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THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARCHITECTURE

TITLE: **Urban Nature**

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2006

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis investigation is to explore how space can be connected and [re]connected. How does one connect different entities to create a harmonious urban space? How does one [re]connect and integrate a section of the city that was once segregated? Will also look to explore how landscape and architecture can be connected, and how that can change the idea of either one or both of the aspects, and how that may create new, or artificial landscapes, and how that landscape may also become the architecture.

SITE [sīt]

The place where a structure or group of structures was, is, or is to be located
 The place or setting of something

The site of this investigation is located inside of the Brooklyn Navy Yard in Brooklyn, New York. This site was once home to the United States Navy and was used to construct and repair ships. Because of the high security needed for the Navy, the Yard was completely walled and fenced off from the surrounding neighborhoods. Though the Navy decommissioned the land in 1966 and sold it to the City of New York, the walls have existed ever since. Upon visiting the site it was obvious to see the disconnect between the Navy Yard and the surrounding neighborhoods of Brooklyn.

The residents of Brooklyn and the entire New York City area have been missing out on an opportunity to interact with the area taken up by the Navy Yard but also the river that the Yard borders and the views of Manhattan that could be enjoyed from this area. Not only are the people being disconnected from the area that the Yard sits, but also the natural qualities of the area and from Manhattan in both a physical and visual aspect.

Because there is such a disconnect both physically and socially between the Navy Yard and Brooklyn and the people of Brooklyn, there was a need to make a reconnection in a programmatical way to attract people to the site, but first in a structural way in order to make it possible for people to interact with the site and to enter the site.

The site is located in an area that offers many opportunities to develop and to attract people from the surrounding boroughs of Manhattan and Queens and further, but most importantly to provide for the people of Brooklyn, and to intrigue people to come to the site and experience what is provided them. To the southeast of the site is a large cultural neighborhood surrounding the Brooklyn Academy of Music. To the south of the site is Pratt Institute, and a large community of students. To the east of the site is a large area of residential towers and projects. The need for a focal point in Brooklyn along the river with a connection across to Manhattan is needed. A majority of the river's access is currently blocked off by industrial development, and the main downtown section of Brooklyn is nowhere near the river or connected in anyway visually to Manhattan.

AR•TI•FI•CIAL [ärtə-fīshəl]

Made by humans: produced rather than natural

"More than ever before, the natural and artificial have become literally inseparable and indistinguishable. Organic prosthetics, biological computers, genetically modified foods, animal cloning, and the human genome are indices of a new era, in which the distinction between nature and artifice is no longer adequate to the complex tangle of interrelated phenomena and systems that now constitute landscape and environment. The vocabulary of man and nature has been replaced with a language of systems and networks, of intersections, interactions, and interference." (czerniak 67)

Park [718] presents a unique opportunity to exploit the potential and implications of these emerging possibilities for the park of the future: to generate a new synthetic landscape through rigorous understanding and integration of its intrinsic and extrinsic systems: cultural, ecological, historical, recreational, and social.

Park [718] offers an unprecedented opportunity to move forward by producing complexity through consistency, to generate organization through a mediated, integrated synthesis of rigorously differentiated orders and systems, to create a new synthetic discipline across the natural and the artificial, the rational and the organic.

Park [718] becomes a fabricated "landscape" designed first and foremost to orchestrate on-site leisure activities, cultural, and social development. The function-based system generates the spatial structure of the site. It is a network of distinct regions for living, playing, learning, relaxing, and gathering, each with particular characteristics and requirements.

CON•NEC•TION [kə-nĕk'shən]

An association or relationship

Contextual relation or association

Park [718] is located in such a way that it can be "connected" in a plethora of ways. Location of the Park gives many possibilities for connection. Connection to people is by far the most important quality of a successful urban space. This connection can be made physically, by the Park being public, and accessible to the people. Visually the Park is connected to the people, and would need to be intriguing to people to interact with. Also visually the site offers a vantage point that not many other places offer. Culturally and programmatically the park should be connected to the people as well, as something to pull them to the site, but also to keep them there.

Connections need to be made between the Park and the surrounding areas, but there are many connections created within the Park that are important to the development of the site and the interaction with the park.

The subdivision of the surface of the site into major elements provides a template for decentralization as a means of encouraging greater urbanity throughout the site especially on the eastern edge of the site where there will be an intensification of urban uses. By contrast, the interior of the park will be devoted to maintaining and expanding the vastness and 'otherness' of the site. particular characteristics and requirements.

HY•BRID [hī'brīd]

Something heterogeneous in origin or composition

Public and Private. Real and Virtual. Interior and Exterior. Natural and Synthetic.
Architecture and Landscape.

Hybrid is an idea that is created when differing ideas or objects are morphed together to create something new. Most times to create something better than what was before.

The above relationships all are displayed in some way, shape or form throughout the Park. The most important and obvious hybrid is that between architecture and landscape. Whether this landscape is natural or artificial or both, and how it comes in contact with or creates architecture is something to be seen. The built and un-built spaces in the site together create a hybrid form which becomes the Park.

PROJECT PROGRAM

To create a network of planted open spaces in an urban environment which are spatially connected, creating vital urban places.

Throughout the space created there will be an emphasis put on giving a sense of openness, of creating inner-city movement, and environmental enjoyment. Interaction is a large part of the program for these spaces. The interaction between people, between people and their environment, between the built and the un-built, and the relationship between the site and the urban fabric that that the site inhabits.

Some possible programs that could inhabit this site include diverse residential spaces including apartments, lofts, and condominiums. There could also be an entertainment section of the program and an area for retail. These programs could encompass a sort of mixed-use community development. The use of these spaces for pedestrian travel is ideal. The program will help develop the site into a pedestrian park that includes the previously stated programs. Because there is a large artist community to the south of the site, the program will work to integrate the arts with the other parts of the program, possibly through and Urban Arts Centre. The arts of this community would not be limited to painting or visual arts, but also to music, dance, theatre, and other forms of artistic expression.

These different programs will in the end be integrated together to create a link between the built and the living environment, and in turn connect the inhabitants of this hybrid environment to not just an urban environment but one that brings in ideas that are typically thought of to exist outside of the urban environment. The qualities of these different programs will help bring the vitality necessary to create a vibrant urban space.

Actions that may take place in these spaces could include but are not limited to:
 Relax-[giving the inhabitants a place to remove themselves from the speed of the urban fabric and a place to rest and reflect]

Socialize-[giving the inhabitants a place to gather and converse]

Play-[giving inhabitants of the urban environment a space to engage with each other, a place where they can get away from where they work or live]

Experience the environment-[the inhabitants would have the opportunity to take in the landscape and the wildlife created by these spaces]

Interact with the environment-[the inhabitants would have the chance to work with the landscape and the environment and be involved with their environment]

Live-[on many levels the space would live, giving the inhabitants a healthier opportunity to live, the space itself would be living, and the space itself would have life]

Grow-[the space itself would develop as a landscape, through the green space, as well as the space would grow into the urban fabric and develop into a lifestyle]

Travel-[these spaces could be used by the inhabitants of the urban environment to move from space to space and throughout the city, possibly at a more leisurely pace than what normally happens in an urban environment, also creating a healthier environment with less pollution]

Reuse-[the space would be used over and over by the inhabitants, but also the space would be created by the use of spaces that have been used before, and by using sources that are renewable, along with the continuous use of the landscape for new growth]

Work-[the program would create place for work to occur, whether that be in the or on the landscape provided, or in a structure that is built specifically to house work]

The site in which these ideas might occur would ideally be an environment that is contextually urban but that is also a part of a larger diverse entity that may also contain suburban and very rural areas. The project does need to be based where there is the possibility of getting open space and land to be developed from some source. Ideally this space might fit best in an urban environment that has been developed with the automobile in mind, so that this development will give a contrasting idea for the inhabitants of the urban environment to get involved and interact with. An urban environment where sustainable ideas would be beneficial would be an ideal space. Possibly sites that contain brown fields, or abandoned space or structures may also be beneficial.

PROGRAM QUANTITATIVE SUMMARY

[Built Interior Spaces]

Residential-250,000 sq. ft.

Condominiums-30%

Rental Units-50%

Lofts-20%

Retail-75,000 sq. ft.

Urban Art Centre-65,000 sq. ft.

Music Creation & Production-10,000 sq. ft.

Dance Studios-25,000 sq. ft.

Visual Art Creation Studios-10,000 sq. ft.

Performance/Display-25,000 sq. ft.

Cultural-100,000 sq. ft.

Work-25,000 sq. ft.

Exhibition-35,000 sq. ft.

Cineplex-200,000 sq. ft.

[Total Interior Spaces-650,000 sq. ft.]

[Exterior Spaces]-these spaces could overlap, reducing the amount of space needed

Green Park-250,000 sq. ft. -5.75 acres

Constructed Forest-200,000 sq. ft. -4.6 acres

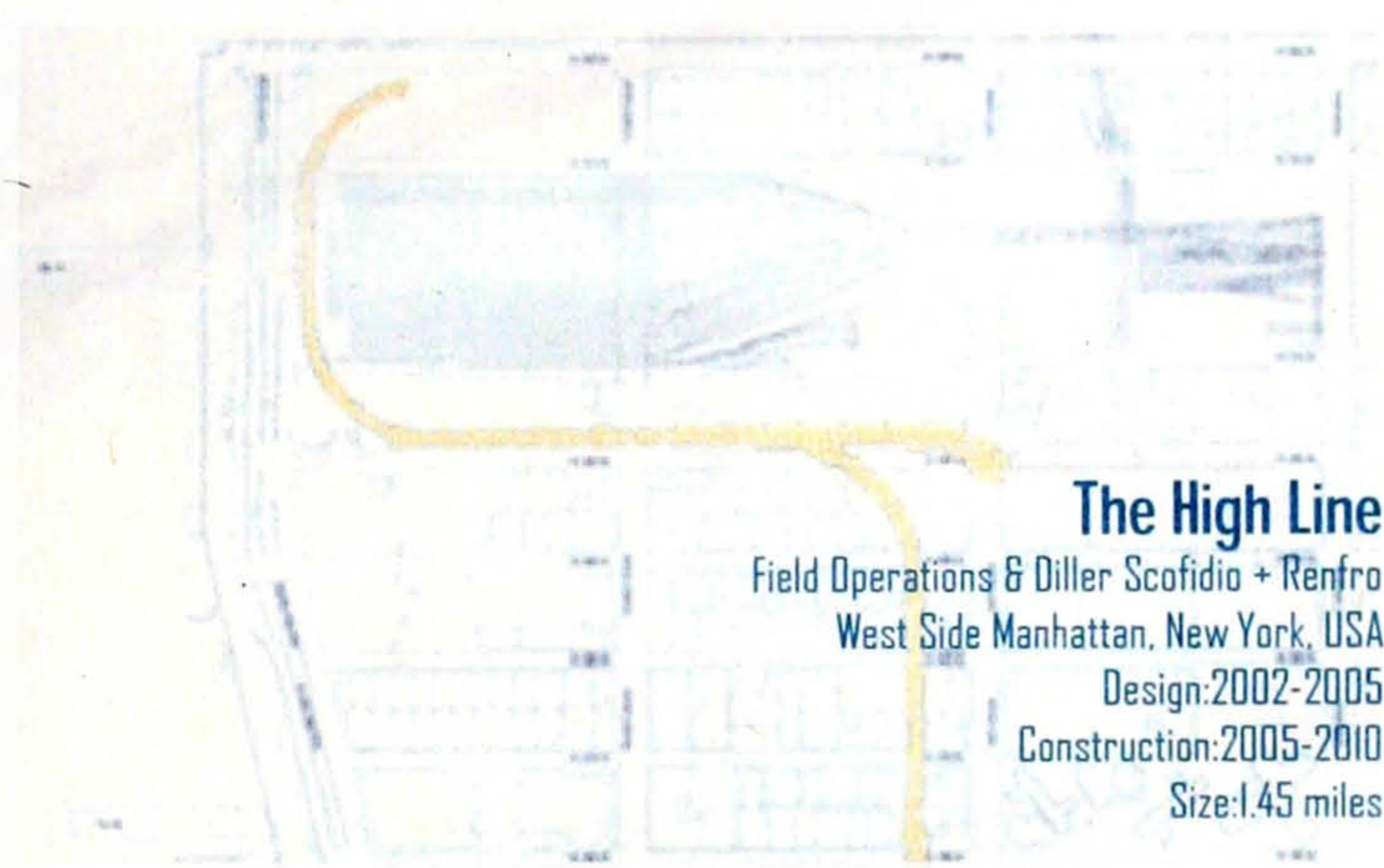
Public Event Spaces-125,000 sq. ft.

Recreational Spaces-75,000 sq. ft.

[Total Exterior Spaces-650,000 sq. ft. -14.92 acres]

[Total Space-1,300,000 sq. ft.]

[Site Total-1,969,538 sq. ft. -45.21 acres]

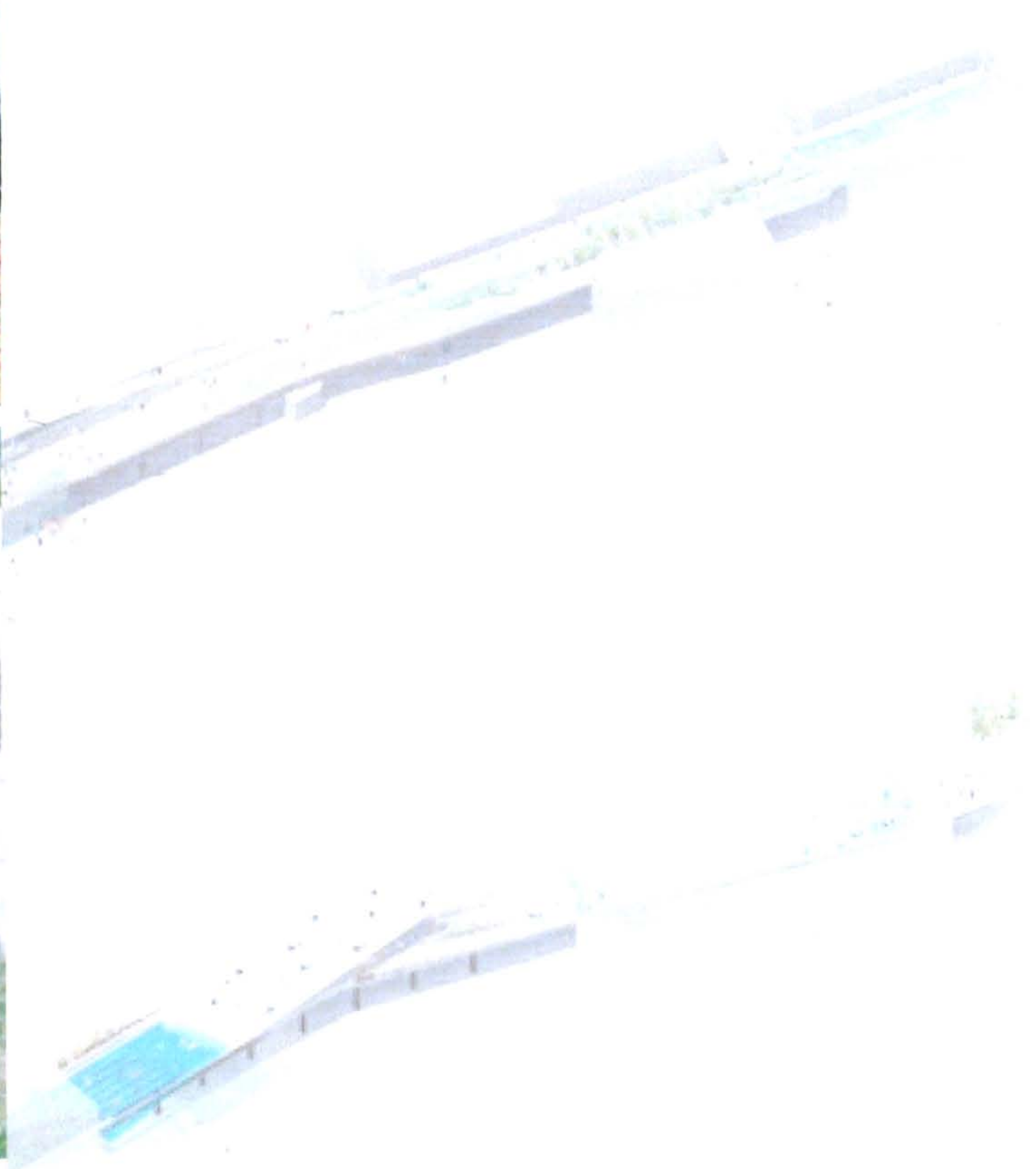


The High Line

Field Operations & Diller Scofidio + Renfro
West Side Manhattan, New York, USA
Design: 2002-2005
Construction: 2005-2010
Size: 1.45 miles

Inspired by the melancholic, unruly beauty of the High Line, where nature has reclaimed a once-vital piece of urban infrastructure, the project retools this industrial conveyance into a post-industrial instrument of leisure, life, and growth. By changing the rules of engagement between plant life and pedestrians, the strategy of agri-tecture combines organic and building materials into a blend of changing proportions that accommodates the wild, the cultivated, the intimate, and the hyper-social. In stark contrast to the speed of Hudson River Park, this parallel linear experience is marked by slowness, distraction and an other-worldliness that preserves the strange character of the High Line. Providing flexibility and responsiveness to the changing needs, opportunities, and desires of the dynamic context, the project is designed to remain perpetually unfinished, sustaining emergent growth and change over time.

Using the mantra "keep it simple, keep it quiet, keep it wild, keep it slow," the design team created a conceptual framework for the High Line as a whole and for elements along the length of the structure, including planking for the hard-surface pathways, planting, furnishings, access, railings, and lighting. The architects contrast their plan for a slow-paced High Line with the fast-paced Manhattan streets that lie beneath: The plan establishes the High Line as its own world, albeit one that meets the essential operational needs of security, maintenance, environmental sustainability, historic preservation, and commercial activity. A wilderness landscape atop an engineered structure, historic yet modern, an escape from busy streets that is physically linked to the city and its buildings, the High Line will enhance the community and the economy and create new ways for New Yorkers to celebrate their urban environment.



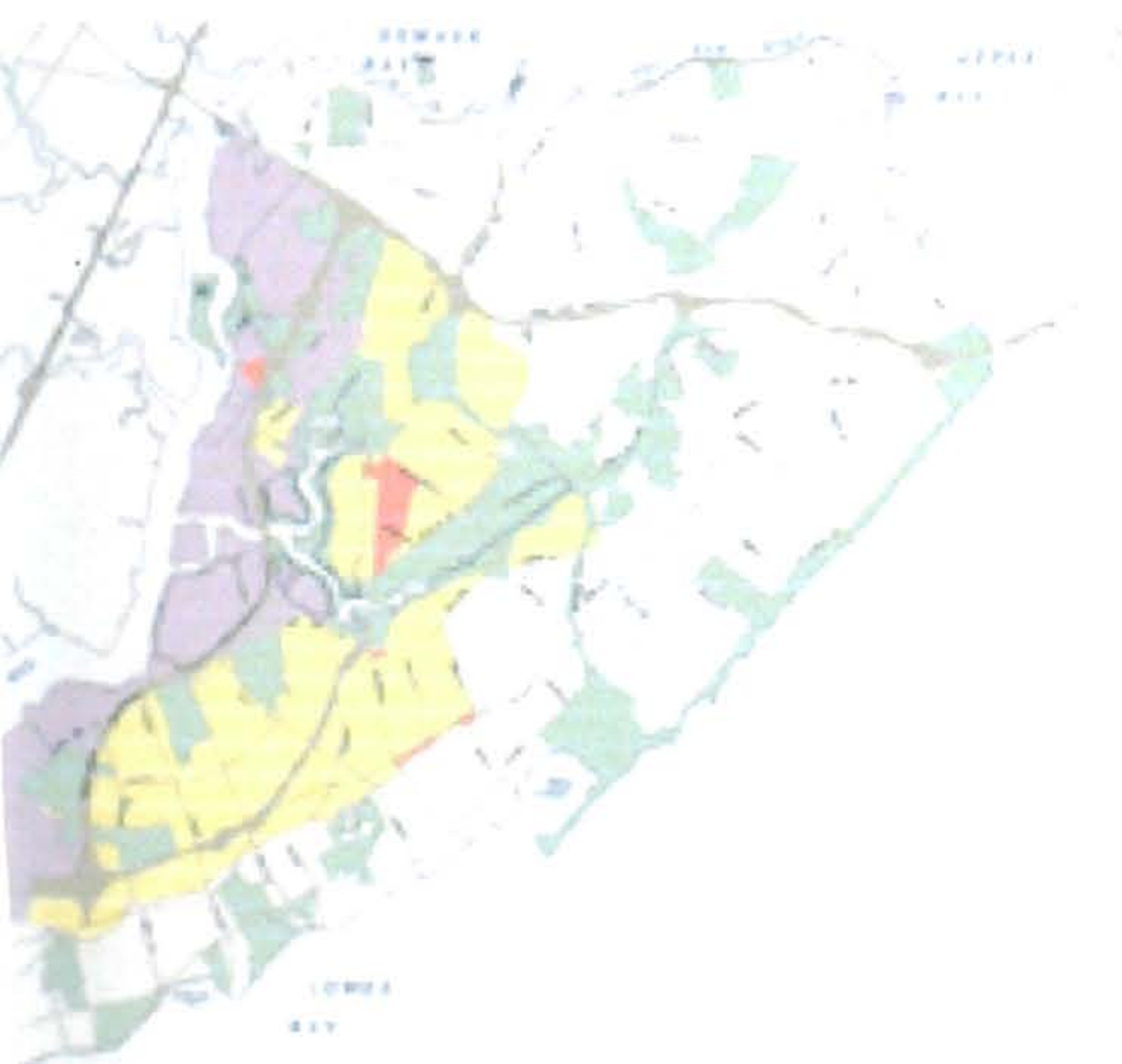
Personal thoughts of the High Line

The High Line project is important in the development of my own thesis project because it shows a way in which green space can be integrated into an urban setting in an innovative way. The project shows how a part of the existing city can be reused to benefit the city and the inhabitants of the city. This project also is developed around an idea referred to as 'agri-tecture', where agriculture and agricultural ideas are integrated into architecture and the urban fabric. This piece of architecture not only brings a sustainable, pedestrian aspect to the city, but while doing this also links communities with the people inhabiting the city and the High Line. The High Line creates an environment in which to rest, contemplate, socialize, play, engage in cultural or recreational activities, and be part of the larger community. This project is also very much integrated with sustainable ideas including using native species of plants, water harvesting for later irrigation use, and reducing heat island effect in the city. The only weakness I see in this project is that there may not be enough access points for easy access when the structure becomes widely used by the inhabitants of the urban space.



