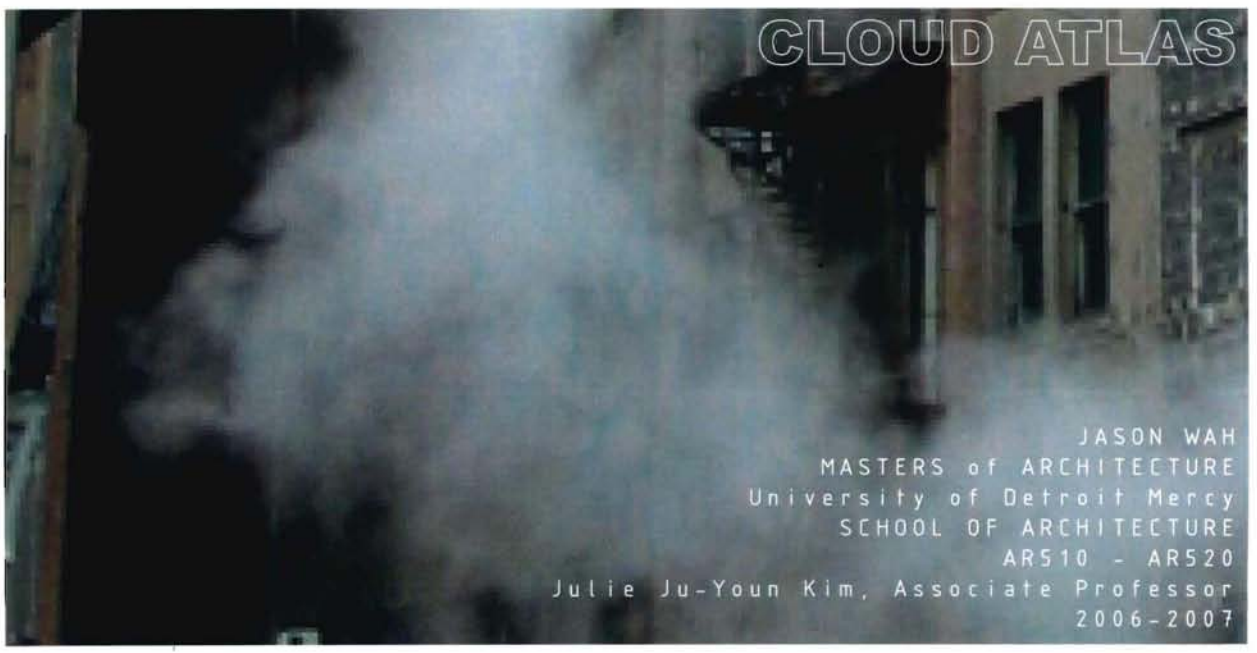
CLOUD ATLAS
JASON WAH
MASTERS of ARCHITECTURE
University of Detroit Mercy
SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE
AR510 - AR520
Julie Ju-Youn Kim, Associate Professor
2006-2007

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{ function. purpose. product: CONSUME : THE SYSTEM : WHOLE
++
doing. being. process: CIVIC : THE HUMAN : PART }

Through the design of a multiple public scenarios such as a washroom, car wash, bus stop, and park, this thesis seeks to engage citizens in the experience of contradiction - of being in public but yet being in private; of being unsure about who the "public" really is and who can claim a stake on that space. This thesis seeks to appropriate public land for public services. By providing a program that is common to all, the project hopes to engage and reach the public and help realize a truly public architecture.

Using the commonplace and everyday as a springboard to truly bring about change, perhaps it is possible to achieve the ideas of social justice via the creation of a truly public space. By providing a public service, it is possible to then allow for the integration of all people, homeless people included, without forcing the issue or trivializing a response.

A good understanding of the "parts" will allow for the reconfiguration and alteration of those parts into new tendencies and relationships that lead to new understandings of experience and of space. The unique nature of individual parts and the combination of them to form a whole involves resistance, reaction and conflict - and it is within this working relationship of conflict and challenge that invites possibility for resolution and collaboration.

abstract

Each individual is a single part: a member - that makes up a larger whole: society. However, the power in society is not shared by all individuals that make up the society. This can result in conflicts where the over arching whole of society does not serve the interests or meet the needs of the individual members that make up that whole. The changing dynamic of the city and the ever-emerging global influence can impose policies and forces that leave some individuals in society displaced. Displaced individuals seek to make use of whatever resources are available to live their lives. By examining the ways which displaced members of society attempt to make use of available public resources and the potential loss of one's habitat, this thesis seeks to create potential by claiming unused public space and confront public policies that prevent their use by all citizens.

The circumstance surrounding the claiming of unused or void public spaces brings about conflict especially with the government that owns it. Displaced people will ultimately find a way to shelter themselves, but how does the government (and the society it serves and represents) respond to such actions by its own people?

Instead of tackling these issues head on (which would probably lead to an insufficient, trivialized, institutional responses) it might be more useful to understand Tschumi's approach to architecture as a paradox and work with existing, relevant concerns - using the commonplace and everyday as a springboard to truly bring about change. Perhaps it is possible to achieve the ideas of social justice via the creation of a truly public space. By providing a public service, it is possible to then allow for the integration of all people, homeless people included, without forcing the issue or trivializing a response.

Through the design of a public washroom, this thesis seeks to engage citizens in the experience of contradiction - of being in public but yet being in private; of acknowledging people but ignoring them simultaneously. This thesis seeks to appropriate public land for public services. By providing a program that is common to all, the project hopes to engage and reach the public and help realize a truly public architecture.

Conceptually, the project must understand the basic working relationships between the individual parts which make up the larger whole. This inter-related networking is prevalent in all of life's relationships and should be present in the design of the project. The project must also understand change and be able to accommodate a complex and disjoined societal framework. The issues of displacement, movement, and change need to be addressed with an "architectural language that can be deterministic and ambiguous simultaneously" - allowing for a level of basic structure to work from, but without a definite regulation leaving no room for adaptation and change. Adaptation to change must utilize the current framework of available resources in creative ways, otherwise it remains radical only in an ideological or conceptual state. A good understanding of the "parts" will allow for the reconfiguration and alteration of those parts into new tendencies and relationships that lead to new understandings of experience and of space. The unique nature of individual parts and the combination of them to form a whole involves resistance, reaction and conflict - and it is within this working relationship of conflict and challenge that invites possibility for resolution and collaboration.

public space is twofold:

* democracy - humans have right to space, right to basic services
* capital exchange - activity predicated on commerce, sports, bars, festivals

The creation of public space is a conflicted and contested struggle for ownership and identity. The projects attempt to question who owns it, who uses it, who takes care of it, and who belongs or doesn't belong in the space.

CLOUD ATLAS

Down by the Detroit River, a man has been living on abandoned property. His name is Victor Manuel and he is from Honduras. He was a construction worker working on a nearby Jefferson Ave. overpass when he began squatting on the current site of his home. His home is composed of scraps of wood, bricks, plastic and metal that he finds, collects and carts back to the site using a shopping cart. He then takes the materials and with his construction background, uses them to build his shelter, his home, his dwelling on this abandoned site. The building itself is quite complex and even includes electrical conduits ready to hook up to a power source. Victor Manuel is an individual living among a society that cares less about his existence. Victor Manuel has little or no money. He has no documents. He has no insurance, no car, no property, no "valuable" belongings or possessions, just the protractor he wears around his neck. Victor Manuel is probably sick and mentally ill. But Victor Manuel exists and survives within his environment of the city of Detroit. Victor Manuel is a pioneer. Instead of building from logs that he cut down, he uses scraps gathered from the surrounding landscape. The Detroit landscape is one that allows for such individuality. Not that that individuality is officially sanctioned, but it is the broken nature of organization and prolonged effects of urban decay that allows for cracks within the social framework that allows for individuals such as Victor Manuel to take over a site and build his house there. In other cities, a site similar to his would have been well taken care of - at least fenced off for future development by the owners. The shanty he built would have long been bulldozed and Victor Manuel would have been forced to find somewhere else to settle. In Detroit, his shelter remains. "Progress" is slow, but soon one day, the whole Riverfront will be transformed with parks, condos, restaurants, chic boutiques. One day Victor Manuel will no longer live on the Riverfront. But for now, Victor Manuel is a pioneer - a settler surviving in a strange land, among strange people, living one day at a time.

Victor Manuel is the starting point of this thesis investigation. The issues that face Victor Manuel are those that are actually quite similar to those facing many people in the city - in fact, everybody. The human experience and the question of place and belonging within a public framework of society is the basis of this thesis investigation which affects every citizen.

The quest for discovery is the critical driving force in trying to understand the human experience. Theories of quantum physics have led to an idea that provides a common base of realization. If all objects we perceive as reality are composed of atoms - electrons and neutrons, then everything is essentially the same. It is a science of possibilities in realizing that individual entities are not separate, but are relationships and connections that provide a structure for mass and identity. It is a summation of parts governed by an organizational structure that further identifies its own existence. Society and its architecture can also be regarded in this manner. Everything is made up of smaller units, which when compiled in a certain order make up the whole.

Society is made up of individuals, but as a whole in terms of power structure, it can operate solely within a few number of individuals, but without the mass, it ceases to exist. Patterns are also summation of certain elements, that through repetition and/or translation combine to produce a distinct body.

Each individual is a single part: a member - that makes up a larger whole: society. However, the power in society is not shared by all individuals that make up the

society. A 2002 Gallup Poll found that 60% of the global public believes that their government is not governed by the will of the people. This can result in conflicts where the over-arching whole of society does not serve the interests or meet the needs of the individual members that make up that whole. The changing dynamic of the city and the ever-emerging global influence can impose policies and forces that leave some individuals in society displaced. Displaced individuals seek to make use of whatever resources are available to live their lives. By examining the ways which displaced members of society attempt to make use of available public resources and the potential loss of one's habitat, this thesis seeks to create potential by claiming unused public space and confront public policies that prevent their use by all citizens.

The circumstance surrounding the claiming of unused or void public spaces brings about conflict especially with the government that owns it. Displaced people will ultimately find a way to shelter themselves, but how does the government (and the society it serves and represents) respond to such actions by its own people?

The parts of the whole are important, but more so are the relationships and functions that give structure to form. Quantum physics would assert that governing laws such as gravity and motion are not so much laws, but rather tendencies and habitual processes. If you are able to reconfigure and alter habits, you can create new tendencies and relationships that lead to new understandings of experience. Architecture, I believe, operates in this realm of research and discovery.

Habits, however, are not easy to alter and reconfigure. And if they are altered, the ensuing change stirs cause and effect. The inherent resistance between tendencies and change brings about conflict. Some may see this conflict behaving as a check to protect structure and order. However, I would like to examine the role of conflict in the possibility of forming new relationships (between the parts) as a part of solutions (the whole).

Science has involved the study both of parts (matter) and of the whole (behaviours). Much of our understanding of the physical world has been made available by the work of scientific research. However, the study of behaviours is constantly under revision. The complexity and unpredictability of the human experience on earth is still very mysterious and curious. The attempt to process and understand the "whole" as relationships between the "parts" is what I would consider art. And architecture certainly has its roots based in human existence and experience.

Bernard Tschumi explores the same ideas of conflict and change in his book Architecture and Disjunction. In response to the student protests of 1968 in Paris, Tschumi postulates a possibility for architecture to be political and how it might change society. "How could architects avoid seeing architecture and planning as the faithful product of dominant society, viewing their craft, on the contrary, as a catalyst for change? Could architects reverse the proposition and, instead of serving a conservative society that acted upon our cities, have the city itself act upon society?" He realizes the difficulty of this imperative and says "None of these environmental tactics leads directly to a new social structure,"…"Architecture and its spaces do not change society, but through architecture and the understanding of its effect, we can accelerate processes of change under way."… "I was starting to realize that the old revolutionary concept of 'taking advantage of the internal contradictions of society' was applicable to architecture and, in turn, could one day influence society. The internal contractions of architecture had been there all along; they were part of its very nature: architecture was about two mutually

exclusive terms – space and its use or, in a more theoretical sense, the concept of space and the experience of space." [1]

"The definition of architecture as simultaneously space and event brings us back to political concerns, or more precisely, to the question of space as related to social practice. If architecture is neither pure form nor solely determined by socioeconomic or functional constraints, the search for its definition must always expand to an urban dimension. The complex social, economic, and political mechanisms that govern the expansion and contraction of the contemporary city are not without effect on architecture and its societal use. Space always marks the territory, the milieu of social practice. Would we ever wish it to do so, our society could not get out of its space. Even though it produces space, society is always its prisoner. Because space is the common framework for all activities, it is often used politically in order to give an appearance of coherence through the concealment of its social contradictions. This conjoined/dis-joined condition characterizes our cities, our architecture. The contemporary world is a dislocated space of constraints that may find few common denominators. Yet we should remember that there is no social or political change without the movements and programs that transgress supposedly stable institutionality, architectural or otherwise; that there is no architecture without everyday life, movement, and action; and that it is the most dynamic aspects of their disjunctions that suggest a new definition of architecture." [2]

Tschumi proposes that architecture is a paradox: that it is impossible to question the nature of space and at the same time make or experience a real space. "Was architecture really made of two terms that were interdependent but mutually exclusive? Did architecture constitute the reality of subjective experience while this reality got in the way of the overall concept? Or did architecture constitute the abstract language of absolute truth while this very language got in the way of feeling?"[3] In order to explore the paradox, Tschumi offers the point of junction between ideal space and real space as a place of understanding and working between the two interrelated but mutually exclusive elements. "Each society expects architecture to reflect its ideals and domesticate its deeper fears." [4] "Life was seen as a negation of death – it condemned death and even excluded it – a negation that went beyond the idea of death itself and extended to the rot of the putrefying flesh. The anguish about death, however, only related to the phase of decomposition, for white bones did not possess the intolerable aspect of corrupted flesh. Architecture reflected these deep feelings: putrefying buildings were seen as unacceptable, but dry white ruins afforded decency and respectability." "Society scares easily at those aspects of sensuality that it qualifies as obscene. 'Inter faeces et urinam nascimus' (we are born between excrement and urine), wrote St. Augustine….Georges Bataille, Le Corbusier's contemporary, pointed out that the fundamental prohibitions of mankind were centered on two radically opposed domains: death, and its obverse, sexual reproduction."

"The moment of architecture is that moment when architecture is life and death at the same time, when the experience of space becomes its own concept. In the paradox of architecture, the contradiction between architectural concept and sensual experience of space resolves itself at one point of tangency: the rotten point, the very point that taboos and culture have always rejected. This metaphorical rot is where architecture lies. Rot bridges sensory pleasure and reason." [5]

The essence of the project seeks to find that delicate balance where architecture is understood as an idea and experienced as a space. It is at this point where

architecture is poignant and potent enough to truly impact society and challenge the limits established by institution in a meaningful way. The revolutionary movements of the 60s were in the end unsuccessful in any long-term or on-going sense as they failed to respond to certain harsh realities of life. They were successful as ideas and concepts, but failed to translate into lasting experience and found existence quite different from the concept. In the end, their slogans are now used in advertising campaigns. Architecture, then, must be careful to walk the tight line of contradiction and paradox to produce relevant and meaningful spaces and experiences.

Conceptually, the project must understand the basic working relationships between the individual parts which make up the larger whole. This inter-related networking is prevalent in all of life's relationships and should be present in the design of the project. The project must also understand change and be able to accommodate a complex and disjoined societal framework. The issues of displacement, movement, and change need to be addressed with an "architectural language that can be deterministic and ambiguous simultaneously" – allowing for a level of basic structure to work from, but without a definite regulation leaving no room for adaptation and change. Adaptation to change must utilize the current framework of available resources in creative ways, otherwise it remains radical only in an ideological or conceptual state. A good understanding of the "parts" will allow for the reconfiguration and alteration of those parts into new tendencies and relationships that lead to new understandings of experience and of space. The unique nature of individual parts and the combination of them to form a whole involves resistance, reaction and conflict – and it is within this working relationship of conflict and challenge that invites possibility for resolution and collaboration.

Is the displaced person homeless? Is Victor Manuel homeless, though he has built his own house out of scraps? How does society respond to people in an ambiguous situation? Does society need to or should it even try to welcome displaced people to participate in society? The challenges of displacement are often associated with those of homelessness, poverty, mental illness, race, class and on and on. These are society's most complex and misunderstood problems. Instead of tackling these issues head on (which would probably lead to an insufficient, trivialized, institutional responses) it might be more useful to understand Tschumi's approach to architecture as a paradox and work with existing, relevant concerns – using the commonplace and everyday as a springboard to truly bring about change. Perhaps it is possible to achieve the ideas of social justice via the creation of a truly public space. By providing a public service, it is possible to then allow for the integration of all people, homeless people included, without forcing the issue or trivializing a response.

Through the design of a public washroom, this thesis seeks to engage citizens in the experience of contradiction – of being in public but yet being in private; of acknowledging people but ignoring them simultaneously. This thesis seeks to appropriate public land for public services. By providing a program that is common to all, the project hopes to engage and reach the public and help realize a truly public architecture.

A public washroom is an interesting problem facing urban cities. On the one hand, it meets a very real need that often arises and that everyone can identify with. On the other hand, it presents problems of maintenance and management. No one wants to clean up another person's mess.

Public washrooms are a human right. To deny the use of a washroom is inhumane. If having to go is a natural human condition and there are no public washrooms to meet that need, and it is illegal to go in public anywhere other than a washroom, the problem cycles back on itself.

A civilized society will address this need in some way. The problem of a permanent toilet is the issues of maintenance, security, vandalism, etc. The public washroom houses a true public need that all of society experiences. How can the public washroom properly address all the people using the facility? A true public washroom is open to the public. Therefore, a wide range of people will end up interacting with each other on some sort of level. The public washroom seeks to be a very public place, however, the events and actions occur at a very private level. The relationship between the "inside" and the "outside" will be explored to try to understand the distinction and limits between the two. What is public? What is private? A public toilet is a very private thing, which raises security concerns, maintenance and upkeep.

The site is synonymous with program. The steam pipe network in downtown Detroit will provide the existing infrastructure that the project will take advantage of. It is an opportunity to take an ambiguous situation and turn it for a purpose. The exhaust piping of the network is a necessary function of the steam system, but the locations are in quite awkward positions (middle of the street, middle of a sidewalk, etc.). By exploiting this condition, and turning waste into use, the public washroom project hopes to provide not only the conceptual workings of a public space, but also the implementation and realization of that experience.

Although the initial program will consist of a public washroom, there is room for change and adaptation to address other uses beyond the public washroom. Other democratic and public uses include access to food, education, health, etc. and these can all be considered in the same way the public washroom. (The final project will include a car wash that utilizes the steam pipe network as a method of appropriating a wasted resource; a bus stop that better serves people waiting for the bus; and a pod parasite that hangs off of the people mover in an under utilized park.) The basis for the thesis investigation is the meeting of human need through the experience and creation of a public space, but also coupling it with programs that fit into the context of "acceptable" urban uses.

The notion of "public space" however, is questionable at best. The reality is that the city doesn't really consist of any true democratic and public space in the sense that every citizen has an inherent right to that space and that it belongs to the people and the freedom of use of the people rather than a restrictive governing body. It is telling that the newest and most central "public space": Campus Martius, a hub for every major downtown Detroit event, is owned and operated by the Compuware Building management and technically is not even a public place. The reality is that downtown Detroit operates critically on an economic level. Money is the bottom line and without it, there is no "life" to downtown. Culture therefore, revolves around the notion of capital. All social events are organized as a way to make more money. The joy of celebration is secondary to the joy of making money. There is no party when there is no money. The masses are not regarded as citizens, but rather as consumers, and their worth is evaluated on the level of consumption.

It is now quite trendy for companies to uphold a level of morality and "corporate responsibility". In 2003, "77% of a group of large companies surveyed by World

Economic Forum report on corporate citizenship issues on their website." "Annually, more than one-fifth of global consumers reward or punish companies based on perceived social performance." Don't be fooled by the apparent social awareness offered by corporations. These are really marketing efforts to get more sales. They key word is "perceived" social performance, as more and more all that is left is appearances and images only. On one hand, there is faith and hope in the human ability to rise above the meaningless surface of money, but on the other, there is the reality of the power of money and the harsh consequences of living without any. Which one does architecture follow?

The spirit of a public space still remains in the spirit of democracy. Beyond the crass commercialism of even a shopping mall, there is still a spirit of unity in purpose - or more accurately the abstraction of that experience. Andy Warhol, in his diary, said: "What's great about this country is that America started the tradition where the richest consumers buy essentially the same things as the poorest. You can be watching TV and see Coca-Cola, and you can know that the President drinks Coke, Liz Taylor drinks Coke, and just think, you can drink Coke, too...When Queen Elizabeth came here and President Eisenhower bought her a hot dog I'm sure that not for a dollar, not for ten dollars, not for a hundred thousand dollars could she get a better hot dog. She could get one for twenty cents and so could anybody else." [6] Although this illustration may give the impression that consumption is democratic and gives everyone a chance, it must also remember the global nature of today's economy. The same spirit of consumption leads to the cheaper production of goods by people with lower standards of living. The local community is thus dissolved and is lost in hyperspace. Space and time are no longer standards of measurement, but are dynamic and always changing based on the driving force of commerce. In an instant a deal is made, a transaction occurs, without there ever being a meeting of individuals.

Public space then is abstracted. In a conceptual understanding, it is a place available to all citizens for the cultivation of culture; for activities to take place, for people to meet, for people to relax and be free in the spirit of democracy. Yet, another understanding reveals that the citizen is relegated to the role of the consumer, and that their value in the public arena is based upon their contribution to society.

Henri Lefebvre wrote about abstract space as: "a space of quantification and growing homogeneity, a a merchandised space where all the elements are exchangeable and thus interchangeable; a police space in which the state tolerates no resistance and no obstacles. Economic space and political space thus converge towards an elimination of all differences." [7]

"Public space is increasingly commodified but is always in a process of being shaped, reshaped, and challenged by the spatial practices of various groups and individuals whose identities and actions undermine the homogeneity of contemporary cities." [8]

"Public space is the product of competing ideas about what constitutes that space - order and control or free, and perhaps dangerous, interaction - and who constitutes "the public". These are not merely questions of ideology, of course. They are rather questions about the very spaces that make political activities possible." [9]

The downtown city centre may be the site of public interaction and activity, however the actual amount of "public space" is minimal compared to privately owned

space. The sidewalk and the street most closely approach a "public space" – where all citizens are allowed. The problem is that there is no active program in these spaces to enhance the human experience of public life. This thesis seeks to examine overlooked spaces as an opportunity to incorporate and involve human activity. The only true public spaces left are those not already taken over by commercial tendencies. These are the "residual" spaces of the city: the cracks in the logistics and system that allow for people like Victor Manuel to inhabit it. The street, the alley, these are some of the spaces in the city that have little or no commercial value to them – they are the public spaces. "The street is the most democratic of places…its vitality is a measure of our priorities and values." [10]

Public space is found within a dialogue between consumption and between democratic civility. In downtown Detroit, the population swings dramatically through the day as the majority of the people are commuters working or fans of sports and entertainment. There is also the casino gambling economy in place as well. This is the framework that public space is trying to coexist in. The problem is that despite the mass number of people to enter and exit the city for events, very little is done to accommodate a mass public. The people come specifically for a purpose and leave once that purpose has been fulfilled. Therefore, there is no apparent need for public services, as downtown is simply a destination point for specific functions. Any public space is then not really being used by the masses, but rather people in the city – street people. Therefore funding for any public space is not really needed as it doesn't serve the majority of the mass public.

Thus the challenge of creating a meaningful public space is quite daunting and often meaningless (from a business point of view). If for a moment, the human element could be valued for its priceless qualities, then one could see the worth of a public space as a crucial component to a civic center. Public space is two-fold. It is found somewhere between where a person is a citizen and a consumer. On the consumption side, one answers to the roles imposed on them – roles of function, purpose, and production. These are contrasted by the understanding of the nature of humans – a nature of doing, being and processing. Public space is found somewhere the human ends and the system begins…somewhere in the relationship of recognizing the part and when it becomes the whole.

"There is nothing more dangerous than to build a society, with a large segment of people in that society, who feel that they have no stake in it; who feel that they have nothing to lose. People who have a stake in their society, protect that society, but when they don't have it, they unconsciously want to destroy it." – Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Today, the world is changing at such a rapid rate, that it is hard to adapt. More and more, the factors affecting the lives of citizen consumers are further and less tangible from them. The sense of alienation and helplessness in the face of imminent changes leaves society more and more disconnected and disjoined. The thesis investigation considers all of these issues, but has no prescription to these complex concerns. The projects rather suggest possibilities and explore the ranges of ideas relevant the concerns of public space in the context of the citizen consumer dialogue. In the same way a cloud atlas tries to document and understand fleeting dynamics of the in-between states of water and gas, this thesis tries to understand that unstable point of contradiction of the public and the private, the parts and the whole, the citizen and the consumer.

ENDNOTES:

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5 Ibid, pp. 75-6
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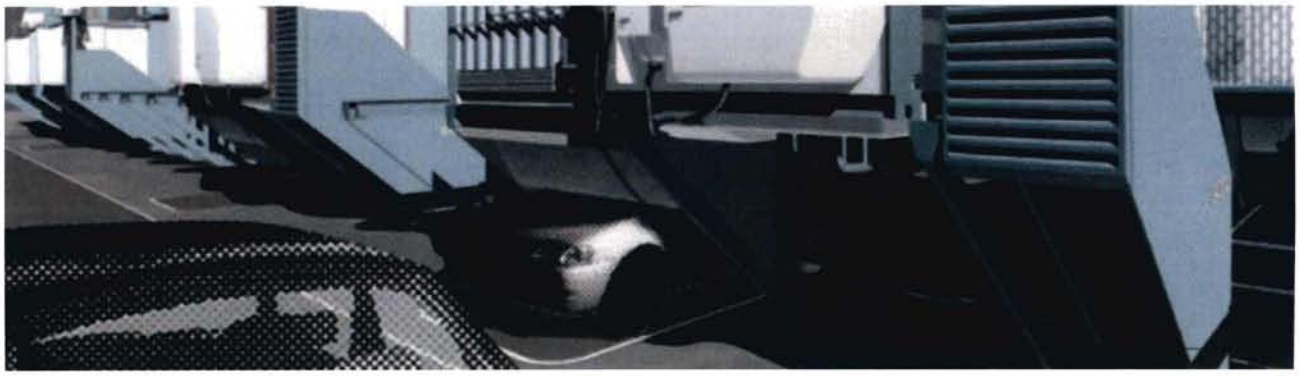
10 Kelbaugh, Douglas (Ed.) with Janice Harvey, Roy Strickland. Downtown Detroit 2002. University of Michigan Taubman College Design Charrette. The Regents of the University of Michigan: Ann Arbor, MI. 2002.



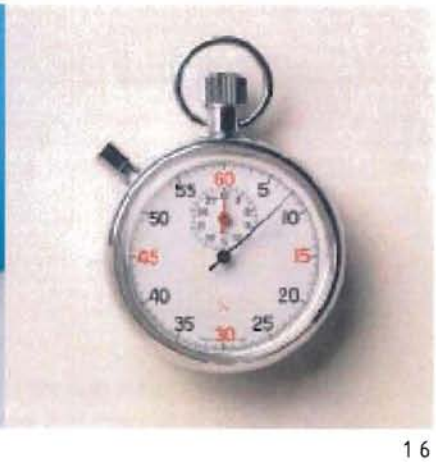
precedent studies

The TakeHome

Office of Mobile Design, Jennifer Siegal
Desert Hot Springs California, currently under construction 2006

Take Home is the latest line of prefabricated housing systems from Office of Mobile Design. The Take Home aims to provide affordable architecturally designed homes. The design philosophy of OMD is that of sustainability, affordability and time savings. Take Homes are currently priced at around $250 per s.f., which includes the house, foundation, engineering, local transportation, taxes, and site permitting. Through prefabrication building technologies and a defined buying process, Take Homes are ready to move into in the average time of 5-10 months, compared to the typical 16-24 months for typical traditional home building. The Take Homes fit within the standard dimensions of codes relating to trailer park homes, which allow for the units to travel on a chassis easily. There are currently 3 Take Homes in pre-sale located in Desert Hot Springs, California. These three bedroom, two bathroom homes offer high-end amenities such as fully landscaped courtyards with pools, passive cooling systems, Italian Boffi kitchens and Duravit bathrooms. The buyer is able have the home tailored to their specifications with upgrades that range from 100% solar power and water heating, to bamboo and radiant heated floors. This mass-customization allows homeowners the possibility to have a unique but relatively affordable home.

http://www.thetakehome.com

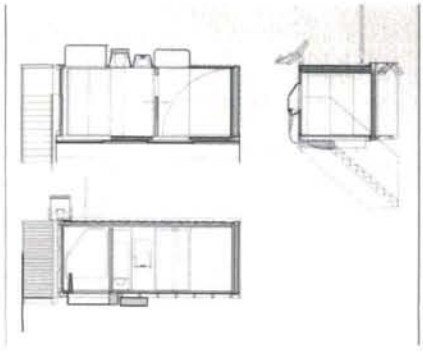


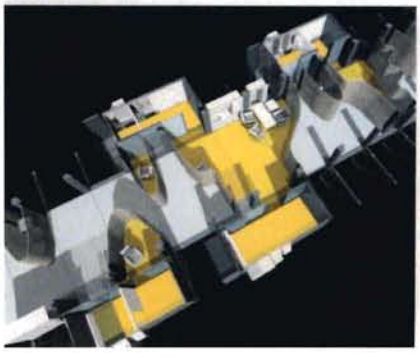
The Take Home is able to provide relatively fast and affordable shelter. By working within standard sizes and developing a standard practice for customization, the project was able to achieve its goals. Although $250/s.f. is not really "affordable", as a whole package with the high-end amenities, it is relatively competively priced. But again a lot of these features are optional. The beauty of this project is it's ability to become what you need or want. The use of modular sized components, and their rearrangement and reconfiguration to adapt to the user and provide a quick means of a shelter is an important aspect to study. The possibility of mass-customization is a very powerful duality that has great potential. As architecture increasing becomes commodified, this concept of mass-customization can be a tool for the affordable nature of architecture to become an affordable and personally obtainable object, while being able to offer a level of personalization that makes it custom to the people living in it. The modularity perhaps also suggests a level of possible modification and reorganization to adapt to future change.

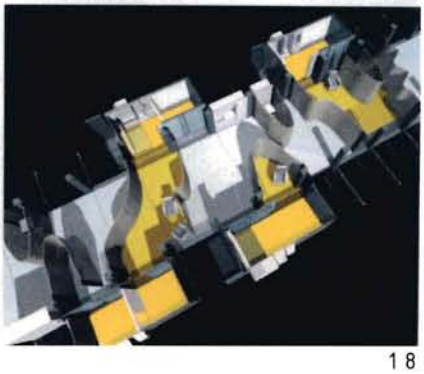
The e-HIVE

LARGE, Doug Jackson
Industrial Port Area, Oakland California

e-HIVE is a community of digitally and physically networked spaces on a 22-acre site in the industrial port area of Oakland, California. The primary components are based on a modified 20 ft. shipping container able to accept various standardized "plug-in" fixture modules to accomodate storage or hygiene needs. These standardized and largely self-sufficient individual dwelling units allow for its maximum flexibility. A transverse sliding partition within the unit acts as a curtain to separate and mediate spaces within the container. With the application of technology, it is possible to integrate various entertainment, communication and lighting to the e-HIVE, so that the individual unit is not "shacked by the real time within which it is located, but rather can accomodate the idiosyncratic schedule of its occupant." [1]

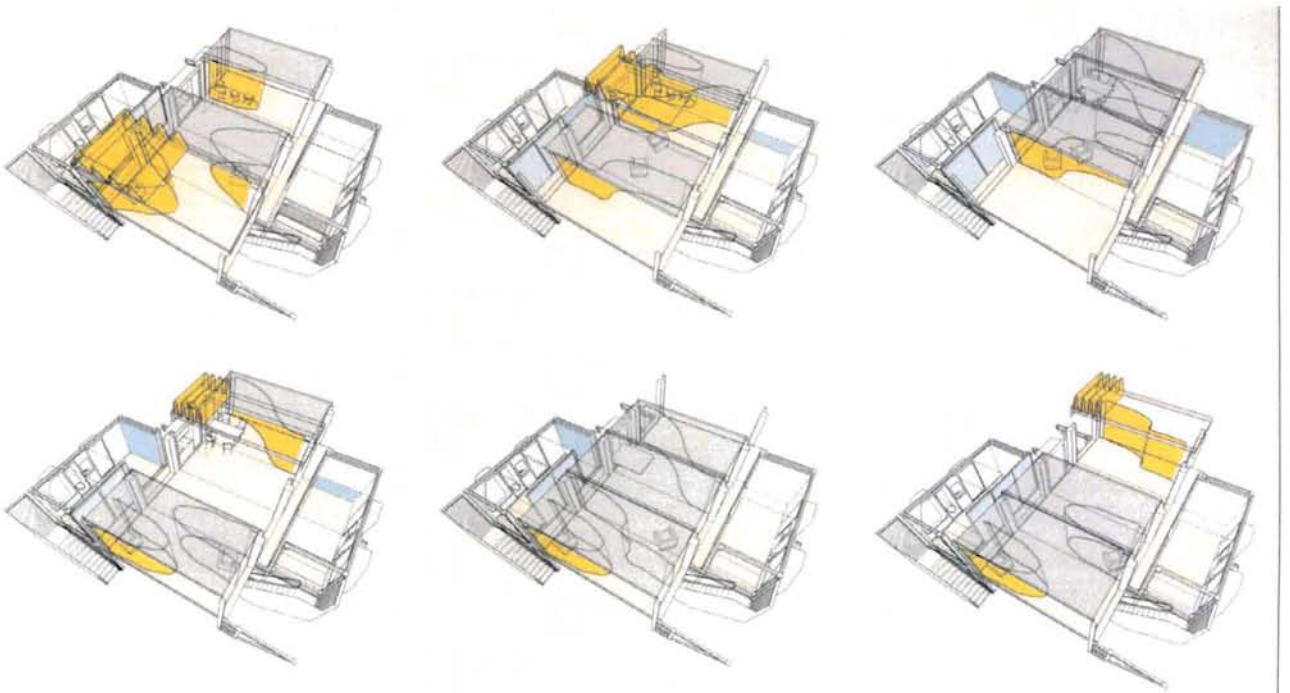




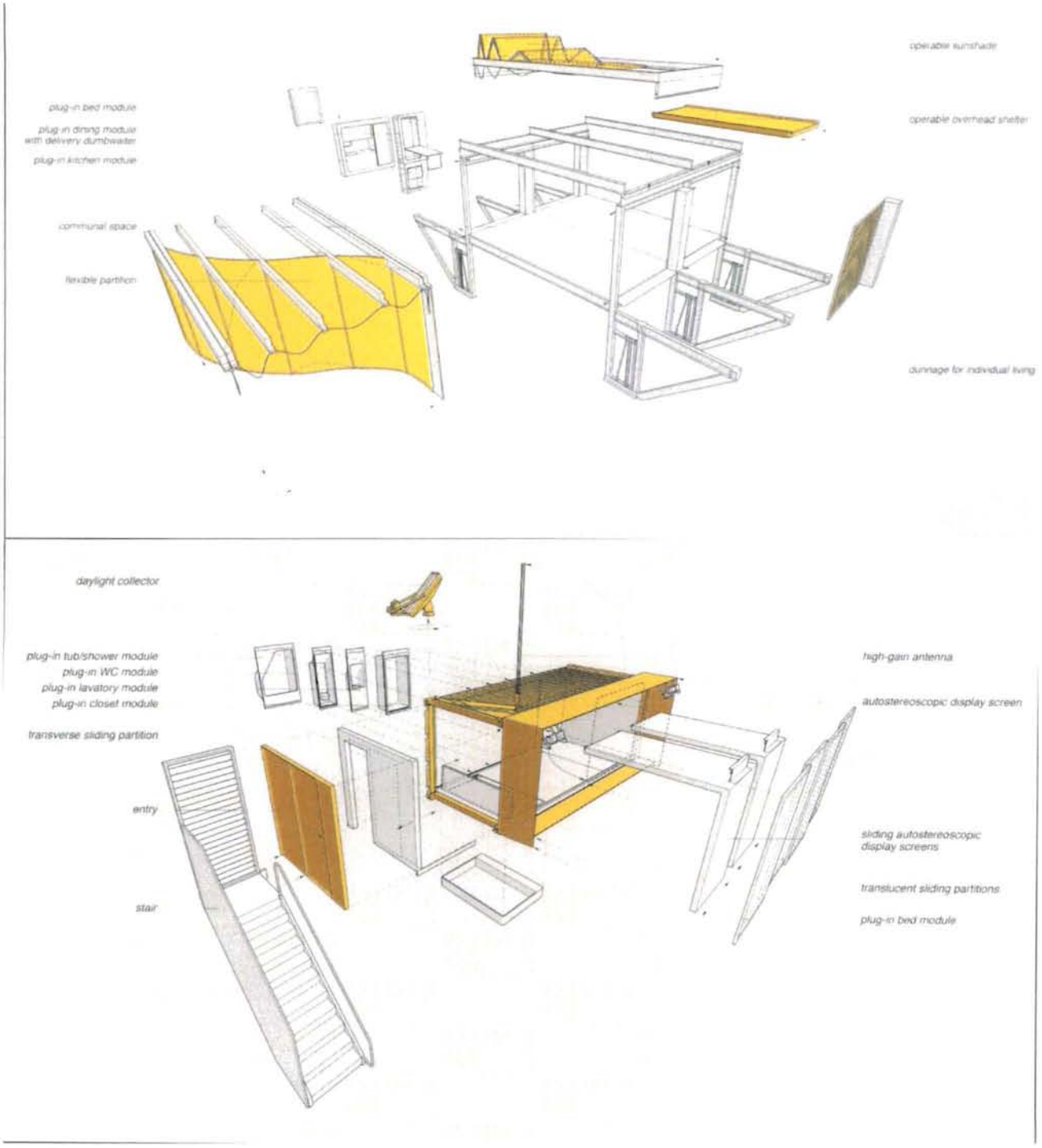


This begins to question the value of "telepresence": the use of any type of mediated communication technology to impart the sense among its users of being in the same environment. Although telepresence can really affect and re-conceptualize our experience of the world including architecture, e-HIVE establishes connectivity on an ad-hoc basis.

e-HIVE is all about flexibility and variability: "from its ability to weave together interior and exterior, and to extend and connect the individual dwelling units with a new type of space based upon a nonrectilinear formalism that arises directly from its need to be flexible. Furthermore, by enlisting the occupant as an agent of the physical networking of individual spaces, the e-HIVE gives, by analogy, palpable expression to the digital connectivity that it also provides." [1]



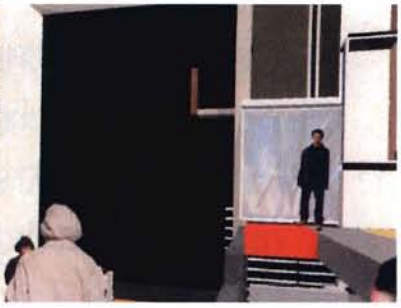
1 Siegal, Jennifer. Mobile: The Art of Portable Architecture. 1st. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2002.

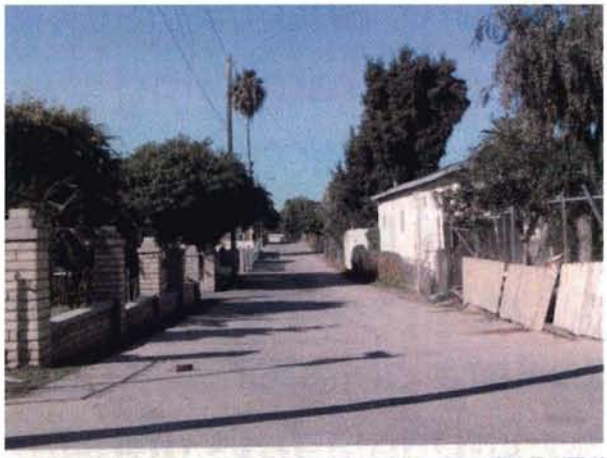


The theme of mass customization allows for a high level of personalization while using standard elements. Starting from a standard box, one can adapt it to whatever specifications they want. There may be the question of whether or not the high level of specificity might outweigh the original factors of being low cost. However, the use of prefabricated parts and the clever use of very cheap materials such as the curtain partition, make this project quite effective. The evolution and mediation of space within the box, pushes the notions of living in a metal container box. Along with the integration of media and technology, there is large potential for collaboration between units and the development of a community or a "e-HIVE".

Casa Familiar: Living Rooms at the Border

Estudio Teddy Cruz
San Ysidro California, 2001





The project takes place in the streets of San Ysidro, California, located across the US - Mexico border from Tijuana. The program undertaken for the local nonprofit social services organization, Casa Familiar, is a 3-stage, 8-year plan for the improvement of the urban core.

With the aim of changing the existing zoning to promote higher density, mixed uses, and affordable housing, this organic, incremental plan's first phase involves the renovation of a historic church into a community center and offices for the organization, as well as a public garden.

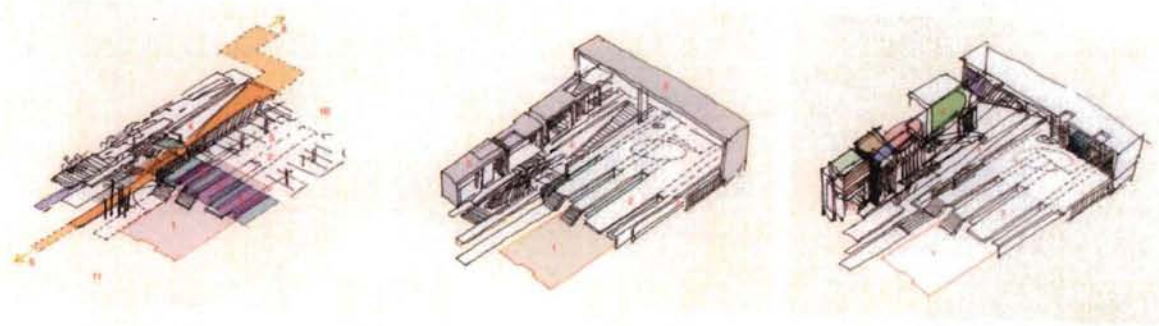
In the second phase, a concrete-frame "arbor" will be constructed in the garden and will act as a shaded walkway connecting the street and alleyway, or as an area where new public uses such as a community market can operate.

The third step will see the concrete frame as the support for the affordable housing to be built upon, under and around it. The flexible nature of these dwellings are better suited to the residents.

The open-ended nature of this project allows for a myriad of possibilities to take place in the interstitial and in-between spaces. The almost deliberate ambiguity reflects the unwillingness to dictate the final outcome of how it is used. Instead it offers suggestions and provides the foundation for future possibilities.

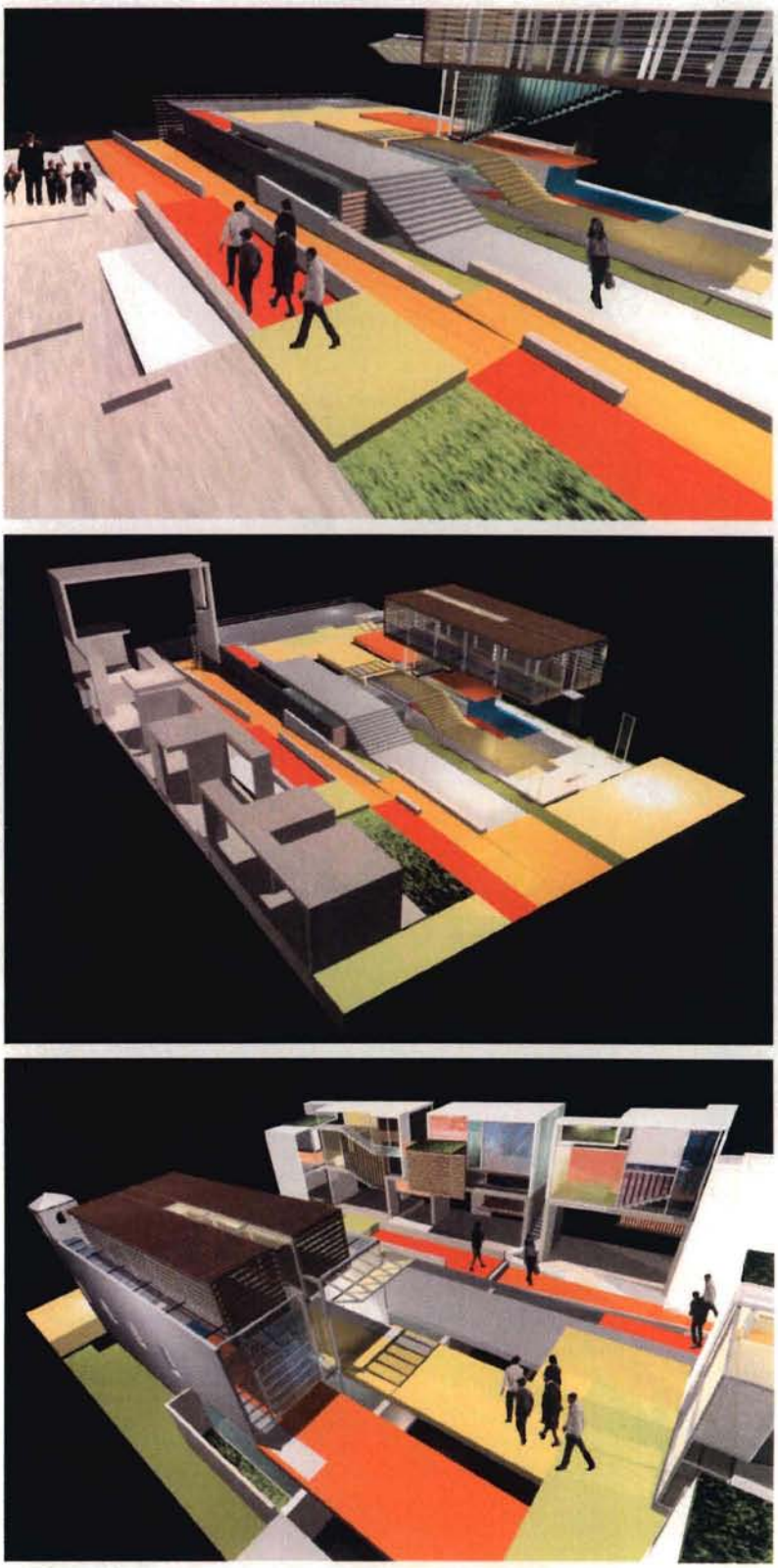
View of the existing alleyway (top left), and three successive proposed phases of development

The key aspect to this project is the incremental implementation of design and growth. By using very simple, open and direct steps, the design enables the growth of this urban border city. The interweaving of program space and uses allows for a rich diverse mix of culture and happenings. The construction of little pieces, slowly add up to make a big change by the 3rd stage. The process of change and development with the use of small scale interventions is a key aspect of this project to study.

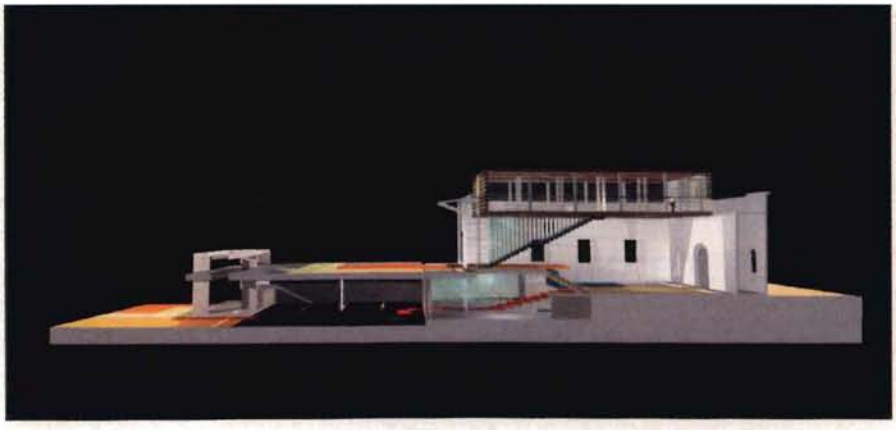


Studies of the project's three development phases

Casa Familiar: Living Rooms at the Border
Estudio Teddy Cruz



Different views of the interior garden at the three phases of development

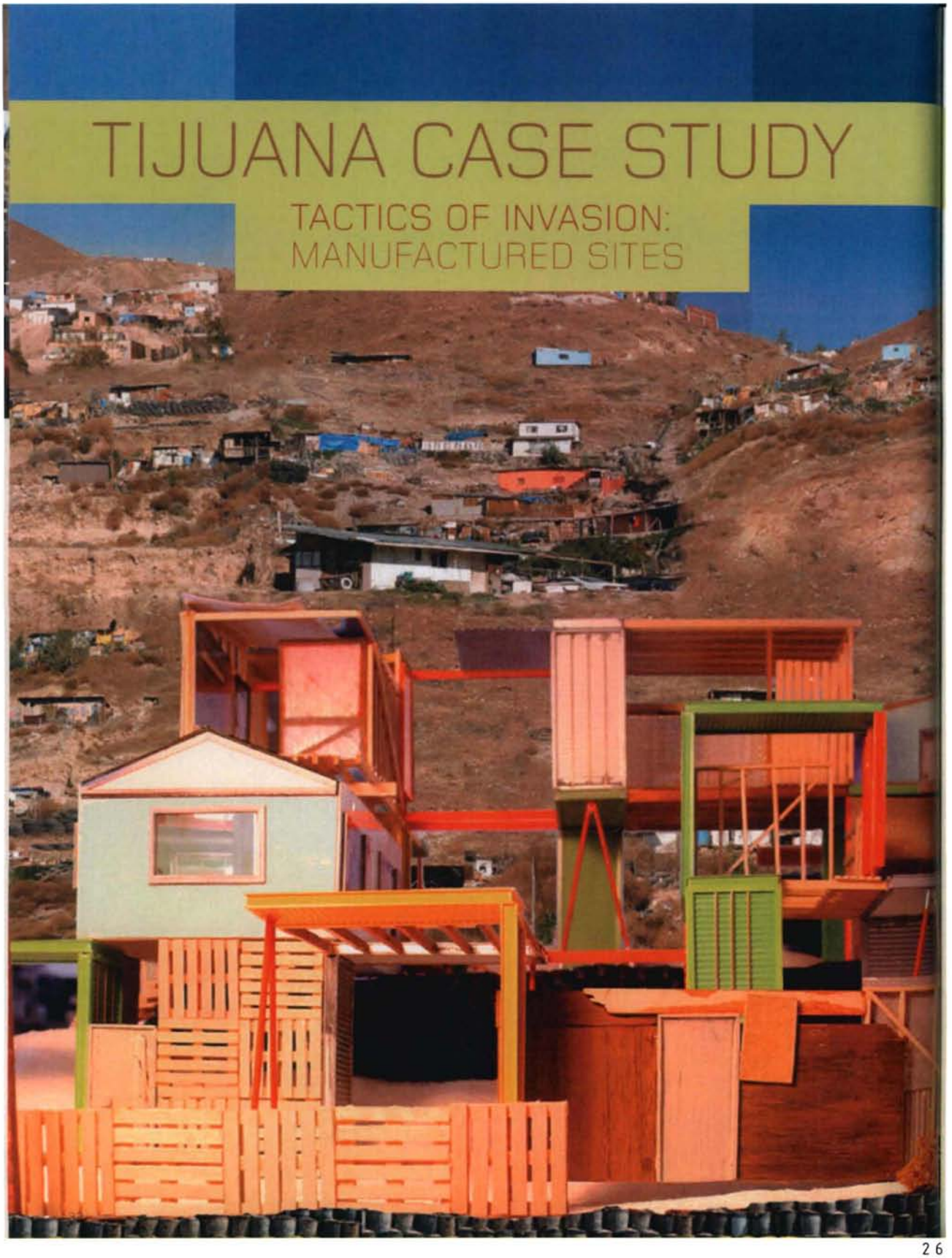


Section through the renovated church with the Casa Familiar offices on the upper level

View of the housing in the third phase

Manufactured Sites

Estudio Teddy Cruz
Tijuana Mexico Case Study



Teddy Cruz describes how his practice in San Diego has used its experience of Mexican/US border conditions to inform a project of 'urban acupuncture' that has the potential to bridge the enormity of a transnational divide that exists between two adjacent communities. In essence a simple prefabricated aluminium frame, Manufactured Sites could provide the much-needed, small-scale infrastructures and services for *favela*-like settlements.

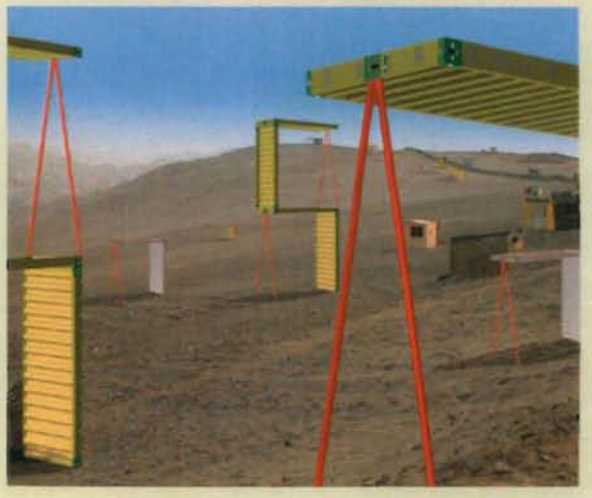
The international border between the US and Mexico at the San Diego/Tijuana checkpoint is the most trafficked in the world. Approximately 60 million people cross annually, moving untold amounts of goods and services back and forth. This contested zone is the site of massive contradiction, defined and redefined every day by the unstable balance of two powerful forces. On one hand are the 'legal' actions and 'official' urban policy prompting the federal government to rethink surveillance infrastructure, incrementally transforming San Diego into the largest gated community, while on the other hand insurgent and 'illegal' actions proliferate in both border cities in smaller-scale, spontaneous occupations and appropriations that seek to blur and transgress the 10-foot-high steel wall that divides these border cities

Even though our practice is primarily interested in challenging the rigidity of San Diego's discriminatory planning regulations and housing policy, it has also been researching, by physically dwelling at the shared edge of these two border cities, the role of housing within the strategies of invasion and appropriation that shape the informal communities of Tijuana. Learning from Tijuana's practices of everyday life has informed our efforts to develop the conceptual tools to rupture the dam that keeps this city from spilling into San Diego. While in San Diego the effort has been to contaminate urban legislature with the 'spillage' of heterogeneity and juxtaposition found in Tijuana, the energies that drive our practice within Tijuana via projects such as Manufactured Sites have to do with imagining a project of urban acupuncture that can inject services and small infrastructure into the precarious condition of the *favela*-like settlements on the city's periphery.

