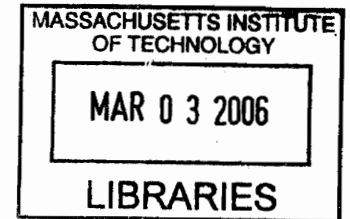# SITES OF FRICTON / *borders of the banal*

by

Lilly Donohue

Bachelor of Fine Arts
University of Massachusetts, 2001

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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SITES OF FRICTON / *borders of the banal*

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Lilly Donohue

Submitted to the Department of Architecture
on January 20, 2006 in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Master of Architecture

This project considers the duality of *friction* as a force which is simultaneously threatening and essential; responsible for destruction and violence, yet vital in precipitating progress and new relationships within the urban context. The thesis uses Boston as a case study and investigates its history of social conflicts from its puritan origins to present day. The recent shift to a sublimation of friction between groups within the city is theorized as a source of stagnation. The project examines this issue, centering on two adjacent yet isolated communities in the Dorchester neighborhood and proposes the introduction of a series of physical borders which are housed within several seemingly banal commercial buildings. The border is offered here not an object to further divide, but paradoxically as a necessary edge condition which permits contact and thus re-establishes friction between these neighborhoods.

Thesis Supervisor: Ann Pendleton-Jullian

Title: Associate Professor of Architecture

figure 1

SITES OF FRICTON / *borders of the banal*

fric•tion: noun
Etymology: Middle English, from Middle French or Latin; Middle French, from Latin *friction-, frictio,* from *fricare* to rub; akin to Latin *friare* to crumble, and perhaps to Sanskrit *bhrlnanti* they injure
1 a : the rubbing of one body against another **b :** the force that resists relative motion between two bodies in contact
2 : the clashing between two persons or parties of opposed views : disagreement

Chapter I : **FRICTION**

1   *a history of antagonisms*

Like most modern cities, Boston is alive with contradiction. It is noted for its passionate politicians and prestigious universities, and prideful of its abundant history. Remembered for being at the forefront of abolitionism (Massachusetts was the first state to abolish slavery in 1783), the city is generally regarded as a place of tolerance and progressive thinking. However, Boston remains a deeply segregated city whose neighborhoods outside the metropolitan center are largely divided both by race and economic standing.

The Civil Rights Project, a study out of Harvard University, addresses the particular hypocrisy which surrounds this city;

"Boston is at once blessed and cursed by a rich history. It is celebrated as the cradle of American democracy and today prides itself as a center of education and culture. The celebration follows the path of the Freedom Trail from Beacon Hill and the Minute Man trail through Concord and Lexington. But while it is remembered as a hotbed of abolitionism, it has also been denounced as a northern stronghold of racism whose residents violently rejected the dismantling of segregated schools, public housing, and police and fire departments. Perhaps less known is the fact that the communities of Beacon Hill, Lexington, and Concord, so closely associated with the region's positive past, remain predominantly white, affluent enclaves, while the disenfranchised white population and growing numbers of African Americans and Latinos remains largely concentrated in a small number of communities. The story of Boston's persistent racial and class separation may have much to say about the subtle but powerful forces at work to sustain segregation despite years of public and private efforts to eliminate the divide."[1]

The fact is that in many ways, Boston persist as a tribal city; it is separated out into neighborhoods, (*Charlestown, East Boston, Back Bay, Central, Fenway, South End, South Boston, Jamaica Plain, Roxbury, Dorchester, West Roxbury, Roslindale, Mattapan, and Hyde Park*) each with a distinct reputation and character that is unmistakable to those that reside there. What is of particular interest is that unlike many urban centers where segregation is a product of economic constraint, studies suggest that certain Boston residents choose to live in clusters and neighborhoods with

little cultural diversity. This is highlighted in the article *More Than Money* which illustrates that African Americans and Latinos who can afford to buy homes in any number of Boston neighborhoods remain concentrated in several specific communities (often those which are also experiencing the greatest decline in white homeowners). An overwhelming eighty percent of minorities in this study cited fear of resident antipathy as the primary factor in preventing members of the group from moving into other communities around the region. [2] Three decades after the busing controversy, Boston now has one of the highest rates of increasing school segregation in the country, and with the shutdown of minority access to Boston Latin School and the recent termination of the city's desegregation plan, racial and class isolation stands to become even more extreme.

This tradition of resistance to integrate with "outsiders" in many respects informs the entire history of Boston as a city. James Carroll muses, "…except for those native Americans who'd named the place Shawmut before the English came, Boston's successive dominators have, in truth, been slow to open up to others. Thus you could write the history of the place as a chronicle of its antagonisms; Brahmin versus Irish, Irish versus Jews, Italians versus Hispanics, whites perennially versus blacks." [3] This friction between groups has been an indispensable factor in determining the nature of the contemporary city. Today, in the culture of political correctness, the trend in several Boston neighborhoods appears to be a retreat into insular communities which make every effort to resolve the uncomfortable challenge of brushing against difference

figure2: *Mary Dyer led to execution on Boston Common, 1 June 1660*

through isolation and disregard. Without the persistence of friction which has been so essential in Boston's evolution, the city risks a period of stagnation.

The social climate of Boston today can only be understood with relationship to its particular geographical, political, and cultural history. Originally settled in 1630 by a group of English Puritans of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, many of Boston's contemporary traits (the distinctive accent, the emphasis on education, and the interest in a well established and active government) can be traced to its puritan roots. In addition to these more favorable characteristics, Boston's puritan foundation also made it a site of extreme intolerance. The early politicians were largely clergy whose central mission was the preservation of religion and whose convictions often lead to prejudice against outsiders. Perhaps the earliest example of this is the execution of the Quakers (1659-1661). Following years of persecution including book-burning, excommunication, and imprisonment, the Quakers were ultimately banished from Boston by law and "upon pain of death" because their refusal to accept the teachings of the Bible was perceived as a threat. Regardless of the knowledge that they would be executed, several Quakers returned to Boston and faced their deaths in order to uphold the principles of their religious beliefs. Despite the fact that they themselves had been the victims of religious persecution in Europe, the Puritans held fast to the need for uniformity of religion and state and they outwardly rejected the concept of
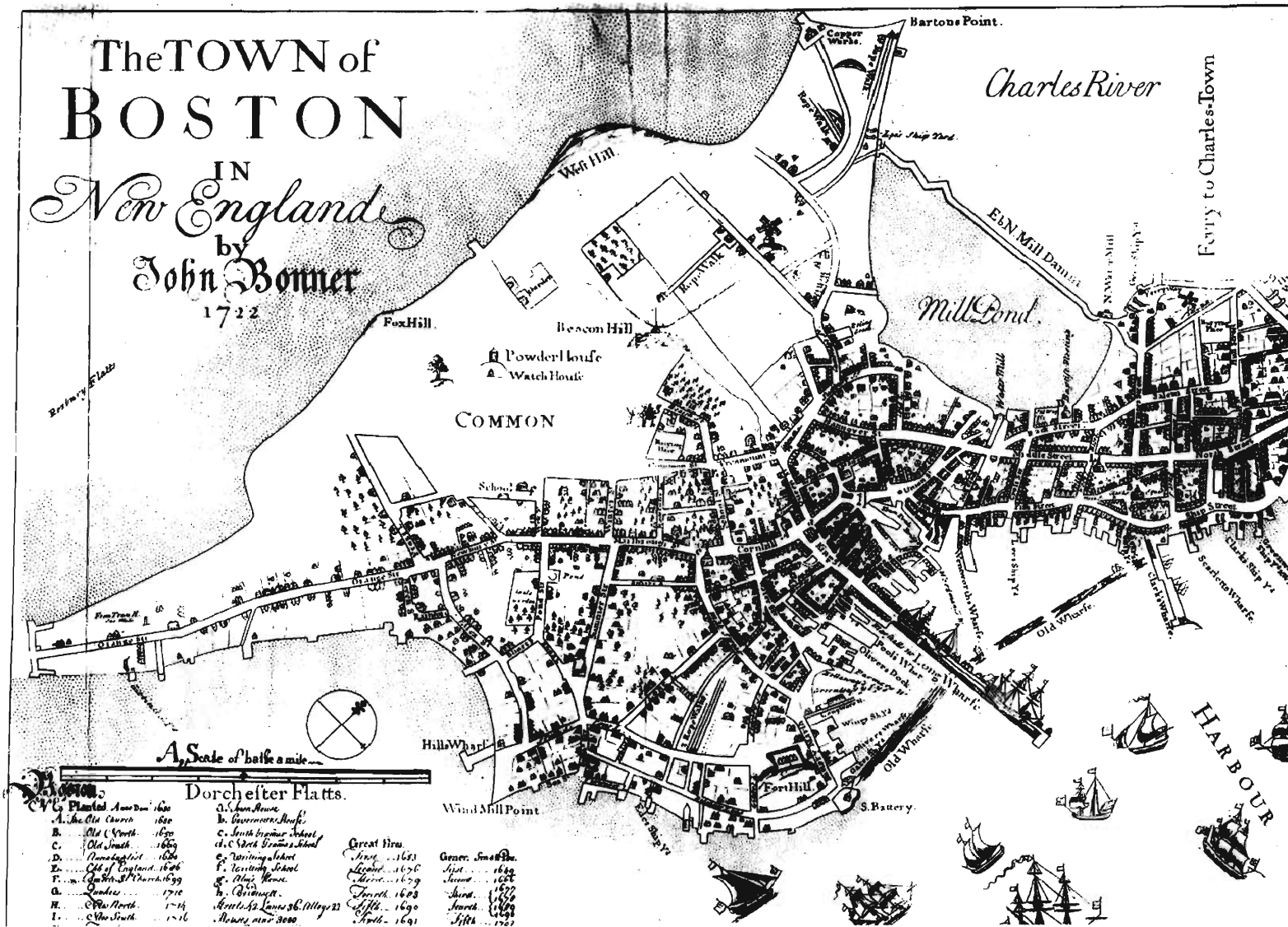
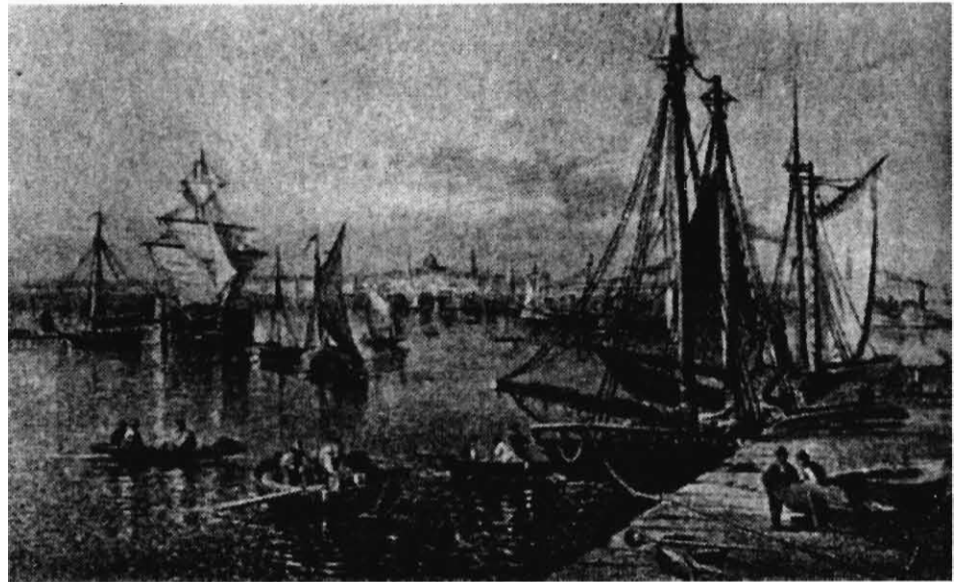figure 3: *The Town of Boston in New England, 1722*

figure 4: *View of waterfront from South Boston in early 19th century*

tolerance. These attitudes formed the foundation of Boston's social strategies in dealing with outsiders, and in many ways remain evident to-day.

The Puritan reputation was so harsh that many European immigrants were dissuaded from making attempts to settle there until much later than cities in nearby New York and Pennsylvania. During the seventeenth and most of the eighteenth centuries only a modest number of Irish emigrated to Boston and among them only about one-fifth were Roman-Catholics. Although the Presbyterian immigrants from Ireland were initially met with hostility by the Boston Yankees, their attitudes and work ethics eventually earned them acceptance with the reigning Anglo-Saxon traditions. In 1778 when the French announced their alliance with the newly formed United States of America, Boston also began to relax some of its anti-Catholic traditions. These shifts in attitude paved the way for the drafting of the Bill of Rights in 1779 which guaranteed liberty of conscience and freedom to worship to all men, making it unconstitutional for Massachusetts to pass any further legislation against members of any specific religion. [4]

figure 5: *Anti-Irish arson at Ursuline convent* (Charlestown, 1834)

Following the failure of a season of potato crops in Ireland in 1821(predating the famine), Irish-Catholics began to come to Boston to seek work by the thousands. They settled primarily in the slums near the waterfront where many labored loading ships and cutting fish. These new residents were not met with the same acquiescence that their protestant countrymen had received before them. Acts of violence were so common during the night in the Irish neighborhoods that in the mid 1820s, night watchmen had to be assigned in order to keep the peace. This hatred erupted on August 11, 1843, a when a mob of workingmen set fire to a convent where nuns operated a boarding school for children. The nuns and children were allowed to escape safely, but none of the eight men brought to trial for arson were found guilty.[5] This incident bitterly divided Boston residents. The upper class (merchants, doctors, bankers, etc.) were more lenient with the immigrant population, but Boston's poor, working class perceived these foreigners as a threat to their modest income. As work declined and immigration increased, hostility between these groups continued to compound.

On June 11 1837, an Irish-Catholic funeral procession intersected with a group of Yankee firemen returning from a call and incited a fight which ultimately escalated into a full scale riot. "For more then two hours the battle raged up and down the streets of the lower part of the city where

figure 6: *The Departure* (exodus from Ireland, 1850)

the immigrants lived, with an estimated ten thousand people watching eight hundred men fight it out with sticks and stones, bricks and cudgels. The so-called Broad Street Riot was finally halted only when Mayor Samuel Eliot brought in the National Lancers, followed by some eight hundred of the state militia, with fixed bayonets, to disperse the rioters and restore order to the city."[6]

In 1845 Ireland suffered from a terrible potato famine which endured for several years. Boston, which now had a strong Irish-Catholic population, became a desirable destination for these "Famine-Irish" fleeing extreme poverty and starvation. Massive numbers of Irish settled in Boston in the following decades; by 1850 the Irish population had risen to 35,000, by 1860 it was 50,000, almost a third of the overall population of 178,000.[7] These immigrants were not only despised like their predecessors for being catholic, but they were also weak, sick, and without many skills. They found themselves in a culture where they could not find acceptance, and as a result chose to remain largely isolated in their own neighborhood. In Boston's Immigrants, Oscar Handlin describes this new wave of segregated Irish as "a massive lump in the community, undigested and indigestible."[8]

figure 7: *housing in Roxbury (left) and Dorchester (right) erected in the early 20th century to accomodate population growth in these neighborhoods.*

During the 1850s, slavery began to eclipse religion as the central friction in America. While Boston is generally noted for its strong anti-slavery position during this time, the issue created even further divisions between the working class Irish immigrants and the upper class academics in Boston. The working-class who had been received so violently and continued to struggle in poverty had little concern for slave practices which they saw as legal under the Constitution at the time. They perceived the Boston elite as hypocrites who demanded equality for blacks while they deprived immigrants of those same basic human rights. The fact that Boston's immigrants acknowledged efforts to abolish slavery with contempt rather than to empathize and look towards tolerance is indicative of the city's tradition of animosity towards others.

As the numbers of Irish in Boston continued to grow, the first generation of immigrants became more established and found better jobs enabling them to leave the shacks and shanties of the waterfront and move first to areas of South Boston, East Boston, and Charlestown and later (1860's- 1870's), with the introduction of the horse-drawn street car, they ventured further to Dorchester, Roxbury, and Jamaica Plain. Eventually most of the Irish abandoned the waterfront altogether and new waves of Italian and Jewish immigrants took their place.

1874 map including most of the recently annexed neighborhoods of Dorchester (1870), West Roxbury (1874), Brighton (1874), and all of Charlestown (1874).
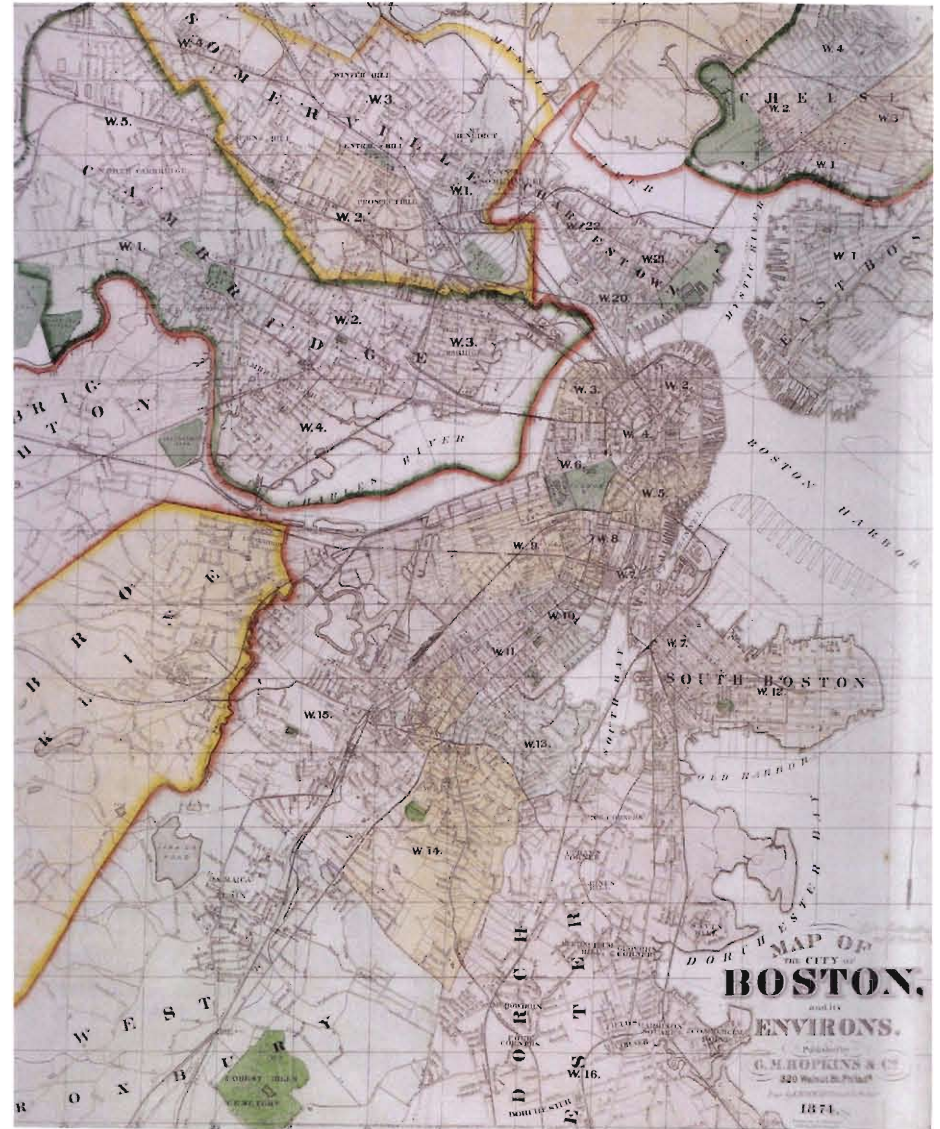
figure 8: *Map of the City of Boston, and its Environs* (1870)

figure 9: *Map of the City of Boston, and its Environs (1870), illustrating distribution of the predominant race factors*

figure 10: *Blue Hill Avenue Synagogue,* (Grove Hall- Blue Hill Avenue district, Roxbury)

figure 11: *The G & G Delicatessen,* (Blue Hill Avenue district, Mattapan)

Like the Irish before them, Jewish immigrants were discouraged from settling in Boston by the puritan distaste for religious dissention. In fact, the city was the only major seaport town to lack a permanent Jewish community in the 17th and 18th centuries. The small numbers of Jewish immigrants from Central Europe who began to settle in Boston in the early 1800's were generally met with little concern. They were dismissed as few in number and because many of them were well educated and eager to work, they were viewed more favorably by the Yankee natives who shared these values. Many of the first waves of Jewish immigrants were actually encouraged by puritan clergy who believed they could convert these new foreigners. Instead, the Jews isolated themselves in their own small communities and relied on one another to quickly advance in economic standing; largely working as peddlers to support Boston's emerging industrialization as a manufacturing center.

