

# Altering Perception

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# Altering Perception

The study of social construct in the built environment and its architectural implications

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## ABSTRACT

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# ABSTRACT

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Society has evolved over generations and will no doubt continue to evolve. Its effect on the built environment has continually changed over time as well. However, over time, the built environment has reciprocated this effect, also contributing to the evolution of social and cultural behaviors. The way one behaves in space is largely dependent on the individual and the culture in which they have grown in. Societal effects such as varying technologies also play a role in a person's behavior. But to what extent can the built environment begin to shape the way people think about their actions? Buildings can have the ability to make us think about our lives, our actions, and leave us with awe-inspiring emotion. Our built environments are time pieces that teach us about our ancestry.

and how those folks lived. The relationship between society and architecture is so deeply embedded in our built environment that it is often overlooked. The very concept of mass production and replication threatens the individualized history that each building contributes to a society while also threatening the very role of the architect. The constant push and pull of the relationship between these two entities needs to be constantly re-evaluated. At this point in time the influence of a mass produced society has begun to take its toll on the built environment. To what extent can the built environment now push back against these influences? How, as architects, do we appeal to human senses and design for the current social conditions as well as continually re-shaping the future of our built environment.

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Architecture is, in the purest sense, a solid manifestation of form and understanding of space. It is an absolute caused by a motivated reaction, a moment where the intent is form and function harmoniously interacting. “Architecture is not abstract but concrete. A plan, a project on paper is not architecture but merely a more or less inadequate representation of architecture, comparable to sheet music. Music needs to be performed. Architecture needs to be executed. Then its body can come into being”<sup>1</sup>. Architecture in this sense, as a final product, is an object. A physical objective with the opportunity for interpretation. What one interprets is dependent on two things: our own subjective human perception and the objective sensuousness of architecture.



# The Object

Sartre examines the essence of the human with his point that “existence precedes essence.” He suggests that the human does not have a true essence before existence. There is a general shape, genetic makeup, upbringing, and societal effect; however these are merely influences and do not pre determine the lives of a human. Instead we ourselves shape our lives. We create ourselves, and the meaning we find in things is essentially meaning we already seek. Human Essence is freedom and that provides the choice to determine what we see <sup>2</sup>. In the application of architecture, the viewer perceives what they want to see in much the same way. The meaning that can be extracted from a space is largely subject to each individual and what that individual seeks on a personal level. In this spirit the architect must realize that his design intent, once executed, is merely a collaboration of an owner’s and his own subjective standards.

Although the human/occupant chooses to interpret what they seek, the architect still

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maintains some control over experiential value through the sensuousness of space. This means that we must interact on both an intellectual and a physical level with architecture. To experience architecture in a concrete manner means it must appeal to our senses. One must smell it, see it, hear it, and touch it<sup>1</sup>. Architecture is a series of physical encounters designed to evoke emotion through the experience of the senses. It is the architect's job to work with these qualities to spark a person's sensuous reactions.

The way an object is perceived is largely dependent on the viewer. Similarly the architect sees architecture in a very different way than most others. To the architect there is more than just experiential or practical value in a space. There is information relative to the work that he himself creates. Because architecture is a final object, a culmination of ideas and sense evoking tactility, the architect searches for what is successful, what he feels the space communicates best, and most of all what he can modify to further benefit his own design.

Lebbeus Woods discusses how architecture can provide information through states of opening and closing. A methodology of how one is able to extract data from an object concludes that it is only through open architecture that future designs can move forward. An architecture of opening is best classified as a piece that entails design elements that an architect can extract and expand upon in future designs. Woods compares this to the Corporate Campus in Shanghai by Morphosis. On the other side of this comparison is the concept of an architecture of closing. Which is exactly that, closed to the imagination as everything it entails has been done before and anything after will be nothing more than a replication. This can also be referred to as a masterpiece, as it is in the final state of evolution and everything it encompasses has been perfected. Woods compares this to Zaha Hadid's Viaduct Social Housing project in Vienna. This piece, in his opinion, has no more evolutionary value to the architect. "She has taken the conventional blocks of social housing seen everywhere in Austria and Germany—rationalist white

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masses with ribbon and punched windows—twisted and cut them at acute angles to create interesting shapes and spaces between... We can appreciate and admire, or criticize and detest, but it all ends there. Coming away, we can imagine nearly infinite variations of twisting and cutting the conventional, but little else. She has, with a masterstroke, summed up the thought and concluded the idea. Anywhere we might take it will only be an echo or an imitation.”<sup>3</sup>

As the architect designs to appeal to the senses, he must also be conscious of the repercussions his work has on the study of architecture itself. An architect must be aware of the potential for an evolution of his design, meaning he must be aware of his final object and where it falls under the classification of opening or closing.

Replication in terms of economical standards is a beautiful thing but to a designer there is an inherent negativity to imitating work. “The extreme marketing and mass production

of an artifact leads to a common recognizability and an expected value. The artifact transcends art and commodity to become solely a product, reducing the architect/ designer to a mere stylist.”<sup>4</sup> This implies that when an architect replicates they are no longer creating rather they are simply repositioning elements. This is exactly what Lebbeus Woods referred to when discussing projects trying to go beyond Hadid’s masterpiece. “Coming away, we can imagine nearly infinite variations of twisting and cutting the conventional, but little else.”<sup>3</sup>

Another major issue with replication, maybe even more critical than its effects on the profession, are the implications of over exposure on the user. When over exposed to a certain condition, the architect’s ability to evoke a person’s sensuous reactions is nullified creating a disconnect between users and the built environment. This disconnect creates a passive attitude towards the built environment, causing one to simply use space rather than engaging space. The largest problem the architect faces is bringing about a revival of open architecture.

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“We need architects who give us beginnings and not endings, and whose buildings not only inspire, but also give us the tools for thinking and working to go forward.”<sup>3</sup>

# Social Relationship

Buildings, as objects, are representations of time. Throughout history there are many examples of how the built environment has been adapted to form these beginnings. All of which, stem from a direct relationship between the built environment and social or cultural influences. The two are so tightly woven that without one the other could not exist. Buildings are direct reflections of previous social conditions while current social conditions have been shaped by the continual growth or decline of regional built environments.

One example of many, can be found in the year 1889 at the Paris world's fair. Gustave Eiffel constructed a monument that marked the 100 year anniversary of the French Revolution. The monument, better known as the Eiffel Tower, was at that point the highest structure in the world. The structure even though it was considered revolutionary for the time was looked upon

with skepticism and many people contested its safety. Despite these issues, the tower had a major influence on the urban landscape. It took people 984ft into the Paris sky, revealing to them a view of the urban context that had never before been experienced. Those heights had only been achieved previously in rural areas, from climbing mountains or using the natural landscape. In this instance the urban grid with all of its winding streets and busy people could be seen from an unprecedented height. What Eiffel did, whether he realized or not, was create a new social phenomenon.

What Eiffel built was not new technology by any means. The tower's structure was very similar to the interior of his earlier project, the Statue of Liberty, just scaled larger. He had simply taken something from the past, reworked it, and used it to change people's perceptions of their surrounding space. The value Eiffel brought to the profession of architecture was not in the aesthetics of the tower rather it was in the experience and the objective sensuousness of the space atop the tower.



# Social Relationship

continued

Looking at examples such as Eiffel, the impact a designer has on a social condition is prevalent in many ways. In turn, it is now clear how societies embracing of such experience can affect the future work of architecture. The want to experience the urban landscape from such heights had ultimately given birth to the city as we know it today. The modern skyscraper has its roots in the very experience that Eiffel achieved back in 1889. Looking back at these examples throughout history it's also clear to see how one cannot exist without the other. Without the work of someone first providing that experience, the evolution and embracing of that experience could not occur. On the other hand without the embracing of the experience from social point of view, future urban environments may have taken a completely different course of development.

In the search for understanding our future designs as openings or beginnings, it is critical that the designer doesn't merely design space as he knows space. It is the process of finding new ways for people to think about

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# THESIS PAPER

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space through the technologies and archetypes that already exist. Science, as part of society, continually offers the architect new tools and materials to craft with. It is up to the architect to assemble and design these components in ways that inspire and innovate the way people sensually perceive space, ultimately engaging them much like Eiffel did in Paris.

# Engaging Space

As mentioned before the societal effect of mass production has created a condition where the conforming architect's ability to evoke a person's sensuous reactions is lost, creating a disconnect between users and the built environment. Getting users to engage space requires far more than just exposing people to new things. "It's not just exposure to stimulation, but agentic reaction in exploring, manipulating, and influencing the environment."<sup>6</sup>

This suggests that people need an active role in order to get them re-engaged in the built environment. Ultimately the architect must achieve an active altering of sensuous perceptions in order to get the user engaged and open the door for future interpretations of these designs. A major focus of this thesis is to examine what it means to passively use space

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# THESIS PAPER

vs. what it means to actively engage space and ultimately create a design to facilitate a more direct interplay between architecture and the people that use it.

This thesis was formed to be an experiment that tests a certain methodology in creating engaging spaces. It also begins to challenge the social construct of the urban environment in order to create new ideas of how one circulates through and uses urban public space.

- 1 Zumthor, Peter, Maureen Oberli-Turner, and Catherine Schelbert. Thinking Architecture. Basel: Birkhäuser, 2006. Print.
- 2 “Phenomenological Existentialism.” My Webspaces Files. Web. 27 Apr. 2012. <<http://webspaces.ship.edu/cgboer/phenandexist.html>>.
- 3 “ARCHITECTURES OF CLOSING AND OPENING.” LEBBEUS WOODS. Web. 27 Apr. 2012. <<http://lebbeuswoods.wordpress.com/2011/05/24/architectures-of-closing-and-opening/>>.
- 4 Kieran, Stephen, and James Timberlake. Refabricating Architecture: How Manufacturing Methodologies Are Poised to Transform Building Construction. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2004. Print.
- 5 Rottschaefer, William A. “Some Philosophical Implications of Bandura’s Social Cognitive Theory of Human Agency.” American Psychologist 46.2 (1991): 153-55. Print.



# Influential Studies

# Lebbeus Woods

Lebbeus Woods discusses the issue of replication in terms of open and closed architecture. Closed architecture is a piece that has already been mastered, and any attempt to expand upon it would result in nothing more than a replication. He refers to Zaha Hadid's Viaduct Social Housing project in Vienna as an example of this. This building effectively ends the ability to further develop a particular style. "She has taken the conventional blocks of social housing seen everywhere in Austria and Germany—rationalist white masses with ribbon and punched windows—twisted and cut them at acute angles to create interesting shapes and spaces between... We can appreciate and admire, or criticize and detest, but it all ends there. Coming away, we can imagine nearly infinite variations of twisting and cutting the conventional, but little else. She has, with a masterstroke, summed up the thought and concluded the idea. Anywhere we might take it will only be an echo or an imitation."



Architecture of Closing



# Architecture of Opening



Wood on the other hand discusses open architecture. This is the exact opposite of closed architecture. Open architecture is characterized as architecture that has the ability to influence future design. Woods also refers to these pieces as beginnings, meaning that they explore something beyond what is already in the built environment. These pieces are what propel the future of design, serving as precedent that has yet to be mastered but still has the potential to be. He relates this concept to Morphosis' Corporate Campus in Shanghai. It creates new experiences within space that have the ability to be expanded on and mastered.

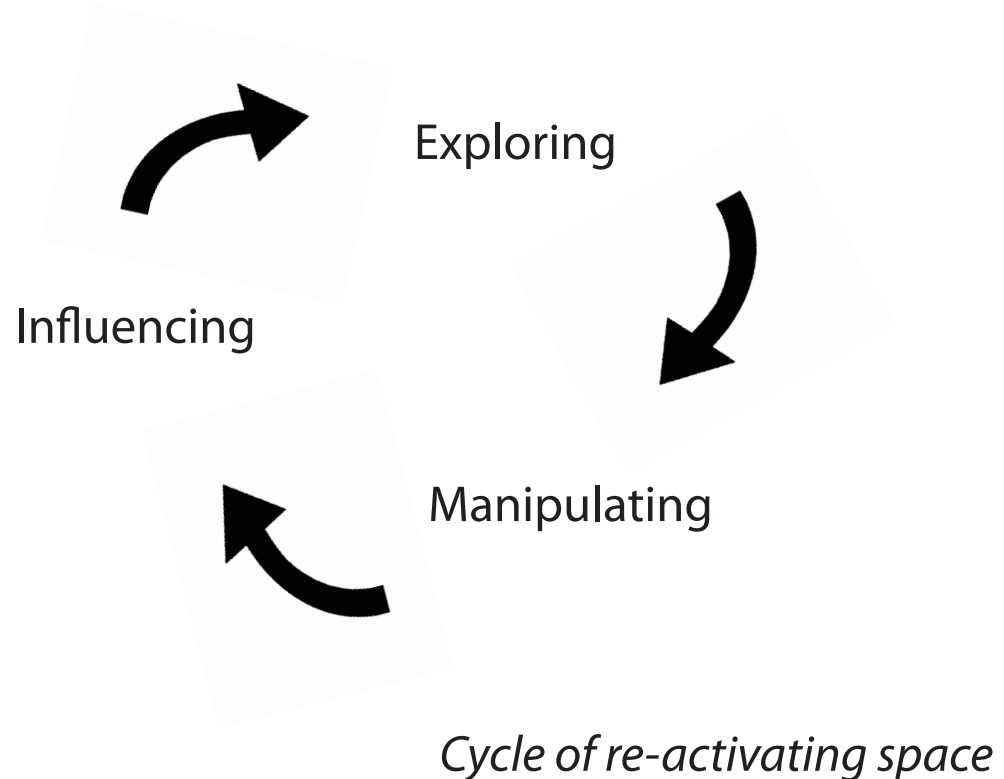
# Social Cognitive Theory

Albert Bandura

“It’s not just exposure to stimulation, but agentic action in exploring, manipulating and influencing the environment.”



*Human as an agent -  
to intentionally influence ones  
function and circumstances*



## Gustave Eiffel

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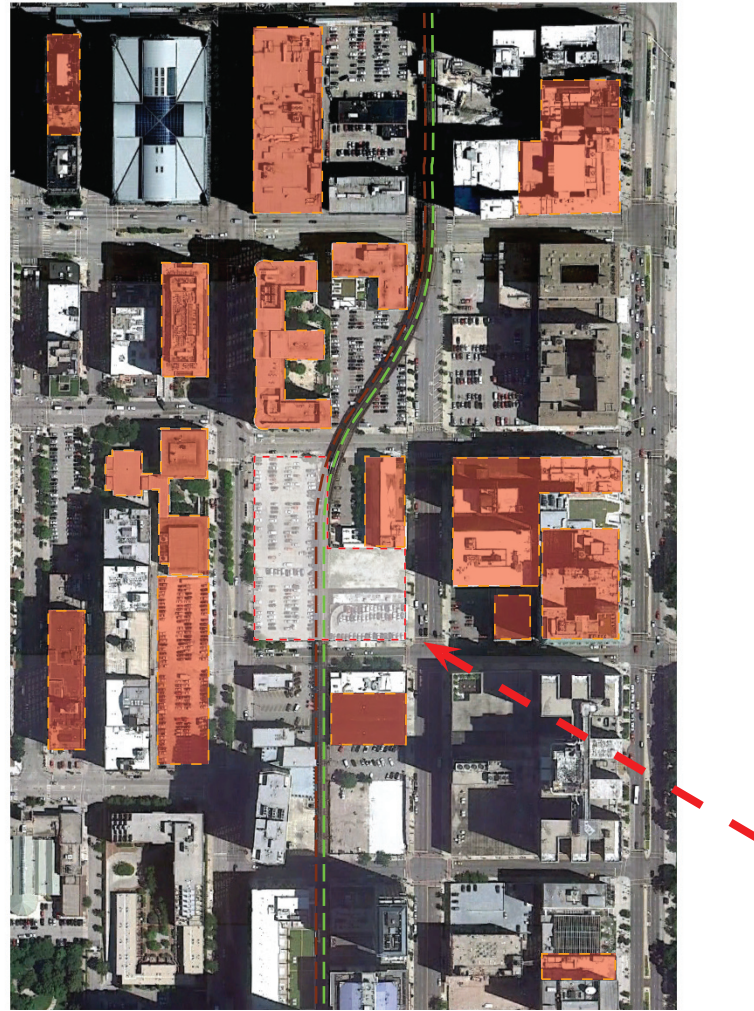
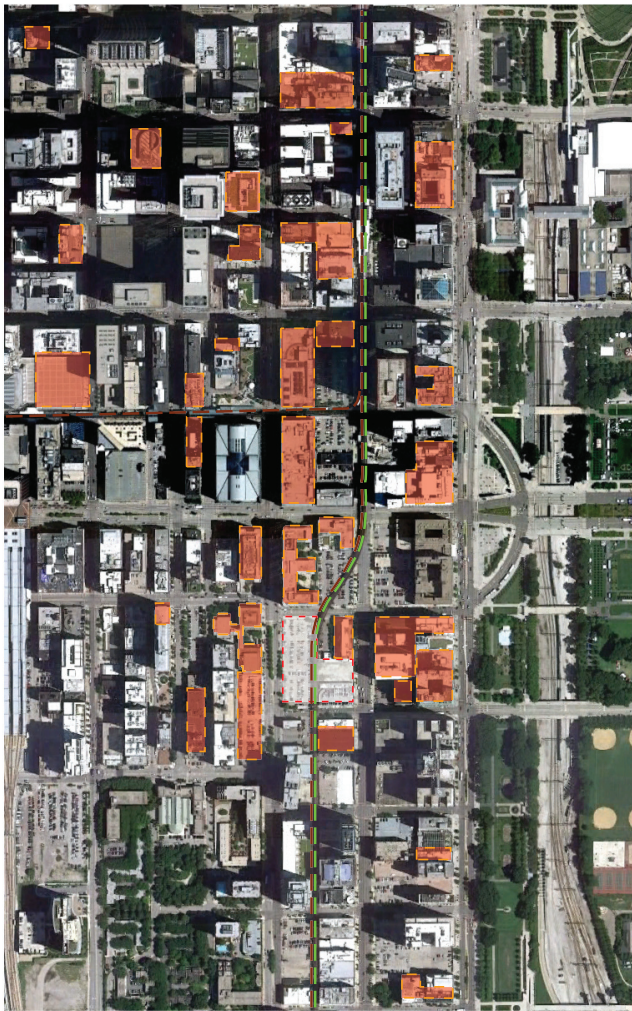


The Eiffel Tower serves as a good example of how architecture and society are inter-related entities. With the construction of the monument came unprecedented views of the urban condition that ultimately led to the future of experiencing the urban landscape. The tower changed how people engaged the urban landscape by modifying the sensuousness of perceptions of the user. Eiffel had effectively created a new social phenomenon.



