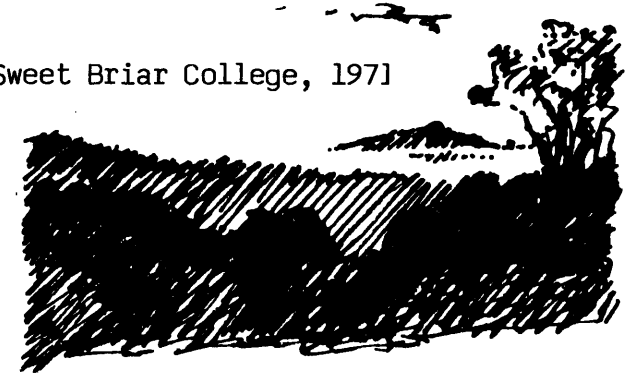


observations and design of public place and paths in a New England town.

by ANN COMPTON B.A. Sweet Briar College, 1971

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the degree of
MASTER OF ARCHITECTURE
at the
MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
June 1984



Signature of Author

Ann Compton, Department of Architecture, May 11, 1984

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Accepted by

Rosemary Grimshaw, Chairperson Department Committee for Graduate Students

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observations and design of public place and paths in a New England town.

by

Ann Compton

Submitted to The Department of Architecture on May 11, 1984, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Architecture.

ABSTRACT

This is a plan - a hypothesis in which some ideas are developed for the building of a path and parks. Through the use of imagery texture, and materials a sense of the possible is evoked.

This is also an exploration of designer as an advocate for the user and the used. The forgotten elements. The spaces between. The earth, the river, the senses

The site is Brattleboro, Vermont. There is a physical opportunity in Brattleboro to turn the town around. The backs of the old warehouses, the railroad, and the grade change to the Connecticut River are all resources. The possibility for living spaces and markets and recreation is created by the development of a pathway and series of small incursions into the built landscape of the area.

Thesis Supervisor: John Randolph Myer

Title: Professor of Architecture

Contents

Site:

History

Land

Climate

Resources:

Water

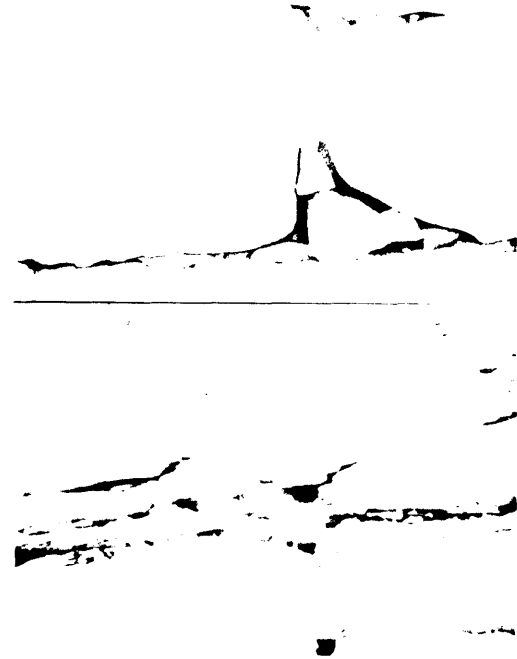
People

Design:

Program

Parts

Overview



Introduction

I am trying to develop and understand some appropriate forms which reinforce our relationship to nature. By this I mean our human nature as well as the earth...the biosphere...our larger common ground.

This thesis is an exploration...an introspective journey among some perceptions and experiences shared by us. How do we communicate or represent a community?

Initially I looked to the forms that demonstrate a people's common bonds - values, culture, attitudes...Churches, Wall Street, the Isi Shrine,... a statue in the park. (A broad sense of the term community center)

The community must be a part of any real undertaking that will form their commonly held land. In this particular design, however, I am a community of one. I was a neighbor of the site for 8 years. I didn't

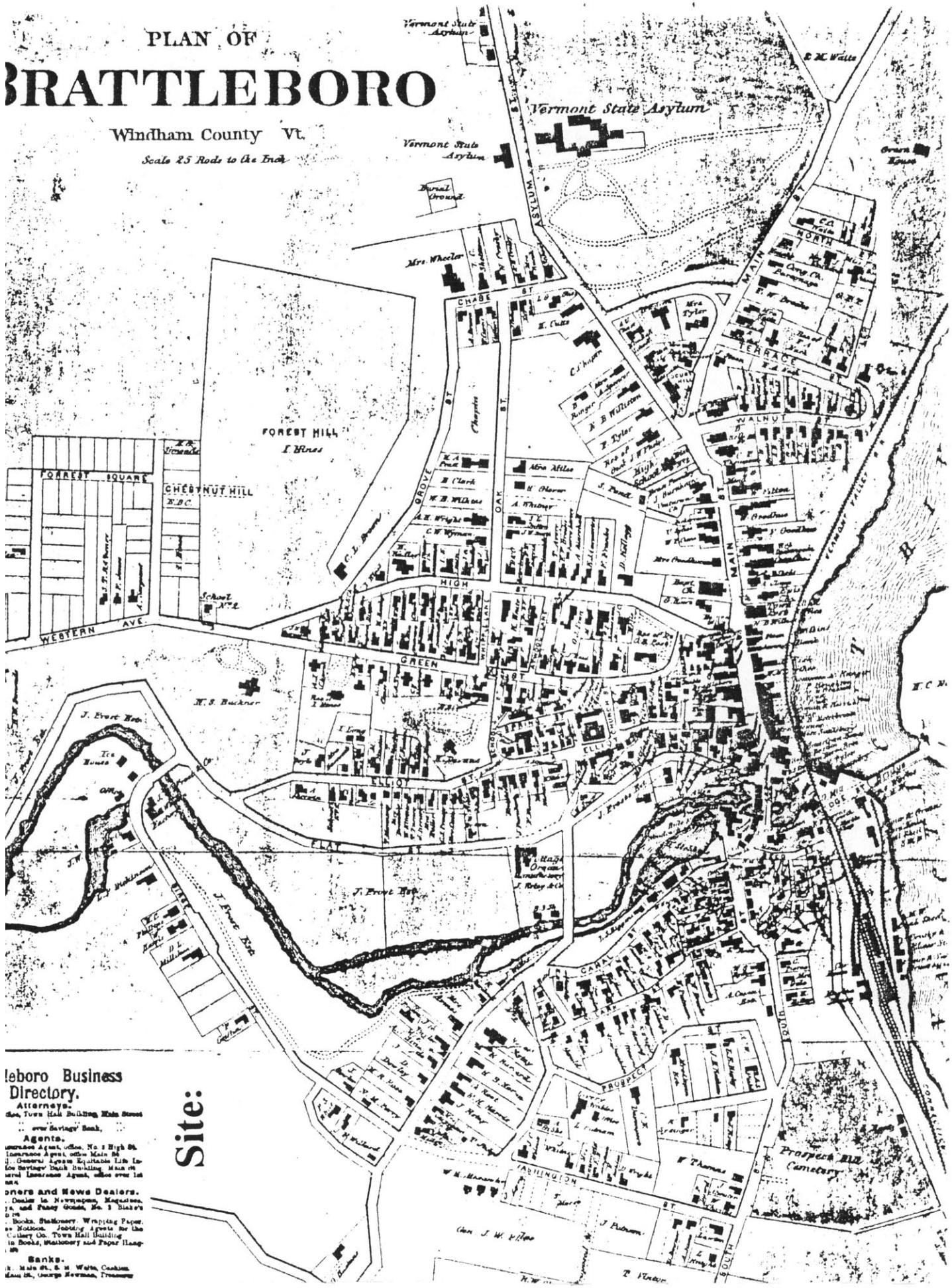
do extensive market research. I remembered what I missed in trying to shop in town. I didn't do surveys. I talked with friends who live there. I talked with the Town Manager and the planning commission. But mostly I looked within.

In Jungian psychology an analyst must understand clearly his/her own psyche before attempting to work with a client's perspectives. To form a deeper appreciation of the differences in experience and perception as they overlay and illuminate a collective, common base.

The site can use developing - for the public good. The designs suggested are just that. They are intended, along with the references, to communicate possibilities for the sites. To stir the mind/imagination onto new connections and new patterns and a broader understanding of the ways we can and do share the same common ground.

PLAN OF BRATTLEBORO

Windham County Vt.
Scale 2.5 Rods to the Inch



Brattleboro Business Directory.
Attorneys.
 See Town Hall Building, Main Street
 over Savings' Bank.
Agents.
 Insurance Agent, office, No. 3 High St.
 Insurance Agent, office, Main St.
 Life Insurance Agents, Equitable Life Ins. Co.
 Savings Bank Building. Man on
 several Insurance Agent, office over lot
 next
Books and News Dealers.
 Dealer in Newspapers, Magazines,
 etc., and Fancy Goods, No. 3 State's
 St.
 Books, Stationery, Writing Paper,
 etc. Hooker. Jobbing Agents for the
 County On Town Hall Building
 in Books, Stationery and Paper Hang-
 ing
Banks.
 1. Main St., S. M. Wells, Cashier.
 Main St., George Keenan, Treasurer.

Site:

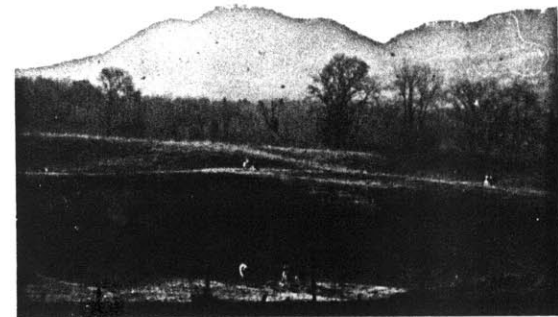
History

Brattleboro is a large town (a city by Vermont standards), built along the Connecticut River . . . at a good mill and market spot. This place marks a strong geological condition of crossroads. Here is where mountains meet the river and people pass through. A steep slope runs up from the river on the east/New Hampshire side. That barrier and the river itself seem to turn development back on itself and up the easier slopes of the Vermont river bank.

The town is made up of many neighborhoods--it's a mill town, as well as a market and service center for the larger (300 sq. mi. +) farming and manufacturing area.

The central market zone is strung out (north/south) along the river for the most part. Residential areas extend along hillsides and tops--to the west. Industry (old mills . . .) are clumped in the crack, at the sides of the Whetstone Brook, which drops into the Connecticut.

When the town of Brattleboro was first settled, the waterways were the source of power, transportation and sustenance. The Connecticut was a broad road of ice in the winter and barge-channel in the summer. The land to the west was rich farm land of delta built up by spring flooding and gently rolling hills. The Whetstone Brook provided water power and the old Indian path along its bank brought travellers east/west through the Green Mountains.





Now today I have been greatly startled by your voice coming through the forest to this opening. You have come with troubled mind through all obstacles. You kept seeing the places where they met on whom we depended, my offspring. How then can your mind be at ease?

You kept seeing the footmarks of our forefathers; and all but perceptible is the smoke where they used to smoke the pipe together. Can then your mind be at ease when you are weeping on your way?

Great thanks now, therefore, that you have safely arrived. *Iroquois*

The land was originally peopled by bands of hunters moving after caribou and mastadon (around 10,000 B.C.). Spruce forests and tundra gave way to deciduous trees and bushes as the glaciers retreated-- flooding the valleys and literally filling the sea with their waters. The hunters turned into farmers and fishers.

By 6000 B.C. the populations moved seasonally to harvest the plants and wildlife of the region from ice fishing sites to marsh land settlements along major migration routes.

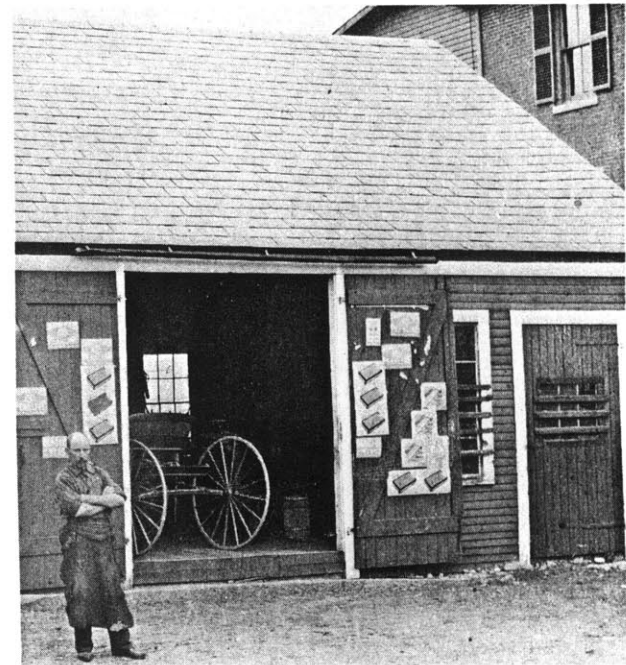
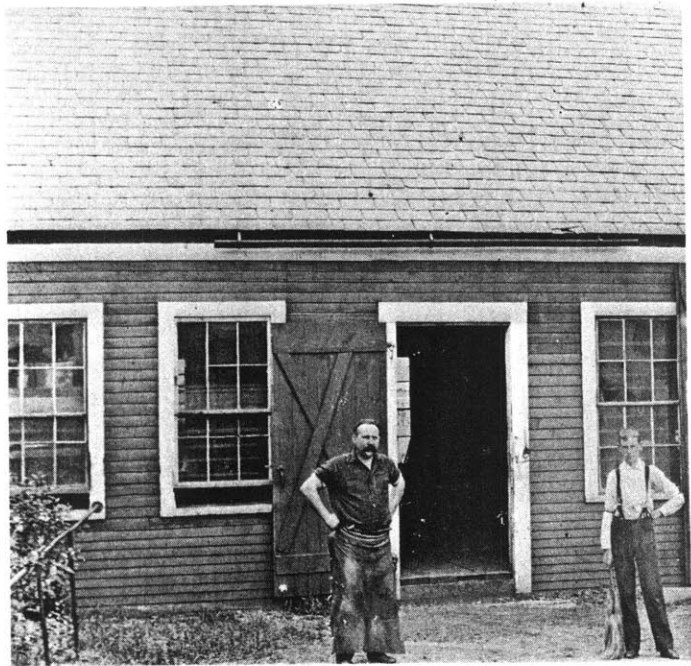
From 3000 B.C. the climate was in a temperate cycle and the population of the area rivaled that of the English when they were well established 46,000 years later. Strong trade connections east-west and north-south brought resources and skills from Mexico and the west.

By 1000 B.C. the climate was cooling and the population seems to have left the hills and gathered at the estuaries and shore more often.

The Indian populations of the following millenia were, it seems, migratory hunters and farmers. (There is evidence of farming in the region around 1100 A.D.).

By the time the first settlers came up the Connecticut River valley into what is now Vermont the Indians' earlier civilization had been all but destroyed, disrupted by trade wars (infighting over access to European goods).

By the mid 1800's Brattleboro's Main Street had grown from the mill at the Whetstone Brook up along the old river bank trail-parallel to the river but up off the flood plain. The town ran from mill work and manufacturing at the south end along the marketplace of Main Street into the institutional and then residential buildings to the north.





Main Street during the late 1870's

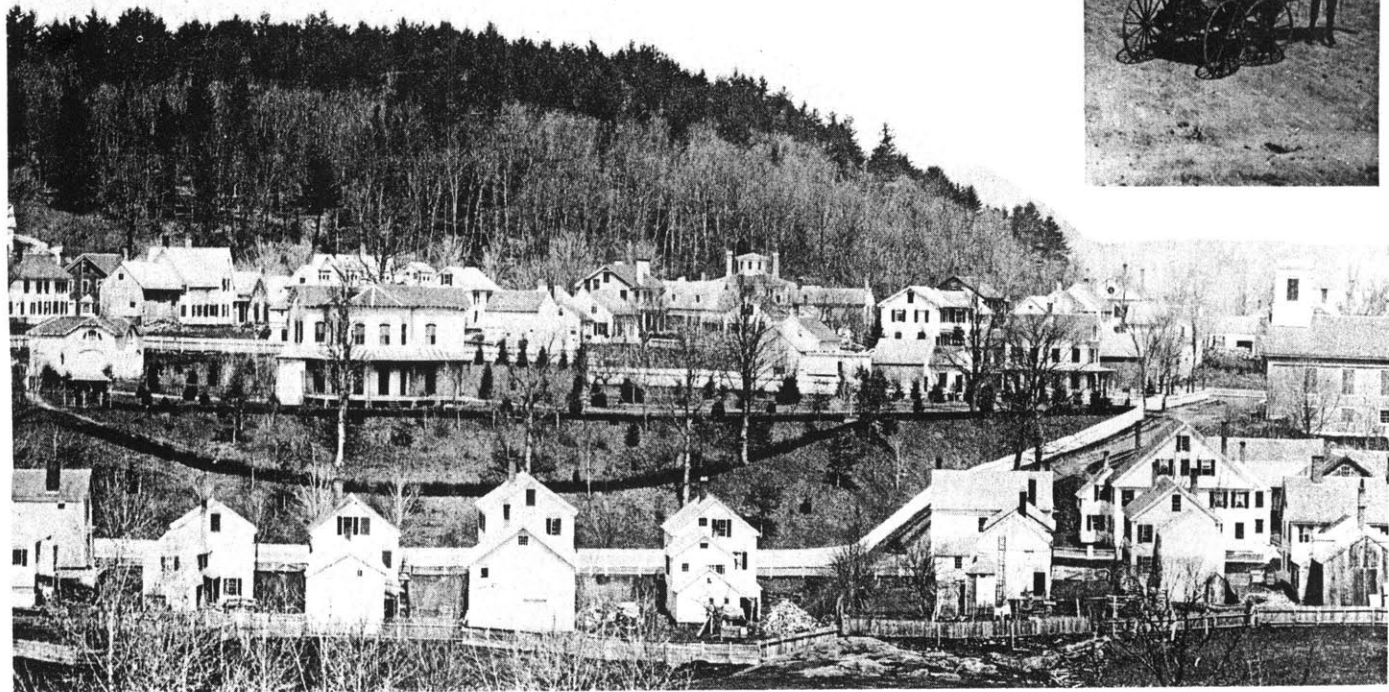
The main street of Brattleboro is a monument to the mercantile optimism of the mid and late 19th century in this part of Vermont. A short generation or two before this wall of buildings was erected, the early settlers had a tentative hold on land and crops. They were at the mercy of the elements . . . and the Indians. By the mid 1800's the community had attracted and acquired enough wealth and confidence to invest in themselves (community). Developers stacked walls of shops and offices to both sides of Main Street. The town had become a combination of marketplace for southeast Vermont and a manufacturing area.

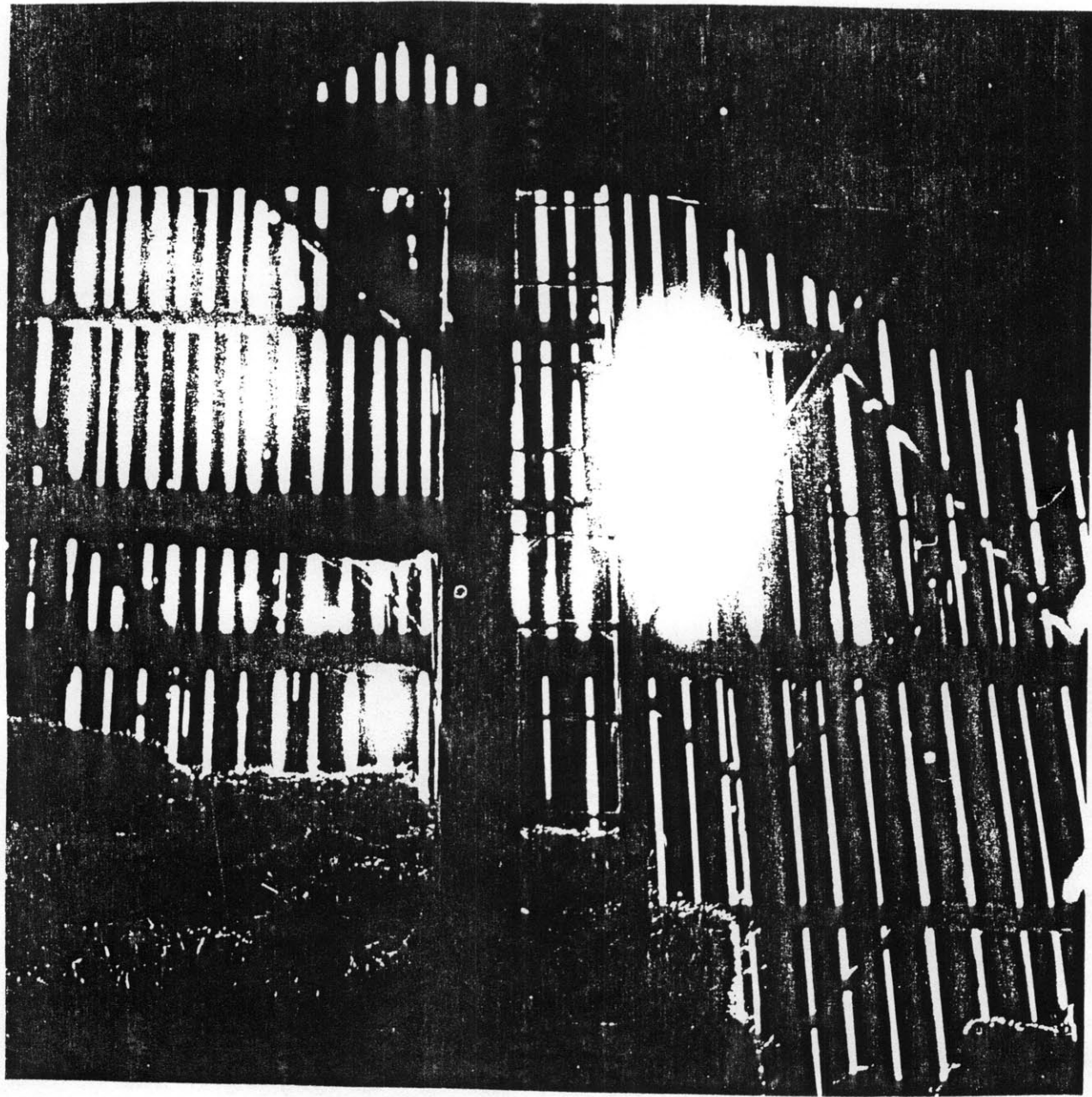
The housing stock and near majority of the central Brattleboro buildings are from the era 1870-1980 (Appendix C). There's a dance hall complete with pastoral murals in the top floor and raised.

The gradual steadying and then decline of the local economies seems to have frozen Brattleboro's Main Street. There was a shift in balance from dairy farming and

manufacturing to a tourist economy. The incoming land and product buyers didn't need or want to change the town. Their impact on the farm,

Land prices went up. Competition from agribusiness put a slow squeeze on the family farms. Times changed.





