

PASTICHE AS TECHNIQUE

Inside an American Palace

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B.A. Computer Science & Studio Art
Dartmouth College, 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.

January 2008

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ABSTRACT

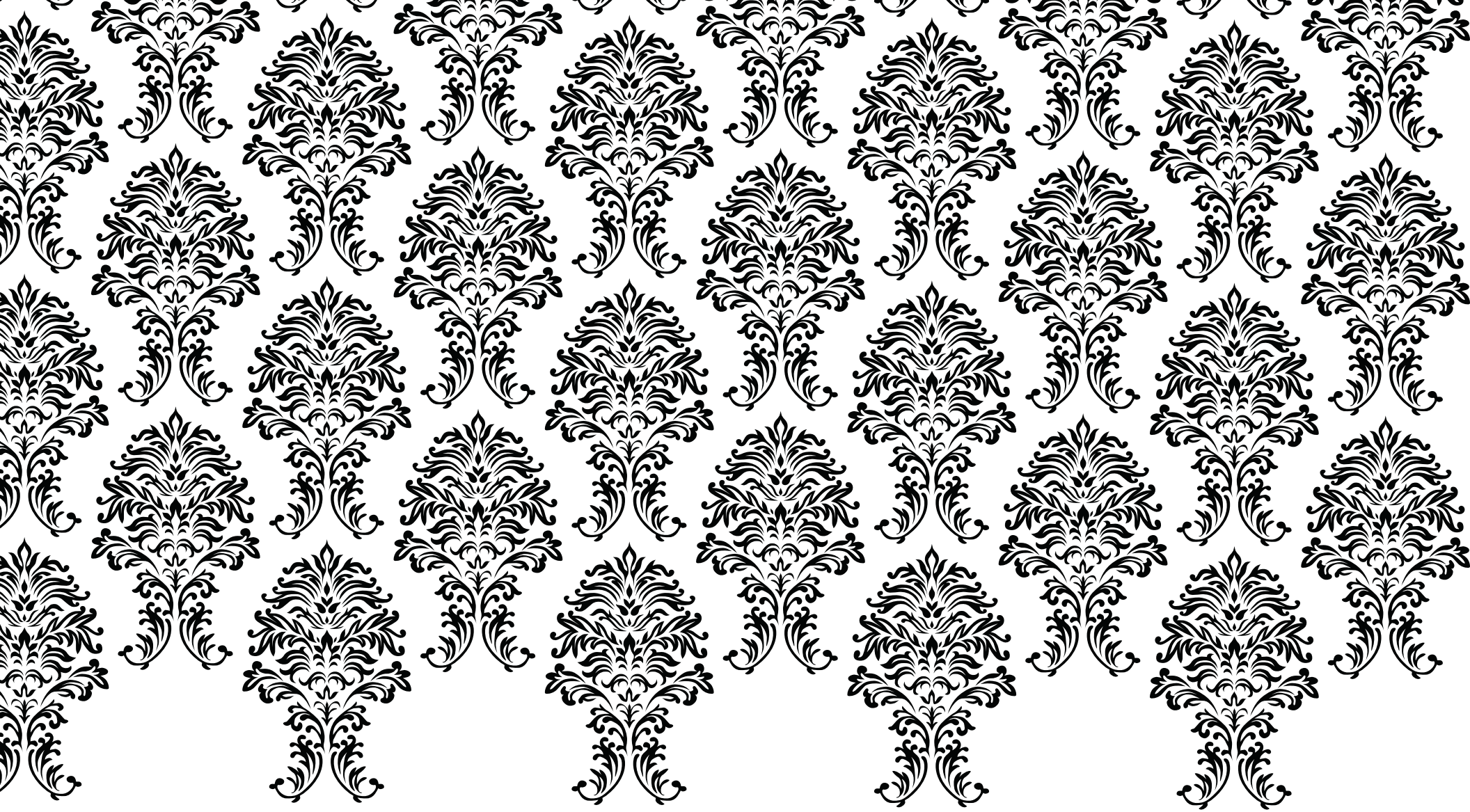
This thesis investigates the potential of opportunistic borrowing and blatant reference—a postmodern approach pioneered by architects like Michael Graves, Robert Venturi and Charles Jencks—through a renovation that reinstates a movie palace into a 99 cent store in Williamsburg Brooklyn.

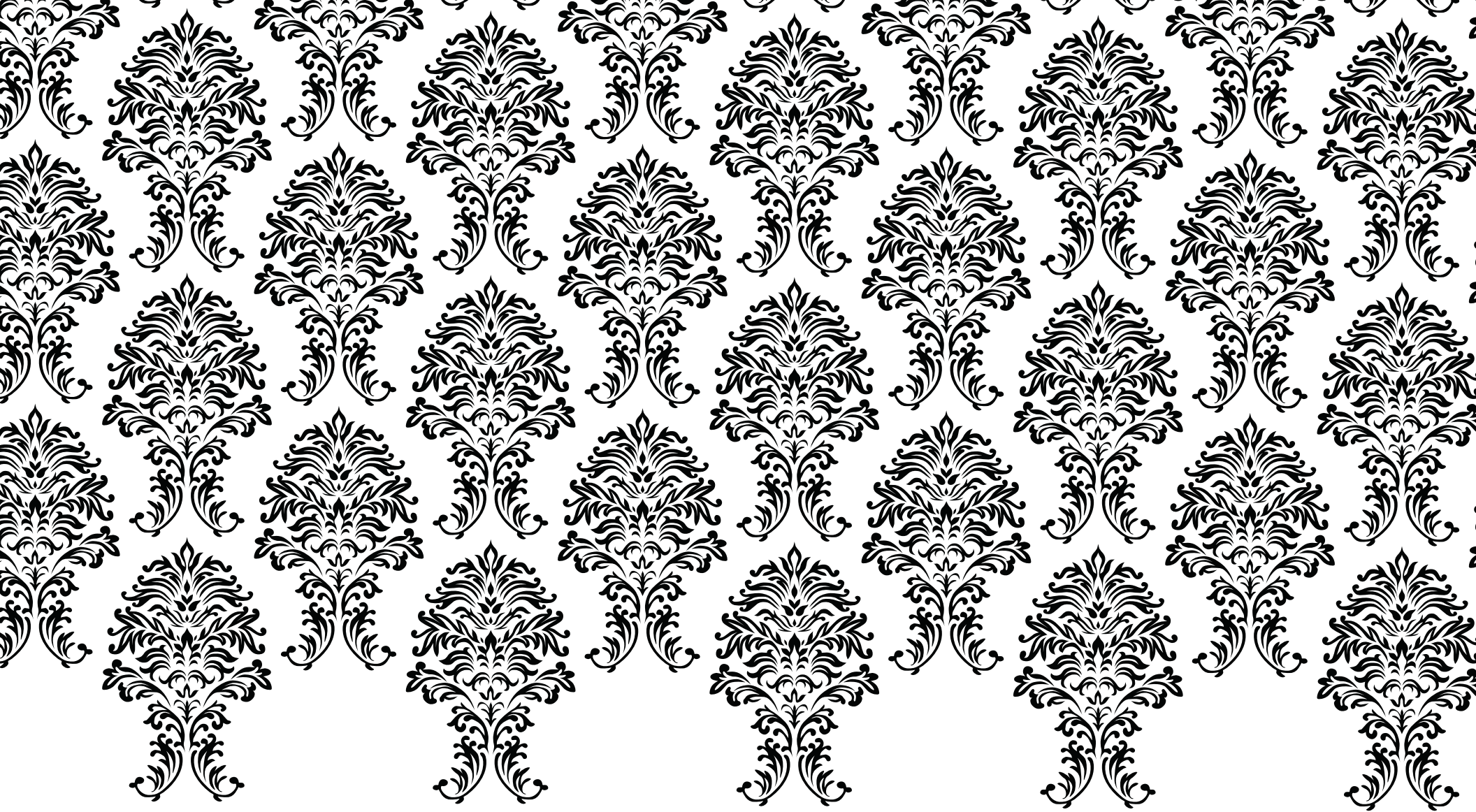
Instead of concentrating on the facade like postmodern architecture of the past, however, this thesis turns these techniques inward, as a way of designing the interior of the building; using an aesthetic which encourages nostalgia, that, through historical reference, can endear a design to a community, mitigate programmatic dischord, and provide unusual formal qualities.

To find this nostalgic beauty this thesis will revisit antique typologies like that of the movie palace and nickelodeon, out-dated architectural techniques like poche and pastiche, and forgotten forms of ornament. Iconography and ornamentation, rather than being mere decoration, form a membrane which acts as a cultural interface to site the building in a strong, diverse, and ultimately stubborn community.

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Introduction



Still from Dr. Zhivago. 1965

Why isn't the notion of beauty a larger part of the architectural discourse?

Even beauty's cousin, style, has been noticeably absent from architectural discussion and production. Are we continuing the sensibility of the high-moderns who proclaimed architecture free from any notion of style? Other disciplines like product design, interior design, and a wide range of media arts seem thoroughly engrossed in style—and by extension issues of aesthetics, beauty and taste.

In the realm of critical theory, people like Sylvia Lavin¹, Wes Jones² and Sarah Whiting³ have been calling for an acknowledgement of style for the past few years. While compelling, their call to action has lacked clear direction for architects on how to proceed. Architects themselves seem uncomfortable with questions of taste and judgment. How would they defend their aesthetic decisions?

Instead of holding onto their territory, architects have found solace in efficiency, economy and the elegance of the diagram. In other words, stylistic and conceptual minimalism. This style does, of course, have a place in the built world, but are there other visions that we might investigate, styles that might speak to an aesthetic culture?

Thirty years ago, a series of American architects asked precisely these questions. They explored the relationship between the vernacular and the avant garde;⁴ they interrogated the nature of history and context;⁵ and they separated morality from

aesthetic production.⁶ Although promising, most of their work focused on the facade, not the interior. Their techniques and the potential of opportunistic borrowing, blatant reference and pastiche are currently an under explored area of the architectural discipline.

This thesis uses an aesthetic which encourages nostalgia, is unapologetically pleasurable and is unashamedly beautiful. It borrows ornamentation from an American tradition of movie palaces, whose stated purpose was “to make the common man feel like a king.” By revisiting antique typologies like that of the

movie palace and nickelodeon, outdated architectural techniques like poche and pastiche, and forgotten forms of ornament, the past may be mined for more than its history.⁷

Iconography and ornamentation, rather than being mere decoration, form a membrane which acts as a cultural interface to site the building in a strong, diverse, and ultimately stubborn community.

¹ “But to be contemporary- to be on time, to move with time and the times, subject to its losses, entropies, provisionality, obsolescences, currencies, intensities, fads, and flourishes—is a possibility that architecture assiduously avoids.” Sylvia Lavin states in her book “Crib Sheets”.

² See Wes Jones’ article “Post Cool” calls for a post-post criticality, a hyper-criticality that is obsessively aware of history and historical styles.

³ See Sarah Whiting’s article “Going Public” in Hunch.

⁴ “Learning from the existing landscape is a way of being revolutionary for an architect” – Venturi and others in “Learning from Las Vegas”

⁵ “...today all styles are equally open to adaptation and transformation, and it depends on the local context, the client, the function and several other concerns, including the architect’s desire, which style or styles are used” – Charles Jencks in an interview with Roemer Van Toorn

⁶ “I see architecture not as Gropius did, as a moral venture, as truth, but as invention, in the same way that poetry or music or painting is invention.” - Michael Graves

⁷ “We are now, in other words, in ‘intertextuality’ as a deliberate, built-in feature of the aesthetic effect and as the operator of a new connotation of “pastness” and pseudohistorical depth, in which the history of aesthetics styles displaces “real” history.” – Frederic Jameson, Postmodernism, Or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism

Site & Context

FIGURE 1

Brief History

1638

The Keskaechquerem, aor Canarsie, Indians of the Algonquin language family sell a swampy bog called Cripplebush (today Bushwick, Greenpoint and Williamsburg) to the Dutch West India Company.

1650s

Unregulated squatting by farmers from Norway, France, Italy, Sweden, and both free and enslaved Africans. Indian attack leads to development of first town: Boswijch (meaning "Town of Woods") with 23 families

1660

British gain official political control of Cripplebush, although Dutch remains the predominant language. Kiekout formed on Old Mese-role Farm (East River at South 4th Street - first town in Williamsburg) - Later called Het Strand.

1664

At the time of the American Revolution, there were four predominantly Dutch towns in Cripplebush, including: Het Drop in what is today Bushwick; Cherry-point, in what is now Greenpoint; and Het Strand. British troops cut thickets and scrub oaks for fire during war.

1780s

James Hazard of New York, begins ferry runs from Morrell farmhouse to Grand Street in New York.

1800

Richard Woodhull starts competing ferry from North Second Street to Grand Street in New York.

1802

Woodhull commissions a survey of the Cripplebush coast. The part from Bushwick Creek to what is today Division Street is named after the surveyor, Woodhull's friend, U.S. engineer Colonel Jonathan Williams.

1818

First North-South road unifying Williamsburgh. Williamsburgh ("h" dropped in 1855) incorporated as a farming village in New York State. First village president: Noah Waterbury. Slavery abolished in New York.

1827

First cobblestoned streets. Rapid population growth.

1830s

Third ward added, mostly German Dutchtown. Financial crisis in New York and Brooklyn.

1837

Irish influx around Metropolitan Avenue near Union Avenue. Tinney Row occupied by African Americans and mixed blood Indians. German Jews center around Grand Street. Three local newspapers.

1850s

Corrupt Williamsburg mayor escapes village bankruptcy and personal indictment by joining Brooklyn. Sugar refineries at their height. New immigrants from Russia, Lithuanian and Poland--many Jewish--supply labor. Hungarian Jews on Cook Street.

1855

Williamsburg Bridge purposed in State Senate.

1880s

First significant wave of Italian immigrants. Patrician WAPs and German Jews from Grand Street begin to move out.

1884

Unification of Greater New York.

1903

Williamsburg Bridge opens. Increased influx of poor immigrants from Lower East Side.

1910s

Williamsburg reaches highest population, including the most densely populated blocks in the city.

1920s

Manufacturing displaces residential housing.

1938

First public housing in the U.S: Williamsburg Houses.

1954

BQE construction obliterates downtown and thousands of units of housing.

1950s

White flight. Hasidic and Puerto Rican influx.

1960s

Urban renewal. Seneca Club-Satmar alliance. Loss of manufacturing jobs.

1975

Fiscal crisis in New York. Polish, Italian, Hasidic, Hispanic community organizations. First effective Puerto Rican political organization. Real decline in income.

1976

Schaefer Brewery closes. Loss of 2,500 jobs.

1980s

Legal disputes about land, schools and crime between Hasidim and Hispanics. Artist colony develops.

2003

Hasids protest "yuppies" overdevelopment of neighborhood.

Sources: Gothamist.com Wikipedia.org, nyc-architecture.com, 2007

Williamsburg, Brooklyn, the chosen site for this thesis, has a rich and dynamic history. First settled by the Dutch in the 1800's, it was once the most densely populated area in the United States (in the 1920's - 1930's). (Fig. 1) Although the population growth has slacked in previous decades, the last ten years have been ones of huge economic and population growth for both Brooklyn and Williamsburg in particular. Mostly, this is because North Williamsburg gone through a process of urban "gentrification" resulting in large population of hipsters: young students, artists, and musicians, settling into the region.

This large influx of a population willing to spend significant portions of their disposable income on housing has sparked numerous residential developments in North Williamsburg. Mostly, high rises along the waterfront.

This development has been

so aggressive, in terms of its scale and marketing strategy to people who outside the existing Brooklyn community, that the city and county government has taken a

first is an urban landscape in which transportation infrastructure is dominant. Within a few hundred yards are massive pieces of infrastructure: the Williamsburg



The existing facade.

number steps to control and curtail development. South Williamsburg has not been a major part of these political or economic changes, but it's poised to be.

There are two major characteristics of the site. The

Bridge, the Brooklyn Queens Expressway, the JMZ line of the New York City Subway system, Broadway Avenue, a four lane road and commercial hub. Indeed, constructions and demolitions of these structures have had a direct effect on the area. For

example, the construction of the BQE corresponded with a major recession (Fig. 1)

The proximity of these different types of urban systems gives rise to the second characteristic condition of the site: a diverse set of inhabitants made up of distinct groups. Currently, the site consists of a stubborn population that can be broken into three types: hipsters, Hasidic Jews, and Hispanics. Each not only has different age distributions, households, spending patterns, and racial makeup, but also very separate neighborhoods and buildings. (Fig. 2) However, they all share the urban circulation spaces.

The site of the building itself is located at the nexus of all of these systems: directly on Broadway, at the Myrtle stop of the JMZ, one block from the Williamsburg Bridge, and two blocks from the BQE. (Fig. 3)

FIGURE 2

SITE STATISTICS

Demographics

AGE DISTRIBUTION

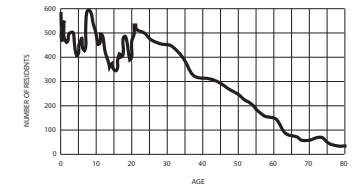
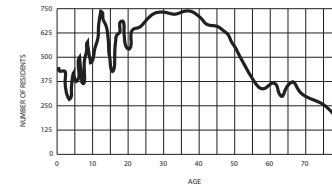
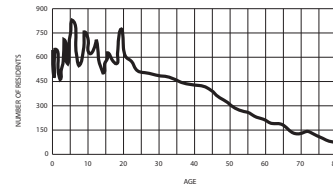
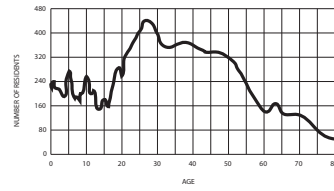
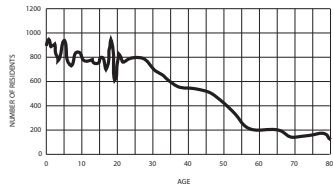
11211

11222

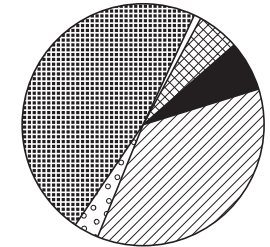
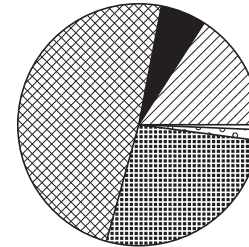
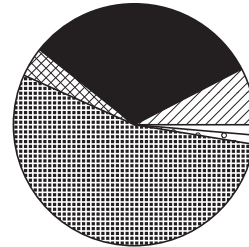
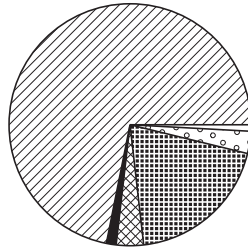
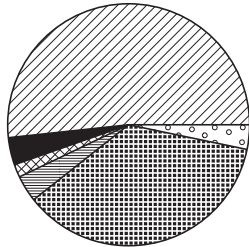
11206

10002

11237



RACE*



INCOME**

\$29,897







\$32,258

\$24,775

\$28,300

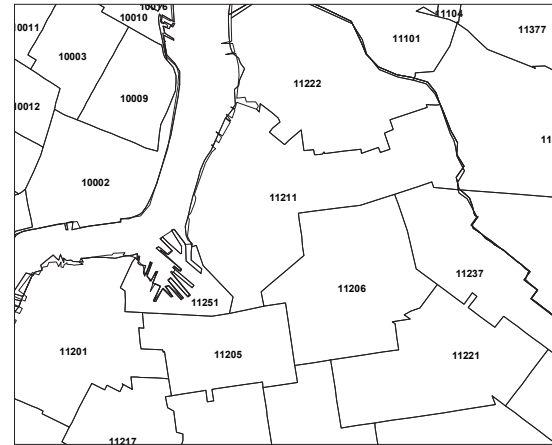
\$22,002



-  WHITE
-  BLACK
-  HISPANIC
-  ASIAN
-  TWO RACES
-  OTHER



Average Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) in 2004: \$29,897 (Individual Income Tax Returns)



Data Sources:
 US Census Bureau, Census 2000
 Internal Revenue Service, 2004 Tax Statistics

Brooklyn is composed of a number of informal neighborhoods that are separated by race, class and culture. Although most people who are familiar with the area readily concede that these neighborhoods exist, the boundaries and locations are very difficult to pin point. The site is the epicenter of three of these neighborhoods converging: Hispanic, Hasidic, and Hipster. We have used three factors to try and isolate these groups: age, race, and income.

Age can help pin-point hipster and Hasidic neighbor-

hoods. Hipsters are white and in their twenties. Hasids have a higher birthrate on average than hipsters, although it is fairly close to the birthrate of those who identify as Hispanic. In the 11211 zip code which is part hipster, part Hispanic, and part Hasid we see an age distribution skewed towards the young. If we move north to 11222, the heart of Williamsburg, the percentage of children drops while people in their 20's and 30's dominate. To the south in 11206, a Hispanic neighborhood, we see more children. Across the Williamsburg Bridge, in

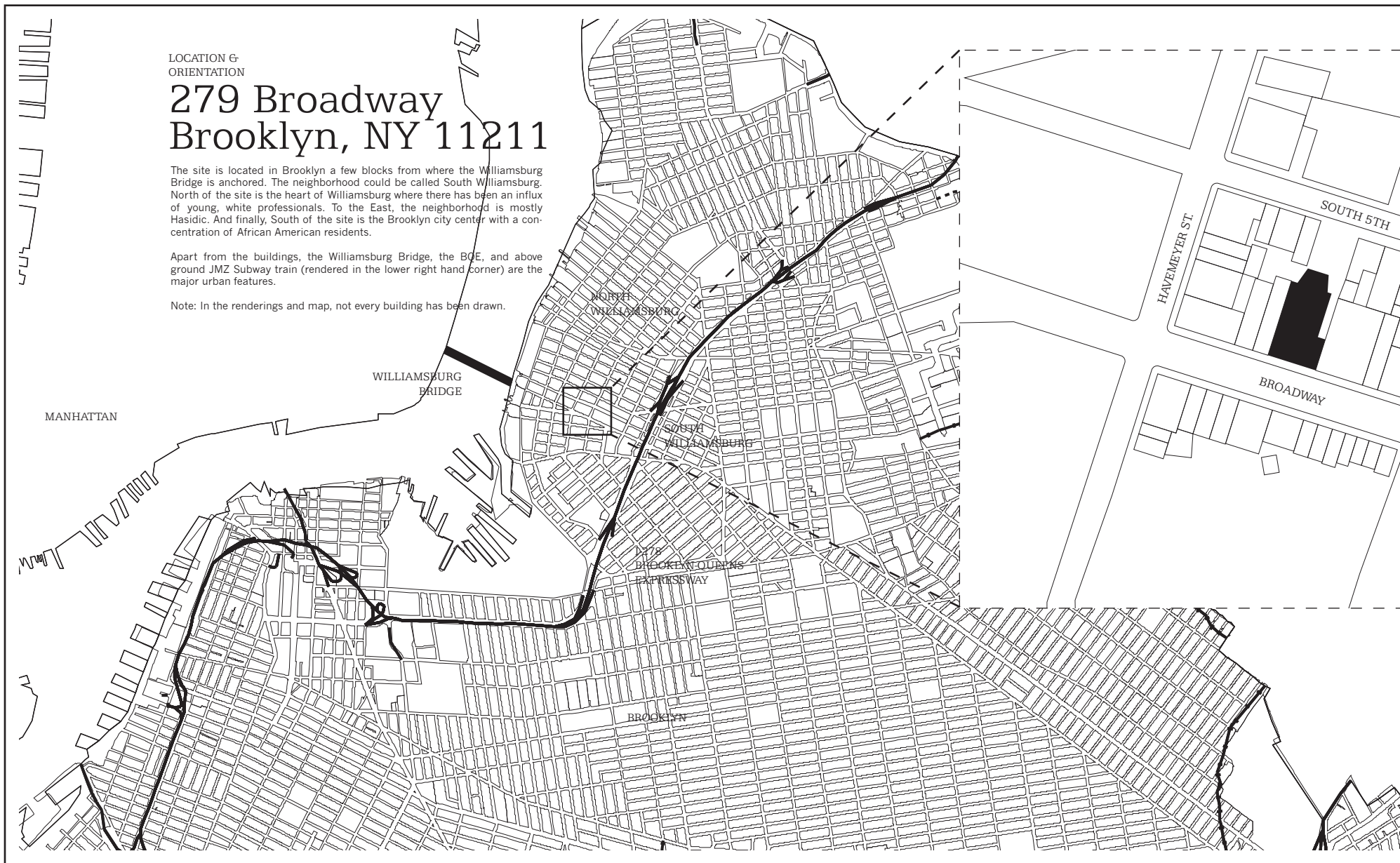
10002, the majority of people are in their 30's and 40's. Finally, east of the site in 11237, we see the high birthrate in a neighborhood that is part Hispanic, part Hasidic.

