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# DEAD SPACE

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Arch 5100, 5110, 5200, 5210. Mark Farlow. April 27, 2012









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## ABSTRACT

"It's always about being in the middle of the street"

*-Ricky Oyola-*

The bridge between skateboarding and architecture is not seen on the same plane. Both stem from the idea of creating new challenges, new design, and moving through space. The distinction between building space and urban space is utilized by skateboarders, enabling them to constantly change within a city's environment. This questions the distinction between public space and "who" the public is when the skater and the city mesh.

Design is an initial and studied process that requires a certain amount of skill. Architects, urban planners and designers design spaces or places that they may never use themselves. It is possible that the design has some experiential factor and meaning behind it, but not experienced by the actual designer. Skateboarders stem from the same breed of technical and insightful individuals that are not taken as seriously as designers.

Skateboarders have the unique and intuitive way to develop and design space through the tool of a skateboard. The perception of the skateboarder that begins to identify pedestrian level interactions from different perceptions of the city and the urban fabric.



## THESIS PAPER

“skaters take the space other’s ignore”

*-Anonymous-*

Space within our cities can be seen as buildings, parks, parking lots, vacant land, etc. As we move through our cities we tend to have an idea or assumption of where we will be going, how we are going to get there, and why we are there in the first place. Some make destinations within a city a daily routine. The professional in an urban setting usually drives or takes public transportation to work. During that time, he or she will grab a quick breakfast and continue to the final destination and possibly not step out of the office environment for the next eight hours.

This description of a worker in city shows how the space used in a city is seen as dead space. The vertical and horizontal path in a plaza had design implications as well as new experiences. The simple act of moving from different thresholds to finally end up in the office cubicle was the routine set for those who live in cities during a five day work week.



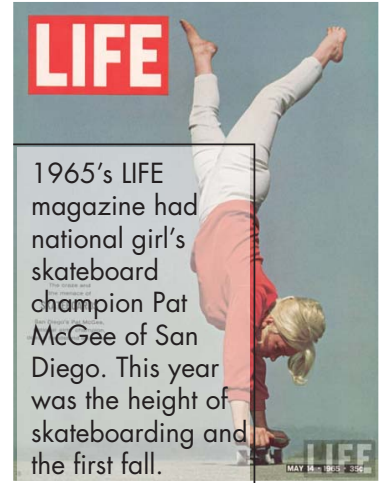
The only spectacle that might occur is a skateboarder making more noise than the sidewalk, street, or building was intended. Most view skateboarders as immature and reckless throughout cities. Despite these stereotypes, they have the unique and intuitive ability to develop and design space through skateboarding.

Skateboarding history started in California as an alternative way of surfing when there were no waves. The nickname given at the time was called "sidewalk surfing." This later became skateboarding because of the nature of the object. A piece of two by four that had roller skate wheels attached to the bottom of it. The birth of skateboarding was in 1951, a time frame where modern architecture was rising in major cities. Skateboarding was seen as a fad and the sport eventually died by 1965.

During the seventies, new technologies in board construction were being developed. Poly-urethane wheels replaced clay wheels. Metal trucks were developed as a way to hold the wheels as well as to move more freely when riding. The shape of boards varied from thick wooden boards, replicating typical surf boards of the era, to plastic molded boards. The biggest boom was skateparks developing as a new way of mimicking surfing moves were beginning to be translated to solid vertical surfaces. Skateparks became a sensation in development with civil engineers and architects as well. The development happened so rapidly that skateboarders themselves began to feel that their



SOM Lever house was built in 1952 as being the first built in the International Style. The building had an innovative courtyard and public space.



1965's LIFE magazine had national girl's skateboard champion Pat McGee of San Diego. This year was the height of skateboarding and the first fall.

1900'S

1950'S

1960'S

19

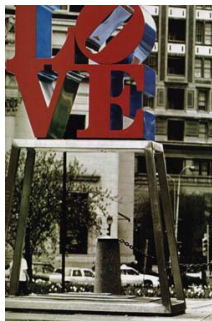
The Brooklyn Bridge is opened in 1883 with the Brooklyn Banks never intended to be used as public space until 100 years later by skateboarders.



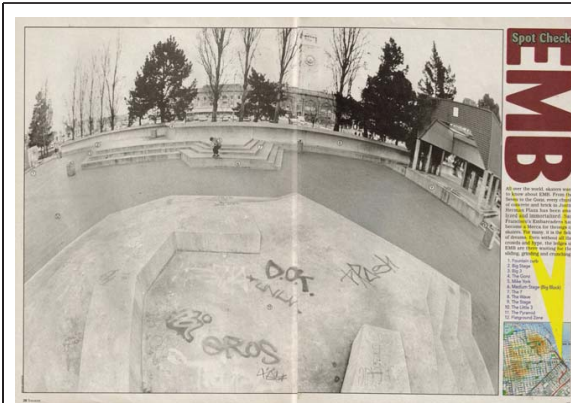
First skateboard made in the 1950's was the deconstruction of scooters from the 40's. A single piece of 2x4 with roller skate wheels.



Edmund Bacon th...  
in 1965 when "L...  
the JFK plaza in



SOM designs the layout for the Golden Gateway for San Francisco. Making the Justin Herman Plaza the central focus in 1971.



SOM Bank of America Building plaza sculpture "Transcendence" was built in 1969. The "new" landscaping, added in 1996, was to stop skateboarders from riding on the sculpture along with the ledges in front of the sculpture as well.

70'S

1980'S

1990'S

2000'S

thesis proposal becomes a reality  
"Love Park" is built and re-named  
1967. A future skateboard mecca.



ROMA Design Group designs the front entrance of Pier 7. It was not very long before this was also inhabited by skateboarding and later banned in less than 5 years.

sport was being dominated by others that were not part of its culture. At this time in the field of architecture, SOM had begun making an established name for itself with different building commissions across the U.S. and would also become a well known advocate for an alternative skateboarding.

The end of the 1970s had multiple skatepark openings along with multiple skatepark closings. The high premiums for memberships and strict rules became too much for skateboarders. In the early eighties, a new scene began to emerge called street skating. One professional skateboarder, Natas Kapas, became instrumental in making this alternative skating possible anywhere. Objects that would appear on a typical street became obstacles for enjoyment for those who skated. As the popularity grew, skateboarders explored cities, interpreting buildings, streets, sidewalks, and objects in a new way to move through and use cities in a direct way rather than a simple means of work or entertainment. Modern architecture began producing defensive and cold public spaces that served as a place to sit or move through. Modern architecture becomes the basis and new frontier that pushes skateboarding to be limitless. From the late eighties to present day, skateboarding is seen as a problem to city planners, city officials, urban planners, property owners, and architects. How can space be said to be "public" when a private name follows "blank plaza" or "blank square," and what is really public space now? <sup>3</sup>

The idea of public life began with a diverse word, cosmopolitan. The 17th century French use, cosmopolite, is described as a man who moves comfortably in diversity; he is comfortable in situations which have no links or parallels to what is familiar to him. Sennett explains the fall of public life and man from the change from 18th to 19th century. "Things and people" were placed in the Order of Nature. Nature was not physical or tangible. The idea of secular is based on the transcendental. The idea was changed once industrial capitalism began to emerge as the movement of immediate facts and sensations were more accepted than the transcendental. The bourgeoisie continued to believe that people experienced sensations and human relations out in public than any other social context or setting. Industrial capitalism denies the idea of interaction as people are to remain strangers to each other. The spread of knowledge was and is no longer produced by social intercourse.<sup>1</sup>

Private space is the new public space. Property owners and building owners make their name known by explicitly displaying their name or company throughout landmarks within the city. Public space is public only when the appropriate people, objects, and activities are within said public space. The spaces immediately turn private when unwanted actions, objects, and people enter that do not fit the hidden criteria of the owners or companies. An example of this type of space is the Justin Herman Plaza, also known within skateboarding culture as "EMB" short for embarcadero. Justin Herman was a city

planner for San Francisco and was spearheading the redevelopment of the area with SOM. The redevelopment was aimed at removing Italian immigrants and a produce market as the area showing signs of "blight." The irony of the entire plaza and intention of Justin Herman was the creation of an entirely new landscape and new idea of public space through the act of skateboarding. Skateboarding was banned in the late nineties and the plaza once again fulfilled its duty as a private public space. If public space is private space then should our spaces in cities now be titled as dead space?

The idea of dead space is from the first International Style School skyscraper, The Lever House. Sennett describes the building as an open air square with a tower on the north side and a one story above ground that complete the square. As one enters the courtyard, dead spaces begin to emerge. The street level becomes dead, leaving no activity or diversity on the ground floor; the movement becomes only a means of passage to the interior. In the great debate of form follows function, the public square is defined by the form, but the public square does not function as the intended form states. The nature of the public square is the mix of people and activities. The new function of the public space is an area to move through and not to be in. Public space has now become a new form of movement leaving everything as dead space.<sup>1</sup> The dead space that surrounds and engulfs cities and suburban cities are cast away and ignored. Can skateboarders be the new designers of these spaces and what their functions can become?

The subject of skateboarding is seen in a theoretical exploration of space. Specifically the movements through space in which the skateboarder performs his maneuvers that include architectural objects and space in the same realm. Iain Borden breaks down the essential elements, subculture, and examination of urban form to the movements of skateboarders. Borden describes a brief history of skateboarding before exploring the further developments of skateboarding of constructed space by skateboarders, previously stated earlier as skateparks. Skateparks are a fixed interpretation of what skater's wish for within a park. The idea of a skatepark is a safe and practical solution to control skateboarders from damaging property and endangering bystanders. This idea hinders the very nature of skateboarding, or at least what street skating is known for today. Borden explains how fixed architectural interpretation of a skateboarder is one who destroys architecture and does not use a space to what it is intended for. These new movements through space that was not planned or designed for a skateboarder, but creates a new movement designed by the skateboarder. <sup>3</sup> Since skateparks are still predominant and being built at a rapid pace, they completely replicate elements and objects within cities.

One way to view skateparks is to see them as training for possible objects or situations within a city. A leading skateboarding website has a segment were skateboarders throw a dart at a map of the city they are currently in and have to skate where the dart lands on the map. This segment completely coincides with the

idea of a cosmopolite as Sennett stated earlier. Skateboarders could be seen as urban nomads that are ever changing and adapting to environments, directly using architecture, much like homeless use architecture in cities as shelter. Within the idea of skateboarders as a new form of movement and design, there are specific interests that lie within the city that are more attractive than others. The image of the city breaks down the city into five components that make up a city.<sup>4</sup>

## **THE IMAGE OF A SKATE - CITY**

The first of these components of a city is paths. Paths according to Lynch are channels that pedestrians will possibly use or move on. These can range from streets and sidewalks to transit lines and canals. Path is a predominant image within most people within a city. Paths in skateboarding are viewed in a different way. Paths or "runs" as skateboarders describe is when one starts at one point and moving through space performing maneuvers and tricks within a set distance not knowing what is going to happen next until the moment arrives. The runs and paths merge as a new movement and use of the path as more of experiential moment in time rather than an element to understand boundaries or orientation. <sup>4</sup>

The second is edges. Edges are linear elements not viewed or used by pedestrians as paths. Edges within a city differentiate from other cities within a county or districts. Objects to skateboarders have, in one way or another, an edge to slide or grind on. This



is viewed as destructive or damaging, but to some it is a sign that skateboarding has occurred or is present within this area. One particular edge that is seen as a small yet notable skateboarding landmark is the Seawall in Chicago, IL. The Seawall is the edge of Chicago's aquarium on the southwest end of Lake Michigan. This wall has been used by skateboarders, mimicking once again movements of surfing, a concrete wave. The edges of a city has the ability to bleed into other areas much like edges transfer and change from surfaces as the movements of the skateboarder changes. <sup>4</sup>

Districts are the third element that defines a city. Districts are usually noticeable from paths and edges within a city. They are more notably defined by their interior qualities and characteristics compared the entire city as a whole. In relation to skateboarders, districts become another blur to their path of movement as objects within those districts become categorized by importance and versatility to the use in the maneuvers they perform. Nodes are points are spots that a pedestrian can enter. Nodes can be crossings of transportation lines or intersecting paths that sparks an interest within the city at a very small scale. Nodes can be translated into the notion that skateboarders use as of orientation and location of particular objects within a city. They are very similar and closely related to the final element within a city and that is its landmarks.

Landmarks are very distinguishable and noticeable because they act out or possibly have all of these elements into one. The landmark serves as a

simple physical object such as a building, sign, façade, monument, museum, etc. Skateboarders use landmarks by complete changing the identity of the original nature of the object and breaking the landmark down into smaller objects. An example was previously stated as “EMB” referring to the Justin Herman Plaza in San Francisco. The Brooklyn Bridge is viewed as the Brooklyn Banks, an empty strip of masonry embankment that is beneath the bridge. West coast landmarks have had a huge impact in replicating specific object locations such as the Hollywood High Stairs, El Toro, Pier 7, and Hubba Hideout. These landmarks are influential to the skateboarding culture. One landmark in particular that has been very influential is Love Park in the Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Edmund Bacon designed the JFK Memorial Plaza (Love Park) in 1932 as part of his thesis work. The park was built later in 1965. The park itself had worldwide attraction to many skateboarders and also paved a way for many up and coming professionals. Skateboarders constantly filled the park as a public space. The city of Philadelphia had other plans in mind due to the damaging nature of skateboarding and spent millions of dollars installing devices that prohibited skateboarders from skating at the park entirely. Skate stoppers are now common in city and urban planning councils when new projects arise. Objects become surveyed and modified to stop one type of act that can hurt an entire plaza or park. These types of stoppers are primitive and are a last minute thought from clients or cities that need to stop such activities. These actions will do nothing more than prohibit all types of activities and completely exile all forms of public who should not be on the premises of plaza's and parks.



Architects and urban designers must strive to implement alternative design strategies so primitive solutions do not become a normal occurrence. If architects and urban designers begin to recognize that more than one group of users will use the space then the design can encourage alternative activities, such as skateboarding, that can influence other user groups to be welcomed within public spaces. The thought and design of such a space is delicate and difficult when programmed space can lead into segregated space. This goes back to Sennett's ideas behind what public space was and how it had changed over time through design. Even though public space has changed over time, there are new examples of parks and plazas that have been conscious of the users that will occupy them. Alejandro Zaera-Polo Architects designed South East Coastal Park in Spain, encompassed and embodied all activities to be invited within the park as an example of new public space. SLA Architects designed City Dune / SEB Bank in Denmark, allowing design to take over the urban landscape and the built environment. These examples are the new public spaces that can remove dead space.

These precedences are not possible without a set of rules that are slowly integrated into the urban fabric. Lynch has established the components of what the image of the city is, but there is a social and political realm of city's that need to be addressed in order for such public spaces to be built. Borden cites Henri Lefebvre in discussing his ideas of space, cities, and architecture. Lefebvre's ideas are a form of marxism, but uses its ideology as a guide of understanding social space. The process of slowly informing a type of space that has multiple dimensions of use has to be slowly implemented. This can start to happen by breaking down

the metonymy of the users experience. As stated earlier of the typical city dweller develops a routine, they become numb and non-perceptive to their surroundings. If their daily become changed by a small intervention, their perception of their surrounding changes. These instances are moments of temporality. They are not the solution to public spaces, but they offer insight of the in-between experience that city dwellers can perceive from their mode of transportation to their place of work. This also gives the a new function of space for duality. The street will be viewed as a place for cars, but once the street is taken over by an in-between experience then duality contributes to function as an entirely new experience. The urban fabric to skateboarders is constantly seen as duality with the objects that they use for skateboarding and how their original design intention has been temporarily changed.

The questions and insight into the specific topic of skateboarding is merely a reminder for Architects and urban designers to be conscious of the impact they make when they design. The skateboarder is one of many different subjects to take in consideration to understand the use of public space and cities. Architecture is nothing more than an object to a skateboarder, but their perception of space is a vital experience that can begin to influence a new way of designing public space and the urban fabric.

**ENDNOTES**

Page 4, Page 7

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Page 7, Page 8

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Lynch, Kevin. *The Image of the City*. Cambridge, Mass. [u.a.: M.I.T., 2008. Print.

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## PRECEDENT STUDIES

### **Antoine Predock**

*Body and Motion Precedent*

### **South East Coastal Park**

*Park Design Precedent*

### **The City Dune**

*Urban Space Precedent*

### **HafenCity**

*Master Planning Precedent*

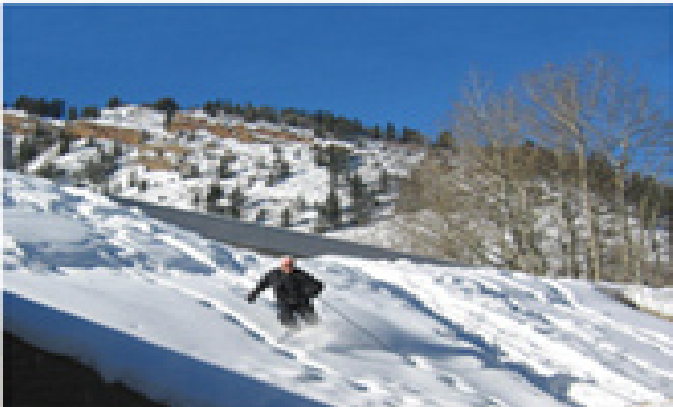
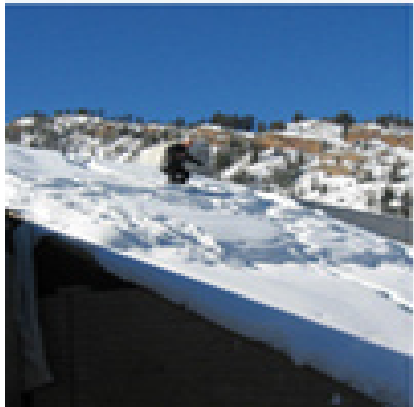
### **Philip Burton Federal Building Plaza**

*Anti-Precedent*

## **ANTOINE PREDOCK**

*Body and Motion Precedent*

Antoine Predock describes architecture as an experience between machine and technology compared to landscape and architecture. The images of himself skiing on his own building begins to blur the relationship between what can be considered architecture and landscape. Skateboarding uses these same notions throughout a city by breaking down their physical elements into a new purpose.



## SOUTH EAST COASTAL PARK

Barcelona, Spain (*Park Design Precedent*)

The South East Coastal Park, designed by AZAP, was a response to the site specific conditions that were handled. The intention was to encourage all different types of activities from walking to skateboarding. A comparative landscape project that uses the geometries of the French landscape and the organic qualities of English landscape. The use of topography to depict the relationship between land and sea as seen in the image to right, gives an insight as to how materials can become more important in forming landscaping and how humans interact with these conditions





## THE CITY DUNE

Copenhagen, Denmark (*Urban Space Precedent*)

The City Dune is an urban design project that involved handling a completely sustainable and accessible urban space within Copenhagen. The landscape has a folding movement and contour that specifically handles the technical demands of its sustainable nature. As far as movement, it creates a unique movement through the space for the employees of the SEB Bank and other pedestrian users. This precedent is to demonstrate how influential site and landscape can begin to inform the architecture and handle an urban plaza situation at the same time.





## HAFENCITY

Hamburg, Germany (*Master Planning Precedent*)

Europe's largest inner-city development project has a huge transformation of infrastructure being placed within to increase job opportunities and allow for more housing units as well. This precedent is more of reflection of how to handle voids within a city. HafenCity does not just focus on the old port plaza, but on an entire community that will benefit. The plaza, however shows how new movement and objects within a space can begin to revitalize an old area to bring new potential and growth to a city.







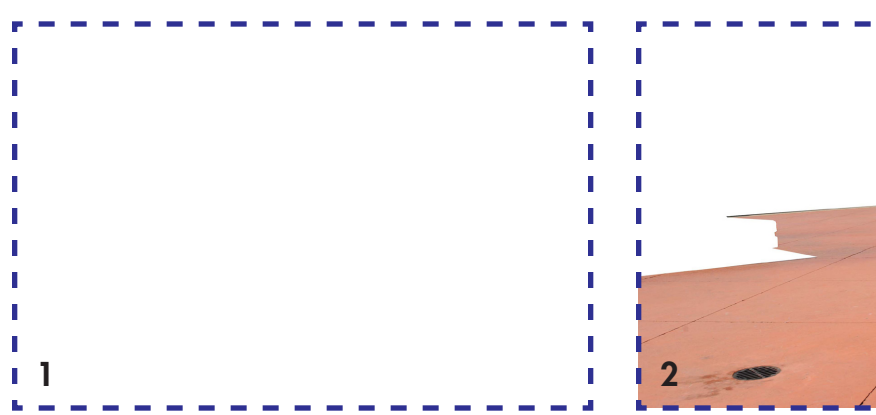
## PHILIP BURTON FEDERAL BUILDING PLAZA

San Francisco, California (*Anti-Precedent*)

The focus on skateboarding has its negative appearances from seeing how destructive an action can be to the objects within the space, inhibiting other pedestrians limited access and use of said space. The plaza has similar appearance to the actual function of the building, both displaying its power of privacy from other users within a city. Not only are metal objects placed on top of other objects to prohibit skateboarding, but also the segregation of human interaction as well from the divided benches that are placed within the plaza. These objects become nothing more than ornamental decorations for buildings that serve no purpose to the general public, but only to those who have the right to use these spaces. Skateboarding is not the only action that causes spaces to fail, homeless people and other lesser intelligent beings that are not seen to fit within the space and to be surveillance as to be careful of the danger they might harm to owners of buildings and plazas.