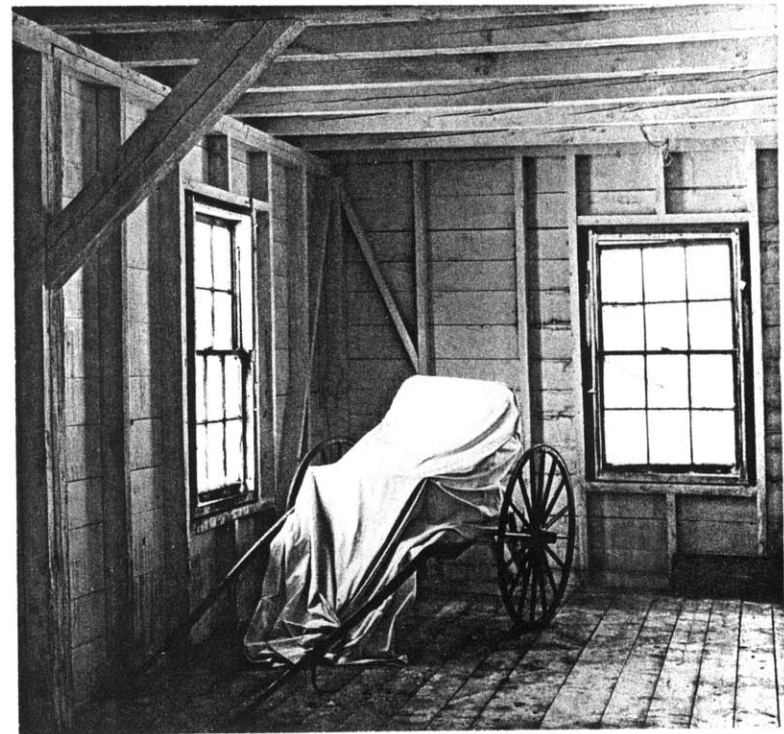
You put the barn good and far from the house in case it burned: like the night they woke up in a strange light and it was the glare of barn-flame in the bureau mirror: everything gone.

But at the home farm the three barns were still there, a square standing open for any child to wander in. Quiet and muffled in winter, the sound of the bull bashing impenitently against his stake and his wall; animal bodies bumping and squaling and rubbing; pock-pock-squawk from the henhouse, fierce indignant broody hens warming china eggs.

The air was floury at feed time. You could sit [when you were alone] on the edge of the calves' pen letting the calves lick your bare knees as you felt their starred foreheads: cow-lick. You could sit in the buckwheat as if you were in hot-sand, pouring the smooth dark grain down your legs and wondering if there was a word for the rounded double-prism shape. Or watch old Molly the blind horse bringing load after load of straw in between the lofts after threshing; or was it hay after haying? Would a city child know?

The guineas stayed in the trees, but the banty hens played in the stable behind the horse's hooves, where no child went; and in the doorway, cats suckled whatever kittens came along. In the cowbarn, Ab put mangels through the mangel.

But the sheds fell down on the democrats and cutters; no stone-boats drew the milk-cans to the road; the families ran to girls and city-fellers; the hired men went away; and we were left with the stories.





In moving from the history of the area into the present. It is important to keep in mind the larger time/space context--the dynamic framework of this place. Changes remind us

The river runs and the landscape transforms in a seasonal cyclical spiral dance ordered at a global scale. We are part past, part present, and part future as we project our dreams forward. We stand on the bones of the earth, relics of the past. We feel that inner past in the movement of the mountains. Close at hand, and more immediate in the works of man on the banks of this river.

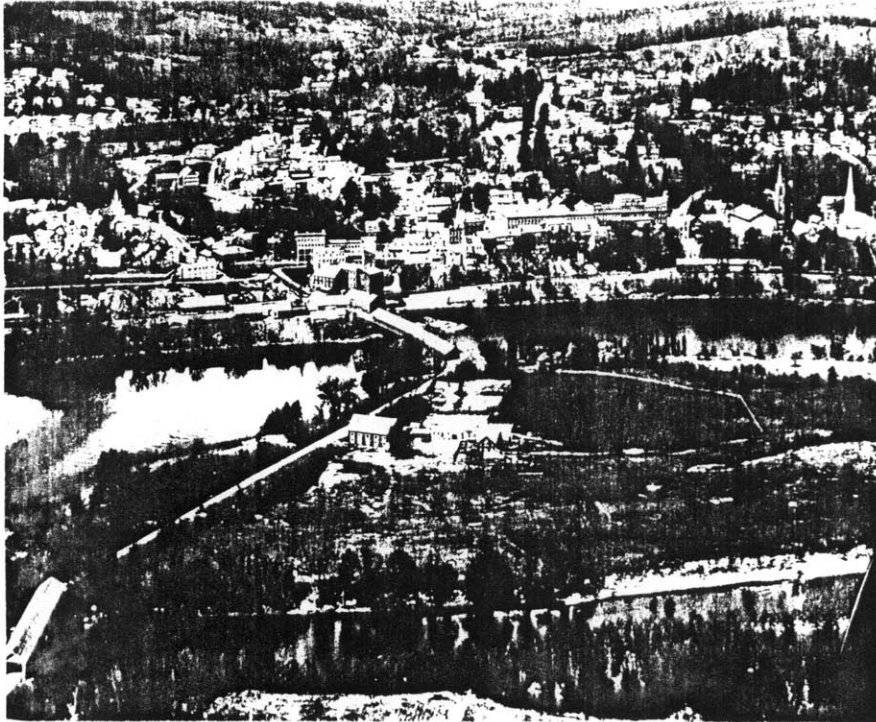


The shells of the old merchants blocks are still there today. Some with the same uses. The mills have gone to fire and flood --or markets and storehouses. The old railroad station is now a museum. The upper end

of town has a new town hall (in the old Victorian high school); the armory has been turned into a senior citizens' center and recreation hall called the Aiken Center; and a new courthouse is going up behind the beleaguered fountain at Main Street's end. The library, post office, and most of the churches, and a bevy of banks mark this as still the institutions' end of town.

The backs and upper floors of these buildings are underutilized. Garbage and scrub sumacs litter the slopes. The town turned its back on the railway and the river in the 1800s for good reason. The dirt and flood of the rail and river was not a part of the original scheme. Too close for comfort. But the river has been tamed and the railroad fallen into disuse. Times have changed.



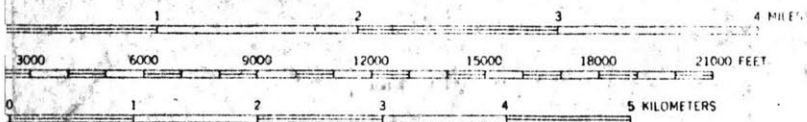


It is necessary and possible without tearing the fabric of the old town to develop an experience and expression of the larger landscape/framework of which this town is a part.





SCALE 1:62500



CONTOUR INTERVAL 20 FEET
DATUM IS MEAN SEA LEVEL



QUADRANGLE LOCATION

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

- Heavy duty
- Light duty
- Medium duty
- Unimproved dirt
- U. S. Route
- State Route

BRATTLEBORO, VT.—N. H.
N 4245—W 7230/15

1954

AMS 6469 I SERIES V713

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A SERIES OF TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

22

Land

This part of the Connecticut River valley is underlain with crystalline metamorphic and igneous bedrock. The rock weathered for 300 million years. Weathered and worn and covered with thick soil only to be stripped of its cover by advancing ice sheets--thousands of feet thick. The ice scraped and cracked the bones of the mountains. The glaciers left a littering of boulders, till and sediment in its wake. The till covers most of the river valley. More stratified deposits occur along the river valleys too. Sand and gravel pits dot the valleys of tributary streams and rivers. testament to the sifting of silt, sands and clays--glacial deposits from that era. Yet the bedrock not the surface material control the larger land forms here.





CLIMATE

The winters are long and hard in northern New England. Snow in November stays around until April or May (on the north side of the barn). It can get deep. Three or four feet You can count on a bitter cold snap in late December or January that sends the thermometers popping at -20 to -30 degrees F, never mind the wind chill factor. At the same time (or rather, soon thereafter) you can get a thaw that tricks the trees into budding and gives a first sweet run on the maple sap--if you're able to get the taps out soon enough.

Anyone will tell you that there's been snow in every month of the year in recent memory.

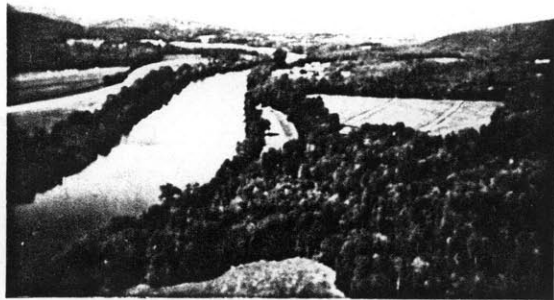
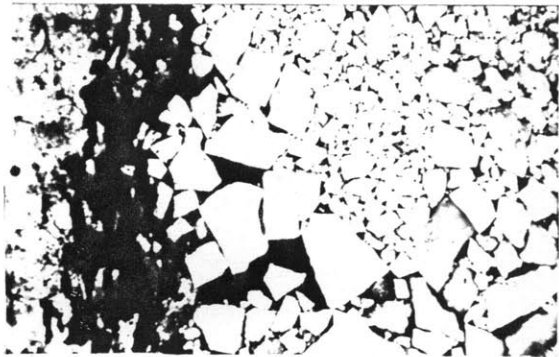
"If you don't like the weather just wait a few minutes,"--There's not much lead time (for a nose untrained to save the hay bails) before storm clouds appear over the edge of the hilltop. Not much sky to see from the valley with all that furry forest of second growth on the ridges.



So, faced with a northern world which seems everywhere to be going interior and underground,

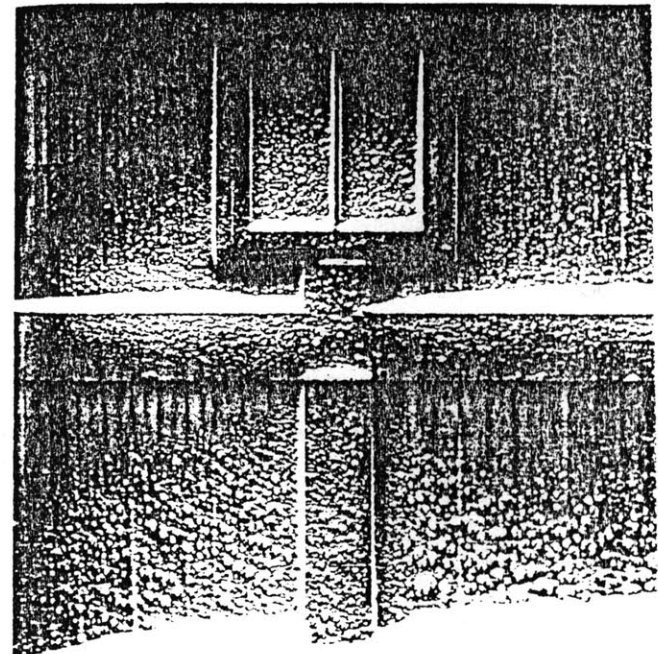
this is a professional "second opinion": with the discomforts of northern situations come certain delights--as with kids in rubber boots and slickers out in the rain. The distinctions of pain, patience, and pleasure are things not necessarily, in our diagnosis, desirable.

These projects prescribe interweavings, controlled exposure to the elements, consciousness of the larger context, bravery in the face of phobia, some discomfort to get the greater pleasure of real non-synthetic tactile experience.
Carmen Corneil

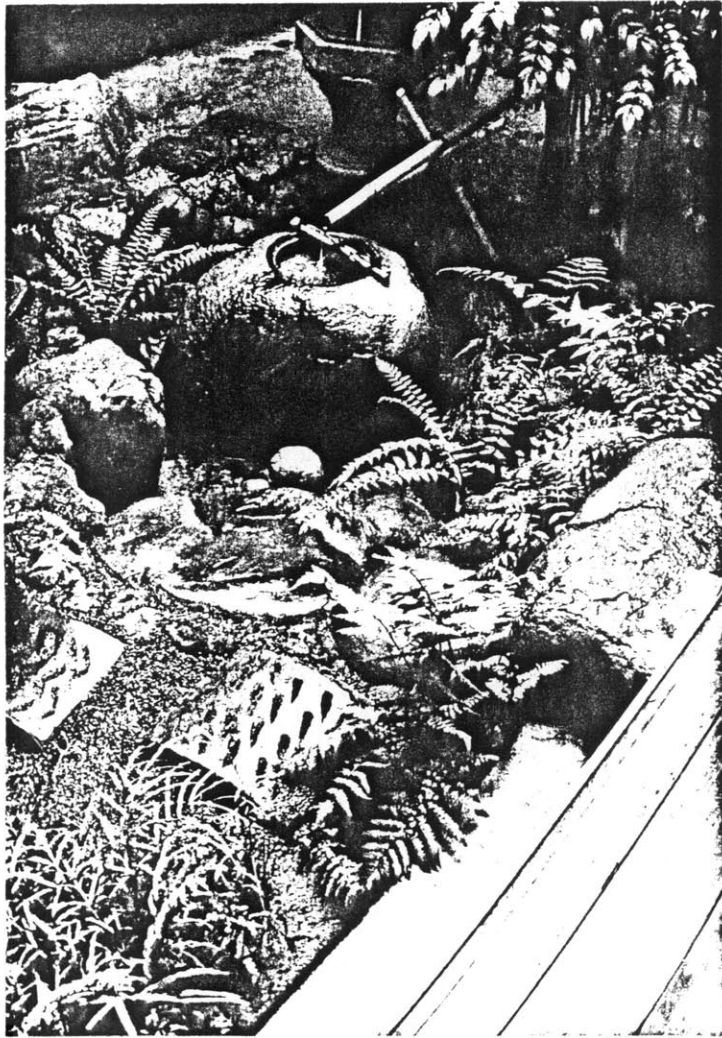


It rains or snows one day in three or four here. The heaviest months for run-off are April, May...mud season...I mean serious, up to your ankles in it MUD. The water changes forms with flair in the North East... Ice dams creak and groan on the river. Roaring cascades tumble down usually tame streambeds. Fog holds heavy in the River Valley on cool summer mornings. Snow flakes sparkle in the moonlight - squeaky underfoot a -10 degrees.

It's kind of taken for granted - good water. Maybe because the first settlers had the good sense to choose places with plenty of it. They knew, and we dimly see in cultural memory, the path to the well, the spring house, the ice house...not just a romantic notion but tangible reality in a past, now gone, that kept everyone bound to the cycle of the seasons and the flowing water.



Resources:



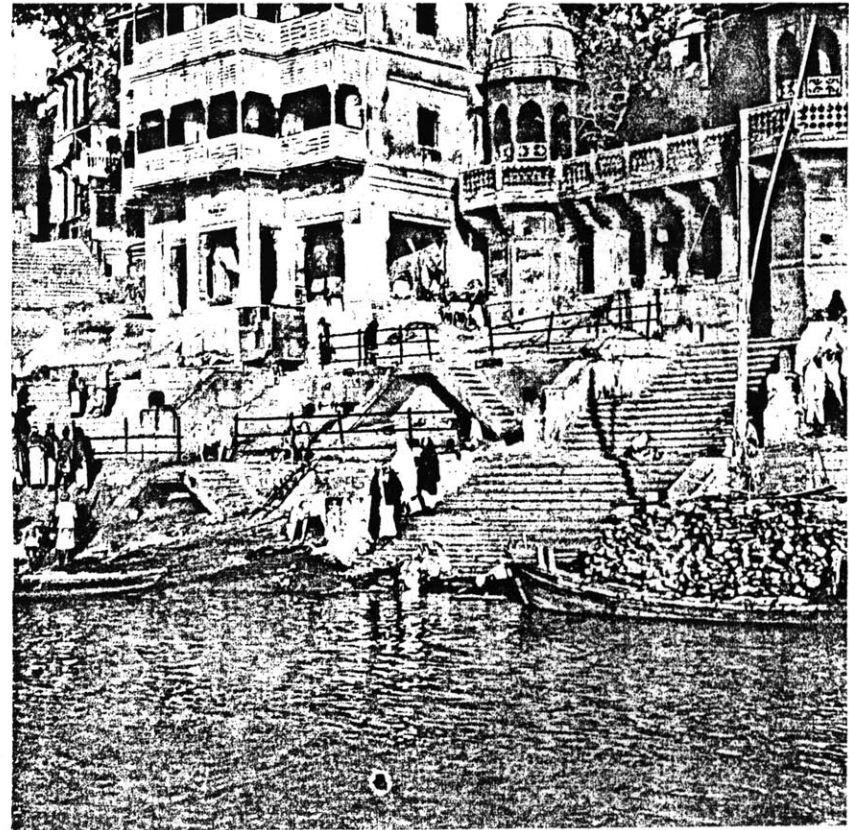
"Architecture is built of materials and composed of forms. For man, the materials and forms have a content; the observer can tell, or ought to be able to tell from the design something about the use of the design, and something about the people by whom or for whom it was built. Water is a natural material, and the unchanging identity which it maintains, wherever it goes, keeps it in evidence as a natural material where it is used in an architectural composition as well as when it appears in nature. Its use in architecture, then, because it is a natural material, should be an indication of the attitude toward the natural world of the people by and for whom it was designed."

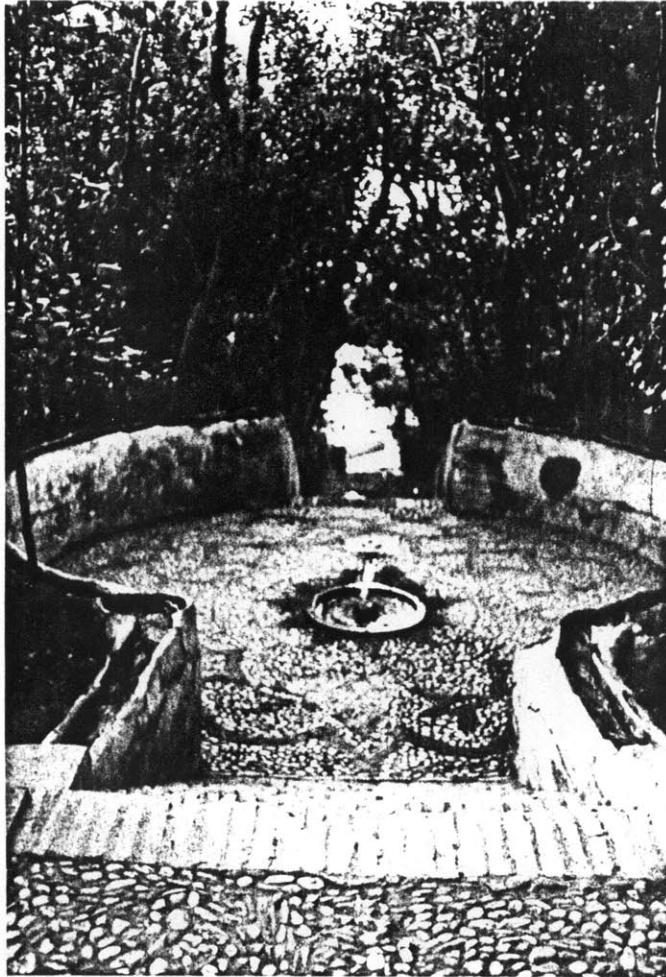
Charles Moore
Water and Architecture

Water

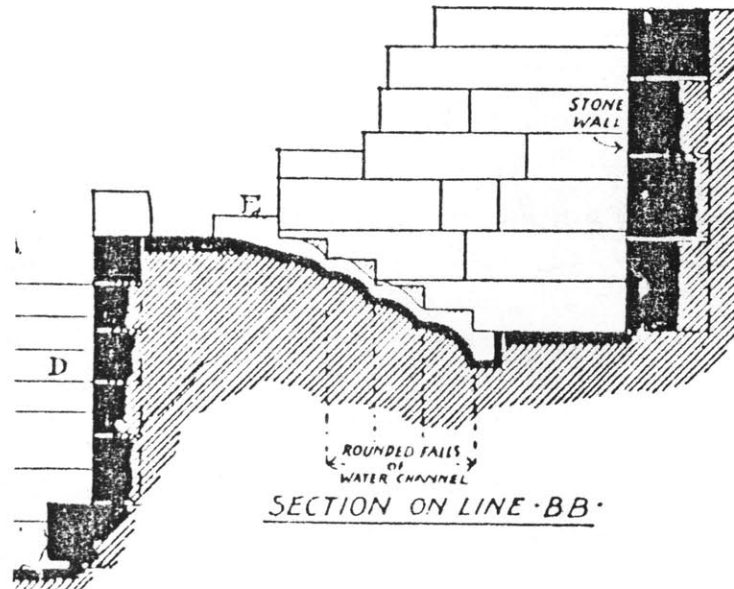
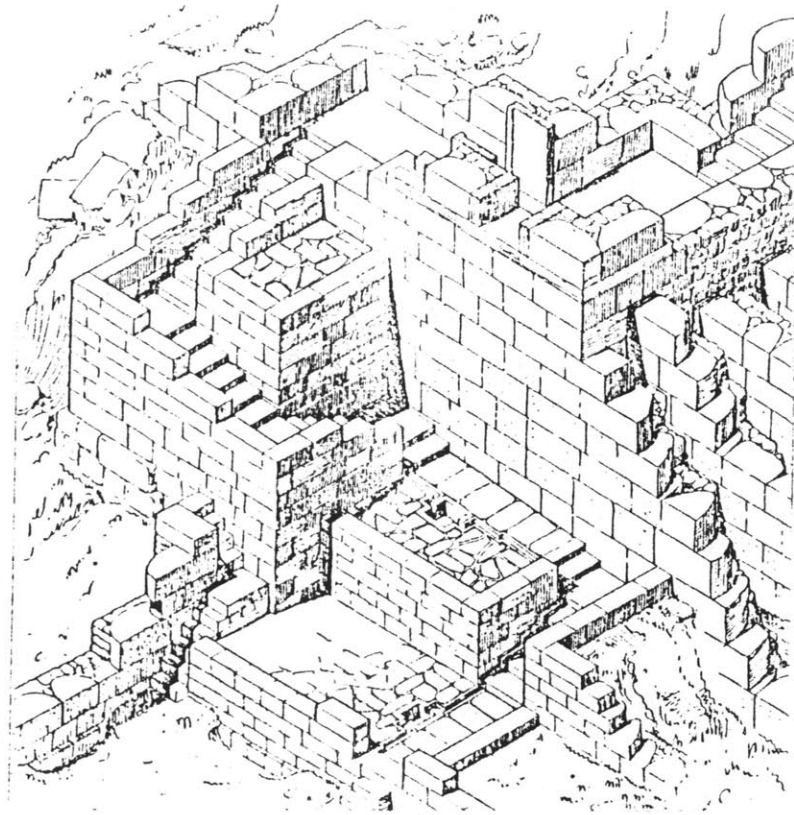
Strong associations layer our relationship to water. We have built in fact and formalized into ritual access to these rivers of life. Building our movement to the riverside--and channeling the water's movement to our side.

