TRANSCENDING
space

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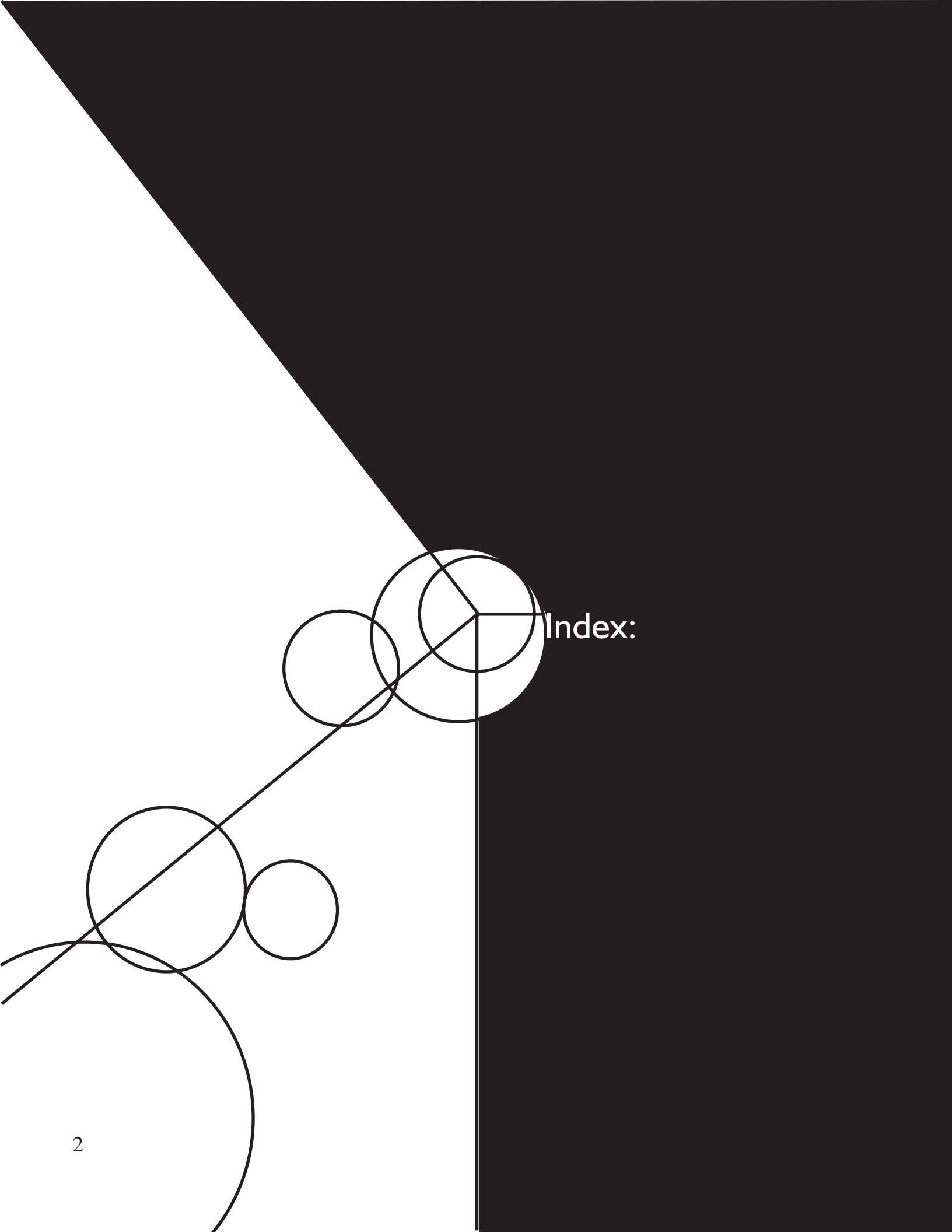
UNIVERSITY OF DETROIT MERCY

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THROUGHOUT TIME — PRECEDING CONSTRUCTED CIVILIZATION — RITUAL HAS BEEN A PREDOMINANT PART OF LIFE. EARLY NATIVE AMERICAN SETTLERS DANCED AROUND FIRES CHANTING RITUALS AND EXPRESSING THEIR EMOTIONAL CONNECTION TO THE PHYSICAL EARTH. ESSENTIALLY, THESE ARE EMPOWERED SPACES WITHIN WHICH CULTURES HAVE ADAPTED ALONG SIDE BOTH THE EARTH AND PEOPLE — EXPRESSING FAITH IN A DRIVING FORCE THAT IS LARGER THAN ANY ONE MAN. THESE EMPOWERING SPACES HAVE PROVIDED A VITAL FORCE IN THE ADVANCEMENT OF CULTURES, AND THEIR SOCIAL FABRICS. EXISTENTIAL PHILOSOPHY WOULD SUGGEST THAT EVEN A FIRE — MENTIONED IN THE PRIOR EXAMPLE — HAS THE ABILITY TO TRANSFORM A "SPACE" INTO A "PLACE", BUT WHEN DOES THE FIRE TRANSFORM BEYOND A SIMPLE FLAME? THE FIRE HAS A HUMBLE POWER, IN THAT IT SUCCUMBS ITSELF TO A LARGER IDEAL. THIS THESIS VENTURES TO SUGGEST THAT SPACE HAS THE ABILITY TO LOCATE AN INDIVIDUAL — HOWEVER — A PLACE HAS THE ABILITY TO INFLUENCE AND EMPOWER AN ENTIRE CULTURE. ULTIMATELY LENDING ITSELF TO A FOCUS ON CULTURE AND IDENTITY — SPECIFICALLY "MISPLACED IDENTITY" — THROUGH THE EXPERIENCE OF SPACES, THAT HAVE ADAPTED TO A TORN SOCIAL, CULTURAL, AND URBAN FABRIC. THE IMPORTANCE OF THESE THEORIES MAY BE RELEVANT, BUT WHAT IS EQUALLY IF NOT MORE IMPORTANT IS THE THEATER. IT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ATTRACTION AND INTIMACY. THE SIMPLE FIRE [NOTED ABOVE] HAS A HUMBLE POWER, WHERE AS THE TYPICAL SKYSCRAPER SERVES AS A MONUMENT TO MANS EGO. THE SKYSCRAPER MAY BE A REPRESENTATION OF A MORE SOPHISTICATED ASSEMBLY — ONE THAT SPEAKS TO THE CURRENT CULTURE — YET AS HARMONIOUS AS ITS CONSTRUCTION MAY BE — IT IS MERELY A DISPLAY OF A DISPLACED CONNECTION BETWEEN BODY AND EARTH.

SPACE IS TYPICALLY THOUGHT OF AS AN AREA OF SETTLEMENT — A LOCATOR OF MAN. WHERE AS PLACE IS THE EMBODIMENT OF SPACE — IN THAT IT GOES BEYOND THE LIMITS OF SPACE. PLACE IS EXPRESSED THROUGH THE INTERACTION AND ADAPTATION OF MAN, AS WELL AS BUILT — NATURAL — PUBLIC — AND PRIVATE ENVIRONMENTS. IN ORDER FOR SPACE TO TRANSCEND BEYOND ITSELF TO FORM PLACE IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT THERE IS A CULTURAL PRESENCE TO REVEAL WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE SITE. IT IS ALSO NECESSARY FOR A HISTORICAL CHARACTER TO EXIST WITHIN BOTH THE CONTEXTUAL ASPECTS OF THE SPACE, AS WELL AS ITS INHABITANTS. FOR THIS THESIS CIRCUMSTANCE IT IS ALMOST PREFERABLE THAT THE SOCIAL FABRIC WITHIN THE SPACE BE TORN. IN THAT THROUGHOUT TIME, THE CULTURES IDENTITY HAS BEEN "MISPLACED" [NOT NECESSARILY LOST].

abstract

thesis

Cultural identity is essential to the evolution of social and urban fabrics. It is the very thing that empowers people, societies, cultures, and architecture to "be" in time, to con-sciously exist along-side the world. There is a co-dependent relationship between the people of a city, and the city itself. Cultural identity defines the way people live and inhabit spaces. And architectural spaces are defined and established by the people who inhabit them. Cultural identity provokes a visual, informational, and sensual emotion that speaks of who we are as a culture, and as individuals. It is through cultural evolution that the human race has been able to advance. It is our way in which beings, in the Heideggerian sense, live along-side the world, on the earth and beneath the sky, which enables a space to transcend into a place, this occurs through experience, interaction, and reaction to our environment –the lived world.

The essence of place is a tightly woven cohesive fabric, which allows us to experience it as a unified whole. It is a fabric that does not separate itself from the core, but is rather some-thing that radiates out from the core as a continuum. This is evident when we look at cities such as Chicago or New York. Although the outskirts of these cities are not as defined as the core, there is still a discernable identity that is inherently present in the people, the architec-ture, and the fabric of the place. This identity is present throughout the spaces between the core and the edges. It enables people to identify who they are in the context of where they have been, where they are, and where they have the potential to go. The neighborhoods and districts surrounding the core become the "in between" spaces that are part of this continuous composition. The true identity of a city – a place – lies in the identity of its people, as defined by this composition. Consequently, this begins to facilitate dwelling in terms of how people identify with the character of their place, and vice versa.

What I am claiming here is that this identity has been "displaced" within the city of De-troit, specifically in the neighborhoods that surround the core of the city. This identity is not absent or lost, but rather hidden beneath a stereotype. It has been imposed upon the city and its inhabitants like a stigma, a genetic disease that has plagued the city. Displaced identity ap-pears through the people, who are unable to relate to the space that they inhabit, where the city itself has been tainted by a stereotype. This identity is also apparent within the city itself it is a direct reflection of society's ability to "care about" the space, rather than to "care for" the place. Its identity has, throughout the years, disappeared from the surface, sinking into the infrastructure that was once there, and has the potential to emerge again.

As we will come to see, identity is essential to the emergence of place. This will later be ex-plored more in depth through the works of Norberg Schulz's excerpts on "Man-Made Place," "Place," and "Dwelling and Existence." It is also necessary to draw on Juhani Pallasmaa's no-tions of architectural identity in relation to the social and built environments. How both are co-dependent on each other. This will ultimately begin to define how dwelling is fostered within a place, through society's ability to identify with their culture, their built environment, and the space that they inhabit.

So then why should anyone care about this topic? Identity is essential within a social fabric because without the identity of the people, the city – the urban fabric – would cease to exist. This is the plight of many American cities, in that they have displaced the true meaning of place, and character in terms of the identity of the people that inhabit them. This is important to all people who live along-side the world. Without a cultural identity, space cannot transcend into place, and without place, dwelling cannot occur.

The problem of experiencing a displaced identity within a city relative to the culture that inhabits it is an ever present struggle that is unmistakably rooted in the city of Detroit, with a specific emphasis on the spaces between the core and the edges. The overpowering stigma that masks the identity of the people and the place has, and will forever change how the city itself is experienced. Consequently, this has a direct effect on the people who attempt to dwell within the city.

To emphasize the differences between space and place it is necessary to lean heavily on Heidegger and Norberg – Schulz's terminology. Space, according to Heidegger is typically thought of as an area of settlement, a locator of man. The true essence of space is, "… something that has been made room for, something that is cleared and free, namely within a boundary." [1] It defines a set of coordinates on a map that distinguishes one location as being different from another. Space does not define itself; it is defined by its locale. Heidegger claims that locations are things and by their very nature they allow for a site, and a site which allows for a space. Furthermore, "space admits actions, and allows life to take place." [2]   This enables man to settle and inhabit, but does nothing more than define a boundary. Moreover, Norberg Schulz claims that space is "…an implied presence of earth and sky." [3] It is not meant to be experienced, nor is it meant to act as a way of defining an identity, "space is not something that faces man. It is neither an external object nor an internal experience." [4] It provides a boundary on earth and beneath the sky within which man, or "mortals" as Heidegger would say, have the potential to dwell.

In contrast, place becomes the embodiment of space; in that place goes beyond the limits of space or what defines it as previously noted above. Place is experienced and expressed through the interaction and adaptation of man – human beings. It acknowledges the experiential quality of space, as well as the relationship that is created between man and space. "When the man-made environment is meaningful, man is at home." [5]   If place is the interaction and adaptation of man which consequently, is a direct result of a "settlement," then the man-made environment is what begins to transcend space into place.

> "From the beginning of time man has recognized that to create a place means to express the essence of being. The man-made environment where he lives is not a mere practical tool or the result of arbitrary happenings, it has structure and embodies meanings. These meanings and structures are reflections of man's understanding of the natural environment." [6]

The environment is what differentiates space from place, in that "a concrete term for environment is place." [7] But, is it enough to define place as an environment? An environment whether it is built, natural, public or private is defined through experience. Norberg – Schulz claims that concrete things within a location or space "determine an 'environmental character', which is the essence of place." [8] This character is the "genius loci" or spirit of the place, which appears only though ones interaction and experience with the space. The interaction and adaptation of man sets the stage for the surpassing, but it is the experience, the understanding and knowing of that environmental character that ultimately transcends space into place. A place, according to Norberg Schulz, has the qualities of a concrete environment, as well as an imagined world. The two aspects co-depend on one another, enriching the experience for the individual.

Space is objective in terms of a location, which would seem to make place objective as well. Yet, the experience of place is not objective; it is subjective in its very nature. In order for something to take place suggests that it is to be "understood in a quantitative, 'functional' sense," [9] in that it addresses factual elements. But, "the functional approach…left out the place as a concrete 'here' having its particular identity." [10] Therefore, in order to experience place it is necessary for it to be of a qualitative, subjective manner. When place is experienced as "being qualitative totalities of a complex nature, places cannot be described by means of analytic, 'scientific' concepts. As a matter of principle science 'abstracts' from the given to arrive at neutral, 'objective' knowledge" [11]. To enhance your understanding of the difference between space and place consider the following passage:

> "You walk into a space. An architectural remnant stands there. It frames the space, both literally and metaphorically, giving it perspective. The mental geometry of the work is all there. All you have to do is yield to it. And so you enter this large frame, sensing a tectonic concrete surface. The frame soon presents itself as an entranceway and becomes a liminal passageway. There is a long suspended wall above your head that leads you inside a space. You walk beneath this structure, allowing it to guide you, as if preparing you for a walk – through experience." [12]

The above mentioned space is providing all of the factual, objective information needed to analyze the space. But, if you read carefully it is only "preparing you for a walk through experience" it is not creating it. All of the elements are there, but until this space is interacted with and experienced by man, it will continue to remain a space.

How places are experienced and defined in the world rely greatly on the individuals who inhabit them. The 'environmental character' of Detroit has over time deteriorated, causing the identity of both the urban and social fabric to become "displaced." This in turn has stained the city with a stigma that has been painted on itself, as well as its inhabitants.

In order to more clearly define this 'stigma' it is necessary for some historical background. Detroit is a large city in Michigan. It is located towards the southwest of the state, where much of the "core" of the city lies along the Detroit River. It was founded in 1701 by the French, and initially was the home of the French Ribbon Farms. It was a desirable location due to its proximity to the river. This allowed for easy access to surrounding bodies of water and enabled trade to occur.

The major population flux was during the development of the automobile industry, between 1900 and 1930. It took the population from a couple hundred thousand, to over a million in that period. During this time the city itself began to flourish in its industrial glory, it was known as the "Motor City" capital of the world. Although it was large compared to other cities such as New York and Chicago there was not enough room for the people who lived in the city to "dwell." The open spaces were few and far in-between, making it difficult for individuals to find a retreat that offered solitude.

The late sixties and early seventies brought about a decline in the population. People that lived in the city began to move outwards beyond the edges, or boundaries of what defined the city of Detroit. This created what we now refer to as sprawl, or during that time it was referred to as the "the great white flight." In most cases it was the people with higher positions in the automotive industry that could afford to flee the city, only to leave behind the minorities and less fortunate.

This occurred for almost twenty years, and throughout that period the population had plummeted. The people that remained in the city could not afford to leave or refused to. But, with this decline in the population came a decline in jobs. Many of the factories moved north along with the people. In addition to the decline in jobs and people the mental institutions surrounding the city closed their doors, forcing the patience out on the streets. That act created an increase in the homeless population.

During that time there was an increase in crime and vandalism. Buildings were burnt and destroyed, people were robbed, and riots were common amongst the people. Now, many of the buildings are abandoned and desolate. All of the facts mentioned above began to paint a stigma upon the city. People who lived outside the edges began to "care about" Detroit and its people, rather than "care for it," causing them to refrain from entering the city for fear of their lives.

The "caring about" Detroit has remained the attitude towards the city and its people for more than thirty years, and while the city today is trying to change their image it still remains a common concern amongst many who live around the boundaries of what defines Detroit. Yet, with all of the atrophy the city has encountered there is still life radiating from it. There is a place, and people with an identity that are searching for a way to stitch their fabric back together.

With all of that being said, it is now time to delve into the heart of the site. Focusing on a

specific boundary outlined between the core and the edges of the city. The actual site is located along Grand River between Warren and Martin Luther King Boulevard. There, one will find two distinctly different neighborhoods, one to the northeast of Grand River and one to the southwest. The above outlined boundaries exist between three historic districts, Bricktown, Corktown, and Woodbridge. Together the two neighborhoods are large enough to be considered a district, but as they stand now the definition of neighborhood is suspect. The people who live in these areas are the "social fabric" of the space, and the context surrounding it is the "urban fabric."

The site itself and its surrounding context were extremely dense, and throughout time have dissipated due to sprawl and the stigma that remains on the city. The two neighborhoods or social fabrics are distinctly different from one another. The one to the northeast of the site is more tightly woven, there is a sense of community and culture present, but through intuitive experience of the space its identity or 'environmental character' seems hidden. This is true of the neighborhood to the southwest as well, although the community base and culture is less obvious.

Pallasmaa claims that in order to experience the world within which we dwell we must be able to use our "bodily existence" to know and interpret what we experience. "Our domicile is the refuge of our body, memory and identity." [13] The identity of the people is the cultural identity that is necessary for the place itself to have an identity. Without the identity of the people the place will subsequently lack identity. Yet, these notions are co-dependent on one another. One cannot exist without the other. These identities together create the environmental character of the place, which creates the "genius loci," or spirit of the place. Without a cultural identity, an environmental character, and a genius loci place cannot exist, nor can dwelling occur.

"We are in constant dialogue and interaction with the environment, to the degree that it is impossible to detach the image of the Self from its spatial and situational existence." [14]

Essentially, to reinforce how space transcends, there must first be a space, a location or a settlement that as Norberg – Schulz would claim, allows for life to occur. Once that is established there must be a culture. Man must exist within the space allowing for it to "take place." Furthermore, there must be an identity and a character that exists within the culture of the social fabric. This enables the urban fabric to transcend from space into place.

Focusing on Pallasmaa's claim that man's interaction with the environment "always" resembles an image of "Self," in that it is impossible to separate man from his environment, we will begin to consider the site. At one point in time the site was part of the communities mentioned above. Today, life occurs around the space itself, but does not currently embody human life. It has reverted back to nature. The buildings that once existed on the site were abandoned, and eventually demolished causing nature to reinfuse the space. It is an open field enclosed only by a series of metal fences. The communities that exist around the site hold a

culture and an identity that is displaced or lost, not absent. Both the urban and social fabric share a history that is true to the essence of the place, but is displaced to the individual whom experiences it, creating a lack of place.

To reestablish the identity of the urban and social fabric within, and around the context of the site, there will be a focus on empowerment. Empowerment is the act of creating a sense of pride and accomplishment within people, this enables them to establish a belief system catered to their personal identity. To empower a space through architecture and function is to empower people, which in turn create a system for people to empower one another. When people are empowered and believe in each other there is a sense of pride that radiates outward, this creates an identity among a group of people – a "cultural identity."

To create this sense of empowerment among the community there must first be a "gathering center" that draws people in. "Centers are found on all environmental levels…The center represents what is known…It is the point where man acquires position in space…The point where he lingers and lives in space." [15]   Norberg-Schulz's center begins to define how a space can identify and orient an individual.   In order to more clearly define what is meant by a "gathering center" I will also refer to Abraham:

> "A place in which everything comes together, is concentrated, the site gathers unto
>
> itself, supremely and radically. Its gathering power, gathers in and preserves all it had gathered, not like
>
> an encapsulating shell, but rather by penetrating with its light all it had gathered, and only thus releasing
>
> it into its own nature" [16].

The proposal is to establish a "community node," a center that gathers people to a common place. The experience of the program or function of the site will begin to establish a sense of permanence and place within and around the site. What I am proposing is an urban market garden where the market itself acts as the "center," and the surrounding site enables the gathering and empowerment to occur, which creates the node. Ultimately, "enabling life to occur" within the space.

The architecture is meant to humble itself to the people; it is attempting to create an experience of the place while also establishing an identity.   "Buildings and towns enable us to structure, understand and remember the shapeless flow of reality, and ultimately, to recognize and remember who we are." [17]   Man-made environments begin to establish this permanence, which ultimately defines an identity and reveals a history of both a place and a culture. "Architecture enables us to perceive and understand the dialectics of permanence and change, to settle ourselves in the world, and to place ourselves in the continuum of culture and time." [18]

To institute the urban market garden as a "gathering center" there will be a combination of paths, that are "general properties of man's orientation in the world." [19] Due to the gap that Grand River creates through the site there will be paths that begin to reconnect the two sides, while simultaneously drawing people inward. They will

extend over the physical boundaries of the site, and begin to infuse the surrounding context. This will begin to suggest a "stitching" of the two fabrics. In addition to the paths there will be domains that "function as potential places for man's actions." [20] The domains will exist as "fields" or gardens where man is able to physically interact with the place itself. The gardens will act as "nourishment" for the people and the place, as well as an educational tool that has the potential to empower people.

Norberg – Schulz claims that the degree to which a space is open also constitutes it ability to gather and create a sense of place. The site currently is extremely open, the only boundary it has is the fence, which is not much of a boundary to begin with. And, because the proposed program does not intend to encompass the entire site, nor does the architecture in-tend to ever fully enclose the individual, the space will remain open, or at least be perceived as "open." Embodiment and architecture also begin to produce a sense of place in terms of ori-entating the individual. "Embodiment is determined by how an architectural form stands, rises, opens and closes, admittance depends on spatial organization in terms of centers, paths, and domains." [21] Without a form of spatial organization the embodiment of the site and the people will be difficult to bring together. "On all environmental levels works of architecture have to possess a spatial order of this kind, which is related to the given natural space as well as the pat-terns of human action." [22]

The program attempts to create a "gathering center," to "stitch" the fabric of the place back together, while simultaneously creating a "community node" that empowers a space, which in turn empowers people, ultimately, creating an experience that establishes a sense of place. This center is a circle that is in continuum, a cycle much like the "cycle of life." It is meant to change with the seasons, and the life that inhabits it.

The cycles and changes begin to create movements within the space, "these kinds of movements…are the precondition for traditions to be re-embedded in new contexts and with-in new territorial units that exceed the limits of shared locales." [23] Movements begin to create traditions, which occur within cultures, and also create an identity, or commonality amongst people. According to Abraham, traditions have the capability to move between generations, but more importantly, through spaces. "They move with people as they make their transitional journeys from old homes to new homes." [24] This suggests that private dwelling has the ability to inform and create identity as well.

To dwell, Heidegger would claim that man and the environment have the ability to co-exist alongside the world. But, it is important to understand that "dwelling is not experienced as man's being; dwelling is never thought of as the basic character of human being." [26] Dwell-ing is a way in which man knows or experiences the world. It is a way for man to identify with his surroundings and vice versa, "the body is not a mere physical entity; it is enriched by both memory and dream, past and future…the world is

reflected on the body, and the body is projected onto the world." [27] There is a dualism that exists between man and world. It is the dualism that fosters man's ability to dwell within a place.

The urban market garden combined with the surrounding context of the neighborhoods has the ability to foster dwelling, specifically private dwelling. The place creates a way for man to come out of his home to know the world, "the house is one of the greatest powers of integration for the thoughts, memories, and dreams of mankind." [28] For it is the experience of a space that creates a sense of place, but it is the actual experience that man has, and takes back with him, to his corner in the world (his home) to ponder, imagine, and daydream about his experiences. This process of knowing the world is the way that dwelling occurs within a place, specifically the urban market garden.

With that being said, why should we care? It is important to understand who we are as people within a place, as a culture. We have begun to loose site of how we, as a society, identify with the places within which we dwell. Detroit, in this specific case has been displaced as a whole. The stigma that it has been stained with has driven the way in which people live and experience Detroit for too long. And, although the proposed thesis does not answer the problem as a whole in terms of the entire city, it does begin to address how the people that live along Grand River can reestablish their identity and relationship to the place they inhabit. It is about the spirit, the identity of the people and the place that is created through their environment. The stigma took many years to alter the experience of the city and displace the identity of its inhabitants, but that does not mean the reversal of the stigma is impossible. It will require an attitude that changes from a "caring about" the city to a "caring for" the place. And that is what this theory, in essence, is attempting to do.

I have described how a stigma that has been stained upon a city can displace the identity of the people, as well as the place itself. I have also analyzed how, with the interaction and adaptation of man, space has the ability to transcend to transcend beyond its limits. But, according to phenomenology this will remain a theory as long as the implementation and experience is absent.

Due to the differentiations between places and cultures this theory cannot be implemented everywhere. This particular analysis is specific to Detroit, mostly because the theory involves the history of the city, as well as the people's history that inhabit it. If one were to implement this same theory in a city such as New York the analysis, and the outcome would be completely different due to the nature of the specific problems that are being questioned in Detroit. And, more importantly one cannot dwell in Detroit the way they would in New York.

In order to reestablish a displaced identity the culture of the place, the space itself, and the architecture must co-exist together alongside the world. Without the above mentioned aspects of a place the environmental character cannot exist, and without an environmental character there is no "genius loci." All of these things work together harmoniously to foster dwelling, and

if man cannot dwell the essence of place does not exist. It is a continuum set into motion by man that creates a never ending cycle within the world. This has a resonating effect on architecture because it is man's way of identifying with the environment, and through architecture the spirit of the place can be perceived and experienced formally. Consequently, all architecture should attempt to define the spirit of the people and the place within which it exists.

precedence

16 [em]powered spaces

ALL OF THE FOLLOWING PRECEDENT STUDIES ARE BASED ON THE NOTION OF TRANSCENDING SPACE. IN THAT EACH PROJECT RESEMBLES A WAY IN WHICH ARCHITECTURE CAN CREATE A SPACE THAT BECOMES A PLACE THROUGH THE INTERACTION OF PEOPLE AND ARCHITECTURE. THIS IN TURN CREATES A CATALYST WHERE PLACE EXISTS TO CREATE A SPACE WITHIN WHICH PEOPLE AND ARCHITECTURE FUSE TOGETHER TO EMPOWER ONE AN-OTHER.

"...traditions move, not just intergenerationally but no

interfaith spiritual center [NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY] boston

...w also through space."
                  - Alsayyad -

interfaith spiritual center - office dA

small scale architecture that empowers -

concept:

    To bring together many people of different religions, both cultural and spiritual orientations where people can pray, reflect, and engage in constructive dialogue.

context / site:

    The project is located in Boston Massachusetts, specifically Northeastern University. This is a space within the university on the second floor of the university. The surrounding context are classrooms and hallways.

scale:

    The interfaith spiritual center is a small room that is divided into smaller spaces to house both private and public dialogues. There is a main area dedicated to public speaking and practice, as well as smaller spaces that are more confined for a more intimate dialogue.

program:

    The center functions as a spiritual center within which many different people from many different religious organizations can come together to share knowledge, experiences and thoughts. It functions as a space to practice ones beliefs, as well as a space to share beliefs. The space is open to both students on the campus and residents in the surrounding area. It offers humble architecture for people to come together and empower one another.

design:

    The space itself is centered within a building so it does not have access to exterior windows or daylighting, and the architects felt that the space needed to capture and celebrate "natural light" they chose to use a translucent material for the walls that resembled windows in order to capture the essence of the natural light. The same goes for the void circles in the ceiling. The space is not lit by any natural light, but uses a backlighting configuration to represent what it would look like.

