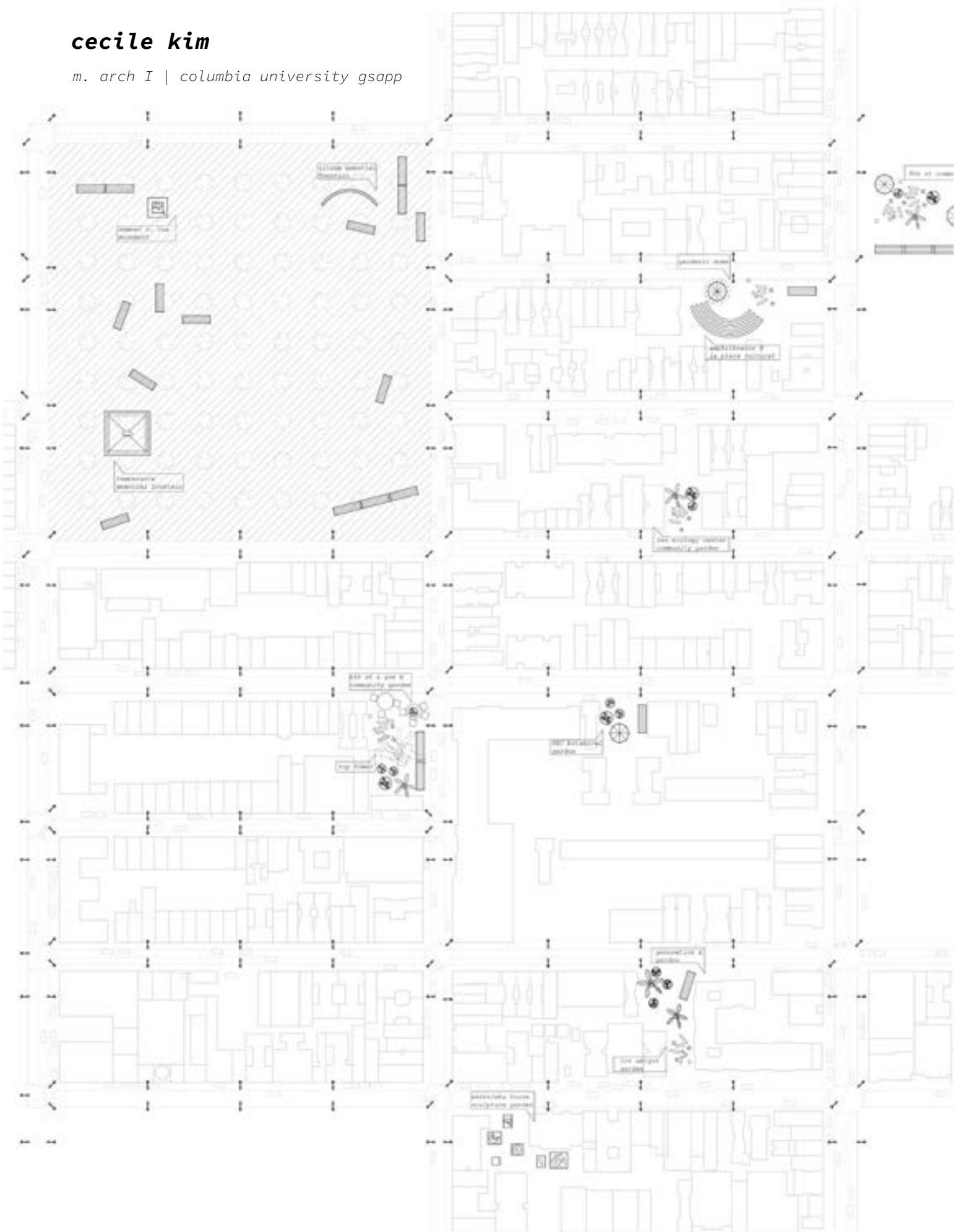


cecile kim

m. arch I | columbia university gsapp



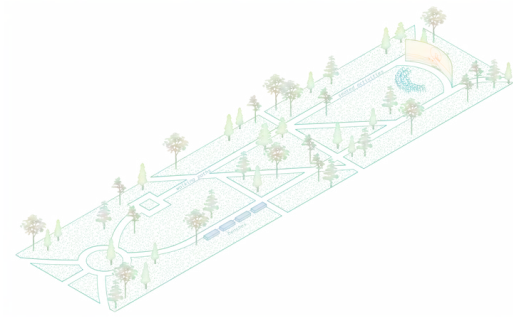
towards a new public

This collection of projects from my time as a graduate student imagine new publics for the built environment. Not all projects manifest as a building, but they aim to spatialize different architectural conditions that construct the “public”. In redefining this understanding, I hope to engage new modes of interaction between people, spaces, and communities, and reveal entanglements that construct our physical world as we know it.

Enjoy !

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stitch



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Avery Spot

a new standard



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Pocket Park



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now trending...



Koreatown:
Redefining the
Public & Private



Koreatown:
Place Identity &
Cultural Image

stitch

The projects in this section aim to formally stitch different programs and spaces through proposed infrastructure. In connecting fragmented pieces of the urban fabric, site specific conditions are heightened, uncovered, and revealed.

1. Bronx Borough Hall
2. 215 Station
3. Avery Spot



Bronx Borough Hall is the only borough without its own building; it is a tenant within the Bronx County Court Building. The current building sits on a monumental plinth, and it is situated between Joyce Kilmer Park to the north, and Franz Sigel Park to the south. Its stately building form imposes its domineering civic presence and influences how the public co-opts and interacts with the space.

With Bronx County Court being reallocated to a neighboring system, park begins to intersect the building, stitching the networks of park and Borough Hall. The new building is imagined to be an extension of the park in its program and governance within the community.

The project explored the notions of park through courtyards, achieved by the removal of floor plates. The column grid of the structure remains on floors programmed for municipal functions. In floors designed for leisure, the column grid reduces to make room for more recreational activities. Redesigned cores allow for circulation through the building. In addition to the elevators and bathrooms, a glass volume holds additional programs. The recreational floors are open to the elements, while a new barrier is established on the governmental floors. In the pursuit of bridging borough hall with park, the new building adapts with its surroundings.

Bronx Borough Hall

Studio: Advanced VI, Spring 2023

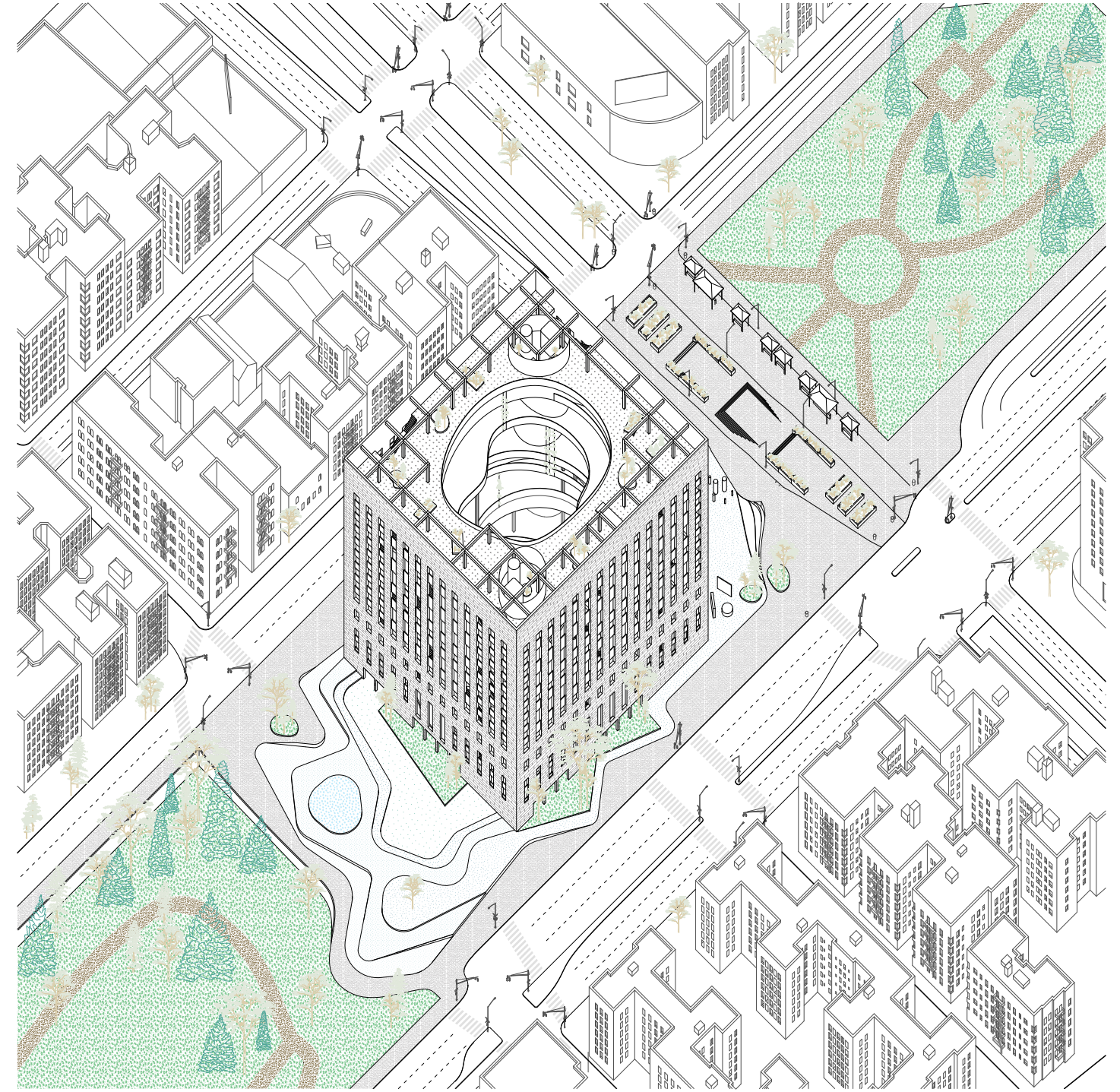
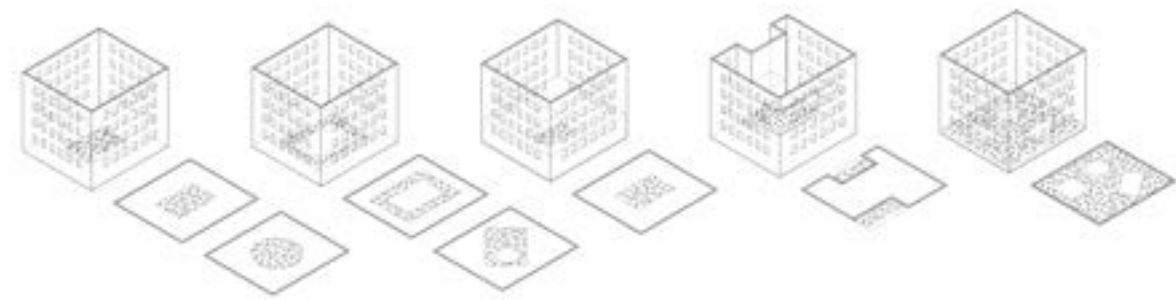
Critic: Eric Bunge

Site: Grand Concourse, Bronx, New York

in collaboration w/ Kim Langat

Process:

- a. historic uses of park- topography, vantage points
- b. exploration of courtyard typologies
- c. axonometric

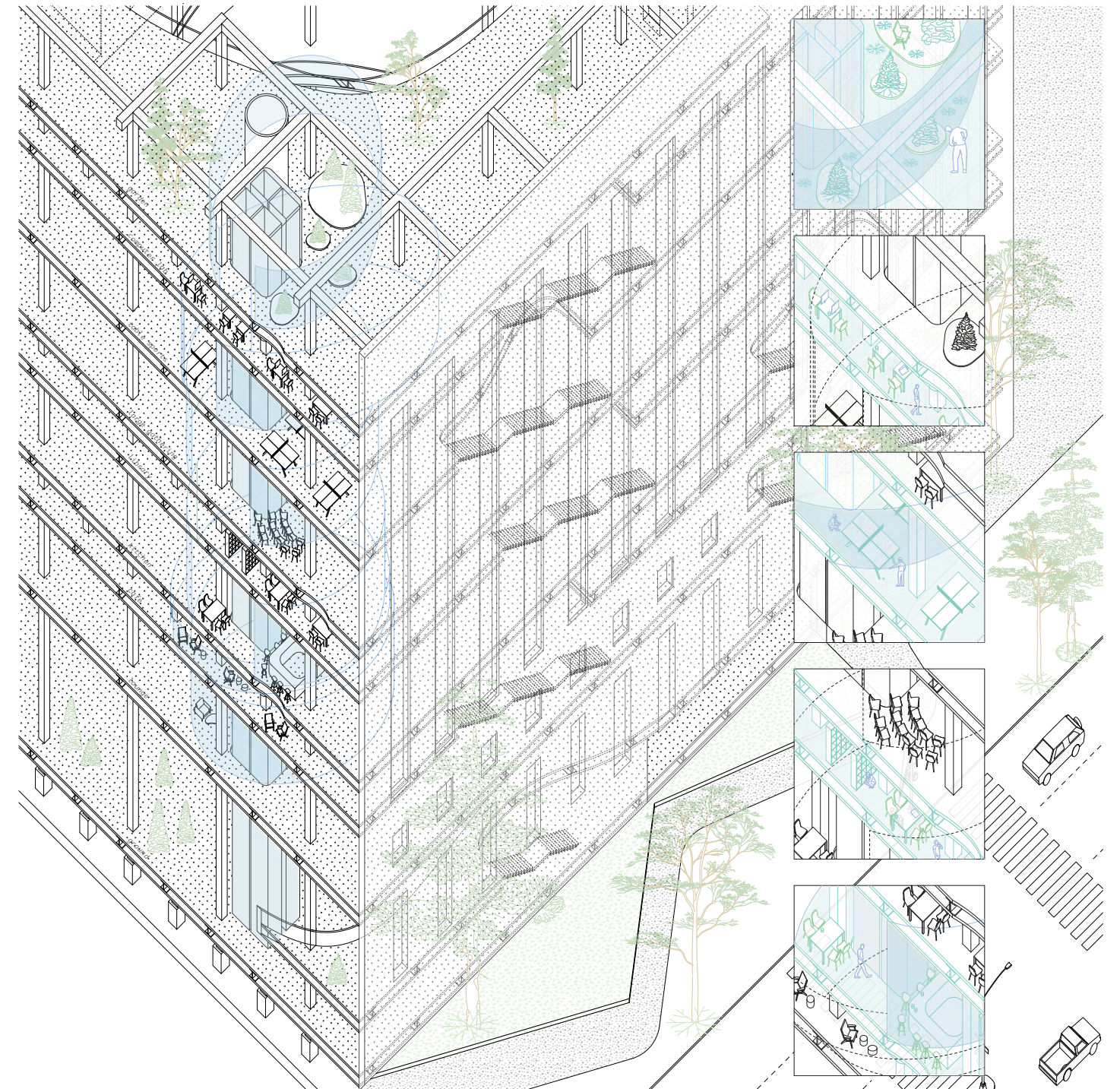
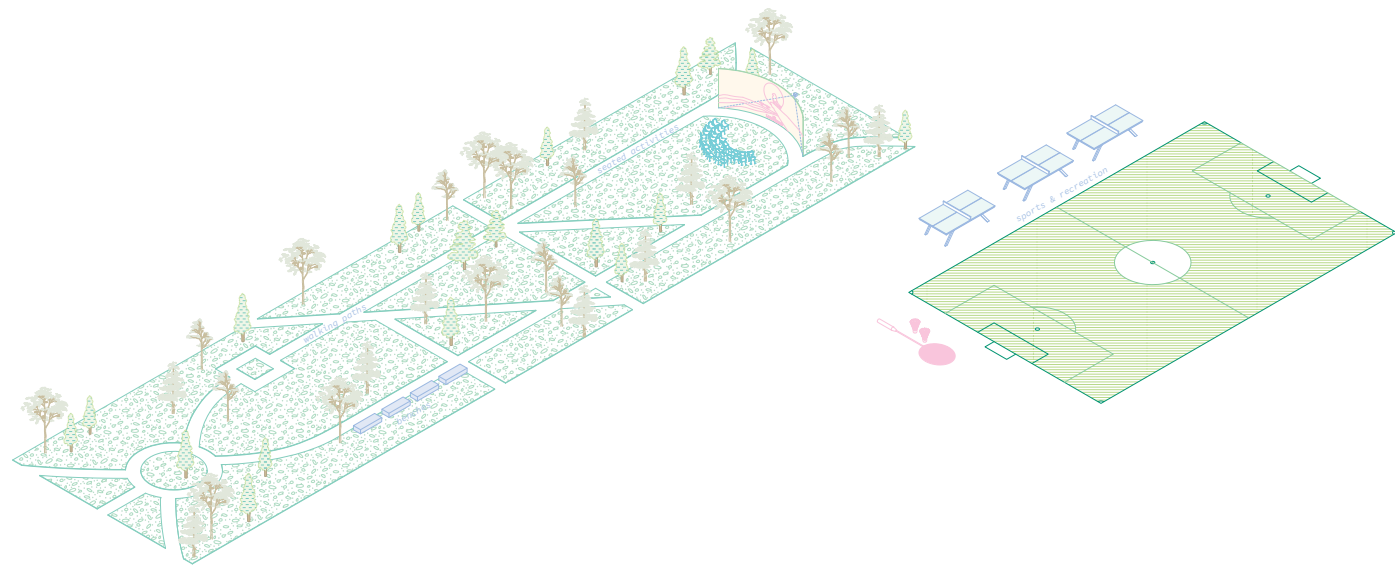


