

Transcending the Urban Venue:

a study on arena architecture

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This book would not be possible without the special support from a few certain people. So this book is dedicated to everyone who has helped me along the way. I deeply appreciate all the support that you have given me and thank you for always pushing me to strive for the best.

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Matt Rossetti

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Introduction

To think would be always be to construct, to build a free plan in which to move, invent concepts, unfold a drama.

-Guy Debord

The intention of this thesis is to investigate spatial relationships between architecture and spectacle. Generally speaking, spectacle refers to an event that is memorable for the appearance it creates. Guy Debord's theory of spectacle suggests that social actions begin to take the form of objects. Spectacle does not strictly mean a collection of images, but a social relationship between people and events. The spectacle exists simultaneously as all of society or part of society, and as an instrument of unification. As a part of society, it is specifically what concentrates all gazing and all consciousness. Due to the fact that this area is separate, it is the common ground of the deceived gaze and of false consciousness, and the unification it achieves is nothing but an official language

of generalized separation. The spectacle becomes the very thing that relates the human body and the movement through space. This thesis represents a search for an architecture in which the building, rather than being a monumental form positioned in the public realm is instead a method of creating a sense of community within the social fabric. It will question how to create a zone with-in the urban fabric in which activity occurs during the event. This thesis will focus on how to integrate the urban context and sustain growth between architecture and spectacle.



2

Thesis Paper

A matter of achieving the unknown by a
derangement of the senses.

-Rimbaud

This thesis investigates the placement of venues in urban context, grounded in the theory of spectacle. Using Guy Debord's theory of spectacle as a starting point and translating this directly into what has become the most important modern day spectacle, sporting spectacle. This informs how the venue should interact and be situated within the urban context while exploring the methods of modern venues. For the intentions of this thesis, spectacle refers to an event that is memorable for the appearance it creates. Guy Debord's theory of spectacle suggests that social actions begin to take the form of physical objects. Spectacle does not strictly mean a collection of images but a social relationship between people and events. The spectacle exists simultaneously as all of society or part of society, and as an instrument of unification. As a part of society, it is specifically what concentrates all gazing and all consciousness. The spectacle becomes the very thing that relates the human body and the movement through space [1].

What is Spectacle

Spectacle can be broken down into a few themes for better understanding. Speed being the first theme takes a closer look at Paul Virilo's book *The Aesthetics of Disappearance* which explores the concept of picnolepsy, a condition of moments in lapses in time, being momentary absences of consciousness. These events are more prominent in children but still happen to adults, having hundreds of them a day. These moments of absences of consciousness are produced by speed and are a characteristic of the pace at which we live our lives [8]. Moving through space and becoming unconditioned to our surroundings. Identity being

[1] Debord, Guy. Society of the Spectacle. Detroit: Black & Red, 2000. Print.

[8] Virilio, Paul.
The Aesthetics of
Disappearance.
Los Angeles:
Semiotext(e), 2009.
Print.

[9] Kwinter, Stanford.
Architectures of
Time: Toward a
Theory of the Event
in Modernist Culture.
1st ed. Cambridge:
The MIT Press, 2003.
Print.

the second theme, is the manifestation of the instrument of unification, as groups of people or social actions start to become one. This is where the social actions of a certain area start to shape and create physical forms that become the identity for an area. The third theme is event, speaking towards Stanford Kwinter's theory on an event being the actual thing that is being witnessed and that it is pure individualism so it will differ from person to person. The very thing that is going on will be recollected differently by every person in such a way that they create a memory of what happened in that space [9].

New Babylon

Guy Debord was one of the three founders of the Situationist International along with Asger Jorn and Constant Nieuwenhuys. They started out to create unitary urbanism but Constant broke away to pursue it in a more architectural manner while the others wanted to pursue it in a more social way. Unitary urbanism became Constant's dream as he wanted to create a new mode of dwelling and society, entitled New Babylon. Within this, it would be a world of collective creation and absolute transparency where everything would be exposed to the public gaze. The aim was to move throughout the city without purpose, thus provoking unexpected events and encounters. Constant worked in three scales: city, district and ambiance or sector. These show how New Babylon would engulf a city. Constant created specific ambiances for specific purposes and designations. These sectors would change through the activities that would occur within them. New Babylon was comprised of 80% public space and 20% private space which was only

used for sleeping and things that truly needed to be private. Constant even went as far as labeling people from the homo-ludens who lived freely within New Babylon and the homo-fabers who lived in the city below and aspired to live within New Babylon. The motto that Constant used for this project, which explains the existence of the project itself, written by the poet Rimbaud, was a “matter of achieving the unknown by a derangement of senses” [10].

Evolution of Spectacle

Spectacle was most prominent in theatre but has evolved over time. Theatre audiences are not free beings that have a set roles of gestures that are considered to be appropriate. Modern theatrical performances created a desire to organize and control perception, conditioning or requiring the spectator to assume a set of gestural, postural, visual and perceptual attitudes: sitting upright, attentive and quiet sitting in the dark, trapped between the arm rests and the knees of the other spectators, freeing the mind of preconceptions and staring at the light. Nineteenth century responses were often unruly as the spectators assumed the right to disrupt the show, talk, move about, eat and drink. Modern cinema finds this to be negative to the mood of the performance. It is now the producers who led the consumers not the other way around. With the invention of cinema it helped ease out these notions. Once full length narrative films were the norm, the darken auditorium and bright screen image made the audience more complacent. The introduction of the spoken language into films in 1927 insured this transformation of disordered audiences. Transferring these disruptive audiences to music

[10] Heynen, Hilde.
"New Babylon:
The Antinomies of
Utopia." *Architecture
and Modernity: A
Critique*. Cambridge:
The MIT Press, 2000.
Print.

halls, circus acts, comedy shows and strip shows. [2]

This transformation led sporting events to become the most important modern spectacle. Unlike cinema, this rowdy behavior of the spectator was accepted and spectators were encouraged to show emotion in an open and free playing manner. In most cases, it is beneficial for the athlete to have vocal assistance as this behavior is not disruptive like in cinema. Whether live or recorded, the sporting contest would seem deadened without the noise of communal support. Sporting spectators have a playful freedom compared to cinema spectators for three main points. First is the ability to negotiate a relationship to other unknown spectators. It can range from ignoring them to creating a bond to vilifying or striking them for cheering for the opposition. It is not uncommon to see spectators behaving in a way that would be uncharacteristic in any other context. For example, embracing, shouting, swearing, kissing, dancing and even male crying. Much of this spirit comes from the spectators' civic or monetary investment to the team, from the person who just watches on TV, to the season ticket holder or the gambler with a lot of money riding the outcome. Sports teams are most commonly identified with certain regions, cities or even countries. Spectators often look to a team as a representation of the polis and take civic or national pride in their ownership. When the team wins it can be said that the city, region, or nation wins. Second, sport spectators can condemn the outcome or the manner of play. If the result displeases them, they may express their dissatisfaction publicly. It is true, theater goers can do this however, since their investment is much less, they rarely express it openly. Third, sports spectators have the freedom to

vary or alter the purpose of their presence, for public behavior becomes a method of owning the experience. [2]

Two key distinctions should be made in the evolution of spectacle. First being occurrence versus happening. Occurrence is modern cinema where the spectacle really does not exist as you are centered in space becoming the static eye. Happening is the sporting event where the spectacle freely exists because you are a free subject in space and are free to interact how you so choose, thus creating the methods for how you will recollect what happened in space. The second distinction that must be made is between the audience and the spectator. If we look at the Latin meaning of these words we get “those within hearing” and “those who look.” An example of this would be a spectator who is at the game actively watching and a person who just passes by hearing the roar of the crowd or the guy on the corner trying to sell peanuts and bottled water. It can be said that the venue where the spectacle is taking place becomes the spectator and the surrounding urban fabric is the audience.

Role of Sport

Sporting events have become the most important modern spectacle due to the fact that they have a great impact on many different roles. Sports have created an impact on four main categories: political, economic, social, and philanthropic. Jesse Owens used a sporting event to make a political statement against Hitler by out-performing his supposed dominant race. Where it was said by Hitler that the Arian was the perfect race and African Americans were inferior. Another example

[2]Kennedy, Dennis.
The Spectator and
the Spectacle:
Audiences in
Modernity and
Postmodernity.
Cambridge, UK:
Cambridge University
Press, 2009. Print.

[2] Kennedy, Dennis.
The Spectator and
the Spectacle:
Audiences in
Modernity and
Postmodernity.
Cambridge, UK:
Cambridge University
Press, 2009. Print.

was the 1980 Olympic boycott by the United States to protest the Soviet war in Afghanistan. Sporting events are unique to most other events for the ability to draw large crowds of people to come together which in turn then brings an economic impact to the area. In 2005, the Superbowl was held at Ford Field in Detroit and within one week it was said to have had a \$263 million impact to the area [4]. These large gatherings create a unique social experience as unknown people will actively talk with one another, exchange bodily contact, and even sing and dance in unison. One of the most underrated aspects of sporting events is the philanthropic side. Examples like the Susan G. Comen walk for the race for the cure which bring tens of thousands of people together raising awareness and charitable donations to fight diseases. Jimmy V week, which happens every year in the first week of December, was named after an inspirational basketball coach and his quest to beat cancer. Each year his life is celebrated and used as a cause to raise money. In 2009 the organization raised more than \$911,000 in one week for cancer research [5].

The invention of the video camera and television broadcasting has created multiple levels of spectators and what they see. From the actual event that takes place, to the one produced and harnessed by the TV networks. This causes a different type of experience for a set a people. The people who are at the venue will have a different understanding from those who witnessed the produced version on TV. This also created the ability to reach many different scales of people. Slow motion replay is used to celebrate the previous play that was just watched so intensely over.

Critique of Modern Venues

Today many venues are designed to be a single use in nature and not even located in the main downtown area, for example the Palace of Auburn Hills and the Pontiac Silverdome located in metro Detroit. Even other large cities like Chicago, Los Angeles, and New York have adapted this model. Venues disappear once new ones are built, for example the old Tiger Stadium when Comerica park was built and even the brand new Beijing National Stadium, commonly known as the bird's nest, which was built for the 2008 Summer Olympics and today sits unused. Often they are created with large walls that cut off the surrounding environment and placed on an island surrounded by a parking lot just to maximize the owner's dollar. Having no relationship to the site, they sit on or around the surrounding urban context. Even new multipurpose venues don't get enough use. For example Pizza Hut Park in Dallas, which holds a sport team and doubles as a concert venue, only had 20 scheduled events in 2010 leaving the other 345 empty [6].

Site Selection: Detroit

Analyzing Detroit as a site selection was a natural fit with the city needing urban development. The rich sporting history that the city contains and the current sale of a professional team make it ideal. Currently Mike Illitch is in the process of negotiating the rights to purchase the Detroit Pistons and possibly moving the team back downtown to a new multi-purpose arena that also supports one of his other locally owned franchises, the Detroit Red Wings. Illitch owns more than 100 properties

[4] "Economic Impact." Detroit Sports. Detroit Metro Sport Commission, n.d. Web. 3 Dec 2010. <<http://www.detroitssports.org/pressbox/econimpact.html>>.

[5] "About Us." The V Foundation for Cancer Research. The V Foundation for Cancer Research, n.d. Web. 3 Dec 2010. <<http://www.jimmyv.org/about-us/news/43-v-news/950-more-than-911000-raised-for-third-annual-jimmy-v-week.html>>.

[6] Mankin, Robert. "Single-sport stadiums undermine civic, sustainable model." Sports Business Journal. The V Foundation for Cancer Research, 26 Apr 2010. Web. 17 Oct 2010. <<http://www.sportsbusinessjournal.com/article/65580>>.

[7] "Illitch has an insatiable for Land in Downtown Detroit." The Verifiable Truth. Blogger, 19 Jun 2007. Web. 03 Oct 2010. <<http://www.theverifiabletruth.com/2007/05/ilitch-has-insatiable-appetite-for-land.html>>.

in the downtown area mainly clustered in two areas, one by Motor City Casino which contains more buildings than land. The second area, which includes numerous parking lots and buildings just west of the Fox theatre, is located within blocks of his other two stadiums [7]. This second area will be the site for this thesis due to its relationships to the stadium district and because it will more than likely be the future site of the new arena. The sporting teams in the area have created an identity since they are the three original sporting franchises.

Intentions

This led to the beginning of the design process and starting to identify aspects of a venue that could start to be challenged and better integrated into the urban context. This thesis is different from a traditional sporting venue as it will question the very presence of the venue and its relationships to its surrounding context. This thesis will also challenge the design process for venues and how it can be changed to engender urban growth.

3

Diagrammatic Definitions

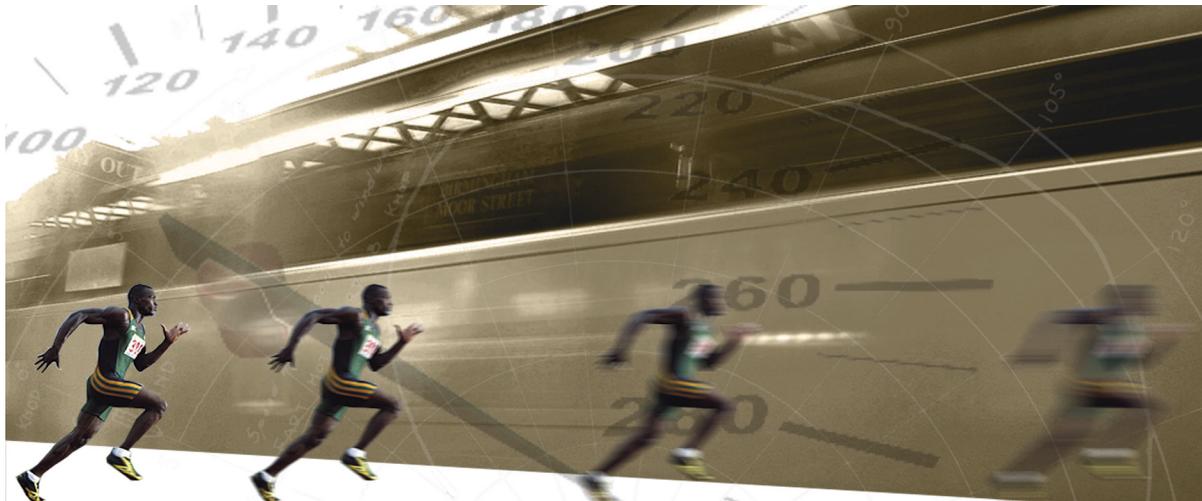
Reality...it is a perpetual becoming. It makes or remarks itself, but it is never something made.

-Henri Bergson

Each of these definitions are shown graphically to understand what each one of these terms means for the purpose of this thesis.

Speed

In Paul Virilo's book, *The Aesthetics of Disappearance*, he speaks towards the condition he calls *picnolepsy*, being moments of lapses in time or momentary absences of consciousness. These events are more prominent in children but still happen to adults who have hundreds of them a day. These moments of absences of consciousness are produced by speed and are a characteristic of the pace at which we live our lives.



Event

Sanford Kwinter speaks towards the theory of event in his book *Architecture's of Time*. Here he speaks of event being the actual thing that is being witnessed and that it is pure individualism so it will differ from person to person. So the event itself will be unique to the individual but also to the place that it was witnessed.



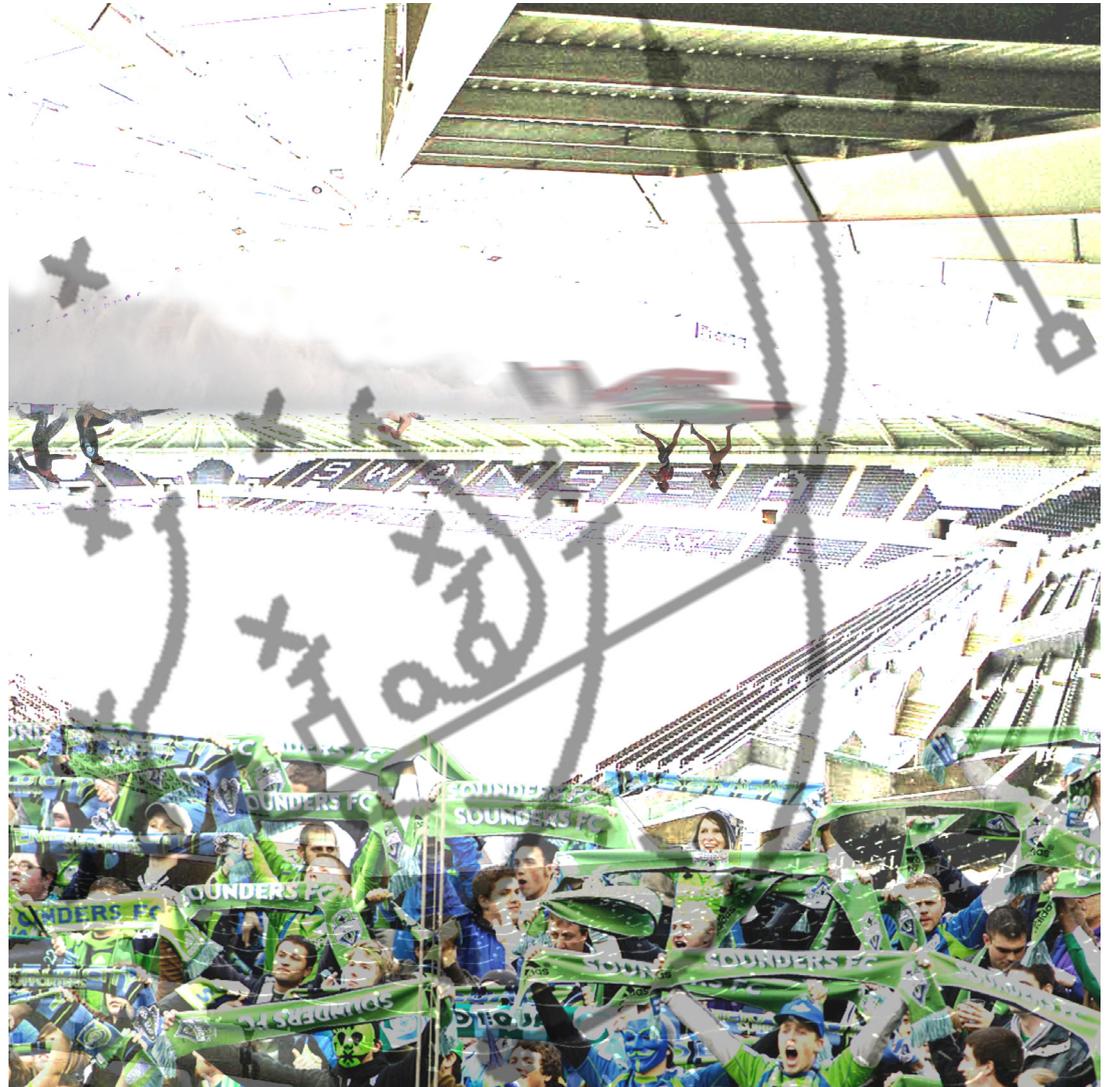
Identity

Many different things can create or alter the identity of a place. This thesis speaks towards the groups of people and the social actions creating the existence for a place. Identity is also the manifestation of the instrument of unification, as the identity unifies groups of people in a place.



