

# The Island the Day After

## *A New Experiment for Cuba*

By Jessica Jorge

Bachelor of Arts in English Literature  
Middlebury College, 2008

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

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### ABSTRACT

This thesis seeks to investigate the role of architecture in staging, broadcasting, and promoting political and social ideologies, especially as new political regimes come to power and are confronted with the monuments and built artifacts of their predecessors. This thesis is interested in how the optimistic promises of any nascent government are staged in buildings and in the city. What sites remain, are transformed, or are torn down?

The story of Havana's growth in the twentieth century is directly tied to the political motivations of its leaders. While the country was free from the Spanish but not quite independent, the city grew up. Casinos, high-rise apartments and hotels captured coastal real estate through which money could be funneled to the upper echelons of the Batista regime. Along with Fidel Castro came a promise of utopia. For a brief moment, the revolution sponsored a new, experimental architectural form. The US Embargo and the fall of the Soviet Union halted Havana's growth and urbanization abruptly.

This history suggests three key attitudes towards architecture as a site of politics: augmentation through additional construction, erasure of buildings in order to re-write history, and inhabitation of a building in order to reuse its infrastructure while simultaneously changing its function and image.

In order to test these strategies, this thesis inserts itself in a future moment of crisis and revolution in Cuba, a moment akin to Cuba's fight for independence and to the time of Castro's rise to power. It questions the inevitability

of a wave of capitalism washing over the island in the post-Castro years and instead imagines a new state-sponsored project to make Cuba 100 percent food-independent. In this future, the state witnesses the political turmoil and instability around the globe and realizes it cannot rely on foreign aid and imports to feed its people; it designs a return to its agrarian past.

This thesis argues for an alternate ending to the story of Cuba's experiment with socialism. While construction was cut short due to political contingencies in the early 1960s, could there be a new experiment for the Havana of today? Can the aspiration for a collective urbanity be revived? Where will the future sites of production exist in the city?

In Havana, there are pockets of vibrant life, notably in the Old City, along La Rampa, or along the Malecón. Here, glimpses of the promised socialist dream may still be visible. This thesis asks if these few social islands (or social condensers in the words of O.M. Ungers) can be saved, if they can become sites of non-capitalist production and education, and if they can help sustain Cuba into our unknown future.

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# Part One

## 1. Introduction

-Archipelago

-Taking Stock: The Communist Experiment Today

-Crisis and Opportunity: A Food Independent Cuba

2. The Island the Day After:  
A Brief History of Cuba in Six Chapters

3. Proposal

4. Final Model



# Introduction

## *Archipelago*

In the aftermath of WWII, Berlin along with many European cities was left bombed, ruined, broken. In the 1970s, planning for the International Housing Exhibition began. Its primary concern: how to reconstruct a destroyed city. Their project raised critical questions about the form of the city: Must we save ruined things? What are the elements of a city? Where will people live, work, play? How should urban decay be addressed? Out of this moment, Oswald Mathias Ungers and Rem Koolhaas developed their theory of *The City in the City* consisting of architectural islands on the liberated plane of the city. In 1977, they published the first draft of their Berlin manifesto.

As said by Pier Vittorio Aureli in *The Possibility of an Absolute Architecture*, the Green Archipelago was the first proposal of its kind to take on the questions of the urban by accepting the idea of a shrinking city, opposed to the typical understanding of urbanization which accepted growth as the de facto future.<sup>1</sup> For Aureli, this did not amount to an abandonment of the city as project nor to a state of “deurbanization.” Instead, the city’s form could be imagined as an archipelago which was strengthened by each “island.” An island would be a clearly articulated architectural element which sought to bring about an intensification, or densification, of urban life.

Koolhaas and Ungers addressed the question of preservation by allowing for certain parts of the city to be “weeded-out” or dismantled while others chosen for tune-up or completion.<sup>2</sup> They believed the notion of historical reproduction or urban repair was detrimental and produced an illusory nostalgia for the past thereby ignoring the present or future conditions (in their case depopulation in

1. Aureli, Pier Vittorio. *The Possibility of an Absolute Architecture*. (MIT Press, 2011) 178.

2. Ungers, Mathias Oswald and Rem Koolhaas. *The City in the City*. Berlin: A Green Archipelago. Eds. Florian Hertweck and Sebastien Marot. (Lars Muller Publishers, 2013) 14-16.

Berlin and the unsustainability of large urban centers).<sup>3</sup>

Undoubtedly, the form and programs of Berlin's urban archipelago, as imagined by Koolhaas and Ungers, cannot to be transferred onto Havana. More importantly, that is not the aim of this project. The usefulness of The Green Archipelago is to carry on their inquiry into the form of the city as an architectural archipelago in which selective depopulation or shrinkages are acknowledged and allowed for.<sup>4</sup>

The ideas presented in The Green Archipelago provide a productive framework for thinking about the future development of Havana and the potentials of new architectural interventions. Already within the city, there exist islands of vibrant public and social life and pockets of collectivity (in a sea of failing and crumbling architecture). The places of collectivity are able to thrive as a result of the country's isolation and commodity shortages. Public spaces - sidewalks, plazas, streets, corners - have remained significant social spaces as well as sites of trade and commerce (through bartering or buying "illegal" goods on the black market). These intense yet dispersed moments are typically connected to or sited near the hotel industry, state-sanctioned wi-fi hotspots, places to buy items on the black market, or small groupings of private businesses.<sup>5</sup> The way social life relies on these public spaces and meeting places simply does not exist in capitalist nations.

Amazon, Netflix, Zipcar, FreshDirect, X-box and Apple have reduced the public sphere to a hallway connecting one privatized business to the next. When we want to shop, we sign-on. When we want to play, we activate the bluetooth headset. When we want to go, we go alone.

For Marx and Engels, the generation of the world market through spatial means has produced only one type of freedom: Free Trade. In the capitalist system which relies on constant production and improvement of the means of production, the market will, "nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connections everywhere."<sup>6</sup> Marx and Engels said of the bourgeoisie: "It compels all nations, on pain of extinction, to adopt the bourgeois mode of production; it compels them to introduce what it calls civilisation into their midst, i.e., to become bourgeois themselves. In one word, it creates a world after its own image."<sup>7</sup>

3. Ibid. 88.

4. In *The Unreal Estate Guide to Detroit* (University of Michigan Press, 2012), Andrew Herscher examines another type of "shrinking city" - Detroit.

5. In 1997, Raul Castro legalized the operation of small private businesses, such as small private restaurants called *casa particulares*.

6. Marx, Karl and Friedrich Engels. *The Communist Manifesto*. Ed. Robert C Tucker. (W.W. Norton and Company, 1972) 337-338.

7. Ibid. 339.

Yet, the global takeover of capitalism and the bourgeoisie class did not render Cuba extinct. Nor did the US embargo program crush the revolution and re-instate capitalism (and corruption) to the island. How long this will remain true is unknown. What, if anything, can be preserved is an unanswered question. How the communist project will continue on the island is yet to be determined.

### *Taking Stock: The Communist Experiment Today*

Despite many questions about the future of Cuba, it is certain that the communist project, against the odds, has continued on the island. The idealism and utopia present in the early years of the Castro regime have faded. Yet, Cuba has remained a last bastion of communism in the western hemisphere.

Since the beginning of the embargo, there have been debates over its efficacy. Many argue the sweeping economic and trade sanctions are an unnecessary and cruel relic of the Cold War while proponents assert the Cuban government has not met clearly defined conditions such as improving human rights.<sup>8</sup> For them, the embargo is a necessary leveraging tool for any future negotiations with Cuba. In addition, different administrations in Washington have brought forth differing positions and priorities towards the sanction programs.

In 2015, President Obama re-opened diplomatic relations with Cuba and the US flag was raised at the US Embassy in Havana once again. For many Cubans, this step towards normalization offered a sense of hope. A Univision poll taken in 2015 revealed the vast majority of Cubans would like to see an end of the embargo and welcome warmer relations with the US in hopes of bringing greater economic stability to the country.<sup>9</sup> Conversely, the Helms-Burton Act, passed by the United States Congress in 1996 and enacted into law by President Bill Clinton, actually tightened trade sanctions yet again.

The lack of predictability in Cuba-US relations over the past 60 calls into question the assumption that relations between the two countries will inevitably normalize. Still today, it seems unlikely

8. Suchlicki, Jamie. "Why Sanctions on Cuba Must Remain in Place." *The New York Times*, 20 November 2013.

9. Partlow, Joshua and Peyton M Craighill. "Poll shows vast majority of Cubans welcome closer ties with U.S." *The Washington Post*, 8 April 2015.

that the US Congress, or the President, will prioritize a vote to end the embargo. It seems equally unlikely that the Cuban government will forgo its revolutionary past and abandon its experiment with communism.

Thus, the continuation of the embargo and of Cuba's isolated island-ness may persist for some decades longer. In this one potential future, a future which maintains Cuba's separateness as well as its exceptionalism, the Cuban government may be forced, as it has in the past, to address large-scale national economic problems. In 1989, for example, the dissolution of the Soviet Union cut off nearly all energy resources available to Cuba and ushered in the so-called Special Period in Time of Peace. In this time, the government responded to the national economic crisis with food rationing, land redistribution, and new agricultural practices.

### ***Crisis and Opportunity: A Food Independent Cuba***

The cost of communism, in the face of the embargo and the fall of the Soviet Union, has been high. Today, 80% of Cuba's food is imported.<sup>10</sup>

Food shortages are common and the government has continued its rationing program. In response, urban farming and intensive vegetable production has greatly expanded. In 2013, there were 97 high-yield urban farms in Havana producing 60,000 tons of vegetables a year.<sup>11</sup> Acknowledging the success of these urban farms, the government has authorized citizens to use vacant lots to produce food and started programs to encourage women and youth participation.<sup>12</sup>

Might the government expand its focus on food and farming? As in previous decades, could the government sponsor a national food and education program? While the state's ability to organize another large-scale project may be questioned, Puerto Rico serves as an example of how farming and agriculture may become a more central part of government policy.<sup>13</sup> Puerto Rico, which has also been forced to import a majority of its food, is now looking to lease its unused land to young farmers and entrepreneurs.

10. Lamar, Joe. "For Cubans, the struggle to supplement meager rations is a consuming obsession." *The Guardian*, 24 April 2015.

11. Thomas, Graeme. *Growing Greener Cities in Latin America and the Caribbean*. Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2014. 11-15.

12. *Ibid.* 14.

13. Charles, Dan. "How Puerto Rico Lost Its Home-Grown Food, But Might Find It Again." *NPR*, 13 May 2017.

14. Loomis, John A. *Revolution of Forms*. 19-20.

Furthermore, in Cuba, a link between education, reform and politics has happened before: In the 1960s, the National Art Schools were intended to bring students from around the country to Havana to study together, for free. The construction of the schools was halted abruptly and the schools were never fully populated. Also in the 1960s, the country launched a national literacy campaign. Tens of thousands of people from around the country traveled (mostly to rural areas) to end illiteracy within one year.<sup>14</sup> And, finally, the Coppelia ice cream network - a state-sponsored project to build socialist ice cream parlors in different cities throughout Cuba that would, above all, gather citizens around inexpensive, Cuban food.

This project continues this story of education, politics, and architecture.





# *The Island the Day After*

*A Brief History of Cuba in Six Chapters*

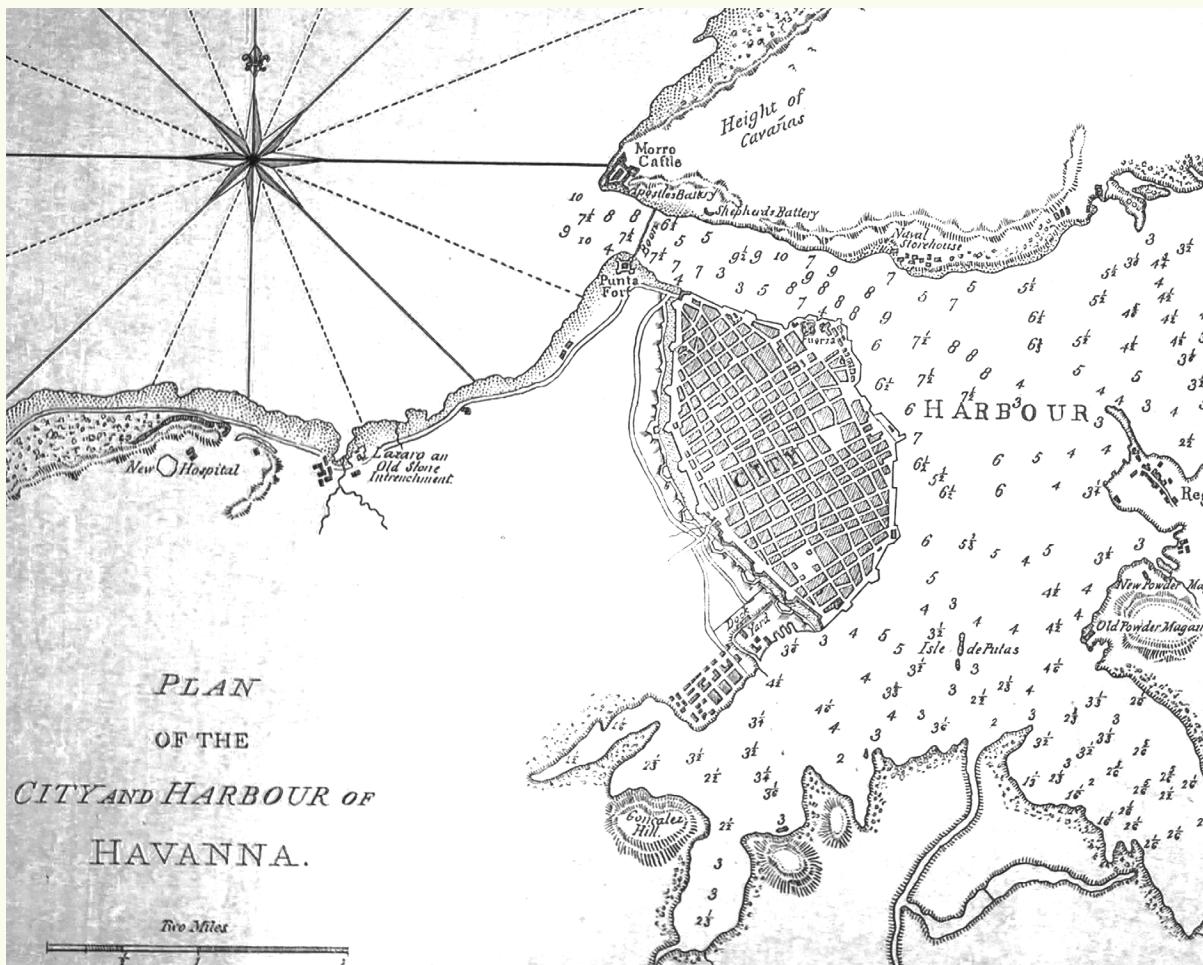




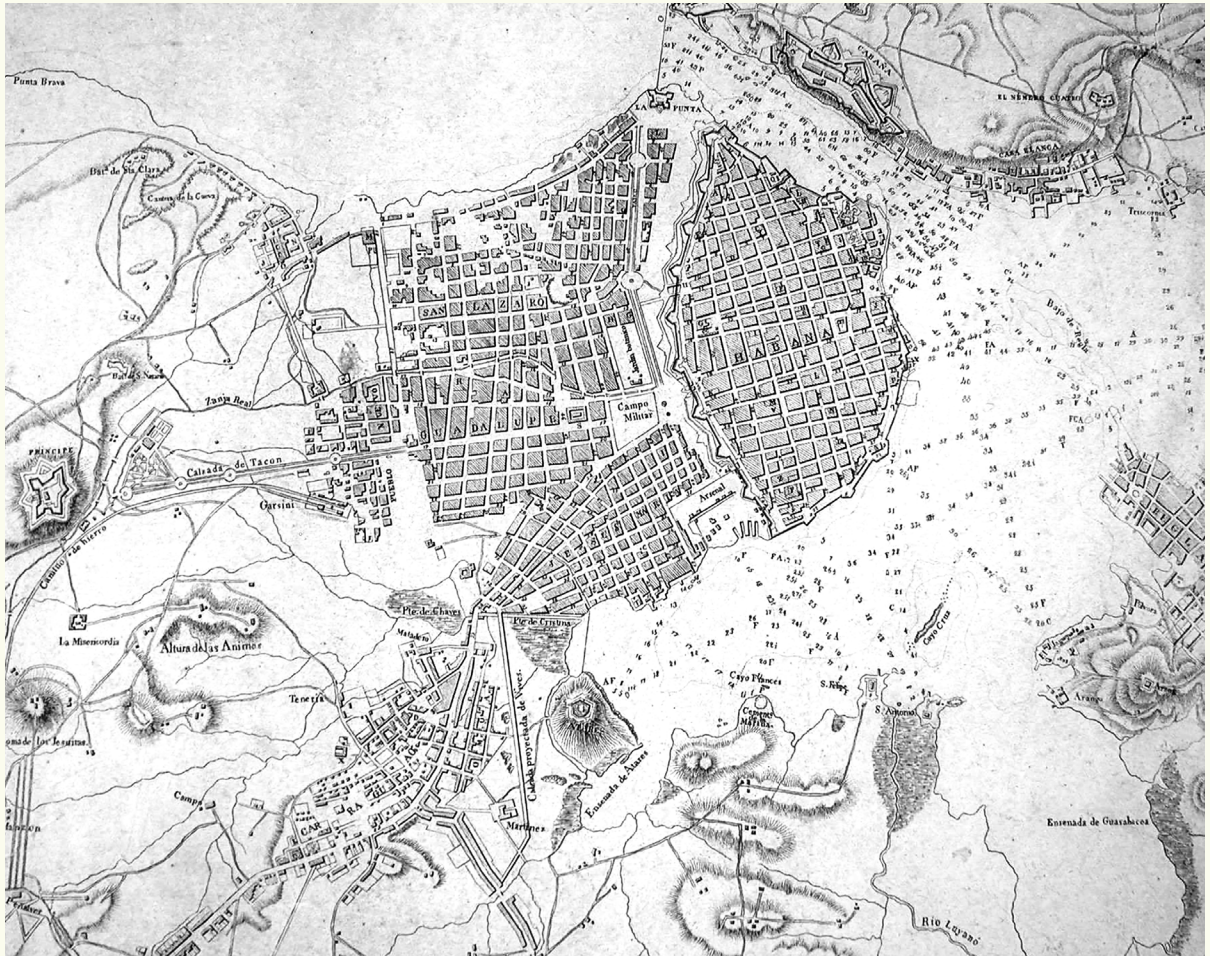
*Chapter 1:*  
*After the Spanish*

***Cuba, just 90 miles from Florida, was once called The Pearl of the Antilles by its first conqueror, Christopher Columbus. That was 500 years ago.***

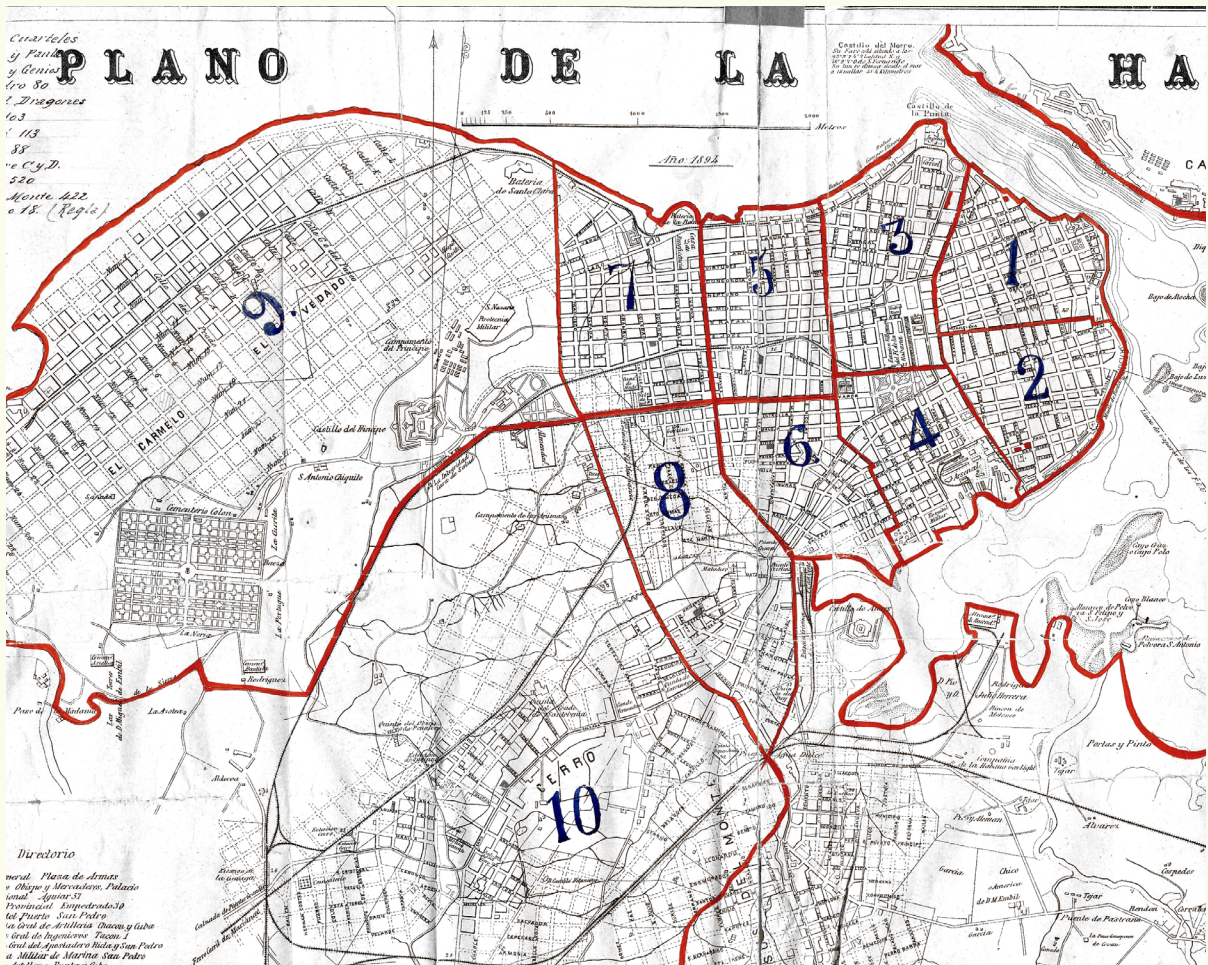




*Havana's protected harbor and its proximity to the US made it a key gateway for trade between the Americas, Africa, and Europe.*

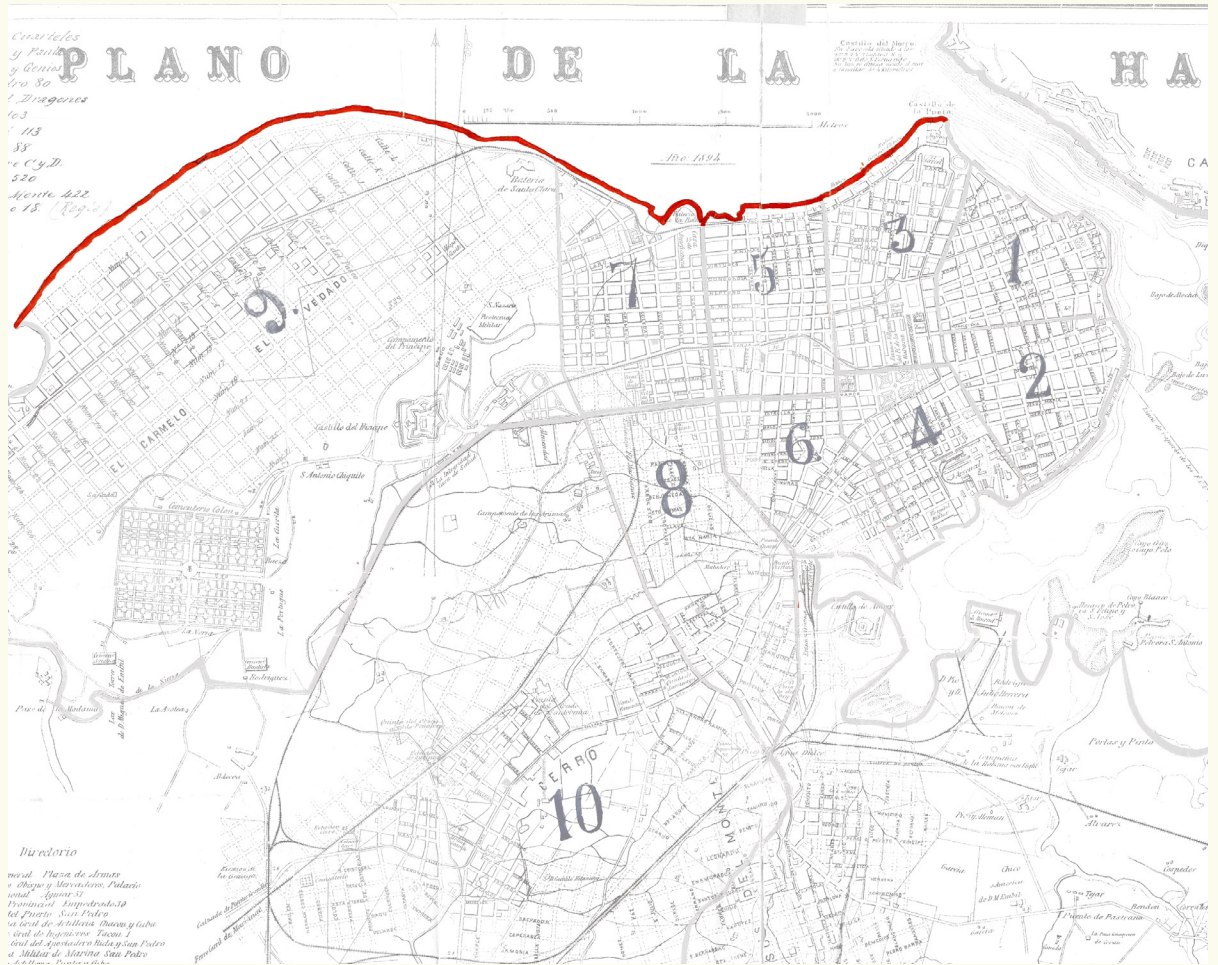


*Eventually pushing out beyond the walls that once protected it, Havana grew west.*



What emerged from this tropical-styled Manifest Destiny was an 8km strip of urban coast running from the mouth of Havana Harbor to the Almendares River.





## *Chapter 2: Build Out*

***Starting in 1901, immediately after Cuba's liberation from the Spanish and while it was still under the loving care of the United States, the Cuban government began a 50-year long project to construct a sea wall along this coast.***





*The wall was billed as a protective measure.*



*It would safeguard the city against dangerous hurricanes and devastating flooding.*





*US sponsorship, US steel, and  
Cuban laborers made it happen.*







*Built in 3 segments from 1901 to 1952, the wall's great gift to the city was flatness. The new space produced between ocean and city was, for a brief moment, unmarked, blank, and open.*





*Yet the construction of this wall also marked an erasure: An erasure of a natural coastline and of homes, schools, sports fields, and more.*

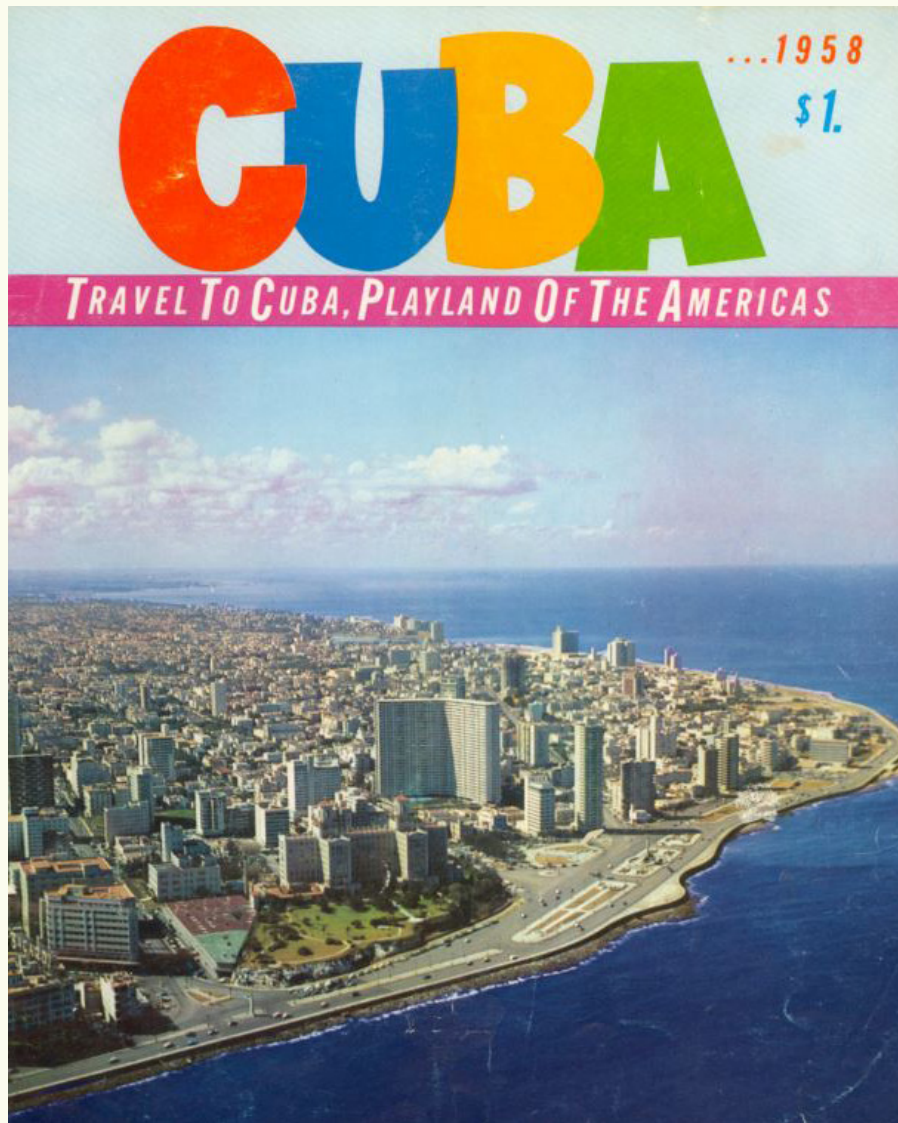
## *Chapter 3: Build Up*

*Fulgencio Batista, President turned dictator, suspended the Constitution in 1952. Under his rule, Cuba became a pleasure island for the rich, the famous, the mafia – an island for beaches, for experiencing the exotic, for play.*





*To house and to hide these luxurious activities, hotels, casinos, and high-rise apartment buildings went up.*



*And, the skyline and the coastline were seized by those who could afford them.*

*Chapter 4:*  
*Revolutionary Re-Staging*

***On January 8, 1959, Che and Fidel marched into Havana. The Revolution promised a new nation. It promised utopia.***







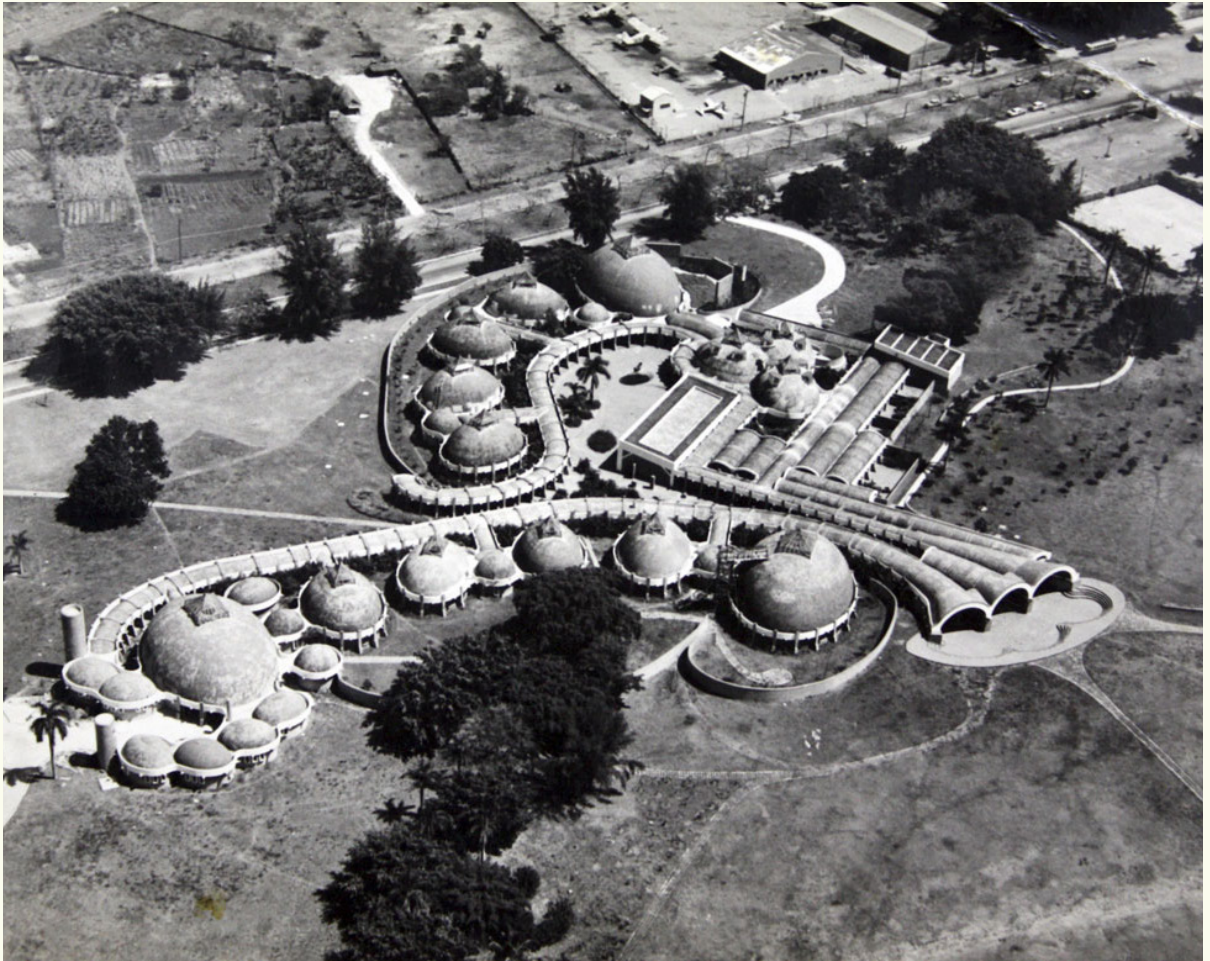
*In the early days and months of the Revolution, icons of previous regimes and economic ideologies were strategically re-staged, re-framed, and re-broadcast to the country and the world.*

*The Havana Hilton became a rebel base.*



*The Copa Cabaret room in the Hotel Riviera was used for press conferences.*





*The Havana Country Club was mocked (Press Corps in tow) and Castro later converted the site into the National Art Schools.*

*Chapter 5:*  
*Contingencies*

*But, every revolution has a creative-half life.*





*The harsh effects of the US Embargo left the country's infrastructure and industry frozen in time.*





*Or, rather, not frozen but melting. And divisions between the wealthy and poor emerged again.*



*Yet, if we think of Havana's history as a series of land-grabs, from one regime to the next, the current instantiation of this trend is a sort of take back and take over its people. In everyday life, the very same monuments Castro once re-staged have been transformed into new public spaces that are regular parts of daily life. People check Facebook outside the site of the 1967 Parisian May Salon.*



*Or video chat on the steps of the former Havana Hilton.*





*Or pack the Anti-Imperialist Platform, a protest space built at the feet of the US Embassy, for a Major Lazer and Diplo show. Protest plaza becomes dance party.*

*Chapter 6:  
Re-Staging*

***Belmont Freeman wrote: Havana's greatest asset is the very fact that the city recused itself from the past half century of capitalist development.***





*In the city, there is no sprawl. No billboards. No superhighways. No GPS.  
While the merits of this pre-Y2K lifestyle can be debated, out of it has  
emerged a new crisis.*





*Cuba now imports 80% of its food and food shortages are common.*



*Often the most desirable produce ends up in private restaurants and hotels.*

Producto	Percepción	Precio	Inicio	Vence
ARROZ NOIR 2300g X D		1.25	1-2-13	28-2-13
ARROZ ADO 920g X D		1.80	1-2-13	28-2-13
AZUCAR Q7000 920g X D		0.20	1-2-13	28-2-13
AZUCAR REFINO 920g X D		0.30	1-2-13	28-2-13
leche P/LE 1 bnl x M/NO		1.50	1-2-13	28-2-13
leche P/DE 1kg X D/H		2.50	30-1-13	28-2-13
Milles 2702 x C		0.80	1-2-13	28-2-13
Acete	250 ML X CONS	0.20	1-2-13	28-2-13
che Polvo	2 bols x CONS	1.25	12-2-13	11-3-13
FOROZ	1 X CONS		1-2-13	28-2-13
	1-2 3 4 5 6	3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13		
SAL A	1 bols 2 bols 3 bols		5 bols 6 Bols	
CORR: Diciem bre, ENERO, FEBRERO				
	1 x CONS. ota	4.00	22-1-13	21-2-13
MAIS	33 x D-6 x M/NO	0.25	28-1-13	27-2-13
leche P/LE 1 bnl x M/NO		2.50	1-2-13	28-2-13

4  
CONTROL DE ENTREGAS PRODUCTOS POR DIETA MERCAL

	Cam	PO	Leche	Leche	Vandas
	1	2	3	4	5
	1	2	3	4	5
	1	2	3	4	5
	1	2	3	4	5

PRODUCTOS	ENTREGA MES DE:	
	ENERO	FEBRERO
Arroz	6500 2760	
Granos		
Aceto	250	250
Azúcar R.	250	
Azúcar C.	250	
Compota		
J. Baño		
J. Lavar		

While government ration books help provide rice, beans, and sugar, they don't cover fruits and vegetables.

