

ABSTRACT

Title of Document: REPRESENTATION(S): A MUTABLE PROCESS FOR A TRANSITIONING URBAN LANDSCAPE

Lisa LaCharité-Lostritto, Master of Architecture, 2009

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To understand the medium is to understand the affects the medium has on the changes and the scale and form of human association and action over time, not only as the medium is being introduced, but also the unconscious and unforeseeable effects the cultural matrix within which the medium operates. Marshall McLuhan

Difference is not simply the collapsing [or circulation] of identity, it is also the rendering of space and time as fragmented, transformable, interpenetrated, beyond any fixed formulation, no longer guaranteed by the a priori or by the universalisms of science. Elizabeth Grosz

Media can be leveraged as a way to evaluate and inform the built environment. By using media as more than just a communicative necessity, media is capable of directing process. This process seeks to construct a representational framework and narrative through the investigation and translation of cultural, historical, and conceptual contexts. Architecture, as media, functions as a perceptual tool toward the fusion of process and a meta-physical and physical experience. This thesis asks the question: ***How can these complex contexts create a framework within which the media operates and informs the built environment?***

The validity of this research in the context of the culture of architectural education is to show that architecture is more than simply applied knowledge and skills translated through conventions of visual communication. Architecture is a way of seeing and thinking that requires understanding of media beyond the idea of tool and production to an idea of performance, process, and methodology.

REPRESENTATION(S): A MUTABLE PROCESS FOR A TRANSITIONING URBAN
LANDSCAPE

by

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University of Maryland, College Park in partial fulfillment
of the requirements of the degree of
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Preface

This document embodies a series of essays that were written over the course of one year that were collected and tied together at the end of this research.

There are some animations discussed that are ill-suited for this document format. To see these animations and other information about the author, please visit www.0095b6.com/lacharite.

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Recognition needs to be given to:

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Introduction

conceptual agendas

What are the products of architecture and where should we place representation? The products of architecture are not just buildings, but also drawings and models, and writings, each of them a mode of representation of reality with which architecture is engaged, each of them with some similar concerns, but each somehow keeping a certain degree of independence and autonomy from the other. Jorge Silvetti

Architecture is a way of seeing and thinking that allows a theoretical approach to the creation of form and space. By using media as more than just a communicative necessity, media is capable of directing process. We can learn from process. This thesis leverages media as a way to evaluate and inform the built environment. Architecture, as media, functions as a perceptual tool toward the fusion of process to create metaphysical and physical experience.

This research provides the opportunity to construct a design process working non-linearly in explicit systemic, conditional and metaphorical operations. Speculative design methods develop across a series of disparate media processes that are structured, rather than dictated, by the particular architectural issues of social culture, concept of place, and composition. Accommodating and embracing a diverse and complex range of issues of input and testing the variable levels of output lead to non-prescribed outcomes in the form of new discrete ideas and compositions. These disparate media processes develop into an architecture that assembles and weaves these processes together.

Contemporary architecture continues to value the Modern position that multiplicitous phenomenon as symptomatic of valuable and interesting complexities (Venturi, 1966). While the analog design processes



Week 14

Fig. 1 Temporal Connections

This diagram demonstrates the connections and collapsing of time that occurs in this project that participates in a fragmented understanding of history (or multiple histories), an ambiguous understanding of present identities, and an embraced uncertainty of future trajectories.

of mid-century Modernism remain pedagogically relevant in the instruction of architectural design, the challenge to effectively introduce contemporary digital media to such traditions remains. This research endeavors to uncover such opportunity through exploratory design processes involving the hybridization of digital and physical modeling, digital animation, mapping, drawing and static image. These processes seek paths through traditional architectural conventions towards new and speculative virtual and spatial relationships.

cultural agendas

In a world that is becoming more complex through technological evolution, global connections and major changes in our environment, cultural identities are becoming increasingly less diverse. Our memories of past events are converging. This research proposes that remembering happens not through the resurrection or complete protection of the past, but through the translation of the past.

This thesis asks the question: how can multiple perceptions of the past translate into future trajectories for our built environment? How can perception, both as memory and haptic experience, be translated to media? It is clear, through the evolution of cities and emerging phenomena and effects in cities today, that traditional systems of representation and models available in architecture cannot take on the complex roles necessary to translate these issues (Allen 69).

A site with a delicate and complex past and uncertain future is discovered and used to test ways of translating specific historical and cultural issues through media to inform a new built environment. The existing site includes a laundromat, a vacant retail space and a parking lot on the 14th Street Corridor in Northwest Washington, DC.

This project participates in the *fragmented* understanding of history or past (past identities of Washington including the 1968 race-riots), an ambiguous understanding of present identities (a transitioning urban landscape and the laundromat), an embraced uncertainty of future trajectories (a mutable scaffolding for activities and future investment).

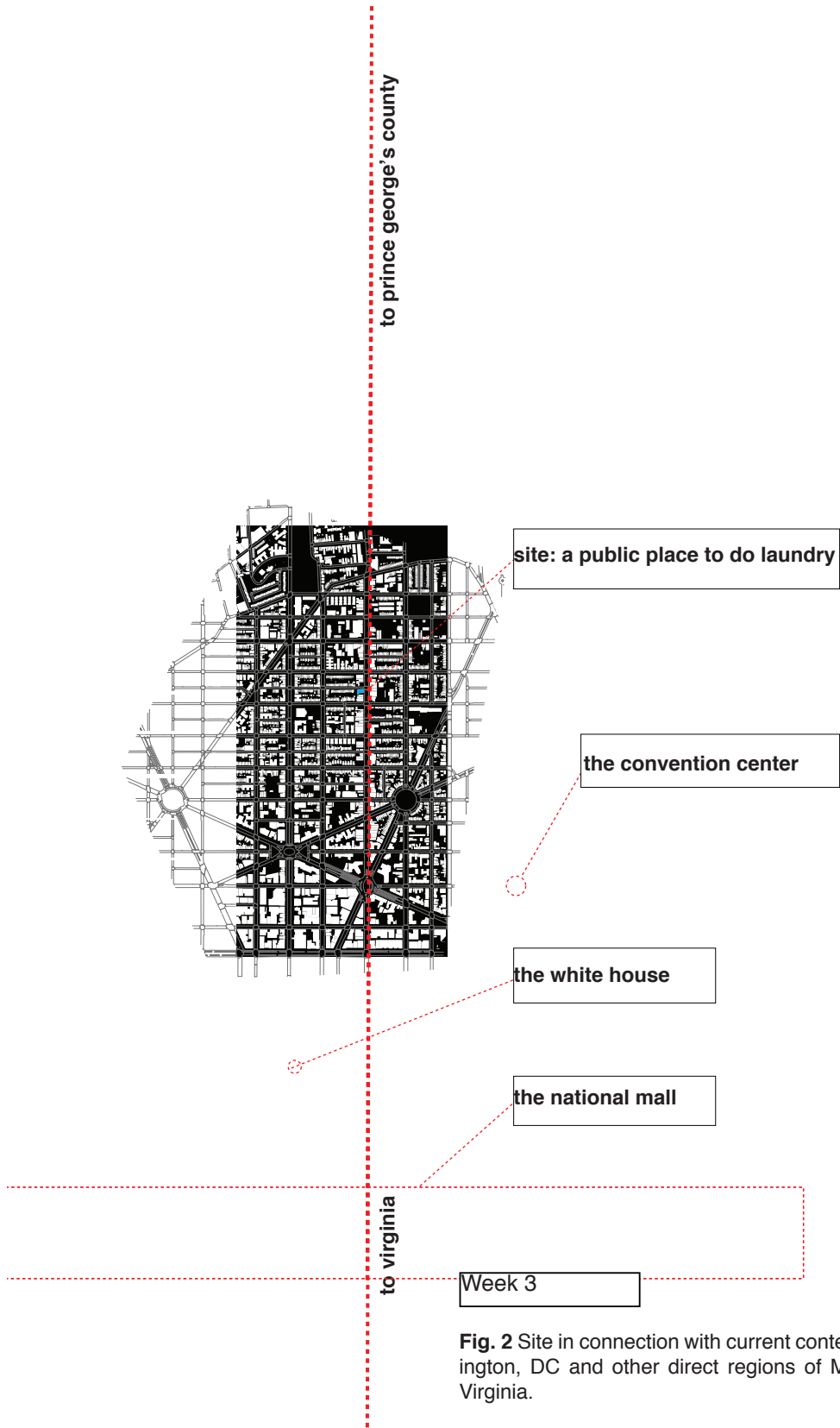


Fig. 2 Site in connection with current contexts of Washington, DC and other direct regions of Maryland and Virginia.

site as catalyst

location

This research involves a site that is used as a catalyst for historical and cultural discovery. The site is at the corner of 14th and Swann Streets Northwest Washington, DC fronting the 14th Street Corridor. Currently, the 14th street corridor is a direct path to the National Mall and continues south as an artery into Virginia. 14th Street continues north and connects Washington to Prince George's County, Maryland. It connects to P Street just south of the site—a newly thriving intersection in the Logan Circle neighborhood and connects the P street area to the U Street Corridor—another rapidly changing and active neighborhood.



Fig. 3 Major districts and areas influencing the site investigated for this thesis.

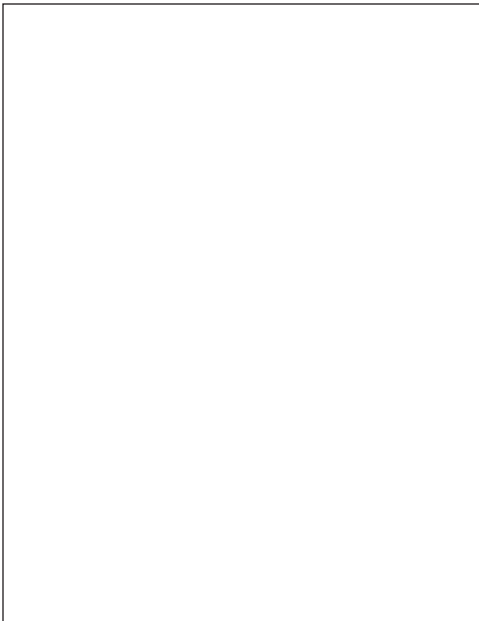


Fig. 4 Auto industry sales sign on 14th Street NW in the 1940s. Photograph from the Library of Congress Digital Collection.

early 20th Century

The 14th Street Corridor was a major commercial corridor supported and used by a predominantly African American community at a time when segregation was still prominent. It was a thriving street heavily influenced by industry and cultural production. Its connection to the U Street Corridor, the “Black Broadway” of Washington, DC, created a center for investment, entertainment, and social and cultural institutions. These corridors were frequented by some of the most prominent figures in entertainment including Cab Calloway, Pearl Bailey, Louis Armstrong, Sarah Vaughan, Ella Fitzgerald, Dizzy Gillespie, and Duke Ellington who was a native of Washington, DC.

Despite its flourishing status, the African American community in this area still struggled with major segregation issues. These corridors were created out of utility by African Americans for consolidated and accessible resources and infrastructure in a time when African Americans were not served by most taxi cab companies, they were not served equally by most public transportation, they were not welcome to go to many restaurants, stores or public institutions. They were not welcome to purchase any home they wanted. The 14th Street and U Street corridors were areas in the city where African Americans were the major tenants of white-owned buildings. Even after the termination of the legally mandated racial segregation, this area along with many others in Washington remained the centers of African American middle-class prosperity.

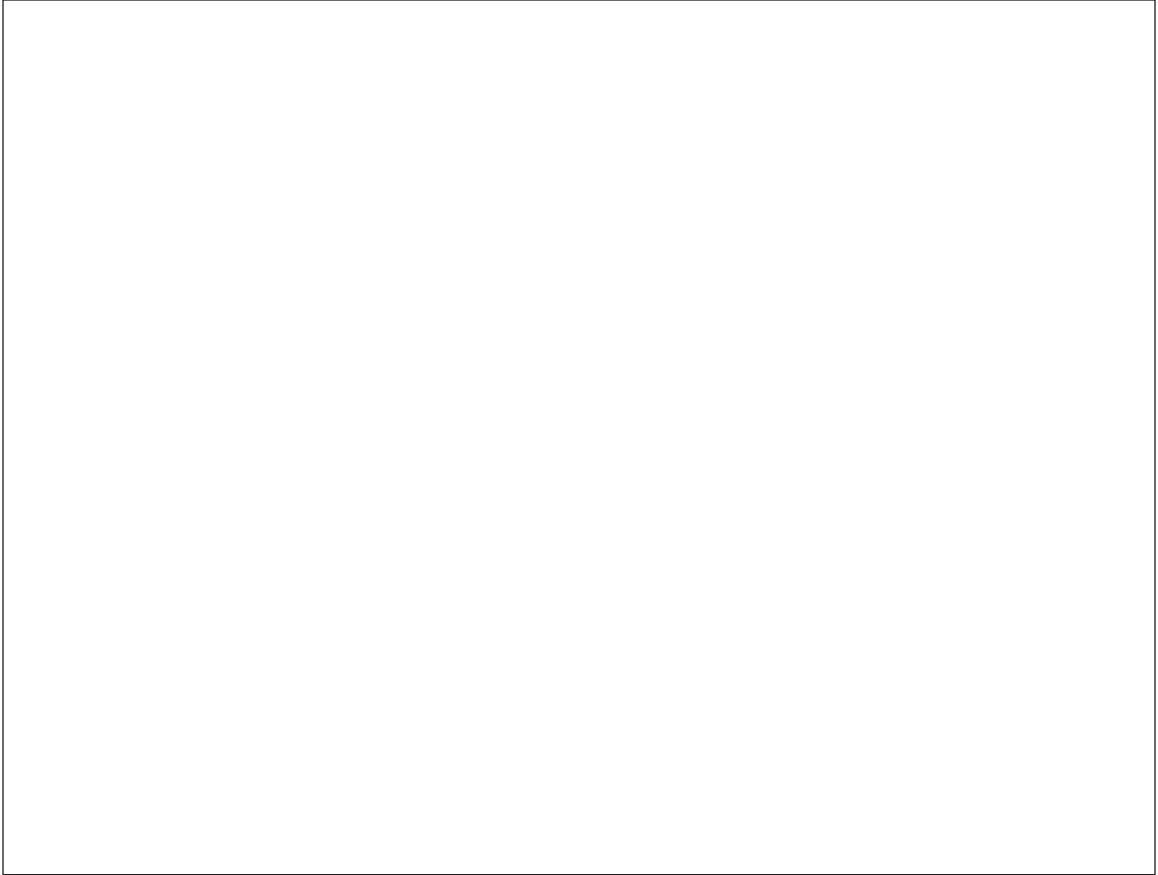


Fig. 5 Bustling U Street nightlife around 1930.
Photograph from the WETA Public Broadcasting for
Greater Washington. WETA Local Video, Shaw Neigh-
borhood Documentaries, Ben's Chili Bowl. Posted Jan-
uary 1, 2006. <http://www.weta.org/video/local/1253>

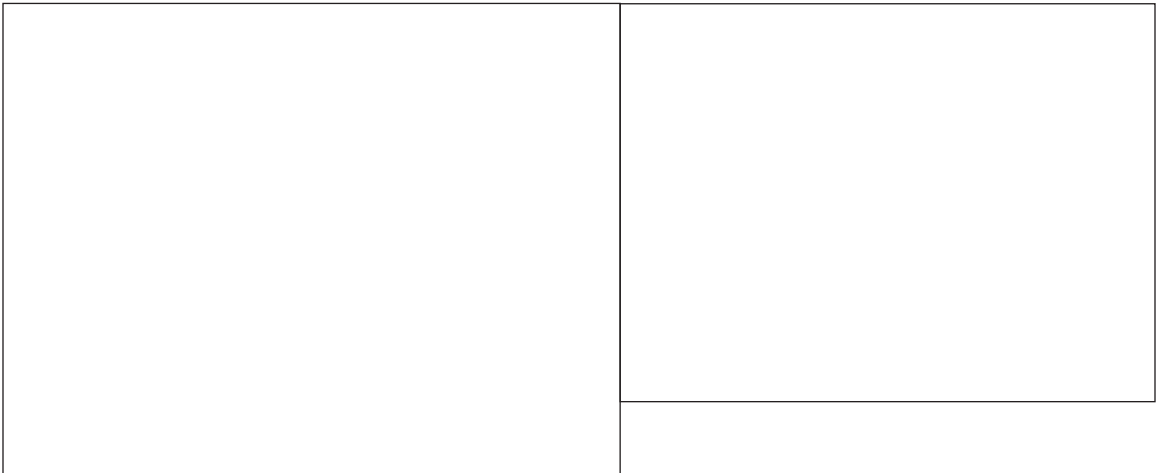


Fig. 6 Different parts of the 14th Street Corridor in
early 20th Century.
Photographs from the Library of Congress Digital Col-
lection.



Fig. 7 1968 riots imagery near the 14th Street Corridor NW.

Photograph from the WETA Public Broadcasting for Greater Washington. WETA Local Video, Shaw Neighborhood Documentaries, Ben's Chili Bowl. Posted January 1, 2006. <http://www.weta.org/video/local/1253>

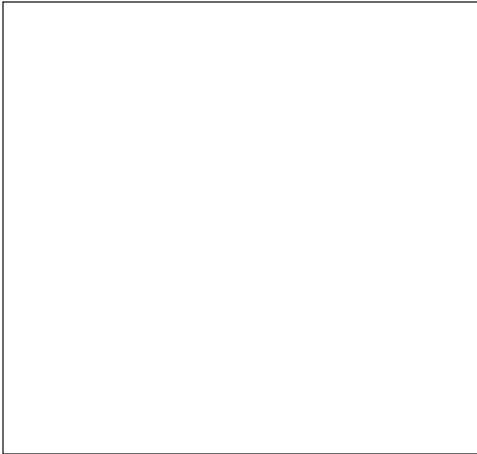


Fig. 8 Photograph of 14th and Swann Street site (currently with laundromat on corner) during the 1968 riots right before its destruction. Photo from CNN news web posting: Nation's capital still recovering from 1968 riots. April 4, 1998. <http://www.cnn.com/US/9804/04/mlk.dc.riots/>

the 1968 race-riots in Washington, DC

In 1968, after the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., race-riots began to take place in many major cities including the main corridors of Washington, DC. Many blocks off of 14th Street NW were left bare after the destruction caused during the riots. Many of the major cultural monuments from that era have disappeared as a result of these four days. The specific site of study is the only site recorded as unsalvageable south of the U Street Corridor on 14th Street.

After the fuel shortages in the early 1970's, the 14th street area population and visitor frequency started to plummet, resulting in desolate unsafe drug-ridden spaces. Starting in the 1980's, an effort was made to start building in areas that were left with nothing after the riots. This generally resulted in hasty construction of buildings to try to attract a population back to the area.

In 1988, the U Street Metro construction began one block away from the 14th Street Corridor. In an attempt to revitalize the U Street area, the new Metro station would link the area back to the city. The Metro station was not complete until about 1998, forty years after the riots. It was not until this time that the area started to change and an influx of people started to invest in this area of the city.

