

# QUEERING COMMUNITY: Collective Housing in Los Angeles

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Bachelor of Arts  
Brown University, 2000

Submitted to the Department of Architecture in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF ARCHITECTURE at the MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY.

June 2012

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# QUEERING COMMUNITY: Collective Housing in Los Angeles

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BY JULIANNA D. SASSAMAN

## ABSTRACT

What is queer architecture? What are the spatial implications of this identity, community, and history? And how can queerness in architecture generate new modes of living?

Queer spaces are often marginal spaces: overlooked, under lit, and co-opted spaces. However, they were also the political, gender bending cabarets of Weimar Germany, the Parisian salons of the early 1920s, the scenic highway stops of the 1950s, and the bathhouses of the 1970s. They are spaces that have been elaborately developed in literature and yet have rarely been built.

Throughout the Twentieth Century, an enduring narrative of resistance has developed within queer identities, one with historical ties to socialism, feminism, prison abolition, environmentalism and anti-racism. Similarly, a queer identity has emerged that challenges gender and sex norms, as well as assimilative gay, lesbian and bi-sexual identities.

This thesis identifies a typological history of queer space and proposes a design for collective housing in Los Angeles that embodies that history. This project operates on a definition of queer space as the temporal appropriation of marginal spaces, bartering in a language of objectification, seclusion and the mapping of the body onto objects and the landscape. Here, it is conceptualized as a valuable mode of rupturing the normative through subverting forms, co-opting spaces, dissolving categorical assumptions, and exhibiting attitudes and behaviors that express new freedoms of identity.

Submitted to the Department of Architecture on May 24th, 2012 in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF ARCHITECTURE.

Thesis Supervisor: Filip Tejchman  
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Thank you to everybody in QuBE. I hope that you continue to build and support a queer community within SA&P.

Thank you to my family and friends for keeping me afloat even through the roughest waters. To Julie for taking this journey with me and for believing. And to my Dad, whose joy for life is carried on.

# QUEERING COMMUNITY: Collective Housing in Los Angeles

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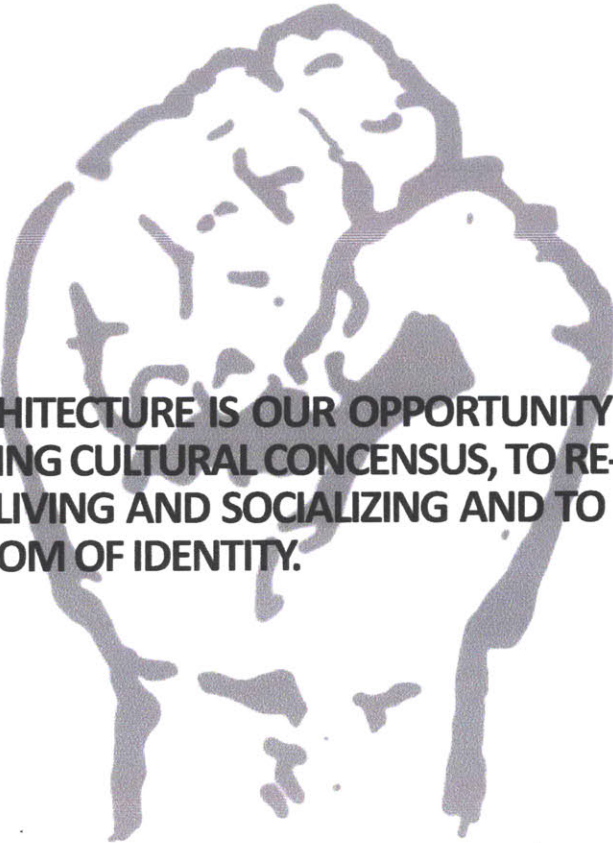
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THE COCKETTES, SAN FRANCISCO, 1970s



**QUEERING COMMUNITY:**  
Collective Housing in Los Angeles





**QUEER ARCHITECTURE IS OUR OPPORTUNITY TO ADAPT TO THE EMERGING CULTURAL CONSENSUS, TO RE-IMAGINE OUR MODES OF LIVING AND SOCIALIZING AND TO DESIGN FOR A NEW FREEDOM OF IDENTITY.**

An enduring narrative of resistance has developed within queer identities, one with historical ties to socialism, feminism, prison abolition, environmentalism and anti-racism. Similarly, a queer identity has emerged that challenges gender and sex norms, as well as assimilative gay, lesbian and bi-sexual identities. Queer architecture seeks to respect these interrelations and to rupture with normative forms that limit the development of a queer community and queer thinking. Queer architecture has the power to re-define the composition of family networks, social interconnections, homes, and communities. It offers the opportunity to quickly adapt the tools and technology of an architectural practice to the emerging cultural consensus, to re-imagine our modes of living and socializing and to design for a new freedom of identity.

While substantial literary and theoretical traditions have been established in relation to LGBTQ identity politics, little has been written as a history of queer space. These were the political, gender bending cabarets of Weimar Germany, the Parisian salons of the early 1920s, the scenic highway stops of the 50s, the bathhouses of the 70s, modernist homes of the 80s, and many more that remain barely visible.

Theorizing a history of queer architecture and queer space promises to reveal new methods of design thinking that operate from this historical trajectory, this literary-theoretical framework, and lead to the radical transformation of normative space.

# QUEER SPACE

1900

Edward Carpenter  
The Intermediate Sex, 1905



1920

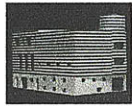
Harold Piers  
Savage Revolt, 1913



Women Cabaret  
1920s



Ubangi Club  
New York, 1920s



Josephine Baker House  
Adolf Lutz, 1928

Virginia Woolf  
Orlando, 1928



1940

Riveters and Welders  
1941-1946



1960

Allen Ginsberg  
Howl, 1955



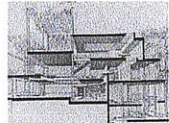
William S. Burroughs  
Naked Lunch, 1959



Drop City  
Colorado, 1965



Archigram  
Barnes Road, London, 1966



Richard Serra  
Pencil Run, 1967



Chelsea Piers  
New York, 605-705



Orinda House  
Charles Rosen, 1970



Gilles Deleuze  
Anti-Edipus, 1971



1980

Samuel Delany  
Dhalgren, 1975



Carlesito  
San Francisco, 1970s



Ray Van Dyke  
1977



2000

Andrea Zittel  
Critical Space  
2007



High Line Park  
Daniel Libeskind, Christiane  
Diller, Scottie Barto  
2009



## BUILDING HISTORY

Within our lifetimes, the riots at Stonewall and the Harvey Milk White Nights have become canonized and legitimate historical events. In what future will we celebrate the decrepit piers, sites of cruising in the 70s that ultimately developed the social networks now being legitimized through the gay marriage movement? How must we re-read history to accommodate the sexualization of rest-stop bathrooms, suburban malls, and city infrastructure?

These timelines present a history of spatial typologies of queer space beginning in the Twentieth Century, as the terms gay, lesbian, and queer began to identify a population, one that quickly developed into a social and cultural community. Proposing this multilayered history prompts a re-reading of recognizable spaces and typologies into an emerging canon of queer space.



CHELSEA PIERS, NEW YORK, 1970s

1890

1900

1910

1920

1930

1940

Railway Age  
1825-1840

Slavery Abolished in US  
1865

Lightbulb invented  
1879

Model T Ford  
1908

World War I  
1914-1918

Prohibition  
1920-1933

Harlem Renaissance  
1919-1930

Stock Market Crash  
1929

Great Depression  
1929-1940

Persecution by Nazi Germany  
1934

World War II  
1939-1945

Kinsey  
1948

## INTERIOR FORTRESS

Sigmund Freud's Office  
Vienna, 1891-1938



Le Corbusier  
Eusebio Wolfe, 1910



## SUPER GENDER SPACE

Women's Suffrage  
1848-1919



Riveters and Welders  
1941-1946



WAVES  
US Armed Forces, 1942-1948



## LITERARY

Oscar Wilde  
Picture of Dorian Gray, 1890



Edward Carpenter  
The Intermediate Sex, 1905



Marcel Proust  
Swann's Way, 1913  
Gertrude Stein  
The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas, 1914



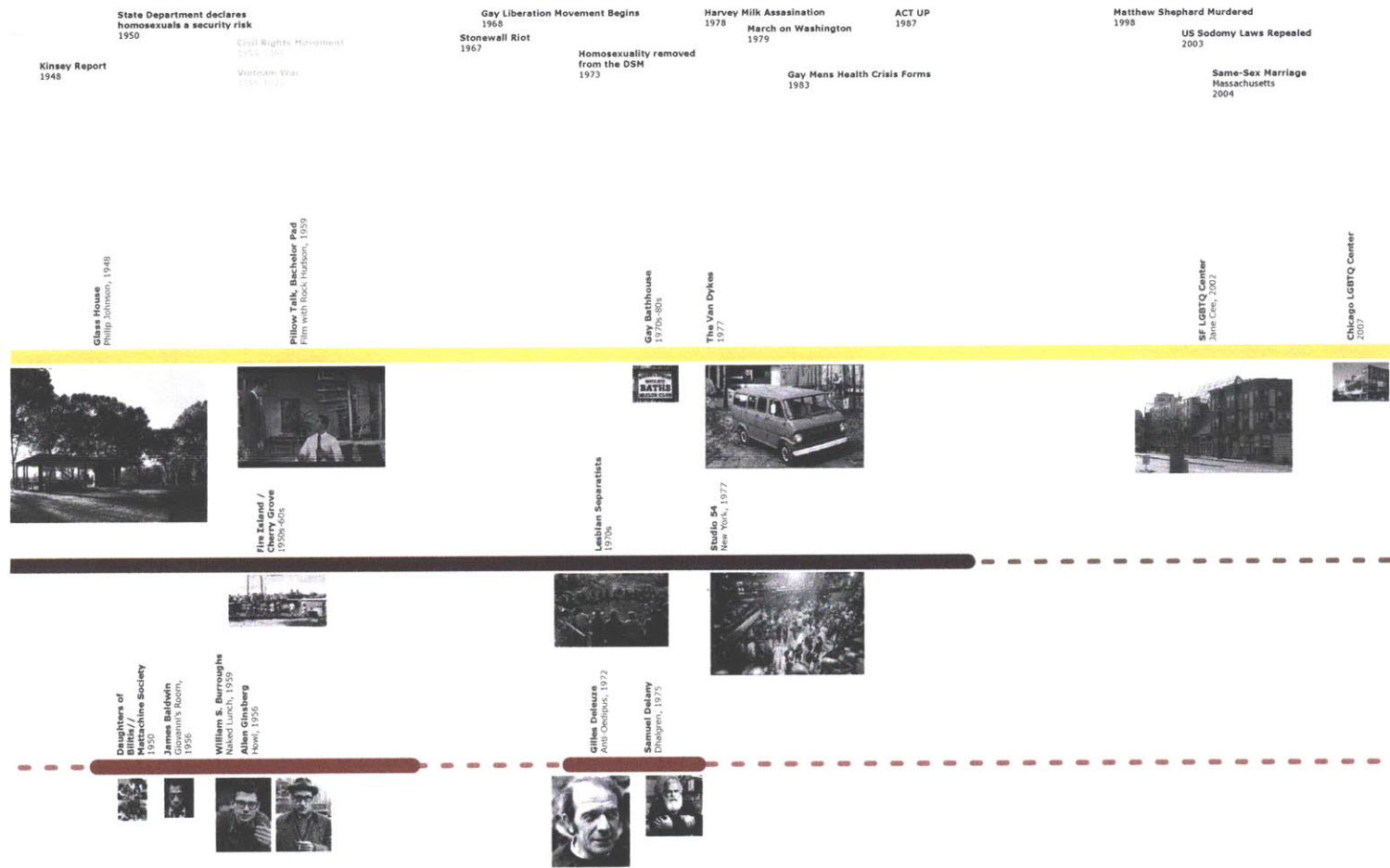
Willie Cathers  
My Antonia, 1918

Edna St. Vincent Millay  
The Fifth Season, 1921



Radclyffe Hall  
Well of Loneliness  
1928  
Virginia Woolf  
Orlando, 1928





1890

1900

1910

1920

1930

1940

Railway Age  
1825-1890

Slavery Abolished in US  
1865

Lightbulb invented  
1879

Model T Ford  
1908

World War I  
1914-1918

Prohibition  
1920-1933

Harlem Renaissance  
1919-1930

Stock Market Crash  
1929

Great Depression  
1929-1940

Persecution by Nazi Germany  
1934

World War II  
1939-1945

Kinsey  
1948

## MOBILE QUEER SPACE

## LABYRINTH

## CABARET

## PUBLIC PROMENADES



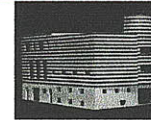
Versailles  
1705



Wolfram Cabaret  
1920s



Ubangi Club  
New York, 1920s



Josephine Baker House  
Asilf Loop, 1928



Finocchio  
San Francisco, 1936-99



Central Park  
1940s



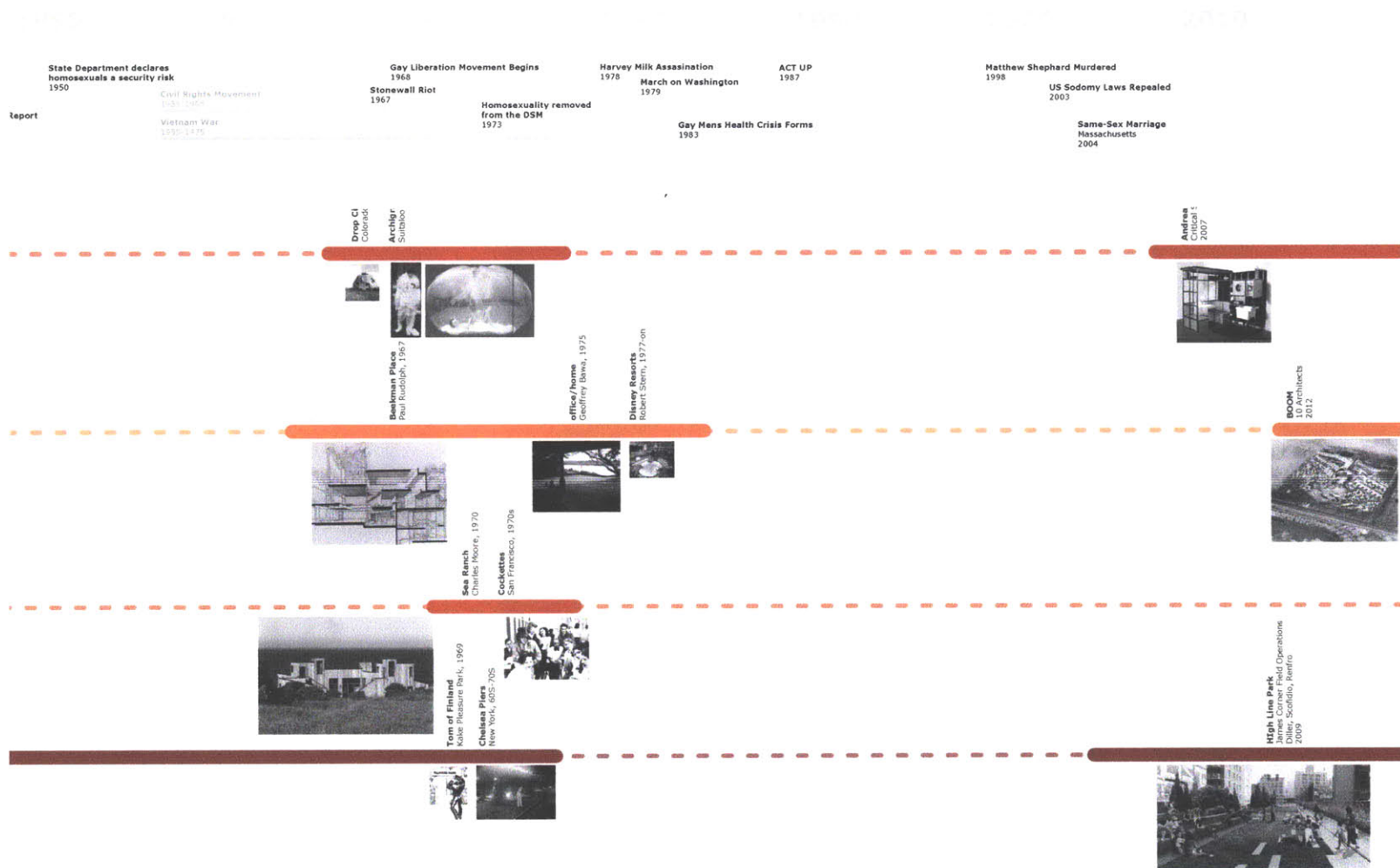
American Walking Mall  
Victor Grunv, 1940s



E-1026  
Elton John, 1926

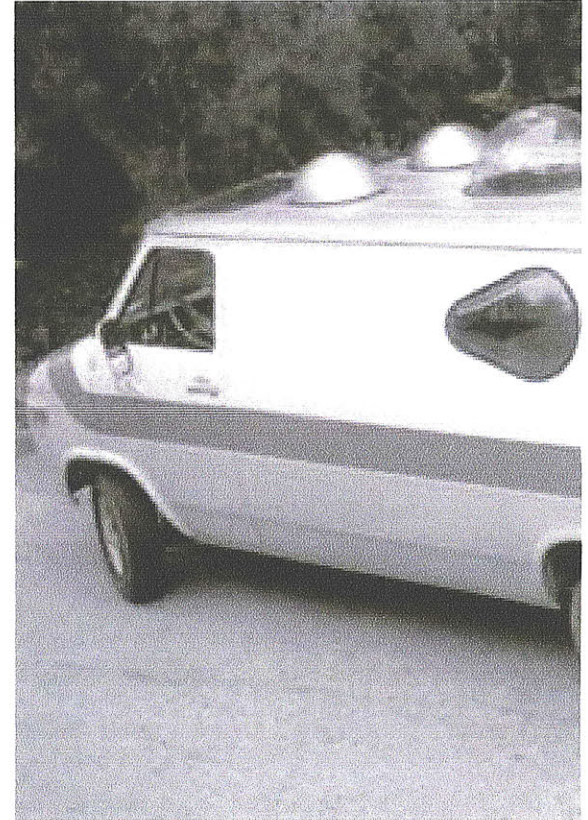


Hearst Castle  
Julia Morgan, 1920s





THE BEATS



ANT FARM

## THREE CASE STUDIES

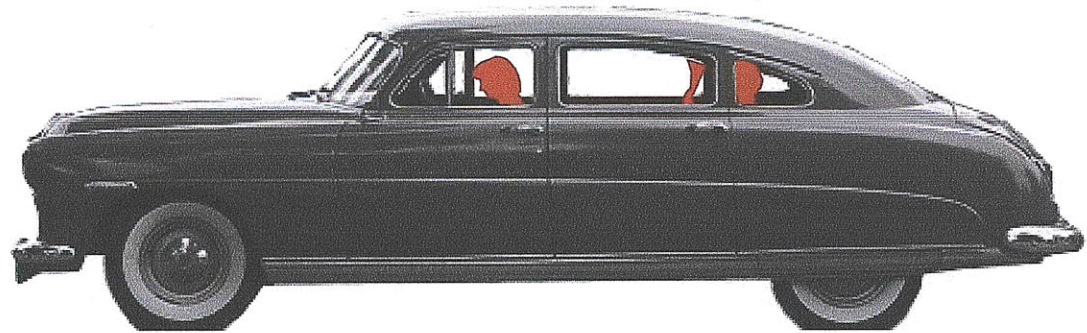
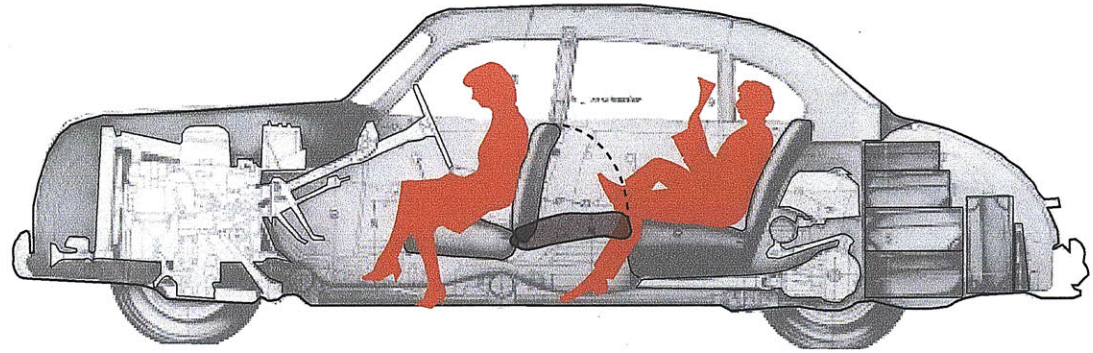


ANDREA ZITTEL

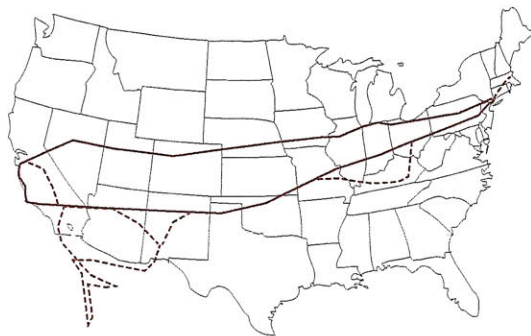
Jack Kerouac wrote On the Road while travelling in a 1949 Hudson. This model had a lush interior, upholstered ceilings, interior theater lights, bench seats and in some cases curtains. Everything was designed for plush comfort and leisure so that no change in the social norms was required for car travel.

