ORIGIN OF PLACE

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RAIC Syllabus, Directors Review

D9 – Thesis, Origin of Place

J. Kerr Lammie

PQAB9010

September 2003

Introduction

Three separate files form the basis of the thesis documentation submitted as this work progressed over a 15-month period. As such the documents are now bound in the order they were submitted with their original title sheets. However they have been collated to form a single document and thus now share the single table of contents and chapter designations.

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However without the endless support and patience of my wife, Shelley, I would never have reached this stage in the journey.

Abstract

This thesis is about the origin of place as it relates to the creation of the built environment in the western world. Moreover it is a criticism of the systematic dismissal of place as a primary principle of architecture in theory and application. By juxtaposing a historical model with more current developments through the filters of space, time, and culture the paper asserts a broad definition of how we conceive place. One in, which a development is articulated as part of a greater whole, expected to exist beyond its original intent while accommodating within its conception a multitude of uses unrelated to its defined program. The context and texture of such a site are engaged through a broad sweep of initial research and allowed to evolve through the fluctuations of time and use, which eventually produces a visible layered history. Within these environments a series of connections exist to form a specific place that extends beyond its own boundaries infecting the surrounding areas. When this occurs in an urban setting layered cities that reflect the complexities of life are possible.

In general most built environments dwell on a singular idea for their definition, thus limit their scope and reach. The creation of multiple disconnected buildings found in the modern business park or the segregated gated communities and subdivisions such Celebration, Florida equate to static entities that seem to ignore the idea of place altogether and miss the opportunity to create malleable places. Devoid of opportunities for multiple readings and uses over time they become disregarded remnants let down by the absolute nature of their inception. Place can exist in the layers of each successive use of a building or space in which some portion of its origins remain. The acknowledgement of that possibility provides fertile ground for the creation of an

evolutionary morphology that validates the past while providing a base of knowledge for the future.

A place therefore can be a square, a courtyard, a monument or a building that maintains a relevance and legibility for a local population no matter the variations that occur around it. Acknowledging that architecture cannot move as readily as pop culture, that it is a static art form by comparison. One that represents things, as they are, have been or could be.

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1 SPACE

"Often borders are thought of as passive objects, or matter of factly just edges.

However a border exerts an active influence."

<div align="right">Jane Jacobs</div>

ENCLOSURE

Each site has its own set of characteristics that define it. Architecture as an act of place making accentuates, hides, mimics, or invents itself over the genius loci. The act of enclosing place provides a boundary condition, an edge, which gathers and focuses an interior world. The penetrations through the enclosure create an interior/exterior relationship within the place and in relation to the areas around it. Over time the enclosure of our public spaces have been defined by a multitude of terms; "Forum is an enclosure, the same etymon as raum (room, space), antrum (cavern, room, primordial space). The court is also an enclosure, from the Greek kortos. The term piazza (square), even if it derives from plateau (open space, clearing), is always used to indicate a space surrounded by buildings."[1] The congregation of a series of buildings over time creates a finite set of elements within a tractable whole. The voids in this whole, the streets and squares constitute the public space of the city. This basic definition can be reduced to describe any major subset of the city, the square, the street the institutions to private homes that frame an interconnected whole. The accumulation of apartments, houses, businesses, and voids are jostled, and juxtaposed until the space of a community becomes a place, definable by its own set of characteristics.

Norberg-Schulz defines these characteristics as *figural qualities*, which are always related to human scale as a *function of meeting*. The creation of a defined area within an undeniable whole is then an identifiable structure of meaning and reference for those who occupy it. The particularities allow for constantness in an ever-changing environment, and that static quality provides the opportunity for dwelling. All of this occurs over time and through a series of economic cycles in which communities and

cities rise and fall, grow and shrink. The figural quality of a given place, segregated at its inception into interior and exterior, fluctuate along with the city. A place is embued with meaning by its creators and subsequent users, from this any program of activity can articulate the place as interior or exterior. The enclosure then acts as a flexible container, in which various distinctions allow the opportunity for connection to the place to be made by various groups. The public areas of urban spaces are interiors because they are enclosed by the city, though physically beyond the boundaries of a singular building, which are their own enclosures. It is a distinction of scale that distinguishes the square from the corridor of an apartment, nevertheless the articulation of private and public spaces in each define the rules of engagement. And it is the parks, streets and corridors that neglect to address these differences that fail.
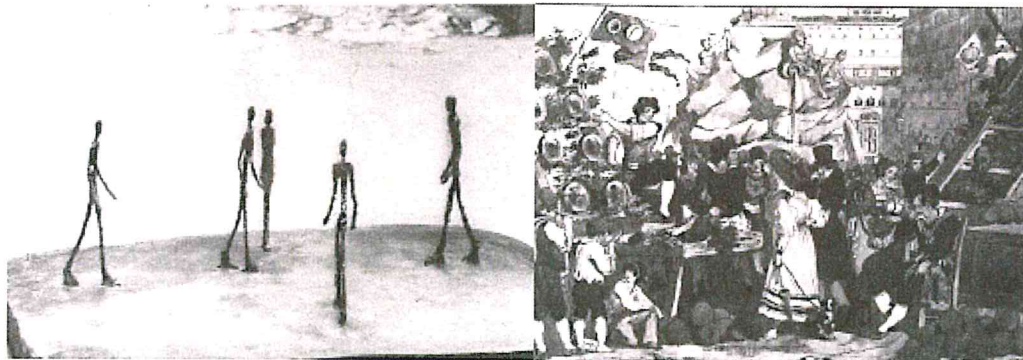
1. *Project for a square* (A. Giacometti, 1950).   2. *Piazza Navona* (A. Pinelli, 1833).

The interior court of a subdivision, square, park or street must allow for a variety of interactions to occur freely, contiguously and continuously. If two people meet in the corner of a square they may feel inside of an interior, a box within a box, or a world within a world, yet others may be within earshot, on the same bench and exist in completely separate worlds of their own.

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[1] Favoli, P. *Squares in Contemporary Architecture* (Amsterdam: Architectura & Natura Press, 1995), 10.

Central Park in New York City, is a box within a box, a clearly enclosed area with its own tree-lined perimeter, which acts as its physical definition and an element of separation from the enveloping city. Within the park itself, "the southern half of the park has a pastoral image, whereas the northern portions represent a rougher picturesque wilderness."[2] These two distinctive sections contain a number of crossing streets that allow for the traversing of the park, water elements, and submerged sections from street level, buildings, and pathways. By maintaining an overall vision that accommodates continued revision and addition the park "is a place in New York where people from every walk of life go to recreate, take a leisurely stroll, sit at peace by themselves, or do nothing in particular."[3] The explicit freedom of use is expressed in the topology of the park by its ability to accommodate a variety of activities that independently or interdependently redefine the program of the park on an ongoing basis. The wider the possible reading of place the wider the possibilities for sustained legibility and use. In a sense Central Park is a very large articulated square that serves a very large dense urban population.

3. *Sailboat Pond, Central Park* (J.Bly, 1979).

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[2] Rowe, P. *Civic Realism* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999), 157.
[3] Rowe, P. *Civic Realism* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999), 157.

To paraphrase Norberg-Schulz, 'the square should be round to accommodate continuous boundaries'. Central Park, though it is not round, completes the act of enclosure within a continuous boundary in the mediation between its perimeter, the street, and the larger enclosure of the surrounding buildings. No distinct hierarchy exists, in which the destruction of one building or one tree could destroy the whole, allowing the park to act as an interconnected series of events that relate to its intimate surroundings. Though Central Park may be the end goal for many trips within Manhattan, it is the infiltration through the network of streets that run parallel and through the park that allow it to exist at all. Norberg-Schulz states that a street "should be relatively narrow and have a defined direction."[4] Thus, suggesting that the street itself in section and length will set the basic character of a place. At 800 feet by 200 feet the Manhattan grid, "promotes linear arrangements of buildings with considerable emphasis on the street fronts and little or no activity, other than service, within the interior open space of each block."[5] By contrast the streets of Rome are more reflective of a labyrinth, which sets up a distinctly different set of urban possibilities and constraints. So Central Park could never exist in the context of the Roman system of streets and equally the Piazza Navona could never exist in New York. The distinct nature of the streets or the squares, the voids, defines the forms of spatial enclosure available for the creation of public and private areas within a city.

Those voids in a city provide a preexisting set of variables or manufactured genius loci that will further inform the development of an enclosure. The floor plane of any site

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[4] Norberg-Schulz, C. *The Concept of Dwelling* (New York: Rizzoli, 1985), 63.
[5] Rowe, P. *Civic Realism* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999), 130.

provides a *vibe* which "is produced by a combination of space and behavior."[6] The

development of program and use are initiated in response to the ground plane.

Generally using abstract models of topological or geometrical orientation, and these

present asymmetrical or symmetrical choices, respectively, as a way to define an

enclosure.

The choice of orientation suggests a certain set of parameters or principles on which the

rest of the place will be founded. "Geometrical spaces represent a common order, and

therefore suggest or impose certain choices,"[7] the implication of which is that an

imposed order restricts the freedom of possibilities within the square or street.

Following from this topographical orientation provides a more open-ended definition of

place. So long as there is a genuine attempt to connect to the genius loci natural or

manufactured, no matter the orientation, place has a chance to take root.
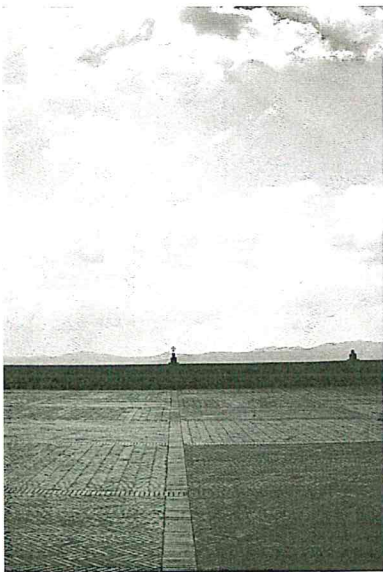
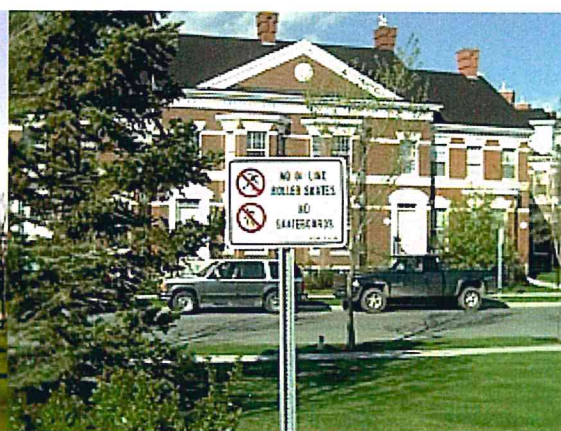4. *Poetical Dwelling, Gubbio* (uncredited).

As Sorkin points out, it is this lack of connection that fails much of current attempts to

engage the ground plane. "Consumer culture obscures its project by creating empty

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[6] Sorkin, M. *Some Assembly Required* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 71.

differences, this lack of meaningful distinction frustrates consent, which cannot genuinely be given without a sense of choice."[8] Specifically the trendy application of New Urbanist principles, in residential planning models, search for an instant validity through neo-traditional planning and aesthetics that extend from Florida to the Canadian plains. In McKenzie Towne, Calgary, Alberta, a new urbanist style project, a disconnected town has been created on 950 acres of empty prairie. Separated into quadrants (or villages), each named for a Scottish city (Inverness, Prestwick and Elgin), the development will eventually house 18,000 people in neo-traditional homes within a strictly regimented plan. The main square (circle) anchors the town's business district and is the sole point of vehicular ingress and egress. Choice is restricted even in accessing the development and this automatically creates a segregated community both externally and from quadrant to quadrant. Each further distinction and difference from other areas of the city increases and reinforce this planned segregation.

5. *McKenzie Towne* (K Lammie, 2002).　　　　6. *Community Action* (K. Lammie, 2002).

The addition of two lanes of traffic flowing in and out of the community empties the main street of any potential use and leaves the central space as nothing more than an enlarged traffic circle. The new town public square or focal point exists without the

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[7] Norberg-Schulz, C. *The Concept of Dwelling* (New York: Rizzoli, 1985), 64.

benefit of a major public building or monument to validate its focus and slips towards the definition of open space as opposed to an interior. This open space segregates each village from the other. Within each village is a different 'theme' that is focused on a central quasi-public space in the community. In the village of Inverness this occurs as a formal square complete with a "Victorian bandshell"[9] in the middle. Added to this is a 92-foot clock tower, which serves as the town landmark and is set up with all the acuments of an historical clock tower with none of the reason. In the past a public clock was connected to a public building, town hall or library, that faced the commons and provided a definable civic place, the clock in this town does not even pretend to be engaged in any public or civic activity.

The entire model of McKenzie Towne misses the point by not engaging the perimeter functions of the business and residential activities and by external and internal segregation through the absolute articulation of the plan. The zones are clearly set out and buffered dissuading any confluence of activities from one zone to another. From afar and upon entry the town has a clear pastoral image, but one swing around the traffic circle acknowledges that it is not a town, it is a subdivision.

"Squares have only been created as centres or pivotal points in the new towns, not in suburban zones or in the large areas of urban expansion."[10] It is in the missed connections and denatured application of form that deflates any hope that the development will live up to the promise of the image or the more commendable aspects, "dedicated mass transit, open space, growth limits, and pedestrianism", of the New Urbanist movement.

[8] Sorkin, M. *Some Assembly Required* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 77.
[9] Carma Developments: www.mckenzietowne.com/mckenzie/index2.shtml.

Topographical orientation addresses the ground plane and possesses a greater chance of connecting to the *vibe,* as described by Sorkin, while suggesting a less authoritarian tone. The Piazza Navona is part of the old city of Rome and it follows like the majority of the old city a topographical model in the development of place. On the Campus Martius, the Piazza Navona is within the confines of the Eternal City, which in-turn is defined by the Aurelian walls. These walls "continued to form the boundary of Rome through the eleventh century and visibly until about"[11] 80 years ago. It is within these confines over a long period of time that the Piazza developed and matured. In 60 AD the Emperor Caesar was planning to "divert the course of the Tiber, to build over the Campus Martius"[12] and extend the official area of the city over the low-lying plain. The Piazza itself is based on the old form of a stadium, which provides an ancient perimeter on a flat site, paved over with stone following the common practice of Italian squares, owing to its location on a large flood plain. The reflection of a ship shape, in plan view, and the origins of the word Navona relate to its proximity to the Tiber River. The city of Rome is located about 20km inland from the Tyrrhenian Sea on the banks of the Tiber River and surrounded by a series of hills on which the initial city was founded. As such, the Tiber has always played an integral role in the development of Rome.

That connection to the site may have been more relevant in the past, but nevertheless remains as an identifiable component of the place.

A series of buildings enclose the site completely in a random pattern of construction and void predicated on use with no specific priority of importance in the spatial configuration of the enclosure itself. Only the fountains, installed in the 1600's, provide a point of central orientation, via figures or elements, to anchor the space and provide focus to the

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[10] Favoli, P. *Squares in Contemporary Architecture* (Amsterdam: Architectura & Natura Press, 1995), 11.
[11] Krautheimer, R. *Rome: Profile of a City 312-1308* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 237.

whole ensemble. But this authoritarian formalization of the square does not detract

from the fragmented and interconnected nature of the place as a whole. The relation to

lanes and alleys, adjoining squares or the inner courtyards of the adjacent palazzos

appear as distinct pieces free from the implications of the fountains and major buildings.

The basic conditions of enclosure, edge and perimeter, of this place despite the

continued revision and addition, has essentially maintained its boat shaped form of its

original use as a 20,000-seat travertine, brick, concrete and wooden stadium built by

Caesar.
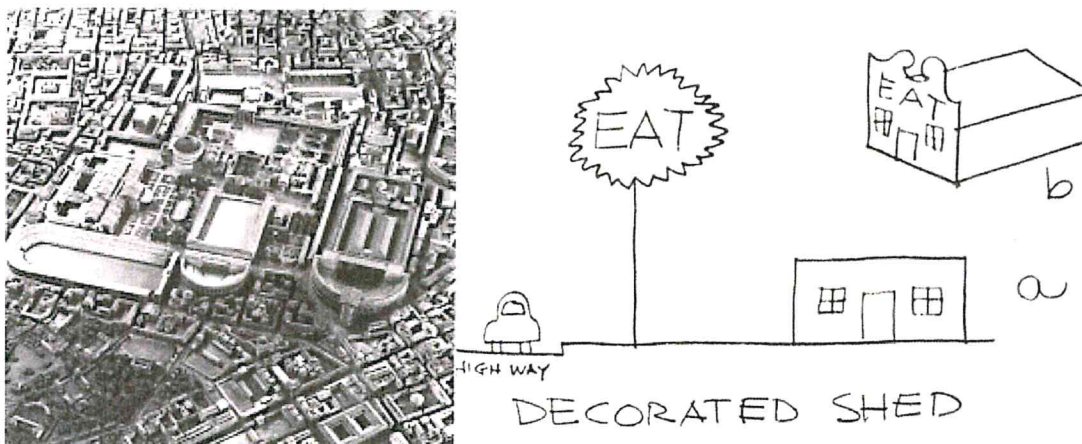
7. *Model of the Stadium Domitian* (Museo Della Civilta Romana, 1967).
8. *The Decorated Shed* (R.Venturi, 1977).

Enclosure is not defined only by architecture, but also by its adjacencies, and topology.

The act of dismissing one or more of these factors in the patterns of development of

place fails to connect to the contradictory plurality of meaning and use that exist. "We

are disciplined in the tradition either-or, and lack the mental agility - to say nothing of

the maturity of attitude – which would allow us to indulge in the finer distinctions and

the more subtle reservations permitted by the tradition of both-and."[13]

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[12] Agnew, J. *Rome* (Toronto: John Wiley & Sons, 1995), 23.
[13] Venturi, R. Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture (Cambridge: MIT Press,), 23.

The use of any orientation mediated with the ground plane and the immediate surroundings stands the chance of attaining the vibe of the locality. The combination of spatial organization and use dictate what that space will be; this is the primary act of architecture. Architecture gathers and reflects the place; enclosure is the vessel of that collection.

MORPHOLOGY

The way a place rises from the earth to the sky allowing horizontal movement from end to end through the dictation of a series of lines and points opens a world of opportunities and expression. The specific nature of these lines and points can be seen as an abstraction or reference to locality, be it topology, geography, or culture. These forms define the place as expressions on the constructed boundary. In the past, as with the Piazza Navona, the process of enclosing space occurred over time. "The slow completion of historic squares permitted the accumulation of meanings and the classification of functions: there was no need for anything else."[14] That day is gone if only because our culture moves so quickly that we cannot possibly conceive all the potential meanings and relevance from the multitude of symbols in contemporary life. In fact much of what passes by our eyes is developed for its immediacy, not for lasting meaning that may be nurtured and developed from generation to generation.

The vessel of enclosure is a porous container of a series of points and lines bounded vertically by the ground and sky. A point is described, "as the prime generator of form, indicates a position of space."[15] A line is an extension of the point providing length, and direction. The slow development of a place through the accumulation of points and lines one on top of the other equal a layered space. How does a more rapid development gain those attributes? By exploring and expressing as many possible connections within a continuous plasticity thus allowing a multiplicity of readings and use. Methods for exploring plasticity can be found in violence and memory.

[14] Favoli, P. *Squares in Contemporary Architecture* (Amsterdam: Architectura & Natura Press, 1995), 2.

[15] Ching, F. *Architecture: Form, Space and Order* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1979), 19.
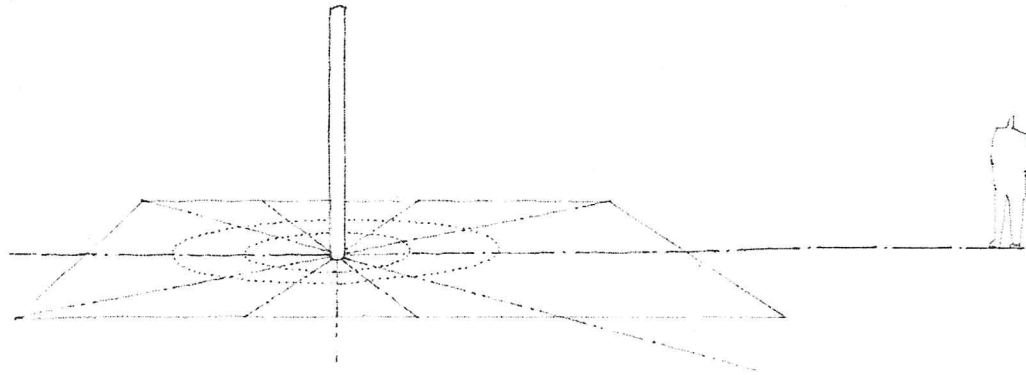
9. *Vertical Element* (Ching, 1979.)

