

**Sustainable Urban Design in China**

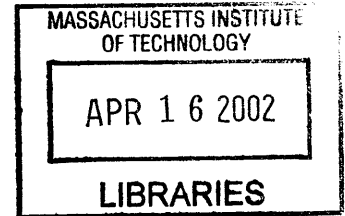
by  
Henry Chang

B.A. English, Haverford College, 1989  
B.A. Philosophy, Haverford College, 1989  
M.A. Philosophy, University of Michigan, 1991

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  
FEBRUARY 2002

**ROTCH**



Signature of Author: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Department of Architecture, January 18, 2002

Certified by: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Andrew Scott  
Associate Professor in Architecture

Accepted by: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Andrew Scott  
Associate Professor in Architecture  
Departmental Committee on Graduate Students Chairman

©2002 Henry Chang. All rights reserved  
The author hereby grants to MIT permission to reproduce and to distribute publicly  
paper and electronic copies of this thesis document in whole or in part.

## **Thesis Committee**

**Andrew Scott**

Associate Professor of Architecture  
Advisor

**Leon Glicksman**

Professor of Building Technology & Mechanical Engineering  
Reader

**Eran Ben-Joseph**

Assistant Professor of Landscape Architecture and Planning  
Reader

**Shun Kanda**

Senior Lecturer in Architecture  
Reader

## **Abstract**

### **Sustainable Urban Design in China**

by Henry Chang

Submitted to the Department of Architecture on January 18, 2002  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Architecture

What constitutes sustainable architecture? Clearly, this is a question very much in vogue nowadays, and contemporary responses have been framed for the most part by topics such as new building technologies, energy conservation, climatically and environmentally responsive design, recyclable materials, and so on. Though sustainable architecture must certainly be about many, if not all of these things, my thesis proposes a much more familiar architectural response. Namely, I argue that the design of spaces that facilitate and promote communities is not only a necessary condition for a sustainable architecture, it is the necessary pre-condition.

How does an architecture facilitate and promote communities? I have chosen the problem of housing as the vehicle to answer this question, because I believe one's living arrangement ought to be a critical opportunity for community life. To take advantage of this opportunity, I have tried to provide for variety and flexibility in public spaces, because these contribute directly to the viability and longevity of any community. I have tried to think of ways that architecture can actually give people something to do, activities that can be shared, perhaps even by cross-sections of society that do not typically have much to do with one another, because such successful collaboration is essential for the vitality of any community. And I have tried to strike a realistic balance between the day-to-day demands of contemporary lifestyles and the long term goals for a globally sustainable environment, because communities can best be expected to thrive when the needs of both the present and future generations are met.

Thesis Supervisor:  
Andrew Scott  
Title:  
Associate Professor

## Contents

	Introduction	6
	A Definition of Sustainability	8
	Methodology	10
	A Study at 4 Scales	11
THE CITY IN CONTEXT BEIJING LESSONS FROM THE FORBIDDEN CITY THE CITY GRID THE COURTYARD	<b>C I T Y</b>	13
OVERVIEW TOWN-GOWN RELATIONSHIP TSINGHUA: THE PAST TSINGHUA: THE PRESENT TSINGHUA: THE FUTURE TSINGHUA'S STRATEGY OF FORMALISM TSINGHUA'S STRATEGY OF ZONING CLIMATE CONDITIONS	<b>C A M P U S</b>	23
SITE LOCATION SITE FEATURES SITE ANALYSIS PROPOSAL FOR SITE DESIGN	<b>S I T E</b>	41
GENERAL DESIGN GUIDELINES RIVER-EDGE TYPOLOGY LIVE-WORK TYPOLOGY COURTYARD TYPOLOGY	<b>3 T Y P E S</b>	55

85 Final Review

86 Acknowledgements

87 Bibliography

89 Illustrations

## Introduction

Notwithstanding that global ecology has become increasingly prominent in people's minds, conditions are getting worse. Simply put, there is an increasing demand being placed on a decreasing supply of natural resources, and this disparity is growing exponentially. Housing represents a critical dimension of this problem. World population had remained relatively stable for 7500 years, but increased five-fold in the last 500 years. Moreover, the population is expected to be 10.02 billion in 2050, nearly double what it was in 1994. However, in the same time frame, inhabitable land has largely remained the same. History's solution to this problem has been the urbanization of world demographics, i.e., large-scale migrations towards denser concentrations of people. The question is whether this has proved successful; certainly, evidence of the global environment dramatically worsening would contravene this success.

In its farthest-reaching implications, my thesis shall posit an alternative to past patterns of urbanization. In doing so, I assume that such patterns have not been entirely successful as solutions to the aforementioned disparities, owing to the ecological devastation they have wrought. Moreover, I shall also assume that the solution must be an urban one, as opposed to, say, a rural one which might entail the return to agrarian societies. My reasoning here is that non-urbanistic proposals are essentially non-starters insofar as they contradict the presumably irreversible trend towards increasing densities of habitation. The question is whether these densities can be achieved in significantly better ways than we have seen thus far.

Specifically, I shall propose a project for sustainable housing in Beijing, China. My reasons for choosing this location are as follows: firstly, because of the unique situation in the world that Beijing and China occupy; and secondly, because of the unique opportunities being afforded here by the Building Technology department's work in sustainable urban housing in China.

The site I have chosen is located on the eastern edge of Tsinghua University, located at the northeastern edge of Beijing. This choice is the result of a number of factors. Firstly, the Architecture Department here at M.I.T has had a long-standing collaboration with their counterparts at Tsinghua, and as a consequence, a wealth of resources are readily available to provide for a robust investigation. Secondly, and more importantly, the campus itself provides for an interesting case. It has long been engaged in efforts to create a more sustainable campus, but the results have been questionable at best. What it does have working in its favor, however, is its own history. Originally the site of the Royal Gardens for the Imperial family, it remains something of a sanctuary in the middle of a city that has largely been a disaster of urban sprawl. It is, in its own rights, a city within a city, and is currently in the throes of massive re-development. In fact, I would venture to say that Tsinghua is at a critical moment in its own urban history. Although some of the first indications of its direction are not very promising, it is not too late. But a different strategy for urban design is needed, and it is the articulation of this strategy that is at the heart of my project.

## **A Definition of Sustainability**

What does sustainability mean in the context of the built environment? In the broadest sense it can perhaps be defined as an adherence to the following goals:

ecological balance (preserving the resilience of natural environments and balances); economic performance (enabling markets for generating production and consumption patterns); institutional capacity (meeting the organizational needs of private entities and firms and public agencies); and viable governance (ensuring effective policy, regulation, and accountability).<sup>1</sup>

At the level of the building, sustainable architecture can be defined as a

means of making buildings that are more user responsive, more humane places to inhabit, more intelligent in the way they balance their energy flows, more respectful of nature and the resources it offers, and more understanding of buildings having a life span during which they undergo substantial change and adaptation. Put together, it simply equates to better designed places in tune with the environment.<sup>2</sup>

In fact, the meaning of sustainability is a topic worthy of being a thesis topic unto itself, and is not the subject of this thesis per se. Nevertheless, as the immediately preceding definition would suggest, it seems safe to say that sustainable architecture is by and large synonymous with what we generally understand to be good architecture: namely, the design of interesting and engaging spaces which represent a qualitative improvement in our lives.

To this, I would like to add further that sustainability must also entail the design of spaces which are successful in fostering and promoting community. It is not enough to ponder one's own relationship to the environment-- we are no longer islands unto ourselves, and the actions of our fellow human beings, we have learned, can effect the natural environment in ways that have direct bearing upon any one individual's life. Moreover, it is clear that sustainability refers not only to the viability of the world around us, but also to our own viability, as a species, as collectives of persons, and as individuals. Since it is imperative that we facilitate our mutual cohabitation in order to ensure the longevity of each of these three groupings, the facilitation of community is at the crux of the issue of sustainability.

Nowhere are these issues more relevant than in China. Being in the first place, a communist country, and in the second place, a country with a long Confucian heritage that espouses the importance of social interconnections, the notion of community is one that must be dealt successfully in any architectural undertaking if that undertaking is to be at all successful. This thesis focus on this brand of sustainability. The question then becomes, how can we, as architects, design buildings and landscapes are not only inhabited by communities, but in fact make them flourish?

#### **Notes**

<sup>1</sup> Scott, p. ix

<sup>2</sup> Scott, p. 2

## Methodology

By methodology, I mean a kind of procedural map that shall guide the process of design in its successive stages. The methodology proposed here involves an examination of the problem of sustainable community design in a series of 4 scales: the scale of the city, the scale of the campus, and finally, a scale which addresses 3 proposed typologies.

The first scale is that of the city. The examination begins with some background on China in order to put the city in context. Next, the history of Beijing's urban development will be researched and an attitude toward the role that that history should play in the project design shall be arrived at. A discussion of the Forbidden City will follow, as it figures prominently in the shaping of Beijing's urban form. The city grid which resulted from the footprint of the ancient city will then be examined. Finally, the courtyard configuration, which is itself a derivative of the grid, will be introduced as a possible prototype for urban development.

The second scale will be that of the campus. This investigation begins with background information on the University. Then, the campus's relationship to the rest of Beijing will be discussed. Next follows a study on Tsinghua's strategies for campus planning- past, present, and future. The major themes of Tsinghua's projected masterplan will be identified as a strategy for formalism and a strategy for zoning. Finally, the essential climate conditions of the campus will be articulated.

The last scale shall involve the proposal of three different building typologies. These typologies are the river-edge type, the live-work type, and the courtyard type, which receives the greatest degree of attention. Naturally, they are not meant to be all-inclusive examples, but rather embodiments of the main idea of a sustainable community design.

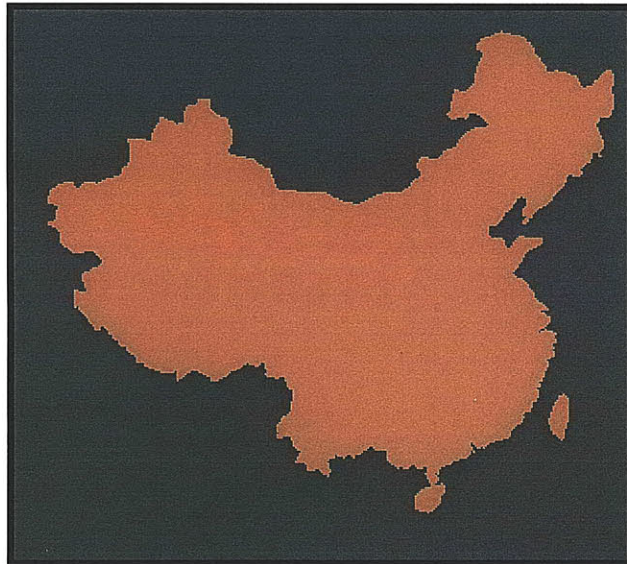


## **A Study of 4 Scales**

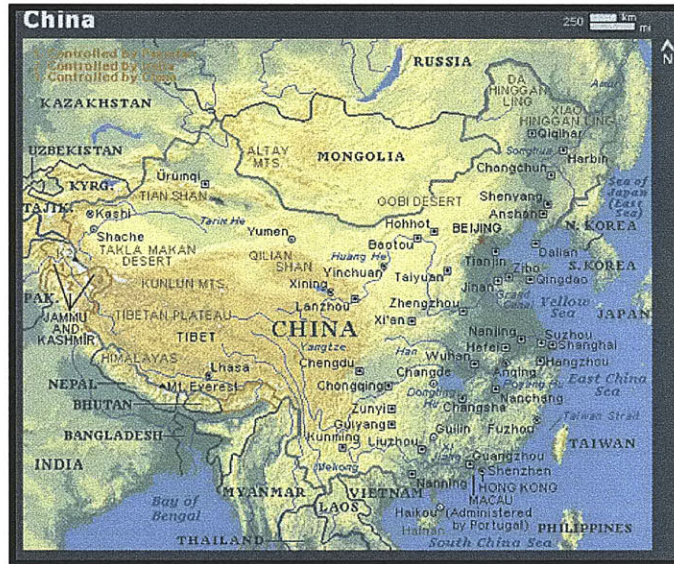
C I T Y

At 1.3 billion persons, China is currently the world's most populous country, and thus represents a major challenge to any solution to the disparities of supply and demand in housing. With a projected population of 1.8 billion in 2050, this disparity threatens to be even greater. To confront these challenges, an estimated 2.5 billion square meters of total construction areas will be completed in urban areas in the next five years, and 3.5 billion square meters in rural areas. In other words, an area roughly equivalent to the size of Connecticut is being proposed as new built floor area for China.

Contemporary map of China



Cities and geography of China

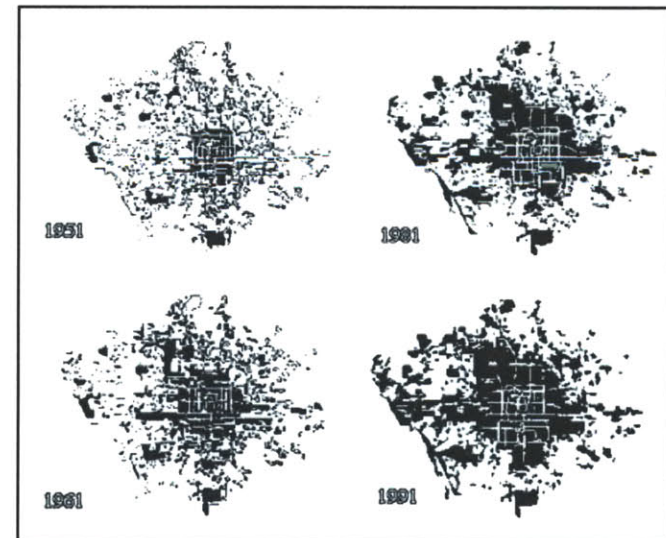


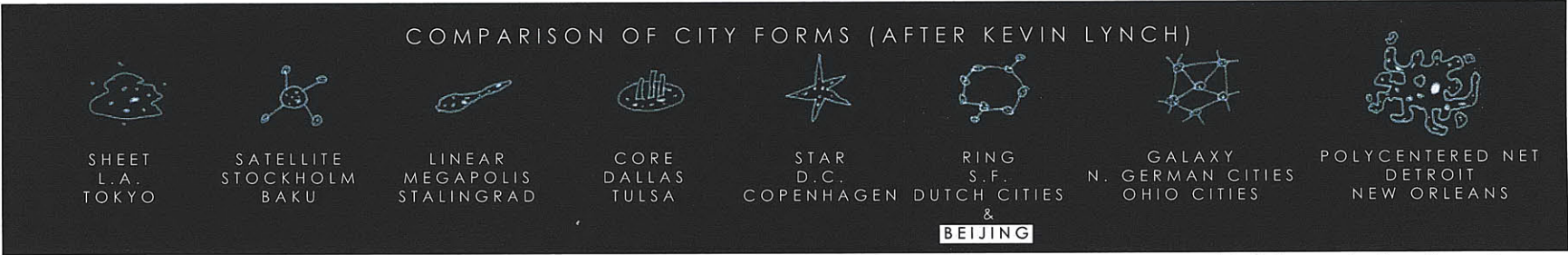
Beijing, the nation's capital, is a hyper-example of these tremendous forces. As the below illustration shows, the densities of Beijing are growing exponentially. In 1998, 1.519 million square meters were sold for housing at 8.78 billion yuan. This represents an increase in square meters sold of 110 percent from just one year ago, but an increase in yuan spent on housing of 180 percent within the same time frame. Consequently, housing prices are currently more than twice the national average, at 4,100 yuan (\$494) per square meter. If current trends persist, housing shortages will be so great as to be untenable for the long-term sustainability of Beijing. Recent dramatic increases in homelessness in Beijing are testimonials to this problem.

Road map of Beijing

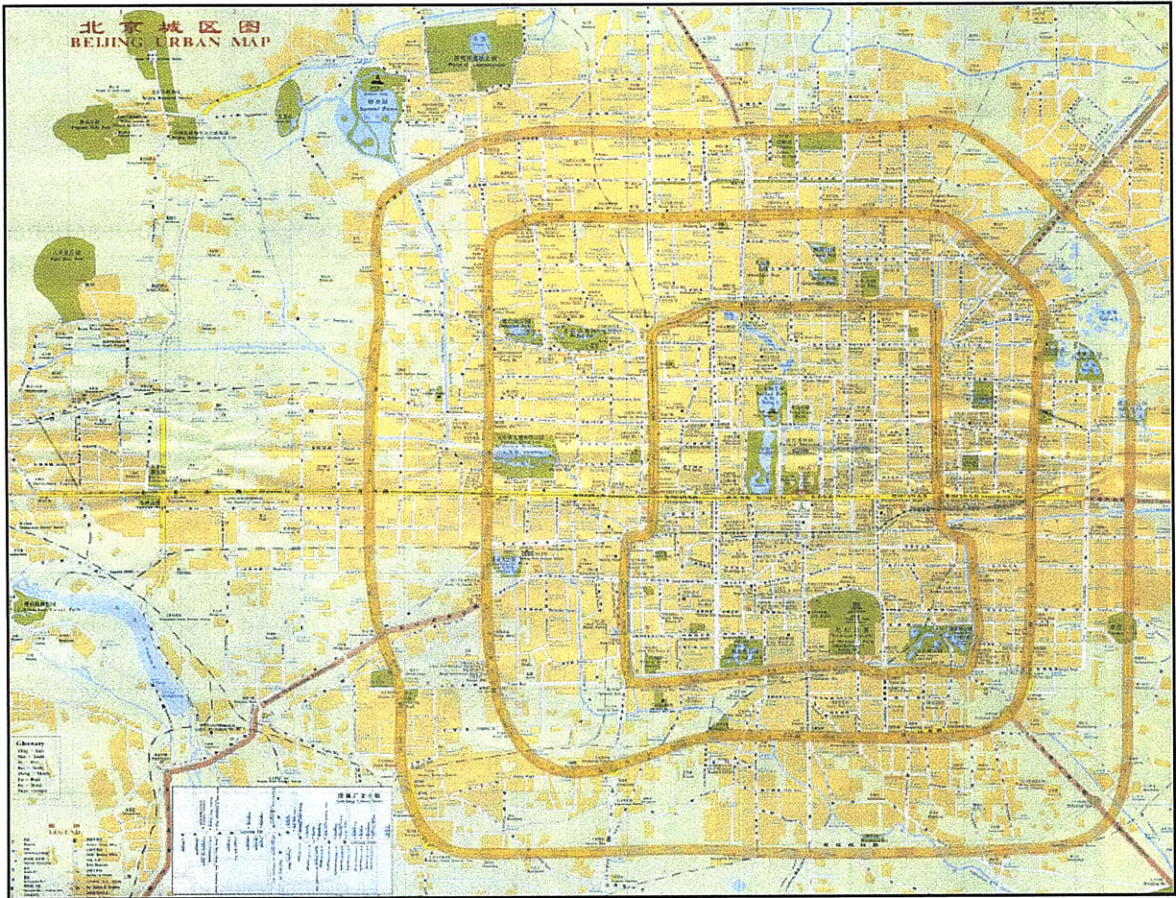


Growth in density over a 40 year period





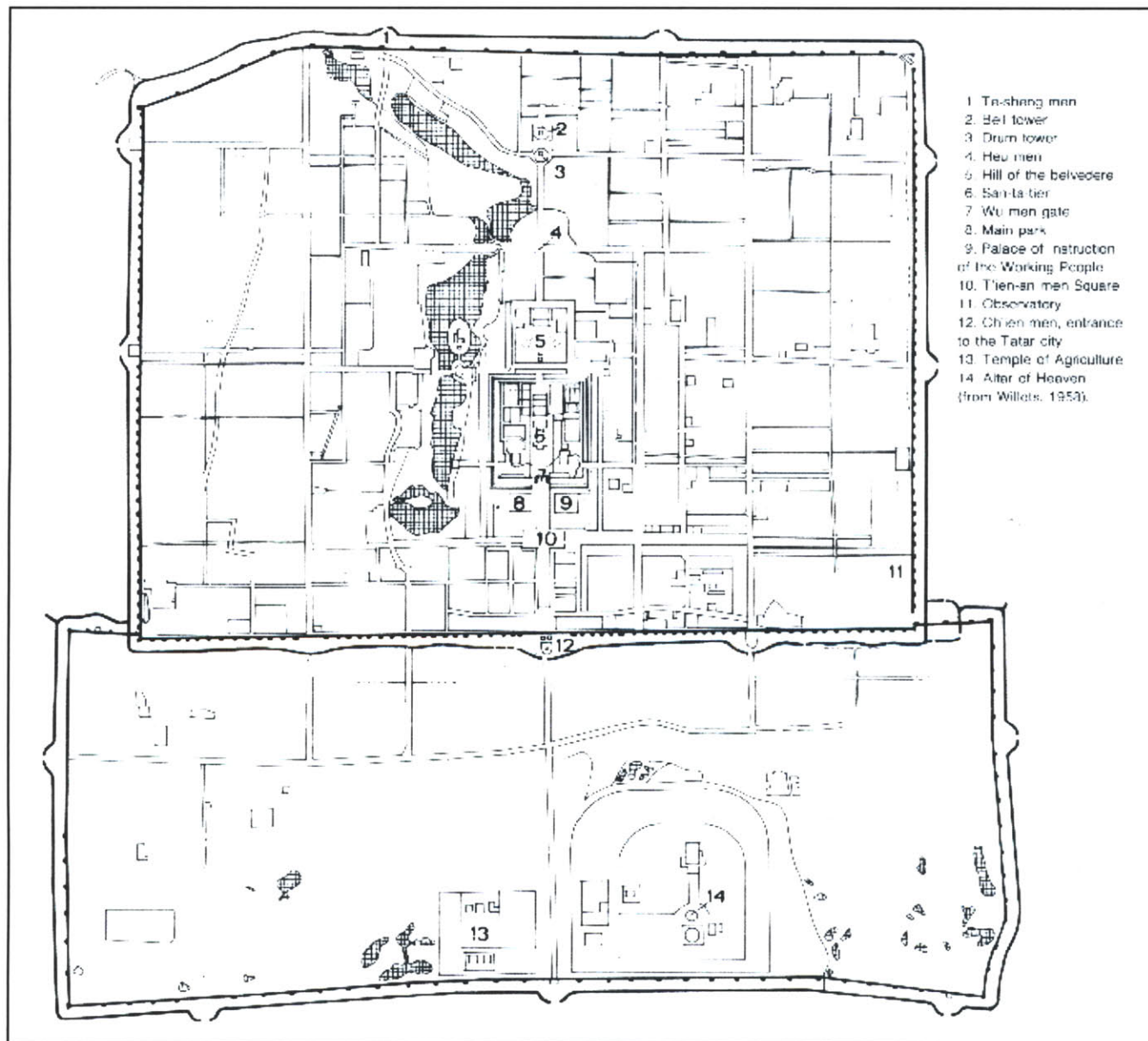
Variations of urban form diagram



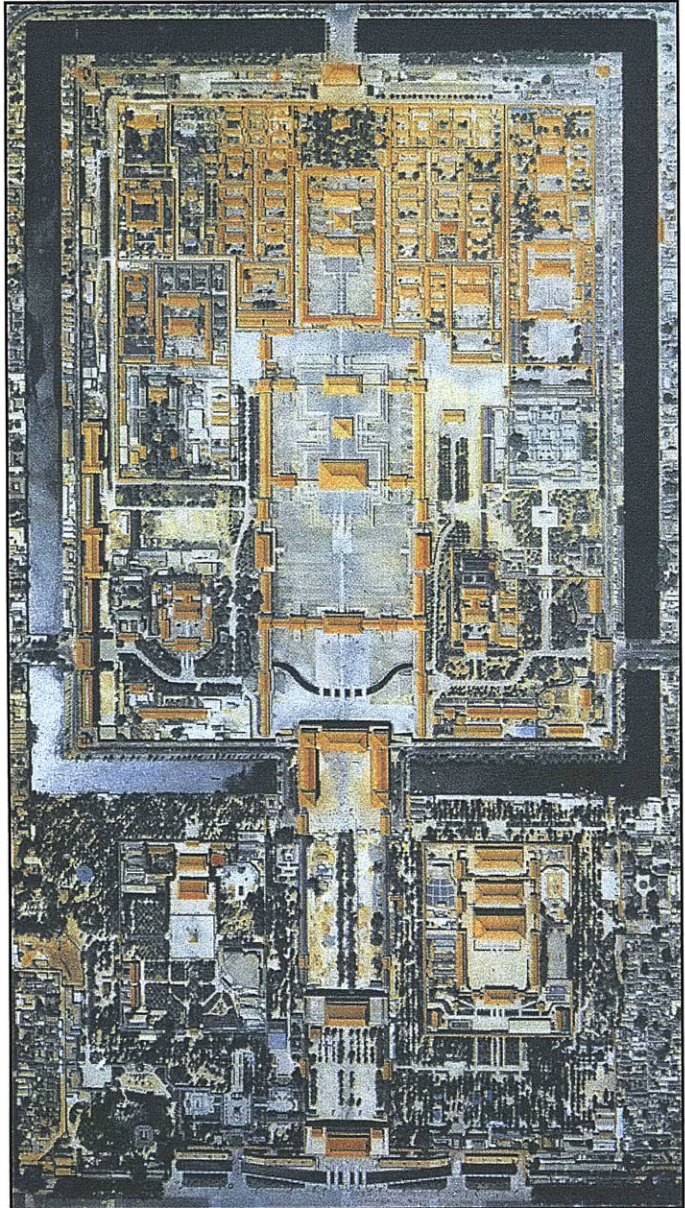
A comparison of city forms helps us appreciate better Beijing's essential urban form, which can be associated with a ring configuration. This form has its origins in the Forbidden City, which lies at the center of the city. The ancient city was encircled by a wall. When the city grew beyond these confines, the wall was demolished and a road was built on top. This process was repeated, resulting in a growth pattern of concentric circles. Beijing has undergone profound changes to these configurations, but traces of these original patterns remain in the 4 ring roads that define the city.

City map of Beijing, highlighting the ring roads

As a result of the centrality of the multiple ring configuration, a strict hierarchy of space was established. In the Forbidden City per se, this was accentuated by placing the emperor's seat in the north, at the base of the mountain, and the temple, the seat of the gods, at the center.