The Beats subverted this instigation for continuous behaviour. They harnessed this emerging technology to wildly expand their sphere of experience, hooking up with anonymous young men in far flung places, following drugs, running out of gas, hitch hiking and undermining the prescribed use of the plush interiors.

In this way, the Beats pioneered a new, queer, domestic space- the mobile interior.



1949 HUDSON



KEROUAC'S CROSS COUNTRY ROUTE

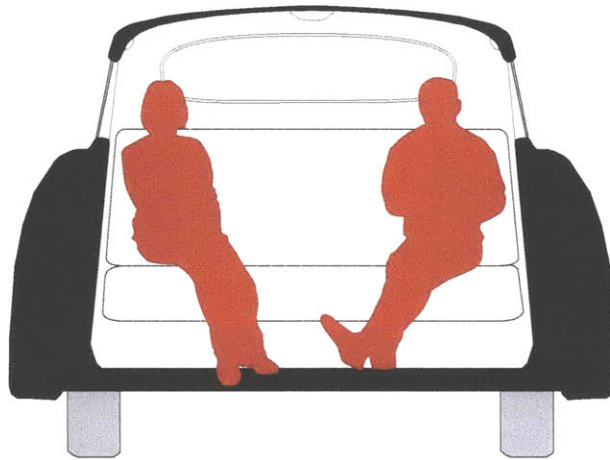


## THE BEATS AND THE MOBILE DOMESTIC

*In my writing I am acting as a map maker, an explorer of psychic areas, a cosmonaut of inner space, and I see no point in exploring areas that have already been thoroughly surveyed.*

- William Burroughs

Through their cross country road trips, The Beats built networks that changed the concept of domestic space from one that is static, to dynamic, from anchored to mobile. Living in their cars, they turned the interior of the automobile into the living room, bedroom, smoking porch and bar. By making the domestic realm mobile, this use of vehicles then connected roadside stops and scenic overlooks to sex-space, queering the understanding and potentials of the open road.



1949 HUDSON INTERIOR

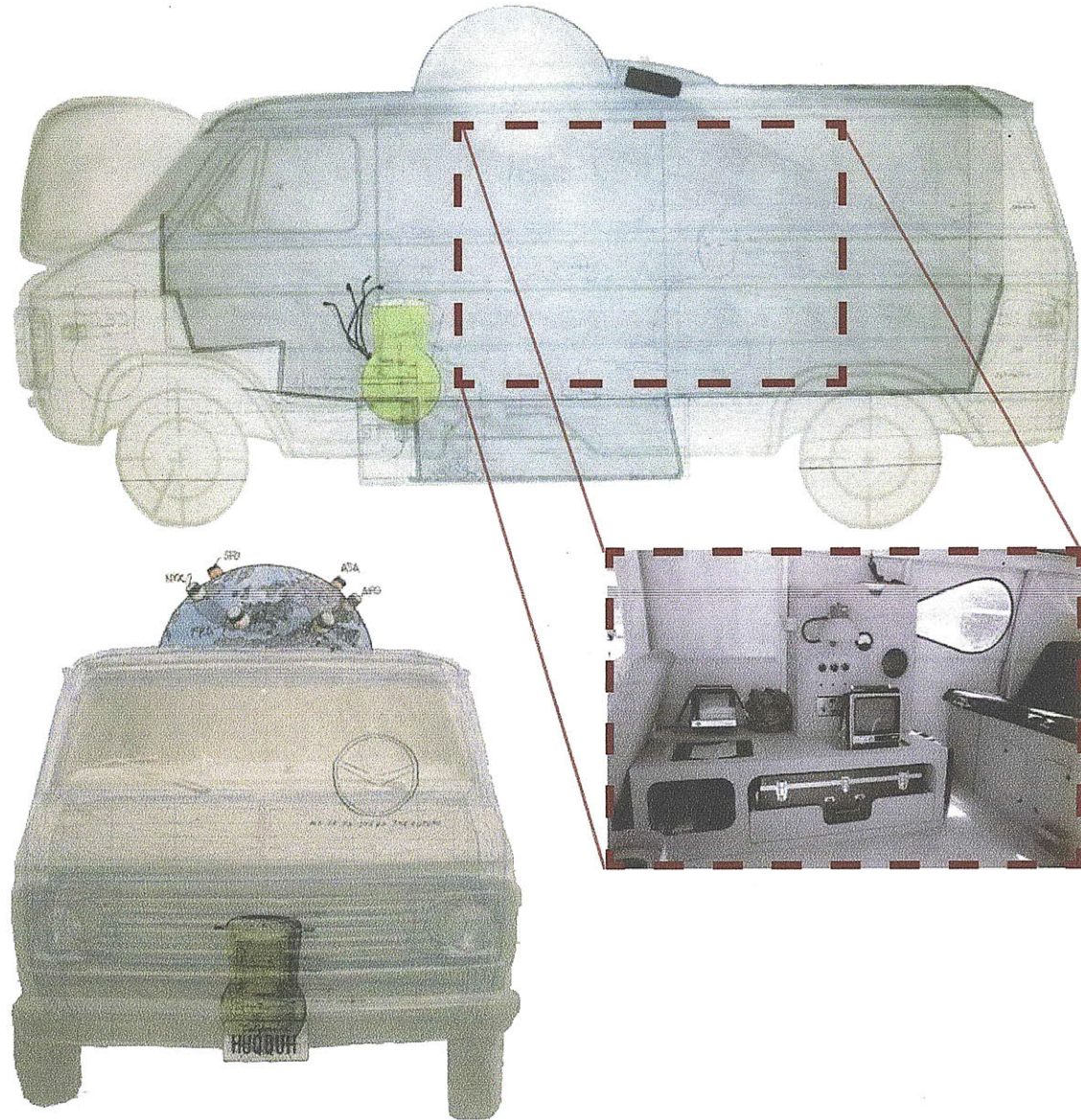


Following the legacy of the Beats, Ant Farm pushed mobile agency beyond the realm of the vehicle itself, and made the automobile both a futuristic, technoladen interior and a base for the deployment of a grander queerspace, the *Happening*.

Using lightweight, translucent materials, they were able to create a deployable queerspace. The inflated spaces were temporal, instable, and disorienting. They were new spaces with new rules, and contained the potential for the formation of new identities and new communities.

Ant Farm pushed the notion of queerspace beyond individual freedoms towards re-identifying whole congregations of people. Their work connects to the ideas of 'continuity' in Kieseler's Endless House, Samuel Delaney's Mobius setting, and the queerspace of Proust and Stein where any one perspective is constantly shifting and referencing itself. Likewise, Ant Farm created *Happenings*, prioritizing events over static structures, capitalizing on quick assembly methods and simple instigations.

The van itself was lush in an entirely different way from the Beat's 1949 Hudson. The media van was equipped with every technological surveillance device, as well as couches, observation bubbles and capitalized on voyeurism. The Ant Farm's queerspace was mobile, deployable and temporal.



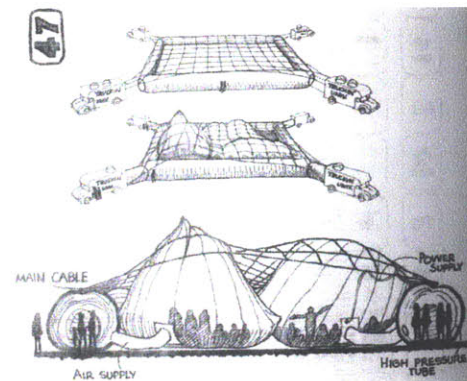
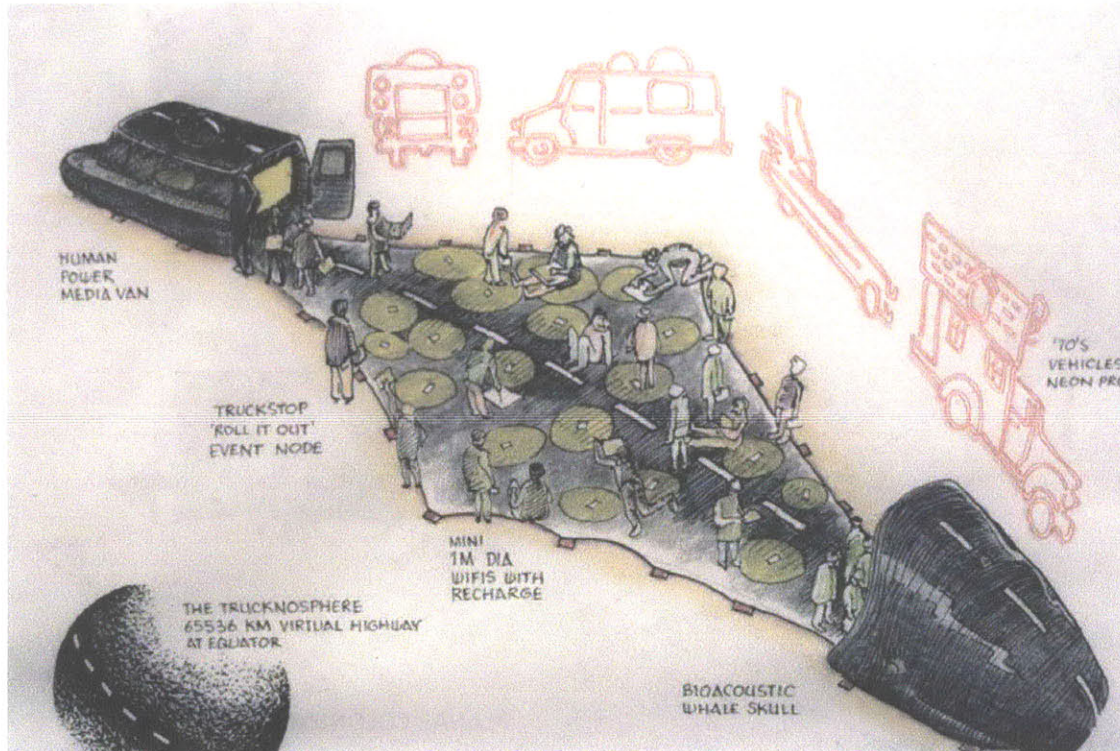
## ANT FARM AND THE HAPPENING

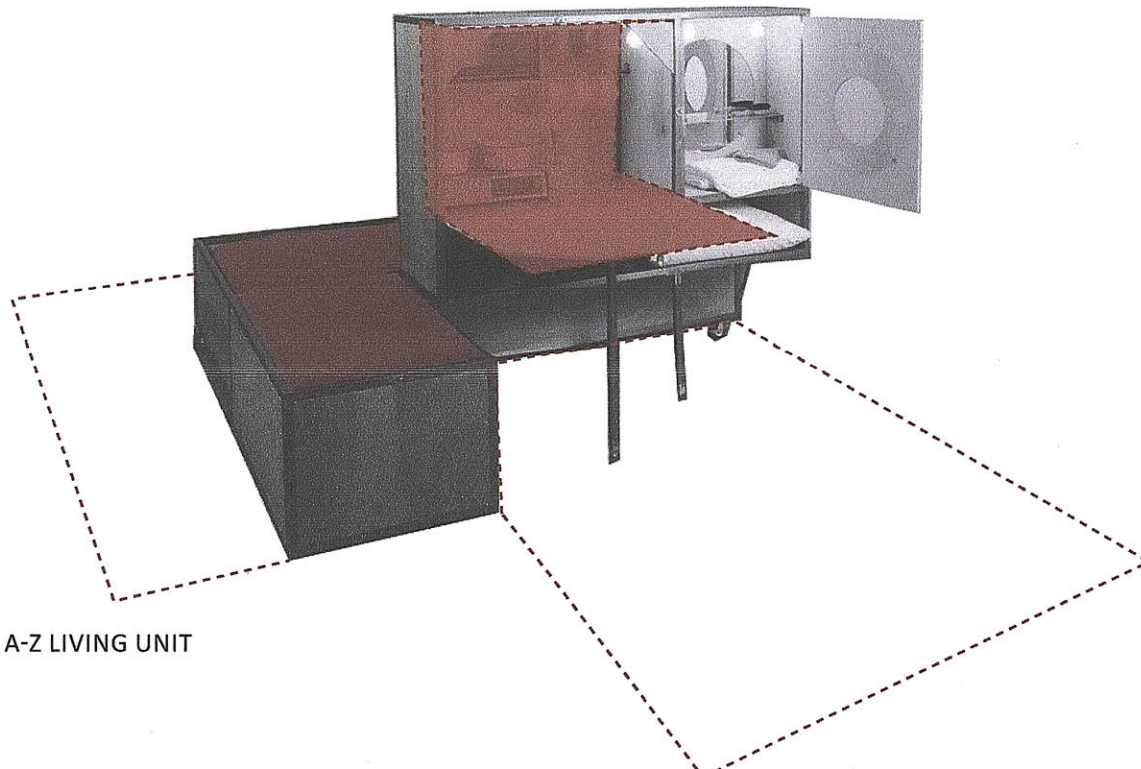
*Why to build inflatables becomes obvious as soon as you get people inside. The freedom and instability of an environment where the walls are constantly becoming the ceilings and the ceiling the floor and the door is rolling around the ceiling somewhere releases a lot of energy that is usually confined by the xyz planes of the normal box-room.*

- Inflatocookbook  
Ant Farm, 1973

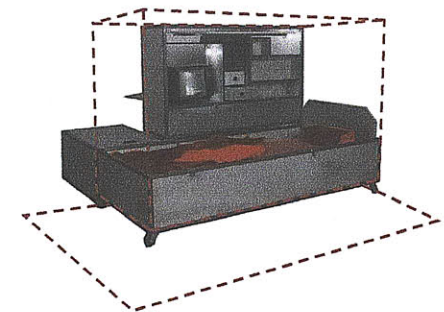
*To unfold, inflate and see each other in a black white red purple cloudballoon can help to break down people's category walls about each other and their own abilities.*

- Inflatocookbook  
Ant Farm, 1973

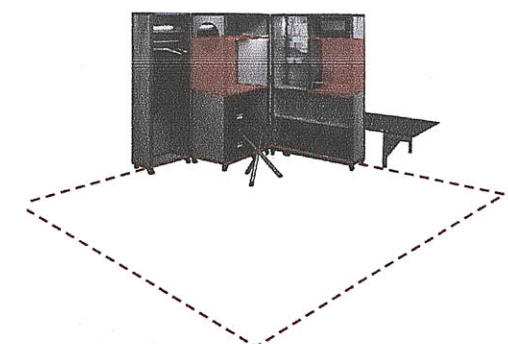




A-Z LIVING UNIT



VOLUMETRIC COLONIZATION



PLANAR COLONIZATION



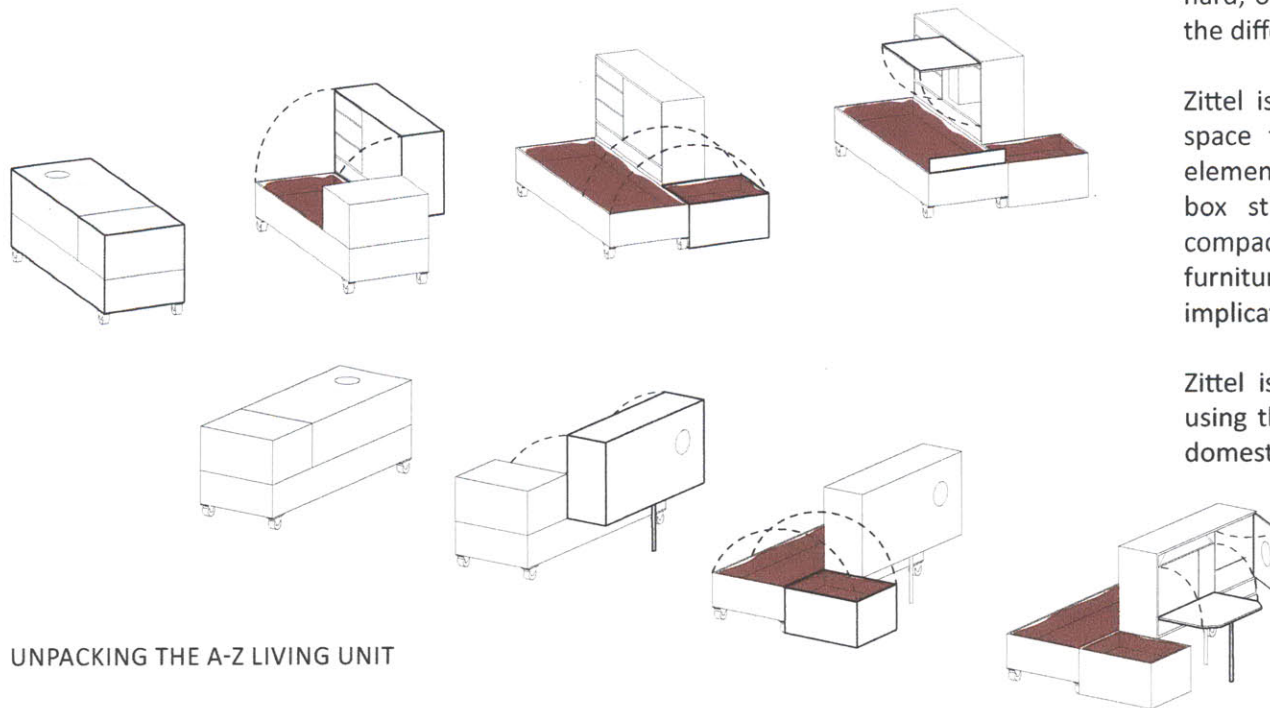
DENSE DOMESTIC

## ANDREA ZITTEL'S LIVING UNITS

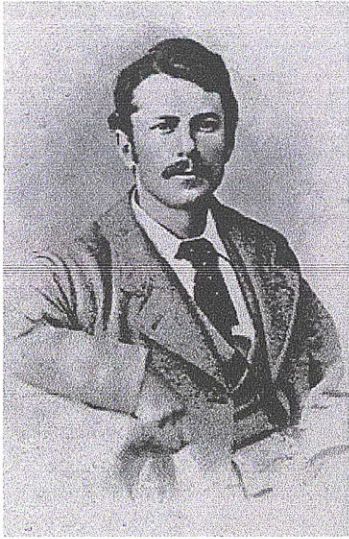
Andrea Zittel's work studies the domestic space by stripping the superfluous, and compacting the essential domestic elements into a box. The A-Z box functions as a pollinator of domestic space, unfolding as either a bedroom, a kitchen, or dressing area. Each enactment colonizes space through a different formal language, and capitalizes on variation of the surfaces, plush/hard, opaque/mirror, plastic/wood, to denote the different typologies of space.

Zittel is able to pervert traditional domestic space through the absurd condensation of elements and the rapid-deployment, unfolding box strategy. She conflates floor/ceiling, compacts hard/soft surfaces, and uses a furniture scale strategy to create home-scale implications.

Zittel is able to create a queering of space using this shape-shifting strategy, making the domestic a public performance.



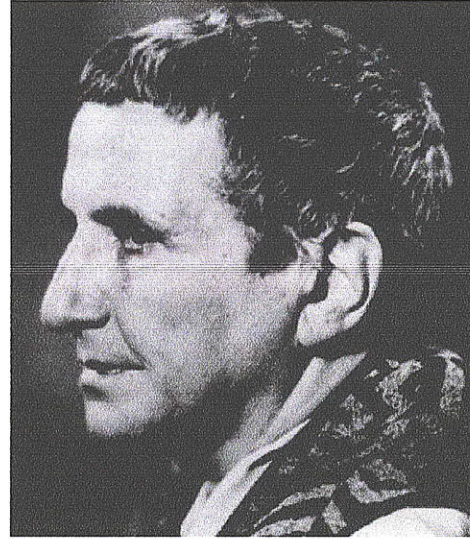
UNPACKING THE A-Z LIVING UNIT



EDWARD CARPENTER



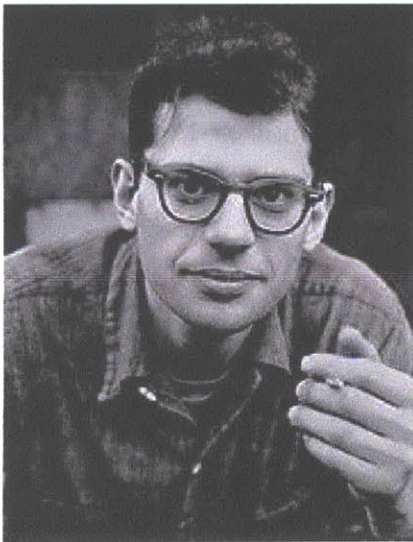
MARCEL PROUST



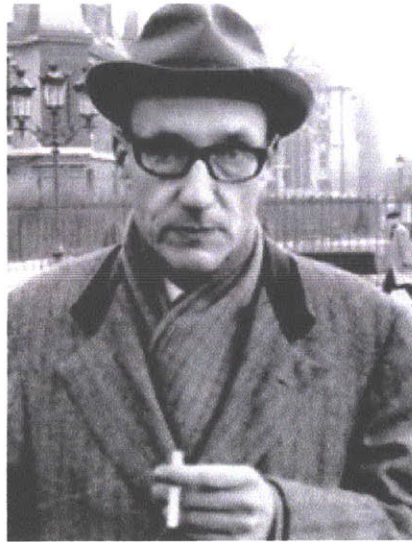
GERTRUDE STEIN



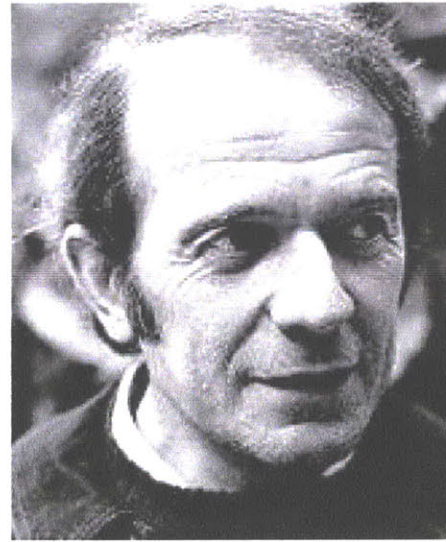
VIRGINIA WOLFE



ALLEN GINSBERG



WILLIAM BURROUGHS



GILES DELEUZE



JUDITH BUTLER



FREIDRICH KIESELER EXHIBITION 1943

DOROTHY LAWRENCE 1896-1964

GLADYS BENTLEY 1907-1960

## EDWARD CARPENTER

Edward Carpenter is a Godfather of the modern Gay-Rights Movement and with his work, *The Intermediate Sex*, written in 1906, he lays the philosophical groundwork for contemporary Gay and Queer Identities. He describes gayness as a desirable and valued state, not to be constricted but celebrated.