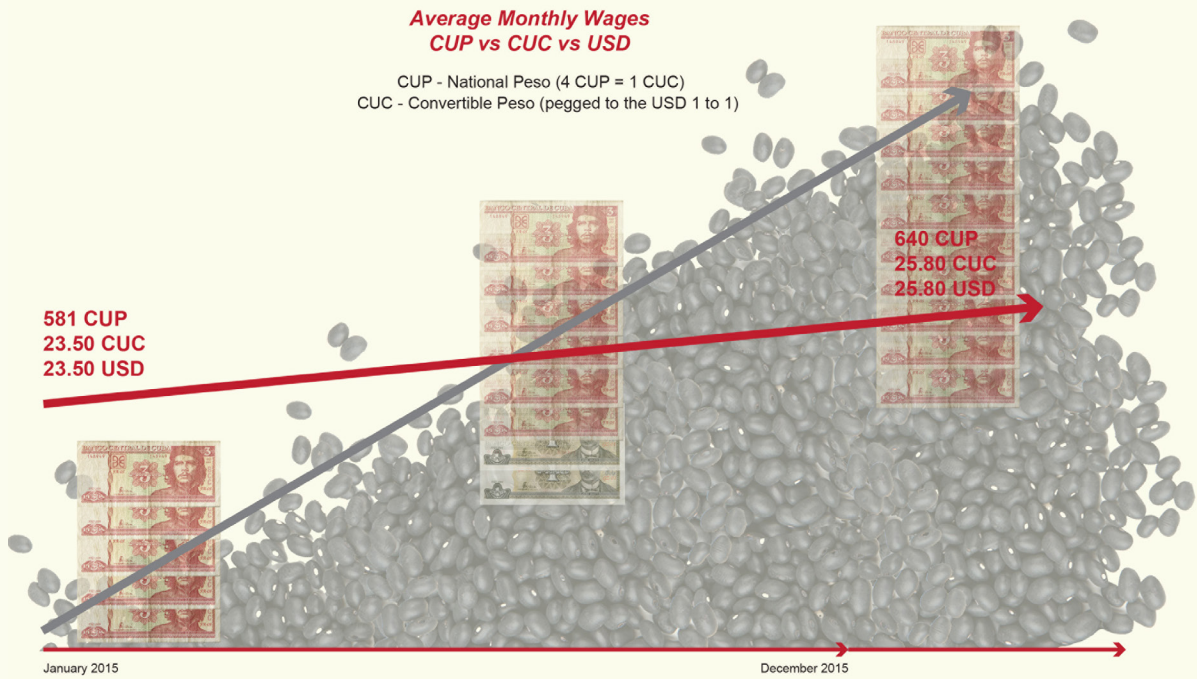
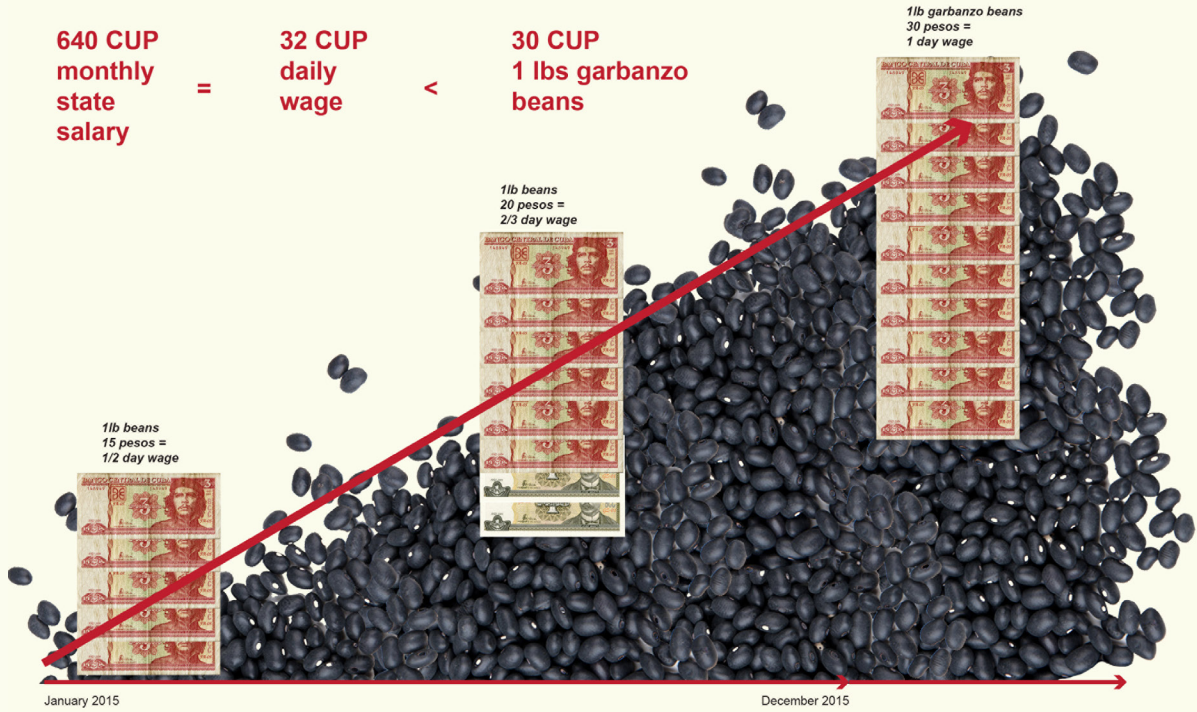
*Yoani Sanchez, a Cuban dissident blogger, reports:*

In recent months consumers have suffered a significant increase in the cost of agricultural products. If the year started with a pound of black beans costing between 12 and 15 Cuban pesos, at the close of December the price varied between 15 and 20 pesos – the wages of an entire working day – reaching the staggering price of 30 pesos in the case of garbanzo beans.

Meanwhile, the average monthly wages in the country only grew from 581 to 640 Cuban pesos (roughly \$25 US), a symbolic increase which, expressed in a worker's purchasing power, equals about three more pounds of beans a month.

“I have to earn my beans,” says a teacher, as he justifies dedicating his workday to cooking pork, along with a portion of “Moors and Christians” – as we call black beans and rice – that he sells illegally to the workers at a hospital. Because yes, our lives revolve, rise and fall around those delicious little bits that we long to put on our plates. Expensive and tasty, they are the best indicator of the General's failure.









*To combat this growing food crisis, a micro-food and farming revolution has begun in Havana. Urban farms have spread throughout rooftops, empty building lots, and neglected government land.*

*In 2002, 90% of Havana's fresh produce came from all organic local urban farms and gardens.*

# *A New Hope*

*In response to this trend, the Cuban government launched a new national project.*

*There was one goal: a food independent Cuba.*







*The site was strategic: The Hotel Riviera and its adjacent blocks along the Malecón seawall.*

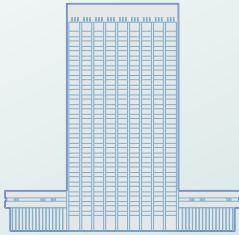
*To meet this goal, a new generation of farmers had to be educated and housed.*



## *A Look Back: Building Up the Coast*

The construction of the Malecón seawall allowed for a build-up of the coastline. Hotels, private apartment buildings, and casinos became prominent features of the Havana coastline. This valuable waterfront land was in large part privatized and access from the city was limited by perimeter walls and parking lots supporting and “protecting” the hotel properties.





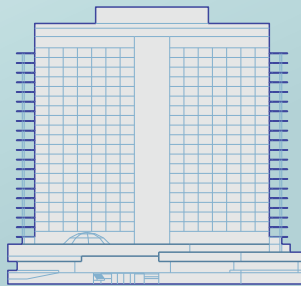
Hermanos Ameijeiras Hospital  
1950s-1966



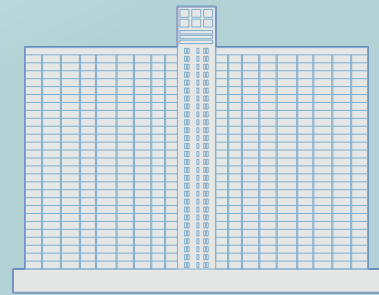
Hotel Nacional de Cuba  
1930



Edificio Someillan  
1957



Habana Libre  
1958



Edificio FOCSA  
1956



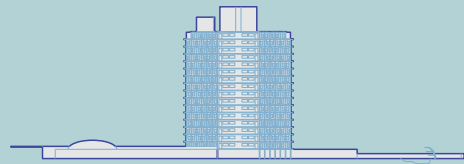
US Embassy  
1953



Edificio Seguro Medico  
1958



Edificio Atlantico  
2000-07



Hotel Riviera  
1957



### ***Precedent: Re-Staging the Country Club***

The National Art Schools, commissioned by Castro in the early days of the Revolution, were built surrounding the former Havana Country Club. Prior to the construction of the Art Schools, this land was private and gated.

This site demonstrates a circulation and transformation of land for differing modes of production: from farmland to a pristine, manicured golf lawn, to a site of art production and intellectual exchange.



Detail: Golf Ground

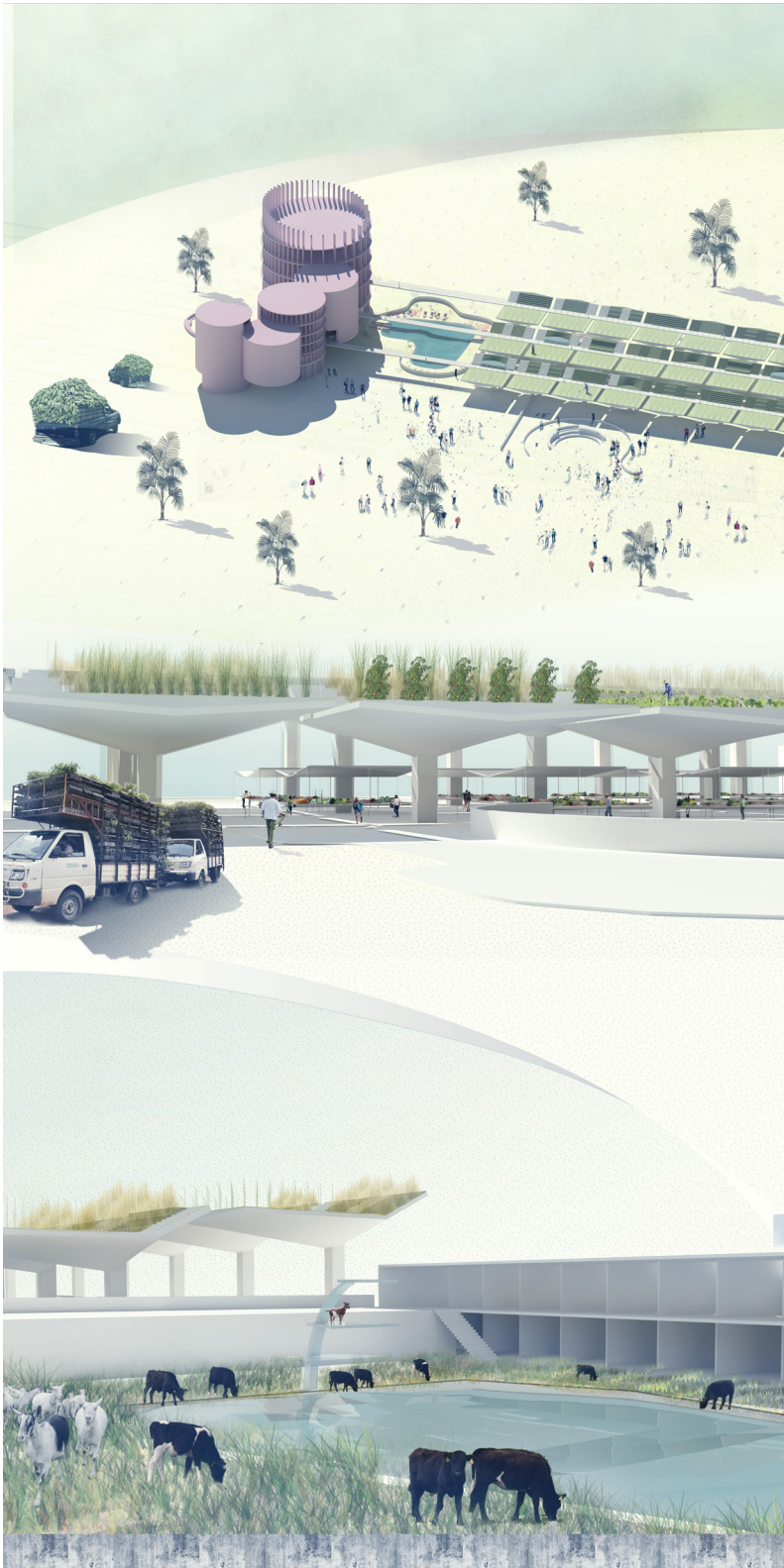


Detail: Agricultural ground





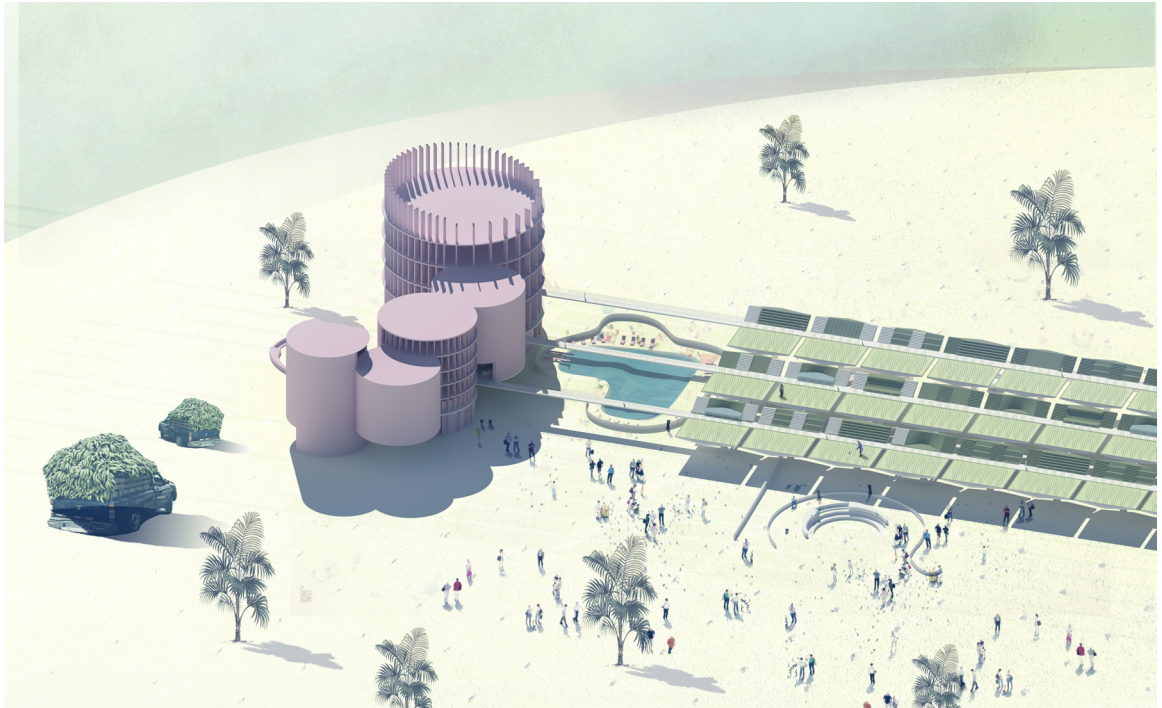
Detail: Grazing ground



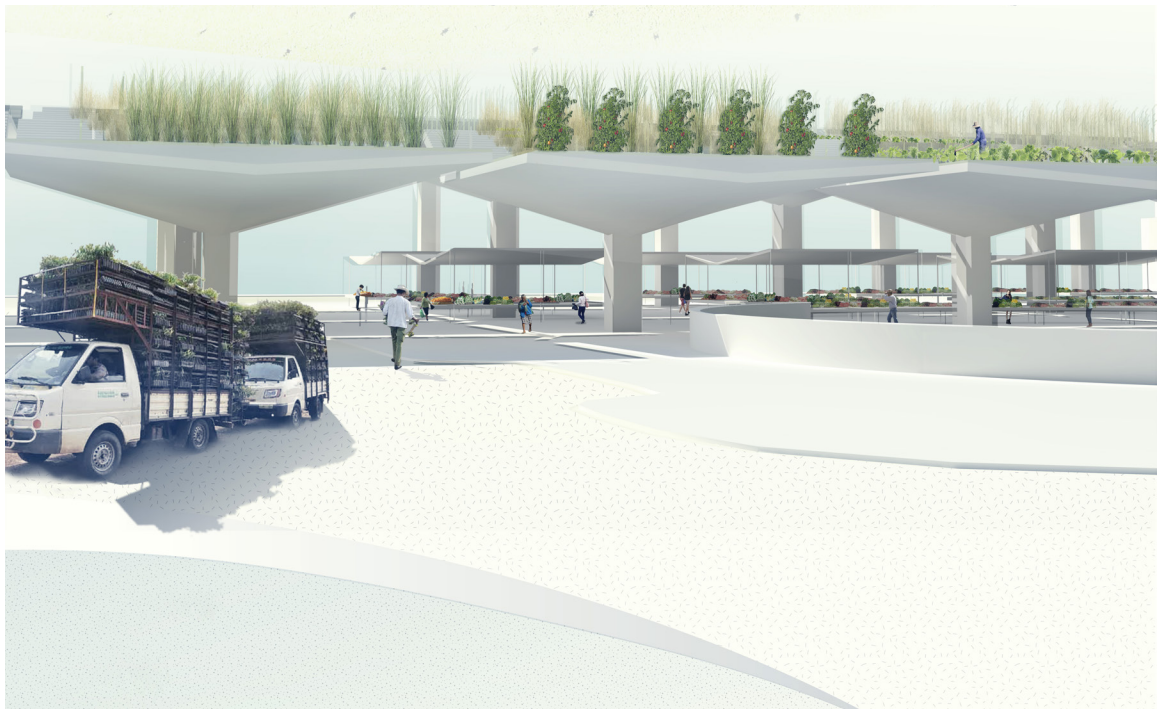
## ***The Next Chapter: Re-Staging the Malecón***

As with the Art Schools and other key political sites in Havana (such as the Hilton Hotel and US Embassy area), this project seeks to re-stage the grounds of the Hotel Riviera and its surrounding blocks. Three programs are added to the site:

1. Farm school (new construction)
2. Urban farm and market (built surrounding an abandon pool and water-park)
3. Student and animal housing (inhabiting the Hotel Riviera hotel rooms and grounds)



Detail: Aerial of school and market

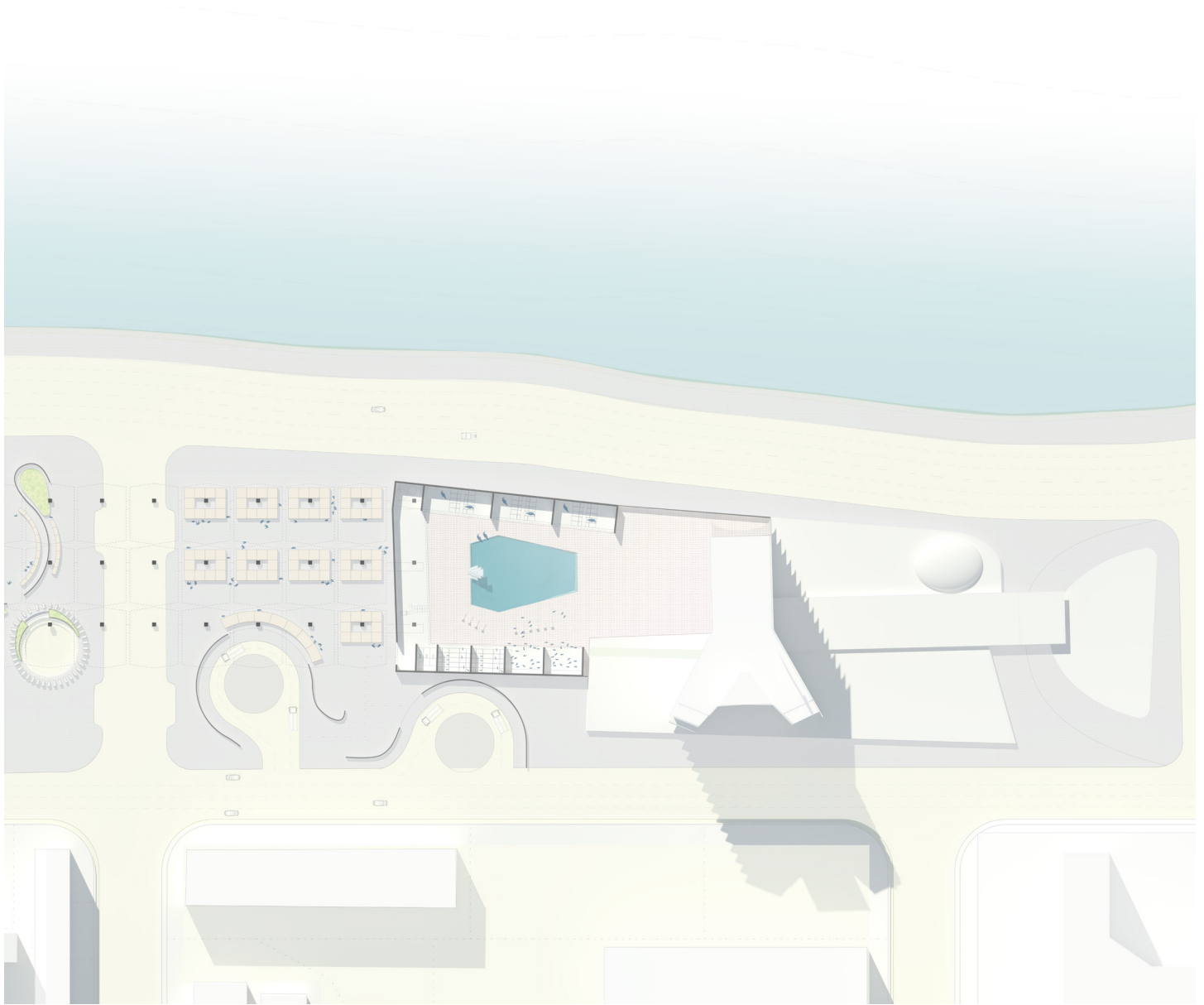


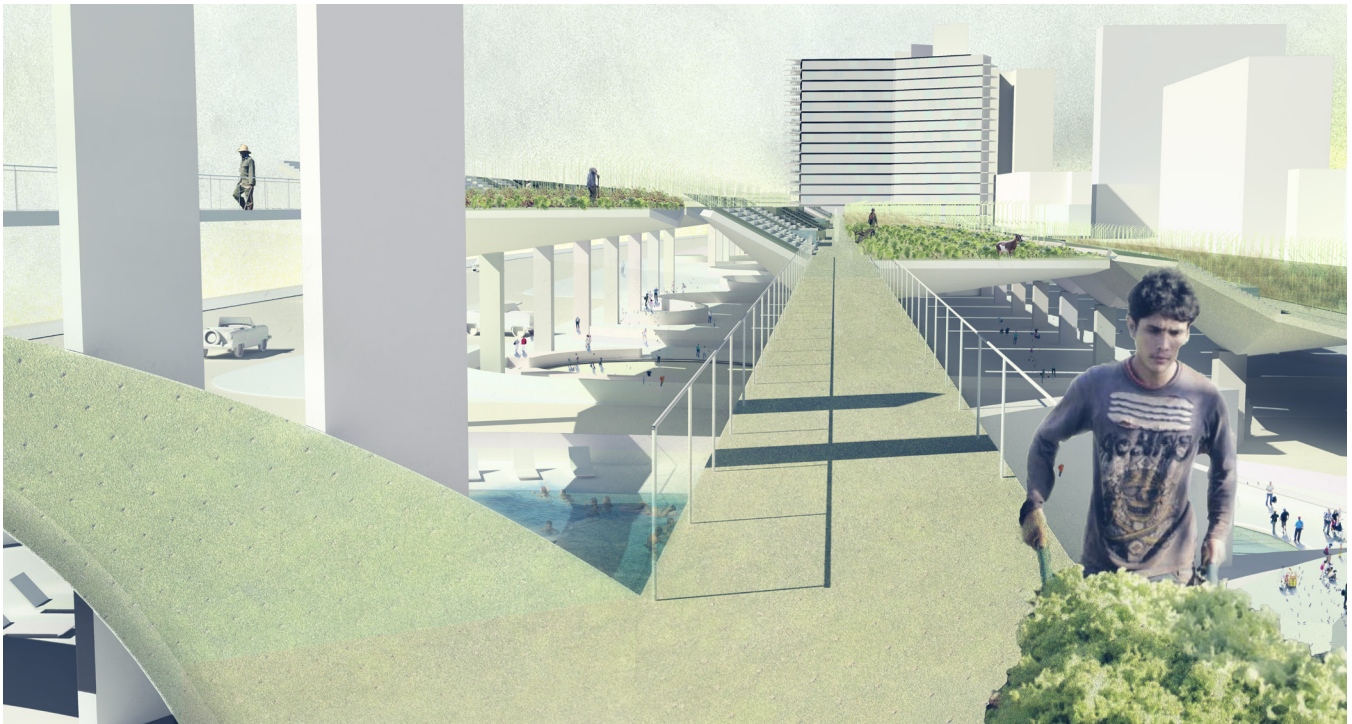
Detail: Entry to market from city



### *The Site*

This project experiments with three key attitudes towards architecture as a site of politics: augmentation through additional construction, erasure of buildings in order to re-write history, and inhabitation of a building in order to reuse its infrastructure while simultaneously changing its function and image. The project is hopeful for a new form of urban collectivity as well as sites of production.



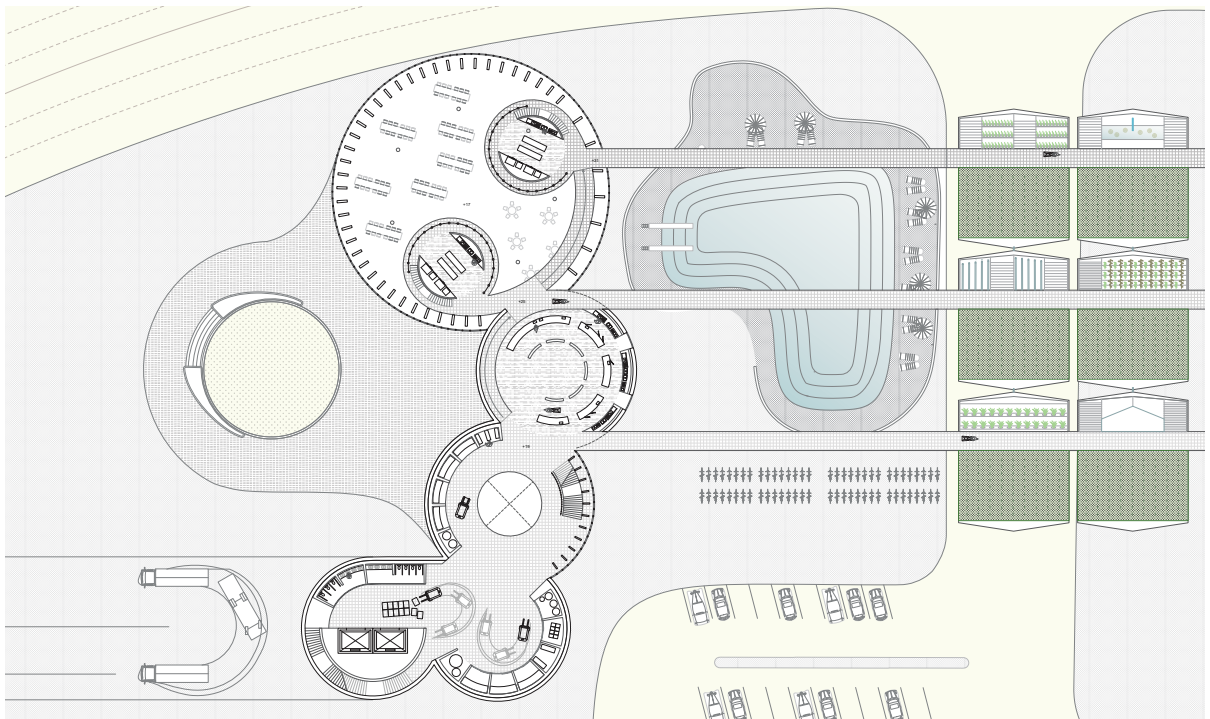


View from school towards farm and housing

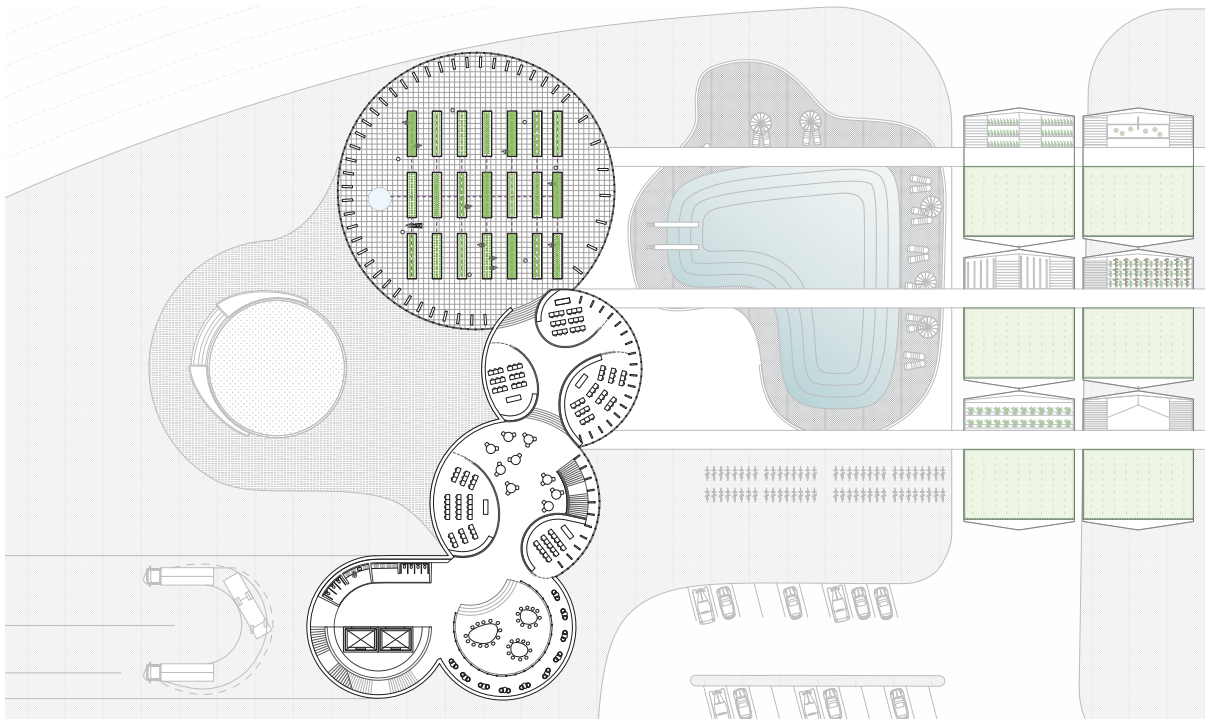
## *The School*

Situated on the west side of the site, the school is a new construction. It replaces an existing but decrepit recreation center. The school preserves an existing pool on the site and opens it up to the public.

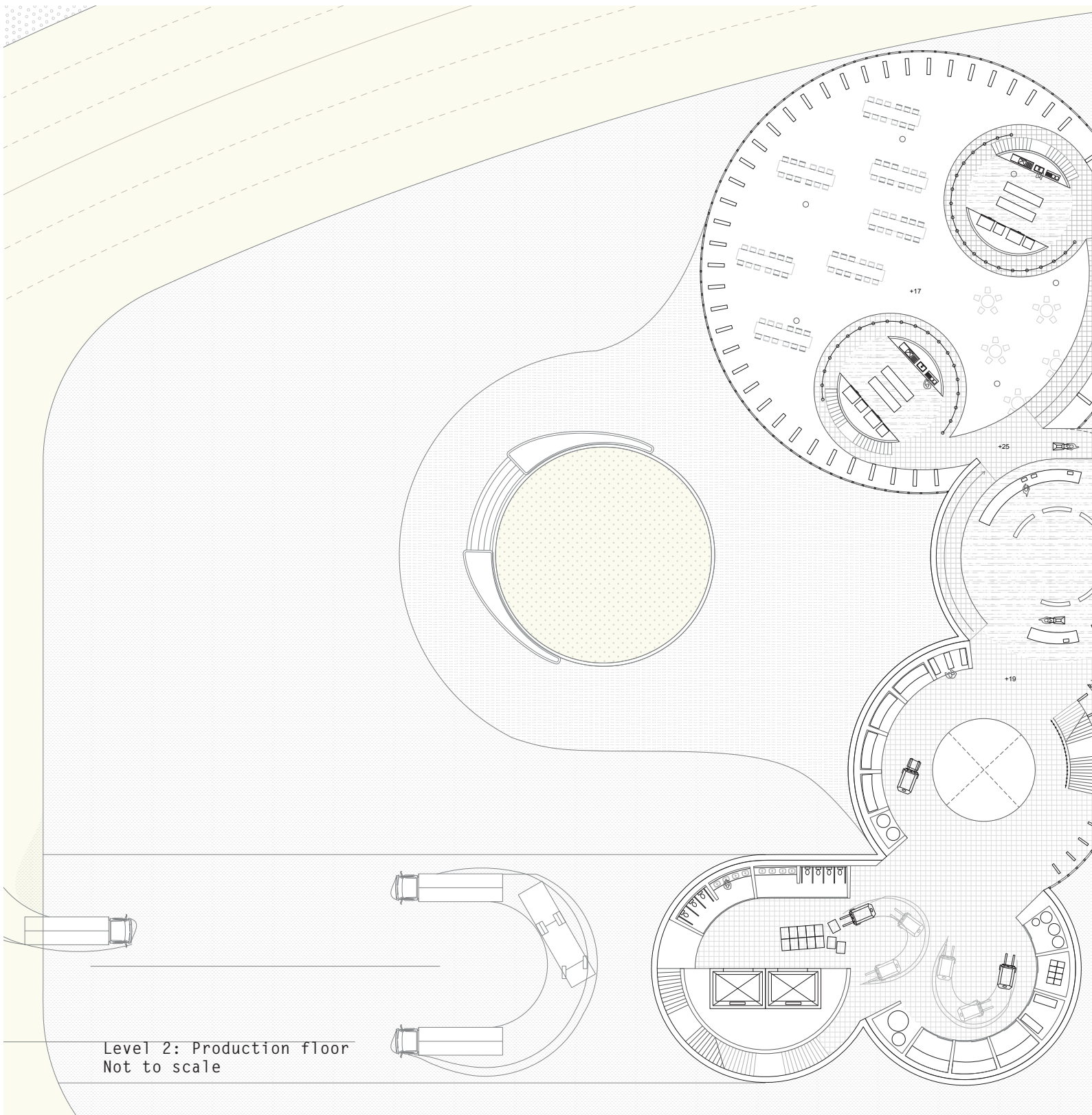
The students grow and cultivate the farm land and also learn about organic farming and food sustainability practices. Food can be brought directly into the school on the second floor. This floor works as a production floor – produce can be cooked, stored, processed and transported. Above this production floor are classroom spaces that learn from the spatial and formal operations of the unfinished National Arts Schools.



