

On
the
Nose

Embodying the heavy-handedness suggested by its name, *On the Nose* is less a title and more an orientation. The ongoing collapse of forms of political domination, as demonstrated by increasing brutality, warrants a collapse of the pretense of critical distance. Collapse does not always warrant rebuilding, and perhaps, it is time to abandon the ruses of signification so familiar to architectural discipline in favor of incisive engagements with the tools of architectural education.

What follows is a testament to attempts to theorize this orientation in relation to critical architectural discourses and non-normative architectural practice. More often than not, these testaments, whether drawn, modeled, or written, verge on the speculative—but always remain on the nose.

4
14
34
40
52
60
72
80

On the Nose

Pano Preto
adv 6 studio | Mario Gooden

Inversion / Insertion
core 3 studio | Galia Solomonoff

Footnotes to Development
environments of governance | Felicity Scott

Side Waqf
adv 4 studio | Ziad Jammaledine

Special Drawing Rights (and Wrongs)
postmodernism & world systems | Reinhold Martin

Capacitive Voids
core 2 studio | Karla Rothstein

Wipochk Baths
core 1 studio | Lindsey Wikstrom

Path of Most Resistance
adv 5 studio | Yussef Agbo-Ola & Cory Archie

Pano Preto

Adv 6 Studio Spring 2024 | Critic: Mario Gooden

Historically regarded as the first panoramic representation of Salvador, the Prospecto pela marinha a Cidade do Salvador Bahia de todos os Santos (Marine Prospectus of the City of Salvador Bay of All Saints, commonly referred to as the Caldas Prospectus) of 1756 represented an optical shift in the vision of, what was at the time, the capital of the largest Portuguese colony in the Americas. No longer, or rather not as, concerned with the orthographic or linear perspective of previous representations, the panorama, as Caldas' aptly titled Prospectus (from the Latin pro 'forward' + specere 'to look') might suggest, became a way to anticipate, or more specifically to speculate, not just military threats but financial profit. The technological development at the core of the panoramic drawing was the capacity for simultaneity, in other words, the ability to

forgo the time that would otherwise be needed to see from discrete viewpoints. Within the colonial framework which understood vision as a relation which preconditioned domination, previously restricted to the spatial domain, this development afforded the potential for temporal domination as well.

Of course, the colonial fantasy of the dual domination of space and time, which in many ways anticipates the panoptic ideal, was just that, a distortion which functioned to make a desired future visible. Furthermore, the technological development represented by the panorama was, like most technological developments, an abstraction. The panorama, as a spatial and temporal mode of capture, abstracts the time, and by extension movement, necessary for this process of graphic capture to occur. The panorama then naturalizes this abstraction

Photo from inside 1:1 model demonstrating effectiveness of pinhole camera by projecting the view of the roof of Fayerweather Hall and the School of International and Public Affairs

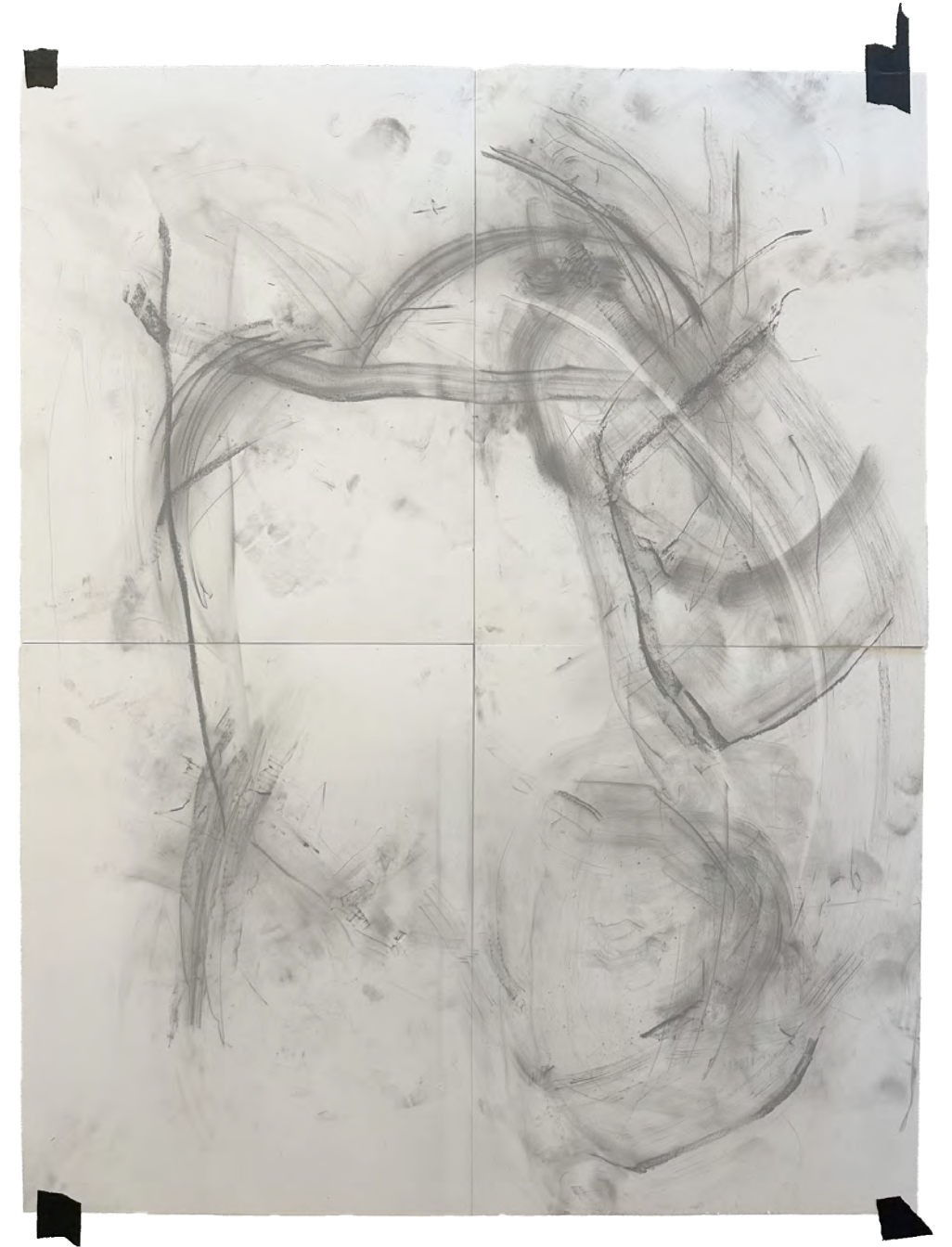


by presenting what are in fact drawn records of movement, or cinematographic fragments, as a single photographic totality.

For Jose Antonio Caldas, the mechanism which enables this universalization, understood as the process by which these fragments come to be contained within one whole (i.e. the panorama), was the camera obscura.

Research conducted by Brazilian architect and academic Carlos Francisco Moura has revealed Caldas' own attestation to the use of portable optical cameras to 'take' his prospectuses, including the Salvador prospectus. Caldas referred to this prospectus as the "most modern," in reference to the fact that such a representation of Salvador had not been

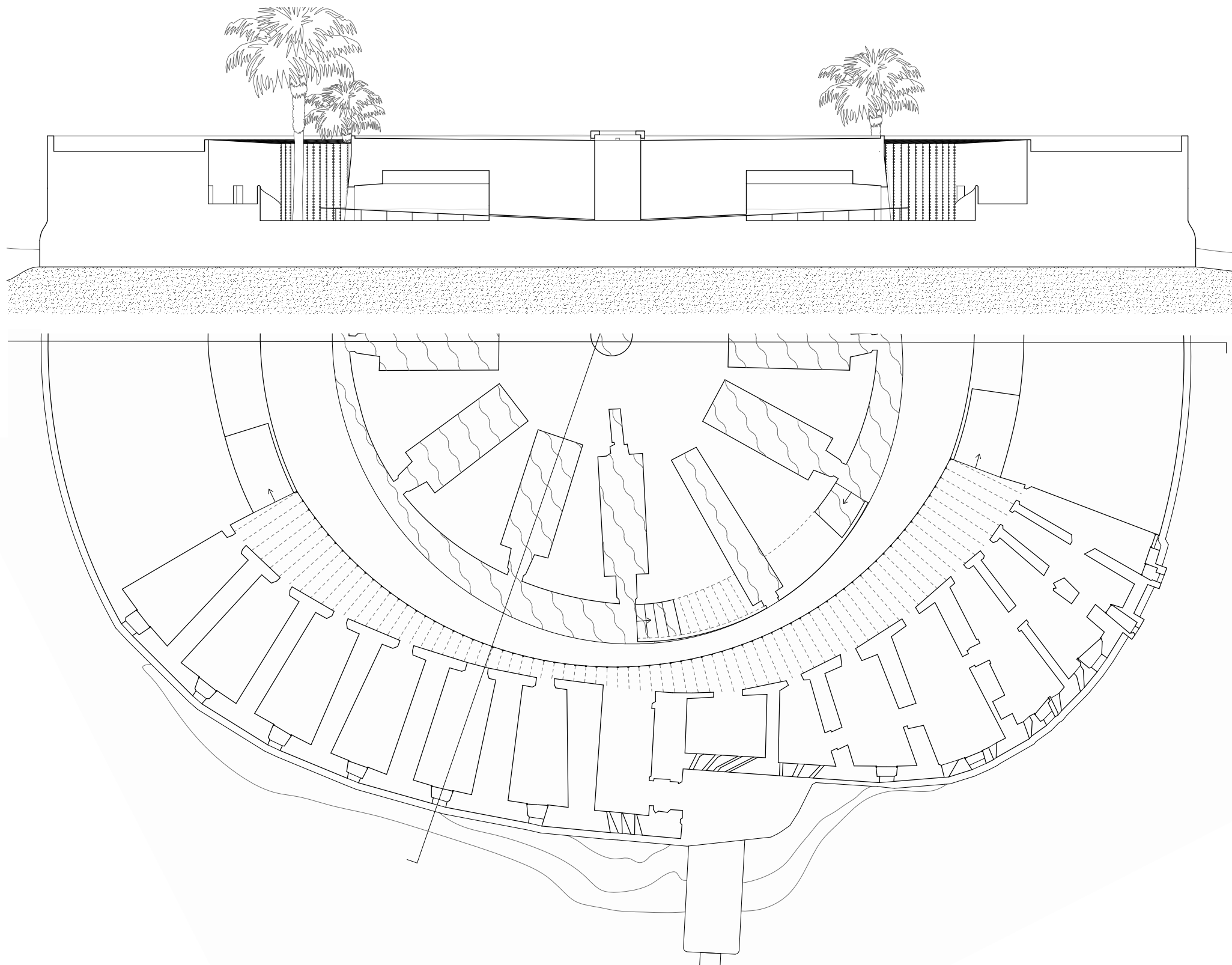
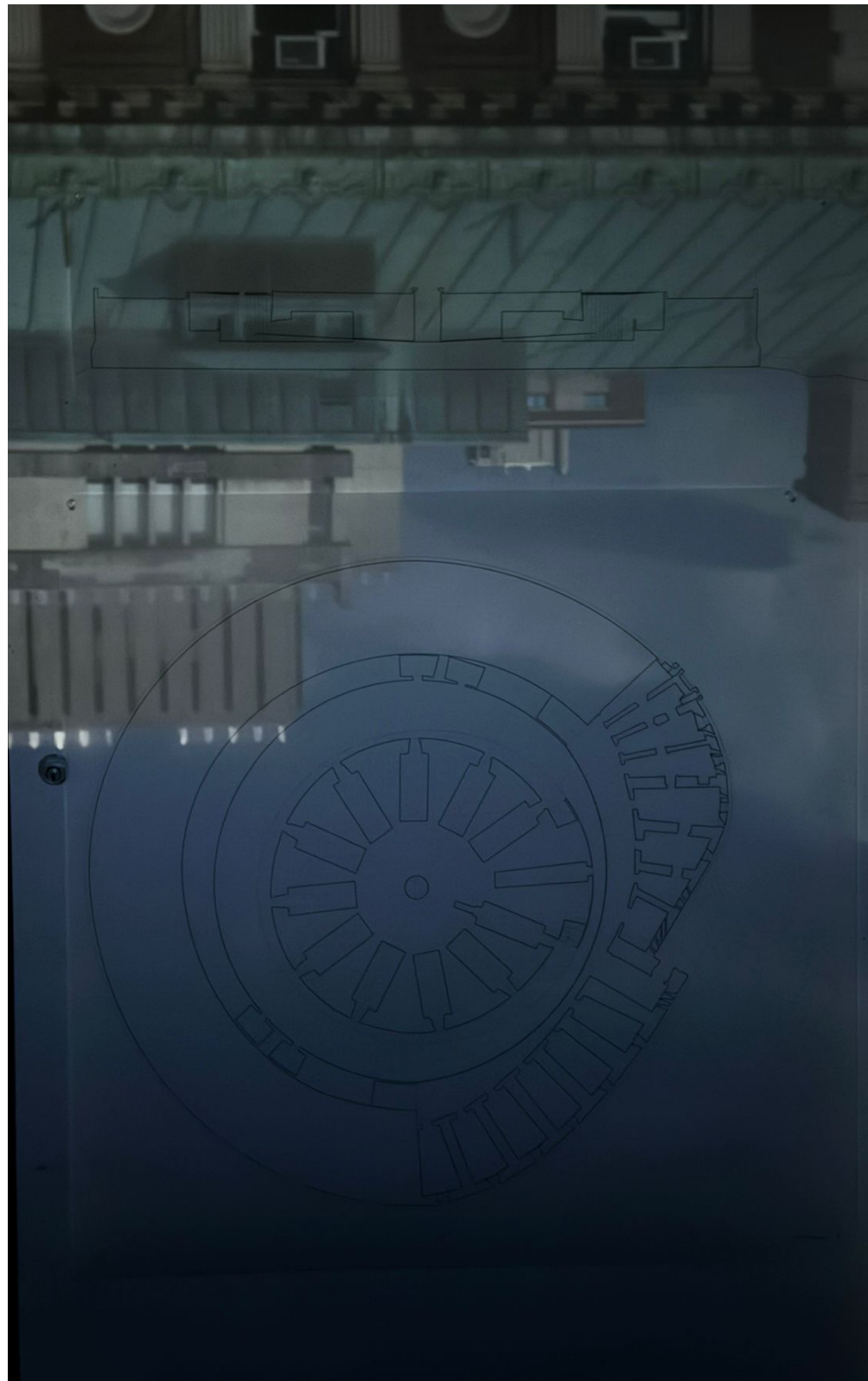
Prospecto pela marinha a Cidade do Salvador Bahia de todos os Santos by Jose Antonio Caldas (1756)

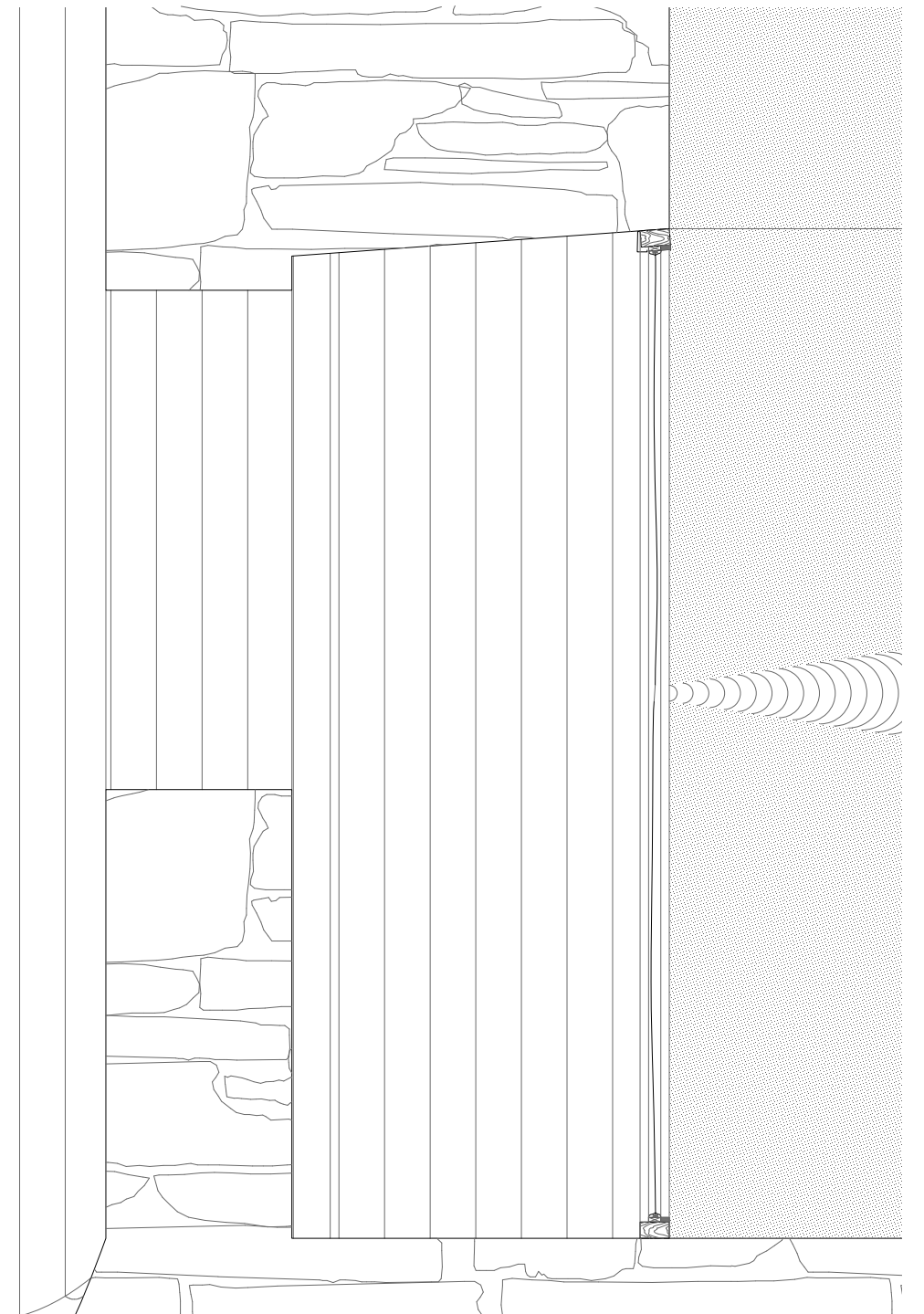
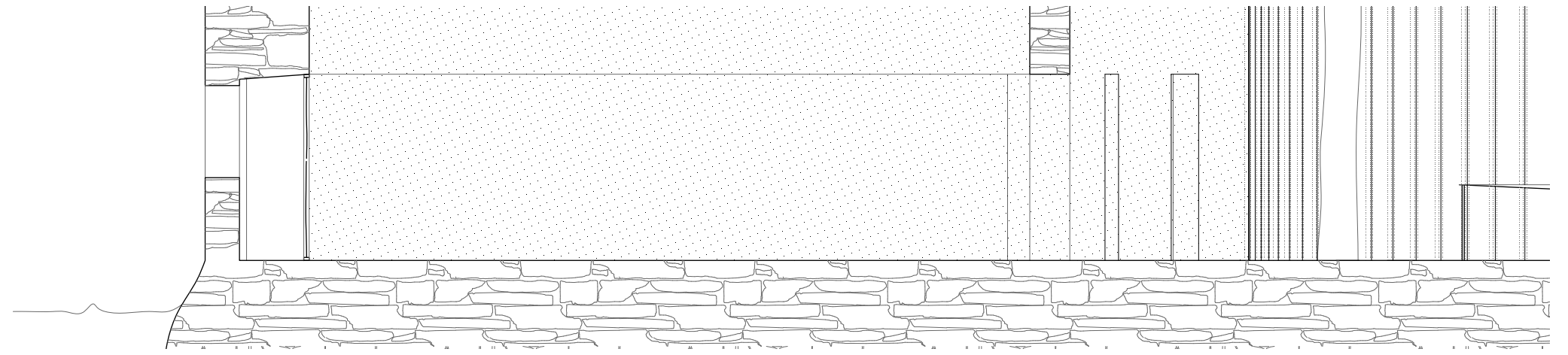


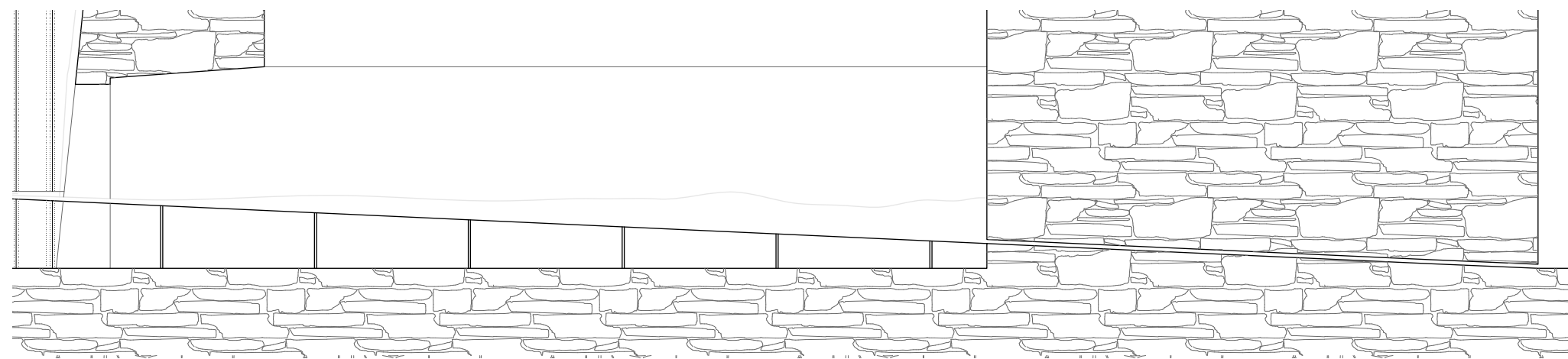
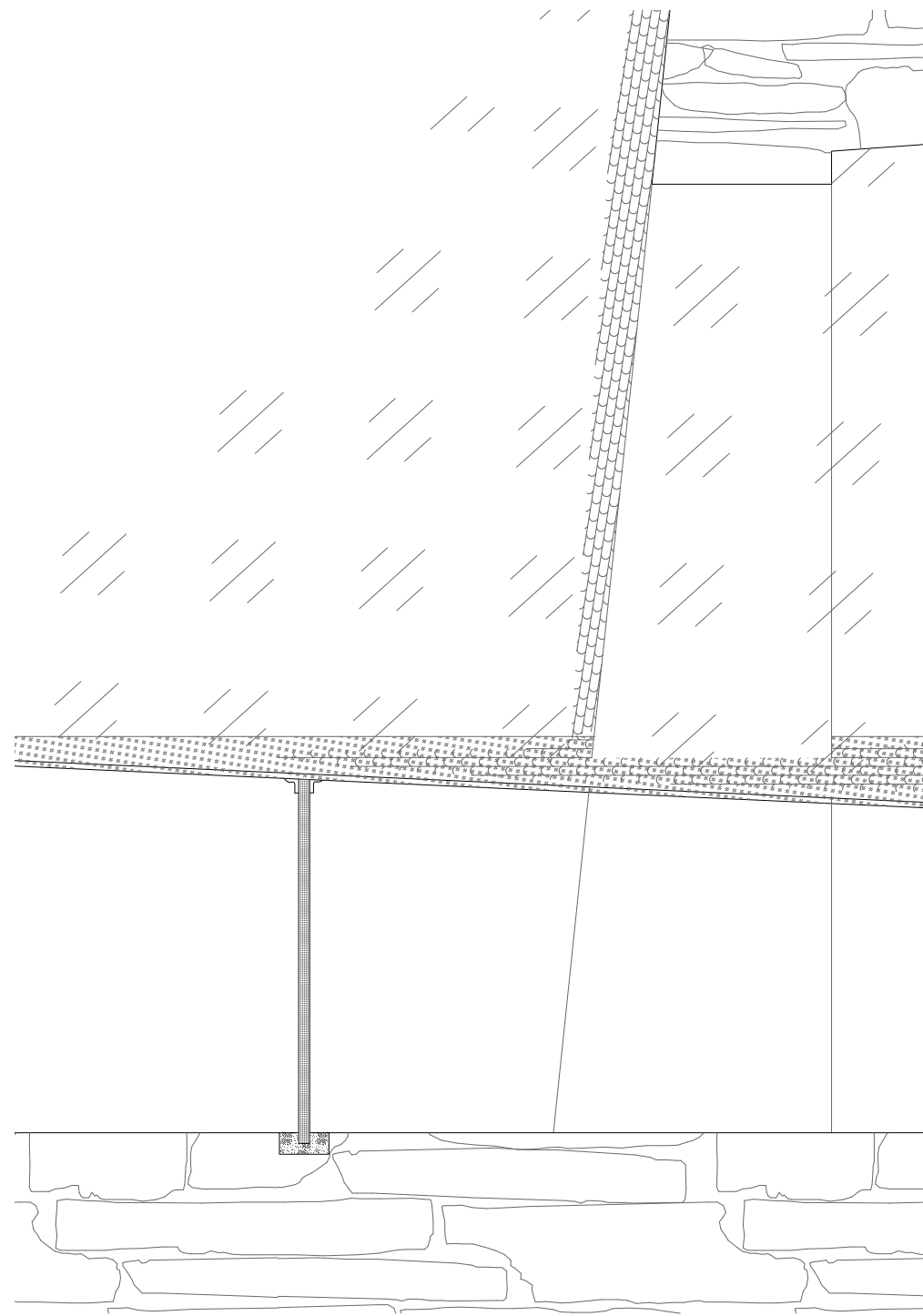
produced before his own. However, in a metaphorical sense, Caldas' Prospectus was also the most modern in the way that its commission revealed the developing desires underlying Portuguese colonial presence in Salvador.