His writing drew connections between socialism, homosexuality and the specific nature of living between two socially defined categories of gender. He did not essentialize the homosexual but instead celebrated the unique contributions these individuals might make to society. He wrote his doctrine at a time when the terms 'homosexual' and 'gay' were just emerging, and the Women's Rights Movement was working to evolve strict gender notions.

His work is a profound celebration of living between genders. Carpenter defined those of the 'Intermediate Sex' as having both male and female temperaments and insights (such as Lawrence and Bentley). He contributed a powerfully positive conception of homosexuals and described these individuals as important, unique, but without any imperative for normalization.

## THE BEATS AND FREDERICK KIESELER

Allen Ginsberg's conflation of time, sex, industrial spaces, anger and drugs in *HOWL*, 1956, was such an affront to social norms that he was arrested. William Burroughs contributed stories of heroin, road trips, gay sex and automobiles. The Beats together re-drew a picture of American masculinity that unhinged traditional assumptions and created new freedoms through a constantly changing context.

The Beat Poets and architect Frederick Kieseler both explore queerness through motion, as a mode of moving the body through space, understanding space in relation to the body, and resisting normatives and codification through this perpetual movement.

Kieseler sought to dissolve the visual, real, image and environment into a free-flowing space. With *The Endless House* in 1960, he pursued his theoretical concept of 'correalism' or 'continuity', which concerned the relationships among people, objects and concepts. He made 'polydimensional' drawings and experimented with ergonomic, biomorphic furniture.

Both the Beats and Kieseler explored surface as a means to accommodate the body and disorient the context.



WEIMAR GERMANY CABARET, 1920S

## GILES DELEUZE

Gilles Deleuze, in Anti-Oedipus (1972), contributed a metaphysics in which the concept of multiplicity replaces that of substance, and event replaces essence. He subordinated 'difference' to 'identity', thereby opening a freedom of identity by making it a secondary principle to the relationship of differences.

As a temporal state, queerness is not fixed and is not a stable identity. It is a performance to be continually re-invented.

## JUDITH BUTLER

The work of Judith Butler significantly ties back to Edward Carpenter and underpins the contemporary framework for the formation of a queer-identity. In, Gender Trouble, Feminism and the Subversion of Identity (1990) she philosophizes that the perceived coherence of the categories: sex, gender, sexuality- are constructed through the the repetition of stylized acts, over time. As an alternative to these sedimented, aggregated definitions, Butler conceives of gender, sex and sexuality as performance. Thus, defining queerness or any assertion of gender/sexuality as a temporal act, a transitory identity and thereby one free to be continually reinvented.

The cabaret has historically been a place of rule breaking for gender and sexual norms. From the cabarets of Weimar Germany in the early 1900's to the club shows during the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920's-30's to the performances of Cockettes in San Francisco in the 1970's to the underground raves in Southern California in the 1990's... these spaces have attracted a mix of classes, inverting the daily social rules and celebrating the 'uranians', the intermediate sexes, the defiant, flamboyant, and provocative.



ROSIE RIVETERS, SHAPE SHIFTERS, 1940s

## MARCEL PROUST

Proust's writing and his elaboration of detail and observation describe a deeply interior space. His world continually slips through time, pulling the reader deeper and deeper into reminiscence before moving the plot. He creates a rich, non-linear world of tactile experience where a memory is as valid as an action.

Similarly, the architect Paul Rudolphe's designs are so elaborately conceived that they cannot be understood through any one plan, or section. With multiple stairs, atriums and walkways, he demonstrates every intention of drawing the visitor into an elaborate and Piranesi-esque experience, one that promotes voyeurism and exhibitionism, lost time and spatial slippage much like Proust's interior realm.

Both Proust and Rudolphe author a kind of space that is seamless and also constantly shifting. They have constructed queer spaces that reflect an essential instability and temporality.

## GERTRUDE STEIN

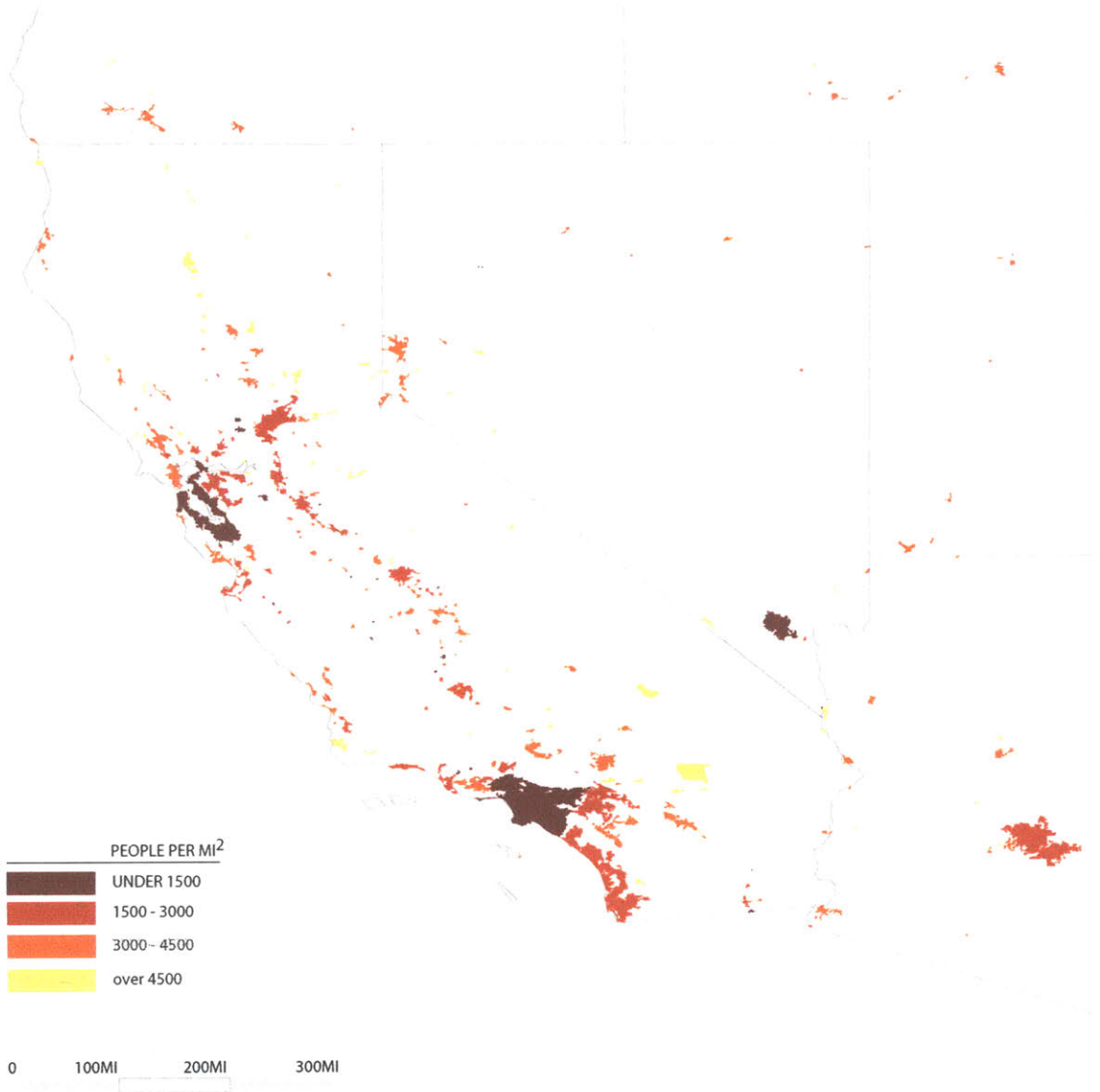
Gertrude Stein explored queerness through the slippage of time and perspective within her writing. In Tender Buttons (1914), her prose is introspective, associating and philosophizing around a string of objects for an unknown audience. Her approach is cubist in its constant re-framing of the objects, an approach that was similarly reflected in Stein's Salon in Paris in which she curated contemporary works and connected an emerging society of artists, that were experimenting with perception, identity and means of expression.

Her work suggests a queer space that is achieved by continually de-stabilizing normative space through experimentation.



## DEFINING SITE

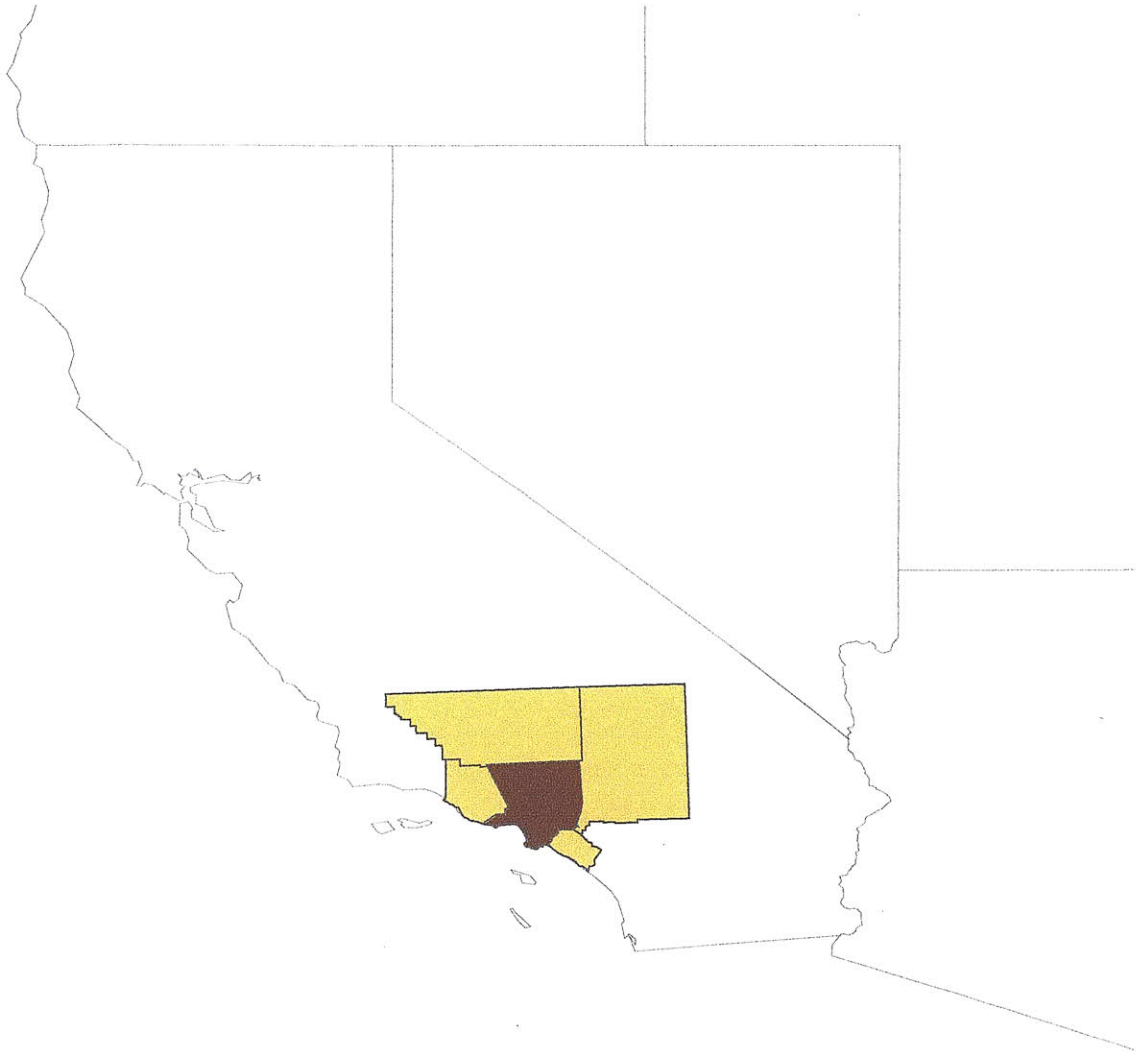
To understand Los Angeles as a site, it must be situated in relation to the Urban Centers and Population Density across California. LA anchors the urban concentration in Southern California, but also supports the corridor of settlement that reaches through the middle of the state and connects with the San Francisco Bay Area. The Central Valley is an important extension of the LA Basin as more satellite communities develop, relying on LA's job resources.



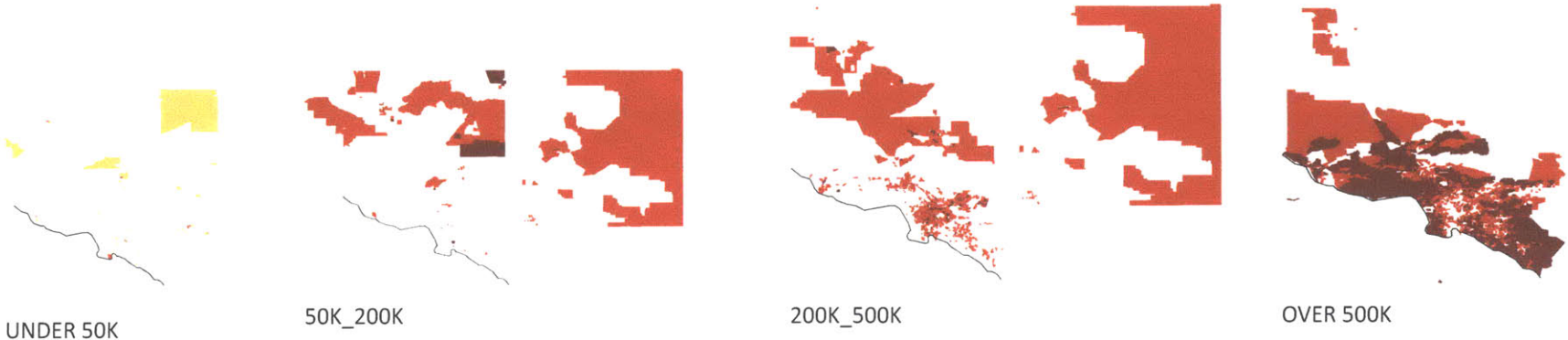
Mapping the commuting times in the Los Angeles five county area reveals a city halo of extreme commuters. According to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2004 report, *Journey To Work*, trips of 90 minutes or more are the fastest growing category of commute since 1990. Together this gives rise to a new population of mobile workers, those who spend more than 400 hours a year in their cars, where the average commuter spends 100hrs/year.

Based on the data collected in the 2000 Census, these maps indicate that affordable housing only exists as a standard condition by reach of extreme commuting from central Los Angeles. A ring of 'commute cities' has developed, housing a community that is marginalized by extreme working conditions and high costs of living.

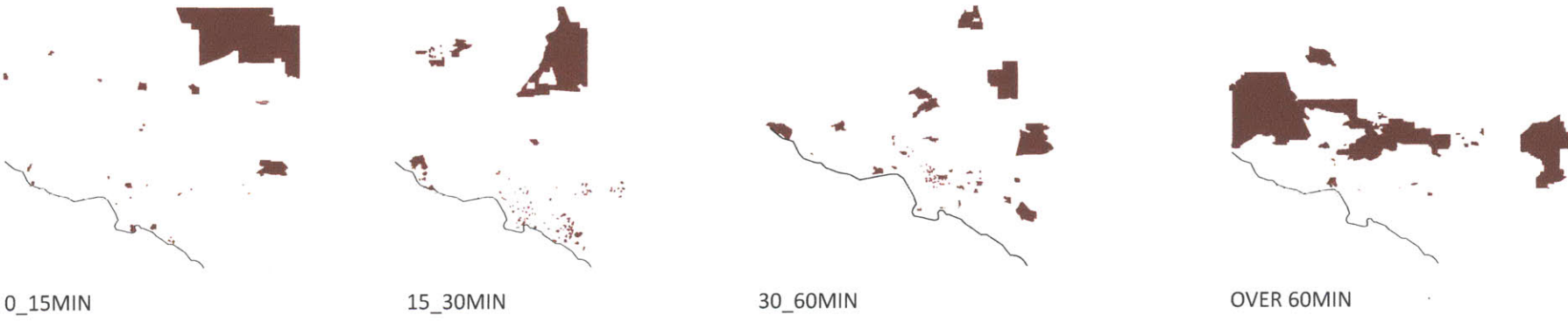
These maps highlight data from the Los Angeles Basin, consisting of five counties: Kern County, San Bernardino County, Ventura County, Orange County, and Los Angeles County.



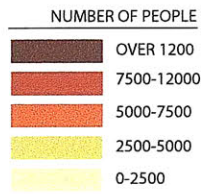
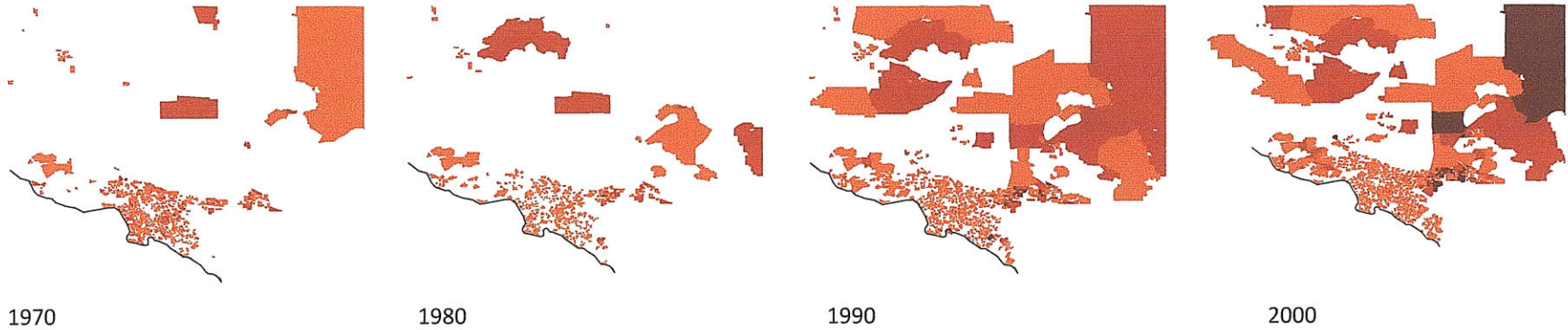
HOUSING COSTS WITHIN THE 5 COUNTIES  
For the Majority of Housing within each Tract



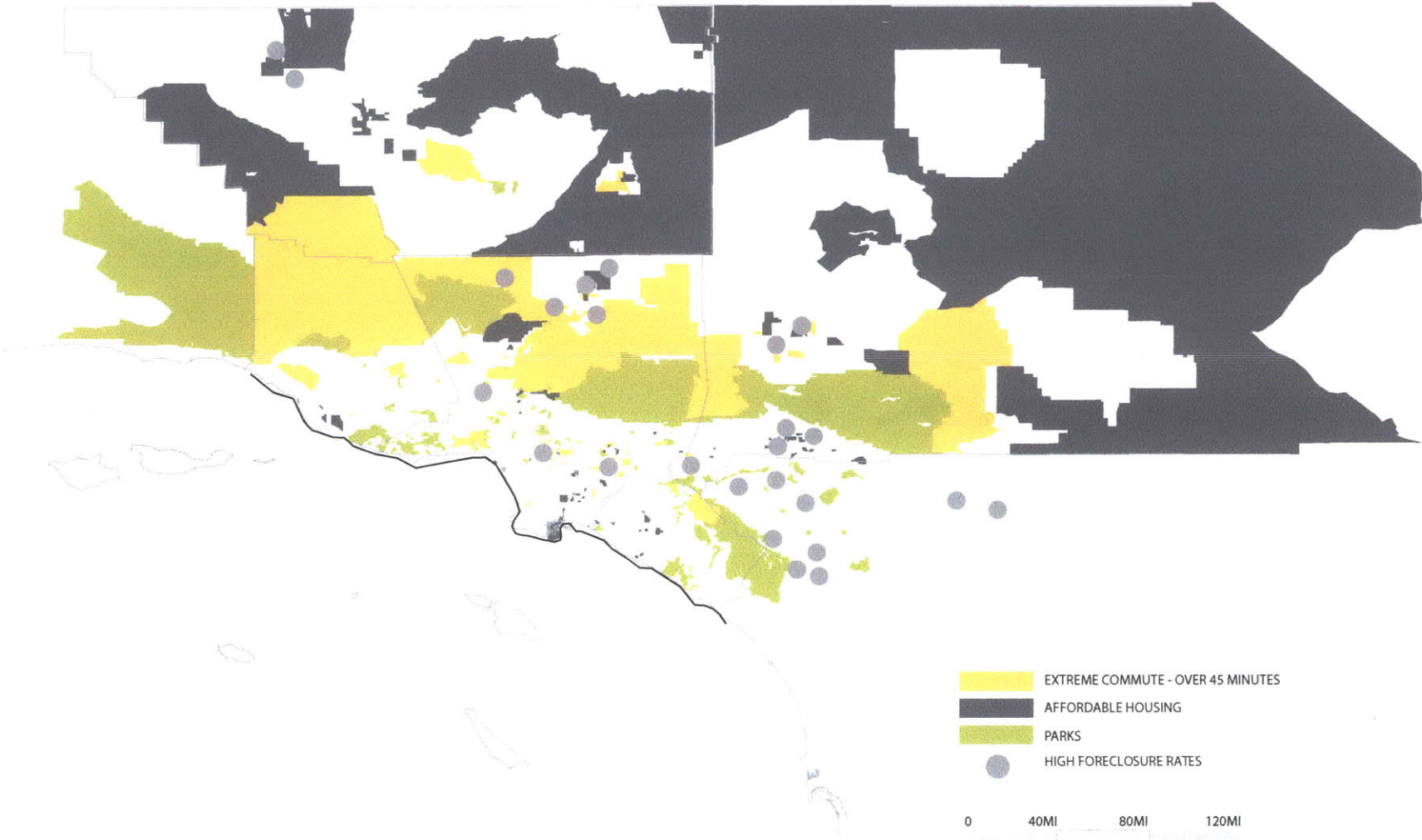
COMMUTING TIMES  
For the Majority within each Tract



POPULATION GROWTH  
Over 17 Million People Currently Living in the  
Five County Region

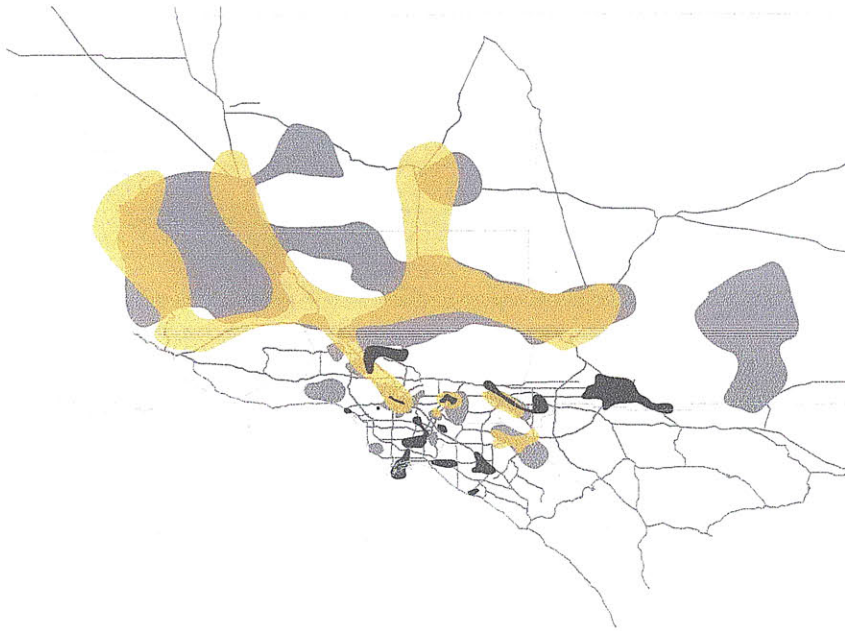


COMPOSITE MAPPING  
Relationships between Extreme Commuting,  
Affordable Housing and Foreclosure sites.