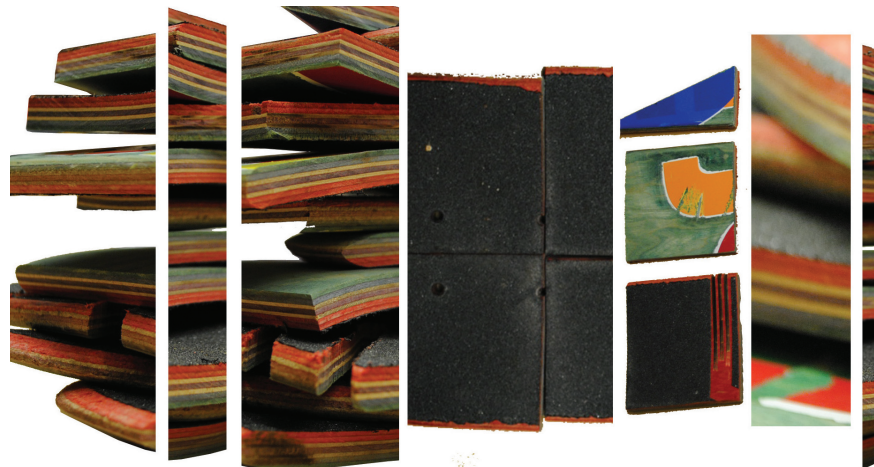
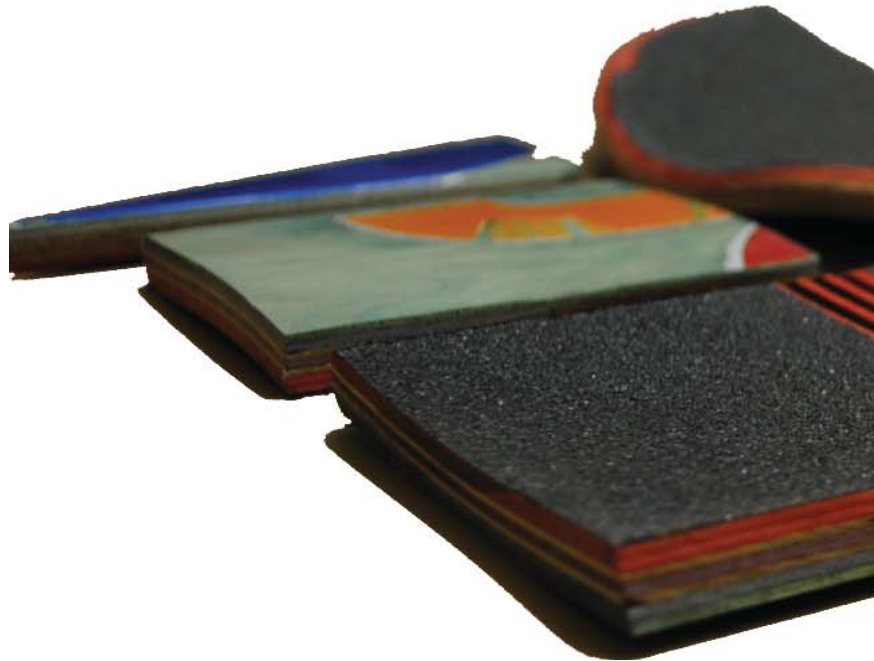
## TRANSITION

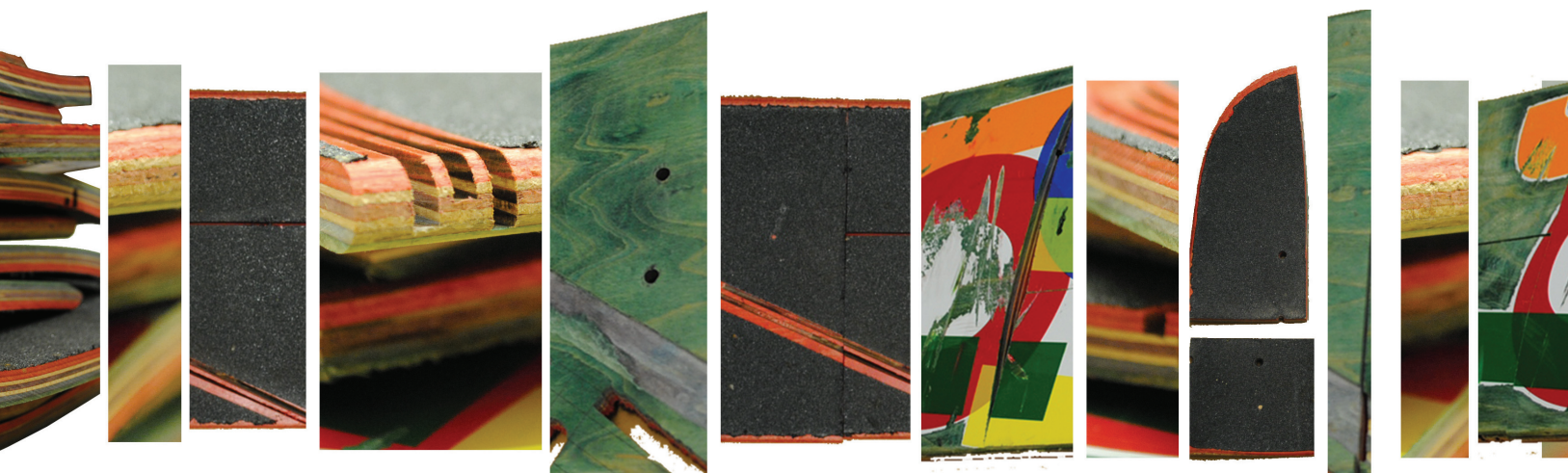
### STUDY MODEL

The beginning processes of understanding landscape and space was to understand the characteristics of the skateboard itself. The study model to the left is a demonstration of how the material of the skateboard has detail viewed from a perspective view as well as seen in section and separated as it forms a new image of how to understand a skateboard as an object on its own. The images above the study model label 1 through 4, is a process of understanding how we design spaces.

1. Beginning with an empty canvas.
2. Then the distinction of planes.
3. After surfaces are distinguished, objects are added to fill the space with elements that are familiar to all users.
4. Lastly, the user of the space is placed into question.

The issue of the users of the spaces is how architecture and skateboarding begin a relationship. Public space is meant for all human interactions at many different levels. To understand this, there must be an understanding of how all interactions can understood by all users.



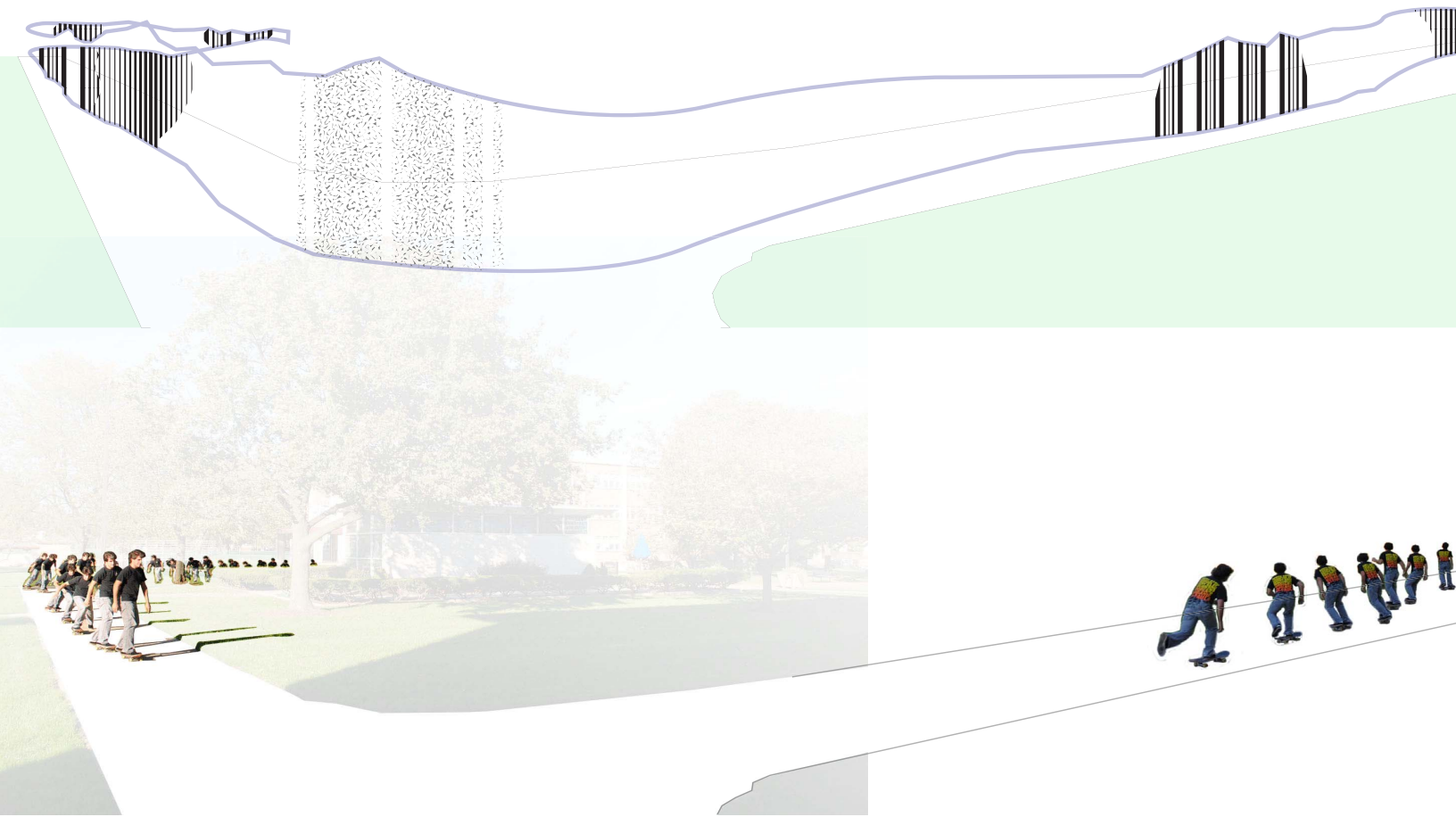


LAUNCH	MINI RAMP SESH!	QUICK
ARMY BUNKER	LONG BOARD SLIDE	IMMENSE
SLOPED	GRAVEYARD	REUSE
FREESTYLE	GUTTER	HOLLOW
BENCH	PUMPING	SCHOOLYARD
CARVE	SLIDING	SEAWALL
MY PATH	BOMBIN	SEWER PIPE
WALL RIDE	MANNY PAD	SHOPPING MALL
BRIDGE	TWEAK	RAPID
BUMPER	LAWN GAP	BANGIN
SKITCHING	ACID DROP	SLIDE
REFLECTION GAP	NOSE BONK	SLOPE
MATERIAL SITE	WISHFUL THINKING	SPILLWAY
COUCHES	PARKING LOT	STAIRS
PAIN	PICNIC TABLE	STATUE
CULVERT	PLANK	TRAFFIC
SLAPPY'S	FUN BOX	SCREECHING
PLAYGROUND	INSANE TERRAIN	ENTERTAINING
FREE PARK	POND	CURVED
FIRST SKATEBOARD	CONCRETE WAVE	STURDY
GRIND	SKATEPARK	ROAD TRIP
<b>ANYTHING</b>	QUARTER PIPE	TUBE
TWIRL	RAMP	WALL RIDE
ROCK N' ROLL	RESERVOIR	WHEELCHAIR RAMP

ROAD  
ROAD OBSTACLES  
ROLLER RINK  
RUN OFF  
SCHOOLYARD  
SEAWALL  
SEWER PIPE  
SHOPPING MALL  
SIDEWALK  
SKATEPARK  
SLIDE  
SLOPE  
SPILLWAY  
STAIRS  
STATUE  
STREET SIGN  
STREET  
TENNIS COURT  
TRAIN TRACK  
TREE  
TRUCK  
TUBE  
WALL  
WHEELCHAIR RAMP

GARAGE  
GAS STATION  
GRAVEYARD  
GUTTER  
HALF-PIPE  
HAND RAILING  
HILL  
LANE DIVIDER  
LAUNCH RAMP  
LAWN  
LOADING DOCK  
MAILBOX  
MALL  
PARKING LOT  
PICNIC TABLE  
PLANK  
PLANTER BOX  
PLAYGROUND  
POND  
POOL  
PUBLIC PARK  
QUARTER PIPE  
RAMP  
RESERVOIR

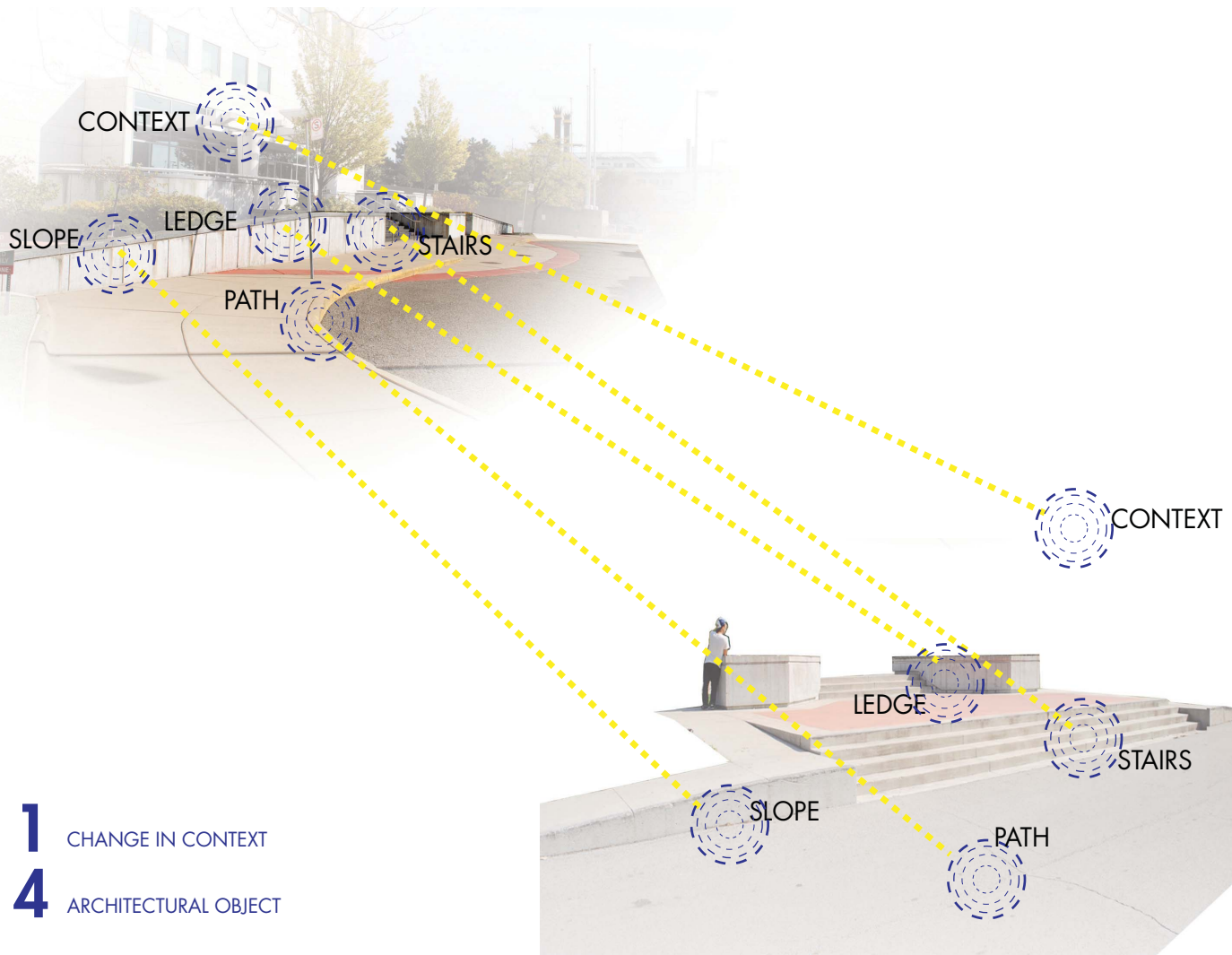
ALLEY  
ARMY BUNKER  
BANK  
BASKETBALL COURT  
BENCH  
BEVEL  
BIKE PATH  
BRICK WALL  
BRIDGE  
BUMPER  
CAR  
CASTING POND  
CONSTRUCTION SITE  
COUCHES  
CRACK  
CULVERT  
CURB  
DOWNTOWN  
DRAINAGE DITCH  
DRIVEWAY  
**EVERYTHING**  
FIRE HYDRANT  
FULL PIPE



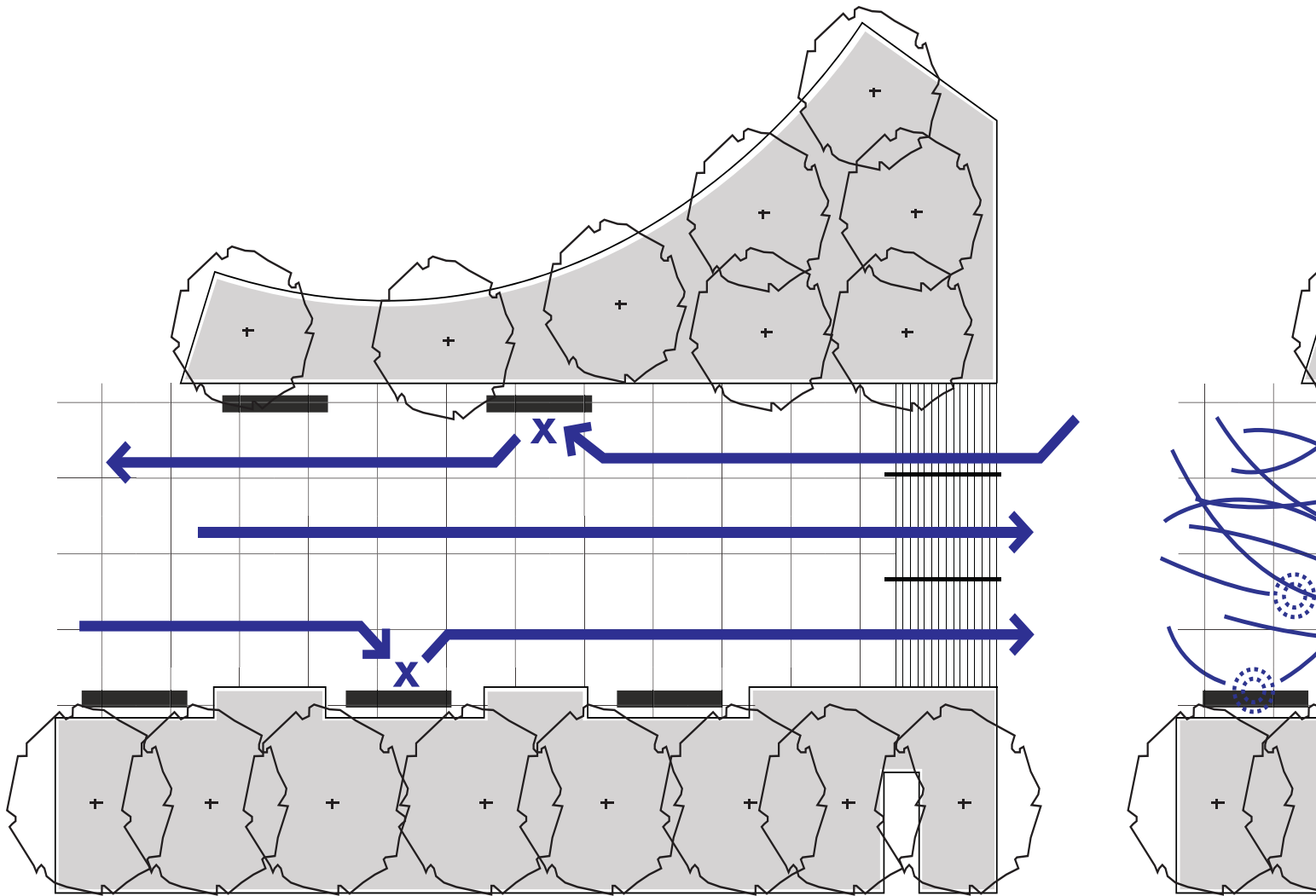
The previous pages is a list of objects sided with adjectives of those objects that skateboarders see differently that normal user of a city or space. They original intention of the object is changed as the skateboarder performs a different type of trick or maneuver off or on the object. To look beyond the object, is to look at the movement the skateboarder performs through space and how information can be taken out their movements. The image above depicts the skateboarder and the line of information that can be seen as a different texture that can translate to the type of material felt or the speed within the movement.



Understanding the information of the surrounding space is important as well. The diagram below showcases similar architectural objects and skateboarding objects that are completely identical. The difference between the two is the actual scale and context one understands these objects to be in. In this case, it is merely replicating what is already existing in a new context, but not understanding the relationship as to why these objects are important to skateboarders and how they are uninteresting and unnoticed to the everyday user.