In other words, that Caldas, a military engineer, was the first to represent Salvador panoramically was not incidental or tangential.

Caldas was a graduate and teacher at the Aula de Arquitetura Militar da Bahia (a military architecture academy), and his prospectus demonstrates how the epistemic objectives of military drawing school coincide with, and furthermore, represent, in the most literal sense, the aspirations of colonial modernity.







Inversion / Insertion

Core 3 Studio Fall 2022 | Critic: Galia Solomonoff | Partner: Ian Callender

The site demands that our approach to housing considers the cycles and spaces, outside of the home, that mediate more normative understandings of housing as a private home. With attention pulled in so many directions, but within such structured regularity, transitions become blurred. Is it possible to lean further into this blurring, inverting familiar typologies in new syntactic assemblages—that is, spatially, sonically, photically—to define an approach to housing?

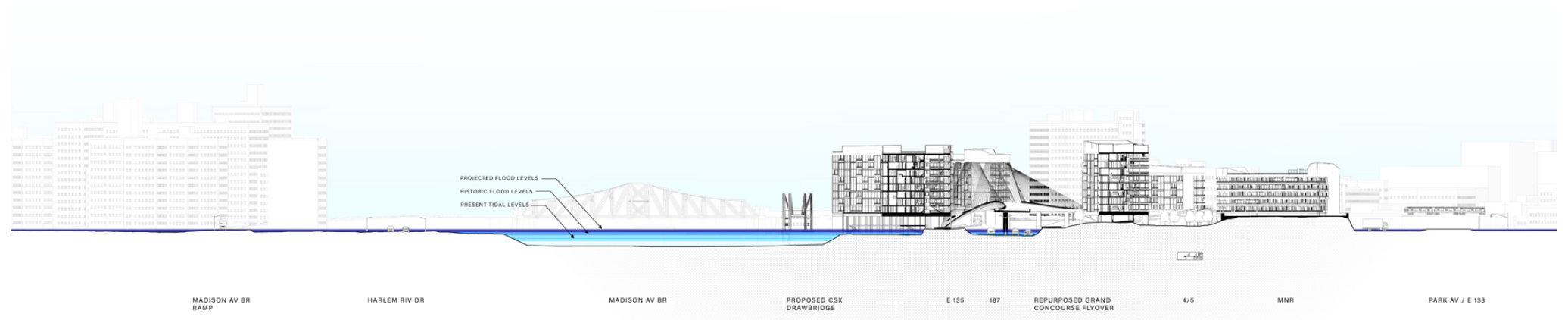
The site sits defined by 138th Street to its north, the Metro North Railroad to its right, and cutting through it, 135th Street, 187, and a flyover. It also sits largely within the anticipated 100 year floodplain. On closer inspection, an element stands exempt. A central flyover connects Grand Concourse and I-87 in both directions and intersects the site. It's not necessary: traffic can easily

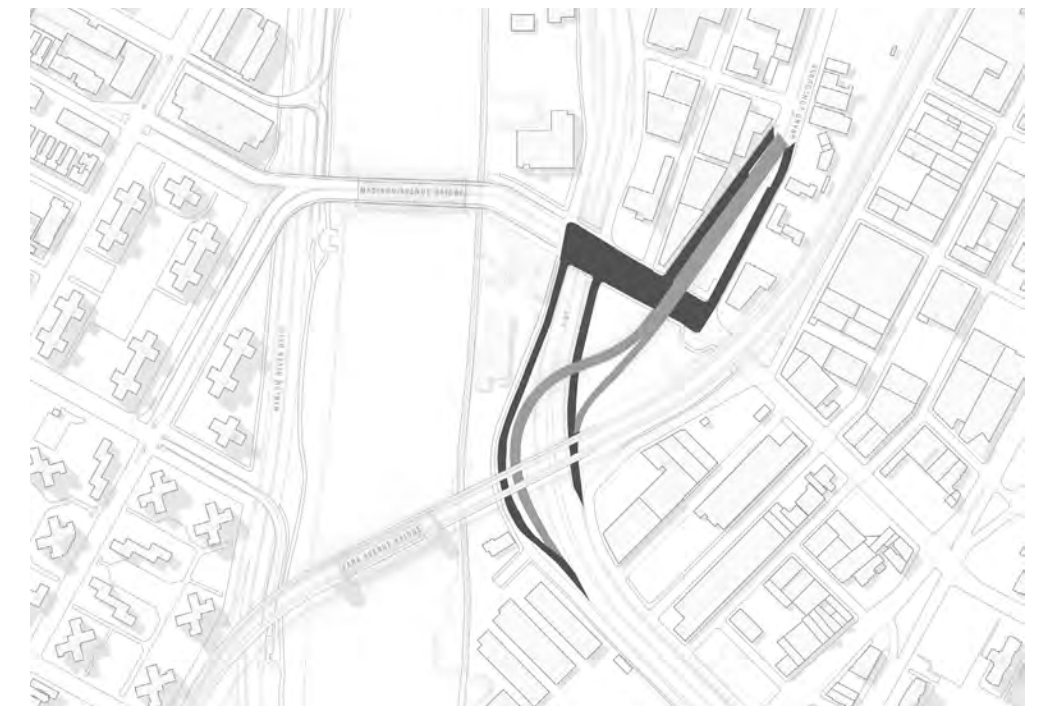
circulate via on-off ramps only feet away. Appropriating this flyover as our central mode of circulation affords a straightforward opportunity to resolve circulation and bring our project to an infrastructural level.

The present site's privileging of the vehicle is furthered by relative isolation, sequestered by multiple streets and poor public transportation. Currently, the site is most easily accessed by the 4 and 5 trains, on the north side of 138th. Adding an exit on the south side of the street, as well as inserting stops along the pre-existing BX and a stop along the Soundview ferry line augments direct site access pervasively throughout the city. With these new means of accessing the site, and new passageways between them, the site becomes consistent and pervasively accessible. The site comes to life.

Photo of model of typical two-bedroom unit





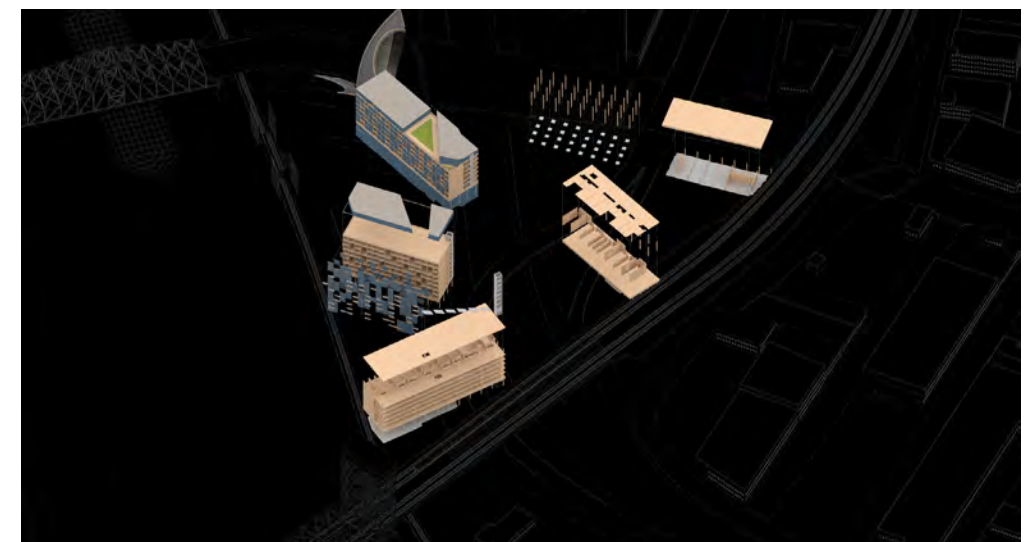
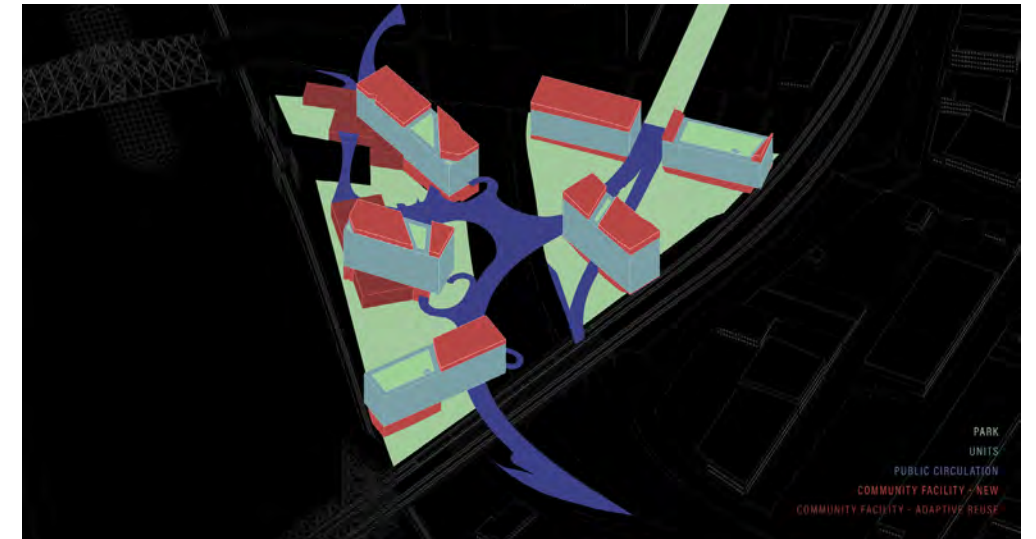
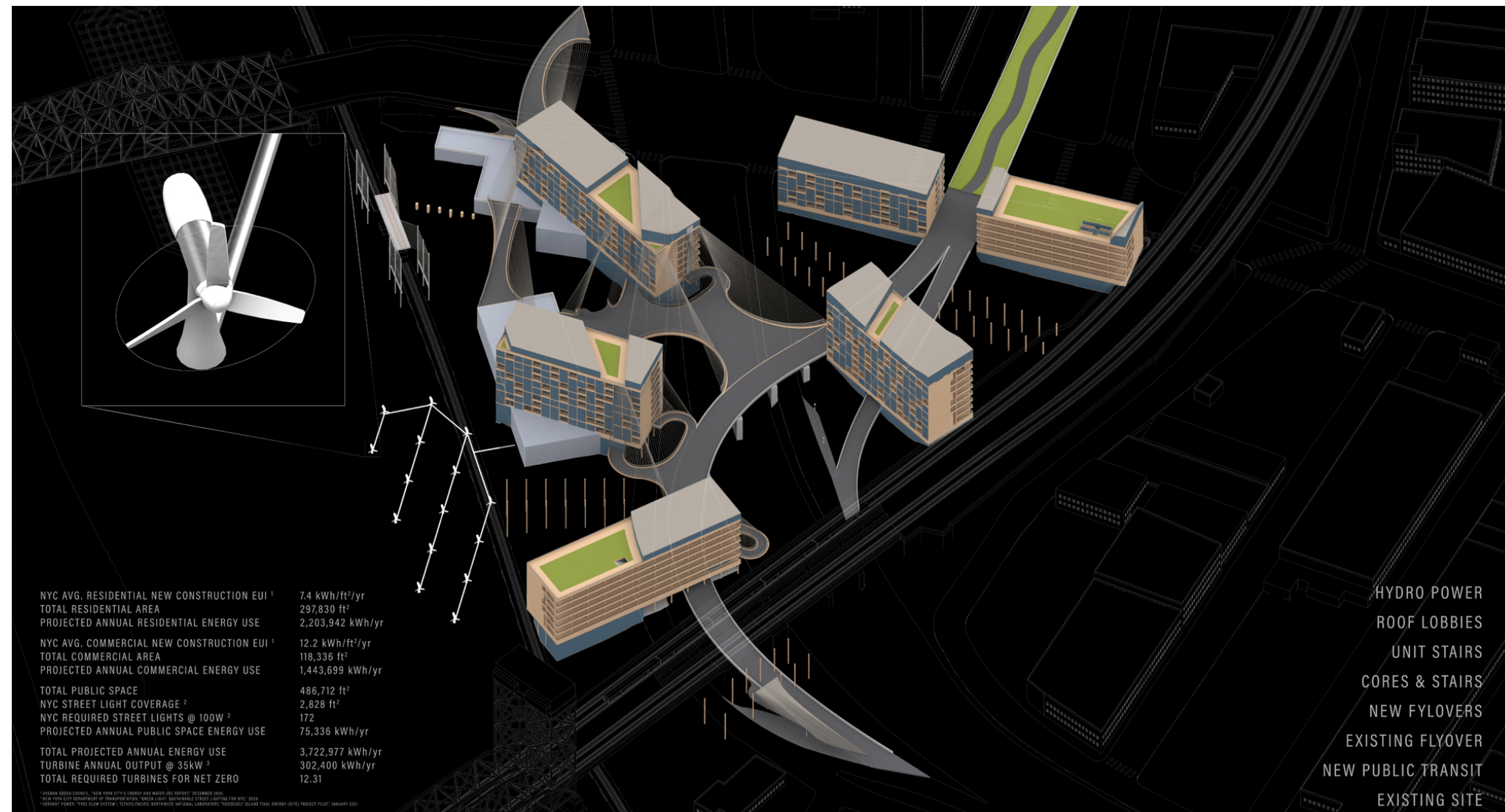


The project consists in 425 residential units, all accessible. It aims to be a fully self-sufficient insertion onto the site. First, the project retains existing industrial structures on the site. Next, it introduces a new subway station, two bus stops, and a ferry terminal, and relies quite directly on that central flyover as a circulation spine. A network of new flyovers further augments circulation throughout the site. Following in the logic of self-sufficiency, these are supported by the buildings via cable anchors, eliminating the need for supporting columns and further disruption of the ground plane.

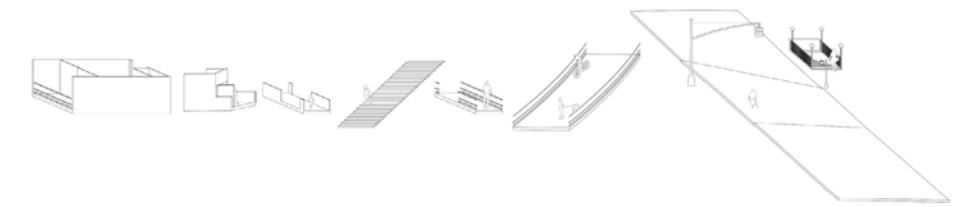
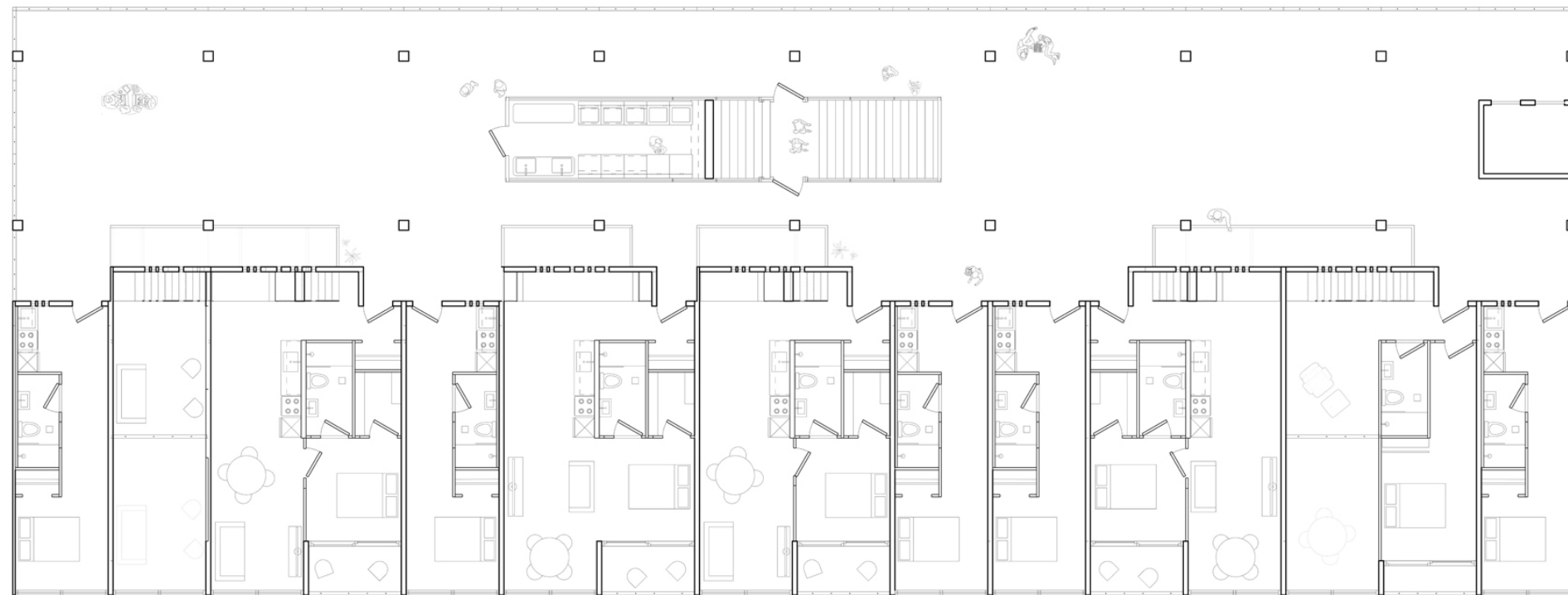
These passages link directly to the cores of the buildings: elevators and singular gestures of large stairs which cut from one end of each building to the other.

Lobbies are placed at the roof level, and activated to become hubs for the residents of the buildings. An array of tidal hydro power generators allows for net-zero functional energy.

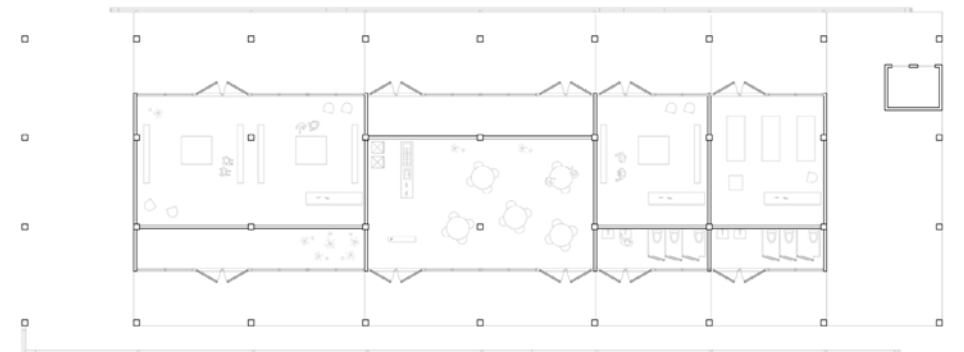
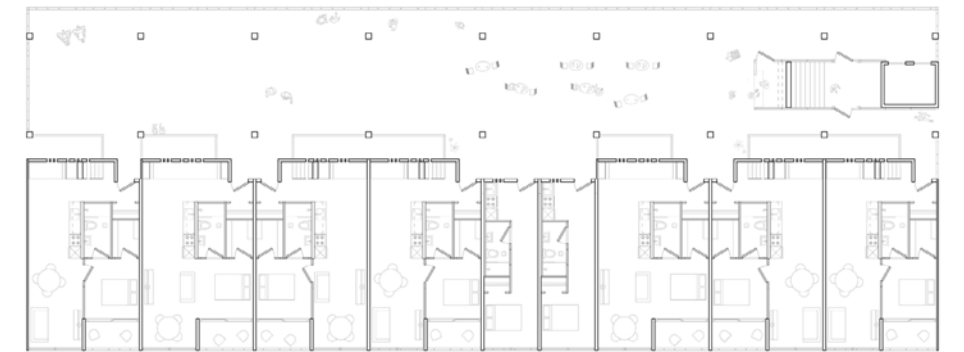
The buildings sit in stasis, designed for repeatability and affordability, each implementing the same structural approach, only varying in length or height. First in expanding that spine into a network of access and program. Second, in the roofs and grounds, which serve as inversions of one another. A program diagram depicts how this logic frames the buildings. The project is built with mass timber. CLT columns at 20' intervals are secured in concrete footings, topped with floor slabs, bearing walls, a concrete core, window walls, and finally flyovers.