Manufactured Sites explores the start-up housing processes within Tijuana's slum communities. In his most recent book, *Planet of Slums*,[1] Mike Davis reminds us that one billion people live in slums around the world and that it is in fact in those types of settlements that we can find a laboratory to advance ideas of housing in relation to sustainability, technology and community. Working at the San Diego/Tijuana border allows us to closely observe this phenomenon, as Tijuana's informal periphery is incrementally shaped by nomadic settlements that appear from one day to another, growing at an even faster rate than San Diego's gated communities.

This proximity has given us an opportunity to speculate on relevant issues in contemporary debates about architecture and urbanism. It has provoked research into the tactics of invasion that characterise some of these

First Step: The frame
The *maquiladora*-produced metal frames are distributed at the moment of invasion. Families use them to deploy their first traces of occupation on the vacant land. The frames come equipped with prefabricated footings that can be injected into the rubber-tyre retaining walls, providing added stability.



North to South: Disposable housing
A Tijuana speculator buys houses slated for demolition in San Diego. He puts them on wheels and brings them to the border where they will wait in line for their right to cross. Once in Tijuana they are placed on top of steel frames, leaving a space of opportunity beneath them.

start-up settlements, where the potential of a temporal, nomadic urbanism is supported by a very sophisticated social organisation. Hundreds of dwellers, called 'parachuters', invade, en masse, large public (sometimes private) vacant properties. As these urban guerillas parachute into the hills of Tijuana's edges, they are organised and choreographed by what are commonly called 'urban pirates'. These characters, armed with cellular phones, are the community activists who are in charge of organising the first deployment of people on the sites, as well as the community, in an effort to begin the process of requesting services from the city.

Through improvisational tactics of construction and distribution of goods and ad-hoc services, a process of assembly begins by recycling the systems and materials from San Diego's urban debris. Garage doors are used to make walls; rubber tyres are cut and dismantled into folded loops, clipped in a figure eight, and interlocked, creating a system that threads a stable retaining wall, and wooden crates make the armature for other imported surfaces, such as recycled refrigerator doors. After months of construction and community organisation, the neighbourhood begins to request services from the city. In other words, inhabitation happens first and infrastructure follows. The city sends trucks to deliver water at certain locations (one of the first infrastructural elements to be implemented is a water tank on top of some dwellings). Electricity follows as the city sends one official line, expecting the community to 'borrow' the rest via a series of illegal clippings called *diablitos* (little devils).

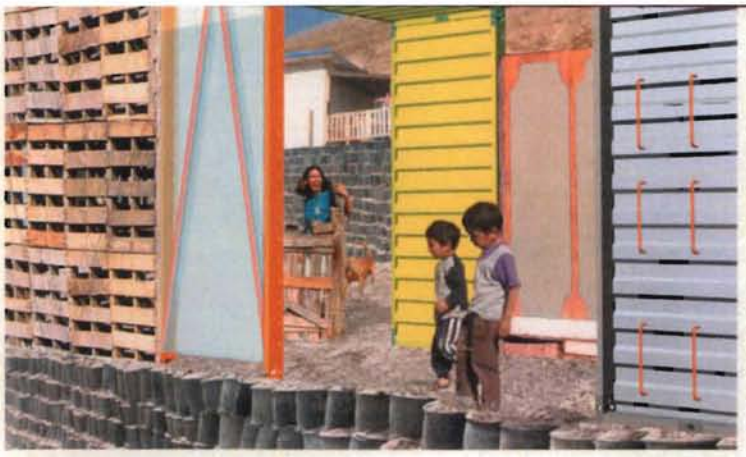
The sites are comprised of the stitching of these multiple situations, internal and external, simultaneously. The interiors of the dwellings become their exteriors, expressive of the history of their pragmatic evolution. As one anonymous resident put it: 'Not everything that we have is to our liking, but everything is useful.'

It is clear that, very easily, one risks romanticising these environments and, in a sort of ethnographic gaze, patronising their fragile conditions. We cannot forget that they are the product of resistance and transgression. In a time when architecture has been so distant from the political ground and the social fabric that shapes it, the critical observation of these settlements and the assessment of possible tactics of intervention to assist their organic evolution is a risk worth taking.

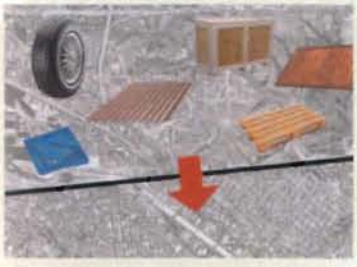
In other words, the image of these informal communities' 'poverty' that planners in Tijuana and the institution of architecture want to obliterate in order to install their own project of beautification in the tabula rasa of the periphery is superseded by a sophisticated social choreography and organisation, and a temporal process of negotiating boundaries and resources. It is precisely these organisational practices and the differential systems that are invented in these environments in order to promote spatial promiscuity that can shape an alternative process of intervention in the contemporary city.

Analogous to the process of transinstitutional triangulation enacted 20 minutes away from these settlements, in San Ysidro, in order to create a microzoning strategy for Casa Familiar the Manufactured Sites project needed as a foundation a similar economic and political

Frame as Infrastructure
The frame comes with a refillable, clip-on fibre-glass water tank containing two weeks' supply.



Uses of the Frame
The frame is conceived as a 'hinge' that can facilitate and strengthen the connection to the variety of recycled materials and systems. Allowing the human resourcefulness and social organisation that characterises the construction of these settlements, the frames come with a manual that can help dwellers optimise the threading of certain popular elements, such as pallet racks and recycled joists. The frame can also act as a formwork, allowing the user to experiment with different materials and finishes. And can also transform into a stair system to facilitate circulation across the difficult topography, becoming the base system for receiving some of the recycled houses from San Diego.



North to South: A city constructs itself from the waste of the other
Tijuana recycles a variety of materials and systems from San Diego. Discarded tyres become retaining walls. Leftover wooden pallets become dwellings. Recycled garage doors become walls and partitions. Some of these fragments are transformed into operational systems. Retaining walls made of whole tyres are further improved by the ingenuity of necessity, as people construct their own sites for inhabitation. Conventional tyres are dismantled and transformed into a system of clipped and interlocking loops to build a more solid and stable structure.

framework. In this transborder scenario, the main agencies involved are *maquiladoras* – NAFTA-supported, foreign-owned manufacturing companies, such as Sony or Samsung, operating in Tijuana to take advantage of cheap labour and low tariffs – as well as the municipality of Tijuana and an NGO, such as Casa Familiar in San Ysidro. *Maquiladora* industries have strategically positioned themselves close to informal communities of workers in Tijuana to avoid having to invest in transportation infrastructure. At this moment, there is not an official political mechanism that can monitor the transactions between *maquiladoras* and the communities they interact with to ensure some sort of social and economic equity. In other words, the CEOs of these companies are not contributing any resources to the development of minimal infrastructure needed in the informal communities that surround them.

The Manufactured Sites project proposed a collaboration between a San Diego NGO and the Municipal Planning Institute (IMPLAN) in Tijuana in order to channel funding from international foundations. Because of the formal protocol of Tijuana's government, there is no existing model for public–private transnational collaboration to support speculative projects and help enact policy. The alliance between the municipality of Tijuana and Casa Familiar in San Ysidro has created the momentum to enact funding and policy, which would require the CEOs of the *maquiladoras* to reinvest in the communities they inhabit by sharing their own technical capabilities to facilitate minor infill infrastructure for start-up housing settlements.

In order to support this process, we are currently proposing a prefabricated *maquiladora*-produced aluminium frame that can act as a hinge mechanism to mediate the multiplicity of recycled materials and systems imported from San Diego and reassembled in Tijuana, giving primacy to the layered complexities of these sites over the singularity of the object. This frame, which can also act as formwork for a variety of positions and scenarios where a stair, pad or wall is needed, comes equipped with preassembled footings that would stitch into the existing rubber-tyre retaining walls, a bracing system that supports a plastic water pouch containing two weeks' supply, and is designed to adapt to the most popular systems that are distributed at the moment of invasion. This small piece is also the first step in the construction of a larger, interwoven and open-ended scaffolding that could help strengthen an otherwise precarious terrain, without compromising the temporal dynamics of these self-made environments. By bridging man-made and factory processes of construction the frame questions the meaning of manufacturing and of housing in the context of the community. Here, manufactured housing is not a minimalist object deployed on the ground, but an actual site, open for multiple futures.

Many lessons can still be learned from the great transnational metropolis stretching from San Diego to Tijuana, as it embraces recurring waves of a new mix of immigrants from around the world. It is out of these socio-cultural and economic tensions, and from territories of political conflict, such as this one, that critical architectural practices can emerge. These are also the transborder urban dynamics that continue to inform our work as we straddle the politics of (contaminating) zoning in San Diego, on one hand, and the tactics of invasion and the informal in Tijuana, on the other. This 'double-sided' practice represents a pursuit for an architectural language that can be deterministic and ambiguous simultaneously, in order to frame both the seemingly chaotic processes of development in many of Tijuana's nomadic settlements and the immigrants' tactics of encroachment into the relentless homogeneity of San Diego's picturesque order.

Can new notions of architectural form emerge out of these social formations, territorial projects whose main focus is not the object of architecture, but the subversion of the information imprinted artificially on the land, the alteration of the boundaries and limits established by the institutions of official development? A different notion of housing can emerge out of this terrain, pregnant with the promise of generating an urbanism that admits the full spectrum of social and spatial possibility.

Tactics of Invasion: Start-up settlements in Tijuana
- Vacant land is 'spotted' for invasion
- 'Pirate urbaniser' organises the invasion.
- Invasion happens at dawn; invaders carry materials for start-up shelter.
- Recycled materials are incorporated.
- First consolidation takes advantage of leftover materials.
- Progressive consolidation is achieved out of social organisation.
- The local municipality begins providing services.

This 'double-sided' practice represents a pursuit for an architectural language that can be deterministic and ambiguous simultaneously, in order to frame the seemingly chaotic processes of development in many of Tijuana's nomadic settlements.

Note

1 Mike Davis, *Planet of Slums*, Verso (New York), forthcoming. Introduction published in *New Left Review*, March/April 2004. See www.newleftreview.net/NLR26001.shtml.

Housing of Contingency: Temporal urbanism
The frame's main objective is to mediate between site and house. Without compromising the improvisational energies of the communities and their temporal evolution, it adds, via a sort of urbanism of acupuncture, structural reinforcement to an otherwise precarious terrain. As the frames interconnect and are infilled by other systems, the overall system becomes a temporal scaffold that can frame the complexity of the sites. As time goes by, the frame might disappear, but only after establishing a choreography of interventions and relationships that will have given form to the new city.

Paper Loghouse

Shigeru Ban
Kobe, Rwanda, Turkey, 1995

The simple construction of these Paper Loghouses, with Ban's signature use of recycled paper tubes, allows for easy and cheap installation of these shelters. These temporary refugee shelters are made up of individual simple tubes, which when combined together make the wall of the house. These houses are truly cheap and affordable, though they are for refugees and not the typical housing market. But one cannot help thinking about what other applications they can be used in.

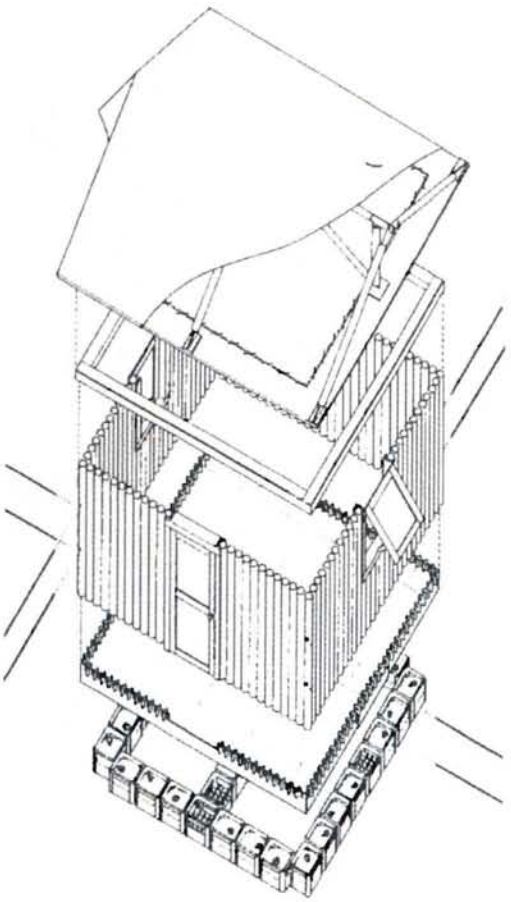
SHIGERU BAN

Paper Loghouse
1995

Foto di/Photos by **Hiroyuki Hirai**

La casa è stata progettata per le emergenze causate da guerre o da calamità naturali. Un primo esemplare è stato realizzato in occasione del terremoto di Kobe; sistemi analoghi sono stati successivamente utilizzati in Rwanda e in Turchia.

The house has been designed for emergency use in wars or natural calamities. The first model was constructed at the time of the Kobe earthquake; similar systems have been used subsequently in Rwanda and Turkey.



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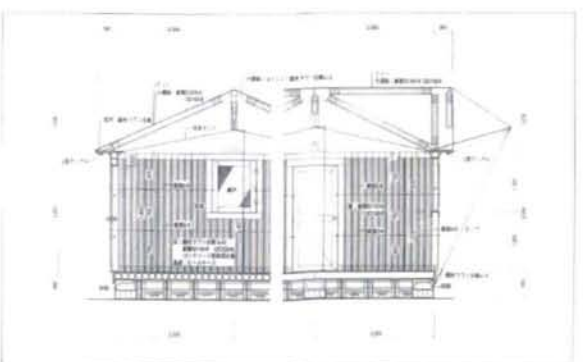
Esploso assonometrico con gli elementi che compongono la struttura, vedute dell'esterno e di un interno e prospetti.

Axonometric exploded diagram showing the elements that make up the structure, views of the exterior and an interior and elevations.

Le caratteristiche principali della Paper Loghouse sono l'economicità della struttura, la possibilità di realizzarne senza difficoltà la costruzione e di riciclarne le parti in un secondo tempo. La struttura è composta da case di birra riempite di sabbia, muri realizzati con tubi di cartone (diametro 108 mm, spessore 4 mm), soffitto e tetto di tela. Tra i tubi è applicata una spugna resistente all'acqua. Il tetto e il soffitto sono separati per assicurare il ricambio dell'aria. Una Loghouse costa circa cinque milaeri di lire

The principal advantages of the Paper Loghouse are the structure's low cost, its ease of construction and the fact that its parts can be recycled for use in the future. The structure is made up of beer crates filled with sand, walls made out of cardboard tubes (108 mm in diameter, 4 mm thick) and a canvas ceiling and roof. A layer of waterproof sponge is set between the tubes. The roof and ceiling are separated to ensure the change of air. One Loghouse costs around 2500 euros.

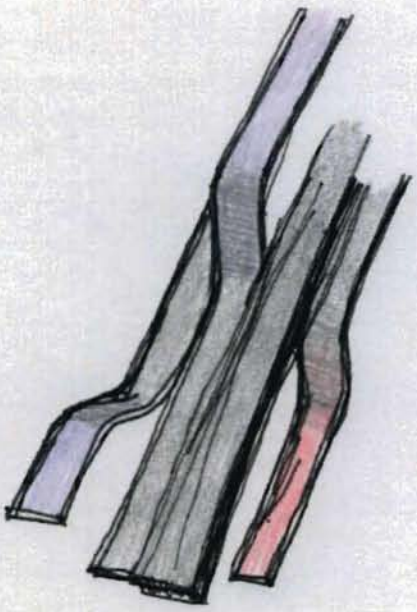


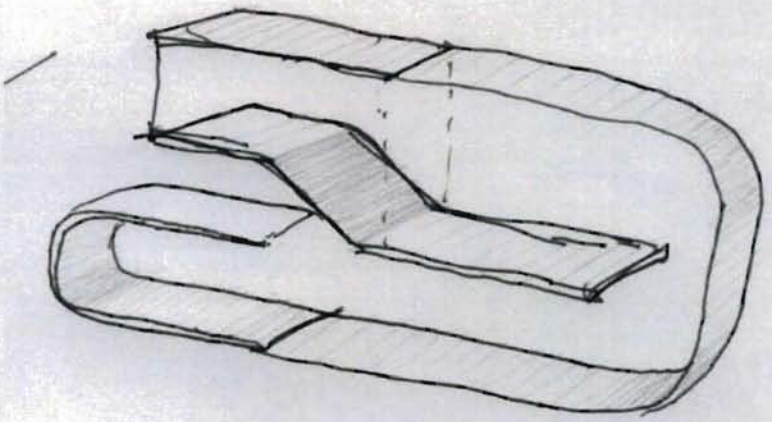
Analysis Artifacts

Preliminary Sketches

CASA FAMILIAR:
LIVING ROOMS AT THE BORDER.

- 3 stage, 8 year plan. →
  - renovate church → community centre, public garden
  - concrete frame → walkway, market
  - infrastructure → flexible
- higher density
- mixed uses
- affordable

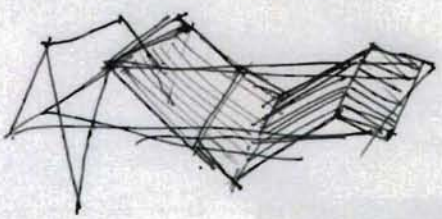


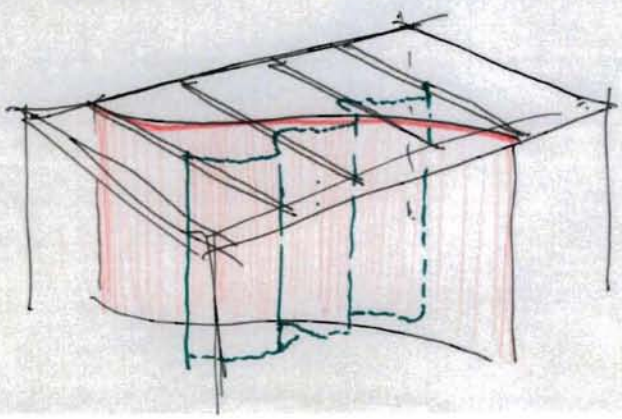


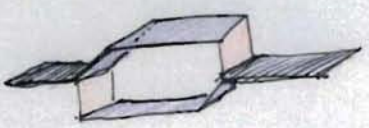
interweaving of spaces
using a basic framework as a base
for future structure

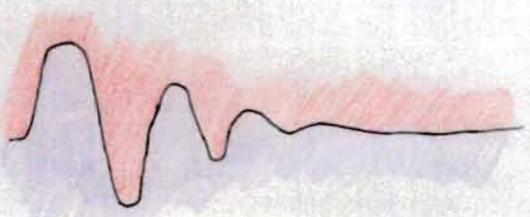
e-HIVE.

the act of
separating / enclosing
space



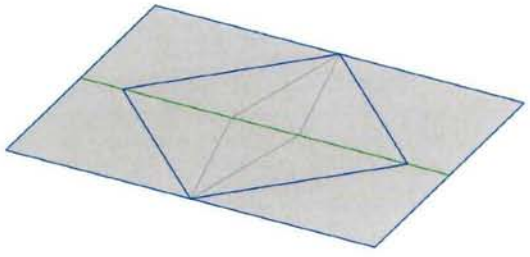




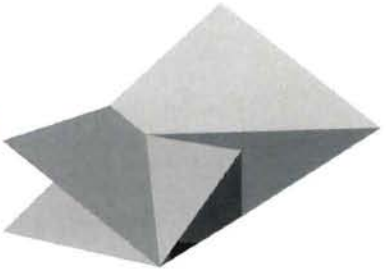


Analysis Artifacts

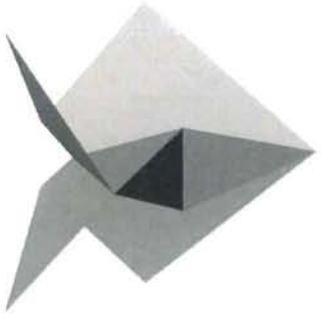
Paper Model Configurations



standard 8.5" x 11" sheet of paper

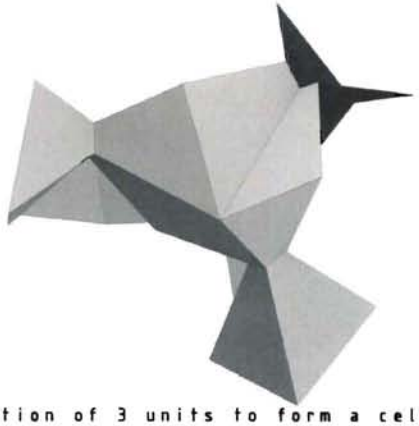


paper after a series of folds

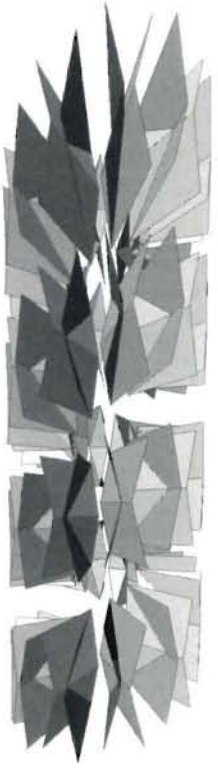


single unit configuration

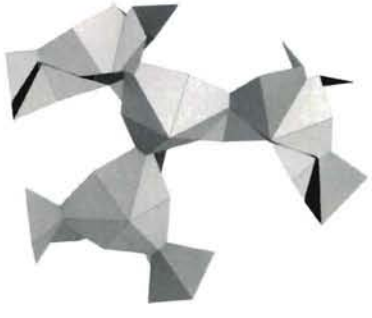
The artifacts take standard sized units and arrays them in different configurations to create unique and distinct shapes - that at another level can become building blocks for something further. The ideas of standardization, but also mass customization are present. Adaptability is also an important factor in these studies, as their ambiguity for use allows for an open examination of their possible implementations and uses.



combination of 3 units to form a cell

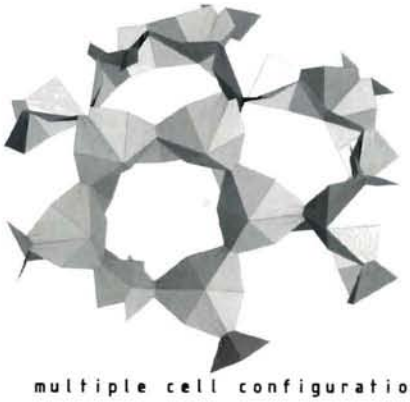


spiral configuration



multiple cell configuration

ring configuration



multiple cell configuration

Don't Miss a Sec

Monica Bonvicini
London, December 2003

A new way to view London: from a toilet
Usable bathroom exhibit boasts one-way mirrored walls

An art exhibit of a usable toilet enclosed in a cube of one-way glass is seen across the road from London's Tate Britain Museum. The person inside the outhouse can see passersby while remaining invisible to them.

LONDON - Visitors to Britain will find a new stop on London's site-seeing route this spring: a usable public toilet enclosed in one-way mirrored glass situated on a sidewalk near the River Thames. The contemporary art exhibit, which allows the user to see out while passers-by cannot peep in, toys with the concepts of privacy and voyeurism.

"I think there'd be a twinge of not believing that people outside couldn't see you," said Jeff Bolotен, as he peered into the glass cube to see the metal prison toilet and its transparent walls.

The exhibit, entitled "Don't Miss A Sec," is on display at a construction site across the road from Tate Britain, the national gallery of British art from 1500 to the present.

As museum-goers inquisitively press their noses to the reflective glass, and construction workers mill about, it isn't difficult to see why people would feel uneasy about using the glass outhouse.

"Playing with the idea of the most private bodily function and having to sit on a street corner is just bizarre," said Bolotен, who works at the Tate Britain.

"The construction site makes it interesting because portable toilets are at construction sites all the time, but, the Tate Britain's a respected institution; the juxtaposition makes it more unique," he said.

Far from testing the viewers' levels of embarrassment versus exhibitionism, the artist, Italian-born Monica Bonvicini, conceived of the idea while watching people at art openings. Amid the gossip and pageantry, nobody wanted to leave the room for fear of missing a key entrance or comment. The "Don't Miss A Sec" exhibit -- which was unveiled in December -- reflects peoples' reluctance to leave the spectacle, and allows the art-goer to remain in the action, even while on the toilet.

While some viewers meditate on the exhibit's psychological and cultural implications others revert to telling potty jokes.

British dailies and art commentaries have also had fun with the subject: "Loo with a view" and "Bathroom humor in London" have been among the headlines.

Panoptican surveillance system
The use of the sterile prison toilet and sink unit stems from the fact that the site once housed the Millbank Penitentiary, where prisoners were held before being transported to Australia in the 1800s.

The prison's architect Jeremy Bentham had hoped to create a Panoptican, or all-seeing, surveillance system for the penitentiary.

His design envisioned a cylindrical central tower, from where a guard could see all the prisoners in their cells, which radiated out from the tower, without being seen himself.

Bentham believed that the knowledge that they were being watched would prevent prisoners from being disobedient, and that they would come to internalize the watchful eye and be able to act as their own guards if they were eventually released.

Although Bentham's Panoptican was never realized, 21st century surveillance systems, like closed circuit television (CCTV), have taken on a similar role.

"Don't Miss a Sec" turns the tables by taking the all-seeing power away from the camera and giving it to the person on the toilet, while letting them remain invisible to the world.

But peoples' fears of being seen with their pants down still hold strong.

In 2000, a pair of self-proclaimed performance artists caused an uproar when they relieved themselves on artist Marcel Duchamp's 1917 sculpture of a urinal, on display at London's Tate Modern gallery.

But, even with full permission to defecate on Bonvicini's work of art, Britons and tourists alike tend to shy away from the challenge.

Considering that four-man outdoor urinals are a frequent site in the U.K. capital, some may question the need for nerves. And in some cultures using the toilet is not considered a private matter at all. In fact, it was common for ancient Greek aristocrats to discuss political and business affairs while attending to their own "personal business" in communal bathrooms.

Carlile, Jennifer. "A New Way to view London: From a Toilet." *MSNBC.com*. 5 March 2004.

Glass Outhouse

Patrick Killoran
SculptureCenter, Long Island City, 2002

Modified portable toilet.
An existing portable toilet was fitted with special walls and doors that allow the occupant to see out but the public cannot see in. The toilet is functional. Glass Outhouse is an unlimited edition of porto-potty.
www.patrickkilloran.com

A tale of two toilets - Front Page
Art in America, Feb, 2004 by Raphael Rubinstein

Following reports in the media about Bonvicini's piece, which is free but only open for use during certain hours of the day, some New Yorkers were reminded of a piece on view in the courtyard entrance of New York's Sculpture Center a year earlier--Patrick Killoran's Glass Outhouse. This was a standard portable toilet that the 31-year-old New York artist had altered to create a see-through-mirror effect similar to that of Bonvicini's subsequent work. Looking at photos of the structure housing Bonvicini's toilet--a perfectly rectilinear box--one couldn't help thinking that Killoran net only seemed to have arrived at the idea first, but also had done so with far greater conceptual elegance. By choosing to use a portable toilet, of the kind often found at construction sites and outdoor public events, Killoran neatly alluded to the occasion of his piece: the inauguration of the Sculpture Center's new home, a renovated industrial building in Queens. (Glass Outhouse remained on view for some 10 months and was free and usable during the center's regular hours.)

In contrast, the external form of Bonvicini's work appears to have no specific relation to its own function. Rather, like previous pieces of hers, it alludes chiefly to Minimalist sculpture, that is, to the realm of galleries and museums. One could argue that Killoran's economy of means--adapting a preexisting object through a simple but crucial operation (shades of Duchamp's urinal)--is artistically and intellectually stronger than Bonvicini's much more elaborate (and no doubt much more costly) construction. Doesn't a work of art, even one that serves the most quotidian of functions, need to possess a certain internal logic, a correlation of concept and form, in order to be esthetically compelling?

On one level the coincidence of these two toilet sculptures is just another story about precedence, but it's also an occasion to compare two related works of art and make a qualitative distinction between them. For art aficionados that should count as a truly welcome public convenience.

Rubenstein, Raphael. "A Tale of Two Toilets."
Art in America. February 2004.

paraSITE

Michael Rakowitz
Cambridge, Boston, New York, Baltimore, 1998

PARASITISM IS DESCRIBED AS A RELATIONSHIP IN WHICH A PARASITE TEMPORARILY OR PERMANENTLY EXPLOITS THE ENERGY OF A HOST.

paraSITE proposes the appropriation of the exterior ventilation systems on existing architecture as a means for providing temporary shelter for homeless people.

PARASITES LIVE ON THE OUTER SURFACE OF A HOST OR INSIDE ITS BODY IN RESPIRATORY ORGANS, DIGESTIVE ORGANS, VENOUS SYSTEMS, AS WELL AS OTHER ORGANS AND TISSUES.

The paraSITE units in their idle state exist as small, collapsible packages with handles for transport by hand or on one's back. In employing this device, the user must locate the outtake ducts of a building's HVAC (Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning) system.

FREQUENTLY A HOST PROVIDES A PARASITE NOT ONLY WITH FOOD, BUT ALSO WITH ENZYMES AND OXYGEN, AND OFFERS FAVOURABLE TEMPERATURE CONDITIONS.

The intake tube of the collapsed structure is then attached to the vent. The warm air leaving the building simultaneously inflates and heats the double membrane structure.

BUT A HOST IS CERTAINLY NOT INACTIVE AGAINST A PARASITE, AND IT HINDERS THE DEVELOPMENT AND POPULATION GROWTH OF PARASITES WITH DIFFERENT DEFENSE MECHANISMS, SUCH AS THE CLEANING OF SKIN, PERISTALTIC CONTRACTION OF THE DIGESTIVE APARATUS, AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF ANTIBODIES.

In April of 1997, I proposed my concept and first prototype to a homeless man named Bill Stone, who regarded the project as a tactical response. At the time, the city of Cambridge had made a series of vents in Harvard Square "homeless-proof" by tilting the metal grates, making them virtually impossible to sleep on.

PARASITES RESPOND TO THIS DEFENSE BY ANCHORING THEMSELVES WITH HOOKS AND SUCKERS ONTO SKIN, OR DIGESTIVE MUCOUS MEMBRANE, AND BY DEVELOPING PROTECTIVE DEVICES AND SUBSTANCES WHICH LESSEN DEFENSIVE CAPABILITIES OF THEIR HOST.

The system by which the device attaches or is anchored to the building is designed to allow the structure to be adaptable. The intake tube can be expanded or tightened to fit the aperture of the vent through an adjustable lip made possible by elastic draw-strings. Hooks are attached to the metal louvers for reinforcement.

THERE IS "TENSION" BETWEEN A HOST AND ITS PARASITE, SINCE THE HOST ENDEAVOURS TO GET RID OF THE FOREIGN BODY, WHILE THE PARASITE EMPLOYS NEW WAYS TO MAINTAIN THE CONNECTION WITH THE HOST.

The connection of the inflatable structure to the building becomes the critical moment of this project.

Since February 1998, over thirty prototypes of the paraSITE shelter have been custom built and distributed them to homeless individuals in Cambridge, Boston, New York, and Baltimore. All were built using temporary materials that were readily available on the streets, such as plastic bags and tape.

While these shelters were being used, they functioned not only as a temporary place of retreat, but also as a station of dissent and empowerment; many of the homeless users regarded their shelters as a protest device, and would even shout slogans like "We beat you Uncle Sam!" The shelters communicated a refusal to surrender, and made more visible the unacceptable circumstances of homeless life within the city.

For the pedestrian, paraSITE functioned as an agitational device. The visibly parasitic relationship of these devices to the buildings, appropriating a readily available situation with readily available materials elicited immediate speculation as to the future of the city: would these things completely take over, given the enormous number of homeless in our society? Could we wake up one morning to find these encampments engulfing buildings like ivy?

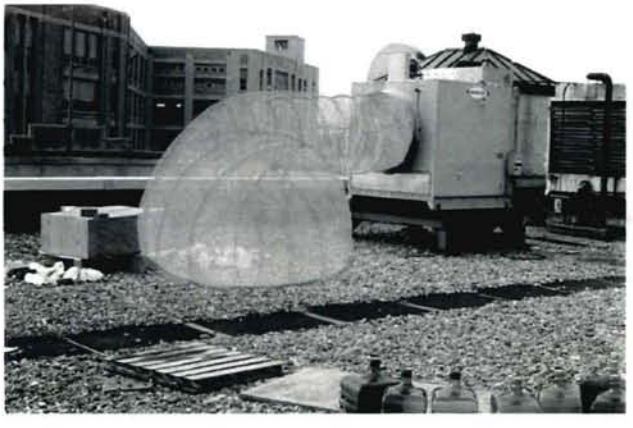
This project does not present itself as a solution. It is not a proposal for affordable housing. Its point of departure is to present a symbolic strategy of survival for homeless existence within the city, amplifying the problematic relationship between those who have homes and those who do not have homes.

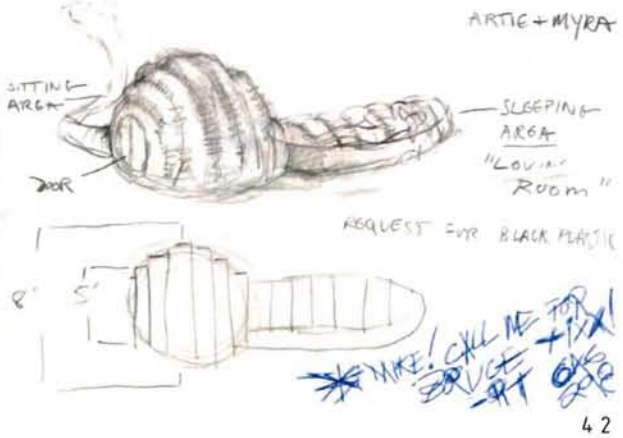
The issue of homelessness is of global proportions and it is foolish to think that any one proposition will address all the issues associated with this problem. There are many different types of homeless people. The mentally ill, the chemically dependent, those who are unable to afford housing, men, women, families, even those who prefer this way of life are included among the vast cross section of homeless people in every urban instance. Each group of homeless has subjective needs based on circumstance and location. The project does not make reference to handbooks of statistics. Nor should this intervention be associated with the various municipal attempts at solving the homeless issue. This is a project that was shaped by Rakowitz's interaction as a citizen and artist with those who live on the streets.

Joe Heywood's
paraSITE shelter, 2000

Michael McGee's
paraSITE shelter, 2000

Bill Stone's paraSITE shelter, 1998





(P) LOT

Michael Rakowitz

Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien (MUMOK), Vienna, 2004

(P) LOT questions the occupation and dedication of public space and encourages reconsiderations of "legitimate" participation in city life. Contrary to the common procedure of using municipal parking spaces as storage surfaces for vehicles, (P) LOT proposes the rental of these parcels of land for alternative purposes. The acquisition of municipal permits and simple payment of parking meters could enable citizens to, for example, establish temporary encampments or use the leased ground for different kinds of activities. A first initiative for this re-dedication is realized through the conversion of ordinary car covers into portable tents, available for loan at the MUMOK. Visitors to the museum and interested citizens who wish to participate in the development of this proposed culture will have the choice to use one of five covers ranging from a common sedan to a luxurious Porsche or motorcycle, thereby enabling a broadcast of desire within the marginalized space of need.

88
UPS

Stair to Park

Heavy Trash, www.heavytrash.blogspot.com
Los Angeles, 1997

In June 1997, Heavy Trash installed their first project - a 2,000-pound stair providing temporary access to Triangle Park at Santa Monica and Bundy. A 7'-high fence had been erected around the park to prevent the homeless from using the grassy enclave. The City solved the "problem" by using $28,000 of tax-payer funds to fence off the park and permanently remove it from the public realm. For three weeks, the stair allowed the local community to use the park again.

Viewing Platforms

Heavy Trash, www.heavytrash.blogspot.com
Los Angeles, 2005

As an anonymous arts organization of architects, designers and urban planners, Heavy Trash creates large, disposable art objects that draw community and media attention to urban issues. By explaining a particular urban problem and suggesting a solution, Heavy Trash seeks to provoke dialogue among the residents of Los Angeles.

On April 24, 2005, Heavy Trash volunteers deposited bright orange viewing platforms in front of three Los Angeles gated communities; Brentwood Circle, Park La Brea and Laughlin Park. The purpose of these viewing platforms is to draw attention to the phenomenon of gated communities -- the fastest growing form of housing in the United States. "There are now more than 1 million homes behind such walls in the greater Los Angeles area alone," according to Setha Low, a professor at the City University of New York.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH GATED COMMUNITIES?
Most people want to live in communities that are safe for their families and most homeowners want to protect their property values. Although these are fundamentally reasonable goals, walling off one section of the city from another is not a reasonable way to achieve them. In fact, doing so can actually harm the very communities in need of protection. According to USC Lusk Center Director Ed Blakely and UC Berkeley professor Mary Gail Snyder,
"When public services and even local government are privatized, when the community of responsibility stops at the gates, the function and the very idea of democracy are threatened. Gates and barricades that separate people from one another also reduce people's potential to understand one another and commit to any common or collective purpose."

Instead of walling ourselves off in gated communities, alternatives, such as the following, should be explored:

- Unrestricted pedestrian access. Since it is difficult to commit a property crime in Los Angeles without a car, unrestricted pedestrian access could be provided to all gated communities. This would return the parks, streets and sidewalks that have been removed from the public realm back to the residents of Los Angeles.

- Investment in public infrastructure. Encourage investment in public infrastructure -- like parks, streets, sidewalks and schools -- by restoring local control over property tax revenues, essentially fixing the unintended consequences of Proposition 13.

- "More eyes on the street." Amend zoning code to encourage more mixed-use residential neighborhoods with 24-hour activity. Legalize second units ("Granny Flats") in single-family homes. Both of these actions would put more people outside during the normal course of a day, and nothing works quite as well to make neighborhoods safer, friendlier and livelier.

WHY VIEWING PLATFORMS?
Like the historic viewing platforms at the Berlin Wall that allowed Westerners to see into East Berlin, the Heavy Trash viewing platforms call attention to the walls of gated communities and provide visual access to parts of the city that have been cut off from the public domain.

Park Up a Building

Acconci Studio
Spain, 1996

PROGRAM: A portable park adaptable to a blank wall of any building

ORIGINAL SITE: Alvaro Siza's museum building, Centro Gallego de Arte Contemporanea, Santiago de Campostela, Spain.

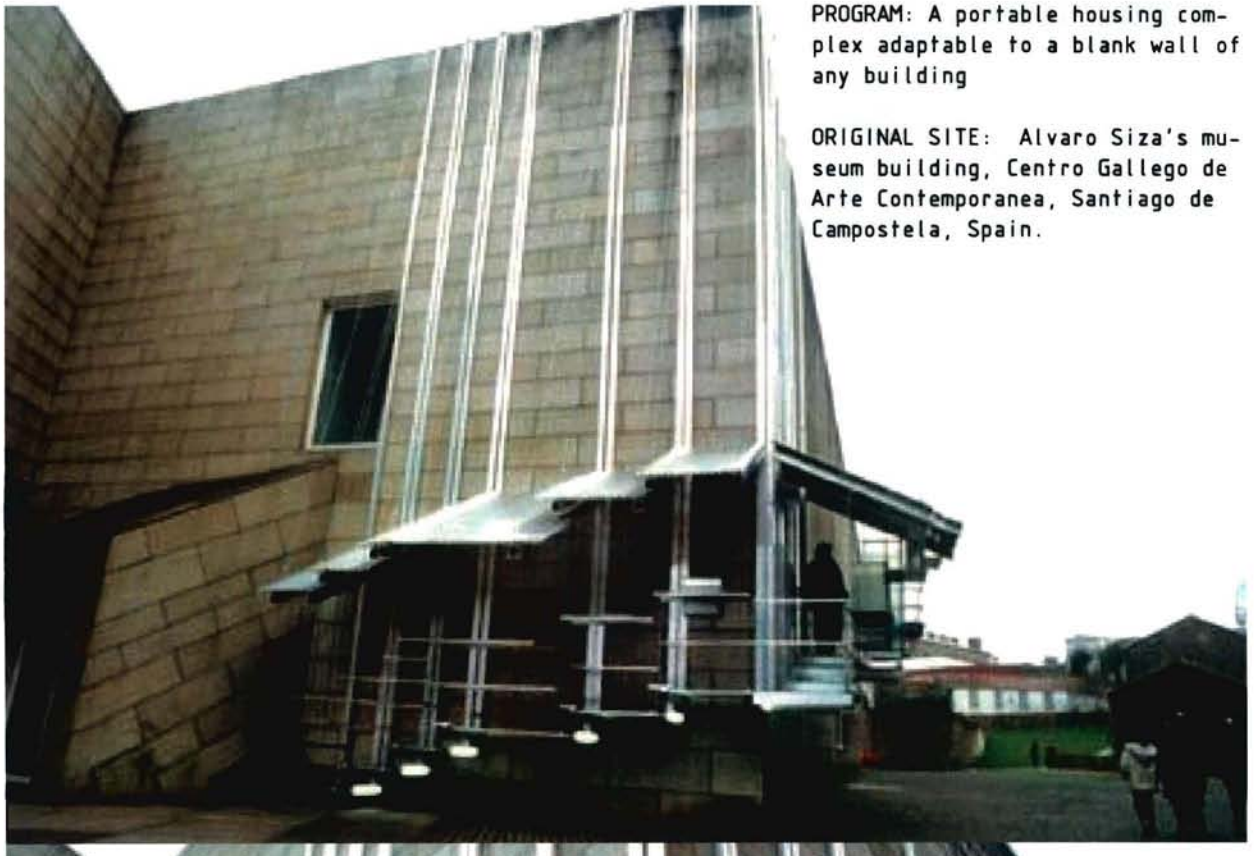
PROJECT: 9 pairs of telescoping tubes, U-shaped at one end and L-shaped at the other. The U-shaped ends hook onto the parapet of the building; from the L-shaped ends, one module of a park is suspended on threaded rod.

2 types of park-module alternate: a floor with a seat on opposite sides, inside and outside; and a floor with a seat on the inside and a tree on the outside. A connector, a step, joins one module to another. The floor, the seat and the step are metal grating - you can look up through them; the tree is enclosed within a metal grate, its roots encased in the burlap sack it was transported in. A light from beneath each floor illuminates the park. Each sucessive module is hung one step higher than the one before: as you walk through the park - as you walk from step to floor, between seat and seat and between seat and tree - you're climbing up the side of the building.

The tubes, the park-hangers, telescope down to 8-foot sections, so that they can be transported and adjusted to buildings of different heights. The PARK can be hung with its companion-unit, HOUSE UP A BUILDING, on different walls; or the PARK can be hung alone.

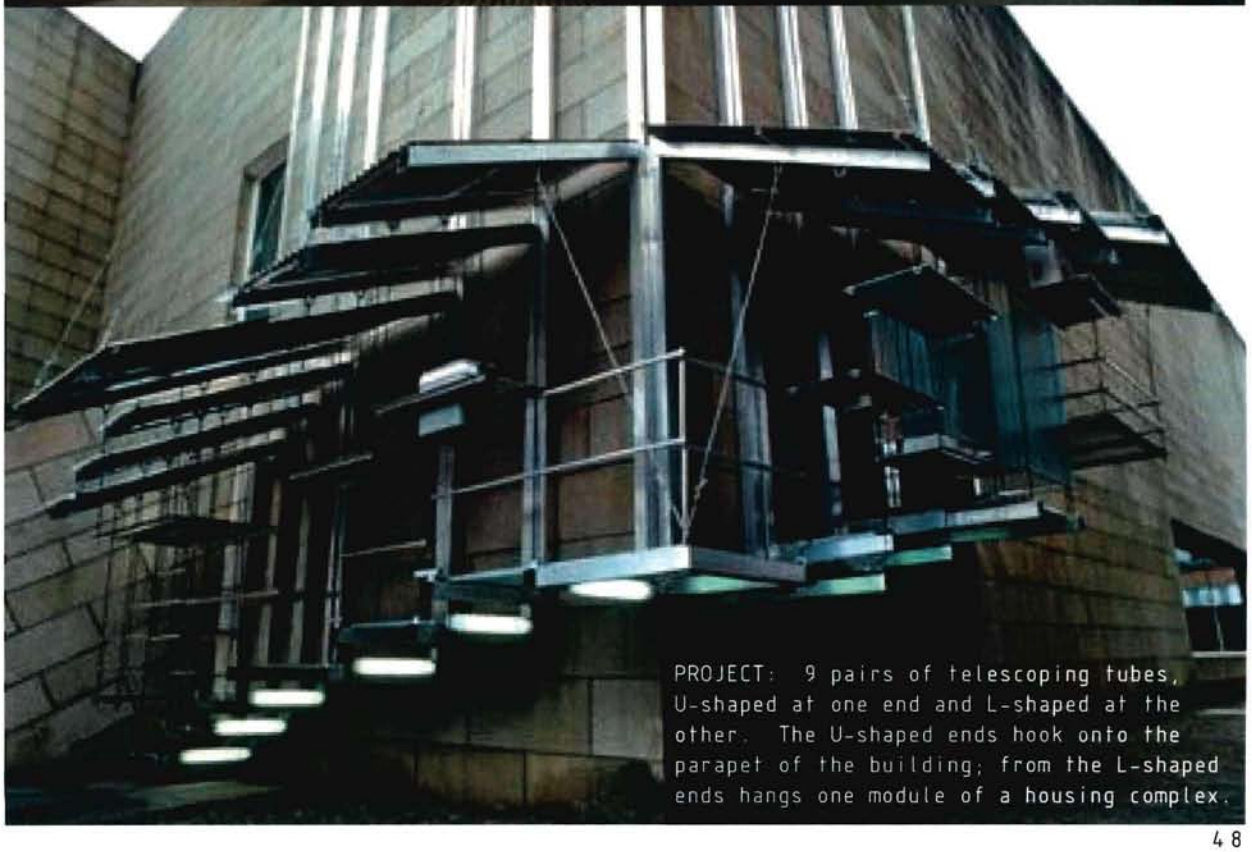
House Up a Building

Acconci Studio
Spain, 1996



PROGRAM: A portable housing complex adaptable to a blank wall of any building

ORIGINAL SITE: Alvaro Siza's museum building, Centro Gallego de Arte Contemporanea, Santiago de Campostela, Spain.



PROJECT: 9 pairs of telescoping tubes, U-shaped at one end and L-shaped at the other. The U-shaped ends hook onto the parapet of the building; from the L-shaped ends hangs one module of a housing complex.

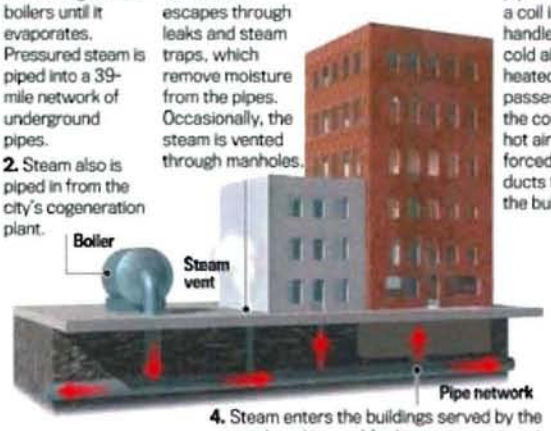
All steamed up

The Detroit steam network, owned by Detroit Thermal L.L.C., supplies heat to 240 buildings. Here's how it works:

1. Water is heated in natural gas-fired boilers until it evaporates. Pressured steam is piped into a 39-mile network of underground pipes.

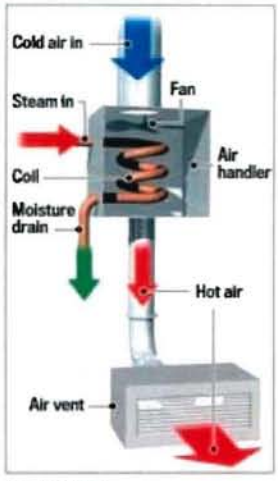
2. Steam also is piped in from the city's cogeneration plant.

3. Along the way, some steam escapes through leaks and steam traps, which remove moisture from the pipes. Occasionally, the steam is vented through manholes.



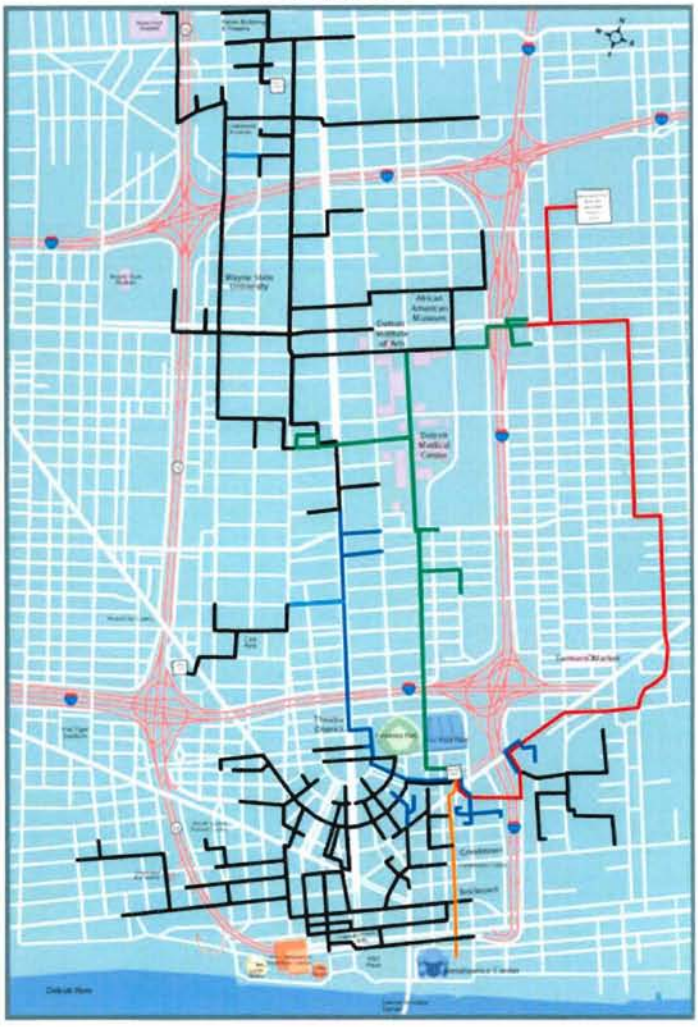
4. Steam enters the buildings served by the network and is used for heat or to power air conditioners.

5. Steam is piped through a coil in an air handler. The cold air is heated as it passes over the coil. The hot air is then forced through ducts to heat the building.



Note: Not to scale

Tim Summers / The Detroit News



Piping Key
225 PSI
140 PSI
125 PSI
100 PSI
45 PSI
Cold Standby

additional research

site analysis

SITE CRITERIA

- void public (city-owned) space
- space that is quite commonly found in cities - since this issue (especially homelessness) is quite prevalent in all major cities
- contested space - space that has been inhabited by individuals but the city maintains a strong degree of control over
- flexible space - spaces that have varying degrees of change. For example, a park downtown is seldom used at night or on the weekends - can this be a spot for people to inhabit during that time. This can also be seasonal space as well, a public space may be used in the summer, but in the winter it lays vacant.
- Vacant space - and varying degrees of vacancy - this can apply to a site, or a whole building, or even a whole neighbourhood or district. It has to be a place where someone can come in and settle (at least for a little while)
- Infrastructure - the space has some kind of existing infrastructure that the inhabitants make use of and build off of. For example, an underpass has an existing overhead shelter in place. One might also be able to make use of water / electricity sources; there might be a spot where there is good soil to grow some vegetables; etc.
- Opportunity to go beyond shelter. Although shelter is a primary need and goal, there needs to be the opportunity for events to occur after that goal is somewhat met. What do the people do once they settle there?

- steam connection - steam pipe network exhaust provides resource that otherwise is wasted. The vented steam can be used for heating, water, and even aesthetic uses. Integration of existing instrastructure is a key part of the thesis investigation.
- contested space - issue of public versus private - the site must exhibit this tension of ambiguity of space use. The sites are located in the middle of the street or sidewalk.
- the opportunity for growth beyond a public washroom entails that there to be space available to meet those growing needs: health, education, shelter, food, etc.

SPRINGBOARD 1: the pending displacement of Victor Manuel

* victor manuel's house
* greening of detroit park and pavilion - questions of public use
* alley behind foxtown - another current residence
* garfield & woodward - gathering place
* financial district garage - flex space?
* michigan & griswold - lot with steam pipe

MIDTERM:

STEAM INFRASTRUCTURE
    CHIMNEY: griswold, gratiot
    MANHOLE: monroe + randolph
STREET SIDE
    BUS STATIONS: woodward ave, city hall
    library/hudson's block
PARK
    garden station park (north greektown)
    washington blvd.
    capitol park? - also bus station
CORNER/ALLEY
    foxtown

STEAM INFRASTRUCTURE: reclamation of wasted public resource
TRANSPORTATION (bus shelter): immobility for mobility (wait time)
OPEN PARK: void in density - antidevelopment in a sense

SITES:
griswold:
gratiot:
monroe+randolph

cityhall bus - media centre - newsstand
woodward buses

garden station park -
washington blvd. -

STRATEGY - TACTIC

public washroom - democratic

car wash - utilize the steam, maybe live there for heat, legit to take up street space. making money, culture

recreation area - sit and lounge, goes with eating, music and media

media - information is power (knowledge is power). the right to know. free exchange of thought, includes newsstand

music - space for practice, performance, expression

~~advertising - the easiest way to pay for stuff, but affects identity - consumer or citizen?~~

greenhouse - steam, heat, water, grow stuff. eat it. or sell it.

~~food - coffee / snack bar~~

~~open source - freeware, shareware~~
~~open networks~~

site possibilities

Site Possibilities

SPRINGBOARD 1: the pending displacement of Victor Manuel

* victor manuel's house
* greening of detroit park and pavilion - questions of public use

Starting with Victor Manuel's home site, and contemplating what will happen to him when he gets displaced, this study looks at the legitimacy of space claims. Across the street is the Greening of Detroit Park and Pavilion. There stands a beautiful structure there, but what makes that a legitimate claim over that space, versus Victor Manuel's squatting on a site. Is it because it is not a clean, well-kept parkette? Is it because he doesn't pay any property tax? Is it because the land legally belongs to somebody else - somebody who is not doing anything with the property now, but waiting for the cash cow to come in the near future? Who does space really belong to? The person who paid for it but doesn't live there, or the person who didn't pay for it but is living there?

victor manuel's home / greening of detroit park and pavilion
orleans + jefferson DETROIT MI

Site Possibilities

SPRINGBOARD 1: the pending displacement of Victor Manuel

* victor manuel's house
* greening of detroit park and pavilion - questions of public use

This is Victor's house. It is made up of scraps he has found in the vicinty and has carted back to the site. His background in construction allows him to create a pretty elaborate shelter. It has structural columns and wood framing, masonry walls, a ramp to the roof, and even electrical conduit.

victor manuel is originally from honduras
he is a construction worker and has built his home out of scraps he has found
the rivertown development will displace him soon

pan across site N-W-S

rebar and masonry block

phase 2 in progress

ramp leading to roof

masonry wall, wood columns

fence and curb cut

entry, ramp and bushes

electrical conduits wired into wall

garbage? resources?

pan looking west from site

Site Possibilities

SPRINGBOARD 1: the pending displacement of Victor Manuel

* victor manuel's house
* greening of detroit park and pavilion - questions of public use

The Greening of Detroit Park and Pavilion is located on the north side of Jefferson. In contrast to Victor's site, this park is somewhat well kept, sanitary, quite empty and lonely except for the occasional person getting of the bus and cutting through the park. The pavilion is a very beautiful structure, but no one really uses it. So, what is the shelter for? Who is it supposed to shelter? Imagine if the shelter became a true shelter for somebody, maybe Victor. How different would it be? At least there is electricity at this site.

