

A LADIES APPAREL SHOP ON
BOYLSTON STREET, BOSTON

September 2, 1955

Submitted as partial fulfillment
of the requirements for M. Arch.
by:

Astra Zarina-Haner

to:

Prof. L. B. Anderson
Dept. of Arch. and Planning MIT



tout ce que l'Art humain a jamais inventé
 Pour mieux charmer les sens par la galanterie,
 Et tout ce qu'ont dissipé la grâce et la beauté,
 se découvrir à nos yeux dans cette Galerie.

Ici les Cavaliers les plus aduantageux
 En lisant les Romans s'animant à combattre ;
 Et de leur passion les Amans languoureux,
 Flattent les mouuemens par des vers de theatre

Ici faisant semblant d'acheter deuant tous
 Des gands, des éuantaills, du ruban, des danteles ;
 Les adroits Courtisians se donnent rendez-vous,
 Et pour se faire aimer galantifient les Belles.

Ici quelque Lingere à faulte de /
 A venant abondamment de voler /
 Contre des Chicaneurs qui par la /
 Empeschent les Chalandz à s'aborder

A LADIES APPAREL SHOP ON
BOYLSTON STREET, BOSTON

by

ASTRA ZARINA-HANER

Submitted to the Department of Architecture in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master
in Architecture.

ABSTRACT

The individual shop is a respected and widely enjoyed element
of the commercial as well as the urban scene. The purpose
of this thesis is to study a ladies apparel shop with its
specific requirements in relation to a restricted downtown
site and to the existing street facade.

Thesis supervisor:

Lawrence B. Anderson

Title:

Head of the Department
of Architecture

Arch. - Nov 22, 1955

September 2, 1955

Pietro Belluschi, Dean
School of Architecture and Planning
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Dear Dean Belluschi:

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree,
Master in Architecture, I herewith respectfully submit a
thesis entitled "A Ladies Apparel Shop on Boylston Street,
Boston."

Sincerely,

Astra Zarina-Haner

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

For the advice, criticism and encouragement that I have received during the process of this thesis design, I wish to thank:

Dean Pietro Belluschi
Professor Lawrence B. Anderson
Associate Professor Ernest N. Gelotte
Associate Professor William H. Brown
Associate Professor Robert B. Newman
Associate Professor Thomas F. McNulty

Mr. Lennard, Manager of "Worth" inc.

Miss Louise Laube from Rotch library

My husband and the members of my class

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An apparel shop belongs to the large and widely varied family of specialty shops. In general the term "specialty shop" may refer to anything from a candy or flower shop to a place that specialises in a particular kind of hamburger. When, however, the cognoscenti of the apparel merchandising world speak about a specialty shop, they mean a store that sells soft goods, such as apparel, linen and yardage. Related to this is the department store that carries both soft and hard goods, such as various household items and furniture. Contrary to the popular belief the size of the store is not a factor in this particular system of classification, and thus "Filene's" is a specialty shop as well as the "Sporting Tailors" on Newbury Street.

The large specialty shop resembles in most aspects to its relative, the department store. The small to medium sized shop, however, aside from the basic, commonly applied merchandizing and store planning principles, has a character and role of its own. It provides for complete lines of a limited group of merchandise, a leisurely place with comfortable conditions for shopping and an intimate atmosphere with personal attention to each shopper.

The above criteria receive additional importance in case of a ladies shop. When the average American man needs an item for his wardrobe he expects to find and to buy it as directly and as quickly as possible. The average woman, however, enjoys the ritual and the adventure connected with

visiting apparel stores. Aside from buying an object she enjoys the escape from her usual surroundings and relaxes while being waited on and catered to her demands, instead of waiting on and catering to those of her family or her employers. An afternoon spent in the soothing atmosphere of fine shops may well restore the balance of a dreary day, and the psychological role of the apparel shop as a glamorous retreat becomes an important design factor.

No longer the privilege of the wealthy exclusively, the high quality apparel shop attracts a sound variety of clientele. This is mainly due to the constantly improving living standards as well as an increasing number of fashion conscious professional and business women that spend a surprisingly large percentage of their earnings on apparel.

Contrary to the complex aspects that the shop represents to the lady customer, to the merchant, its sole function is to sell. The duty of the conscientious architect should be of course, to satisfy the needs and demands of both.

The general rules of organizing the successful sales space are valid in the case of the specialty shop. The merchandise is divided in three large groups: impulse, convenience, and demand. The merchandise in each of these selling groups should be organized into separate, well defined sales areas, properly related to customer traffic routes. This threefold division is again repeated when arranging each sales department.

The arrangement of the non-selling areas in the small to medium shop likewise correspond to the general rules of store planning. Each sales area has to be equipped and properly related to the corresponding service area, such as stock and fitting rooms, elevators, chutes, etc. Experts agree on the practice of locating a concealed service belt on three sides of the entire sales area. This belt leads to the service nucleus and further to the delivery point. In many cases, however, a simplification or change of the rules is necessary to adjust the operation of a shop to unusual or limited site.

In regard to sales operation, four main types are recognised.

Operation 1 Customer needs sales person.

Only limited sample or case display is in sight. All merchandise to be sold is stored in stock rooms. This type of operation is employed in selling very valuable jewelry, furs, as well as expensive dresses and gowns.

Operation 2 Customer partly dependent on sales person.

In this type of operation the variety of a line of merchandise on display is sufficient to enable the customer the selection unaided. In other instances, actual selling stock is displayed, but service, such as seeing to proper fit or providing the merchandise in the exact quantity desired, is required. Types of merchandise best sold under this system include those that involve servicing, high value, danger of soiling or excessive variety.

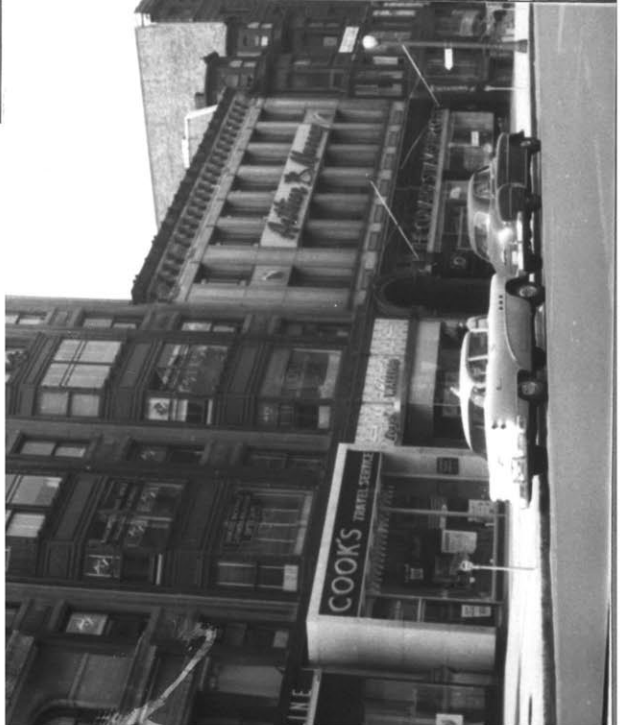
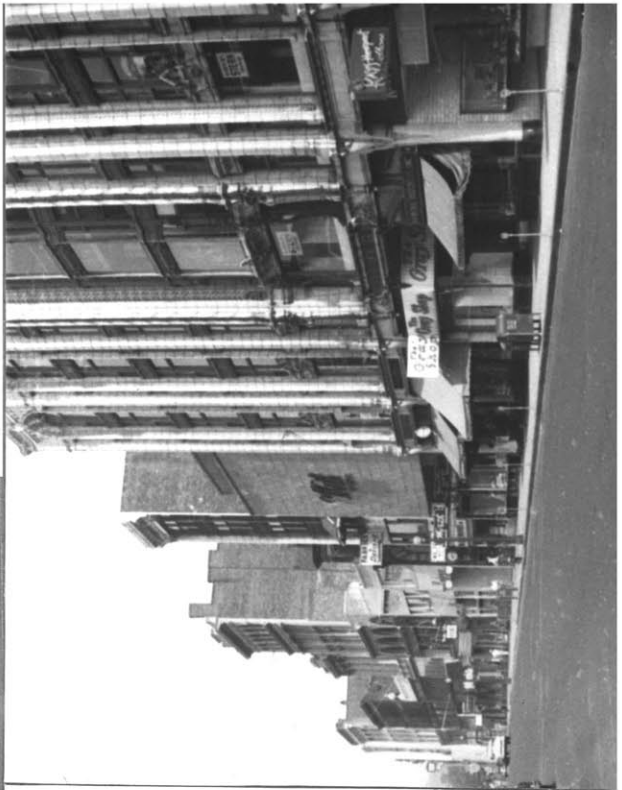
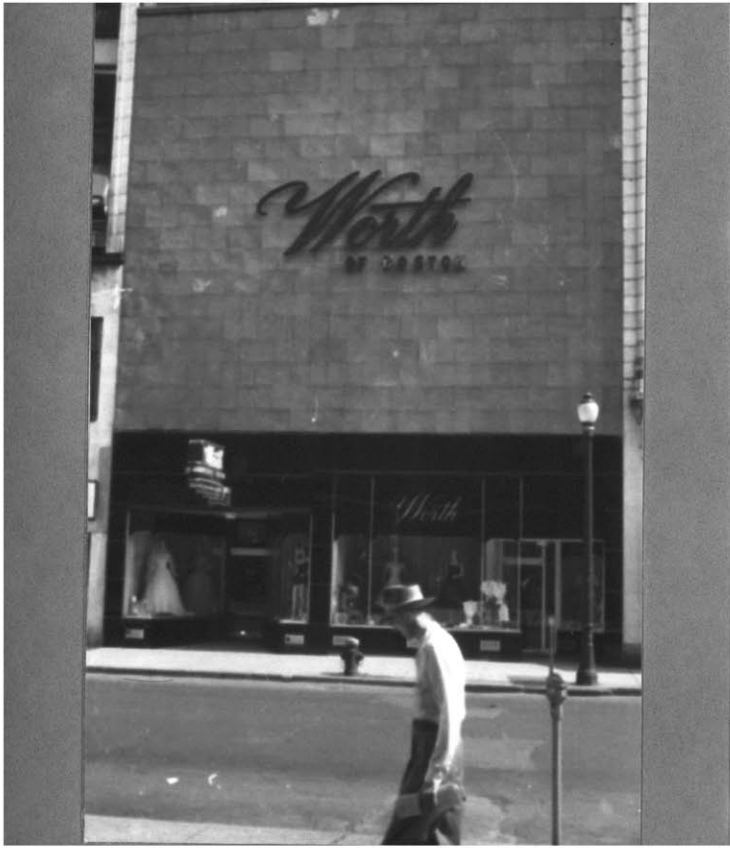
Operation 3 Customer may have sales persons help.

