POST POLISTASIS

Post Polistasis:
A Critcal Examination of Urban Space in Post Democracy
By: Alena Bower

POST_POLI_STASIS
POST_POLI_STASIS
POST_POLI_STASIS
POST_POLI_STASIS
POST_POLI_STASIS
POST_POLI_STASIS
POST_POLI_STASIS
POST_POLI_STASIS
POST_POLI_STASIS
POST_POLI_STASIS
POST_POLI_STASIS
POST_POLI_STASIS
POST_POLI_STASIS
POST_POLI_STASIS

contents:

a letter of discontent

POST POLISTASIS is the culmination of research, theory and overall
frustration
with the state of our current system. As a designer, I am appalled
with the extreme lack of innovation, creativity and motivation
residing within our political ideologies.
As an individual, I am frustrated and
angered by our system's
blatant disregard for human interests.
As a voter, I find myself constantly disappointed with our candidates'
continual failure
at delivering promised goods.
Our two-party democracy has turned voting into
a business proposition
instead of an act of true politcal participation.
As a student, I am disappointed and shocked
with our nation's scorn for intellectualism.

When did knowledge become a threat?
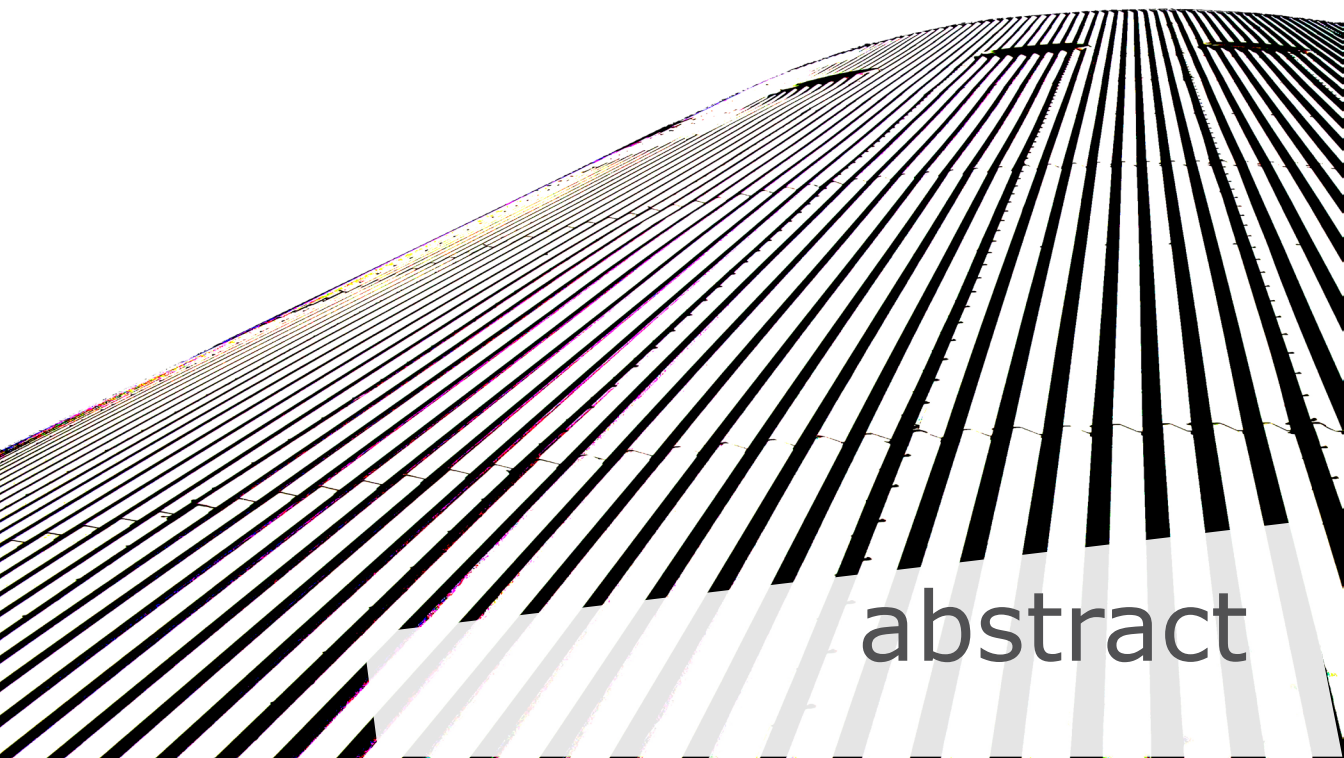
Post Polistasis:
A Critical Examination of Urban Space in a Post Democracy

The evolution of urban space and architecture is not only indicative of societal changes through time, but it also serves as a medium for investigating the intricate relationship existing between society and the political-economic power structure in which that society functions. The resulted disturbances of urban space due to the wavering tendencies of this correlation give rise to new inquiries regarding the complex role the post-democratic ideology plays within architectural discourse and practice. As a seemingly more influential Corporate-State infiltrates the elected power of present governing bodies, is the identity of our urban environment correspondingly mutating along this seam shared with political power? In light of the current events surrounding the Occupy Wall Street Movement and the Arab Spring in the east, citizens across the globe are utilizing, and in some cases demanding, their right to actively participate in their respective political regimes, some democratic and others not. This political engagement has predictably been met with stark criticism and opposition from politicians and citizens alike, creating a buzz of media attention. Although there is always just cause to challenge the intentions of any mass movement, there is also reason to stand in amazement at the pure speed and intensity propelling the current protests. Accessible technological devices, e.g. the cell phone and other wireless devices, have provided new "weapons" for the demonstrators and revolutionaries. Consequently, both work with an efficiency that is historically unrivaled. In a political system built to favor groups and not the individual,

citizens must find new channels of political participation in order to instigate societal change. The post–democratic citizen must become a virus.

Movements such as these beg questions regarding our built environment. A city park now doubles as a stage, a microphone, a picket sign and a symbol. The street morphs into a new line of communication. No longer moving cars and trucks; the street permits the broadcast of a message. Although these messages may not be new or different from those delivered in the past, the viral form of its transmission is new and far more effective. In place of posters and newspaper columns, we have substituted instantaneous Facebook updates and Twitter statuses, which are directly accessible from cell phones and laptops. Swarms of chanting citizens operate within this mutating infrastructure of gigabytes and coding, while urban architecture transforms into a new framework for this physical manifestation of viral information. Architecture must respond to this condition and reinstate itself into the urban fabric by going viral as well. A building must become a mutating force that evolves with not only the city but with society as well.

But before we explore the architectural implications of this complex relationship linking urban space with its respected political environment, we must truly comprehend the circumstances surrounding this relationship, such as the current political climate of the United States and the circumstances through which we can ascertain the plausibility of this post-democratic political entity.
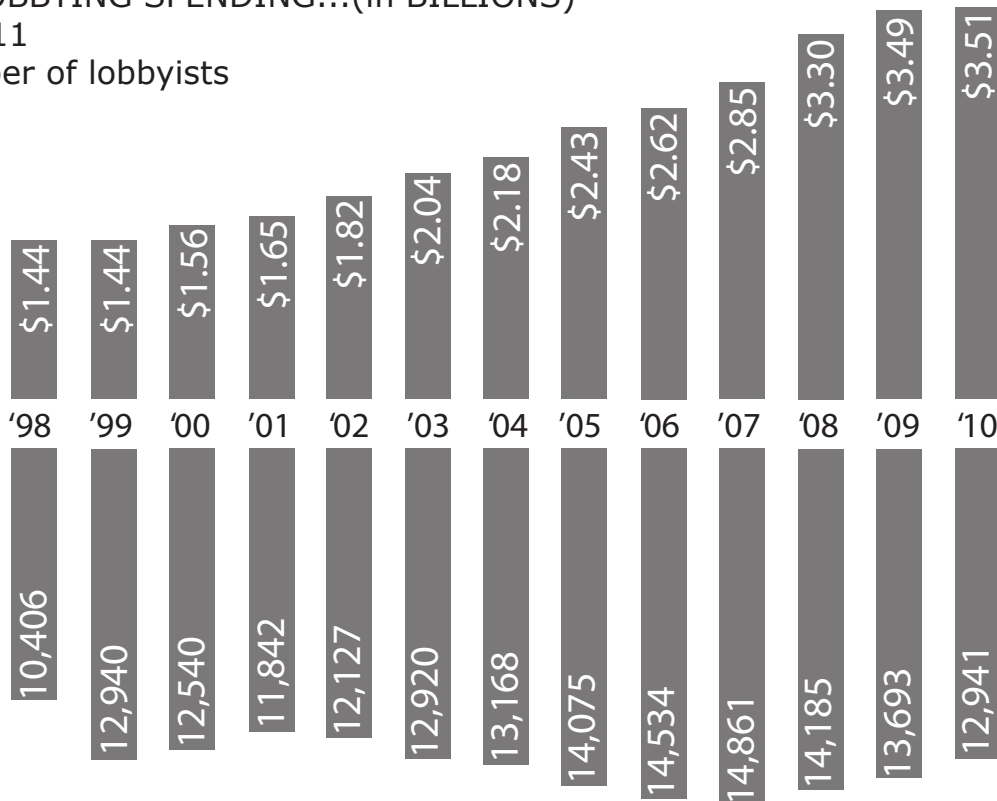
democracy in question

One citizen. One vote. This is the promise of the democratic society, a promise that is a foundational belief for countries boasting the equality and effectiveness of their participatory governments across the globe. Instilling hope and pride into democratic citizens for generations, this belief holds profound depth for the political participant. Promising a special concentration of political power and societal involvement, the very concept of voting is adhered to in order to promote a balance of power within any transaction, whether or not it pertains to political affairs. This agreement between the government and its people is an intrinsic trait belonging to the political system of the United States, but could it be that this once sacred promise of democracy is in jeopardy? With the removal of restrictions that provide any modicum of regulation to the copious amounts of campaign donations supplied to politicians from various industries (Obama's reelection campaign managed to raise $47 million in three months), the vote cast by the American individual is possibly being undermined by the monetary interests of the ever-powerful private sector. In 1975, the creation of the Federal Election Commission provided U.S. politicians with a regulatory agency that oversaw the amount, sources and disclosure of campaign donations. Over the course of the last few decades this agency has been stripped down to regulate fewer and fewer actions. In 2010, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of unlimited corporate and union funding of individual political broadcasts, stating that it was unconstitutional to regulate these actions.

TOTAL LOBBYING SPENDING...(in BILLIONS)
1998-2011
vs. number of lobbyists

Year	Spending	Lobbyists
'98	$1.44	10,406
'99	$1.44	12,940
'00	$1.56	12,540
'01	$1.65	11,842
'02	$1.82	12,127
'03	$2.04	12,920
'04	$2.18	13,168
'05	$2.43	14,075
'06	$2.62	14,534
'07	$2.85	14,861
'08	$3.30	14,185
'09	$3.49	13,693
'10	$3.51	12,941

While U.S. democratic and republican candidates accept millions in campaign financing, the average middle to lower class American is politically limited to their meager "one vote" and the promise of free speech.

This corporate influence of the U.S. political body is not necessarily new or innovative. Admittedly, it is a natural tendency of any group, company or organization to advocate for their respective politician, but the fostering of these relationships can quickly become a societal problem when the interests of the private investors and the interests of the public oppose one another. This growing opposition of interests is provoking and supporting an imbalance of power between working class citizens and the private sector. This imbalance of political power

is coupled with growing discrepancies in wealth distribution, which is consequently stifling upward mobility in the United States. In a current system that feeds off of the corporate lobbying trough, it is hard to imagine the weight this mantra carries in a system that has undeniably been skewed for the benefit of the nation's top shareholders. Particularly in the United States, this trend is growing consecutively every year. In a twelve-year span from 1998 to 2010, corporate lobbying spending almost tripled, securing the friendship and obedience of politicians plucked from every party. Citizens no longer need to vote, they simply need to cast a ballot worth the equivalent of nearly $3.5 billion.

Images and graphs
1. chapter page photo:
http://www.flickr.com/photos/benheine/4960862668/

2. http://www.opensecrets.org/lobby/

the american abyss

September of 2012 witnessed the birth of possibly one of the most viral societal movements to take place in United States, The Occupy Wall Street (OWS) movement. Protesters assembled and set up camp in New York's Zuccotti Park on the 17th and strategically aimed impassioned protests towards New York's financial district and consequently all corporate greed and corruption in U.S. markets. Accused of not having a clear set of intentions and demands, the movement has transformed into a more generalized and all-inclusive attack on varying issues including the Iraq War, educational costs, healthcare costs and civil rights. Possibly due to the all-inclusive nature of its grievances, OWS spread nationally and internationally with incredible speed and intensity. The lack of accurate mainstream media coverage of the OWS protests sparked a furry of social media coverage, including Facebook pages and Twitter posts. Possibly due to its all-inclusive nature of its grievances, OWS spread nationally and internationally with incredible speed and intensity. The lack of accurate mainstream media coverage of the OWS protests sparked a furry of social media and networking coverage including Facebook pages and Twitter posts. This attention from the social media provided citizens, protestors and critics alike, with instant updates via internet and cell phone messaging. Instantaneous updating links citizens to the events in real-time, exemplifying the accessibility of this viral information.

WALL STREET VS. THE REST OF THE COUNTRY   2007-2009

+ 720%
Wall Street profits

+ 102%
Unemployment rate

- 35%
American home equity

Whether in support of or opposition to the OWS movement, U.S. citizens have undoubtedly been forced to consider the ardent messages of such a viral mass movement. Successfully drawing attention to hot button political issues such as healthcare, education, and civil rights, copious amounts of coverage has been directed at the objective statistical foundation of the OWS concerns. Underlying all these concerns is the seemingly unequal distribution of wealth that's driving the wedge between the upper class and its underlings. This disparate ratio has given rise to the now infamous "We are the 99%" slogan that's been reverberating in the ears of all American citizens over the past few months. Undoubtedly, history has warned of the possibly disastrous effects associated with the allowances and promotions of such concentrations of wealth. The physical manifestation of such an ominous possibility has presented itself in the form of the OWS movement and its respective occupations of public and sometimes private spaces.

As Gilles Deleuze states in his 1990 essay, "Postscript on the Societies of Control," "Man is no longer man enclose, but man in debt." American debt has become one the foremost topics on the socio-economic scene in regards to the increasingly daunting tasks hindering American upward mobility. Whether caused by outstanding student loans, piling healthcare costs, or even bad mortgages, mounting debt is stunting American upward mobility and putting a rather large question mark after the words: American dream. This is not to say that irresponsible credit card usage is killing American democracy, but we have advocated for and allowed the emergence of a system that makes some forms of debt necessary and potentially unavoidable. These types of debt, such as student loan debt, is a necessary evil for most students studying in the U.S. and result in future financial restriction. This trend is possibly due to the privatization of higher education where many universities have turned education into a business as opposed to an educational experience. With little well paying opportunities available to those lacking a college degree,

society has cornered high school graduates into a situation with very few options. Alternative educational systems such as apprenticeships are now obsolete, and in most fields, typically abandoned in favor of more traditional educational routes like the university. Students are funneled into a system where they must go into debt in hopes of obtaining a future job and career. With little well paying opportunities available to those lacking a college degree, society has cornered high school graduates into a situation with very few options. Alternative educational systems such as apprenticeships have been made obsolete, and are, in most fields, typically abandoned in favor of more traditional educational routes like the university. In this way, students are funneled into a system where they literally must go into debt in hopes of obtaining a future job and career.

Educational debt is not the only example of this type of control. Rising healthcare costs are also responsible for restricting upward mobility in the U.S. The United States is the only nation in the industrialized world without universal healthcare and also spends the most on health care per capita per year at nearly $7,500 (this is almost double that spent by Canada.) It's no surprise that health care expenditures are responsible for half of all American bankruptcies. As highlighted in Michael Moore's documentary, Sicko, the American health care system is in crisis. It is a system that promotes the attitude of "buyer is user" with out recognizing the fact that uninsured citizens also drive up the cost of health care. The uninsured ultimately receive less preventative care and are therefore diagnosed at more advanced stages. Not only are mortality rates much higher in this situation but this trend consequently results in more uncompensated healthcare (referring to care that is not paid for by private or public means.) Uncompensated care totals billions of dollars each year and is paid for by the federal and state governments who ultimately hold taxpayers responsible for the bill. In reality, our current system of private healthcare is not completely buyer-user; taxpaying citizens are still

Us Wealth Distribution
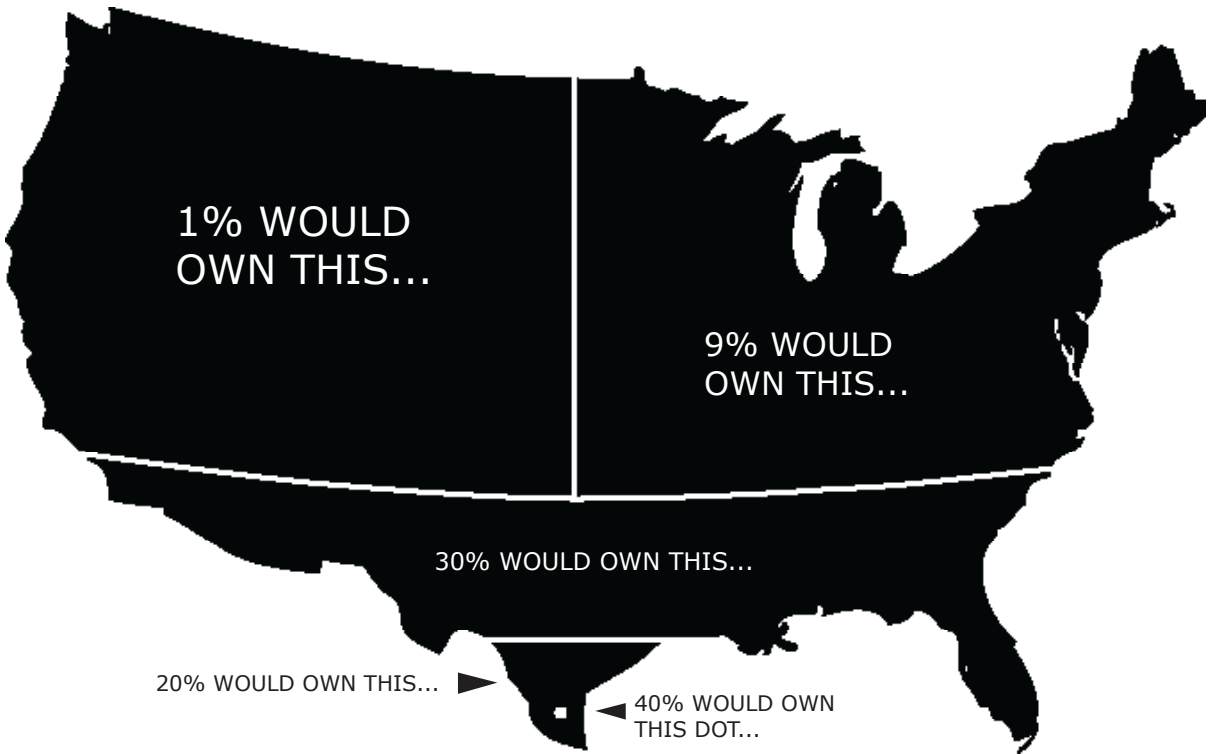## Average Income Per Family In The United States

TOP 1%	TOP 1-10%	BOTTOM 90%
$1,137,684	$164,647	$31,244

2008 DATA

If the land of the United States was distributed like its wealth...

1% WOULD OWN THIS...

9% WOULD OWN THIS...

30% WOULD OWN THIS...

20% WOULD OWN THIS... ▶

◀ 40% WOULD OWN THIS DOT...

held accountable for uncompensated care originating from the uninsured. This overly privatized industry is yet another example of how poorly regulated industries are weakening the American public and strengthening corporate initiatives.

Again, we can refer Deleuze's allusion to debt as a prominent characteristic of his society of control, similar to the way in which Foucault refers to spatial control in his disciplinary society. American debt holds a significant amount of influence in free market economic structures as a mechanism of control, an increasingly effective medium of control that is intangible and often unrecognizable. No longer bound by disciplinary spatial restraints, society is free to move in mass. Technological advances have freed the individual from geometrical space, but with this new freedom also comes a new language of control. Similar to the intricately complex software that morphed OWS into one of the most viral campaigns in history, debt also serves as an indicator of a new reign of control. If we are to accept the premise that we are currently in a post-democratic societal form, resembling

something similar to Deleuze's description, then we must challenge the current means of participating in that form. In a political system built to favor groups organized by a monetary hierarchy, citizens must find new ways to instigate change. The post–democratic citizen must become a virus in a system that is no longer programmed for them.