# Site Research

CHICAGO\_ILLNOIS



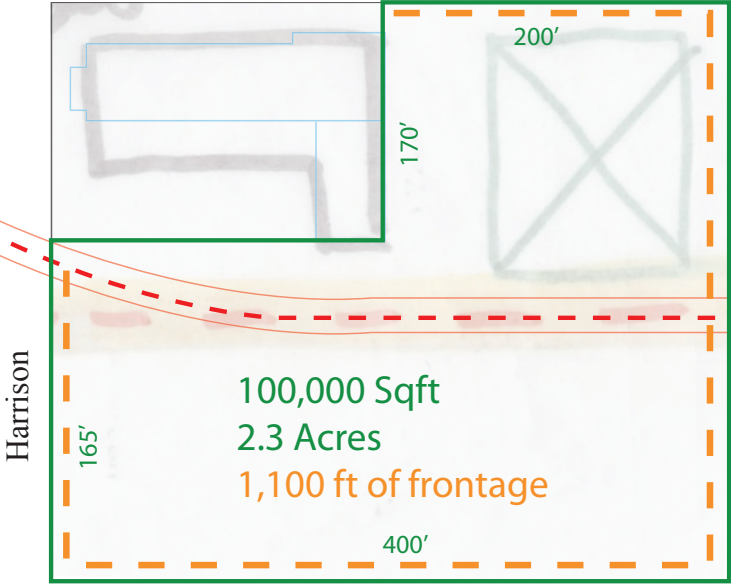
## Site Selection

There were two major decisions that influenced my site selection. The first had to do with the urban context. I intentionally wanted to set this project up as an experiment to see how people use and move through space and how that space can effect their movements. As a result of that foot traffic was a huge factor in this experiment, so i chose a high density urban location. The secondary reason had to do with the public educational aspect of this project, I chose a site that was in an educational hub. In the diagrams above all buildings higlighted in orange are buildings with educational components.

Currently a parking lot with an adjacent vacant plot of land, I chose a site that was located in the Loop district of Chicago, two blocks west of Michigan Avenue. My site is bound by State Street, Harrison, Balbo, and Wabash, and located directly across the street from Depual University's Student Center.

Columbia College

Wabash



DePaul Student Center

State Street



Jones Prep

Jones Prep Addition

1



The site falls on a plot of land that is very active in terms of transit. Located at the north west corner is the Harrison red line station and slicing through the center of the site is the above ground, green and orange lines. This site becomes a prime destination with access to a large choice of transit. Shown to the right is a diagram of Chicago's L-train system that connects the entire city to this particular site.



## Transportation Analysis

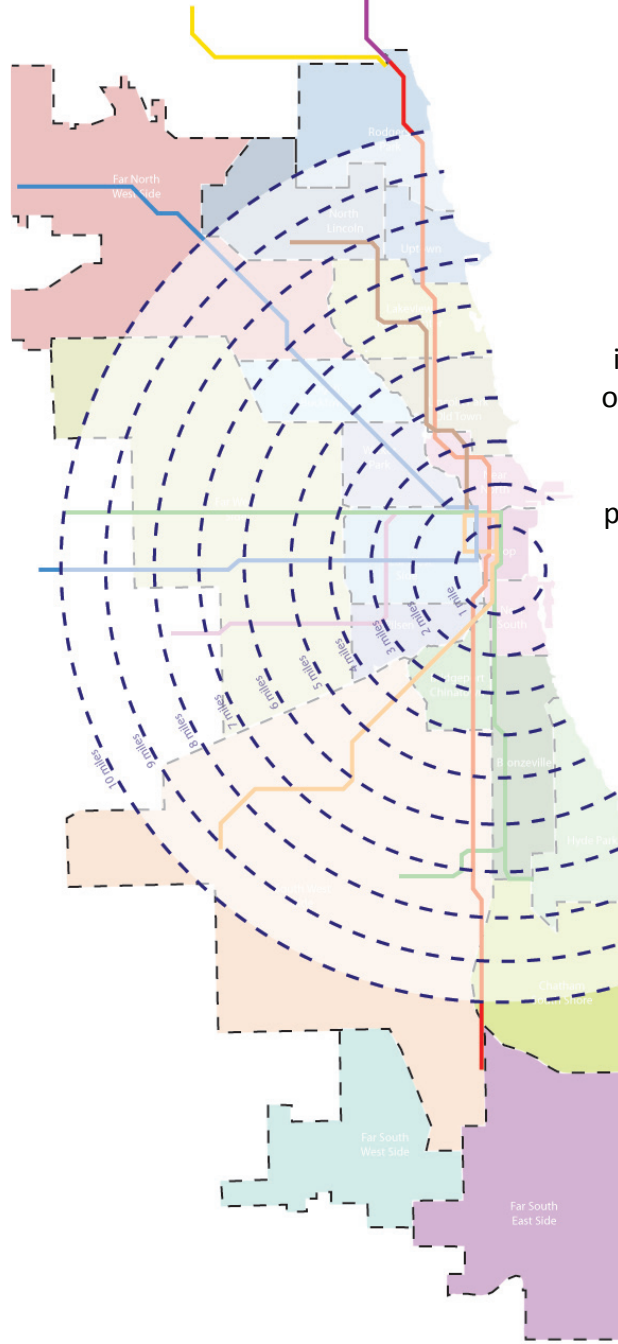




This diagram illustrates the segregation of public green space within the urban context of the loop area. Even though the waterfront provides a large amount of greenspace, the remainder of the city is relatively lacking in these spaces. Can the incorporation and embedding of additional public green space change the way people experience the dense urban condition?

## Dedicated Green Space Analysis

Loop - to - Rodgers Park	8 miles
Loop - to - Far North Side	6 miles
Loop - to - North Lincoln	7.5 miles
Loop - to - Uptown	6.5 miles
Loop - to - Lakeview/North Center	5 miles
Loop - to - Logan/Bucktown	4 miles
Loop - to - Lincoln Park/Old Town	3 miles
Loop - to - Far West Side	4 miles
Loop - to - Wicker Park	1.5 miles
Loop - to - Near North	1.5 miles
Loop - to - Near West	.5 miles
Loop - to - Near South	.5 miles
Loop - to - Pilsen	1 mile
Loop - to - Bridgeport/Chinatown	1 mile
Loop - to - Bronzeville	2 miles
Loop - to - South West Side	3 miles
Loop - to - Hyde Park	3.5 miles
Loop - to - Chatham/Southshore	7 miles
Loop - to - Far South West Side	11 miles
Loop - to - Far South East Side	10.5 miles



During my site selection process I investigated the surrounding districts of Chicago and calculated the distances to each location in order to gain a better understanding of who the potential users of my design would be. This map shows the distances to the surrounding districts of the Chicago area. The majority being within 10 miles of my site.



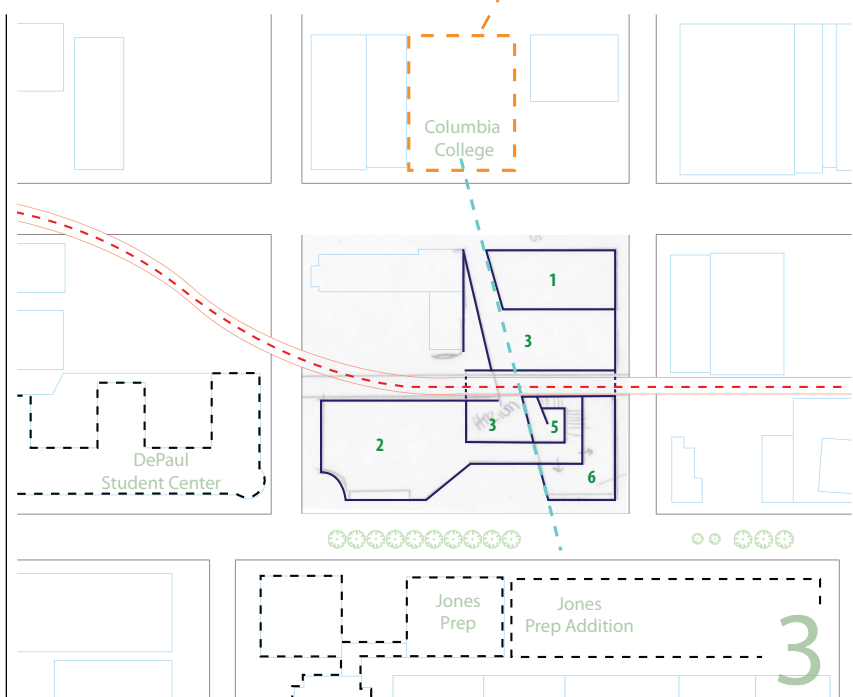
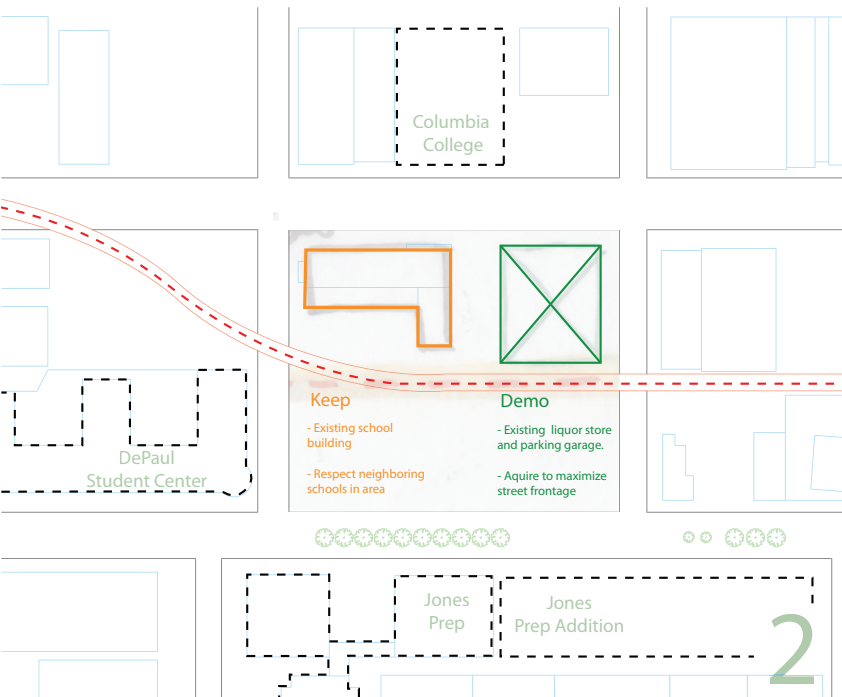


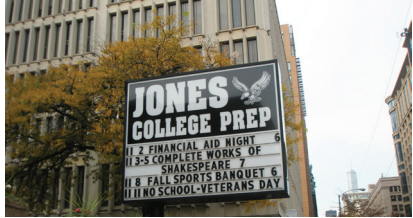
Surrounding Site Photographs



# Site Analysis

While at the site I made a few key observations and decisions. First I decided to expand my site by removing an existing liquor store and parking garage. This maximized my street frontage, allowing for more foot traffic to engage my program. Next I decided to extend key axis of the surrounding context into my site that began to influence the shape of my design. The first of which, seen in diagram 3, was the axis created from the entry of Columbia and stretched to entry of the new Jones Prep addition.

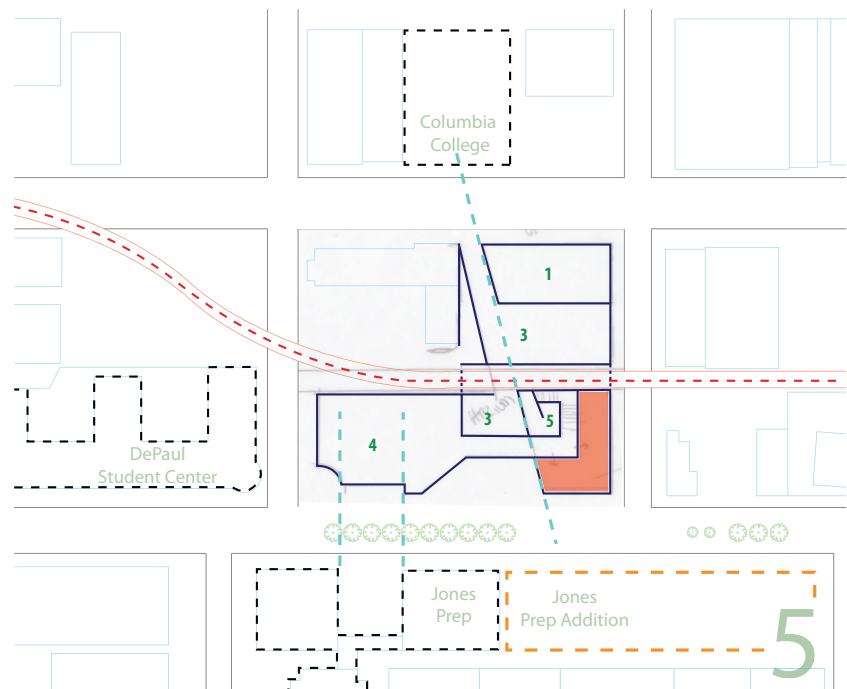
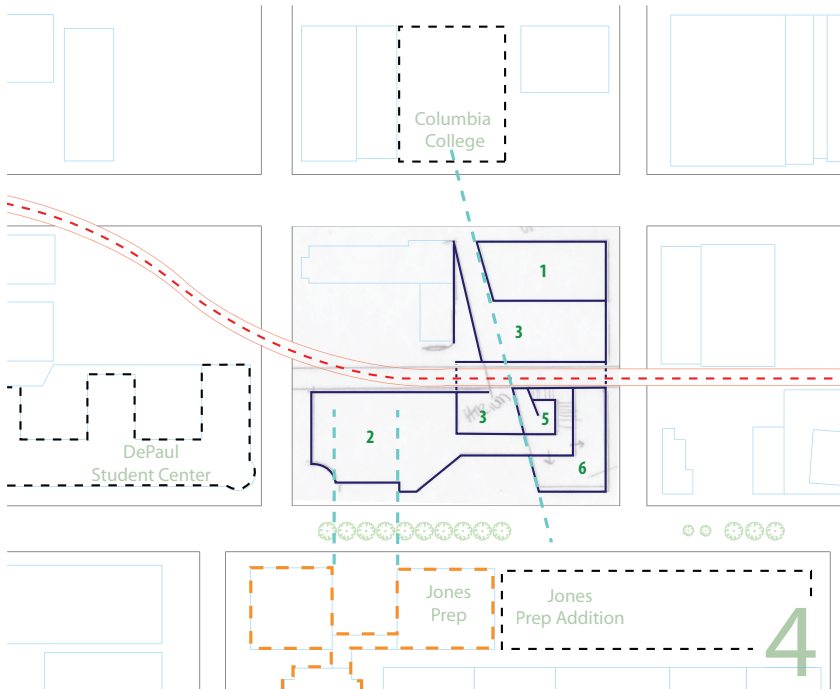