Here selling stocks are openly displayed, and customer can select the item unassisted. Merchandise that do not involve excessive value, servicing and probability of damage is best sold under this system.

Operation 4 Customer cannot have sales persons help.

This type of operation may be similar to the preceding example in regard to the display and treatment of merchandise. The point of difference is that the customer is denied any selling assistance. Most apparel store employing this system confine it to the sale of house dresses, pinafores and aprons.

For the group of specialty shops to which the subject of this thesis belongs, the operations one, two and three are employed. In sales such as bridal and evening gowns, operation one is employed. A combination of operations one and two are most suitable for the better dresses, hats and lingery while operation three finds application in sportswear department and selling accessories such as belts and umbrellas.



THE PROGRAM

The subject of this thesis is to design a high quality ladies apparel shop located at 406 Boylston Street, Boston. The program for the subject has been suggested by the firm of Worth, Inc., that occupies a large, partially remodelled residence on the same site. In general the new store should have:

1. an increased direct sales area
2. additional departments
3. a tea room and terrace

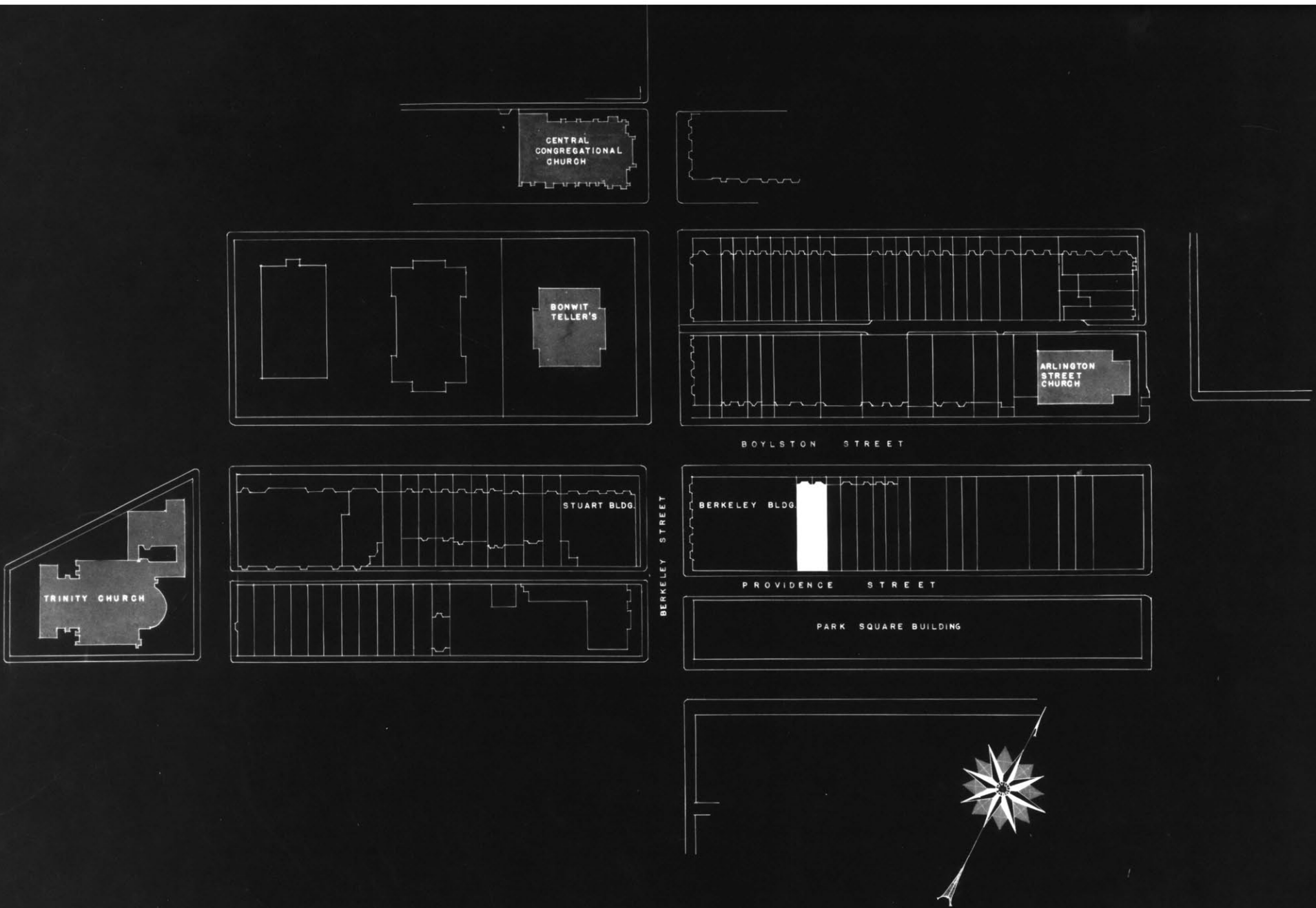
For the purpose of this thesis the site of the present store shall be used for the new building. The disadvantages of temporary location during periods of demolition and erection of the new structure are well balanced by the various advantages which would be insured in staying at this particular location.

The present site of the shop has several vital locational advantages such as:

1. location near the central shopping district.
2. nearby subway service ($\frac{1}{2}$ block from both Arlington and Beverly Street entrances)
3. location in the center of the better womens apparel merchandise zone which stretches along Boylston Street from Clarendon to Church Street.

(Peck and Peck, Best and Co., Bonwit Teller, etc.)

Similar nearby stores stimulate business by giving shoppers a chance to compare styles, values and prices and by increasing



SITE PLAN

LAS 1

the impulse or temptation to buy related merchandise. By staying in its present location the firm is more likely to retain the patronage of its previous regular clients.

At present the firm of Worth, Inc. has the following merchandise departments:

1. accessories, including jewelry, gloves, bags, belts, umbrellas, etc.
2. lingerie and hosiery
3. millinery
4. sportswear
5. suits
6. dresses
7. coats
8. gowns and bridal apparel
9. furs

The firm would like to make the following changes and additions:

1. to add budget clothing and shoe department
2. to give more importance to bridal department, sportswear and lingerie

The enclosed table gives the approximate areas of each department as suggested by the firm.