Fresh Kills Park

Field Operations
 Staten Island, New York, USA
 Design: 2004-2005
 Construction: 2006-2031
 Size: 2,200 acres

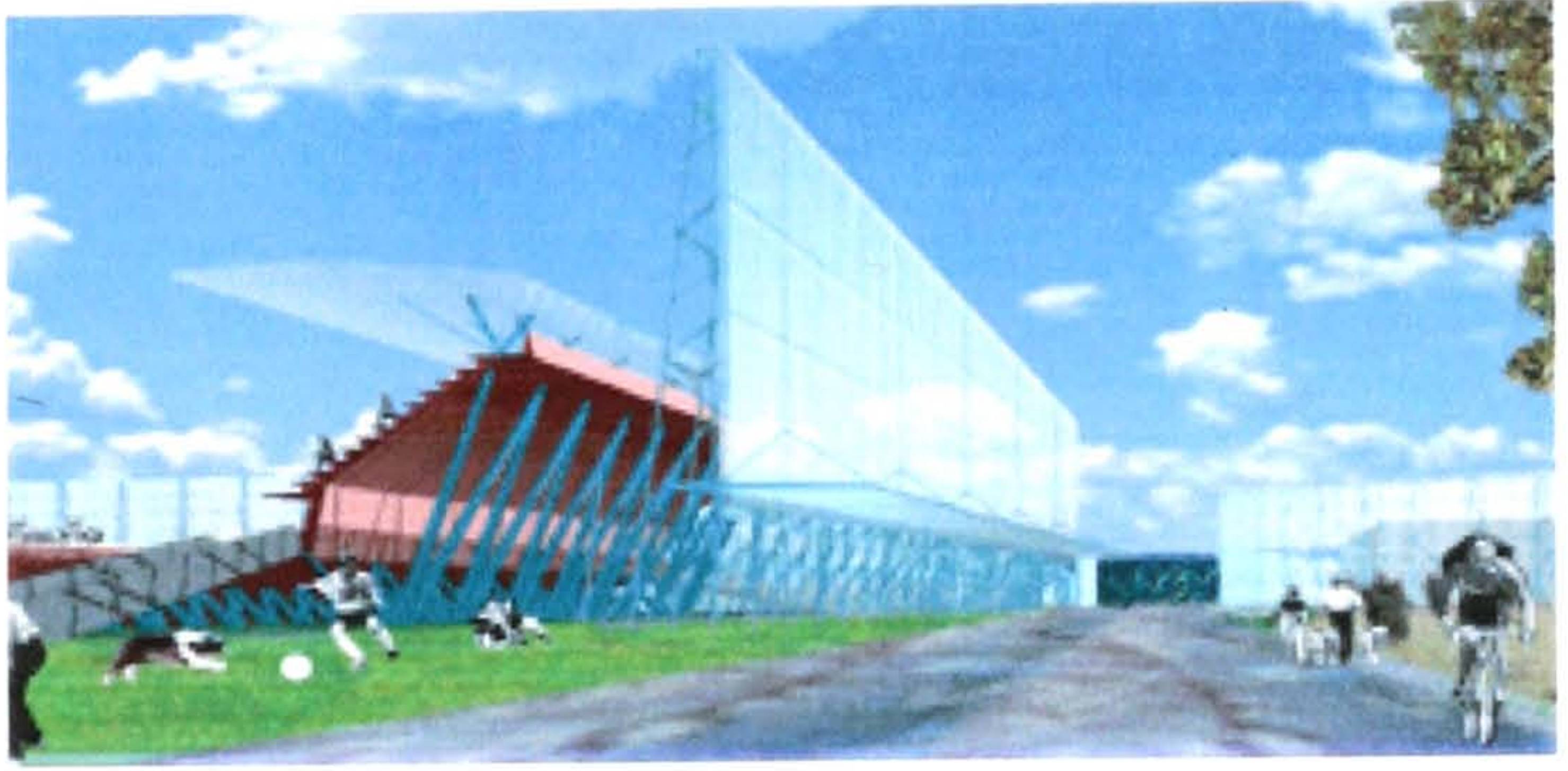


Master Plan for 2,200 acres of landfill to be converted into an innovative, ecologically diverse and culturally active new parkland. Nearly 3 times the size of Central park, the 2,200 acre site comprises over 1000 acres of closed landfill (once the world's largest landfill) and 450 acres of creeks and wetland. The remaining 750 acres can support more active programs, such as a regional sports complex, active recreational spaces, markets, restaurants and public event spaces. Anticipated to be developed over the next 25 years, the Field Operations plan proposes a huge ecological restoration of the site, diversifying wetland, grassland and woodland habitats across the site. A major regional roadway is designed to work in harmony with the new parkland setting, and over 50 miles of new trails, bikepaths and equestrian paths are proposed. The project also incorporates an ambitious public art program, environmental education exhibits and a special earthwork memorial for 9/11 to mark the recovery area where debris and remains were once sorted.

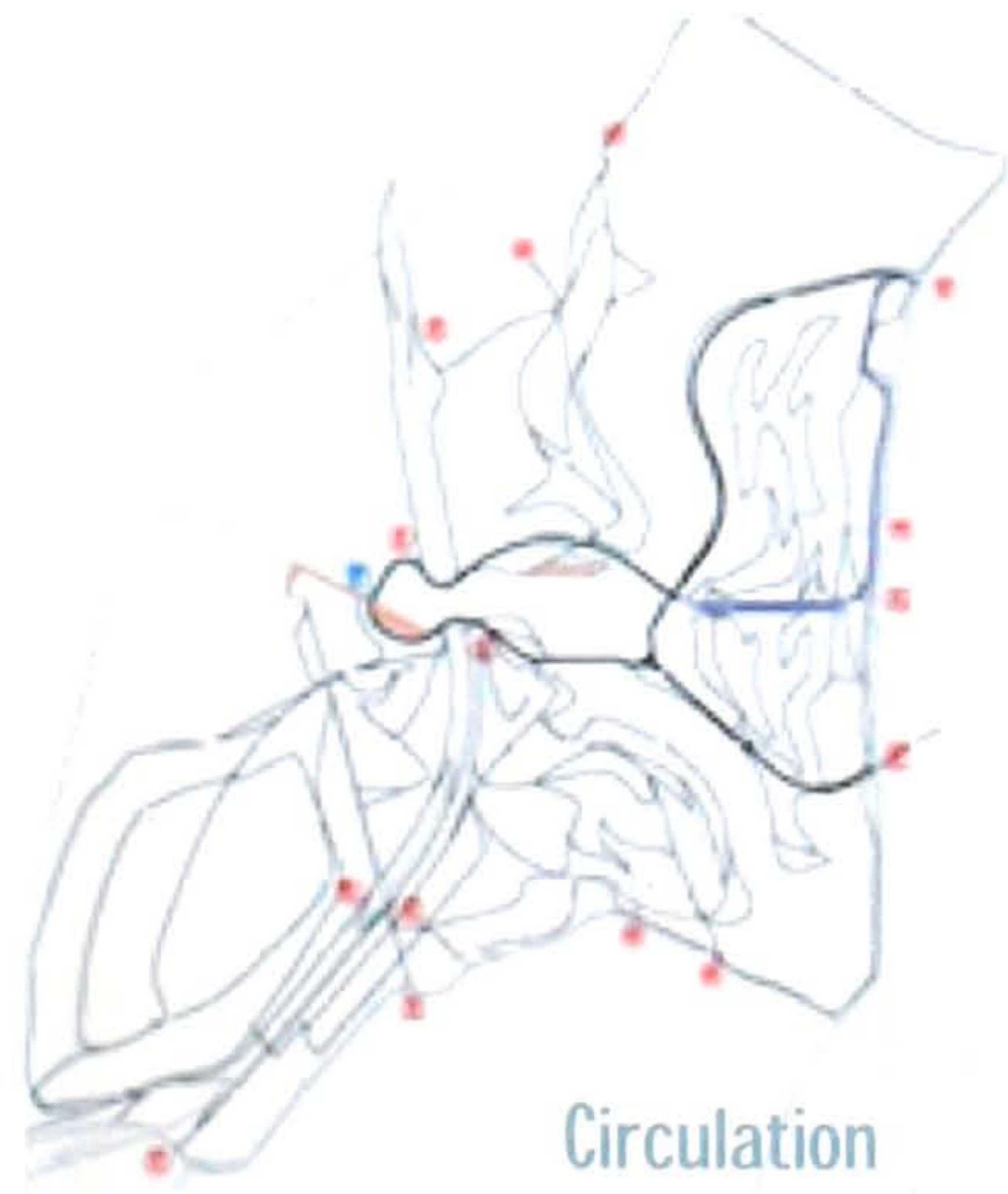
LIFESCAPE, Field Operations' winning proposal, envisioned Fresh Kills Parkland as a new form of public ecological landscape; a new paradigm of creativity and adaptive reuse. Lifescape is informed by the voice of an engaged public and shaped by time and process. The Field Operations team imagined an ecologically robust landscape, not as a pastoral refuge from the city, but as an active agent within it. Fresh Kills could provide richly diverse settings for wildlife, birds and plants, and serve as a vibrant locus for social life - for all kinds of active recreation, for physical and cultural experience. Because the site is vast and complex, the idea of a landscape developed in stages, unfolding over time—as all life does—was central to the proposal.



Program



Habitat



Circulation



Schouwburgplein [Theatre Square]

West 8

Rotterdam, Netherlands, Europe

Design:1990-1992

Construction:1996-1997

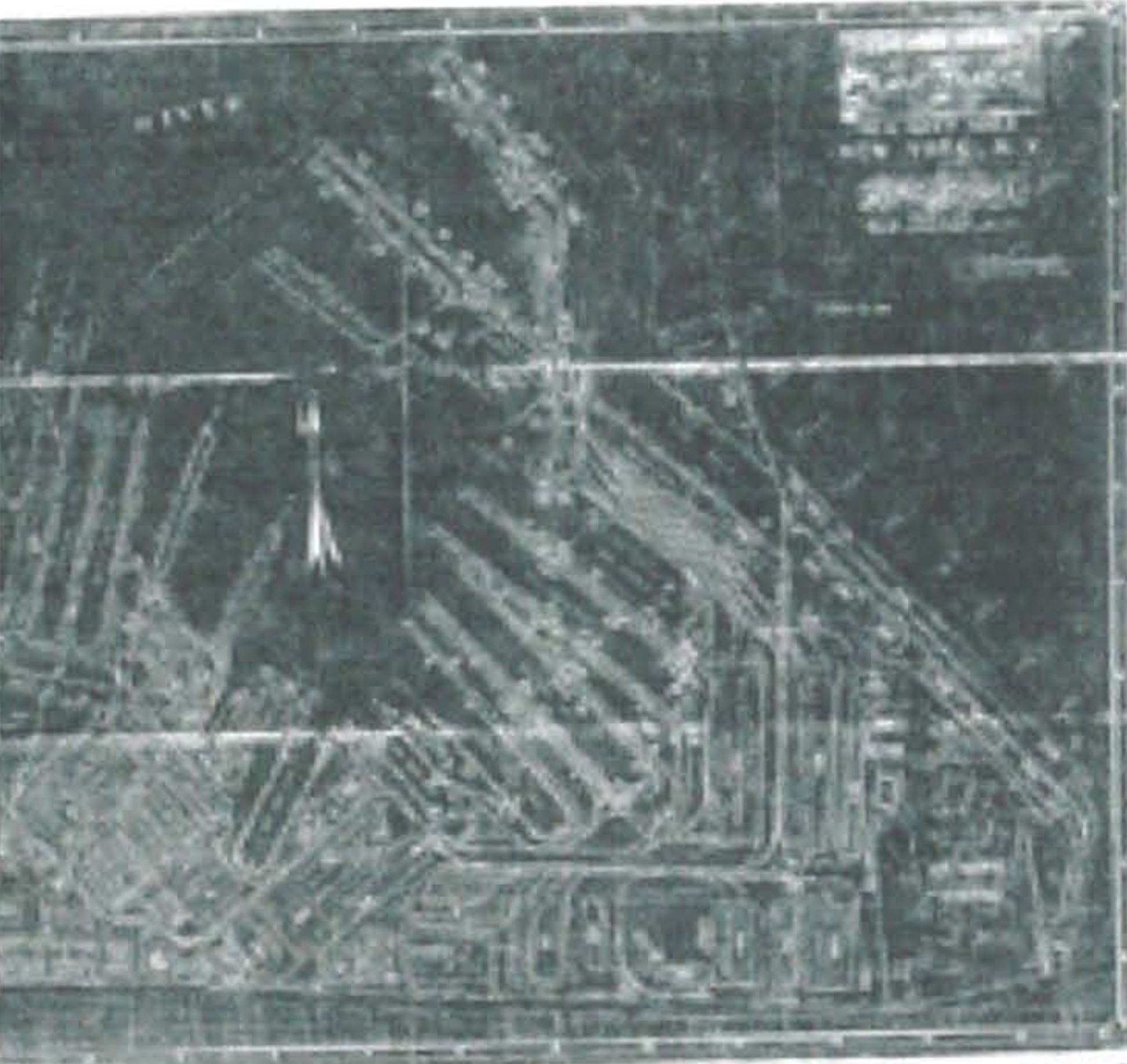
Size:12.250 sqm

The Theatre Square is a podium from which Rotterdam's skyline is visible. The walking surface is 35 centimetres above ground level. No one can walk the square unnoticed; crossing the square is a conscious act. Once on the square, the visitor becomes an actor or spectator.

The square's floor is a mosaic of different textures. Wood, perforated steel plates, granite, epoxy and rubber elicit different activities. Football players, skaters, children and musicians each choose their own zone. The square's surface is completely level. The only objects on the square are red light masts, the glass entrances to the underground parking garage and the 70-metre long city bench. On the eastern edge of the square stand three high ventilation towers, which together form a digital clock.

The four 35-metre high, hydraulic light masts echo the cranes in the harbour and serve as stage lights. These are spotlights in which lovers may capture each other and street singers may perform. The public may operate them so that a continuous mechanical ballet can be performed.





Map [circa 1943]



Brooklyn Navy Yard [circa 1944]



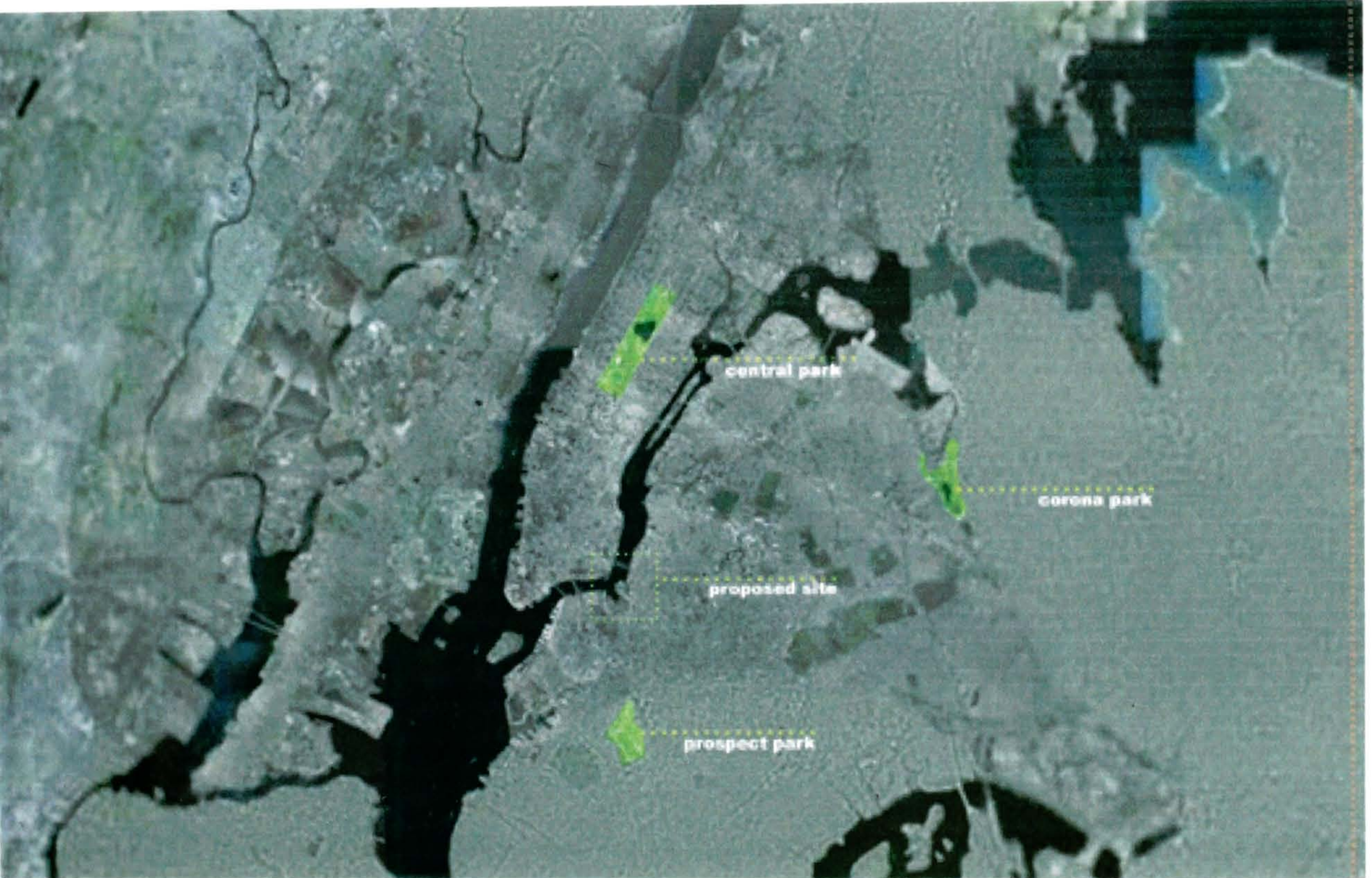
Wallabout Market [circa 1901]

Brooklyn [Navy Yard]

Brooklyn, New York, U.S.A.
 Brooklyn, Kings County, New York, USA
 40°42'07.14"N
 73°58'02.83"W

The Brooklyn Navy Yard, is located 1.7 miles northeast of the Battery on the Brooklyn side of the East River in Wallabout Bay, a semicircular bend of the East River. The Navy Yard was established by the federal government in 1801. In 1938 the Yard employed about ten thousand men, of whom one-third were Works Progress Administration (WPA) workers. At its peak, during World War II, the Yard employed 70,000 people, 24 hours a day. The Navy decommissioned the Yard in 1966 and sold it to the City of New York. It then became an area of private manufacturing and commercial activity. Now the Yard has over 200 tenants with more than 3500 employees, and is managed and operated by the Brooklyn Navy Yard Development Corporation for the City of New York.

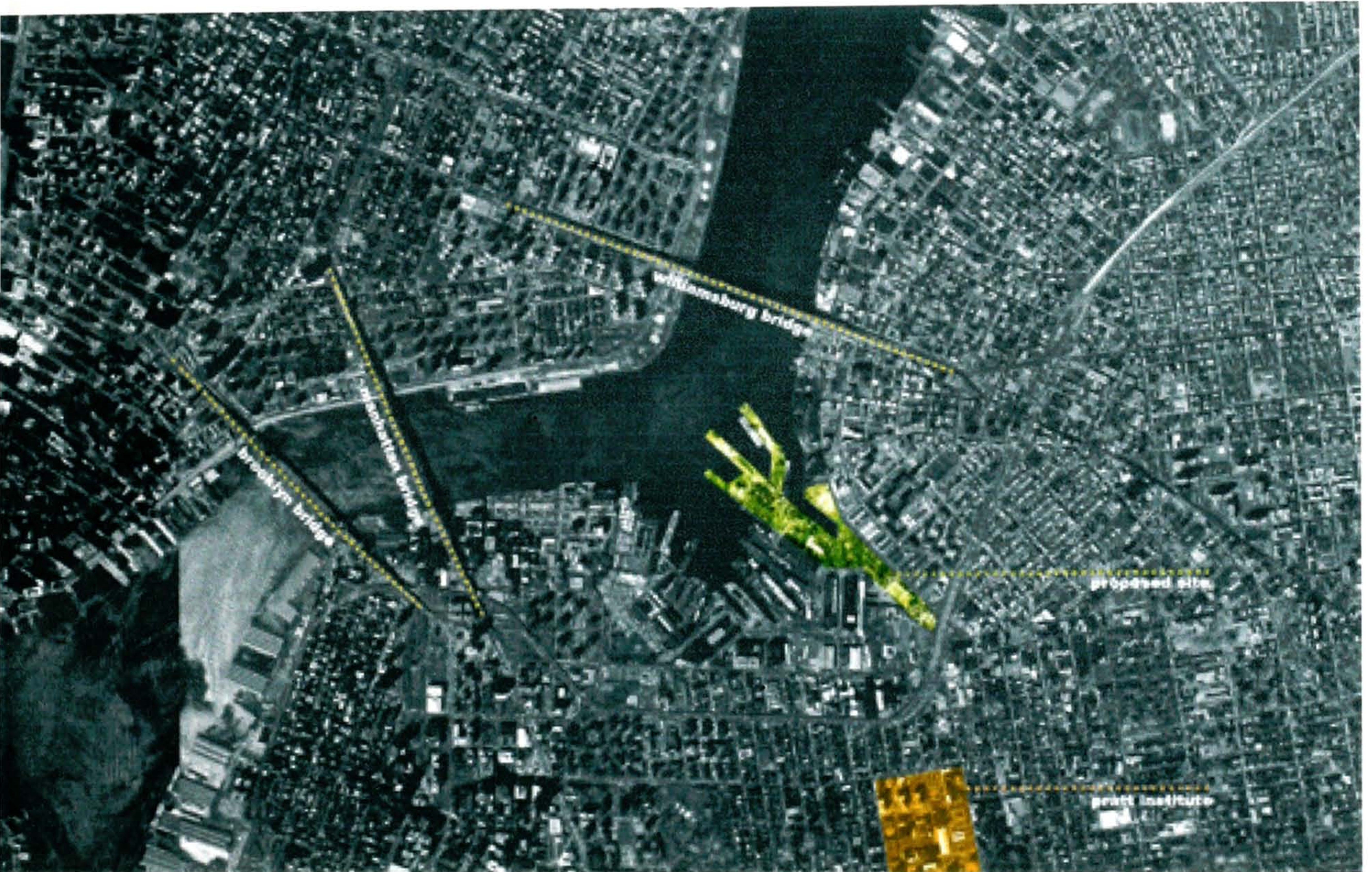
New York's Wallabout Market was once the second-largest market in the world. From about 1884 onwards, vendors would gather in this district adjacent to Wallabout Bay in Brooklyn and sell their various wares. The market featured permanent two-story brick structures designed in a nostalgic Dutch style, commemorating the Netherlandish origins of New York and Brooklyn, centered around an open plaza known as Farmers' Square where stalls were erected. Wallabout Market was an unfortunate victim of World War II when the Navy Yard expanded to seven times its previous size, gobbling up the land the Market was built on.