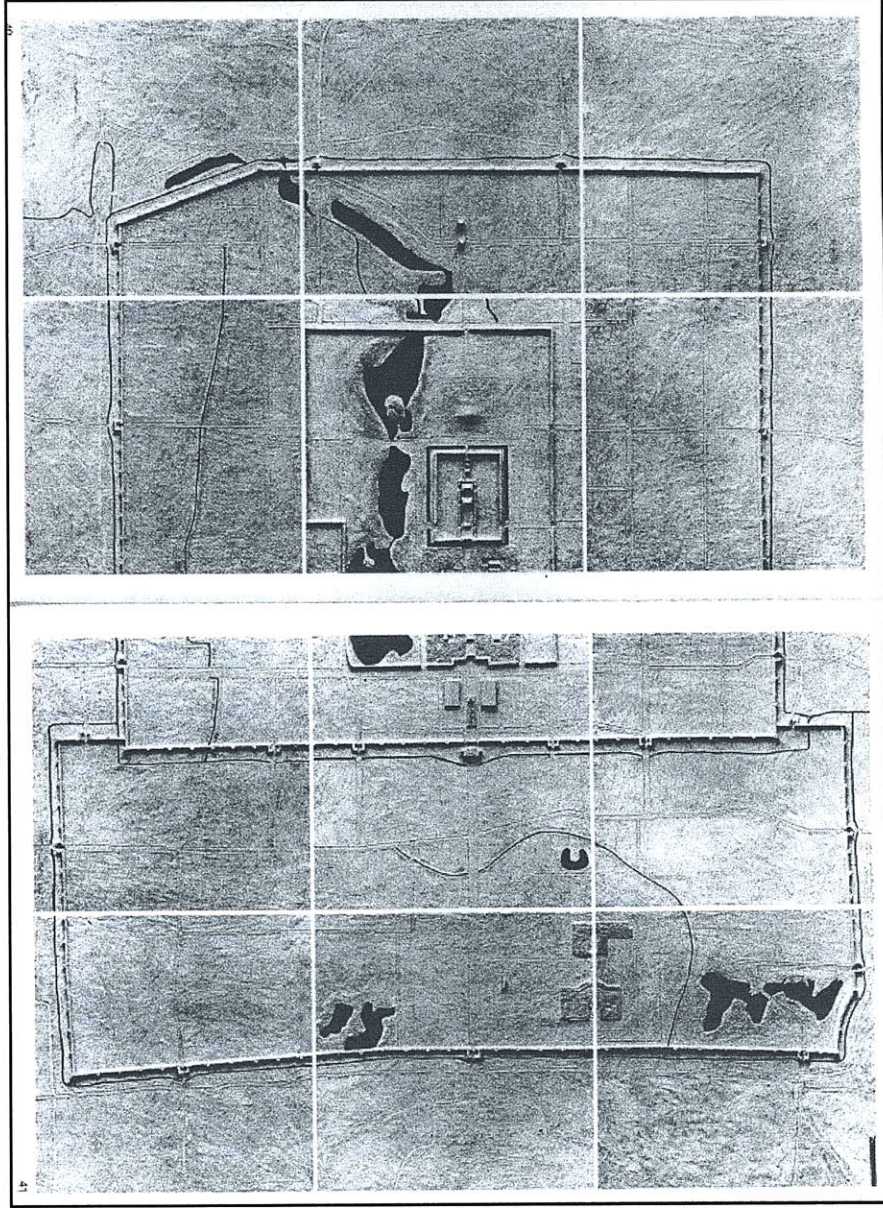


Map of the Forbidden City

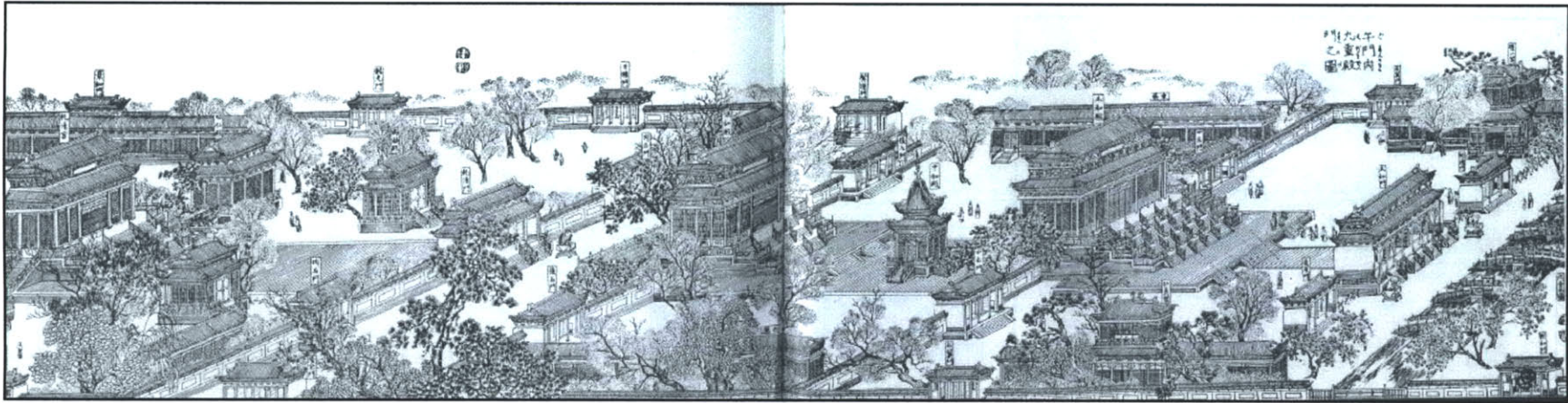


C I T Y

LESSONS FROM THE FORBIDDEN CITY



Aerial views of the Forbidden City

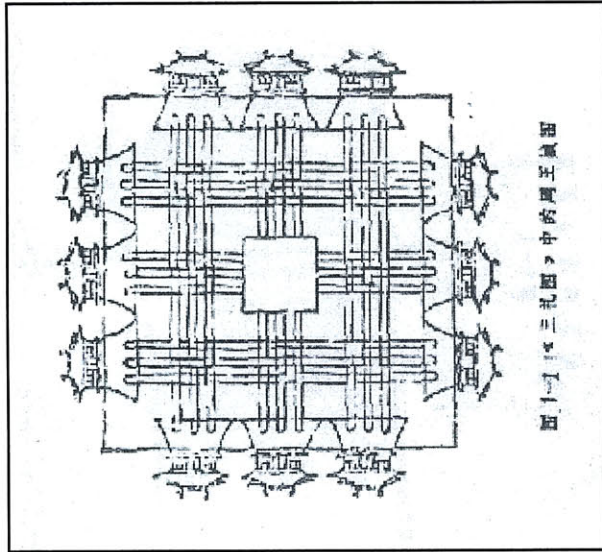


Forbidden City in ancient times

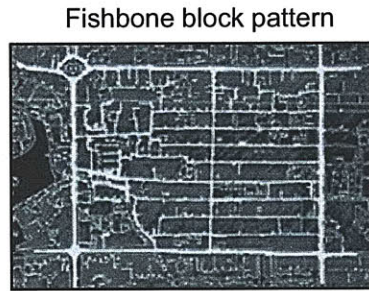
One of the most conspicuous characteristics of the Forbidden City is its horizontality. Not only is it largely flat, but the planar quality of the ridge roofs reinforces this horizontally, and this feature has defined the nature for all of Beijing, both in the past and in the present.



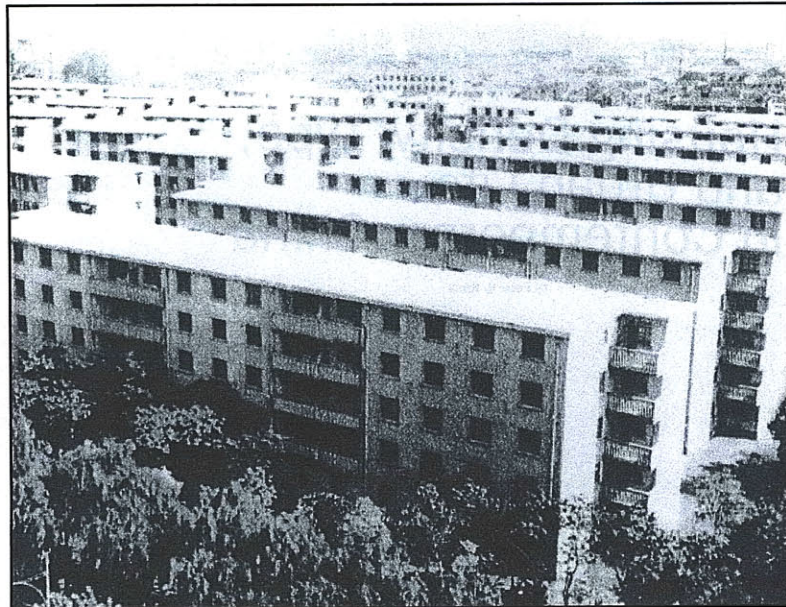
Photo of present day Forbidden City & Beijing in the background



Original 9-cell configuration



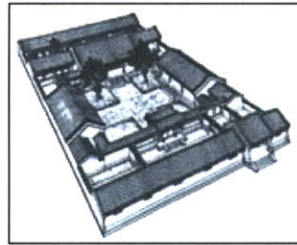
Fishbone block pattern



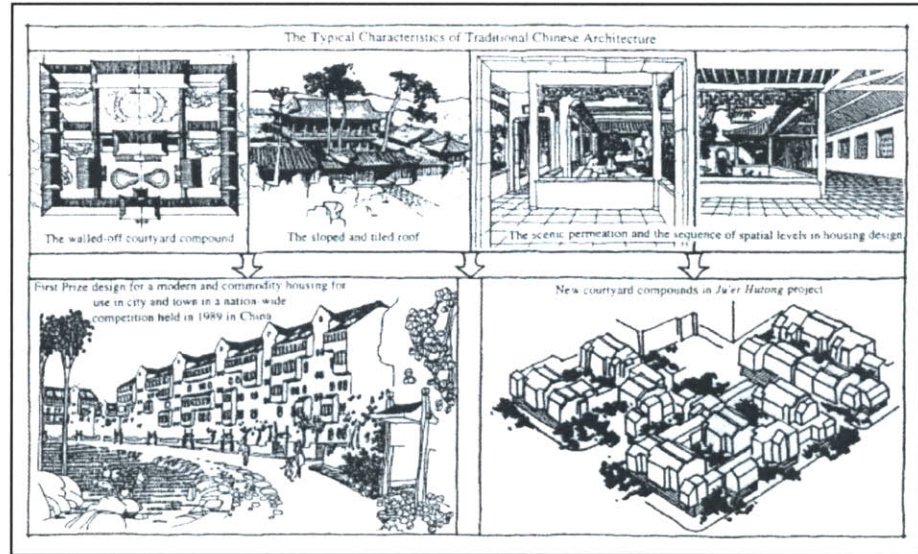
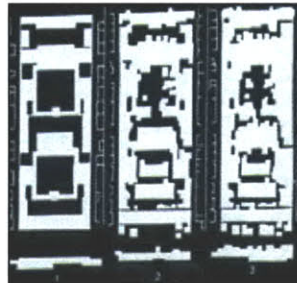
Contemporary example of housing in China

The influence of the Forbidden City on the rest of Beijing has been pervasive. One of the critical examples of this has been the proliferation of the original 9-cell grid pattern into the contemporary urban fabric. This orthogonality has resulted in a scheme that can be characterized as a “fishbone pattern,” with major roads along the perimeters, long blocks oriented along the north-south axis, and a minor arterial in the middle for enhanced accessibility. One unfortunate consequence of this has been a tendency to design buildings that fit easily into this rigid orthogonality, thus resulting in monotonous and repetitive building blocks.

Traditional courtyard prototype



Densification of courtyard type



Transition of traditional forms to contemporary models

It is clear that the traditional precedents could be employed in much better ways. One promising example would be the courtyard configuration. This involves a rectangular void space defined by surrounding buildings. In fact, the courtyard still persists in the central areas of the city, although, as a matter of necessity, the density of its configuration has greatly increased.



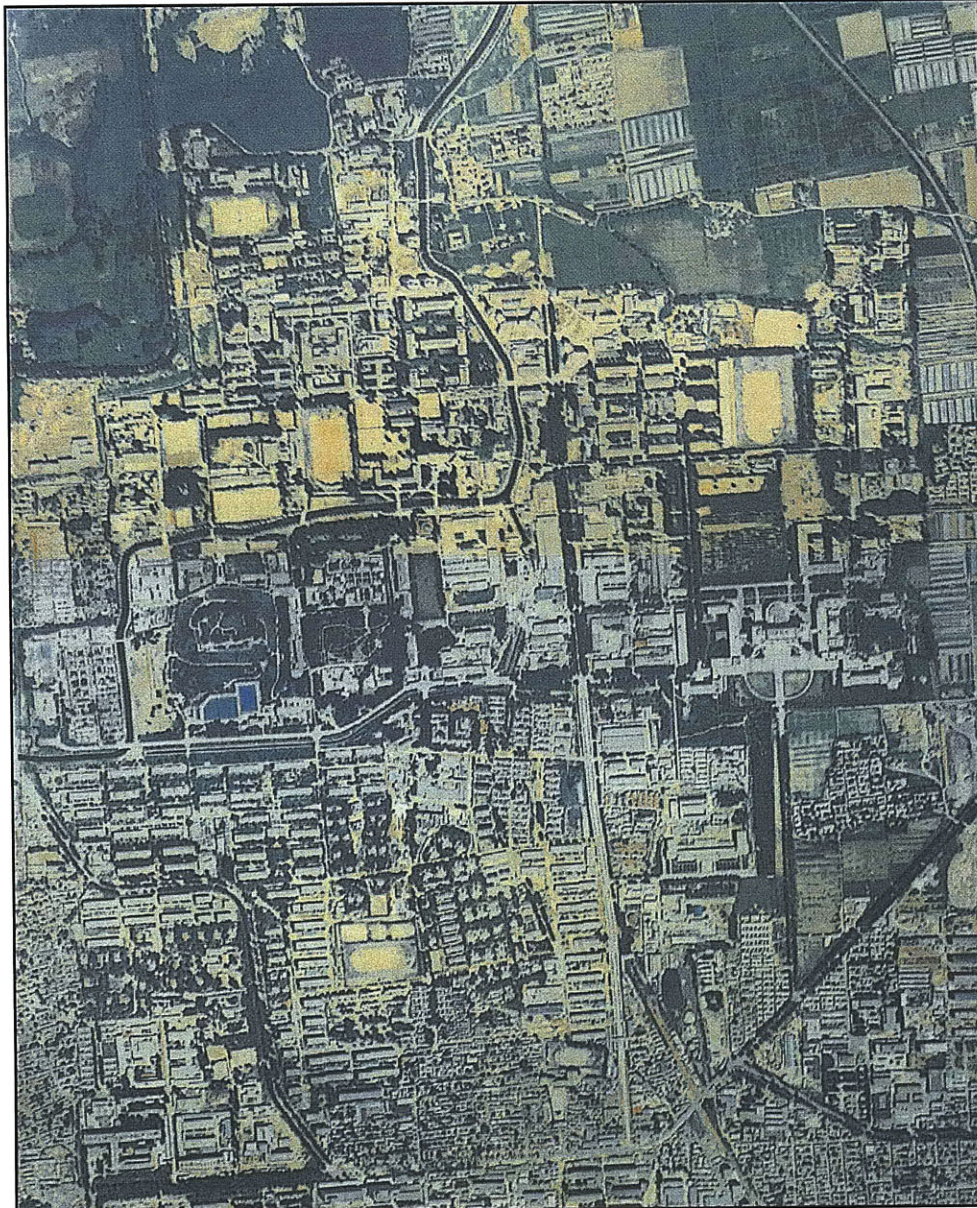
Densification of courtyard type

THE COURTYARD

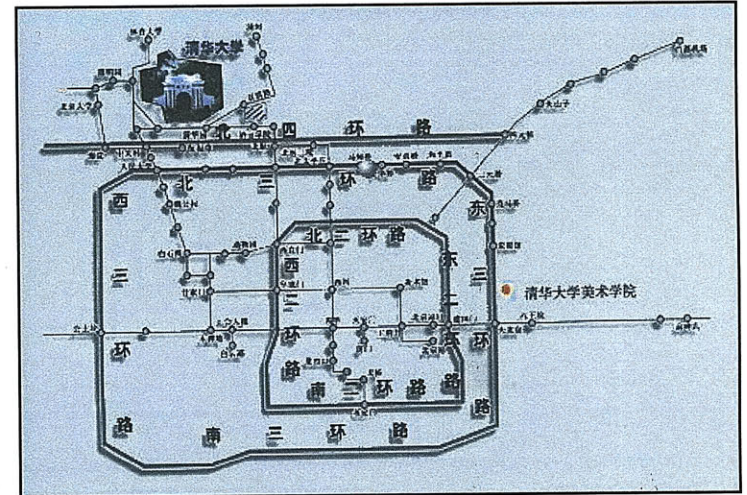
C I T Y







C A M P U S OVERVIEW



Campus location in Beijing

Tsinghua University is located on the northeast edge of Beijing. Public transportation to and from the campus is somewhat limited-- there are no nearby subway lines. Nevertheless, the area surrounding the University is thoroughly metropolitan in nature, although the campus itself has some distinctively agrarian features.

Aerial view of Tsinghua University

Like Beijing, one of the key features of Tsinghua's campus is its expansive horizontality. The campus itself is verdant and lush, which unfortunately is indicative of the excessive carbon monoxide in Beijing and the city's chronic pollution.

Photo of Tsinghua University



TOWN-GOWN RELATIONSHIP

C A M P U S



Like Beijing, the identity of Tsinghua University is defined largely by the presence of ring-roads. The entire campus is surrounded by a road, which, on the campus-side, is fronted with a wall, effectively separating the university from the rest of the city.

Photo of Tsinghua University



Detail of the wall



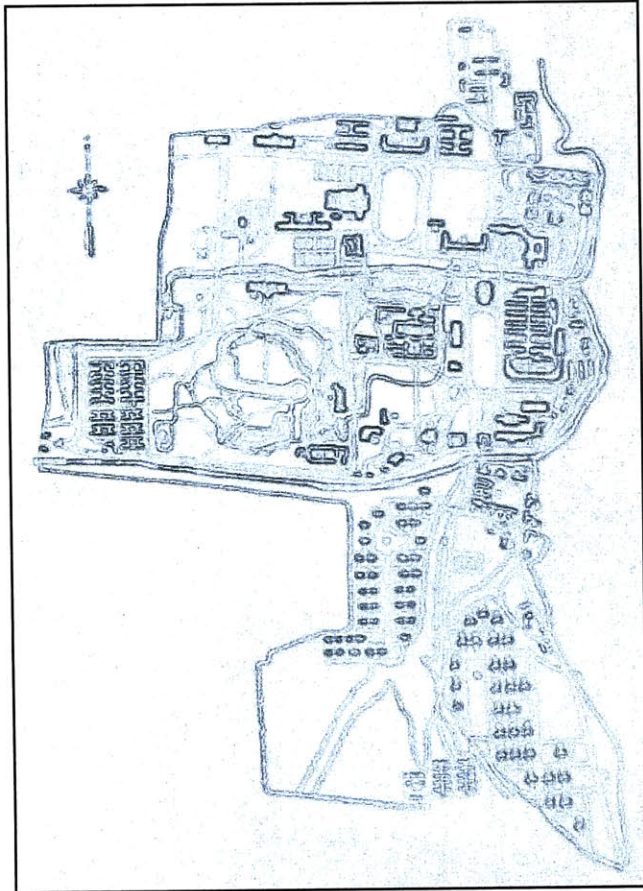
The road encircling the campus



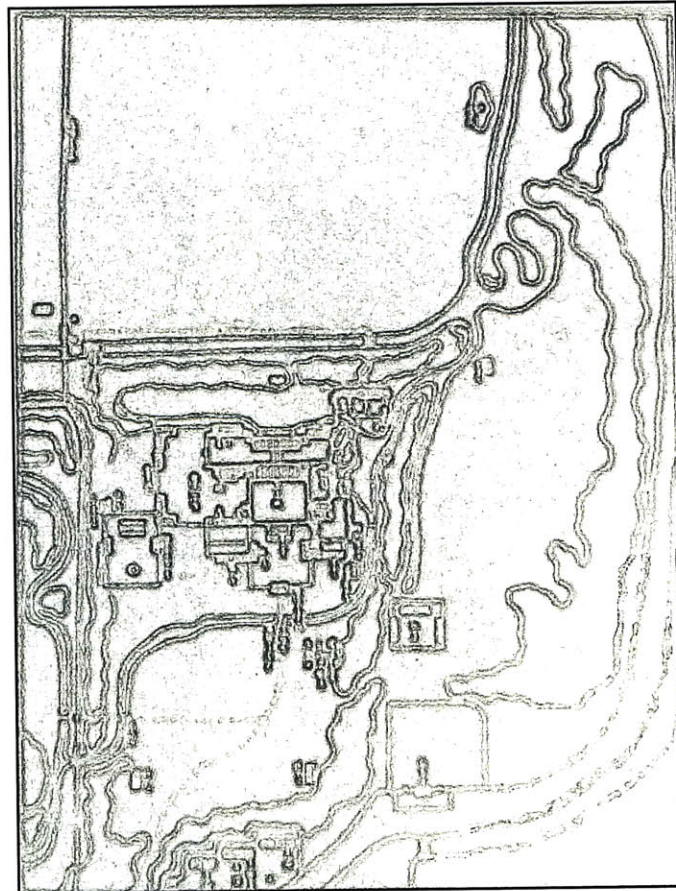
The city at the edge of Tsinghua

TOWN-GOWN RELATIONSHIP

C A M P U S

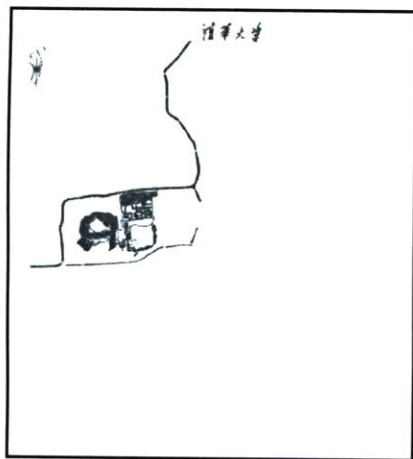


Early campus map

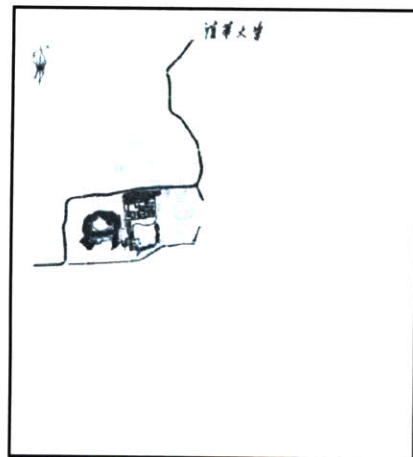


Royal Garden

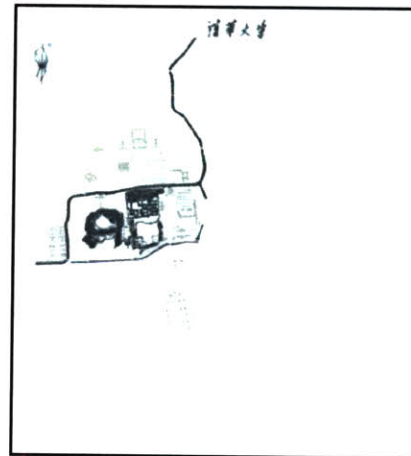
The University was originally the Royal Gardens for the Imperial family, and was converted to a university at the turn of the century. The footprint of the Gardens, including the lily pond and the river, remains largely intact today. The history of growth of the University mirrors the history of Beijing, and has likewise developed in concentric circles, expanding ever-outward.