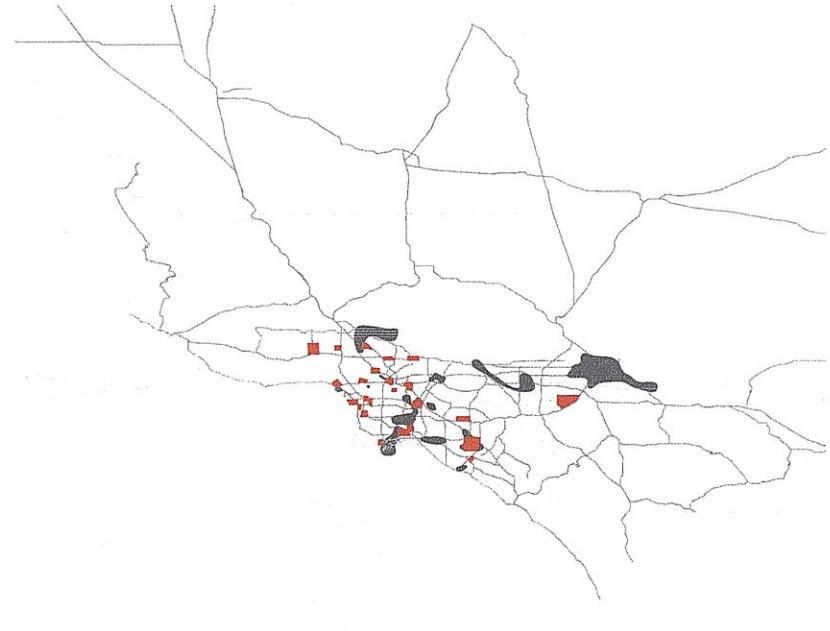


## COMPOSITE MAPPING

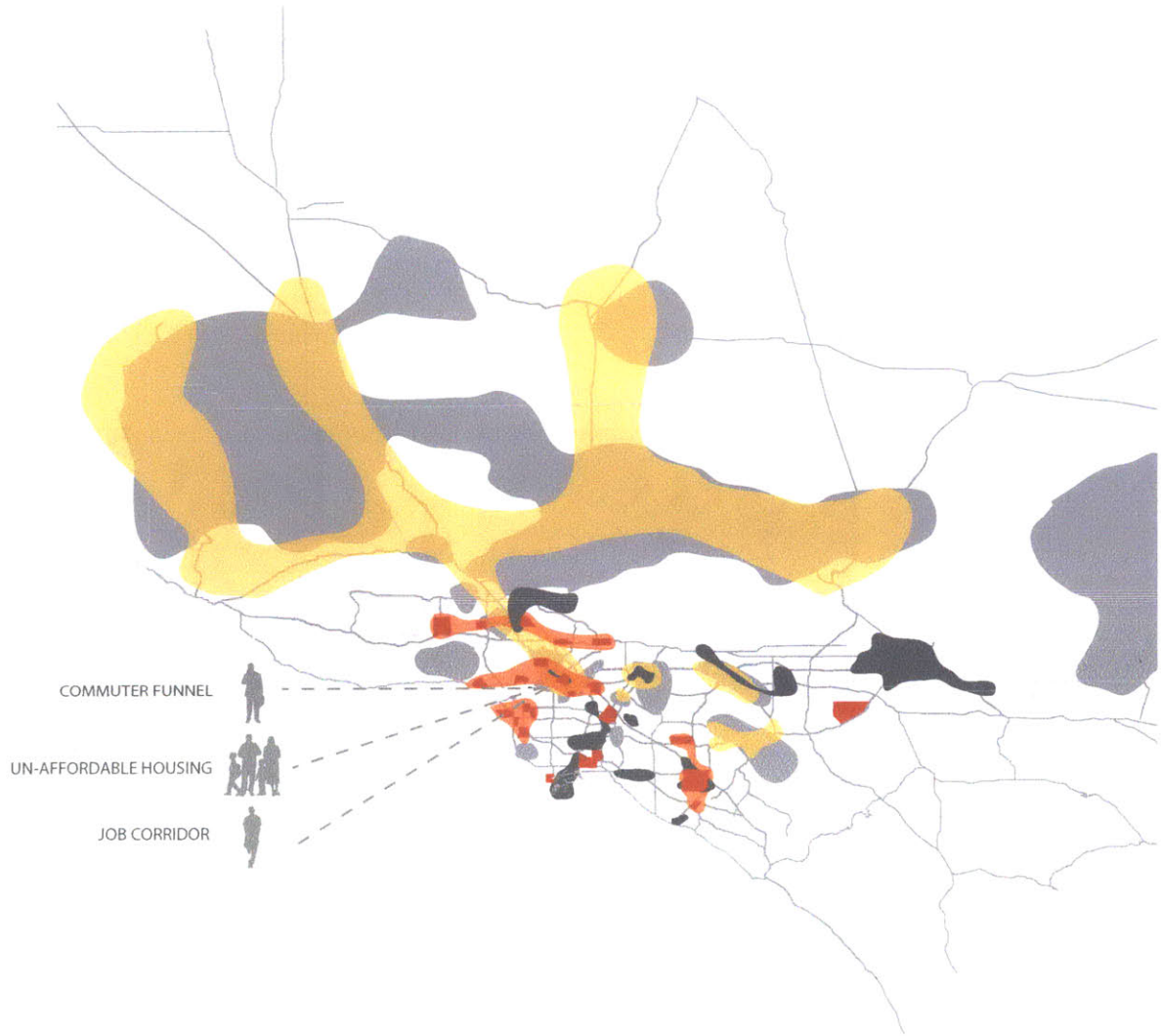
Finding relationships between: Commute Routes, Affordable Housing, and Job SubCenters



Extreme commute zones highlight heavily traveled freeway routes and intersections with the central tracts of affordable housing.

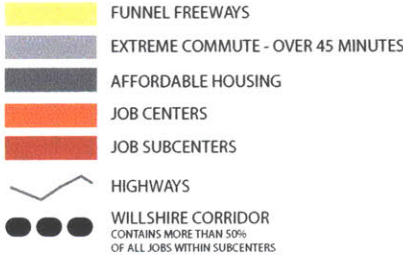


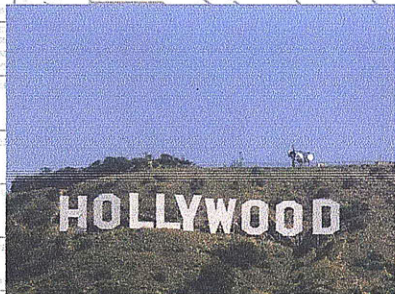
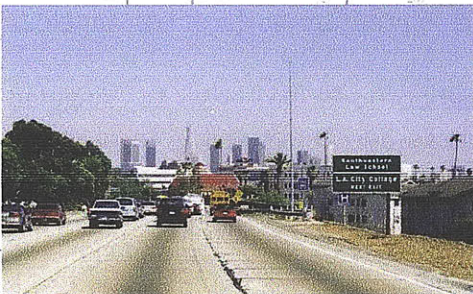
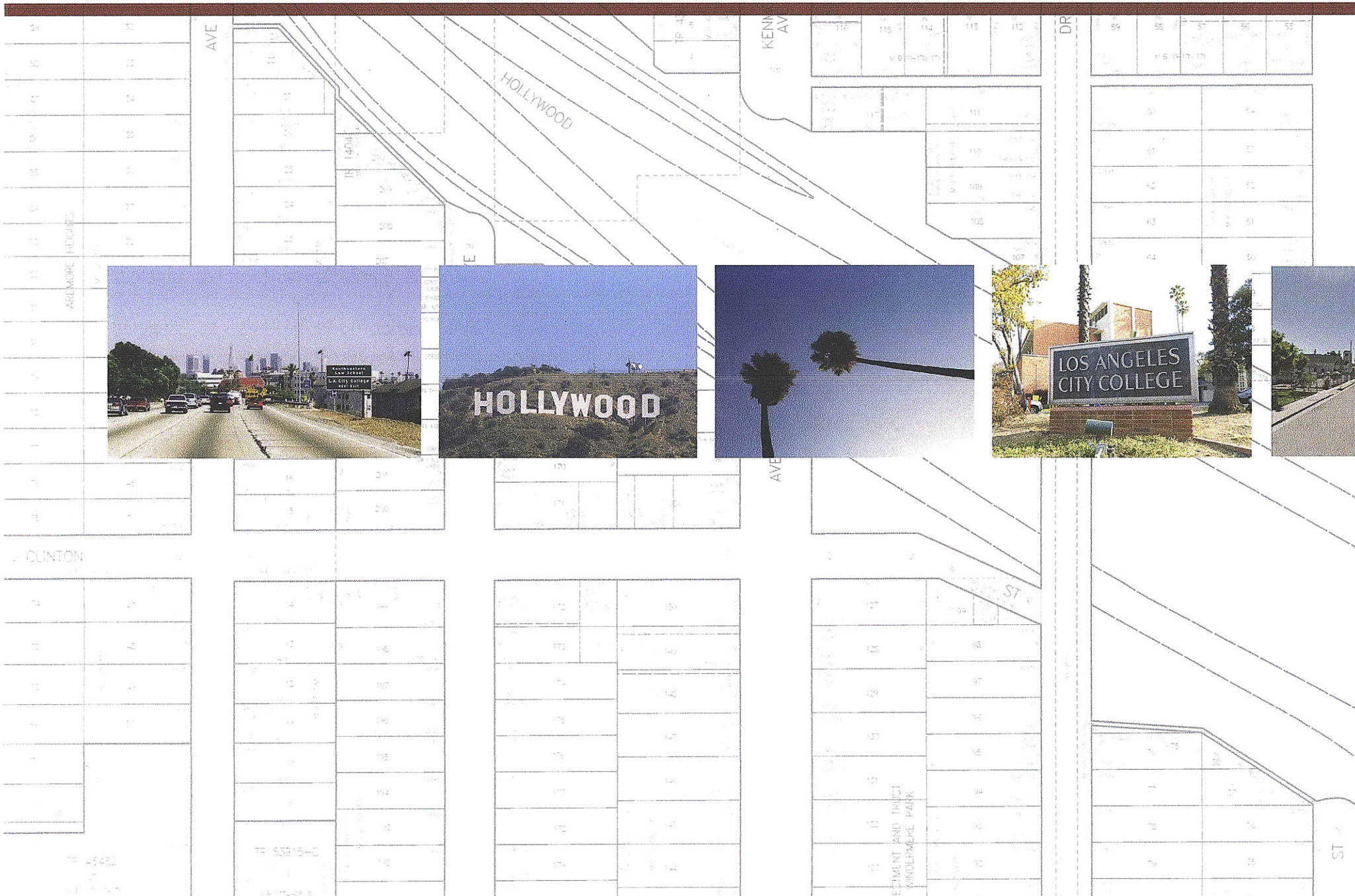
Job subcenters create a field condition throughout the LA basin. However, their locations rarely correlate to affordable housing tracts.



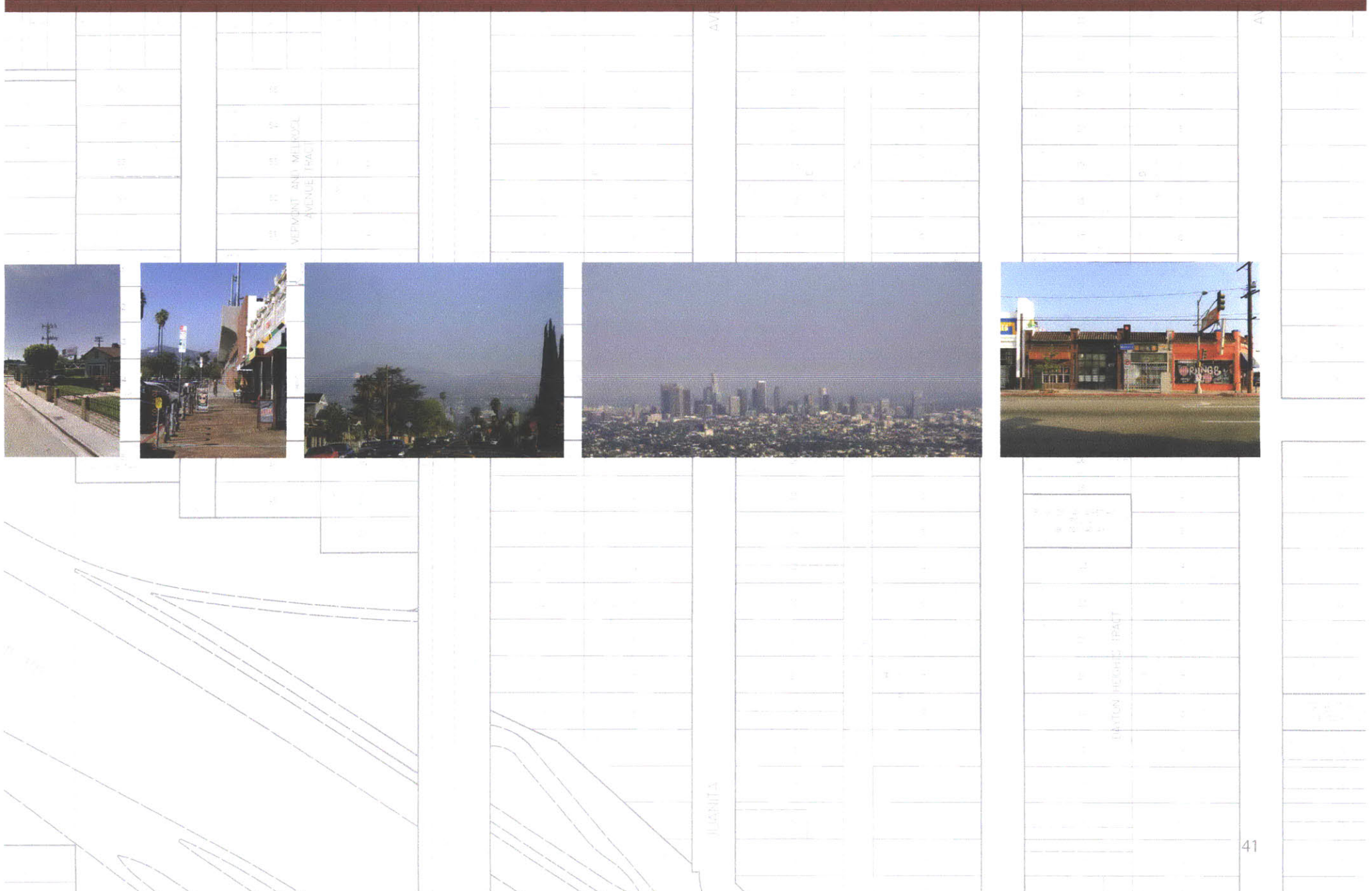
The Wilshire Corridor connects five of the thirty-two job subcenters in Los Angeles. Together these five contain more than half of all jobs located in the subcenters (*Subcenters in the Los Angeles Region*, Guilano and Small, 1991). This corridor connects to one of the central commuter funnels into the city, Highway 101, in the East Hollywood neighborhood, a route that reaches the expanding community of extreme commuters North of Los Angeles.

This neighborhood also hosts Los Angeles City College and is accessible to multiple other universities. While current housing prices are average here, it is not considered affordable, making it an ideal site for an affordable housing development for students, commuters, and families.



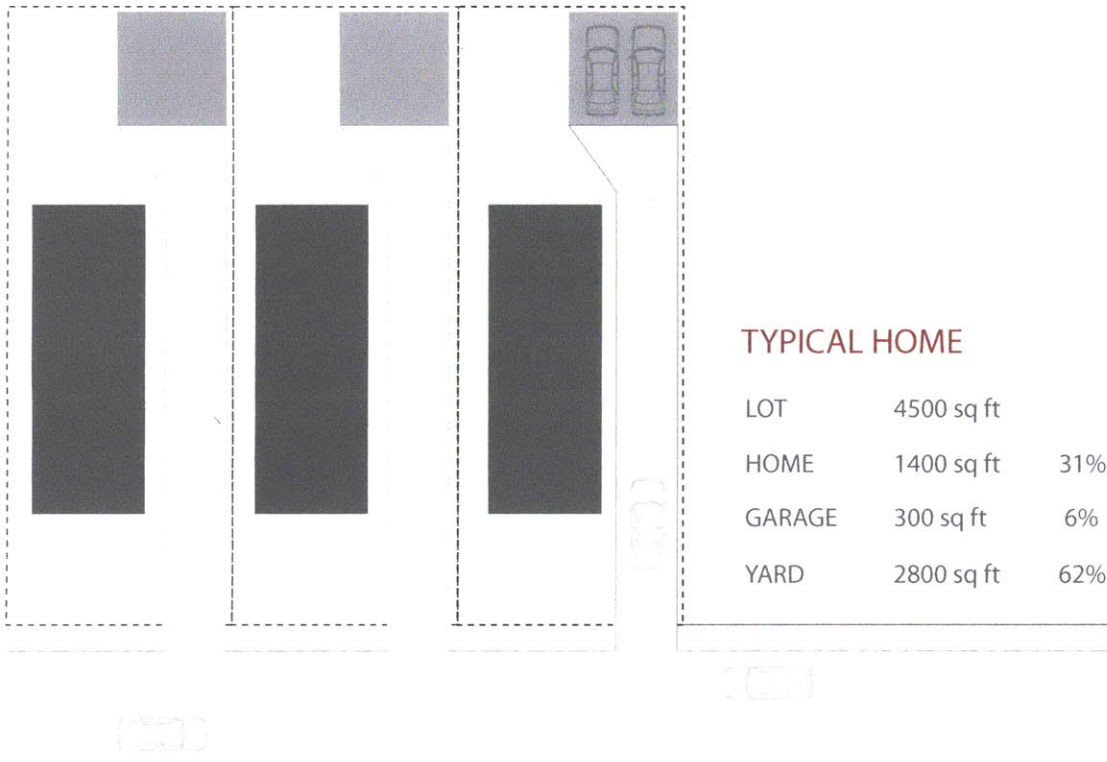


# NEIGHBORHOOD SITE



**NEIGHBORHOOD RELATIONS**  
freeway access, schools, downtown and the  
Wilshire Corridor

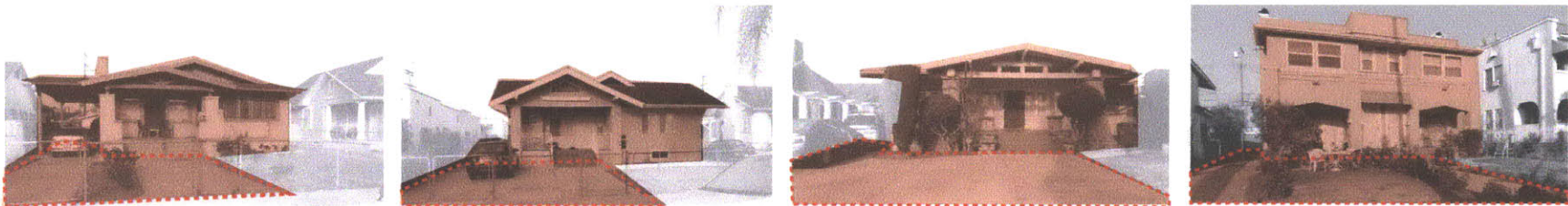




### EAST HOLLYWOOD SITE

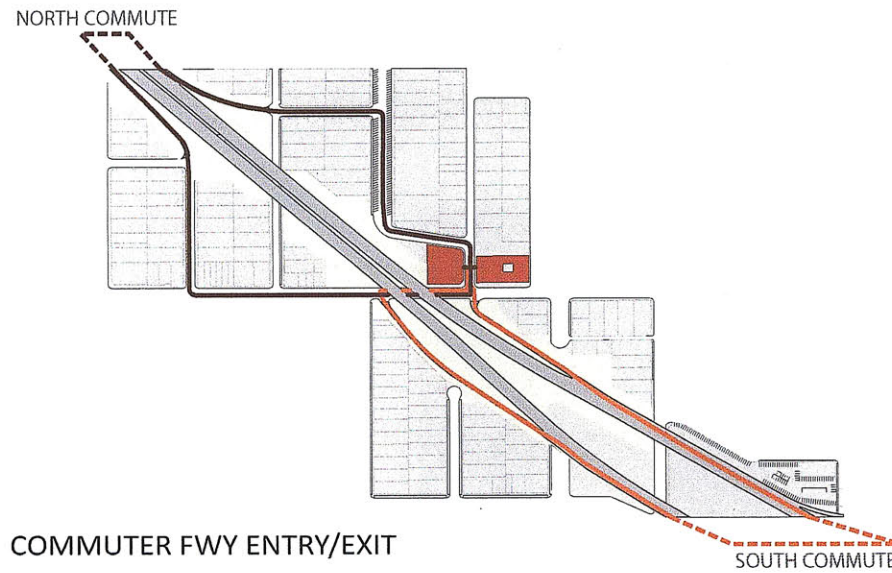
The fabric of this neighborhood is typical for Los Angeles, with shotgun lots and low density. The houses are primarily one story, with twenty houses per block and three to five cars per lot. As studied extensively in, RE: American Dream: Six Urban Housing Prototypes for Los Angeles (1995), the houses typically occupy only 30% of the lot, surrounded by yard or parking space.