"In terms of the sense, one of the changes that econom

la boca district [BUENOS AIRES] argentina

...ic globalization has wrought is in the connection between identity and place. ”

- Alsayyad -

la boca district - the people of the city

large scale architecture that empowers -

concept:

> To create a character of a place that reflects the identity of the people who inhabit it.
> "Neighborhoods towns, and regions that have held onto their authentic identities attract us by their
> toughness and individualism" (Speck, 10).

context / site:

>   This is the la boca district in Argentina. It is located on the river plate of the city, hence the name
>   "la boca" which translates to "the mouth of the river." It has a distinct relationship to the industry
>   that supports the district, as well as the river.

scale:

> The district itself is at a smaller scale than a "typical" city, but compared to an architectural project it
> is a large scale design.

program:

> The district functions as both a large tourist attraction, as well as a home to Argentina's shipping
> industry and its people. It aims to create a walkable and economical attraction for its people and its
> visitors.

design:

> The districts ethnic roots which are heavily Italian, and its industrial base which are sailing, shipping, and
> boat repair worked in harmony together to create the identity of the place early on. The neighborhood
> itself is a "proud working class" environment. Part of la boca's identity is also related to the "tango,"
> as well as its self bread soccer team. The people that inhabit la boca are part of what we would refer
> to as a "lower class" - at least economically. Many people begged for materials from local shipping
> industries such as sheet metal and paint to create the facades of their buildings. The colors and the
> character of the place is inherently visible in the images. They exude a confidence and a sense of
> pride in their community. It did not require large sums of money or expensive architecture, only a
> sense of community and an identity that was present among la boca's people.
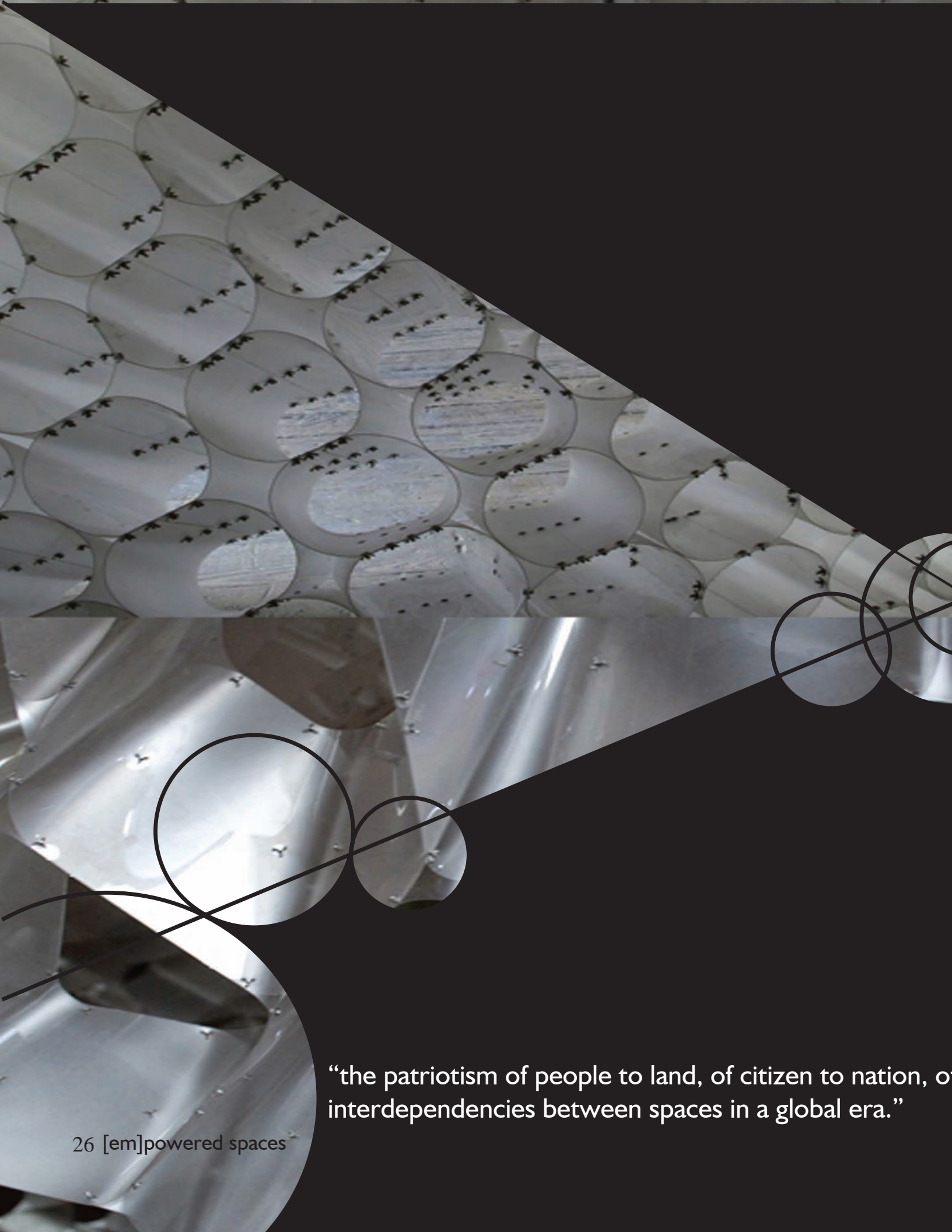
"the patriotism of people to land, of citizen to nation, of interdependencies between spaces in a global era."

voromuro [INSTALLATION] placeless

f self to space - is rendered increasingly unstable by the growing

- Alsayyad -

voromuro installation - office dA

small scale design that questions the meaning of place -

concept:

> To create a receprosity between parametric and structural qualities, as well as a relationship
> between form and fabrication.

context / site:

> Essentially, all installations are placeless because regardless of their reason for creation they are
> temporarry pieces of art. They may house a specific activity or program, but eventually are removed
> from their original place of creation. Voromuro was created for a specific space. The installation is
> located in a civil war era fort in boston that has been converted to a museum. The building has stood
> as a reminder of war for so long, and part of the reason for creating the installation was to transform
> the meaning of the building.

scale:

> Its scale ranges from large to small. It is a dynamic flowing structure that unfolds to
> reveal a wall that undulates into a vaulted dome.

program:

> The district functions as both a large tourist attraction, as well as a home to Argentina's shipping
> industry and its people. It aims to create a walkable and economical attration for its people and its
> visitors.

design:

> The design itself is based on a mathematical diagram. It starts out as a square with a point in the center
> of it. The initial point begins to address other points in the square which in turn begins to manipulate
> its form. The end result being that none of the pieces are the same shape or size. The point creates
> interdependent forms in that each form needs the previous to be created, but no two shapes are the
> same. The installation creates a timeline from past to present, and ultimately making a suggestion
> for the future. If it is considered in the application of the two previous precedent studies we can look
> at it as where we have been, where we are, and where we are going. For example, the la boca district
> is a city that identifies with its people. It has a place and an identity. The interfaith center creates a
> sense of place with the interaction of people. But as for the installation, no matter how many people
> experience or interact with it, it will never create a sense of place for its people because of the very
> nature of an installation. It is meant to transform and manipulate space, not to create a sense of place.
> It is purely an art form that does not address the culture, character, or identity of the people within
> its context, and in my oppinion it begins to address the way we have begun to treat architecture today.

site
circumstance

30 [em]powered spaces

THE LOCATION OF THE SITE MUST BE IN AN URBAN AREA. IT MUST BE LOCATED IN A HEAVILY RESIDENTIAL AREA TO BECOME AN INCUBATOR. IT MUST ALSO ADDRESS THE VARIOUS SEASONAL QUALITIES THAT MICHIGAN HAS, AND MUST ALSO HAVE DIRECT SUNLIGHT IN ORDER FOR THE CROPS TO GROW. THE SITE MUST ALSO BE IN AN AREA THAT RECEIVES A DECENT AMOUNT OF RAINFALL PER SEASON, AS WELL AS HIGHER LEVELS OF HUMIDITY TO ACCOUNT FOR PROPER CROP GROWTH. THERE MUST BE LOCAL SCHOOLS AND BUSINESSES SURROUNDING THE AREA IN ORDER TO HAVE THE SITE AND THE PROGRAM FUNCTION AT MAXIMUM POTENTIAL.

THERE MUST BE AN OBVIOUS LACK OF COMMUNITY AND IDENTITY WITHIN THE AREA IN ORDER TO ADDRESS THE CONCEPT OF "DISPLACED IDENTITY." FOR THE COMMUNITY SUPPORTED GARDENS AND MARKET TO SUSTAIN ITSELF THERE THE LOCATION MUST ALSO HAVE A LARGE UNEMPLOYMENT RATE, IN ADDITION TO A SHORTAGE OF FOOD SERVICES IN THE AREA. MOST IMPORTANTLY, THERE MUST BE EVIDENTIAL SUPPORT THAT THE COMMUNITY WAS NOT DOING WELL, BUT DUE TO AN INCREASE IN INFILL AND ATTENTION TO THE AREA IT WOULD SUGGEST THAT SOMEONE DOES "CARE," AND THERE ARE PEOPLE TAKING AN INITIATIVES WITHIN AND AROUND THE SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES.

site
criteria

THE SITE ITSELF MUST HAVE THE ABILITY TO INTERACT AND ADAPT — NOT ONLY WITH THE ARCHITECTURE — BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY WITH THE PEOPLE WHO INHABIT IT. IT WILL BE THE INTER[ACTION] WITH THE CULTURE THAT FACILITATES THE SITES ABILITY TO BE "EXPERIENCED" AS A "PLACE". THE SITE, AS WELL AS THE ARCHITECTURE MUST HAVE THE ABILITY TO RECOGNIZE AND "HOUSE" THE PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE. IN THAT IT MUST BE ABLE TO RELATE TO WHAT AND HOW IT WAS WITH WHAT IT HAS BECOME. ESSENTIALLY, THE MANIFESTATION OF THE SITES HISTORY MUST PRESENT ITSELF IN ORDER TO CREATE AN INTERACTION BETWEEN THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE PLACE.

ALONG WITH THE ABOVE MENTIONED CRITERIA IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO CONSIDER THE SITES PHYSICAL ATTRIBUTES. AN URBAN CONTEXT WILL PROMOTE THE CENTER, OR THE POINT AT WHICH THE SITE AND THE ARCHITECTURE HAVE THE ABILITY TO GATHER PEOPLE AS WELL AS ITS SURROUNDINGS. A NATURAL CONTEXT IS ALSO IMPORTANT TO CONSIDER IN TERMS OF THE IDENTITY OF THE SITE. IN THAT HISTORICALLY, NATURE WAS THE DETERMINING ASPECT OF SETTLEMENT. IT IS ALSO IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND THAT NATURE IS NOT ONLY NECESSARY FOR OUR EXISTENCE, BUT THAT IT IS AND ALWAYS HAS BEEN A PART OF OUR LIVED-WORLD. THE NATURAL ASPECT WILL ALSO BE ESSENTIAL IN HELPING TO DEFINE "URBAN FARMING" — WHICH IS AN ASPECT THAT THIS THESIS IS CONSIDERING.

IT MAY ALSO PROVE TO BE BENEFICIAL TO THE THESIS THAT SUSTAINABILITY BE CONSIDERED IN THE SELECTION OF THE SITE, AS WELL AS THE EXISTING ARCHITECTURE WITHIN THE SITE. IT WILL MORE SO ADDRESS SUSTAINABLE CONCEPTS, SUCH AS USING LOCAL MATERIALS AND FARMING WITHIN THE COMMUNITY — NOT NECESSARILY "GREEN DESIGN".

THE PROGRAM HAS BEGUN TO EMERGE THROUGH THE ARTICULATION OF THE CIRCUMSTANCE AND THE CRITERIA OF THE SITE. IT IS A GATHERING CENTER — A POINT AT WHICH SOCIETY COMES TOGETHER TO NOT ONLY INTERACT, BUT TO ALSO GAIN KNOWLEDGE AND RE[IDENTIFY] WITH THE FABRIC OF THE COMMUNITY. THIS THESIS IS LENDING ITSELF TO AN EXPLORATION OF A MARKET PLACE WITH A DIRECT CONNECTION TO AN URBAN FARM, AS WELL AS A LARGER VENDER WITHIN THE LOCAL AREA. THE MARKET WILL FACILITATE THE NOTION OF BRINGING A COMMUNITY TOGETHER, AND THE URBAN FARM WILL INCORPORATE THE IDEALS OF SUSTAINABILITY.
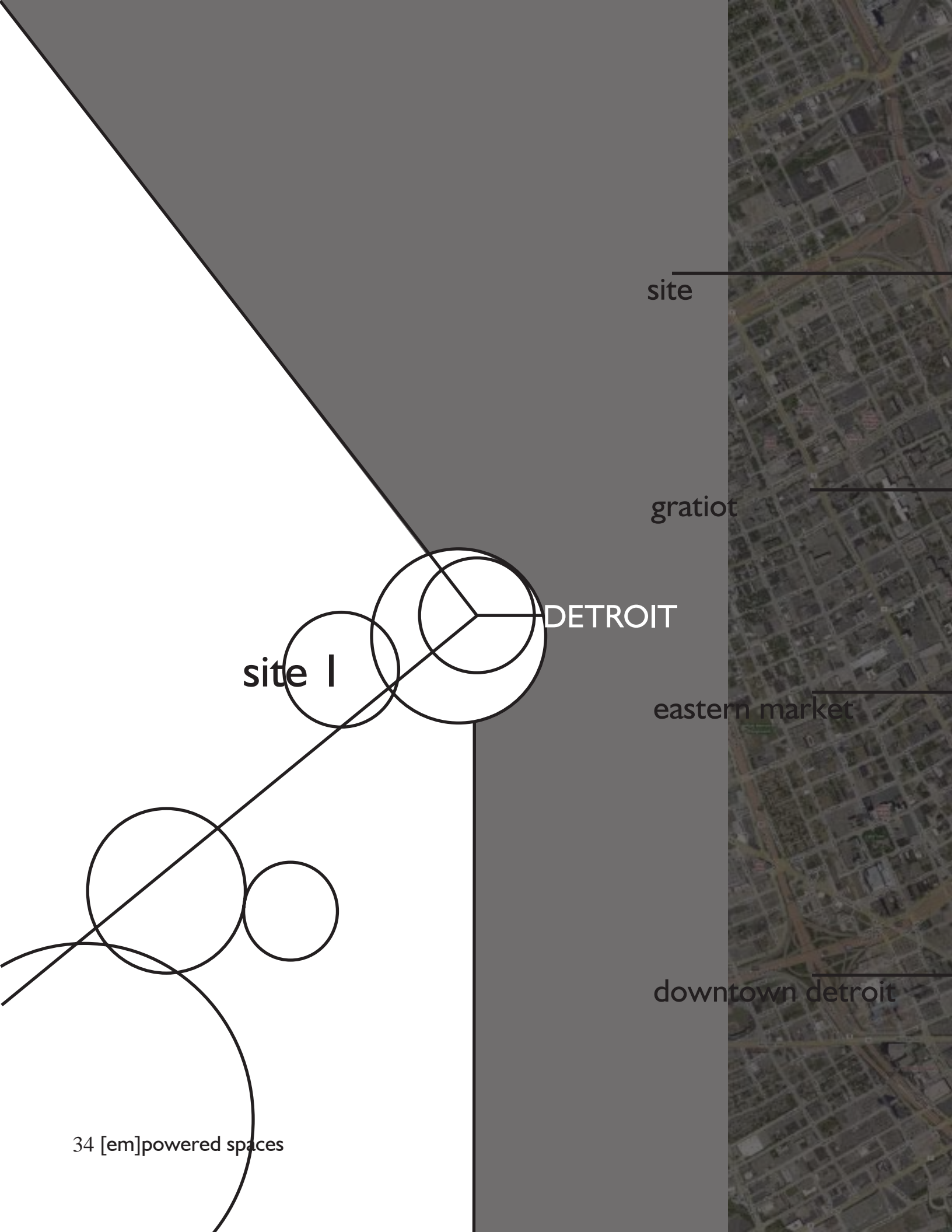
site

gratiot

DETROIT

site 1

eastern market

downtown detroit

34 [em]powered spaces

site 1

analysis

The major reason for choosing not to use this site was due to its close proximity to Eastern Market. The project type is an urban market with community supported gardens, so the site met all of the criteria, but the context did not. I originally thought that it would be beneficial to be near Eastern Market because its selling days for fruits and vegetables are only on the weekends, so there could have been a collaborative effort between the residents of the area and Eastern Market in terms of use, and selling conditions.

This site is located in a more rural area on the eastern side of the city. It met many of the circumstantial and criteria requirements for the project such as:

It includes a vast open area of green space that was inherently necessary for gardens and green space.

It is surrounded by a fairly dense residential area on all four sides which supports the idea of CSA [community supported agriculture].

There is a school in close proximity to the site which would help to facilitate the need for students to not only participate in cultivating the land, but also to study sustainability by learning how to plant, grow and maintain a garden to feed themselves as well as to earn a profit from it.

The site itself has wetlands located on the actual site which promoted the notion of sustainability and could be useful in collecting rainwater to use for irrigation as well as drinking.

38 [em]powered spaces

This study was done in an attempt to analyze the site within its context. How the surround-
ing areas could become part of the network that the node begins to address. In addition it was
looking at what functional aspects existed around the site itself [eg: zoning, walkability, etc...].
It was also used to find out "potentially" the distance this node would radiate out from its
central location.

The circles represent the network that the node begins to create.

The red blocks represent local businesses in the area that line the main
thoroughfare that accesses the site.

The site becomes a node in the center of a network.

The yellow areas are residential blocks that will work to become incubators.

The black areas represent industrial, commercial, and institutional areas.

[In the end I wound delving into Detroit's history a little more and finding that Western Market
used to exist on the West side of the city, which was destroyed to make way for the Chrysler
freeway so my interests began to shift slightly.]
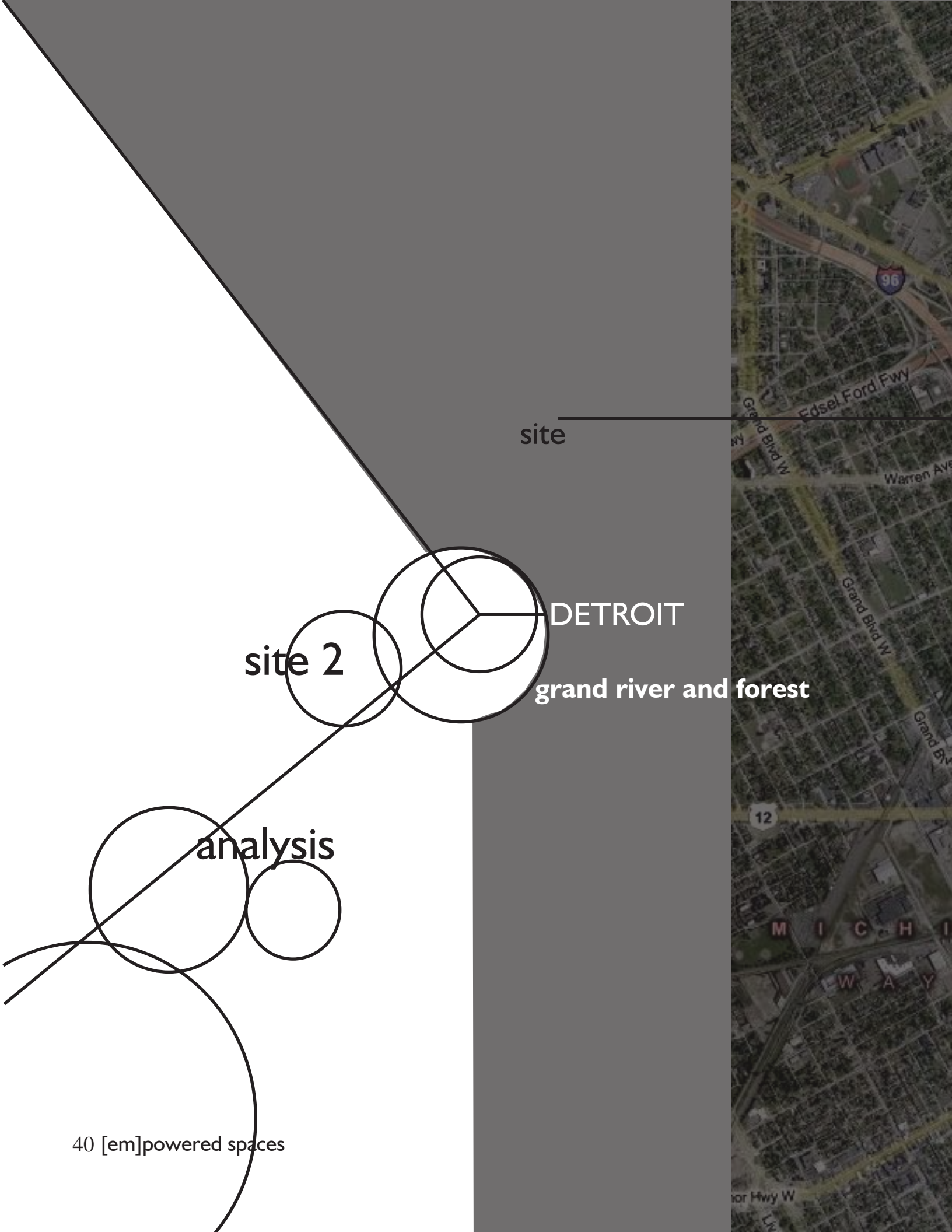
site

DETROIT

grand river and forest

site 2

analysis

40 [em]powered spaces

transcending space
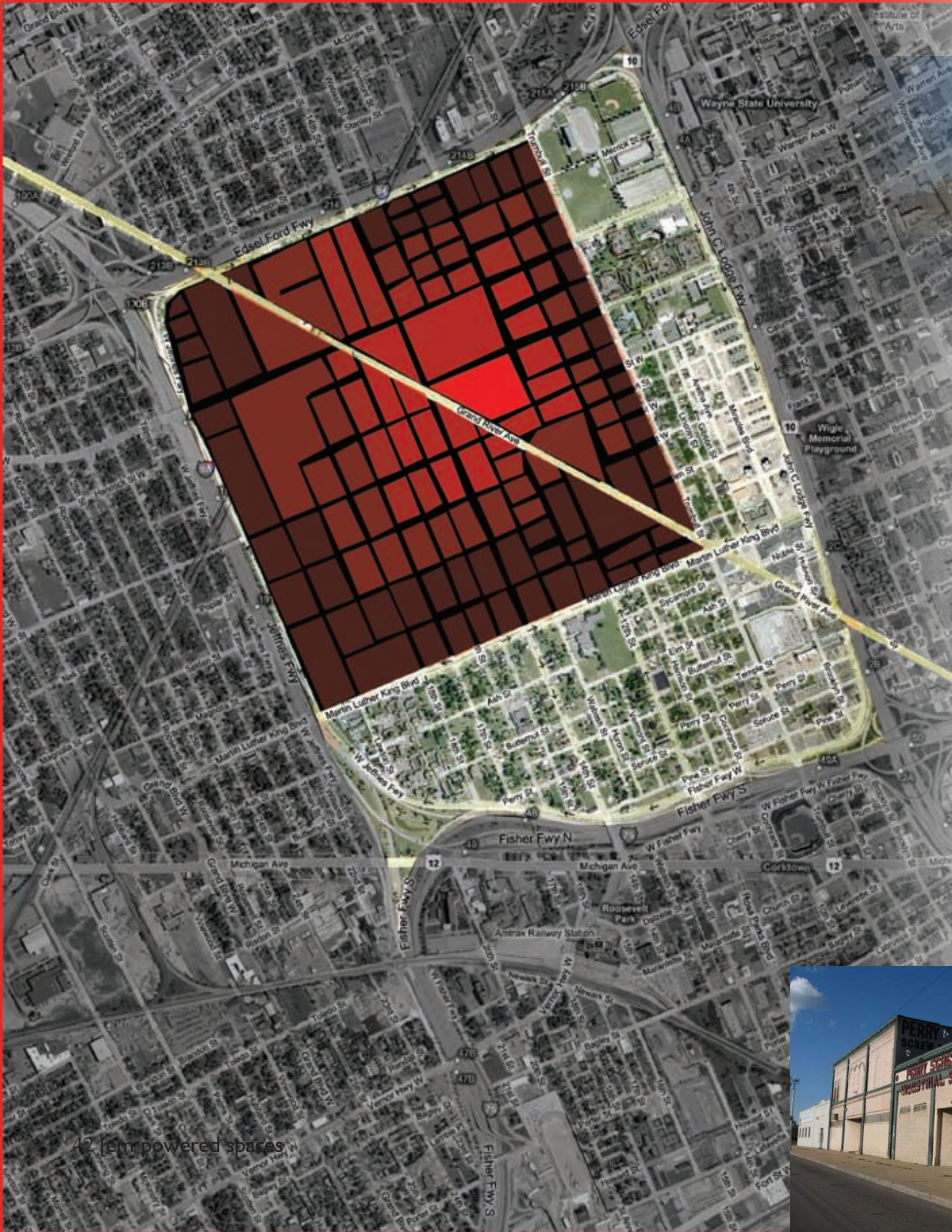
42 [em powered spaces

The site is located along grand river between forest and warren. The brightest red area is the actual site, and the fading red blocks around the site are residential blocks. The purpose of the fading is to establish the walkability of the area. The brownish - red colored blocks are furthest away from the site, and the more vibrant areas resemble the blocks in closest vicinity to the site.

Grand River runs along the southwest edge of the site and creates a boundary between the neighborhoods to the northeast and southwest of the site.

The neighborhood to the northeast is dense and has a sense of community. The neighborhood to the southwest is much less dense with areas of infill.
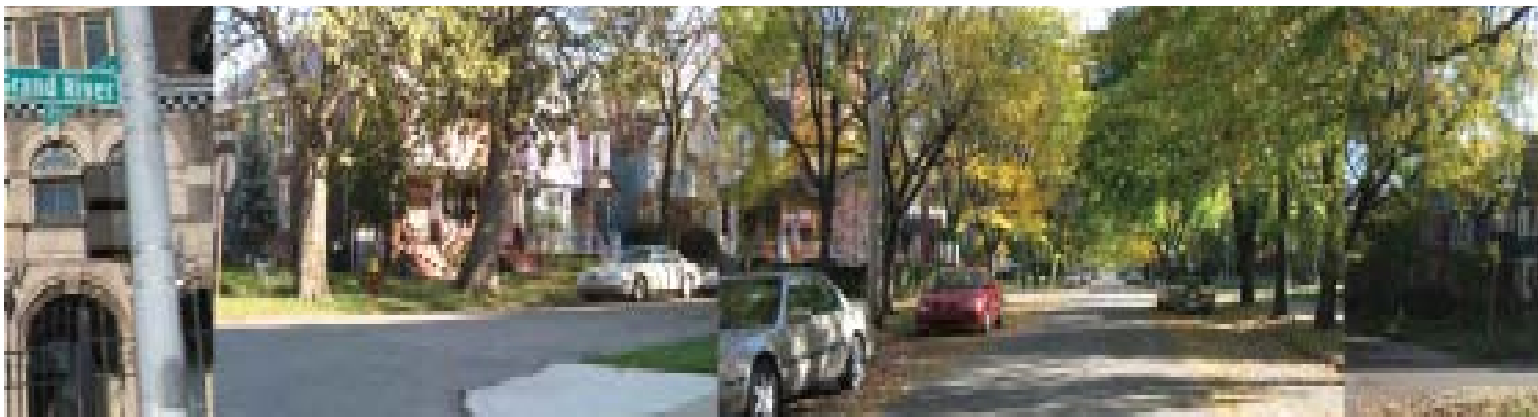
images of the neighborhoods northeast of the site

images of the neighborhoods southwest of the site

images of the actual site and surrounding buildings

conceptual
site analysis
studies

EACH STUDY IN THE FOLLOWING PAGES SPEAKS TO BOTH THE ATTITUDE OF THE SITE AS WELL AS THE
EXPERIENCE IN TERMS OF ITS EMOTIONAL ASPECTS. IT ATTEMPTS TO ANALYZE THE HISTORY OF THE SITE – ITS
EVOLUTION FROM 1949 TO THE
PRESENT. EACH INDIVIDUAL STUDY TAKES INTO CONSIDERATION BOTH THE DENSITY IN TERMS OF THE BUILT
ENVIRONMENT, AS WELL AS THE DENSITY IN TERMS OF ACTUAL PEOPLE.

ITS ABOUT WHERE THE SITE HAS BEEN, WHERE IT IS CURRENTLY AND WHERE IT CAN GO. EACH MODEL IS A
REPRESENTATION OF AN EXPERIENTIAL ANALYSIS OF THE BOUNDARIES AND BORDERS OF THE SITE THAT HAS BEEN
CREATED THROUGHOUT ITS HISTORY

context

grand river
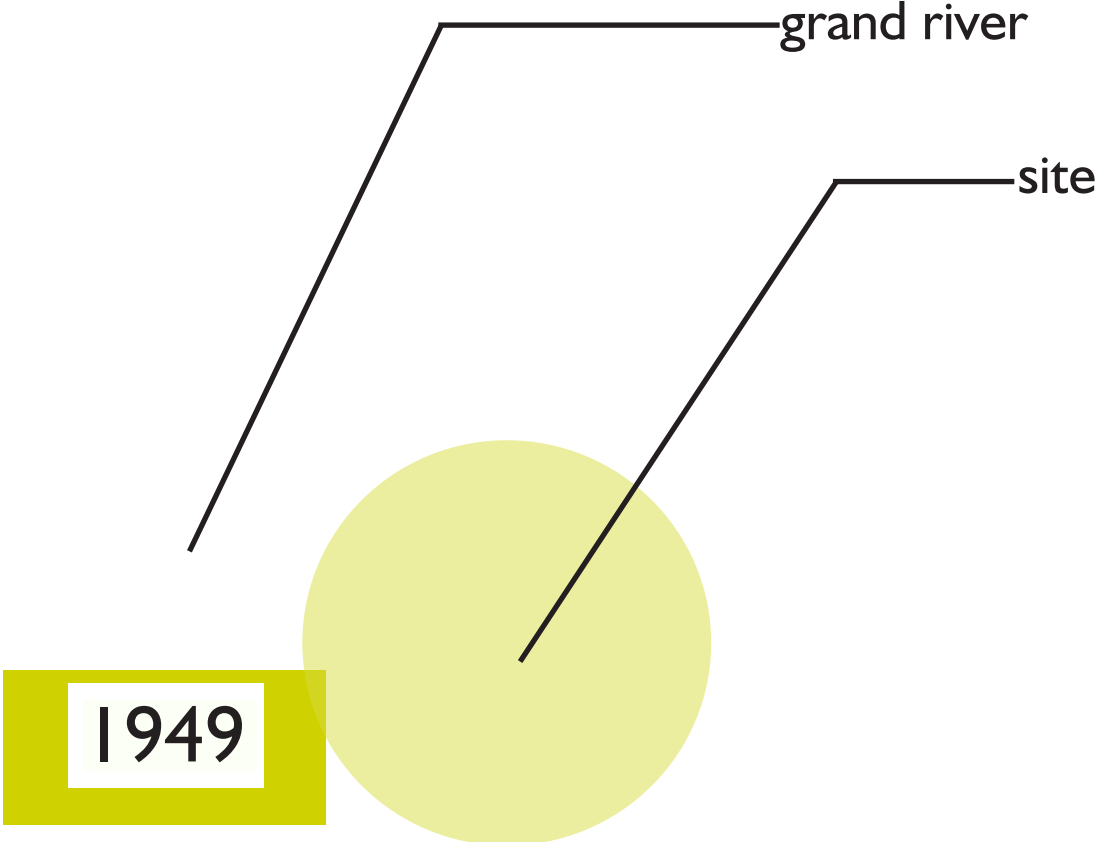
site

1949

In 1949 the site was flourishing - the city was in the peak of its industrial glory, and many people were moving in and around the city. It was a desirable place to be due to the high demand in jobs that the automotive industry created.

As you can see in the image to the left each block was so heavily populated there was not room for much of anything else. At this point in time the city was incredibly dense, and residents were beginning to run out of space - especially green space in the area.