AREA ESTIMATES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

| Item | at present | | desirable | |
|-------------------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| | area, sq.ft. | %area | area, sq.ft. | %area |
| jewelry | 300 | 2.1 | | |
| accessories | 350 | 2.5 | 1500 | 7.5 |
| underwear | 400 | 2.8 | | |
| shoes | - | - | 1200 | 6.0 |
| sportswear | 550 | 3.9 | 1500 | 7.5 |
| blouses | | | | |
| millinery | 400 | 2.8 | 450 | 2.25 |
| furs | 800 | 5.7 | 500 | 2.5 |
| coats | 1500 | 10.6 | 1500 | 7.5 |
| suits | | | | |
| dresses | 1000 | 7.1 | 1500 | 7.5 |
| gowns | 500 | 3.5 | 1350 | 6.75 |
| budget cl. | - | - | 1000 | 5.0 |
| Total sales | 5800 | 41.0 | 10500 | 52.5 |
| alterations | 350 | 2.5 | 500 | 2.5 |
| service and circulation | 8000 | 56.5 | 9000 | 45.0 |
| TOTAL | 14150 | 100.0 | 20,000 | 100.0 |
| tea room | - | - | | |
| employees lounge | - | - | 3,000 | |
| kitchen | - | - | | |

NON-SELLING FUNCTIONS AND SPACES

Administration

Bookkeeping

Adjustments

Filing and Records

Cashiering

Art and advertising

Wrapping

Receiving

Marking

Storage

Display

Alterations

Heating and Ventilating

Fitting rooms

Sample room

Public toilets

Employees locker rooms

Employees toilets

Employees lounge and lunch area

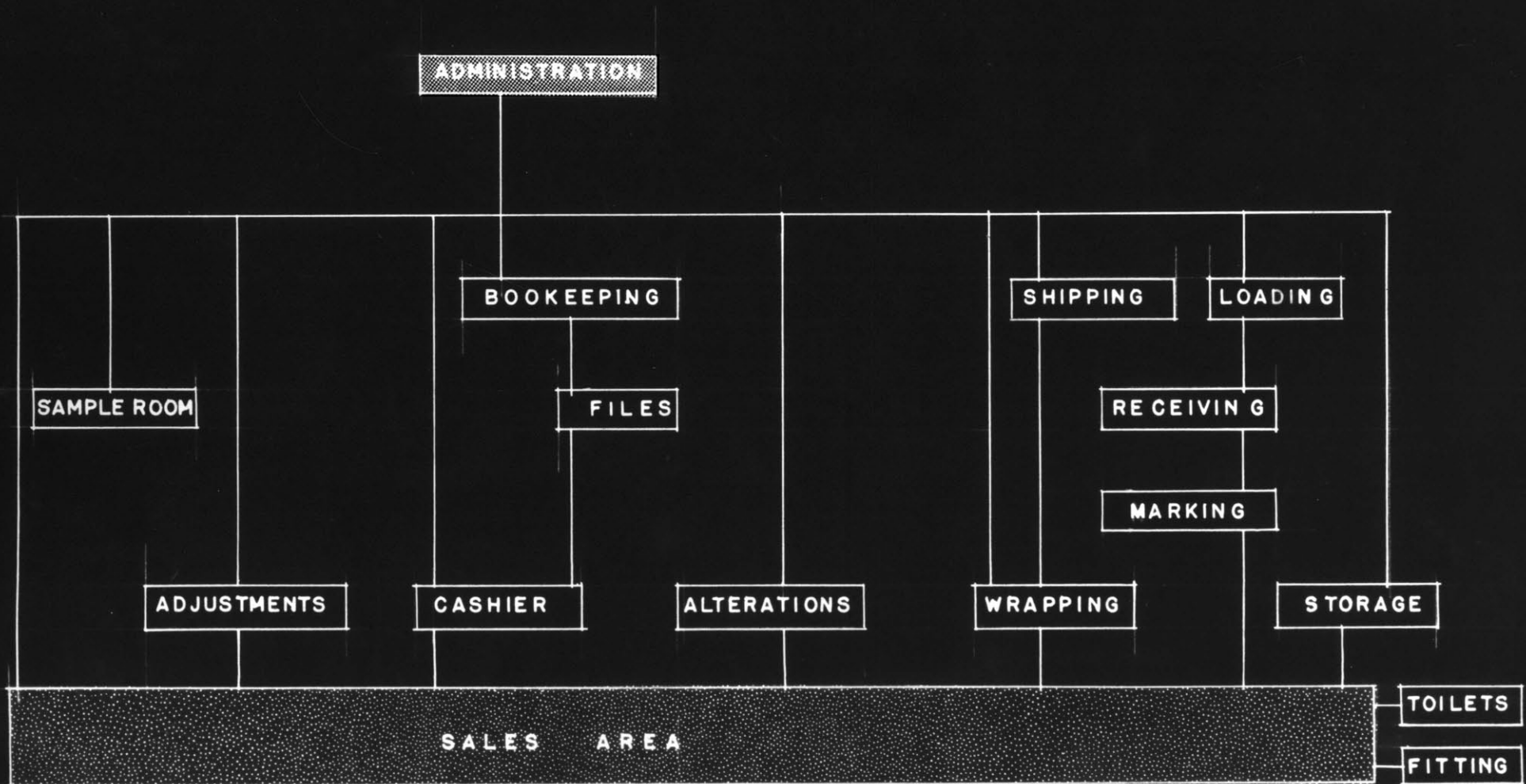
Public tea room and terrace

PERSONEL

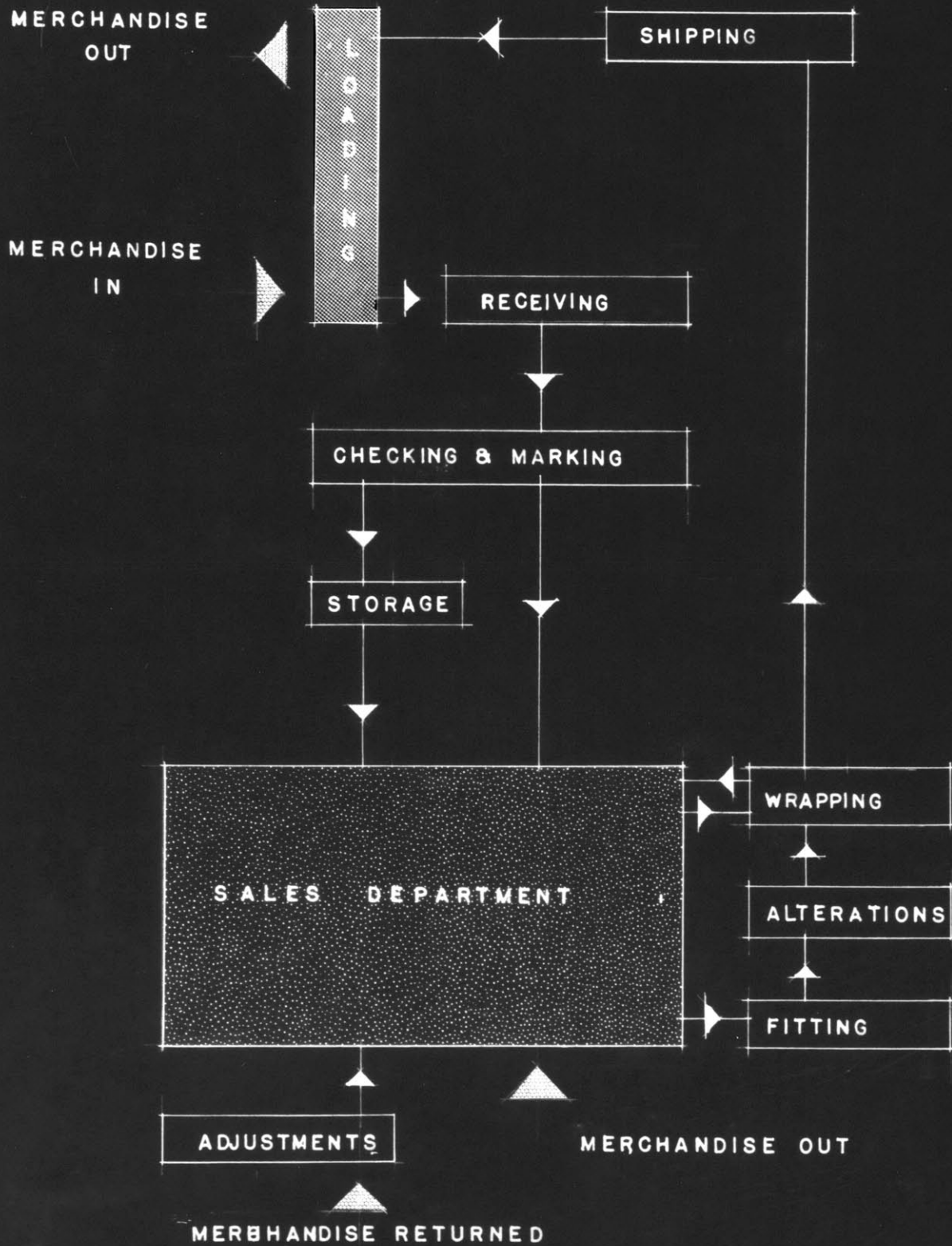
At present, the breakdown of personel is as follows:

| | |
|-----------------------------|----------|
| Administrators..... | 2 |
| Salespeople and buyers..... | 22 |
| Bookkeepers..... | 4 |
| Seamstresses..... | 8 |
| Artist..... | 1 |
| Window dresser..... | 1 |
| Marker..... | 1 |
| Porter..... | <u>1</u> |
| TOTAL..... | 40 |

The increase in sales people including the two new departments will be under 40%, while the increase in number of the remaining classifications would be negligible.