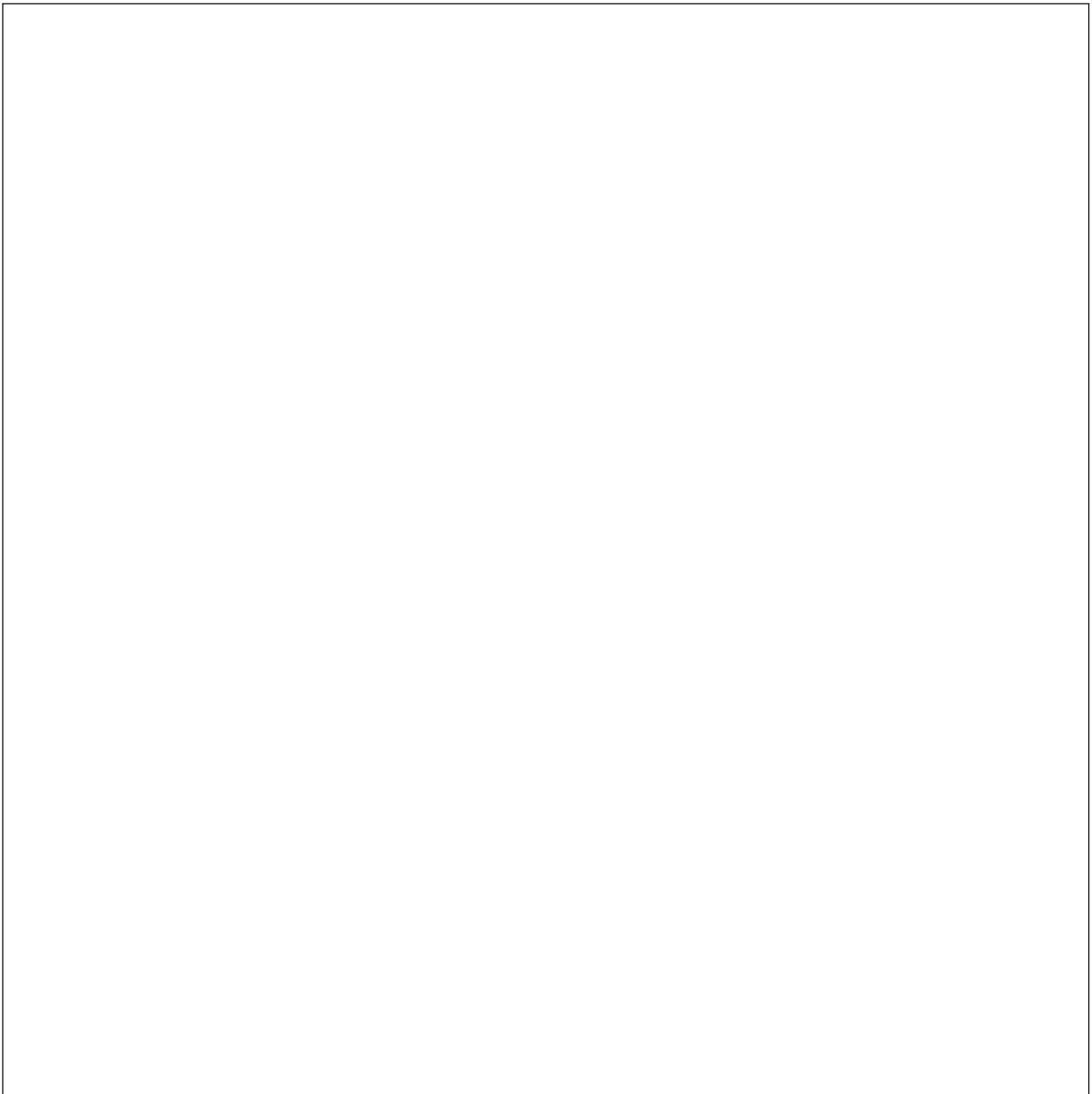


Fig. 9 Example of a void/ leftover space never re-developed. A parking lot serves as a memory of what was there, similar to the parking lot on the site being investigated.
Photograph from the Library of Congress Digital Collection.

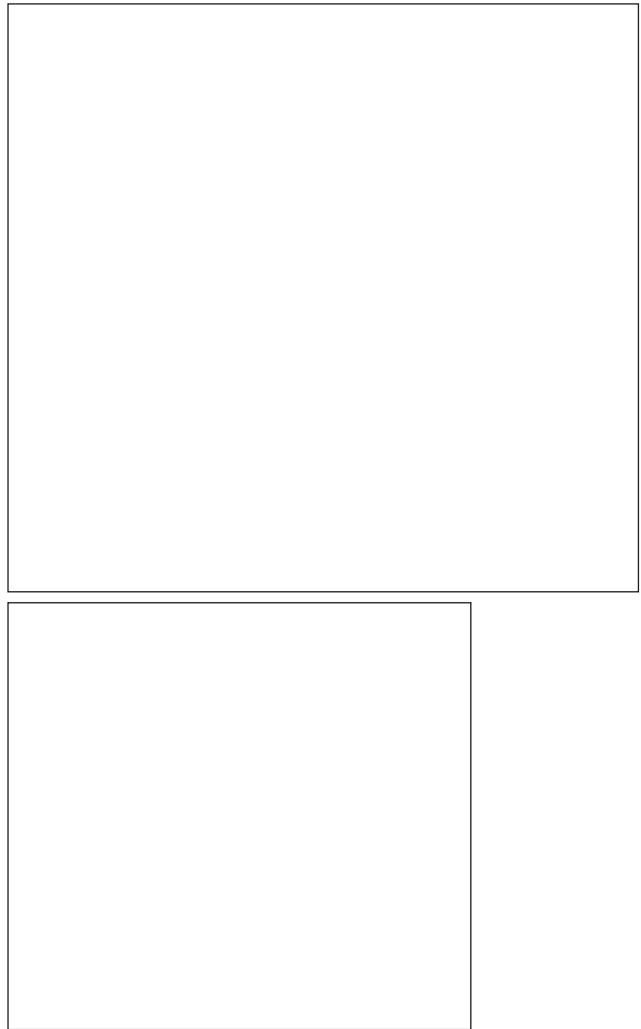


Fig. 10 and 11

Citywide damage map. Locate the intersection of 14th and Swann Streets NW where more that 50% of the site was damaged and therefore unsalvageable.

District of Columbia City Council. Report of City Council Public Hearings on the rebuilding and recovery of Washington, D.C., from the Civil Disturbances of 1968.

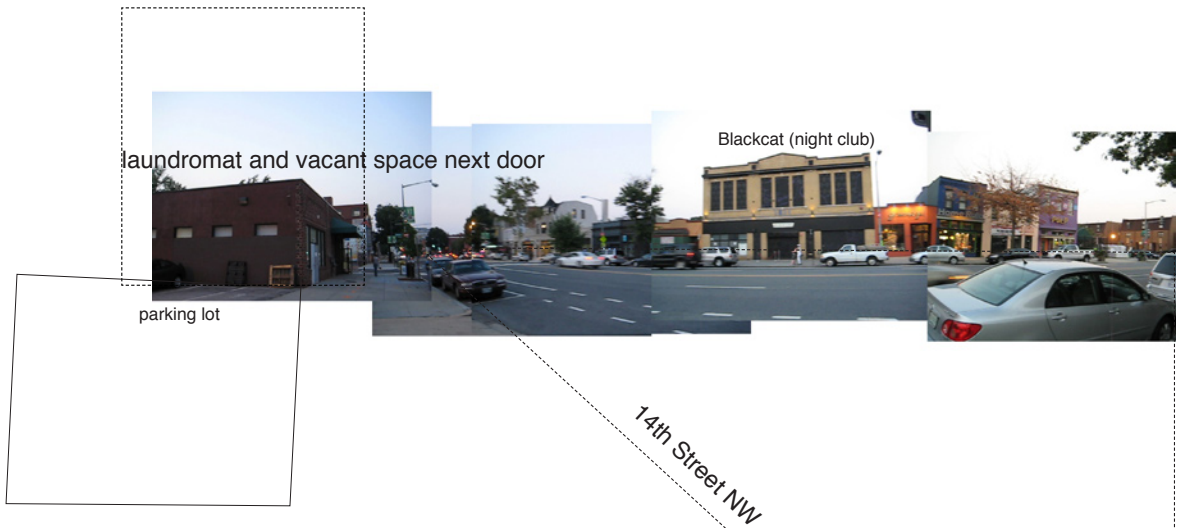
the laundromat :
14th and Swann Streets

The specific site of investigation is a discovered left-over of mid to late 20th century urban degeneration at the corner of 14th and Swann Streets Northwest. Currently, 14th Street is straddling the line between growth and collapse. On one side of the street exist dilapidated vacant row houses, graffiti-ed warehouses, and dollar stores. On the other exist boutiques equivalent to Barney's New York, nightclubs and bars, and designer furniture stores.

These four days also resulted in what is now located on 14th and Swann, a one-story, generic, brick band-aid that has been occupied by a laundromat for at least fifteen years.

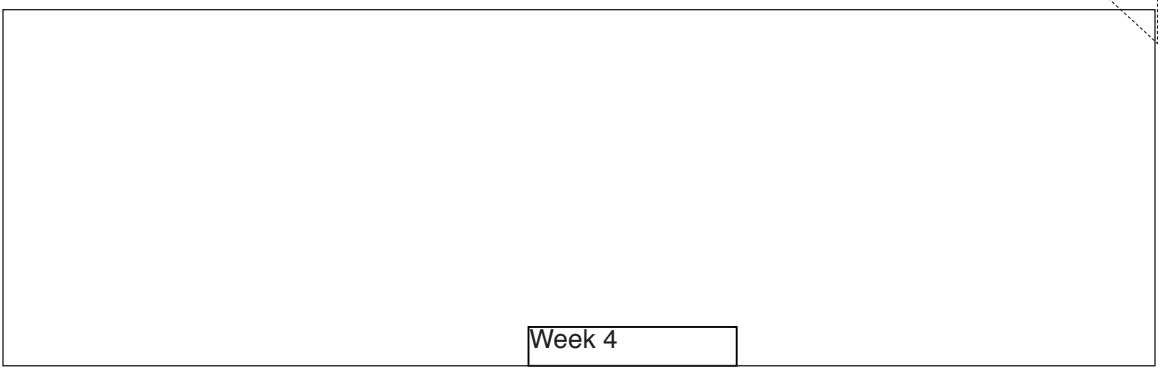


Fig. 12 The north face of laundromat, 14th street on left side of composition and back alley opposite.



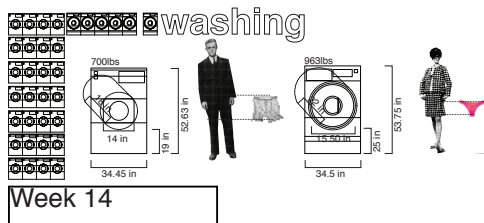
Week 4

Fig. 13 The laundromat on left side of composition looking north on 14th Street NW.



Week 4

Fig. 14 Current connection of site to U Street, major developments to north and south, lack of development in between.



Week 14

Fig. 15 This drawing indicates the number and dimensions of washing machines in existing laundromat relative to human size. This drawing also hints at the idea of identity through laundry.

the activity of doing laundry

This thesis will focus on several aspects of this site's current contexts and identities through the activity of doing laundry:

the activity of laundering

With the laundromat comes the serendipitous relationship between cleansing and neighborhoods: the branding slogans related to laundry that now seem to relate to racial segregation and neighborhood cleansing such as "Keep Your Whites Whiter and Brights Brighter" and "separate lights and darks." The definition of laundering also includes the idea of erasure of evidence or covering up evidence of something such as in the case of Lady Macbeth, "Out damn'd spot! Out, I say!" and in political and popular culture is the infamous soiled Lewinsky dress. There exists also the question of revitalization and whether it means to make the past evident or to forget the past and build anew.

the revealing of identity through laundry

A laundromat is possibly the one place where you have the opportunity (or the misfortune) of exposing what you wear under your clothes. It exposes whether you like boxers or briefs, tighty-whities or big boxy roomy underwear, thongs or grandma panties [or granny panties, ethnographically speaking], flowers or leopard print. What is most interesting, however, is there is no mixing of anything when it comes to undergarments. You know when you have picked up the wrong underwear, unlike searching for your car in a massive parking lot, there are hardly ever any chances of confusing yours with someone else's. Underwear is particular to one person's identity. The most important thing to note, possibly, is the differences in gender. That is something that is not as easily identified in most other cases like with cars or even other pieces of clothing.

Week 23

clothing as mediator between human body and world
clothing as public function

clothing as representation
 clothing is a spatial phenomena
 clothing communicates to others
 clothing as process of putting on

clothing as performative

clothing is accommodation
 clothing keeps the human body warm
 clothing requires repair
 clothing is assembled systematically

laundrying to maintain mediator between human body and world
laundrying as public function

laundrying as a way to clarify or cover up
 laundrying highlights dichotomy between innocent/ every day and illegal actions
 laundrying as a process of sanitizing
 laundrying as communicated to the masses:
 "Keep whites whiter and brights brighter"

laundrying as performative

laundrying is specific for different materials
 laundrying is done systematically
 laundrying as a process of ironing/ folding/ hanging/ putting away

communication by the masses as mediator between two sets of people
communication by the masses as public function communication by the masses as performative

communication by the masses as a way to convey a message or idea
 communication by the masses as a way to establish a group of people
 communication by the masses as a spatial phenomena

communication by the masses as performance
 communication by the masses to effect change
 communication by the masses to publicize

Fig. 16 This diagram translates the culture of clothing and washing to the goals of the riots (communication by the masses) and built form (function).

how soiled are your clothes?

at home washer
2.5-3.0 gallons of water/ lb of laundry
 commercial washer
0.5-1.5 gallons of water/ lb of laundry

9.00 cubic feet x 10 washers @ 60lb
 4.19 cubic feet x 12 washers @ 35lb
 3.76 cubic feet x 12 washers @ 25lb

300-900 gallons of water per load
 210-630 gallons of water per load
 150-450 gallons of water per load

commercial coin operated washers and dryers
laundromat water and energy use

the water factor is gallons per cycle per cubic foot per washer
the lower the number the more efficient it is

water factor approximately 10
 water factor approximately 12.5
 water factor approximately 10

Average of **40 people** visiting the laundromat per day
 at an average of **4 loads** per person per day
 and **20 loads** for Wash n' Fold =
180 loads of laundry per day
 10 washers x 90 gallons x (20 loads x 364) = 6,552,000
 12 washers x 30 gallons x (80 loads x 364) = 10,483,200
 12 washers x 25 gallons x (80 loads x 364) = 8,736,000

25,771,200 gallons per year

1 commercial washer uses on average
 900 kWh/year
 washers can use between 0.26-5.24 kWh/load

10 washers @ 20 loads/day **1898-38252 kWh/year**
 12 washers @ 80 loads/day **7592-153008 kWh/year**
 12 washers @ 80 loads/day **7592-153008 kWh/year**

1 commercial dryer uses on average
 800 kWh/year or 0.20 kWh/load

21 dryers @ 80 loads/day approximately **16800 kWh/year**

kWh/load	cost/load	cost/year
0.26	3c	\$11
1.92	21c	\$83
3.58	39c	\$154
5.24	58c	\$226
3.58	39c	\$154



Week 20

Fig. 17 This diagram maps the evolution of the washing machine and provides possible sustainable efforts that the Laundromat makes to serve its community.

travelogues: a neighborhood interview

This investigation attempts to tie perception, experience, urban and spatial connections and culture. A set of interviews are conducted in the laundromat. The questions that are asked to users and employees determine their perception of the boundaries of this neighborhood and its relationship to where they live. They were also asked to suggest a program that this site would need or benefit from.

Interviewee #1 is a woman who works at the laundromat. She manages the office and takes care of the Wash n' Fold jobs. Wash n' Fold provides a way for people to drop off their laundry to be washed, dried and folded for an extra dollar. The boundary of the neighborhood that she drew excluded the laundromat itself-- a possible subconscious commentary on the perception of the laundromat as something that is both part of and separate from what is considered to be the neighborhood. She suggested an extension of the existing laundromat.

Interviewee #2 is a man who works at the laundromat. He sweeps the floor and asks people for extra change. He lives on U Street and considers the neighborhood of the laundromat to be integral to the U Street Corridor. He suggested that the site could use a club, restaurant or valet parking.

Interviewee #3 is a man who frequents and uses the laundromat. He kept to himself and read a book while he waited for his laundry. He drew a small isolated boundary around his neighborhood and drew a path to the laundromat. He suggested that a book store exist next to the laundromat.

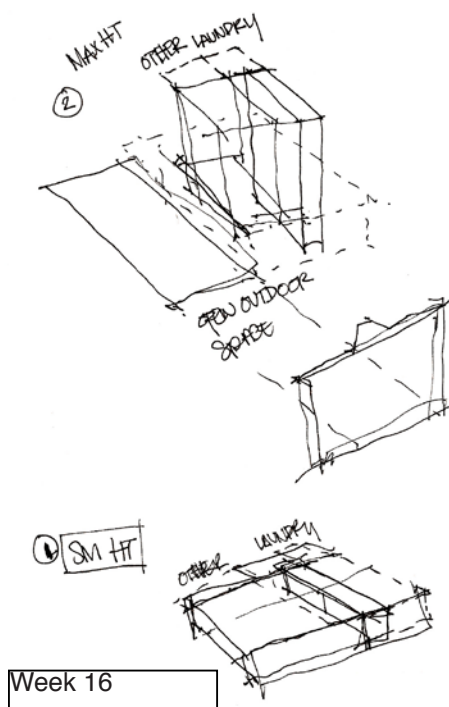
These three interviews were the three most telling about the perception of the neighborhood and the environment. It also proves the viability of entrepreneurship and expansion of the laundromat by providing new jobs in addition to the use of the machines.



Fig. 19 Laundry: activities within existing program on site with question of what new activities can be added to both contrast with and support the laundromat.



Fig. 20 Frames from a flash animation of transforming volume embodying code explorations on the site are taken and extrapolated and overlapped to show types of activities that could fit in each volume.



Week 16

Fig. 21 Working out frames for animation that show possible options for volumes in the space. The bottom diagram demonstrates the filling of the open lot at the same height of the existing building. The top diagram demonstrates the pursued option of setting the volume on top and slipping out to frame the open outdoor space.

program: a scaffolding for activity

These previous investigations have provided insight into the unpredictable urban landscape and how visible and non-visible changes in the city affect our built environment. These series of investigations provide a way to evaluate shifts in culture and built environment and to use these evaluated fragments of this particular site as information and input for future development and growth.

These investigations have shown that new activities in this space should accommodate unanticipated shifts in culture. Just as these processes and investigations are mutable and adapt to its direct and shifting environment, the new built environment should be mutable and adapt. This raises the question: how does one construct a built environment that will accommodate change, immediate or future? How can media communicate unanticipated growth and cultivation?

The program needs to accommodate for the influx of new investment and the new population's indispensable income and simultaneously the existing population who have influenced the changes that have happened in the past. The program needs to anticipate a new wave of urban renewal spreading from the surrounding Dupont Circle, Logan Circle and U Street Corridor areas.

The beginning investigations of program involved tracing and understanding existing activities in the laundromat. Analyzing these activities provided a way to develop new program(s) were based on possible overlap and juxtapositions that would metaphorically highlight contrasts discovered in previous investigations such as African American tenants and white-owned buildings, ownership of the laundromat as isolated and separated from and the tenant-role its users take on, and the lack of investment on the specific site and the new investment that is currently changing the 14th Street

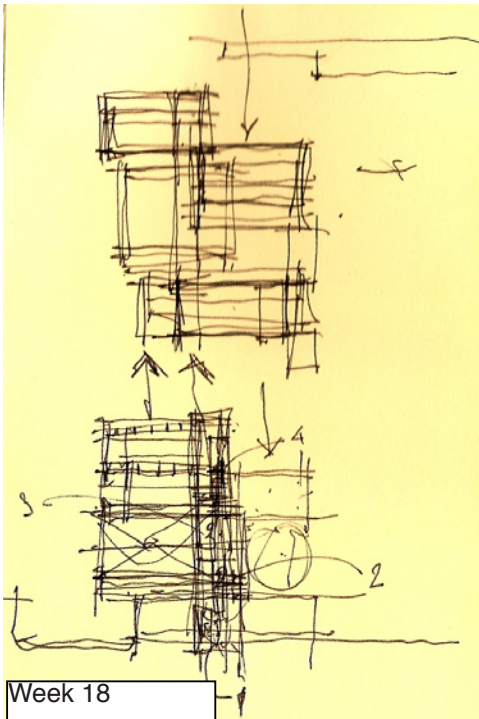


Fig. 22 Diagram that investigates the structural connections between the overlapping volumes of space and the core rooting it into the existing laundromat.