Site Location

New York City

The proposed site for this thesis project is located on a portion of the Brooklyn Navy Yard. This map shows where the site is located within the greater New York City area, with reference to some of the larger parks in the area including Central Park in Manhattan, Prospect Park in Brooklyn, and Flushing Meadows-Corona Park in Queens. The site is bordered by the Wallabout Bay, located within the East River on the north edge of the site.



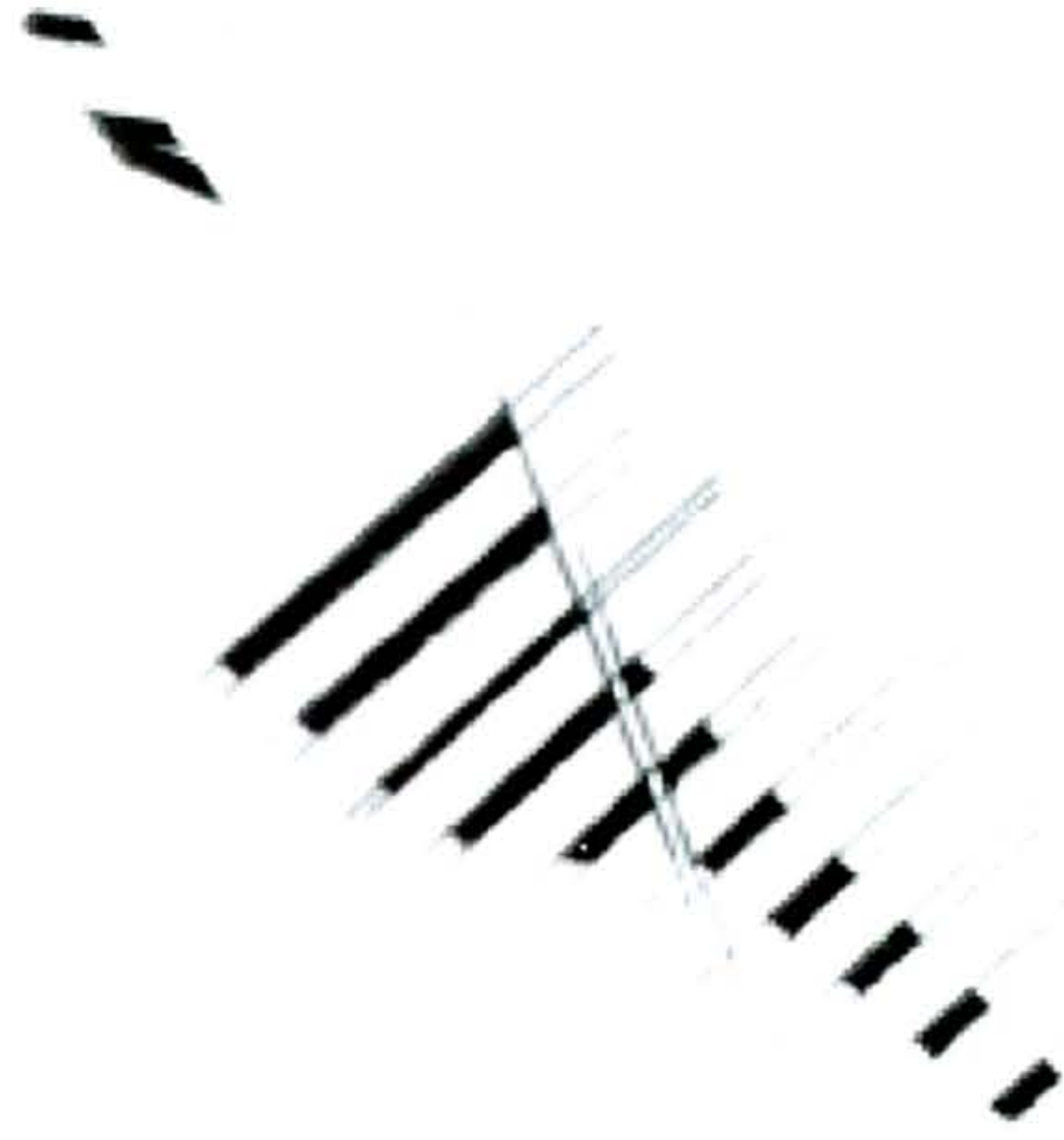
Focused Site Location

Brooklyn, NYC

Taking a look at a more focused site for this project shows that the site is located across the East River from Manhattan, between the Manhattan and Williamsburg Bridges. The site can be accessed through four major thorough ways, the Manhattan Bridge, Williamsburg Bridge, the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway, and access from the East River. Pratt Institute is located about one-half mile south of the proposed site with downtown Brooklyn and the Brooklyn Academy of Music and cultural center located about a mile and a half to the southwest of the site.

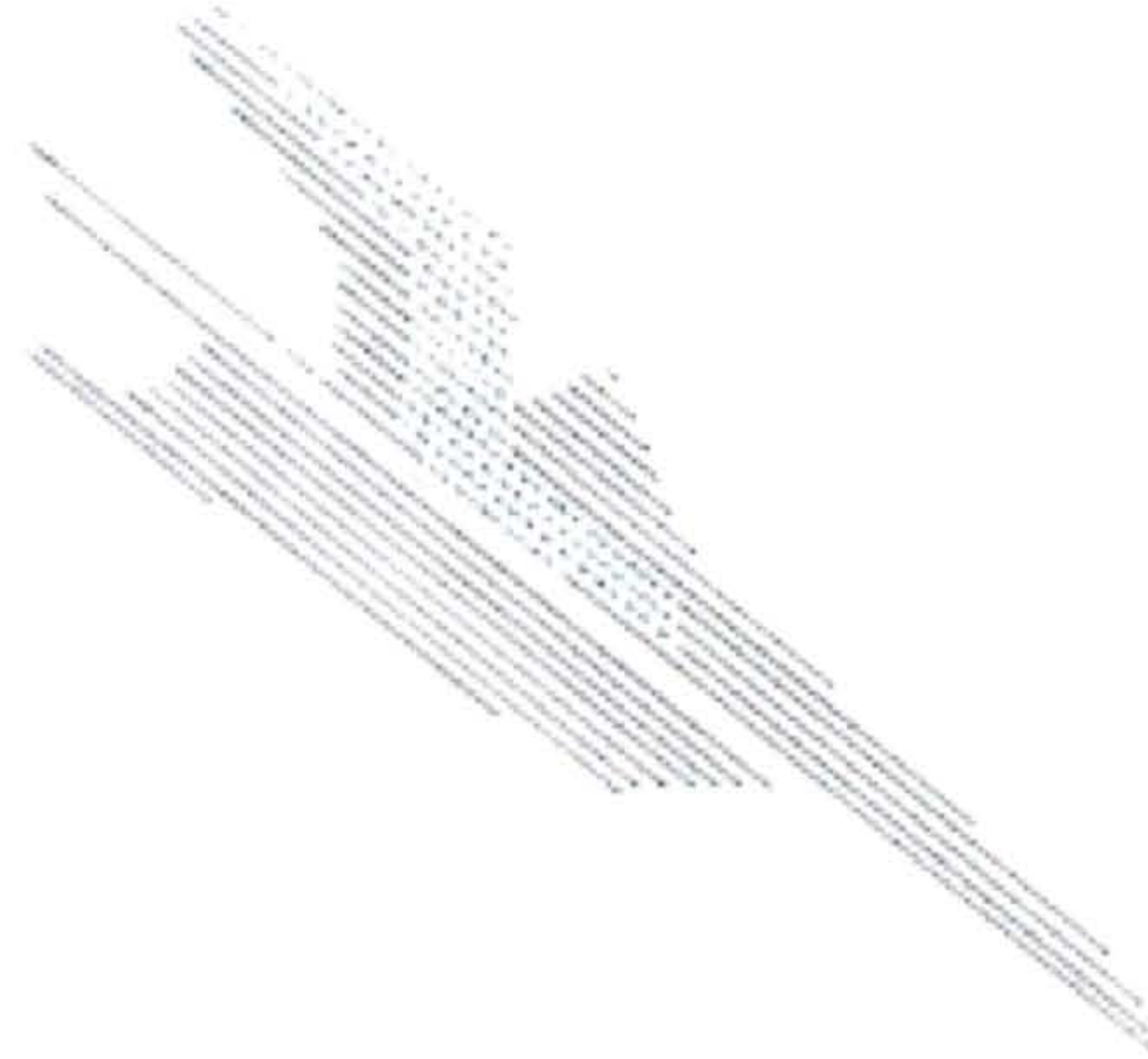
Street/View Corridors

Corridors based off of existing streets from the surrounding neighborhood that make contact with the edge of the site.



Lines along middle axis of site

Lines offset from the middle axis of the site, towards Manhattan



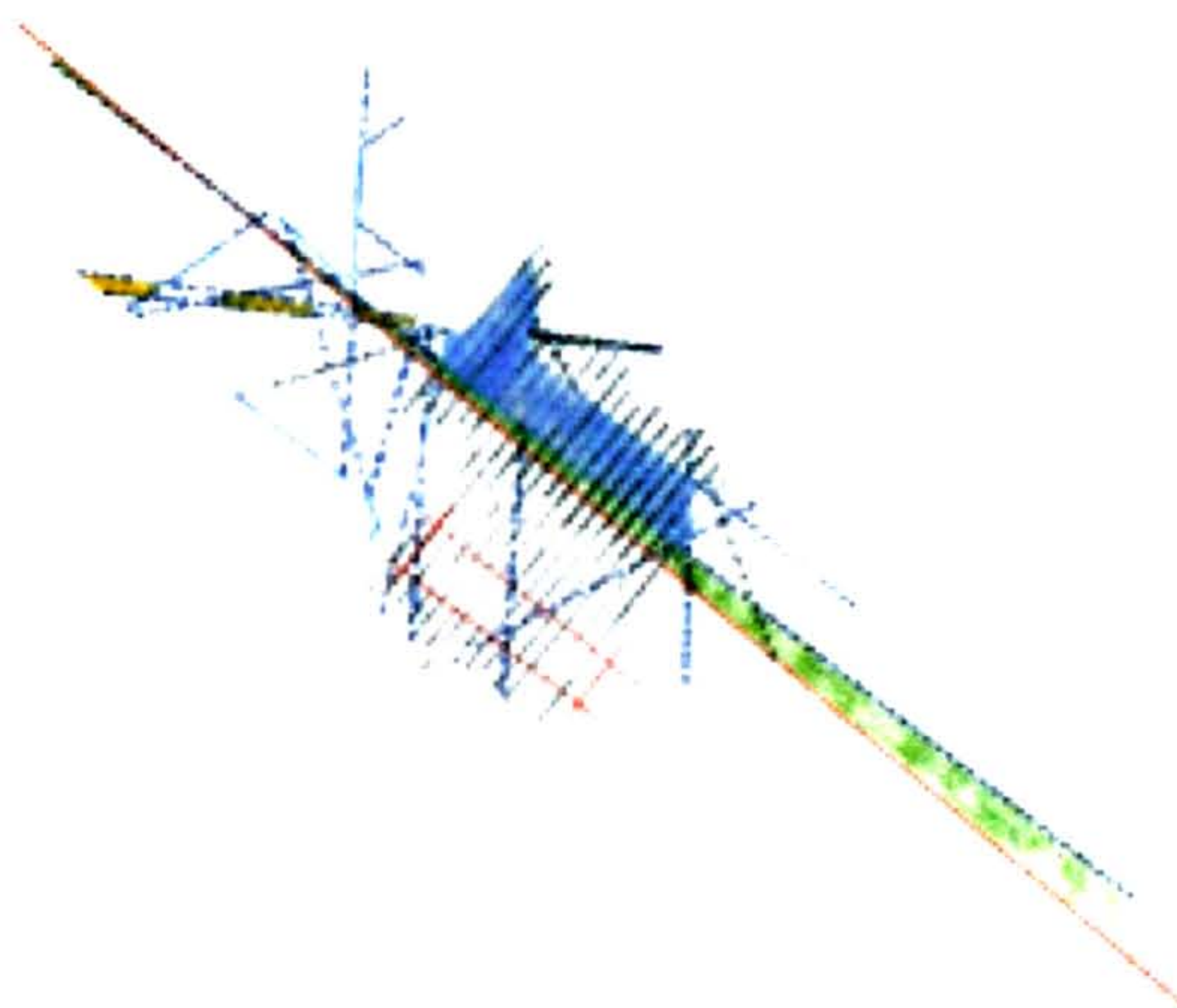
Site lines towards Manhattan

Lines derived from edges of the site, that reach towards Manhattan



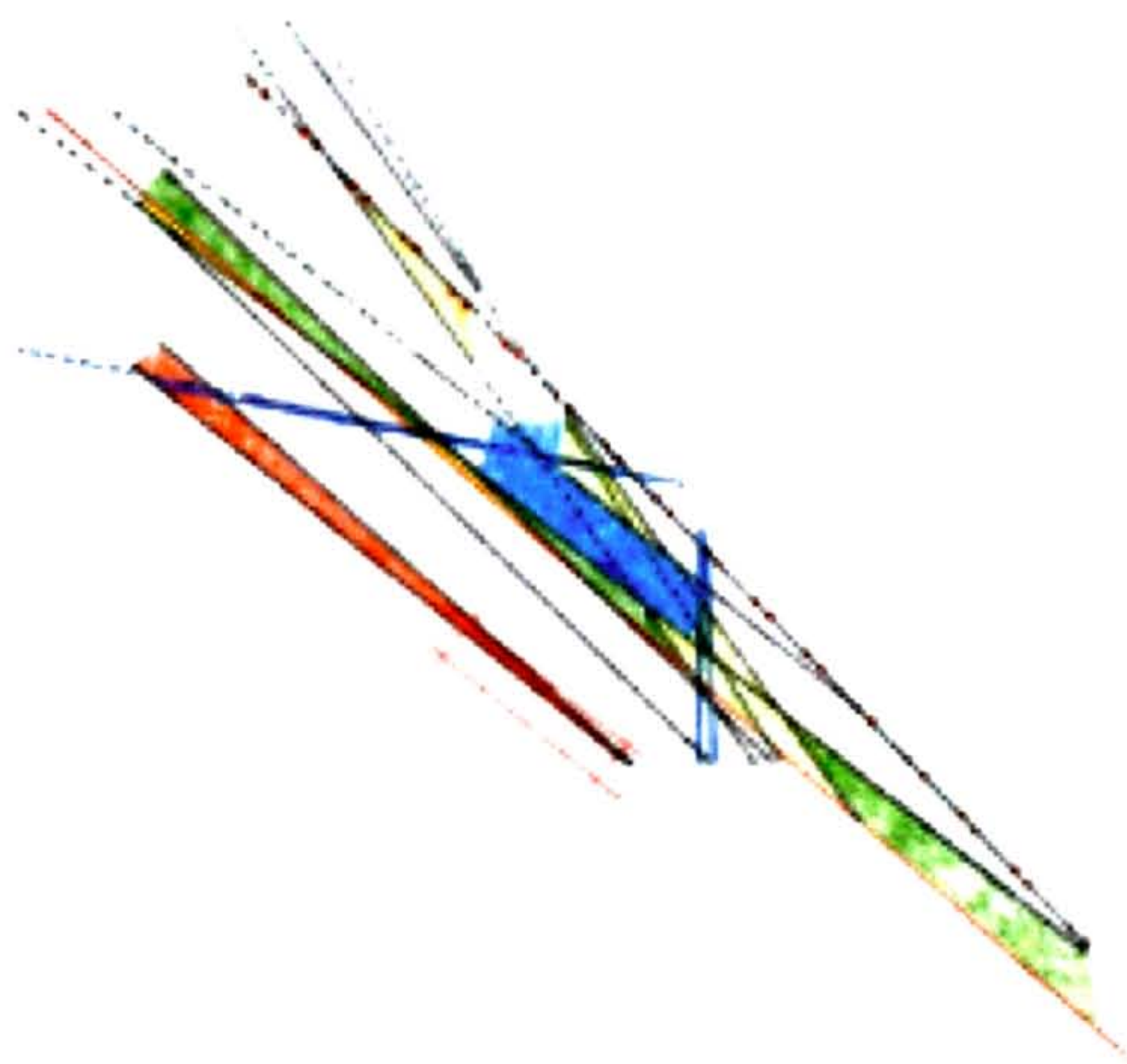
Site Lines

Site Lines that are not those extending directly to Manhattan, derived from the edges of the site.



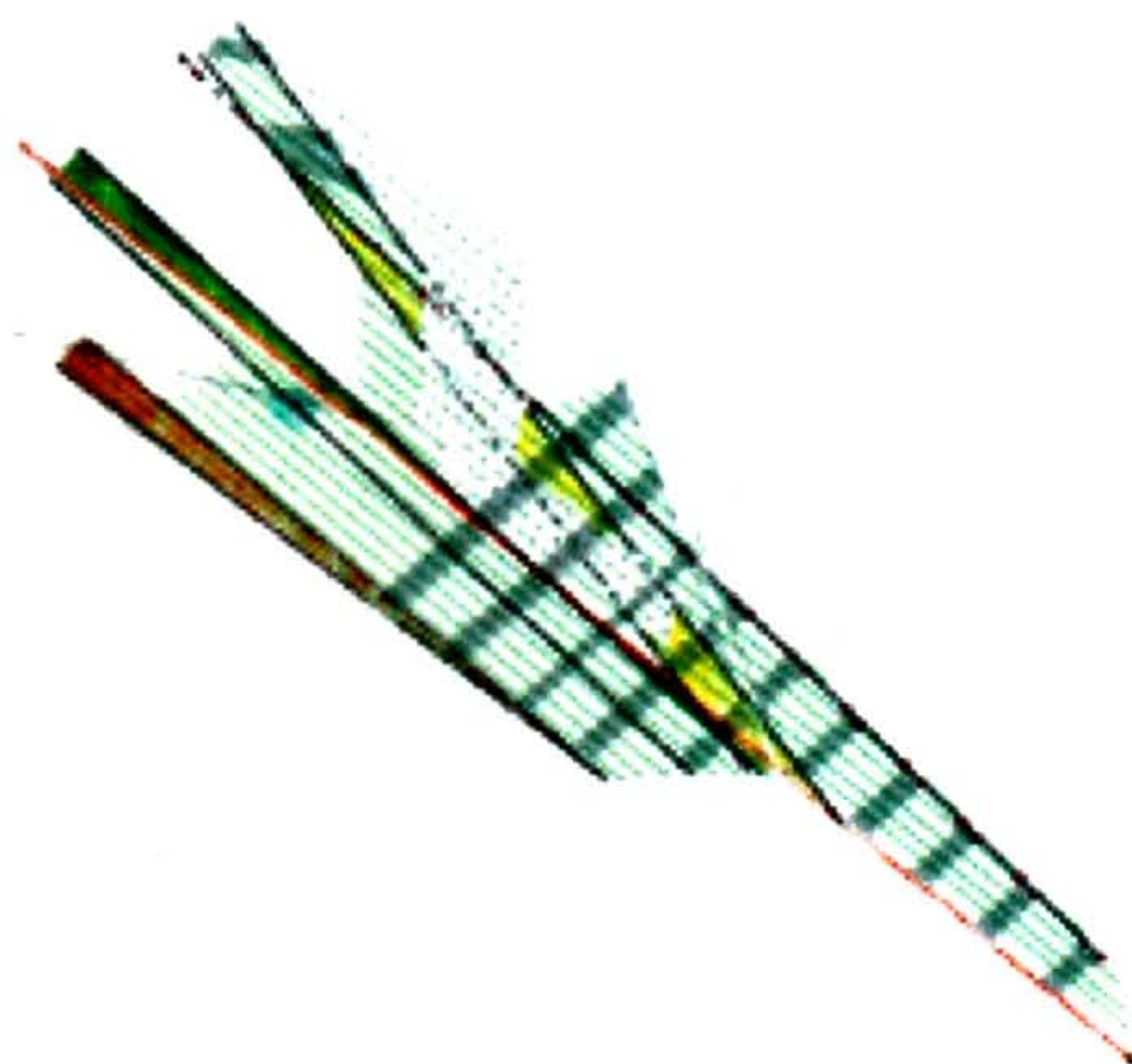
Site Lines Refined

Lines that have been refined from the site lines going towards Manhattan, and those that do not, and how they related to each other, and the types of spaces that these lines form.



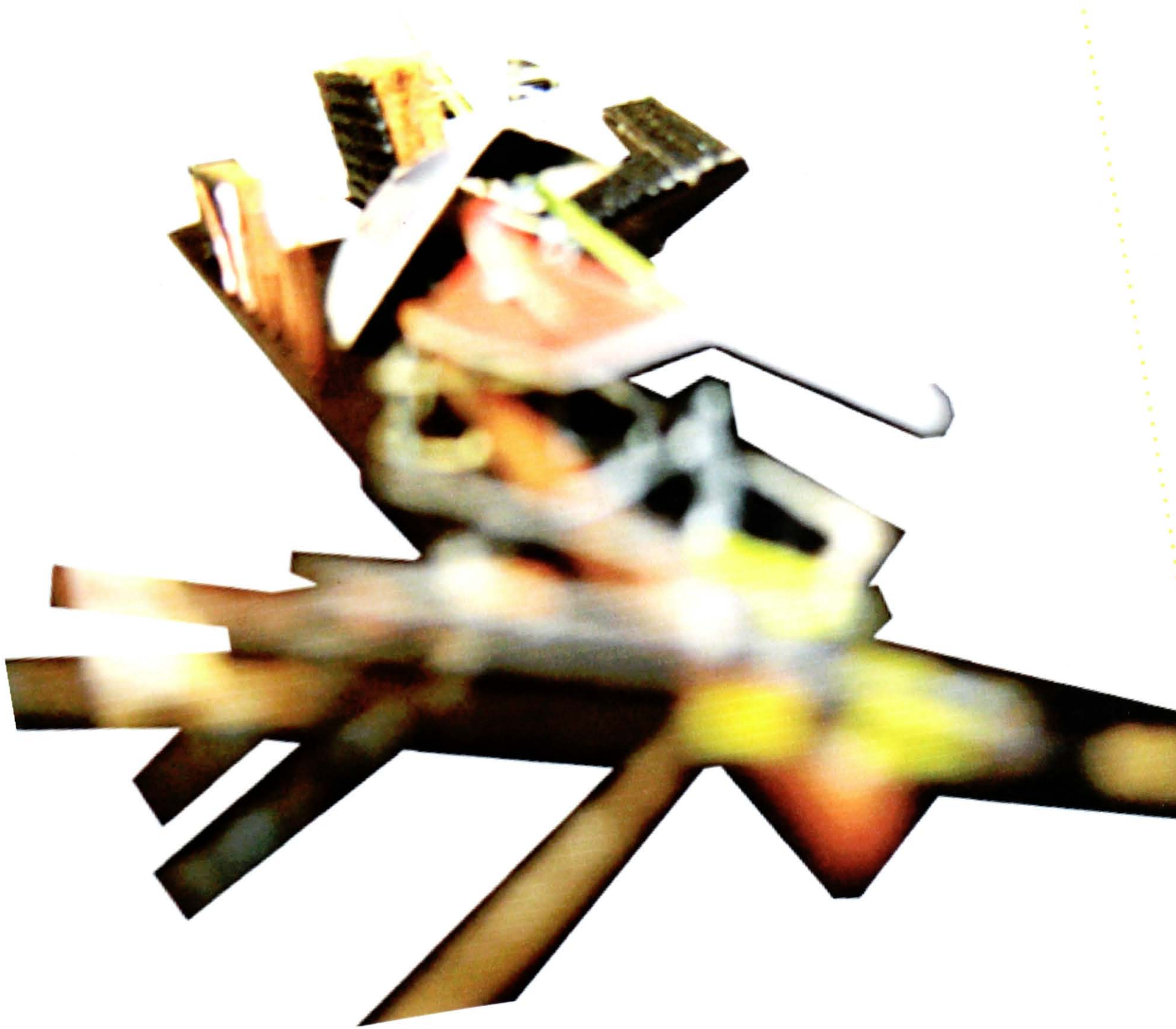
Composite Site Analysis

Composite of all of the analysis done on the site including the previous 5 analysis studies, and then refined into a study of how these can be utilized in developing a master plan of the site.