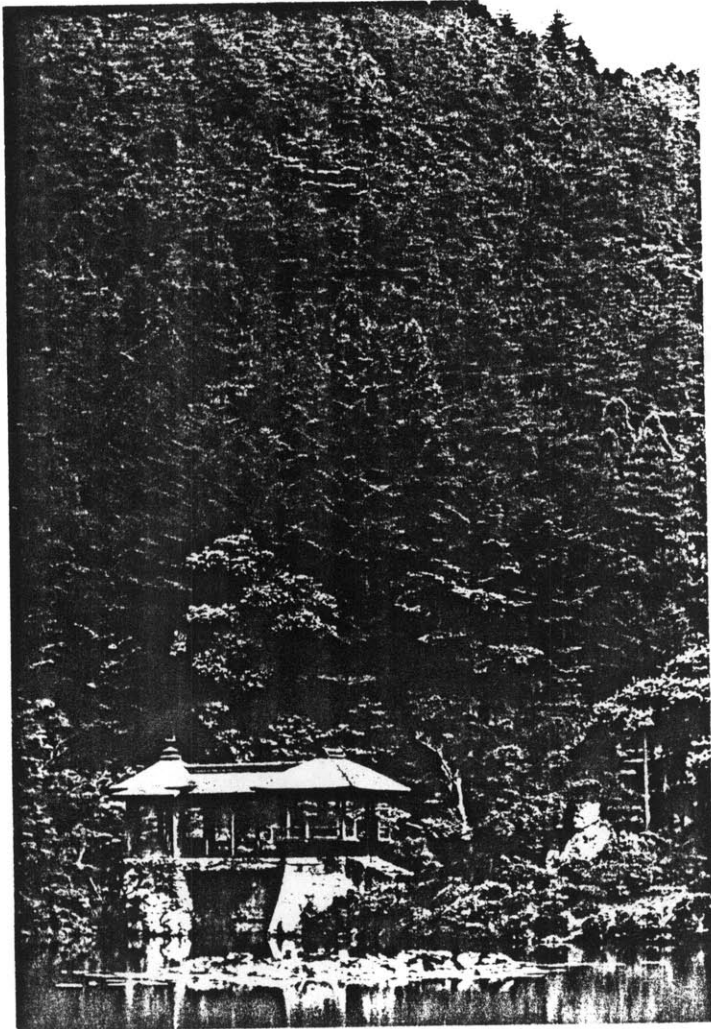
From earliest history the control of the waters has been a vehicle for the articulation of forms; our pathways through those forms; and the places to rest within those forms or beside the path.





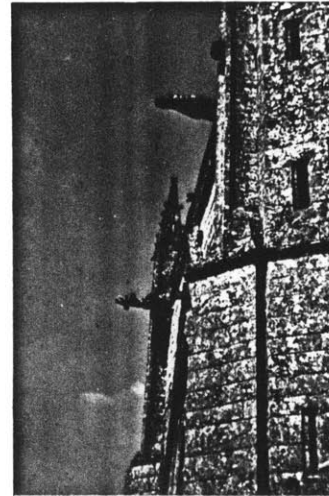
The Alhambra
 The Palace of Minos
 The water canals which parallel the
 streets in Japan
 The courtyard houses of Pompeii





Japanese ponds

Water-in-abundance fountains of European
public square and private garden



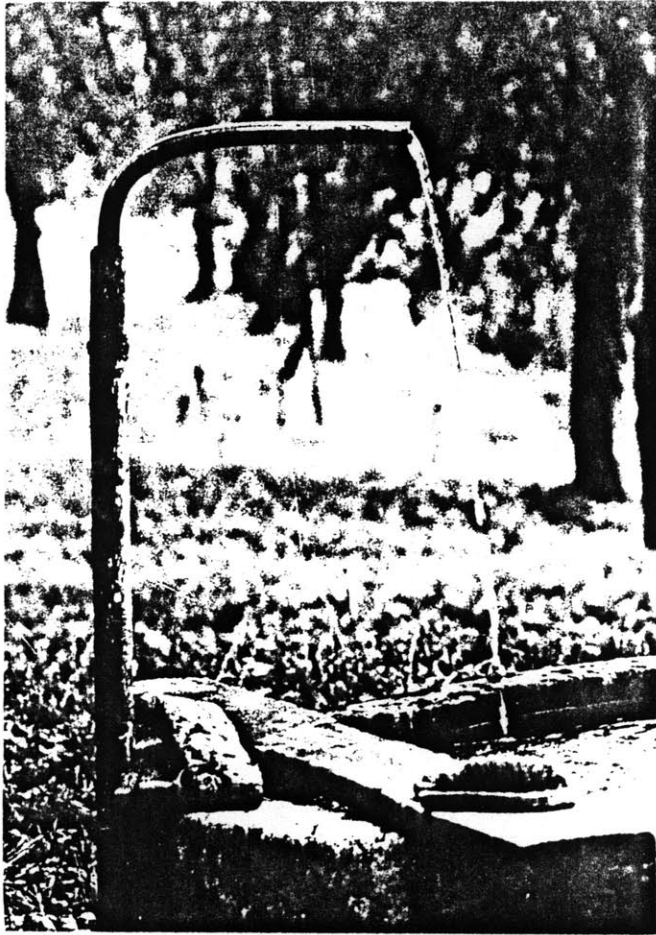
Gutters

Gargoyles

In many instances the channeling of water was the reason for the form to begin with. European piazzas were designed for drainage. The paving patterns at times disguised and at times emphasized the water's flow over the slightly sloped stones to the collection points.

Campo in Siena

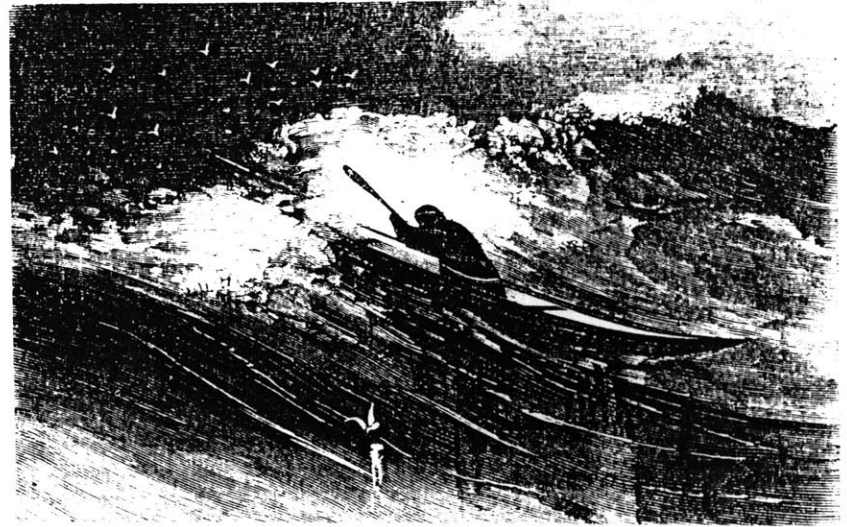
San Marco Piazza



We find endless fascination with,
hence, articulation of watering holes at a
journey's end . . . fountains, ^{TROUGH'S} thoughts, or a
cup and carved stone bowl.



Sometimes we contain the water and
sometimes the water contains us.



People



The person, traveler, citizen brings to the environment a complex set of perceptions and expectations. His/her resources are the senses; vision, touch, smell, and hearing; socio-cultural attitudes; and associative memory.

There is common ground for all of us in human experience as well as striking dissimilarities in our particular or cultural interpretation, understanding, and expression of this experience.

Vision is our strongest sense stimulus. It is primary but objective (sightseer, onlooker, observer). The visual world is more abstract and lacks emotional reality when compared with other senses.

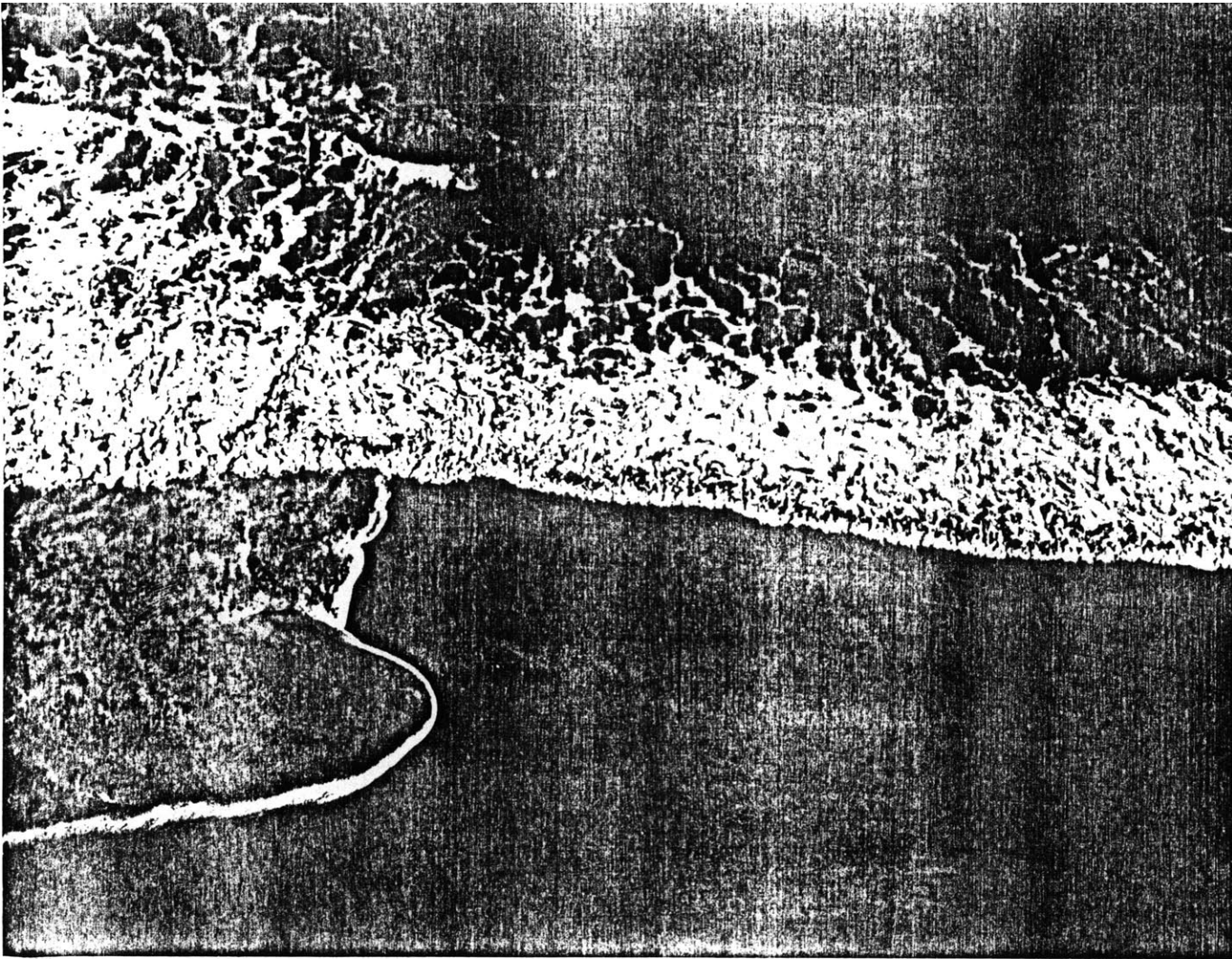
The senses are tied indirectly with our interpretation/perception of reality. They are filtered through our learned responses to the environment . . . a personal, social, cultural screen.

Although it appears that vision has the strongest conscious associative connection for human beings in modern society, at any point one can, with reasonable modification, substitute either the word "sounds" or "smells" or "experiences" for "appearances" in the previous quote by Berger.

Appearances cohere. At first degree they cohere because of common laws of structure and growth which establish visual affinities. A chip of rock can resemble a mountain; grass grows like hair; waves have the form of valleys; snow is crystalline; the growth of walnuts is constrained in their shells somewhat like the growth of brains in their skulls; all supporting legs and feet, whether static or mobile, visually refer to one another.

At second degree, appearances cohere because as soon as a fairly developed eye exists, visual initiation begins. All natural camouflage, much natural coloring and a wide range of animal behavior derive from the principle of appearances fusing, or being suggestive of other appearances.

Appearances both distinguish and join events.
John Berger*



The modern architect is designing for the deaf.

His ears are stuffed with bacon.

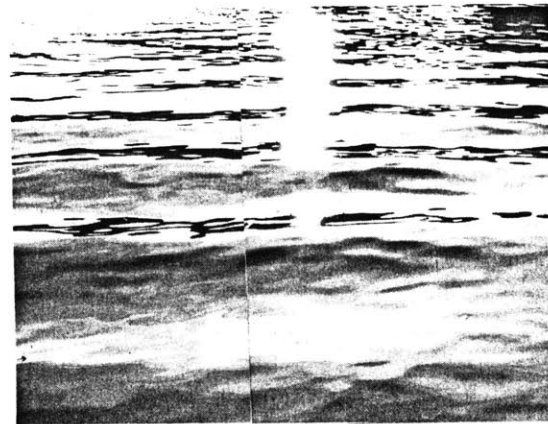
Until they can be unplugged with ear cleaning exercises, modern architecture may be expected to continue its same rotten course. The study of sound enters the modern architecture school only as sound reduction, isolation and absorption.

HEARING/SOUND

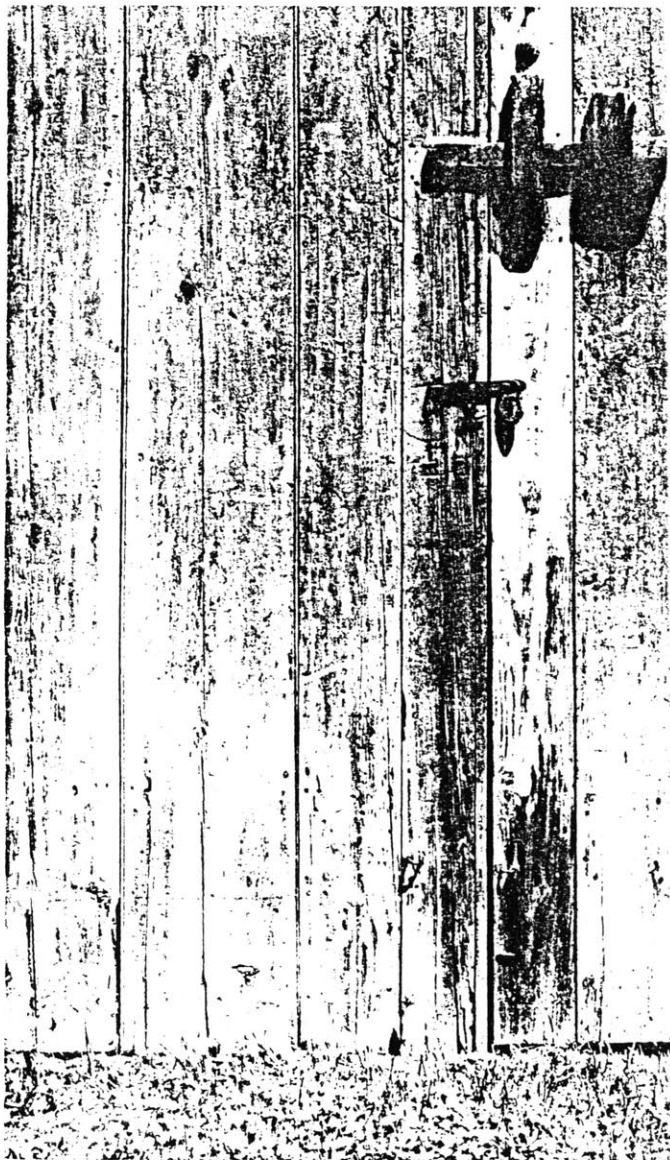
Our hearing is not particularly acute. (As with all our senses, hearing is adaptive. We don't track our prey We are attuned to sounds a pitch corresponding to a baby or woman's cry. . . .). And yet we are more directly touched by what we hear than what we see. Perhaps sound bypasses our consciousness. It is true that music and certain other sounds have immediate resonance with the heart/emotions.

The sound of the sea holds something in common with basic human experience. Rhythmic, ever changing and never changing. A piece of eternity. A mother's heartbeat felt as much as heard in the womb.

We are all brought back to the same place. Ancient voices. Archetypal sound.*



The sound in Norman and Gothic churches, surrounding the audience, strengthens the link between the individual and the community. The loss of high frequencies and the resulting impossibility of localising the sound makes the believer part of a world of sound. He does not face the sound in "enjoyment"—he is wrapped up by it.



Touch

The sense of touch. To touch. A verb. We have a highly developed sense of touch.

A person can feel the difference between a smooth pane of glass and one etched in grooves $1/2,500$ of an inch deep. Blindfolded and with ears plugged a person can tell the difference between plastic, metal, paper, or wood by gently tapping the surface with a fingernail.*

We touch in order to get the sense of a thing. To touch is objective verification. To feel is more subjective (passive?).



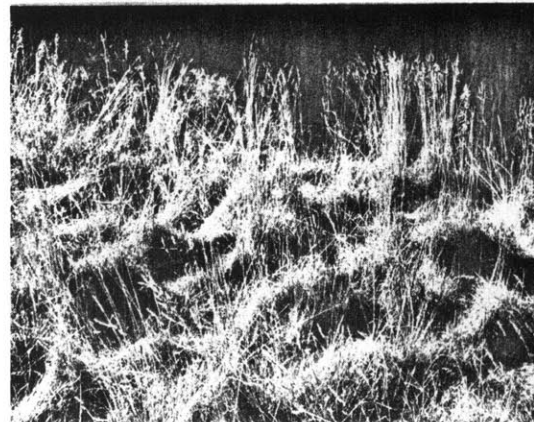
Children are constantly picking up, reaching for, patting surfaces. Eager for more understanding of their world, they explore with great dexterity and determination.



Smell

We have neglected our senses in the modern world and perhaps none more than our sense of smell. Odor advertizing is threatening to give all smells a bad name. Still, unthinkingly, a smell can waft us back into another time and place. Lilacs . . . low tide . . . new mown hay

In concert all the senses (when played) bring us a symphony of sensual awareness.





CULTURE

Berger goes on to say that appearances coalesce with the memory of other appearances/experiences. To recognize an object/appearance/experience requires associative memory . . . the memory of other experience. These memories are often projected as expectations which immediately color our perceptions.*

Our senses/sensitivity grows with exercise. We use only a small portion of our power to experience and that amount varies with the culture and individual needs. For us space is empty without objects or boundaries . . . because there is nothing to see . . . but for others, space is dynamic.

No middle distance, no perspective, no outline, nothing that the eye can cling to except thousands of smokey plumes of snow running along the ground before the wind--a land without bottom or edge. His language includes at least twelve unrelated terms for various winds. . . . On horizonless days he lives in an acoustic, olfactory space.

PERCEPTIONS OF SPACE AND FORM

According to Yi-Fu Tuan we perceive nature partly as discrete objects and partly as an unfocused background, a continuance of air, light, temperature, and space. I would see a third way . . .

Every self-consciousness knows itself (1) as universal, as the potential of abstracting from everything determinate, and (2) as particular, with a determinate object, content and aim. Still, both these moments are only abstractions; what is concrete and true (and everything true is concrete) is the universality which has the particular as its opposite, but the particular which by reflections into itself has been equalized with the universal. This unity is individuality.* Hegel

Equalized with the universal . . . or
said another way:



Objects interpenetrate each other. They never cease to live. Imperceptible they spread intimate reflections around them. Cezanne

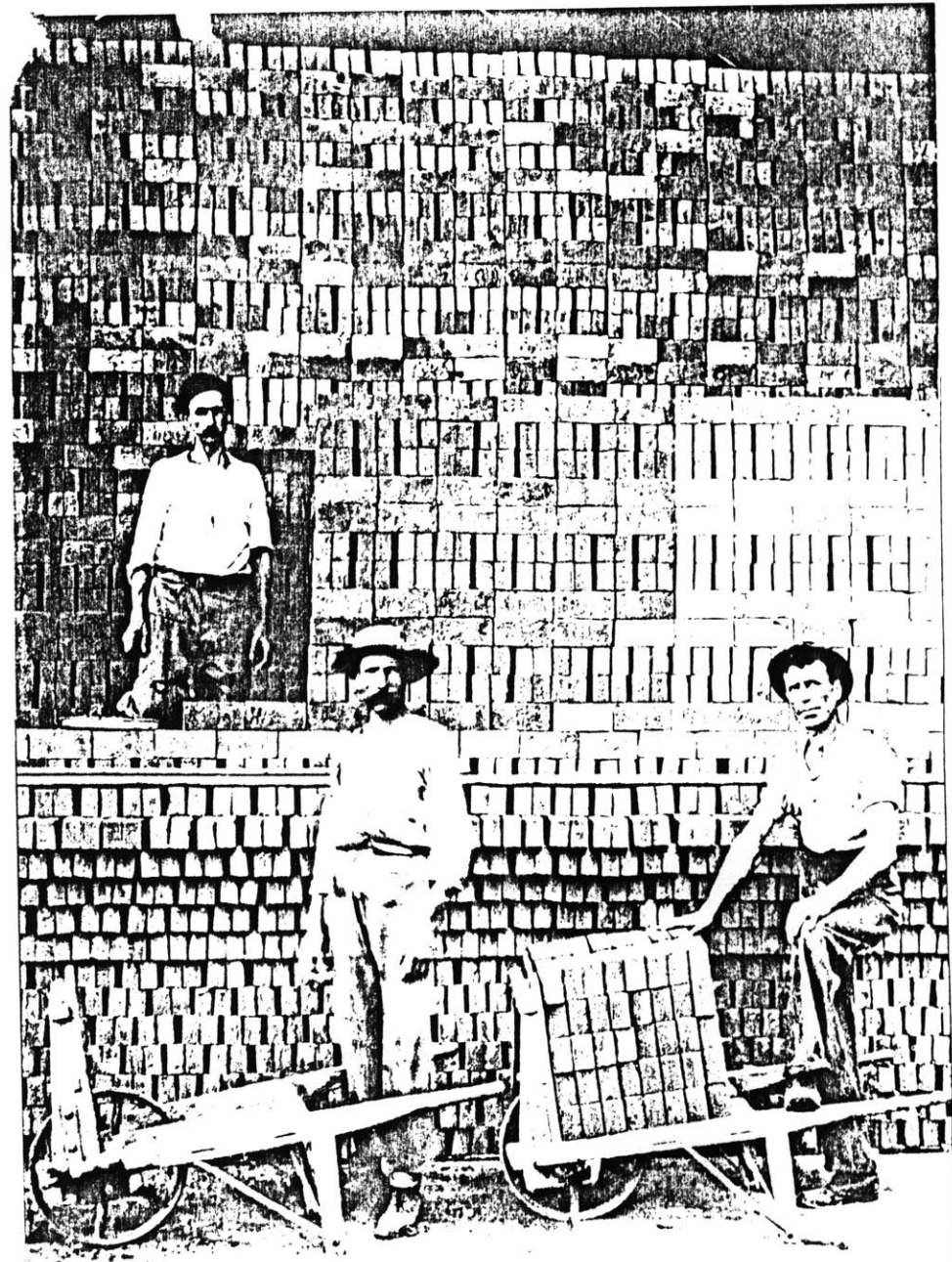
A Common Ground . . . of understanding
and experience.