Programming Borough Hall

- a. passive v. active recreation
- b. cutaway drawing illustrating program

passive recreation

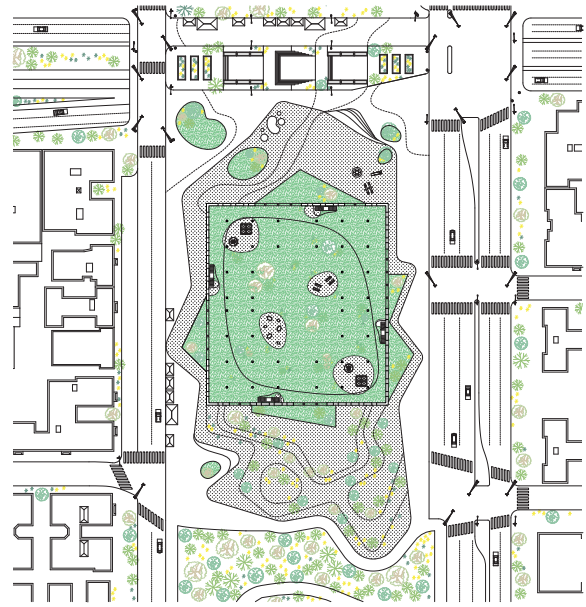
active recreation



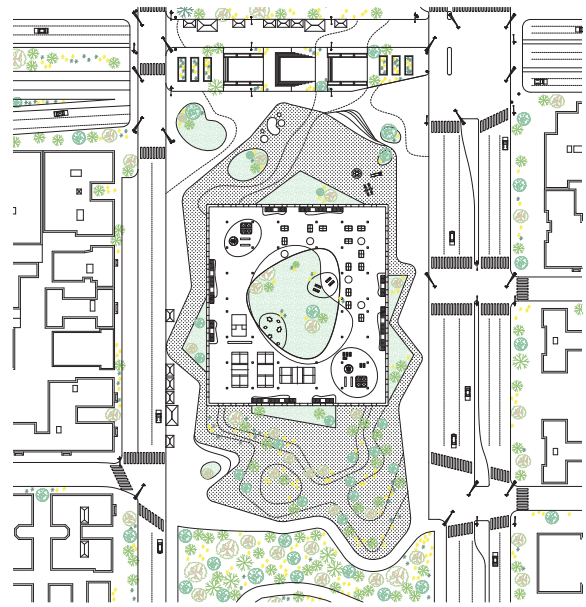


3/16" chunk model of cores

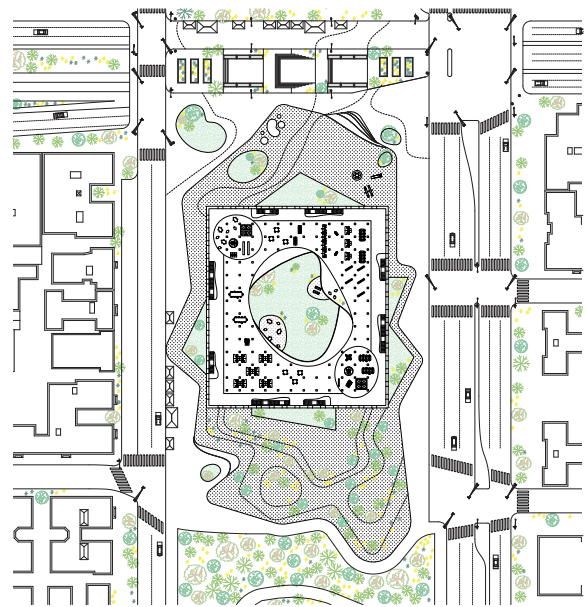
ground floor plan

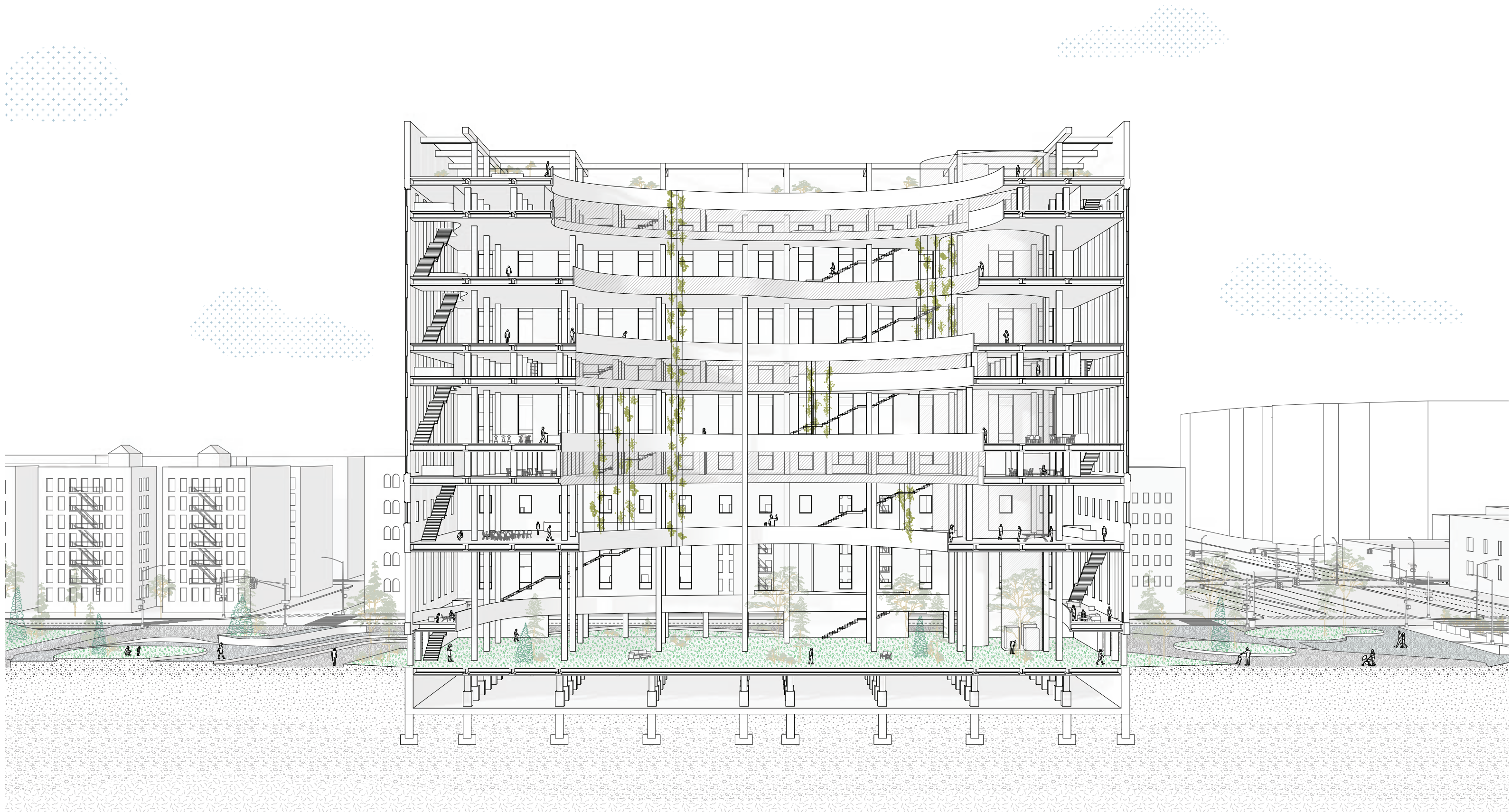


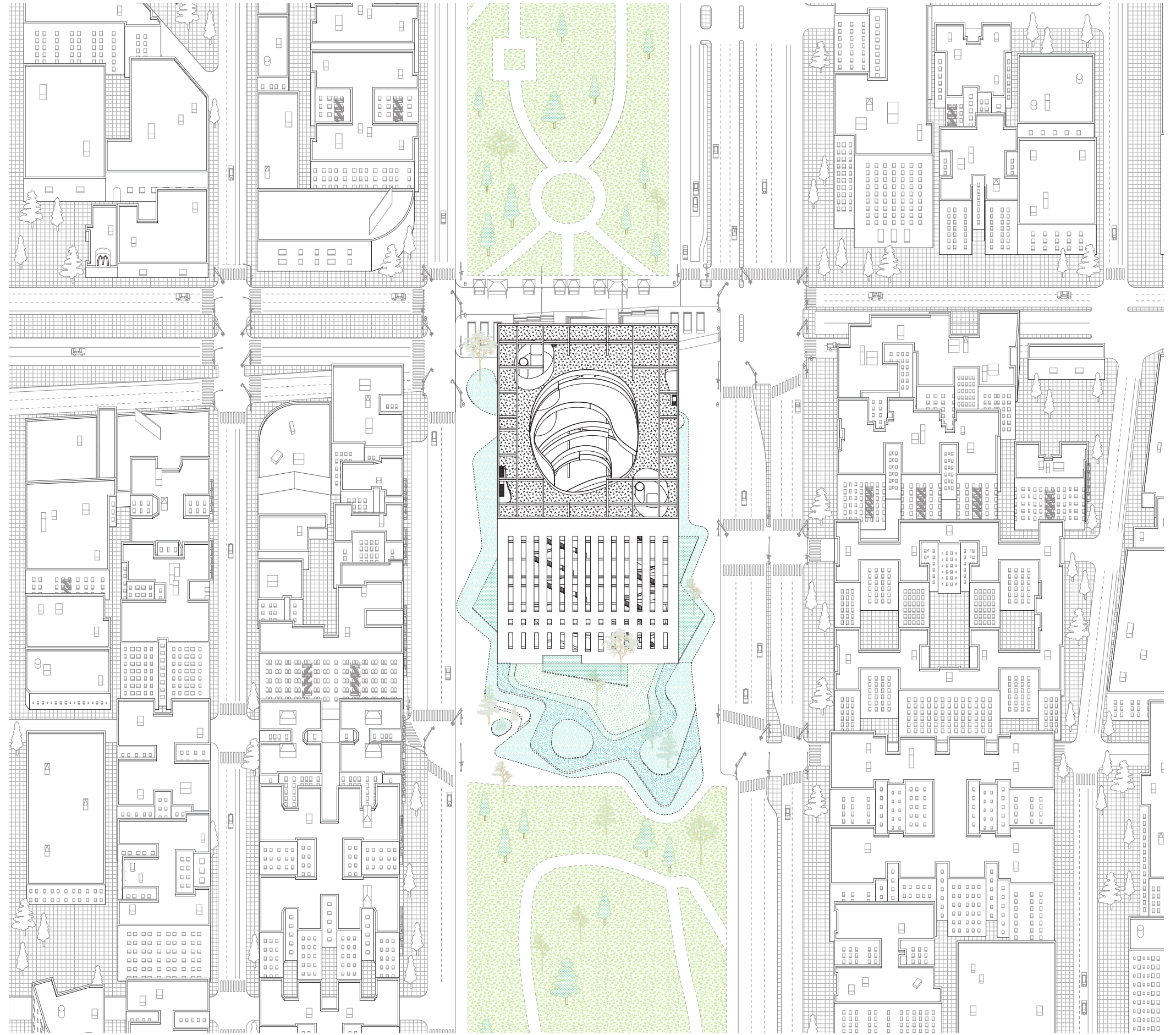
municipal plan



recreational plan



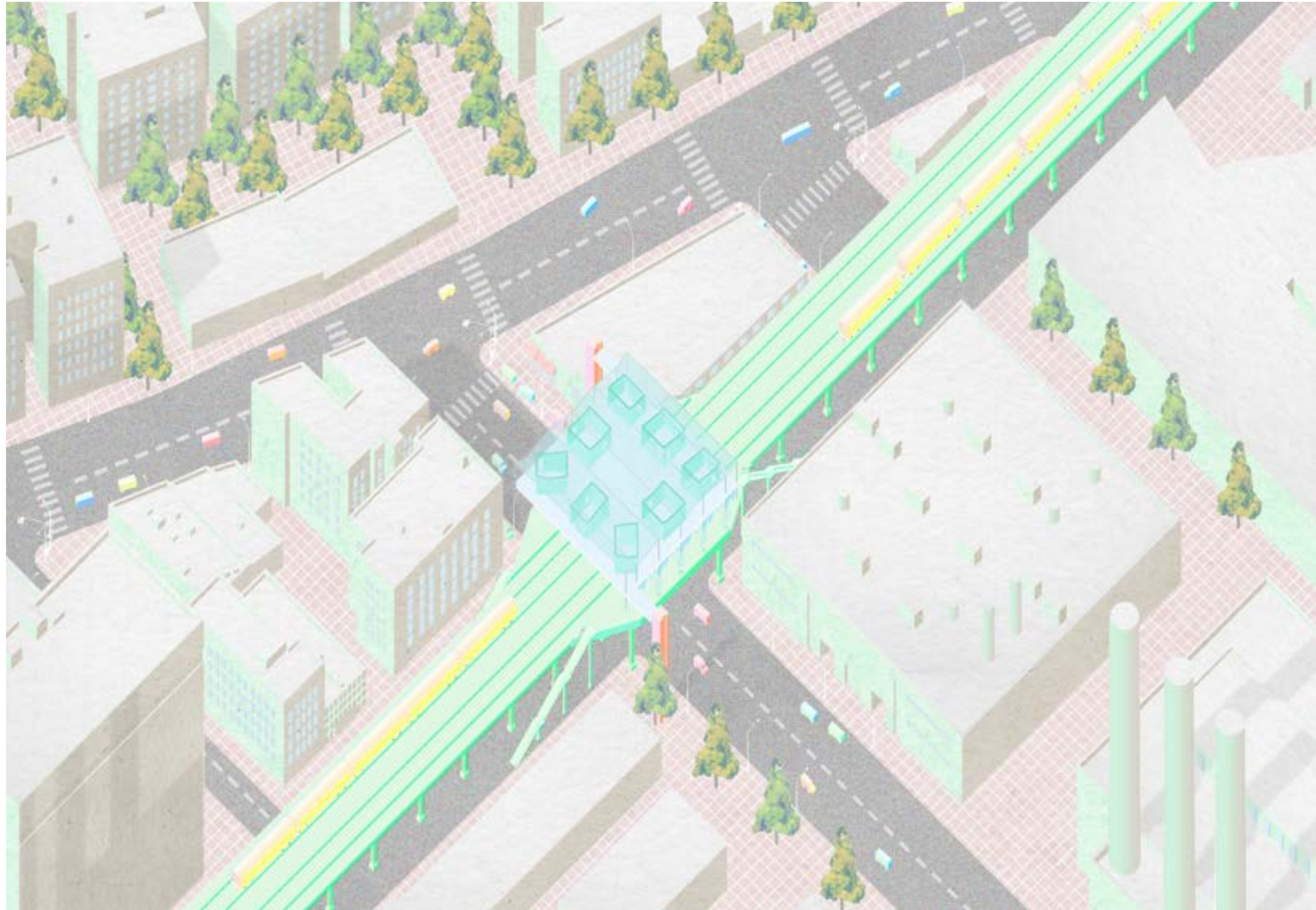




site oblique-
stitching together park through borough hall



perspective-
building adapts to the seasons



Northern Manhattan has historically functioned at the city's fringe. Visible power stations, surface parking, elevated subways, original homesteads and natural landscapes all characterize the neighborhood. From the city's inception, the resources of northern Manhattan have largely been dedicated to the function and supremacy of lower Manhattan. Northern Manhattan's subordinate role to its prodigal southern neighbor isn't something that evolved by chance; it was designed and has been reinforced through zoning and public policy for centuries. Despite this structural inequity, the neighborhoods of Inwood and Washington Heights coalesced and thrived within the informality and resource scarcity.

215 Station aims to redefine the existing transit system and its institutional image to be appropriated for the collective benefit. By pairing the MTA Arts and Design program with the existing arts program in Inwood, the proposal links people to places, with art that echoes the cultural history and community context of the stations.

By annual passenger ridership, the 215 station is the least used station in all of Manhattan. As the existing rail disrupts the grid of the city, the project aims to stitch the context by creating a new ground plane above the tracks. The different levels appear to float, and they amplify the existing elevated views. By reshaping the visual landscape, the artists' voices within the community become amplified, and through the combination of the two programs, train ridership becomes subsidized.

215 Station

Studio: Core I, Fall 2020

Critic: Josh Uhl

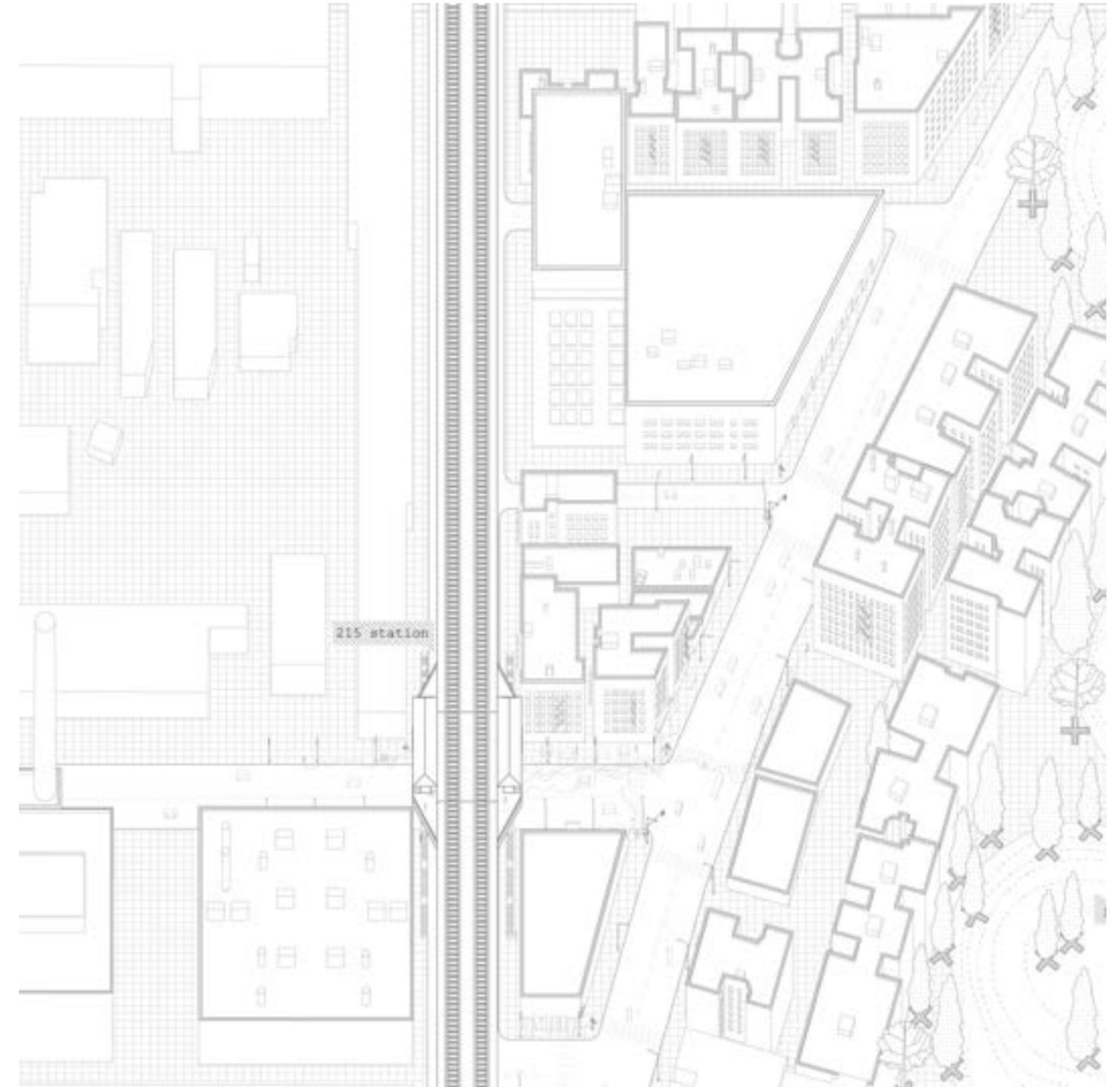
Site: Inwood, New York

Process:

- a. mapping- available housing v. average cost of living
- b. elevation- built environment as the grid shifts
- c. oblique- grid as a disrupter

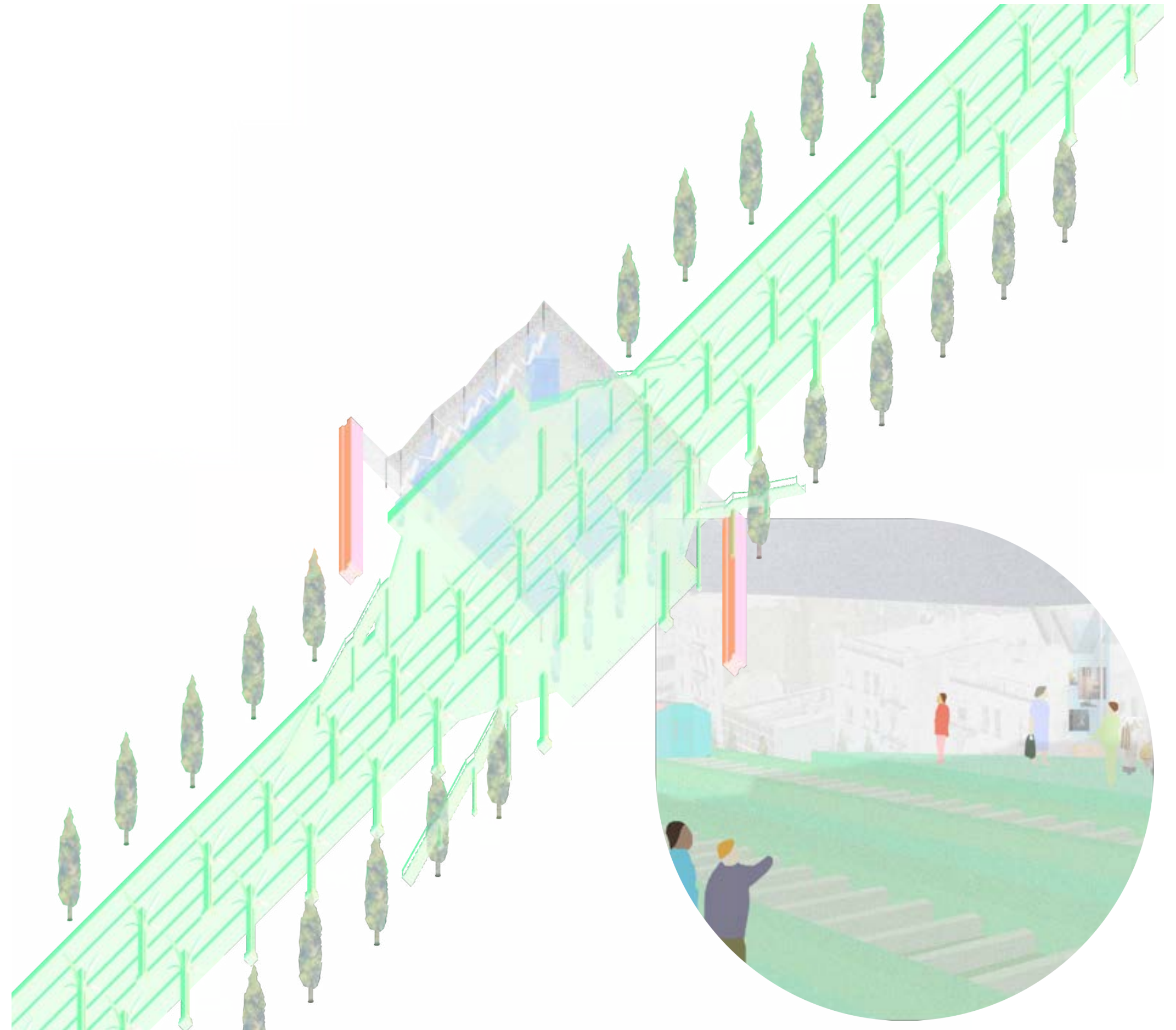


*black- available housing > average cost of living
white- available housing < average cost of living*



worm's eye-
stitching over above ground rail

perspective-
platform level, train as an
urban intensifier





oblique-
utilization of 9-square grid



Avery Spot is a design-build art installation and pavilion at Columbia University's Morningside campus. The seminar began with research of precedents for temporary pavilions, and progressed into the design, feasibility studies, structural and mechanical consulting and review, project management, budget management, and final construction of the pavilion. The pavilion celebrates the reunion of students and faculty on campus in the spring of 2021.