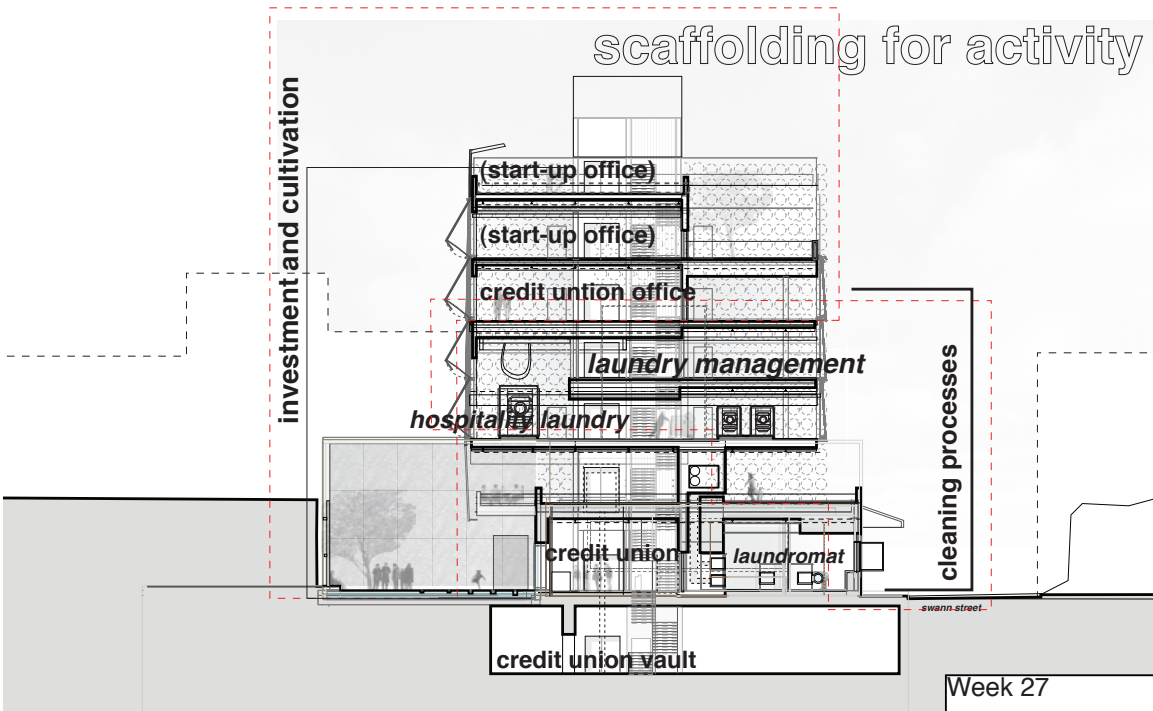


Fig. 23 The extension and addition, connection and overlap of multiple activities.

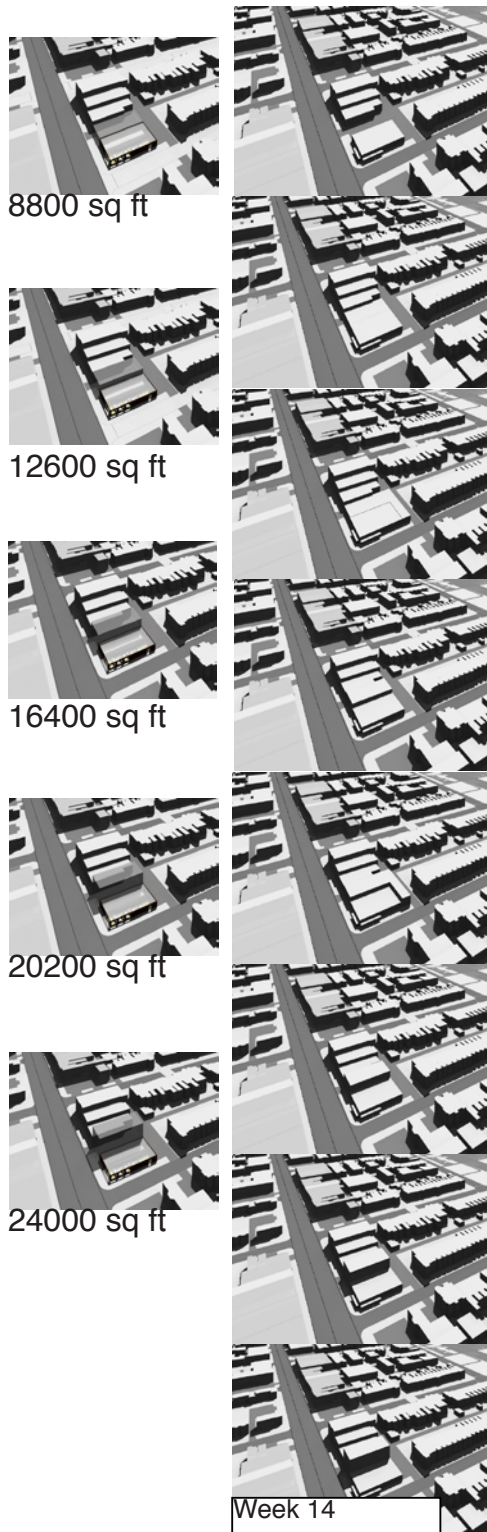


Fig. 24 Isolated study based on legal codes and zoning regulations on the site

Corridor. This led to the integration of a program that involved the actual activity of investing in a community: a credit union. This program also had parallels to the laundromat in that it had transient traceable activities that involved the brief use of a facility to access financial activities, similar to the brief use of the laundromat for washing and drying

The investigation of program was also grounded in current code issues as a way to set new inputs for formal investigations. The 14th Street Corridor is considered an Arts District. This can be interpreted as a place that is in need of development in the city. The current maximum height allowed on the site at 14th and Swann Streets is 65'-0". Figures 20, 21, and 24 explore a spectrum of general to more specific volume and mass studies leading to ideas about what various activities would be best for different volumes such as business (tall and narrow leading to ideas and translations of office tower), production (longer more horizontal stacked spaces found in factories), archival (larger museum spaces), residential (higher, more isolated and intimate spaces).

The eventual solution came down to several factors. One was to build to the maximum allowed square feet on the site, 24,000 square feet. This meant an additional 5 floors would be added to make the height 65'-0". This would allow for more possible activities to interact and exchange in the space.

In order to accommodate for multiple possible futures, the ability for activities to fluctuate and change over time needs to be considered. This meant that the spaces should be configured and constructed in a way that can accommodate for many types of activities.

Another factor was to *reserve* an urban or public space that would directly connect and penetrate the existing and new spaces. By carving out a space for public use, more space was able to be added to the individual floors.

By using the technique of montage, the process of program was worked through a series of sections that assembled different volumes dedicated to different activities. This led to the connection and overlap or penetration of different activities causing new types of interactions and adjacencies.

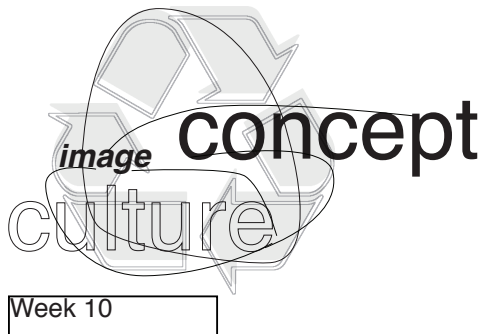


Fig. 25 Tripartite Methodology

This is the beginnings of a 'logo' for this thesis, a graphic that defines the major foundations of the thesis and the idea that one can become the others or relate to the others, similar to the idea of recycling-- distancing itself from the idea of just a cycle.

technique and process investigations

The value of systems of translation and systems of representation has changed many times in the history of architecture. Architectural communication and visual production in architecture has been predominantly drawing-centric. In contemporary practice and education in architecture, the drawing is not meant to produce an evoking image or meant for direct communication of concepts or tectonics, but a way to evade both evocation and communication relying heavily on, but not exploiting or experimenting with, drawing convention. As architects move beyond drawing-centric culture into a dynamic process and performance culture, experimentation with media is superseding the directed and limited use of media through convention. There is an opportunity now to re-invigorate and re-center representation and education simultaneously on ways of exploring architecture by developing and exposing design processes and methodologies that reprioritize ways of seeing, thinking and making.

Through the discussion of representation, this research endeavors to debate the value of representation in architecture and its distancing between humanity and the world (Perez-Gomez Pg. 89). This research questions the quest for "truth" of the image and the idea of simulation through media and not media invoking and creating truths to our built environment (Perez Gomez Pg. 93).

This research has defined a series of paths to discover the overlap and connection between image, culture, and concept. These three terms were pulled in the beginnings of this research and defined as recyclical, as they are terms that generate processes that always connect back to each other, but lead to lateral and iterative discoveries. Therefore, they are cyclical, but the cycle changes and collapses each time.

For example, in figure x of the following chapter,

started out as a conceptual investigation of ideas and definitions from readings that influenced ideas about this thesis. Simultaneously, this conceptual mapping condition creates an evocative image, and also creates its own conventions and cultures.

If, then, each drawing that this thesis generates has its own conventions and cultures through the exploitation of established traditional convention, each individual drawing has the opportunity to have embedded in it a closer connection or something that identifies a connection between humanity, or specific cultural conditions, and drawing.

Because this thesis seeks to place itself in the continuum of media culture in architecture, it is also necessary to question some ideas about typical drawings in architectural processes.

This research, for example, might understand the perspective as something much more abstract in terms of understanding clear spatial definitions than an orthographic drawing. Perspectives might have more symbolic, metaphorical or allegorical depictions instead of just a projected drawing that simulates space. This is found in art and architecture throughout history. Perspectives are distorted to frame or gesture toward a broader picture or meaning. This can be found in many perspectival paintings in history. For example, both before and after the Renaissance, the period in which the scientific methods for a projected perspective drawing were established and practiced, the placement of something, usually an icon or symbol, in space in a drawing or painting had meaning or give something definition. Compare, for example, *The Offerings of Abel and Melchizedek* (6th c.) and *The Ambassadors* (1533), both telling story about ritual and icons in culture, but also both having hidden symbolic readings. The former painting, the distortion of space emphasizes the religious ritual being performed. The latter painting uses anamorphosis, a mathematical approach to the distortion of perspective, to emphasize the symbolic nature of the skull at the center of the image. Both paintings use distortion of space to emphasize specific ideas embedded in the paintings and put into question the direct correspondence between object and image (Perez-Gomez Pg. 139).

Some works that have given theoretical inspiration for this type of questioning between object and image in other media include the work of William Christenberry. Christenberry tells stories about

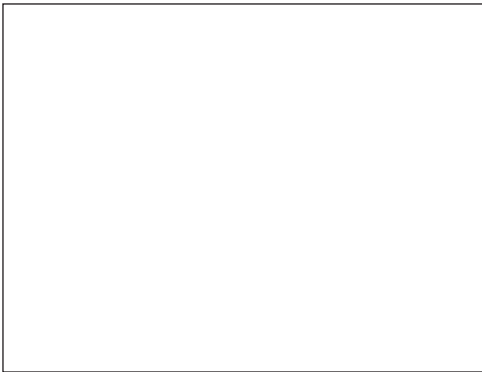


Fig. 26 The offerings of Abel and Melchizedek San Vitale in Ravenna, Italy 6th c. (Perez-Gomez Pg. 90)

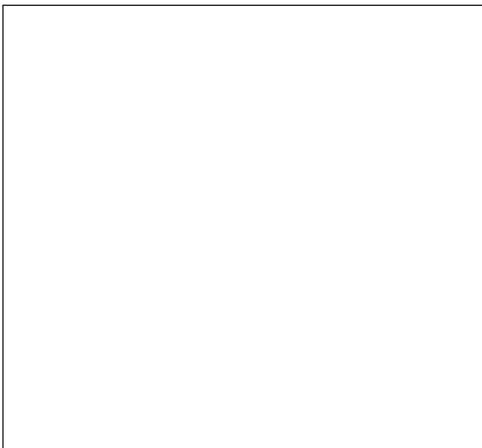


Fig. 27 The Ambassadors Hans Holbein 1533 (Perez-Gomex Pg. 138)

discovered artifacts in his home town in Alabama through photography and sculpture. In both media, he emphasizes the contrast and blurring between beauty and decay by choosing a specific part of the artifact to capture or model. This is also leads to less of a direct correspondance between media and object by framing and choosing specific aspects of the artifact to show, whether it be just a fragment of an artifact or to show the artifact change over many years or multiple interpretations or memories of the same artifact. Each photograph or sculpture also leaves the viewer asking questions and remaining curious about its existance. These aspects of his work have lead to ideas about tracing and *residual effects* of things or *pieces left-over*. These ideas are ways to tie the present to the past and lead to the development of *apparent contrasts*.

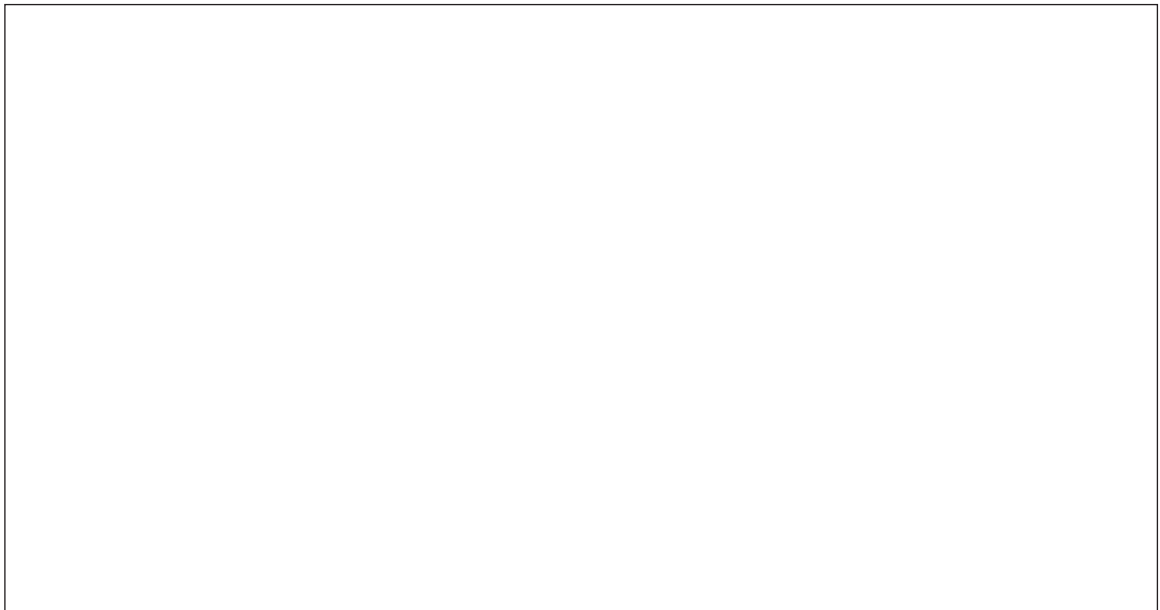


Fig. 28 Spott Church William Christenberry
Two sculptures that describe two different perceptions of the same place. (Christenberry Pg. 88-89)



Fig. 29 William Christenberry

Series of photographs that explore the de-population of a rural environment and the unanticipated growth and change of that environment over time (Christenberry Pg. 13-19)

over many years or multiple interpretations or memories of the same artifact. Each photograph or sculpture also leaves the viewer asking questions and remaining curious about its existence. These aspects of his work have lead to ideas about tracing and *residual effects* of things or *pieces left-over*. These ideas are ways to tie the present to the past and lead to the development of *apparent contrasts*.

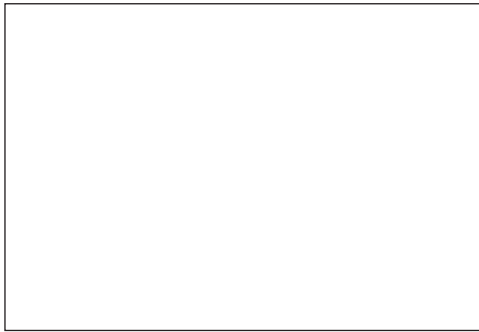


Fig. 30 Gordon Matta-Clark Splitting 1974-75 (Crow).

Other cited works for this research include media that changes the perception, or perhaps is closer to the actual perception, of space and built environment. One example is the works of Gordon Matta-Clark. Through composition and editing of photos, The media is meant to communicate a human experience, not a simulation or a replication of space. These works go beyond a simple objective description to a more specific portrayal of subjective phenomena.



In the theater drawing by Eric Owen Moss, there is both a blurring and contrast between existing and new. The illusion in the image becomes important to the context of the project playing on ideas of theater and stage setting. There is the contrast also of digital line and the palpable nature of the existing site. This collage of drawings emphasizes the combination of beauty and decay, old and new.

Fig. 31 Eric Owen Moss A digital drawing of new intervention and existing site. This demonstrates both a blurring and contrast with existing environment. It also ties to theatrical play in imagery and stage setting (Cook).

pal·imp·sest

n. a manuscript written over a partly erased older manuscript in such a way that the old words can be read beneath the new

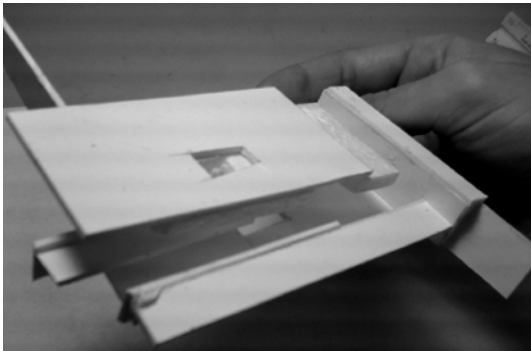
adj. used to describe a document that has been overwritten

A palimpsest is an artifact that has resulted from societal change coinciding with an existing environment. A palimpsest has plural and simultaneous, revealed and concealed layers that require analysis through tracing, delaminating, and deciphering. A palimpsest in architecture is an expanded process where each addition or removal, each action or event is temporally dislocated. In a palimpsest, artifacts can exist inside one another; a palimpsest is both figure and field. A palimpsest of ideas is momentary linked overlapping connected ideas that cannot be physically jettisoned or removed.

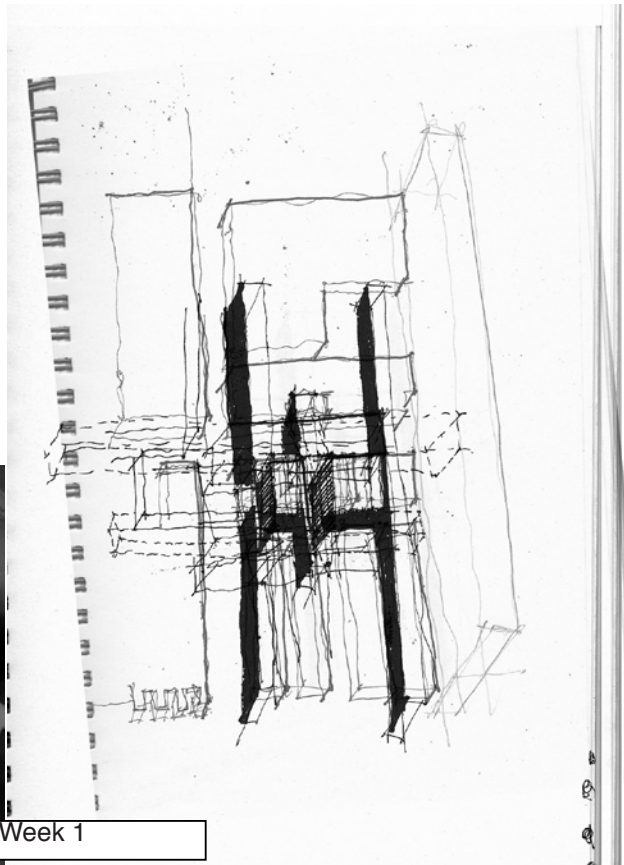
Palimpsest is an important concept for this investigation. The site itself is a palimpsest with latent layers of history coinciding with active layers of material effects and active programs. The beginning investigations involved the study of palimpsest through different media. Examples of methods to create a palimpsest in drawing are recording transformations of an artifact over time, a flattened model, a temporal perspective, or an assemblage of multiple drawings into one.

A palimpsest in drawing is a contracted process. The method for future additions or subtractions can be based on the structure provided by the existing artifact. The intent of a palimpsest in drawing is to articulate and reveal (not just represent what one sees) the particularities about an artifact simultaneously and also allow the drawing to unfold and expose possible new connections, analogies, networks, or transformations.

Figure 33 and 34, for example, are layered



Week 2



Week 1

Fig. 32 Physical stacked horizontal layers found on the site and investigated through model and drawing.

conceptual maps. The size and locations of the concepts on the map are based on their relative relevance to this research and the connections of the definitions to other concepts. A network of ideas starts to unfold, revealing connections between concepts that may not have been found otherwise. The map was developed over time, and as concepts became less relevant they would fade into the background or field of color. The definitions remain latent in the drawing, ready to be re-revealed by cutting away at the background.