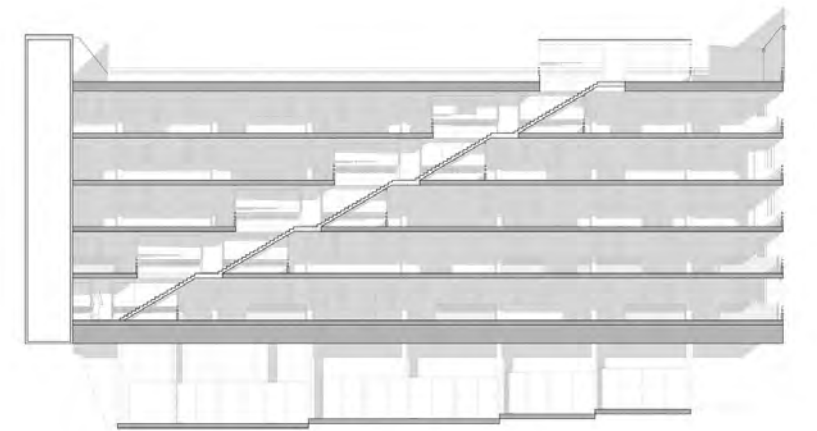
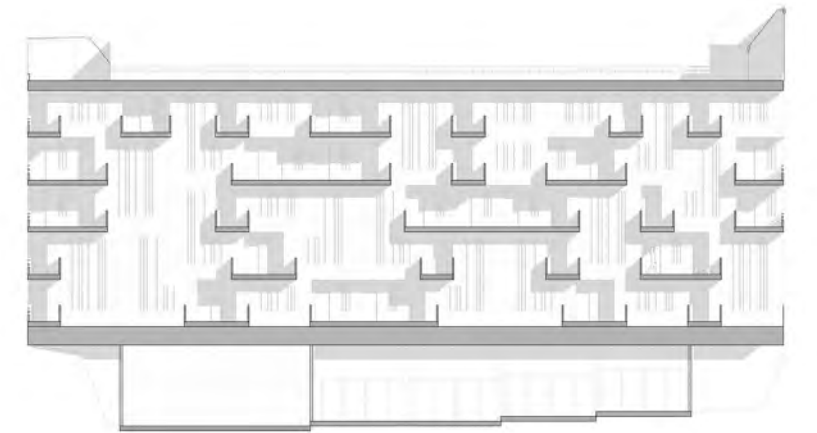
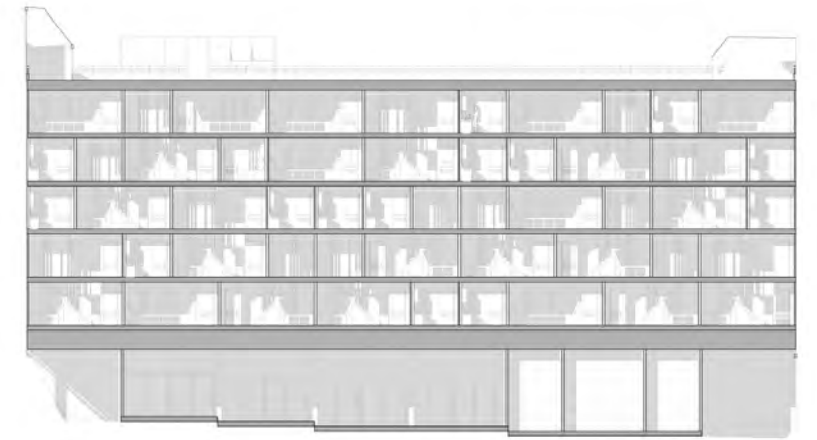
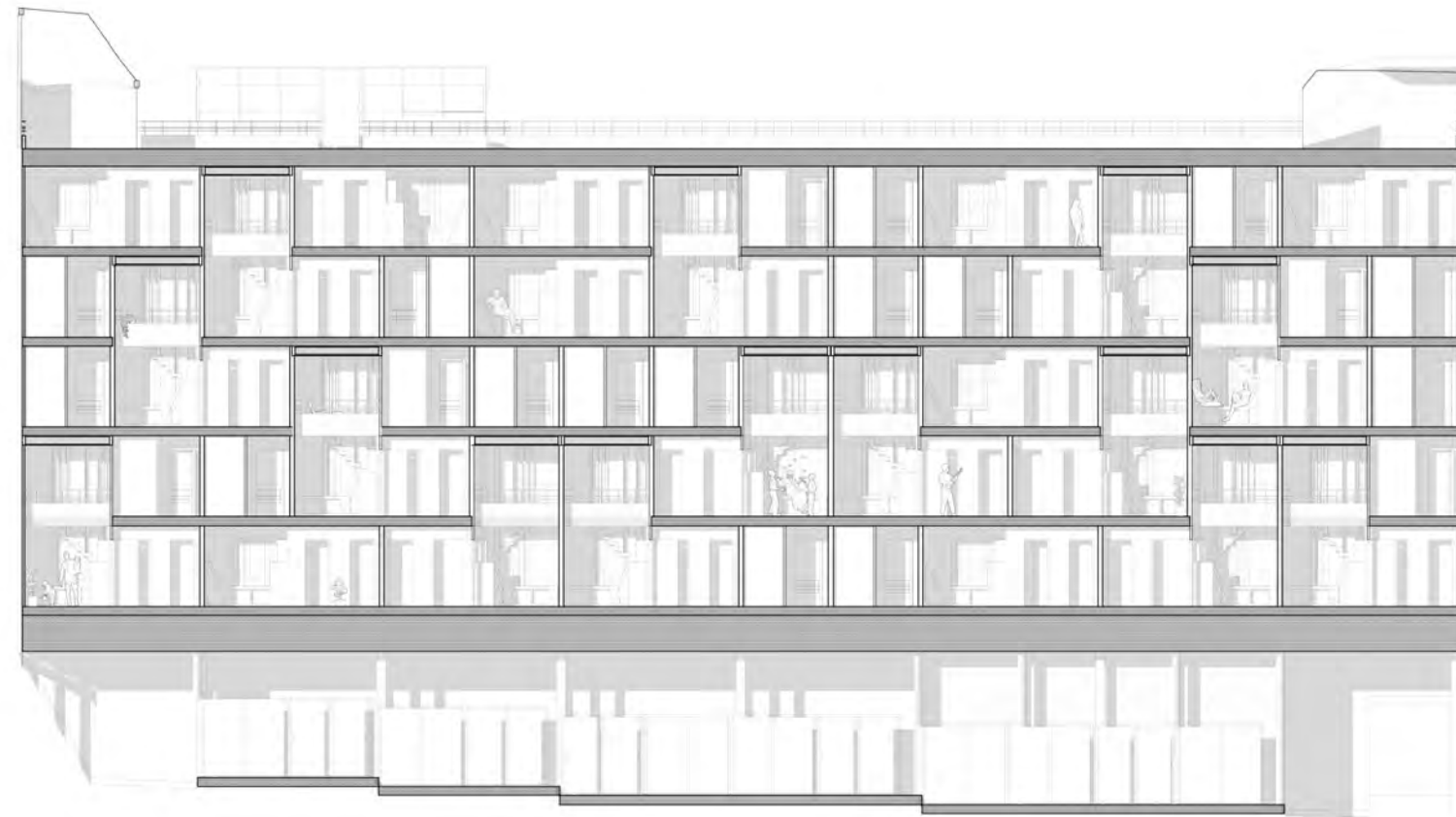




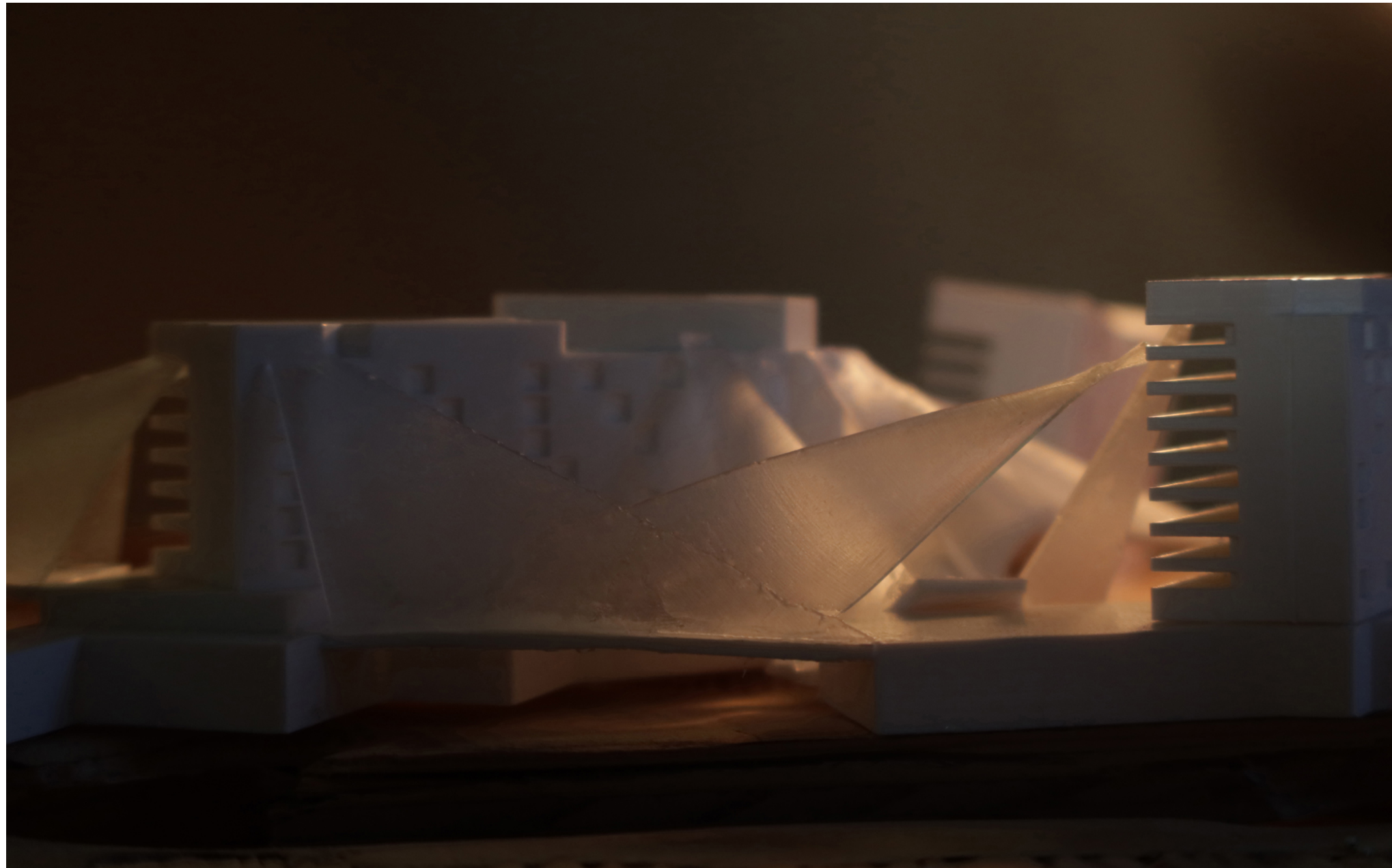


Private Home Driveway Private Street Semi-Open Street Open Street SubUrban Public Urban Public

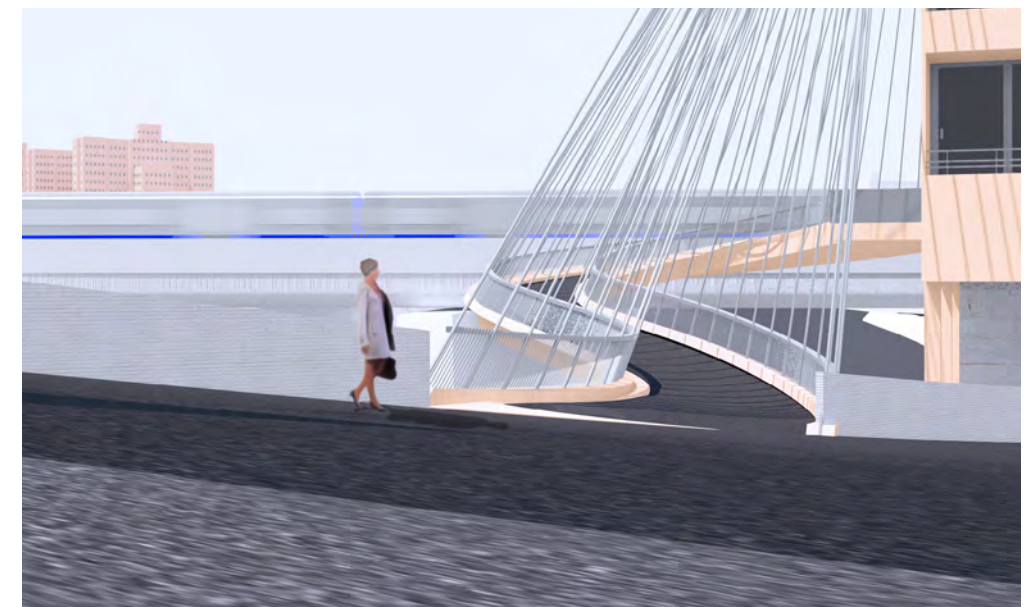
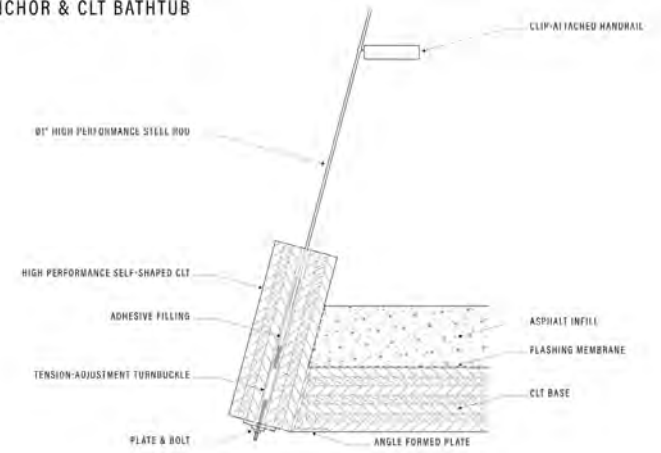


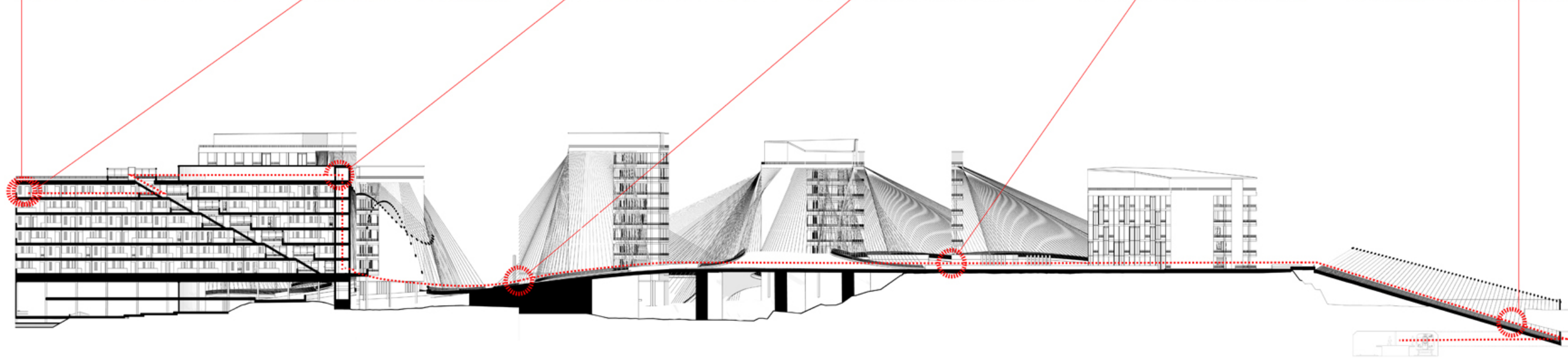
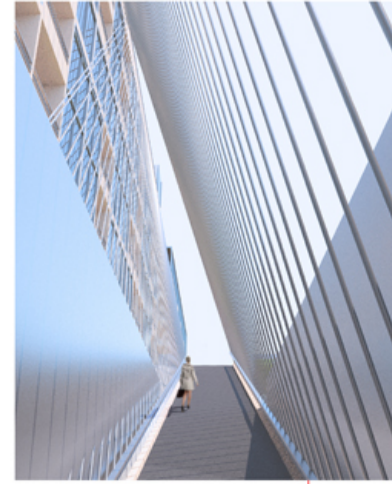
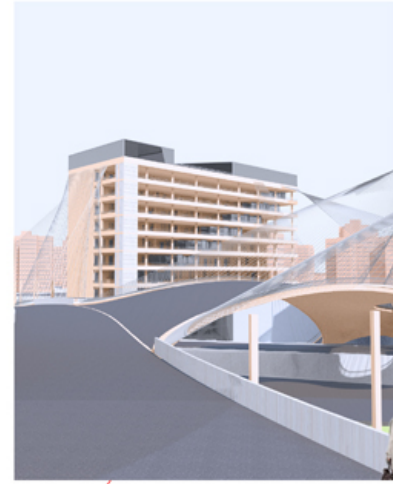
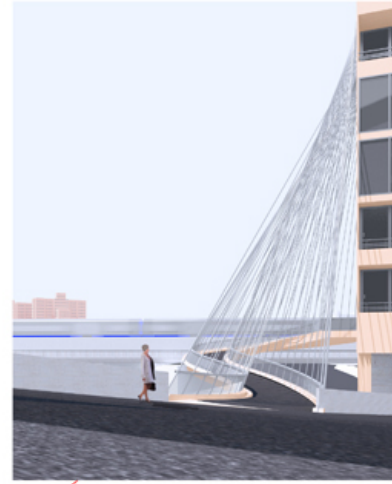
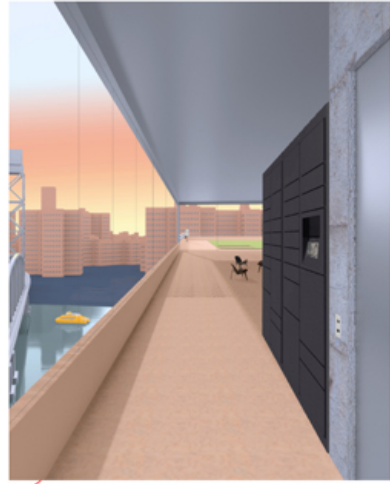
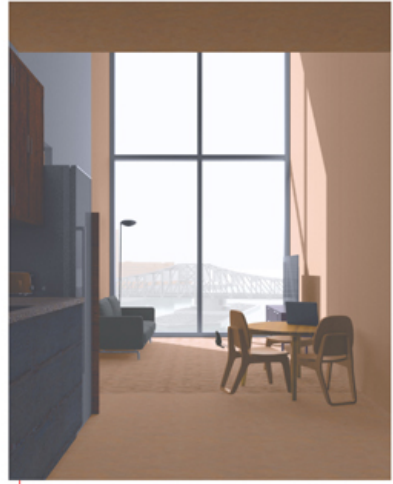






FLYOVER SECTION DETAIL:
ANCHOR & CLT BATHTUB





Footnotes to Development

Tracing Vectors of Expertise from Cairo's Immobilia Building

With the concluding paragraph of the final chapter, political scientist Robert Vitalis ends his study of the politics of investment conflict in Egypt in the first half of the twentieth century, *When Capitalists Collide*, by locating the entryway to the Immobilia Building as one of a handful of sites where the legacy of the confrontation between the nascent Egyptian state and local business interests could be read. That political theorist and historian Timothy Mitchell begins his own study, *Rule of Experts*, here, with the first chapter drawing heavily on Vitalis' account of this period, stages Mitchell's own attempts to complicate the forms of agency, human and otherwise, that manufacture the technical body that, he argues, constitutes human agency. Vitalis' final claim might not augur Mitchell's own claims, as the Immobilia Building exists primarily as a footnote in *Rule of Experts*, but to take Mitchell's, and by extension Vitalis', charge seriously might demand revisiting the Immobilia Building and the claims of expertise, necessarily, invoked amongst the variety of human and nonhuman

agencies acting upon it. Limiting the scope of such an endeavor to one such expert, Aziz Sidky, reveals how following his early work as Director of the Technical Office for the General Real Estate Society of Egypt, the client which commissioned the Immobilia Building, to the consequent completion of his Ph.D. in regional planning at Harvard University, to his return to Egypt as General Director of a government land reclamation program, and his eventual appointment by Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser as head of the Ministry of Industry may in fact warrant privileging the Immobilia Building as such a site not just where legacies of business-state relations begin to unfold but also where questions of expertise, technical assistance, and development emerge.

Before arriving at the specific case of Aziz Sidky, however, it might be helpful to engage with the Immobilia Building to the extent that and on the terms that Mitchell does so in his text so as to form a kind of critical scaffolding. The first mention of the eighteen-story Immobilia Building is tied,

Notes:

¹ Timothy Mitchell, *Rule of Experts: Egypt, Techno-Politics, Modernity* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002), 31.

² Mitchell, *Rule of Experts*, 308 n38.

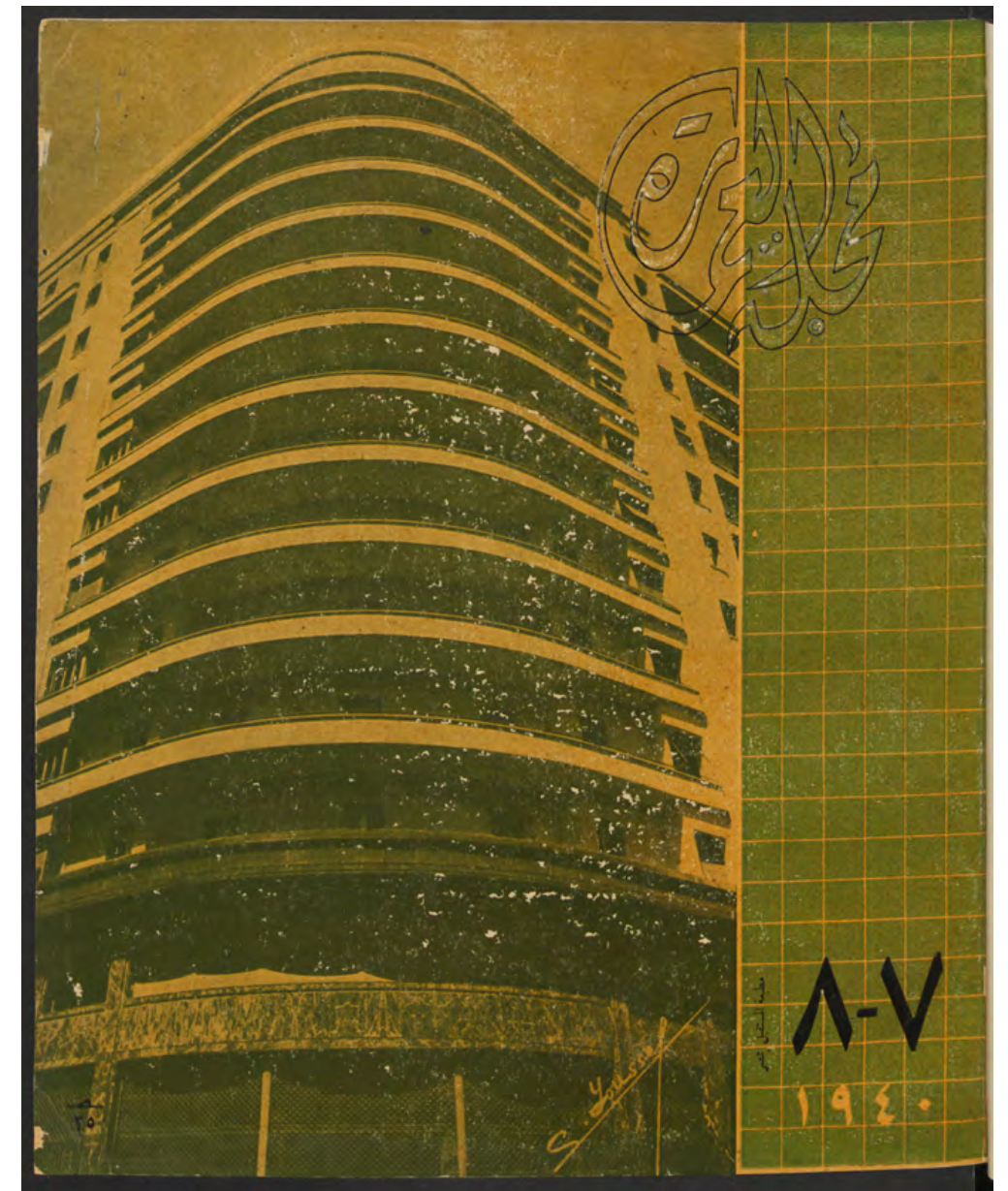
³ *Ibid.*, 49.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 314 n102.

as in Vitalis, to the story of Ahmad Abbud as where “[Abbud’s] business empire moved its headquarters into” with additional context regarding its status as “Cairo’s first high-rise structure.”¹ This is accompanied by a footnote providing further context regarding the building’s height (70 meters), date of completion (January 1940), and occupancy capacity (38 shops, 82 offices, and 218 apartments).² The only other mention of the building by Mitchell is in another footnote, but here, rather than figures and dates, the potential of a reorientation towards the building becomes clear. It is towards the end of Mitchell’s delineation of what he terms “para-sites of capitalism” that the stories of Abbud and his ever-expanding business empire, *Anopheles*

gambiae (a species complex of mosquitoes) and *Plasmodium falciparum* (the malignant form of the malaria parasite carried by those mosquitoes), and development aid to Egypt converge at the Immobilia Building. In a discussion regarding the importing of the chemical pesticide Dichloro-diphenyl-trichloroethane (DDT) by two Egyptian subsidiaries (Imperial Chemical Industries Ltd. and Salmawy & Co.), Mitchell notes, “with U.S. help the [Egyptian] government acquired the six helicopters from United Helicopter to use for spraying the chemical from the air.”³ In the footnote accompanying this passage, Mitchell expounds, “Salmawy, whose offices were in Abbud’s Immobilia building in Cairo, also imported the helicopters.”⁴ If Plasmodium

Majallat al-Imarah, Vol. 2 No. 7 & 8 (1940), Cover.



falciparum is Mitchell's parasite, then it is the DDT factory initially conceived by Abbud as a joint venture with Monsanto in 1949 and appropriated by the revolutionary government, with technical and monetary aid from the WHO and UNICEF, three years later,⁵ rather than the Immobilia Building, that is Mitchell's "para-site."