Bernard Tschumi explores the idea of the violence inherent in architecture in Parc de la Villette in Paris. As part of a major series of projects to reinvigorate the Sienne River, the site is a large open space within the urban confines of Paris. As part of an overall redevelopment of disused or obsolete sites it encompasses 55 acres of the historic slaughterhouse area at the northern edge of the city. A competition for the project called for the creation of a complex *social field,* and Tschumi's response was to superimpose three spatially organizing constructs that penetrate each other to create disjunctive and interchangeable places within the potential whole. The openness of this proposal contradicts the formal authoritarian aspects of contemporary cities by addressing the ground plane as a "neutral point-grid underlying spatial structure, established at 120-meter intervals,"[16] running parallel to the adjoining canal that bisects the site.

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[16] Rowe, P. *Civic Realism* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999), 73.
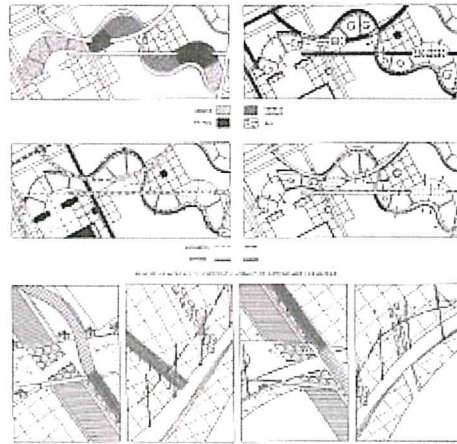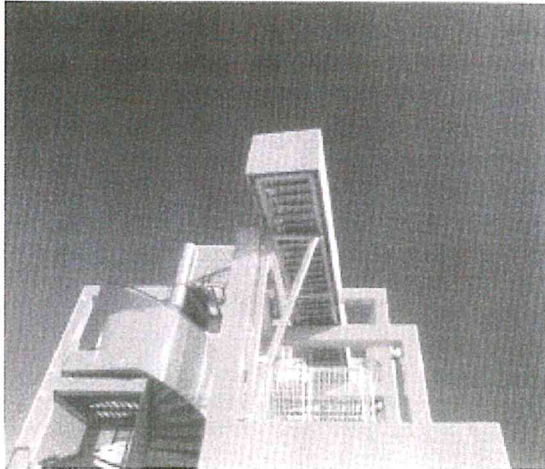
10. *Folie P6, Parc de la Villette* (uncredited, 1985).   11. *Superpositions* (B.Tschumi, 1985).

The buildings within the Parc follow the premise that "although the logic of objects and the logic of man are interdependent in their relations to the world, they inevitably face one another in an intense confrontation. Any relationship between building and its users is one of violence, for any means the intrusion of a human body into a given space."[17] The 25 red buildings (folies) occupy points of the primary grid and these are points of violence. Viewing use as violence and space as the container over the field of exploration acknowledges an unconventional understanding of place. The term violence itself conjures an entirely separate set of characteristics and images, relations and meanings unrelated to architectural conventions or polemics. Balanced against a set program the process of exploration for solutions can raise unexpected connections. The folies express an alternate logic in the variety of forms related only by their position in the grid, their similar size (10.8m2), and the red color of their facades. The functions of the units meanwhile vary from folie to folie, from café, planter, belvedere or decorative shell. The superimposition of two other systems mark paths and gardens, each garden has a specific and distinct theme, from the garden of mirrors to the garden of bamboo and the path mediates between the collection of gardens. Ambling through the park

and punctuated at regular intervals by the folies the path completes the whole

conception of the Parc as a series of connected, independent compositions. The

elements in the end create a composition unrelated by program and use. "Clearly one

can negotiate the "points", "lines", and garden "surfaces" of the park in a variety of

different manners."[18]

The overlapping nature of the three systems removes the formal authoritative structure,

replacing it with a more open conception of place. "The lack of unification between the

physical form of the folies and their function was deliberate and polemical."[19] Essentially

presenting the Parc as a manifestation of discovery. The discovery lies in the

morphology of the built environment, on the ground plane and in the physical forms of

the folies and gardens. Meaning is to be a temporal thing graphed to the place by the

user.

On the other hand ritual in the public sense is the reenacting and reinforcing of

commonly held beliefs and values, and can be found in specifically articulated and

formalized social structures. "Genuine social space is made up of an ensemble of vital

characteristics"[20], the reflection of acceptance of social practices and the way in which

acceptance occurs define a place. A representative selection of signs and codes

provides the civic backdrop for our actions as a community. Memory and ritual overlap

in the reinforcement of actions and acts that are performed on a public and private

level.

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[17] Tschumi, B. *Architecture and Disjunction* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996), 122.
[18] Rowe, P. *Civic Realism* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999), 74.
[19] IBID, 73.
[20] Rowe, P. *Civic Realism* (Cambridge, MIT Press, 1999), 140.

In the 17th century the Piazza Navona was formalized into the monumental space of today by the creation of the church of S.Agnese, the Palazzo Pamphili, and the Four Rivers Fountain. This activity in the piazza was predicated on a single event, in 1640 Innocent X Pamphili was inducted as Pope. His initial improvement was the enlargement and renovation of the palazzo Pamphili in 1644. Proceeded by his families' further glorification through the building of, "a conspicuous fountain to celebrate their presence on Piazza Navona in the center of the old city."[21]
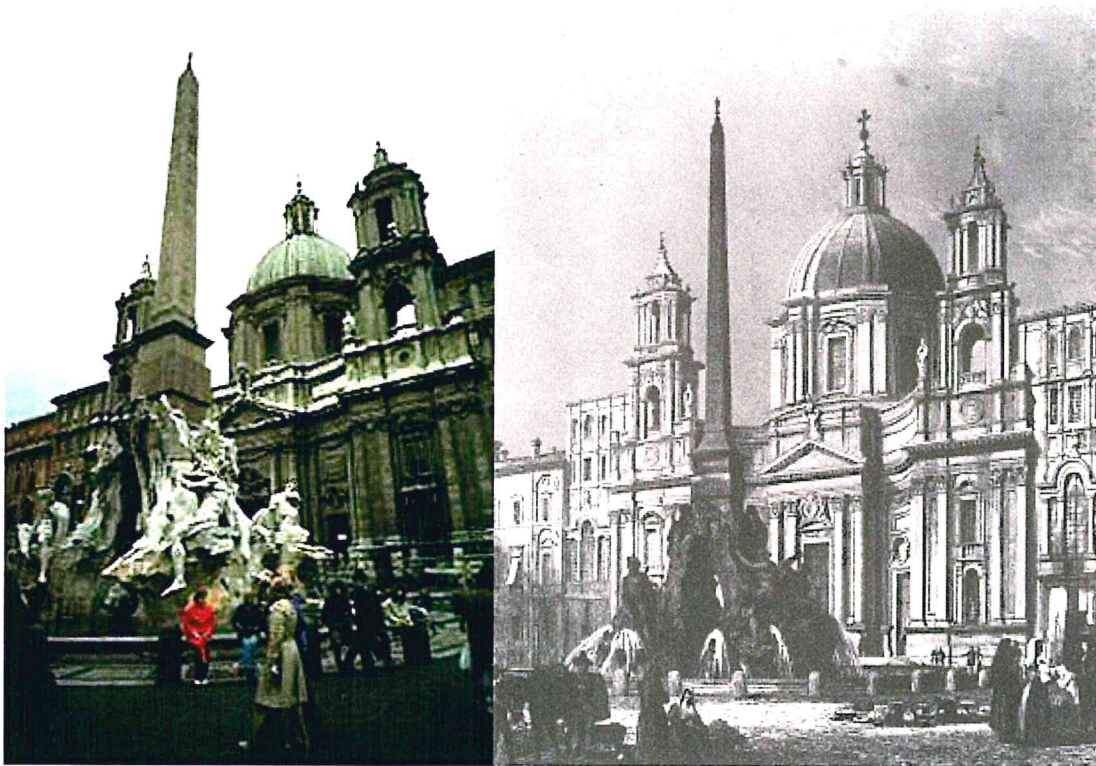
12. *Four Rivers Fountain, Rome* (L.Curran, 1978).   13. *Painting of the Fountain of Four Rivers* (W.B. Looke, 1837).

The church of S.Agnese is described in 'An Outline of European Architecture', by Nicholas Pevsner, as it relates to its place in the development of church architecture, starting with a general statement on a series of new churches:

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[21] Marder, T. *Bernini and the Art of Architecture* (New York, Abeville Press, 1998), 95.

"They constitute the most interesting development of Baroque church architecture, a development belonging in Italy chiefly to the second half of the 16th century. Serlio and Vignola place the longer axis of the oval at right angles of the facades. This is repeated by most of the others, but S.Agnese in Piazza Navona, begun in 1652 (by Carlo Rainaldi and provided by Borromini with its North Italian two-tower façade), consists of an octagon in a square, with little niches in the corners, and extended by identical entrance and choir chapels at west and east, and considerably deeper north and south transeptal chapels so as to produce an effect of a broad oval parallel to the façade, with masonry fragments sticking into its outline."[22] In 'History of Art', by H.W. Janson a further explanation of the façade of S.Agnese is provided:

"Its lower part is adapted from the façade of St.Peter's, but curves inward, so that the dome-a tall, slender version of Michelangelo's-functions as the upper part of the façade. The dramatic juxtaposition of concave and convex, always characteristic of Borromini, is further emphasized by the two towers which form a monumental triad with the dome."[23] Borromini successfully joins the Gothic and Renaissance with the combination of two towers and dome composition, which essentially works as a triparid compound.

14. *S.Agnese, Rome* (L.Curran, 1978).

[22] Pevsner, N. *An Outline of European Architecture* (Markham, Penguin Books Canada, 1990), 243.
[23] Janson, A. *History of Art* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1986), 517.

Bernini created the Four Rivers Fountain buy tapping the oldest operating aqueduct in the city. In 1624 he was appointed secretary of Acqua Vergine, and "in the following year he assumed the post of overseer of the Piazza Navona fountains"[24]. The creation of a new centre fountain was commissioned as the Fountain of Four Rivers. The composition is anchored in a mass of quarried travertine that supports an obelisk and on whose base are four figures representing the major rivers, the Nile, the Ganges, the Plato, and the Danube. The stone base is sliced through along the main axis to create a deep opening. The base is described as presenting "the appearance of unsteadiness accompanied by the dynamic visual effect of the over-life-size figures at the corners of the rocky base, who seem ready to squirm off their perches, in centripetally directed poses."[25] The four figures dramatically collect and distribute the water, while allowing for justification of four separate supports to grip the obelisk. The Pamphili Obelisk was created independently from the base, on a commission received in 1647. The obelisk was erected in 1649 and unveiled in 1651, atop the base of the fountain to proclaim the power of the church and the Pope. "Since the time of Sixtus V (1585-90) obelisks were understood as symbols of Christian triumph over the pagan world."[26] At its base is an interpretation of the four continents a reference that perhaps Bernini used in the design of the fountain. However the true meaning of the fountain remains an ongoing debate " perhaps it is best to assume, as Magnuson does, that several interpretations may be appropriate for this product of an age that admired multiple meanings and multivalent messages."[27]

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[24] Marder, T. *Bernini and the Art of Architecture* (New York, Abeville Press, 1998), 20.
[25] Marder, T. *Bernini and the Art of Architecture* (New York, Abeville Press, 1998), 96.
[26] IBID, 97.
[27] IBID, 97.

Marder expands on the design of Bernini's fountains explaining that they, "deal with space, embracing it more forcefully and occupying it more meaningfully than previous designers had envisioned."[28] By engaging the space more fully Bernini seems more architect than sculptor addressing and formalizing the conception of the piazza as a whole. The fountain provides a civic focus and rhythm to the piazza allowing for the creation of multiple areas within the entire composition or the impression of a singular space.

Though the two major commissions that anchored the piazza were conceived within a short time from each other they are unrelated. The church was not anticipated when Bernini determined the design of his fountain that sits in the middle of the piazza, and the two appear as singular entities. This comment seems to question the authenticity of a singular space, but only in the modern conception of a whole. The idea that major elements within a perceived whole can be independent clarifies one of the ironies of modern space. Bernini and Borromini personally despised each other and regardless of the supremacy of God they could not be induced to contextualise the work of the other. The irony is that this did not hamper the overall conception of the whole it only emphasizes the perception of a whole of independent pieces.

In much the same way Tschumi provides a whole in the Parc de la Villette by the creation and deployment of independent elements. The failure in much of our current development of place lies in an inability to perceive places as the creation of independent units that equate to a definable whole. As in McKenzie Towne and Celebration, Florida a single overriding image defines the whole and that idea is regurgitated down to the manhole covers in the case of Celebration.

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[28] IBID, 101.

The exploration of violence and ritual as methodologies for manifesting a series of independent structures of points and lines creates a whole that admits many contradictions from the supremacy of God, to the idiosyncrasies of the individuals that created the place is another way to go.

15. Piazza Navona, *Rome* (L.Curran, 1978).   16. McKenzie Towne, Calgary (K.Lammie, 2002).

In the Parc de la Villette the traditional interpretation of ritual is lacking a monument that documents an overriding civic structure. In discussing this omission in modern squares, Favole, states that "planning takes on different coordinates, depending on the specific case. In new squares, it is a question of shaping the surround and working on the contained space (as it is in the tradition of the square and how this is expressed in the language). The 'monument' to refer to is almost always lacking, but projects are distinguished according to their spatial morphology or the language used in the architecture of the surround. In that case the architect must work on the floor, conferring form, functions, landscape, scenery, graphics upon it, anything that can be used to determine a centripetal effect in relation to context."[29] Tschumi created a series of compositions strung along a sinuous path, all of which are tied together conceptually by similarities in the materiality of the folie and the superimposition of three Cartesian grid systems. The formal structure provides a minimal cohesive form for an area in

[29] Favoli, P. *Squares in Contemporary Architecture* (Amsterdam: Architectura & Natura Press, 1995), 11.

which ritual can be public or private. It becomes solely dependent on the individual or group to define the actions taken. The separation of program and use provide a set backdrop for a multitude of activities without any formal structure to dictate or inform. The place therefore is potentially everywhere, or a road to nowhere.

The act of meeting imparts information on the activities brought together, held and reflected back in the architecture of the place. In Villette an attempt is made to engage a society that is immersed in ever changing images by providing variety within a static field. "We recognize the profound meaning of using the place as our primary self-identification."[30] In the contemporary world we do not see our selves as citizens, or worshipper, but as an individual. The Parc Villette responds to individualism by providing 25 folies and a series of unrelated gardens to constitute a place for identification and connection.

A series of points and lines composed formally around an underlying societal belief either in God or individualism reinforces those beliefs and its prefects. Both are primarily defined by the horizontal rhythm that is our path through the place. Be it with endless variety or repetition of a theme the defining elements are continuous in the sense that they unfold as we progress through the space. Vertical points, the fountain or the folie, reinforce and articulate the space, while providing respite. A point at which movement can stop and meeting can occur. The fountain and the folie fulfill the role of point by articulating or 'quarterbacking' the compositions. In the piazza one fountain provides a focus on one deity. In Parc Villette 25 folies provide room for the expressions of many lesser gods.

2 TIME

"Incessant new beginnings lead to sterility."

Wallace Stevens

[30] Norberg-Schulz, C. *The Concept of Dwelling* (Rizzoli, New York, 1985), 51.

BIRTH, USE, and DEATH

As places evolve over time they may become more or less important in the life of the city, within a square, a building, in the life of an individual. Birth, death and rebirth equate to a cycle of use and disuse of a place. Adaptive reuse and urban renewal projects attempt to reconstitute unused urban space as part of this ongoing cycle, while other areas are affected by disruptions in use and are forced to reconstitute themselves. But how are these acts conceived? The conception of a space always exists within the ready-made world, in other words nothing is entirely new or without history. It is important to have some semblance of what a place was, prior to initiating a review of what it may become. The process of defining a new space or redefining an existing space can follow a multitude of routes from the notable form or function arguments, to philosophical, sociological or economic factors that seek to direct this search. Unfortunately at times this process ends in a commodified version of the simplest history available as opposed to a layered conception of space.

In Halifax, Nova Scotia the City has undertaken to reinvent its dockyards with a public quay and boardwalk. The docks, as seen in the existing buildings, present a working past in which weathered materials show the scars of time. The maintenance and incorporation or preservation of these buildings within the overall plan undoubtedly provides the underpinning of the place as authentic and the rebirth of this area through the introduction of coffee shops, pubs, restaurants, and museums is laudable. The extension to the walkable downtown core further defines the conception of the area as an enclosed whole that the docks either start or end depending on the initial point of entrance. However the insertion of new buildings, which attempt to emulate that authenticity of the docks may undermine the whole enterprise through their obvious

caricature. Bishop's Landing a new housing/retail scheme, "combines the best of traditional architecture, a prime waterfront location, and the features sought by today's urban dweller."[31] Through the repetition of materials and details, Bishop's Landing provides a stylized, kitsch rendition of the areas constructed past. The failure of this approach lies in the disconnect between form and use in its current application. The material and forms of the dock exist as a single entity tied to a specific place and time. The new structure emulates history only formally lacking the veracity of the original. Relevance of the original vernacular is not pluralistic but specific to time, place, and function and therefore expressive of the requirements of the area. No real connection is created between new buildings and the existing structures, only geography ties the two together. The new building does not speak to the real nature of the area today, nor does it expand on the language of the region; it mimics it. In fact it is the latest sign of the gentrification and sanitation of a colorful area that once housed bar brawls and fish hooks as easily as it now doles out cappuccinos. By not expressing any current activities the area is exposed to the status of relic. The application of an empty vernacular disposed of all its colorful history and current relevancy, bounded by the Sheraton and Westin hotels, one can walk the entire length along the waterfront without seeing any real activity. Perhaps no other designation so emancipates places as the designation of tourist stop, as this eventually removes all the currency from a place and currency is the fuel that keeps a place alive.

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[31] Southwest Properties: www.southwest.ca/bishover1.html
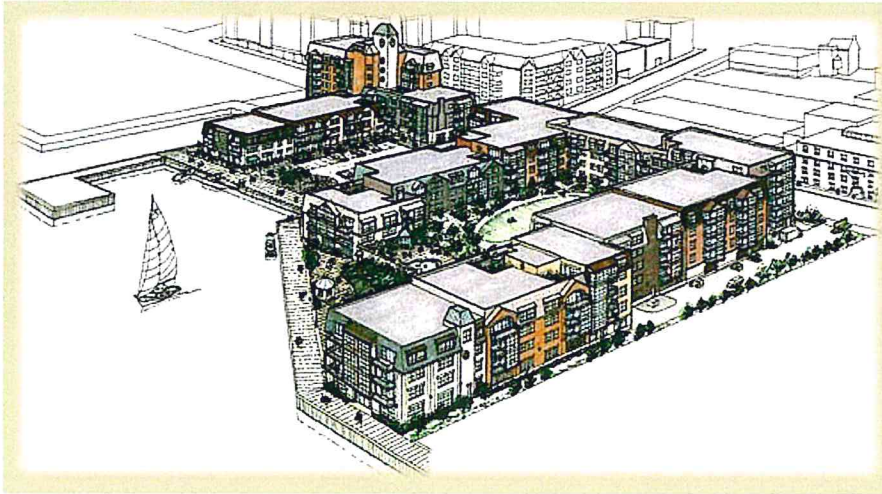
17. *Rendering of Bishop's Landing* (uncredited, 2001).

The act of destruction can also provide an opening for the creation of a layered space. By breaking down the barrier between new and old and replacing only existence, war torn areas are under construction and destruction simultaneously, they exist as layers of each. A building is bombed and destroyed, but the husks provide shelter and space reconstituted as a remnant of its former self. Both acts form valid histories of the place specifically through time and use, in absence of program. In Radical Reconstruction, Woods suggests that architecture decodify itself to survive the ever-changing city. "The building and the city can never be considered independent of one another, any more than an individual in society."[32] The interdependence of parts exist through the history of a place and by engaging the end of a cycle, of disuse through disruption (due in this case to war), Woods exposes a process for rebuilding cities and in turn the lives of individuals. In the graphic drawings that illustrate his ideas, reuse literally attaches itself to the existing building. The violence of the insertions create a literal, physical connection to the past, even its destruction. In this way the drawings indicate wide possibilities of reading into the intent of the construction. Is it a bandage? Is it a scar?