Future Addition

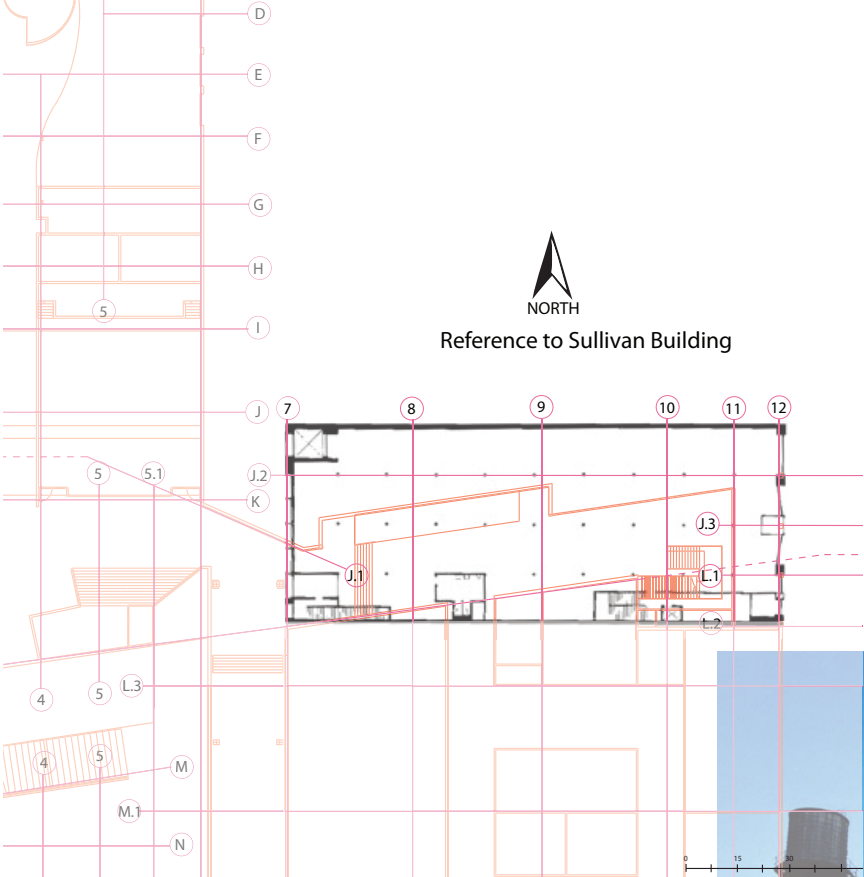


Another initial observation that I made was in relation to the existing Jones Prep academy seen in diagram 4. I decided to extend the existing axis from the Jones Prep courtyard into my site, later creating the space that would be an entry into my space. And lastly in diagram 5 I decided to make reference to the new Jones Prep Addition. The rendering, seen left, of the future condition shows exterior spaces on the facade of the building. I decided to mirror that elevated exterior space in order to create a dialogue between the two conditions. The space highlighted in red was my initial concept for this exterior space.



# Wirt Dexter Building

The vacant portion of my site, across from Columbia College was at one point a city landmark designed by Louis Sullivan. In 2006 it burned down, just shortly after another Sullivan landmark, Pilgrim Baptist Church, had burned down in Chicago as well. I allowed Sullivan's existing plan, seen left in black, to influence some of the early design decisions on my site. I kept the front structural layout identical to that of the original Sullivan building and recessed the facade to the second row columns creating an indent that began to refer to what was once there.



One of my first steps in designing the exterior landscape of my site was to focus on using an influx of green space to pull the user off of the sidewalk and into public nodes. I set up three of these spaces all corresponding to the surrounding educational facilities. The first of these nodes, seen below, opens the corner of State and Balbo. This intent of this move was to slice through the building with a green path that led to an elevated roof top space. This space now begins to have a dialogue with the neighboring Jones Prep exterior spaces. This move also began to shape the form of my building with the lowered roof green space creating a stepping down effect. The stepping down of this corner also contributed to softening the corner and drawing people into these spaces.



## Exterior Public Circulation

1 of 3

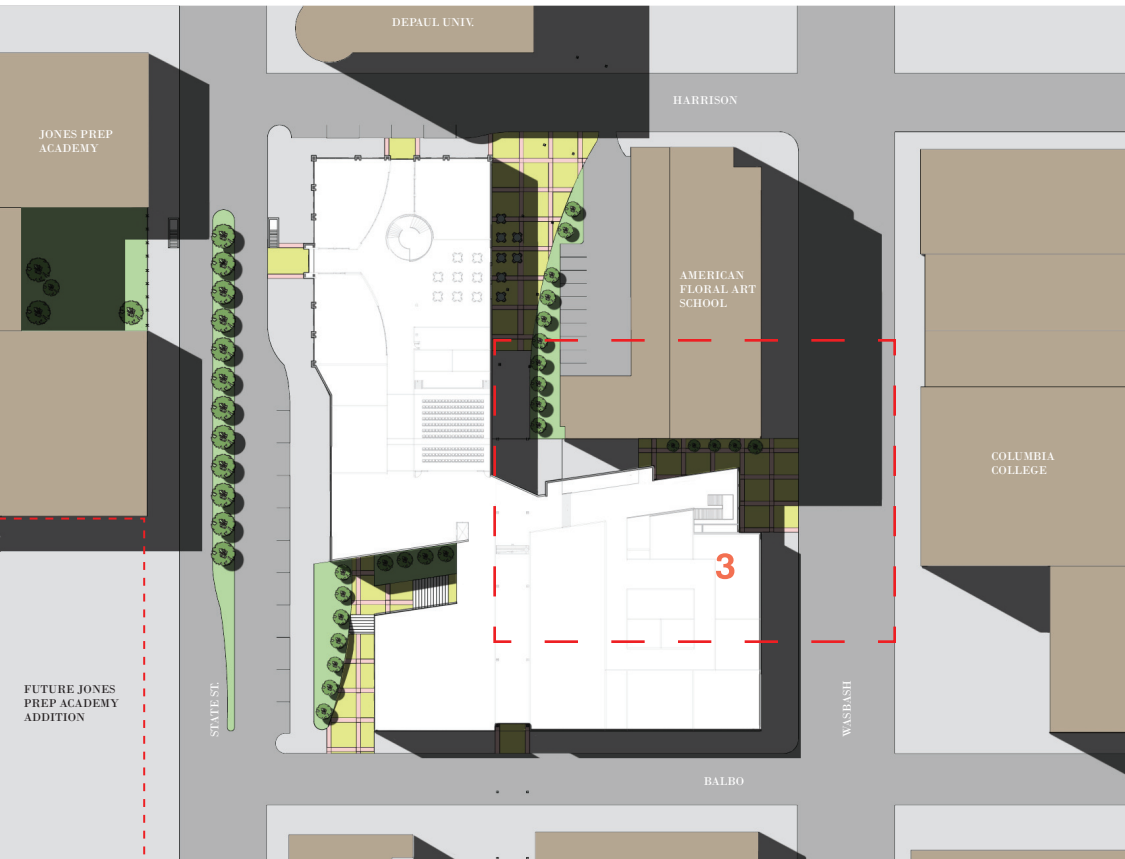
The second space created was on the axis that ran underneath the orange and green L lines, adjacent to DePaul University's student center. This space provided a unique opportunity to inhabit what currently is nothing more than an alley. By overflowing interior usages into this space, the alley becomes an activated space that begins to draw users in. This green plaza also leads to an entry located between areas 2 and 3. The train, on non peak hours, passes every 7-12 minutes. Stacking uses in this space with transportation above and public space below begins to experiment with the relationship between the two entities.



2 of 3



The third and final node that I began to work with was on top of the existing Wirt Dexter building site, across from Columbia College. As I previously mentioned the facade of the building in this space begins to step back allowing for a softer entry point. The path set up along this axis connects Wabash to Harrison creating an embedded exterior path way through the entire site.



3 of 3



# Program / Proposition

USAGE\_PLANNING\_STUDIES

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# PLANNING

As I moved on to programming this development, I decided that this design would be an experiment of two things: first, how to design a building in an urban context that begins to allow the user to see that context and perceive it differently, and secondly I wanted to focus on the interior elements of a building and how the overlapping of space allows for moments of engagement.

A building is an object in an environment. To merely look at a building without context does not give one an understanding of space. My first objective was to begin to allow people to experience the urban environment in a different light, through exterior circulation and programmed space at the tops of varying levels. Placing the green nodes throughout the site was a method of bringing people onto these paths. Once on this path a user reaches different exterior levels changing their physical relationship with the street front, surrounding buildings, and the passing L-train. Making the majority of public space at the top also began to challenge the social construct of the built environment. Typically the higher a space is, the more privatized or elitest it becomes.

# Program Development

My second goal began to play out more so in the programming of the space. The concept behind these spaces explored where two complex programs overlapped and how those instances create moments of engagement. By creating a dynamic condition where the user has the capability to choose the spaces usage, it begins to get the user actively involved in the built environment. Through blurring the line between programs it allows the user to ultimately engage the space and over time as other uses are revealed to them through events or other users habits, they begin to understand space differently from their initial perceptions.

The program of my building, because I wanted to focus on the overlapping of different programs, has become a multi functional space with programs that may not typically be associated with one another. The design includes, access to two L-train stops, one above and one below ground, multiple greenspaces, retail, public education for issues of the built environment, offices/studio spaces, and two cafes.

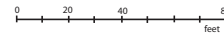
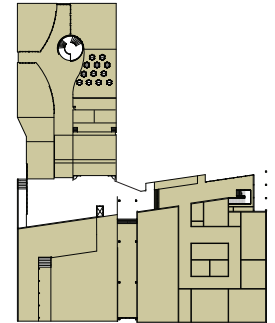
This program takes on an institutional role, a building operated publicly by the city and used as retail and a resource center for all .

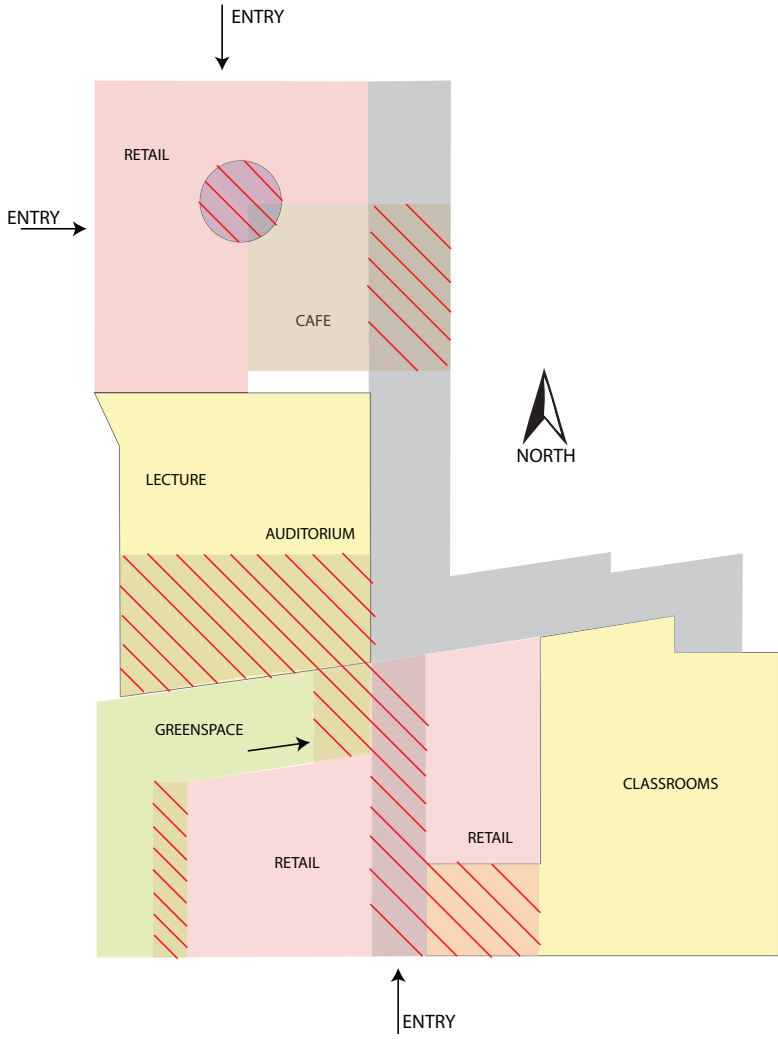


# LEVEL ONE

Programmed Usages

- Retail
- Cafe
- Exterior Greenspace
- Auditorium
- Public Educational Space
- Circulation

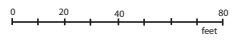
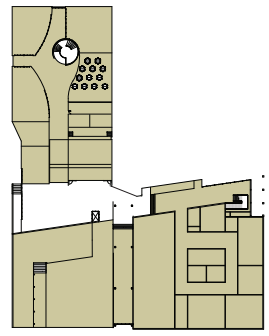


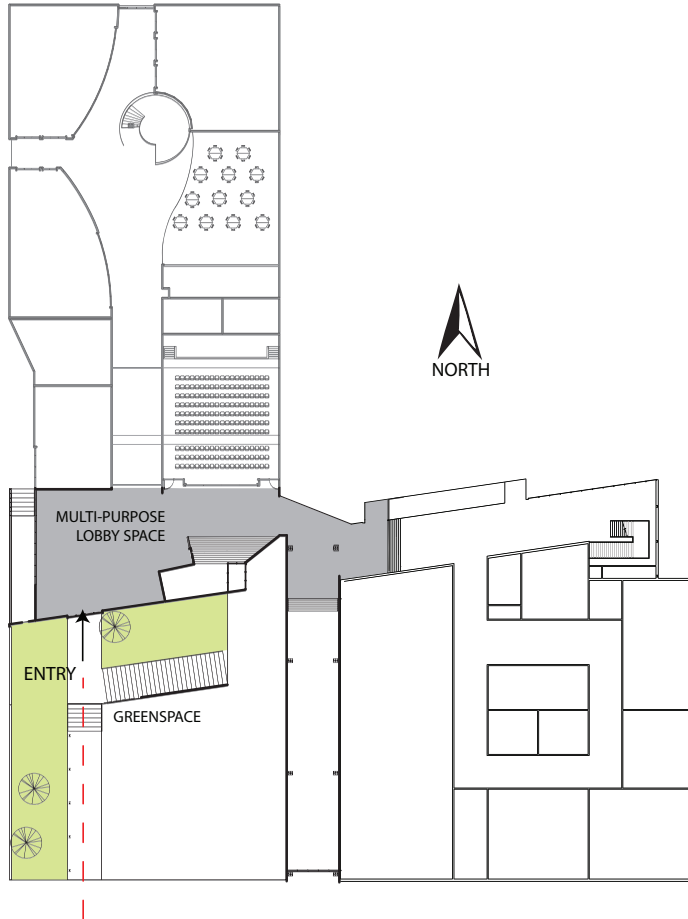


# LEVEL ONE

Programmed Usages

- Retail
- Cafe
- Exterior Greenspace
- Public Educational Space
- Overlapping Moments

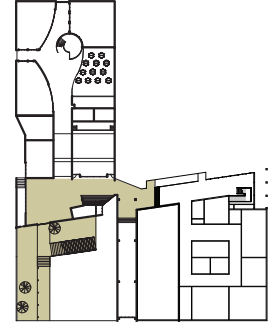




# LEVEL ONE.5

Programmed Usages

- Multi-purpose / Lobby
- Exterior Greenspace
- Circulation








# LEVEL ONE.5

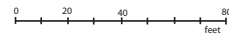
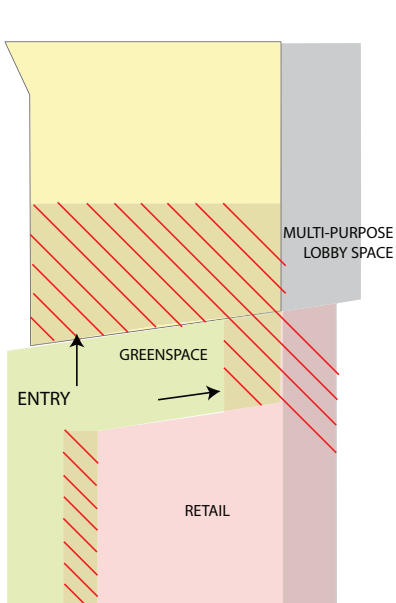
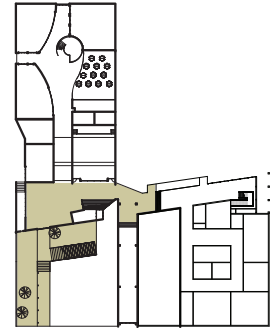
## Programmed Usages