Level 2

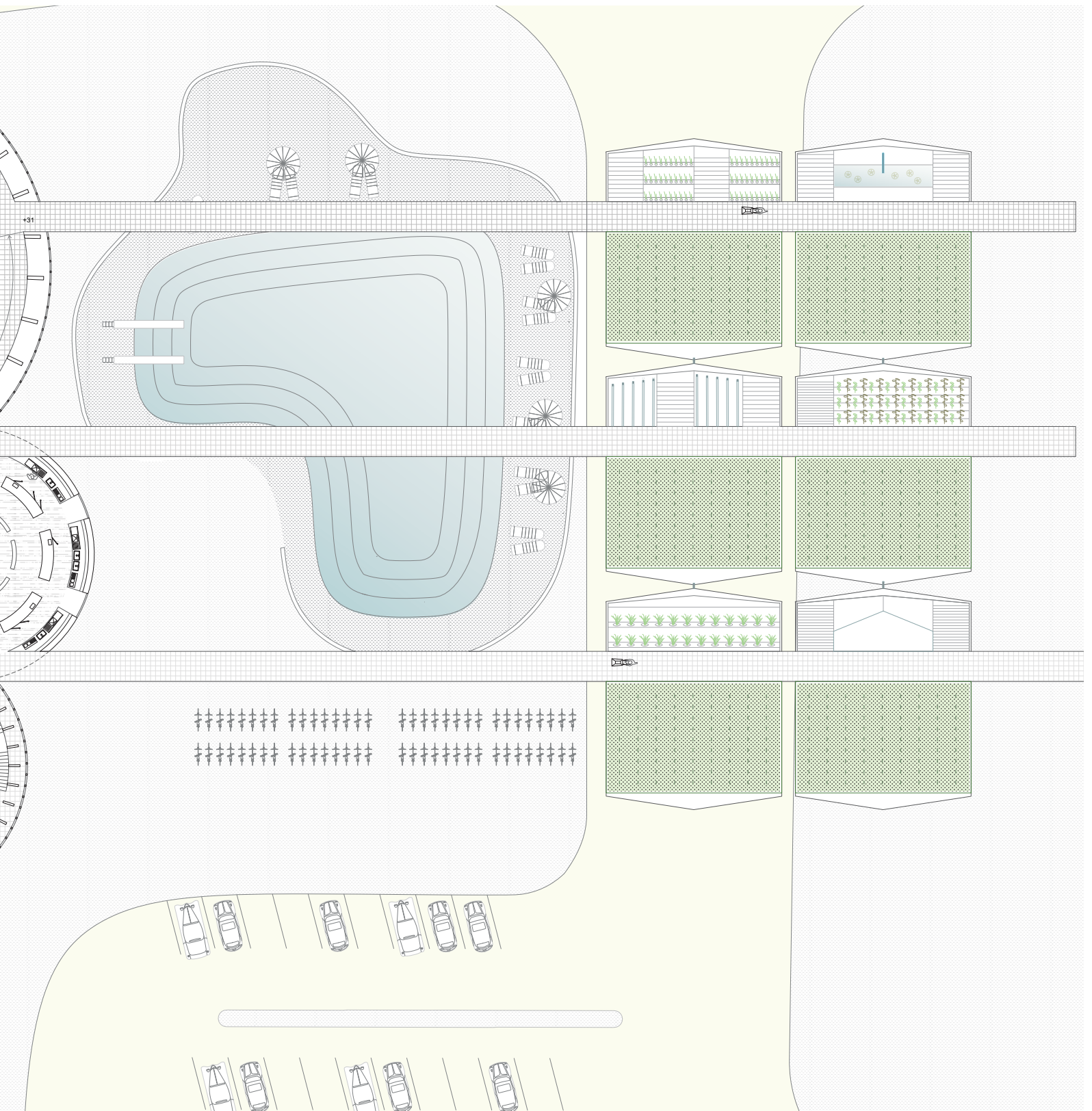


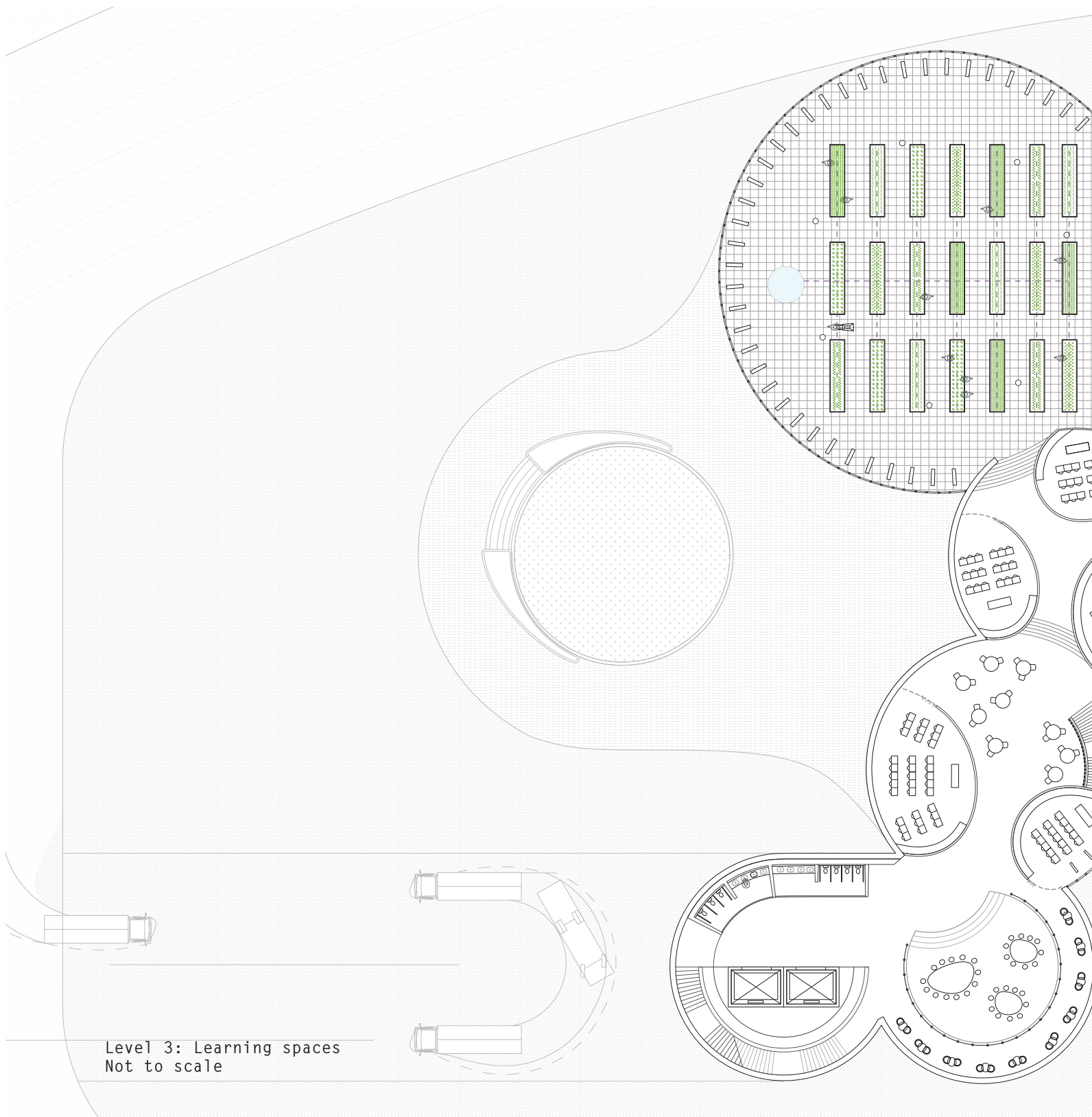
Level 3



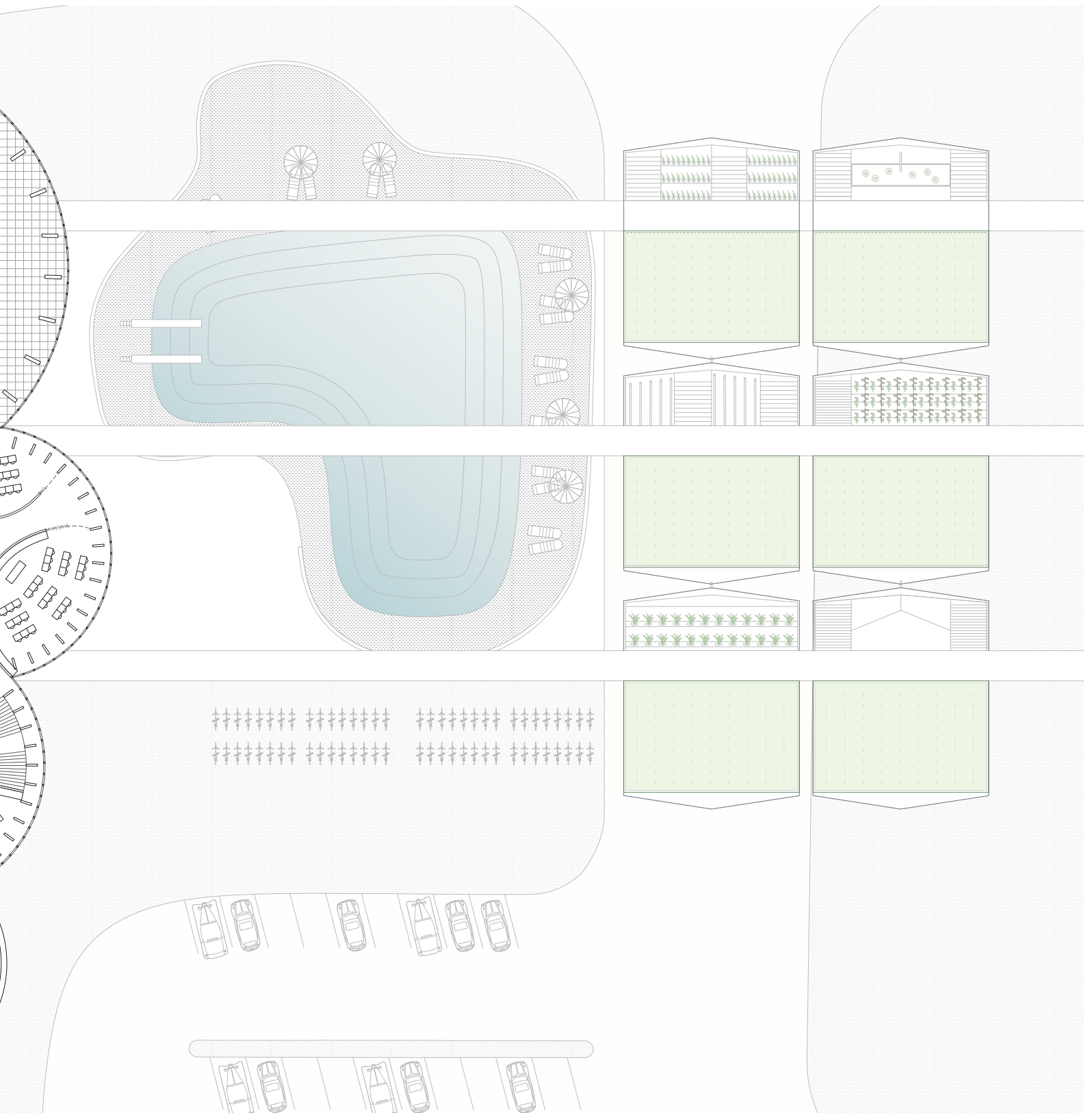
Level 2: Production floor  
Not to scale







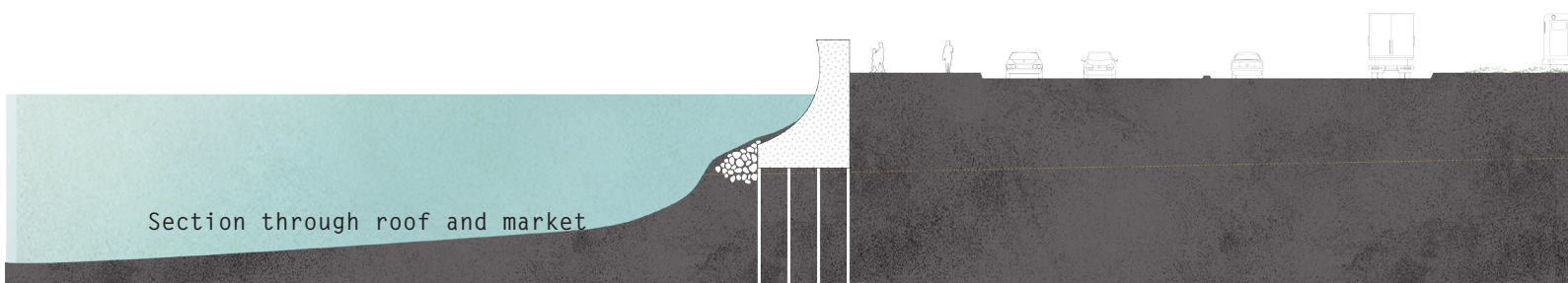
Level 3: Learning spaces  
Not to scale

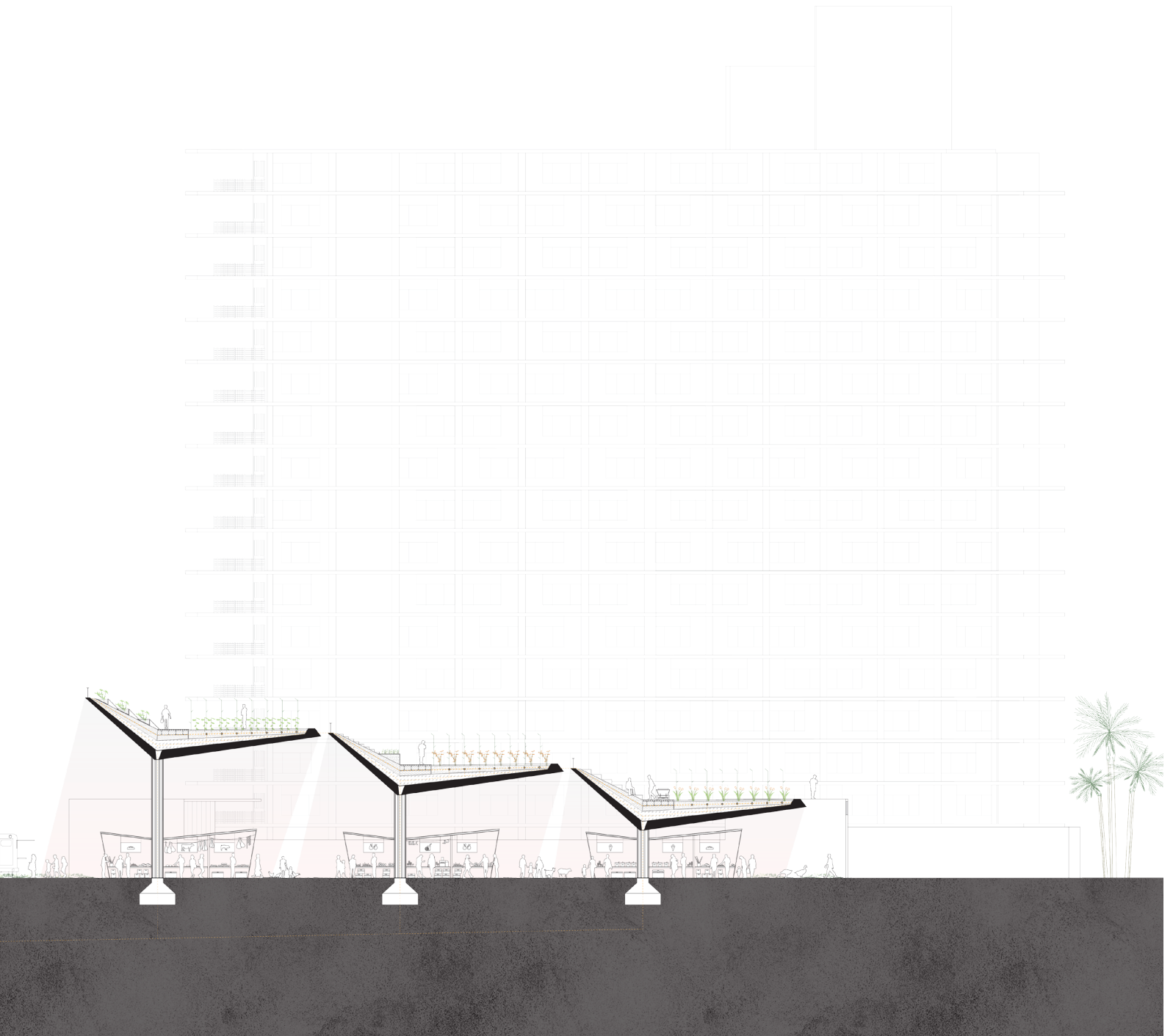


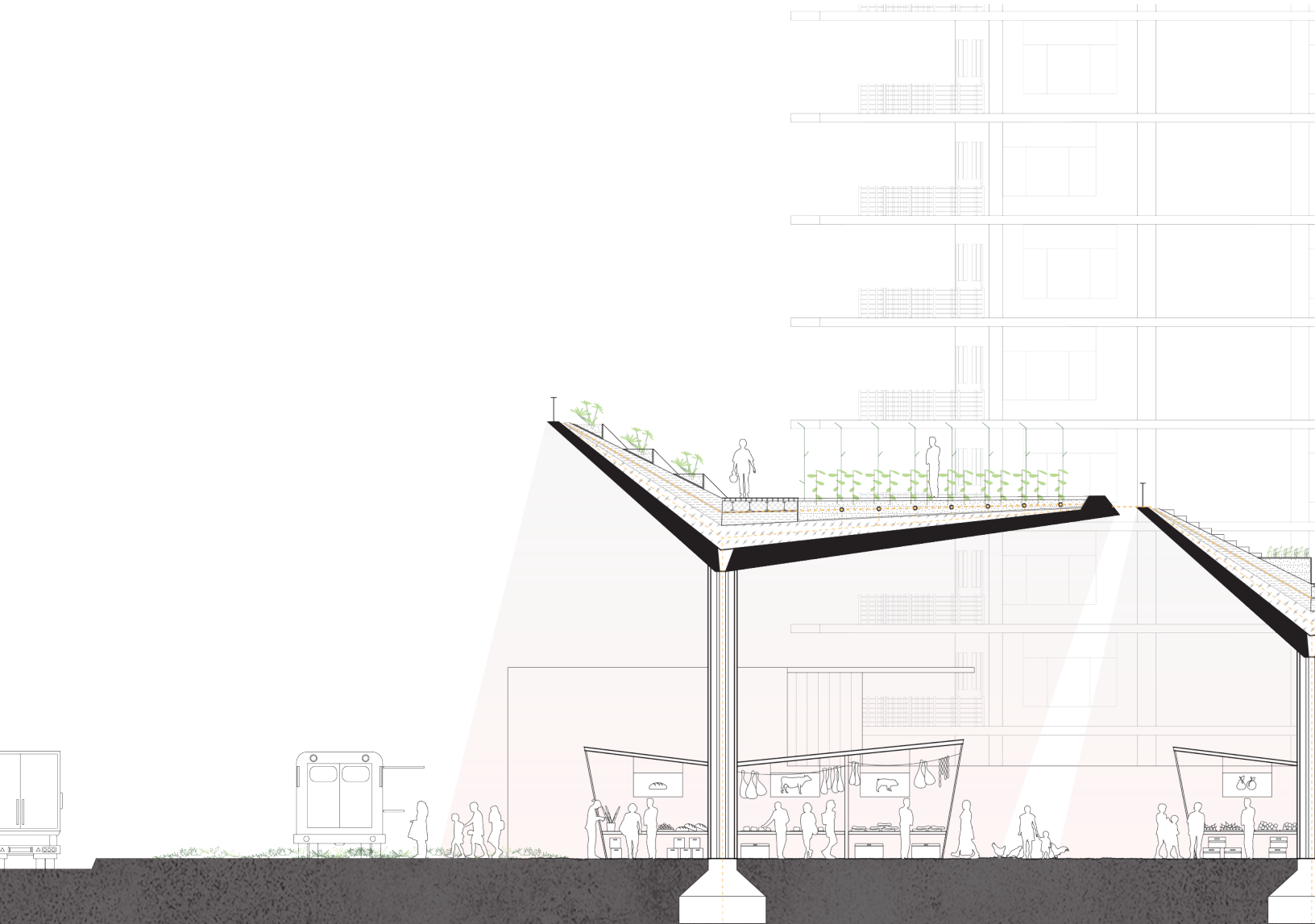
## *Doubling the Ground*

Spanning one large city block, the elevated urban farm grows food that can be sold in the open air market below or distributed into the city. This produces two grounds: one agricultural and one public.

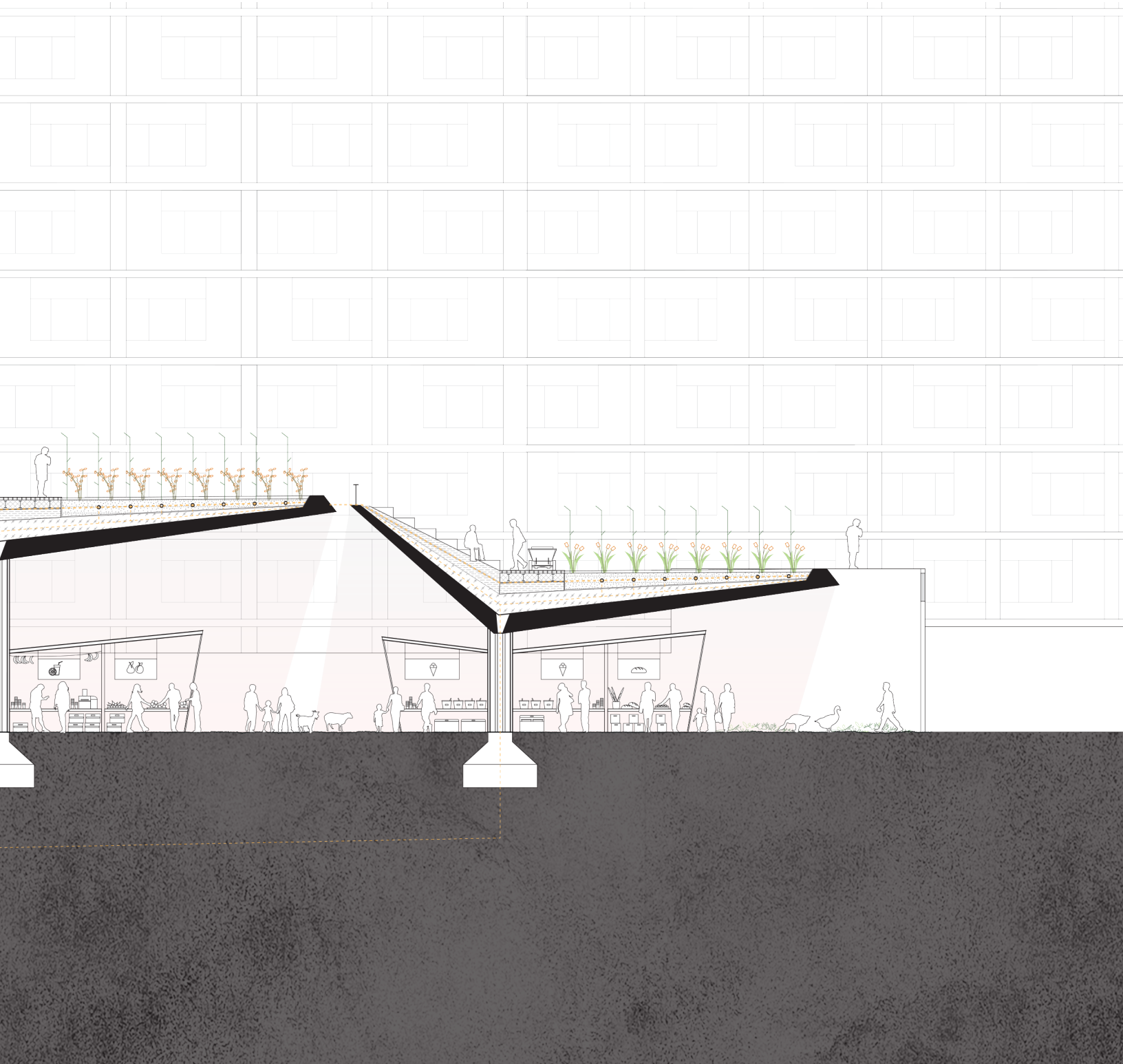
By moving the production ground up, pedestrian access from the city is made more open. The walls that formerly surrounded the pools and water-park are removed so the market can takeover the entire urban block. In Havana, the soil is depleted so urban farmers already rely on raised beds and roof gardens. This strategy acknowledges the ground can be left open to the public because it cannot be transformed into viable agricultural land.

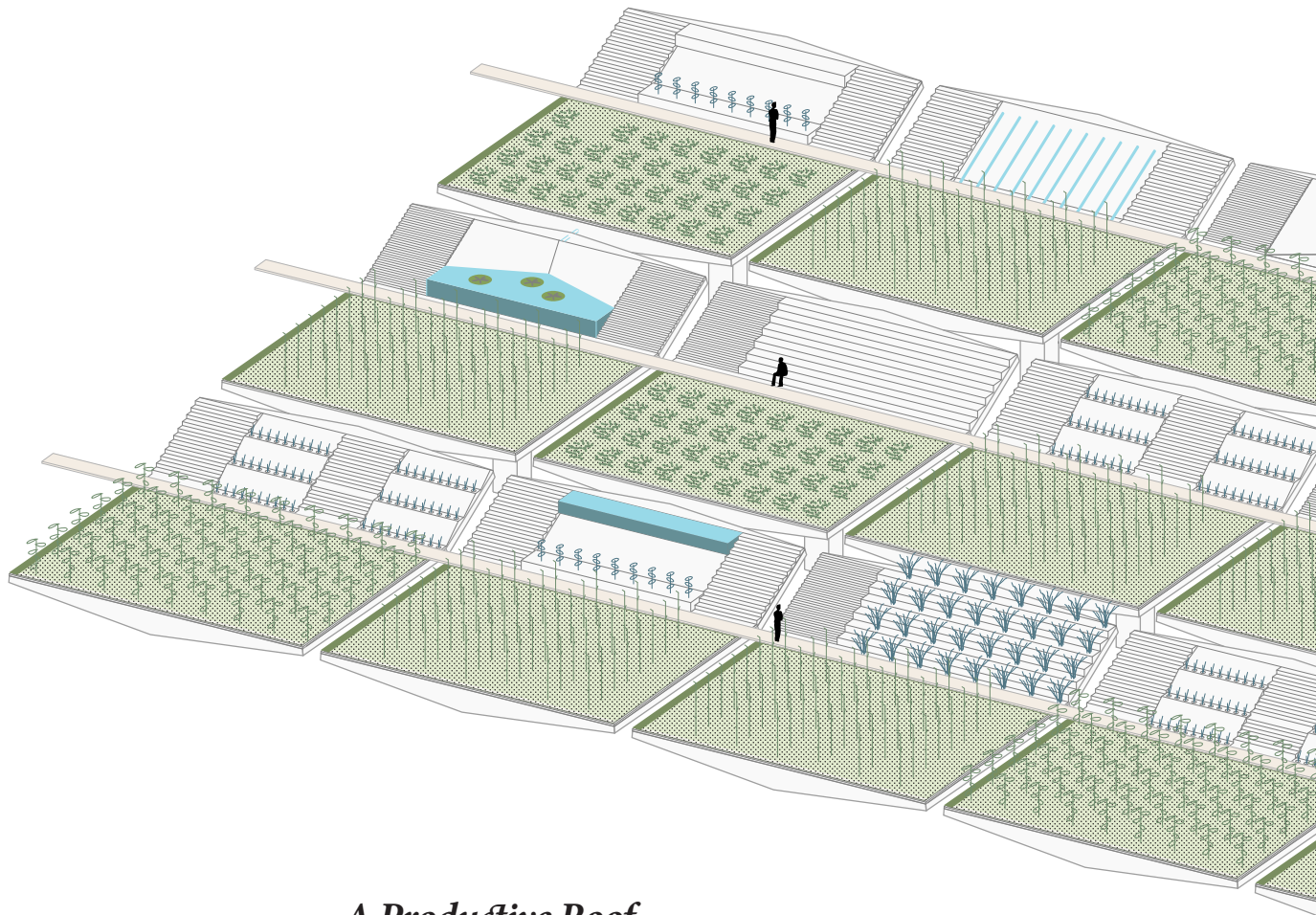






Detail: Farm and market

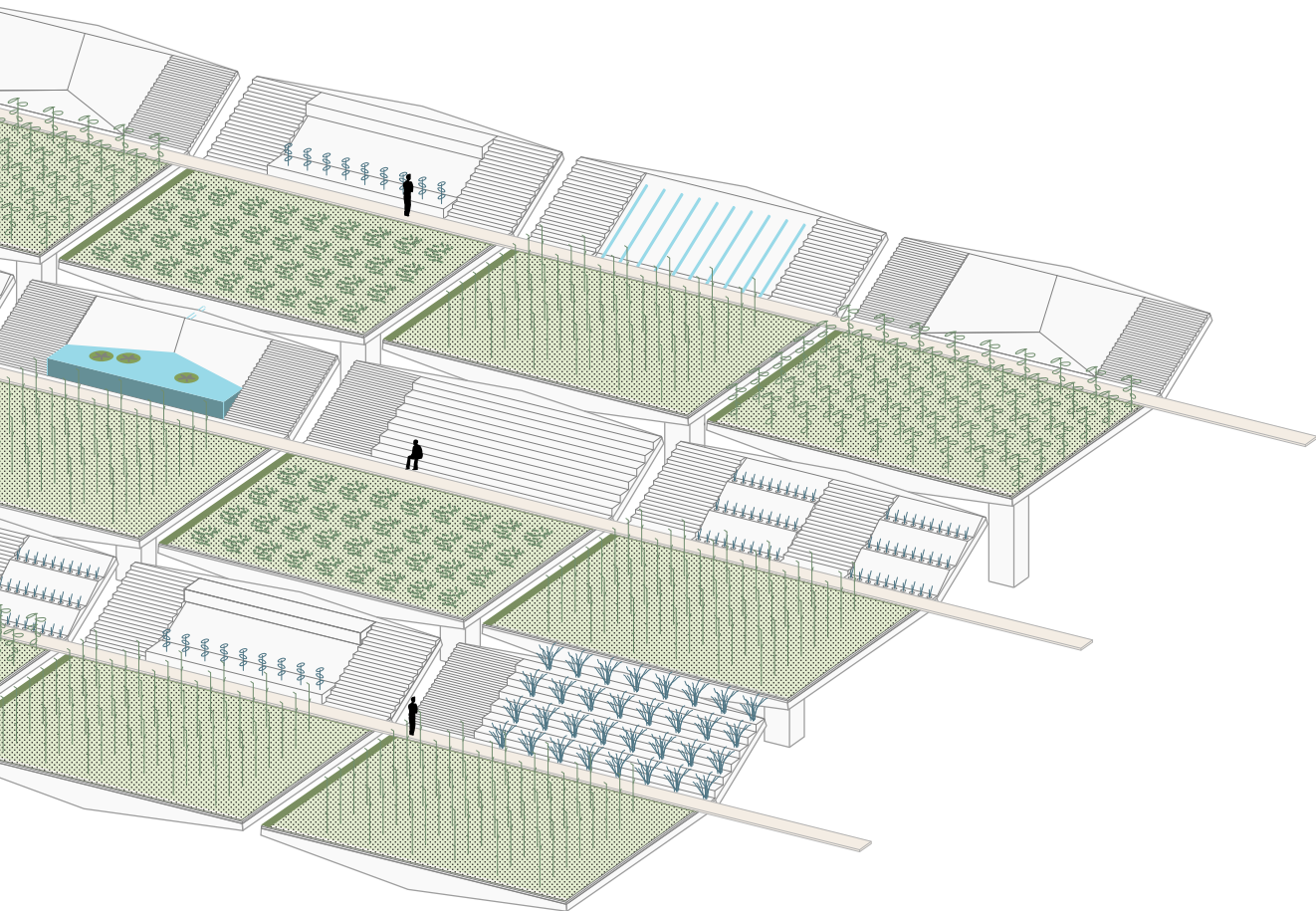


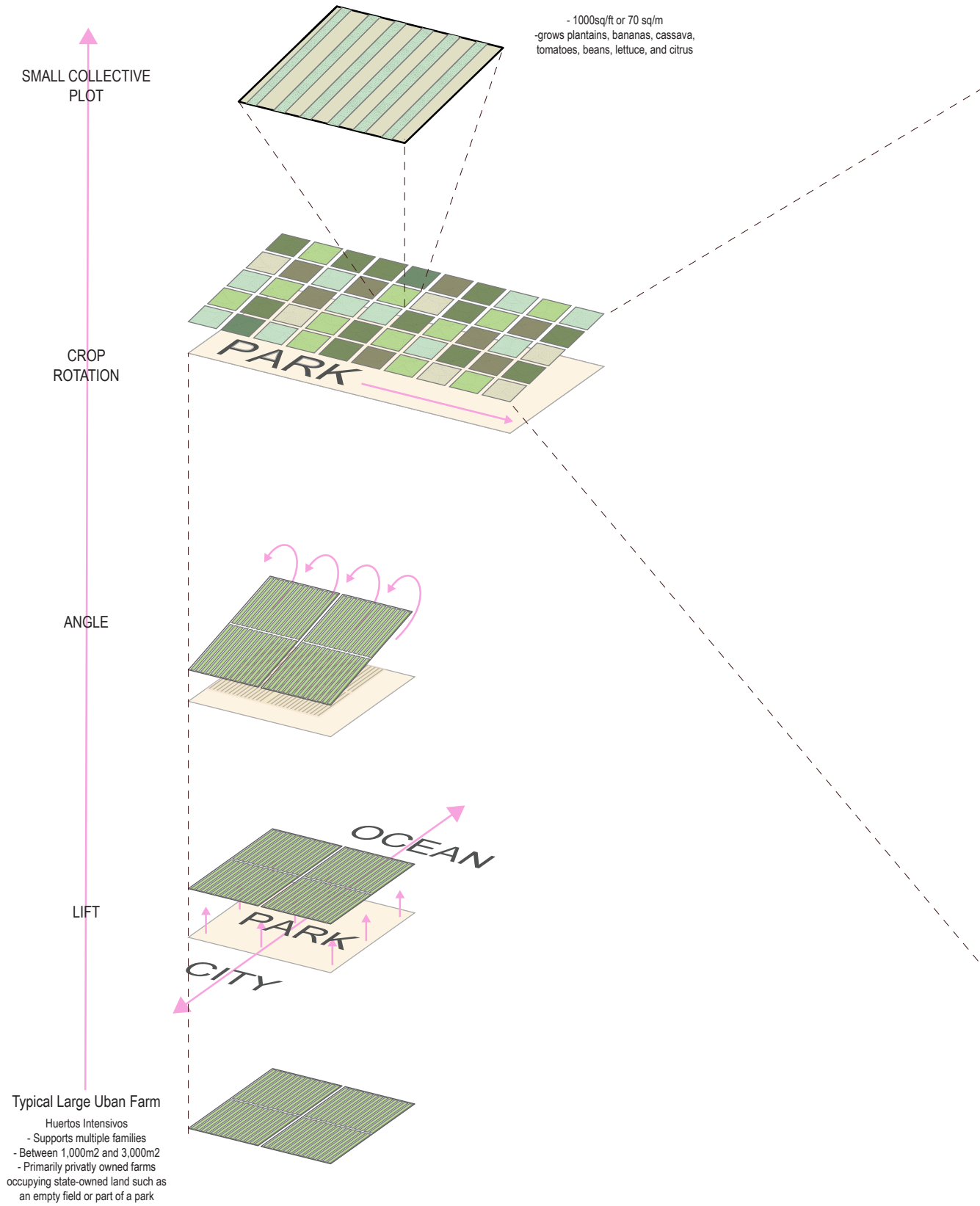


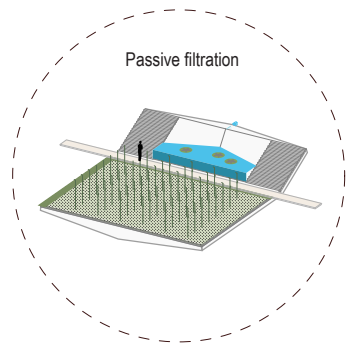
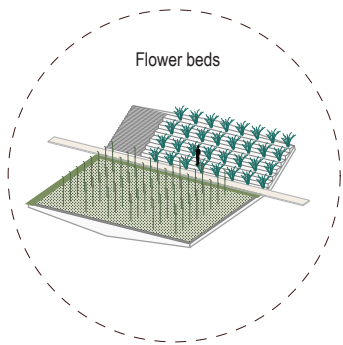
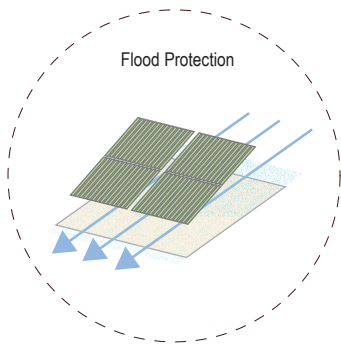
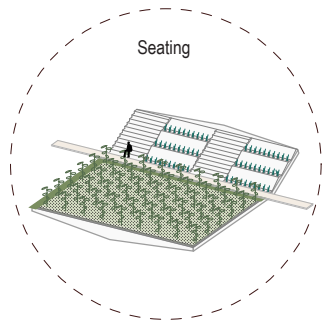
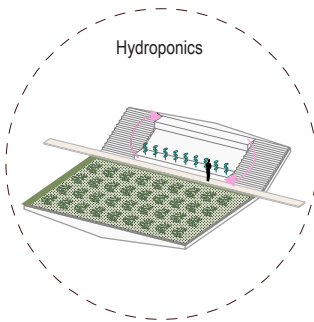
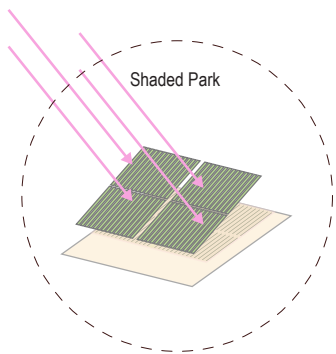
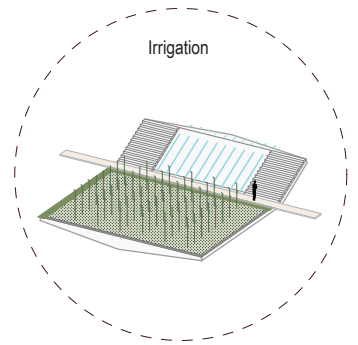
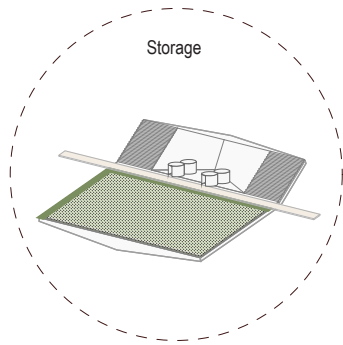
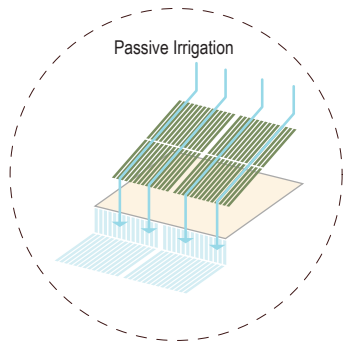
### *A Productive Roof*