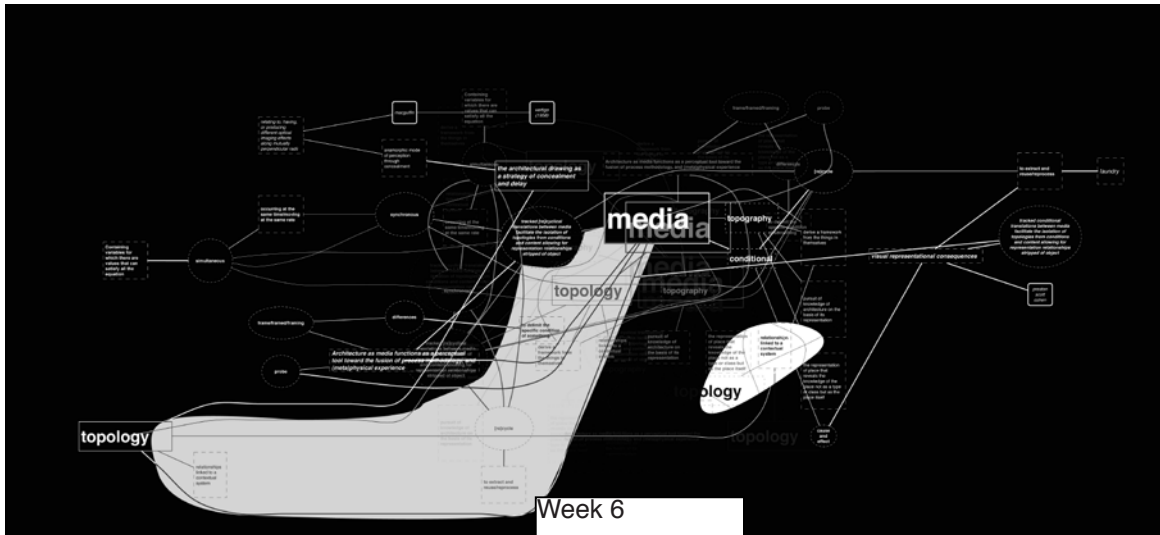
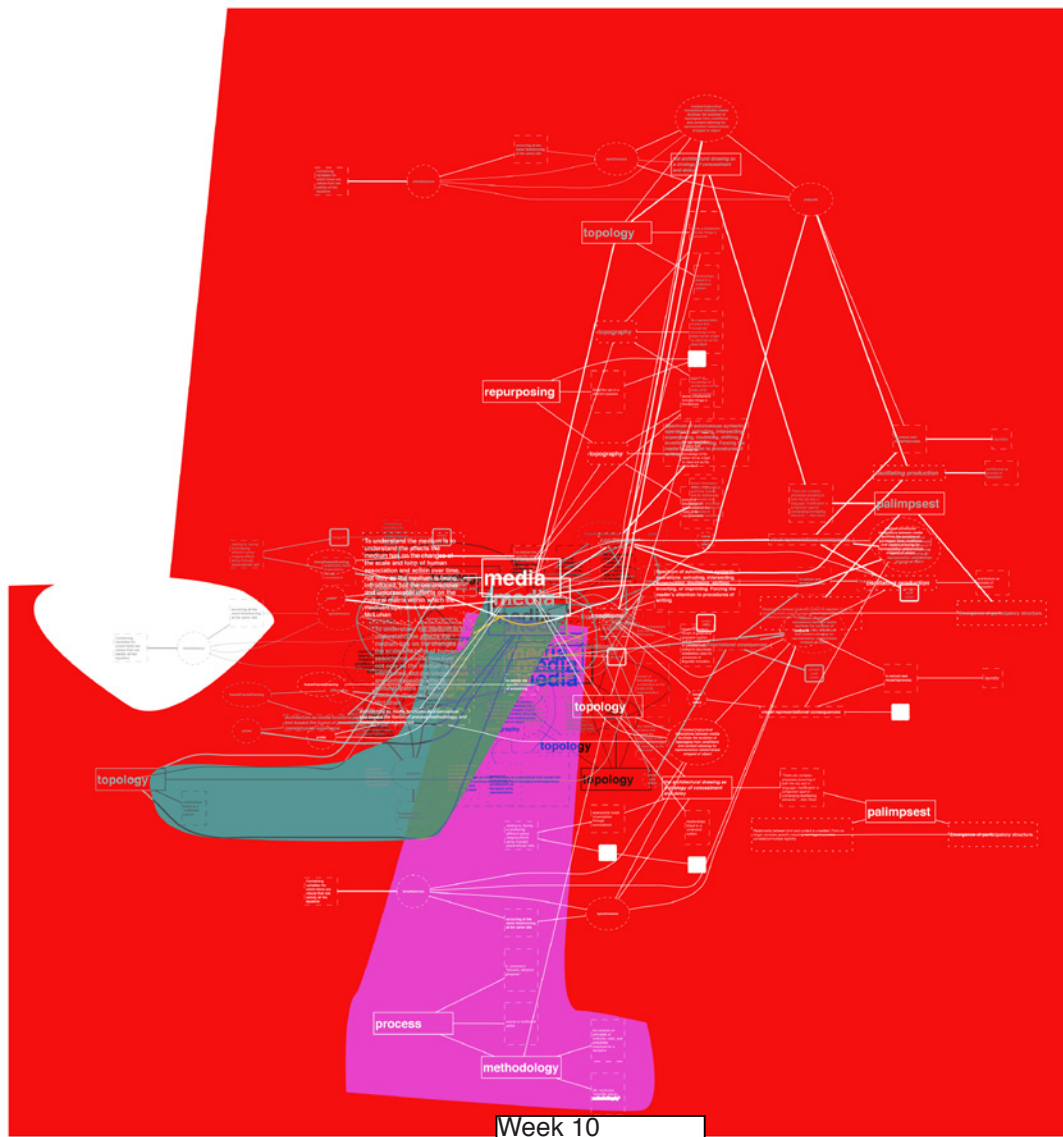


Fig. 33 Early Conceptual Palimpsest



Week 10

Fig. 34 Conceptual Palimpsest
 Printed layers compiled to create appearance of singular surface. Overlapping misaligned layers of ink call attention to structure of surface.

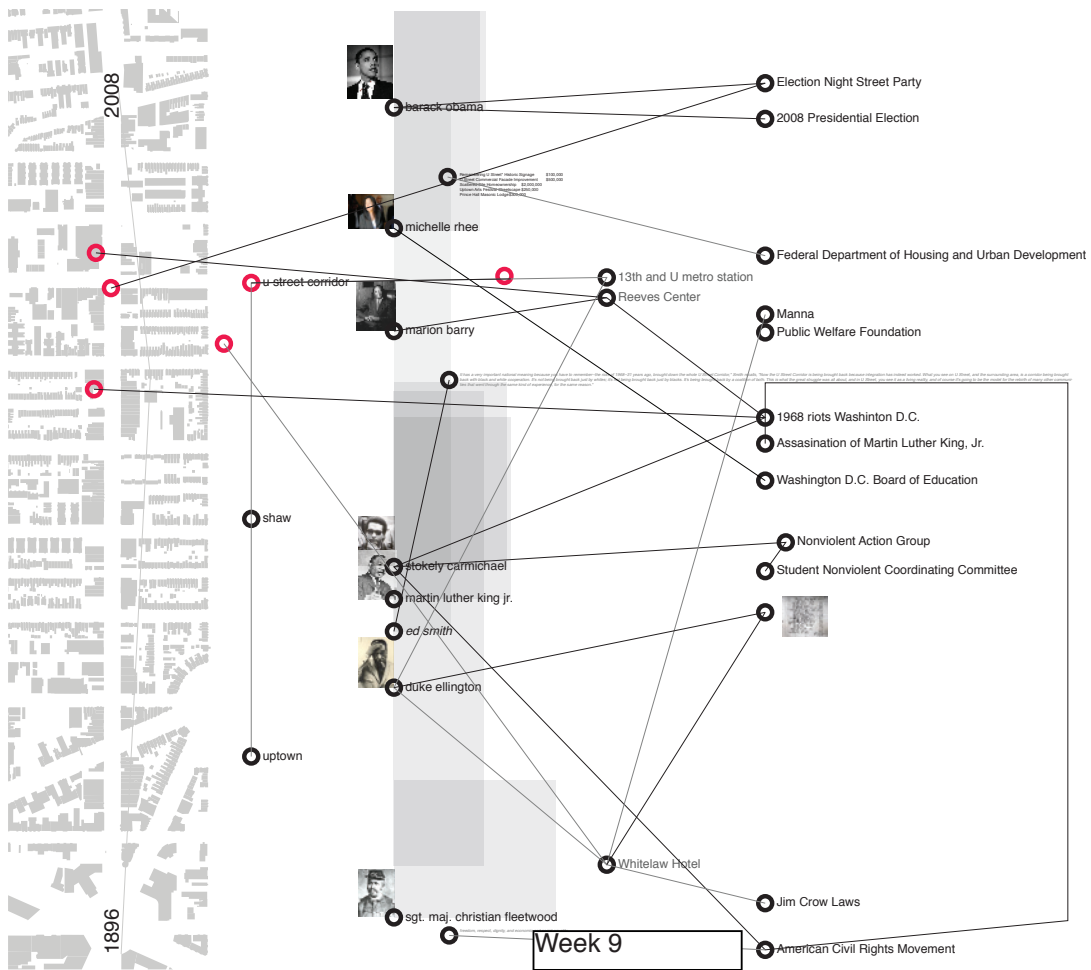


Fig. 35 Cultural Mapping

A person, place, or thing that has had a visible impact on the spaces on or near direct site of study over a span of 112 years.

This map in figure 35 takes one of the first steps in this set of processes to translate history to drawing and to link the history and evolution of this site to the current cultural contexts of the site. By linking a set of physical places, people who have influenced changes that have happened in history, narratives, public organizations, and cultural monuments of this site and other direct areas, this map illustrates the fluctuation of the state of this urban landscape over 112 years. Mapping these elements gives a new spatial set of relationships to people, places, and things and creates new connections between elements that did not exist before.

Another isolated process examines the existing building on the site. Each model explores palimpsest through the compositional structure and layering of the existing laundromat and basic formal and spatial ideas such as figure and field, reverse figure and field, overlapping and colliding surfaces, the space in between, open and closed, and solid and void. Each model flattens a specific set of existing vertical surfaces and volumes. Each model is a consequence of the model before it and each model is retroactively affected by the models after it. The white surface in all of the models is the most figural volume or surface within the layers examined. These models serve as a formal palette or a formal structure for future intervention based on patterns within the layers of the existing site.

Recording of model making process:

Model 1: Cut out simplified wall of laundromat on Swann Street including windows and side entrance. Make frame beyond surface from layers of buildings beyond (south) of the site. Frame volume for walking on 14th Street and edge of 14th Street.

Model 2: Construct the next layer south on the site inside the laundromat. Consider only a small portion of washing machine volume. White surface, in this case, is the rhythmic repeated surface of the washing/drying machine doors. Frame above volume is

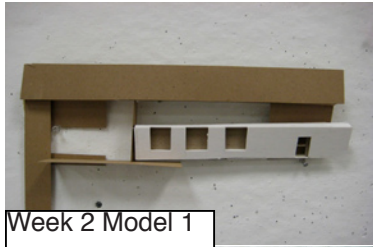
the open space between machines and overhead plane (ceiling). Open space on left is entrance into laundromat. The rest of the back surface is the continuation and breaking up of machine volume.

Model 3: In vacant site looking south. Open volume is the vacant site. Edge on right side of model is the alley and edge on left side of model is the sidewalk area made longer to indicate more continuation. White surface is prominent layer beyond the site framed by other layers.

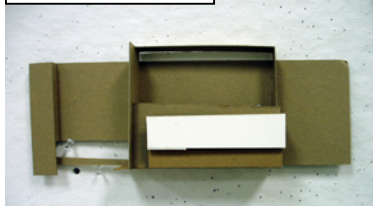
Model 4: Adjacent surfaces, the white being the edge of the site, the space in between is the open volume as Swann Street.

Model 5: Looking more in depth at Model 2. Constructing open volume as machine that is on top against machine as closed volume and white surface as continuous surface of machine doors.

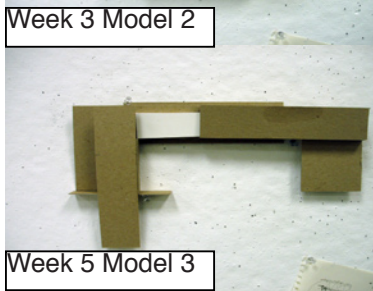
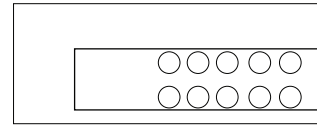
Model 6: Flattening of all layers into one composition. Only fragments and important pieces of other models are used.



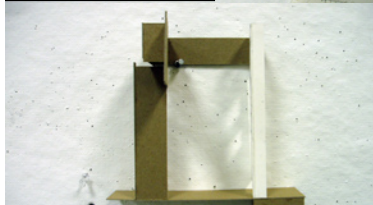
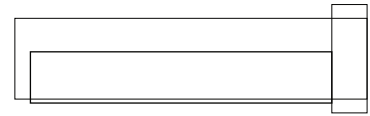
Week 2 Model 1



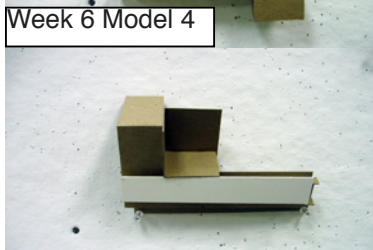
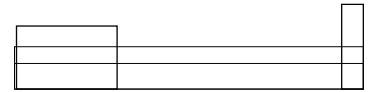
Week 3 Model 2



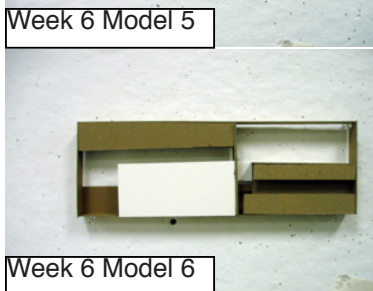
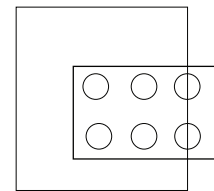
Week 5 Model 3



Week 6 Model 4



Week 6 Model 5



Week 6 Model 6

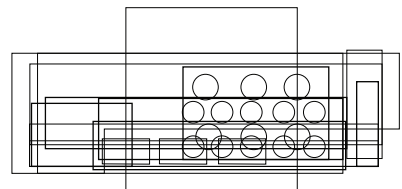


Fig. 36 Models of flattened vertical surfaces and layers of space found in and adjacent to the laundromat.

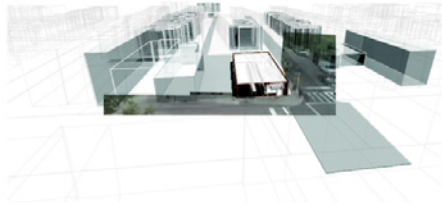
collage, temporal collage and assemblage

Within this singular flow animation of content and expression, spontaneous organizations emerge at different points within the animations. Ali Rahim

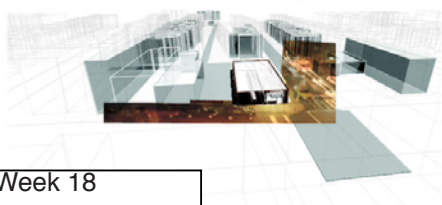
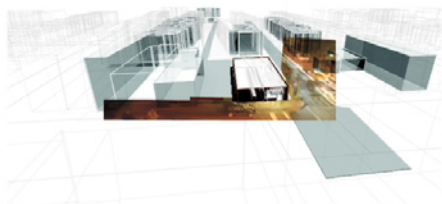
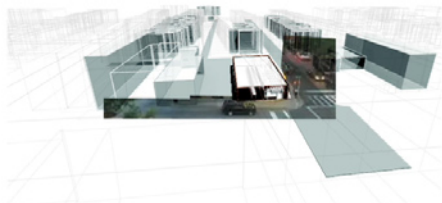
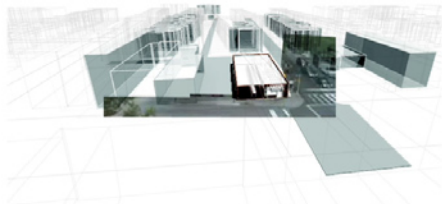
Collage is typically defined as a drawing that is made of an assemblage of different forms in a composition. In architecture, an idea is communicated through the method of assemblage. This can be translated to the idea of animation as a temporal collage. There are co-present layers of line and surface as in a collage, but the connections that the lines make and the characteristics of a surface can change over time in a temporal collage. The method becomes a polymorphism, a combination of ideas and/or operands that create at least two or more related results that may or may not be immediately recognized as related. Many static compositions can hint at the idea of change in time, but cannot create a series of seemingly autonomous compositions linked by time.

Montage is typically defined as a drawing that is made of an *assemblage* of different forms in a composition. An architectural idea is typically communicated through some method of assemblage, as seen in a typical set of plan, section, and elevation drawings.

The exploration of contrast in collage and montage becomes important in animation investigations. The set of frames in Figure X shows the collage of two different types of layers: the digital drawing of the laundromat and its direct site and the palpable stop-frame motion capture of the city block. By making the two layers apparent in the composition, the boundary between the two fragments is revealed and also blurred by their direct tie and relationship of sharing the same site. An *apparent contrast* is found in the process of constructing an animation. Collage and temporal collage has been therefore



considered as both a technique in media and a way to formulate process and the beginnings of a framework discussed in the following section, apparent contrasts, of this research paper.



Week 18

Fig. 37 The contrast and overlap between antiseptic digital drawing and palpable city street video.

fragment

In the history of modern art and aesthetics, the fragment has had a double history of signification. As a reminder of the past, once whole but now fractured and broken, as a demonstration of the implacable effects of time and the ravages of nature, it has taken on the connotations of nostalgia and melancholy, even of history itself. As an incomplete piece of a potentially incomplete whole, it has pointed towards a possible world of harmony in the future, a utopia perhaps, that it both represents and constructs.

Anthony Vidler

The fragment is a piece of a larger whole. Isolated on its own, it can provide new insights and meanings to already identifiable artifacts or objects. In this research, a fragment is seen as both a way of perceiving, as in memory, as a frame or a momentary image, as in animation, or as an isolated process or investigation of something. An example here is the exploration of the washing machine door surface-- the assemblage of about 300 recycled Pyrex washing machine doors as a sign for the laundromat. The investigation included the artful drawings of details that explore ways that the doors could attach to one another and operate in multiple ways as groups of doors or individual doors. Tied together with gaskets, cables, and rods that reflect the pieces that tie the washing machine door to the machine, the doors operate and pivot in ways that could change the environment and perceptual effects on the interior and the perception of this drafted veil or acting shirt of doors on the exterior.

As these details are being studied, theoretical ideas and overall concepts, spatial and formal implications are still being explored. This allows for this project to be created through a series of processes working at different conceptual levels laterally as opposed to a linear development from concept to detail.

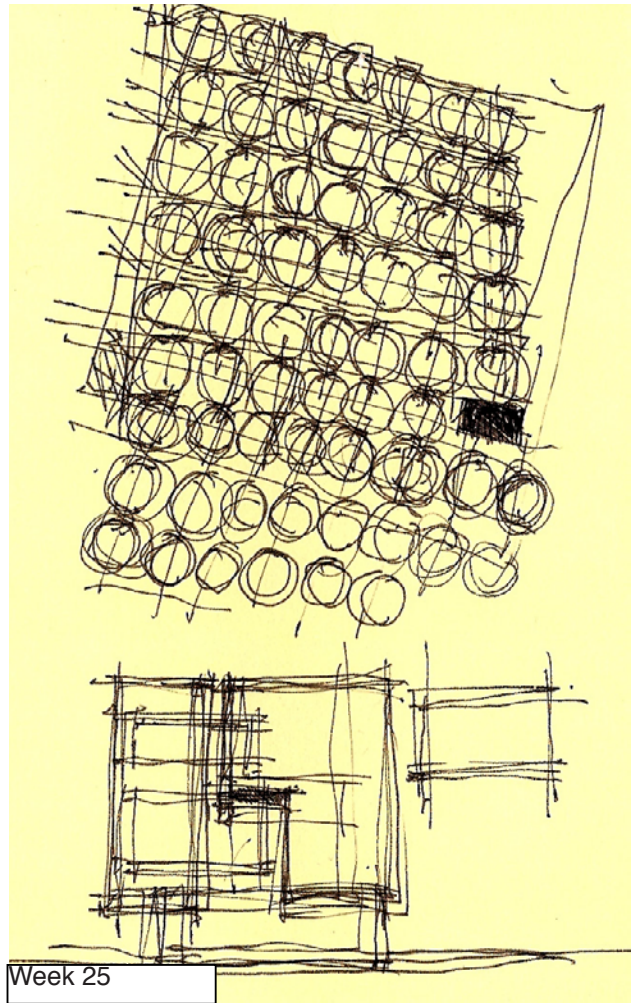
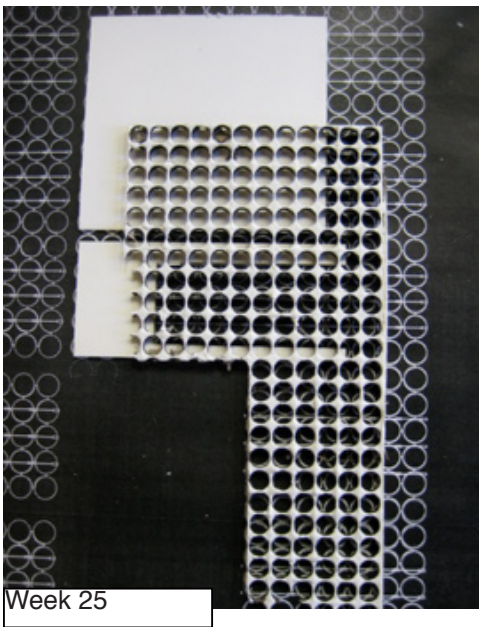
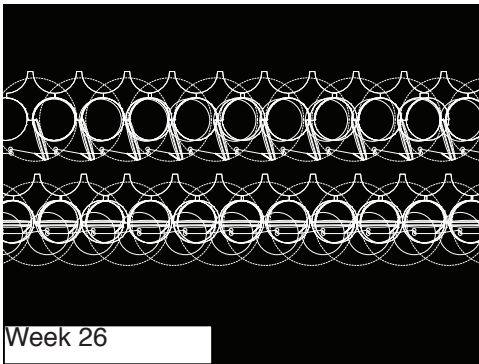


Fig. 38 Different media exploring composition, tectonics and assemblage of washing machine doors as a surface.

memory and *objectification*

to **make physical**, to externalize, to
degrade an object
the mental faculty of **retaining** and **recalling** past
experience, a **fragmented** visual understanding of
past experiences

de-sign and dis-cover

exposing, to find or happen upon, to
make known, to reveal, to gain knowl-
edge of
creating, to intend for a definite **purpose**, to assign
thought or intention, to **remove from direct meaning**
toward multiple interpretations, to **draw connections** be-
tween

public and *void*

an **empty** space, a **vacancy**, **left-over** space,
space that is **open to interpretation**
open to **all persons**, **familliar** to the public, **invested** in
the welfare or **well-being of a community**

Week 29

Fig. 39 Diagram that shows relationships between apparent contrasts.

architecture as processes of translation: apparent contrasts

The important applications of the discoveries in previous investigations are toward the distillation of two existing apparent contrasts found within these events.