At the turn of the century, the more established and successful Jewish immigrants followed the path of the Yankees and Irish to areas of the South End, Dorchester and Roxbury while new arrivals (largely Russian Jews) lived among Italians, Portuguese, Poles, and Germans in impoverished conditions in the North End. [9] As Boston's Jewish community grew in number (100,000 by 1910) and strength, they were no longer under the radar and anti-Semitic sentiments began to intensify. The increasing population of Jews who settled in Irish neighborhoods lead to outbreaks of violence throughout the 1930s and 1940s. "Bands of Irish youths ranged up and down Blue Hill Avenue in the Jewish district of Dorchester (the Irish disparagingly called it 'Jew Hill Avenue'), harassing shop owners, beating up Jewish boys on their way home from school, scrawling swastikas and ugly graffiti on Jewish homes and temples." [10]

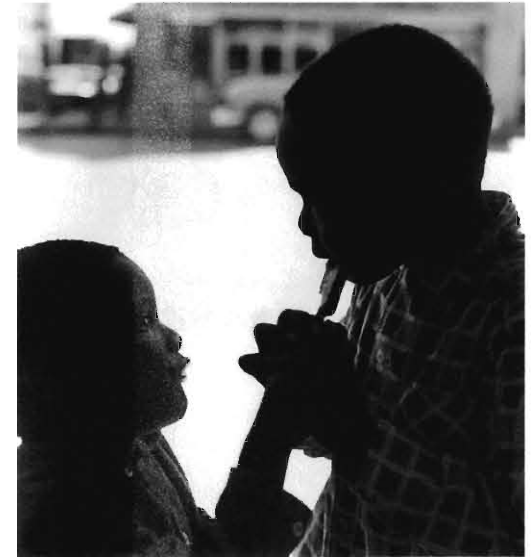figure 12: *Girl and Market*, West End, Boston in 1950s

figure 13: *Eating a Sugar Daddy,* South End, Boston in 1960s

While the Jews were not free to live among the Irish, their businesses were met with greater favor. Many Jewish people owned and operated markets and shops in Irish neighborhoods and enjoyed amiable relationships with their Gentile patrons throughout the day. This was acceptable as long as they continues to reside in their small isolated neighborhoods like the narrow sliver of Blue Hill Avenue that ran between Roxbury and Dorchester. This policy of segregation applied even more firmly to Boston's modest community of African-Americans (one of the smallest of all major American cities at that time). Black Bostonians lived throughout most of the 19th century in their own small community in Beacon Hill. At the turn of the century, they were largely displaced by the swelling immigrant population and moved to the South End and eventually lower Roxbury. In "The Boston Irish", Thomas H. O'Connor writes of the isolation of communities by race and religion in Boston, "During the 1930s and 1940s… ethnic and national groups in the city accepted the unwritten law of residential segregation. According to this law, it was possible for all kinds of people to live together in peace and harmony as long as members of each group remained within clearly defined geographical boundaries and socialized only with other members of the same group." [11]

However during World War II huge numbers of Black workers flocked to the Boston area to labor in factories, armories, and navy shipyards. Boston's black population doubled and continued to grow after the end of the war. The population spilled out of the previously established African-American boundaries and they began taking up residence on the edges of the white, predominantly Irish, communities in Dorchester, Jamaica Plain, and Hyde Park.[12] In areas like Blue Hill Avenue, they displaced the established Jewish community who moved to areas of Brookline

figure 14: (left) *Busing Students in Boston, 1974*

figure 15: (right) *Police Escort Carrying Black Students to South Boston High School, 1974*

and the suburbs. Unlike the Irish and Jews before them who settled in these areas of the city once they had risen in economic status, the black community (which despite its growth was still a fragile ten percent of city's population) continued to live in poor conditions with rising rents and suffered from unemployment and poverty. White residents of these neighborhoods were furious and saw the encroachment of African-Americans as a threat to their safely and security.

This friction reached its climax with the issue of school desegregation which bitterly divided the city's residents. In 1954, in Brown v. Board of Education, the Supreme Court ruled that segregation in public schools was unconstitutional. A decade later, the NAACP reported that the majority of schools in Boston were either predominantly white or black with little integration. The Boston School Committee strongly opposed the notion of desegregation and argued that the racial separation of the schools was a product of the neighborhoods and schooling children in the nearest institutions. It was not until 1974, twenty years after the Supreme Court ruling, that Boston was ordered by court (the outcome of a bitter trial) to desegregate its school system through the busing of 18,000 school children. The ruling creating a huge rift in relationships, not only between races, but also between the working class whites who were most impacted by the busing and the more affluent whites who settled in the suburbs or sent their children to private schooling. The issue galvanized the city's neighborhoods of working class Irish and Italians who protested with by painting fences and building with slogans like "Never" and "Resist." "The next two years saw a series of ugly racial incidents, including stonings, beatings, firebombings, and even shootings, as a result of which Boston acquired the reputation as the most racist city in the nation." [13]

figure 16: *Busing Students to Hyde Park High School, 1974*

figure 17: *Students and Police Outside South Boston High School, 1976*

figure 18: *Nash's Pub, Dorchester Ave., 2005*

figure 19: *Grove Hall Area of Roxbury / Dorchester, 2005*

Throughout the 1980s, Boston's black, Hispanic, and Asian populations continued to grow. Despite the fact that the city remained sixty percent white, less than half of Boston's school age children were white. With the introduction of crack-cocaine in the late eighties, violence erupted in poor, predominantly black areas of the city. In 1989, following the murder of Carol Stuart, a white woman whose husband claimed that she had been attacked and killed by a black man in Roxbury, the Boston Police Department issued a search on sight policy for all young black males suspected of gang violence. This practice deepened the animosity which had been growing between the largely white Boston police and the city's black residents. When the truth came out that Stuart's husband had lied and that he himself had killed his wife, tensions reached their height making 1990 a peak year for violence in the Boston. The city reacted with a strong plan against violence which united African-American clergy and the Police Department and throughout the 1990s, the crime rates steadily declined.

Today Boston is a city whose diverse cultures have been successfully integrated in some areas (race mixing in the city-center aided by the university population, class mixing in Charlestown and race and class mixing in the South End, etc.), yet remain forcefully segregated in others (Roxbury is almost entirely minority, Dorchester is divided into clusters of minorities and whites, etc.). In these zones of segregation, some residents seem to have returned to the days of harmony through isolation, with little contact between groups despite their physical proximity. Violence, which once again is on the rise in Boston, is now targeted more at members inside one's own community as opposed to the inter-community turbulence which has been so historically notorious of the city. While clearly violence is not desirable, there does appear to be stagnation between social groups within areas of the city whose isolation may be challenged through the resurgence of friction which has been so consistent in shaping the Boston's history.

figure 20: *Aerial Photograph of Boston*

2 *acts of violence*

The History of violence in the city of Boston has predominantly centered on acts perpetrated by one community against another; Yankees against Irish, Irish against Jews, working class against affluent, white against black, etc. *(see a history of antagonisms)*. This contentious past has shaped the physical and social character of the city. However, with the introduction of crack-cocaine to Boston in 1980 and the formation of street gangs in the city's poor and minority communities, a new pattern of violence emerged. This modern era of violence concentrates on crime perpetuated against one's own community rather than directed towards outsiders. Through the considerable effort of the communities, the city, and the police department, this type of largely gang related violence reached all time lows during the late 1990s, prompting the city to proclaim the "Boston Miracle". However a dramatic increase in violence began in 2004 and homicide rates continue to rise through 2006. While Boston's notorious friction between groups in the past ultimately prompted social progress, this trend of new violence serves to further devastate the city's poorest neighborhoods and isolate them from their more affluent neighbors.

The following timeline tracks the monumental instances of this new pattern of violence from the insurgence of crack-cocaine through the present.

1988 ——→Crack-cocaine becomes prevalent in Boston and homicide rate experiences dramatic increase

Tiffany Moore is killed in the cross-fire of a drive-by shooting- brings attention to gang problem

1989 ——→BPD reassigns "City-wide Anti-crime Unit" to neighborhoods with highest gang pressence

Superior Court Judge dismisses gun charge against gang member (violation of 4th amendment rights)

* Carol Stuart murder heightens tension between police and African-American community (search-on-sight policy for all young black men)

1990 ——→Peak year for violence in Boston; 152 homicides (62 youth homicides- under 24 yrs)

Halloween gang rape and murder of Kimberly Ray Harbour

Probation Dept. of Dorchester District Court creates Youthful Offender Unit to collect gang information

1991 ——→Panel is appointed to deal with widespread claims of police brutality

Take Back the Street Crusade; African-American clergy reclaim vacant lot used by gangs for drug-dealing

1992 ——→Gang violence erupts at funeral at Baptist church- awakens religious community to gang problems

Operation Night Light (two gang- unit officers and probation officers ride together at night to enforce probation terms)

Neighborhood "police tribunal" to air charges of police misconduct

1993 ——→Louis D. Brown, 15 year old honor student is shot on his way to anti-gang violence Christmas party

1994 ——→A warrant sweep in Mission Hill housing project arrests 135 chronic offenders- becomes model for 6 more sweeps over the next year

BPD cracks down on gun violence in Uphams Corner (Dorchester)- break up of gun supply connection

1995 ——→Operation Cease Fire begins with the first gang-specific crackdown, on Dorchester's Vamp Hill Kings, and beginning of meetings with gangs; formal announcement of the policy

1996 ——→In a joint action, the BPD and DEA arrest Intervale Posse members on the first day of school

1997 ——→Benny Rosa (19years old) killed in gang related cross-fire at youth basketball game

1998-
2003 ——→Violence statistics reamain at an all time low, city proclaims the "Boston Miracle"

2004 ——→Homicide rate soars 50 percent above previous year, "Boston Miracle comes under scrutiny"

First triple homicide in a decade- three young men shot to death in parked van (Dorchester)- speculation that large numbers of gang members being released spikes violence (revenge killings- violence is more targeted in nature)

Monumental Violence: The acts of violence since the introduction of crack-cocaine *(see preceding timeline)* have been pinned to their sites of occurrence on this map with the darkest stains indicating the greatest intensity of monumental violence.
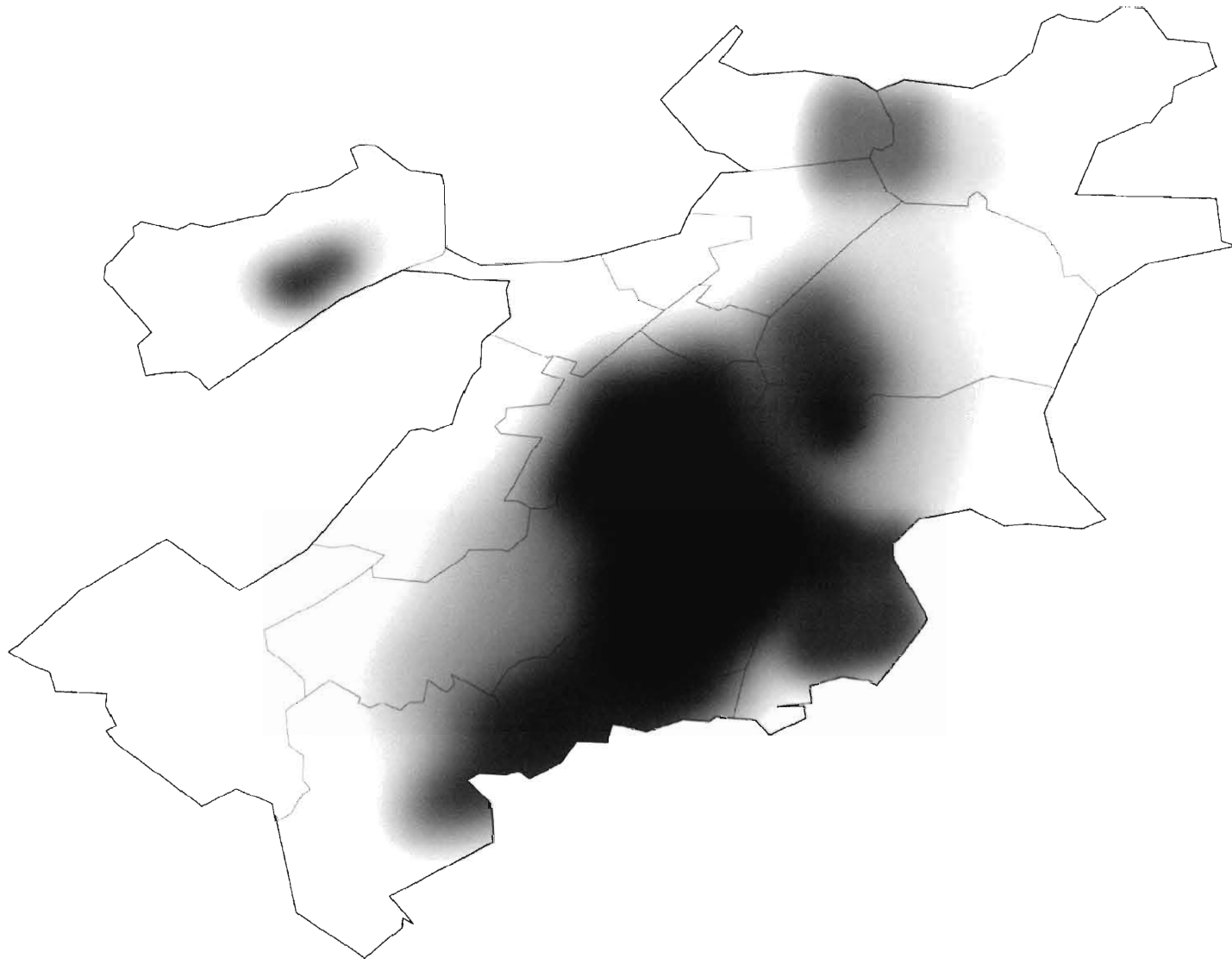
*Boston **: Areas of Monumental Violence** by Intesity (since 1980)*

3 *boston perceived*

      A series of interviews were conducted of Boston residents from different neighborhoods throughout the city in order to juxtapose the more general research of Boston with an understanding of the place on the subtle level of the individual. Participants identify areas of the city which are familiar, unknown, and feared. The city emerges as a patchwork of loosely related and widely diverse communities. The following shows participants paired with maps of the city as they understand it, with the lightest areas representing those which are avoided or unknown.

BOSTON PERCEIVED / ALICE
"...the next parish over from Galway Bay"

BOSTON PERCEIVED / LINDA
"I got to say I'm so over it at this point."

BOSTON PERCEIVED / JULIE
"I'm totally tuned in... you know I understand anyone that's from here."

BOSTON PERCEIVED / ROBERT
"They put the kingpins away and now it's the Avenue of Color"
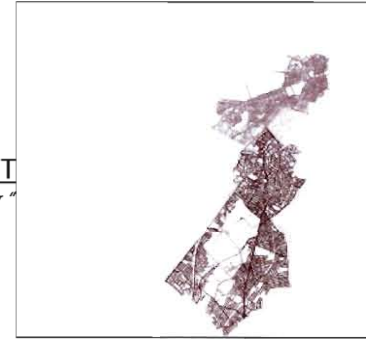
BOSTON PERCEIVED / OLIVIA
"I like to do whatever I want and I know it all over better than anyone else."
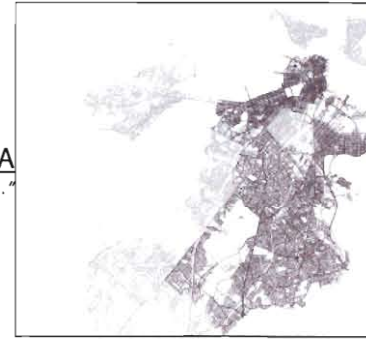
BOSTON PERCEIVED / FERDY
"For me, my community is my family."

I am the fifth generation of my line to live in Dorchester, MA- I was a Lydon of the county Mayo Lydons, now I'm a Barrett and my husband's ancestors have been around this area almost as long as my own. My family left Ireland in 1847 during the time of the great famine and headed to Boston. We think they settled in South Boston first and then eventually moved to Dorchester. I was born here in 1945, and in my sixty years I've seen this neighborhood go through a lot of changes.

In my eyes, Dorchester is still the best of Boston; we have a wonderful Irish history and some of us are still here with pride. We have a saying that this is "the next parish over from Galway Bay". There's fewer people around that know what that means these days, but it still holds water. "The Avenue" still has a lot of the character it always had- lots of nice Irish markets and pubs; that's where they hold the Dorchester Day Parade on the first Sunday of June every year. That's really the core of our Irish community and where I like to spend most of my time when I get out of the house.

Most of the neighborhood is still pretty safe I suppose. But my husband was a police officer; just like my father and his own before him. He worked right here- District 11 in Dorchester, and he would've told you himself that there are some areas- as nice as this place is- that you just don't wander around in if you have any sense. There's a lot of broke down buildings and empty lots nearer to Roxbury- it just doesn't make you feel real secure and I wouldn't head over there without my car. I mean, I'll drive any old place in this city, I've lived here my whole life and I know it well, but there are a few places where I definitely lock the doors. I don't mind that over the years the neighborhood has gotten more diverse- God loves us all and there were always different types of people here; Jewish, Italians, Black, now there's many Asian families near my street… but Grove Hall, Washington Street- some of those places are just plain unsafe. A few years ago they arrested a whole group kids over there that were tied to gangs; it made national news and gave people the wrong idea about Dorchester. It's sad to see the way those people have to live- but the city has been working hard to make it cleaner Truth be told some of those areas were never in any kind of decent shape to begin with, a lot of people think that when all of the blacks started coming

over from Roxbury in the seventies that they destroyed the western part of Dorchester. I suppose there's some truth to that- but some of those streets were always in bad repair and lived in by the poor- no matter what color they were.