The following diagrams are illustrating a specific relationship existing between selected political ideologies and their subsequent architectural manifestations. This was an attempt to discern how architectural styles, components, volumes and materials might relate to the governing structure of their relative society.
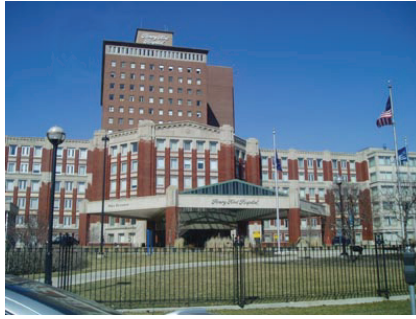
the head of state　　the hospital　　the bank

DEMOCRACY

SOCIALISM/COMMUNISM

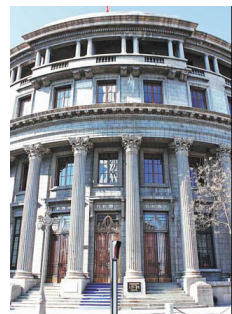## the shopping center

the home
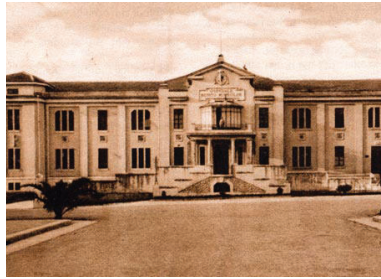
	the head of state	the hospital	the bank
FASCSIM			
MONARCHY			

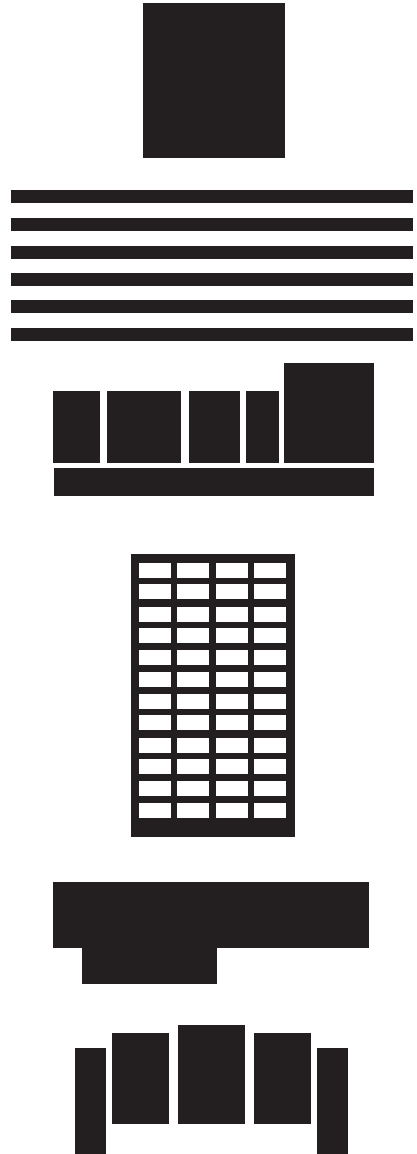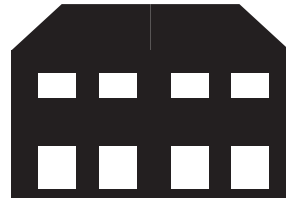# the shopping center   the home

DEMOCRACY

SOCIALISM/
COMMUNISM

FASCISM   MONARCHY

images and graphs
1. chapter page photo:
http://ny-pictures.com/nyc/photo/topic.
bigphoto/10653/Wall_Street

2.,3. http://motherjones.com/politics/2011/02/
income-inequality-in-america-chart-graph

4. ows.posters.tumblr.com

5. www.city-analysis.net/2011/11/19/what-space-to-
occupy-in-new-york-a-two-site-solution/

6. http://www.thenational.ae/news/world/africa/
qaddafi-loyalists-strike-back-at-libyan-rebels

Political typology graphic: left to right, top to bottom

7. http://harkin.senate.gov/services/visitdc/capitol.
cfm

8. http://jaripatlokova.profitux.cz/detroit.htm

9. http://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ficheiro:American-
bank-note-building.JPG

10. http://mall-hall-of-fame.blogspot.
com/2008_05_01_archive.html

11. http://www.detroityes.com/mb/showthread.
php?6892-Room-for-Rent-Villages-of-Detroit

12. http://academics.triton.edu/faculty/fheitzman/
new%20buildings.html

13. http://unbridledoptimist.wordpress.com/
category/travels/

14. http://ocsuperiorconstruction.com/?p=59

15. Alena Bower

16. http://www.sodahead.com/living/what-is-your-
dream-home-look-like/question-707977/?link=i
baf&q=typical+American+home&imgurl=http://
images.sodahead.com/polls/000707977/polls_
img_3988_4642_812799_answer_4_xlarge.jpeg

17. http://www.flickr.com/photos/22214753@
N07/4815814138/

18. http://daninvietnam.blogspot.com/

19. http://www.artline.ro/The-Romanian-Savings-
Bank-Palace-----C-E-C--Palace-24140-2-n.html

20. http://www.flickr.com/photos/
phototouring/3234310931/

21. http://downtown-creator.net/2009/02/10/the-
rise-and-fall-of-the-unite-dhabitation-5/

22. http://blog.travelpod.com/travel-photo/
iwanllyrevans/1/1237319400/former-government-
building.jpg/tpod.html

23. http://calebmaupin.blogspot.com/2010_07_01_
archive.html

24. http://libcom.org/news/laid-bank-workers-
protest-beijing-21042010

25. http://www.skyscrapercity.com/showthread.
php?t=604778&page=17

26. Alena Bower

27. http://en.mobile.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reich_
Chancellery

28. http://himetop.wikidot.com/ospedale-civile

29. http://decoarchitecture.tumblr.com/
post/3028943123/banca-del-lavoro-e-u-r-rome-italy-
photo-by

30. http://thetempestmayhowlblogspotcom/2011/12/
karstadt-hermannplatz-192919511976.html

31. http://roma.andreapollett.com/S3/roma-ft51.
htm

32. http://rooseveltislander.blogspot.com/2010/03/
mainstreaming-to-main-street-story-of.html

33. http://www.flickr.com/photos/
deutschebank/3417509249/

34. http://www.flickr.com/photos/g6/6387774995/

35. http://romethesecondtime.blogspot.
com/2011/10/enter-monumentally-fascist-era-doors.
html

36. Alena Bower
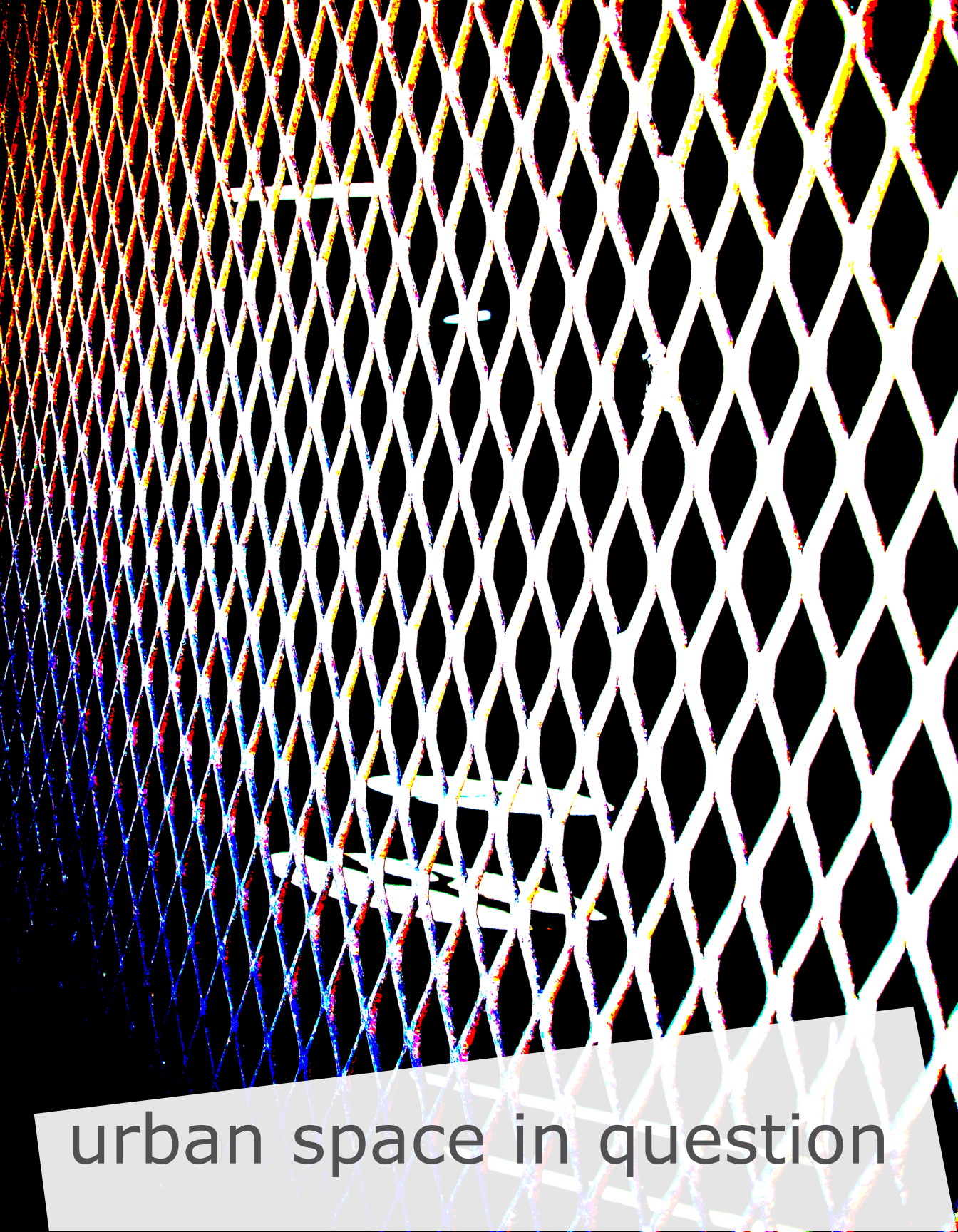37. http://www.britainunlimited.com/Biogs/Wren.
htm

38. http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/finance/
jeremywarner/100011868/if-the-band-of-england-
is-going-to-do-more-qe-it-should-get-ultra-
adventurous/

39. http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-
london-14555871

40. http://www.mariabuszek.com/kcai/Design%20
History/Exam1_gallery1.htm

41. http://www.pol.illinois.edu/undergraduate/
internships.htm

42. http://www.azkhan.de/MyWebalbums_
PhotosBritain.htm

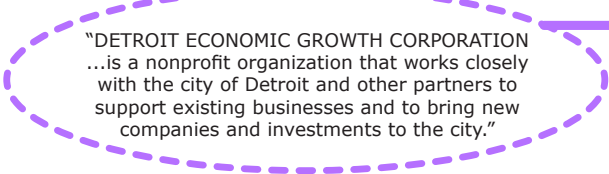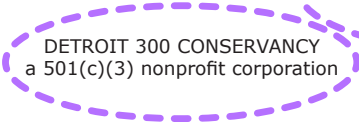43. http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/life/2011-02/15/
content_12011719.htm

44. http://www.laststyleofdefense.com/2009/10/
can-i-speak-to-mr-dior-please.html

45. http://knowledgeoflondon.com/victorianhouse.
html

urban space in question

Movements such as OWS and Arab Springs have successfully revived a complex conversation existing between citizens, their prevailing political powers, and protestors. Again, this conversation is not new, but it is successful in refining and reshaping the way we think about the urban fabric. While the issues that protestors bring to the foreground are the real topics of concern, it is perhaps equally important for us to examine and consider the means through which they are accomplishing this goal. The tactical use of public space, such as urban parks, plazas, and streets, for political engagement is undoubtedly one of the clearest examples of a public forum in today's society. Serving the public similar to the how the Greek agora served the citizens of ancient city-states, our urban public spaces provide a platform from which citizens can communicate ideas and beliefs. As witnessed during OWS protests, this platform often falls under public scrutiny. Particularly in Detroit, where developers and real estate speculators have access to an abundance of inexpensive land and foreclosed properties, conversations of ownership, development, and consequently the terms "public" and "private" are intricately connected to the situation of the city as a whole. Detroit, a city who's infrastructural capacity far exceeds it's own population, has and still is falling victim to monetary problems associated with its own maintenance. As a city's population fluctuates with sprawl and decentralization, its built environment, for the most part, remains in tact. This overabundance of foreclosed, abandoned or vacant land leaves opportunities for private investors like
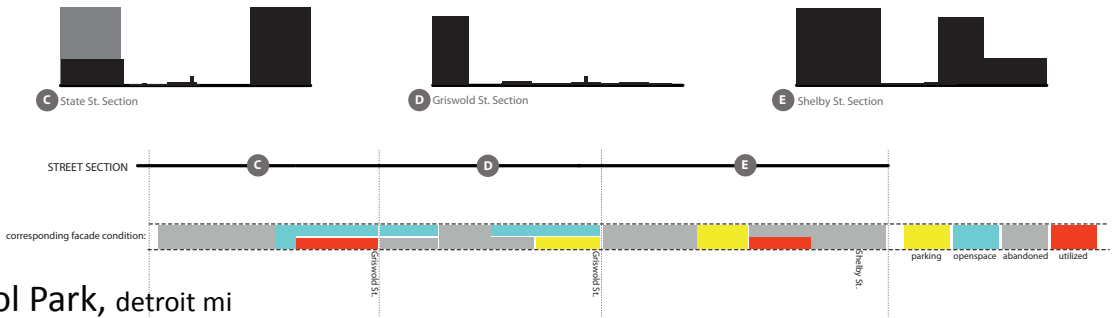
I-75

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

p29_urban space in question

12.

10.

9.

11.

1.Grand Circus Park-connects Theater District with Financial District, includes People Mover Station

2.Capitol Park-Detroit historical site, recently renovated by DEGC and Michigan Historical Commission

3.Compuware's Lafayette Greens Community Garden-newly established urban garden

4.Campus Martius Park-2.5 acres, public and private partnership

5.Hart Plaza-14 acres, multi-use facility

6.GM Renaissance Center and GM Plaza-GM donated first .5mile of the Riverwalk

7.Detroit River Walk-5.5 miles of Detroit riverfront, donors include GM and Kresge Foundation

8.The Dequindre Cut-1.35 mile greenway of public, private and nonprofit partnerships

9.William G. Milliken State Park and Harbor

10.Chene Park

11.Belle Isle

12.Gabriel Richard Park

THE KRESGE FOUNDATION

GENERAL MOTORS

COMPUWARE

DETROIT DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION

MICHIGAN HISTORICAL COMMISSION
the public arm of state history programs

THE DETROIT RIVERFRONT CONSERVANCY
a 501(c)(3)

DETROIT 300 CONSERVANCY
a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation

"DETROIT ECONOMIC GROWTH CORPORATION
...is a nonprofit organization that works closely
with the city of Detroit and other partners to
support existing businesses and to bring new
companies and investments to the city."

OPEN URBAN SPACE: open to public but
can be privately owned (by an individual or a
corporation)

Privately owned space within
Detroit is often nestled adjacent
to buildings that are owned by the
same institution. ex. GM RenCen
and GM Plaza.

PUBLIC SPACE: open to all members of the
community, typically few restrictions on activities

Detroit boasts the largest
American park that is owned by
the actual city it resides within.
But park maintenance often
presents finding issues for the
municipality.

PUBLIC SPACE

Michigan's only urban state park
is located in Detroit. Michigan
Historical Commission also holds
responsibility for maintaining
historical sites within public
spaces.

OPEN URBAN SPACE

501 (c) organization:
tax-exempt, nonprofit corporation
or association
501 (c)(3):
religious, educational, charitable,
scientific, literary, testing for
Public Safety

A partnership is often used in
Detroit to dispurse development
budgets and to take pressure off
of municipal funding.

privately owned

city owned

state owned

nonprofit

combined

initial sketch problem:

C State St. Section   D Griswold St. Section   E Shelby St. Section

STREET SECTION

corresponding facade condition:

parking   openspace   abandoned   utilized

1 Capitol Park, detroit mi

A

B

parking   openspace   abandoned   utilized

2 Lafayette Urban Gardens, detroit mi

A

B

parking   open space   abandoned   utilized

3 Campus Martius, detroit mi

Michael Kelly, Manuel "Matty" Moroun, and Dan Gilbert to acquire properties at low cost. This development trend is not purely a negative or a positive relationship, but it can have unintended social consequences in terms of the privatization of urban space.

To further examine these trends, a study was conducted of public spaces within the city of Detroit. This study included spaces that exemplify an array of public, private, and combined ownerships. The spaces examined included Grand Circus Park, Capitol Park, Compuware's Lafayette Greens Community Garden, Campus Martius, Hart Plaza, GM Renaissance Center and GM Plaza, Detroit River Walk, Dequindre Cut, William G. Miliken State Park and Harbor, Chene Park, Belle Isle, and Gabriel Richard Park. Through this study it was determined that much of the spaces we perceive to be truly public spaces, are actually owned and operated by a combination of public, private, and non-profit entities. This realization could be regarded as an indicator that urban areas are slowly relying more and more upon alternative sources of monetary support to maintain and develop our open "public" ¬¬spaces. This being said, we could further deduce that this means that citizens using these spaces are ultimately at the mercy of the entities controlling and regulating the space.
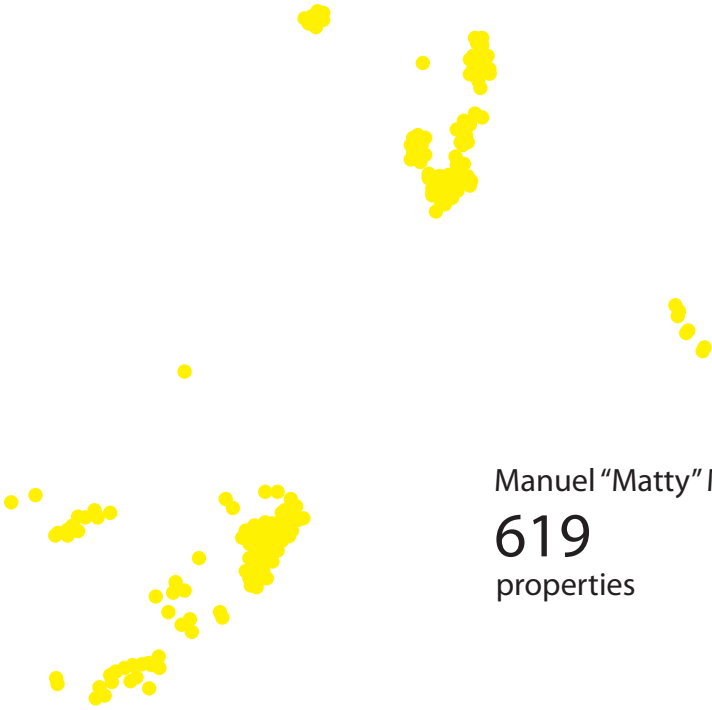
Manuel "Matty" Moroun

619

properties
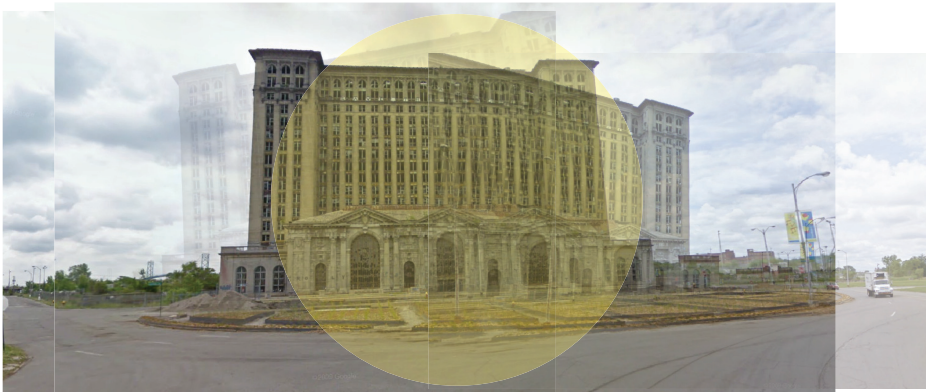
*Central Union Station

NW Detroit Development Corp.

836
properties

*property at Blackstone St.
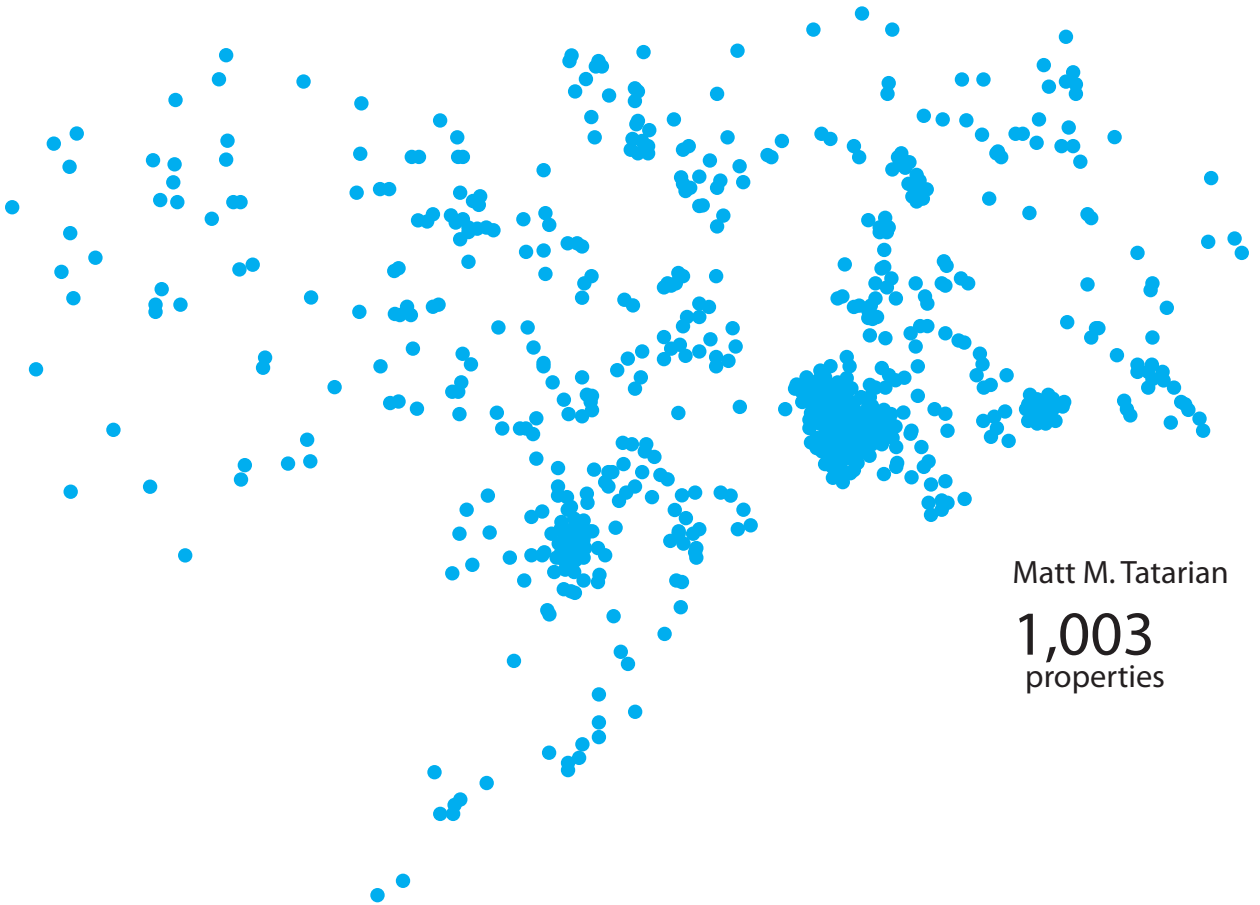
Matt M. Tatarian