Said in the context of the individual: to understand one's place requires exercising one's sense of self in relation to those smaller tangible elements as well as the larger networks of which we are a part family, town/ community, region, earth/environment.





Design:



PROGRAM

When I came back to Brattleboro I saw very little change . . . but a town more beautiful than I had remembered. It seems that familiarity does breed contempt or at least a sort of blindness.

I have chosen to focus on the riverfront next to the marketplace downtown as a fertile ground for design.

This zone extends from roughly the splitting of Putney Road and Linden Street south along Main Street to the museum in the old railway station.

I have chosen this region because a river runs next to it and the general topography is strong; this town, because I am familiar with it, and because it shows a basic linear organization which is typical among New England mill towns; and this part of town, because it clearly indicates an



As Americans we tinker with the landscape. There are no secrets there. If we read it carefully our past and present and dreams of the future are decipherable. Meinig

historically exuberant attitude of man over nature winding along the hillside like a giant wall stepping in rhythm with the hills. Built in defiance it yet bends to the will of the landscape.

Brattleboro has grown large enough to be incoherent. There is little sense of Vermont's strong landscape within the town (except for cursing the hilly streets, come winter).

The people of the town climb into their cars and drive to the shopping malls outside of town. The out-of-towners get into their cars and head into town to shop and socialize. The landscape is forgotten in the general tidal flows of traffic. The markets have created continuous walls of merchandise in the valley. A valley within the valley.

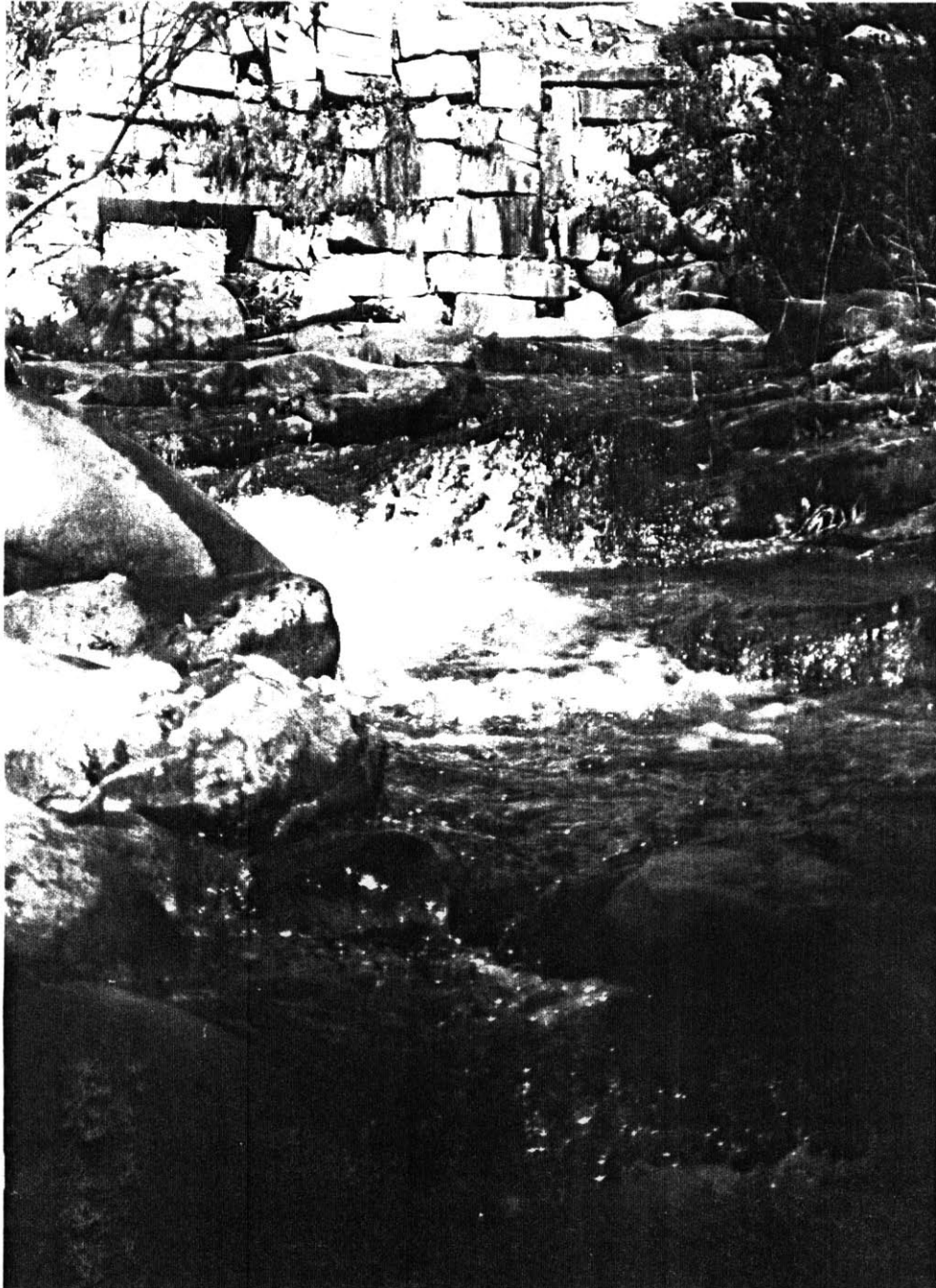
There is no center--no place of rest and recreation (re-creation) for the townspeople. No place to "park" the kids and/or oneself. No place to breathe.

It is ~~true~~ ^{time} to design a park and path system which allows people to re-collect the

larger landscape in which we work and live and perhaps remind us of our connections/ place within the town.

A common place speaks to some reason for the existence of the town or neighborhood. What are common experiences of the townspeople? (. . . Why are you here?) Possible connections are: 1) children (family and home), 2) economics (jobs), 3) mutual support (larger network, neighborhood), 4) historical (local achievements), and 5) conveniences (or inertia). As a recreation area this common thread can be demonstrated/ ritualized and in some way experienced.

I have designed a master plan for the area. A coherent system of paths and parks from the ~~bank~~ ^{bank} to the island.



My materials are the landscape and a particular consistent use of stone, timber and concrete to form a framework. The path is in some way connected with water and the parks with stone. The retaining walls and supports for structures with concrete (hermaphrodite liquid stone).

In order to do this, I have rebuilt, recollected, and sometimes invented a network of use forms with and in the landscape. Recollecting the river by reinforcing the use of the existing alleyways that connect pedestrians with the river view at the backs of the existing east Main Street blocks. Inventing a path to tie together these backs-non fronts in a major pedestrian passageway whose main trunk runs parallel to the river, the mountain ranges, the railroad, and the street. Rebuilding the edge of the railroad and the riverfront with a series of active and passive parks.





It is helpful to have large simple explicit building parts to work with, Norwegian Timber Buildings have this quality. Door posts, lintels, steps, pothanging beams are single rudimentary folkloric parts--quaint perhaps--but a way for the tiniest and most domestic structures to be heroic in their right . . . and to be in both a visual and a tactile sense. Carmen Corneil

In these named pieces their^{is} is the strength of association with common human experience. Japanese kitchen fire with the post from a cast iron hook in the middle of the room; tripod holding a paunch over an open tipi fire; split-log camp fire with a bean pot to the side buried under the coals . . . the warmth of homes. Simple gifts.

I like this ^{VERSION} mission of the heroic. It borrows from the strength of many. Pieces are put to a purpose and they create a form that fits.





53. Tea-garden path leading to waiting booth, Ura Senke, Kyoto.

A park can be a boulder along a stream; a manicured town square, a baseball diamond, playground, fairgrounds, and/or a wilderness.

It is in some way a public or shared place in which to remember, and forget and recreate oneself. It is a place set aside for the celebration of the events, history, and commonly shared values of a people. It is also always a common ground for the sharing of human experience (cemeteries, playgrounds, .).

A path can be an animal track, a backyard junket from ballfield to the house, or a mental journey . . . but always connotes movement. From a subjective point of view, the experience is a kind of channeling of sequential events. Objectively a linear pattern is chosen and therefore formed and then repeated.



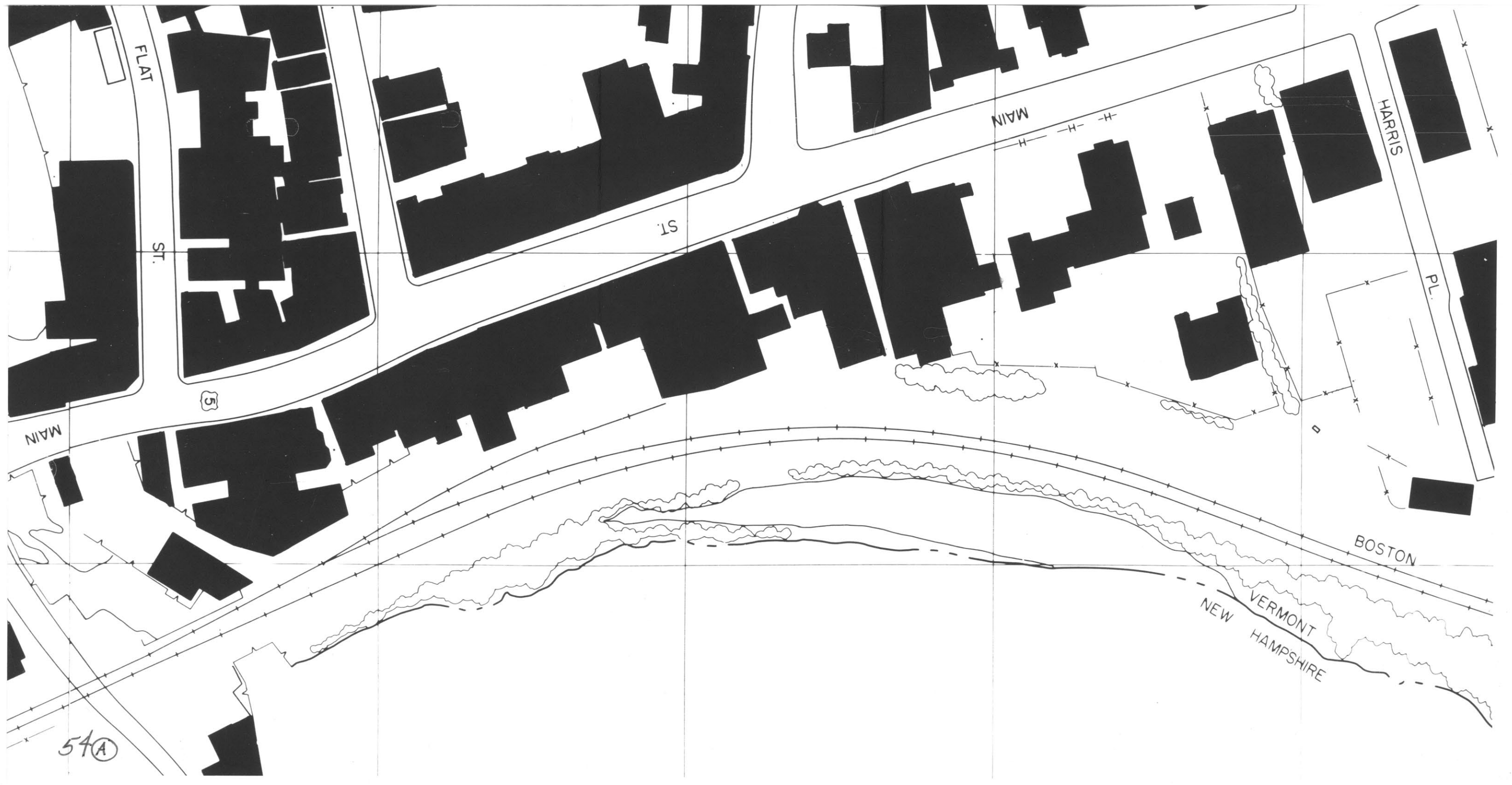
Repetition of the movement pattern can be by the same person over time or many people who chose the same sequence and/or goal. Time, sequence, repetition (note association with music).

A path is a liquid continuum of experience. A traveler can move without looking to left or right from point A to point B, or s(he) can move in a more mentally open way and observe the elements, sensing the changes as (s)he moves along. The option should exist (physically or metaphysically) at times to stop and let the residual movement of the path wash over one's shoulders. To turn and look back. To take a step and open to a new perspective for exploring a whole new world (or the world at hand in a new way).

A well trodden path is like a riverbed, its stones worn smooth and its channel cut deep by the passage of many feet.

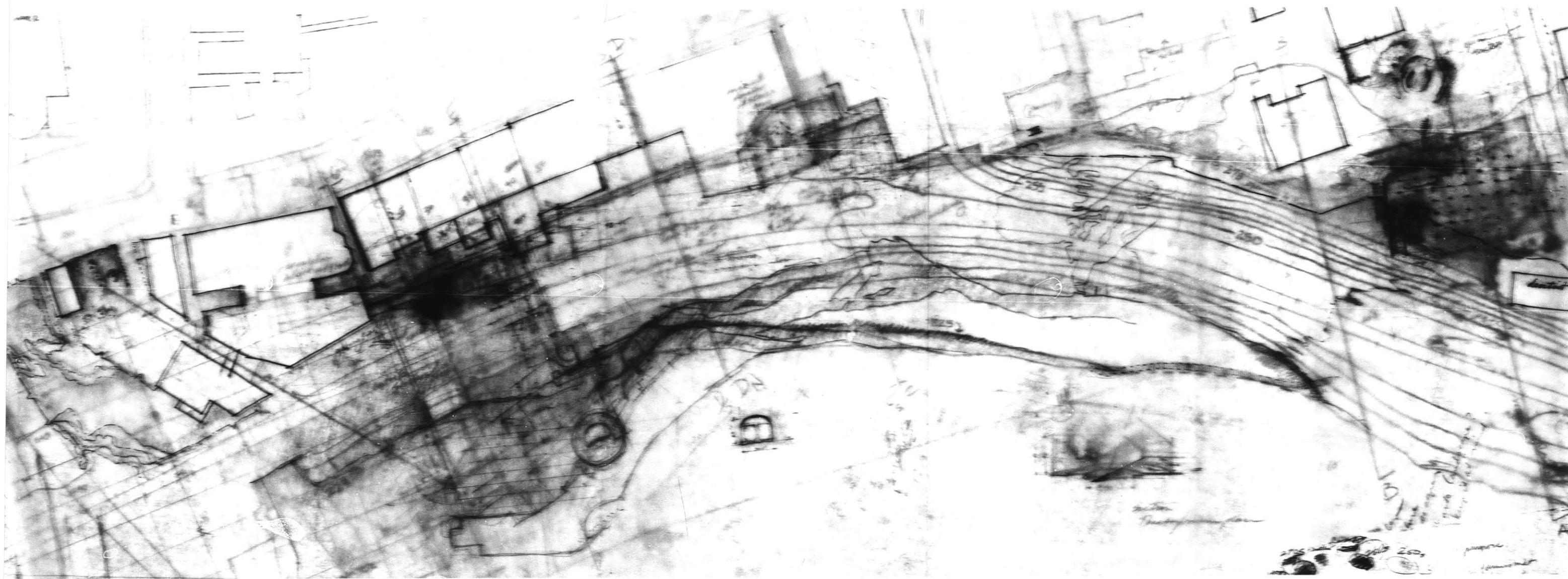






54A

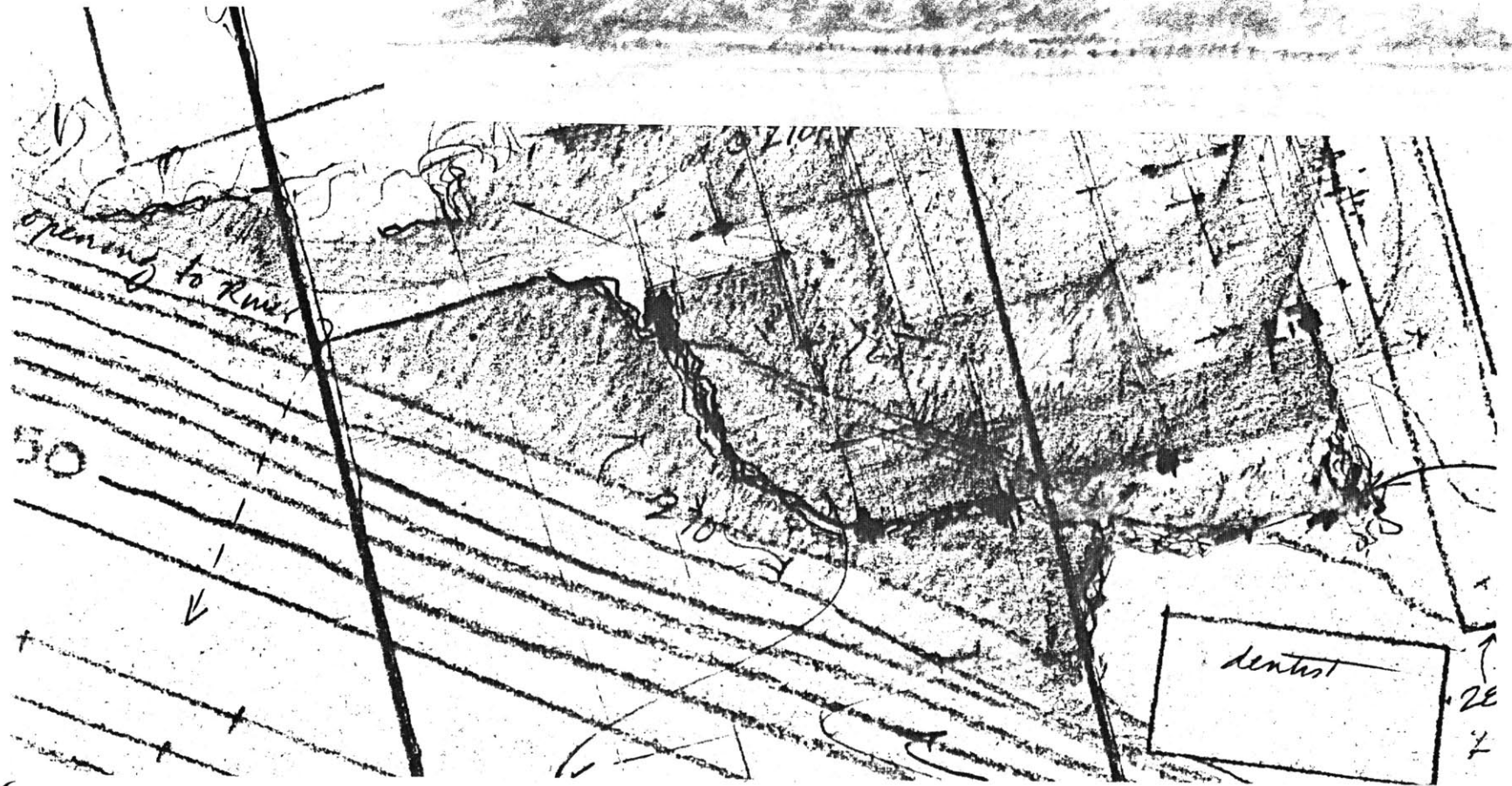
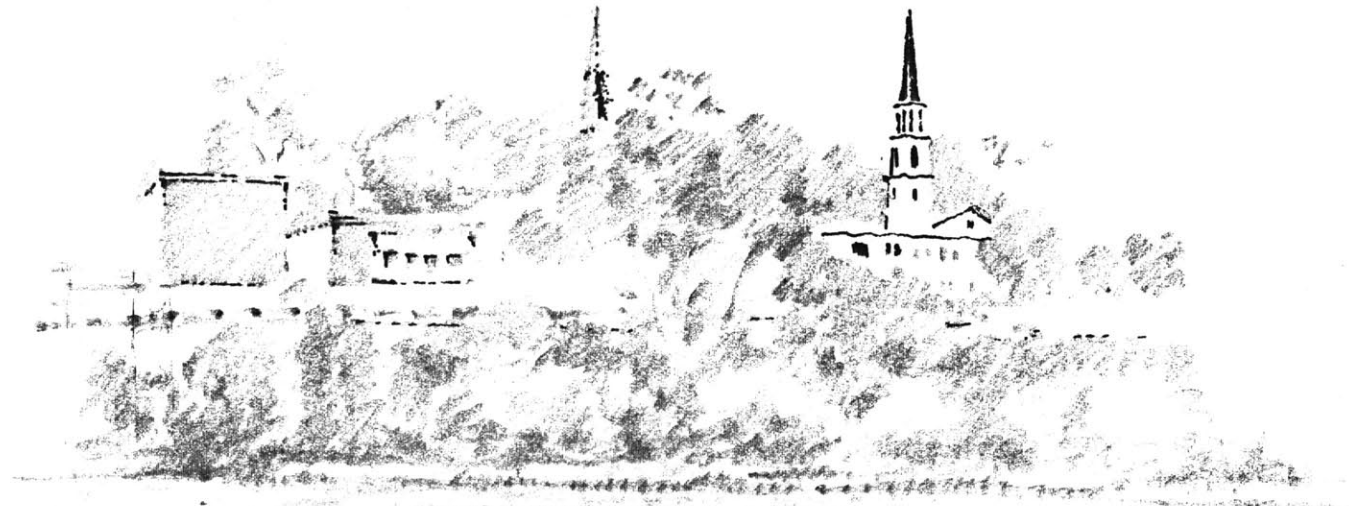
NEW VERMONT
HAMPSHIRE



54B



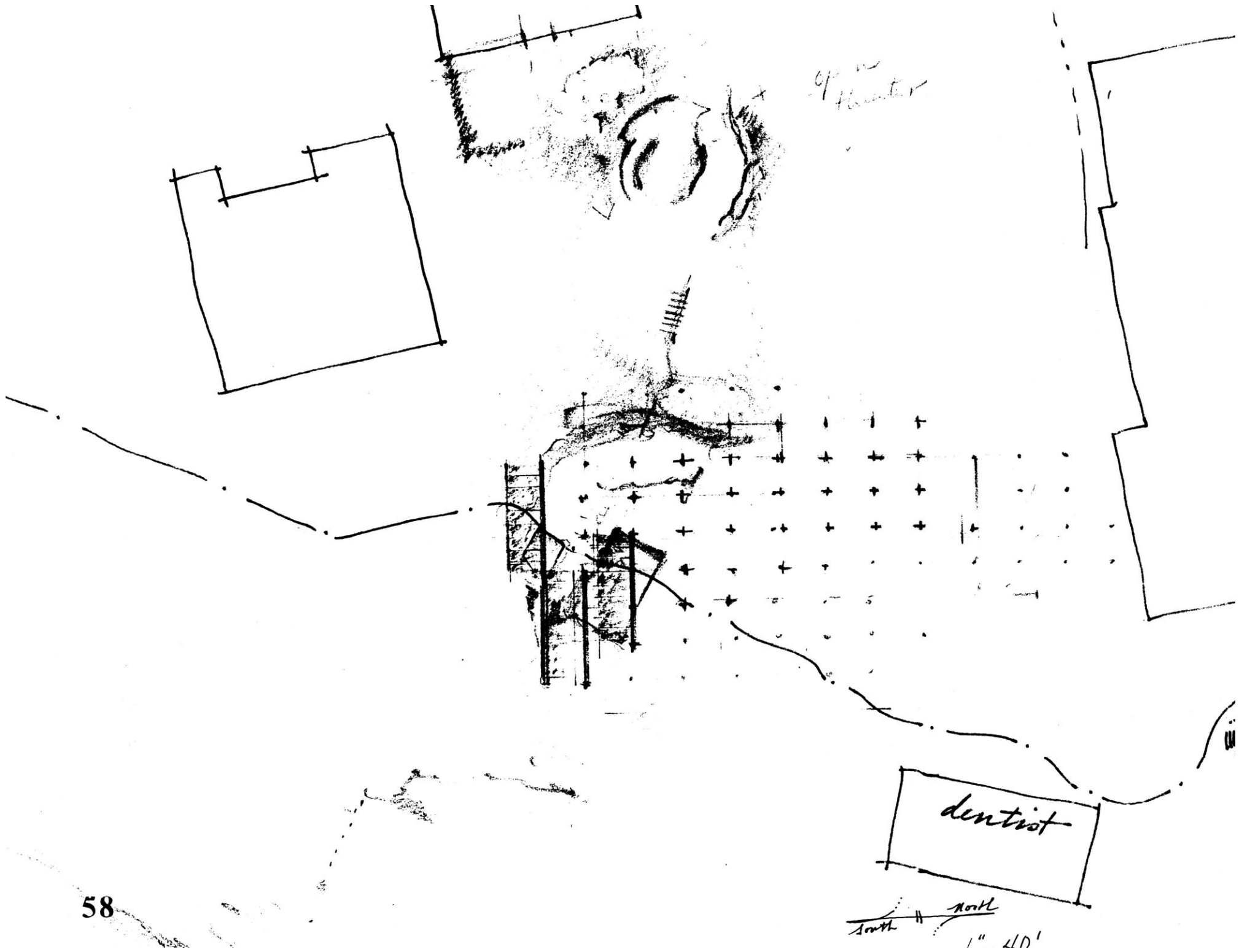
Part A



Intention: A pool house-recreation place. A lantern. A building with clear relationship to the rest of the built park system.