GENERAL CIRCULATION



MERCHANDISE FLOW

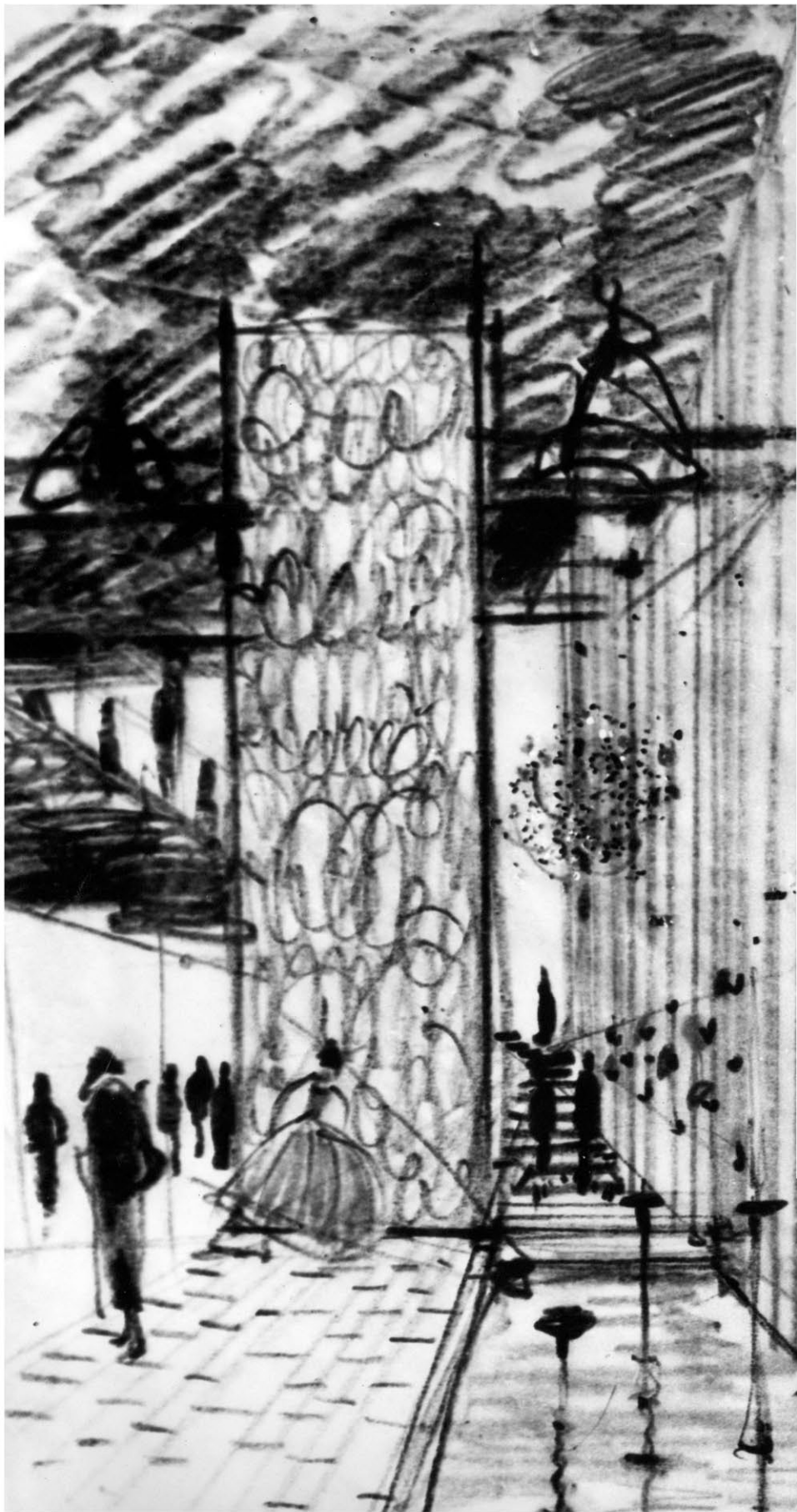
THE IDEA

The given program represents a problem of relating the various components of a shop to a site, predetermined as a volume rather than an area. The volume, approximately 42 feet by 127 feet by 75 feet is formed by party walls of two adjacent buildings. These rather handsomely designed buildings are in good condition and of a long life expectancy. The area requirements for the shop suggest a multi-level structure. One design approach that seemed the most stimulating, both visually and from the retailing point of view, was a study of the volume as a unified total space, modulated by juxtaposed, wall-free platforms of different sizes. This approach grew out of a desire to create a spatial articulation without destroying the unity of the given volume. In this manner the vision of the customer is lead beyond the immediate level to remote areas thereby stimulating interest and curiosity to visit them.

The solution applies to one specific shop and does not intend to be a universal example. The possibility, nevertheless, exists that the aspects studied within this type of approach may be usefull in designing under similar site conditions.

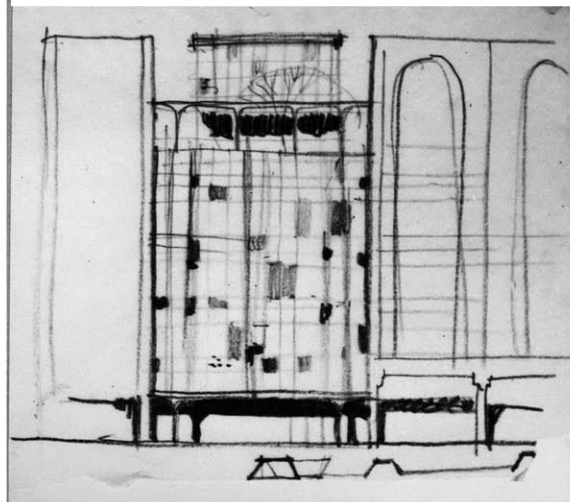
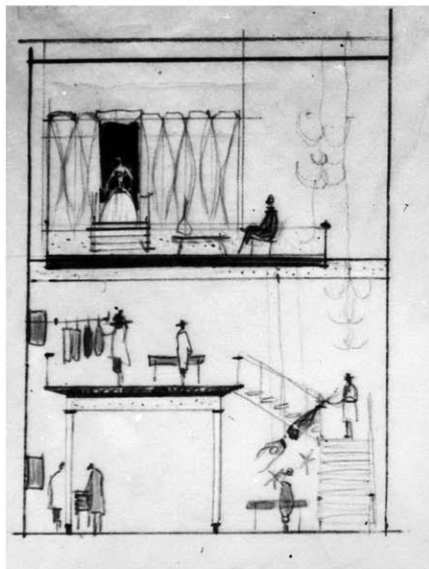
THE FOLLOWING PAGES SHOW SKETCH STUDIES