1,003
properties

*property at 1986 E. Willis

Melvin Washington

1,055
properties

*property near in the 1200 block of Lakewood
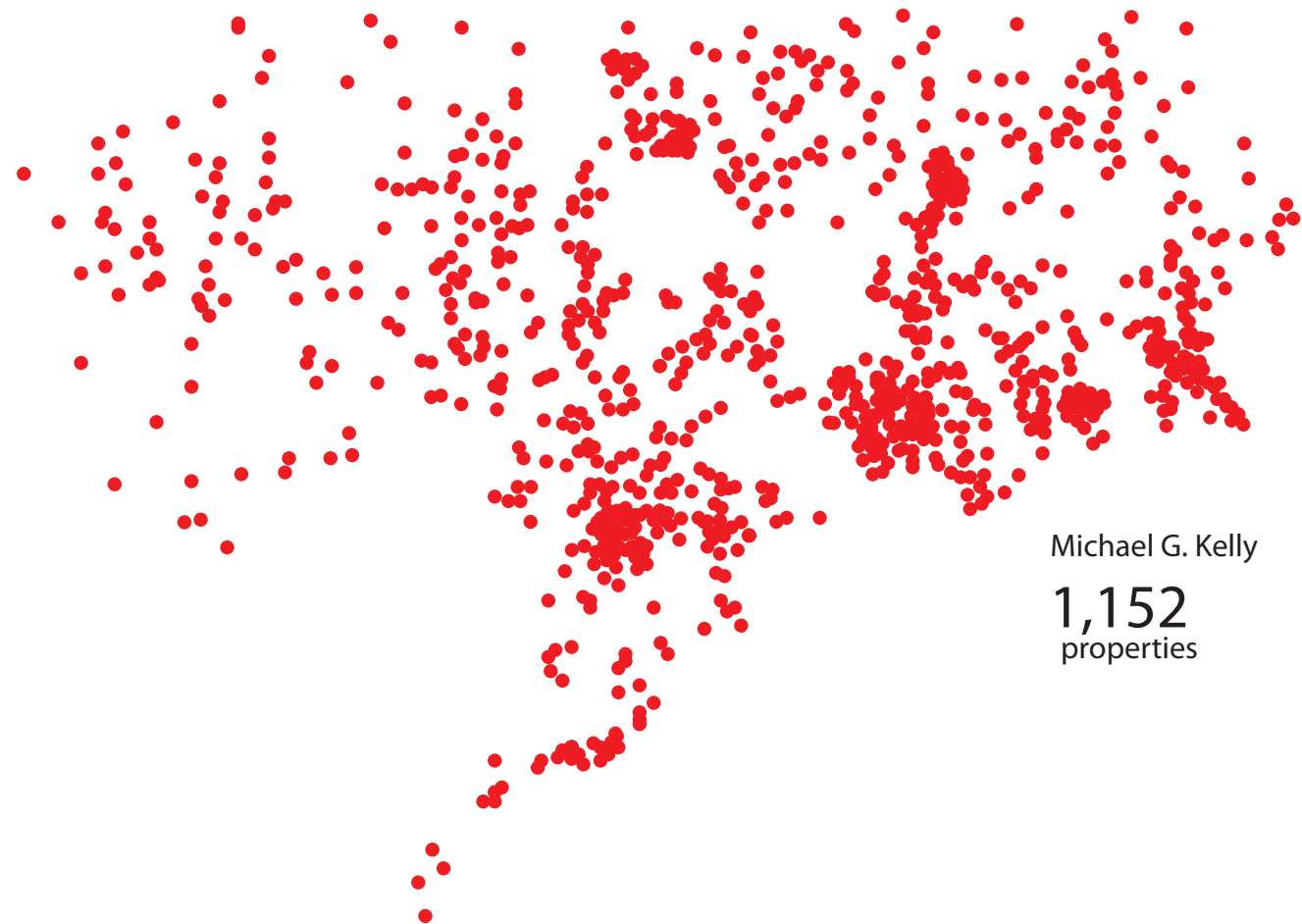
Michael G. Kelly

1,152
properties

*property near the Coleman A. Young Municipal Airport
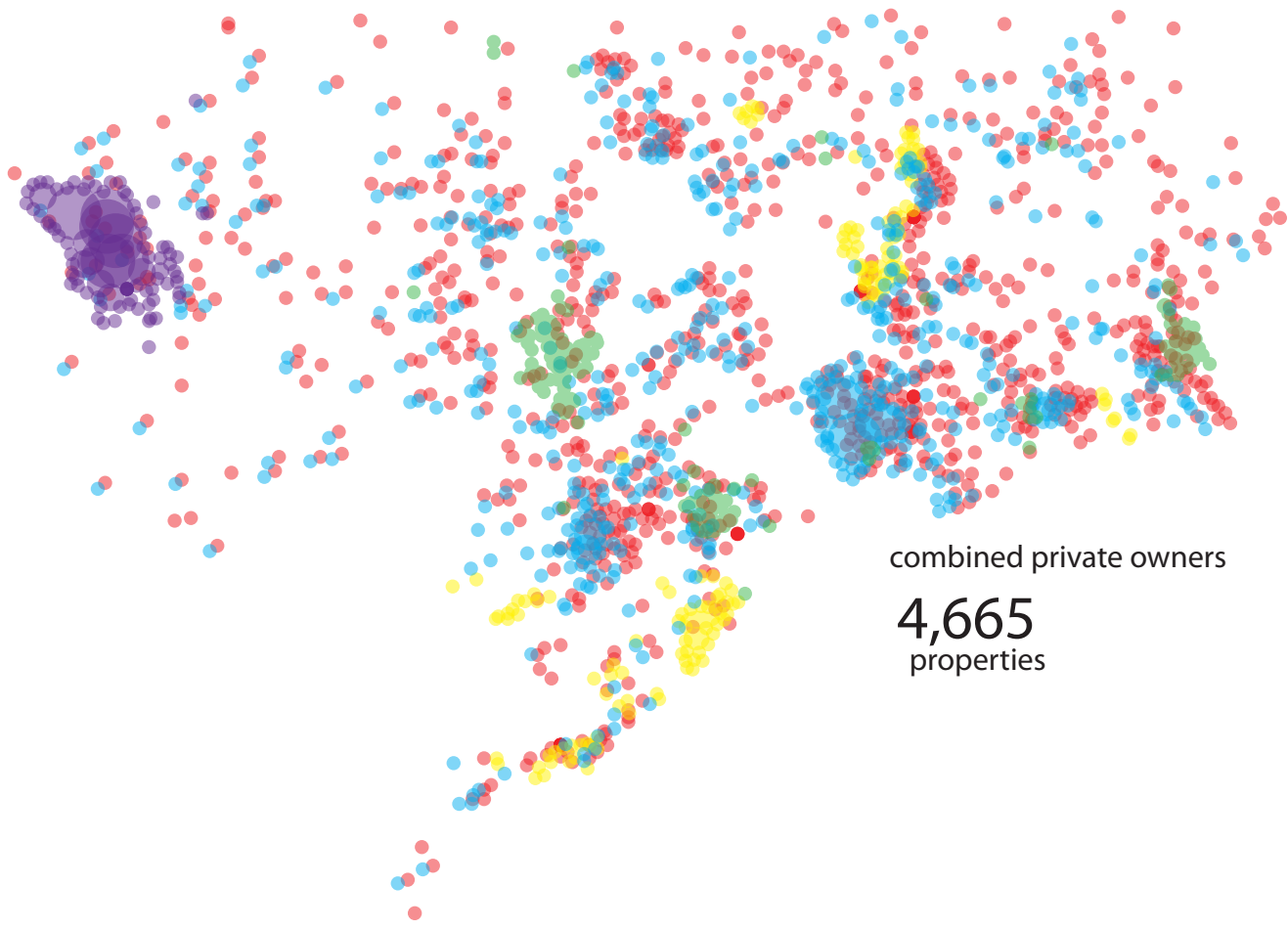
combined private owners

4,665
properties

KEY OWNERS:

- State of Michigan
- City of Detroit
- Wayne County
- Religious Institutions
- Detroit/Wayne Stadium Authority
- Olympia Entertainment
- Olympia Development
- Detroit Edison
- Downtown Development Authority
- Zorro Development LLC
- Kern Crowley Land Venture LLC
- Kwai LLC
- Greektown Casino LLC
- Blue Cross Blue Shield
- Riverfront Holdings INC
- Riverfront Associates
- Civic Center DEPT
- MGM Grand Detroit LLC
- CSX Transportation

images and graphs:

1. Alena Bower

2.http://www.examiner.com/article/lafayette-greens-urban-garden-is-blooming-downtown-detroit

3. http://www.google.com/imgres?q=campus+martius+park

references:

data form mappings:
http://www.detroitnews.com/article/20110203/SPECIAL01/110202002

Detroit ownership map:
livinginthemap.us/spaces

http://www.detroitnews.com/article/20110205/METRO/102050350/Bing-to-crack-down-on-absentee-landowners-of-blighted-properties

TOWER B

B
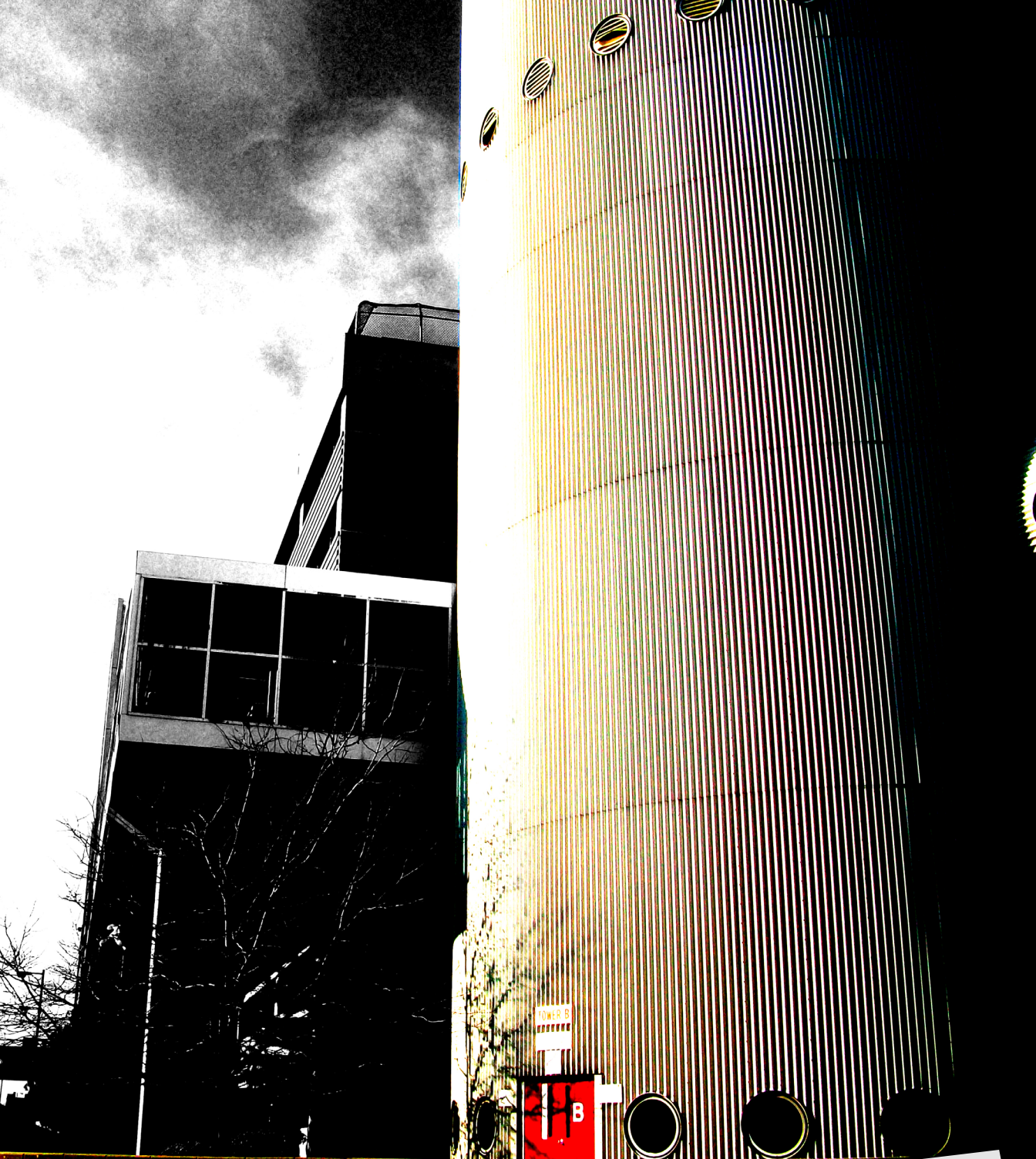
sited

Although the overall project is not tied specifically dependent upon the situational planning of one site, it is necessary however to give an example of the type of urban situations in which this programming could possibly occur. Due to the previous explorations of urban public/private spaces within the city of Detroit, the selection of site possibilities were also drawn from a pool of potential urban spaces within Detroit. As part of the investigation of ownership and development trends within the city, three sites were examined at a smaller scale to get a clearer idea of how these spatial situations could possibly be used to facilitate the intended architectural intervention. Capitol Park, the island, the intersection of Griswold and Clifford St., and the area surrounding the Joe Louis Arena skywalks, the interstice, were all selected as examples to study further. From these exercises, the Joe Louis skywalk was selected as an interstitial space that would be used as an example of where this project could potentially take place.

Interstice:
a) a space that intervenes between things; especially one between closely spaced things,

b) a gap or break in something generally continuous,

c) a short space of time between events.

This definition establishes a conventional understanding of interstice, and even has the potential to offer some limited connotations about how an interstice may form. But that is all. There is no description of how an interstice appears,

the ISLAND ①

AREA OWNERS:

Apollo Development LLC	1.	16.	1134 Griswold LLC
Isaac Agree Synogogue	2.	17.	MAE Development LLC
Mongo, Larry J	3.	18.	United Foundation
Taxpayer/Occupant	4.	19.	Griswold Building
Griswold Garage Company LLC	5.	20.	North American Investment
Harmonie Plaza INC	6.	21.	Aubrey, Louis & Josephine
Taxpayer/Occupant	7.	22.	Aubrey Joint Trust
150 Michigan Avenue LLC	8.	23.	AMD Development LLC
Griswold Development Group INC	9.	24.	Clark, Mark
Hagopian, Paul	10.	25.	Rim, Choon Soo & So Young
McDonald's Corp.	11.	26.	Uncle Bills Manufacturing
Cadillac Assoc. LTD INC	12.	27.	Ypsi-Ann Realty Co.
Woodward Building Plaza INC	13.		
Capital PK Partnership	14.		
1133 Griswold LLC	15.		

CAPITOL PARK

the INTERSECTION ②

AREA OWNERS :

City of Detroit	1.
Downtown Development Authority	2.
Morton L Scholnick & Assoc. CO	3.
Isaac Agree Synogogue	4.
Ypsi-Ann Realty Co.	5.
Woodward Clifford Bldg.	6.
Woodward Plaza INC	7.
Schwartz & Ross	8.
Schwartz Ross INC	9.
Becker Whitney LLC	10.
Himmelhock Apt.	11.
DMARC 1998-CI Communities L	12.
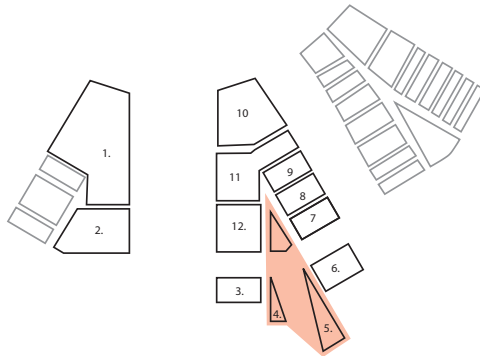
GRISWOLD/CLIFFORD

the INTERSTICE ③
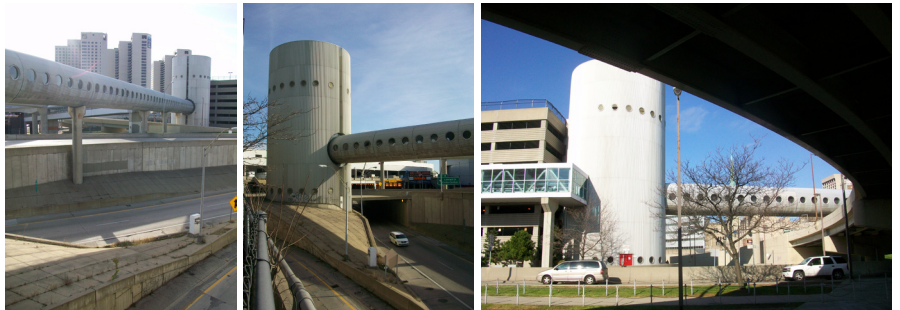
AREA OWNERS:

Civic Center Dept.	1.
City of Detroit	2.
Municipal Parking	3.
Riverfront Associates	4.
Riverfront Associates	5.
Riverfront Associates	6.
Civic Center S-6	7.
Civic Center S-6	8.
Civic Center S-6	9.
Civic Center S-6	10.
Civic Center S-6	11.

GERBIL TUBES @ COBO

and no real experiential account of how we may encounter interstices in everyday life. By using phenomenological reflection to explore the essence of interstice, we can supplement this conventional definition by describing how interstices appear to us, the human subject. Only in the subjective understanding of space do we truly grasp what space means to the subject. Without the subjective, we are only looking at the facts of space and not its true essence. To really understand how a space may appear to us, we must conduct an analysis that allows us to see the space for what it truly is.

Interstices are most easily recognizable within the city. Transit lines, alleyways, small parcels of open space, sidewalks, and even time intervals between bus pick-ups are examples of interstices that appear to human beings daily. A subtle component of urban living, interstices compose a kind of invisible fabric from which the city is woven. By applying Samuel Mallin's

body hermeneutics, the phenomenon of interstice can be explored in terms of its relationship to the human body. How do these subtle moments in the urban fabric ask us to move through the city? Do they unknowingly force us to interact with the urban context in a manner that differs from suburban or rural interaction? Or do these small spaces of intervention go unnoticed by the unassuming urbanite?

the INTERSTICE
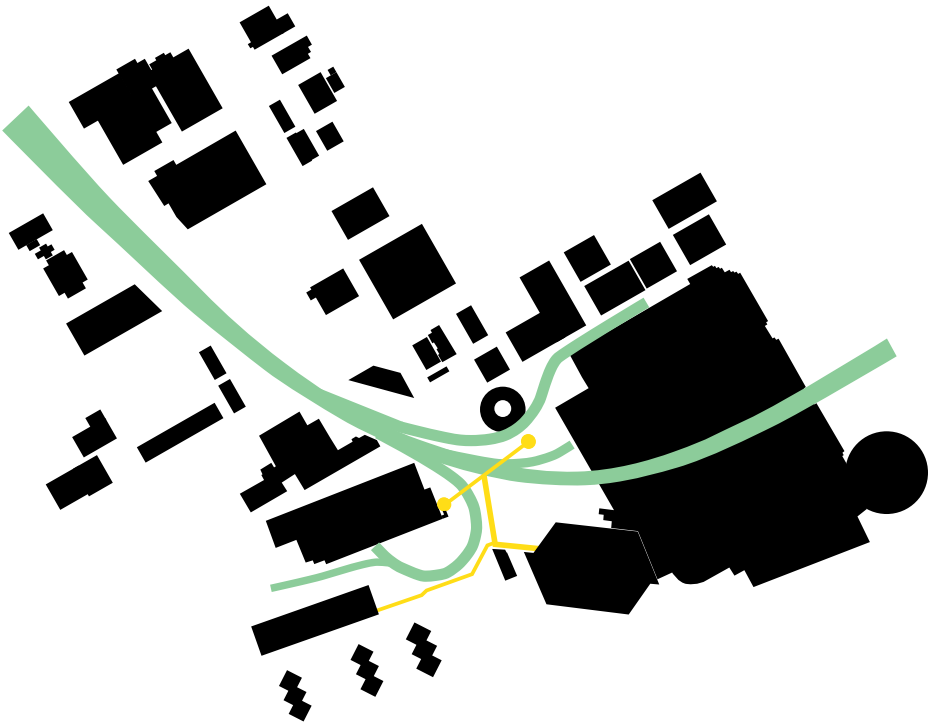
*figure-ground with the Lodge freeway

*ground parking figure-ground

p53_sited

*compiled figure-grounds

🟩	John C. Lodge Freeway
🟦	local streets
🟥	tertiary street connecting to apartments
🟧	the Detroit People Mover
🟨	pedestrian overpasses

1

* John C. Lodge

2

* W Jefferson Ave.

These diagrams were an exploration of the actual three-dimensional spaces created by the intersection of highway systems and city infrastructure. These spaces could potentially be utilized by the intended program of the project.

p57_sited

2

3
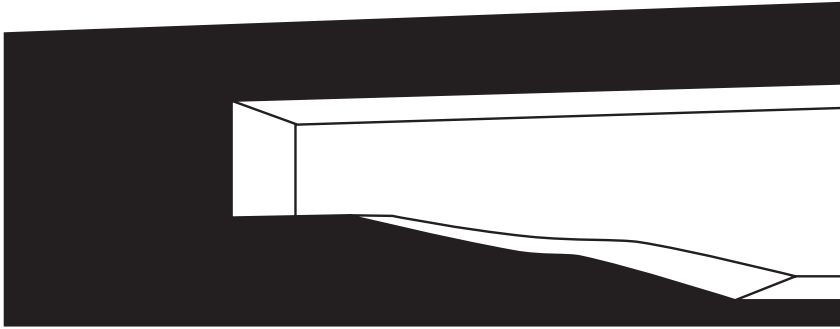
* W Jefferson Ave. and Wayne St.

4

5

6

* W Jefferson Ave.
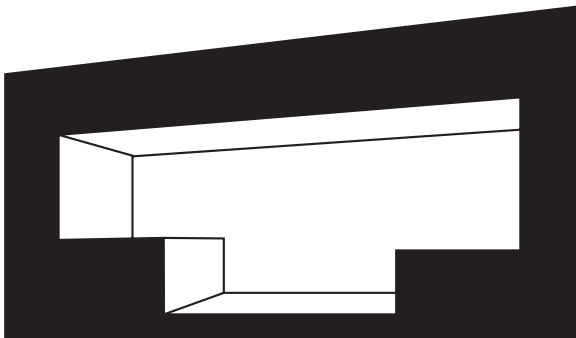
The experience of the body in the urban context is a drastically different experience than that of the body in the suburban context, and even more so in the rural context. When comparing these contextual typologies, we find major differences in the arrangement of buildings, infrastructure, people, information, etc. We can easily see that the arrangement of urban space is more condensed than both rural and suburban spaces, which instigates different architectural issues. Take, for instance, the alleyway. The alley can sometimes be found in a suburban context but it is rarely defined as well as the urban alleyway. The same is true in rural contexts. Only in the city can we easily discern instances where gapping cracks seem to split buildings in two, as well as sprawling tendrils of open space, which fragment urban density. These interstitial spaces resulting from the consolidation of buildings, infrastructure and people play a major role in informing the body's movement through the urban environment. We begin to cut corners when walking on sidewalks and pause to mingle with friends on parcels of green space. This sub-layer of infrastructure has the potential to host a variety of activities that surpasses the typical understanding of the space. A phenomenological investigation will help us determine how these interstitial moments appear to us and how they inform a subject's involvement in the city-person/mass-individual relationship.