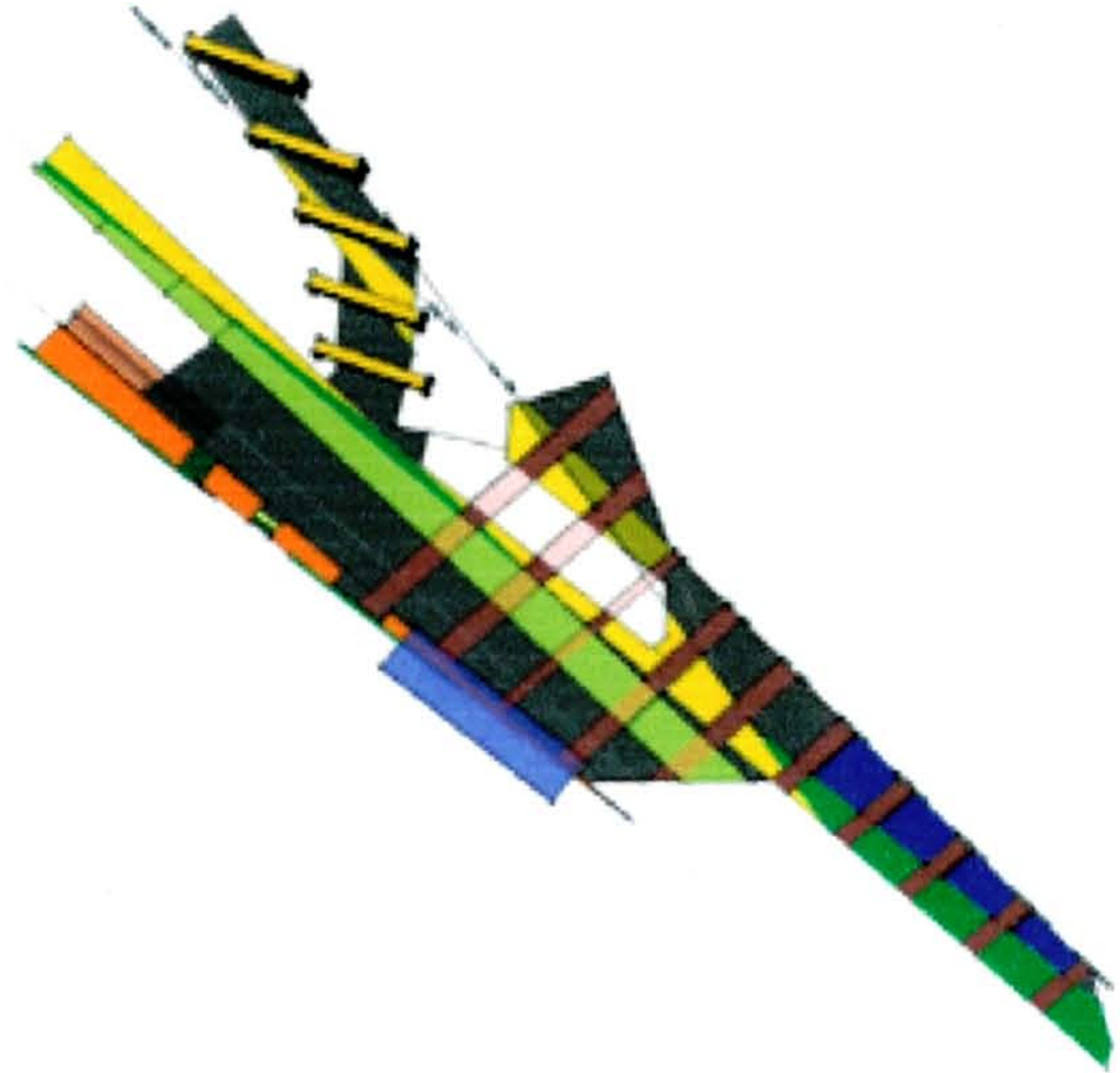


View of Skyline



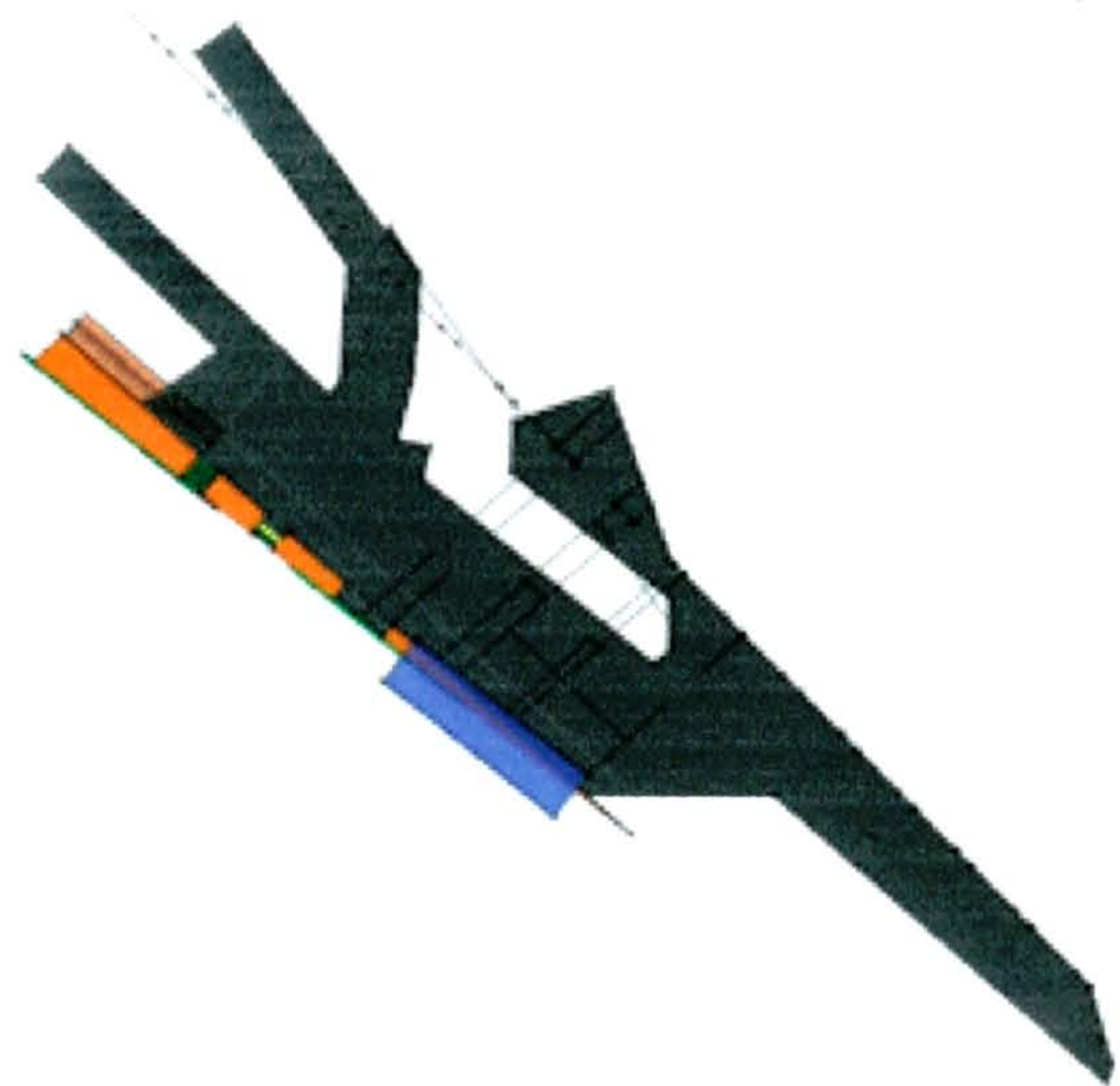
Composite Master Plan

The master plan for the site is made up in a large part by green, open space, that is intended for leisurely relaxing activities, as a way to escape from the hustle and bustle of the city. Also included in this plan are residential units, a market, mixed-use development, and a culturally focused



Culture Barge

Leisure hybrid, combining entertainment with urban arts

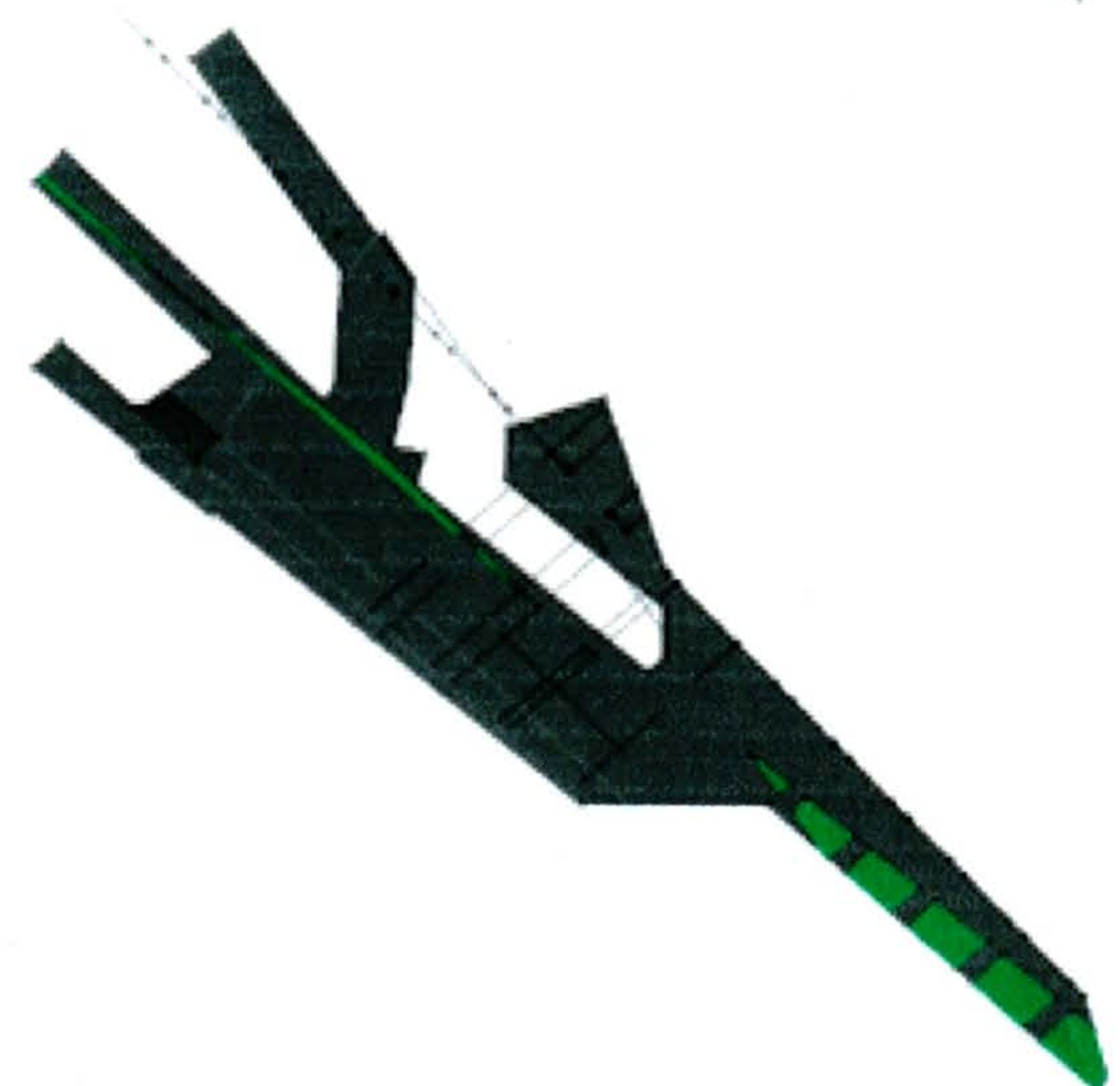


Green Field

Green park space, reaching the entire length of the site.

118,854 sq. ft.

2.73 acres



Green Savannah

Wooded area, creating edge and depth.
297,53 sq. ft.
6.83 acres



Market

Open air retail environment for public use.



Mixed-use Context

Creating relationship and context to surrounding environment



Landscaped

Residential Farm

residential park/farm.
239,494 sq. ft.
549 acres



Residential Towers

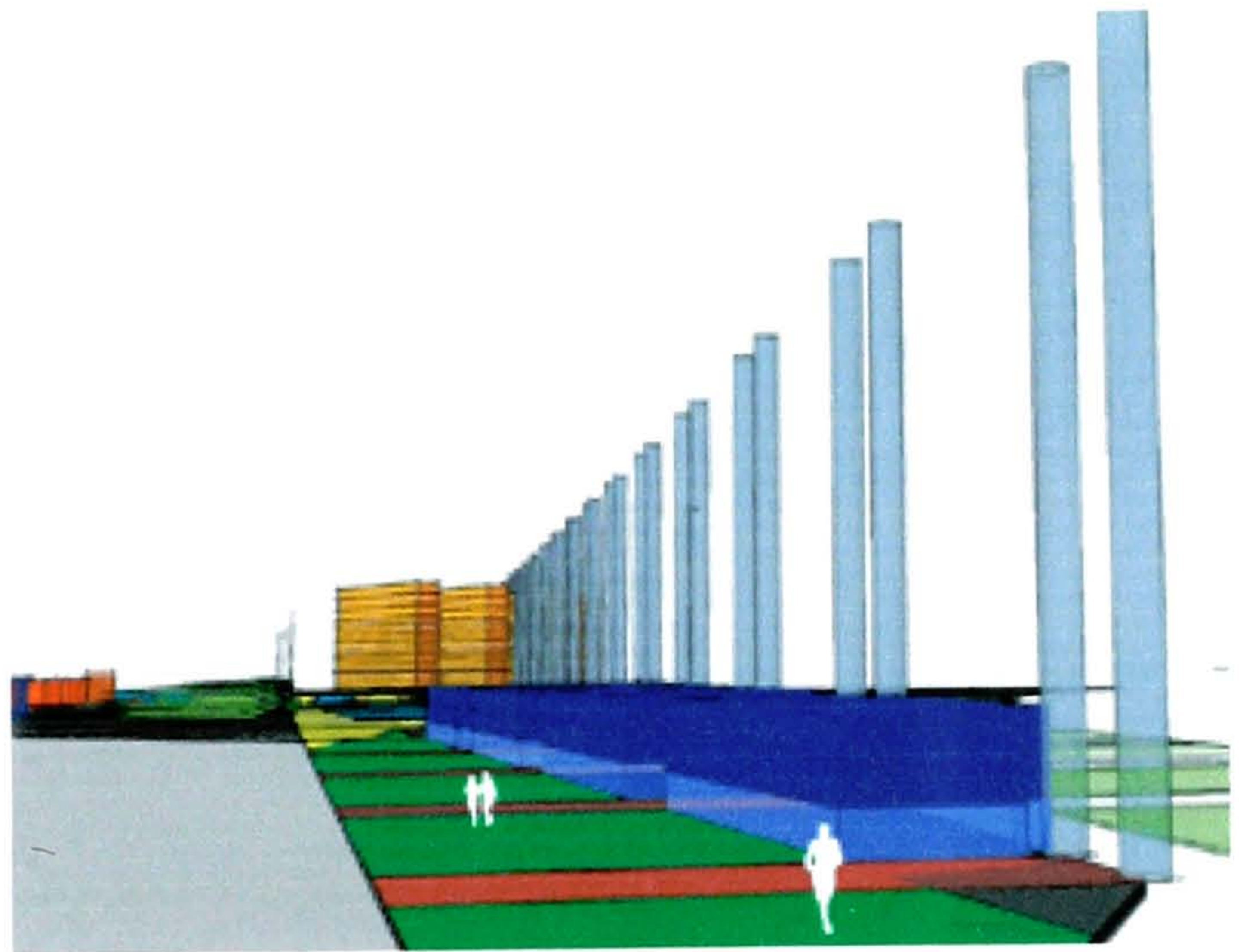
Living environment, maximizing views to Manhattan.



Voids

Creating view corridors down existing streets from surrounding environment.