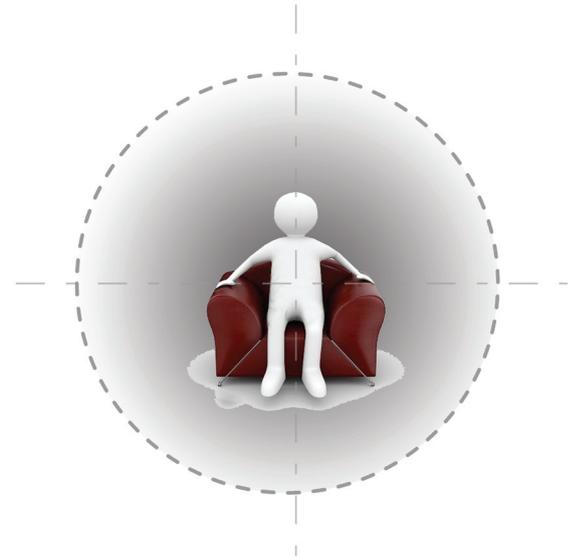
Spectacle

This collage was a compilation of the three themes: speed, identity and event. Spectacle refers to an event that is memorable for the appearance it creates. Guy Debord's theory of spectacle suggests that social actions begin to take the form of physical objects. Spectacle does not strictly mean a collection of images but a social relationship between people and events. The spectacle exists simultaneously as all of society or part of society, and as an instrument of unification. As a part of society it is specifically what concentrates all gazing and all consciousness. The spectacle becomes the very thing that relates the human body and the movement through space.



Occurrence

This is considered modern cinema were the spectacle really does exist anymore. Here, the spectator is centered in space becoming the static eye. Modern cinema created the desire to organize and control perception, conditioning or requiring the spectator to assume a set of gestural, postural, visual and perceptual attitudes: sitting upright, attentive and quiet sitting in the dark, trapped between the arm rests and the knees of the other spectators, and freeing the mind of preconceptions.



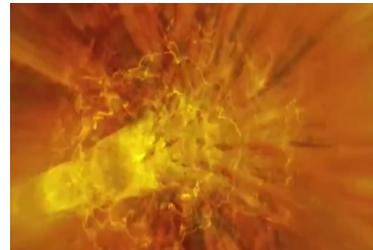
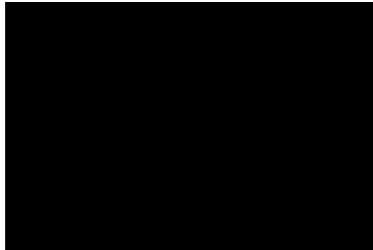
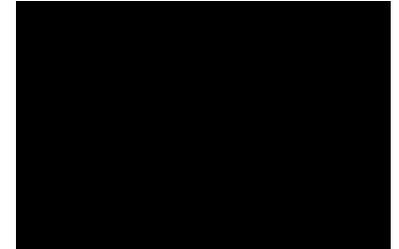
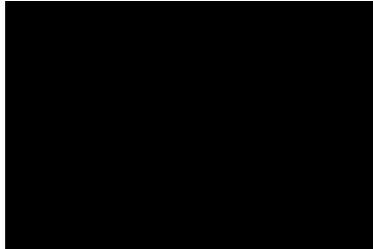
Happening

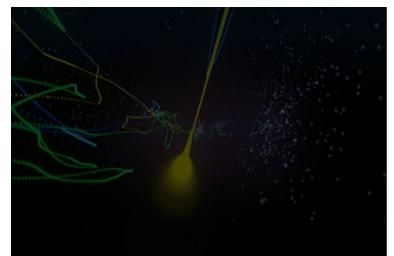
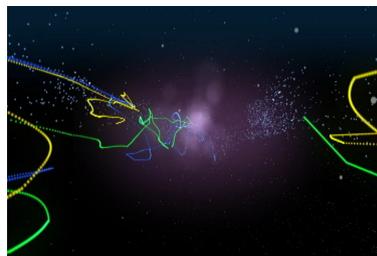
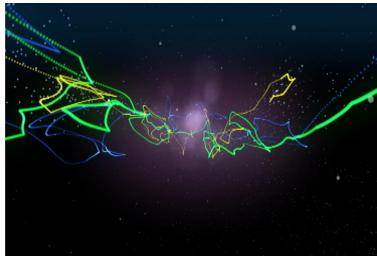
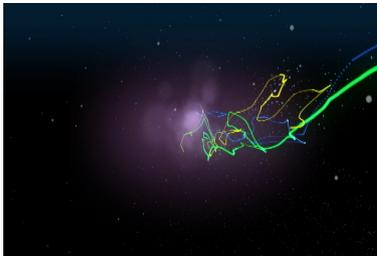
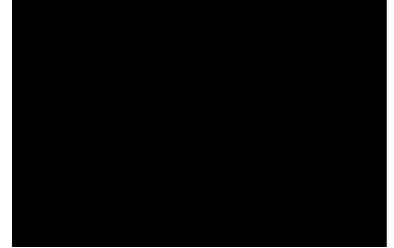
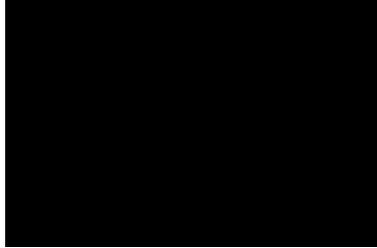
This is considered the sporting event were the spectacle freely exists. Here, the spectator is a free subject being in space and is free to interact how you so choose. This differs from modern cinema for three reasons. First, is the ability to negotiate a relationship to other unknown spectators. Second, sport spectators can condemn the outcome or the manner of play in a more open way. Third, sports spectators have the freedom to vary or alter the purpose of their presence as public behavior becomes a method of owning the experience



Diagrammatic Video

This video was meant to show spectacle from the event taking place. From a group of people coming together to create an identity, to how the individual is seeing the event and how it is translated to their consciousness.





5

Precedent Analysis

Perception does not give us truths like
Geometry but presences.

-Maurice Merleau Ponty

Lord's Cricket Ground

St. John Wood, London

Lord's was named after its founder Thomas Lord and it is considered to be the home of cricket. This venue dates back to 1814 and has been in constant restoration since. At its current state, it holds about 28,000 people.

What makes this precedent so interesting is the constant movement of people. The game of cricket does not have a time limit as it is based upon wickets. This creates a unique scenario where matches could last for hours or even days at a time. This creates the condition of people constantly moving around and shifting in and out of urban spaces. With this movement, a variety of levels were created to accommodate the constant shift in the crowd. Another interesting aspect of Lord's is the media centre that was introduced for the 1999 world cup. The media centre runs all the broadcasting of the matches and determines what is broadcasted. Even though the media centre was cutting edge design for its time, it still creates a sense of tension with the rest of Victorian architecture of the venue.



Opening Ceremony

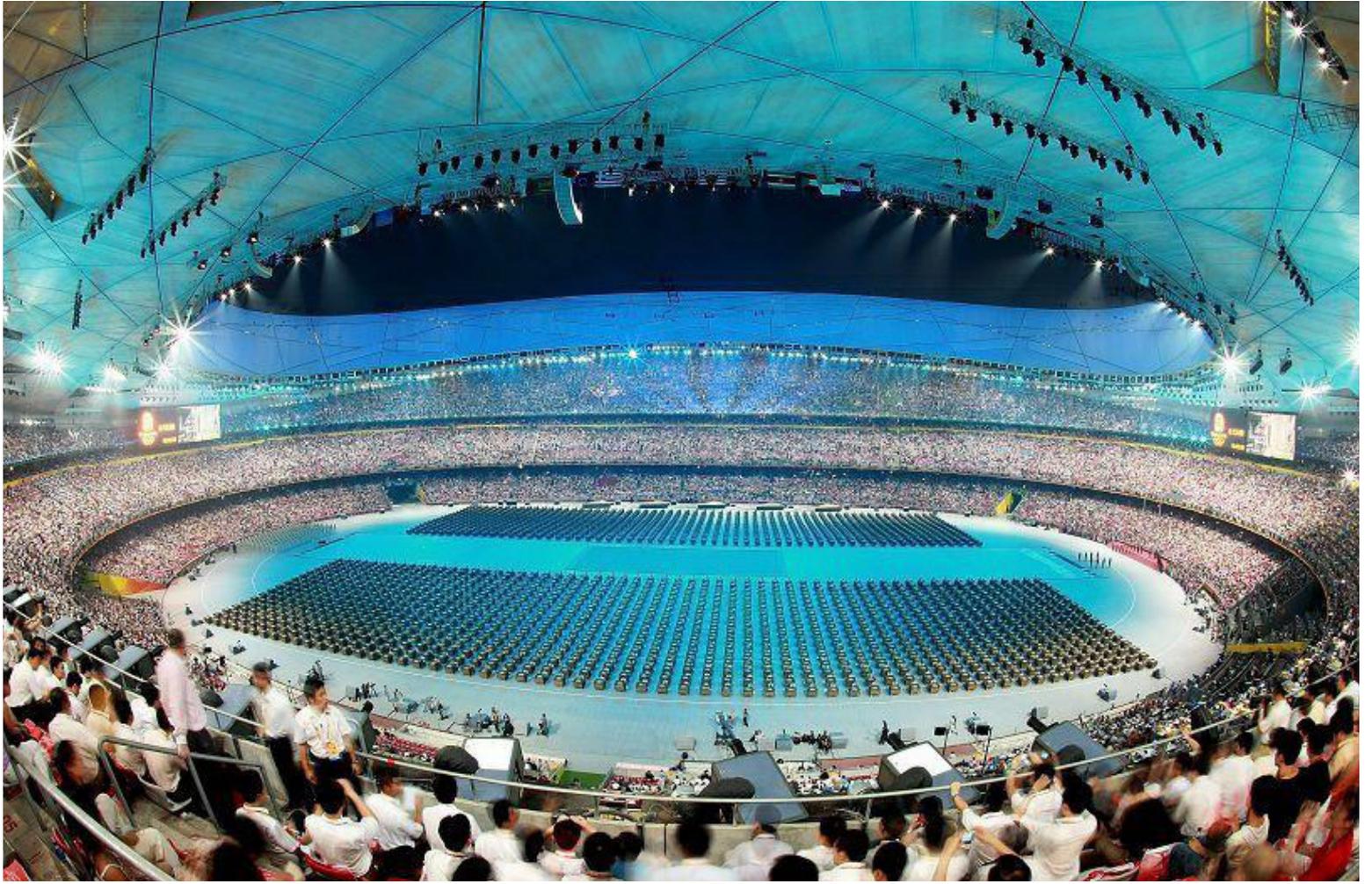
Bird's Nest

Beijing, China

2008 Summer Olympics

This precedent study is not necessarily looking at the venue itself but the event that took place there. In 2008 Beijing National Stadium hosted the 2008 Summer Olympics opening ceremony. The venue holds about 80,000 people but held 100,000 for the opening ceremony. The ceremony itself lasted for over four hours and reportedly cost over a 100 million US dollars.

What makes this so interesting is the varying degree of spectators that witnessed the ceremony. First, you have the people who witnessed the event on television, from the eyes of the people who produced it. They even went so far as to fake in computer graphics that were only seen by the television audience. Second, were the actual people who were in the stadium. Since they got a completely independent viewing experience, it was up to the individual to take in what they saw memorable. Third, were the performers. Performers are always unique for their audience is the cameras themselves and not the actual event that they are taking part of. This dichotomy of viewership is what made this event so unique as it varied dramatically from person to person and even from country to country.



March to the Match

Seattle, Washington
Seattle Sounders

The Seattle Sounders are the professional soccer team that resides in Seattle Washington. Before every home game they ask their fans to meet at Pioneer Square located about a half mile away from the stadium. Here, Sounders fans gather wearing all their team gear, holding their scarfs and all other sounders memorabilia that they own. From here they will march in unison toward the stadium where they are lead by the Sounders band. The fans chant, sing, dance, light off flares and march towards the stadium to enter as a united fan base.

What is truly interesting about this is that the city shuts down the street for this march. Every time this event occurs, a re-purposing of the street happens. No longer is it used for automobiles but for the person. This community of people are creating an identity and even re-creating the identity of the street and surrounding buildings. This enhances the spectacle and extends it out from the stadium itself and it starts to become integrated into the street itself.



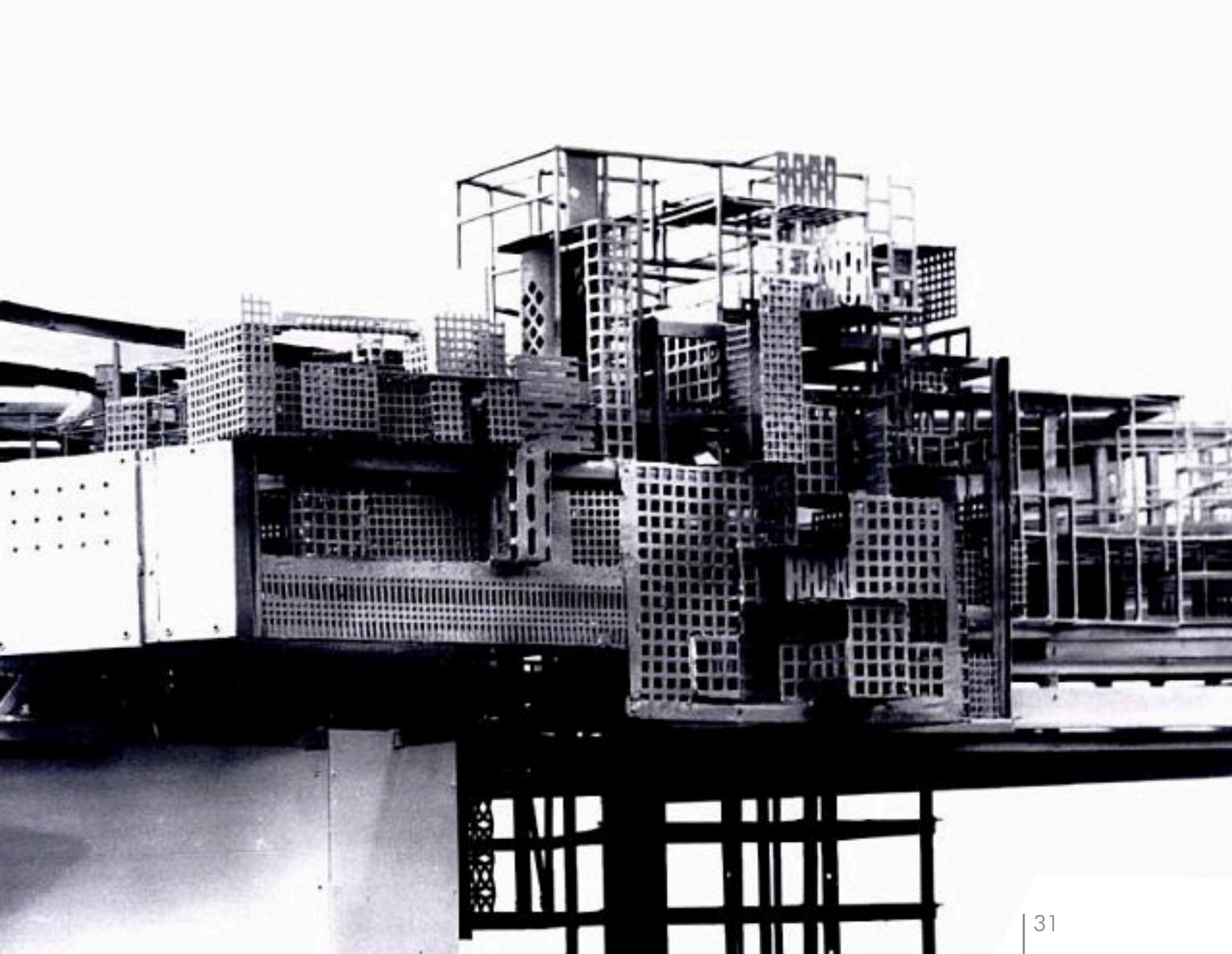
New Babylon

Constant Nieuwenhuys
Theoretical

In 1956, the Dutch artist Constant Nieuwenhuys started working on a visionary architectural proposal for a future society which he didn't stop for almost twenty years. Having been a co-founder of the Cobra group of artists in the late forties, he abandoned painting in 1953 to concentrate on the question of "construction". He became a founding member of the Situationist International in 1957 and played a central role in their experiments until his resignation in 1960. New Babylon, as his project would eventually be called, is a situationist city intended to be a polemical provocation.

New Babylon was elaborated in an endless series of models, sketches, etchings, lithographs, collages, architectural drawings, and photo collages, as well as in manifestos, essays, lectures, and films. New Babylon is a form of propaganda that critiques conventional social structures.

New Babylon envisages a society of total automation in which the need to work is replaced with a nomadic life of creative play. In which traditional architecture has disintegrated along with the social institutions that it propped up. A vast network of enormous multilevel interior spaces propagates to eventually cover the planet. These interconnected "sectors" float above the ground on tall columns. While vehicular traffic rushes underneath and air traffic lands on the roof, the inhabitants drift by foot through the huge labyrinthine interiors, endlessly



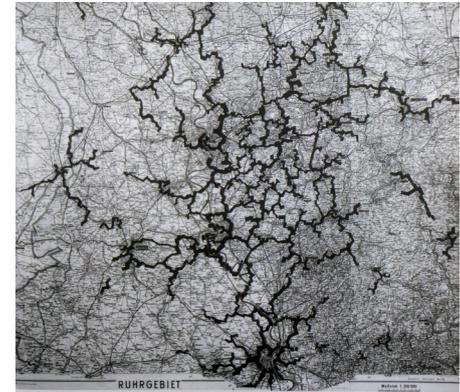
reconstructing the atmospheres of the spaces. Every aspect of the environment can be controlled and reconfigured spontaneously. Social life becomes architectural play. Architecture becomes a flickering display of interacting desires. [Wigley, Mark *New Babylon. The Hyper-architecture of Desire*]

Unitary urbanism became Constant's dream as he wanted to create a new mode of dwelling and society. Within this, it would be a world of collective creation and absolute transparency where everything would be exposed to the public gaze. The aim was to move throughout the city without purpose; thus, provoking unexpected events and encounters. Constant worked in three scales : city wide, district and ambiance or sector. These show how New Babylon would engulf a city. Constant created specific ambiances for specific purposes and designations. These sectors



would change through the activities that would occur within them. New Babylon was comprised of 80% public space and 20% private space which was only used for sleeping and things that truly needed to be private. Constant even went as far as labeling people from the homo-ludens who lived freely within New Babylon and the homo-fabers who lived in the city below and aspired to live within New Babylon.