The model begins to look at Grand River the road that is highlighted green in the image to the left. Then it was a narrow two lane road that was a direct connection from the North of the city to the South (downtown). The districts on either side were closely knit and surrounded by a diverse, and incredibly dense residential core. There was a clear connection between the two sides and Grand River did not interrupt that. The model speaks to that gesture in that the area had no boundaries, there were no difficulties in people coming together to interact with one another. At this point in time there was also an Eastern, Western, and Central market in Detroit due to the immense size of the city. The city is large, but it was full of life and although incredibly dense, it was "open" in terms of its accessibility with people and functional aspects. It is really the options, and choices that were available to the people at the time. It is important to note that I am not suggesting that I know what it what it was like to live during that time, but by studying the changes in the site, as well as various sources it has been suggested.
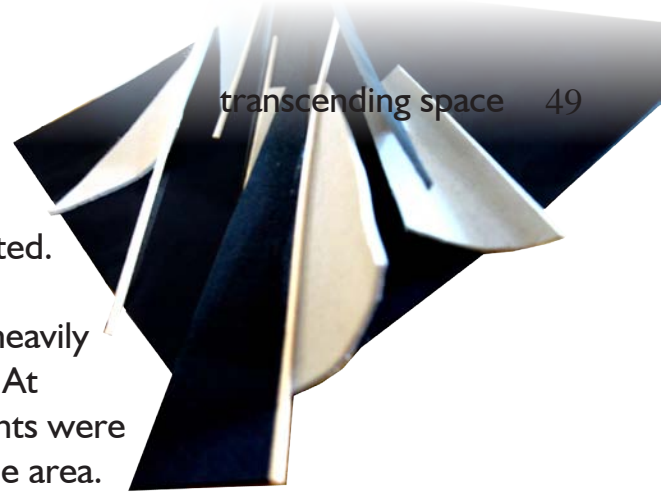
context

grand river

site

1956

1956
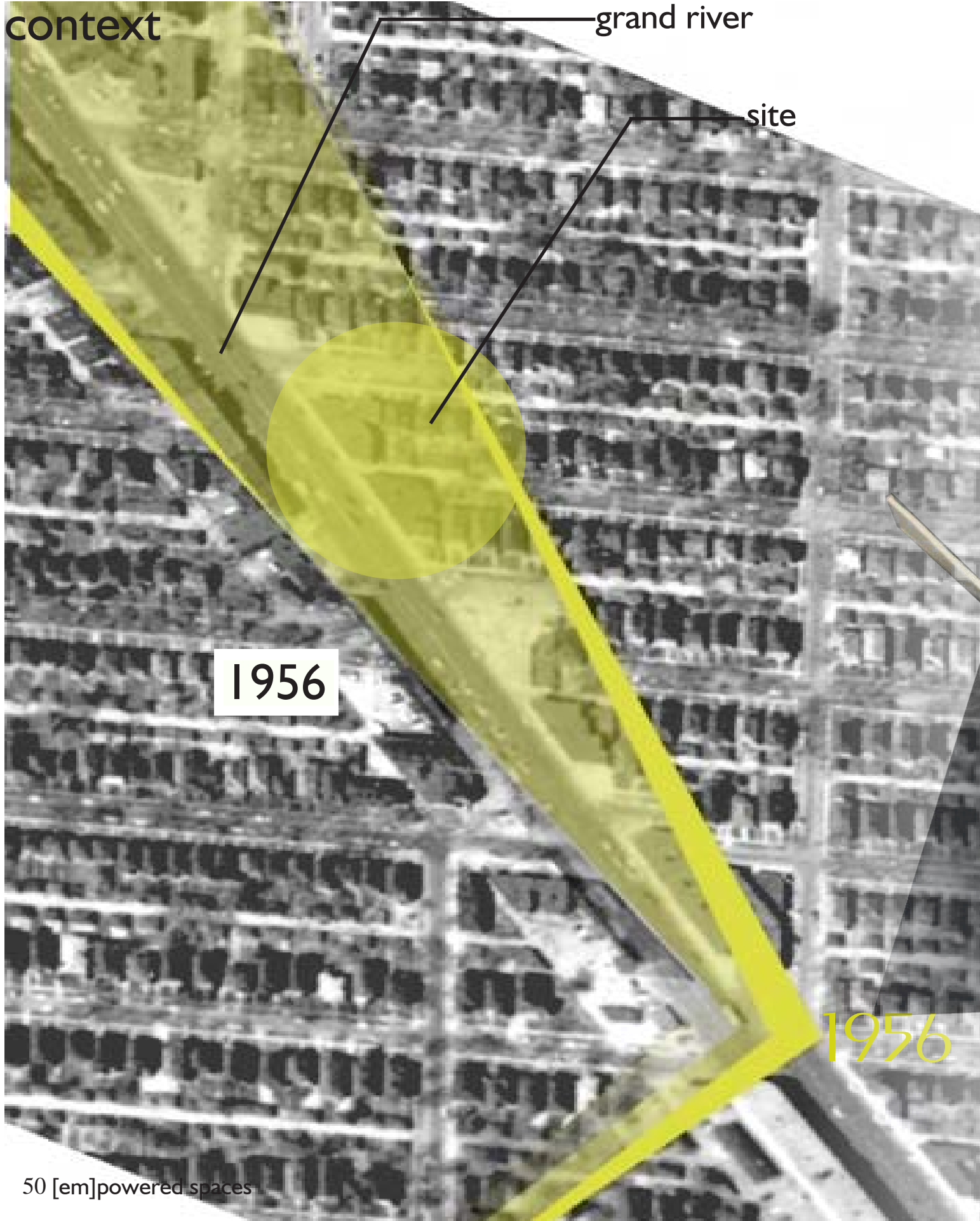
In 1956 the density of the area was at its maximum. Each block was at full capacity in terms of housing. The city itself was cramped an people started to look elsewhere to find "space" and relaxation. So the "sprawl" began, starting with the motor companies big wigs to move further away from their jobs. It started with retreats, or vacation homes, and then it turned into everyday living. Many people began to feel the same within the city so they started to move outward, expanding their options in terms of green space and freedom from the city.

At the same time the automotive industry was still thriving in the city, and major thoroughfares were widened to handle the increased amount of vehicles on the roads. Grand River was also widened from a two-lane road to a four-lane "highway" almost. It was one of the main connection points that enabled people to get from what had been coined as the "suburbs" to the city. So, people were still moving through the area, but the desire to actually live in the city was dwindling.

The model below begins to address that notion of density, and the increase in sprawl. With the widening of Grand River the separation between the northeast side of the site, and the southwest was also increasing. The road began to create a barrier, from both its size as well as the speed at which traffic began to pass. It was fairly difficult to move from one side to the other.

The model speaks to both this shift in density as well as the boundary that has begun to emerge from Grand River. It is reaching out from the center to the people - asking for a sense of community that it was inherently beginning to lose.

context

grand river
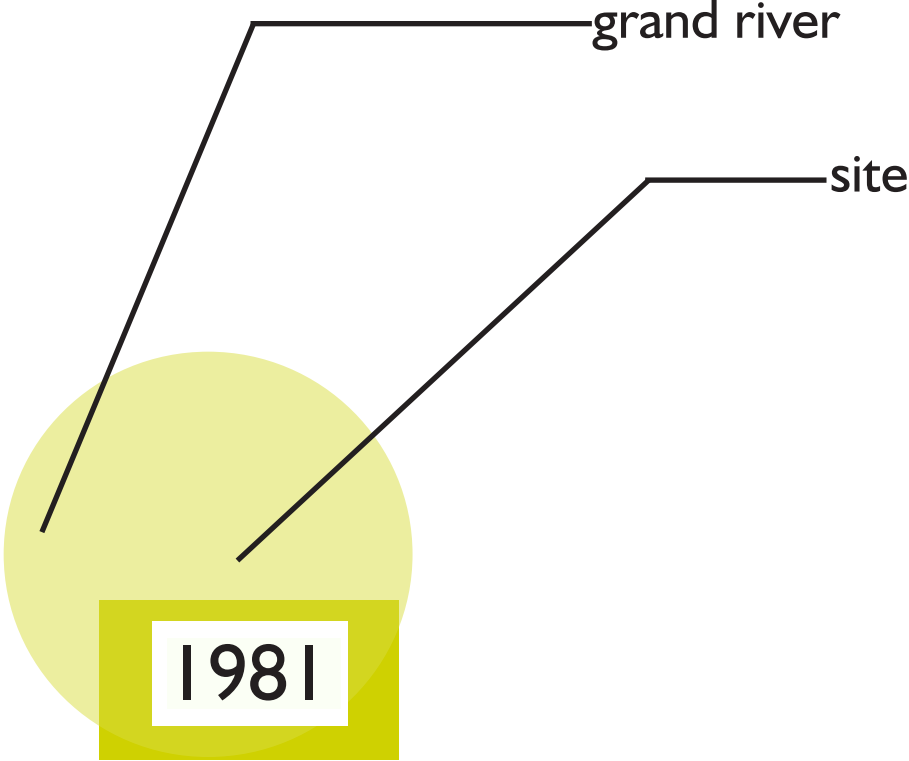
site

1981

In 1981 the decrease in density, and the increase in commercial and industrial buildings was apparent. This was after the riots that began in the late 60's and continued through to the 70's. The site in particular [which is highlighted in green] was "empty." Most of the housing was either lost to fire, or left abandoned. The city had crashed, and it was no longer was a safe and desirable place to live, or conduct business. It was fading like quick sand.

With the residents sprawling to the north, the business began to move also. Taking jobs and people with them, leaving behind individuals that could either not afford to or did not want to leave. During this period of time was also when the mental health facilities began to close their doors. This left many without homes or jobs, and so began Detroit's every increasing problem with hopelessness.

Due to all of the issues mentioned above the site was doomed, in that it would never again be what it was twenty-some years ago. So it began to ask the question - does it want to be that again? Should we ignore what it has become due to events that have transpired, or do we acknowledge where it was and [re]define what it could be in the future?

The model speaks to those questions in terms of the absence of active life as well as the boundary that now exists between the two sides of the site. It has started to become a fortress, keeping all that they possible could out - even their neighbors. Bars started going up on windows and doors to prevent burglary and theft, people lived in fear of the night, hoping that their homes would not fall victim to arson, or vandalism.

The city lost its vivaciousness, its charisma and its active life force that was once the way that so many yearned to be like. In turn, the formal aspects of all of this began to develop in a conceptual model form.
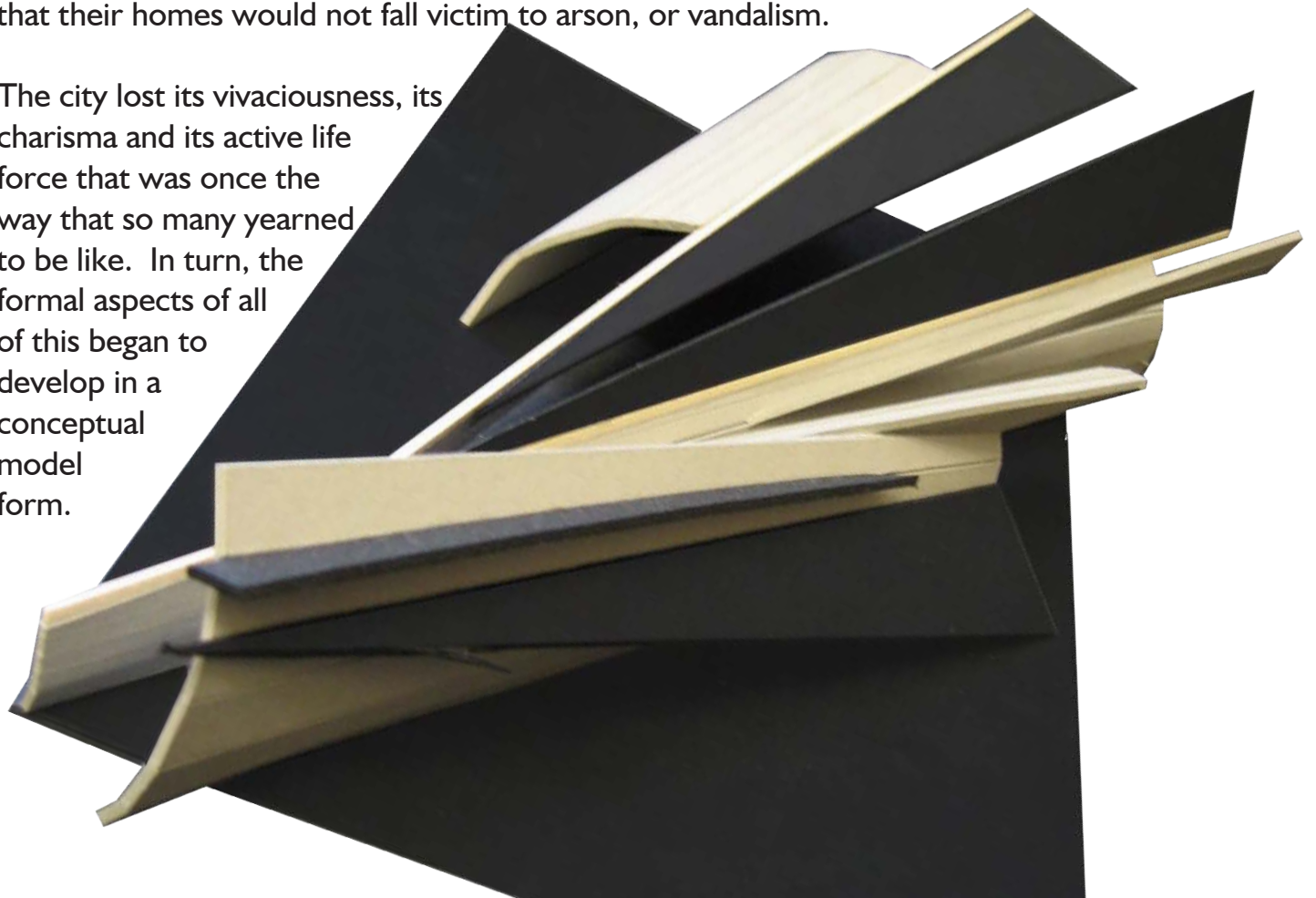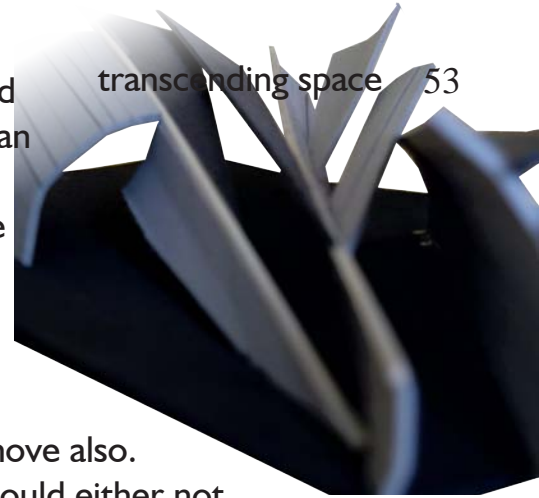
context
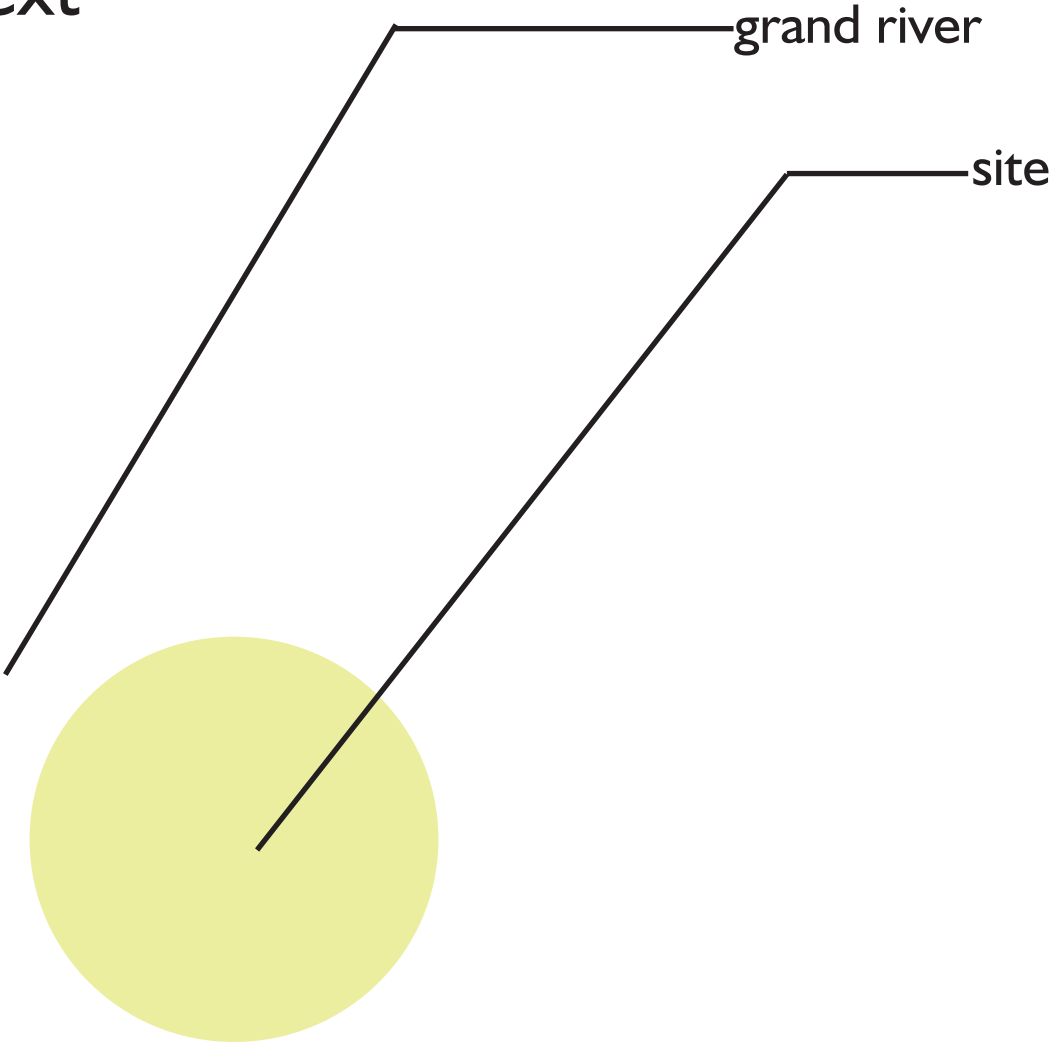
grand river

site

2006
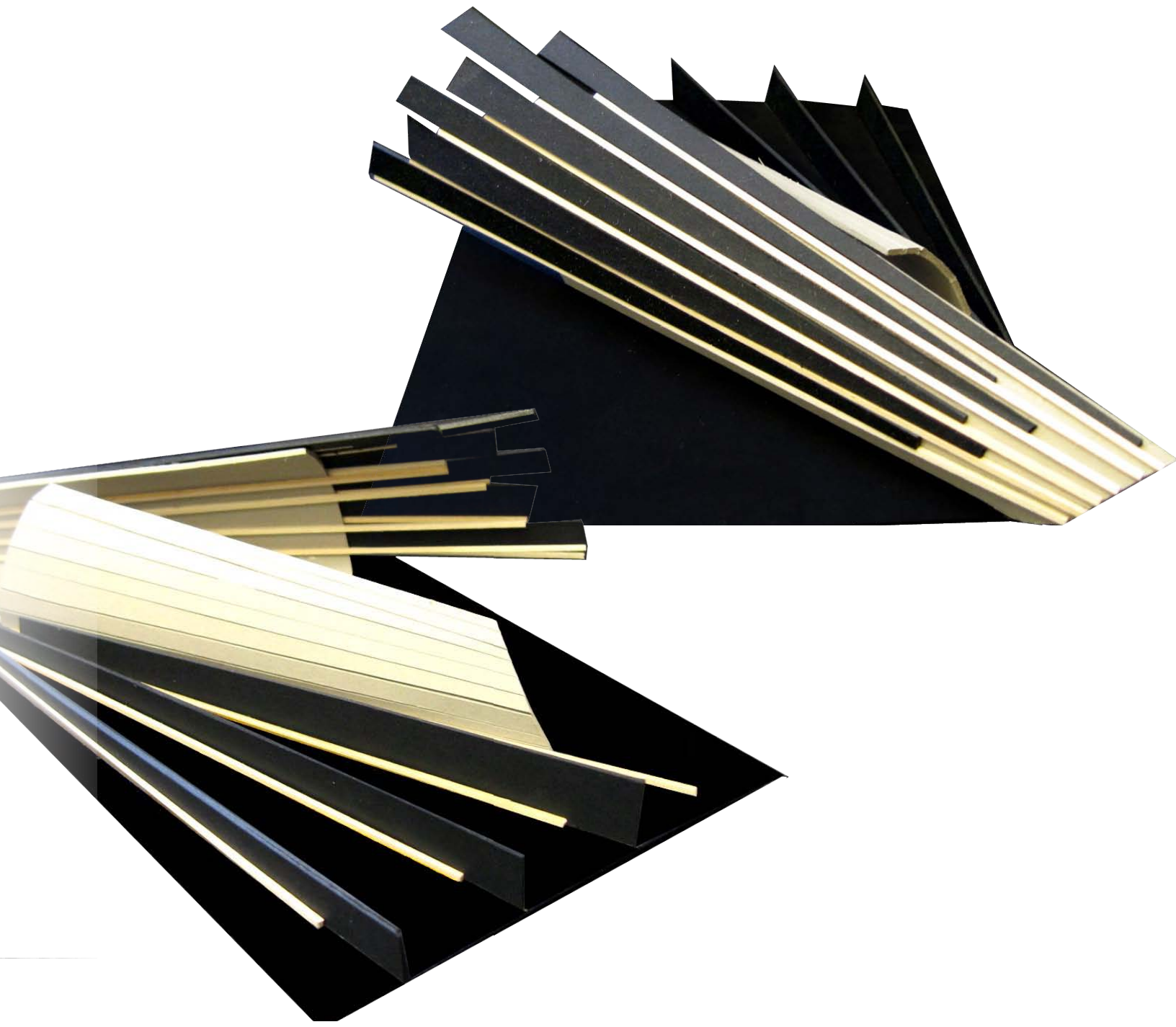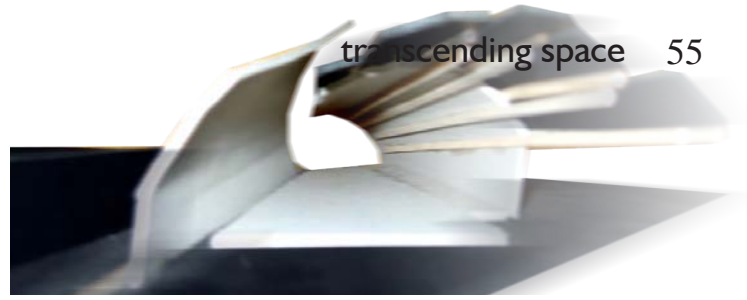
This model speaks to the site and its surrounding context. It begins to look at the street wall on either side of Grand River, as well as the "tear" that it creates between the two sides of the site. The white and the black are representative of density. The black represents the more heavily populated residential areas, and the white represents the more sparse areas. It also begins to question the ease to which an individual can cross the street to gain access to either the site, or the few commercial buildings that exist on the opposite side of the street.
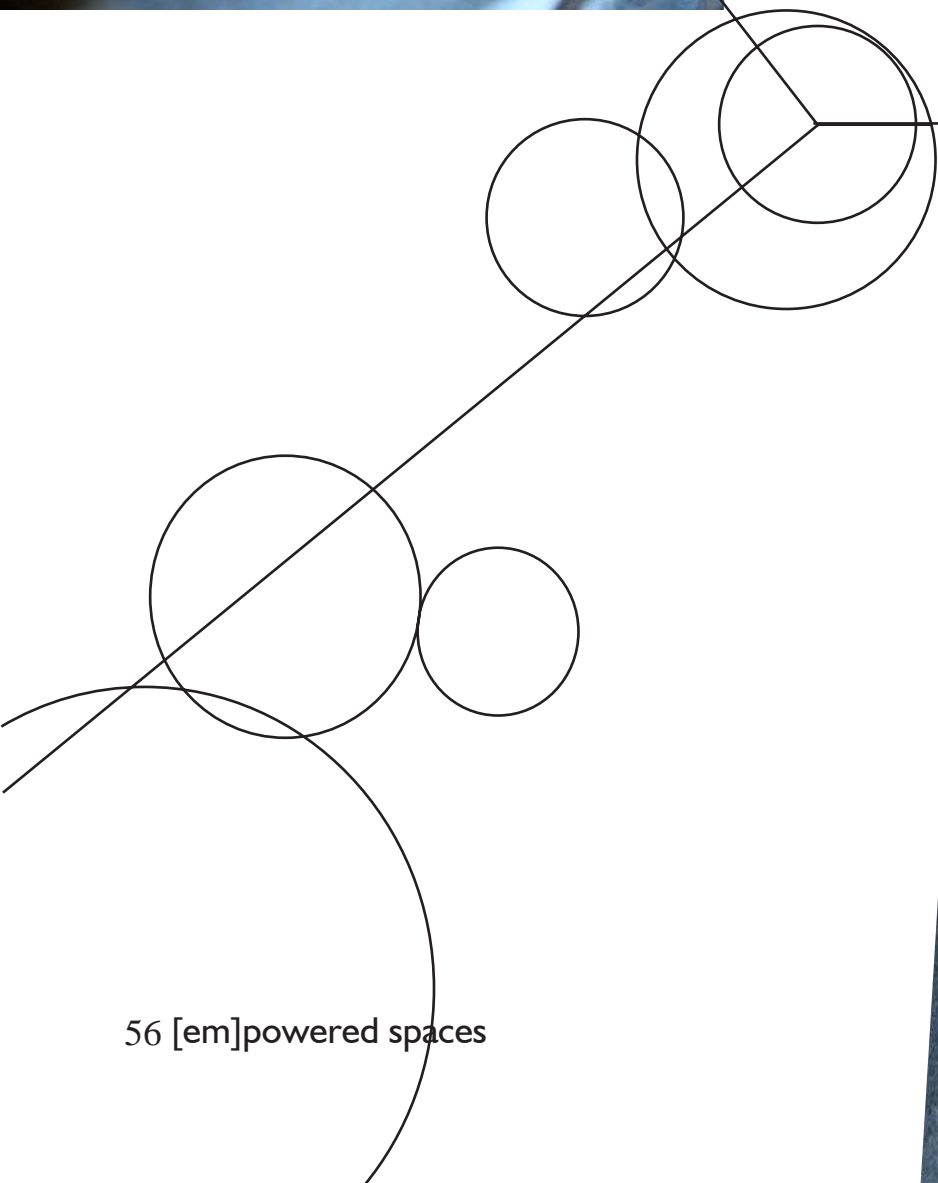
This model looks specifically at the site and the ease to which it can be accessed. There is a fence that borders all but one side of the site, inherently closing it off along the main thoroughfare and the school to the North. Yet, with the one side open it leaves the site vulnerable to use due to the fact that although it is private property, it is still accessible. It also questions the ease to which an individual has in terms of utilizing the site, and the green space that exists on it. The ground plane is uneven and difficult to walk on, and due to its immense size, it is also difficult for people traveling along Grand River to see someone using the site. This makes it dangerous to people that do attempt to use the site for its vast open green space.
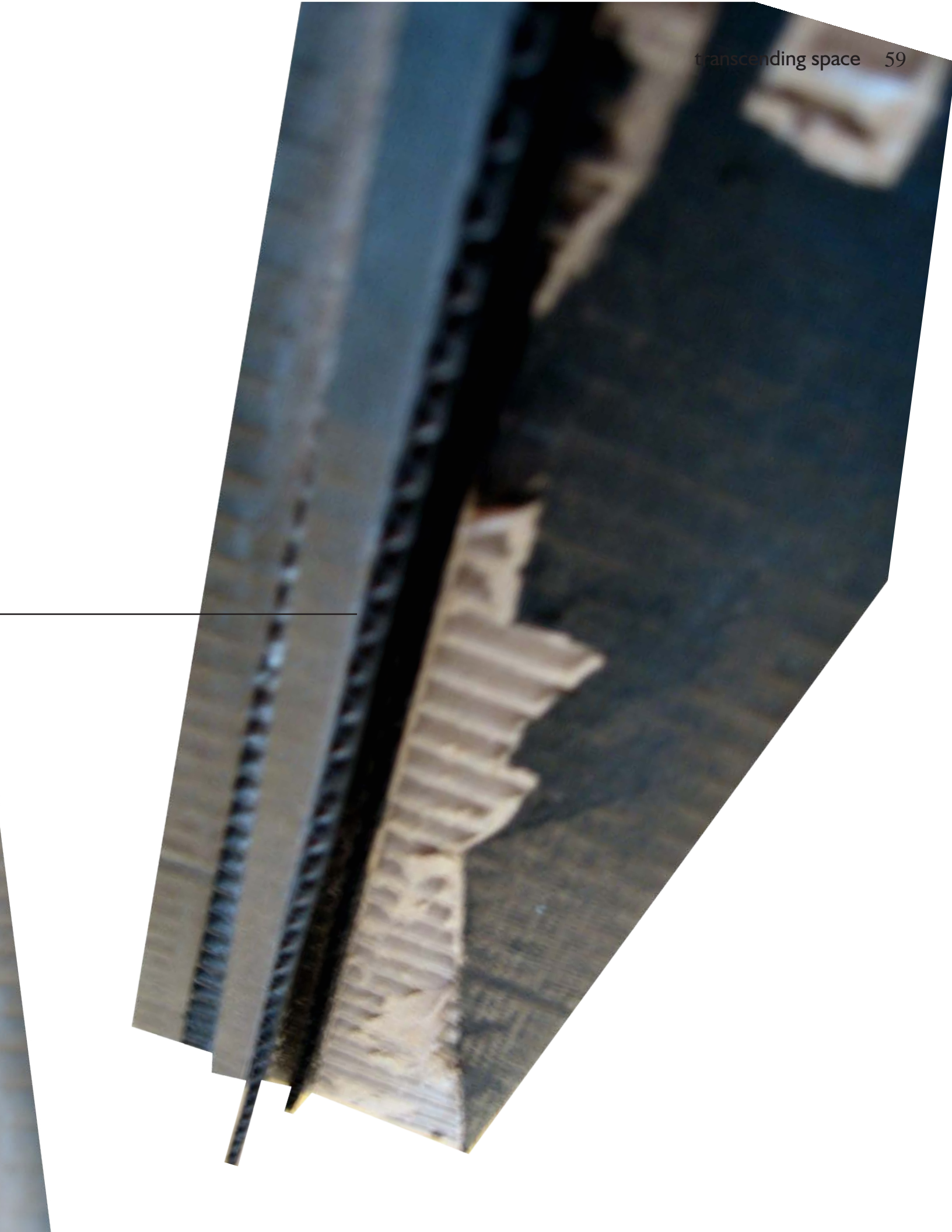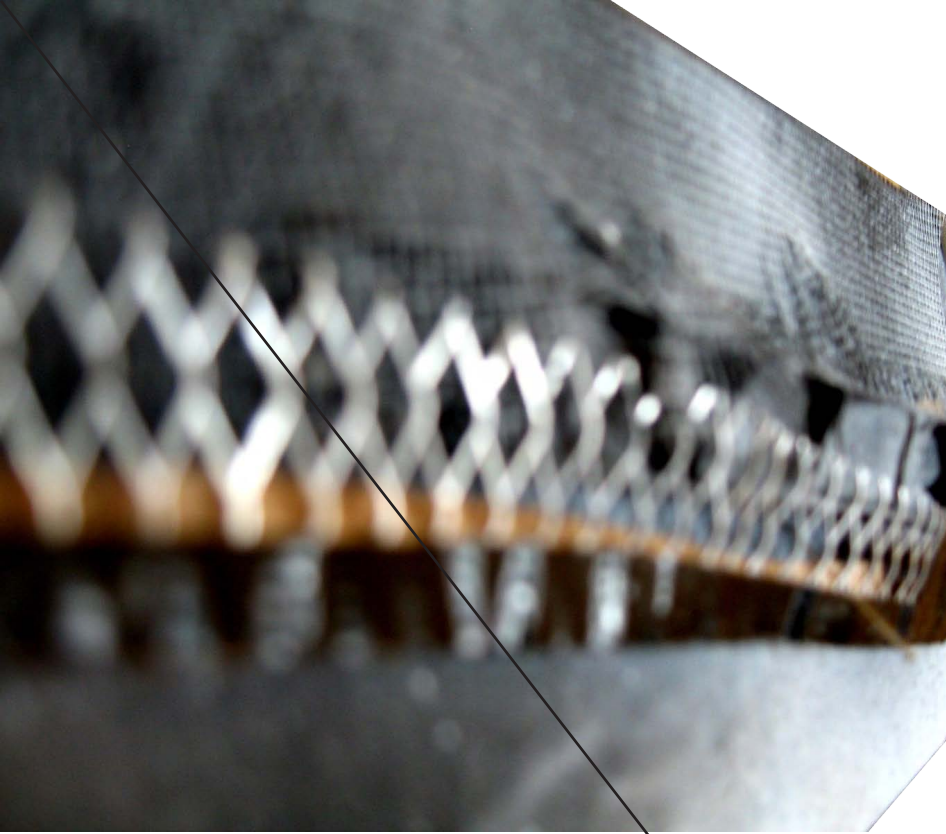
This model speaks to the ease at which the site currently joins to the surrounding neighborhoods. Due to the fact that the site is fenced in, and the fact that the blocks that are located directly around the site are vacant its connection to the surrounding community is vague and incoherent. This model also begins to take into account the social fabric of the area. There are not many people that use the surrounding area on foot or bike, it is mainly traveled by car [which is of course typical for Detroit]. In addition to that, the social fabric in terms of community is also torn between the two side of the site, as well as the local business and schools surrounding the area.