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[32] Woods, L. *Radical Reconstruction* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1997), 30.
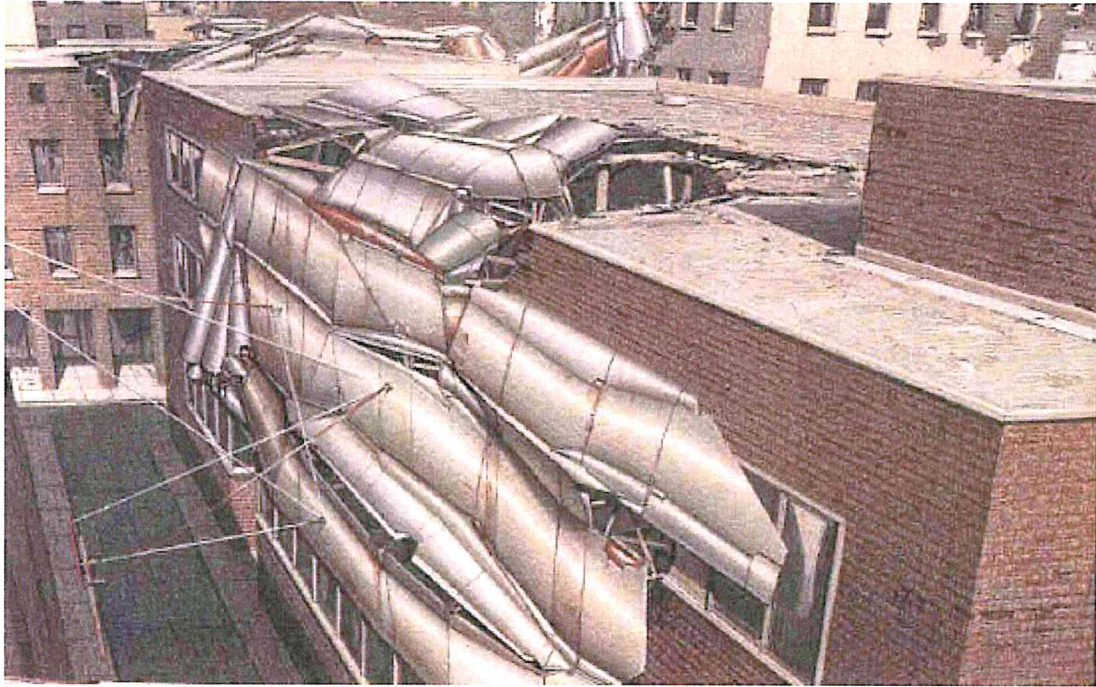
18. Sarajevo, (L. Woods, 1997).

"The spirit of invention demanded by perpetual transformation thrives best in space itself shaped by invention."[33] The idea of invention, not the conforming to standards or expectations drives the process of reconstituting place. Invention mirrors need and circumstance, as when the occupation of a burnt out husk of a building presents itself as better fate than life on the street. Recent examples of the invention required during periods of war can be referenced in Beirut, Baghdad, Jerusalem and the West Bank. In the shards of buildings that remain certain variables are not destroyed at moments of disruption, which leads to a realization of the value of what remains in the ongoing life of a place. This also suggests that place is not constituted on the architecture alone, but remains rooted in the act of gathering and meeting.

Parallels are drawn to a series of acts of invention that occurred due to the fall of Rome and the subsequent disuse of the area around the Piazza Navona. By the early fourth century, Rome had grown over a thousand years from a few hill villages into a sprawling metropolis. In fact Krautheimer, "dates Christian Rome as commencing on October 28, 312 A.D,"[34] and this date also reflects a change in Rome's fortunes and its urban development. Ancient Rome was set in the hills with the public area of the Campus Martius in the surrounding lowlands. In the Middle Ages, as Rome fell, it shrank both in stature and in population. The poorer smaller population that remained within the confines of the city reversed the previous development in the hills and migrated to the banks of the Tiber River. The convergence of people along the Tiber was the initial step in the creation of the dense version of Rome we see today. The Campus Martius and the Piazza Navona were then in the center of the densification of a decaying Rome. The population filled in the voids between public buildings, monuments and green areas, and in doing so appropriated existing foundations on which to build new structures. Most of the monuments within the Campus were "swallowed up by the medieval town, they served a convenient shelter."[35] In the Piazza Navona this meant building on the perimeter of the old stadium and leaving the center unused.

[33] Woods, L. *Radical Reconstruction* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1997), 29.
[34] Krautheimer, R. *Rome: Profile of a City 312-1308* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 4.
[35] Krautheimer, R. *Rome: Profile of a City 312-1308* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 243.

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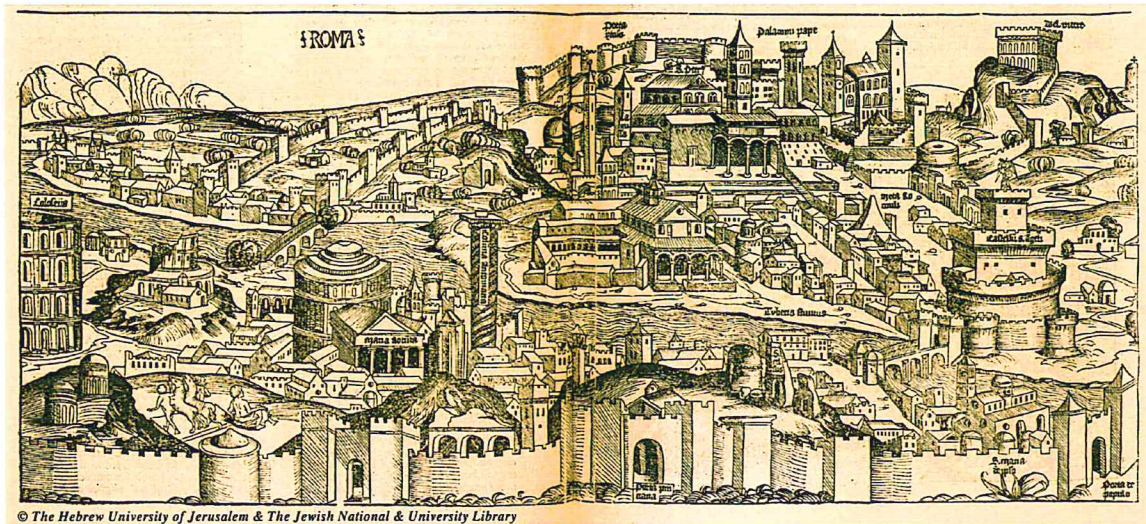
19. *Rome, circa 1493* (Hartmann Schedel).

The broken walls and vaults of the area were rengaged when the "oratory of S.Agnese was ensconced by the end of the eighth century in a vault of the Stadium of Domitian at Piazza Navona."[36] The diminished population, in acts of invention and reuse, also congregated along the papal processional routes; "the ceremonies of papal processions indicate with some precision the main streets through the core of the town."[37] Businesses and other public activities occupied other less prominent areas usually near the processional routes or on the pilgrimage trail. The center for the pilgrims was, "Saint Peter's grave and his basilica; it was there that pilgrims were lodged and fed; its booths, stands, and shops formed the commercial district of Rome; money changers and bankers were found along its street."[38] The impact on the Piazza Navona was that this local activity equated in the sporadic use of the church of S.Agnese in Agone, which was on the pilgrimage trail, and when the large open area functioned as a public market. The Piazza also benefited by its proximity to major arteries, the most influential being an "east-west artery that linked Ponte S. Angelo to Corso, which passed below the southern

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[36] Krautheimer, R. *Rome: Profile of a City 312-1308* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 252.
[37] IBID, 278.

end of the Piazza."[39] But this general proximity to the center of the city and access to major roadways did not equate to any development of the Piazza; in fact the area remained in general disrepair during a period from the 7th to 11th centuries. From the 4th century on the Empire constructed a massive system of aqueducts, which brought fresh water to Rome, but by the Middle Ages "only one aqueduct, the Acqua Vergine, continued to serve the city. Lack of fresh water discouraged the growth of the city, which withdrew into a bend in the Tiber."[40] The Tiber River provided food and water, and was the major transportation and communication route thus, "medieval Rome was anchored to the Tiber."[41] Due to this fact "the three areas built up in the earlier Middle Ages east and west of the river grew into a coherent and, it would seem, densely populated town."[42] Previously distinct areas from the river's edge to the northern foot of the Capitol and the area around the Pantheon to Piazza Navona were connected in a sweep of westward development that eventually filled in the entire river bend. The Campus Martius became an urbanized low-lying area and a second phase of disuse ensued as the city ceased to expand until the Renaissance.

The act of neglect or stagnation allowed great portions of the area to maintain buildings from antiquity and the Piazza retained its boat like shape because their was no pressure to divide the area into smaller piazzas or to infill the open space.   A series of missteps and accidental occurrences have lead to the version of the place as it is today.

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[38] IBID, 272.
[39] IBID, 248.
[40] Marder, T. *Bernini and the Art of Architecture* (New York, Abeville Press, 1998), 83.
[41] Krautheimer, R. *Rome: Profile of a City 312-1308* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 237.
[42] Krautheimer, R. *Rome: Profile of a City 312-1308* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 271.

20. *Photo of the Piazza Navona* (uncredited).

The creation of a stadium in an open field, the habitation of a disused dockyard, or the appropriation of partially demolished building represent portions of a cyclic pattern of use that is independent of original program, and owes more to necessity and economy than planning. The initial shape of the Piazza remains alongside, monuments, fountains and churches that survived the densification of Rome, and provided over a number of centuries a slow evolution of a place that was initiated with no overall intention of its eventual form. In Croatia and other war torn areas the acts of violence and destruction accelerate the process of birth and death of place thus constituting a significant misstep or disruption, but not one that ends the pattern of use. Contrary to this is the insertion of a false rhetoric as seen in the dockyards of Halifax. The appropriation of working maritime images and forms, in current retail and residential projects, kills the growth of place and installs instead a relic. Thus, new projects and uses must revalidate place by admitting and expressing new variables within a given context.

Whether a single building, a block or a piazza the idea of place does not disintegrate in the act of demolition or abandonment when seen as a cyclic pattern of existence. The process of birth, use, and rebirth essentially define the way a place is perceived. That perception is often based on use, not necessarily on program for program is fleeting. Through a series of disruptions Rome evolved as a complex whole, a disconnected history, that same history allowed the Piazza to emerge as an essentially baroque square. The whole is not a whole; it is an assembly of parts each valid in its inception and continued existence. The disconnected parts exist independently, such as the Church of S.Agnese and the Four Rivers Fountain connected only by time, reference, and use. The voids, ruptures, or abandoned areas provide opportunity for invention, whether deliberate or accidental and this implies a freedom of connection, and it is in that process of use-reuse that place exists.

MISUSE

When do we use a place? Our lives cycle through days eating, working, sleeping, and so to does a place. The daily life of a place is the determinant of its currency, that currency must include deliberate and accidental components. Community activity can be regimented through informal or formal activities that occur in an area without the removal of the unexpected. Flexibility of use provides the basis for a wide set of possibilities to exist within a single place. It is this lack of flexibility that is one of the major concerns raised about New Urbanist towns that "are underpinned by a legal labyrinth of restrictive covenants, building regulations, homeowner's associations codes of behavior, and engineered demographic sterility."[43] The absolutism of these places has been parodied in the television show the X-Files (Season 6:Arcadia), and movies such as Edward Scissorhands to express the bland effect of mass homogeneity on place.

21. *X-files* (uncredited, 1999).　　　　　22. *Edward Scissorhands* (uncredited, 1990).

In opposition to such forced sterility a place like Chater Garden and Statue Square, in downtown Hong Kong exist. The area survives a varied series of uses and apparent lack of definitive rules of appropriation that appear to provide a contradictory mix of participants and activities. The square and garden exist as a venue for a myriad of possibilities, which at a given point in time would claim ownership of the place. Surrounded by a series of buildings and a heavy vegetated green space the smallish

square and larger garden are abutted on the south by Norman Fosters Hong Kong/Shanghai Bank building. On the east Chater Garden, on the north by Chater Street and a solid façade of buildings (major hotel chains) that separate the area from an expressway. And on the west the Prince's building provides a continuous façade that stretches from Chater Street to Des Voeux Road Central. Starting at Statue square the ground plane is finished in large pavers that extend to the sidewalk. One crosses the cobbled Chater Street to move into the larger garden that follows the form of a traditional Chinese garden with pathways, bodies of water, and a series of smaller enclosures that culminate in the undulating open plaza below the Shanghai Bank. Early on a Monday morning the square is filled with the practitioners of Thai Chi, the adjoining streets teeming with commuters as they make their way to work. By noon, the office workers are joined by travelers on their way to the local market or bazaars, which are found in adjoining alleyways, or making their way up the mountain. Commercial areas surround the square for the mecca of well-dressed corporate employees' incessantly wandering the streets in search of retail shops, restaurants, bars, and hotels. The hustle and bustle of the city quiets in the evening and the few homeless in Hong Kong (given its size) find spots to sleep; yet they are gone by the return of the morning aerobists. On Sundays a more profound change infects the area as thousands of immigrant nannies are given a day off and literally kicked out of the homes in which they work. From miles around they arrive in the thousands to the Statue Square, closing down adjoining streets, walkways, and sidewalks. Congregating the entire day picnicking, conversing, participating in Karaoke and fashion shows. Into this a temporary bazaars of retailers are on hand with confectioneries, umbrellas, clothing and jewelry for perusal and purchase. In the early evening the square is cleaned and

[43] Sorkin, M. *Some Assembly Required* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 67.

nannies is on show with the exception of one or two lingering groups unwilling to give
up on the day. In this eclectic series of uses there can be no real sense of ownership of
place, no absolute appropriation of use, just a temporal clutch and release.

23. *Statue Square, Hong Kong* (K. Chim, 2002).   24. *Chater Street, Hong Kong* (uncredited, 1993).

The vast series of opportunities for gathering within a public open square are countered
in the mass homogenization of corporatism, "we need only mention stadiums, shopping
centres, and large multi-purpose spaces."[44] The urban malls in particular with their own
police forces, restrictive hours, and rules on where to eat or drink or sit, do provide
amenities but with strict definitions of appropriation. It is absolute regulation of
appropriation that stifles place. How would the interior streets of the local mall handle a
mass of foreign nannies confiscating the premises every Saturday? The over-regulated,
commercial spaces are zoned and hermetically sealed for a set of pre-determined
activities in which even perceived freedoms are really just a choice between the Bay and
Sears, and there is no place for thousands of nannies much less the local boarders.
At the level of urban space this example can be extended to any area undergoing
gentrification, a process that inalienably alienates the group or groups involved in the
initial the creation or reintroduction of place. The slow removal of the existing tenants

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[44] Favoli, P. *Squares in Contemporary Architecture* (Amsterdam: Architectura & Natura Press, 1995), 10.

through the institution of owner's groups and community associations restricts the use and access to places. In New York the appropriation of SoHo, an acronym, standing for South of Houston Street defines a district of forty-three blocks in Manhattan. This area has experienced a full cycle of birth, death and rebirth in the last one hundred and fifty years. Around 1850 the area was based on large residential projects, "this segment of the Broadway corridor helped project the civic virtue and aspirations of the rapidly expanding city."[45] As the area continued to develop and take a more urban character, the activities within it diversified to include a mixture of brothels, apartments, commercial activity and an entertainment centre. The commercial activity provided mainly by mercantile enterprises overwhelmed the exclusive homes of the area, by this time apartments, to become an area of loft building. By the 1950's the area declined to the point of disuse and was known as Hell's Hundred Acres. The area became a haven for illegal activities and remained in limbo with the exception of the entertainment district along Broadway between Canal and Houston streets. In the 1960's, artists, squatters and other groups living outside the mainstream co-opted the area and "all of this occupation was clandestine, as the district officially remained for some time an industrial and commercial zone."[46] A strange mixture of illegal activities from prostitution to squatting became the norm for the district. Over time a series of events saw the gradual redevelopment of the area by more mainstream commercial and residential activities culminating in zoning changes and the eventual implementation of the 1981 Loft Law. These strict measures on the ownership and renovation of loft spaces officially put an end to the more open relationships that had formed in the area for the previous two decades. The district has come full circle and is now a vibrant part

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[45] Rowe, P. *Civic Realism* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999), 132.
[46] Rowe, P. *Civic Realism* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999), 134.

of Manhattan, but at the cost of selectively removing the seedier aspects of the past and restricting the new activities that can occur within its boundaries. A study of the place today is a study of how the regulated and unregulated activities are interacting, and the result of that interaction will eventually define what kind of place SoHo will be.

In the creation of place a balance between use and misuse is required at the level of individual and community action. Just as over regulation can drain an area so can a lack of regulation, in which misuse is the prevalent activity. Needle Park in East Vancouver presents an equally unbalanced set of choices as the mall or Hell's Hundred Acres may have presented in the 1950's. Allowing for only a narrow band of activity to permeate the space, it is cut off and ostracized from the community at large. The mixes of routines appropriate or otherwise, from day to day, and year to year define the breadth of a place. In this breadth of connection the place, through the balance of appropriation and misappropriation of all potential actions, is accessible to a multitude of people and activities. For regardless of rules and rebukes misuse thrives and flourishes in every city. It appears as a guerilla force in general conflict with the regulatory bodies and corporate interests currently presiding over the development of our places.

CONTEXTUALISM

In the creation of a layered place the myriad of possibilities within the enclosure should be reflected in the architecture. Mere repetitive contextualism is not the goal, the goal is to acknowledge and work from within the framework of the existing space. A contextual reference must engage and understand the site, circumstances, and functions of place to hope to achieve a broad range of connections. A multi-layered analysis and the development of many concurrent ideas, to form a cohesive vision of a place, all the time accepting the fragility of the development itself and admitting the possibility of misuse. This kind of whole cannot be achieved by theming nor branding in any meaningful way, for these are temporal approaches meant to provide a single clear image or message with as little ambiguity as possible. In reality a place with the ability to provide multiple readings should be ambiguous or at least provide the opportunity for ambiguity.

Too often new buildings rise in older areas as glazed blocks that reflect the surroundings without actually engaging them. Or worse, engage the area in a thinned out mimicry of the existing fabric. In an old warehouse district on the corner of Mount Royal and St.Urbain, in Montreal, a new building is under construction and it will employ similar materials to that of the surrounding buildings. A quick review of the area provides a palate of discernable influences from which a correct series of details, motifs, and elements can be applied, as applique, to the new building. At best this kind of good neighbor development is invisible or just bland, and it does not engage the community in which it is located with any kind of currency. It is the same mentality that provides our suburban developments with the eerie sameness of homogeneity.

25. *Strip mall from anywhere* (K. Lammie, 2002).

In opposition to an empty contextualism is a detailed exploration of context. One that takes into account the strata from which the building will gain its footing, the economy, the street, the area, the work of the individuals, the existing building construction, and its past, present and potential future uses, its users their beliefs and desires. For this is a living entity, not just an empty place in a paint by numbers. Exploration of this kind may indeed come up with the same building solution as the later example, but it will surely produce a number of other possibilities that may represent more honestly the particulars of a locality because context is about connection. Connection on the floor plan, in the elevations, at the curb, or in the square; each connection should be intertwined with other points of reference, this builds corners, communities, and cities. In the natural world we readily accept the idea of interdependence in ecosystems and food chains, though we deplete and exploit them at our peril. The same level of understanding is known about place, yet we continue to deplete and exploit them in the same callous manner.

3 CULTURE

"The reciprocal relationship of space defining social practise also pertains to most urban-environmental circumstances."

Peter G. Rowe

PARTICIPATION

Within the origin of place, a reflection of the beliefs and a representation of the activities of its constructors are present. On the way to make visible that certain way of life, within a community, one or more individuals are intertwined in the act of creation. Saul argues, "our society functions today largely on relationships between groups,"[47] and these groups exist in a realm of interest. The main goal of the group is to promote their point of view as opposed to a general betterment of the public good. The public good is the voice of the individual and in the past the representatives of the people, the Government, supported it. However the main discussion today involves many interested groups and the government at the exclusion of the individual.

26. *Costumi Carnevaleschi in Una Tempera* (A.J.B. Thomas, 1817).

In early 2002 world figures gathered in New York to discuss a wide range of economic issues. Bono, from the rock band U2, was the only person that spoke as an individual within a wide group of CEO's and elected officials. In the end these groups are focussed on their primary interest, economics, which underpins corporatism. Corporatism does not desire individual democracy because it looks for the most stable environment to develop its economic priorities. To define this Kingwell writes a series of rules on

corporatism, "the first is that de facto universalism of the transnational market has more devastating effects on the idea of the individual's particularity than any liberal attempt to articulate formal rights ever could."[48] Defacto universalism is then at odds with "the citizen-based society built upon the shared disinterest of the individuals."[49] The idea of an active democracy here suggests that the main conversation in social developments, in which architecture is included, should be the effect on the public good. In reality when individuals attempt to engage corporations or the government in discussions about public good the result is the marginilization of those individuals. The process of place creation is handled by government ministries, planning boards, permit processes, and city inspectors each representing groups with a specific interest, usually political or economic. Place is then based on profit, brand experience, and designated usage in the interest of corporate and state entities, not in dwelling. Is there another use for a McDonald's? It seems like a reasonable question, but the answer is no, it is like so many business entities, it is of singular use. Through pervasive zoning and distinct ownership of place our modern city presents very few opportunities for an expression of the public good.