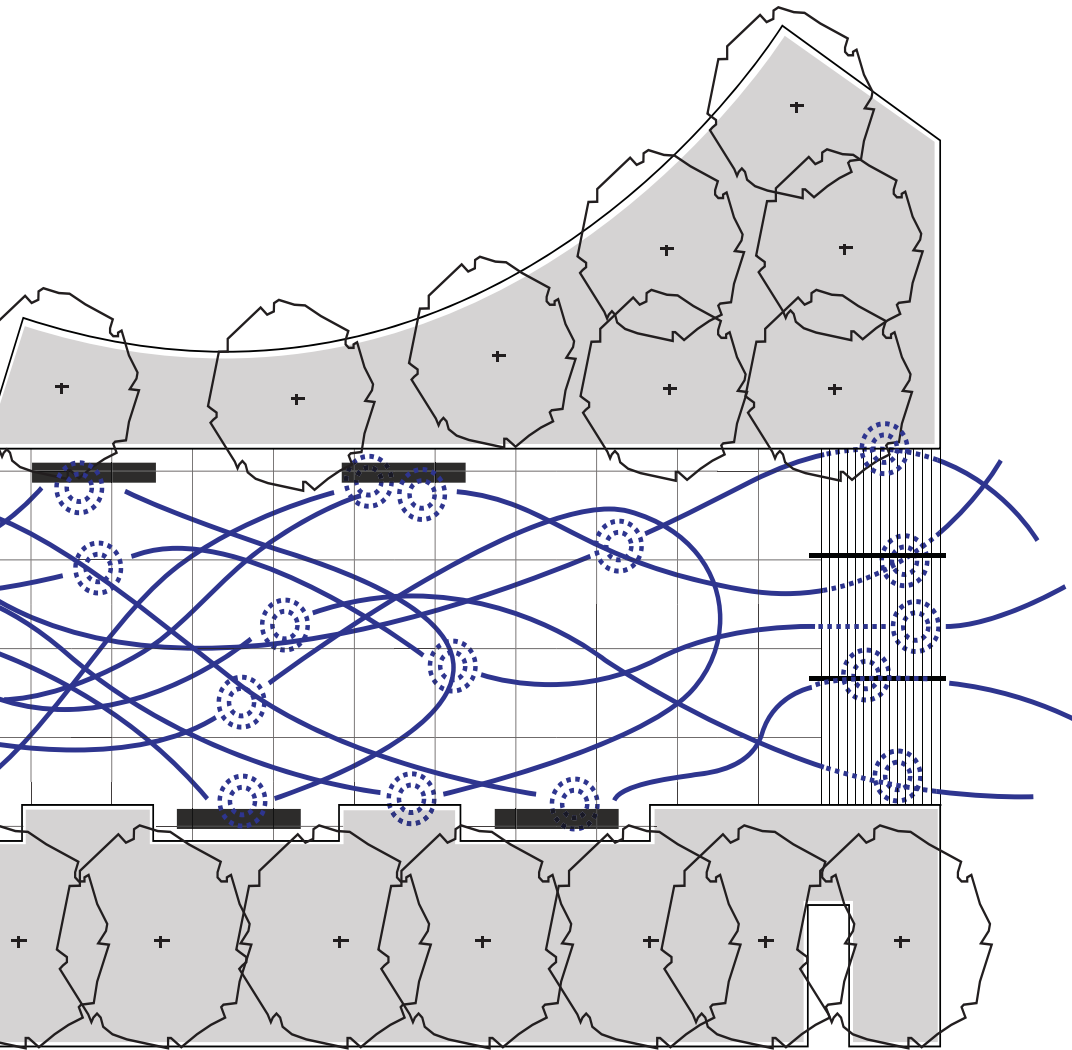
- 1 CHANGE IN CONTEXT
- 4 ARCHITECTURAL OBJECT



## PEDESTRIAN MOVEMENT

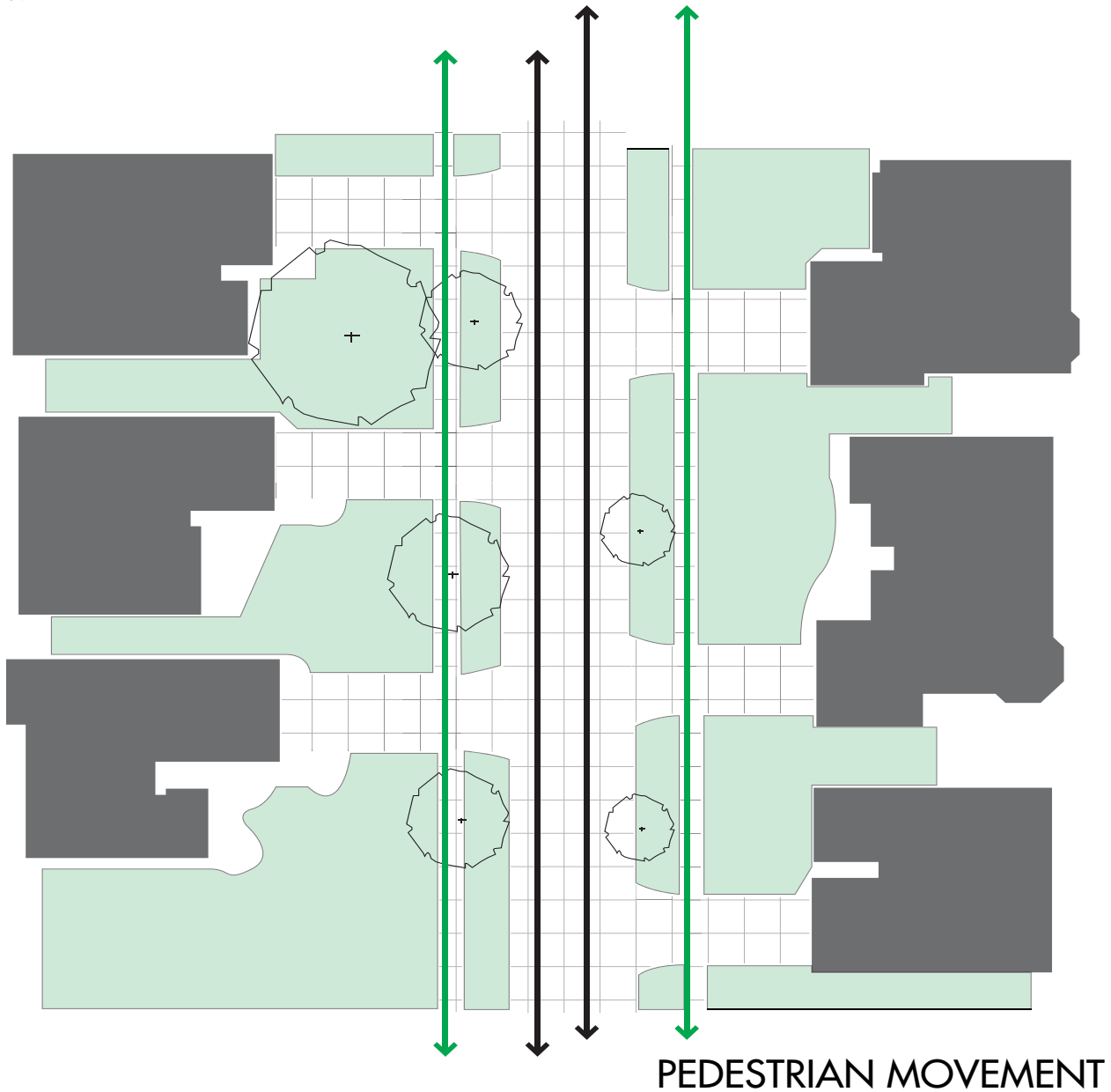
**3** STATIC MOVEMENTS

**X** SPONTANEOUS MOVEMENTS



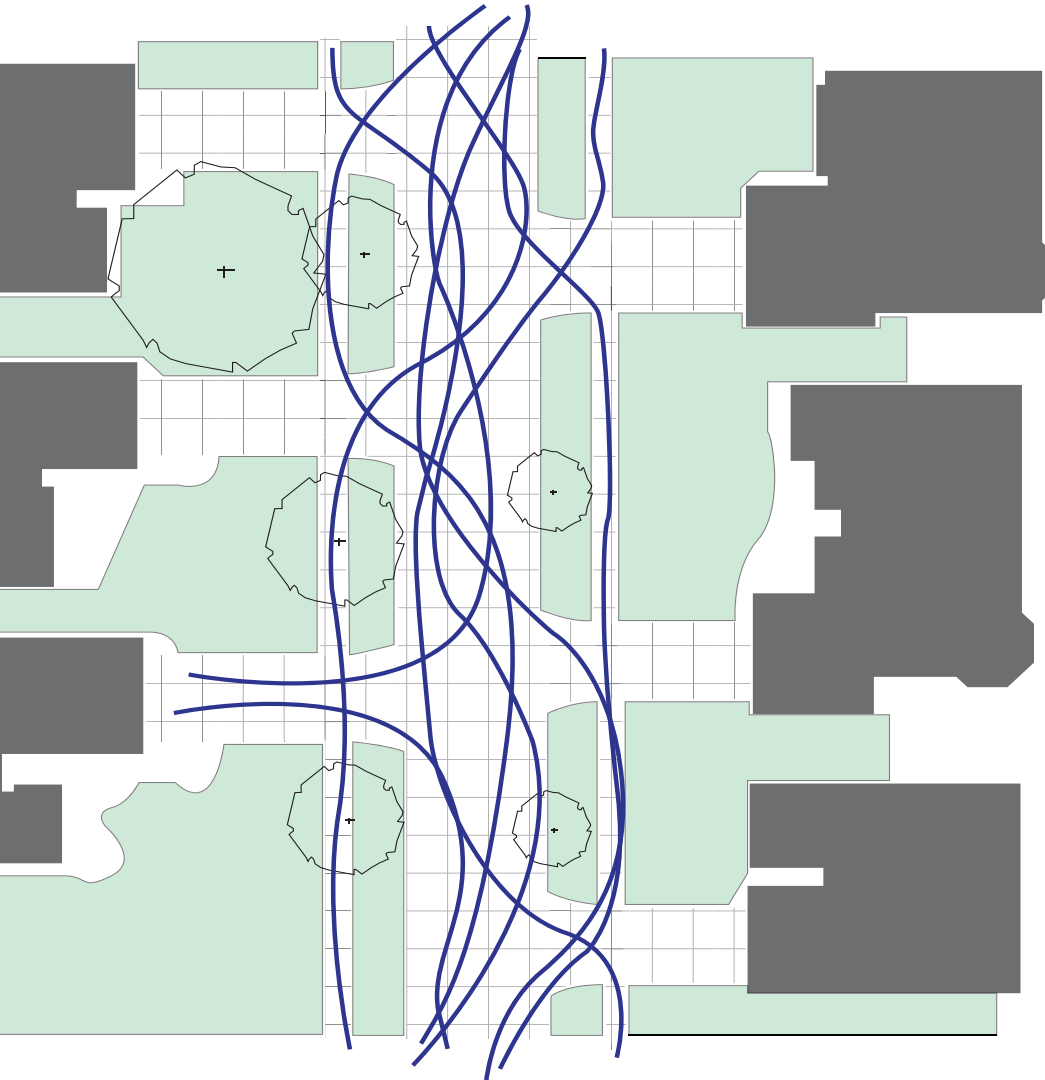
## SKATEBOARDER MOVEMENT

The diagram on the left represents benches, stairs and handrails placed within a small instance of a possible plaza. The movement compares the pedestrian and the skateboarder of how they use the space provided. The objects placed within the space only represent one function to the pedestrian. The skateboarder, however, see's a multiplicity of interactions to be able to encounter within the small space. The dashed radial lines are indications of the skateboarders performance within the space such as maneuvers or tricks on or above the objects. What is not explained in the within the diagram is the actual physical contact that the skateboarder encounters through the tool of the skateboard and misunderstood relationship to the pedestrian.



**2** STATIC MOVEMENTS

**X** SPONTANEOUS MOVEMENTS

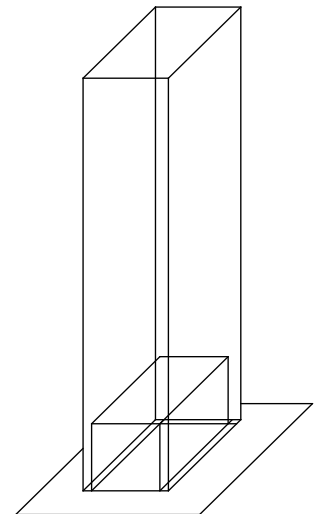
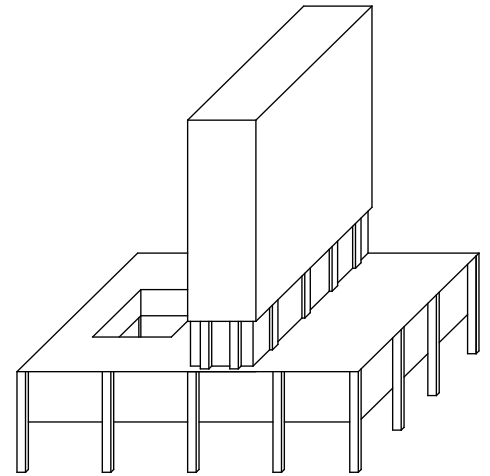
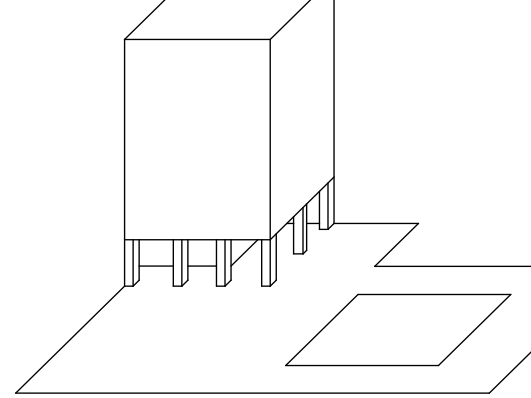


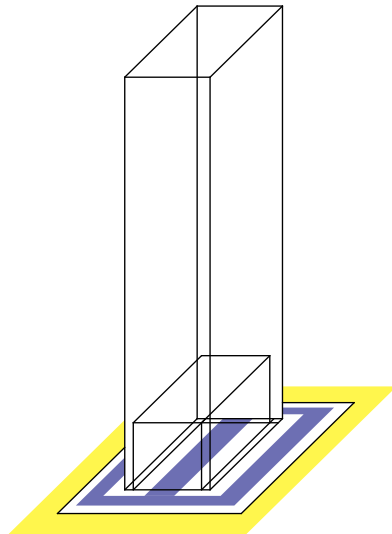
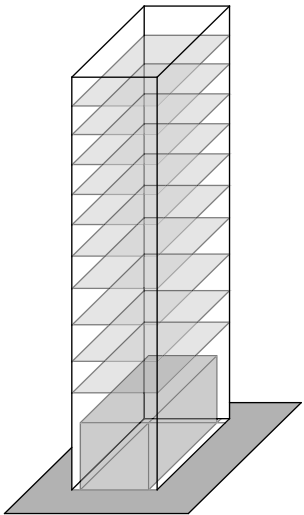
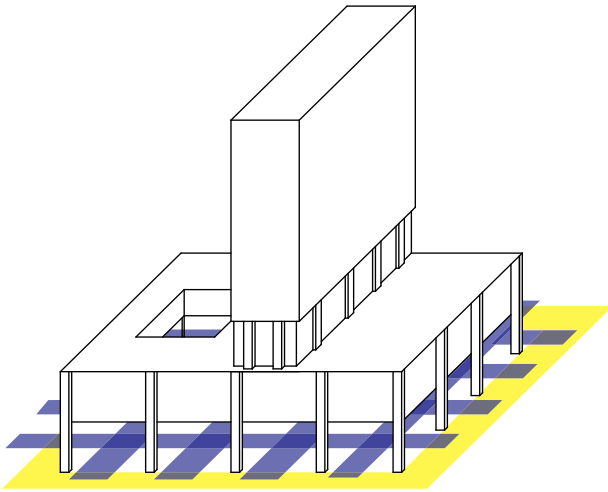
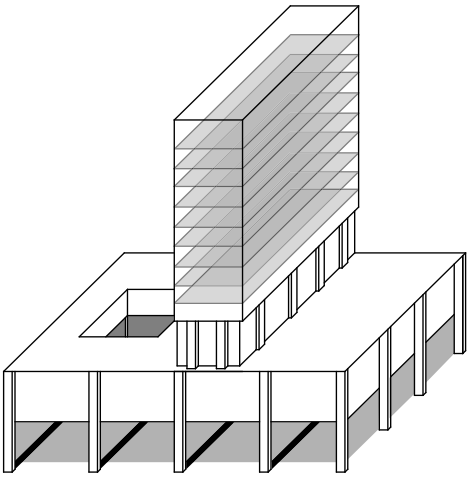
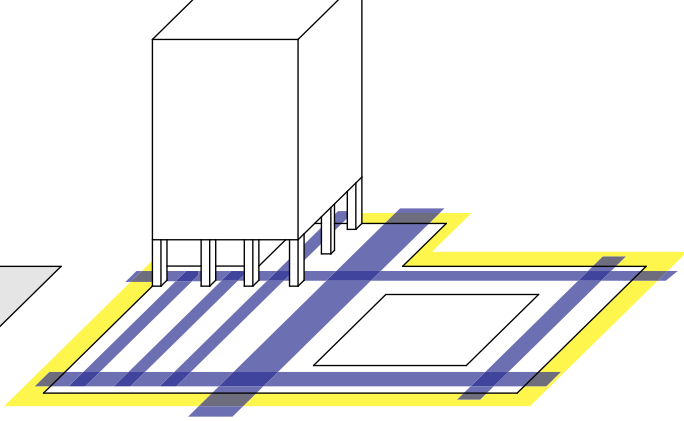
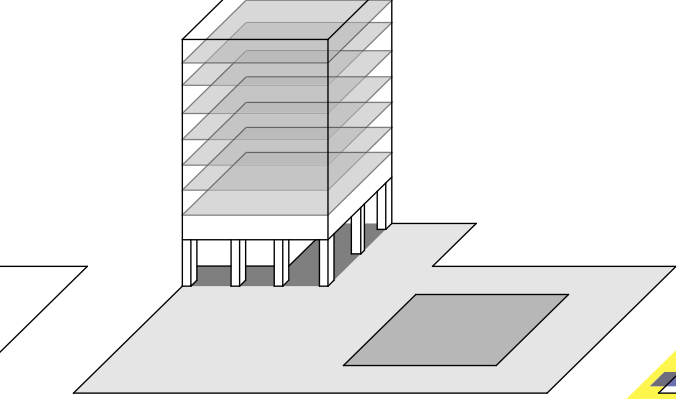
SKATEBOARDER MOVEMENT

Similar to the previous diagram, this looks at movements of skateboarders within a suburban setting rather than an actual plaza environment. The pedestrian movement also includes two black lines for vehicular traffic that would occur on a suburban street. The skateboarders movement uses the entire space of the vehicular and pedestrian as new lines of movement begin to shape that are now seen even with the very rigid structure of the placement of home, sidewalk, setback, and street. These movements show a new pattern of movement that is intended for a new type of foot traffic through a heavily vehicular area of suburbia.

## BUILDING TYPOLOGIES

The diagram shows three different types of building typologies that handle public space in different ways. The first building at the top, shows a typical plaza with a water feature and the building adjacent to the plaza. The building in the middle is a diagram of the Lever House that Sennett describes in *The Fall of Public Man*. The building is raised up on stilts that covers the plaza and has one area that allows light to penetrate through for natural effects to occur while one is in the plaza. The third typology is of a building with an interior plaza setting. These can be seen as lobbies for the buildings, but in some cases there are retail stores and small cafe's that reside within the building. In terms of public versus private, the assumption of the first typology can be the most public form, allowing users to pass through the space and not have to have any relationship to the building and its occupants. The Lever House has an opposite feeling. The plaza is subjected to dark areas with sunlight only reaching particular areas. This space begins to separate the user from the actual function of the plaza. The last building completely hides its interior plaza only rendering the users who occupy the building the actual use of the interior plaza.





## SKATE PLAZA

Rob Dyrdek/ DC Shoe Foundation  
Kettering, Ohio

The skate plaza is the first in the country to use the term “plaza” in reference to what is normally called a skatepark. The plaza is located within a city park. These images and drawings of the plaza are more of an understanding of the actual plaza and its objects. A case can be made that this is a safe location of where the plaza is placed. Compared to having no place to skate and allowing skateboarders to skate in cities where there is more danger and interactions with other users. These issues relevant, but what should be noticed is that there is an injustice to the context and to the very nature of skateboarding itself, by over objectifying space for only one specific user.

HANDRAILS

13

RAMPS

15

LEDGES

18

STAIR SETS

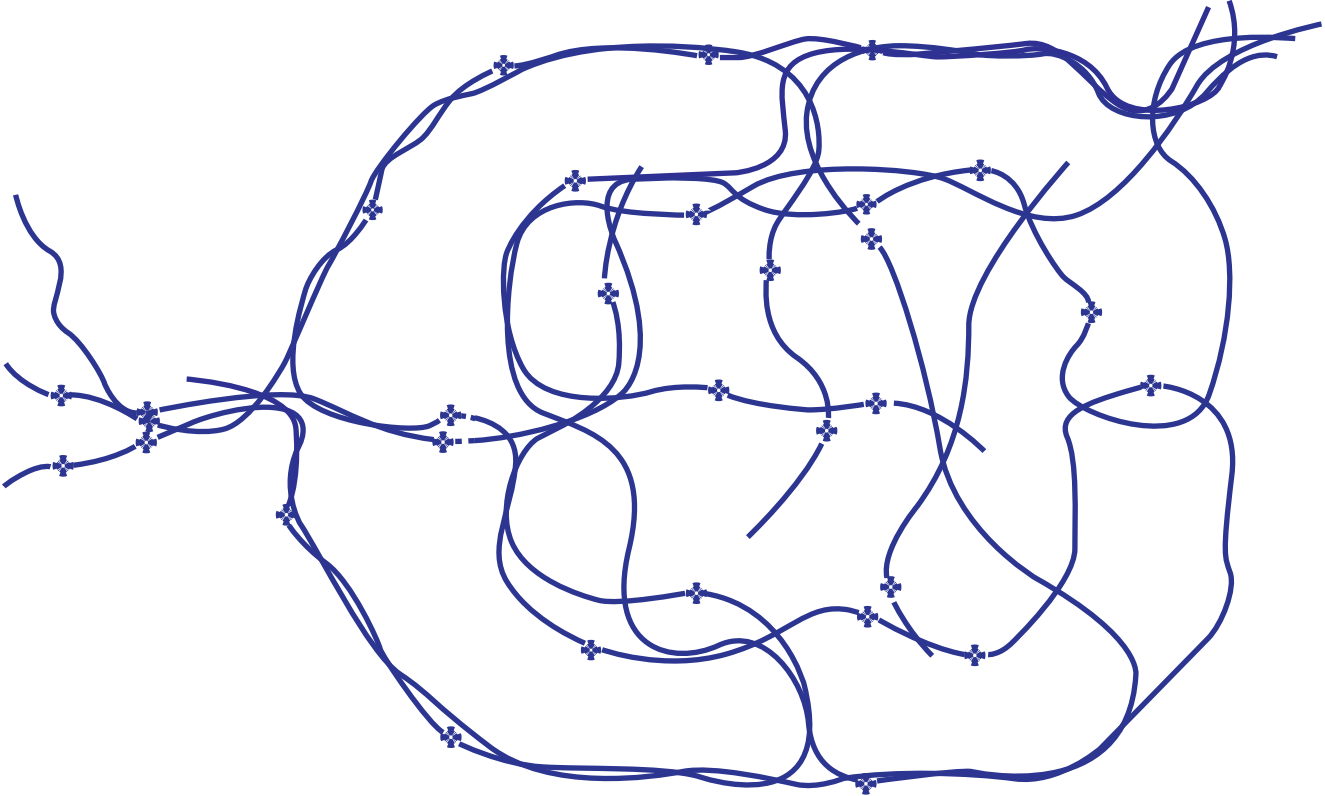
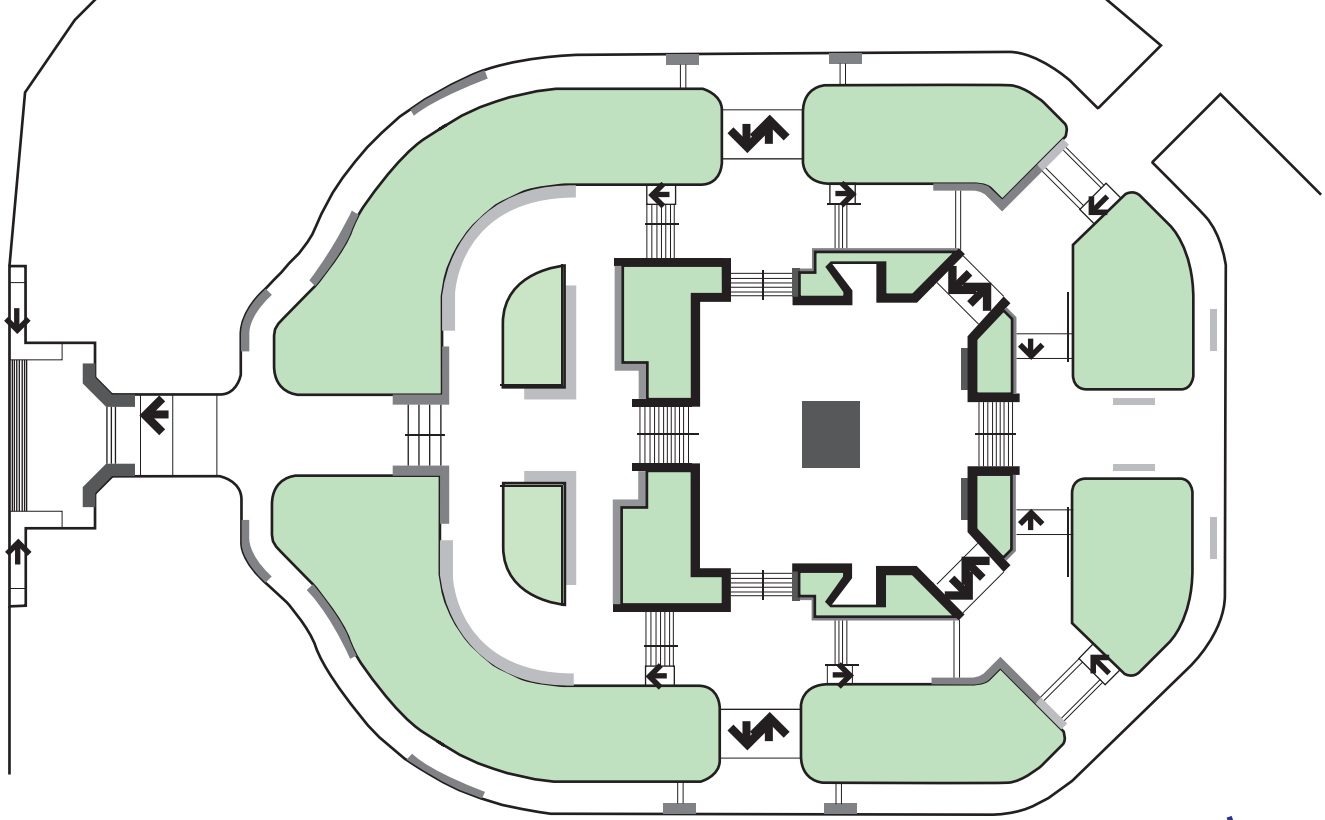
19