The 600-pound inflatable canopy above Avery Plaza is anchored by four steel beams in Avery and Fayerweather Halls and four anchor points. During construction, LED lights were installed within the inflatable to establish an omnipresent glow below the canopy at night. LEDs are powered via solar panels located at the base of the pavilion. The canopy uses a rain chain to divert water from the platform and prevent water buildup and additional weight. The platform program features social distancing circles organized in three colored arrangements to accommodate casual meetings, outdoor seminars, and formal lectures. A projector-stand and large screens are built into the platform to accommodate hybrid events. To create a stark contrast with the artificial materiality of the inflatable, the ground component celebrates natural textures including four live-edge cedar benches.

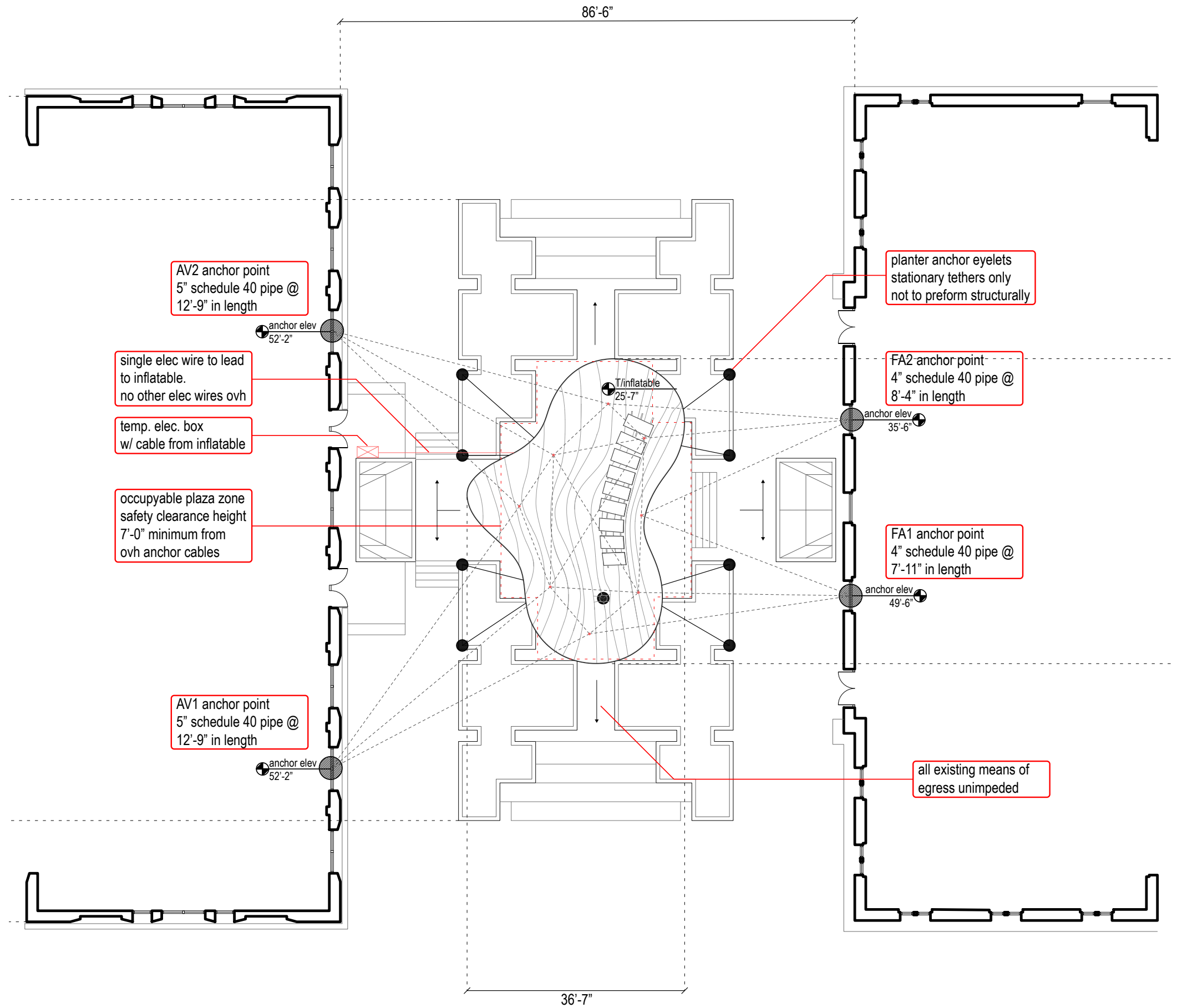
Avery Spot

Course: The Outside Project, Spring 2021

Critic: Laurie Hawkinson & Galia Solomonoff

Site: Columbia University Morningside Campus

in collaboration w/ students in fall 2020 outside project course



shop drawing-
anchor plate location

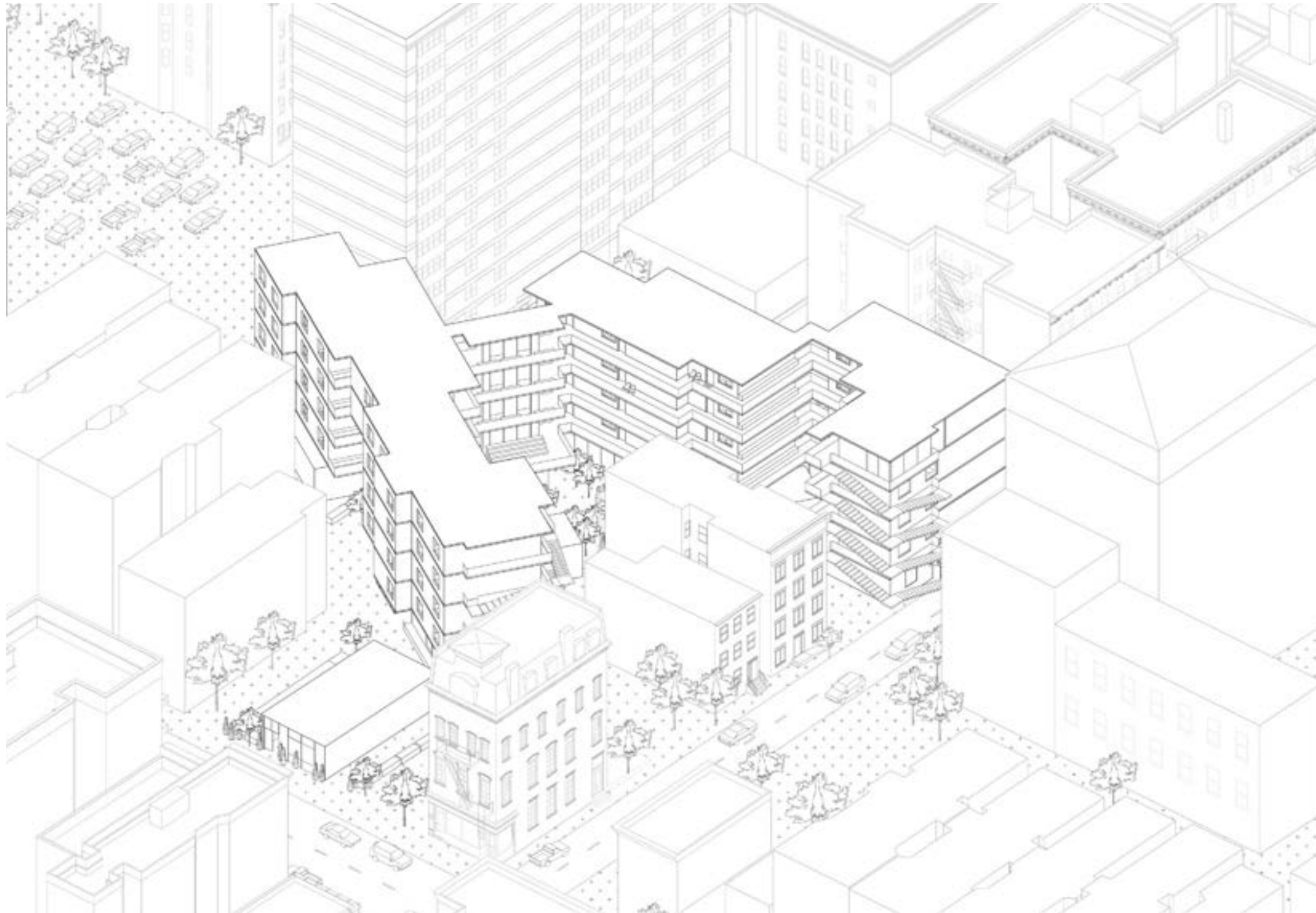


night view-
illuminated LED lights

a new standard

These projects analyze the rules and regulations that dictate the construction of the built environment. In understanding the guidelines, a new architectural standard can be developed- one that “abides” by the rules.

1. New Grounds for Leisure
2. Pocket Park
3. Walls as Rooms



New Grounds for leisure centers leisure as an activity that can be more accessible to housing and proposes a public programming that intersects more directly with residential life in the city. Our housing proposal takes cue from existing urban forms and devices on the site that facilitate group gatherings and leisure activities that aren't afforded in a formal way by current city planning in the Melrose Bronx. The Bronx community has reappropriated urban forms for leisurely gatherings and activities that bring a sense of togetherness on the street and public spaces that are typically or not intentionally designed to be occupied for leisure.

The project proposal is a direct reaction to these conditions and proposes an extended site of leisure that bleeds into the city block with public programming that is accessible to the immediate context and residents of the housing above. The current rigid structure of work and school force time for leisure in a prescribed way. Time for leisure is often allocated after work or school. The proposal aims to weave leisure in to the quotidian parts of the day, We propose multigenerational housing with an emphasis on leisurely spaces that allow for acts of rest for populations in affordable housing development including seniors, families, and kids for rest outside of the home, work or school. This scheme allows for a break in the typical routine activities in residents zoned in mostly residential areas.

New Grounds for Leisure

Studio: Core III, Fall 2021

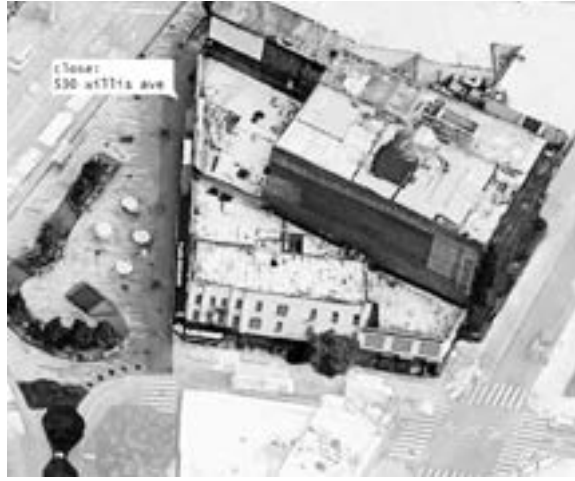
Critic: Alicia Ajayi

Site: Melrose, Bronx, New York

in collaboration w/ Laura Blaszcak

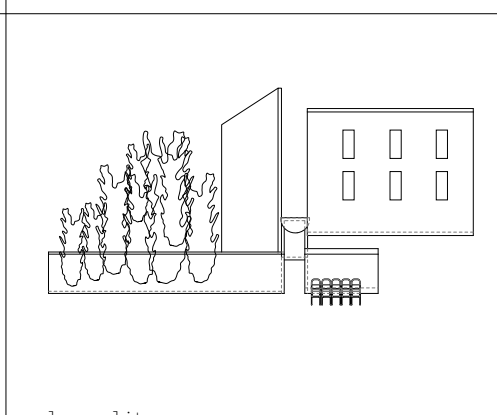
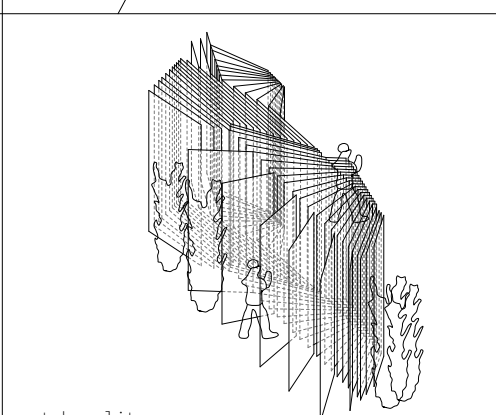
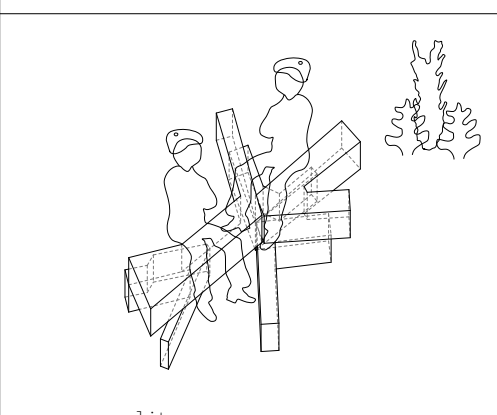
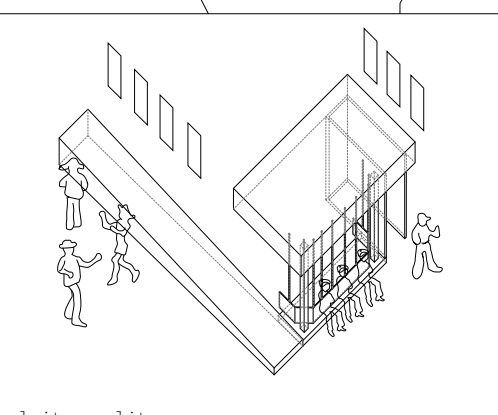
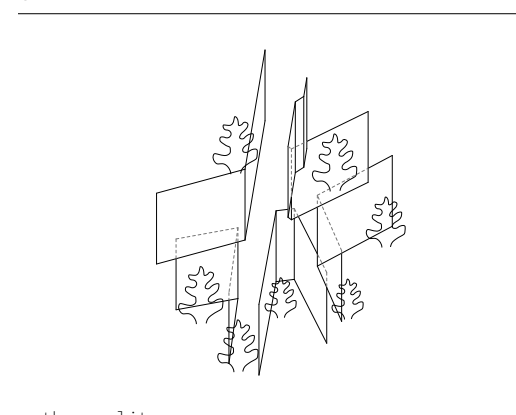
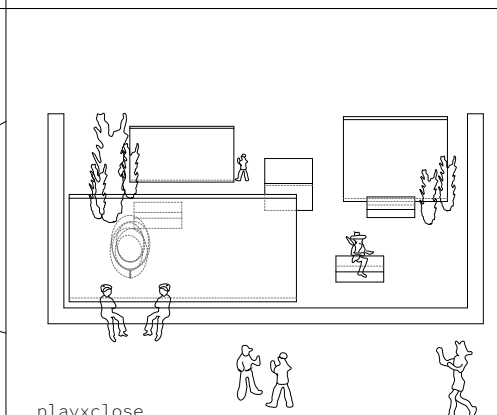
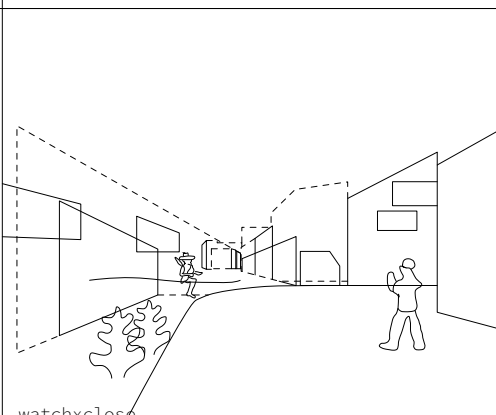
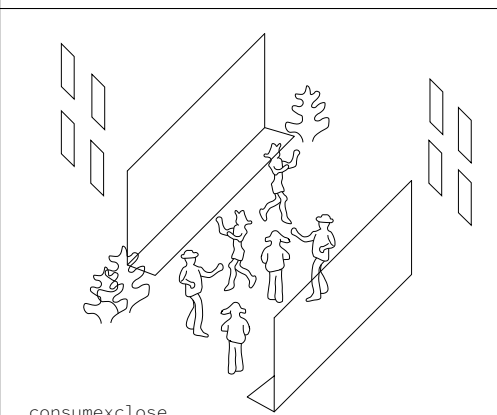
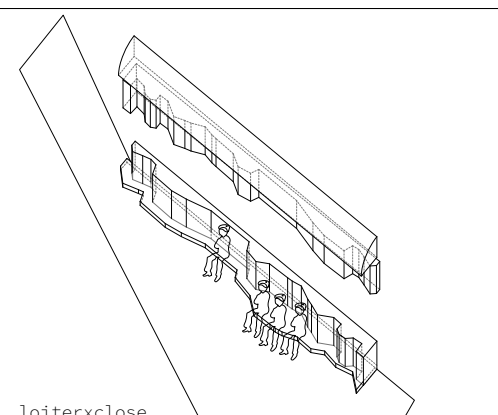
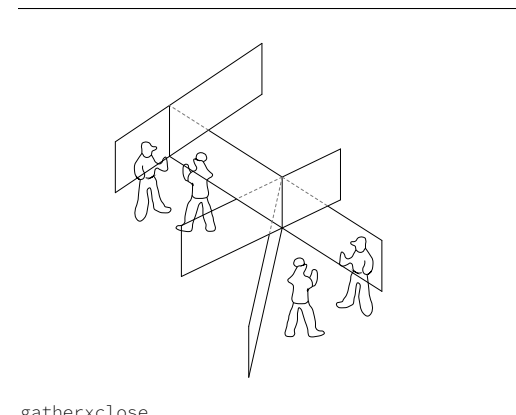
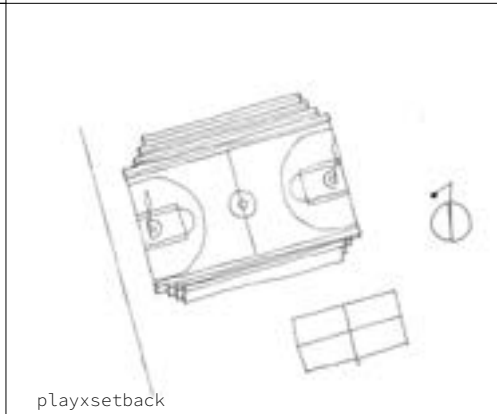
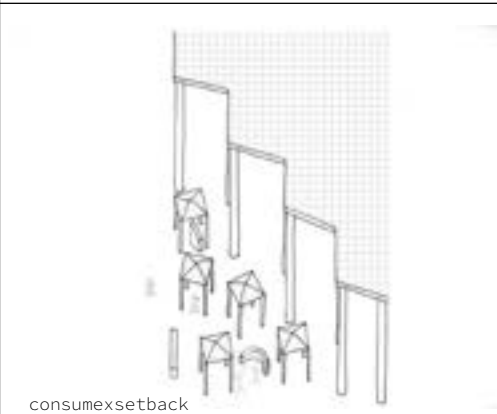
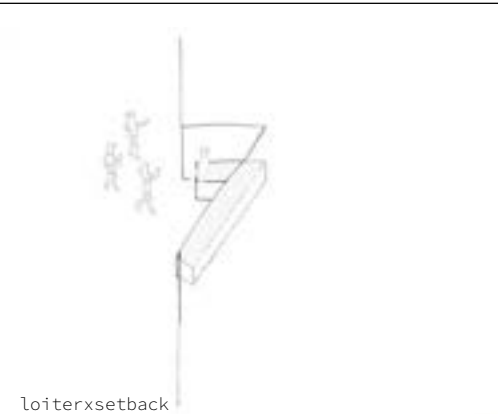
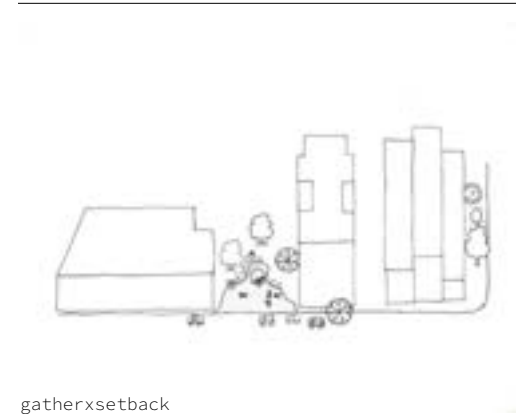
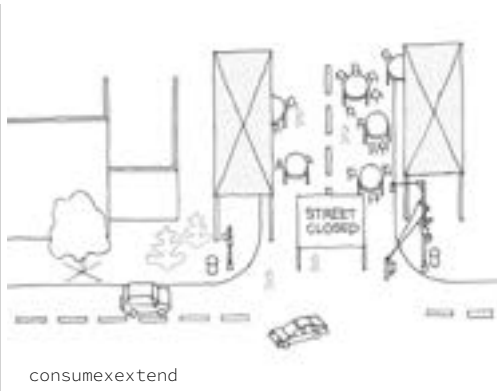
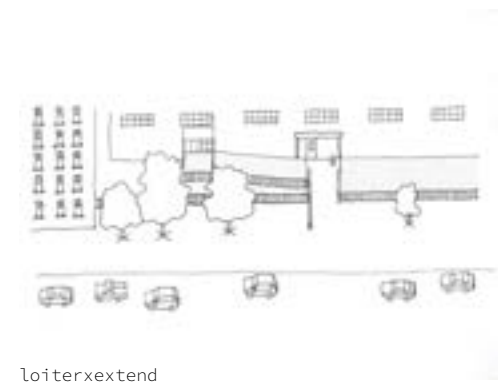
Process:

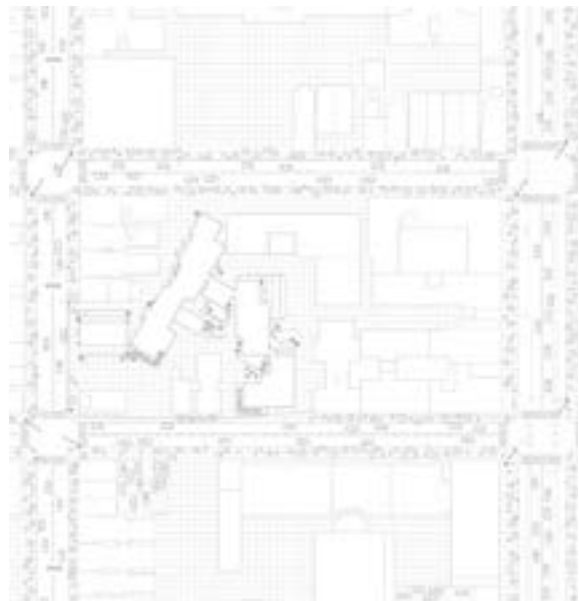
- a. zoning in melrose
- b. leisure spatialized on site



Form Finding Strategies:

a. designing for leisure

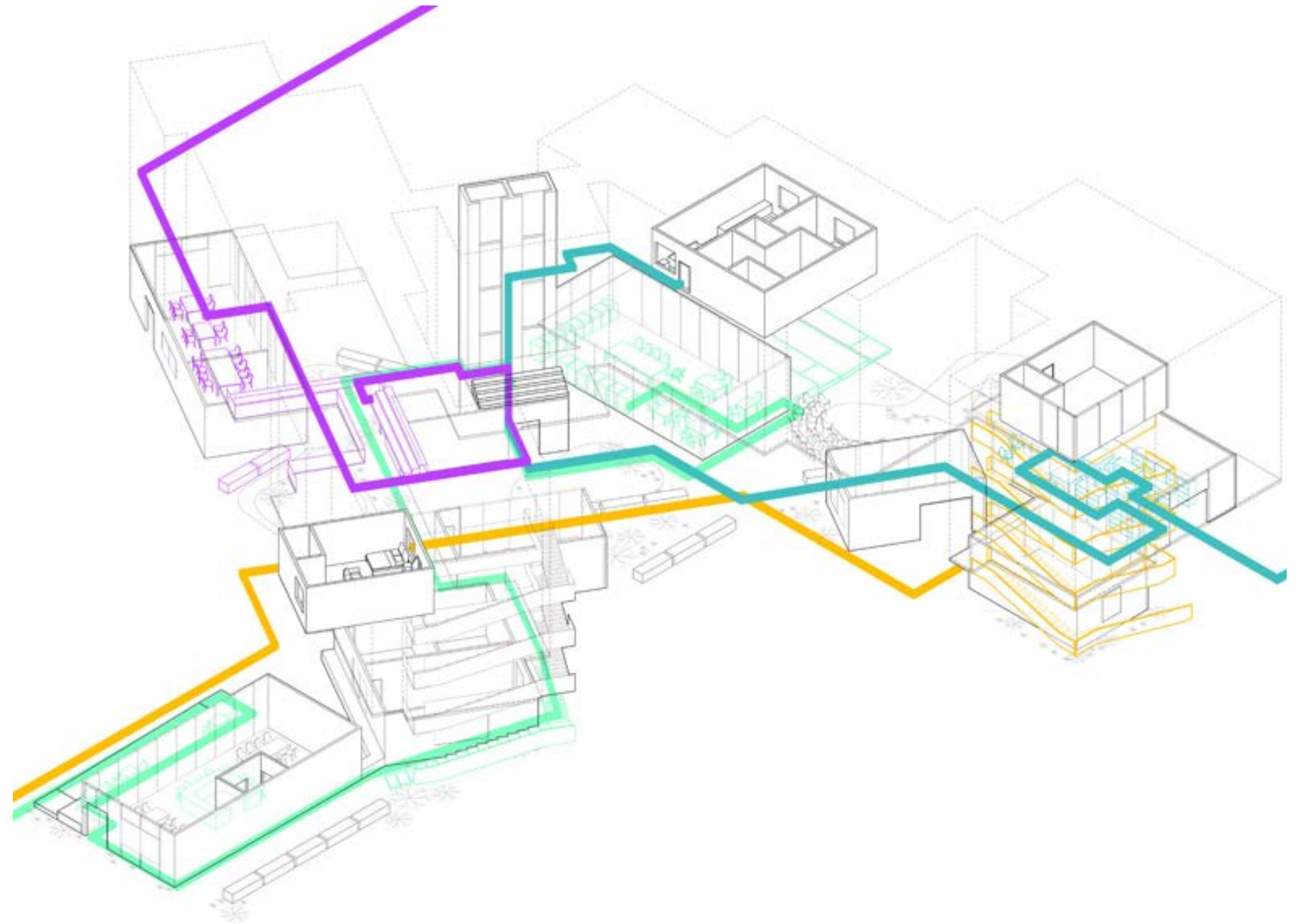




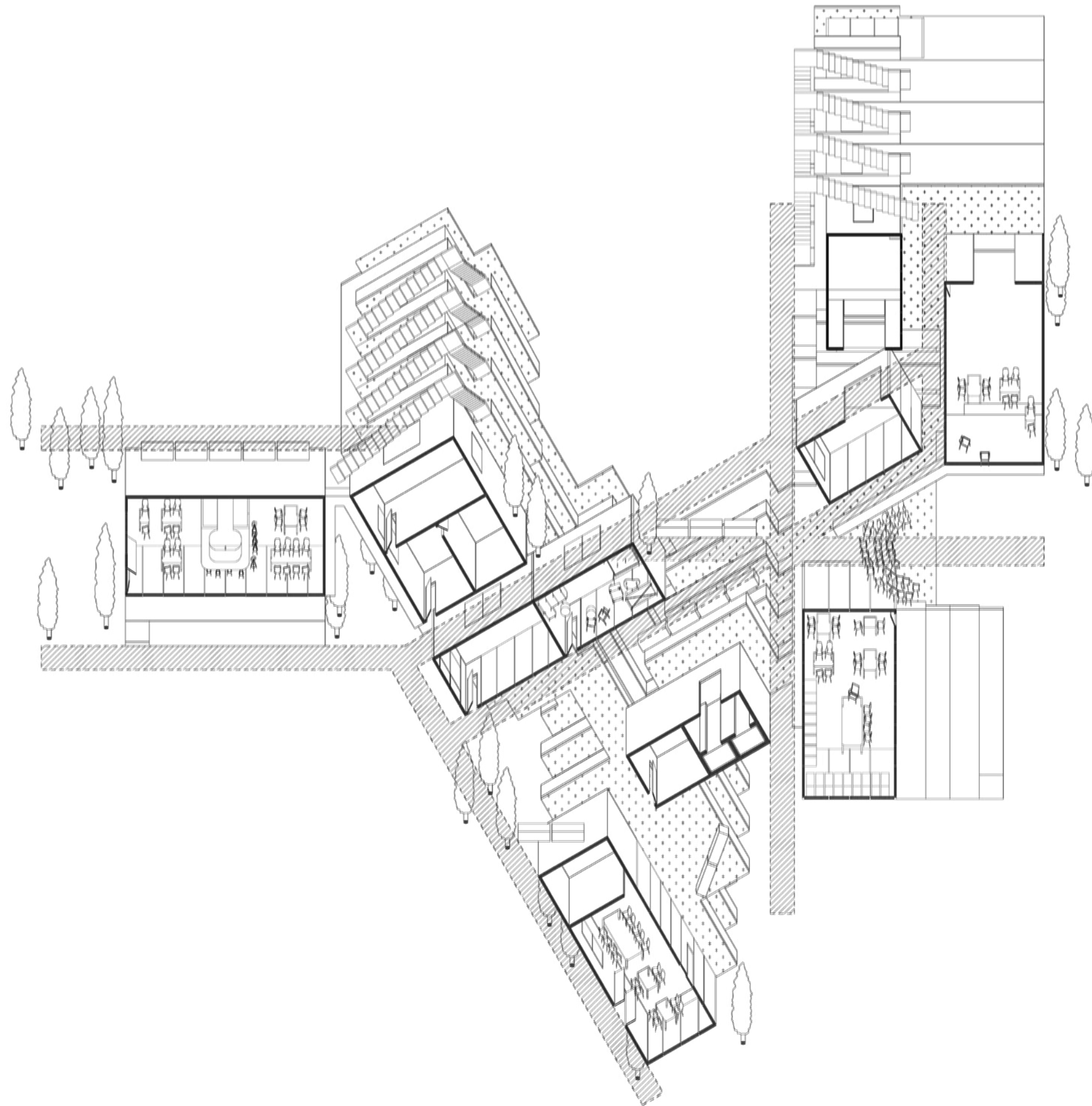
site plan

unit plans
studio





circulation diagram of different users



worm's eye





A prominent red light district existed in Hudson for nearly a century from the city's formation until the 1950s in various stages of legality, concealment, and protection. Though the red light district was well known among this population and the city's own residents, and often protected as an economic resource for the municipality, the image of the city was carefully concealed to hide the industry and preserve the curated vision of Hudson.

Drawing on themes of concealment, exploitation, and selective reinvestments, Pocket Park explores labor in relation to the commons in the modern economic paradigm of Hudson. Warren Street spatializes this phenomenon with its high-end boutiques, art galleries, and cafes. The Columbia County Sanctuary Movement is the only non-profit organization that aims to provide aid to undocumented workers in Hudson, but it has yet to be spatialized.

Our project aims to spatialize the existing sanctuary movement and propose an alternative framework of services that breaks the curated path along Warren Street. The path connects Warren Street to the existing Columbia County Human Services building and sites of the red light district. The points of the grid created by the path. Each turn of the path creates a new grid, and multiple grids overlap. The points of the grid function as the organizing principle and a framework that allow different infrastructure to be plugged in. The grid changes in scale to allow for a range in programs, and the four nodes subdivide the site. The nodes include programs for community building, legal and financial services, and a space for the provision of goods.

Pocket Park

Studio: ADV IV, Spring 2022

Critic: Alessandro Orsini

Site: Hudson, New York

in collaboration w/ Maclane Regan

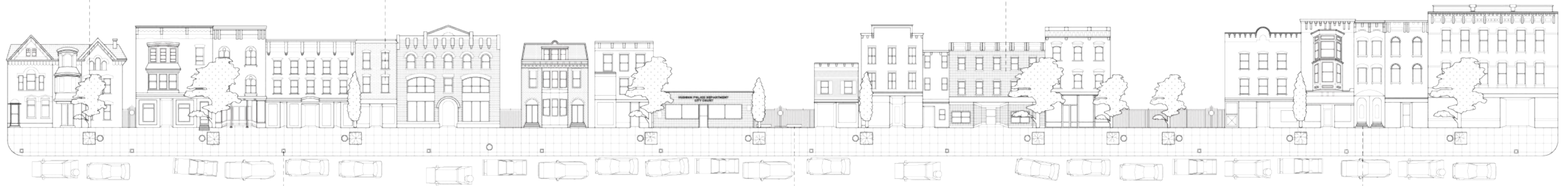
Research:

a. elevation study of architectural guidelines in hudson

street trees:
trees should be spaced regularly,
located close to the road, and
provide pedestrians a sense of
protection from traffic

fenestration:
window openings should be vertically
oriented, and may be grouped together
to provide variety to the facade design

building materials:
materials with a historic context are
encouraged; brick, clapboard, shingles,
and stone are preferred



lighting:
lighting should use ornamental
poles that accent architectural
features; "uplighting" is
discouraged

street furnishings:
benches, litter receptacles, and other
furniture should present a coordinated
design theme and reflect the need to
keep maintenance needs to a minimum

architectural style:
new development should continue to mix
the city's variety of architectural
styles to maintain the character of the
neighborhood

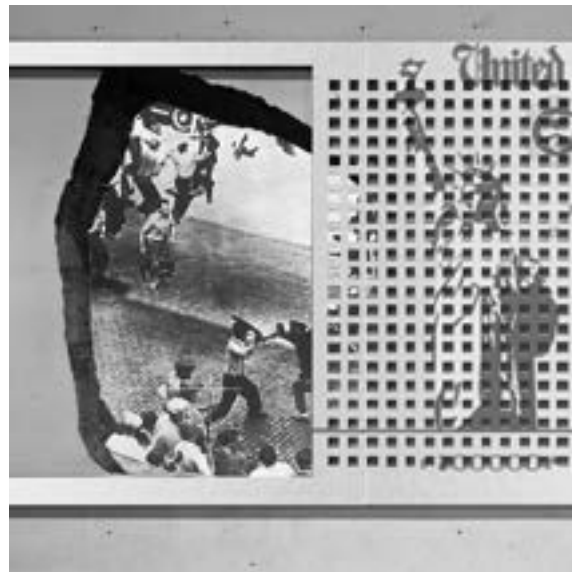
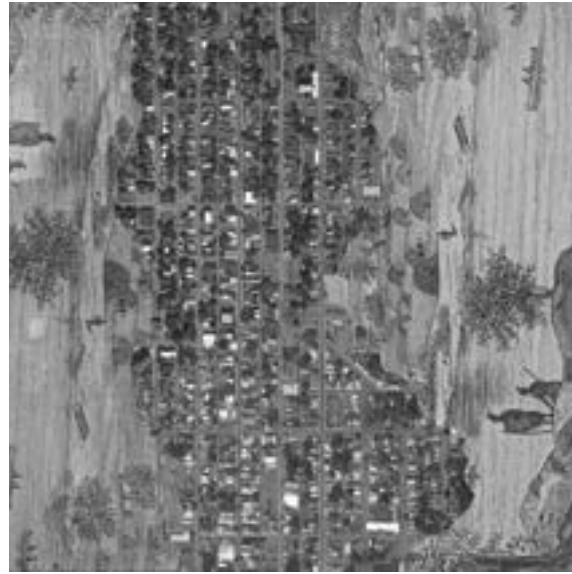
Research:

a. exploded axonometric- behind the facade



Process:

- a. bucolic landscape v. migrant workers
- b. montages



1930-1980: Mennonite & Amish Native Americans cultivated crops in raised mounds

1680-1850: Mennonites were widely converted to agribusiness

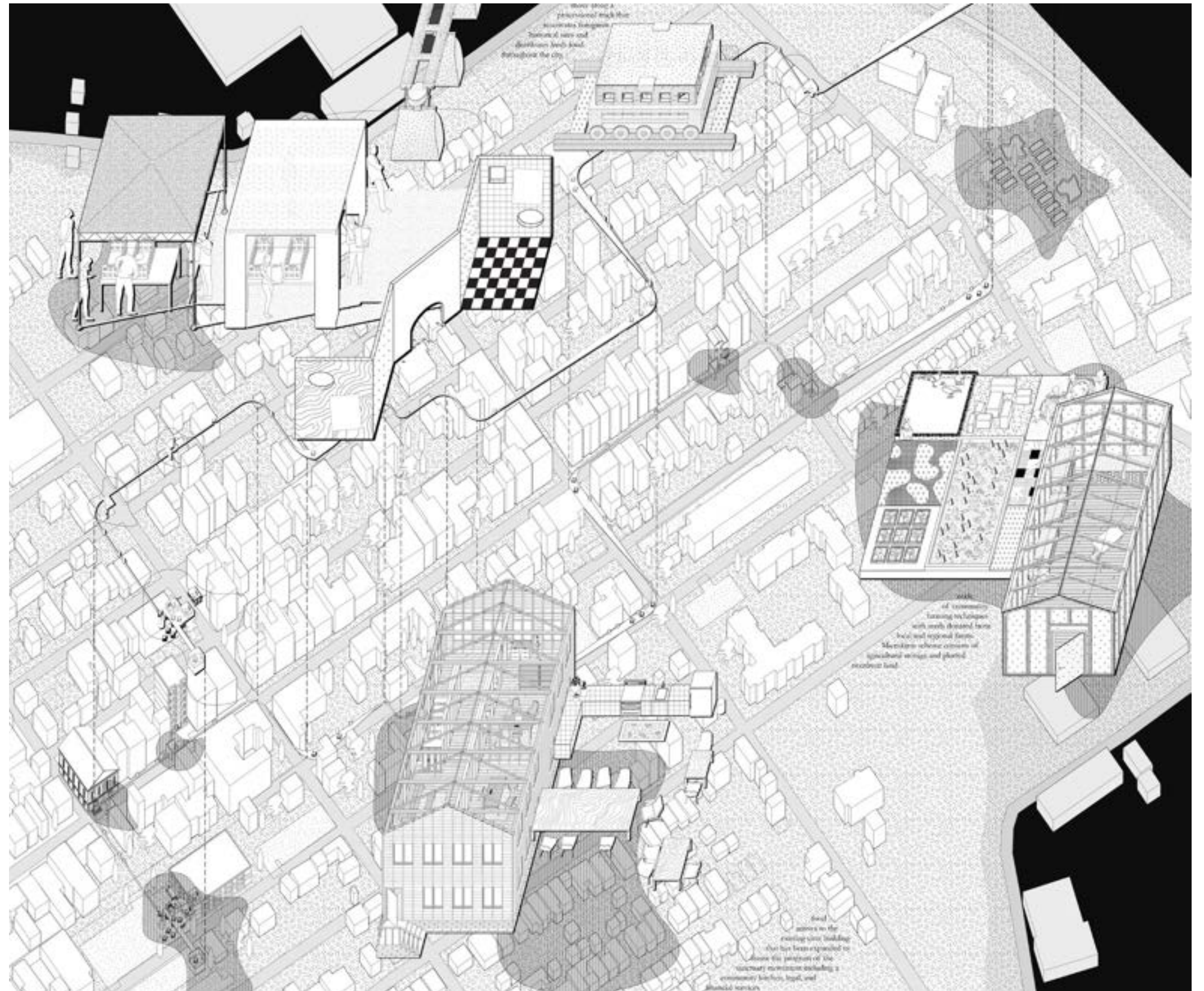
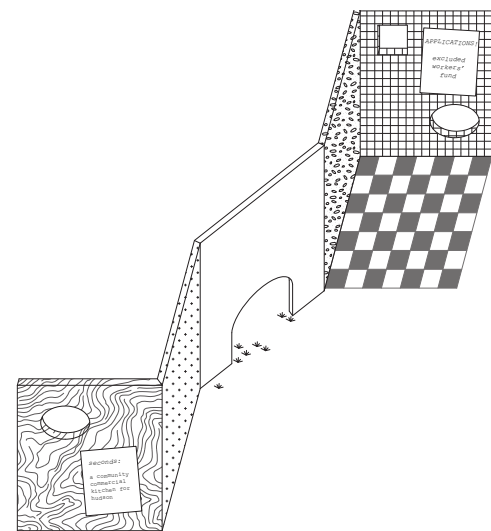
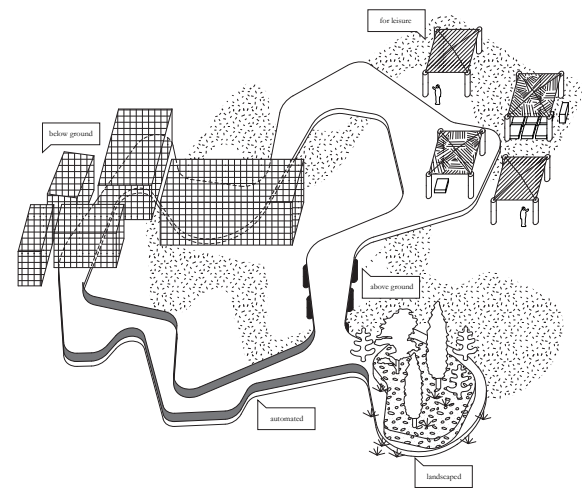
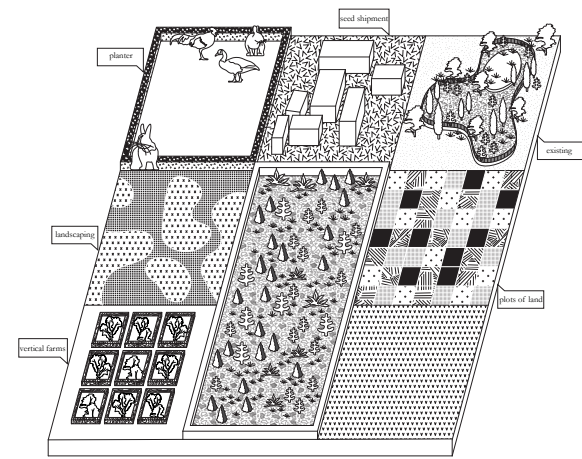
1940-1945: Farmers began to use silos, & began to focus food production for urban areas, especially NYC. Specialty crops such as apple orchards and vineyards appeared & technological innovations increased crop yields.