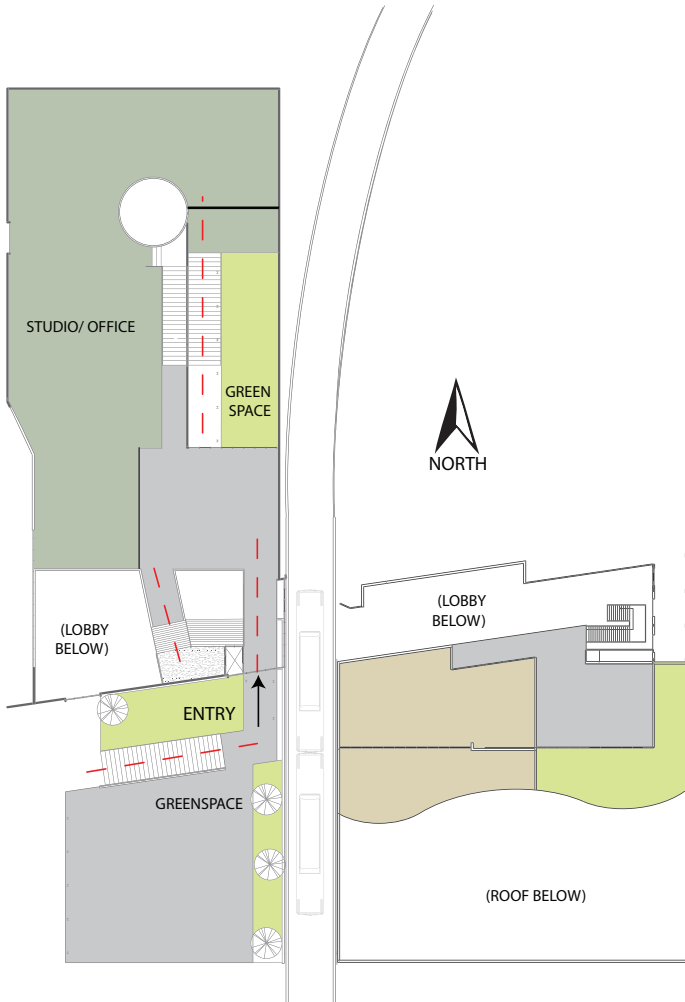
Retail 

Exterior Greenspace 

Public Educational Space 

Overlapping Moments 

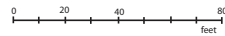
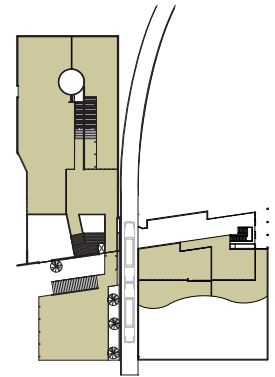


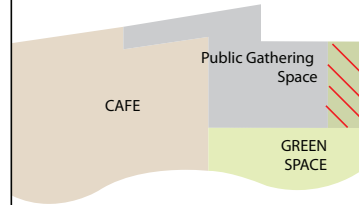
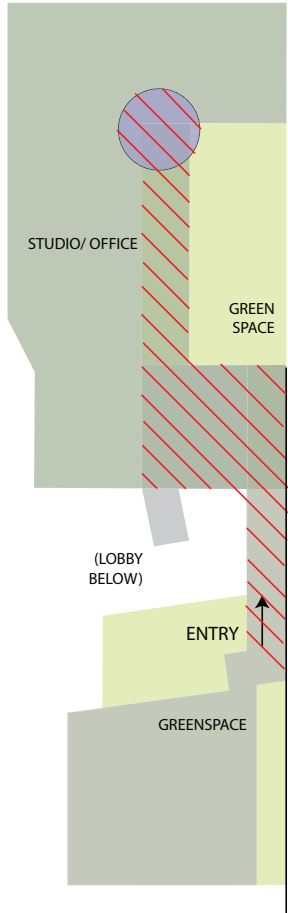


# LEVEL TWO

Programmed Usages






- Public Gathering Space ———
- Exterior Greenspace ———
- Studio/Office Space ———
- Cafe ———
- Circulation - - -

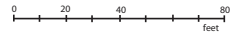
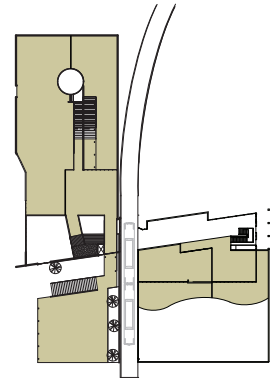


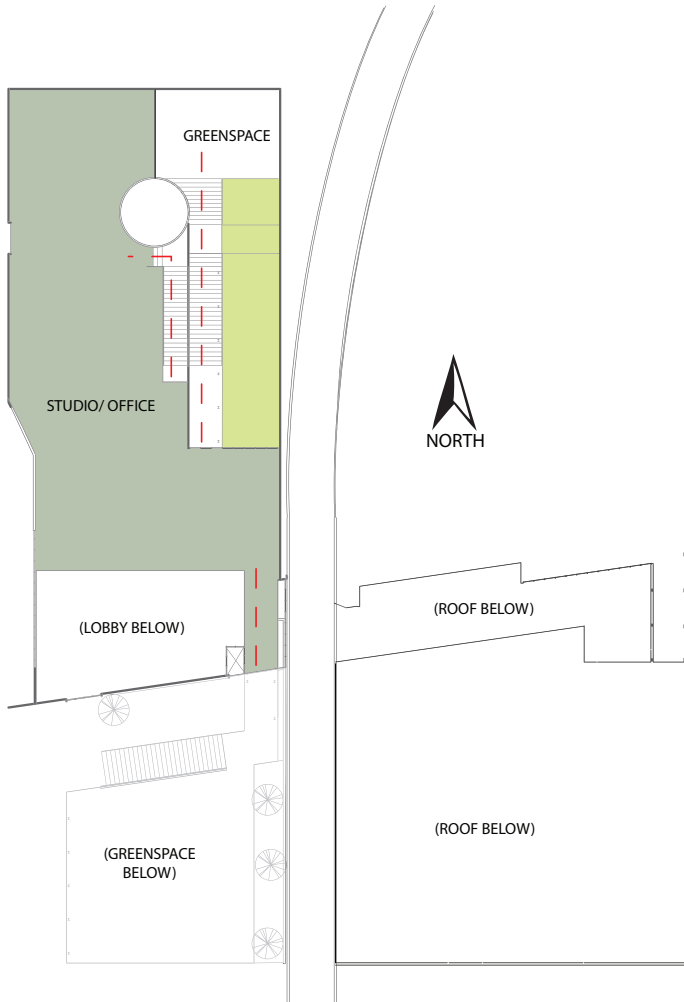


## LEVEL TWO

Programmed Usages

- Public Gathering Space 
- Exterior Greenspace 
- Studio/Office Space 
- Cafe 
- Overlapping Moments 

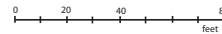
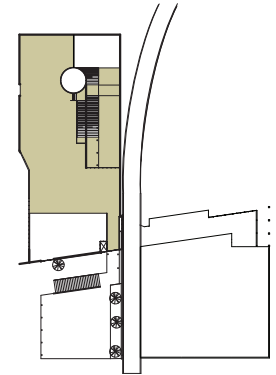


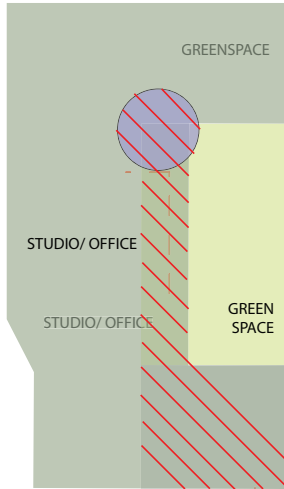


# LEVEL THREE

## Programmed Usages

- Exterior Greenspace
- Studio/Office Space
- Circulation

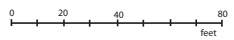
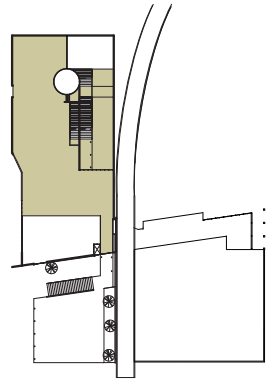




# LEVEL THREE




## Programmed Usages

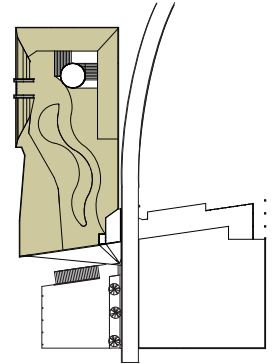
- Exterior Greenspace
- Studio/Office Space
- Overlapping Moments



# LEVEL FOUR

## Programmed Usages

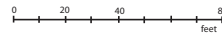
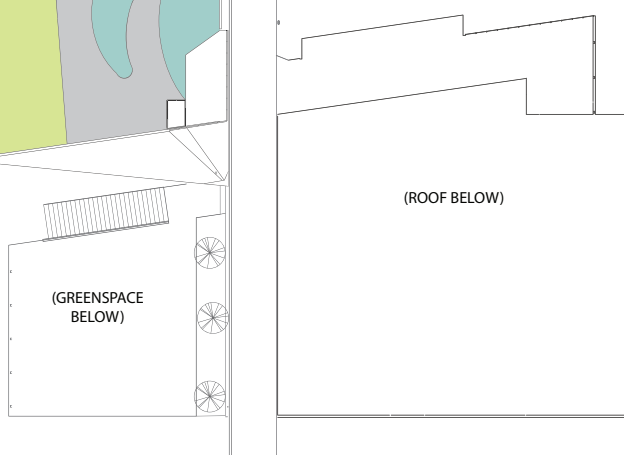
- Public Gathering Space 
- Exterior Greenspace 
- Circulation 

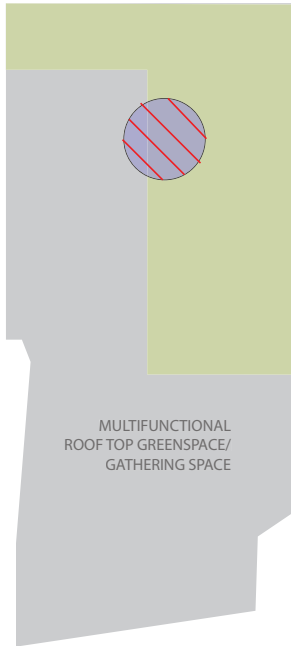


MULTIFUNCTIONAL  
ROOF TOP GREENSPACE/  
GATHERING SPACE



NORTH

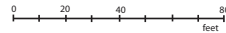
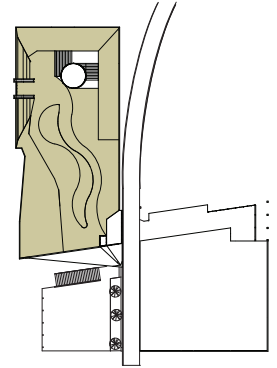




## LEVEL FOUR

Programmed Usages

- Public Gathering Space
- Exterior Greenspace







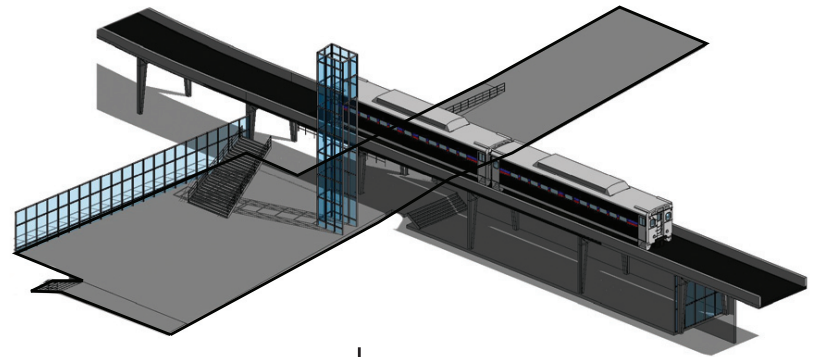
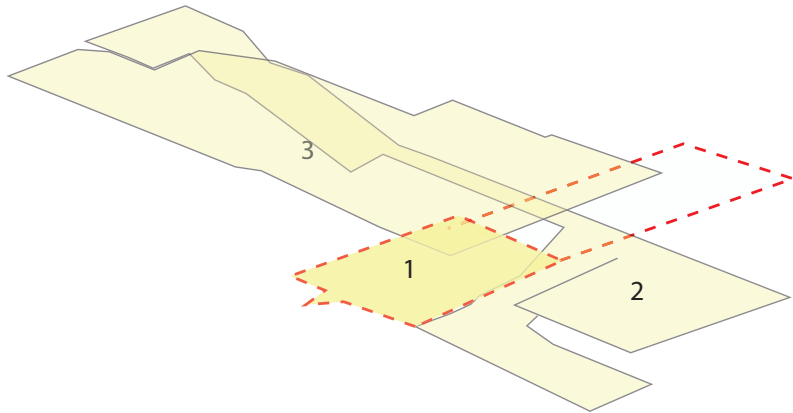
# Concept Design

CREATING\_THE\_PATH

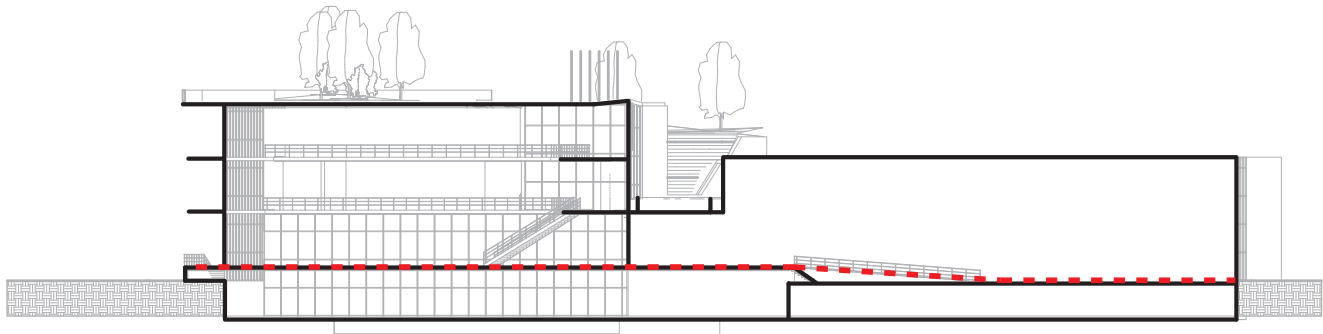
# Vertical Development

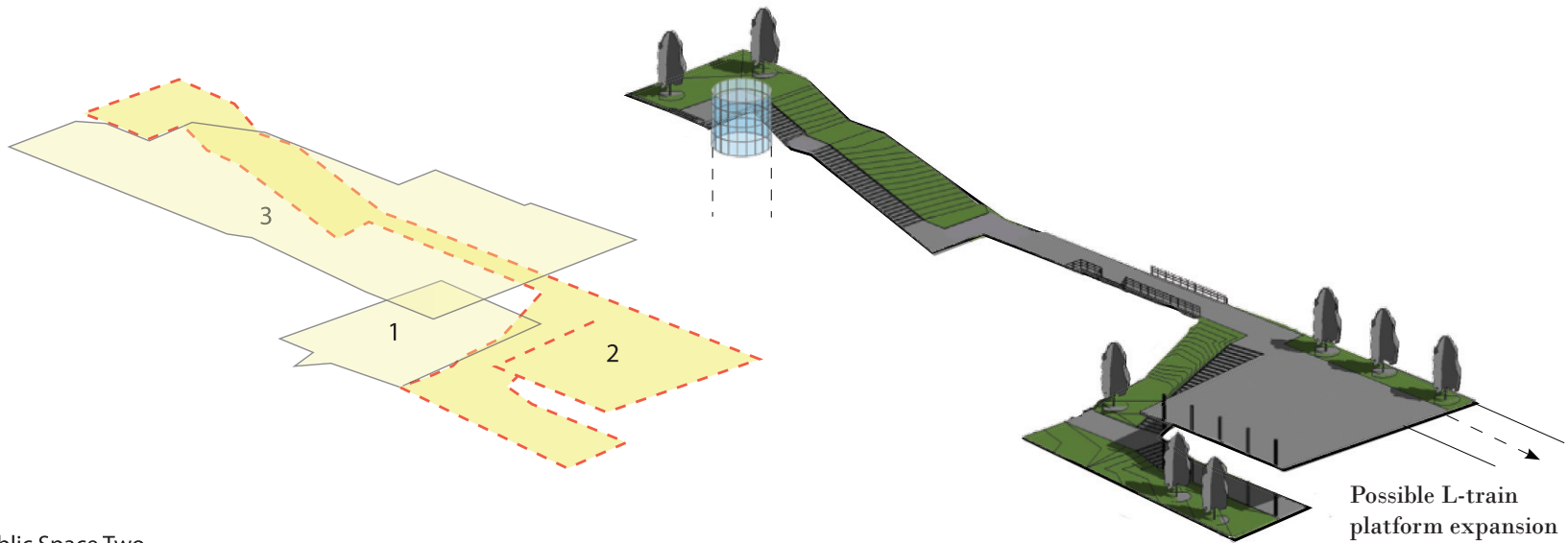


As I developed the planar spacial relationships amongst different programs, I wanted to take the same concept and work it vertically throughout my site. The design of my building began to take shape around a rising path. The path connecting to all three major green nodes allowed for ease of access from foot traffic. The lower level of this path, seen in diagram one, shows how the interior space exists beneath the L train, meeting the rest of the path in a main atrium space . Diagram two shows the winding of the exterior space from level one to level four. Stretched along level two is a proposed L train station dispensing people into the public space above ground level. Lastly, diagram three, shows the purposed roof scape of the building. This roof scape is a destination or an ultimate ending to the path.