Perhaps in this case the DDT factory does better reveal the varied processes of manufacture, of not only DDT but of expertise and capitalist development, and perhaps for that reason the Immobilia Building is relegated to the footnotes in Mitchell's analysis. In fact, it might even be misguided to argue that a skyscraper could be a site beside (a "para-site" to) capitalism as even a cursory engagement with discourses of modernity in architectural history would reveal the distinct status given to skyscrapers as avatars of capital. But if Mitchell's footnotes reveal anything, it is that the Immobilia Building was also a site of manufacture, if not of DDT then, at the very least, of the conditions mediating its dispersal through the importing of helicopters in its offices.

As a final note on Mitchell's framework surrounding the anti-malaria campaign in Egypt, much has been said about the parasites and hosts in this story but noticeably missing are the vectors, in this case the *Anopheles gambiae* mosquito. Mitchell addresses this absence in relation to the tasks of the expert, "It might be said, surely the difference between the mosquito and human expert is clear."⁶ Lest anyone think they are the same, Mitchell continues, "[The mosquito eradication teams] needed a lot of nonhuman assistants."⁷ Mitchell's formulation identifies the ability of the expert to leverage "nonhuman assistants" as he calls them, in this case DDT.

However, read sardonically, Mitchell's formulation invites an interpretation whereby the two can be read alongside one another. Similar to his attempts around "para-sites of capitalism," but lacking the novel coinage, the mosquito and, now, the expert can be understood as vectors of capitalism.

These two, not entirely unrelated, aspects of expertise, the ability to leverage

nonhuman actors on the one hand and how this functions to vectorize capital on the other, are critical to the introduction of a figure like Aziz Sidky to a site like the Immobilia Building. Although DDT serves as the expert's cudgel in Mitchell's text, Mitchell reveals other possible tools, ones which bear more relevance to the case of Sidky and the Immobilia Building. In fact, in Mitchell's account, it is the prototypical tool, the architectural plan, with which he begins this discussion. Contradicting Marx, Mitchell declares, "Nowhere does one suddenly step from imagination to reality, from plan to real thing."⁸ Although likely speaking about plans more broadly here, Mitchell continues the thought, "Plans, intentions, scientific expertise, techno-power, and surplus value were created in combination with these other forces or elements."⁹ In other words, plans did not appear prior to or as distinct but were "manufactured in the processes themselves."¹⁰ Perhaps there is no better place to begin with the kind of technical development Sidky would serve as a vector for then through the Immobilia Building plans he was responsible for in his capacity as Director of the Technical Office for the General Real Estate Society of Egypt.

In 1940, the same year construction on the Immobilia Building was completed, the Egypt-based architecture and design magazine *Al-Emara* ran a 55-page cover story regarding the recently completed building. The first page of this story is a letter commissioned by the magazine from the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the General Real Estate Society of Egypt, Ismail Sidky (no relation). Immediately after is a two-page segment titled "Choice of Plan" written by Aziz Sidky, the Director of the Technical Office for the General Real Estate Society of Egypt. Accompanied by 7 diagrammatic site plans (one of the preexisting conditions and six of the Immobilia Building itself, see Figures 1 and 2), Sidky's brief segment outlines the strategic approach taken towards the building's surroundings:

For every issue there is a solution and the best solution is the simplest

8 Ibid, 45.

5 Mitchell, *Rule of Experts*, 50.

9 Ibid, 52.

6 Mitchell, *Rule of Experts*, 45-46.

7 Ibid, 46.

10 Ibid.

Aziz Sidky, "Le Choix du Plan," *Majalatal-Imarah*, Vol. 2 No. 7 & 8 (1940), 338.



solution. This simplicity needs to be according to the requirements and demands of the issue we are trying to solve. Arrival at the best solution is achieved by completing a detailed study for all the requirements given by the conditions of the issue.

The land owned by the company is in a semi-rectangular shape and on two of the most important streets in the capital and on an area of about 5,400 square meters, which is a large area and would not allow one solid building unless there is a courtyard in the middle that all the internal facades look out onto. In this situation we are looking

at extending Al Fadl Street (reference the first drawing) [Figure 1, right] and that is expressed in the conditions that the company published in this issue.

One of the advantages of the private street that extends to Al Fadl Street is that we have two facades of the building and a passage for entry and exit of the cars, and to get you to an underground garage that has capacity for 100 cars. It could not escape us that extending Al Fadl Street is the best plan for this area of this district. We still have difficulty finding the largest flat facades for the buildings so that all rooms have external windows. To solve that, we left

a gap of more than four meters from the sides of the neighboring building, and an extension of the private street (reference the second drawing) [Image on previous page, right]. Thus, the dwellings are beautiful and interspersed with windows for light and air.¹¹

Clearly engaging the architectural discourses of his time, Sidky captures the modernist preoccupations with rational planning as well as with light and air. By naturalizing the street grid, Al Fadl Street in particular, the choice to bisect the building becomes the rational, and simplest, solution to maximize light and air for the occupants of the building. Sidky develops the approach:

We chose the entrances so that they are all internal and not on the main street since there will be a lot of traffic on the main street. We are trying to avoid the danger of entering and exiting from the crowded streets and to create comfort and ease of use for the occupants of the building. Also when cars are parked they will not affect the external appearance of the building and of the storefronts. After that we worked on widening the private street and beautifying it so we introduced colonnades on the sides of the private street for the occupants and pedestrians (reference the third drawing) [Image on previous page, left]. They are better served and the building retains its beauty and function. We added to the luxuriousness of the building by cladding this area in a dark colored marble.

By doing this simple step I specified we arrived at a good base and have enough space for the stores that are divided on the two main facades beneath the colonnades.

All that remained were the internal cores to accommodate all the utilities (reference the fourth drawing) [Figure 2, left] and also the service entrances to those cores. From here we chose the simplest form of plan within the requirements which was the best of the solutions and also the simplest.

I will leave you to the rest of the plans that speak for themselves. Return to them yourselves and I will leave the explanation of the construction of the building to Mr. Jules Arnaud, General Secretary of the company, in his article published in this issue of *Al-Emara*.¹²

Sidky traces the emergence of the floor-plan from the poche of the bisected massing to the addition of the colonnade and the unveiling of storefronts, cores, and service entrances. That these site and building-scale drawings are the one which warrant explanation, by the Director of the Technical Office nonetheless, as opposed to the typical floor plans included later in the issue, which as Sidky writes “speak for themselves,” provides a lens for understanding the character of expertise demanded by an expert in this context. In other words, it was Sidky’s ability to leverage a handful of diagrammatic site plans with a couple of paragraphs of explanation to arrive at the “simplest solution.”

Sidky’s contributions as Director of the Technical Office for the company responsible for Cairo’s first skyscraper could hardly have gone unnoticed. However, it would be 11 years before Sidky would graduate with a Ph.D. in regional planning at Harvard University with the completion of his dissertation titled, “Industrialization of Egypt and a Case Study of the Iron and Steel Industry.” As the title would suggest, Sidky argued for the industrialization as the “chance of increasing the area of cultivable land is limited.”¹³ Yet, two years after graduating Sidky was working as a General Director for a land reclamation scheme for Tahrir Province whose first stated aim, as recounted by the director of the Tahrir project, was to “increase Egypt’s arable land.”¹⁴ This was not a betrayal of what Sidky had written his dissertation about two years earlier however. As Jon Alterman’s thorough archival research on Egypt and American foreign assistance in the years immediately following Egypt’s 1952 coup has shown, even in his capacity at Tahrir Province US embassy officials who spoke with Sidky took note, “It is quite evident that his plans are an effort to apply in Egypt the planning principles he

¹¹ Aziz Sidky, “Le Choix du Plan,” *Majalat al-Imarah*, Vol. 2 No. 7 & 8 (1940), 338. [Translation by author.]

¹² Sidky, *Majalat al-Imarah*, 339. [Translation by author.]

¹³ Jon B. Alterman, *Egypt and American Foreign Assistance, 1952-1956: Hopes Dashed* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 159 n79.

¹⁴ Alterman, *Egypt and American Foreign Assistance*, 79-80.

¹⁵ Ibid, 159 n79.

¹⁶ Robert Vitalis, *When Capitalists Collide: Business Conflict and the End of Empire in Egypt* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995), 253 n51.

¹⁷ Vitalis, *When Capitalists Collide*,

¹⁸ Anouar Abdel-Malek, *Egypt: Military Society; The Army Regime, The Left, and Social Change Under Nasser* (New York: Random House, 1968) trans. Charles Lam Markmann,

¹⁹ Abdel-Malek, *Egypt: Military Society*, 131.

²⁰ Ibid, 132-133.

²¹ Unknown, “Egypt’s New Premier: Aziz Sidky,” *New York Times*, January 24, 1972.

was taught at Harvard.”¹⁵ Sidky’s ties to the new government were not limited to the Tahrir province scheme, and by this point, he was also serving on the High Committee for Planning and Coordination for the new government. Sidky’s career in government was only beginning and “By 1956, and, importantly prior to the sequestration of French- and British- owned enterprise, Nasser appointed Aziz Sidki [sic.], a main architect of etatism in Egypt, to head the newly created Ministry of Industry.”¹⁷ Just two years later, in his capacity as “Minister of Industry, Dr. Aziz Sidky, won approval for his five-year industrialization plan.”¹⁸ Just seven years after completing his dissertation arguing for an industrial future for Egypt, Sidky was finally given free reign to implement his plan.

However, Sidky’s plan was short-lived. When the national income was not doubled as his plan suggested within the updated three-year timetable that Nasser suggested, Sidky was held responsible.¹⁹ In the aftermath, Sidky explained, “We found it necessary to offer private capital, endowed as it is with all its potentials, the opportunity to take part in industrial projects either alone or in cooperation with capital from the private sector.”²⁰ This explanation, drawn from research by Egyptian political scientist Anouar Abdel-Malek, in conjunction with Vitalis noting the timing of Sidky’s appointment as Minister of Industry as “prior to the sequestration of French- and British- owned enterprise” above provides insight into the contradictions motivating not just Sidky but the nascent Egyptian government’s desire for development expertise.

The shortcomings of Sidky’s Five-Year Plan did not hinder his career in government and by 1971 was back in the good graces of the Egyptian government and new president Anwar Sadat. Sidky was appointed by President Sadat as Prime Minister in 1972 (for which he even received a *New York Times* write-up²¹) and his history to private capital was likely welcomed in Sadat’s government as he implemented his infitah policy.

In conclusion, and to return to the Immobilia Building, it perhaps should not

come as a surprise that a building whose name is an Arabized version of the French word for real estate, immobilier, for the company which commissioned it, Societe Generale Immobiliere d’Egypte (General Real Estate Society of Egypt), would have harbored such an effective vector for a mode of capitalist development characterized by a technical expertise like that of Aziz Sidky. Although the Immobilia Building was likely where Sidky first served as a vector in the way he did, leveraging technical expertise in architecture, engineering, and planning, at least at such a scale, it would be an overstatement, and in fact naive, to suggest that Sidky’s work at the Immobilia Building was the origin point for his a policy like infitah. What it does do however is speak to the ability of technical expertise to act as a vector for capital to survive, in the way that it did with someone like Sidky, through changes in attitudes and policy brought about by Egyptian nationalism, Arab socialism, and neoliberalism.

Side Waqf

Adv 4 Studio Spring 2023 | Critic: Ziad Jamaledine | Partner: Lauren Brown

Of the 9 mosques or Islamic centers serving Staten Island's Muslim communities, the Islamic Center of Staten Island (ICSI) established in 2018 was the first on Staten Island's South Shore. Serving, for the most part, a geographically distinct community than its counterparts, ICSI is situated along a strip of light industrial businesses between Arthur Kill Road and Veteran's Road West. The West Shore Expressway marks the boundary between the ICSI and its unlikely neighbors and the suburban neighborhood of Rossville. The ICSI's imam noted that the property's location adjacent to this main transportation belt in Staten Island was the primary reading for picking this site to Build the first mosque in South Shore Staten Island.

In addition to hosting a variety of industry, the neighborhood is also home to a boat graveyard which was active in

the 1930s and today hosts over a hundred abandoned and decomposing boats on the neighborhood's shore. The end of our focus area is met by the South Mound of Fresh Kills Park, the site of the former fresh kills landfill which served as one of NYC's main landfills until its official closing in 2001

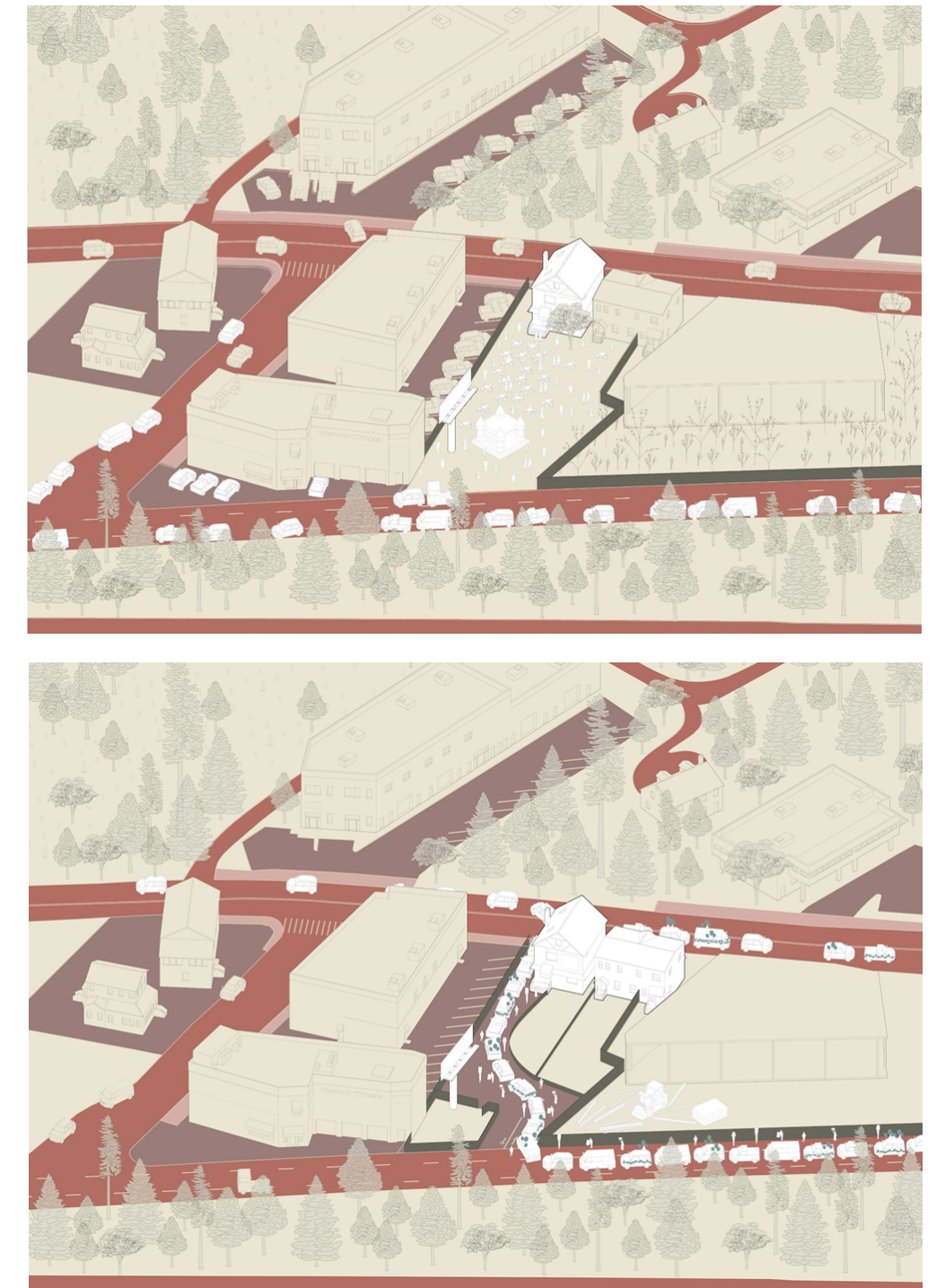
During our site visit to ICSI, the imam, Sheikh Karim Azzat, noted that while small, the community at ICSI had rapidly grown since it's grounding in 2018. He noted that they wish to naturally grow outside of their current space to accommodate the mosque's growth and additional prayer and teaching spaces for the multiple children who are part of the mosque. During a community potluck not long after its founding, ICSI utilized the backyard of the mosque as a gathering space and place space for children during their after school programs. When COVID-19



prevented ICSI from hosting indoor prayer and gatherings for holidays and community events, they modified their backyard with a paved driveway to allow for drive-thru prayer and social events to celebrate holidays such as Eid-al-Fitr. At this point ICSI also purchased an adjacent billboard and neighboring house to bring in additional income for them.

With a growing community coming from across Staten Island via car due to the ICSI's positioning by west shore expressway as of 2022 ICSI fully paved their properties

facing veterans road. Additionally, this parking space serves as an outdoor prayer space during the warmer months as seen in this image of Eid Al-Adha prayer. During this time ICSI purchased the adjacent abandoned lot and structure on Arthur kill road to construct a K-12 Islamic school that is scheduled to open this September. This spirit of naturally growing and expanding their physical and community presence on Arthur kill road was even seen when we visited ICSI earlier this month during Ramadan.





The former tiny home of the imam and his wife is parked in the backyard as a cafe space and an additional vinyl siding structure was constructed in less than a month's time to accommodate Taraweeh prayers during Ramadan.

Recognizing both the growing spatial presence of ICSI on Arthur Kill Road and the upcoming opening of a K-12 school in this industrial neighborhood, our project seeks to deepen the relationship between ICSI, local businesses, and the future community accessing Arthur Kill road. This deepening

is spatial through the establishment of the sidewalk as waqf, and pedagogical through the creation of Maktabs in partnership with local businesses facing Arthur Kill road.

Building on ICSI's practice of starting with the ground specifically to address the need for additional prayer space, we encouraged the ICSI to break from the confines of their lot, as they have already demonstrated the ability to do, as they sought to accommodate as many 350 worshippers across two prayers every Friday.



We made into a waqf

the sidewalk and roadbed of Arthur Kill Road between the S74 Arthur Kill Road/Bloomingdale Road bus stop (at the southern end) and the S74 Arthur Kill Road/West Service Road bus stop (at the northern end)

This waqf **property** cannot be gifted, inherited, pawned, owned, appropriated, transferred, or transmitted in all or in parts, to anyone. We took the property out of the **ownership** of

the New York State Department of Transportation (NYS DOT)

and transferred it to the ownership of God. We name as **administrators** of the waqf property

the Islamic Center of Staten Island (ICSI)

Through the delivery and receipt of the waqf property to the administrators, they become responsible for operating the waqf property through the use of **assets** including

a portion of the \$70 million the New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYEDC) is prepared to allocate towards the improvement of infrastructure at the Rossville Municipal Site and supplementary funds provided by the Freshkills Park Alliance

and providing the **benefits** of

a safe and walkable path, especially for those attending school and Friday prayer at ICSI

a permeable surface to mitigate flooding

ADA accessibility and ease of travel

a gate with direct access to the West Mound of Freshkills Park

to the **beneficiaries**, occupants sharing a property line with the stretch of Arthur Kill Road mentioned above, including

D Sharp Studios

Healthcare Associates in Medicine

Woodrow Fence

Freedom Electric and Data

The Historic Old Bermuda Inn

In the case of an **imagined future** where

a safe and accessible path with access to Freshkills Park has been established along this stretch of Arthur Kill Road, the assets of this waqf should be directed towards enriching futures for the beneficiaries and future generations by way of the operating and pedagogic needs of the school at the Islamic Center of Staten Island,

to continue this waqf's charitable obligation.

By building on the urban management practices of the Islamic Center of Staten Island and suggesting a series of small scale educational spaces which all interact with the transformed streetscape in a dynamic way, yet with care taken to the existing surroundings. Arthur Kill Road's intersection with Zebra Place at one end and the entrance to the parking lot for the Old Bermuda Inn at the other mark the boundaries for the new campus ground we have designed.

Within those bounds, Arthur Kill Road becomes a one way street for southbound

traffic while the other side of the road is designated for pedestrian use. With grass-crete oriented toward Mecca, the ground serves as a visual guide for children but also for outdoor prayer in the warmer months. Adjacent interventions as mentioned earlier provide each business with a street face towards arthur kill road. The form of each intervention speaks to the light touch to the site which ICSI upholds: each intervention wraps around existing landscape in the neighborhood with minimal footprint and large canopy which at some points are occupiable.







Special Drawing Rights (and Wrongs) National Commercial Bank's Reception and Referential Afterlives

At the time of its completion in 1983, the National Commercial Bank's new headquarters designed by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM) marked the newest and largest addition to Jeddah's growing commercial district. Due in part to the high profile nature of the project, with the main design ideas attributed to architect Gordon Bunshaft, the project elicited coverage from both domestic and foreign press who circulated diagrams, drawings, and photographs before, during, and after the building's construction. This coverage both anticipated and mediated the building's reception by highlighting and indexing aspects of the project from design strategies to material sourcing and more. By indexing these indexes, first, in relation to the National Commercial Bank, Aga Khan Award for Architecture, *AramcoWorld*, & *Mimar*, in particular, reveal the professionalization of the process by which critical reception was obfuscated and tradition was (re)invented in service of emerging neoliberal modes of capital accumulation, and its apotheosis in Saudi Arabia

with the Riyadh Development Authority.

As historian Rosie Bsheer brilliantly argues in her book on the production of history in Saudi Arabia, *Archive Wars*, the historicization of urban space, particularly in Riyadh and Mecca, and state consolidation was inextricable even if these processes occurred differently, and in contradictory ways, in the two areas. From Bsheer's study, a timeline and by extension a context for the National Commercial Bank project can be drawn out:

"By April 1952, a US finance commission had set up the Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency, effectively a central bank, in Jeddah. Since then, the institutionalization of the finance industry has enabled the diversion of large amounts of oil money into banks in the United States and several Western European countries."¹

"After assuming the throne in 1964, Faisal faced major political and social challenges. The national financial crisis only made things worse for him. [Muhammad] Binladin bankrolled Faisal's regime then, essentially saving both the economy and the monarchy. Faisal reciprocated by guaranteeing

Notes:

¹ Rosie Bsheer, *Archive Wars: The Politics of History in Saudi Arabia* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2020), 54-55.

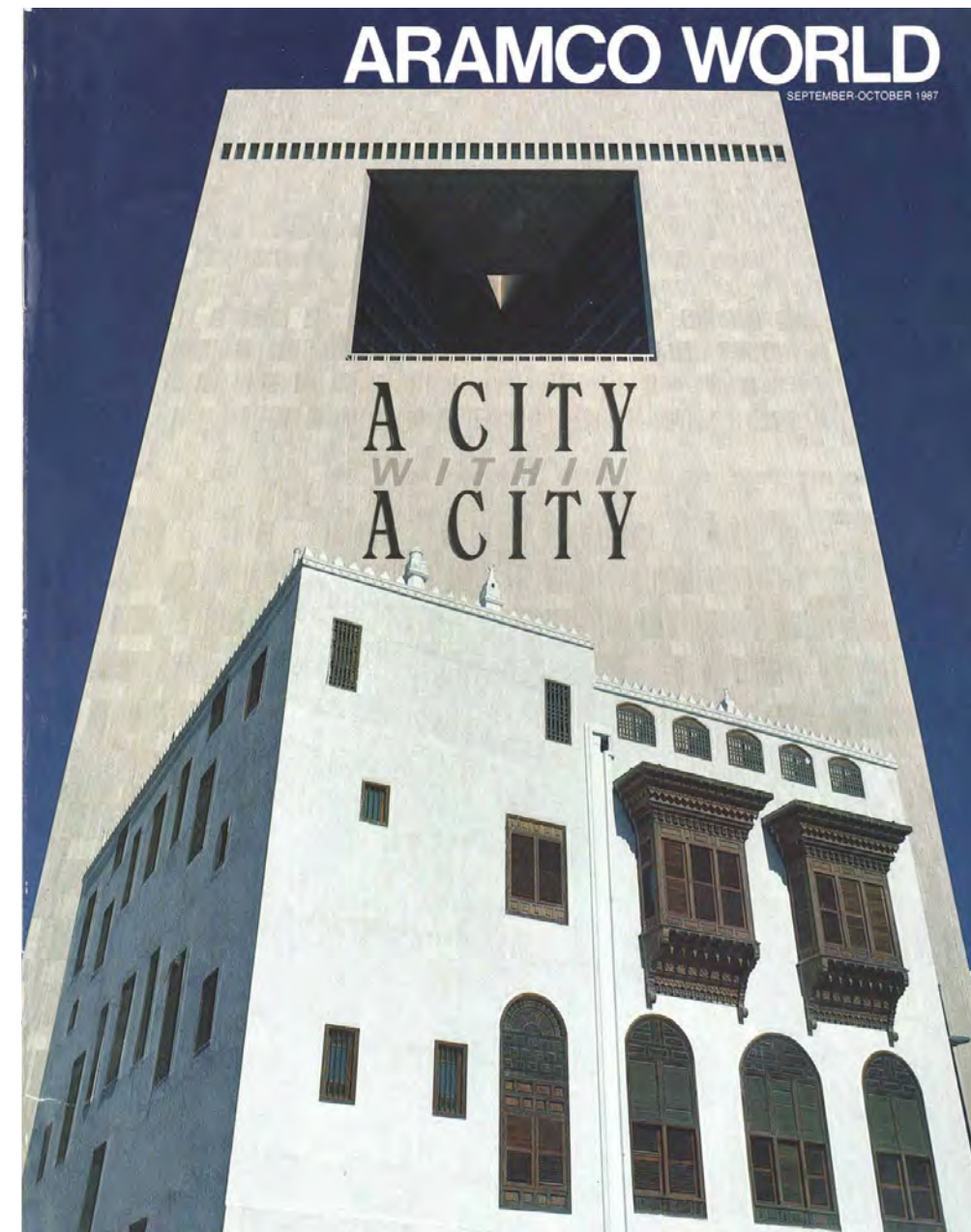
² Bsheer, *Archive Wars*, 171.

³ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

AramcoWorld, Vol. 38 No. 5 (1987), Cover.



Binladin the majority of infrastructural bids in the kingdom and the wholesale "development" of the western region, or the Hijaz."²

"From 1970 through 1979, the regime had accrued extraordinary oil revenues, a windfall that allowed for large-scale alteration of the country's structural and infrastructural landscapes."³ A period which was of course punctuated by the 1973 Oil Crisis, the aftermath of which saw the price of oil pegged to the USD effectively in exchange for the value of the SAR pegged to the IMF's Special Drawing Rights.

The 1980s saw the price of oil drop, and as Bsheer rightly notes, "That decade also saw the Saudi state binge on military spending.

Such spending was part of the petrodollar recycling that the US government had compelled the Saudi regime to undertake"⁴

"In 1979, Saudi Arabia's rulers became partners, along with the main Pakistani intelligence agency, in US support for the anti-Soviet jihad in Afghanistan."⁵

"Not only did oil prices collapse in the 1980s...the Saudis were also the largest financiers of Saddam Hussein's regime during the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq War as well as the subsequent coalition that went to war with Hussein in 1991."⁶

"Yet in this period of economic and political turmoil [1991], and perhaps because of it, the Saudi regime agreed to buy



another \$20 billion in weapons from the United States. At that point, it was the single largest arms sale in history. The war thus exacerbated the extreme fluctuations in oil revenue streams of previous decades and increased the urgency of realizing other, regular (and more stable) sources of income.⁷⁷

As a result of the fluctuations in oil prices, “investment in real estate became part of a concerted regime policy whereby only the top members of the monarchy and their allies made decisions on, and benefited from, urban redevelopment plans in Riyadh and Mecca.”⁷⁸ However, before this practice came to be established in Riyadh and Mecca primarily, Jeddah was one such location for

real estate investment. In fact, “Where Muhammad Binladin initially had made a career for himself in the 1930s by preserving homes in the historical al-Balad area of Jeddah, by the end of the century, his family amassed a great fortune through the redevelopment of Mecca and Medina and the destruction of Islam’s historic and religious sites there.”⁷⁹ It would be the al-Balad area of Jeddah which would see the arrival of the National Commercial Bank’s headquarters nearly half a century later.

As architectural historian Caecilia Pieri has written about in the context of Baghdad, “International competitions tend to develop some trends within the monumental style and the iconography of the excessive by

⁶ Bsheer, *Archive Wars*, 171.

⁸ *Ibid.*

John Christie, “A City Within A City,” *AramcoWorld*, Vol. 38 No. 5 (1987), 10-11.

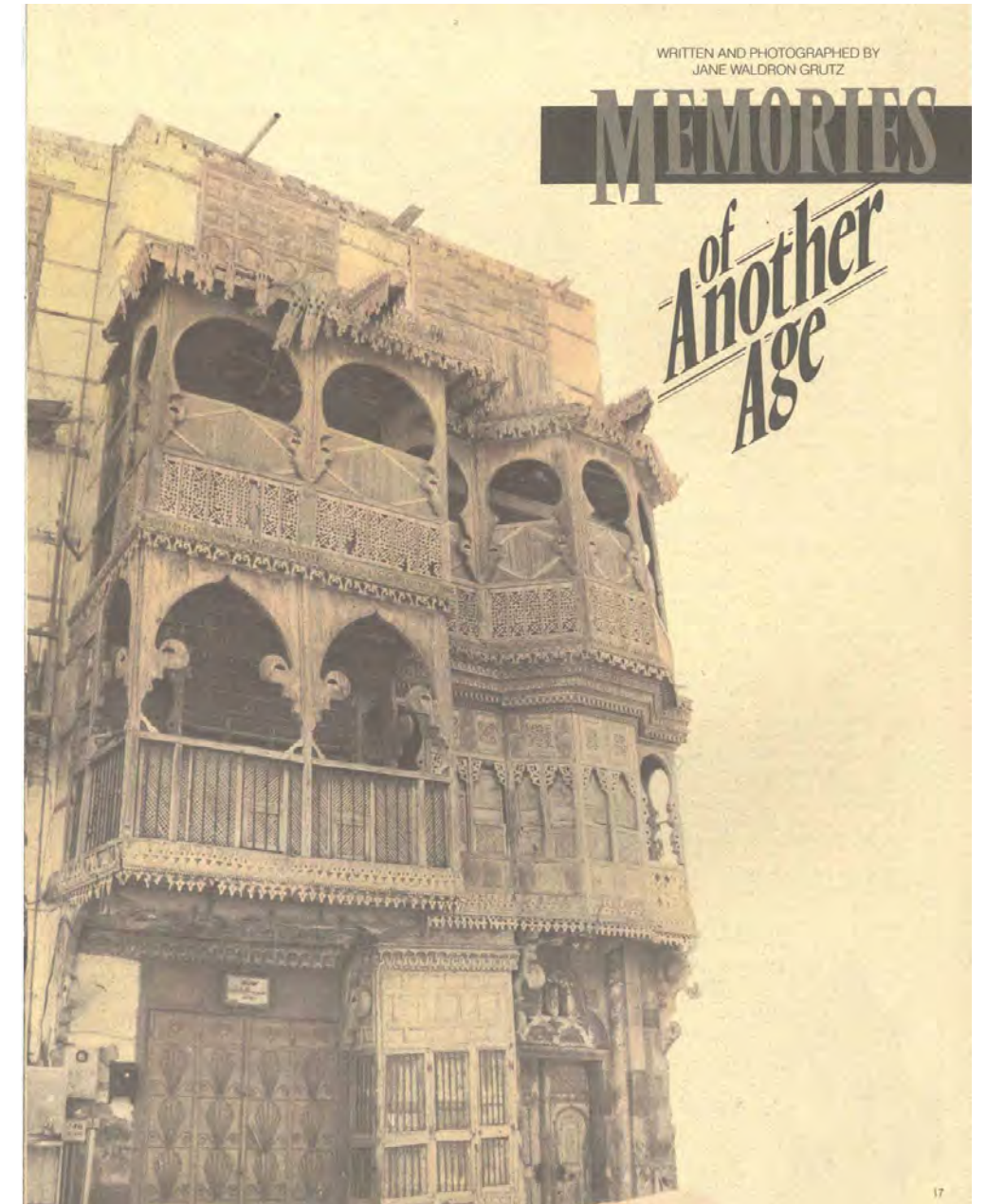
⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*, 172.

¹⁰ Caecilia Pieri, “Modernity and its Posts in Constructing an Arab Capital: Baghdad’s Urban Space and Architecture,” *Middle East Studies Association Bulletin* 42, no. 1/2 (Summer/Winter 2008): 36.

Jane Grutz, “Memories of Another Age,” *AramcoWorld*, Vol. 38 No. 5 (1987), 17.

¹¹ Pieri, “Modernity and its Posts in Constructing an Arab Capital,” 36.



re-using historical iconic landmarks and emphasizing the past grandeur of the country.”¹⁰ Although not the product of an international competition, these sentiments certainly apply to the National Commercial Bank. Pieri elaborates, “In some areas this new urbanism has been erasing or privatizing a whole sector of public space.”¹¹ Again, Pieri’s analysis applies to the context of Jeddah historic district adjacent to the National Commercial Bank, and the discursive work necessitated, in order to reconcile the new building with its surroundings, by coverage of National Commercial Bank is elucidated.

This discursive project arrived in many mediums, from the Aga Khan Trust

for Culture to AramcoWorld to Mimar, and not always with affirmation. In fact, the ‘critical’ responses would be important in providing a semblance of discursive integrity.

In particular, the surveys, in the 1989 Technical Review Summary, would provide the primary source of these critiques from the perspectives of NCB employees, NCM customers, professionals, and nearby residents.

However, the conclusions in these reports would obfuscate and water down legitimate critical responses towards the NCB’s presence in the historic district of Jeddah, functionally rendering any critiques marginal. Pieri writes, “This new public architecture forgot that identity is a matter of sedimentation

and not decision: under the pretext of reviving past Arab and Mesopotamian greatness as the foundation of a newly built collective identity, more often than not it produced kitsch and a soulless parody of monumentality”¹²

To Pieri’s point, that a 19th century building constitutes an authentic architectural tradition for that region is naive (which is not say that another or an older building properly does constitute an architectural tradition or even could). Nevertheless, by (re)inventing tradition for discursive use capital (i.e., Aramco) could facilitate this new mode of accumulation through real estate.

The shift away from Jeddah and towards Riyadh and Mecca were seemingly due in large part to the widespread neoliberal economic developments Bsheer describes, “The property market in these cities had become subject to new terms and forms of regulation and control that conformed to broader trends that marked late capitalism: accelerated urbanization, a return to a form of primitive accumulation, the dismantling of the welfare state, and gentrification and the displacement of the poor.”¹³

Of course, this would not have been possible without mediation by institutions like the National Commercial Bank. Beyond

¹² Pieri, “Modernity and its Posts in Constructing an Arab Capital,” 36.



Arthur Clark, “The Centennial’s Jewel: Riyadh.” *AramcoWorld* Vol. 50 No. 1 (1999), 23.

that direct linkage, the National Commercial Bank also served as a reference for the development to come. Referential here not in terms of a semiotic referent where you can read the National Commercial Bank visually through some of the formal elements of these buildings which antecede it (and while it’s not incidental that you could do just that), it’s more of a shadow that looms over these other buildings and the processes mediating them. Just as with the National Commercial Bank, it’s this manipulation of signs (through Aga Khan Trust for Culture, Aramco World, and Mimar) that does the work of capital

and is the shape dissimulation takes at the semiperiphery. Still doing the work of capital, but differently. Instead of the ‘look here not there’ core/periphery program of producing meaning, the formulation takes the shape of ‘look back not now’ in the semiperiphery.

Regarding this project developed by Riyadh Development Authority, Bsheer notes, “They [the urban planners and architects] relied on images and archival records from Aramco . . . The built surroundings, from the mosque to the pedestrian walkways, were replicas and variations of what had once existed—or rather, what planners assumed had once existed.”¹⁴

¹³ Bsheer, *Archive Wars*, 15.



Arthur Clark, “The Centennial’s Jewel: Riyadh.” *AramcoWorld* Vol. 50 No. 1 (1999), 26.

Furthermore, as the professionalization of these processes occurred, the amount and quality of critique contained in these reports waned. In this AramcoWorld article, the intentions of the development are expressed in clear economic terms, “The final stage of the *Qasr al-Hokm* [Justice Palace] development plan is being carried out in tandem with private enterprise to improve the wider area’s appearance and encourage investment. The district encompasses a number of old mud-brick houses dating back to ‘Abd al-’Aziz’s time and before. The RDA [Riyadh Development Authority]’s Heritage Program study has suggested that owners convert these buildings from residential to commercial use to make them viable economic units.

The goal of the Qasr al-Hokm project

is ‘to keep the heart of the city alive,’ says Abdul-Rahman al-Sari, director of urban and cultural development for the RDA. Riyadh’s main business district has moved to the north, Al-Sari points out, but by providing a core of public buildings, infrastructure and services the RDA hopes ‘to convince the people to come back and invest their money in the old city.’¹⁵

Artifacts, architectural finds, and replicas in this museum are displayed in seven sequential exhibition halls organized under the following themes:

1. “Man and Universe”: origins of the Universe, geology, fossils, and Neolithic artefacts.
2. “The Arab Kingdoms”: Arabian scripts and late Bronze Age—third century AD polities.

¹⁴ Bsheer, *Archive Wars*, 155.

Trevor Boddy, “History’s New Home in Riyadh.” *AramcoWorld* Vol. 50 No. 5 (1999), 22-23.

¹⁵ Arthur Clark. “The Centennial’s Jewel—Riyadh.” *AramcoWorld* Vol. 50 No. 1 (1999), 22.

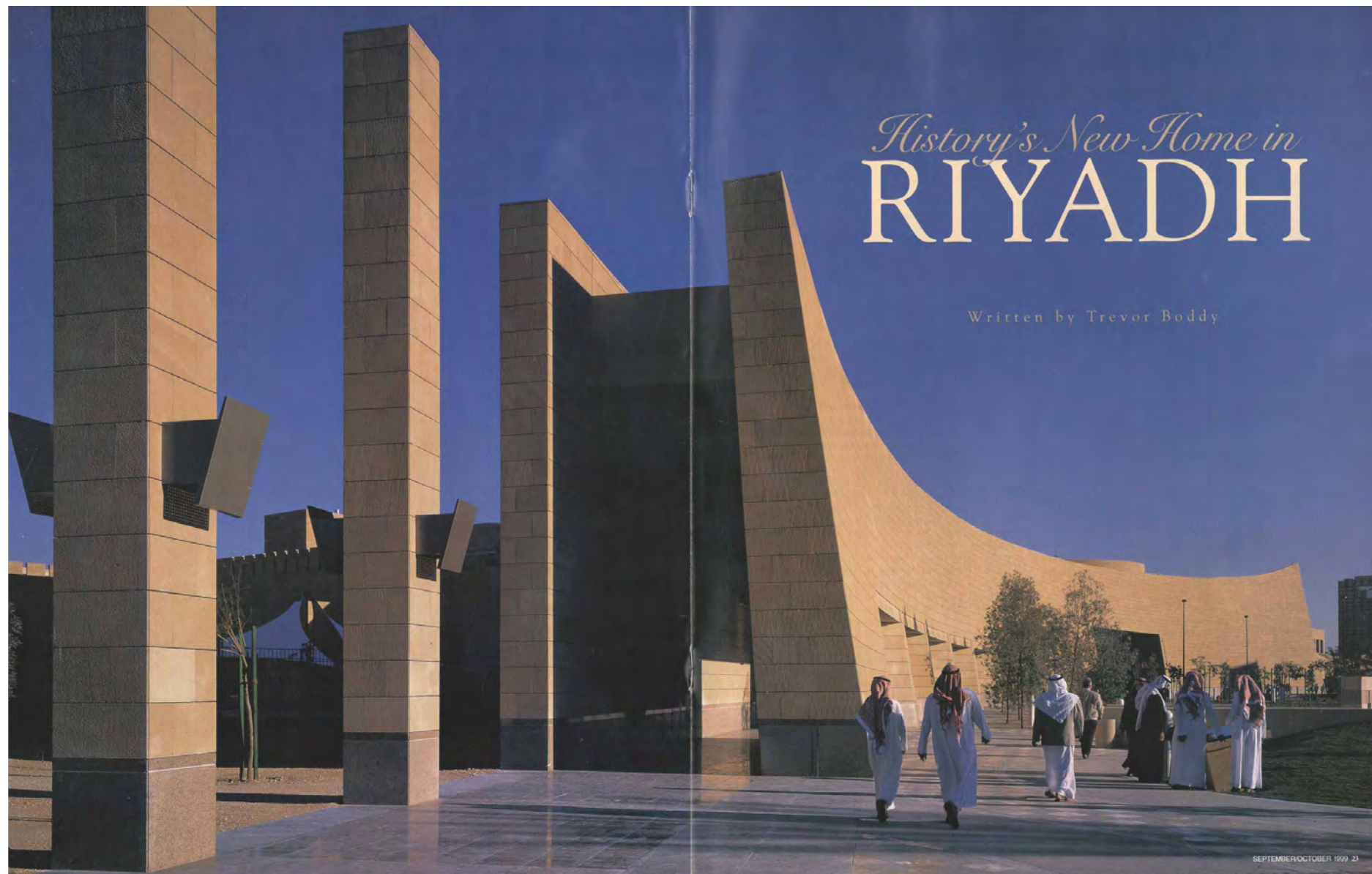
¹⁶ Omer Can Aksoy. “Framing the Primordial: Islamic Heritage and Saudi Arabia.” In *The Making of Islamic Heritage*, ed. Trinidad Rico (Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 72.

¹⁷ Trevor Boddy. “History’s New Home in Riyadh.” *AramcoWorld* Vol. 50 No. 5 (1999), 28.

3. “Al-Jahiliyyah (Pre-Islamic) Era”: caravan routes, markets, Arab poetry, and oasis settlements.
4. “The Prophet’s Mission”: the life of Prophet Muhammad, his lineage, and major events from his birth in Mecca until the hijra (the migration of the Prophet and his followers from Mecca to Medina) in 622 AD.
5. “Islam and the Arabian Peninsula”: Umayyad-Abbasid, Mamluk, and Ottoman era finds, and Mecca.
6. “The First Saudi State and the Second Saudi State”: the lives of Imam Muhammad bin Saud and Sheikh Mohammed bin AbdulWahhab, and the history of Dirriyah.
7. “Unification of the Kingdom”: the Unification War and King Abdulaziz’s life.
8. “Hajj and the Two Holy Mosques”: the role of previous polities in preserving the hajj rituals, historical hajj routes, the development of Mecca and Medina, and the role of the Saudi state in providing services to pilgrims.¹⁶

In a fascinating account of the decision-making processes surrounding this project, again in AramcoWorld, the author highlights that “the National Museum is proving remarkable for two qualities seldom found in contemporary museum design: modesty and flexibility. Saudi planners had decided early on that splashy architecture was not for them, nor did they want an interior scheme along the lines of the Bilbao Guggenheim, which has individualized its room designs according to the key artists whose work will be displayed in them. As a new institution, the Saudi museum is designed to accommodate change over time, particularly as archeological research continues and cultural historians provide ever-clearer accounts of Arabian life in ancient times. In addition, the fast-track design and construction cycle meant that foundations were being poured before final decisions had been made about the functions of the galleries above them. With the collection of artifacts also only then beginning, the galleries had to be

designed for as-yet-unknown displays.”¹⁷ Seemingly an admission of the desire by the state to manipulate historical narratives as they see fit, paradoxically, at a slower rate than the construction of the spaces generating these narratives, this account speaks to the maturity of the processes developed initially with the National Commercial Bank.



Capacitive Voids

Core 2 Studio Spring 2022 | Critic: Karla Rothstein

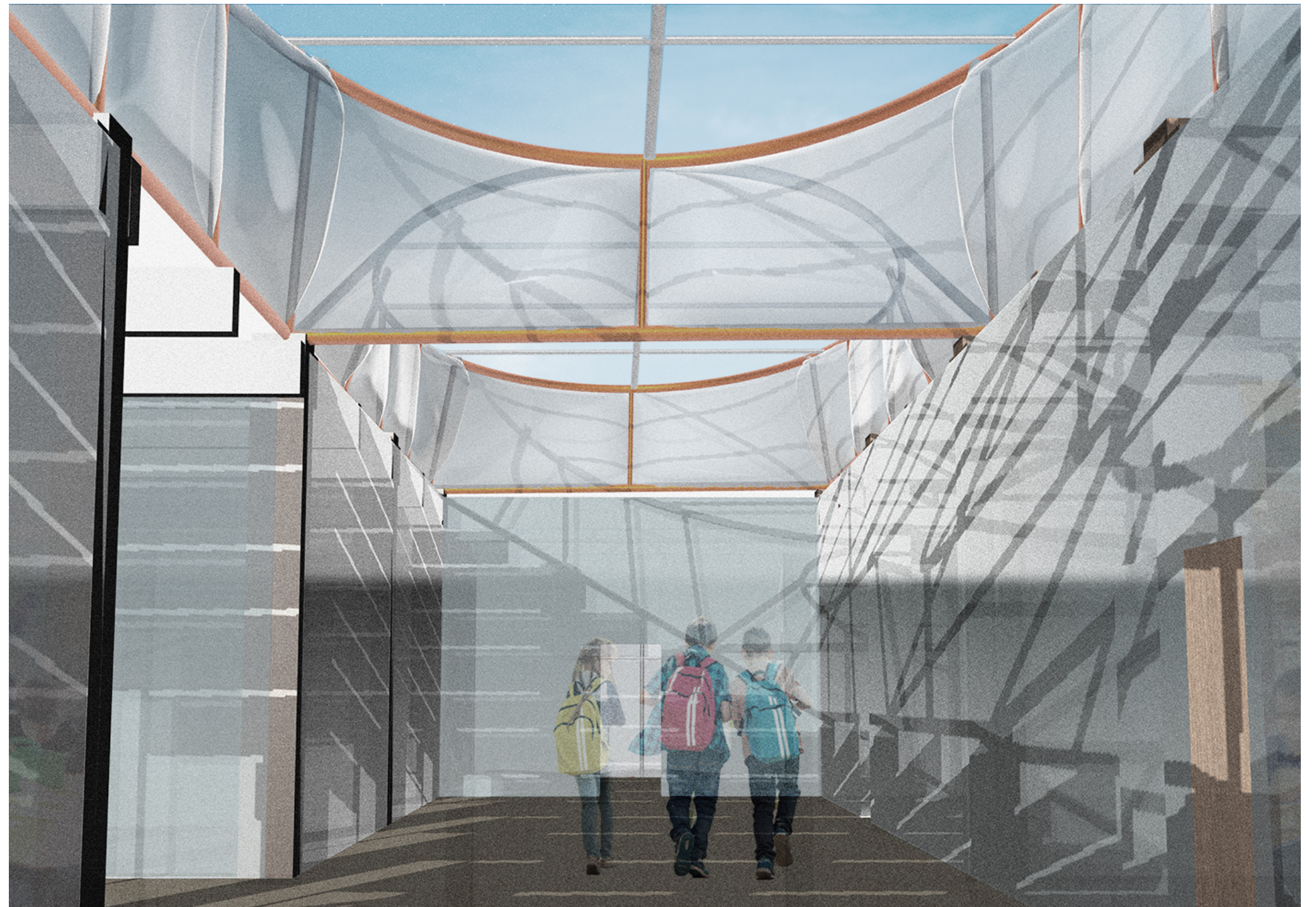
Within the continued histories of schools as sites for the reproduction of society, students have often voiced their demands for improved conditions in schools, that is, in society. As students sense that these multiscale and interrelated conditions are contestable, they have begun to articulate demands for educational settings that sense back, not to surveil and classify, a reflection of society as it is, but ones that transmit the needs of their constituents, a society as it might be. Translated spatially, both reflection and transmission can manifest as either compounding or communing, with the critical difference being where those processes take place.

It is often in the forum of the school that these contestations can arise. That these contestations, beginning always with a question, come to be constituted in the school, comes as no surprise as the school, at its best, is the

realm of questioning. The question is a capacitive void. Rather than enclosures, borders, and limits constituting space, what if instead voids, sensed and sensing, and by extension their orientation and communing, constituted a space of learning, a capacitive pedagogy?