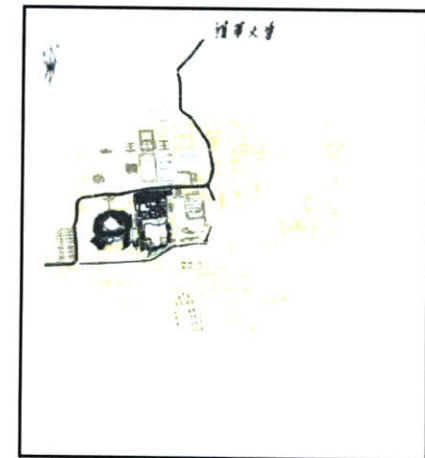
Royal Garden, 1762-1909



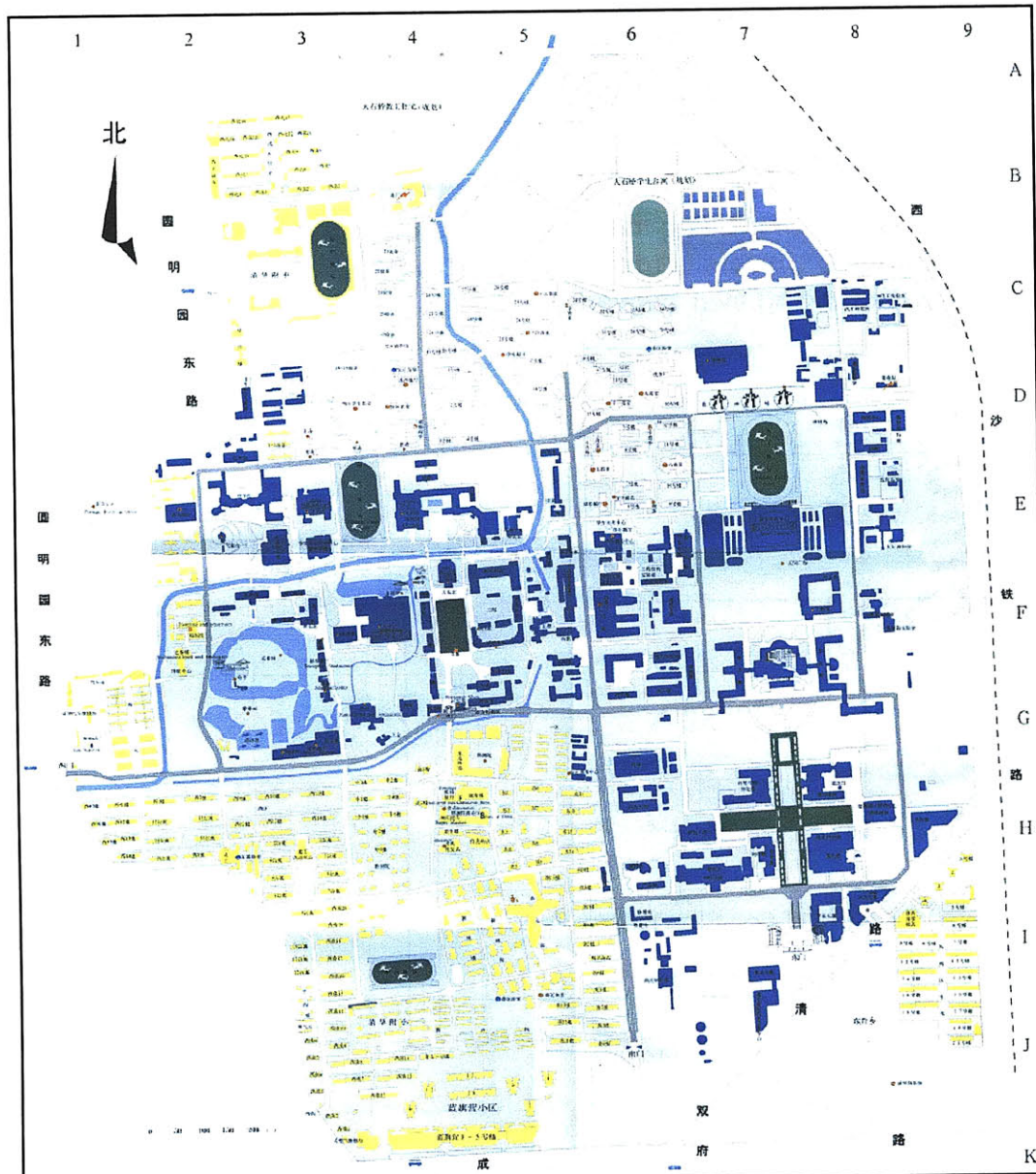
1935



1965



2002



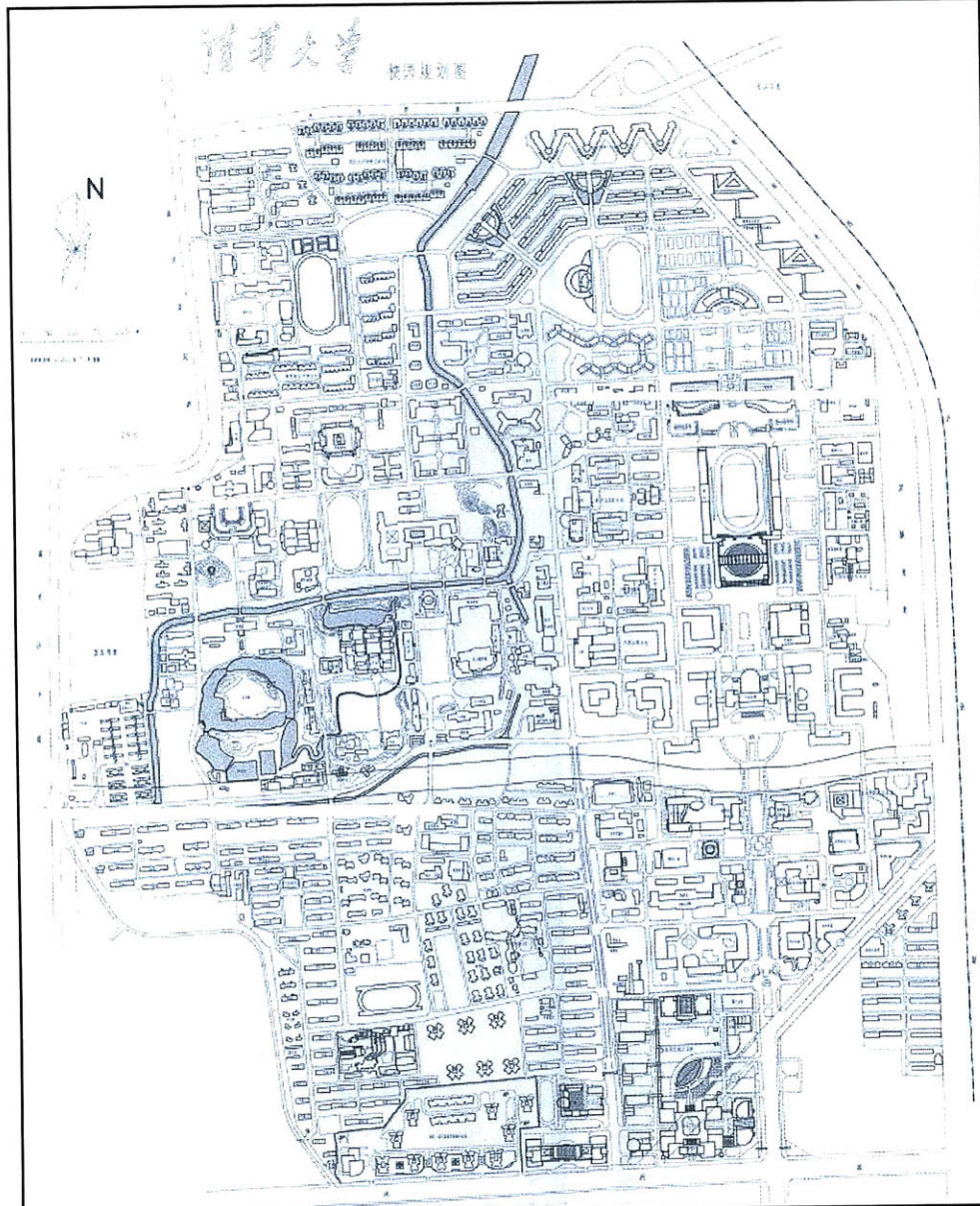
Present-day map of campus

In the map to the left, blue represents academic buildings, yellow represents faculty housing, and pink represents student housing.

Masterplan for Tsinghua University



The map to the left shows existing buildings in addition to the scheme for Tsinghua's future masterplan. Brown represents academic buildings, dark yellow represents student housing, pink represents the science park, and light yellow represents faculty housing. The faded colors represent proposed building projects. Of particular note is the difference between the two halves of the University, divided by the central north-south road. The western older half tends to be more dynamic and much smaller in scale. The eastern newer half tends to be more formal, defined predominately by axial relationships, with buildings at a much larger scale.

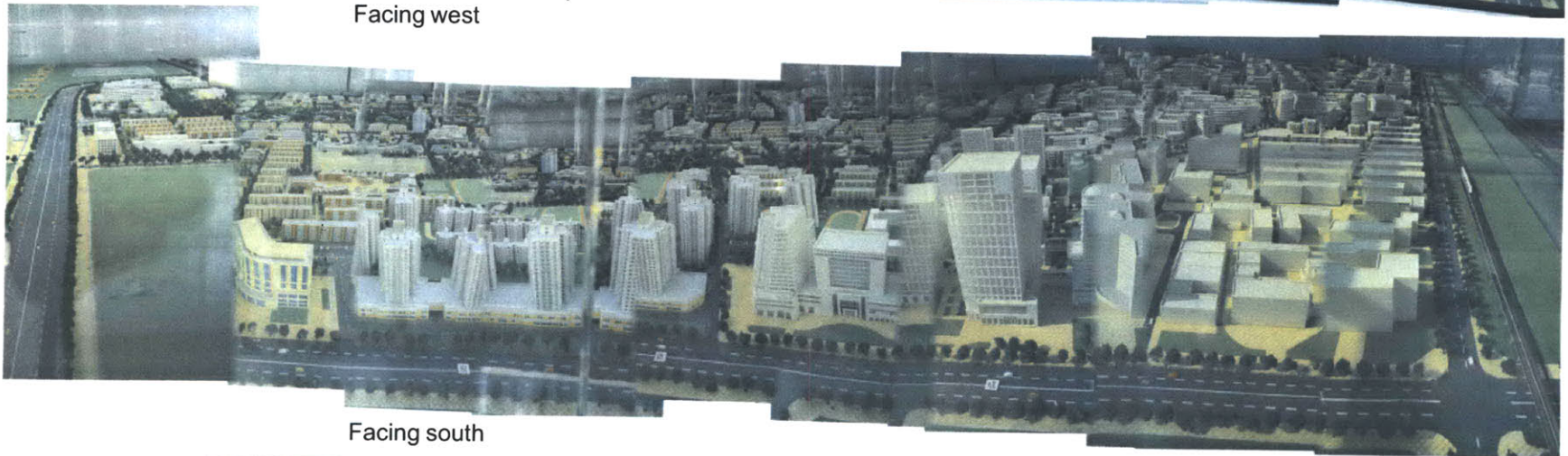


Masterplan for Tsinghua University

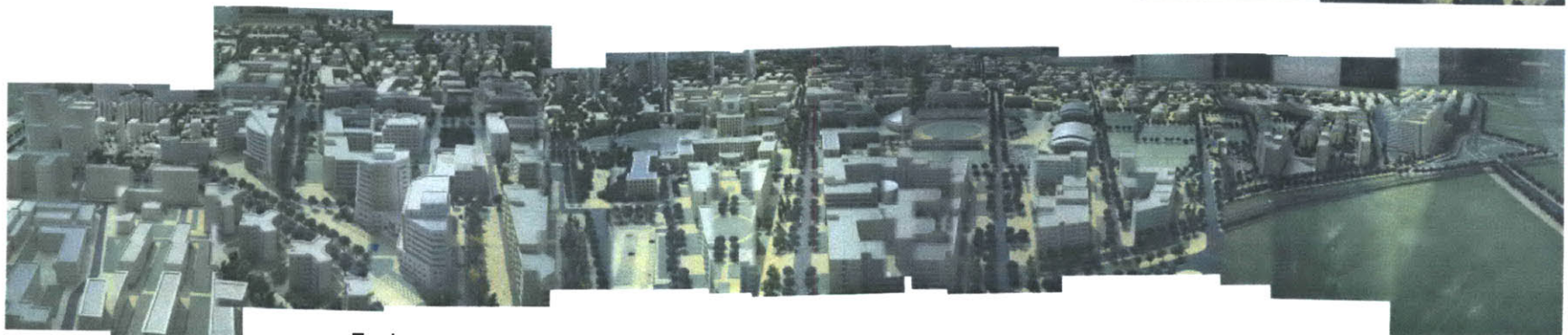
C A M P U S TSINGHUA: THE FUTURE



Model of future campus  
Facing west



Facing south



Facing east

Diagram of urban forms

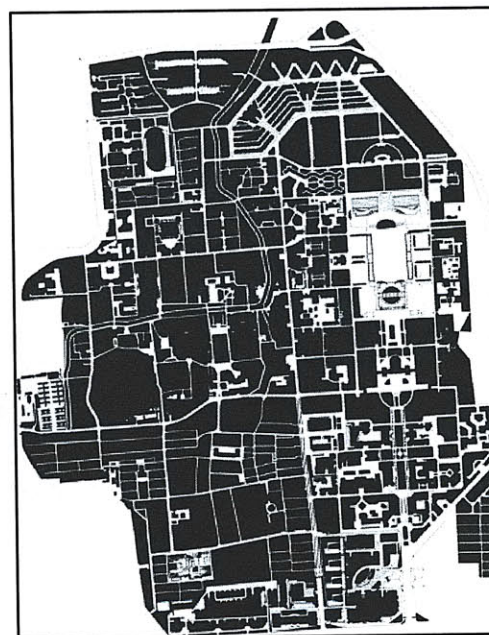
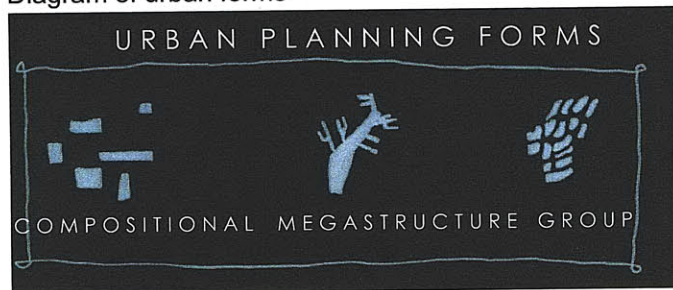


Figure-ground map of the campus buildings

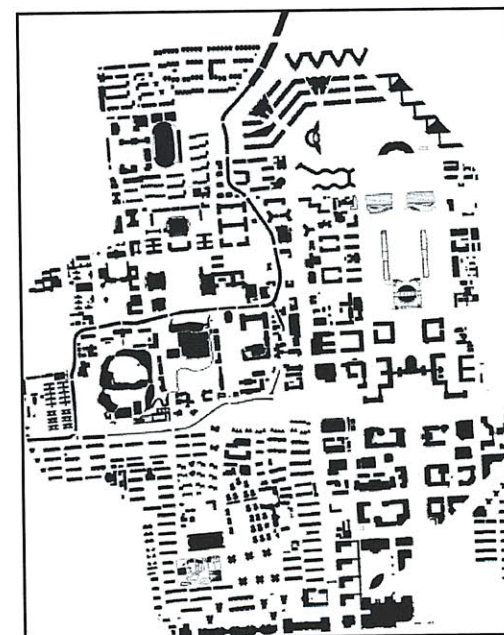
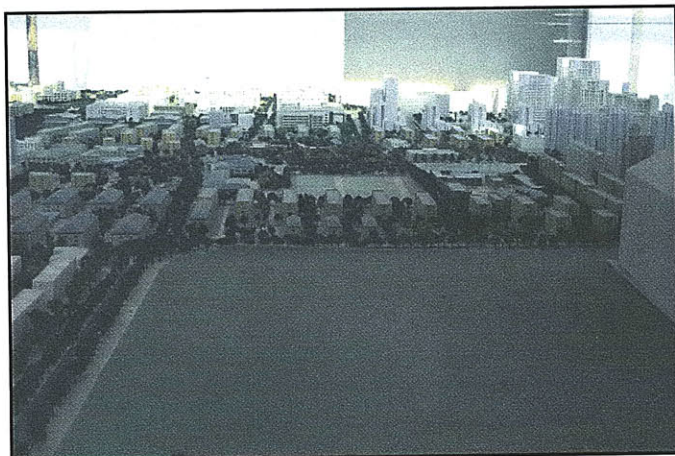


Figure-ground map of the campus circulation



Although it is clear that the present plan for Tsinghua University is bound for more formalism and masterplanning based on composition and megastructures, there is a better solution. As I will suggest, urban planning based on sensible grouping offers greater promise.

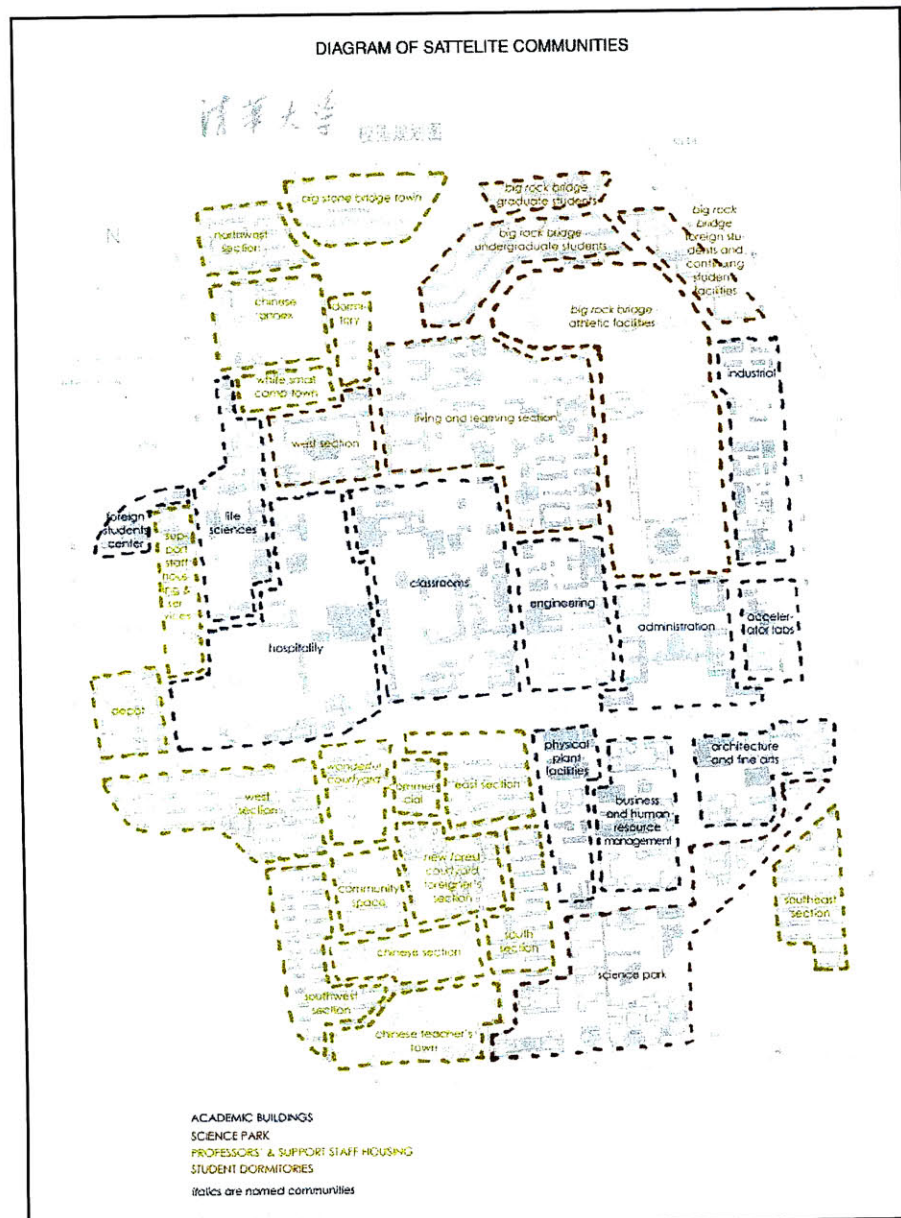
Photo of campus model, showing two halves of campus

Model & photo of formal half of campus



Model & photo of faculty housing complex



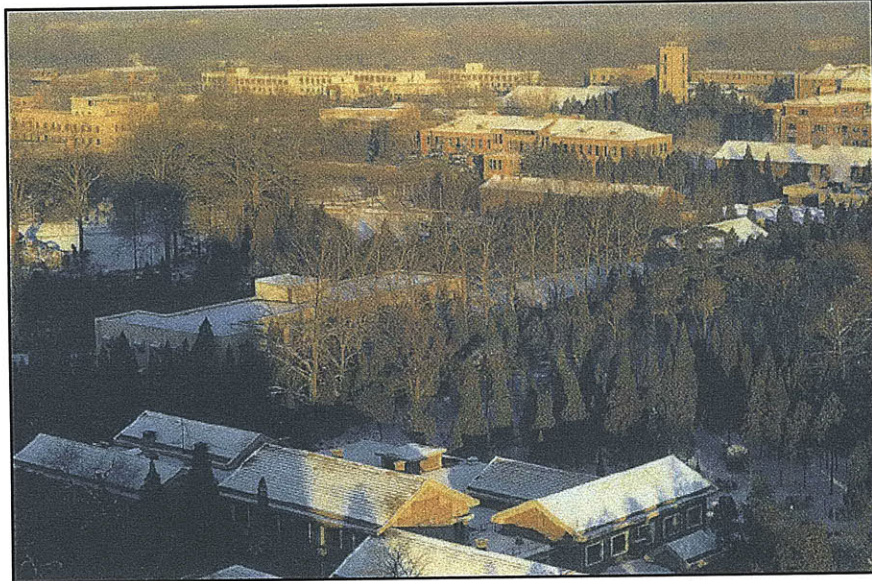


Another unfortunate trend in Tsinghua University's master-planning scheme is the tendency towards separating the programmatic requirements of the university into physically distinct zones. This is further reflected in the architectural vocabulary of the campu-- a hodgepodge of styles, without any apparent cohesion between them.

Diagram of zoning on Tsinghua campus



Matrix of architectural vocabularies



Academic zone of campus: winter



Commercial zone of campus

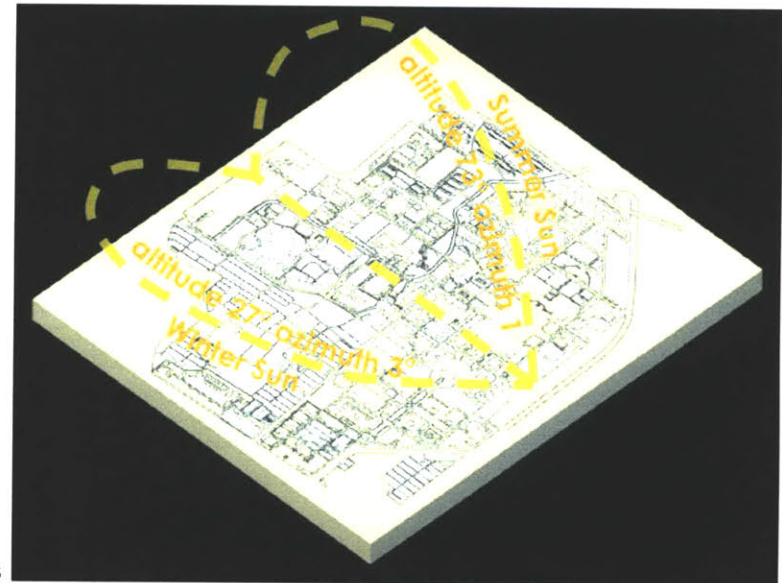


Academic zone of campus: summer

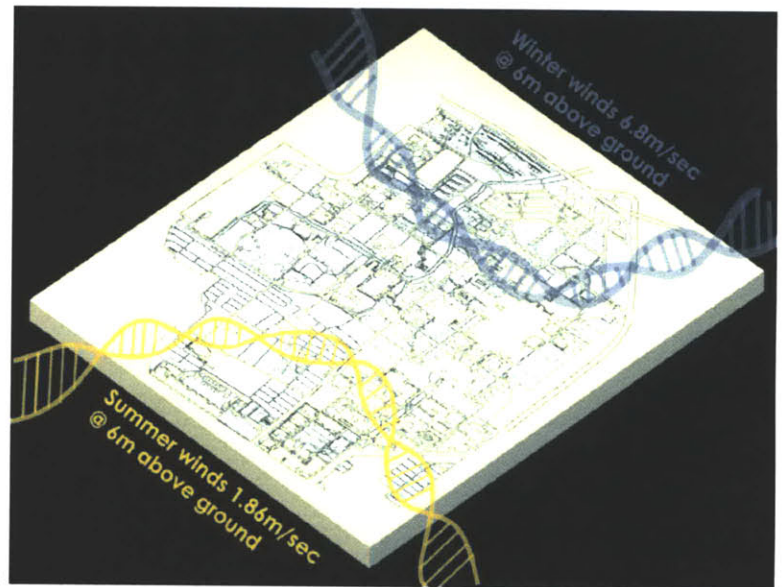
Though this strategy of separating program has some inherent flaws, the underlying condition is highly promising: namely, that Tsinghua University has a multitude of programmatic elements. In fact, the campus is a city unto itself, with its own commercial areas, housing, hotels, hospitals, and energy plants.

Climate conditions must play a vital role in determining a design strategy for a more sustainable urban planning scheme. The seasonal sun conditions are similar to Boston, and would suggest that buildings oriented along the north-south axis are preferable-- and this is, in fact, the prevailing trend on campus. But the more important design imperative is to keep winter winds out, which would could be facilitated by larger structures on the northern edge. Natural ventilation in the summer would be desirable, but since the wind speeds are quite low, this can not be considered a design imperative.

Seasonal sun conditions



Seasonal wind conditions



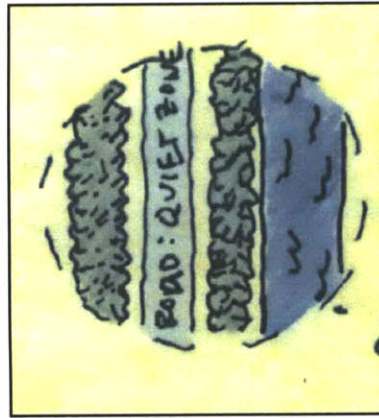


S I T E



I choose the western edge of the campus for the location of my site. Included in this area is part of the original site for the Royal Garden and part of the center ring road of the University.