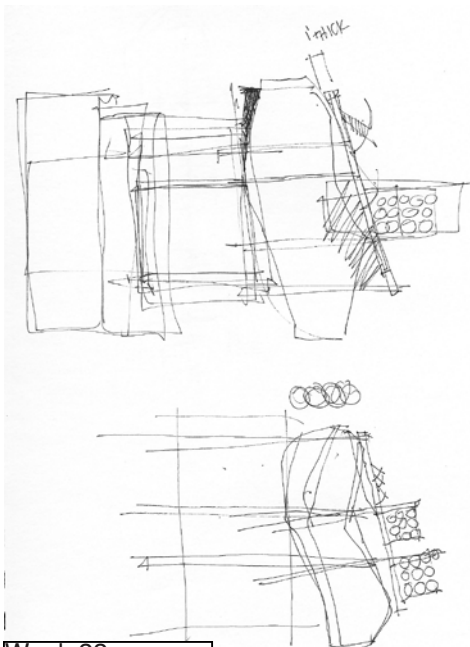
Relic and renewal identifies 14th Street as one of the last remaining relics of Washington's troubled past and it is on the cusp of an urban renewal wave spreading from other parts of Washington. It identifies issues of historic preservation and new developments. Historic preservation seeks only to tell stories of the past the way it has always been told-- it leads to an architecture of nostalgia and does not open up new networks for change and improvement. New developments clean and erase any visual sense of past.

Public and clean identifies current activities on the site related to the existing laundromat as a place that is both dirty (public) and clean (doing laundry). It is both societal and perceptual. It brings in issues discussed previously in this research about the African American tenants and white-owned buildings. It points out the contrast of the ground and the existing shell as part of history and the new "higher" volume of spaces, relating to ground as dirty, accessible and public and above ground as clean, private and protected.

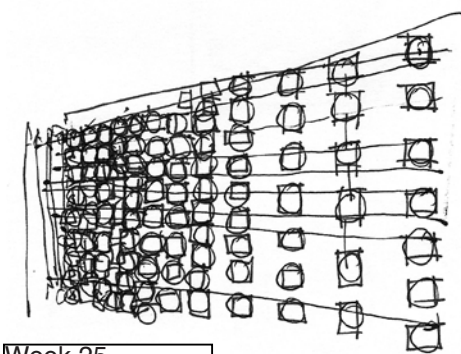
Apparent contrasts are two terms that appear to be contrasting, but are in fact not contradicting. Apparent contrasts are a way to systematically represent conditions that are often considered to be unquantifiable while being true to a non-dialectic understanding of history. Apparent contrasts are scientific and ambiguous.

The discovery of these apparent contrasts led to the design of new apparent contrasts.

There is a tendency is to separate these contrasts,



Week 22



Week 25

Fig. 40 and 41 Diagrams that begin to weave ideas about surface to program explorations and section.

similar to separating laundry. Such is the case as with relic and renew—we have laws and codes in place to preserve some places and keep them frozen in time, others are left open to complete destruction and erasure. I intend to make these simultaneous. Each set of apparent contrasts have lead to either a strategy for design or a descriptor that ties architectonic and formal or spatial ideas with theoretical, metaphorical or alligorical ideas.

Memory and objectification is an apparent contrast that embodies many ideas of this research. It is both ephemeral and degraded. Memory is metaphysical. It is a fragmented visual understanding of past experiences. Memory is subjective, leading to many different perceived pasts. At this specific site, for example, there is a generational difference in memory. Those who lived through both the flourishing years of the area and the 1968 riots tend to try to forget the destruction and the downturn. Newer generations want to tie what they do remember together. Both stories lead to a much more fragmented understanding of the past, both through erasing and forgetting and putting back together and assembling. Objectification is a way to make something physical. It directly relates to the idea of translating memory to artifact. Objectifying also means degrading or devaluing something. In this thesis, however, objectifying by making memory physical, leads to adding value through the memory of destruction and degradation.

De-sign and dis-cover originally was established as a way to both use the current discovered pieces of the site and its contrast and overlap with new and designed added pieces to the site. It is both the process of exposing and creating, to reveal and to remove from direct meaning. Existing and intervention or proprietary and designed are also ways of describing these origins. Eventually, this led to the idea of de-sign and dis-cover. This is a strategy that takes something that signifies

or symbolizes the past or current contexts and designs with these found objects. Through their assembly of a field of these objects, for example, these discovered identifiable artifacts create new interpretations and connections, new perceptual effects and experiences.

Public and void discusses the perception of public, full and vibrant spaces versus empty, desolate, void spaces. Public, in architecture, is perceived spatially as a void. They overlap in spatial definition, but contrast in their perceived connotations. It is a place that is both reserved and exploited and a place for unanticipated growth and investment.

All of these apparent contrasts lead to ideas about a built environment that discusses an anticipatory architecture. These apparent contrasts lead to an architecture that its details, surfaces spatial and formal configurations appear to be everchanging and contradictory in the media that conveys them, both loosening and tying things to the familiar. Both hinting at important pasts and pushing the perception of a many possible futures, only to become clear later. (Hays Pg. 14-17)

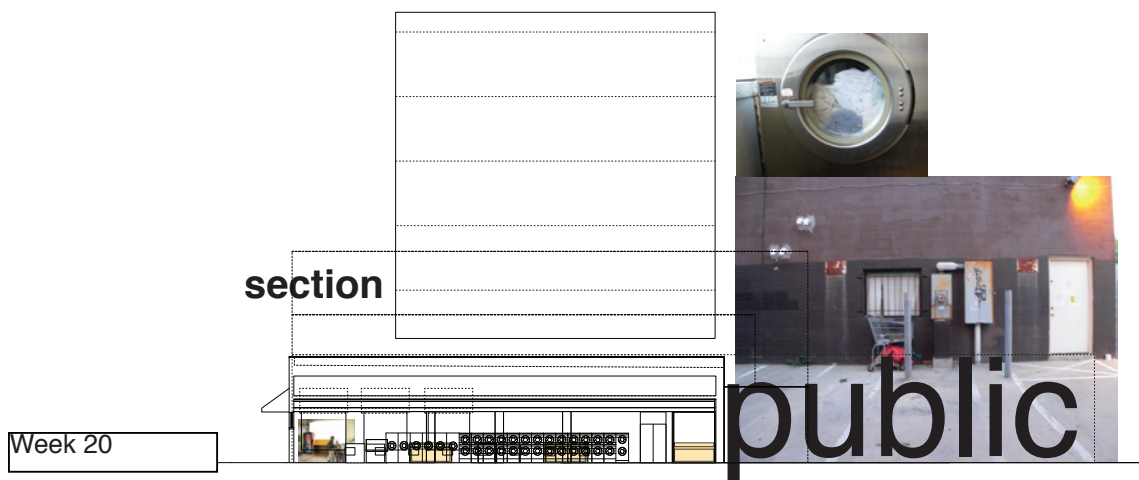
The framework of apparent contrasts leads to an architecture that is in-between-- simultaneously about the past and the future. It leads to an architecture that is making identity physical and transformable and beyond any fixed or formulated way of existing. (Sola-Morales Pg. 3-11)

These contrasts were used as a jumping off point to more finite tectonic or spatial implications. For example, in the washing machine door surface found in the media following is an example of design and dis-cover manifest. A washing machine is deconstructed to look at its parts as a way to assemble this surface. It both retains a level of specificity as a set of doors and participates in a new whole creating a new aesthetic. It acts a

drafted veil or shirt, a discovered sign or symbol for the laundromat that will be left as activities inside change—a residual effect or a way to trace back to its current activity.

Public and void, as another example, manifest in the reserved urban space. The voids are the historic reality of the past, it acts as a scar.

Memory and objectification manifest in situations where the communication of past through physical artifact communicates directly, such as in the wall that divides the laundromat and the credit union or in the direct interaction with the washing machine door wall.



Week 20

Fig. 42 Section of existing laundromat collaged with photos of existing laundromat to communicate ideas about public and clean.

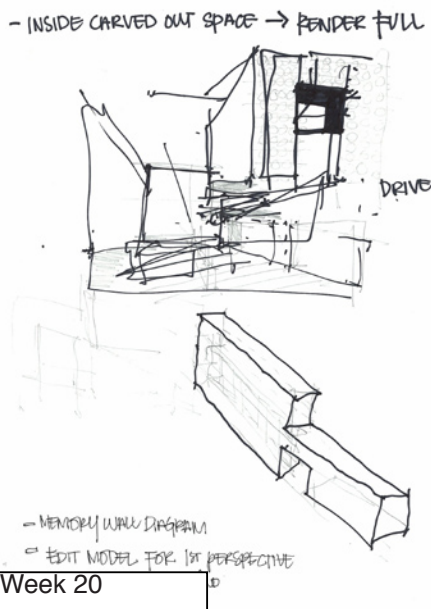


Fig. 43 Drawing that isolates conditions of public and void, memory and objectification.

implications of media as process and narrative

Perspectives straddle the line between directly and representationally communicative.

Orthographic abstractions provide a lens by which to see the interaction between these apparent contrasts in a spatial manner.

Models explore and weave surface volume solid and edge from macro to micro simultaneously

Animation is in this case, not here to simulate, but to re-engage the temporal context with temporal media at multiple scales. This allows for different shifts in the moment as much as it changes in minutes, hours, days, years, or decades over time.

Please refer to media to find descriptions, narratives, and other discovered inspirations. The diagrams paired with the perspectives begin a new investigation stripping the perspectives of most cultural layers and demonstrate the ways that the perspectives can inform the built environment.

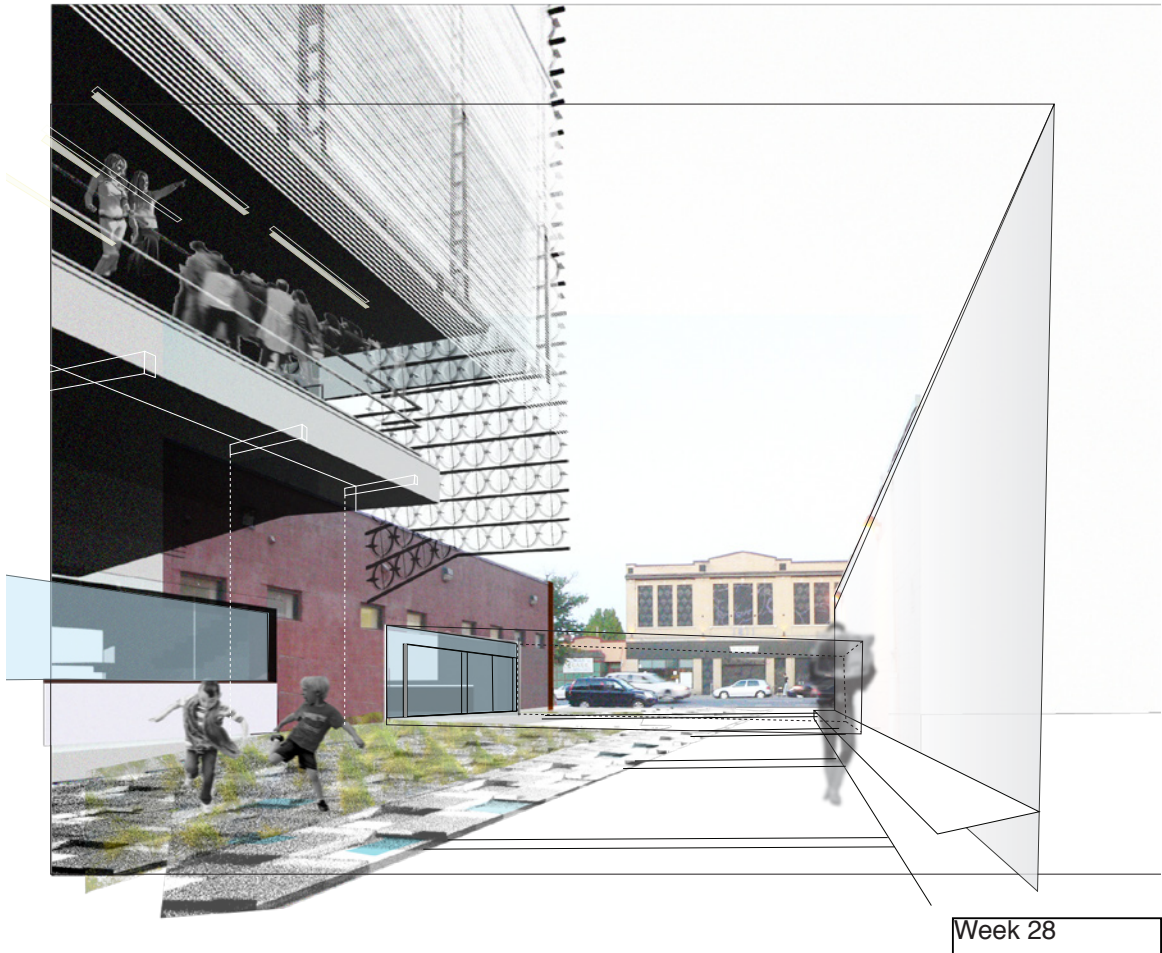
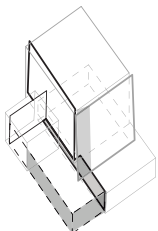


Fig. 44 Inside urban space looking toward 14th Street. Perspective that includes layering of material, perceptual, and spatial effects.



inside urban space looking toward 14th street

The ground becomes a prominent facet of this drawing. This space is reserved for public use and connects directly back to the interior spaces. Water is pumped into the new ground from a cistern that collects water from the washing machines. New plant life grows through the new paving pattern.

public and void

The water and growth recalls images of Washington, DC as a swampland. This reserved urban space maintains the memory of devalued leftover and neglected lots from the 1968 riots and simultaneously regenerates itself as an active valued space.

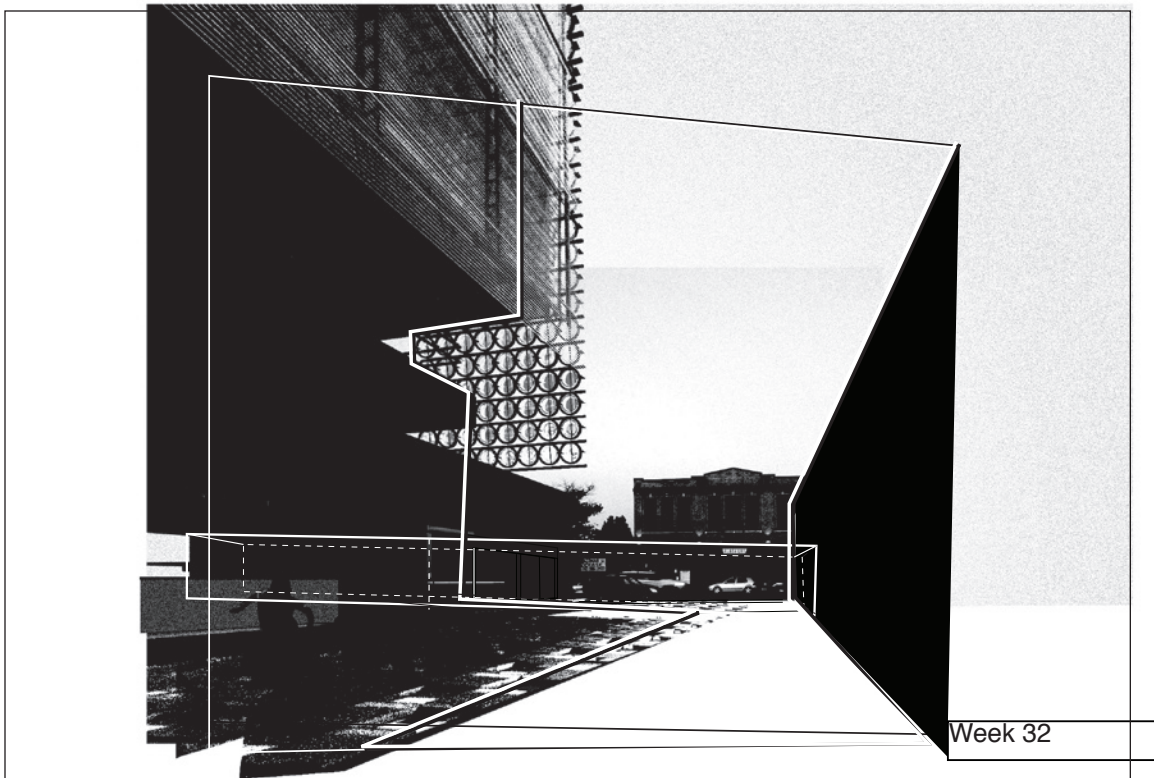
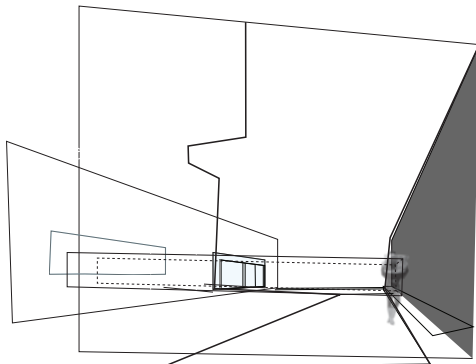