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[47] Saul, J.R. *The Unconscious Civilization* (Concord: Anansi Press, 1995), 31.
[48] Kingwell, M. *The World We Want* (Toronto: Penguin Books Canada, 2001), 59.
[49] Saul, J.R. *The Unconscious Civilization* (Concord: Anansi Press, 1995), 33.

27. *Ubiquitous McDonald's* (K. Lammie, 2002).   28. *Where's that Starbucks* (D. Hanson, 2002).

"The individual therefore lives in a society"[50] and a balance is needed between interested and disinterested individuals and groups, which is mirrored in the balance required between use and misuse, in the formation of place. That balance does not exist and the negative reaction to those imbalances can be seen in the protests that occur at the private meetings and global summits of trade and government organizations.   Often a disinterested party's involvement in these meetings is seen as an intrusion, a security hazard. This security risk sometimes has an accidental physical manifestation in the unintended creation of place. Though these places are temporary, they are places nonetheless.

At the Summit of Americas, in Quebec City, 2001, within a UN designated International Heritage site, a perimeter fence was established. "Three and a half kilometres of concrete and chain link three meters high "secured" an area of 10 square kilometres,"[51] ensuring the elected representatives of the people would be protected from the people. Any attempted intrusion into this fenced community was grounds for repellant actions on part of the "6000"[52] strong public and private police force. Quebec City, unlike the

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[50] Saul, J.R. *The Unconscious Civilization* (Concord: Anansi Press, 1995), 73.
[51] Baker, J. *Wall of Shame*, Canadian Architect, Vol. 46, Num. 6, 30.
[52] IBID, 30.

WTO meeting in Seattle in 2000, had some forewarning about the nature of protest and decided to arm itself against the antiglobalists, the anarchists, and the pacifists. The enclosure of the historic downtown core choked off a very public space for essentially a private gathering, which "made 20,000 inhabitants carry identity papers to get in and out of their homes."[53] The media showed the armed police and the rock throwing protestors, discarding the official demonstration, which dutifully followed a predetermined path away from the perimeter fence and the view of the cameras.

29. *Summit of the Americas, Quebec City* (J. Baker, 2001).

"Indifference can swiftly breed callousness, arrogance, and eventually contempt."[54] Indifference to the protestors to outright corporatism, and to unresponsive governments has a negative effect on public space. By allowing economic interests to supersede the public good, we abdicate our responsibility for place; putting it into the hands of groups who then keep it away from the influence of individuals. "Since 1995, Reclaim the Streets (RTS) has been hijacking busy streets, major intersections and even stretches

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[53] IBID, 30.

of highway for spontaneous gatherings."[55] Public activities such as RTS and raves are ways in which individuals are attempting to rengage public space in a spontaneous manner. These movements are temporary and occur as blips in an otherwise constant stream of development. The staged events express a point, defining the hopes the participants, without articulating any longer-term goals. The participation of individuals in a society acting in disinterest needs to direct governments to consider the wider view of public space as benefiting the public good. Otherwise the removal of public space will continue and temporary reclamations will "...attempt to fill it with an alternative vision of what society might look like in the absence of commercial control."[56]

[54] Kingwell, M. *The World We Want* (Toronto: Penguin Books Canada, 2001), 62.
[55] Klein, N. *No Logo* (Toronto: Knopf Canada, 2000), 312.
[56] Klein, N. *No Logo* (Toronto: Knopf Canada, 2000), 313.

BRANDING

Commercial control of the built environment is an extension of the branding process. It is everywhere from the USA to China, but it is only the most visible element in a complex world of smaller regional exercises in the definition of place. At issue is the widening gap between a branded environment and regional vernaculars. Brand is a market identity tool meant to entice the widest possible bevy of buyers for a particular set of products. Its concern for the built environment or place is nominal. By contrast the local vernacular attempts to engage and express the specifics of a place. Strong regional styles exist and coexist with the brand experience and the balance between the two is a major factor in the definition of contemporary place.

Branding is so successful that some companies don't actually produce anything, they just brand. "What does Tommy Hilfiger manufacture? Nothing at all."[57] So clearly is brand focused on economics and economics so entrenched in a primary role in the lives of individuals that it has seeped into our homes, villages, and cities. Dwelling, community, neighborhoods are all effected by the force of economic factors so much so that they define the success or failure of place. The most popular public places in most cities are the shopping malls, but they are private spaces that attempt to look and act like public ones. The local mall has a landlord, a police force, and they restrict and enforce the activities within the mall. "There is an unavoidable parallel between the privatization of language and cultural discourse occurring through copyright and trademark bullying, and the privatization of public space taking place through the proliferation of the superstores, theme park malls and branded villages like Celebration,

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[57] Klein, N. *No Logo* (Toronto: Knopf Canada, 2000), 24.

Florida."[58] The malls now compete with the public square and the park as a point of gathering. The specific problem is the mall is a place of commerce first and foremost and all the amenities within the mall are just extensions of purchasing. The walls of the mall are secondary to the signage and the product of the stores. The architecture fades to the point of irrelevance in the case of the big box retailers, such as Costco. Each Costco store is designed and manufactured in the same basic configuration with similar materials, no thought to place exists. The massive warehouses sell a wide variety of products in empty shells. The brand in this case is economy. Other economic levels of brand from low to high priced products exist in unending rows of strip malls and big box retailers. The one similarity that they share is a certain sameness, regardless of context. McDonald's is McDonald's in Calgary or Hong Kong, and that is the point to define a recognizable image or place regardless of context. In any situation, Gucci or Costco, the lack or exuberance of place is seen as an extension of the brand. Starbucks Coffee Co., which is found in Japan, the US, Canada, and China to name a few countries, all look and feel the same from the outside right down to the list of available beverages. The flooring, light fixtures and seating are all brand equity. They are the "decorated shed's"[59] of Venturi's roadside architecture. Just one more method to distingush their product from others and all the theme buildings connect while the architecture fades into a series of real/unreal spaces. New York and Venice are reinterpreted as spatial experiences within the American desert of Las Vegas along a branded strip, and we are left with big-box stores sporting massive signs all lined up in demographically determined orders.

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[58] Klein, N. *No Logo* (Toronto: Knopf Canada, 2000), 182.
[59] Venturi, R. *Learning from Las Vegas* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1988), 88.

30. *The Venetian Hotel* (D. Heller, 2001).   31. *New York New York* (D. Heller, 2001).

32. *Paris Hotel*, (D. Heller, 2001).

The coalescing of the branded environment is therefore encroaching past billboards and malls in attempts to appropriate the street. In Edmonton, Sir Winston Churchill Square, the cities main public space lodged between the public library and City Hall was to undergo a redevelopment and this development was to be sponsored by a company. The company in turn would receive the brand rights to the square. This kind of business relationship is common at arenas and stadiums, the Bell Centre in Montreal or GM Place in Vancouver are just two examples. But a public square is something different; the people own it. The city simply cares for the space as the representative of the public good.

The street and squares of our cities are under pressure from the expansion of the branded environment by way of the ubiquitous neon signs, themed interiors and the sponsorship sites from public squares to thoroughfares. Building by building and street by street the proliferation of massive neon signs and logos scream their mantras to the consumer society. Brand requires stable and controllable environments, in which to flourish so in the streets "from New York to Vancouver to London, police crackdowns on graffiti, postering, panhandling, sidewalk art, squeegee kids, community gardening and food vendors are rapidly criminalizing everything that is truly street level."[60] The

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[60] Klein, N. *No Logo* (Toronto: Knopf Canada, 2000), 311.

sterilization of urban streets is basically emulating policies that created McKenzie Towne or Celebration on a wider scale. The removal of anything deemed unfit can be wiped from the inner city streets as part of a re-appropriation of these areas. This action is occurring simultaneously in the virtual world of America On-Line (AOL), in which a "so-called Community Action Team began deleting messages from discussion groups deemed harassing, profane, embarrassing or just "unwanted.""[61] This kind of activity is not bad or good it is just required corporate censorship to protect and enhance the brand environment. The brand must remain pure to gain the maximum market share; infection by conflicting ideas or actions is unacceptable.
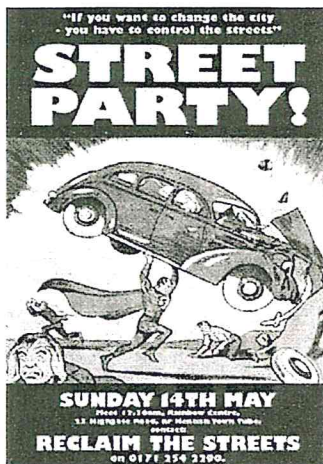
33. *RTF Poster* (uncredited, 1998).

Counter to this are the multiple regional movements or vernaculars that attempt to address where we are in space and time and thus define a particular now. Vernacular movements engage the genius loci and overlay the existing conditions of a place, thus reinvigorating or adding to the continuous development of place with new, additional or alternate meaning. As a reflection of the context of their creation, not relics or simulata, local architectures are distinguishable from location to location. In the Canadian

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[61] Klein, N. *No Logo* (Toronto: Knopf Canada, 2000), 184.

experience architecture differs from coast to coast. Each area supporting its local heroes, in Vancouver, Henriquez Partners, in Montreal, Dan Hanganu, and in Halifax Brian McKay Lyons, expose and further articulate what is distinct about their local place. The Montreal Archives Centre conserves historical documents from Quebec history within a series of buildings ranging from 1870 through 1966. In 1997 Dan Hanganu and Provencher Roy and Associates won a local competition in which "new functions have been carefully matched with existing spaces. Old elements have been cleaned up and repainted, and the bare minimum of new parts added."[62] The resultant building connects the 1966 addition, the 1870 building, and the former HEC building using an L-shaped plan and atrium. "Since Arcop Associates completed Maison Alcan in 1983, it has become a Montreal cliché to recuperate historic buildings by linking them to new construction with an enclosed atrium."[63] The new building reflects the nature of other local architecture in its material, detailing, and sense of context, in which the building does not mimic the older forms, but sees itself as an equal partner in the ensemble of a block.
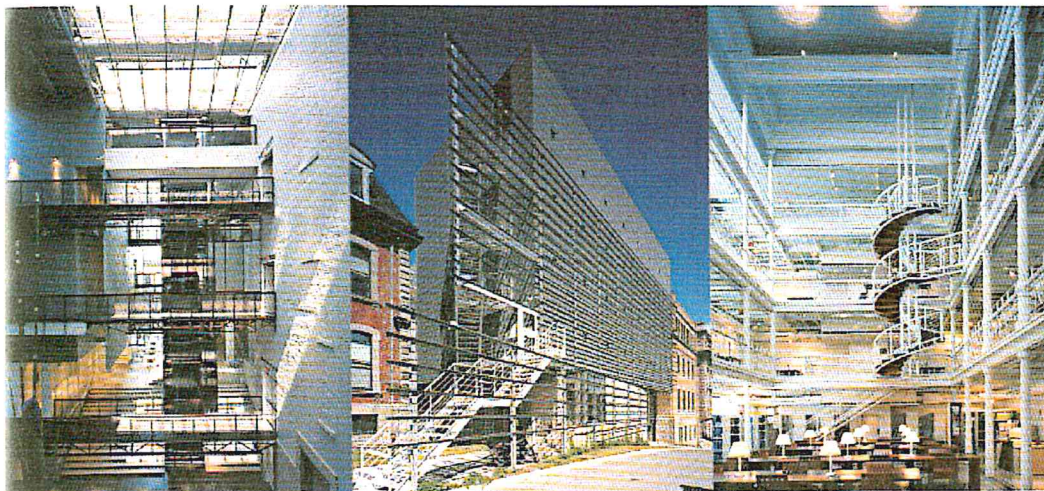
34. *Photos of Montreal Archive Center* (Canadian Architect, 2000).

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[62] Theodore, D. *Bridging Past and Present,* Canadian Architect, Vol.45, No.9, 24.

The empty historicism of McKenzie Town, the Halifax Dockyards, and the branded environment blur the distinction between real and unreal environments, global and vernacular. As television, video games, and cyber space vie for status as alternate realities, existence cannot be abstracted to a point without personal contact. No matter the magnitude of iterations in which the new items are heralded one upon the other, all with brand distinction, now remains a definition of a specific place that we inhabit as we walk out our front doors. The sheer rate of churn in consumer products and trends renders them irrelevant due to the fact that we have not experienced them long enough to value them in any other way other than by their designated newness. In the computing industry a faster, better item is always being promoted; each year the automobile industry produces vehicles that are nominally different, yet somehow vastly improved from the previous years offering. And of course there is always the promise of whiter teeth and cooler shoes.

35. *Nike Advertisement* (Nike web site, 2002).

"Communities around the world, and at various generational levels, are no longer being blinded by the brands' shiny promises of newness and of endless selection."[64] The combination of an acceptance of some level of brand along with more reflective and

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[63] Theodore, D. *Bridging Past and Present*, Canadian Architect, Vol.45, No.9, 26.
[64] Klein, N. *No Logo* (Toronto: Knopf Canada, 2000), 189.

separate architecture is required to develop an articulate version of now. The past and future are expressed as disposable brand clichés. Our memories, needs, and utility all open for dissemination via the lowest common denominator application of mass marketing. This forced application of nostalgia or futurism packaged for use in one time branded environments does not constitute place. It is not that art or architecture are dead to quote a much-used cliché, it is the lack of any definable now that disposes us of anything to say and a certain validity is provided by brand. "The conflation of shopping and entertainment found at superstores and theme-park malls has created a vast gray area of pseudo-public private space. Politicians, police, social workers and even religious leaders all recognize that malls have become the modern town square."[65] Public or quasi-public space and the act of branding exist as an evolving conversation on how to interact. A balance is required between the public good and the needs of commerce for both to survive. The vernacular speaks to the local and specific nature of a place through material, details and approach, while the branded environment exists as an extension of commerce. Vernaculars reach is regional, Brands is global, and both have a role to play in the ongoing development of the place.

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[65] Klein, N. *No Logo* (Toronto: Knopf Canada, 2000), 183.

MOVEMENT

Contemporary culture is global and is based on movement, it is our currency of choice, our flavor of the day. Movement is expressed everywhere, in the montage of video images, daily news flashes, communications, and software. If we stand still our society is not overcome with relief or enjoyment, just boredom. In a culture that values movement the temporal images of brand recognition in a sharp video edit remove the unwanted moments of tedium, and provide crescendo, crescendo, crescendo. Architecture can modulate the pace of the city in its outward expression; it can emulate the concurrent movements around it or it can disappear hidden behind or under brand. Times Square is the modern day obelisk or monument for nothing moves faster than images and nowhere contains more messages of popular culture than Times Square. "Everything is firing message modules, straight at your gonads, your taste buds, your vanities, your fears. These modules seek to penetrate, but in a passing way."[66] Nothing is meant to penetrate to touch, to explain or define and that is the problem. A world expressed in rapid-fire images does not provide any kind of coherent message with the exception of buy. To entice purchase in "our media age such visibility is no longer a static, space bound, optical concept but something to be transmitted by all available means."[67] Within the modern Mecca of Times Square is an underbelly of a crime ridden sex trade area, and illicit past. The distinction between these two poles is recent so they physically overlap causing a disjunction in image. The media executives want Times Square as a brand environment, while the prostitutes still ply their trade on nearby corners. "In Times Square this leads to a false choice: either celebrate the

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[66] De Zengotita, T. *The Numbing of the American Mind*, Harper's, Vol.304, No.1823, 36.
[67] Sorkin, M. *Some Assembly Required* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 11.

crummy and degraded sex bazaar as it is, or bring on Disneyland."[68] The appropriate and inappropriate uses of the area are being redefined, a short while ago there was the possibility of an alternate reality in which a balance between the needs of place and economic variables could have been reached. That discussion never occurred and the activities of lesser economic value are being displaced, as in the district of SoHo.

36. *Times Square, New York* (uncredited, 2002).

In the past, a monument like the obelisk in the Piazza Navona was a clear expression of the power of God and the Church. In the Piazza Navona, society and individuals understood the forms and references installed on buildings and monuments in a number of ways. Namely, to live in the sight of God was to live under the law of the land; thus you were not persecuted. The Obelisk and Fountain of Four Rivers, in the center of the piazza, fill the role of socializing element and present a definable set of rules of engagement for human interaction. The Obelisk, as noted earlier, was seen as a triumph of the Catholic Church over the Pagans. The fountain in using precious water

[68] Sorkin, M. *Some Assembly Required* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 14.

confirms not only the wealth of the church/state, but also the power of the institutions by tying the control of a primary requirement to them. So a social pact is created and expressed in civic terms. The location of the fountain in the formal and physical center of the square transforms the piazza into a defined public space, again under the supervision and direction of the church or God. All activities occurring thereafter in the piazza under the provision of the church/state without which the square would not exist. Annual pilgrimages, Papal processions, and public markets reinforce the formal hierarchy of society and define how the population interacted. Just as S.Agnese and the surrounding palazzos defer to the central monument of the Obelisk, lesser themes defer to the overriding concept and that provides the Obelisk with a certain clarity.

It is absurd to consider that any monument or place concisely represents all the various activities of any given time. The Piazza Navona itself is a series of unplanned buildings that coalesced over time into a distinct place, yet within that whole the disparate parts remain. The ability to confer a number of different adjectives onto a monument is crucial to its longevity and evolution. In the act of creation place can have distinct, even contradictory, aspects. The sources of conflict act in concert to create a dynamic tension. Times Square is in the process of redefining itself based on current series of these dynamic tensions. Most notably the interests of major corporations and those of the lingering sex trade intermingling at the fringe of the area. Times Square, by becoming the largest reflector of consumer culture, rapidly intensifies how we interpret a wide assortment of messages or meanings by the pulsating, never-ending series of images that creates a monument of movement. The massive amount of information available for display restructures time and space into smaller and smaller packets. The

finite dense packets are then digestible within the flood of information and choices of an infinite field. "There were ersatz environments and glitzy ads back in the fifties, but this is a new order of quality and saturation. Saying that it's just more of what we had before is like saying a hurricane is just a breeze."[69] The hurricane of choices is exactly what Times Square expresses in the reflection and display of the modern society. Therefore the modern monument corresponding to changes in culture has widened its definition and by default expanded what is allowable within it.

In the Baroque period the images were restrictive, but the intensity and density of configurations provided a number of possible readings. So the Piazza Navona through the obelisk and fountain generally express a single ideal, but also provide a series of alternates. In the Parc le da Villette we have a world of possibilities and readings unrestricted by any overt overriding order. In Times Square we have just images with no overall coherence. It is this unbridled plurality that architecture attempts to encompass via large scale abstraction, and thus the overriding global monuments are about movement expressed as structure unrelated to the specifics of place.

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[69] De Zengotita, T. *The Numbing of the American Mind*, Harper's, Vol.304, No.1823, 37.

4 PHILOSPHY OF PLACE

"The Internet is great, but it ain't the Piazza Navona."

Michael Sorkin

Architectural expression through any applied methodology engages and informs place through a specific dialogue. It is absurd to suggest a prescriptive method can capture and redistribute the nature of a specific dialogue from one place to another. Rather a philosophical stance on place must be defined to guide research on its development. In this way the particulars of a site can be engaged or disengaged as required by the site itself. This in no way constitutes a resolution that will necessarily attain the status of successful place. It is an attempt to see place through its constituent parts defined by space, time, and culture. In discussing these attributes this paper argues that all successful place is layered and conceived as a natural process, which itself is untrackable through its slow osmosis. Once place is recognized as a layered construction, the collection of unconnected spaces that we encounter on an ongoing basis seem more and more to abdicate place as an idea and experience altogether.
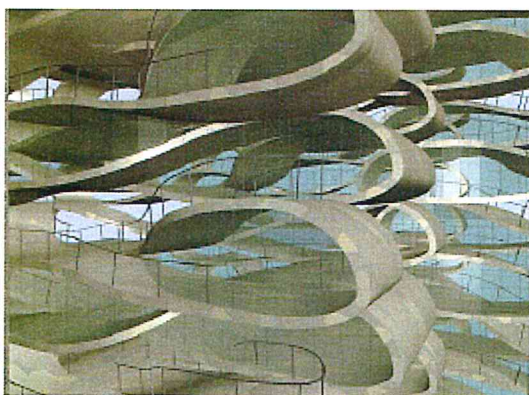
37. *Virtual House* (Foreign Office Architects, 1997).