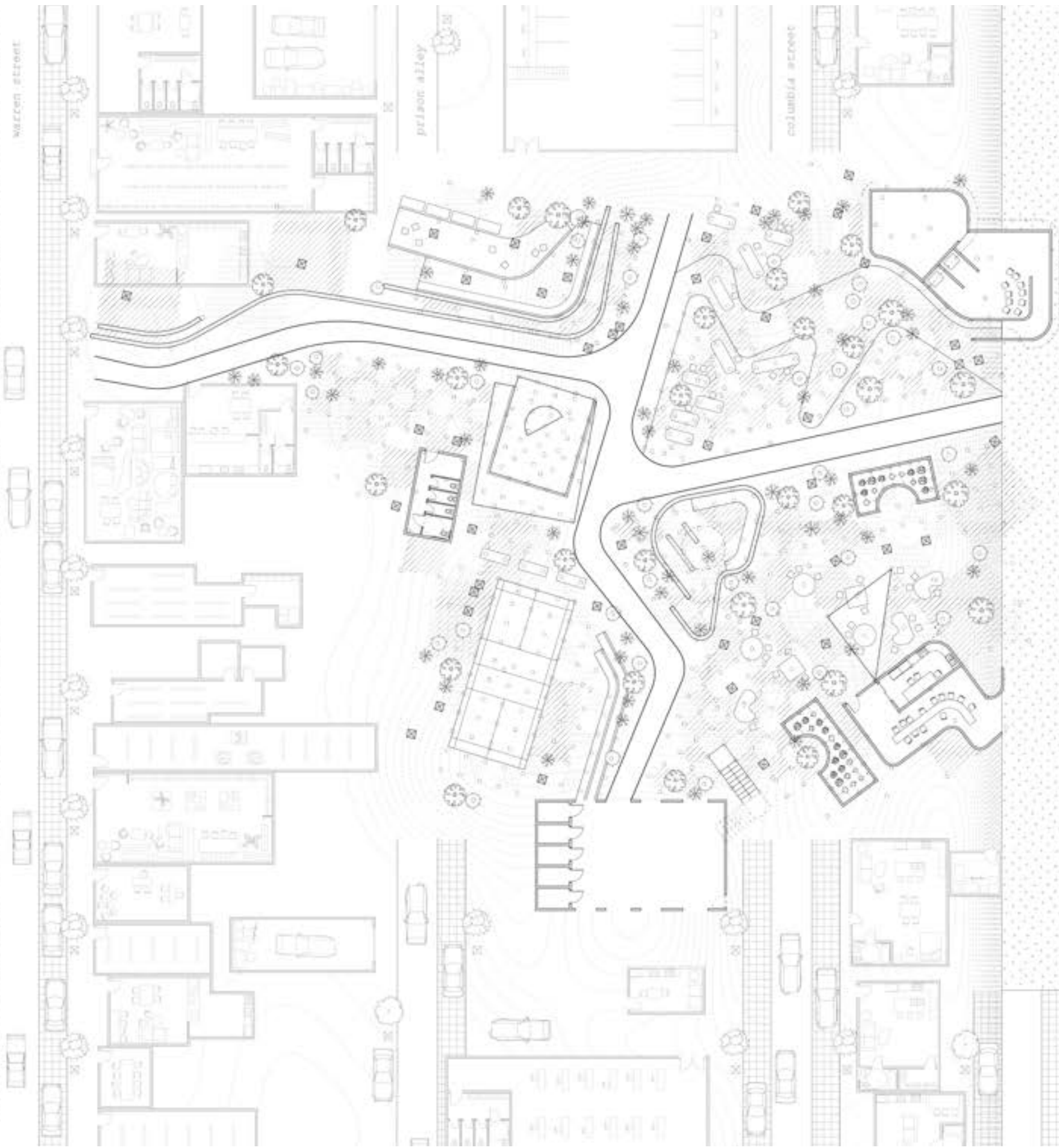
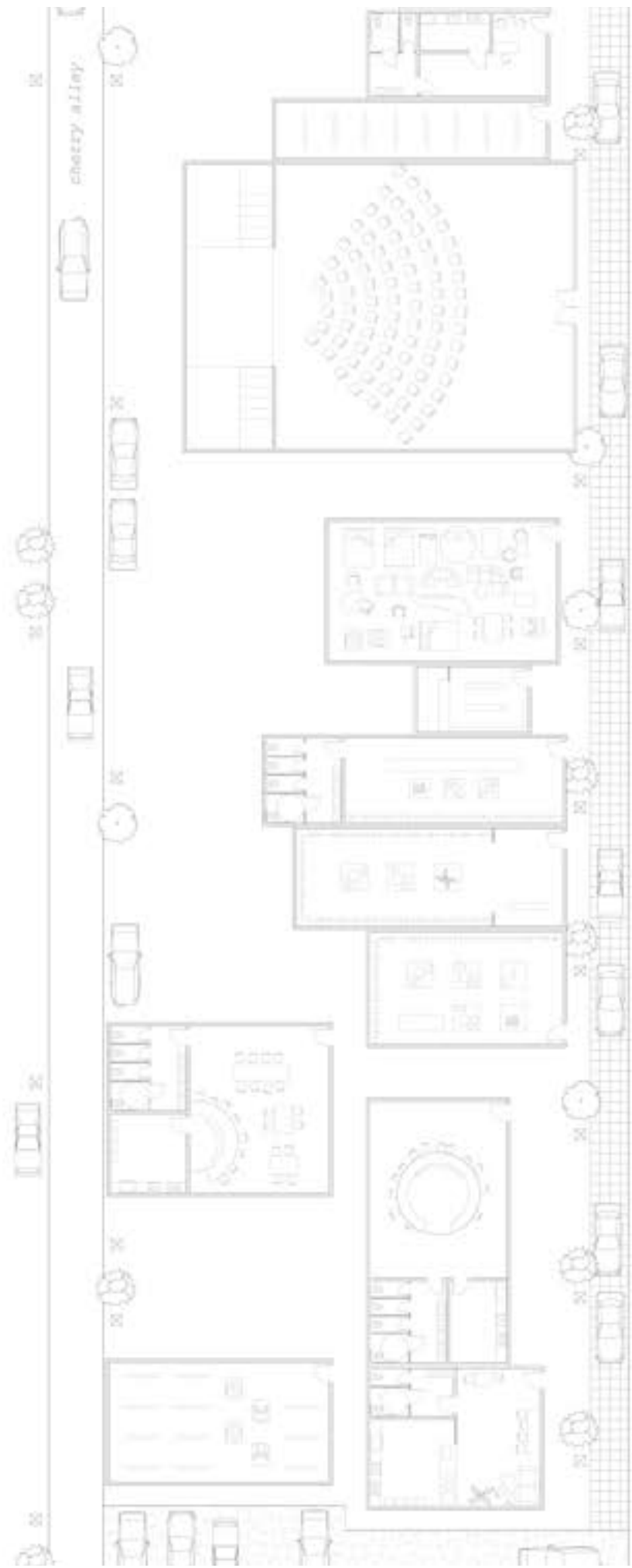
1940-1960: Factory-made farming equipment began to appear on the market. Corn (adapted from Native American varieties) provided animal feed.

1945-present: Large-scale, mechanized mono-culture crops and GMOs become more common. Health concerns increased due to industrial pollution and use of chemical fertilizers. Family farms shrink & more laborers come from outside the US.

Process:

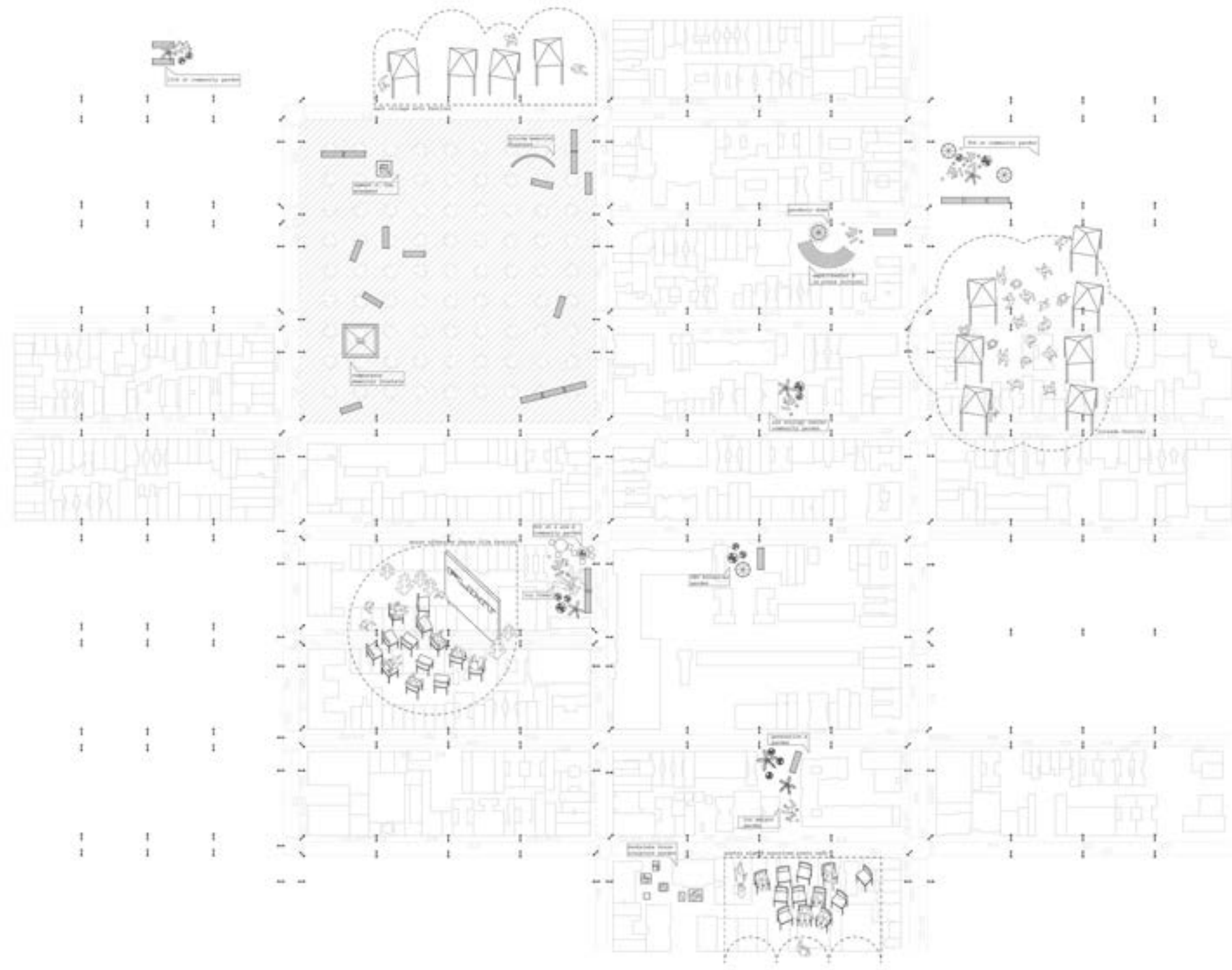
a. toolkit of elements placed on site







perspective from reuse building to park



Walls as Rooms uses ready-made objects as a tool to design a public school serving children in grades K-8. The program, which includes classrooms, laboratories, play spaces, assembly spaces, and student services, reflects that of a current New York City K-8 school. Built in 1906, the existing P.S. 64 building is a classic Snyder H-block plan, adorned with French Renaissance Revival ornamentation.

In using the ready made plans I was interested in blurring wall and room, and solid and void. The H plan began to take on the physical form of the castle. The school becomes more public facing with an open floor ground plan. The placement of the new volumes create a quasi-corridor condition while still remaining open. Upper level floors have less volumes for larger programs.

In redefining the poache of the thick-walled castle plans, the new intervention is a double skin project where the poache becomes an indoor/outdoor space open to the public.

Walls as Rooms

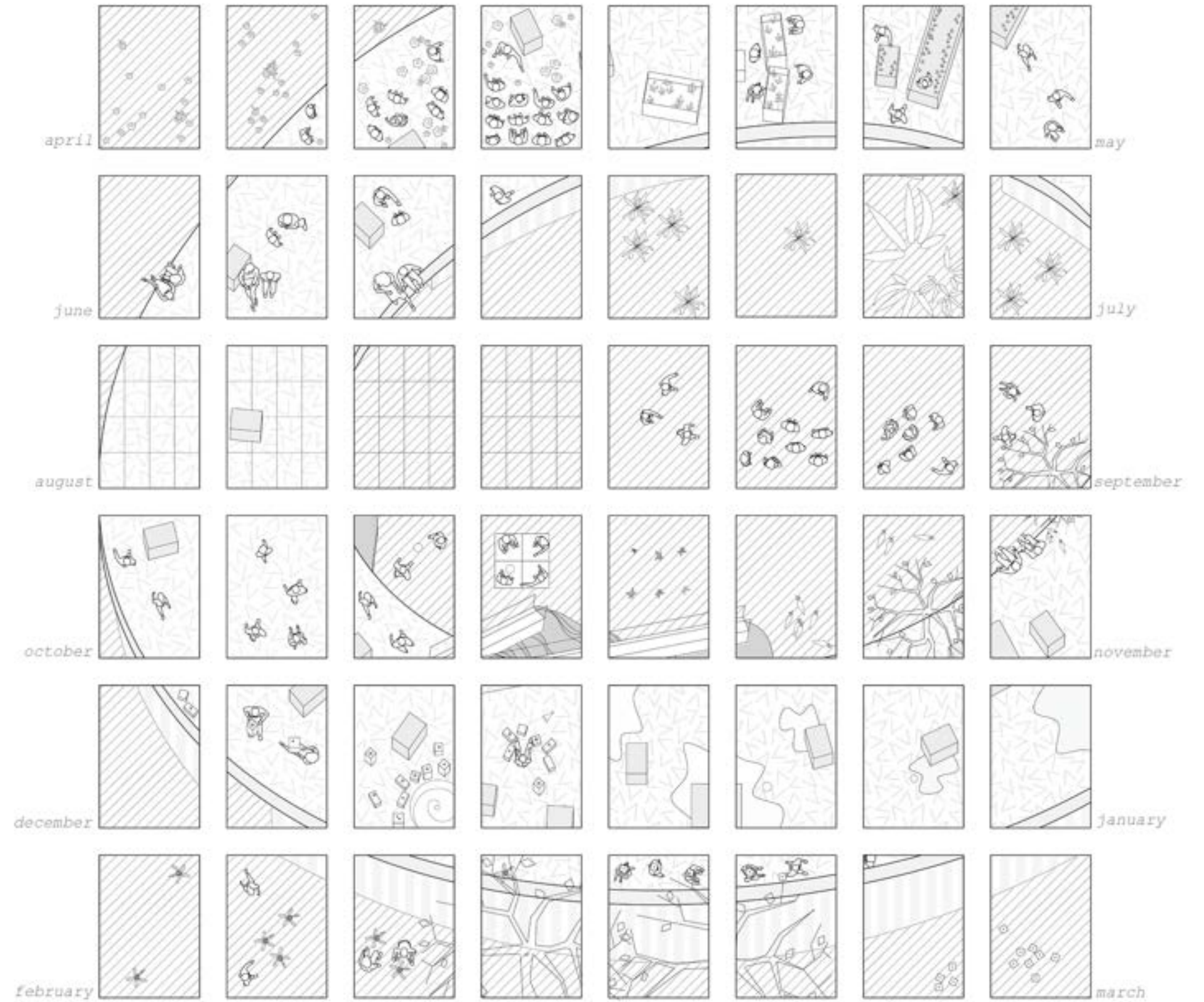
Studio: Core II, Spring 2021

Critic: Emmett Zeifman

Site: East Village, New York

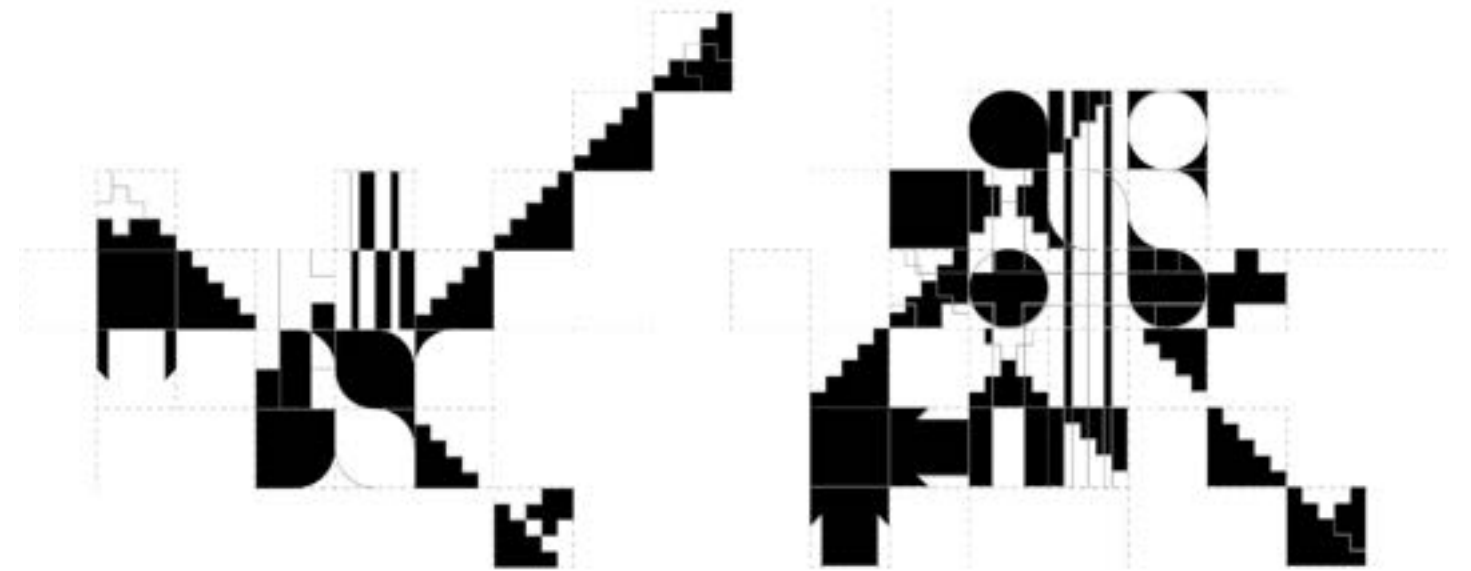
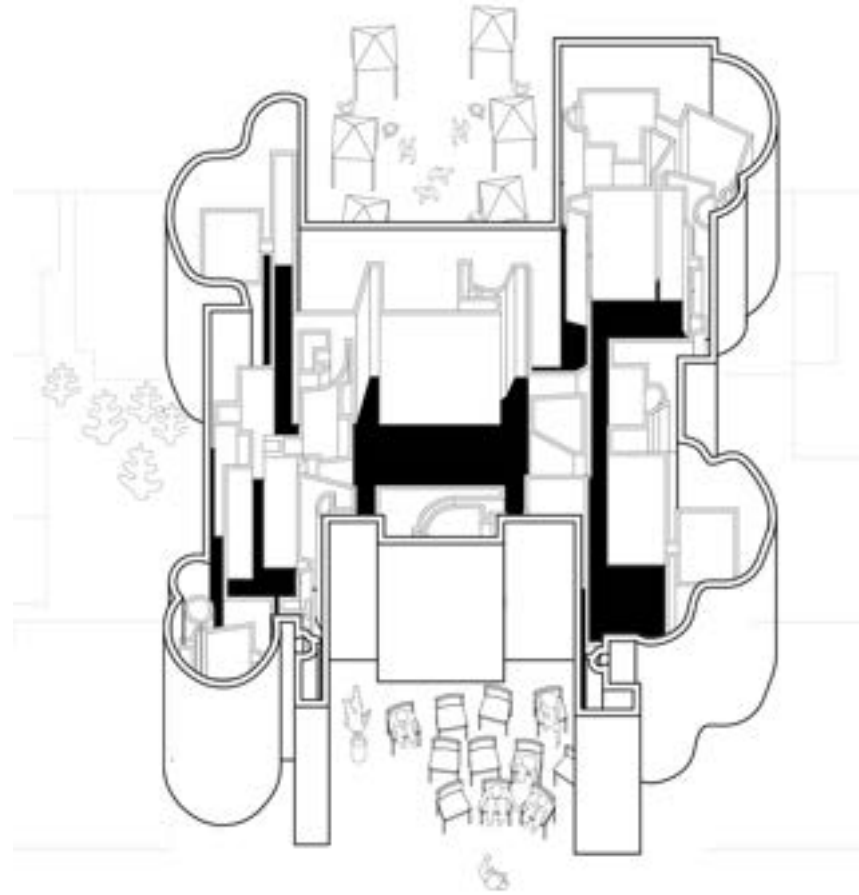
Case Study | Fuji Kindergarten