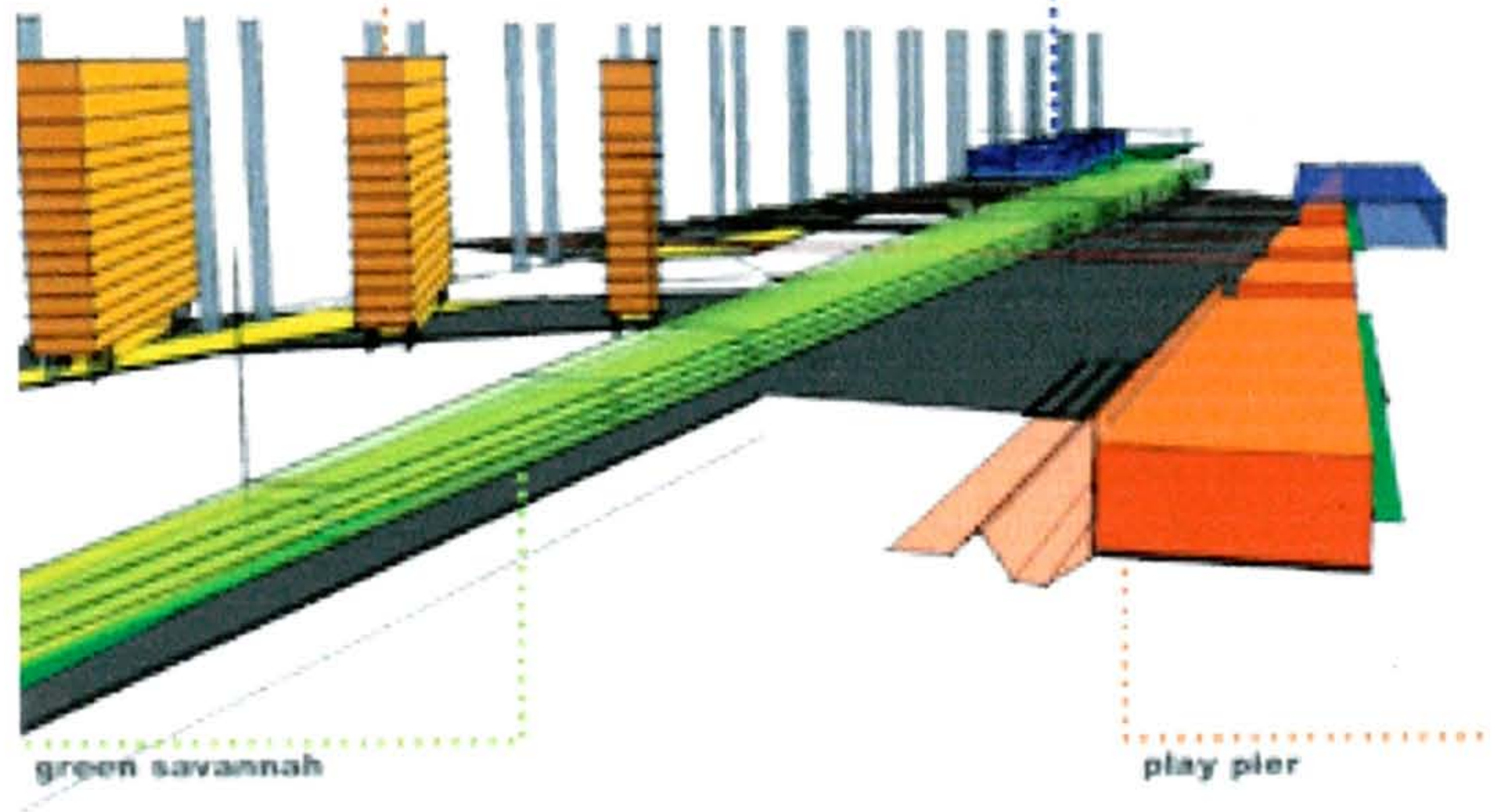
Perspective from Brooklyn



residential towers

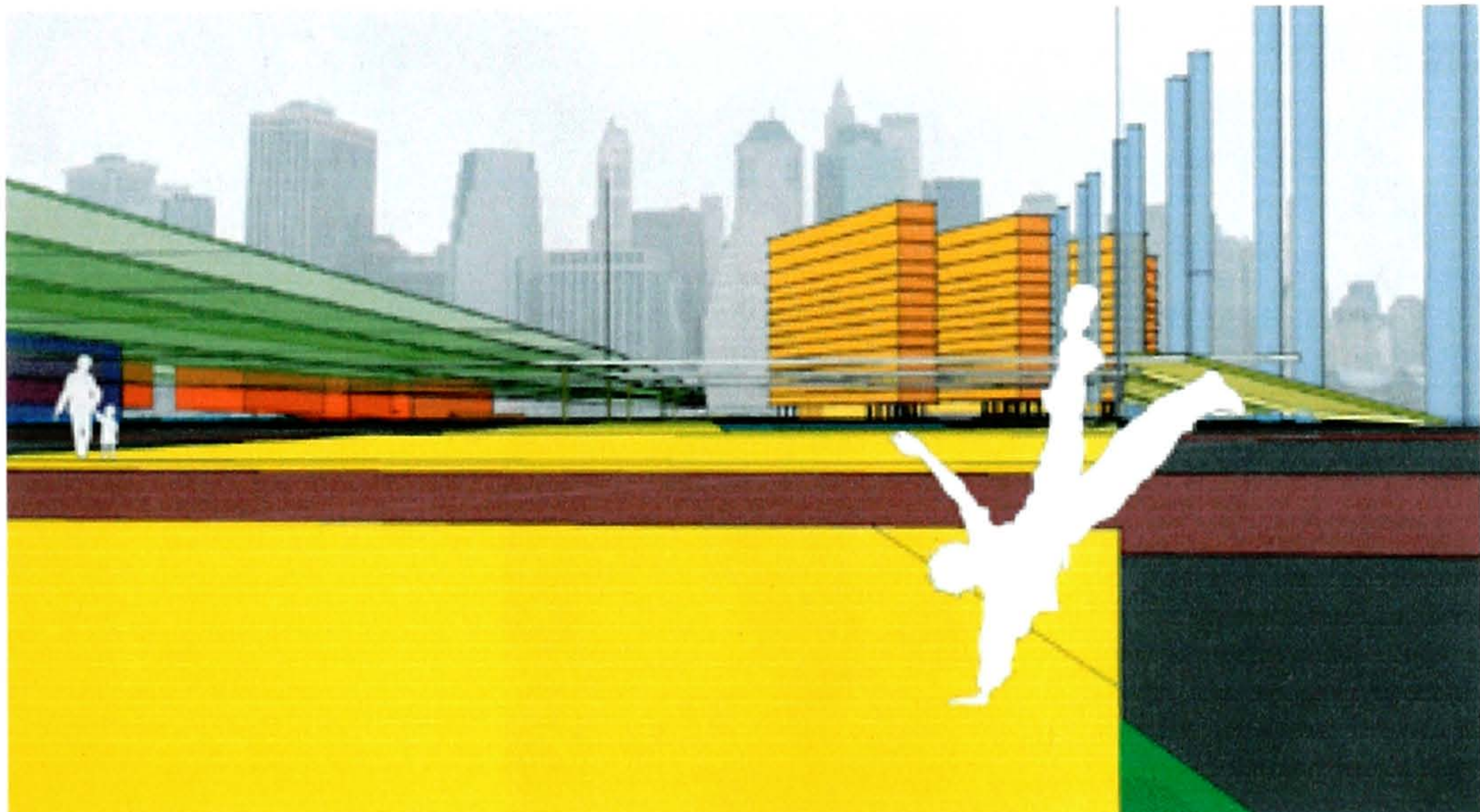
mixed use context

Perspective from East River

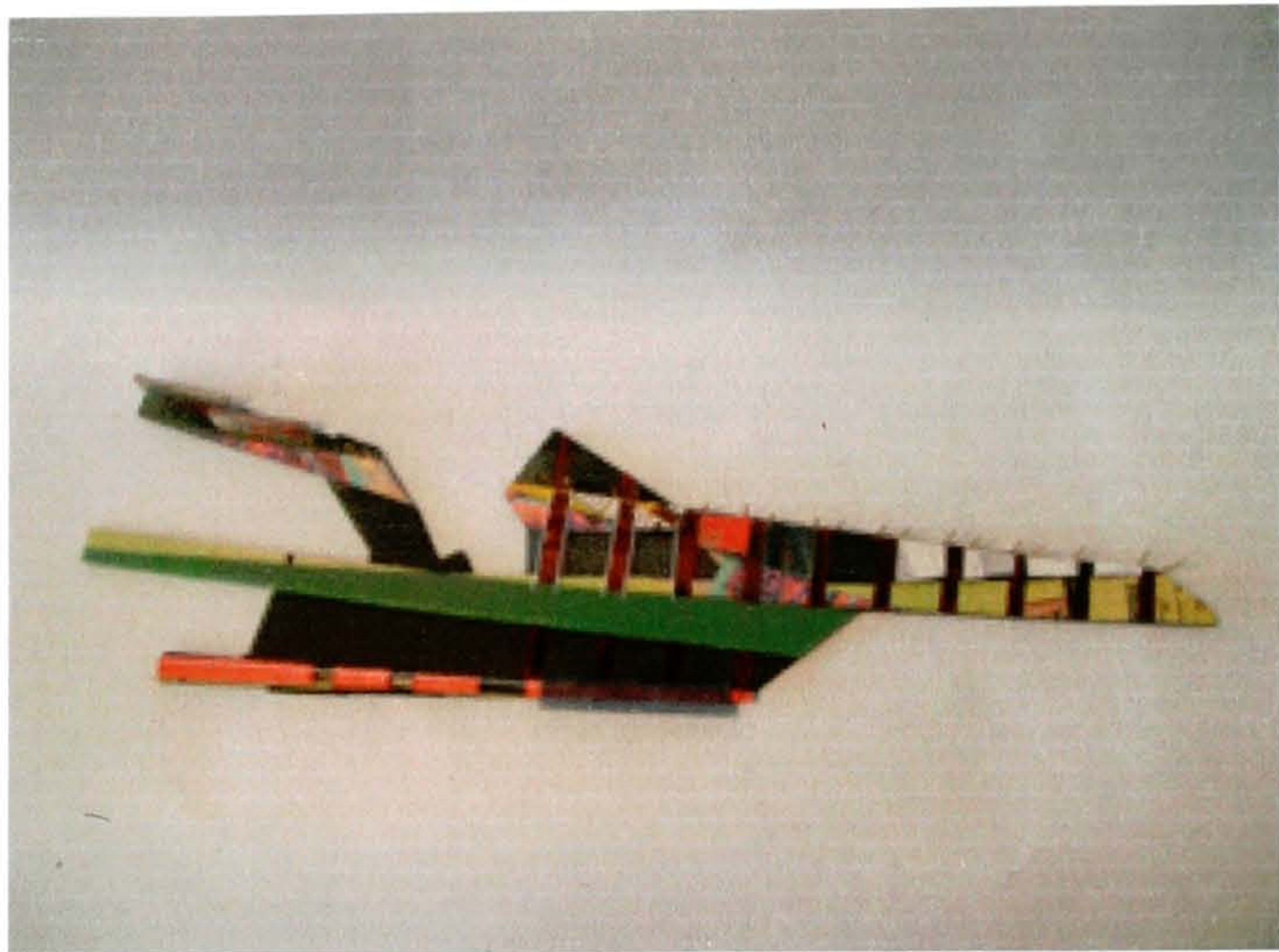


green savannah

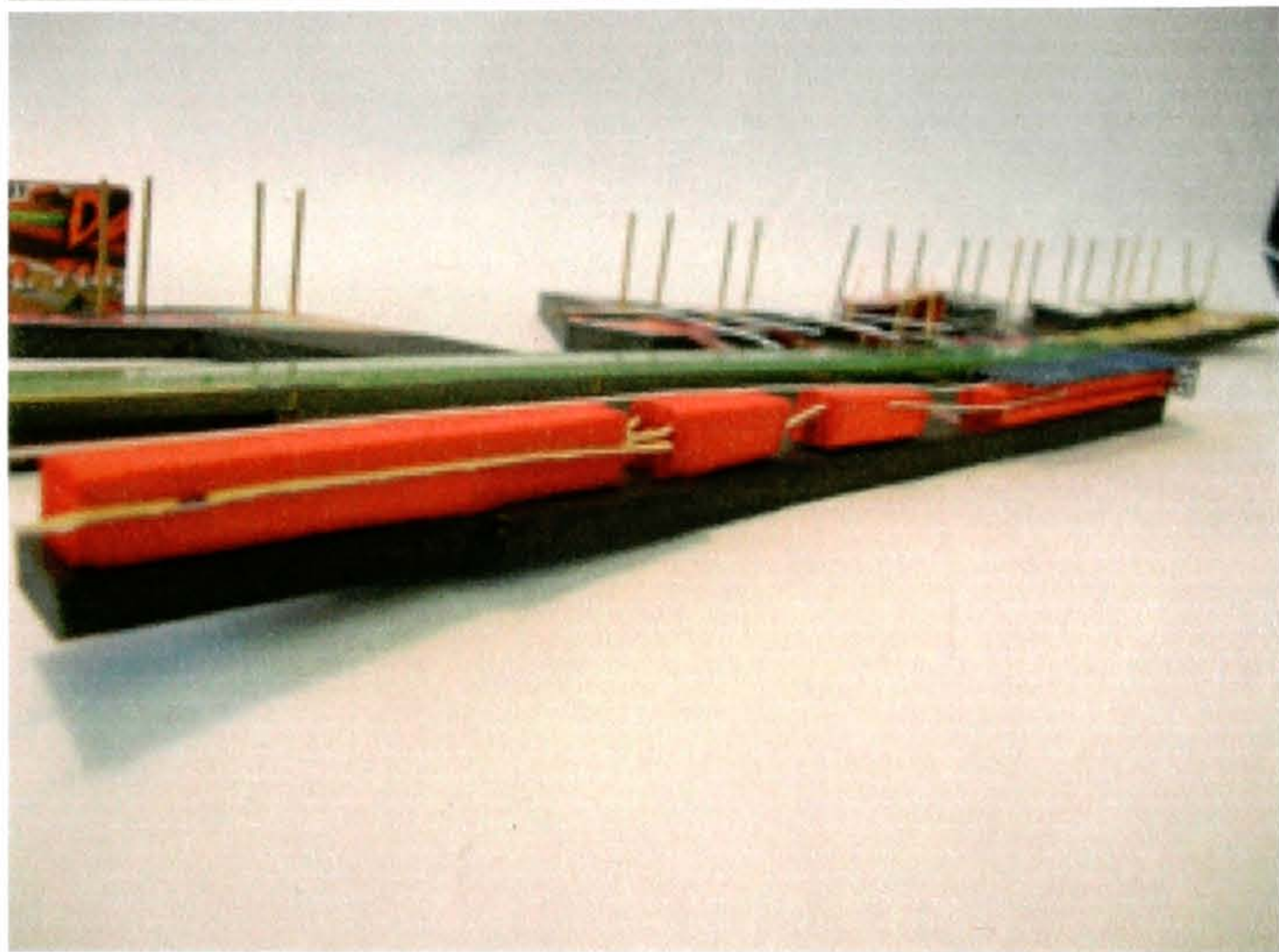
play pier



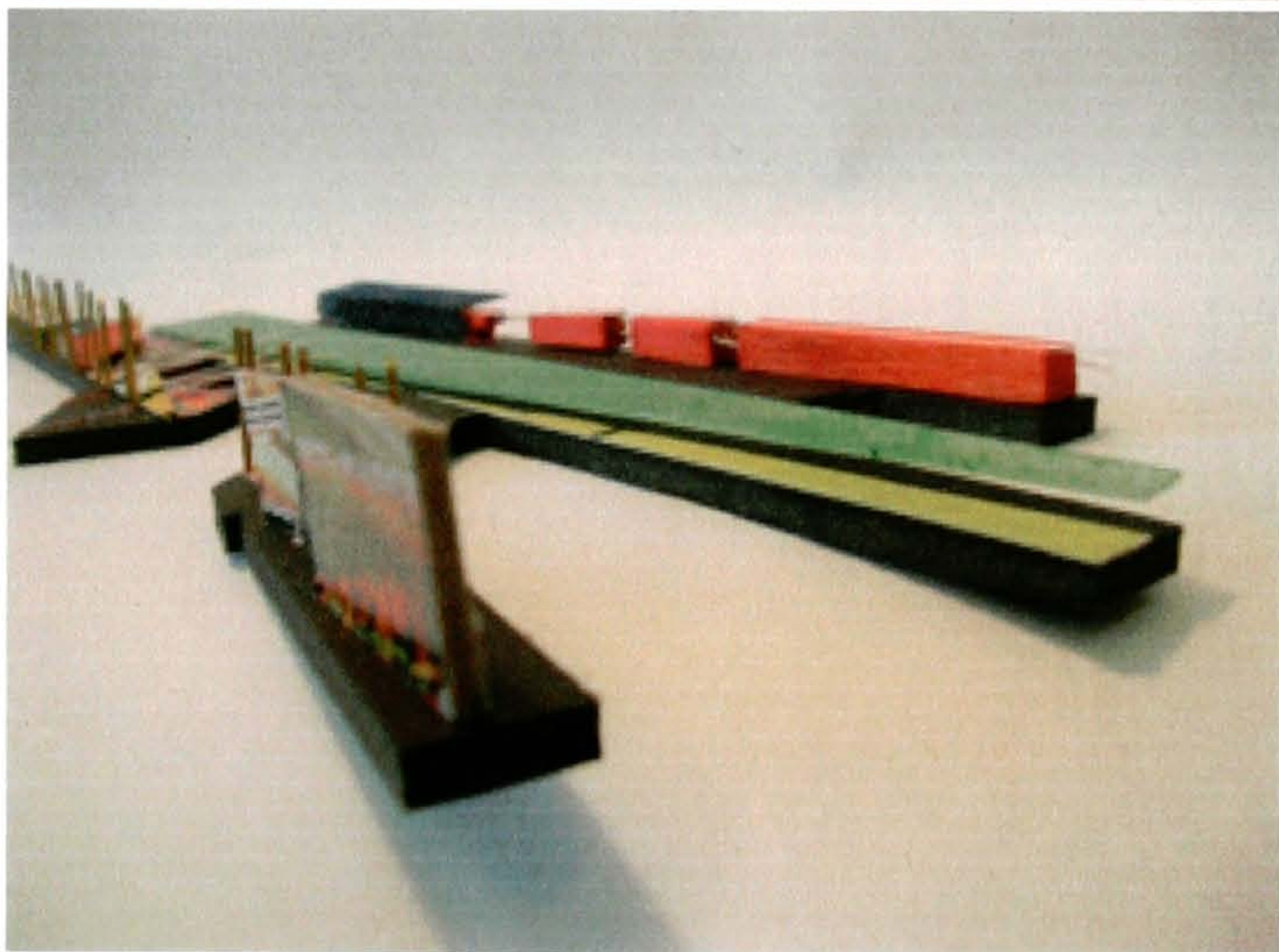
Aerial View of Master Plan Model



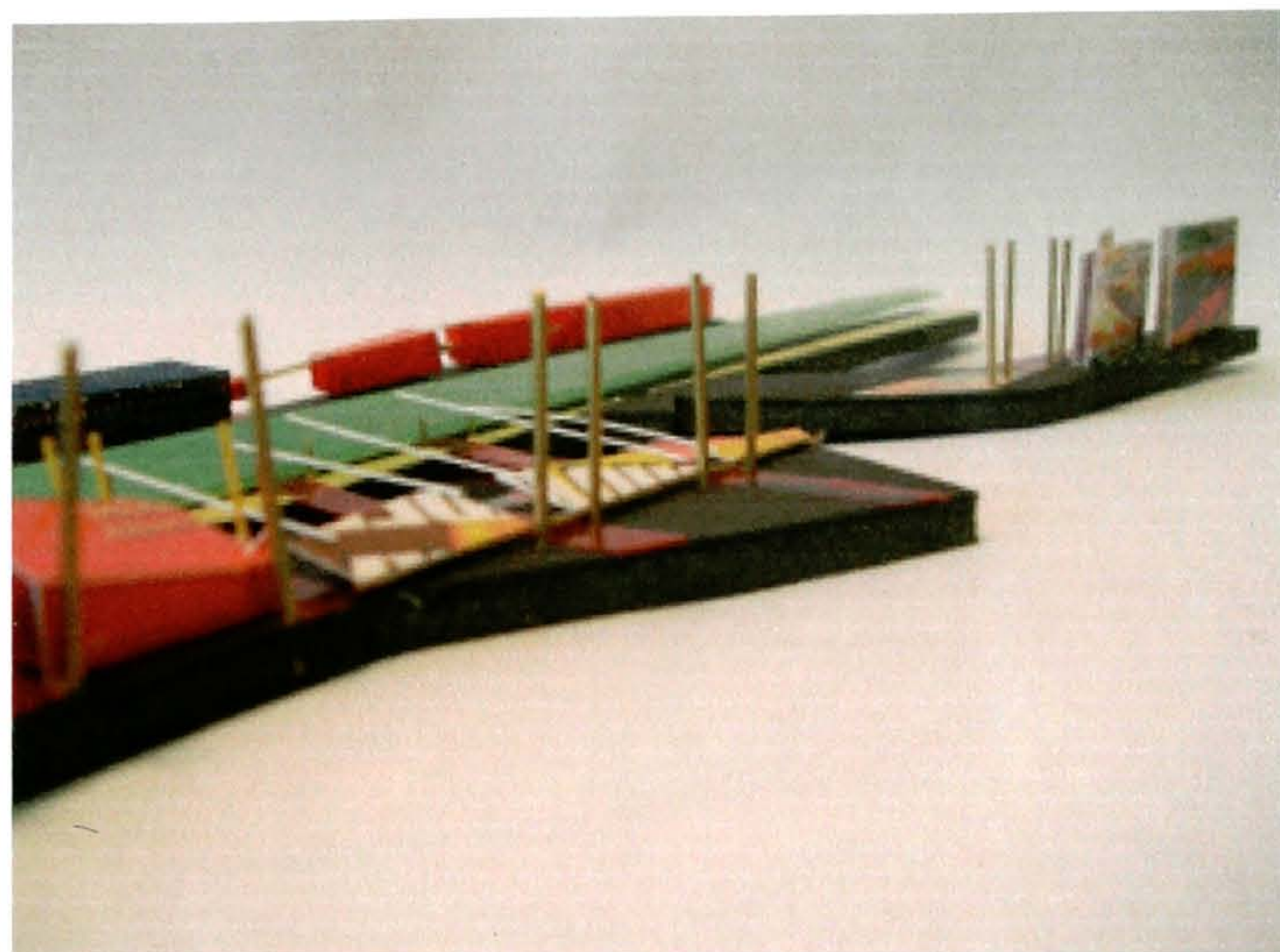
Perspective from East River



Perspective from Wallabout Bay



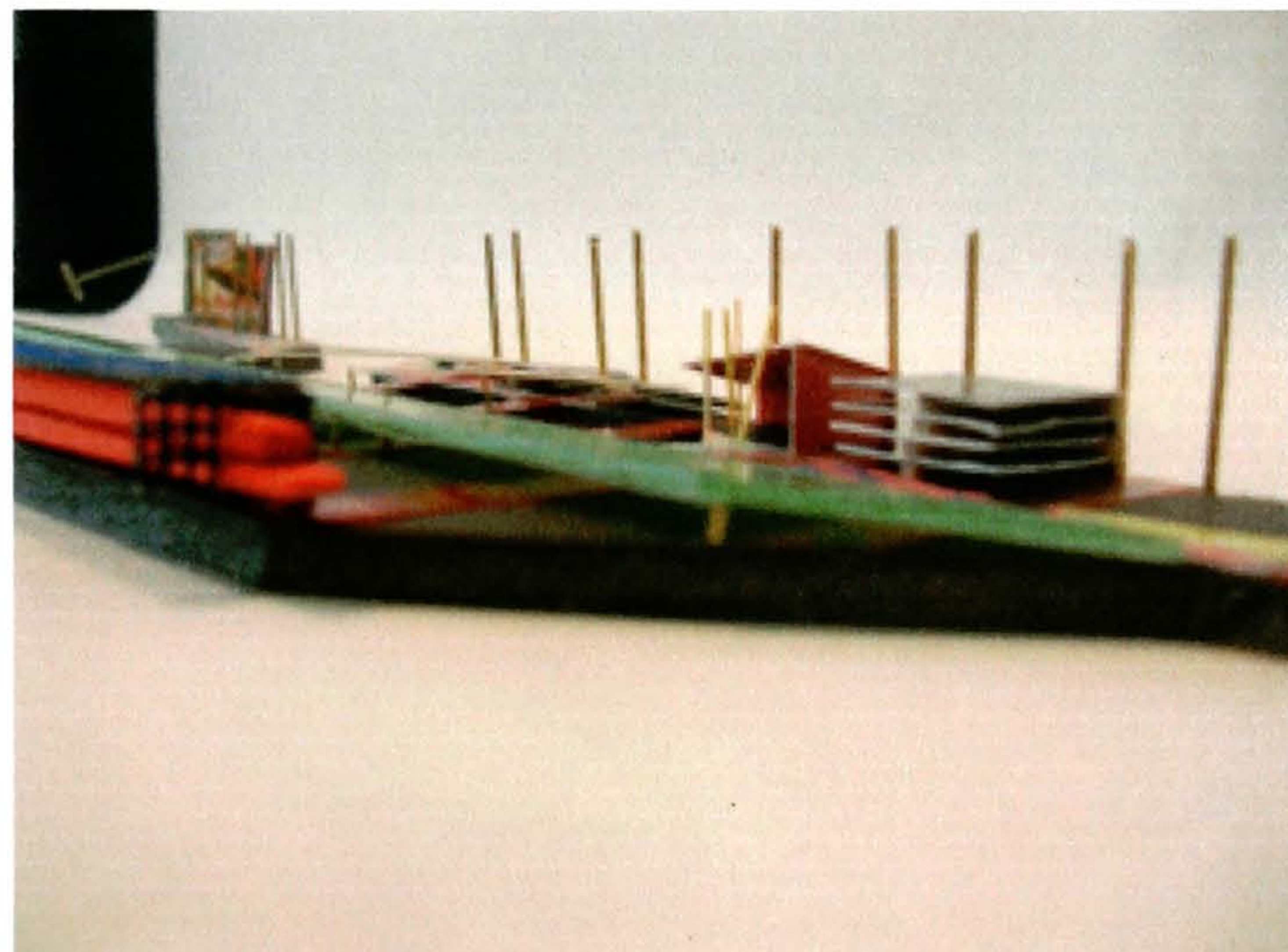
View from Williamsburg

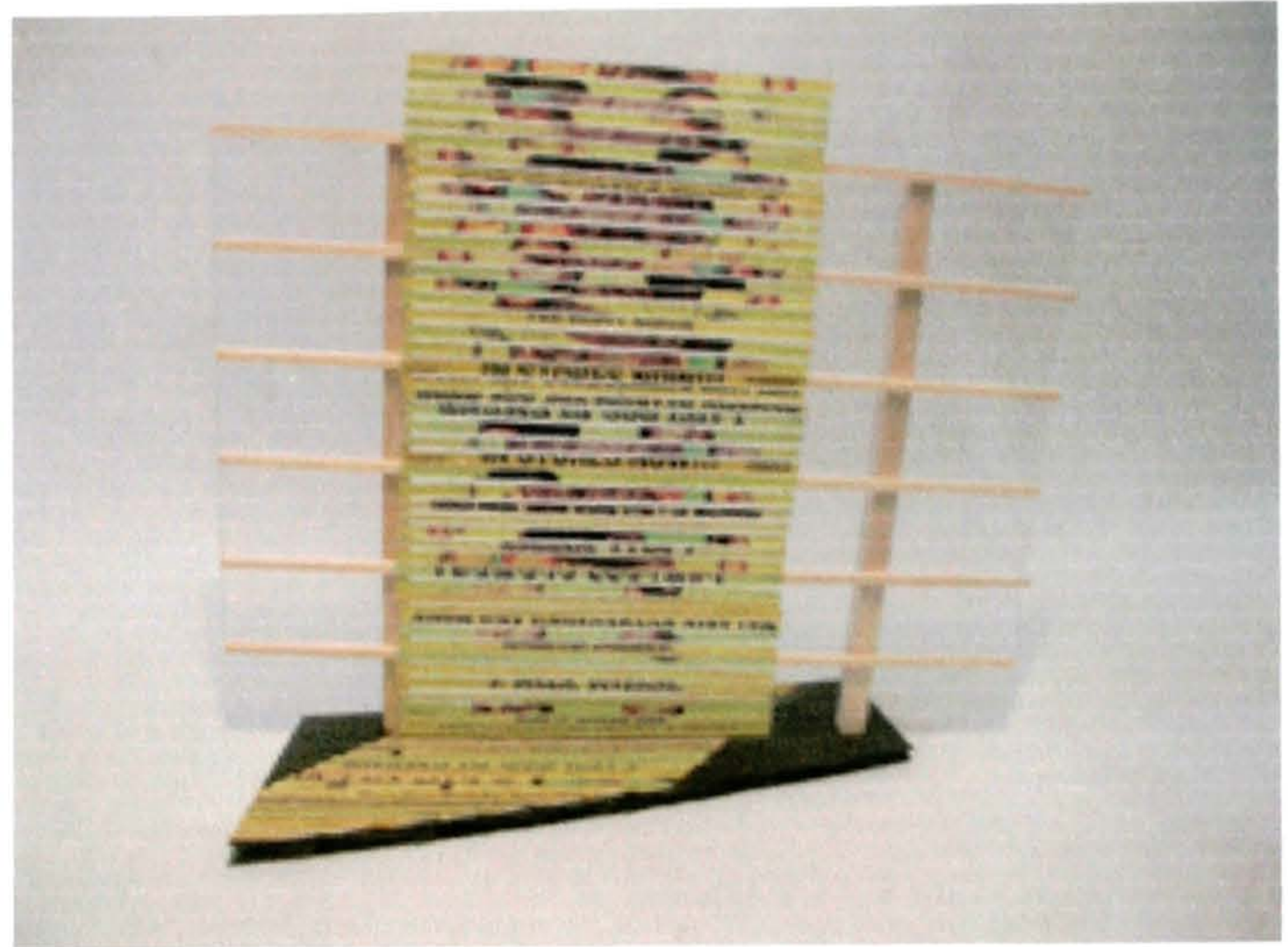


Aerial of North end of site



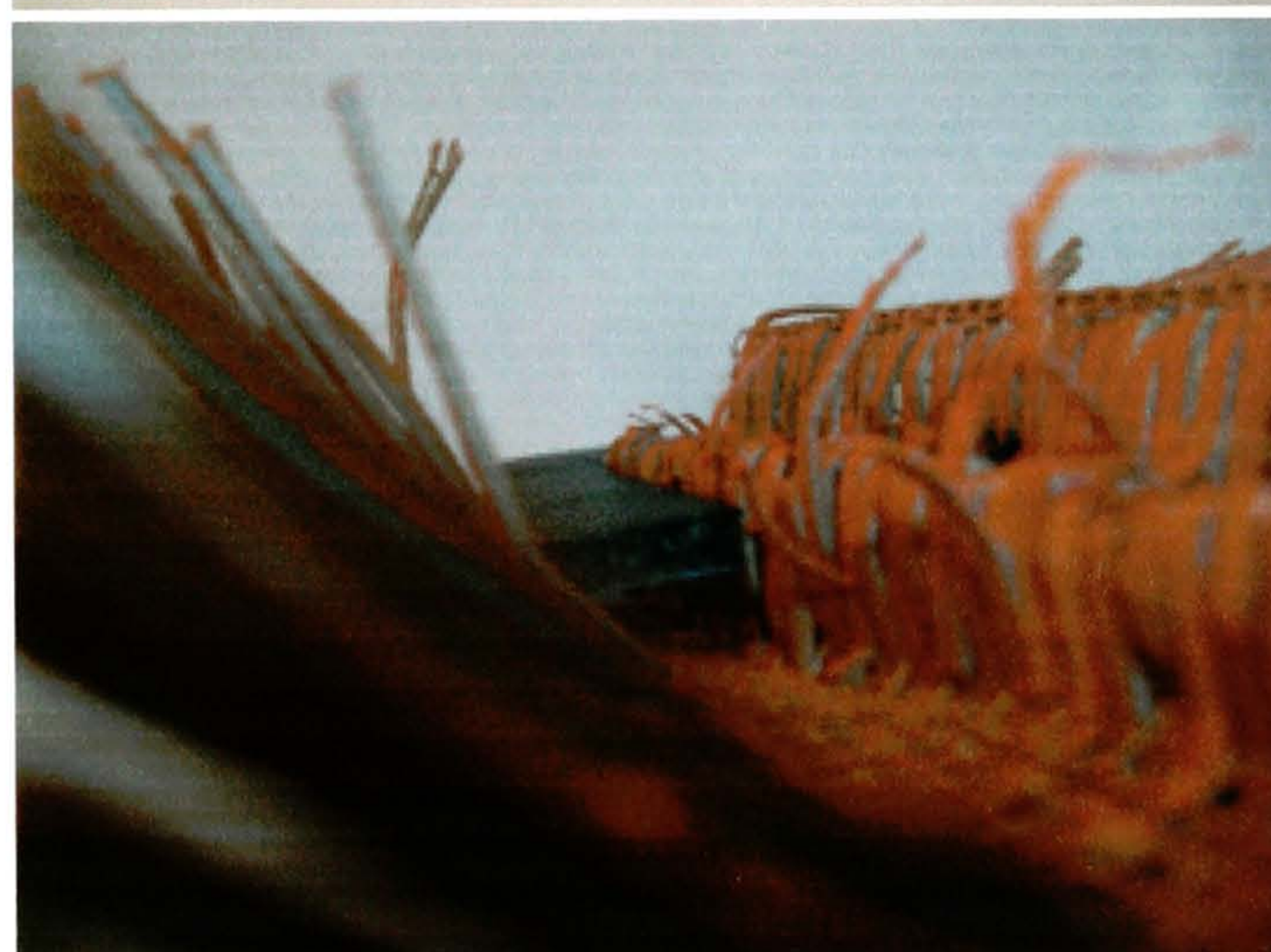
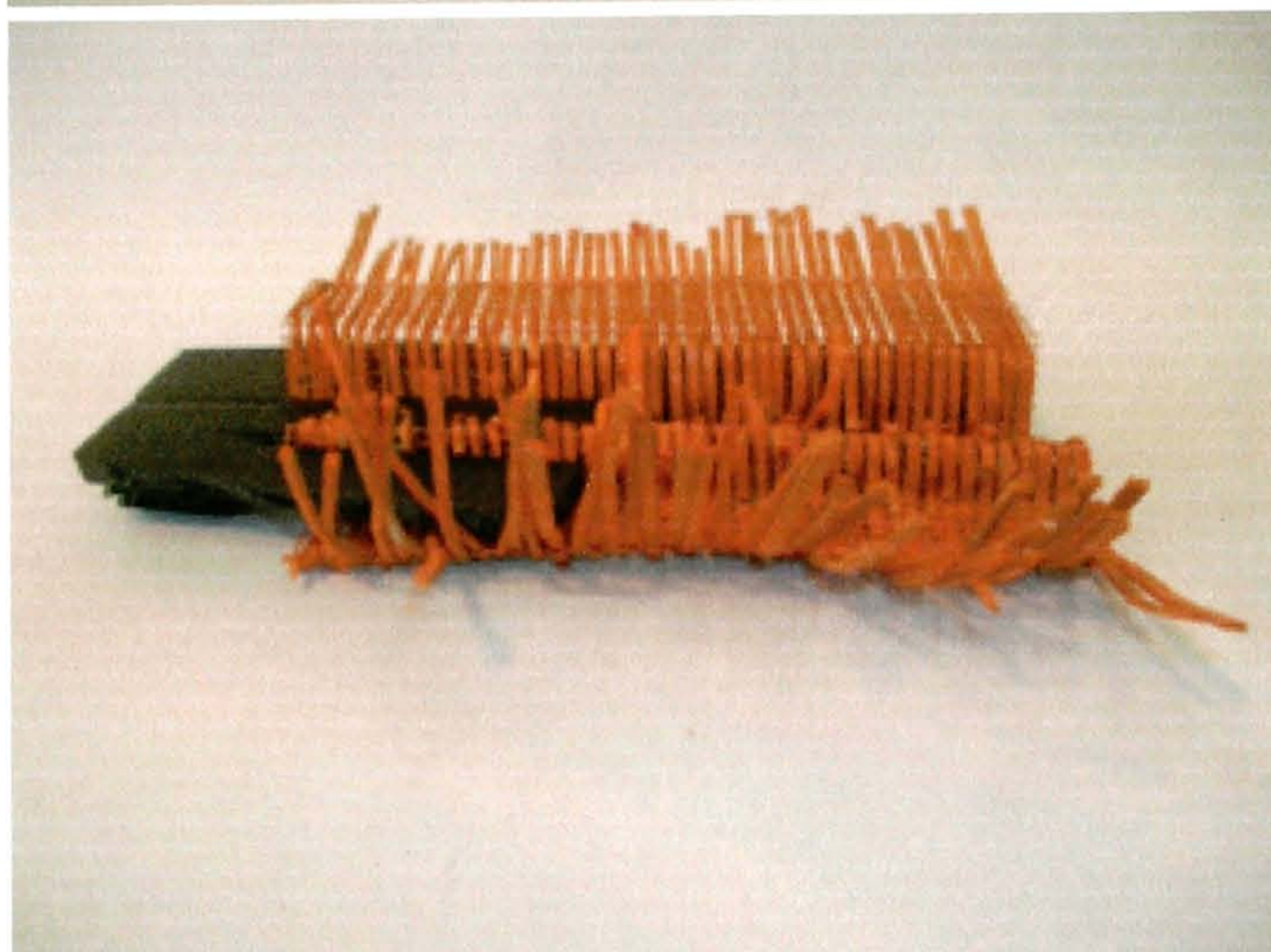