BENCHES

23

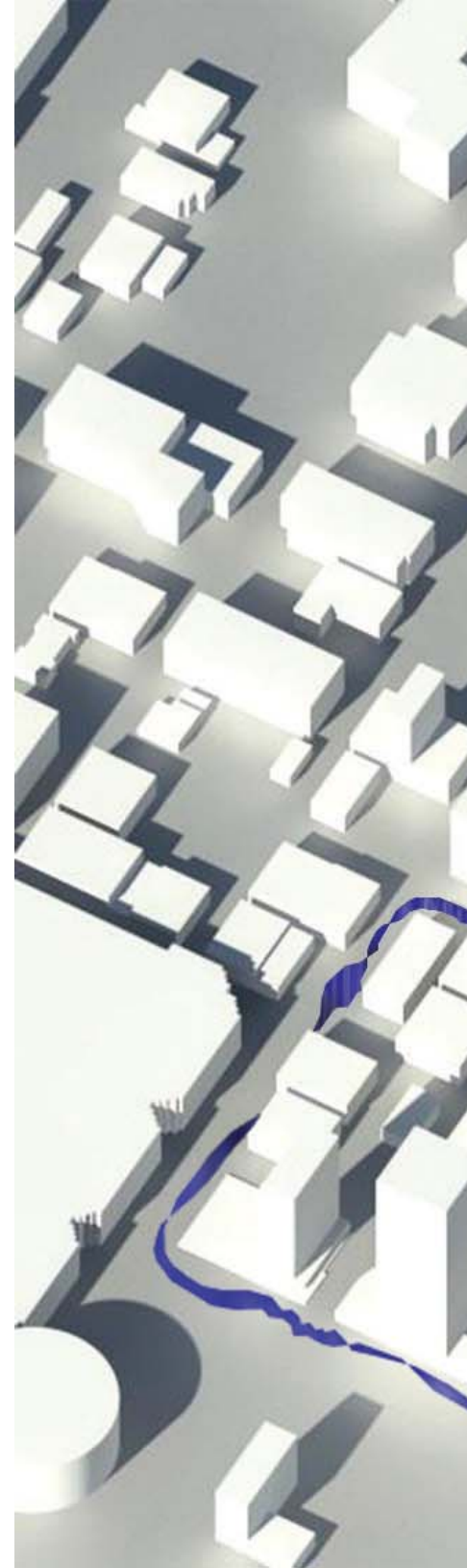






## RIBBON

The ribbon is a representation of the skateboarders movement through a city using how Kevin Lynch describes *The Image of a City*. The ribbon was an investigation of a skateboarders reaction to the city having no predetermined destination. The image is rendered with the ribbon moving fluidly through the city and also with the intention of the city as one entire landscape compared to dividing the city by streets and sidewalks.

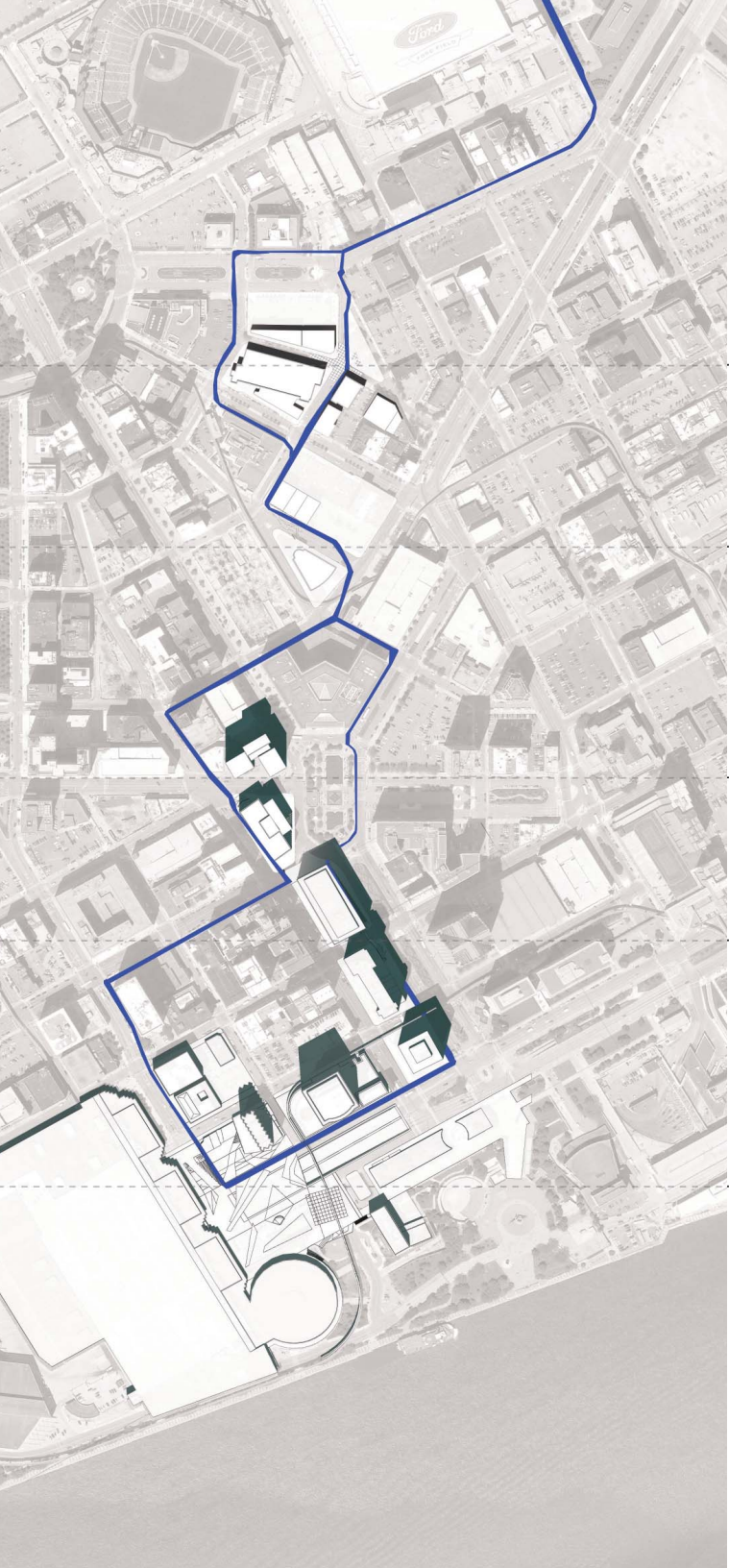


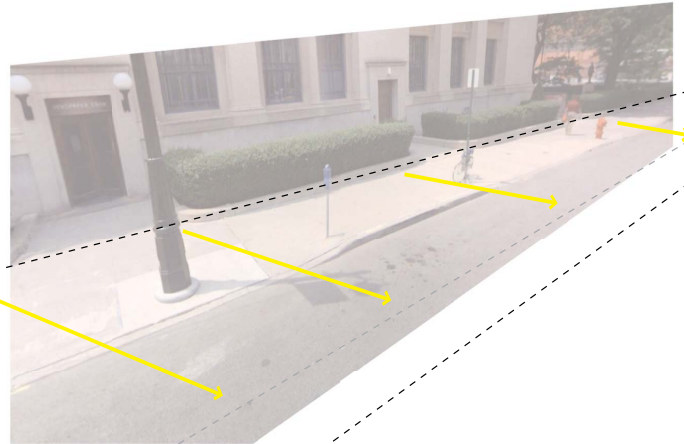
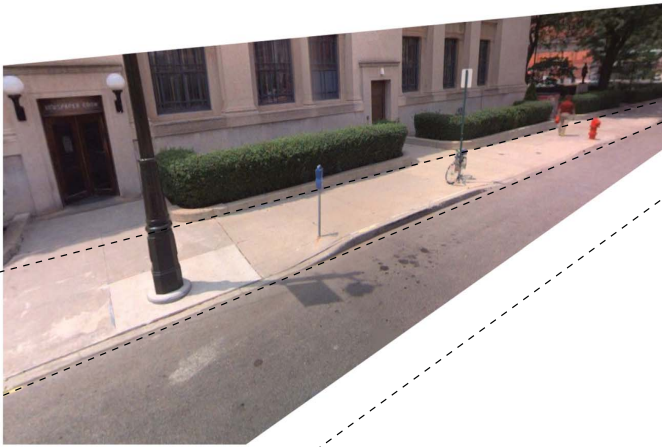
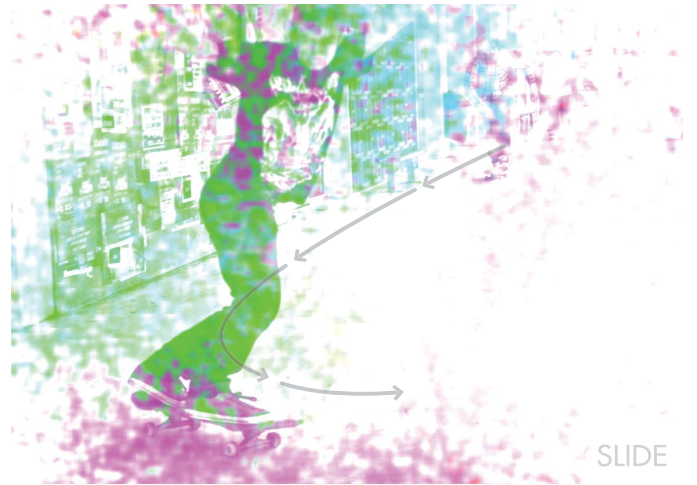
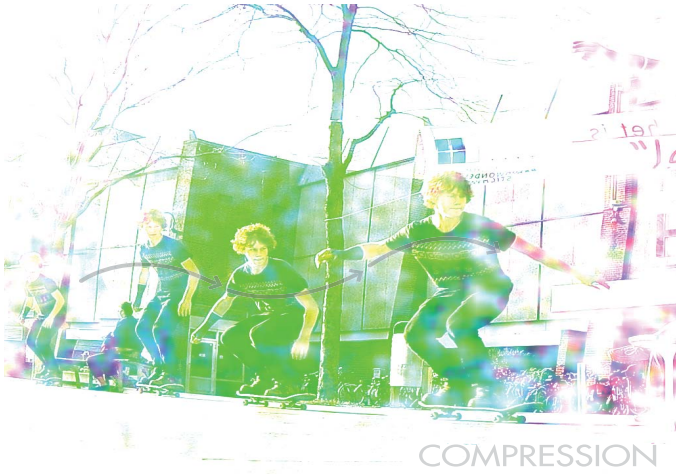


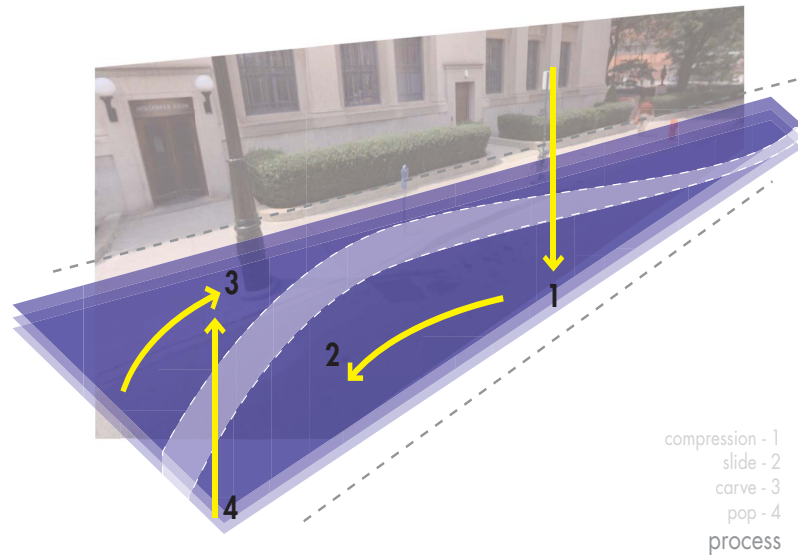
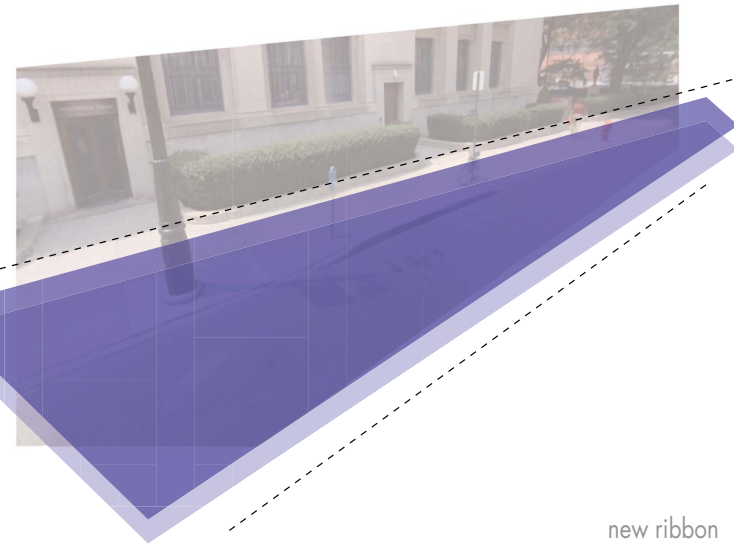
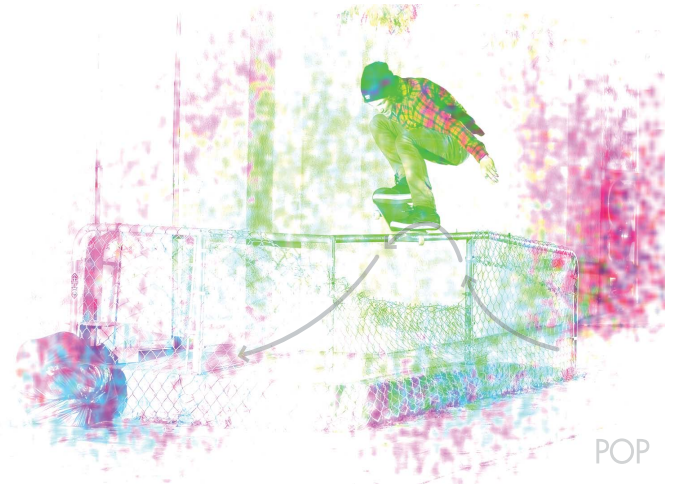
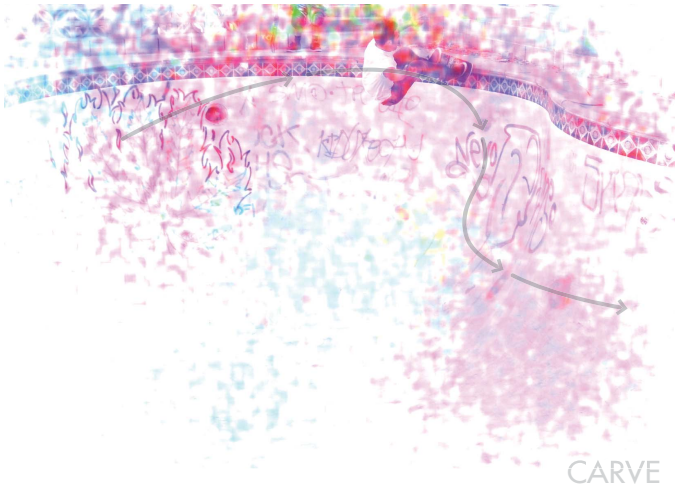


The images are taken from a video recording the skateboarders movement through the city as well as within a subdivision setting. The site plan illustrates the ribbon as a two dimensional surface. The context of the city that is shown in white are the sites that will begin to unfold the relationship between architecture, skateboarding, and the image of a city.









compression - 1  
slide - 2  
carve - 3  
pop - 4  
process

The images above show four basic movements of a skateboarder and the beginning process of how to interpret and design from these gestures. The ribbon, as a three dimensional surface, can start to transform as the skateboarder begins to take over the landscape and form a new movement and design within the city. The simple gesture is to take over the space that can be intended for all users and not just vehicular.



## DISTRICT

### OBJECT: CURB CUTS

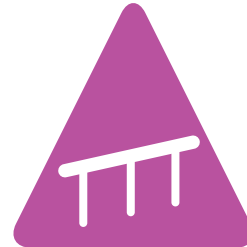
German town district, Harmonie Park (paradise valley), is a place that one "enters." To fully have the observer understand their surrounding, the curb cut will extend to the entire district, heightening the observers awareness and perception of the space



## PATH

### OBJECT: RAILINGS

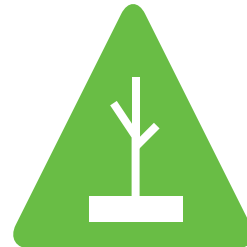
A section of library and farmer street will be taken over by railings. Railings of different heights and sizes. They will begin to dictate space and form a new path that can be experienced. This changes the perception of railings intended use.



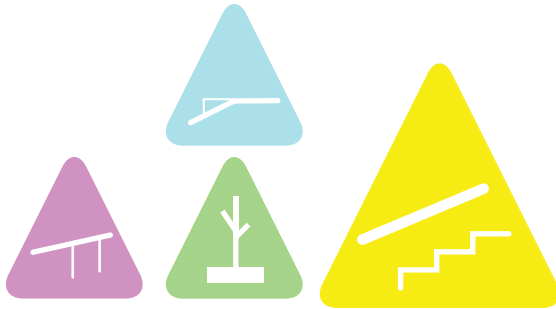
## EDGE

### OBJECT: PLANTER BOX

The edge condition separates different areas of the city. The E & Y building uses this edge as mechanical service. The planter box will serve the purpose of allowing the user to move through a planter box while also allowing ramps to play an important role in the edge condition.





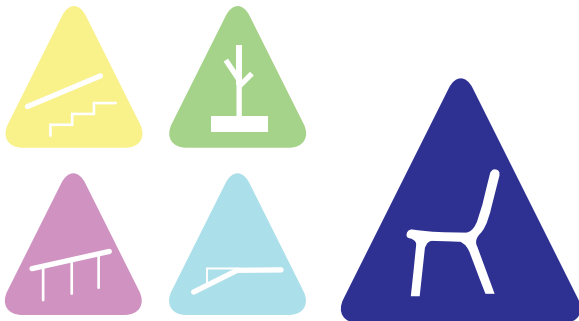


**OBJECT:  
STAIR\_HANDRAIL**

The woodward corridor will serve as a series of nodal points begins to address the public (east) and private (west) space. The design will be driven off of the influence of stairs and handrails, starting with the Chase Building.



**NODE**



**OBJECT:  
BENCH**

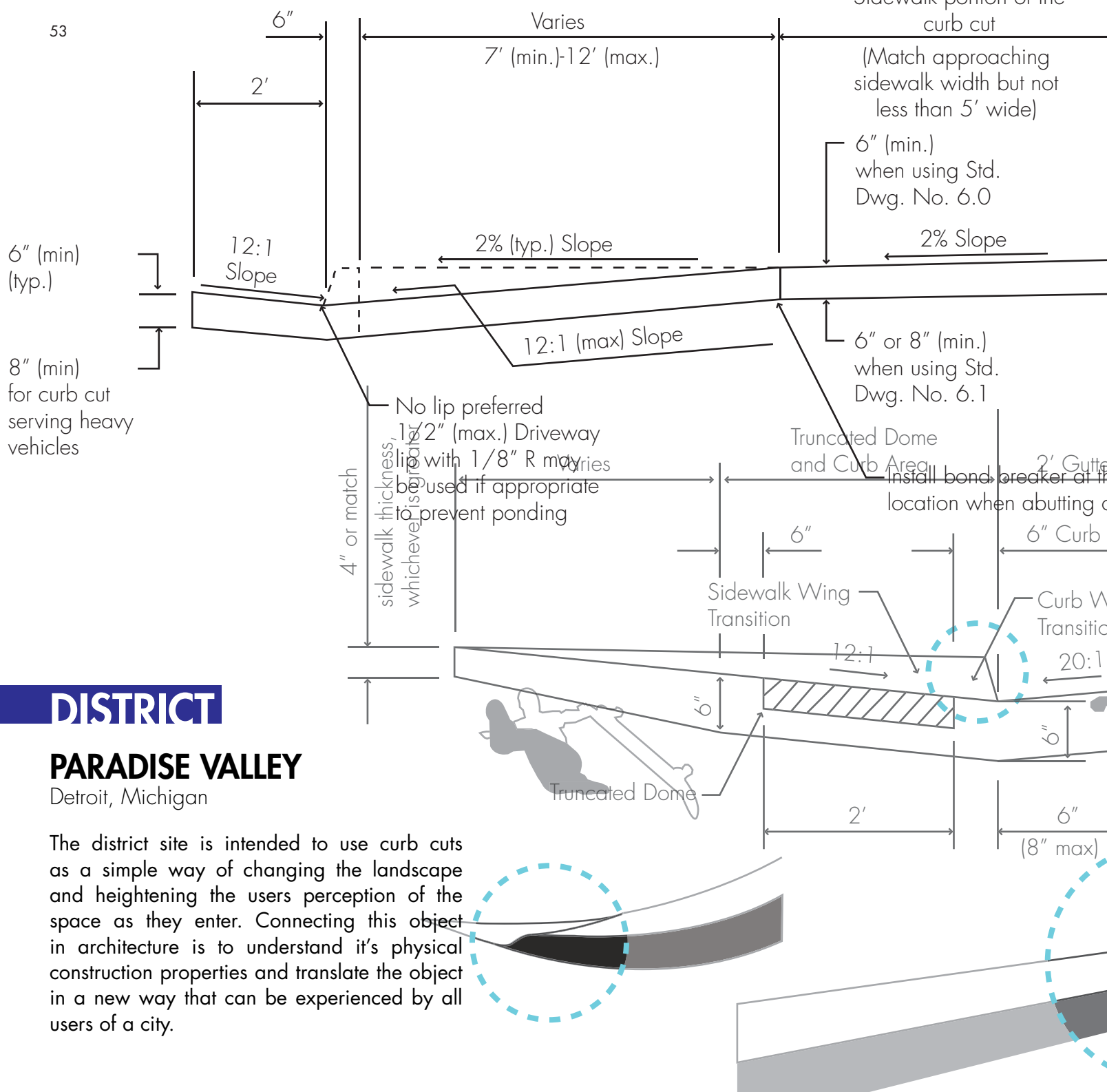
Landmarks are popular destinations and physical objects that can stand alone. The bench, along with the other four objects, will be implemented as a full scale experiment of objects. The landmark will begin to make connections with buildings and urban fabric as the space expands.