Here, the public space is the sidewalk, interrupted by curb cuts for driveways and parking. The private outdoor spaces are divided by driveway, fence and garage. My housing proposal inverts these relationships, creating a large continuous public space, and smaller individual private spaces for the benefit of a larger population.



The specific site lot was chosen for its immediate freeway access, North and South on Hwy 101, for its connection to the existing retail corridor on Melrose Avenue, and its proximity to Los Angeles City College.

According to the Los Angeles Times' 'Mapping LA' project, this neighborhood is among the highest densities in the city of Los Angeles. It is nearly 60% Latino and the median household income is close to \$30,000 a year. The average household size is three people. It is a mix of students and small families in the surrounding area.





EAST HOLLYWOOD NEIGHBORHOOD





**MOBILE**



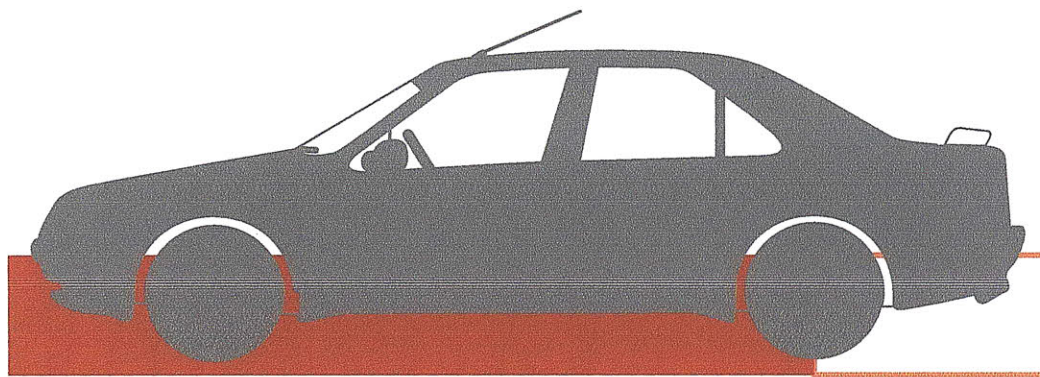
**EMERGENT**



**DISLOCATED**



**MARGINAL**



**70%** COMMUTE TO WORK ALONE IN CAR

ANNUAL COST OF COMMUTE - National Averages

Fuel	\$2000
Mileage	15,000 miles/yr national average
Hours	100hrs/yr national average

ANNUAL COST OF COMMUTE - 90min Commute (extreme)

Fuel	\$4000
Mileage	30,000 m/yr
Hours	750 hrs

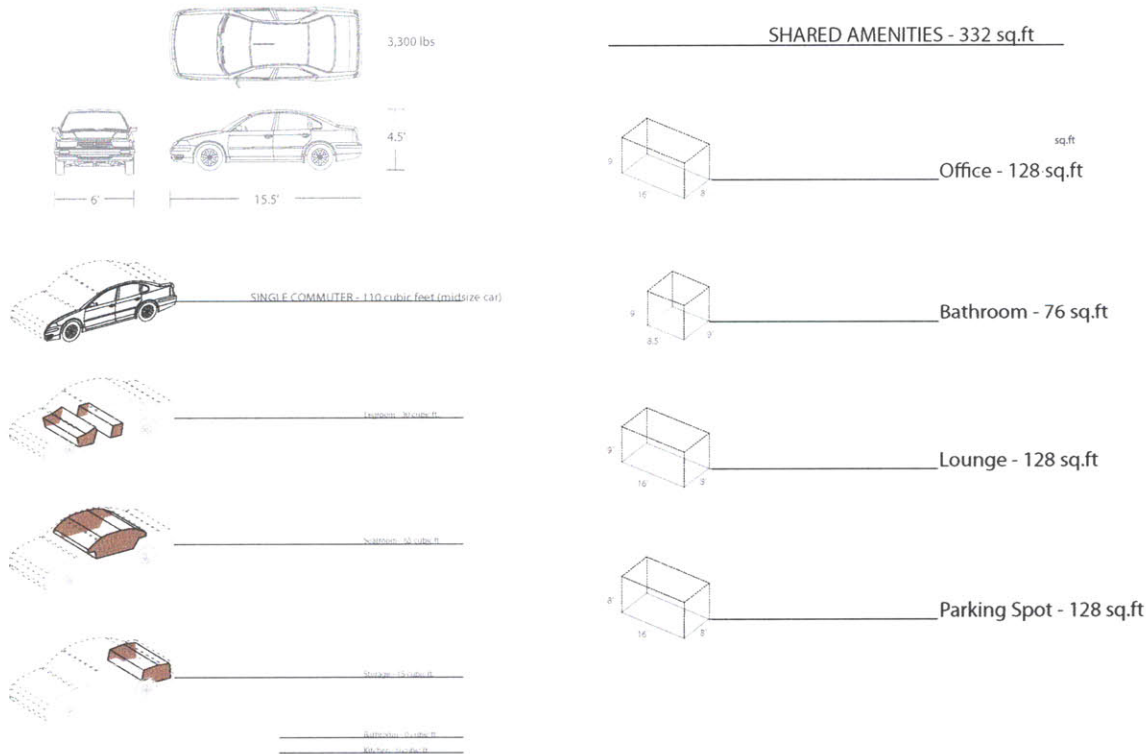
Vehicle Investment	\$9250
Social ConnectionC	ut by 10% per 10min of commute
Rush Hours5	am-11am 2pm-7pm [11hrs]

LIVING COSTS

Average LA Hotel Rate = \$120/night  
 = \$3600/mo per room

Added Cost of Commute = \$4000/yr  
 = \$325/mo

## TYPICAL COMMUTER SPACE



There are an estimated 3.4 million extreme commuters in the United States, and they represent the fastest growing category of commuters since 1990 (*Journey to Work*, US Census Bureau, 2004). This population is becoming increasingly marginalized as the locations of home and work grow further apart, more time is spent in the car, and less with family and friends. It is estimated that for every 10 minutes of commuting time, one's social connections are cut by 10% (*Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, Robert Putnam, 2000). By creating a centralized work-week home for this population, new community connections and support can be developed.



# MOBILE



**85%** RECENT COLLEGE GRADS MOVE HOME



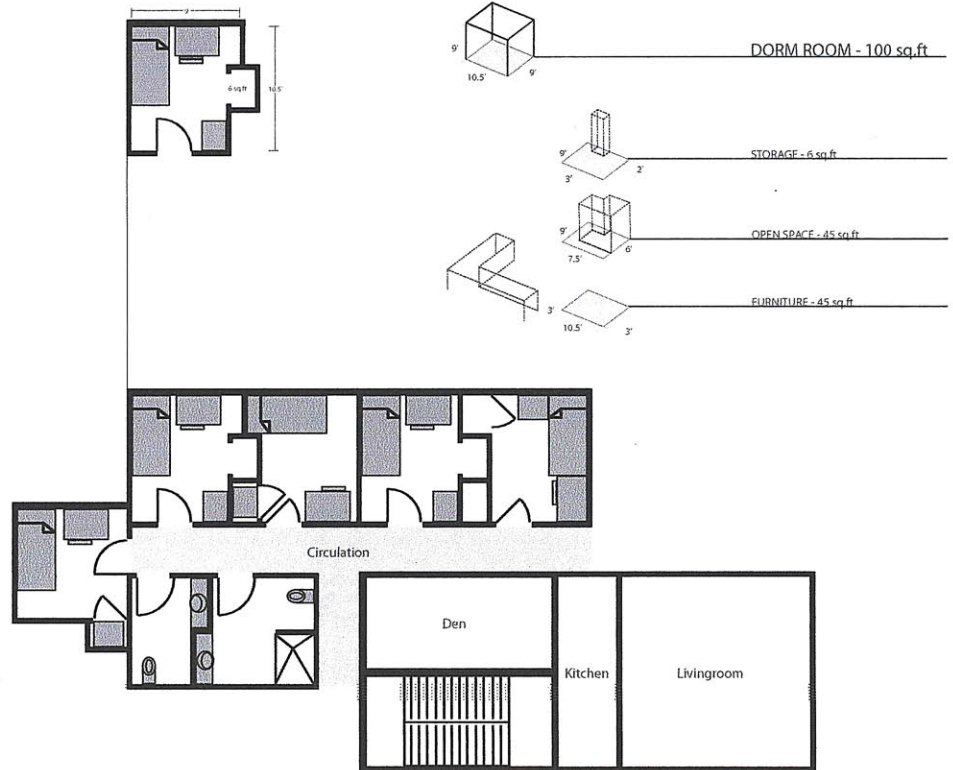
**54%** UNEMPLOYMENT RATE // 18-24YRS OLD

### LIVING COSTS

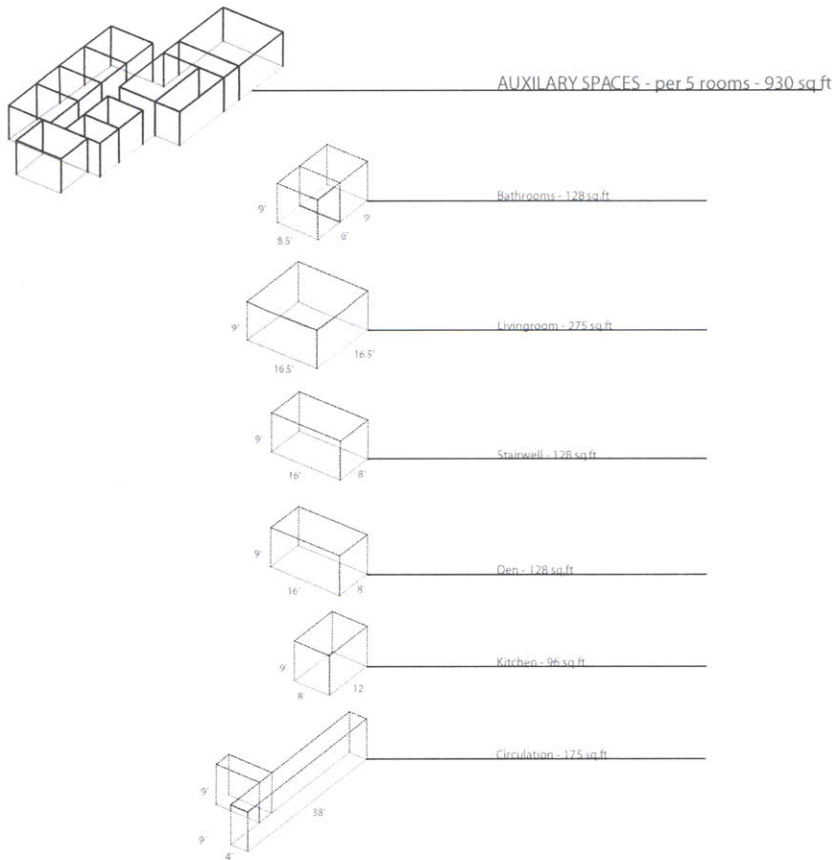
Typical Dorm Rent = \$3400/semester  
 = \$850/mo per room

Suite Total Rent = \$4250/mo  
 1,030 sq ft Suite = \$4.13/sq ft per month

### TYPICAL STUDENT SPACE



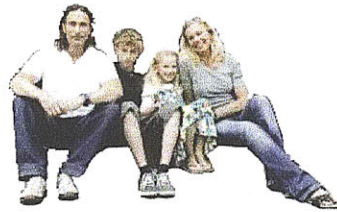
## TYPICAL STUDENT SPACE



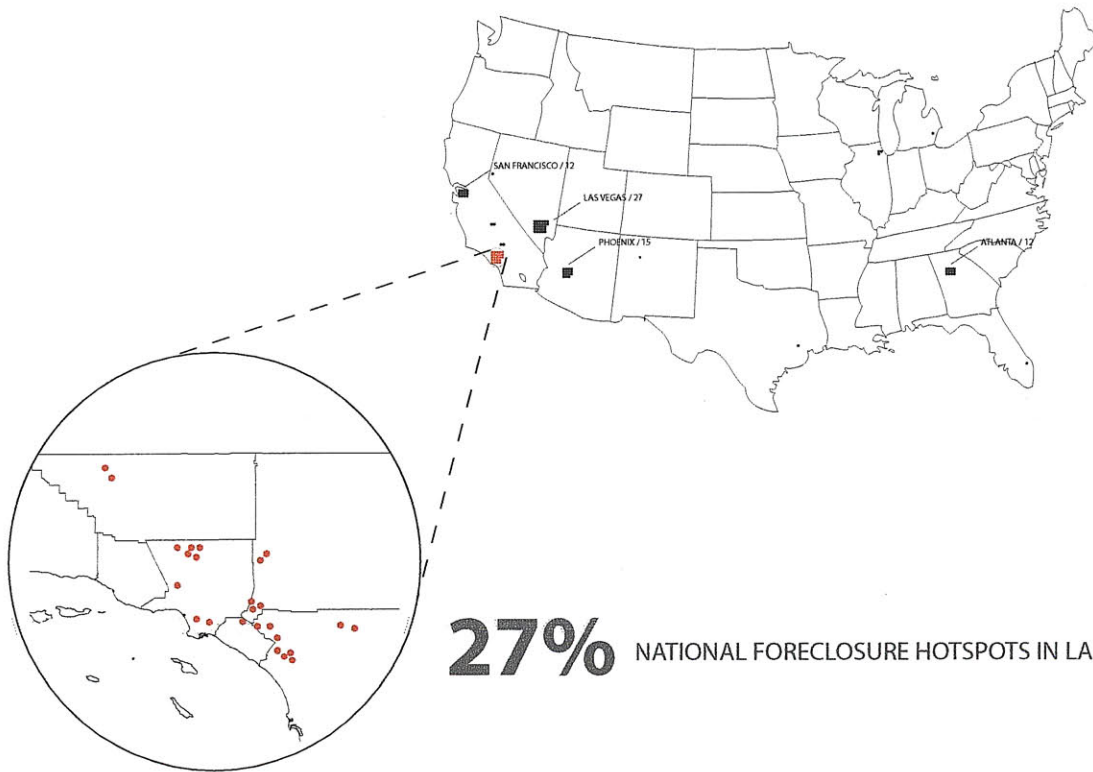
Student living spaces have rapidly evolved over the last 50 years, reflecting changing social structures and identity, from the curfews of the 60's, to mixed sex residence halls in the 70's, to the advent of personal computers in the 80's. Today, dorms have become a revenue source for universities and offer increasingly elaborate amenities. Students, however, are emerging into a national economic crisis with colossal loan payments, few job opportunities, and little hope of financial independence. This population is emerging into the margins of society, seeking new avenues for independence and opportunities for developing community.



# EMERGENT



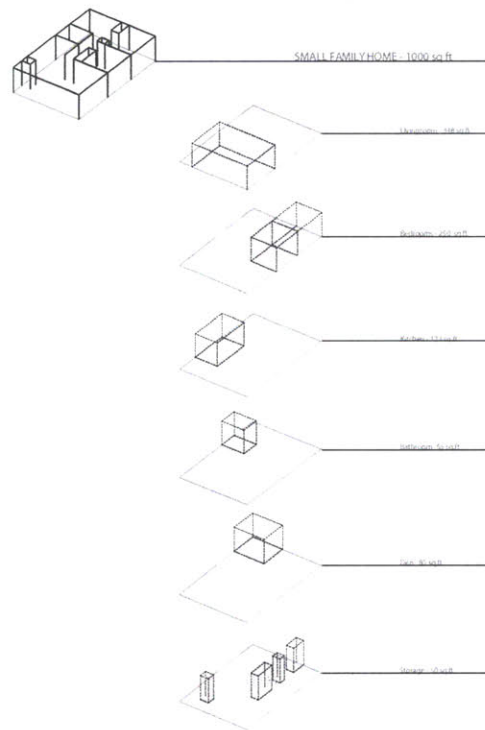
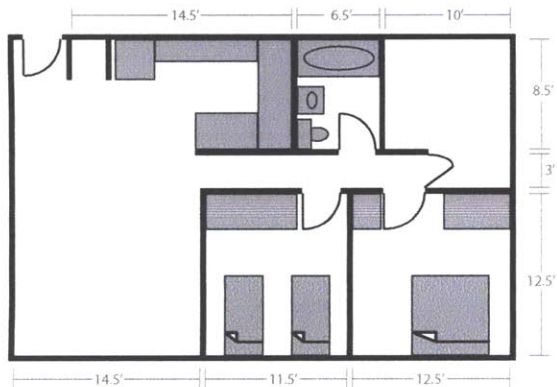
### 100 ZIPCODES WITH HIGHEST FORECLOSURE RATES - 2010



#### LIVING COSTS

Median Rent - 2BR	= \$2500/mo
1,000 sq ft Apartment	= \$2.50/sq ft per month

TYPICAL SMALL FAMILY SPACE

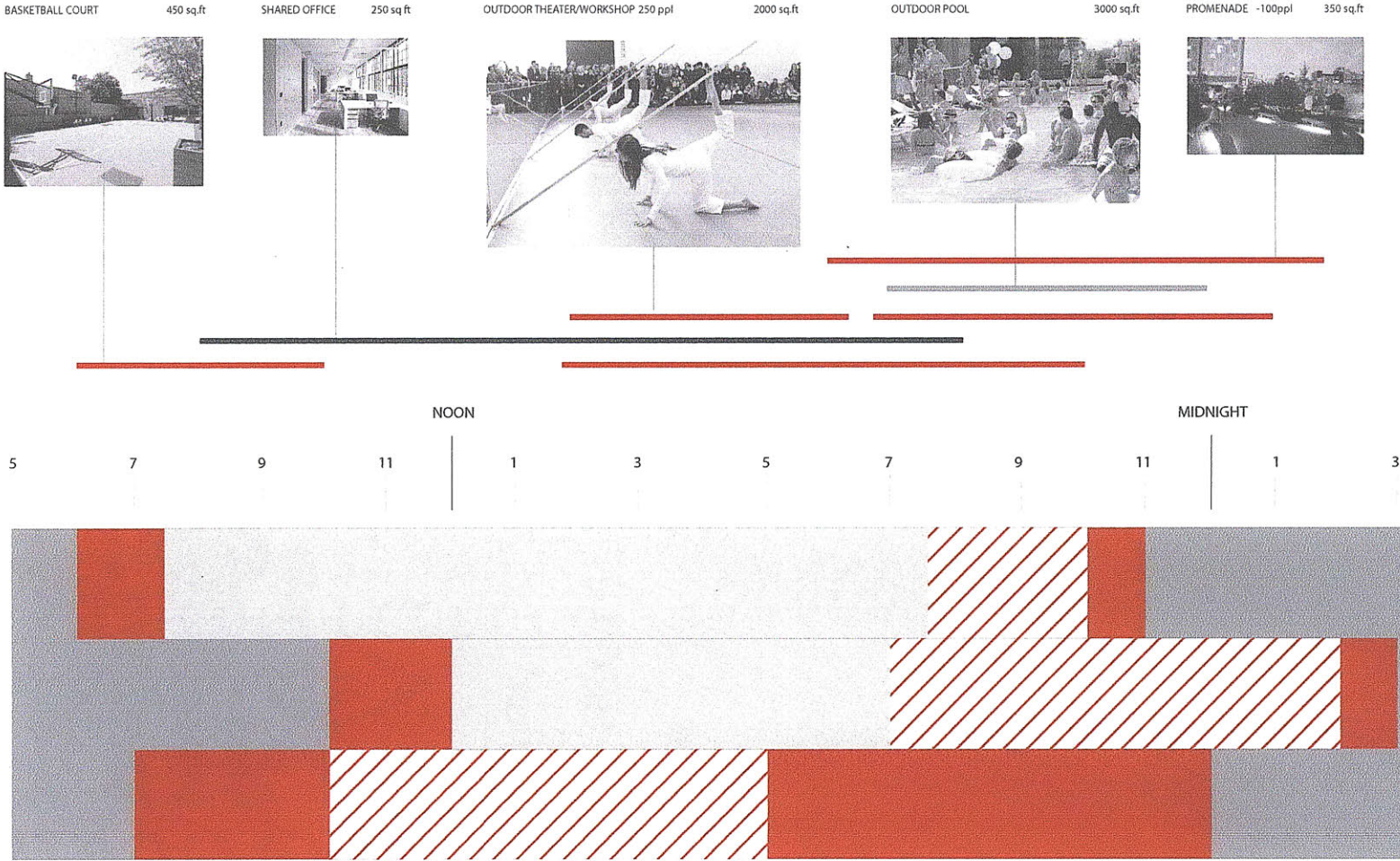


27 of the 100 zipcodes with the highest foreclosure rates in the US are in the Los Angeles Basin (CNN Money, January 23, 2012). This crisis is primarily affecting small, working families, shifting the image of homelessness away from the previous model of the single man. This population can benefit both by being relocated in the vicinity of job resources, and by developing expanded community networks. By connecting dislocated 'families' with both students and commuters, symbiotic relationships of support can develop.