The city of Rome is a series of lanes, sectors, and quadrants of ruins in various states of decay. The city has been many things, the center for the world's largest religion, and the capital of the largest empire in history. A place in which, "the ancient stratum underlies the medieval city, the Baroque city the modern one"[70]. Four distinct Romes co-exist at some level in the modern city, and this more or less spontaneous

development over many, many years can be defined as a natural process. The alternative being places, which have been created, in whole or part, by designers and planners and are therefore artificial places. "It is more and more widely recognized today that there is some essential ingredient missing from artificial cities. When compared with ancient cities that have acquired the patina of life, our modern attempts to create cities are, from a human point of view, entirely unsuccessful"[71]

A collection of layered places equates to a layered city of convoluted interrelationships, which represent the specifics of that time, not as an after thought or an extension of commerce, but through a myriad of unstable and shifting criteria. Enclosure and morphology are the first orders in the definition of one specific space being distinct from all others. The genius loci of a site is reinterpreted for the act of human dwelling and so space is subdivided into modules of human scale. Once that site is defined it can be enclosed, but not completely for a porous boundary of solids and voids, adjacencies, and topology act to gather or condense a vision of a place. Dismissing this primary function is to displace the initial opportunities of place.

Within any enclosure, a set of points and lines composed along a horizontal or vertical axis restrict and focus movement through a place. The application of monuments and ritual movements reinforce a connection to the site by articulating its importance to the local community. Therefore orientation on the ground plane, spatial organization, and use dictate a set of factors relative to a specific place. The interconnection within and without of that set completes a place and provides a sense of a whole from a set of interrelated parts.

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[70] Agnew, J. *Rome* (Toronto: John Wiley & Sons, 1995), 27.
[71] Alexander, C. *"The City is not a Tree"*, Zone, 129.

38. *Veduta Generale Della Navona* (Savio, 1965).

Christopher Alexander describes "both the tree and the semilattice are ways of thinking about how a large collection of many small systems goes to make up large and complex systems."[72] In the case of a site, each set is related in some way to the other sets and how they relate can be addressed. The connections of a tree are hierarchical and finite, while the semilattice has more numerous and less absolute connections, and in relation to place the examples expose a basic structure and the potential of a site. "A tree based on 20 elements can contain at most 19 further subsets of the 20, while a semilattice based on the same 20 elements can contain more than 1,000,000 different subsets."[73] Modernism and restrictive zoning promote the tree as a method of development and in doing so segregate places from each other. Disruptions and fissures in development are seen on purely economic terms in which each piece of the city is seen as a separate whole. But the whole is not whole; it is an assembly of parts each valid in its inception and continued existence. Edward O. Wilson calls for a reconciliation of knowledge in the sciences, through a series of books that articulate animal and human nature through to questions on the nature of science itself. Arguing, for example, that the segregation of

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[72] Alexander, C. "*The City is not a Tree*", Zone, 129.

Biology from chemistry creates a gap in our ability to understand the whole by only recognizing its parts. In discussing the interrelationship of scientific fields Wilson states "It dawned on me that ecology had never before been incorporated into evolutionary theory; now Slobodkin was showing a way to do it."[74] Though even when shown the way he notes, "the genius of human sociality is in fact the ease with alliances are formed, broken, and reconstituted, always with strong emotional appeals to rules believed to be absolute."[75] Thus the creation of a complex layered place must be cognoscente of its role in constituting an absolute quality of the whole, within the comprised, malleable, interdependent parts that maintain its currency in an unstable environment over time. The Piazza Navona has accepted voids, ruptures, and the abandonment of areas while maintaining its overall sense of wholeness. The act of invention can provide the malleable opportunity, as expressed by Lebbeus Woods that allows a freedom of connection mirroring human sociability and all its fragility.

If our relations form a complex semilattice, then so to should our places. "It is this lack of structural complexity, characteristic of trees, which is crippling our conceptions of the city,"[76] and further this lack of flexibility in places perpetuates the imbalance of use and misuse. Absolute zones detract from the flexible whole because the whole is conceived as a singular act with singular purpose, the shopping mall, the grocery store, or the strip mall. Even our public space is reduced to less and less permitable activity, which in turn gives rise to further distinctions of alternative spaces, such as skateboard parks, bike trails, and animal corridors. The narrower the band of activity the more distinct the segregation and more complete the ostracization from adjacent places. Restriction and

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[73] Alexander, C. *"The City is not a Tree"*, Zone, 133.
[74] Wilson, E.O. *Naturalist* (Island Press, Washington D.C., 1994), 233.
[75] Wilson, E.O. *On Human Nature* (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1978), 163.
[76] Alexander, C. *"The City is not a Tree"*, Zone, 133.

zoning curb the breadth of place in its ability to connect to a multitude of people and actions. In the Greater London Plan, 1943, by Abercombie and Forshaw, the structure of the plan is conceived of a large number of communities, each sharply separated from all adjacent communities.
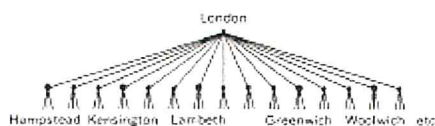
39. *Greater London Plan* (Abercrombie and Forshaw, 1943).

Over time the forced segregation of communities creates an architectural heritage or "residue"[77] that due to its limited scope exhausts the currency of place. Once this occurs in a tree structure the branch dies, the same is true of architectural residue that fails to correspond to any relevant activity within place and is therefore open to misuse or wholesale abandonment. The inner cities and immediate suburbs of most major North American cities clearly mirror this situation. By contrast the residue of layered place would always contain the possibility of multiple levels of currency as it evolves admitting the past, present, and future within a single kaleidoscopic framework. A detailed exploration of context within such a framework provides an account of the

buildings, the square, the economy, the street, and the belief and hopes of individuals dwelling within. The complexity of the connections within any place can suggest some remaining possibility of use or reference, which may be intertwined with other points of reference, to build a new place upon the old.

In Rome when the sacking, "came at the hands of it own people-landowners, politicians, and speculators-who over the period of 1870-1950 destroyed one-third of its own buildings and more than one-half of its green space,"[78] two processes were underway. In 1870 both activities involved the use and or destruction of the architectural heritage of Rome to reinvent the city as the Capital of a reunited Italy. At this point the residue of the previous two Rome's, Ancient and Renaissance, were deemed surplus to the formation of a new Capital and in a series of projects, over a period of 80 years, the urban fabric of Rome would be reshaped. The main thrust of the movement was to create Rome along more "Euclidean dimensions."[79] Work was undertaken by clearing and rebuilding the areas within the Aurelian walls, and the subdivision of the areas on the borders of the walls. Thus, the existing city was divided into distinct sections, separating it from the river and leaving historic centers as relics. The area around the Piazza Navona, the most densely populated area of Rome, consisted mainly of a series of apartment houses interrupted by only a few public spaces. As other historic areas no longer connected to the active development of the city, the isolation of monuments was complete in the implementation of city zoning, building standards, and other bureaucratic policies.

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[77] Alexander, C. *"The City is not a Tree"*, Zone, 137.
[78] Agnew, J. *Rome* (Toronto: John Wiley & Sons, 1995), 25.
[79] Agnew.J , *Rome* (Toronto: John Wiley & Sons, 1995), 32.

In this process the active development of the Piazza Navona, within the evolution of the city, was halted. The residue still valid but now only as a complete image of historical place. Other places were less fortunate as they were raised for new roadways and the creation of subdivisions. Essentially this massive series of projects ends the dominance of place created by religous dogma, shifting to place based on bureaucracy, and eventually economy.

40. *Piazza Navona* (uncredited, 1630).

Economic motivation to create buildings does not engage in the articulation of place. When economic measure trumps place, unarticulated and disconnected development occurs. This leads to the indifference that is mirrored in much of our current society when concerned with the idea of place. "This was an inevitable result, for as a rule the skyscraper is primarily concerned with commercial and business activities"[80] and the rise in the skyscraper inversely relates to the general decline in our focus on the public good. The idea of the public good is subject to the increasing scope of economic interests leading to a certain fatalism, in which we accept buildings, and communities that do not engage the concept of place as anything more than a marketing tool. Eventually the emptiness of these images fades and the realities are seen, as in the urban public

housing projects of the 1970's such as the infamous Pruitt-Igoe, or the New Urbanist dream towns of today.

Movements that question the economic activities of unresponsive governments or outright corporatism seem to be temporary in nature and not reflective of the whole of society. Groups like Reclaim the Streets (RTS) and others, rengage public space in a spontaneous manner creating temporary ruptures. However, the staged events require longer-term goals, which include the participation of disinterested individuals and an investment in place that benefits the public good by connecting and creating layered places that can exist over time.

The semilattice provides for many potentials to exist within a given whole, the strength of which lies in the web of connections. To this end communities need to develop, not as singular wholes, but as a collection of disparate parts that understand the economic factors are not paramount in development of place. A more balanced approach to context and need engages place by admitting brand, architecture, memory, need, utility, security, and all other potential classifications of things that articulate a particular version of here and now.

That particular now also has the potential to reinvent the public good and with it public space. Space, which is not branded or encumbered by unduly regulations, can then be open to interpretation. The mode of interpretation can be expressed through local vernaculars or global movements depending on the specifics of a place. However, the more likely solution lies in the gaps between the poles of each movement, and within the space of polar extremes is the potential to encompass the plurality and complexity of the semilattice. This kind of architecture attempts to express the specifics of place through a combination of regional vernaculars, monumentality, participatory

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[80] Saarinen E. *The City*, (New York: Reinhold Publishing Corporation, 1943), 196.

populations, corporatisms, global activities, environmentalism and any other 'ism' under the sun, in the creation of layered space.

The origin of place is an idea about how to address a site keeping in mind the notion of layered space, that relates to the complexities of modern life and reflects the users of it. This idea is in no way absolute. In fact, it is absolutely contrary to that sensibility. Space, time, and culture can articulate the constituent parts of place within the moment of creation. The subdivisions of enclosure, morphology, birth, use, and death of place, misuse, contextualism, participation, branding, and movement further articulate the ideas that lead to place created as a semilattice and not as a tree, to use the analogy of Alexander. The realization is that the moment of creation is the only point of clarity and from that point on the place is subject to a series of unforeseen uses and missteps that will determine how place is used and perceived. The layered place can provide in its connections the broadest possible understanding of context, the potential for the unexpected.

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FINAL PRESENTATION

RAIC Syllabus

D9 – Thesis, Origin of Place

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June 2003

5 THESIS SUMMARY

The Origin of Place argues that for the most part place in the creation of the built environment is neglected. By viewing place as a primary consideration through the filters of space, time, and culture we can start to develop places at once acknowledging the past, present, and potential future of a development through a series of layered connections.

Space, composed as enclosure (the act of defining space) and morphology (the articulation of enclosure).

Time, studied through birth, use, and death of place. Shows that over successive phases of use and disuse distinctions arise in areas as a natural process.

Culture, is reviewed as participation (the necessary engagement of the users of place), branding (the economics of place), and movement (the transitory nature of popular culture).

From this review a philosophy of place is asserted, one that promotes the moment of creation as the only controlled moment in the life of our built environment. From that point on the place is exposed to a series of unknown uses, missteps, additions, or reductions over time. From that natural process:

RESIDUE

Successful place is layered through the acceptance and use of various developments that overlap or abut newer works. The life and death of place should leave scars on an area and those wounds inform and provide credence to current processes and activities.

WEB

An individual building or Cities basic structural relationship should be as complex and flexible as possible. Modernism and restrictive zoning promote the development of tree like structures, which separate places from each other. Disruptions and fissures in development are seen on purely economic terms in which each piece of the city is seen as a separate whole. But the whole is not whole; it is an assembly of parts each valid in its inception and continued existence.

TRUMP vs WRIGHT
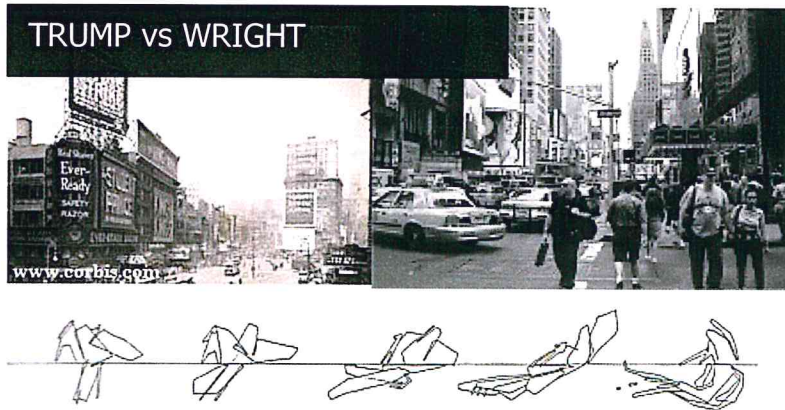
Economic motivation as the sole generator of form and meaning does not engage in the articulation of place. When economic measure trumps place, unarticulated and disconnected development occurs. This leads to the indifference that is mirrored in much of our current society when concerned with the idea of place.

6 SYNTHESIS

Exploring and presenting the ideas expressed in the Origin of Place through an architectural solution does not follow a prescriptive method, nor does the text suggest a specific building typology.

To realize the ideas in the thesis a site study was undertaken. Through a series of tours of neighborhoods in Montreal one area stood out as presenting a specific past in the throes of re-birth. Located at the corner of William and King Streets, in an area known a Fauborg des Recollets, the vacant lot borders old Montreal and the Cite du Multimedia. The idea of place exists within the existing buildings, public space and along the nearby canal. Within the nearby blocks growth and expansion of residential and commercial activities are gentrifying the area morphing the community in the process.

On this site is proposed a Community Arts Centre, one that will incorporate and provide a venue for the loose collection of artists and arts groups that currently reside in the area. Thus providing an existing group with a defined home within the reconstitution of the neighborhood.

The Arts Centre specializes in showcasing and displaying the works of local painters, sculptures, media artists, and performers. Through a series of screens or layers the buildings and site will unfold to provide a number of opportunities for multiple and mixed uses.

The Centres' program accommodates galleries, common rooms, studios, and a theatre/cinema. Ancillary functions will include workshops, classrooms, gift shop/café, dressing rooms, administration offices, ticket window, lounge, collection storage, and

rehearsal studios. The site is seen as a building with a building with the various

program elements scattered over the site enclosed by the existing environment,

mediated by a series of non-programmed spaces and elements. The court, the square,

or the building is expected to shift and morph between public and private space

dependant on need and use.

7 PROGRAM

FUNCTION	Occupancy	Area per person m2	Number	Minimum Area/m2	Assembly
WILLIAM ST. ARTS CENTRE					
Theatre					
Theatre/Cinema	150	2	1	300	A-1
Rehearsal Studios	10	5	2	100	A-2
Dressing Rooms	10	1.5	2	30	A-2
Costume Room	1	50	1	50	A-2
Workshops	15	5	3	225	A-3
Classrooms	20	2.3	5	230	A-2
Ticket Office	2	10	1	20	A-2
Coat Room	150	0.5	1	75	A-2
Washrooms	1	30	1	30	A-2
Storage	1	10	4	40	A-2
Lounge	30	1.5	1	45	A-2
Shipping/Receiving	1	25	1	25	F-3
M.E.C Rooms 5%			1	58.5	
Theatre Total				**1228.5**	
Gallery					
Galleries	85	2	4	680	A-2
Collection Storage	1	200	1	200	F-3
Gallery Total				**876**	
Studio(s)					
Studio B	20	5	5	500	A-3
Studio A	11	9.3	5	511.5	A-2
Studio Total				**1011.5**	
Administration/Commercial					
Café/Bookstore	1	260	1	260	D/E
Administration	13	20	1	260	D
Commercial Space	1	260	2	520	D/E
A/C Total				**1040**	
Non-Programmed Space					
Intervention 1	1	25	1	25	C
Intervention 2	1	25	1	25	C
Main Square	1	1320	1	1320	C
North Square	1	500	1	500	C
Watch Tower	1	25	1	25	C
Non-Programmed Total				**1895**	
Underground Parking	1	25	246		
TOTAL PROGRAM AREA (minimum)				**3999.5**	42994.63

8 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The proposed site is located at the corner of Rue William and King in the City of Montreal, Canada, in an area known as Fauborg des Recollets. The area makes up one of the five districts of Old Montreal, which consists of:

Arrondissement Historique

Notre Dame (north), de la Commune (south), Berri (east), McGill (west)

Old Business District

Saint Antoine (North), Notre Dame (south), Saint Laurent (east), McGill (west)

Administrative Centre

Saint Antoine (north), Notre Dame (south), Bonsecours (east), Saint Laurent (west)

Secteur St.Louis

Saint Antoine (north), Notre Dame (south), Berri (east), Bonsecours (west)

Fauborg des Recollets

Bounded by St.Antione to the north, de la Commune to the south, McGill to the east and the Bonaventure Expressway to the west.

The Fauborg Des Recollets came into being as a result of the construction of the Lachine Canal in 1825. Industrial activities relying on raw materials and heavy transport located in or adjacent to Old Montreal for proximity to the harbour and railway gave rise to the immigrant area known as Griffentown, which the Fauborg Des Recollets formed the eastern most boundary.

Fauborg des Recollets was, and remains, a warehousing district with office and commercial space on Rue McGill. In 1928 Canadian National established a major railway hub to the Old Port, and the area flourished. However by the mid 1930's the area was

in decline and through a process of slow deterioration the demolition of buildings, and general abandonment was well entrenched by the 1960's. As the Fauborg rose and fell so too did Griffentown (mainly Irish population), and with diminishing work and residential activity the area was essentially abandoned. In 1963 the Viger Commission declared the area a Heritage Site. In 1965, the Provincial Government ratified the area as a Heritage Site just as it was constructing the Bonaventure autoroute. The autoroute reinforced less stringent boundaries and provided a definitive edge to the Fauborg and Old Montreal itself. During the next 16 years new regulations on alteration, demolition and construction in the area were set in place. It would take that long before significant financial resources followed the regulations. In 1979 the Provincial Government and the City of Montreal created "Entente MAC-Ville" to revitalize Old Montreal. This was followed in 1981 by S.I.M.P.A (Societe immobiliere du patrimoine architectural de Montreal), created to promote the restoration of Old Montreal within the guidelines of MAC-Ville.

Today Old Montreal is a busy area for businesses and the tourist industry. Yet within the activity along Rue de la Commune the area has large areas that are underdeveloped or vacant. The historical western edge of Old Montreal is Rue McGill, with the Fauborg existing between McGill and the Bonaventure, but the boundary is blurring. As activities found in Old Montreal extend toward the Bonaventure the area changes. These changes can be seen in the "greenfield" approach of the major Cite Du Multimedia developments and along Rue de la Commune. Future developments will continue to morph the area and it is important in this process to remember to consider the origin of place.