Whether planned or accidental, the interstice typically appears to passersby as a moment of transition. Due to this discreet quality, many interstitial spaces have varying descriptive characteristics and appearances, but most can be sorted in two distinct categories. One of these being planned interstitial space and the other being unintentional or unplanned interstitial space. The first appears as lines of transportation, bridges, and time intervals between set events. These have

distinct functions but do not necessarily impose any set programmatic features upon the subject, resulting in the appearance of a more obvious purpose to the subject engaging with it. The later being the unintentional interstitial space, can be characterized by its extreme lack of cohesion and identity. Unintentional interstitial spaces typically appear to us as leftover spaces that are not purposefully designed and not initially assigned a defined program. Although appearing as placeless or even purposeless, this category of interstitial space allows for the most flexibility and freedom in its engagement with the subject, therefore fostering a more active relationship with the subject. Whether by climbing, running, rolling or simply biking, the subject must activate the space through his or her presence and motility.

Detroit is the victim of bad planning. This is a well-known fact among city dwellers and planners alike. Years of bad zoning ordinances and poor infrastructural planning have birthed a multitude of interstitial spaces within the city Detroit. Awkward as these spaces may be, they still carve character and diversity into the post-industrial landscape. The poorly planned networking of transit lines, bus routes, railroads and green spaces give Detroit a messy complexity, but also offers a variety of interesting possibilities within its spaces. Inspiring urban artwork, graffiti and various art installations, these spaces have become a great medium for citizens to utilize in actively participating with the city and other citizens. Poor planning may have had its negative impacts upon city organization and community development, but it has been a successful instigator of unintentional interstitial space.

The intersection of Wayne Street, West Jefferson and Steve Yzerman Drive in Detroit is a planning disaster. Not only do the above streets intersect, but the

John C. Lodge Freeway and the People Mover elevated rail line add another layering of transitional spaces. Parking garages and the Joe Louis Arena border its perimeter, making this a well-trafficked site by vehicles. When encountering this collision of streets, overpasses, public transportation and structures, the pedestrian feels out of place and alienated from downtown Detroit. The Cobo skywalk may give passersby the impression of a stage set from Star Trek. There is an odd futuristic aura clinging to this site, which at the same is reminiscent of archaic communist monuments. These impressions suggest a timeless quality, which further segregate the space from its contextual surroundings. Its aesthetic does not relate to the heavy orthogonal structures of the Joe Louis Arena, Cobo Hall and the high-rise apartment buildings bordering the riverfront. Its stark white and grey tones of the concrete and its cold metallic structures strike a harsh contrast with the soft hues of the background composed of Detroit's historic, brick buildings. The space's sterile quality begs for human intervention and engagement. Sounds from adjacent highways reinforce this spatial distortion experienced by those passing. Clearly audible but not immediately seen, the freeway generates a constant rumble that is heard throughout the sprawling spaces of the interstice. Although the freeway is not strictly part of the interstice, it is close enough to suffuse the area with its noise and penetrate the silence that represents the interstice's lack of human engagement.

Traveling into the city from the west, this interstice is a pseudo-gateway into the city of Detroit. Towering on the edge of this gateway, sits the massive skywalks that accentuate the space's vertical presence. To those traveling along the freeway, this gateway appears as a ceremonial entry point to the city, but without climactic articulation. Only visible for a few moments, this gateway disappears in a matter of seconds. This stark flash of infrastructure appears as a cold, isolated piece of imagery signaling the harsh disconnects between city districts caused by the disruptive paths sown into the urban fabric by highway infrastructure. In an attempt to reconcile these disconnects, the Cobo skywalk imposes a functional layer onto a site that is other wise functionless.

On foot, this space appears oddly calming, yet inspiring. There is an intricacy to the space that cannot be explored or even perceived from the confines of a vehicle. On the southern side of the interstice, the towering effects of the skywalk and the People Mover station emphasize the interiors of the space. Upon closer examination, the pedestrian can discern subtle differences in the materiality of the structures and the flat palate of color indicative of the sprawling concrete that creeps along building exteriors, under overpasses and beneath the subject's feet. Occasionally interrupted by greenscape, the concrete fields within the space provide a potential playground for BMX bikers, rollerbladers and even the daring graffiti artist. By providing a potential public space that's free of programmatic structure, the interstice appears as a tabula rasa for the creative urbanite.

This fragmented composition of sloping concrete and patches of grass force the subject to actively engage with the space. The body's movement through the space must react to these fragmented conditions; the subject must literally climb, walk, jump and weave through the space in order to fully explore its character. As the body engages with the space on a more active level, the textures of the materials begin to form a tactile experience. The subject's body is exposed to the abrasive concrete that provides foundation to the site. Like sandpaper, it rips at clothing and skin.
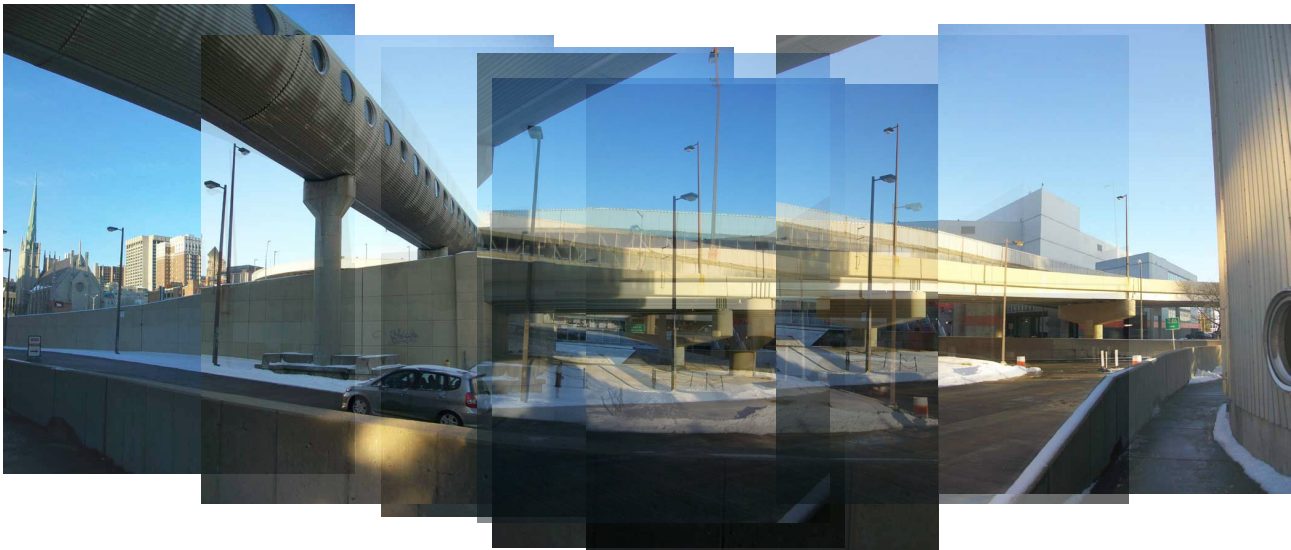
The subject's feet continuously pound into the hard surfaces of concrete and asphalt, but are then relieved by parcels of grass that interrupt the sprawling hardscape. In these sudden moments of repose, the subject's body finds relief in the soft ground and the intricate texture of grass. These fragmented moments within the interstice appear to the subject through the form of texture and are best perceived through a tactile experience.

Along with these physical, tactile experiences, this interstitial space also evokes emotional responses from the subject. Appearing as a space free of programmatic structure, it appeals to the pedestrian's sense of potentiality. An endless variety of events could occur in this space. This possibility of subject intervention inspires creativity in those taking time to explore the space. This sporadic nature is both unsettling and inspiring. City dwellers are typically more accustomed to spaces with more structure and clearer program. Take for instance, the typical American park. Characteristically, there are usually clear paths for walking, benches for sitting and fountains of water for tossing good luck pennies. In the occurrence of someone breaking these unspoken rules of conduct, he or she would likely be regarded as a punk or a nuisance. A simple act of ingenuity or creativity has the effect of making others uncomfortable. In the interstitial space, this discomfort can be attributed to a misunderstanding of how to interact or behave in such a space. However confusing this space may appear to the subject, there is undeniable beauty in the erratic nature readily perceived through the subject's emotional response to the space.

Spatially, the interstice is characterized by not only confusion but also intrigue, therefore exhibiting the potential to move the subject's body in two very distinct ways. The first type of movement is that of reluctance and hesitation. The latter type is that of intrigue and exploration. When experiencing the space through the former, the subject may attempt to move through the space in the quickest way possible or avoid the space entirely. There is bodily reluctance to really investigate the space. The subject's steps quicken and his or her eyes focus upon ground. Uncertain of which path to follow, or if a path even exists, the subject may falter in a moment of indecision. Each street appearing as a possible route to the intended destination, the subject's body is drawn to one of the five options and is speedily directed out of the interstitial space. The body's movement in the latter condition, the instance of intrigue, behaves in a very different manner. In the event that the subject engages with the interstice through an investigatory approach, the body will be drawn to the interstice in multiple ways. The body will wander and feel receptive to the openness of the space. Unrestricted by guided pathways and conventional rules of conduct, the body ultimately feels liberated. Again, the lack of imposed program and structured formality appear to the subject through this process of bodily liberation. In either situation, the body behaves in a distinct manner that is directly related to the space's lack of formal utilization.

Through Samuel Mallin's phenomenological method of body hermeneutics we have established an understanding of the interstice that surpasses any objective observations. Working through each region of bodily existence; cognition, perception, social affectivity, and motility, we have successfully let the interstice appear to us in a manner that allows the subject to understand the essentials of its appearance. Cognitively, we can name and categorize the space. Concluding that it is an unintentional interstitial space, we discerned that it is ultimately composed
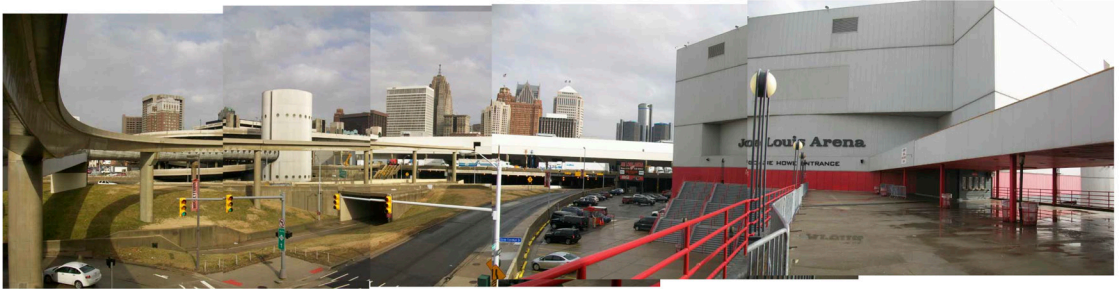
of fragmented leftover urban spaces and has no real program. There is no design intention or spatial formality. It is simply a space connecting the dominant urban elements on its exterior, such as Cobo Hall and Joe Louis Arena. In the region of perception, we established different ways in which the space appears to us. It appears as a gateway, as a blank canvas, as fragments of materials, as a transitional moment and ultimately a space free of control. To the wandering pedestrian, it is also perceived as an intriguing but unidentifiable place. This lends itself to the socio-affective region by provoking emotional responses from the subject. Some may feel confused, hesitant and bewildered due to the site's lack of formal composition. Others may react with the desire to investigate the space on a more intimate level. As urban dwellers, most subjects are traditionally accustomed to experiencing places that have a more specified program, such as a shopping mall. The typical American mall is programmed for consumerism. The body is meant to move through the mall in a manner that facilitates buying; the interstice does not have that predisposition. One is free to move without agenda or purpose. This essential aspect brings us to the region of motility.

The investigation in motility allows the space to appear to us through the physical. The subject's body language is indicative of how the space forces the subject to move. Because this movement is clearly related to the subject's emotional perspective of the site, this region of motility is directly dependent upon the region of social affectivity. These types of responses emoted from the subject are distinct to that person and are influential in building that individual's present physical engagement with the urban environment. The body's engagement with the urban environment differs from that of a body in the suburban and rural environments due to the interstice's influence upon the subject's movement. The essential characteristics of the interstice are varied but discernable. There are no programmatic or functional rules to obey; the subject's movement is not dependent upon any imposed system of control. It is an urban space where the subject's bodily interaction is completely determined by the subject's own emotional responses to the space. Due to the interstice's prevalence in the urban environment, we can conclude that the urban interstice engages the subject more intimately than any suburban or rural environment. The unintentional interstitial condition provides the subject with complete autonomy in the city.

-This portion was written as a phenomenological essay exploring the characteristics of the site.

goals of development:

inspire federal , state, foundation, and private investment
connect mixture of new and existing convention, municipal, commercial and entertainment facilities
analyze functionality of potential lightrail station
analyze functionality of potential aquarium
ensure adequate infrastructure
create identity and sense of place to spur and sustain urban vitality.

*Future development is planned for the civic center area with intentions of revitalizing this section of the downtown business district. The site selected, the interstitial space, will have the potential to utilize and take advantage of some the future investments in this area.

Detroit People Mover deployment/pick-up sites

1. Rosa Parks Transit Center

2. Grand Circus park

3. Campus Martius

4. Greektown

5. Renaissance Center

6. Financial District

7. at SITE

1.

2.

4.

3.
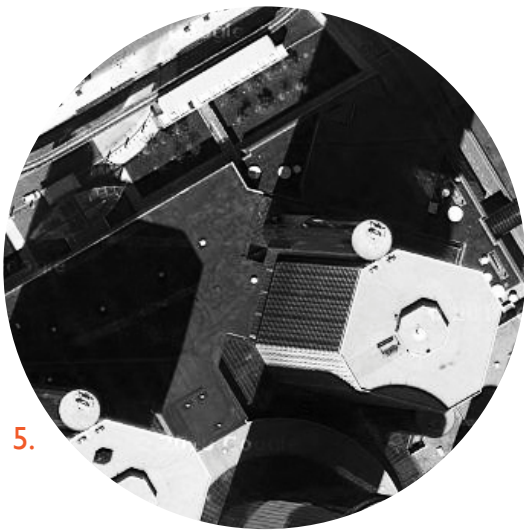
5.

6.

Views into Site from Existing Infrastructure

NE TOWER

SW TOWER

sited_p74
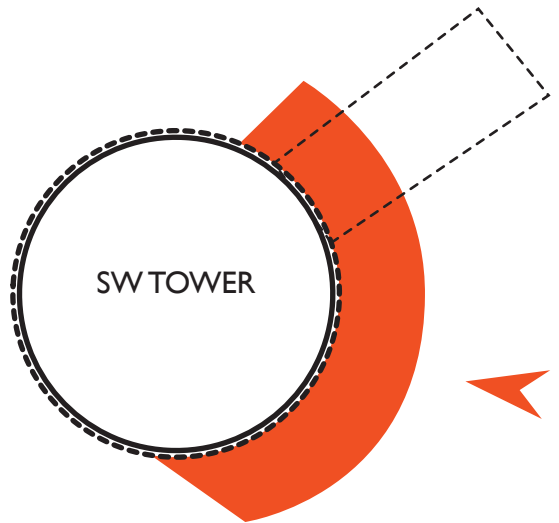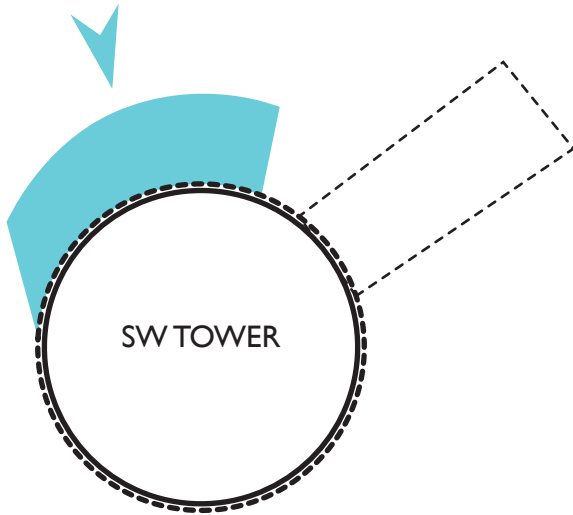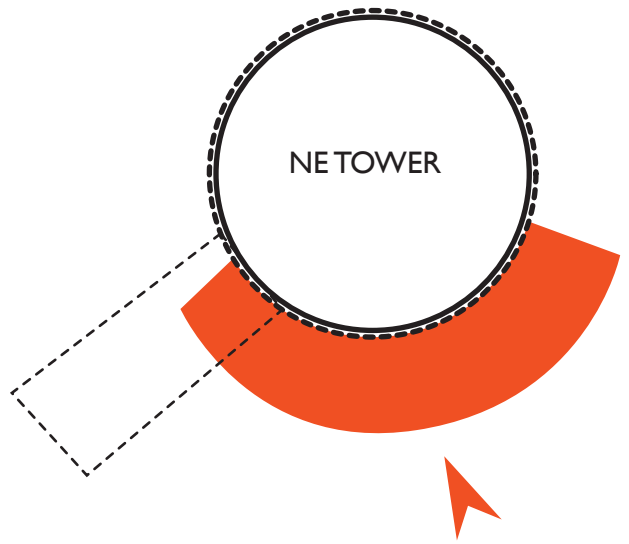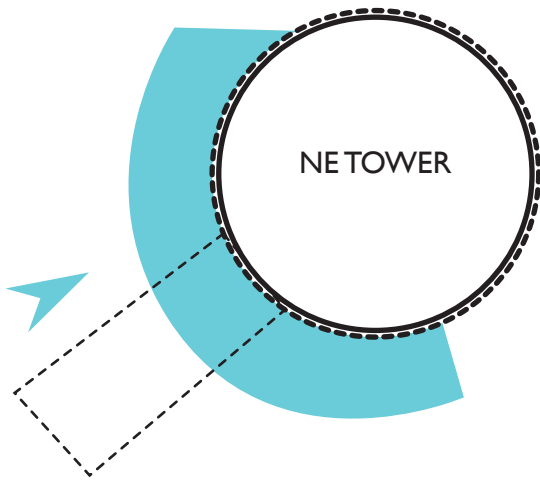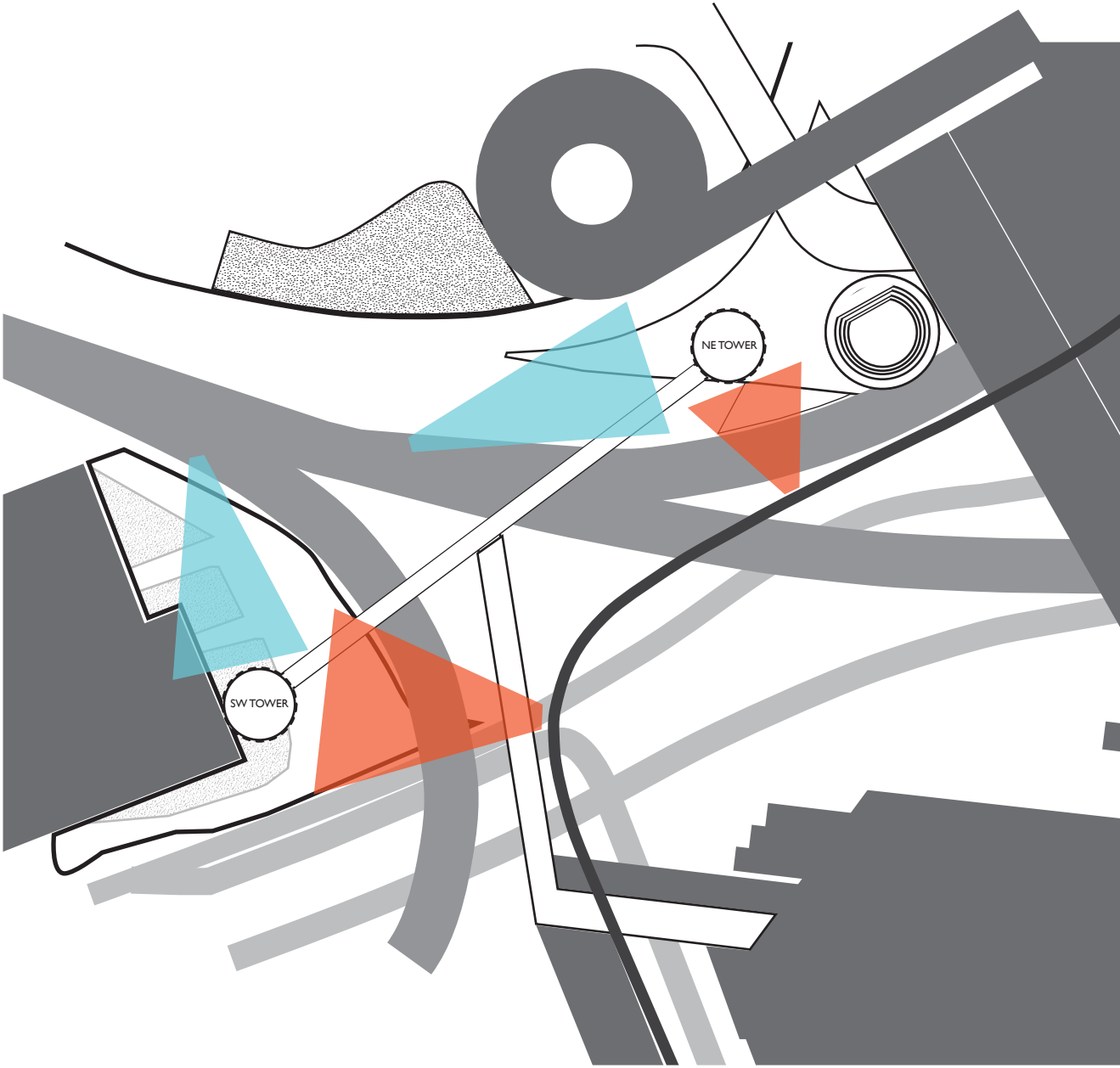
Mapping of Highly Visable Site Areas