This thesis used New Babylon as an example and translated Constant's precedent onto Detroit. Using Constant's methodology, this thesis started on the district scale then moved to the city wide drawing and finally asked the question of what would the stadium sector (model photos on page 74) of New Babylon look like? Focusing first on where vertical circulation points would be created within the city. From there, several iterations were made to truly understand how New Babylon would be applied. In the city wide drawing the sprawling nature of New Babylon mainly followed the five main arteries of Detroit. Even though this is a very conceptual precedent analysis, it sparks the conversation on how a city can be altered.



Nike World Basketball Festival

New York City, New York
2010

Every other year, Nike hosts an event called the *World Basketball Festival* which is a combination of basketball games and concerts. In 2010, this festival was held in New York City as a four day event used as a launching pad for the 2010 FIBA Basketball Championship in Turkey later in the summer. The rendering on the adjacent page shows the open air courts that were placed in the heart of Times Square. Here a basketball game would take place while daily life around the court would go on. Thus you would hear the noise of horns from the streets or the crowds of people who were just passing through. This shows how a sporting event can integrate itself into the urban context without disturbing what goes on.

Throughout this event, games will take place in Harlem in the famed Rucker Park, Radio City Music Hall, and finally in Madison Square Garden(home to professional basketball team, the New York Knicks). During the day, basketball games are played but, at night these courts are transformed into concert venues. This transformation attracts more people to events while still being integrated into the urban context and allowing everything else to do on around it. This precedent shows how the sporting spectacle can be integrated into the urban context for the common person to interact with at there own choosing; however, it does not become a super block as people can go into the surrounding buildings to watch the event take place.



This image is from Radio City Music Hall which is not a venue that is used for basketball games but shows how space can transform to adapt to the sporting spectacle.



This image is a rendering showing the placement of the open air court in Harlem, New York at the famous Rucker Park.





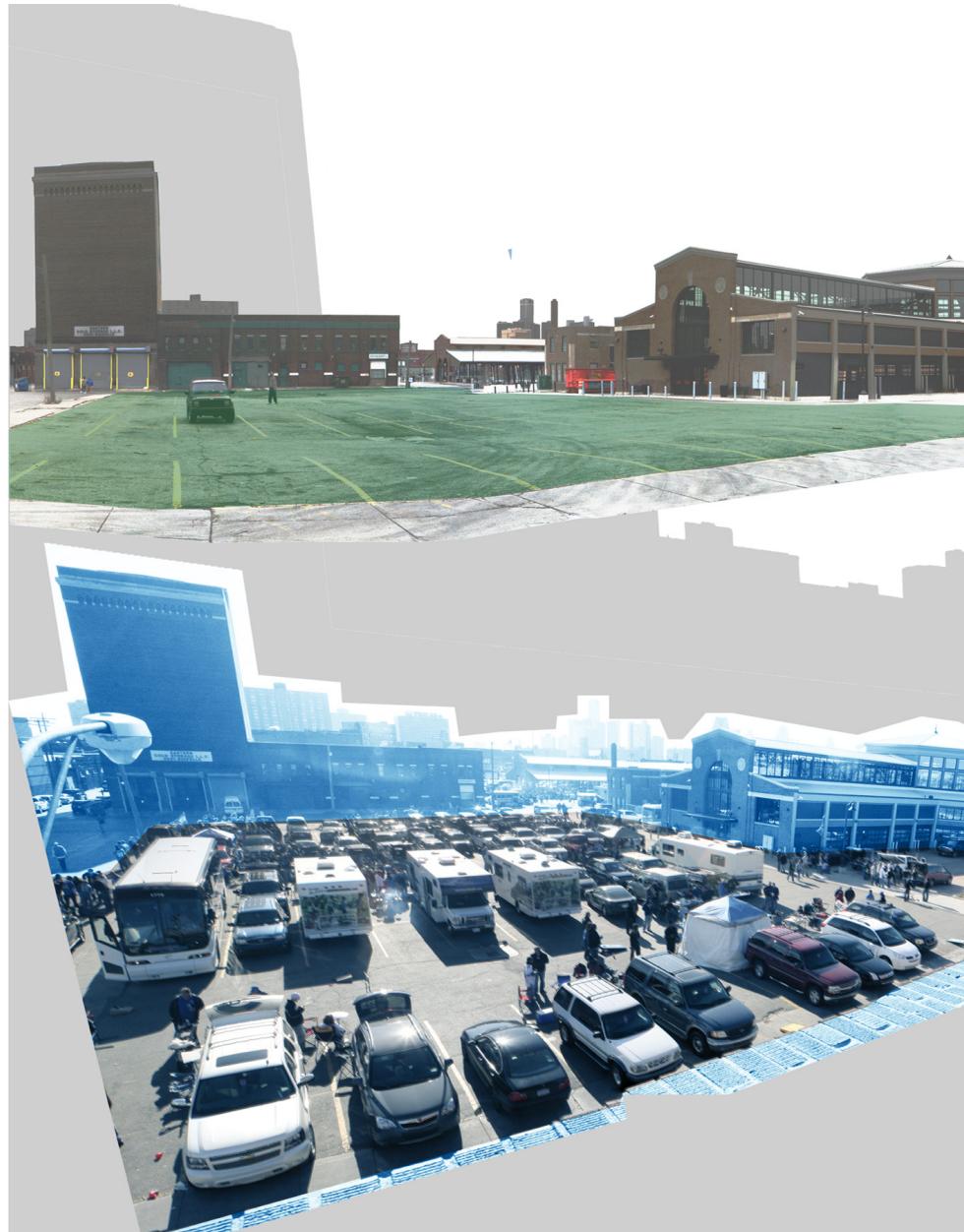
Both of these images are from Rucker Park showing a basketball game occurring. The image on the left is showing the Basketball Festival taken place, while the image on the bottom is a picture looking straight down from the apartment building in the background watching the game. Bleachers are no longer the only method of have an audience watch the event take place, now the buildings in the urban context and be hypothetical bleachers. These shows how the spectacle can be integrated into the surrounding buildings as they can become part of the event taking place.



Eastern Market

Performative Study
Detroit, MI

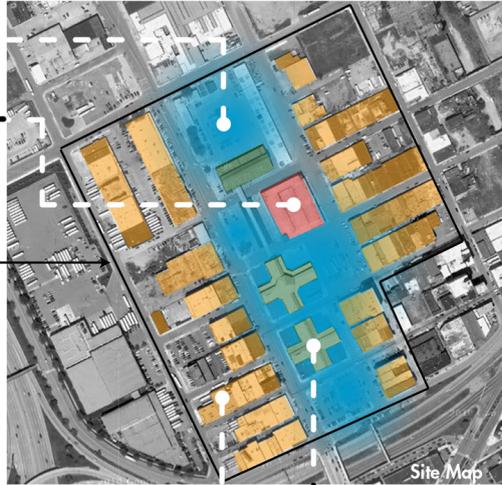
Eastern Market is located on the east side of Detroit. On most Saturdays, from spring to the fall, it operates as a community gathering place for a farmers market. For seven Sunday's and one Thursday during the fall, this place attracts a much larger community in the form of thousands of lions fans. Fans by car and even RV show up for a tailgate and re-create the identity of eastern market. The experience of the space extends from just the regions being occupied to the adjacent buildings, as you always hear someone cheering or music being played. As you inhabit the space you are the spectator, either you are the person that is performing or just the person passing by. The surrounding city becomes the audience, as it starts to take form from the event happening.



Experiential Boundary

Parking Structure

Site Boundary



Streetside Shops

Market Sheds



RV Scale

Human Scale



Tailgate Space

Official Detroit Lions Tailgate
Eastern Market
Detroit, MI.

Time line

Important venue developments over time



1576 - West End Theatre



1599 - Globe Theatre

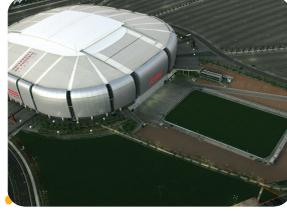


1785 - Palais Garnier



1814 - Lord's Cricket Ground





1850 - Broadway

1879 - MSG

1896 - Motion Picture Cinema

1911 - Fenway

1962 - Chavez Ravine

1989 - Rogers Center

2006 - University of Phoenix Stadium

2008 - Bird's Nest

2010 - 3-D

1800

1900

2000

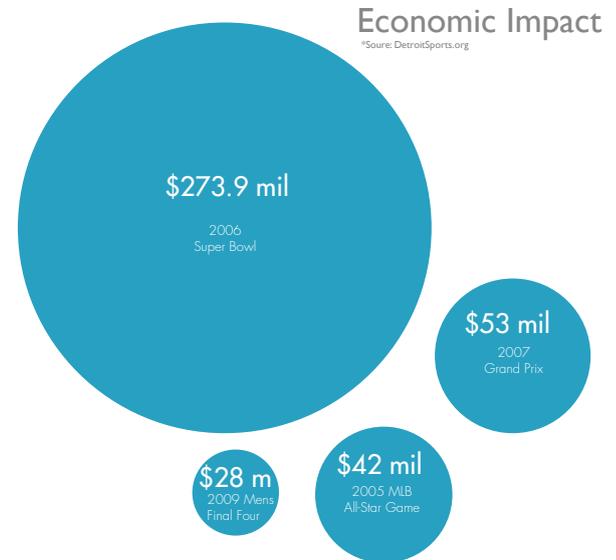
6

Site Selection

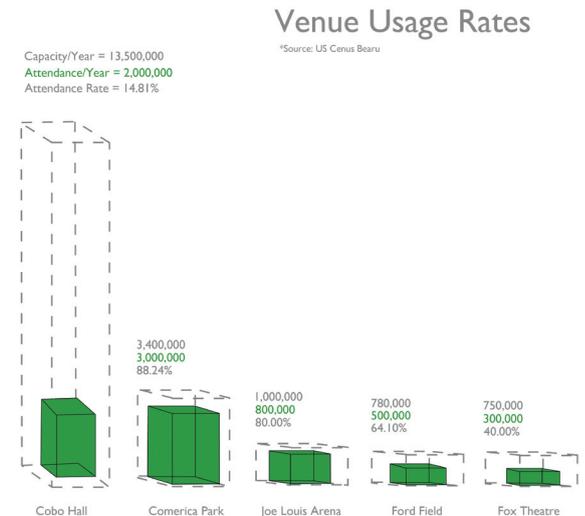
What is real is the continual change of form:
form is only a snapshot view of a transition.

-Henri Bergson

Sporting events have a very large effect on more than just the scoreboard. Major sporting events create a major economic opportunity for cities. For example, if you look at four separate major sporting events that happened in Detroit, they combined for nearly 400 million dollars that was put into the local economy.



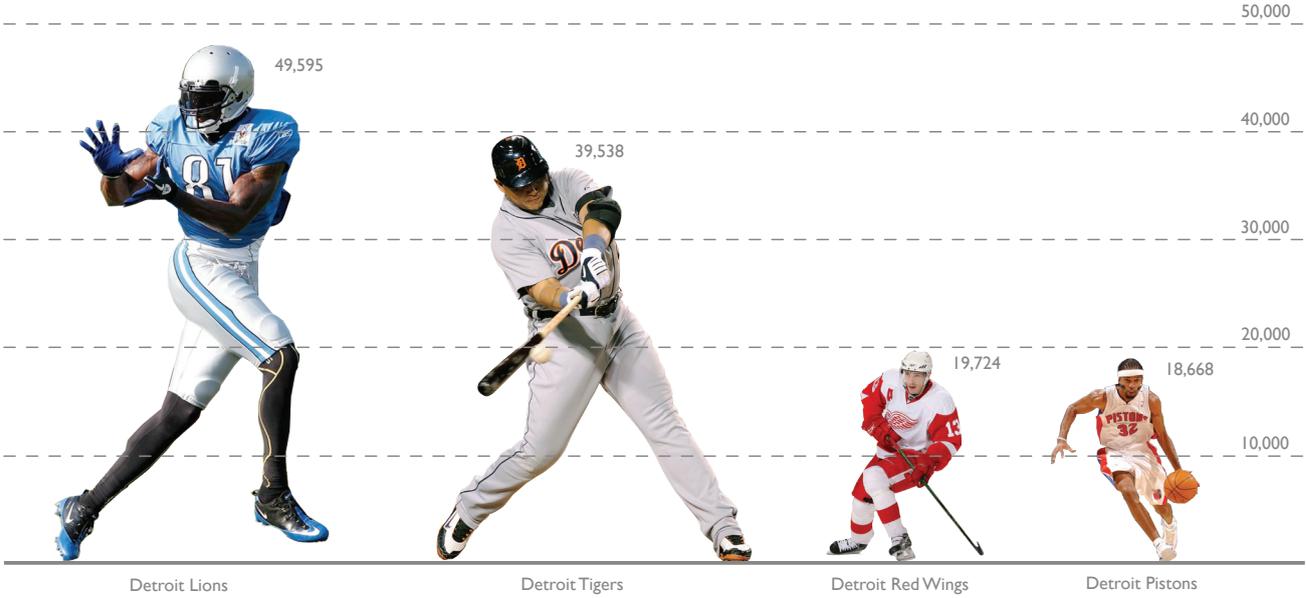
Detroit is a unique place for sports due to the loyalty of the fan base. The graph on the right shows the usage rates for the venues for the professional sports teams. The only one that has a low usage rate is Cobo Hall. This does not house a sports team but is an underutilized multi-purpose space. This is an older venue that fails to attract much use due to the more attractive options within the city.



The chart below shows the average game attendance for the four major professional sports teams in Michigan. Currently, the Pistons are the only team that is no located within the city-limits of Detroit. They are located in Auburn Hills, which is a northern suburb. These attendace fiqures refelct 2004 totals, the only change in current would be the Pistons, whose attendace has drammmactically dropped.

Average Game Attendance

*Source: Sports Business Journal

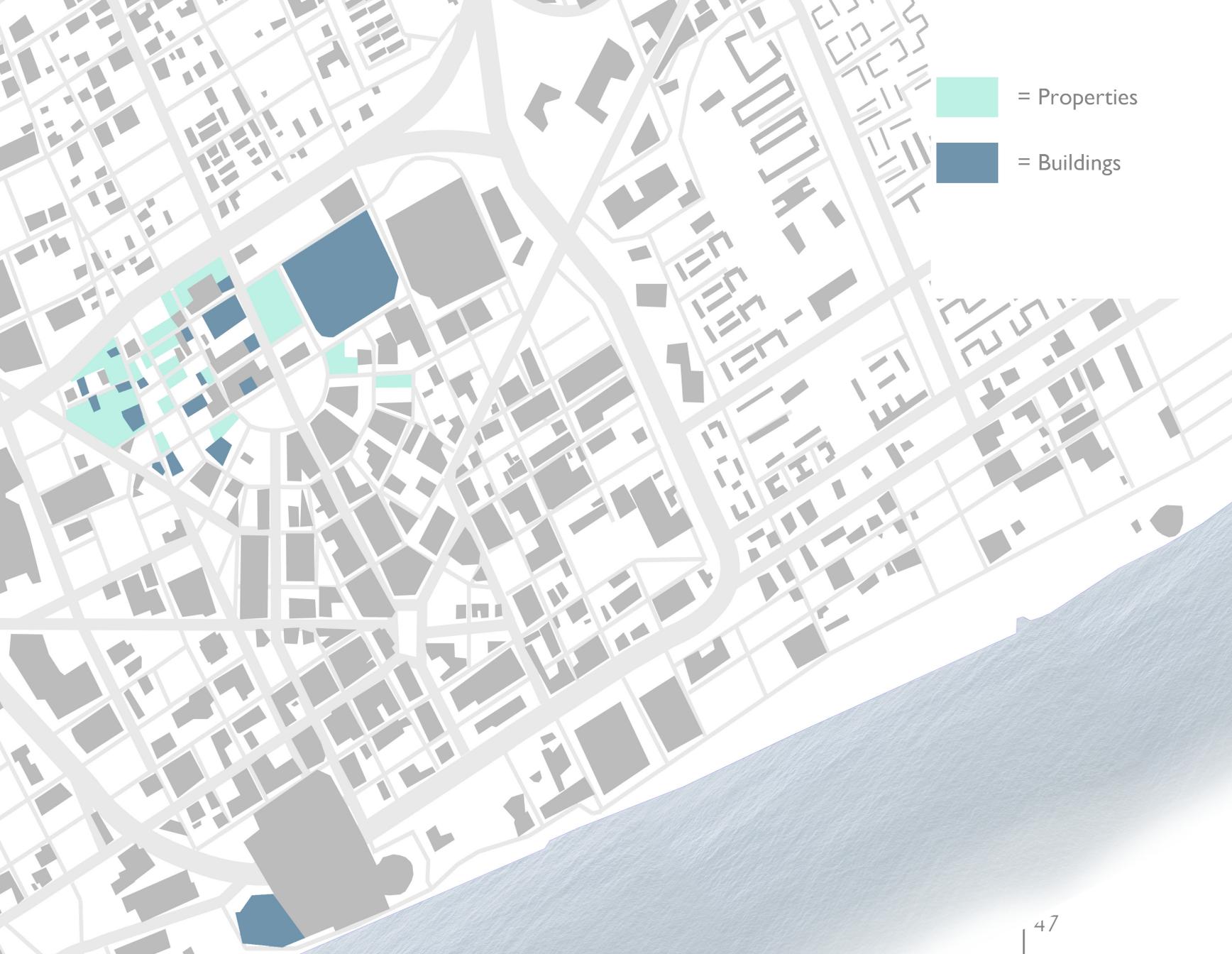


Illitch Owned Properties

This map shows an approximation of the amount of land Illitch and his various companies hold in downtown Detroit. As you can see there are two main clusters, one which is around Motor City Casino (located on the left side of the map). Here it is speculated that he owns more buildings than land as compared to the other cluster of properties. The other cluster being located right off the Woodward corridor and being anchored by Grand River avenue and Comerica Park. Here, there are a lot more properties owned than buildings. This is also because of the lack of density in the area and those properties currently being used as official parking lots for the Detroit Tigers located in Comerica Park. This was one of the factors that led me to picking a site in this area.