Connection of water (pool) with the river. A larger definition of "landscape" inside the building. A shelter on the edge/overlook.

Begin the path--looking east.



9' or
thinner

dentist

North
South || 1" = 10'

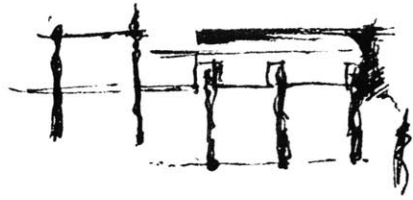
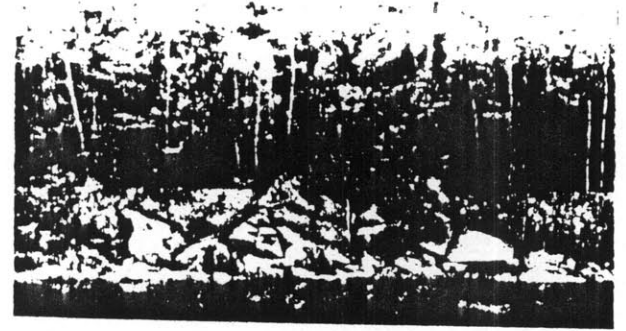
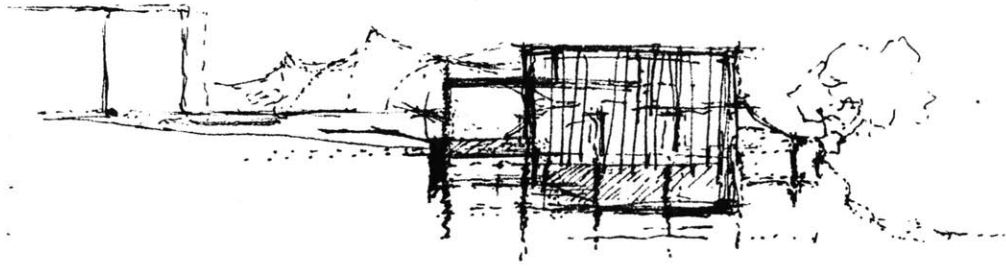
Recreation center pool at the eastern edge of the parking lot on the north end of the site.

Approached by car or by a path along the southern edge of the Aiken Building--from Main Street. The path is of smooth brick pavers edged by a shallow concrete gutter whose interior is washed gravel--but whose top edges are smooth.

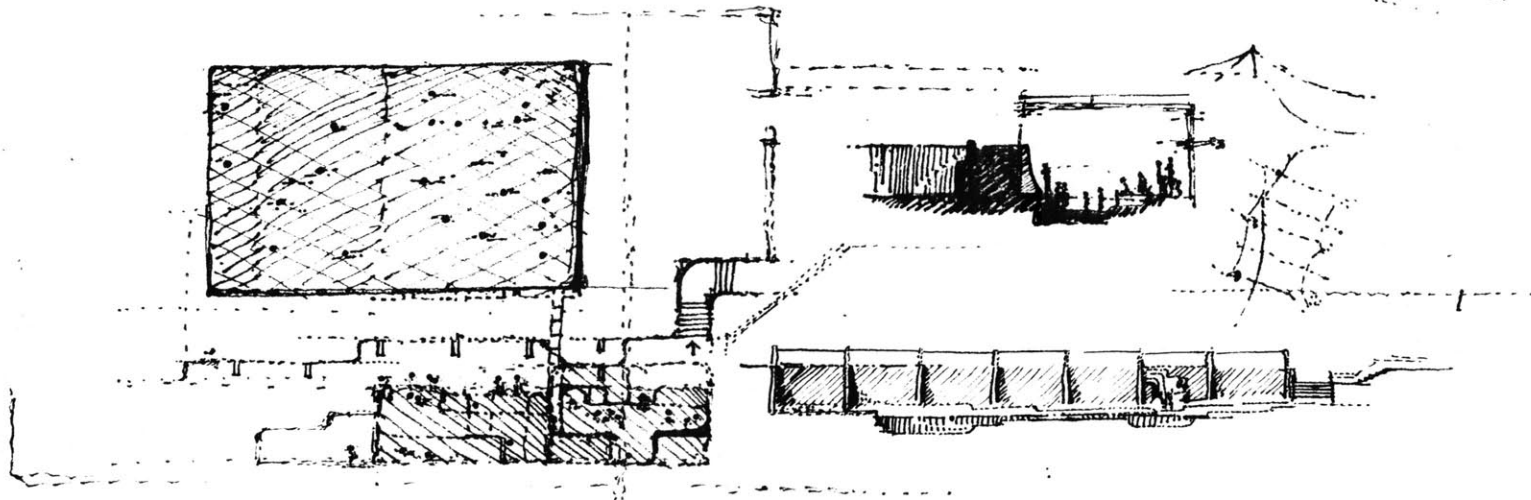
The path is met by a north wind screen of bushes and wall which should happen along the edge of the parking lot.

A sheltered sitting area at the back of the recreation center could occur. Set down into the ground three feet and rimmed to the north by a low wall--it would appear to be a pool of concrete and stone The pool is an amphitheater. Small, but ample for gatherings of children from the Montessori school next door, a dance piece, or a play.





Scale 1" = 40'

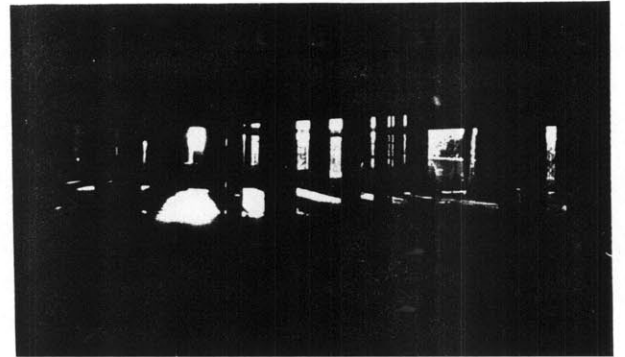
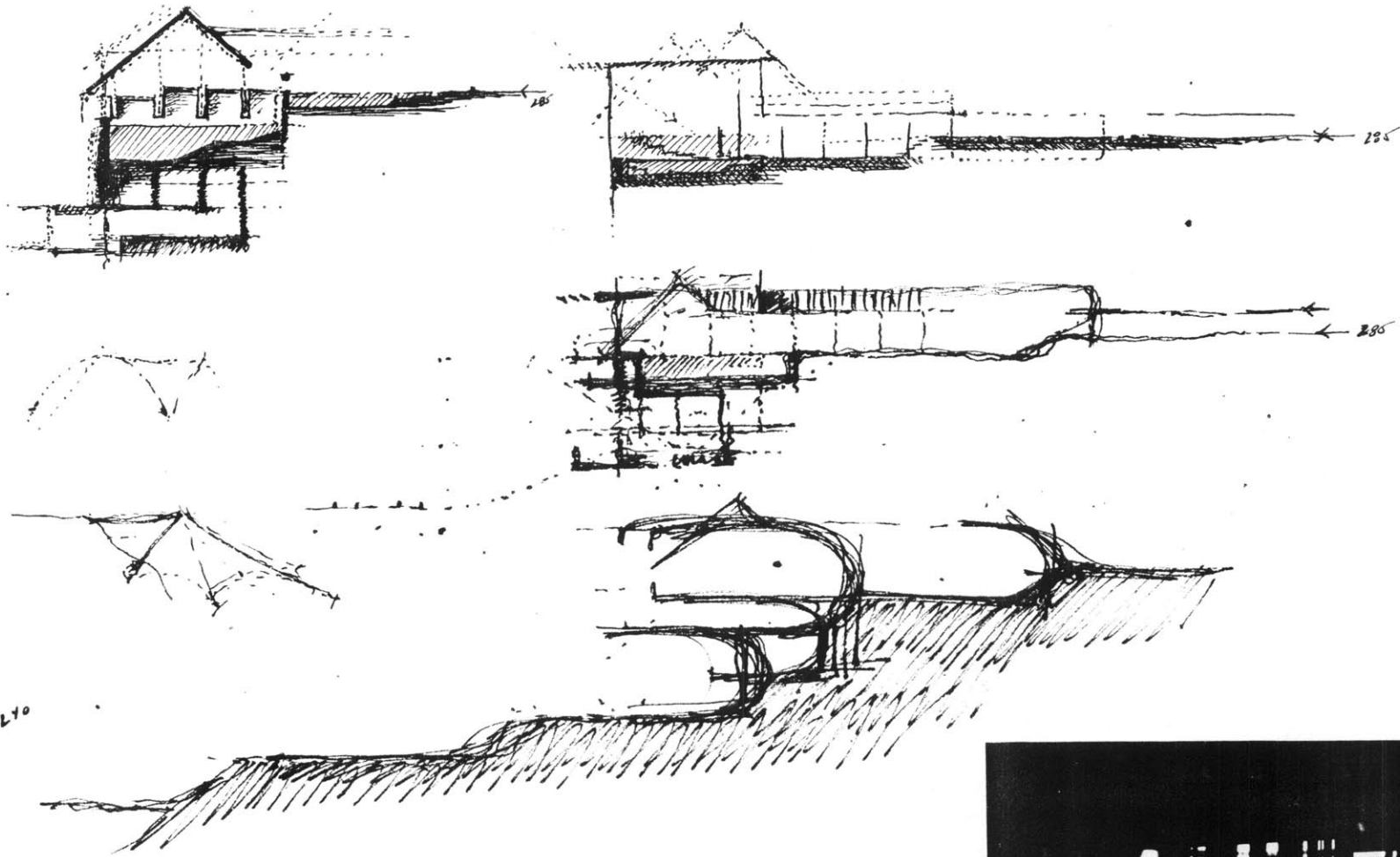


The path continues on to meet the walls of the pool enclosure. The path has dropped slowly along its length. By the time we meet the pool wall we should be at about 278 feet above sea level. We have the choice to follow the wall and enter the building at 275 or to turn from the pool and walk south along the bank of the river.

The pool itself is for swimmers and paddlers. There is a 75 by 45 foot standard sized pool and below it a large puddle. Think of the lower pool as a shallow stream. Narrow enough to allow an edge-perched mother on either side easy reach to intrepid toddlers. The main pool's overflow is channeled to fall (or trickle, depending on activity in the pool) down along the retaining wall and into the shallowest part of the stream--barely wet tiles. Perfect to splash in . . . at the thin edge of the water . . . where the waves just reach your toes.

A rock bed behind the shallow pool (under the stairs and a locker area) receives hot air from a duct at the top of the glassed





area. The air circulates through the bed transferring some of its heat and then is ducted into the locker room area.

The back of the pool house is bermed and well insulated. The glass portions should have inner night shutters. This will slow the heat loss. Their translucence will cause the pool house to glow warmly at night.

The east, south, and part of the west walls are open frameworks with thermopane infills. Awning tents could cover part of the decking that extends out over the bank to the south and east.

The whole structure sets into the bank. Stone to the north and translucence to the south.

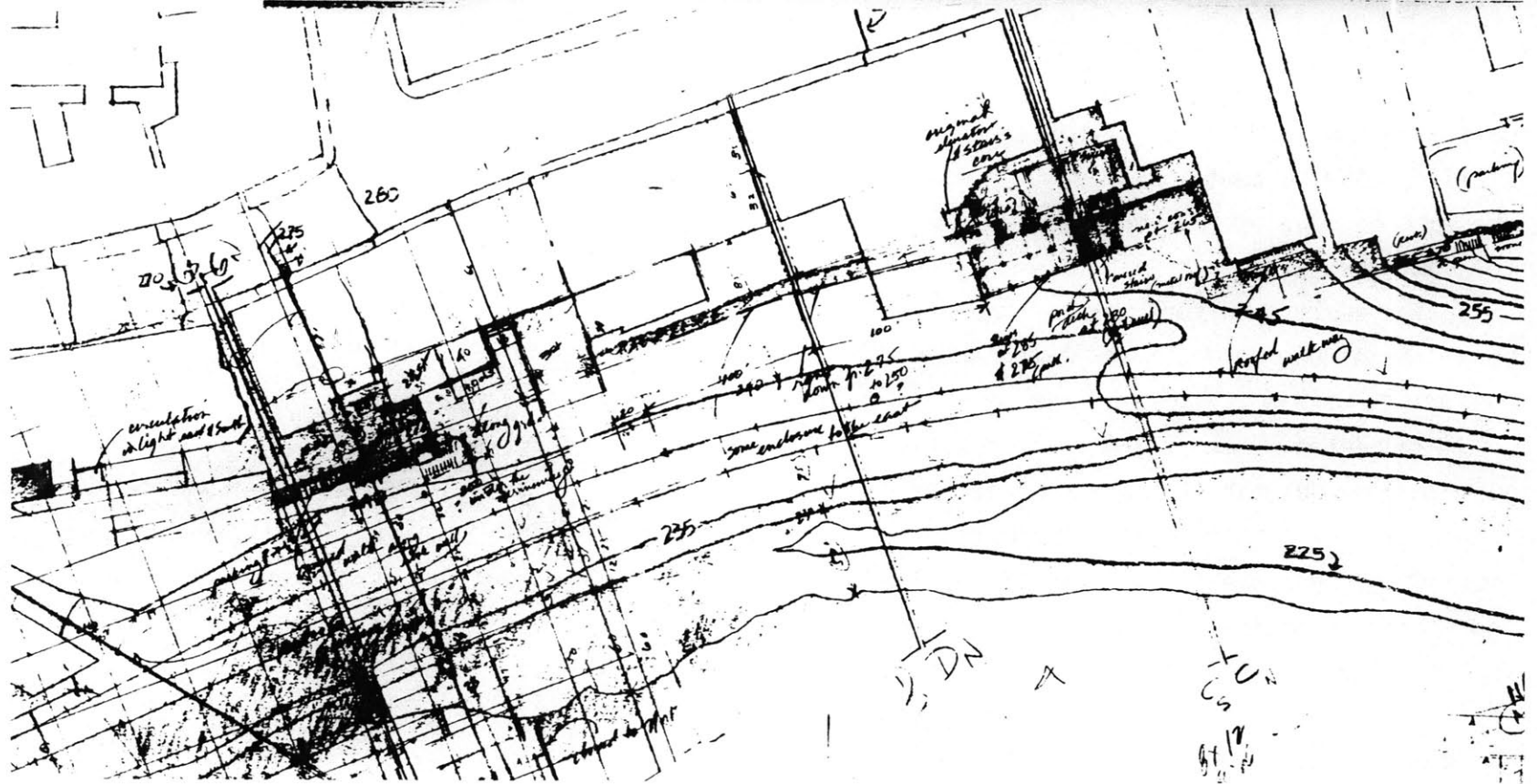
The water which followed us in the gutter along our path from Main Street is joined by runoff from the roof and extra water from the pools. Seasonally it will ebb and flood. Sometimes at the banks edge water will roar over the stones set in the bank to control the erosion such a persistent stream could cause. Water under ice and frozen

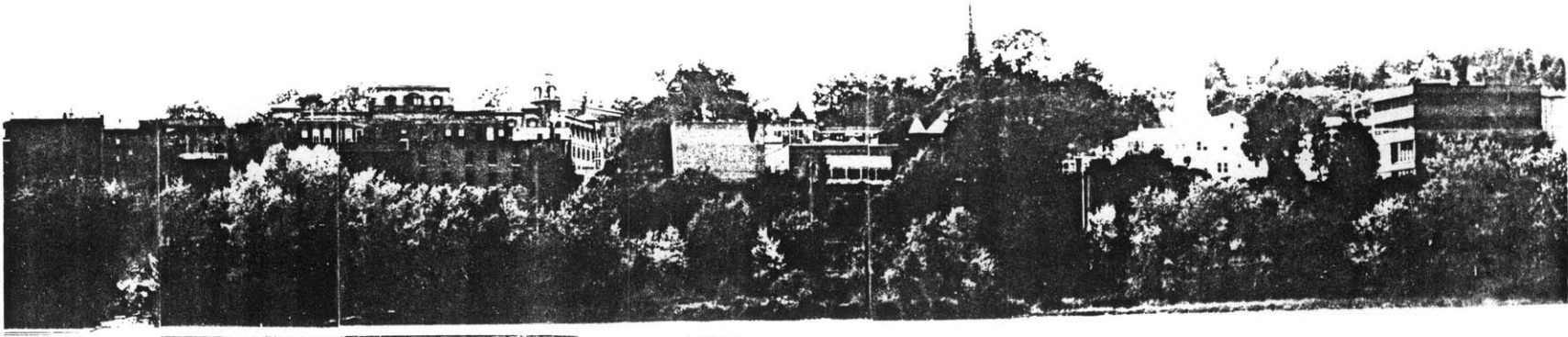
splashes can be seen from the warmth of the pool house--or better yet listed to and watched by people on the snow drifted deck.

A sauna? A work-out room? Lockers for joggers changing for work in town? Possible, but I am interested in the edges . . . where we can look out over the river, the town and the tracks.



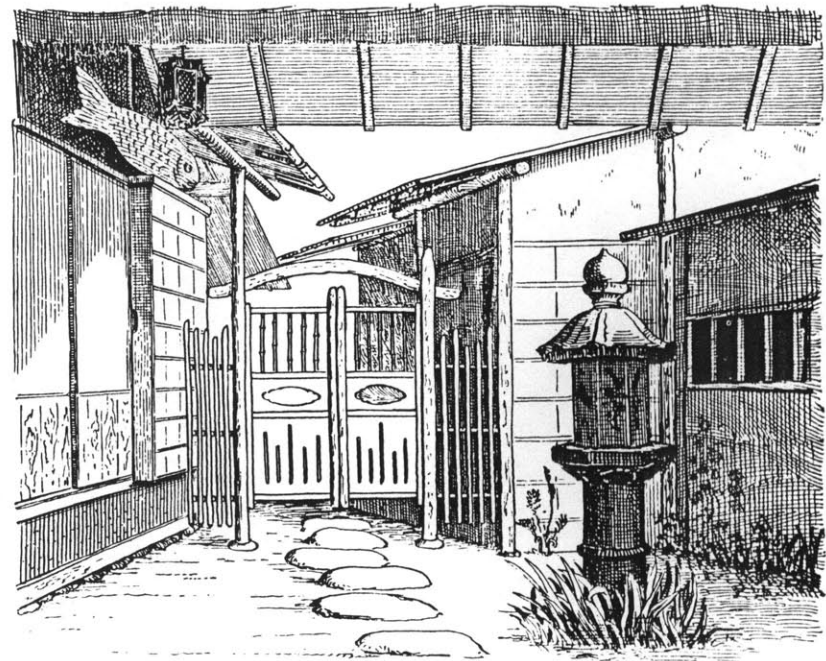
Part B





to the edge

Intention: A narrow and constraining "gateway" (use of a Japanese reference). An entry steps and screens, etc. to orchestrate the travellers's sense of the larger landscape. Introduction to building outside and piece of the landscapes inside.