**LANDMARK**

## IMAGE OF THE CITY

The city is broken down to five elements; *district*, *path*, *edge*, *node*, and *landmark*. To understand the skateboarders perspective, the intent is to assign each site with an architectural object that will drive the design of the site. Each site and object are described above.

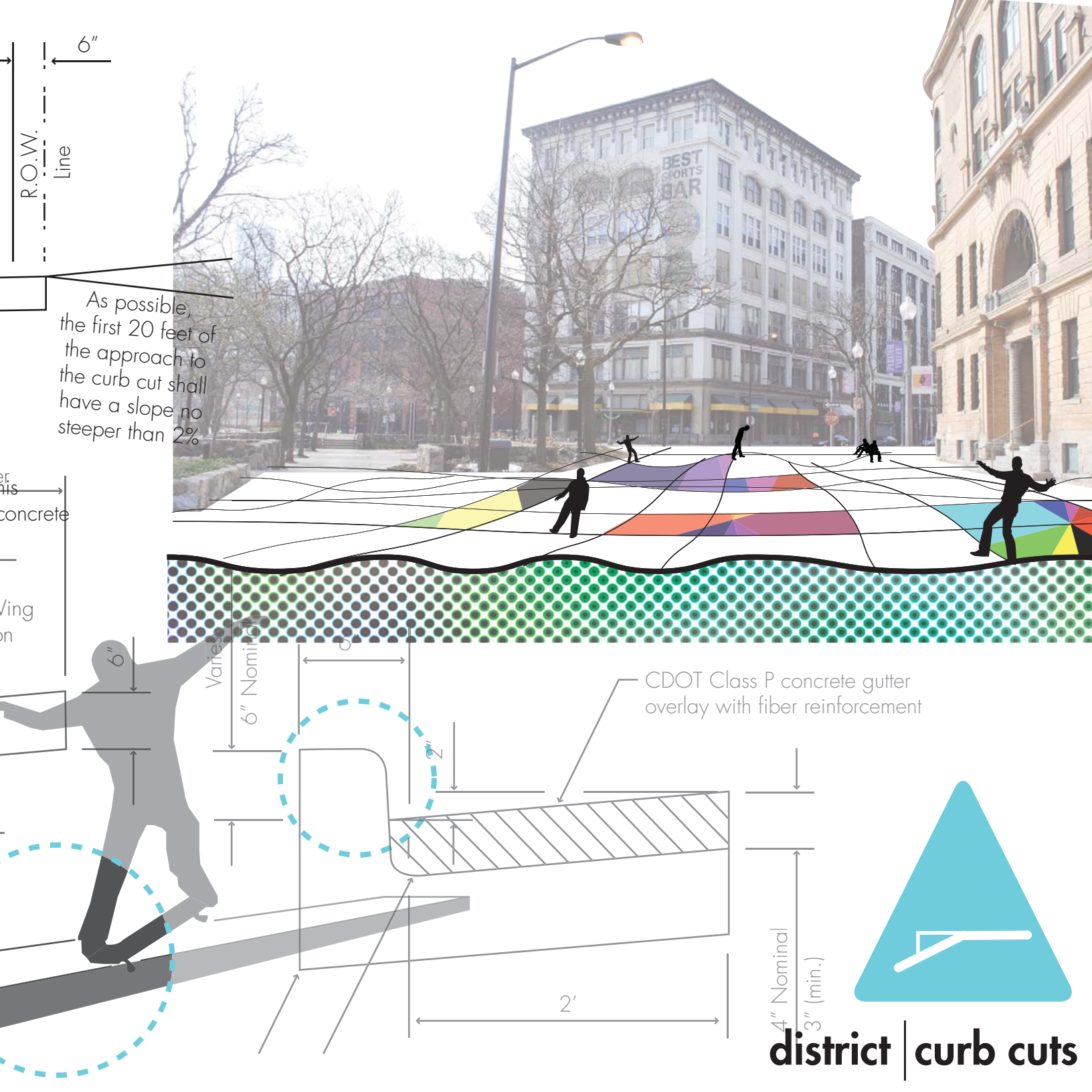


# DISTRICT

## PARADISE VALLEY

Detroit, Michigan

The district site is intended to use curb cuts as a simple way of changing the landscape and heightening the users perception of the space as they enter. Connecting this object in architecture is to understand it's physical construction properties and translate the object in a new way that can be experienced by all users of a city.



R.O.W. Line  
6"

As possible, the first 20 feet of the approach to the curb cut shall have a slope no steeper than 2%

er. this concrete

ving on

Varies  
6" Nominal

CDOT Class P concrete gutter overlay with fiber reinforcement

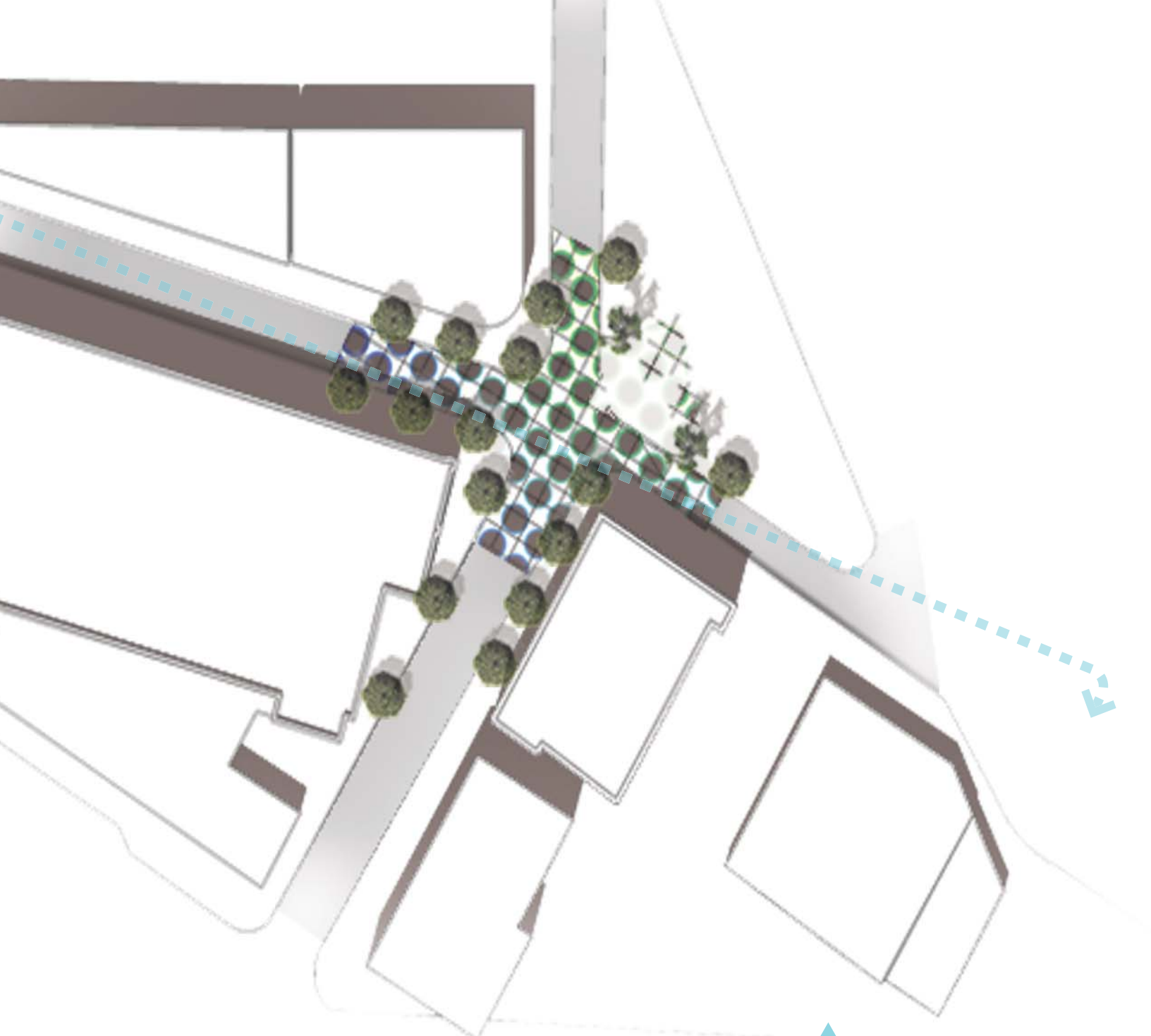
2'

4" Nominal  
3" (min.)



**district | curb cuts**





district | plan

The image rendered shows slight changes to the landscape that begin to invite people into the space and change their speed as they move through the district.



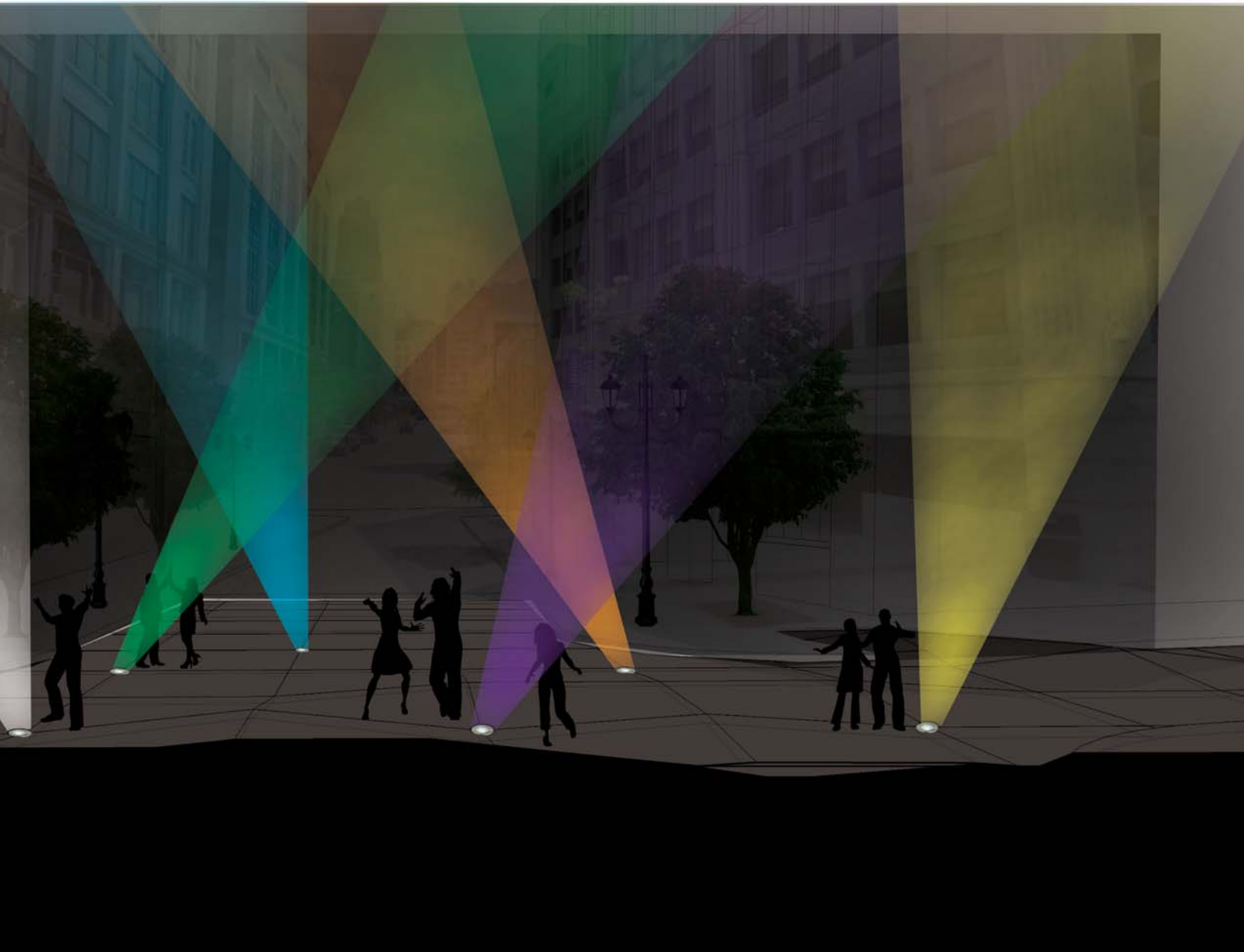


district | section

Duality in program was also investigated in how the space functions at night with recessed canned lighting placed into the low points, allowing for entertainment opportunities to arise.







district | section

61

1 1/2" Sch. 40 Aluminum Pipe (1.9" O.D.)

Mitered Corner

1 1/2" Sch. 40 Aluminum Pipe (1.9" O.D.)

As Req'd

As Required

Aluminum Cover Flange

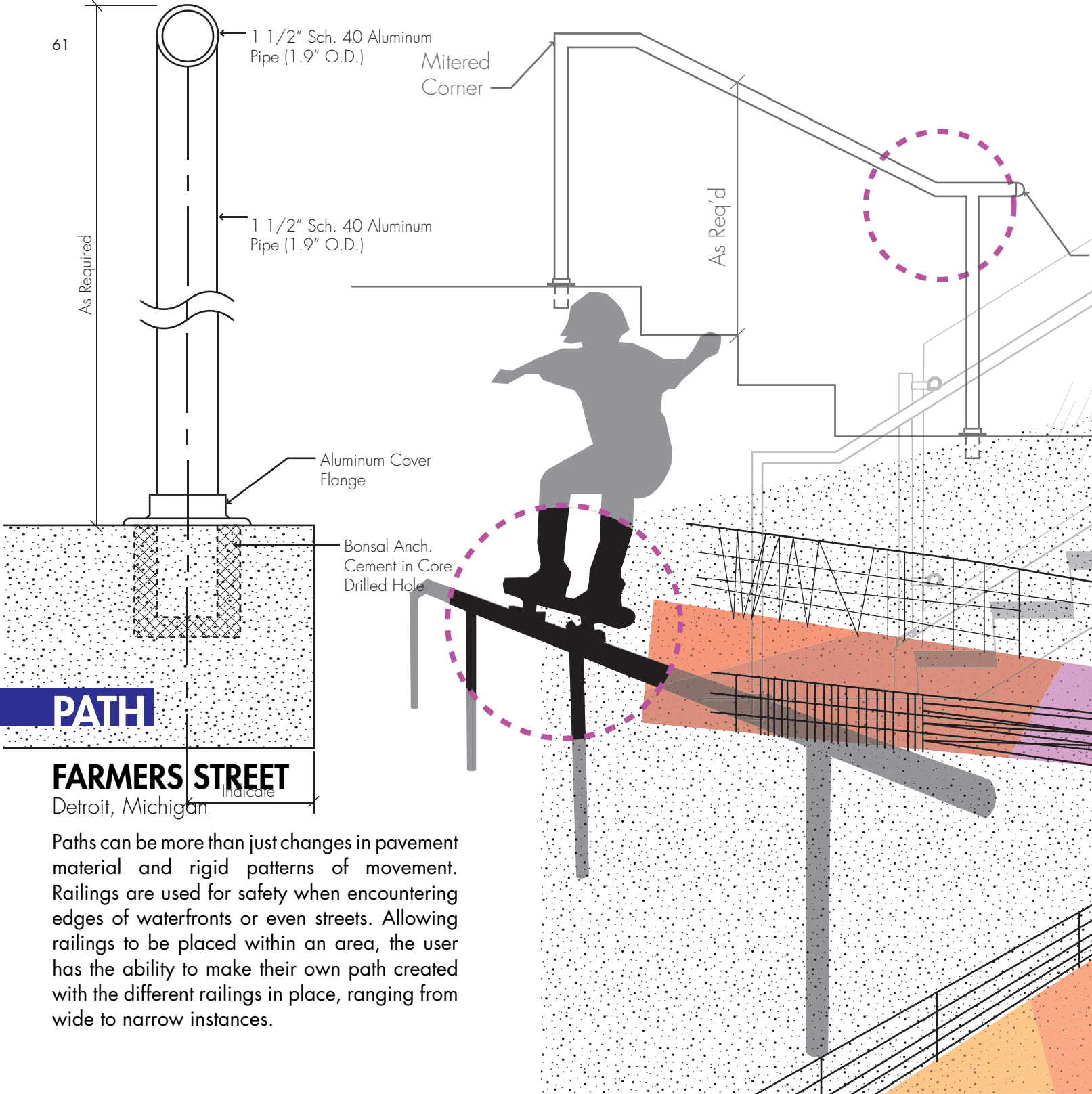
Bonsal Anch. Cement in Core Drilled Hole

# PATH

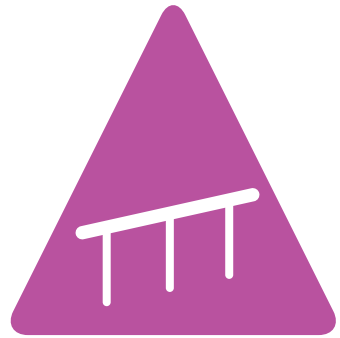
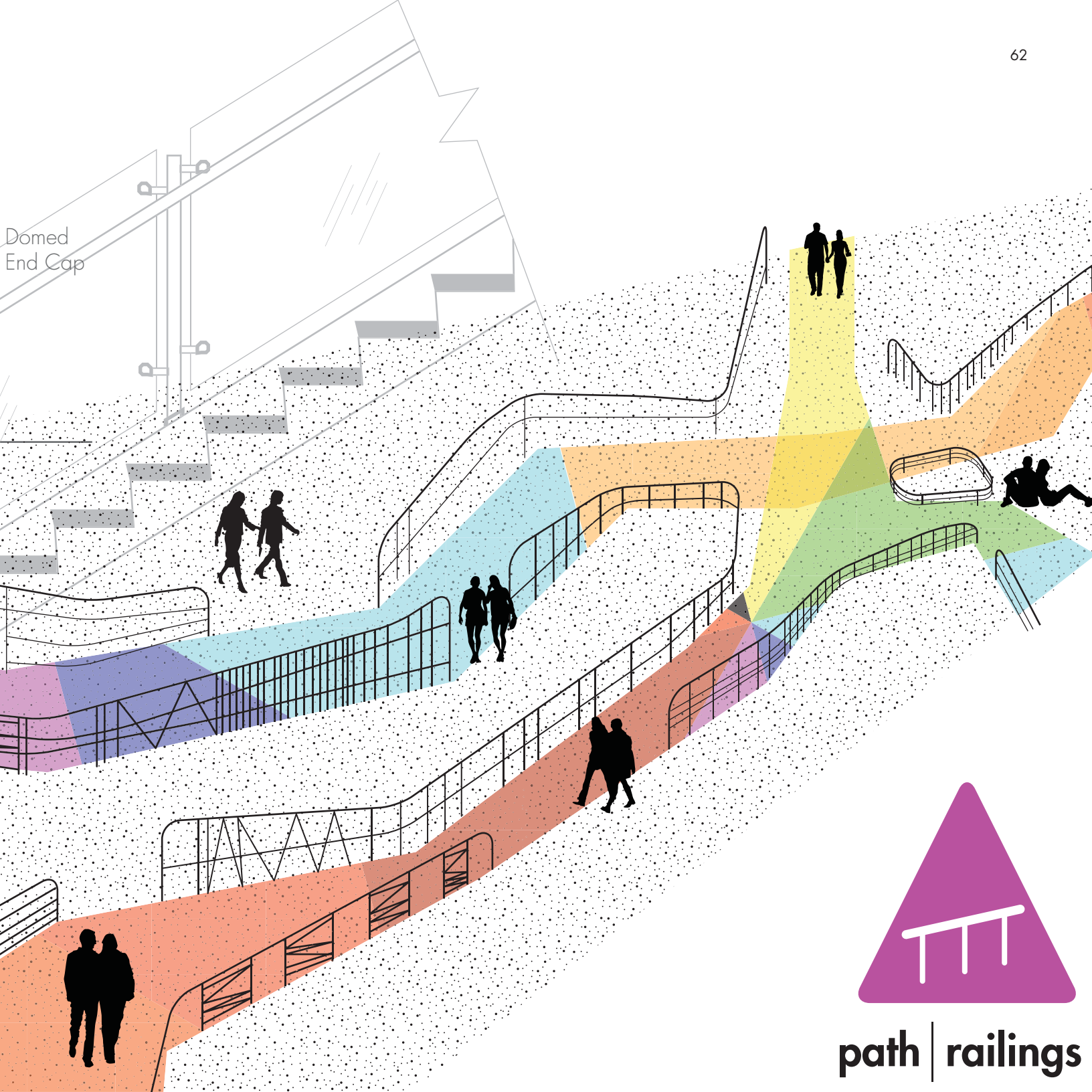
## FARMERS STREET

Detroit, Michigan

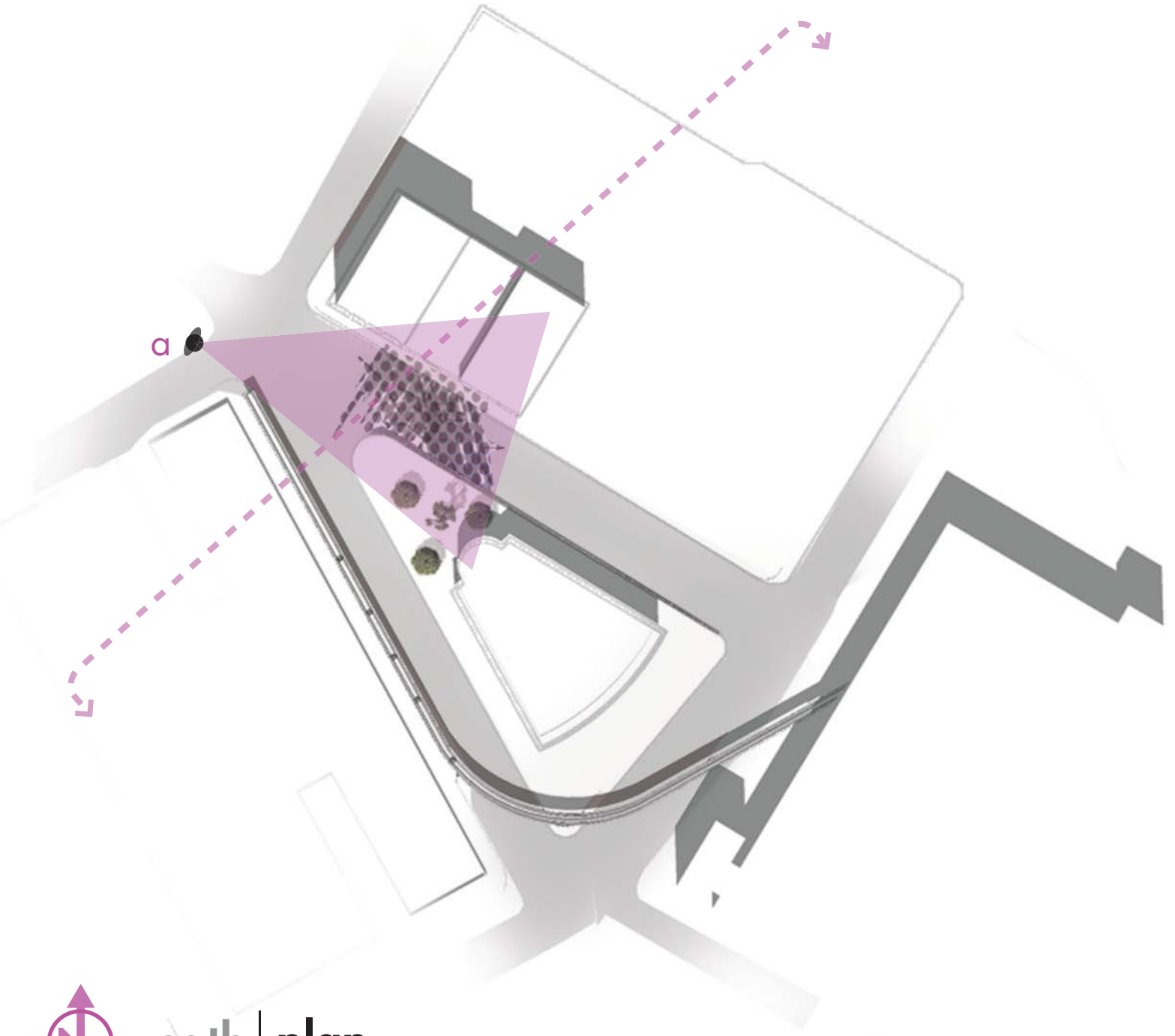
Paths can be more than just changes in pavement material and rigid patterns of movement. Railings are used for safety when encountering edges of waterfronts or even streets. Allowing railings to be placed within an area, the user has the ability to make their own path created with the different railings in place, ranging from wide to narrow instances.