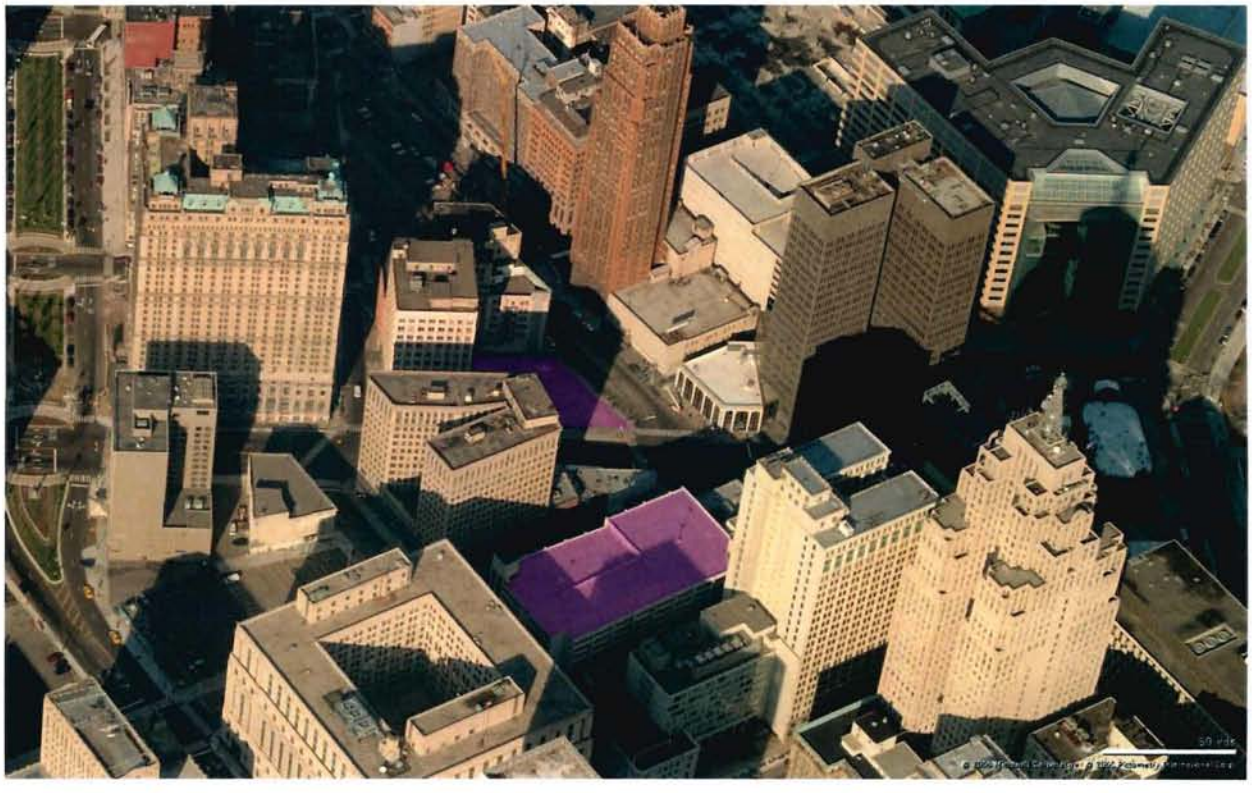
Site Possibilities

SPRINGBOARD 1: the pending displacement of Victor Manuel

* financial district garage - flex space?
* michigan & griswold - lot with steam pipe

The Financial District Garage is pretty much vacant on the the upper levels during the bulk of the year. Perhaps with the exception of major events the garage would see a higher influx of vehicle parking.

Across the street there is a vacant lot with a steam exhaust pipe. Is this a potential resource that can be harnessed for other uses?

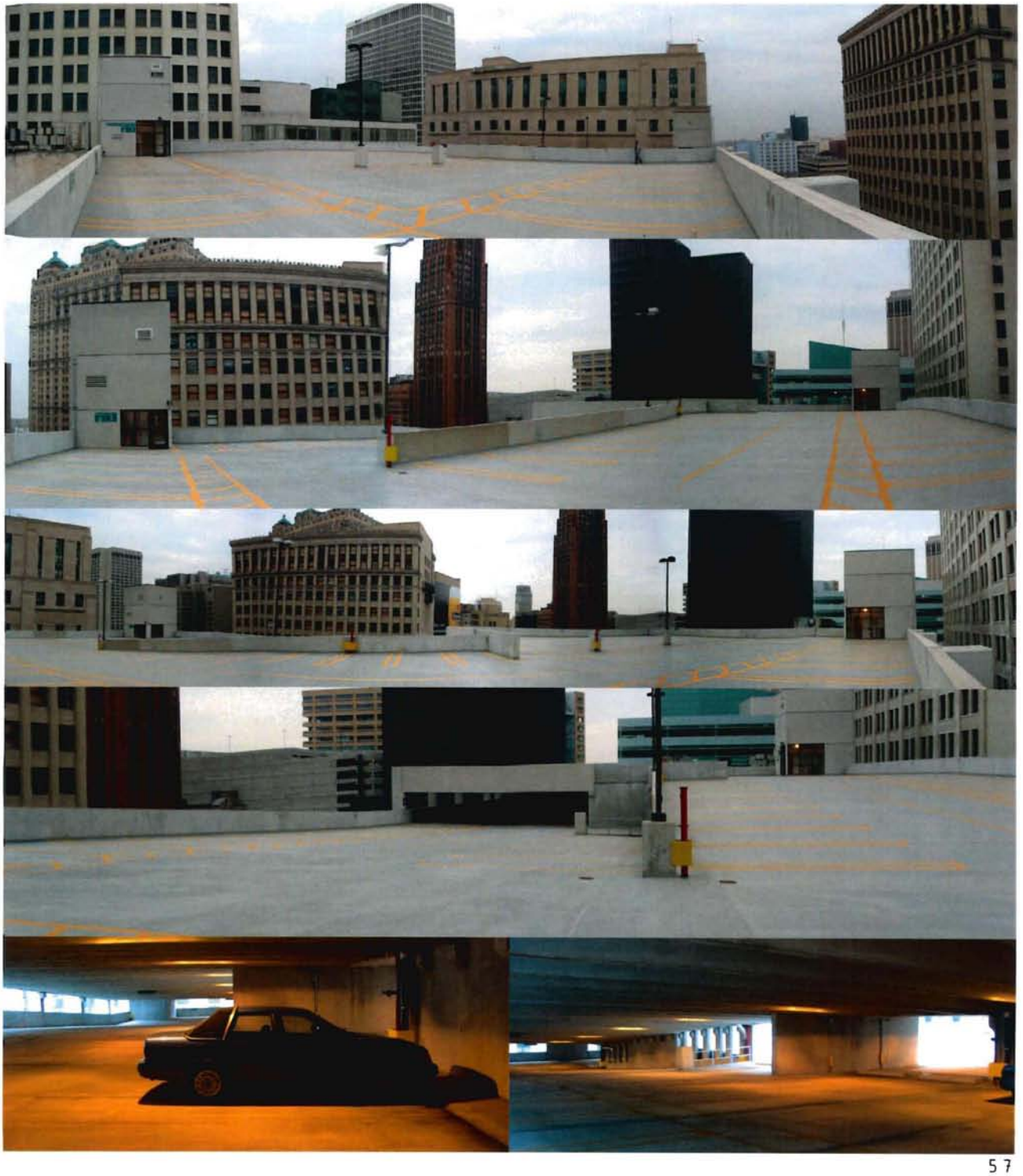


Site Possibilities

SPRINGBOARD 1: the pending displacement of Victor Manuel

* financial district garage - flex space?

There is so much vacant space up here. If you paid $5 to park, is that essentially like renting that parking space? If the parking garage is used during the day but largely vacant at night, is there a possibility of instituting a time-share idea of space?



Site Possibilities

SPRINGBOARD 1: the pending displacement of Victor Manuel

* michigan & griswold - lot with steam pipe

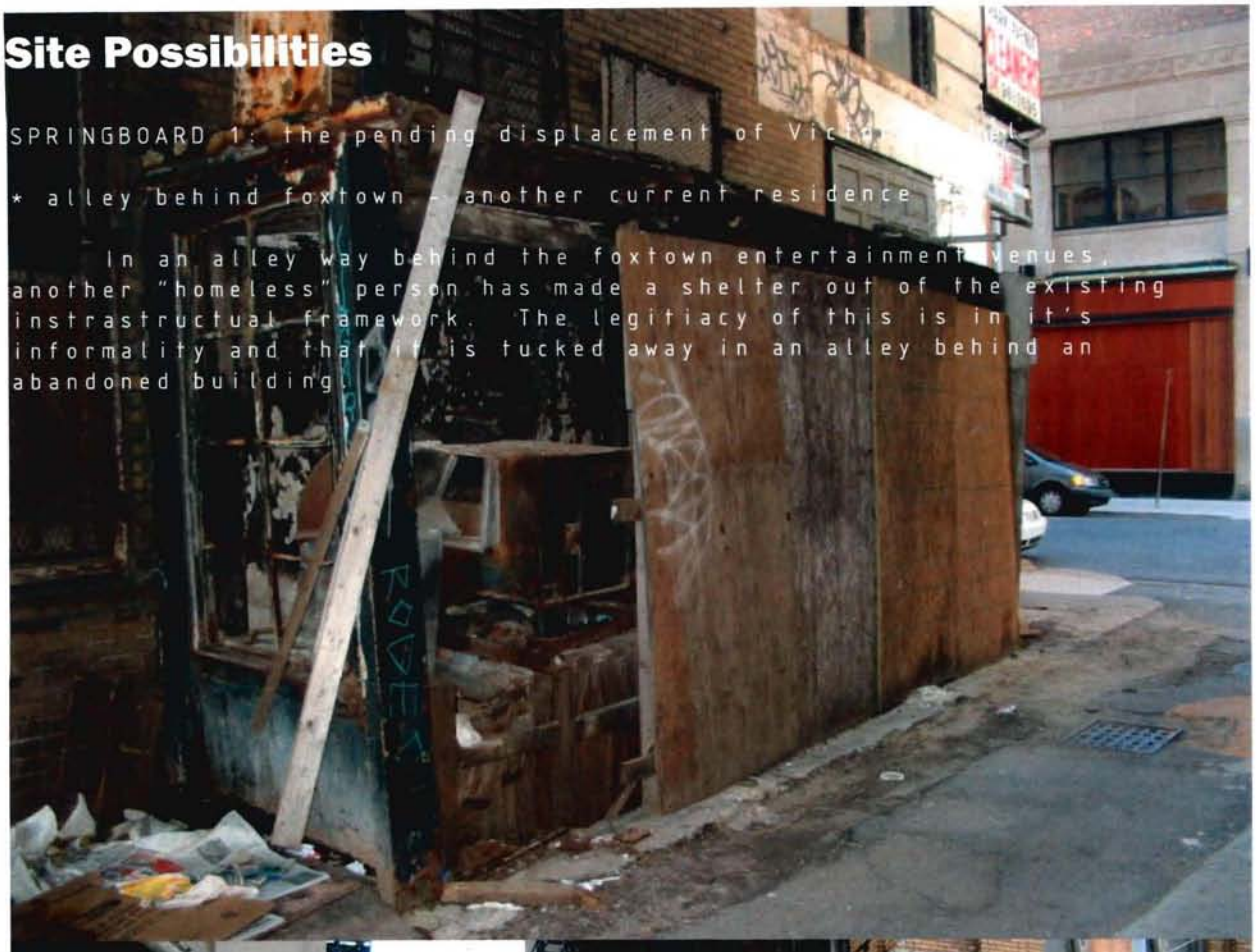
Can all of the exhausted steam be captured for its heat and water?

Site Possibilities

SPRINGBOARD 1: the pending displacement of Vic[illegible]

* alley behind foxtown -- another current residence

In an alley way behind the foxtown entertainment venues, another "homeless" person has made a shelter out of the existing instrastructual framework. The legitiacy of this is in it's informality and that it is tucked away in an alley behind an abandoned building.



Site Possibilities

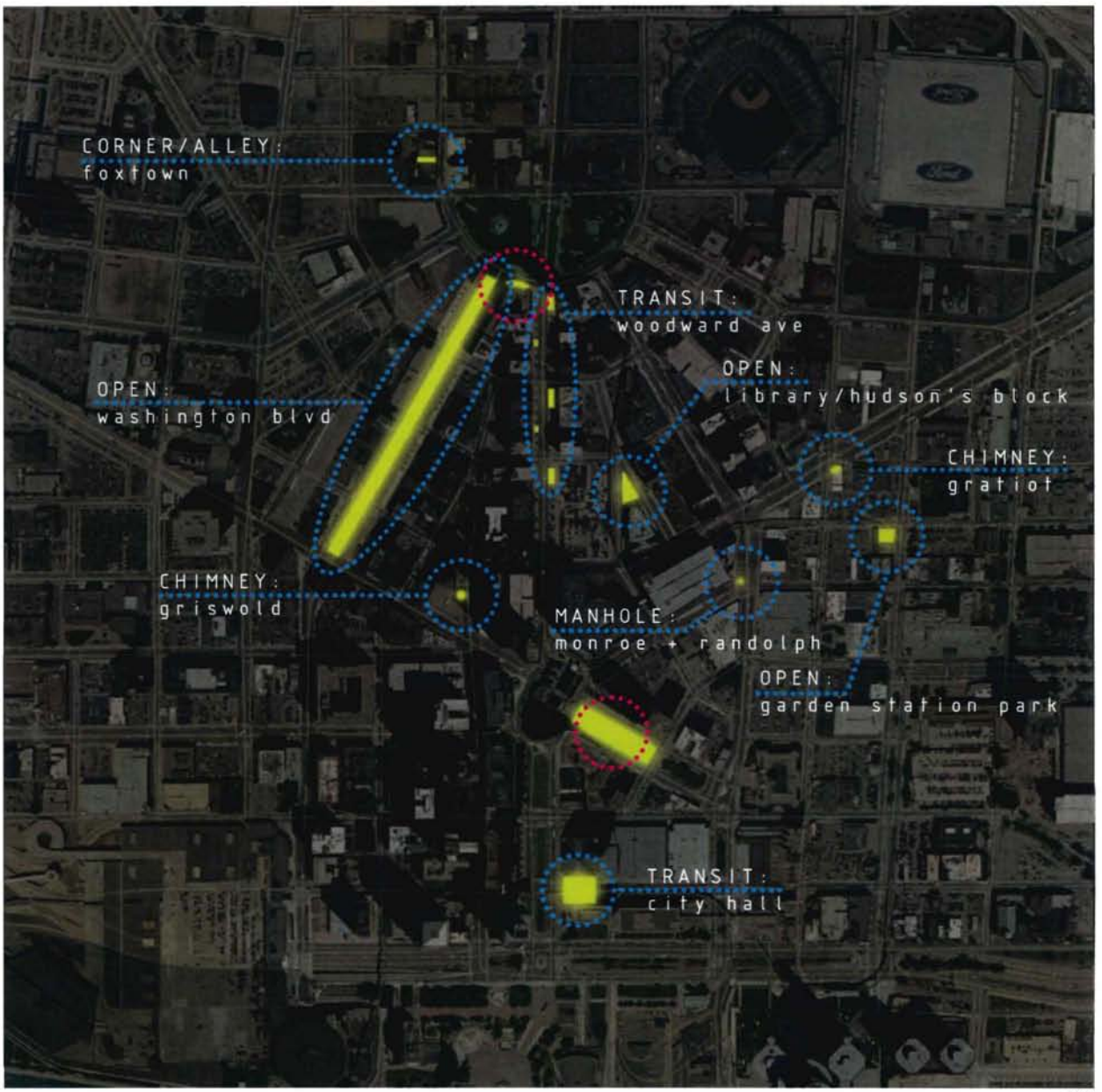
MIDTERM:

STEAM INFRASTRUCTURE
- CHIMNEY: griswold, gratiot
- MANHOLE: monroe + randolph

STREET SIDE
- BUS STATIONS: woodward ave, city hall
- library/hudson's block

PARK
- garden station park (north greektown)
- washington blvd.
- capitol park? - also bus station

CORNER/ALLEY
- foxtown



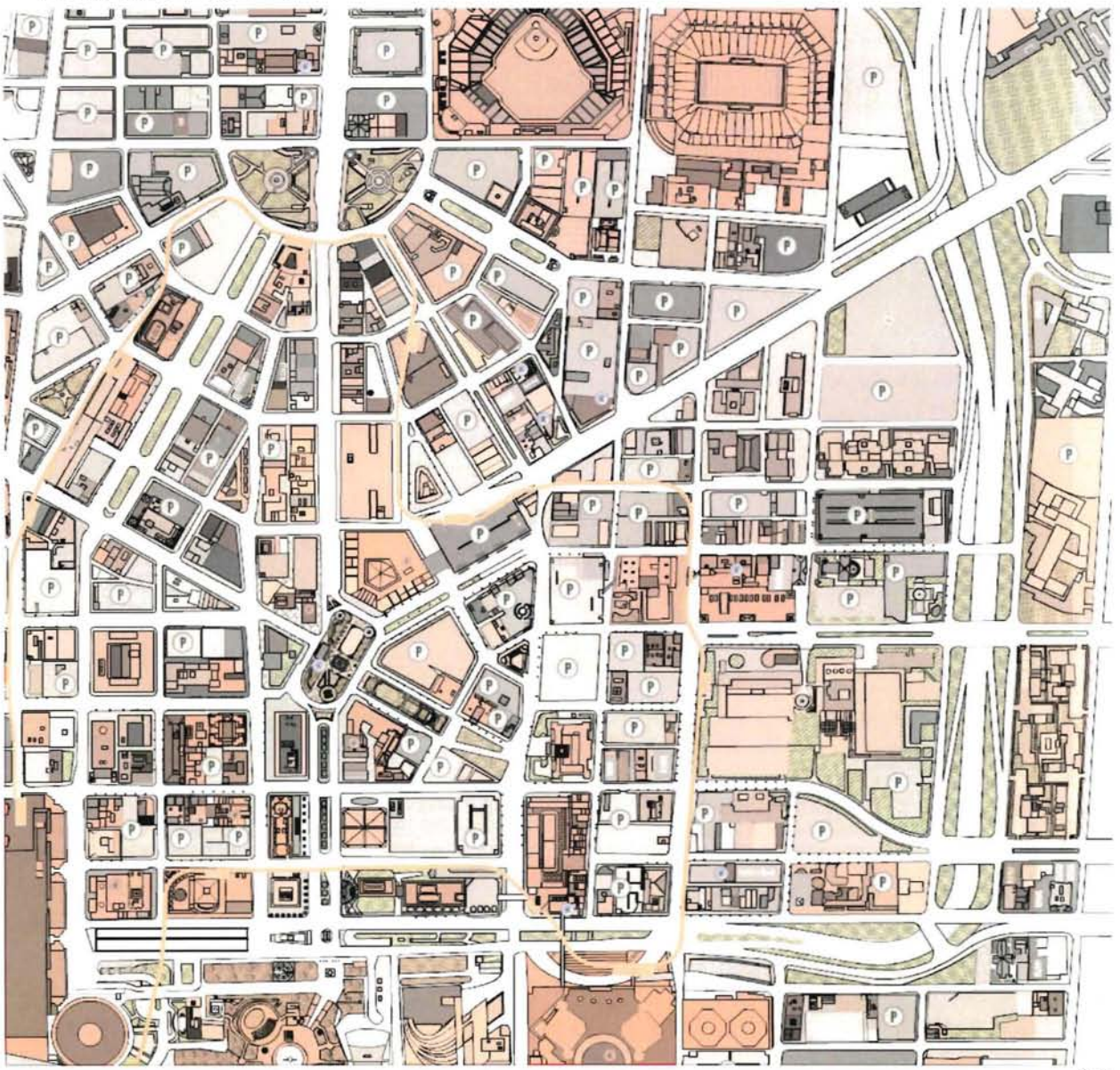
Site Possibilities

SITE	STRATEGY - TACTIC
steam infrastructure	public washroom
bus station	car wash
open park	~~recreation area~~
	greenhouse
	media
	~~advertising~~
	food - ~~coffee / snack bar~~
	music
	open source - freeware, shareware
	open networks

SITES:
griswold:
gratiot:
monroe+randolph

cityhall bus - media centre - newsstand
woodward buses

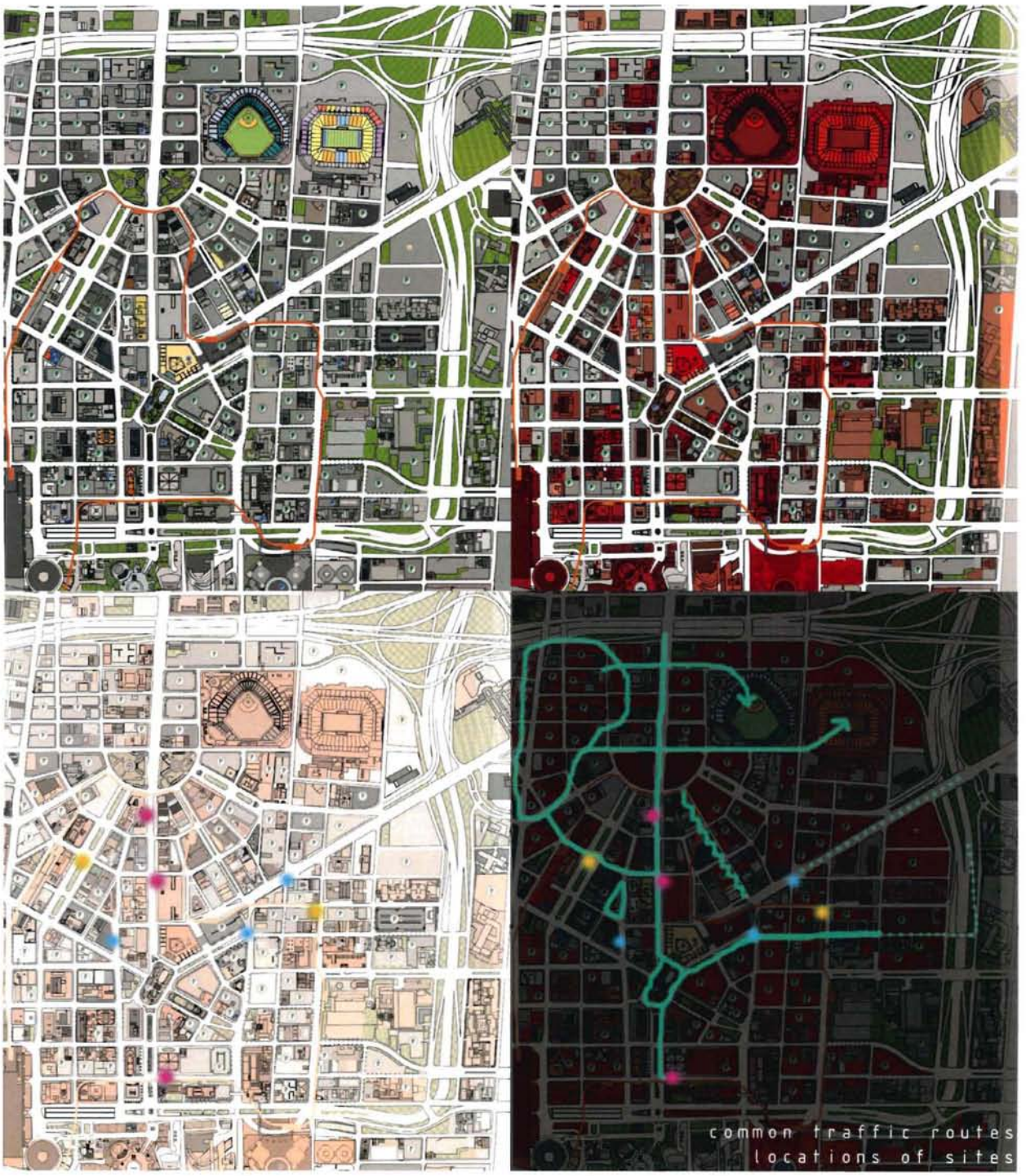
garden station park -
washington blvd. -



Site Possibilities

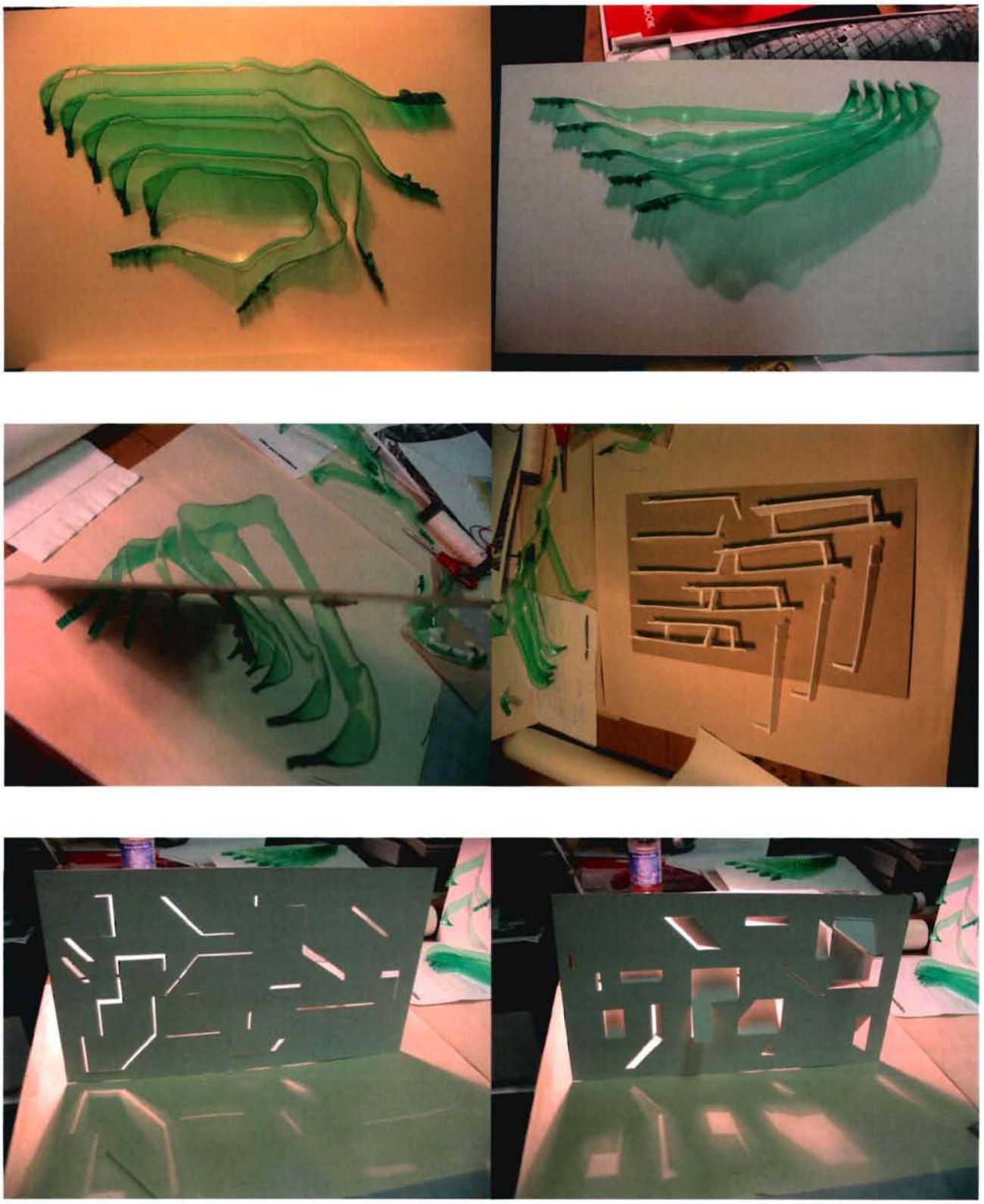
SITE ANALYSIS

Map diagrams of downtown:
shades of red indicate the rate of use
deeper shades indicate heavier traffic and activity



springboard studies

Springboard Studies 1



studies for screens and layers/levels of interaction/interface

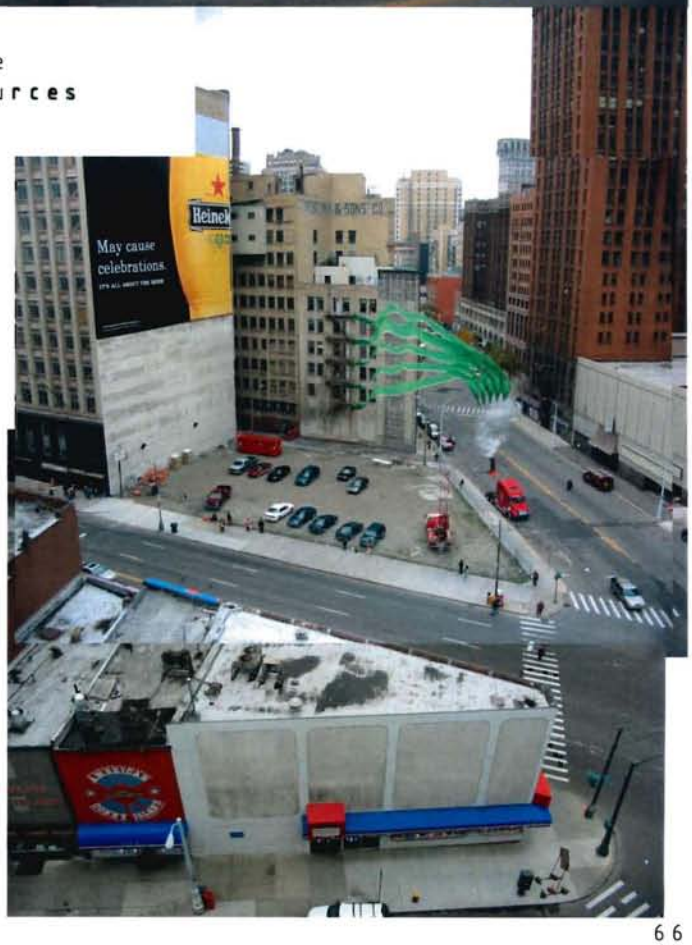
implementation of screen in alley setting - what is public/private?
does a "homeless" person have a home?
what part of the alley way belongs to them?

open / close
parking structure is open to cars
closed to anyone with no "business" being there
can this vacant space above be shared in a way that allows for it to be open and closed?
model examines levels of enclosure and privacy/publicity

utilize existing infrastructure
tactical appropriation of resou**rces**
rethink waste rethink use

attempt at capturing steam for heat and water.

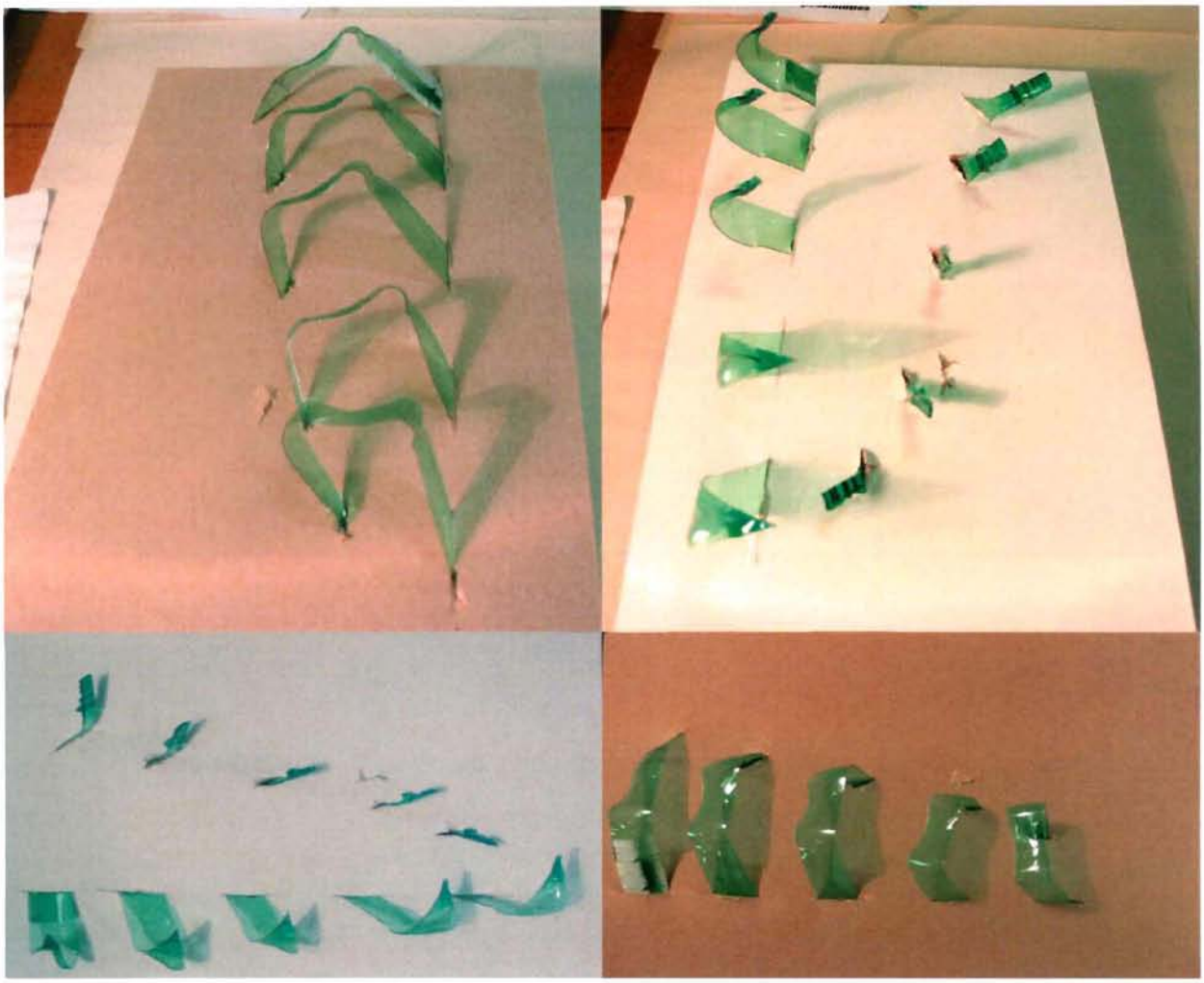
the device takes the exhaust from the steam pipe and redirects it. Maybe the emergency stairs on the side of the building can be spaces for activities such as sleeping or lounging, etc. Now there is some heat.



Greening of Detroit Park and Pavilion.
What if Victor moved here?
If he is homeless, then is this park his "home"?

And if so, how is it shared with the rest of the community?

How private should it be?
How public should it be?



wall inhabitation studies

open stairs

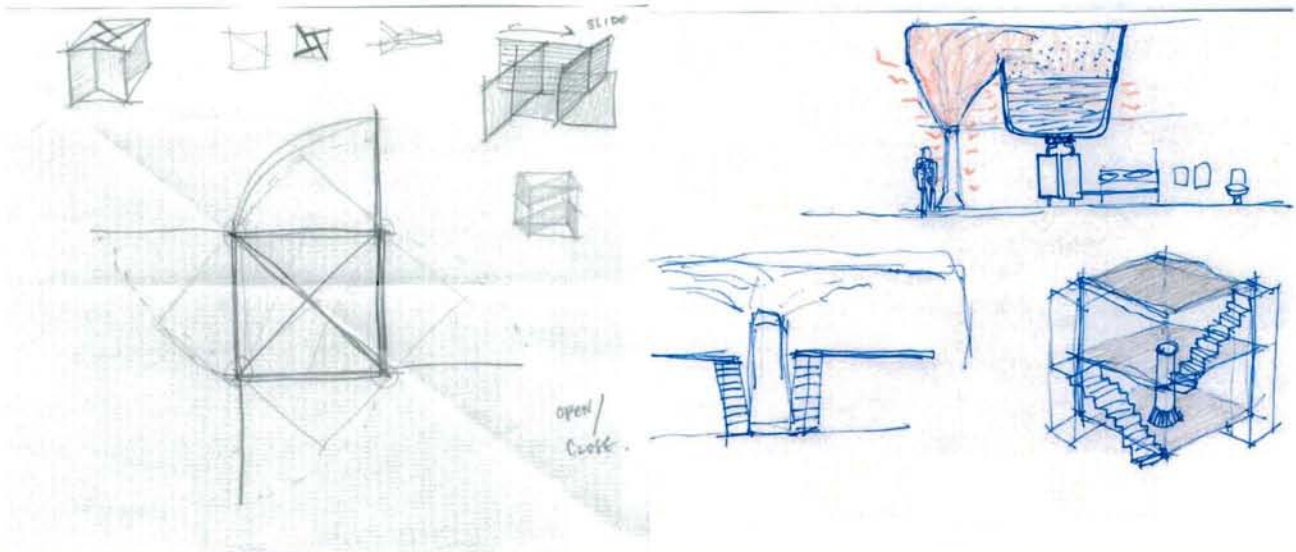
closed loops

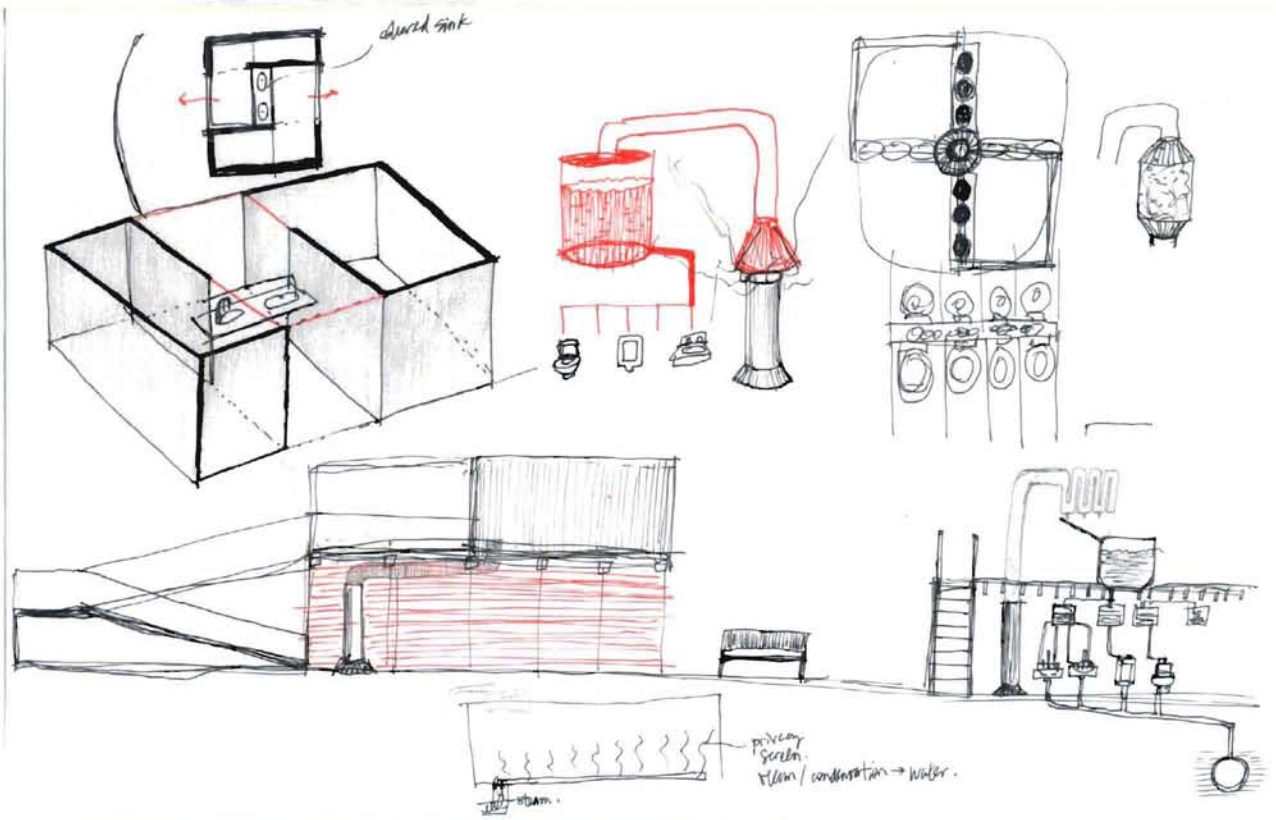
dwell within the gaps of infrastructure
change comes subtly by utilization of public infrastructure
occupy and thereby claiming public space for the public

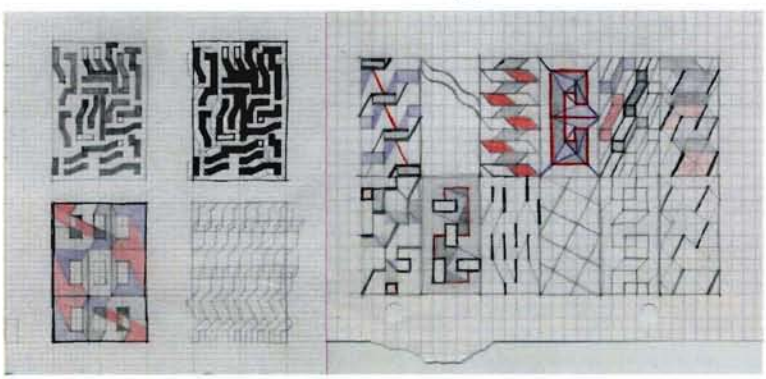
how does a homeless person settle?
is their "home" private though it exists in the wide open public?
where is the line drawn between public/private space?

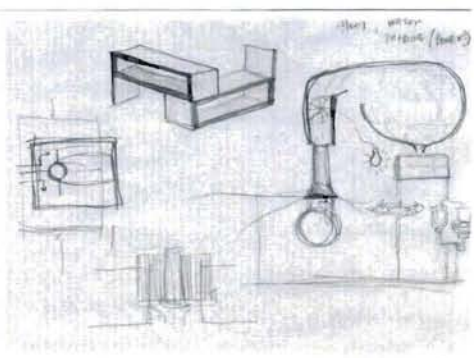
"You would have little hesitation snooping around a homeless person's area,
but it would be very bold to just enter another person's actual house and see what they were up to."
- Jared VanderWeele

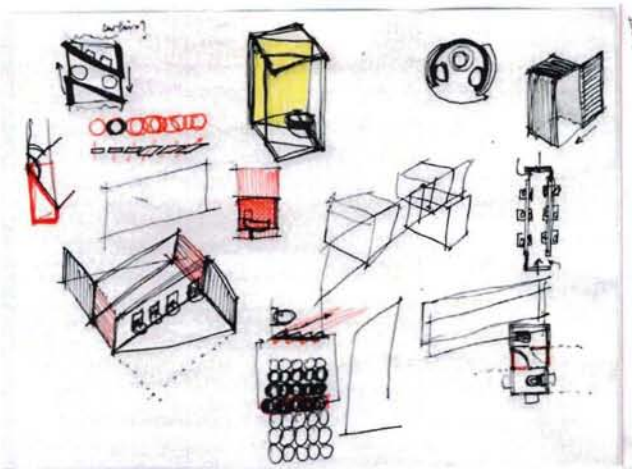
Springboard Studies 2

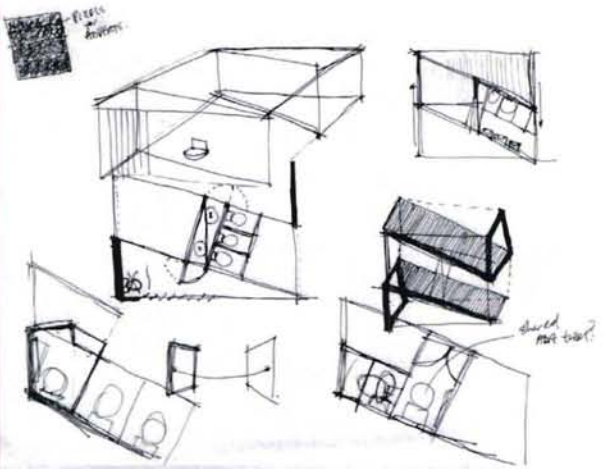


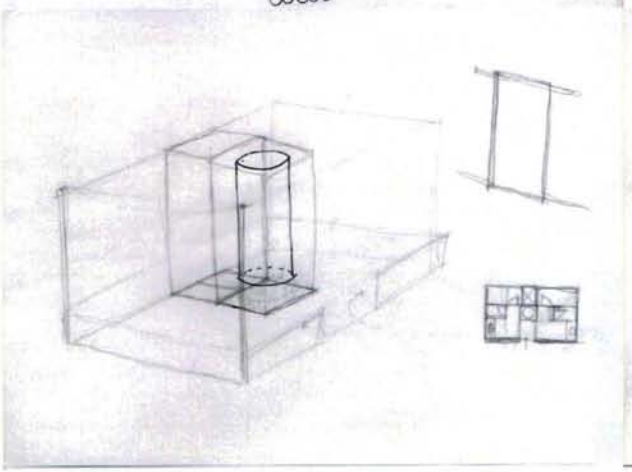


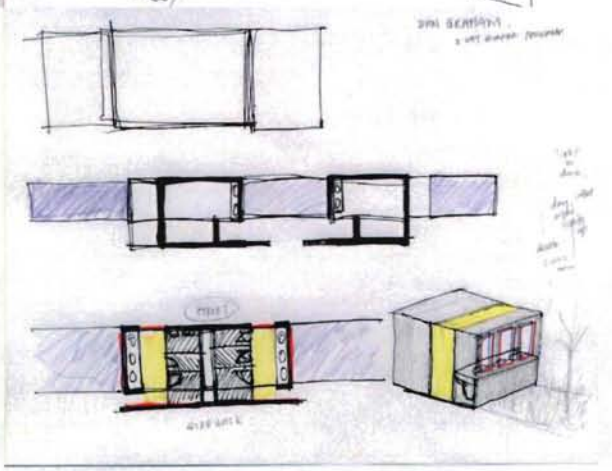


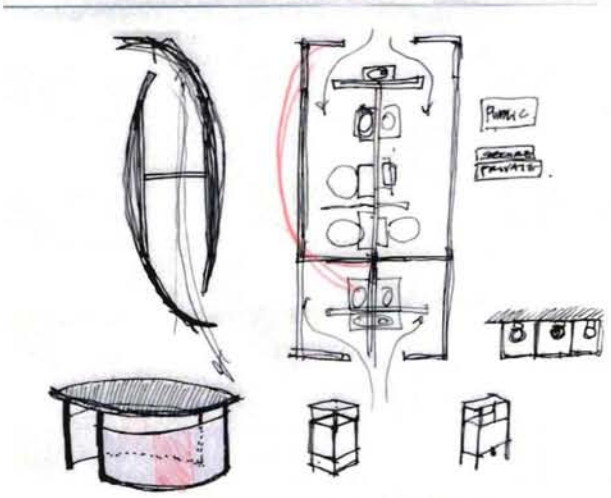


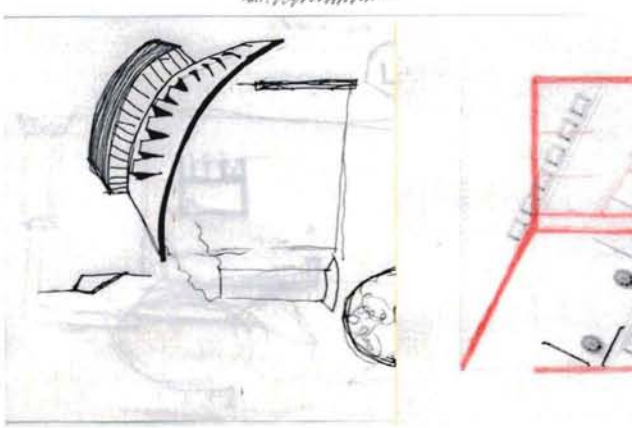


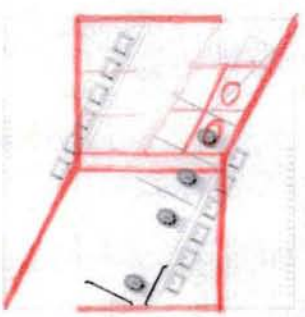


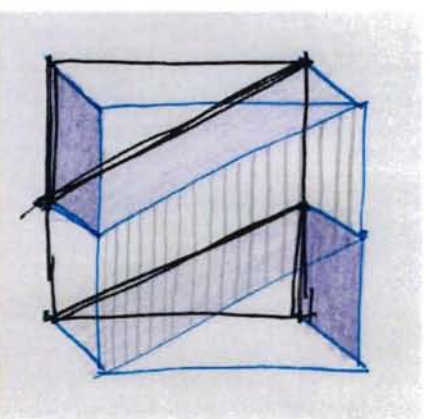


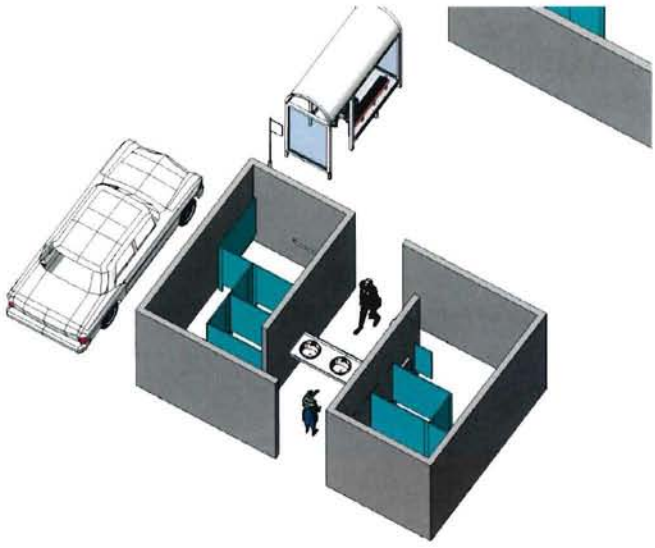


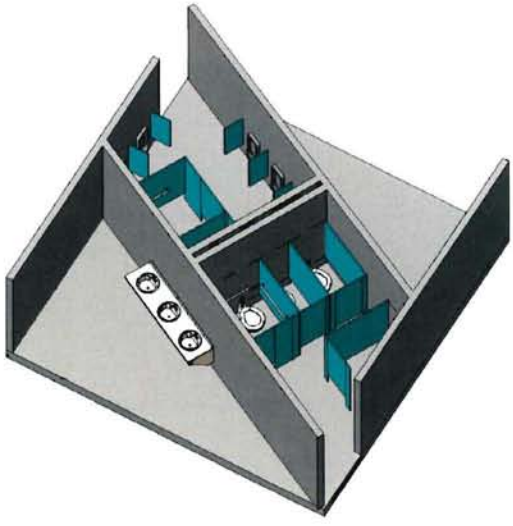


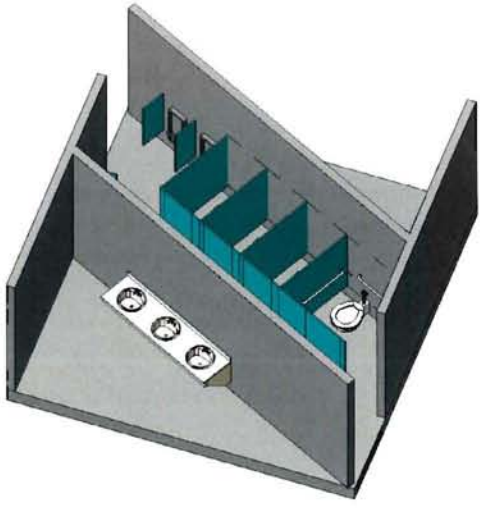




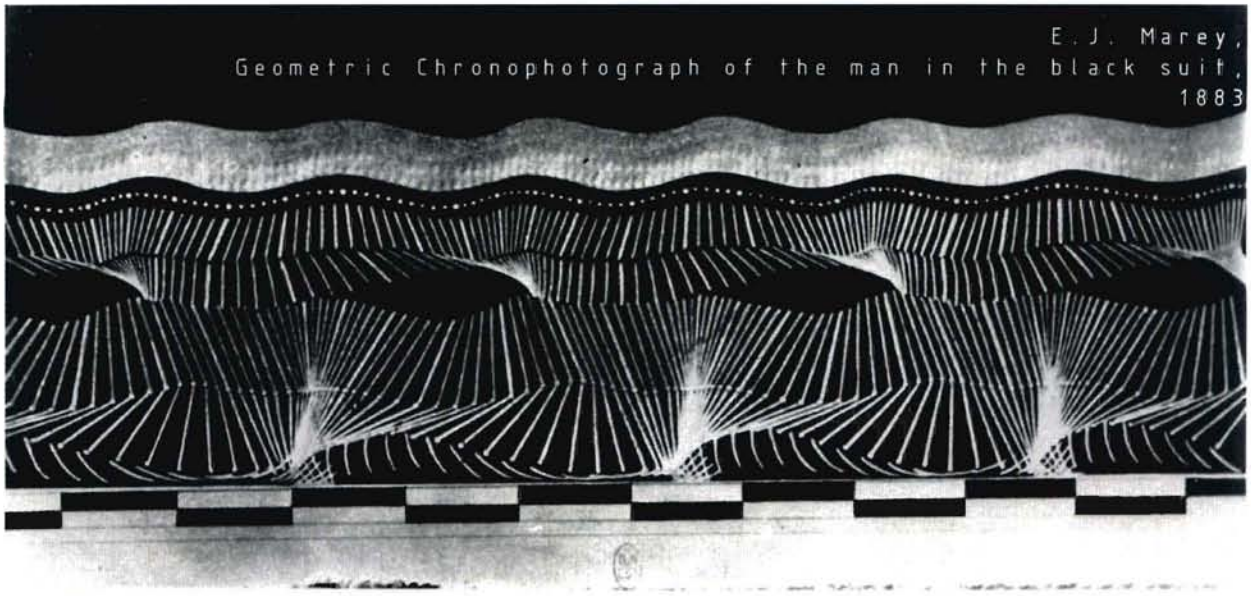






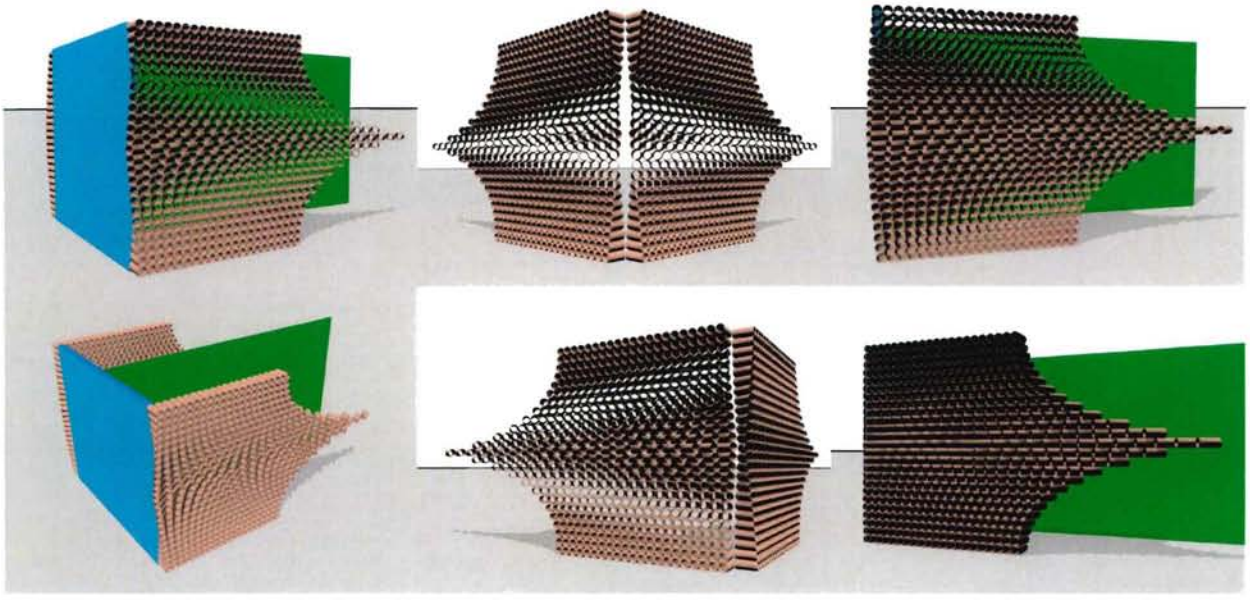


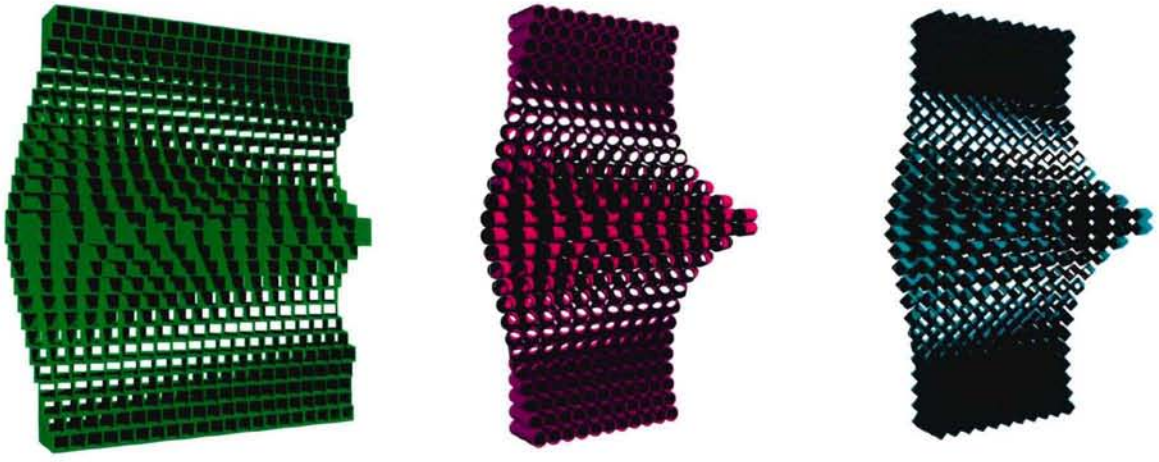
LAYOUT STUDIES
shared sinks, outside sinks, shared utilities