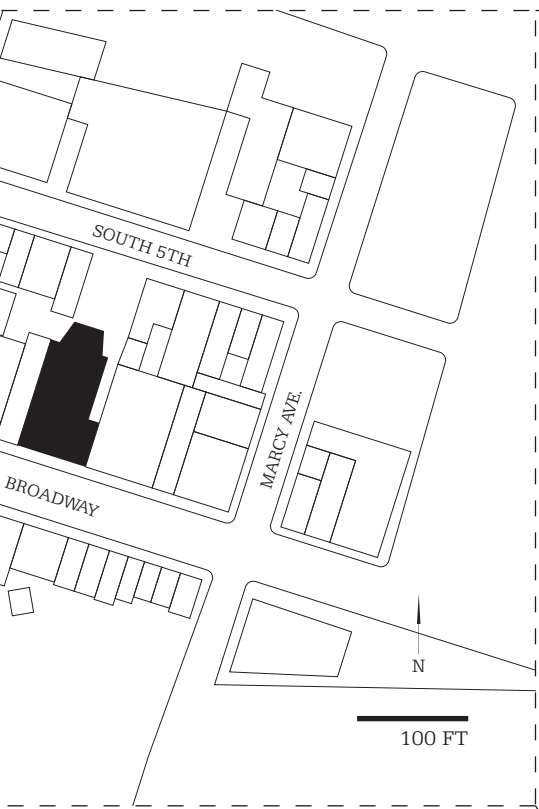
Race, as it is cataloged by the census, is another way to explore these zip code areas. In 11211, whites are barely 50% of the population, but as we move north to 11222 the percentage increases dramatically. Zip-code 11206 is a Hispanic neighborhood with a large population of African Americans. Chinatown lies directly across the Williams-

burg Bridge so it's no surprise that Asians are the majority in 1002. Finally, in the zip-code that passes through the Hasidic neighborhood we see an increase in the number of white residents.

Income might also offer some insight into neighborhoods. The highest incomes are in 11222 and 11211 brought by wealthy young hipsters. All of the incomes fall below the 59.53% average income in New York State.

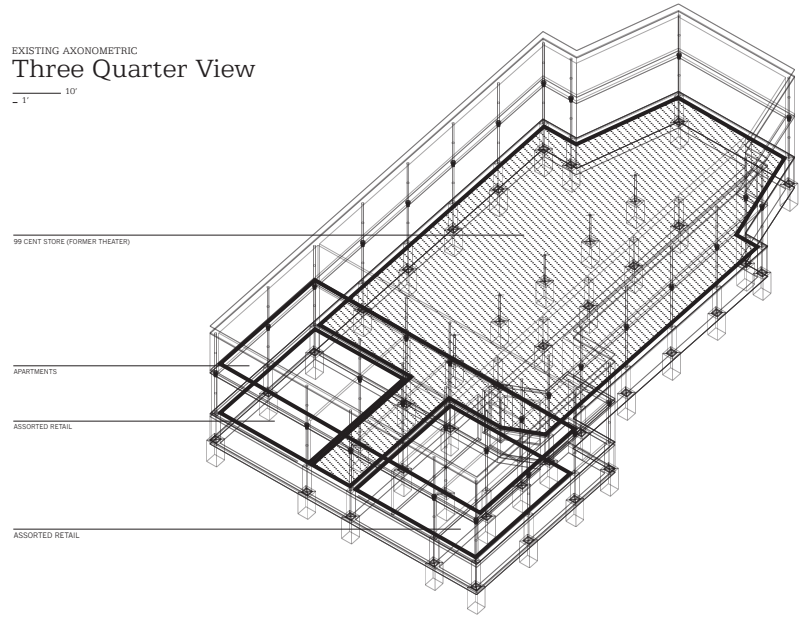
FIGURE 3



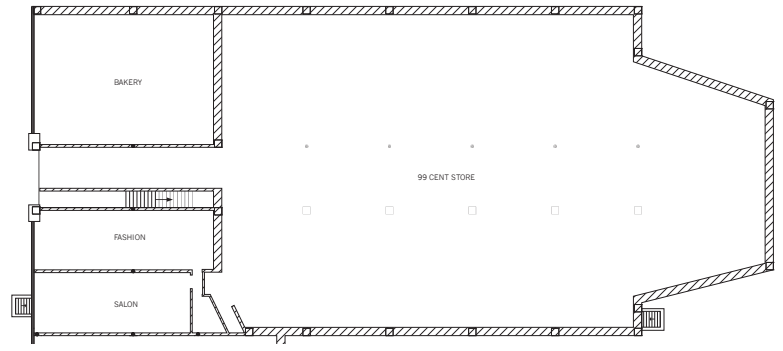


EXISTING AXONOMETRIC
Three Quarter View

1" = 10'



EXISTING PLAN
1st Floor

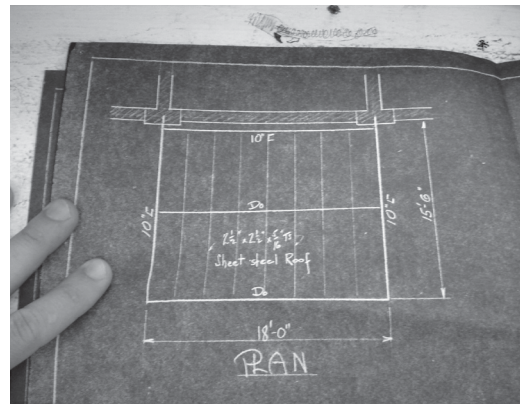


Originally built in 1914 as a theater, the building at 279 Broadway shows little of its history beyond the stone ornament on one of its facades. The Brooklyn Department of Buildings has none of the original construction drawings, only records of renovations. Since the theater has never been on the historic preservation list, no photographic records exist of either its interior or exterior. What the records at the Department of Buildings and recollections of people living in the neighborhood do show, however, is a place that has struggled to adapt as the neighborhood changed around it.

In the 1920s the theater was converted into a cinema and for twenty years successfully operated during the golden age of movie palaces. From 1950's to 1970's the theater gradually declined, eventually showing grind-house Mexican wrestling movies and pornography. After closing in 1977, the theater space was re-purposed as a ballroom and then a restaur-

ant. Today the building holds an assortment of retail stores, several apartments, and a five thousand square foot 99 cent store within the former theater space.

On this site and in this building in particular, adaptation happens at the scale of the interior.



Blueprint of a proposed renovation





Opposite: Underneath the JMZ on Broadway
Above: The existing facade.
Left: The building from across the street.

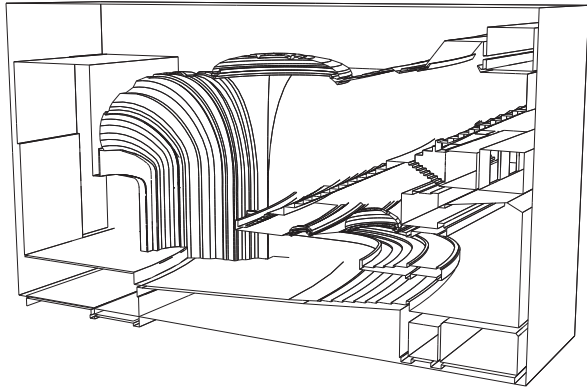






The rear of the building on South 5th Street viewed from across the street.

Process



Alabama Theater, cutaway section



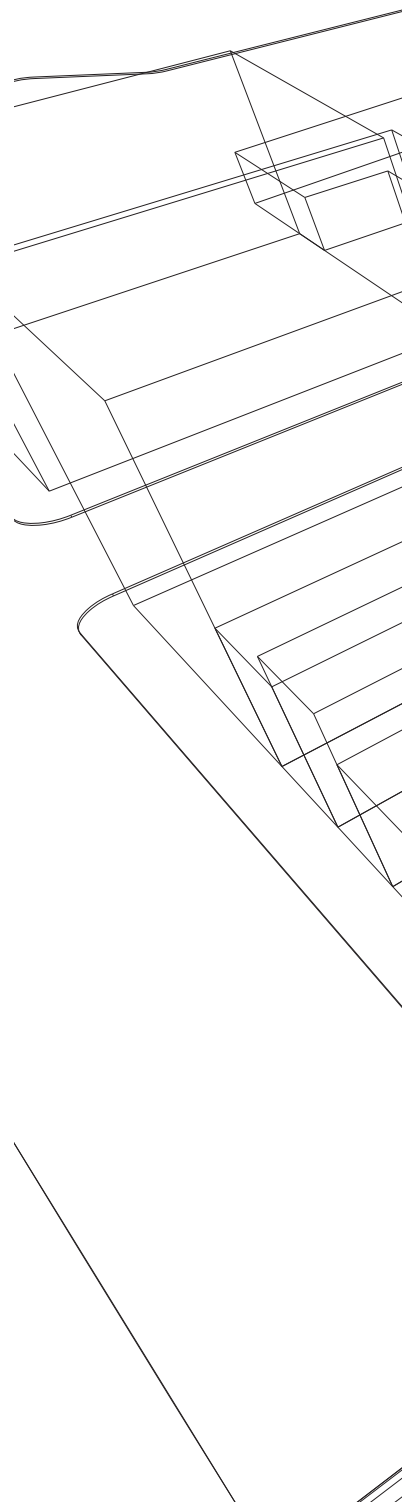
Perspective of the stage

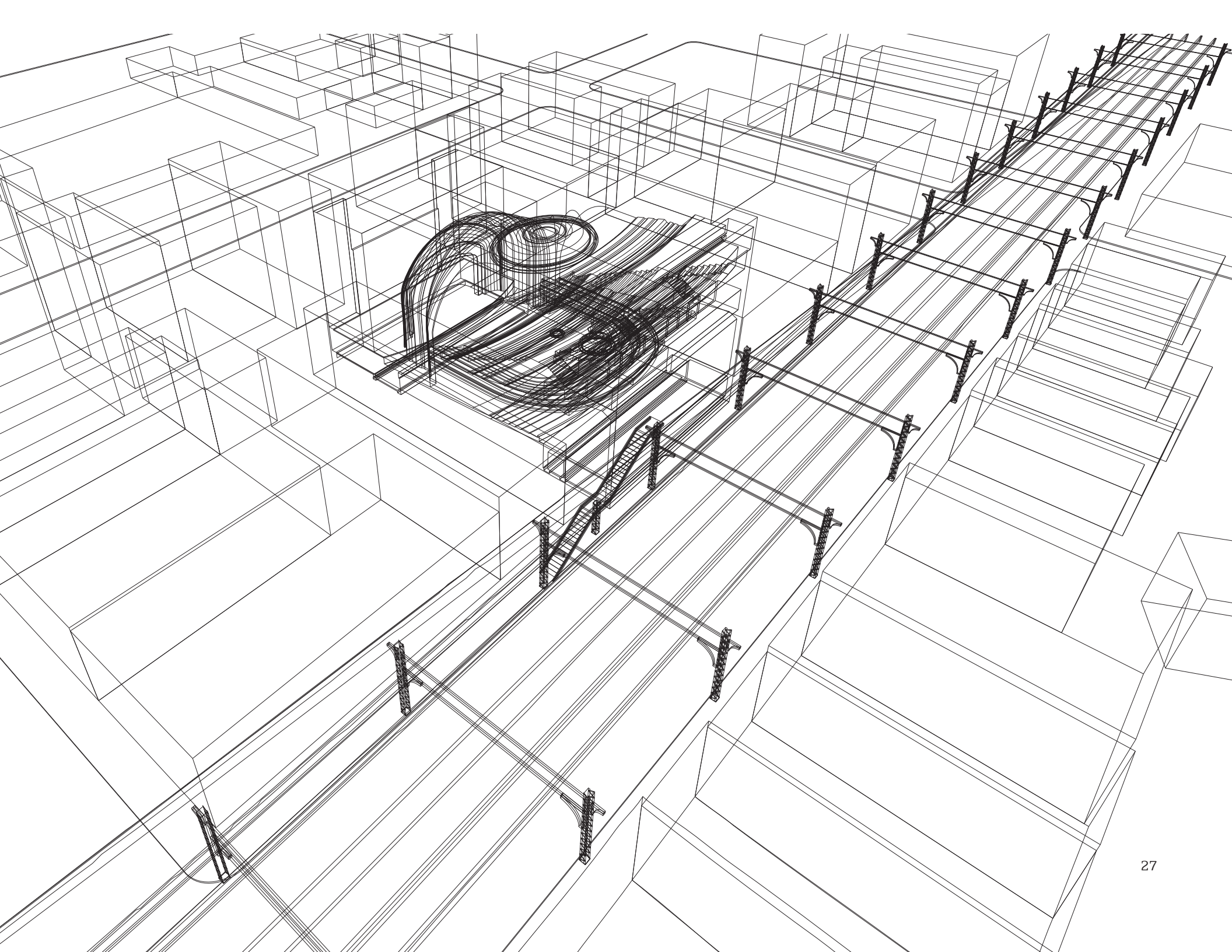
Since the original drawings for the theater have been lost or destroyed, the first attempt to create a movie palace was merely to copy an existing theater of approximately the same size and place it into the site.

The theater chosen was the Alabama Theater¹ in Birmingham, Alabama. It's a wonderfully preserved classic movie palace whose theater space fits neatly onto the site.

The major problem with this approach is that the theater is too large for the community. In the 20's and 30's Williamsburg was at the height of its population density and prosperity. Today, this area of South Williamsburg is poor and only recently is making the same gains in population that we see elsewhere in Brooklyn. It cannot support a 500 to 1000 seat theater. In addition, an ornate movie palace wastes both structure and space in order to maintain its appearance. Re-examining how theaters like this one were originally constructed gave a clue how to proceed.

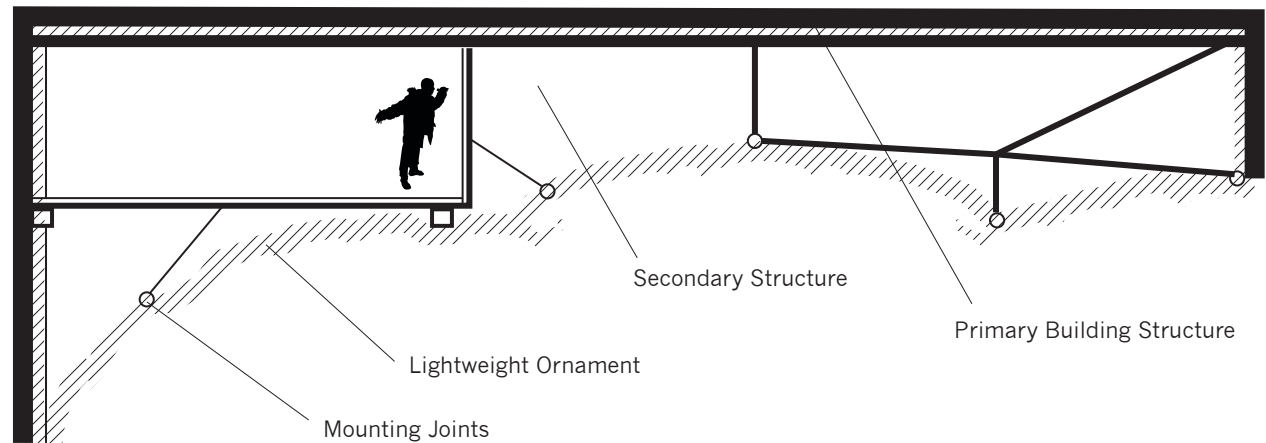
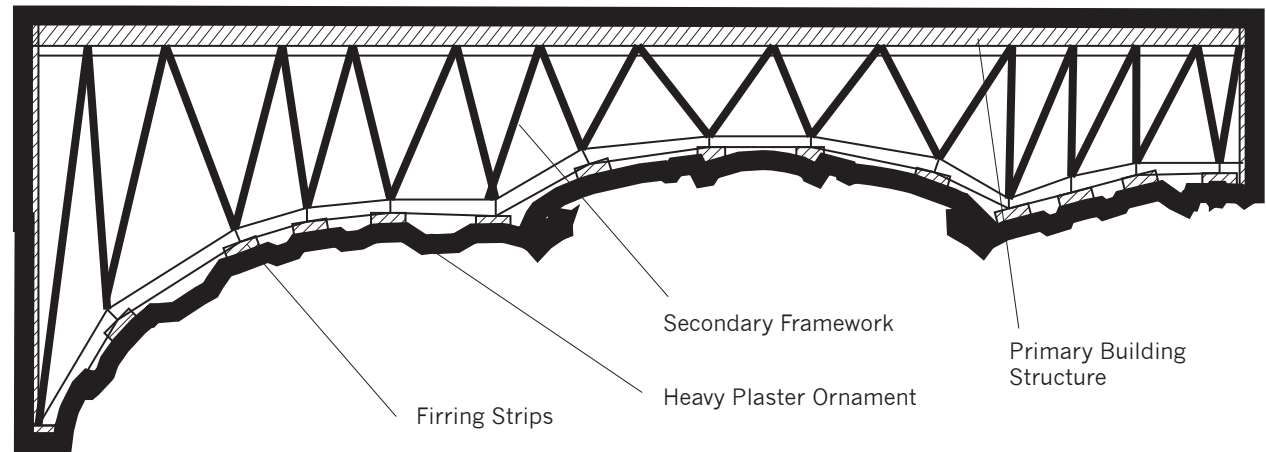
¹Not to be confused with the Alabama Theater in Houston, Texas. Frequently, movie palaces had names which reflected a genre or a lineage rather than a historical location. For example, Rapp & Rapp's Oriental in Chicago spawned many imitators around the United States with the same name.







Structural Drawing of the Alabama Theater



In the old theater, the poche space wastes both framing material and space. By inserting secondary program like apartments or retail into the poche space, whose structure can support lightweight ornament, we also gain the pro forma that might support a large "public" project like a movie theater.

A mid-rise would be the most logical type of program that could behave as pro-forma for the theater. As mentioned earlier, Williamsburg Brooklyn, is facing a massive influx of hipsters who are willing to spend a disproportionate amount of their income of living costs. Further, this group would also be the most amenable

to sharing space with a theater. The residential demand brought on by the hipsters could then support the public, more community oriented program of the

"...the building could be read as a theater where the poche space is a mid-rise apartment building. Or, when we reverse the relationship, mid-rise apartments with a theater as their circulation space."

theaters, balancing the use of building between the various cultures in the area.

Given the strategy of a pub-

lic theater made possible by a number of apartments, the building could be read as a theater where the poche space is a midrise apartment building. Or, when

we reverse the relationship, a midrise apartment building with a theater as its circulation space.

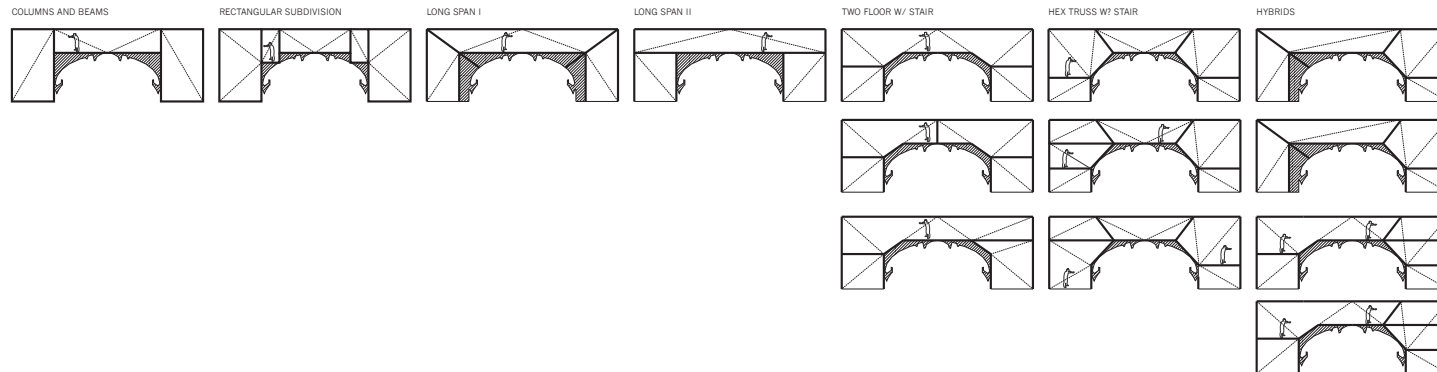
This reversible figure ground relationship, similar to the readings of poched draw-

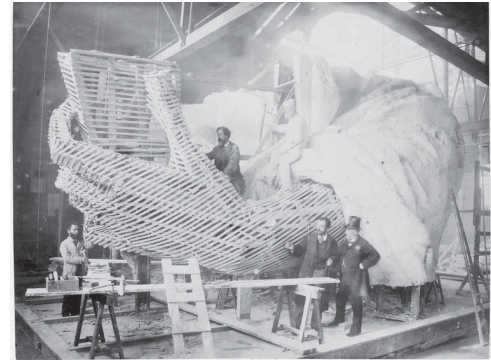
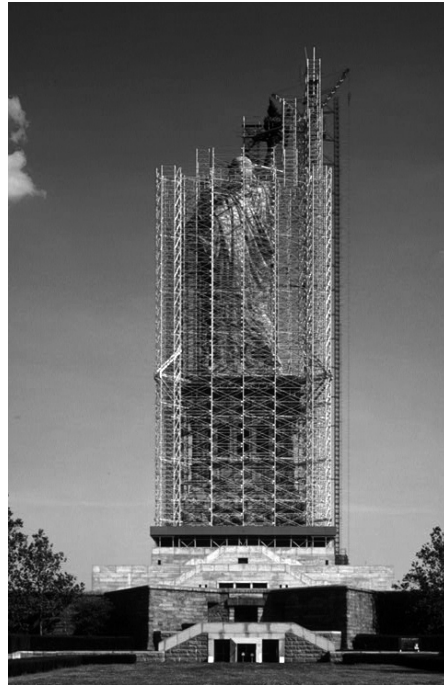
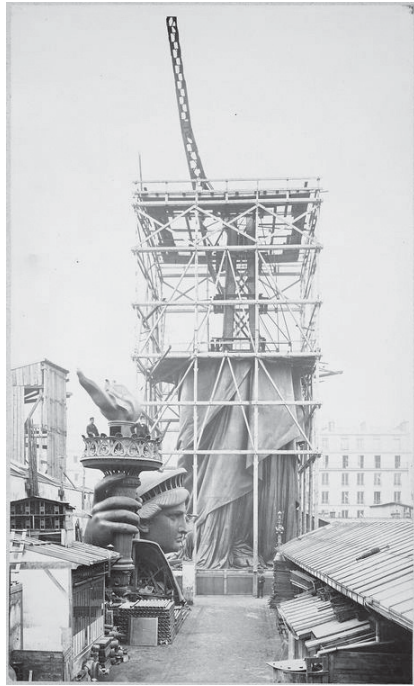
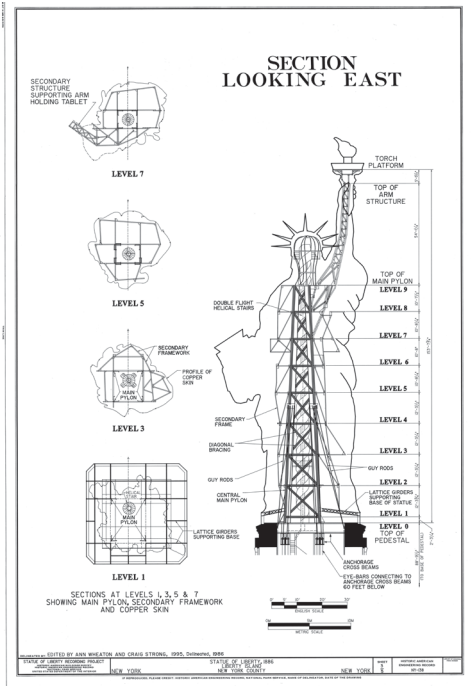
ings or nolli diagrams, structures the building conceptually. It is both/and not either/or. It is both a mid-rise and a theater and this curious

duality allows for multiple architectural readings.