NE TOWER

SW TOWER
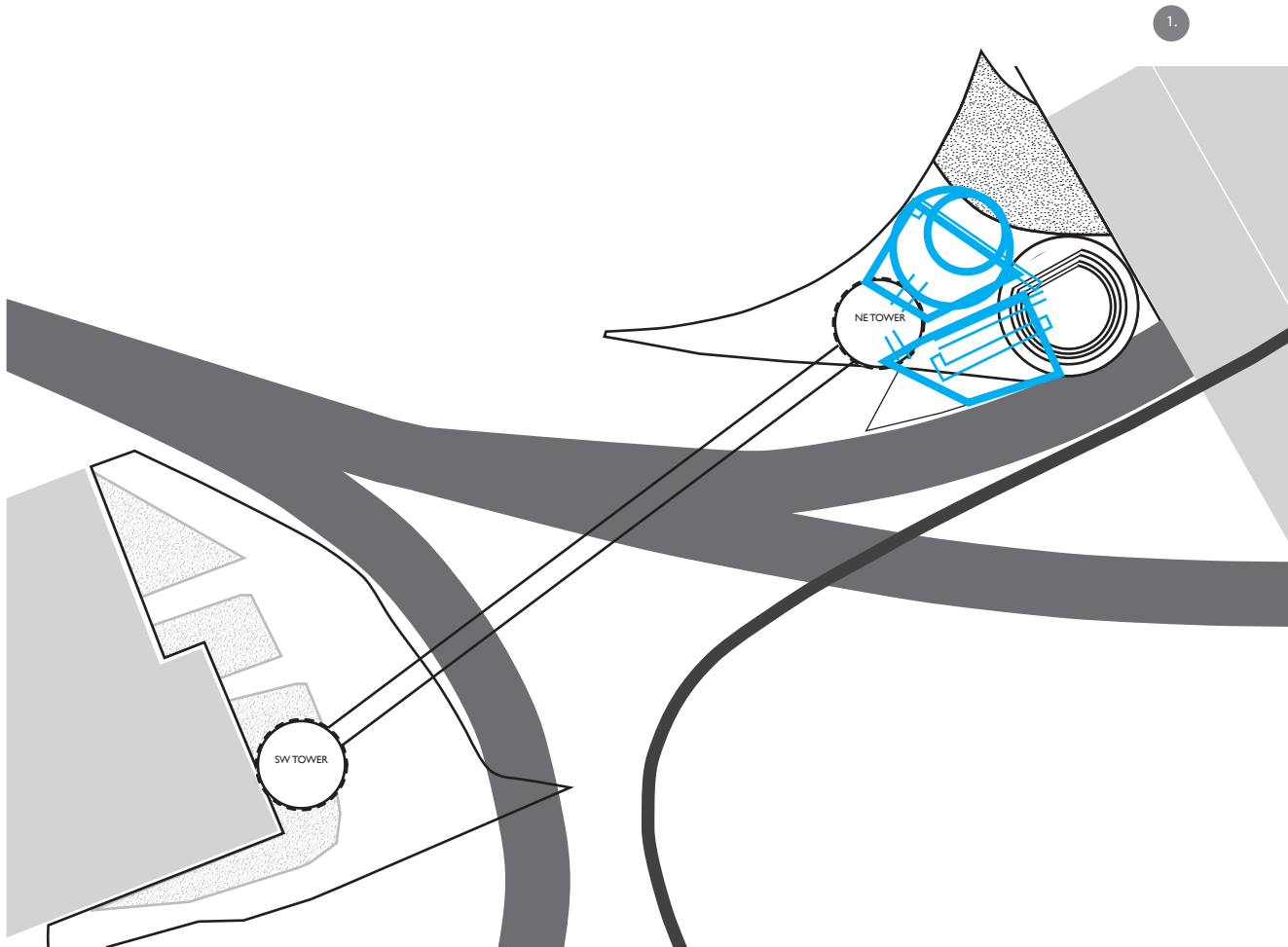
The previous diagrams were used to as a means to begin the design process. By examining areas of the site that were highly visable from the Lodge highway and the Poeple Mover, the following diagrams were constructed by depicting spatial arrangements that would allow for the development of communicative surfaces serving as a canvas for the design. The design of the actual exterior of the architectural intervention is primarily concerned with the deployment and creation of instigatory messages and information. Through these messages citizens will be prompted to take interest in the topics portrayed and will hopefully begin to generate an interest in participating in the actual creation of the these spaces. Through this process the actual site and design will become a viral component within the urban fabric and will eventually instigate the creation of other politically charged spaces that begin to form a city-wide network.

NE TOWER

SW TOWER

N

NE TOWER

SW TOWER

3.

N

NE TOWER

SW TOWER

N

NE TOWER

SW TOWER

N
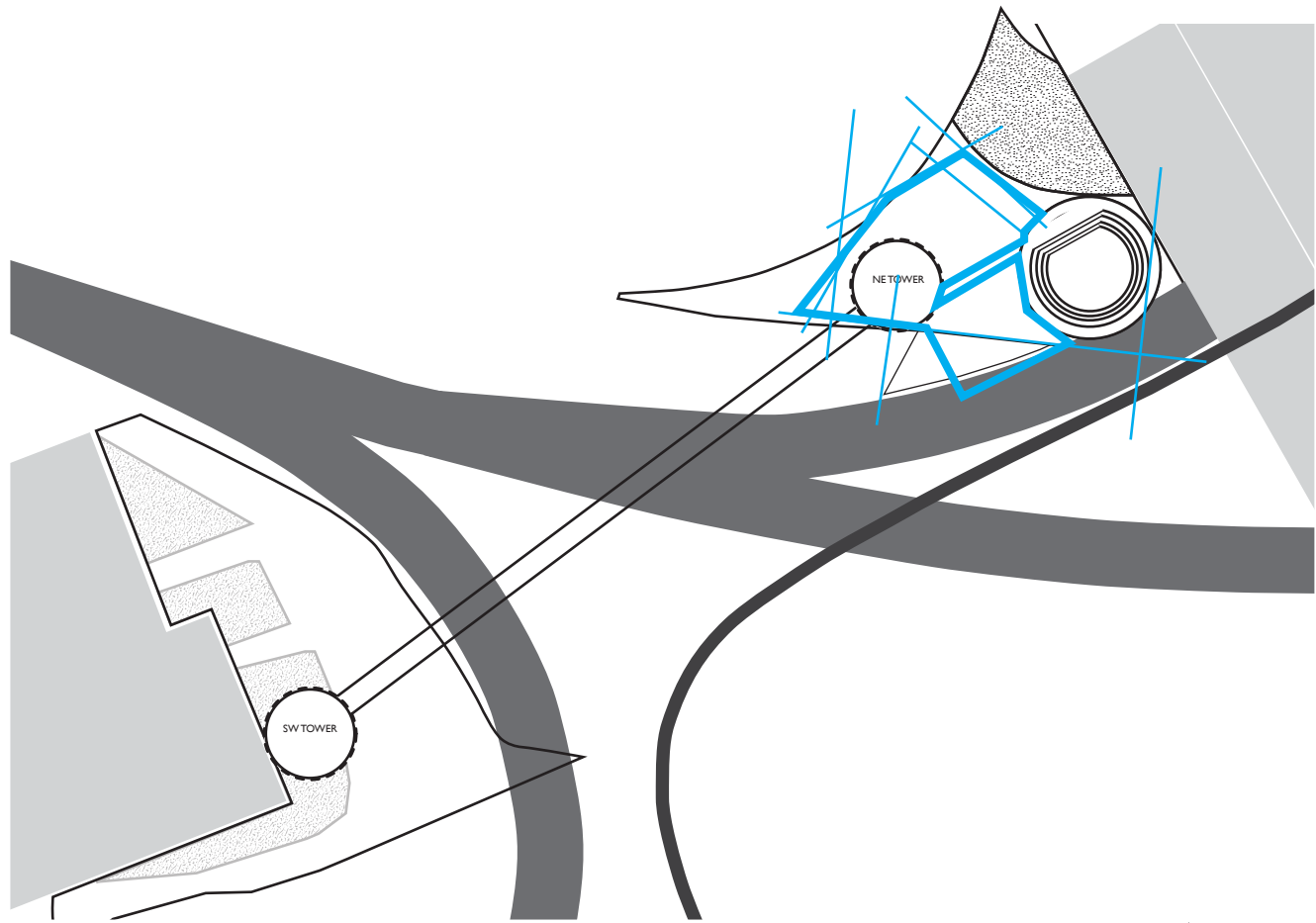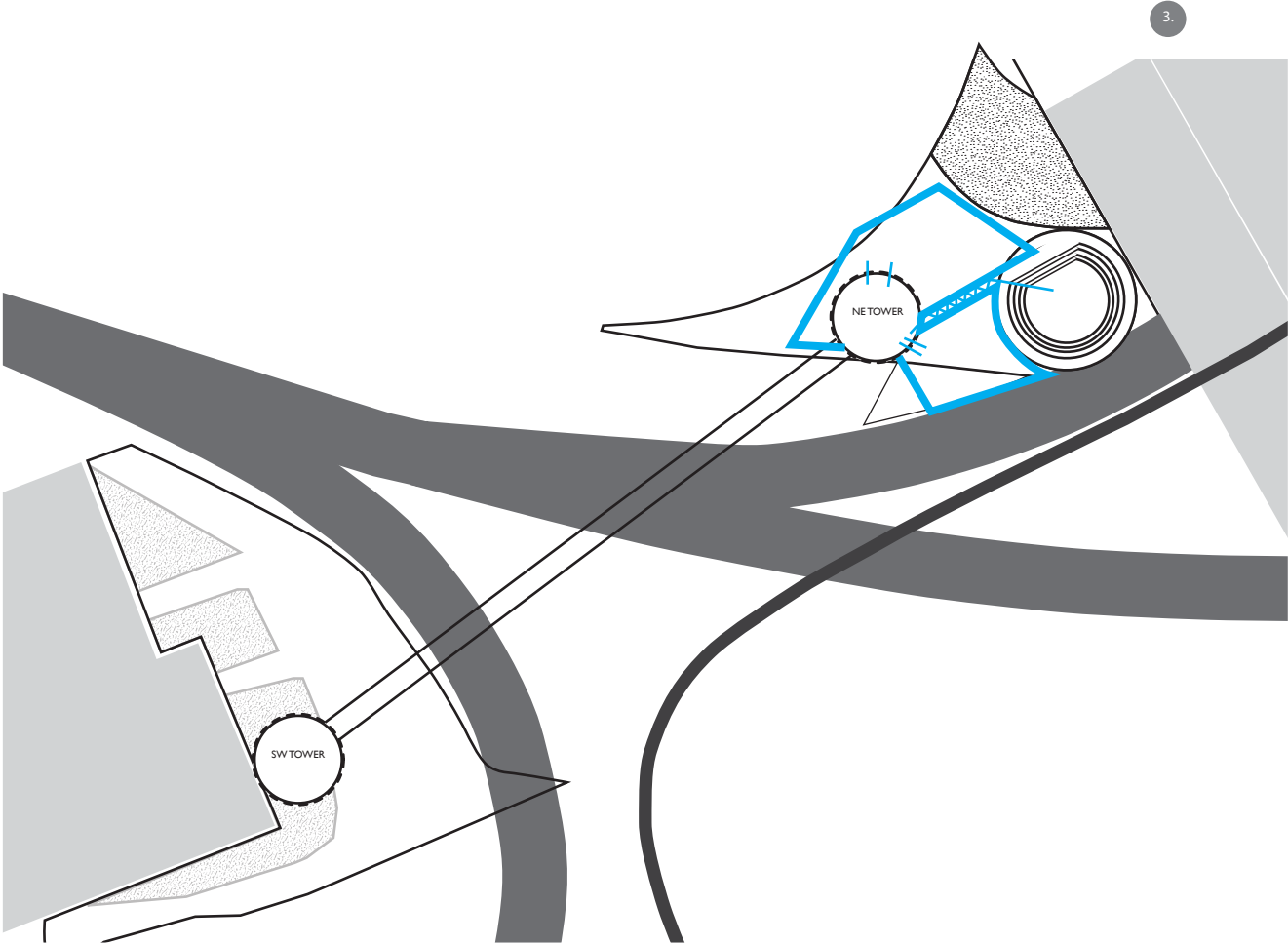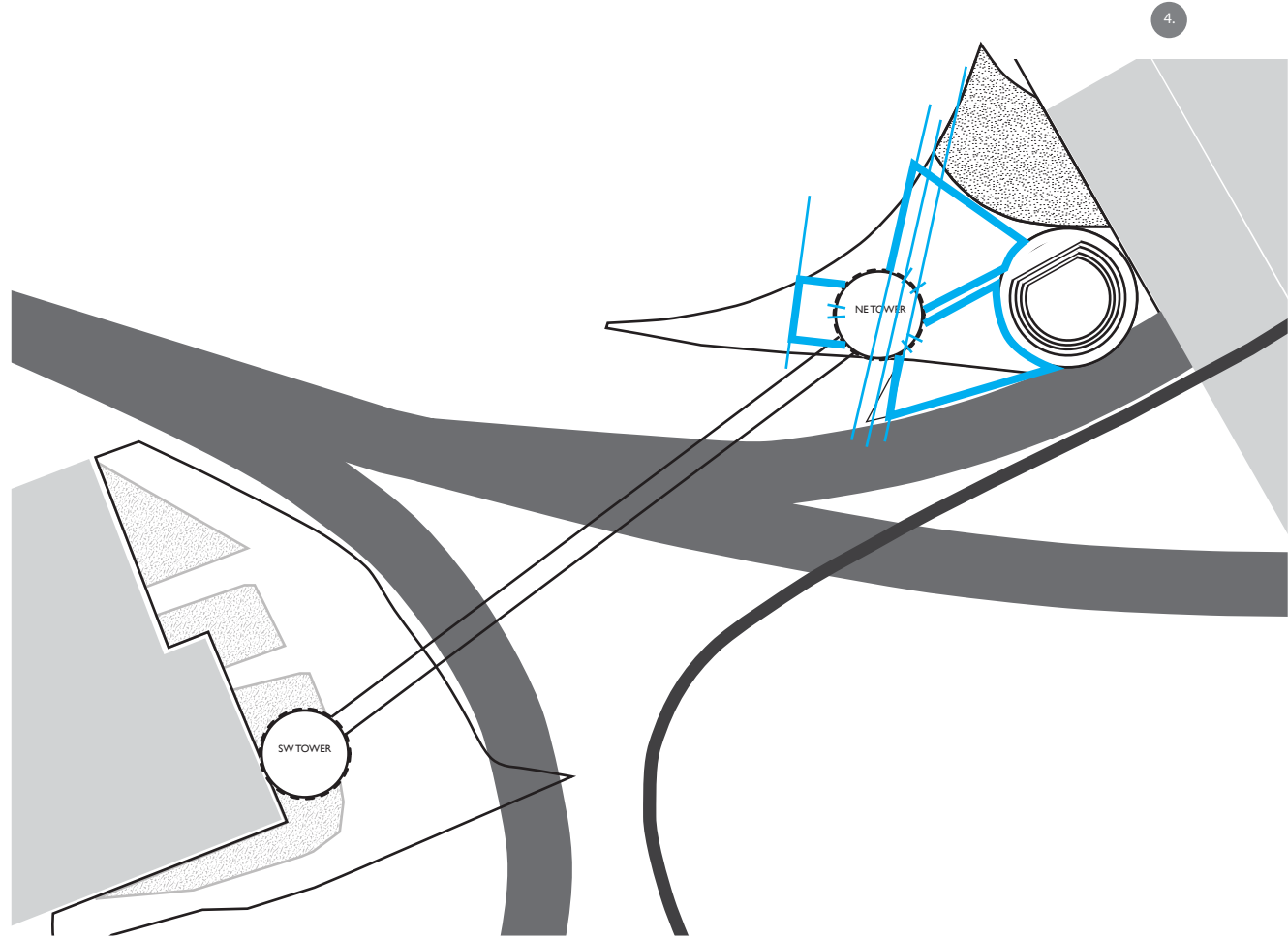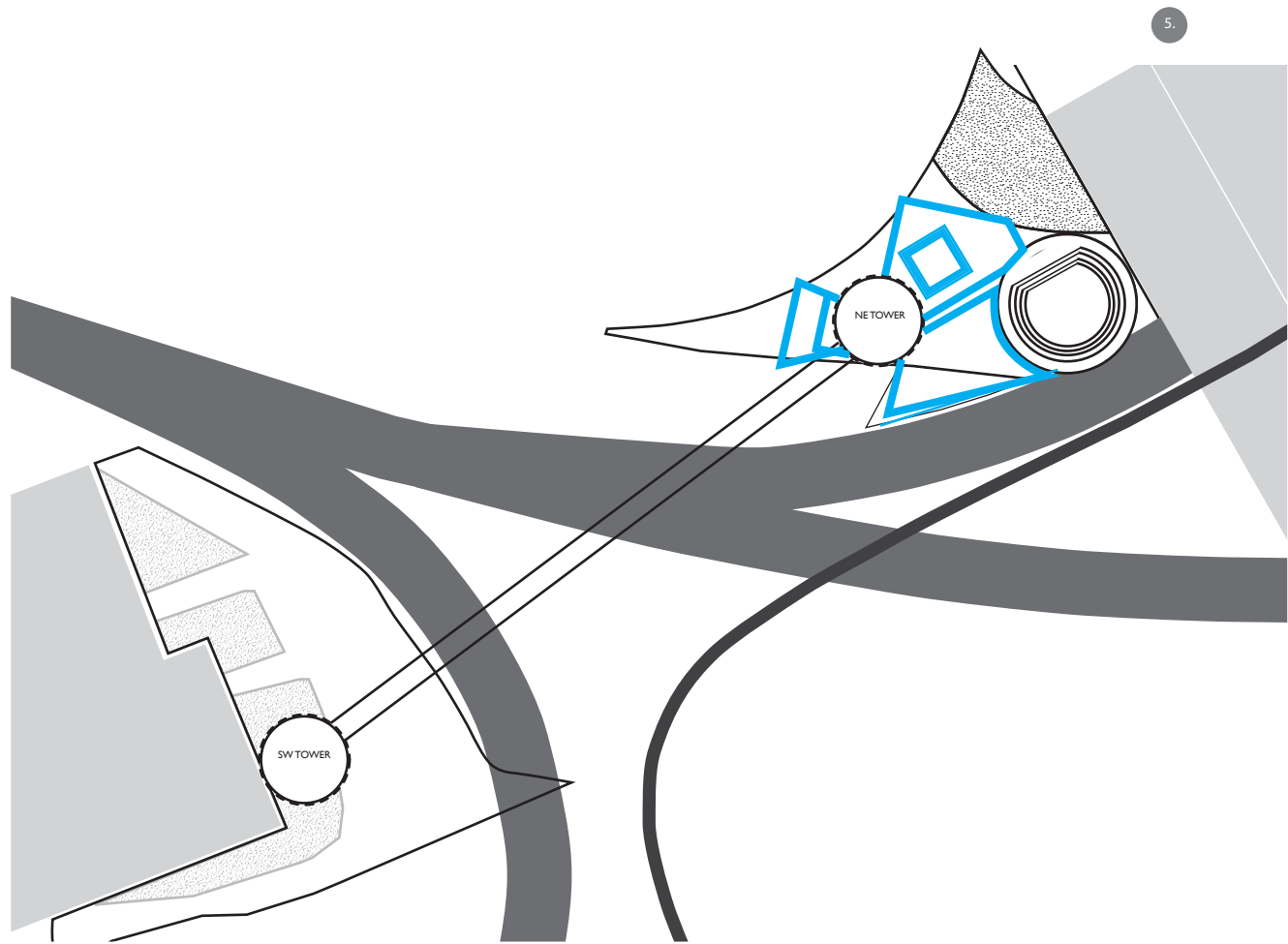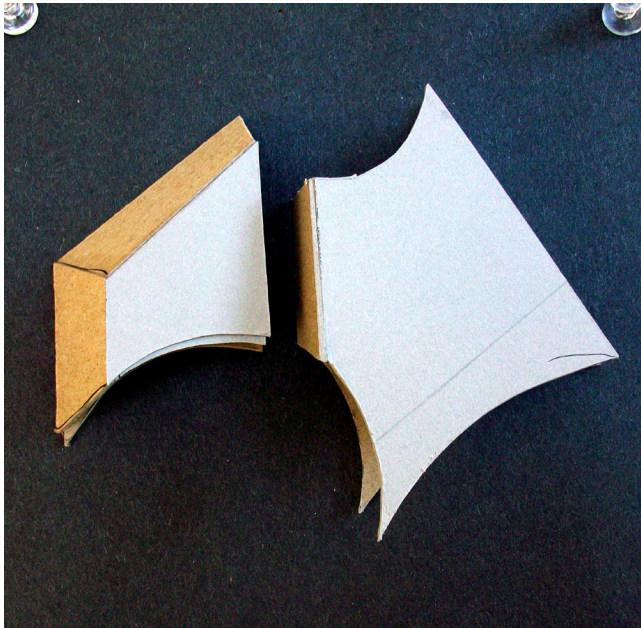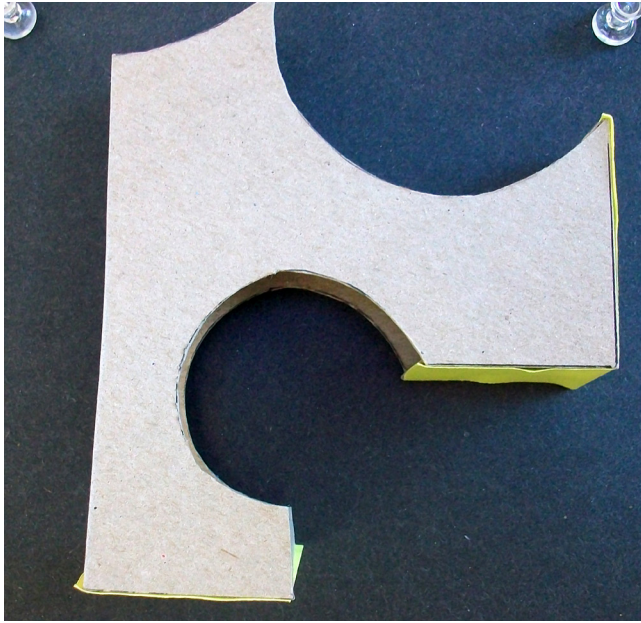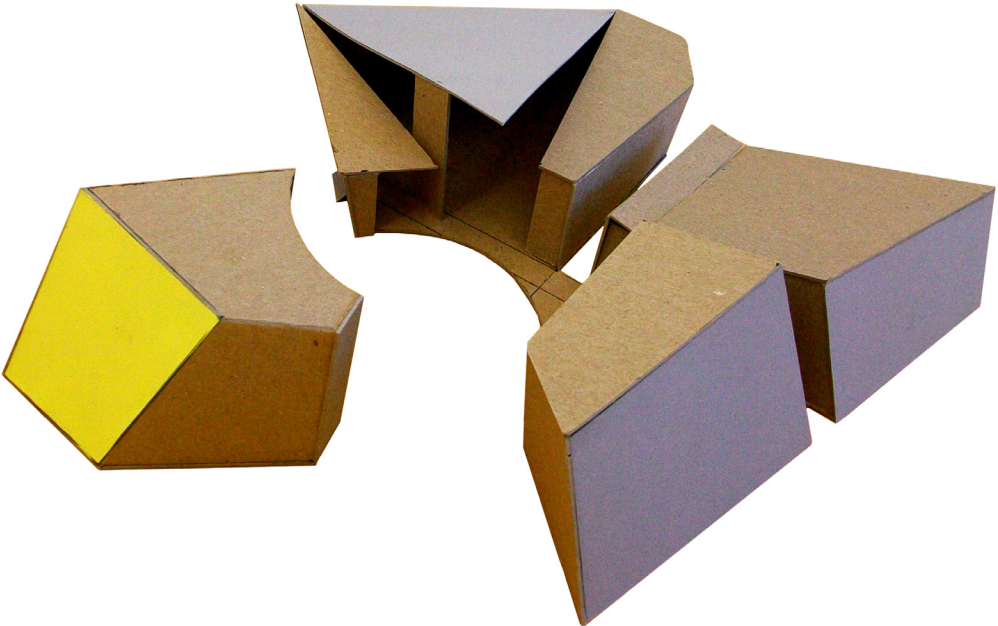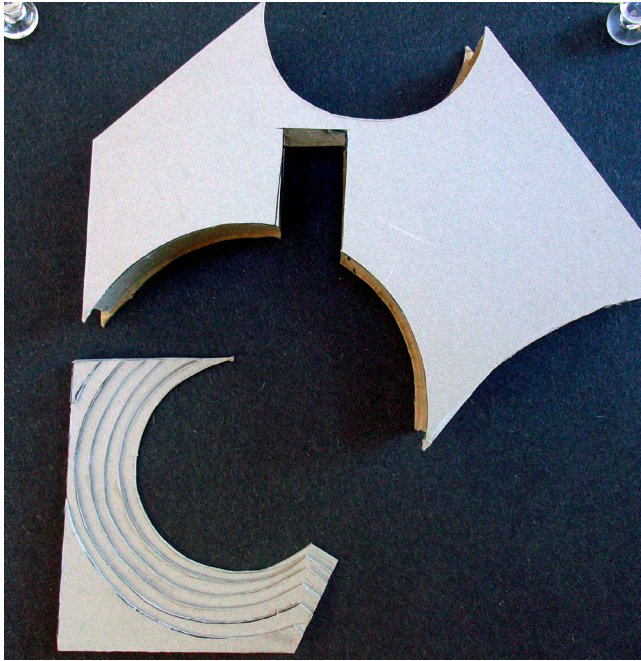
Study Models