View from Navy Yard





Model of Wall of Residential Building

South facade of residential buildings showing integration of landscape with the structure and facade of the building.

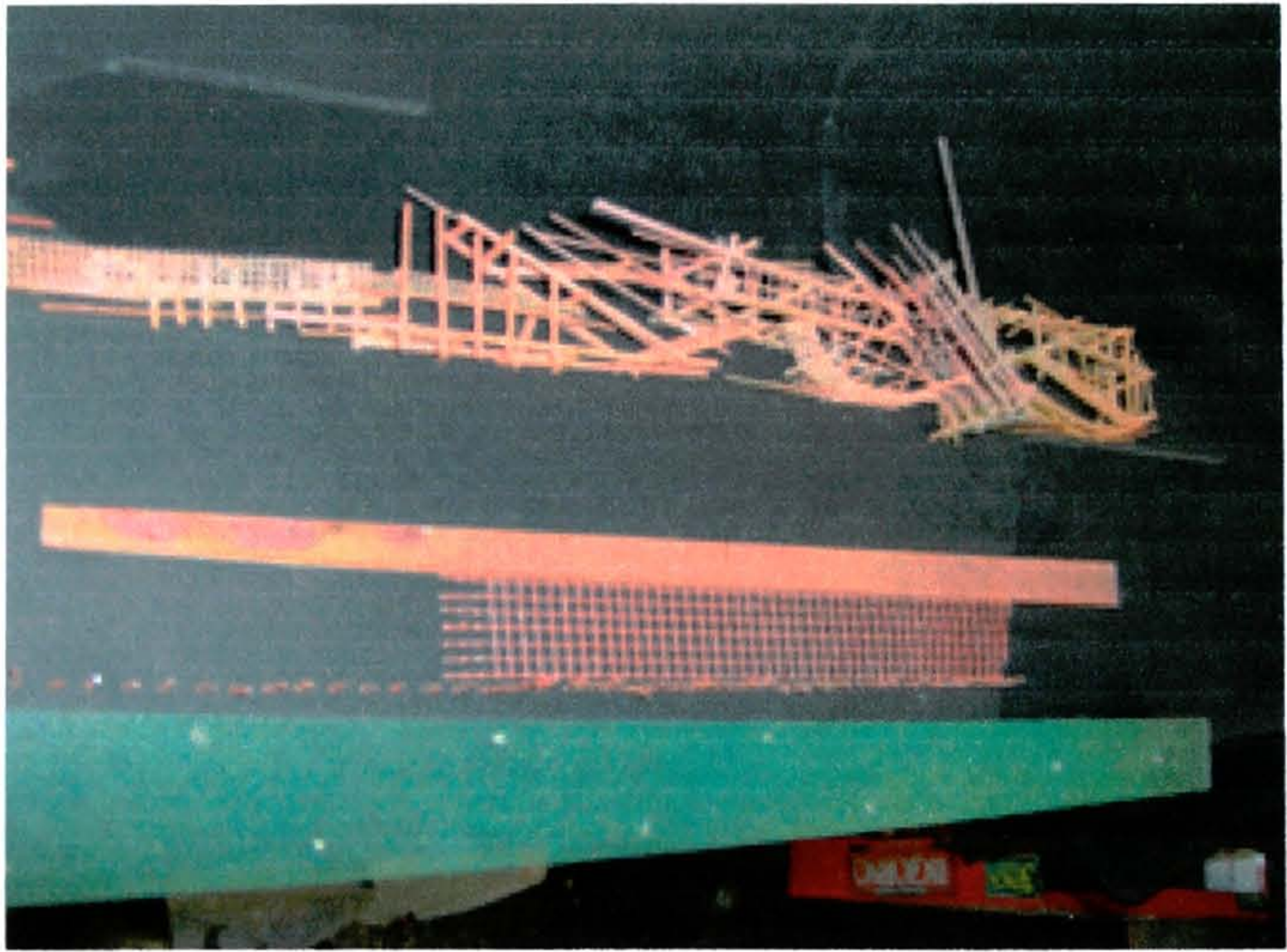


Model of Facade of Culture Barge

Plaza-facade, showing how the facade can also become part of the landscape, and how that can then become part of the plaza and space for people to inhabit.

Aerial of Site Development

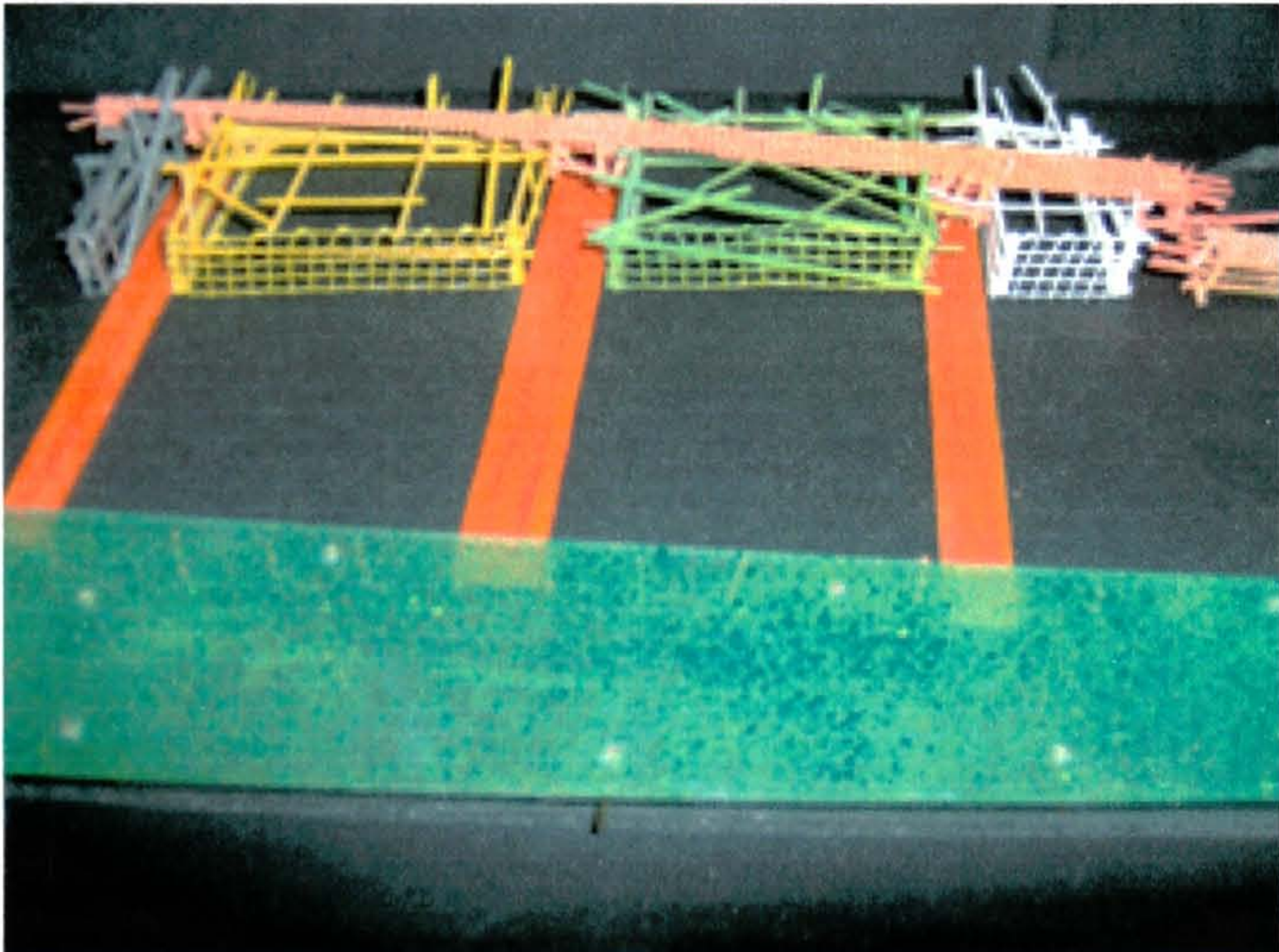
This model showcases the focused site development. The bottom of this picture shows the Green Savannah, with the floating barge just above, and a boardwalk above that with the cultural barge at the top of the picture.