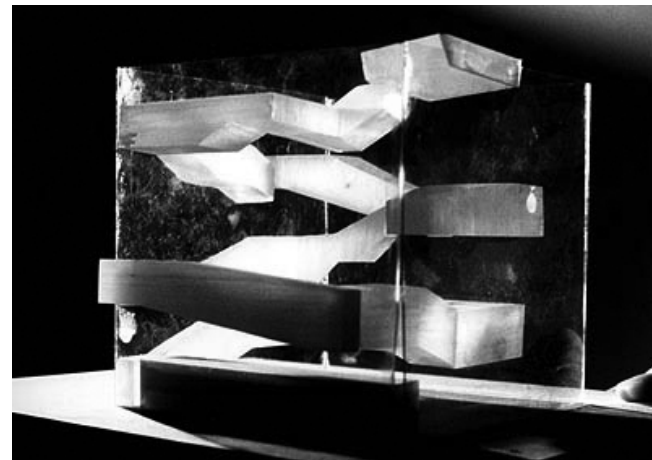
Since the theater and circulation are the same we can address the problem of the theaters scale. Movie theaters make money by having multiple spaces for different movies to show at the same time. A design that had several smaller movie palaces would be more successful than one with a single theater space.

The solution in this case was to divide the theater space into three cinemas, three hollows inside the framework of the building, swellings in the circulation. Each is a different size and has its own features.





The Statue of Liberty, Gustav Eiffel



Dutch Embassy in Berlin, OMA



Laurie Mallet House, Site Architects

Precedents

There is a large and vibrant community of people who are actively interested in the culture and preservation of America's theaters, in particular those movie palaces of the 20's and 30's. In fact, Library of Congress publishes a visual sourcebook for "Architecture, Design & Engineering"¹. These resources include photographs and architectural drawings and were the foundation of the precedent research.

However, several precedents outside this realm of theater research proved invaluable.

Structure

Eiffel's strategies of truss deformation in The Statue of Liberty showed how a regular truss system could form an ornamental (figural) sculpture while maintaining passageways for internal circulation.

Program

OMA's Dutch Embassy in Berlin features continuous vertical circulation of ramps that continue, unbroken, from the parking lot to the roof. In addition to framing views and being programmed itself, the circulation space must also negotiate with the programmatic elements of each floor. The plans, specifically, provided a rich case study in this type of architectural

maneuver.²

Nostalgia

The Laurie Mallet House by Site Architects is a renovation in Greenwich Village in New York City that incorporates plaster cast elements from the previous building into the new design. Literal reference enhances the effect of temporal juxtaposition.

¹ See Craig Morrison's "Theaters" Norton/Library of Congress Visual Sourcebook in Architecture

² See Dutch Embassy In Berlin By Oma/Rem Koolhaas which has a complete set of drawings, paginated, but also drawn as a continuity

The next question became how to construct a continuous amorphous (blobby) circulation system/theater within an understandable structural system. As much as the movie palace represents a fantasy, the mid-rise represents the reality

Keeping in mind that I needed to frame fairly tightly around these odd shapes, I examined ways of wrapping around an ornate curve with a truss chords or webbing. I was also thinking about a framing unit from which these spaces could be subtracted. Some of these experiments were impractical, such as a framing units based on octahedrons or pentagonal tiling.

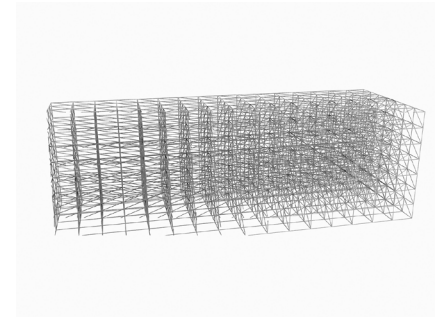
Eventually, 10 foot cubic grid which provided adequate resolution for the circulation spaces, could accommodate livable floor to ceiling heights, and could be easily hollowed into apartment units.

On the left, a diagram illustrates the process of creating an adaptable truss system around various circulation or theater spaces.

From left to right:

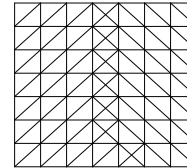
1. The truss system without any intervention.
2. A single theater could be hollowed out from the interior of the truss frame.
3. Two theaters that could sit along a public passageway from one end of the building to the other.
4. A more complex vertical circulation system that bulges in certain spots.

CUTAWAY PERSPECTIVE

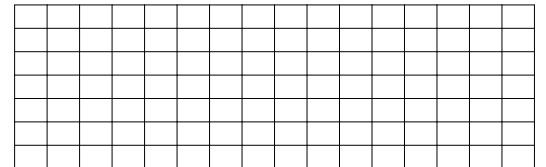


INITIAL OBJECT

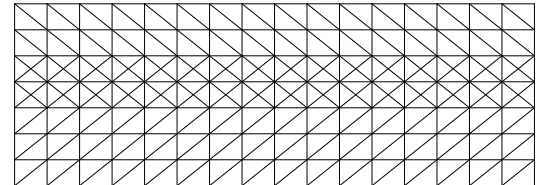
FRONT

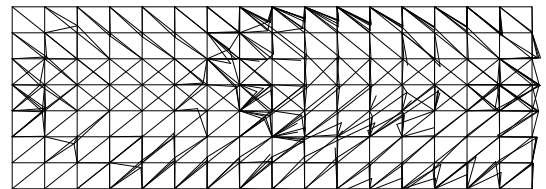
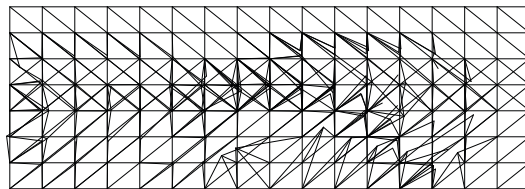
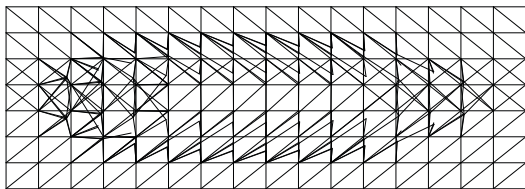
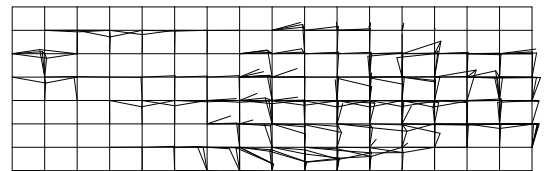
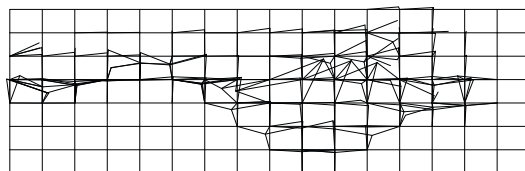
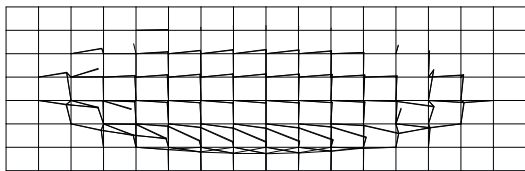
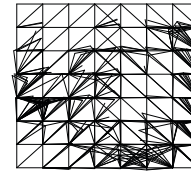
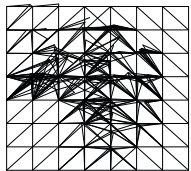
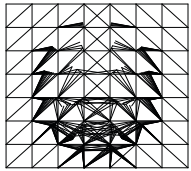
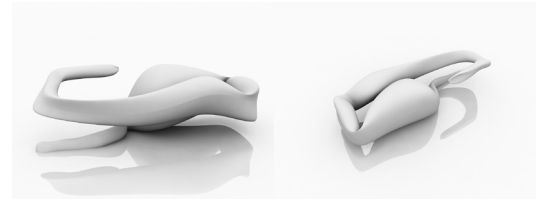
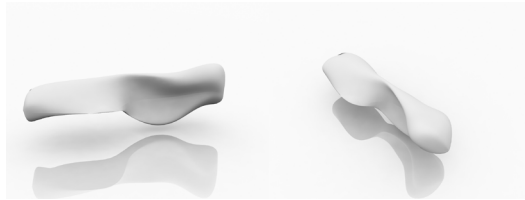
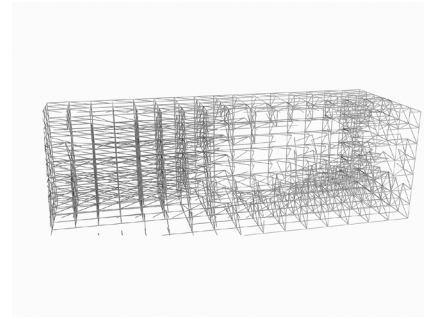
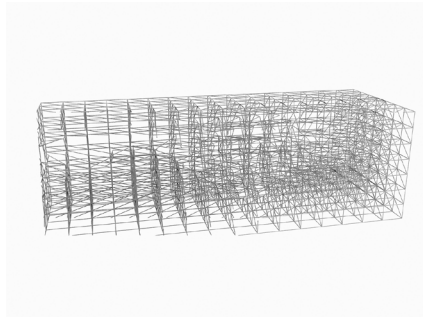
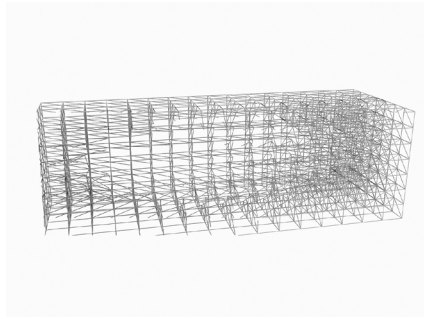


SIDE



TOP





The final blob incorporates the vertical circulation into three separate theaters. The ten foot truss grid has been adjusted to fit not only the theater/circulation, but also tightly packed apartments, retail and office spaces. Although they are more difficult to see in this diagram

“this new construction has the appearance of a theater renovation”

the apartments have been designed as 20 ft. x 30 ft. blocks that sit on either side of the building.

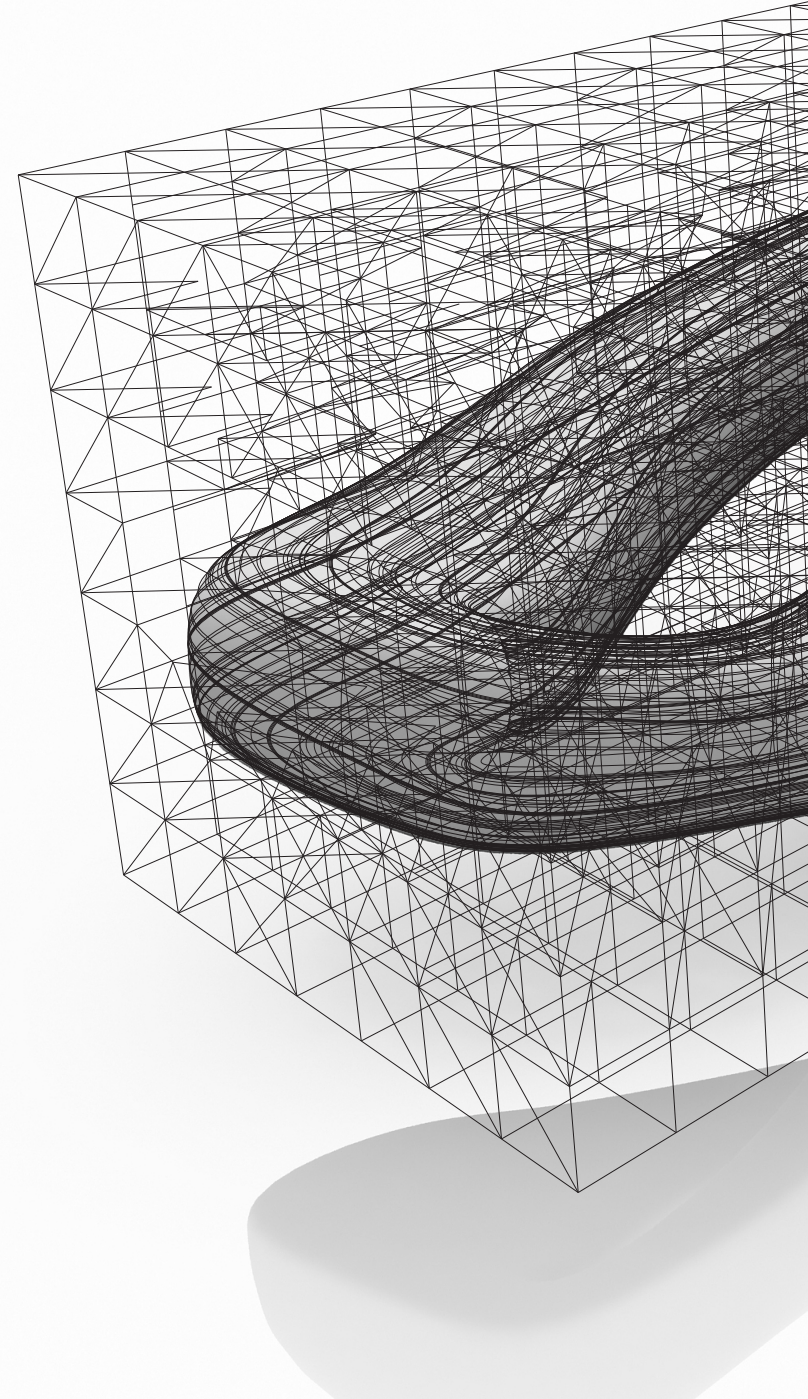
Any apartments which touch the circulation space have had to negotiate the intrusion. This

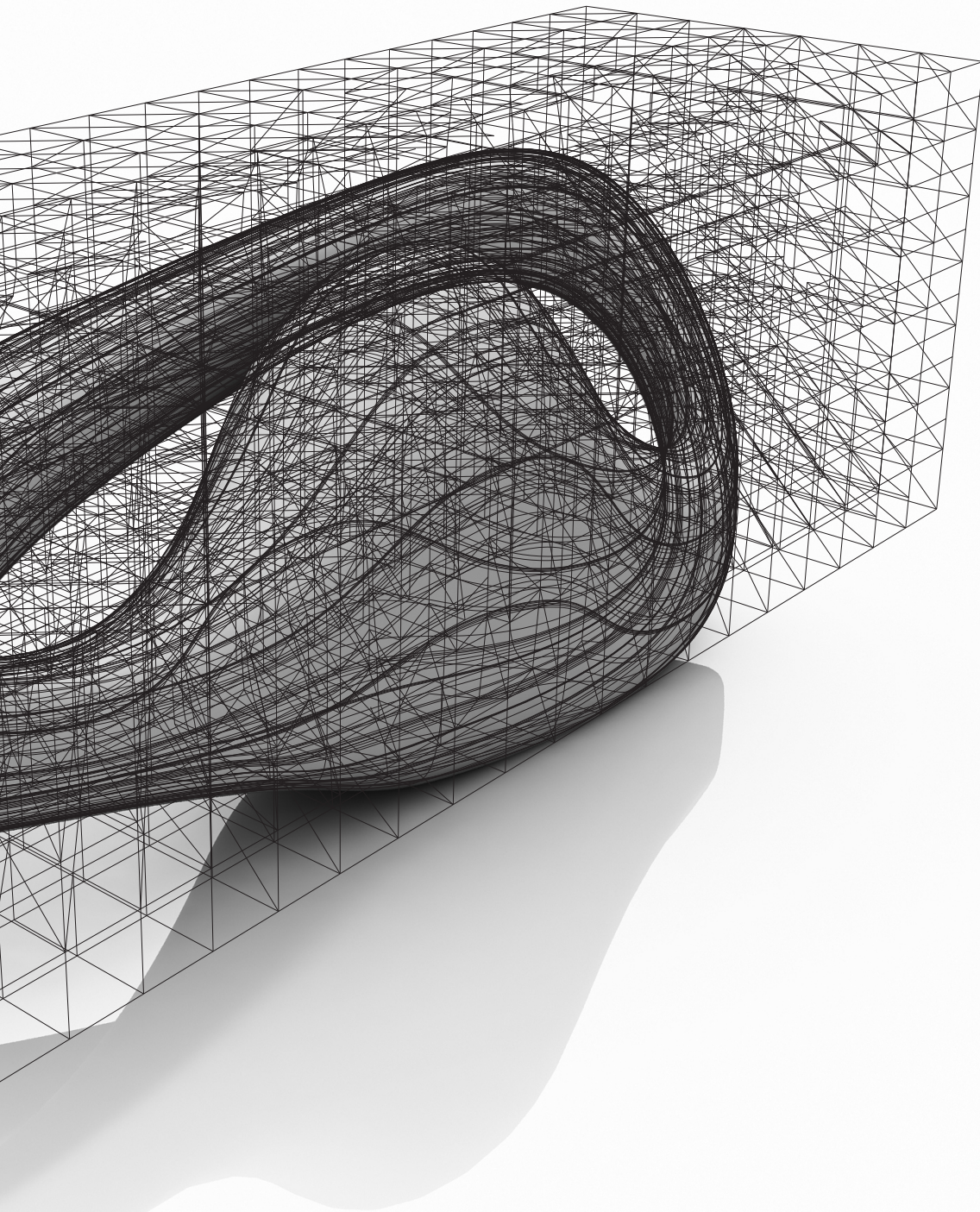
has led to apartments with unusual spaces and orientation. Some have augmented rooms; others must span several floors. See drawings section for the plans.

These adjustments, far from detracting from the value of the apartments, add to it. With the added ornament, placed on the outside of the theater membrane, this new construction has the appearance of a theater renovation. Indeed, the highest priced apartments in New York City are either renovations¹ or buildings whose historical references are transparent².

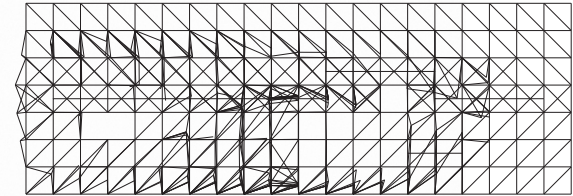
¹ Although the list is constantly fluctuating, several renovations, like the penthouse of Rosario Candela’s building at 778 Park Avenue, consistently top the list. The highest priced apartment by far is The Pierre, a renovated ballroom inspired by the chapel at Versailles at 2 East 61st Street. See New York Magazine, Oct. 8, 2007 pp 68-71.

² The penthouse of Robert Stern’s recent (2007) high rise at 15 Central Park West sold for over 45 million dollars more than Calatrava’s new skyscraper or Herzog and DeMeuron’s 40 Bond. Yet Paul Goldberger describes the building as looking “as if it had been put up 75 years ago”. See Goldberger’s article “Past Perfect” in The New Yorker, August 27, 2007.