Entrance

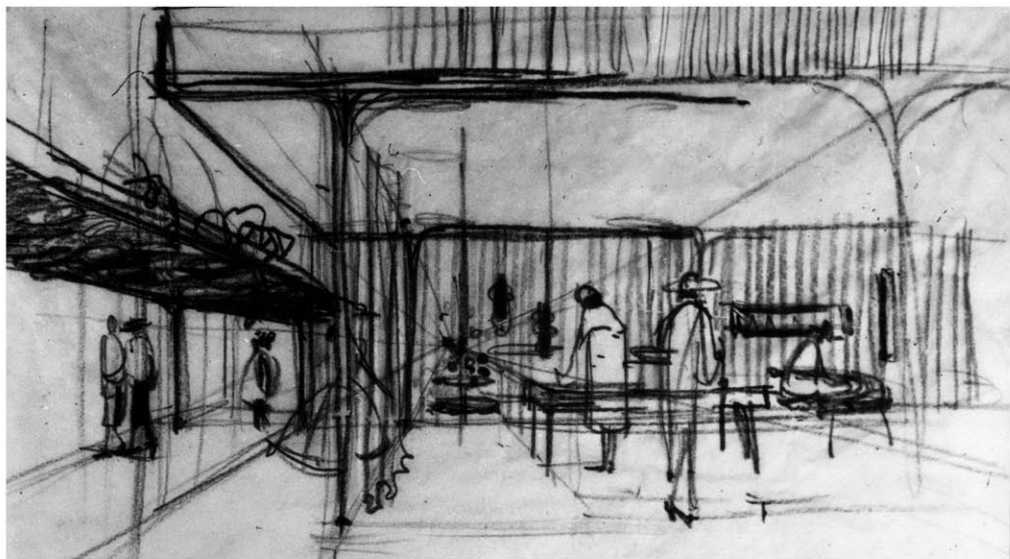
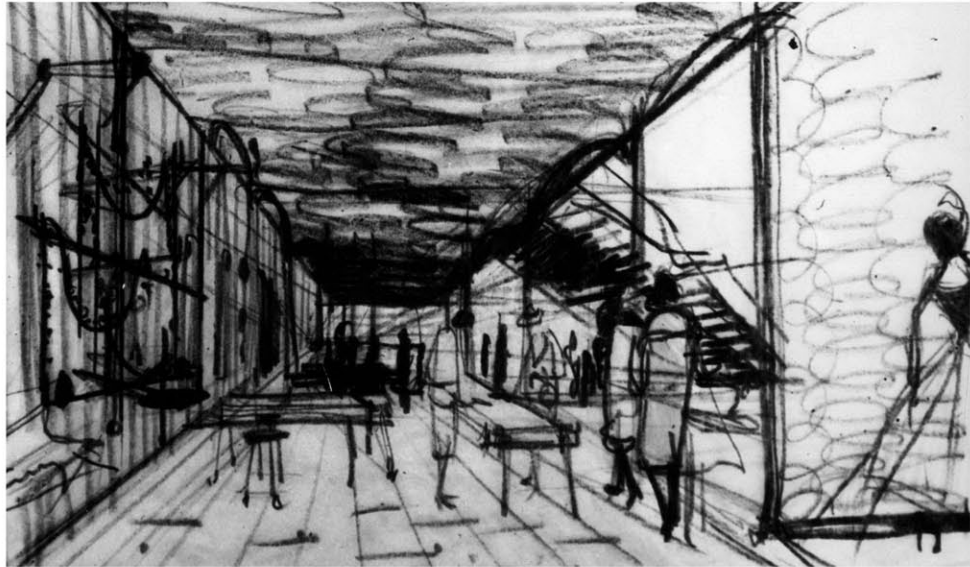


Plans and sections

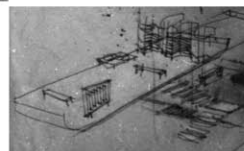
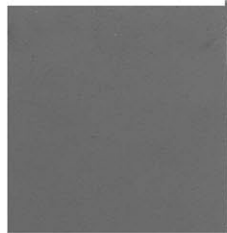
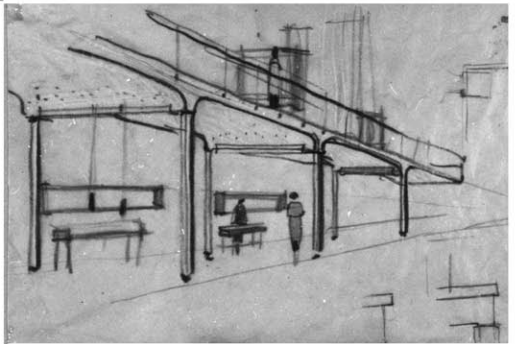
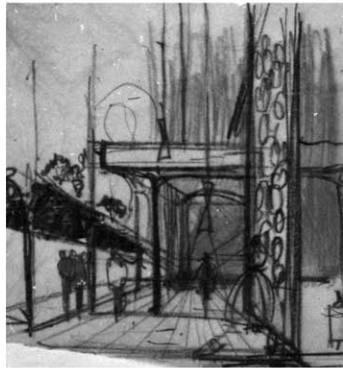
Boylston Street elevation



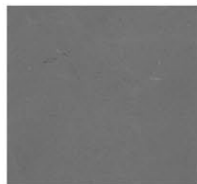
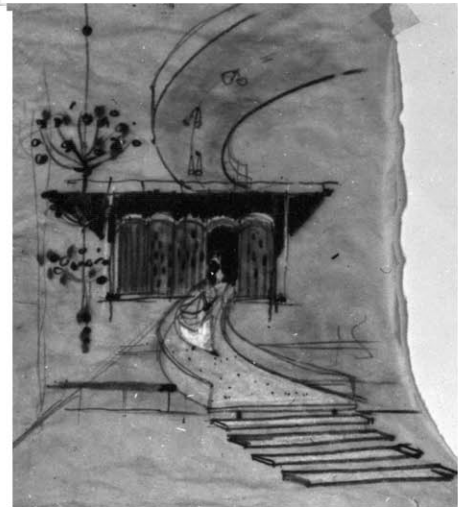
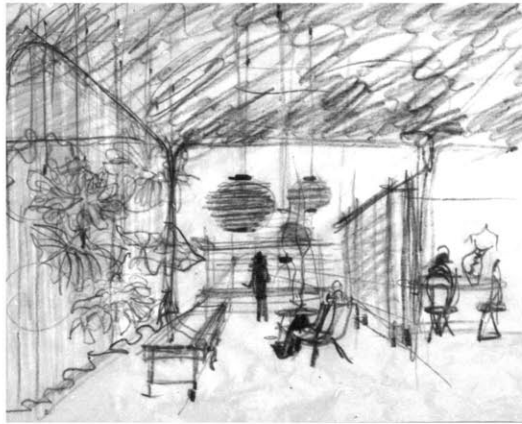
Jewelry department



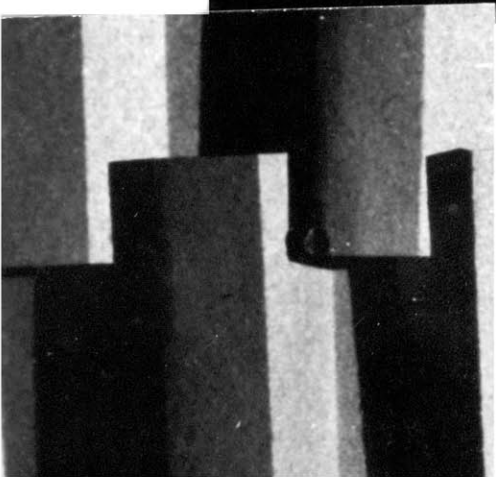
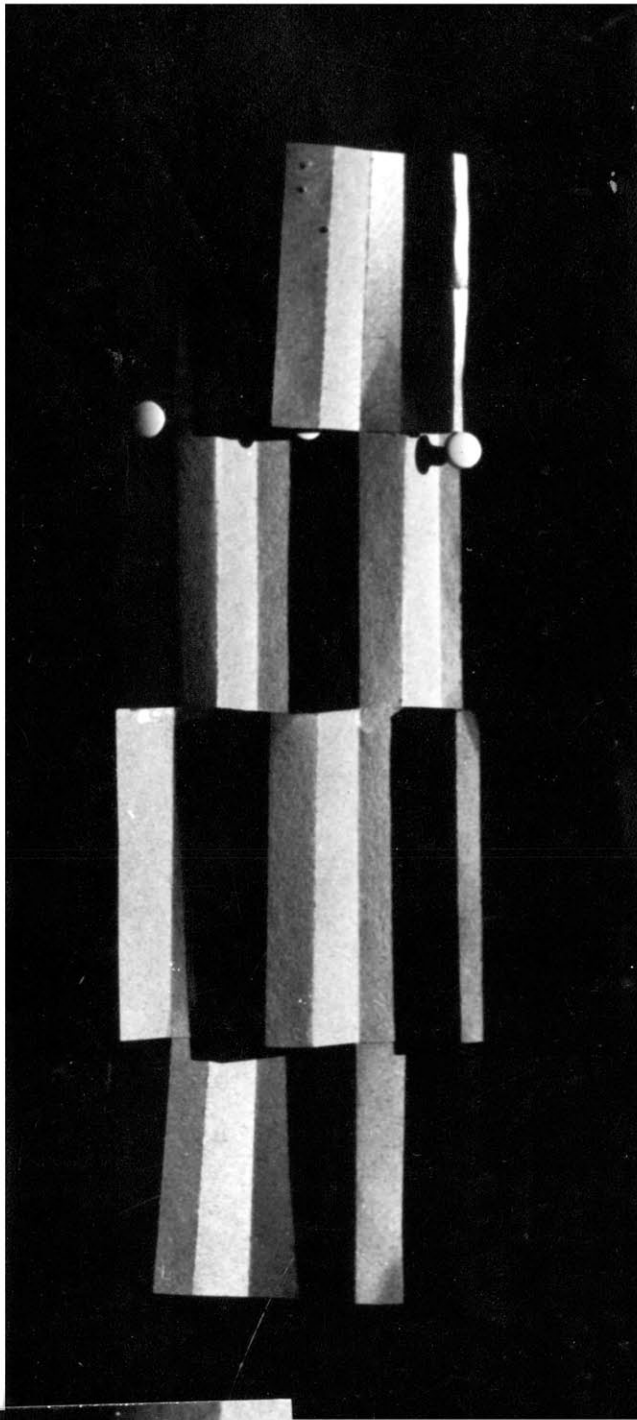
The sportswear platform