9 PRESENTATION BOARDS

Site and Program Presentation Boards, November 2002

Area Plan, General Plan, Building Review

Site Plan, City Bylaws, Historical Review

Parking, Traffic, Program, and Thesis Abstract

Final Presentation Boards, June 2003

Four Presentation Panels

1:100 Site Plan

Isometric of Project

Panels 3 & 4

Theatre, South Elevation

Theatre, West Elevation

Theatre, Main Floor Plan

Theatre, Access Ramps

Studio, North Elevation

Studio, Main Floor Plan

Vignette, North from King and William

Vignette, West from Souer Gries and William

Vignette, West along William

Vignette, Looking East from the Park

Site Plan

9.1.1. *Area Plan, General Plan, Building Review*

9.1.2. *Site Plan, City Bylaws, Historical Review*

9.1.3. Parking, Traffic, Program, and Thesis Abstract
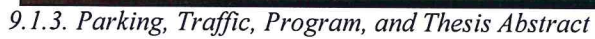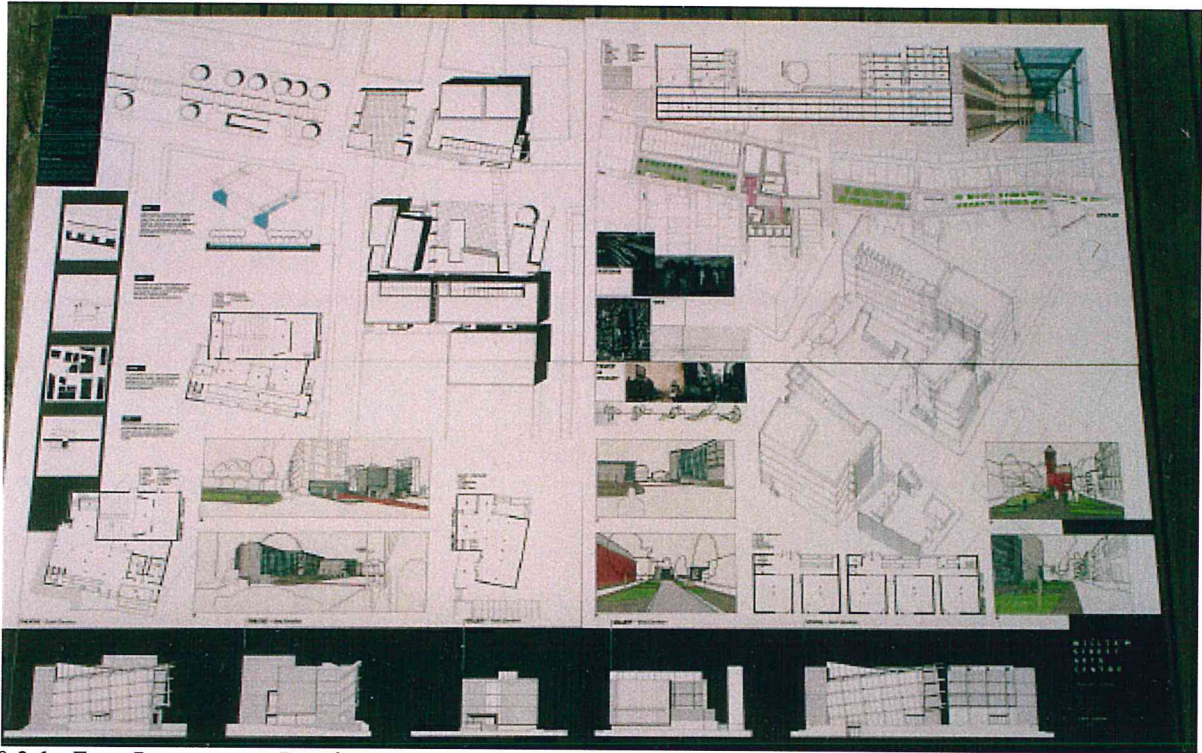
9.2.1. Four Presentation Panels
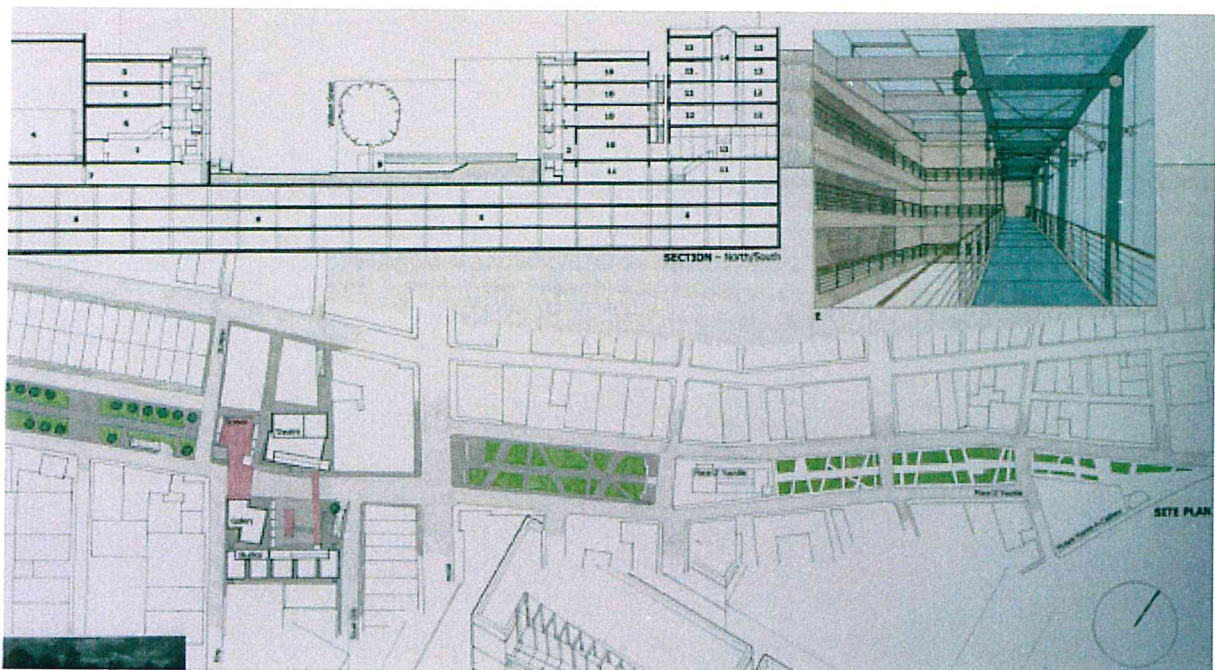
9.2.2. 1:100 Site Plan
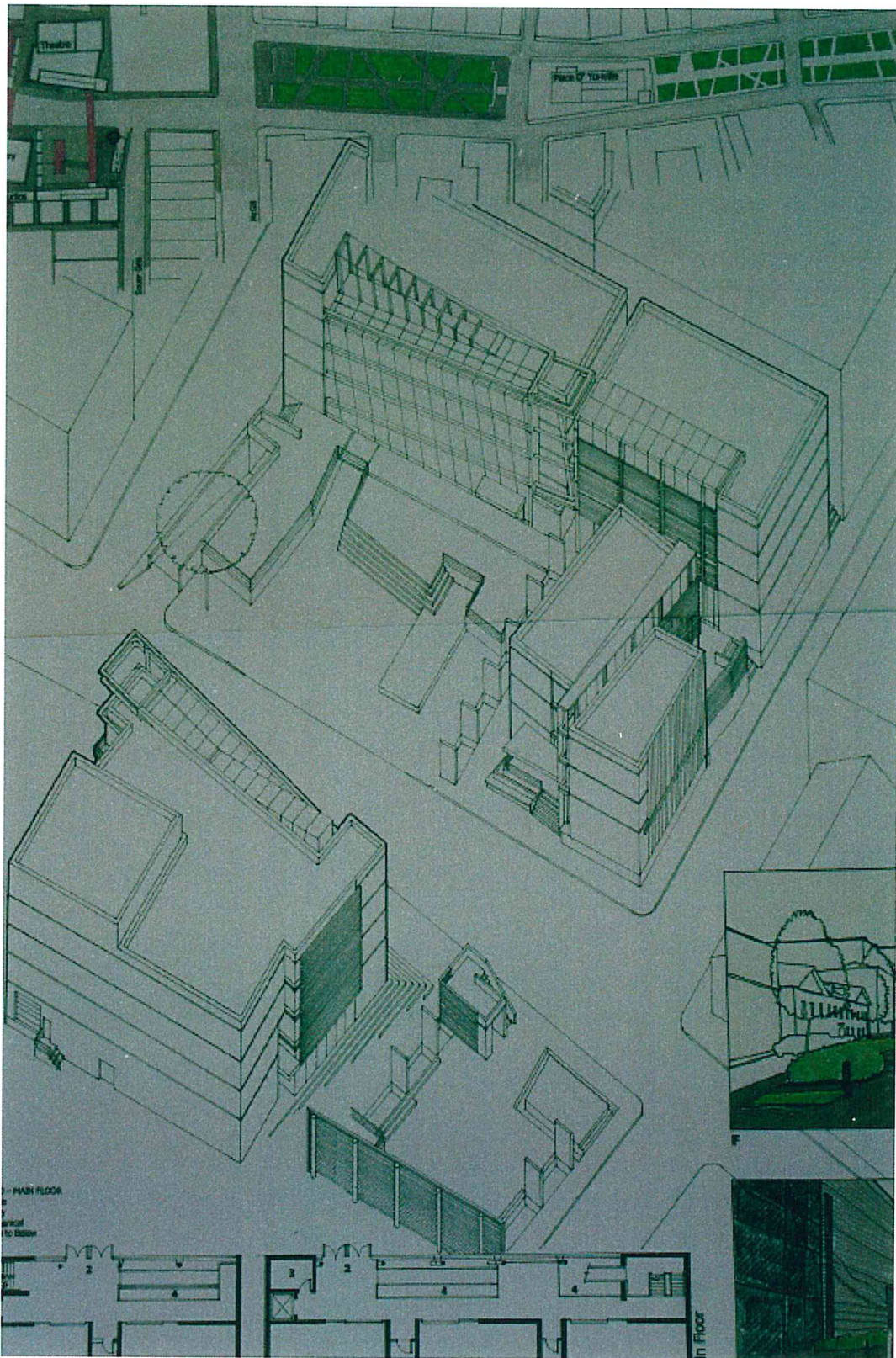
9.2.3. Isometric of Site
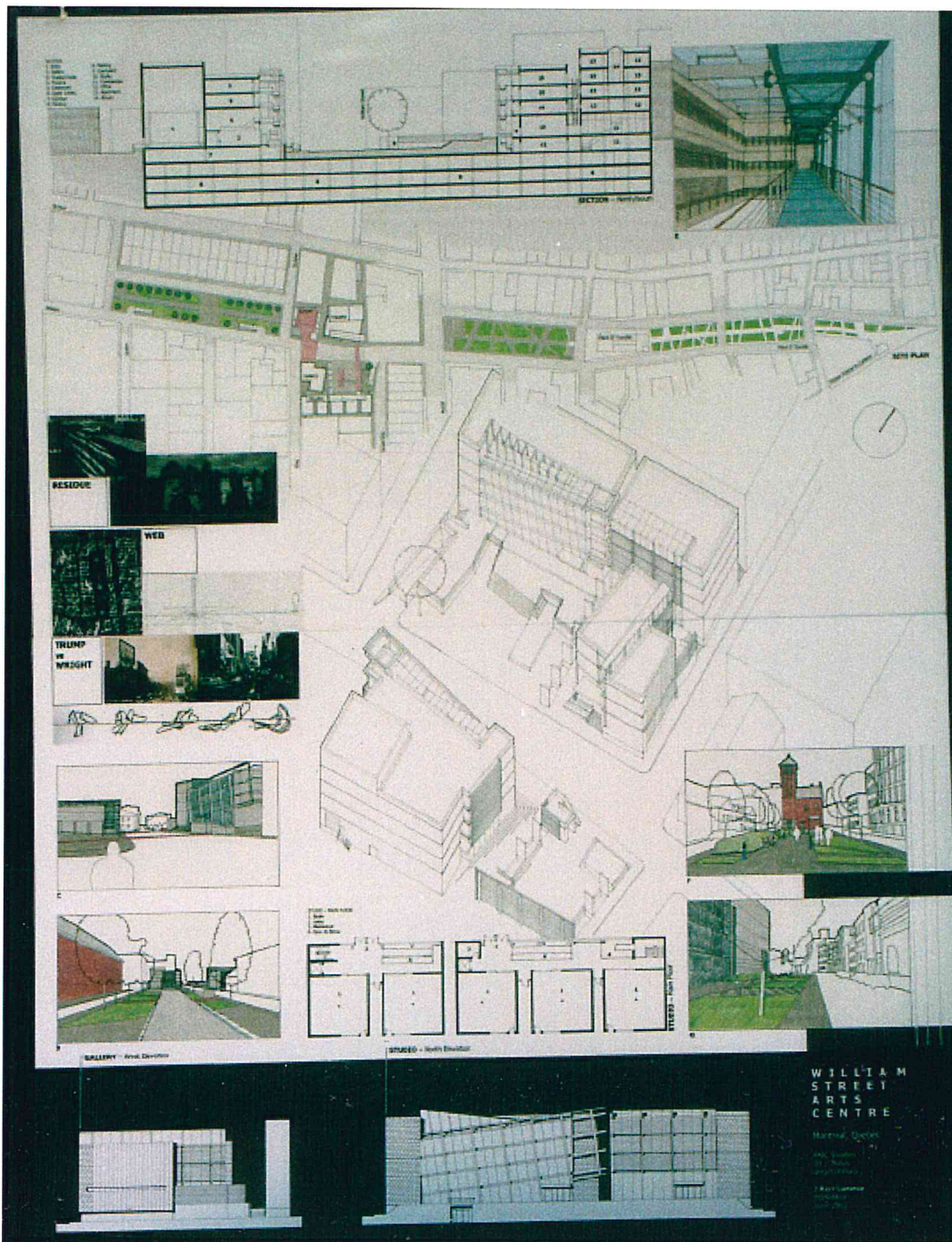
9.2.4. Panels 3 & 4
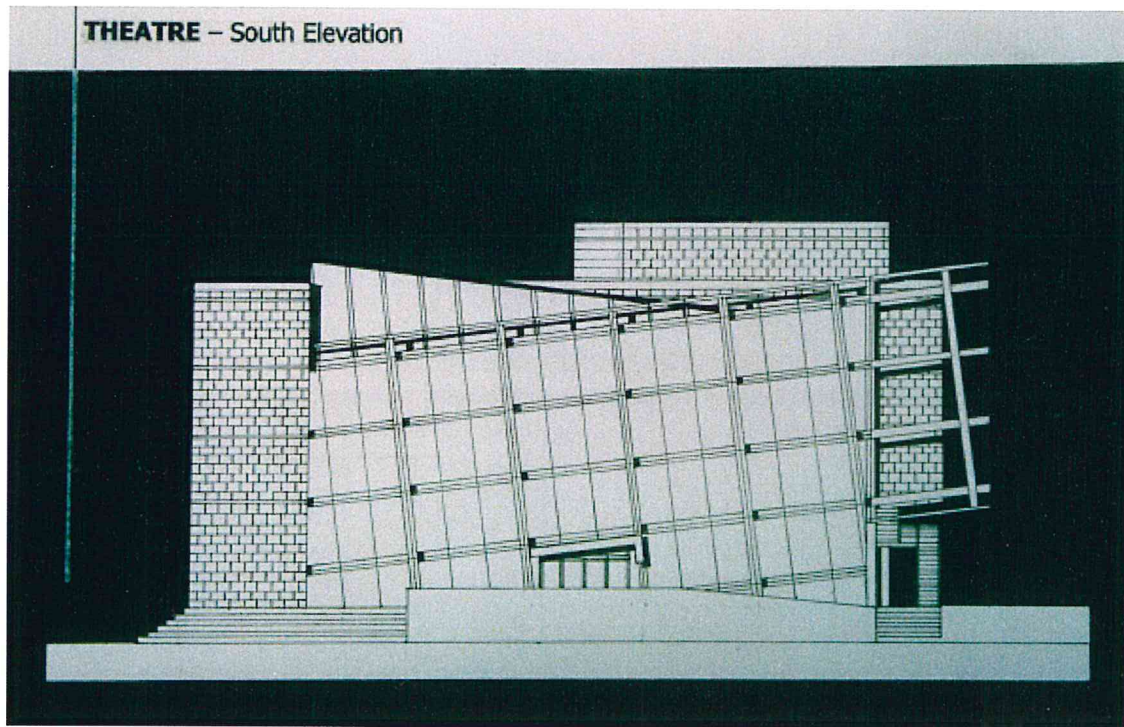
9.2.5. Theatre, South Elevation
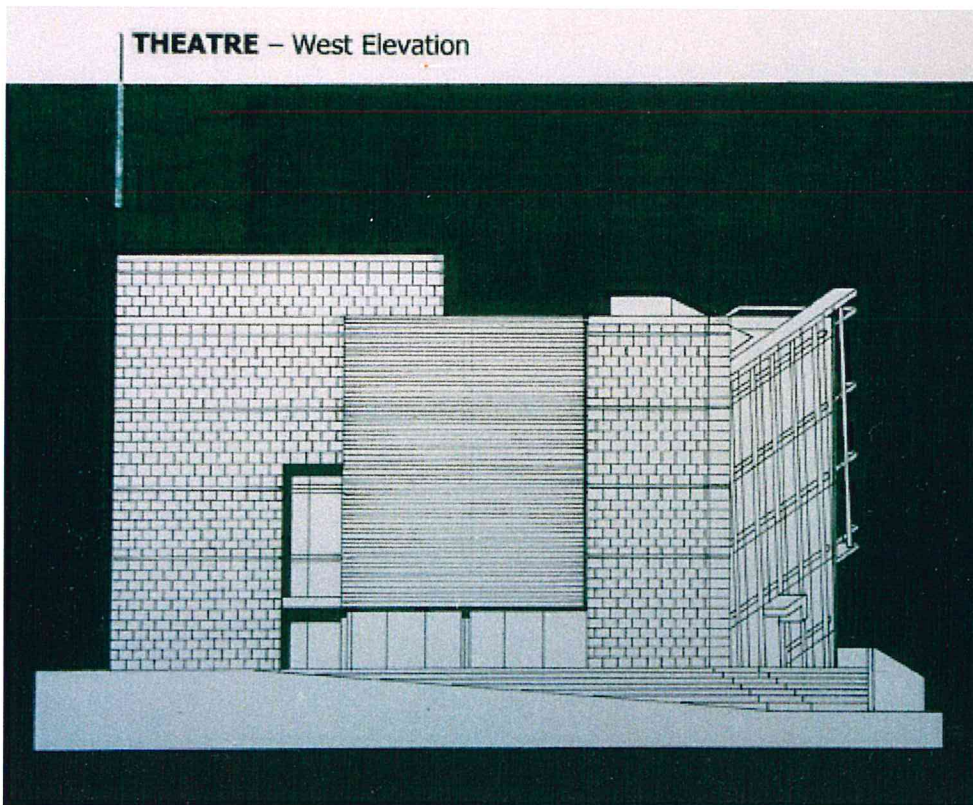
9.2.6. Theatre, West Elevation
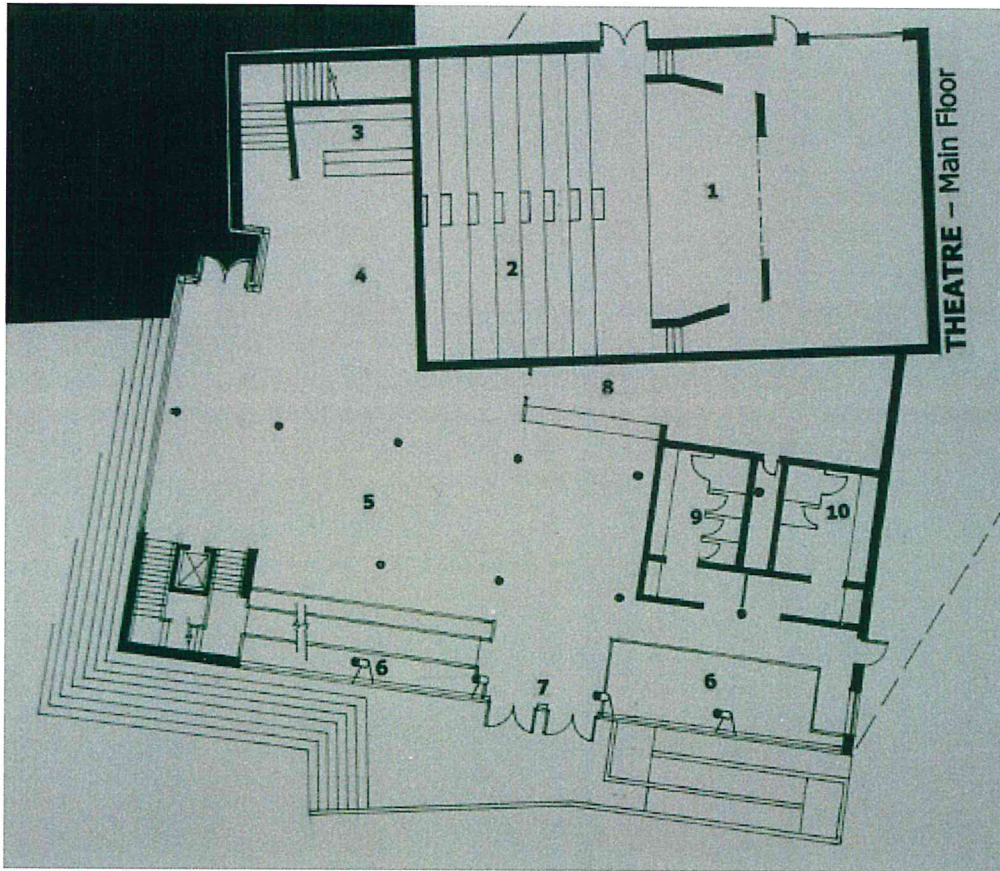
9.2.7. Theatre, Main Floor Plan
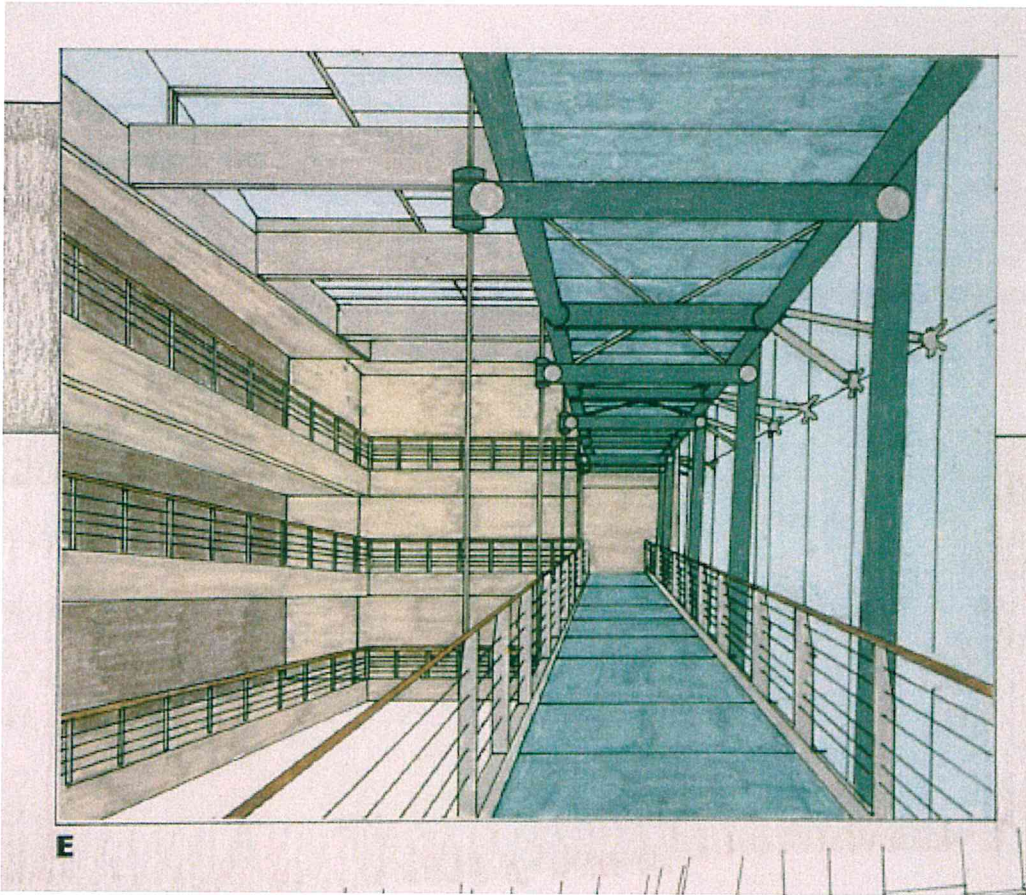
9.2.8. Theatre, Access Ramps