Believe me, I know what it is to be poor; us Lydons had next to nothing when we started here. My father was a hard worker and he made a good life for me and my siblings, but we always struggled. Back then everyone had lots of children, not like these days when people don't seem to like the idea of a family. Big families meant it wasn't easy- we lived in the same house I own to this day… but there were a lot more of us back then. I'll tell you that that place is worth a lot more than my father paid for it in 1950, that's for sure.

I've been retired for three years now, but I was a teacher at St. Mark's Catholic school for nearly thirty years. I worked five days a week and raised my family and even before I got married I worked to support my brothers and sister. That's what family meant back then. Now all of us have done pretty well for ourselves- so we don't want for much, but it's no accident; none of us were strangers to hard work and that's how we earned what we have now. My sister and her husband live with me now. Lots of my family has moved away from Boston, but my brother Paul just moved up to South Boston. I visit him there once every week now that my husband is gone; he usually comes down and gets me and we go for a nice drive and then I have supper with his family. I like that area quite a bit too, they have a strong Irish presence- but you can't really relax the way you can here in Dorchester. I have my garden and it's quite and I never have to worry about parking and whatnot.

Don't get me wrong, it's nice to live so close to the city- my son lives right in the Back Bay now and I love to go up there and have lunch, it always makes for a nice day. I go in with my friends sometimes too to go shopping or look around, it's such a lovely city; it really has the feel of the old big cities of Europe and I'm glad to be part of it.

But these days my life is mostly right here in Dorchester- my church, my friends, my home are all here. Now with the prices of real estate here being so high, a lot of my old neighbors are leaving. Most of the new families are young business people; they stay for a few years and then move on so I don't get to know them much. When I was raising my kids, my neighbors were like part of the family and we all watched out for each other. Now-a-days, I don't even know who lived across the street.

I don't want to think about leaving my house, but I also don't want to become a cliché; the old lady clinging to her Irish roots with the lace curtains. My house is a lot of work, and my kids want me to sell it because they know I'd make a good price. I can't imagine where I would go though; I have my sister and I'm not going to just shuffle to another part of Boston or move to Florida. This place is my home- no matter how much it changes, Dorchester is still where I grew up, where I made my first communion, where I met my husband, raised my children, and go to church- I don't see myself moving on anytime soon.

"I'm totally tuned in... you know I understand anyone that's from here."

I live in South Boston with my parents. I've been here my whole life and I am kind of at that point where I want to try something new so in a way I'm not in the best place to talk about *hurray for South Boston* or anything like that. I can tell you that there definitely is a ton of community pride here, I think in part it's because of all the history and in part because it's become such a major thing that people associate with the area that it kind of becomes something you have to do. But I don't feel like I really think that much about the fact that I am from this neighborhood. I guess I remember being aware of it as a kid, mostly because of the accent. We're so close to downtown and the Back Bay that even when I was like twelve I would go to Newbury Street with my friends and I'd feel really self-conscious that I had this strong accent. It always seems weird to me that I can grow up a few miles from someone in another part of the city and I'm stuck with an accent and they speak regular. I sort of feel like there's a stigma attached to it, like people think that you're working class and not well educated. I still feel that way, a lot of people here like my dad think it's just the best to have this accent, like it means you're the real thing and not a poser… but I just don't think it's very pretty and I feel like it holds me back from getting certain jobs or whatever.

I still live here at home with my parents because the city is just so expensive that it doesn't really make sense for me to move out until I can afford to buy a house or an apartment or something… which will probably be never, even if my parents helped me out considering the prices of things. I'm a waitress and I actually make pretty good money but it's not like you can afford to live in Boston anymore if you're just a regular person with a job. My parents were lucky, they got our house from my grandma and she bought it back when things were affordable, especially in South Boston which wasn't considered a very good neighborhood. That's the funny thing, now everything is so expensive but I mean the area has parts that are really rough and I wouldn't really go into any local bar if you aren't white. I don't think anything would really happen to you and in fact you'd probably be in more trouble if you were some snobby Harvard kid than if you were a black guy; but it just still is a place where it helps to be a real local.
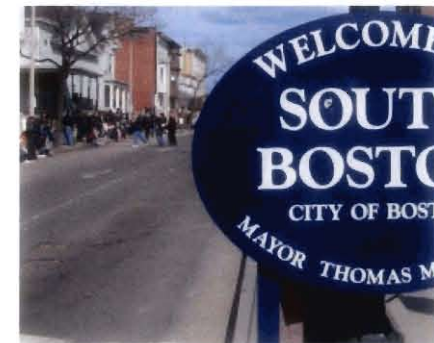
I feel pretty much comfortable anywhere in Boston, but I have no real reason to go anywhere except for the center of the city- not because I'm afraid, just because I don't think there'd be much to do. I guess maybe if I was in the really poor part of Roxbury I wouldn't feel too safe being a young white woman, so there are areas of the city that I am afraid of but I would never go to them anyway so it isn't really something that I think about. I think it's a pretty fun city, but since I stay within the South Boston, downtown, Back Bay, South End kind of area… it feels really small, especially because I just know it so well. I think it's safe as cities go, but again it's a thing where it helps to be local. My neighborhood can be dangerous and if you came here for college or something, the guide book would definitely say to avoid it, but I have lived there so long that people know me or I know what to say or when to cross the street. You just get a feeling for how to deal with your own people after a while. I'm totally tuned in… you know I understand anyone that's from here. It's funny because when I first thought about it I didn't really see much that made where I'm from important, but the more I look at it I realize that there is a lot about me that comes from being from South Boston. I don't feel like it is something that I'm especially proud of, it's just that you learn a lot living in this city- any city probably but I can vouch for this one. It's a place where there are lots of different people from all over the world because of all of the schools, and there's also tons of people like me who are in that age range to but have been here forever and have completely different outlooks on life. That happens all the time when I'm waiting tables, where there's some guy who's my age but I just feel like there's this huge difference between us. I can't explain it, but it's like the accent thing- that still bothers me when I'm waiting on some cute preppy guy and I just feel like he's judging me that I'm not on his level. It's kind of my thing, so don't think that it's something that bothers other people from Southie, like I said my dad says he'd kill me if I ever lostmy accent and I think most people are actually really proud of their's too.

I just think that people have this certain perception of us, like it's *Good Will Hunting* or something. I swear that movie made it cool to be from here, it sounds dumb to mention but it really did make the whole thing so trendy and everyone would come up to me an say, "Oh, are you from Southie", all cool because they're in on the knick-name. I think that's why at first when people ask me if I'm proud to be from here I want to say no because I feel like it has almost become cheesy. I guess the truth is that I do feel a sense of pride in where I'm from. It's not an Irish thing, yes I am Irish, but actually only half and people want to make such a big deal out of that, but I think that for my generation it isn't even something we think about. Sure it's a big deal to my grandma, and maybe some to my parents- but for me the fact that some ancestor who I don't even know came from Ireland means nothing. I definitely don't think about whether or not someone is Irish or catholic when I meet them, I could care less.

As to whether or not I'll stay in South Boston, I have no idea. I'd like to try living somewhere else, some other city even. But there is so much going on here and I know it so well that it's easy to find work and I have all my friends to hang out with that it's kind of a tough place to leave. My parents have both lived here all their lives and so far I haven't broken the family record.

"They put the kingpins away and now it's the Avenue of Color"

I've lived in Roxbury my whole life. Probably never moved more than a couple of minutes away… but that don't mean I'm set on staying here necessarily because I definitely see myself seeing more and living other places before I die. It's a cool place though and I like being close to all my family and most of my buddies are all right here.

I don't know that much about my family history, but I know that my parents moved to Boston around the time that they got married- must be late sixties/ early seventies. They were from the south, outside Atlanta and I've still got some family down there. I was born here in Roxbury (I think) in 1977. My father was an electrician… a lot of people don't know that that wasn't an easy profession for a black man to get into back in the day. But that man was tough- I mean he had a huge heart, but he was serious about what he wanted and the guy just made it happen. You wouldn't want to get in his way, let me say it to you that way. He made a real decent living compared to a lot of the families around here. We own our house- most people in this neighborhood are renters so I'm real proud of that. My father always told me that you got to own something to get any respect in this world and it was a big deal when we got that house back in the day.

Back when my old man was alive my ma' never had to work- I mean she raised me and my brother and two sisters and that was definitely work, but we had enough that she didn't have to go outside the home. Now my father died a couple years ago- so money is a little bit tight and my ma' works a couple of days a week cleaning houses or whatever- mostly cash jobs. It's funny 'cause I love that woman and she's got great style and always looks nice, but I wouldn't say that cleaning was ever her thing. She's a tough woman though- I have much respect for my mother. I live at home with her and my sister- I moved out for a year or so down to a place in Mattapan, just to get out on my own. I save a lot more money though living back with the family, so it just makes common sense. I have a steady job, I'm not lazy. I work as a security guard up at Downtown crossing at the Macy's. It's a real serious job, I got into through a friend of mine who was a guard and it can be dangerous- so you have to know what you're doing. I'm real proud of it- I

I had to take a year of classes and I know that I'll always have work now. I like being downtown too. I take the bus up there- 'cause there isn't any place to park even if I could use the car. There's lots of activity during the day and I feel like I'm really in a city and I'm important. At night things die down a little- but sometimes I'll go to the clubs around that area- more in the city- with my friends or I take my girl out to dinner or something. It definitely looks cleaner and nicer than it does out in Roxbury.

I've made a pretty good life for myself, and my sisters are doing real good too- one is married with a few kids and the other one is going to school at UMass while she's living home. My little brother, James, he didn't really keep it together. He's gotten mixed up with drugs- he's a decent kid but he was the baby and he was probably more spoiled than the rest of us. He just had a big head and things got out of control and last I heard he wasn't doing that well. I don't think his being into drugs has much to do with the neighborhood- there's real rich kids who are using drugs I've never even heard of. People try to make it out like it's a poor thing, or a black thing… but the truth is that if you have a couple kids- one usually ends up doing his own thing no matter how you raise them.

The neighborhood- sure it's got problems. There's some gangs around, they used to be a lot worse though. Back like five years ago they arrested a bunch of kids from Castlegate Road and Interval Posse- those were the big gangs that were heavy into selling crack and they had really taken over Grove Hall back then. They put those kingpins away and now it's the "International Avenue of Color". I'm not sure that it deserves that title 'cause the place is still pretty beat up- but we've definitely put some spice into it. The community has put work into making it look better; they've painted the buildings with murals and just given it a nice look. We do our best- and Grove Hall is definitely my hang out here. They've got some good food along there (can't beat "New York Fried Chicken"), my shops, my barber, it's home- you know. Even the church I go to is on Blue Hill in the Grove Hall area. My girlfriend got me into that- I can't say that my family was big into church when I was growing up. We always were taught about God- but a lot of families in this neighborhood are really tied to church, and we just never were. My girlfriend's family is all from Roxbury; she's got uncles and aunts and cousins- and they all are real religious and I see how strong it makes their family. I definitely think that I'll raise my own kids with a stronger sense of religion than I had- it helps them have focus and steer clear of a lot of the trouble you can get into.

I love this neighborhood- even talking about it I realize that I have a lot more pride in being from Roxbury than I knew. Like I said, I see myself moving around more. I'm still on the young side and I'd like to see more of this world. I don't know though- things are going real good with my girlfriend, and I don't want to think too far into the future, but I know that she would never want to move too far from all of her family here in the Roxbury/ Dorchester neighborhood. I'd like to maybe own my own house someday, maybe I could open my own store or a restaurant or something- I've always wanted to have a place that everyone could come too. I don't know, I've done pretty well for myself and I guess we'll just wait and see what happens.

bor·der: noun
Etymology: Middle English *bordure*, from Middle French, from Old French, from *border* to *border*, from *bort border*, of Germanic origin; akin to Old English *bord*
1 : an outer part or edge
2 : boundary <crossed the *border* into Italy>

Chapter II : **BORDERS**

1   *good fences*

MENDING WALL *by Robert Frost*

Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
That sends the frozen-ground-swell under it,
And spills the upper boulders in the sun,
And makes gaps even two can pass abreast.
I have come after them and made repair
Where they have left not one stone on a stone,
But they would have the rabbit out of hiding,
To please the yelping dogs. The gaps I mean,
No one has seen them made or heard them made,
But at spring mending-time we find them there.
I let my neighbor know beyond the hill;
And on a day we meet to walk the line
And set the wall between us one again.
We keep the wall between us as we go.
To each the boulders that have fallen to each.
And some are loaves and some so nearly balls
We have to use a spell to make them balance:
'Stay where you are until our backs are turned!'
We wear our fingers rough with handling them.
Oh, just another kind of out-door game,

One on a side. It comes to little more:
There where it is we do not need the wall:
He is all pine and I am apple orchard.
My apple trees will never get across
And eat the cones under his pines, I tell him.
He only says, 'Good fences make good neighbors'.
Spring is the mischief in me, and I wonder
If I could put a notion in his head:
'Why do they make good neighbors? Isn't it
Where there are cows?
But here there are no cows.
Before I built a wall I'd ask to know
What I was walling in or walling out,
And to whom I was like to give offence.
Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
That wants it down.'I could say elves' to him,
But it's not elves exactly, and I'd rather
He said it for himself. I see him there
Bringing a stone grasped firmly by the top
In each hand, like an old-stone savage armed,
He moves in darkness as it seems to me –
Not of woods only and the shade of trees.
He will not go behind his father's saying,
And he likes having thought of it so well
He says again, "Good fences make good neighbors."

In his analysis of Robert Frost's poem "Mending Wall", poet Lawrence Raab notes the frequent oversimplification of the piece. President John F. Kennedy invoked the first line of the poem, "Something there is that doesn't love a wall", when he visited the Berlin Wall and in Russia "Mending Wall" was reprinted omitting that same line and highlighting instead the notion that "Good fences make good neighbors". The popular reading of this iconic poem has become an understanding of the wall as a symbol of a primitive and intolerant barrier. Frost himself opposed this reduction and Raab points out, "… the poem doesn't begin, 'I hate walls' or even, 'Something dislikes a wall'. Its first gesture is one of elaborate and playful concealment, a calculated withholding of meaning. Notice that it is the speaker himself who repairs the wall after the hunters have broken it. And it is the speaker each year who notifies his neighbor when the time has come to meet and mend the wall."[14]

Raab identifies the repetition of the word *between* as the primary insight into Frost's thinking about the wall;

I let my neighbor know beyond the hill;
And on a day we meet to walk the line
And set the wall between us one again.
We keep the wall between us as we go.

"[This] repetition should give us pause and remind us of its two equally common meanings: between as separation, as in 'something has come *between* us', and between as what might be shared and held in common, as in 'a secret *between* two people' or 'a bond *between* friends'. The wall divides, but it also connects." [15]

It is this dual nature of Frost's wall, creating a barrier and simultaneously initiating contact, with which this project takes interest. The thesis examines an area of Boston where two divergent communities remain largely segregated with little connection to one another despite physical adjacency. The scheme seeks to establish contact between these groups through instigating friction; the force which has been so productive in motivating new relationships throughout Boston's history. The wall becomes the operative strategy for this provocation. It creates a stronger delineation between these two communities which actually serves as an incentive for a more plausible approach to that same edge condition. The wall then sets the dimension for the gap between these groups, enabling closer contact, potential transgression, and establishing friction at this zone.

2   *finding the edge*

Selection of Dorchester:

In researching the history of the city of Boston and conducting a series of interviews of its residents, the neighborhood of Dorchester emerged as a fascinating anomaly. It is the largest of Boston's neighborhoods, nearly twice the size of the others and second only to Roxbury in density. With a population whose overwhelming majority consists of minorities, Dorchester still prides itself as a center of Irish-American culture and uses the shamrock as its unofficial mascot. Considering that thirty years ago Irish-American residents of South Boston so vehemently opposed their children being bused to the predominantly black schools in Dorchester, it is surprising that even today, many of the neighborhood's residents continue to identify it as being aligned with South Boston as a center of Irish-Catholicism in the city.

The Delineation of Boston's Neighborhoods

Markets in Dorchester Neighborhood, 2005

Despite the continued Irish pride, seventy percent of Dorchester's population is African American or black (including many Cape Verdeans), and with a large number of Hispanics and a growing Asian community, the truth is that Dorchester's white population is small and predominantly concentrated on the eastern portion of the neighborhood. This white minority includes working class and middle class Irish-Catholics, some of whom have had families in Dorchester for generations, but it also consists of many young professionals taking advantage of the housing market and on average staying in the area for only three to five years. [16] In addition, the black and Hispanic residents of Dorchester are among the city's poorest and the majority of the neighborhood consists of inferior housing conditions and high crime rates. As a result of the economic disparity and racial diversity of Dorchester, the neighborhood has become strongly segregated with the generally more financially stable white community retreating to insularity with little connection to its dissimilar neighbors.
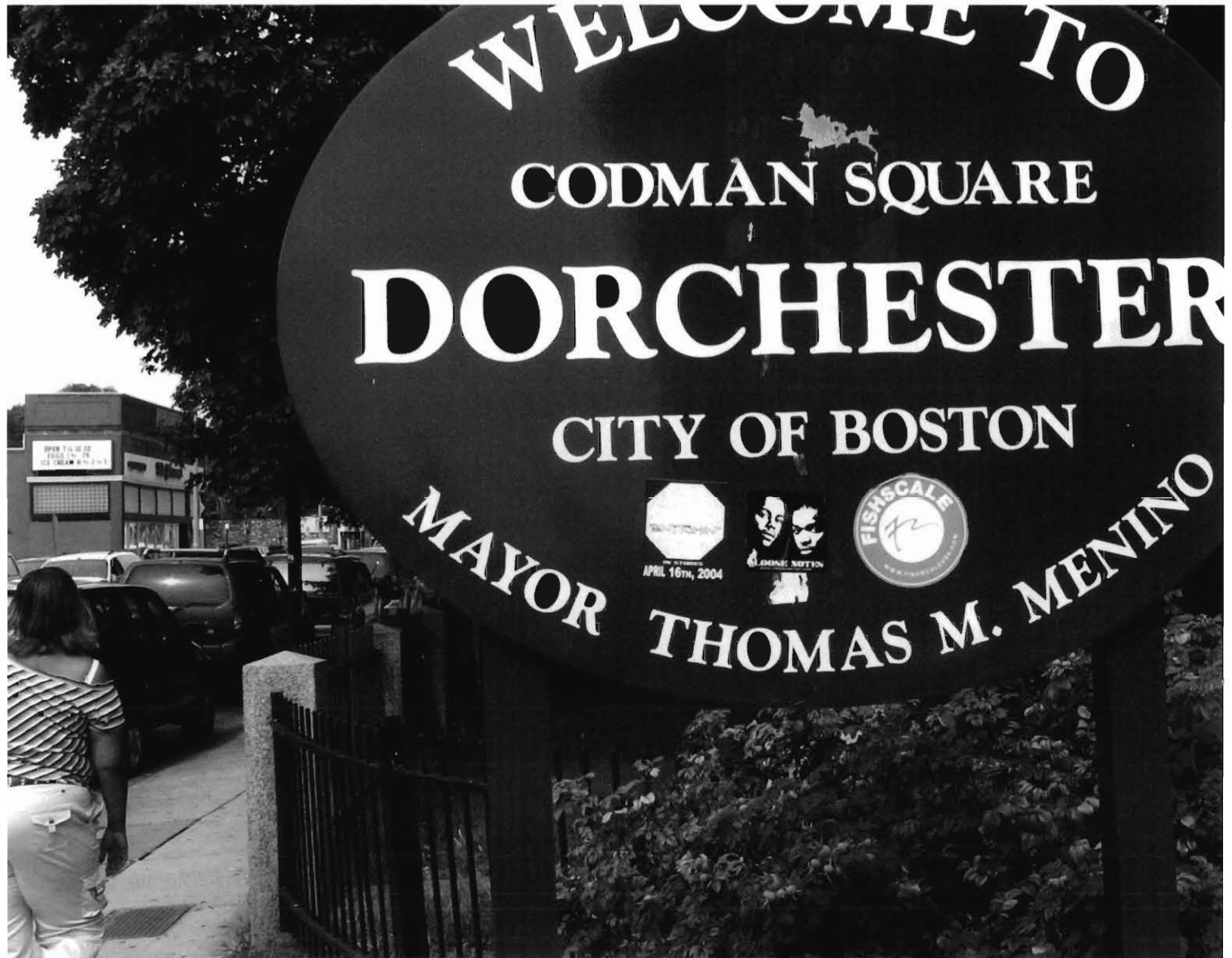
figure 21: *Blue Hill Avenue, Dorchester, 1940s*