Lingerie and Bridal salon



Facade study



THE SOLUTION

The treatment of the total site volume from street level up may be compared to a lined box. The enclosure formed by the party walls is completed with two end walls, facing Boylston and Providence Streets respectively. The plane defining the interior volume is placed at an eight foot distance from the party wall. Thus, a passage is formed which contains fitting rooms, elevators, fire escape, duct spaces, etc. At the south end a wall screens off a 26 foot deep section which is reserved for offices, stock rooms, receiving and marking. On the west side, the lining is directly applied to the party wall.

Into the box, thus lined and prepared, are then placed three sales platforms and one suspended bridal salon. The fourth sales area is the street floor--the bottom of the box. Under this street level is a basement treated as a separate space used mostly for storage, service and mechanical equipment. Only one small center section of it is reserved for selling budget clothing. The roof or the top of the box is a paved terrace on which is located a tearoom, a kitchen and employees lounge.

The structure consists of fireproofed steel beams supported by the party walls. These beams carry the wall-free reinforced concrete platforms as well as floors in the service section.

The East and West walls are lined in glazed tile with

the East wall perforated and treated acoustically. The South wall is a translucent glass screen with illumination behind. A somewhat similar screen, with the glass ranging from opaque to clear forms the Boylston Street facade. The ground floor finish is terrazzo with occasional carpeting. The platforms are carpeted entirely.

General lighting is achieved at each end of the sales space by the two glass screens, one of which is lit artificially and the other admitting natural light. Additional lighting is done by separate fixtures. The lighting is more subdued than is generally the practice in shop design. Except for the large glass screen and jewelry cases, the light shall be incandescent.

Colors are neutral throughout, with the merchandise, people, and occasional pieces of furniture as the bright accents.

The shop is equipped with zoned airconditioning and a sprinkler system. The boiler and water circulating equipment are located in the basement while the air handling equipment with return and supply grills are located in the East wall. The sprinkler lines frame the underside of the platforms and are located at the bottom of the beams.

The store fixtures, such as counters, storage units and display cases are movable, generally made of wood and of a uniform design. The chairs, tables, couches, etc. are chosen from the collections of well known furniture firms, such as Knoll, Herman Miller, etc.

THE FOLLOWING SKETCHES WERE DONE
WHILE EVALUATING THE VARIOUS
FIXTURE REQUIREMENTS.

A. JEWELRY :

earrings, pins, bracelets, beads

INCANDESCENT L.

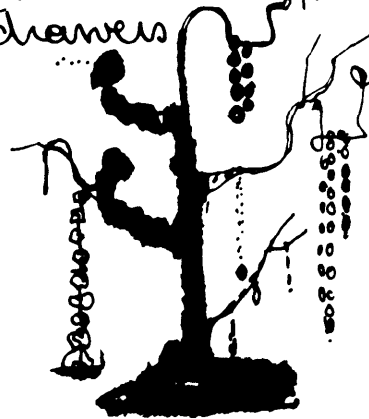
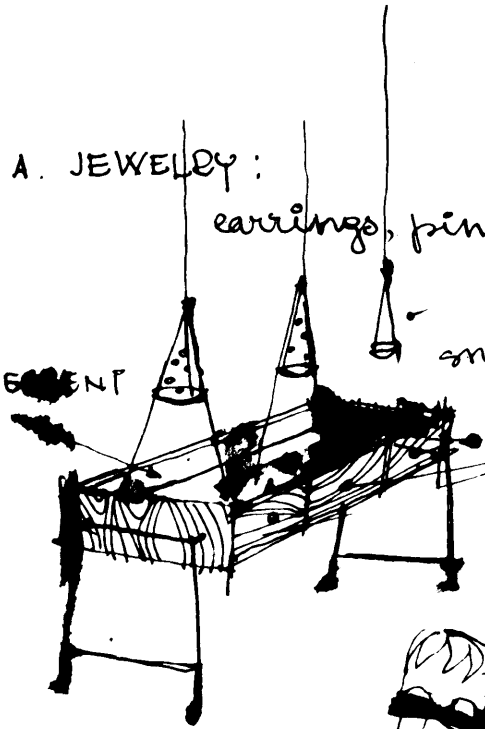
(1-2)

small, glass top counter units (earrings, pins)

FLUORESCENT LIGHT

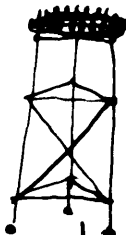
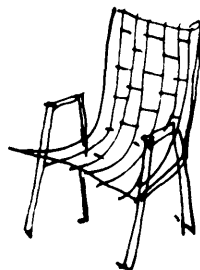
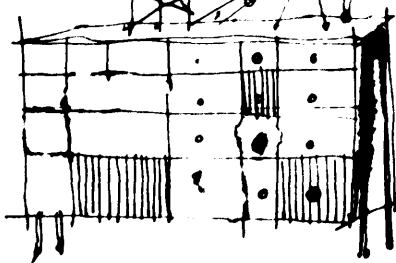
sections to be pulled out like drawers

Something to hang beads, collars etc.

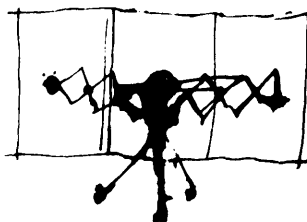
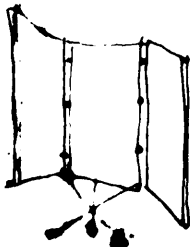


Probably a menuquin for display of earrings, necklaces.

Very little storage needed - probably some (one!) opaque drawer units: a chair or a stool?



MANY MIRRORS - counter-top!



would probably pay to have them with moving waves.