Source: The Verifiable Truth





= Properties

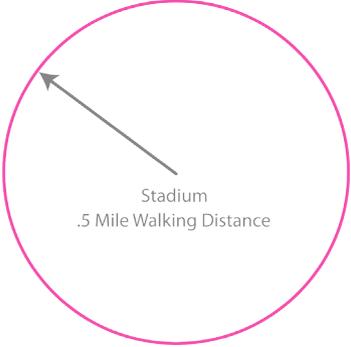
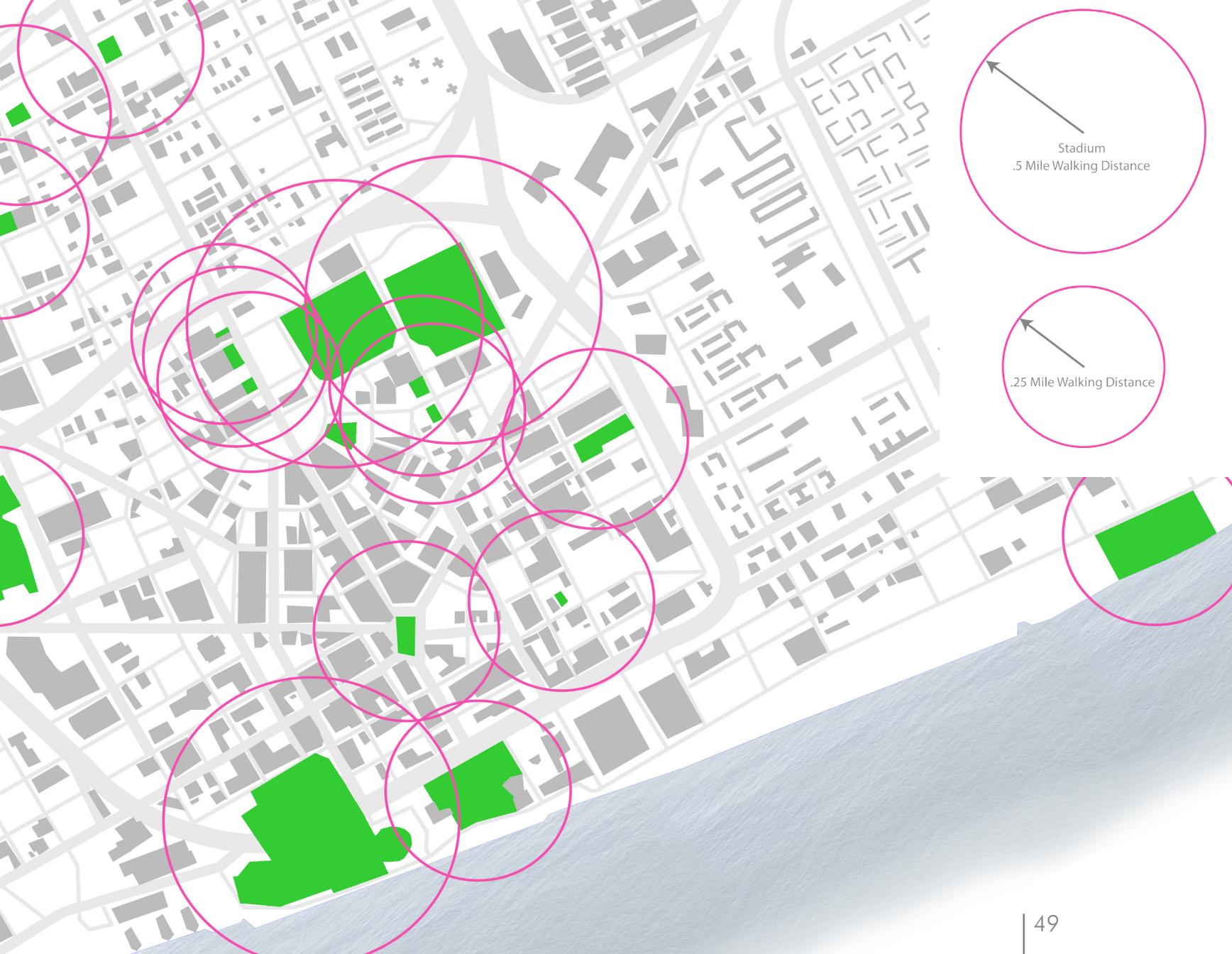
= Buildings

Gaming Concentration

Downtown Detroit attracts 15 million visitors annually. Visitors view downtown Detroit uniquely among peer Midwestern cities, positioning it as a trendy adult destination. This is specifically related to its concentration of sports, entertainment, and theater venues and its position as the third largest walk-able gaming concentration in the United States (source: Detroit in Focus). The map on the right shows this concentration in two main areas: the stadium district and downtown along the river front. Many of these venues have very close proximity to Woodward as it serves as one of the main arteries to move about in Detroit. The circles represent average walking distances around the venue, .5 mile around the stadiums and .25 mile around everything else as the stadiums tend to disperse parking in more areas due to the higher attendance.



Source: Downtown Detroit In Focus



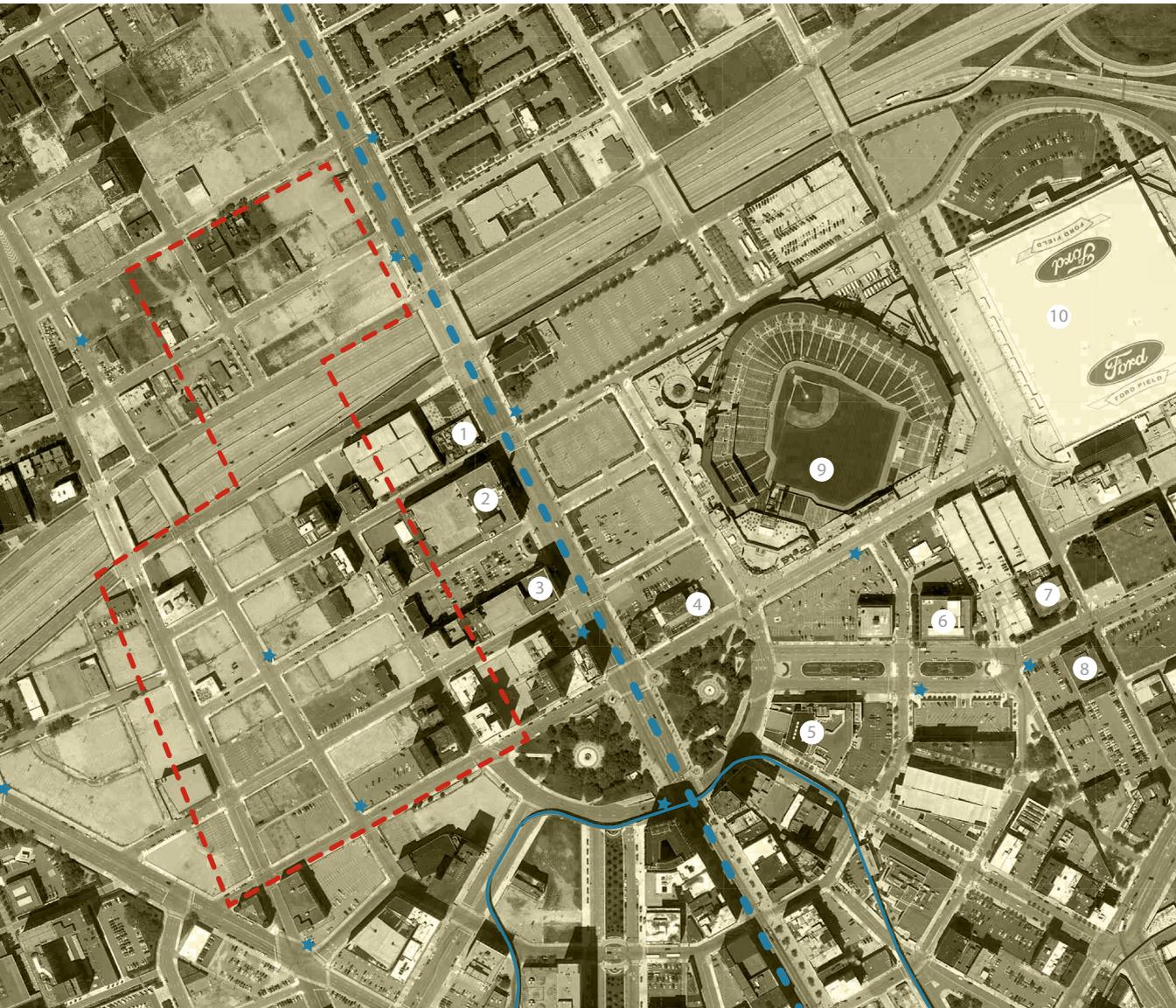
Existing Buildings

The existing buildings were as much of an important factor in site location as was the location with-in the city. Located just south of I-75 and just west of Woodward Avenue were this cluster of buildings. From left to right and below is the Park Avenue House, lodent Loft Building and Fire Engine Number 2 (foreground). Theses facades are all flat and have very few openings, so the venue would be able to cut into or take over the facades, without the buildings losing window openings. On the opposite page is an abandon office that is located one block west of the Park Avenue House.





Proposed Site



- 1. Hockeytown
- 2. Fox Theatre
- 3. Fillmore Theatre
- 4. Cheli's
- 5. Orchester Hall
- 6. Athletic Club
- 7. Gem Theatre
- 8. Music Hall
- 9. Comerica Park
- 10. Ford Field

- ★ Bus Stop
- People Mover
- Proposed M-I Line
- Proposed Site

Even though this thesis is pretty conceptual, one aspect that grounded it was the potential move of the Pistons and Red Wings into a new downtown arena. From there, it needed to be located within the central business district since that would have the most building density. Detroit is broken up essentially into many different neighborhoods and currently has two stadiums located across the street from each other. With-in this area, there are several bars and restaurants that cater to these venues, so an existing infrastructure is already in place.

What made this site even more appealing was the modes of transportation. It is located directly off of one of the larger express ways in the city (I-75) and right off of one of the main street arteries (Woodward Avenue). A new mass transportation system (M-1 Line) is currently under development which will create a link from the downtown area all the way out to the suburbs. All these factors made it a natural fit to site the venue in the west Foxtown area.



Red Wings Game Traffic



Tigers Game Traffic



Lions Game Traffic

7

Programmatic Analysis

Perceptual experience which gives us the passage from one moment to the next and thus realizes the unity of time.

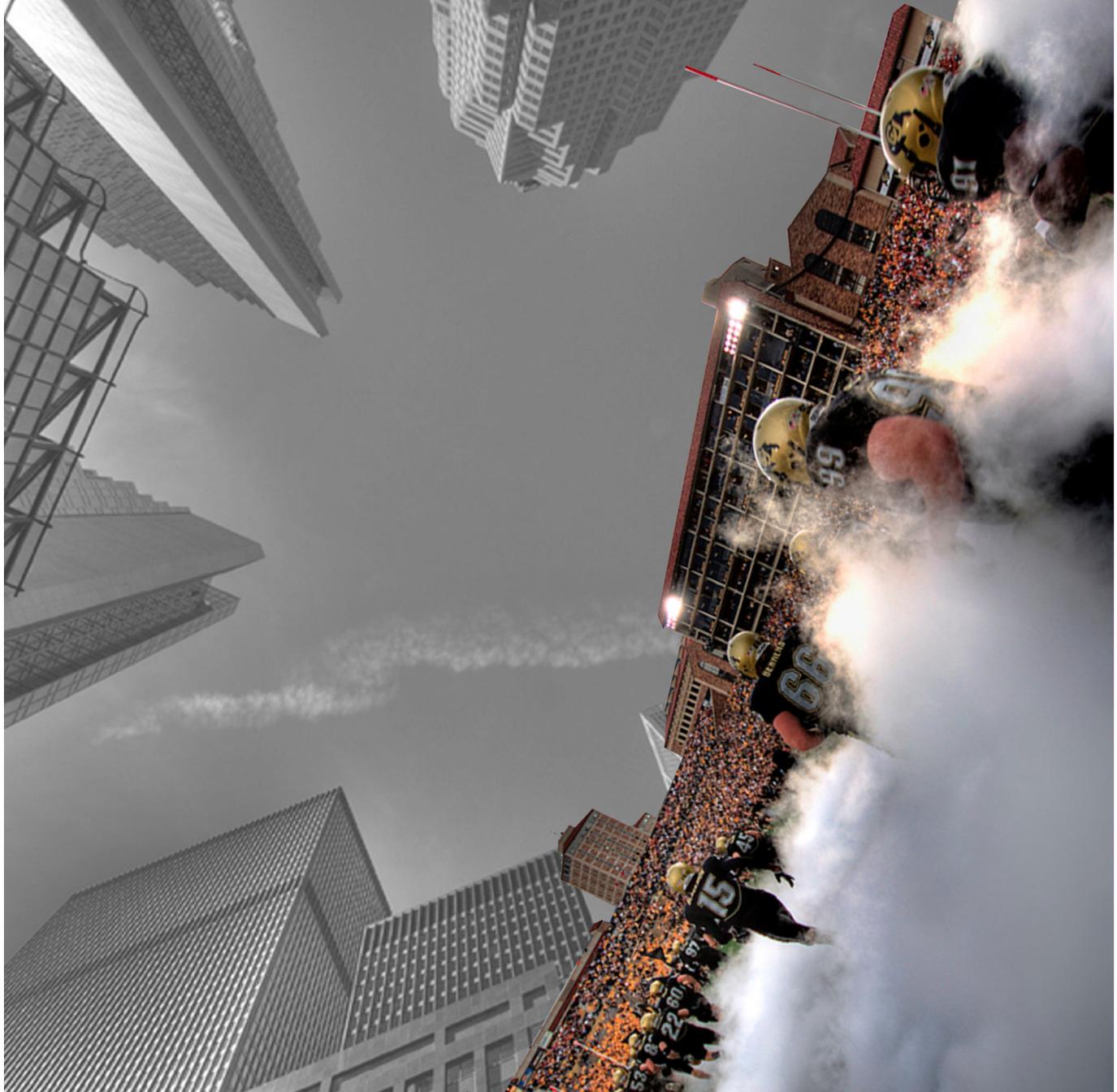
-Maurice Merleau Ponty

Each of these study's examines a different programmatic condition. They are viewed as how these conditions are currently programed into venue space and how could they be altered.

Views

In most instances, all viewing areas and sight lines are pretty much similar from venue to venue. Even though these are mathematically figured out, in order to provide efficient views for the spectator, there is no reason why they should not be questioned. These views don't have a direct relationship to the city as you can only get a glimpse of the skyline. The collage on the opposite page shows what a possible alternative solution might be. What if instead of players running out of a tunnel, they would be running out of the grand lobby of a building. Or what if it was possible that the playing surface itself was facades of the surrounding buildings. This could lead to buildings starting to create and form the areas where people sit and where the event surface would be.

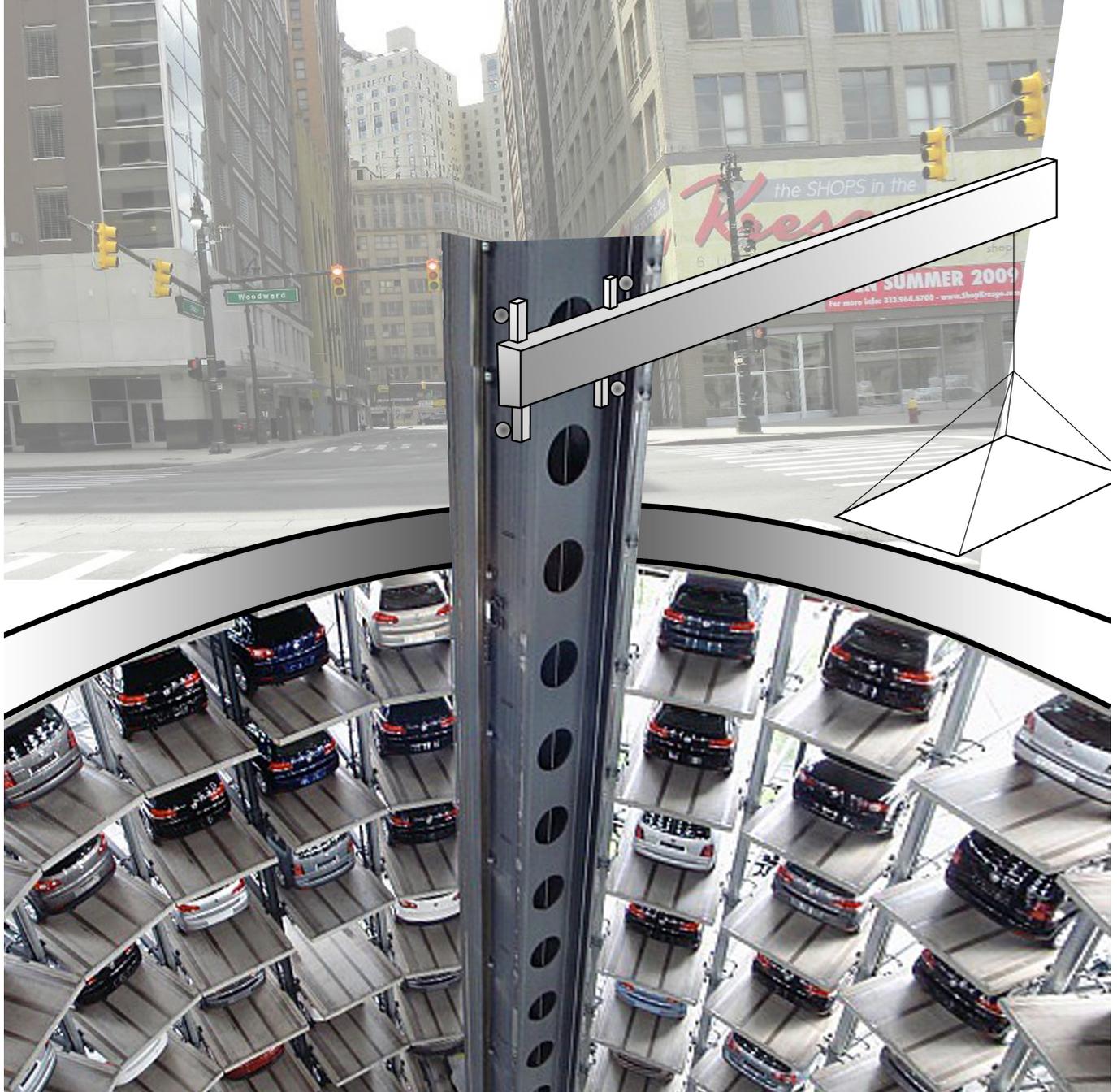




Parking

In most instances parking is handled by surrounding the venue with a vast sea of parking lots. This is detrimental to the urban context because it places the venue on an exclusive island. Currently, there is no relationship to city as the venue operates as an independent program. The collage on the opposite page starts to speak towards how parking lots could be handled. What if the parking lots were stacked upon each other and started to be recessed into the ground, almost creating a worm hole effect. From there it could be possible to utilize smart phones as the parking ticket and it could be possible to send a text message to the parking structure and the machine would go down the hole and deliver the car to the surface.