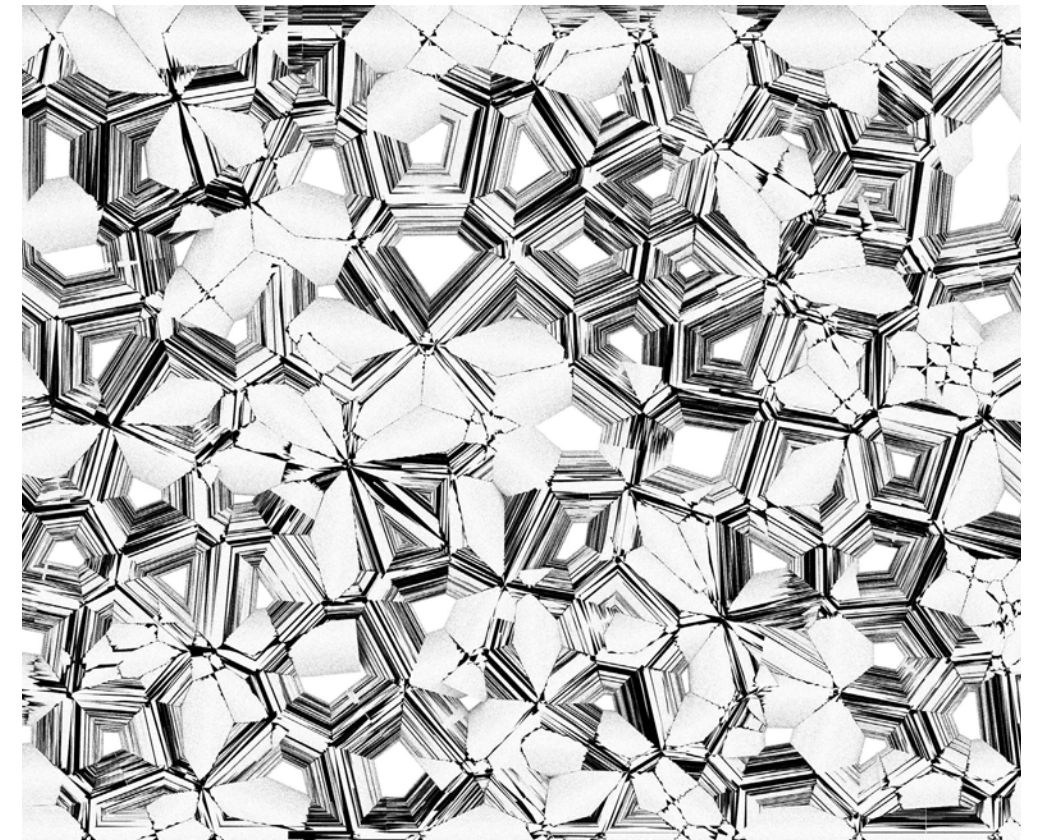
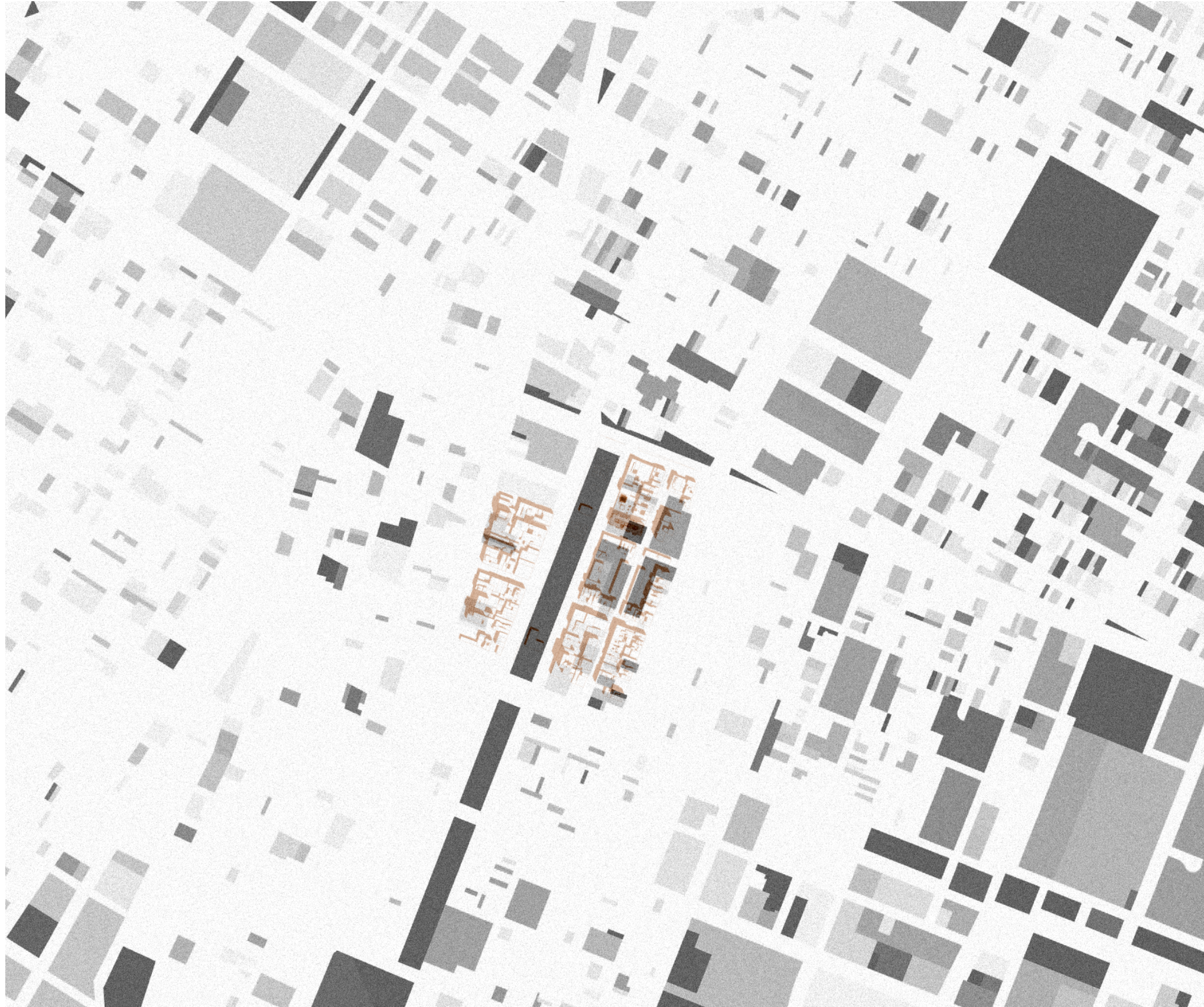
As the question increasingly becomes one of mediation, using the grammar of capacitive voids, in their compounding and communing, can encourage the development of a capacitive pedagogy. This pedagogy is facilitated at four scales. At the urban scale with the built floor area ratio, at the site scale with a courtyard bisecting the school and auditorium massing from the library as well as housing two gathering areas, at the building scale with driven voids facilitating and lighting the circulation, and critically, at the classroom scale with programmatically differentiated voids. These voids bordering

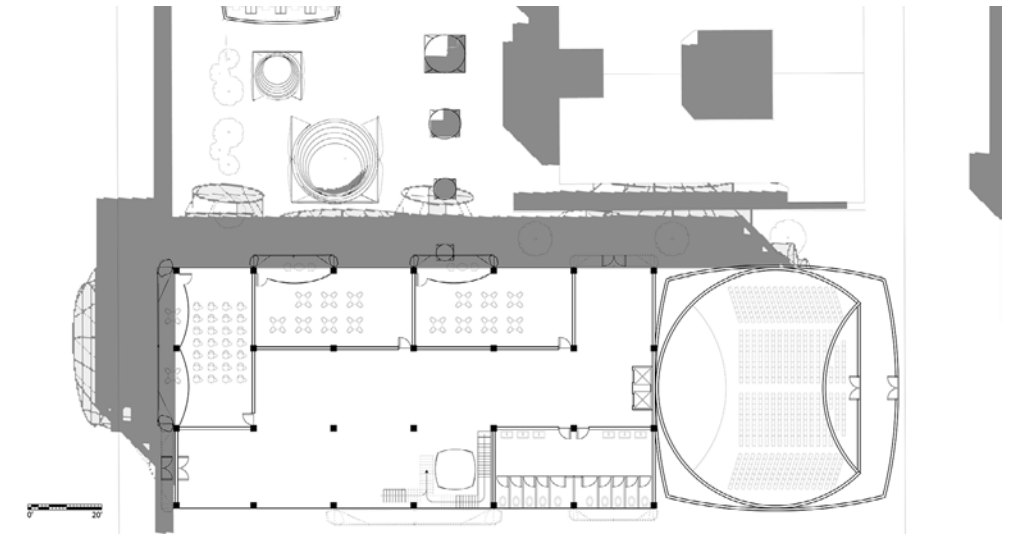
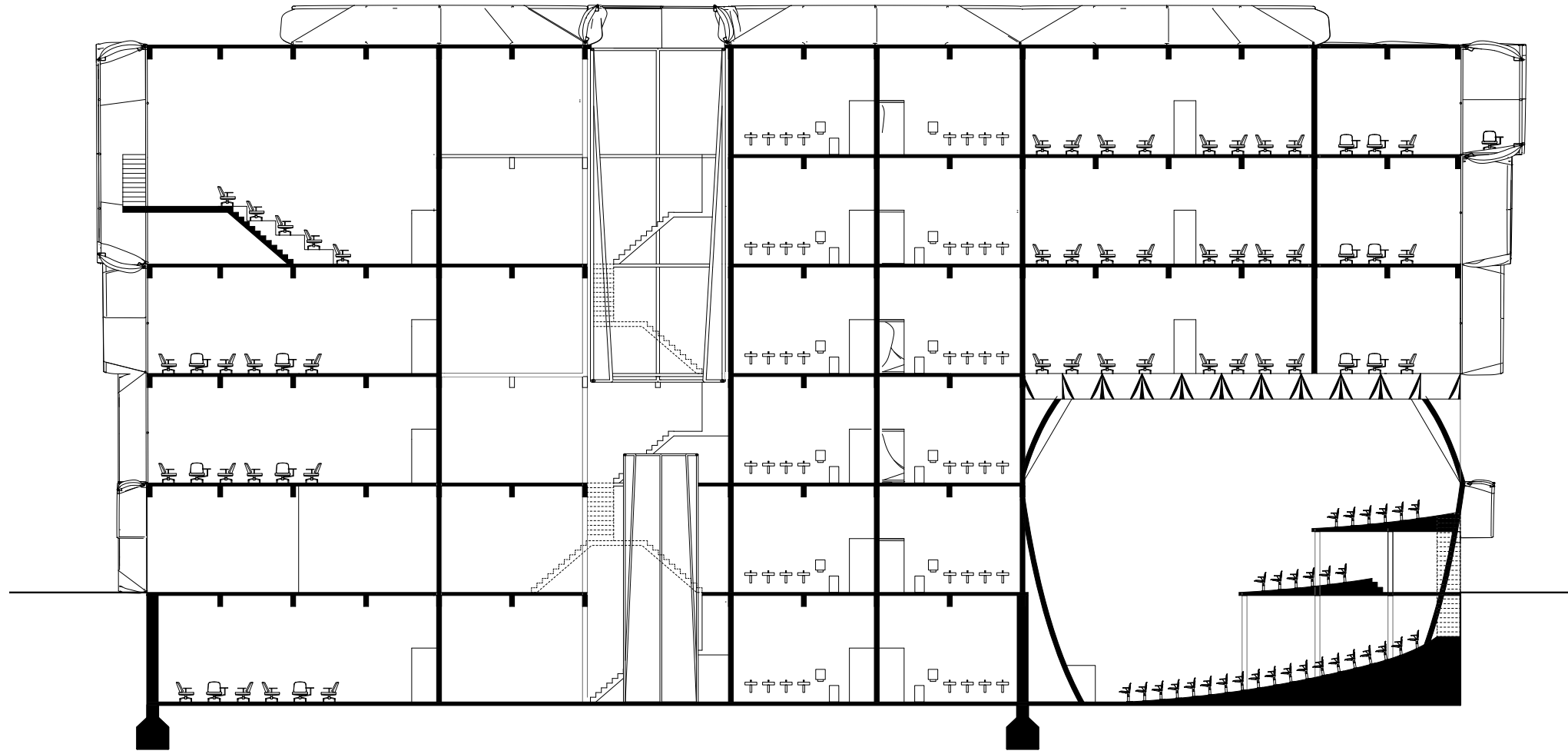
Interior perspective under hallway skylight

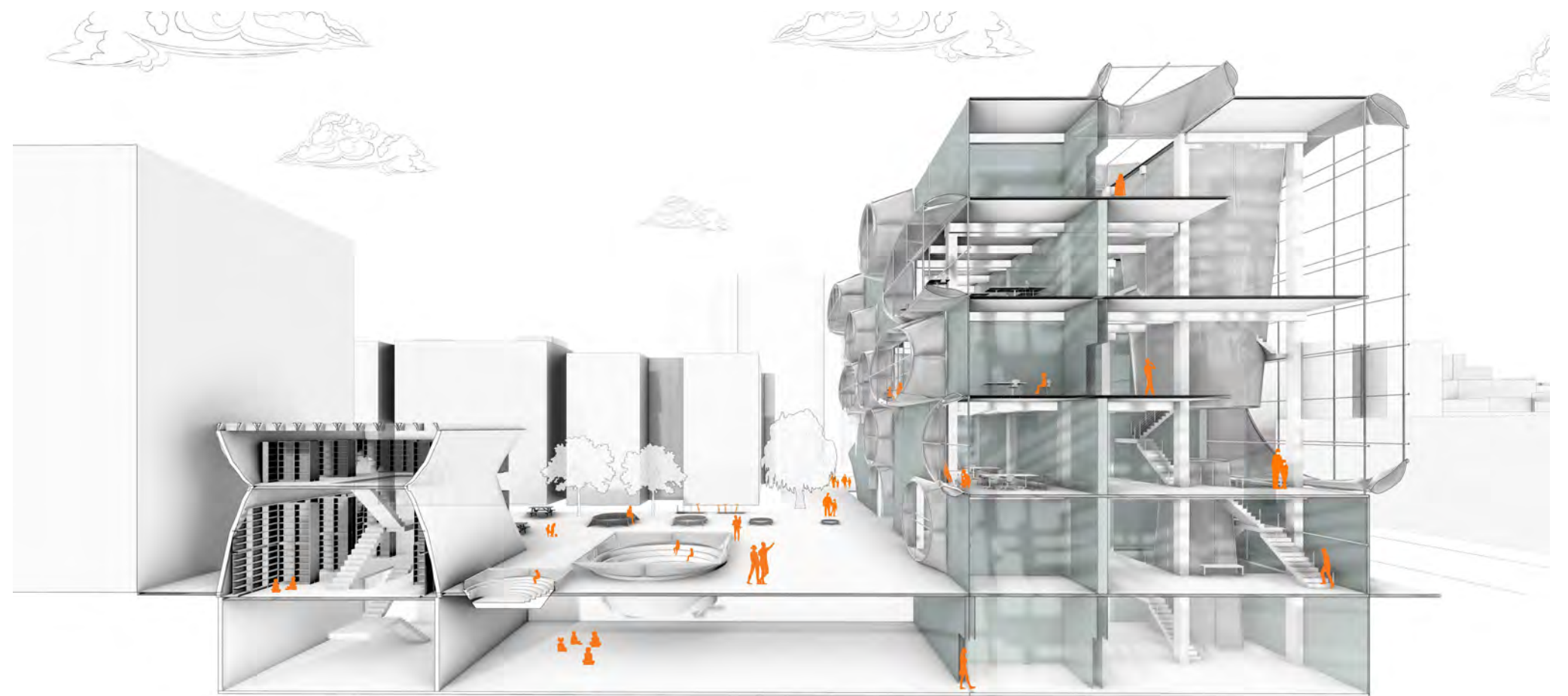
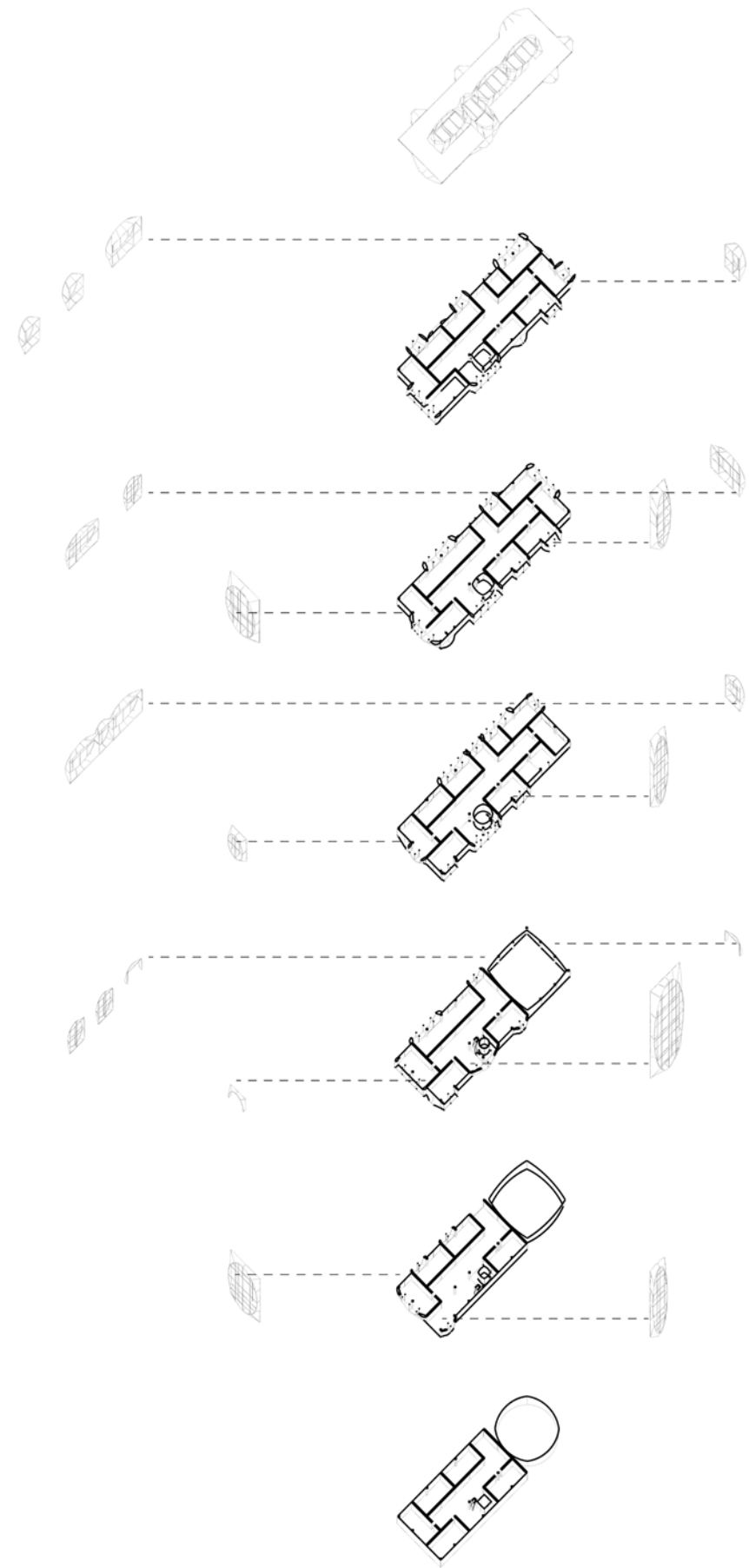


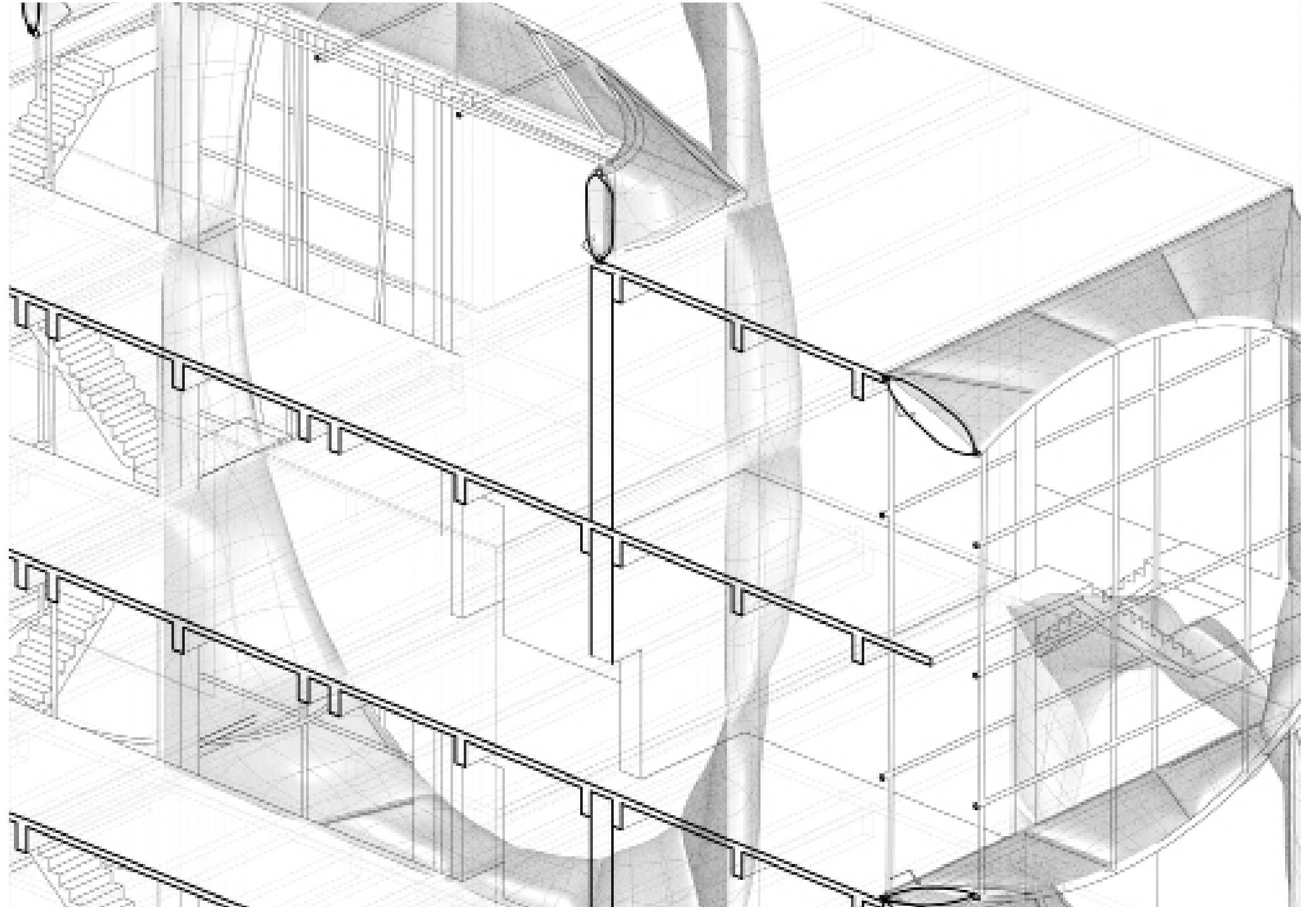
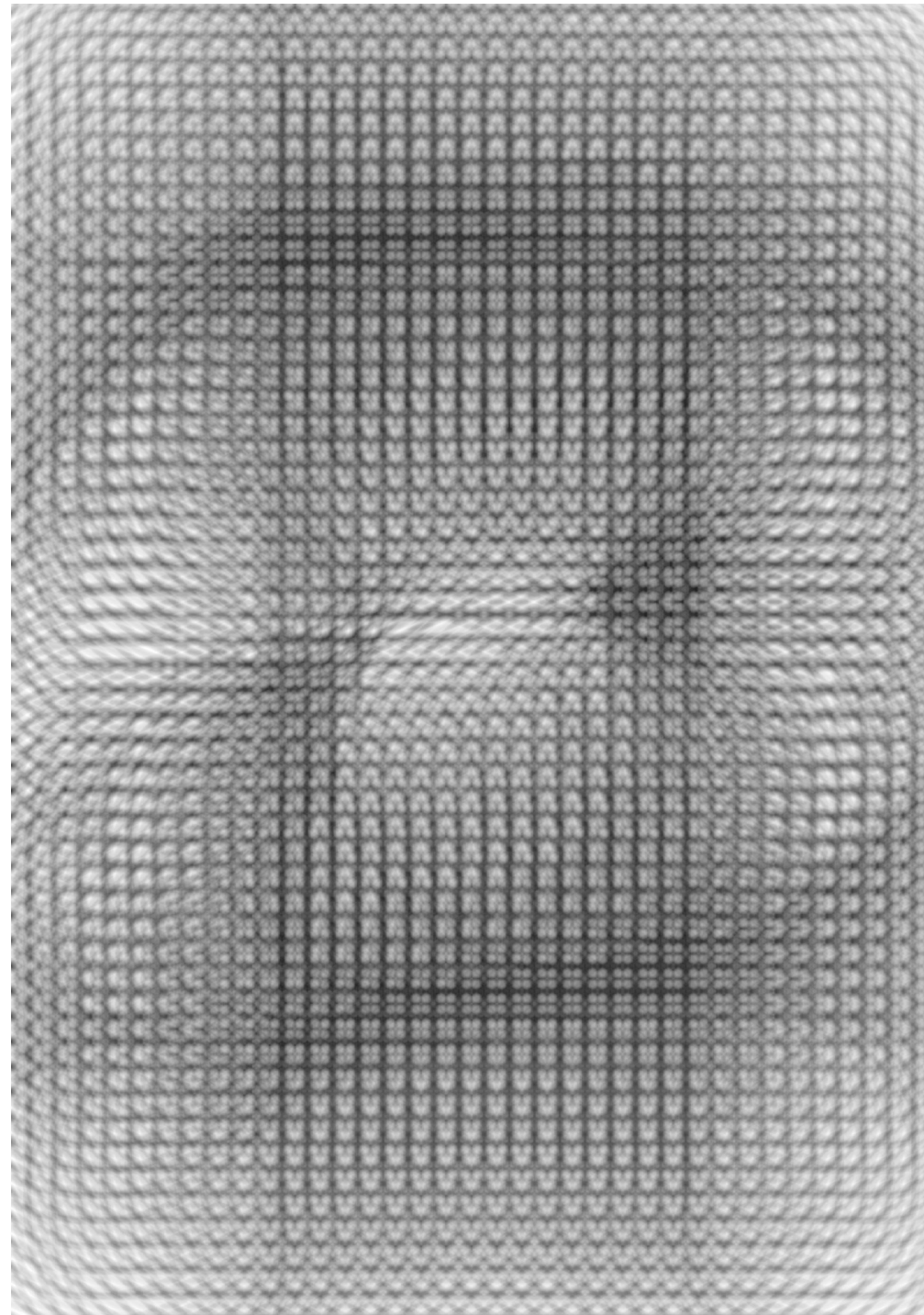
each class room are inhabitable and beyond the transmissive capacity of their ETFE cladding, they facilitate interpersonal transmission in their capacity for engaged smaller group activities. The depth and complexity