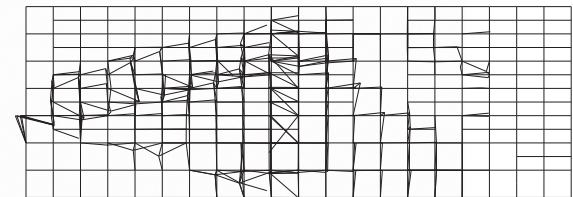




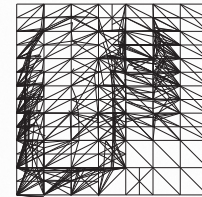
Top



Side



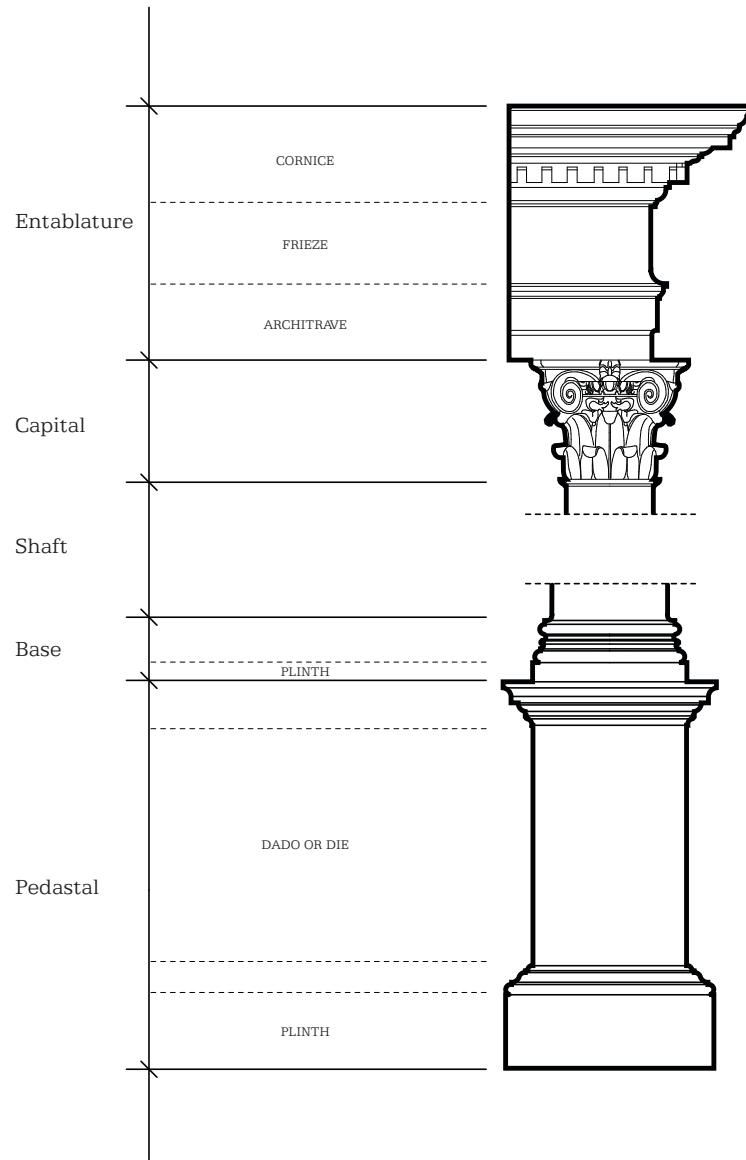
Front



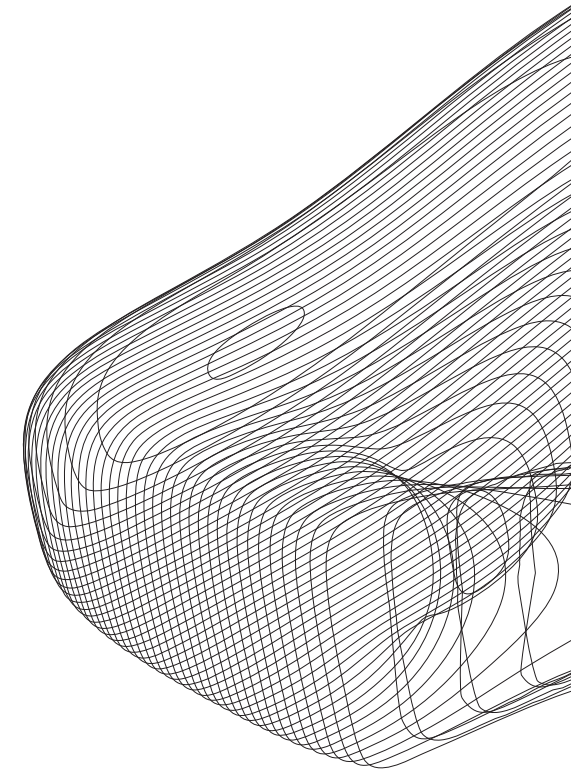


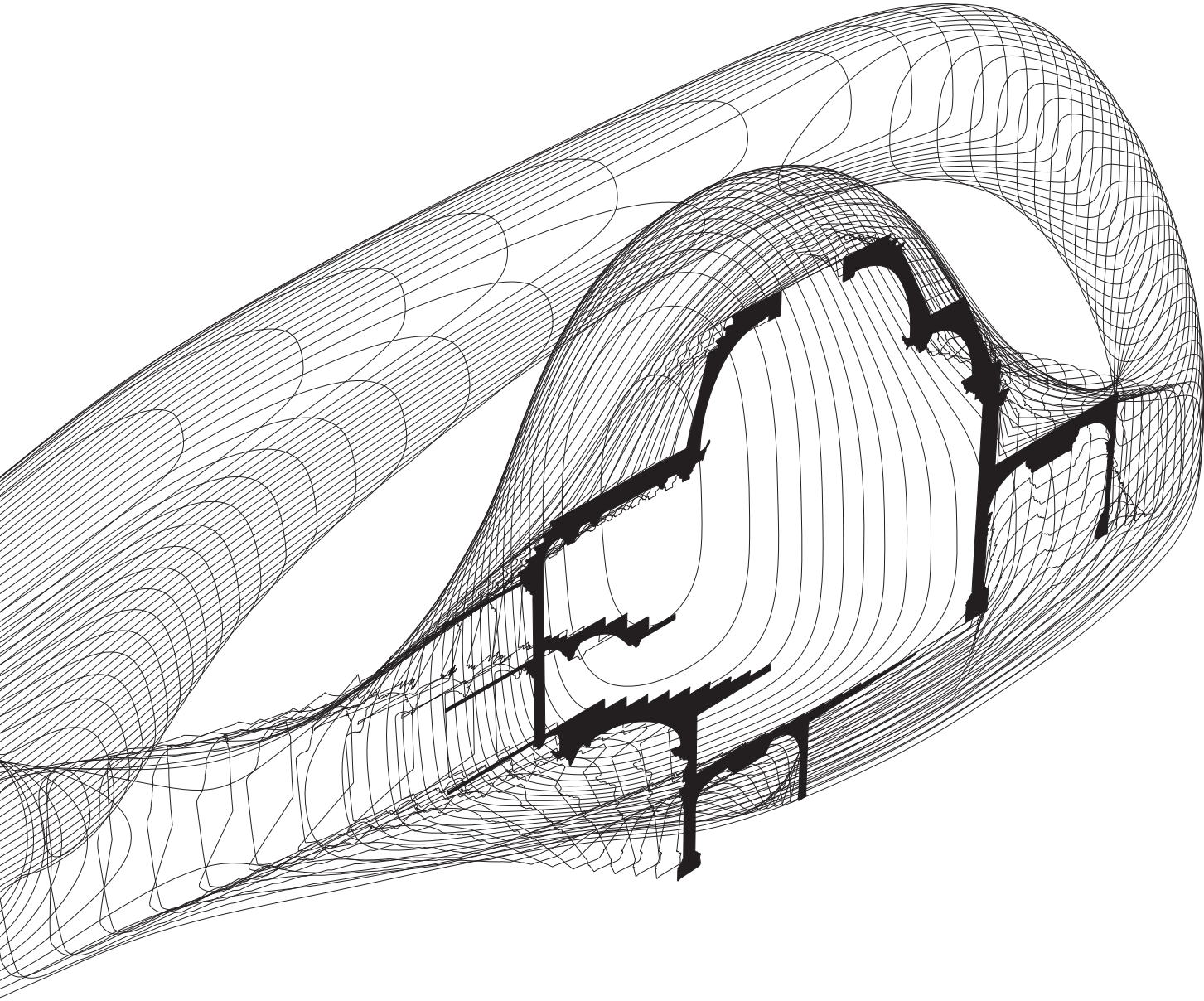
Translating the circulation spaces into more ornate theaters is accomplished by using the classical orders.

The existing facade has traces of classicism, but doesn't fit the typology exactly. (There looks as if there are bits of baroque ornament.) Like most movie palaces the ornament is for effect and not authenticity,



From Left to Right
 The existing facade.
 Classical Orders.
 Fitting the circulation space to the ornament.





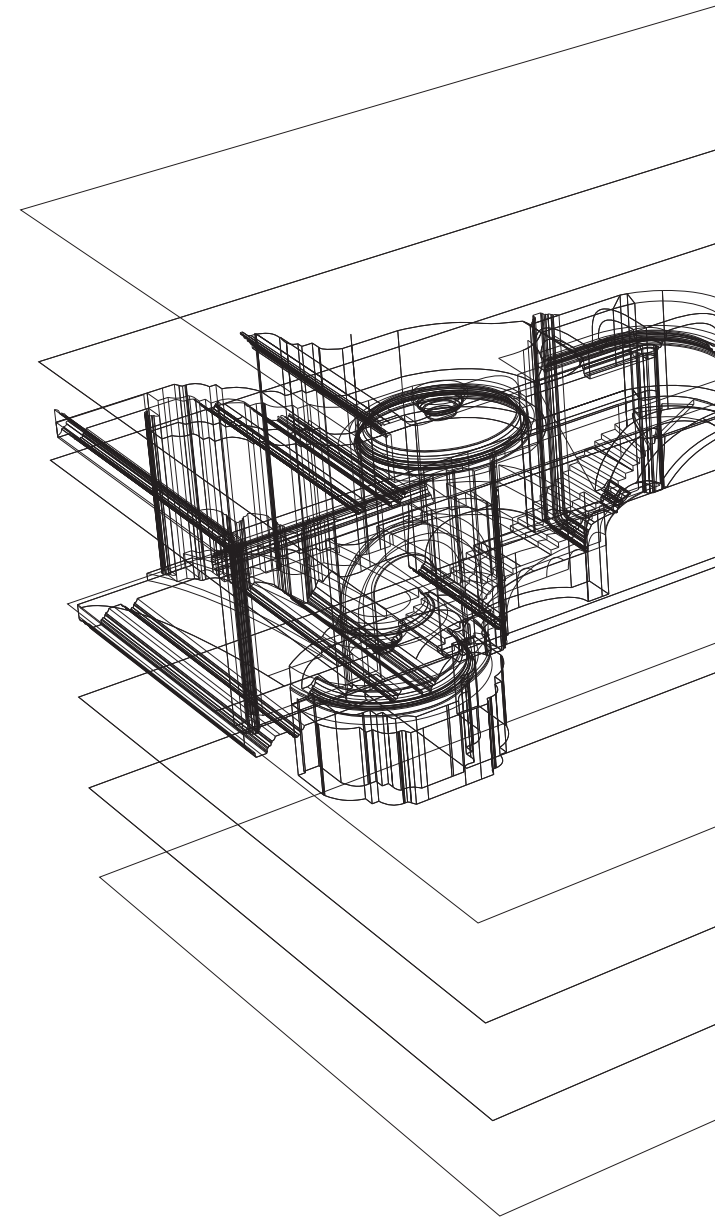
Descriptions of the Theaters

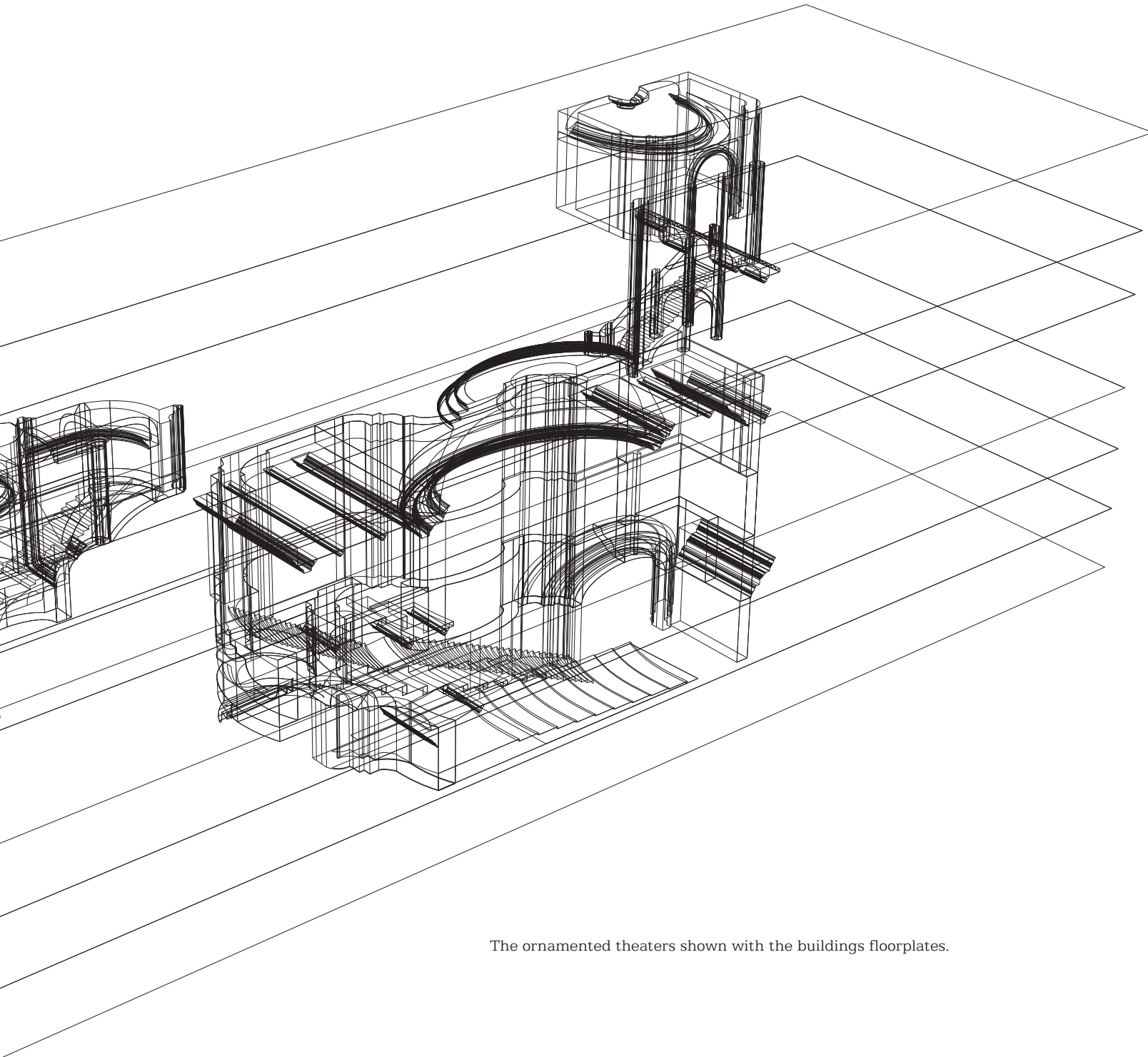
The first theater is taller than it is wide. The space is the height of the entire building. It serves to bring light into the space which creates a large, well lit public space in center of the building. In fact, it connects to a public passageway that goes from block to block.

The second theater is the only circulation space which touches the envelope of the building. It starts at the 3rd floor

and extends towards the interior. Movies are shown against a glass window. When not in use, the theater space offers a visual connection to the JMZ platform. When movies are being shown, a blurred reversed image is available to people on the platform and on the train.

The last theater is the smallest. It sits on the ramp which provides roof access. It can be adjusted for open air showings and performances.





The ornamented theaters shown with the buildings floorplates.

Drawings & Models



Study Model: Wall sconce, cast in paper.

In for the mid-rise apartment to realistically function as the pro-forma for a series of ornate theaters, several major restrictions were applied. First, to maximize the number of apartments and floor space, the building fills the entire site. Secondly, to provide adequate lighting to the apartments while maximizing the usable floor space of the building, the lower two floors consist of retail and office space. At the third floor, the surrounding buildings don't cast shadows onto the site. Lastly, since the building height is restricted to 65 feet, but 9 foot floor to ceiling heights are less than desirable, the floor plates of the apartments are split so that every apartment has 15 foot high ceilings.

Continuing the public circulation of the urban site, the building offers a public passageway from one block to another. This in turn expands the public retail storefront on the first floor. When the theaters aren't in use, the community is invited to use the circulation spaces/theaters as a public space.

All drawings and plans have been scaled and cropped to the page. However, the original scale marks and line-weights have been preserved.

Brief notes on each of the drawings follow. In general the sections show the theater/vertical circulation space, while the plans show the “poche” space/residential program in more detail.

Plan 01

The ground floor of the building is programmed with retail. All of the currently existing businesses along Broadway are accommodated in the design. Farther into the building, a small cafe services the theater. While along the South 5th Street facade, an area of low traffic, a gym services both the neighborhood and building residents.

Plan 02

The second story contains office spaces. Public spaces like conference rooms are placed next to the ornate theater membrane.

Plan 03

The third residential story contains mostly ordinary apartments. The unusual layouts are those adjacent to the theater. One features an expansive ornate bathroom; another a long curved kitchen countertop perched on the outside surface of the

main theater’s dome.

Plan 04

On this floor the second theater begins, providing direct visual access to the JMZ train line (see Section 02). A small bar and cafe service the theater and any public visitors who are watching the trains.

Plan 05

The residential floor continues the second theater.

Plan 06

This residential floor has the third fifteen person theater, used mostly by the building residents. An ornate staircase takes the public to the roof. The deep interior contains a lounge area lit by skylights, that has visual access to the very top of the dome of the largest theater.

Section 01

This drawing shows the main theater space. Like all the sections, it also traces

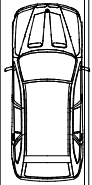
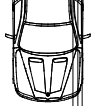
sightlines from the seats. Two stairs cases (necessary to meet safety requirements) function as private circulation for building residents when the theaters are in use.

Section 02

The second theater links the urban circulation of the site to the public circulation of the building. When a movie is being shown, people on the subway platform can watch the film (in reverse). When movies aren’t being shown, the theater becomes a place to watch trains and passengers on the platform and vice versa. All of the theaters are accessible by the elevator shown.

Section 03

The last, smallest, and most private theater will be used mostly by the building residents.

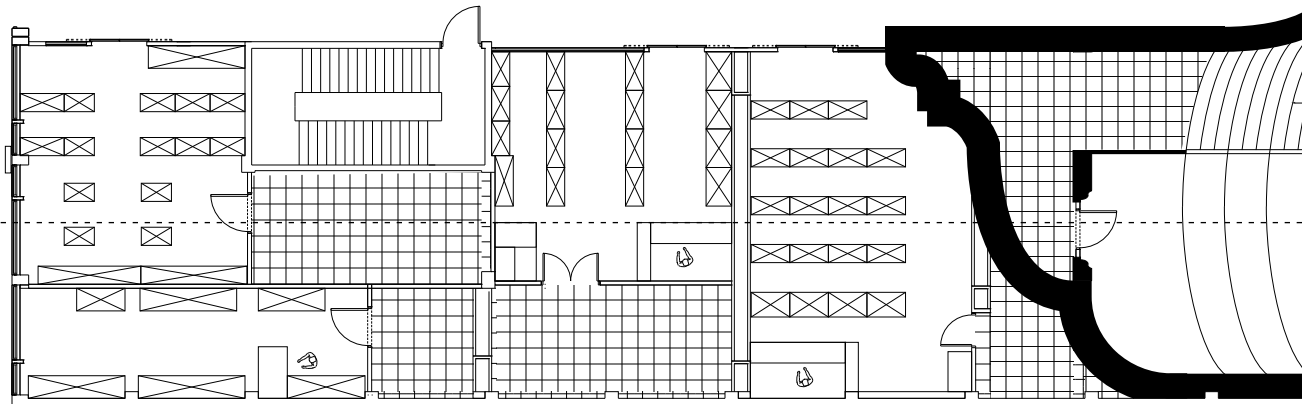
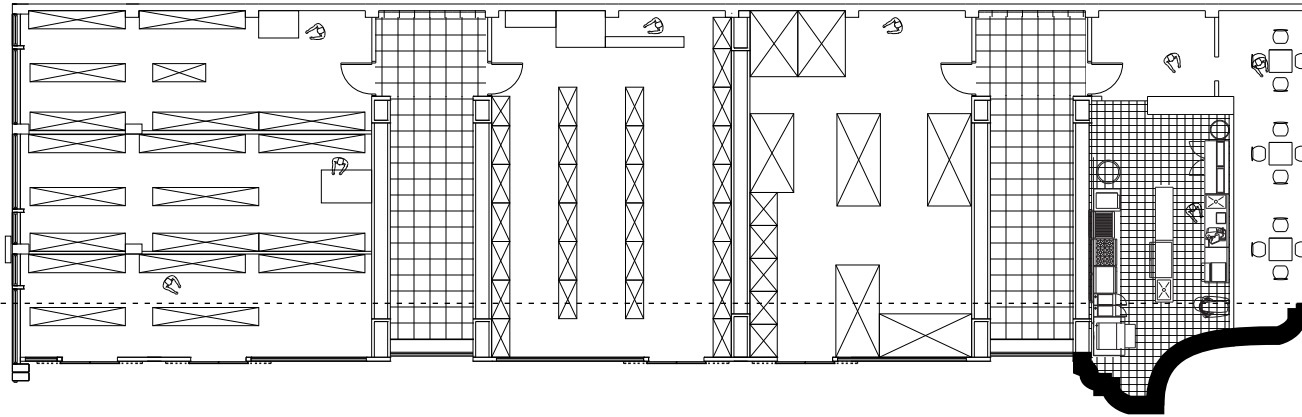


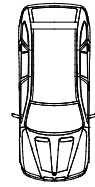
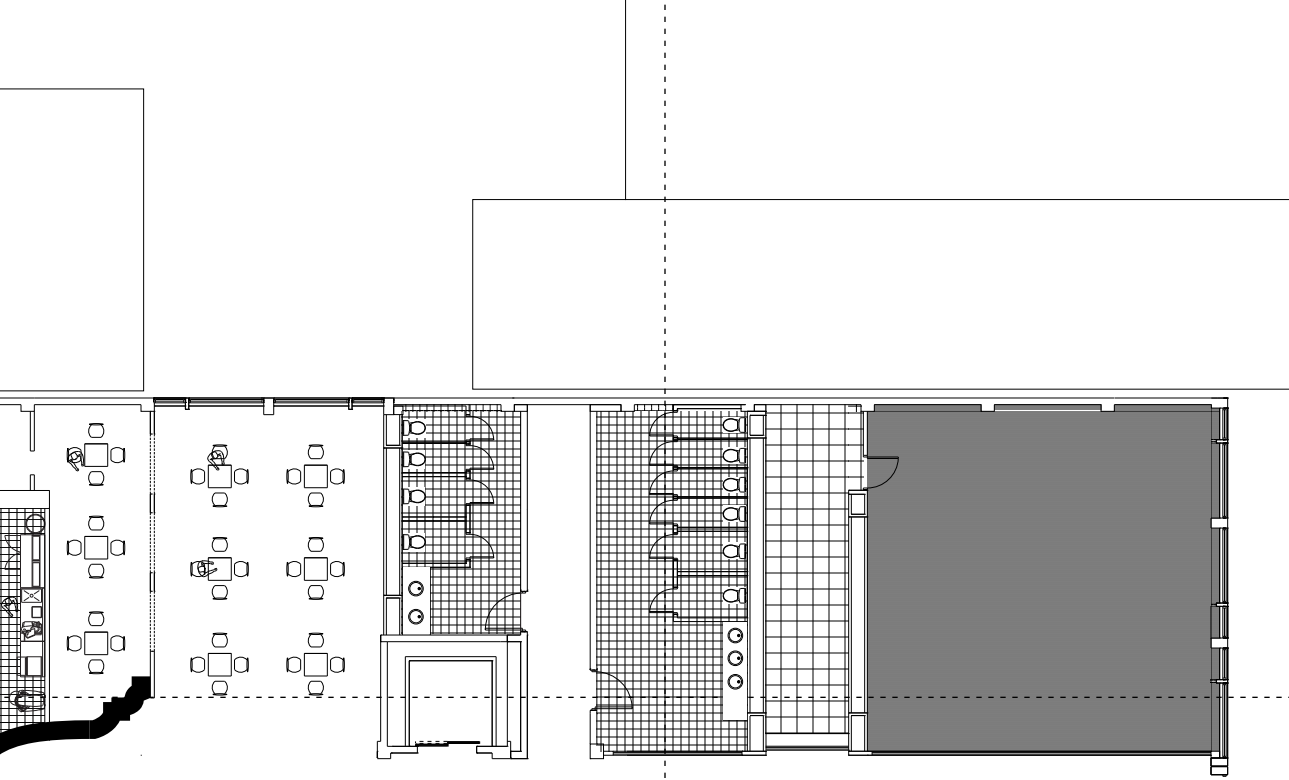
PLAN

01

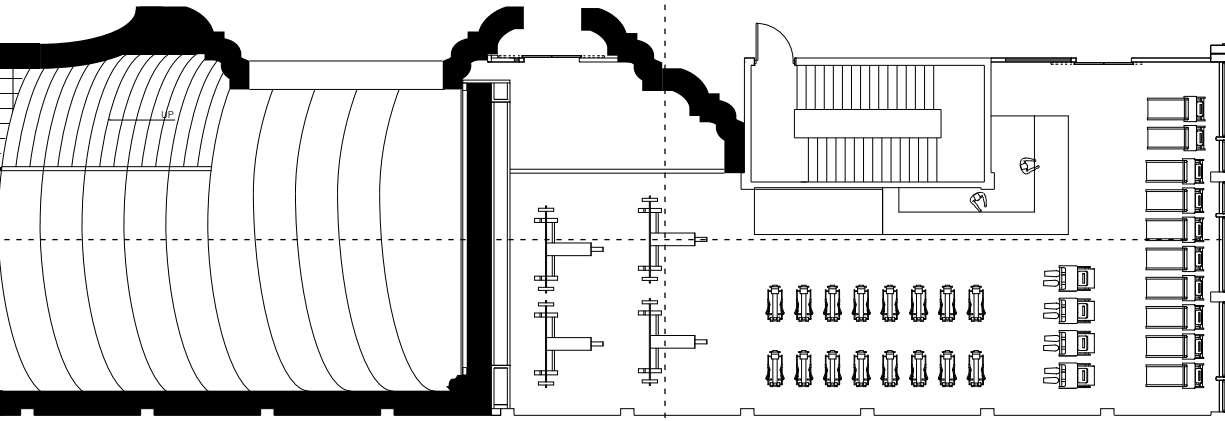
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SECTION 02