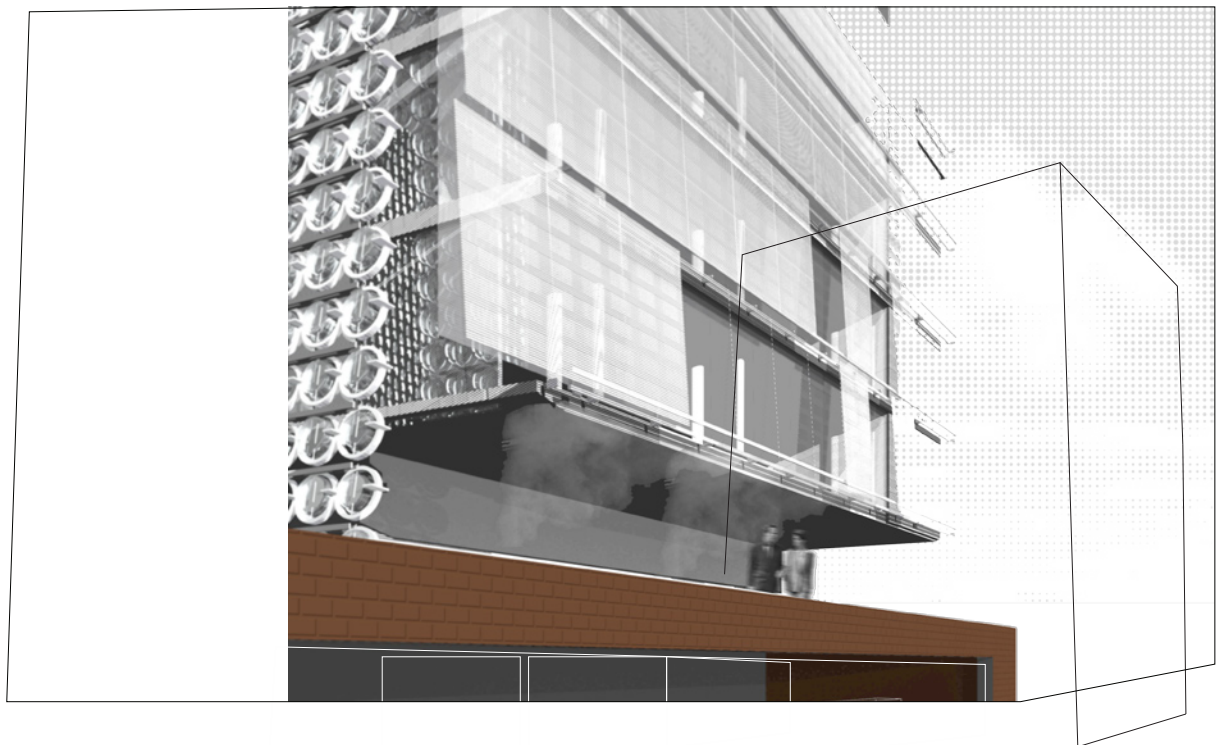
Fig. 45 Inside urban space looking toward 14th Street. Diagrams through perspective that demonstrate, a penetrating void that connects in plan from urban space into lower level spaces, a framed view, solid, void, edge, surface.

on swann street looking up to outdoor space between old and new

This perspective is taken through the lens of the passer-by on Swann Street. It shows an outdoor occupiable space that is in between the new volume and old volume.

public and void
de-sign and dis-cover

This perspective investigates the perception of memory as void or left-over space. In this case, the memory is spatially a void that both blurs the boundary between old and new and makes it also very figural. The wall that divides the laundromat below extends up and releases steam and vapors from the machines, also blurring the line between activity and sensual effect. This space pushes the idea of occupying a phenomena or a metaphysical liminal space. It is a space of curiosity and question allowing the visitor to discover new connections, both rooted in the site and out to the city,



Week 29

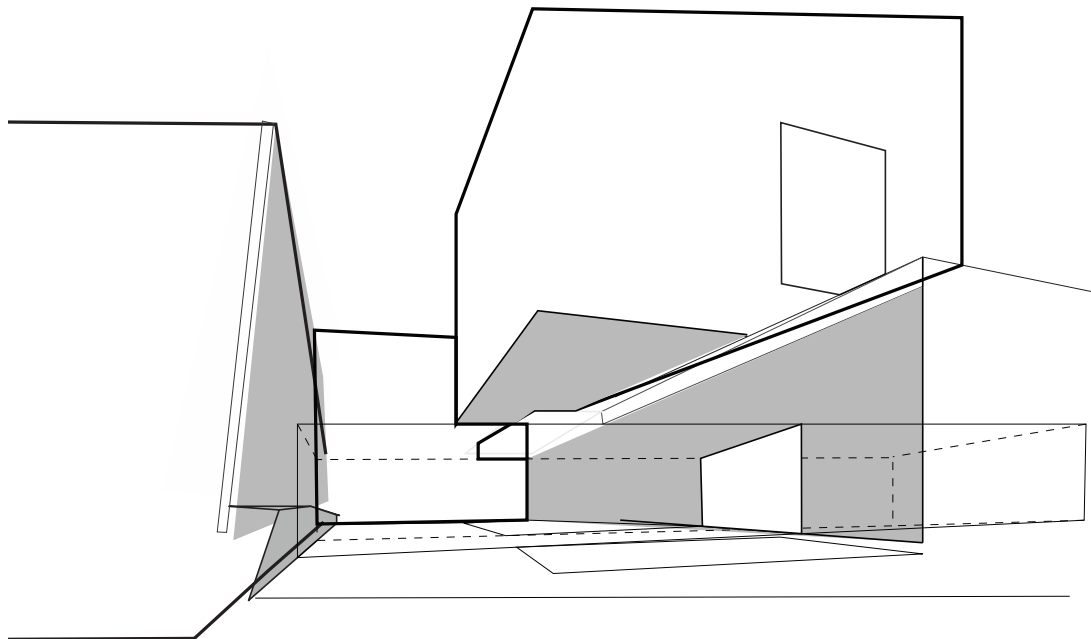
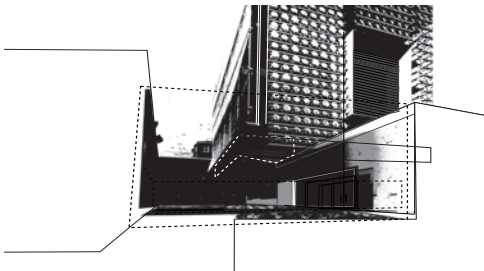
Fig. 46 On Swann Street looking up to outdoor space between old and new. Perspective that includes layering of material, perceptual, and spatial effects. A part of the washing machine door surface and the existing laundromat frame the space and become part of the compositional frame.

on 14th street looking into urban space

This perspective is taken through the lens of the passer-by. It reveals the two public outdoor spaces and the assemblage of walls and surfaces that frame and hold these spaces.

public and void

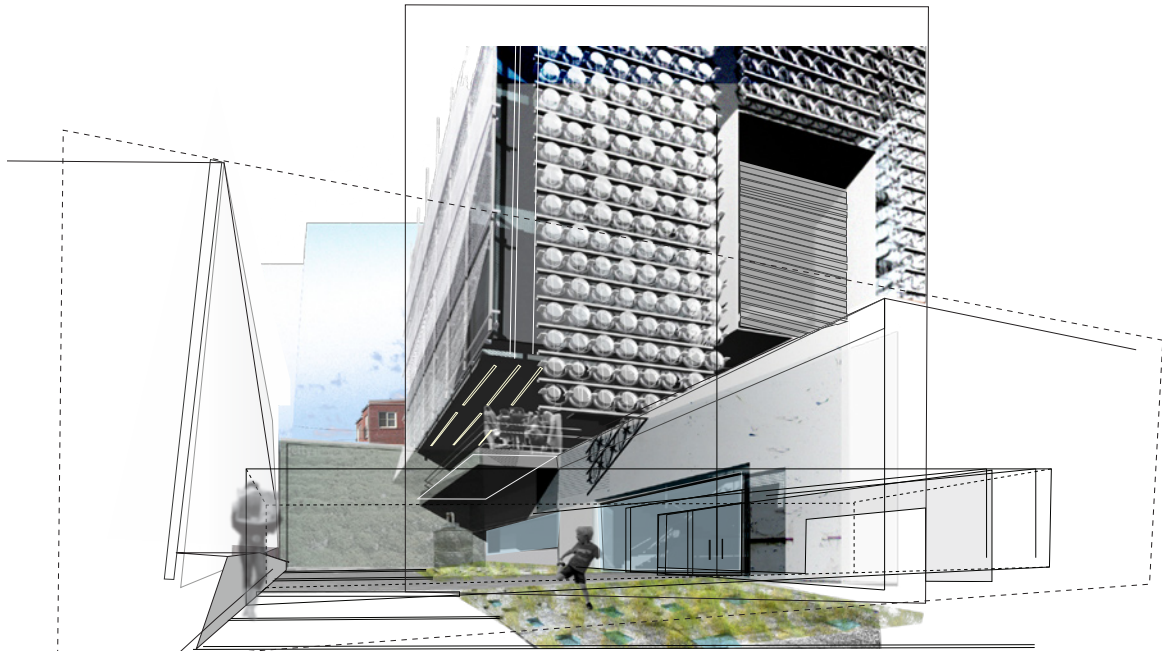
This perspective investigates the perception of memory as void or left-over space. By reserving this as an urban space for public use and cultivation, it contrasts with the pre-existing condition of unused and uninvested space. This urban space penetrates and blurs the line between public outdoor space and public activities on the interior.



Week 32

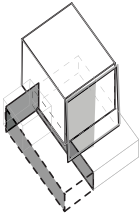
Fig. 47 On 14th Street looking in to urban space.

Diagrams through perspective that demonstrate a penetrating void that connects in plan from urban space into lower level spaces, a framed view, solid, void, edge, surface. In this specific case, some of the edges and bottoms of volumes repeat the frame of the page to pull the viewer into the layers of the space.



Week 28

Fig. 48 On 14th Street looking in to urban space. Perspective that includes layering of material, perceptual, and spatial effects.

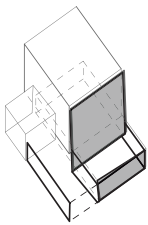




Week 28

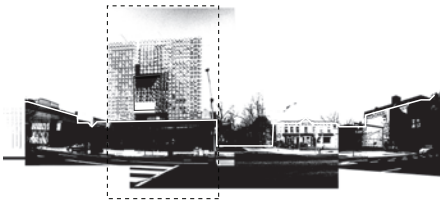
Fig. 49 The washing machine door wall surface and existing shell on 14th street looking west diagrams.

Perspective that includes layering of material, perceptual, and spatial effects. This perspective plays on the idea of a rotated elevation, revealing slightly more context through perspective, yet maintaining the collapsed layered field drawing like the elevation.



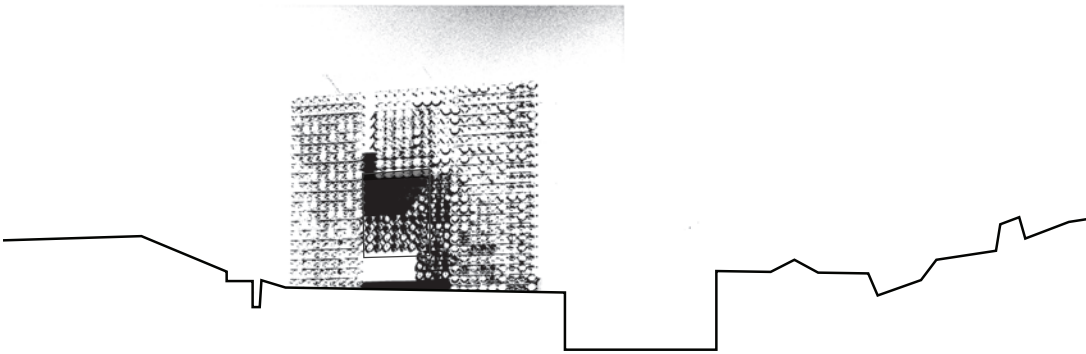
the washing machine door wall surface and existing shell on 14th street looking west

This perspective is simultaneously frontal and turns itself away. It hints at, but does not reveal, the activities and spaces behind. In this environment, the door-wall takes on the characteristics of the opaque gray sky hiding the activities beyond the surface. The perspective also hides the memory-void or reserved and cultivated urban space on the south side of the site.



de-sign and dis-cover

The composition blurs historical and existing contexts and highlights the surface made of washing machine doors (or a door-wall blurring the boundary between threshold and wall, icon and field) revealing the new extension of identity on the site and projects questions of possible future trajectories.



Week 32

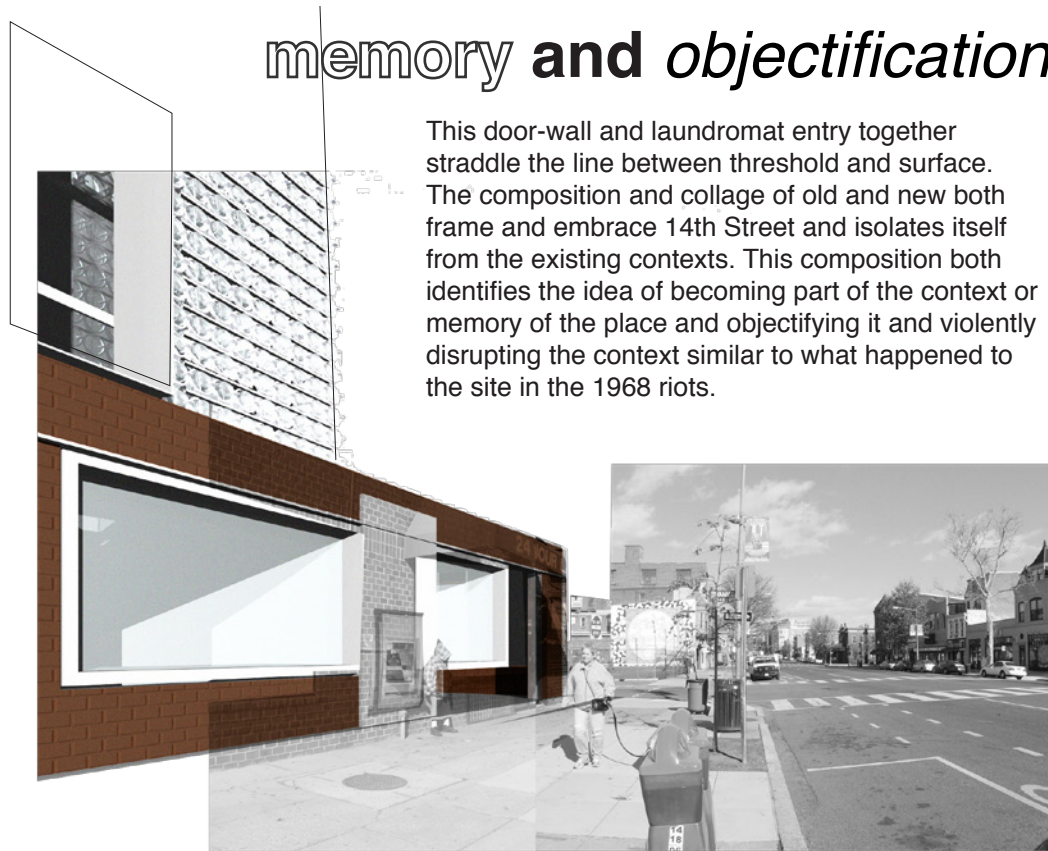
Fig. 50 The washing machine door wall surface and existing shell on 14th street looking west. Diagrams through perspective that demonstrate a broader perception of intervention and existing contexts by making the boundary a line or by blurring the boundary. These diagrams give new spatial and ground readings to the existing contexts.

entrance to laundromat on 14th street

This perspective investigates the perceptual effects of washing machine doors assembled as a surface contrasting with the existing brick shell and its connection to its existing contexts.

memory and objectification

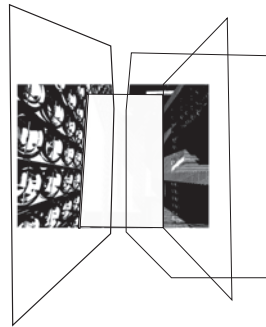
This door-wall and laundromat entry together straddle the line between threshold and surface. The composition and collage of old and new both frame and embrace 14th Street and isolates itself from the existing contexts. This composition both identifies the idea of becoming part of the context or memory of the place and objectifying it and violently disrupting the context similar to what happened to the site in the 1968 riots.



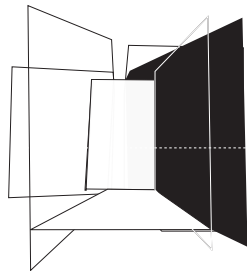
Week 28

Fig. 51 The entrance to the laundromat off of 14th Street. Perspective that includes layering of material, perceptual, and spatial effects.

the space behind the washing machine door-surface



This perspective investigates the perceptual effects of washing machine doors assembled as a surface and the interstitial space that exists behind it. The surface is constructed in a way that the doors can open and close in multiple ways and can be replaced with any size or type of recycled washing machine door. People can interact with and change the surface making it an extension of activity and identity.

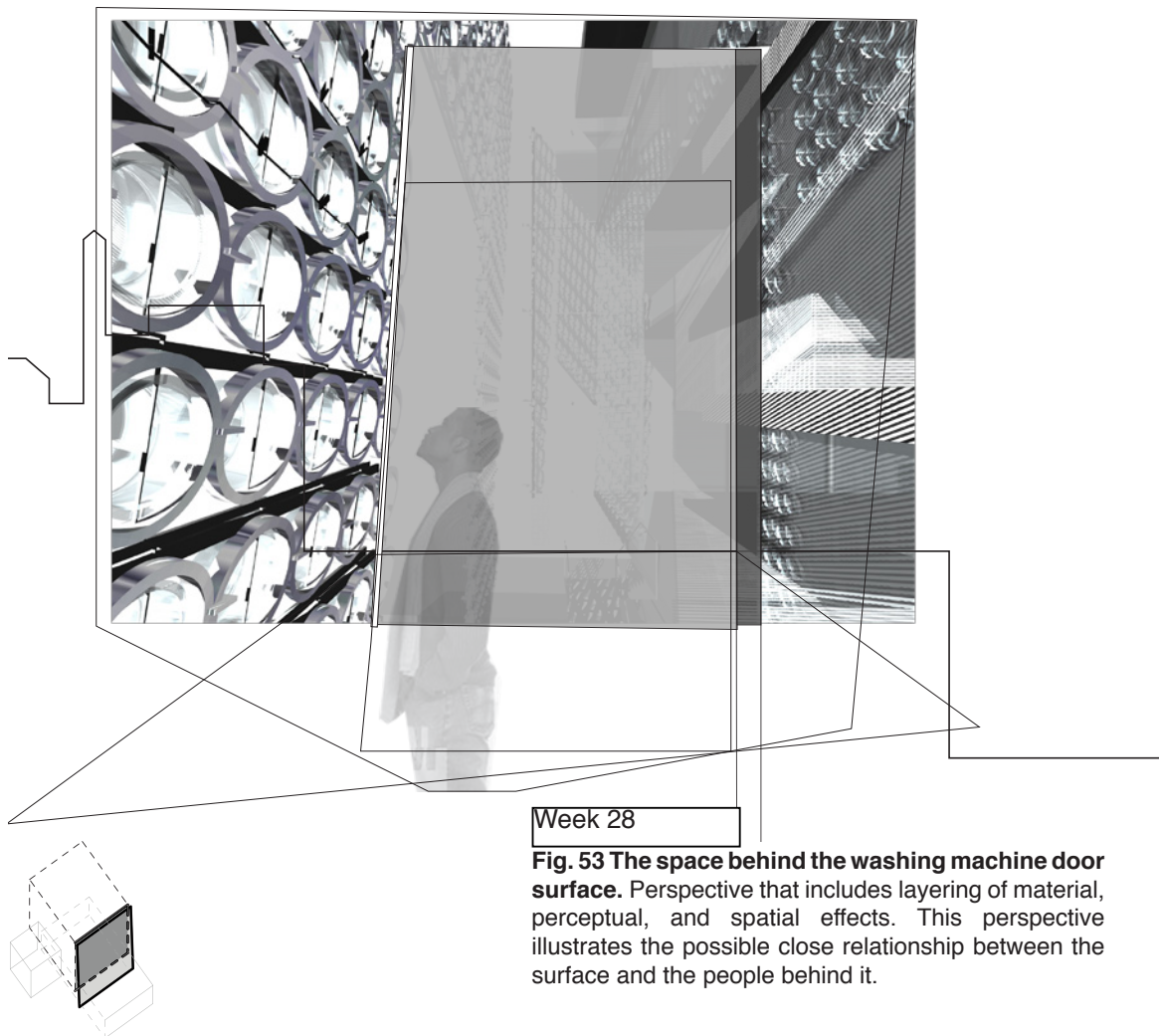


memory and objectification

This door-wall straddles the line between threshold and surface. It has the ability to change over time and as activities in the interior spaces change it will remain as an artifact that can be traced back to the site as it is currently. This surface is similar to clothing in terms of performance and public function. It serves as a form of representation, it creates spatial phenomena, it communicates to others, it requires repair, and it is assembled systematically. This perspective is both simultaneous and in between it reveals many layers simultaneously and a space that separates them.

Week 32

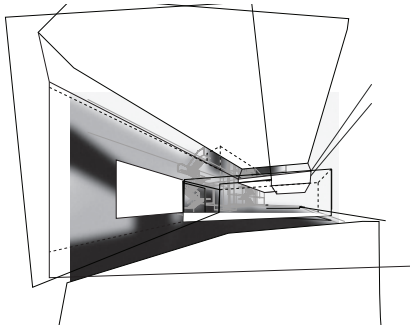
Fig. 52 Interstitial space behind surface. Diagrams through perspective that demonstrate a broader perception of intervention and existing contexts by making the boundary a line or by blurring the boundary. These diagrams investigate the inbetween or interstitial space.