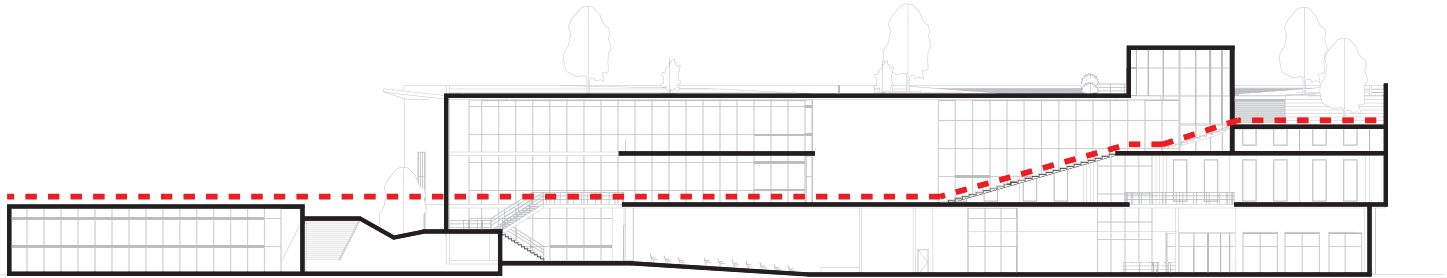


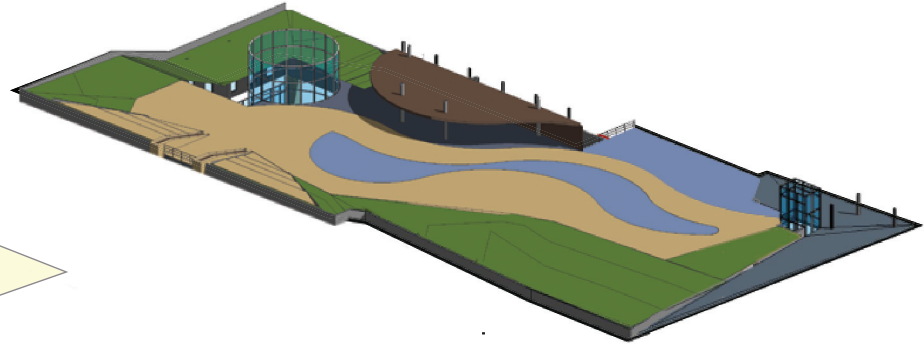
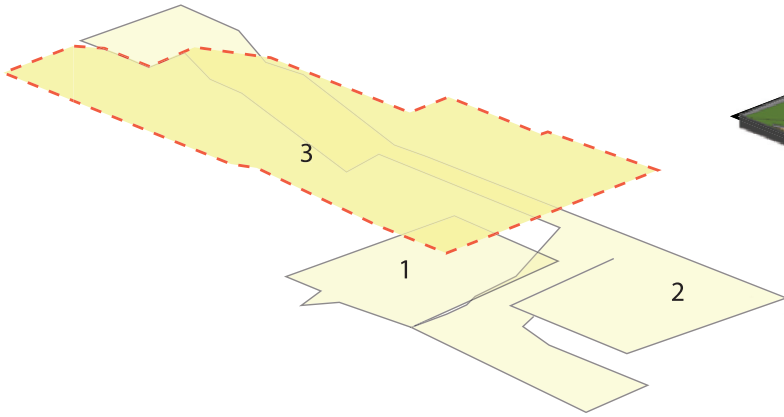
Public Space One



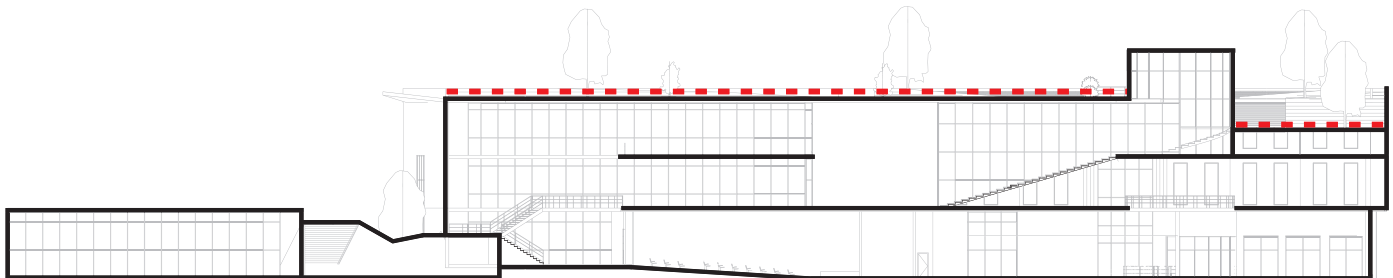


Public Space Two - - - - -





Public Space Three





# Final Design Studies

# Design Strategies

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For the final design aspect of this thesis, I chose two different instances when these programs overlapped, vertically and horizontally and did short studies about each area. The third space I began to look at, in more detail, was the rooftop spaces that examined the contextual relationship with the urban context. I wanted to further explore the relationship that these spaces had with each other and with the context of the city. The remainder of this thesis explores these three instances in more detail.

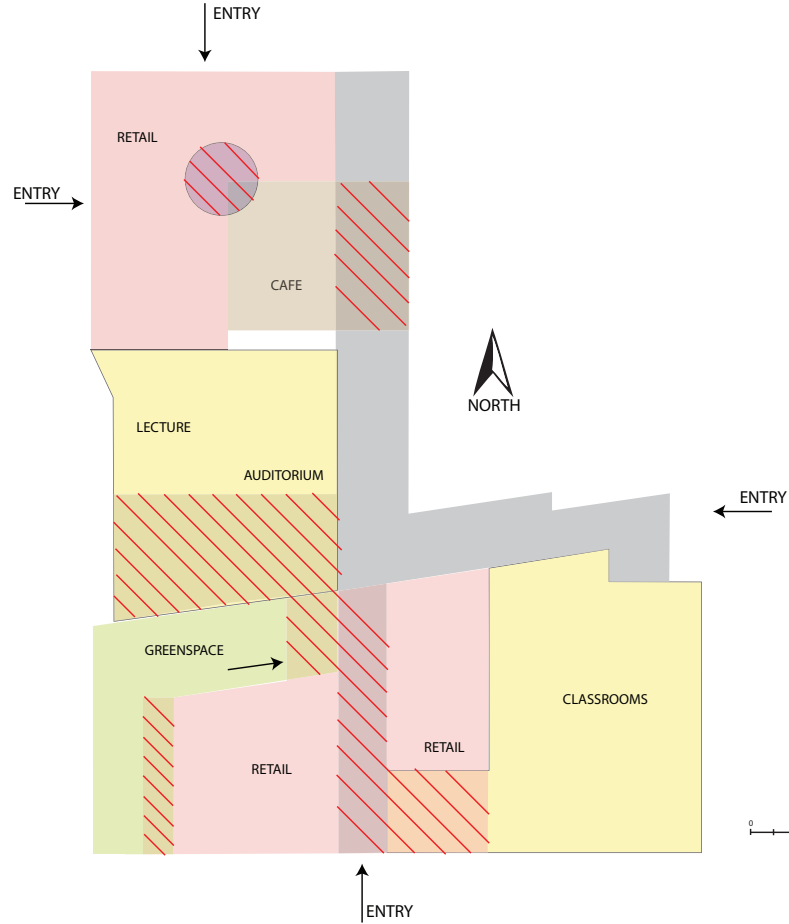
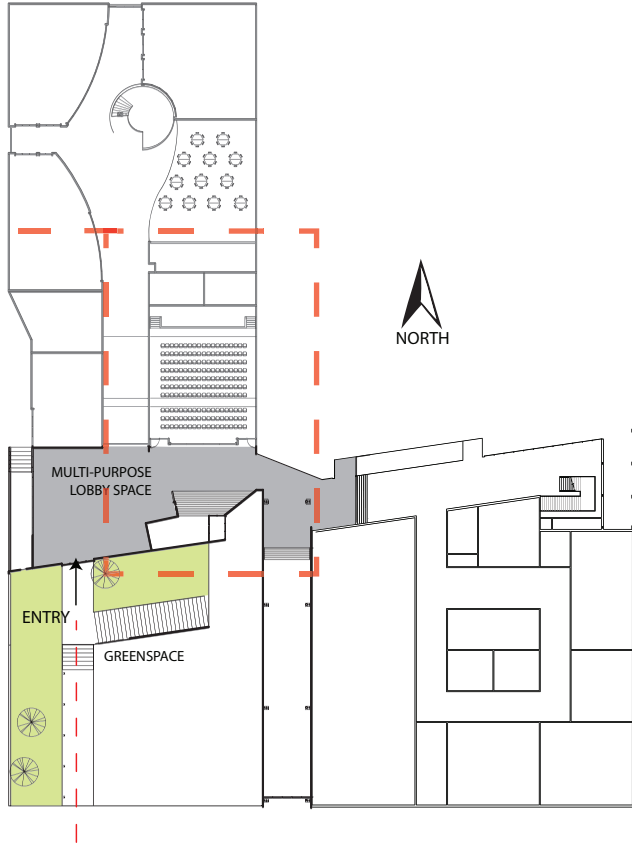


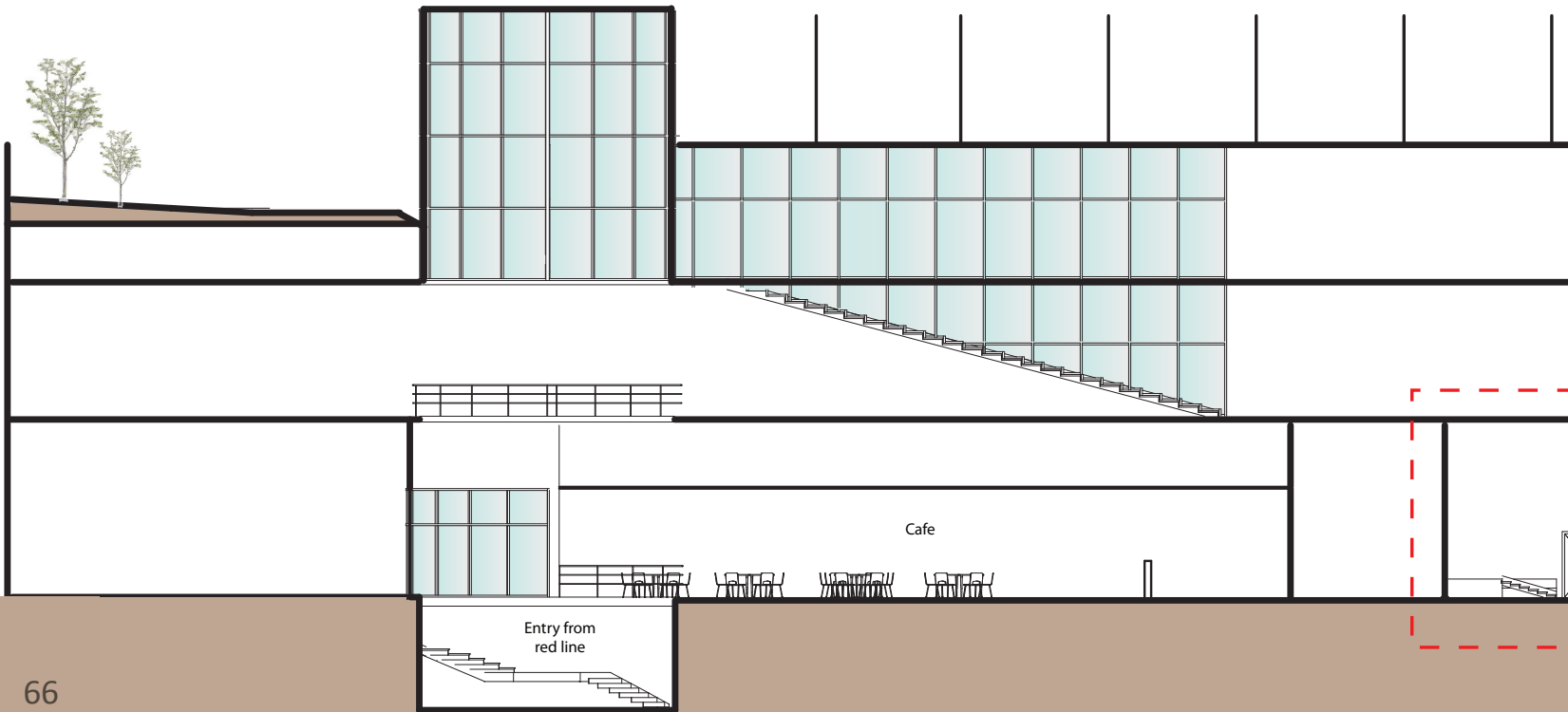


# Instance 1

Horizontal Overlaying of Program - Auditorium/Atrium

The first of the three instances that I began exploring was the condition that is on the first floor between the auditorium space and the public atrium space that is part of the lower level circulation pathway. I found this intersection interesting because because of the vertical circulation happening in the atrium. One of my design decision was to squeeze this public space down with the staircase, and then procede in making that a wide, cermonial type stair. The intention here was to see what would happen both during events and when the space was simply circulation. When events are going on, the stair serves as another level of rising seating, as an overflow for the auditorium. This secondary use of a typical element such as stairs begins to be dictated by the programs happening, but at what point do people stop seeing the stair as just vertical circulation? A space like this has the possibility for reinterpretation by the user, and over time has the capability to become a gathering space without events happening. By using the multiplicity of program to bring these new perceptions to light, the person begins to engage space that they may have once overlooked.

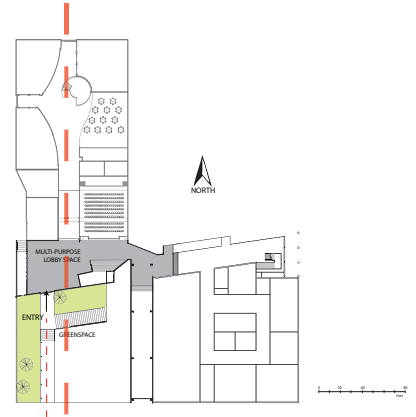
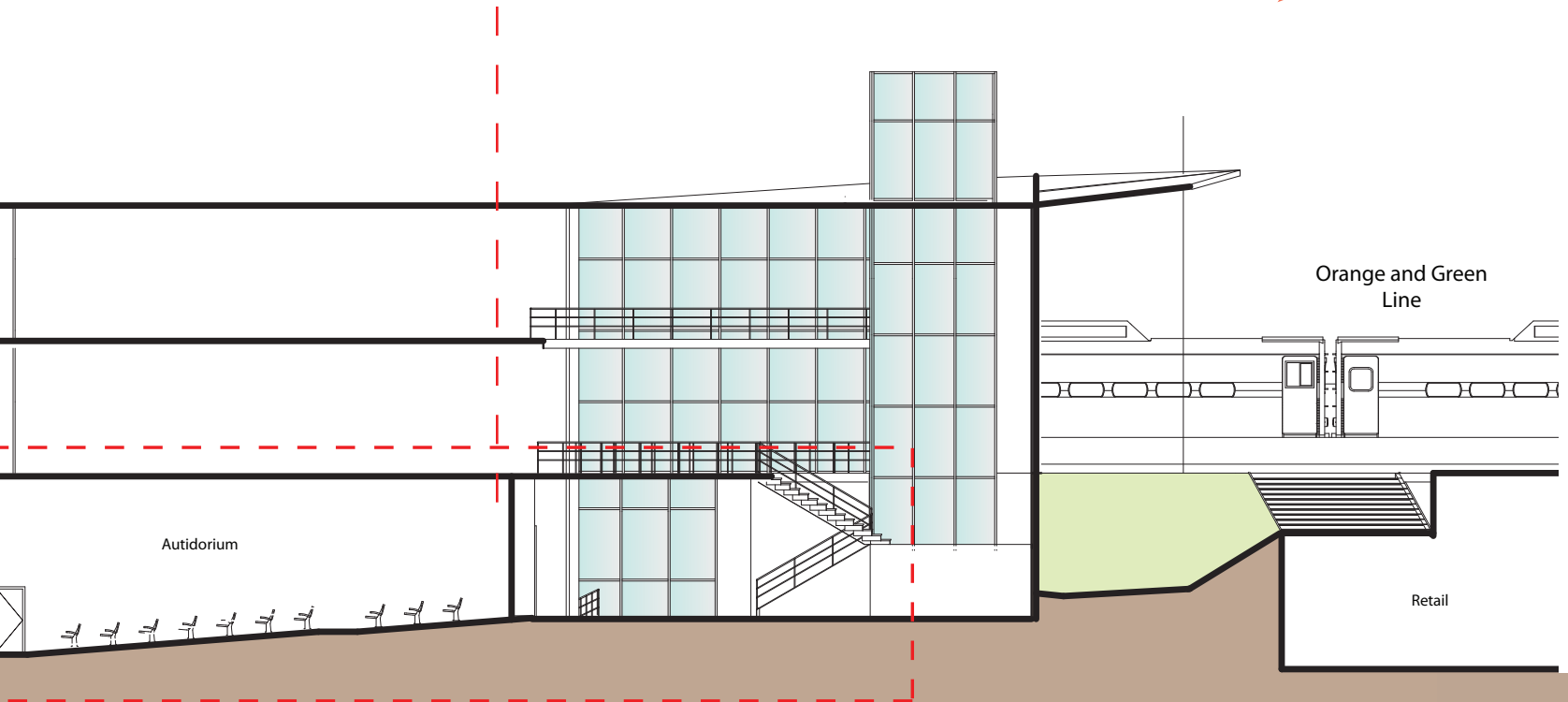