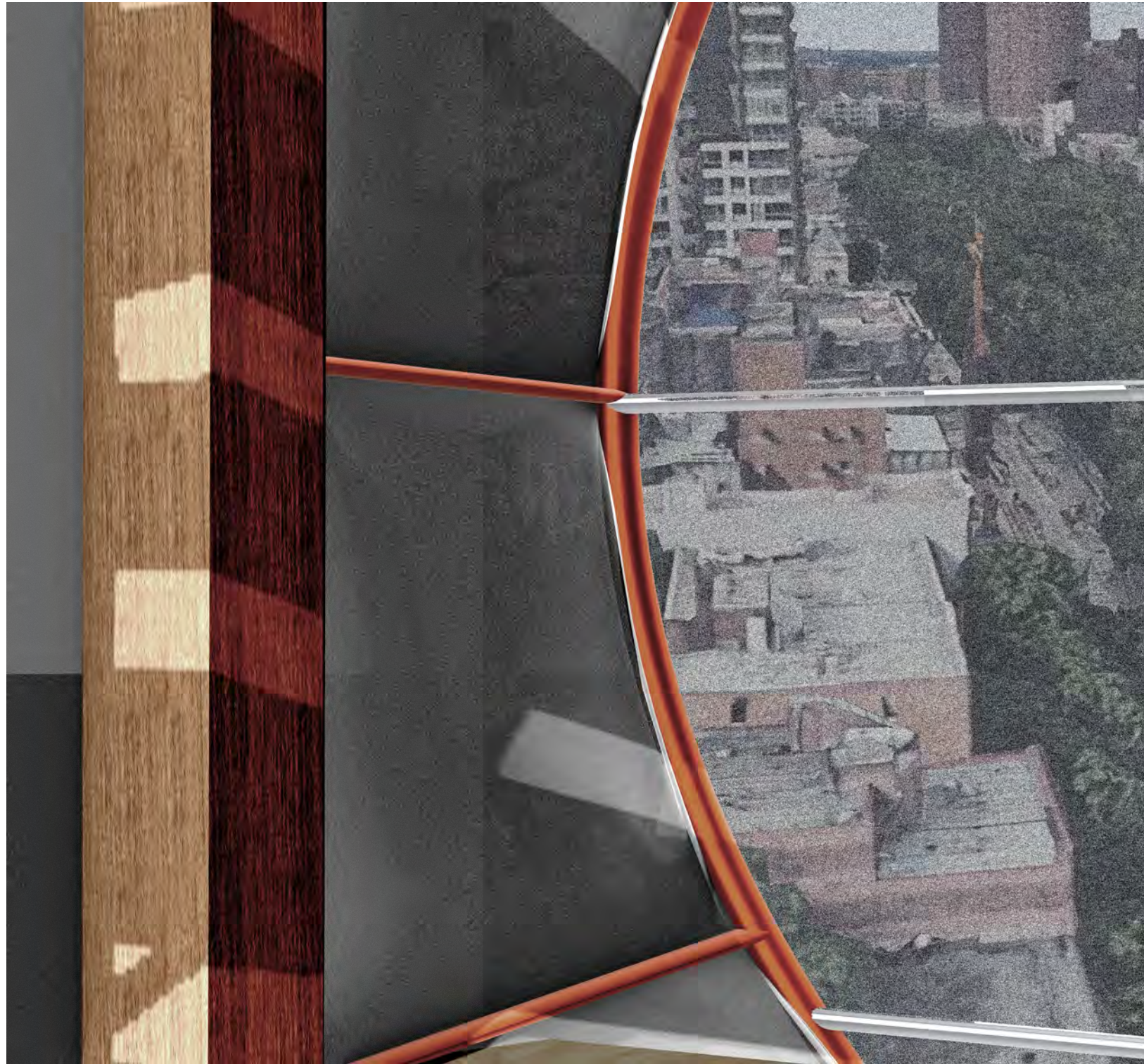
of these voids increases as they ascend and accommodate older students and facilitate and encourage their ability to communally articulate their needs and demands of society.











Wipochk Baths

Core 1 Studio Fall 2021 | Critic: Lindsey Wikstrom

The proposed intervention is the installation of the Wipochk Baths at the site of the abandoned Worth Street station, a local station of what we now know as the 456 subway line. Historically, this was the southwestern bank of the historical Collect Pond and the site of the Lenape settlement Werpoes, a Dutch derivative of the Lenape word Wipochk meaning bushy place or thicket. Today, the site sits below the intersection of Worth Street and Lafayette Street where it shares its western wall with the basement of the Jacob K Javits federal building which houses the New York City field offices of a number of federal agencies including the FBI and the Department of Homeland Security. By tracing the history of water at the site and its role in the destruction of a number of carceral buildings in the surrounding area, most notably the Halls of Justice

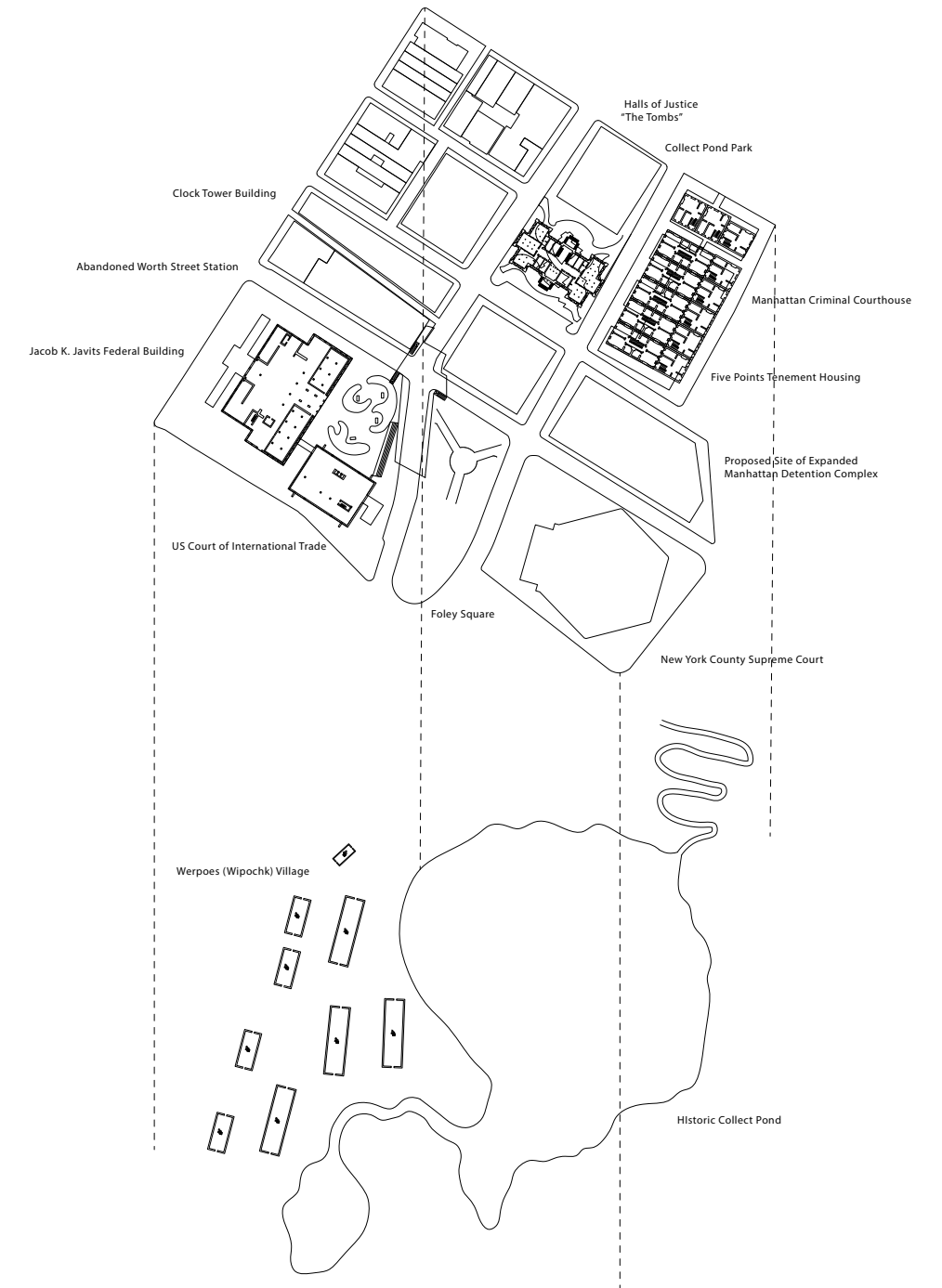
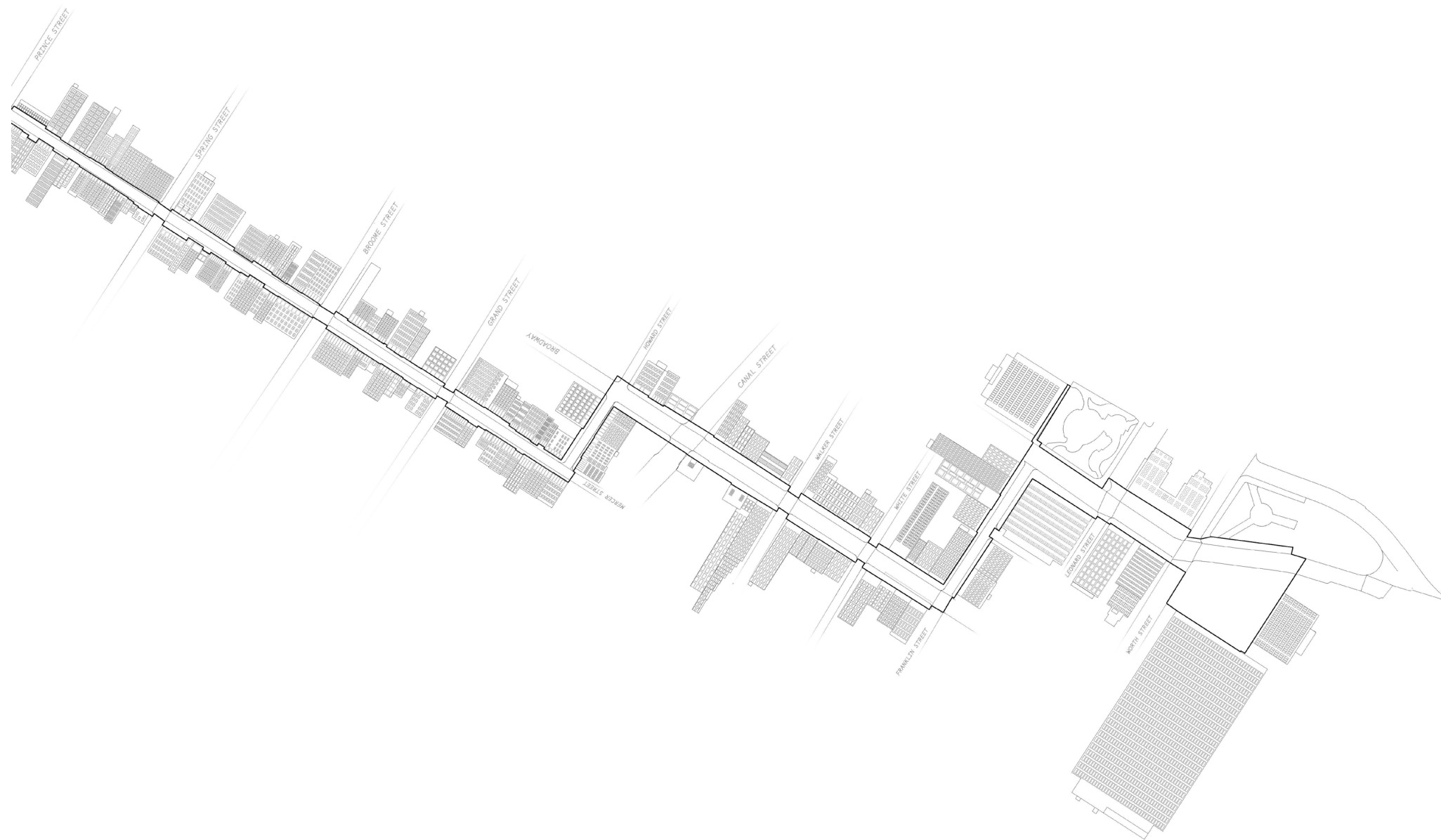
building colloquially known as the Tombs, the motivations behind developing a bath house at this specific site can be understood.

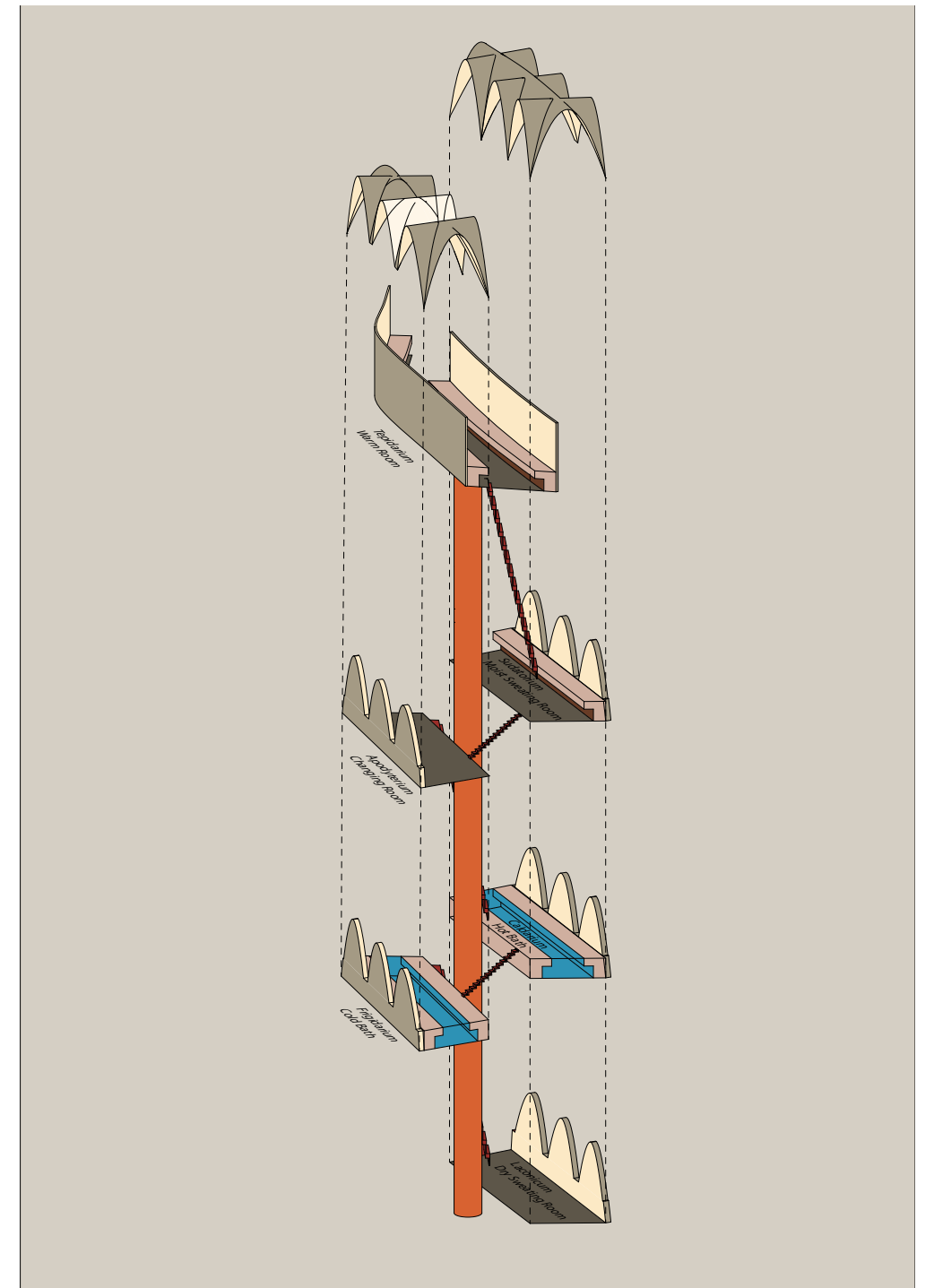
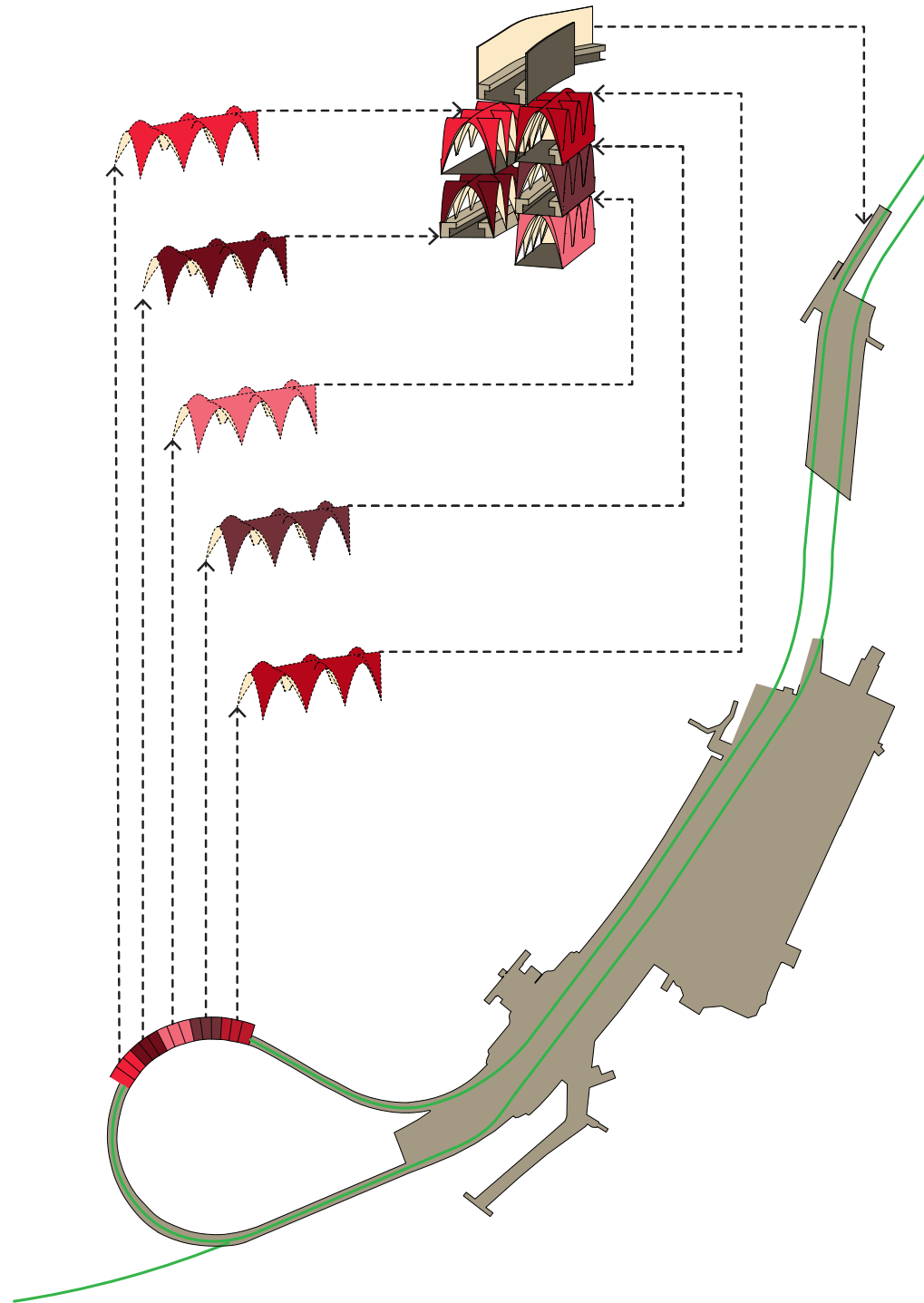
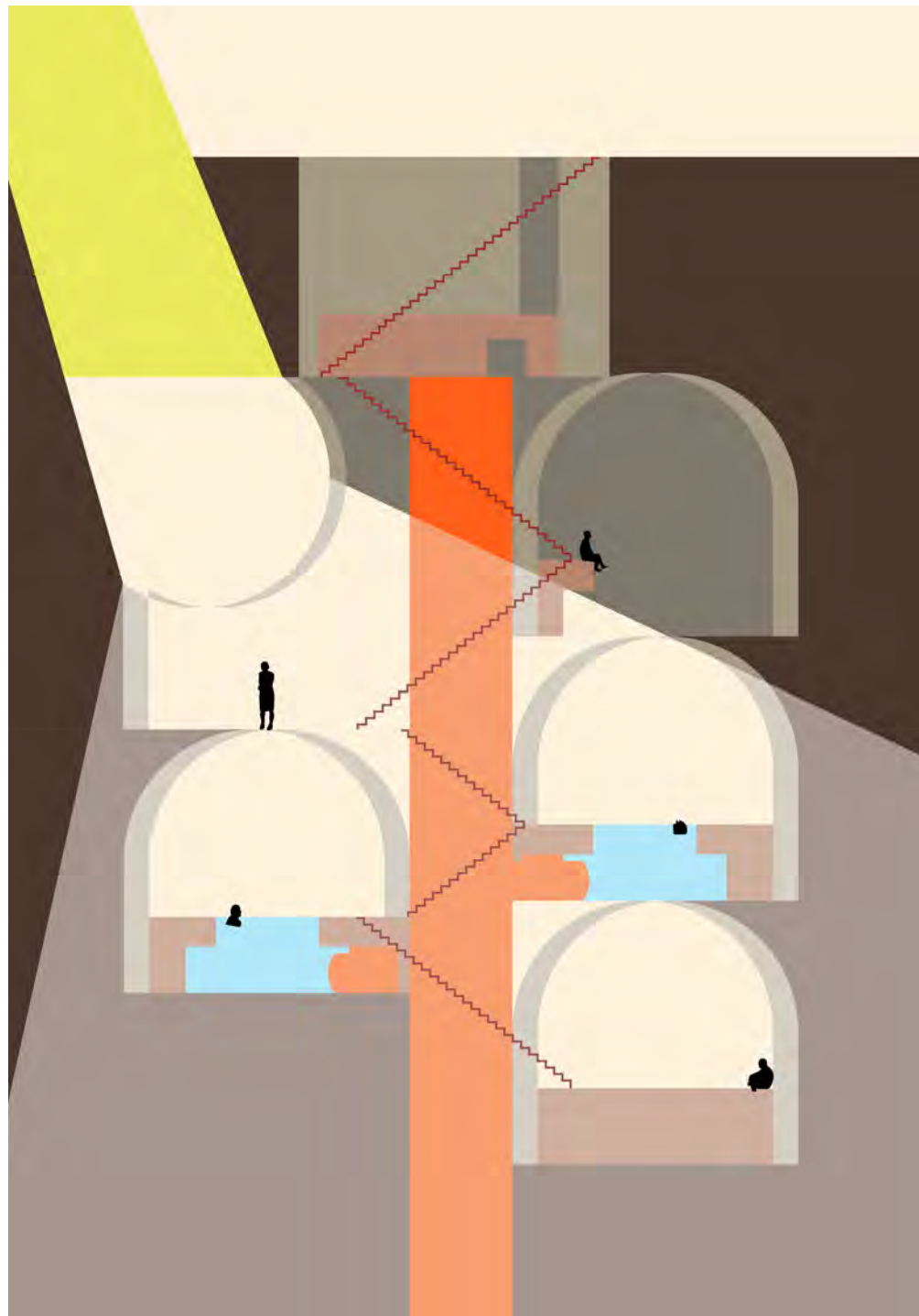
The intervention draws its material and form from another nearby abandoned subway station, the original city hall station also of the 4/5/6 subway line. The City Hall subway station is composed of 15 vaults, 3 of which are glass with metal framing, around a single curved subway track. These vaults were built under the supervision of Rafael Guastavino in the tile arch system he became famous for. In its new location beneath the Worth street station, the City Hall station is layered into 5 cuts of 3 vaults. The bath house program emerges naturally from both the convenience of the underground spring (from which the historical collect pond once drew its water and which the bathhouse taps for its water supply). The structural form



of the abandoned city hall station has commonly been used in bathhouses, including the domed steamhouses of the Lenape. The baths are organized thermally with the hottest room, the dry sweating room, with its underfloor heating system at the deepest point. The hot bath and moist sweating room or sauna are respectively stacked above, with the warm room and entrance at the abandoned Worth Street station sitting just below street level. The cold bath and changing room are stacked across. It is this

stack located closest to the federal building which is covered with the vault cuts with the individual glass vaults to allow for sight lines of the site from the partially excavated plaza of the federal building. Within the bathhouse, the overall circulation, in addition to connecting the varied programs, encourages returning to the sight lines made possible in the baths. There are of course explicit and implicit connections between bathing and surveillance. Ritual bathing has been used to enact an imperial homosociality (in the