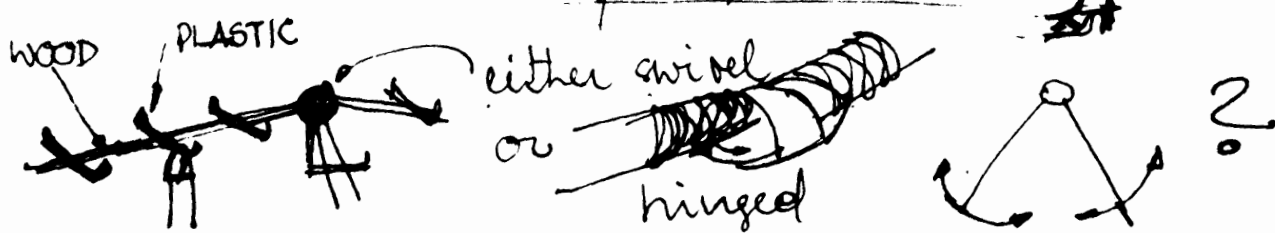
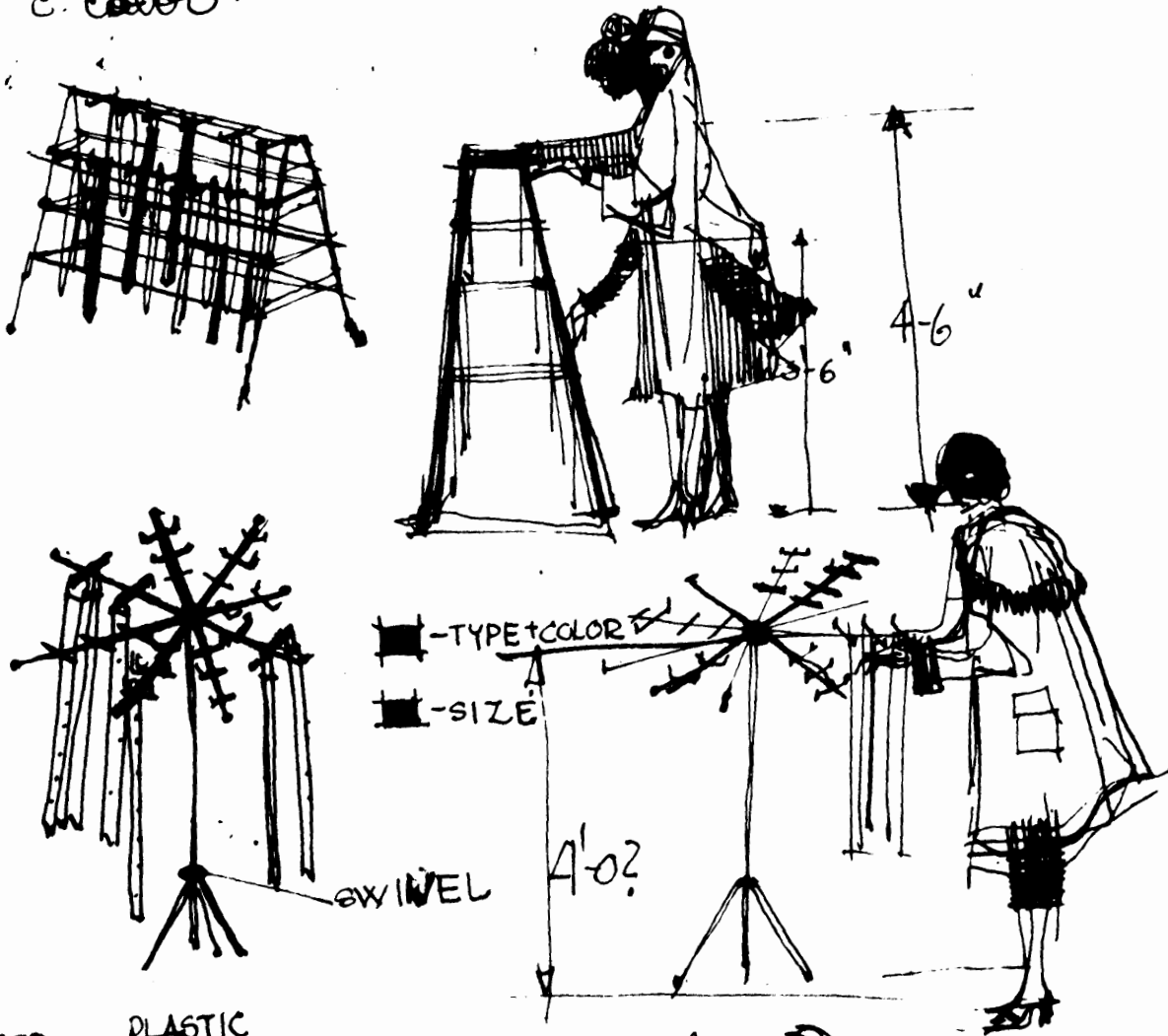
BELTS.

Very little space, all stock forward or only a little (small) storage (concealed) unit.

Drawers?

Main object a good view:
display classifications:

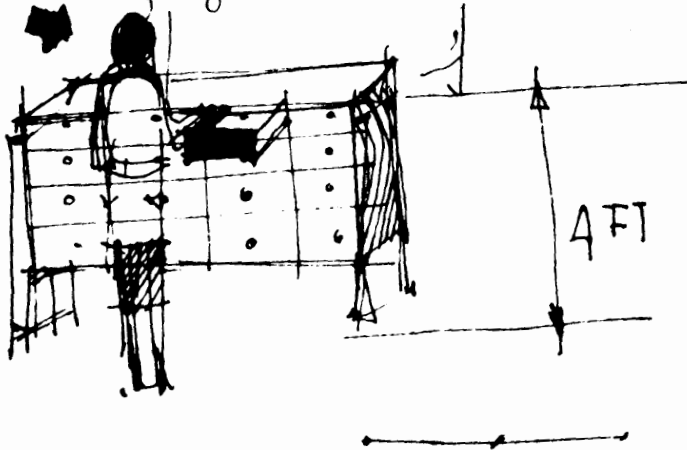
- a. size
- b. type (nummer, velvet, leather)
- c. color



BELTS, CONT.

For concealed storage (if any) -- standard storage unit TYPE 1A - 10 drawers.

SALES GIRL



LONG, SHALLOW DRAWERS PROBABLY BETTER



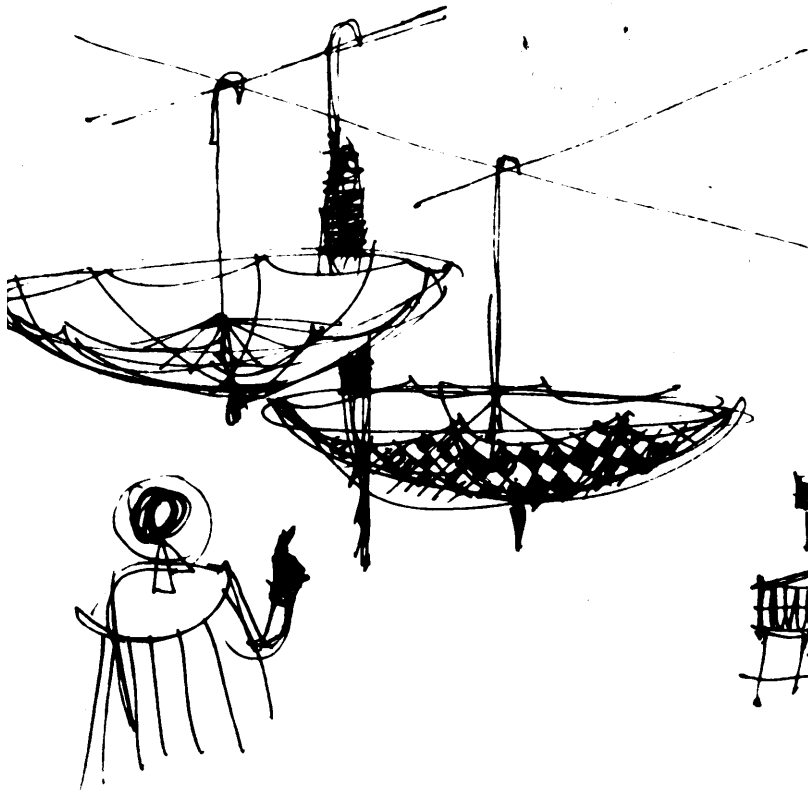
What's better, but just as multi-use as drawers (for belts)

In addition to permanent display - store units "novelty" - temporary racks + gadgets can be used. (same for jewelry)

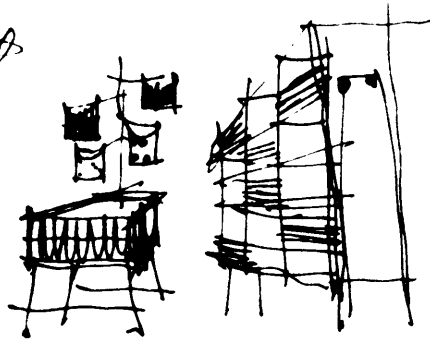


HAVE YOU SEEN OUR NEW GOBRA BELTS?

umbrellas: practically no storage = concealed storage
all items available on display.