60 [em]powered spaces
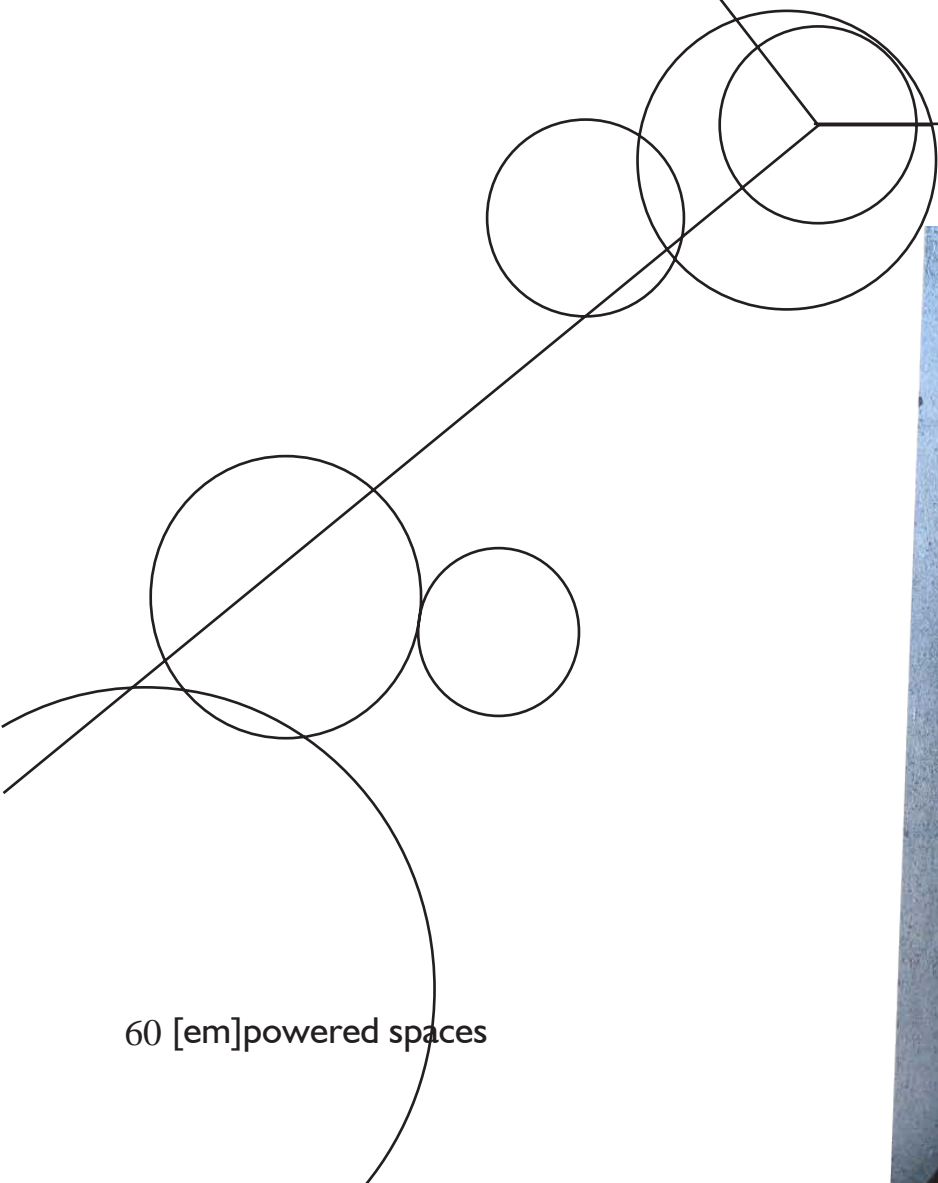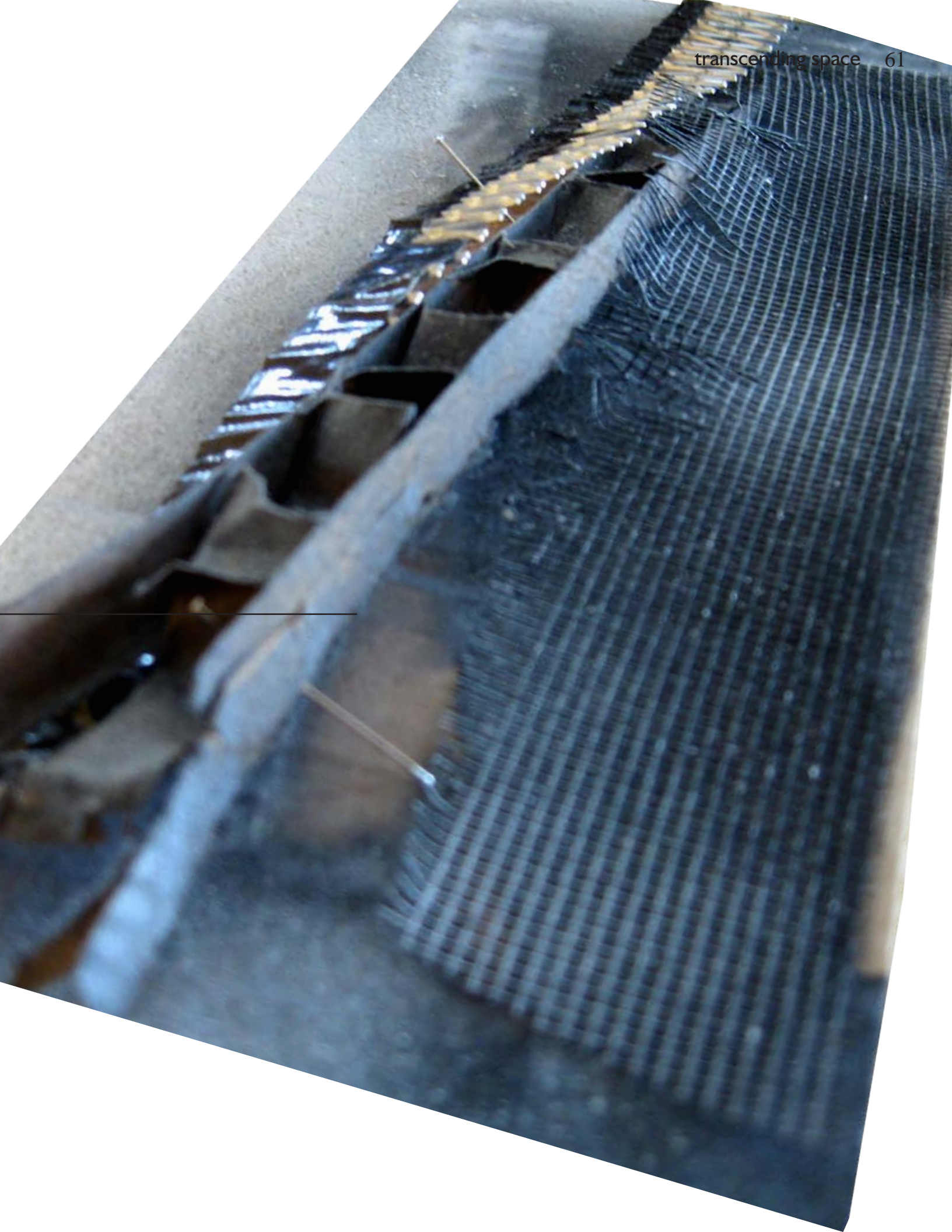
This model and the few pages that follow it are looking deeper into the socail fabric and what it was like to experience the disconnect between the surrounding areas of the site. This model in particular was addressing the void of people in the area. The schools surrounding the residential areas were unapproachable, and vacant. The communities on either side had a few people here and there, but for the most part the place was void of a spirit, or life it seemed at some points.
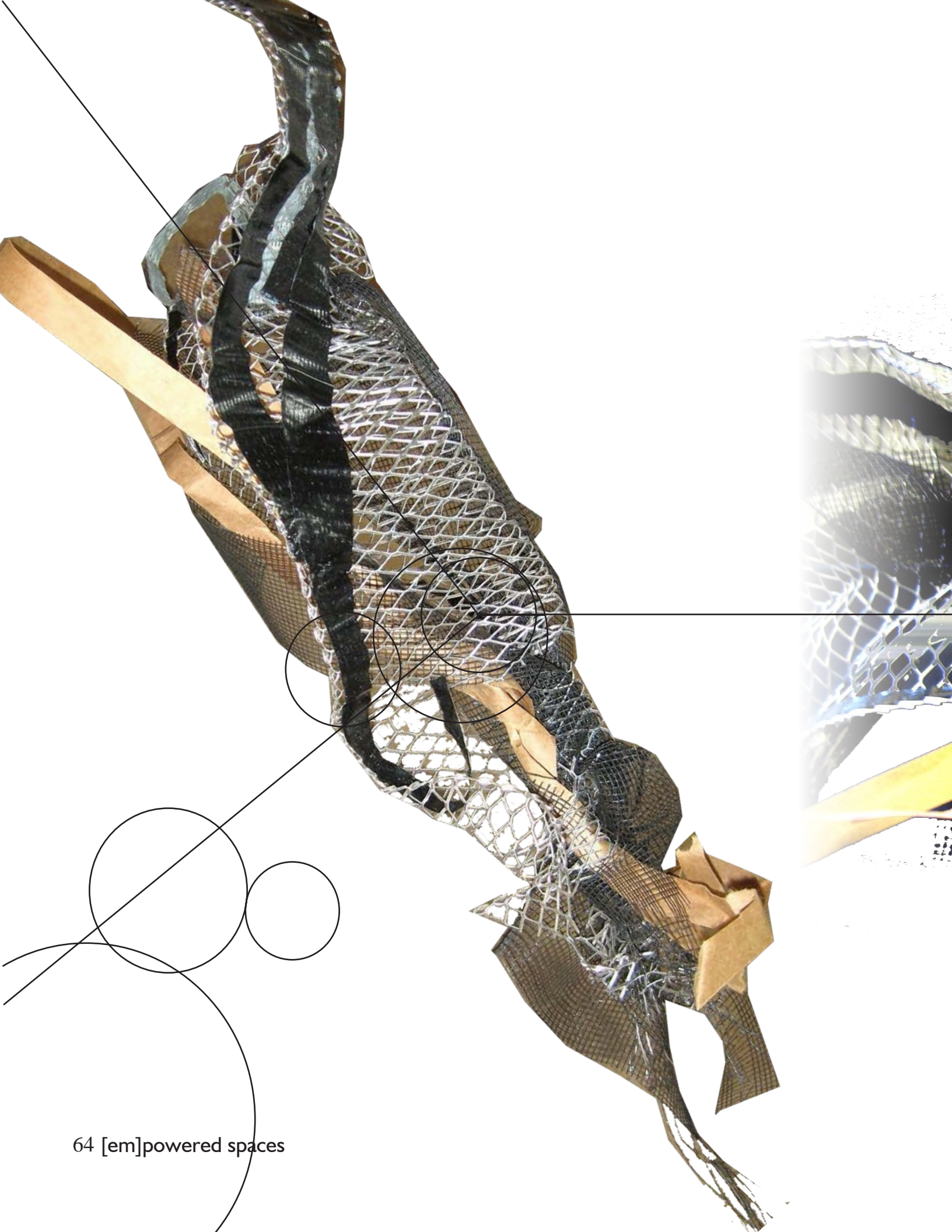
This model looks directly at the various cross roads in the area and identifies where each meet, or open up to the site. The places on the site where that occurs are reflected in the model where the material bunches together, and then opens up to reveal an inner material that also extends the length of the model. The material was also chosen carefully to represent the feeling of the site. Cold, hard and dark except where there was a quick passerby, or some instance where a person passed on foot or bike.

This model speaks to the social disconnect in the area. The edges that are hardly traveled which are unclean and unkept. It also addresses the clear boundaries and barriers that exist throughout the surrounding context. Many individuals have fences around their homes and property, in addition to bars on the windows [I am aware that this is also typically found in Detroit and many other large cities]. This is the point at which the sense of community and pride was lost. It did not have an inviting welcoming feeling, nor was there one individual out experiencing the day. The wall with the clear boundaries on one side represents the neighborhood fences, and the torn, jagged edges on the other represent the areas that are less clearly defined by an apparent boundary, so the boundary line is less clear.

schematic
design
development

The following pages are images of the schematic design, and design development phase. Schematic design had a large impact on the design development phase where the formal aspects were carried through. Each are detailed as to what is being referred to.

The evolution of the form transpired from the site analysis studies. It speaks to the history, the movement, and the barriers that had begun to emerge from the experiential attitude of the area.

The form is a growth, a manipulation of an experiential interpretation of how the site, and the attitude of the site felt to walk through. It addresses the notions of both barrier and growth. The beams begin to fold out of the site to express the the notion of growth from the ground upwards. Its dynamism is attributed the changes [both positive and negative] that the site has gone through over the course of its history. The light that is transmitted through the openings of each beam speaks to the movement of the people, the society and its identity. It is vivid and bright, yet diffused and sparse in some areas.

The initial concept behind the form was to express the above mentioned experiential factors together within one "space," to delve into ideals that are difficult to interpret through words, but are immediately felt by walking taking each stride step-by-step. It is both open and closed, expressing the notion that one could immediately experience by passing through or by the site.

formal evolution
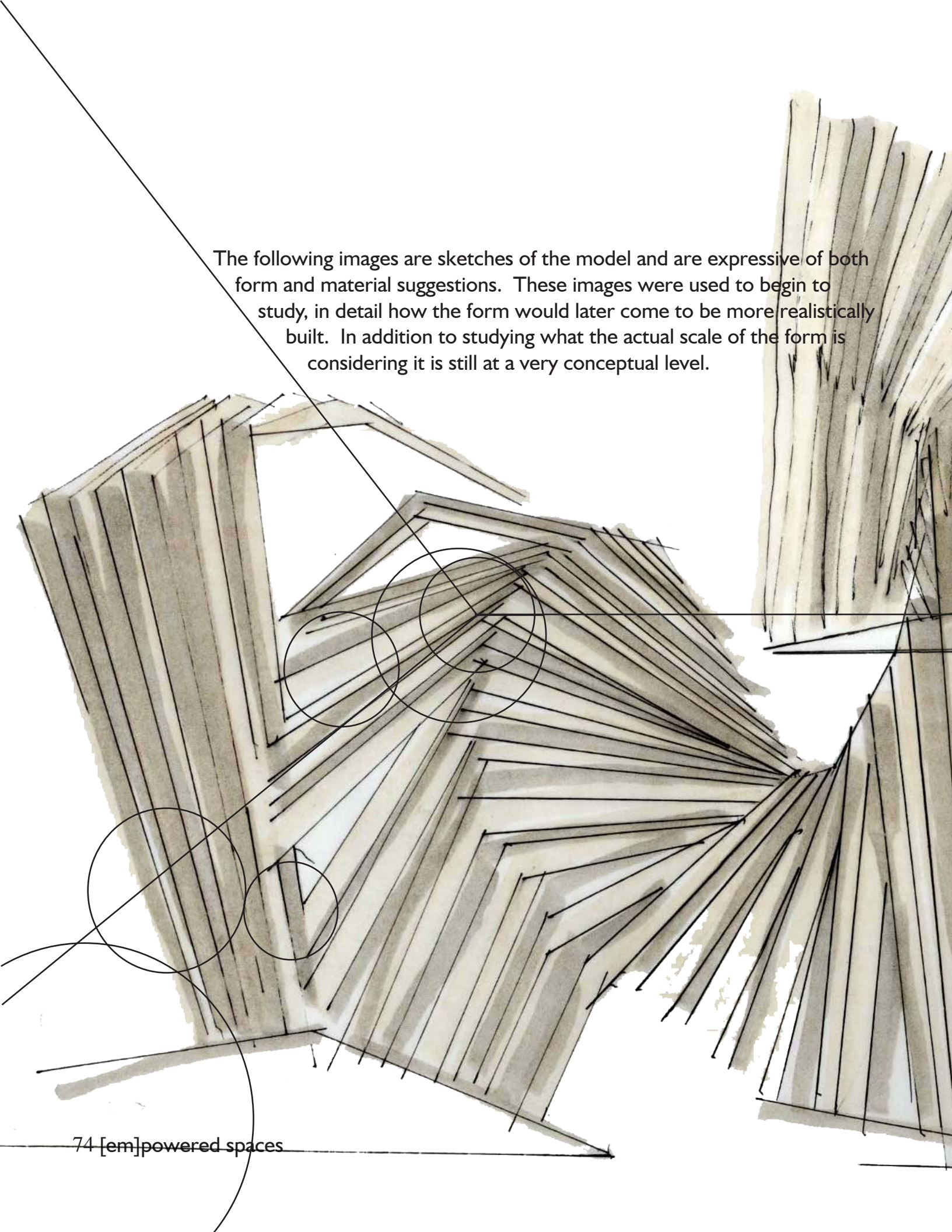
These are a series of images that show the initial form and how it transpires in elevation and plan. This is not a representation of the entire form, it only exemplifies a quarter of what the actual building will be.

In elevation - the image at the top right - shows how the entry will unfold from the ground up. How the entry unwraps at a human scale into a slightly larger form and then twists, rotates, and turns to reveal a much wider open space, which then converts back into a smaller more human scale at the exit.

In plan, each individual piece meets to create a corner piece that forms into two more pieces. The edges and sides undulate just like the roof plan does in order to express this notion of dynamism and folding.

The following images are sketches of the model and are expressive of both form and material suggestions. These images were used to begin to study, in detail how the form would later come to be more realistically built. In addition to studying what the actual scale of the form is considering it is still at a very conceptual level.
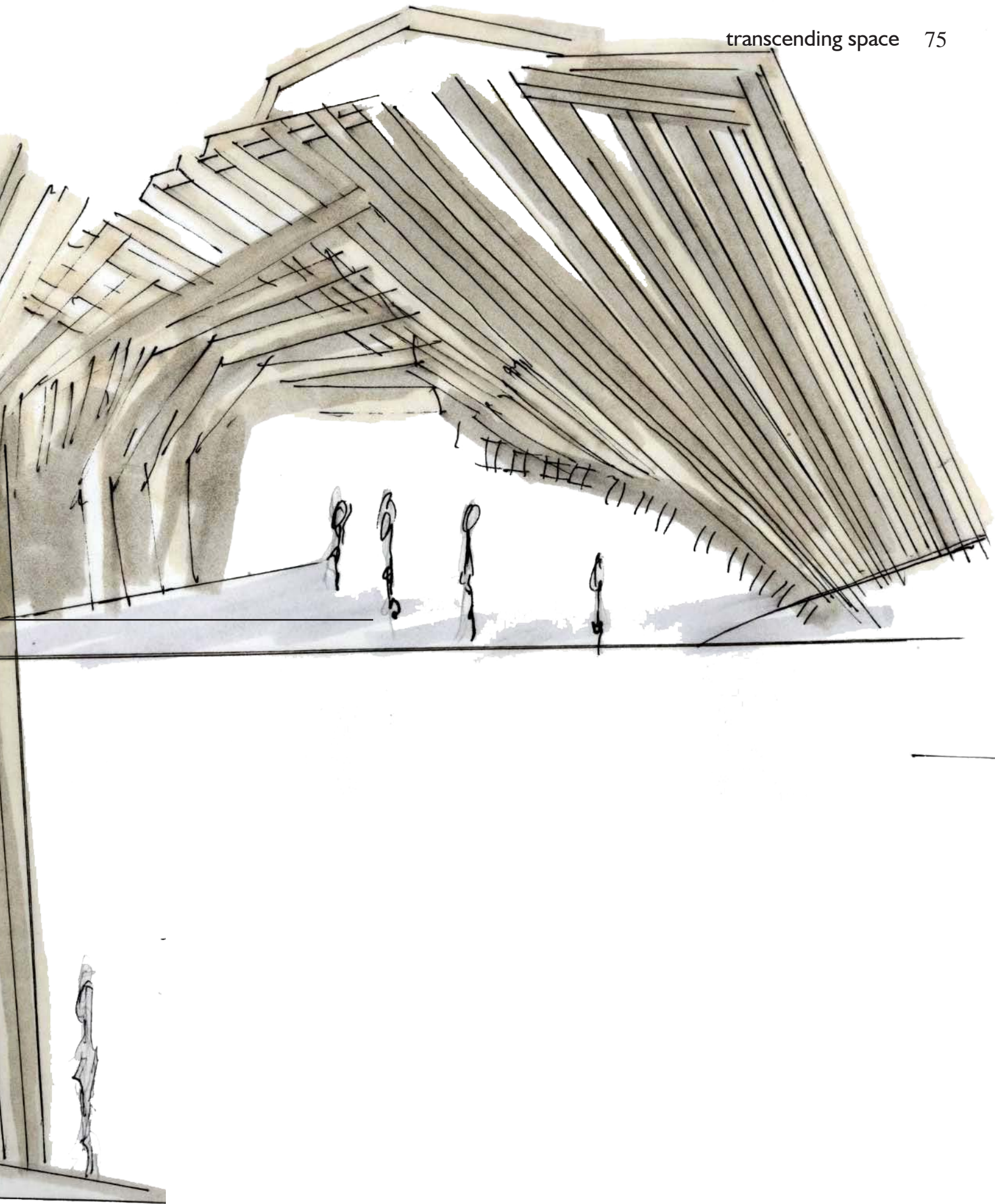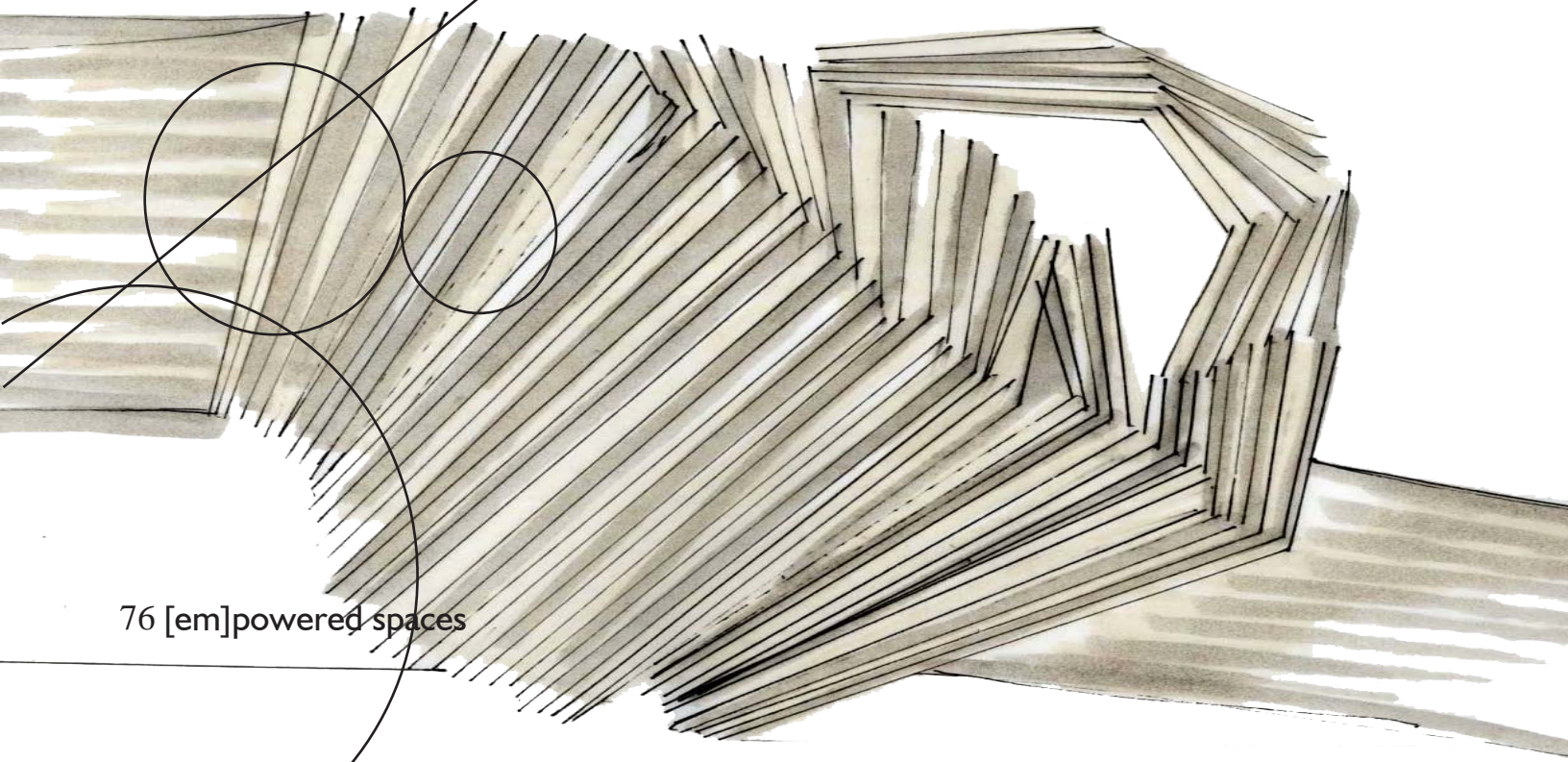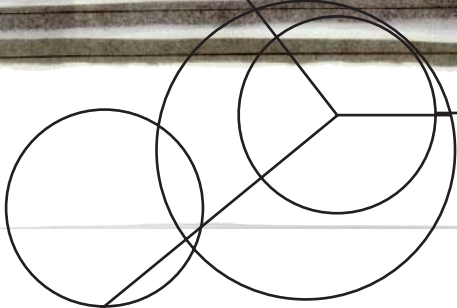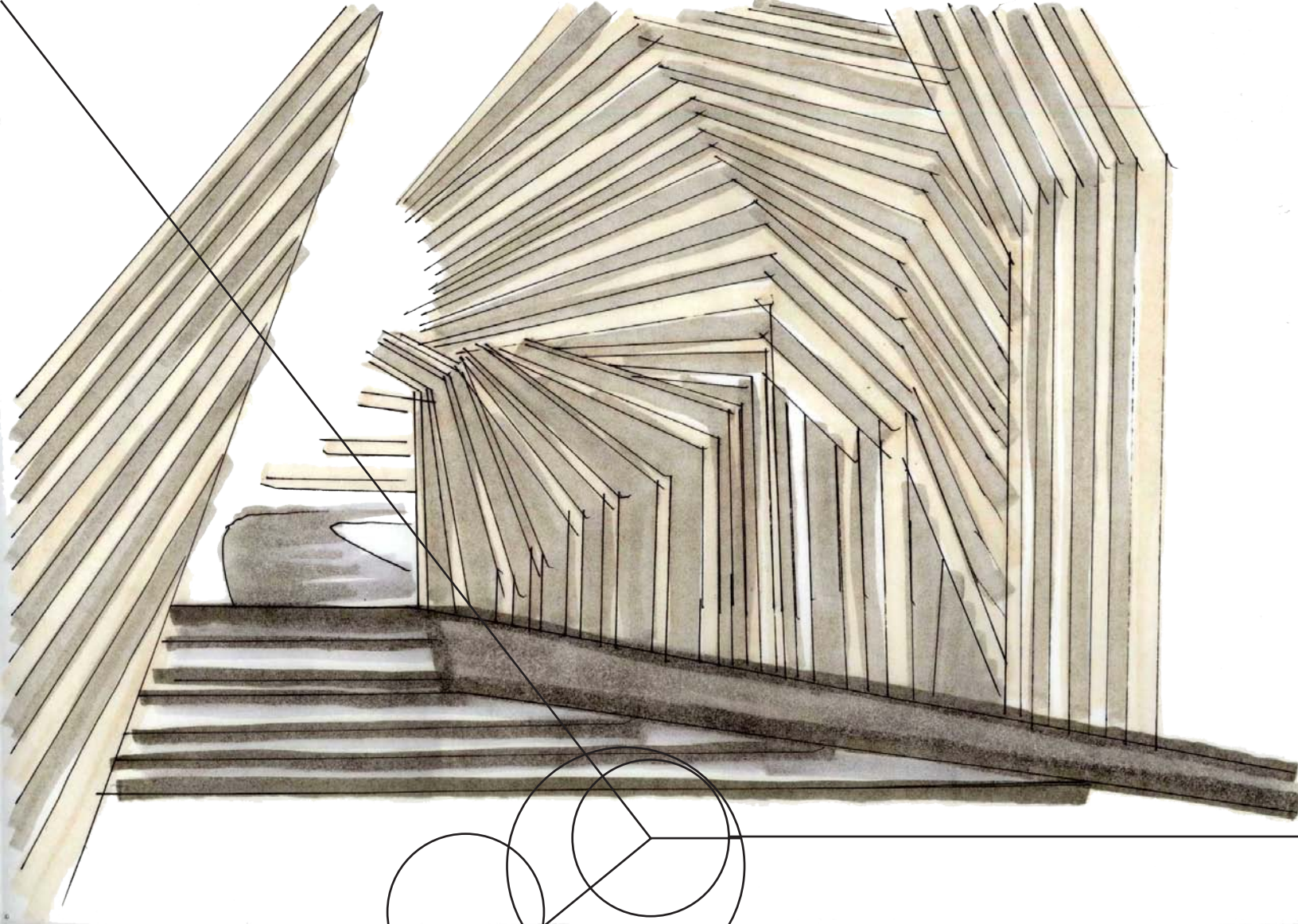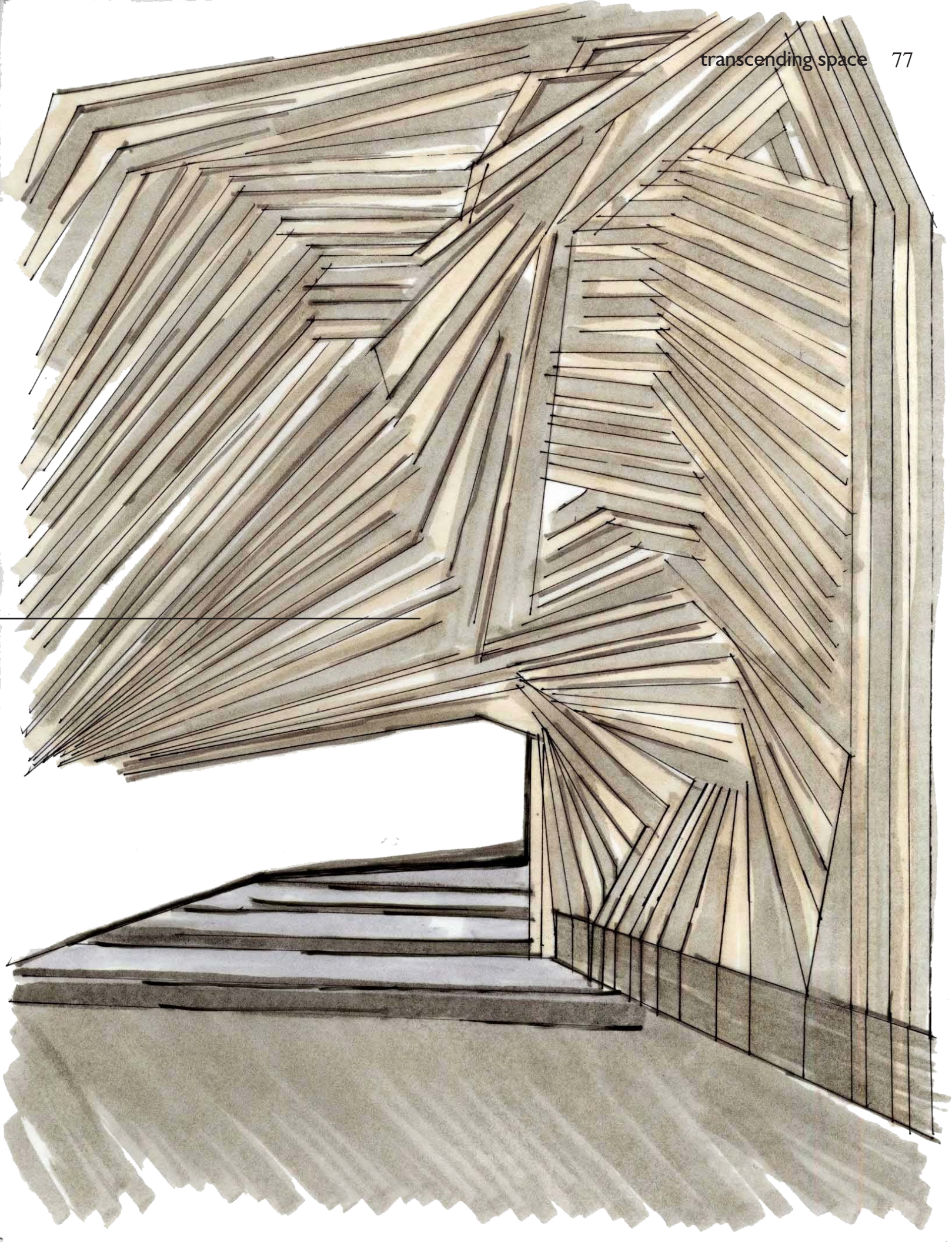
topography
studies
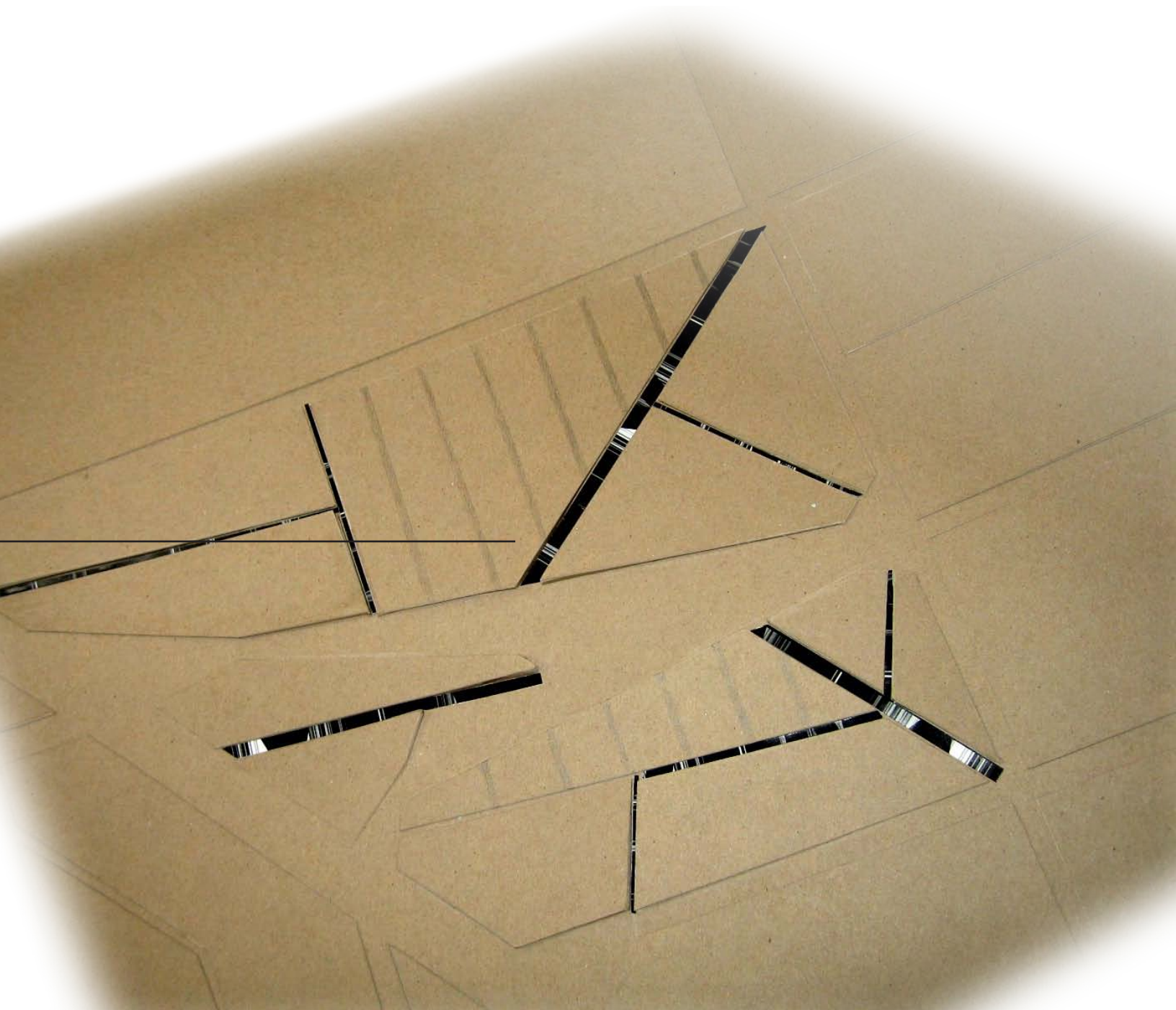
formal
studies