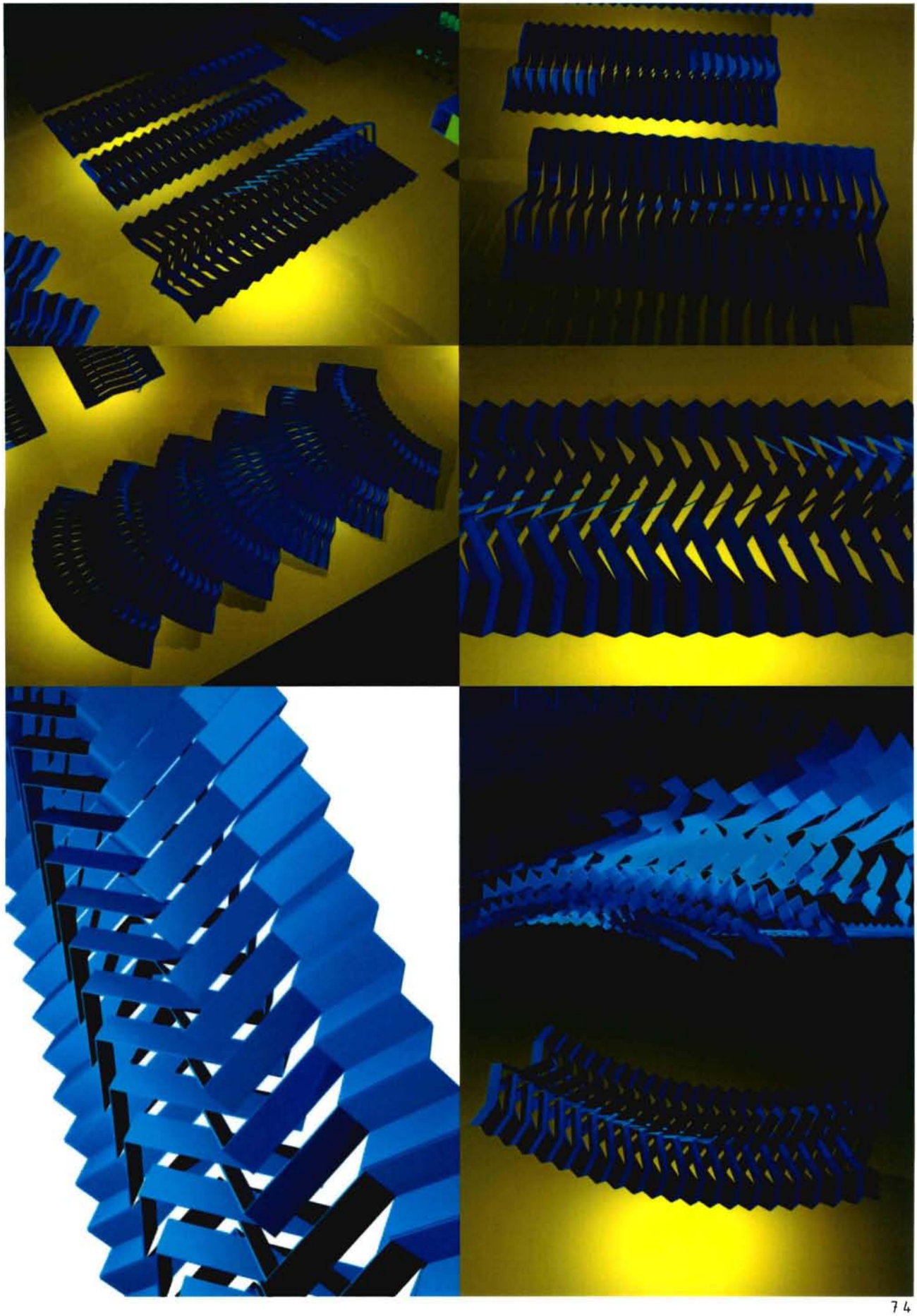


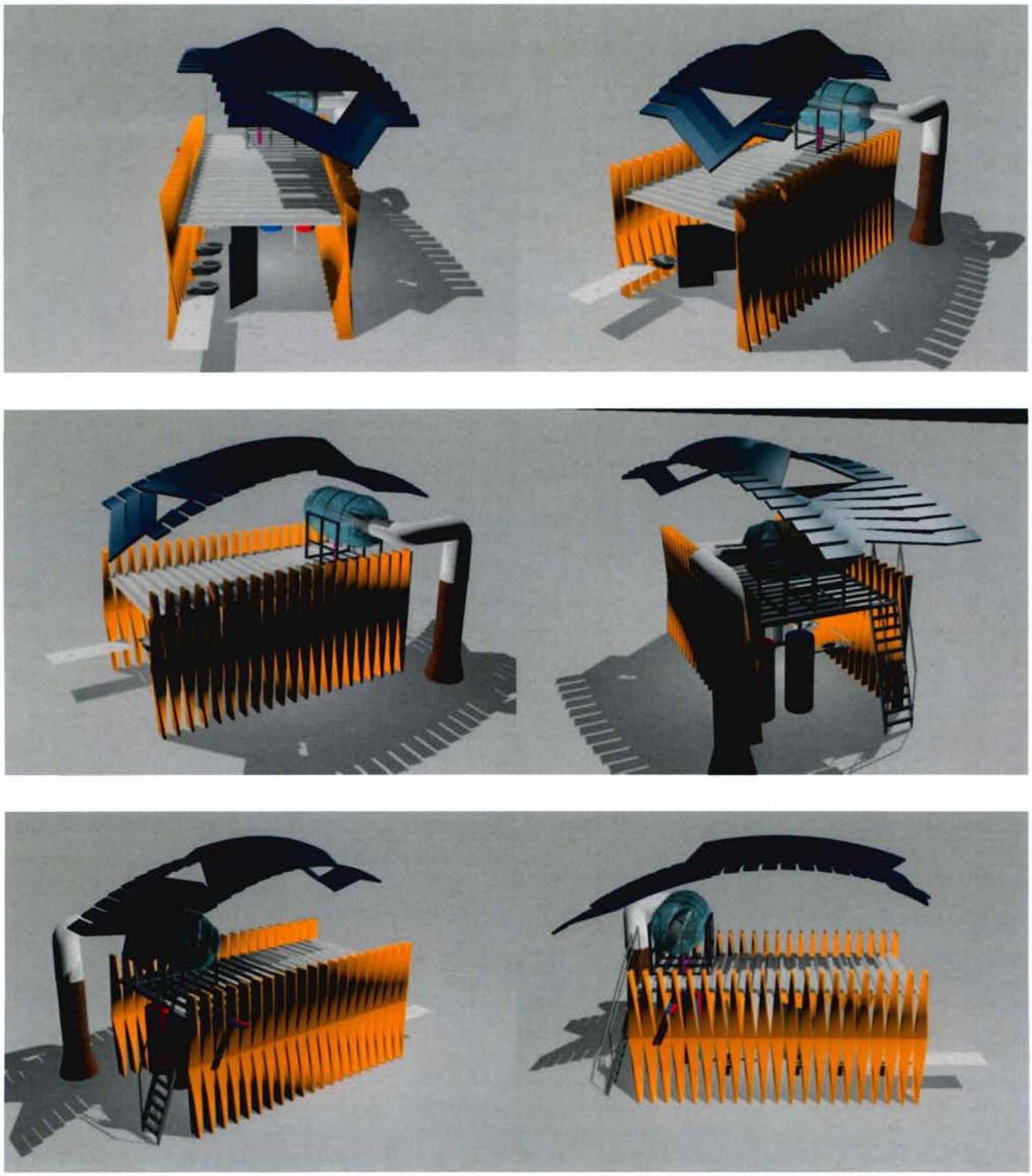
E.J. Marey,
Geometric Chronophotograph of the man in the black suit,
1883

screen studies
stacked toilet paper rolls, pvc pipes/tubes, etc.

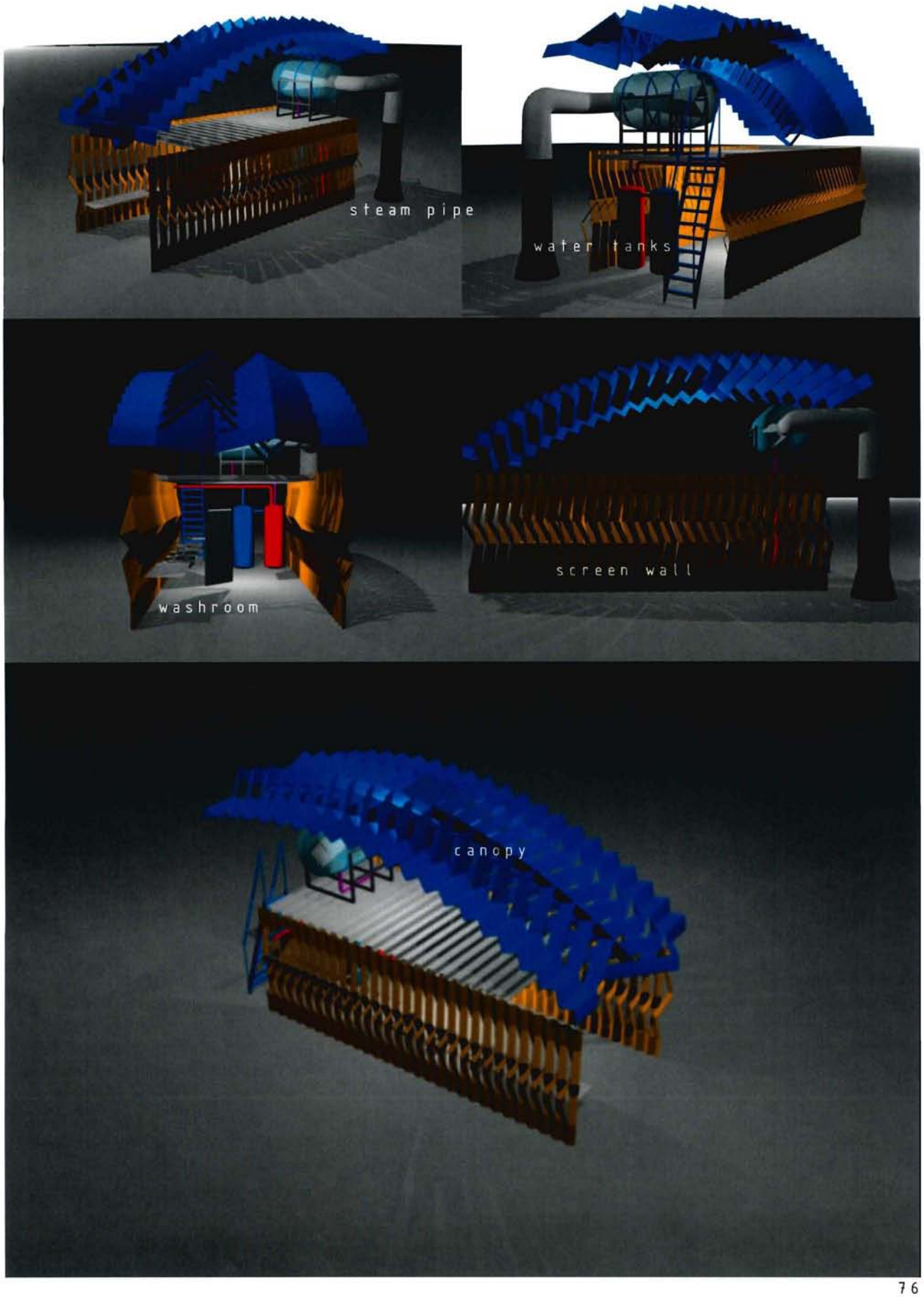




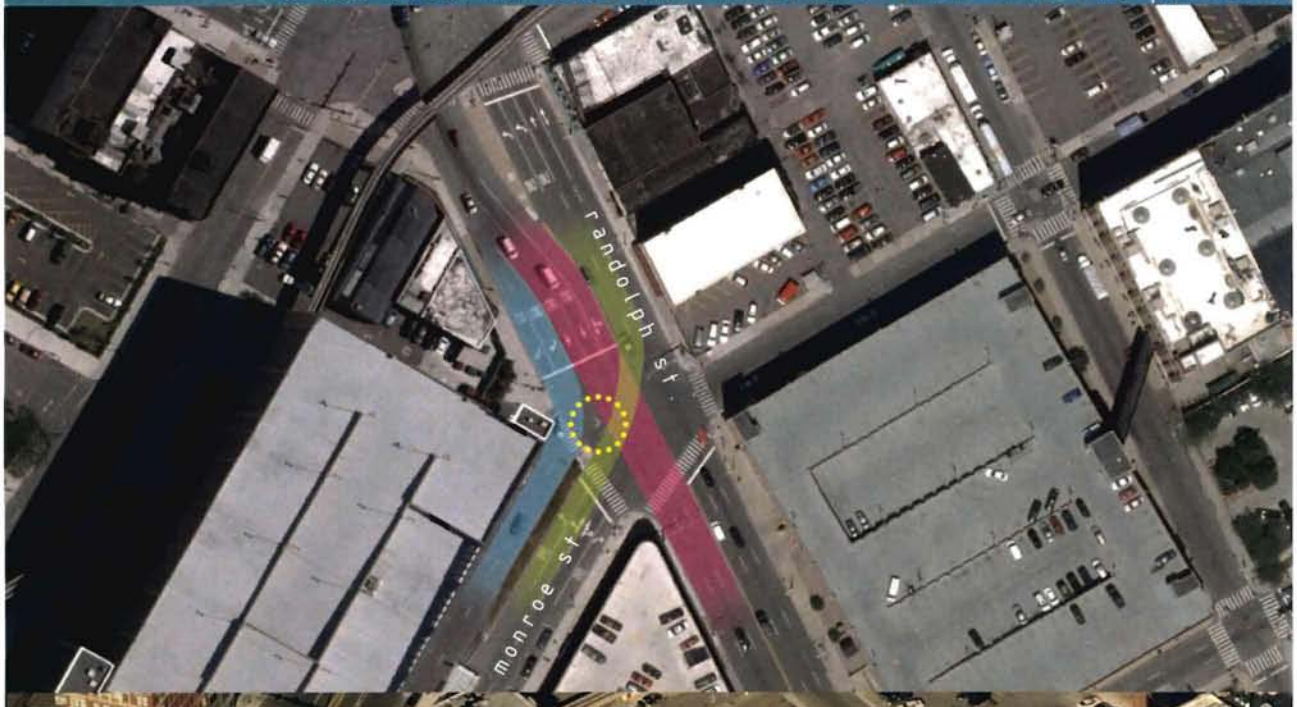


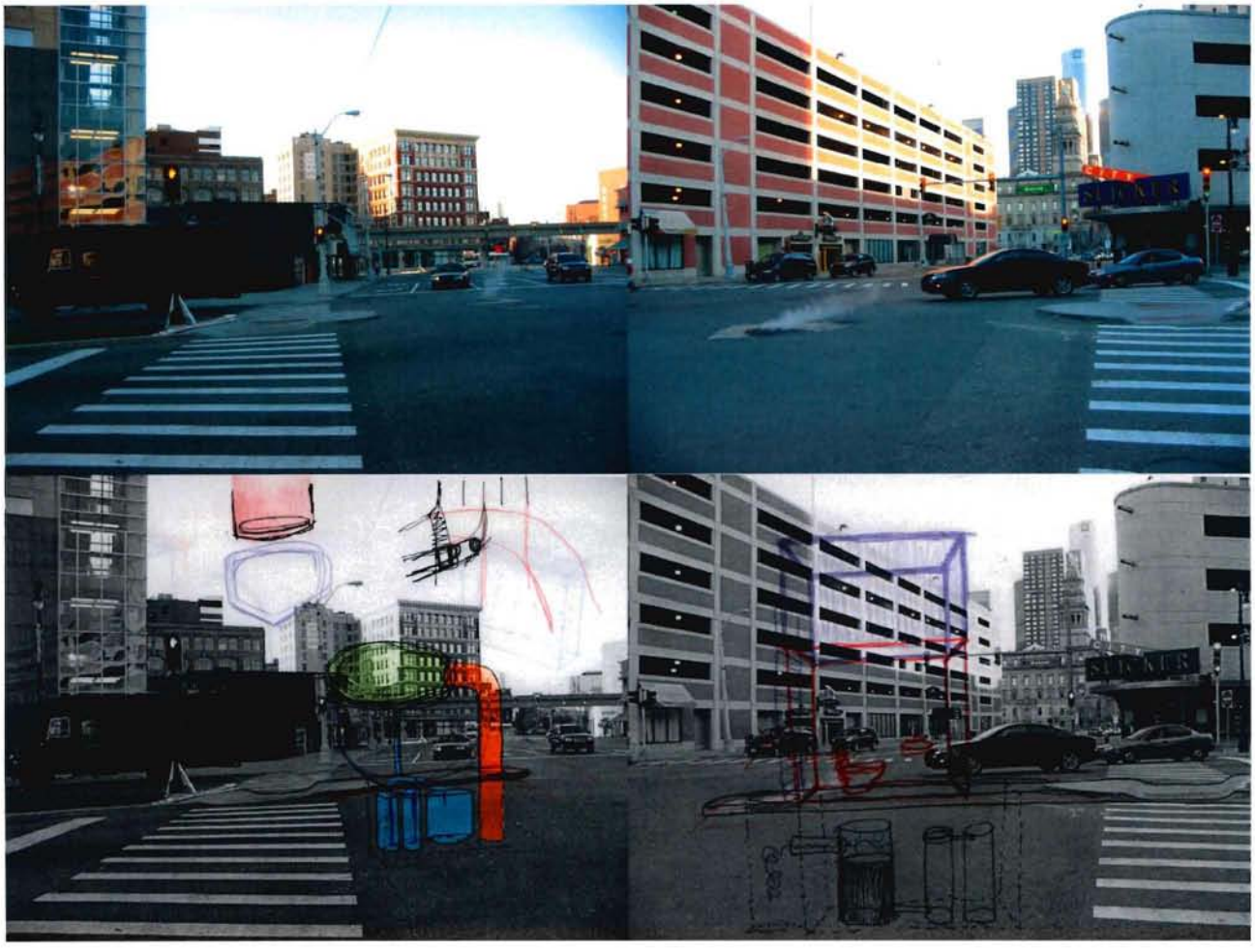


WASHROOM PROTOTYPE
attaches to steam pipe
condenses steam and stores in tank


steam pipe
water tanks
washroom
screen wall
canopy

steam location does not interfere with traffic patterns



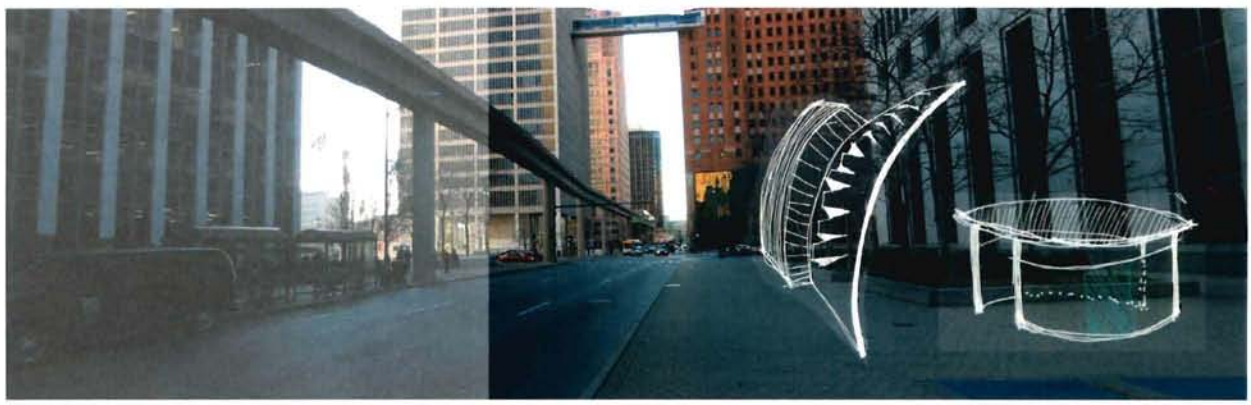


monroe & randolph site study
manhole (no man's land) all the traffic misses it
steam washroom studies

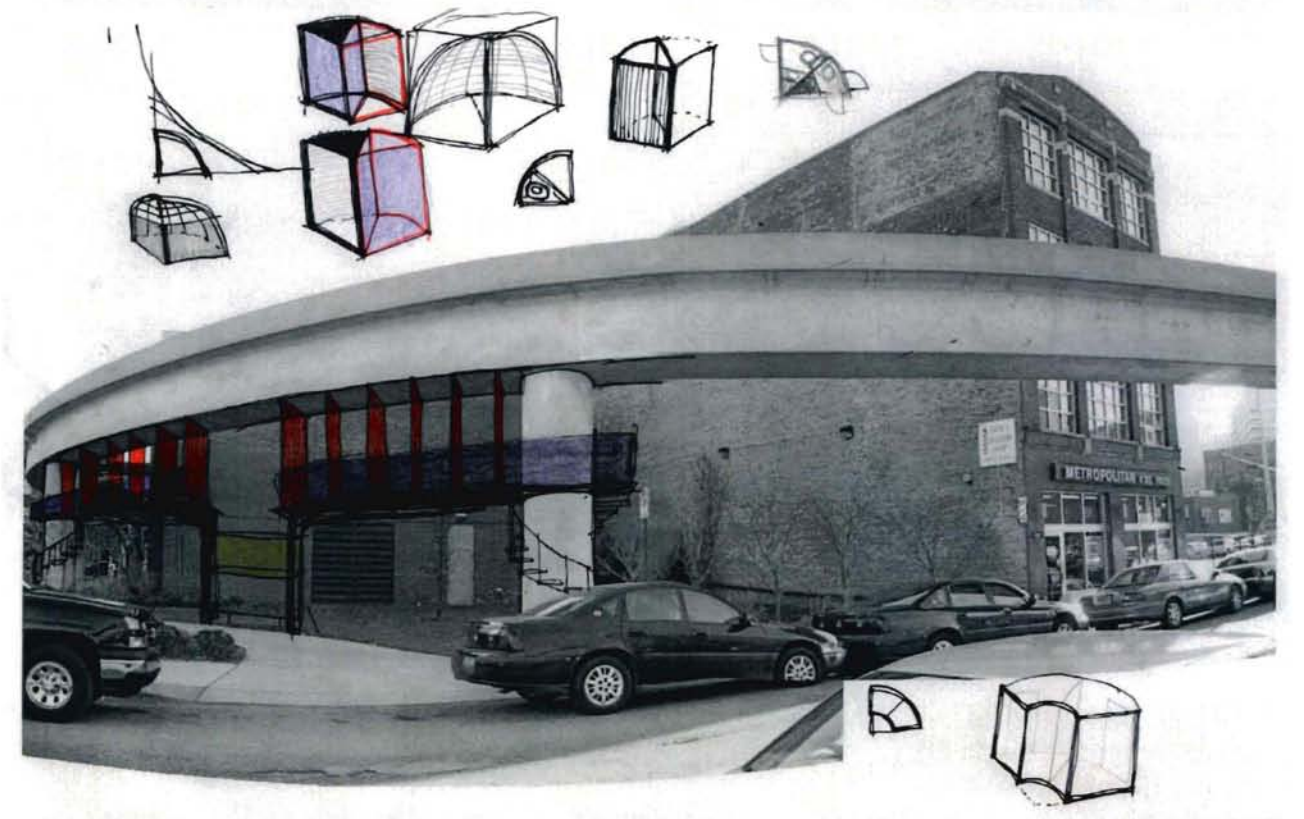
streetside installations

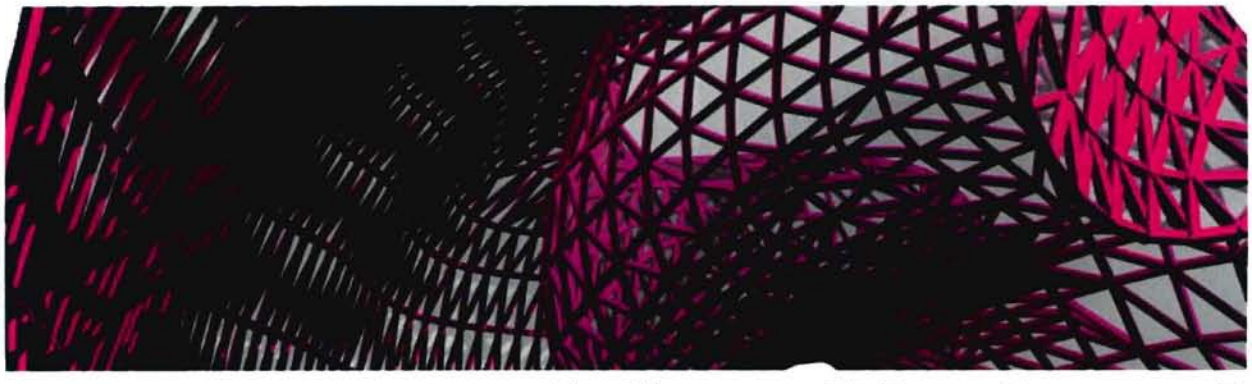
washington blvd. (above)
studies in using the open
park spaces

gratiot steam pipe site
(right)
studies for gateway over the
street, and kinds of screens.



garden station park site
washrooms under the people mover
infrastructure.





design and development

washrooms at campus martius
for skaters only
this is a very public set, but
with very few public amenities

portable toilets are located
throughout the city.
however, they are in marginal
spaces such as sidewalks and in
alleyways, rather than placed as
a celebrated public service.
there is a potential for public
amenities, however they exist in
the margins such as the streets
and sidewalks.

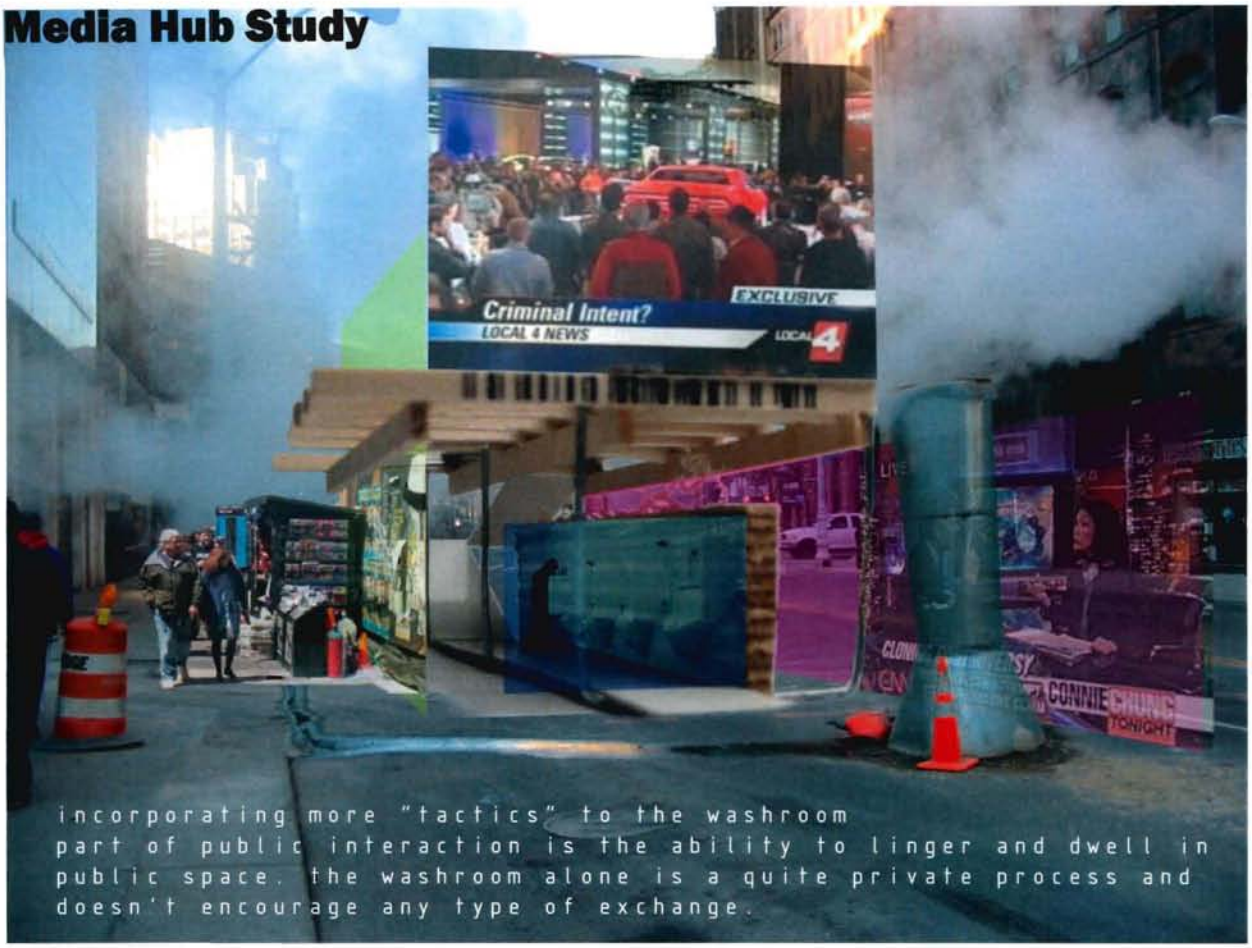
there is a potential for public
amenities, however they exist in
the margins such as the streets
and sidewalks.
the steam on griswold takes up
the street space and traffic goes
around it.

detroit commerce building demo-
lition adjacent to griswold site
will be future home of park-
ing lot and private condos. the
changing detroit seeks the cre-
ative class with higher incomes.
nothing wrong with that. but
what's for the common person?
what's being created for the gen-
eral public?

Bench Study

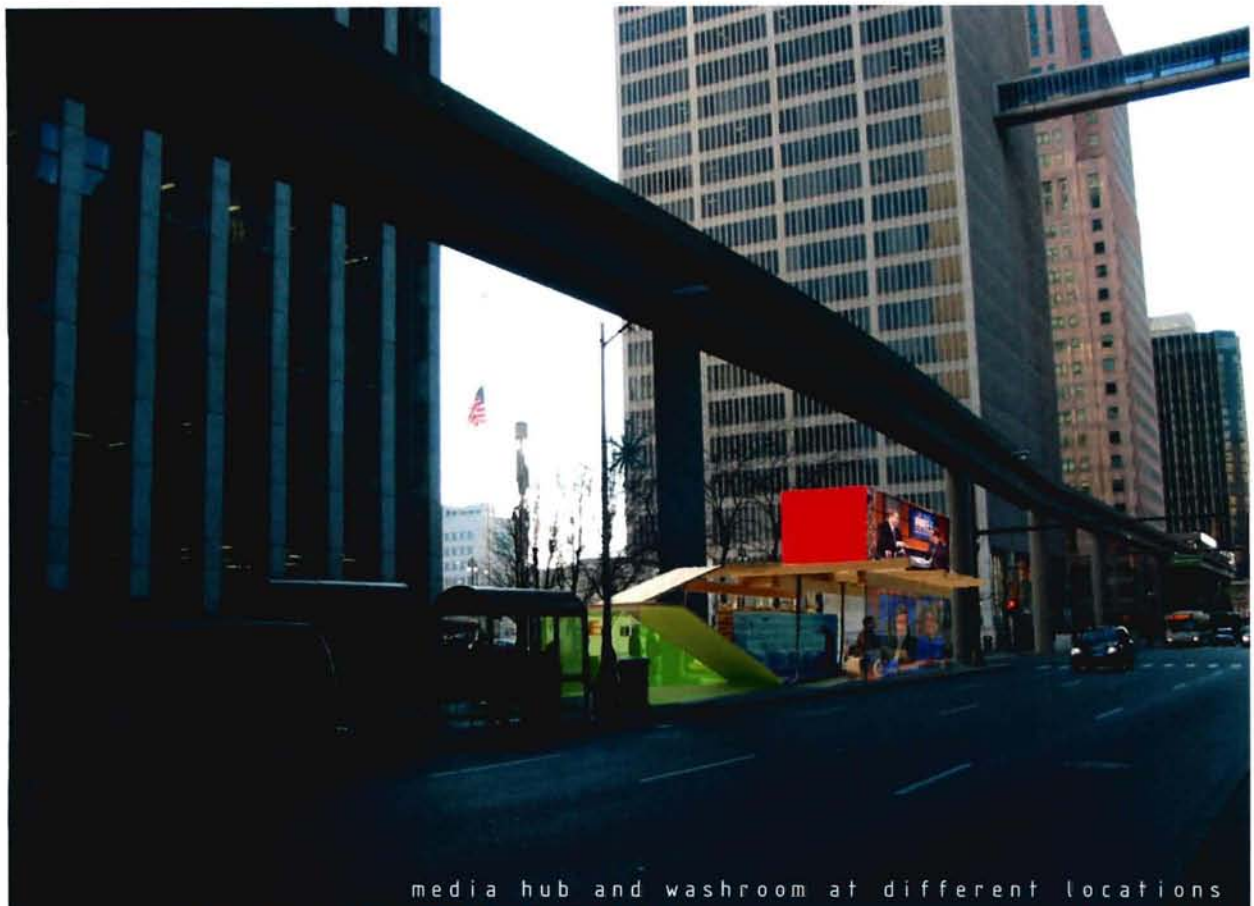
benches trap the steam heat
and provide warmth,
especially during the winter.
STEAM

Media Hub Study



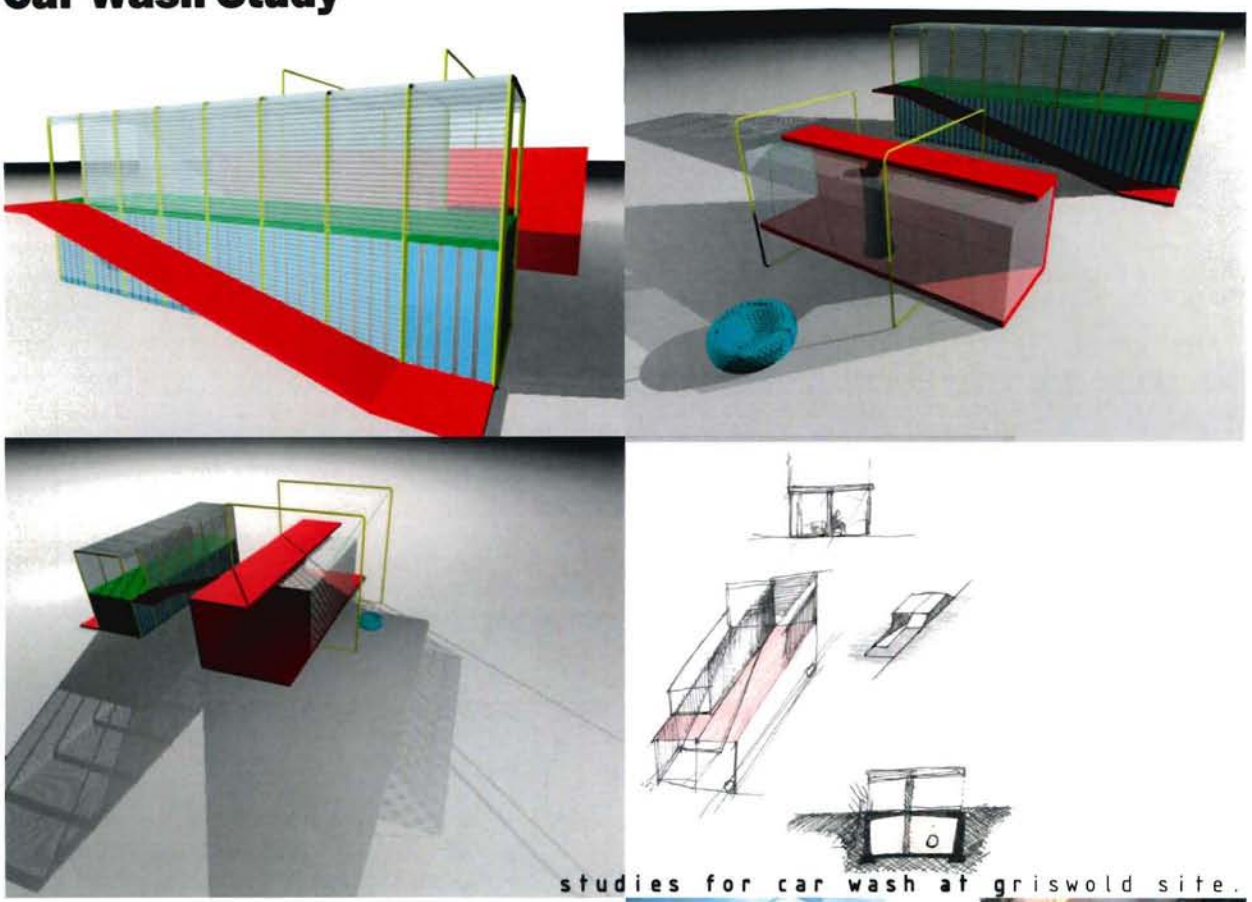
incorporating more "tactics" to the washroom part of public interaction is the ability to linger and dwell in public space. the washroom alone is a quite private process and doesn't encourage any type of exchange.

by adding a newsstand and a media post with tv screens, the public space becomes more dynamic because people are encouraged to stay a bit. the media is also a method of mass communication to the general public. it's relevance and the topics being covered are the catalysts for public discussion and response.

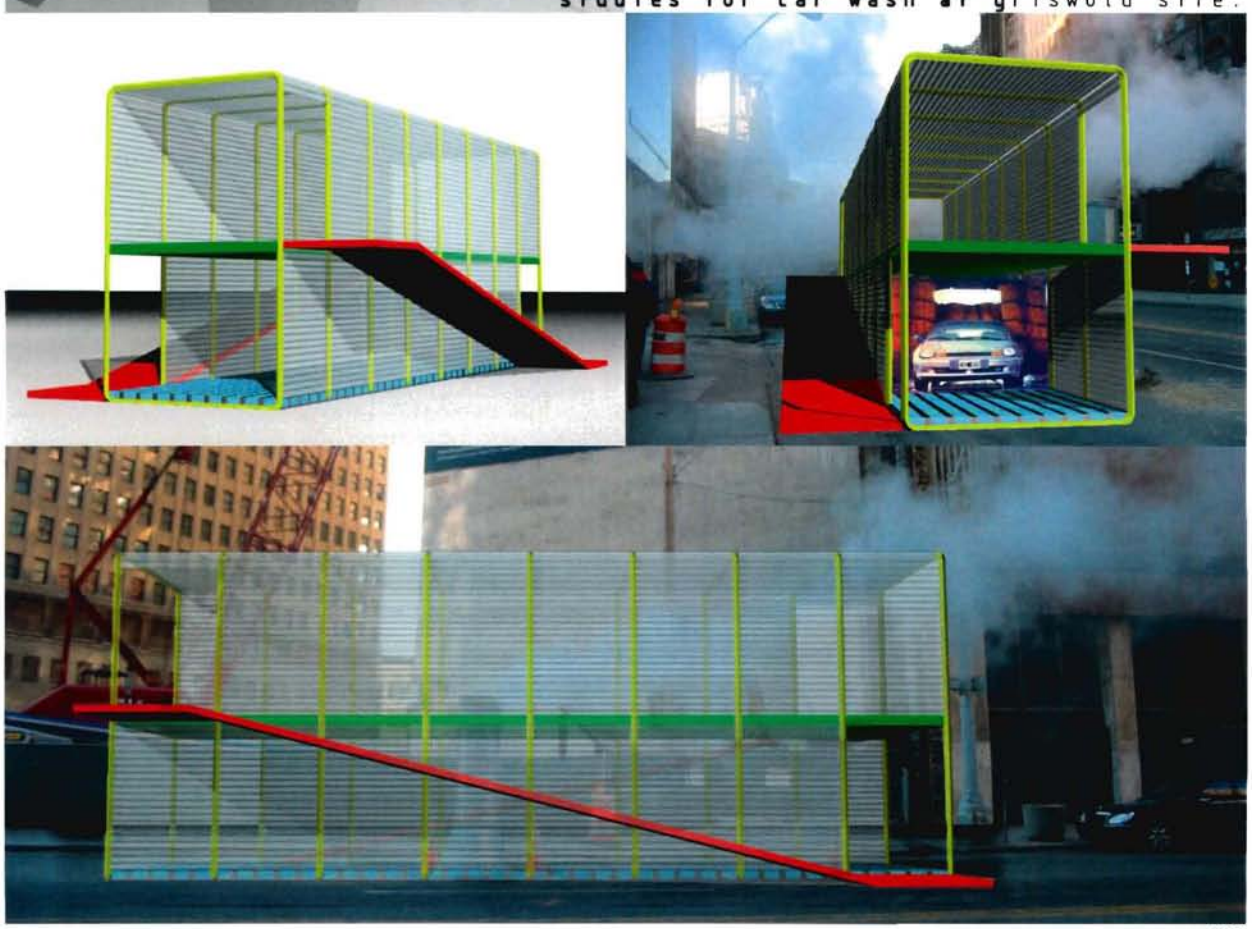


media hub and washroom at different locations

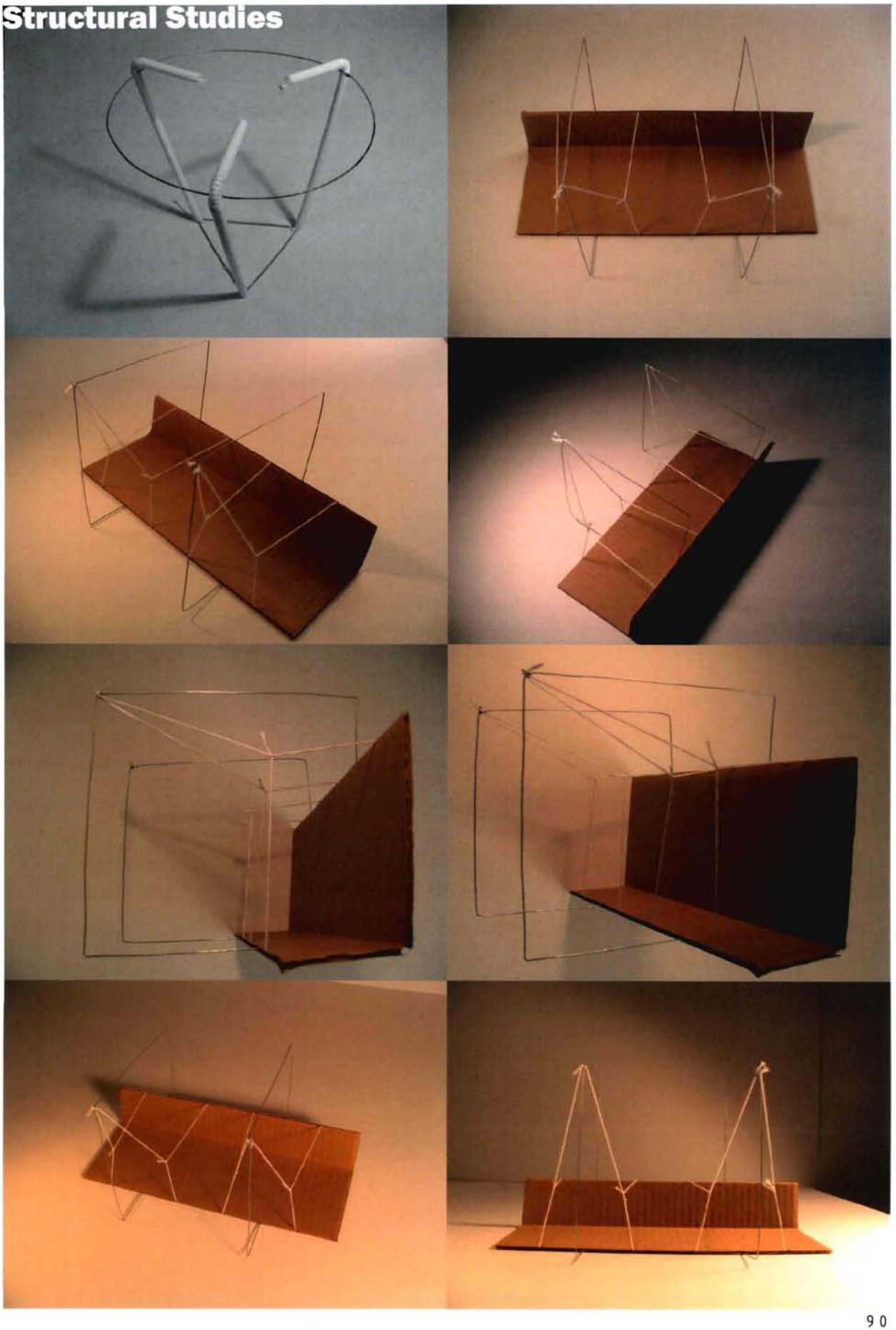
Car Wash Study



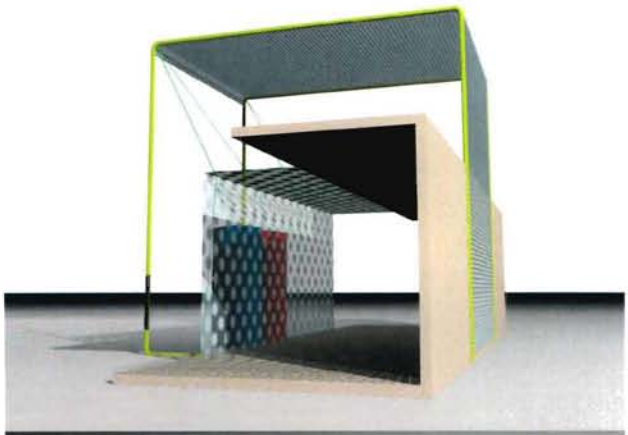
studies for car wash at griswold site.