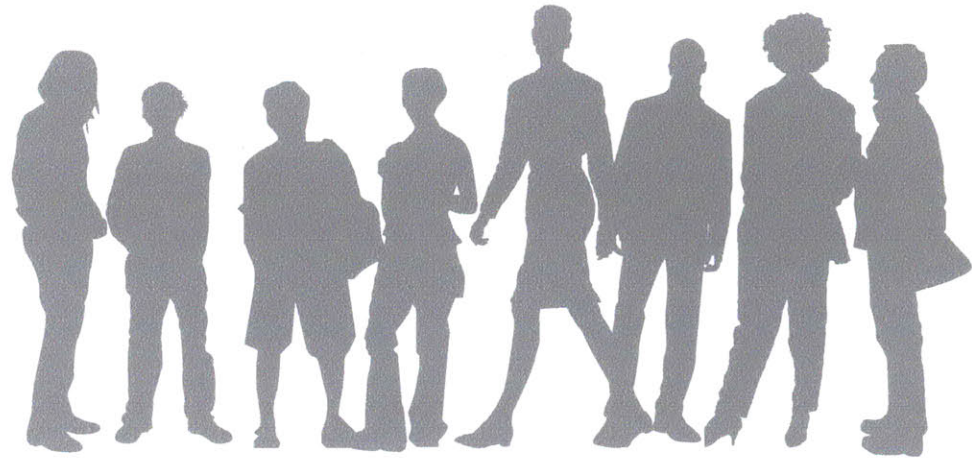
**DISLOCATED**

**SYMBIOTIC RELATIONSHIPS**  
 daily timing of client activities creates  
 opportunities for continual appropriation of  
 shared spaces



These three populations: mobile, emergent, and dislocated, are brought together as a larger marginalized group. Each has specific spatial needs, but the use of space among these groups can be seen as symbiotic throughout the day, week and month. This provides an opportunity for shared spaces to be continually re-appropriated, temporally identified with specific activities, and continually available for re-identification.

The term queer is applied to these populations not in terms of sexual identity, but as agents of appropriation and invention. With shared spaces, these three groups will find lives that are co-dependent in ways that are not typical among existing housing configurations. Because of these functional terms, users will be forced into cooperative models that upend typical notions of private ownership, nuclear family units, and demarcated spaces.



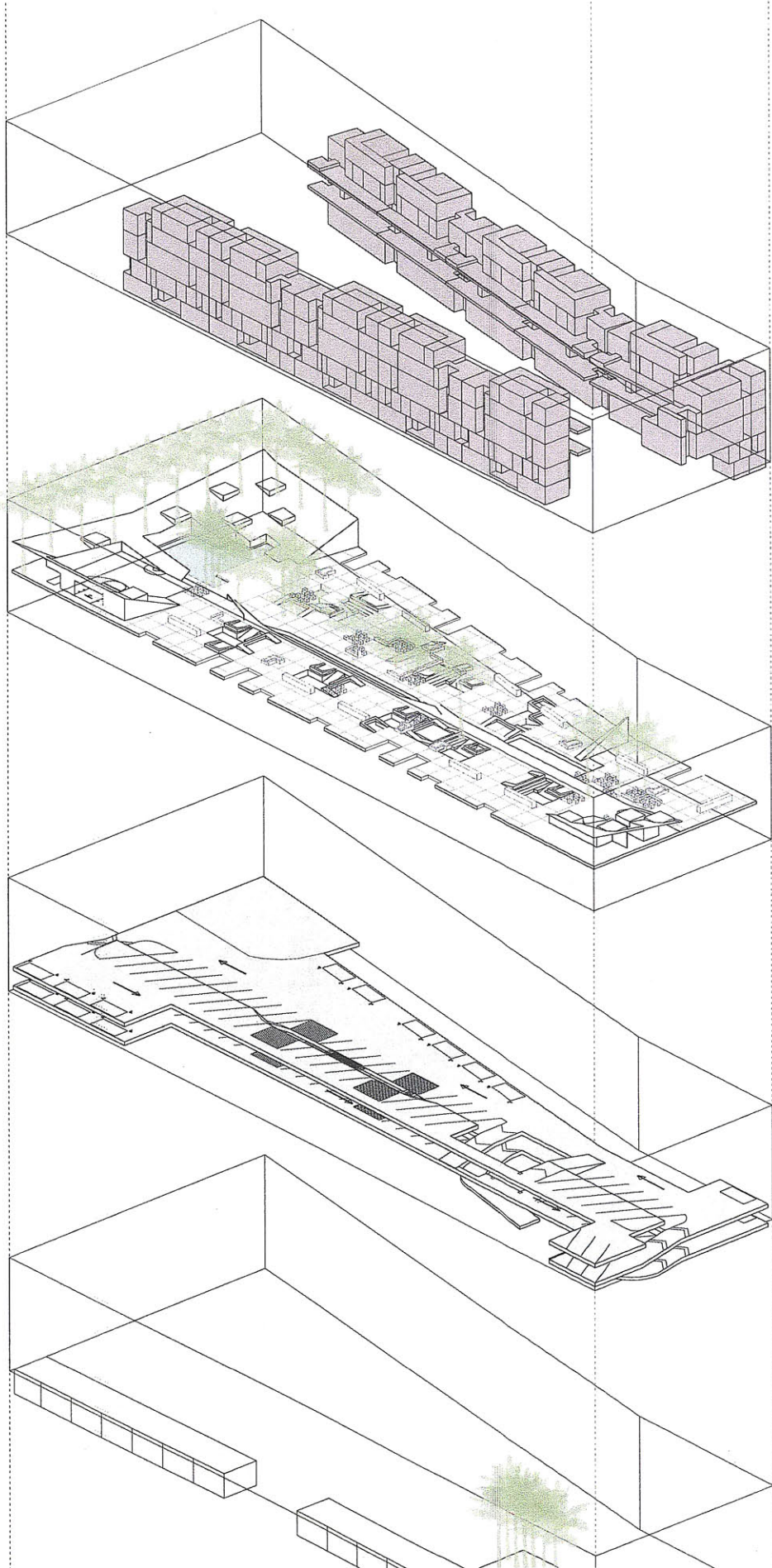
## MARGINAL



TRANSFORMING COMMUNITY



Street Elevation at the Corner of Melrose and North Alexandria Avenues

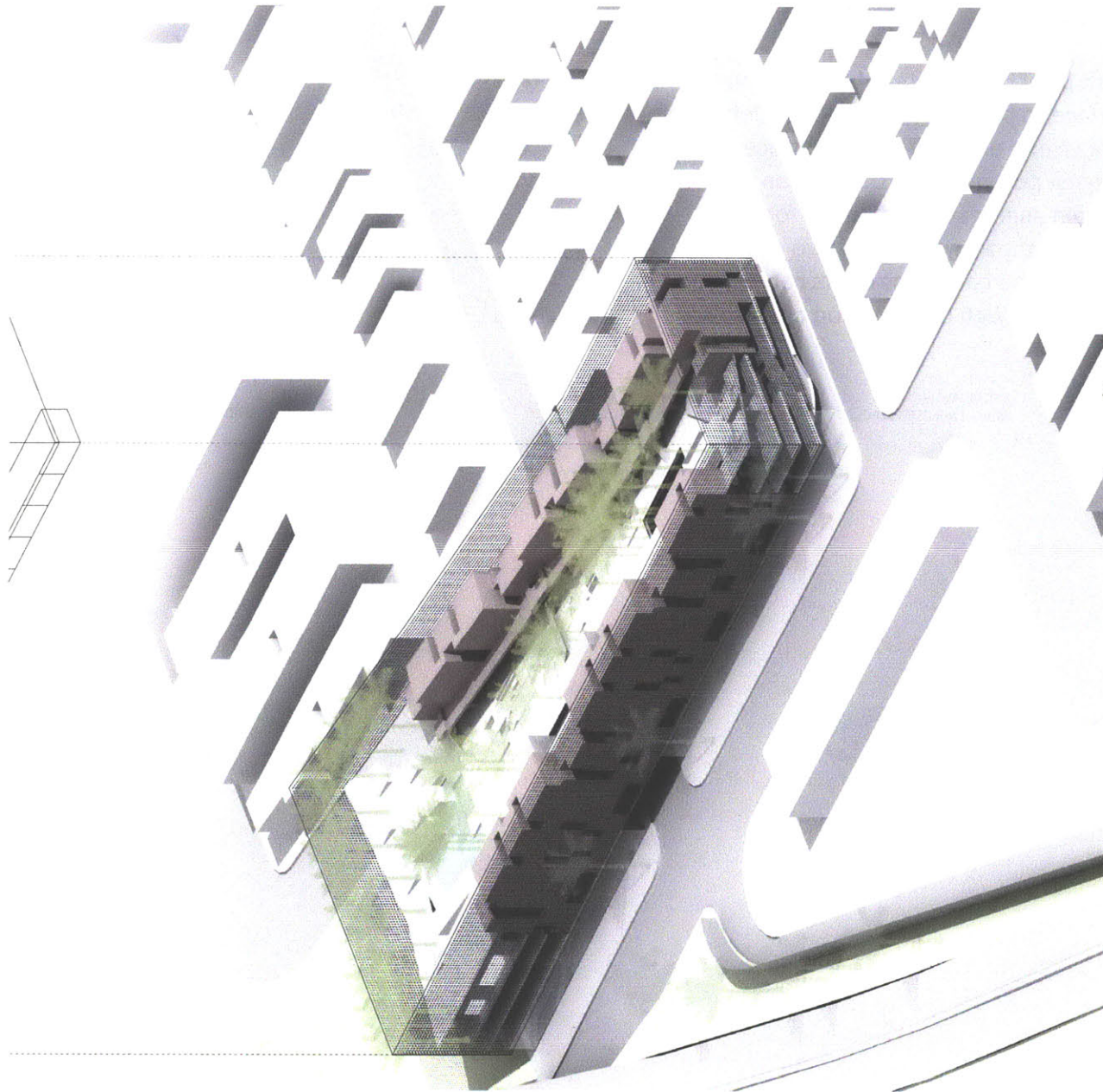


HOUSING

COMMONS

PARKING

RETAIL



This housing proposal is structured by a typical parking slab core. Retail spaces line Melrose Avenue and connect to the retail corridor of Los Angeles City College. These two elements form a base on which the more radical elements intervene.

The housing is created from eleven 'blocks' or smaller community units that dissolve the parking slabs at the edges of the slab and surround the central feature, the Commons.

Through the middle of the project, a promenade runs East and West, linking the large outdoor programs: pool, basketball court, and playground.

The Commons is accessed through a 'pinch point' in the center of the promenade as a social condenser on the largest scale.

The edges of the Commons slab are pulled up and away from the horizontal plane, creating occupiable space that is perforated and contributes to the interior focus and containment strategy on the Commons.

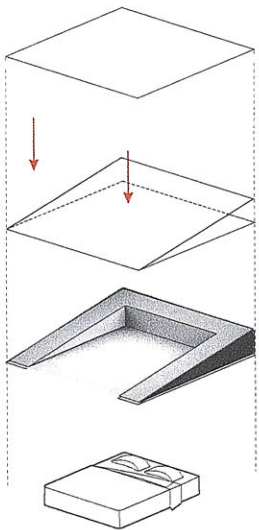
The facade follows the perimeter of the slabs, reinforcing the interiority of the grand domestic plane, the shared Commons.

Finally, palm trees line the promenade and connect the elevated landscape to the surrounding context, framing views of the Hollywood Hills and downtown Los Angeles.

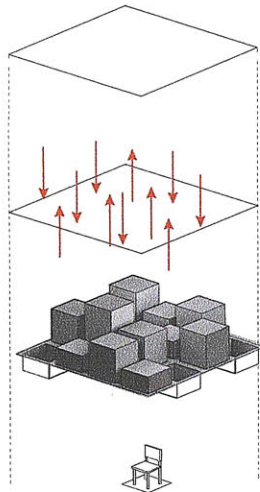
The Commons is formally structured through a pixelization strategy. The dimensions of each pixel are related to typical domestic program: bed, seat, bathroom, office, garden, etc. However, normative notions of the domestic are upended by making these private spaces part of the public common.

Each pixel has a material relationship of surface to program. Hard edges define spaces and enclosure. Soft surfaces suggest potentials for occupation and use. Certain aggregations of pixels form the outdoor theater area, and two outdoor offices. The commons offers continuous variety through combination of the pixels.

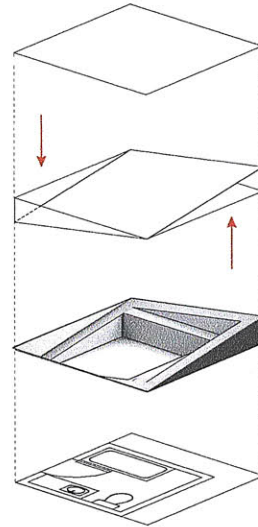
BED SPACE  
EMBEDDED SOFT SURFACE



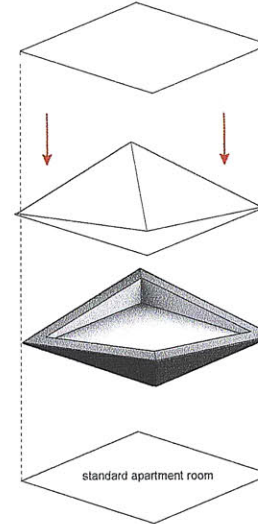
CHAIR // TABLE  
FIXED HARD SURFACE



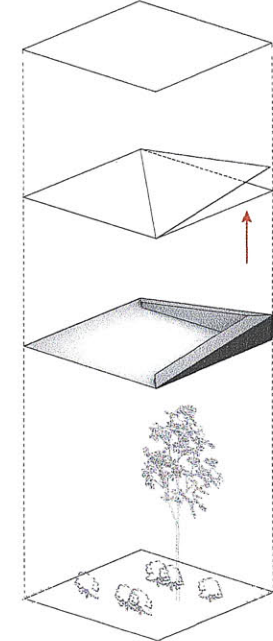
BATHROOM // CLOSET  
SMALL ENCLOSED SPACE