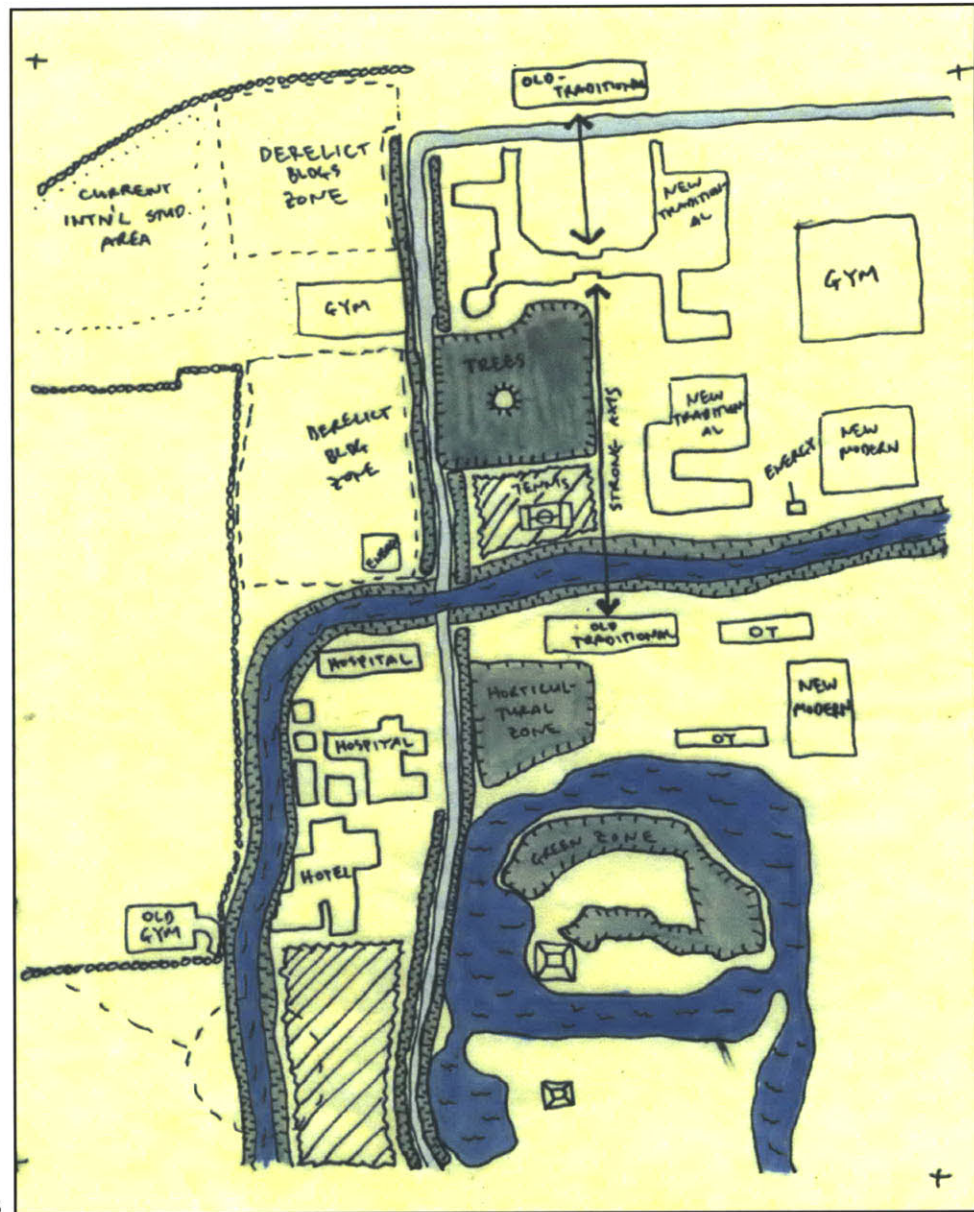
Site map



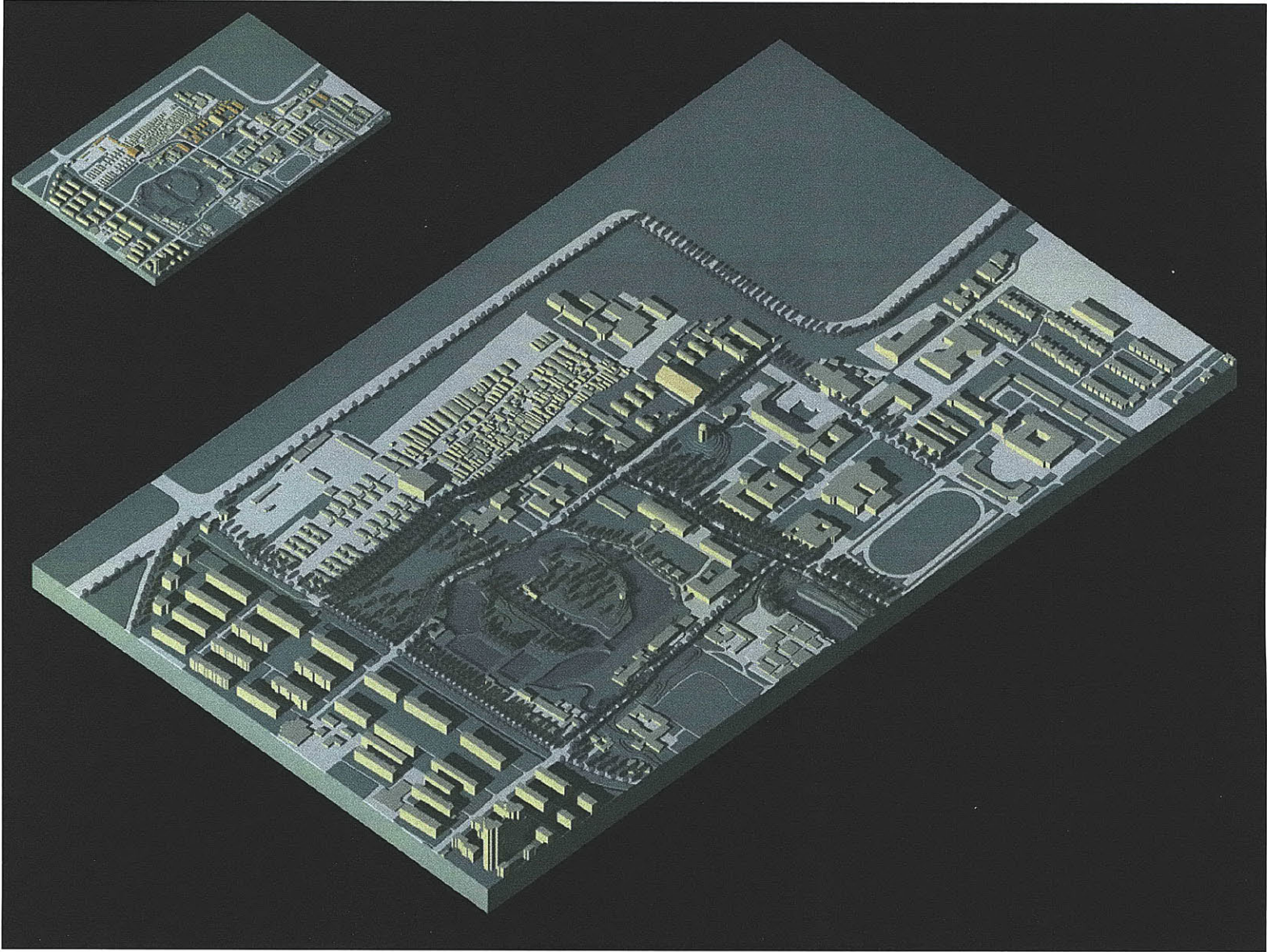
Detail of river condition

There are a number of key features of the site worth mentioning. It is important to note some of the most significant buildings: they include a hospital, an old gym (for which my proposal includes a re-use and addition), an observatory, a hotel, an international students compound, some academic buildings of colonial style (mainly science-related), and housing in the traditional Chinese vernacular. Also noteworthy is a large presence of derelict buildings. In terms of landscape, there are some critical features, including the lily pond and the river. The river behaves as almost like a barrier, and itself functions as a quiet zone due to the presence of trees running along both sides. There is a very strong axial relationship evident on this site running north-south, along which a number of academic buildings are aligned.

Diagram of key features



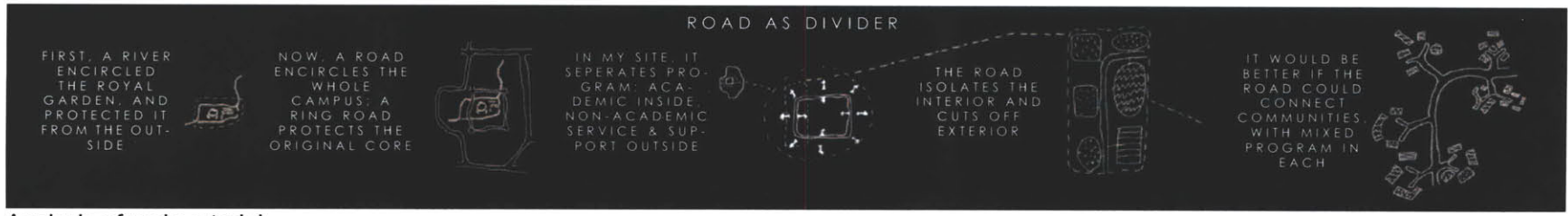
SITE FEATURES S I T E



Site model and miniature indicating derelict buildings

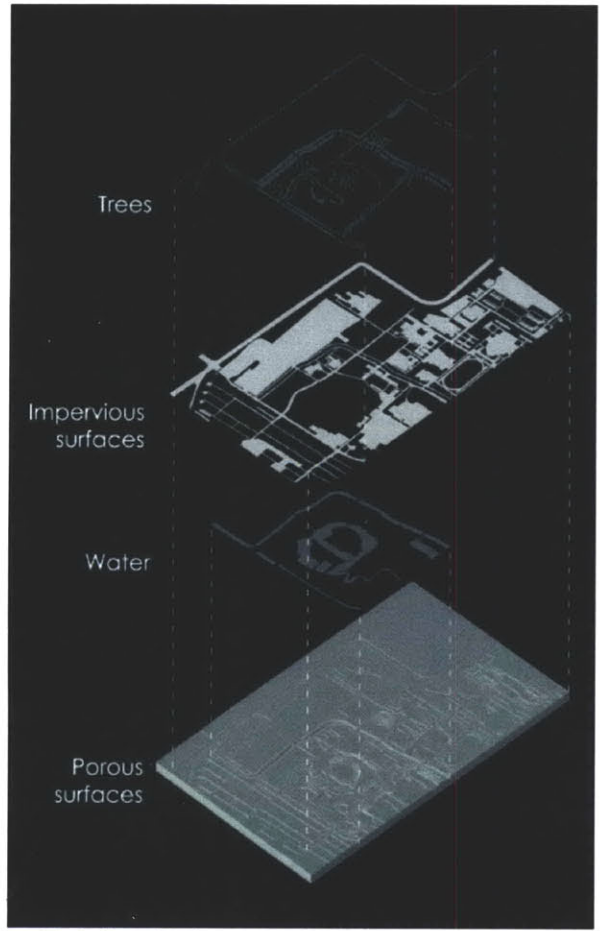
S I T E

SITE FEATURES

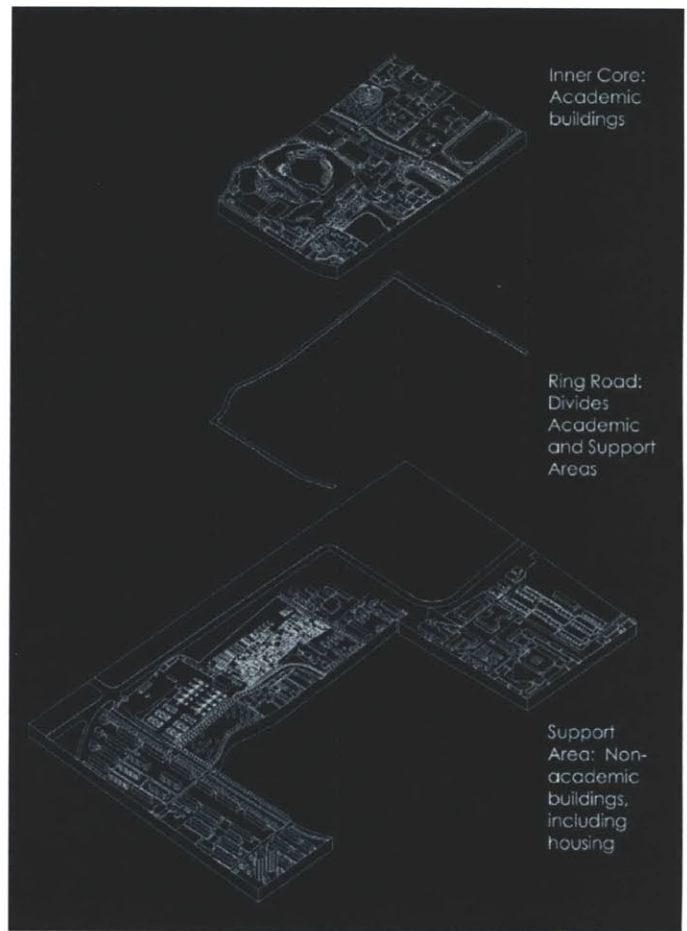


Analysis of main arterial

The site exhibits a number of important design opportunities. The presence of the water features is a most critical factor. Also important is the proliferation of several programs. There are, however, some crucial shortcomings. Unfortunately, Tsinghua has turned its back to the river. At present, it is little more than an expansive trench; the water itself is far below ground level and wholly inaccessible to users. And despite the presence of diverse programs, they are nonetheless strictly segregated by the central ring road. Moreover, being at the edge of campus, this locale keenly exhibits the isolation of the campus from the rest of the city.



Relationship between built and natural form



Division of program

SITE ANALYSIS S I T E

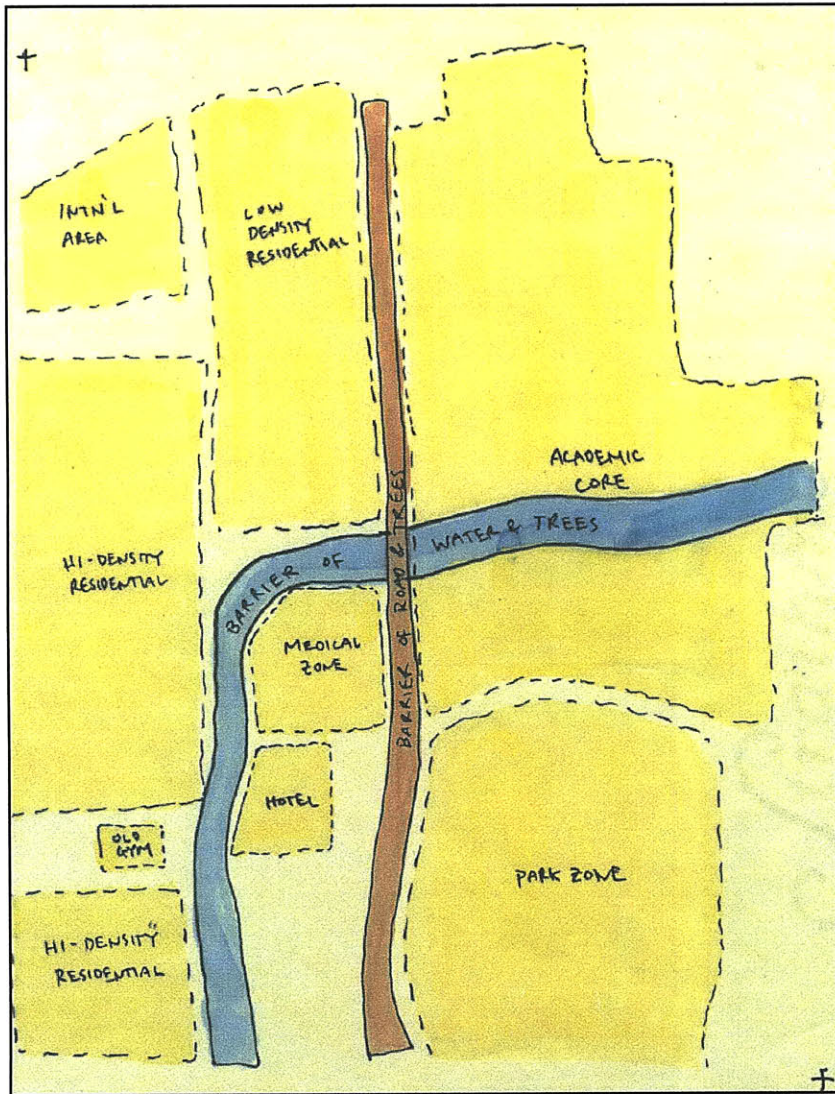
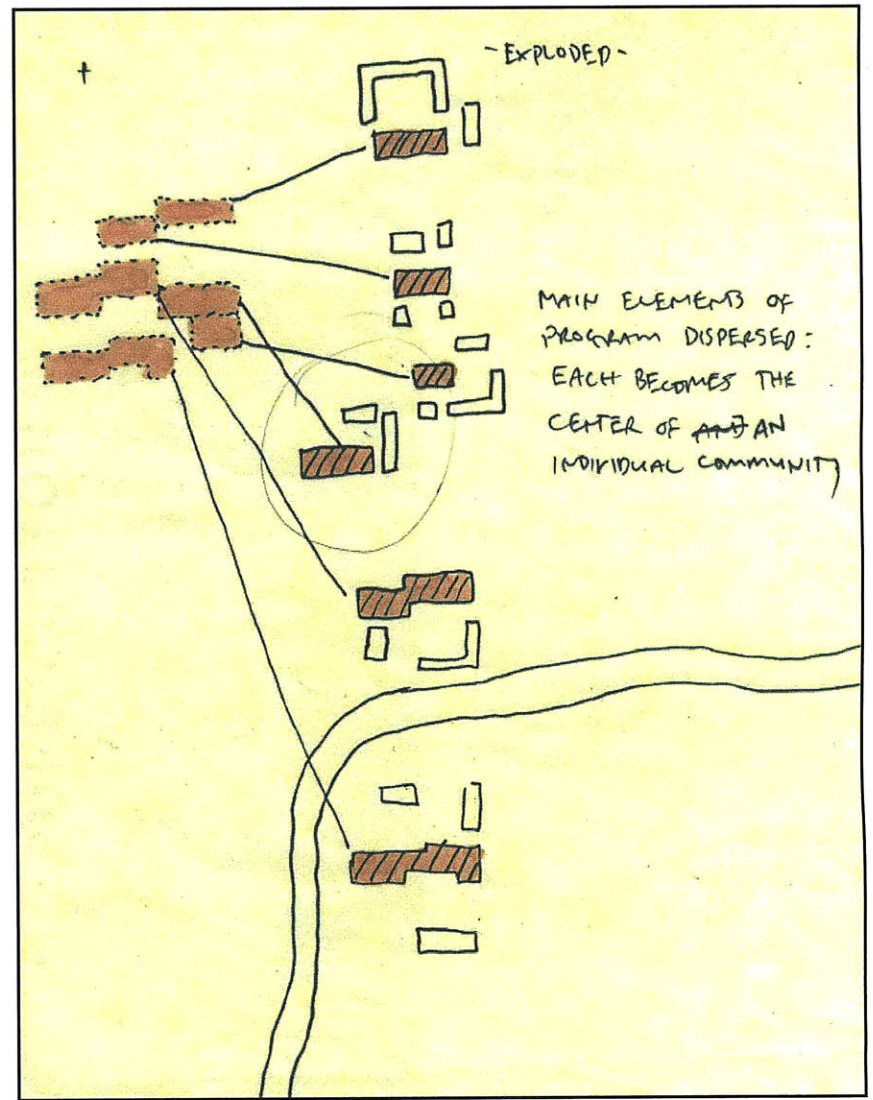
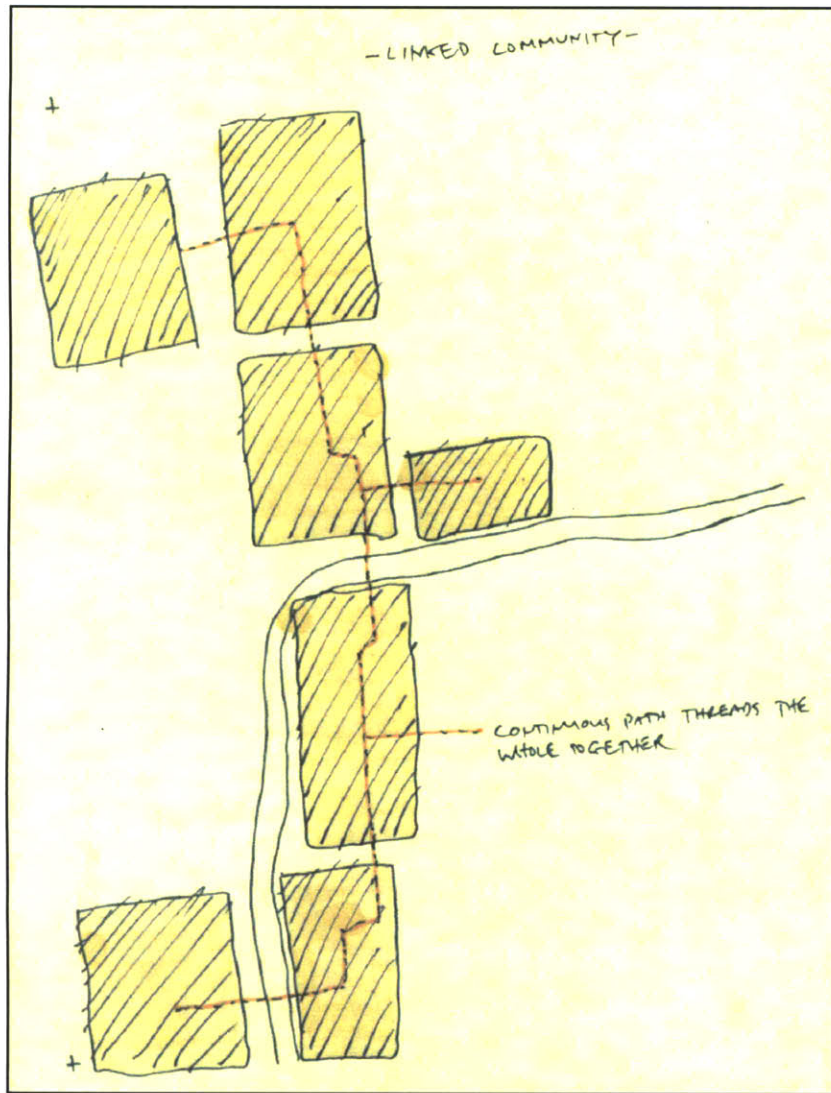


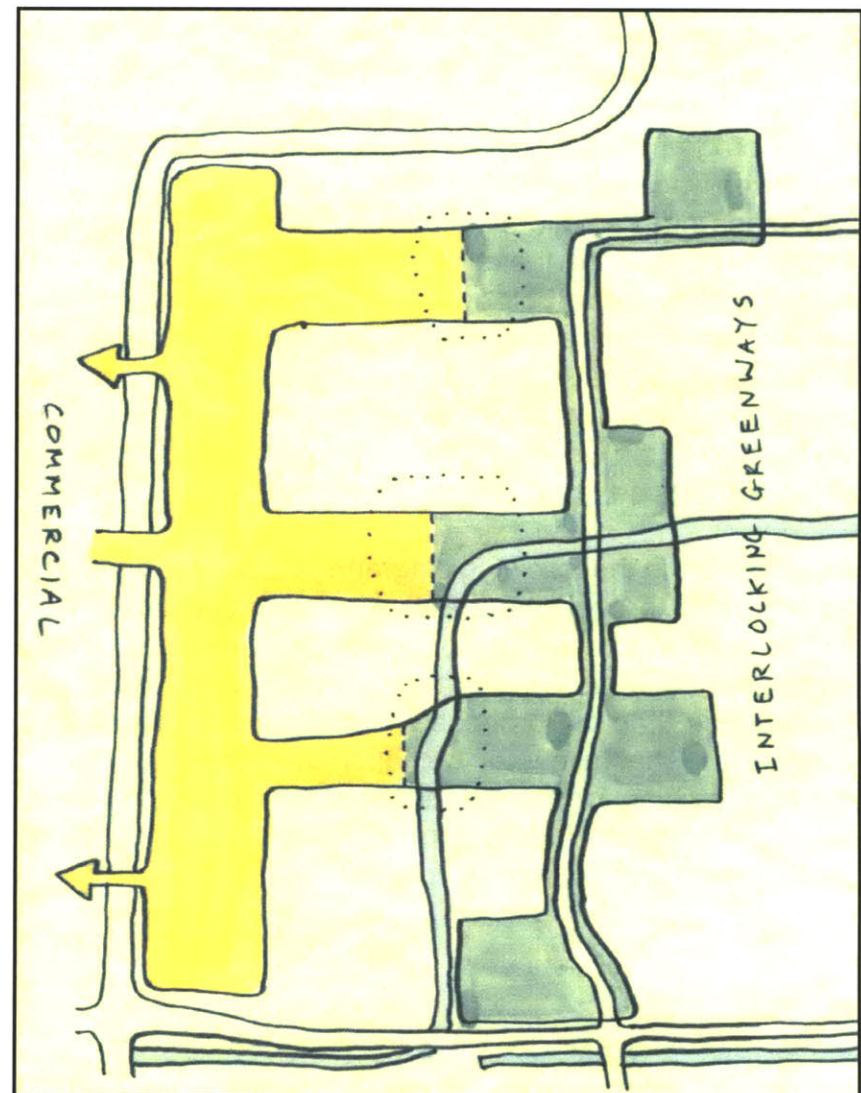
Diagram of existing zoning conditons for site



Program redistribution



Clusters linked by paths



Greenways connect campus with the city

As illustrated by the preceding diagrams, the stratification of program represented by the existing zoning conditions for the site might be remedied in a few important ways. Firstly, program should be “exploded”-- that is, redistributed to different locales within the site rather than groupings of only those programmatic elements that are similar with one another. Secondly, these exploded elements will in turn serve as centers for their own respective clusters. Thirdly, these clusters are themselves linked together by a series of pathways. Finally, through the use of greenways and landscaping, these clusters will extend outwards, beyond the borders of the University, to link the campus with the rest of the city outside.

As illustrated in the following diagrams, these objectives will be achieved through the creation of an urban fabric that can be likened to a village configuration, a series of neighborhood clusters at a scale that is considerably smaller yet more dense than the proposed design for the east side of campus. It shall allow for two alternative types of movements, providing for more freedom of choice for the users, and it will be joined together through the interconnection of roads, water, and courtyards.