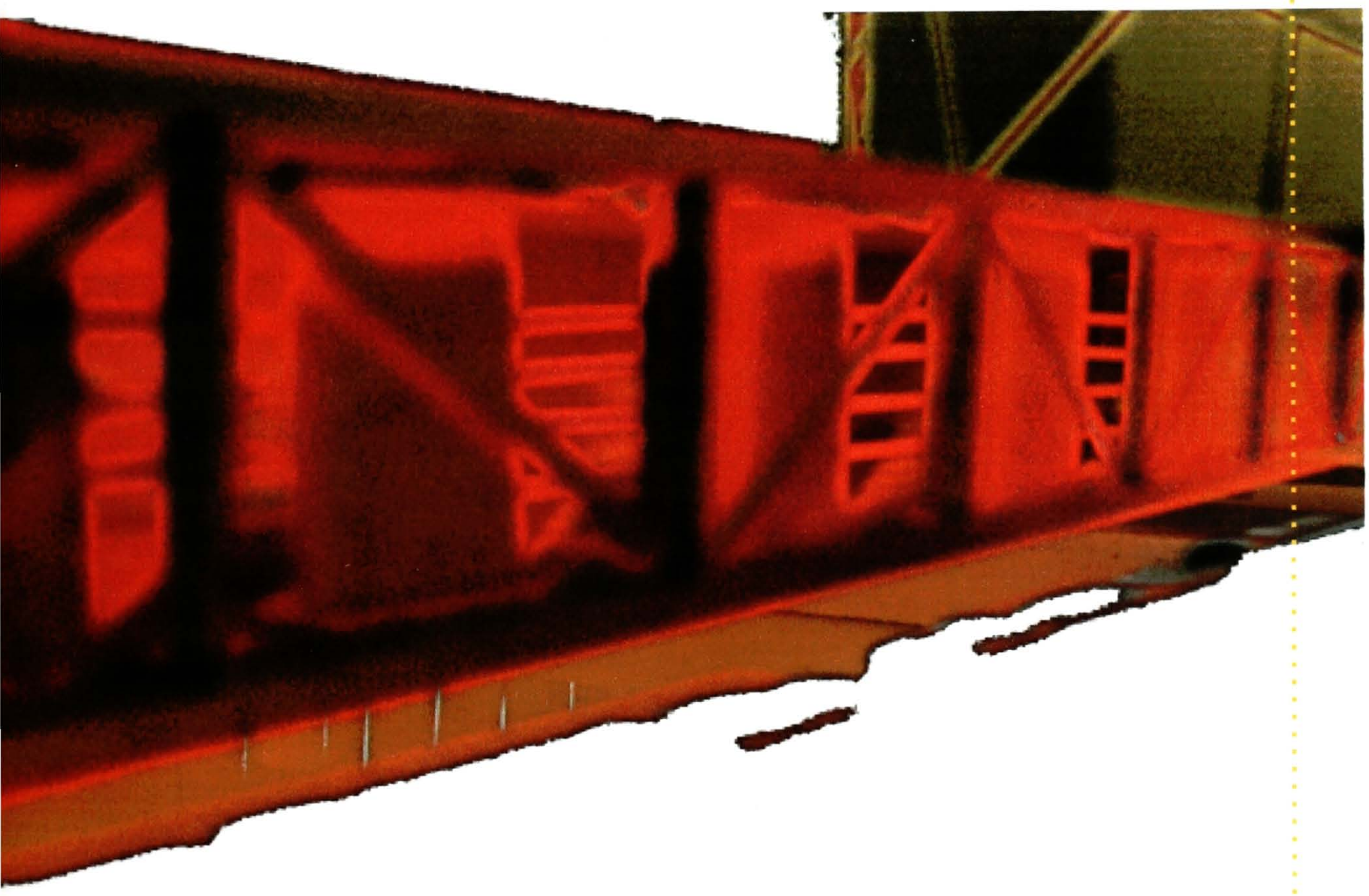


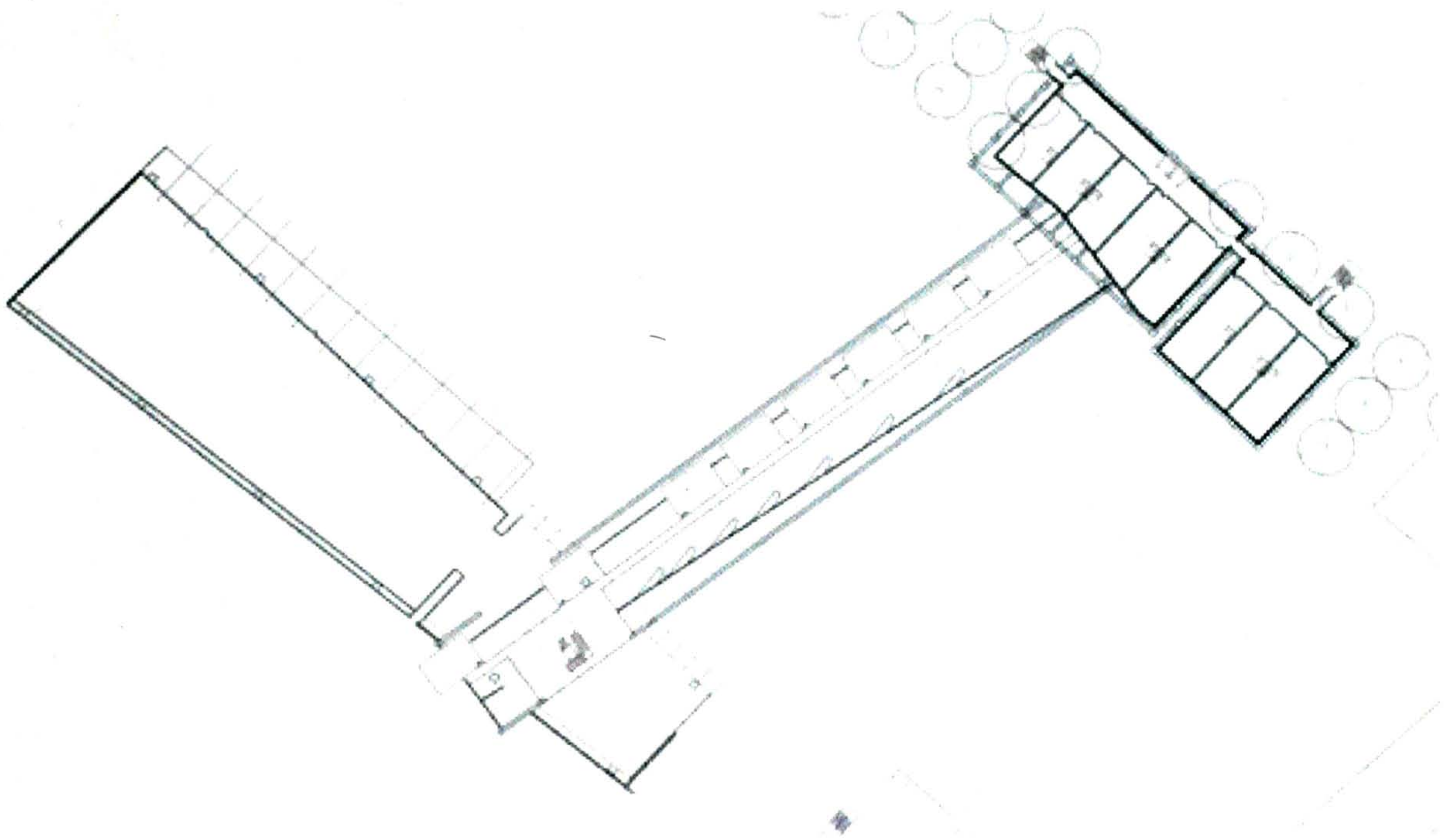
View from Wallabout Bay



View of Urban Arts Centre



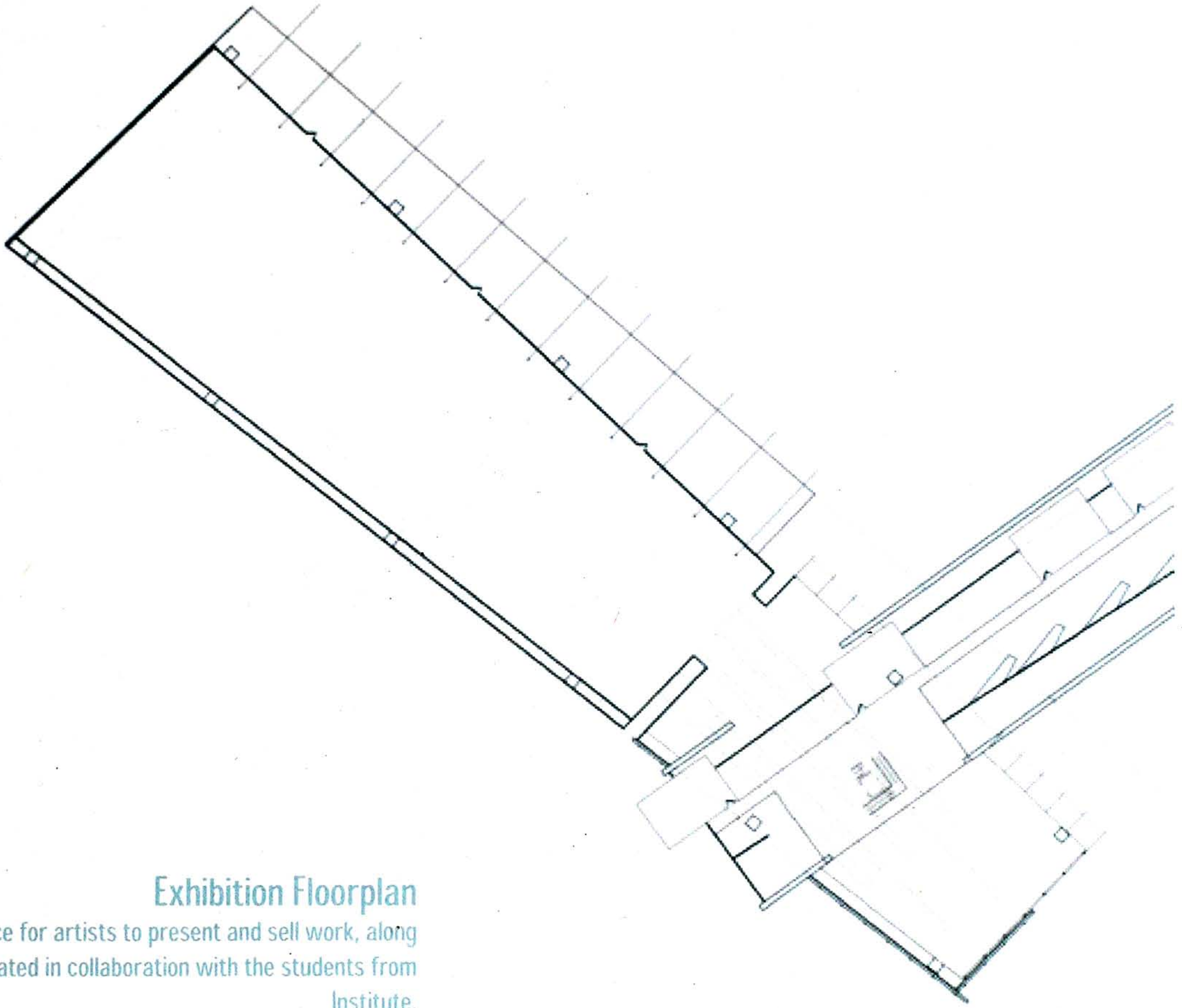




Floorplan

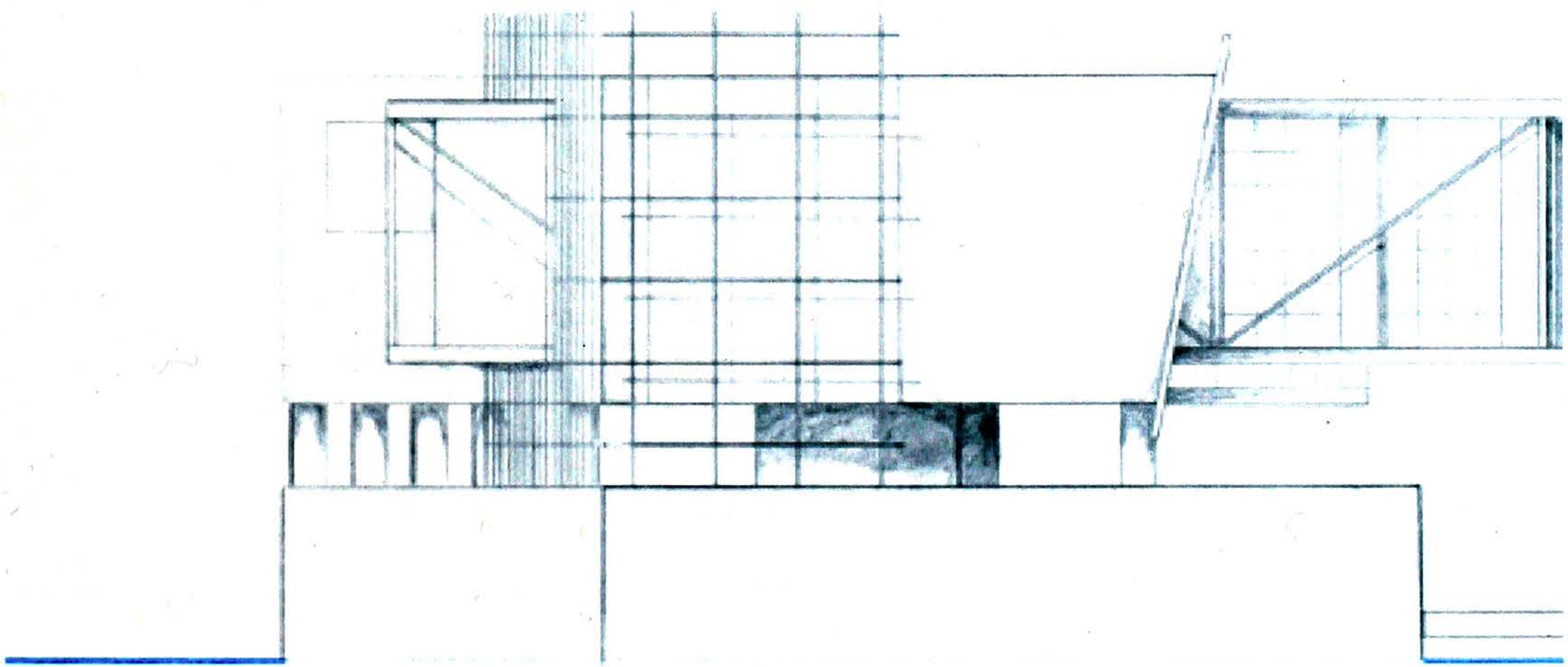


Plaza Elevation

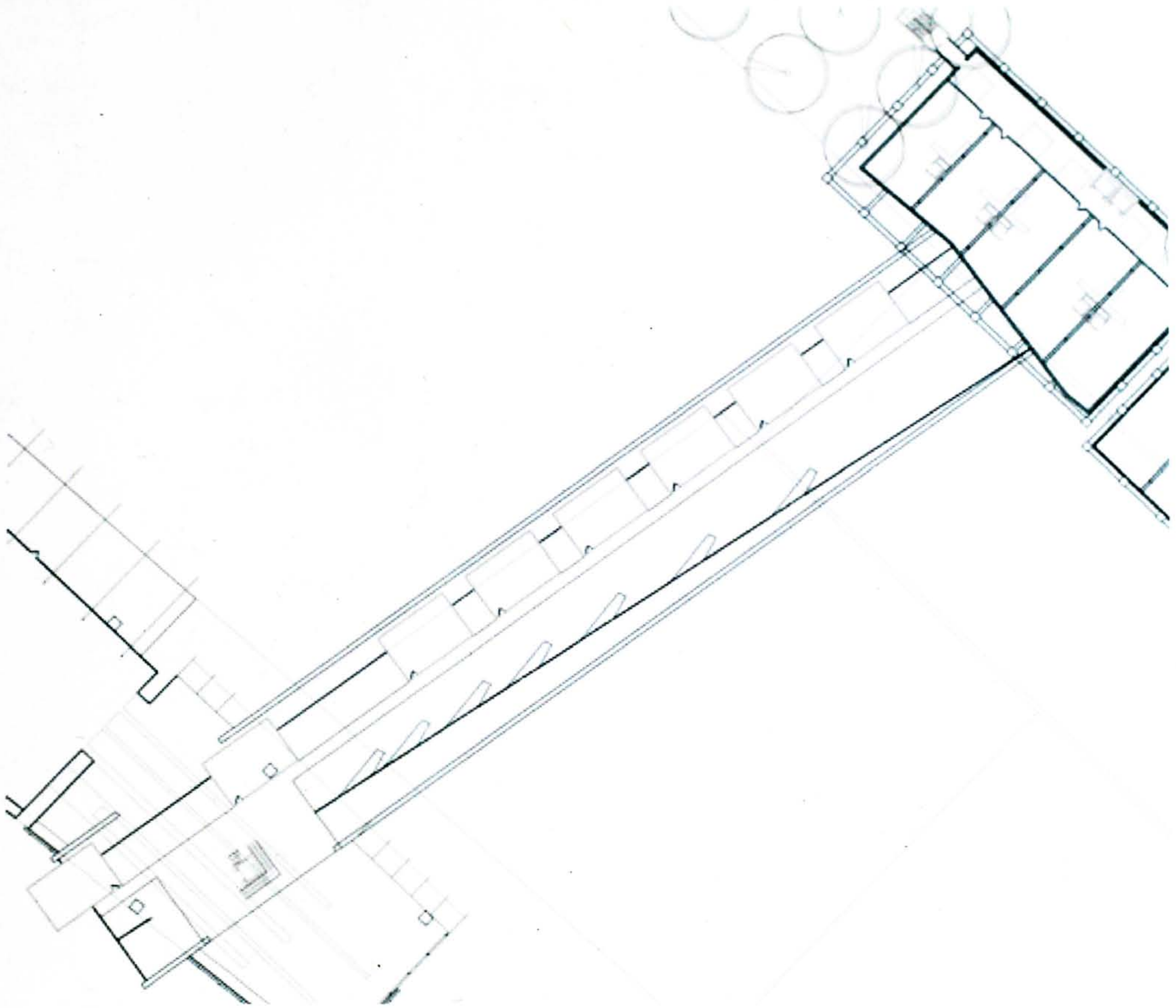


Exhibition Floorplan

Exhibition space for artists to present and sell work, along with work created in collaboration with the students from Pratt Institute.

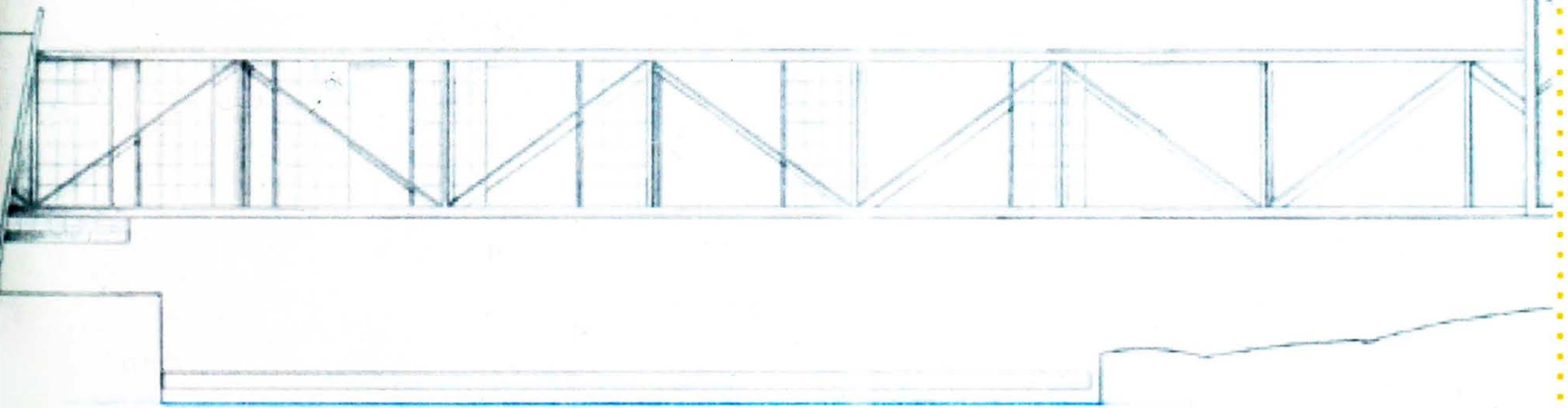


Plaza Elevation

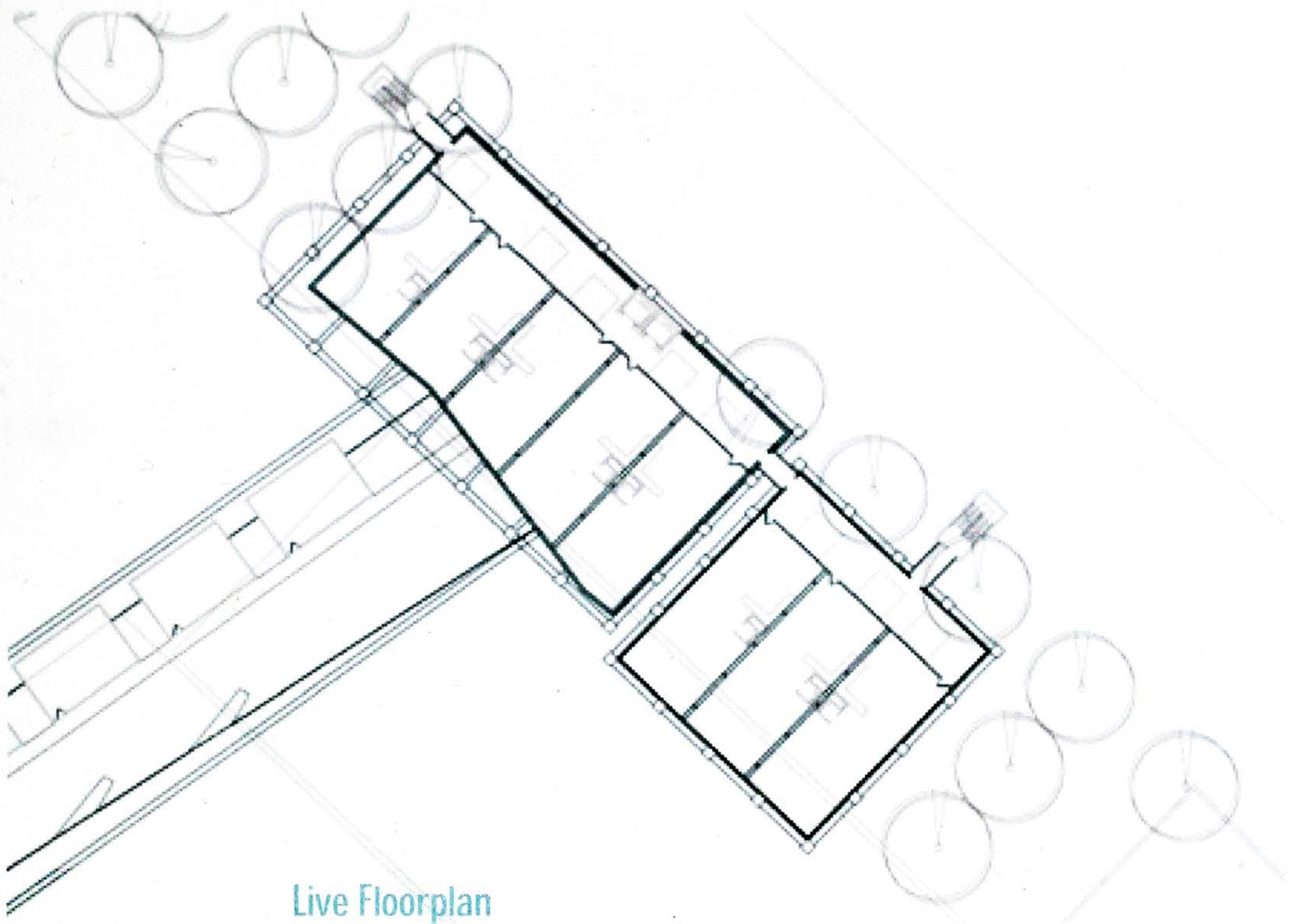


Work/Collaboration Floorplan

Work space for the artists who live in the attached residential towers to create their art, and also collaboration studios for the artists to teach the students of Pratt Institute and create art with.

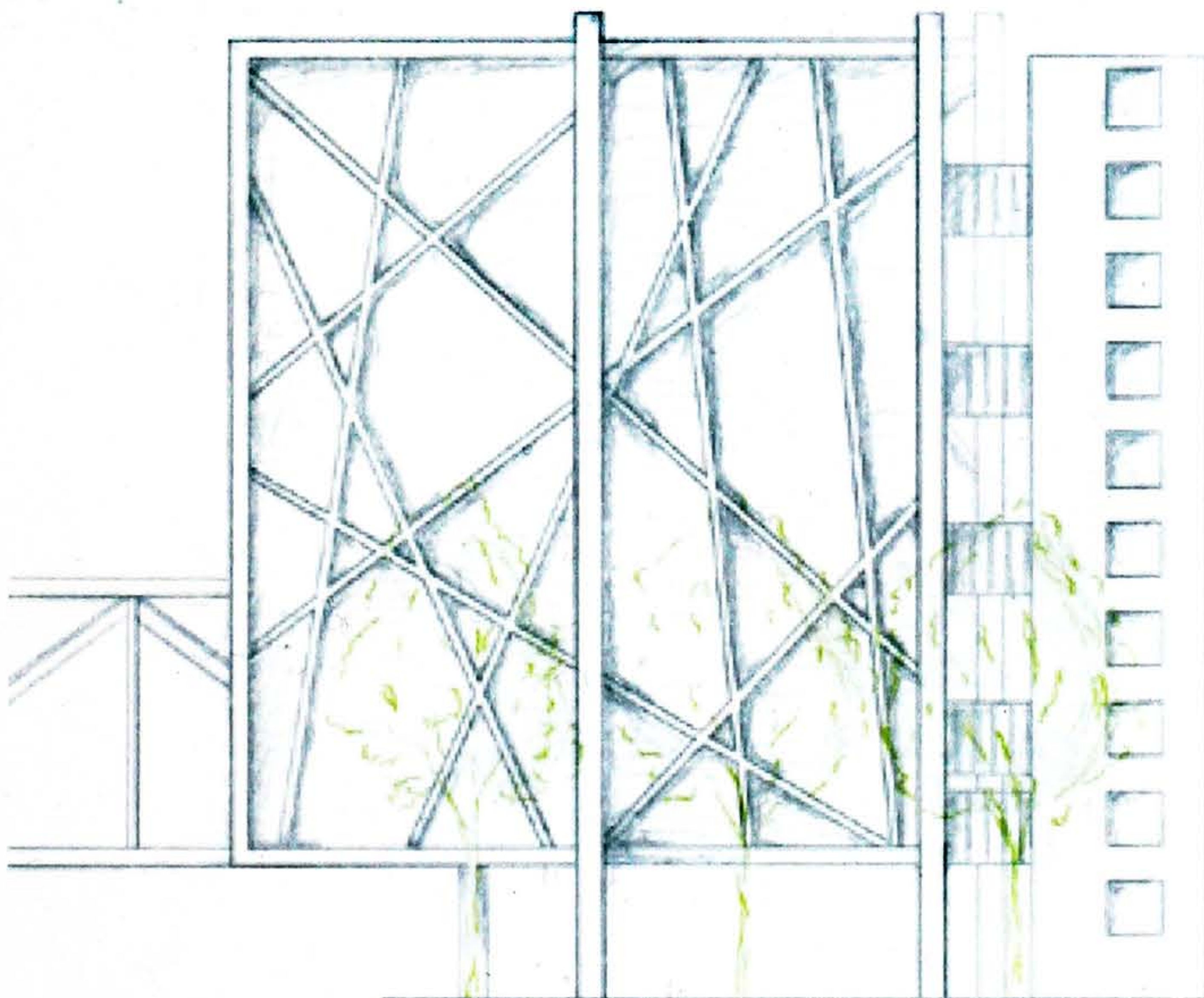


Plaza Elevation



Live Floorplan

Live space for artists, that promote community building and give live space for the artists to use to help further their development of their craft.