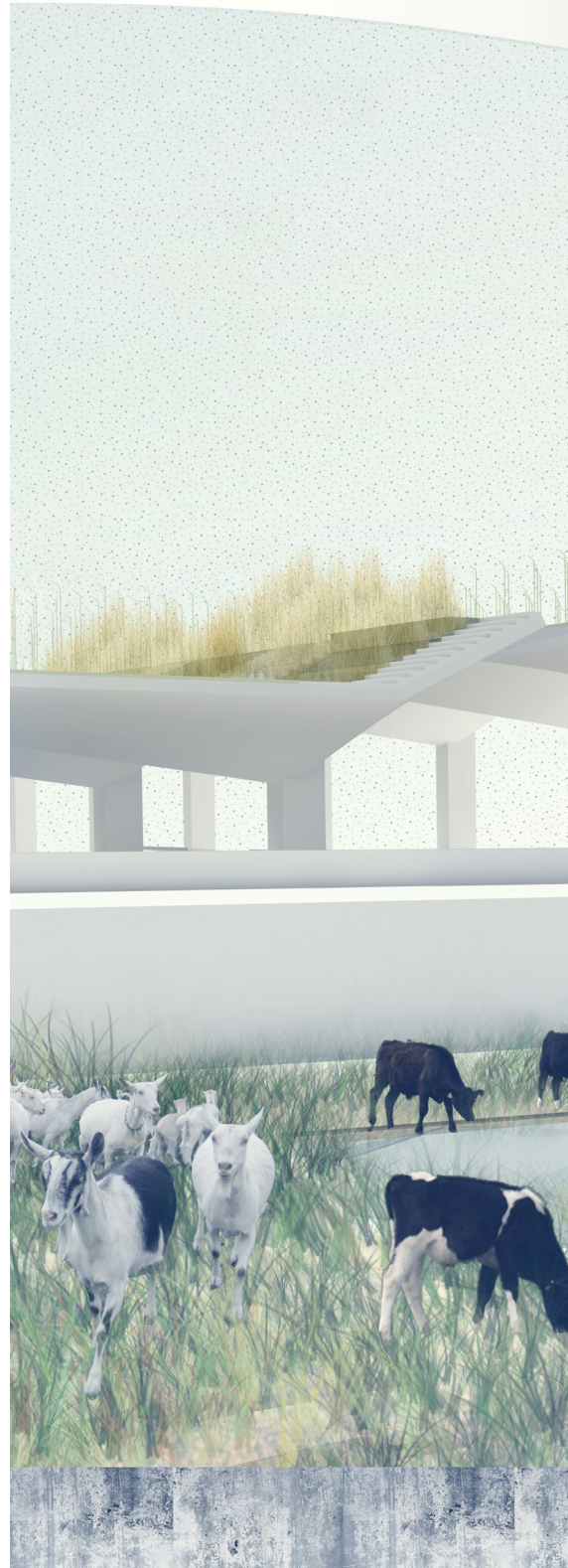
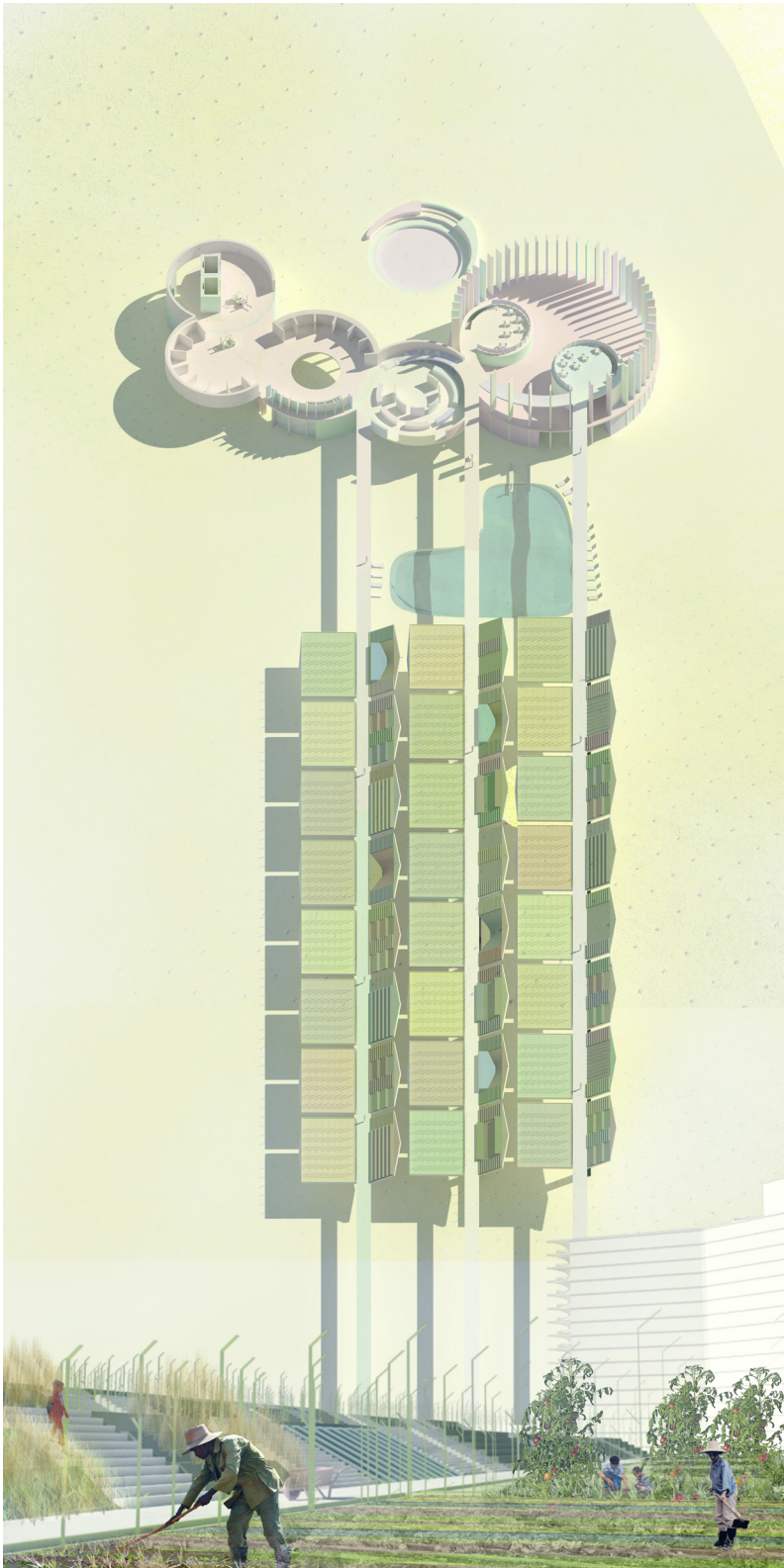
The umbrella roof structure accommodates multiple types of productive land for growing fruits and vegetables. Each umbrella is a hyper, a structural typology that is suited for distributed load such as soil (opposed to point load). The hyper can be built with ruled surfaces and therefore lends itself to building techniques and methods already known in Havana. The top surface of each umbrella is comprised of a flat section for rows of crops as well as an angled section that can house various programs, including storage and seating.

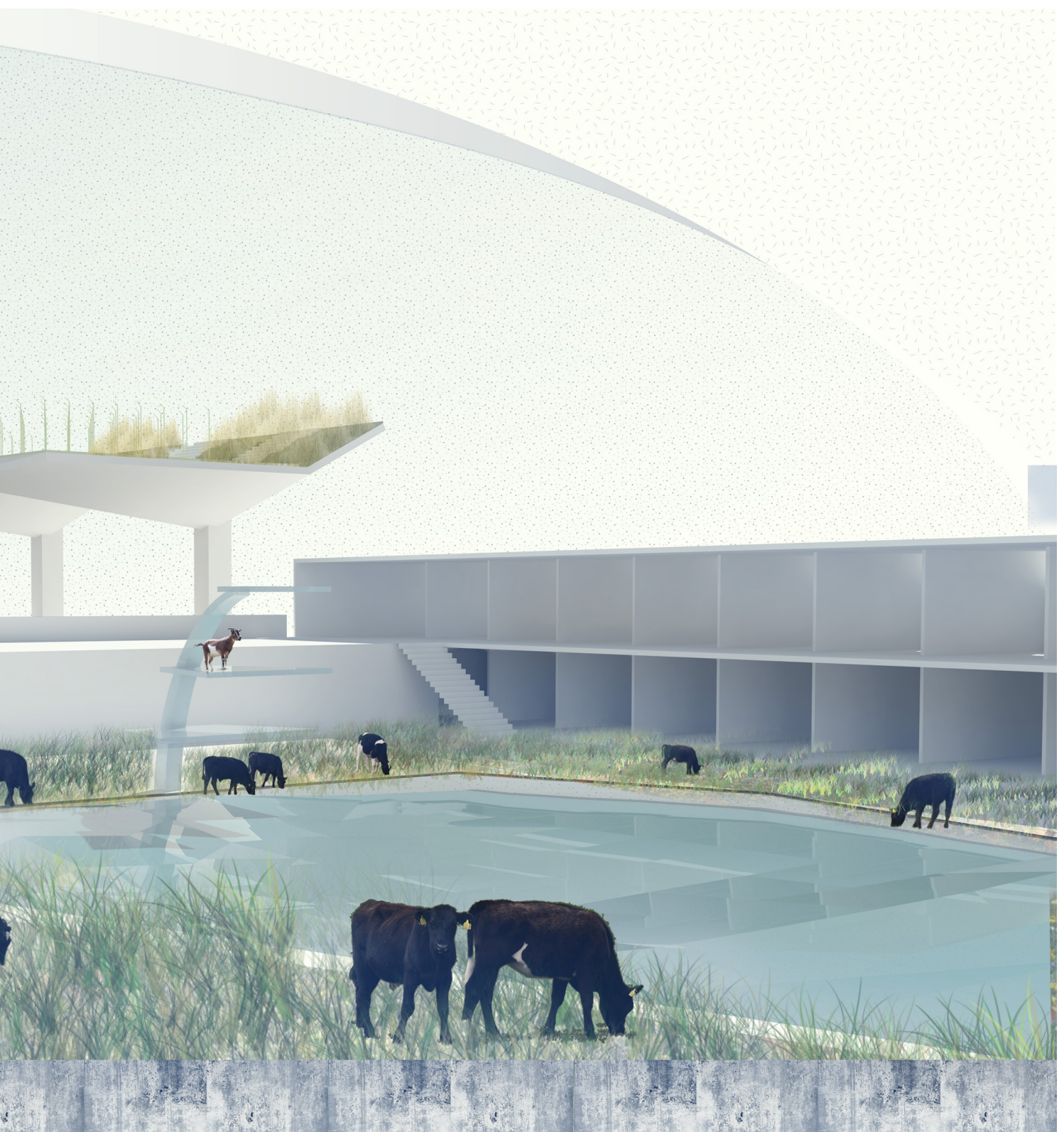


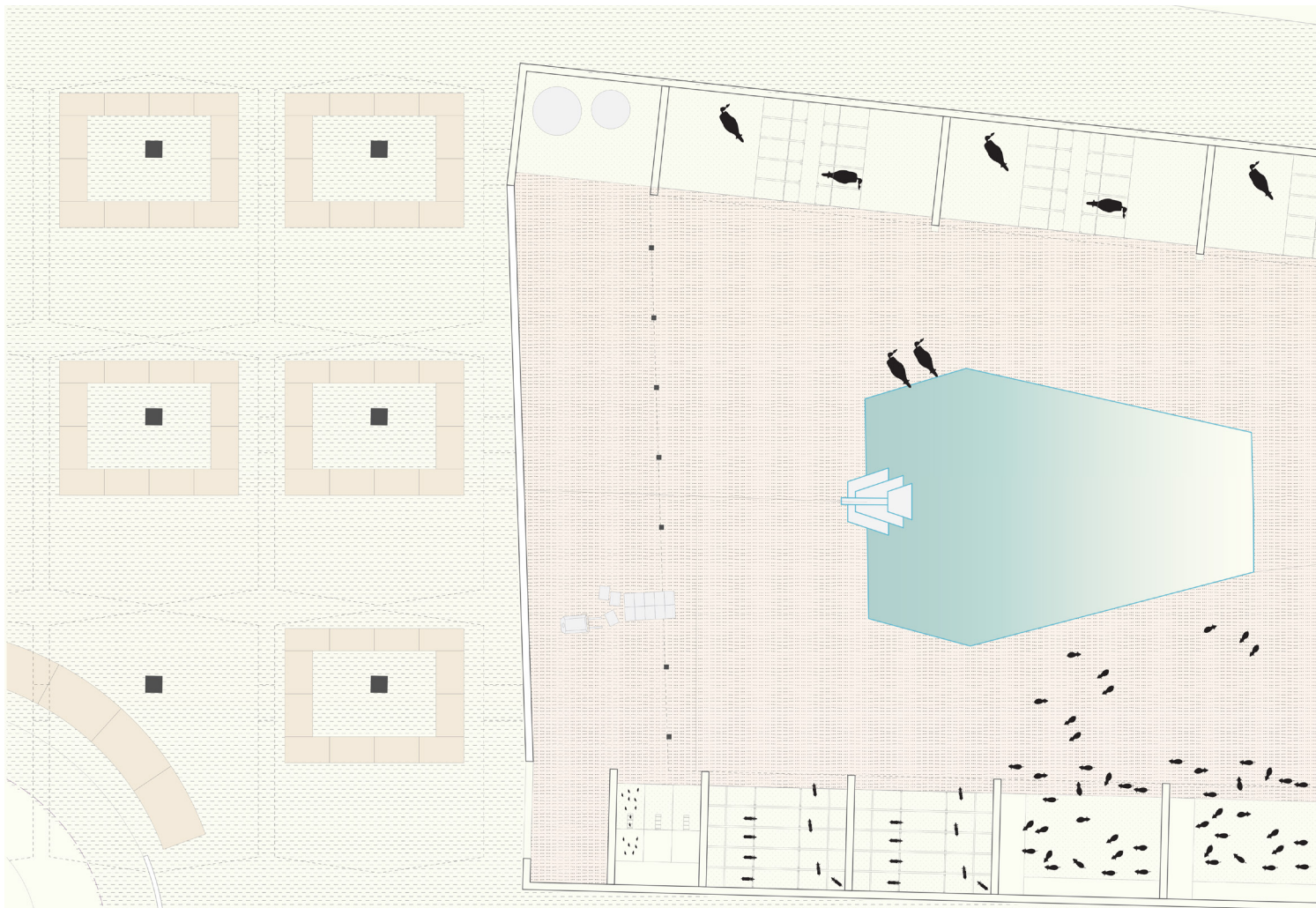












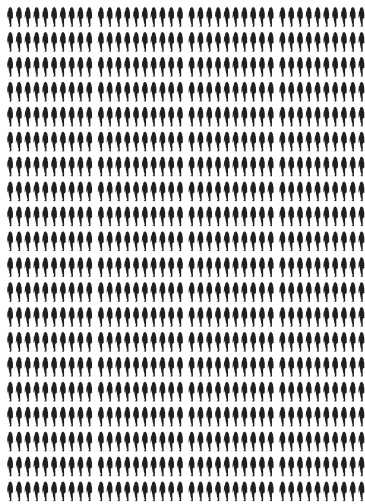
### *A New Home*

The Hotel Riviera provides housing for students, teachers, and animals. The animal farm takes over the ground level of the hotel including the pool deck and former poolside cabanas. The animal farm produces necessary fertilizer and waste for the urban roof farm.

The conversion of the hotel to student housing allows students from different municipalities throughout the country to come study urban farming in Havana in hopes that the techniques they learn can be spread throughout the country and to other urban farm systems in the future. The dimension of the hotel rooms remains the same so this building is only lightly renovated.



Housing capacity for the new Hotel Riviera:



students - 650

teachres - 150



dairy cows - 30



pigs - 40

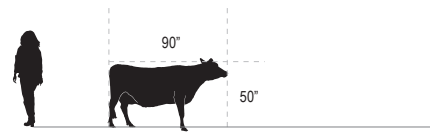


goats - 25



chickens - 125

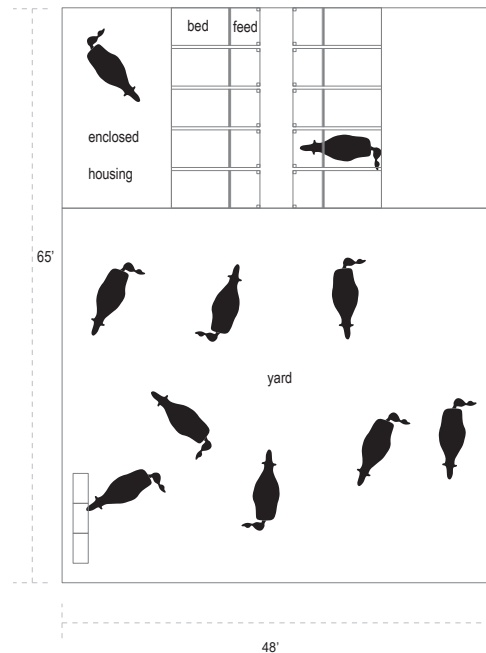
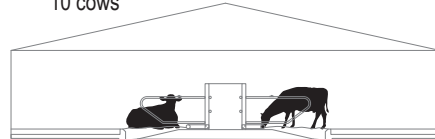
How to house livestock:



Average per cow:  
90 sq/ft interior  
140 sq/ft exterior



Large group:  
10 cows



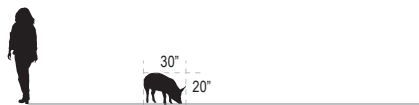
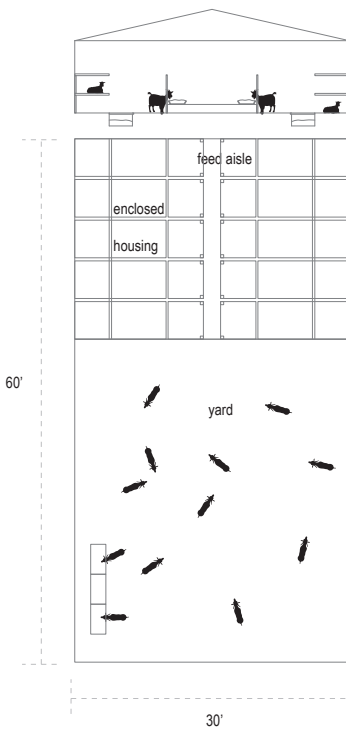




Average per goat:  
20 sq/ft interior  
150 sq/ft exterior



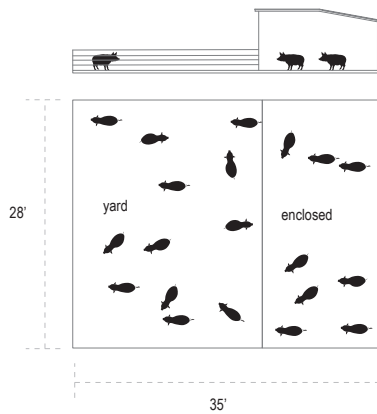
Large group:  
12 goats



Average per pig:  
50 sq/ft total



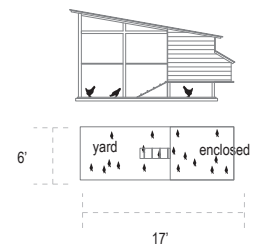
Large group:  
20 pigs



Average per chicken:  
4 sq/ft interior  
10 sq/ft exterior

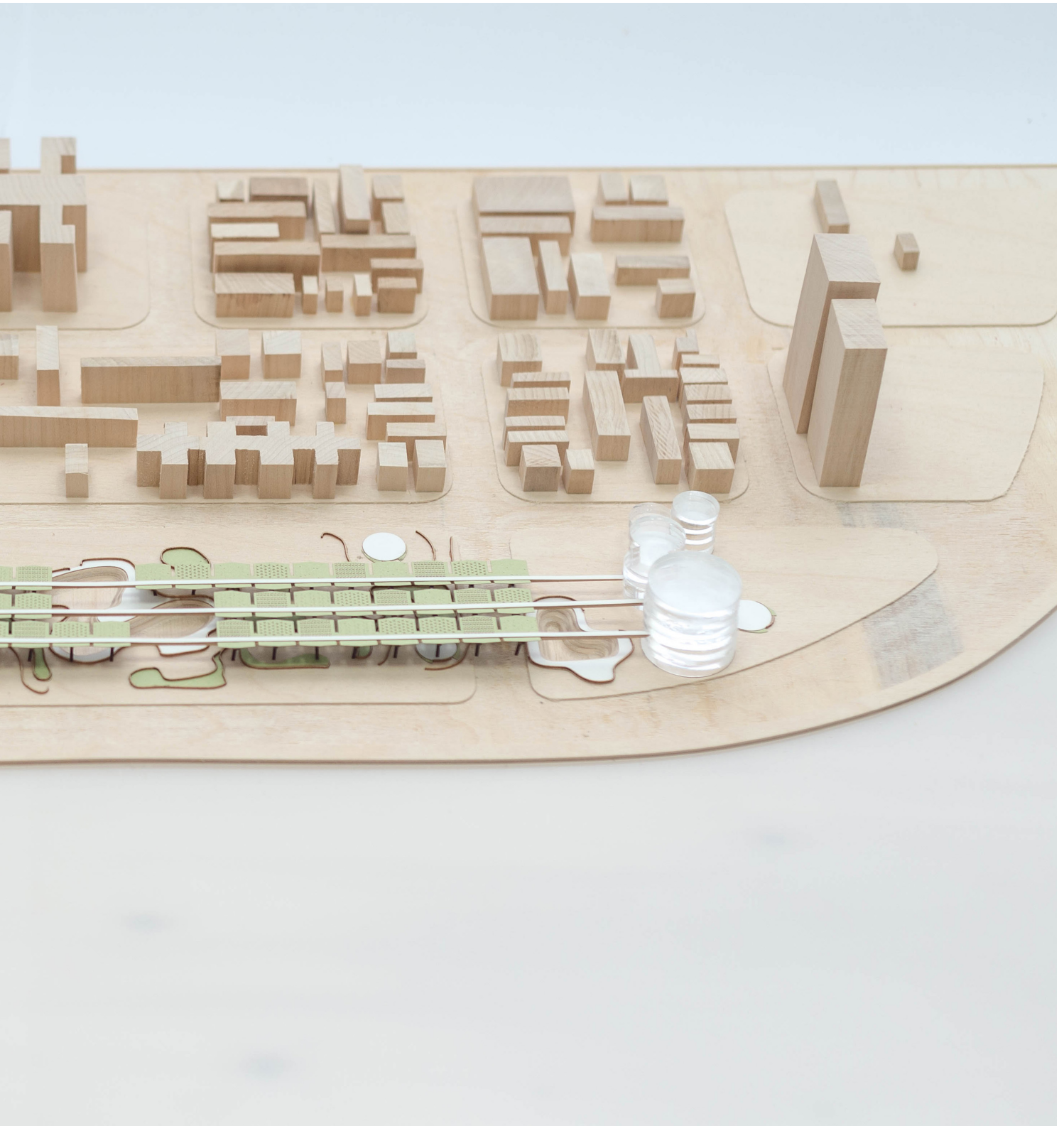


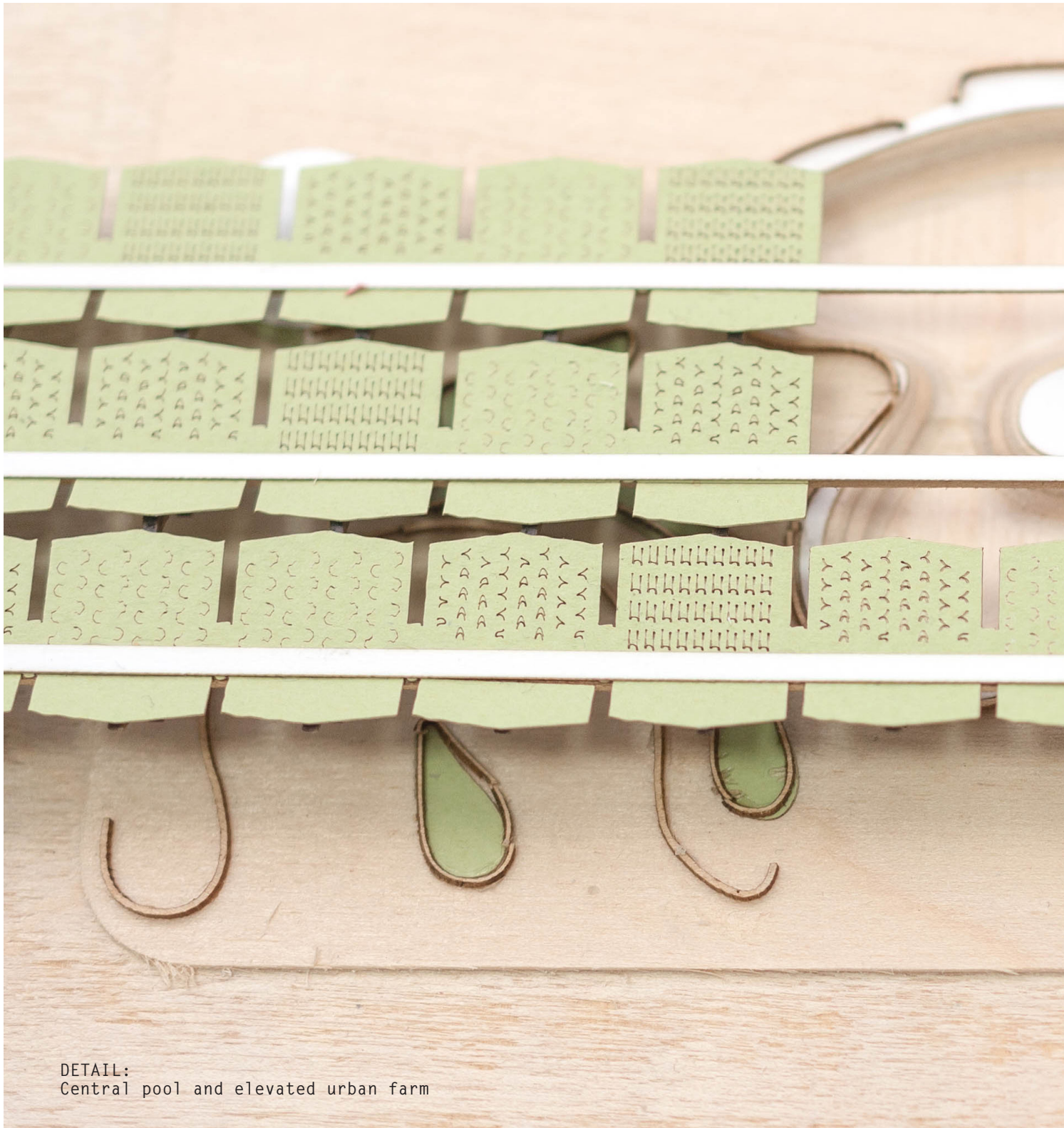
Large group:  
18 chickens





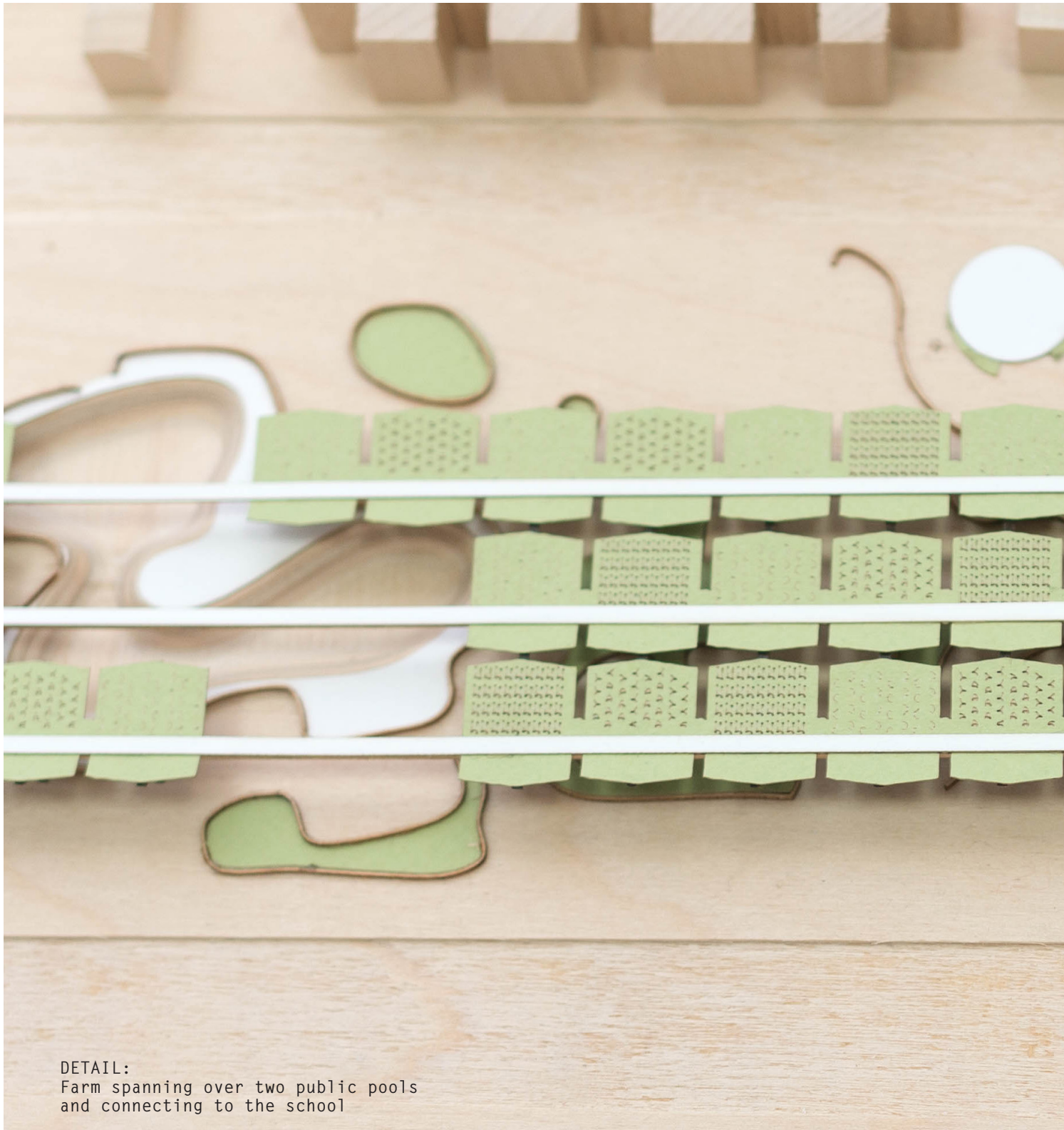
FINAL MODEL  
Scale: 1:1000





DETAIL:  
Central pool and elevated urban farm





DETAIL:  
Farm spanning over two public pools  
and connecting to the school





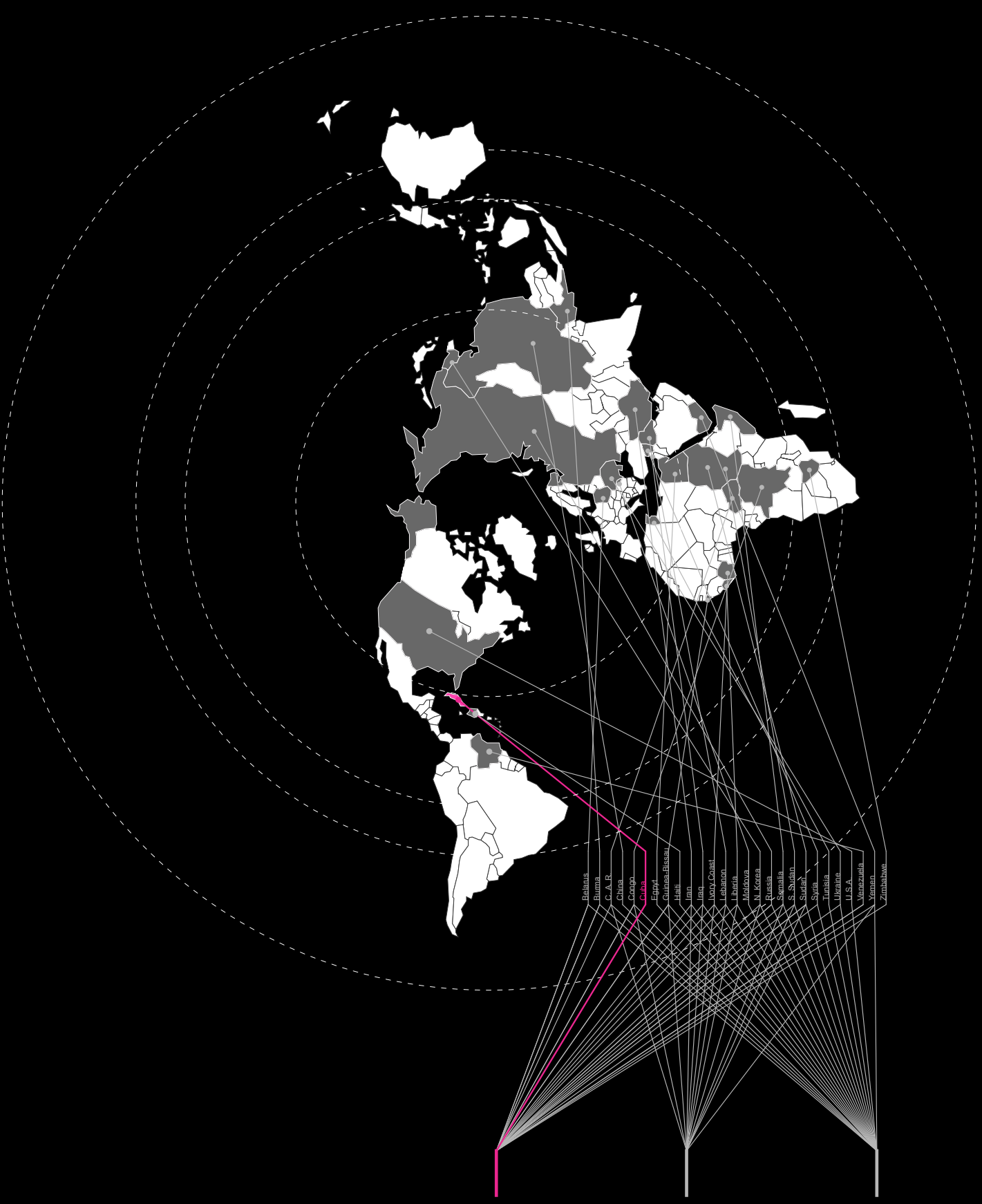
ABOVE: Ground condition around the central pool. The garden and pool exist today but have been abandoned. This project preserves the pool and garden features while removing the wall that surrounds this park.