Historical Edge:

With the intention to establish a border between these two socially isolated communities *(see Good Fences)*, it was of interest to consider the historical border of Blue Hill Avenue. The formal boundary between Roxbury and Dorchester, the avenue also served as the cultural border between the Jewish and Irish, and later the black and Irish communities. From the late 1920s through the 1950s, Blue Hill Avenue flourished as the center of Boston's Jewish community. Initially the area was considered among the safest in the city, but increasing hostility from Irish-Catholics, who knick-named the place "Jew Hill Avenue", marked it as a site of violence throughout the 1930s and 1940s *(see a history of antagonisms)*. Beginning in the 1950s and continuing through the 1970s, the Jewish population began moving away from Blue Hill and the growing black community which was already well establish in Roxbury moved in. Initially the avenue served to divided the mostly white, Irish-Catholic Dorchester from what had become the predominantly black Roxbury just as it had done previously with the Irish and Jews. However, the black population continued to increase at a rate which exceeded this confinement and ultimately spilled over the boundary of Blue Hill and into other areas of Dorchester. With high rates of poverty and unemployment, many black residents could no longer afford their homes and businesses along Blue Hill and beginning in the 1960s through 1980s, the avenue was plagues by hundreds of vacant lots and arson and became a hotspot for gang and drug related violence. During the 1990s considerable efforts were made by the city to revitalize Blue Hill Avenue and the primary commercial center was dubbed the "International Avenue of Color" and was outfitted with brick side-walks, granite curbs, and wrought iron street lamps. [17] Today Blue Hill remains the technical border between the neighborhoods of Roxbury and Dorchester, but in reality it is submerged within the largely black and Hispanic community which stretches seamlessly across the avenue.

Bus Stop, Blue Hill Avenue, 2005

Painted Facade of Vacant Building, Blue Hill Avenue, 2005

Finding the Edge: *The true edge between Dorchester's insular white community and its largely disenfranchised black and Hispanic community is not easily defined, though the white population is largely grouped in clusters throughout the eastern region of the neighborhood. After considerable research and inquiry, a zone consisting of several miles along Washington Street (where these two communities were most divergent and simultaneously most adjacent) was selected as the site for this investigation.*

Group "A" and Group "B":

At this zone, the community to the west of Washington Street (Group A) can be generally characterized as black and Hispanic, economically disadvantaged, home renters who are very reliant on public transportation (the street is on several major bus routes)and have a well established street culture. This street culture includes socializing on sidewalks, stoops, and bus stops, shopping and eating at the number of shops and restaurants, and a lively nightlife with the use of many bars.

GROUP "A"

The community east of Washington Street (Group B) at this zone is predominantly white, older and young professionals who are totally dependent on their cars and have absolutely no street culture (not even the use of their large front lawns and porches). The residents are very centered inside the home and in general they choose to go east to Dorchester Avenue (despite its greater distance) for all services and establish no contact with Group A despite their extremely close physical proximity.

Melville and Dunlap:

The divisions between Group "A" and "Group "B" are particularly apparent at the intersection of Washington Street with Melville Avenue to the east and Dunlap Street to the west. These two residential areas with their stark economic, social, and architectural disparities and total lack of connection despite their proximity underscore the issue of sublimated friction between these groups.

The following pages demonstrate this point though a comparison of the typologies (both formal and informal) of Melville Avenue and Dunlap Street.
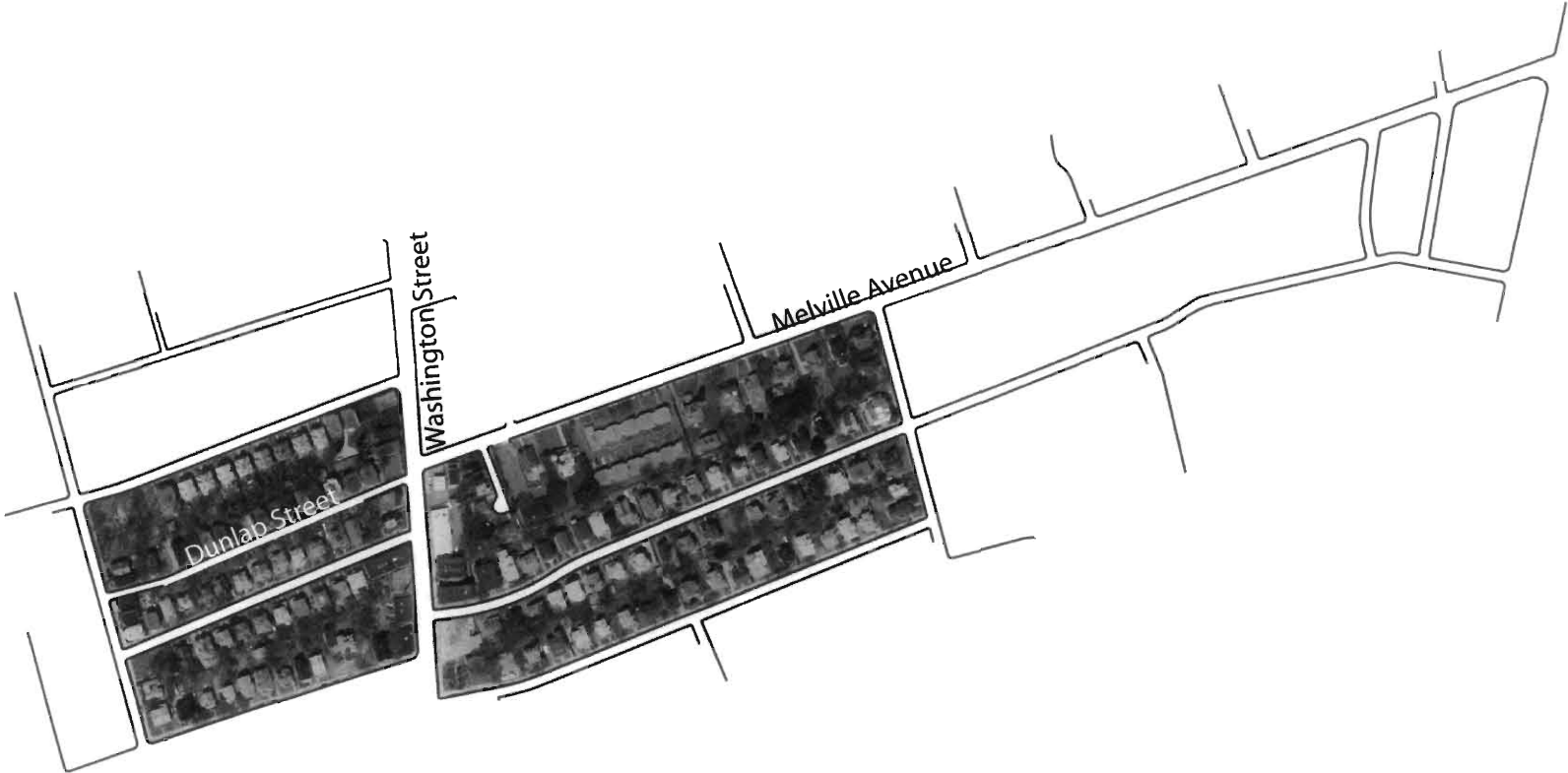
residence / Dunlap Street

residence / Melville Ave.

sidewalk / Dunlap Street
coarse aggregate/trash, typ.

sidewalk / Melville Ave.
fine aggregate / swept clean, typ.

tree / Dunlap Street
stump remains, littered, typ.

tree / Melville Ave.
mature, occasional litter, typ.

front yard / Dunlap Street

front yard / Melville Ave.
.

porch / Dunlap Street

porch / Melville Ave.

lawn ornament / Dunlap Street

lawn ornament / Melville Ave.

curb / Dunlap Street
soft edge / cigarette butts-etc., typ.

curb / Melville Ave.
hard edge / organic debris, typ.

3   *site(s)*

The strategy includes the selection of three consecutive sites along this area of Washington Street in order to establish the theme of the border and introduce friction between these neighborhoods. Each of these sites varies in size, topography, and intensity of existing and potential friction, providing a diversity of opportunities to study the relationship between these communities. The porosity of the proposed border, which will establish the edge condition supposed as vital for the introduction of friction here, also responds to the fluctuations of the three sites. The border demands more direct contact where minimal existing relationships between these communities have been established and initiates more abstract connection where the existing divisions are most extreme

Markets and Shops Along Washington Street, Dorchester, 2005

Site 1: Situated at the intersection of Melville Avenue and Washington, and directly across from Dunlap Street, this very flat lot exhibits the closest existing relationship between Groups A and B. The Victorian homes and large lots of Group B's Melville Ave. literally neighbor the dilapidated triple-deckers of Group B and are buffered only by this corner site.

aerial photograph of Washington Street

vacant lot site 2

Site 3: Situated atop a thirty foot drop in topography, this site has long views stretching across the a residential community (which is largely Group B) to the water. Existing connection here is moderate and primarily visual, privileging Group A with the view.

aerial photograph of Washington Street

view from site 3

ba•nal: adjective
Etymology: French, from Middle French, of compulsory feudal service, possessed
in common, commonplace, from *ban*
: lacking originality, freshness, or novelty : trite

1 *program*

Strategy:

In studying the area between Washington Street and Dorchester Avenue, the moments of greatest friction occurred at otherwise uninspiring locations; McDonalds, Store 24, etc. These banal programs and easily identified typologies serve as moments of entry for the typically isolated white community in this zone. It is of note that these instances do not occur at the many sites which are more oriented towards community gathering (day care, libraries, etc.). The predominantly white population travels the greater distance to more economically established areas for most of these purposes and seems more motivated to create connections with the largely black and Hispanic community at these banal points.

observed frictions in the Washington Street area of Dorchester

—————— site border (linked points of friction)

● observed points of friction

◉ *nucleus (intersection, Dunlap and Melville)*
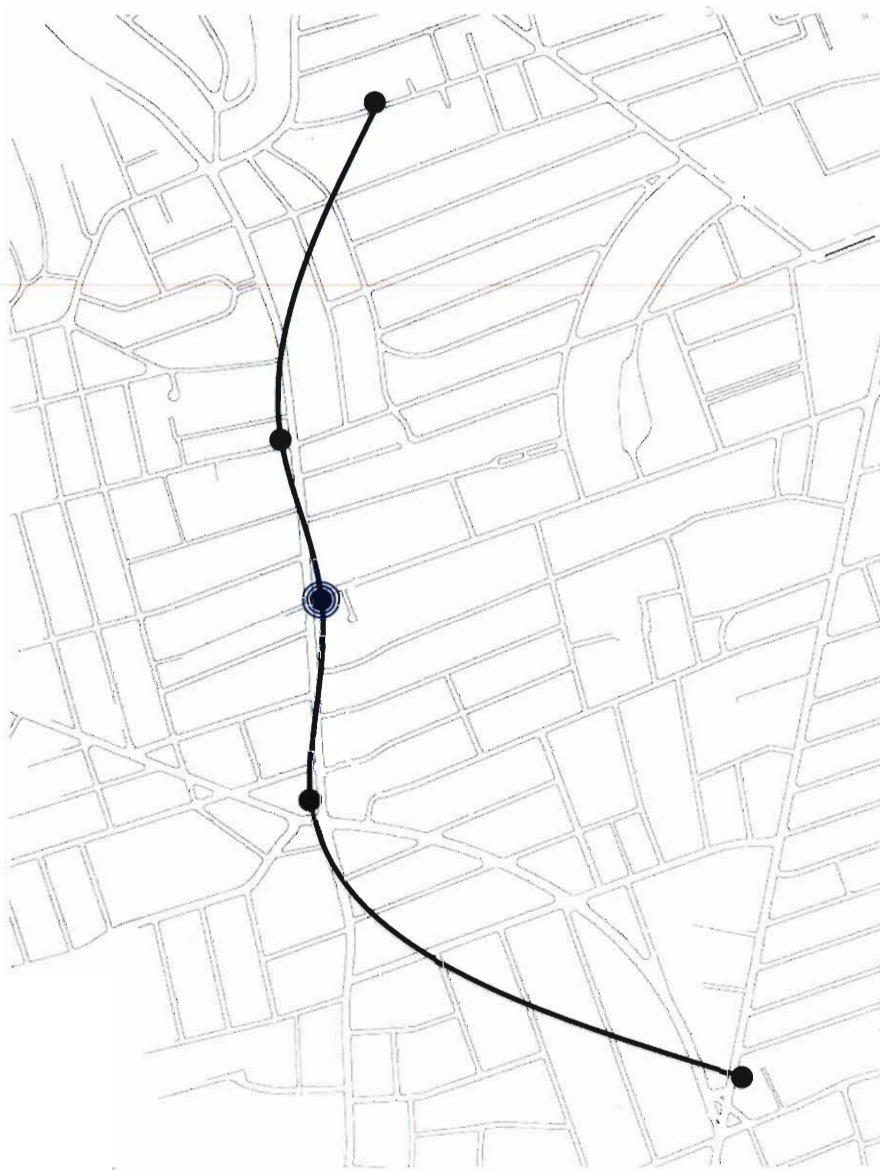
mapping of debris from a single source point across the otherwise isolated communities in the Washington Street area of Dorchester

———— site border (linked points of friction)

— — — connection between debris points

● areas of observed *McDonald's* debris

◉ *McDonald's (source)* location

605 Washington Street

banal programs and typologies:

SITE 1 : *program B generic block*   SITE 2 : *program B generic block*   SITE 3 : *program B generic block*
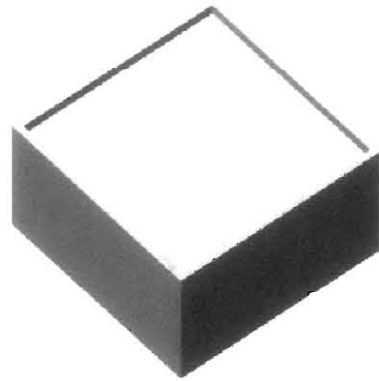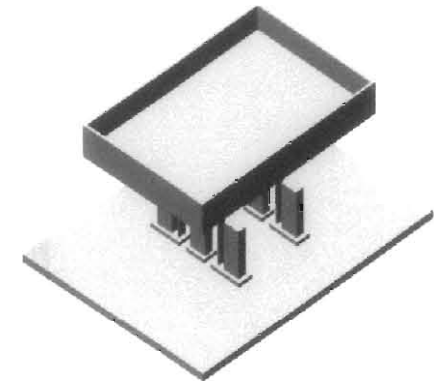
The project capitalizes on this comfort with the identifiable by proposing a hybrid program at each of its three sites. One component of each program is banal in nature and acts as a lure to the reclusive Group B. These elements are designed as point-access services which makes their use most plausible by this home oriented and car reliant group. The second component of each program is more closely connected with the established community of Group A along Washington Street. These elements play into the existing street culture and night-life and are conceived of as a set of connected themes where one may move easily from one to the next up and down the street.

hybrid programs:

SITE 1 / PROGRAM "A" *(diner)*   SITE 1 / PROGRAM "B" *(starbucks)*

1: At this site where the greatest probability for contact presents itself, the two programs are also closely aligned and have high potential for cross-use between goups. The diner program is active from day to night, capitalizing on the lively street culture of Group A . The Starbucks offers an opportunity for patrons to linger and affords many opportunities for views into the adjacent diner- potentially tempting transgression

SITE 2 / PROGRAM "A" *(pool hall / video arcade)*   SITE 2 / PROGRAM "B" *(car wash)*

2: Since this site has the least existing contact, the interest is in drawing members of the Group B community into this Group A area with the transitory program of the car wash. The greatest potential for contact occurs during the brief period during the washing of the car when users can exit and enter the waiting room pocket *(see pockets)* or the video arcade on the first floor of the pool hall.

SITE 3 / PROGRAM "A" *(night club)*   SITE 3 / PROGRAM "B" *(gas station)*
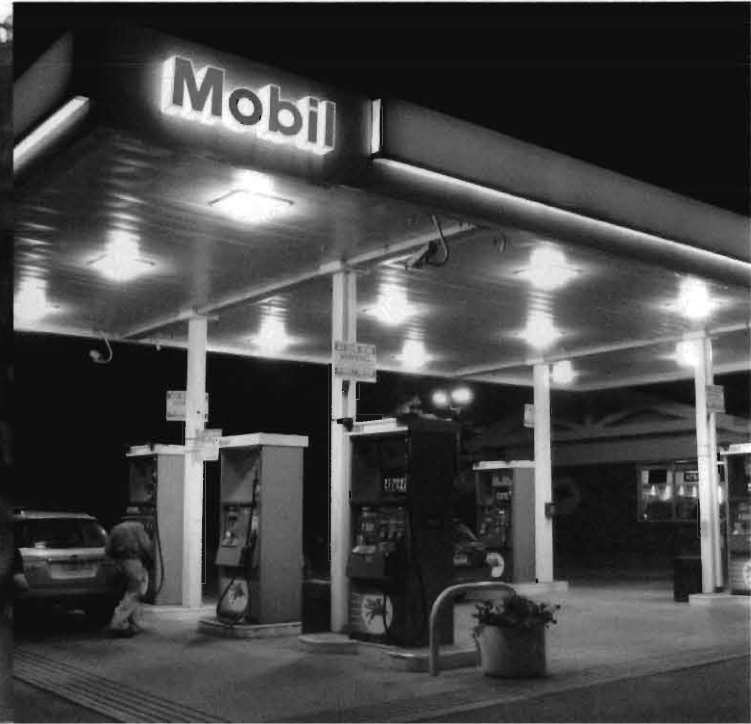
3: The physical proximity which exists on this site is severely handicapped by the thirty foot drop in topography here. The service of the gas station is used as an initial attractor for resistant Group B. Views from this exterior program into the nigh club (which operates exclusively during the evening) potentially incite desire to surmount the shift in level and comfort zone.