project
program

QUANTITATIVE PROGRAM:
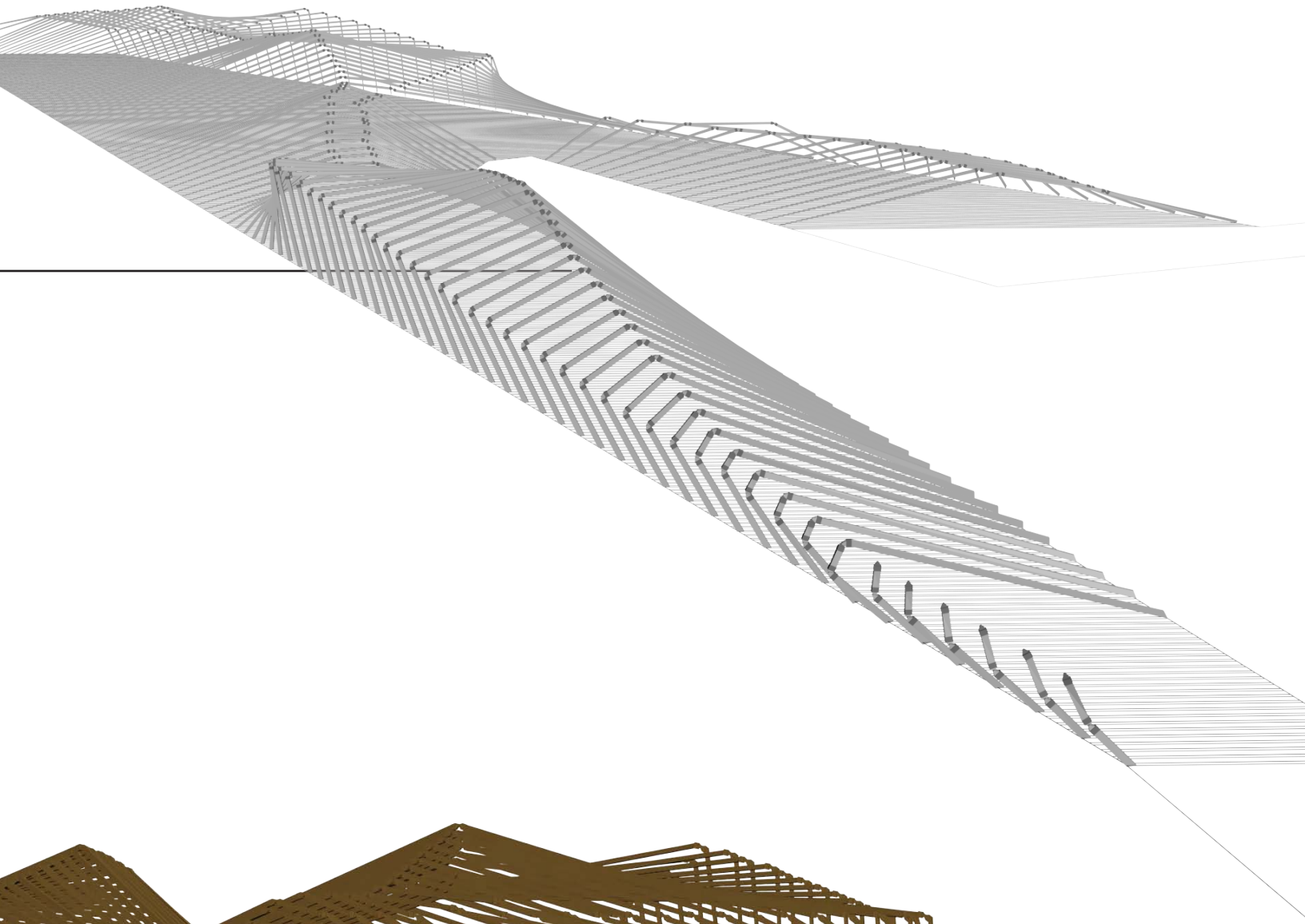
Site: 600,000 sq. ft

Green Space: 290,000 sq. ft

Rotating Crops: 150,000 sq. ft

Main Level: 77,000 sq. ft

Kiosks: 4,250 sq. ft
17 @ 250 sq. ft each

Classrooms: 5,820 sq. ft
4 @ 1,450 sq. ft each

Toilets: 4,000 sq. ft
4 @ 1,000 sq. ft each

Exhibition/ Gallery/ Convention Space: 17,000 sq. ft

Leasable Space: 6,500 sq. ft

Administrative Space: 1,150 sq. ft

Restaurant / Bar: 4,500 sq. ft

Lower Level: 10,000 sq. ft

Storage Space: 6,500 sq. ft

Upper Level: 10,000 sq. ft

Exhibition Loft: 5,000 sq. ft

Cafe/ Coffee Bar: 3,500 sq. ft

qualitative
program

Site: 600,000 sq. ft

The site is compiled of both green space as well as rotating crops. The crops are community supported, in that they are "hand grown" by individuals that inhabit the surrounding neighborhoods. It is available to individuals outside of the area as well, but is focused mainly on the social network within the area.

The purpose for starting out with less crop space than green is due to the initial reaction of the community. The crops must first be grown, then proven to be sustainable and finally maintained. Also, since this is a phasing portion of the project the community must first prove their ability to gain knowledge, grow the plants, and then harvest them. The green space has the potential to be converted [rotated] into crops at any time, when the supply and demand for the fruits and vegetables reach a more profitable point.

Main Level: 77,000 sq. ft

The building on the site opens towards three major roads. It continues the streets that have been cut off by Grand River and the site as pedestrian streets. The overall skin of the building is only meant to shield people from the elements such as wind, rain and snow. It is not heated or cooled. The interior skeleton on the other hand is fully enclosed, and heated and cooled.

Kiosks: 4,250 sq. ft

There are 17 individual kiosks beneath the "pavilion," or skin if you will. Each are approximately 250 square feet each. Their smaller, more personable size allows for each fruit or vegetable to be sold independently. They are comprised of a main area that can be fully opened or closed to the interior of the pavilion with a smaller area for a cashier and storage station. There would not be much storage on the main level, so the lower level storage will be used for larger items.

Classrooms: 5,820 sq. ft

There are four main classrooms located towards the west end of the building. These are meant to hold a variety of functions. Some would include "community" type organized classes where people from the community come together to learn about crop growth and stainability. In some cases the spaces will also be used as "typical" community center rooms where one could find a variety of lessons from sewing to first aid to night classes for individuals without a high school diploma.

Toilets: 4,000 sq. ft

There are four main toilets [2 women and 2 men]. These rooms are larger than what is typically required for that size building do to the fact that the pavilion itself is meant to serve as a pedestrian path for people to use on a regular basis, as a thoroughfare to get from point a to point b. So it was necessary to account for more people than what the functional space can actually hold.

Exhibition/ Gallery/ Convention Space: 17,000 sq. ft

Along Grand River there are approximately 3 or 4 different artist's galleries, in addition to local businesses and schools that would use this space. The local artists have the ability to display their work on a regular basis. The local businesses can use the space as a convention center to help generate interest, as well as become an incubator for more business to come to the area. It was also considered that this space would also be used as a lecture hall where the community could use the space as not only a town hall, but also as an "awareness" center. A space to learn about various ways to be, live, and eat healthier, as well as gain access and knowledge about creating a sustainable lifestyle for the community and its surroundings.

Leasable Space: 6,500 sq. ft

This space is meant to bring smaller [short or long term] vendors into the area. The idea is that an individual would be able to find a florist, a bakery, a dry cleaners or a newsstand within the space as well. Due to the fact that grocery stores are few and far between. In addition to the fact that Eastern Market is too far to walk to from this area, as well as the issue that it is only functional on the weekends.

Administrative Space: 1,150 sq. ft

This space is meant to house cubicles, and small offices for the individuals that handle finances, and organizational issues within the market. It will also house a general curator for the exhibition space, as well as any on site security personnel. This is also part of the phasing concept considering that the market will need to generate a profit prior to being able to afford personnel of that nature, and at that cost.

Restaurant / Bar: 4,500 sq. ft

This space is meant to cook and sell most of the food that is grown on site. It will be necessary to bring in some outside food sources, but the general notion is to keep the food purchasing and consumption within Detroit. This space also helps to act as "eyes," and "ears" on the street due to the notion that this is a venue that will be open later than some of the other functions within the space. It is attempting to attract both a day and night crowd.

Lower Level: 10,000 sq. ft

Storage Space: 6,500 sq. ft

The lower level is meant to house supplies for the various individuals within the community planting, growing and harvesting crops. This space is also to be used as a storage space for the various vendors and artists that use the space. It is slightly larger than what is required to account for additional crop space, which will in turn require additional storage space.

Upper Level [lofted]: 10,000 sq. ft

Lofted Exhibition space: 5,000 sq. ft

This space is a continuation of the exhibition space on the main level. It is open to both above and below. This space allows for two or more different functions to go on at the same time, or it enlarges the space for one event. The loft was done to enhance the main level ceiling, as well as to attach the walls from the main level to the beams that hold up the skin of the pavilion.

Cafe / Coffee Bar: 3,500 sq. ft

This space is a less formal lofted continuation of the main level as well. Its purpose is to entertain the guests that use the exhibition space. This space also has an open balcony area where individuals can sit and watch the functions that are going on below on the main level. Its function also helps to continue the main floor walls up to the beams of the pavilion.

final
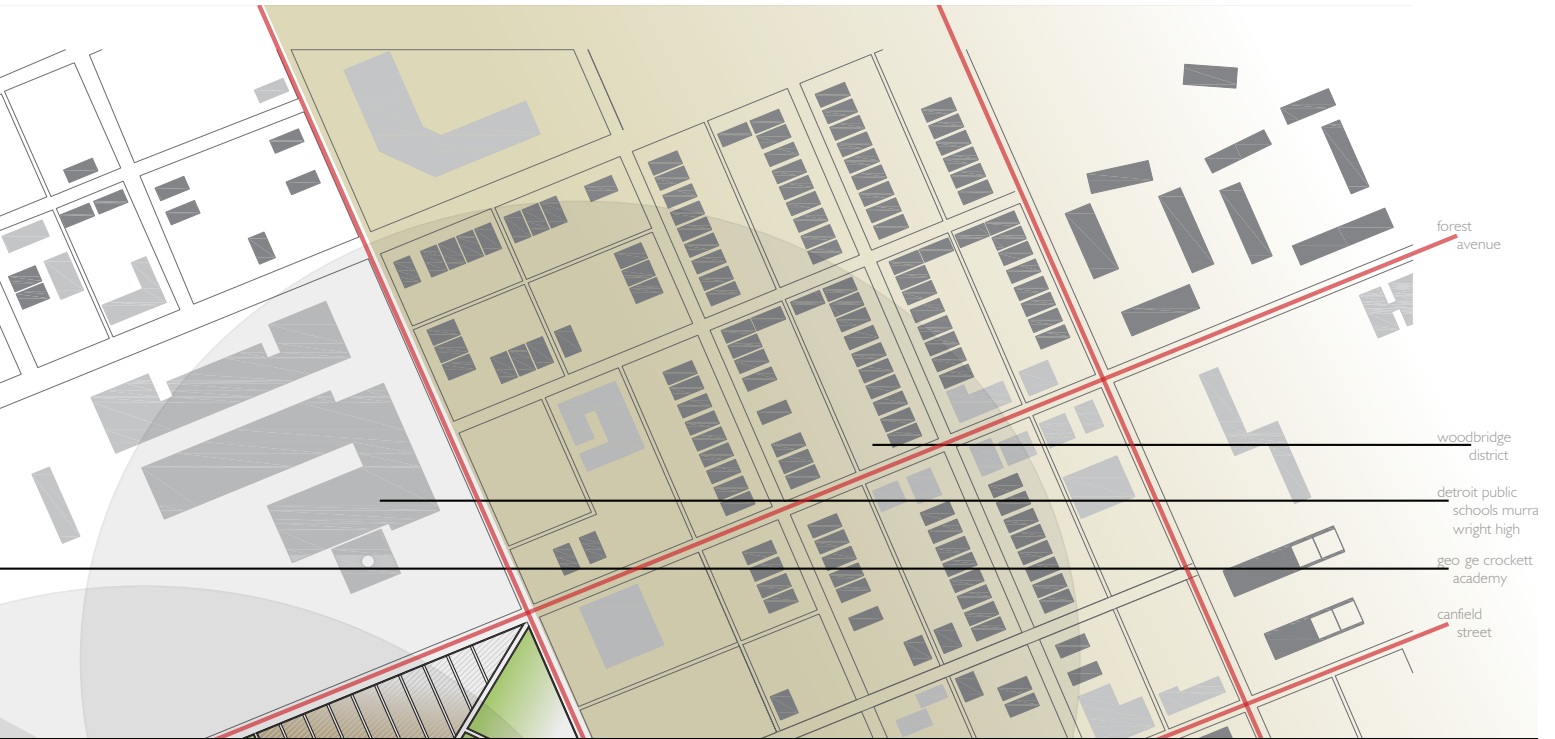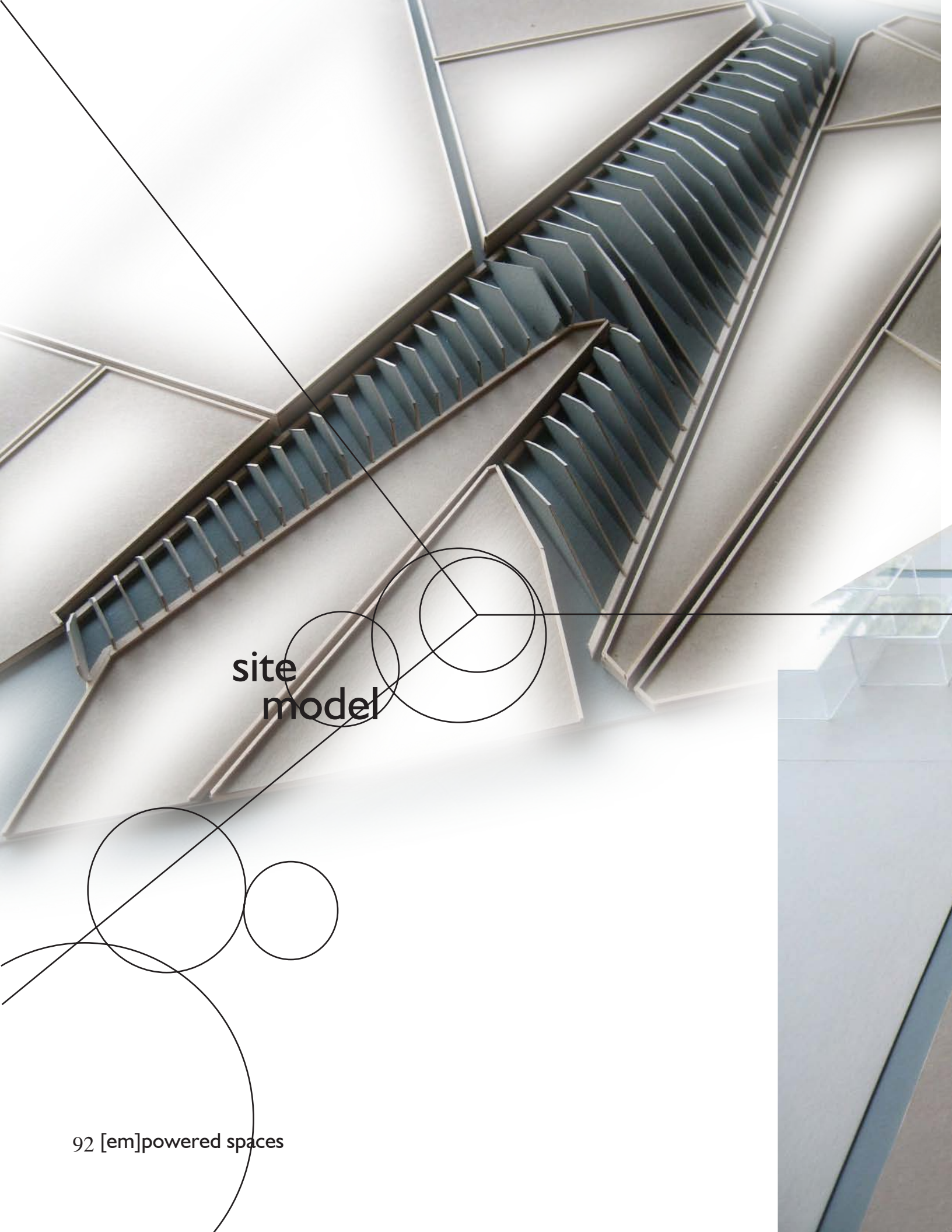project