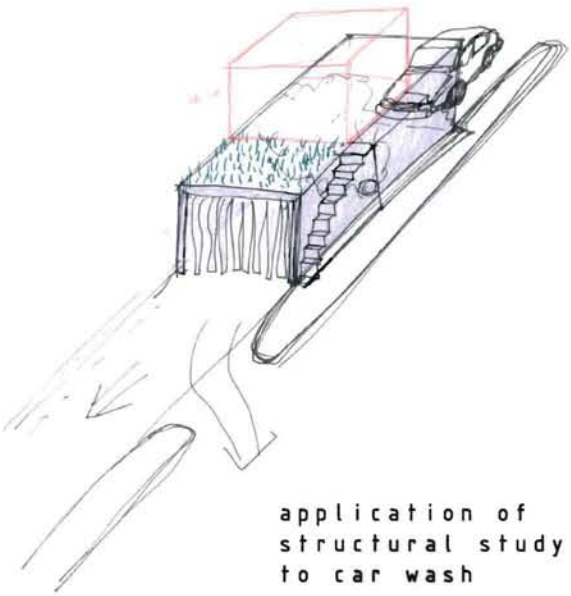


Structural Studies

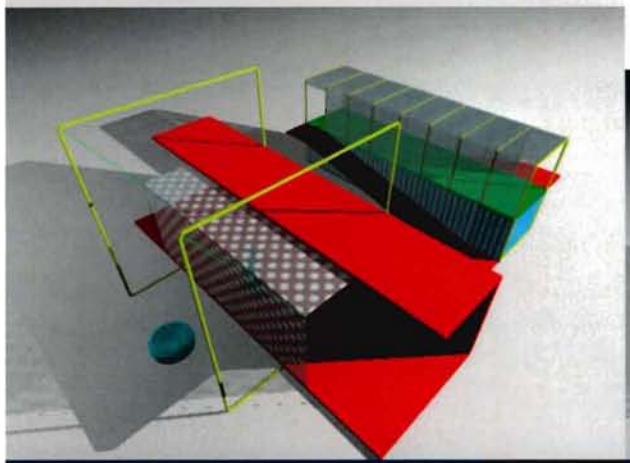


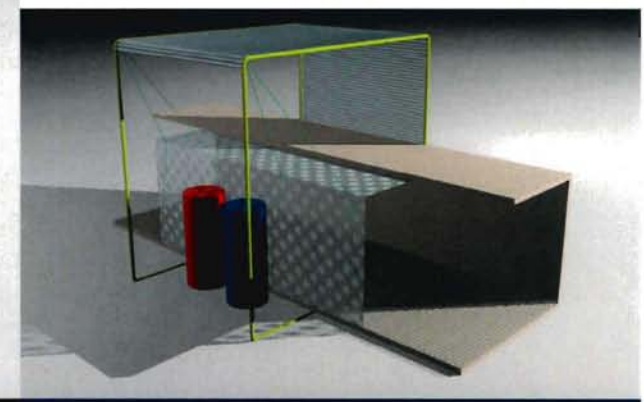
Car Wash Study

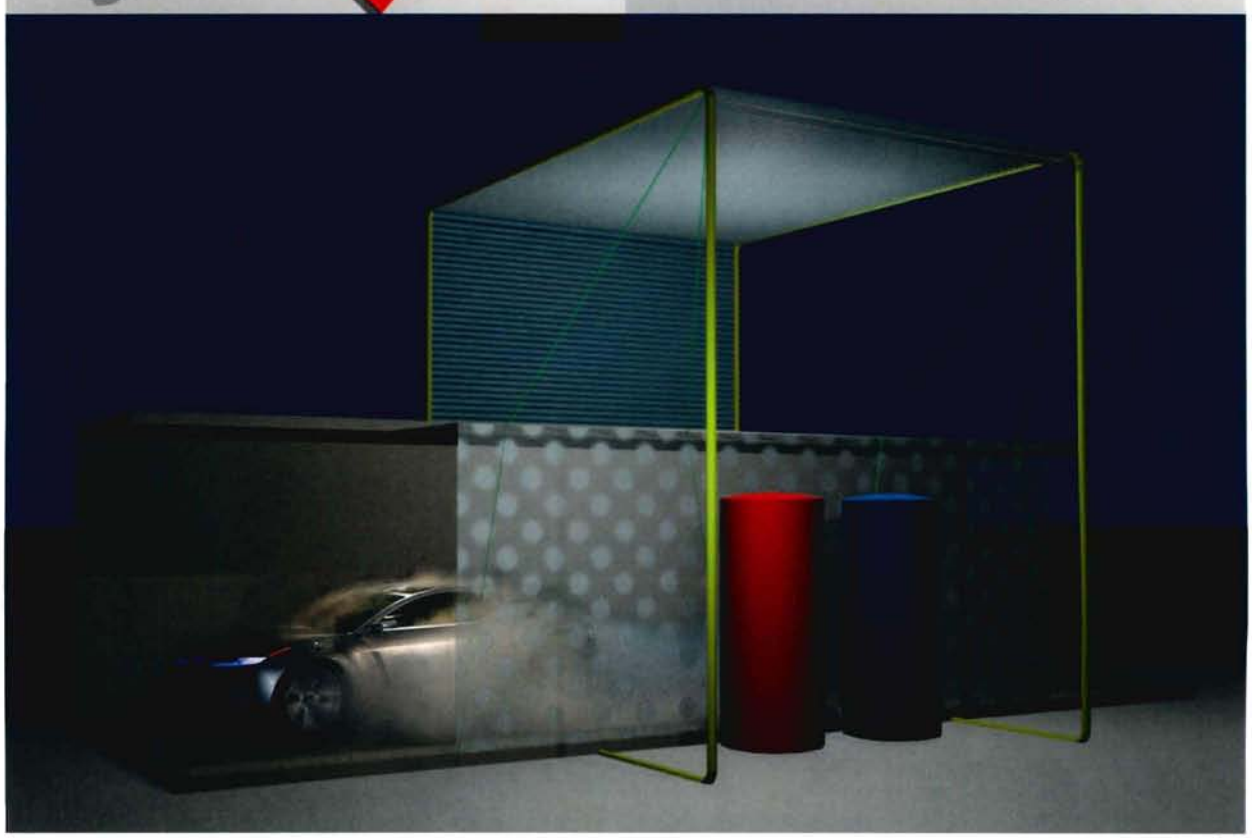




application of structural study to car wash

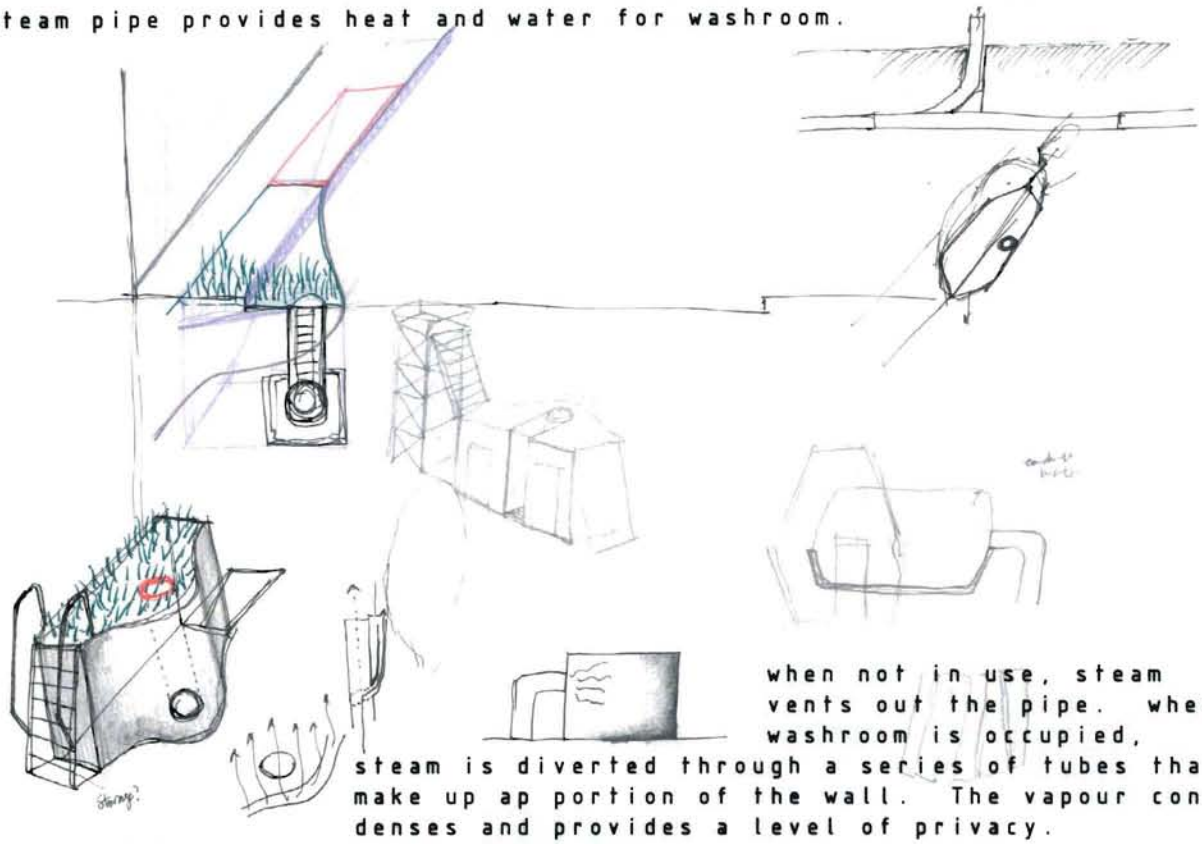




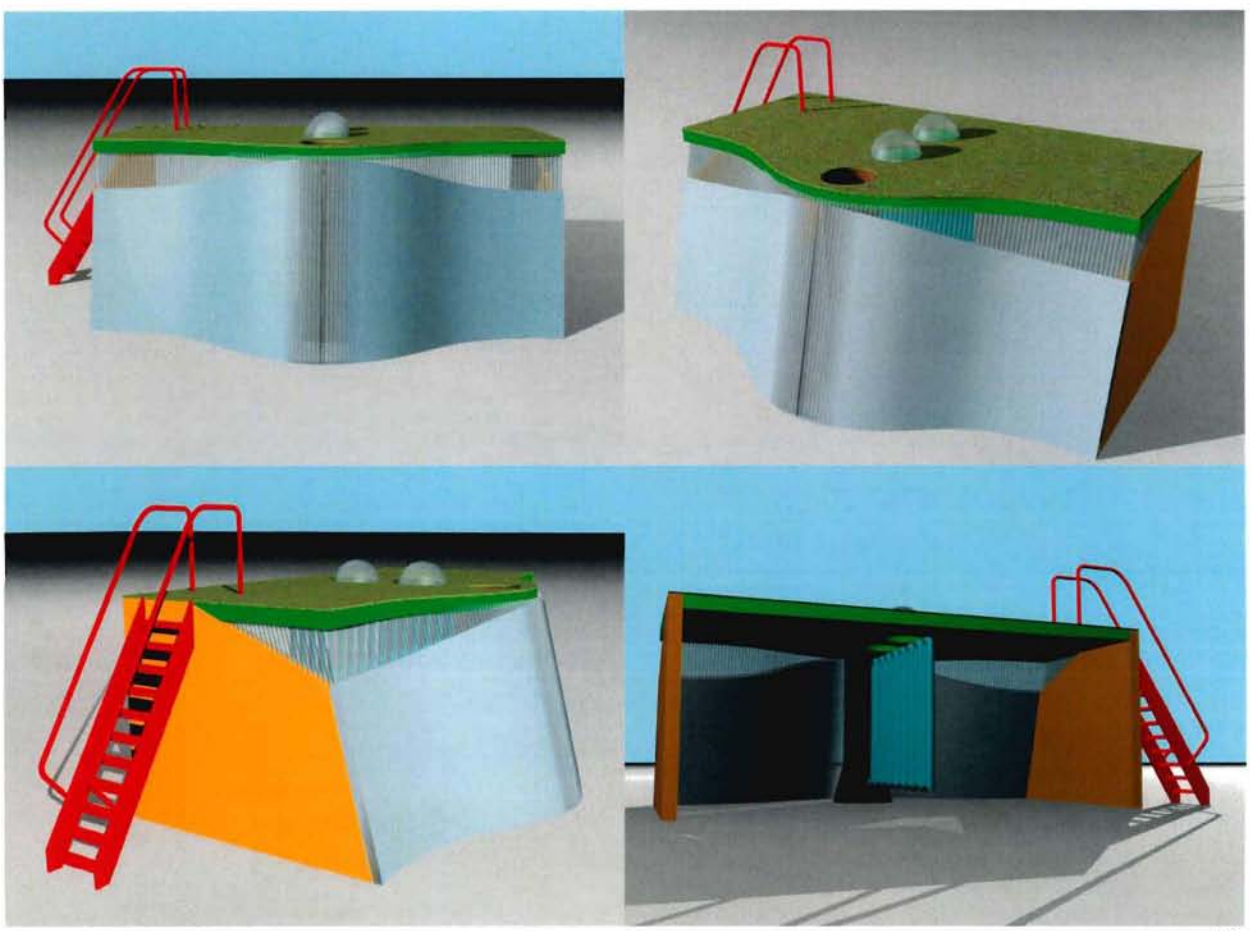


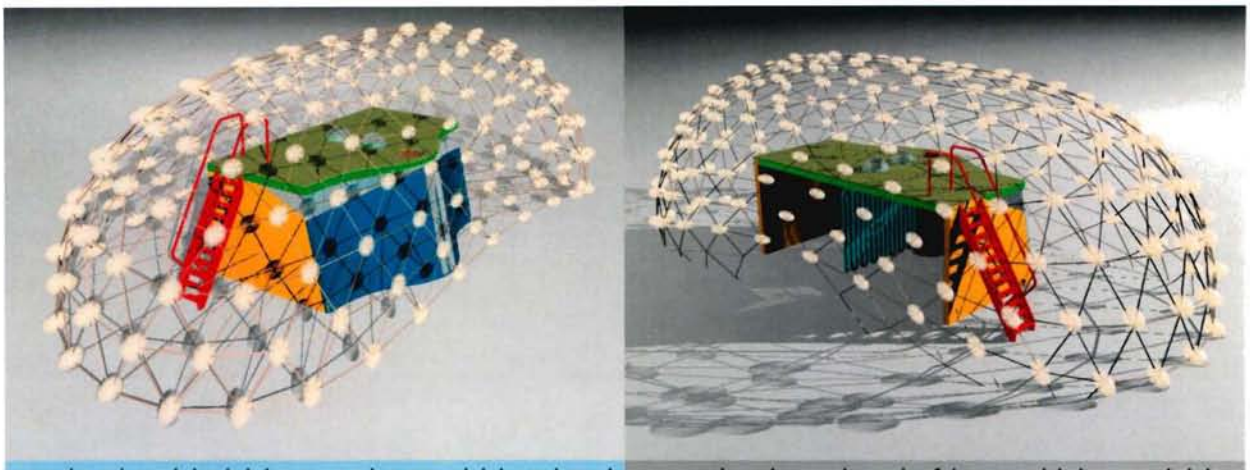
Steam Washroom Study

steam pipe provides heat and water for washroom.

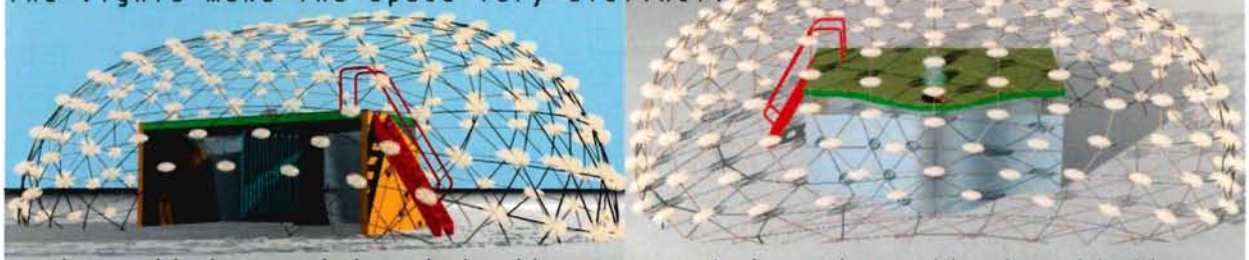


when not in use, steam vents out the pipe. when washroom is occupied, steam is diverted through a series of tubes that make up ap portion of the wall. The vapour condenses and provides a level of privacy.

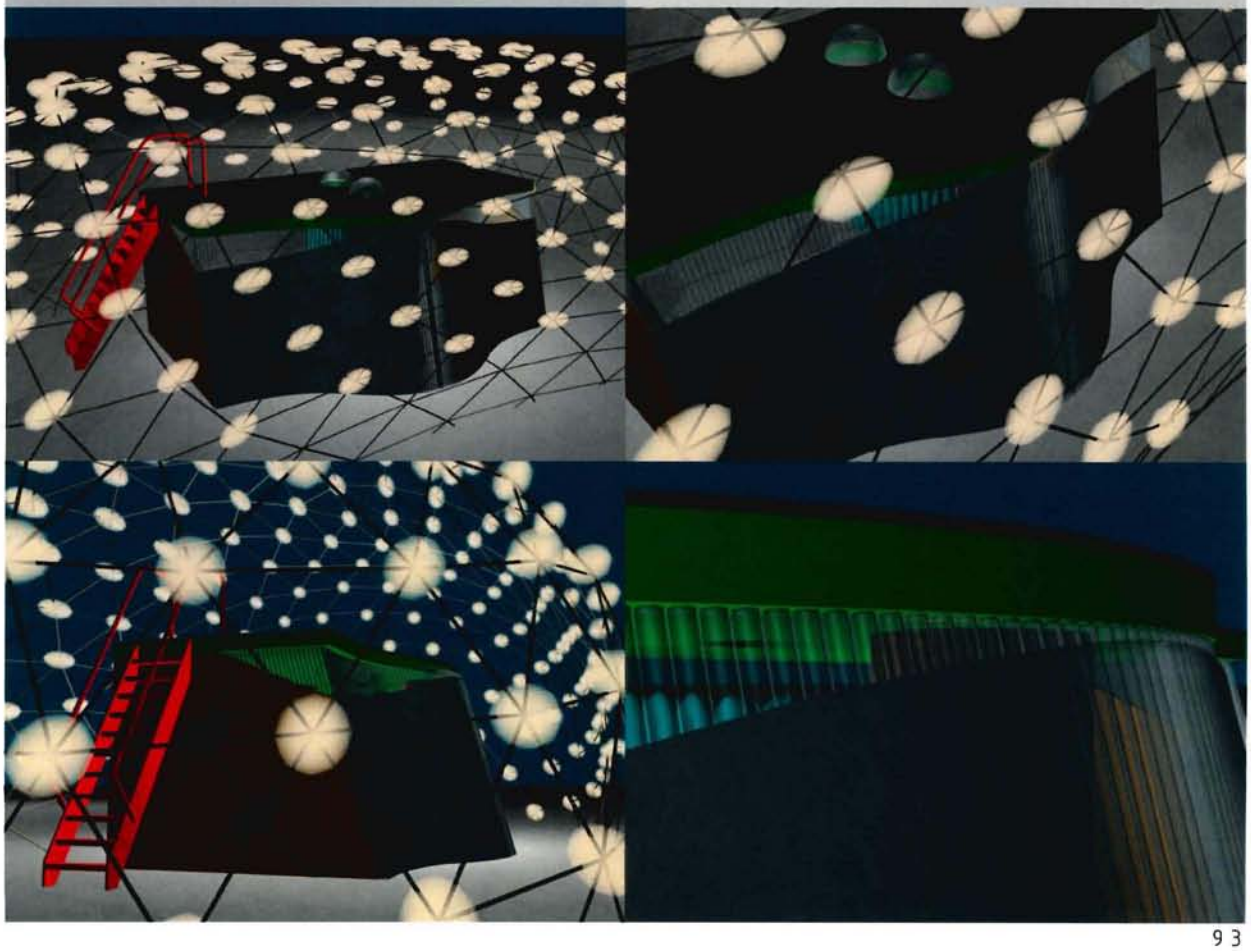




geodesic lighting scheme illuminates and clearly defines this public washroom space. as a method of marking a contested space, the lights make the space very distinct.

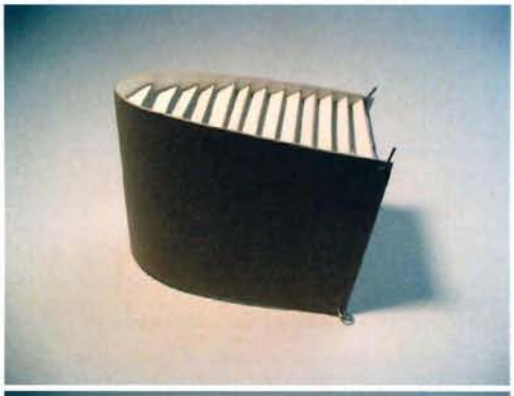


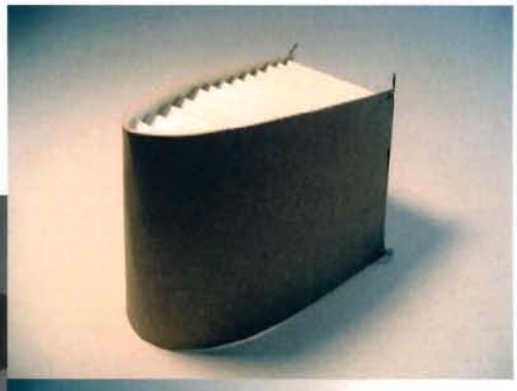
perhaps it is good to claim the space, but perhaps it also limits the definition of the public domain.

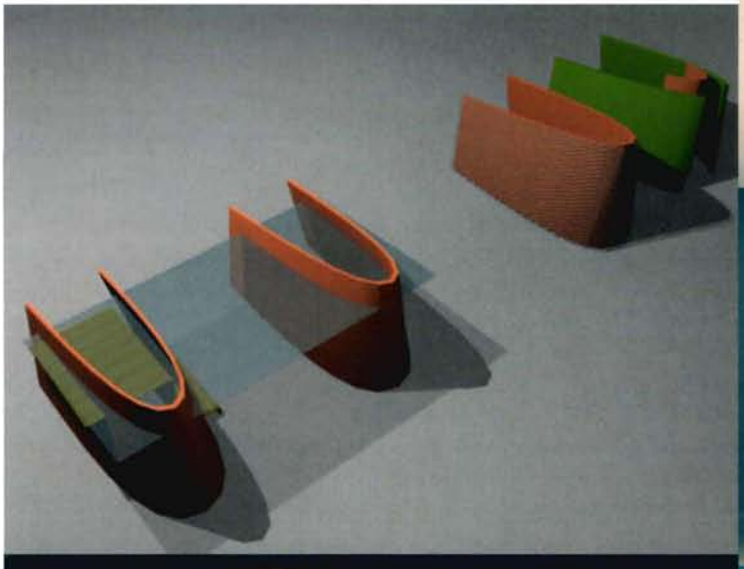


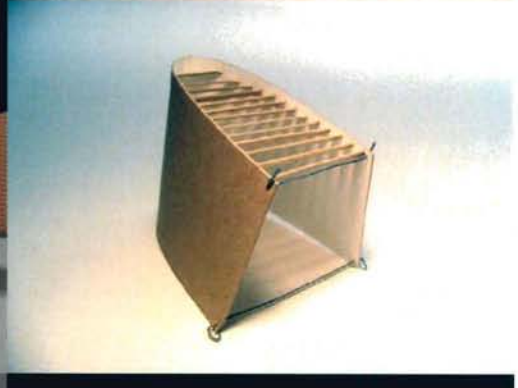
Pod Study

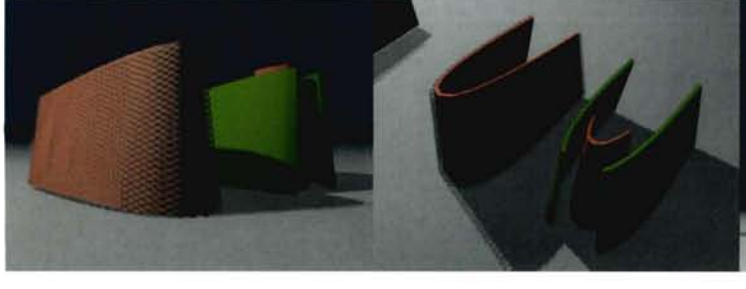
pods are small enclosures that can be arranged to explore the relationship between private and public space.

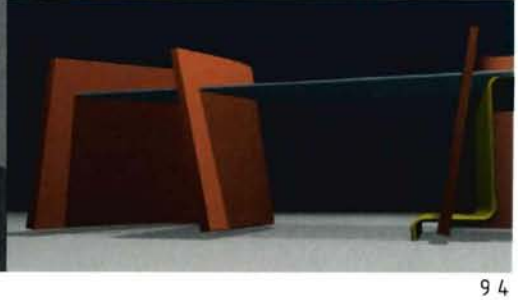




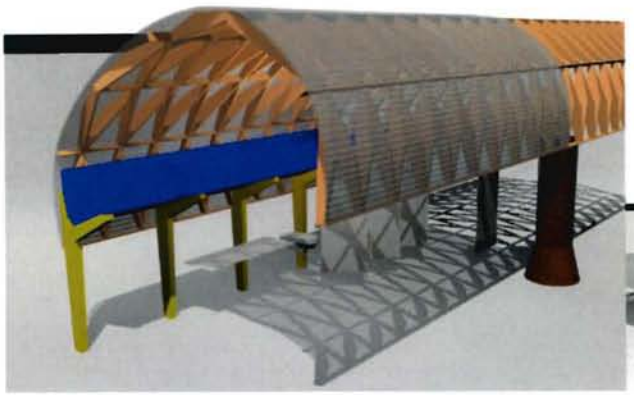


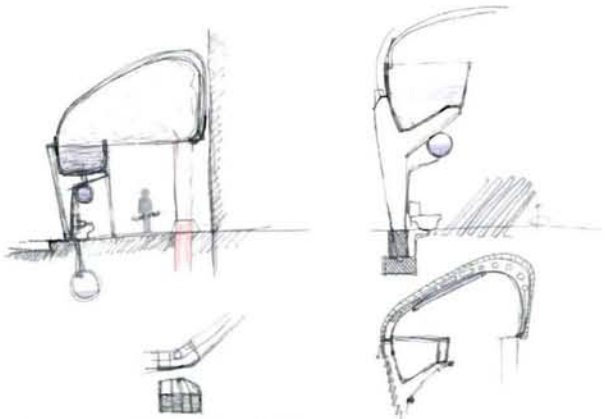






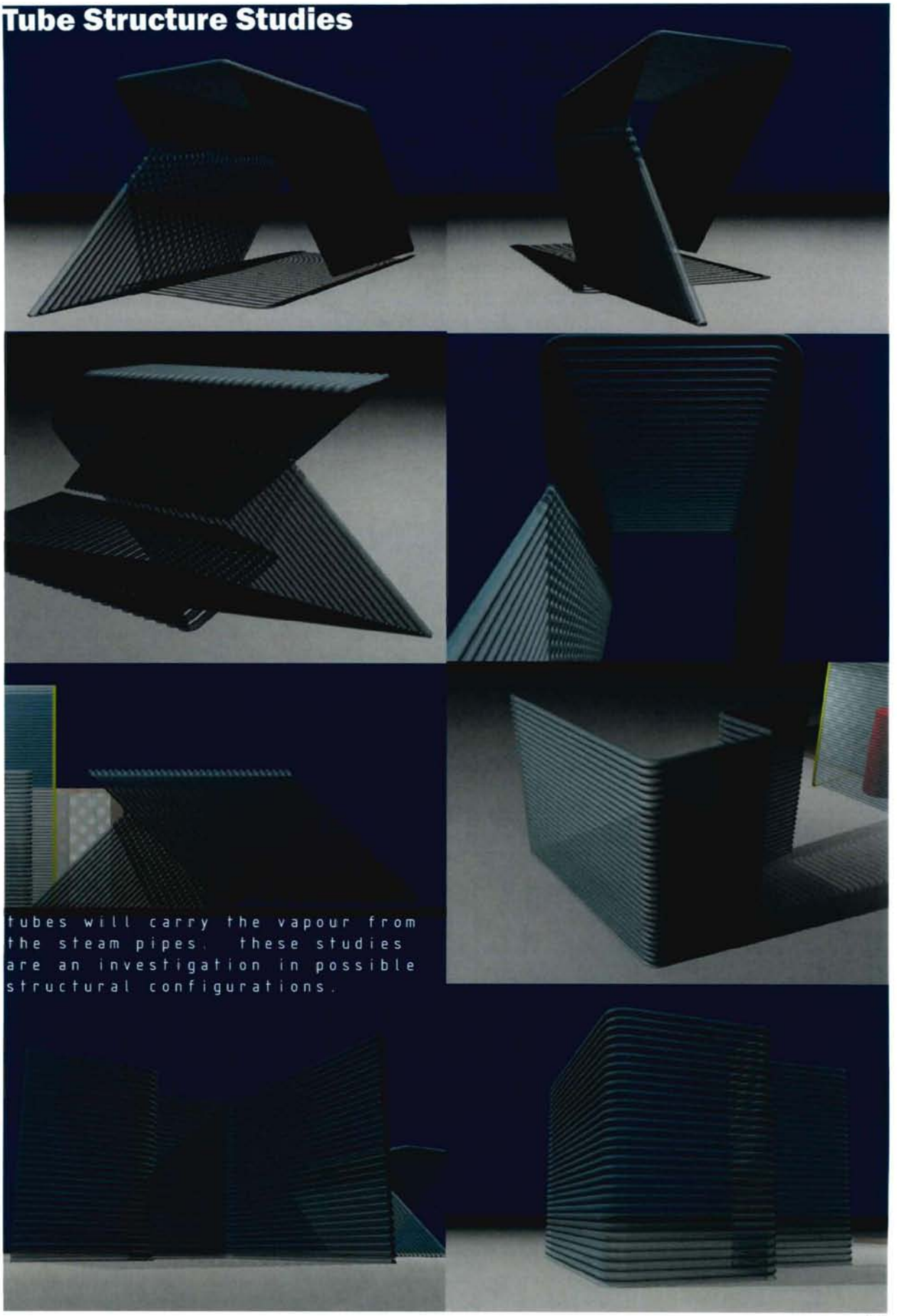
Gratiot Steam Washroom Study



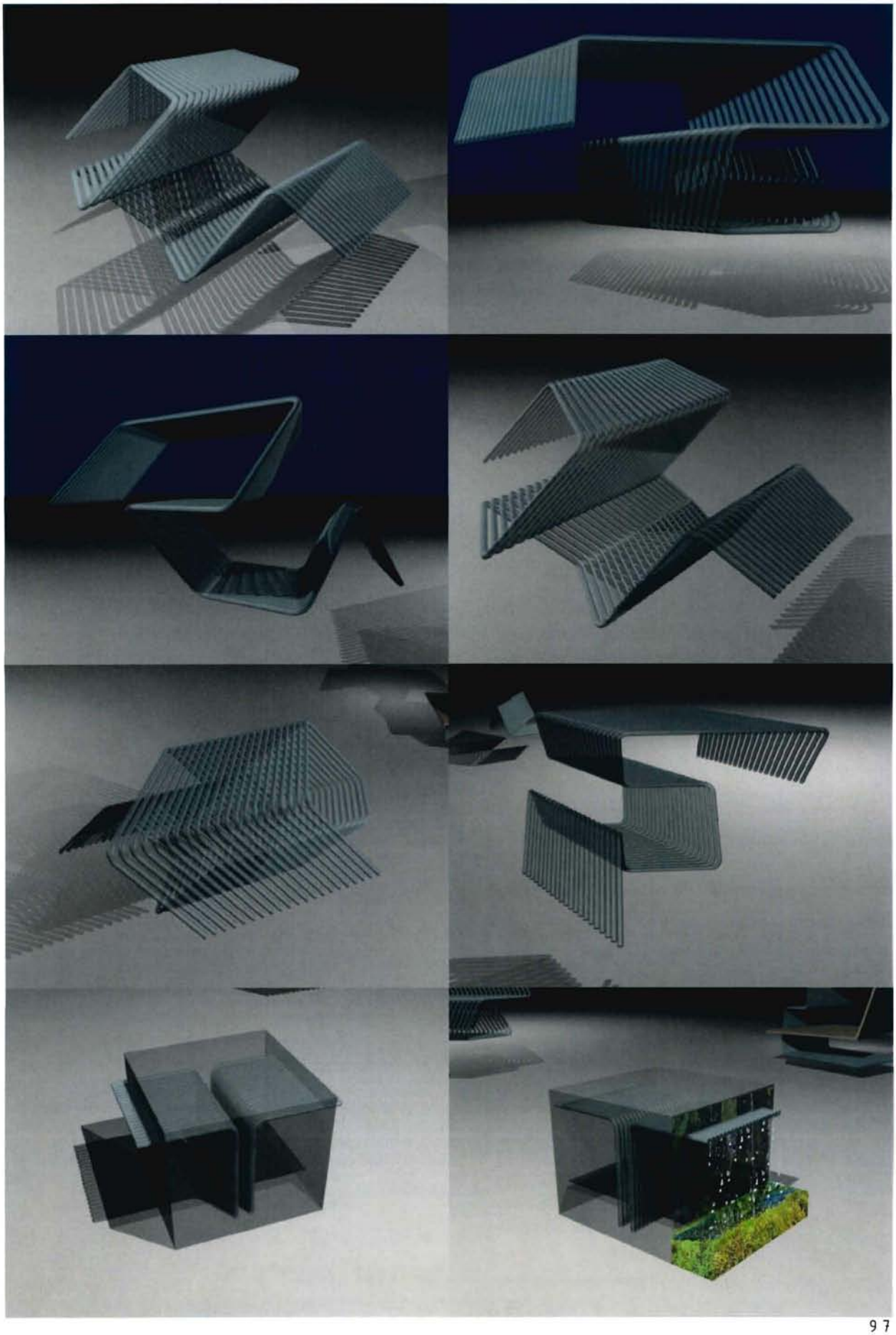


steam pipe in front of building is harnessed for its water and heat. the heat is trapped by a canopy that is attached to the wall of the building and then the vapour condenses and is stored for the toilets.

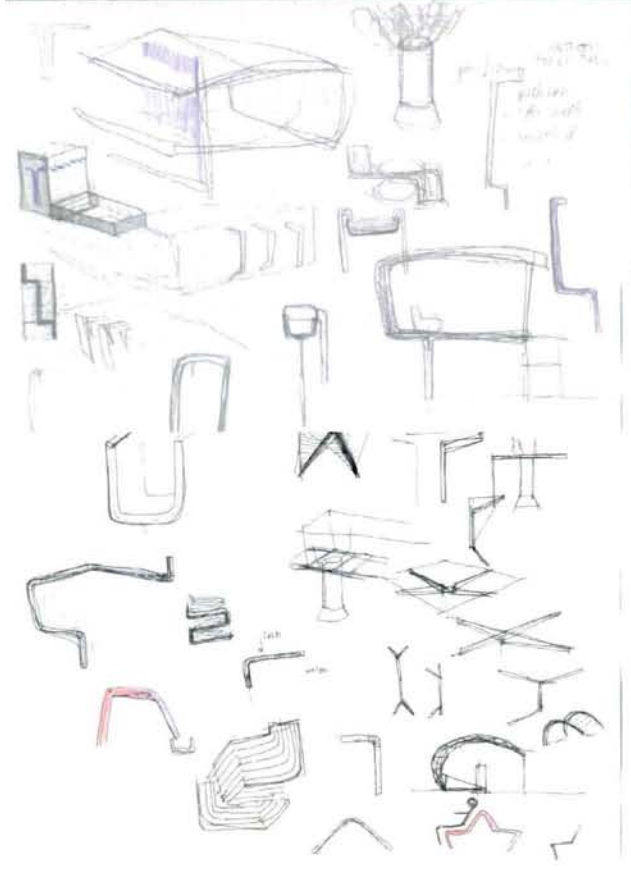
Tube Structure Studies

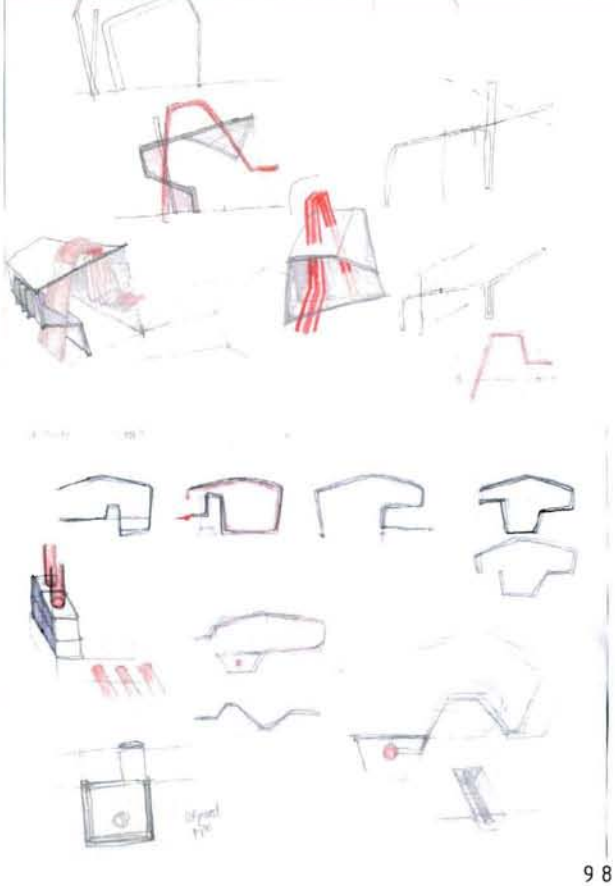


tubes will carry the vapour from the steam pipes. these studies are an investigation in possible structural configurations.

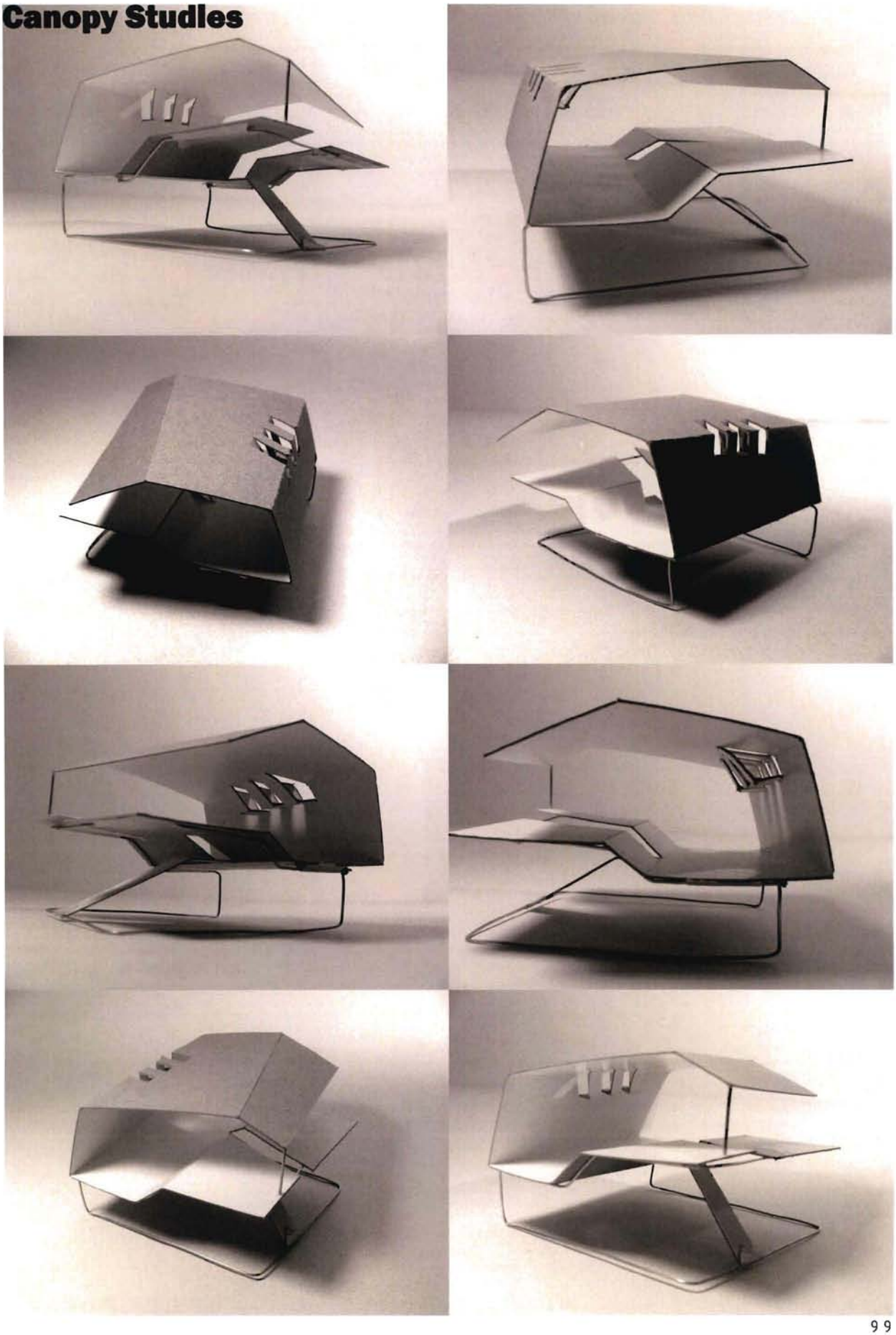


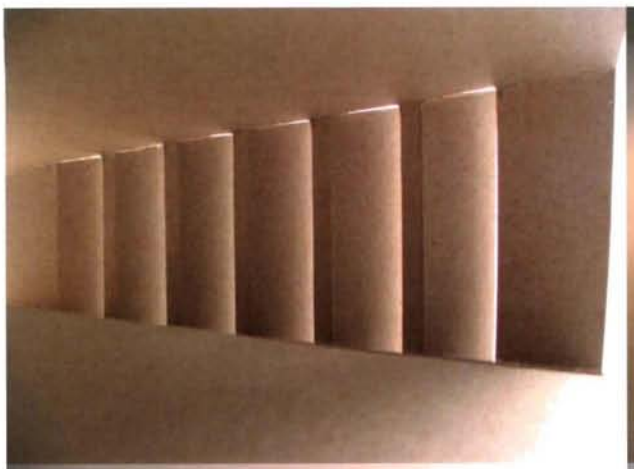
Tube Structure Studies

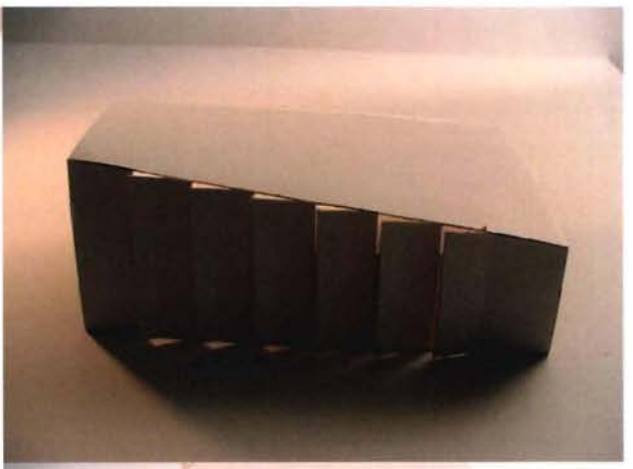


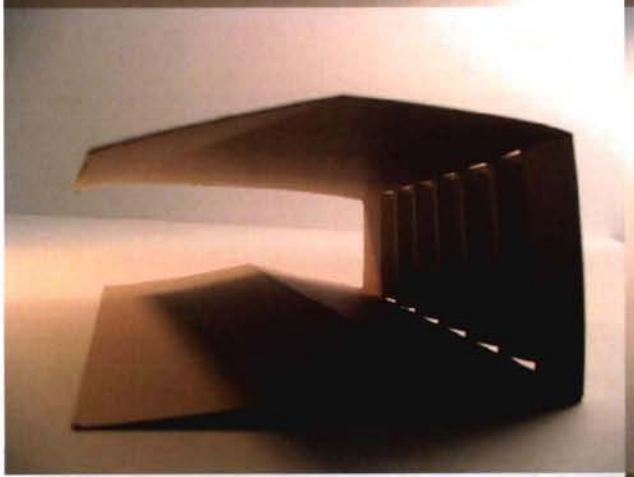


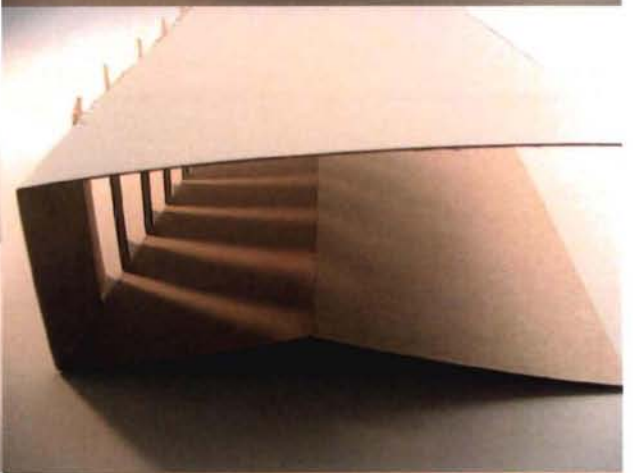
Canopy Studies

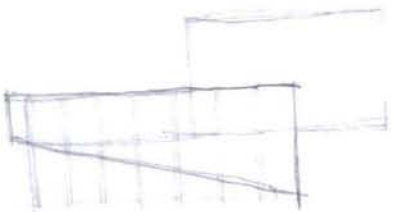


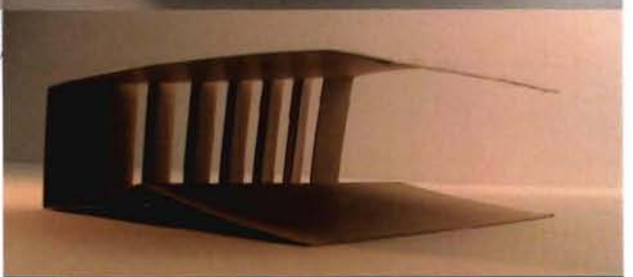


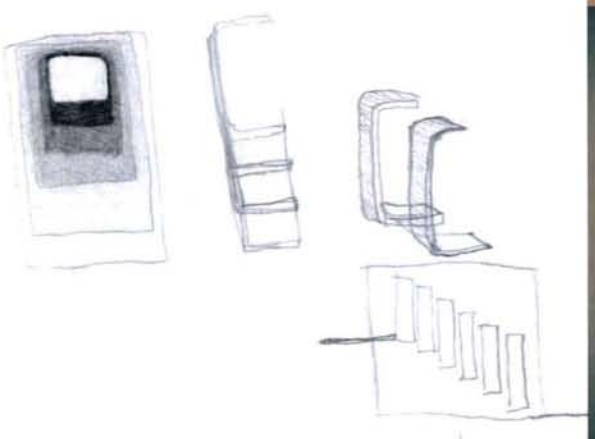


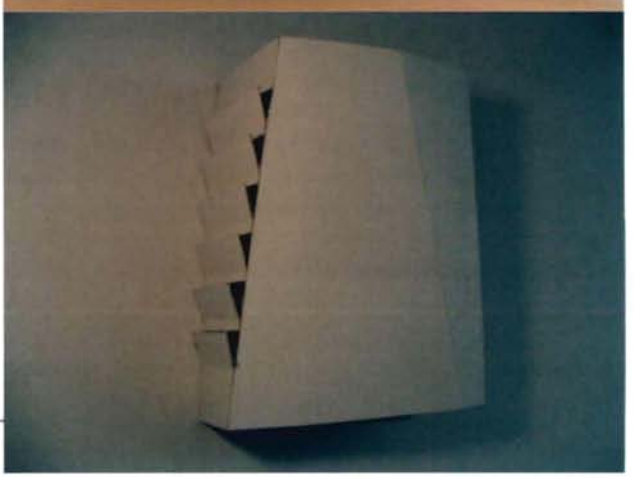




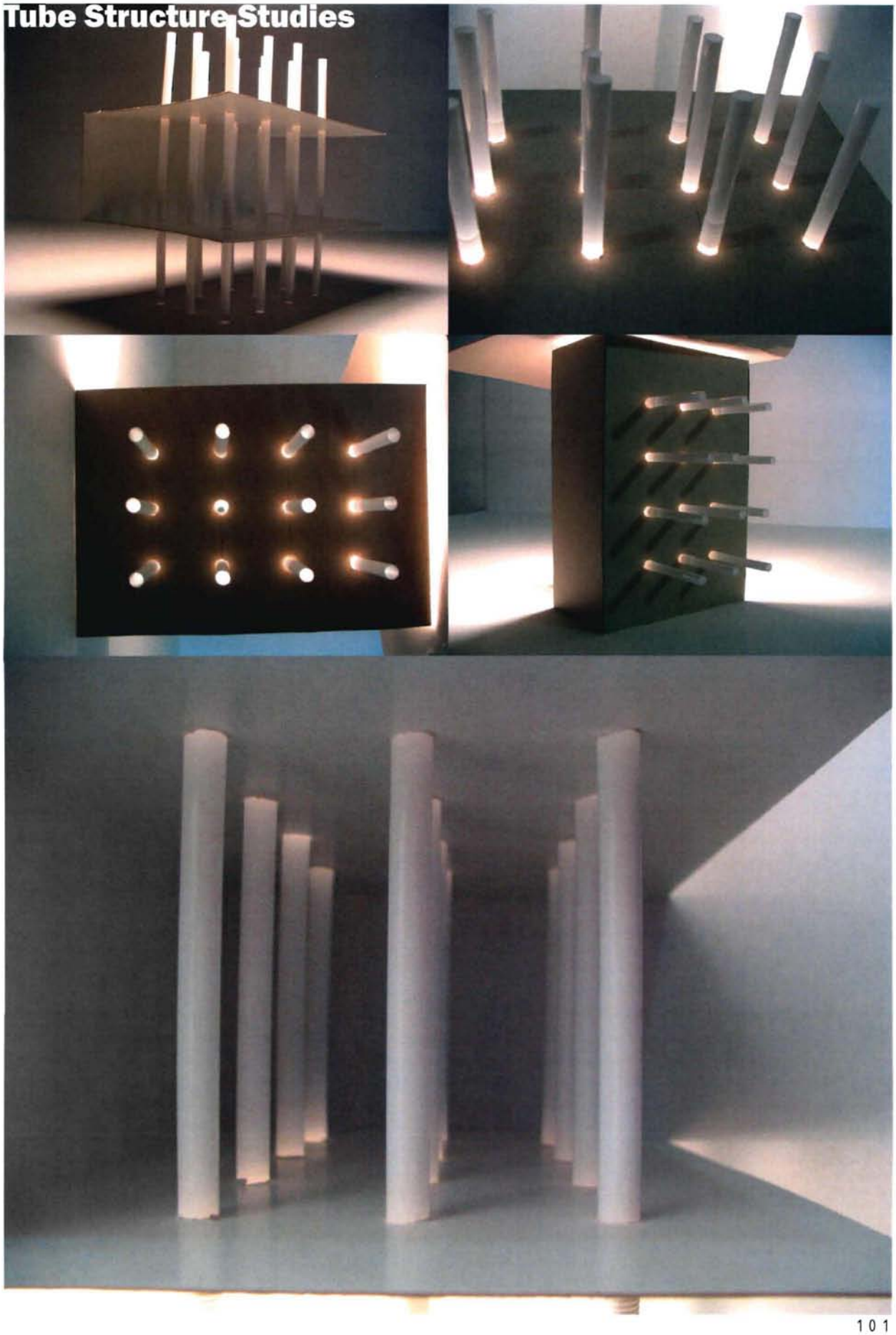


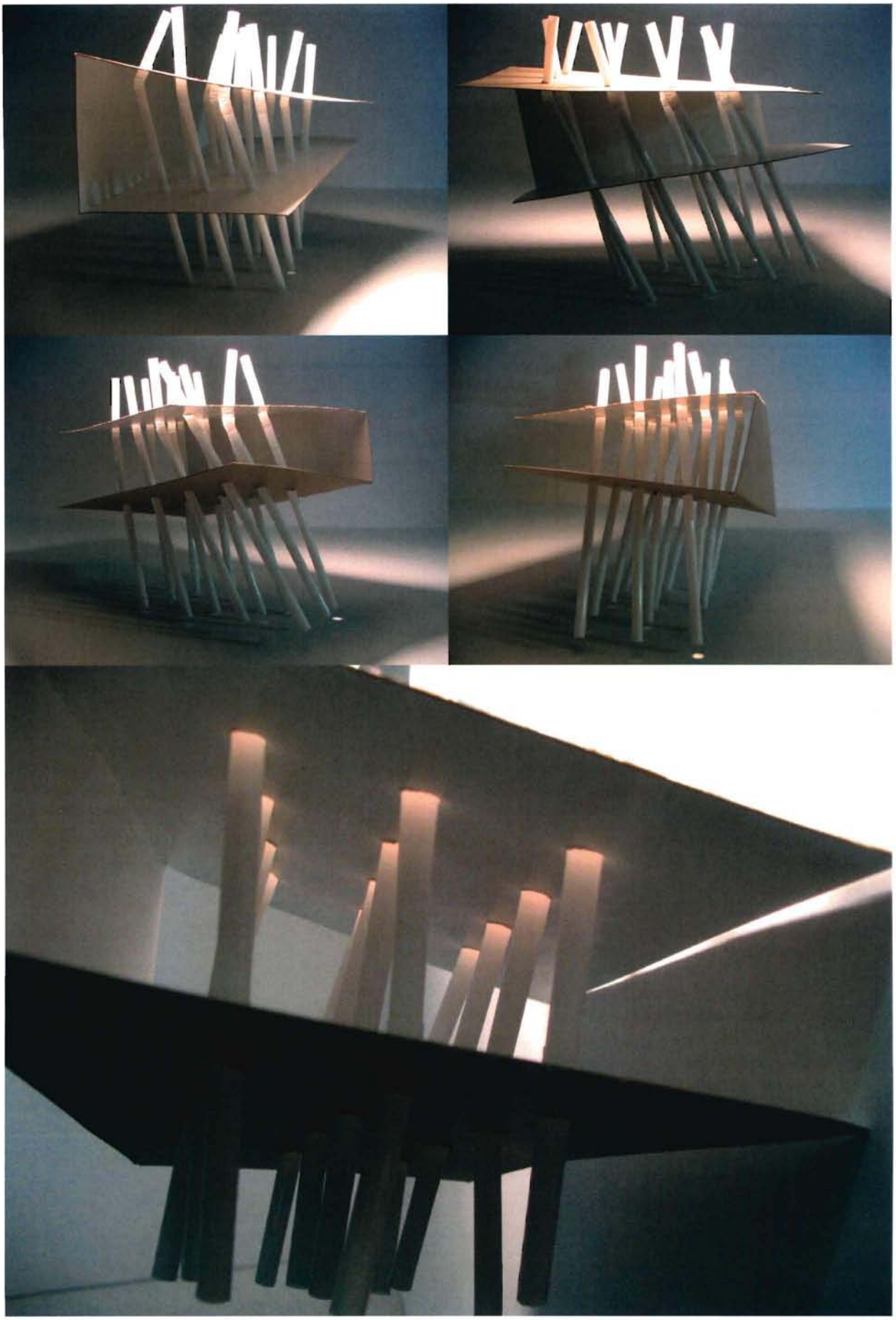


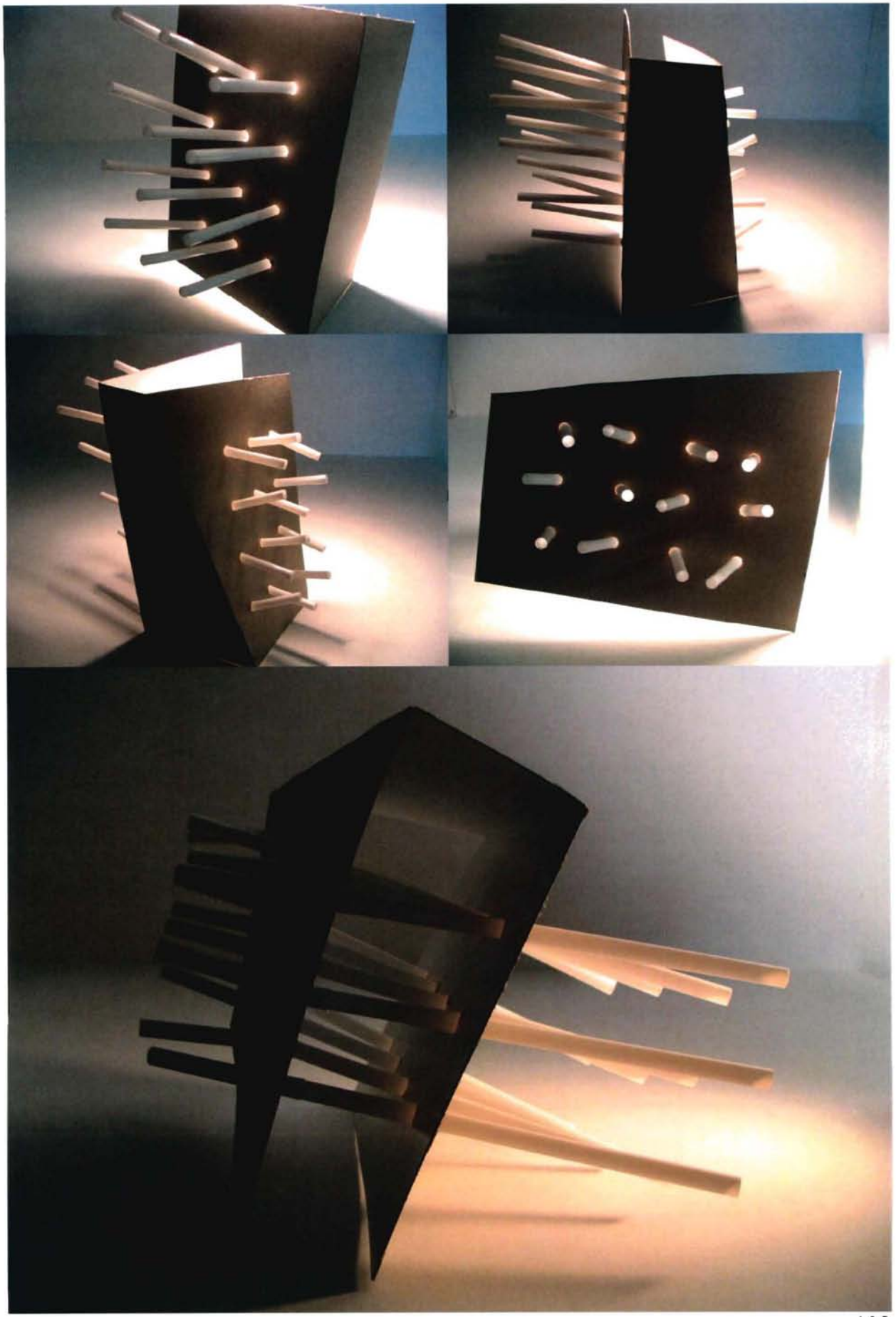


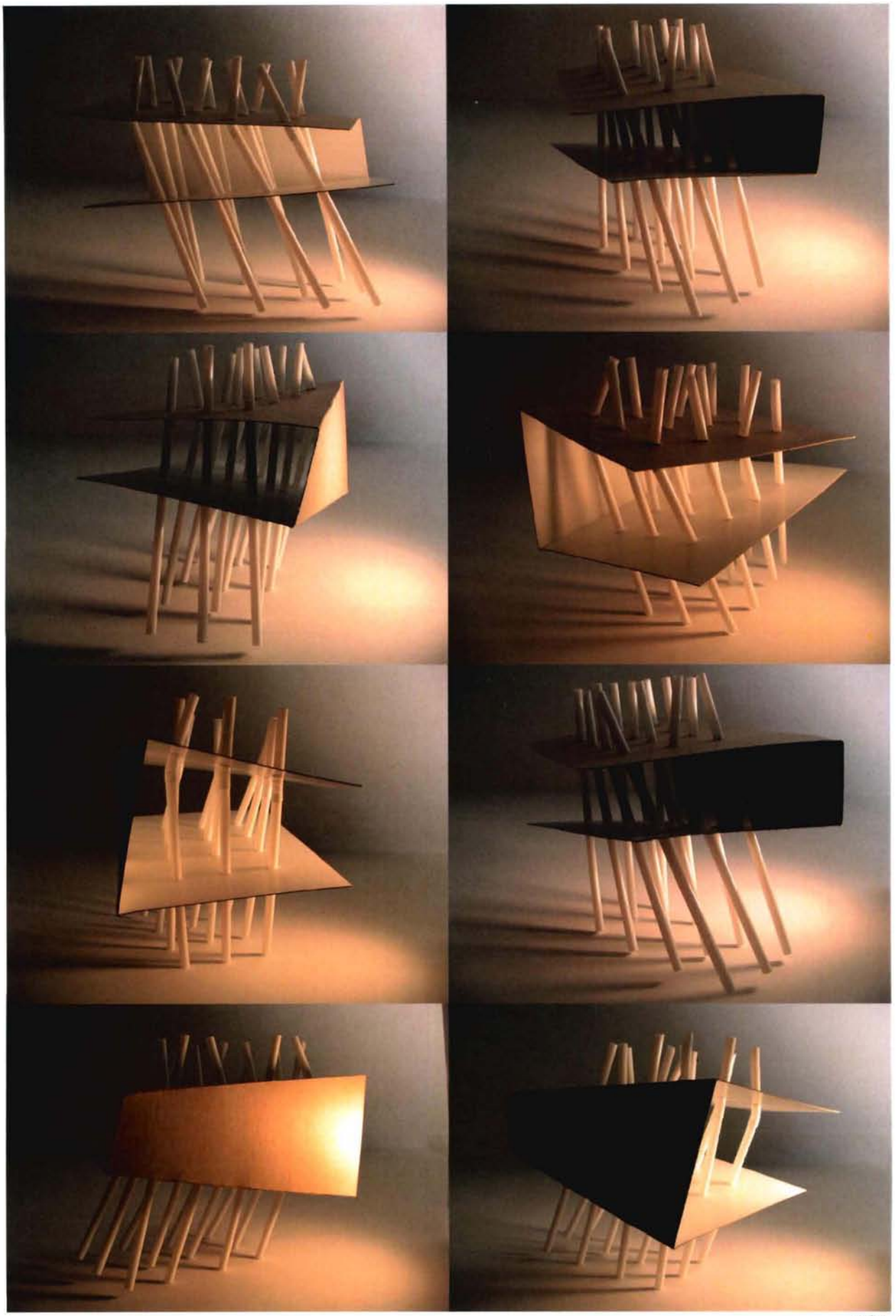


Tube Structure Studies



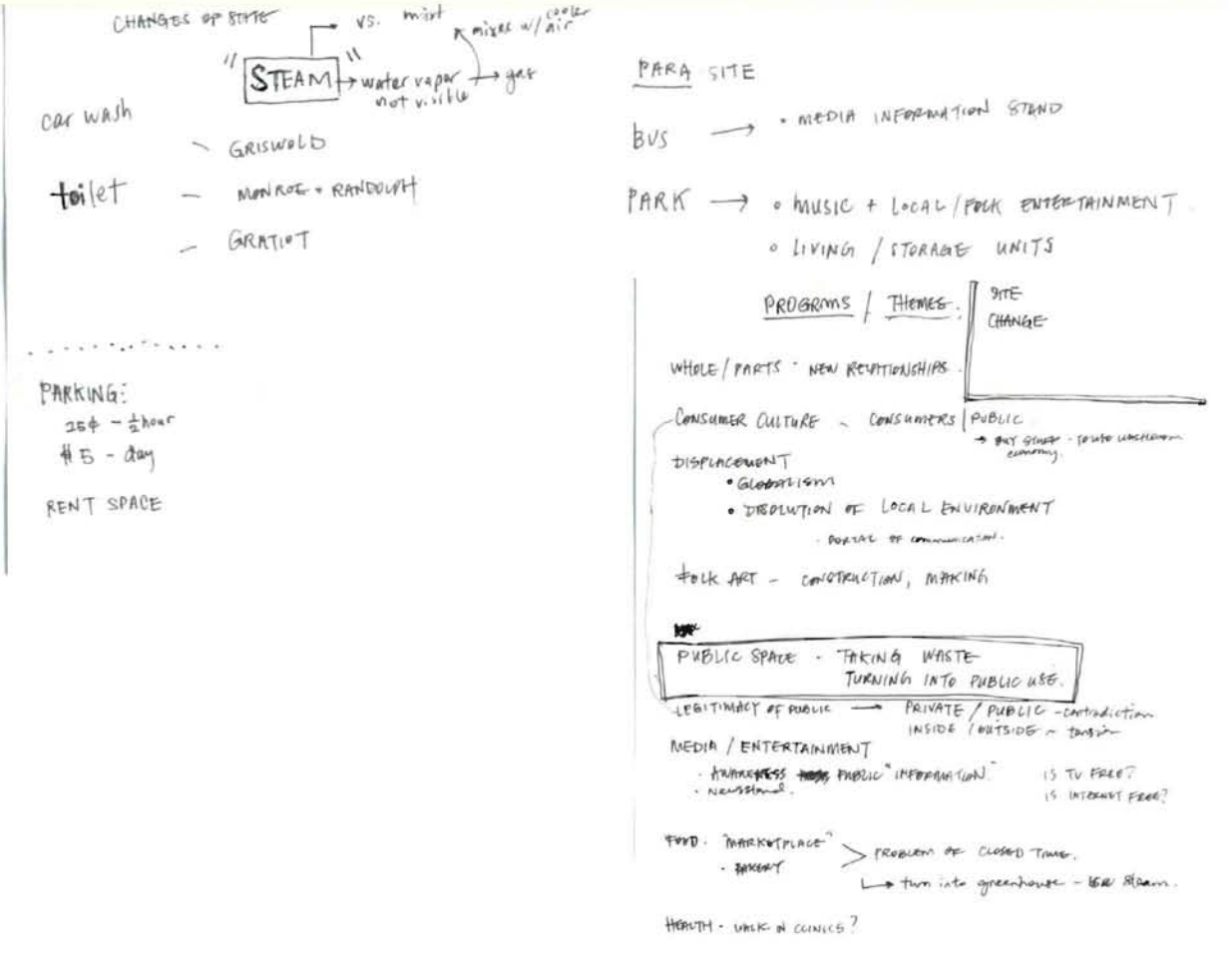






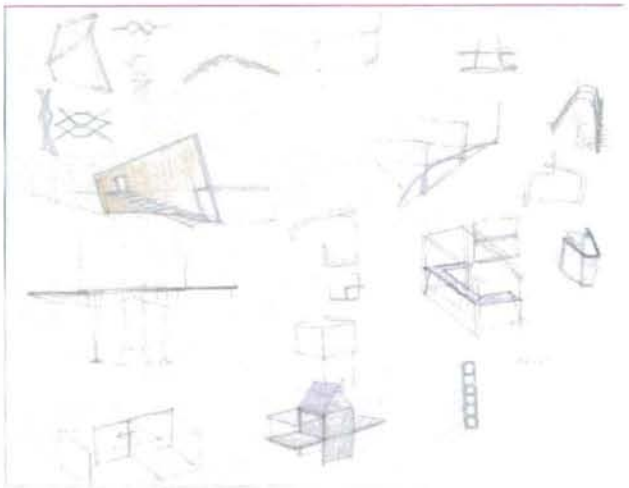
pipes connect to underground steam system to diffuse heat throughout structure.