RIGHT: The three pools on the site are opened to the public; two are used for public swimming and gathering and the third is used for animal grazing and watering

All final model photographs by Sarah Wagner







# Part Two

**1. Economic Contingencies**

**2. Preservation Strategies**

**3. Current Urban Farming**

**4. Process Models**

*The US Treasury's sanctions program against Cuba is the longest-running comprehensive, targeted program the US has ever maintained.*

*Neither the UN nor the EU are in cooperation with the US policy towards Cuba.*

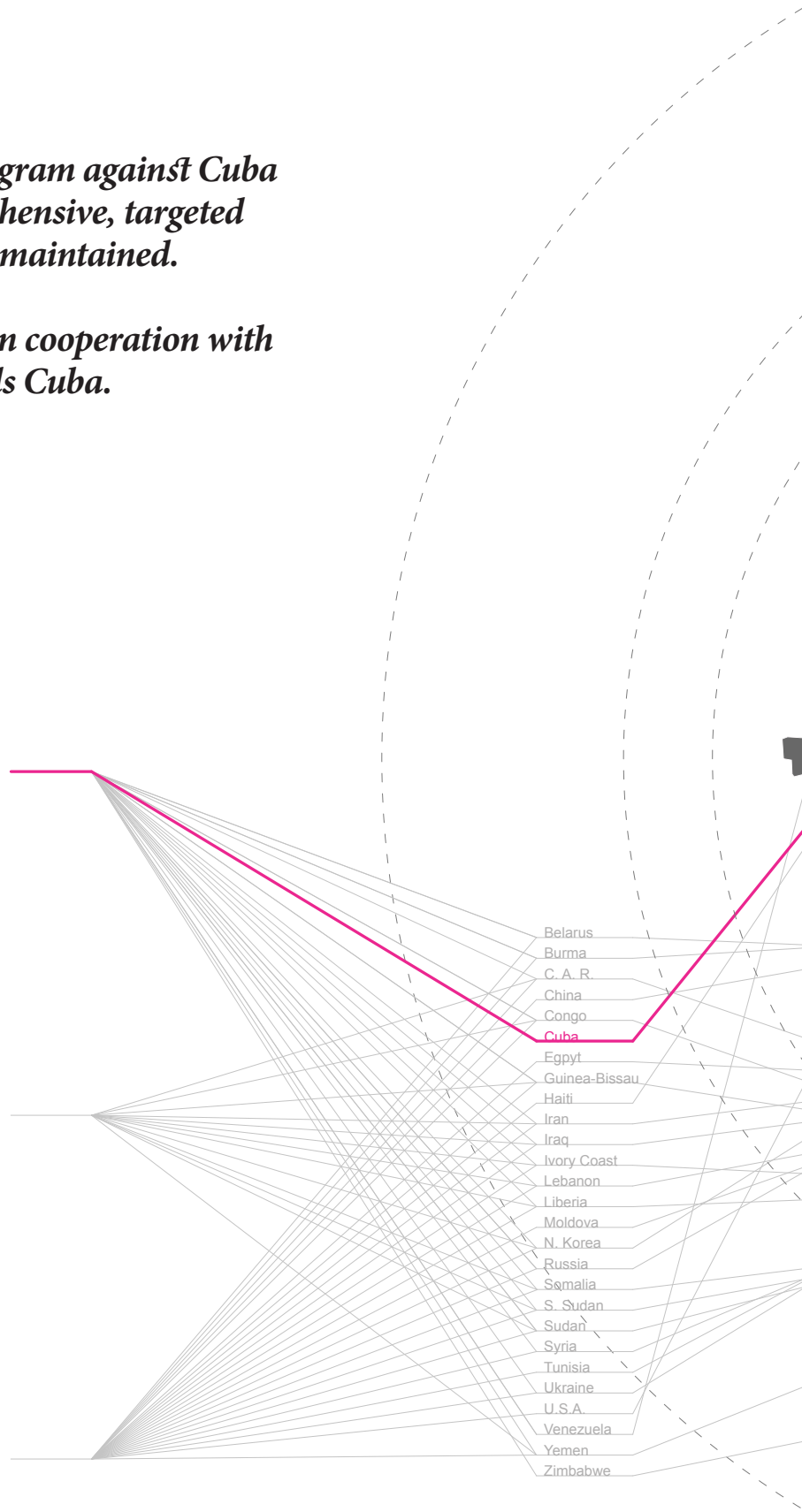
US Treasury

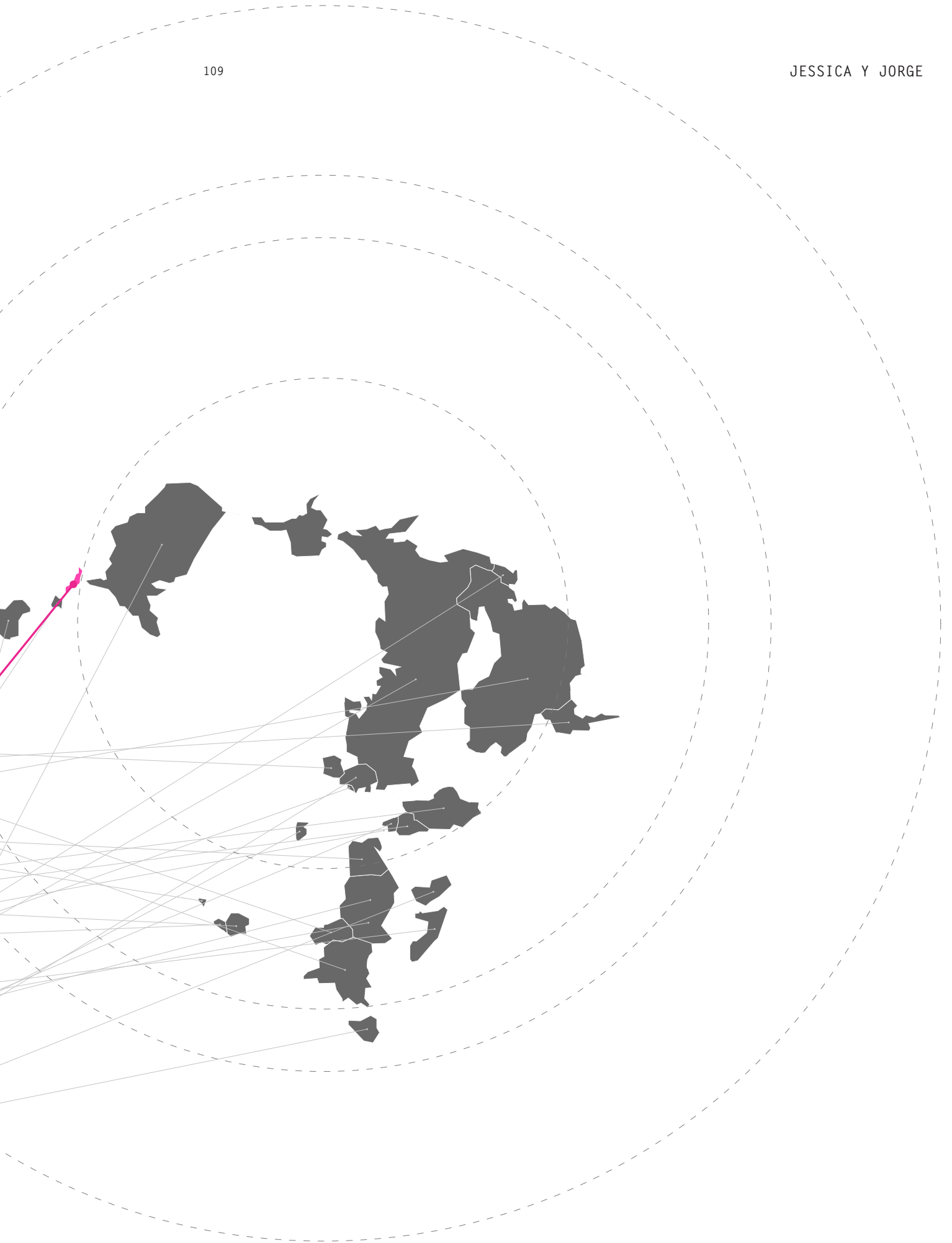


United Nations



European Union

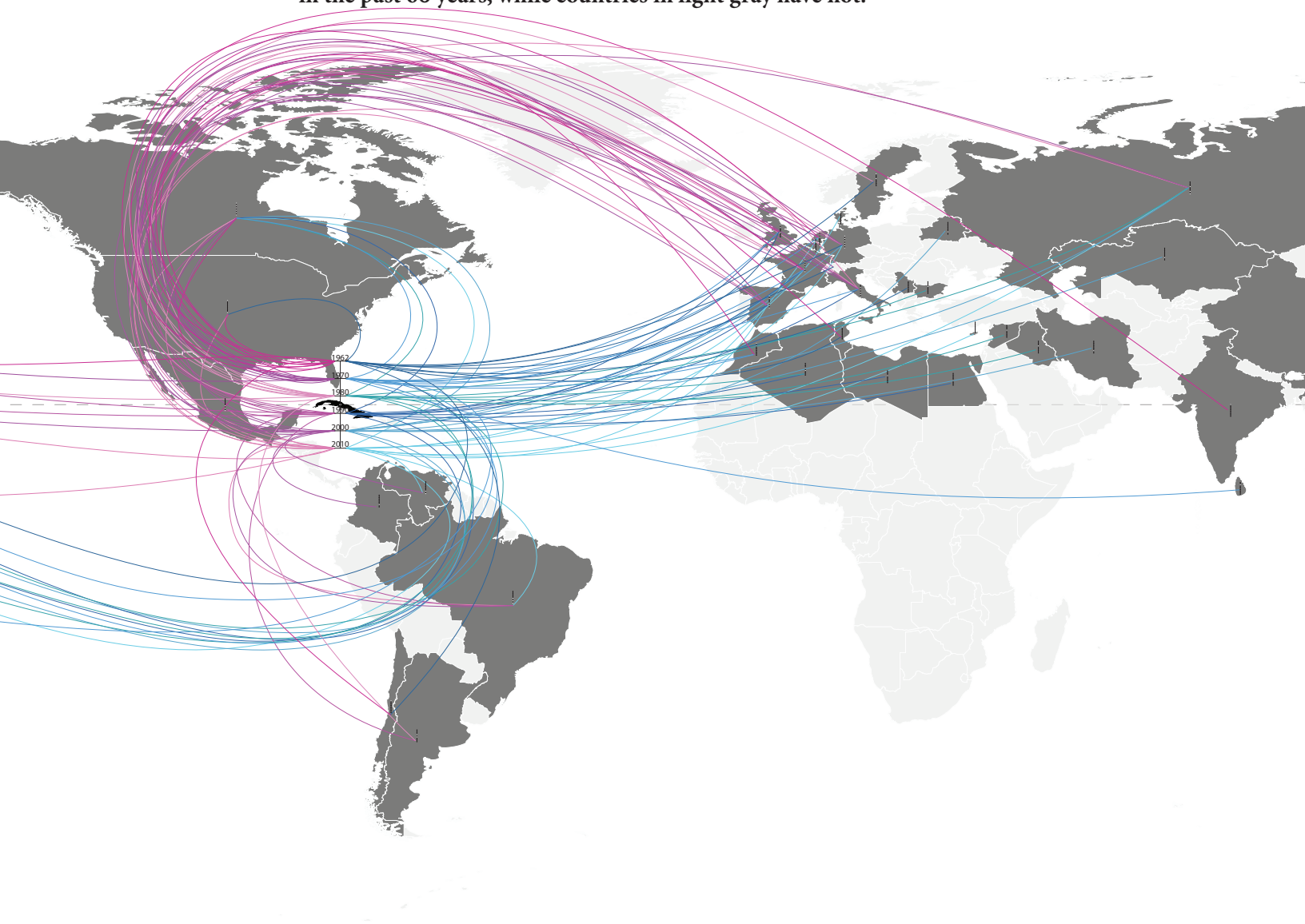


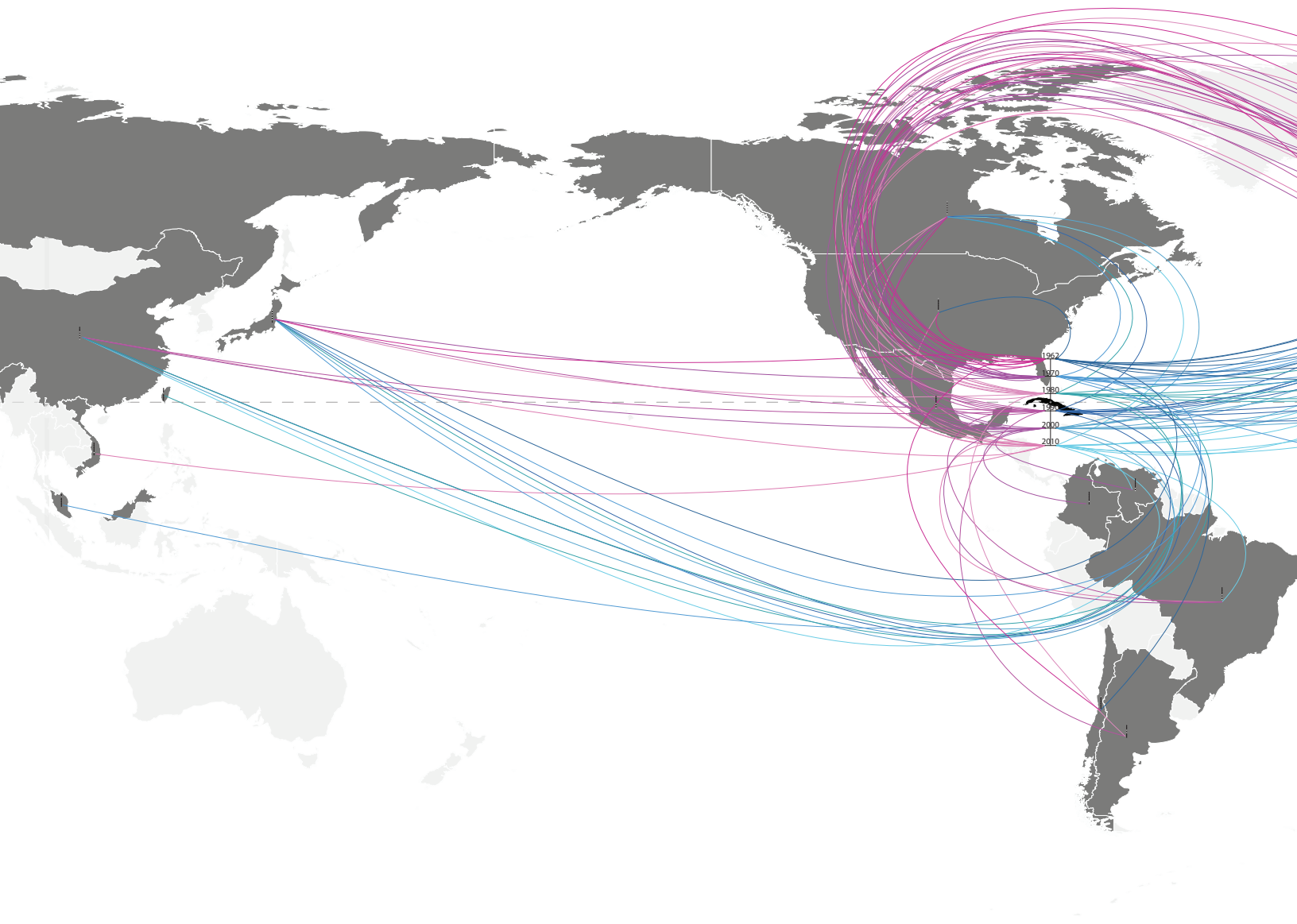


## *Mapping Cuban Import and Export*

At each decade from 1960 to 2010, the top 10 export and import nations are mapped. Source data from The Observatory of Economic Complexity (MIT Media Lab).

Countries in dark gray have traded with Cuba at least once in the past 60 years, while countries in light gray have not.







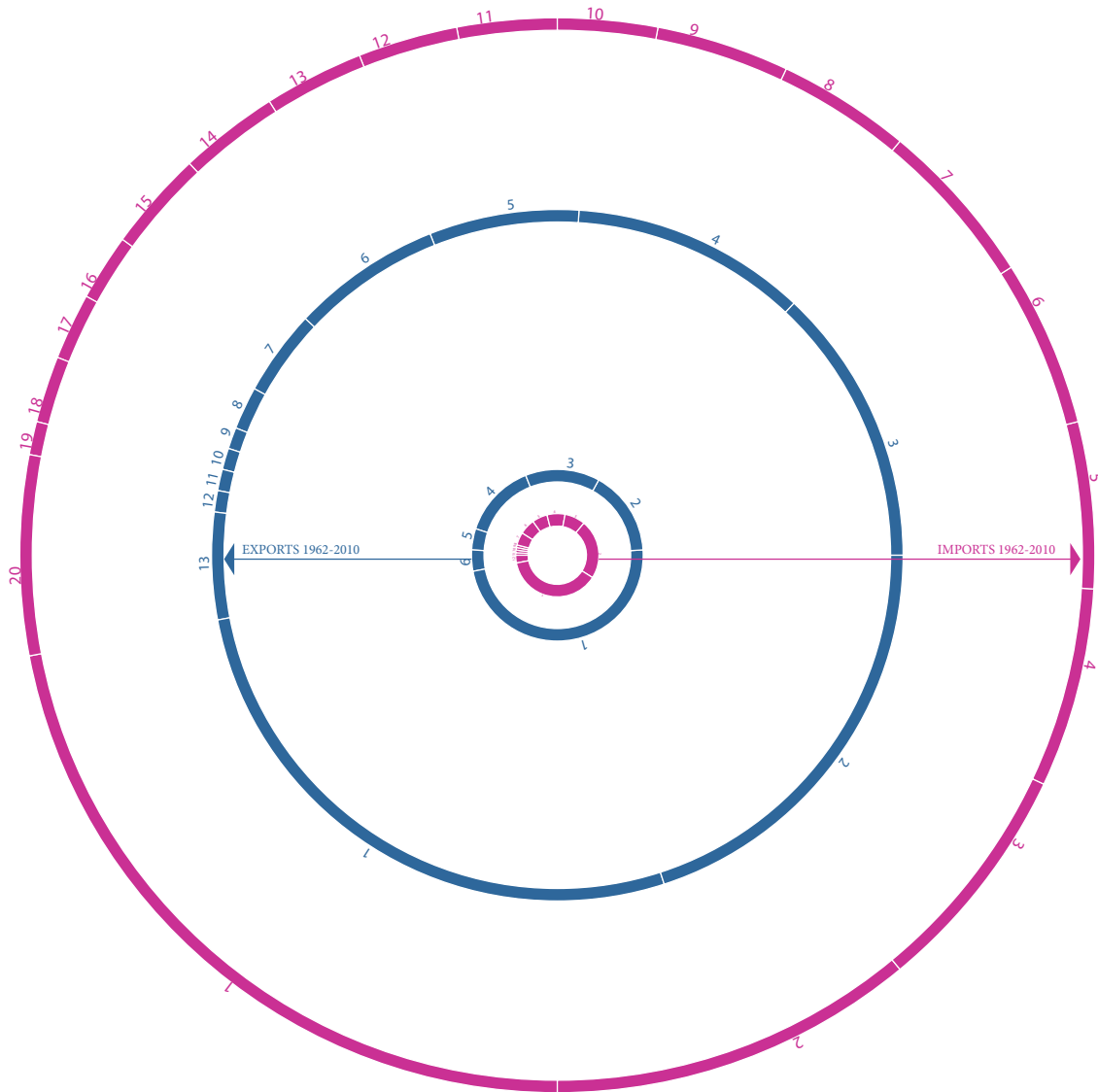




**Cuba and South America**

In recent years, especially after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Cuba has become more dependent on imports from central and south America.

02  
CONTINGENCIES



148 million ————— EXPORTS 1962-2010 —————> 2.4 billion

34.8 million ————— IMPORTS 1962-2010 —————> 5.08 billion

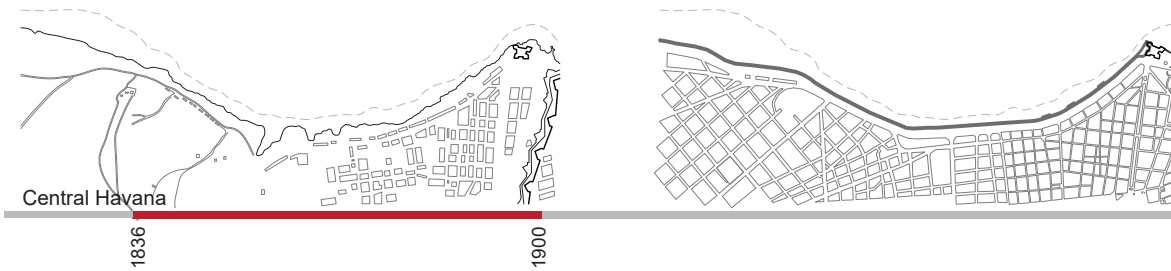
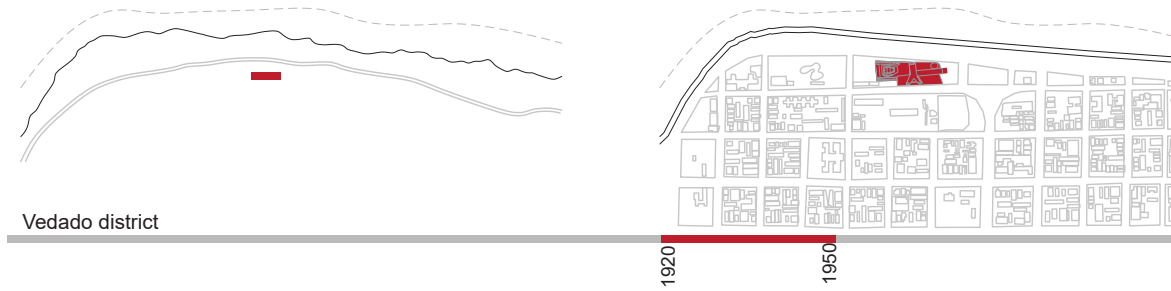
<i>1962 Exports</i>	<i>1962 Imports</i>	<i>2010 Exports</i>	<i>2010 Imports</i>
1 Crops (Cane Sugar)	1 Unclassified	1 Unclassified	1 Machinery
2 Agriculture And Crops	2 Garments	2 Mining	2 Vegetable Oils
3 Agriculture And Crops	3 Shipping	3 Beer, Wine, Spirits	3 Construction
4 Tobacco	4 Seafood	4 Crops (Cane Sugar)	4 Chemicals
5 Beer, Wine, Spirits	5 Health Products	5 Health Products	5 Health
6 Food Processing	6 Machinery	6 Chemicals	6 Electronics
	7 Chemicals	7 Seafood	7 Unclassified
	8 Food Processing	8 Metal Products	8 Garments
	9 Electronics	9 Fruit And Vegetables	9 Metal Products
	10 Textiles	10 Crude Petroleum	10 Boilers
	11 Aircraft	11 Construction Materials	11 Meat And Eggs
	12 Other	12 Machinery	12 Agrochemicals
		13 Other	13 Salts
			14 Cotton And Rice
			15 Misc Agro
			16 Food Processing
			17 Dairy
			18 Petrochemicals
			19 Textiles
			20 Other

**In 1962, just six categories of goods, nearly all in agriculture, accounted for 98% of the country's exports.**

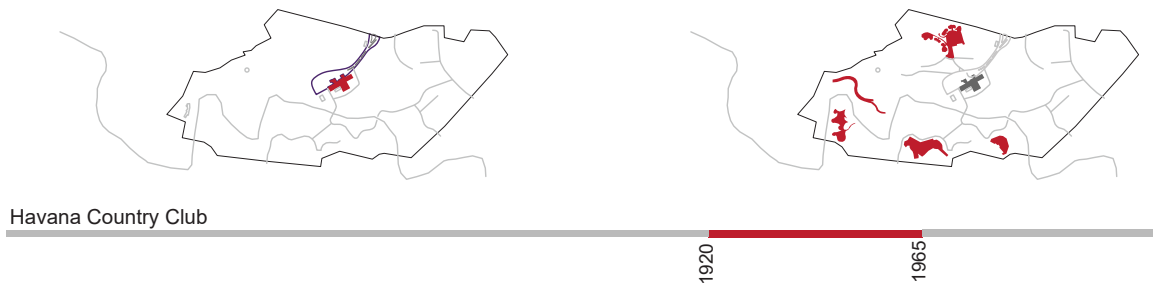
**From 1962 to 2010, Cuba has become increasingly depended on imports for a wider array of goods - from machinery to electronics to salts.**

## Strategies of Land Transformation

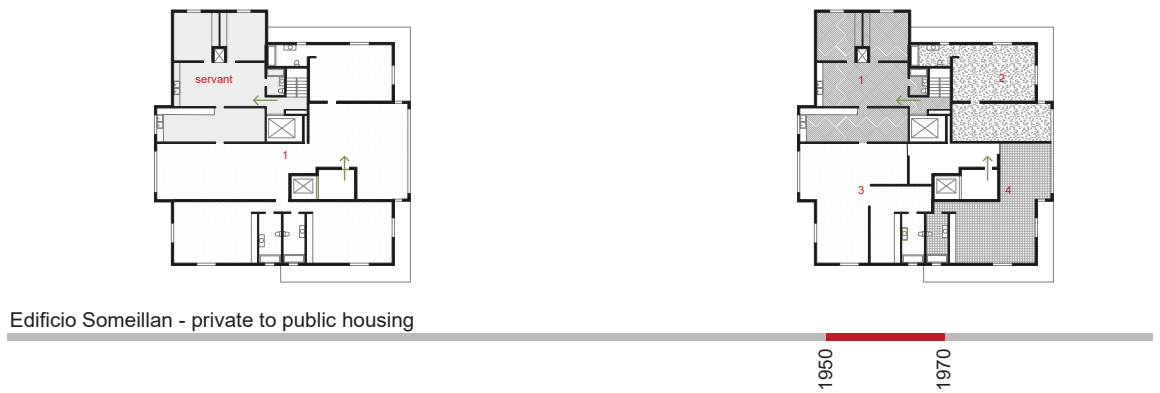
### 1. Erasure



## 2. Augmentation

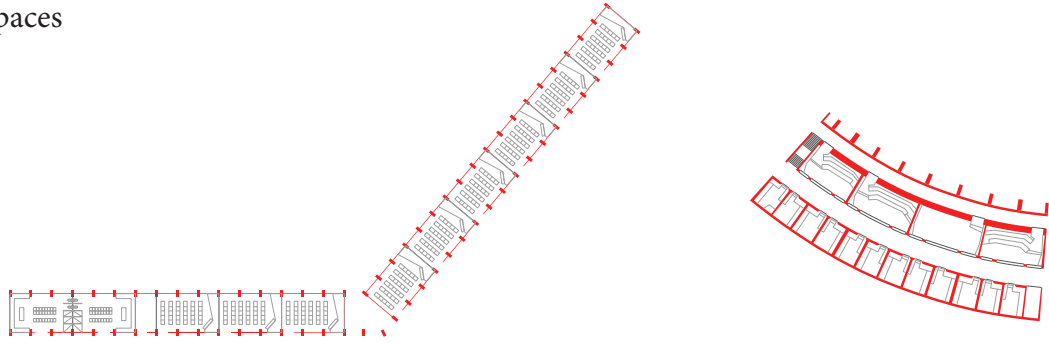


## 3. Inhabitation

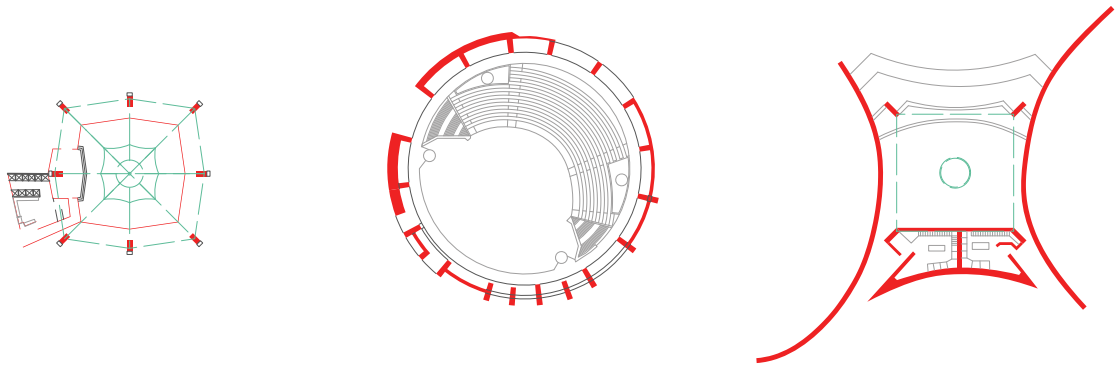


## *Learning From the Country Club*

### Learning Spaces



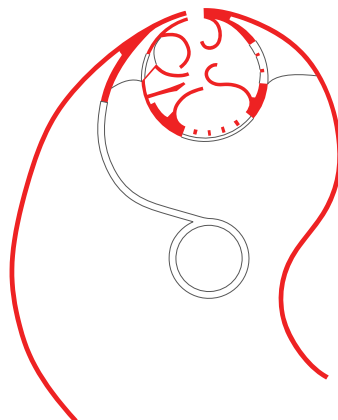
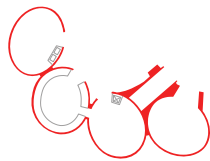
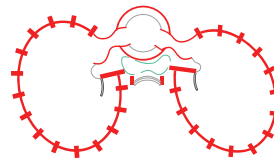
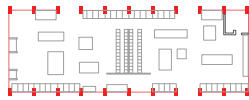
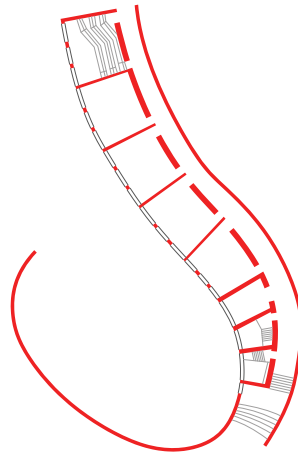
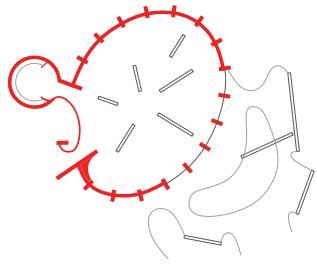
### Performace Spaces



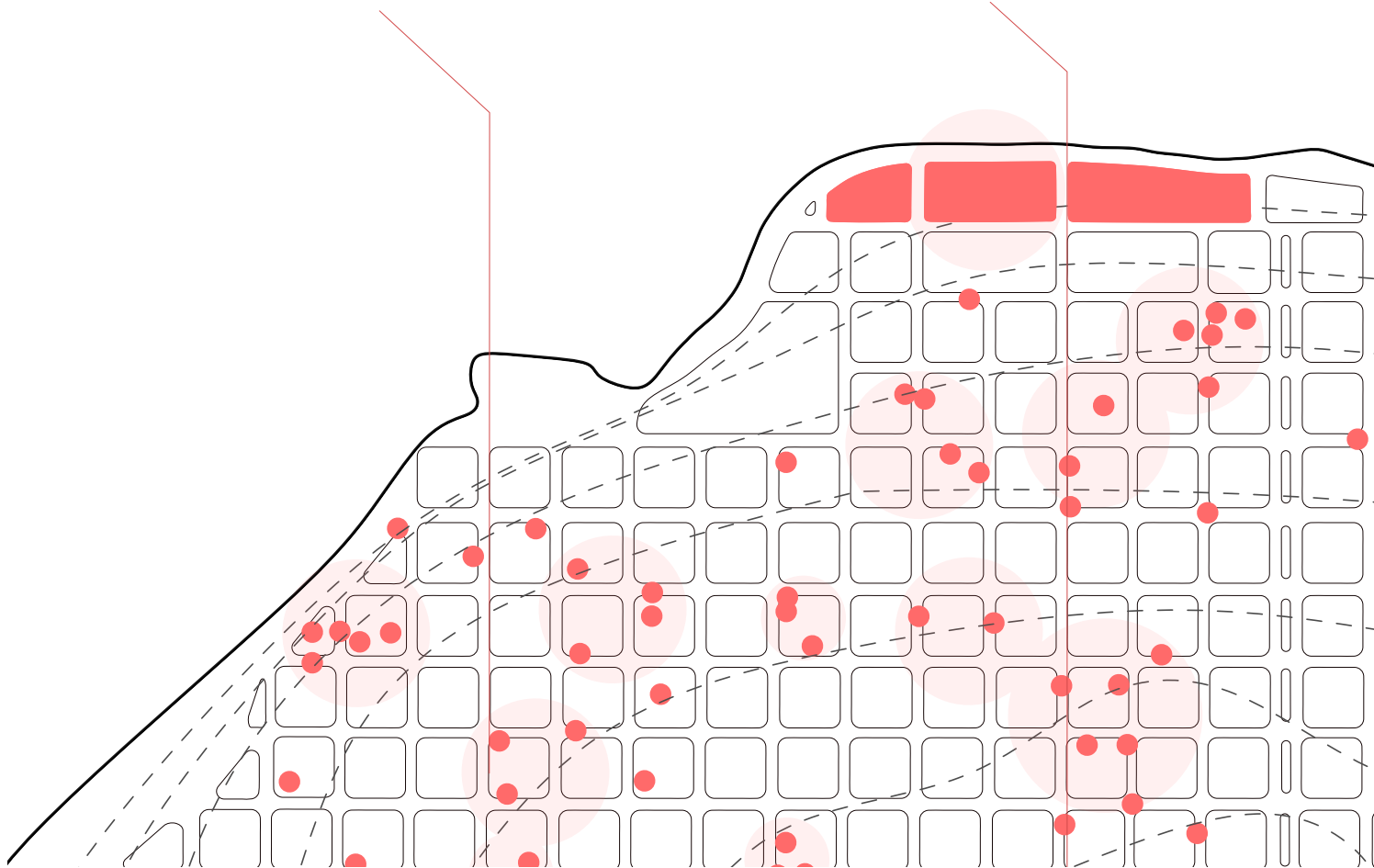
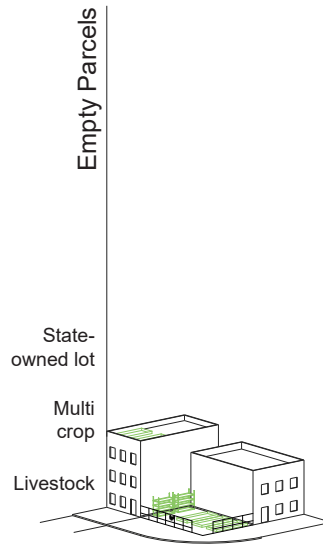
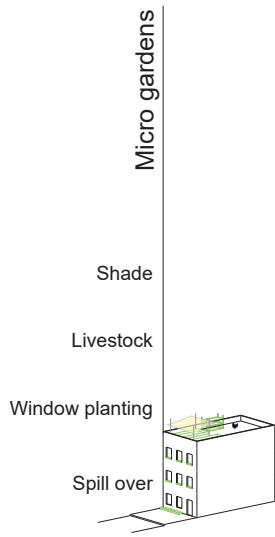
### Catalan Vault