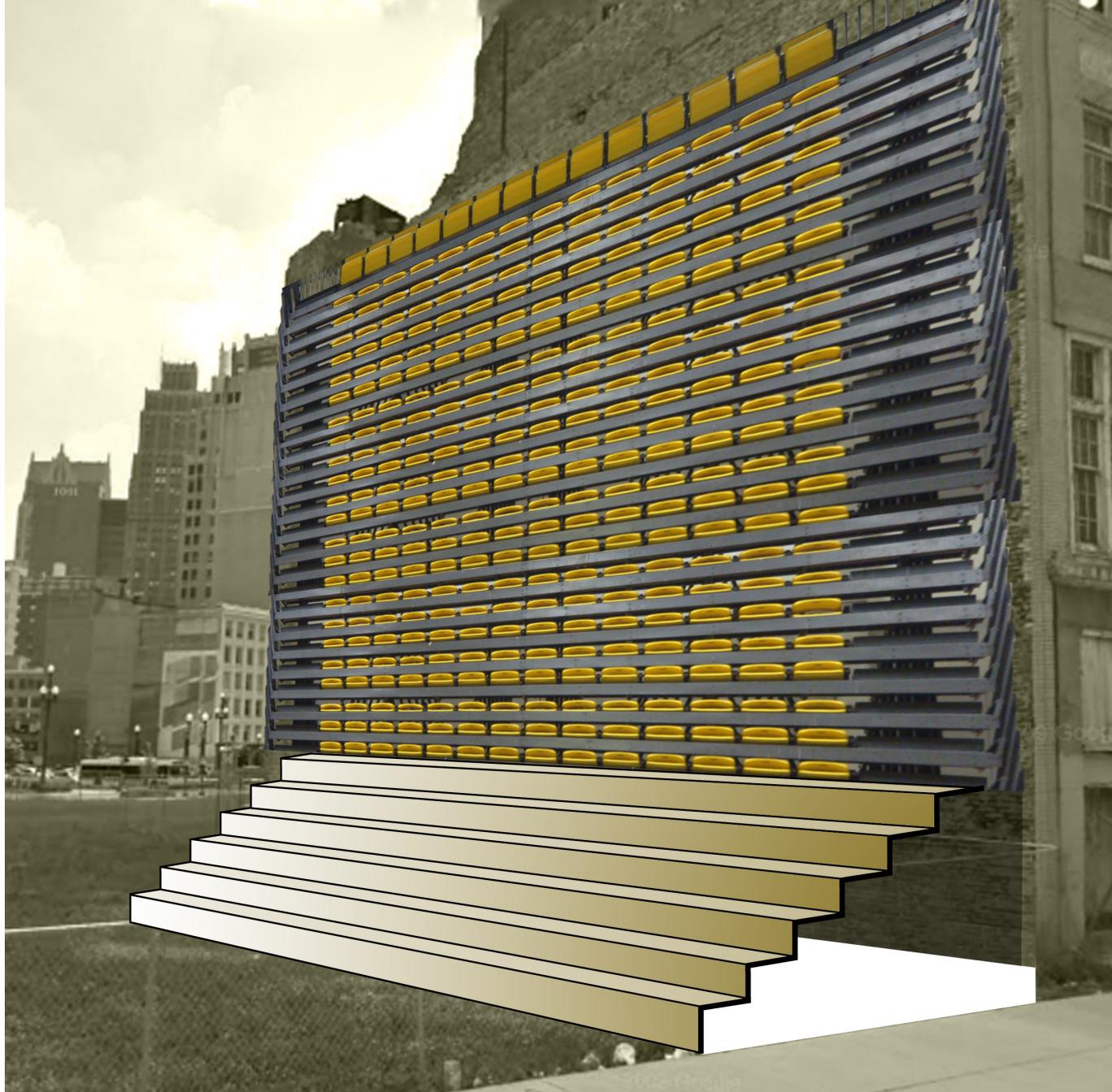




Seating

In most instances, seating is handled exactly the same from venue to venue. The playing surface is more than likely placed in the center and the seating surrounds it in a circle. Even though this does have its advantages, such as site lines, it is cramming the most people possible into an area. These stands create large walls again cutting off all contact with the surrounding urban context. The collage on the opposite page speaks to a possible solution for the stands. What if the stands started to become part of buildings facades were they can be collapsible when an event is not going on, yet pulled out before the event. This could lead to reactivating space behind and would create a direct relationship between the venue itself and the surrounding buildings.

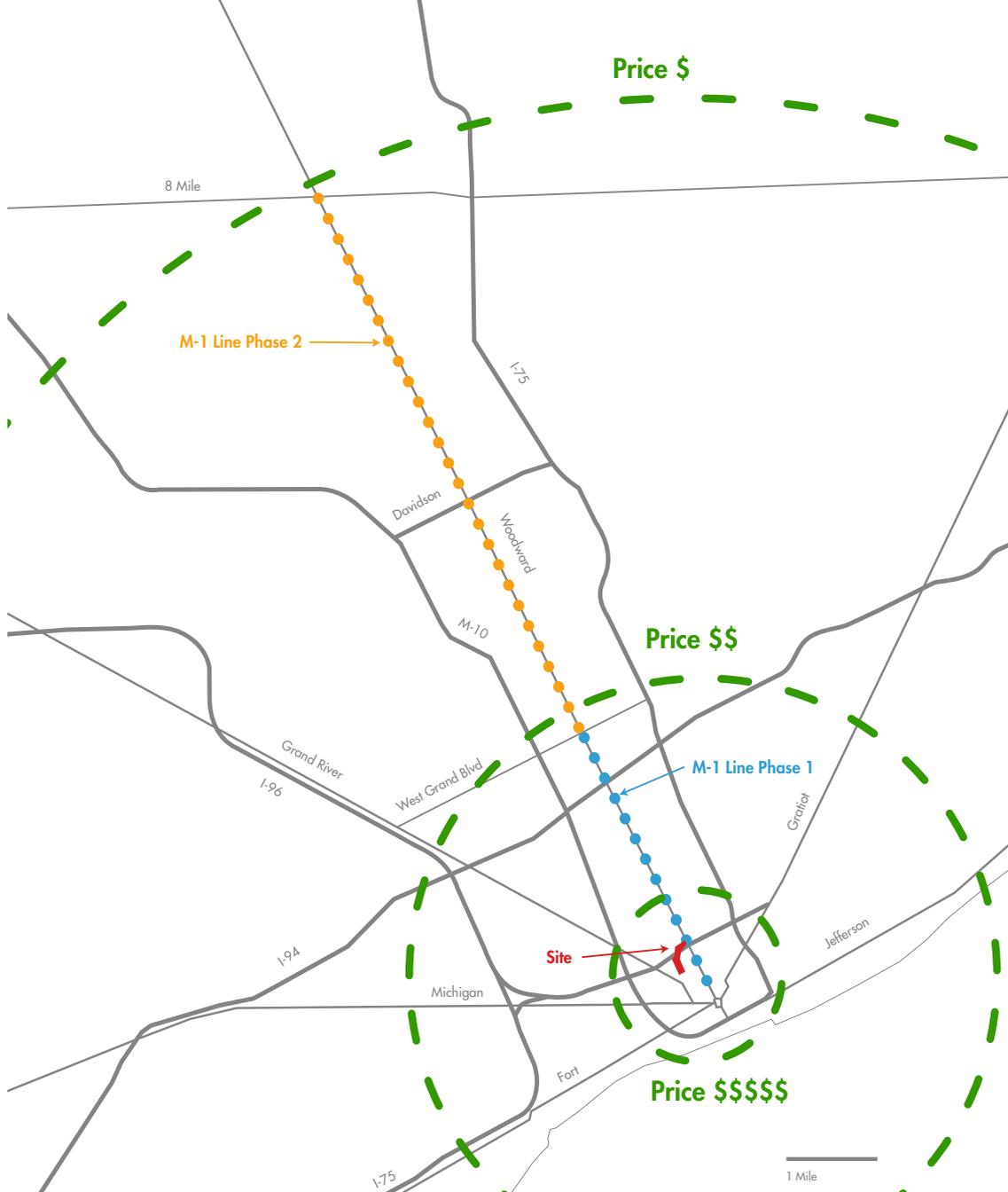




Turn style

In all instances, the single thing that cuts off contact from the surrounding urban contact is the turn style. This thesis proposes to eliminate the turn style to have the ability to just walk through or view any event. Since the site was chosen so close to the new light rail transit system, you could hypothetically try and force people to use it. This could be done by creating parking zones during the events where if you entered zone \$ you would only have to pay a small parking fee since you are riding the extent of the rail system. In zone \$\$ you pay a large fee since you are only using half of the light rail system. Finally for the people who do not wish to use public transportation they can park in zone \$\$\$\$ and pay the most to park their car by the arena. Here it create a great incentive for people to use the mass transportation system and to live within the downtown area. Yes, you wold have to acknowledge the need for some sort of reserved seating, but all other seats or standing areas would be open to the general population in the city.





8

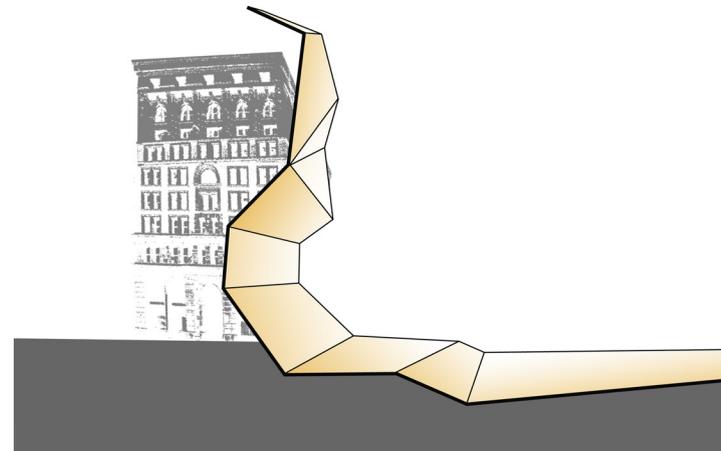
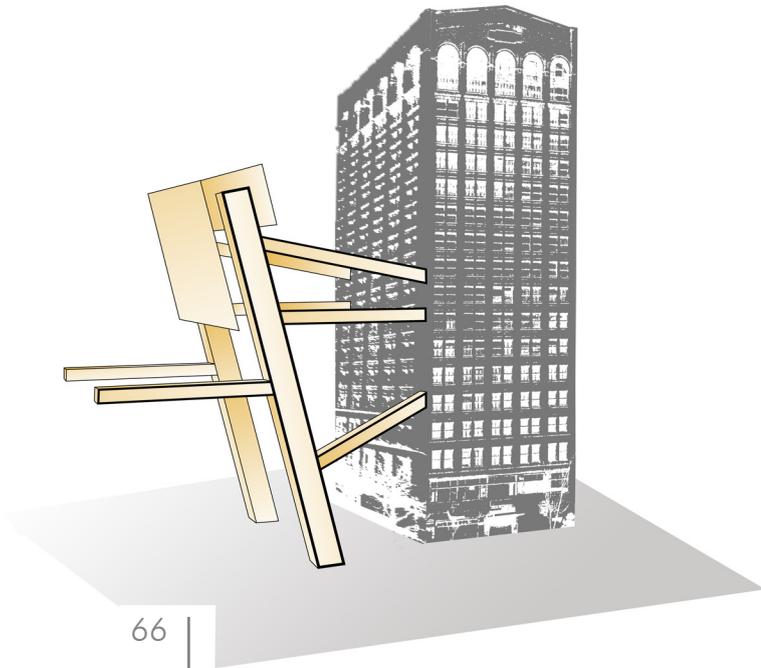
Design Process

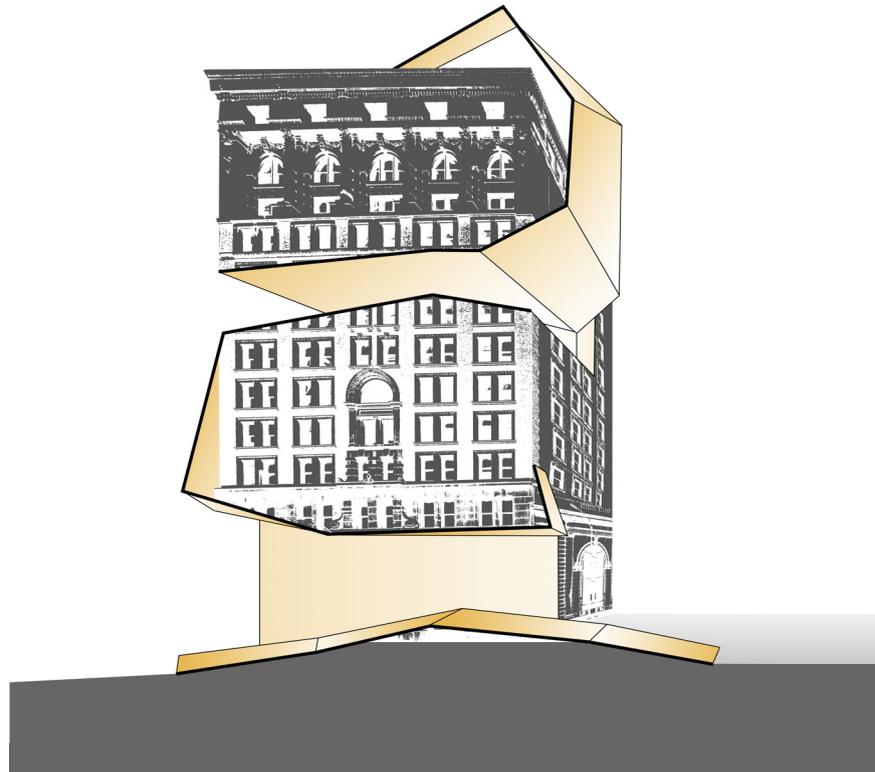
Architecture is about ideas in the first place.
You don't get to design until you have an idea.

-Lebbeus Woods

Transformations

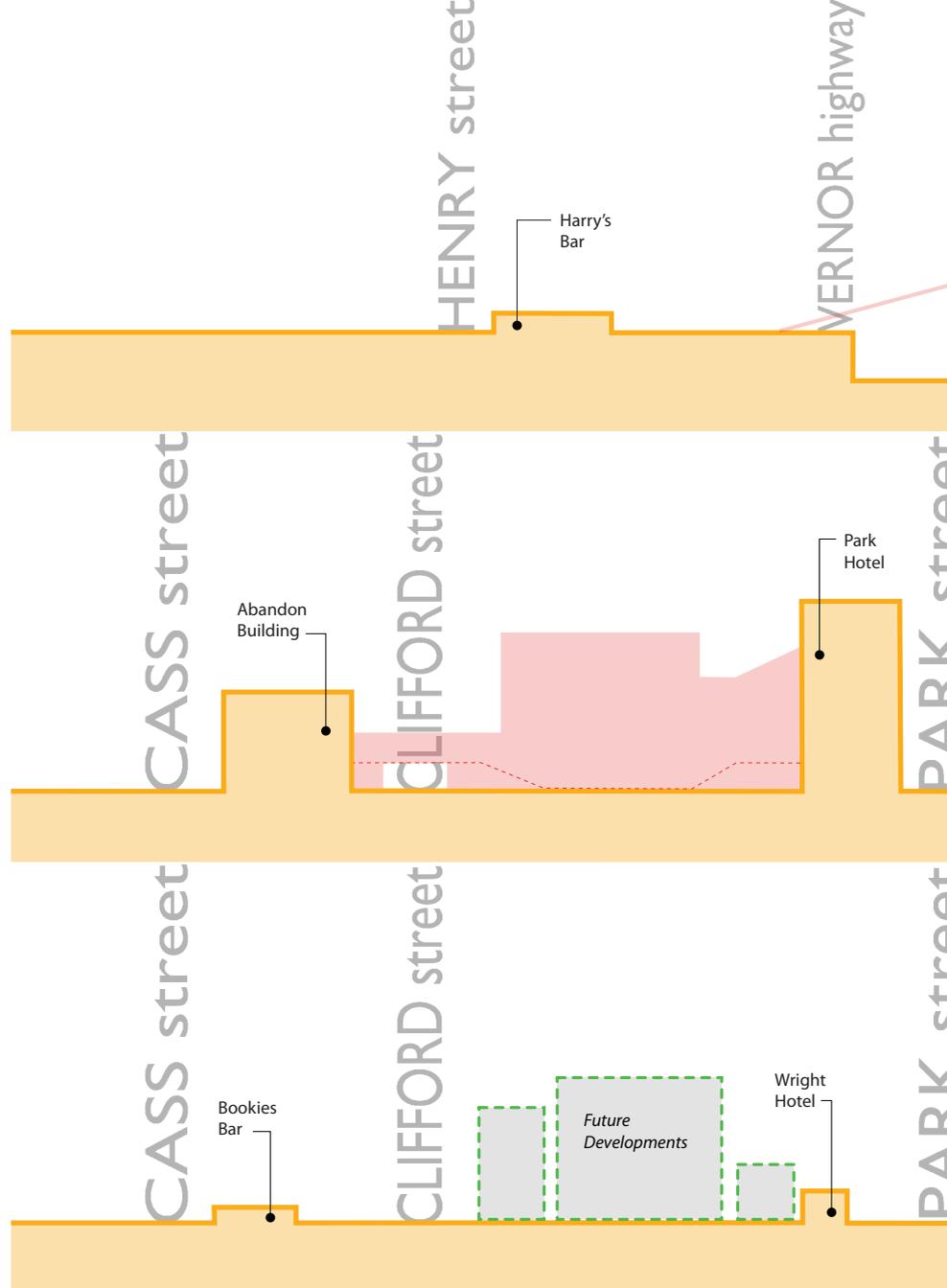
This was an initial design study that explored initial ideas of how to place the arena into urban context, while connecting to buildings that are currently located on the site. From left to right; how to attach directly to the exterior facade of an existing building, how to wrap up and around buildings while engaging the ground, how to directly cut through buildings while altering the ground plane. Even though the final solution is a hybrid of all of these schemes, it was necessary to visualize how they work individually.