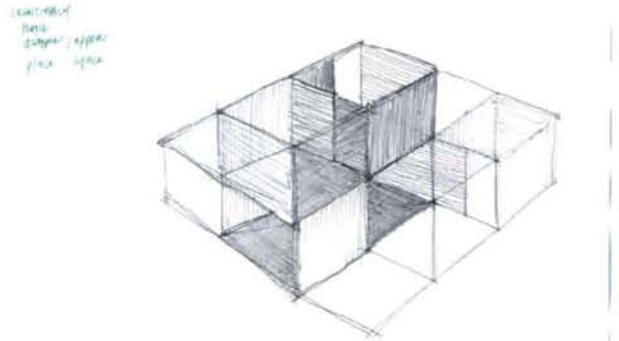
Sketches and Scribbles

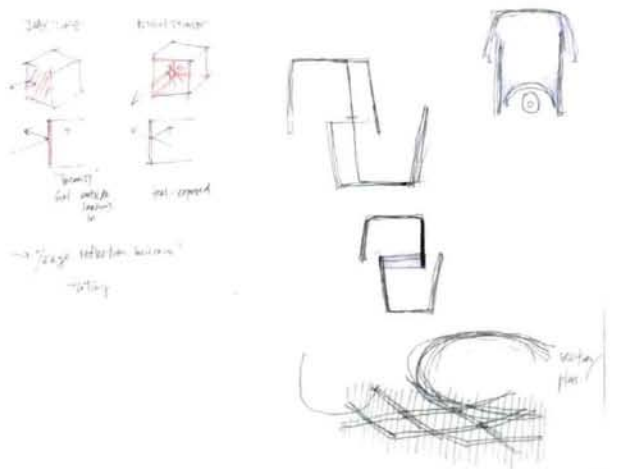


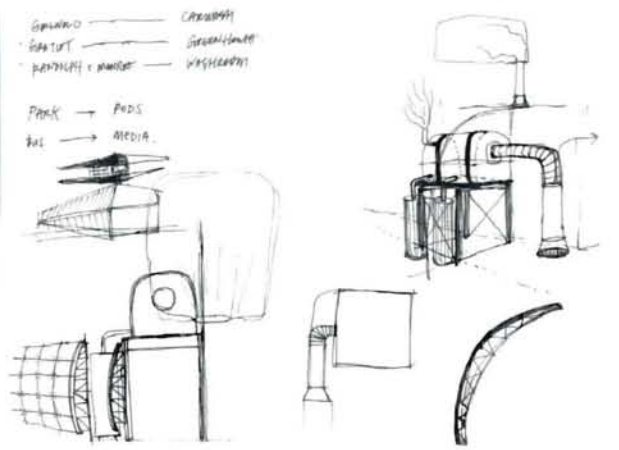
Sketches and Scribbles

mirror studies examine threshold
of private and public

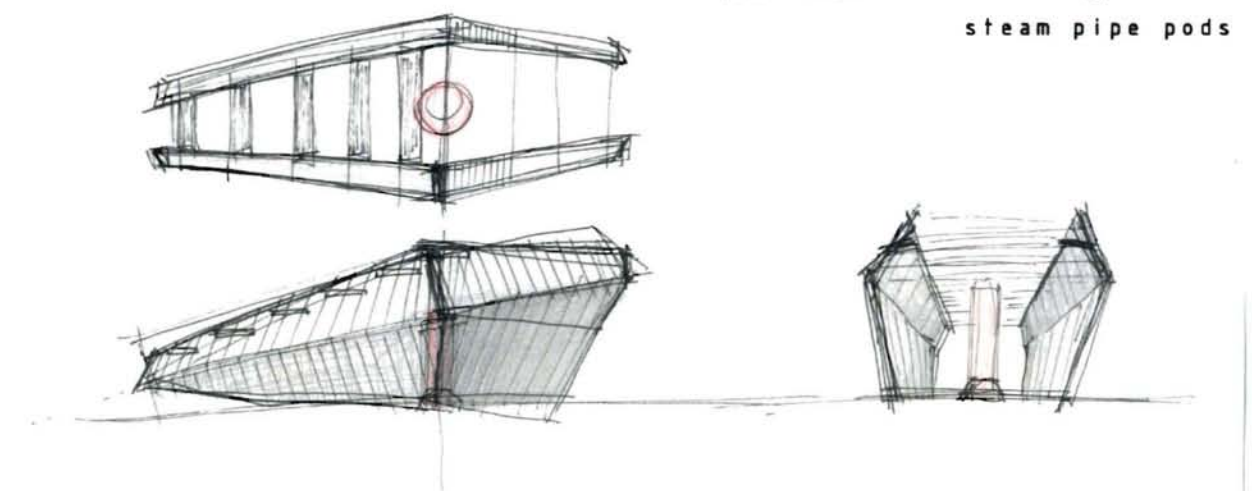




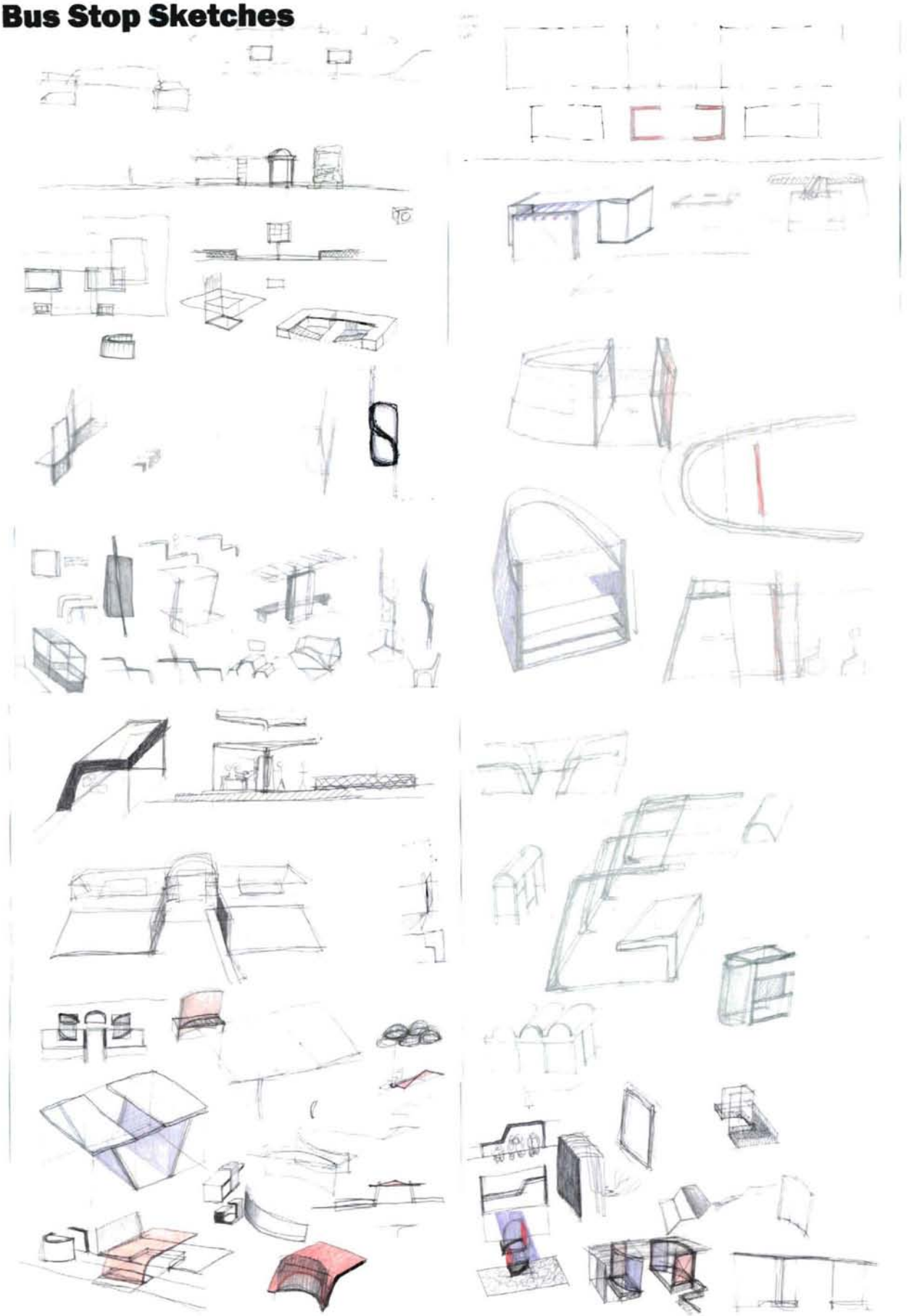


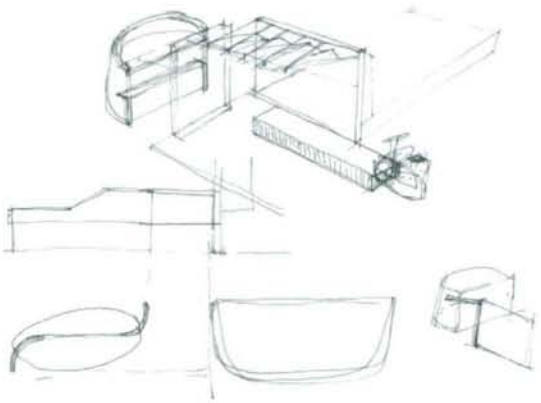


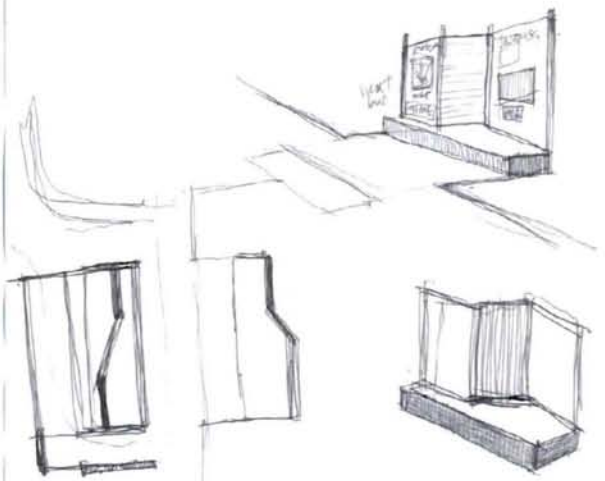
steam pipe pods

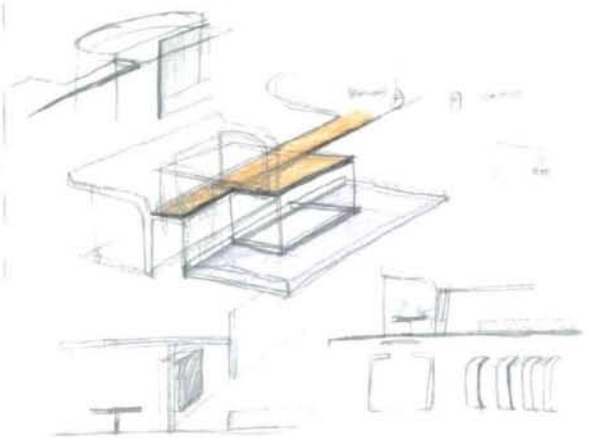


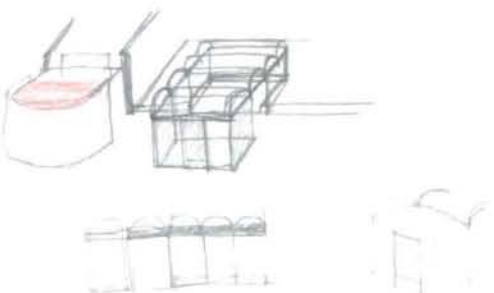
Bus Stop Sketches

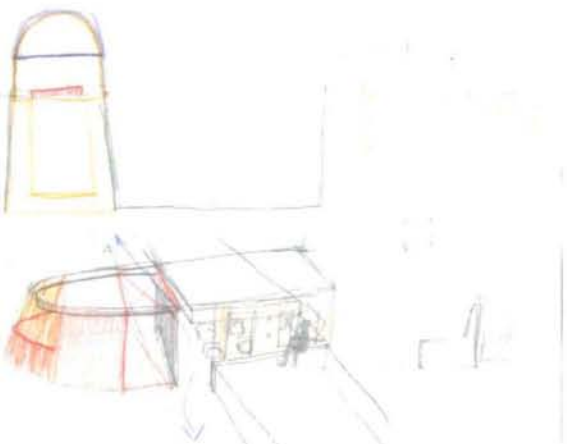


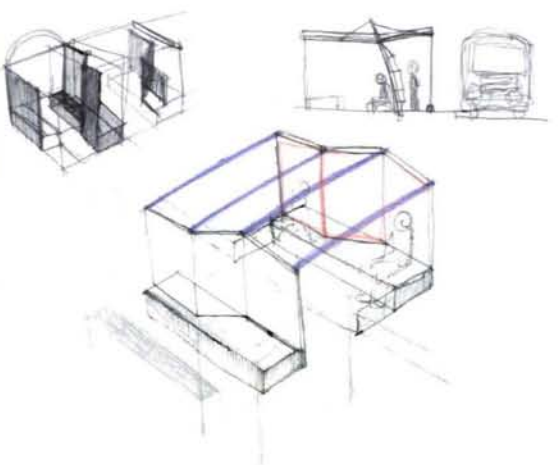




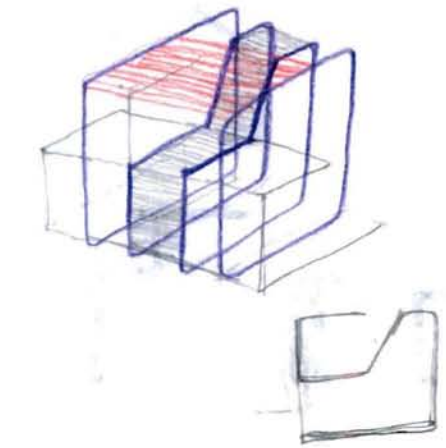


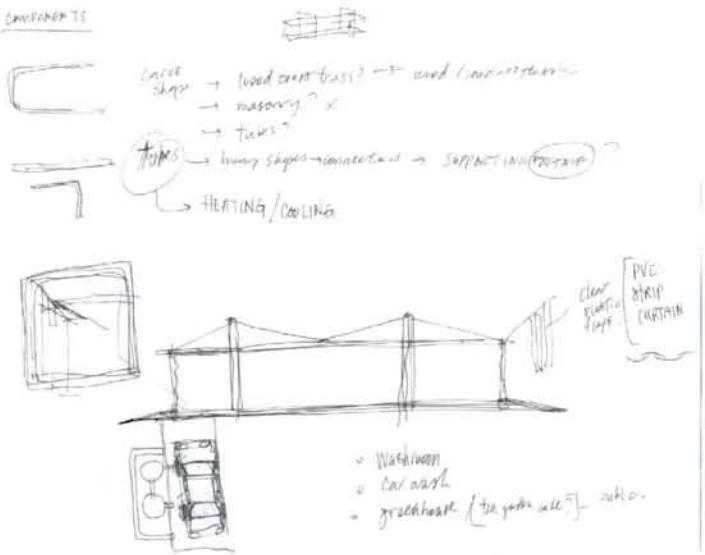


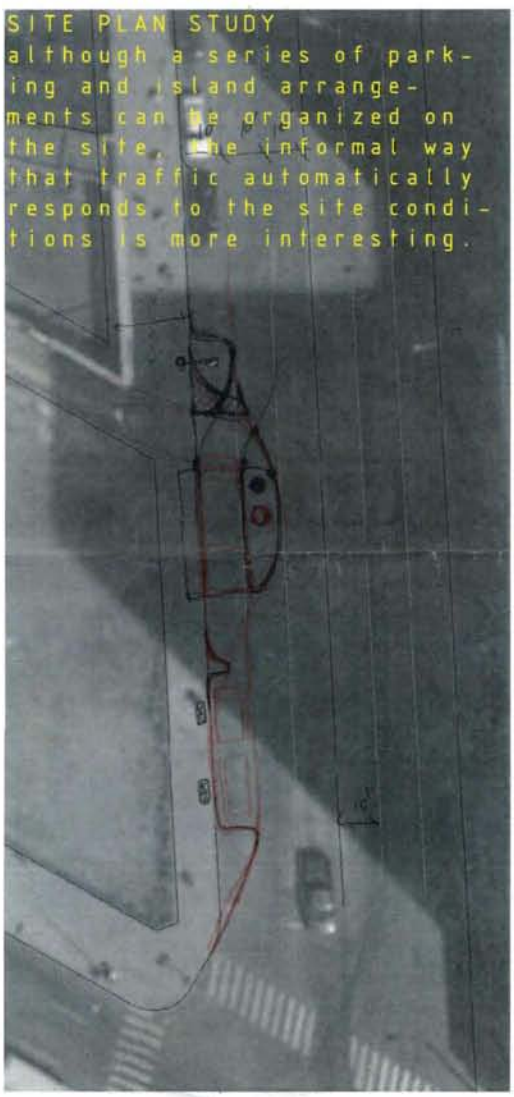


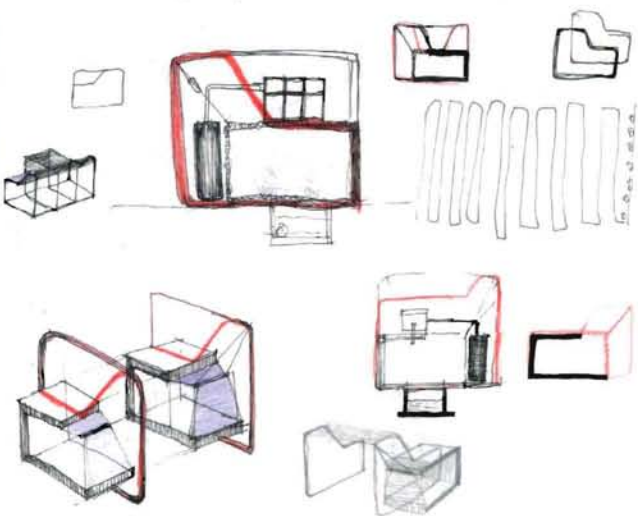


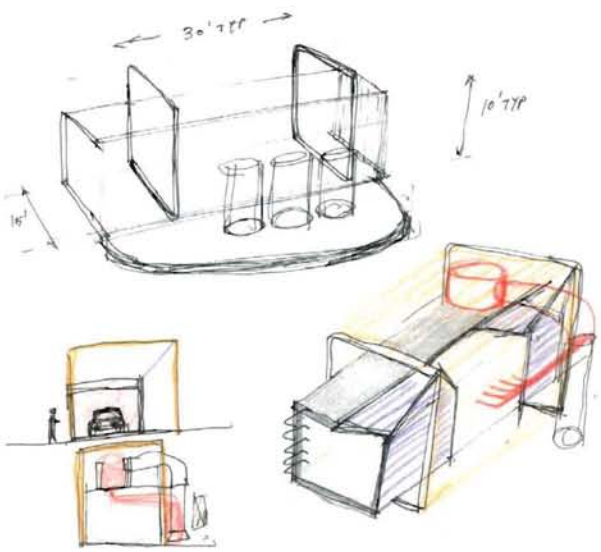
Griswold Car Wash Sketches



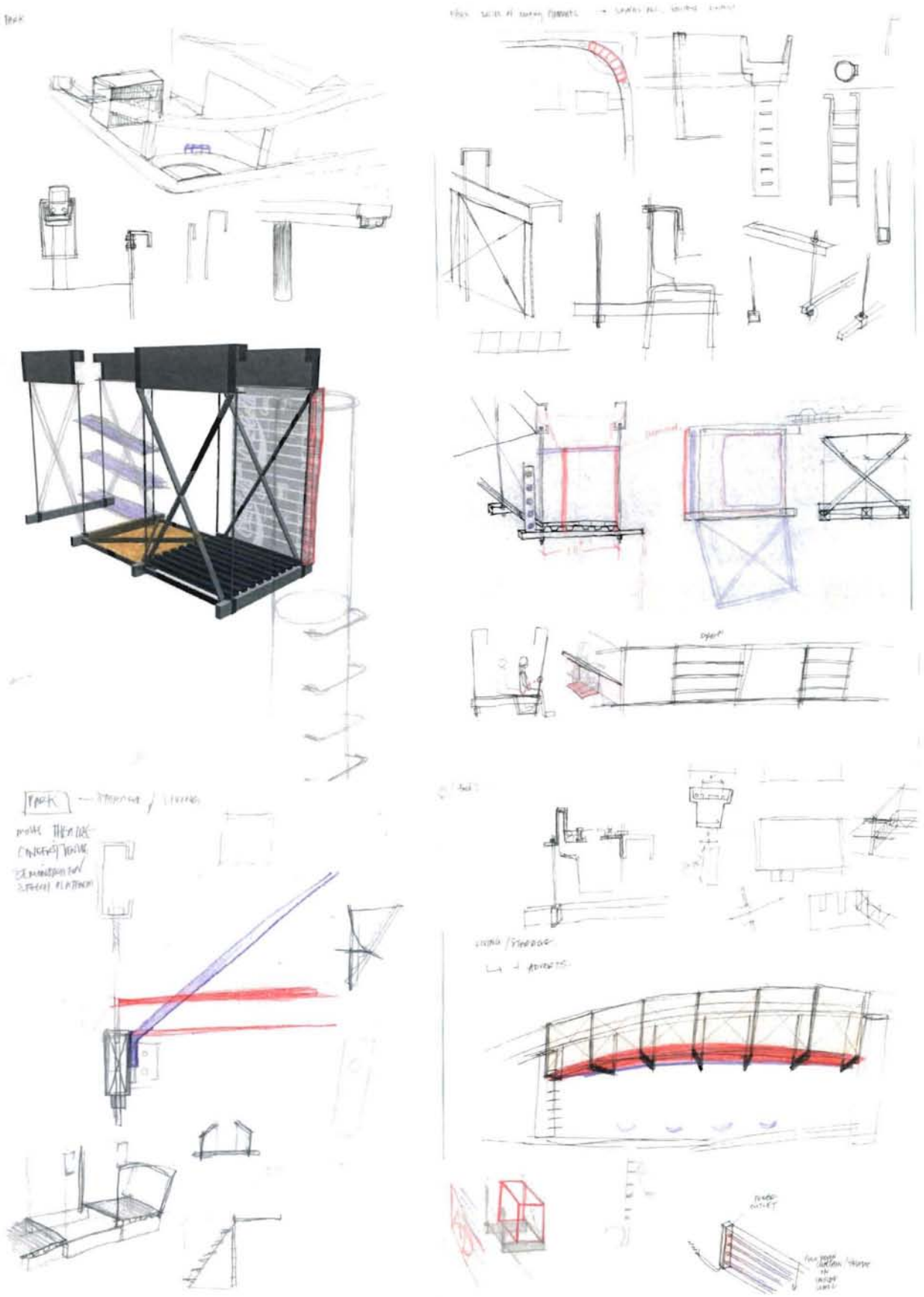




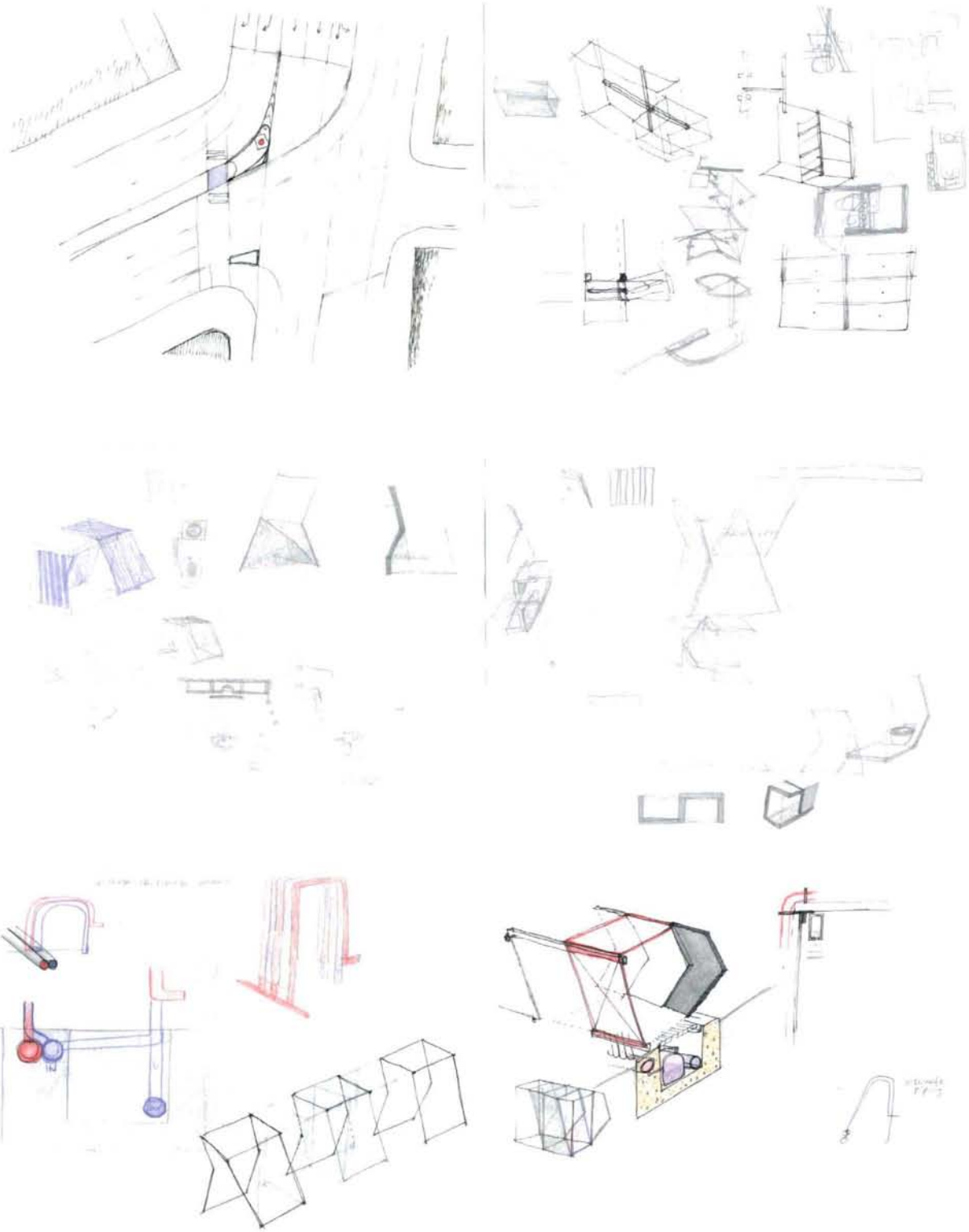


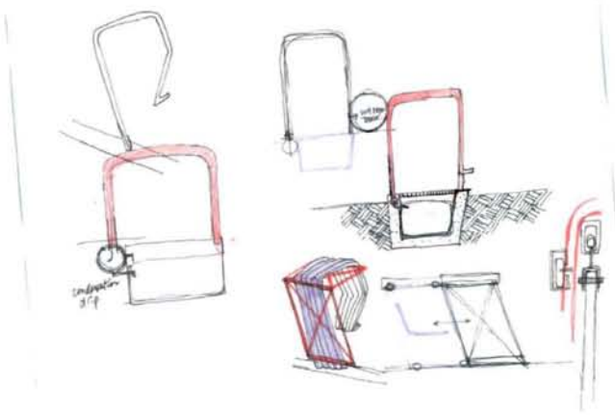


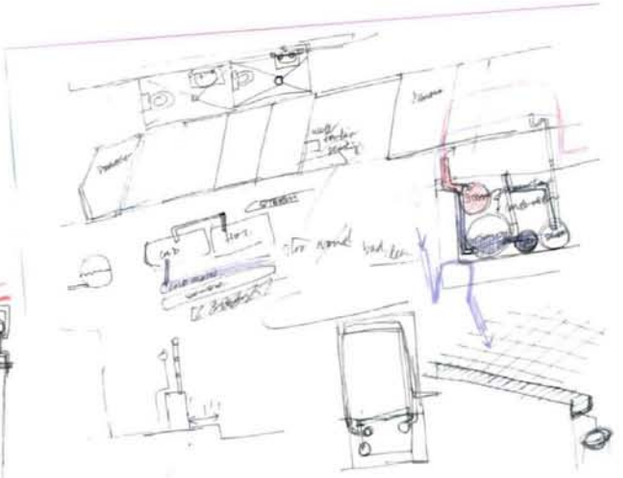
Garden Station Park Sketches

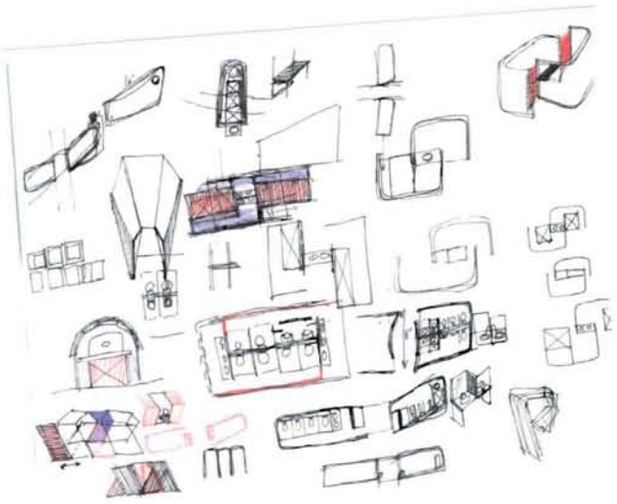


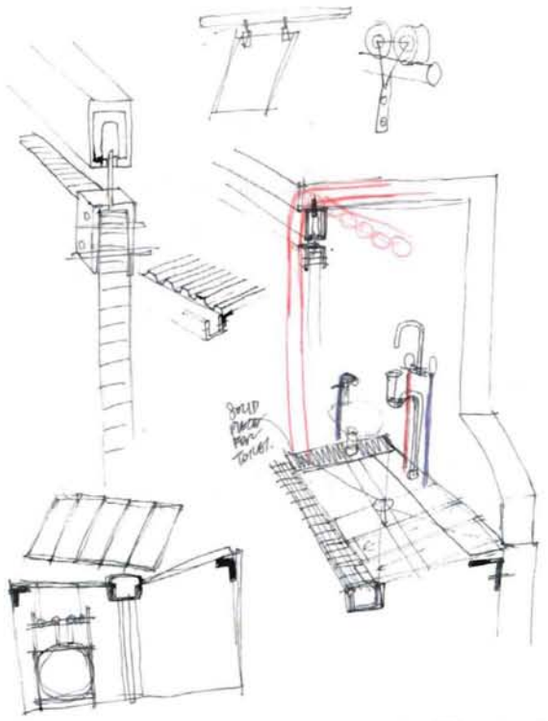
Garden Station Park Sketches

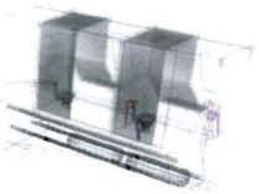


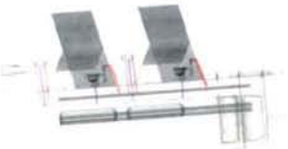










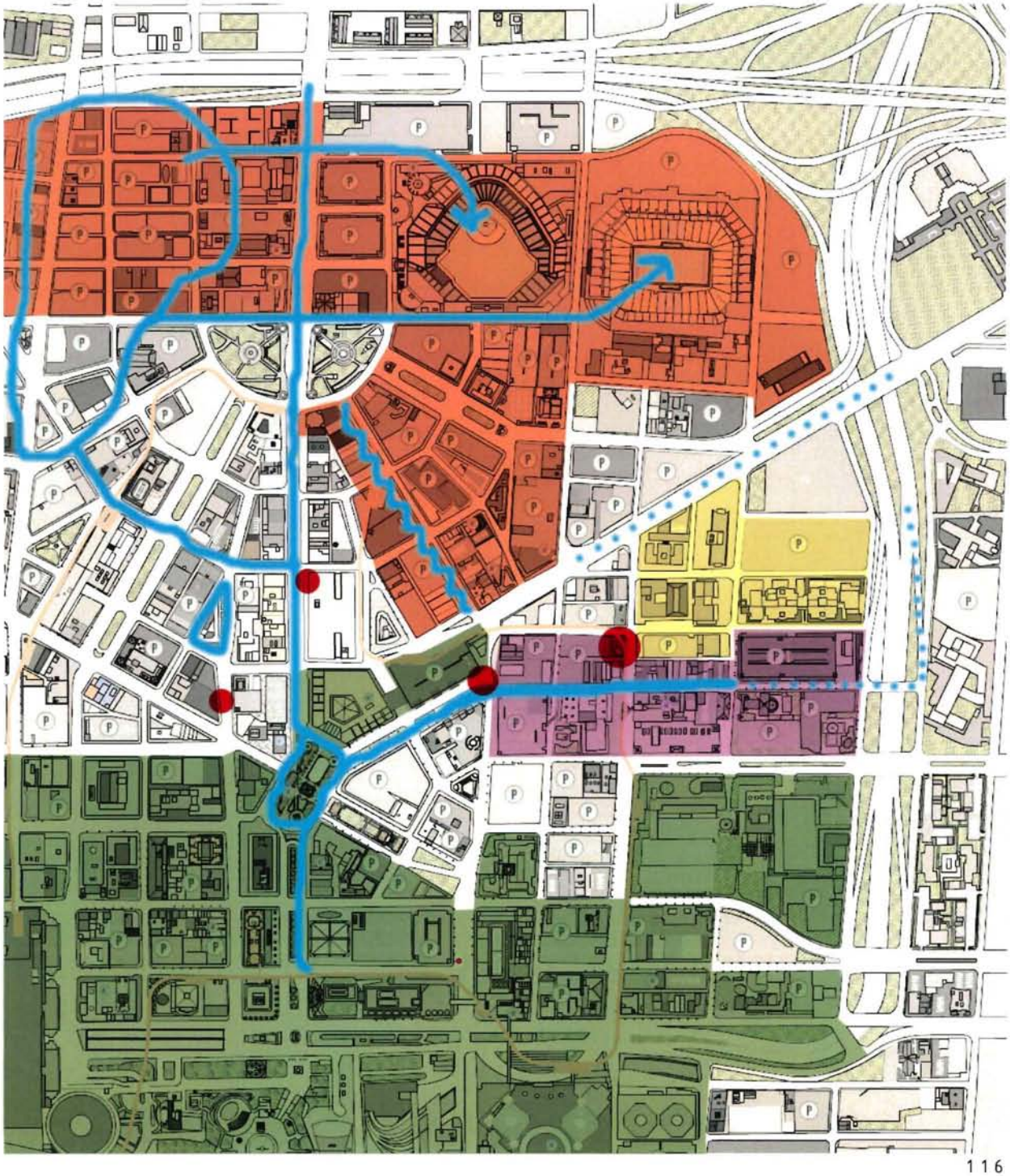


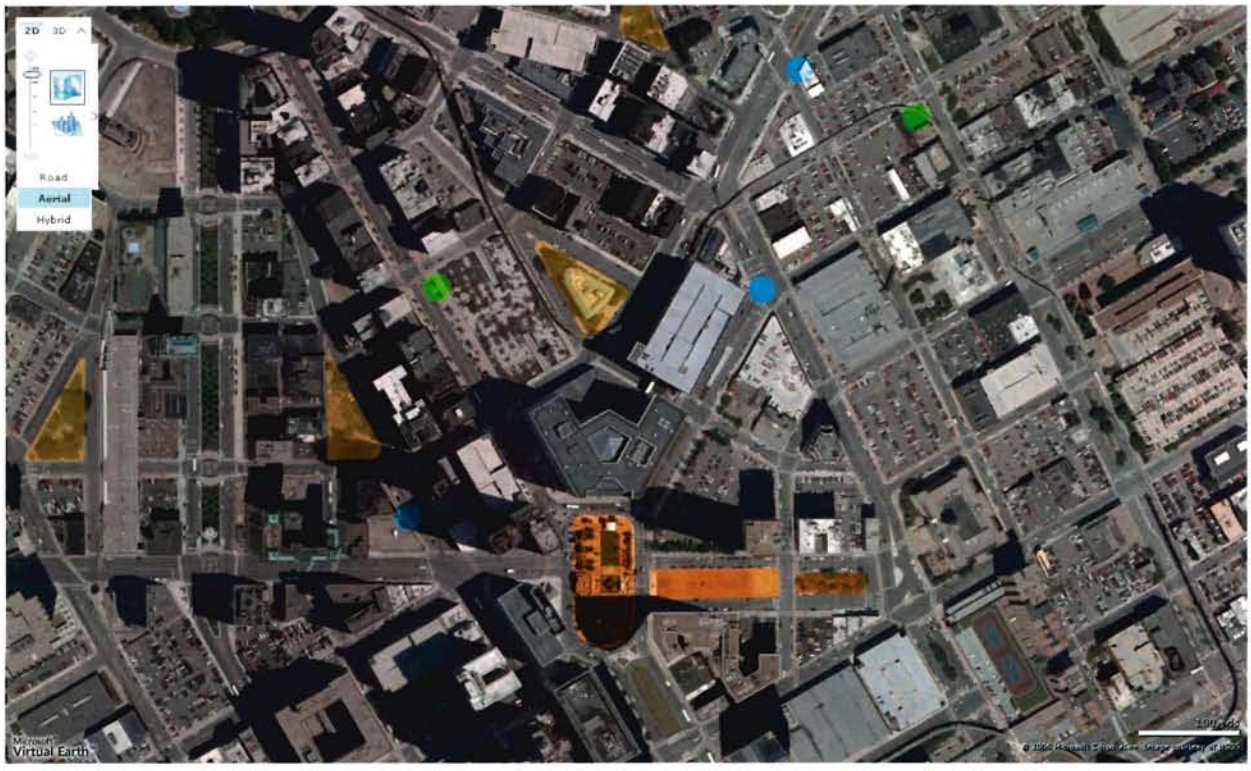
final project

Site Analysis

The city of Detroit is unique in the sets of challenges it brings. Downtown Detroit is in a state of re-building. As a part of this rebuilding, the identity of Detroit is reshaped and re-evaluated. Therefore, this idea of public space is really an ongoing issue in the development of Detroit - as throughout its history, its identity and who it intends to serve has shifted and changed. Much of the development of Detroit is related to economy and what can make money. Obviously, the financial purpose of development is forefront in the decision making process. However, people follow money and once there are people involved, they begin to appropriate and claim space as their own. Much of the downtown core to the south is occupied and controlled. There is not much public space here - and that is fine, because the purpose is clearly defined there. If we look to the north and the more recent entertainment developments, we realize that here too, there is not a lot of public space. The majority of this space is designated as parking for the various sporting and theatre venues and then also the restaurants and bars that service the crowds that come down for these events and then leave after they are done. Again, these spaces are quite controlled for specific purposes, which when broken down are all related to the creation of capital - and this is fine, because this is what America was built upon. In the space between the northern entertainment area and the southern financial core, there is a sort of buffer zone between the two. Here, the are a lot of still vacant and abandoned properties, but also a variety and mix of other uses. Transportation hubs, small retail, small businesses, small independent restaurants, bars, etc. It is here that there is a rich mix of what is private but also what is public - library, harmonie park, the pseudo-public campus martius, bus stops, all spaces that are gathering points where different people are allowed to mix and interact (somewhat freely). The project focuses on the following 4 sites as sites of interest: Griswold (steam pipe), Woodward (bus stop), Randolph and Monroe (steam), and garden station park (small park).

the downtown area can be separated by a few major distinctive areas. the orange represents a night-time crowd for entertainment and restaurants. the green represents the day-time financial business operations. the purple represents the greektown area and the yellow is the courthouse and police headquarters. the selection of sites exists in the areas in between these different areas.

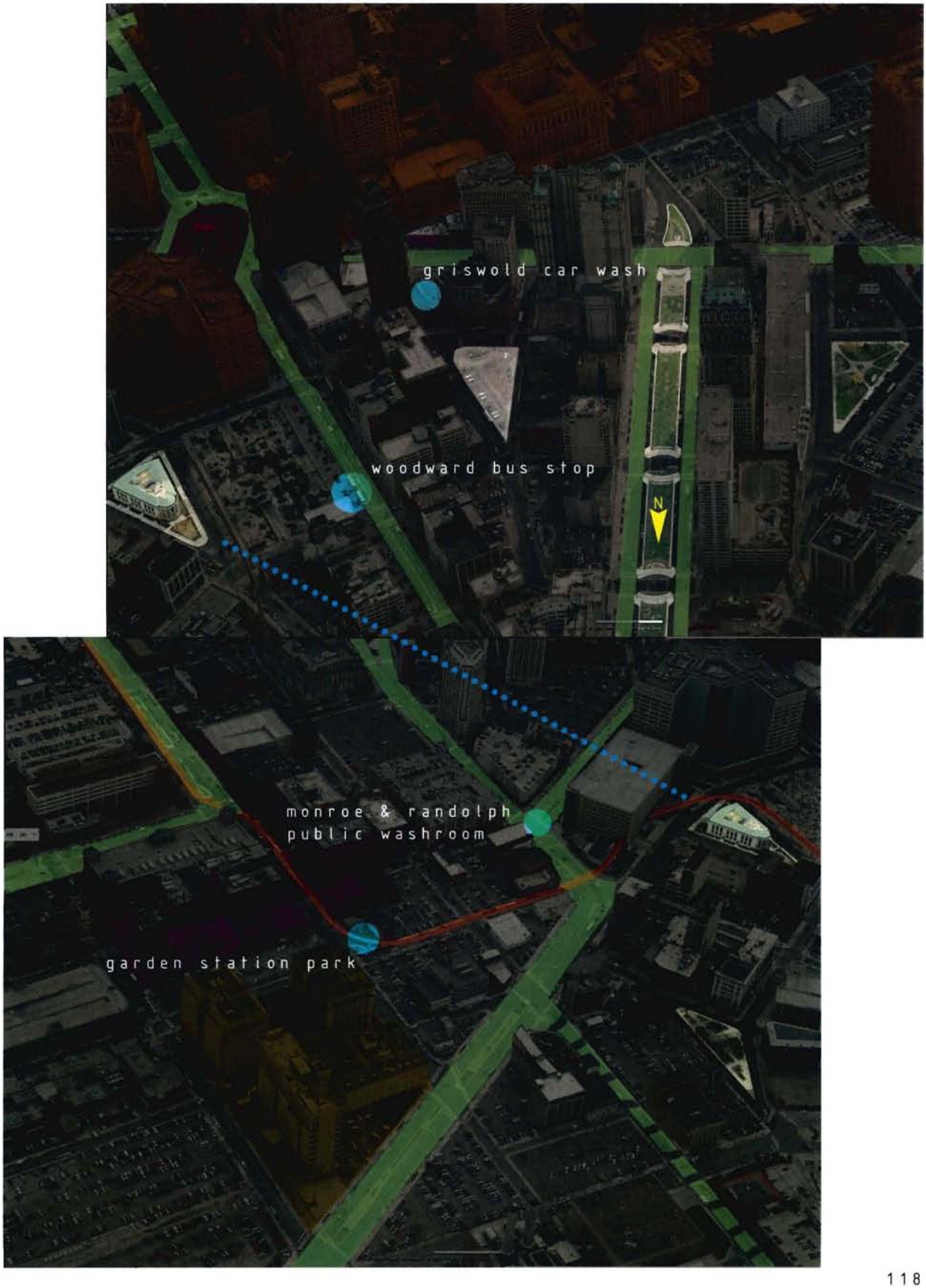




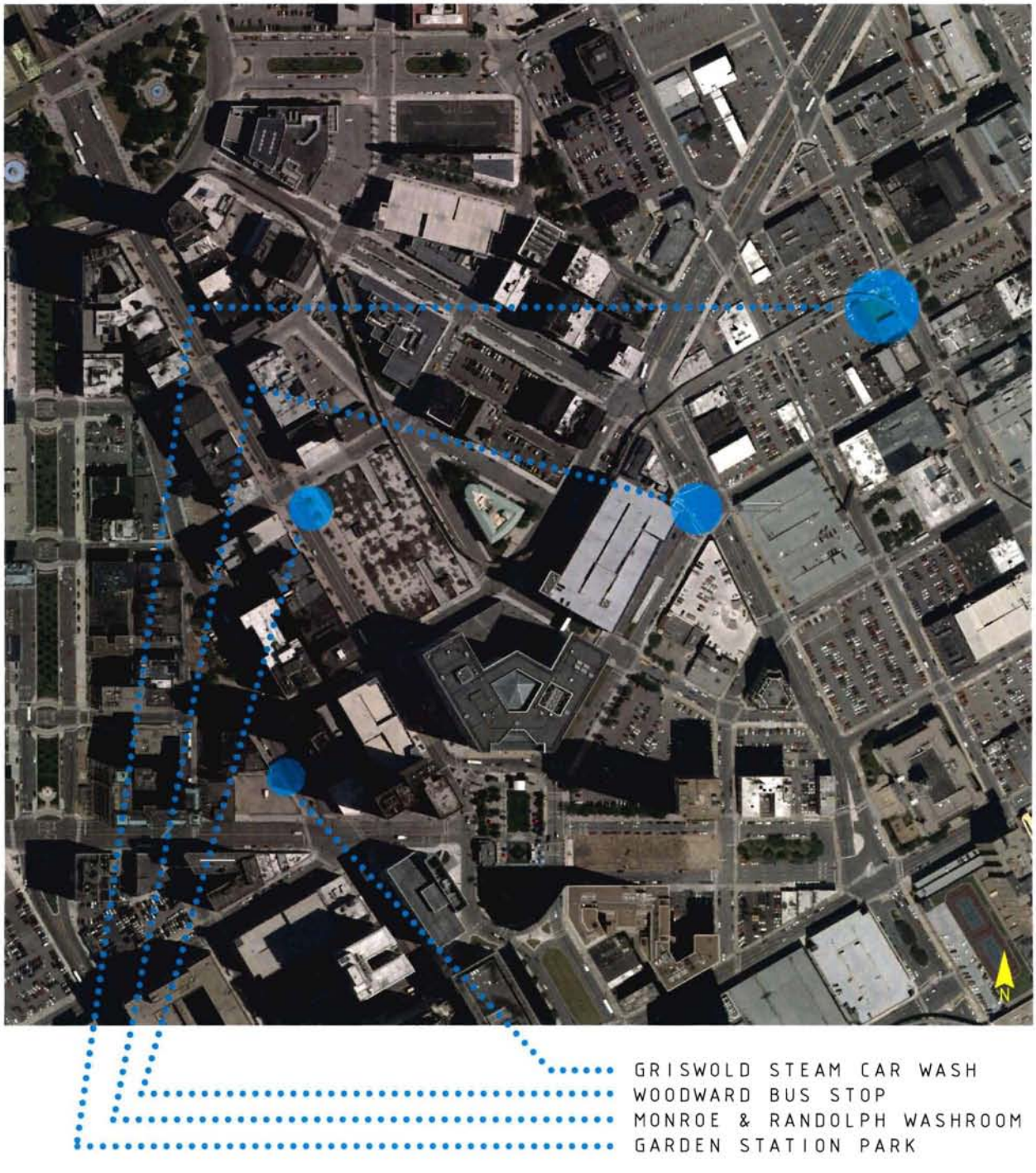
the areas in between the major activity areas already have some public spaces such as the rosa parks transporation hub, capitol park, the library, and harmonie park (all in yellow). the semi-public campus martius lies to the south in orange.

pink represents some of the surface parking lots in the area.