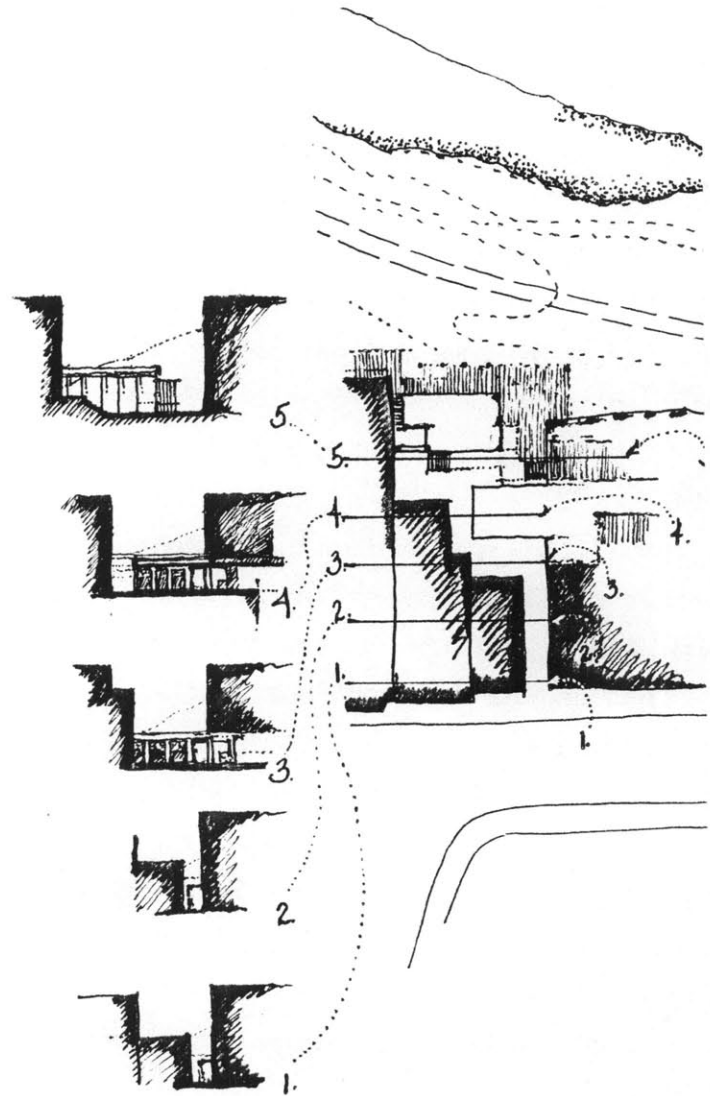
— GARDEN GATEWAY.

In Brattleboro the more open landscape and the town's buildings run parallel. Across this grain runs a finer web of movement and forms. Small crevices in the rock wall allow glimpses of the hills east of the river.

The journey can begin along any one of the alleys that cut through the main street line-up. These passageways are ten to twelve feet across and run between four or five story building walls. The length of the path varies from sixty to eighty feet.

The alley is a deep valley between two cliffs. We will not move easily into a dark place unless we see or know from experience the light at the end of it. So . . . the alley is not closed over. A low building



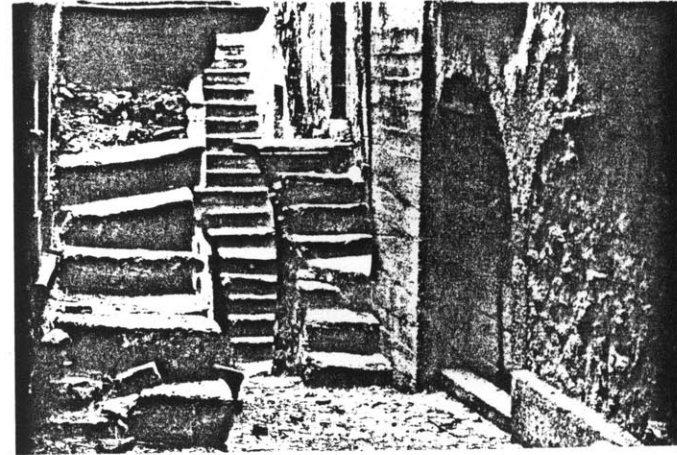


ahead screens our view of the river but the light indicates a break beyond that building. We can just see the hills of New Hampshire over it.

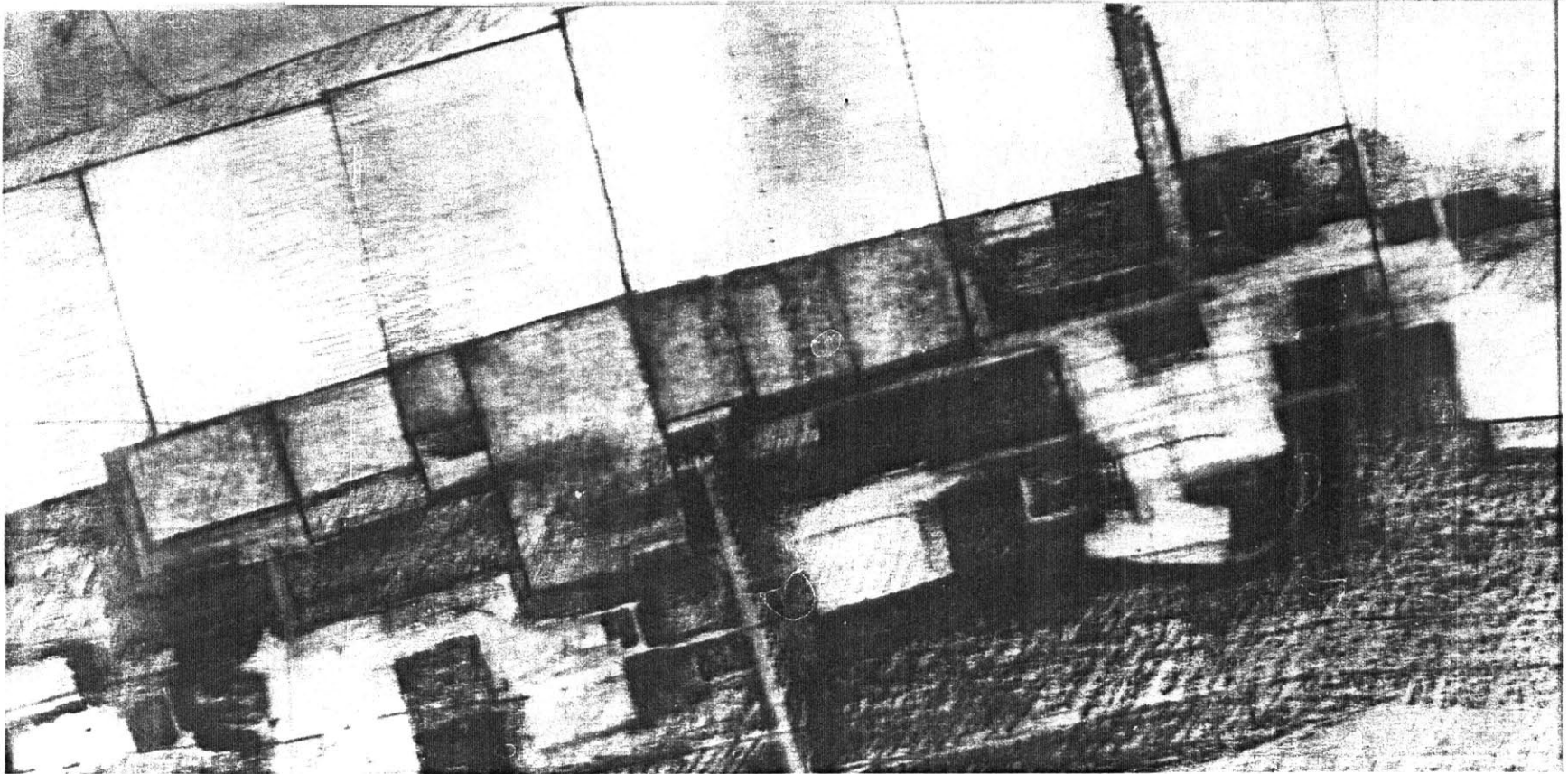
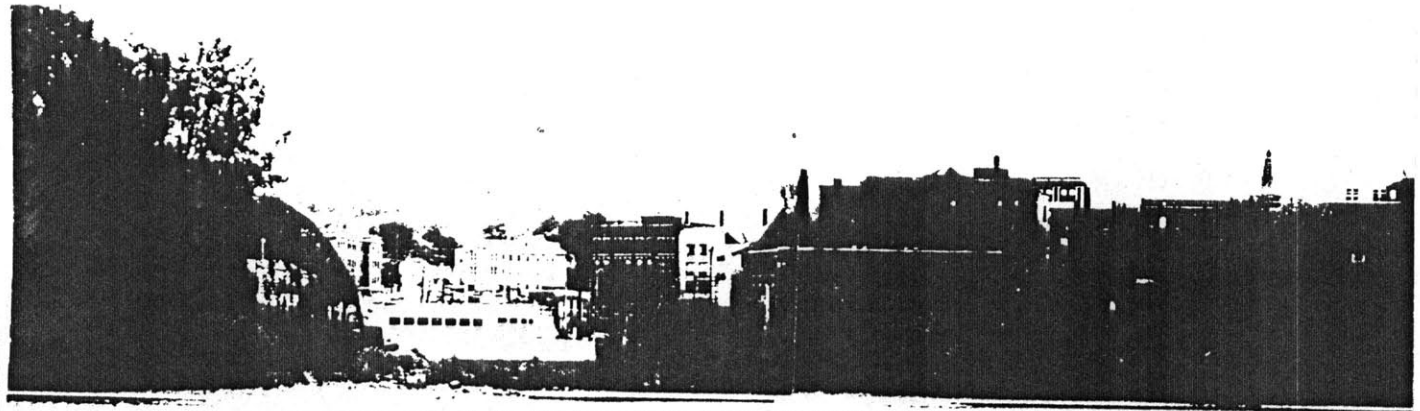
As we move up to the low building we may turn right or we must go left. The right hand entrance leads into a building.

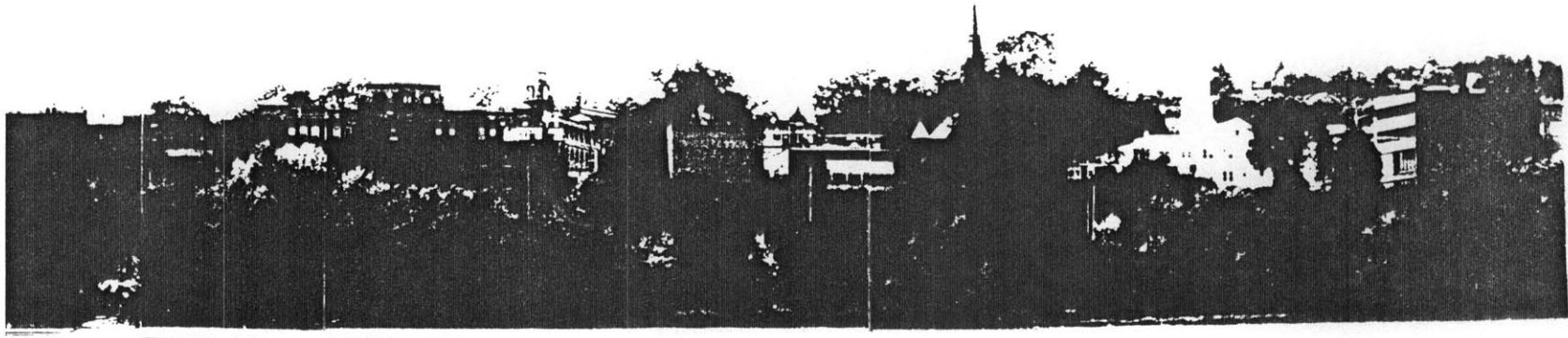
Turning right we walk along the low screening building and under the lintel of the brick warehouses entrance . . . into a market place. Windows to the east (left) can be seen through shop-glass and our path winds through the place moving east and south. We can hear and then pass over the top of a path through the building on the floor below.

If we turn left we wind between buildings out to stairs leading us down (and south) five feet to a terrace. We continue past a screened area to another set of stairs. A narrow view has opened to our left--revealing the river valley but few will notice until they get to the lower terrace and are preparing to enter the large brick warehouse. Perhaps the noise of the river will cause them to look east.



Part C





paths

Intention: A pathway. A chance to be on the edge of the weather, the river bank, and the old town buildings. Articulated connections. Simple materials. A variety of experiences... inside/out and outside/in. A boardwalk - low bridge - promenade. A river-path eroding buildings in its way.

An overview of this pathway will show a silver roof working along the backs of the buildings. It clings to the wall now, leans out over the slope . . . dives in and then out of caves and skirts the cliffs.

Along this walkway are markets, homes, gardens, and glimpses of the river. Smaller paths and bridges lead to them, through them and down to the river.

This path is a movement park. It's a chance for combined active and passive recreation.



The tin roof glints in the sun. Its edge form informs of the changing ebb and flow of people, shifting in response to stairways reaching out an arm to cover incoming paths and spreading a wing down occasionally to cover an activity under foot. It also sounds incredible in a rainstorm.

The walkway itself is wood one and one-half by six inch planks on wooden beams--double beams when a stair or entranceway occurs.

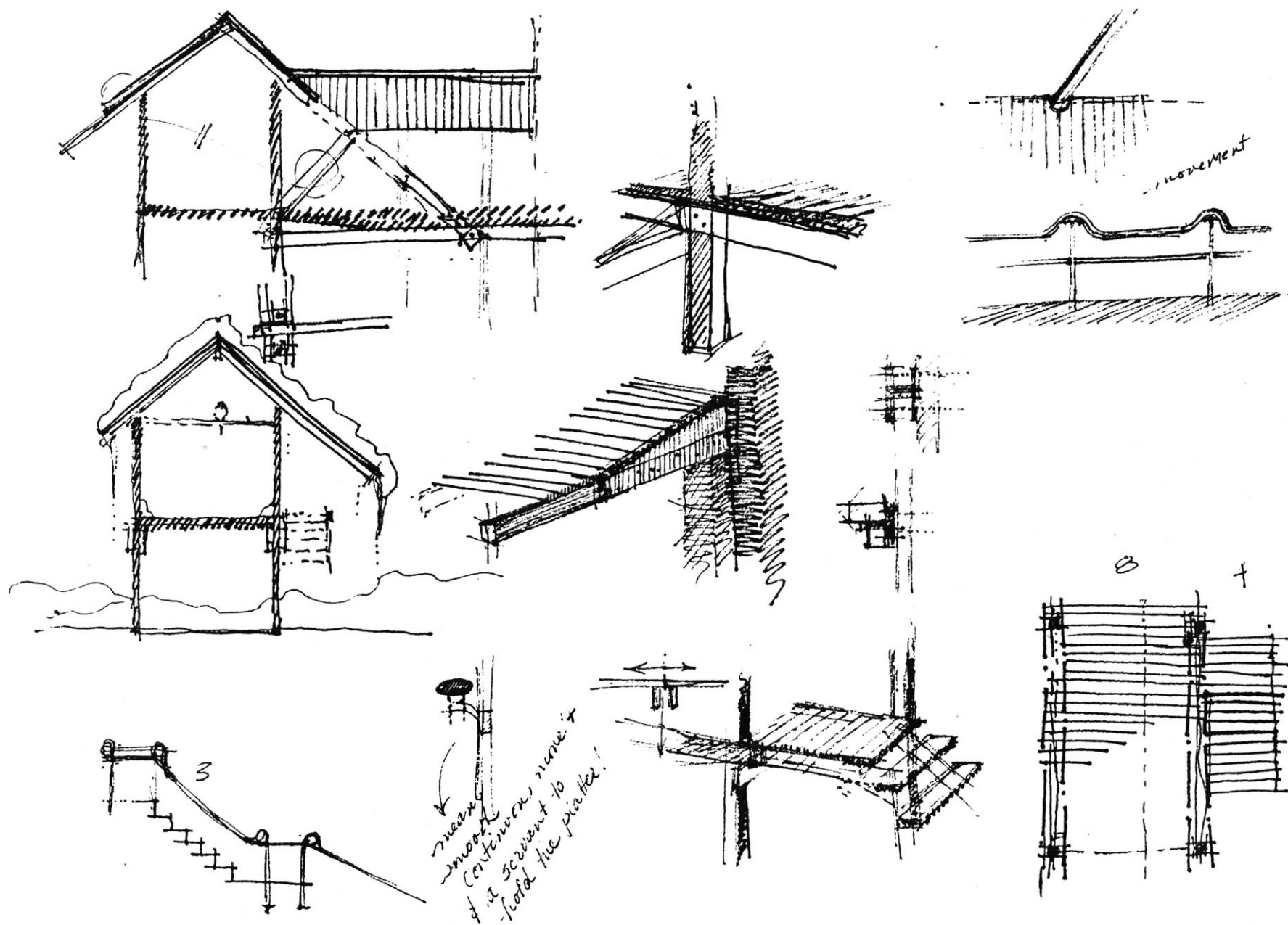
The columns are wooden posts set on sauna tube footings--connected with a metal bracket set in concrete. The separation of concrete and wood by a third material--metal--keeps the wood free of the moisture migrating in the concrete, allows the elements to be dealt with separately when

repairs are necessary to any part . . . and is a clear understandable articulation of the joint between wood and stone.

The columns seem trees . . . saplings . . . clustering to chat around entries and stairs--then separating to stand sentinels on the edges of the roadway--kindly holding branches, shelter overhead.

The town's front/back porch . . . and boardwalk (a kind of platformed walkway).





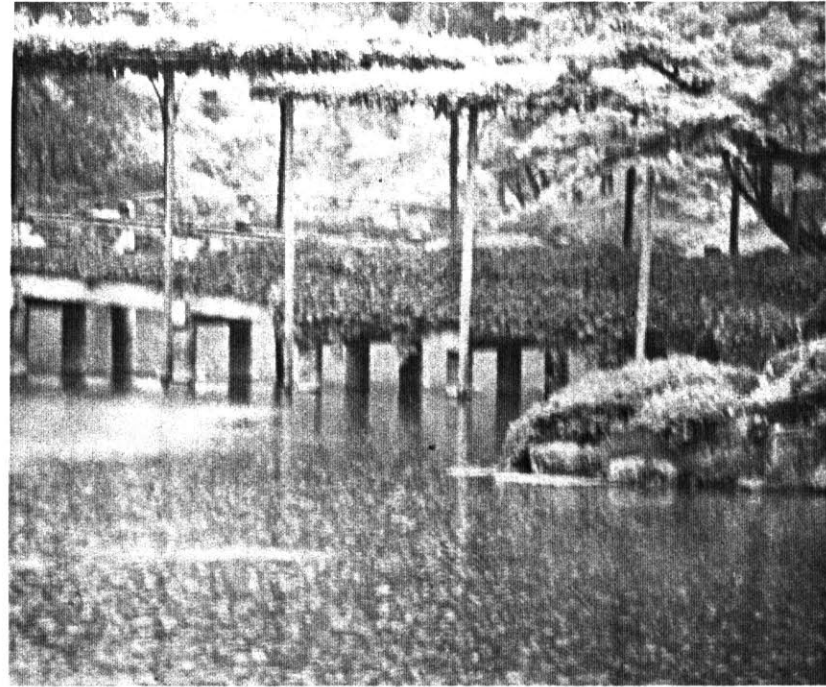
main
 wood
 continuous run +
 a servant to
 fold the plaster!

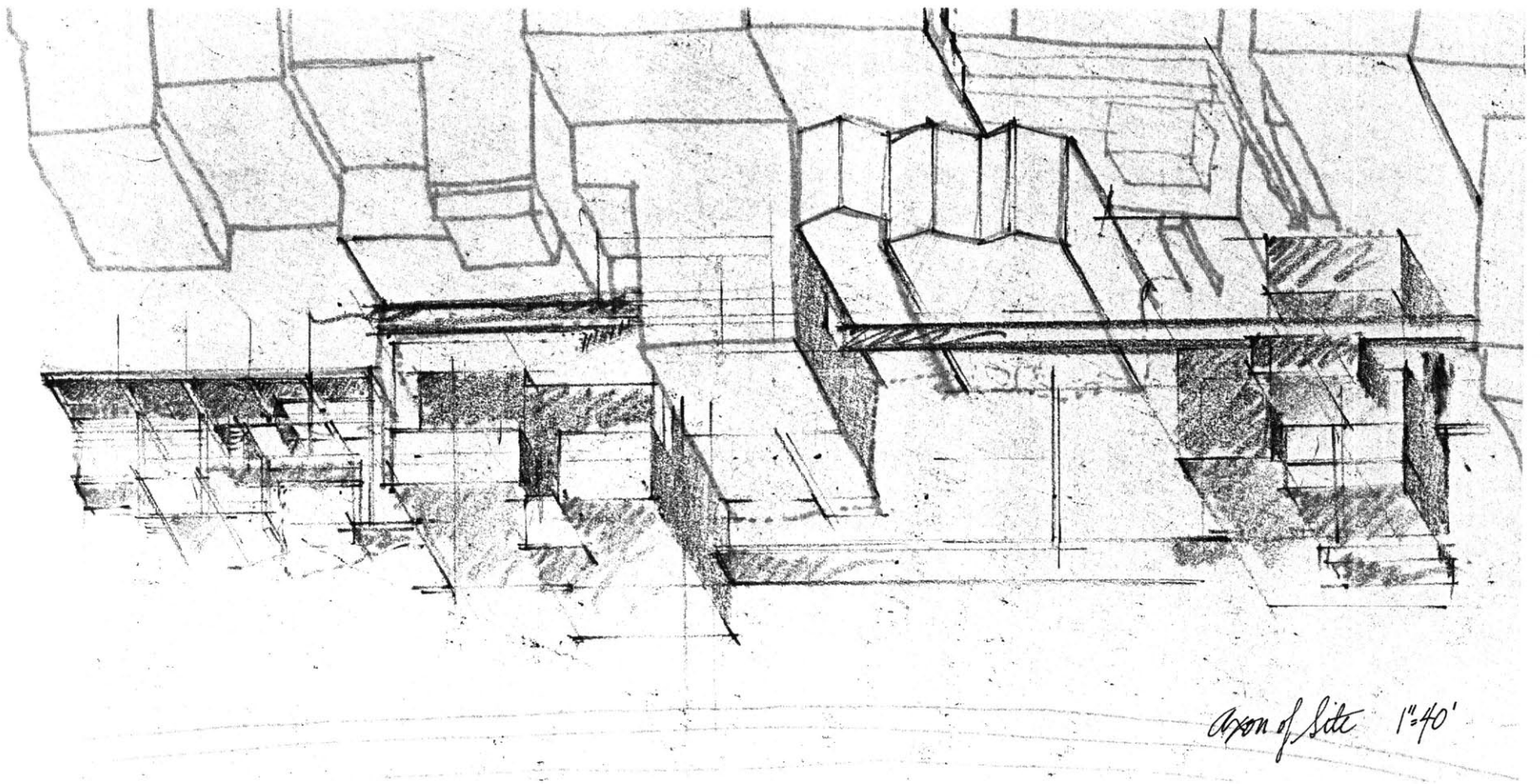
The main path at this place becomes a covered walkway. A kind of boardwalk--it runs above ground, supported by wooden posts at eight foot intervals. The posts run up to hold a wooden truss and metal roof.

The path runs in the valley between two building ranges. A small valley with a steep western slope and glimpses at intervals between the lower buildings to the east.

The ridge of the path's roof runs north south along with the path, road, river, mountain ranges, wall of existing buildings, railroad . . . in the primary movement direction.