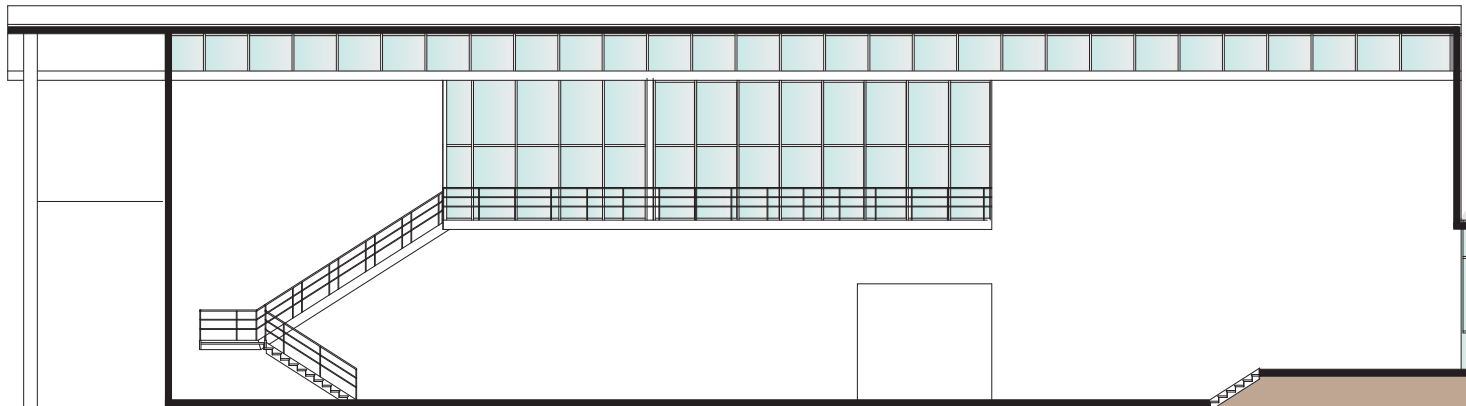


Cafe

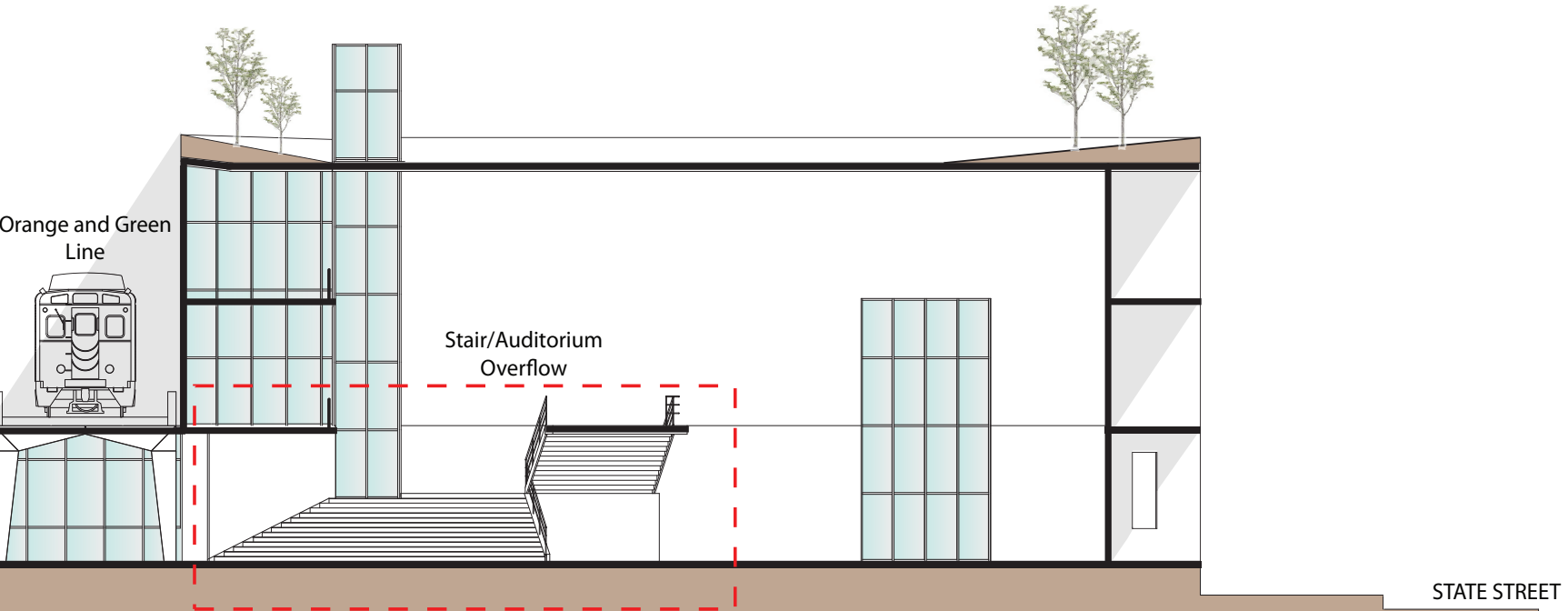
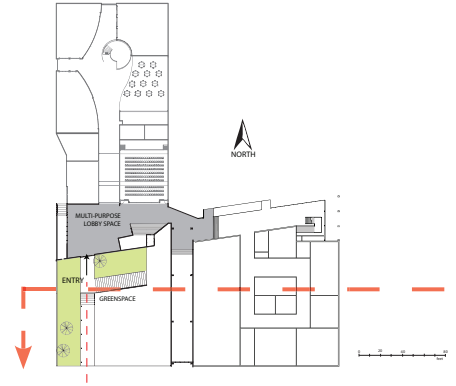
Entry from  
red line

Over head door extends up, creating a joint space.





WABASH

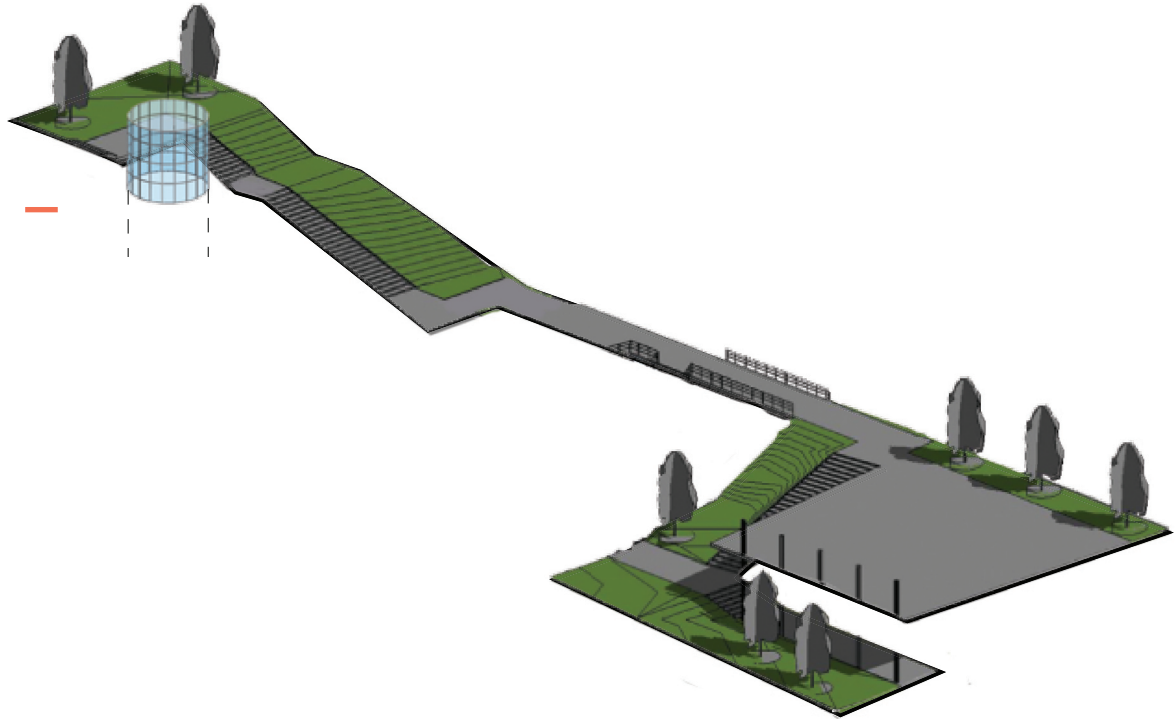


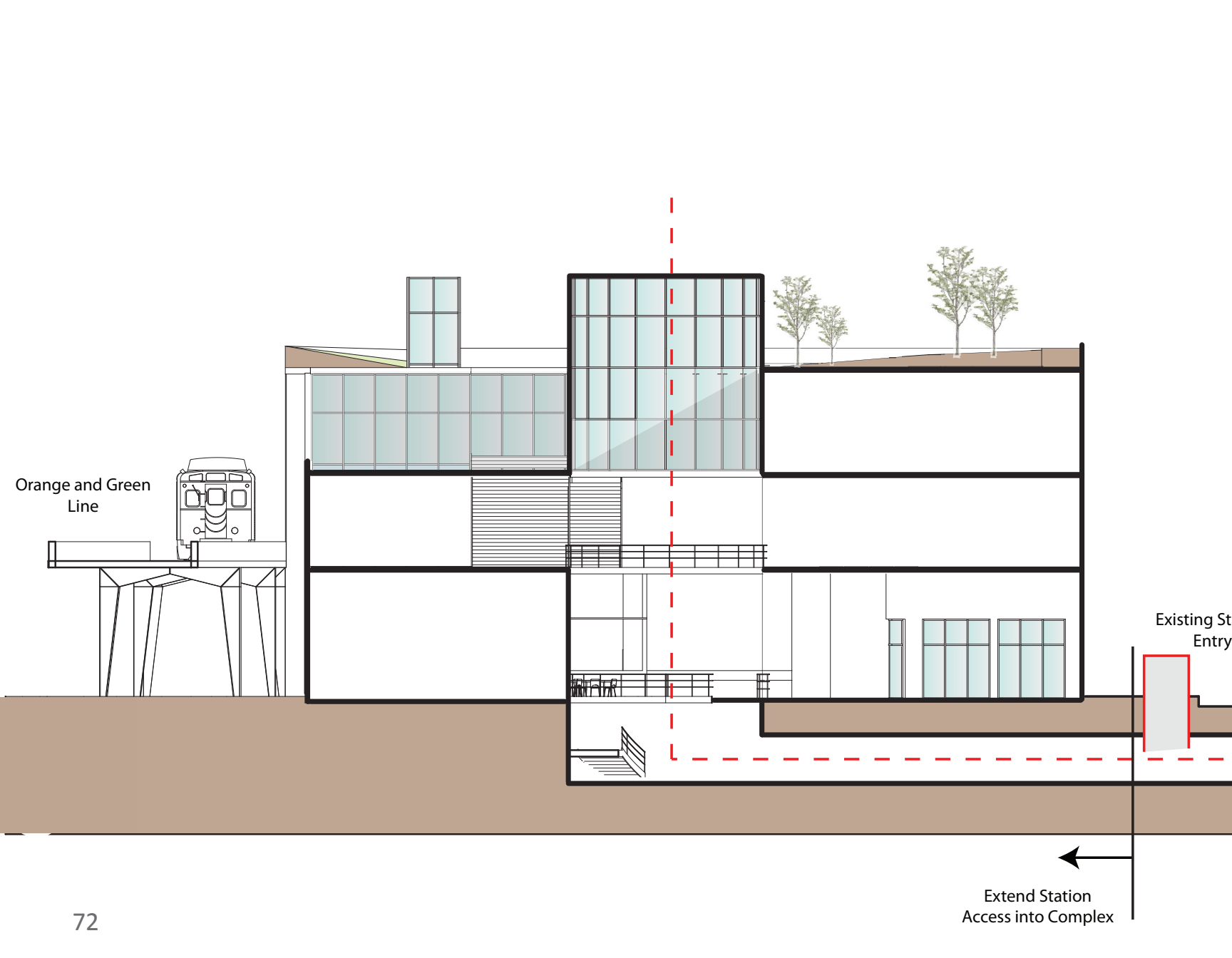
## Instance 2

Vertical Overlaying of Space - L-train entry to Roof top

The second of the three instances that I began exploring was the vertical space connecting the top level roof space and the below grade L-station. This space is an open vertical well that begins to connect some of the more private space on the second and third floors with the flanking public spaces at the top and bottom. This allows users at the bottom to see the end of the path upon entering the building through the L-station entry. At the same time it allows users at the top to look down at where they came from as others begin the path. This tower like shape also begins to allow light to enter the lowest space in the building, creating an atmosphere not typical upon entering a building from a basement level and allowing users rethink the entry process into a space.



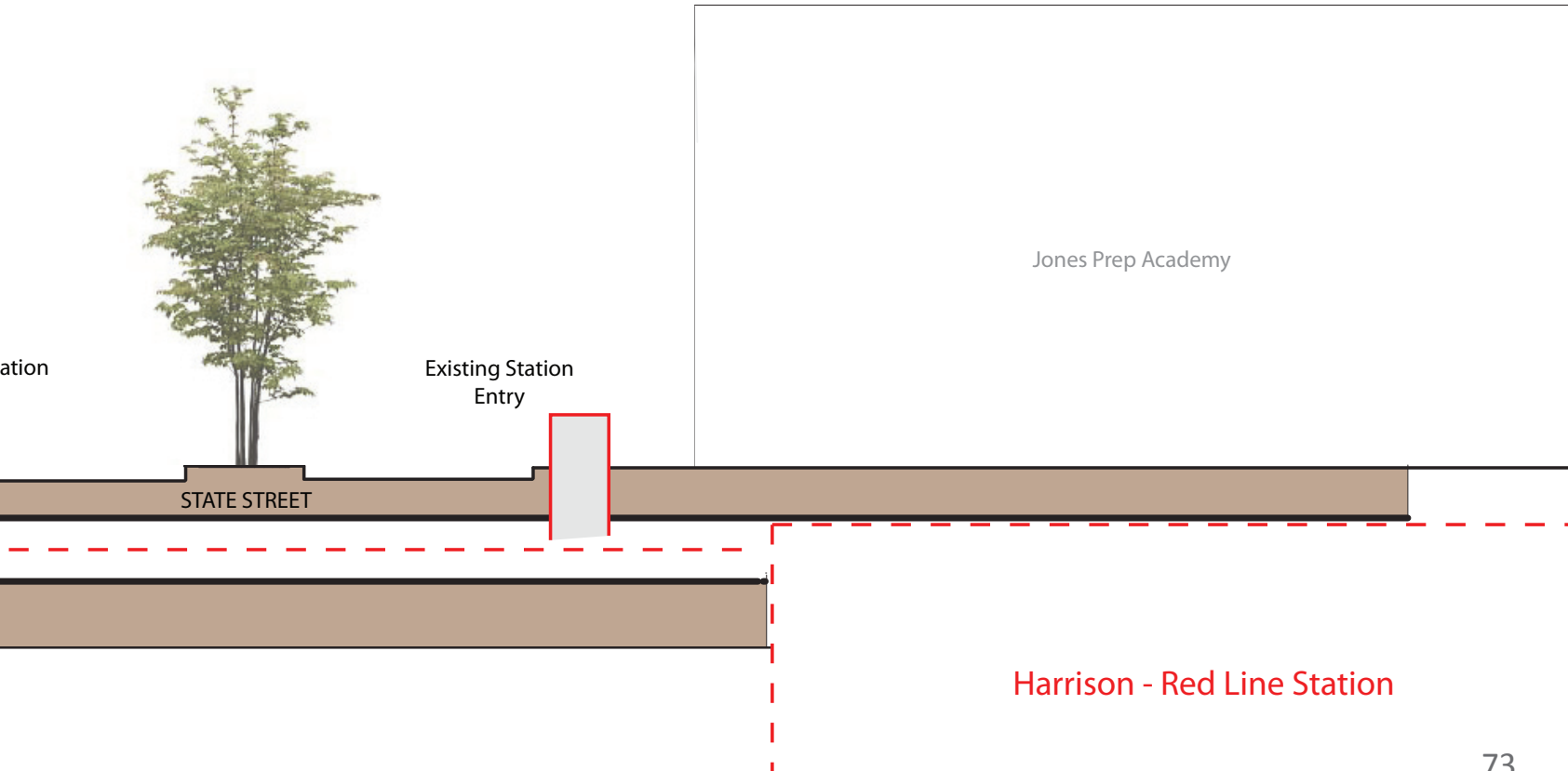
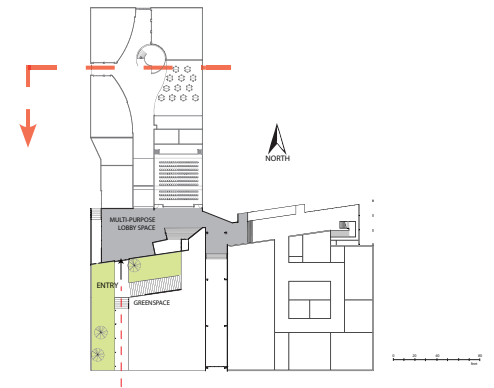