Domed  
End Cap

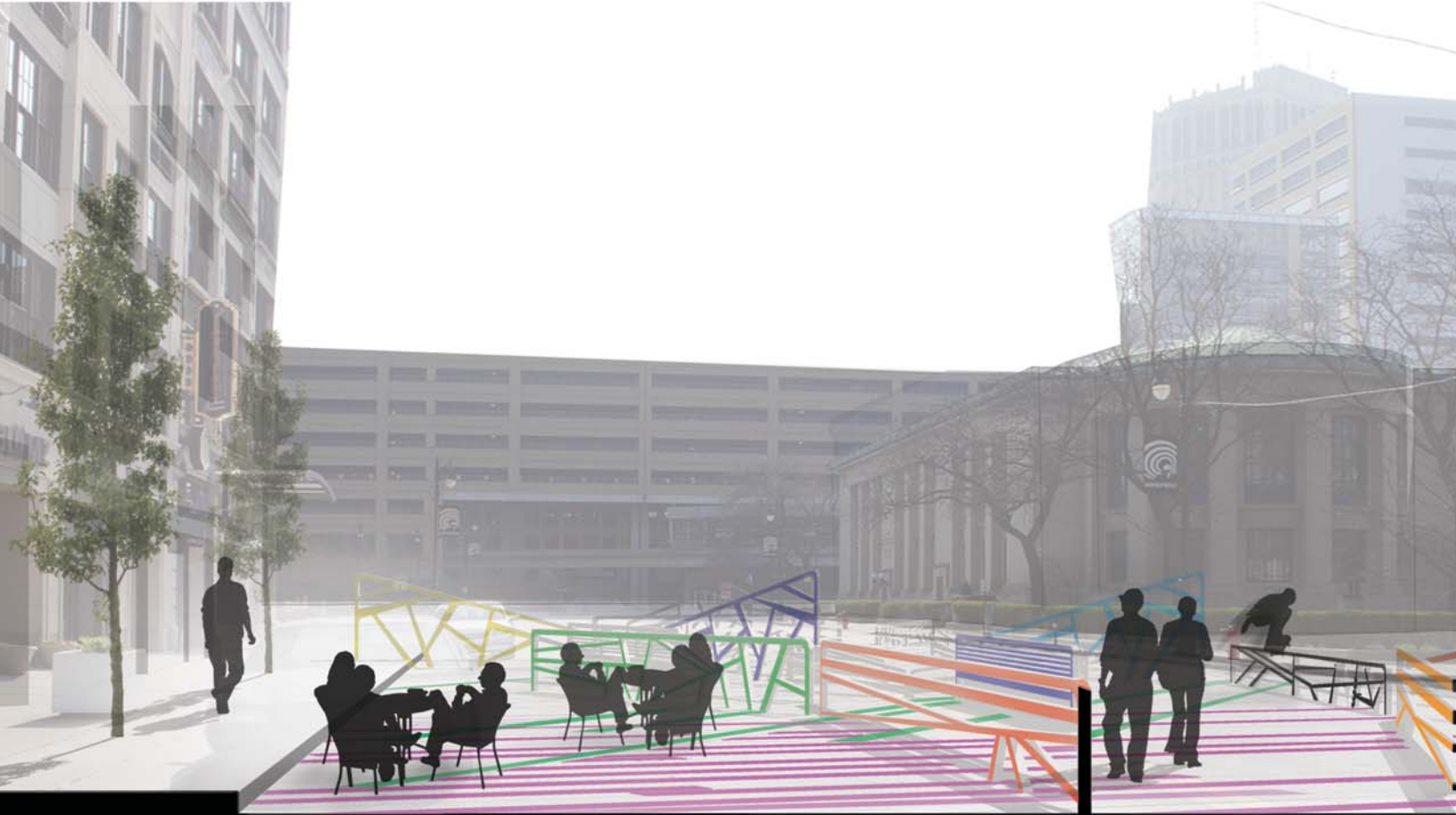


path | railings



path | plan

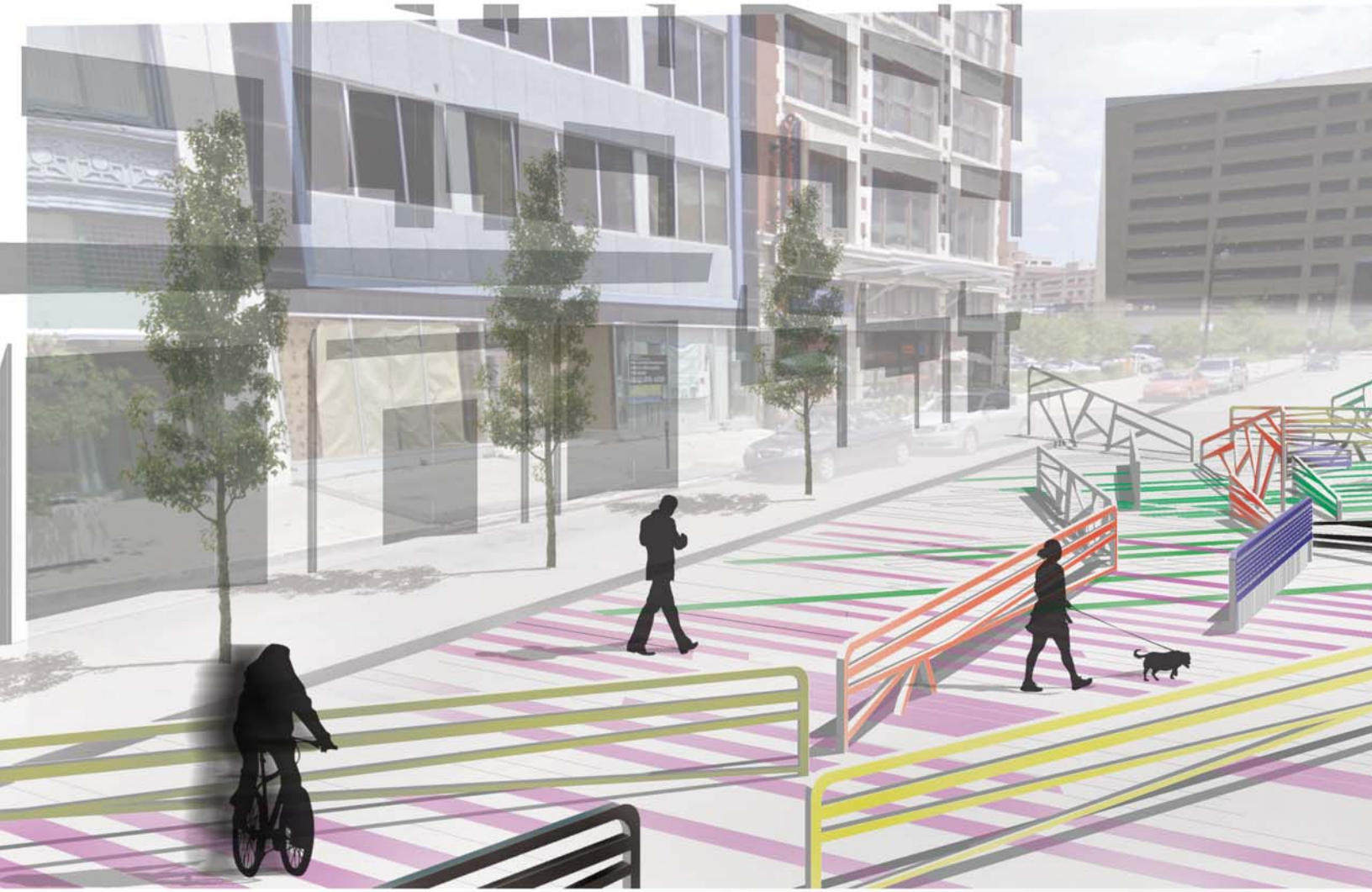




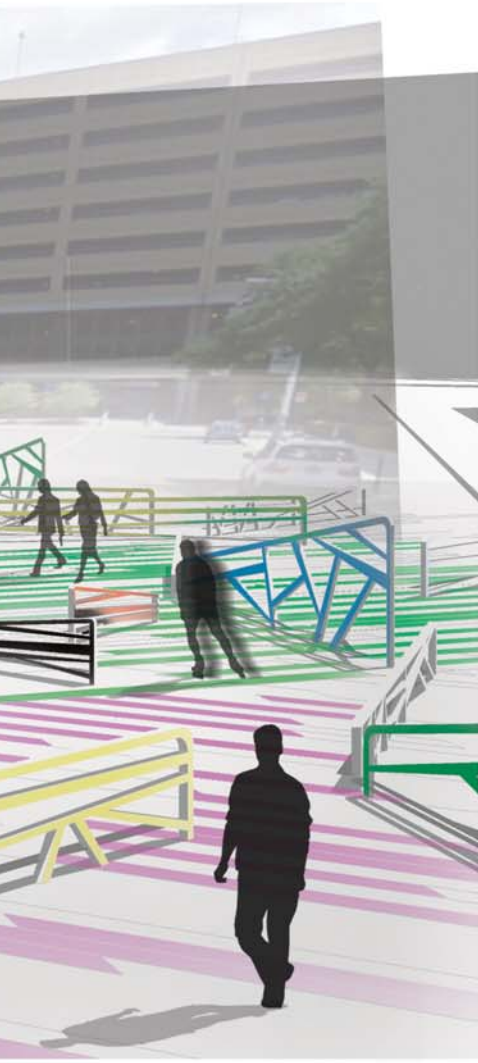
path | section



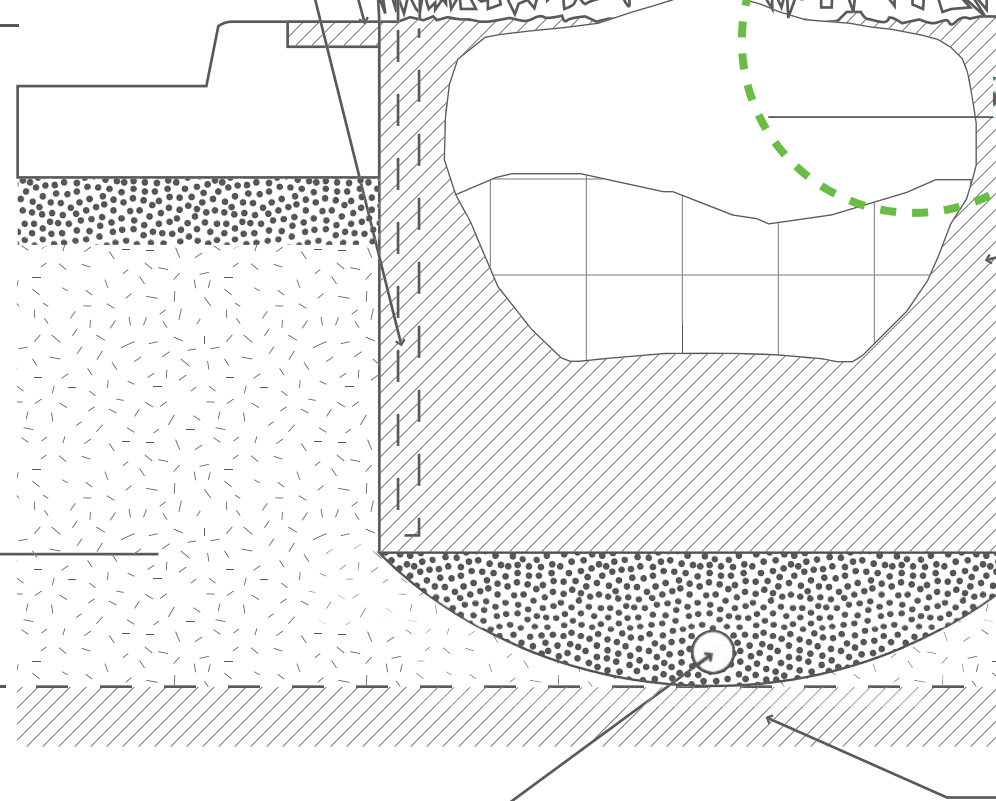
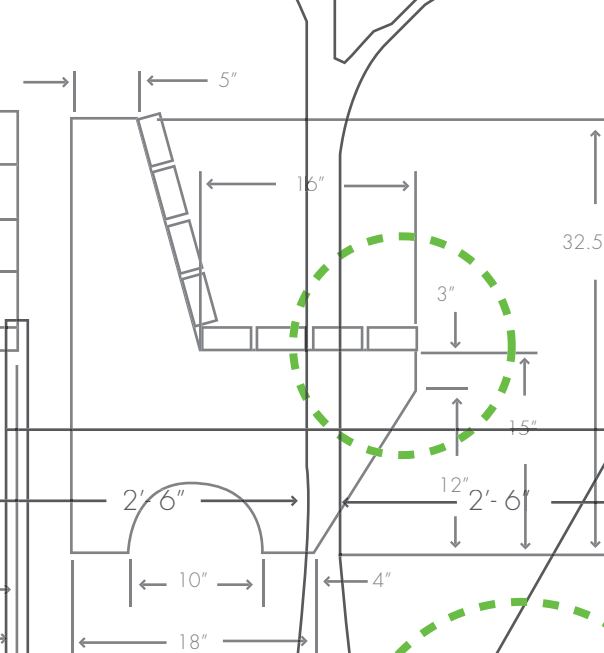
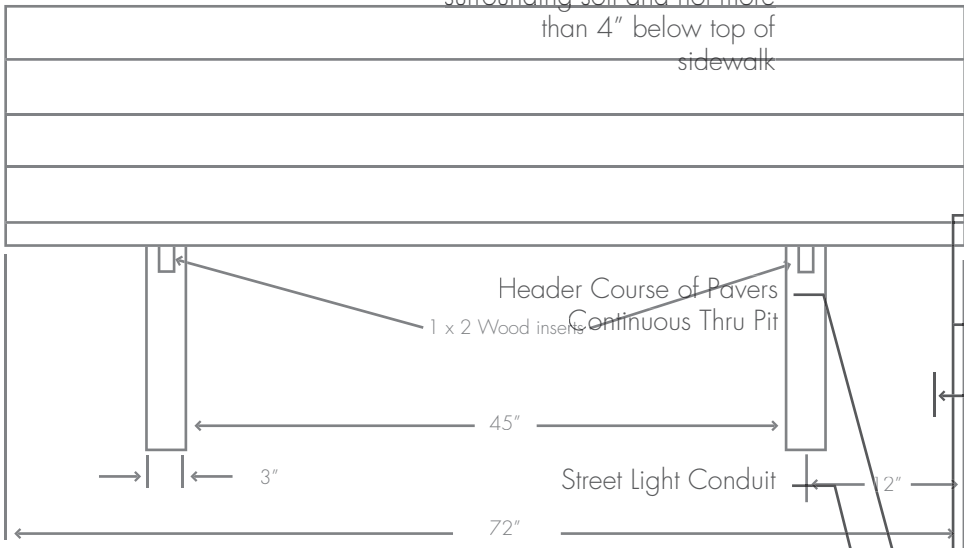
The image on the left refers to the previous investigation of taking over the street. Small cafe's use railings to determine a boundary of seating where now the users and cafe's can determine their own boundaries of public space and movement that isn't prohibited by the sidewalk.







Top of Ball to be set 2" to 3" above the level of the surrounding soil and not more than 4" below top of sidewalk

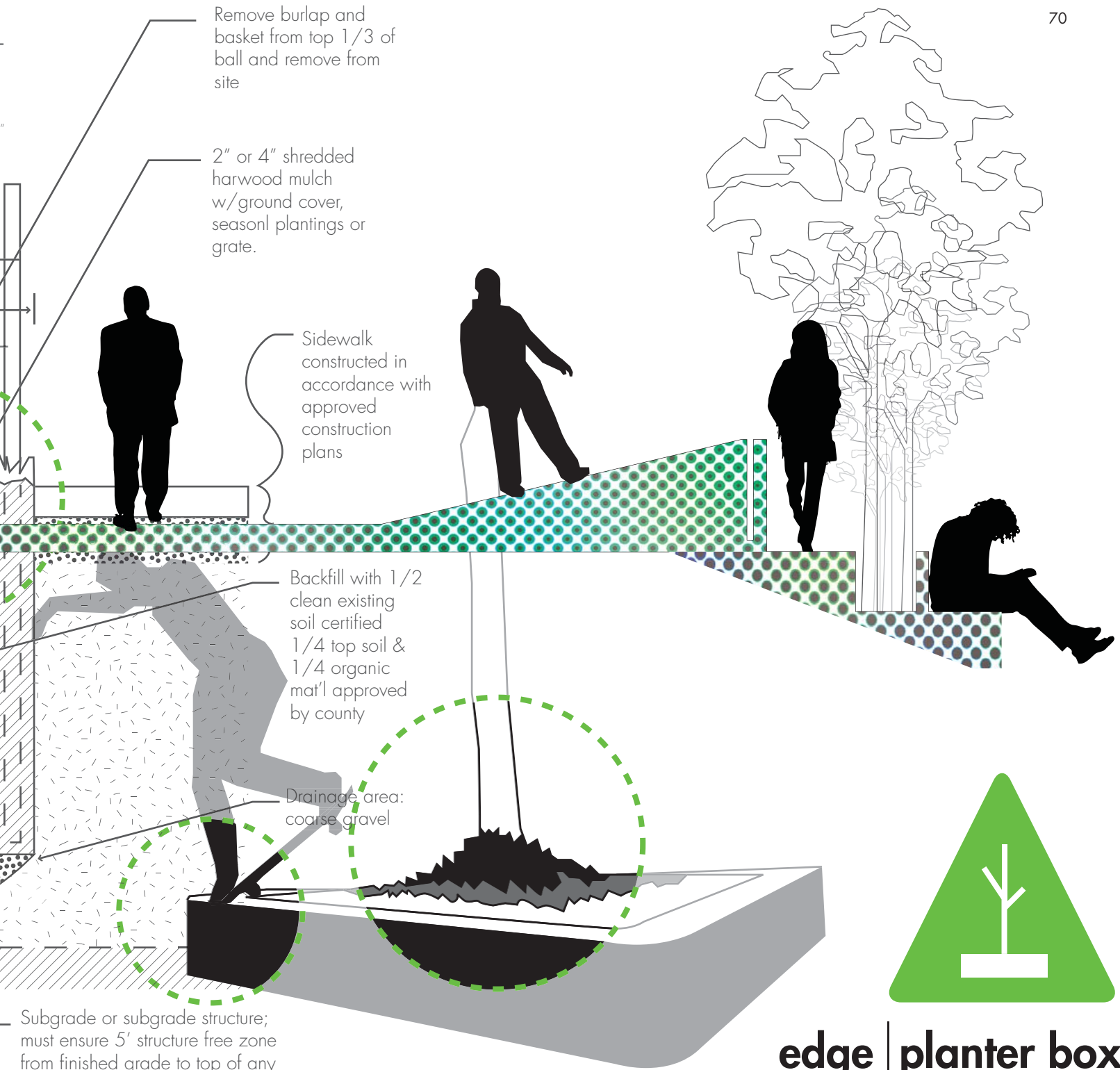


# EDGE

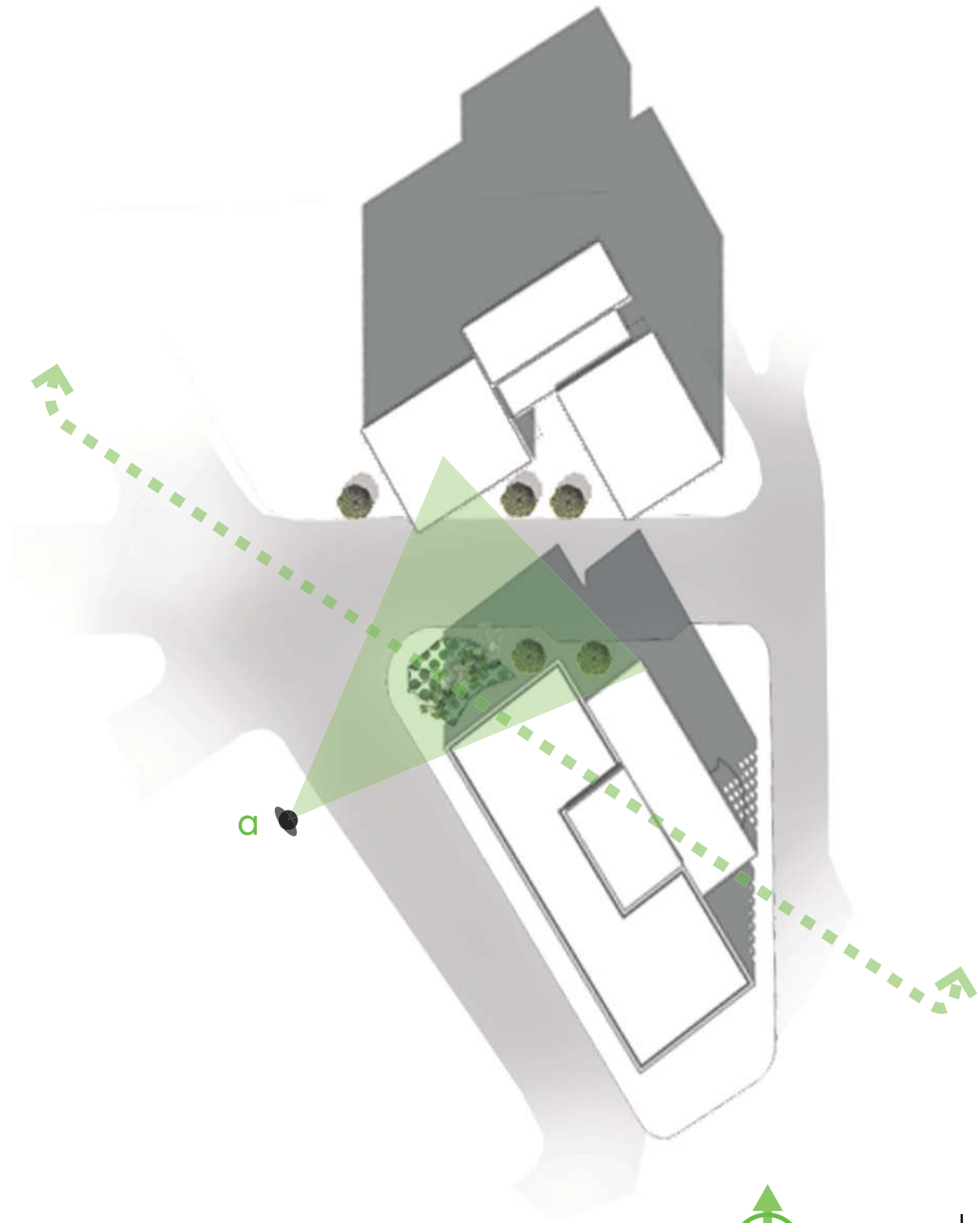
## ONE KENNEDY SQUARE

Detroit, Michigan

Scaling down the edge condition to a street corner can inform a new perception by use of movement and gravity. The intention is to use a planter box to define the space use it as an interactive object that isn't shielded by concrete and railings. Ramps to introduce new movement through a corner as well as a shifting of gravity to make the user aware of the edge condition.







a



edge | plan



The edge begins to transform the landscape into multiple uses and movements through the corner that adapts to many different users of the city.









edge | planter box a

Post - Refer to skate rail and footing detail for type

1'6 min  
3'0 max

E.Q.