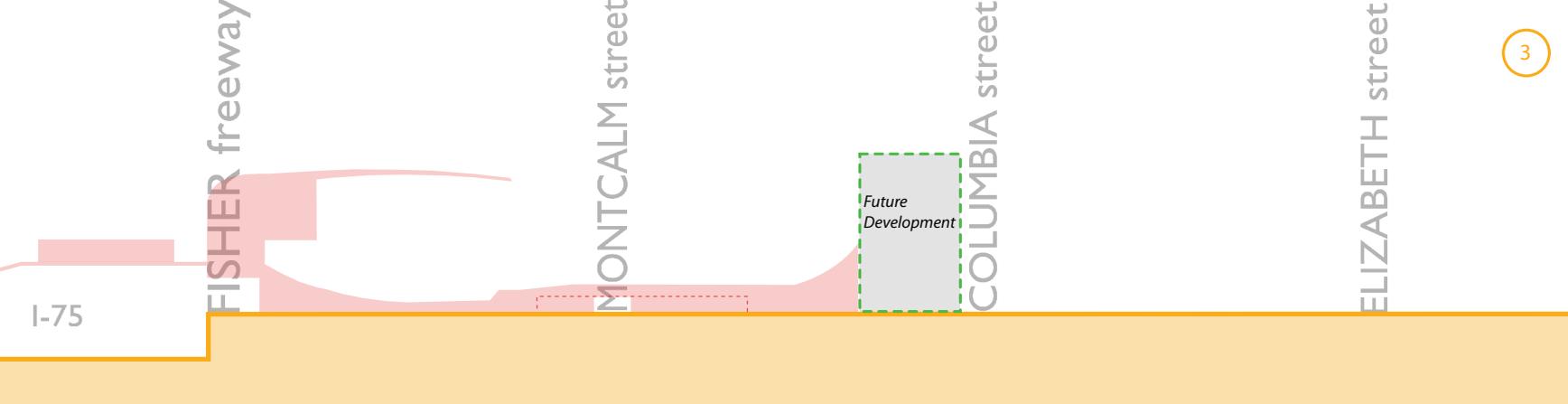




Urban Sections

Much of this project was explored through the use of section, specially looking at how things interacted on the urban level. Everything that is shown in orange is existing, with the red being the new venue proposal. Section 3 is a north-south section while others are east-west. These urban sections start to speak how spread out the city of Detroit is even around such interest points such as Comerica Park or Fox Theatre.





3



2



1

Diagram 1

This diagram shows the circulation planes that run throughout the arena. Each of the planes sprawls out of the arena attaching existing buildings, spanning I-75, connecting to the Fox parking garage and spanning around an existing building and to the west. These planes can be seen as a connecting point to the rest of the urban fabric.

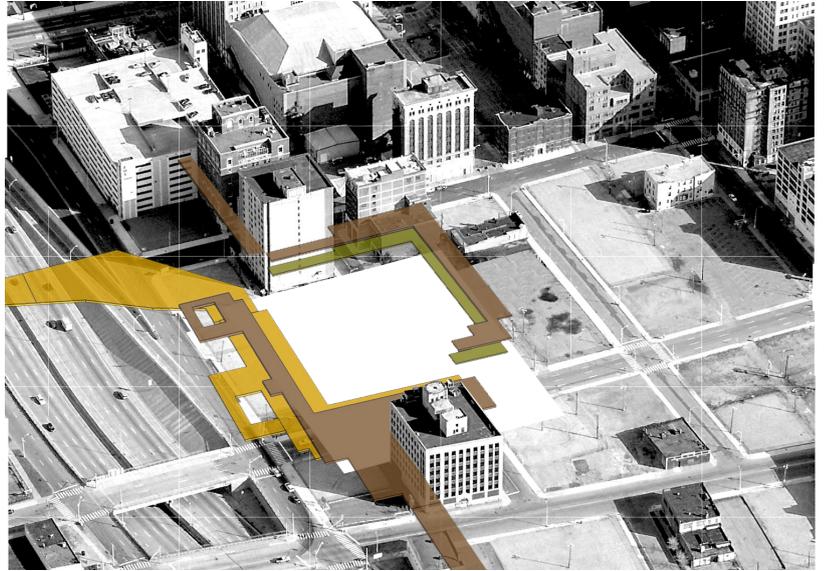
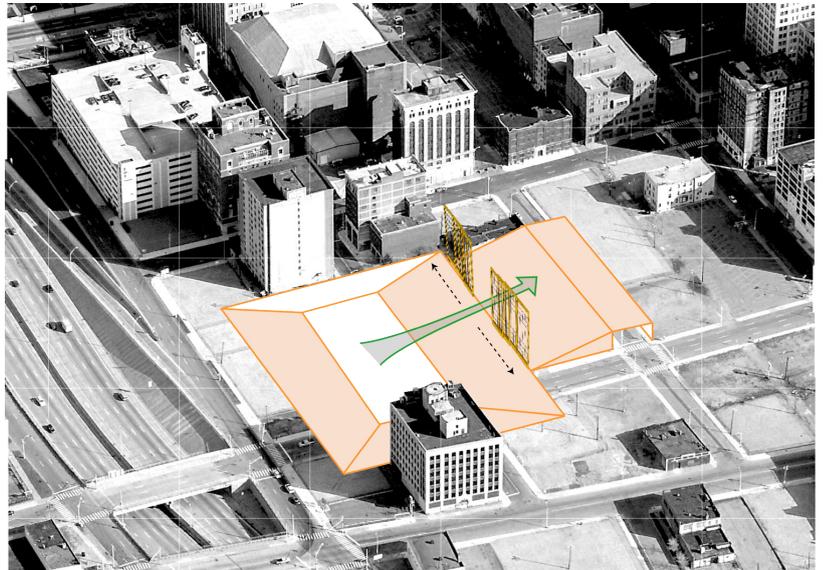


Diagram 2

This diagram shows how the south facade is constructed of large glass hanger doors that are operable. This could create the ability to open up an entire side of the arena for special events. Also this shows how a landscaped hill would be utilized for seating during an event.



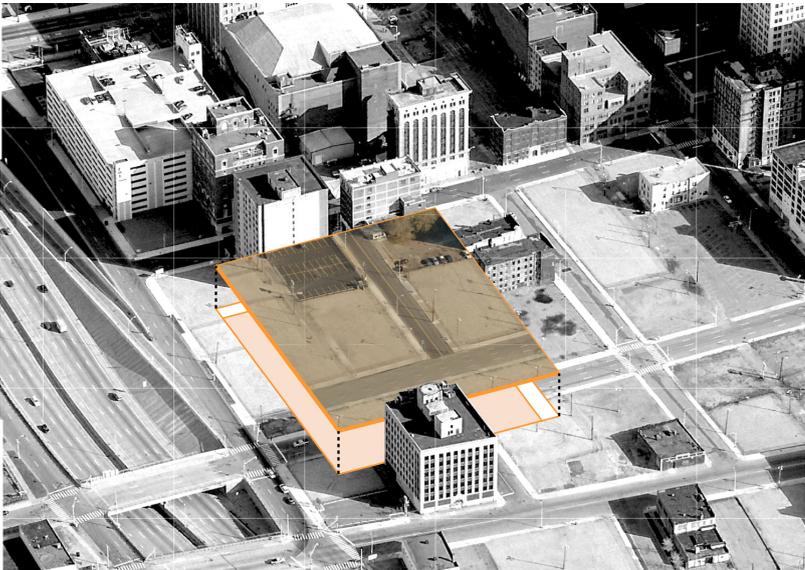
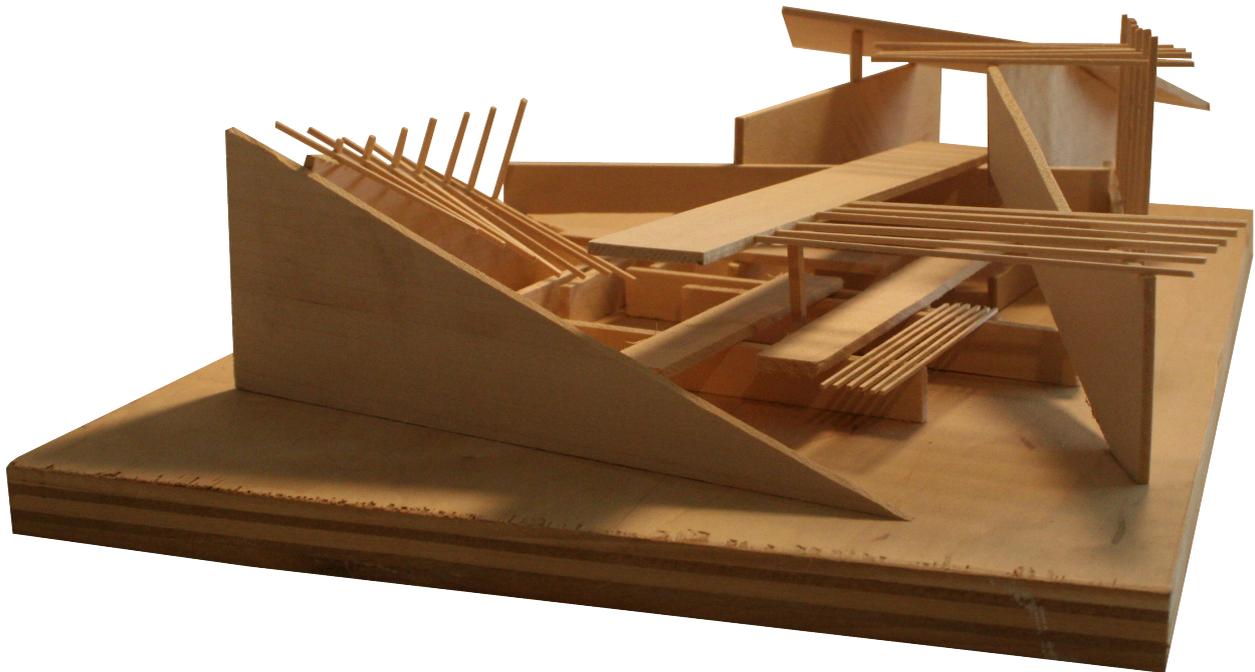
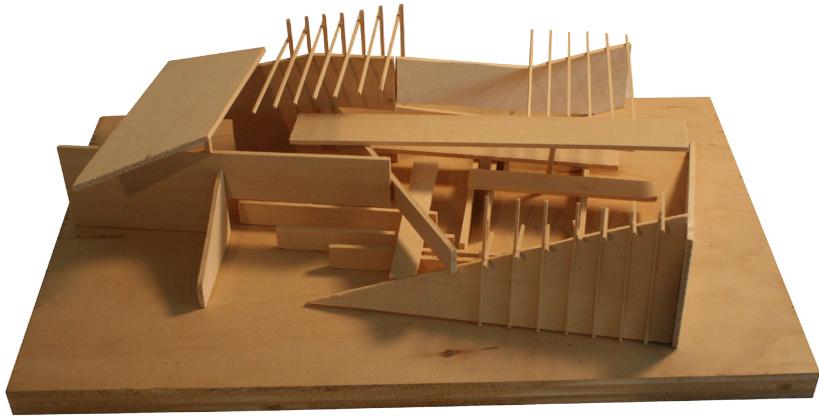


Diagram 3

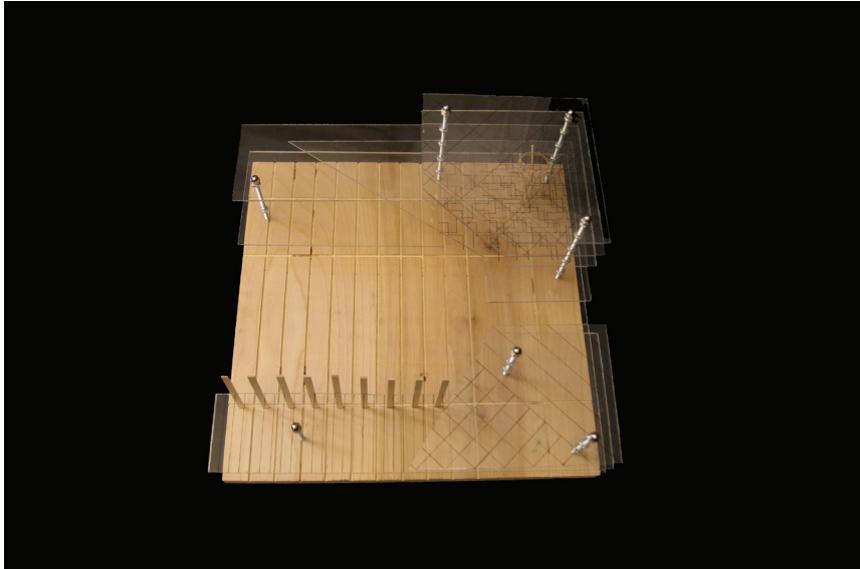
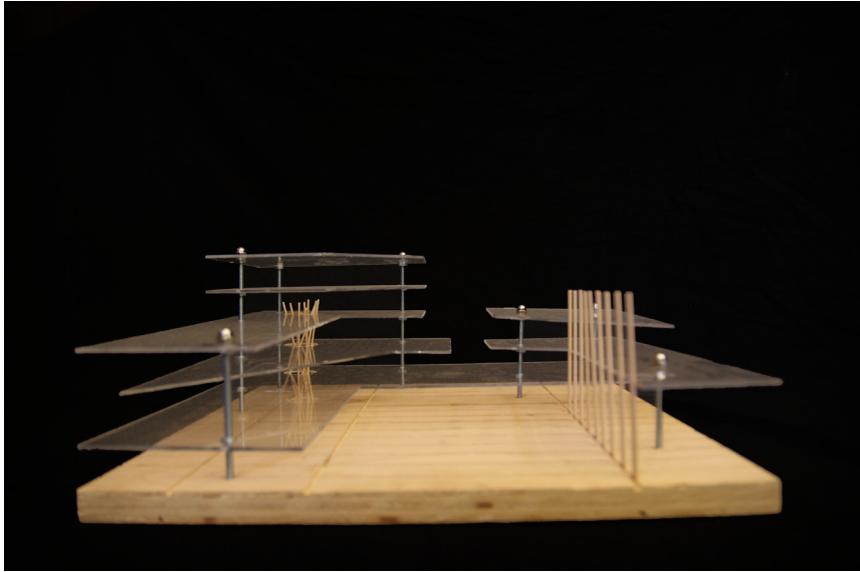
The biggest problem with the current arenas is the roof. This thesis proposes to take a slice of the city plane and just raise it up to create conditioned space below suitable for professional sports. The roof then can still be utilized by people being able to use it. Skylights could be used for people still be able to look down into the arena and bring some more natural light into the venue.

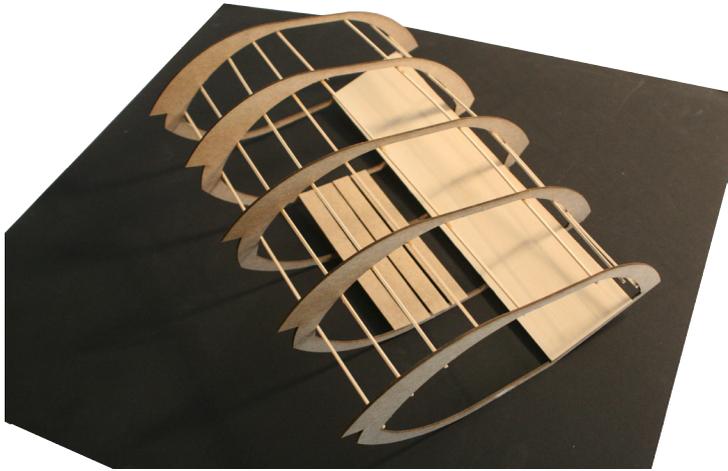




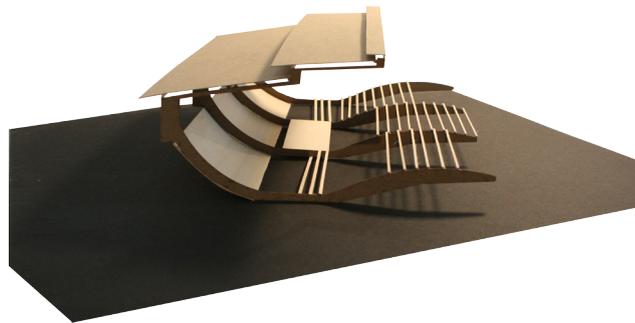
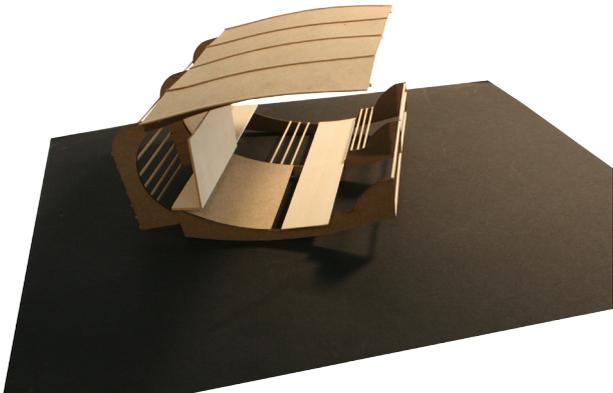
Various study models that were constructed during the design process.







Various study models that were constructed during the design process.



Final Design

Architecture acts as an instrument of organization, of rationalization, and of productive efficiency capable of transforming the uncivilized into the cultivated, the fallow into the productive, the void into the built.

-Ignasi de Sola-Morales Rubino

Rendering I

This collage starts to speak towards how open an arena could be. This angle would be taken from atop of the Fox parking garage were people would have a direct link to the programmed roof and into the arena. You start to see the plane that also spans I-75 that creates a link to the surrounding neighborhood. Also this starts to show how people are free to come in from the street or just pass through.