Orange and Green Line

Existing Station Entry

Extend Station Access into Complex



ation

Existing Station  
Entry

STATE STREET

Jones Prep Academy

Harrison - Red Line Station

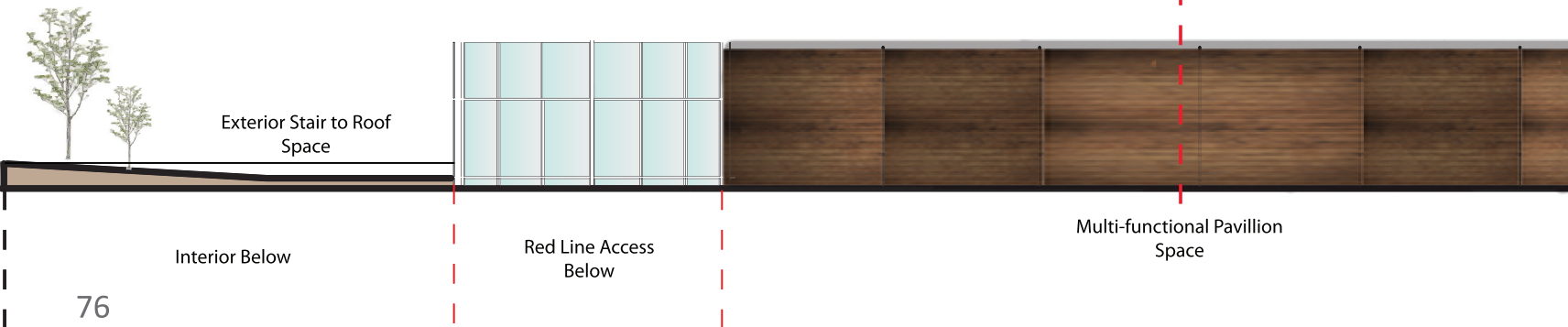
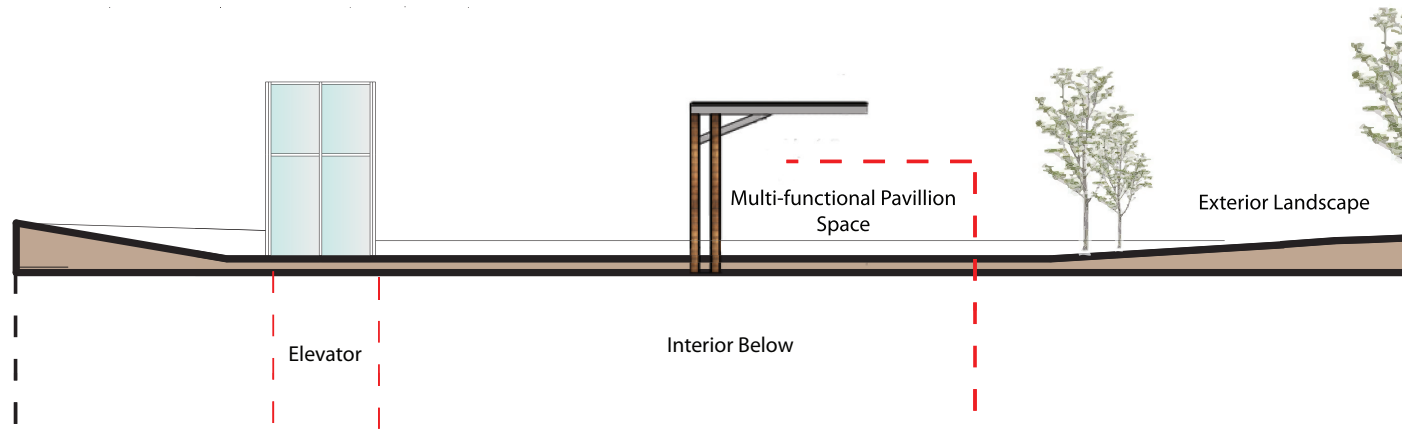
# Instance 3

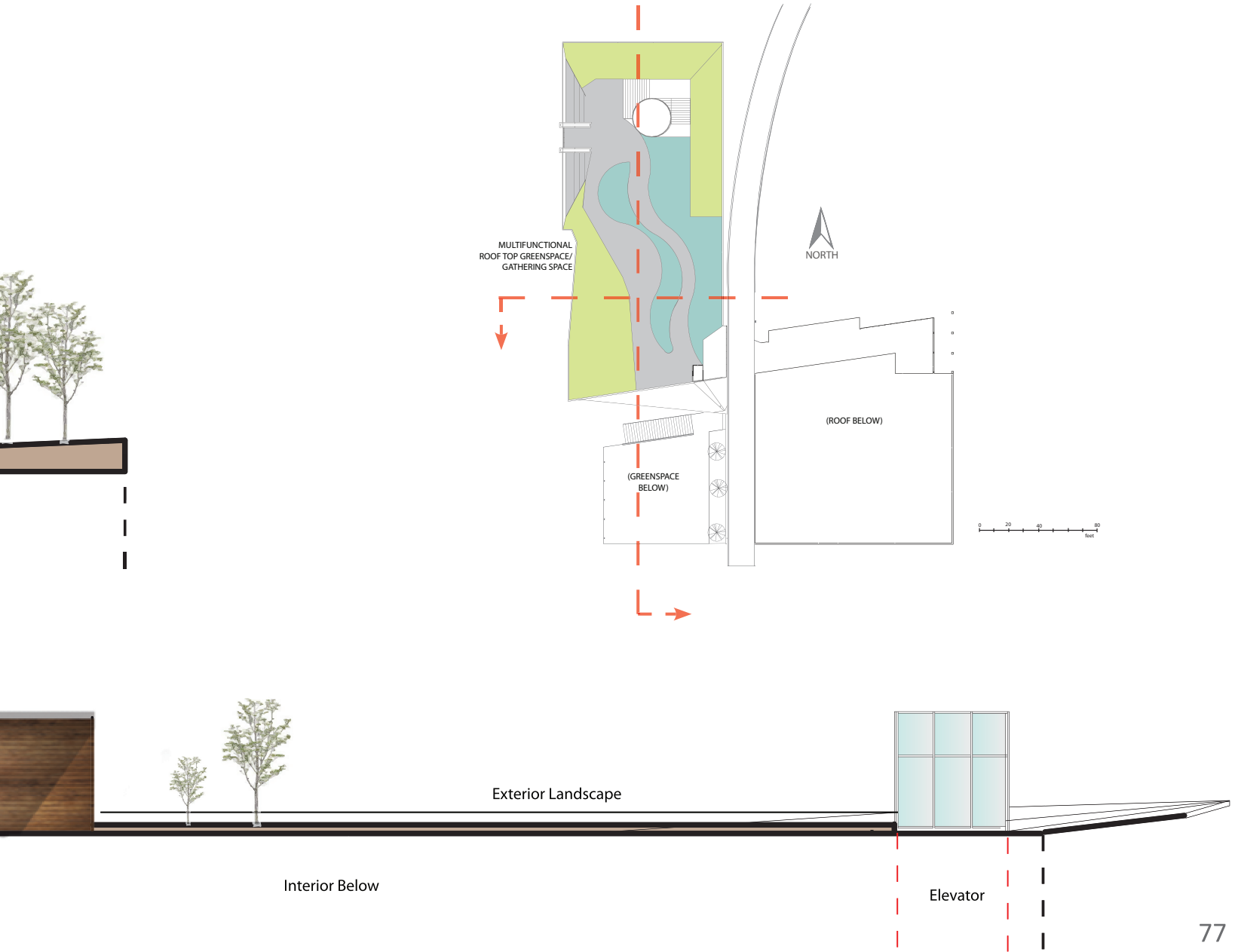
## Roof Spaces and City Context

This instance is probably where I spent the majority of my design efforts. As I got more in depth with the ideas that Eiffel exemplified, I became more interested in how a space highlights the surrounding context and what effects that context has on the user of the newly designed space. So what I began to do is design space that brought the user off of the street level and into a more green landscape. The cities public green spaces are either split away from the city, with Michigan avenue as the boundary line, or on the street level surround by high rises. My design looks at raising those conditions and taking the user out of the urban street front condition, raising the eye level of the user against the contextual background. Secondly it looks at boarding and leaving the L-train and entering directly into a building or directly into a public greenspace. Every day commuters begin to experience these greenspaces not through simply walking into them rather they are forced to enter and exit them in order to move through the city. These pathways become gateways to different parts of the city.



The roof top space was designed around a large open plaza that is combined soft surface and hard surface. The lower level entry extends vertically creating a stepped gathering space at the mouth of the vertical pathway. The shown pavilion is a multi-purpose element that can be assembled and dis-assembled to allow for the construction of tables and the ability to host events in this space. The visual landscaping slopes upward toward the edges of the building cutting off street front influences floors below.





# Before

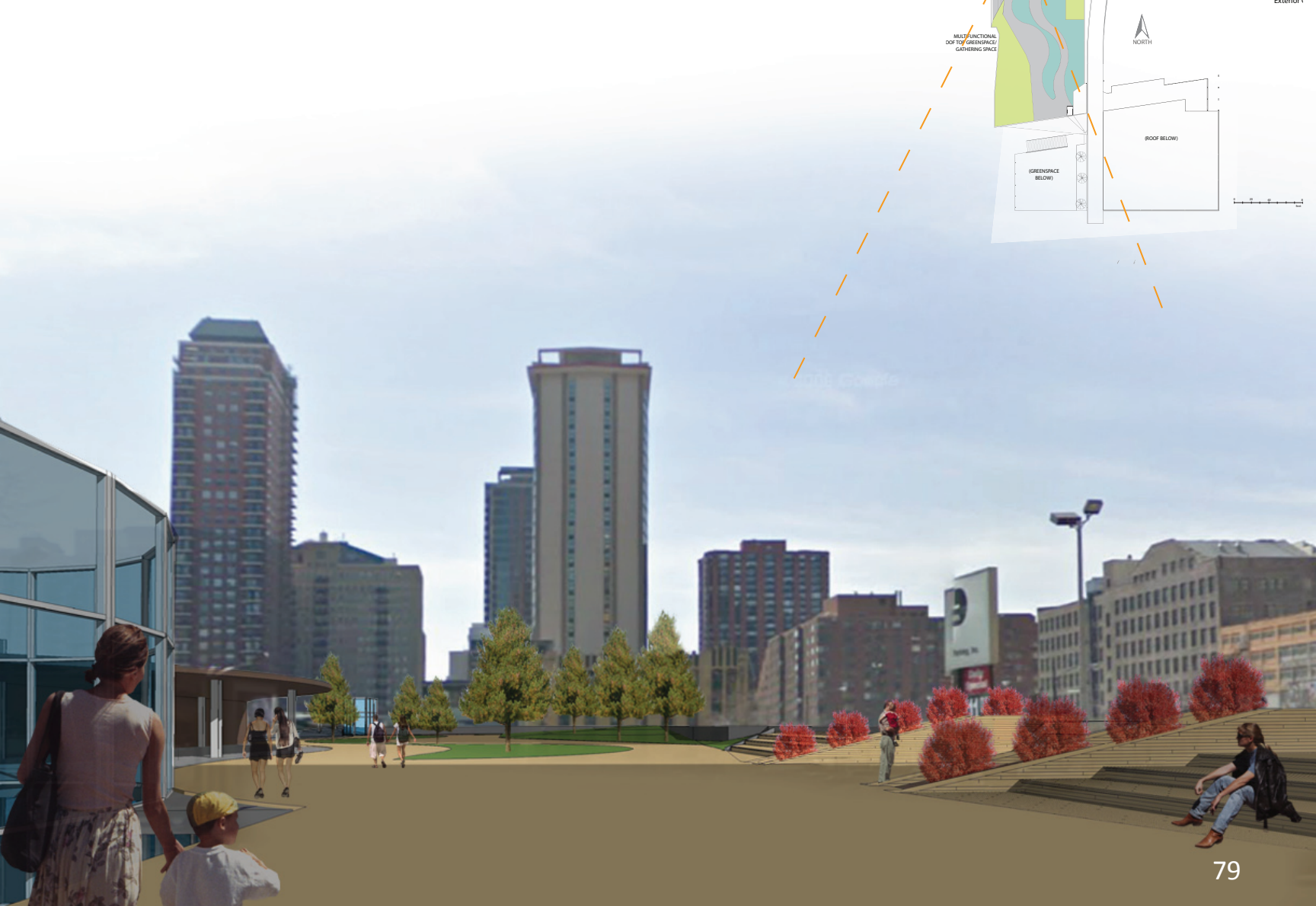
Visual Context from current condition





# – After

Visual Context from roof level



LEVE  
Programmer

Public Gath  
Exterior t

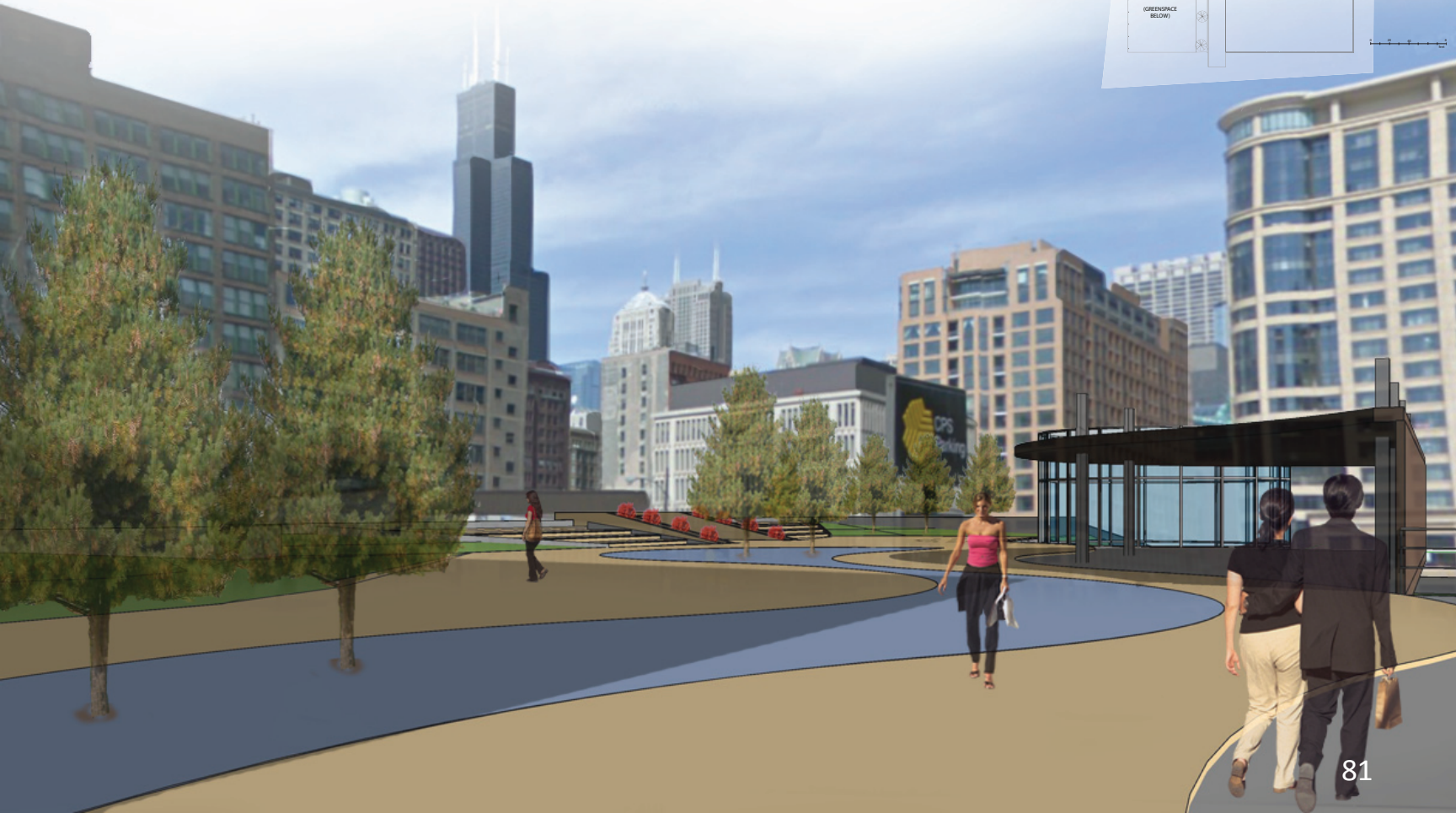
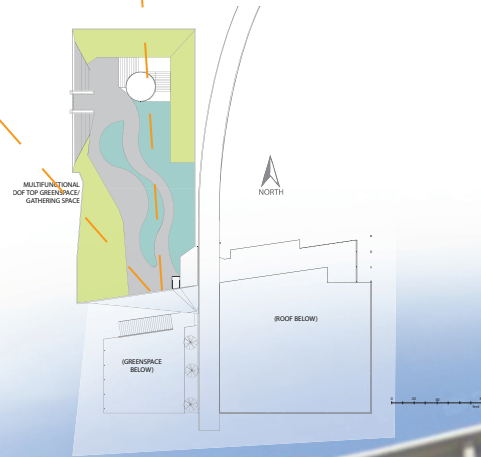
# Before

