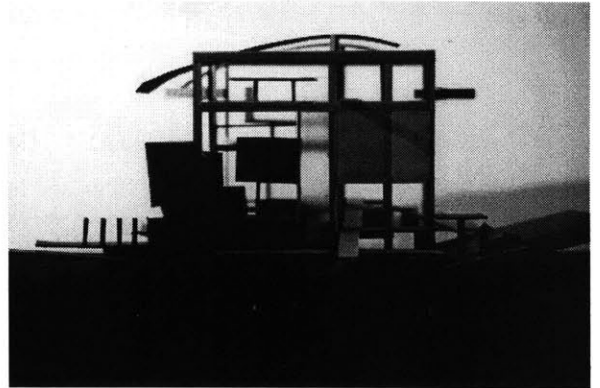
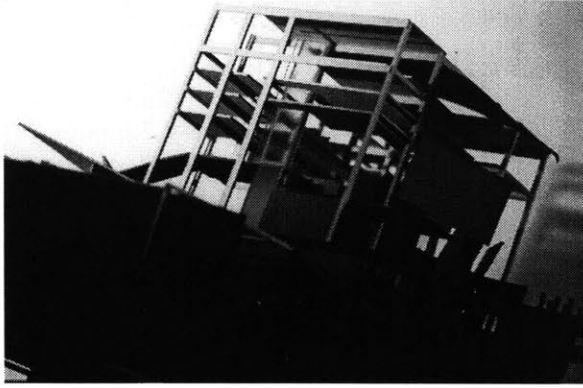






91





92.1 (top left)
92.2 (top right)
92.2 (center left)
92.2 (center right)
92.2 (bottom)
building model

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illustrations

- 6.1 Quilici, p. 105.
12.1 - 13.1 Binzen, no page numbers, photo by Binzen.
15.1 *The New York Times*, November 22, 1996, photo by the Associated Press.
19.1 Binzen.
24.1, 25.1, 27.1 City of Cambridge.
26.1 *The New York Times*, February 27, 1997, map by The New York Times
40.1 Hertzberger, p. 171.
45.1 - 45.5 Goodsell, pp. 117, 141, 130, 39, 116, 140, respectively.
49.1 Lehnartz, p. 59, photo by Lehnartz.
49.3 Lehnartz, p. 32.
49.5, 49.6 source unknown.
49.7 Lehnartz, p. 75.
50.1 *Architektur und Technik, Entwicklungen und Beispiele*, frontpiece.
68.1 Carver, *Iberian Peninsula*, page unknown.
68.2 *Il Palazzo della Ragione in Padua*, page unknown.
71.2, 71.3 Quilici, p. 119.
73.1 Weyergraf-Serra, p. 130.
73.2 Hertzberger, p. 17.
74.1, 77.3 The Olmstead Center, New York City Parks Department.
77.1, 77.2 Von Hassell, pp. 40, 42 [1874 Viele map and 1879 Dripps Map,] respectively.
80.1 Lehnartz, p. 35.
83.1 Abu-Lughod, p. 232, photo by Marlis Momber – renown East Side chronicler.
endpiece *Places*, Peter Droege, guest editor, v. 5, n. 3, MIT Press, p. 92, painting by Gustave Doré, c. 1860, from the “Illustrated Bible.”

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neigh,
facilitation