Week 28

Fig. 53 The space behind the washing machine door surface. Perspective that includes layering of material, perceptual, and spatial effects. This perspective illustrates the possible close relationship between the surface and the people behind it.

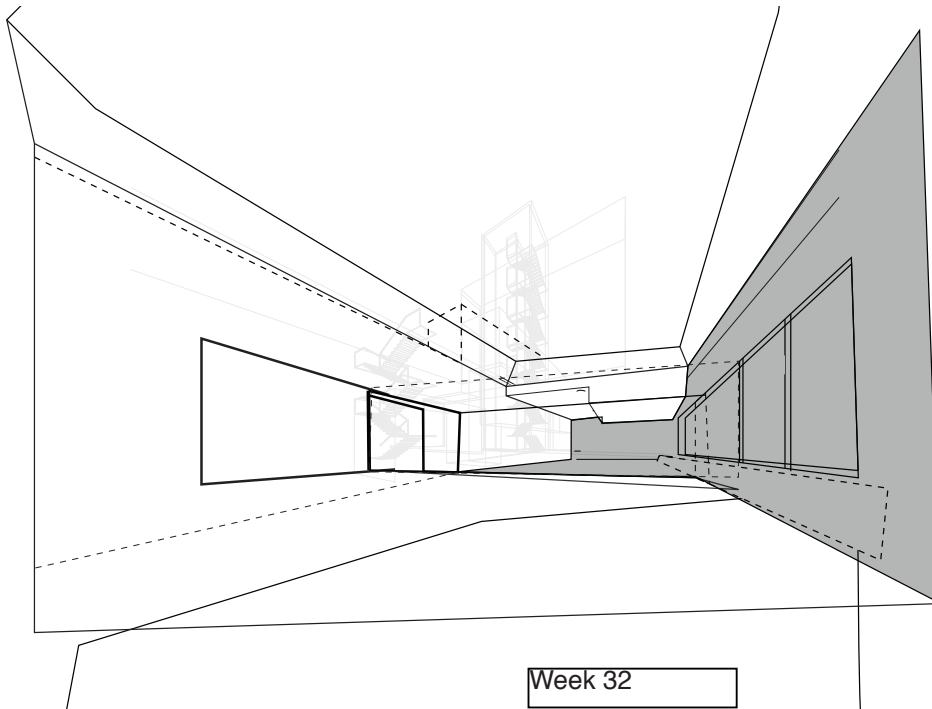
the space behind the washing machine door-surface



This perspective investigates the re-presentation and re-connection of the laundromat to its existing and new contexts. The wall that divides the two activities, laundry and banking, allows the two activities to overlap and collide.

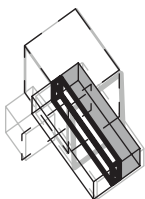
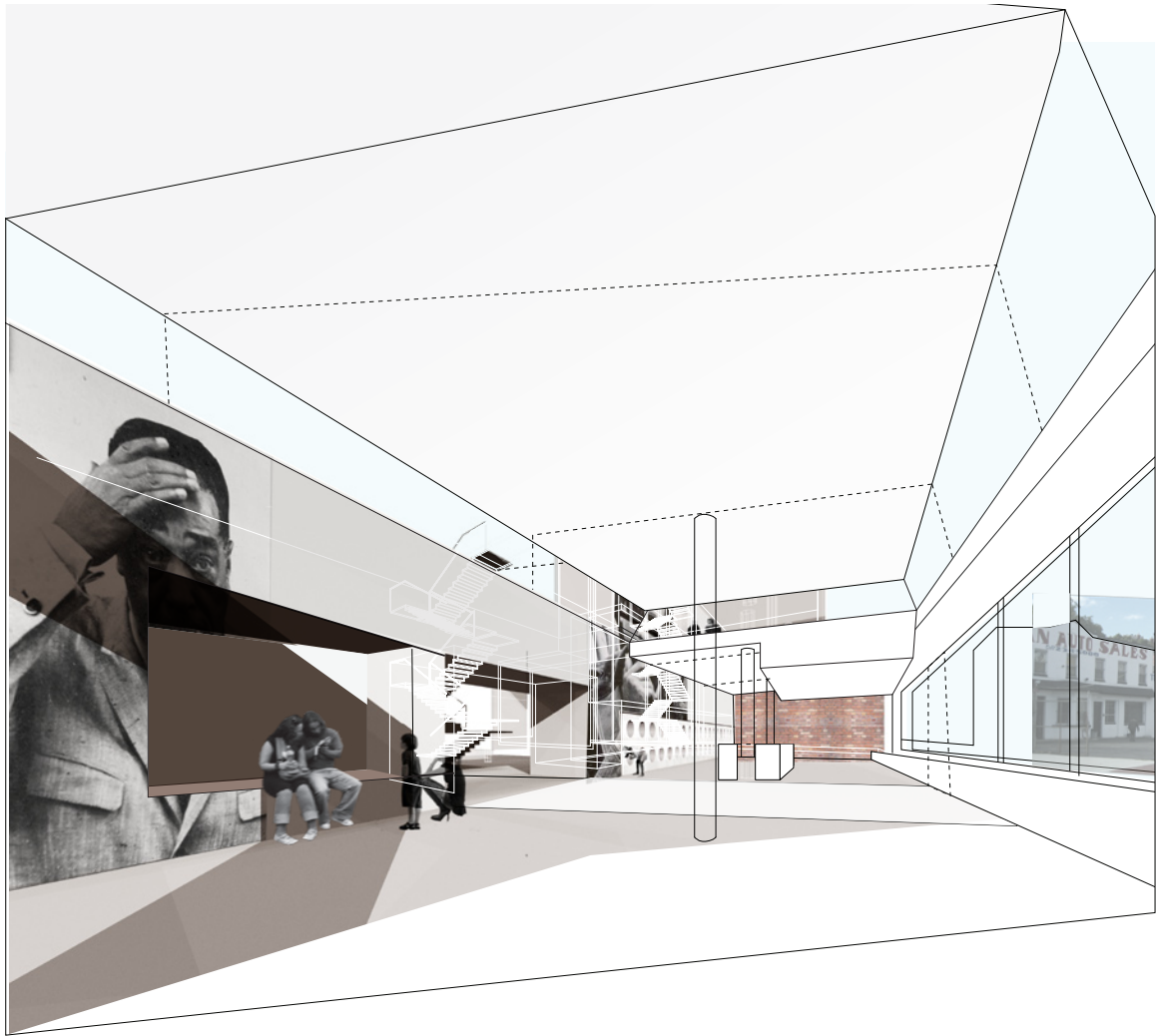
memory and objectification

It is a negotiated wall and used by the public in multiple ways: it is a wall of machines, a wall of material effects, a wall of content, communication and visual culture.



Week 32

Fig. 54 Laundromat interior diagrams. Diagrams through perspective that demonstrate a broader perception of intervention and existing contexts by making the boundary a line or by blurring the boundary. These diagrams investigate the inbetween or interstitial space.



Week 28

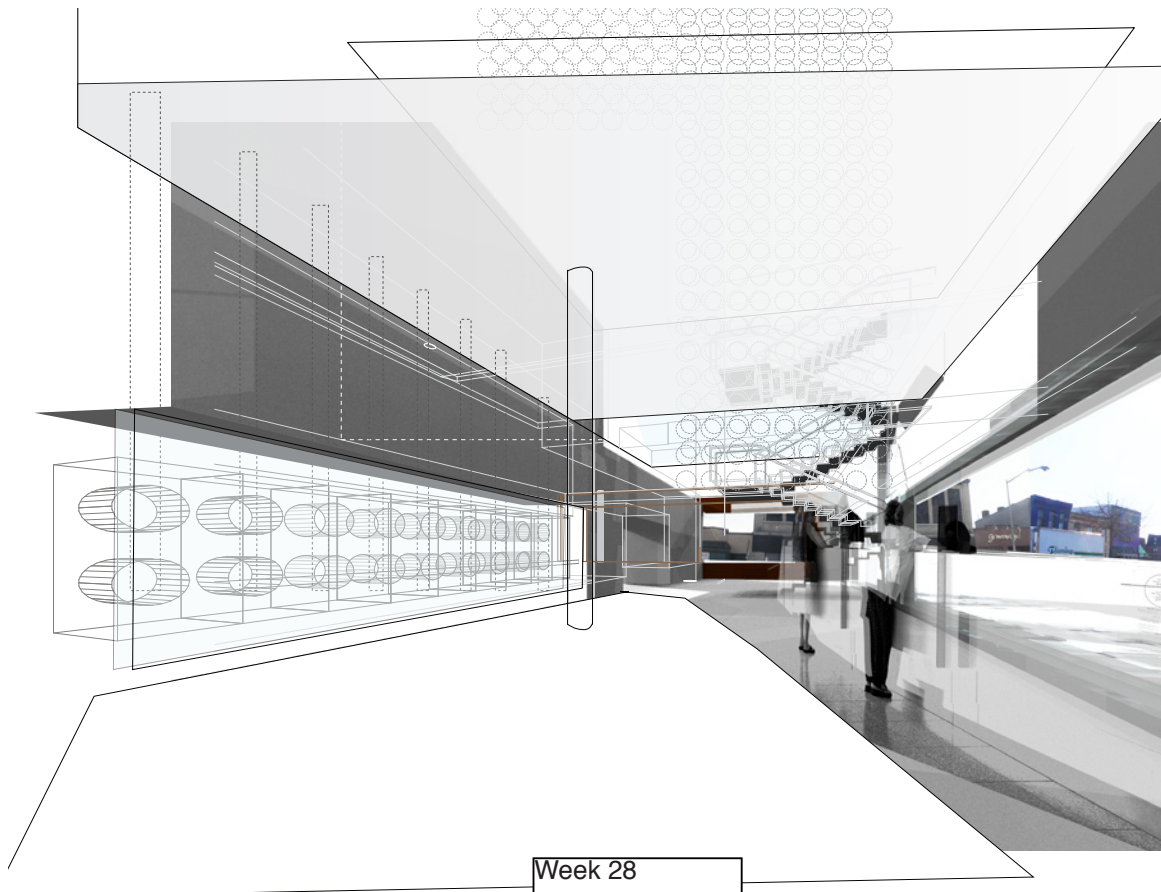
Fig. 55 Laundromat interior 62. Perspective that includes layering of material, perceptual, and spatial effects. This perspective illustrates the possible close relationship between the surface and the people behind it.

inside the credit union looking east to 14th street

This perspective reveals the new activity of banking and its connection to the new urban space and 14th Street. It shares the dividing wall with the laundromat on the opposite side.

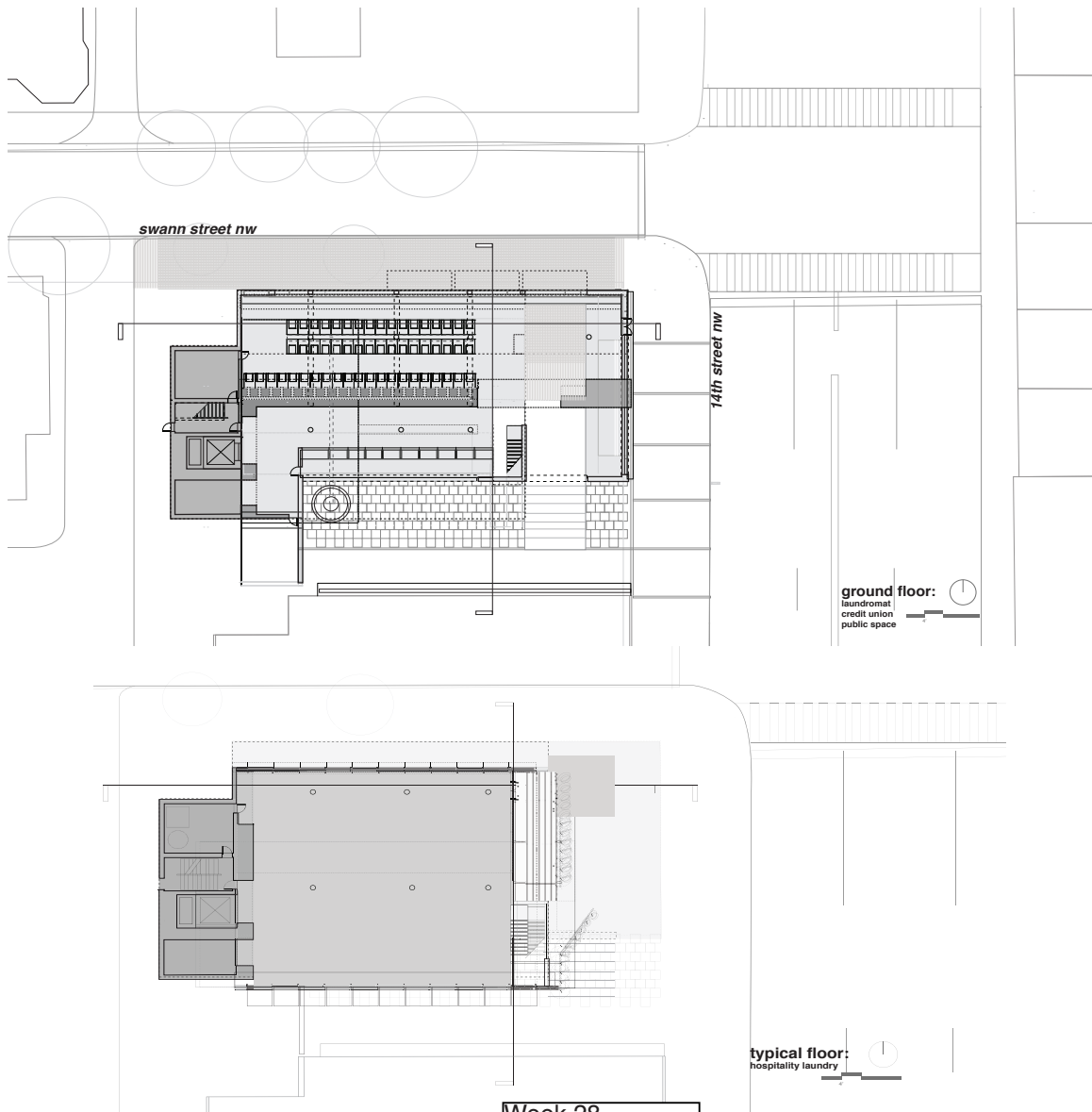
memory and objectification

The dividing wall reveals the backside of the washing machines visually tying the two activities, banking and laundering together, creating an ironic relationship of money and laundering. The queue that is created in front of the tellers reflects the line of people using the machines on the dividing wall. The urban space penetrates the new banking space and connects it to the laundromat. The wall is objectified as both a way to remember and connect, to change and disconnect.



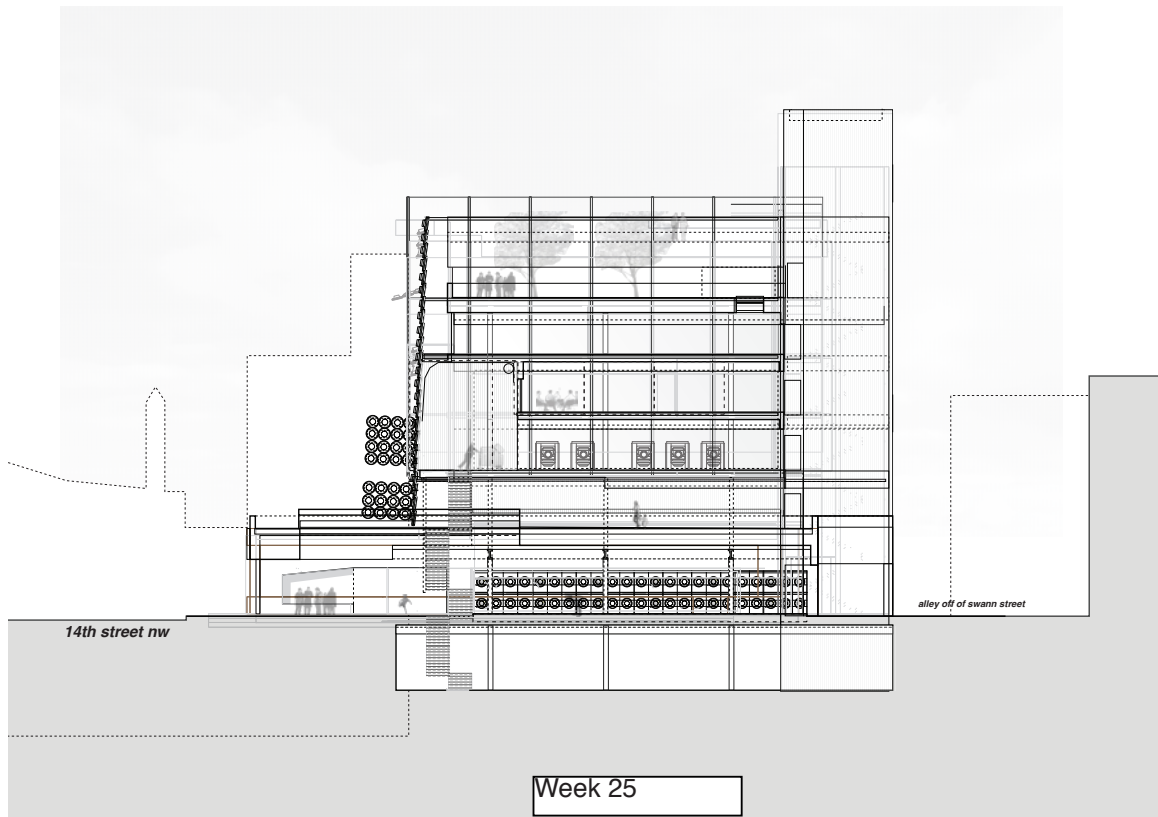
Week 28

Fig. 56 Inside credit union looking east to 14th Street. Perspective that includes layering of material, perceptual, and spatial effects. This perspective illustrates the possible close relationship between the surface and the people behind it. Note the revealing of the backside of washing machines through the division wall.