STUDIO – North Elevation
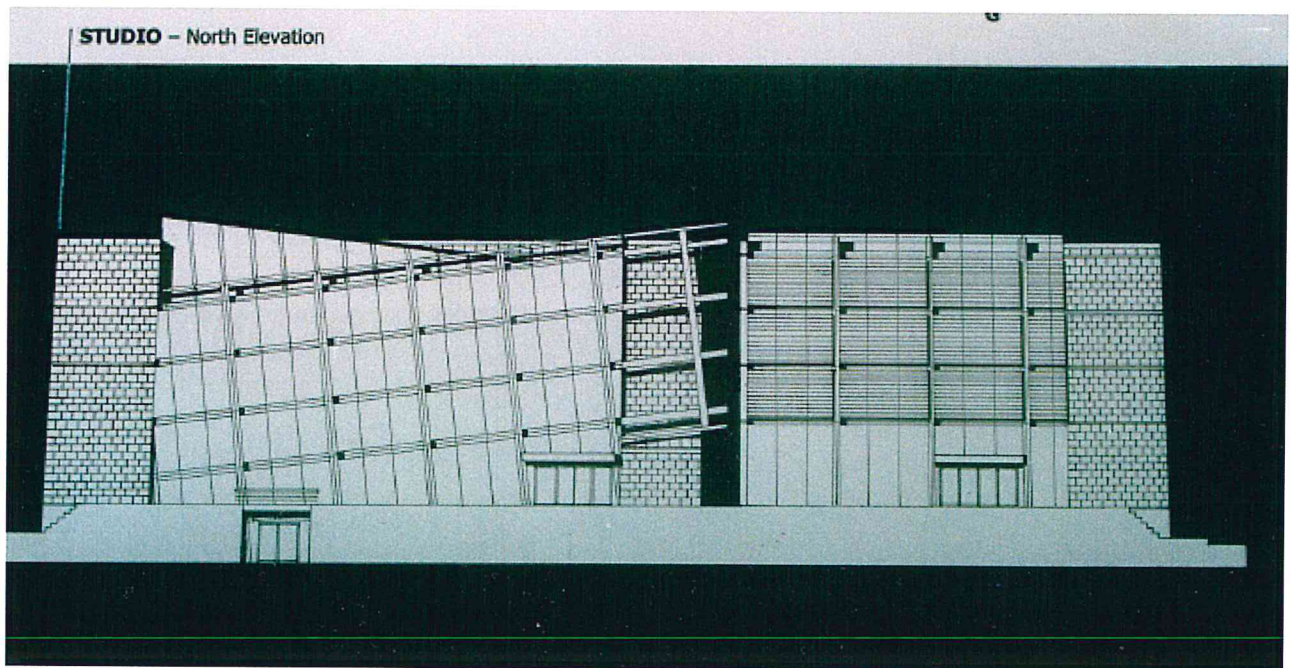
9.2.9. *Studio, North Elevation*   9.2.10. *Studio, Main Floor Plan*

STUDIO – MAIN FLOOR:
1. Studio
2. Lobby
3. Mechanical
4. Open to Below

STUDIO – Main Floor

STUDIO – North Elevation
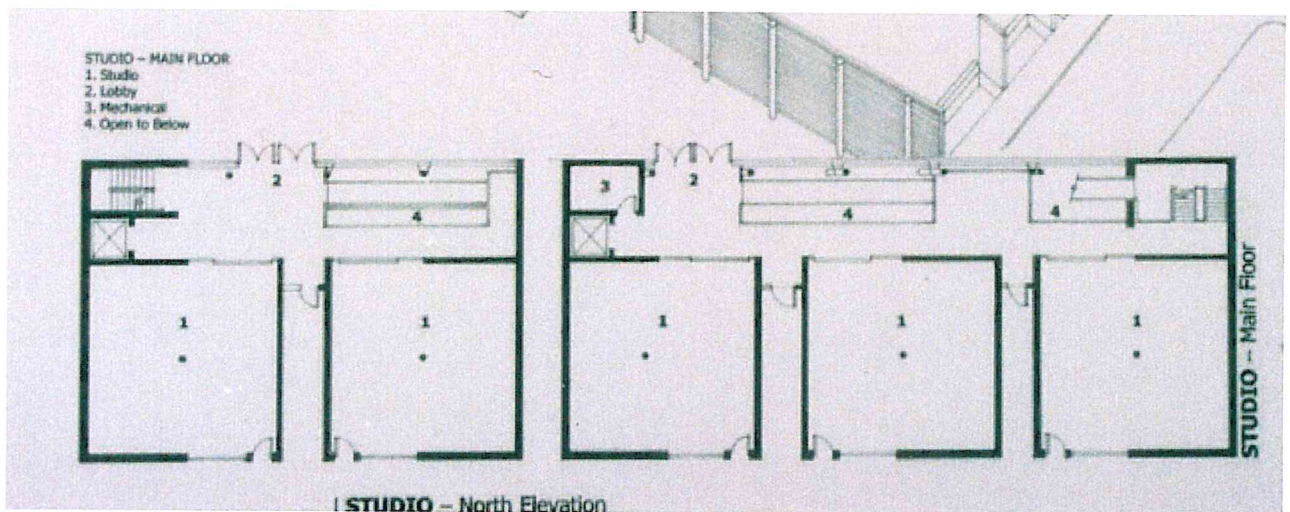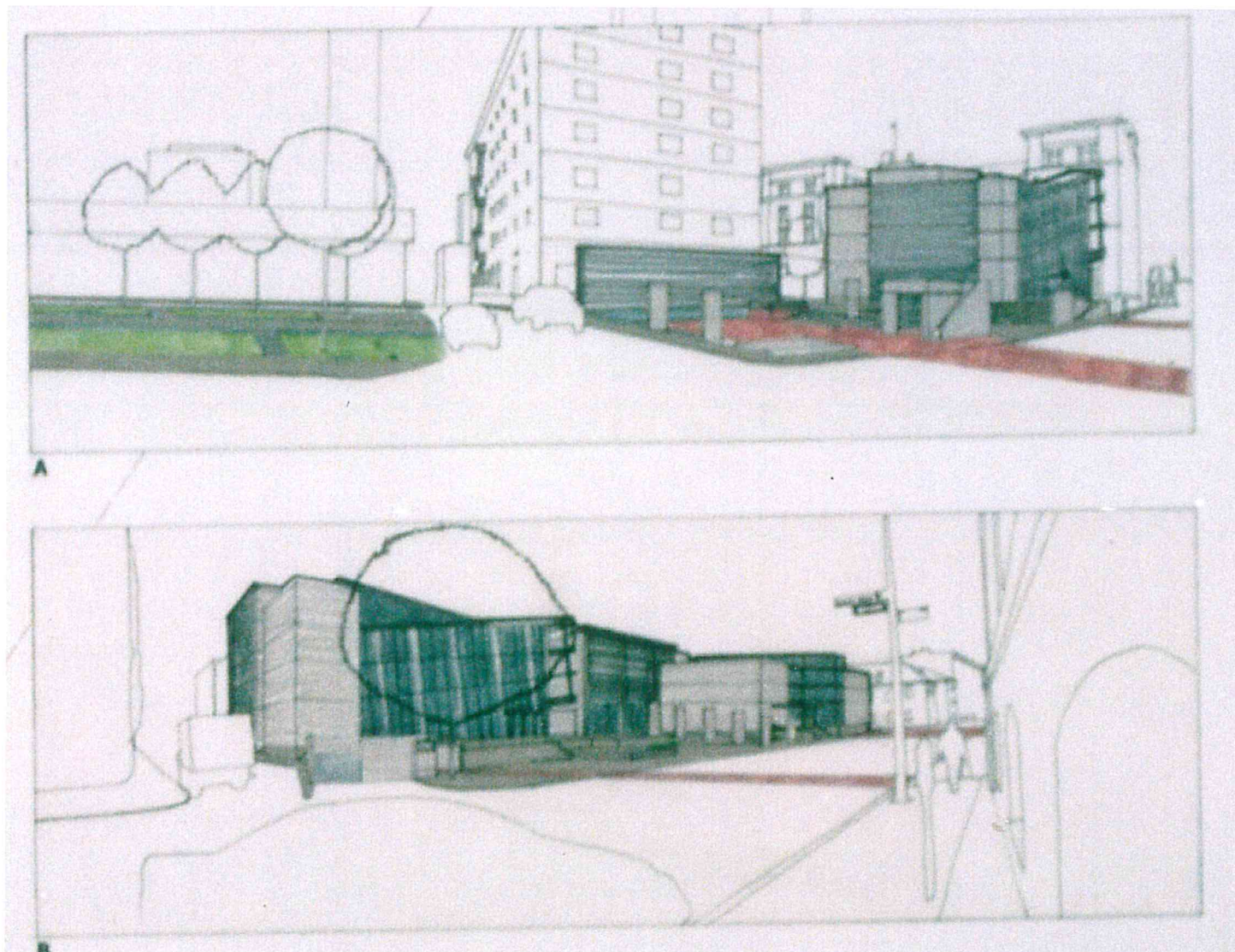
9.2.11. Vignette, North from King and William

9.2.12. Vignette, West from Souer Gries and William
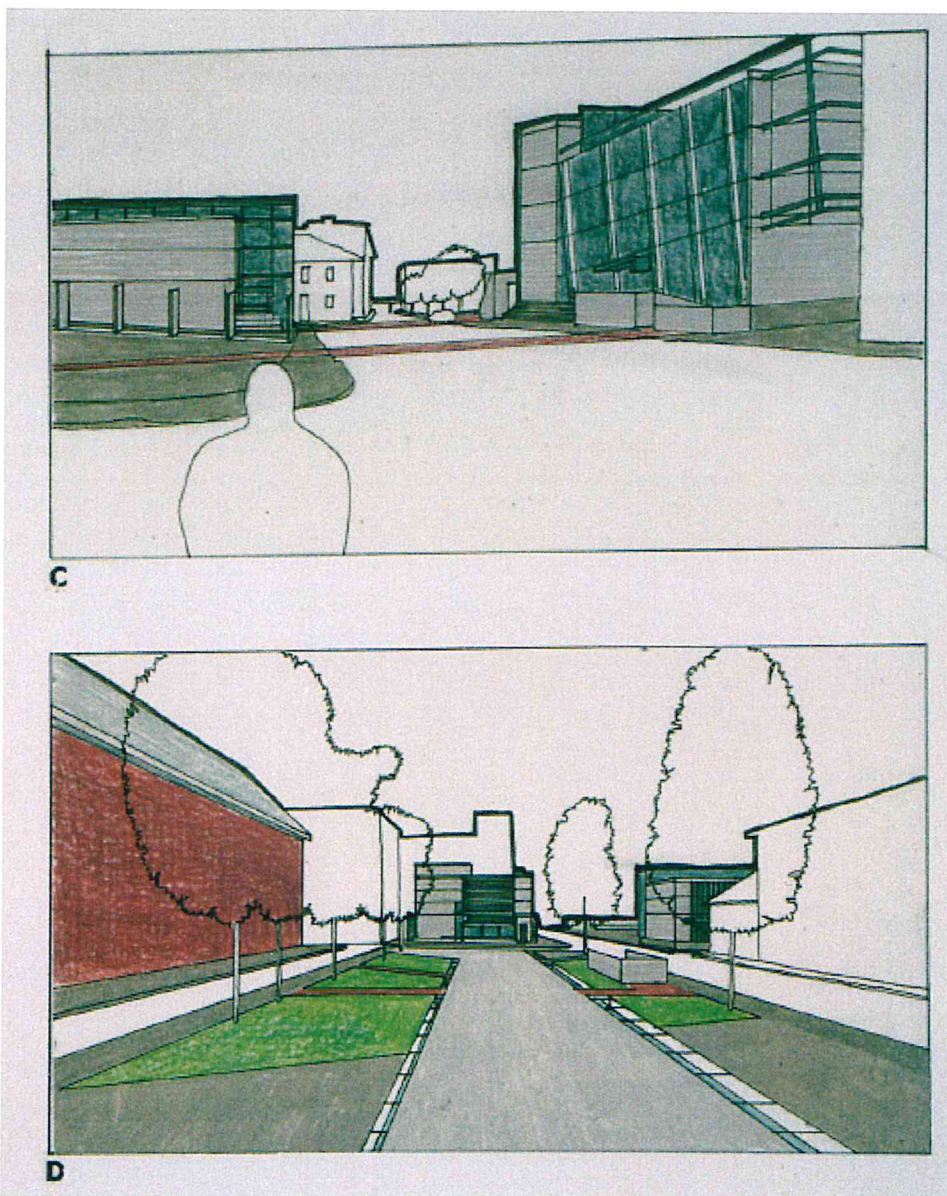
9.2.13. Vignette, West along William

9.2.14. Vignette, Looking East from the Park
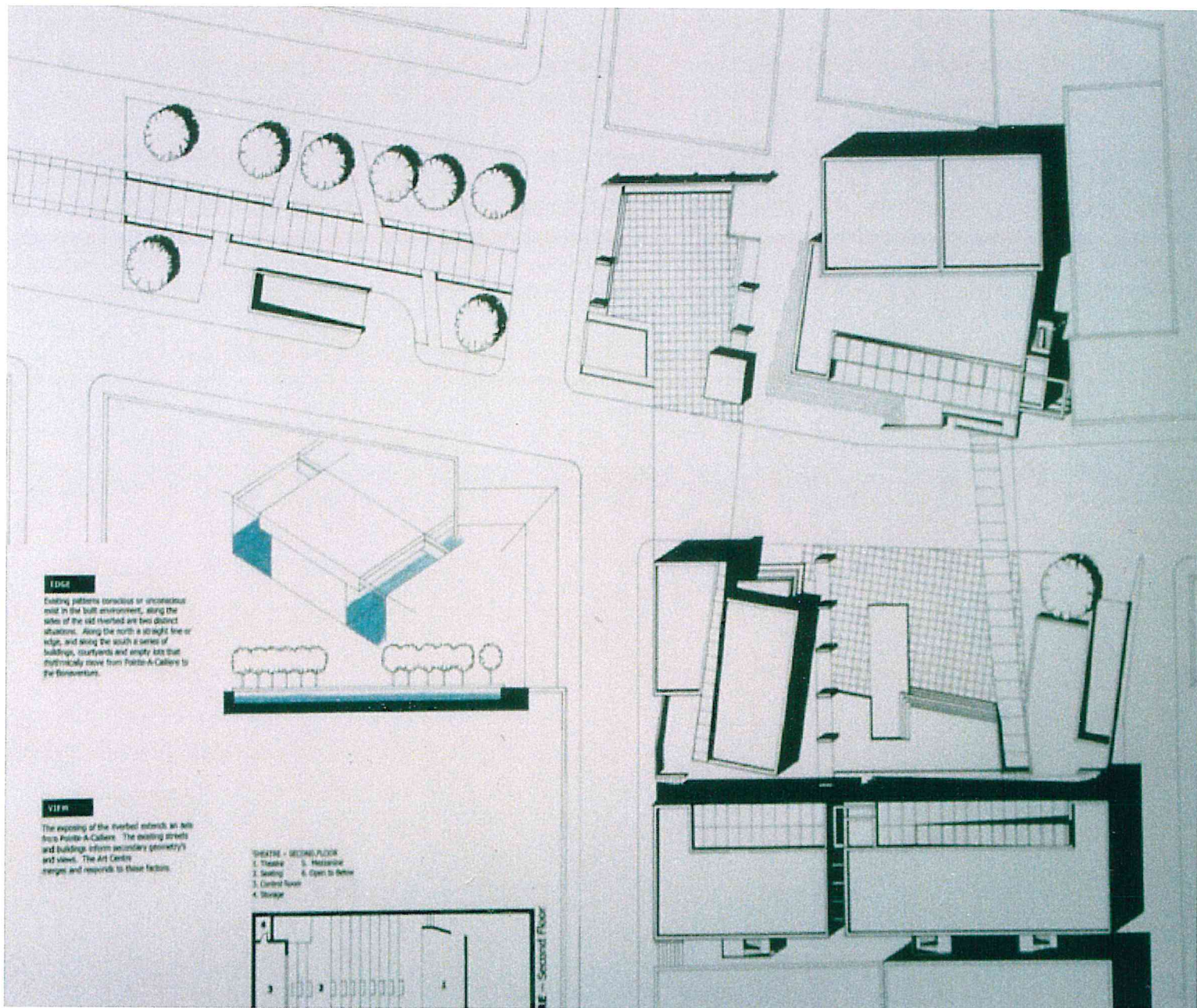
9.2.15. Site Plan

Final Presentation - Model

RAIC Syllabus

D9 – Thesis, Origin of Place

J. Kerr Lammie

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August 2003

10 Model

Photographs

The model shows the developed site for the exploration of the ideas presented in the body of the thesis document. All buildings and landscape elements are constructed and developed to a degree where by the entire scheme is visible.

The model has a number of different colours:

- black buildings are existing

- unfinished wood are new, but undeveloped (or out of scope)

- tan are the gallery, theatre, studios, and intervention
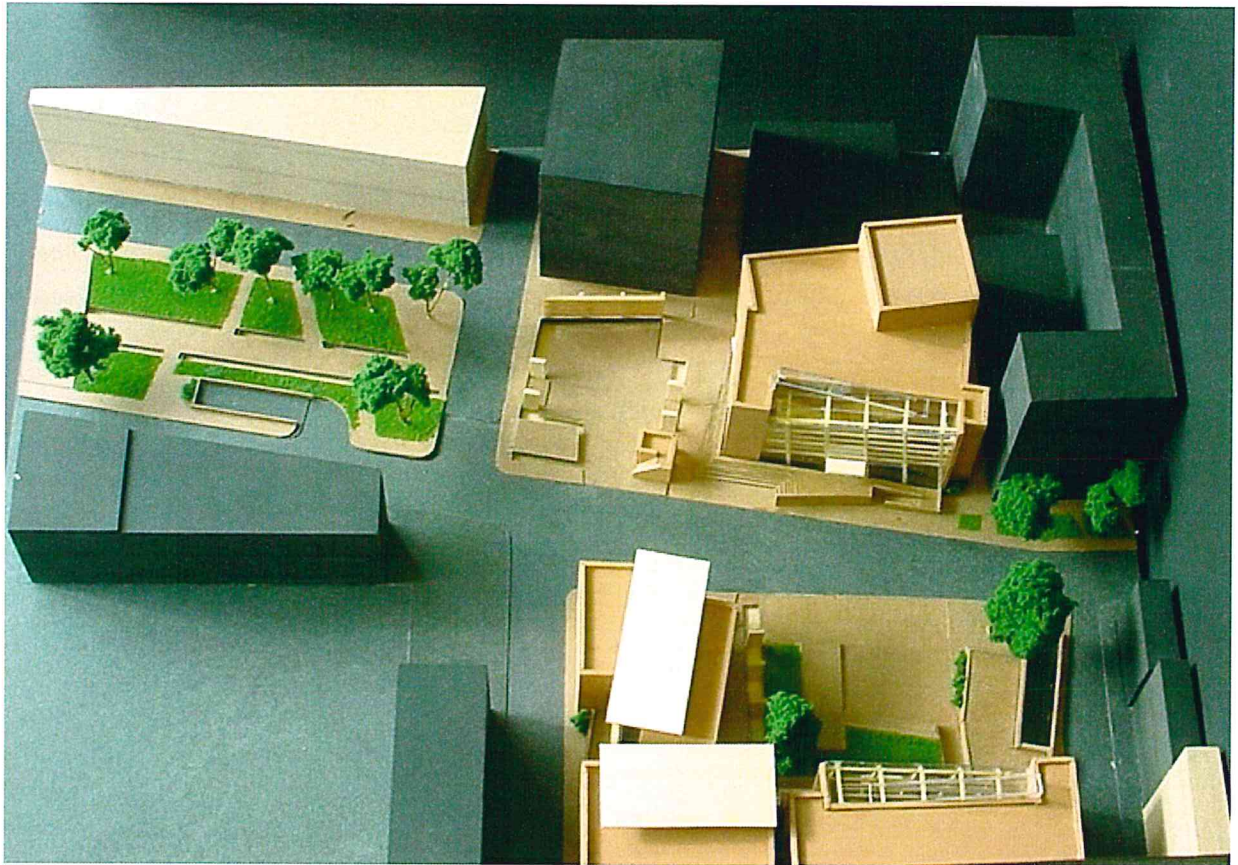
10.1.01. Site Plan

North is to the top of the photo, William Street intersects the site at an angle. There are

a number of existing one way streets around the site:

William Street – west

King – north

Des Souers Gris - south

The north/east corner of the site narrows the roadway to extend the pedestrian areas

across McGill street and into the site.