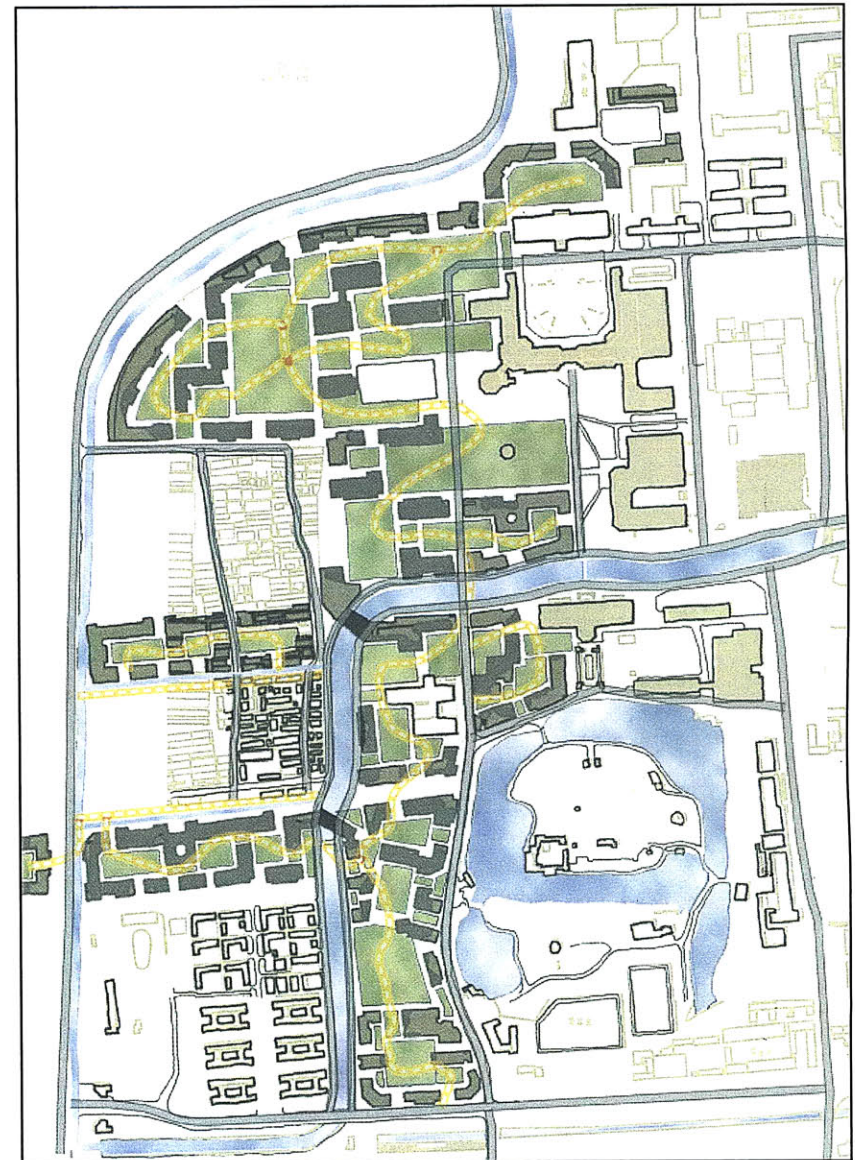


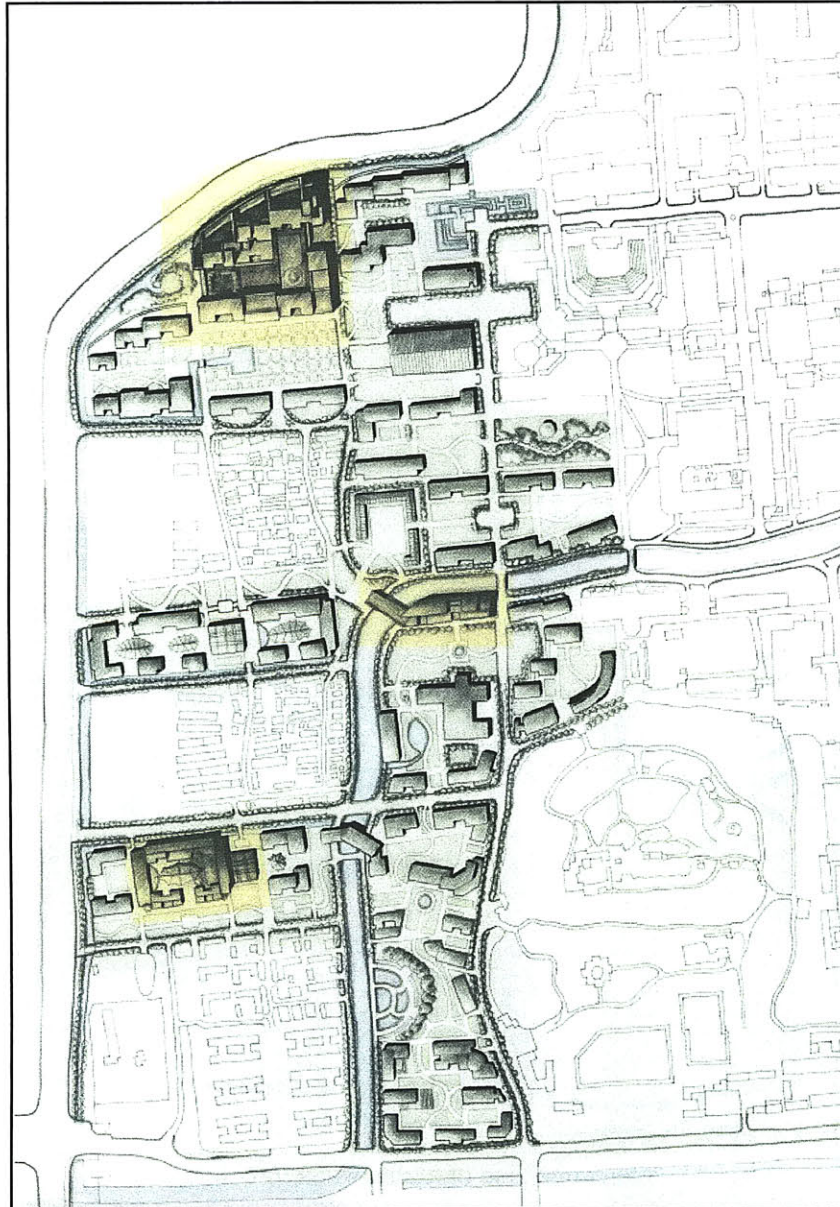
Diagram of site proposal



Two different kinds of movement

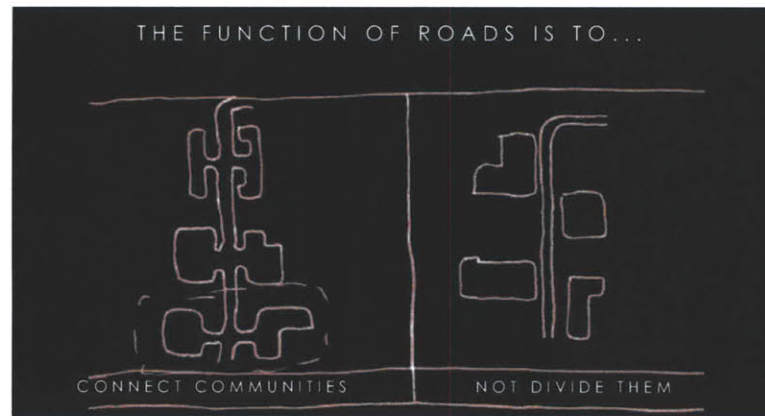
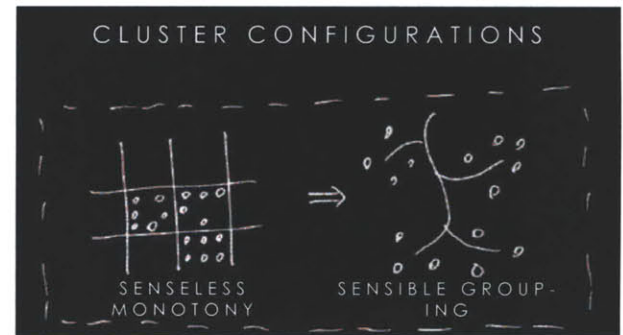
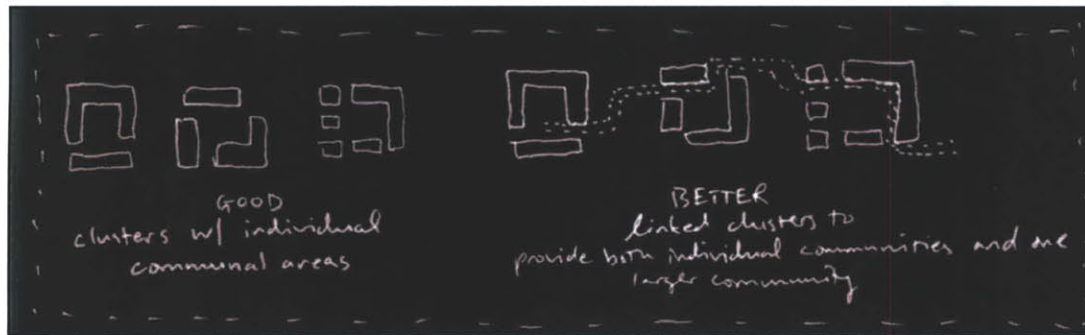
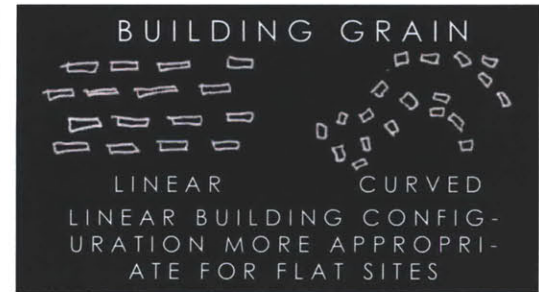
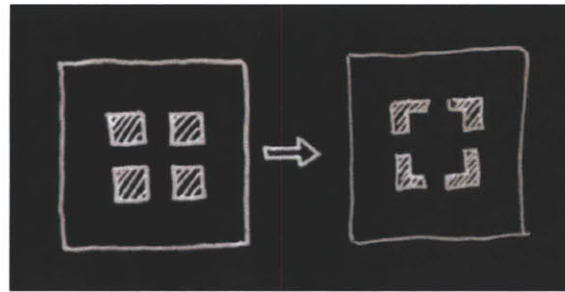
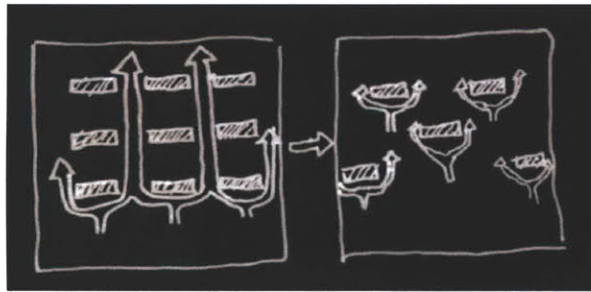


Interconnection of roads, water, & courtyards



The drawing to the left represents the final site design proposal. The areas highlighted in yellow correspond to the three typologies which I have chosen to investigate. Many of the ideas at work in this site plan are illustrated in the following set of diagrams. The first two rows express ideas about the relationship between buildings as a function of such factors as climate and the rules of cogent groupings. The last row indicates some of the programmatic strategies employed.

Site plan design proposal



Diagrams of design guidelines



Interconnection of roads, trees, and waterways

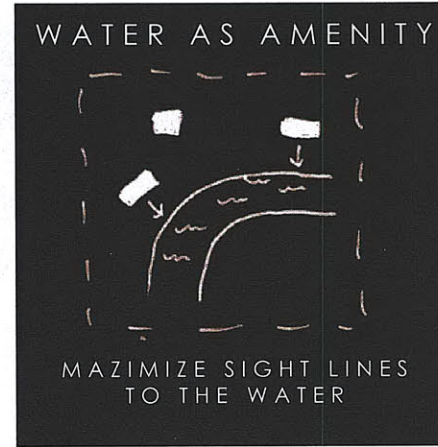


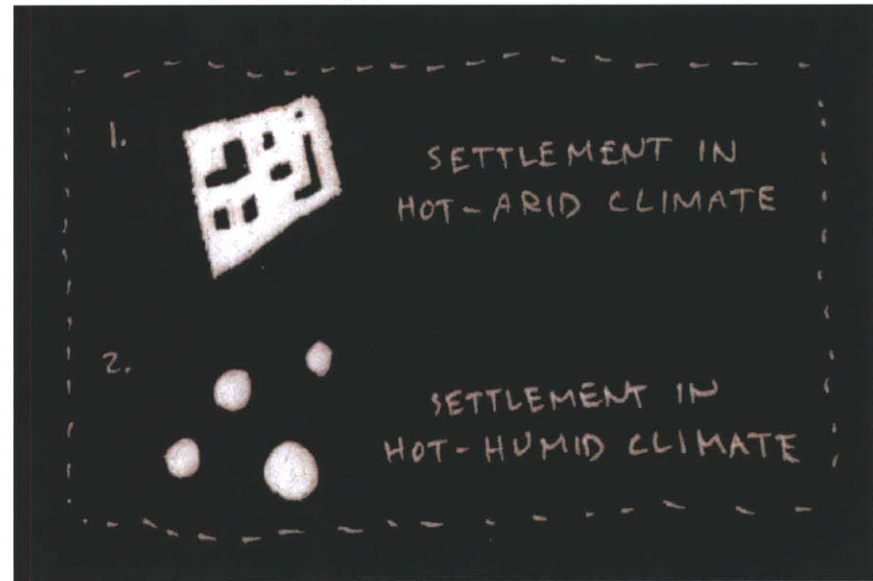
Diagram of strategy for water



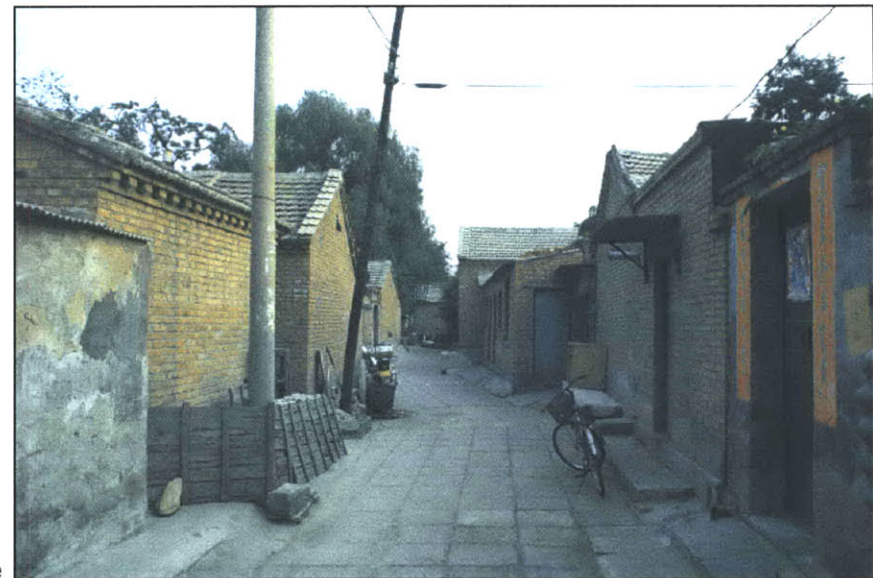
Water as event space

The site plan proposal is also meant to reflect a highly proactive attitude towards the role of water as an amenity for the site.

Moreover, the siteplan also represents a rejection of densities that cannot be legitimately thought of as sustainable for Tsinghua campus. Not only is the extravagant scale of the east side of campus rejected, but the densities of residences in the vicinity of the site are also rejected as being inappropriate for Beijing's climate.



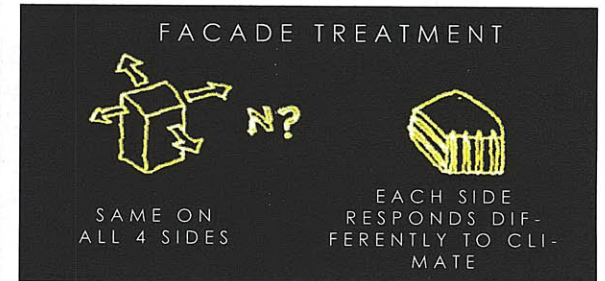
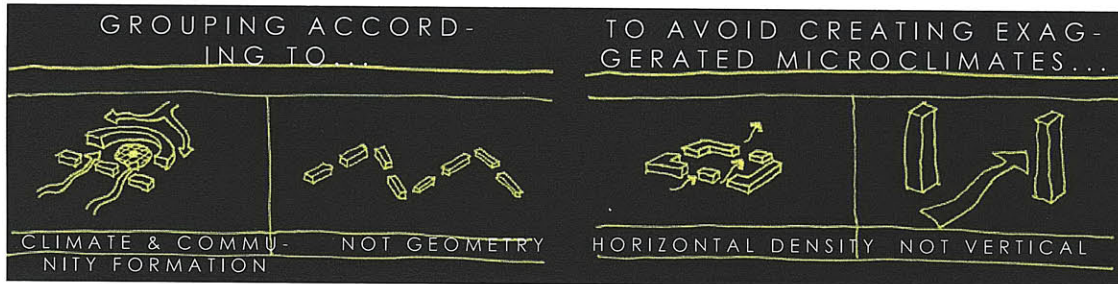
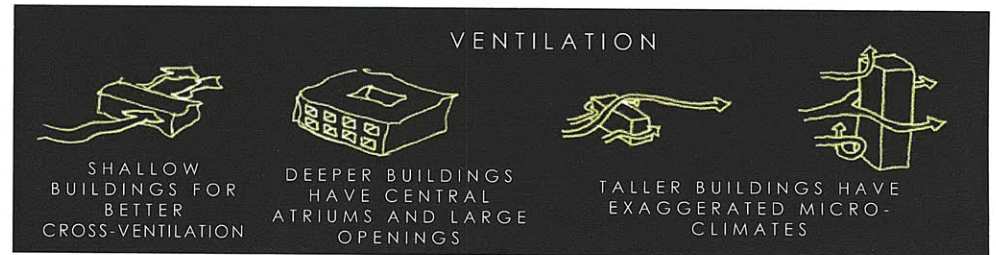
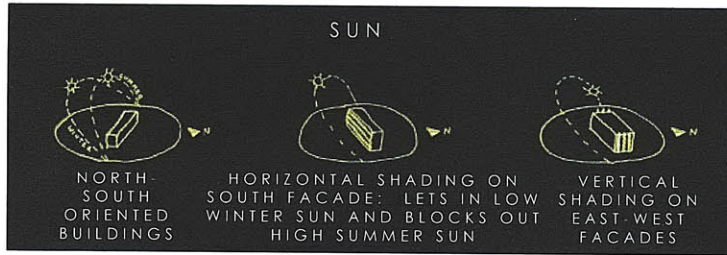
Example of residential densities at western edge of campus



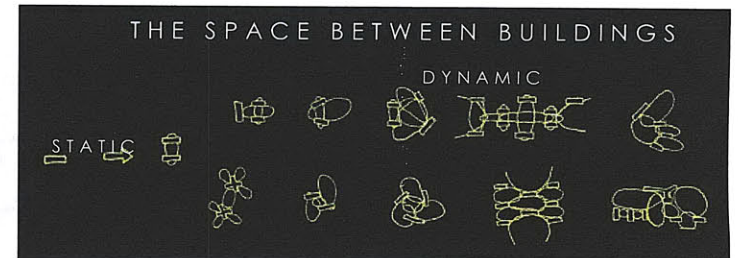
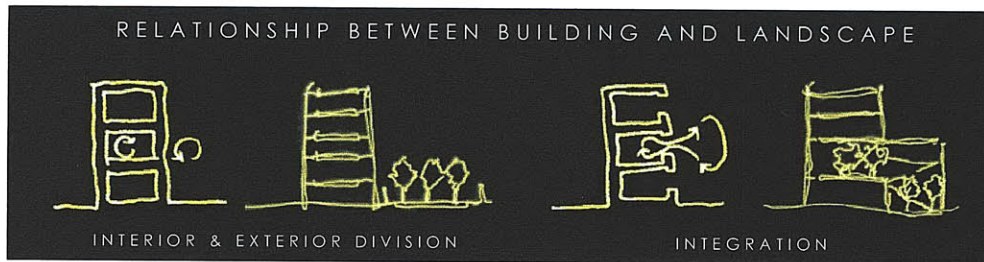
Correlation of densities and climate



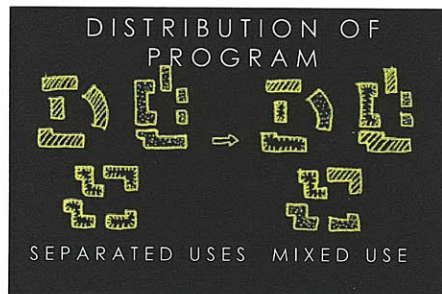




Climate conditions diagrams



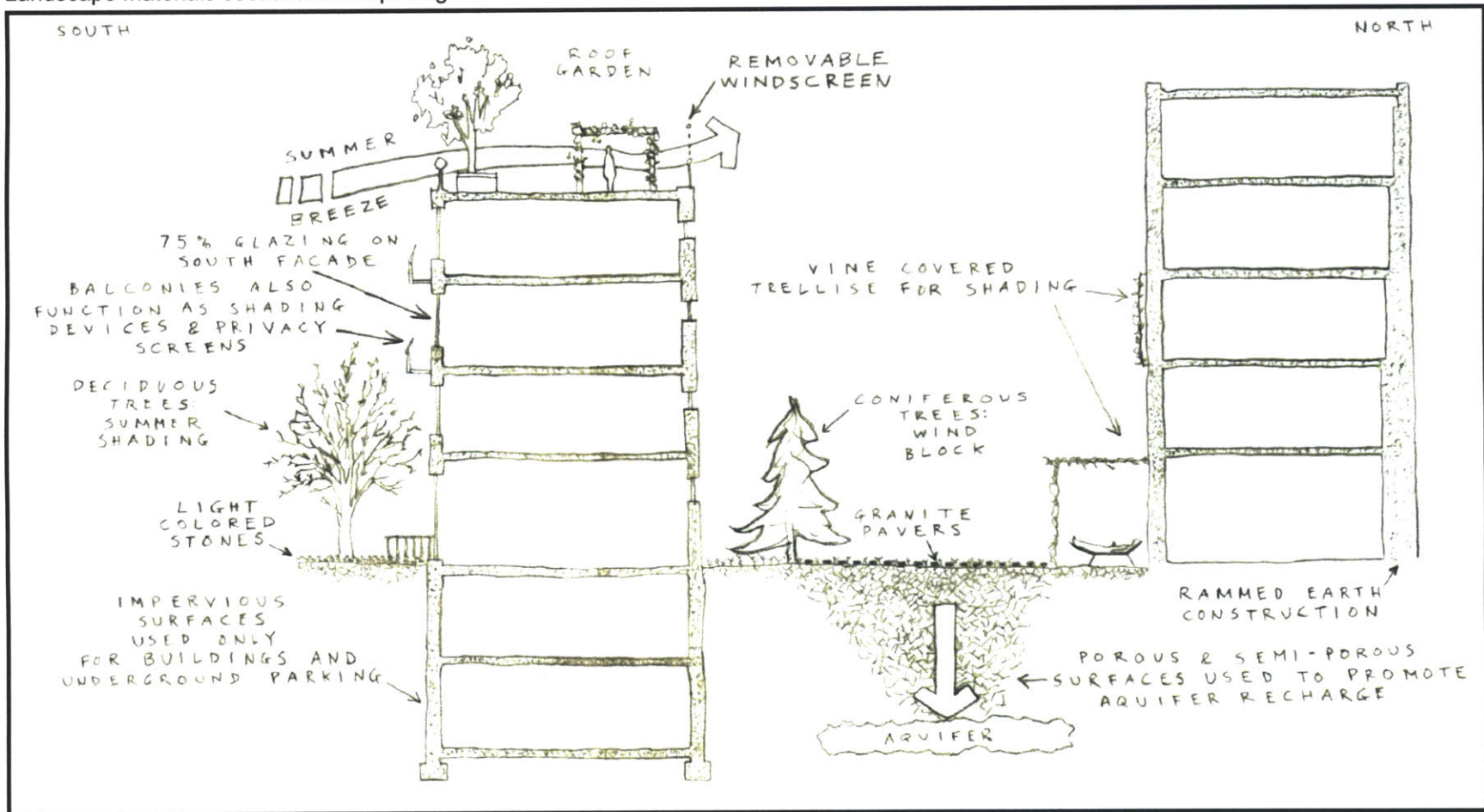
Building relationships diagrams



This section deals with the articulation of three typologies that embody the spirit of the design. To provide structure to this investigation, and as an ends unto themselves, I began with an inquiry into what guidelines I would use to develop these typologies. These diagrams represent some of the thinking towards such a set of design guidelines.

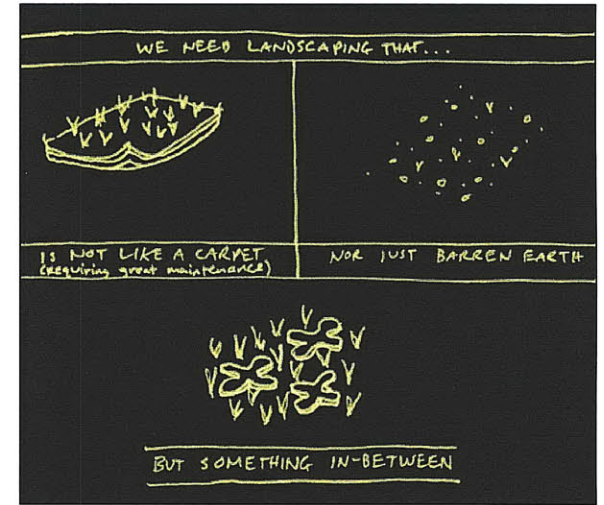
As an important step towards the goal of determining design guidelines, I developed a kind of "materials palette," e.g., a collection of materials that would be conducive to sustainable community design.

Landscape materials sectional concept diagram





Strategy for a “green campus”



Landscape materials concept diagram



Indigenous planting

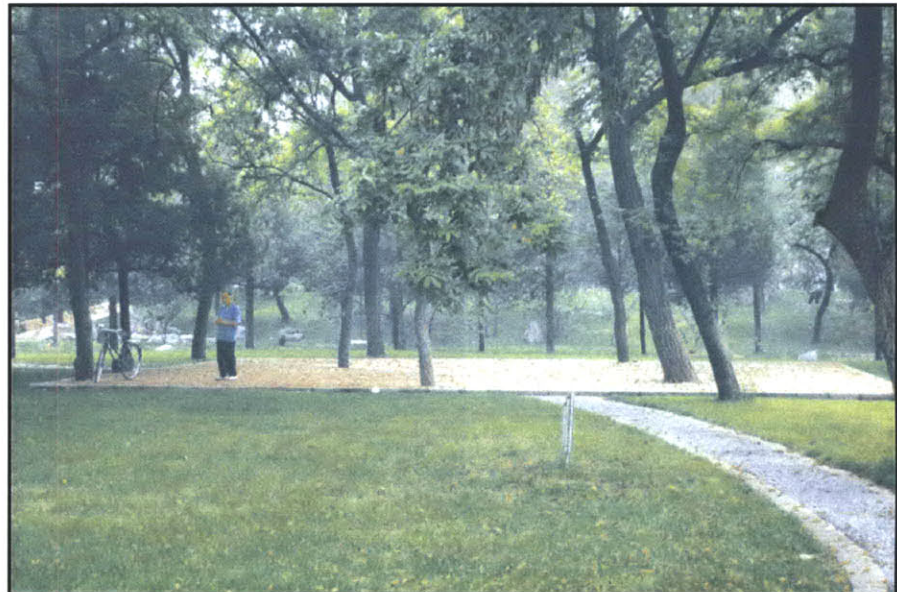
In fact, Tsinghua University has itself been embarking on a project for building a sustainable campus, but in terms of their “materials palette,” there are many questionable practices. For the most part, “sustainability” seems to mean for them, a literal “greening” of the campus. But planting so much of one species of grass, for example, can not be considered an environmentally viable option. Instead, it would be more responsible to plant a variety of species so as to promote biodiversity.

Diversity is a key issue in all aspects of this project, including diversity of public spaces. Such a diversity would be required to better accommodate the various needs and requirements of a large population. A design of a typology should provide for this.