Rendering II

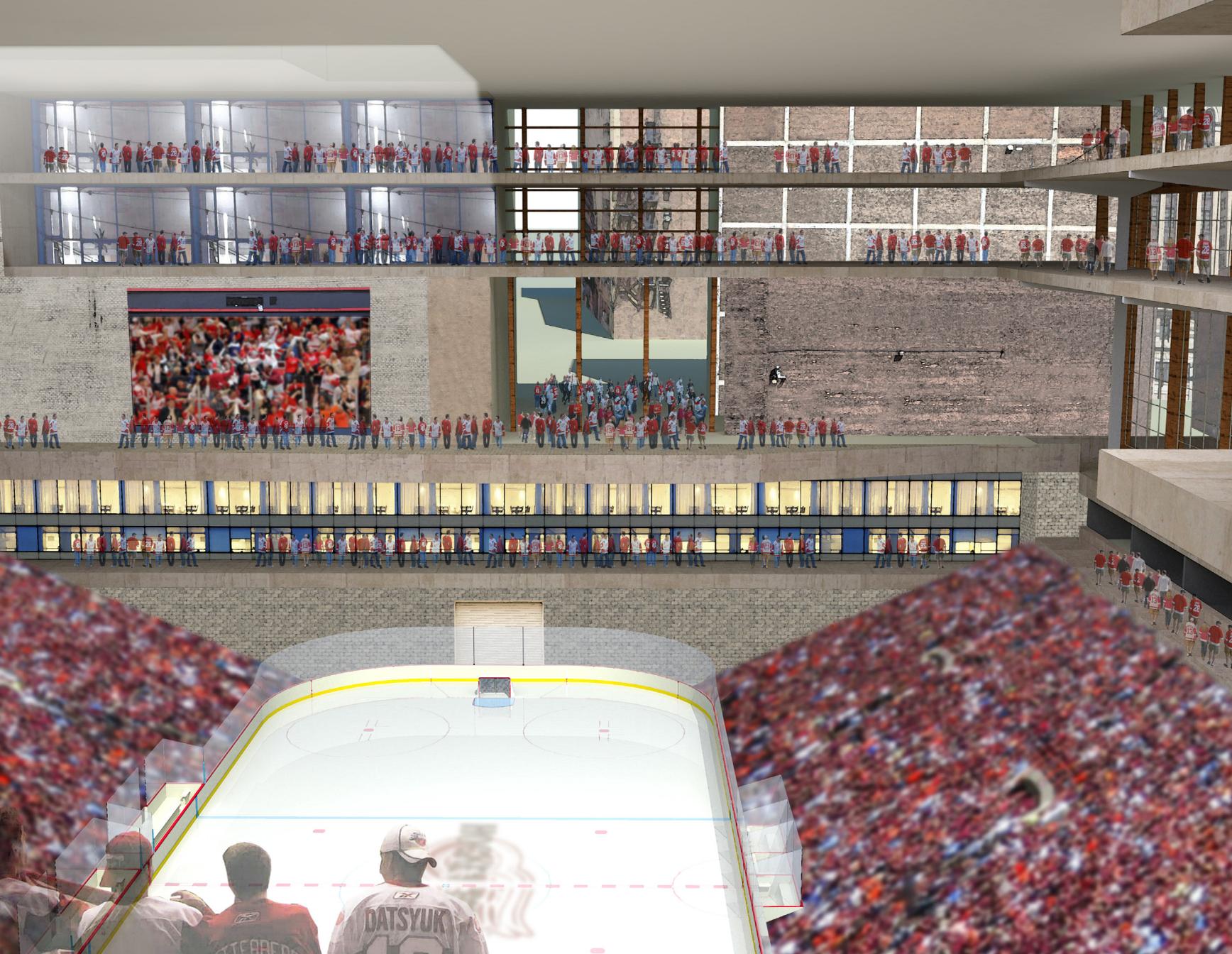
This collage starts to speak towards the openness of the arena and how it would start to radiate light. At night it would appear that the arena starts to become transparent as you would be able to view inside.

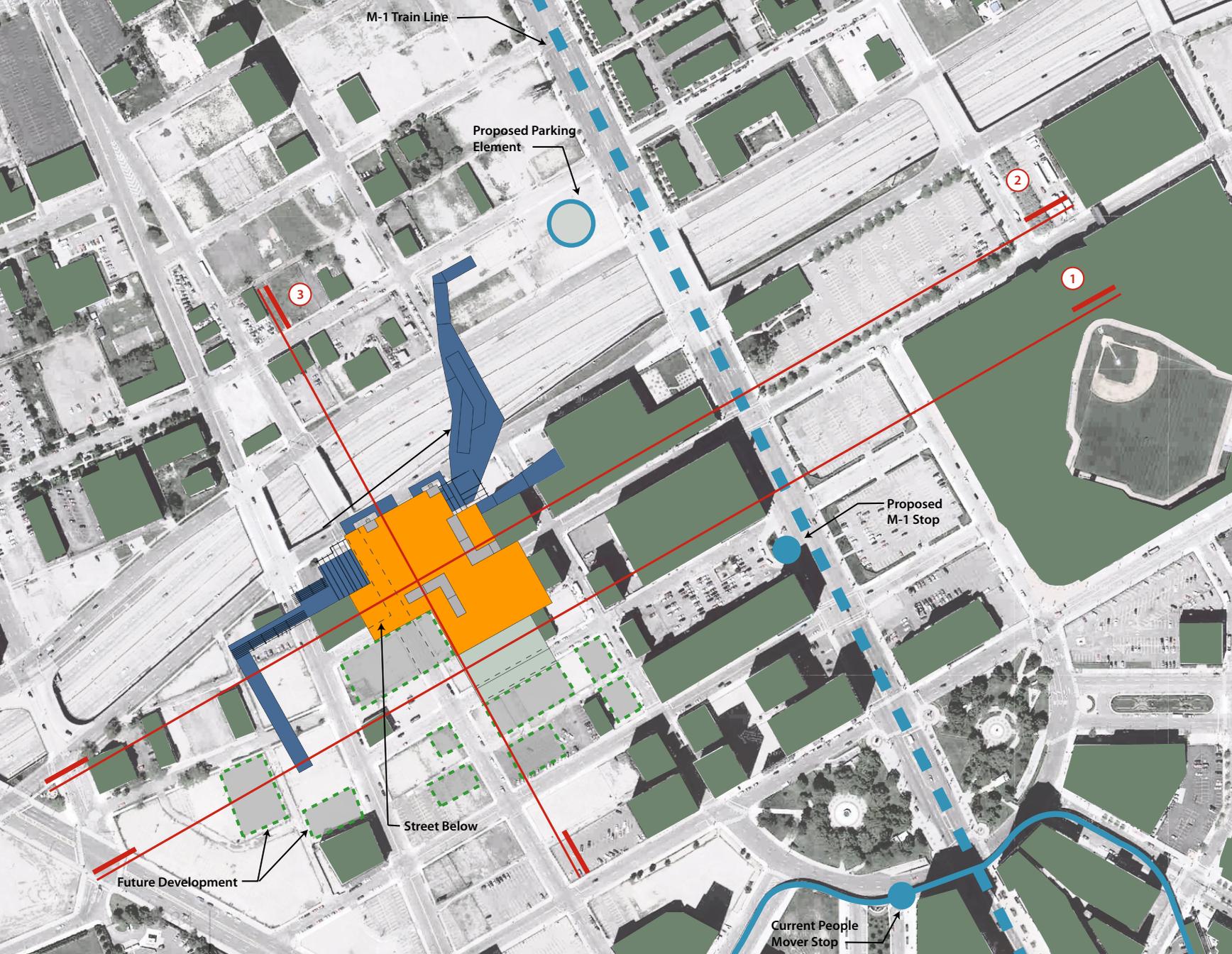




Rendering III

This collage starts to speak towards the quality of the interior space with how the planes start to engage the surrounding buildings. This starts to show how the horizontal circulation planes were used to tie buildings together and creating space to view the event. By the planes engaging the buildings it would then create highly desirable leasing space in the existing buildings. This collage also starts to speak towards the natural light that would be let into the interior space.





M-1 Train Line

Proposed Parking Element

2

1

3

Proposed M-1 Stop

Street Below

Future Development

Current People Mover Stop

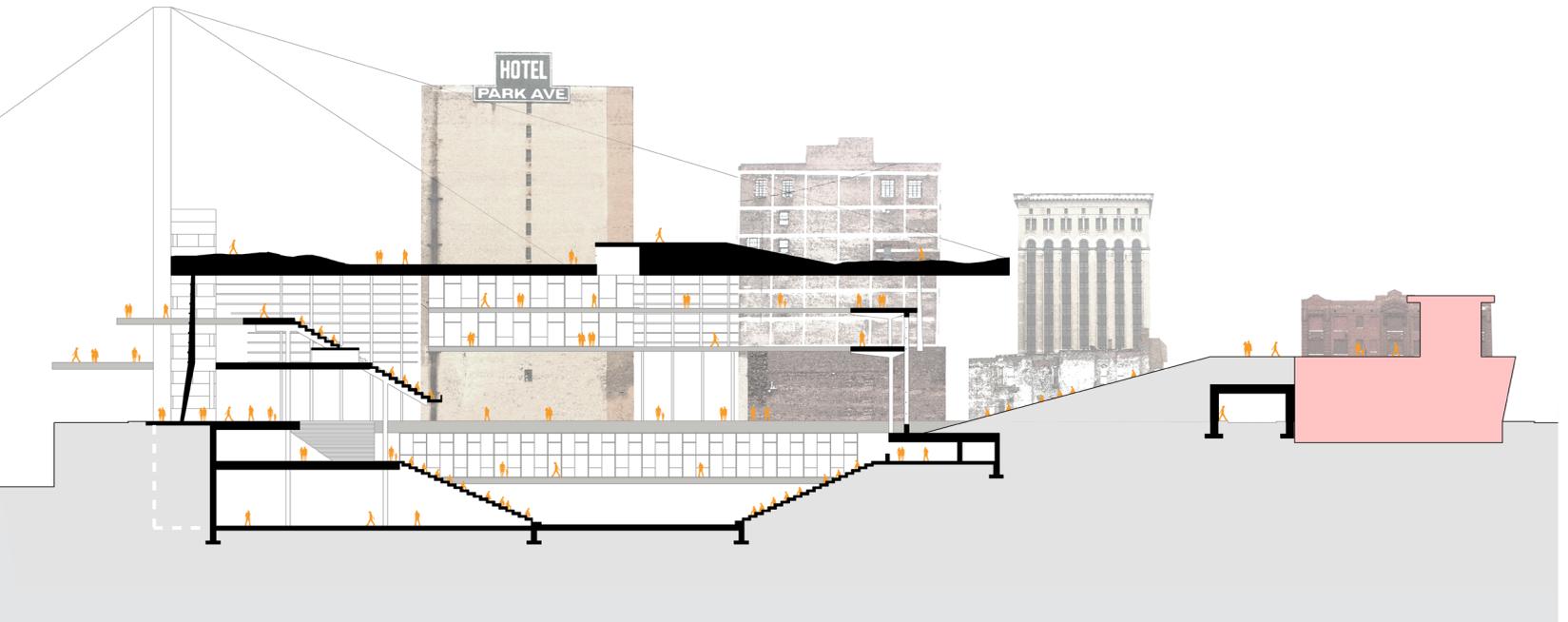


Master Plan

This master plan starts to show how the arena starts to engage the surrounding urban context and not just sitting on an inclusive island. The future development starts to suggest where some buildings might be located if the arena is built in this area. This site would provide a great link to the M1 line that is currently under development. Here you see how the planes of the arena extend out and connect to different buildings and parts of the city. Even though this is just a proposal the arena itself could respond to a variety of different developments.

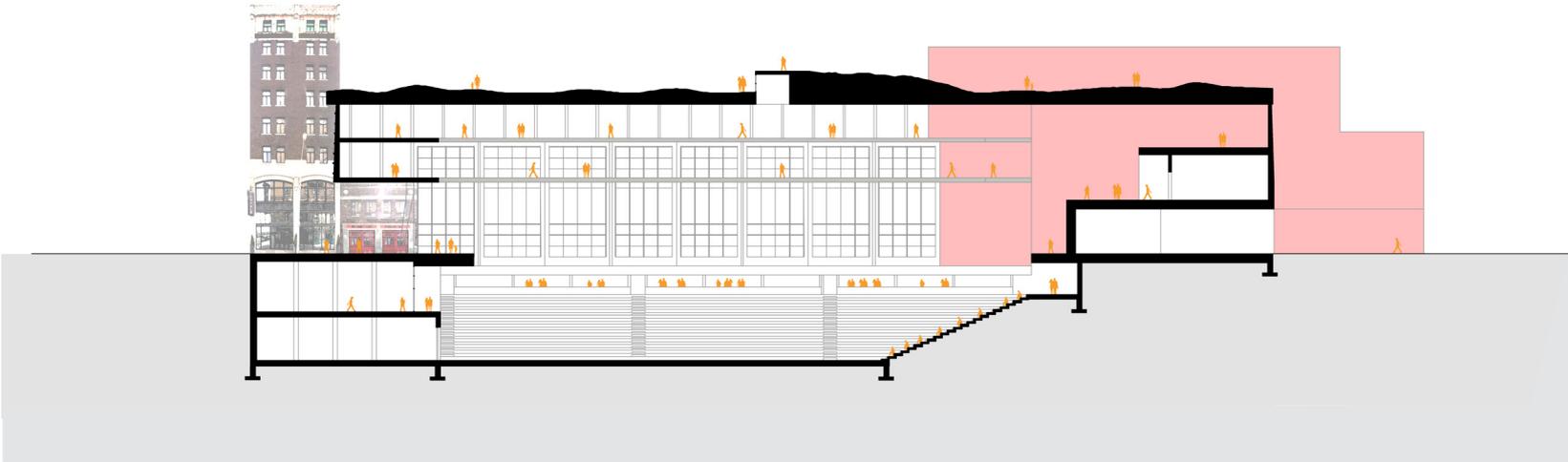
Section I

This section is taken through the landscaped hill that can be used for seating and viewing into the entertainment space. This also shows how some of the horizontal planes start to engage the existing buildings and how the arena connects to future development.



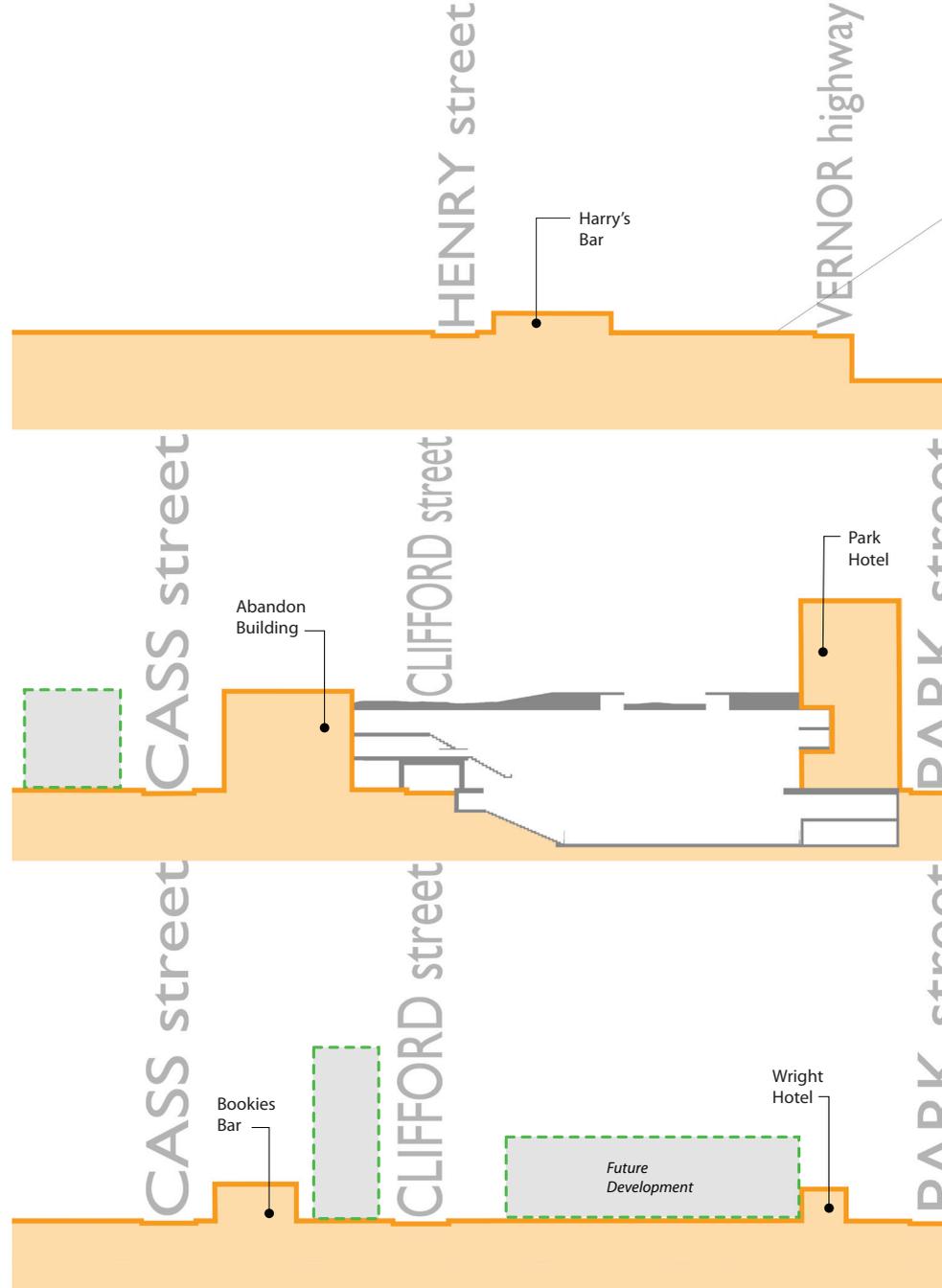
Section II

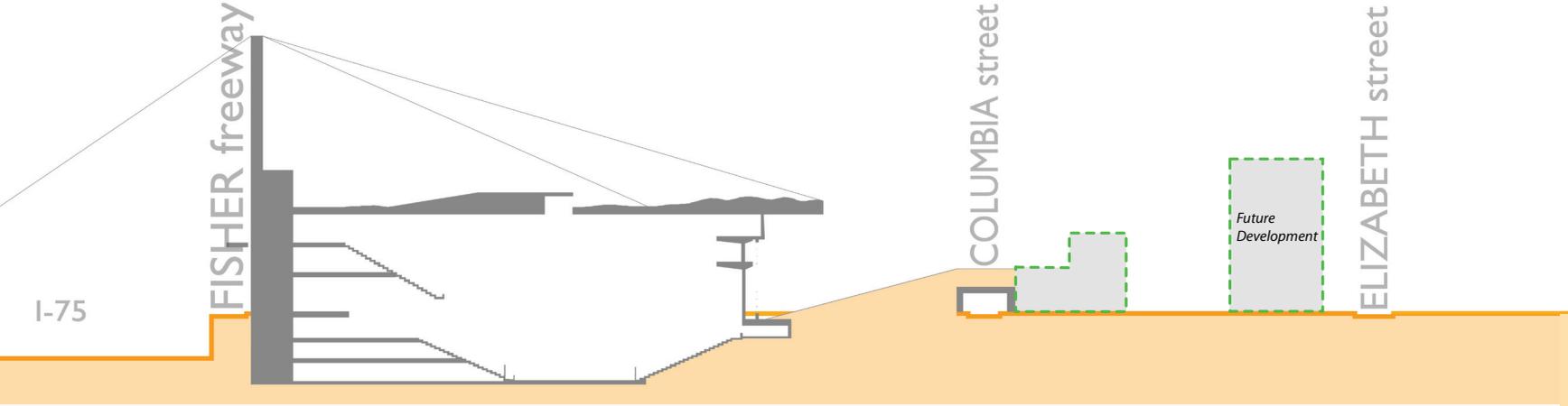
This section is taken through Montcalm street, which is the only street that is partially removed. This section also shows how Clifford street runs through the arena and how Montcalm starts up again. This section also starts to show what most of the stands would see as they are facing south and would see the city skyline. In the background, this shows the operable glass hanger doors.