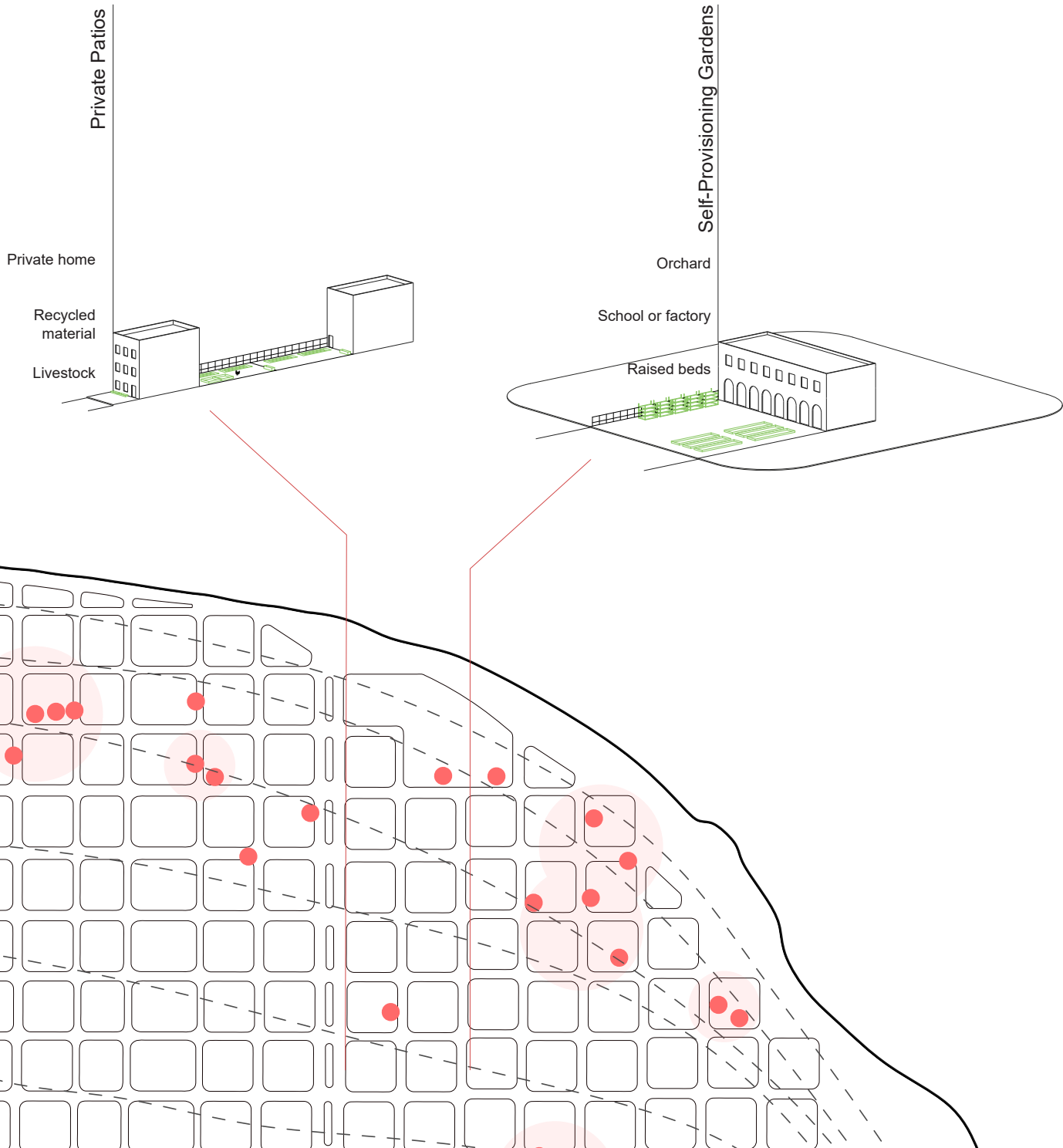
Studio Spaces



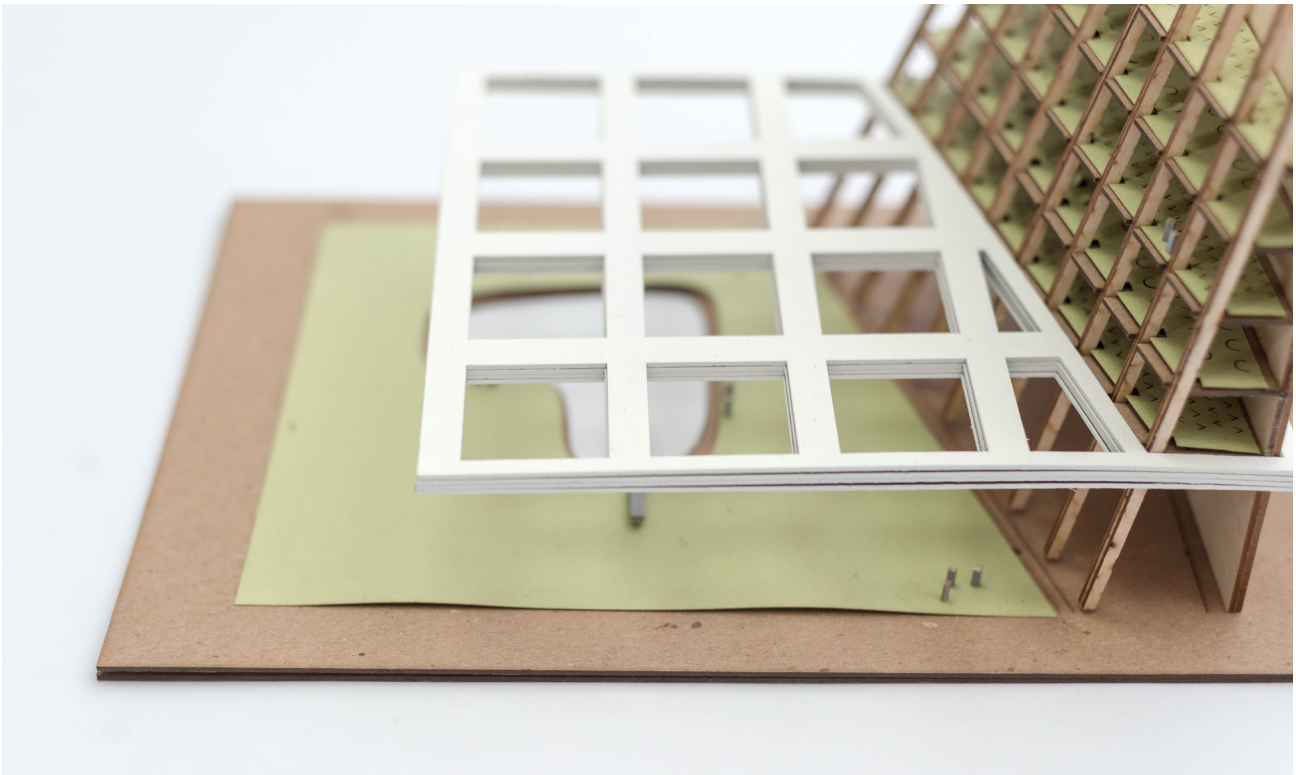
### Existing urban farms in Vedado, Havana





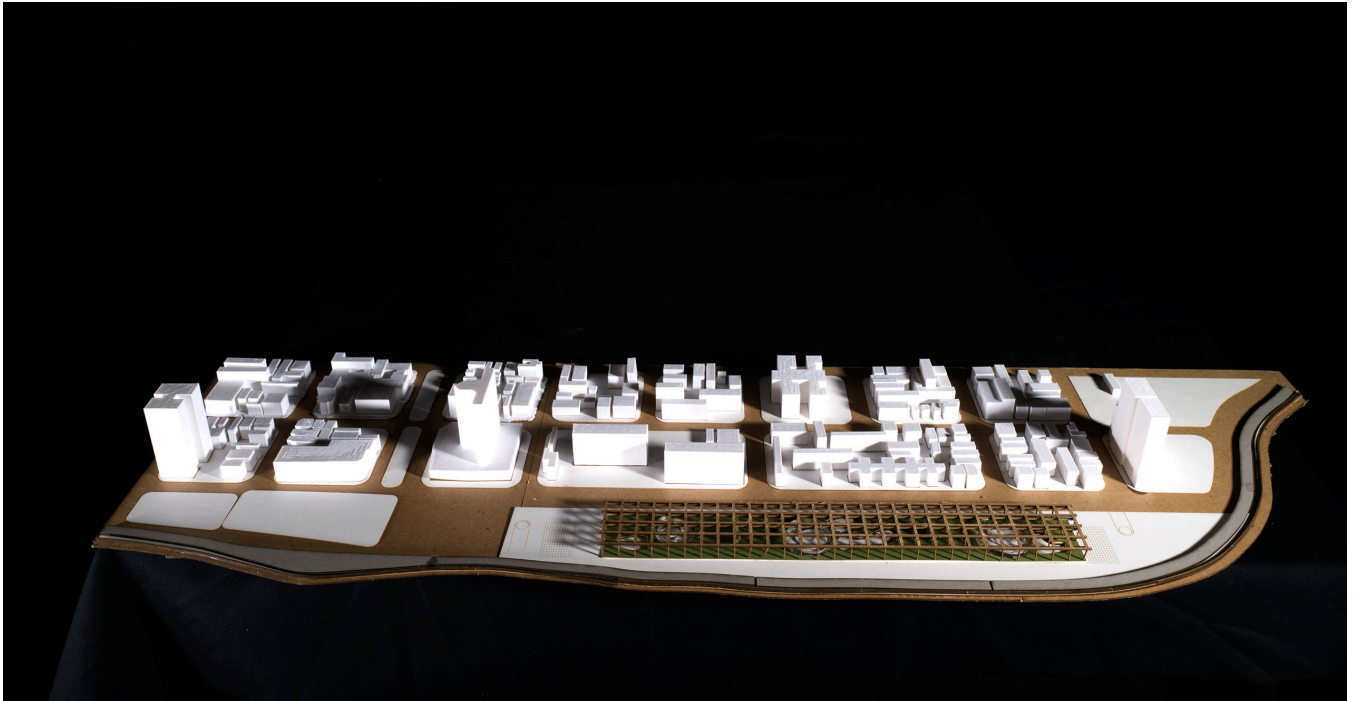






LEFT and ABOVE: Study model of vertical grow wall and super-roof structure

Photographs by Sarah Wagner





LEFT, ABOVE: Big roof, test 1

LEFT, BOTTOM: Big roof, test 2

ABOVE: Penultimate site model

Photographs by Andy Ryan



# Appendix

## 1. Historical Timeline 1950-2016

- ### 2. Friends Matrix
- Berlin: A Green Archipelago
  - Karl Marx-Hof
  - São Paulo Museum of Art
    - Coppelia
  - National Arts School
    - CUJAE

### 2. Research Paper 1

#### The Cuba Embargo: Power, Politics, Control

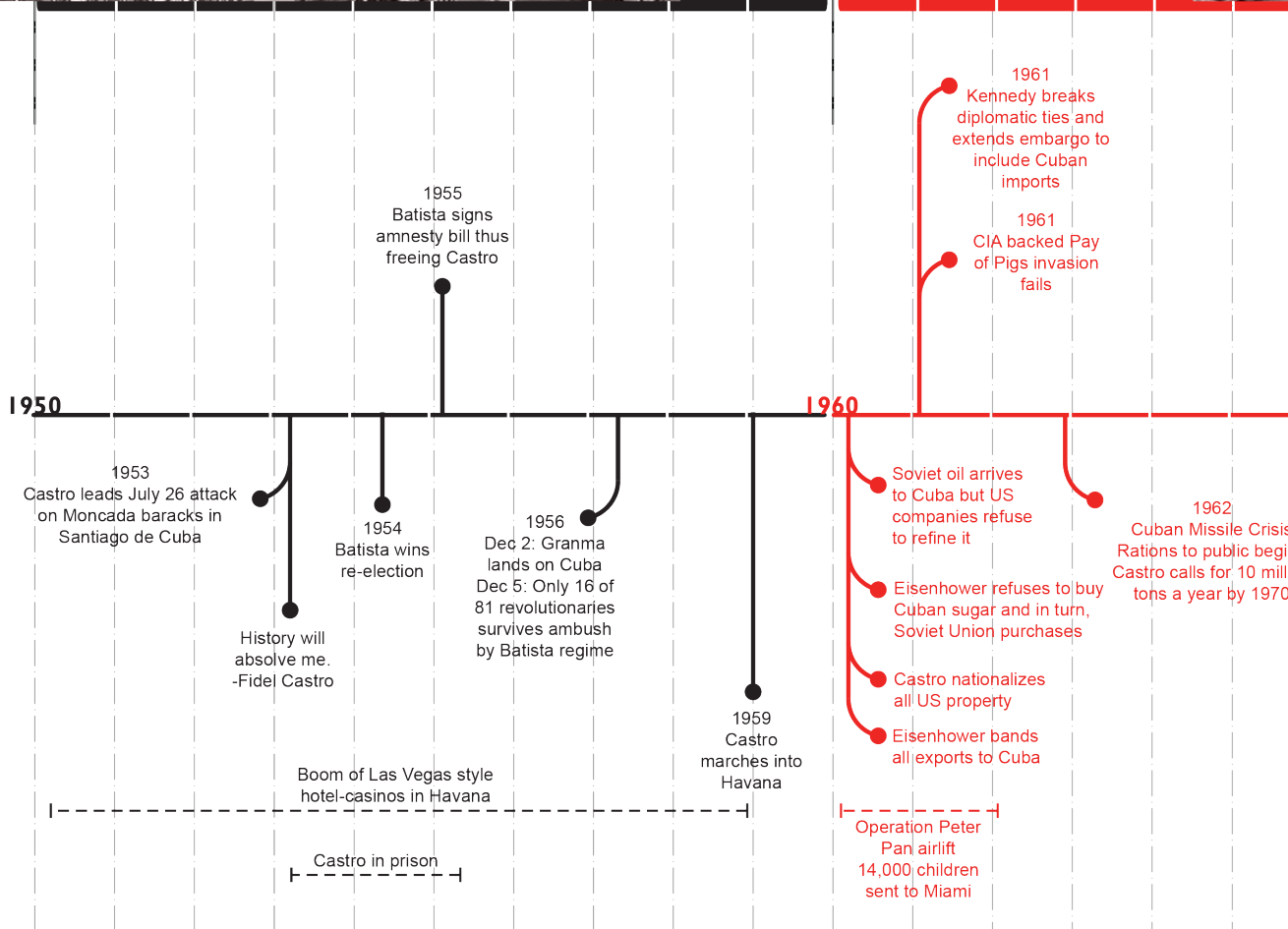
#### Embargo as a territorial question

### 3. Research Paper 2

#### History of Havana: Sert and beyond

### 4. Bibliography

HISTORICAL TIMELINE







1970

1980

1968  
Castro nationalized  
retail trade

1972  
Bobby Fischer  
becomes the first  
American born  
world chess  
champion by  
defeating Boris  
Spassky

Cuba joins  
COMECON

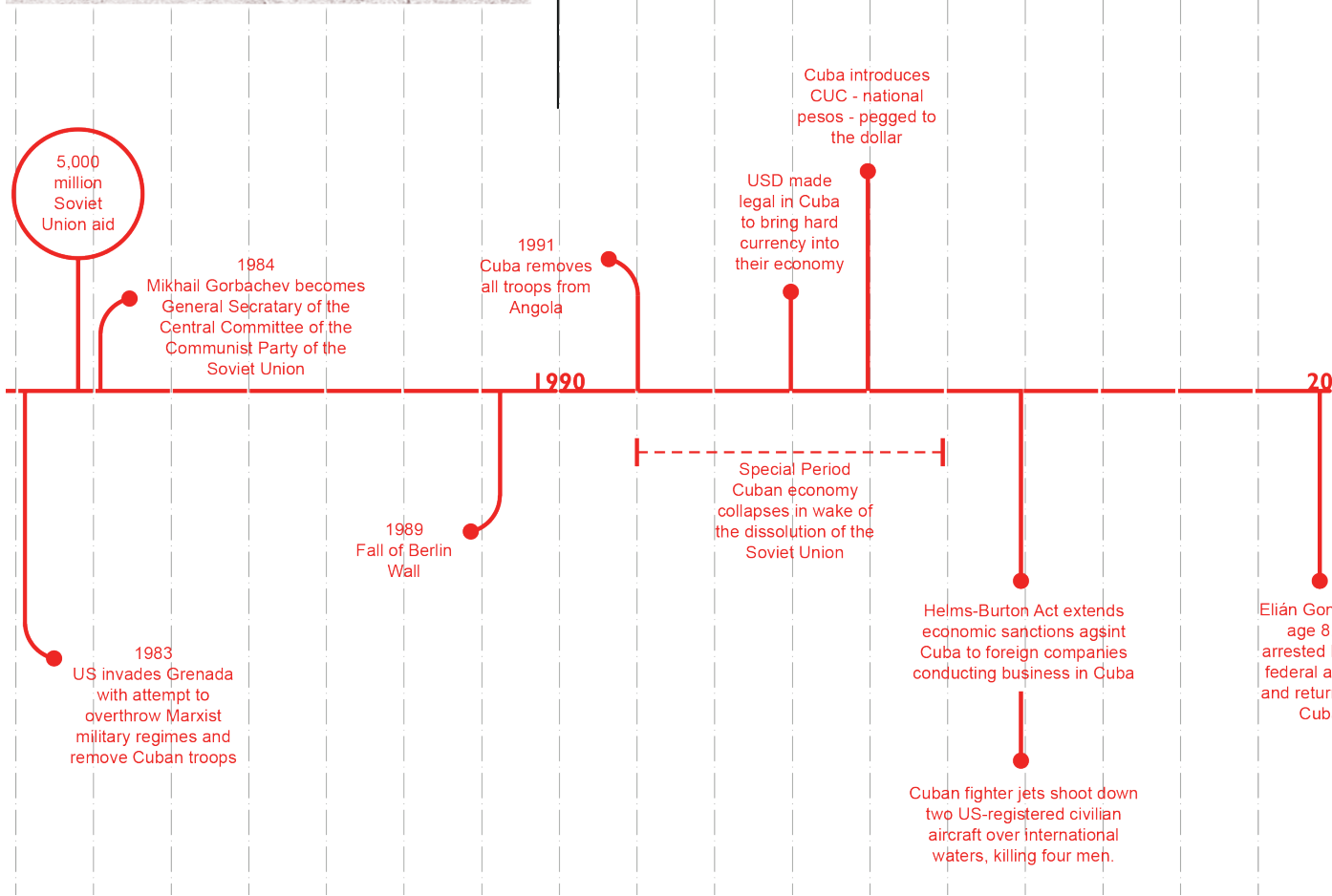
1976  
Death of  
Chairman Mao

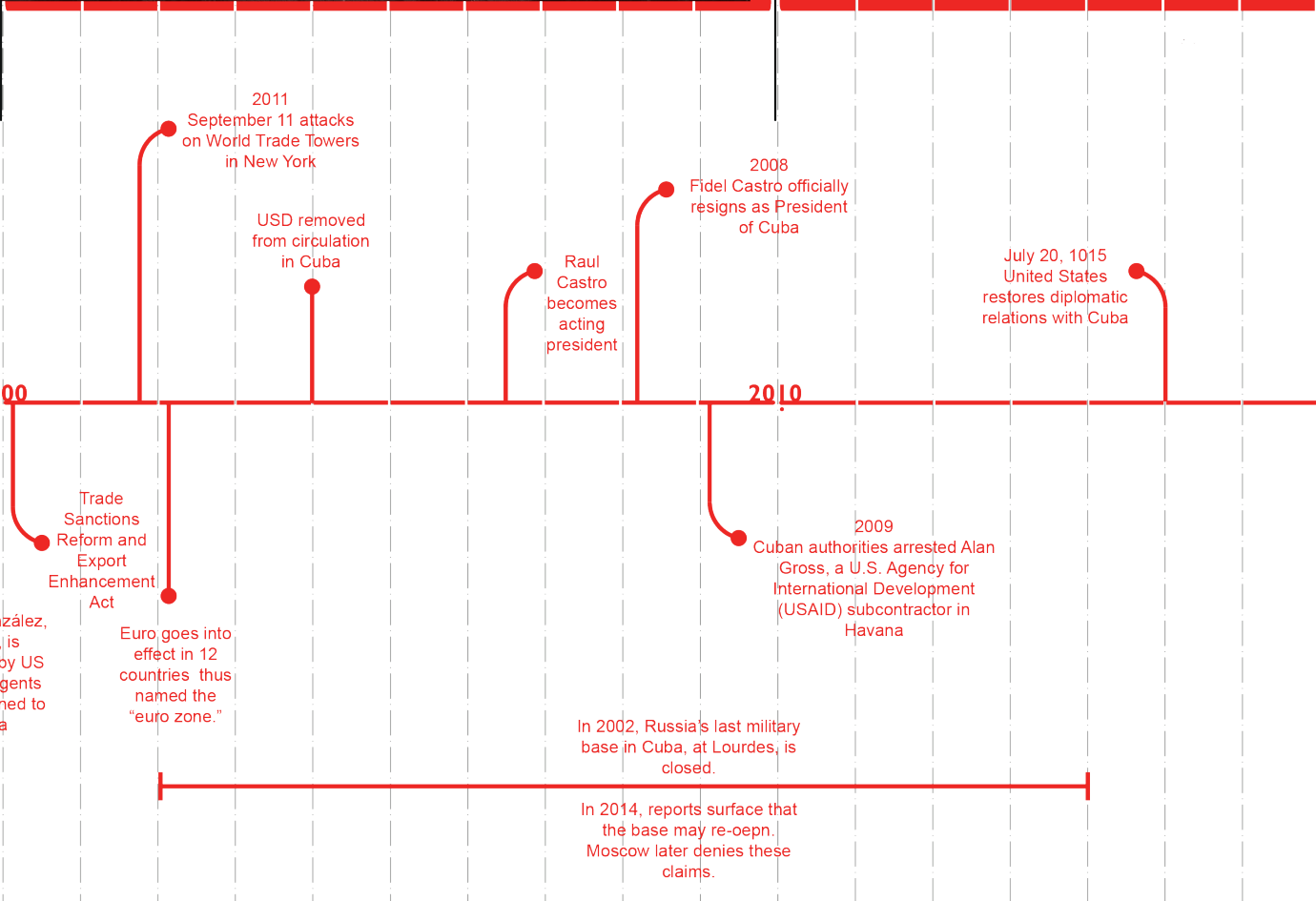
1973  
Paris Peace Accords:  
ends US military  
engagement in Vietnam

Castro sends troops to  
support Soviet-sponsored  
wars in Africa

A

HISTORICAL TIMELINE

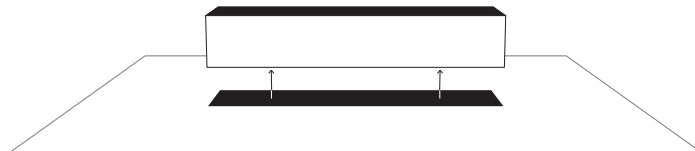
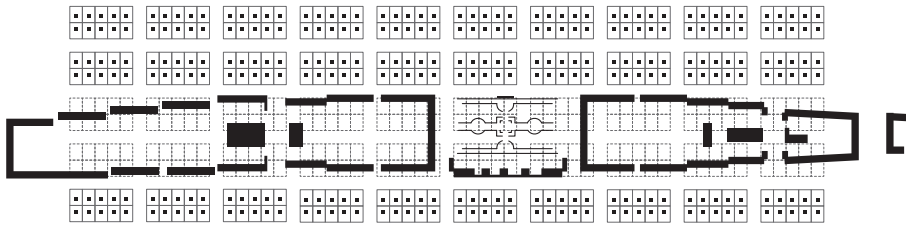
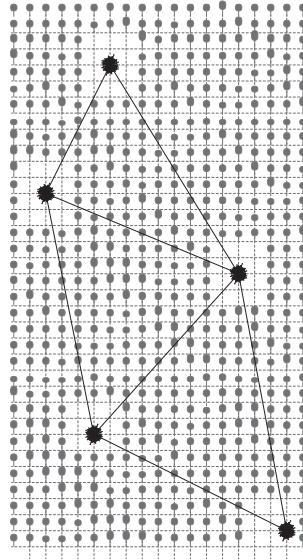




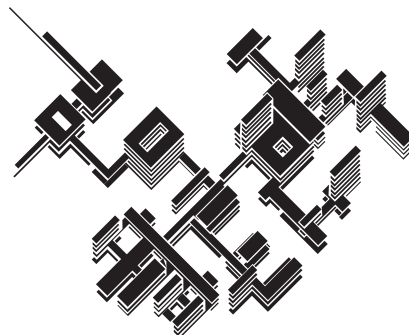
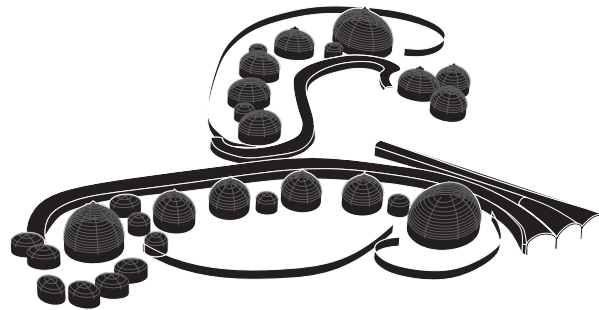
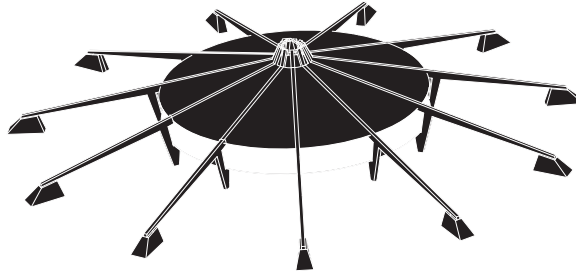
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A  
FRIENDS MATRIX

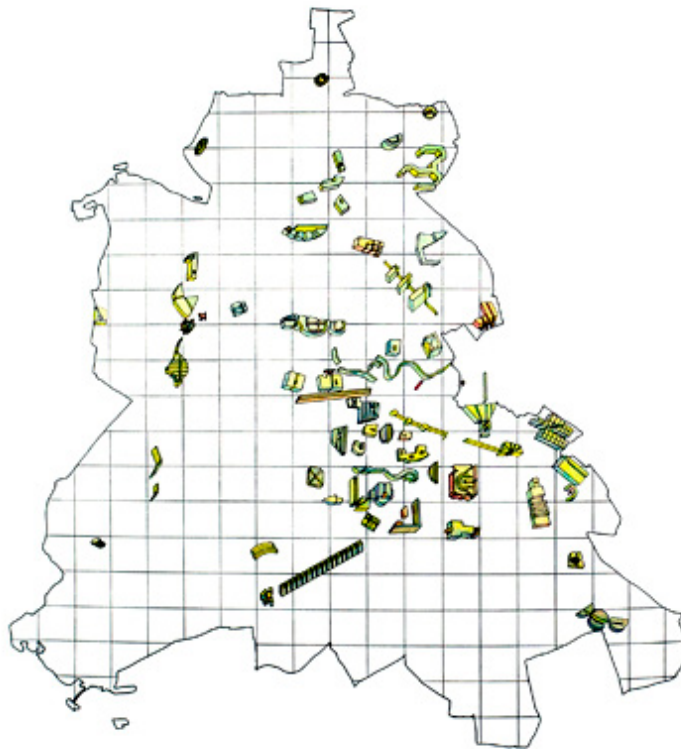
Pen Pals

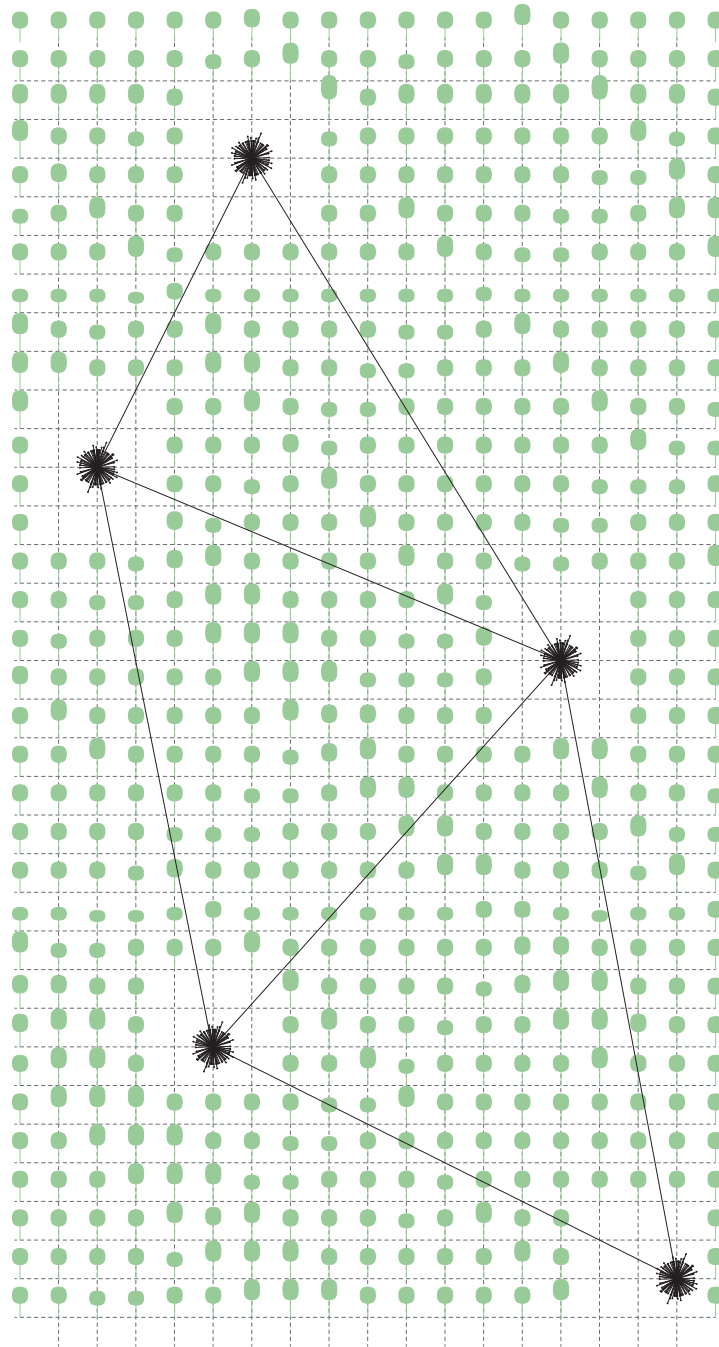


Island Friends



**Berlin: A Green Archipelago**  
**Ungers & Koolhaas**  
**1977**



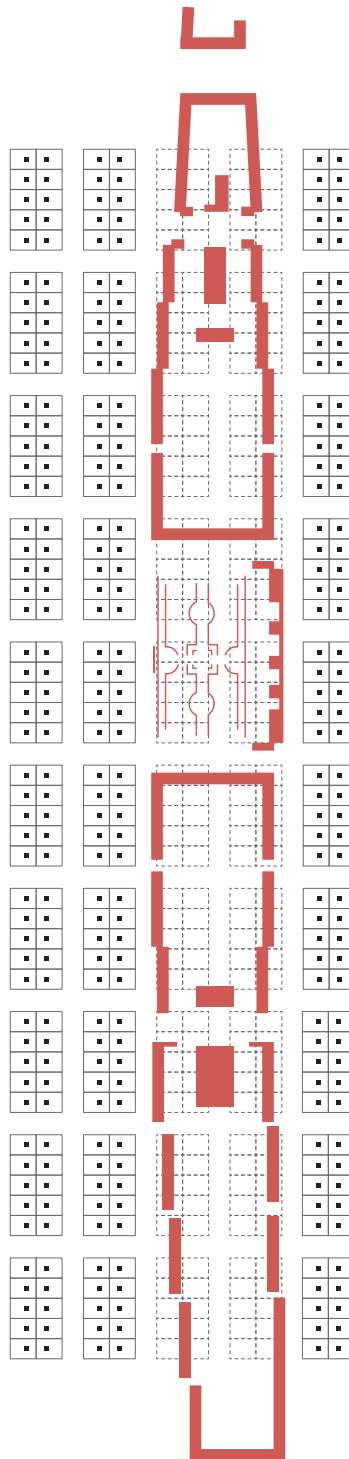


- Points of urbanization
- Shrinking City
- City in the City

**Karl Marx-Hof**  
**Karl Ehn**  
**1927-1930**



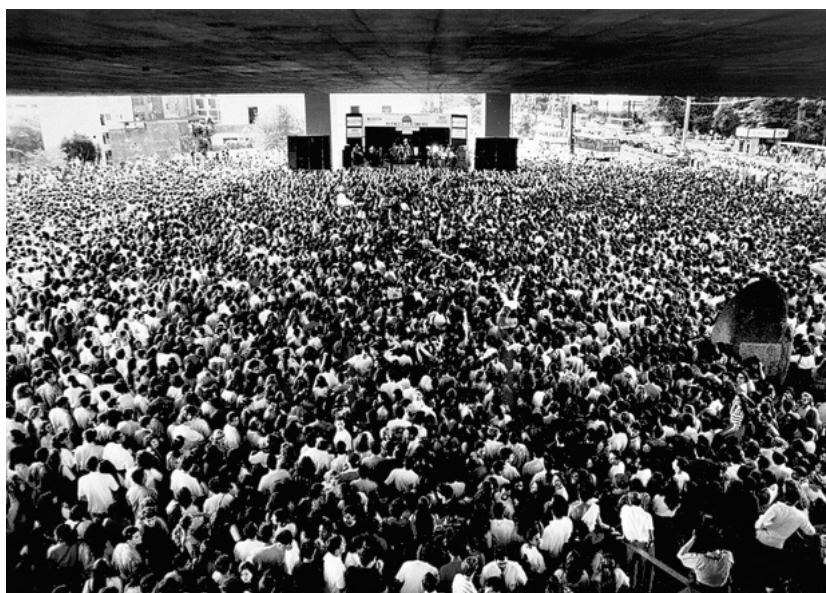


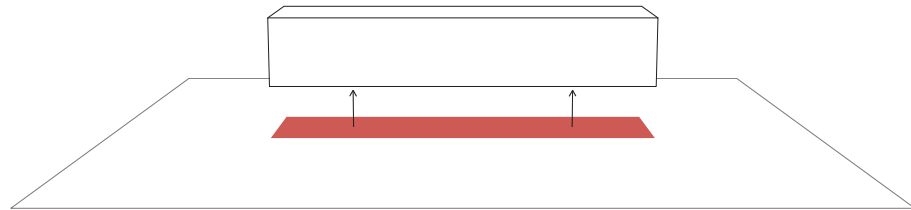


- Superblock

- Unlike many housing projects, Karl Marx-Hof was placed in the center of the city thereby celebrating social housing and living