Plaza Elevation



Exhibition/Work Collision from Plaza



Exhibition from water
[work piercing through]



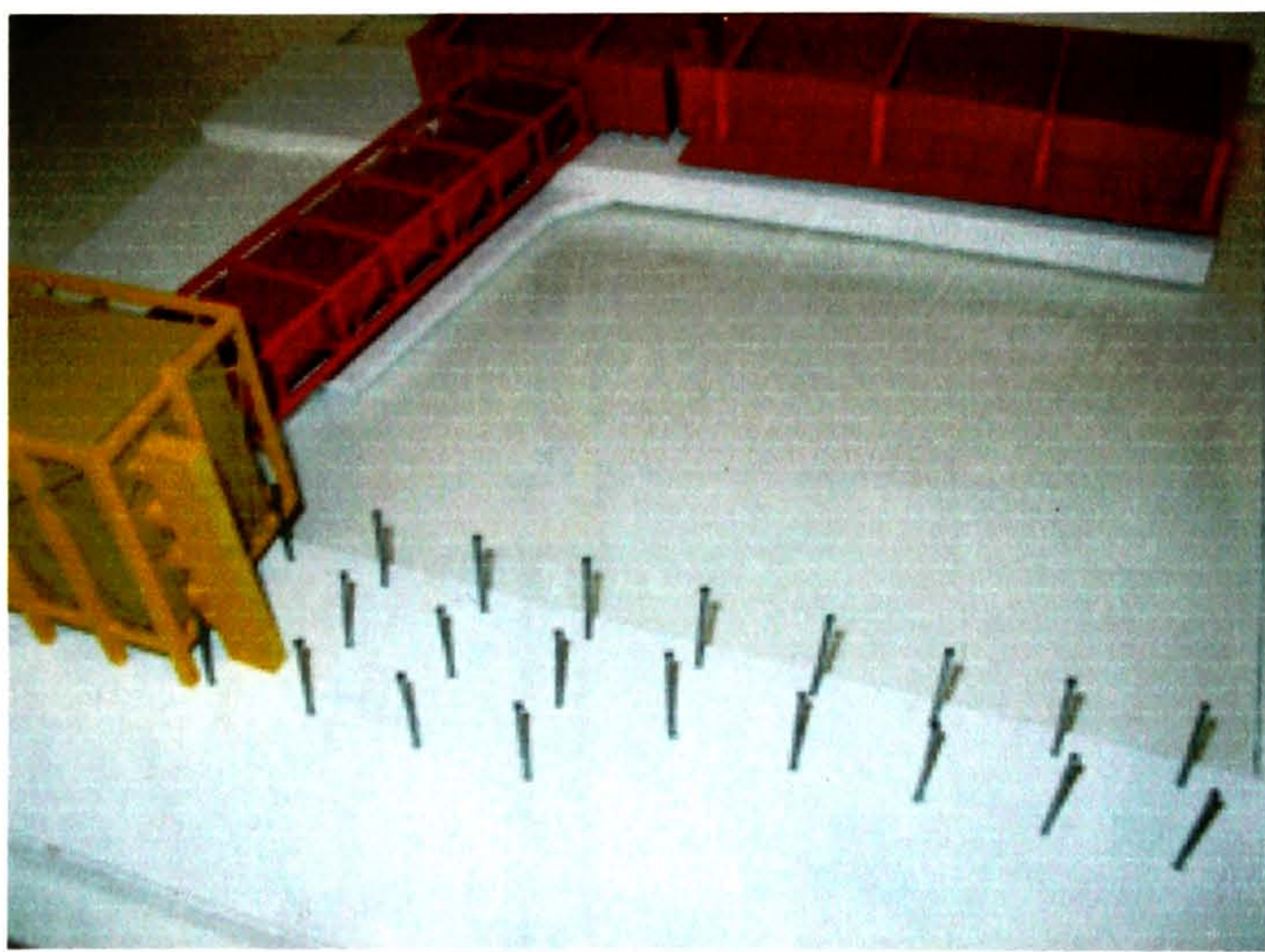
Exhibition from south
[work & live behind]



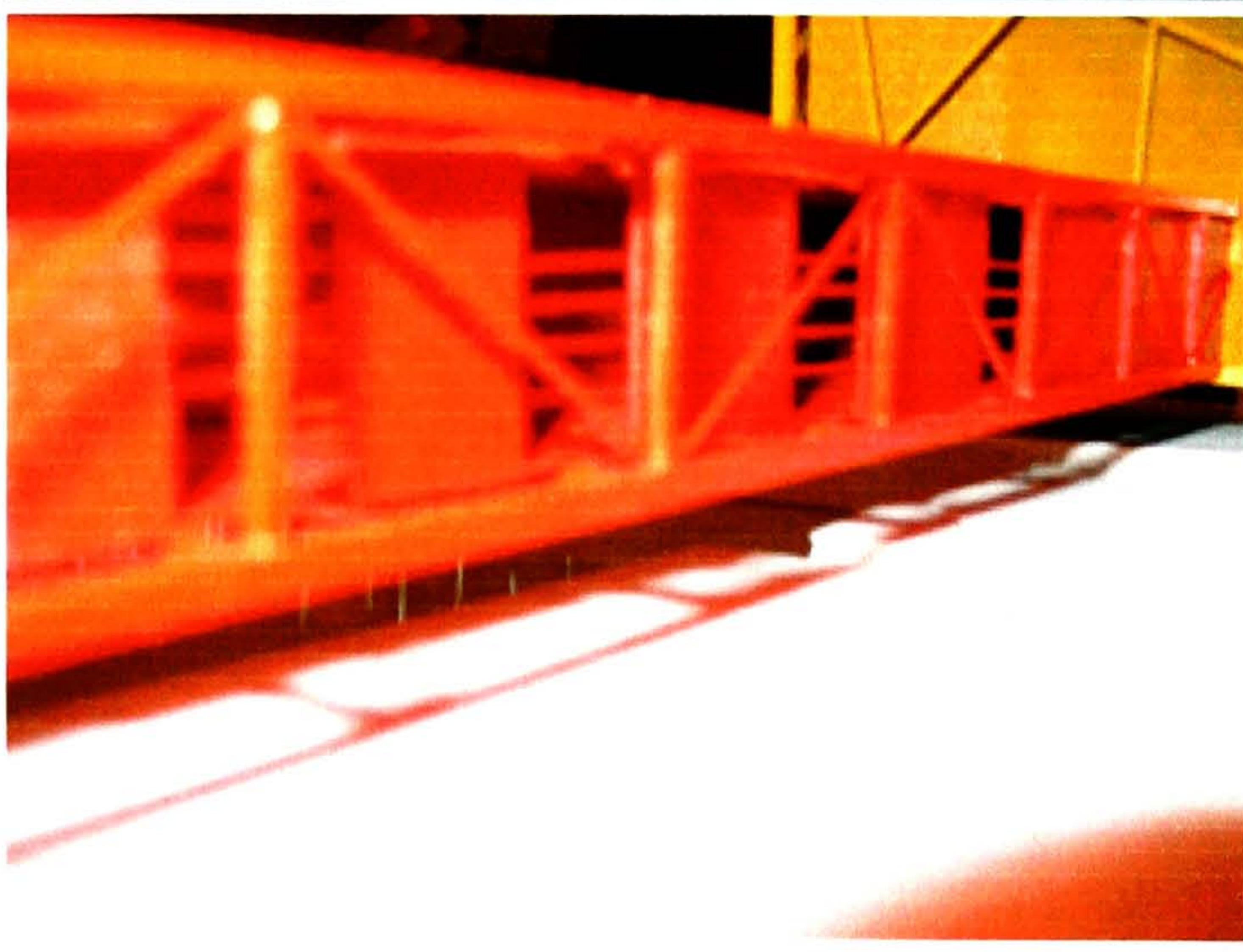
Live/Work/Exhibit from Wallabout Bay



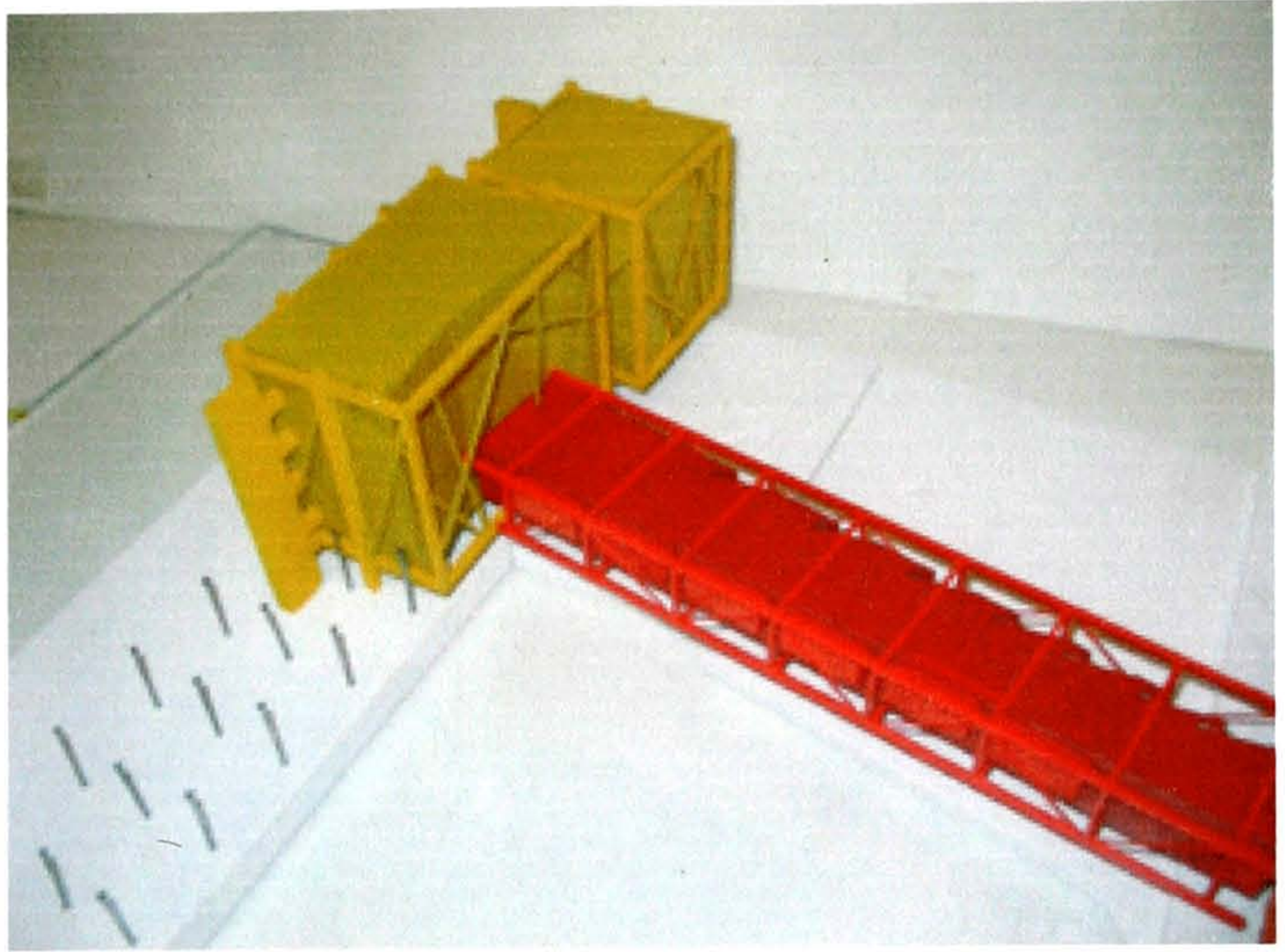
Aerial of Live/Work/Exhibit



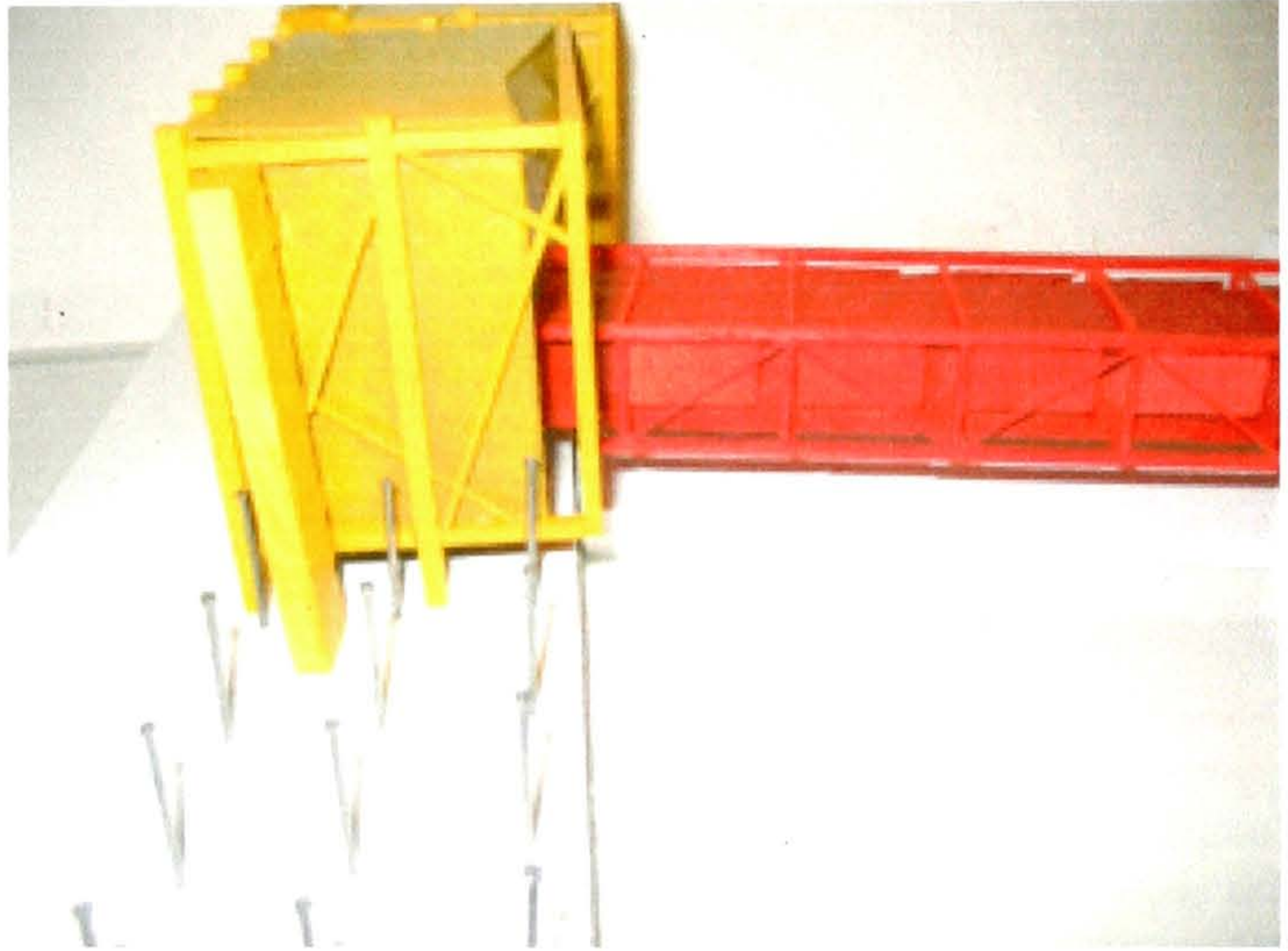
Work from Exhibition



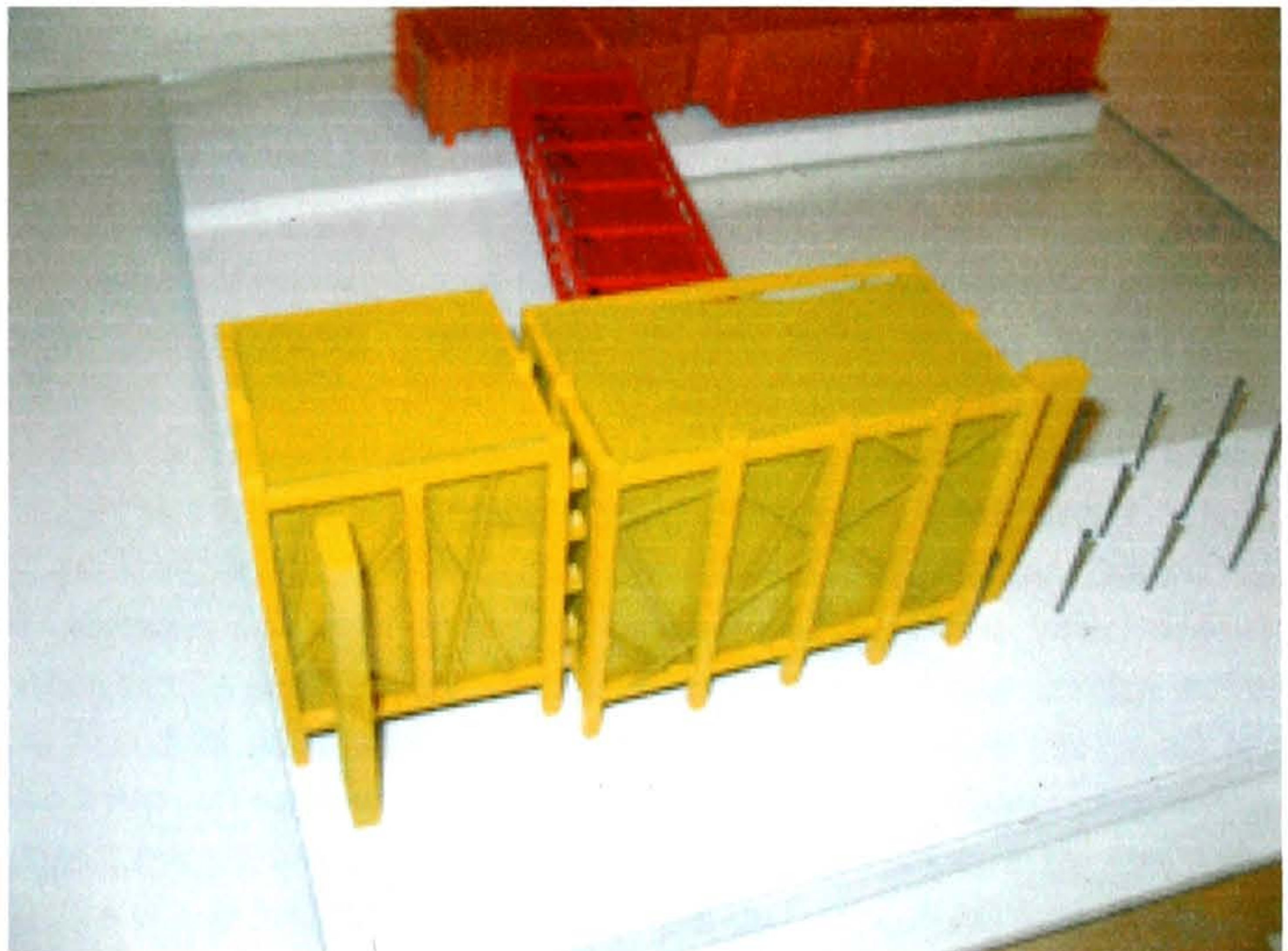
Live/Work Collision



Live from end of Green Savannah



Aerial of Live/Work/Exhibition



The conclusion that I have ultimately come to about this thesis is that overall everything about it was too big. With a project this big it is hard to do anything more than master plan the area. To look back at the entire process of this project, it would have been a more beneficial project to either choose a much smaller site from the start, or to do the master plan, and then focus on a much smaller area of that master plan earlier in the process in order to give time to design with detail.

I don't feel like I was able to achieve a project that fulfilled my thesis idea because of the sheer size of the project made it nearly impossible to get into the details of the project and get to a point where the project could be developed to a successful point and fulfill the expectations of the thesis project as a whole.

I believe that I could achieve the completeness of this project to a point of success with a few more months of development of a focused portion of the site and also of the overall master plan of the site. I am not even completely sure that my idea for the thesis is fitting of the site that I chose, once I got into the project, and that maybe for this project to be successful it would need to be on a site that was on earth, and not necessarily on an artificial surface. To complete this project to a stage that I am happy with it is going to take some time and diligent work, and the project will probably be completely different than what is seen in the final design section of this book, but it is indeed a goal that is reachable with hard work.

Czerniak, Julia, Downsview Park Toronto, Munich, Germany: Prestel Verlag, 2001

This book showcases a design competition for a 320 acre urban park on a former military base in Toronto. This book helped with ideas and development of the master plan for my thesis site, and how to integrate a park into an urban area.

Ibelings, Hans, The Artificial Landscape. Rotterdam, Netherlands: NAI Publishers, 2000

This book showcases works in the Netherlands including architecture, urban design, and landscape architecture. This book helped me to develop some of the ideas for the artificial landscape and to look at some projects as precedent for some of the ideas that I had for my project.

Kirkwood, Niall, Manufactured Sites, New York, New York: Spon Press, 2001

This book tells of how industrial sites can be rejuvenated into viable and vibrant, reused sites, and the techniques used to do so. This book showed me some of the possibilities of sites in their post-industrial state.

Lupton, Ellen, Skin, New York, New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2002

This book shows different studies of what skin is, and how it can be utilized, and in some cases inhabited. I used the information in this book to help to develop some skins as facades for study

Mayne, Thom, Morphosis: Buildings and Projects, Volume 3, New York, New York: Rizzoli, 1999

This book showcases projects by the firm Morphosis from all around the world. I used this book to look at some of the projects dealing with the integration of landscape and architecture.

Mayne, Thom, Morphosis: Tangents and Outtakes, London, England: Artemis Verlags, 1993

This book shows some projects by the firm Morphosis as well as presentation techniques. I used this book to look at how projects were presented and models were built to represent their projects.

Molinari, Luca, West 8, Italy, Palazzo Casati Stampa, 2000

This book showcases projects by the firm West 8, located in the Netherlands. I used this book to look at projects dealing with artificial landscapes and at projects for precedent.

Viljoen, Andre, CPULs-Designing Urban Agriculture for Sustainable Cities. Burlington, MA: Architectural Press, 2005

This book talks of a sustainable urban landscape and urban agriculture. I used this book to develop my thesis project from the beginning and gave me the starting ideas for the project.

If you see or hear goodness from me
Then that goodness is from The Creator
You should be thankful to The Creator for all of that
'Cause I'm not the architect of that
I'm only the recipient
If you see weakness or shortcoming in me
It's from my own weakness or shortcoming
And I ask The Creator and the people to forgive me for that
Thank you Brooklyn, Thank you World

-Mos Def

Brooklyn Stand Up