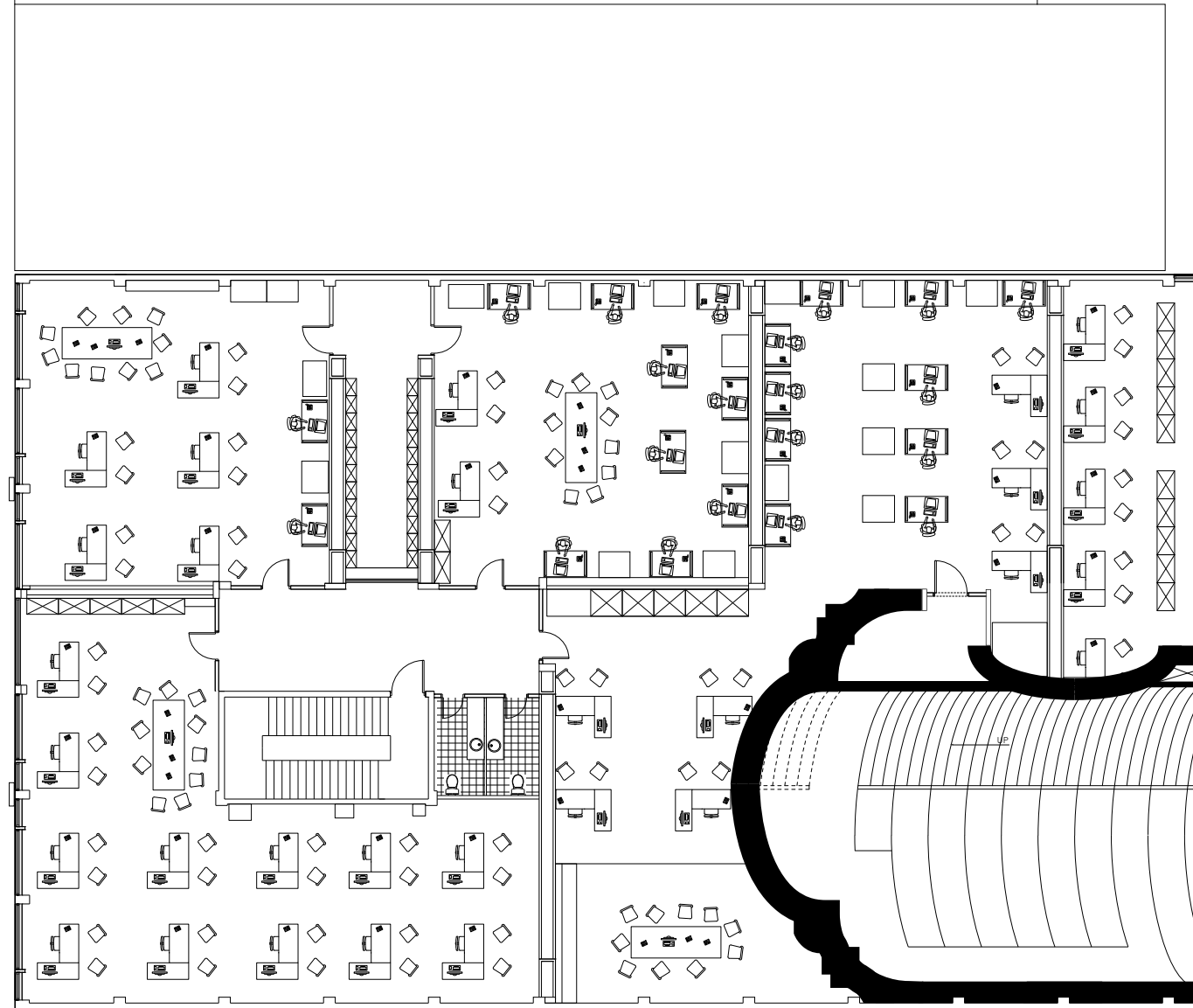
SECTION 01

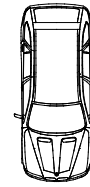
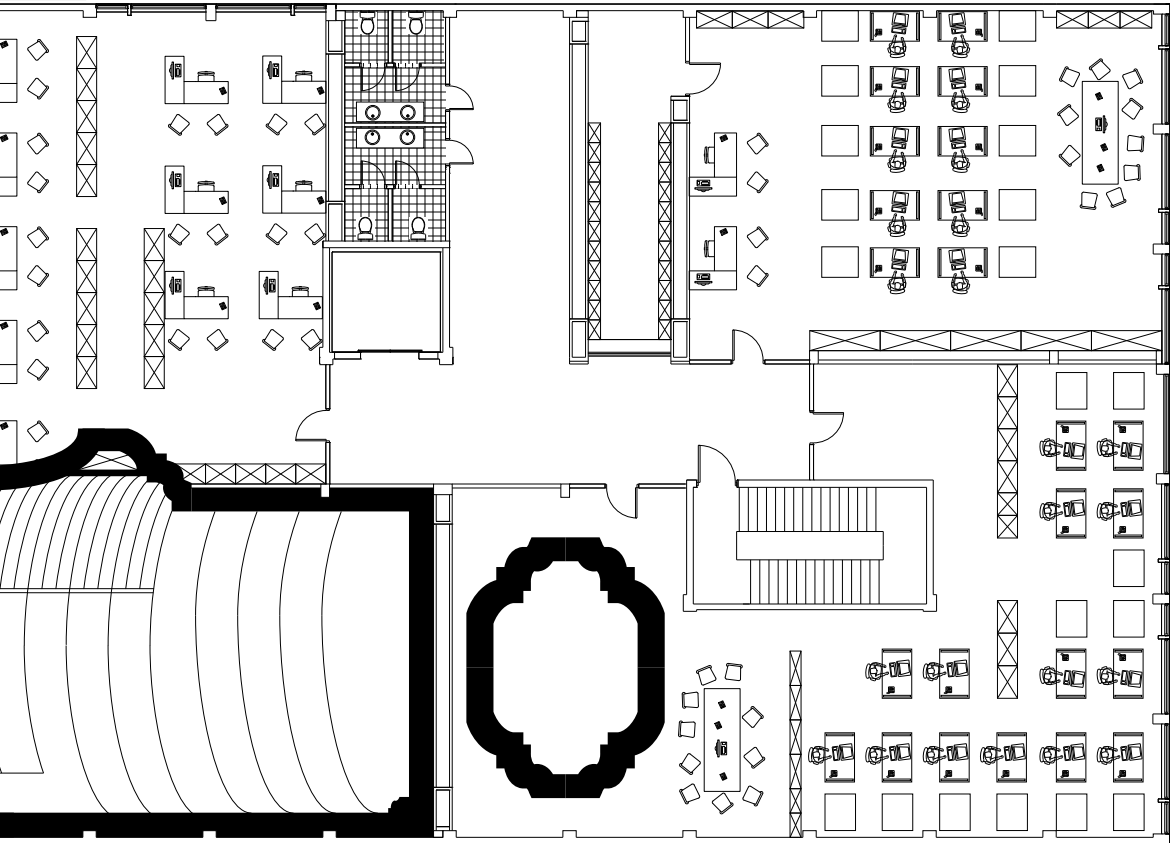
SECTION 03

PLAN
02

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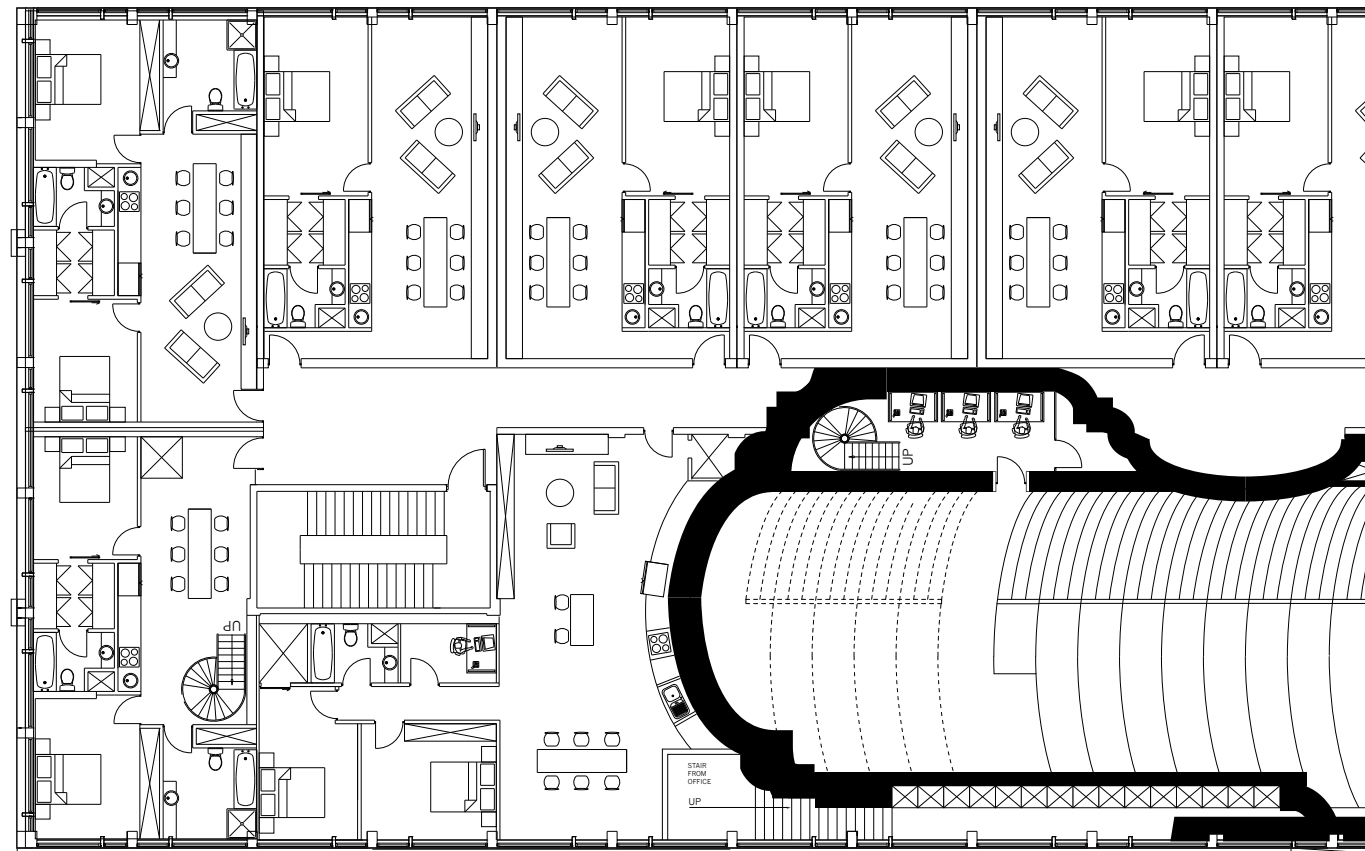


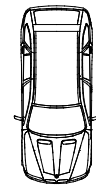
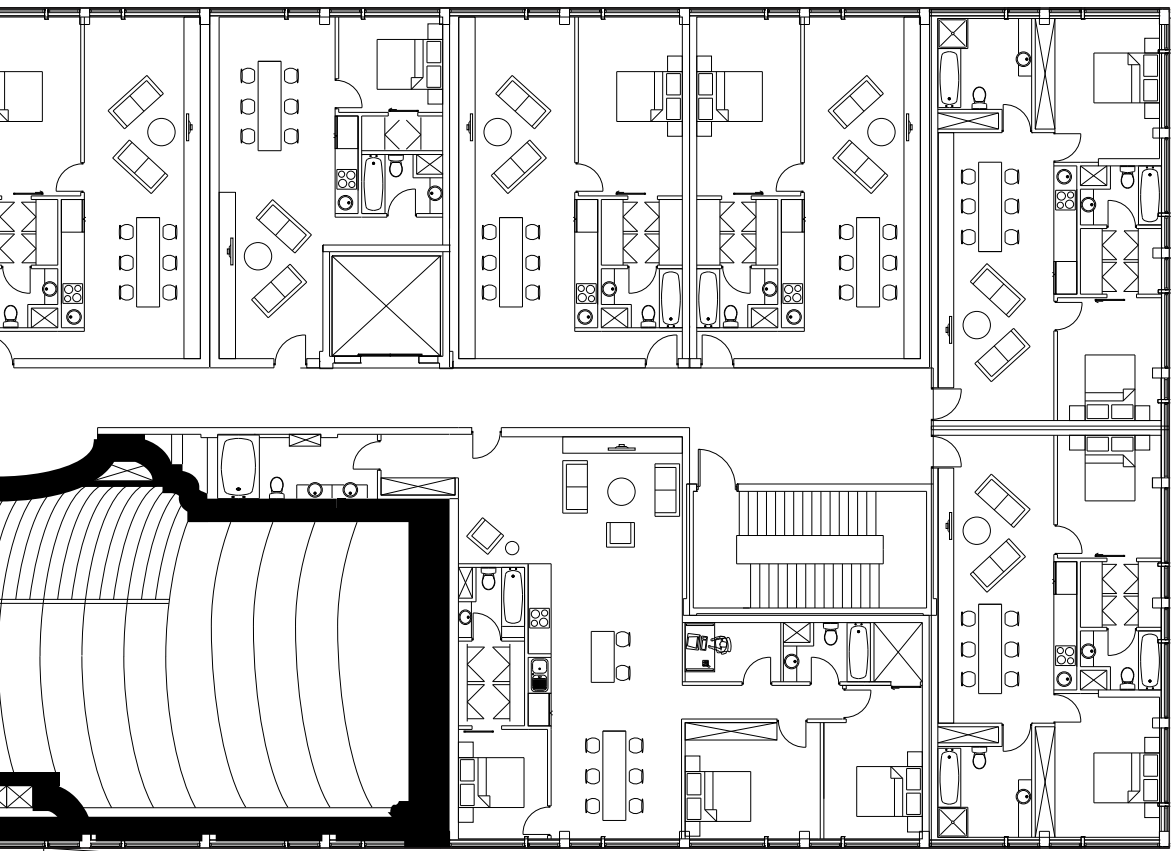


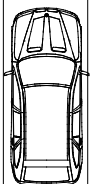
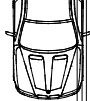
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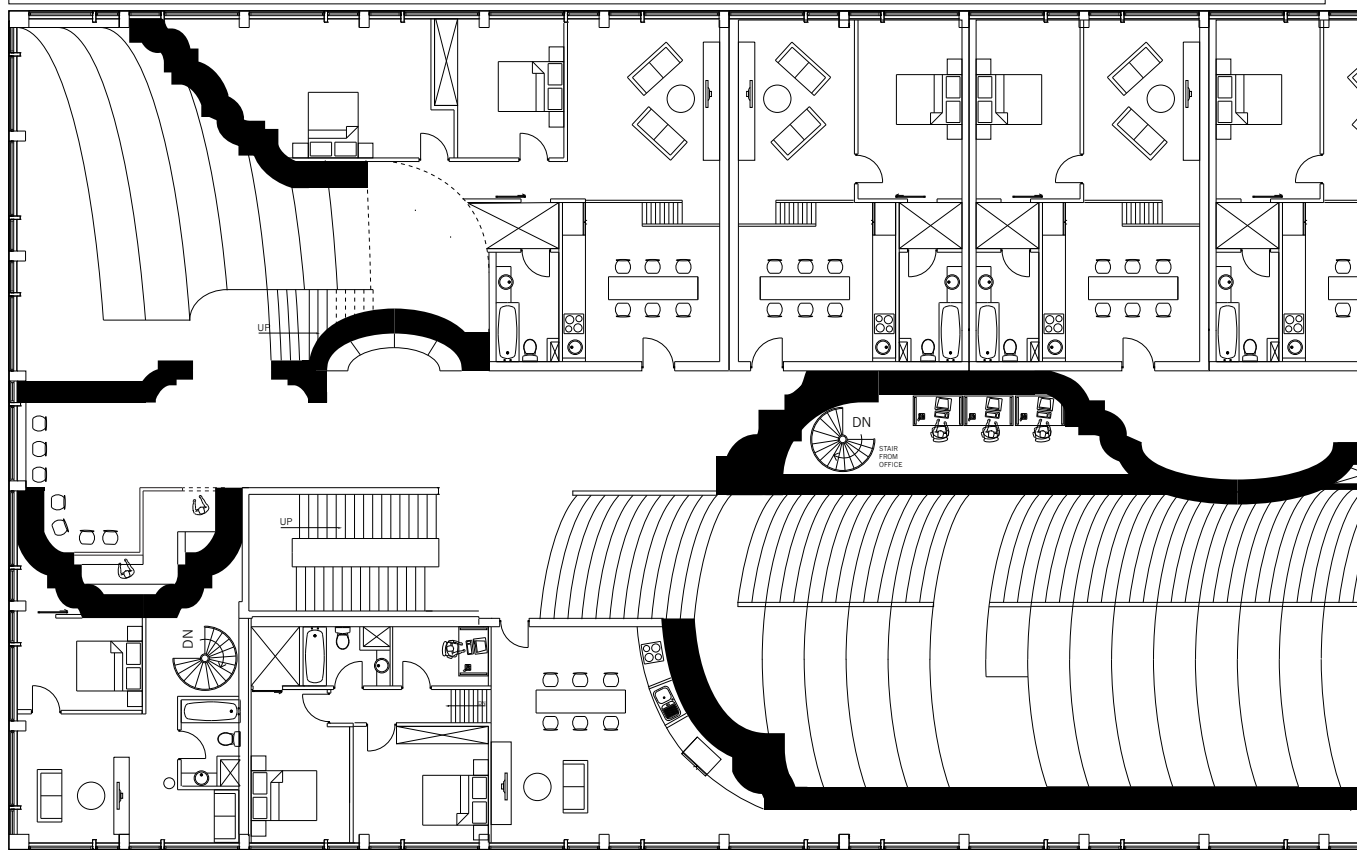


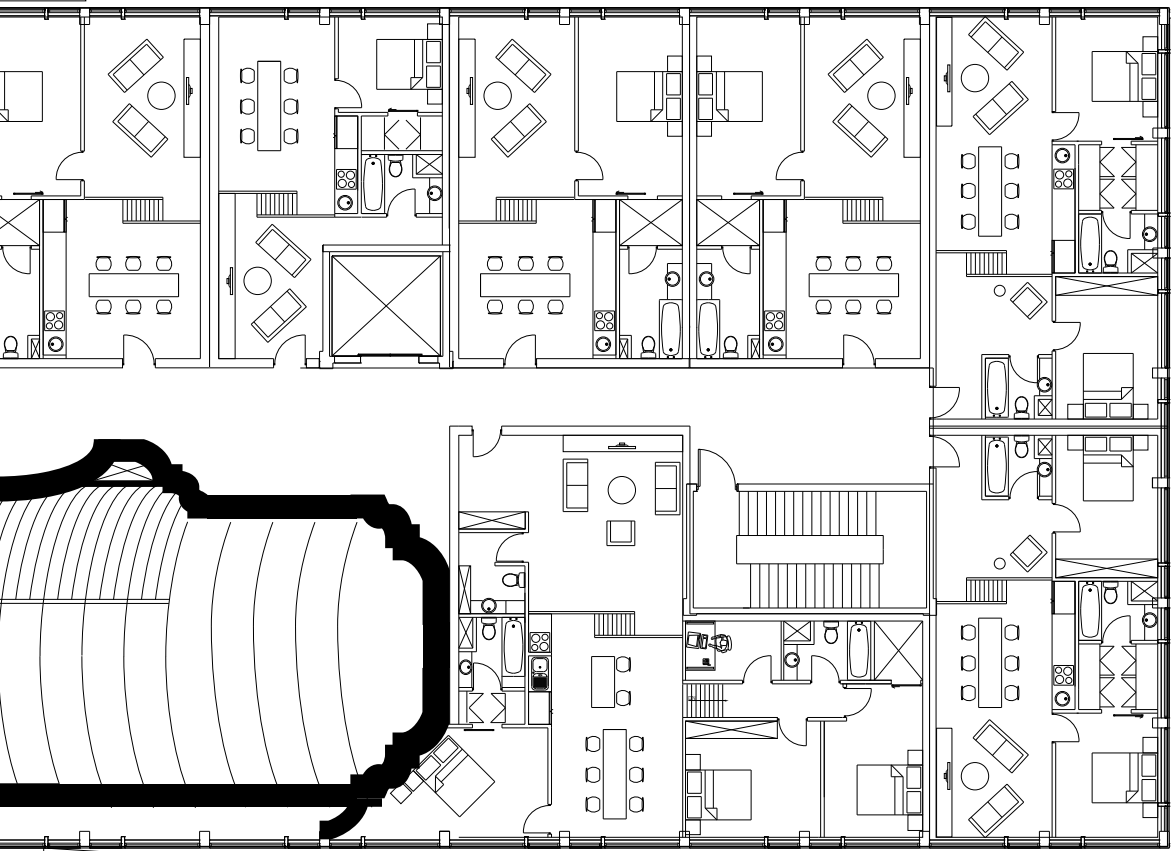
PLAN

04

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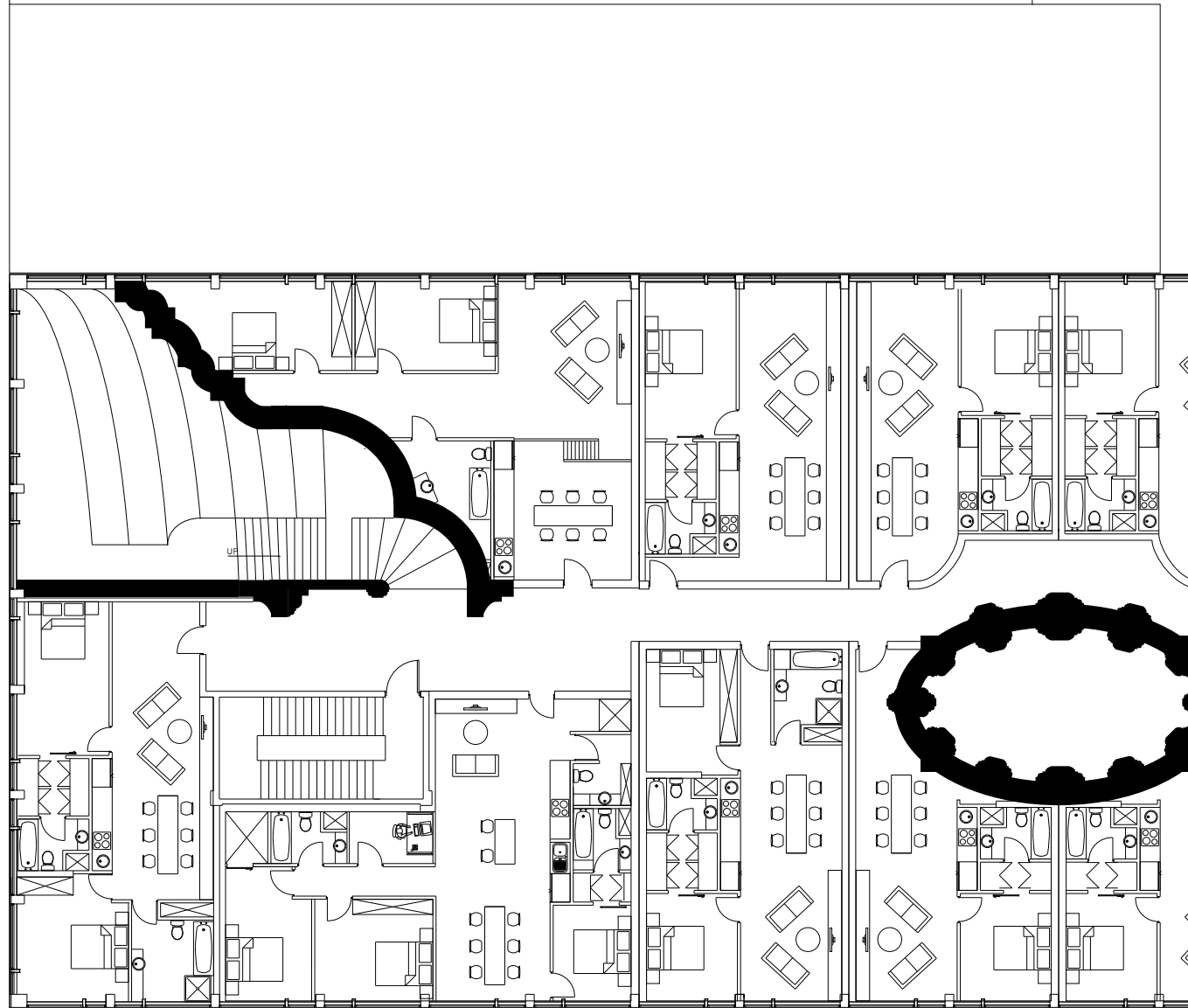