GROUP A : *linked program access*

_ _ _program 1 _ _ _   _ _ _program 2_ _ _   _ _ _program 3_ ⟩

GROUP B : *point program access*

program 1

program 2

program 3

Narratives:

A collection of Images taken at the sites are edited and supposed as film stills or fragments of two narratives describing the experience of Groups A and B along the proposed border. One narrative imagines the social and linear movement of Group A accessing the sites, the other describes the solitary point and retreat access of Group B. These stories merge at one point (this will later establish the notion of the pocket) with the expression;

Slipping between the familiar and the unknown, it's a place we know but have never been before. One scene recedes into another. We crossed the line where it is wide enough to contain us.

exterior : late day . birds, lawnmower in distance, footsteps on pavement. **Rob:** Tell her to go back and get him. We can't just leave him there all night.

interior, view to exterior : late day, glasses clinking, background voices. **Bartender:** (coughs) You asked me that last week. Don't you remember? (pauses) Can I get you any-

interior: late day, background voices. They walk out of view and Jake stands slowly and moves away from the window back to the table.

exterior : late day . dead quiet. They pause for a minute, silent. **Rob:** (studies Kim's face for recognition) This is it, right? You said it was right here.

interior view to exterior : a glass falls and shatters. Applause and laughter. Jake sets down the cue and taps on window to shoo away the stray cat.

exterior : late day . traffic in background, bus brakes squeal. **TJ:** (pushes Rob's shoulder) Man, it's time to go back. There's nothing else up there.

exterior : late day . traffic in background, bus brakes squeal. **TJ:** (pushes Rob's shoulder) Man, it's time to go back. There's nothing else up there.

exterior : late day . traffic in background, cell phone rings. **Kim:** (excited) Where are you now?... What? Talk up, I can't hear a word your sayin'.

exterior : late day, traffic in background, children laughing. **Kim:** (stopping)He said it was fading.

exterior : late day . Kim sings in background, phone rings. **TJ:** (looking up) It's not him now. The light is coming on.... we can't make it in time.

interior: early evening, another loud knock comes from the back. Jake bends to look through peep -hole. **Jake:** (turning to Amy with concern) I think... (hesitates) It's him,

exterior : early evening . car starting in background. Man lifts the hood. **TJ:** (emphatic) There's no way man! He's like 275.

interior, view to exterior : early evening, pool player brakes in background. **Amy:** (approaching window) There it is! That's the car.

exterior : early evening . car starting in background. **Rob:** (touching sticker) That was Earl's friend. 'Member man? He's the one who told us to go there in the first place.

exterior : early evening . laughing, footsteps. **TJ:** (turning to Rob) They follow the boys up the hill. How do you know we can trust them? They don't know a thing, I'm tellin' you....

exterior : early evening . birds, wind. Kim walks to sit beside them on the bench. No one speaks, she grabs Rob's hand... he doesn't look at her. They all stare ahead at the horizon.

The Wall:

The wall (see good fences) is housed within the banal programmatic elements; exerting the edge condition necessary to create friction while permitting views, moments of transgression, and potentially creating desire from one group to the other. The border in its monumentality becomes operative as this instigator only through its subversion within the subtlety of these everyday programs. The wall is conceived of as two layers which fuse, run parallel, a delaminate variable to create different conditions of connection. The materials of the two lamina of the wall play upon existing typologies of border within the communities. One layer is constructed of steel with glass infill where required for enclosure (this system is associated with Group A) , the other is concrete (associated with Group B).
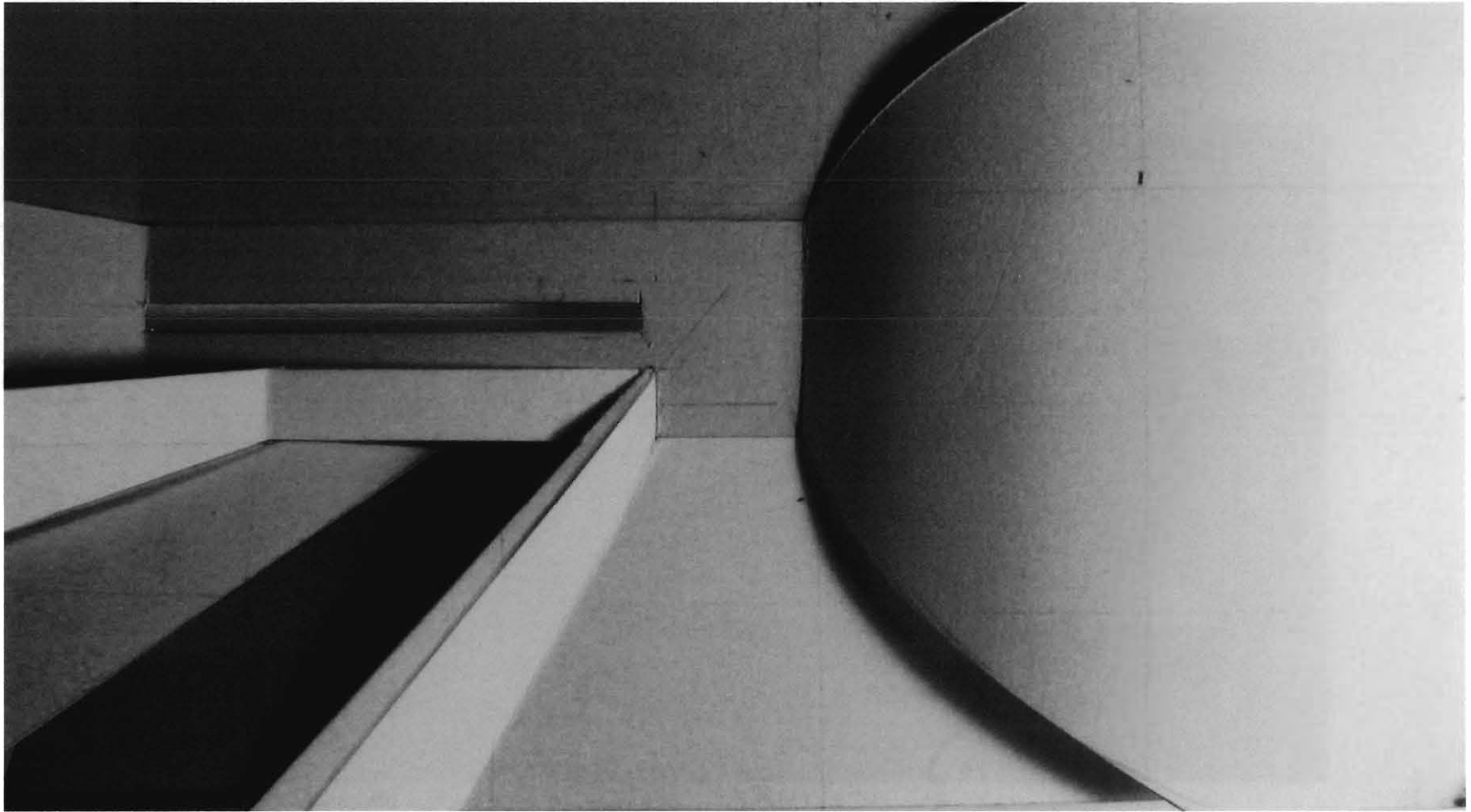
interior wall study
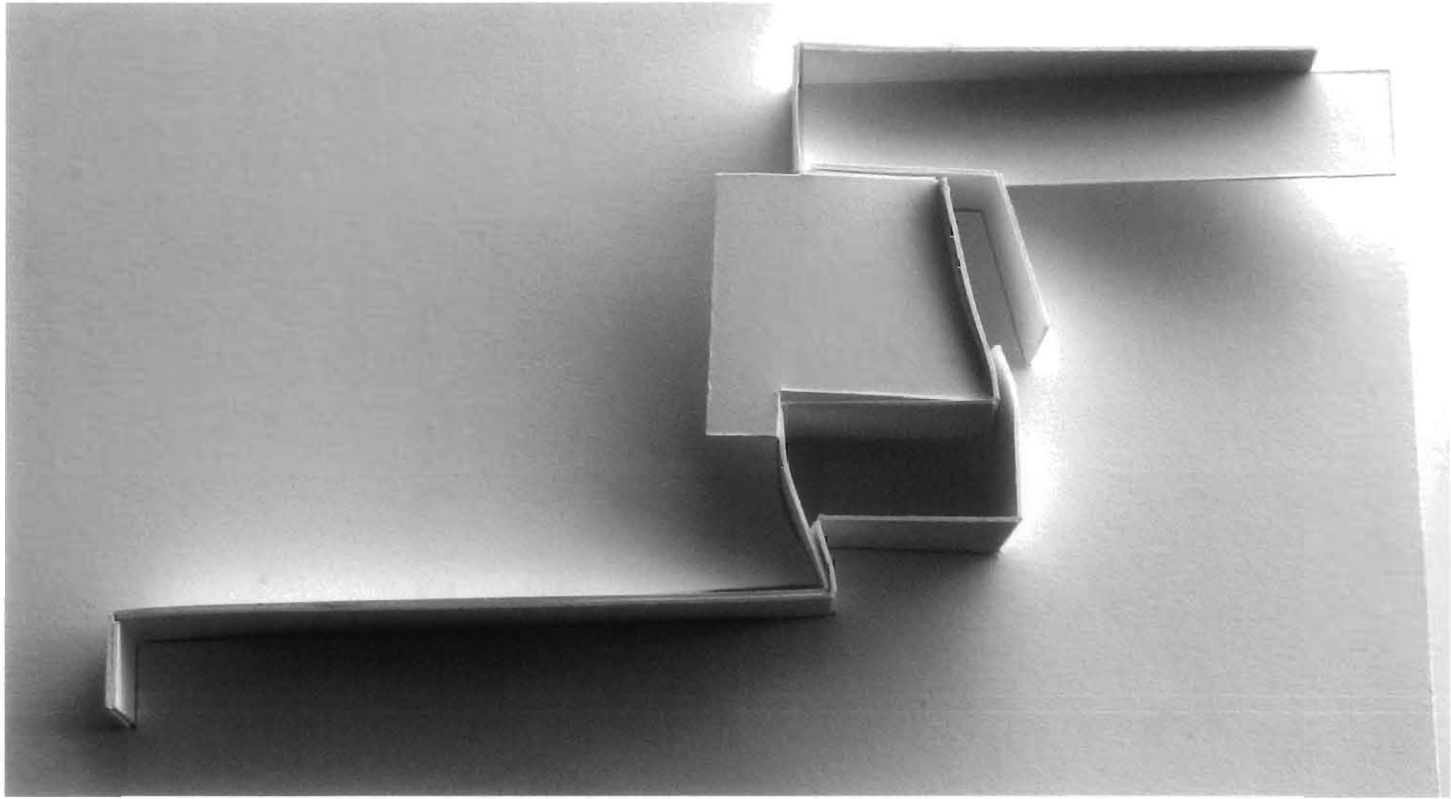
site 1, study of wall laminations
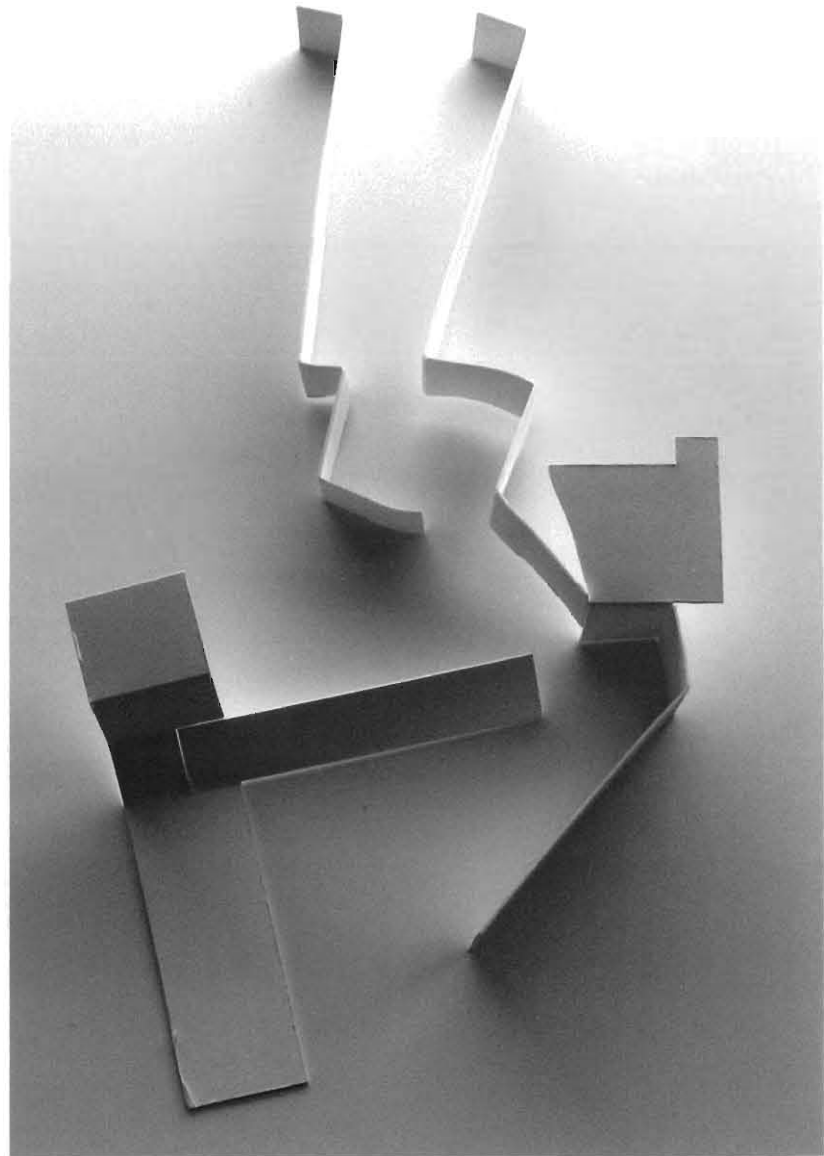
site 1, study of two lamina of wall
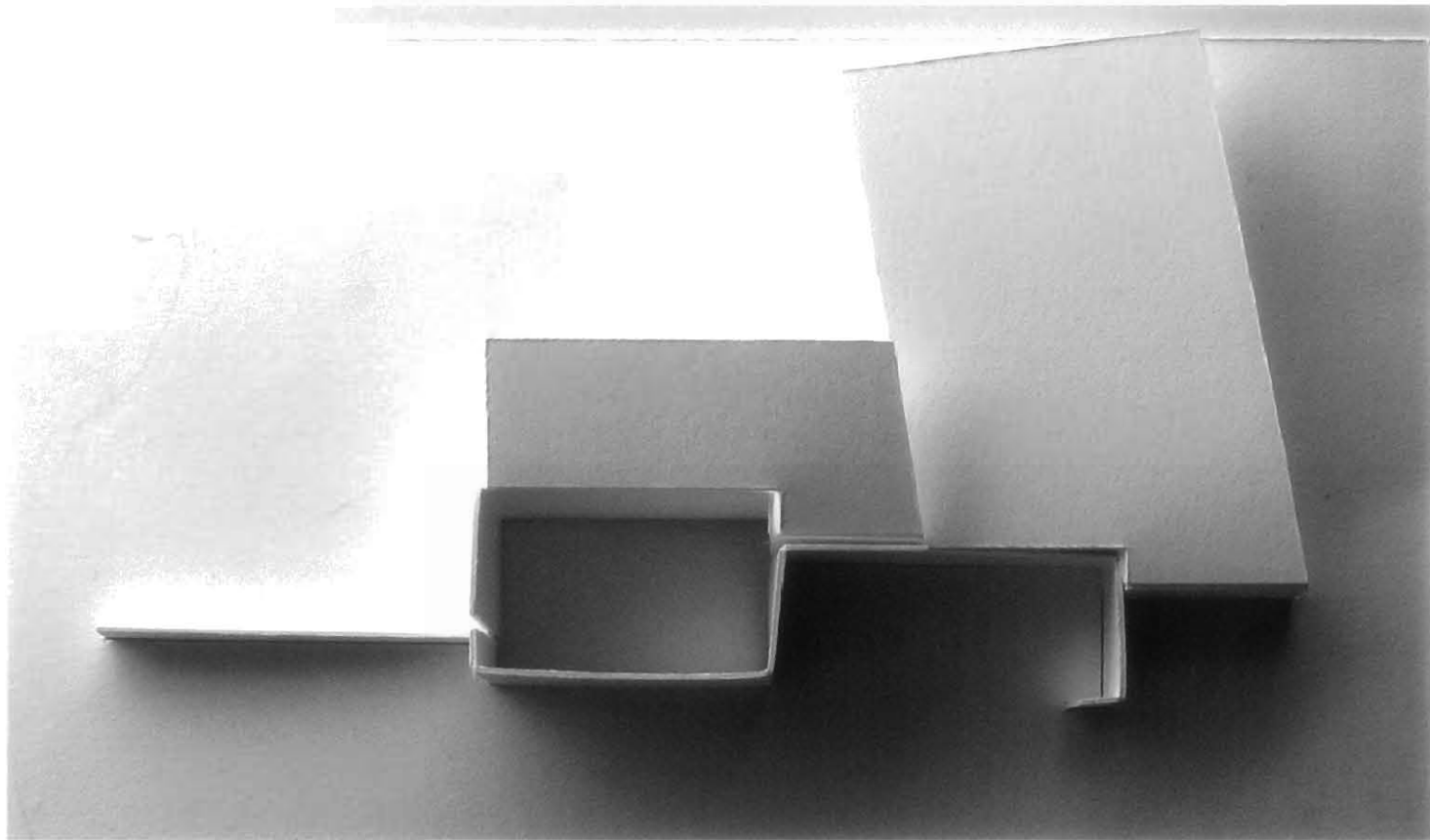
site 2, study of wall laminations
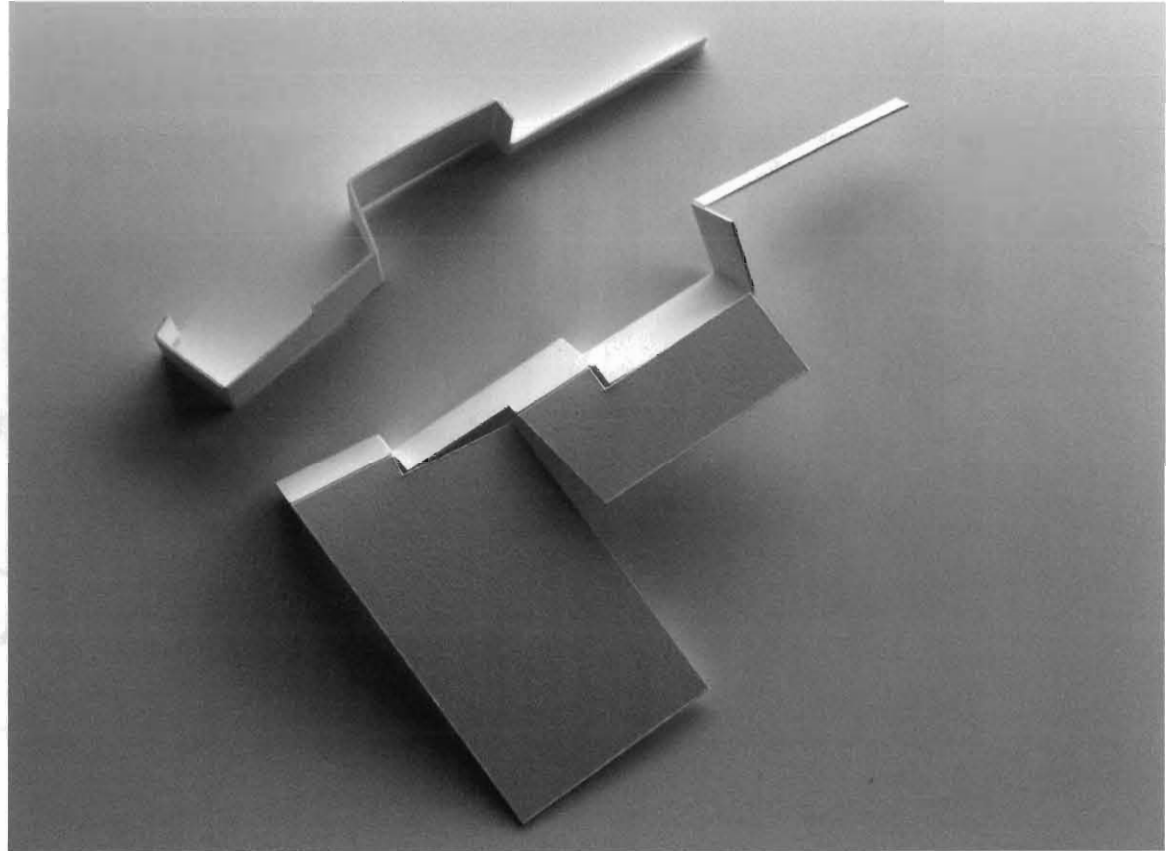
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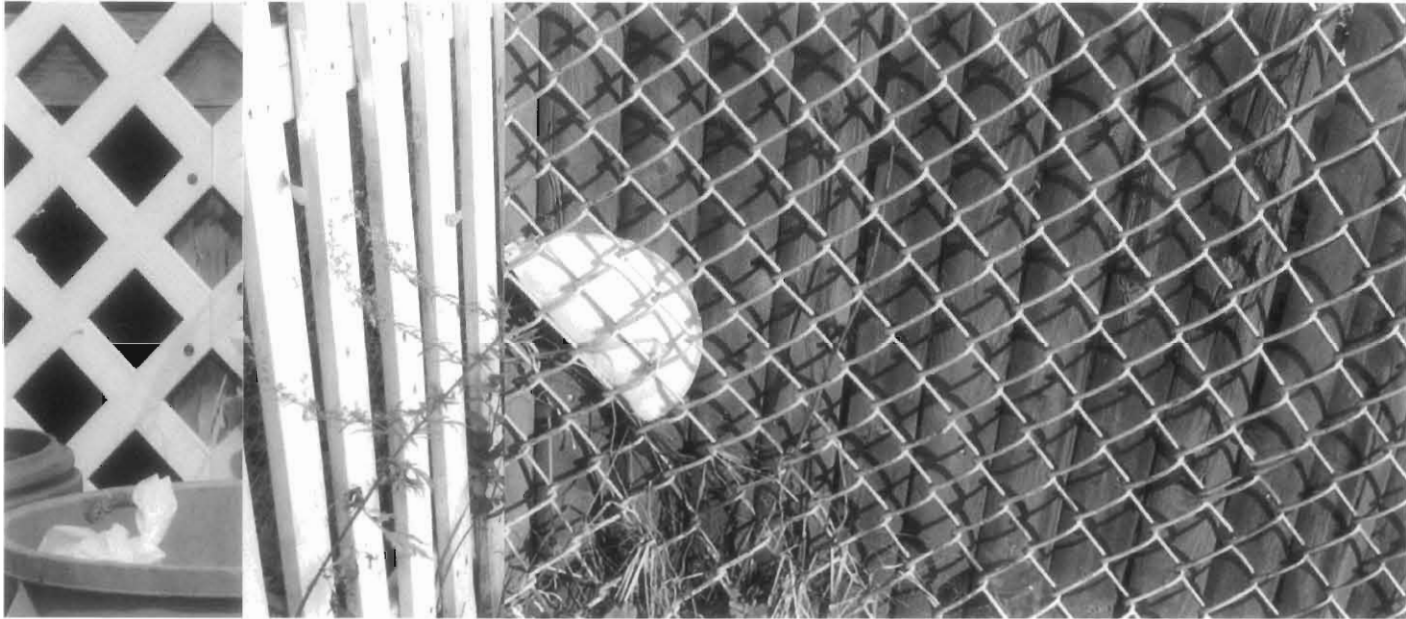
wall: *material inspiration*
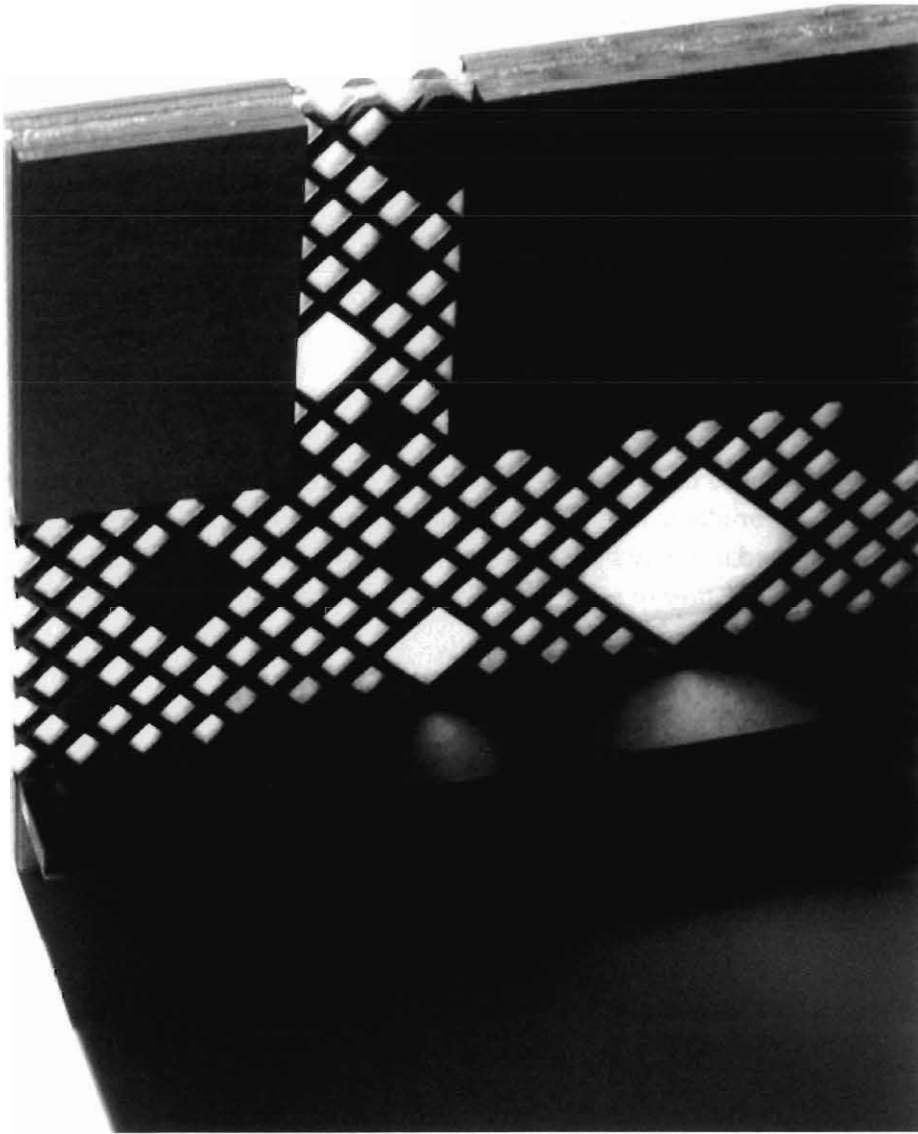
wall studies
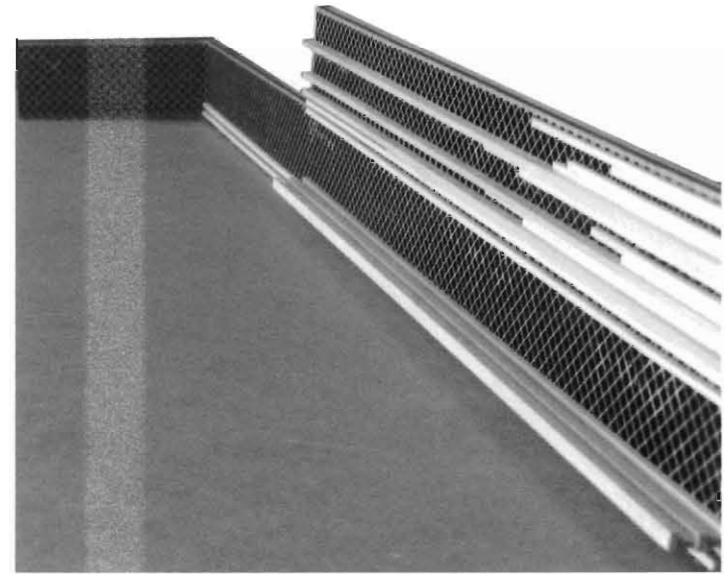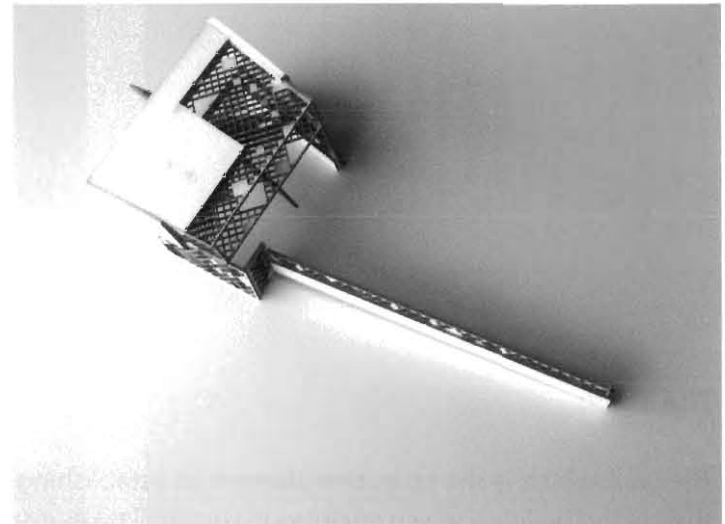
The Shell:

The wall, which is the operative element in establishing friction between these communities, is primarily concealed from the exterior by the shell of the building which encloses it. This shell takes inspiration from the monolithic facades of the abandoned buildings in the neighborhood; structures which in effect belong to no one. This shell breaks down at isolated moments which can be seen only from specific approaches, and in the case of site 2, above street level to reveal controlled views into the walled interior space. The wall also escapes the shell at it's edges where it operated less subversively as it blatantly stretches out into the community

shell: *material inspiration*

abandoned building, Washington Street

site 1, study of shell
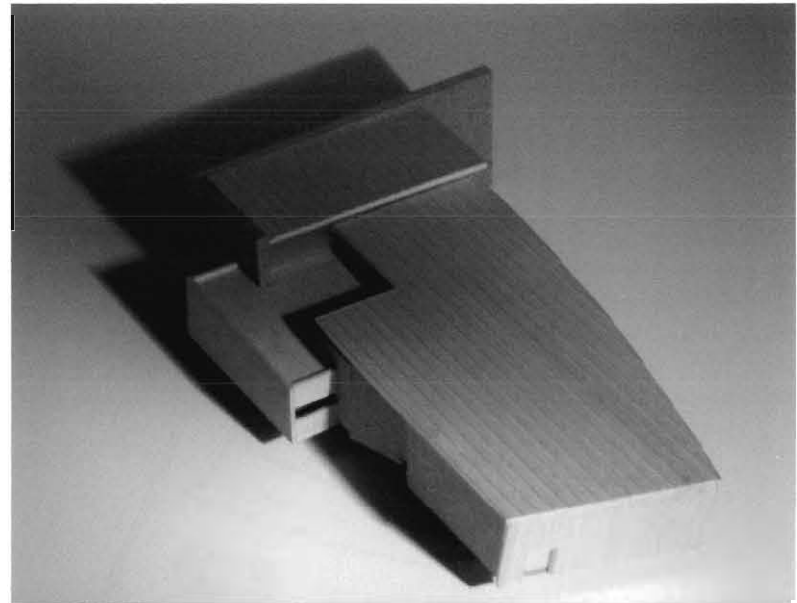
site 2, study of shell
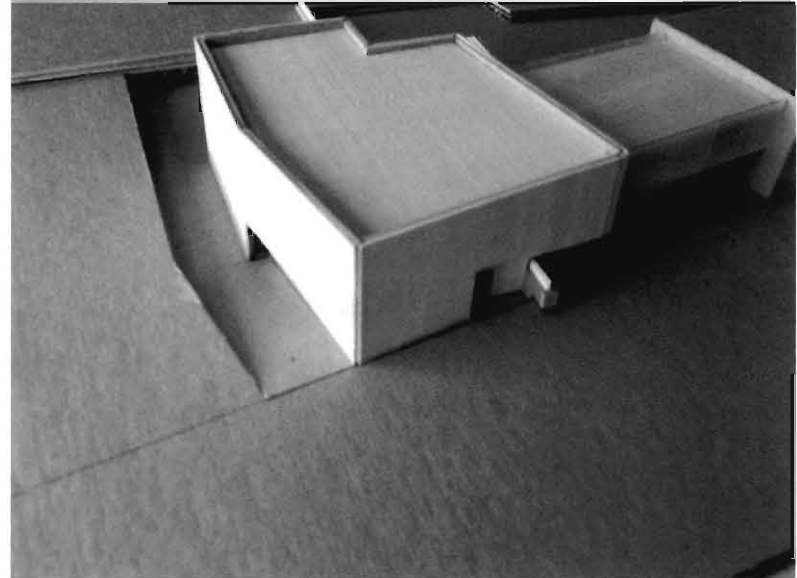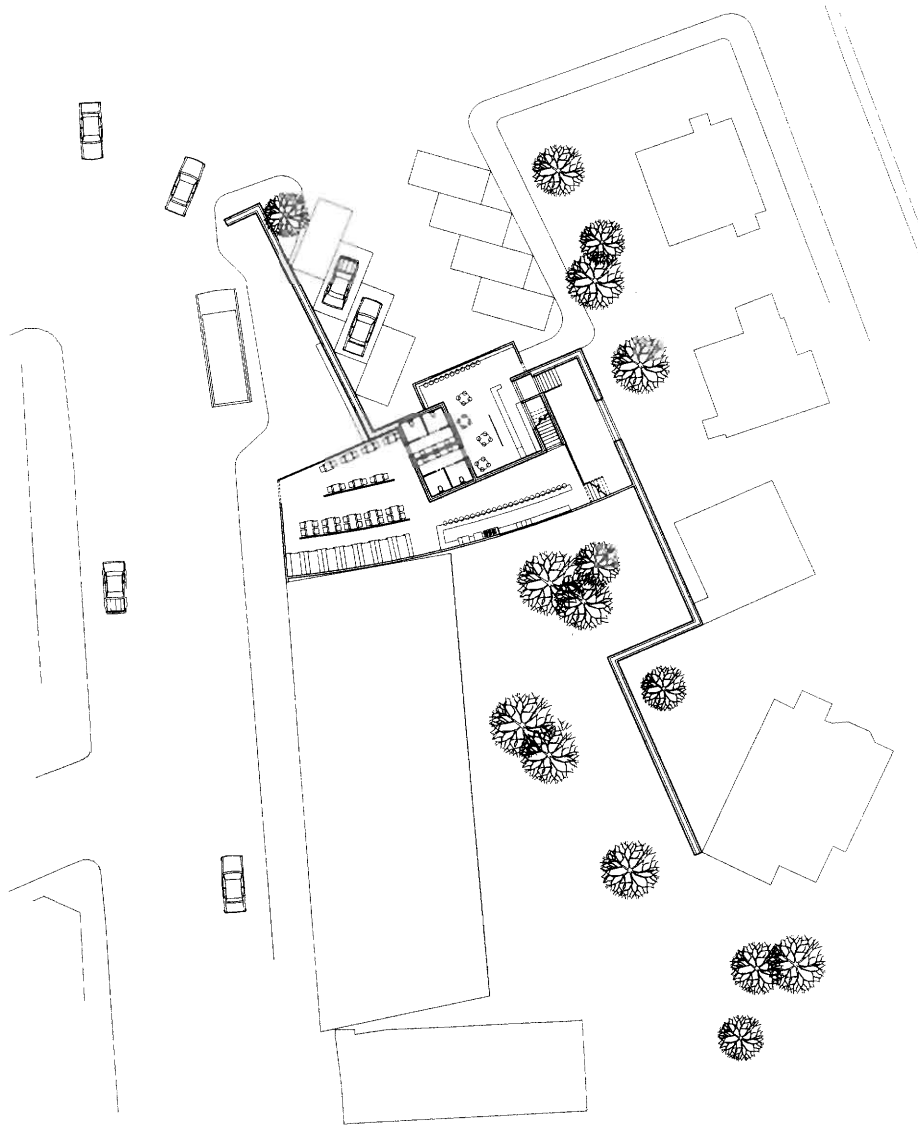
site plan, site 1