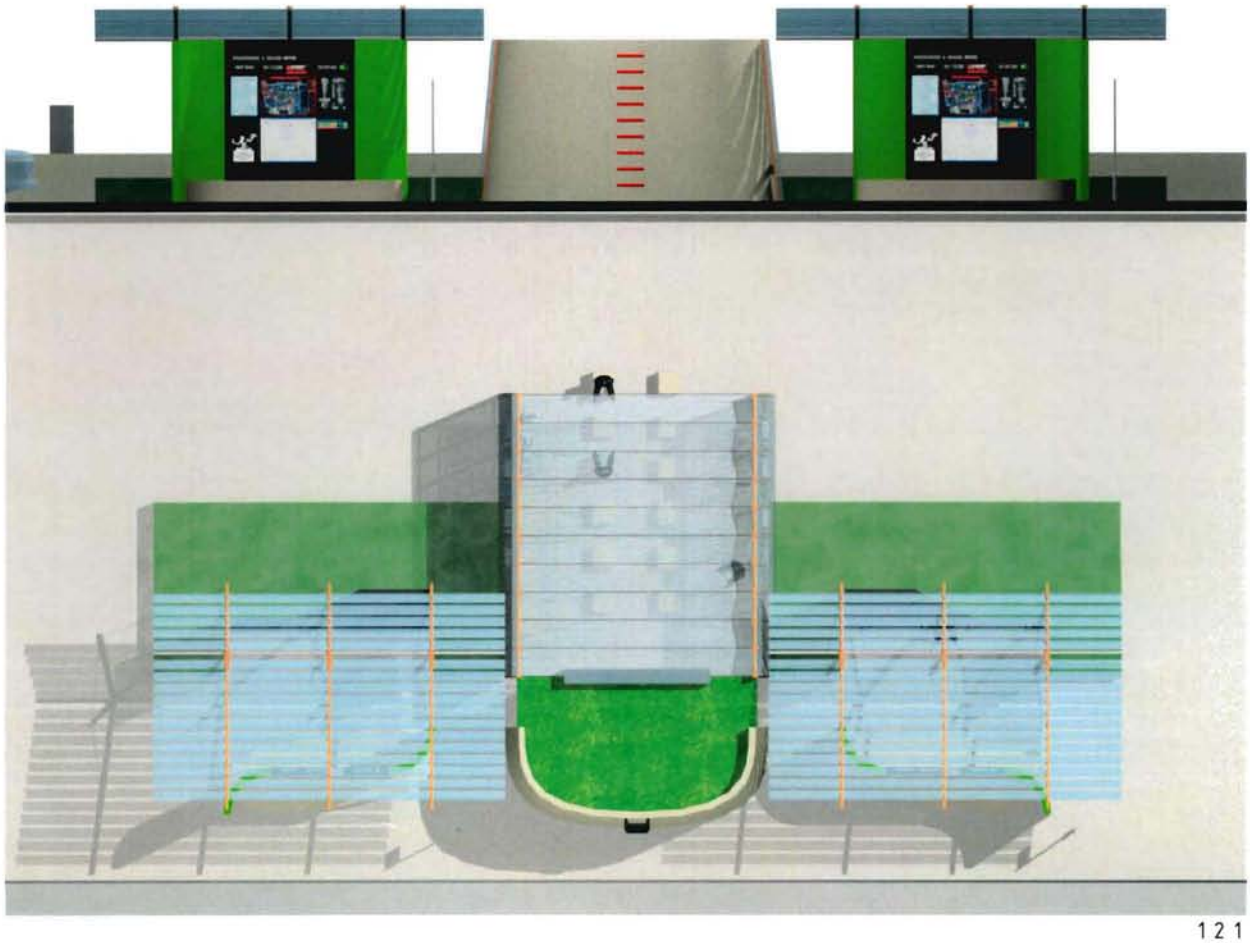
Site Selection

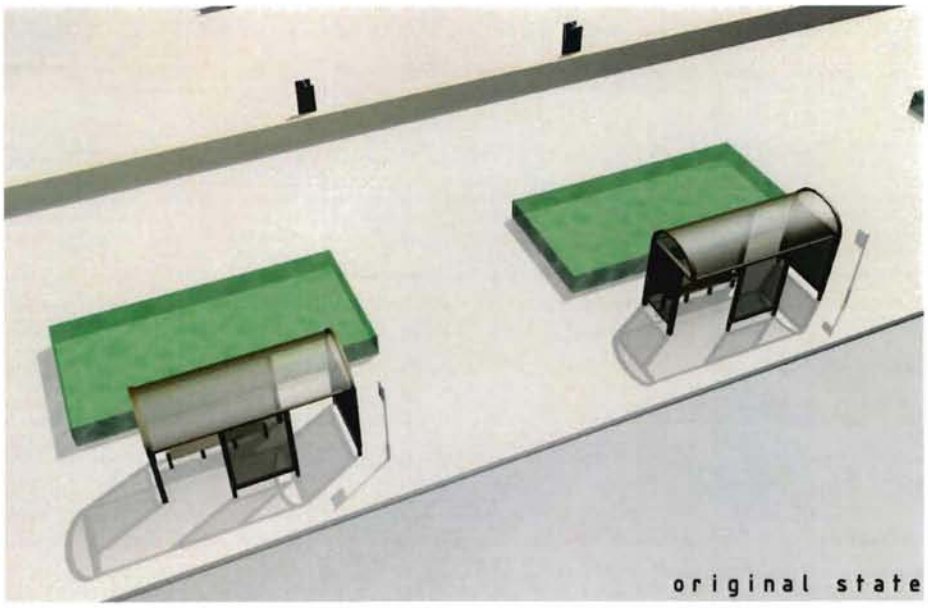


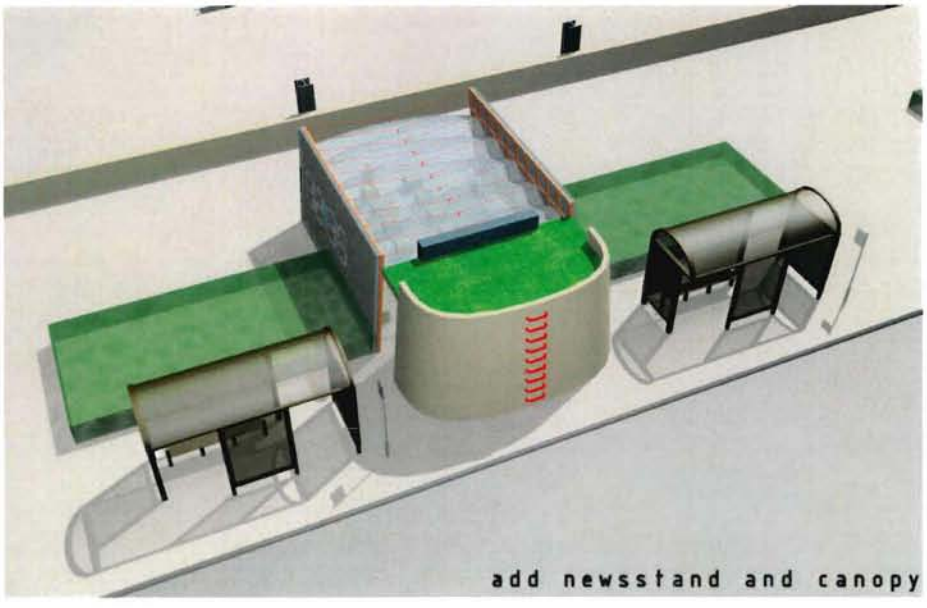
Site Selection



Woodward & Grand River Bus Stop



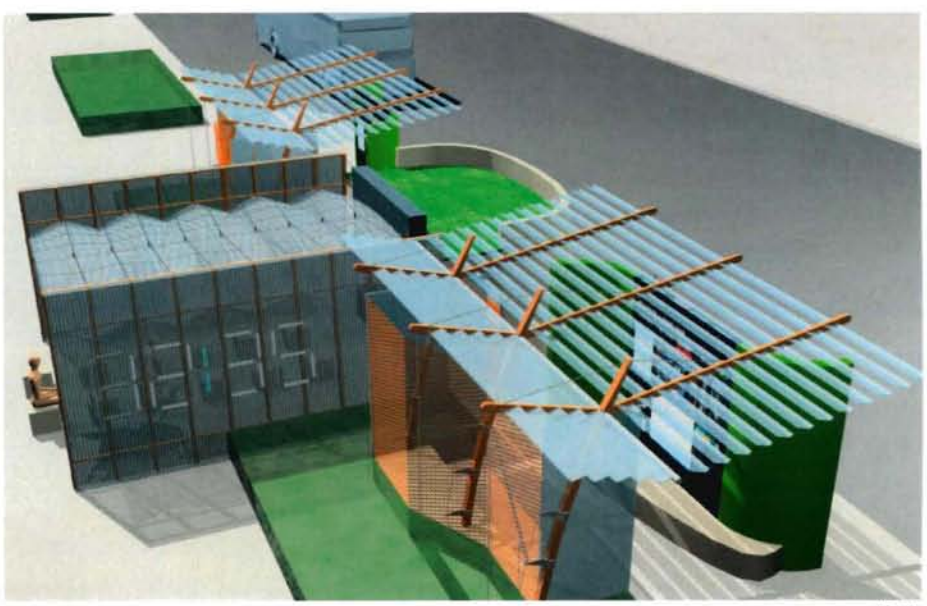

original state

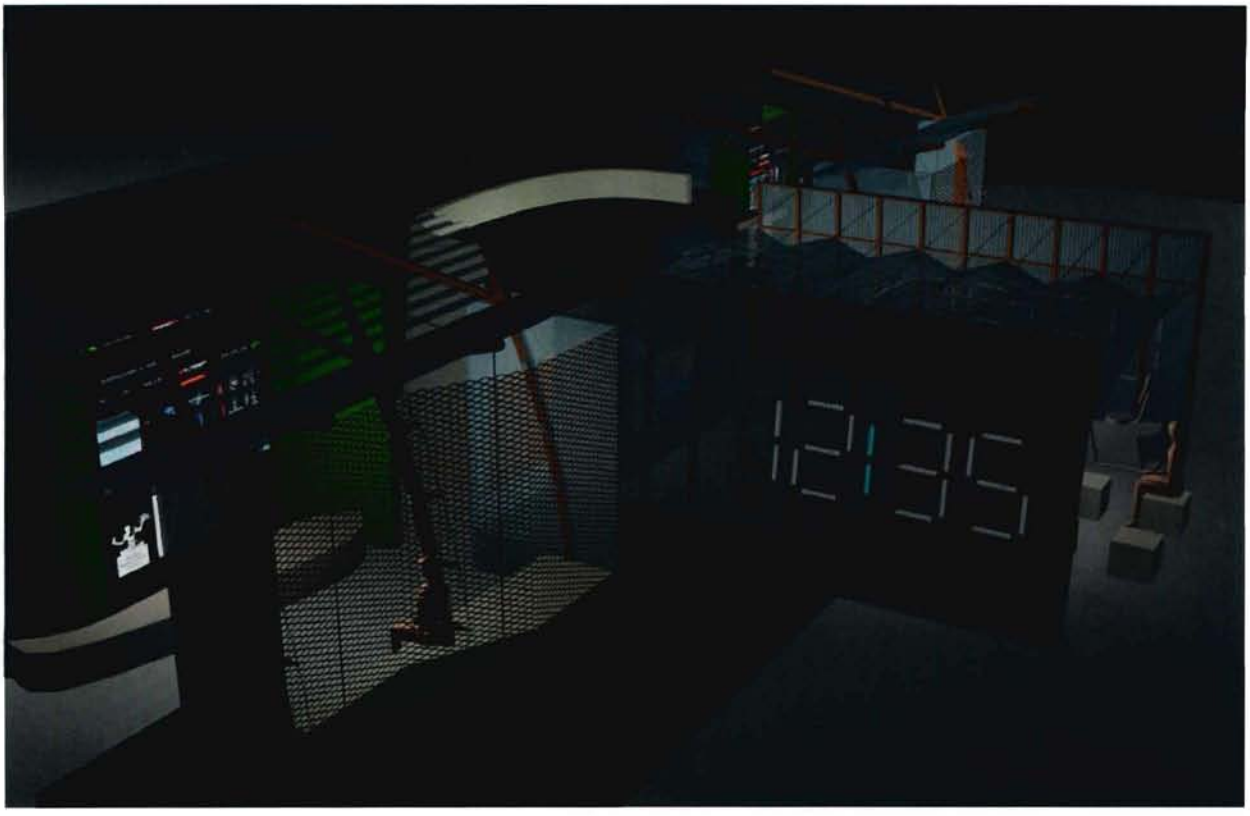

add newsstand and canopy

add new bus shelters

WOODWARD & GRAND RIVER

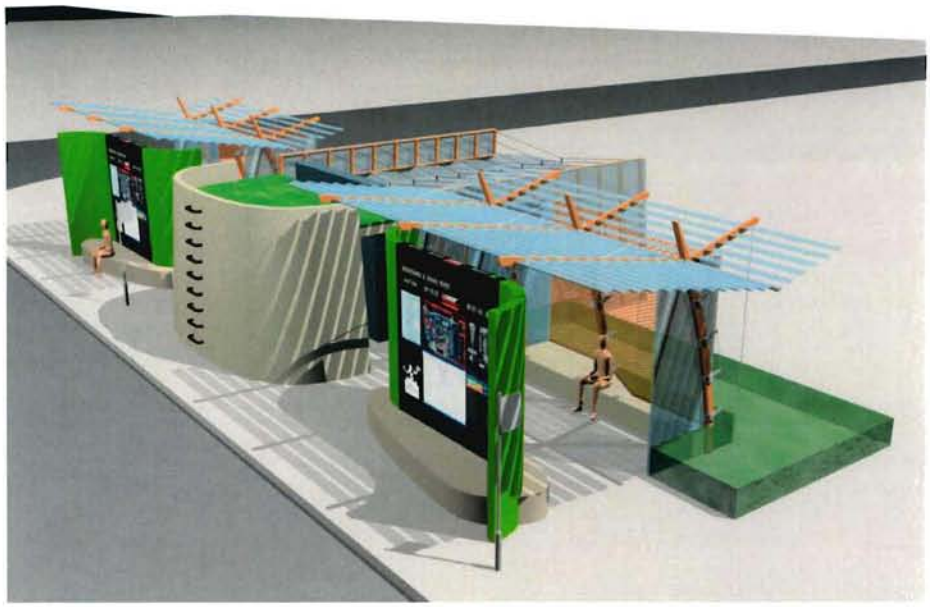
new interface:
interactive schedule
maps
internet
wall postings
WOODWARD & GRAND RIVER
00:07:43

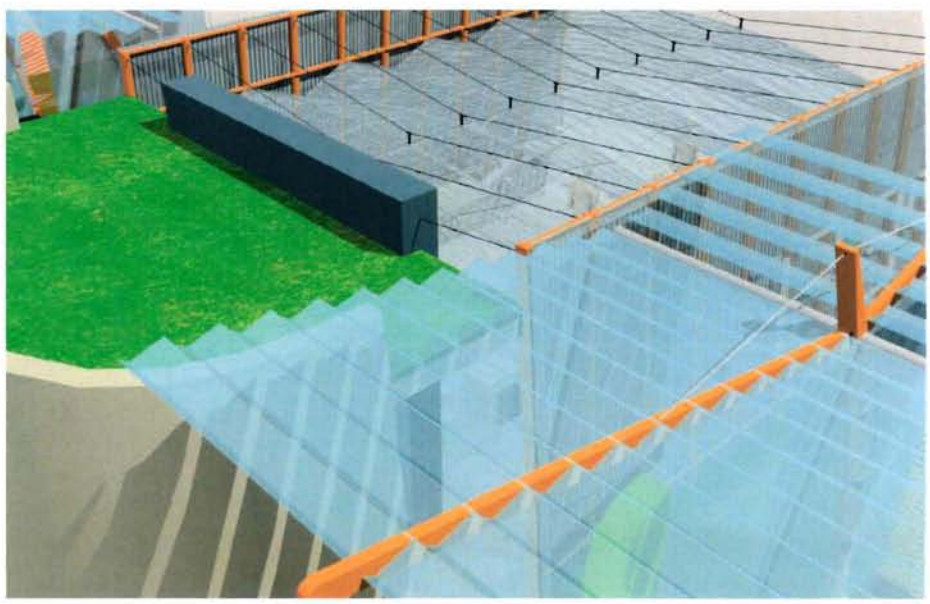


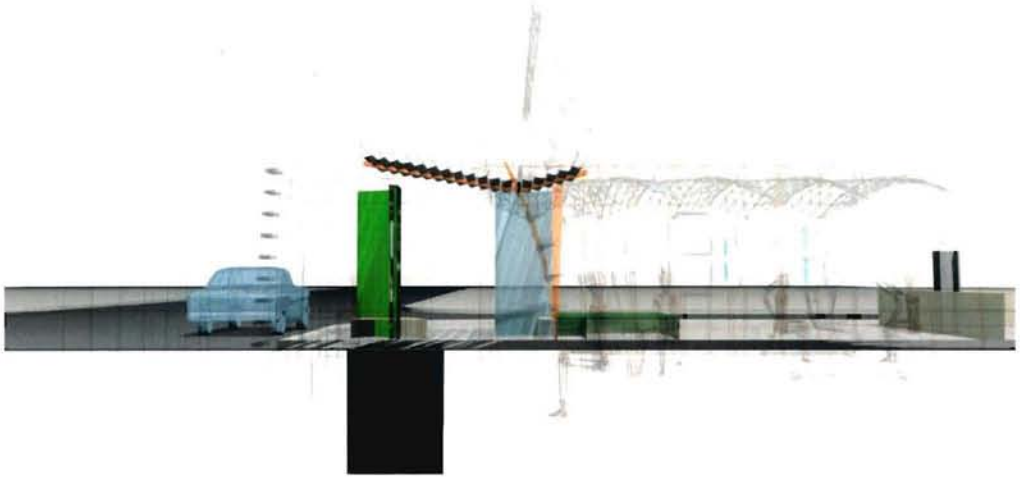


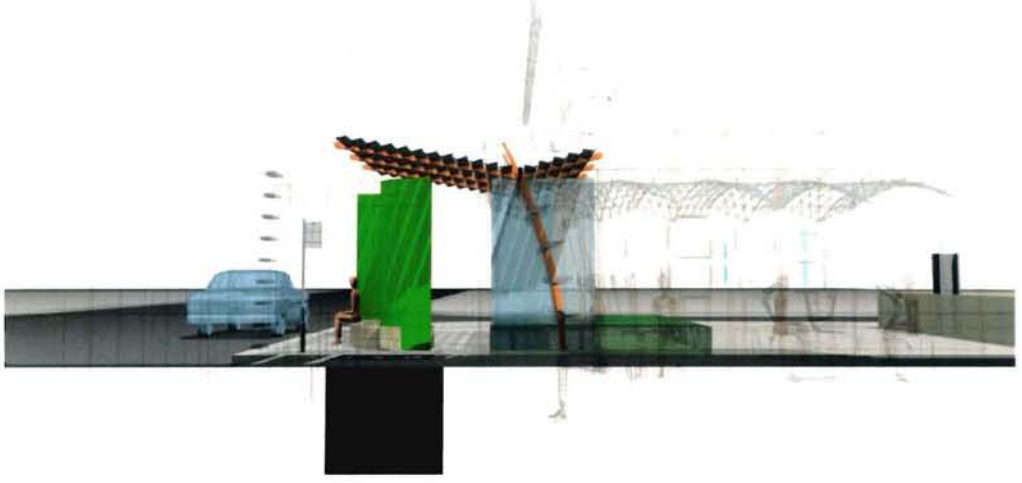
waiting area tv screen newsstand

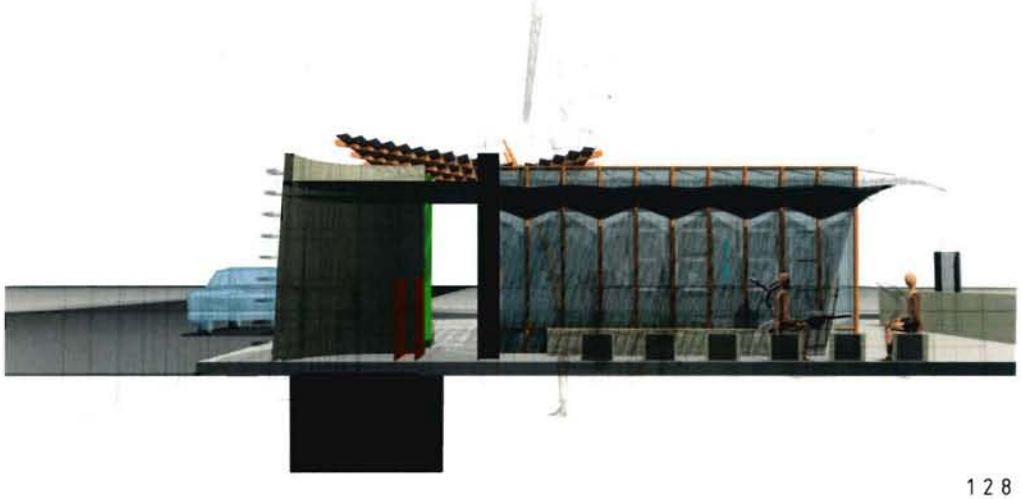
modified exercise bike generates electricity which is stored in batteries that also are the seats to the waiting area. the power is used for the lighting, television, wi-fi internet access, and general plugs.

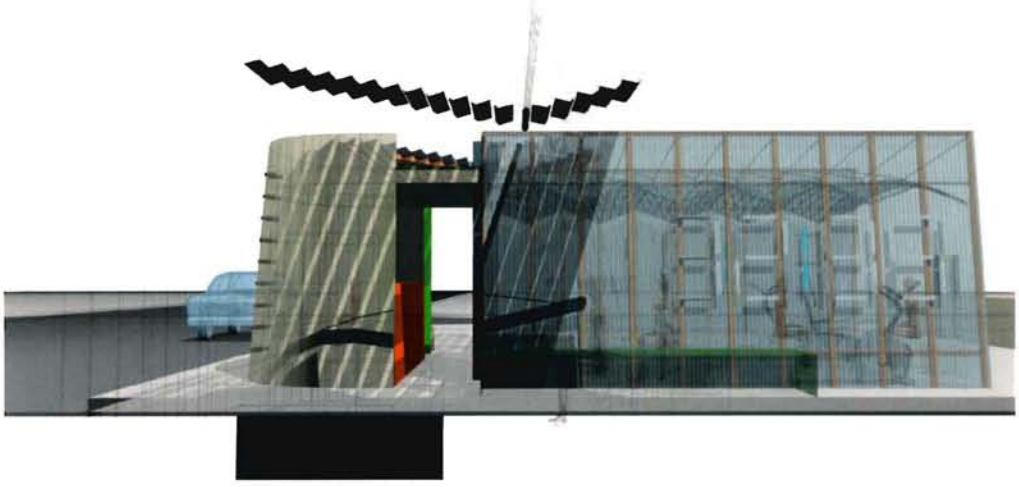


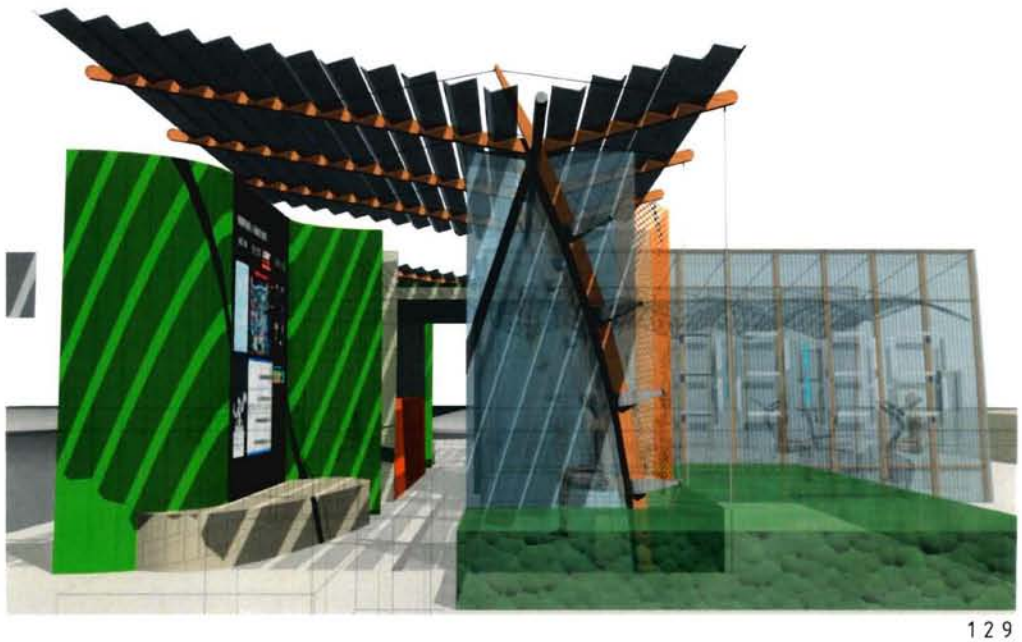




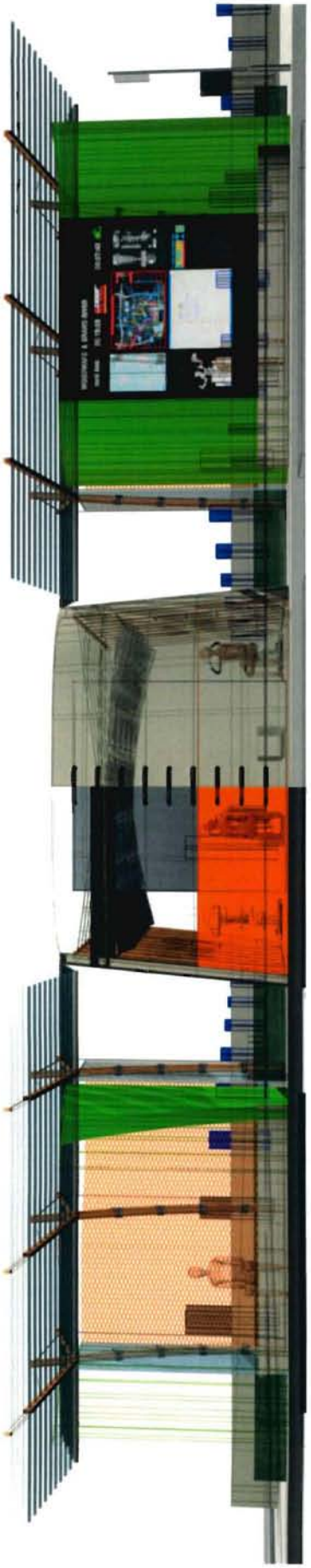




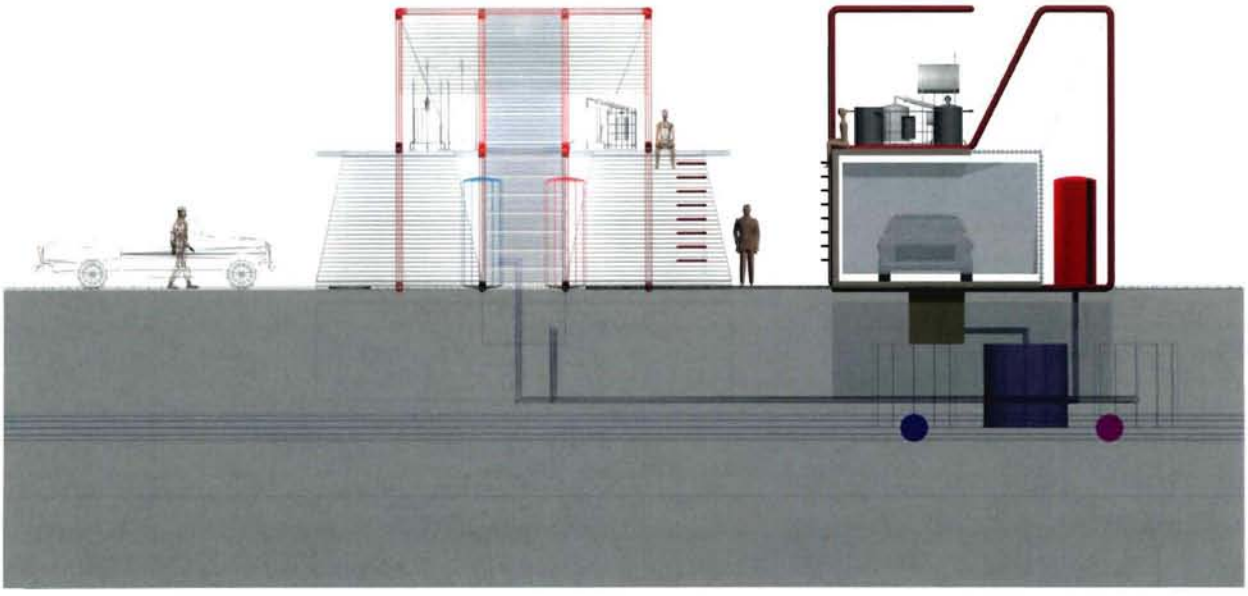


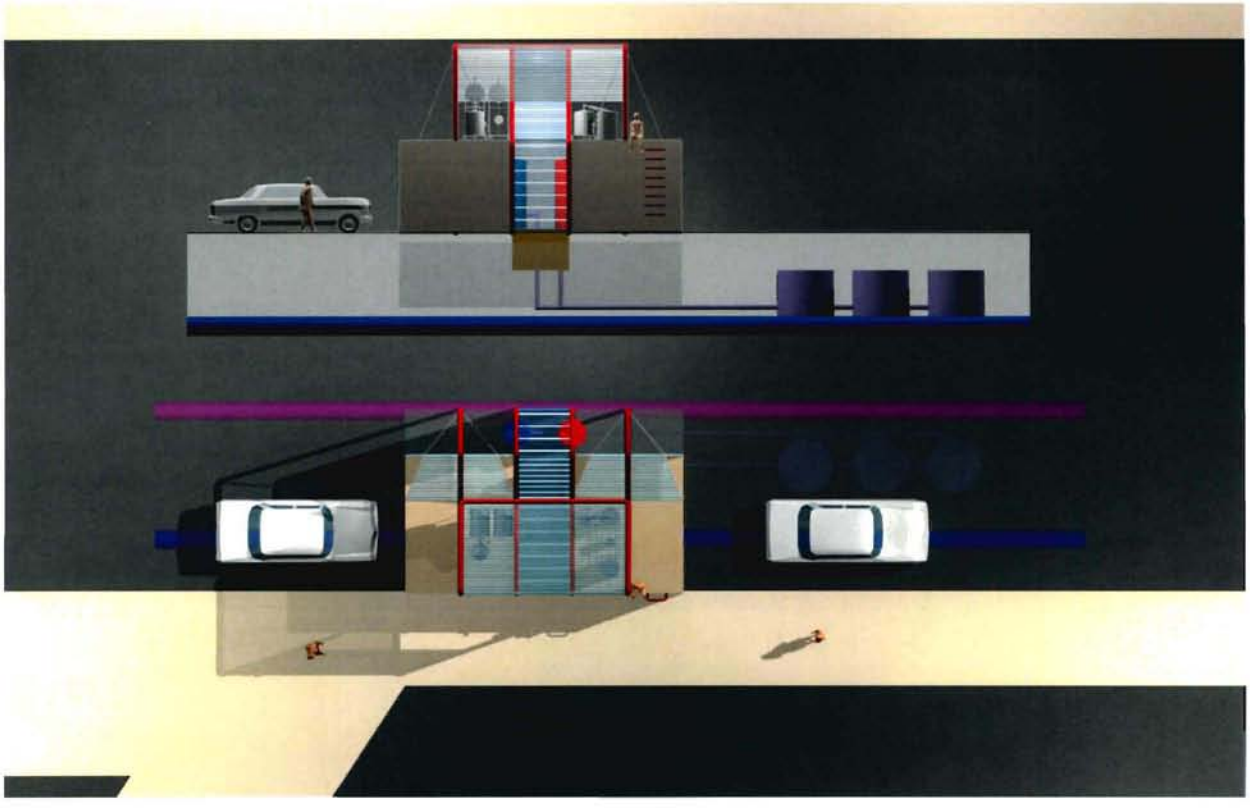


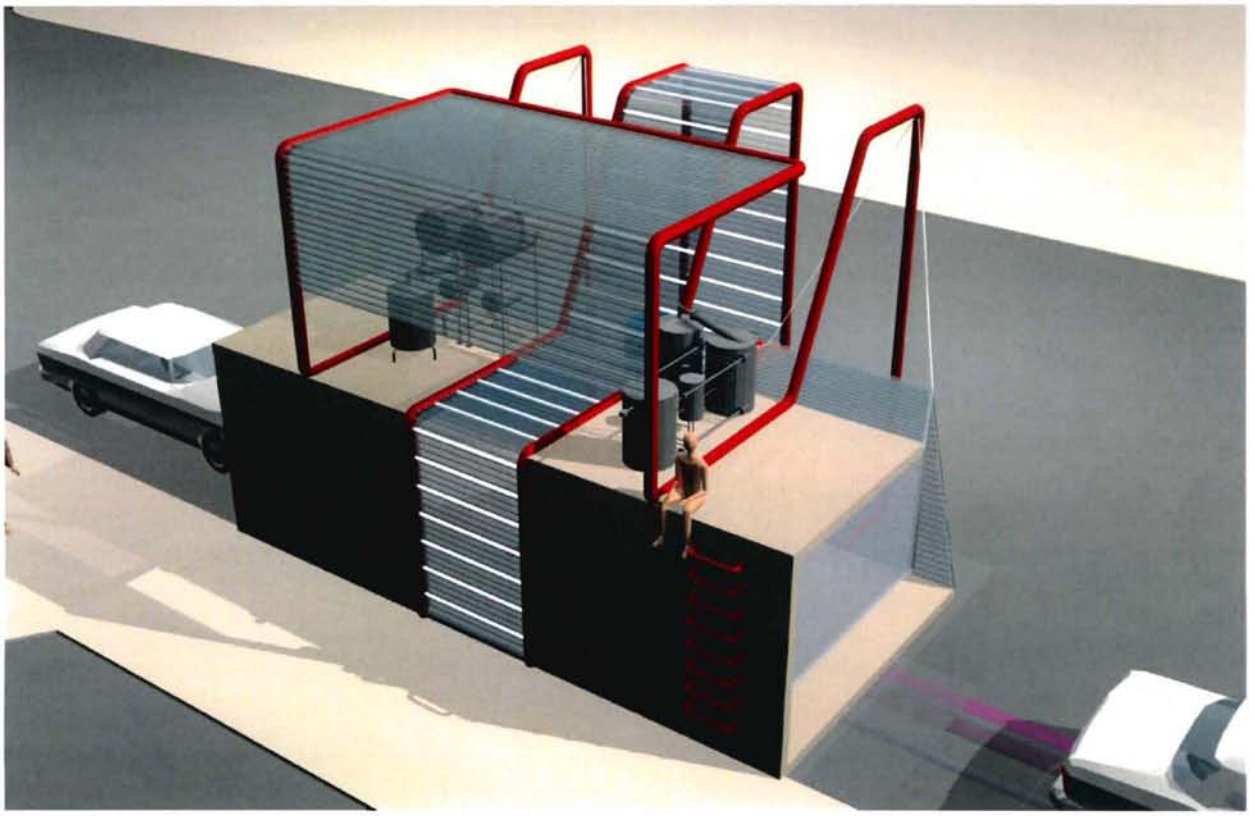
People wait for the bus here. Why not make it more pleasant while they wait? The proposal idea is to put in a newsstand between the existing bus shelters. Then putting a TV screen as well for the people waiting for the bus to stay informed. Access to information is the beginning to knowledge - and since "knowledge is power", at least that's what it's supposed to be... It's about beginnings and opportunities. In a way, the TV is quite a dangerous installation; just as information is quite dangerous when it exposes a lie, for example. There will also be benches and seating in front of the big screen TV. The existing bus shelters will be upgraded to include wi-fi access and information screens that allows connection to the basic internet and also acts as a message board for the community - a side board will allow for physical postings. In order to power all of this, there will be a pedal crank system in place that will generate electricity which will store into batteries which are a part of the benches that are in front of the TV. It's like an exercise bike connected to an electro magnet dynamo. The technology exists, but perhaps it is not in place because if people realize how easy it is to generate some electricity, the electric companies may be in trouble. But they won't, because people are usually too lazy to get on the bike and pedal for 10 minutes, but they will if it can get them a half hour of television or internet. This self-reliance and self-empowerment (literally) gives this gathering area an edge of public interaction that brings fresh identity to downtown Detroit.

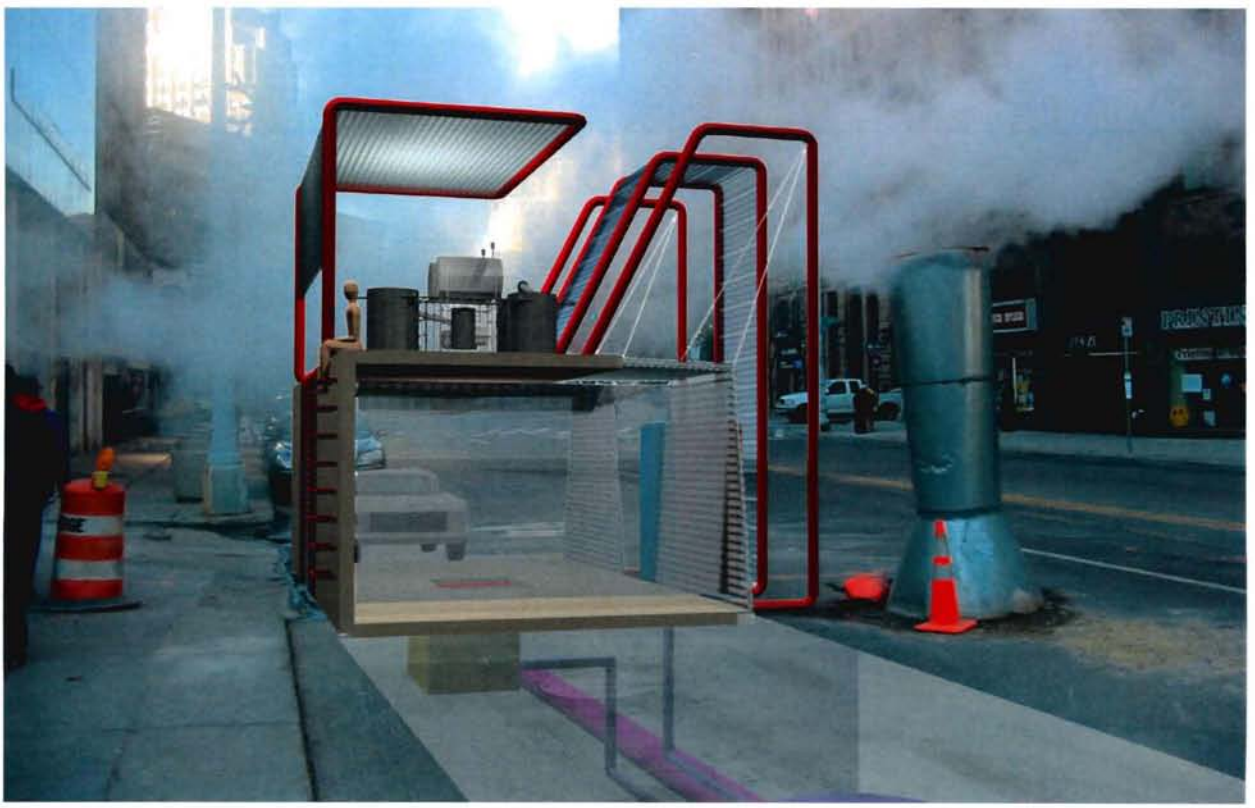


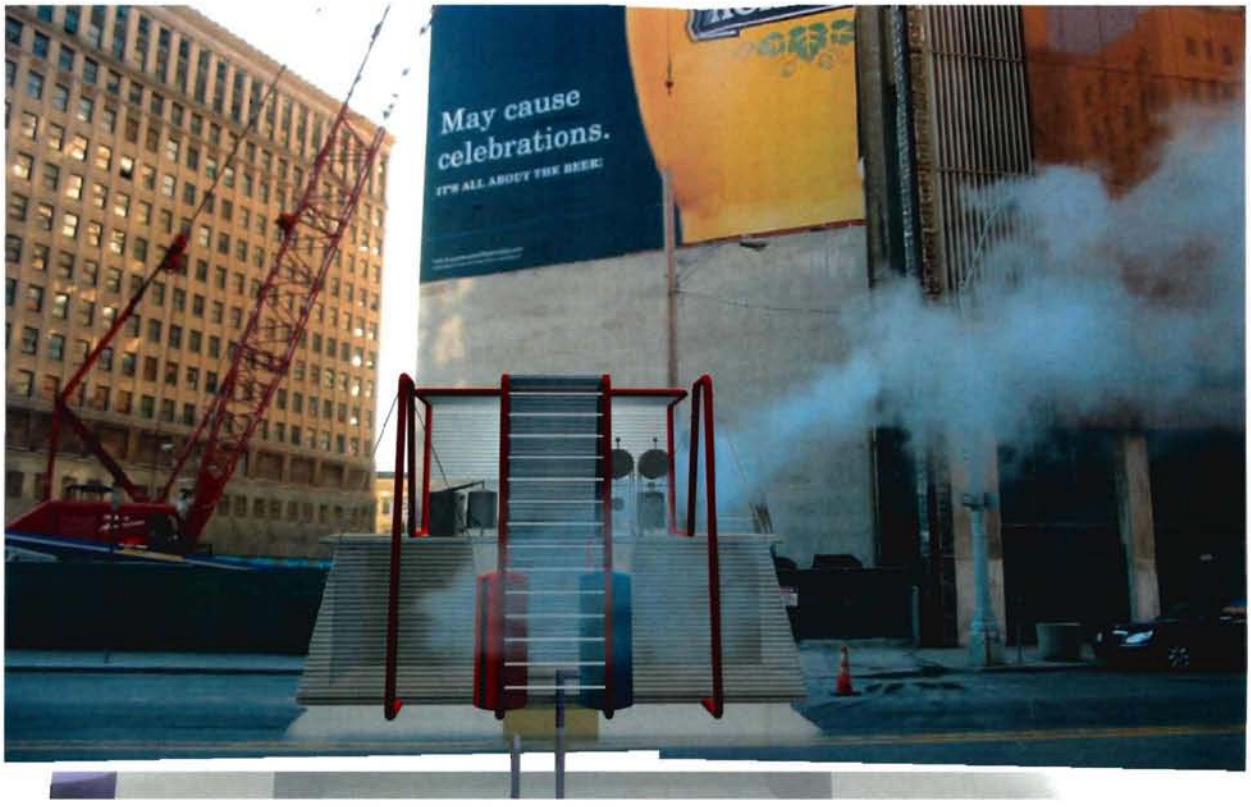
Griswold Steam Car Wash

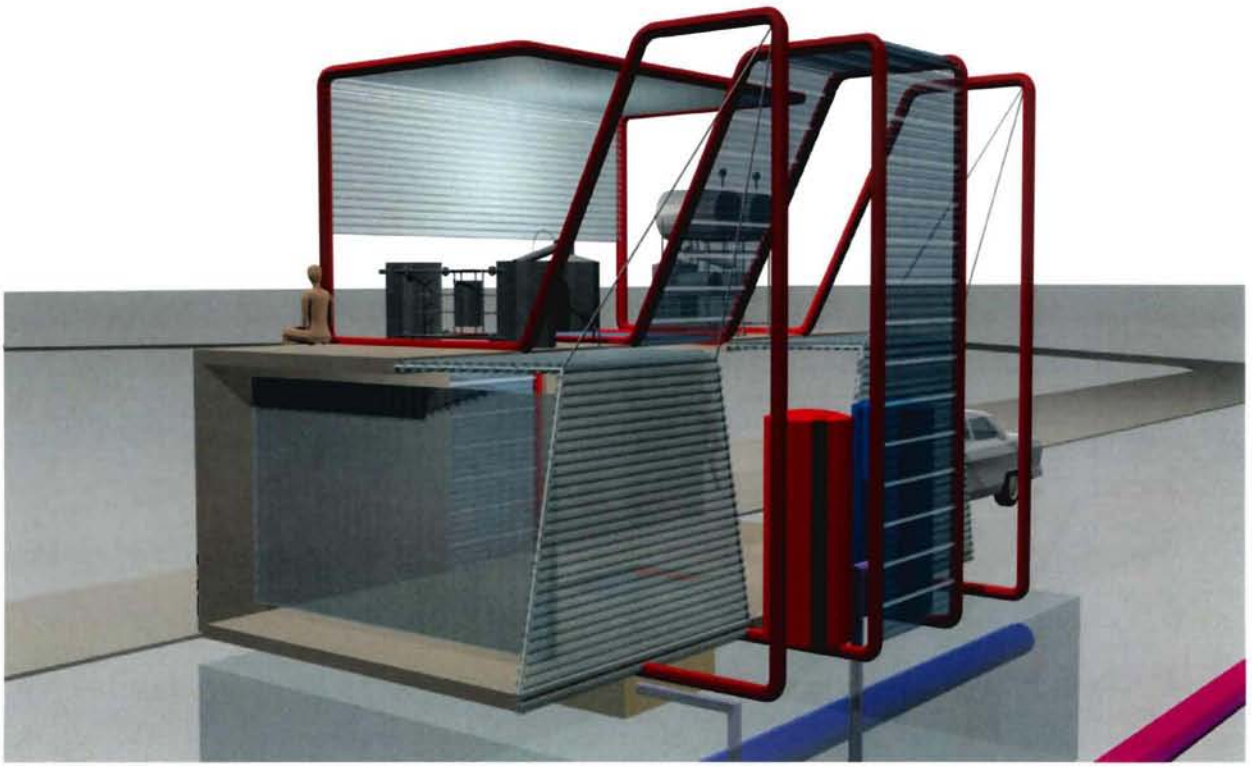




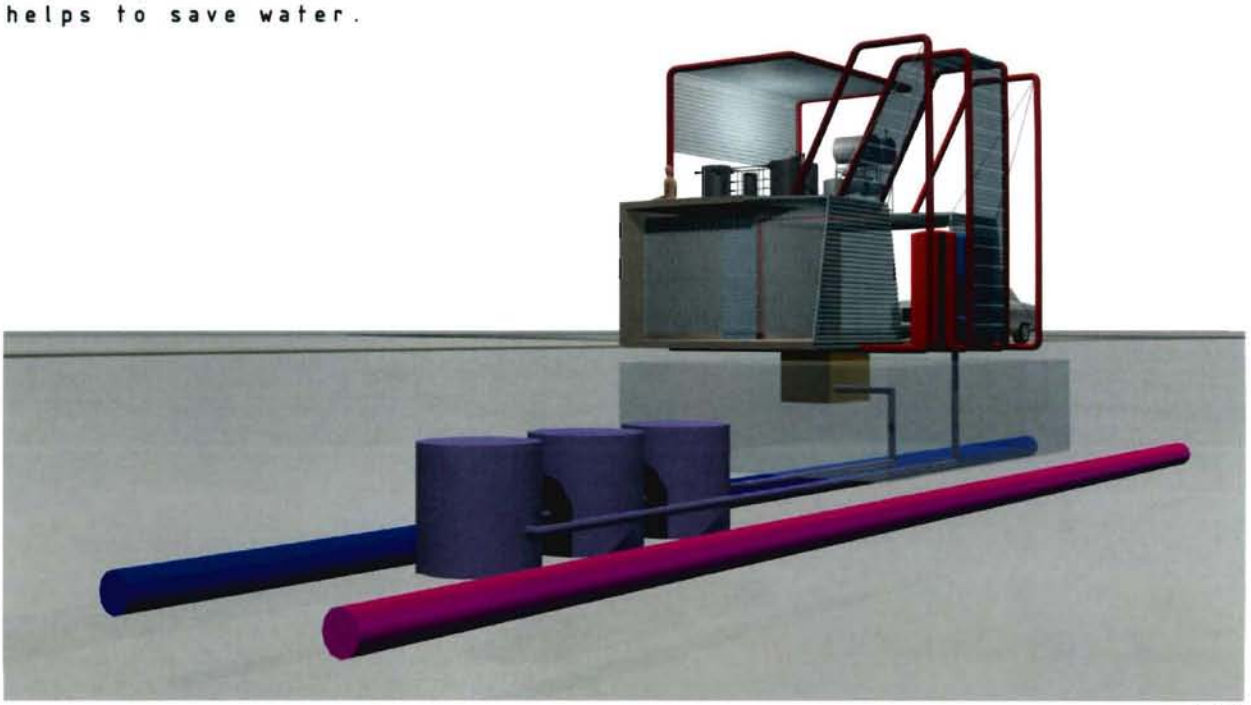


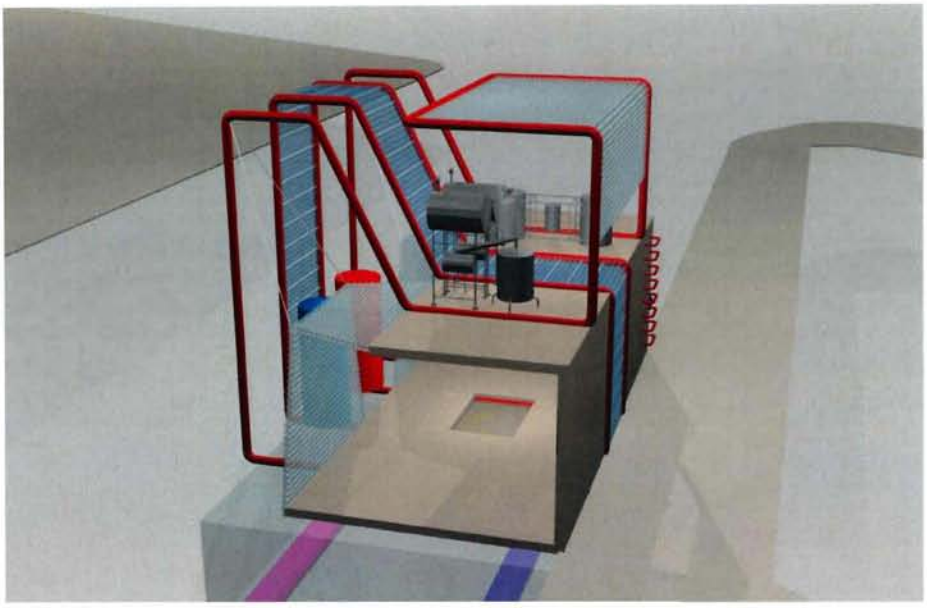


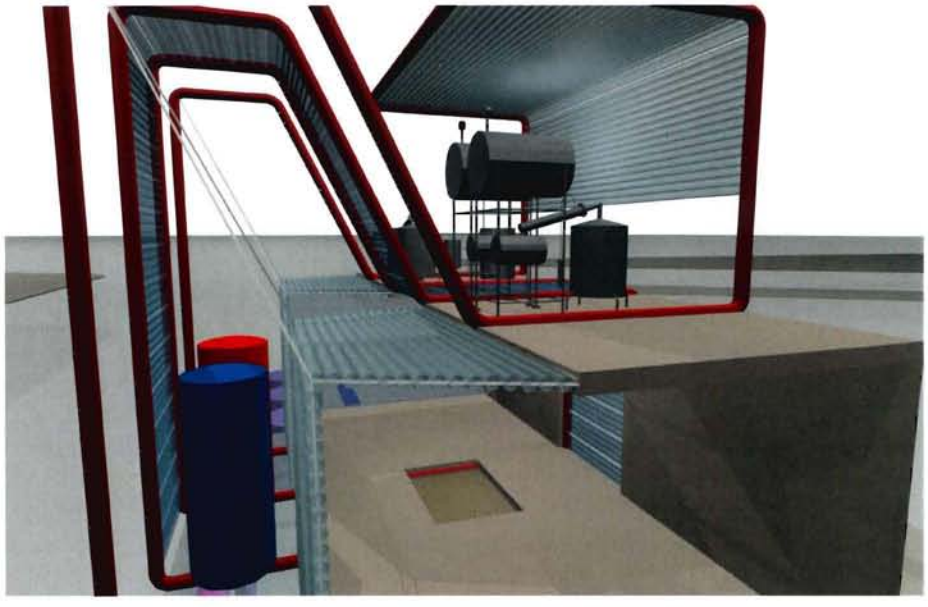

May cause
celebrations.
IT'S ALL ABOUT THE BEER.