Visual Context from current condition



# — After

Visual Context from roof level



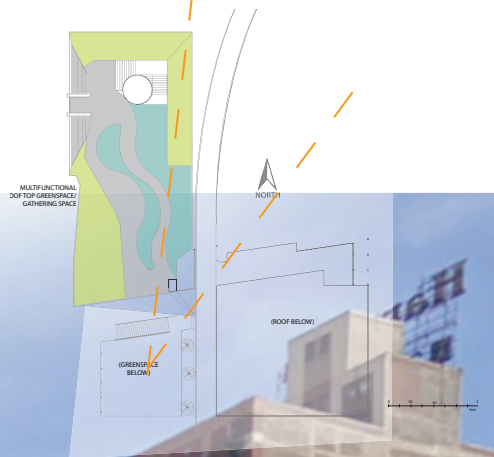
# Before

Visual Context from current condition

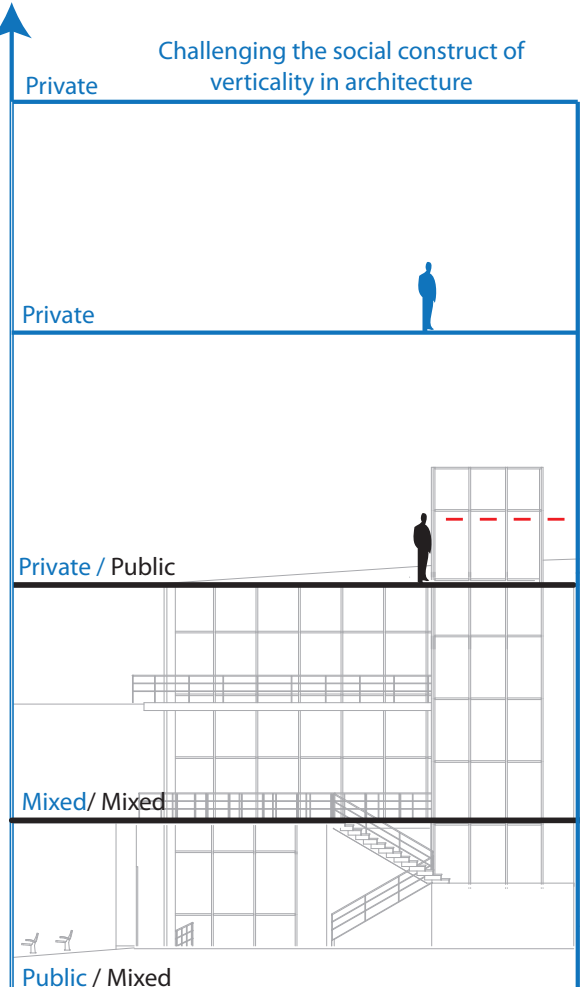


# - After

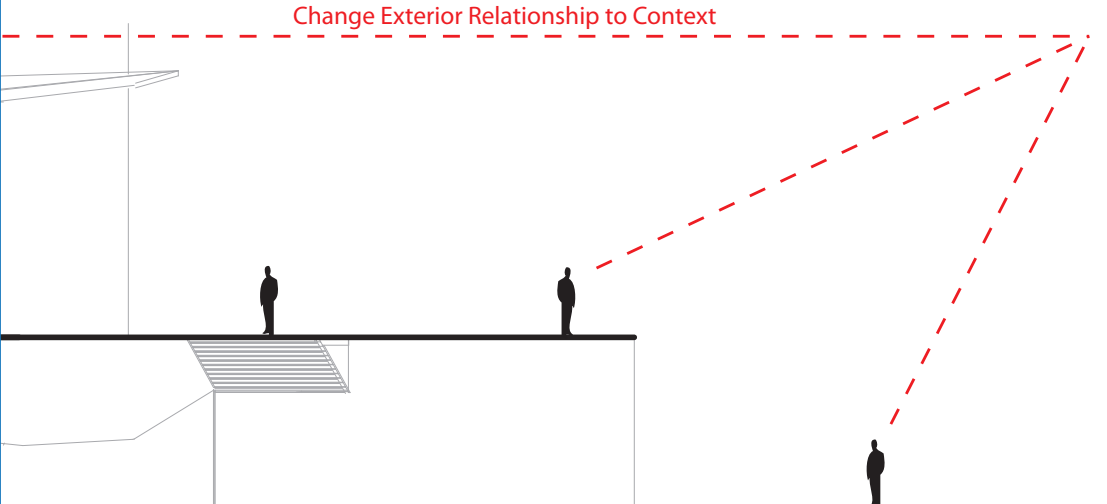
Visual Context from roof level

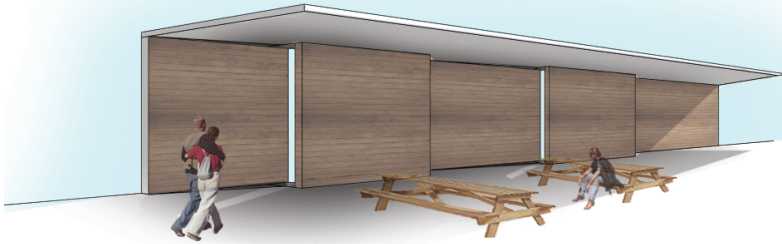


# Visual Relationships

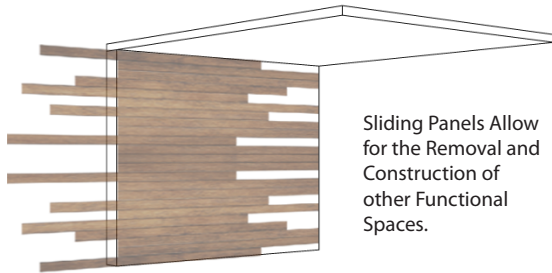


The previous sets of imagery are summed up with the chart below, showing the difference in visual relationship with the context. The next idea I wanted to examine was how my design influenced the street front condition. I began using the roof top pavilion space as an object that creates dialogue with the street front. When the structure is pulled apart the open state is a subtle identifier that social happenings are occurring on the roof level.

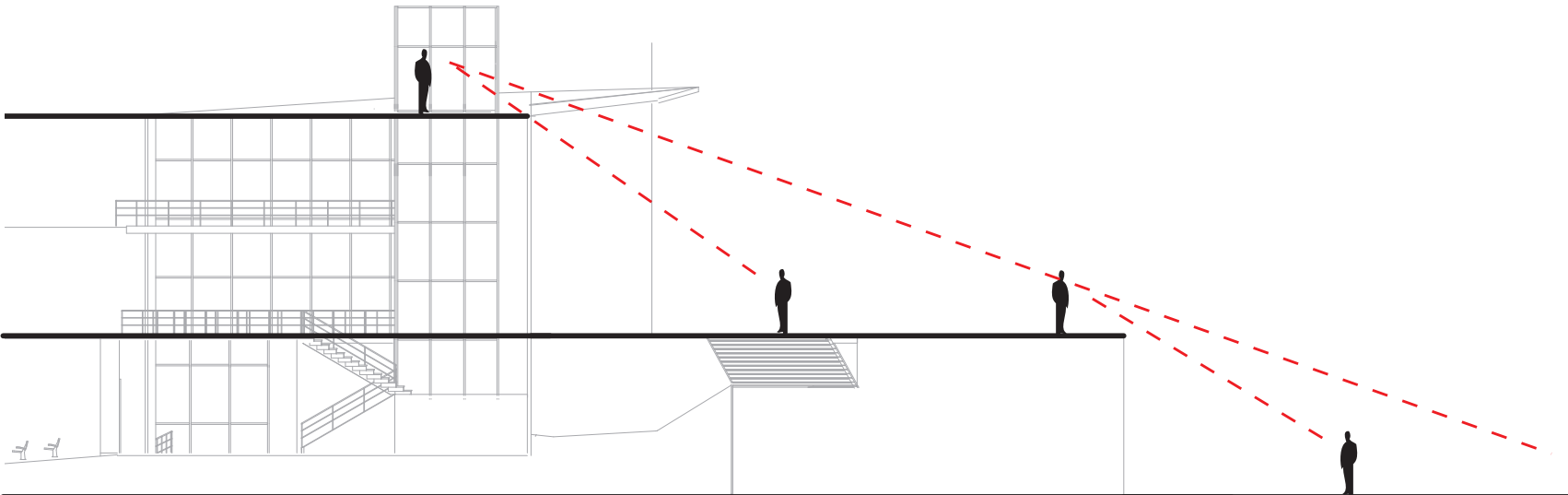




Opened state creates visual conversation with street level. Traffic knows events are taking place when panels are opened.



Sliding Panels Allow for the Removal and Construction of other Functional Spaces.



# Before

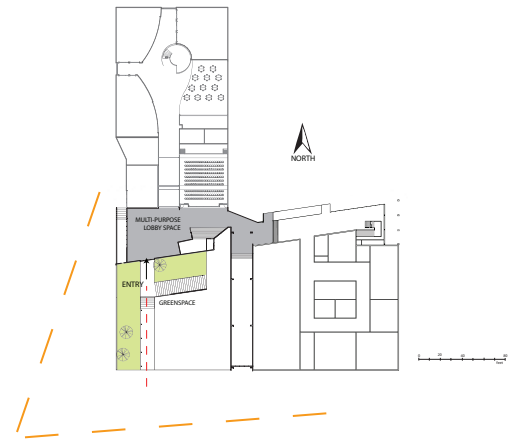
Visual Context from current condition





# - After

New street front visual context



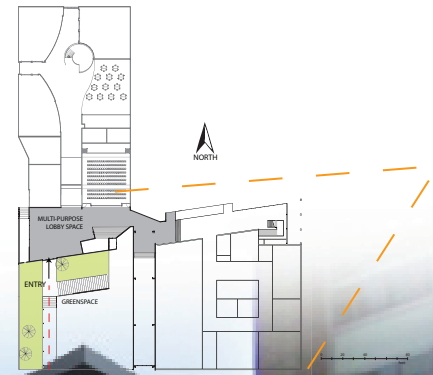
# Before

Visual Context from current condition



# After

New street front visual context



# Before

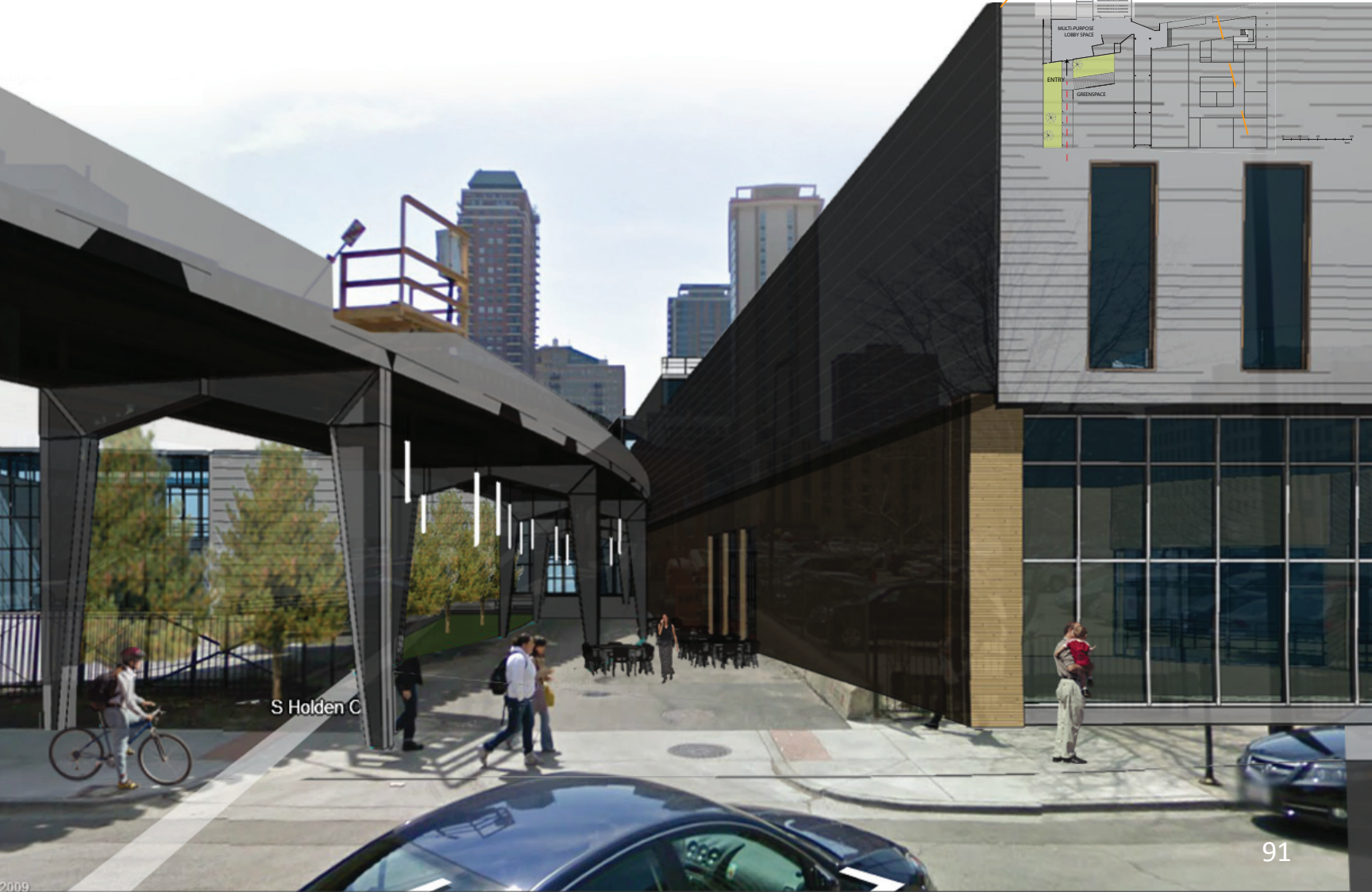
Visual Context from current condition



S Holden Ct

# – After

New street front visual context



S Holden C

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## CONCLUSION

The design intent of this thesis can really only be tested in the built environment, as a theoretical approach's conclusions merely remain in theory. To see how people think about and reinvent space, that space must first be built, because architecture is an object. This thesis focused on more of a methodology of design rather than a concrete conclusion on how to do something.

One of the most important things that I came upon this semester though was an understanding that in order to create new experiences a designer cannot continue to look at space as he already knows space. Rather it is critical that the designer use the context of a site to his/her full advantage and reinvent each design according to its specific surroundings.

Much like the examples of my influential studies, there needs to be a balance of engaging designed space and elements of engaging contextual space. A building that makes us re-think the existing built environment is just as

## Reactions / Results

effective as a building that allows us to engage the new environment.

In a circumstance where mass production has begun to take over the built environment, creating new methods of understanding space, both new and old, is critical. Creating an open building doesn't necessarily mean a designer applies design methodologies that cause someone to rethink only the new space. Maybe there's an opportunity to find something new in our existing conditions through simply altering our perceptions. It's these new relationships amongst the existing and new environments that create new opportunities for the architect to move forward with his work.

# Images

“ARCHITECTURES OF CLOSING ANDÂ OPENING.” LEBBEUS WOODS. Web. 27 Apr. 2012. <<http://lebbeuswoods.wordpress.com/2011/05/24/architectures-of-closing-and-opening/>>.

BitHead. “Fire at the Wirt Dexter Building.” Flickr. Yahoo!, 24 Oct. 2006. Web. 27 Apr. 2012. <<http://www.flickr.com/photos/bithead/278833474/>>.



# Readings

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