Plan, Site 1

The interior wall creates a division between the coffee shop and the diner, but permits controlled views which stimulate a connection potentially establishing desire for transgression. As the wall escapes the shell of the building it reaches into the community to act a bus stop, garden fence, and parking barrier.
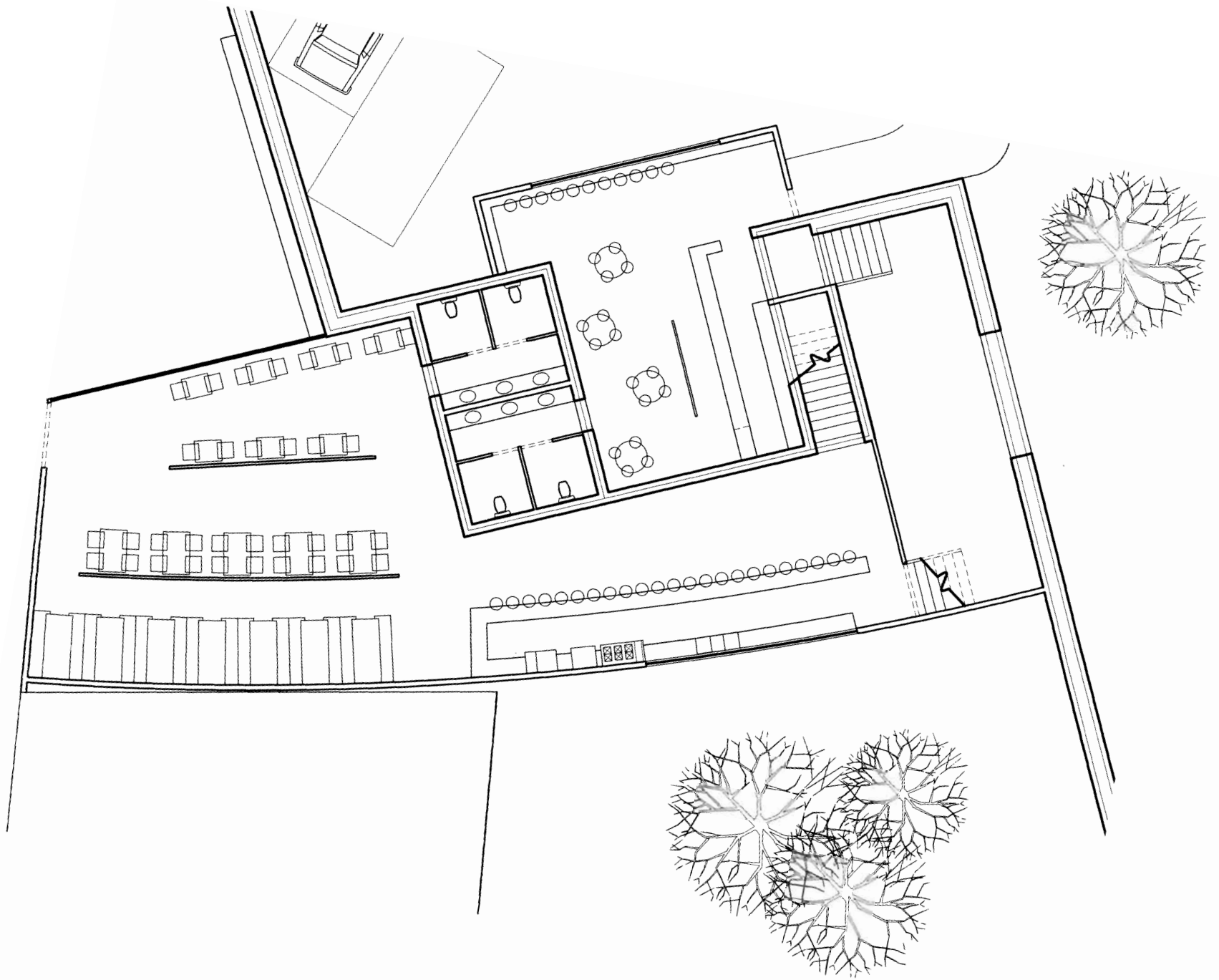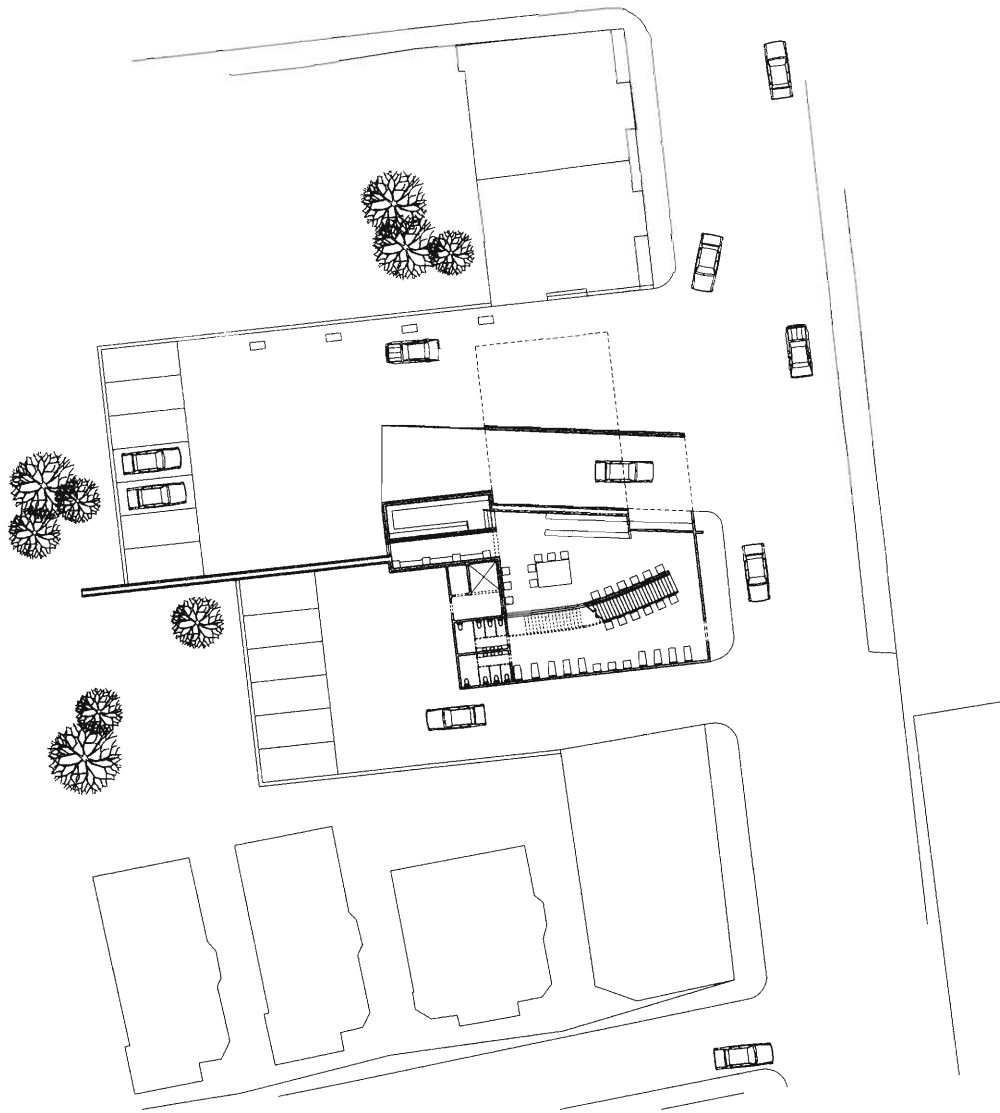
Section, Site 1:

The porosity of the wall to establishes visual and spatial connection between Starbucks and Diner. The wall escapes the shell of the programmatic elements at the edges and stretches into the community where it creates a more overt edge condition.
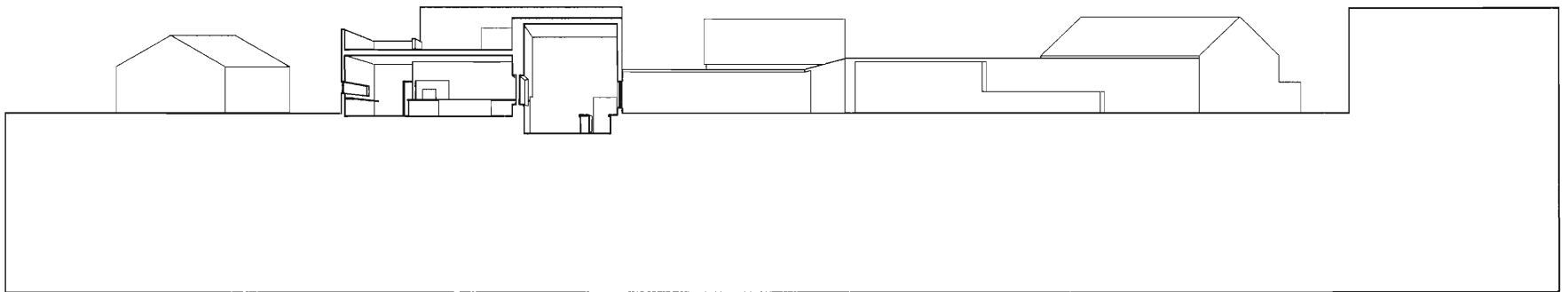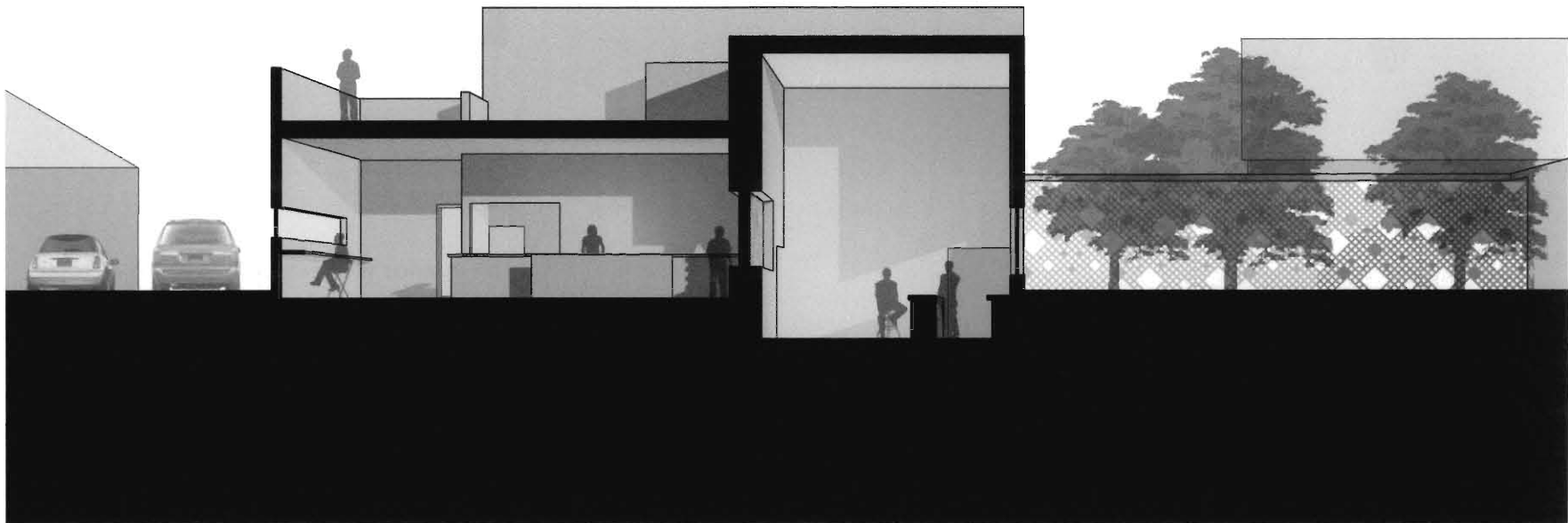
site plan, site 2

Plan, Site 2

The interior wall establishes zones of total isolation (the southern zone to the exterior of the stair on the first floor, the tunnel of the car wash) as well as areas of greater ambiguity in the arcade area adjacent to the car wash. Where the wall escapes the shell of the building to the west, it creates a division for the shift in topography between the two parking areas.
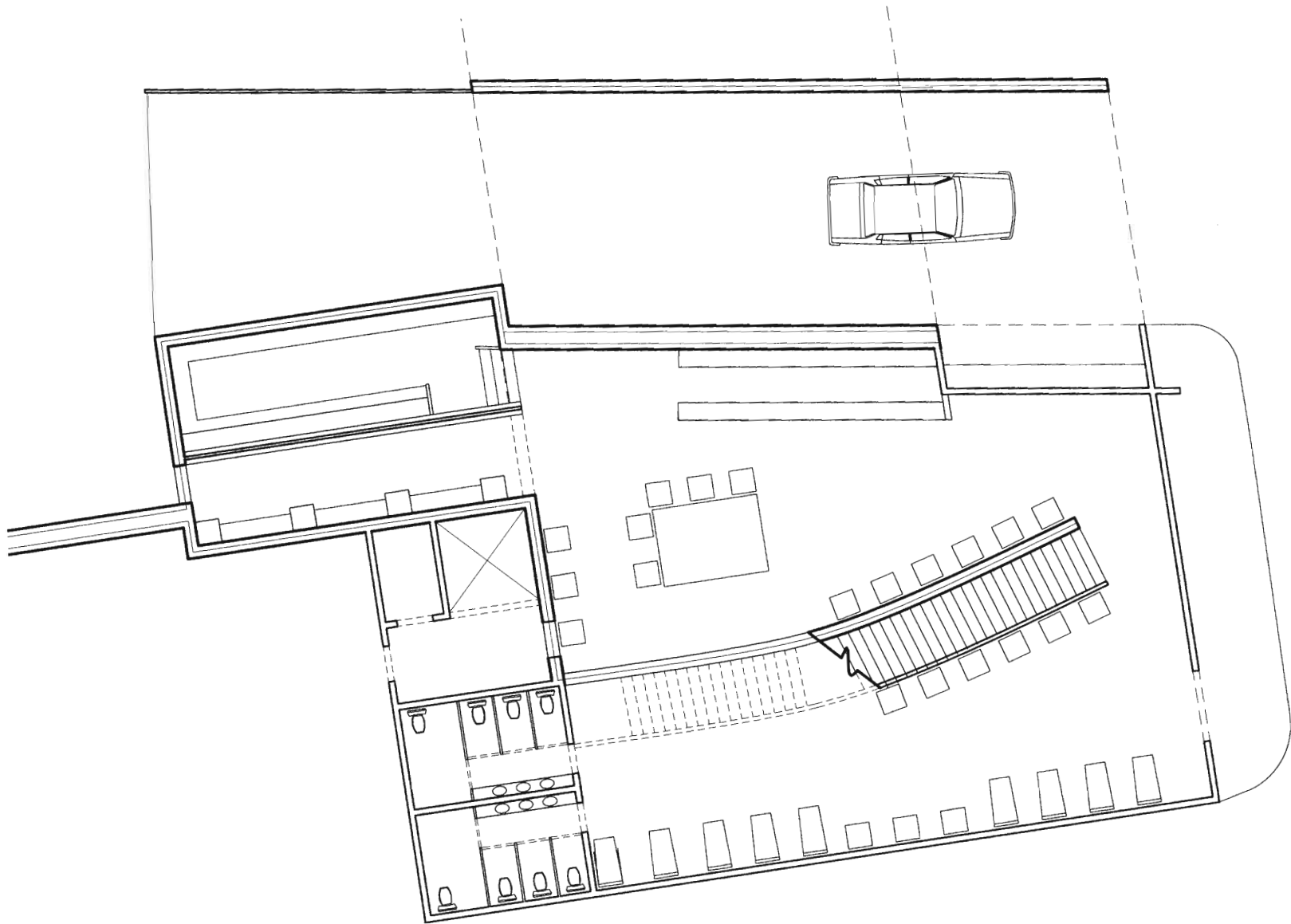
Section, Site 2:

The division created by the wall becomes porous at the carwash while additional connections are established on lower level with the shared video arcade. While the second story pool hall is the most physically divided, the wall escapes the shell here and its glass façade make it visually accessible, potentially creating desire to transgress the barrier.
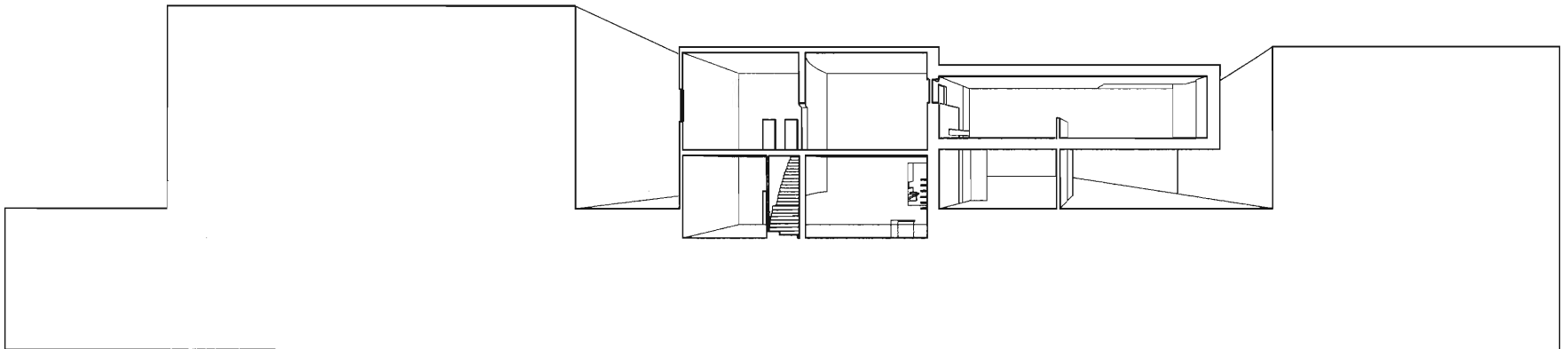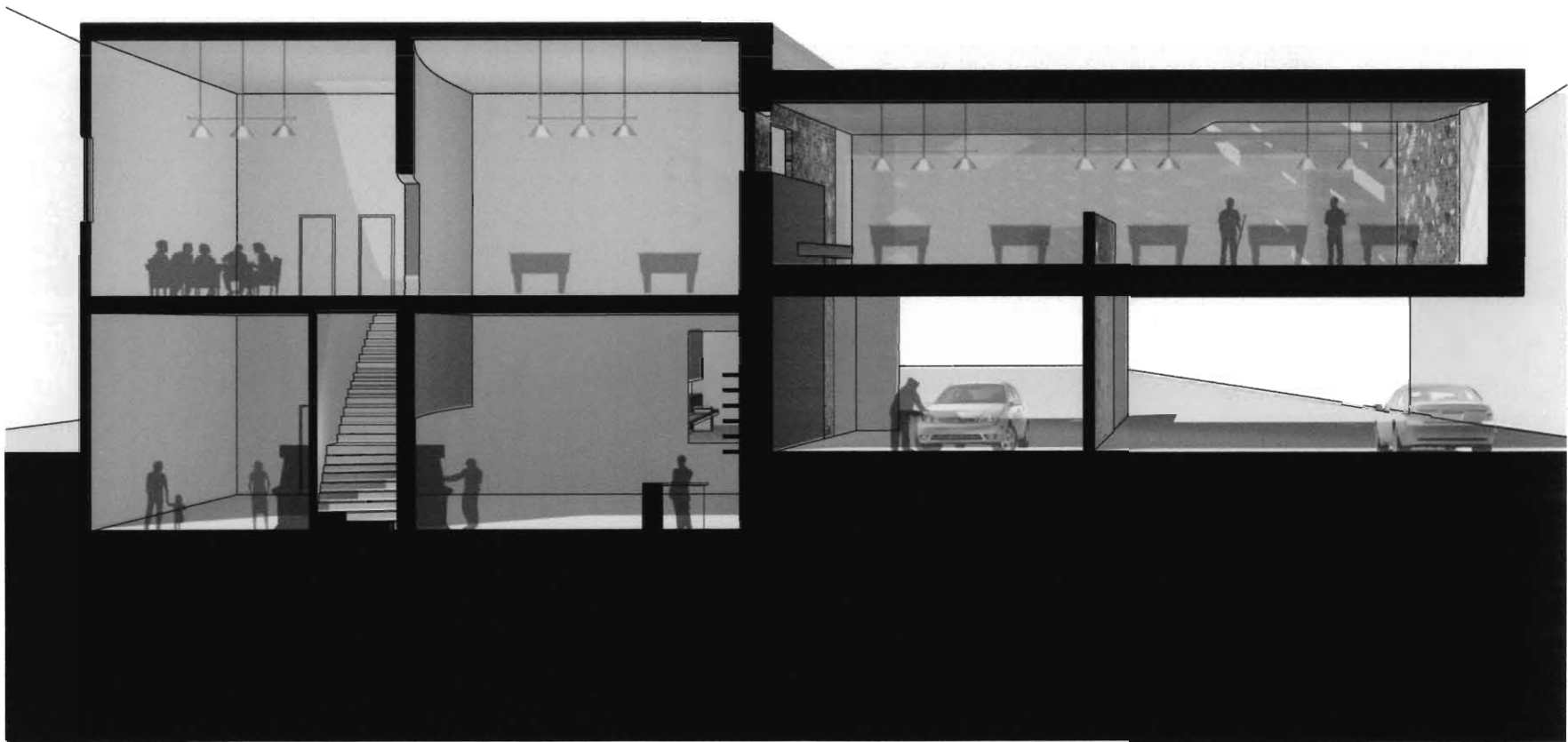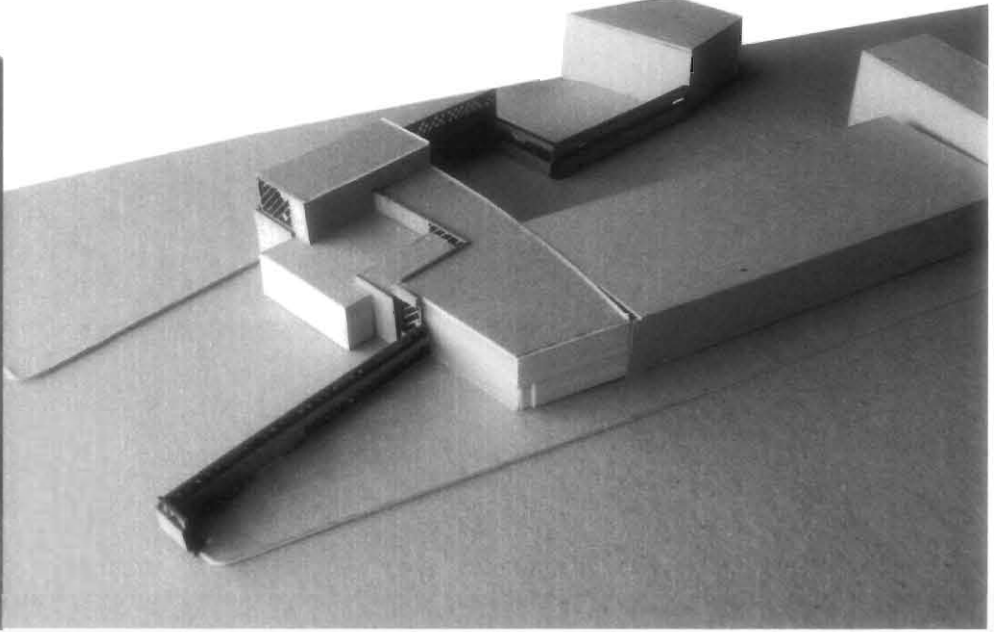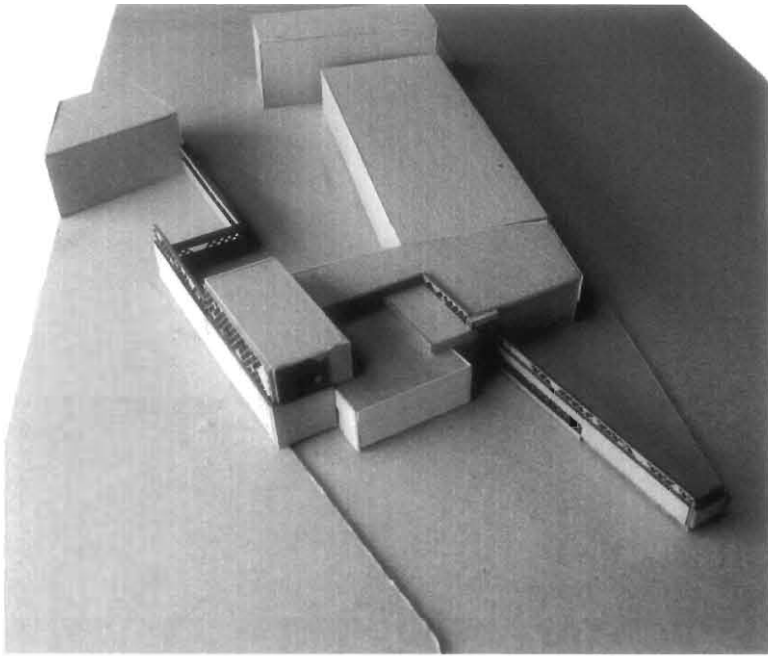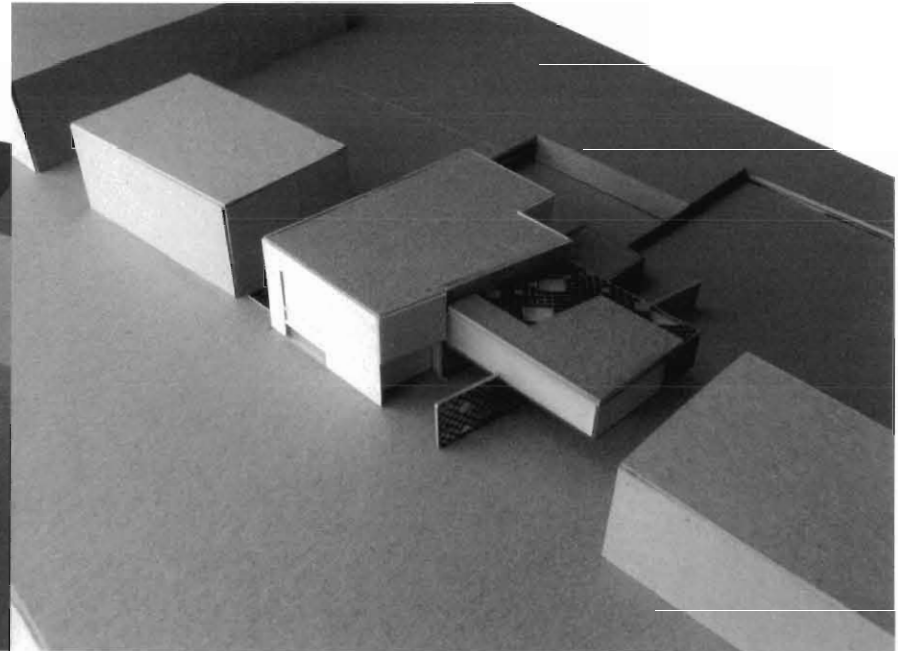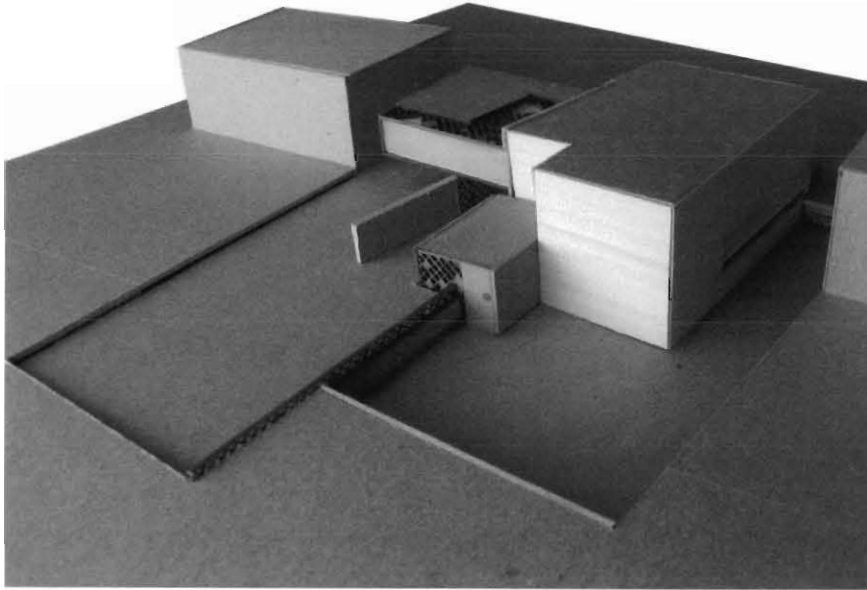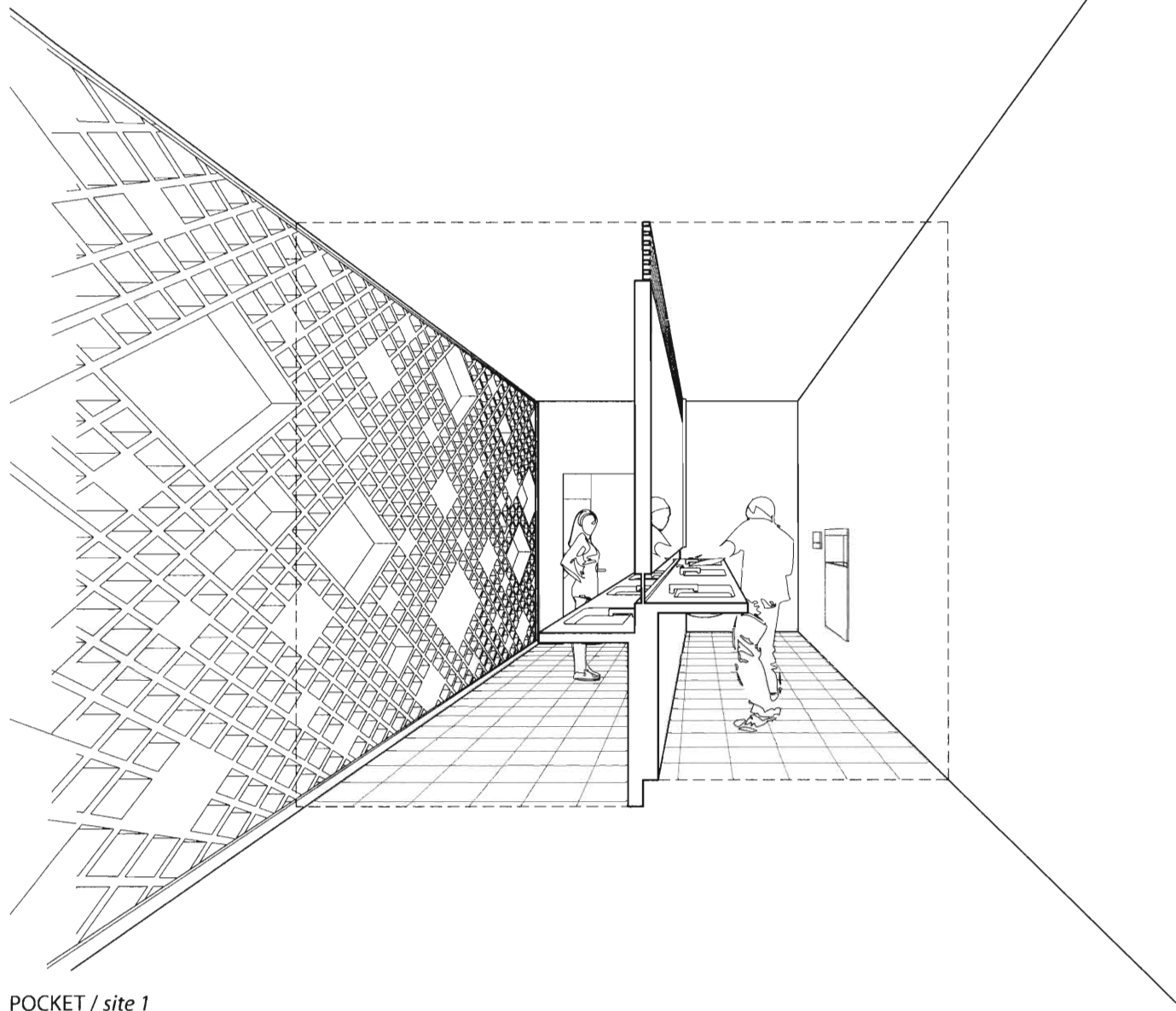
site 1 proposal

site 2 proposal

3 *pockets*

Inspired by the moment of union between the otherwise disconnected narratives of the journey of these two groups along the newly established border *(see "Narratives" in program)*, each site has one zone where the delamination of the wall systems that define this border creates a pocket which can be inhabited by both sides. These pockets occur at an intimate, everyday scale (bathrooms in site1, waiting area and smoking lounge in site 2), but they are monumental as moments of intense transgression of the border.


narrative fragments

Slipping between the familiar and the unknown, it's a place we know but have never been before. One scene recedes into another. We crossed the line where it is wide enough to contain us
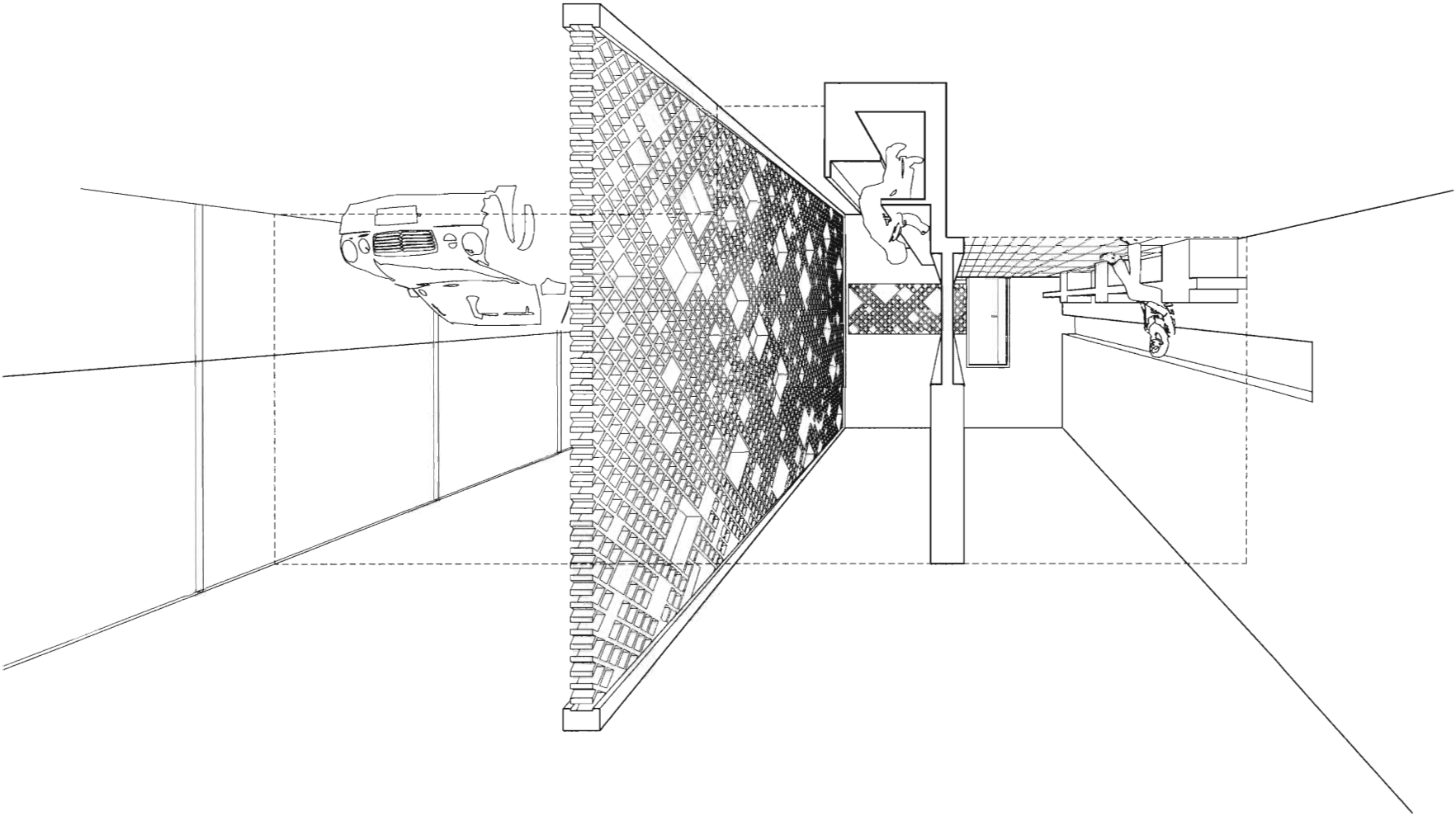
POCKET / *site 1*

Slipping between the familiar and the unknown, it's a place we know but have never been before. One scene recedes into another. We crossed the line where it is wide enough to contain us
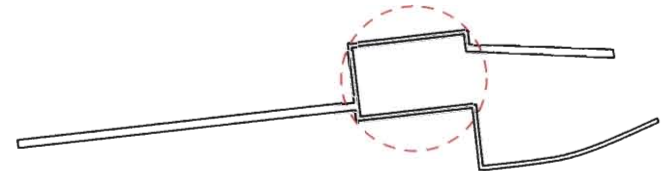
"Thus Boston not only lives in the American imagination; Boston embodies it. The imagination, Coleridge said, is the faculty whose purpose is the reconciliation of opposites. Whether by fluke of history, or by the deliberate choice of its exemplary citizens, or by lessons painfully learned from dreadful mistakes, the reconciliation of opposites has been Boston's purpose too, and so it remains… The ethnic and racial and class boundaries across which so many slings and arrows have been hurled are also sutures that close the social wound." [18]

• *end notes*

1. Guy Stuart. The Civil Rights Project at Harvard University, 2000

2. David J. Harris and Nancy McArdle. "More than Money: The Spatial Mismatch Between Where Homeowners of Color In Metro Boston Can Afford to Live and Where They Actually Reside", The Civil Rights Project at Harvard University 2004

3. James Carroll. *Map of Good Hope: Boston in the American Imagination* in "Mapping Boston", MIT Press 2001, p.233

4-6. Thomas H. O'Connor. "The Boston Irish", Northeastern University Press 1995, pp. 19, 47, 49

7. Sam Bass Warner, Jr. *A Brief History of Boston* in "Mapping Boston", MIT Press 2001, p.8

8. Oscar Handlin. "Boston's Immigrants", Cambridge, MA 1941, p.59
9. William A. Braverrman,.*The Emergence of a Unified Community* in "The Jews of Boston", Yale University Press 1995, p.66

10-13. Thomas H. O'Connor. "The Boston Irish", Northeastern University Press 1995, pp. 204, 239, 261

14-15. Lawrence Raab." in "Touchstone: American Poets on a Favortie Poem", Hanover: University Press of New England 1996

16-17. *Heart of the City : Database of Greenspaces and Neighborhoods in the Heart of Boston*, website: ksgaccman. harvard.edu

18. James Carroll. *Map of Good Hope: Boston in the American Imagination* in "Mapping Boston", MIT Press 2001, p.235

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-*Heart of the City : Database of Greenspaces and Neighborhoods in Heart of Boston, ksgaccman.harvard.edu*

- *The Shooting Research Center, galleryofguns.com*

This book is dedicated to my mother, my aunt Linda, Brooke, James, and all of my family and friends for their continued love and encouragement.