E.Q.

Varies  
Refer to vertical  
reference  
plan and  
sections

Concrete deck

4" compacted base course,  
refer to geo-technical  
report for additional info

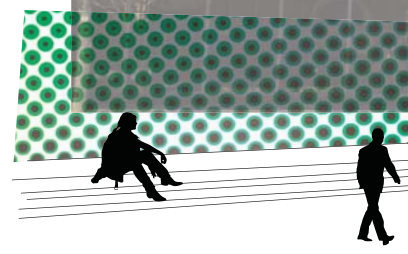
95% compacted subgrade,  
refer to geo-technical  
report for additional info

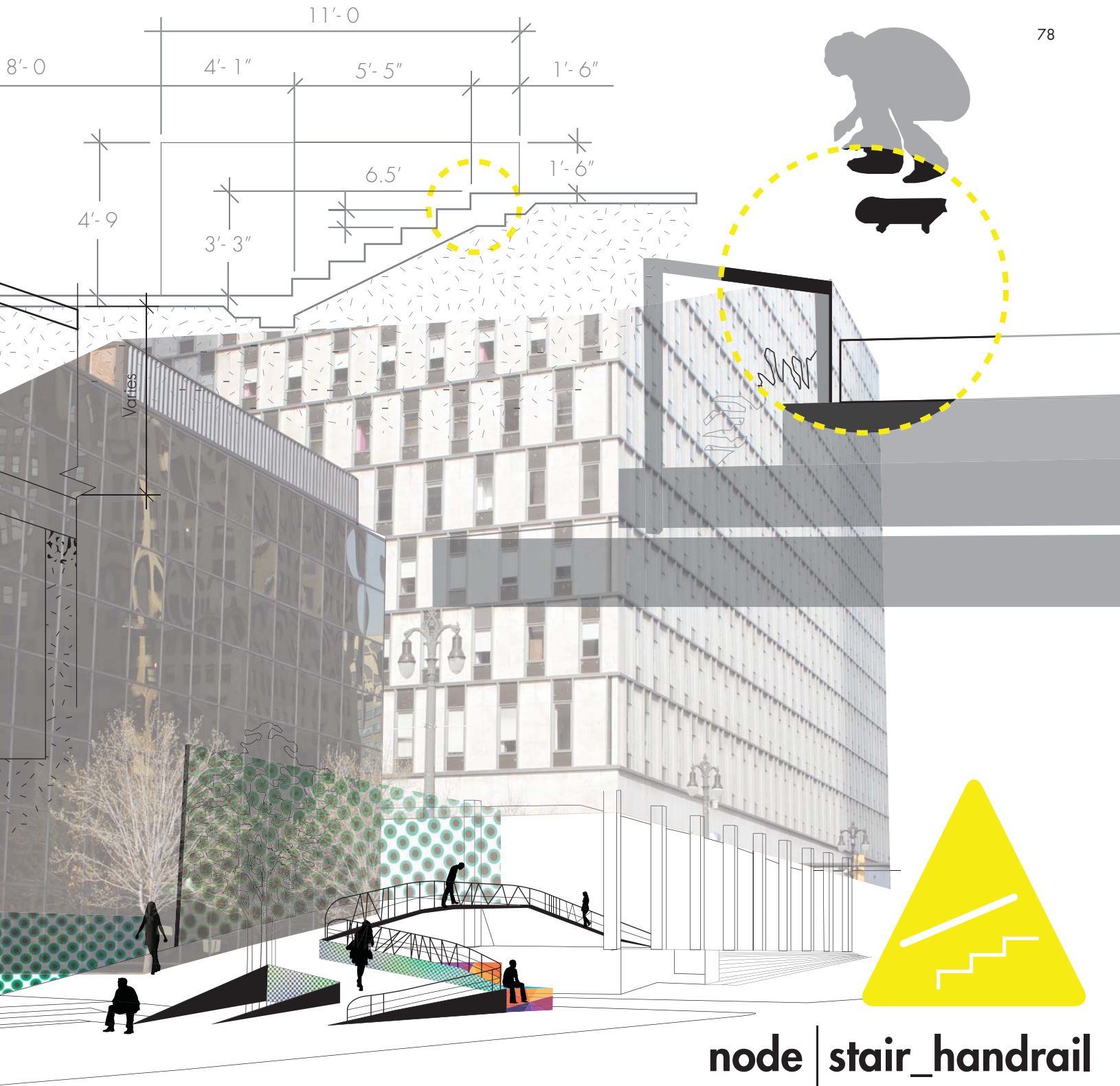
**NODE** footing  
detail.

# WOODWARD AVE. AND CONGRESS ST.

Detroit, Michigan

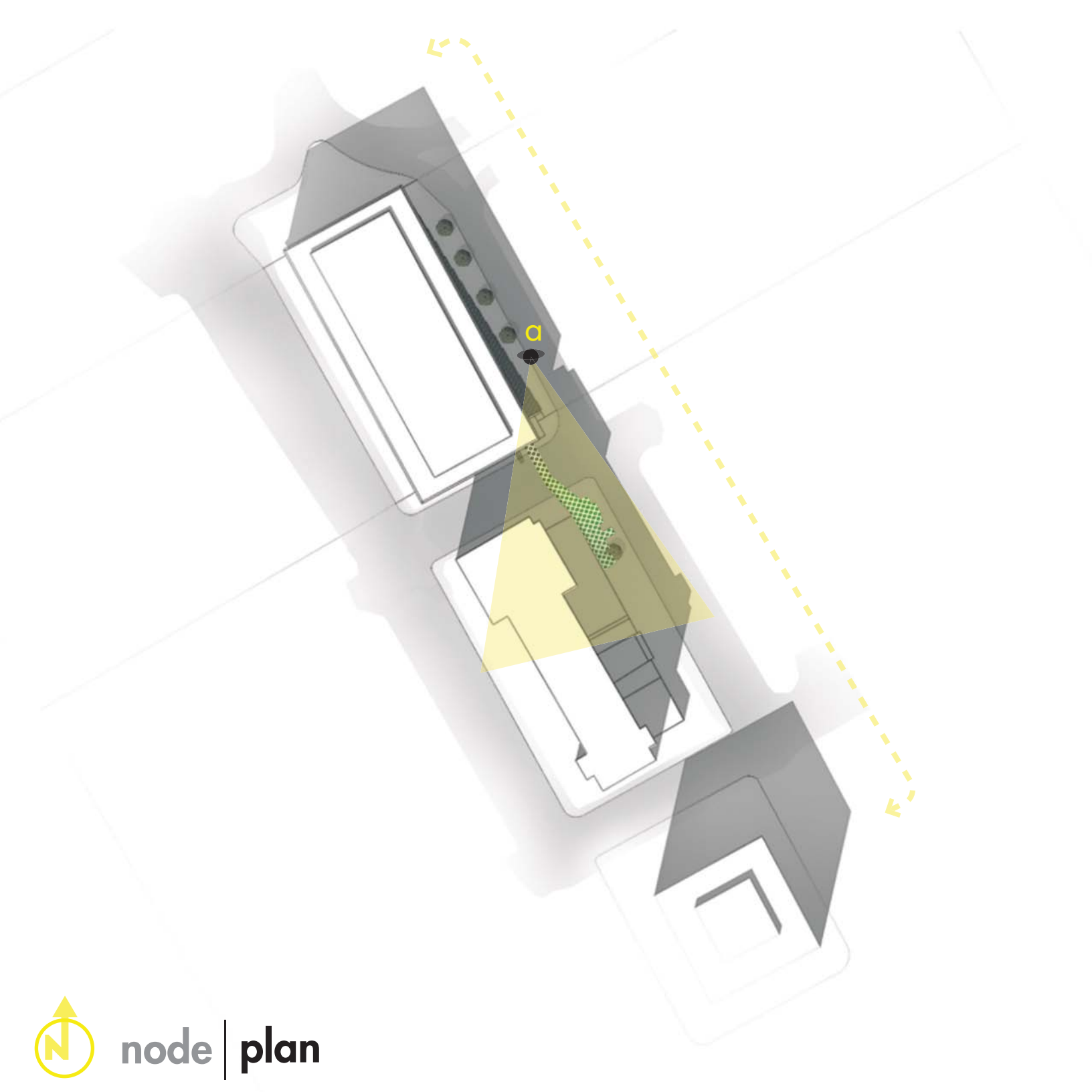
The node is dictated by the use of stairs and handrails. The connection between the Guardian Building and the Chase building is a dialogue with the East side of Woodward. The existing plaza of Chase becomes a new bridge in connecting to the Guardian building to act as a new node and gathering place, as well as a threshold towards Woodward.





Varies

node | stair\_handrail







node | elevation



The elevation shows the connection between the two building plazas as well as a new perception of moving above the street.

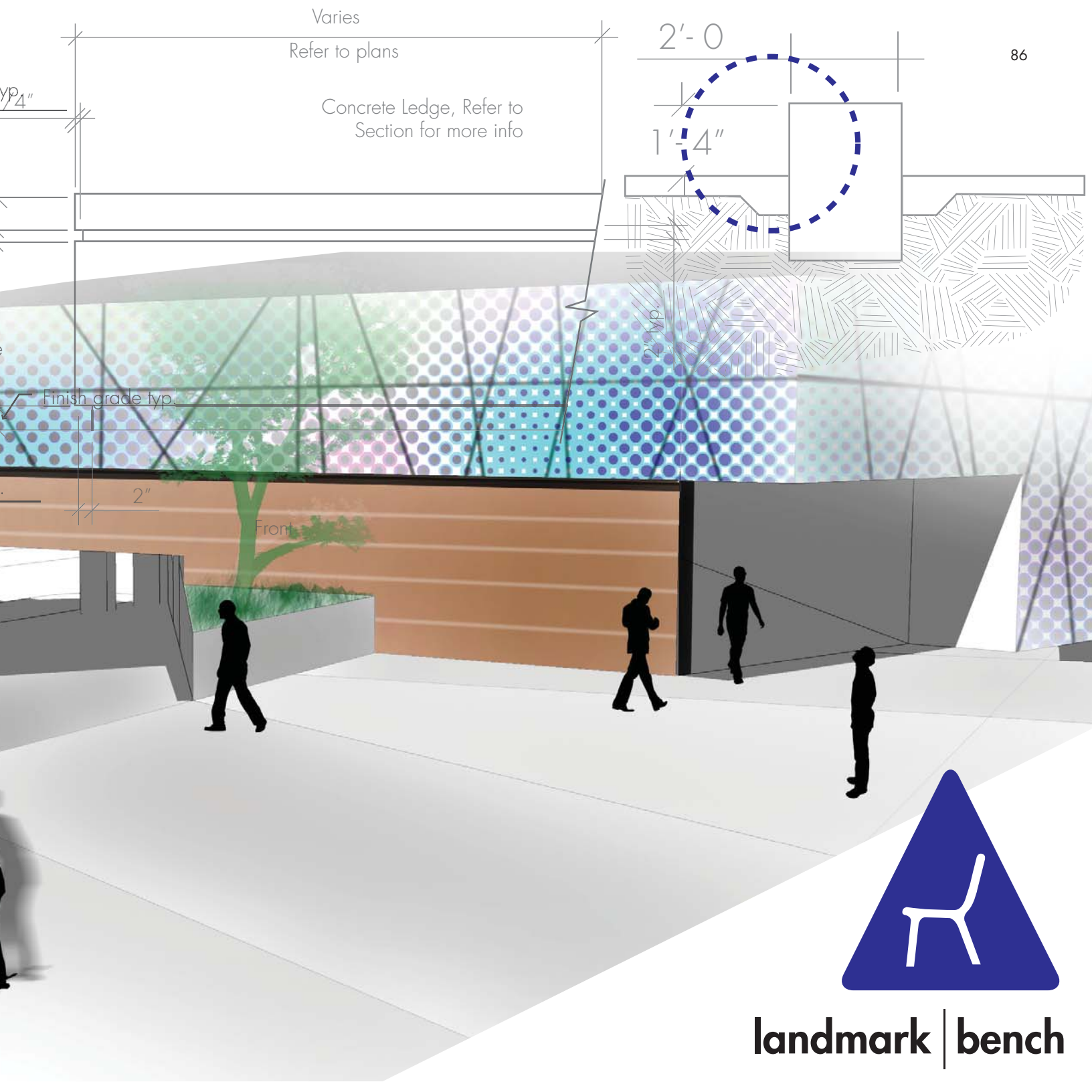


node | stair\_handrail 









Varies  
 Refer to plans  
 Concrete Ledge, Refer to  
 Section for more info

2'-0

1'-4"

2" typ.

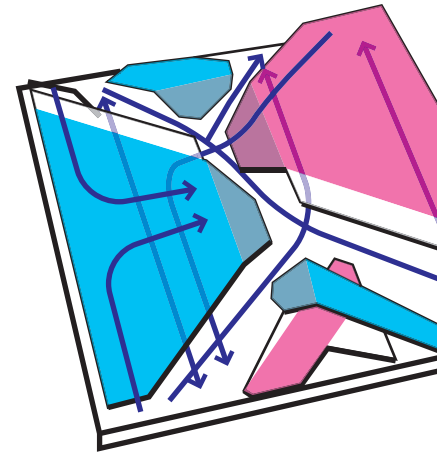
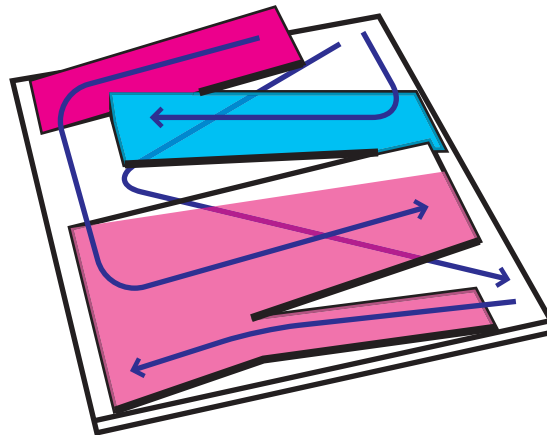
Finish grade typ.

2"

Front



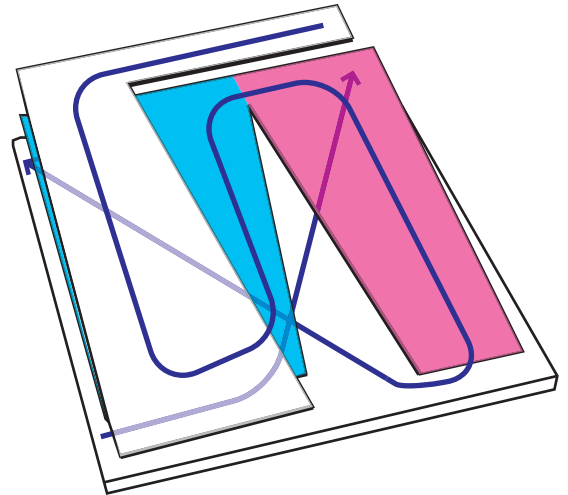
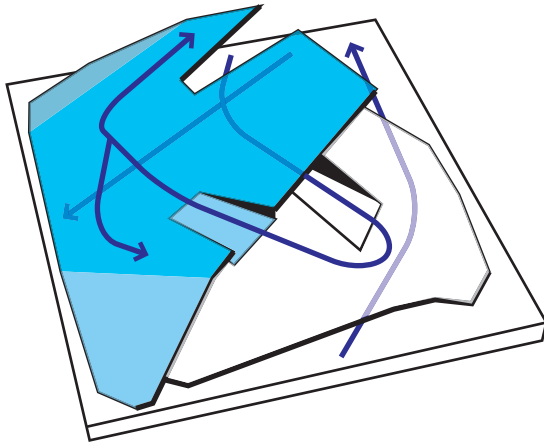
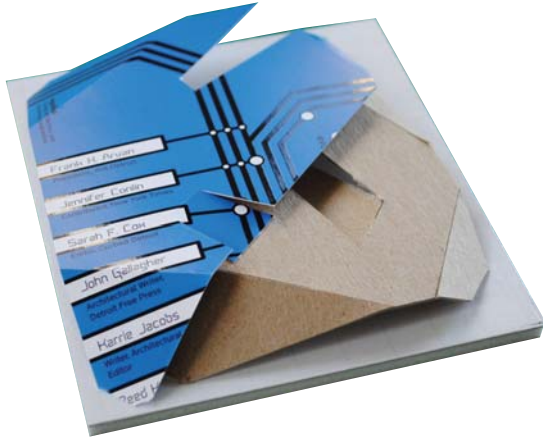
landmark | bench