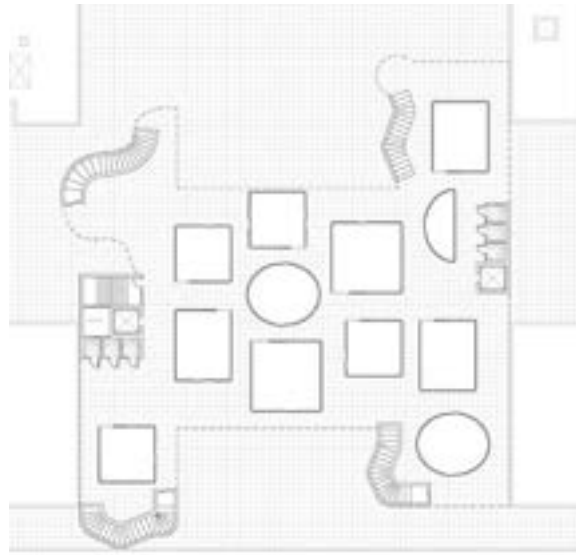
a. kindergarten program reimagined through hwatu cards



Process:

a. inverted plan & section studies

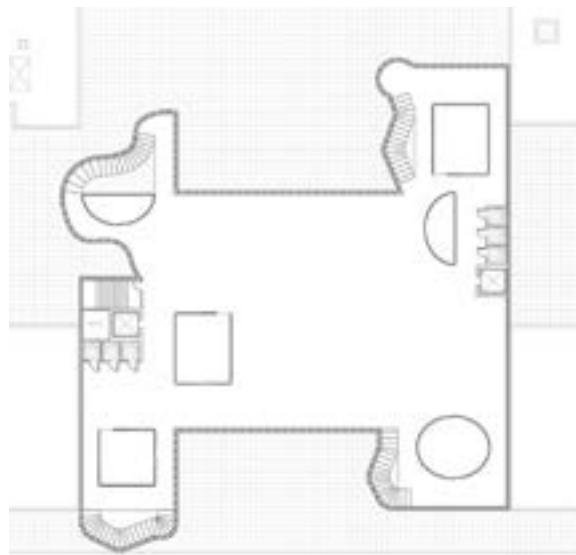




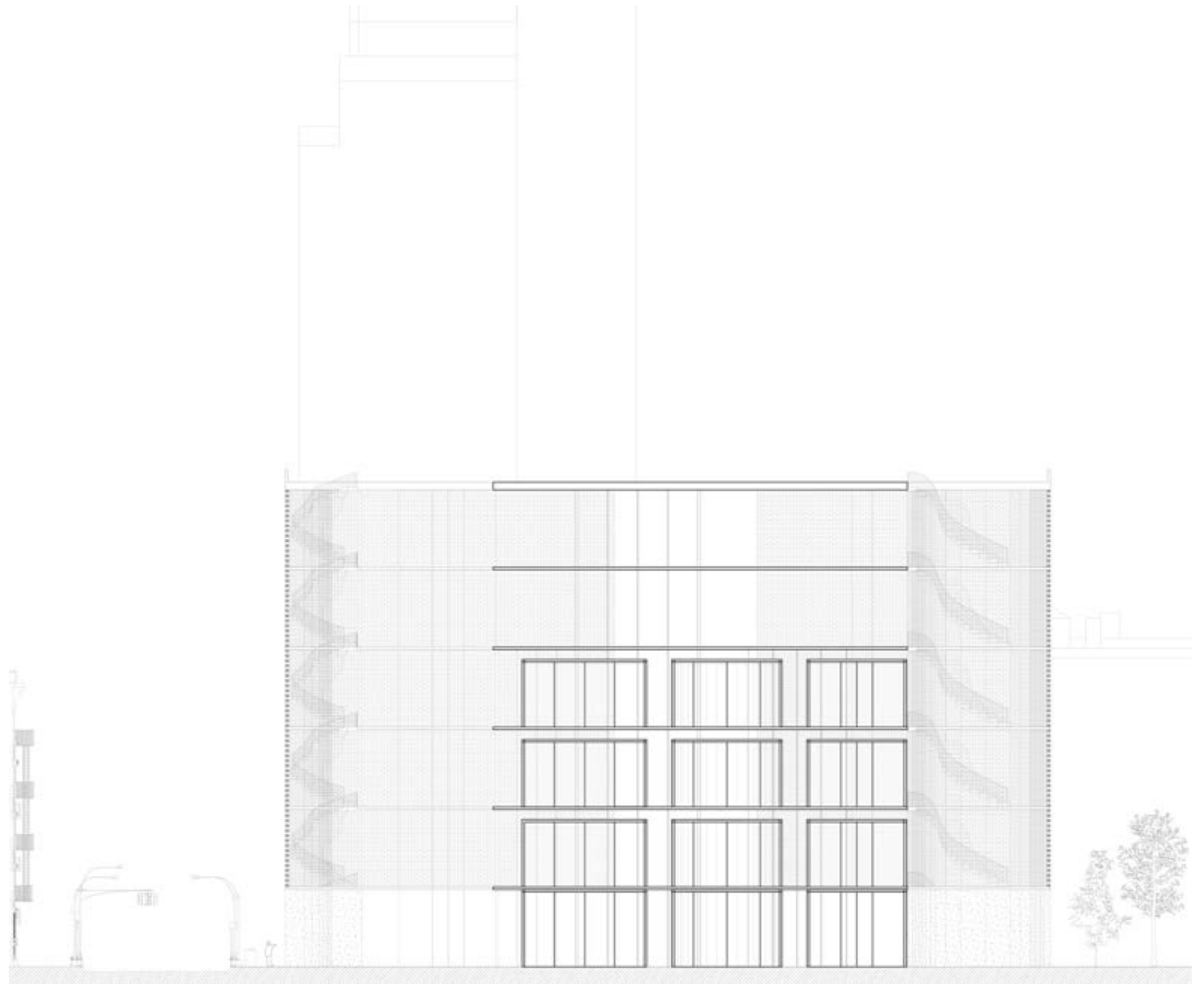
ground floor plan

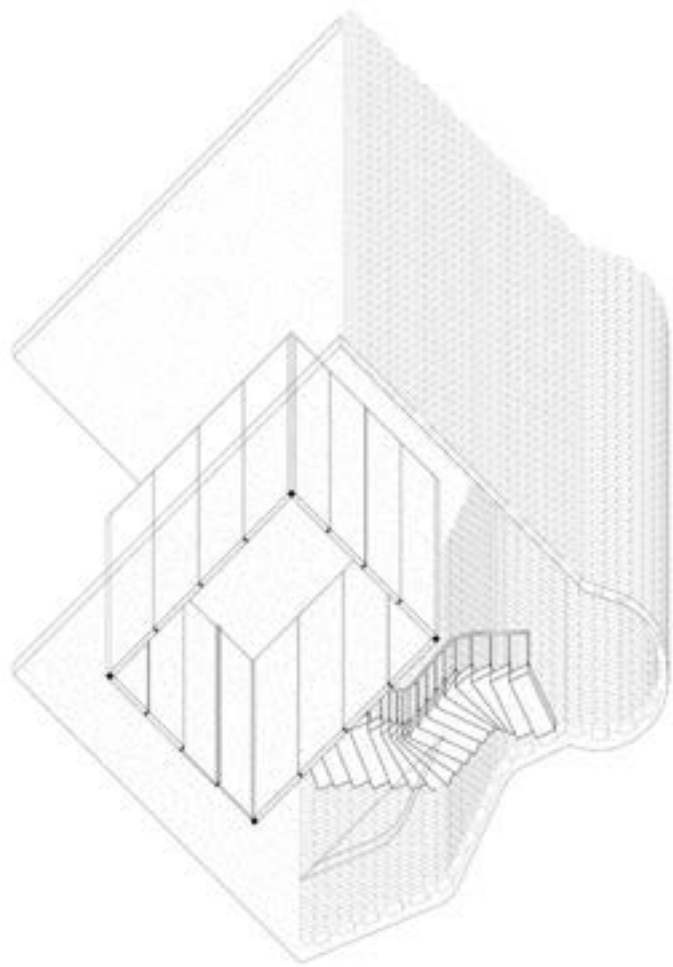


typical class plan

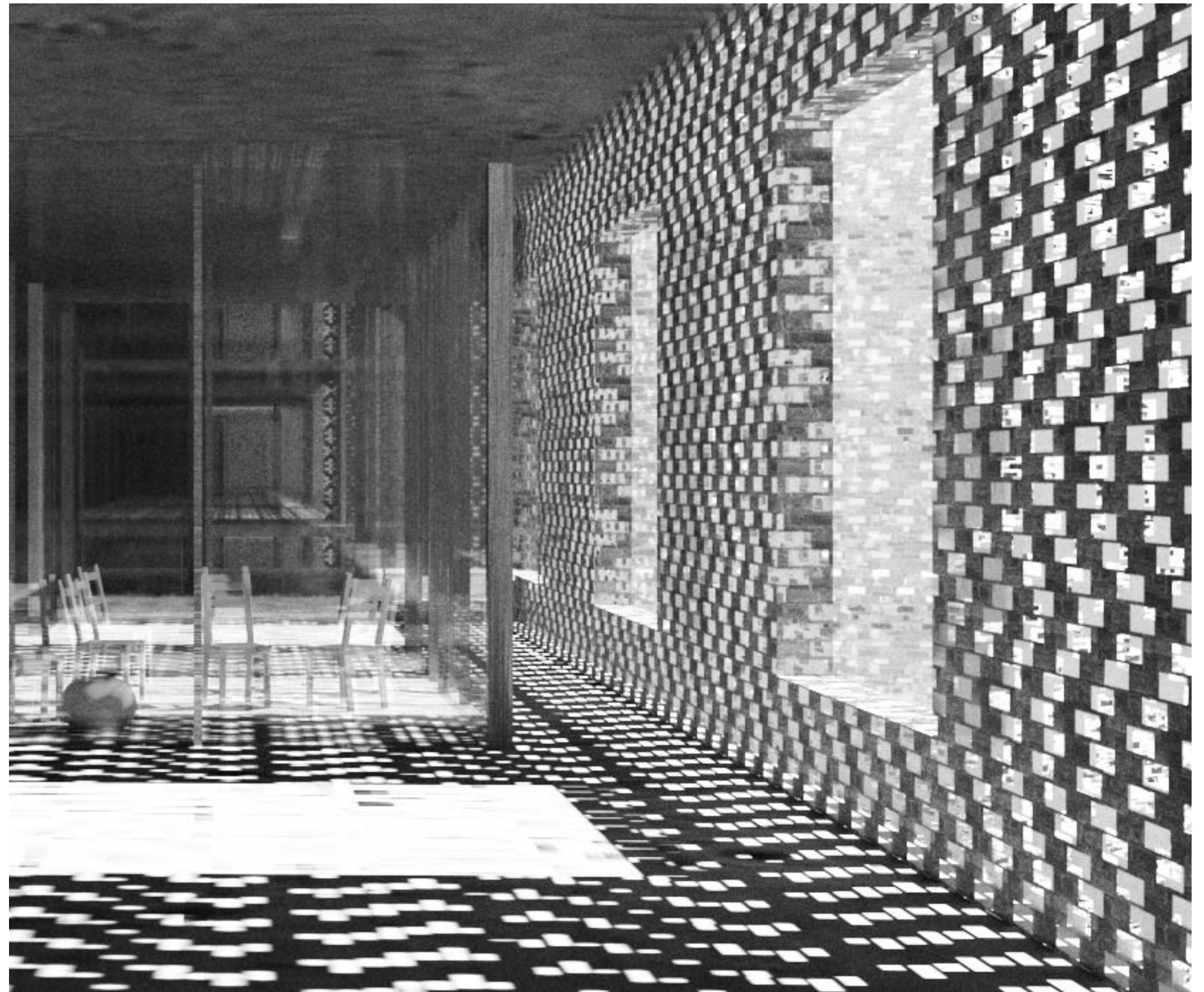


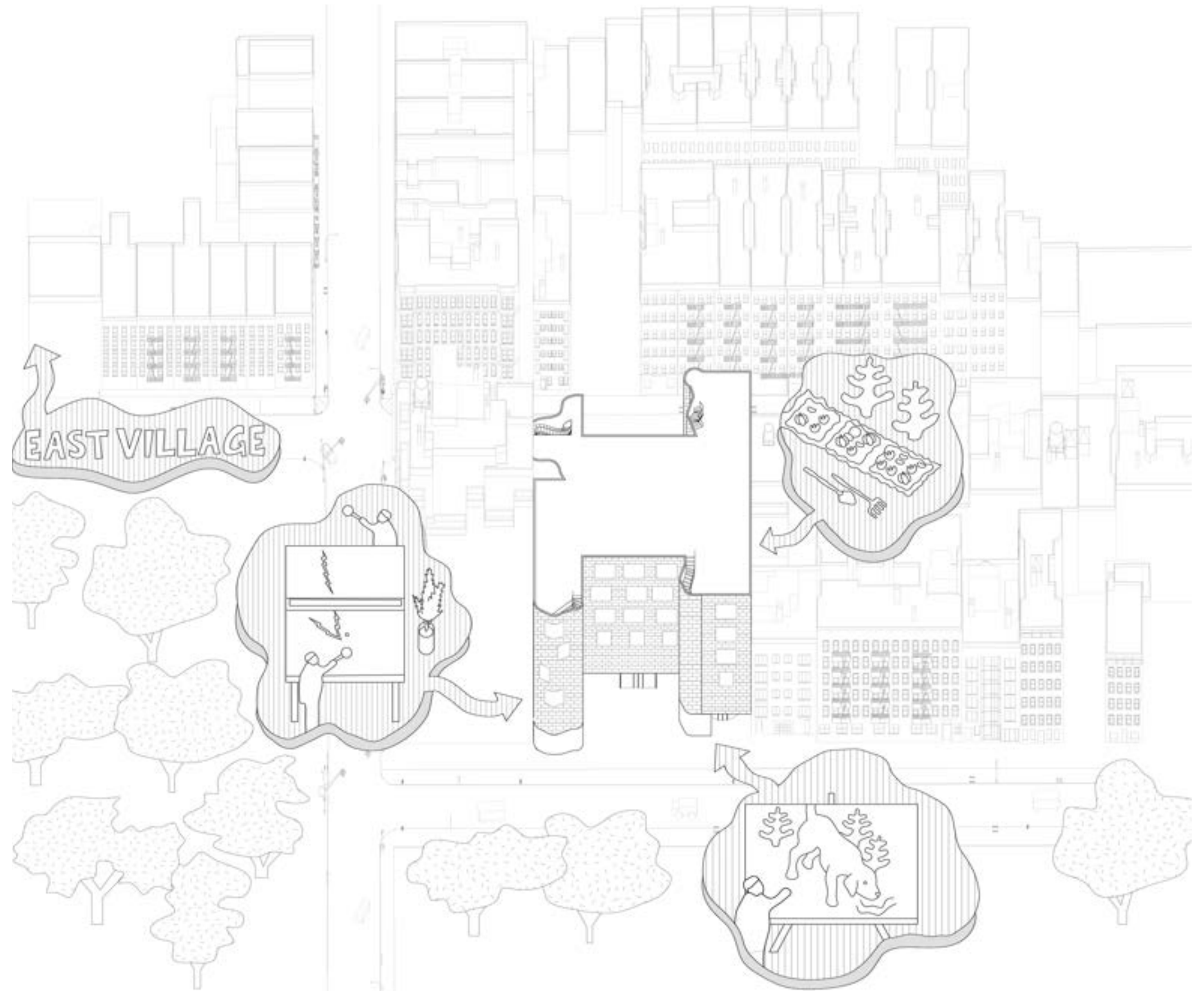
upper level plan





a. material assembly cutaway
b. perspective- brick screen





oblique w/ program zoom in

now trending...

Now Trending... questions styles and aesthetics. Architectural motifs in the urban landscape are entangled with place identity and place attachments by the communities they occupy. In closely examining these built choices, architecture can be a tool in reconstructing (or deconstructing) images that better reflect its users.

1. Koreatown: Redefining the Public & Private
2. Koreatown: Place Identity & Cultural Image



Koreatown: The Labor Market as it Redefines the Public & Private

Course: QAH II, Spring 2021

Critic: Mark Wigley

Introduction

In attempts to spatially understand the persistence of gender stratification, the physical separation that restricts women's access to certain spaces perpetuates a husband's status advantage over his wife's. While women's status is a result of a variety of racial, cultural, and socioeconomic factors, the spatial segregation and the physical arrangements only cater to the imaginary affluent white woman that society has constructed. This results in a spatial distinction between the domestic interior and the public exterior. "In being exclusively identified with the home, women are associated with traits of nurturance, cooperation, subjectivity, emotionalism, and fantasy. While 'man's world'- the public world of events and 'meaningful' work- is associated with objectivity, impersonalization, competition, and rationality". However, this infantilized construction of domesticity and the rigid delineation between the public and the private is challenged by the racialized labor of Asian women following the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965. This is made visible through a comparative look at New York City and Los Angeles Koreatown, showing how the enclaves' built environments and labor practices have shaped the visibility and status of the immigrant workers. The paper challenges the existing notions of the domestic interior and the public exterior to call for a more fluid definition of the public and private spheres in relation to labor.

History and Theory of the Public & Private Realm & its Relation to Whiteness

Historically the construction of whiteness has permeated both the public and private spheres. The Agora in Ancient Greek city-states only allowed for the gathering of free-born male citizens. Jim Crow laws and Jim Crow state constitutional provisions mandated the segregation of public schools, public spaces, and public transportation. Through the distinction between public and private spaces, it has been made clear who is given access to inhabit and participate in these different realms.

In the example of colonial Calcutta where the overlapping geographies and conceptions of space and territory between Black and white towns were constantly negotiated, "...the line of demarcation between the white and Black towns shifted depending on the context and the perception of the observer. In the absence of clearly defined separation, the colonizers created discrete containments for both public and private sociability. The spatial choices oscillated between a theatrical display of open plans and a proliferation of confining elements- elaborate compound walls and railings that spoke a calculated language of exclusion. The desire for strict boundaries was rooted in an eighteenth-century British obsession with classification, division, and separation, exaggerated in the colonial context by the need to distinguish between Black and white."