Active spaces



Quiet spaces

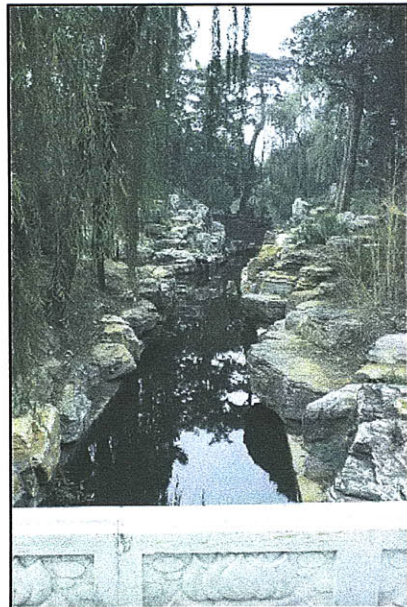




View of lily pond



View of lily pond

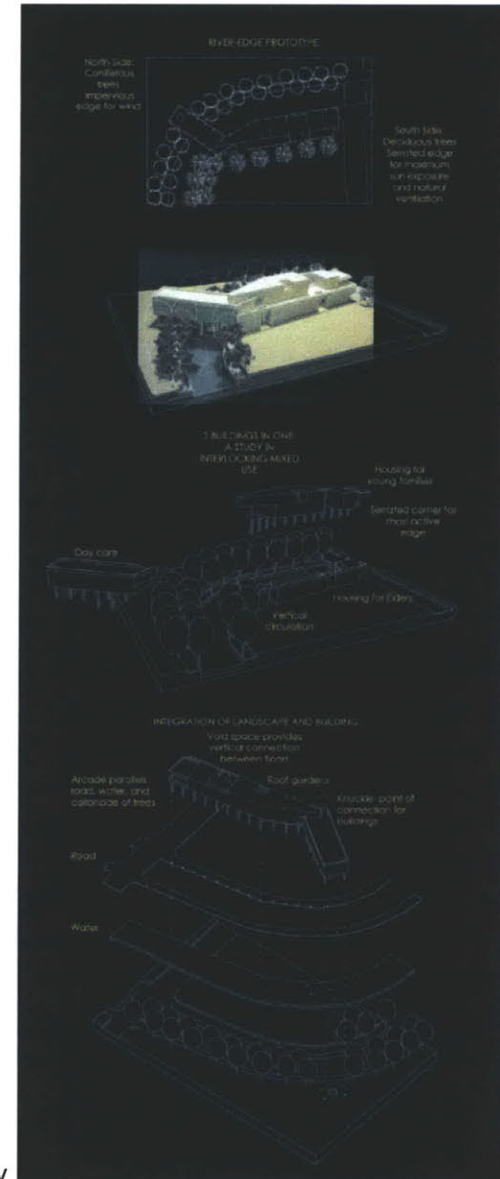


The most important element of the materials palette is water. Its presence is already quite prominent on the campus, and implicit in each of the three typologies is an attempt to incorporate and make full use of this amenity.

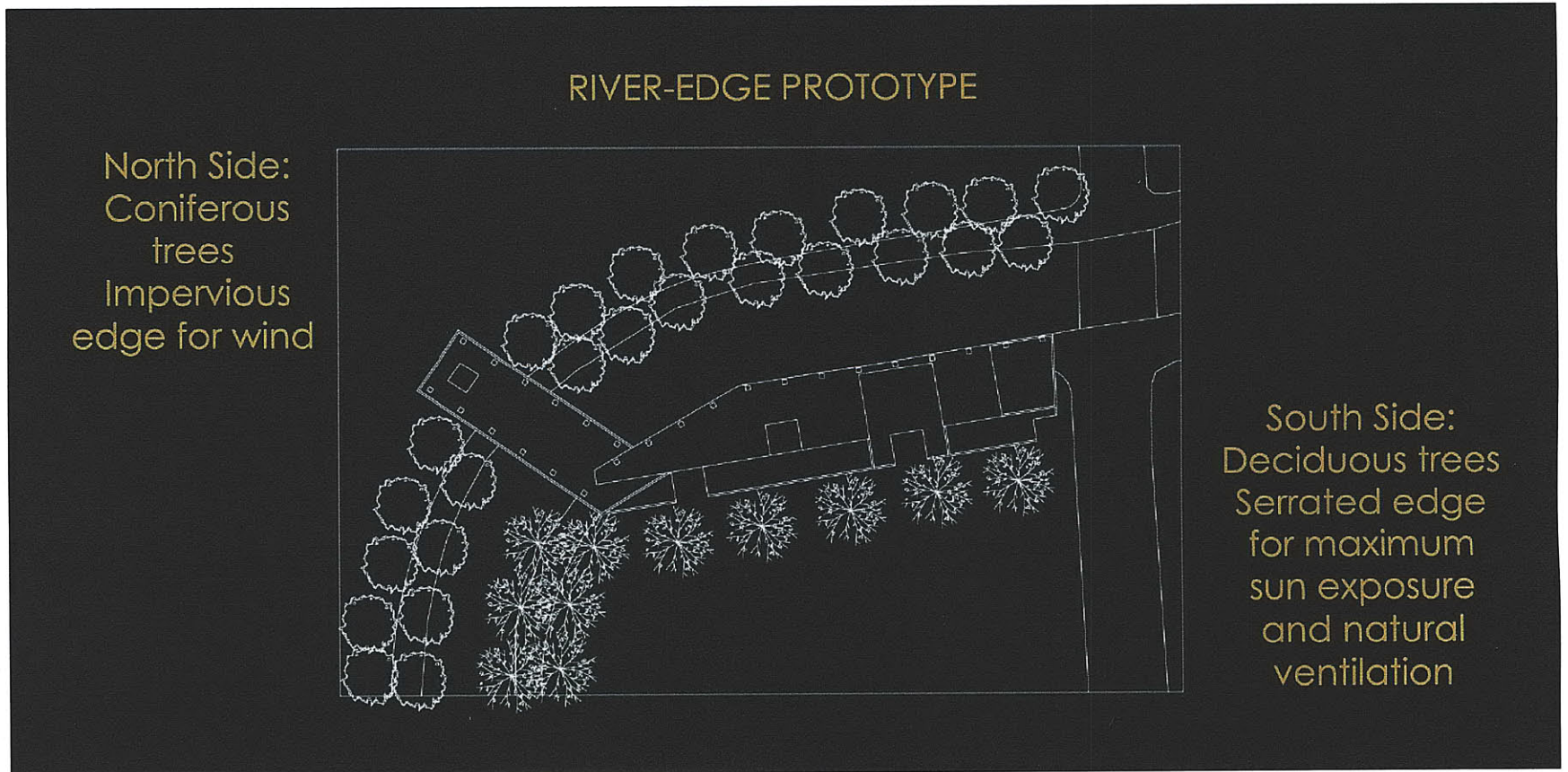
ViewS of river tributary and the river

The first typology is located in a critical area of campus, at the bend of the river. Essentially, it represents an attempt to answer the question: how do different groups of people, people who may not typically have much in common with one another, live together? In this, the river-edge typology, the design goal has been to enlist the river as the point of interconnection between elderly people, children, and working adults. The integration of the river with landscaping (primarily in the form of trees) and pathways serve to provide a nexus for these groups. Moreover, the building itself, being comprised of interlocking buildings, is designed to bring these disparate groups together.

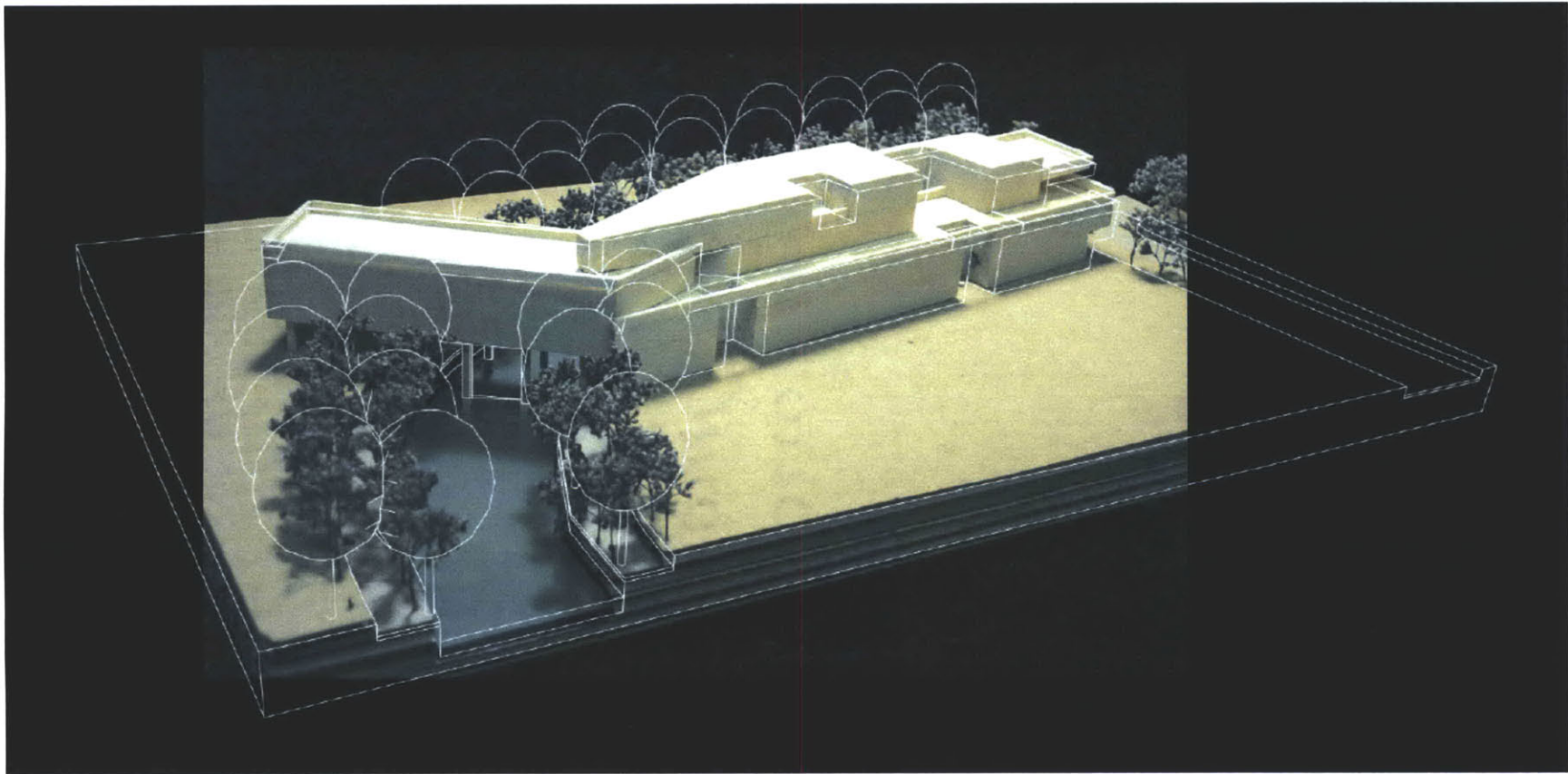
River-edge typology



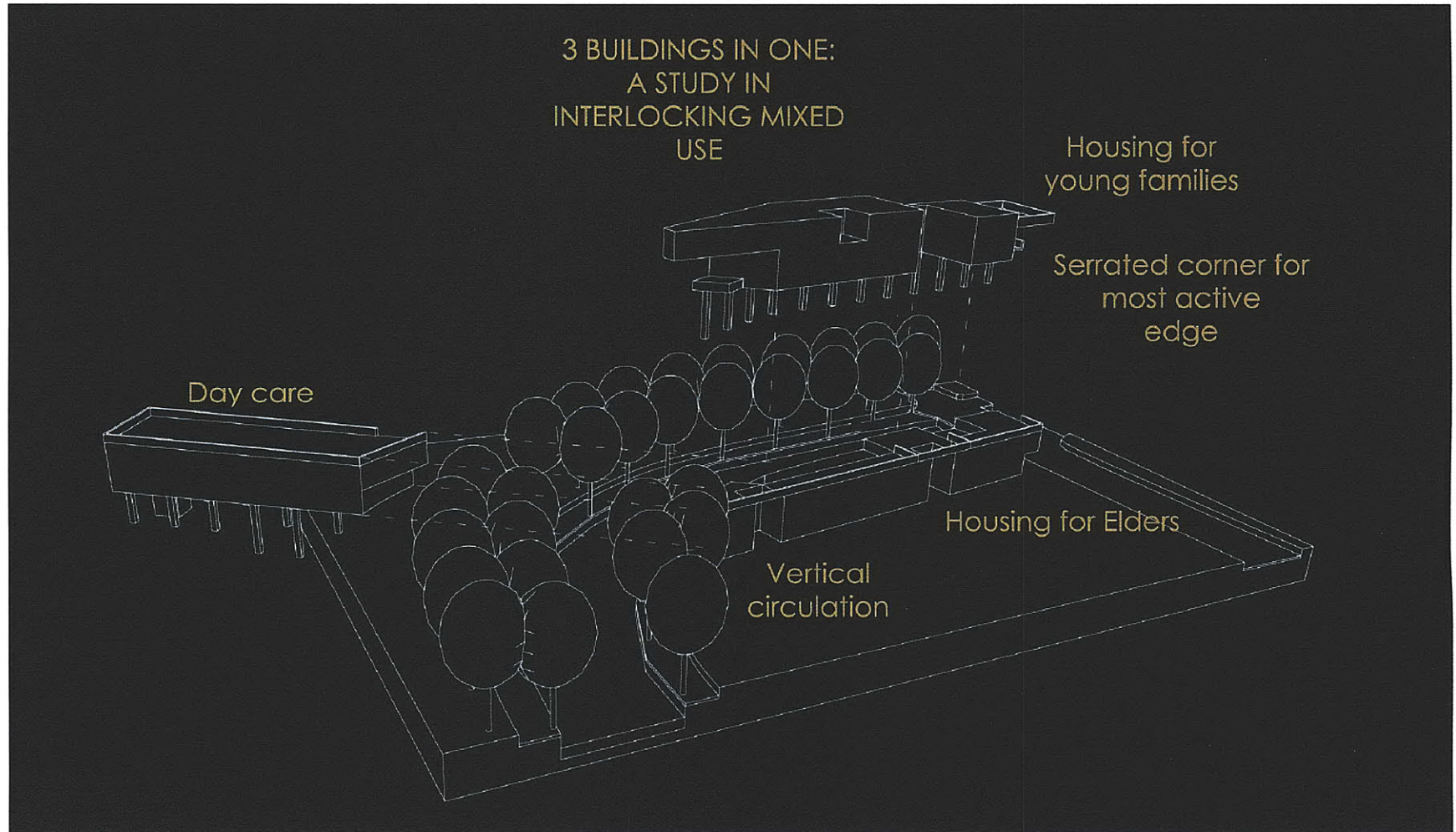
Plan diagram

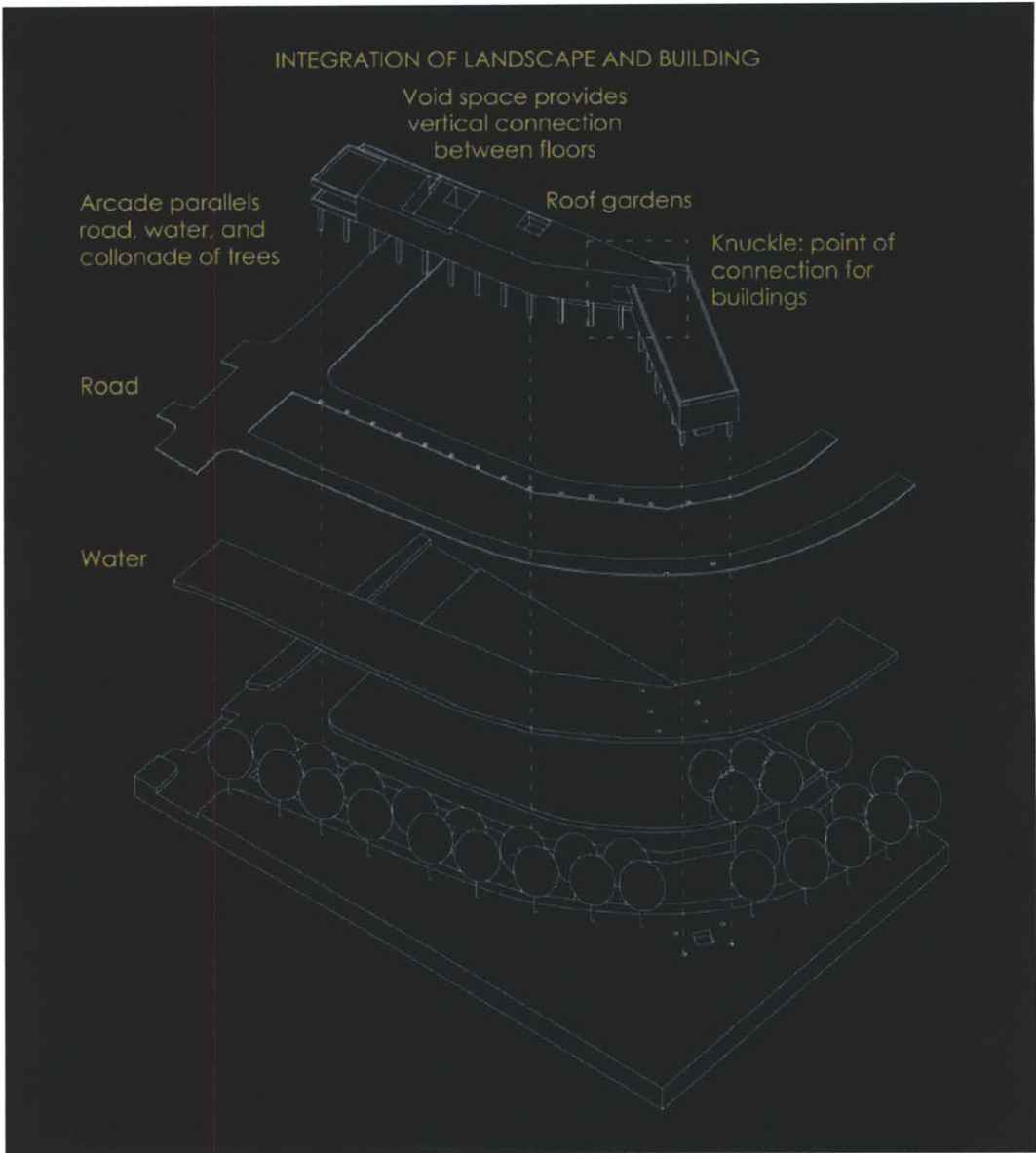


Transposed model & axonometric

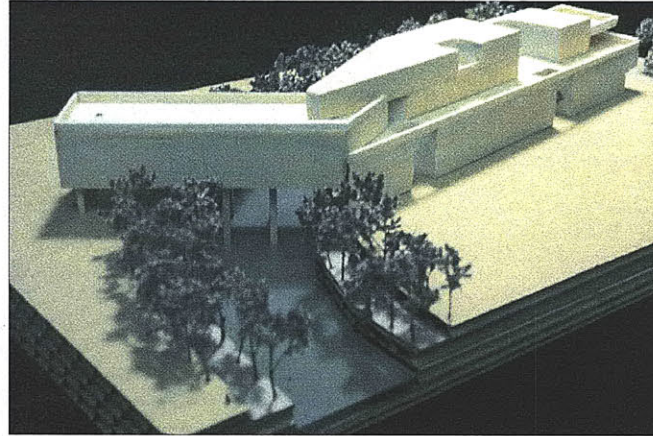
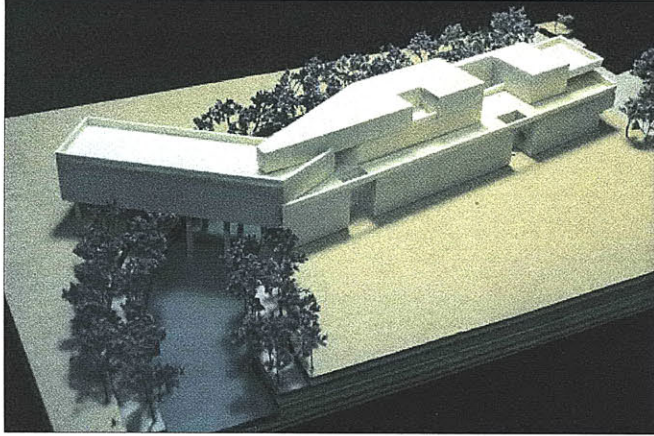


Axonometric diagram

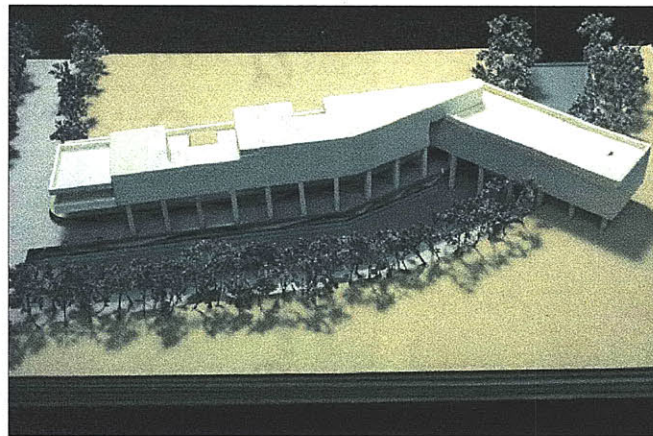
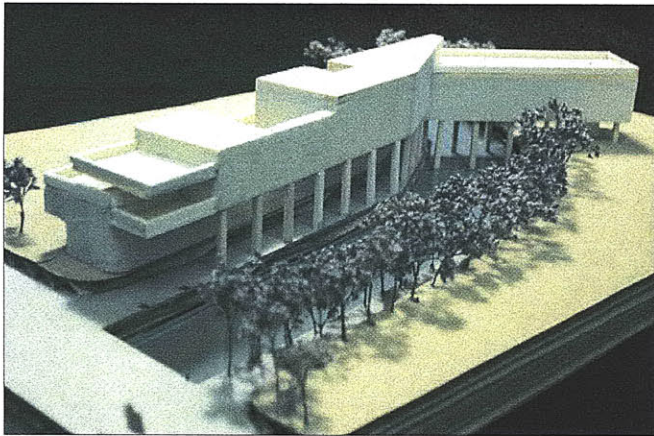




Axonometric diagram

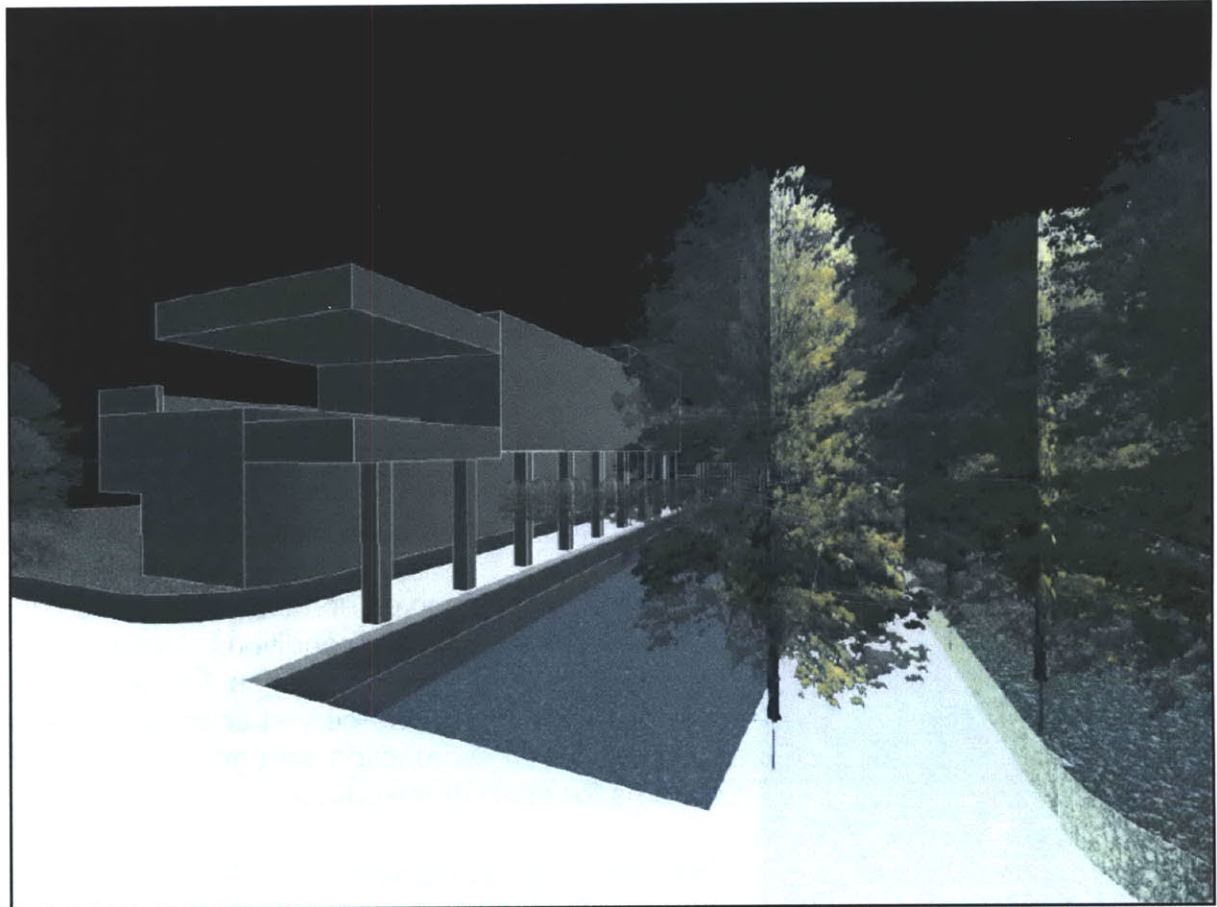


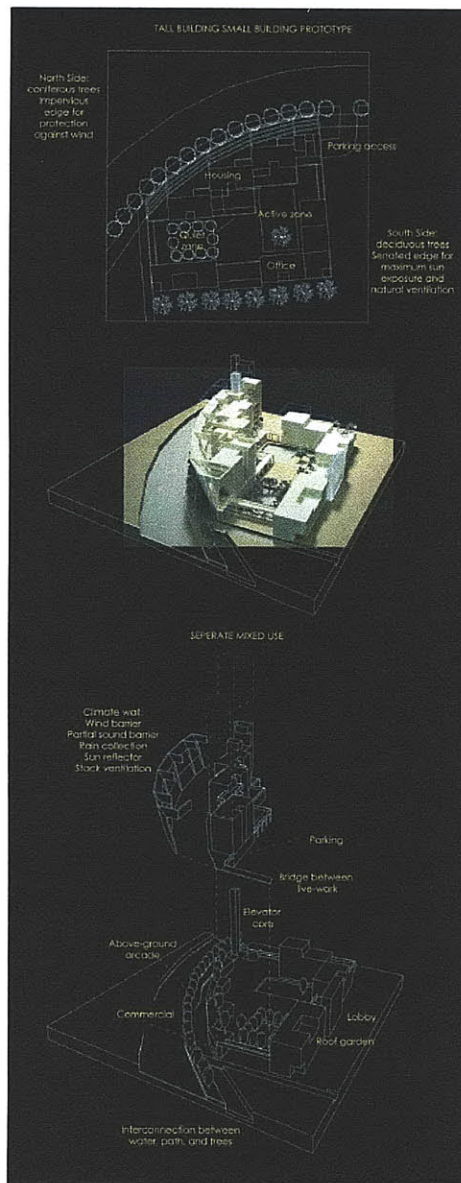
2 views from southwest



Views from southwest & south

Perspective view from southwest





The second typology is for a live-work condition. It is located on the northern edge of campus. The northern buildings are medium-rise housing units and the southern buildings are offices. There is also a commercial zone on the ground floor of the housing structure and below this, car parking. The basic challenge is to design for the complicated privacy issues involved in a configuration with numerous programs. The general strategy is to separate housing from office. The void in between serves as a buffer zone between the two programs and is articulated by a diversity of public spaces. Above ground bridges serve to connect the two programs. Housing is elevated above ground, and a wall on the northern edge facilitates noise reduction and privacy from the urban edge of the city.