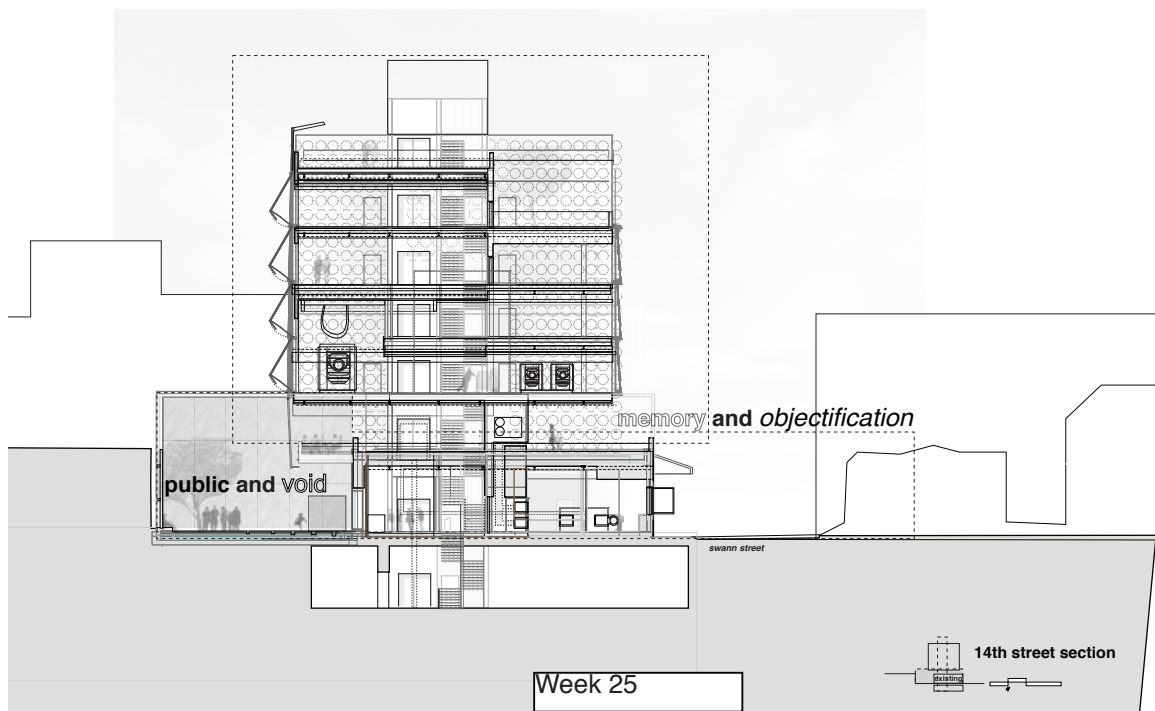
Week 28

Fig. 57 Ground floor and typical floor. These plans illustrate the major spatial implications formed through the creation of perspective such as the interstitial space behind the washing machine door surface, the connection from the urban space to the interior



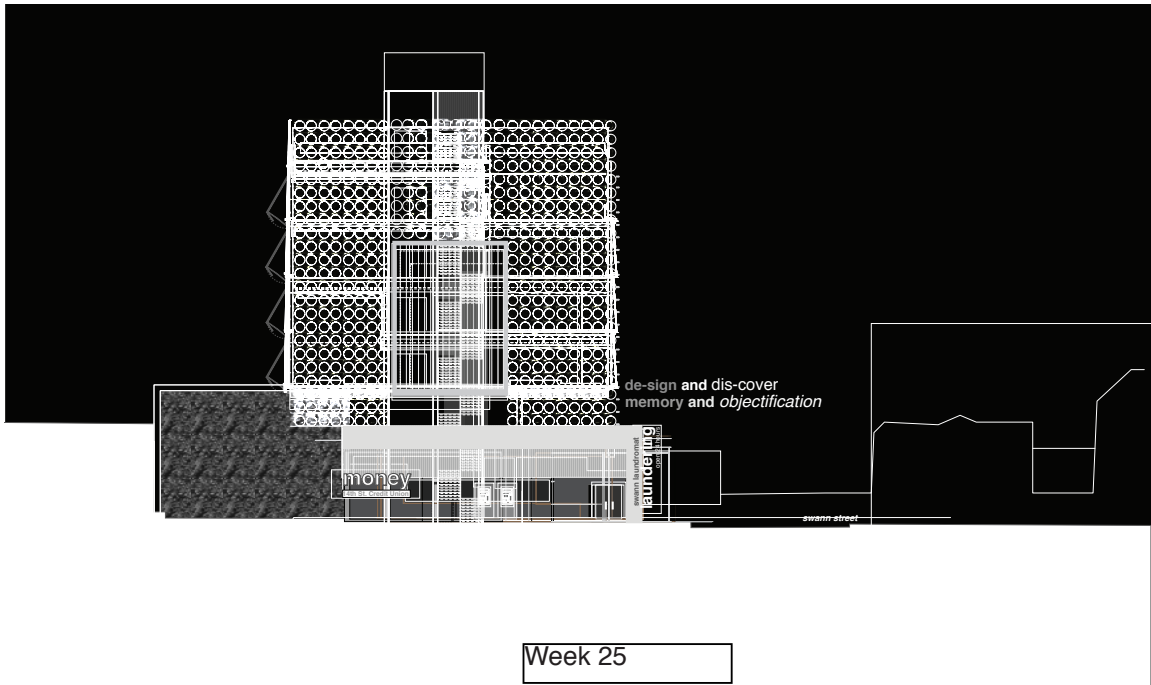
Week 25

Fig. 58 Swann Street Section. This section links the detail of the washing machine door surface, existing spaces in the laundromat, the connection and separation to the new upper spaces. Through the wall that divides laundry and banking there is a threshold that connects straight through to the urban space.



Week 25

Fig. 59 14th Street Section. This section connects and separates existing and new and emphasizes the public and void urban space. Similar to the perspective, the outdoor space that is carved out between the first floor and the third floor weaves the urban space through.



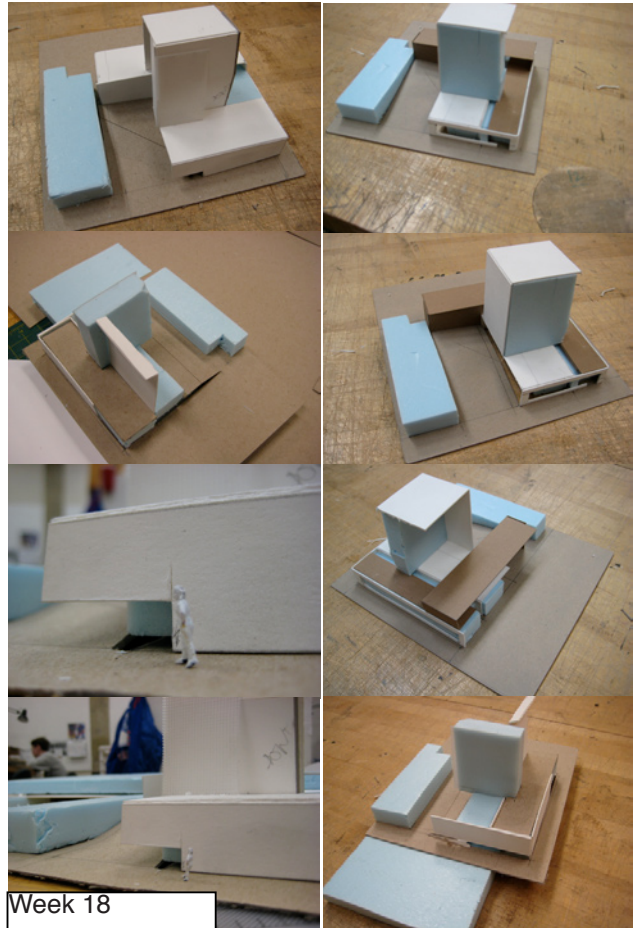
Week 25

Fig. 60 14th Street Elevation. This elevation is a collapsed/conflated field drawing, layering the spaces behind with the surface in front. The depth of the urban space pulls the layers together as the back edge of the space moves toward the foreground of the composition.



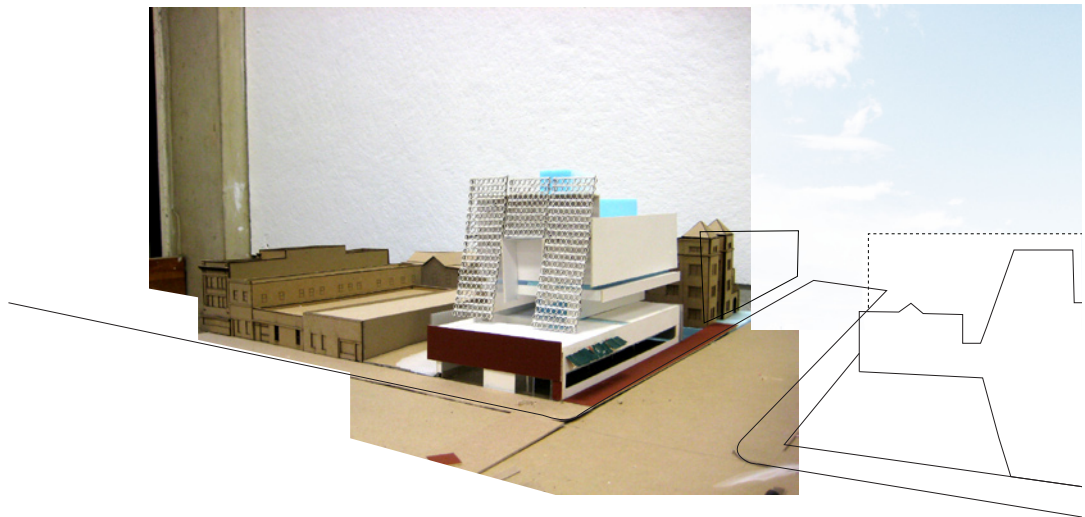
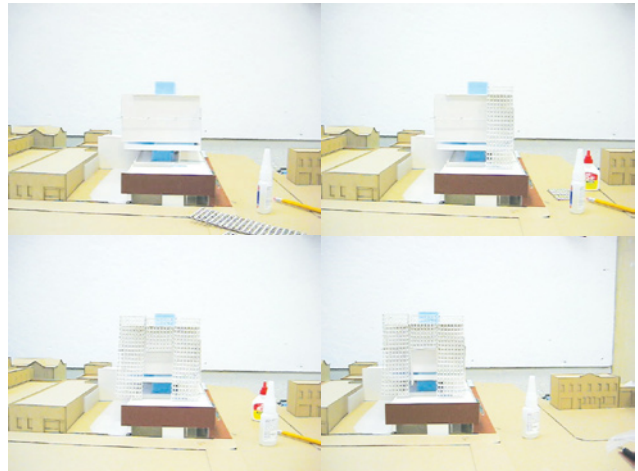
Week 20

Fig. 61 Models exploring contrast between existing, past, and new. These images are frames taking from a stop-frame motion video recording changes in model over time.



Week 18

Fig. 62 Models exploring volume, edge, surface, and void.



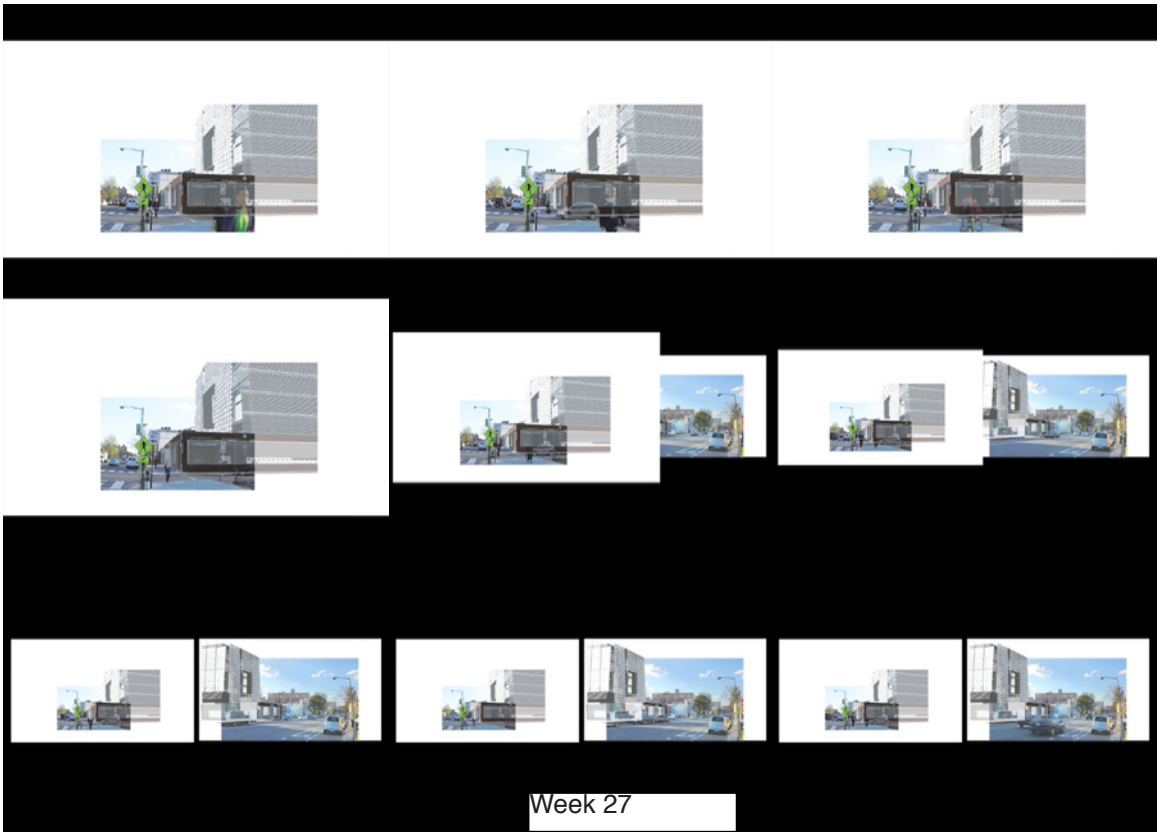
Week 23

Fig. 63 Models exploring contrast between existing, past, and new. This model weaves apparent contrasts together and emphasizes the washing machine door wall surface. This model pushes this surface as simultaneously attached and pulled away, similar to the way a body wears a shirt.



Week 27

Fig. 64 Animations exploring the collage of existing environment and new intervention. Lighting effects are simulated according to the environment in order to tie the two layers together.



Week 27

Fig. 65 Animations exploring the collage of existing environment and new intervention. Lighting effects are simulated according to the environment in order to tie the two layers together. The combination of both animations provides for simultaneous perceptions of the site.

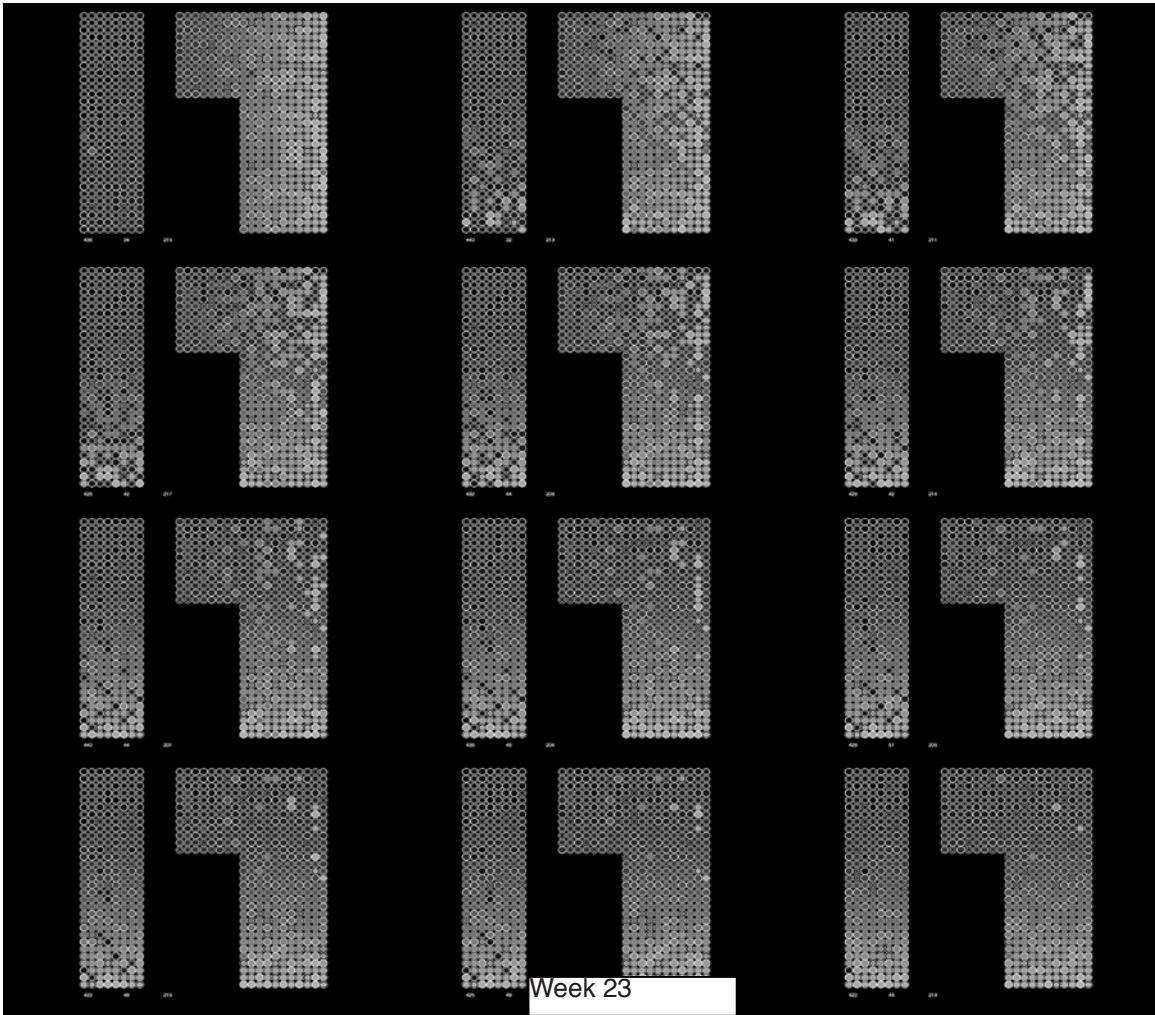


Fig. 66 Animations simulation of the washing machine door surface change over 40 years. This provides one way to explore possible futures through the isolated processes. It provides a possible map for replacing the doors over the course of 40 years to create new effects over time.



Week 25

Fig. 67 Animations that explore the exchange between projected orthographic drawings and rotational effects to cause perspective interpretations. This animation uses another layer of the simulated washing machine door surface to tie the images together.

conclusions and questions

The drawing would be considered not so much a work of art or a truck for pushing ideas from place to place, but as the locale of subterfuges and evasions that one way or another get round the enormous weight of convention that has always been architecture's greatest security and at the same time its greatest liability.

Robin Evans

This design research has demonstrated that architecture as a series of processes is capable of becoming a path to a responsive, developed, and editable system of representation that could produce representational artifacts to describe spatial speculations rooted in specific information about a site including, but not limited to, history and culture. The rules that govern decisions and rationale, in this case the rules are created by the distillation and application of apparent contrasts, stem from the investigation and delamination of this information. It is possible to conclude that these representational artifacts and spatial speculations are performance driven in that they are operating specifically for this site and the identities of its direct population.

This media-driven process involves cross-disciplinary research that has proven to be fruitful for a project that involves the representation of cultural and historical translations.

One of the most foundational lessons is that the comprehensive investigation of a plural and multifaceted site, culture and non-dialectical understanding of history is best done through the use of fragmentation and assemblage as both techniques in media and a way to both isolate and tie multiple processes together. The major challenge of this research is to embrace and translate all of the complexities that are found. This has proven to result in spatial, formal, and phenomenal solutions and effects that both directly communicate the ideas

that created them and are ambiguous and open to interpretation-- both ideas about building craft and culture and ideas about drawing and space such as the role of different drawings and abstract spatial definitions. The over-simplification of the information or investigations could lead to non-specific solutions lacking the ability to communicate or generate multiple readings. In addition, the excitement of the tackling multiplicitous issues that give rise to new intellectually sustainable theoretical networks that have the potential to translate to many future explorations would be lost.

It is also possible to conclude that this process, directed by media, always culminates in the assemblage of multiple solutions and not one single and finite solution. Because this project attempts not to predict or govern the future, but assumes the role of an open work or inchoate project, the development of a set of rules to govern how it changes is not necessary. The media (drawings, animations and models), instead of taking on the role of a set to describe one whole, becomes a system to tell multiple possible wholes. A complete building proposal is not necessary as formal and spatial effects that are both directly and indirectly created can be understood and examined through the lens of the framework developed through and by the specific design processes that involve comprehensive investigations including building craft.

Some important questions are raised at the conclusion of this research with regard to the potential for broader implications and narrower applications. For example, it would be important to understand if this set of processes can be re-applied to another project. Because these processes are highly specific to their direct contexts, they cannot be directly applied to any other project. Each drawing, animation and model is constructed specifically for this particular project. The investigation of a set of new contexts for a new project would lead to a media process that is similar in overall goals and methods, but different in terms of how the media is used to guide these processes. The methods, techniques and processes can be re-evaluated and used as resources for other projects. A possible next step to this project would be to strip it of its culture and to investigate the possibilities of constructing these series of processes as a methodology just through the media and the spatial implications themselves.

This open-ended speculative research proves to have the ability to be used in modes of operation in processes in practice. Traditionally, in contemporary practice, major concepts or parts translate to a set of drawings and symbols that then translate to a building. There is a level of detachment from idea and information to building. This project attempts to embody ideas and information in all of the media used. The conventional “set” of drawings then can be eliminated and a system of media is used to both to embody the information being investigated and to create new ideas and networks about the project itself. It is a way of working that challenges ideas about convention and what media and drawing means in architecture. This type of questioning is usually absent in contemporary practice as the accepted ways and processes are taken for granted and hardly ever questioned. This allows for the possibility of making and thinking that involves poetry, narrative, geometry, space and form in addition to necessary information about culture, building craft and building environment.

This research questions general perception of culture and how it manifests in built form. It has provided a path to a discussion that rethinks the way people interact and what people need in a city. It provides one possible answer for reconstructing an urban landscape to provide for new types of social encounters and cultural phenomena and provides a way to think about how it might change and evolve as these variables change.

Possibly the most fruitful aspect of this research is that it is an artful exploration of the ever-changing use of media and material culture in architecture through both open-ended and solution-driven processes. It has provided a way to investigate systems of representation through a discovered and complex fragment of a city and the cultures and people that have made it what it is and have the ability to change its future. This research does not conclude here. This research has set up a framework for questions and curiosities that propagate new questions and curiosities and the need to try to answer and satisfy them. This thesis has laid the groundwork for a possible life-long body of work.

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