10.1.02. Looking onto the main public space, studios, and gallery.

10.1.03. Looking onto the Theatre, and the smaller public space.
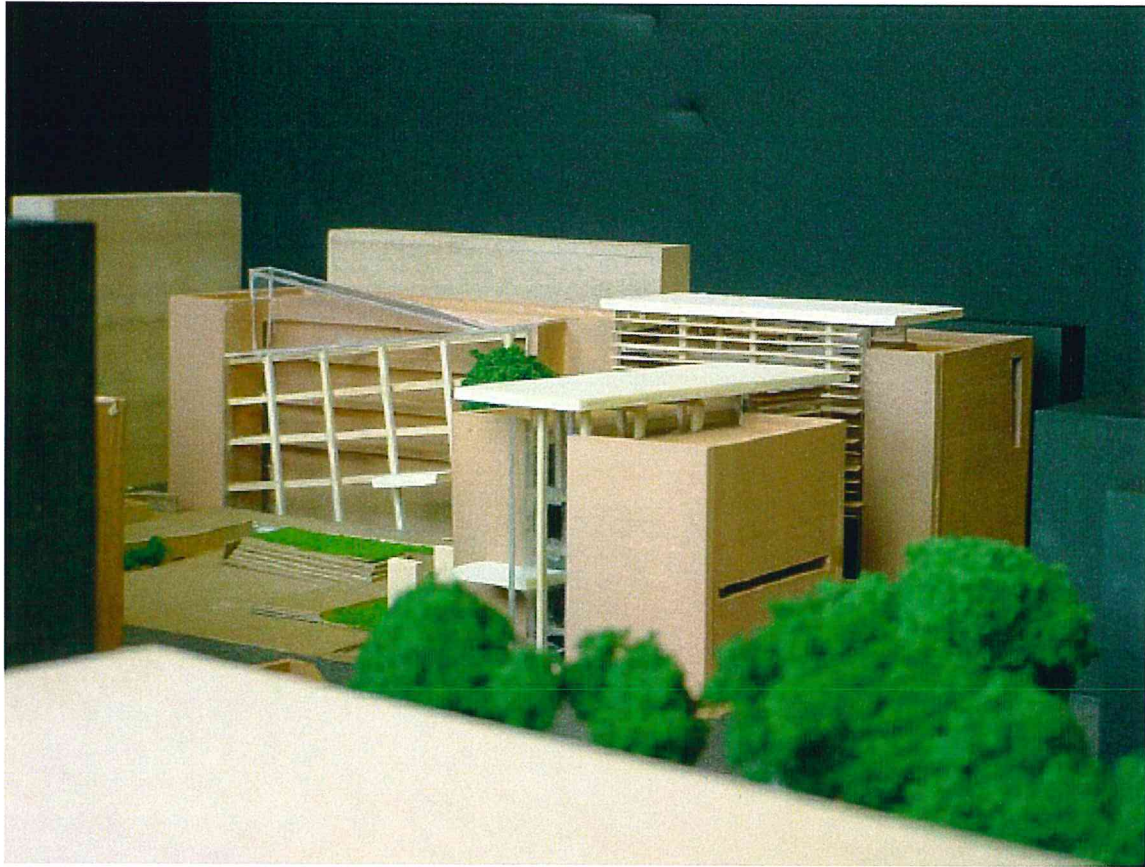
10.1.04. Gallery and Studios
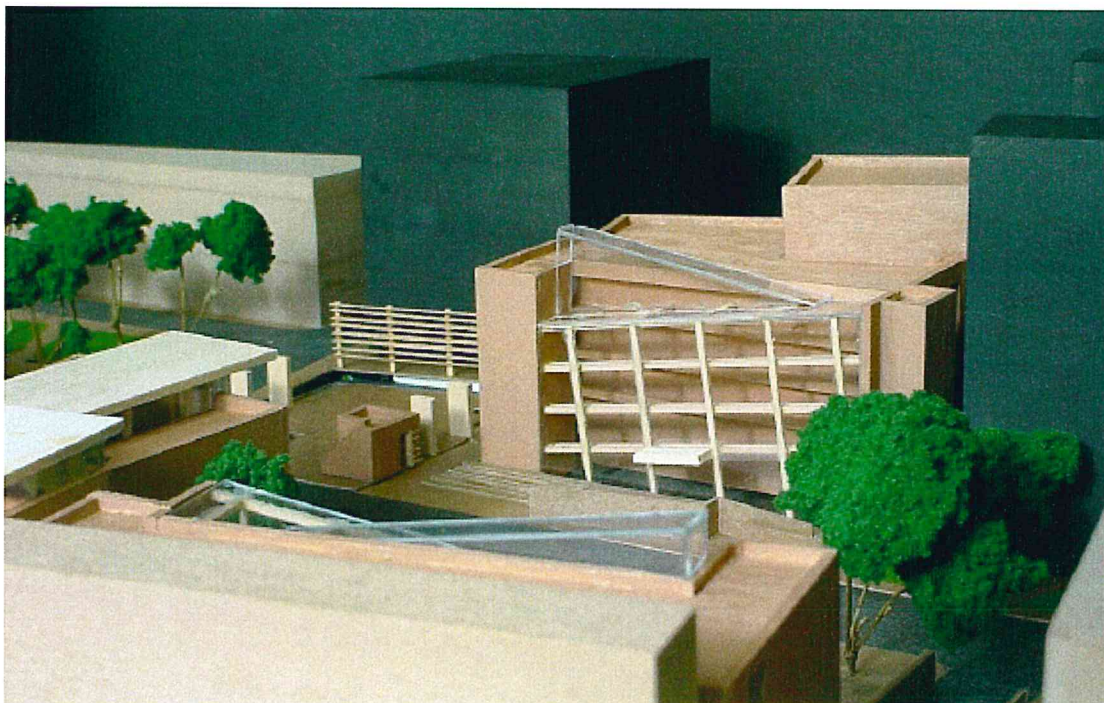

10.1.05. Gallery and Studios

10.1.06. to the West

10.1.07. Theatre Forecourt
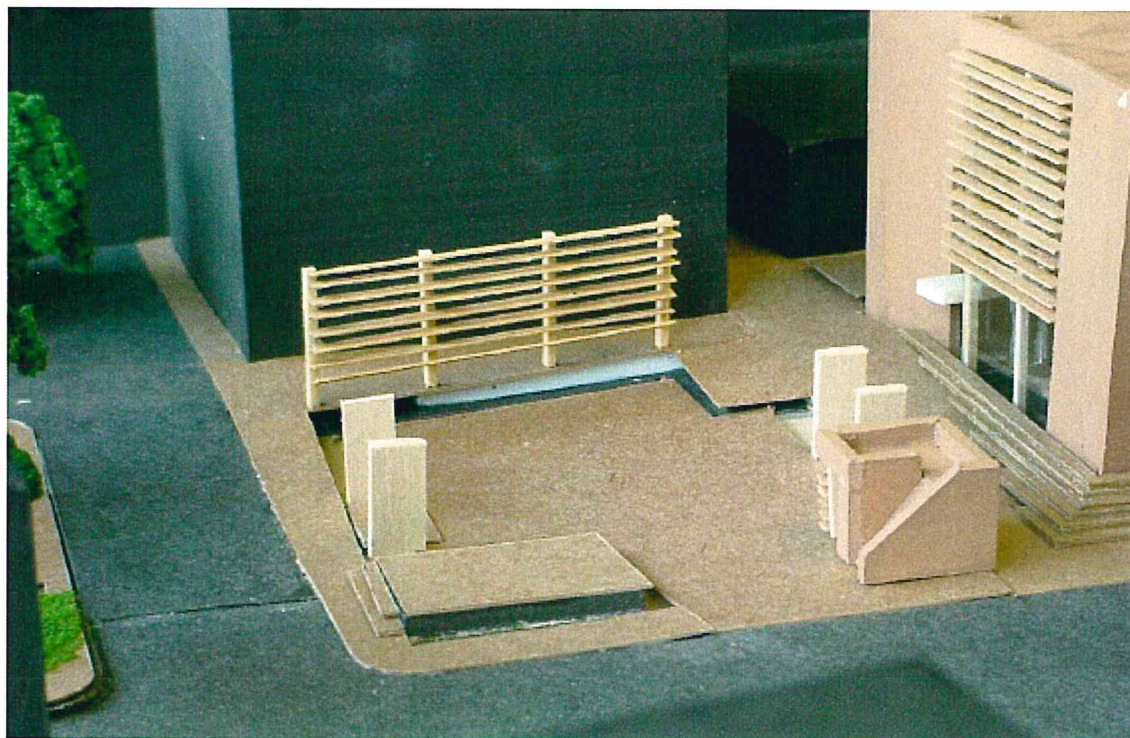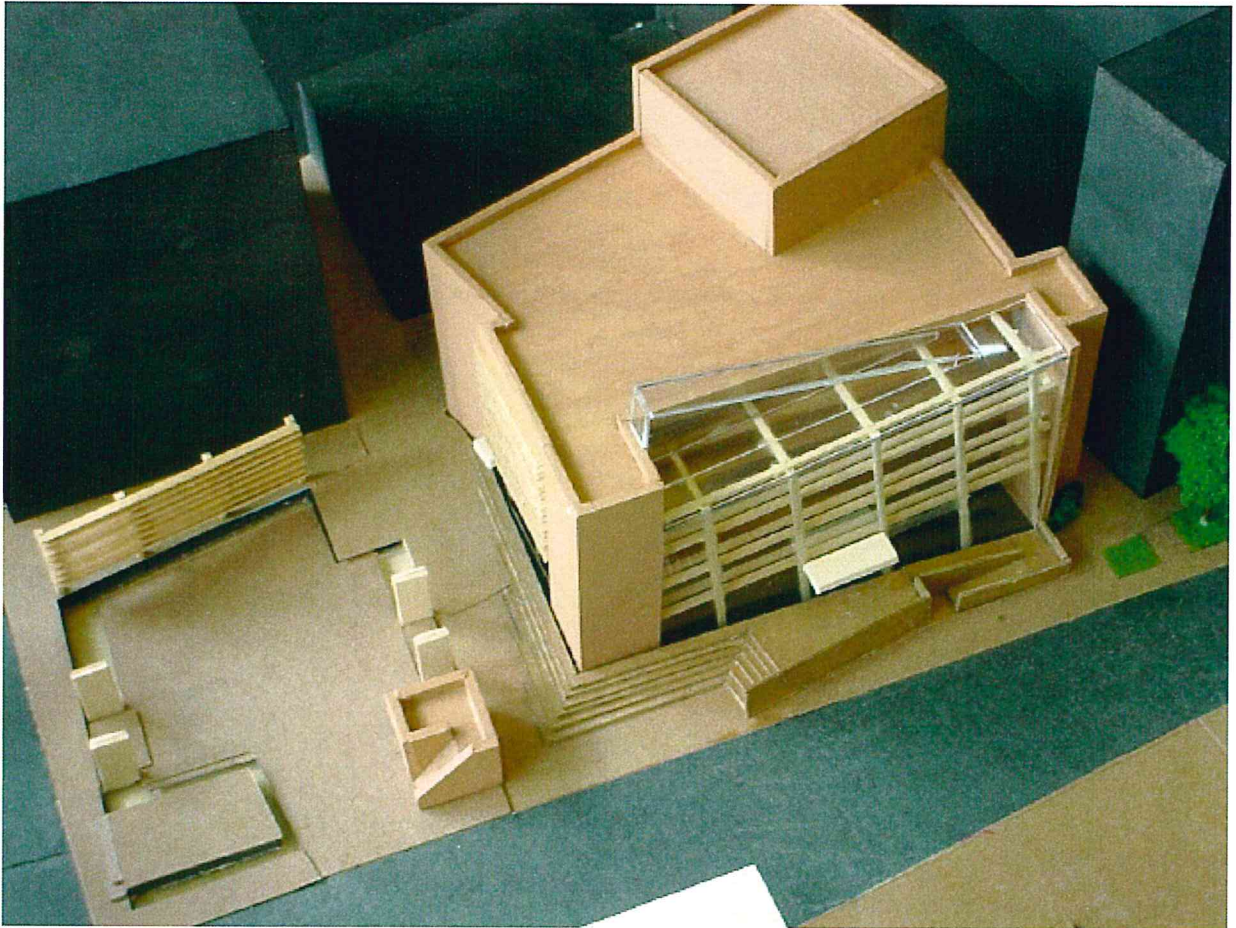
10.1.08. Theatre and Public Forecourt
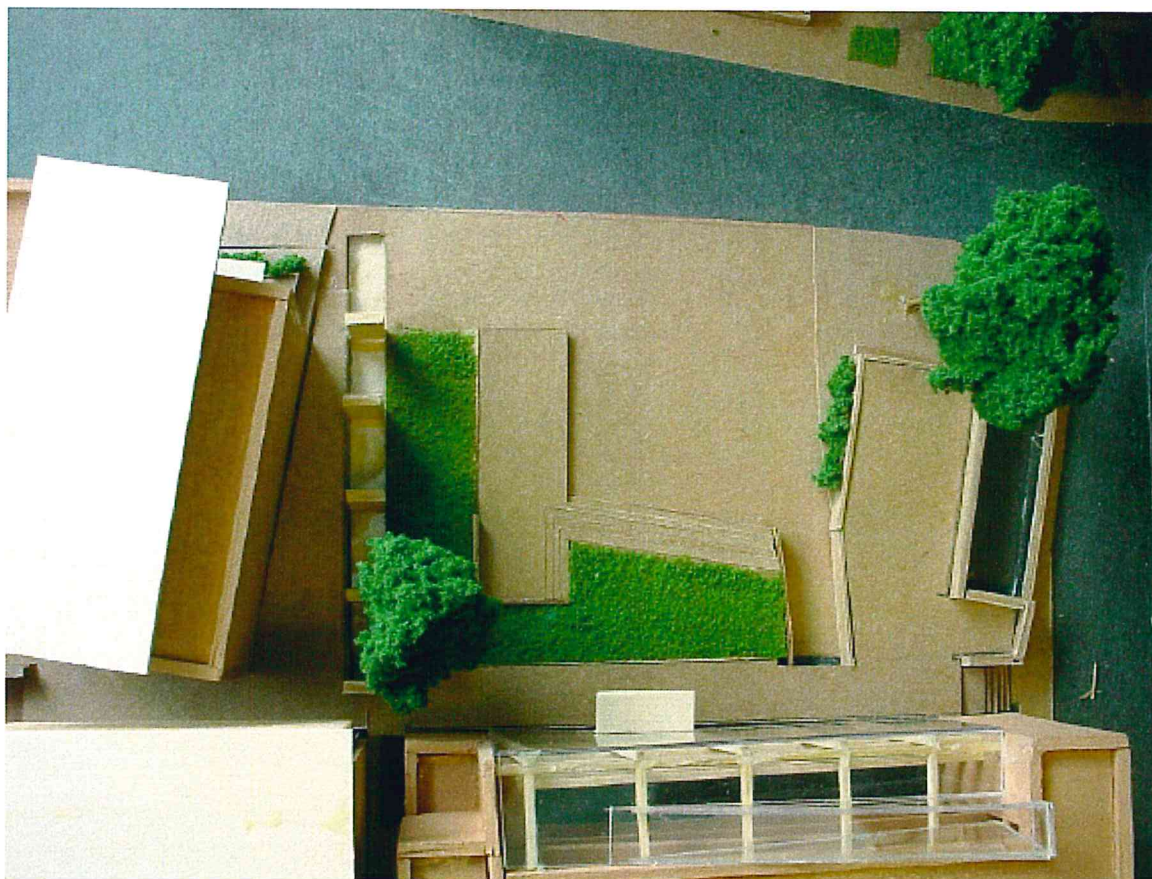
10.1.09. Theatre

10.1.10. Looking East along William Street

10.1.11. Gallery from street level

10.1.12. Theatre from William street

10.1.13. Aerial of Gallery and Studio

10.1.14. Looking East along William

10.1.15. Studio in foreground

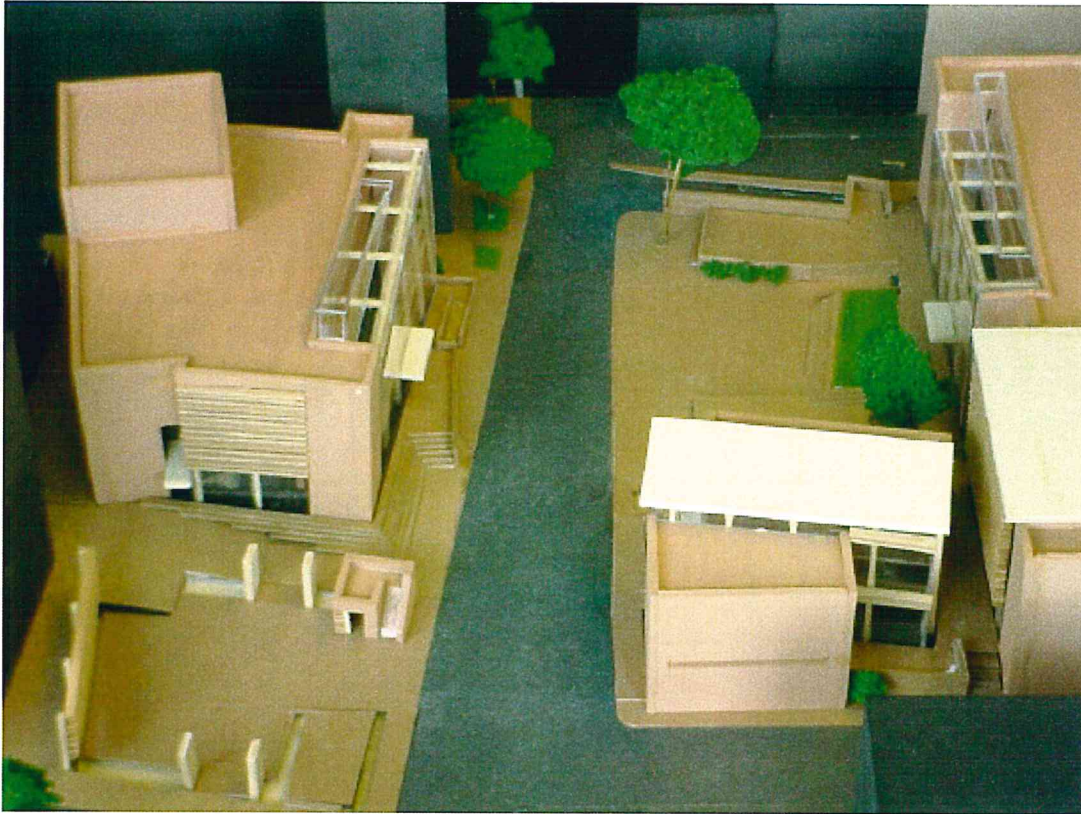*10.1.16. Gallery and Studio along King Street*

10.1.17. Looking East

10.1.18. Gallery and Studios