DOMESTIC ROOM  
CONTAINED SPACE



GARDEN PLOT  
CONTAINED SOFT SPACE



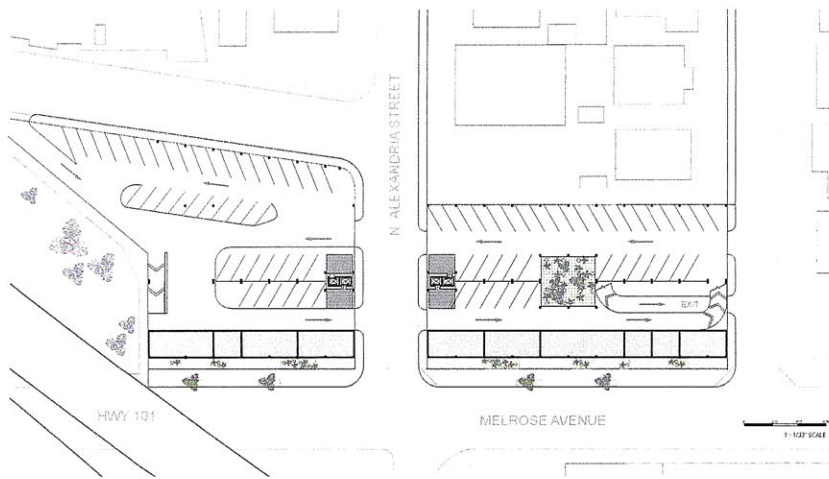


HWY 101

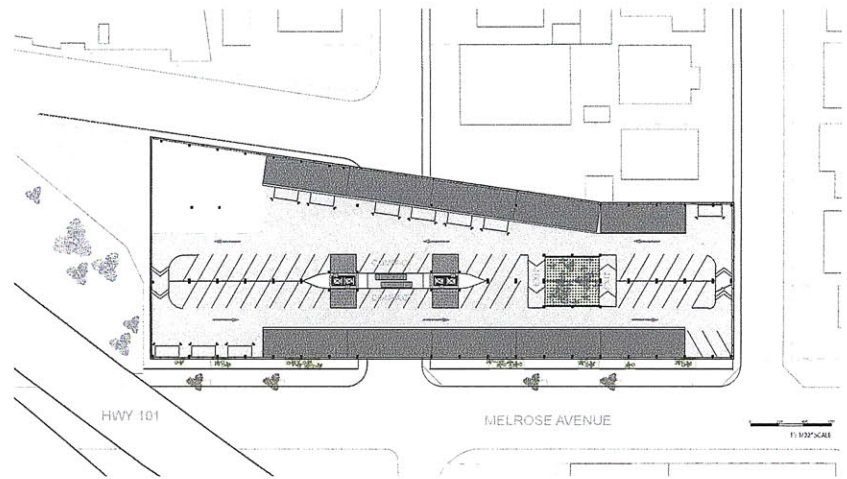
COMMONS PLAN



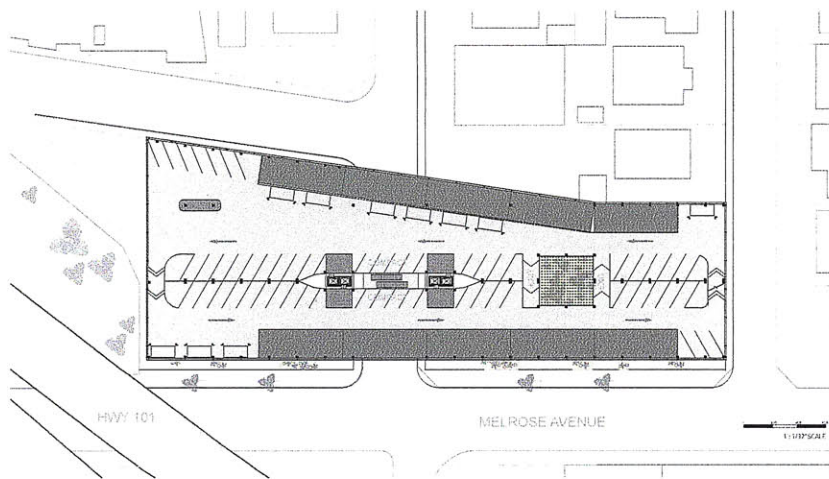
1/16" SCALE



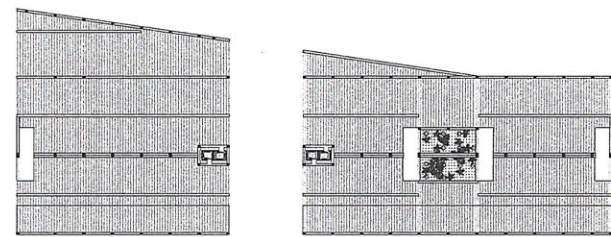
GROUND FLOOR PLAN



SECOND FLOOR PLAN



FIRST FLOOR PLAN

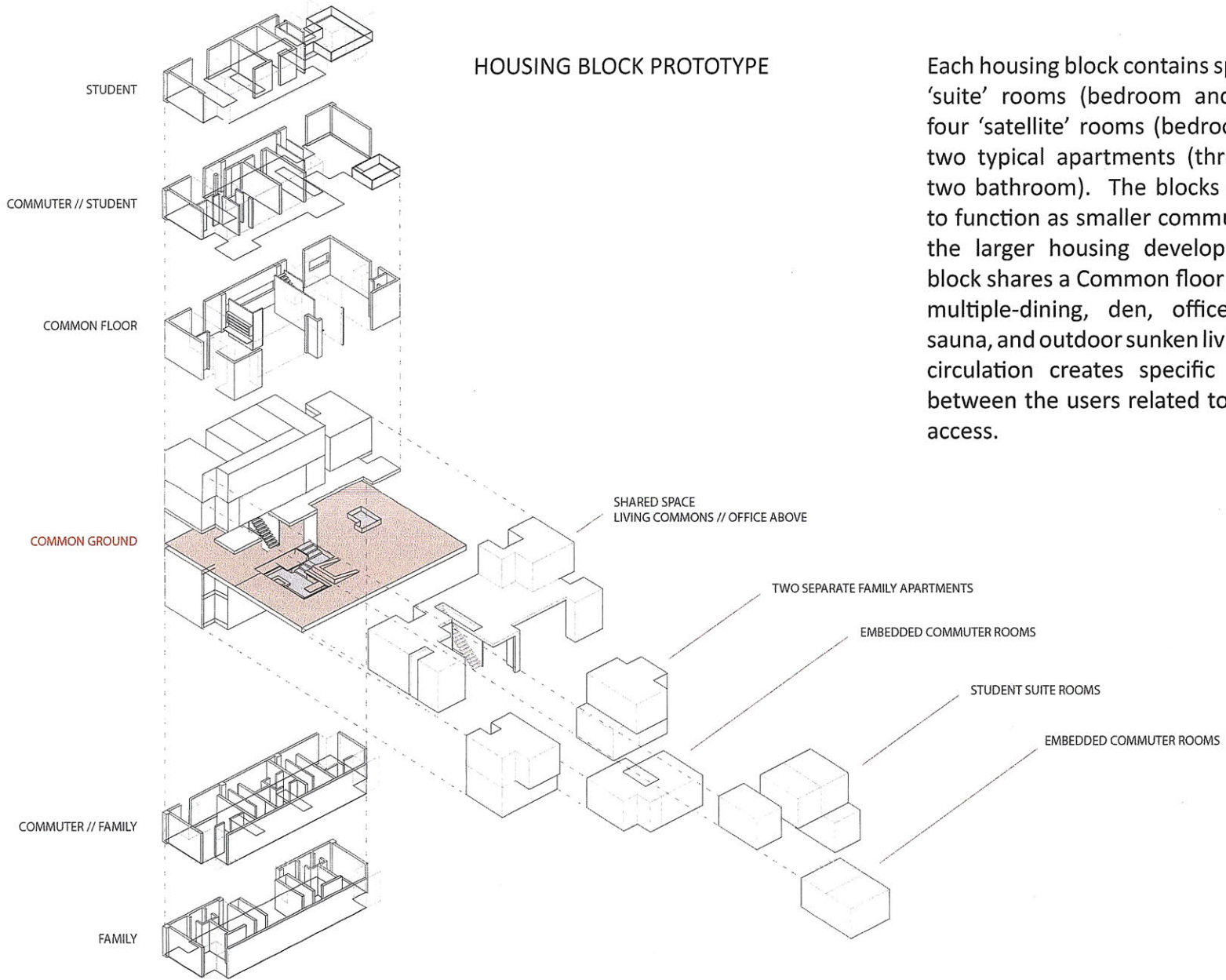


STRUCTURAL PLAN



Pool on West end of the Commons looking towards the Hollywood Hills

# HOUSING BLOCK PROTOTYPE

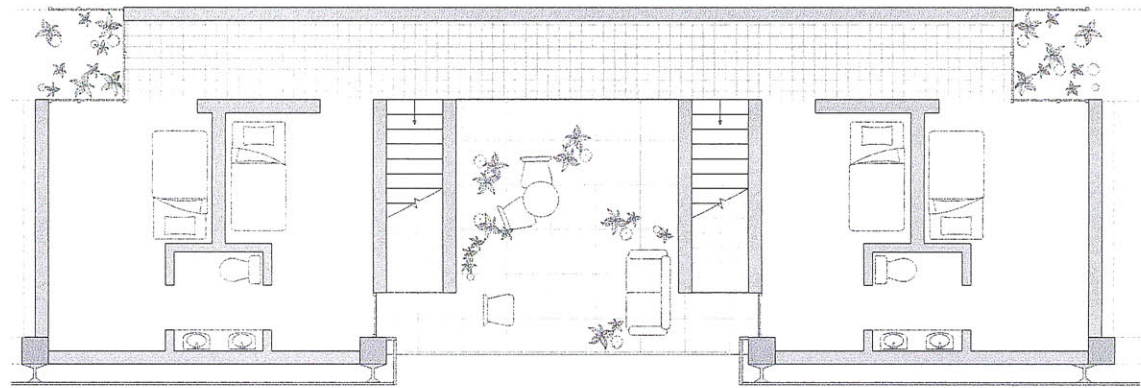


Each housing block contains spaces for four 'suite' rooms (bedroom and bathroom), four 'satellite' rooms (bedroom only), and two typical apartments (three bedroom, two bathroom). The blocks are intended to function as smaller communities within the larger housing development. Each block shares a Common floor with kitchen, multiple-dining, den, offices, hot tub/sauna, and outdoor sunken livingroom. The circulation creates specific relationships between the users related to their shared access.

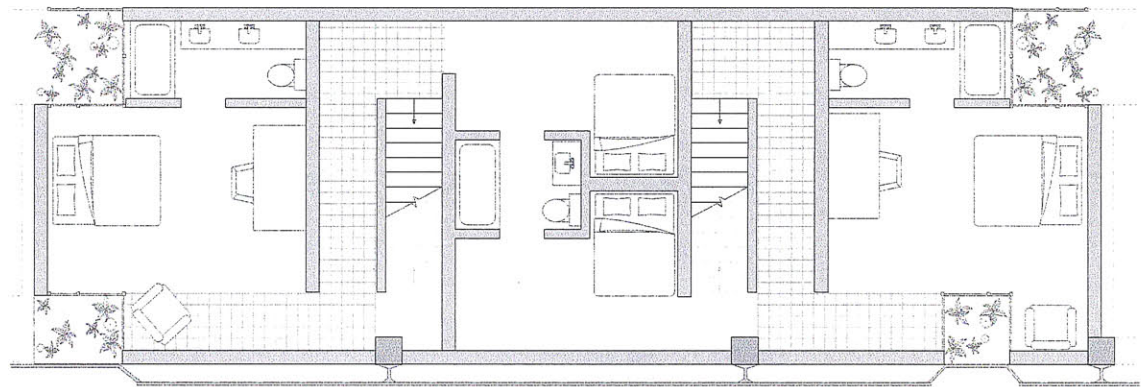


Hot tub to Den, looking south to Downtown Los Angeles

The floors below the Commons mix the typical apartment units with the 'suite' rooms. The circulation paths force the users to negotiate terms of privacy and interdependence. Here, the 'suite' may be used as a rental unit by a family in the apartment, or as a stand-alone dwelling unrelated. The 'suites' share a lateral connection through a shared bathroom that suggests multiple connection types within this arrangement of living spaces.



HOUSING BLOCK 1st FLOOR

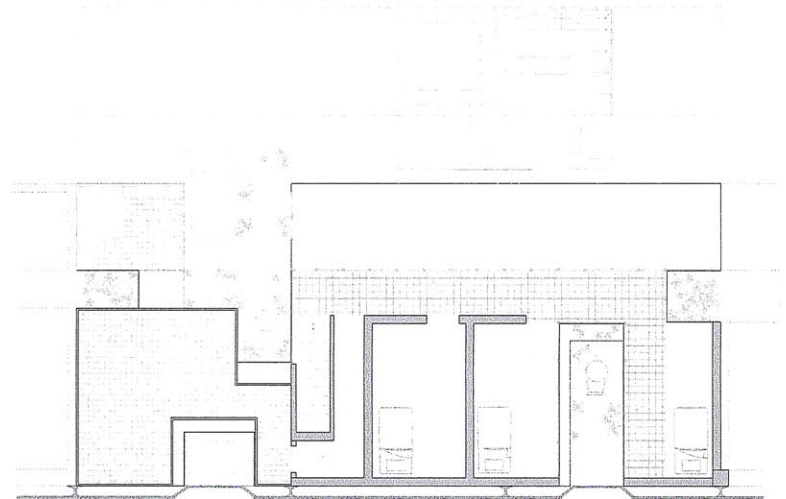


HOUSING BLOCK 2nd FLOOR

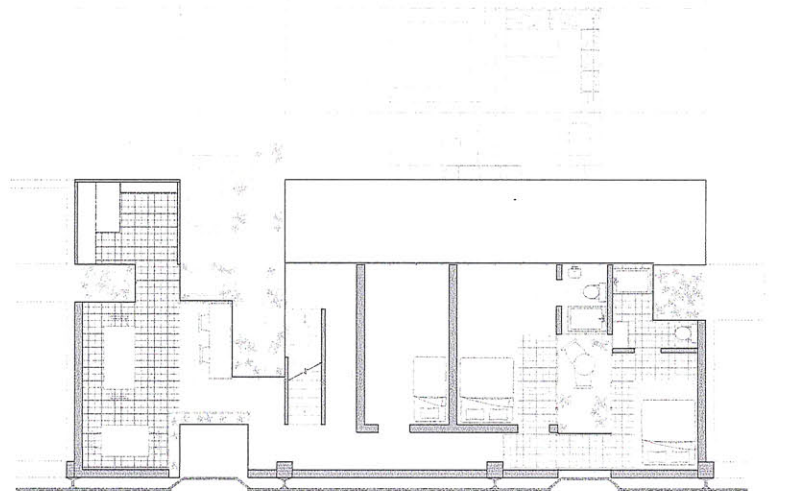
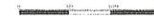


Promenade through Commons, looking West

The floors above the Commons mix two 'suites' with four 'satellite' rooms. Circulation paths are shared yet the spatial arrangement divides the 'suites' substantially in character from the 'satellites'. On the fourth floor, the Office space is a semi-private zone accessible by the entire housing block and offers an outdoor venue for viewing/objectifying the activity on the Commons.



HOUSING BLOCK 5th FLOOR



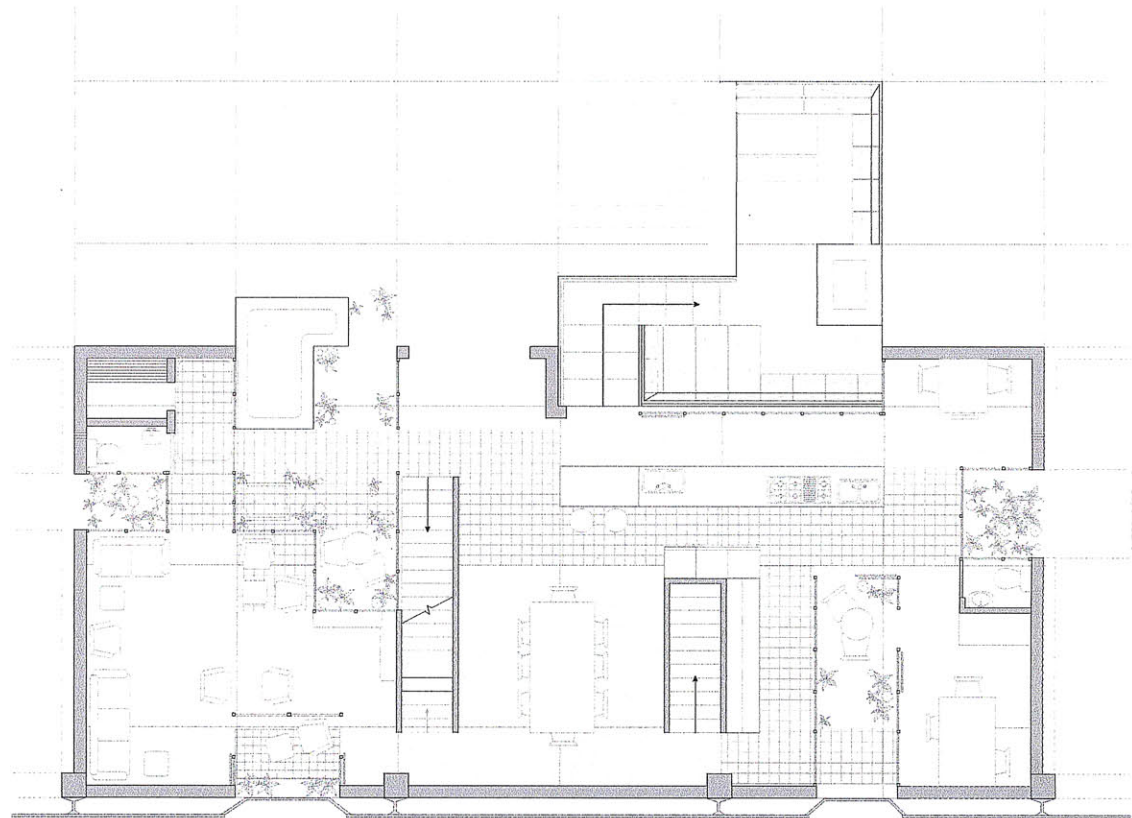
HOUSING BLOCK 4th FLOOR





Communal Kitchen and Mult-Families

The Common floor functions as the social condenser for the housing block. All program spaces are shared by all users. The atriums continue the pixelization strategy used on the central Commons at a smaller scale, dissolving the barriers between indoor and outdoor, mixing public and private domestic activities with both material and visual connection.

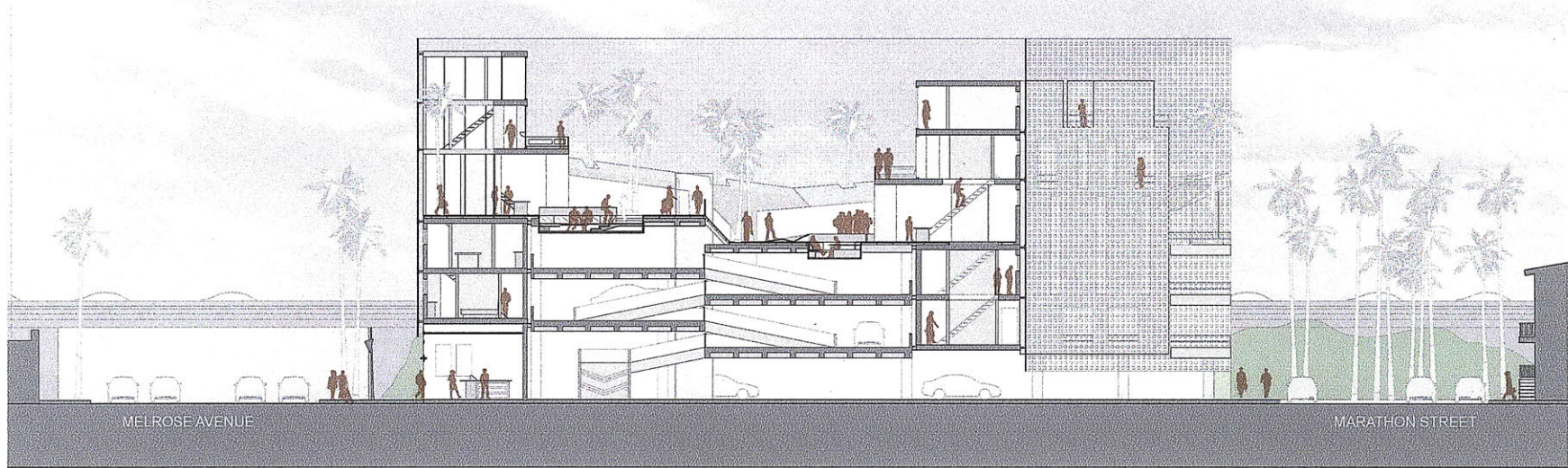


COMMON FLOOR

0 5ft 10ft 15ft



Communal Kitchen onto sunken outdoor livingroom and Commons

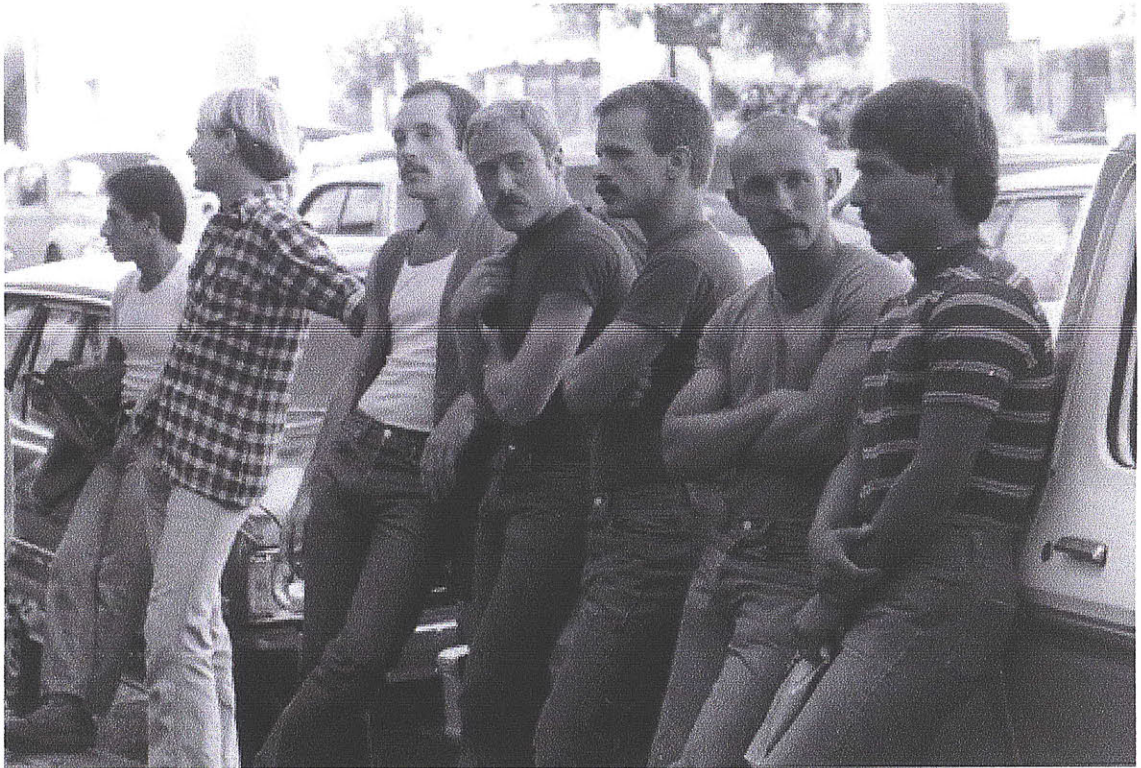


NORTH/SOUTH SECTION



As a temporal state, queerness is not fixed in place or personal orientation. It is a performance to be continually reinvented where multiple identities seamlessly overlap and intersect.

Queer space, is the temporal appropriation of marginal spaces, bartering in a language of objectification, seclusion and the mapping of the body onto objects and the landscape. Here it is conceptualized as a valuable mode of rupturing the normative through subverting forms, co-opting spaces, dissolving categorical assumptions, and exhibiting attitudes and behaviors that express new freedoms of identity.



CASTRO, SAN FRANCISCO, 1970S

## APPENDIX

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Documentation of the Final Presentation on Friday, May 18th, 2012: presentation boards, physical models, and a spoken presentation.

Critics in attendance included:

Rudolphe el-Khoury  
Principal, Khoury Levit Fong

Filip Tejchman  
Lecturer, MIT Architecture  
Principal, Untitled Office

Michael Kubo  
PhD Candidate, History theory Criticism,  
MIT Architecture

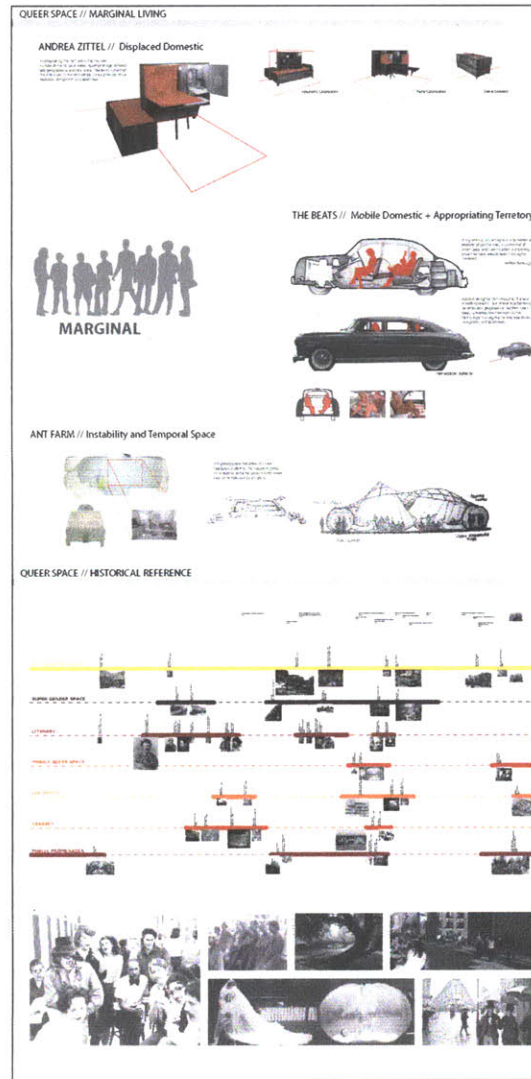
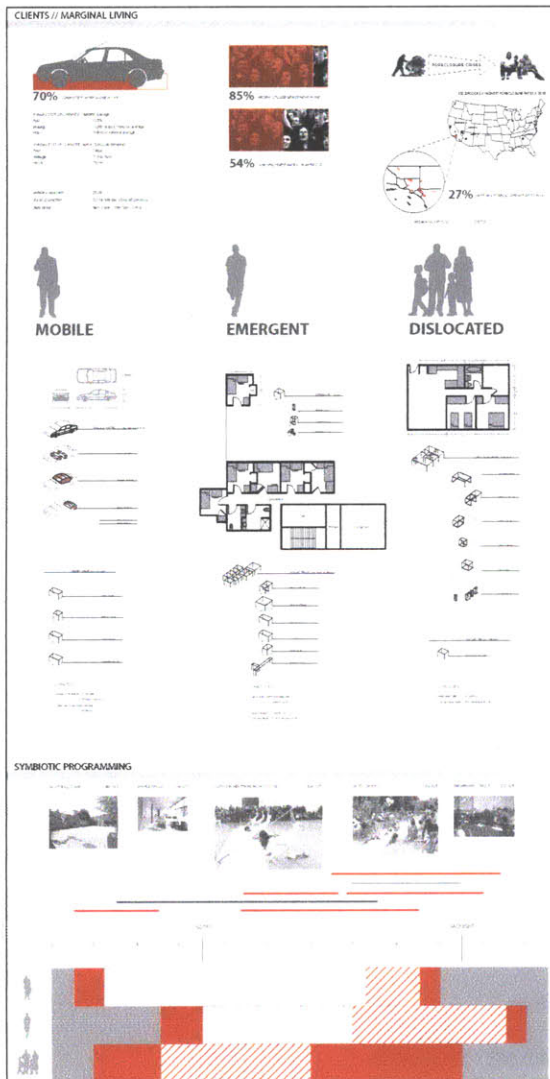
Marc Goulthorpe  
Associate Professor, MIT Architecture