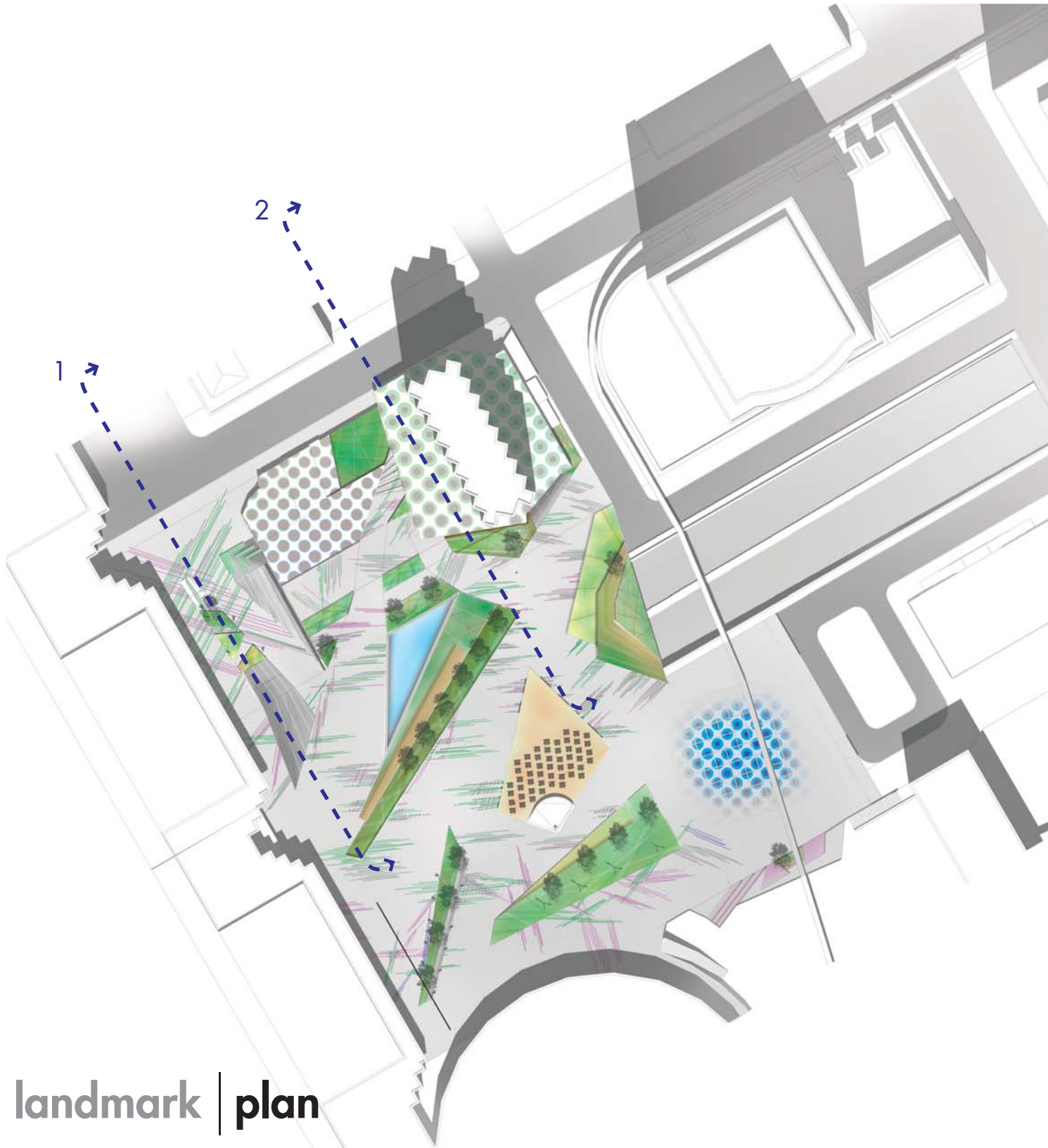


## STUDY MODELS

### *Movement*

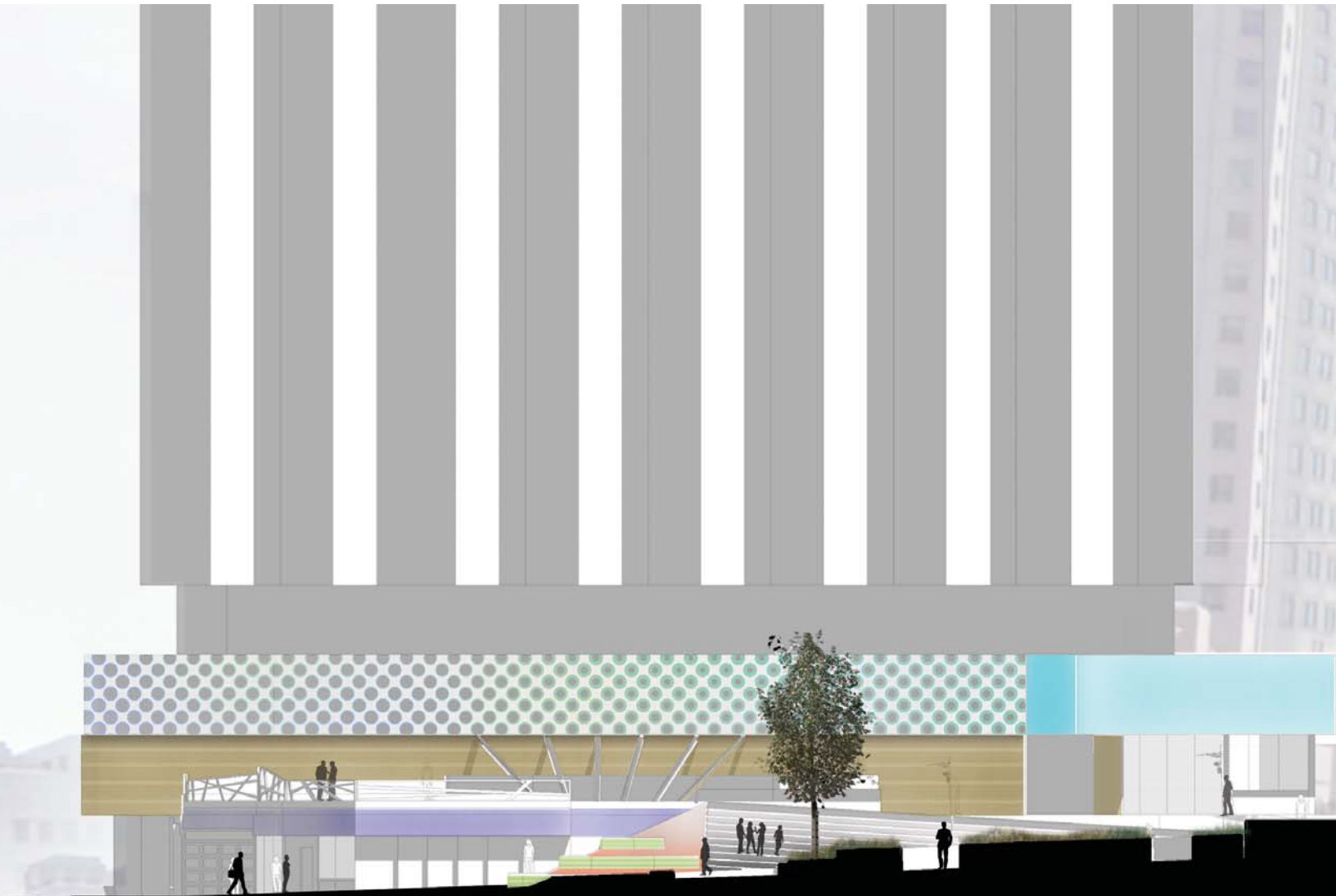
These models were to study different ways of interpreting landscape into an architectural form that had different circulation patterns that could become architectural programming and as well as new objects within a space.



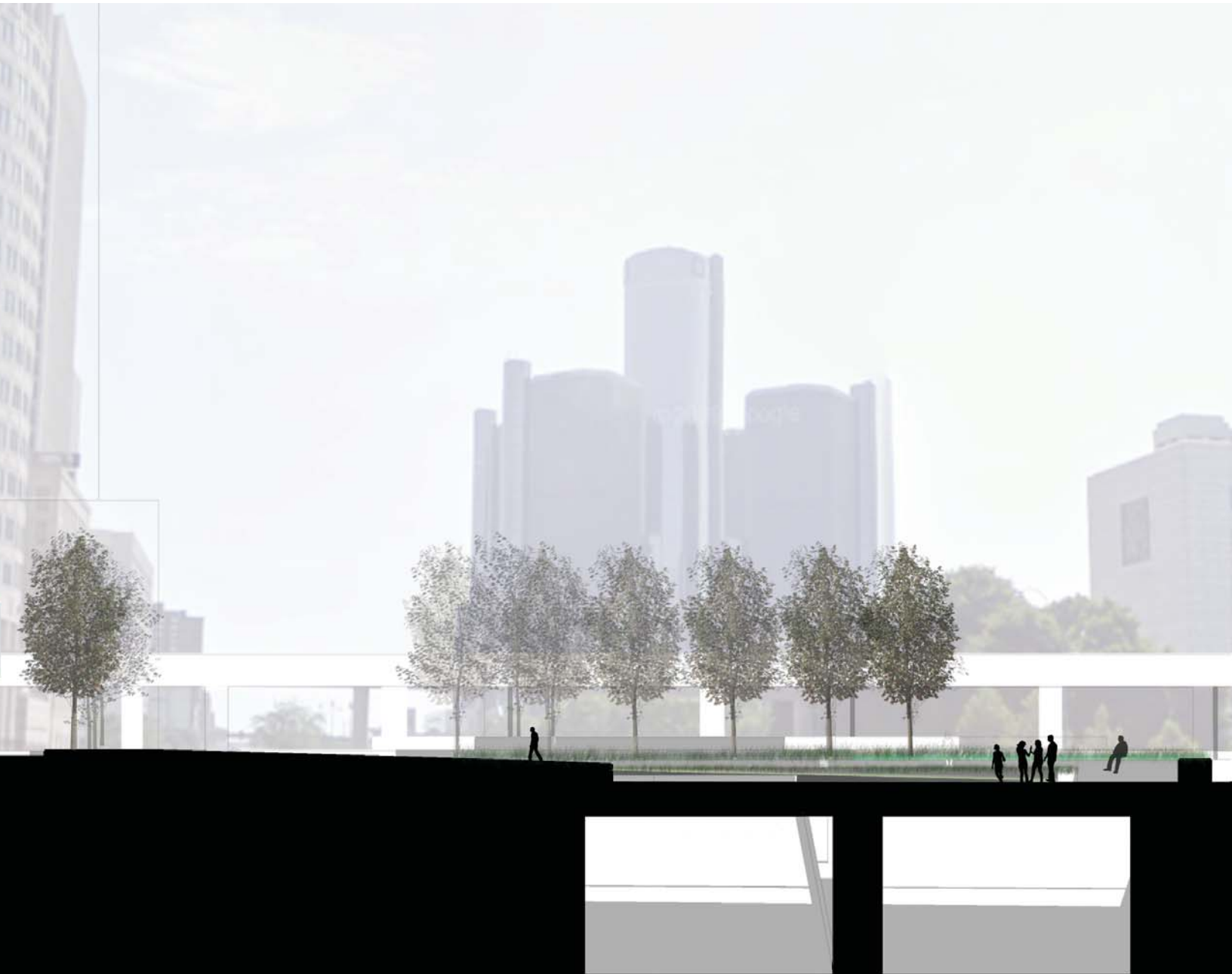


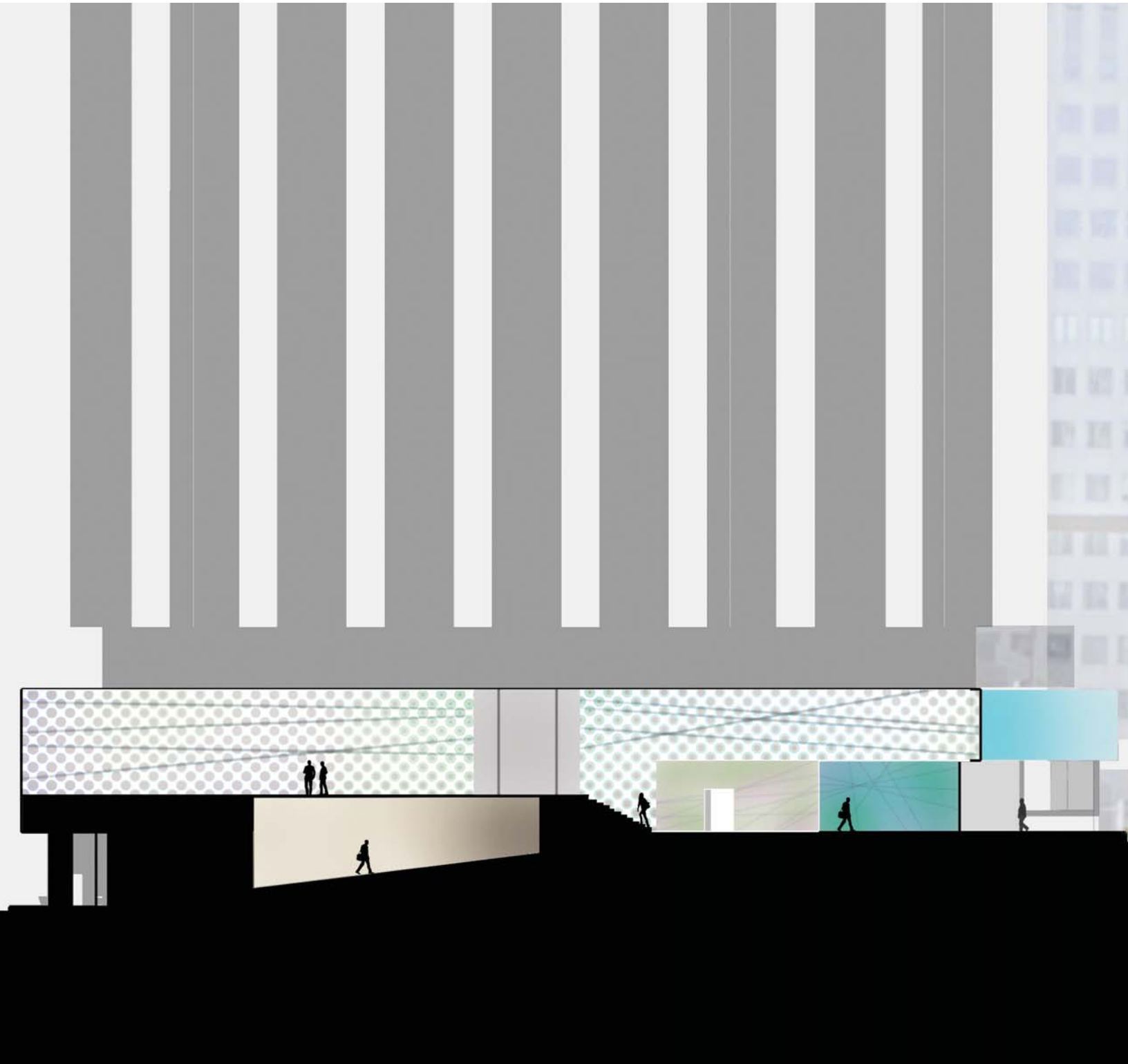


The programming of the site deals with revitalizing the existing hotel, adding small retail shops along Larned St., outdoor cafe, and landscape objects that begin to interact with both the users of the hotel as well as the occupants of Cobo Hall. The events taking place at Cobo Hall are vital to the use of the plaza that expands over Jefferson Ave. The four previous site investigations were exercises to help understand the objects intervention at a small scale and how to influence a much larger design solution.

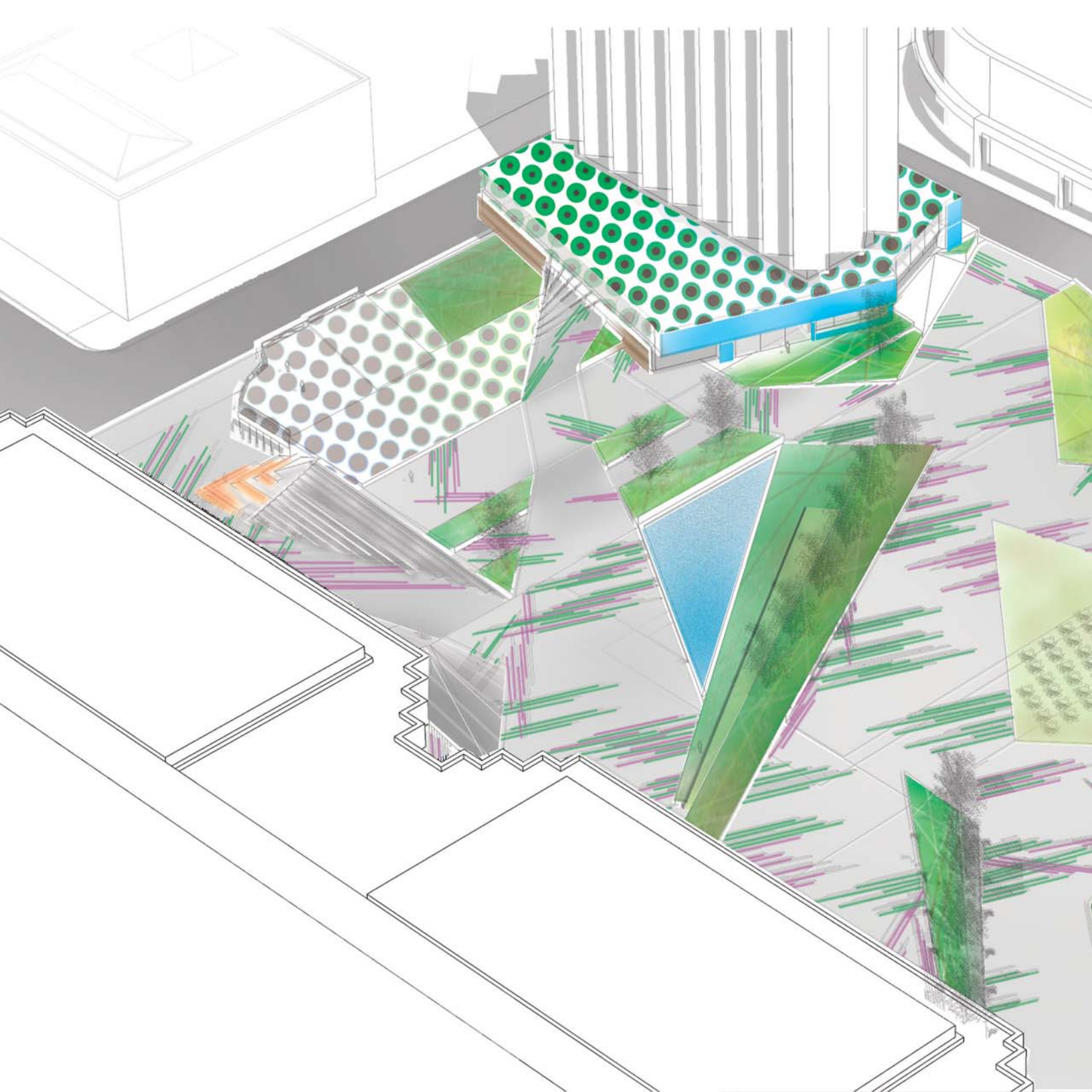


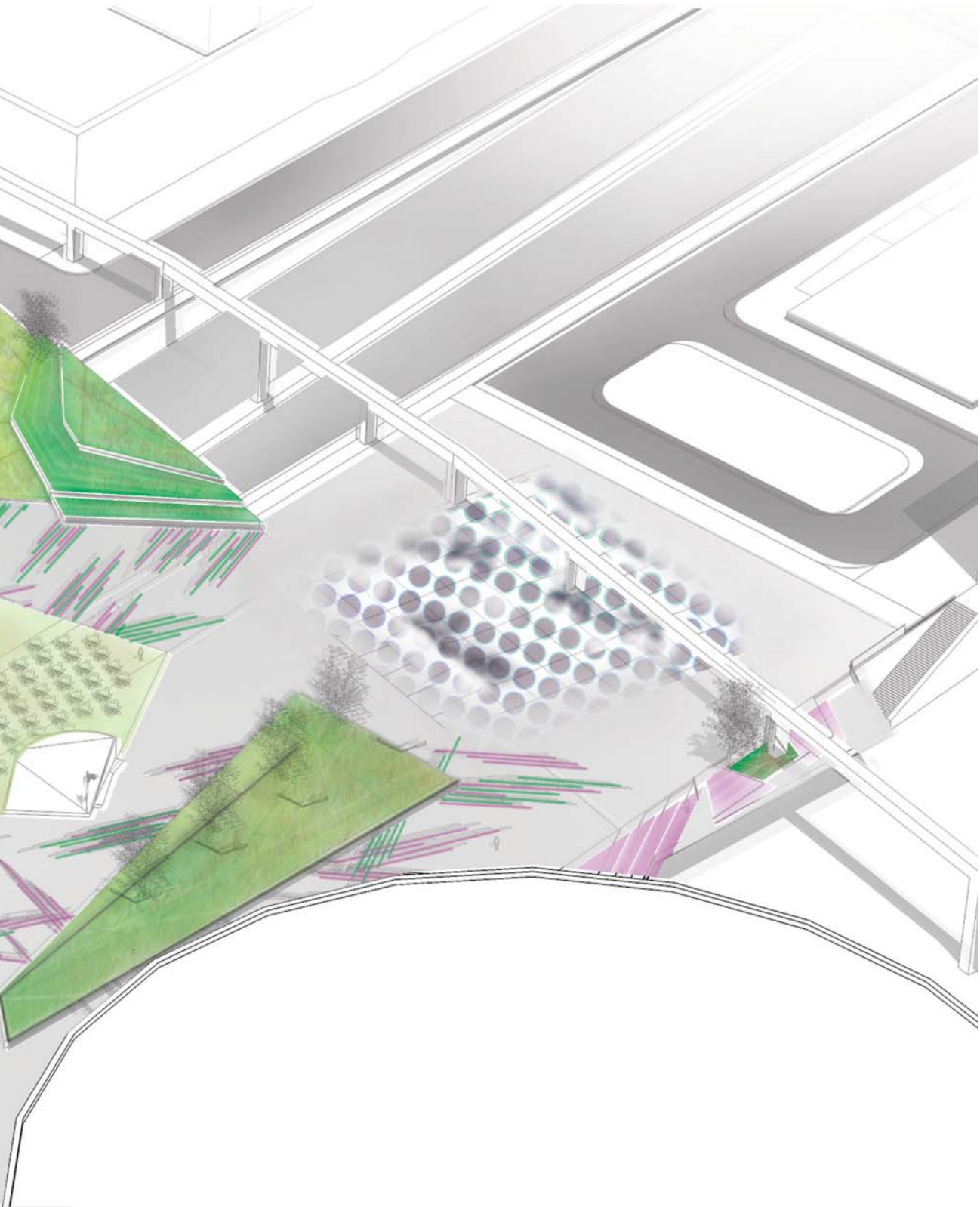












## CONCLUSION

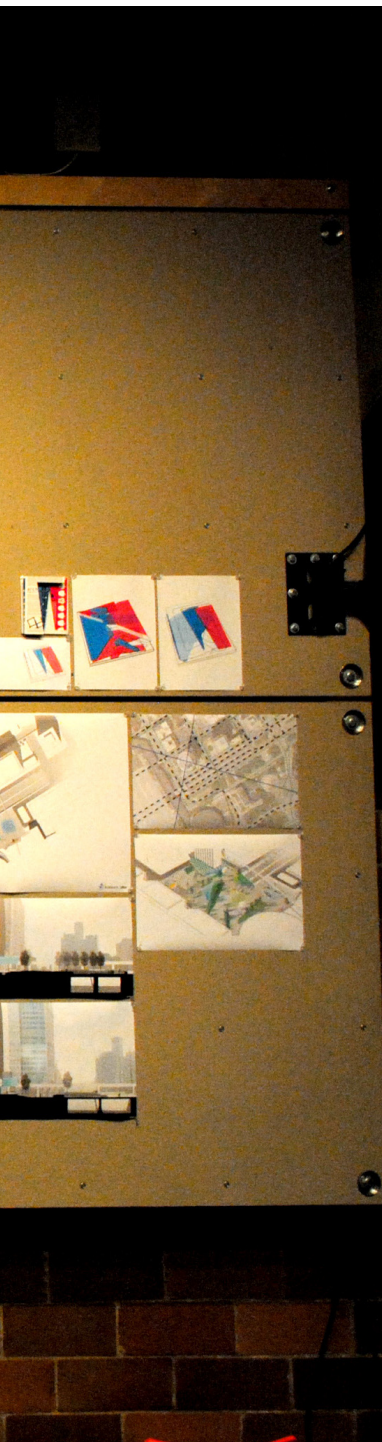
Skateboarding and Architecture will be constantly looked at as a new way to interpret and understand space and the urban fabric. The process of previous investigations of space (Iain Borden) as reference to understand a deeper understanding of this relationship. Beyond the written material, the work produced is to bring a greater understanding of how to learn from a different perspective and gain a new perception of space that can be translated into an architectural intervention. The design ideas are merely investigations for urban design problems that cities deal with today.











**ENDNOTES**

Page 4, Page 7

Borden, Iain. *Skateboarding, Space and the City: Architecture and the Body*. Oxford: Berg, 2001. Print.

Page 7, Page 8

Borden, Iain, Kerr, Joe, Rendell, Jane. *The Unknown City: Contesting Architecture and Social Space*. Cambridge, MA: MIT, 2002. Print.

Page 11, Page 12, Page 13

Lynch, Kevin. *The Image of the City*. Cambridge, Mass. [u.a.: M.I.T., 2008. Print.

Page 7, Page 8, Page 9, page 21

Sennett, Richard. *The Fall of Public Man*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1996. Print.

Page 8, Page 9

Howell, Ocean. "The Poetics of Security: Skateboarding, Urban Design, and the New PublicSpace|3." Redirect. 2001. Web. 15 Sept. 2011. <<http://bss.sfsu.edu/urbanaction/ua2001/ps4.html>>.

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Howell, Ocean. "The Poetics of Security: Skateboarding, Urban Design, and the New PublicSpace | 3." *Redirect*. 2001. Web. 15 Sept. 2011. <<http://bss.sfsu.edu/urbanaction/ua2001/ps4.html>>.

Lynch, Kevin. *The Image of the City*. Cambridge, Mass. [u.a.: M.I.T., 2008. Print.

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