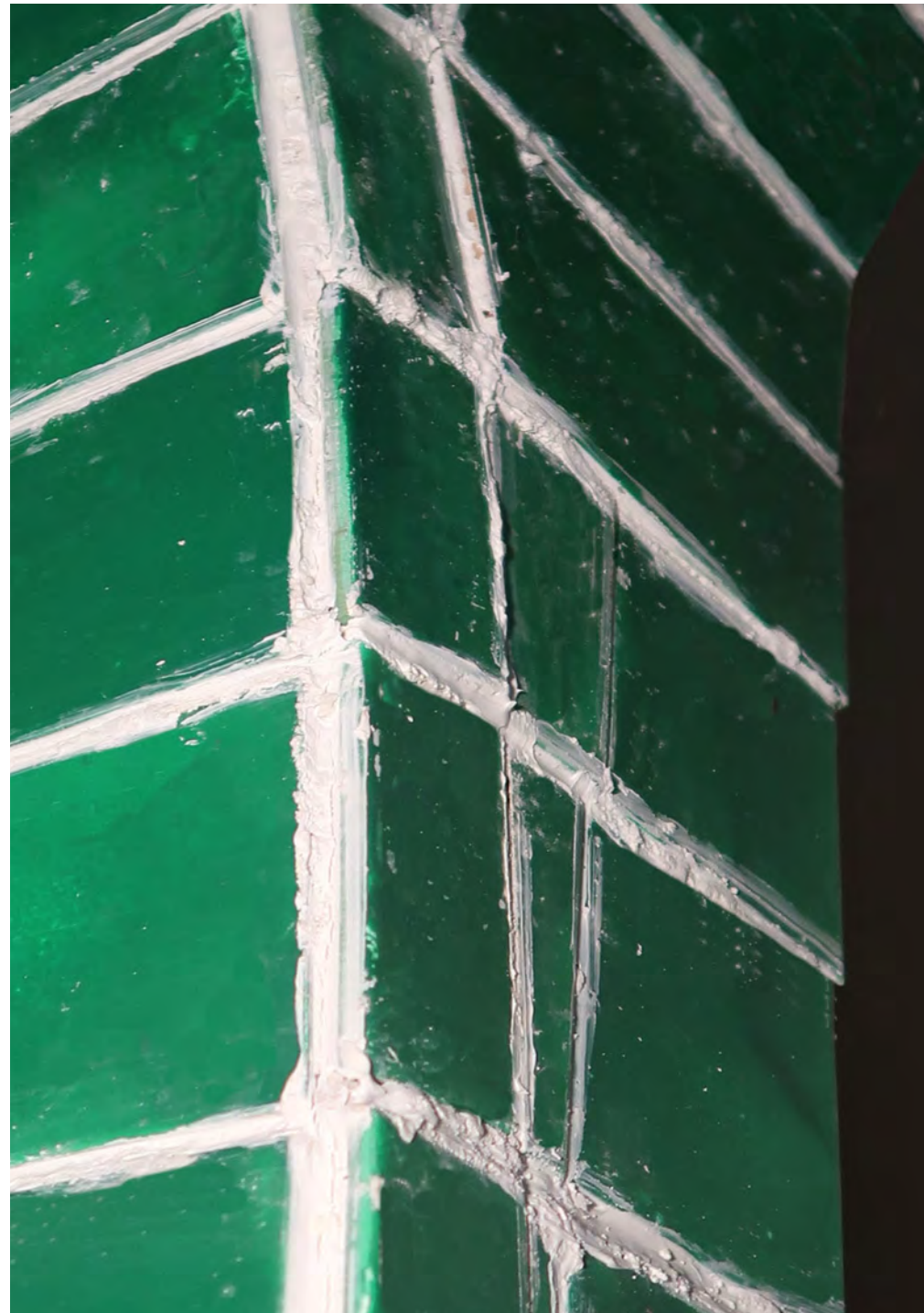
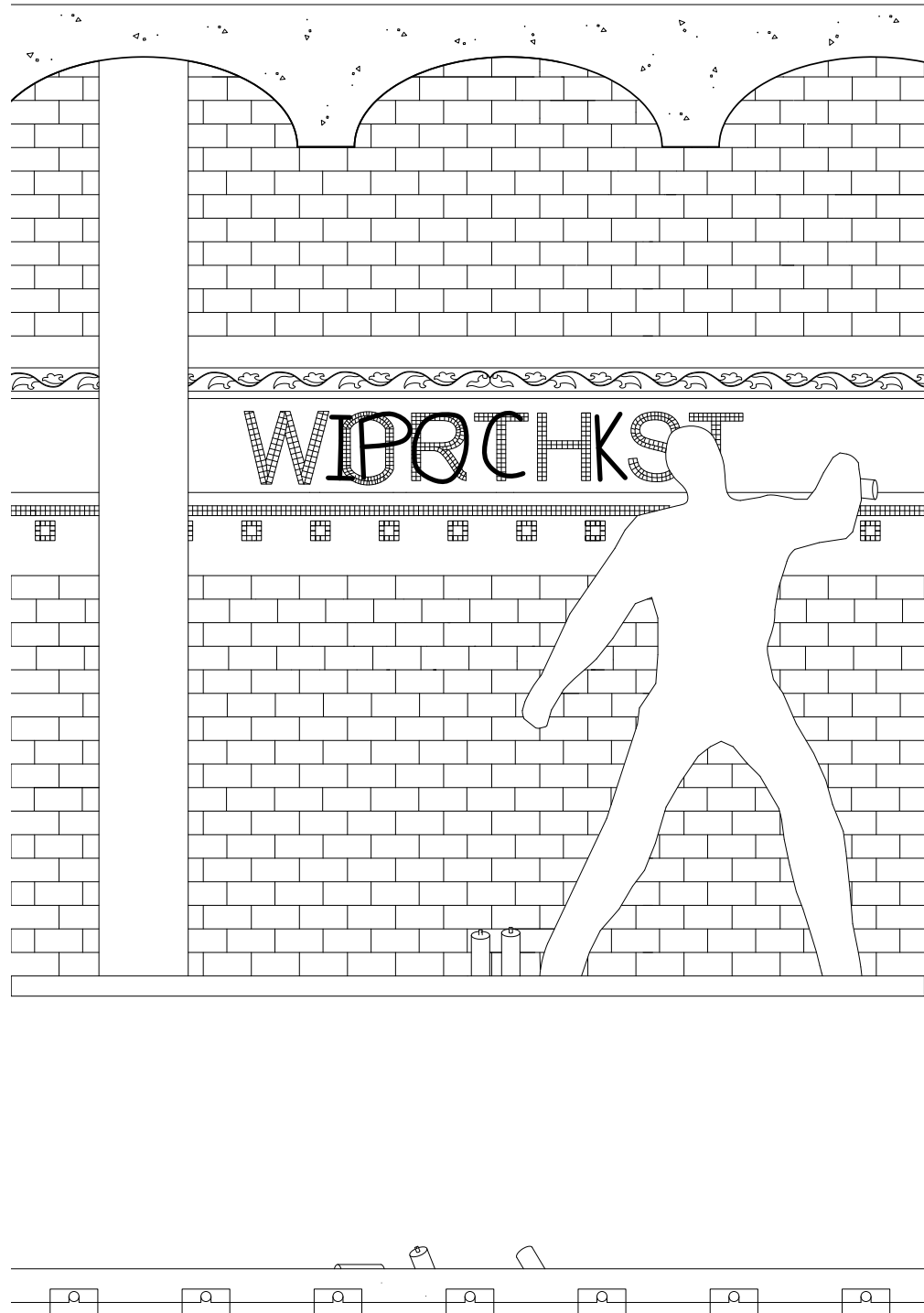




case of classical Roman bathhouse). But bathhouses have also been places for those alienated from society and those escaping surveillance. In many ways this makes sense, as social taboos, most obviously around nudity, are intentionally and mutually disregarded in the baths to accommodate what can, for some people, be the stressful and uniquely alienating experience of undressing.

The Wipochk Baths are similarly envisioned in regards to those who would frequent it. Because the NYC district field office of

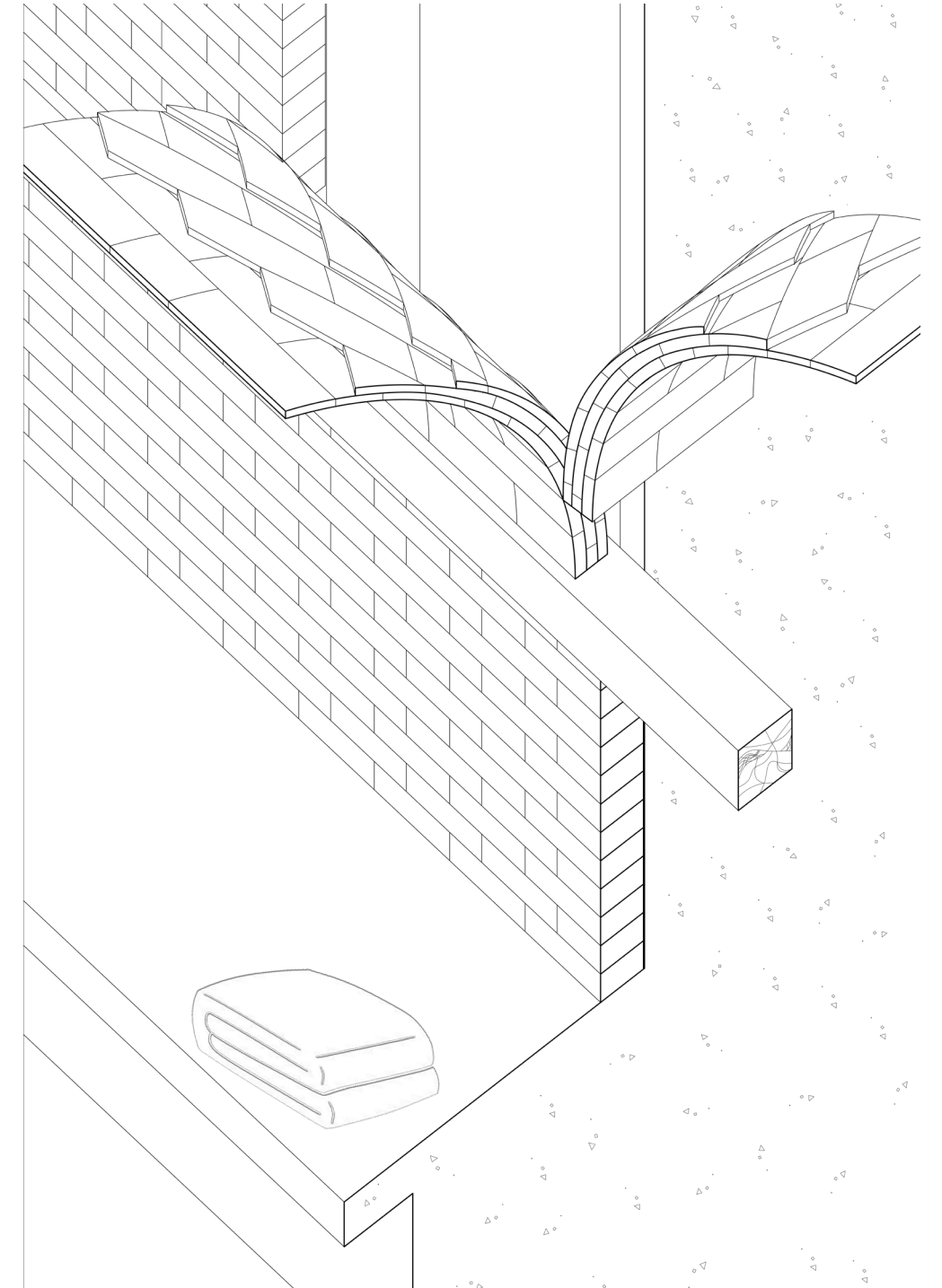
Citizenship and Immigration Services is located in the adjacent federal building, it is a well-known location among the city's immigrant communities. Immigrants requiring Citizenship and Immigration services can be seen lining up in the morning along Worth Street to go through the security checkpoint and enter the building. From even before the entrance to the federal building, the precedent of surveillance and alienation is established. This was the historical process of settler colonialism from the arrival of



European settlers to the present as is seen with collaboration between an agency tasked with naturalizing such as the CIS and an agency tasked with alienating such as the ICE who also have a field office in the building.

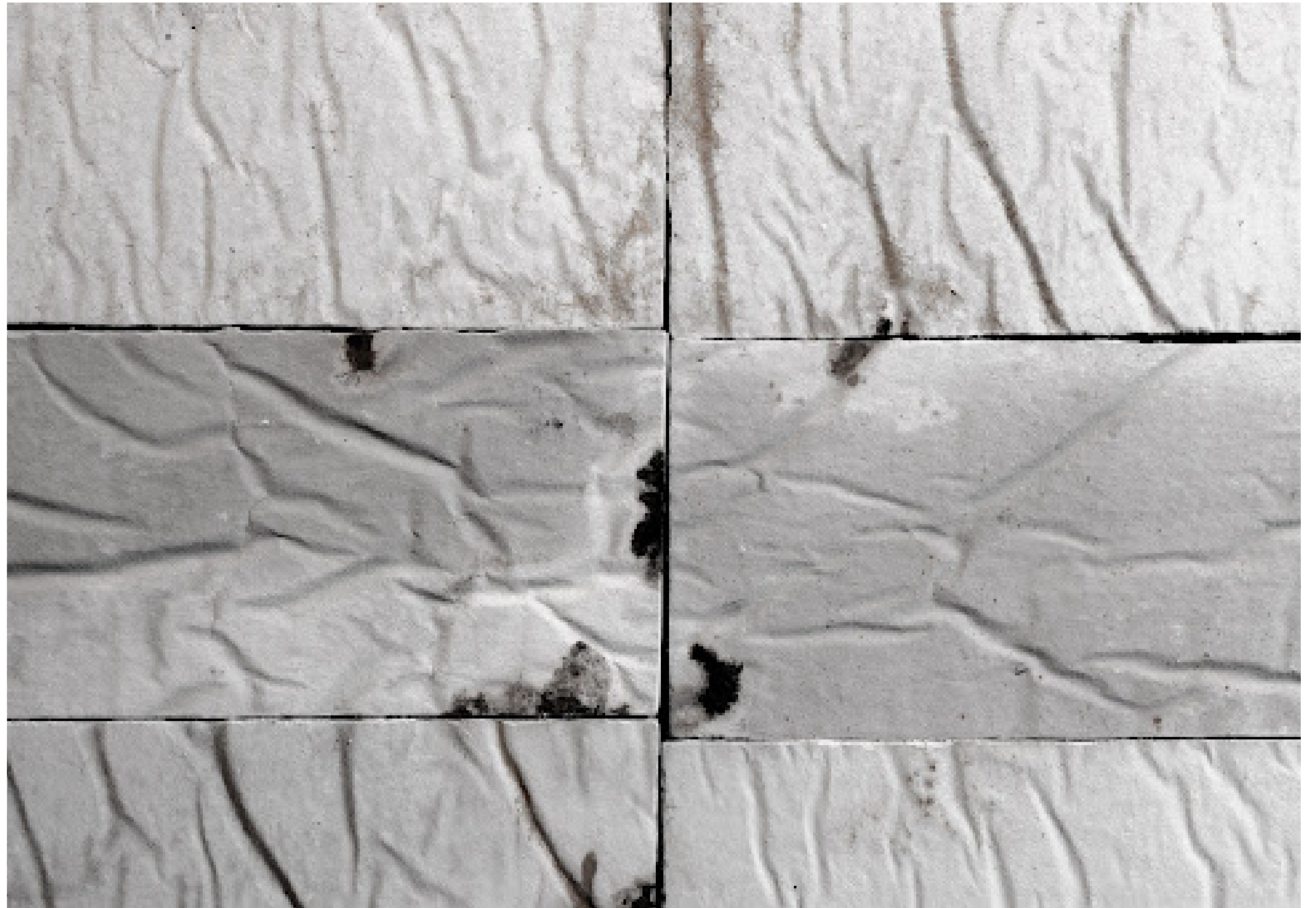
By providing ritual and collective bathing to diasporic peoples specifically those already at the site, The Wipochk Baths, through a recognition of the collective alienation inherent in bathhouses offers a respite of sorts towards a restorative and naturalizing process of a different kind. Some historians

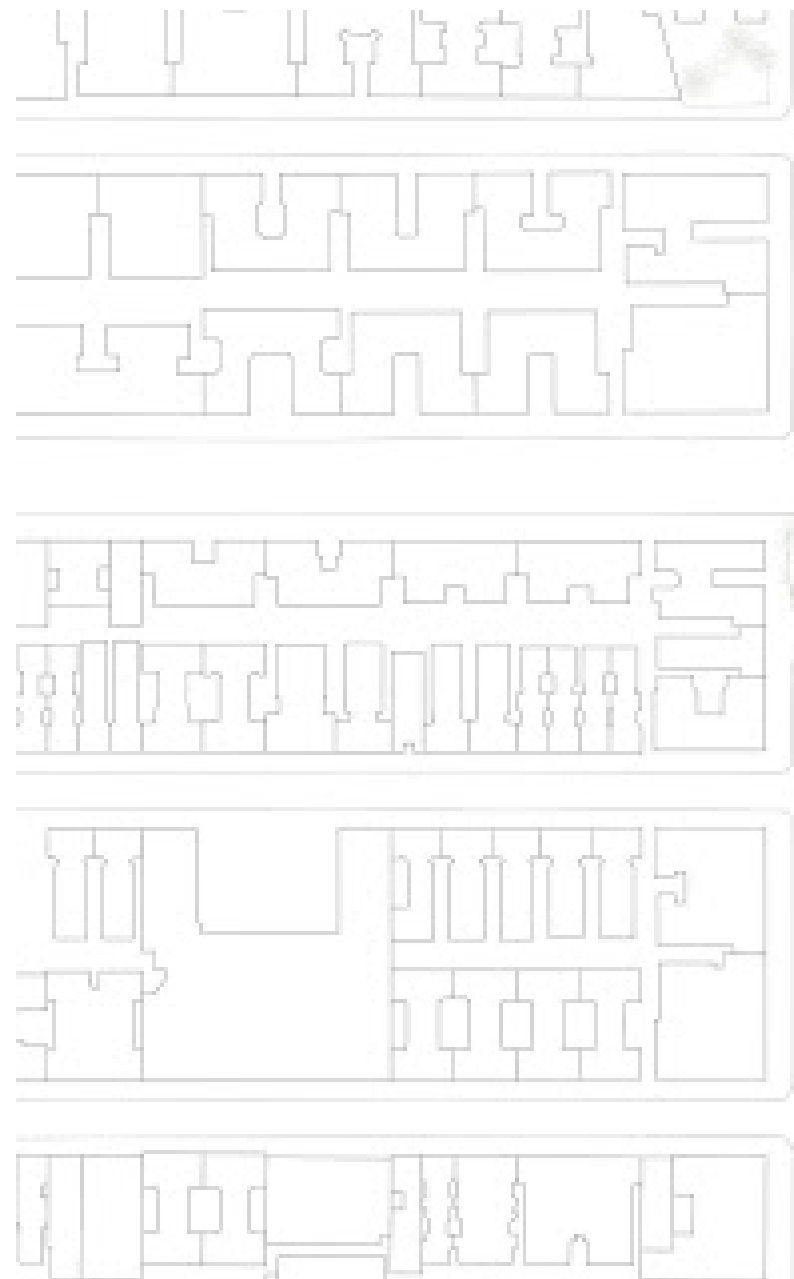
believe it was the Lenape inhabitants of Werpoes or Wipochk who “sold” Manhattan to the Dutch in 1626. The Wipochk Baths of course can not sufficiently constitute reparations to Lenape people currently living in New York City for the erasure of the historical and contemporary injustices of genocide and colonialism at the site. However, through memorializing the site that Lenape people not only bathed at but also lived at, the baths continue the cultural heritage of Lenape people in New York City through the present.



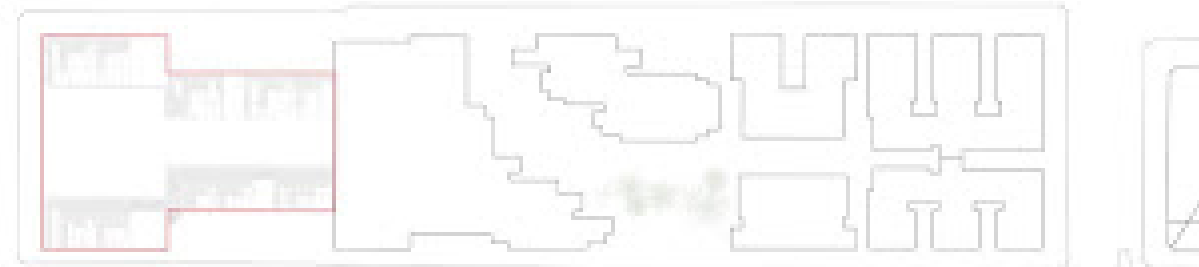
Path of Most Resistance

Adv 5 Studio Fall 2023 | Critic: Yussef Agbo-Ola | Partner: Omer Gorashi





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Amsterdam Ave