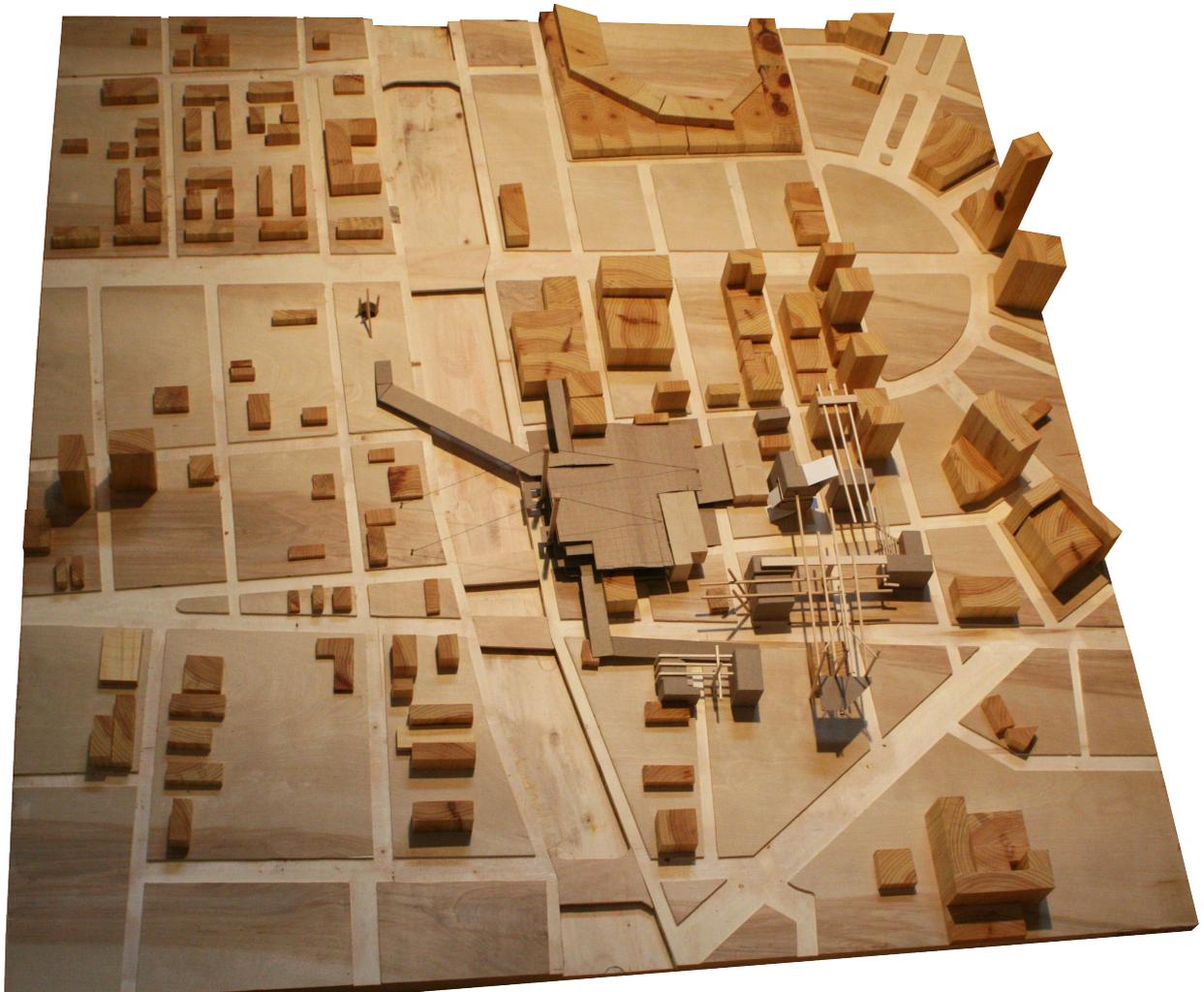


Urban Sections

This was the final iteration of the urban sections. This continues to explore how the arena can actually become an integral part of the city and engage the surrounding context. All of the future development is just proposed as the arena can respond to what actually will be built yet still be the driving force in the area.

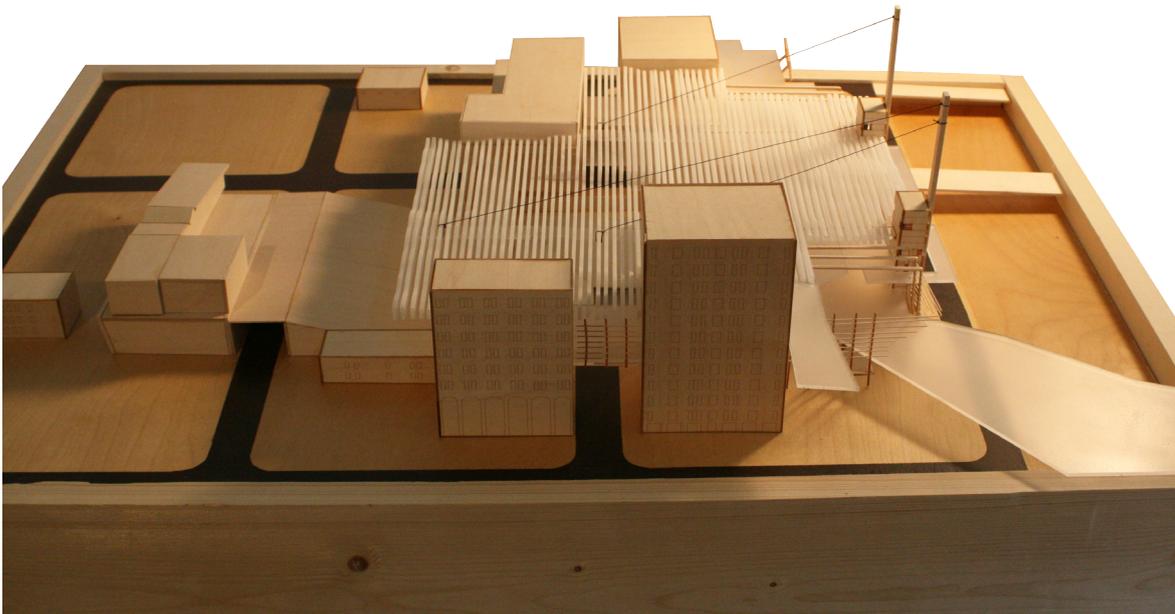
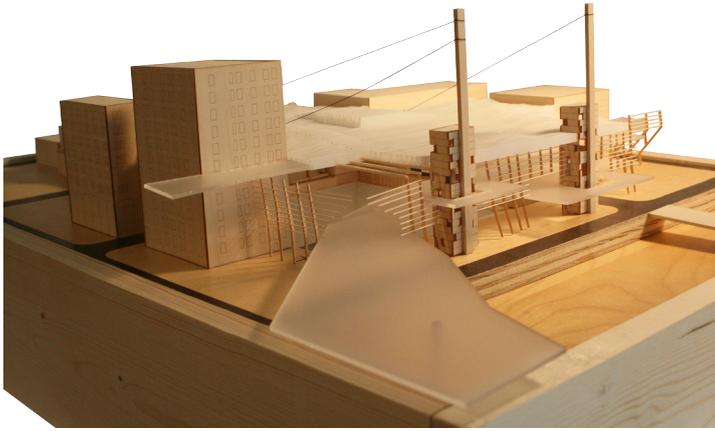




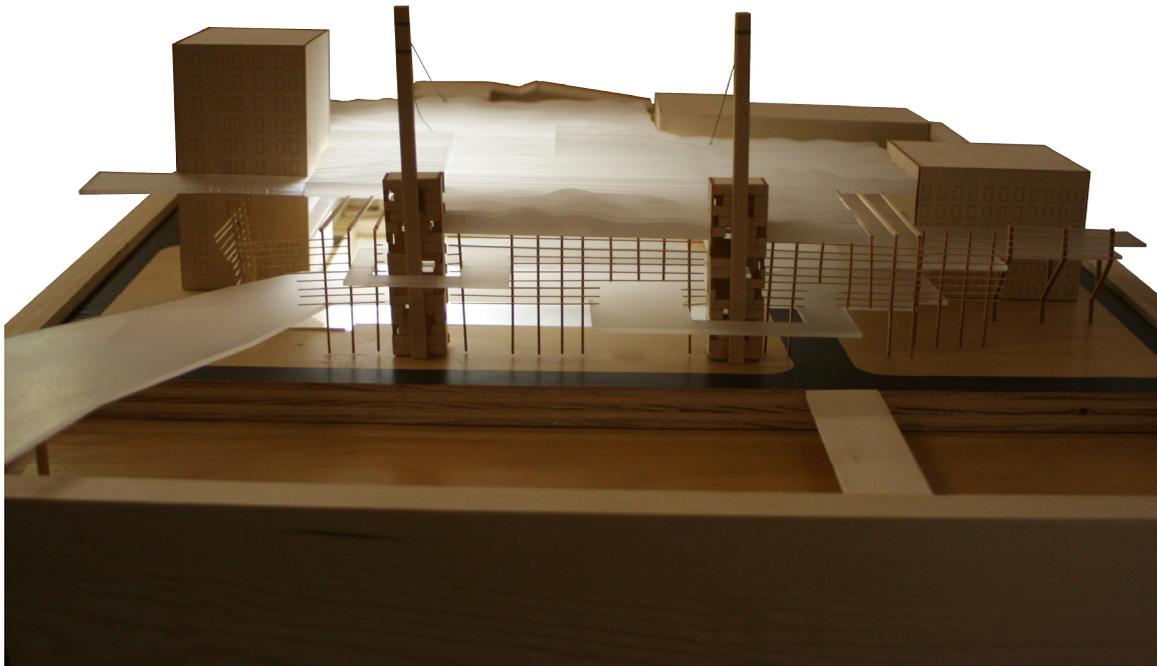


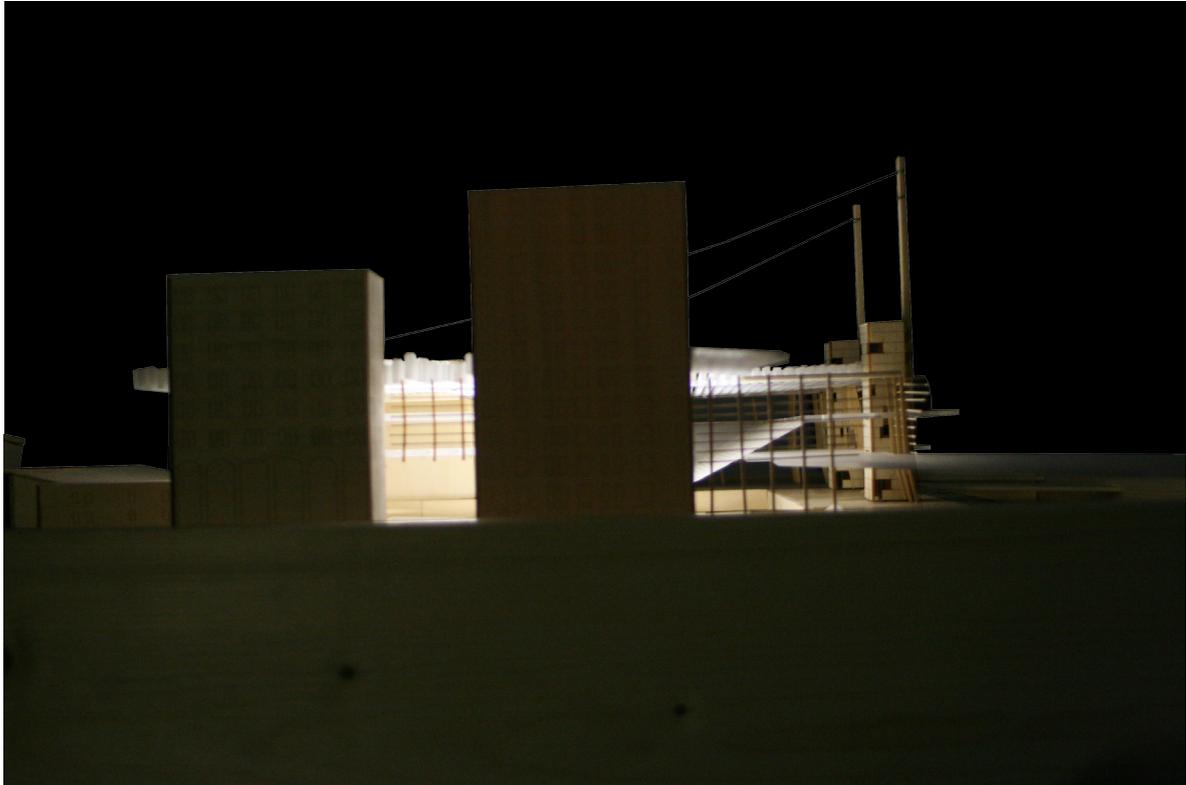
City scale model that was used for explorations of the placement of the arena in the urban context and how the buildings would respond to the arena.

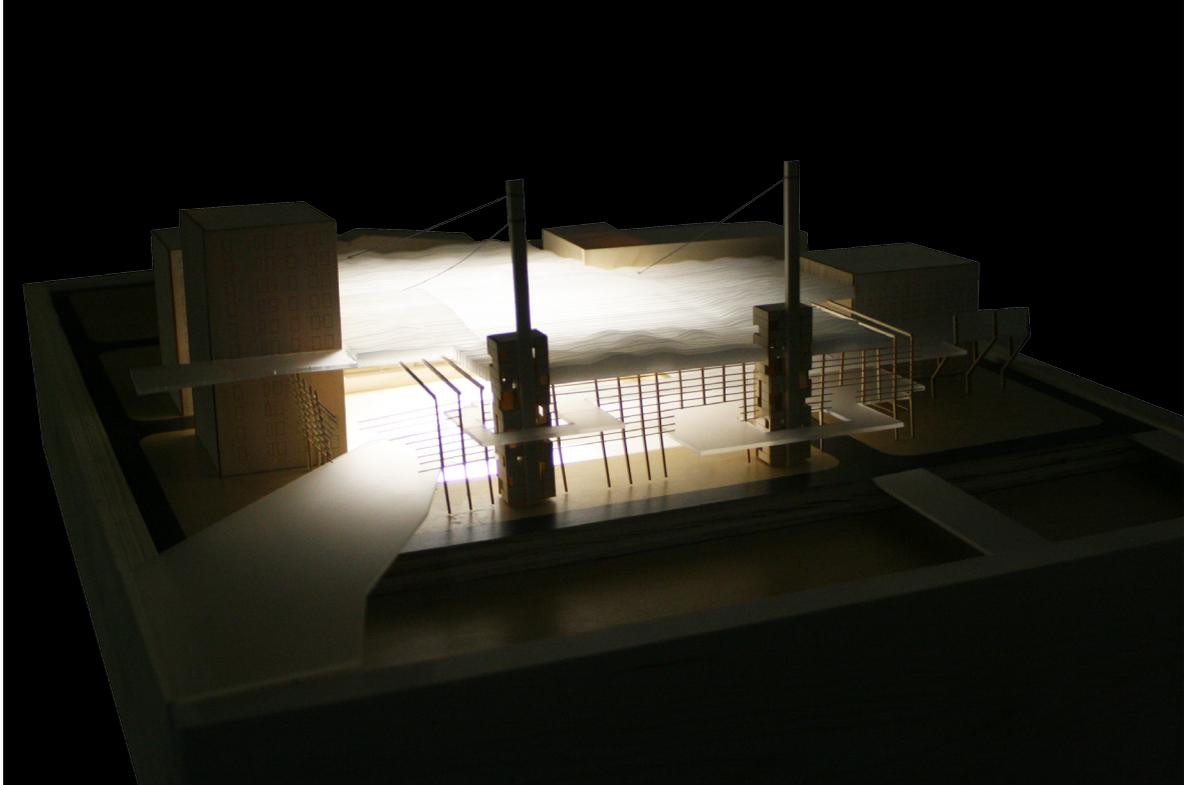




Final model with the arena built out of acrylic to express the lightness and the transparency of the arena. The model was also under light by LED's to show how it radiates throughout the area.







10

Conclusion

Let's get drunk, grab a map of London and figure out how to navigate Paris.

-Craig Borum



A thesis is never done and maybe the best example of this is Constant and his 20 year thesis on New Babylon. This thesis set out to accomplish a few goals. First, to show how the sporting event can interact with the urban fabric more. Second, to show how architecture can help inform the spectacle. Third and maybe most important, to show how the design process for building new venues can be altered to engender urban growth. This thesis only starts the conversation on how these core questions can start to be answered. This thesis will not begin to become a realization until the owners of these venues can start to see the potential for urban growth instead of how they can maximize their profits with cookie cutter design. These questions extends to the design process were designers have started to ask some of these questions; however, they need to continue to question what is good design for urban growth. Even though this thesis lays in the conceptual realm, it still has aspects that ground the project. Explorations can be made into how placement of these venues does not interrupt street life but relishes it. Even how venues can start to engage surrounding buildings instead of being sited on an exclusive island that cuts of the urban context. This thesis is an exploration and not a solution. It should be used for the questioning of the venue in the urban context and to spark the conversation for a symbiotic relationship between the two.

Image Credits

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