The following pages are images from the final presentation. Beginning with the site and the site model and continuing through to the individual details of the project.
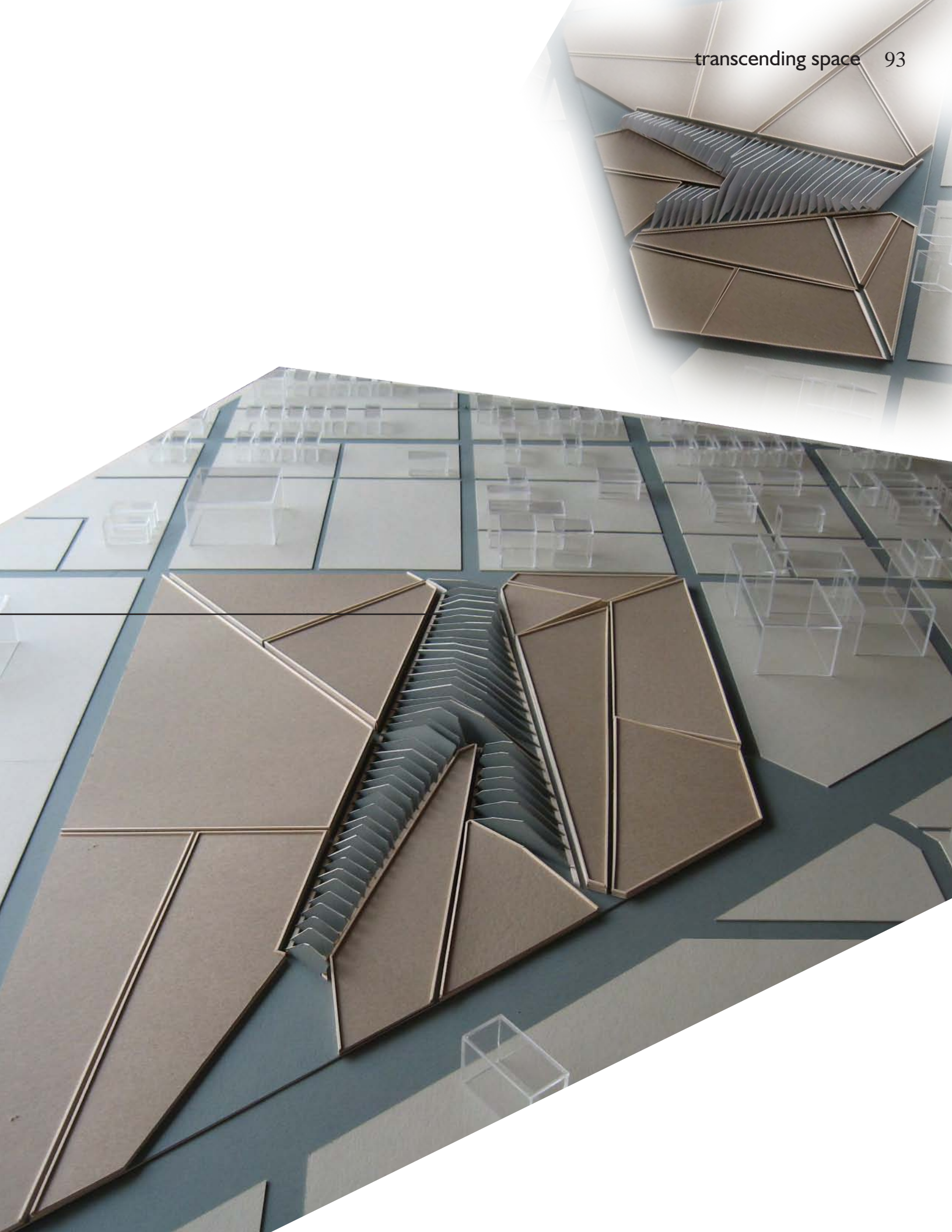
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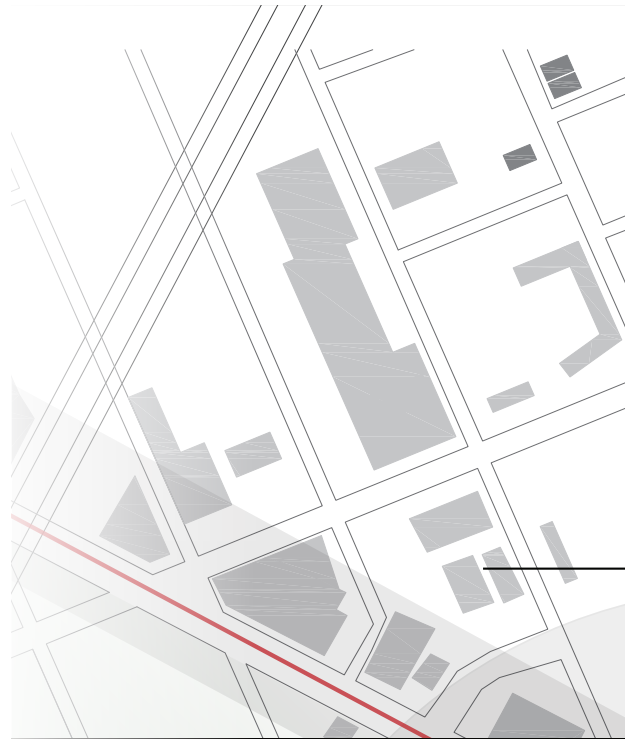
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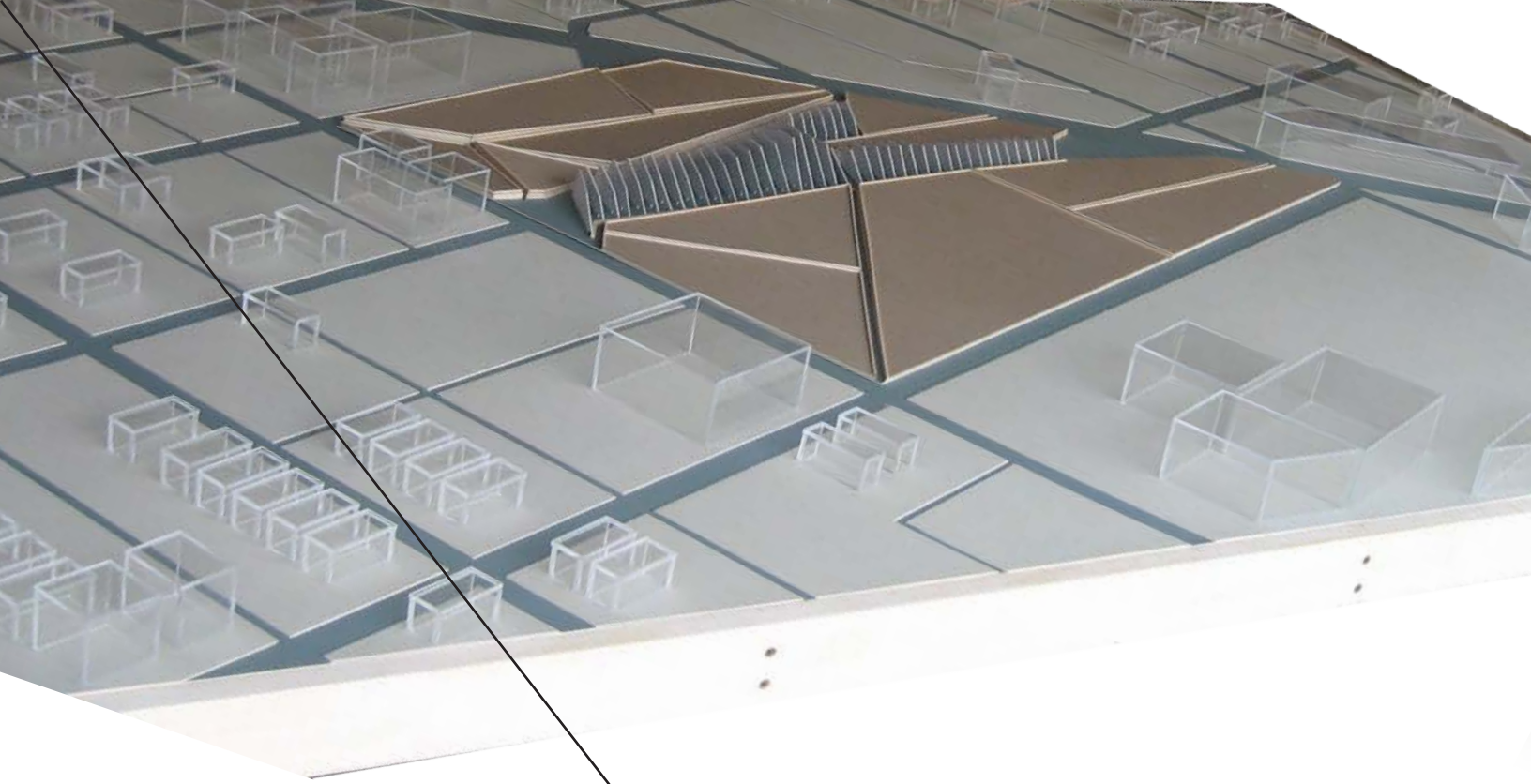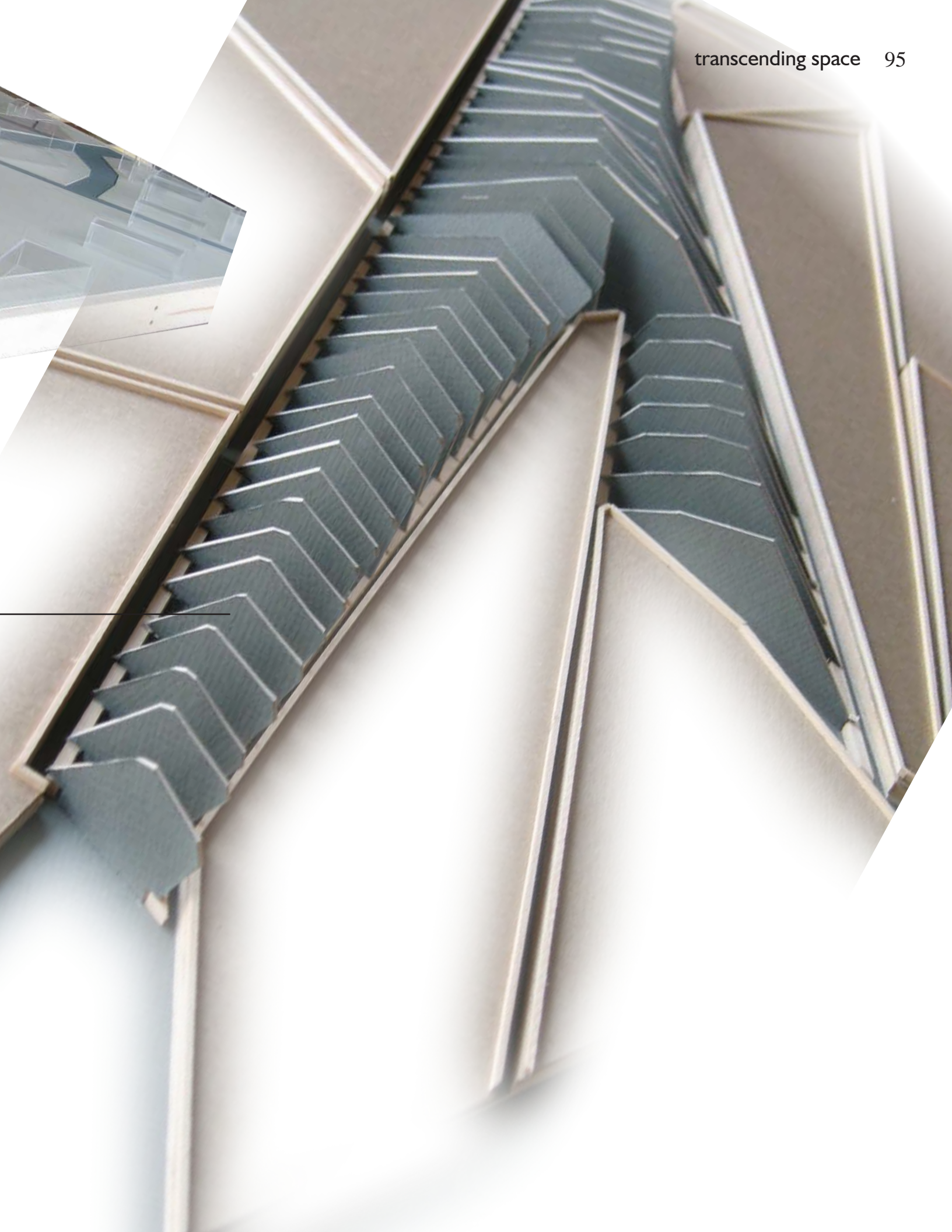woodbridge
district

detroit public
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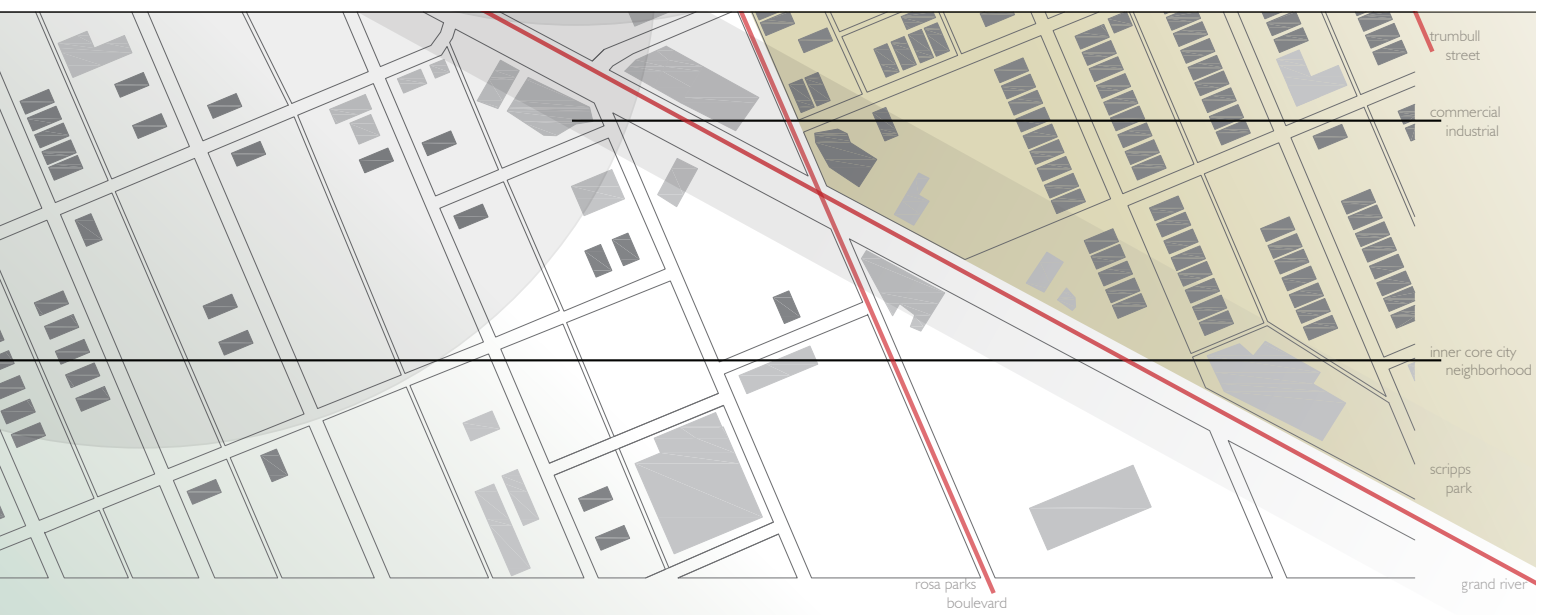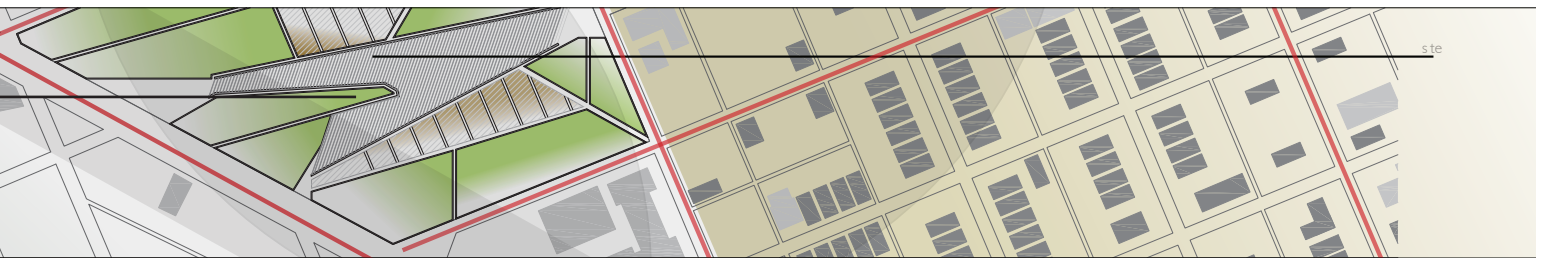
site
model

site
model

WEST ELEVATION

EAST ELEVATION

elevations
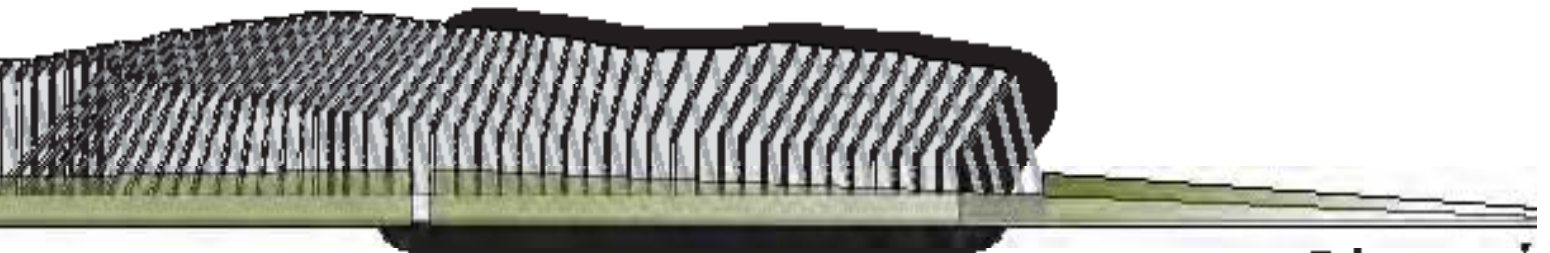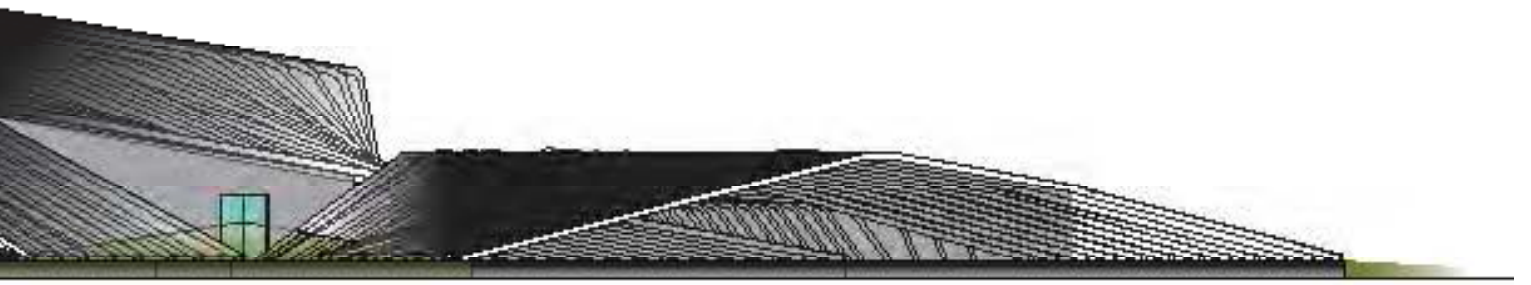
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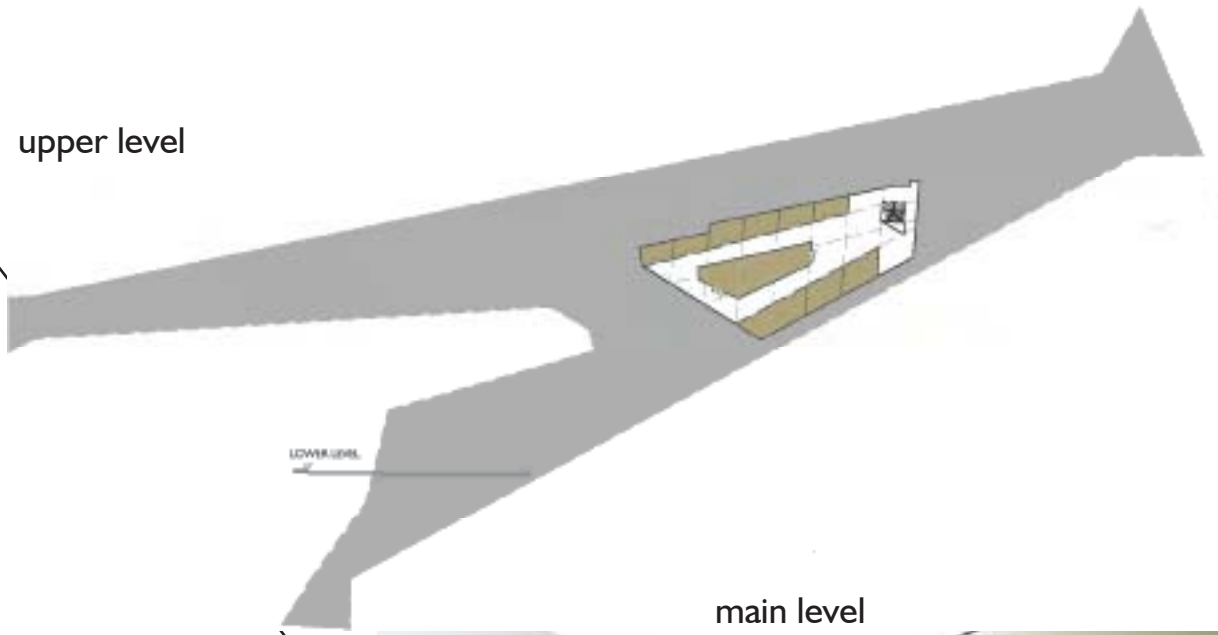
LOWER LEVEL

main level
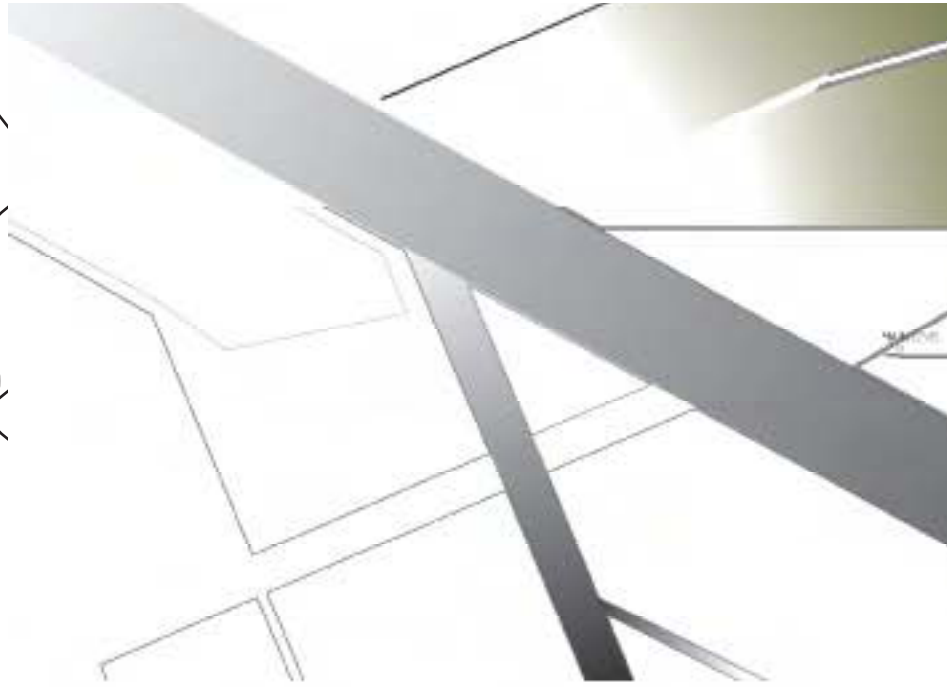
floor
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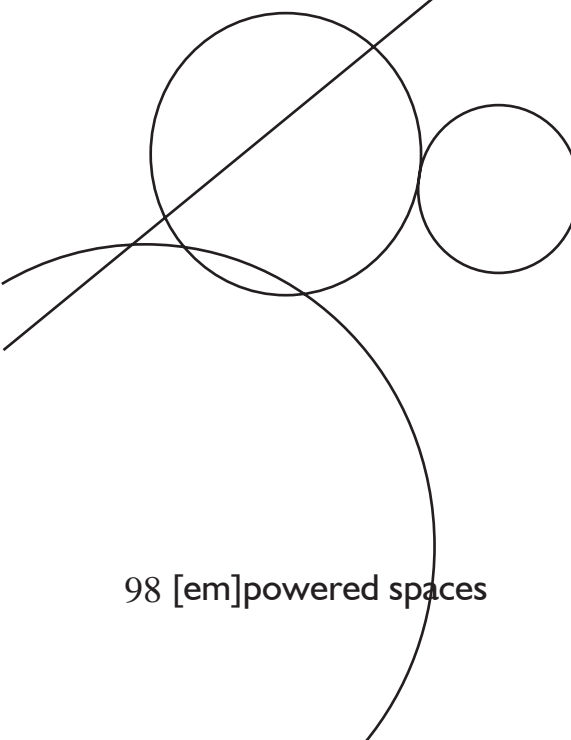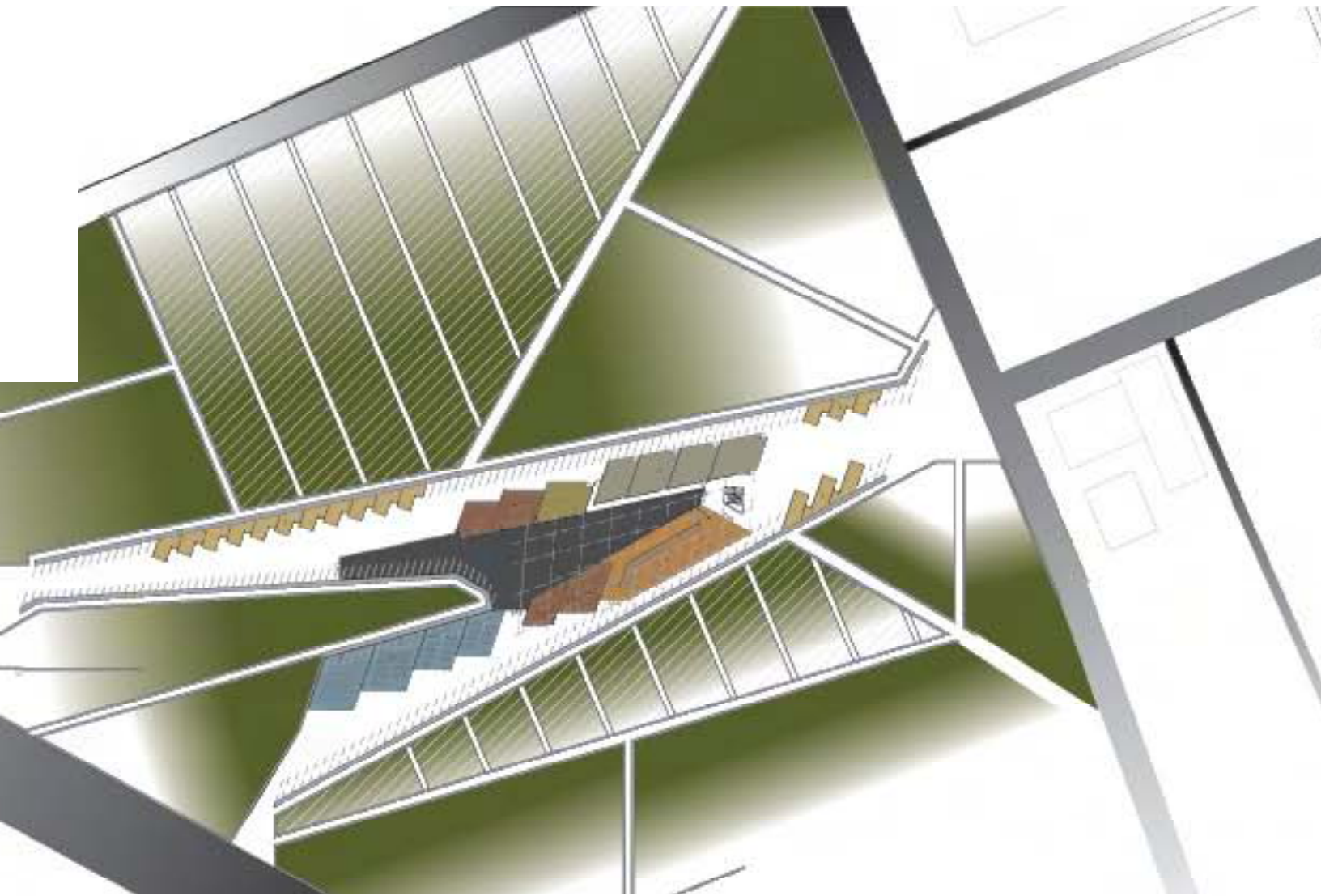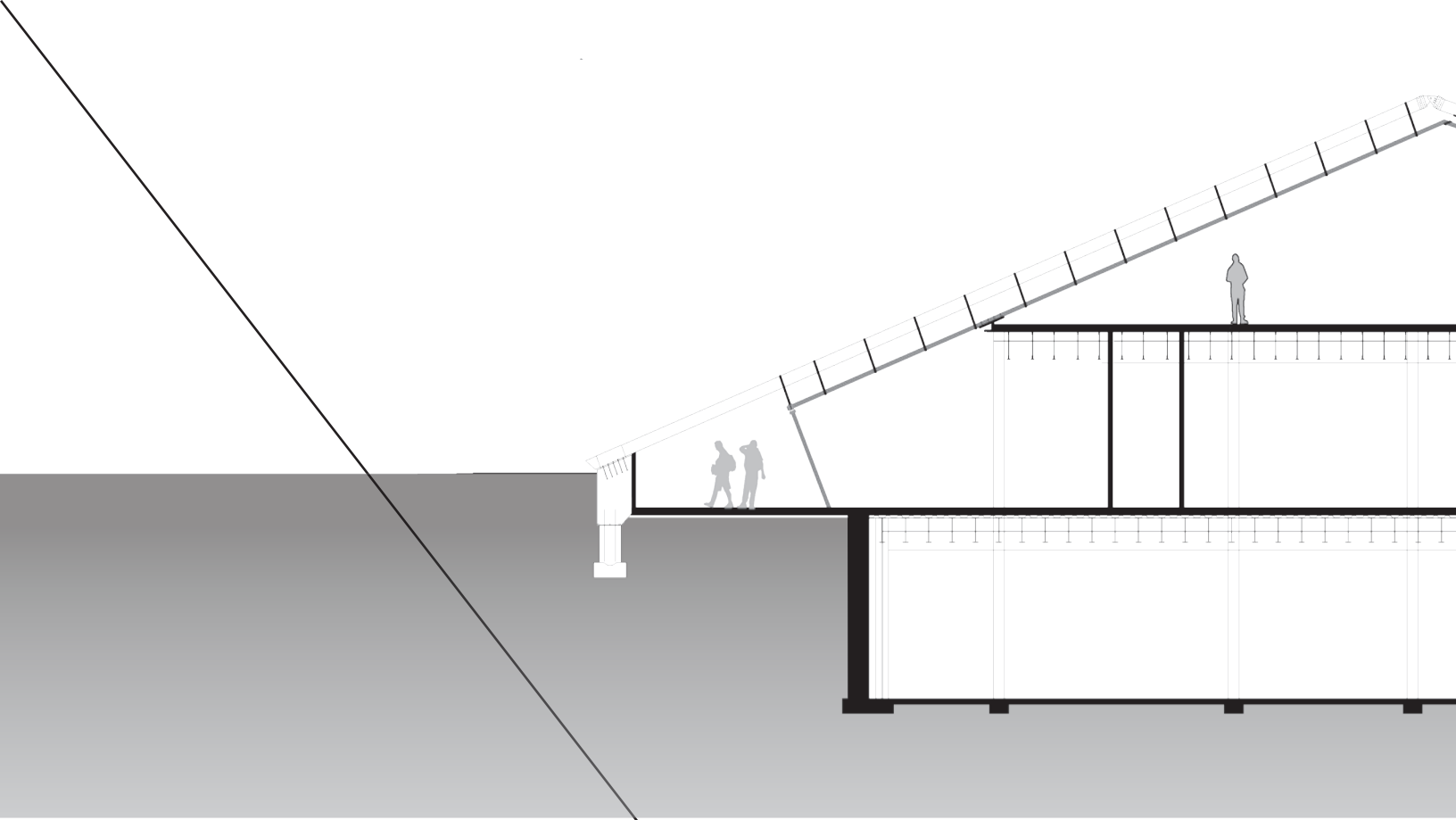
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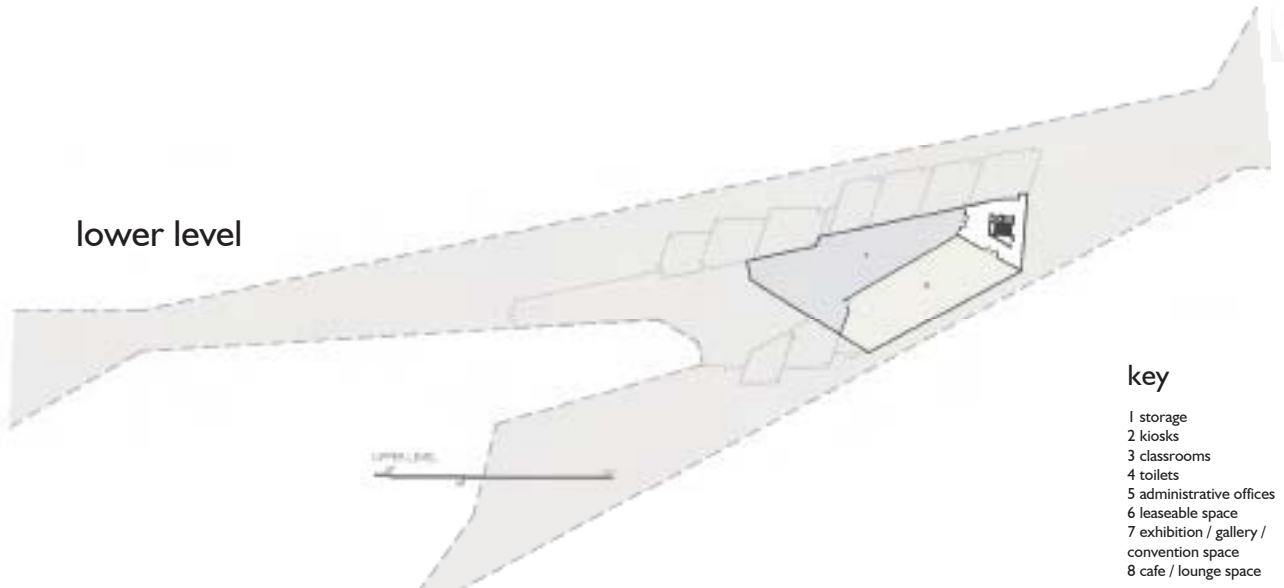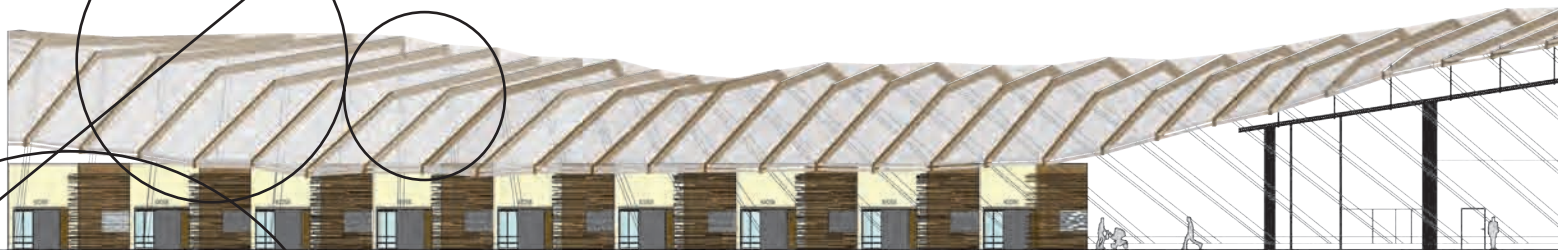
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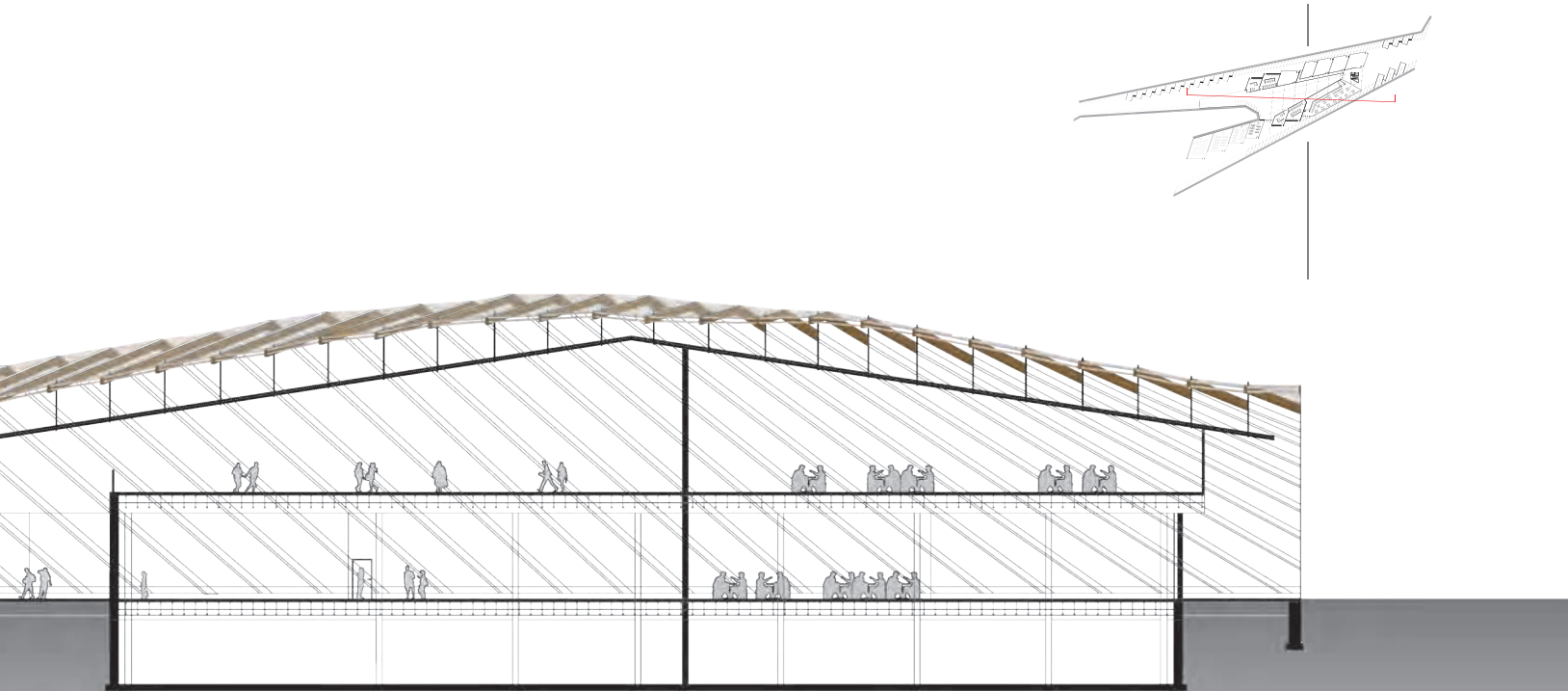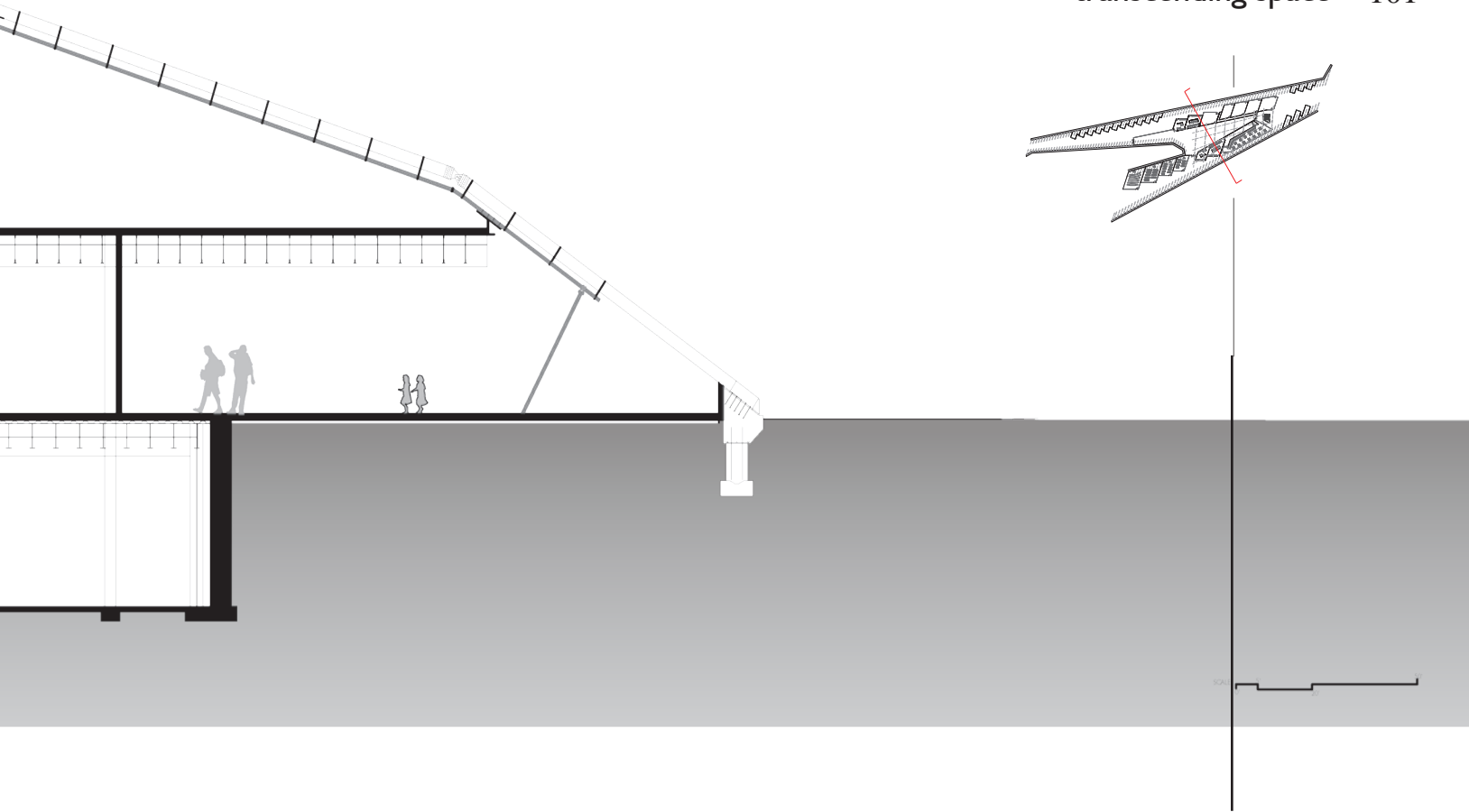
1 storage
2 kiosks
3 classrooms
4 toilets
5 administrative offices
6 leaseable space
7 exhibition / gallery /
convention space
8 cafe / lounge space