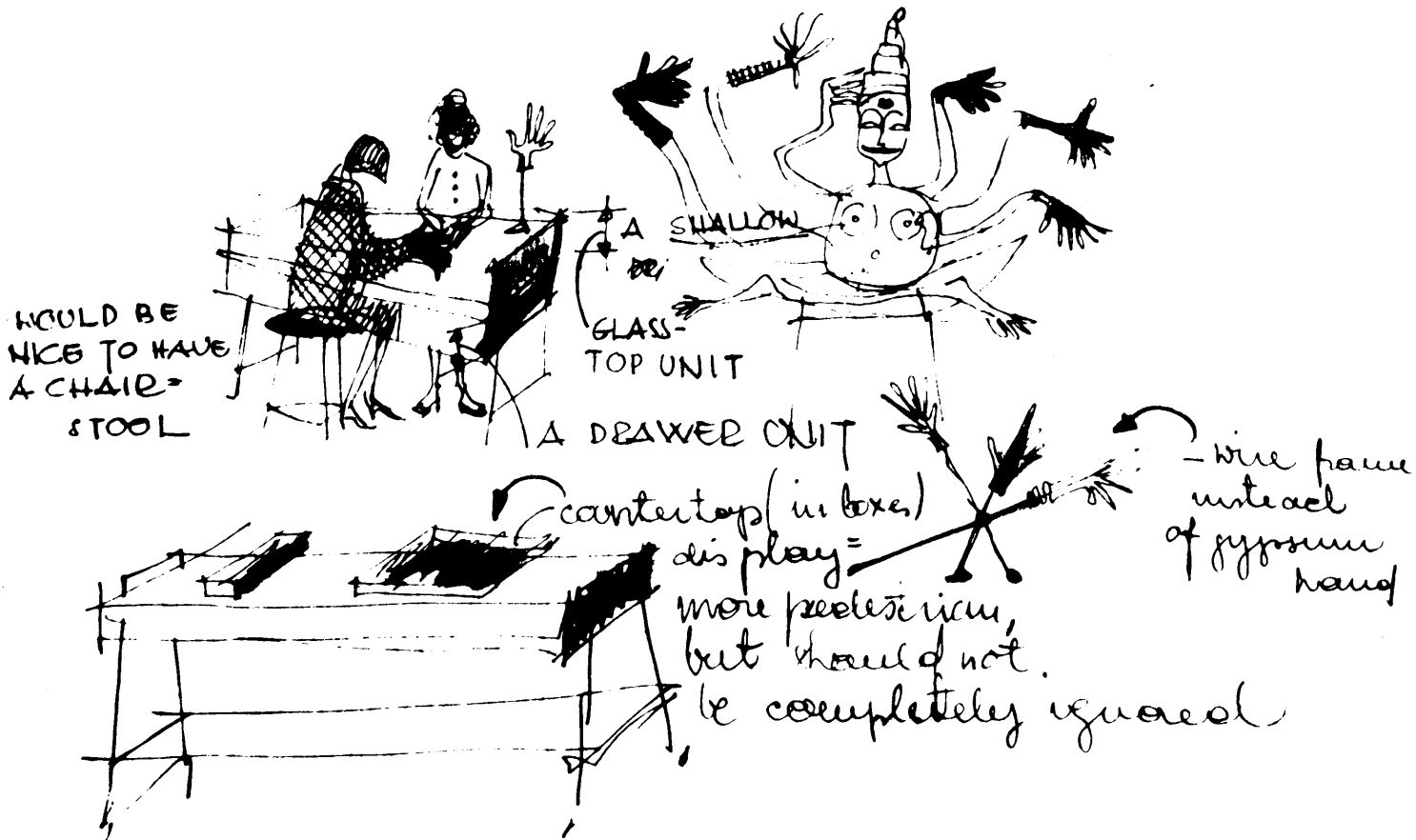
Scavert handkerchiefs,
1. basic storage
unit
2. counter



GLOVES :

*)

" DEVOTE LITTLE SPACE & EFFORT "



*) MR. LENNARD / WORTH'S

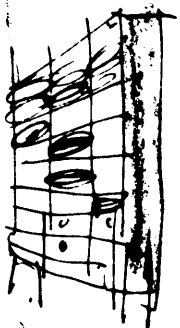
SKIRTS:

SKIRTS:
SLACKS
PEDAL PUSHER



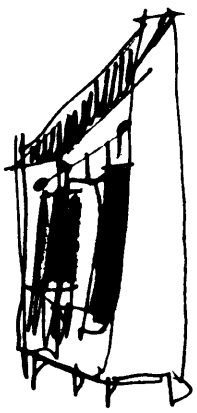
Racks + display
gadgets

BATHINGS
BLOUSES:
SHORTS



COUNTERS + SHELVES

SWEATERS
T-SHIRTS

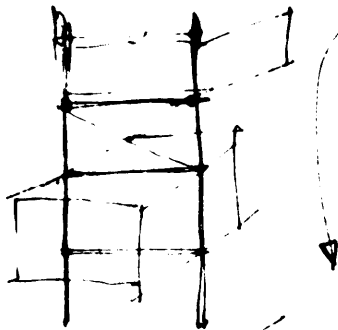


'tall Racks'

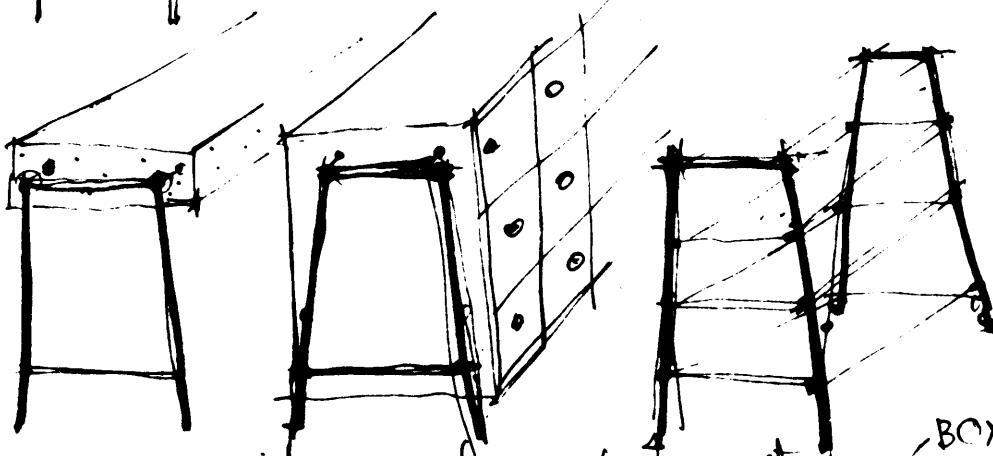
HOUSE DRESSES
SEPARATES

APPROACH No 1 TOWARDS FURNITURE

? To have series of supporting frameworks
LEGS, etc. and standard, several
types of slip-in units:

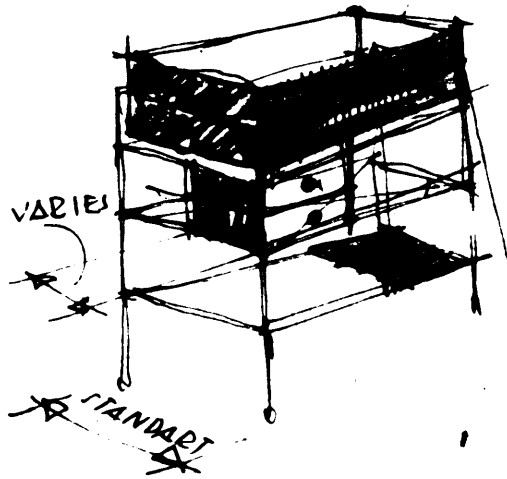
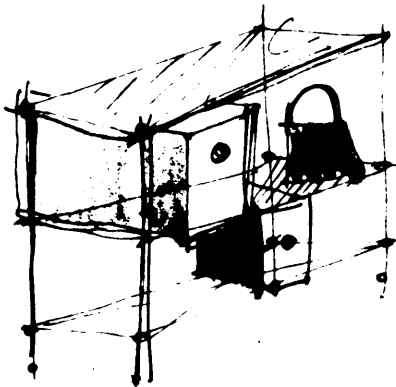


- drawers
- shelving
- Special display gimmicks

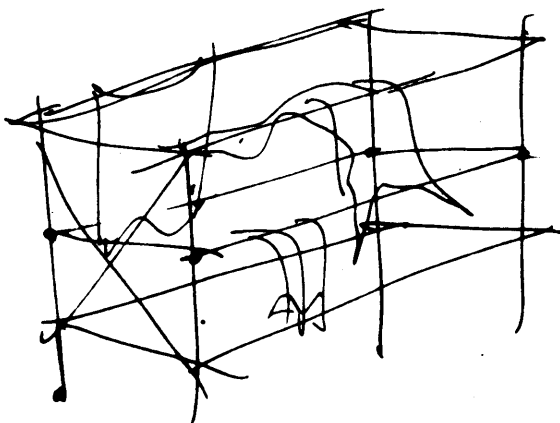


OD FRAMES with up. boxes = drawers etc.

BOX WITH
GLASS TOP.



advantages:
standard
counter with
varied insert
width.



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