Diagram: Instigatory Exterior (previous model)
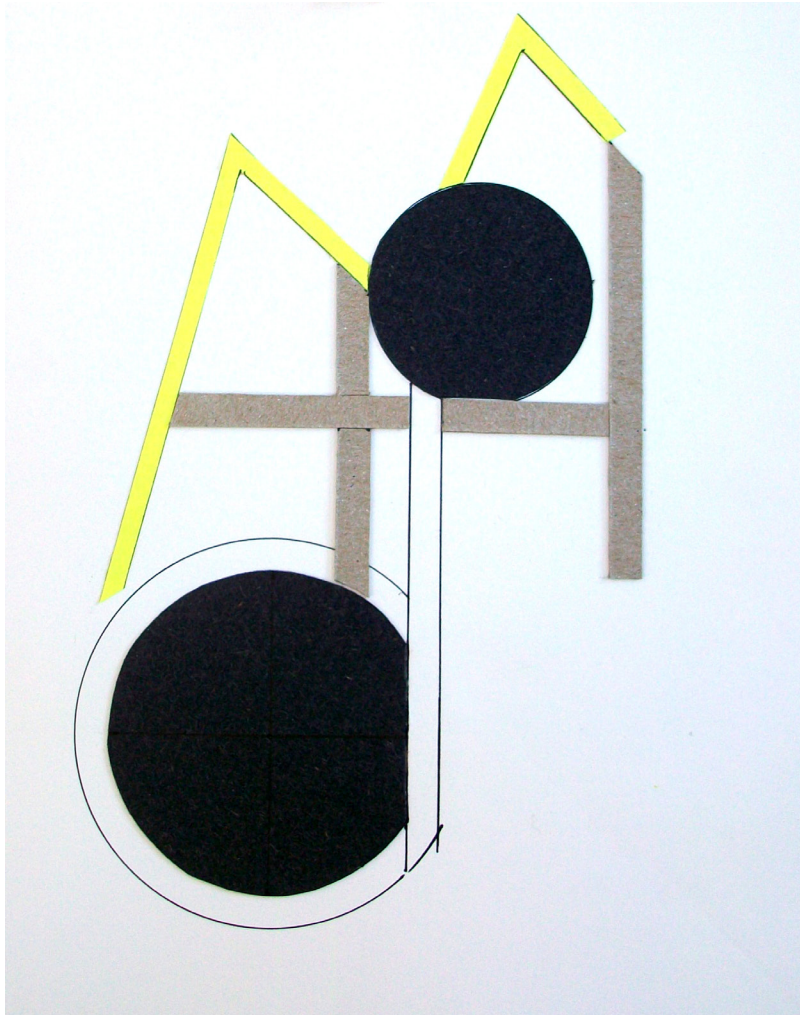
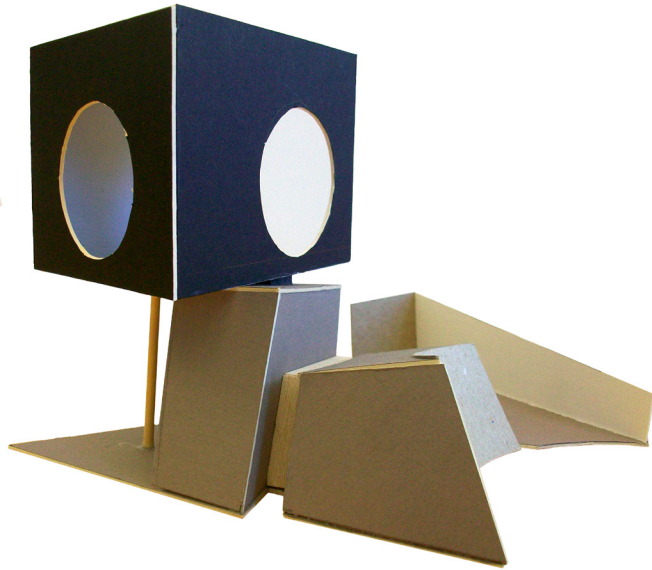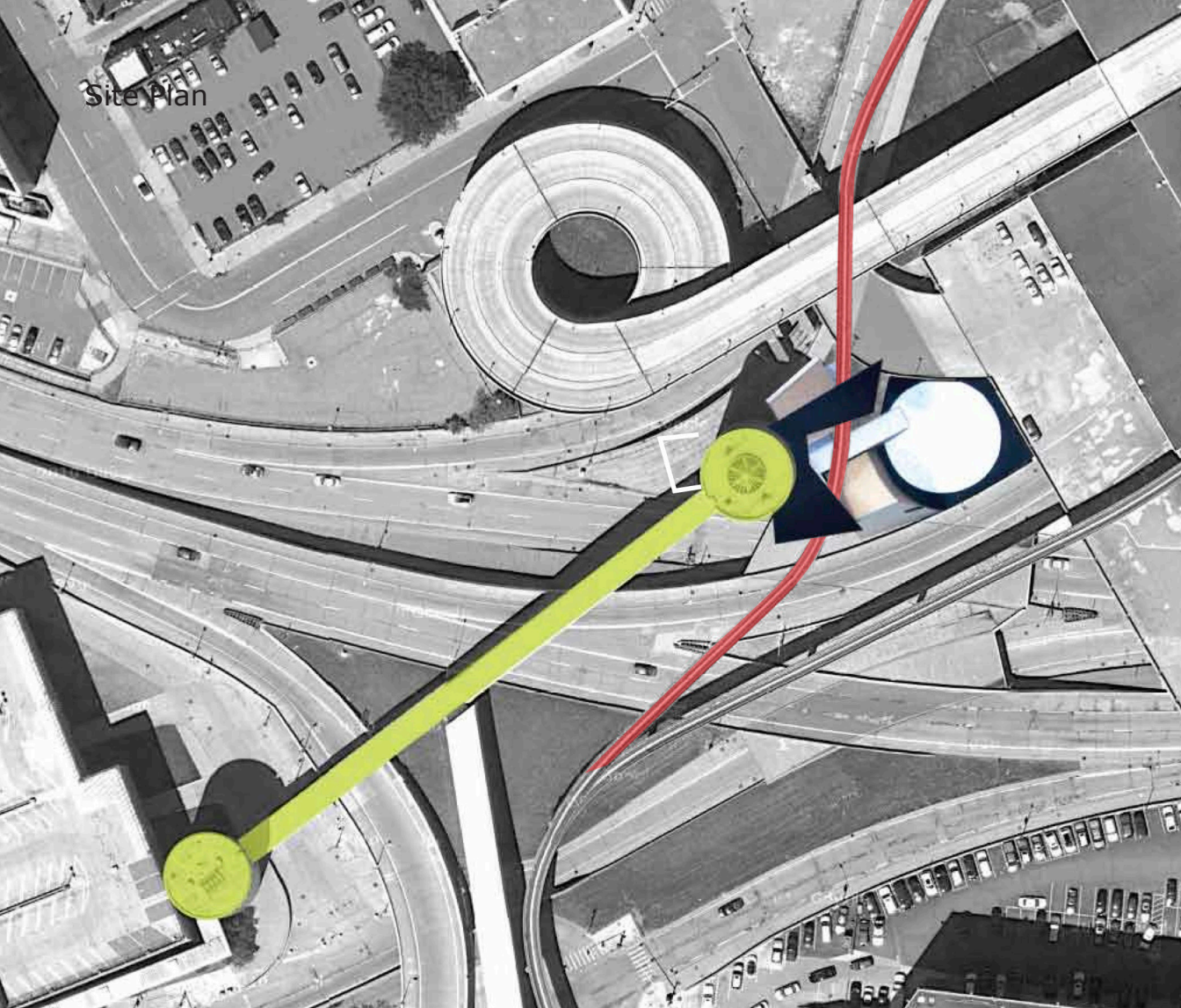Diagram: Participatory Interior (previous model)
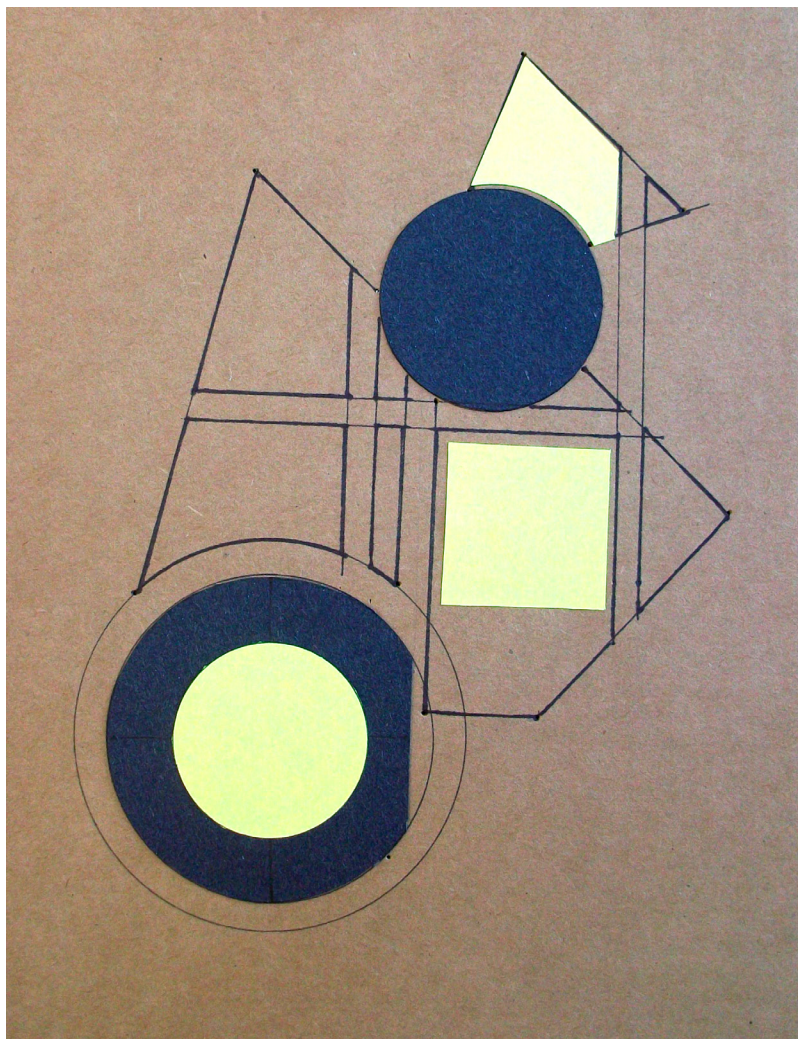
# Diagram: Building Plan (previous model)
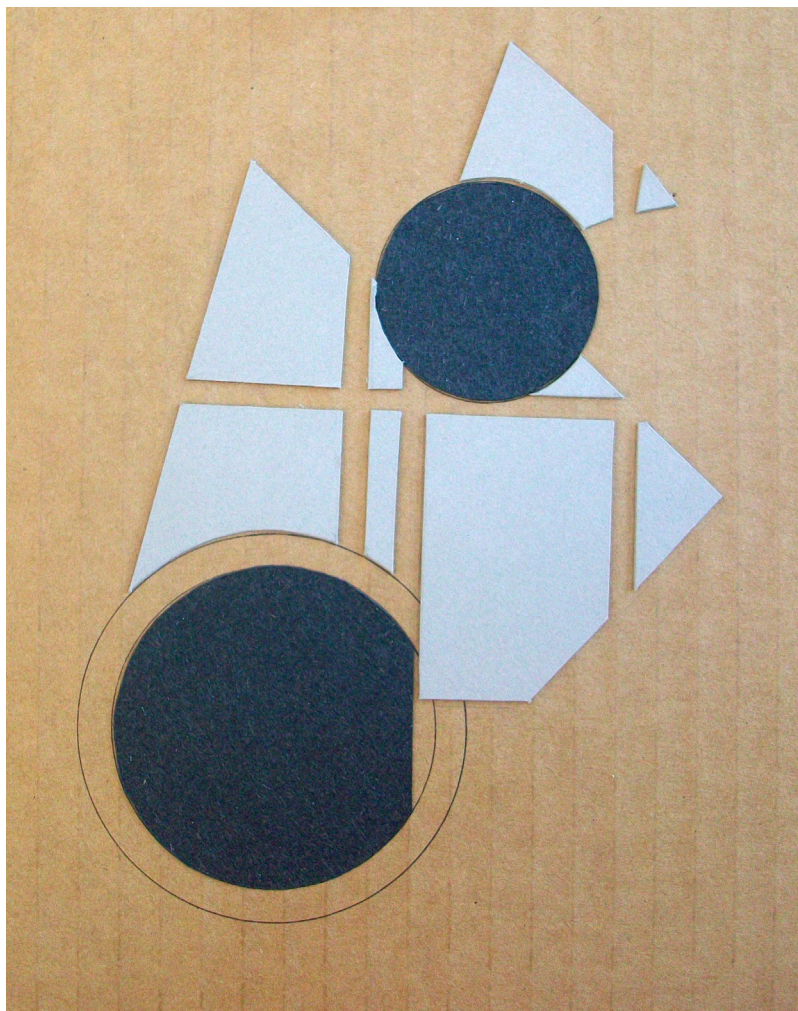
Study Models: People Mover Stop
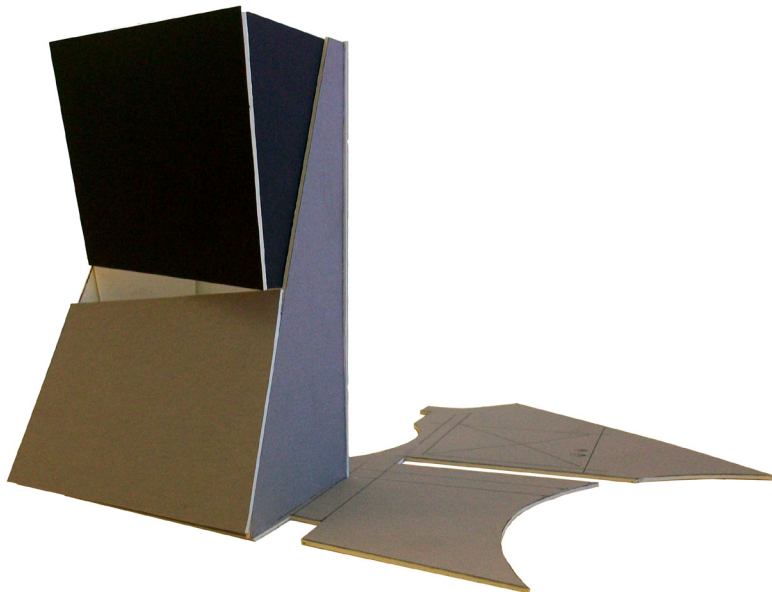
Site Plan

The creation of study models helped to direct the process towards a more physical realm. Angles and volumes were developed using previous diagrams depicting visually prominant areas on the site. The creation of an open space for outdoor public forum was implemented as well as interior spaces that will support programs dedicated to the research, development and application of the deployment of instigatory messages and information. The design will also include large ad hoc open spaces to be used as construction areas for the creation of instigatory deployment vehicles.