sections

DETAIL CONNECTION
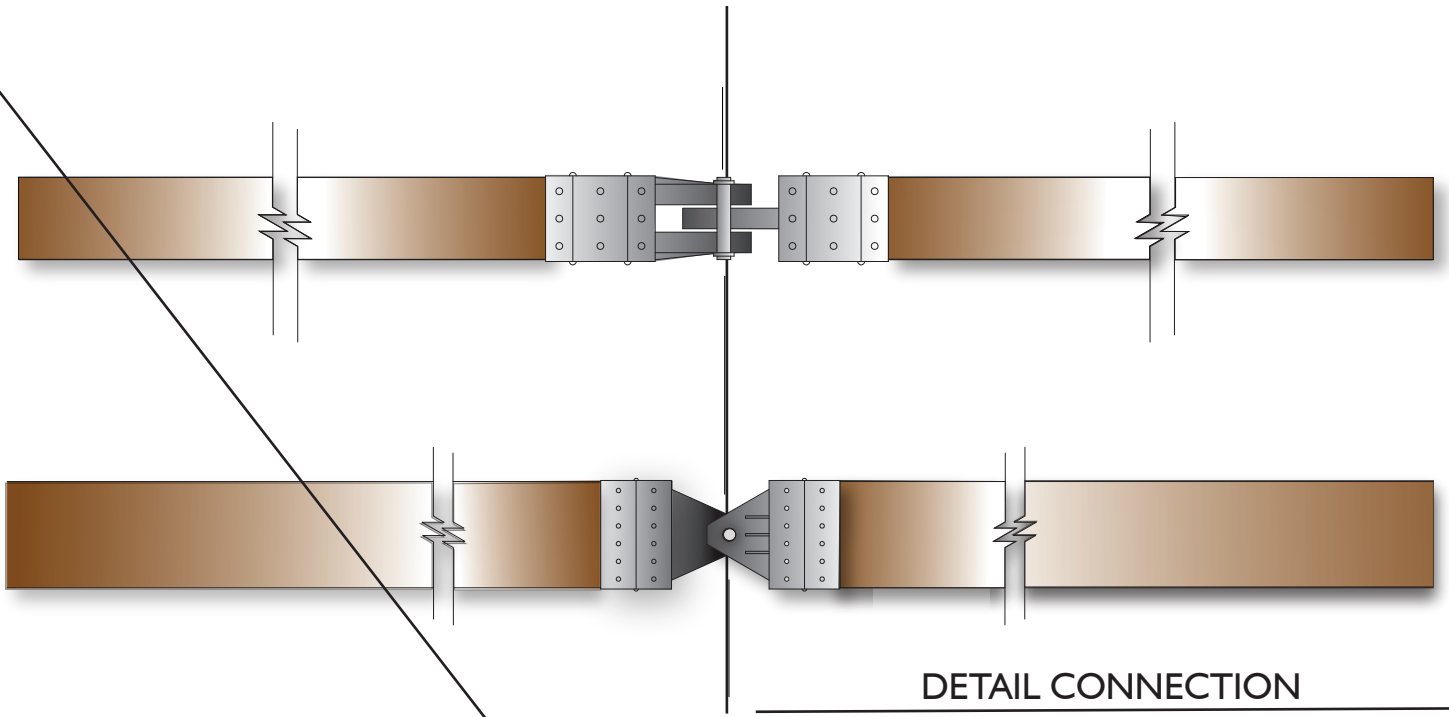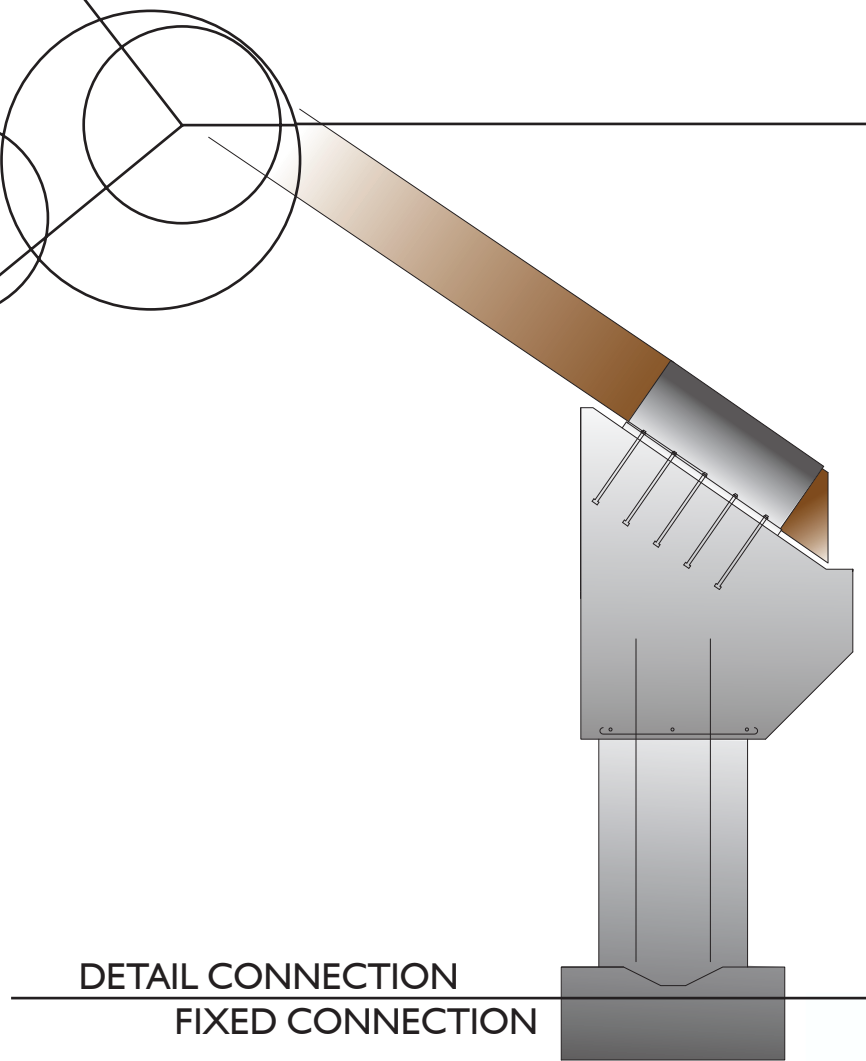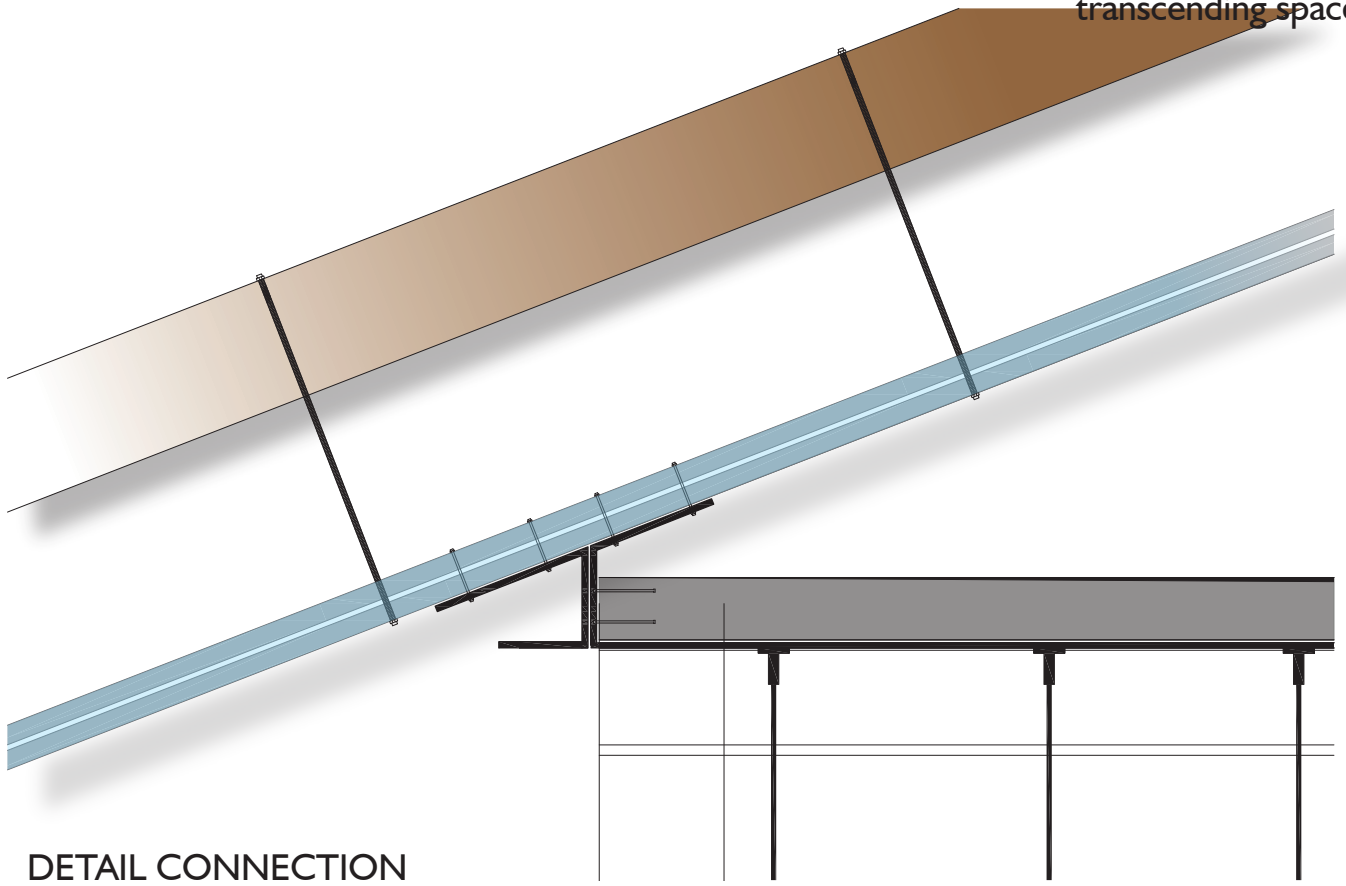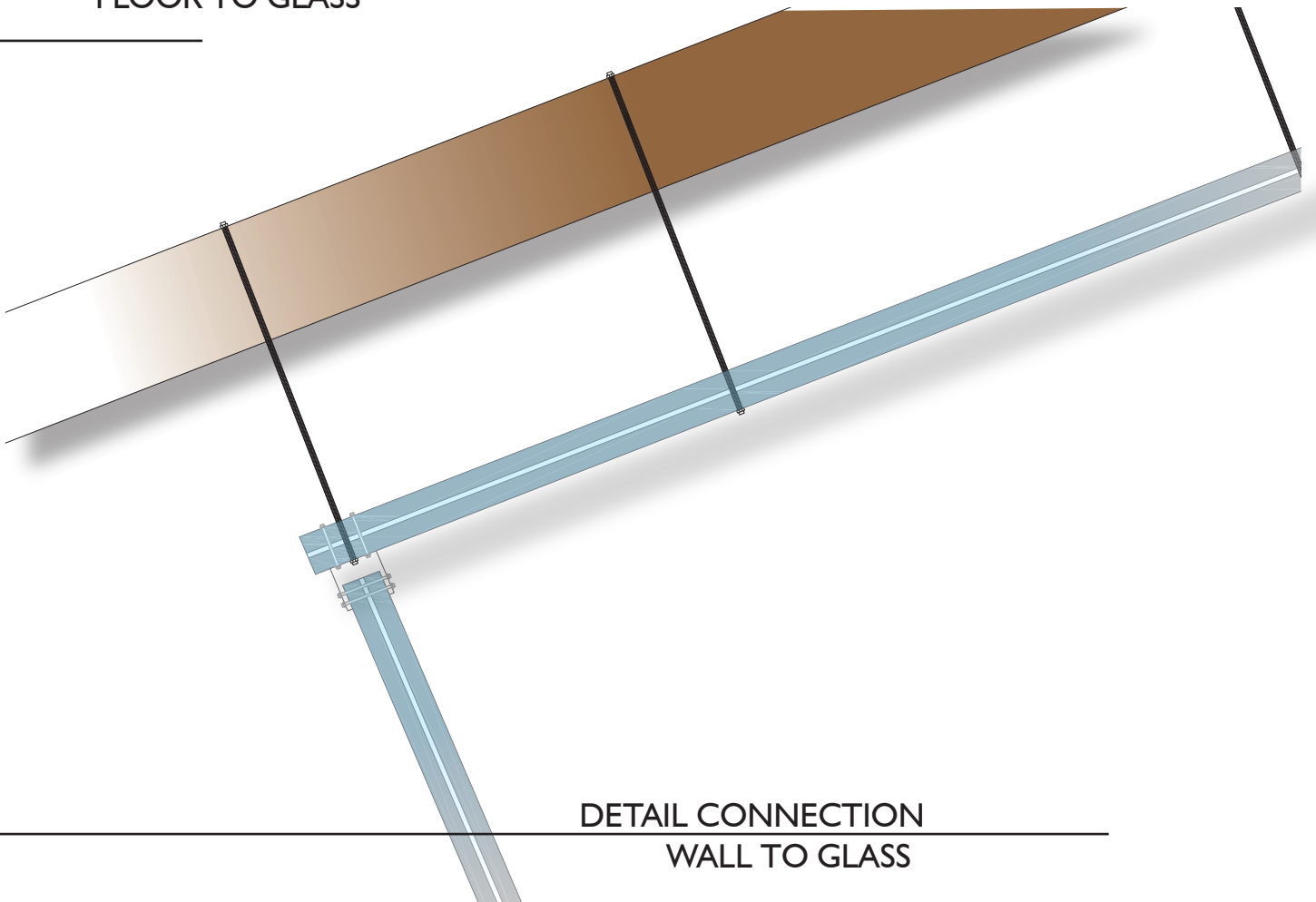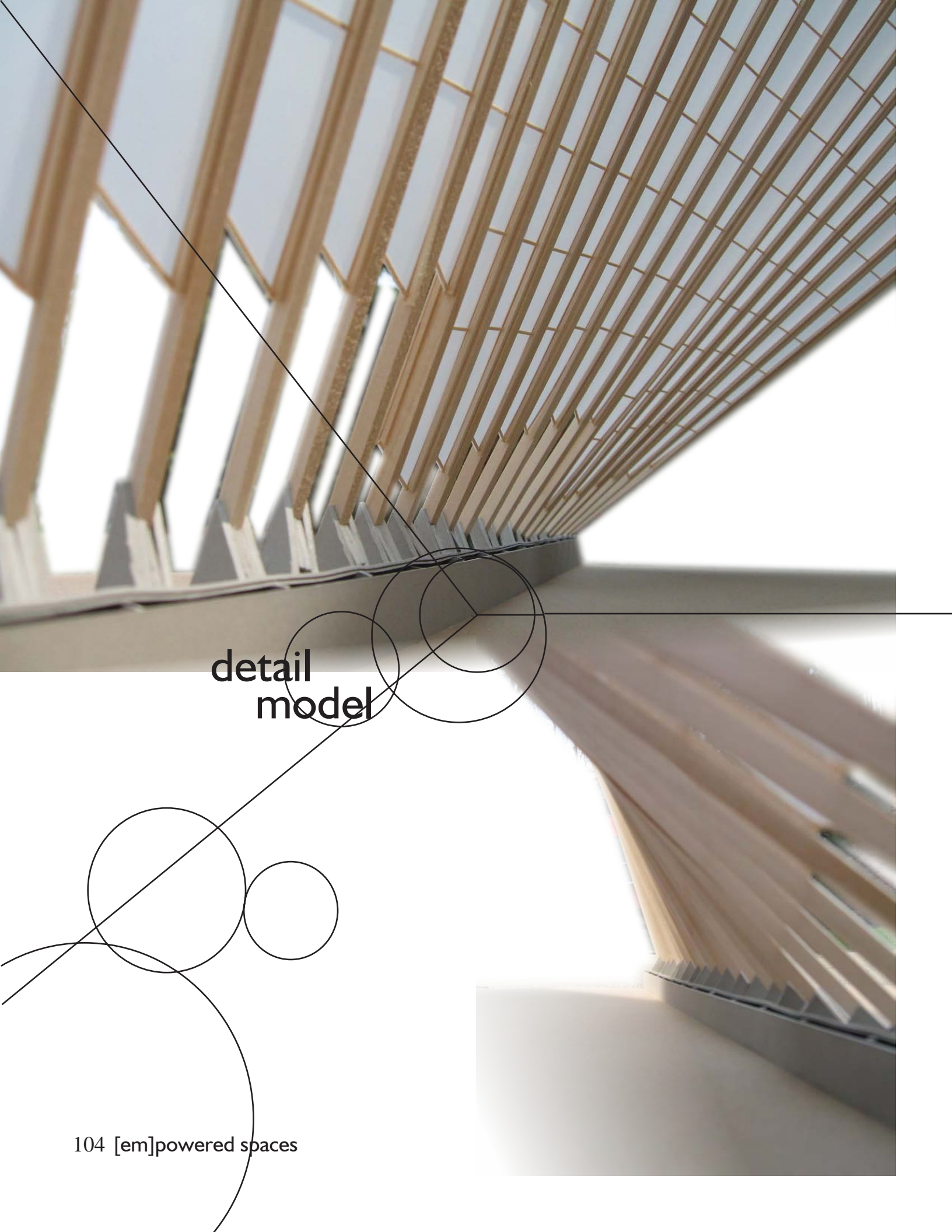HINGE CONNECTION