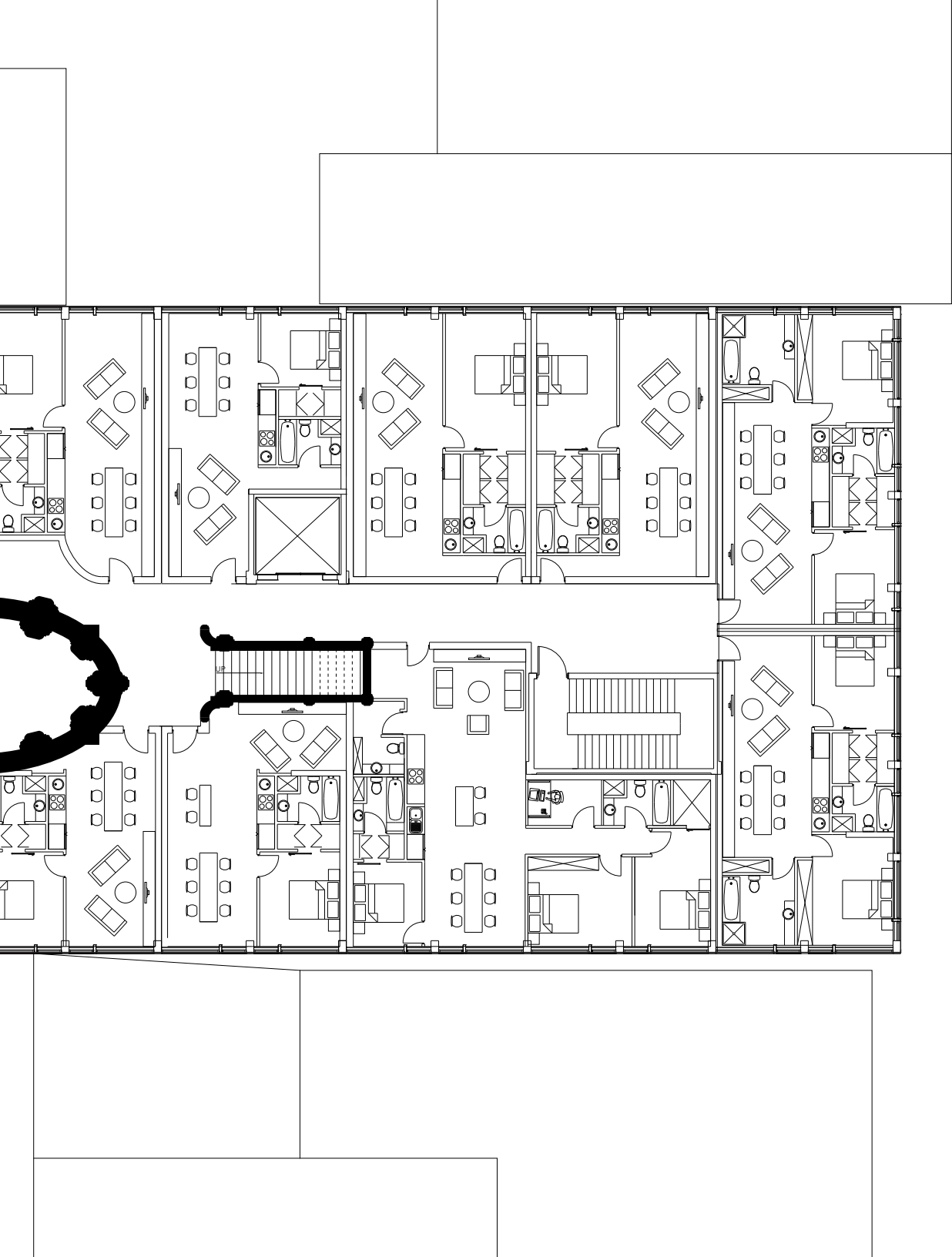


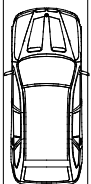
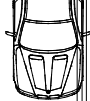
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05

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10ft





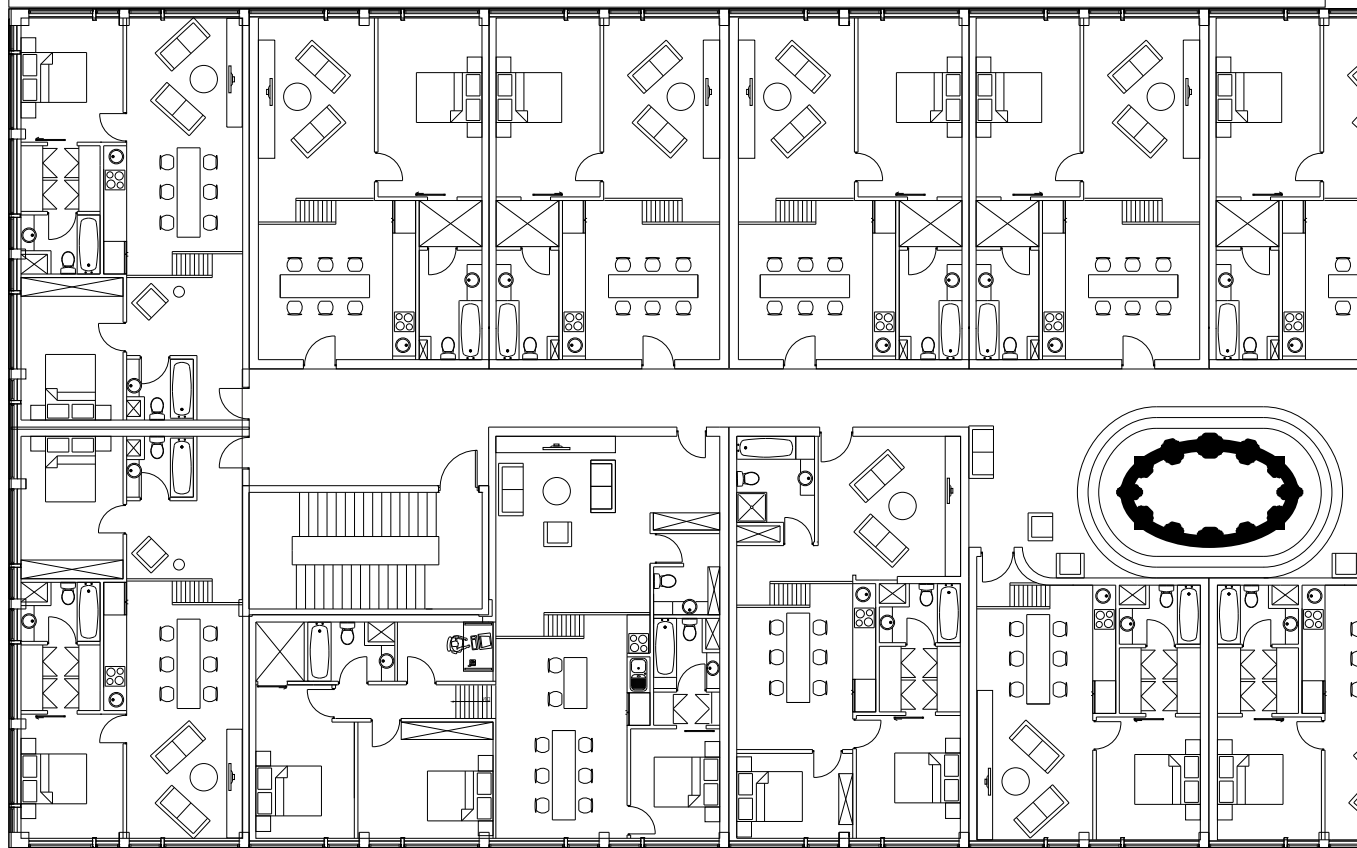


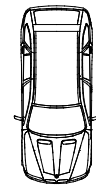
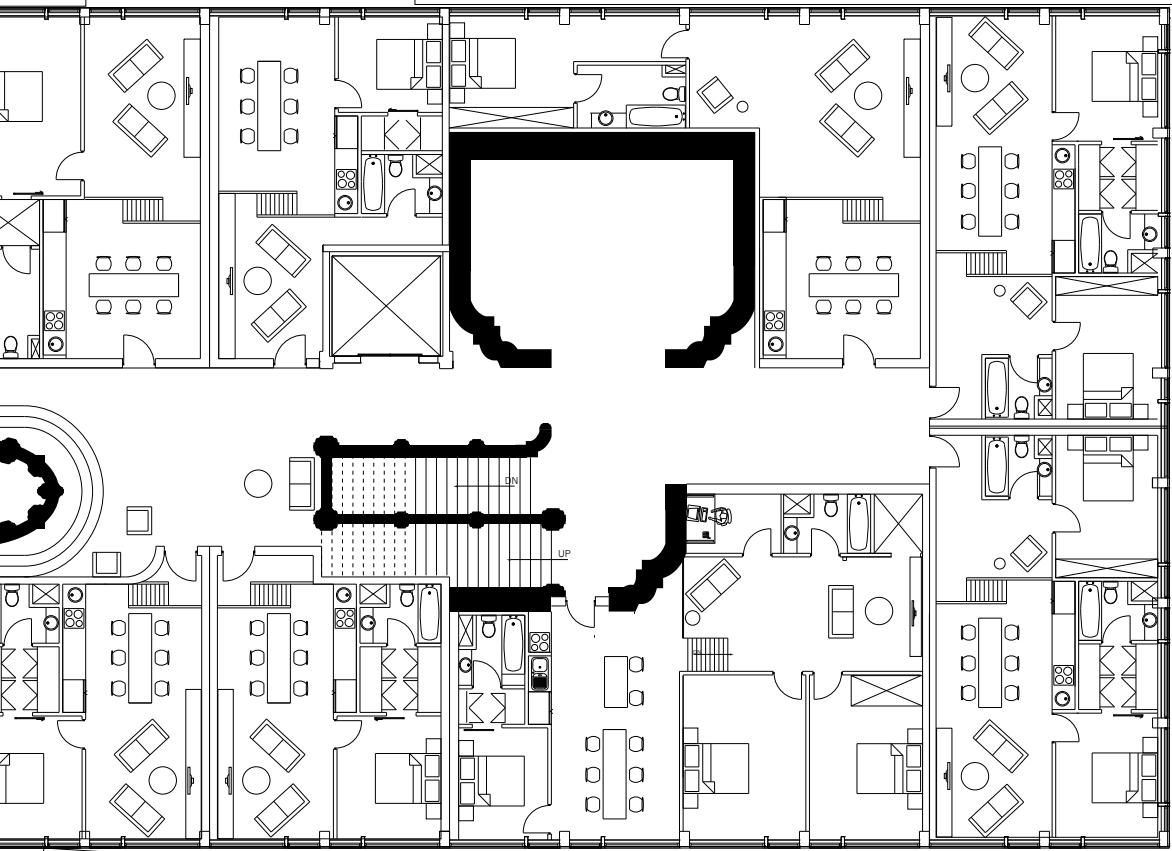
PLAN

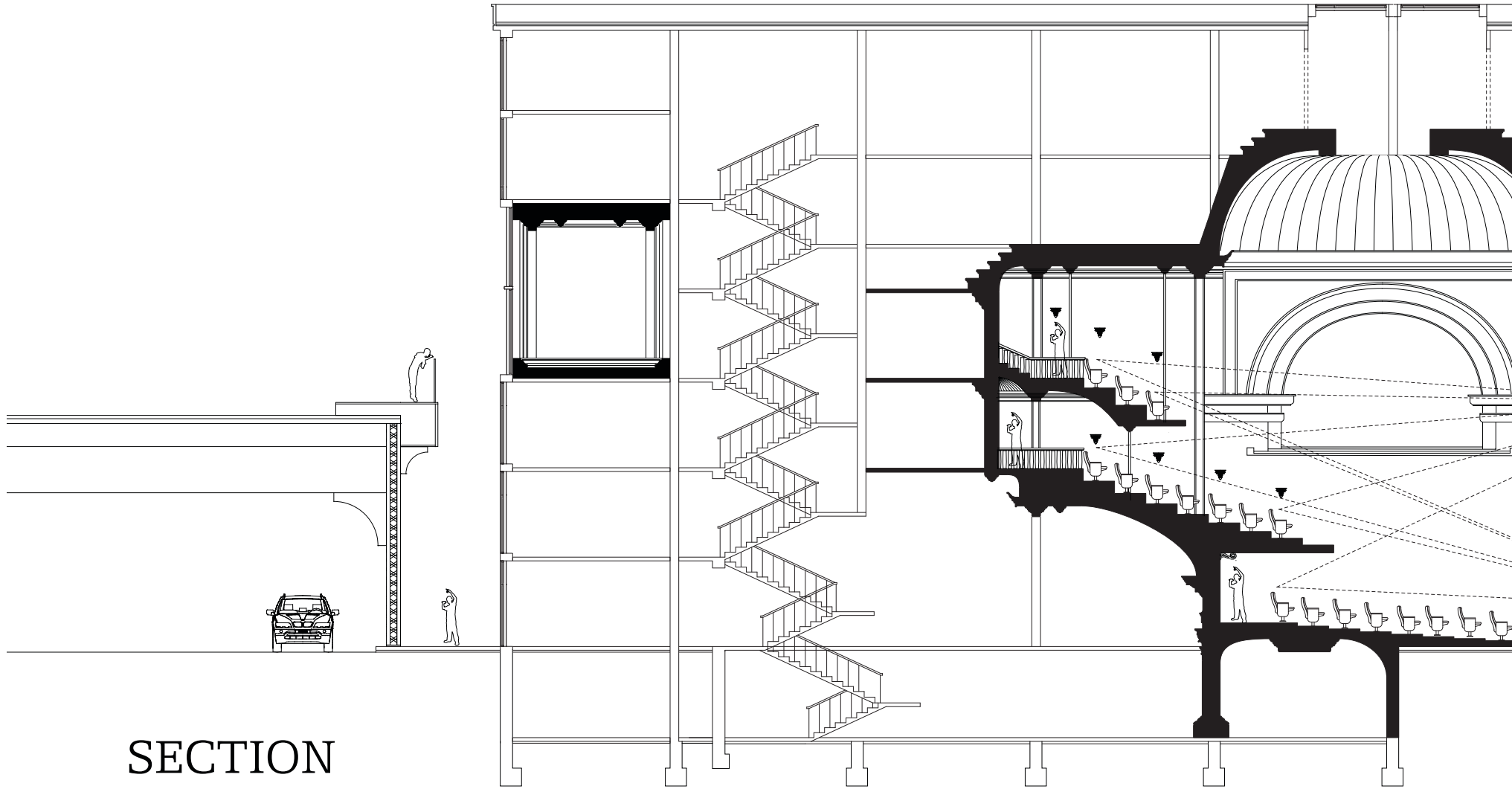
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SCALE 1' : 1/8"

10ft

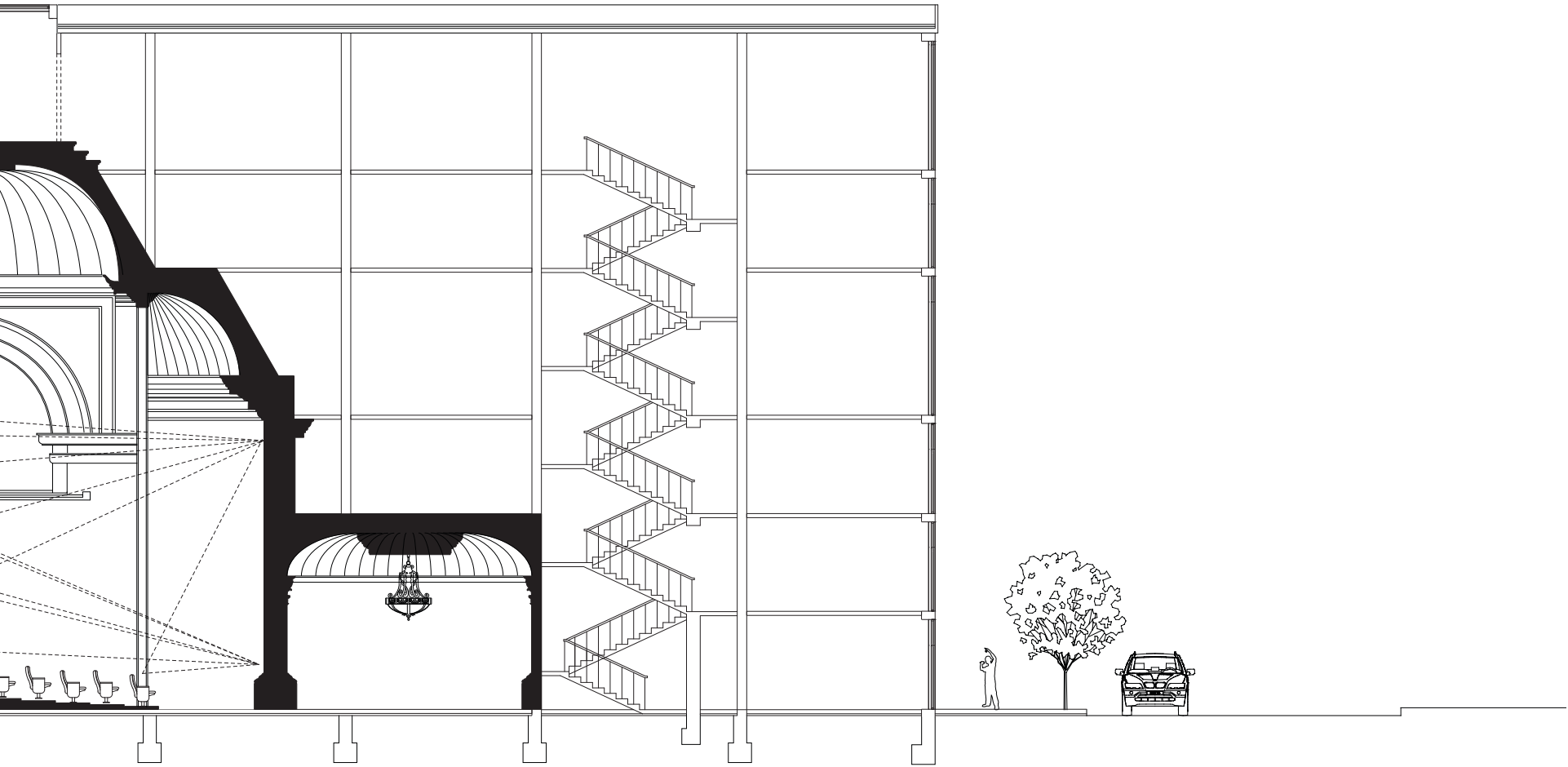


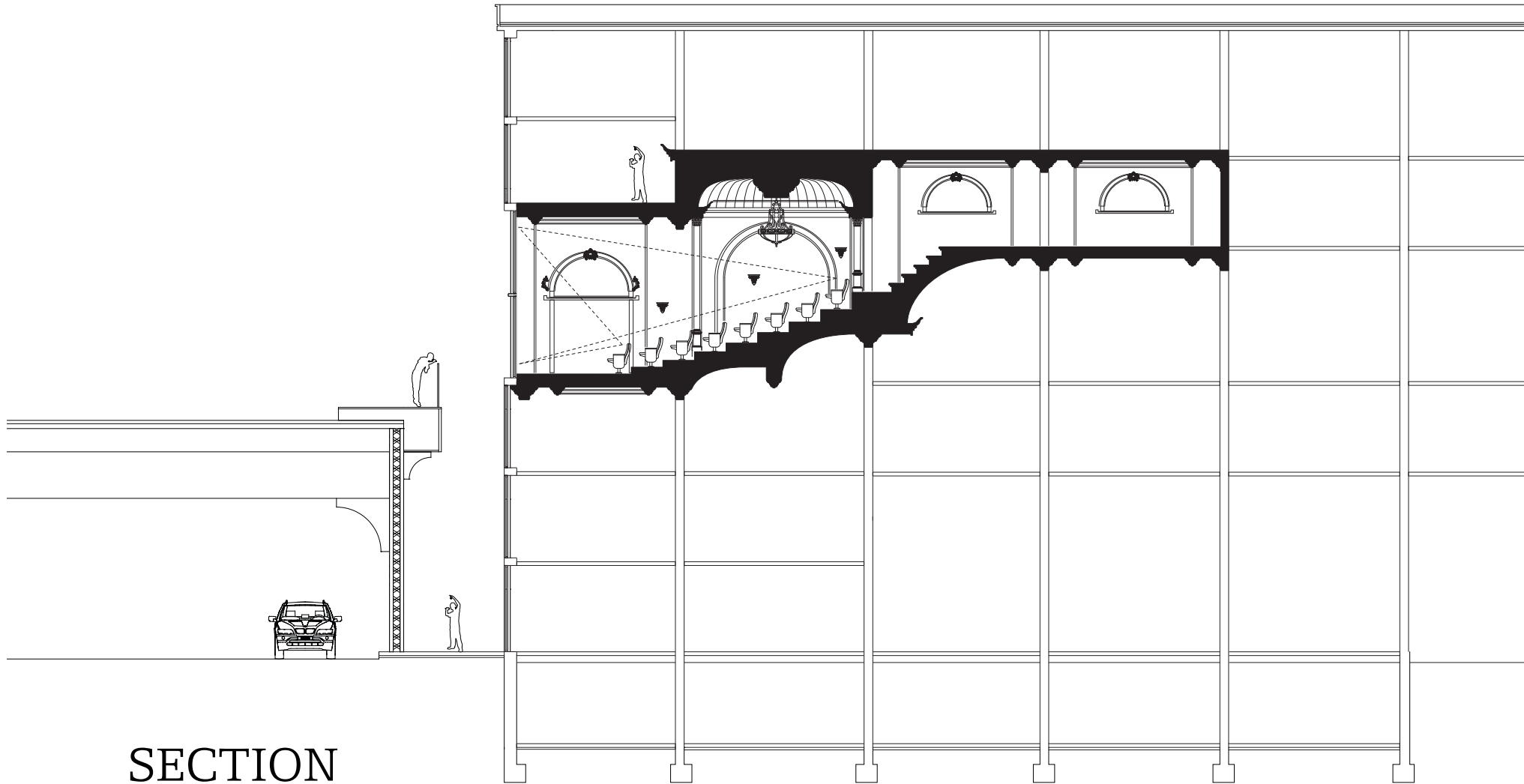




SECTION
01

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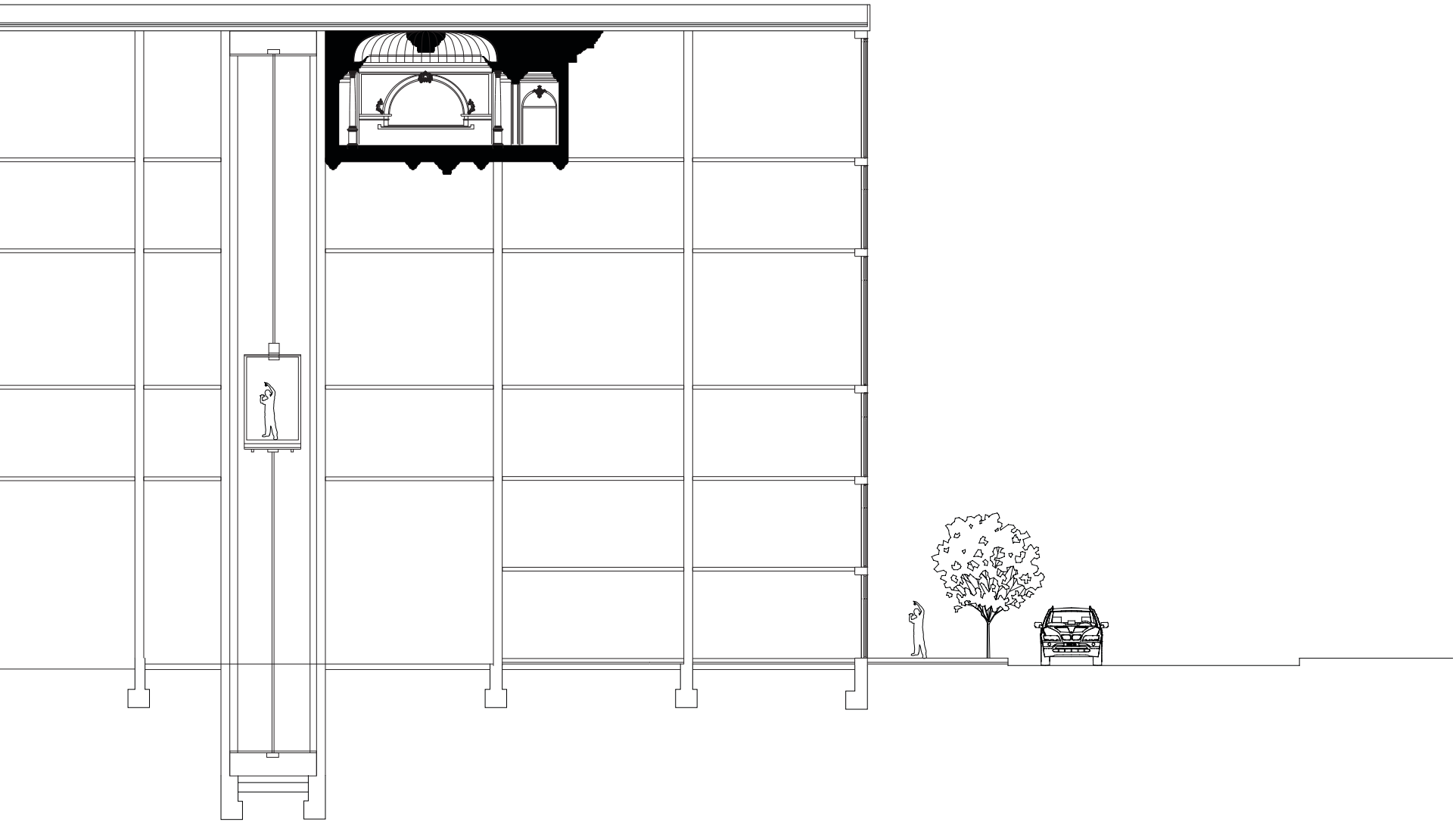