In addition to instigatory exterior spaces, the People Mover rail was pulled into the northeast tower of the site as means to expose more individuals to the design's deployment of messages. This element serves a dual purpose; 1) to expose individuals riding the People Mover to the site and 2) to apply messages and information to the exterior of a separate People Mover vehicle that will be deployed while events are taking place on the site and downtown.
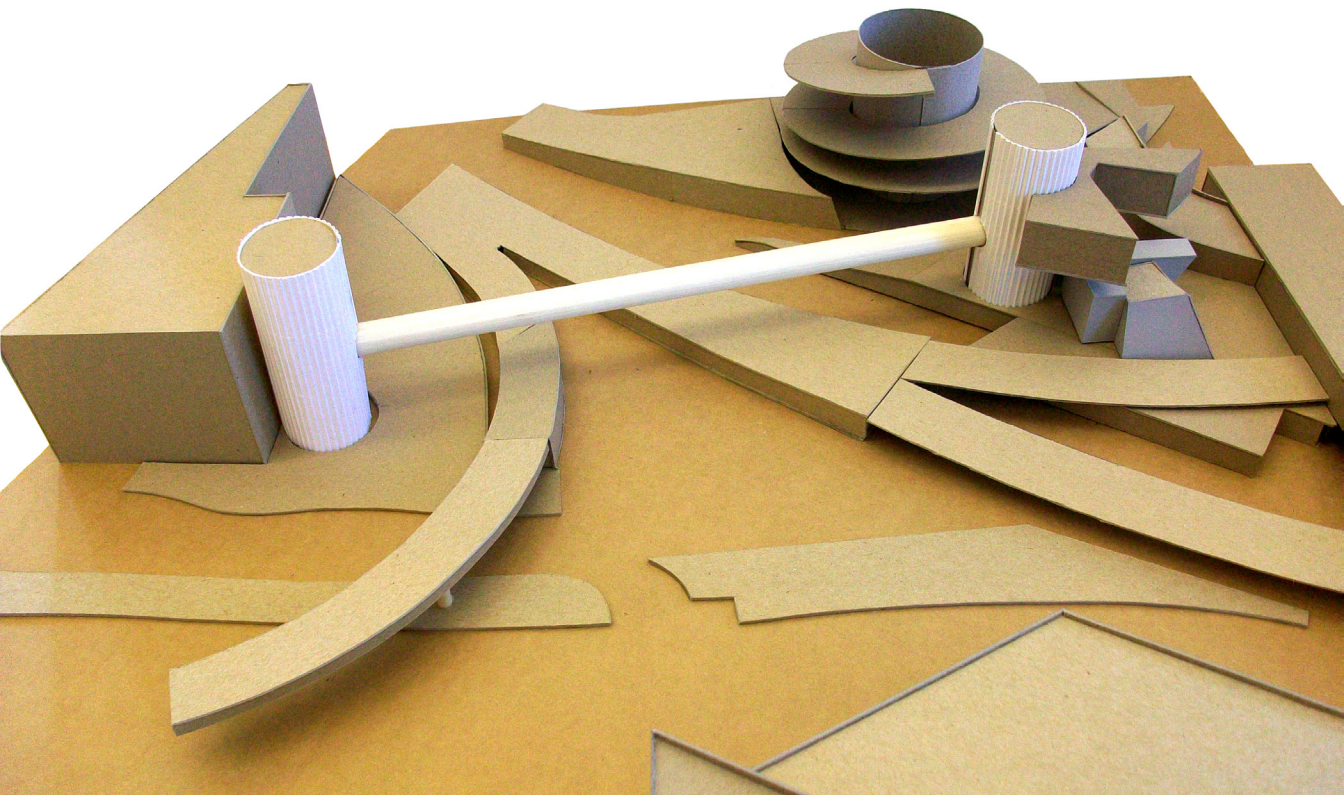
Final Model
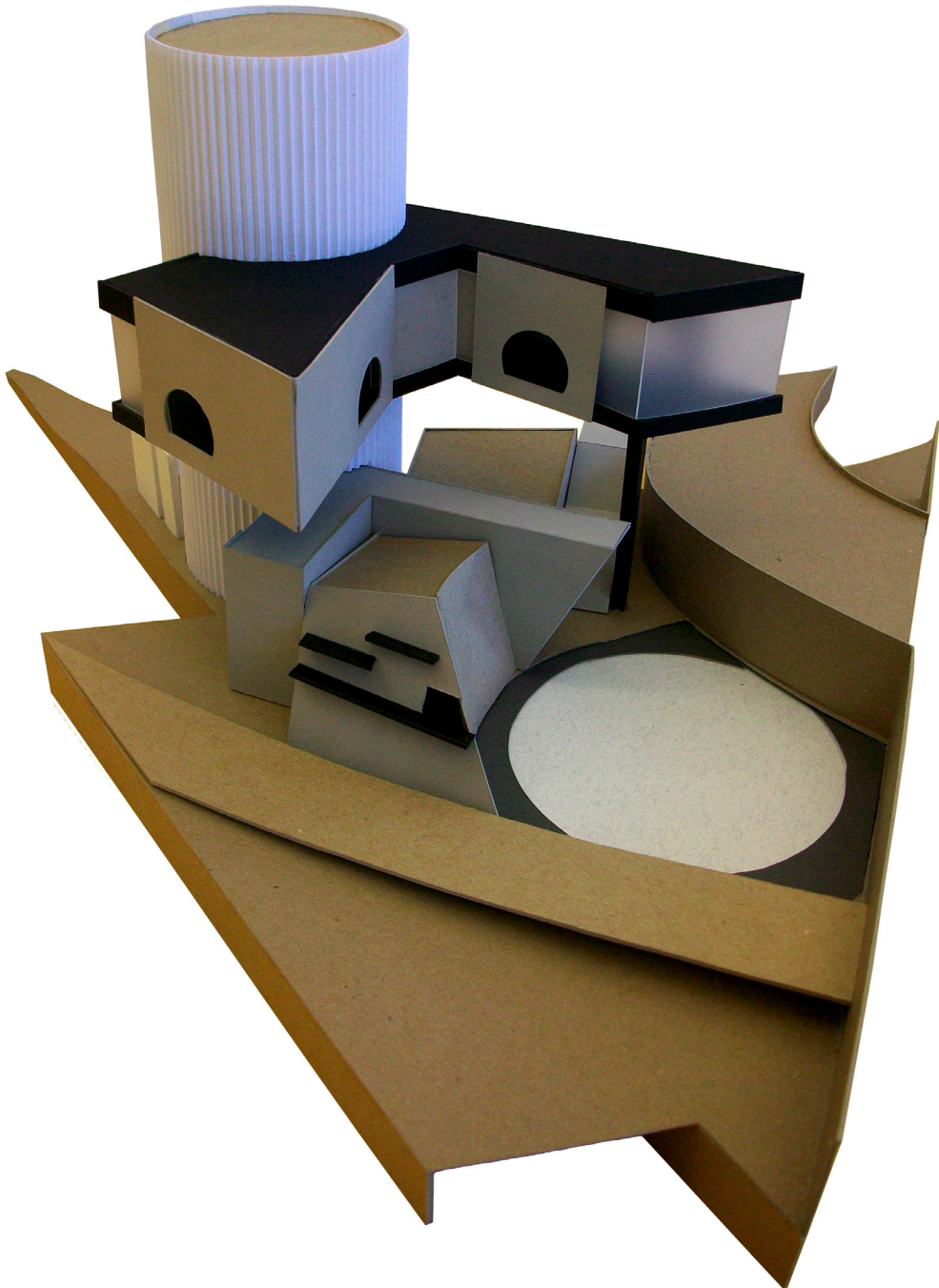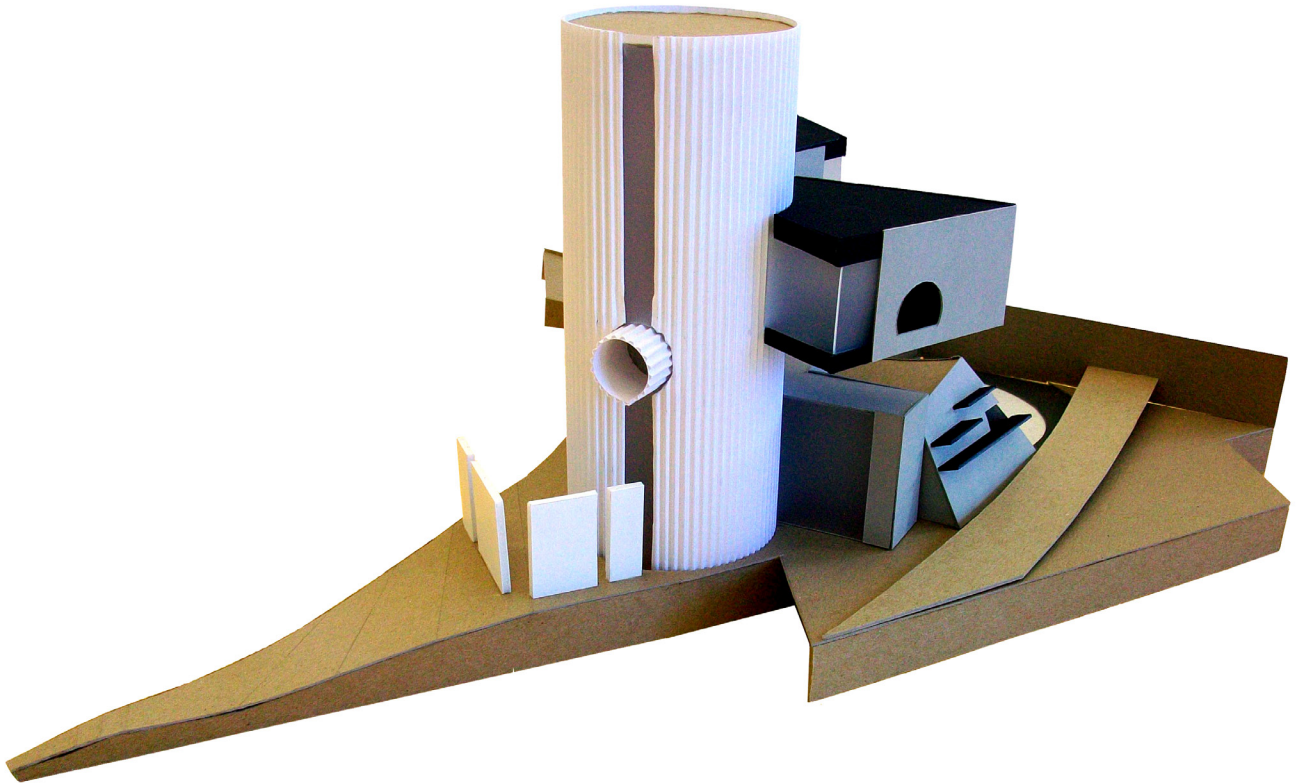
Ultimately, this thesis is serving as a means to investigate and question whether the built environment can assist or facilitate the viral spontaneity of movements like Occupy Wall Street and Arab Spring. Can architecture also lend some credibility to movements like OWS by pushing it beyond its current role as social commentator?
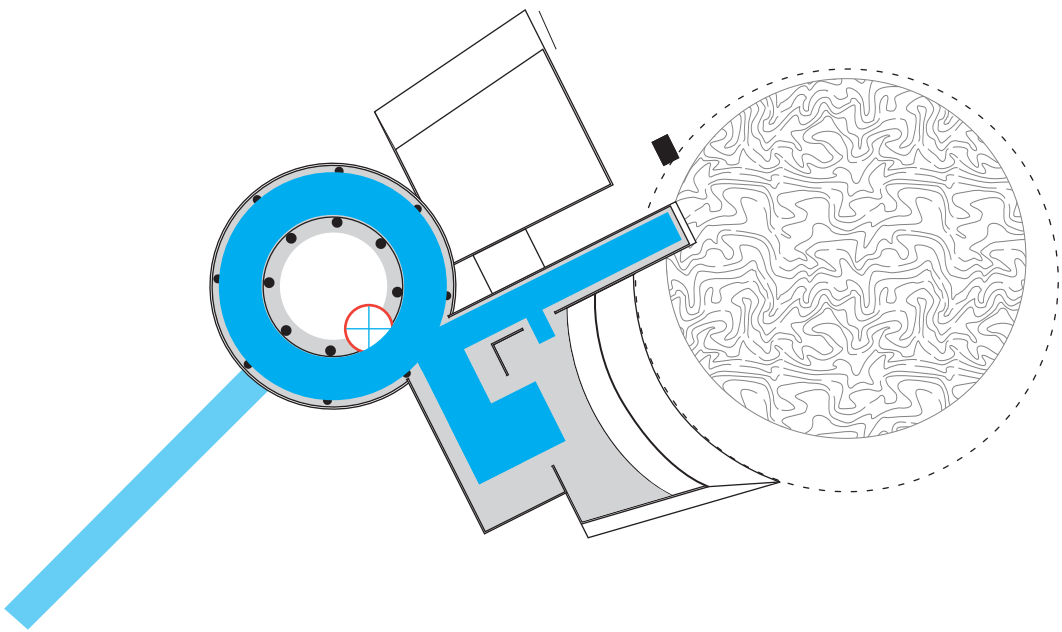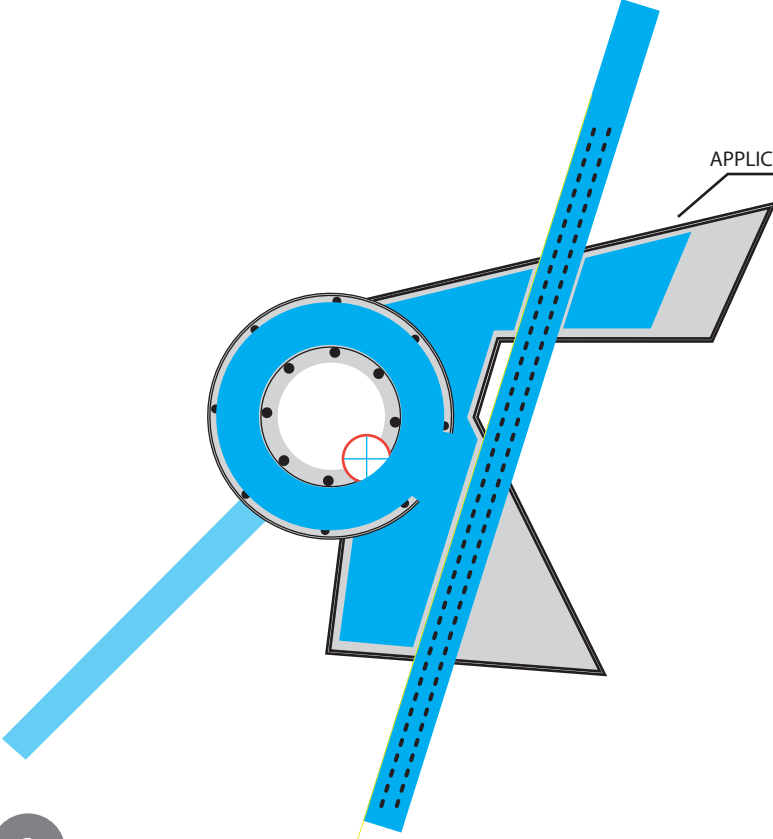
Circulation Diagrams

INTERIOR FORUM

CONSTRUCTION

EXTERIOR FORUM

CIRCULATION CORE
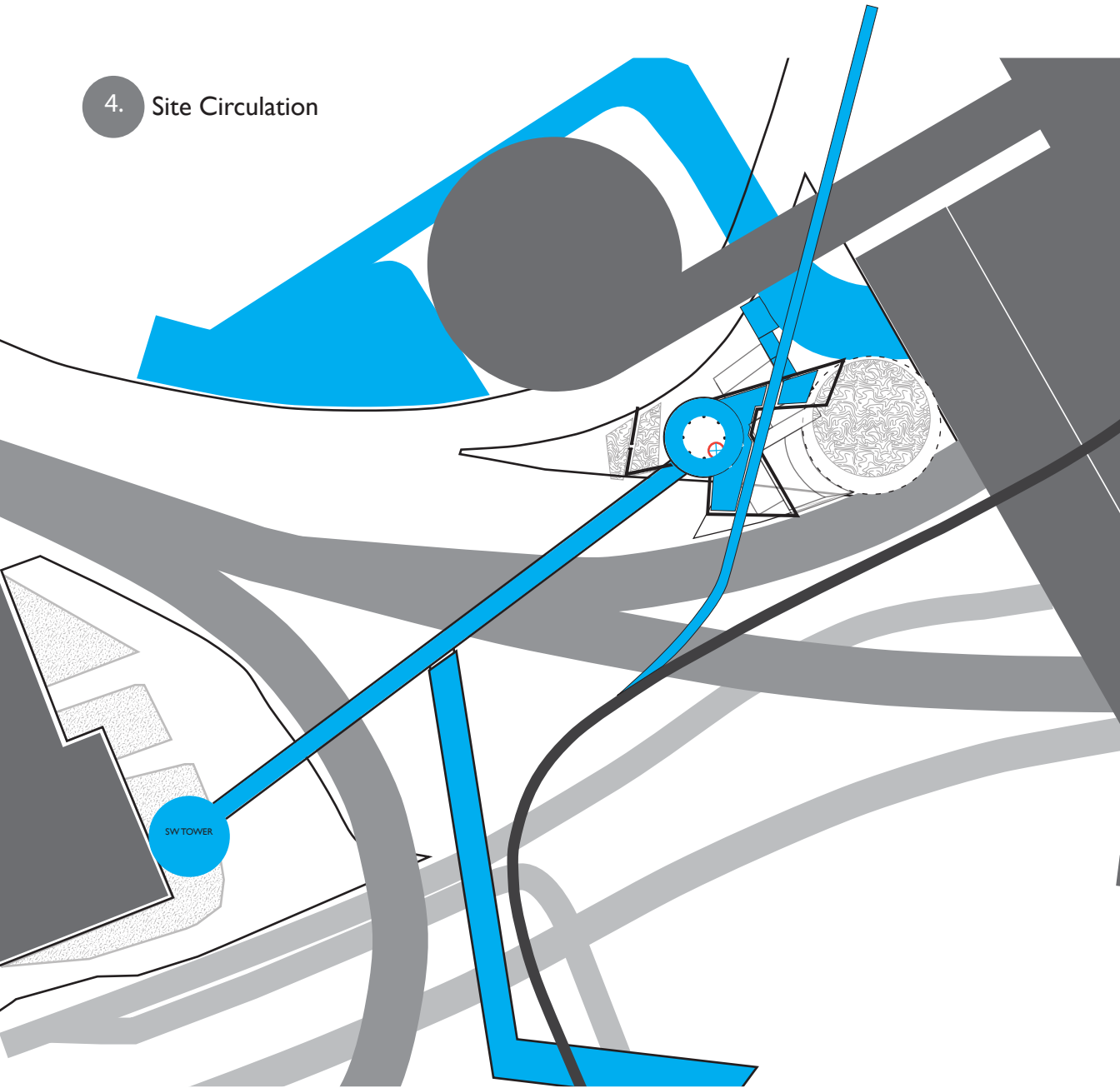
RESEARCH AND DATA ARCHIVAL
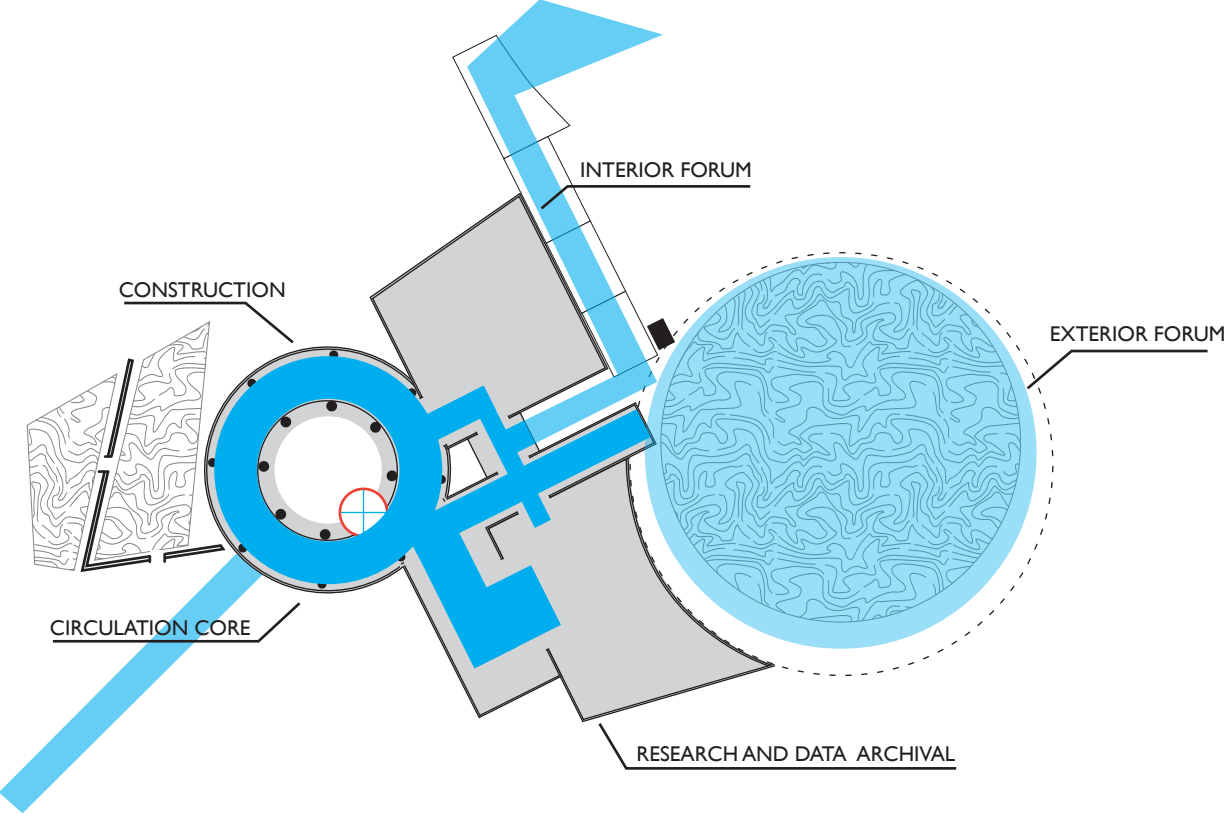
1. First Floor Circulation

2 Second Floor Circulation

APPLICATION AND DEPLOYMENT OF MESSAGES
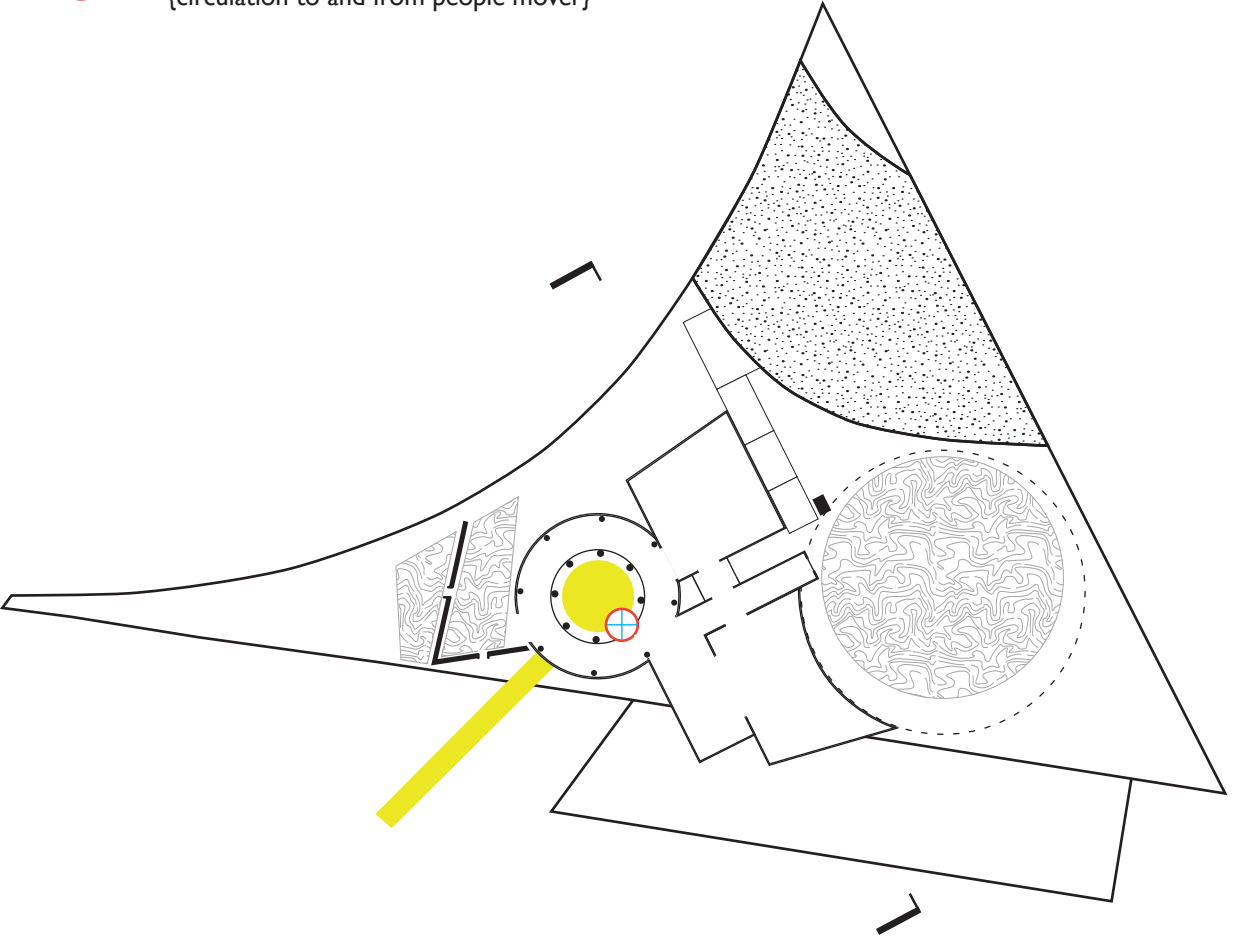
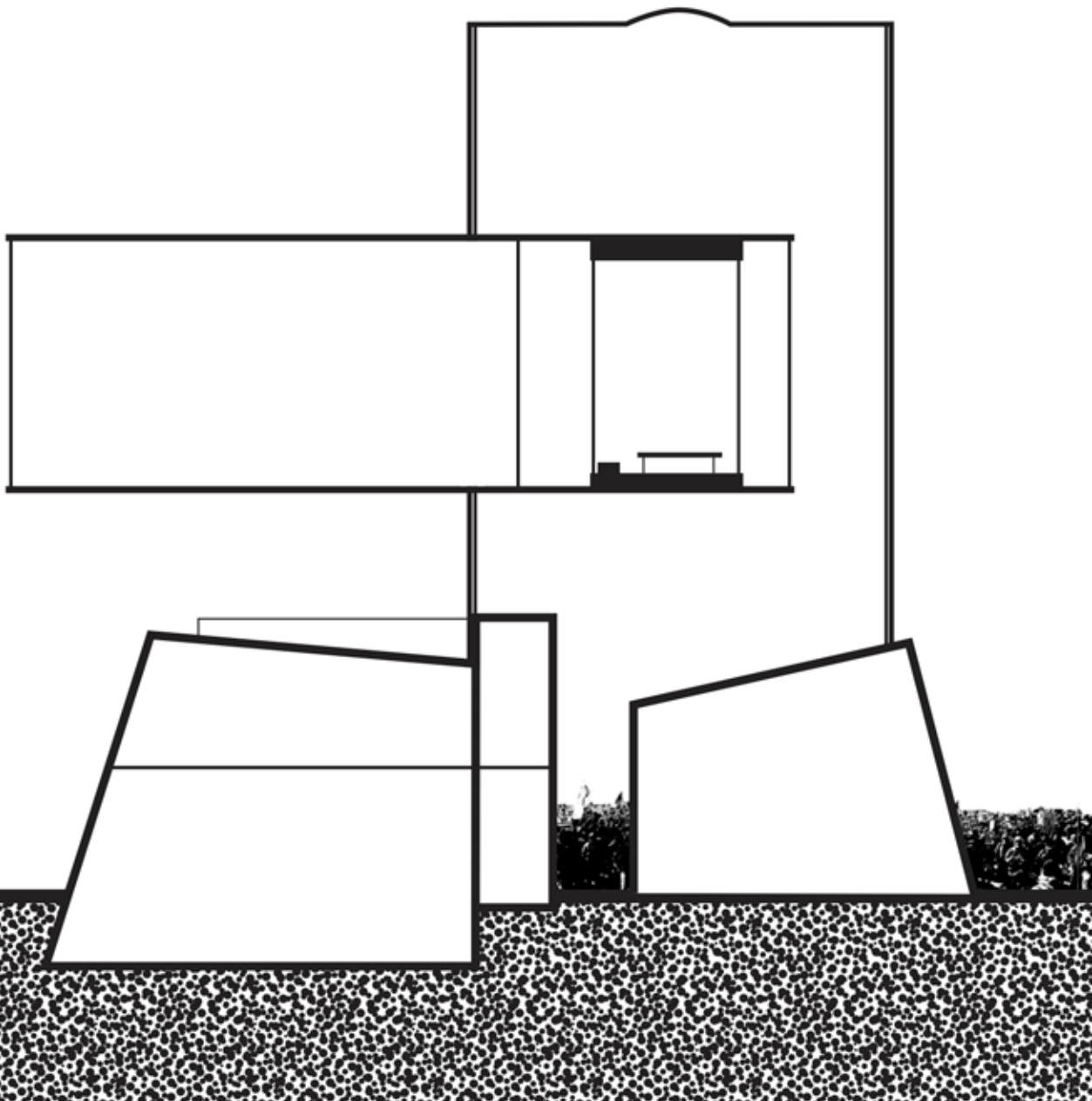3 People Mover Stop