**São Paulo Museum of Art**  
**Lina Bo Bardi**  
**1968**

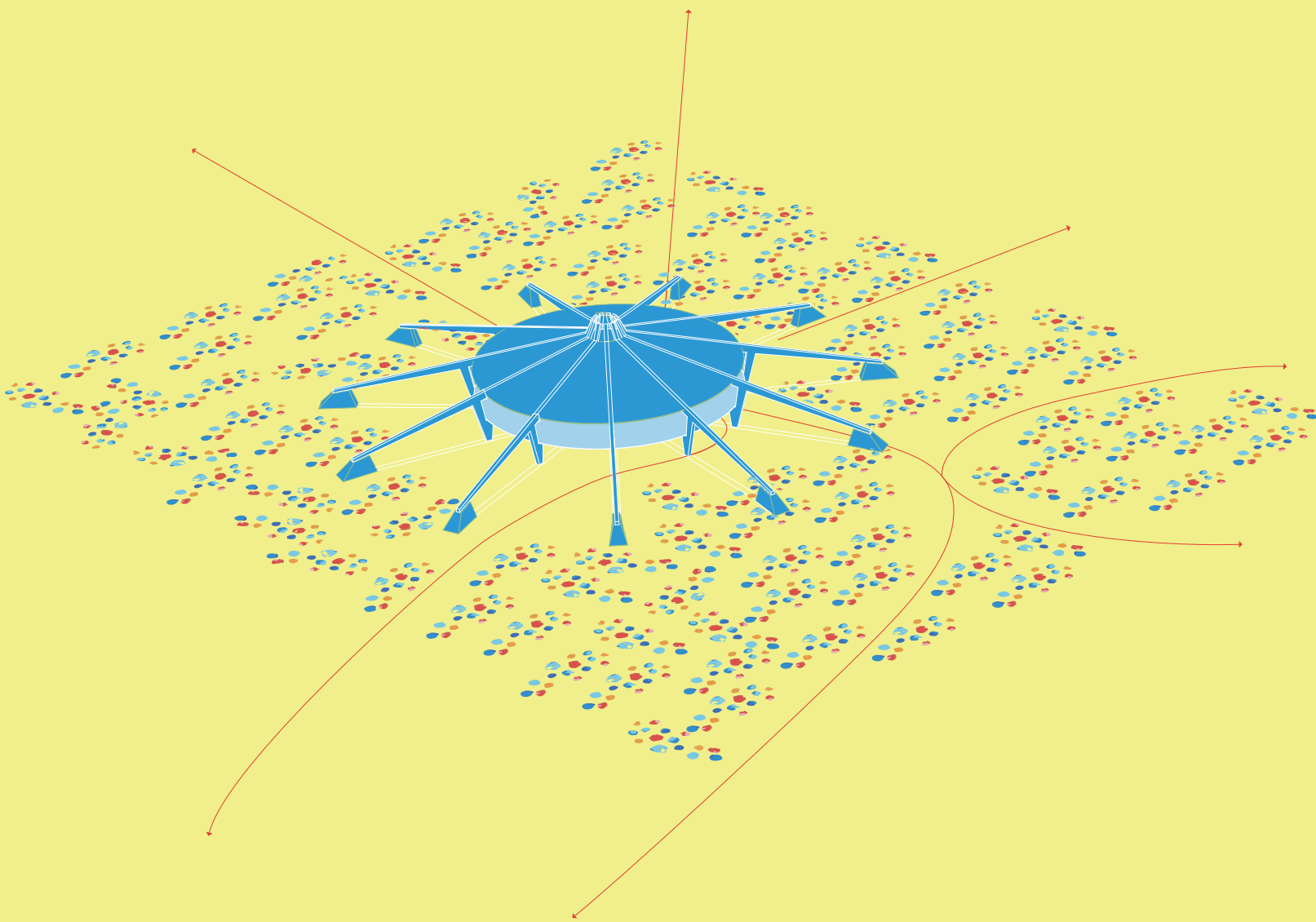




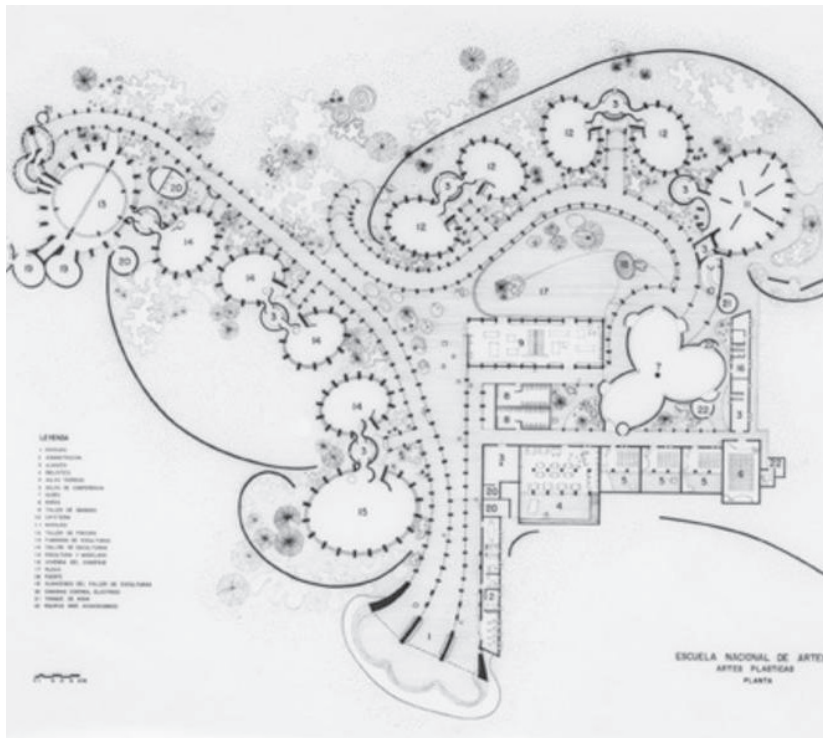
- Opening ground plan
- Public gathering space for music, art, protest and more

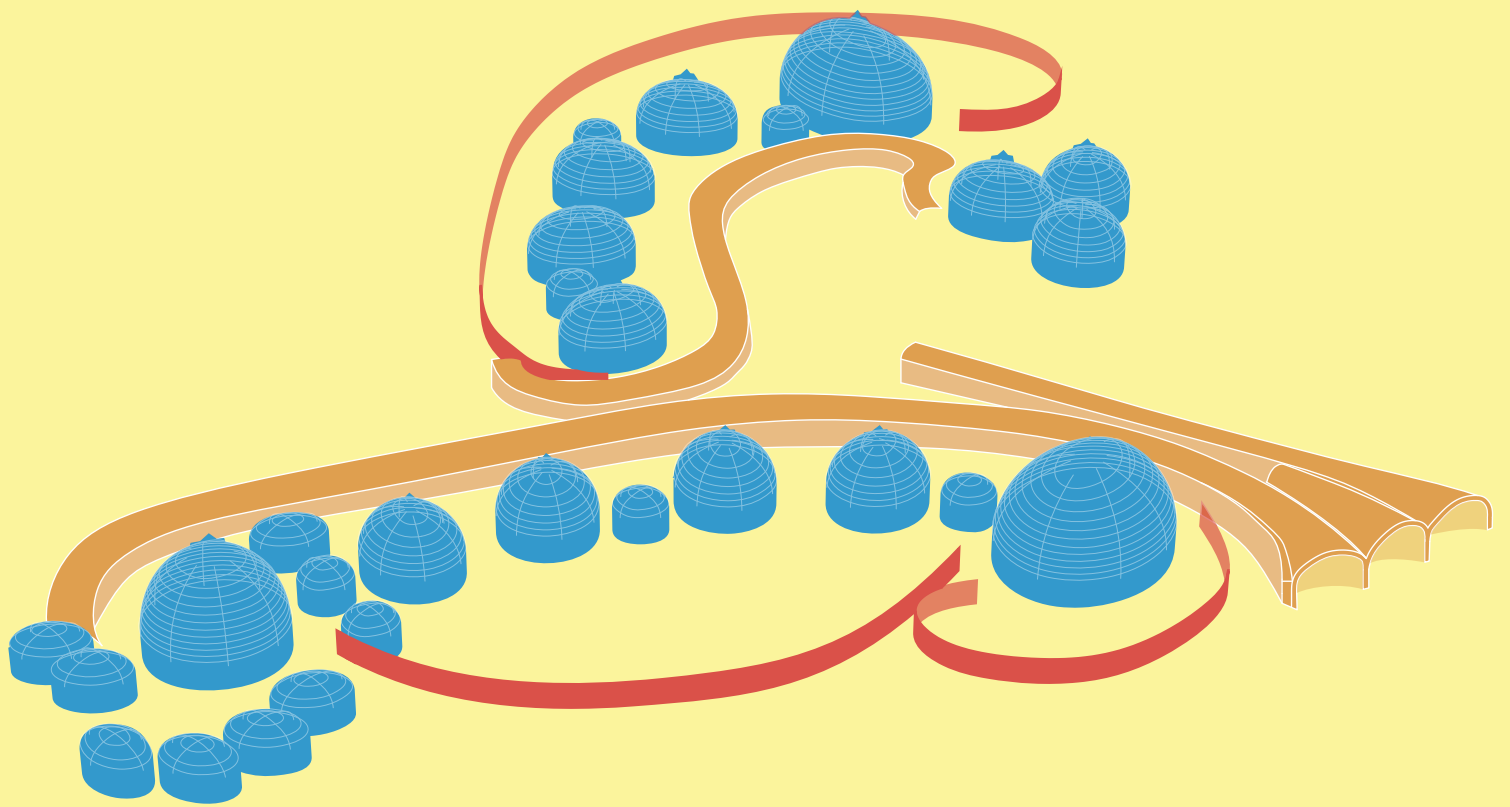
**Coppelia, Havana**  
**Mario Girona**  
**1965-1966**





**National School of Arts, Havana**  
**Richard Porro**  
**1961-1964**





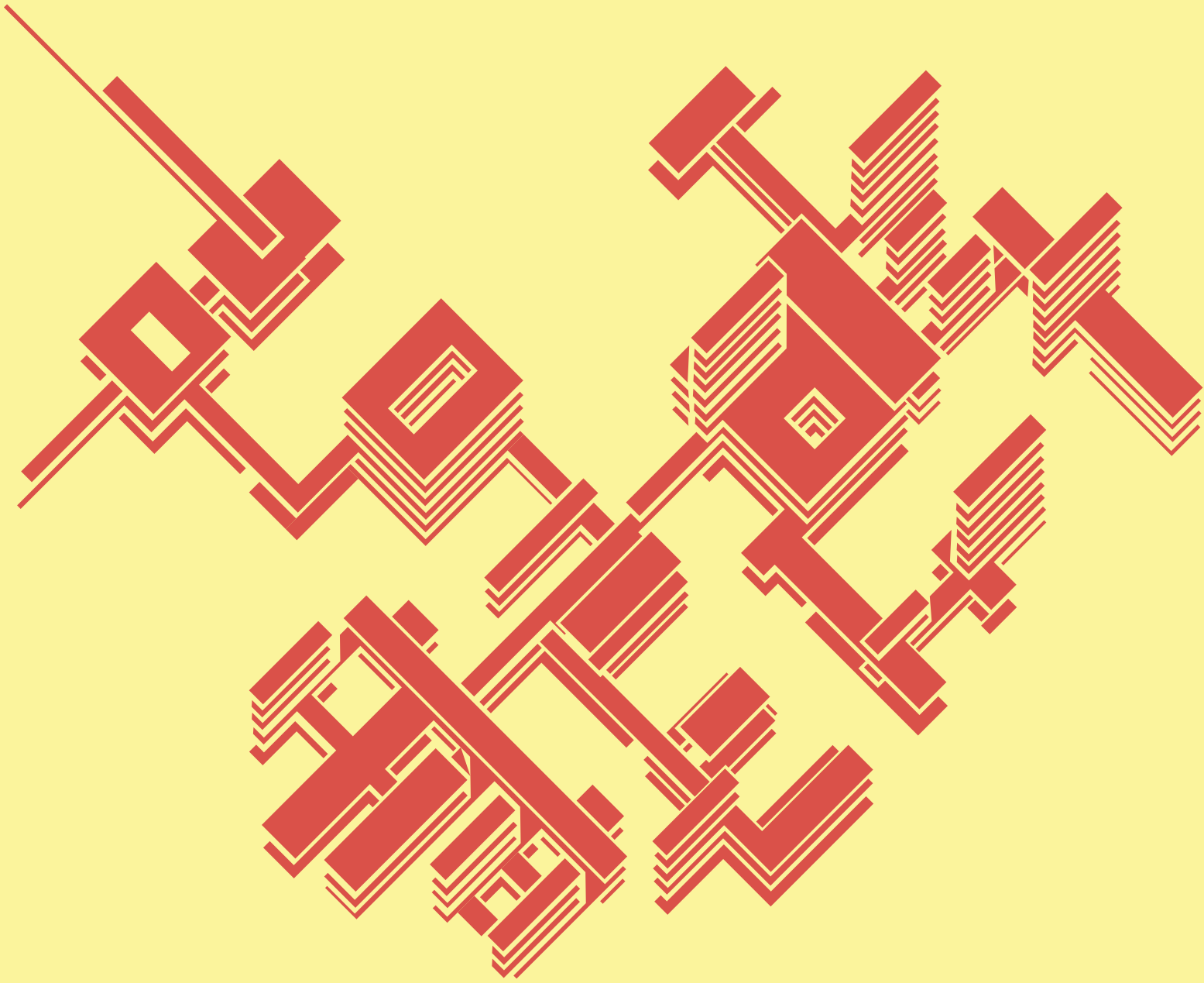
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ISLAND FRIENDS

**Instituto Superior Politécnico José Antonio Echeverría (CUJAE)**  
**Humberto Alonso, José Fernandez, Et Al.**  
**1960s**







# The Cuba Embargo: Power, Politics, and Control

*Whereas the United States, in accordance with its international obligations, is prepared to take all necessary actions to promote national and hemispheric security by isolating the present Government of Cuba and thereby reducing the threat posed by its alignment with the communist powers...*

*~Presidential Proclamation No. 3447 February 3, 1962*

## Introduction

1959 ushered into Cuba a new Communist and revolutionary government, led by Fidel Castro, but also marked the beginning of what would become a total embargo on all imports and exports from the United States to the island nation. Still in effect today and having survived eleven U.S. presidential administrations, the U.S. Embargo on Cuba is the longest running economic sanctions program administered by Washington. The trade embargo on Cuba was a political policy born out of geo-political territorial anxieties – is Communism coming to the Americas? – with the most explicit goal of ousting the nascent revolutionary regime. Through methods of isolation and containment, the embargo has sought to dry up the Cuban economy. However, throughout its 56-year history, the success of the embargo has ebbed and flowed and the goals have become murkier. This paper will examine the origins and fundamental legislative elements of the U.S. sanctions against

Cuba as well as frame these policies in the context of contemporary discourse about territory, state building, borders, and geopolitical power. Furthermore, it will view the policy of economic sanctions as an alternative method to military action but with a similar goal of inciting political upheaval and re-defining territorial relationships.

## History and Territory

In *Economic Warfare: Sanctions, Embargo Busting, and Their Human Cost*, Naylor argues the historic link between military and economic warfare.<sup>1</sup> Despite some attempts throughout history (notable the 1909 London Declaration) to separate private wealth from military conflict, economic sanctions and embargoes remained key aspects of military conflicts in modern times. Naylor argues, however, that WWII marked the first use of unrestricted economic warfare and the first time no effort was made to separate civil and military sectors.<sup>2</sup> Stuart Elden, author of *Land, Terrain, Territory*, acknowledges a similar historical relationship. Siting Jeffrey Anderson's

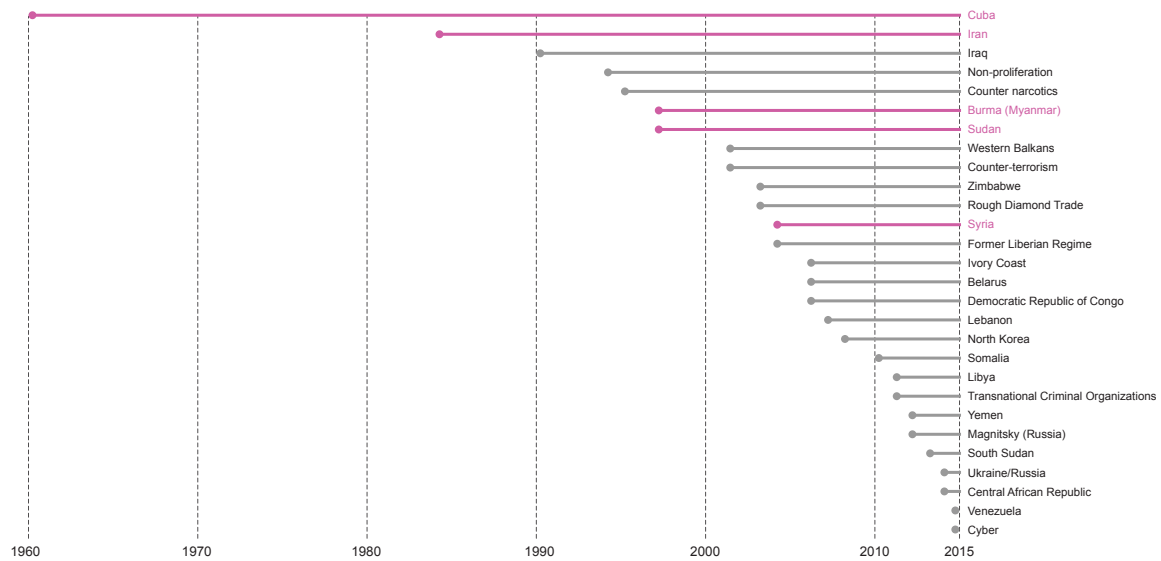


Figure 1: U.S. sanctions programs; comprehensive in pink and targeted in gray (source: cfr.org)

work, he discusses the historical link between territory and conflict, especially within feudalism systems.<sup>3</sup> Within this political system, possession of land and property are directly correlated to power thereby making land the “site and stake of struggle.”<sup>4</sup> This way of understanding territory places an emphasis on defending known borders and mapping land with a militaristic eye. When looking at the U.S. embargo on Cuba and the politics behind it, however, military conflict was taken off the table very early on. In place of an on-the-ground conflict, U.S. sanctions exercised their power through extraterritorial laws – what amounts to a post WWII ideology.

The economic sanctions on Cuba and their extraterritorial effects show the changing relevance of geopolitical boundaries as foundations for imposing power. For Elden, space does not become possible through the creation of boundaries. On the contrary, boundaries and how we imagine space are politically and historically connected. He calls into question the idea of territory as a bounded space and argues that territory is in fact a political tool for measuring and controlling space. This would suggest, then,

that territory is neither finite nor inflexible. Rather, depending on the historical moment and the political powers at play, the state’s territory (and the territory it wishes to control) would be different. In his own words: “Territory is a historical question: produced, mutable and fluid.”<sup>5</sup>

1. Naylor describes the long historical link between military campaigns and economic warfare starting from the 16th century through WWII in “Chapter One: Mightier Than the Sword?” of *Economic Warfare: Sanctions, Embargo Busting, and Their Human Cost*.  
 2. Naylor, R.T. *Economic Warfare: Sanctions, Embargo Busting, and Their Human Cost*. Boston:

Northeastern University Press, 1999. p19.  
 3. Elden, Stuart. “Land, Terrain, Territory.” *Progress in Human Geography* 34, no 6 (December 1, 2010). p806.  
 4. Elden, 806.  
 5. Elden, 812.

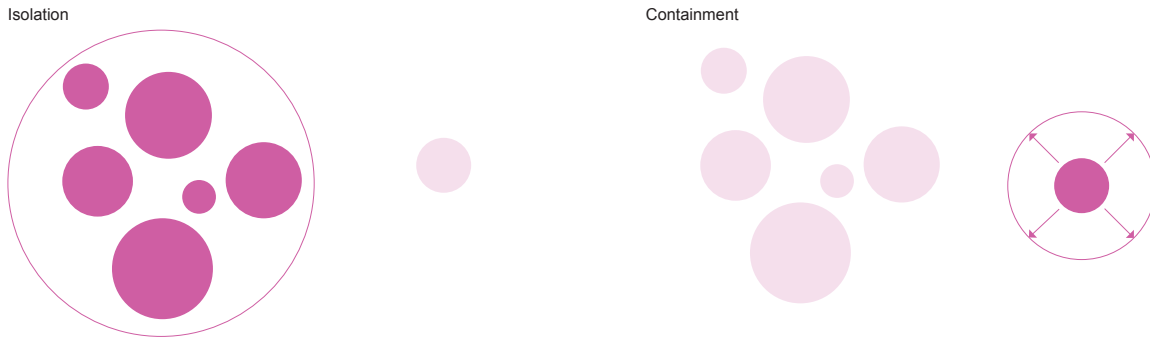


Figure 2: General embargo strategies

For Elden, then, it would be necessary to put the Cuba embargo, and the territorial and political goals supporting it, in a historical context.

### Production of an economic island

Popular sanctions theory in the mid-twentieth century would have predicted success of the embargo. Cuba was essentially supported by one crop (three-quarters of the country's arable land was dedicated to sugar production) and U.S. companies owned 40 percent of farms and 55 percent of mills.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, in the years before the revolution, Cuba was deeply dependent on the U.S. for both imports and exports. The country sent nearly 69 percent of its exports to the U.S. and imported between 60 and 65 percent of its needs from the U.S.<sup>7</sup> In addition to the intimate trade relationship between the two countries, Cuba also served as a home for the U.S. mob. Fulgencio Batista, elected President turned dictator, offered subsidies and tax breaks to mob organizations who in turn owned and profited from Cuban resorts, casinos, and prostitution rings frequented by the American rich.

In 1959, all of this changed. Through a quick series of sanctions and retaliations, the so-called blockade halted all exports and imports to Cuba from the U.S. by 1960. It is important to quickly summarize the escalation that produced the embargo in order to introduce the key global players and to understand the level and thoroughness of the sanctions imposed:

- Prior to 1959: U.S. companies located in Cuba import and refine Venezuelan crude oil.
- 1960: Cuba trades sugar for Soviet oil. The U.S. then orders U.S. refineries in Cuba to refuse to process the Soviet crude. Cuba retaliates by nationalizing all U.S. owned refineries.
- U.S. bans imports of Cuban sugar.
- Castro makes a sugar deal with Moscow and then nationalizes all other U.S. economic interests in Cuba.
- The U.S. bans all trade to and from Cuba and blacklists all non-U.S. firms and ships that did business with Cuba. (For the first time, other countries are punished for trade with Cuba.)
- Later, U.S. would pressure international organizations such as the IMF and World Bank from providing credit to Cuba as well as forbidding U.S. citizens from visiting the island.<sup>8</sup>

6. Chomsky, Aviva. *A History of the Cuban Revolution*. Chichester, West Sussex, U.K.; Malden, Mass.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011. p46.

7. Kaplowitz, Donna Rich. *Anatomy of a Failed Embargo*. Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998. p31.

8. Naylor, 183-184. Naylor describes the lead-up to the complete US Embargo in more detail in this section of the book.

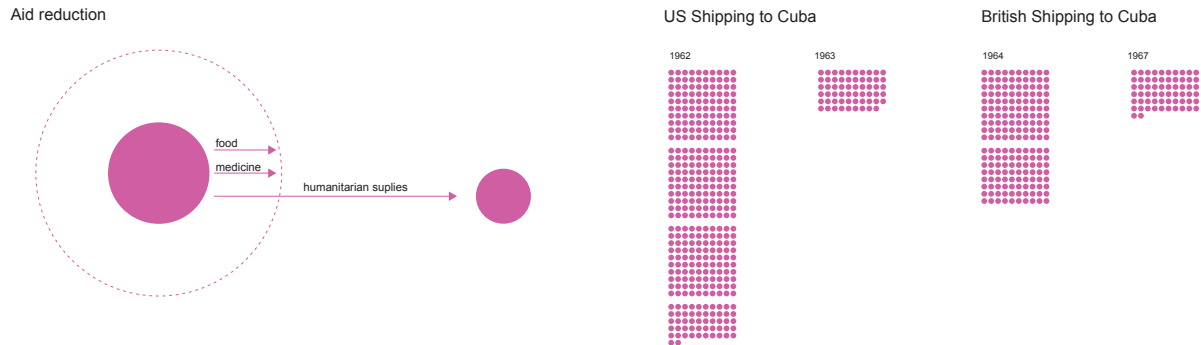


Figure 3: Examples of U.S. sanction effects

The staggering level of economic dependency of Havana on Washington by 1959 suggested that economic sanctions would have an immediate and devastating effect on the country. The policy, founded on economic isolation and containment, first and foremost aimed to create an internal unrest that would push Castro out. In reality, it soon became evident that the effectiveness of the embargo, in both the short and long term, would rely on multilateral support: U.S. sovereignty alone would not be enough to oust Castro or stamp out the Cold War threat of Communism. From a Foucauldian perspective, this fact illustrates a changing relationship between nation-states and the breadth and depth of their power.

### Questioning borders and the emergence of empire

In Chapter 3 of *Border Politics: The Limits of Sovereign Power*, Vaughn-Williams expands his argument about the increasing irrelevance of the inside/outside dichotomy of territory by bringing in aspects of Foucault's theories on territory and geography described in *Power/Knowledge*. Vaughn-Williams writes, "Foucault's reconfigured treatment of power is not in terms of something that can be 'possessed', or kept in a container such as the modern sovereign territorially bordered state, but rather as something that circulates through networks, capillaries, bodies, actions, attitudes, discourse, learning processes and everyday lives."<sup>9</sup> This understanding of

territory pushes us to re-imagine the limits of the power of the state and, taking a Foucauldian viewpoint, suggests state power in global politics do not align with the cartographic borders of nation states.

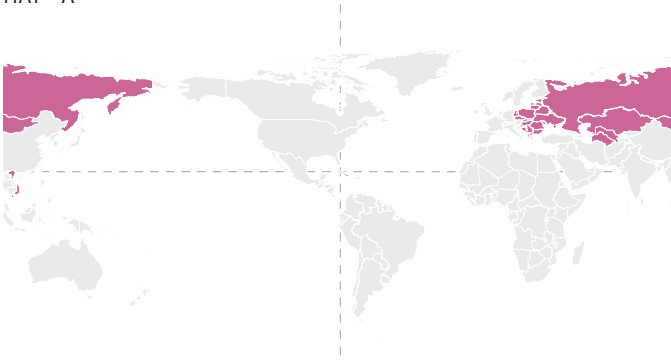
In 1961, the Kennedy administration sought to assassinate Castro and led the Bay of Pigs Invasion. The campaign was a disastrous failure for the U.S. and led, in part, to the Cuban Missile Crisis the following year. The Missile Crisis was a pivotal political moment and was resolved when the Soviets agreed to remove missiles from Cuba in exchange for a promise that the U.S. would halt all military campaigns in the country. Thus, trade and credit sanctions became the remaining tool for punishing Cuba and sending a broader anti-revolutionary message to Latin America. Yet, soon after the Missile Crisis, the U.S. was forced to confront the limits of its power (especially in acting alone) and quickly sought support beyond its geographical, Euclidean borders and realized the power of economic sanctions would rely on creating a broad network that shared its anti-Cuba sentiment.

As imports and exports were already nearly completely blocked, the U.S. moved to weaken Cuba by gaining the support of other national and transnational groups. An early and important step to gaining multilateral support for trade sanctions came in 1962 when the OAS (Organization of American States) voted to expel Cuba, a founding member, due to the country's declared allegiance to Marxism and the incompatibility of the regime with the interests of the Americas.<sup>10</sup>

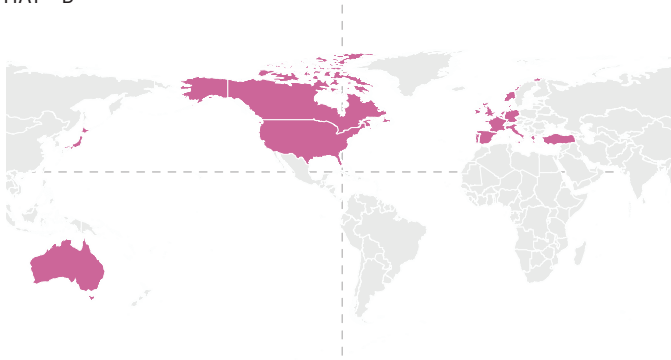
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PAPER 1: THE EMBARGO

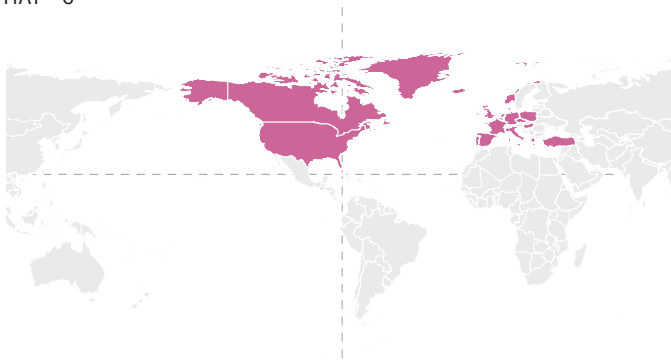
MAP A



MAP B



MAP C



MAP D

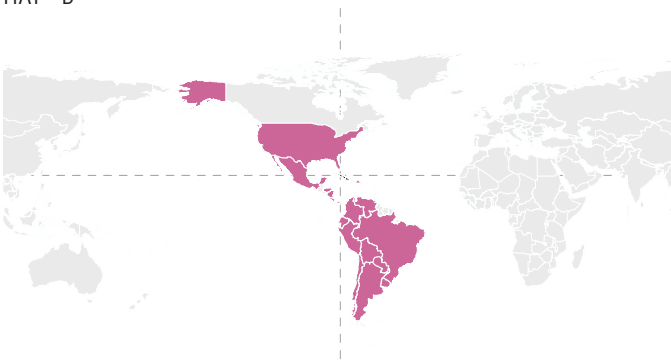


Figure 4: Transnational trade organizations showing north-south and east-west geopolitical relationships and the importance of a multilateral approach.

MAP A. COMECON  
Cuba joined the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance in 1972 thereby gaining much needed economic support from the Soviet Union

MAP B. COCOM  
The Coordinating Committee for Multilateral Export Controls was founded during the Cold War in order to put an arms embargo on COMECON countries

MAP C. NATO 1999  
NATO will oppose the Helms-Burton Act on grounds that it lacks foundation in international law

MAP D. OAS 1962  
In 1962, Cuba is voted out of the OAS and two years later, the organization joins in regional trade sanctions against Cuba, an effort led by the U.S.

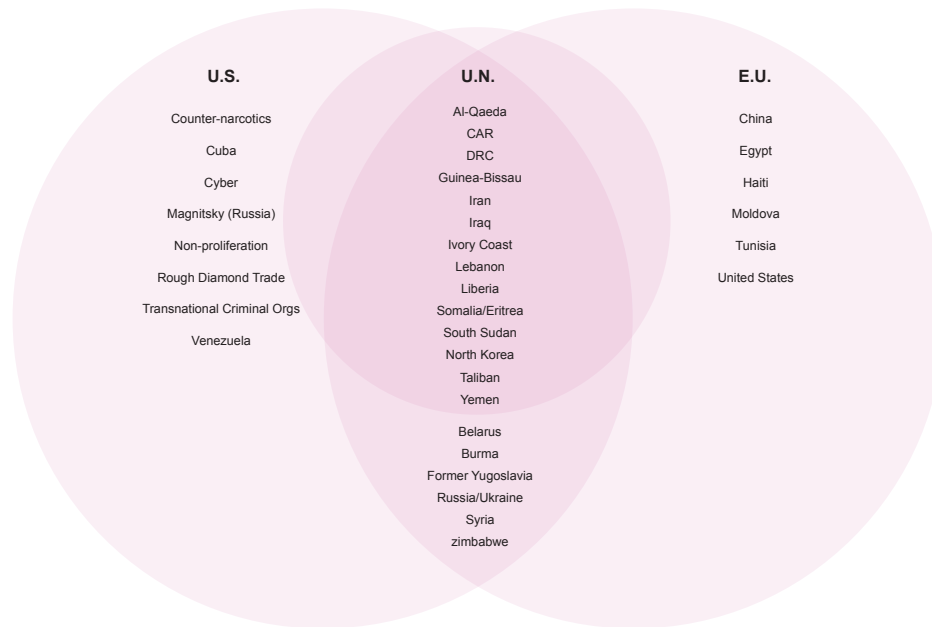


Figure 5: Sanction regimes (source: crf.org)

Two years later, OAS joined the U.S. in the regional trade sanctions against Cuba. The involvement of OAS was then used to try to convince NATO of the validity of the sanctions program.<sup>11</sup> In 1972, Cuba joined COMECON, an economic organization led by the Soviet Union. This, in turn, allowed the U.S. to gain support from Co-Com (Coordinating Committee for Multilateral Controls), a western bloc organization created to put an arms embargo on COMECON countries. The weaving together of these various transnational organizations illustrates the complexity of global trade markets and the dependency of even a large country such as the U.S. on global flows of capital.

Hardt and Negri's philosophical writings in *Empire* may also be useful in understanding the U.S. strategy to involve multiple transnational groups – the OAS, CoCom, the UN, the WMF, NATO etc. – and framing the embargo as a territorial question. Hardt and Negri begin by making a case for the fading out of imperialist logic in favor of what they call empire. For Hardt

and Negri, previous understandings of imperialism no longer relate to the contemporary political landscape. They argue, “Whereas the imperialist order was ‘primarily based on the sovereignty of the nation-state extended over foreign territory’ a new form of sovereignty is said to have emerged: a ‘network power’ that includes nation-states but also ‘supranational institutions, major capitalist co-operations, and other powers.’”<sup>12</sup>

9. Vaughan-Williams, Nick. *Border Politics: The Limits of Sovereign Power*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009. p81.  
10. Council on Foreign Relations. Accessed May 25, 2016. [http://www.cfr.org/americas/organization-](http://www.cfr.org/americas/organization-american-states/p27945)

[american-states/p27945](http://www.cfr.org/americas/organization-american-states/p27945)  
11. Kaplowitz, 78.  
12. Vaughn-Williams, 83.  
13. Vaughn-Williams, 88.

The extent of the success of the embargo on Cuba is in many respects thanks to what Hardt and Negri would call “smooth space” of the American empire. The production of this space is reliant on the emergence of the world market and the success of capitalism across the globe.<sup>13</sup> For them, the ‘smooth space’ of empire is defined explicit as having no boundaries and no limits and is made possible by the diminishing power of territorial borders as they have been historically understood. Yet, in the case of the Cuba embargo, the reliance on smooth space did not add up to immediate multilateral support. In fact, much of the support the U.S. received was gained through enacting extraterritorial laws on third-party countries and leveraging the U.S.’s power in global capitalist markets.

While there are many examples of U.S. extraterritorial laws relating to the embargo, two stand out as prime examples of what Hardt and Negri might call empire. In May 1966, the U.S. Congress passed the Food for Peace Act. This act outlawed food aid to any country that sold or shipped strategic or non-strategic goods to Cuba, with the provision that the president could make exceptions for medical supplies or specific non-strategic goods. This law impacted India, Pakistan, Yugoslavia, Poland and many Latin American countries that would become ineligible to receive food aid from the U.S.<sup>14</sup> While this law did not extend U.S. laws to other countries (as with other laws relating to the embargo did), it successfully linked third-party countries to U.S. sanctions policy and disrupted the flow of capital to and from Cuba.

Secondly, in 1996 during the Clinton administration, the so-called Helms-Burton law (also known as the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act) was passed. While the law is long and complex, a key component is Title III, which made liable in U.S. courts anyone who “traffics” property confiscated by the Cuban government after January 1, 1959.<sup>15</sup> Kaplowitz summarizes this extraterritorial implications: “The U.S. court is therefore exercising jurisdiction over actions of a foreign company that took place in a foreign land for the benefit of someone who was the time

of loss, a foreign citizen.”<sup>16</sup> Not surprisingly, this law met international disapproval, notably by the EU and WTO, with the claim that the extraterritorial extension of U.S. legal jurisdiction was unfounded in international law. Nevertheless, both Helms-Burton and the Food for Peace act show the U.S.’s consistent effort to make the embargo multinational and intertwine global markets with its own sanctions policy.

### **Spatialization of social and political forces in Cuba**

In many ways, the U.S. Embargo on Cuba has failed, namely as it did not achieve its original goal of overthrowing Castro. Using Lefebvre’s notion of the state’s relationship to space as a foundation, this final section will look at the spatialization of social and political forces within Cuba as a result of the embargo. Lefebvre writes that the state relates itself to space by controlling a physical space, a social space and a mental space. On social spaces, he says, “Social space then assumes the form of a collection of ghettos: for the elite, for the bourgeoisie, for the intellectuals, for foreign workers, etc... [These spaces] are hierarchized in a way that represents spatially the economic and social hierarchy, dominant sectors, and subordinate sectors.”<sup>17</sup>

What is interesting is that while Lefebvre writes from a Marxist standpoint and is highly critical of capitalism, the methods of state control he describes are quite relevant to the political methods of Cuba under Castro. As the grip and impact of the embargo tightened, and as the Soviet Union withdrew subsidies in the 1980s, the Cuban government sought to maintain the reproduction of the status quo by organizing space via the creation of ghettos, the creation of places based on power relationships, and by controlling the entire system of production - precisely Lefebvre’s terms.

To manage the effects of the embargo, the Castro government produced ‘ghettos’ and hierarchized spaces by moving masses of people into state housing (thereby combining the labor force and controlling reproduction) and introducing



a two-currency system in the 1990s. The latter had particularly strong effects on the national economy and the stratification of society into two classes, a result that, of course, directly opposes the Communist goals. With the goal to encourage Cubans living in Florida to send cash (and avoid remittance laws) that could then be captured by the government, Castro formalized the American dollar in 1994.<sup>18</sup> This led to the creation of dollar stores, which sold “luxury goods” as well as basic items, versus pesos stores, which operated only in national pesos. This system created a two-class system that persists today: there are those who only have access to Cuban national pesos (CUP) and are therefore at the mercy of government pricing and those who have access to the convertible pesos (1 CUC = 1 USD) and dollar-based sectors mostly related to foreign investment and tourism. In effect, this two-currency system funnels capital and commodities to a very narrow sector of the Cuban population. Spatially, it has produced a clearly hierarchy of spaces as certain stores or businesses only operate in what amounts to USD.