The paths to the buildings eastward are generally lower, narrower secondary streets. Careful treatment of the meeting of the primary and secondary pathways should communicate the relatively public or private nature of the "side street" or "front walk".





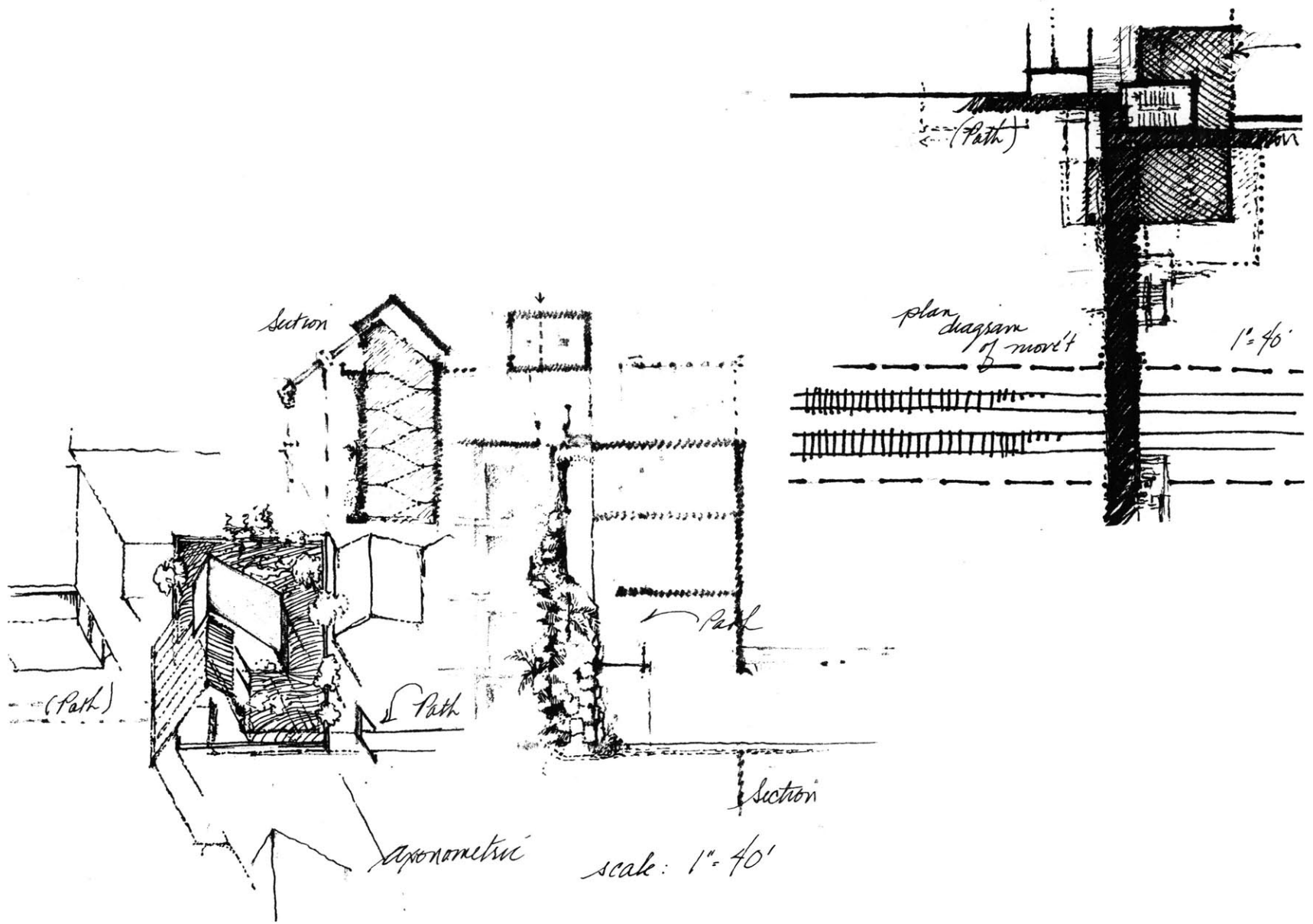
The path continues through the market. A stairway inside the old Dunham's warehouse brings us down to one story below Main Street's level (283 feet above sea level), but three stories up from the level of the railroad tracks.

We enter out onto a platform aware of other levels below us and the river to one side. There is a garden in the southeast corner of the platform. We are on wood. The garden is laid in dirt and gravel with tile walks. Earth.

After a first glimpse of the river the buildings crowd our river side. We are enclosed in a kind of public courtyard. The walkway is met at the edge of this courtyard by another perpendicular to our path. A narrow covered passage leads back to Main Street.

As pedestrians we have the opportunity to experience things more quietly and more slowly. (When I say quietly, I am referring to visual "noise".) It is possible for us to peer around corners and stop to see things child like. As we walk the varied tapestry before us unfolds to all the senses.

It is possible to have eyes and not to see--ears and not to hear. In order to tell the difference in texture or hardness of surfaces it is not sufficient to put a finger on them. The finger must move over them.*



The building has a small doorway carved in its side. At this level there is no alternative. We move into darkness. There is the sound of water here. As our eyes grow accustomed to the more subdued light we see the glint of water beneath us. We continue on toward the sound of water falling down a narrow crevice in the rock wall to our right.

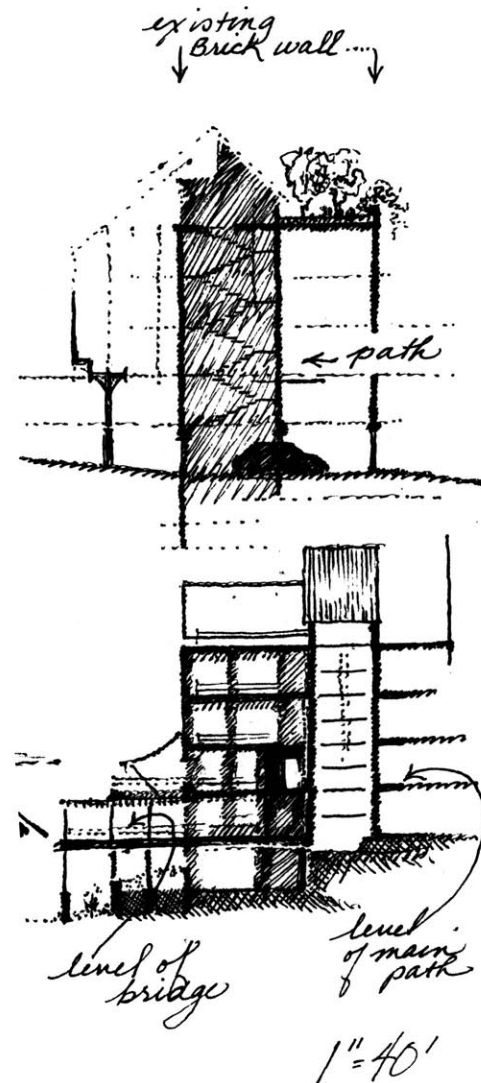
A shaft of light shines on the wall from above. The water sparkles on fern leaves and moss.

Water and light. The dark dappled light of a deep pine forest floor. Strong verticals.

The water comes from a roof garden and drainage system.

The light shines through glass blocks set in the ribs, or which channel the water from the top floor to a pool at the level below our entry path.

The water's path falls past ours on its way to the pool where it is edged by a stone path. Under our bridge/floor flow people and water out toward the river.





Courtyard garden adjacent to main entrance, Daimonjiya inn, Kyoto.

I am designing an interplay of stone-water/glass passing next to and under the wooden path (trees) at a higher level. Weaving.

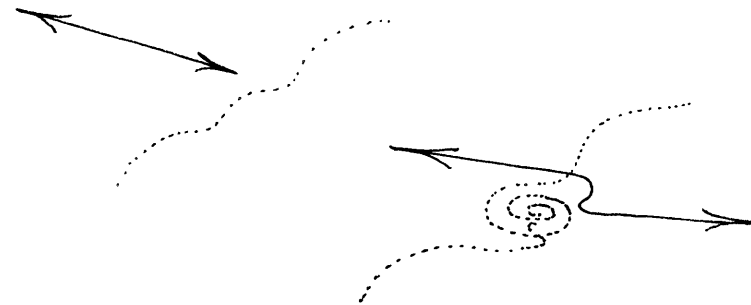
The path continues around the waterfall and into a glass house whose metal framework clings to the brick side of the building--an echo of balconies enclosed in glass.

New materials are stone, glass and water. The glass block is associated with water. Visi-block is particularly underwater like. Light ripples through it. The Visi-block can be used for part of the floor and so insets the wall where light shines through it.

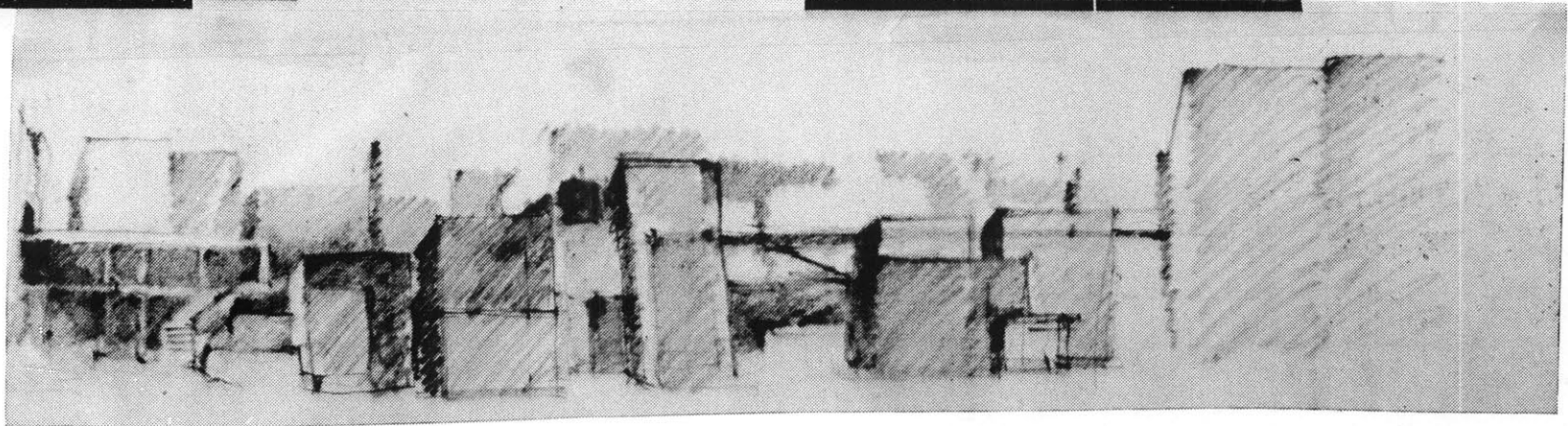
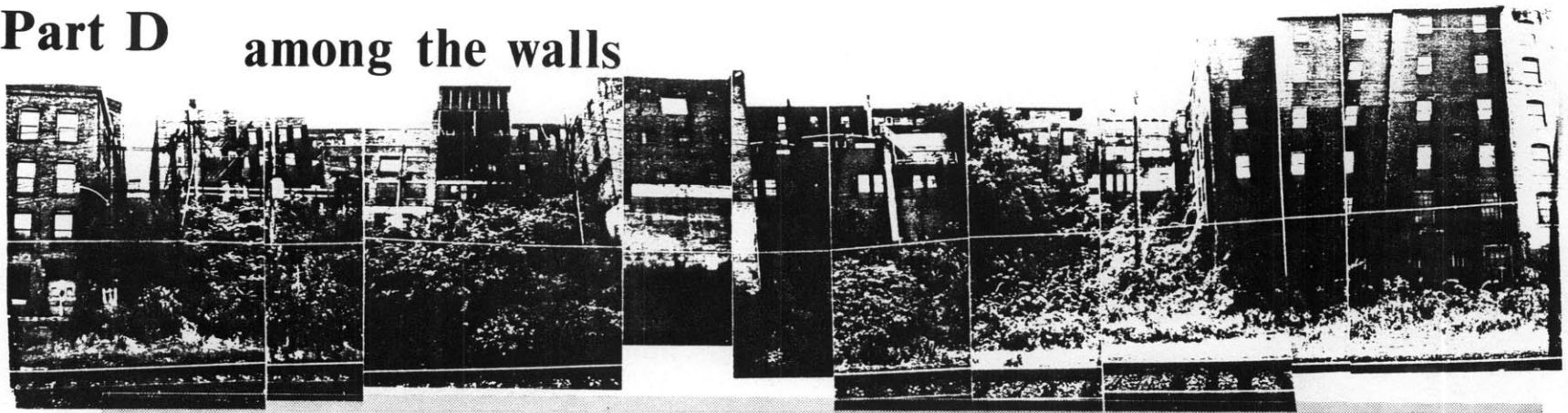
The stone, Vermont granite is incredible when wet. Smooth, finished at hand-rail height and in the places of still water pools (at the bottom of the waterfall), and rough cut for the waterfall, and as a rule along the edges of the trough or channel.

At the scale of movement--the water runs toward the river. The main path runs parallel to the river. Eddies and building "events" happen wherever a watercourse and the park come together.

At these points the water and sometimes a lower level of pathway move under (erode) the main path.

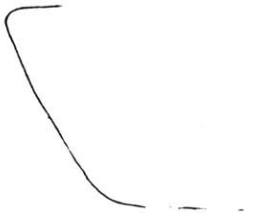


Part D among the walls



Intention: Optimum density design of the area between existing buildings and the railroad. Strong articulation of the landscape's terracing in the

interrelationship of the pieces of the design. Reinforcement of the existing buildings in the overall forms (massing) Reasonable dimensions for housing, parking, access and light commercial use.



South + North

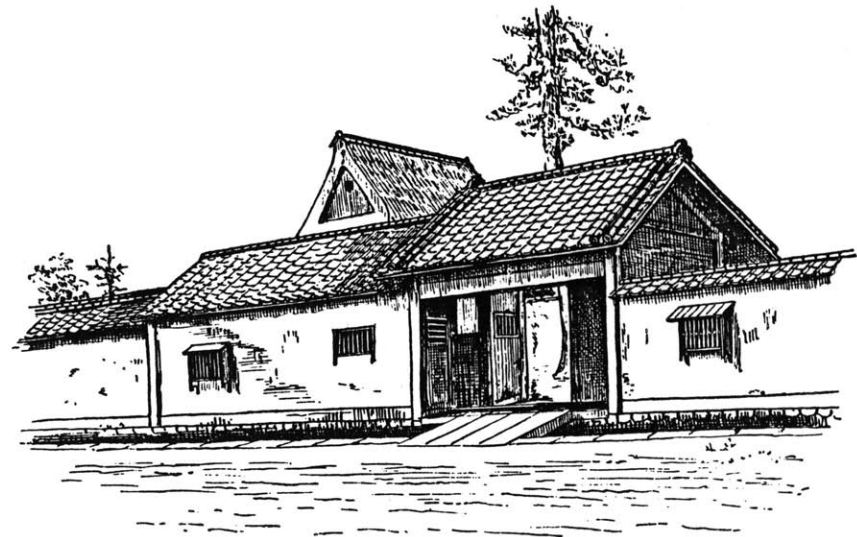
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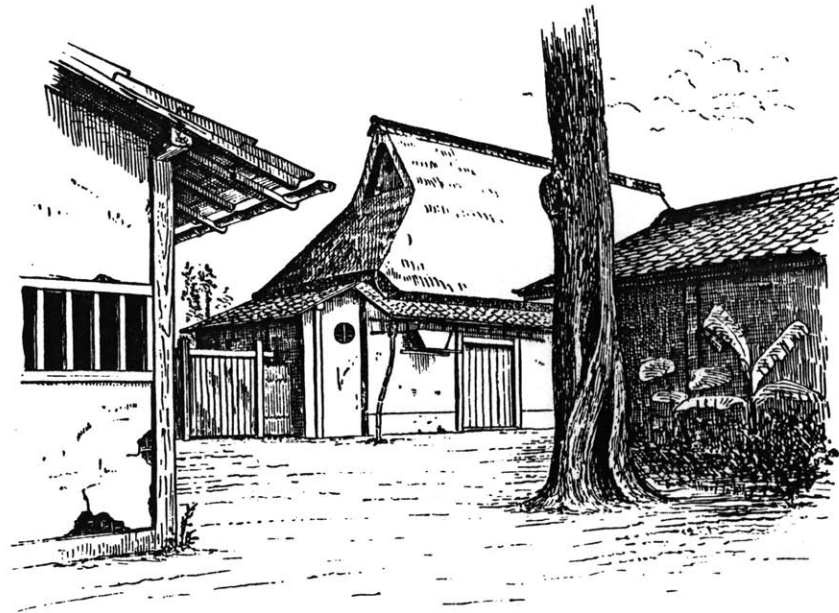
Courtyard garden, Suppon Dai-ichi restaurant, Kyoto.

We are moving in a vertical landscape as we pass through walls. Garden walls, retaining walls, housing. A world of roofs and gardens glimpsed from the path.

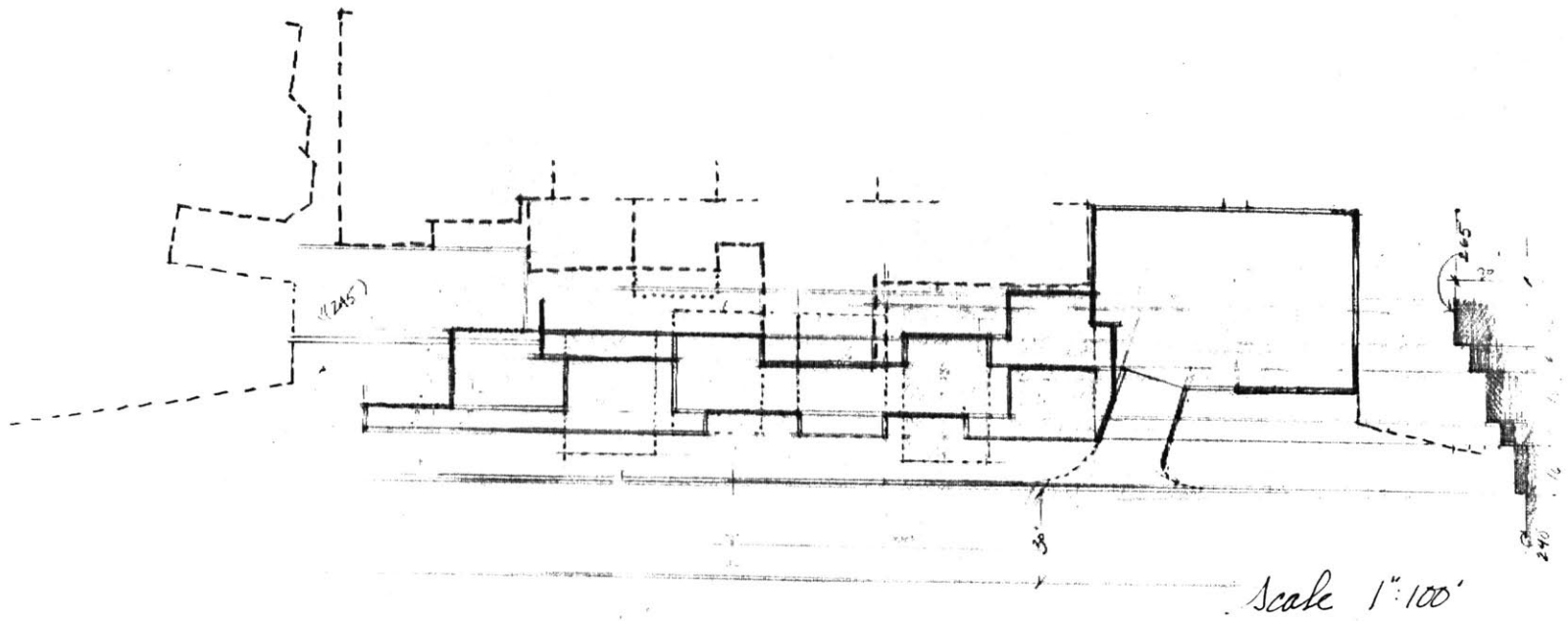
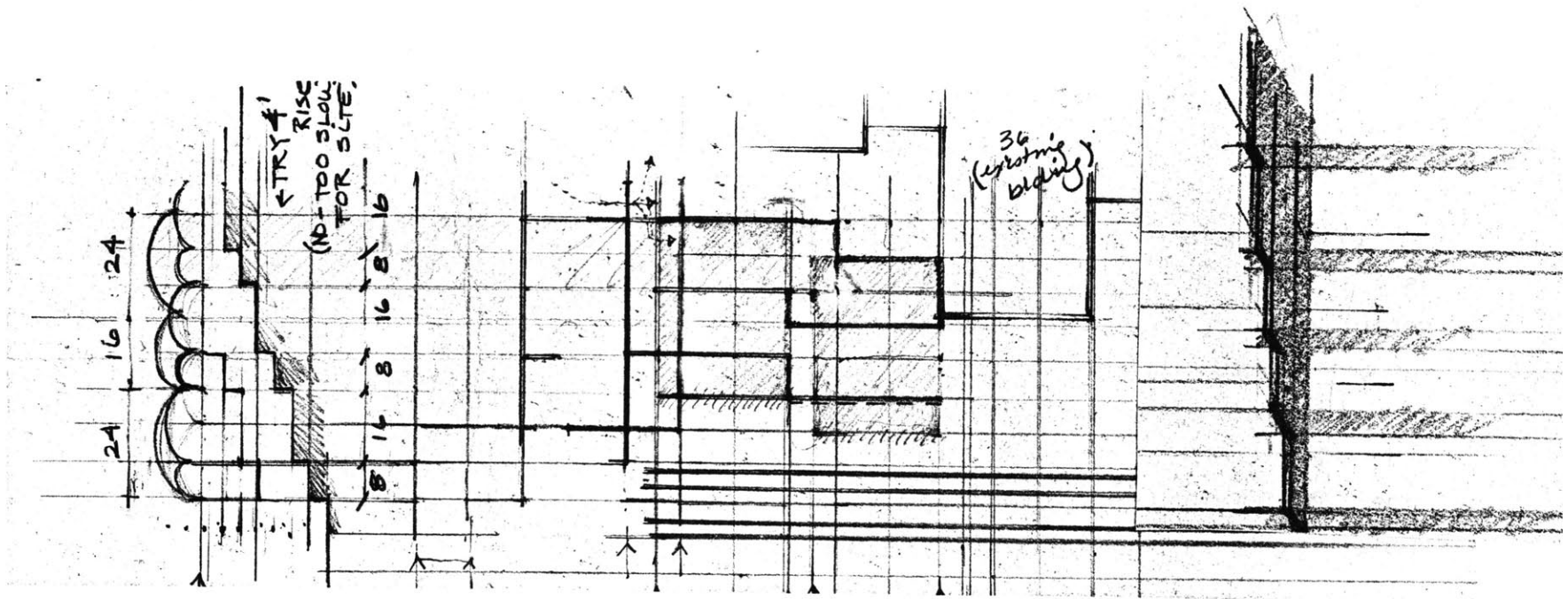
Privacies are protected by low eaves and wall-screens on the public (pathway) side. The housing tells its story as we pass through a gateway zone into a possible open courtyard. The yards can be shared between clusters of houses. Gardens terrace down the hillside facing the wild garden of Mount Wantastiquet across the river.