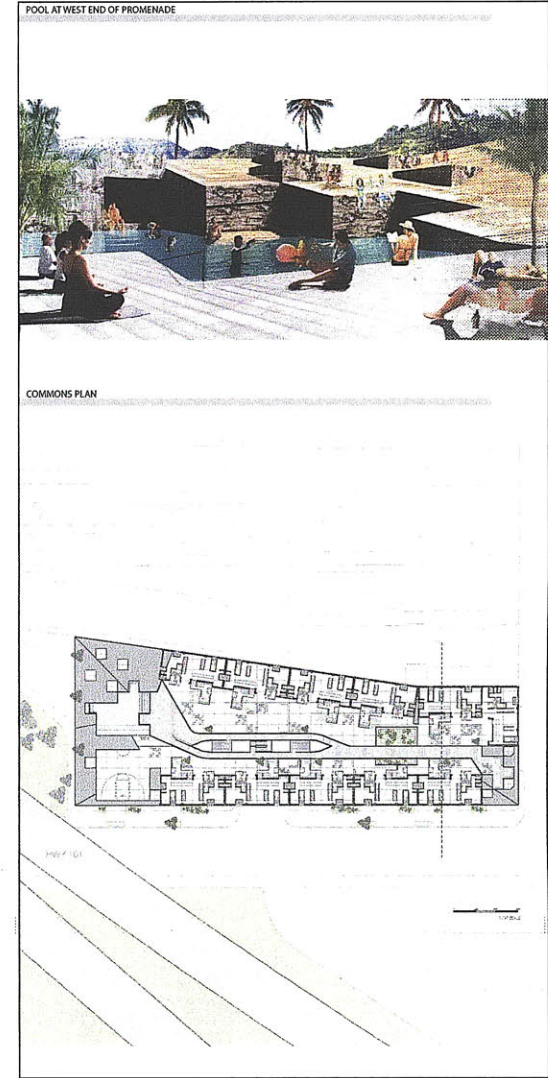
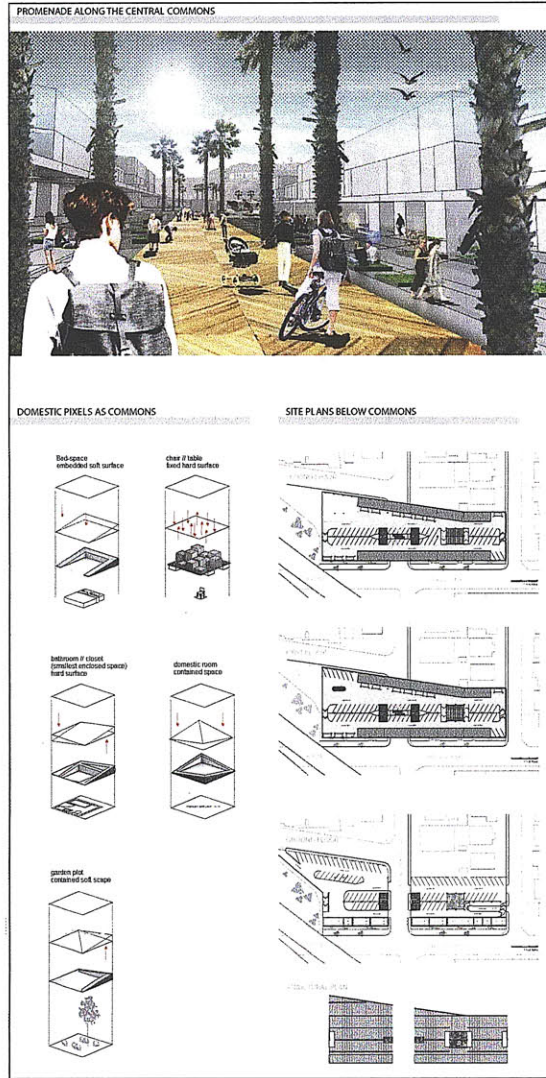
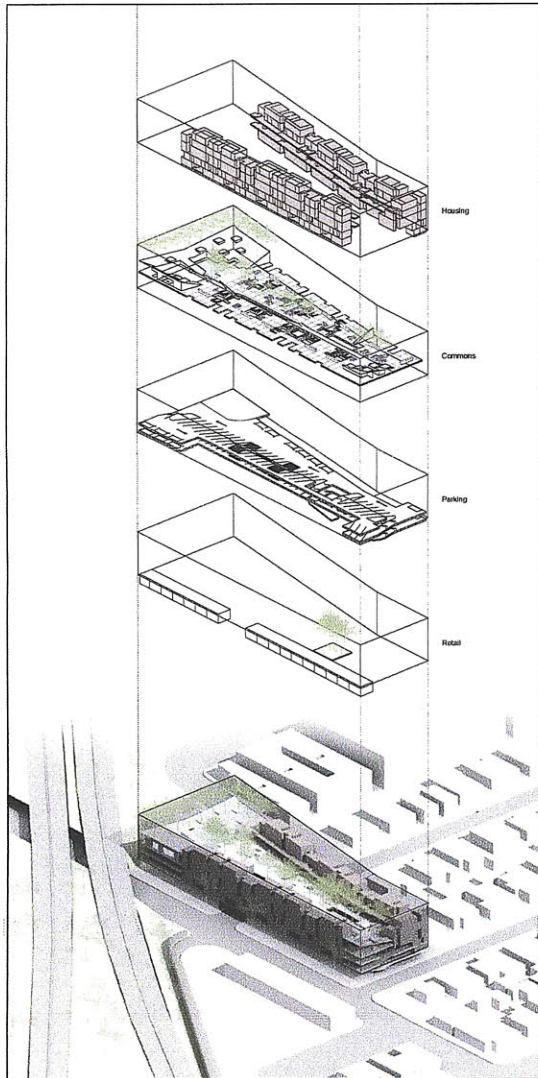
Christina Parreno  
Lecturer, MIT Architecture

Brandon Clifford  
Principal, Matter Design

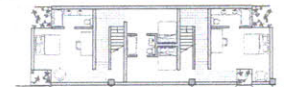
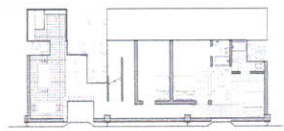
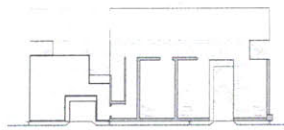
Janette Kim  
Principal, All if the Above



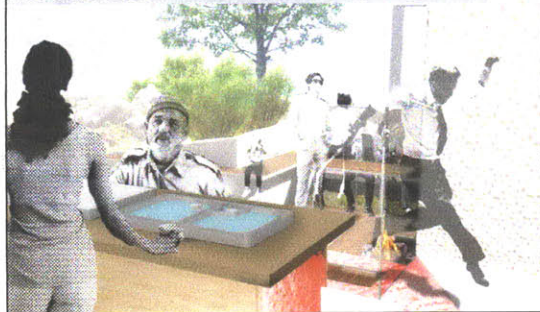




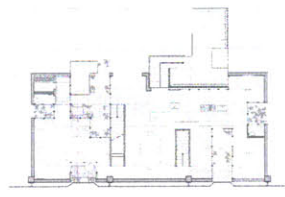
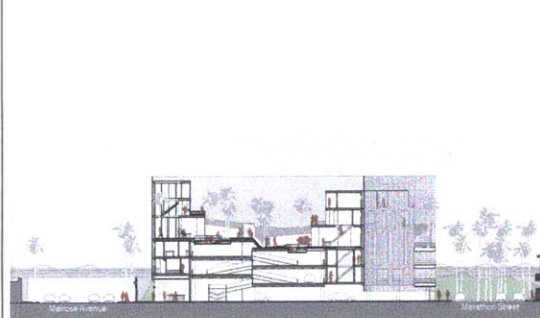
HOUSING PLANS // SINGLE COMMUNITY BLOCK



KITCHEN TO OUTDOOR LIVINGROOM



HOUSING TO COMMONS SECTION

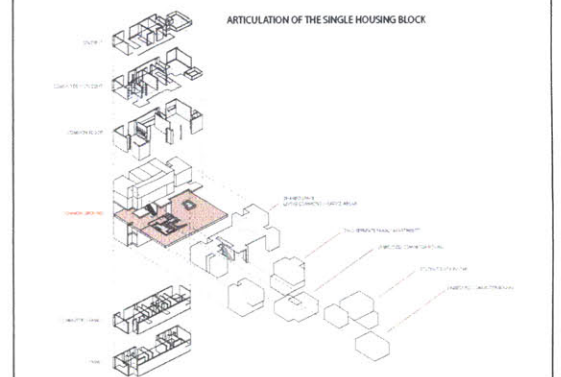


COMMON FLOOR

MULTI DINING ROOM AND KITCHEN

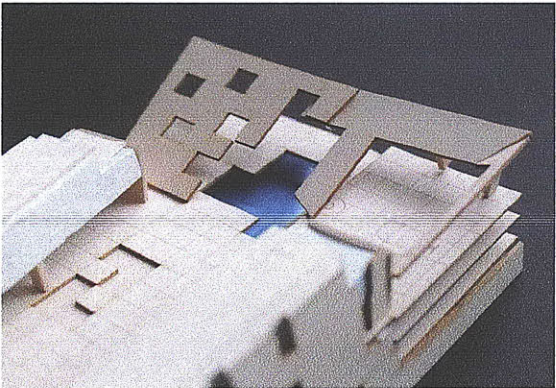


MELROSE AND NORTH KENMORE AVENUES

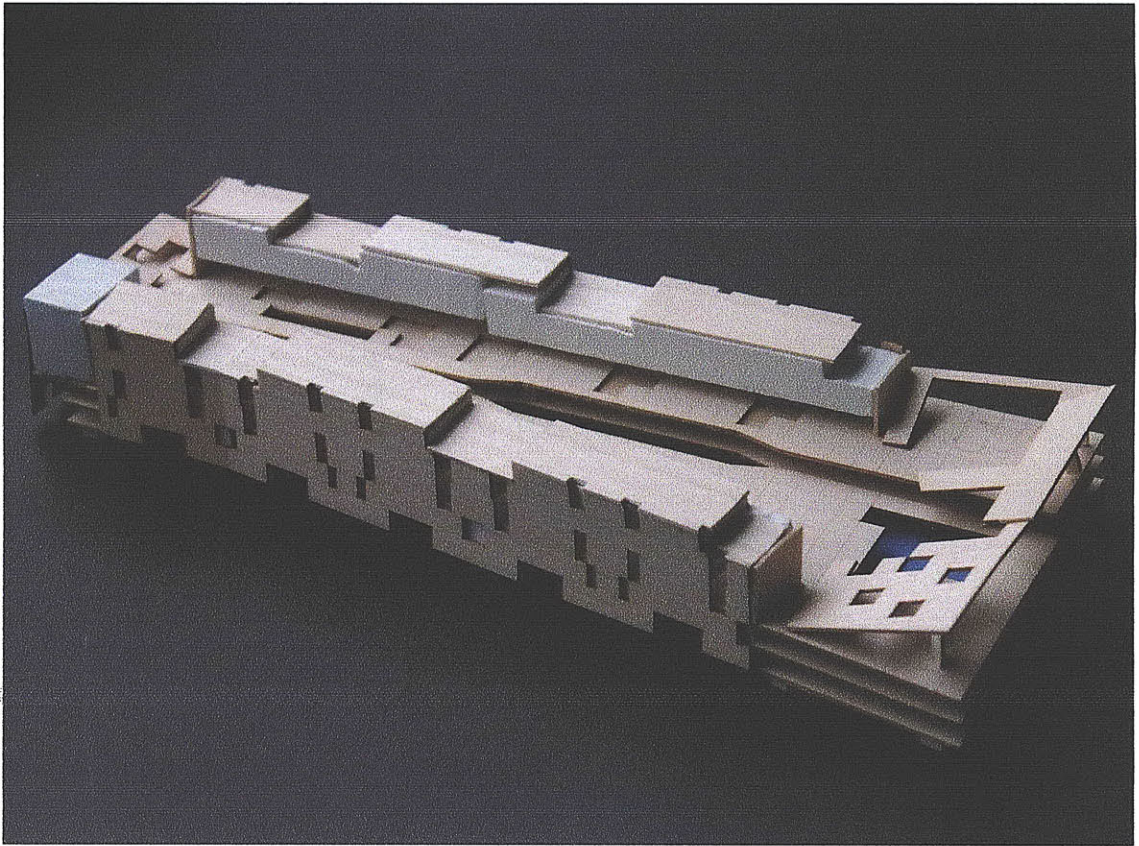


MIXED USE COMMONS



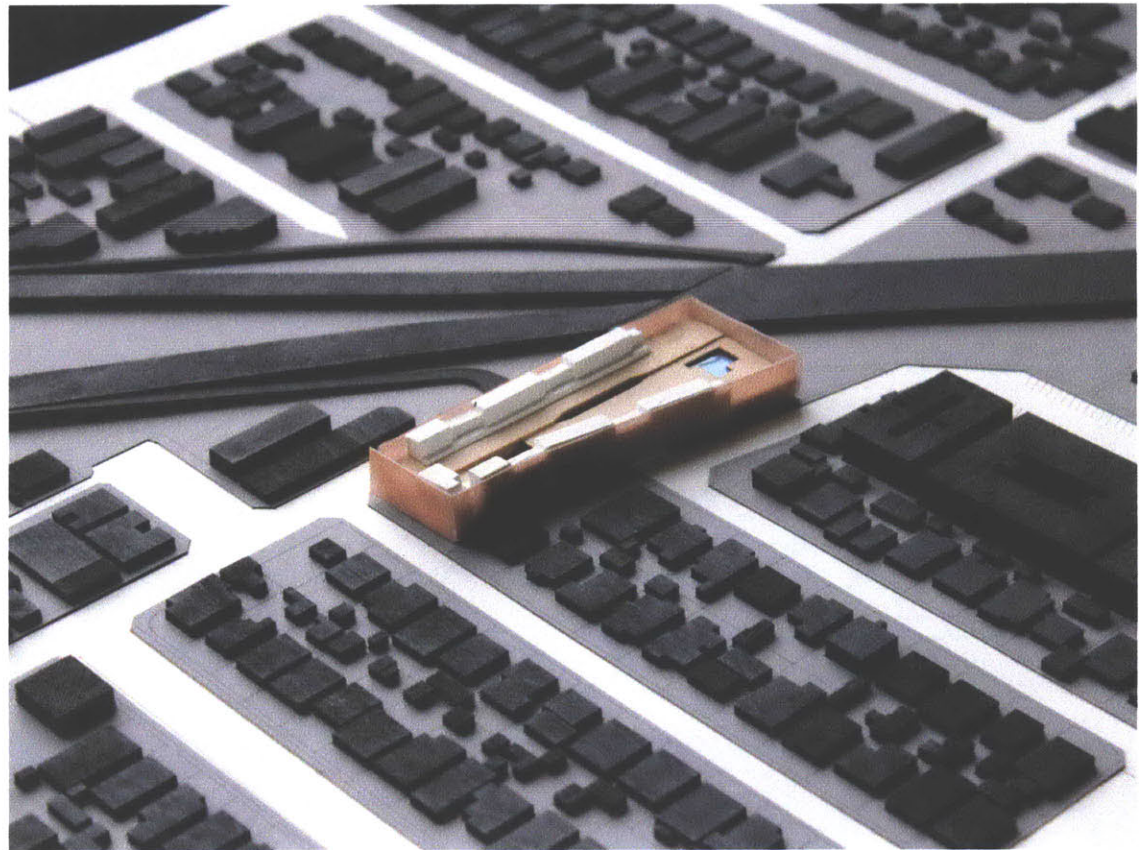


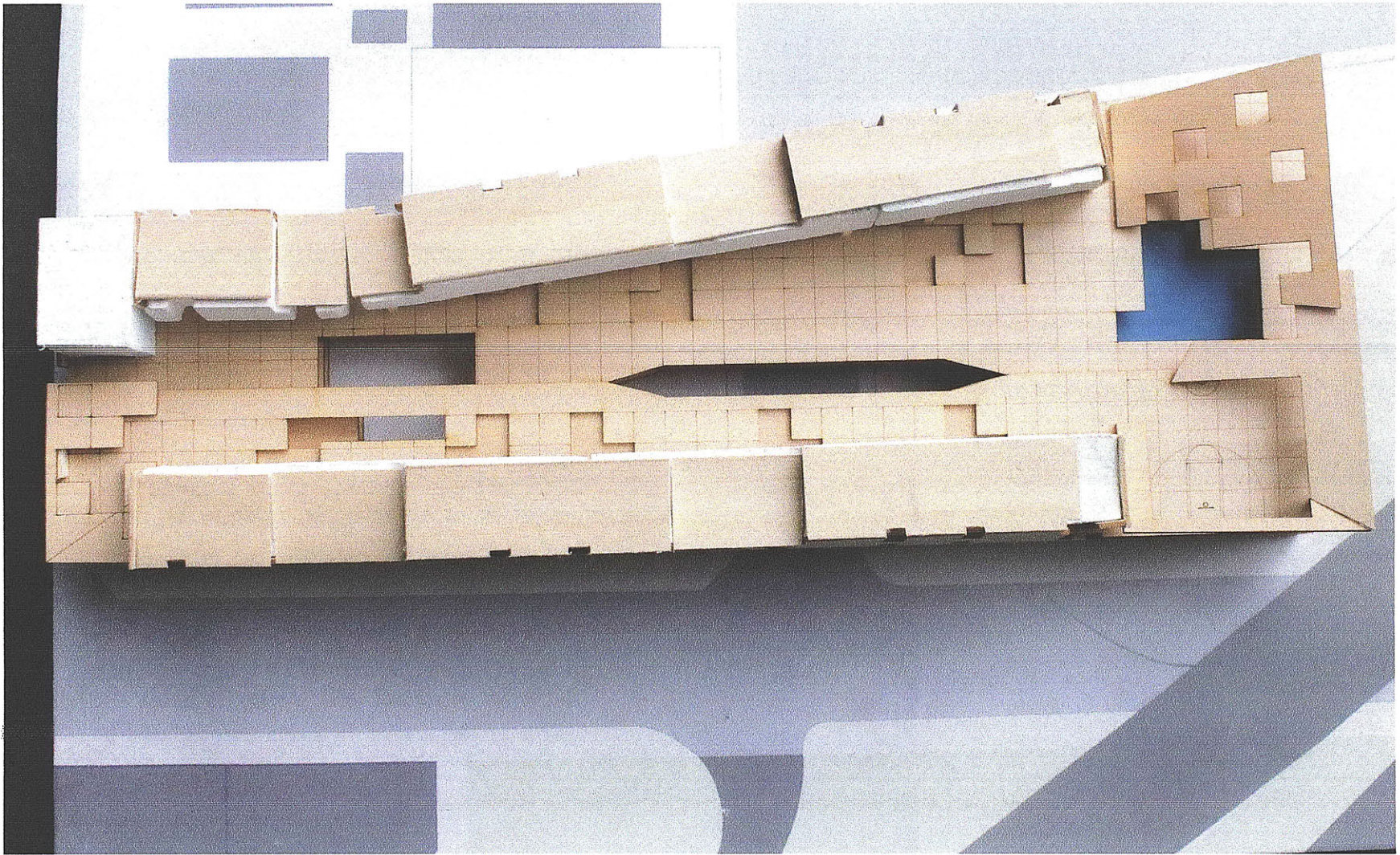
1:500 MODEL  
basswood, foam, acrylic  
10"x4"



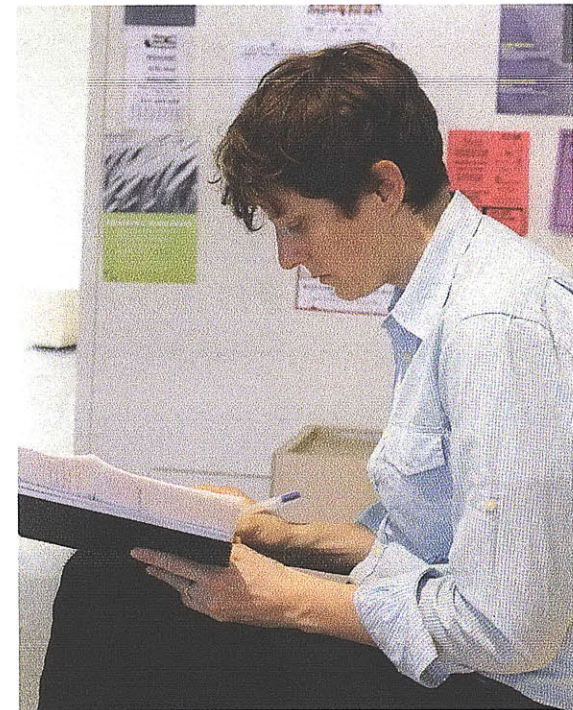


1:1000 MODEL  
basswood, mesh, foam, plywood  
5"x2"









THESIS REVIEW  
Friday May 18th, 2012  
Building 7, 4th Floor Presentation Space  
Massachusetts Institution of Technology





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