In relationship to the public, the private operates within the same exclusionary language, adopting the same values of whiteness. Property "... has functioned as a key resource for the production and reproduction of white domination and non-white subordination", and "...rights in property are contingent on, intertwined with, and conflated with race." Blight, in the context of race, has been substantial in the formation of a "foreclosure-free zone" in which "Black homes matter", as it has been a construct that emerged to know and manage the modern American city. Through this "...the concept of blight has scientized, spatialized, and monetized white supremacy and racism; the same people of color whose presence depreciated property values became agents of blight." And while these "...definitions of blight have consistently applied to property owned or occupied by people of color, while, on the other hand, the remediation of blight has consistently served to transfer property from people of color, through the state, to predominantly white investors, developers, or owners. Property has thereby served as both an instrument and reward of racism."

construction of domesticity and traditional family values have surfaced, yet these constructs apply exclusively to wealthy white women. As the Industrial Revolution “...radically altered the class structure and its inscription in the urban fabric” , working-class women of different ethnic subgroups left their homes to become factory workers. “...the slogan ‘woman’s place is in the home’ took on a certain aggressiveness and shrillness precisely” at this time when “only affluent white housewives could afford to lead shuttered lives secluded in suburbia.” Leslie Kanés Weisman offers the perspective of spatial segregation in the home, where the homemaker has no spaces of authority of her own. “She is attached to spaces of service. She is a hostess in the living room, a cook in the kitchen, a mother in the children’s room, a lover in the bedroom, a chauffeur in the garage.” While this analysis is sound, it once again only considers the affluent white woman as its protagonist. Patricia Hill Collins problematizes this traditional family ideal in relation to the Black woman in the context of labor.

“First, the assumed split between the ‘public’ sphere of paid employment and the ‘private’ sphere of unpaid family responsibilities has never worked for U.S. Black women. Under slavery, U.S. Black women worked without pay in the allegedly public sphere of Southern agriculture and had their family privacy routinely violated. Second, the public/private binary separating the family households from the paid labor market is fundamental in explaining U.S. gender ideology. If one assumes that real men work and real women take care of families, then African Americans suffer from deficient ideas concerning gender. In particular, Black women become less “feminine,” because they work outside the home, work for pay and thus compete with men, and their work takes them away from their children.” In this structure of the imagined traditional family ideal, the experiences of Black women and those of other women of color are regarded as inadequate. And this framework will be extended to follow the racialized labor practices in ethnic enclaves in the

United States, specifically Koreatown in New York and Los Angeles.

History of New York City Koreatown

Prior to 1965, immigration from Asia to the US was largely banned or discouraged. Asian immigrant women immigrated primarily as wives of US servicemen or to join their immigrant husbands. Following the 1965 Amendments of the Immigration and Nationality Act, the discriminatory system was overhauled, and equal quota was given regardless of national origin. During this time, many second and third generation Jewish Americans moved out of the inner cities to pursue white collar jobs leaving a large demand from prior consumers of the Jewish businesses. While there was no formal plan to create a Koreatown in Manhattan, the low rents and high tourist traffic from its proximity to Midtown Manhattan landmarks like the Empire State Building, Macy’s Herald Square, Penn Station, and Madison Square Garden, made it an ideal location for Korean immigrants to settle. Korean business owners started the redevelopment of West 32nd Street, and Koreatown formed on 32nd Street between Madison Avenue and the intersection with Sixth Avenue and Broadway.

As tight-knit immigrant groups stayed within their communities and networks, similar skills and businesses were shared and inherited. Self-employed in the grocery business, dry cleaning, and wholesale and retail sales of Korean-imported merchandise, the enclave “...functioned as a production space for mostly Korean immigrant wholesalers and their staff, together with garment factories, as in a traditional ethnic enclave.” But due to economic restructuring in the late 1980s, the growth of the economy pushed many wholesalers to seek alternative living spaces due to rent increases. Koreatown in Manhattan quickly moved from a traditional ethnic enclave to a commercialized district for consumption. It “... has not served any residential purpose for any ethnic group due to the zoning regulations that prohibit the construction of residential units. Instead, it provided additional leisure and entertainment space opportunities,

“The fluidity between the public and the private that challenged the existing constructs of the realms were largely due to the racialized labor practices of the immigrant women. Through the commercialization of the communities and of Korean culture, the w laborers became a spectacle for the white consumer.”

enabling Koreatown to be open for businesses at all hours.” These businesses physically aligned with the vertical landscape of Manhattan by occupying not only the first floor of the buildings, but also on the second, third, and fourth floors. Programmatically the businesses began to occupy the quasi-public and the quasi-private; laundromats, massage parlors, and all-night spas became an extension of the domestic tasks performed in the traditional construct of the home.

This Seoul style consumption, framed by zoning regulations and the nature of the businesses, began to facilitate the exploitation of labor practices. And today there are “...no organizations or leadership in Manhattan that actively represent the voices of Korean and Latino workers who service the kitchens, storage rooms, and front desks of the businesses that drive the Han-style-based economy. Most activism or support for Koreatown workers in Manhattan—when it does arise—is initiated by the Department of Labor and occasionally activists outside the ethnic community.” The style of 24-hour consumption manifested in the physical form, as stated before, in brightly lit awnings that occupied multiple floors of a single building, and through the packaged construction of cultural symbols

articulated on multiple storefronts in a form of manufactured place identities.



History of Los Angeles Koreatown

As the formation of Koreatown in New York City followed the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, the emergence of a Koreatown in Los Angeles was happening at the same time. As the Black population increased in southern Los Angeles at the time, affluent white Americans moved out the mid-Wilshire district. The area north of Olympic Boulevard transitioned from a predominantly white suburb to a place of residence for Korean immigrants. The enclave here encompassed a much larger area; it was comprised mostly of multifamily residential units and densely packed Korean commercial enterprises concentrated along its main corridors on Olympic, Western, Wilshire, and Vermont. Architecturally, the horizontal landscape of Los Angeles allowed for the single-story buildings to be demolished and ornamented relatively easily. The buildings in the first Korean plaza, the Korean Village, were adorned with imported blue Korean roof tiles and painted in an ornate Korean style. As the enclave received its official designation as Koreatown from the city, a freeway sign and a few Korean-style buildings marked its establishment.

While the Korean immigrants in Manhattan moved out of Koreatown in search of cheaper housing, the Koreatown in Los Angeles became home to one of the largest populations of Koreans living in America. Both first- and second-generation Korean immigrants lived in the enclave,

and the traditions and customs have almost directly transferred over from the motherland. In this way, the Koreatown in Los Angeles functioned as a traditional ethnic enclave; the residents lived and work, and the networks within the enclave provided knowledge and interpersonal relationships within the community. To complicate this interpretation, it is important to acknowledge that the neighborhood had one of the lowest median household incomes, and it housed a large Latinx immigrant population, “...many of whom are undocumented and whose labor provided the backbone for Korean businesses.” This is physically manifested in the VIP Palace, one of the first Korean businesses which was later converted to the Oaxacan restaurant, La Guelaguetza. Outside the architectural choices are Korean, but the interior, adorned in bright colors, reflects the Oaxacan culture.



While there are businesses in Los Angeles Koreatown for commercialized consumption, in pursuit of a community, many more services, like banks, medical offices, and realtors, in addition to highly trafficked storefronts, were established for the residents. Certain opportunities were afforded to Korean immigrants who were landing in Los Angeles Koreatown with the organization of these businesses. The community structure within the enclave provided support, mitigating the effects of the existing barriers of moving to the US. The distinctiveness of the “...Korean ethnic entrepreneurship in Los Angeles is a unique example of a recent immigrant group that appeared to arrive with start-up capital, and had a proclivity for self-employment. Their definition of the ethnic economy has no spatial relationship, and is in fact, not

bounded by any particular geographic neighborhood, but is rather motivated by availability of land and low rents.

These land rent dynamics have created new multi-ethnic and blended forms of labor market participation.” And this is exemplified by the blended workforce in Los Angeles Koreatown between minority groups, more specifically between Korean and Latinx immigrants. This reading is also applicable to New York’s Koreatown in the way the economy was driven by land and low rent; with the increase of property prices the business owners searched for cheaper places of residence. The next portion of the paper will further explore the similarities and differences of the Koreatowns in relation to their labor practices how the enclaves occupy the public and private realms.

The Theatrics of Labor

The fluidity between the public and the private that challenged the existing constructs of the realms were largely due to the racialized labor practices of the immigrant women. Through the commercialization of the communities and of Korean culture, the laborers became a spectacle for the white consumer. In extending Adrienne Brown’s argument in *Erecting the Skyscraper*, she articulates the role of the construction worker as their labor becomes a performance and a spectacle for the viewer. “The spectacular nature of the skyscraper construction worker’s labor, the job’s inherent danger, and the incredulousness, expressed by members of the public that men alone could be responsible for these seemingly extra-human structures resulted in this figure taking on an ambivalent iconicity.” Brown references William A. Starrett in his 1928 monograph *Skyscrapers and the Men Who Build Them*; he characterizes the “’enthusiastic spectator who gazes with admiration at some feat of skill and daring performed by for his very eyes.’” Through the theatricality of the labor, the construction site becomes a drama choreographed by the builders. Yet unsurprisingly, the acknowledgement of the Native Americans, immigrants, and ethnic workers who joined in the construction of the tower are erased from

the narrative. In Starrett’s casual use of the word chief, he “...invokes the figure of the Indian while vanishing the place of his actual body- active in skyscraper construction longer than Starrett’s family- from the scene of building entirely.”

Similarly in the way the labor of the construction worker functioned as a spectacle for the observer, the hiring practices and consumerism of Korean culture in Koreatown also operated as a performance for the audience. The visibility of the workers is paradoxical in this way; the assumed authenticity in the identity of the East Asian worker in the enclave is appropriated by the white audience, and this further encourages the consumption of the community. But in the obsession to consume only certain parts, there is a lack of appreciation and visibility “... to the rich identities, histories, activism and representations underlying Koreatown and Korean culture.” While local media gurus in Los Angeles like LA Times Weekly have dubbed Los Angeles Koreatown as one of America’s hippest ethnic neighborhoods , as stated before, the neighborhood has one of the lowest median household incomes, and with this comes a variety of related issues. The selected visibility of the neighborhood and its residents perpetrate the erasure of the people, degrading the culture to only the favorable aspects by the white audience. And while the culture is open to be consumed by the public, the lack of visibility of the community becomes a private concern. Further, in the shifting diversity and ethnically heterogeneous population of the boundaries which constitute Los Angeles Koreatown, it is impossible to view the enclave through a national identity, but the community is commonly imagined and described as an extension of Seoul. This is further reflected in the employment of East Asian women as the image of the business, yet the Latinx immigrants who are employed in the Korean businesses, mainly in the back of house, are shielded from the public. In this way the public businesses become segregated for the different employees by segregating the more visible laborers from the workers who work in the back. These labor practices facilitated a

hybridized counterfeit of the authenticity of the enclave, and in this curated image of the culture, the laborers become a symbol for the white spectator. Through the performance like nature of the immigrant laborers within the businesses in which they are employed, the visibility of the community became diminished, and these practices further conflated the existing delineation of the public and private.

“The selected visibility of the neighborhood and its residents perpetrate the erasure of the people, degrading the culture to only the favorable aspects by the white audience.”

Labor Practices in Relation to the Public and Private Between the Two Cities

As stated previously, the businesses in Los Angeles Koreatown functioned as a traditional ethnic enclave with a live-in residential immigrant population, and in comparison, the immigrants in New York Koreatown lived outside of the commercial district due to high property values and zoning regulations. However, regardless of the communities in the area, both Koreatowns functioned as a place for white consumption. As the awnings and ornamentation reflected a very curated place identity, the Korean character within the enclaves became more of a global brand less defined by geographic identity and political ideology and more aligned with the commercial interests. In the way the “series of decorative elements installed in Chicago’s Chinatown in the past two decades exemplify such efforts to repackage ‘Chineseness’ for global consumption.” This can be extended to illustrate how the US conflated East Asian cultures.

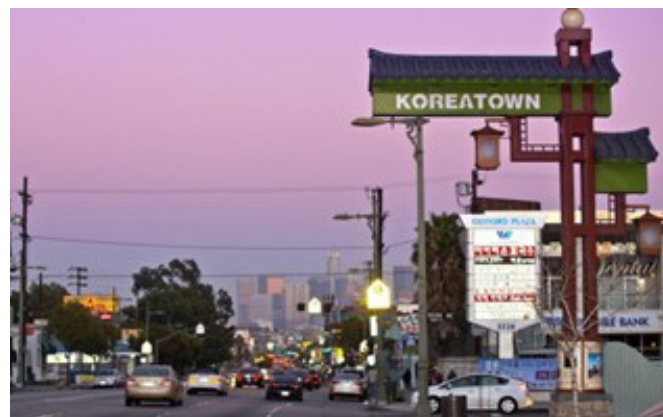
The lack of visibility of the workers and the community become further exacerbated

by the architectural choices in the enclaves. In Los Angeles Koreatown the use of the tiled roof becomes immediately recognizable and associated with traditional Korean architecture. This similar architectural feature can be encountered “...in San Francisco’s Little Tokyo, but in that space, the curvilinear tiled roofs are distinctively Japanese.” Again, this is seen in the Koreatown in Oakland, California. In the tiled roof’s application throughout multiple East Asian enclaves in the United States, “the architecture becomes semiotized as belonging to the architectural conventions of a particular national imaginary (in this case, Korea) in accordance with what the typical viewer expects them to be. The architectural design, in the context of the United States, is obviously not U.S.-American and is understood to be Korean, but only insofar as it occurs within a space in which the objective is the production of Koreanness.” In addition to the tiled roof in Los Angeles, the production of ‘Koreaness’ is further memorialized in the built environment in the forms of ornamental lampposts and other public signs.



Like the function of the ornamentation found in Los Angeles, the street sign’s demarcation signals to the culture of the enclave. However, the Koreatown in Manhattan is not bound to the officially designated street alone. This illustrates the disconnect between official designation and how the individual communities make sense of the corresponding space. The architectural choices and the official designations of the spaces worked to produce a very commercialized image of the culture, and through the occupation of the laborers and the consumption by the audience, the constructs of the public and private begin to coalesce.

In the white male consumer’s obsession to buy and consume the more materialistic and superficial aspects of Korean culture, the constructed definition of the public becomes private. In the idealization of the traditional family as a private haven from a public world, lies the assumption of a fixed sexual division of labor that assumes the separation of work and family. Madison May in Collin’s book criticizes the “...definitions of work that grant White men more status and human worth because they are employed in better-paid occupations. She recognizes that work is a contested construct and that evaluating individual worth by the type of work performed is a questionable practice in systems based on race and gender inequality.” As the scholarship surrounding the spatial segregation between the public and private realms focuses on the man’s occupation of the public, the mere existence of Asian women laborers in the commercialized spaces of Koreatown disrupts the ideology of the father-head



In producing an imagery of Koreatown for the white gaze, the community becomes reduced to a caricature. In New York, the approach is more subtle, but the carefully produced image of Koreatown for the white user still exists. “...The Korean district is designated through signs that mark the area as ‘Korea Way.’” The sign closely resembles an ordinary street sign, and it is officially authorized and placed.

earning an adequate family wage in the public. In the way the labor practices disrupt the existing characterization of the public through the blending of the private, the occupational structure and flexible market of the labor further complicate the definition of the private. In the context of Los Angeles Koreatown, hostess work, initially described as “commercial exchange of individual flirtatious acts”, “...leads to the culmination of a ‘girlfriend experience,’ which simulates the experience of a romantic partner for the client.” The rooms act as liminal spaces in which private moments are curated. In the experience of the hostess, the threshold between the private and the public become blurred. Similarly, with no tenants in New York Koreatown, public services like massage parlors, laundromats, and all-night spas become an extension of the private for mass consumption, as the intimacy of the work is traditionally performed in the home. Through Arne Kalleberg’s model of precarious labor as a lens for the flexible market and employment relations in Koreatown, he shows that the labor practices “ultimately led to the rise of precarious work, characterized by part-time, temporary, casualized, and contingent labor.” In the instability of the labor, the employment risks shift from the economy to the employee, yet again devaluing the labor of the Korean immigrant woman, and creating a distinct hierarchy where capital is prioritized over the needs of the human. In this way, the private realm becomes commercialized for the public.

“The architectural conventions and spaces in the built environment of the enclaves, paired with the fetishization and obsession to consume Asian culture shaped the visibility of Asian immigrant workers.”

Conclusion

While the construction of domesticity is formed by a strict demarcation between the public and the private, the theatrical display of racialized labor of Asian women following the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 subverted the current definitions, and the practices allowed for a more fluid definition between the two realms. As the paper made this visible through the Koreatowns in New York City and Los Angeles, it is important to note the work and practice of other ethnic enclaves and immigrant laborers in shaping this process. As the architectural conventions and spaces in the built environment of the enclaves, paired with the fetishization and obsession to consume Asian culture shaped the visibility of Asian immigrant workers, it is important to critically examine those practices in acknowledging the Asian and Asian-American experience today.

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The assigned identity of Koreatown, often viewed as an extension of Seoul, is reduced to a caricature that signals a place and cultural image. The construction of this image conflates time, place, and moment at multiple scales- city, school, body. Site spatially adds to this phenomenon through the landscape by constructing forced perspectives to the RFK memorial and the school which emphasize the grandness, from the ground looking up. There are only two paths to enter the school, forcing the students and the public to adhere to these ways of moving through the site.

The current curriculum offers courses geared to self-expression- music performance, theater, art (which could allow students to construct and express their own self of self), but the current academy perpetrates a specific point of view.

The proposal introduces shifting planes and berming of a new landscape that follows the current logic of the forced perspectives. Paths from the RFK park intersect the school to create new modes of entry to spaces of knowledge transmission (classroom). Changing levels and reflective planes that sometimes look solid or planar, redefine the image of the school. Through the use of reflective imagery, the school is in constant remediation of itself.

Koreatown: Place Identity & Cultural Image

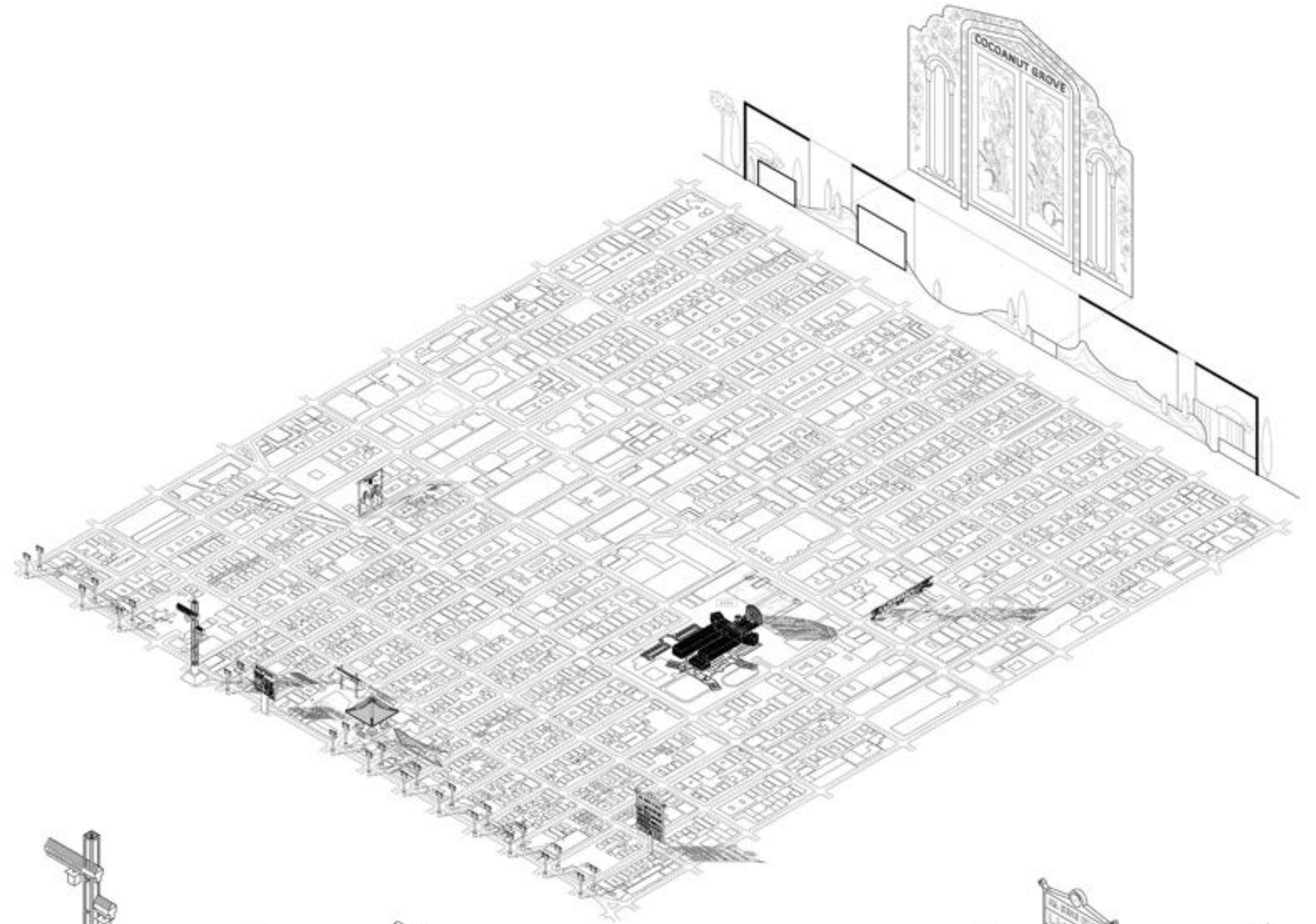
Studio: ADV V, Fall 2022

Critic: Mario Gooden

Site: Koreatown, Los Angeles, California

Research:

- a. ornamental objects spatially mapped
- b. appropriated elements in cocoanut grove



001 N. 1/4 Sec. 36, T. 1N, R. 10E



002 N. 1/4 Sec. 36, T. 1N, R. 10E



003 N. 1/4 Sec. 36, T. 1N, R. 10E



004 N. 1/4 Sec. 36, T. 1N, R. 10E



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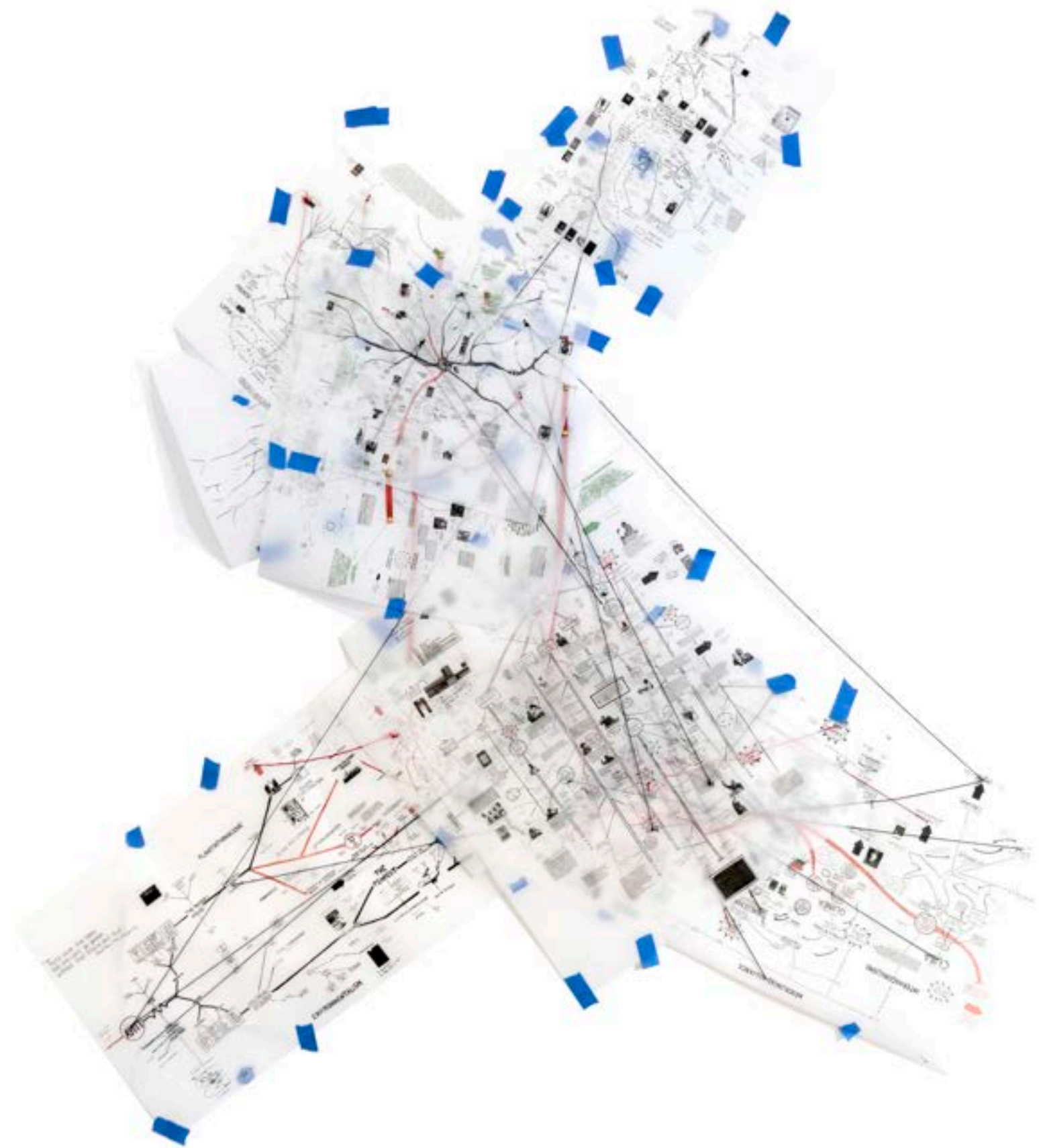
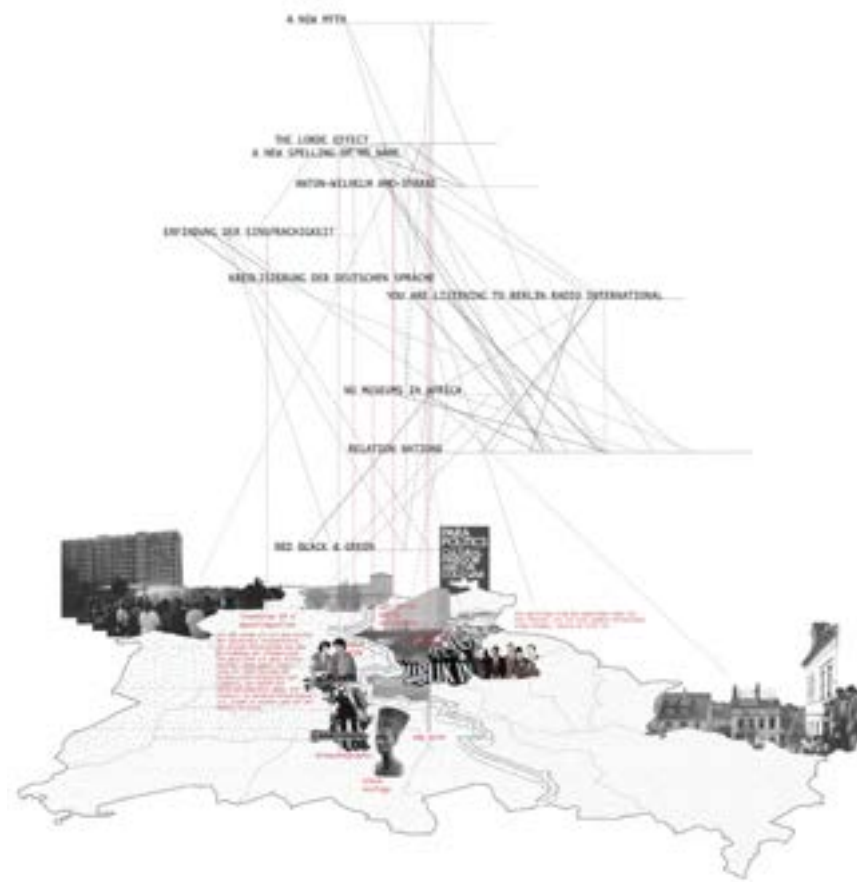


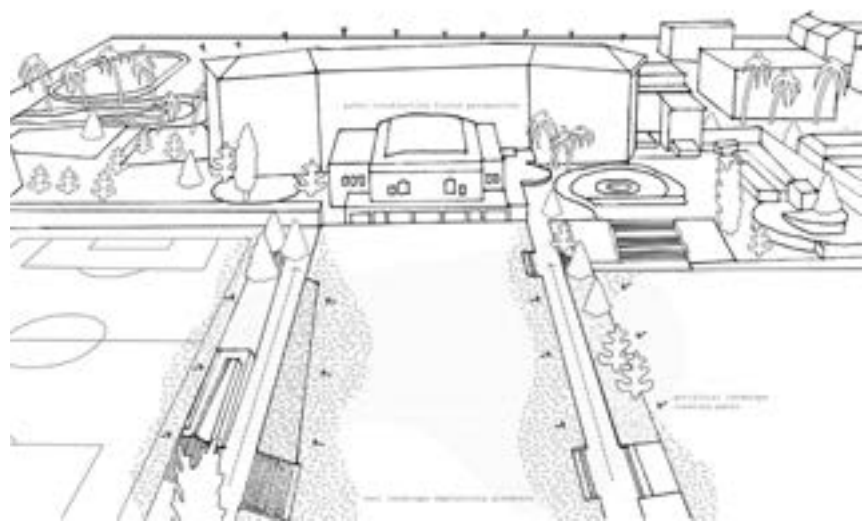
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Research:

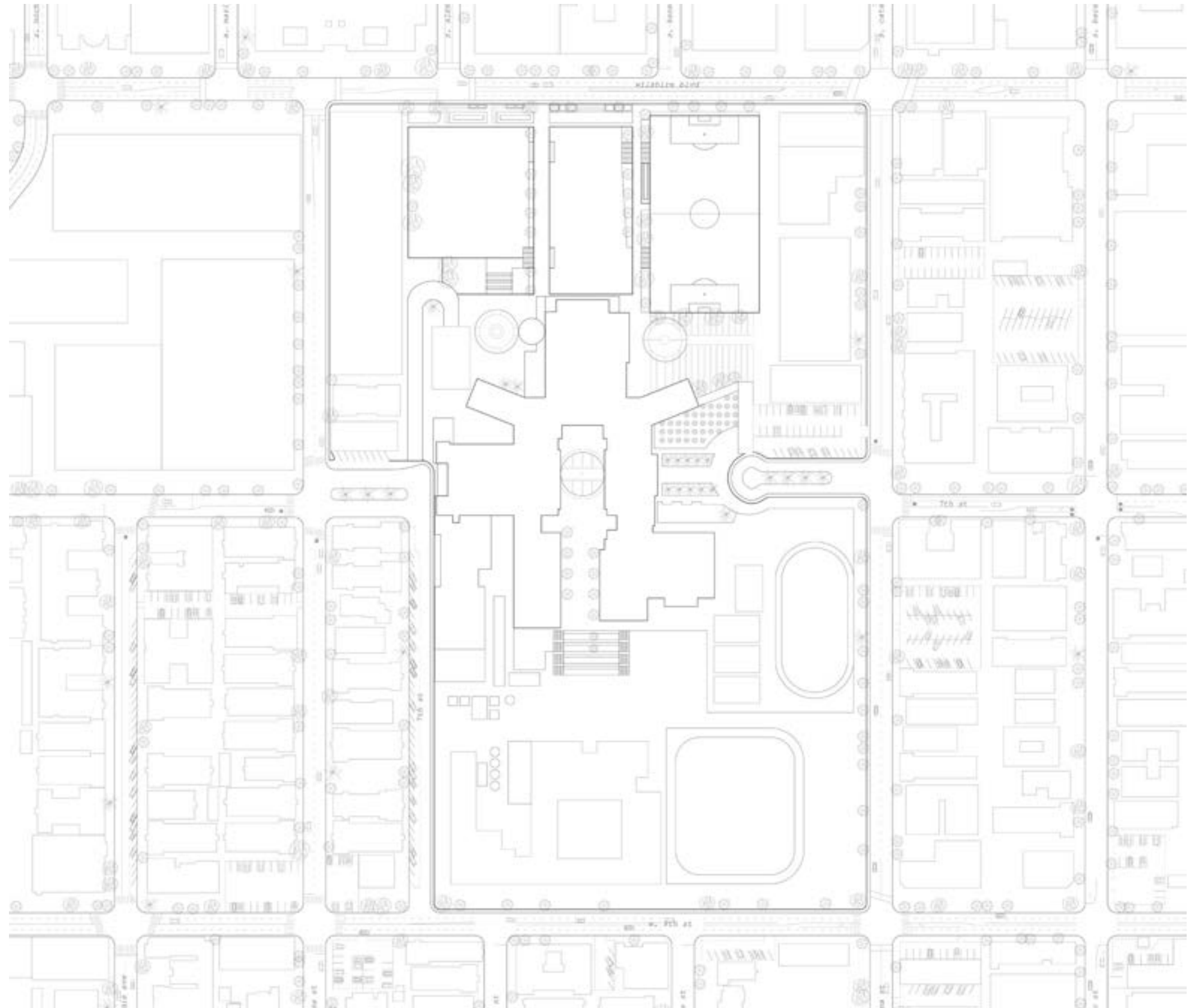
- a. analysis of Moses Marz "Decolonial Reading Notes" (Internal)
- b. analysis of Moses Marz "Decolonial Reading Notes" (External)

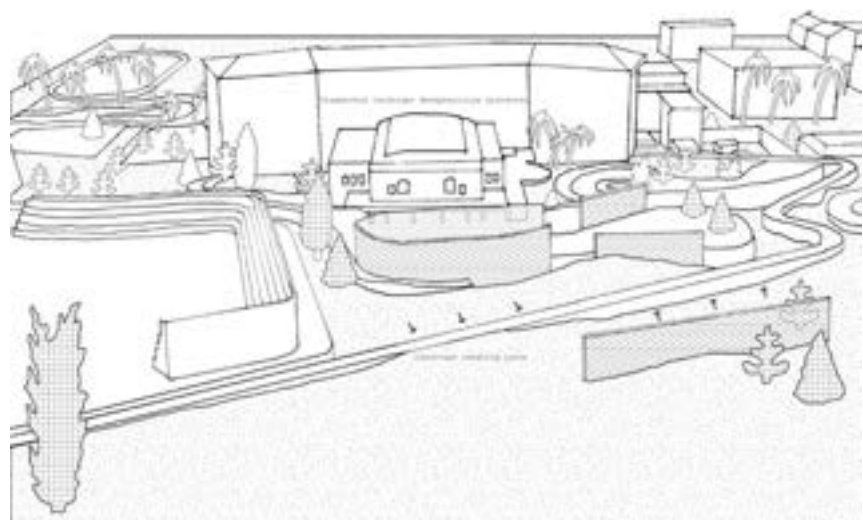
in collaboration w/ Daniel Chang



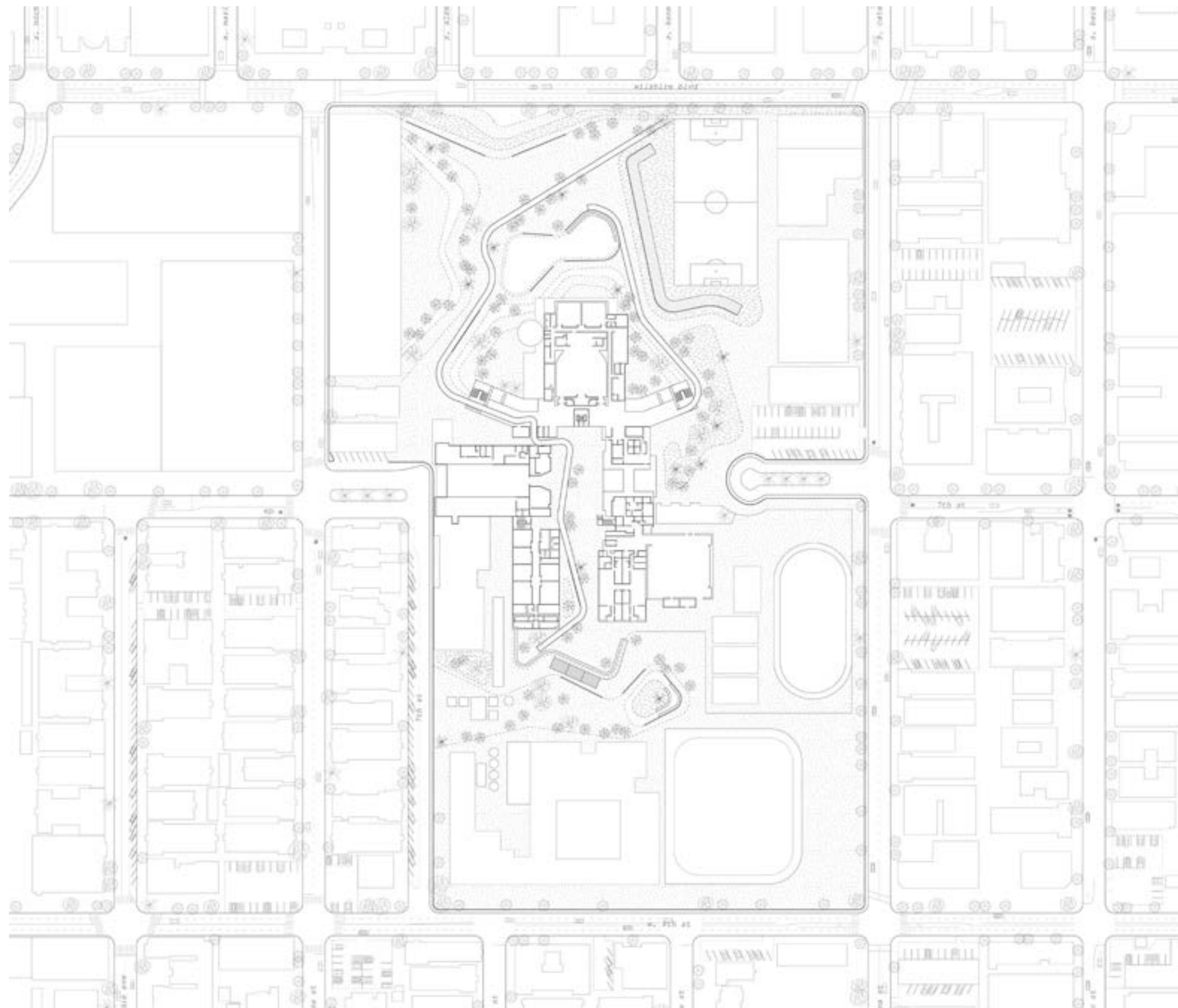


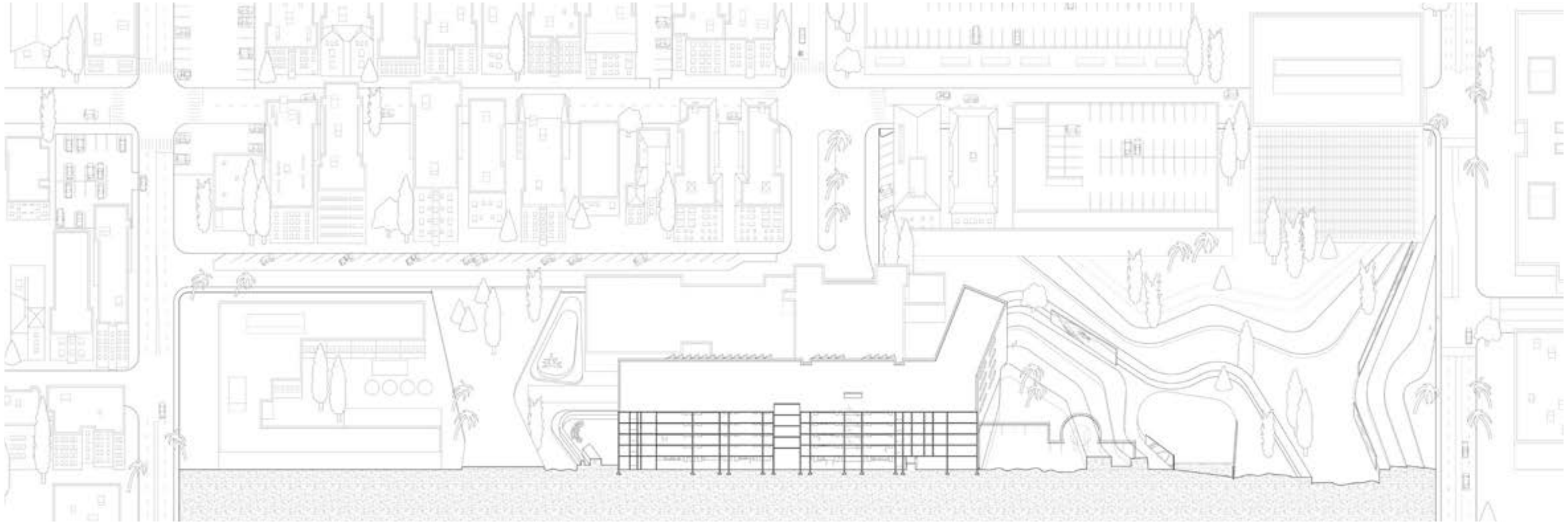
existing site conditions





proposed landscape





site section oblique



mediating between self



mediating between building and city