Another critical condition that is explored here is the juxtaposition of a tall building with a shorter building. The rationale here is use the taller buildings in the north to shield the southern buildings from the harsh winter winds.

The rationale for a curved northern edge and an orthogonal southern edge is to respond to both urban and climatic conditions. Urbanistically, the curved edge takes the curve of the city road, and the orthogonal edge takes after the configuration of the campus interior. Climatically, the curved edge serves to redirect the winter winds around the building, and in conjunction with other configurations of this type, redirects the winds patterns for much of the campus.

Aside from redirecting winter winds, the curved northern wall also deflects the southern sun, thereby increasing sun exposure. There is also a strategy for rain collection into the river below. Moreover, there is also the possibility for stack ventilation in the cavity between the wall and the building.

Live-work typology

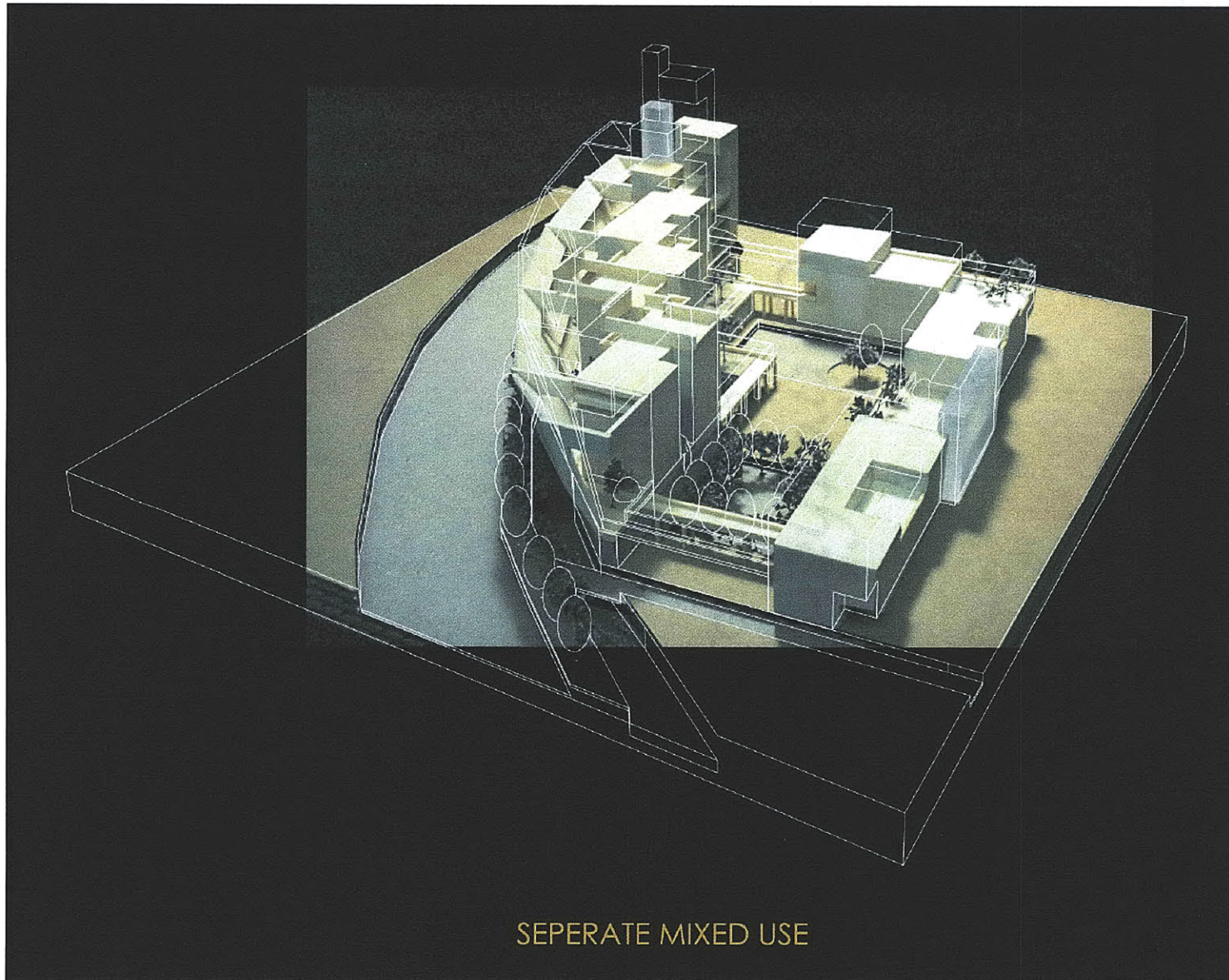
### TALL BUILDING SMALL BUILDING PROTOTYPE

North Side:  
coniferous trees  
Impervious  
edge for  
protection  
against wind

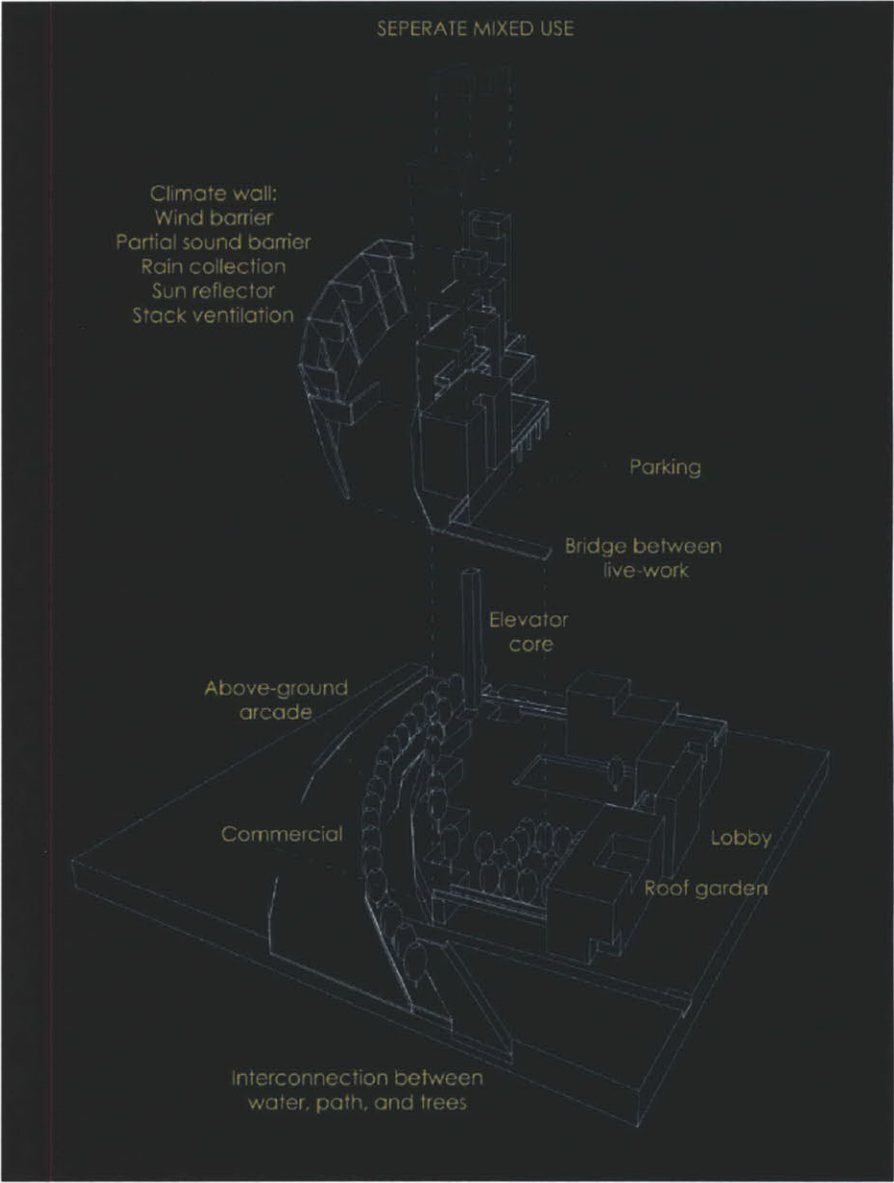


Parking access

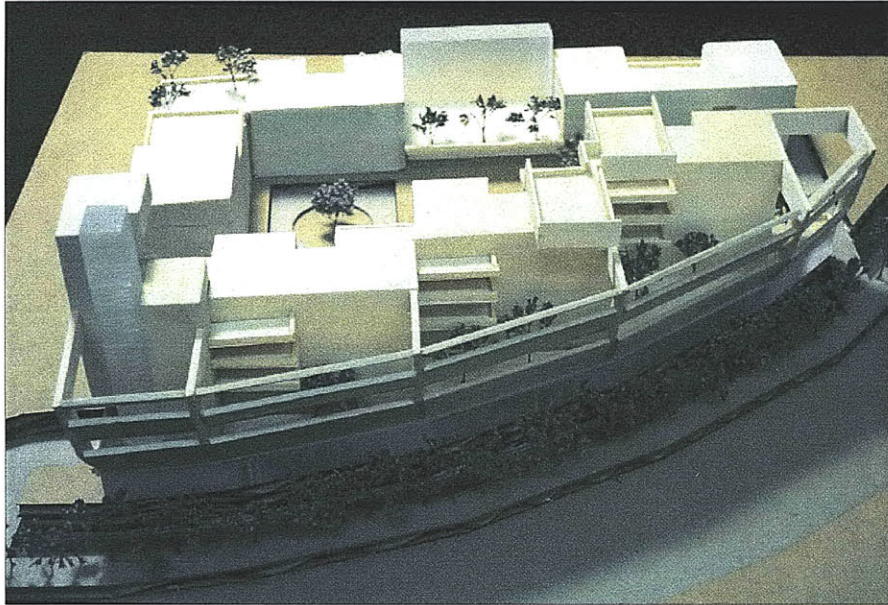
South Side:  
deciduous trees  
Serrated edge for  
maximum sun  
exposure and  
natural ventilation



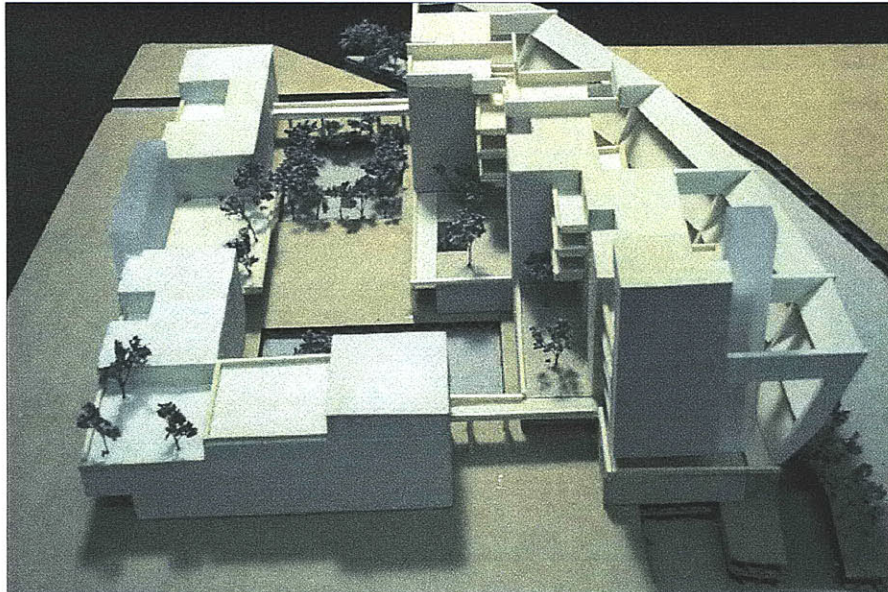
Transposed model & axonometric



Axonometric diagram



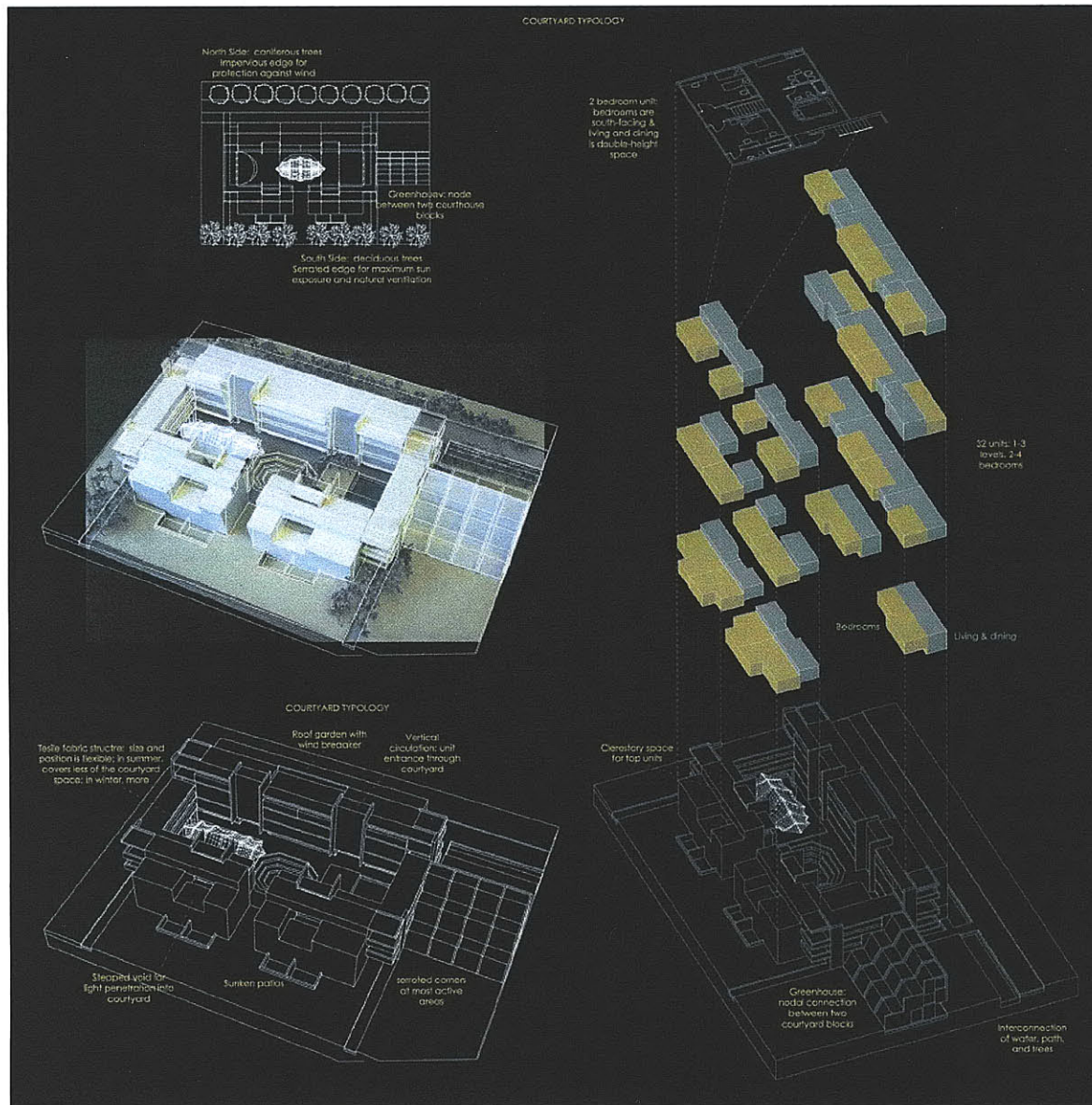
View of model from north



View of model from east



Perspective view from northeast



Courtyard typology

The third typology explores in detail the courtyard condition. It is located on the the eastern edge of campus, and its integration of pathways, roads, and water is intended to connect the campus with the rest of the city. Between two courtyard types is a greenhouse that serves as a node for communal activity.

One of the central ideas of this typology is the design of a fabric tensile canopy to be erected in the courtyard. This canopy would be larger in the winter and smaller in the summer, and its location would be determined by the users.

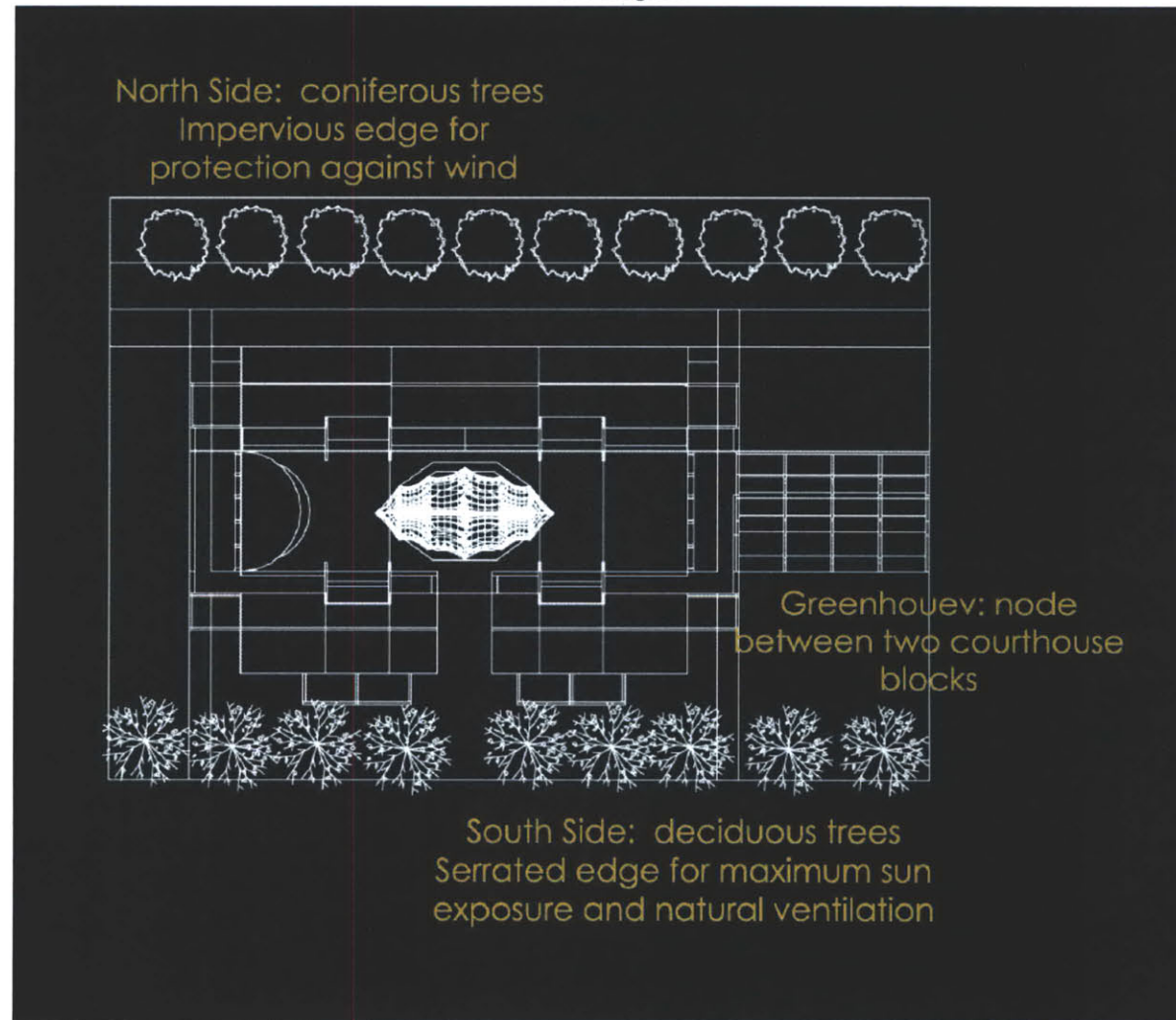
In addition to activating the pathways, water is held in the form of retention pools for the purposes of conservation.

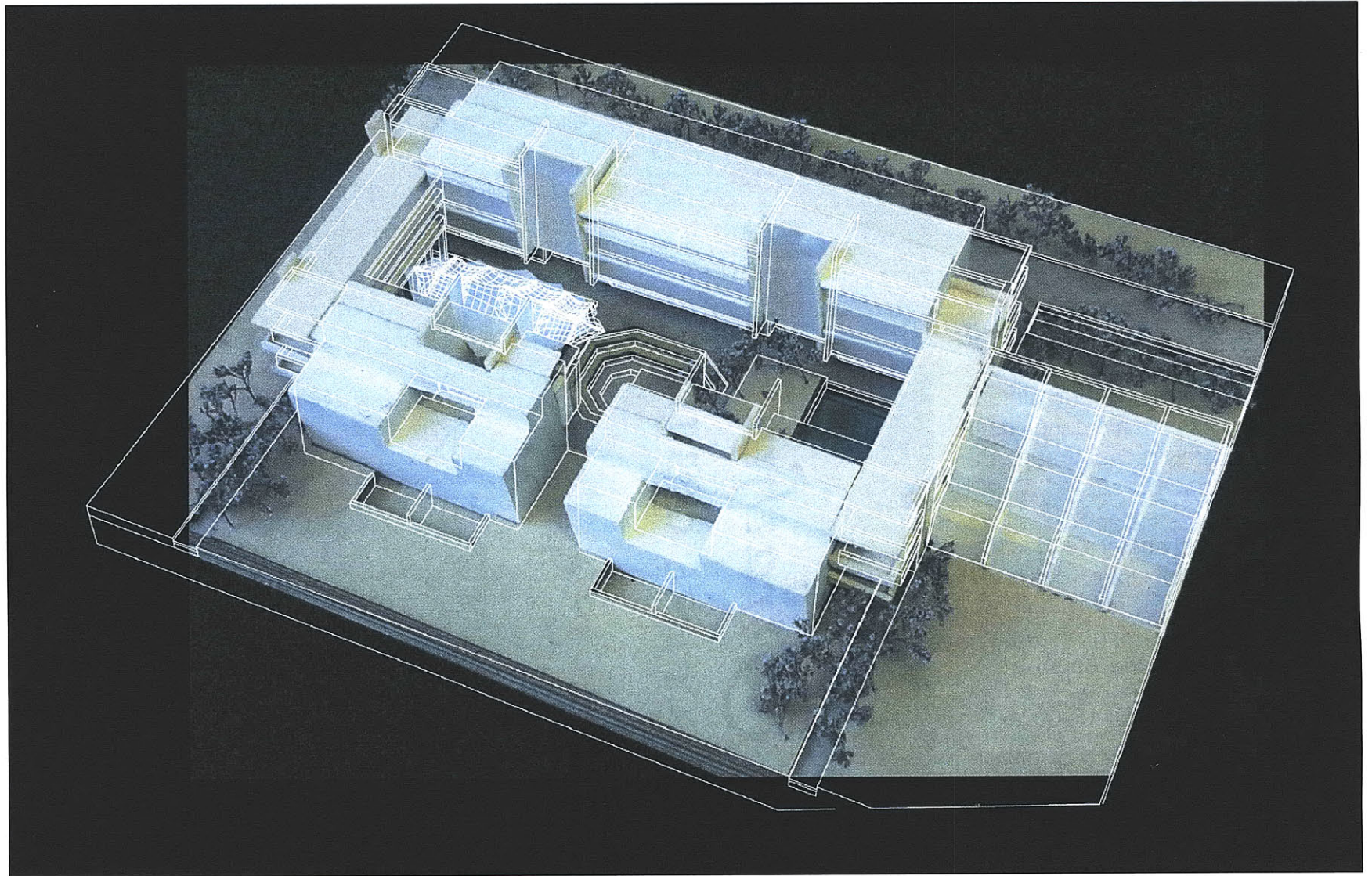
The 4 story northern block blocks the wind from the rest of the block. A commercial is located at the ground level and alongside the axis created by the north side lane of trees, water, and pathway. The 3 story southern block is penetrated by void spaces and allows for optimal sun exposure. Each facade of the north and south blocks encounters a unique set of climatic conditions, and consequently facade treatment is different in each case.

The eastern and western edges are semi-enclosed terraces, designed to accommodate circulation, balcony space, and the hanging of vegetation to screen out the harsh east-west sun and protect privacy.