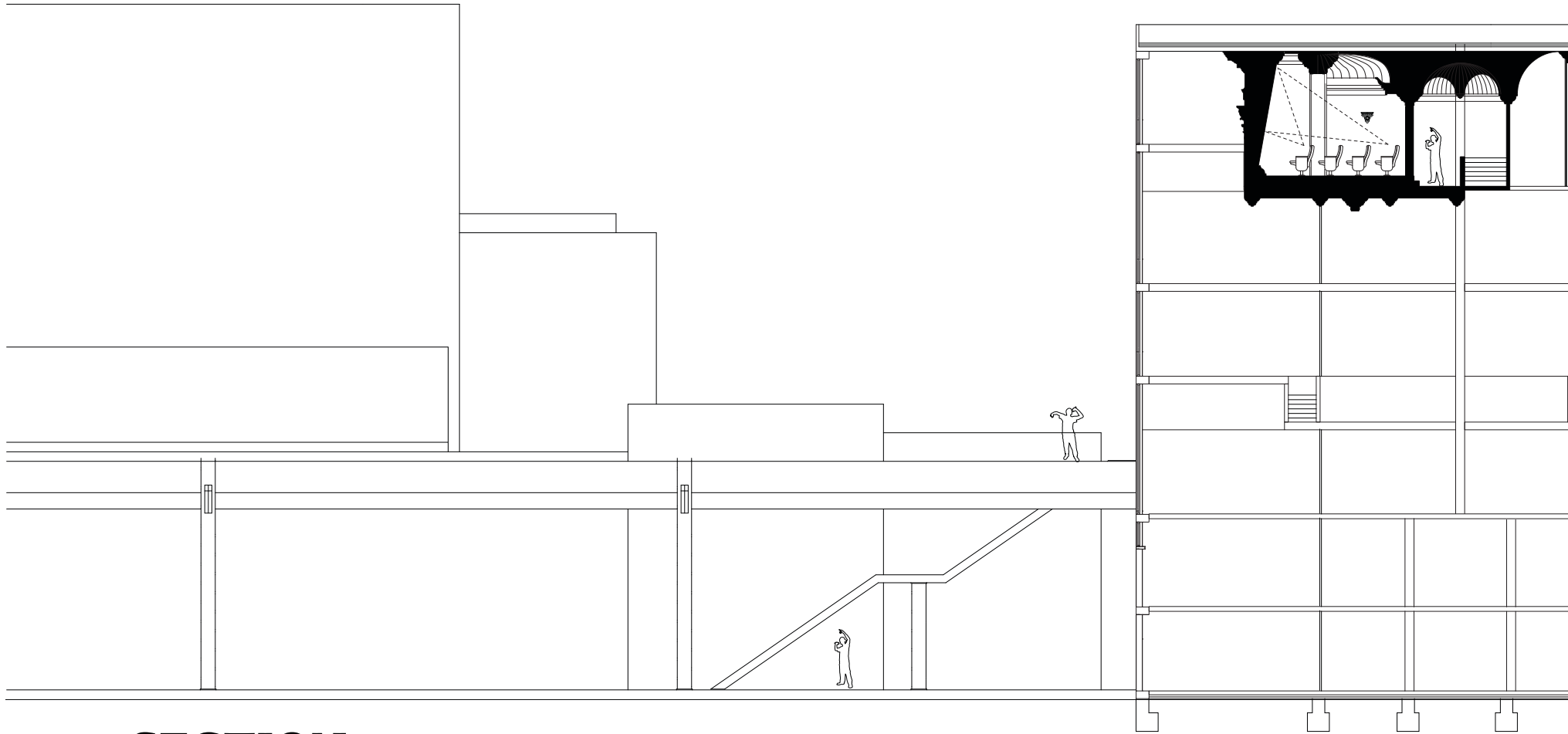


SECTION

02

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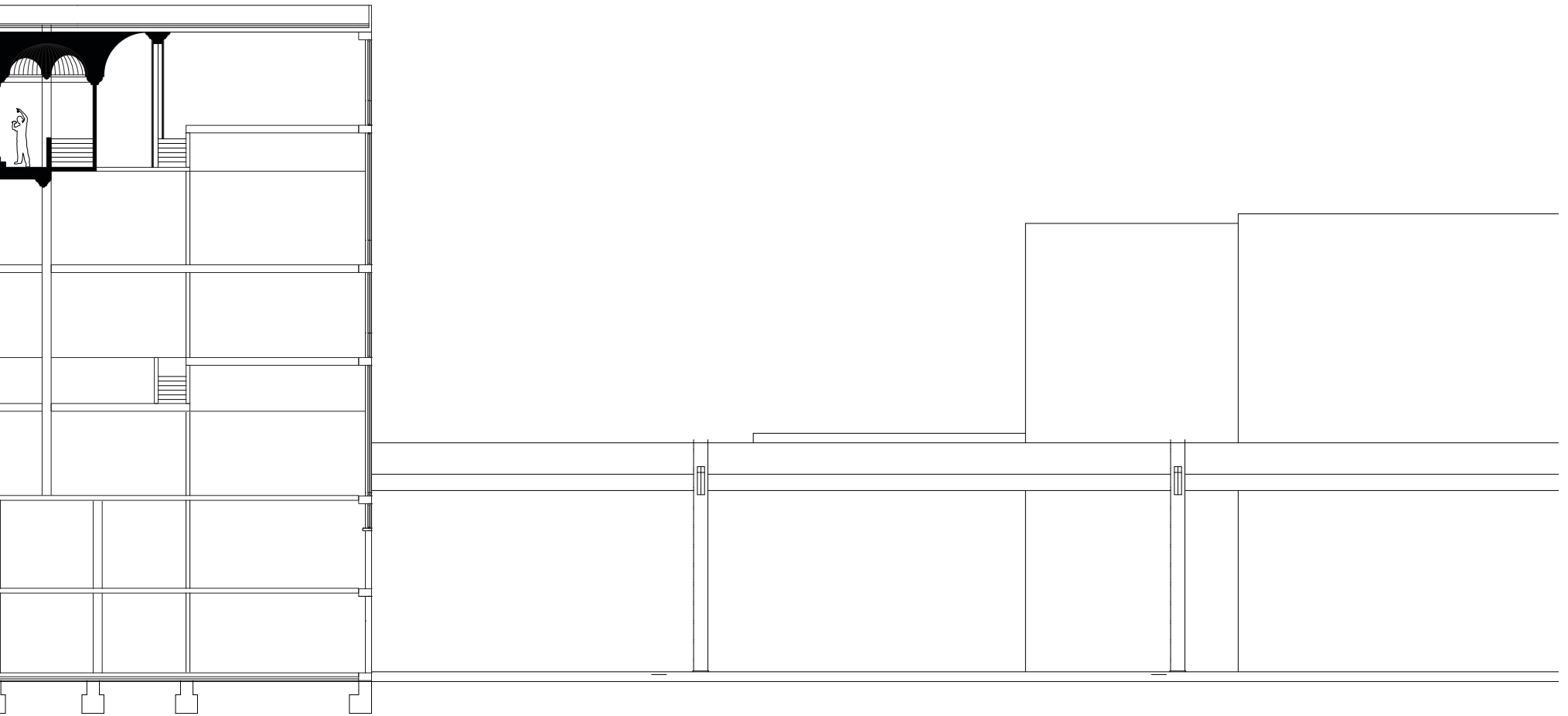


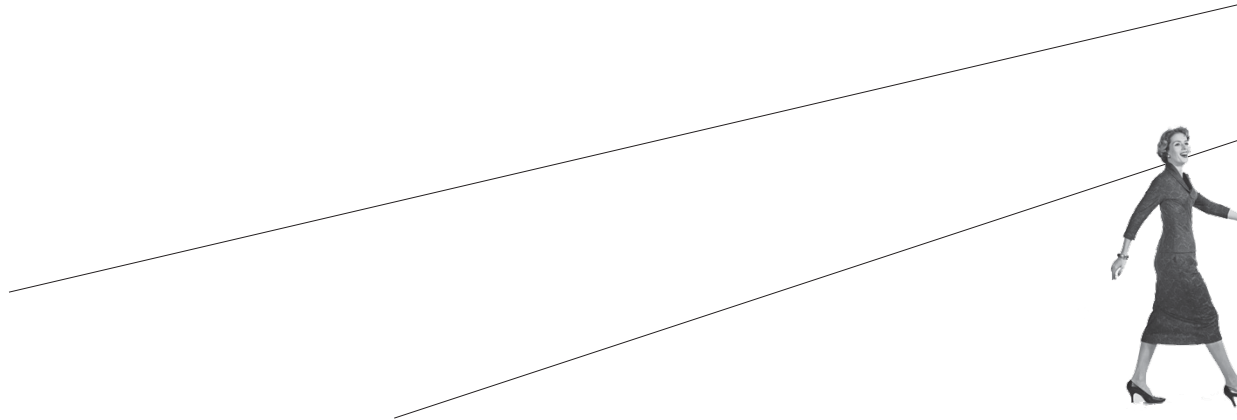
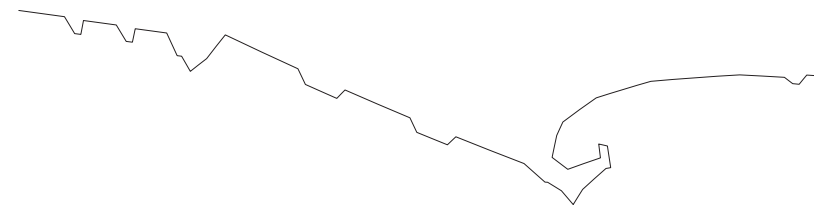


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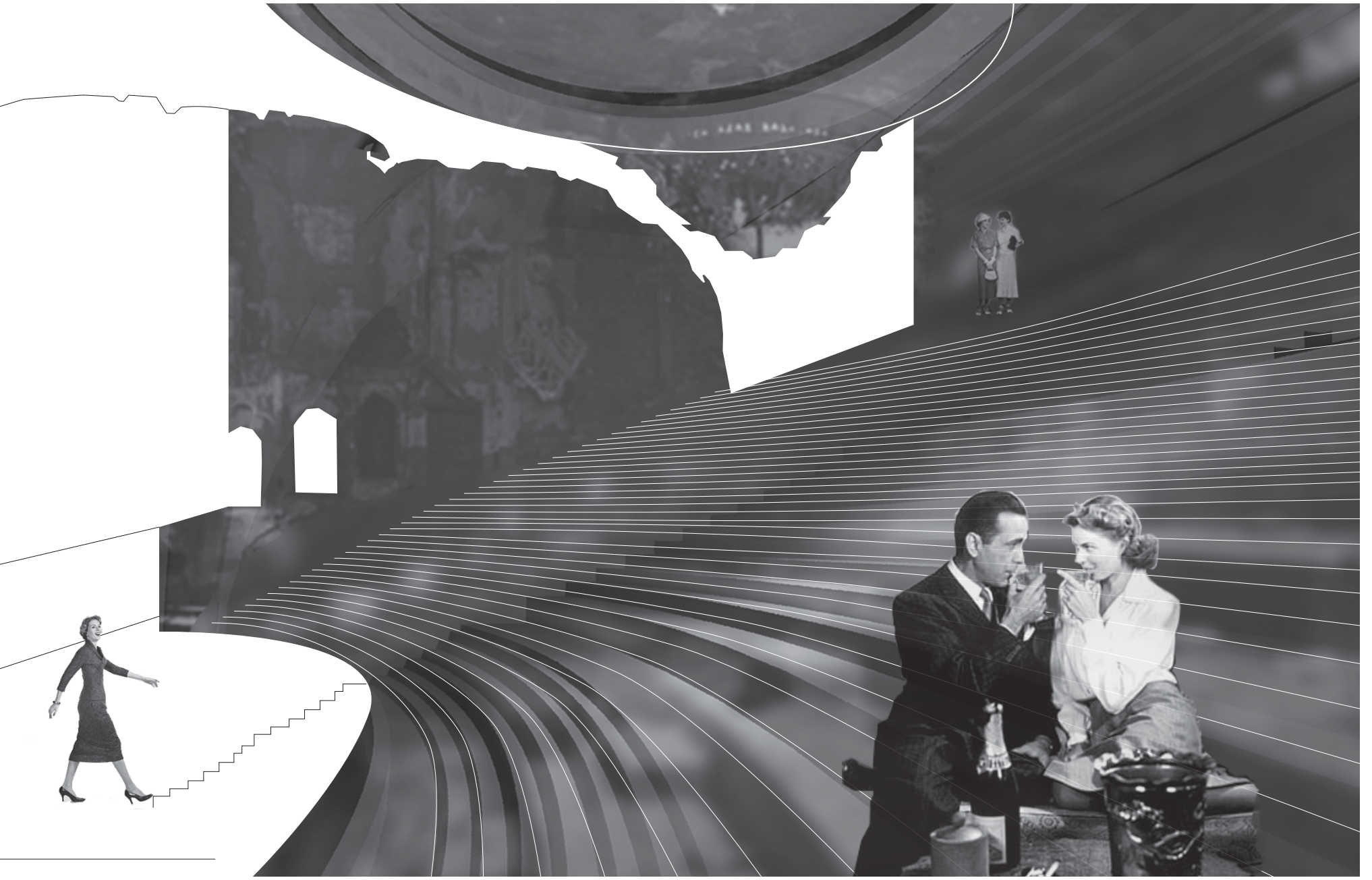
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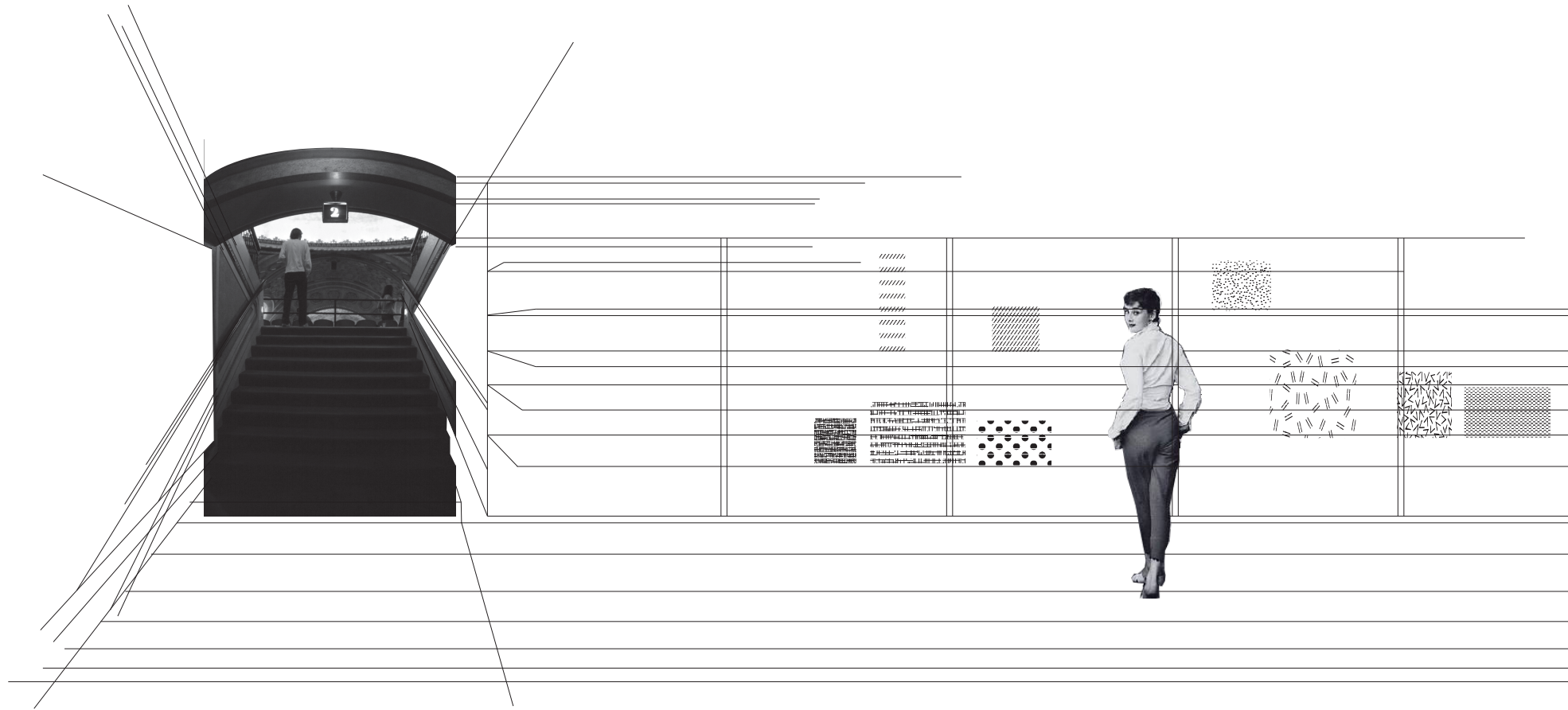
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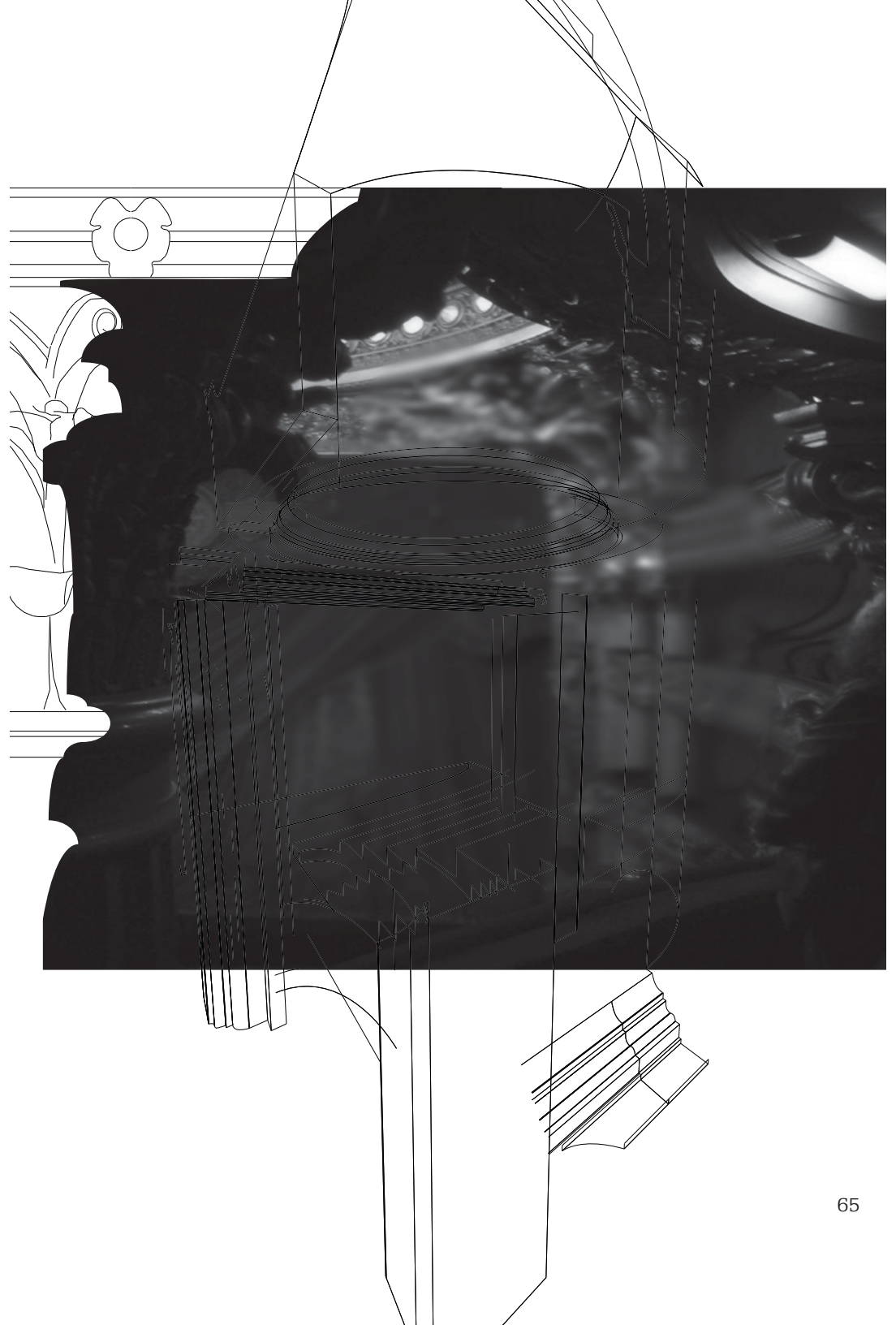
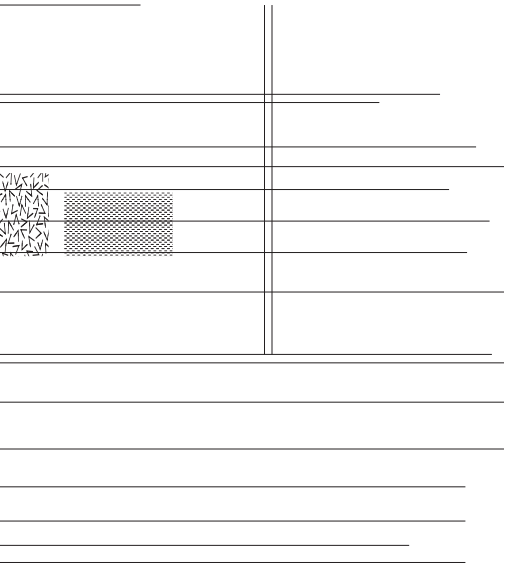