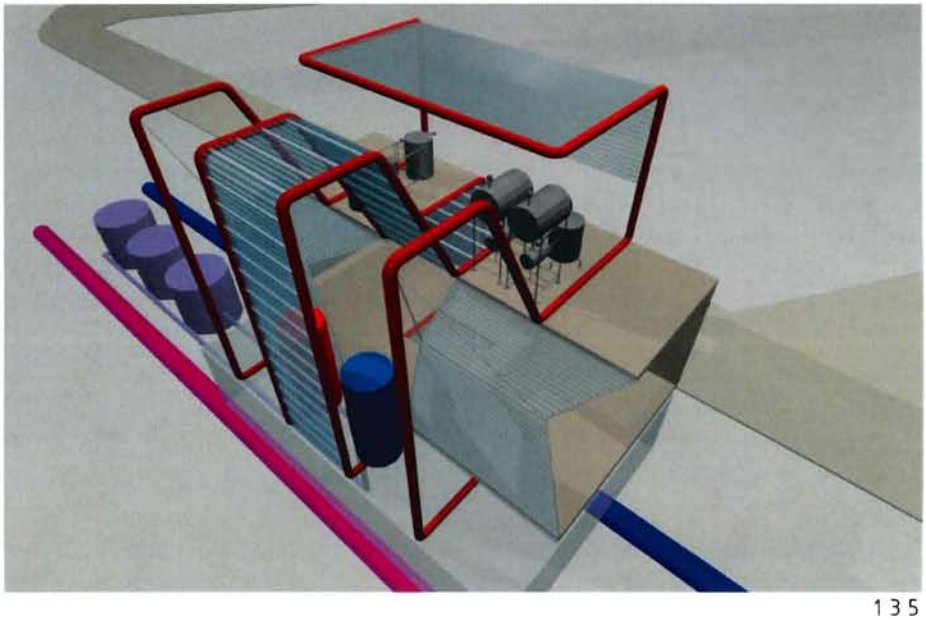


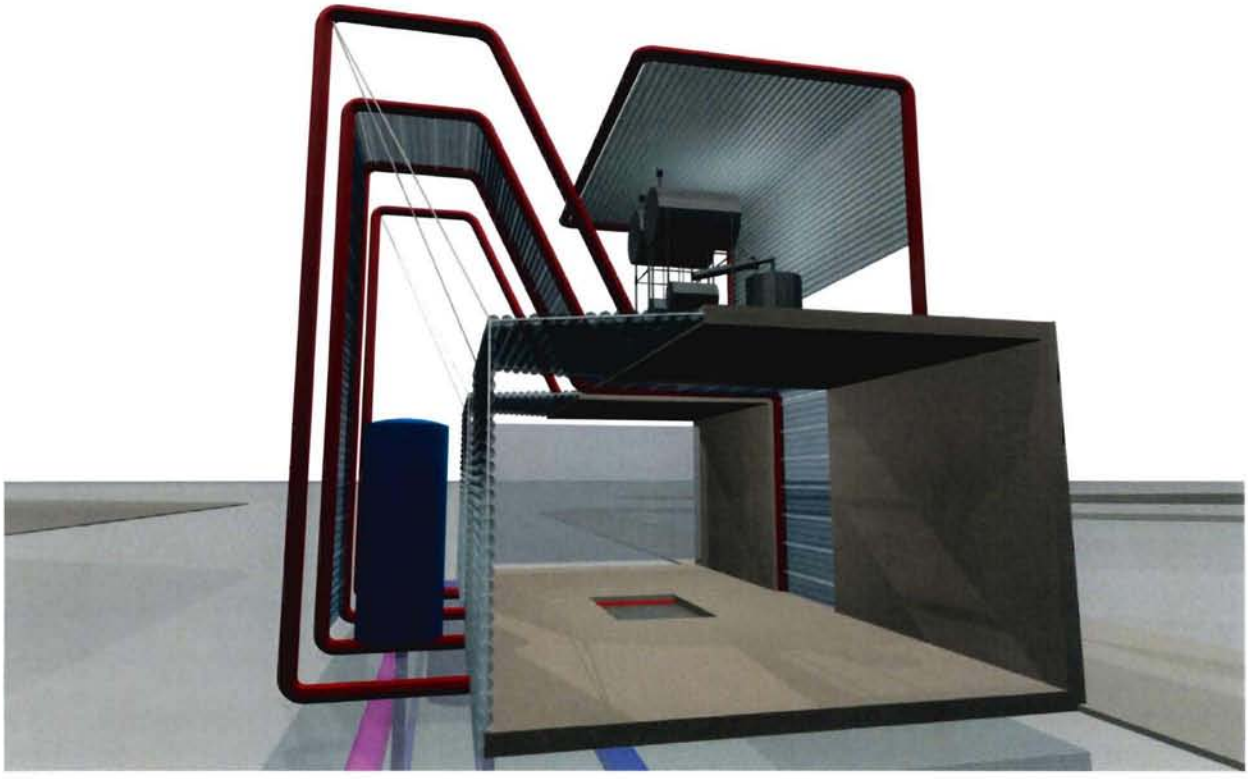
Cars are an essential part of Detroit culture. But why is it that in the summer, the Woodward Dream Cruise stops short and ends just inside Detroit city limits? Why is it that automobile culture is not more celebrated downtown as it is in the surrounding suburbs? The purpose is to focus on a commonly shared interest by a wide public audience and then using that interest and translating it into space that can be used and shared by that wide audience. The idea **of the car wash is to appropriate space that makes some money and employs people in the community. The steam connection makes use of existing "waste" and infrastructure. A water recollection system helps to save water.**

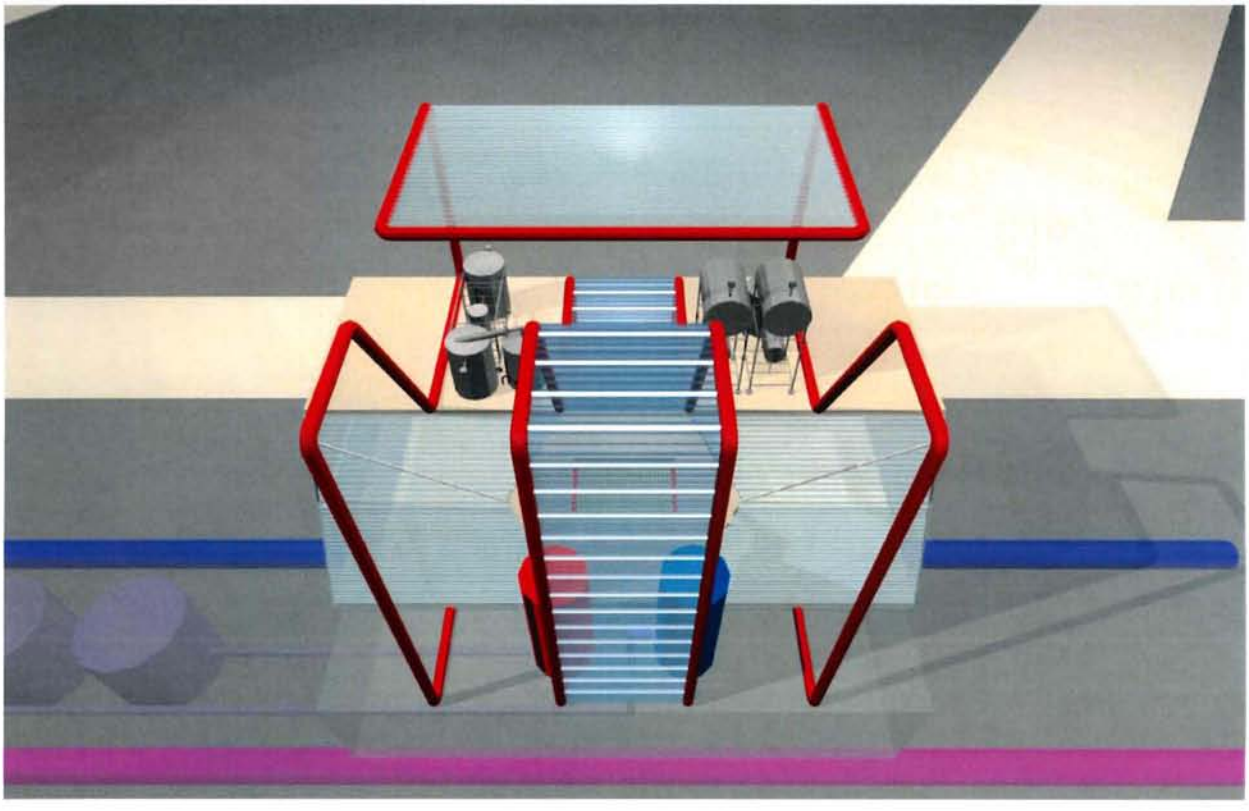


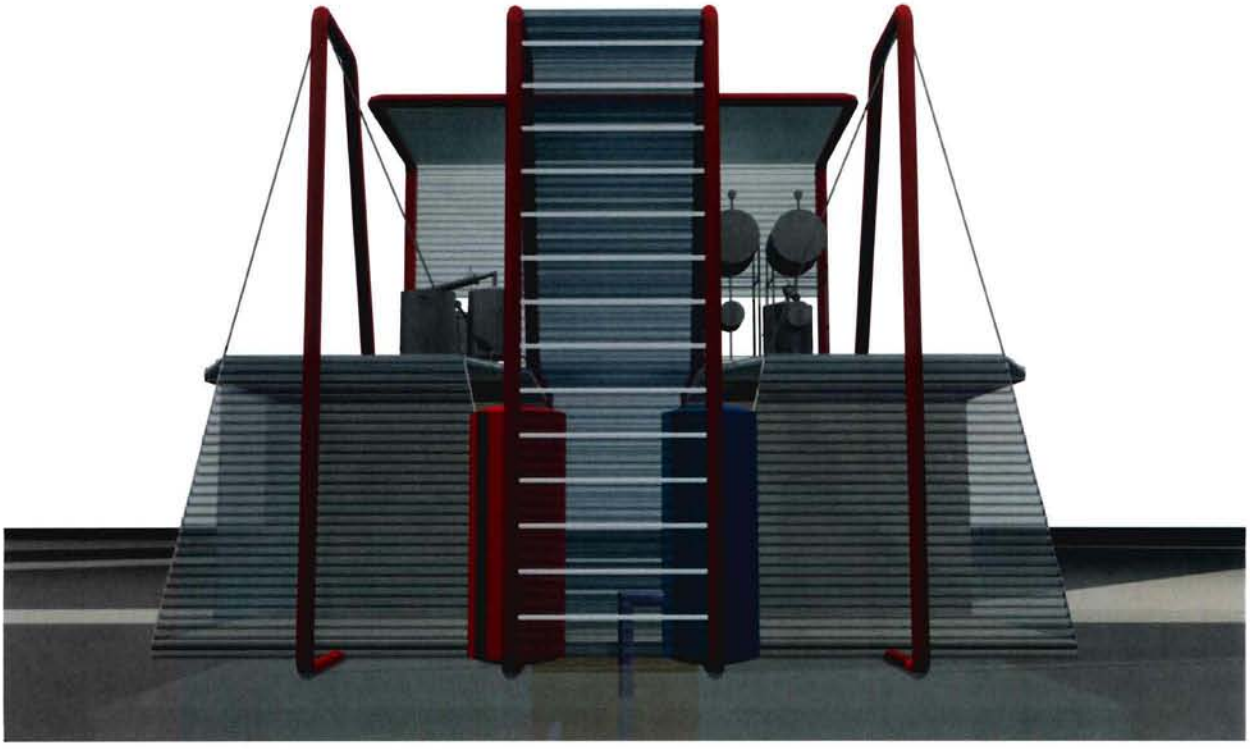


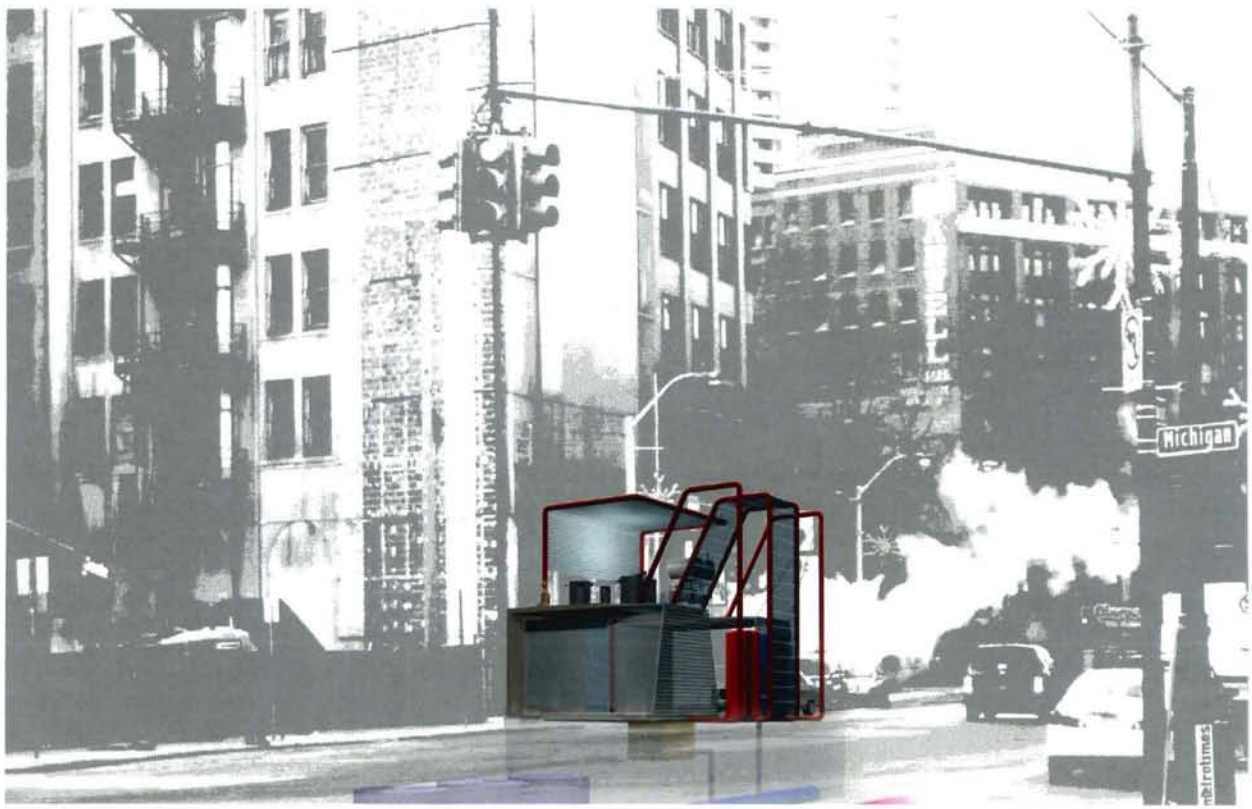




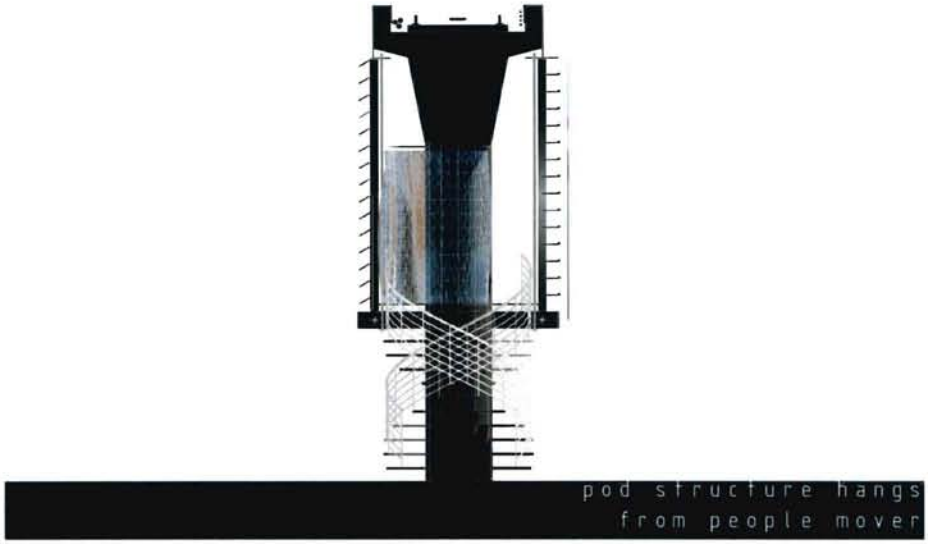


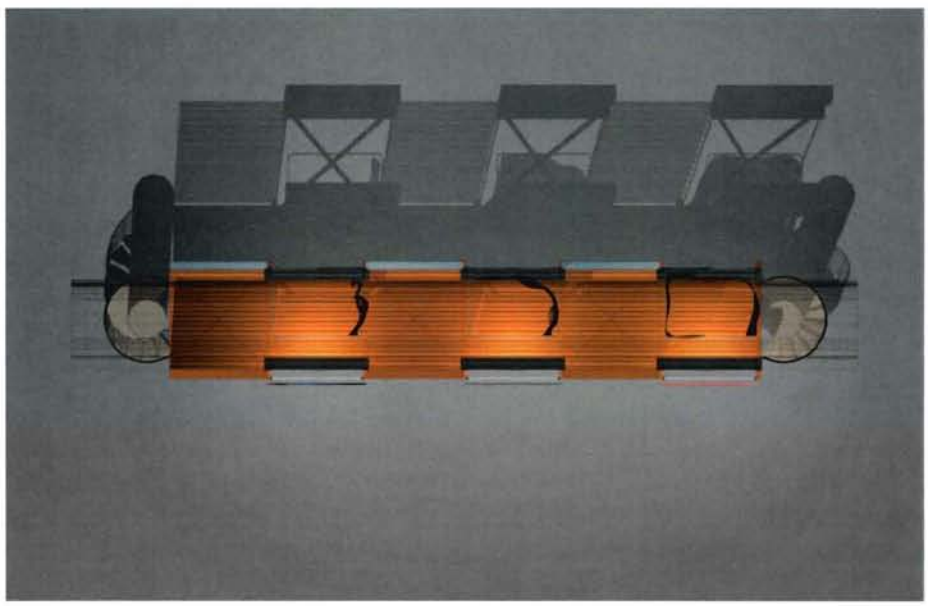




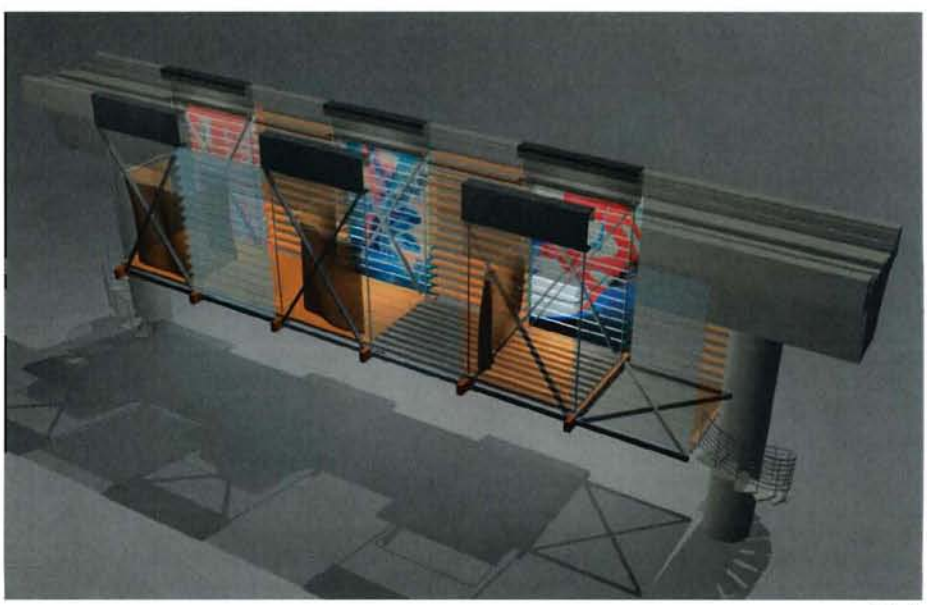

Michigan

Garden Station Park

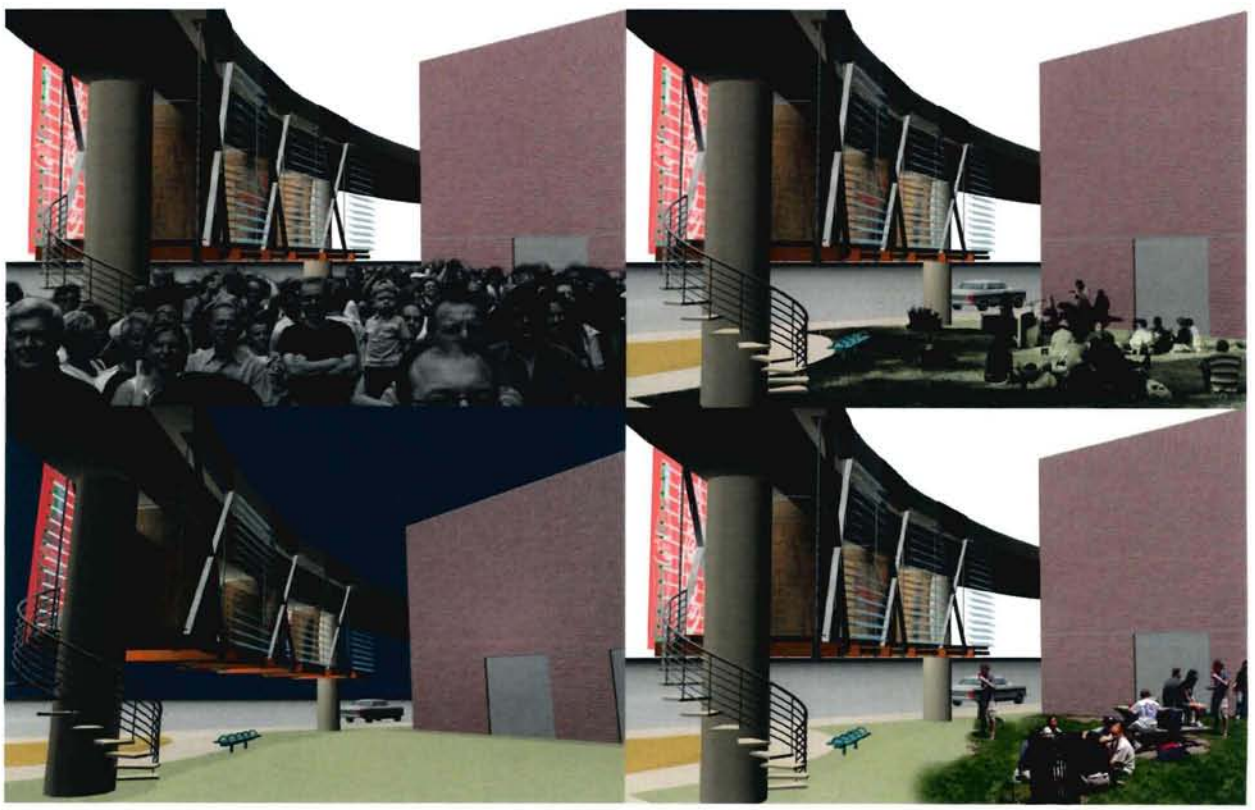


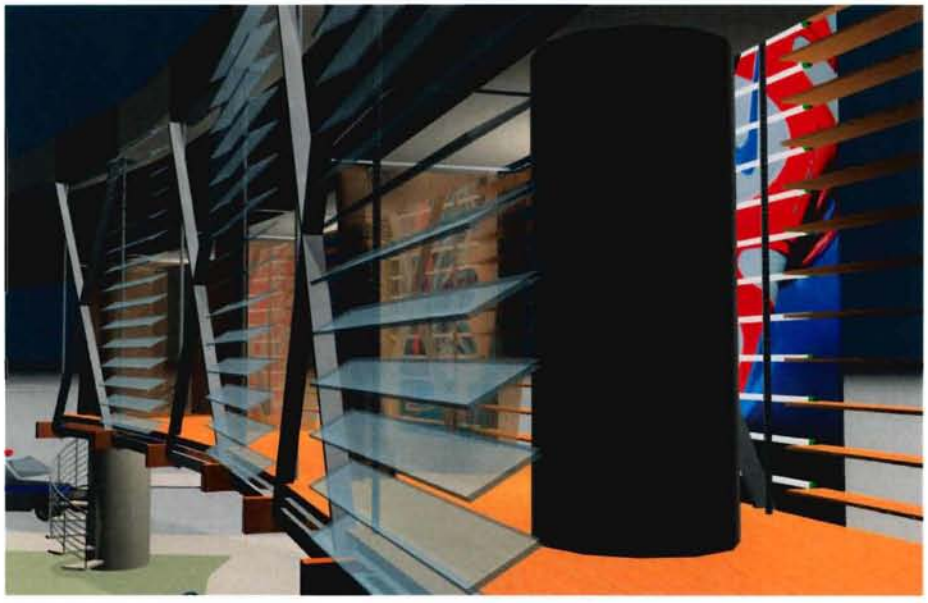


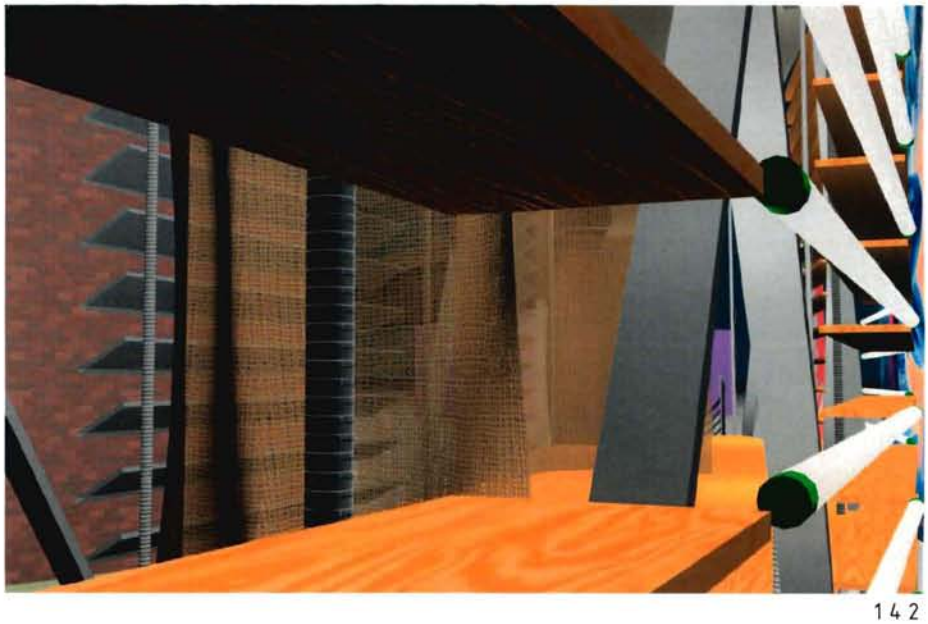
Coca-Cola
Coke

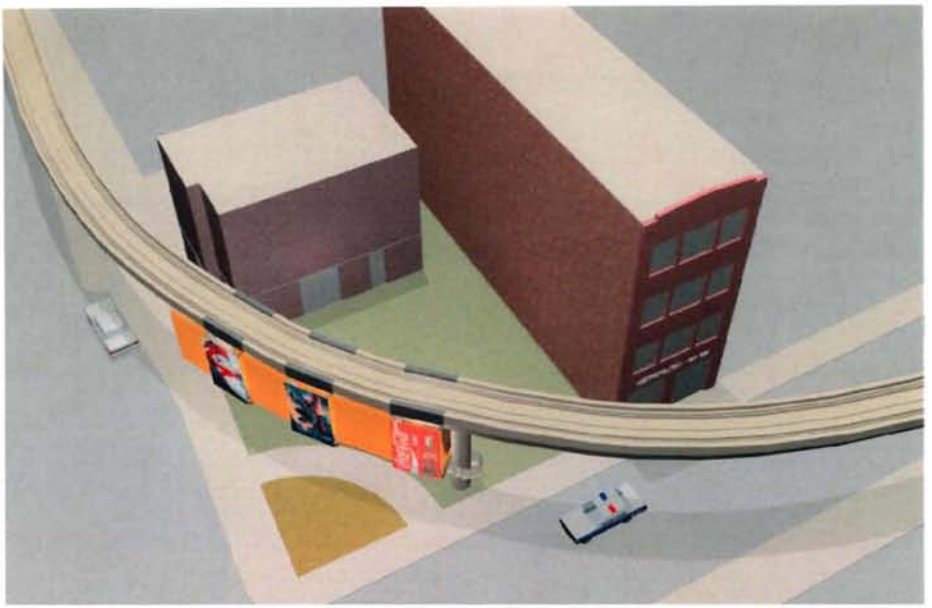


This park is not really being used a lot. People usually walk past it going to and from Greektown, but seldom do people stop to use it. Since the park is so small and there are no tables and just a small "bum-proof" bench, it is not a very friendly place or welcoming area to stop by and each lunch there, for example. However, someone had used a road sign to hide their belongings along side the wall near the alley. Therefore, again, it shows that there is little traffic along the park that deemed it safe enough as a storage area for an assumed homeless person. The design intends to take the park (the airspace is cut by the people mover) and make it more "public". Right now it is a "public place" but it really serves nobody. The location of the park is right across from the police headquarters and a block from the Greektown entertainment and restaurant area. These establishments and institutions reflect a public space concerned with order and good business. The idea of the park would be to operate within the good nature and order of the surroundings, but to also introduce a space that would allow for the free expression of the public. Therefore the park will be more like a stage that will host events such as gatherings, BBQs, small concerts, etc. Because the new programs might displace the storage space and perhaps even the resting space of individuals already using the park, a parasitical construction will hang off the people mover and will initially act as space available for storage, with advertising as the "façade" of the structures. Once storage is offered, the likely use will then be a type of temporary shelter of rest. Although these shelters may be seen as "homeless shelters" they are not. Use is what determines how it is judged. For example if there were a concert going on in the park, these units would be like private box seats above the rest of the crowd. So, these individual units can then behave like small storage units - almost like cottages or tree houses/clubhouses under the people mover track. Anyone could make use of these, not just homeless people. Since there is a large portion of people coming into the city who are not residents of the city and have actually driven maybe a ½ hour to an hour or more to get downtown, perhaps they can set up a unit that can be used when they arrive into the city. In the same way people have cabins or go camping, these units can be the urban equivalent to people exploring the city, just as it can be used for homeless people too. This presents a potential unconventional housing opportunity.

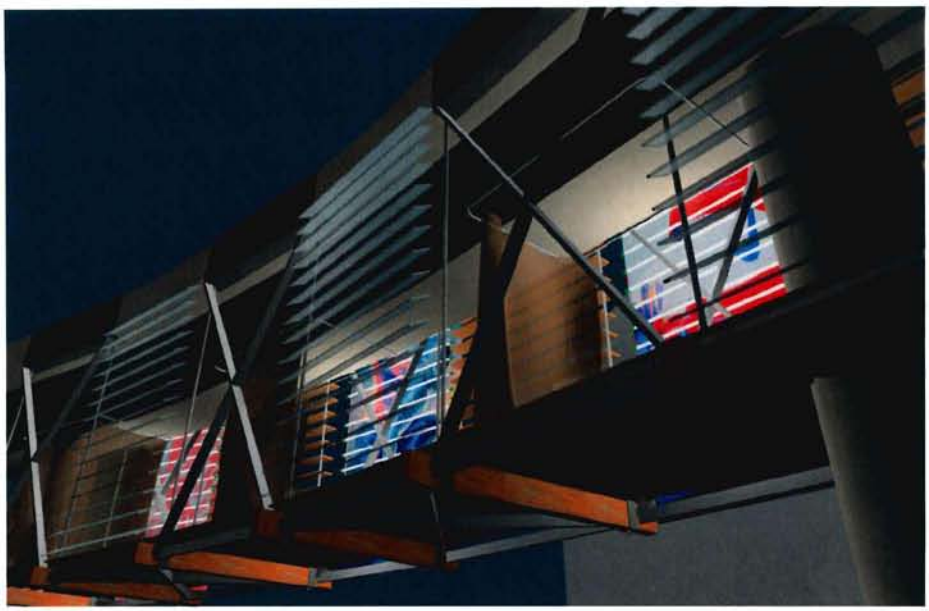




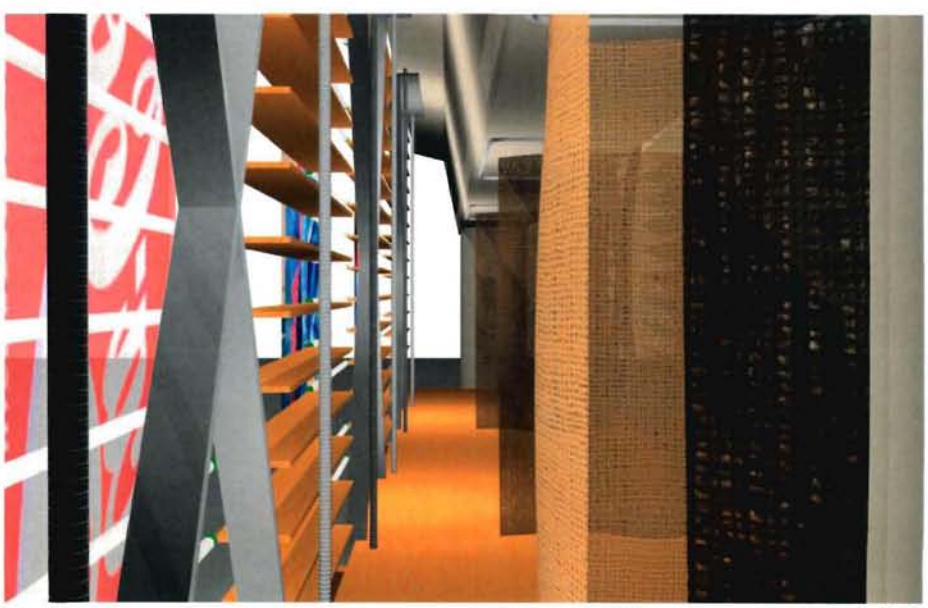


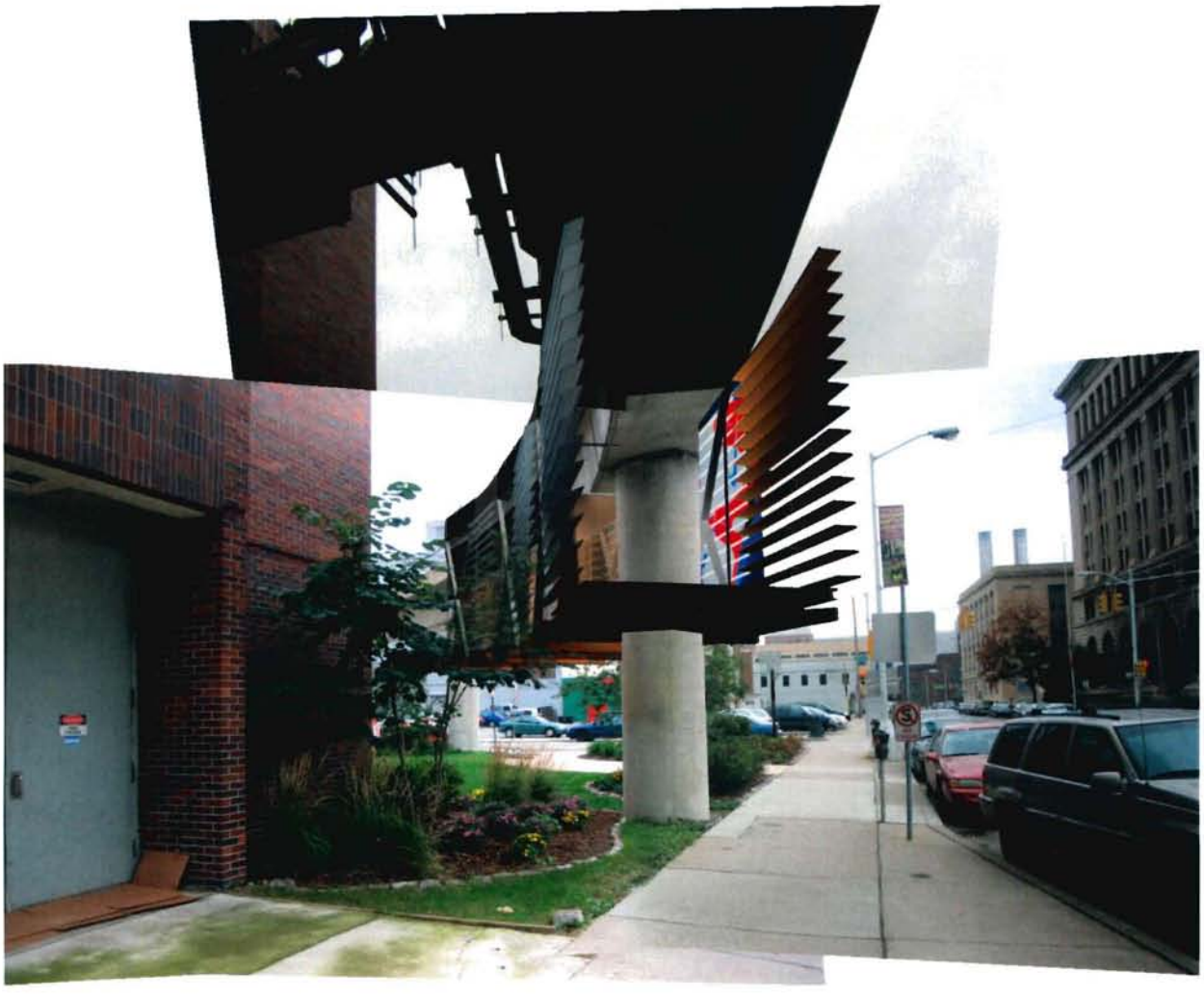


Coca-Cola



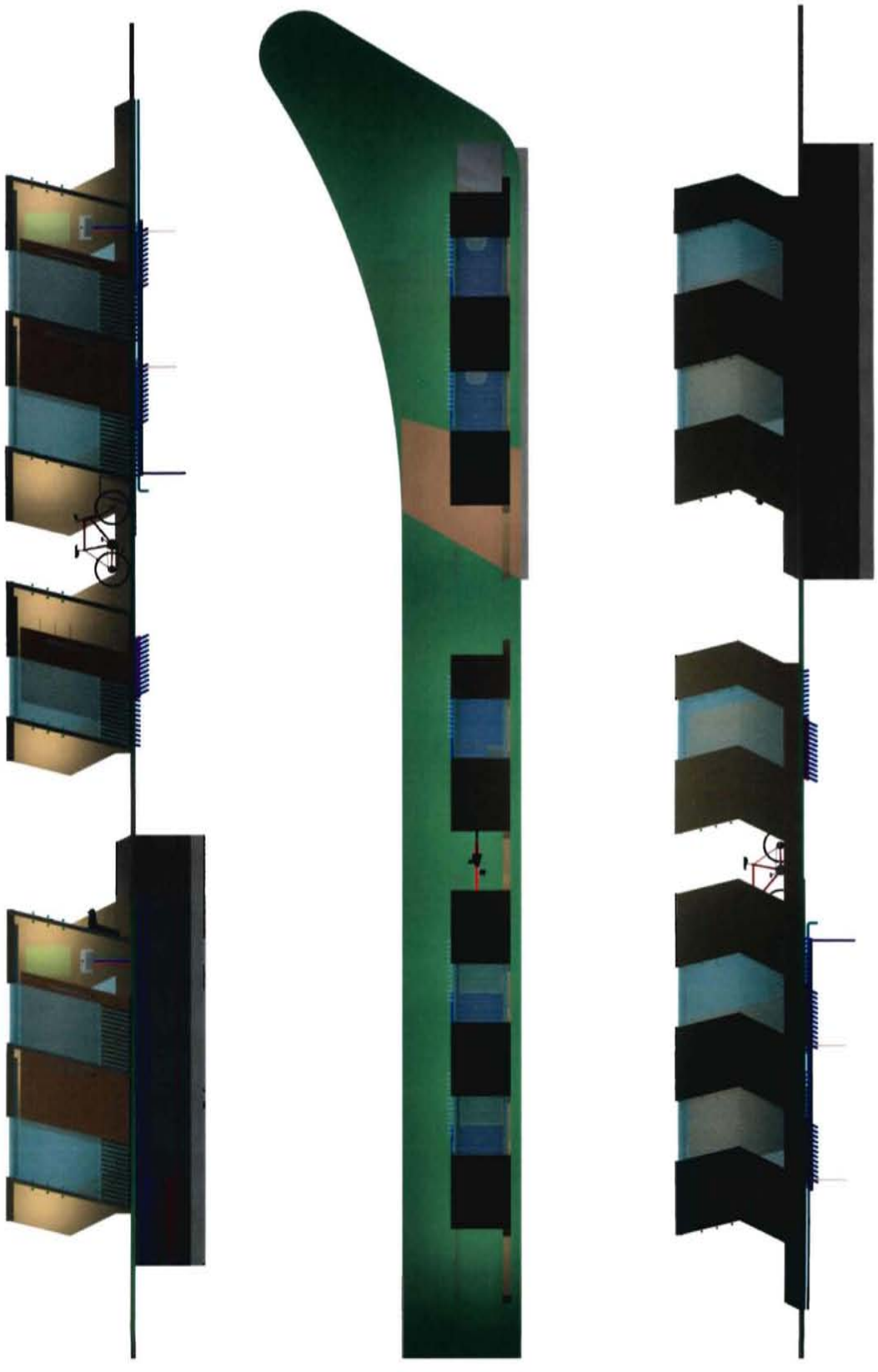
Coca-Cola

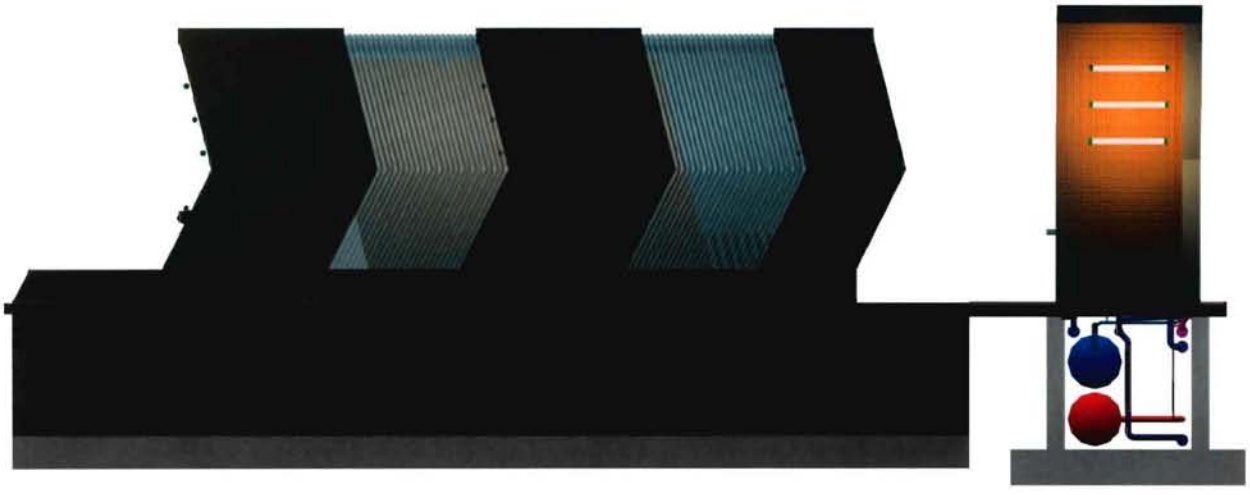


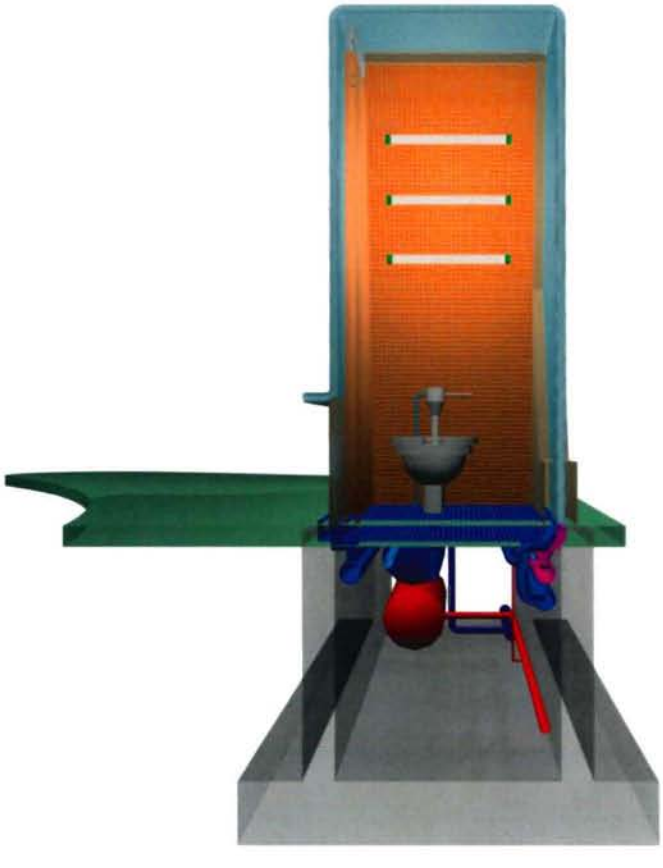


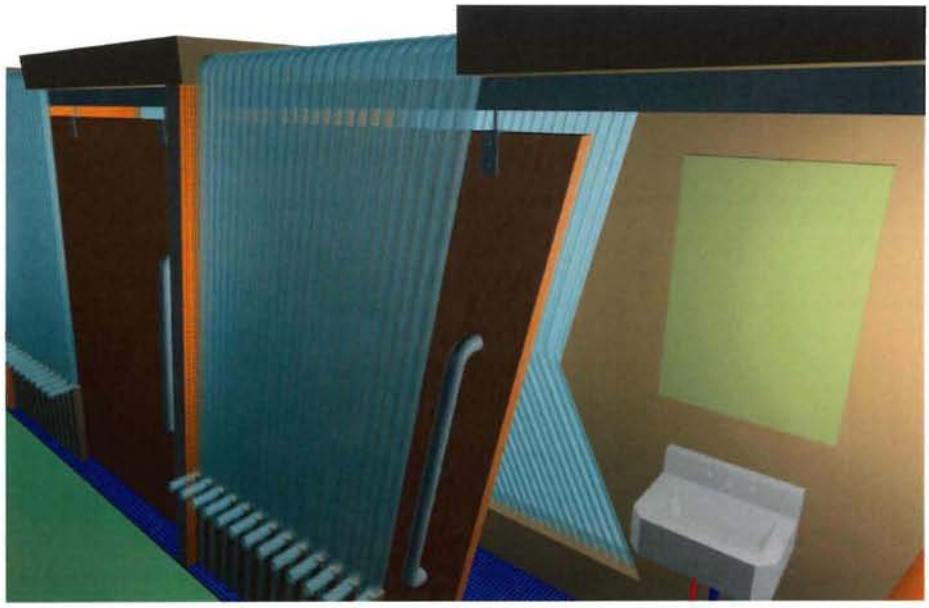
Coca-Cola
COKE
METROPOLITAN

Monroe & Randolph Public Washroom

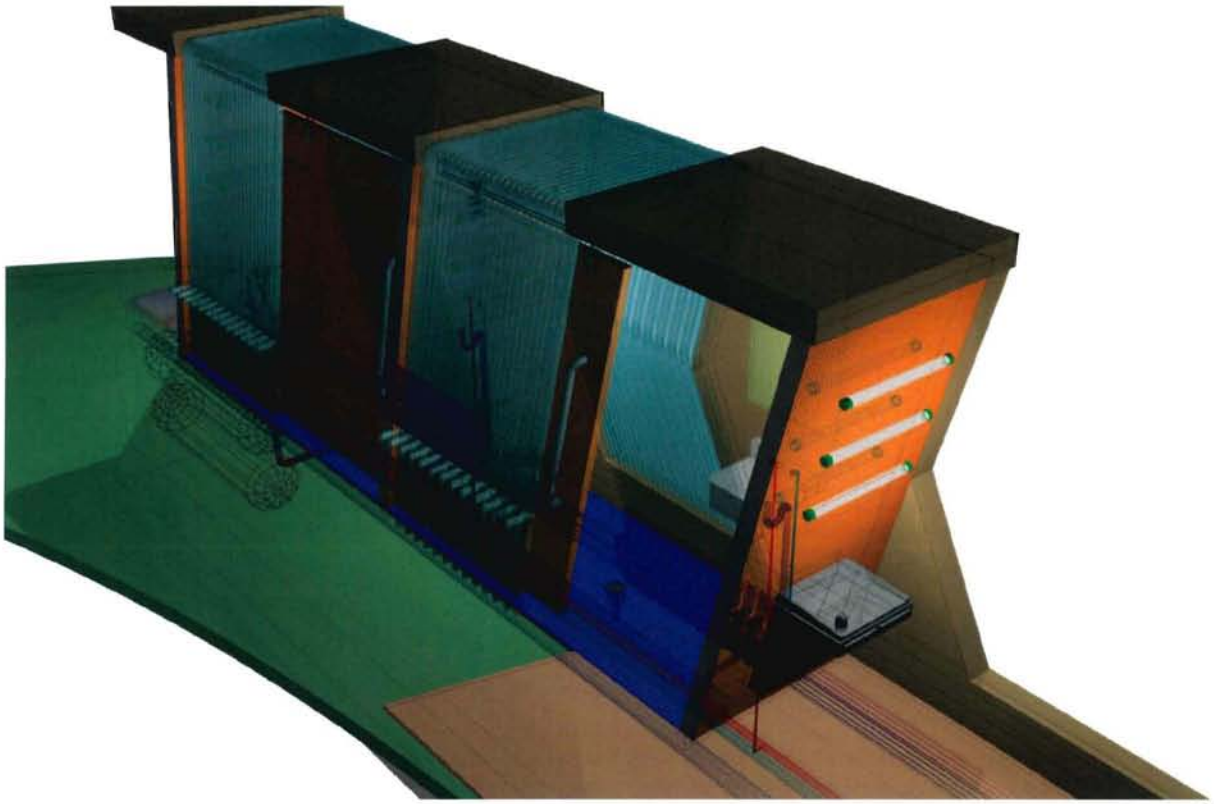


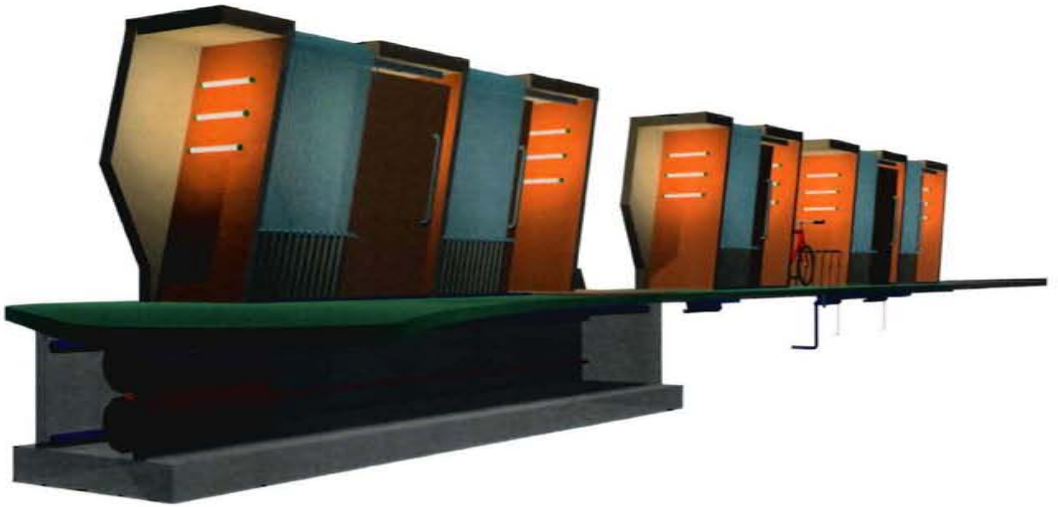


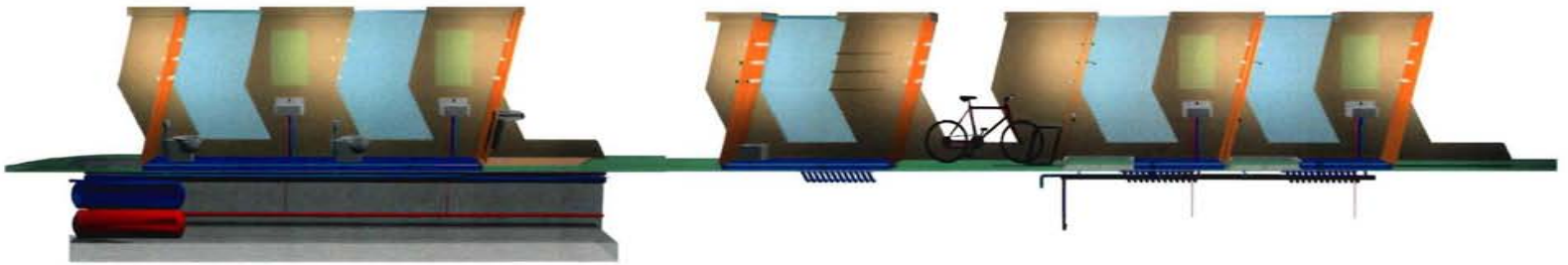




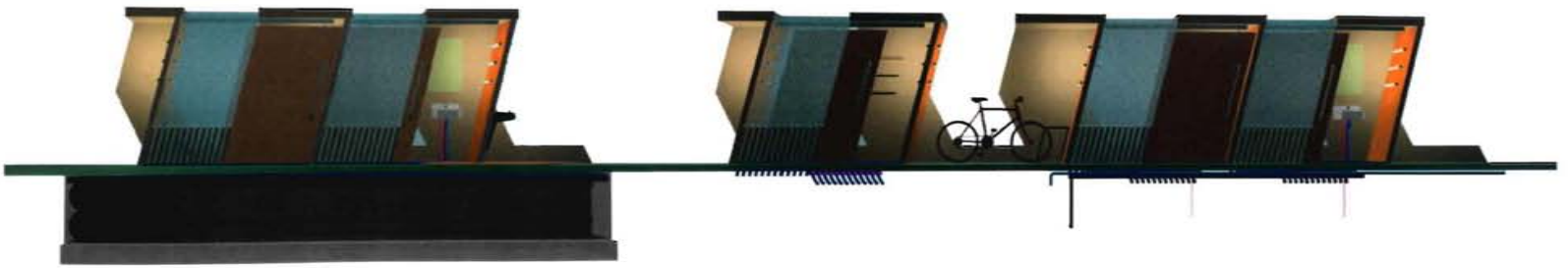
The washroom is a truly democratic program that applies to the needs of every single person. Often washrooms are hard to find downtown. Either stores are not open, or you have to be a customer to use their facilities. Although by code, the restrooms must be made available by any occupant inside the building, the customer rule is good for business. This piece of land left over from traffic patterns presents an opportunity to place a public washroom facility. The steam outlet can be appropriated to provide heating, and a separate tubing system can circulate cold water in the winter time. The concept of utilizing existing waste and making greater use out of existing infrastructure gives the public a washroom that intends to be an open democratic place but also a safe and controlled environment, so that people will feel comfortable using it. This is the challenge. The structures are quite basic and simple. Some stalls are only toilets with sinks while others are showers which allow downtown office workers to bike to work or to have a lunch time run around the city. The showers can also be used by anybody of course and will run on a coin operated timer to avoid wasting water. The translucent piping allows for some level of security and dialogue between inside and outside. Again, this could be a public works project from the city government, where jobs can be created to take care and maintain this washroom. In return, the idea of advertising money could be used to subsidize costs (more to cover the wage of the worker/attendant, rather than water costs).







toilets water fountain maintenance storage showers



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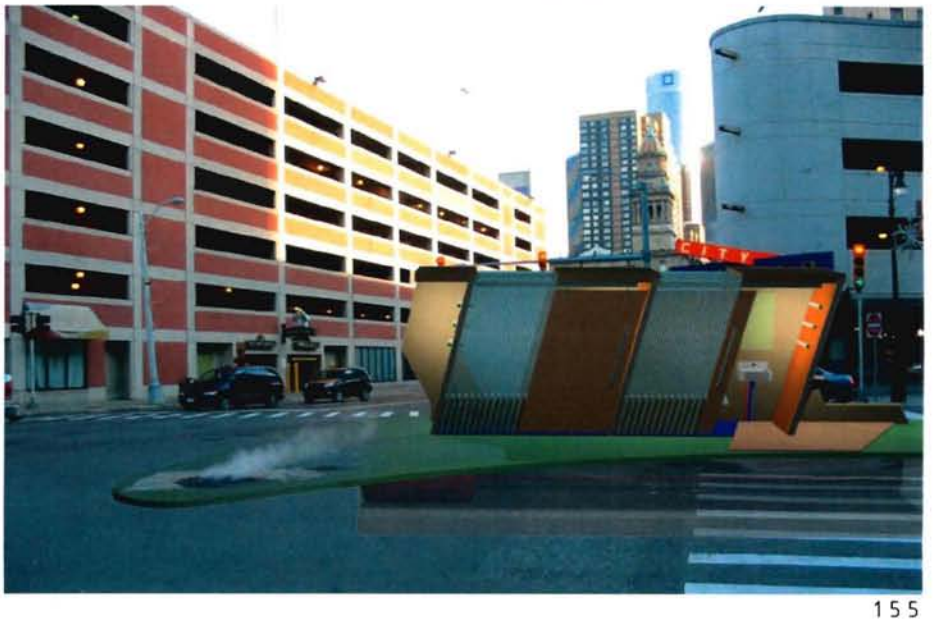

Cloud Atlas is an attempt at investigating the nature of urban public space. Each of the projects attempted to provide a public service of some sort while still embracing the ideas of civility and order. The idea was not to completely take one side of radical socialism or corporate sterility. Public space embraces a little of both. There is, however, room for 'misreadings' and the opportunity for the public to really use these proposals. The creation of public space allows the general public to engage and take ownership of space. This makes the projects dynamic in that they are not prescriptive of any particular urban condition, but rather offer a basic service and a platform for social interaction. In particular, the roof space of each proposal offers potential for further development. Roof space is inherently powerful and holds a 'king of the castle' mentality of space ownership. This condition can be examined in a future study. Each proposal perhaps begins to suggest an alternative to traditional urban development, which Detroit can experiment with as it continually evolves and defines itself. Like a cloud, the ever-changing nature of the city is its vitality, and the projects attempt to provide a basis for the sponsorship of public participation. The creation of public space is always a struggle. Public space is contested space because everyone has a stake in it. The struggle for ownership is the active engagement and participation in urban life which is critical especially in a changing city such as Detroit.

conclusion

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