### Conclusion

At the beginning of the sanctions program, the U.S. viewed Cuba as an ideological and literal island – a nation that could be easily quarantined due to its geography and small economy. On the other hand, Cuba was an important symbol of Communism, Latin American revolution, and the global threat of the Soviet Union. The way in which Cuba belonged to or represented several political ‘territories’ (national, regional, global) very much influenced the policies of sanctions placed upon it and illustrates contemporary debates about national borders, such as, where are national borders today and how are they controlled? The complex and changing politics of the sanctions against Cuba reveal how, in the contemporary moment, we must question the relevance of political borders and sovereignty of nation states. Thus far, the economic sanctions have not succeeded in toppling the regime but, perhaps unexpectedly, did re-create many

conditions of pre-revolutionary Cuba such as the importance of the black market and bureaucratic corruption. It also deeply stratified the country into two classes and has, without a doubt, weakened the flow of capital to Cuba and diminished the country’s ability to form its own extraterritorial allegiances or networks.

14. Kaplowitz, 70.

15. For more on the effect of the Helms-Burton law, see Chapter 8 of *Anatomy of a Failed Embargo* (Kaplowitz) or Chapter 4 of *Failed Sanctions* (Spadoni).

16. Kaplowitz, 180.

17. Lefebvre, Henri. “Space and the State (1978).” In *State, space, world: selected essays*, edited by Neil Brenner and Stuart Elden.

Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009. p244.

18. Naylor, 196.

# Planning Havana, Planning Cuba: Two planning projects, one pre and one post 1959



## Town Planning Associates

Between 1955-58, Town Planning Associates alongside Junta Nacional de Planificación (JNP) developed a grand re-imagining of Havana known as the Plan Piloto de la Habana. Josep Lluís Sert (a Spanish architect living in exile in New York) and Paul Lester Wiener, an American architect and urban planner, were the key designers of the project. Wiener visited Havana in 1955 and again in 1956. Each time, he worked out of the JNP offices while also staying in close contact with Town Planning Associates in New York, where many of the drawings for the master plan were done. This is significant as Wiener not only worked in the JNP office, but he was also instrumental in defining the scope of the proj-

ect (i.e. what maps should be drawn and what research should be conducted).<sup>1</sup> The choice to hire a North American office for the re-design is not surprising (Figure 1) but it did guarantee a heavy American and western European influence on the design priorities and aesthetics of the new master plan for Old Havana.

The Pilot Plan for Havana was one of nearly a dozen master plans produced by the office for various Latin American cities in this time (such as Chimbote, Peru and Bogota, Colombia). The plan is also a clear manifestation of many of the ideas Sert wrote about in *Can Our Cities Survive?* (1942) and of the proposals put forth by the International Congresses for Modern Architecture (CIAM). For Sert, “every city is composed of cells” and these cells should be put into “some

kind of system or relationship.”<sup>2</sup> He also believed the condition of the urban environment, if left to continue without intervention, had grave consequences for its citizens. In the early pages of *Can Our Cities Survive?*, he describes the “widespread attitude of resignation” and the “persistence of a disorganized and chaotic city life.”<sup>3</sup> In this context of a disastrous urban condition, Sert inserted himself as the architect/planner that could resolve the city’s problems through grids, order, hierarchy, and control.

Put in the context of CIAM and Sert’s personal beliefs on the city, one can view the Pilot Plan for Havana as a test of much larger concepts for bettering society and the life of all mankind through the knowing hand of the planner and architect. Sert was not humble with his aspirations and perhaps his moral stance towards urban planning allowed him to make sweeping gestures, such as demolition of entire neighborhoods (which will be discussed in the following sections). For both Wiener and Sert, the order and sequence willfully enforced in the Havana plan are also key elements of their entire planning strategy. And, for them, conceptual order must manifest in formal order.

### Who Benefits: Capitalism?

When first looking at Town Planning Associates and JNP’s proposal for Old Havana (Figure 2), two urban moves immediately stand out: first, a dramatic north-south and east-west road system that divides the area more or less into four parts and second, a large cluster of high-rise buildings running along the north-south axis.

The political implications of these two moves alone are huge. The small key on the bottom left indicates that the central high-rise buildings are meant to be “Zona Bancaria” or a new banking district (think Wall Street meets Havana). Immediately, the priorities of the planners is made clear: led by an American design and planning office, Old Havana was intended to be converted into a modern, capitalistic and capital city. The financial core serves as a backbone for Old Havana: the drawings suggests this area supports the

surrounds in the way it shows narrower strips of yellow, orange and green radiating off this central, thick superblock area. The scale of the bank buildings, their grouping along the dominant axis of the area, and the representational technique of rendering them with shadows point to the planners aim to highlight and glorify this the towering aspirations of the American-back capital city.

Furthermore, the planners are proposing a near scorched earth campaign model of re-building the historic city center. In the context of CIAM and western/American planning trends in the 1950s, Sert and Wiener intend to re-model Old Havana with a utopic vision towards ordered and productive urban life. For them, an important part of this re-modeling was “improving” or upgrading the road system. In the regional map of Central Havana (Figure 3) the key indicates roads are categorized according to “The Rule of 7V” devised by Le Corbusier and made famous through his Chandigarh project. In Old Havana, the large roads are categorized as V3. This European categorization of road types, which is extremely hierarchical, is a clear imposition of American and western notions of order, code and structure onto the map of Havana and onto the Cuban culture at large.

### Who Benefits: Housing?

By closely examining the plan and section diagrams of the proposed new block system for Old Havana (Figure 4), one can begin to see whom this master plan may benefit and whom it may not. The title of the diagrams is, “New Arrangement of Blocks: Rehabilitation Preserving

1. Hyde, Timothy. *Constitutional Modernism: Architecture and Civil Society in Cuba, 1933-1959*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2012. Pg 139.  
2. Mumford and

Sarkis, 58.  
3. Sert, José Luis. *Can Our Cities Survive?* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1947. Pg 2.

Existing Subdivision.”

Here we can see a desire to impose the rigidity of the grid over an irregular block formation that developed over centuries. What is striking about these drawings is the insistence on the square block (or *cuadra*) while simultaneously insisting on the existence of prior and irregular lot lines. Despite a formally aggressive plan to rebuild this district, there's a subtle recognition of preceding ownership rights that may point to a struggle the planners underwent while trying to re-configure this historically complex part of the city.

What is not shown in these neatly drawn and colored diagrams is the destruction and displacement of current residents of Old Havana, a part of the city which has remained densely populated to present day. At the ground floor, the plan suggests removing at least three whole buildings to make way for parking in addition to excavating space for small atriums for the third, fourth and fifth floors. The drawings suggest a nice internal lighting effect for interior rooms but they neglect to show the floor area lost per block and in turn how residents will be removed or moved. The planners seem interested in maintaining the plaza typology and depict a tree-filled internal courtyard. Yet, on closer inspection, the trees are actually covering car parking and in reality, the internal courtyard “park” would not be a place for residents or the public to convene.

The *cuadra* and patio typology can also be discussed in terms of Sert's broader theories on urban planning. As done in the other master plans for Latin American cities, Sert created for Havana two models for a typical residential housing block or unit. The “carpet model” relied on the aggregation of blocks with central patios to create an organized and legible texture for the city.<sup>4</sup> A civic or communal building would surround each patio and Sert hoped each patio would become an essential public epicenter. It is crucial to see, however, that this plan encloses public space and cuts it off from the sidewalk and pedestrian life. In a description of the importance of patios, Sert and Wiener write, “The patio becomes the predominant architec-

tural feature in these designs. They range from the patio for the one-family dwelling to those between apartments or row houses, to the public neighborhood patios of the small local square... or squares of the main urban or metropolitan cores.”<sup>5</sup> For Sert, the patio can be implemented at any scale and for nearly any urban/public function (it can equally well serve the single-family and the entire metropolitan public). The singularity of this solution raises suggests that for Sert, the public and collective realms of urban design could be handled in the exact same manner.

Additionally, what is embedded in these diagrams is the politically motivated desire to change housing in a way that privileges the car (an American import) while devaluing public civilian life. What jumps out from the plan diagram are the large orange areas which represent the widened street width (from one to four lanes!) and the insertion of decent sized parking lots throughout the historic city center. Furthermore, the design of the housing blocks creates a columned arcade on the ground floor. While in one way this widens the pedestrian area, it also

4. Mumford, Eric and Hashim Sarkis with Neyran Turan. Josep Lluís Sert: The Architect of Urban Design, 1953-1969. New Haven and London: Yale University Press and Harvard School of Design, 2008. Pg 68.  
5. Sert and Wiener, “The Work of Town Planning Associates in Latin America, 1945-1956.” Architectural Design (June 1957): 191. Quoted by Hyde, Mumford Sarkis 69.  
6. Hyde. Pg 199.

7. Mumford and Sarkis, 65.  
8. Eckstein, Susan Eva. Back from the Future. Cuba Under Castro. New York: Routledge, 2003. Pg 150.  
9. Chomsky, Aviva. A History of the Cuban Revolution. West Sussex, England: Blackwell Publishing, 2011. Pg 53.  
10. Segre, Roberto and Maria Coyula and Joseph L. Scarpaci. Havana: Two Faces of the Antillean Metropolis. West Sussex, England: John Wiley & Sons, 1997. Pg 134.  
11. Dyer, Donald

relegates the sidewalk to the space under a building, opposed to open to the or under an awning. This creates a seemingly oppressive pedestrian experience. From my time in Havana, I understand the street as a vibrant and active public space in which food is traded, residents walk, talk and simply observe their community (see photos after figures). Sert and Wiener may wish to reference the arcade and awning typologies of Havana's colonial past (hoping to be both climate and culturally sensitive);<sup>6</sup> however, the representation of this space in their proposal defines the sidewalk more as a void between buildings rather than an active and activated space for the public. For me, this highlights their misunderstanding of or indifference to residents' ways of life in favor of a structured and ordered system of urban life centered around the car.

#### Who benefits: History?

Sert's plan for Old Havana also shows a certain manipulation or exploitation of the past for capitalistic and financial desires and also reveals a complex relationship with historical monuments and landmarks. The planners understood the financial value of tourism for the city and therefore aimed to strategically "save" parts of picturesque, colonial Havana. On the other hand, Sert and Wiener, in their own writing, reveal some sensitivity toward the so-called "archaeological zones." They aim to "form charming streets, beautiful in scale, recalling the origins of the city."<sup>7</sup> This aim is confused by the imposition of the superblock and large banking institutions as discussed above. This juxtaposition shows Sert and Wiener's struggle (and perhaps a larger problem with CIAM ideology) to impose conceptual and formal order over areas with a long and complex architectural and cultural history.

In the Pilot Plan, in the northeast quadrant, two colonial plazas are marked as special landmarks for preservation (Plaza de la Catedral and Plaza de Armas). These areas are surrounded by yellow and green thus indicating easy pedestrian and park access. However, while the buildings directly on the plazas are marked blue (there-

fore preserved) the buildings behind them, even those on the same block, are gray (therefore converted to 5 level new housing). The preservation of the very bare minimum of the plazas (just enough to reference the colonial image for a foreign tourist) shows the politics of preservation at play. Wiener and Sert view preservation largely in terms of financial gains for the city and therefore prioritize a superficial preservation of a few plaza facades. (Coincidentally, this sort of preservation model did manifest in the 1980s and 1990s when the government restored the four main plazas of Old Havana while leaving neighboring buildings and streets in near ruin. This was partially a result of Old Havana being named a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1982.)

#### Post 1959: Planning Havana to Planning Cuba

The success of the 1959 Revolution and the installation of the Castro government sharply altered the course of urban planning and development in Cuba. It killed any possibility of the construction of the Sert and Wiener's Pilot Plan and while I was not able to find Castro's direct response to the Pilot Plan, it's clear from his political agenda and other quotes that he would have opposed the master plan. Almost immediately after coming into power, Castro began a mission to erase the disparities between the urban and rural following his own maxim: "A maximum of ruralism, a minimum of urbanism."<sup>8</sup> No longer was Havana the main priority for economic and infrastructural development. Rather, Castro took on a largely anti-urban stance thereby shifting the material and financial resources of the nascent government to the rural and agrarian areas.

R. "Urbanism in Cuba." *The Geographical Review*. Volume 47, No. 2 (April 1957): 224. Urban growth in Cuba grew from 47% to 57% between 1899 and 1953. In the

same time period in the U.S., urban populations grew from 44% to 64%.

While in many ways the economic restructuring of Cuba in the early 1960s (such as an attempt to abandon sugar production) deeply hurt the Cuban economy, there were clear successes to the tactics. Indeed, these early policies raised the quality of life for the poor and brought more schools, hospitals, and public infrastructures to completely rural areas of Cuba.<sup>9</sup> This change in policy had great implications on the preservation of Havana and other historical sites around the island.

The following sections will focus on the immediate post-revolutionary moment (1959-1963) and the effects of the new and sweeping socialist legislation on urban planning and most specifically, housing in East Havana (developed from early 1960s to 1970s). From the beginning, physical planning of Cuba was a key interest of state. Housing became a key aspect of state building as well as an important element in the anti-capitalist revolutionary narrative. In the first years of the Castro government, the state built 26,000 housing units.<sup>10</sup>

### Existing Conditions of Urbanization

To better understand the Castro government's policies towards housing, the capital city, and urban life, it is first essential to contextualize mid-twentieth century urbanization trends in Cuba. In 1953, 57% of Cubans lived in urban centers. Since 1899, the rate of urban growth had increased consistently and was actually increasing at a faster rate than in the United States.<sup>11</sup> Many factors, such as Post WWII industrialization and the rise of the sugar industry, contributed to this trend. For example, sugar manufacturing plants were constructed near towns which contributed to the growth of a more urbanized center.<sup>12</sup>

In conjunction with a nation-wide population shift towards urban areas, Cuba was, at the time, a country whose capital city greatly dominated the economy and population density. In 1957, Cuba was one of the world's ten top examples of greatest population concentration around the capital.<sup>13</sup> 13% of the population lived in Havana and 21% lived in the greater metropolitan area

(i.e. the shadow cities of Havana that were still tied to the economy of the capital city).<sup>14</sup> Again, there are many contributing factors to the population density around the capital city. Significantly, Havana continued to provide job opportunities (industrial and maritime) and greater access to services, such as schools and hospitals. When the Castro government came to power, it did what it could to promote the depopulation of Havana.

### Urban to Rural: Castro's Position (early years)

The housing and economic policies of Castro and Che were greatly influenced by the time they spent in the Sierra Maestra, a poor coffee region of far-south Cuba. In 1956, Castro, Che and 80 other revolutionaries landed, by boat, in Playa Las Coloradas and began the three-year process of hiding in the Sierra Maestra while building up their guerilla militia and winning support of the regions farmers. In fact, some have argued that it was while in the Sierra Maestra that the economic and social platform of the regime became concrete. Che Guevara said of moment: "We began to feel in our bones the need for a definitive change in the lives of these people. The idea of agrarian reform became clear, and communion with the people ceased being theory and became a fundamental part of our being."<sup>15</sup>

For Castro and Guevara, the countryside and rural life becomes deeply entrenched with the narrative of the revolution. The countryside becomes marked as a site of transformation and a certain type of purity. Castro is unabashedly willing to make judgments on the morality of urban versus rural life. He says,

"[The peasants] will show you what rural life in Cuba was: without roads, parks, electric lights, theaters, movies. ... They will teach you how living creatures had to suffer under exploitation from selfish interests. They will teach you what it is to have lived without sufficient food; they will teach you what it is to live without doctors and hospitals. They will teach you, at the same time, what is a healthy, sound, clean life; what is upright morality,

duty, generosity, sharing the little they have with visitors.”<sup>16</sup>

The regime’s deep admiration and respect for rural life (not to mention their gratitude for protection from the Batista government) had a critical impact when the revolution proved successful. Castro and Che’s allegiance to the countryside manifested into large-scale reform policies that truly influenced the lives of both urban and rural poor.

In addition to the Literacy Campaign and missions to re-educate Cuban urbanites and youth (through mass ‘work-education’ programs bringing urban youth to the countryside and rural students to the city on scholarship), Castro aimed to tackle housing problems in the early years of his regime. Below is a summary of early housing reforms:

Table 1: Selected Housing laws<sup>17</sup>

Law No.	Date	Purpose
26	1/26/1959	Stopped legal action against anyone who couldn’t pay their rent or mortgages
135	3/10/1959	Lowered rents by up to 50%
691	12/23/1959	Established the forced sale, at a set price, of vacant lots
892	10/14/1960	Urban Reform Law (in great detail, defined the country’s housing policies)

In the early 1960s, master plans for the development of the country called for a depopulation and decentralization of Havana. The government sought to achieve this by focusing agricultural and industrial development away from Havana and towards the rural and countryside areas. Yet, it was unsuccessful in that it left the Havana housing stock to deteriorate in spite of the fact that while the rate of densification slowed, the population of Havana still grew, thus exacerbating the housing problems.<sup>18</sup> This fact was made evident by the findings of a 1981 census report. The report determined that one half of the

526,000 housing units in Havana were average or below average quality. While this is shocking, what is more shocking is that of these units, 55,000 were built after 1959.<sup>19</sup> These statistics shows the failures of the Castro government to rectify the housing shortage and shows an overall weakening of construction standards post 1959 (likely due to lack of professionals and to lack of proper construction materials).

### Who benefits? Urban Dwellers vs. Rural Dwellers

Early housing programs promoted the demolition of entire shantytowns or slums and the mass-relocation of entire neighborhoods and communities. For example, a notoriously poor housing area, Las Yaguas in Havana, was completely destroyed and all its residents were moved as a group to another area.<sup>20</sup> However, it can be assumed that this program, guided by the Ministry of Social Welfare, was not entirely successful due to its short lifespan. Due to a lack of information and data collection at this time, the number of shantytowns that were demolished

12. Dyer, 226.

13. Dyer, 228.

14. Dyer, 228.

15. Chase, Michelle. “The Country and the City in the Cuban Revolution.”

Colombia Internacional 73.

(June 2011). Pg

127. The author quotes Guevara

from another book: Che Guevara.

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16. Chase, 132. The author quotes

Castro from another source: Address

by Fidel Castro

to the literacy

brigades at

Varadero, May 14,

1961, reproduced

in Castro speech

database.

17. Table copied

from Segre et al.,

187.

18. Coyula,

Mario. “Housing,

Urban Renewal and

Popular Power:

Some Reflections

on Havana.”

Berkeley Planning

Journal. Volume 2,

No. 1 (1985). Pg

42.

and the number of Cubans that were moved varies. To add some scale, though, Roberto Segre estimated that 33 shantytowns were demolished thus relocating 20,000 residents, a significant number.<sup>21</sup> Taking a closer look at the urban configuration of the housing projects in East Havana may suggest possible design problems of this political process.

In 1959, alongside construction projects in rural communities and newly acquired state-owned farms, the National Institute of Housing and Savings (INAV) built several important projects in East Havana.<sup>22</sup> These sites, particularly Ciudad Camilo Cienfuegos (Habana del Este) occupied prime real estate along Havana Bay. Not coincidentally, they also were the same sites that foreign architects (SOM, Oscar Niemeyer, José Luis Sert) had eyed for development of high-end luxury apartments prior to the Revolution.<sup>23</sup> It was also in line with Castro's thinking to build on this politically charged sites. In another instance, he commissioned construction of the new National Arts Schools on the grounds of the former Hilton Country Club (an elite and exclusive institution under Batista).

Ciudad Camilo Cienfuegos (later renamed Habana del Este) is an early result of Castro's urban planning and housing agendas (Figure 6 and 7). The project was built in 1961 and it was designed to house 8,000 residents in 1,306 apartments. The site is 28 hectares and all buildings were between 4 and 11 floors. The planners (led by Hugo D'Acosta-Calheiros) sought to optimize pedestrian accessibility within the complex by creating sub-neighborhoods. These sub-areas would have approximately 200 dwellings and then common services were located within a radius of 150 meters of these dwellings. Common services included schools, playgrounds, supermarkets and shopping areas.<sup>24</sup> The plan for the complex also makes two baseball fields central figures. They create a noticeably large void in the otherwise densely formulated plan. This perhaps suggests a desire to unify the seven sub-neighborhoods and also to allow for public recreation within such a large area.

While the Habana del Este complex, and

others, were aimed to house industrial workers and urban poor who had previously been living in shantytowns or slum areas, the master plan design closely follows the formal logic of middle-class housing developments being built in the U.S.<sup>25</sup> Perhaps more problematic were the reactions of some of the families uprooted from their previous homes and moved into these high-rise apartments. While these families were living in extremely poor conditions before moving to Havana East, they were also not used to apartment-style living and many reportedly moved away.<sup>26</sup> This is evidence of the potential problems with a centralized and inflexible master planning process. The utopian image produced by the state did not align with the lifestyles of its people. It is interesting to note that both Castro and Sert's urban planning strategies willingly dislocate large populations. While the motivations are different, in each case the state is imposing its power over the citizens for the "betterment" of society at large.

Additionally, when looking at the master plan for Habana del Este, one notices a double-ring road on the perimeter of the complex. Practically, this is meant to separate pedestrian life from the fast-moving vehicles on the highways. This condition is exacerbated by the fact that, due to geopolitical contingencies such as the Embargo, it is very uncommon to own a car in Cuba. Furthermore, the development of East Havana greatly slowed thus giving Habana del

19. Coyula, 46.

20. Chase, 136.

21. Segre et al., 131.

22. Segre, 144.

23. Eckstein, 154.

24. Zequeira,

María Elena Martín

and Eduardo

Luis Rodríguez

Fernández. *La*

*Havana: Guía de*

*Arquitectura.*

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y Transportes,

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de Arquitectura y

Vivienda, 1998.

Pg. 306

25. Eckstein, 154.

26. Eckstein, 154.

27. Coyula, 44.

28. Acosta, Maruja

and Jorge E.

Hardoy. *Translated*

*by Mal Bochner.*

*Urban Reform in*

*Revolutionary*

*Cuba.* New Haven:



Este the quality of an island (Figure 8). Sites both directly to the east and west (along the coast) remain undeveloped and the two large rotaries on the ocean-side to the north are conspicuously connecting Habana del Este to small-scale dirt roads. Even without this halt in development, the planning of the site and the double-border gives the complex a fortified and enclosed feeling. It is intentionally made unclear how one would cross the road or access this complex without a car. Once in the complex, the maze-like plan (lacking a grid), suggests residents would never need to leave the neighborhood, to go to the capital city or elsewhere.

As the housing complexes in East Havana were being constructed, the urban core (Old Havana, Central Havana and Vedado) was left, in essence, on its own. This contributed to accelerated deterioration of an historic city center as well as sites of cultural heritage. It also resulted in DIY urban 'solutions' (meaning residents have occupied vacant sites and were forced, especially as the Embargo tightened, to repair their homes with whatever materials they could find). Perhaps more critically, the loss of economic and financial support of Havana, in tandem with changes in ownership rights brought on by 1960 Law of Urban Reform, created "internal densification."<sup>27</sup> The Law of Urban Reform declared that ownership of an immovable object (apartment) would be passed on to other occupants, opposed to a family member. In this way, if a mother or father dies and s/he lives alone, the house will transfer to the state, even if the family members of the deceased live in far worse conditions. If the deceased happened to have a tenant at the time, however, the tenant would become legal owner of the house.

In effect, this made moving extremely difficult and has resulted in multiple generations squeezing together in a small apartments (often converting kitchens or dining areas to sleeping areas) as well as an informal system of posting apartment exchanges or available rooms on doors or along bus routes.<sup>28</sup> As Mario Coyula has rightly observed, these housing policies have in effect moved the shantytown-like quality of

life from the outskirts into the urban core.<sup>29</sup> Anecdotally, the difficulty moving or making even small house renovations persist today. The host of the casa particular (private, small hotel) I stayed at in January 2016 was saving money to send back to Santa Clara, where her daughter lives in her home. It was also common to see plastic buckets and PVC tubes hanging off windows to help with building drainage.

### Conclusion

The contrast between the Sert and Wiener Pilot Plan for Havana and the housing and agrarian policies for Cuba under Castro is extreme. The Pilot Plan, drafted on the eve of the Revolution, embraces the capital city as the economic and financial heart of the entire country. It is also a clear reflection of the idealist and utopian vision of CIAM, a vision in which planners and architects can solve society problems through the implementation of a totalizing grid. The Castro government, on the other side, shifted the resources of the state away from the cities in hopes of elevating the quality of life of the rural populations. While Castro did achieve some of the goals intended by policies such as the Urban Land Reform, he did not foresee how these sorts of policies would in turn hurt the urban infrastructure and the quality of life for the high populations living in cities such as Havana, Santa Clara, Santiago de Cuba and Cienfuegos.

Yale University  
Antilles Research  
Program, 1971. Pg.  
71.  
29. Coyula, 44.

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**Table 4.1.** Partial list of projects outside the U.S. completed by Purdy & Henderson Company, c. 1955.

Project	Location	Cost (\$)
U.S. Naval Operating Base	Bermuda	30,000,000
Palacio del Congreso (Cuban Capitol)	Havana	15,000,000
Sugar mills and related buildings	Cuba	8,000,000
Hotels (4)	Havana and Bahamas	7,300,000
Miscellaneous construction	Canada	5,000,000
Residences and other structures	Cuba	3,134,000
'Edificios' (11 office buildings)	Cuba	2,158,000
Banco Nacional de Cuba	Havana	2,000,000
Palacio del Centro Asturiano	Havana	2,000,000
Camp Las Casas (U.S. Army)	San Juan, Puerto Rico	2,000,000
Palacio del Centro Gallego	Havana	1,500,000
Royal Bank of Canada (18 branches)	Cuba	1,060,000
Royal Bank of Canada	Havana	1,000,000
Edificio Lonja del Comercio	Havana	1,000,000
Edificio La Metropolitana	Havana	1,000,000
Edificio Barraque	Havana	900,000
Banco Nacional de Cuba (12 branches)	Cuba	485,000
YMCA	San Juan, Puerto Rico	200,000
F.W. Woolworth	Havana	140,000
TOTAL		83,877,000

Figure 1:  
Highlights the high number of buildings done by American architectural offices in Cuba, in this case specifically Purdy & Henderson Company, pre-Revolution.

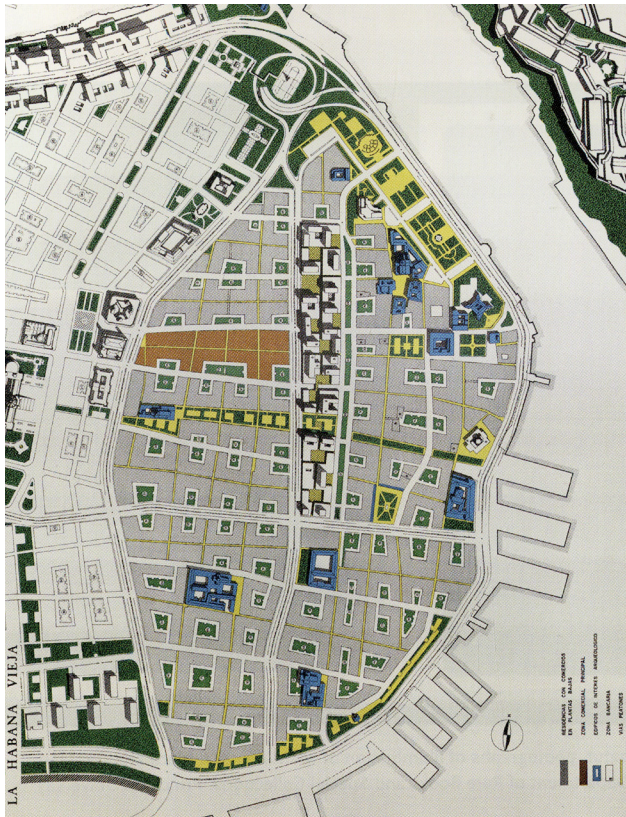


Figure 2:  
Town Planning Associates and JNP proposal for Old Havana

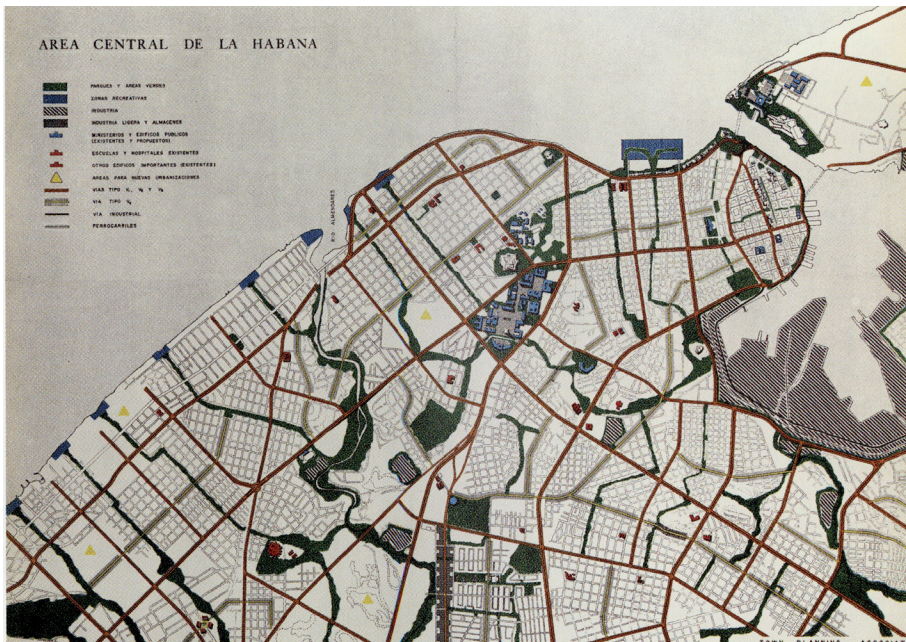


Figure 3: Central Area of Havana (Old Havana is in the north-east quadrant).

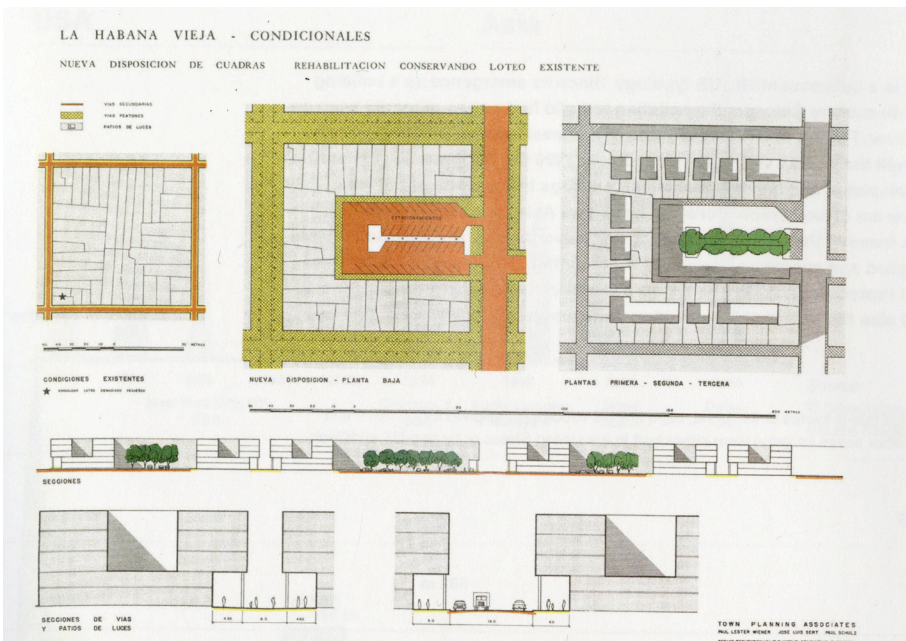


Figure 4: Diagram of typical renovation of block in Old Havana

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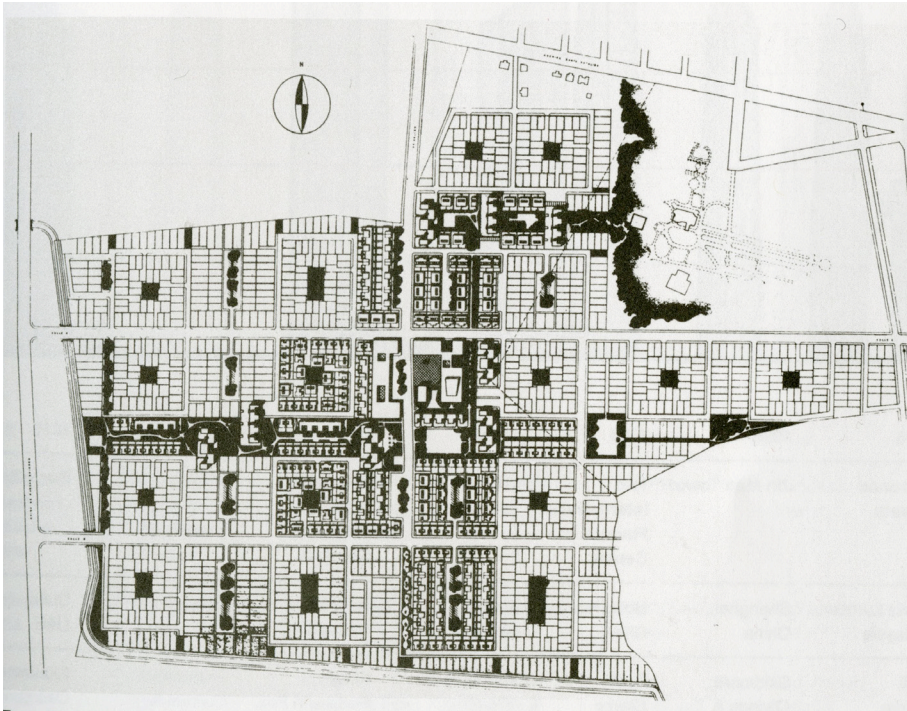


Figure 5: Early study for Old Havana done by JNP. While this plan was eventually abandoned, we can see a persistent focus on verticalization of Old Havana and the scalar jump from historic city block to financial superblock.

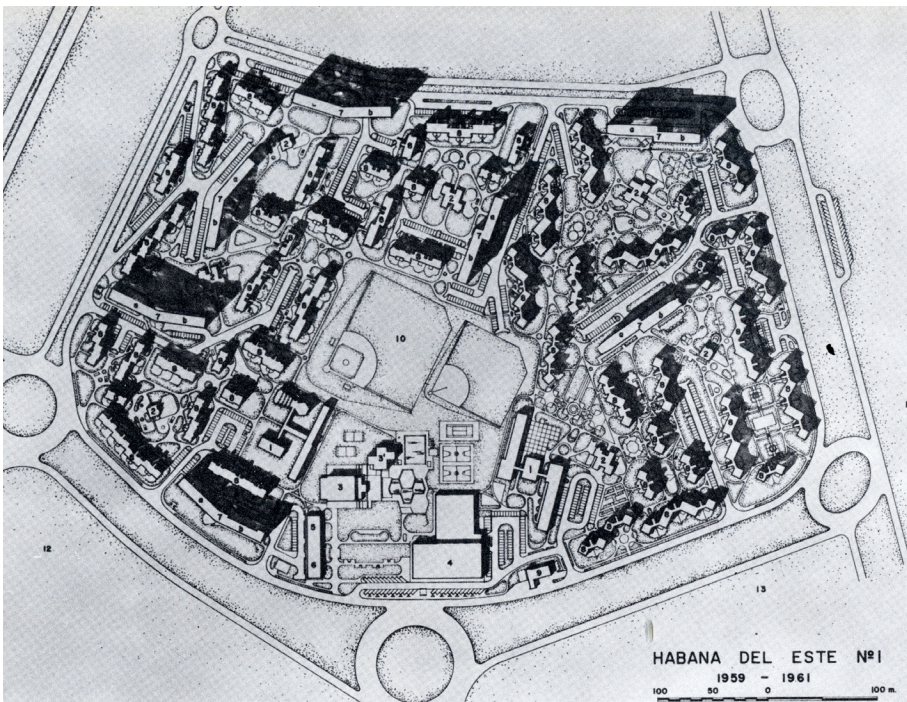


Figure 6: Havana del Este



Figure 7: Habana del Este, aerial photo



Figure 8: Havana East (Google Earth image). Old Havana is seen at the far left (west of the harbor). East Havana developments spread along the coast and are connected by a highway which passes under the harbor into Old Havana.

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