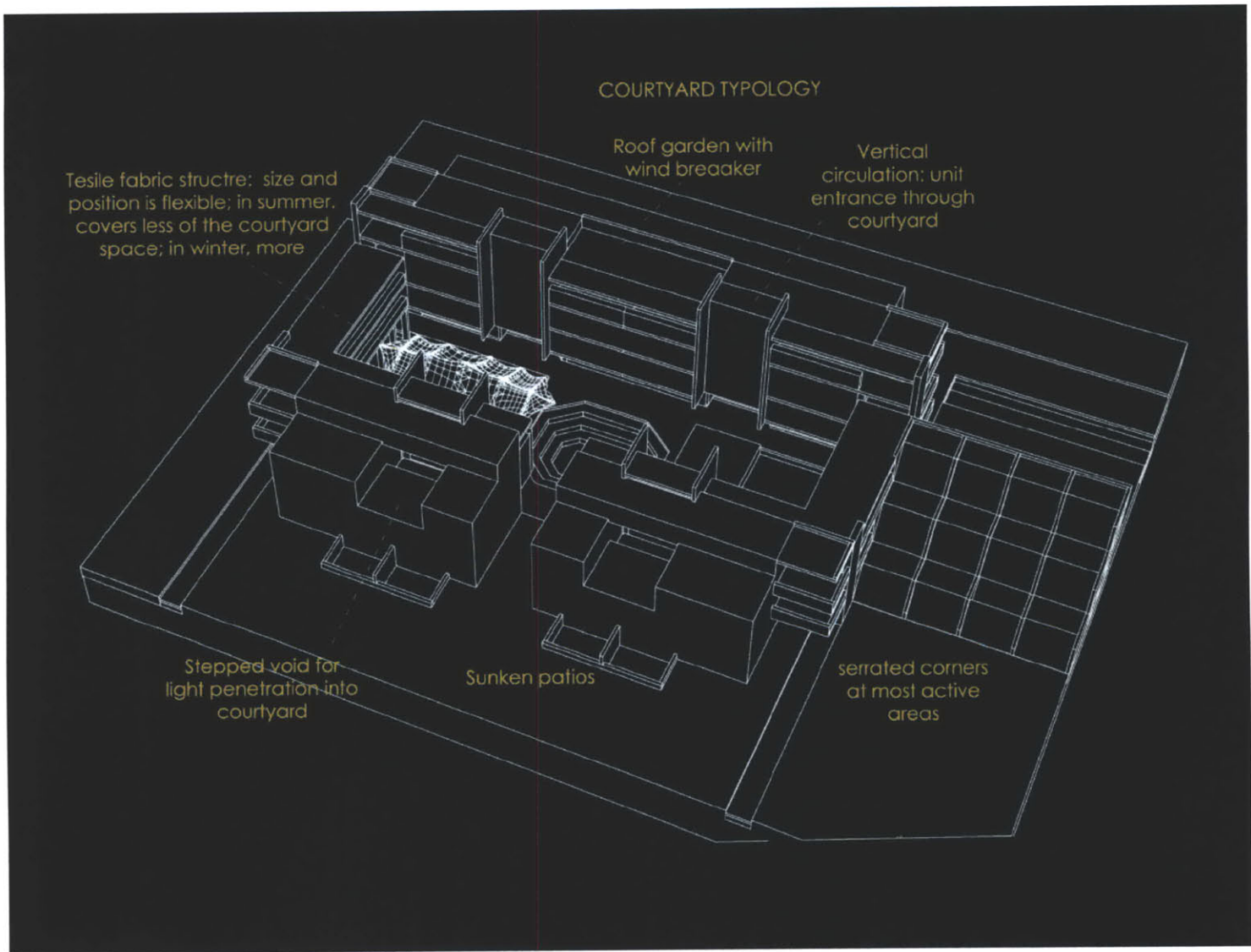
The units are comprised of a mixture of single level apartments and duplexes. Entrances are through the courtyard.

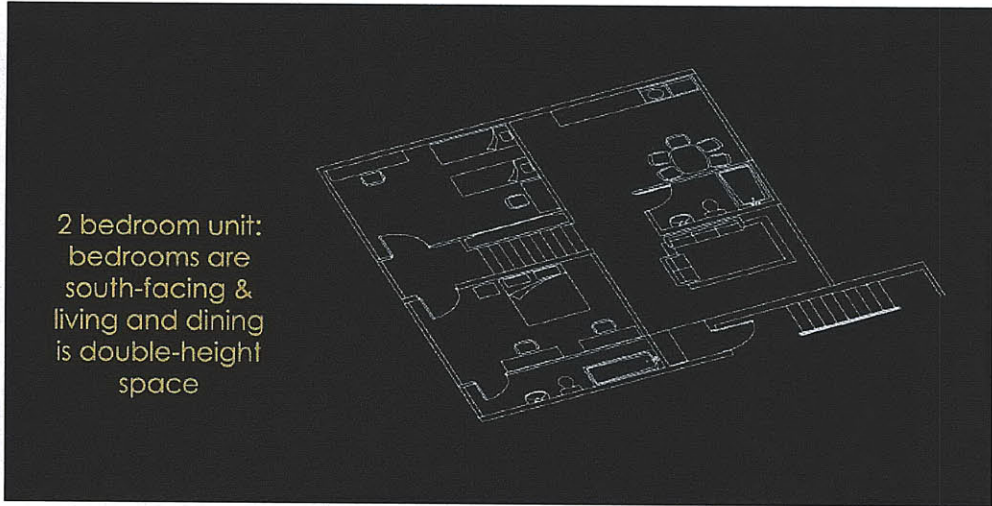
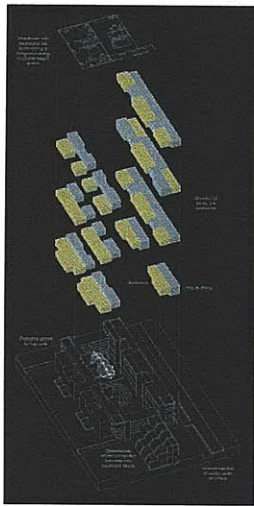
Plan diagram



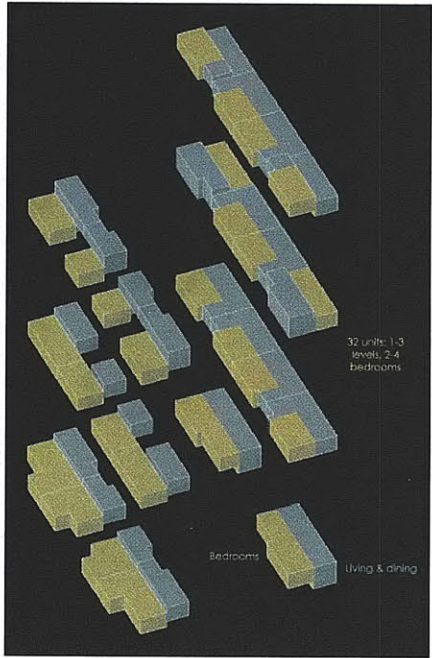
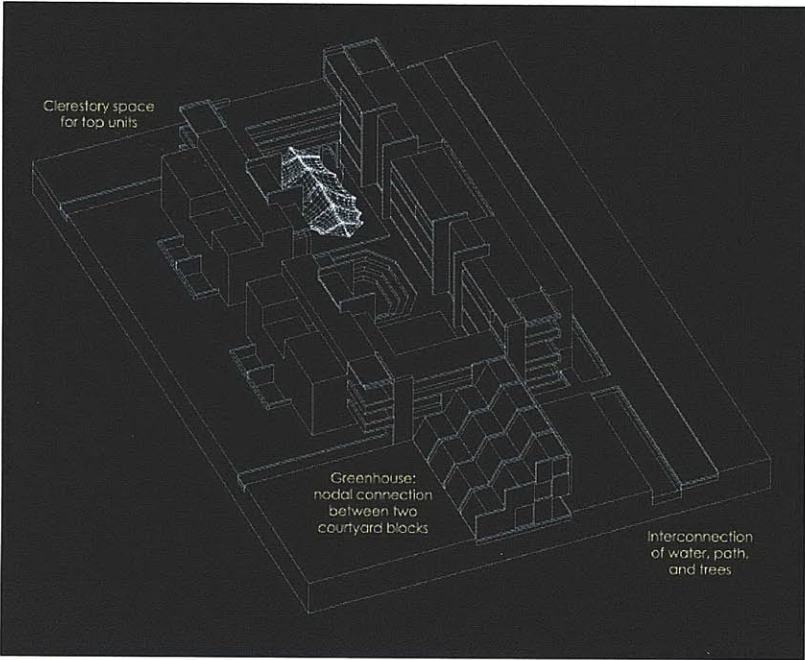


Transposed model & axonometric

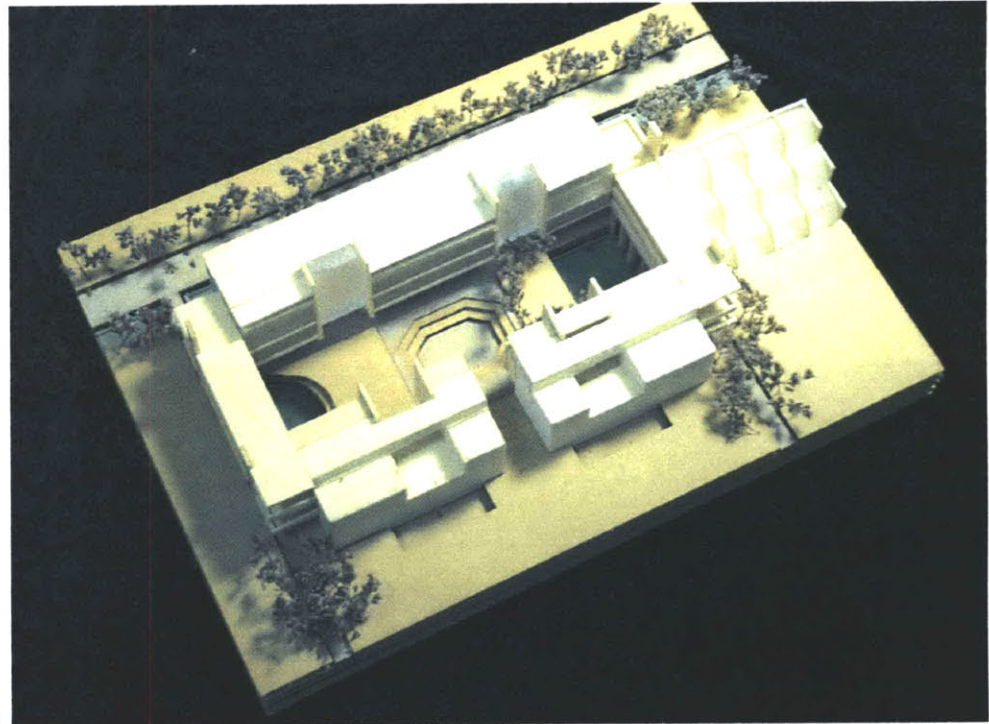




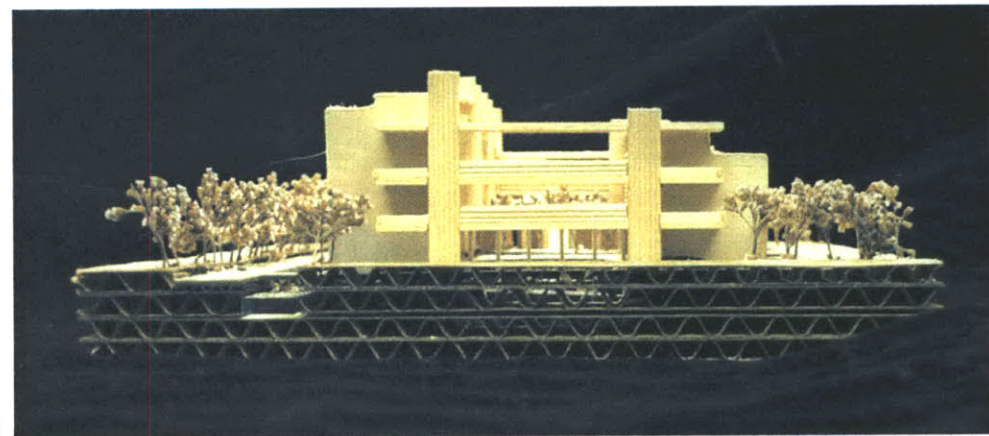
Illustrations [clockwise]:  
Exploded axon diagram  
Typical unit plan  
Unit distribution  
Axonometric diagram



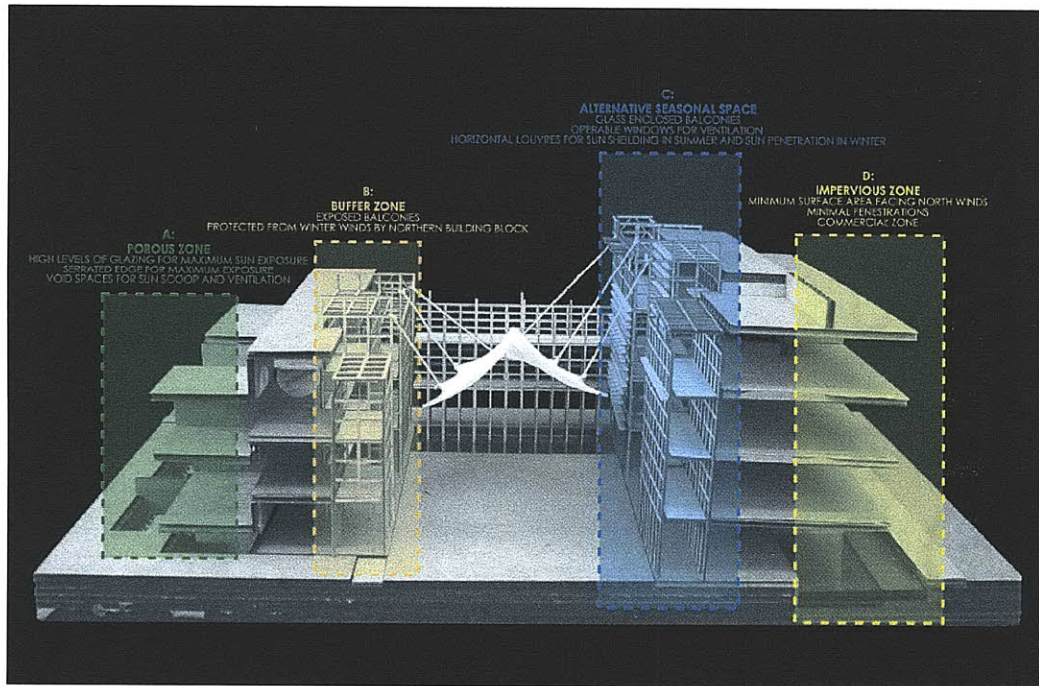
3 T Y P E S COURTYARD TYPOLOGY



Bird's-eye view of model

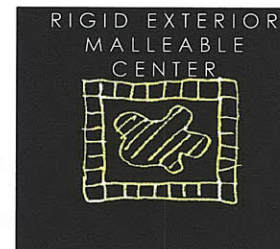


East elevation

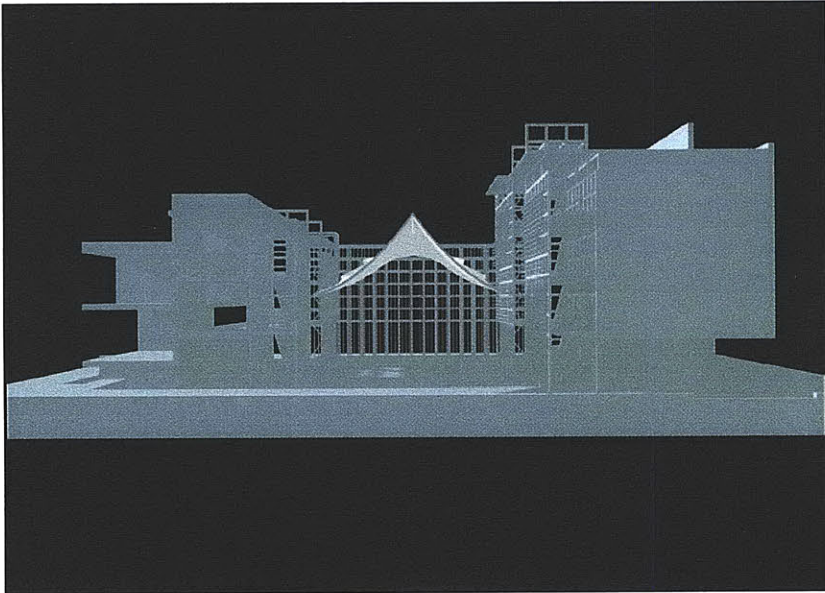


4 climate zones

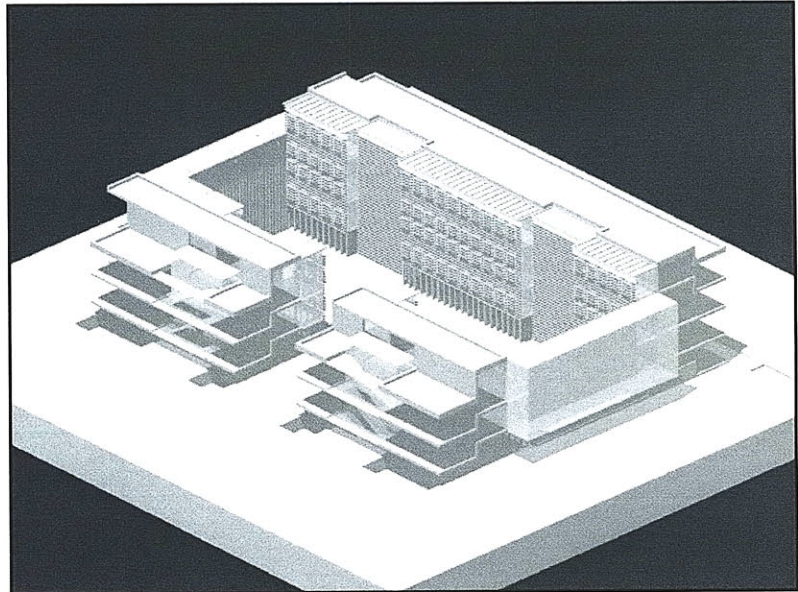
Concept diagram of relationship between building and canopy



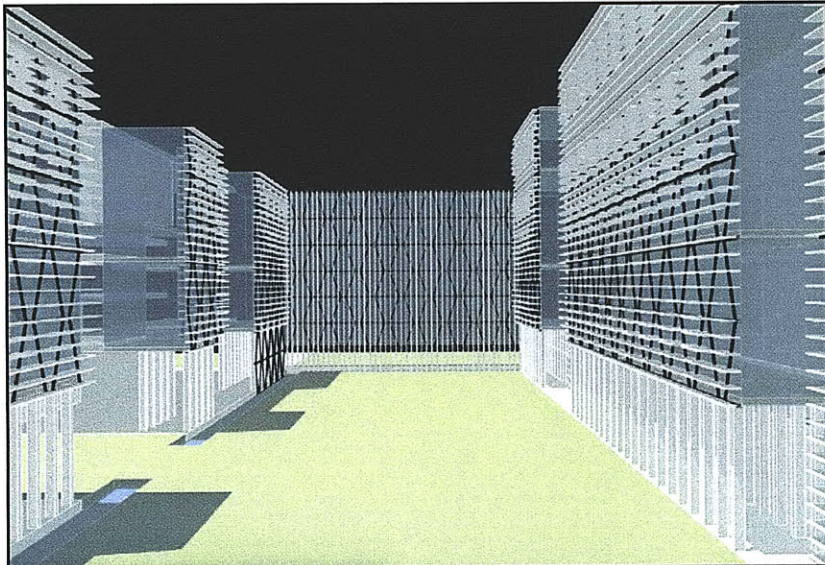




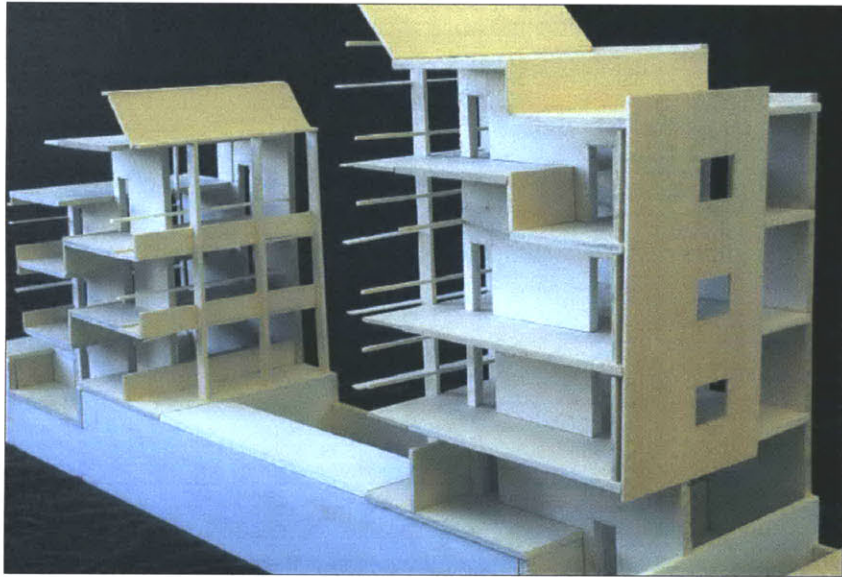
Section perspective view of courtyard



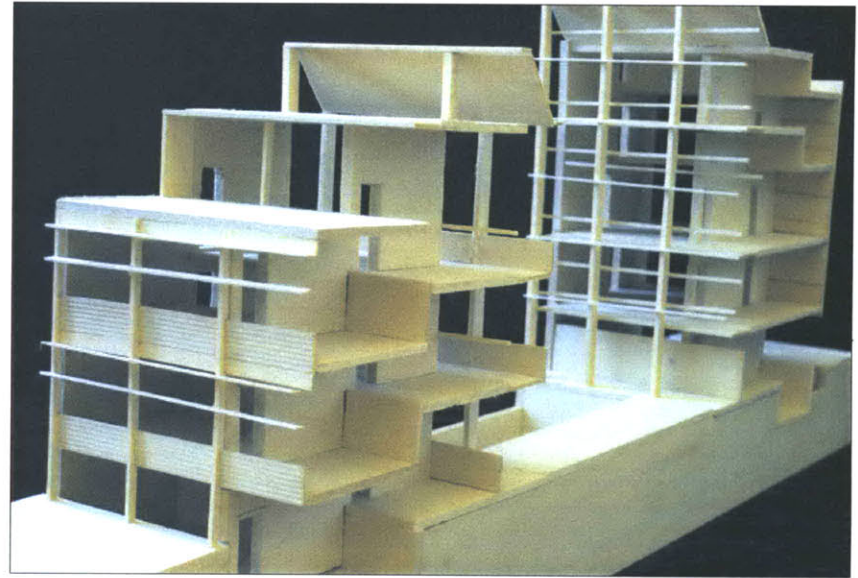
Axonometric



Perspective view of courtyard



2 views of section model from northeast



2 views of section model from southeast



3 T Y P E S



**Final Review**



## Acknowledgements

This book is dedicated to my wife, Jay-- the *raison de' etre* for persisting,  
despite the insanity of it all.

Many thanks for the perceptive, practical, and always timely advice of Andrew Scott.  
It is hard to imagine what I would have been able to accomplish  
without his extensive experience and good sense.

Thanks also to Tonghoon Lee, Zachariah Kramer, Zachary Kron, and Junko Nakagawa.  
Each one of these friends seemed to show up with exactly what I needed in hand,  
just when I needed it most.

Special thanks to my readers for their creative and useful advice:

Eran Ben-Joseph, Professor of Architecture

Leon Glicksman, Professor of Architecture

Shun Kanda, Senior Lecturer in Architecture

## Bibliography

Bacon, Edmund N. **Design of Cities**. New York: The Viking Press, 1967.

Beijing Urban Design Studio Reader. Massachusetts Institute of Technology & Tsinghua University, 2000

Dal Co, Francesco and Tom Muirhead. **I Musei di James Stirling Michael Wilford and Associates**. Milano: Electa, 1990.

Daniels, Klaus. **The Technology of Ecological Building**. Basel: Birkhauser, 1994.

\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_. **Low-Tech Light-Tech High Tech: Building in the Information Age**. Basel: Birkhauser, 1998.

Dober, Richard P. **Environmental Design**. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1969.

Gallion, Arthur B. and Simon Eisner. **The Urban Planning: City Planning and Design**. Princeton: D. Van Nostrand, 1963.

Lechner, Nobert. **Heating, Cooling, Lighting: Design Methods for Architects**. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2001.

Lynch, Kevin and Gary Hack. **Site Planning**. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1984.

Olgay, Victor. **Design with Climate**. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963.

Scott, Andrew, editor. **Dimensions of Sustainability**. London: E & FN Spon, 1998.

Simonds, John Ormsbee. **Landscape Architecture: A Manual of Site Planning and Design**. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1998.

Spreiregen, Paul D. **Urban Design: the architecture of towns and cities**. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965.

Wurman, Richard Saul. **Cities: Comparisons of Form and Scale**. Philadelphia, Joshua, 1974.

Yeang, Ken, **The Skyscraper Biometrically Considered: a design primer**. London: Academy Group, 1996.

\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_. **Bioclimatic Skyscrapers**. London: Artemis, 1994.

.

## Illustrations

all photographs and illustrations are  
from the author unless listed below

- 14 **Contemporary Map of China**, online Encarta Encyclopedia
- 14 **Cities and geography of China**, online Encarta Encyclopedia
- 15 **Road map of Beijing**, online Encarta Encyclopedia
- 15 **Growth in density over a 40 year period**, Beijing Summer Workshop Reader
- 16 **City map of Beijing, highlighting the ring roads**, Beijing Urban Map
- 17 **Map of the Forbidden City**, Beijing Summer Workshop Reader
- 18 **Aerial views of the Forbidden City**, Design of Cities
- 19 **Forbidden City in ancient times**, Design of Cities
- 20 **Original 9-cell configuration**, Beijing Summer Workshop Reader
- 20 **Fishbone block pattern**, Beijing Summer Workshop Reader
- 20 **Contemporary example of housing in China**, Beijing Summer Workshop Reader
- 21 **Traditional courtyard prototype**, Beijing Summer Workshop Reader
- 21 **Densification of courtyard type**, Beijing Summer Workshop Reader
- 21 **Transition of traditional forms to contemporary models**, Beijing Summer Workshop
- 24 **Aerial view of Tsinghua University**, Tsinghua Design Group
- 24 **Campus location in Beijing**, Tsinghua University website
- 26 **Photo of Tsinghua University**, my photo of campus map
- 28 **Early campus map**, my photo of campus map
- 28 **Royal Garden**, my photo of campus map
- 29 **Royal Garden, 1762-1909**, Design of Cities
- 29 **1935**, Design of Cities
- 29 **1965**, Design of Cities
- 29 **2002**, Design of Cities
- 30 **Present-day map of campus**, campus map
- 32 **Masterplan for Tsinghua University**, Tsinghua Design Group
- 42 **Site map**, Tsinghua Design Group

5216-72