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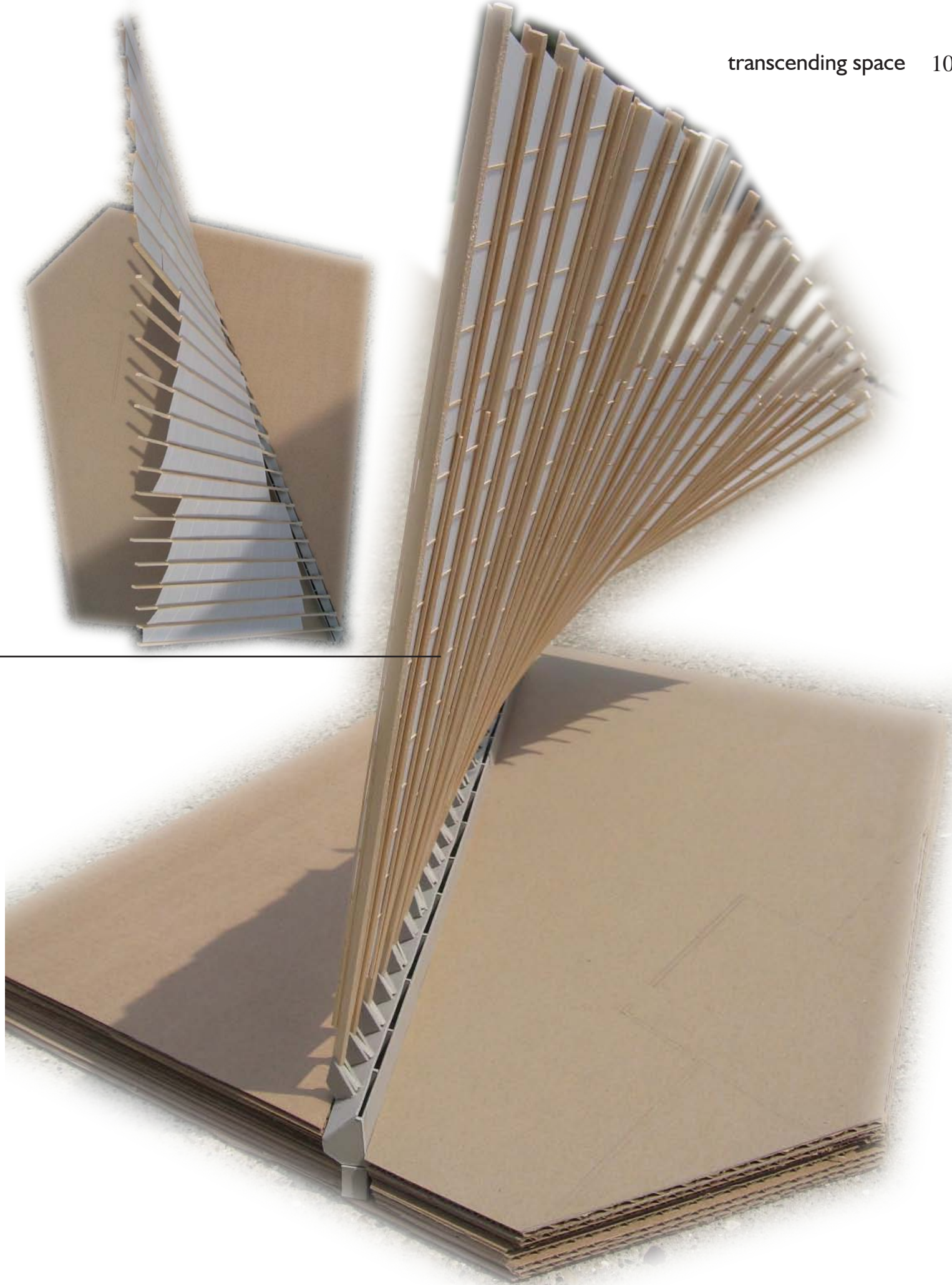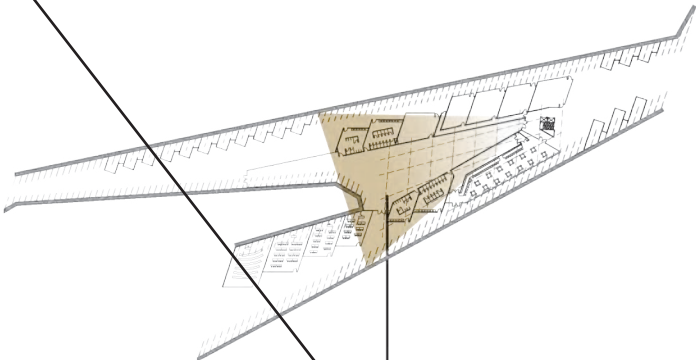
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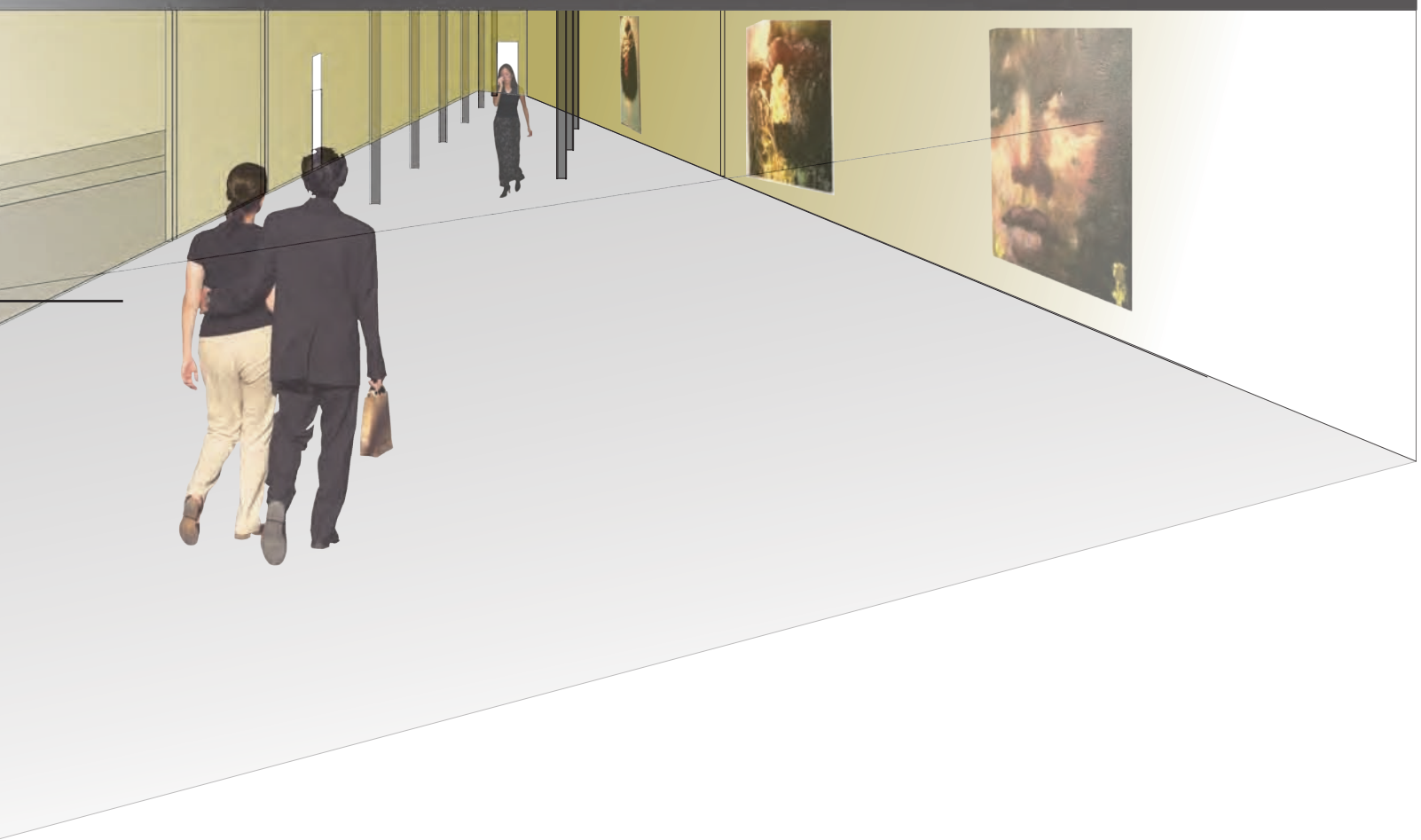FLOOR TO GLASS

DETAIL CONNECTION
WALL TO GLASS

detail
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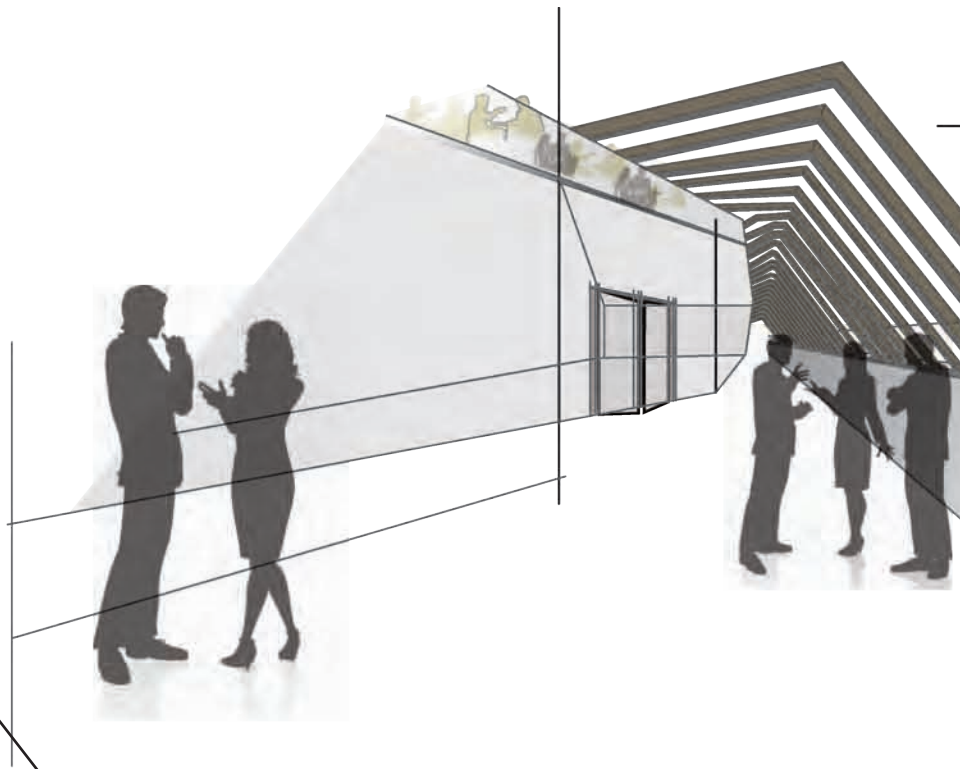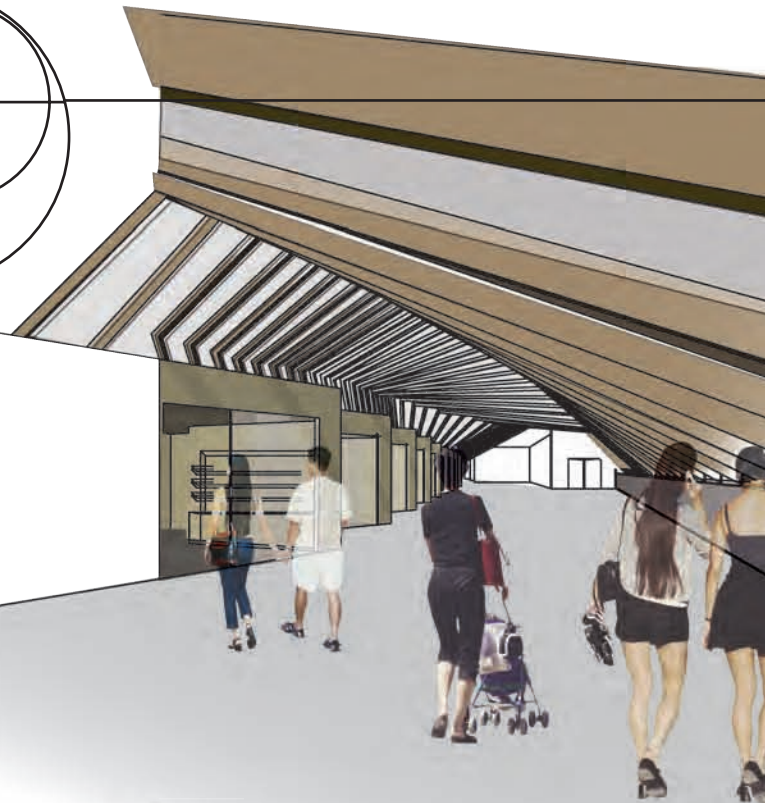
EXHIBITION

perspective
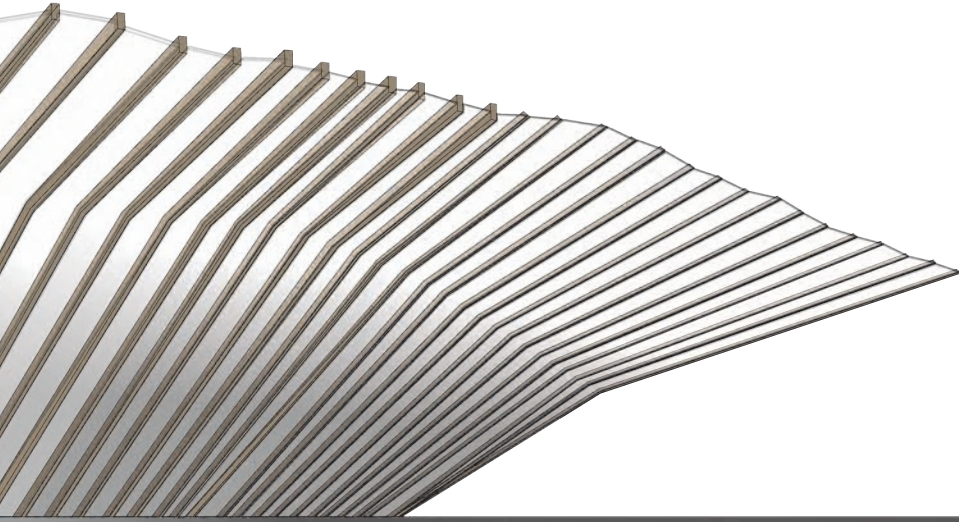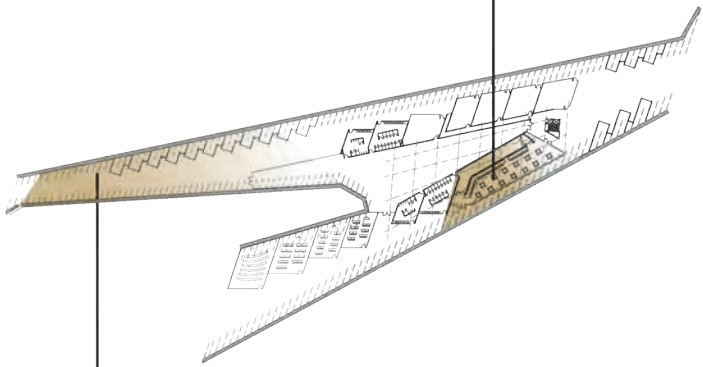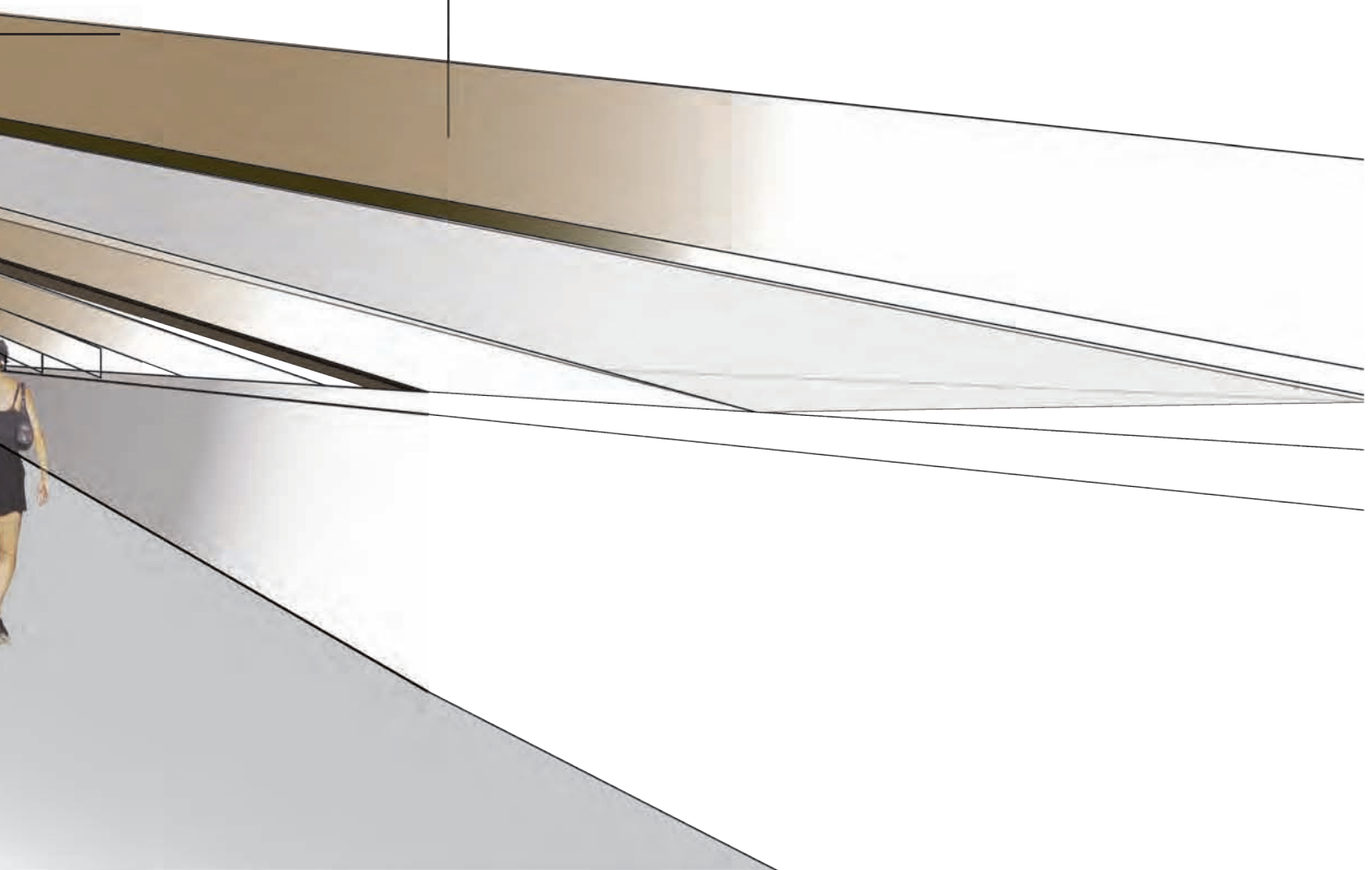
perspective

RESTAURANT BAR ENTRY

GRAND RIVER ENTRY

thesis -
grounded

People in society are identified by the culture within which they inhabit. The influences that the social "norms" or majorities have on individuals and their behaviors dictate how people function as a whole within a group. Individuals identify themselves with society, social "norms," and cultural practices. Thus, identity and culture are interchangeable.

Culture, according to Rivkin and Ryan is "The way people behave while eating, talking with each other, becoming sexual partners, interacting at work, engaging in ritualized behavior such as family gatherings, and the like…" [29] Each culture creates an identity that individuals inhabit, whether it be continued and advanced from previous generations or a relatively new social "norm," yet its people within the various cultures that create the identity which defines the culture they inhabit. Therefore, people [society] cannot exist without culture, and culture cannot transcend [in that it goes beyond the current generation, and manifests itself within the growth and transition of a new generation] generations without people. This is evidently true with historical texts. If individuals do not exist to tell the story – the story would cease to exist.

Locality is also an incubator in the identity of a culture and the individuals that inhabit it. Place – defined by Heidegger as boundaries beyond that of a given space – works to describe its inhabitants through architecture, language, and the belief systems that function together to create an identity of its people. Rivkin and Ryan also describe culture as "Both a means of domination, of assuring the rule of one class or group over another…" [30] In that the Spaces – areas of land identified on a map by a given boundary – individuals inhabit over time only become Places through the means of domination. One group [the majorities] creates an identity and from there it is meant to be the common ideological view among the whole. But, how then is that domination retaliated against by minorities? Rivkin and Ryan would claim that it is a "Resistance to such domination, a way of articulating oppositional points of view to those in dominance." [31] This is not a typical response in the culture we as humans live in today. The voice is typically silenced by any means necessary. Thus, asserting the dominant role that social and class status have over a group of people. The dominant group in terms of social and class status are also defined by the location of the culture, but is typically determined by the group that gains the most "followers." If an individual is part of the majority in a given area – Place – their identity is most certainly defined by the culture they inhabit. But, if an individual is part of the minority their identity is lost in the sea of socially accepted "norms," and their voice is silenced.

My master's thesis is working to investigate how that voice is heard more clearly, and stands out in society through the creation of "empowered space," which is defined by its architecture as well as by the people who inhabit it. Empowered spaces work to "vocalize" a silenced voice, or re-Place if you will the identity of the people in a small district within the city of Detroit. The site is along Grand River just south of Forest Avenue. Woodbridge neighborhood surrounds the site to the northeast, and the Inner Core City neighborhood surrounds the site to the southwest. Historically, Grand River was a small two lane road that cut through the two

sides of the site ever so quietly, but now it is a four lane, major thoroughfare between the suburbs and downtown Detroit It has torn through the area like a knife slicing the two neighborhoods in half, creating an "urban river" between the two sides. Both neighborhoods have an identity of their own. Woodbridge is older, in fact it is a historical district within the city, and Core – although it was once part of Woodbridge – is a more recent revitalization project that uses infill to increase its density. Both sides, individually, speak to the majority of the culture within the immediate area they inhabit. Their voices are read as "displaced," and in some cases absent due to how society has viewed the city as "stained" [referring to the distain and utter chaos that "exists," according to the majority group within the city of Detroit since the mid 60's to early 70's]. This is intriguing considering most of the majority group that "speaks" for Detroit commutes from the northern suburbs, and does not actually live in city.

Today, society participates in mass globalization, rendering services and goods to various cultures around the world with a "pop-culture" [what the majority group believes to be popular and "in demand" at the "moment] tag on everything. We make things as inexpensively as possible and then we sell them for triple what they cost to make, and then throw them away when something better comes along. The life span on products and services are short-lived, inevitably placing an emphasis on creating an even shorter lifespan on culture and social "norms." We throw away culture like we throw away yesterdays newspaper. Although this technique of mass globalization has enabled mass production to exist within our society, [which inherently came out of the industrial revolution, what Detroit's economy and success thrived on for so many years] it has also created capitalism and monopolies, which help to further create "mass culture" around the world because "culture now impresses the same stamp on everything." [32] With this above mentioned notion of "mass culture," how then are the various cultures autonomies identified around the world, more specifically Northern America's, and in particular to my thesis, Detroit's? The general consensus is that they are not identifiable, and will become invisible if we continue down this destructive path where we "throw away" our culture, as we will come to see.

According to Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, authors of The Culture Industry as Mass Deception, "Interested parties explain the culture industry in technological terms. It is alleged that because millions participate in it, certain reproduction processes are necessary that inevitably require identical needs in innumerable places to be satisfied with identical goods." [33] But, today's needs are metaphorical "wants" based on what the media, as the voice of "popular culture," deems necessary to our everyday survival. Material goods are claimed to be representative of who we are as a culture, yet every culture has these goods made available to them in their backyard. So, how then do we moderate and define what material goods we truly "need" in order to survive, to identify who we are as people, and furthermore to define ourselves as a culture? Are material goods, the products and services that drive our nation, necessary for survival? Today, the answer would most certainly be yes

because we have integrated technology and "things" so far into our day-to-day survival that we would be lost without them. In contrast, sixty some years ago the answer would be no. If that is the case, how then do we find the identity that culture once possessed, and do we want to? If technology defines who we are as a culture due to advancements and achievements in life, the consensus to the question above would be no, there is no need to revert back to "the way life was" sixty some years ago. But have we lost that part of our culture, or if filtered, can it be found amongst society today?

We brand ourselves with labels and "ideological" styles that are not unique to individual cultures, but rather are mass produced and can be found around the world within many different cultures. Without these manufactured goods, we as individuals cannot and will not be accepted in certain majority groups. These goods are viewed by the majority group within society as "needs." This notion in turn begins to create a cycle of displaced identity throughout various Places and cultures around the world, in Detroit more specifically. Displaced identity comes directly from the notion of "need" versus "want," and what truly defines the two concepts. The identity of the minority group has been silenced – suppressed – and has resulted in a lack of identity altogether due to the power that the majority class and social status has over them. "The need which might resist central control has already been suppressed by the control of the individual consciousness…" [34] Any individual that attempts to "stand outside" of the social majority, or automatically does due to race and ethnicity almost instantaneously becomes part of the minority – suppressed and displaced within society. But, is diversity among individuals in society not what helps to create this transition from one generation to the next?

It is not homogeneity among individuals that creates culture, but rather it is the notion of experience, view points, and ideologies that bring people together to share the knowledge and information they have learned. Emile Durkheim suggests that in order to truly function within society and adapt to culture it is important to envelop all that surrounds ones self within the environment they inhabit. "One sees… to what man would be reduced if there were withdrawn from him all that he has derived from society: he would fall to the level of an animal. If he had been able to surpass the stage at which animals have stopped, it is primarily because he is not reduced to the fruit only of his personal efforts, but co-operates regularly with his fellow-creatures; and this makes the activity of each more productive." [35] Furthermore, he claims that it is due to this notion of "co-operation" with diversification that "products of the work of one generation are not lost for that which follows." [36] This suggests that in order for one generation to pass on their ideologies and practices to another it is necessary for an individual to diversify themselves within a group, but also that the society within which this information is passed remain intact. "For in order that the legacy of each generation may be able to be preserved and added to others, it is necessary that there be a moral personality which lasts beyond the generations that pass, which binds them to one another: it is society." [37] It is exactly this notion of diversification that has been displaced within

society through what we refer to today as our "popular culture" belief system, that supposedly deems what our societies "needs" based on the majorities rule. But where in the equation does that leave the diversified [minorities] voice?

The culture industry exists due to our "needs" within society [supply and demand], we should note that it is actually part of the system that [destructively] creates these "needs" we cannot live without, "The so-called dominant idea is like a file which ensures order but not coherence." [38] It provides a path for individuals to follow in order to "fit in," but does not portray the true identity of any of its members. This attitude towards the culture industry leads to false interpretations, imitations of what many believe to be the "status quo" of a particular society.

Architecture, although we would like to argue otherwise, has fallen victim to the same fate as culture. Historically, it was a way in which "man" defined their culture, in that it was a way to show culture had something to leave behind. Take the Roman's for example. They were so far ahead of their time when it came to building construction and function – it was unconceivable to any other culture at the time. They were responsible for creating the aqueducts [which captured water and drained it into a communal type fountain] which enabled people to have a version of "running water" in their homes and facilities. And for many years the technique was lost due to lack of documentation as well as information transcending generations. That extremely advanced culture that existed so many years ago has also fallen victim to our "mass reproduction" we have taken that style, those ideals of construction and materials and created a mockery of them. We have created false facades, and materials that "represent" the true material that was once used because not only was it popular [so it must be used again], but it was also expensive [so we must find a cheap alternative for now]. We no longer create architecture that represents who we are and where we come from, we create architecture and our identity from what is popular and cheap to build at the time. A passage from Horkheimer and Adorno concretizes this notion:

> *"In the culture industry this imitation finally becomes absolute. Having ceased to be anything but style, it reveals the latter's secret: obedience to the social hierarchy. Today aesthetic barbarity completes what has threatened the creations of the spirit since they were gathered together as a culture and neutralized. To speak of culture was always contrary to culture. Culture as a common denominator already contains in embryo that schematization and process of cataloging and classification which bring culture within the sphere of administration. And it is precisely the industrialized, the consequent, subsumption which entirely accords with this notion of culture. By subordinating in the same way and to the same end all areas of intellectual creation, by occupying men's senses from the time they leave the factory in the evening to the time they clock in again the next morning with matter that bears the impress of the labor process they themselves have to sustain throughout the day, this subsumption mockingly satisfies the concept of a unified culture which the philosophers of personality contrasted with mass culture." [39]*

To express what is referred to above as architecture representing culture, a primary example would be Antonio Gaudi, a famous architect who attempted this notion of culture through one single piece of architecture. La Sagrada Famillia consumed fifty-five years of his life, and he was completely devoted to it the last fifteen years prior to his death. It is the tallest structure in Barcelona [and zoning has complied to this day], its construction began over a hundred years ago, and was purposefully scheduled to require hundreds of years to be built for two integral reasons. One was so his style and technique of architecture could be passed on through generations. Secondly, Gaudi wanted each generation and or culture that came about over the buildings construction life-span to have an influence on how the architecture manifested itself, to compose the historical technique of constructing with the modern or contemporary technique into one piece of art. It remains true to its concept and materiality in that there are no false representations of what it should be. The building began construction in the mid 1800's, and is scheduled for completion in 2026. The building is about an ideal much bigger than any one individual or culture for that matter, this truly represents "real" placed cultural identity in that it goes beyond the limits of one generation and transcends into many. It exists as a work of art – in the true Heideggerian form where the work of art does not represent something that once was, but rather it simply is because it is true. Durkheim refers to these notions as a system of beliefs that manifests first within the individual as "mental states which apply only to ourselves and to the events of our personal lives," [40] which represents each individual being, but later as a totality of form, a social being.

Architecture is no longer about "us" and our advancements throughout history and generations. It no longer holds true to who we are as a culture, as a composition of various generations, and as individuals. It has become static in "pop-culture," about today, the dollar [or the equivalent of trading means], capitalism, monopolies, mass production, the computer, the media, and most importantly our attitudes towards life, history and anthropology. What kind of impression does this leave on our society today, and more specifically the displaced identity of the individuals [which make up the group] that inhabits Detroit? And is this act of "throwing away" culture a conscious one, or do we believe that this is the answer to defining ourselves in history as people, a generation, and a culture – a human race?

The thesis project manifested itself as a community supported urban market and gardens, a pedestrian path that metaphorically bridges the torn districts of Grand River. Its axial organization is arranged to continue a path that has been interrupted by both Grand River and the site itself. It creates an organization of movement from one space to another where individuals have the ability to fuse together with architecture. To interact, integrate, communicate, and gain knowledge from one another. It this notion of sharing stories, information, and techniques with one another that channels what Durkheim refers to as diversification and co-operation into a single social being or form.

The market and gardens act as a source of sustainability for the residents of the area. In that it generates revenue, not from "pop-culture," but rather from a true "needs" basis, in that we

cannot survive or sustain ourselves without nutrients and sustenance. Furthermore, it works to create a sense of pride that, through experience, the site and the district itself is clearly lacking. The pride then becomes an incubator within the individuals to function as a whole, to create an identity that represents who they are as a culture, where they have been, where they are and where they are going. [It should be noted that historically, prior to the industrial revolution, Detroit was home to the French Ribbon Farms in the mid 1700's. The city was founded mainly because of its location and access points to the various waterways surrounding Michigan, in addition to its rich soil potentials]. In an effort to not become a "representation" of what used to be, and to remain true to the people and the site the building also has further programmatic functions that identify with various businesses surrounding the local area, and classroom engagement for furthering knowledge within the inhabitants of the area. It also has a restaurant and bar where the food that is grown on site, is cooked and sold for a profit.

The form itself is a response to this shift in culture, displaced identity, and a loss of density. It begins as an opening that addresses the main axial points of the grid that was once there, but it skews and rotates to create a dynamic form that speaks to the movement of both the inhabitants of the area [the culture], as well as how the site has transitioned over time. It is a movement that crosses intergenerational, cultural, and historical lines and fuses them together at three points – a historical point, a generational point, and a cultural point that acknowledges the city and the people.

The ultimate goal of the project is to serve as an incubator to re-place an identity, as well as to bring diversification into the area. In that the site and the architecture become a hub, or a node rather, along a network of individuals that with the notion of people empowering one another fuses together architecture, people – culture – and the city, not to become what it used to be, but rather to not ignore what it used to be and become what it has the true potential to be today, to exist without the culture industry, the media, and mass production.

Sure, it could be argued that what has been suggested is trying to solve all of the problems of Detroit through an ideology that will not, and could not ever manifest itself through an urban market and gardens. But, it is important to realize how the inhabitants – the culture – of a space have the ability to transcend space into place through the interaction of both creation and diversification. To refer back to the notion of "empowered space" and what it means to both physically and metaphorically empower a space it can be found that this is what opens doors to unlimited possibilities, to interaction, to knowledge, and more importantly to an ideal that is beyond that of an individual.

conclusion

After having taken a step back from my project I realized that there were many things that could have been done differently. There were many mistakes that were made, as well as many things that should have been considered, but all in all I learned a lot through this process. The most valuable thing that I learned was how to create a project from beginning to end. Due to the fact that each individual student is their own client, architect, and consultant [with the added assistance of the professor] there were many decisions that needed to be made and overall the process really proves each students capability to be independent thinkers. Yet, we all know in the real-world it is never independent, it will always be a collaborative process in some way.

The project may, in my mind, have followed the guidelines I set forth for it to accomplish, but I feel as though the project accomplished the sculptural qualities that I set forth for it, in terms of the conceptual ideas as an experience, but functionally I believe there were holes that, if noticed earlier could have really drove home the concept.

endnotes

1. Heidegger, 152.
2. Norberg -Schultz, Dwelling and Existence, 25.
3. Norberg-Schultz, Place, 8.
4. Heidegger, 154.
5. Norberg-Schultz, Place, 50.
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27. Pallasma, 45.
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