4. Site Circulation

SW TOWER

skywalk

exterior gathering

interior elevator
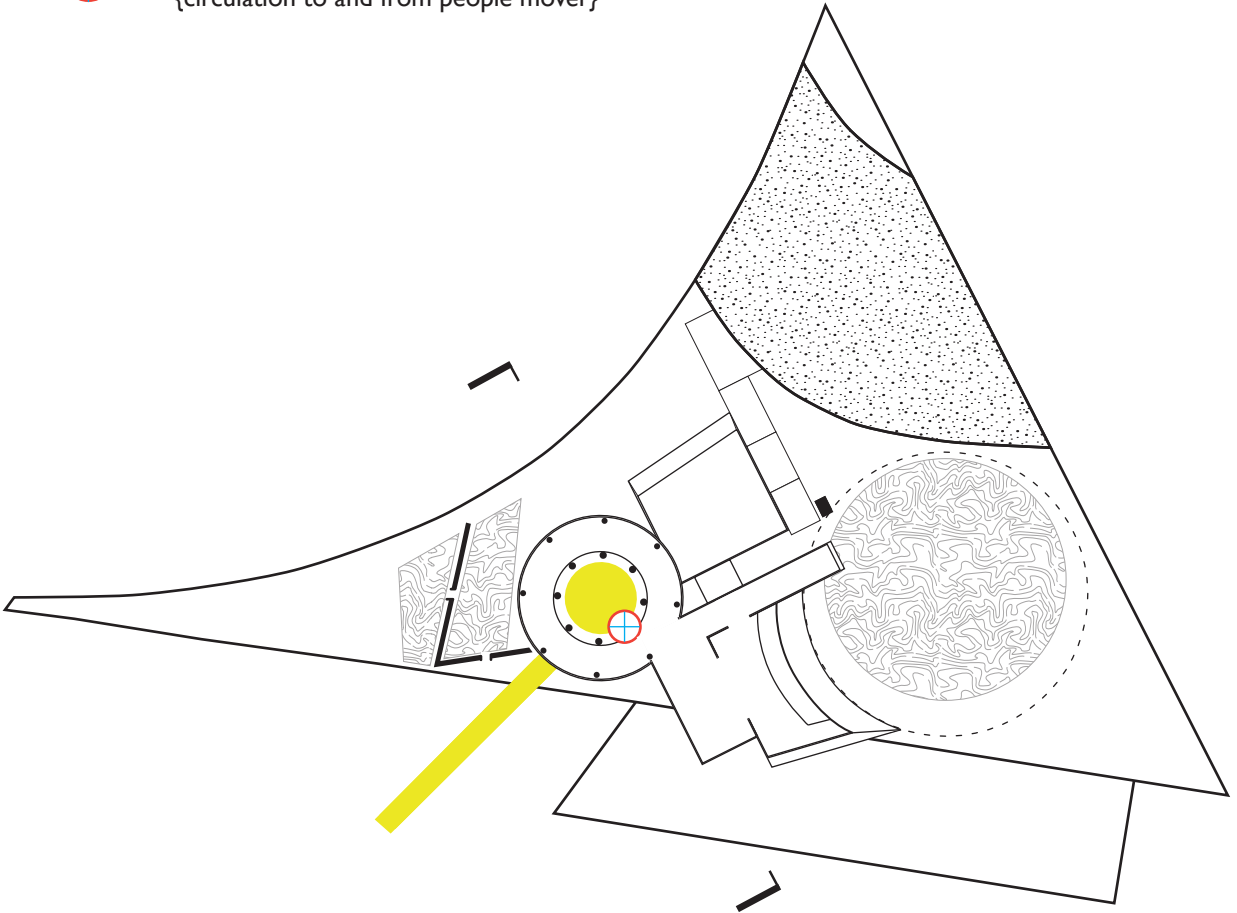{circulation to and from people mover}

N

skywalk

exterior gathering

interior elevator
{circulation to and from people mover}

N

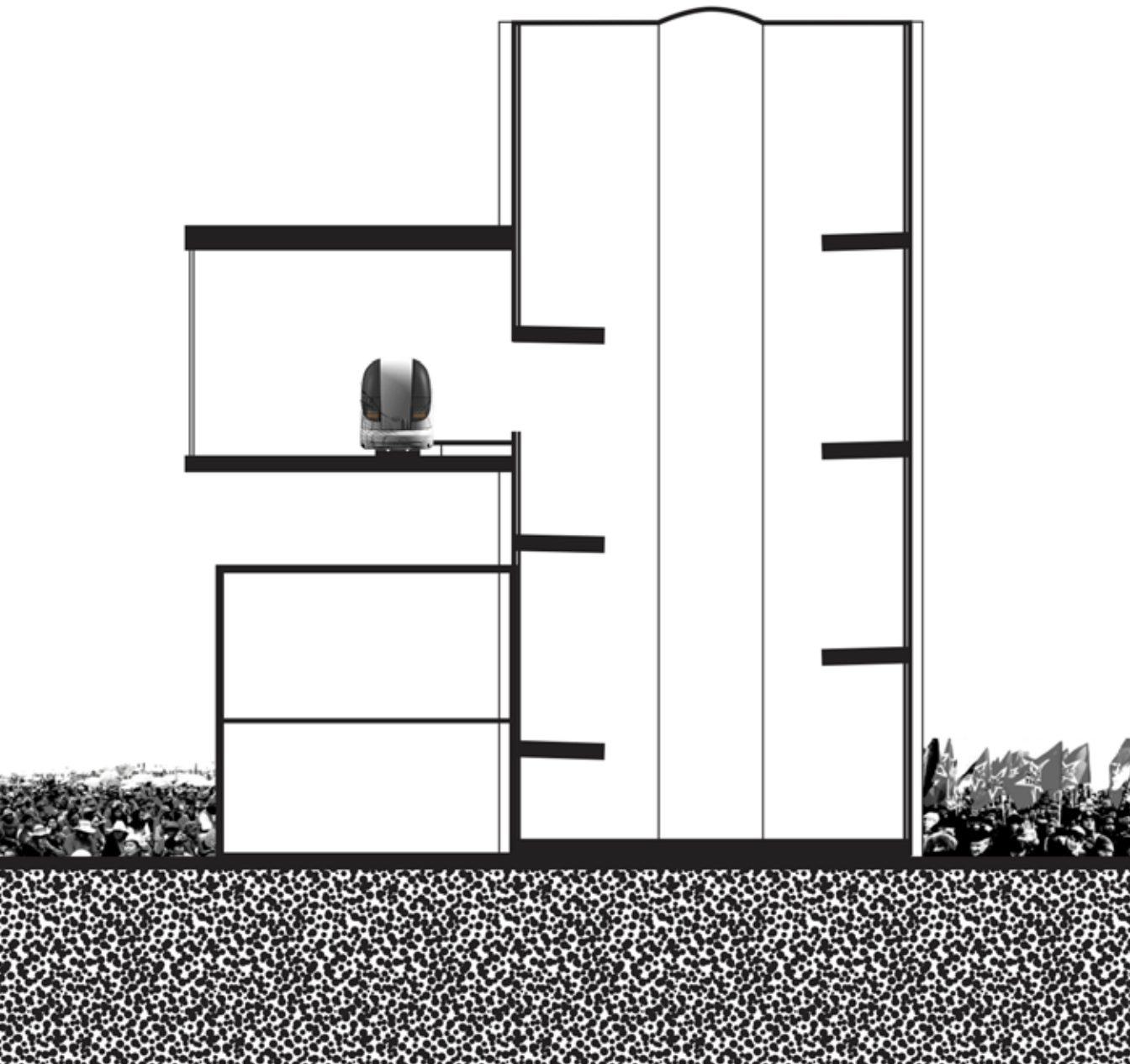Corresponding Section
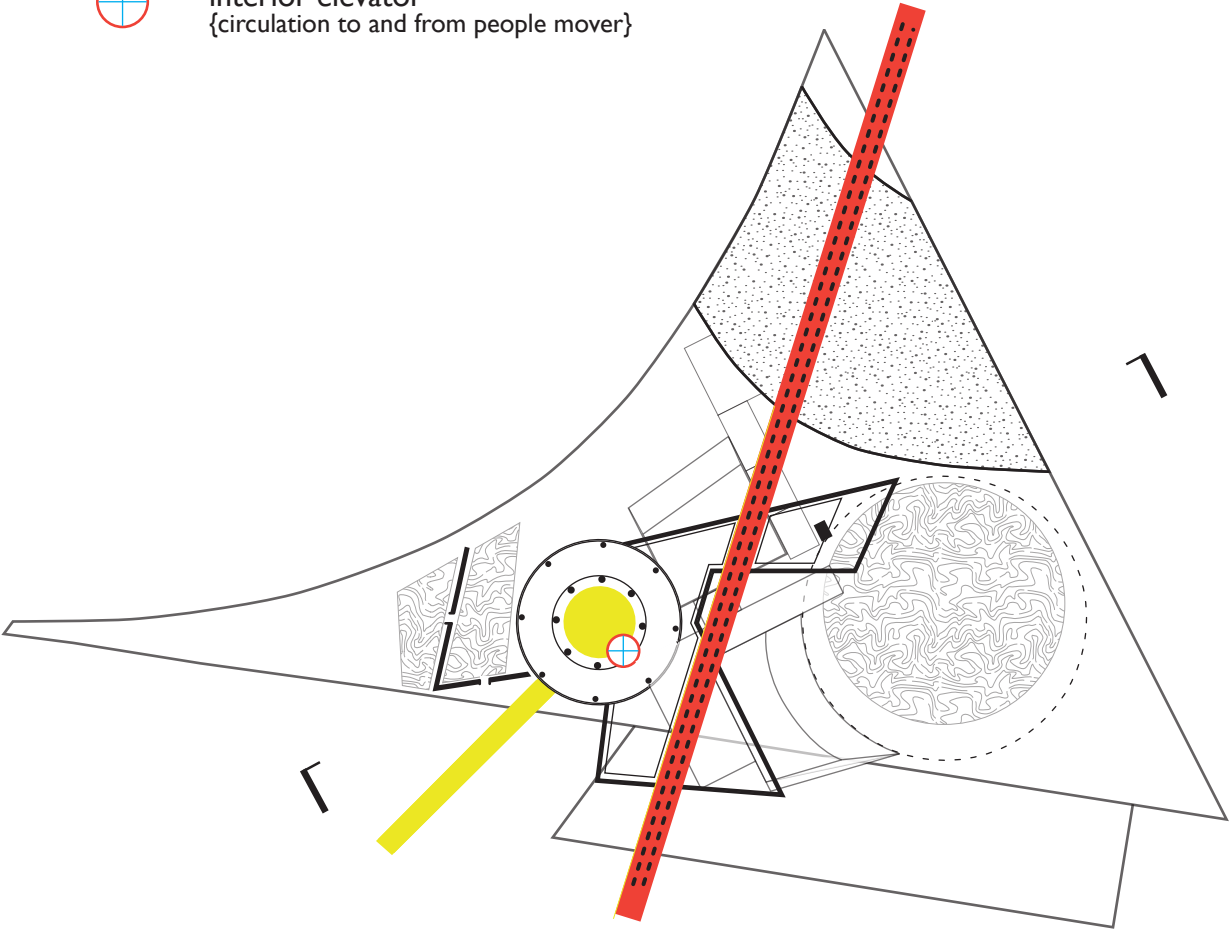
3 PLAN: People Mover Stop
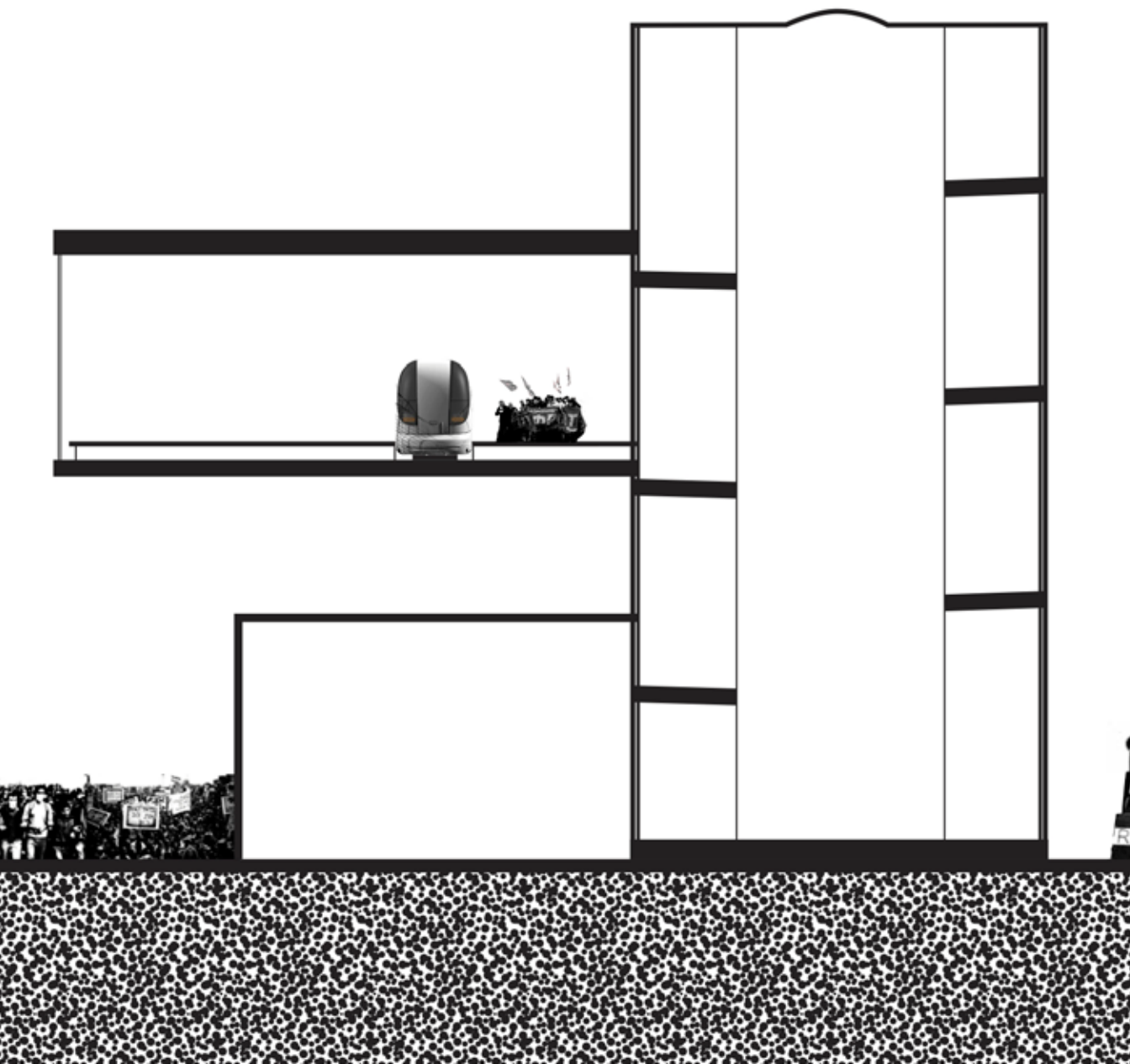
- skywalk
- People Mover Line
- exterior gathering
- interior elevator
  {circulation to and from people mover}

N

Corresponding Section

the architecture of
Post Democracy

Virus: a segment of self-replicating code planted illegally in a computer program, often to damage or shut down a system or network.

The architecture of post-democracy is not an architecture of aesthetic. This does not mean that it cannot be beautiful or visually poetic, but only that it prioritizes activation and participation as opposed to style. Post-democratic architecture acknowledges the built environment's lack of control over its subjects, and uses this realization to create and imagine a totally different typology of design. This typology relies wholly upon the human subjective experience to generate meaning in its environments. This physical manifestation of a viral system will be hospitable to change and allow for the possibility of mutation. With each new encounter, citizens will adapt the space to suit their needs and desires; the post democratic space will become a mutating force that directly responds to societal conditions. As most urbanites witnessed with OWS and the Arab Spring, the public spaces of the city provide an extremely effective platform from which to deploy information and messages. Even if the receiving end is met in disagreement, the delivery of the information is still successful. The goal of this deployment is to instigate reaction. Citizens exposed to this infrastructure will ultimately be a carrier of the viral transmission of a message; a message of change. In the absence of change, looms stasis; with stasis comes the promise of stability. Although the latter is generally positive in reference to topics such as,

p103_the architecture of Post Democracy

economy, it may prove to be the opposite when used to describe society as a whole.

The injection of a viral component into the artery of a static system will promote mutation and adaptability. By treating post-democratic architecture as a means for designing singular instances of contact and exposure, we can introduce viral infrastructure to urban spaces that have capabilities to facilitate these sporadic moments of viral contact. The urban interstice has the potential to provide these same facilities. With little programmed function, interstitial space has managed to rebel against the strict structured confines of the city. Its sprawling boundaries reach deep into urban centers and stretch to the peripheries of the city edge. Instances such as these provide opportunities for sporadic urban intervention. Highly exposed and under developed, the urban interstice is a unique space for the implementation of such viral instances. Within our digital based cultural infrastructure, urban space can now be transformed into a new,

interactive framework for this physical manifestation of viral information. Urban architecture must also respond to this condition and find a means for which it can become viral as well. A building must become a mutating force that evolves with not only the city but also society. The evolution of urban space and architecture denotes societal changes through time, but it also serves as a medium for investigating the intricate relationship existing between society and the political-economic power structure in which that society exists. The wavering tendencies of this correlation disrupts the urban space and gives rise to new inquiries regarding the complex role a post-democratic ideology plays within architectural discourse and practice.

These moments of exposure, instigation, and participation, provide nodal instances where post-democratic citizens can express themselves through a public interface within the city. This relationship between the individual and society is

typically represented in the form of voting or taxes, but post-democracy insists that citizens experiment with new relationships in this context. By providing a true public forum, the urban interstice can plug into the void created by a lack of interaction between the citizen and the political status quo. As a means to this disturbance, the citizen is allowed to activate the public through a space that is open to interpretation and mutability. Obviously, this type of open forum may not always result in seemingly "productive" or "good" interventions, but its true success will be ingrained in its experimental nature. Through its own initiation of dialogue and activation, the post democratic space will allow for the unfiltered and oftentimes unplanned deployment of messages and information. In an era where public space is jeopardized and highly controlled through both municipal and private authorities, citizens need to challenge this status quo through the medium that is often the very topic of concern, the public commons.

Bibliography (and Inspirations):

Birchall, Clare, Prod. Deleuze's Postscript on the Societies of Control.
        Liquid Theory TV, 2010. Web. 11 Sep 2011. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=
        GIus7lm_ZK0>.<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GIus7lm_ZK0>.

Glaeser, dward. Triumph Of The City, How Our Greatest Invention Makes Us Richer, Smarter,
        Greener, Healthier, And Happier.
        New York: Penguin Pr, 2011. Print.

Leach, Neil Leach. Ed. Rethinking Architecture, A Reader In Cultural Theory.
        New York: Psychology Press, 1998. (255-268). Print.

Leitao, Carla. "Meta-Transparency:Mixing Science With Social Networks And Politics."
        The Huffington Post Arts. The Huffington Post , 24 008 2011.
        Web. 11 Sep 2011.http://www.huffingtonpost.com/carla-leitao/
        metatransparency_b_932606.html

Rajchman, John Rajchman. Constructions.
        Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1998. Print.

Rybczynski, Witold Rybczynski. Makeshift Metropolis, Ideas About Cities.
        Scribner Book Company, 2010. Print.

Sennett, Richard. Culture of New Capitalism.
        New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006. 130-178. eBook.

Virilio, Paul Virilio. Speed And Politics.
        Semiotext, 2007. Print.

Virilio, Paul Virilio, and Jonathan Crary. The Aesthetics Of Disappearance.
        Semiotext, 2011. Print.

Weizman, Eyal. "The Art of War."
        Frieze Magazine. N.p., 05 2006. Web. <http://www.frieze.com/issue/article/
        the_art_of_war/>.

Woods, Lebbeus. "Architecture is a Political Act."