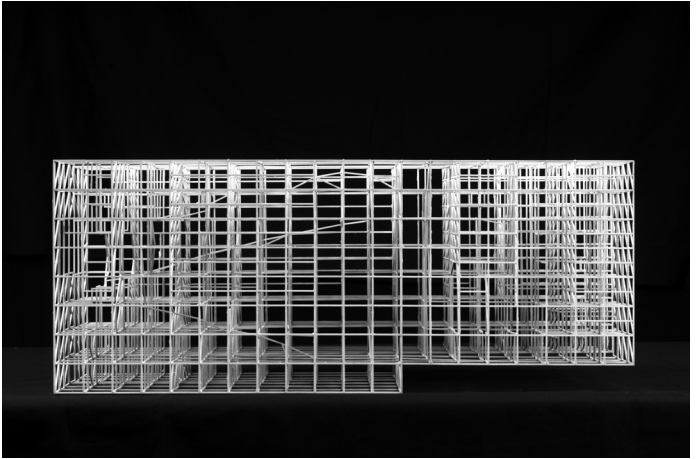
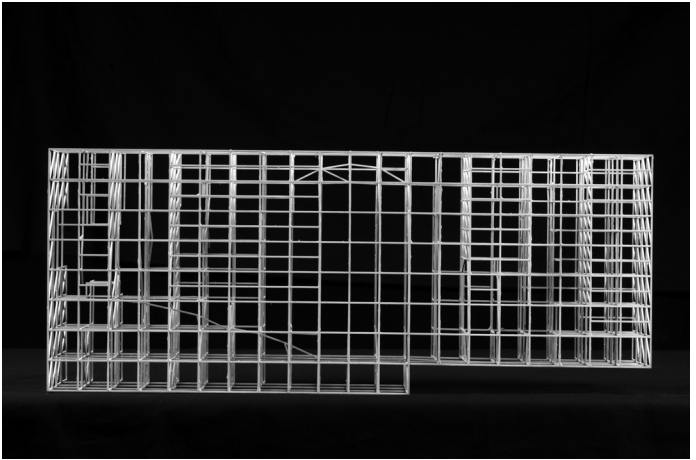
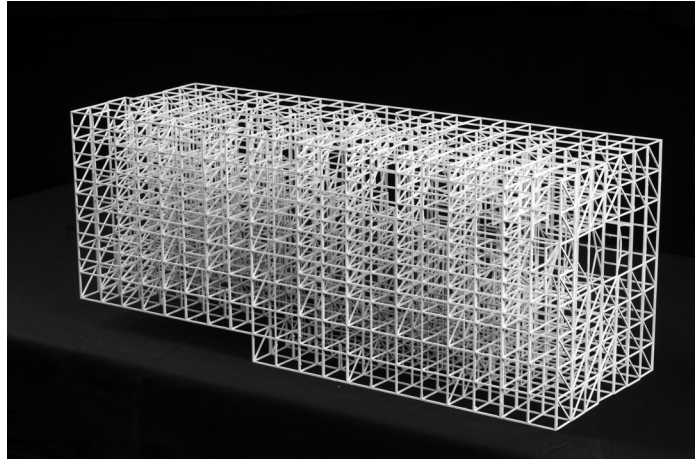
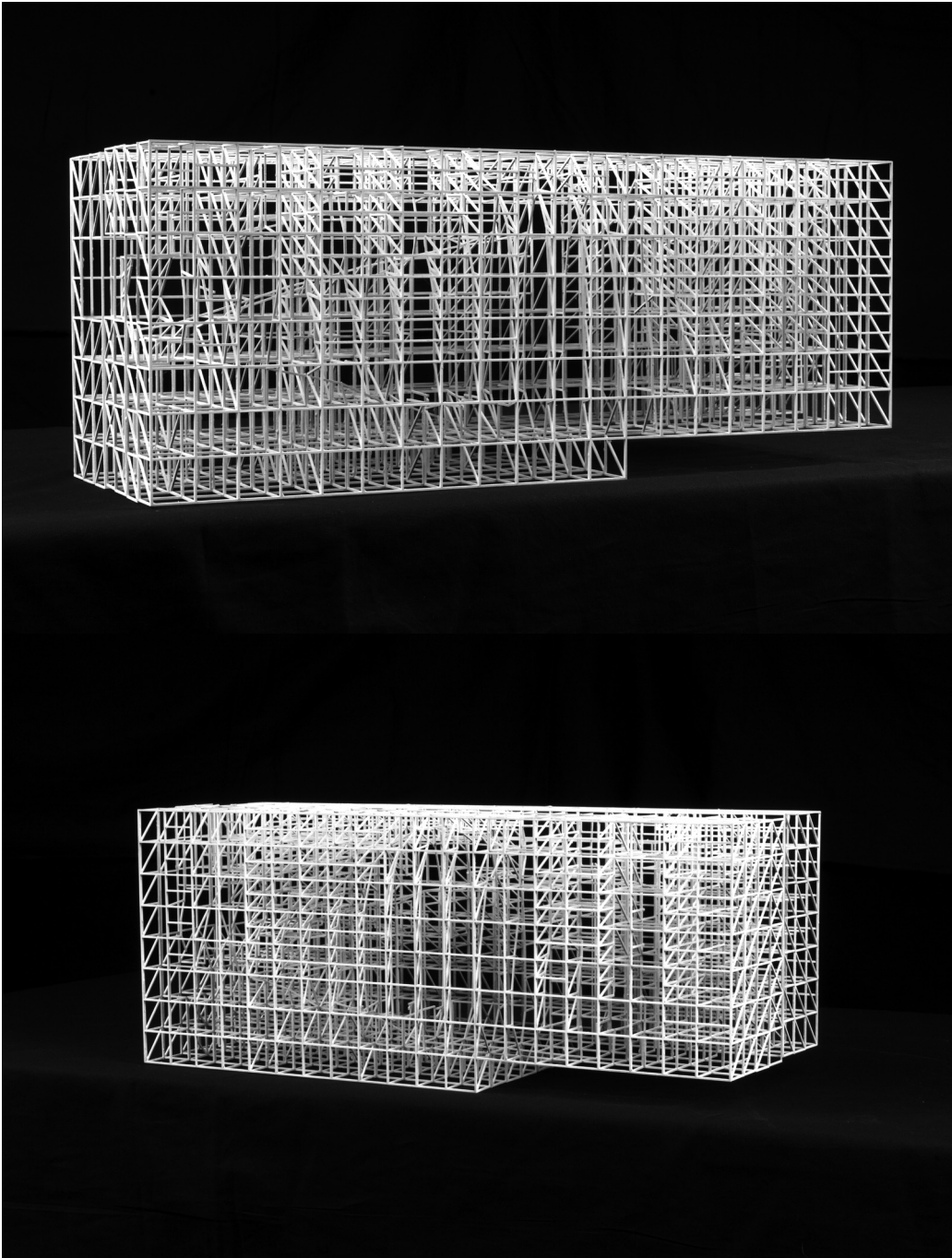
Having lunch inside the main theater.

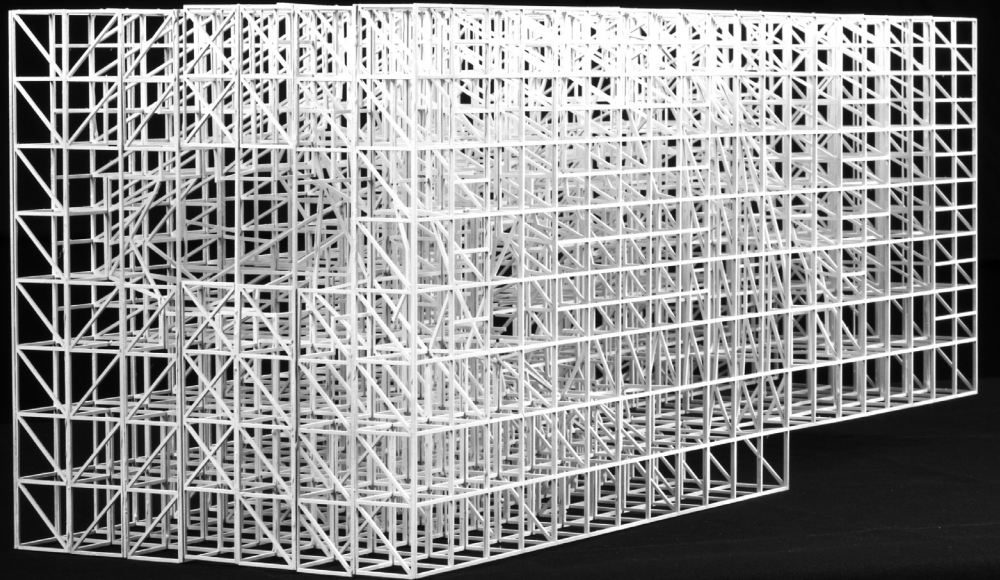
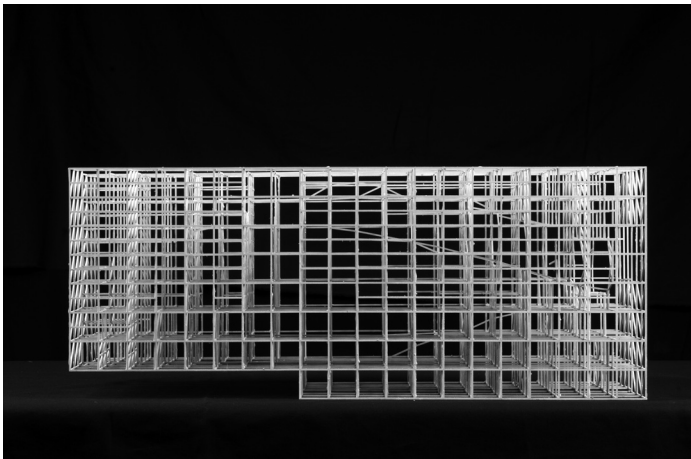
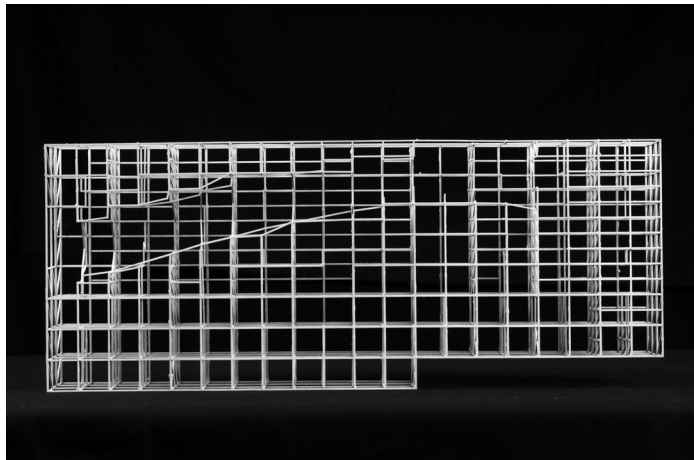
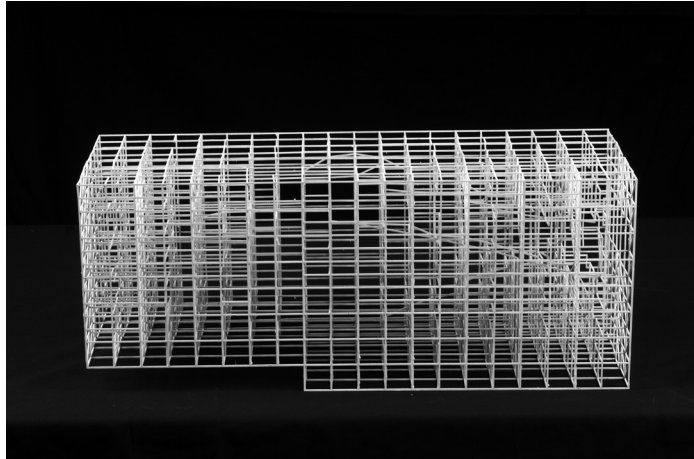


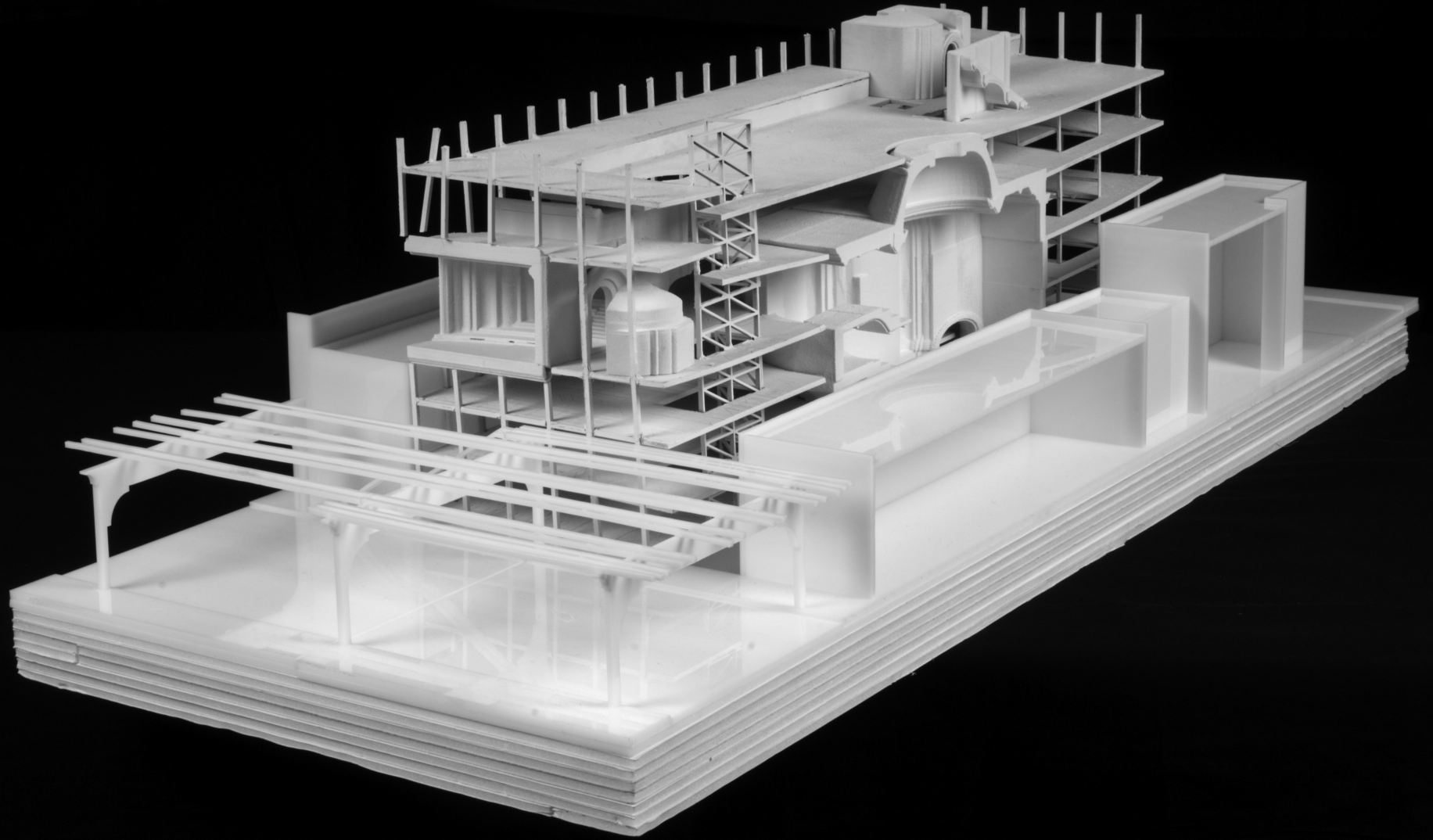


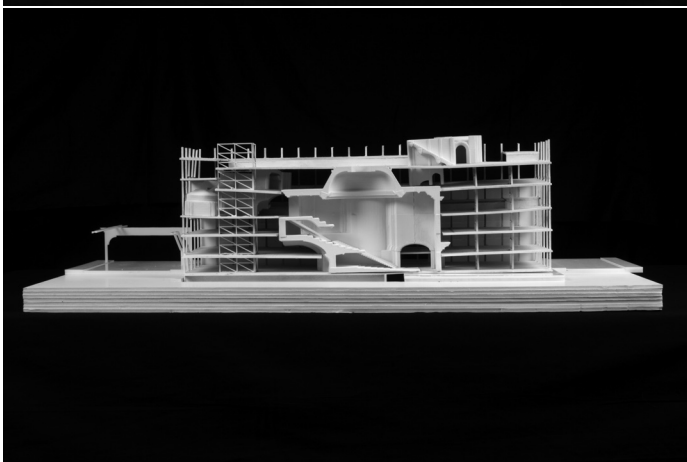
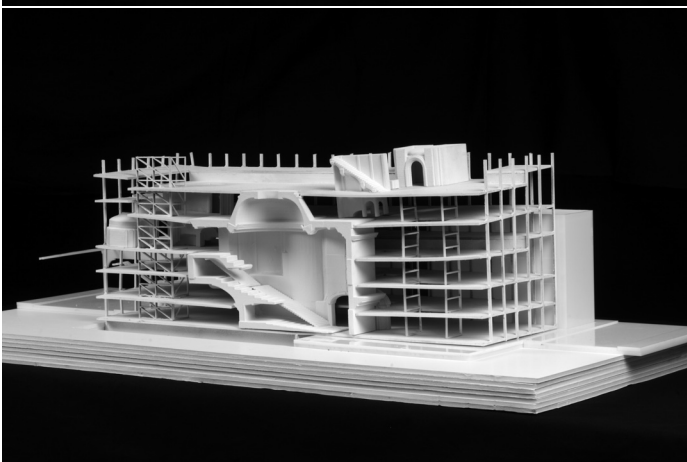
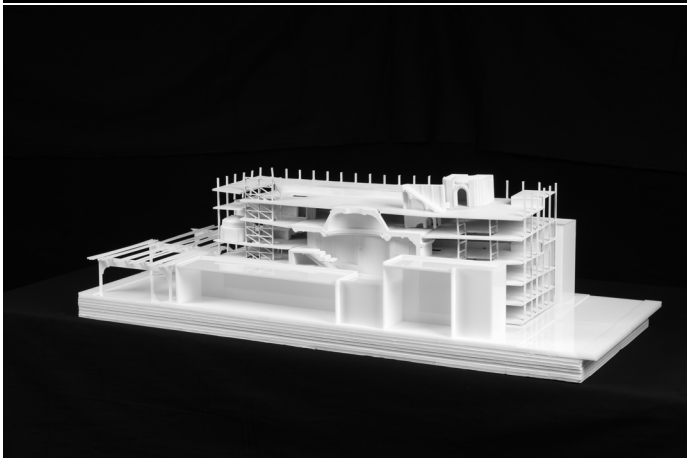
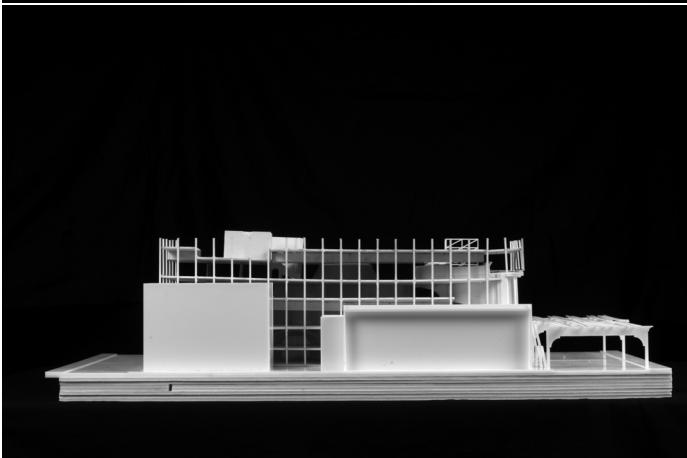
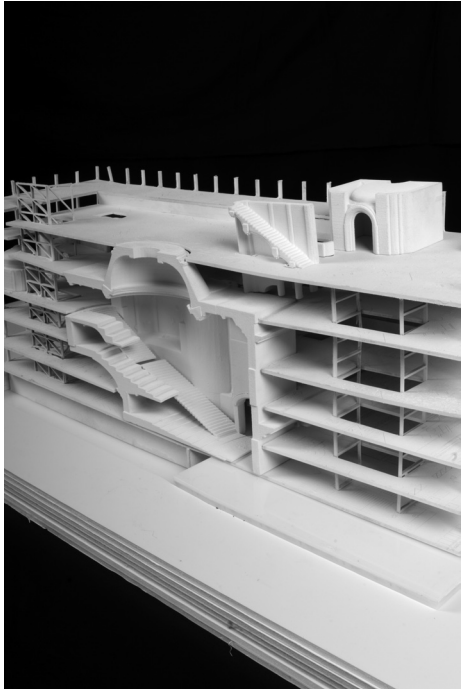
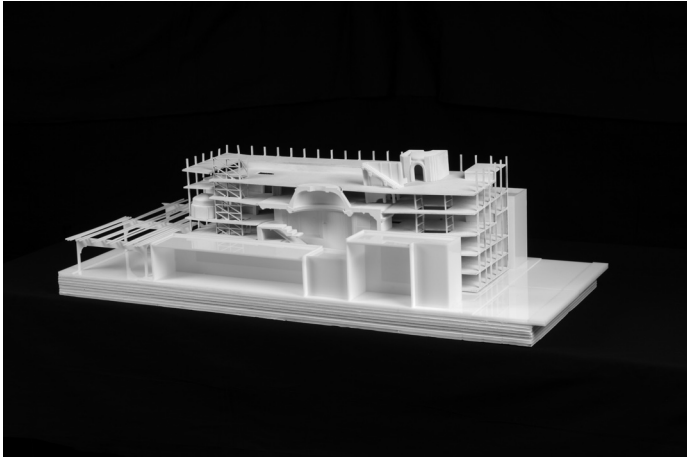
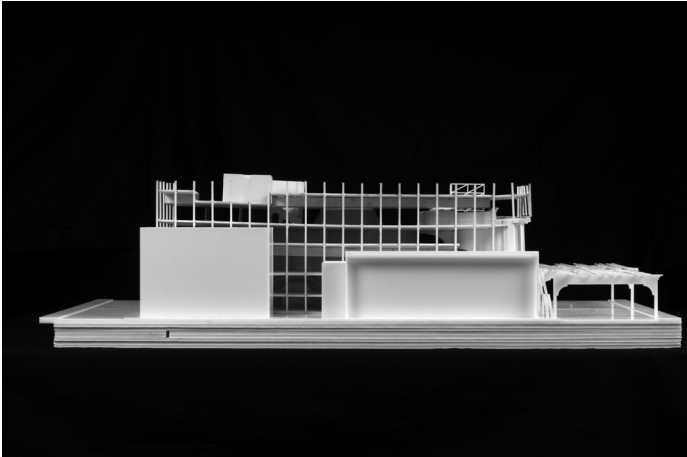
This Page : An ornate entrance for the 99 cent store.
Opposite : A view from the rear of the second theater.











Conclusion

During the production of this thesis, there were a number of unexpected questions and problems, many of which could be further areas for research and study.

To begin, there was the constant struggle to avoid kitsch. Discerning between what is high and low cultural output becomes a minefield of value judgments of which most architects are understandably wary. The payoff, however, was a building with very conventional spaces, but a very unusual appearance, proof of the incredible value of appearance.

This issue of appearance also created problems in terms of the architectural representation of the project. Extremely conventional modes of representation (inked drawings on vellum in black and white) were used to buttress the project against its own visual provo-

cations. Although these restrictions aided in the success of the project, they were still restrictions. In a thesis that focused on “looks” careful representation became an integral part of the gradual specification of the vision. This was imperative since using an intuitive notion of beauty often worked against the development of stricter design processes.

On a more practical plane, certain assumptions made about the economic feasibility of highly ornamented places, while not entirely impossible, represent a design problem that this thesis failed to tackle. Although we are closer today than ever before to building highly ornate spaces, they still incur a greater cost than those unadorned. Even places built of foam and plaster (as the movie theaters of today are) like the Paris or Venice Casino in Las Vegas require a great deal of finesse to craft properly.

Pastiche and blatant historical reference also brought difficult questions into the process. How literal can you be without being insipid? Is there a place for the intellect to perform in this type of project? In short, my own judgment was repeatedly called into question.

Yet, a thesis in Architecture is not only supposed to identify a problem and propose an architectural solution but also, according to Sheila Kennedy of Kennedy-Violich, "offer a set of criteria for evaluation."

This phase of evaluation and judgment is far richer than we, as architects, are practicing it. There are judgments and values that we've left unspoken, as if we all agree on their nature and origin.

This thesis replaces all the criteria for evaluation spoken and unspoken with a single question:

Is this beautiful architecture?



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