-ENTRANCE TO COURT-YARD OF OLD HOUSE IN KIOTO.



-OLD HOUSE IN KIOTO. COURT-YARD VIEW.



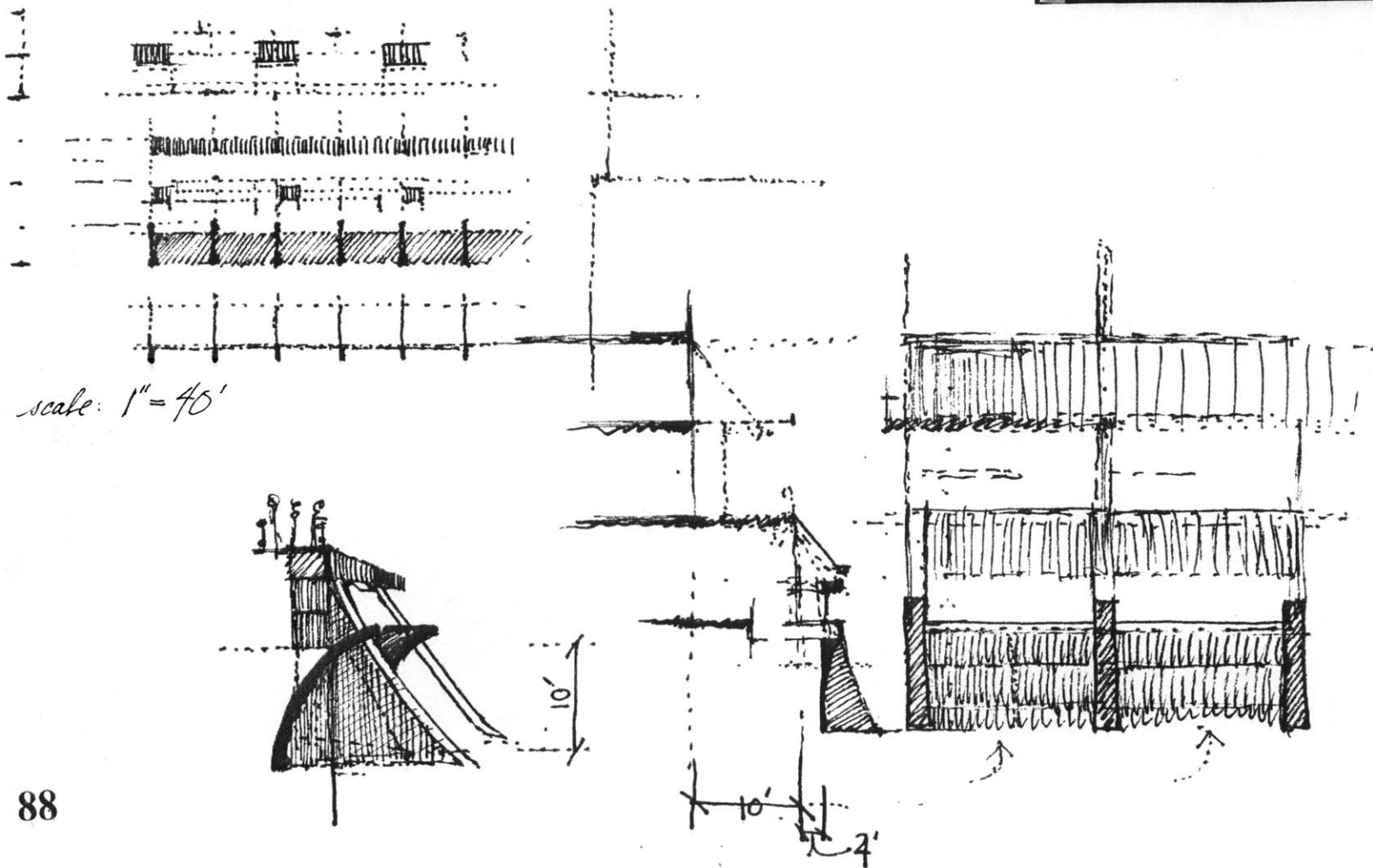
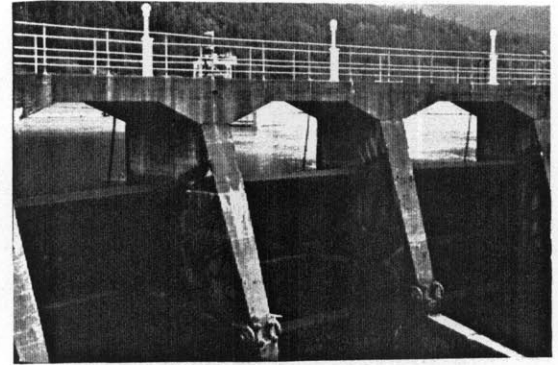
Scale 1"=100'

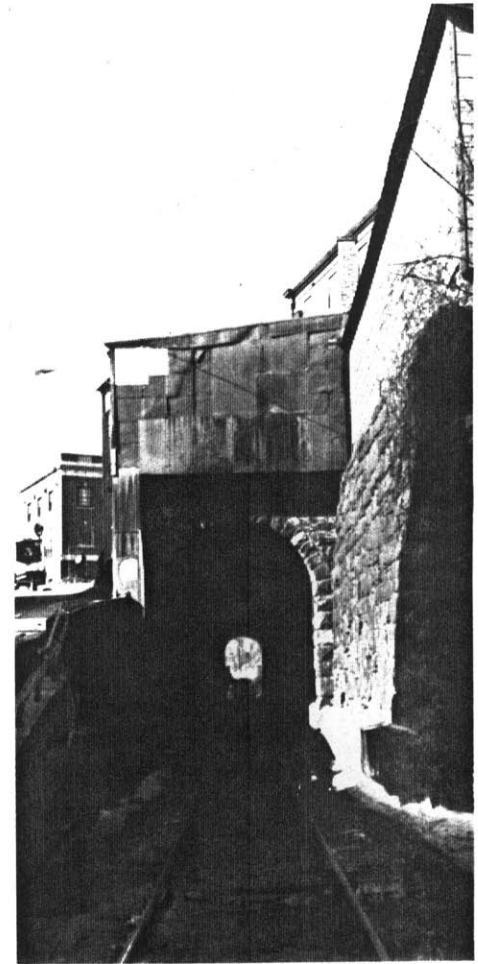
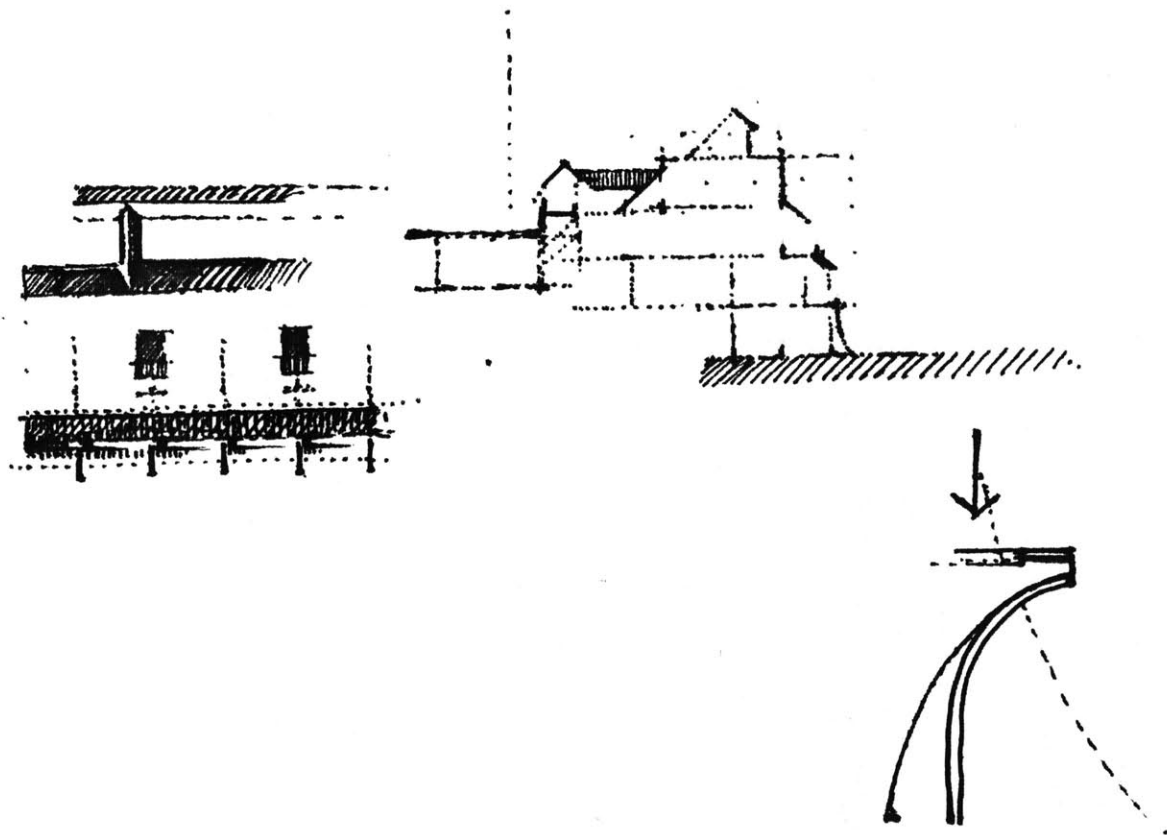
Garden rooftops become walkways below bridges to upper units. Weaving solids and voids. Garden and stone (concrete).

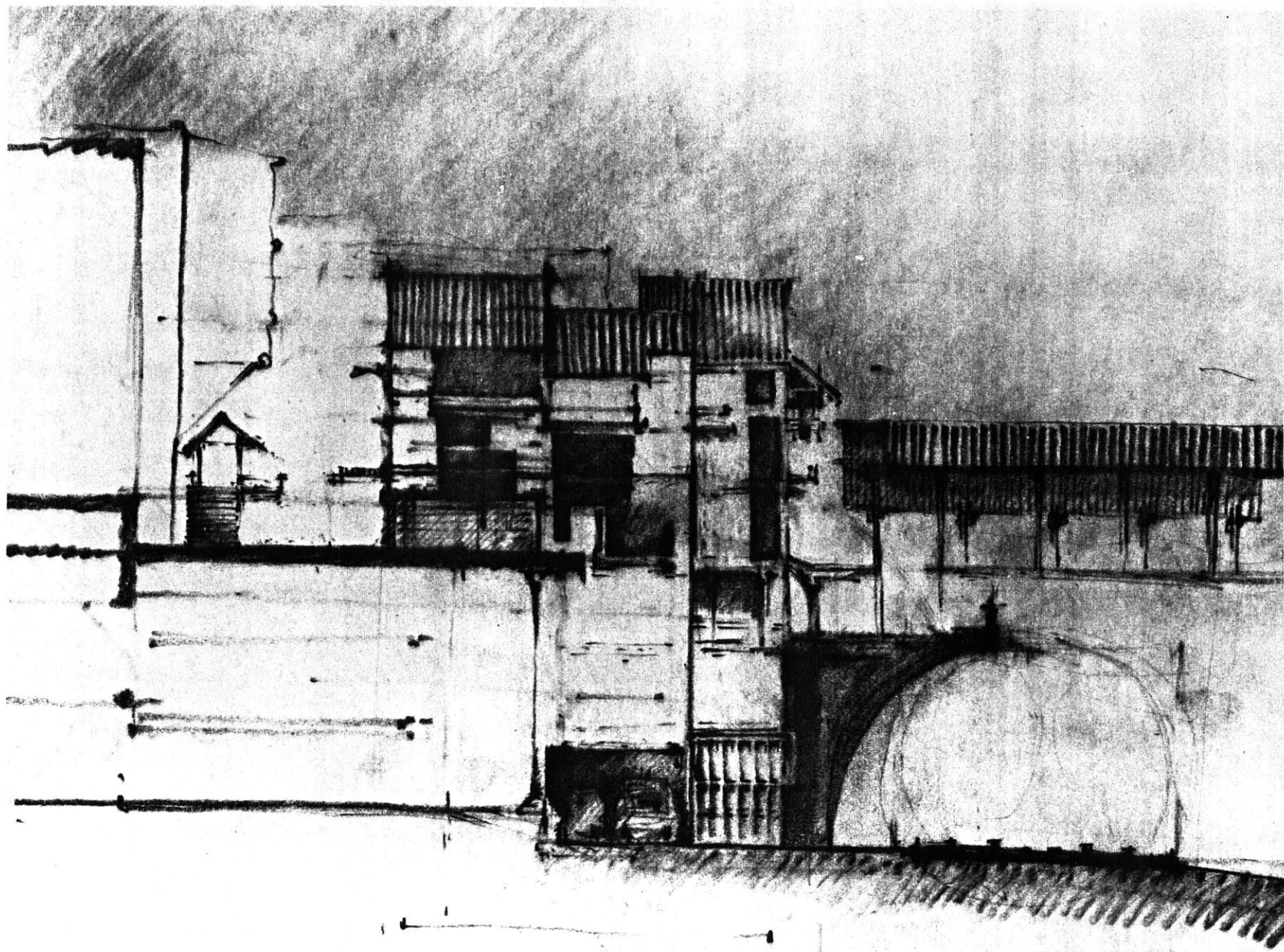
The buildings are built into retaining walls on the steep short slope between old town and the railroad tracks. Vehicles access from rail level or via a main street level (270' above sea level) ramp. The ramp can access the garages of the upper units and then drop to grade (245') near the entrance to a covered car park. The car park is beneath the path and public gardens.

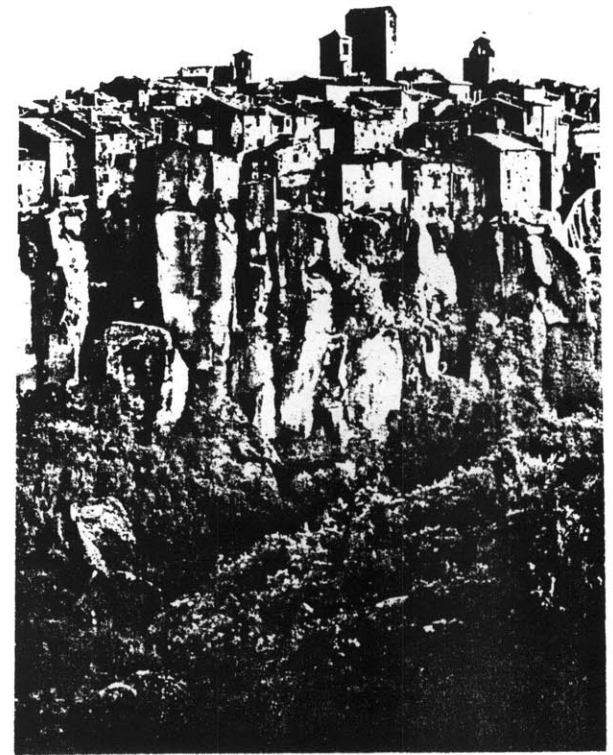
We can choose to move perpendicular to the main path down into and through the walls or parallel with the path and below it--along the edge of the vehicle access.





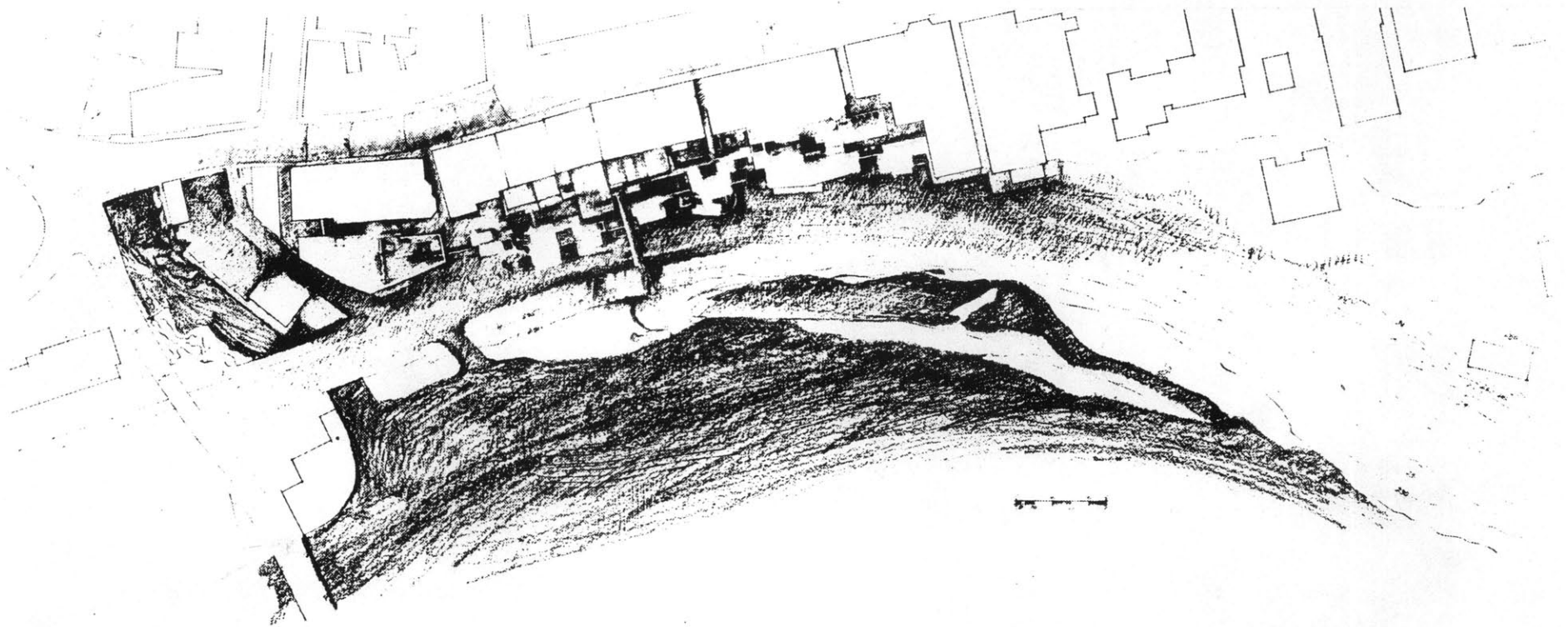
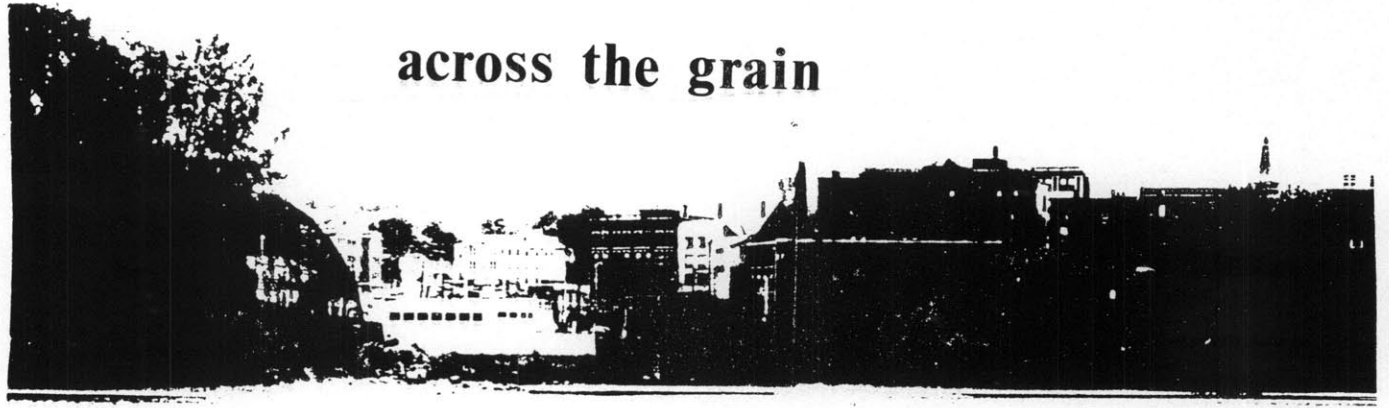


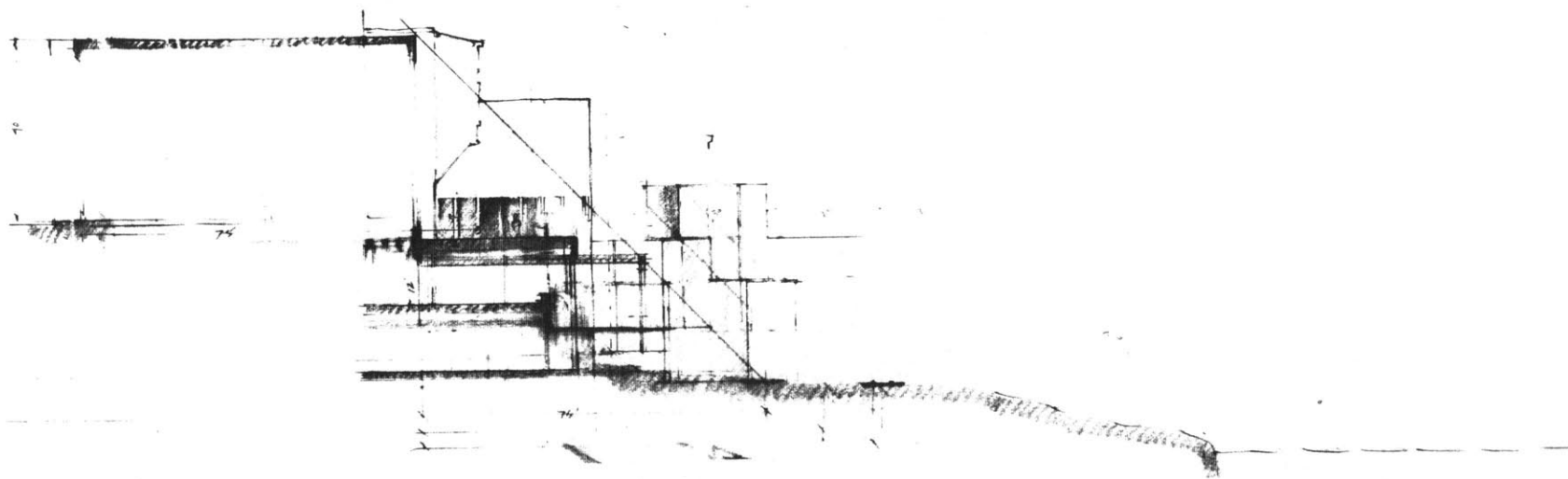
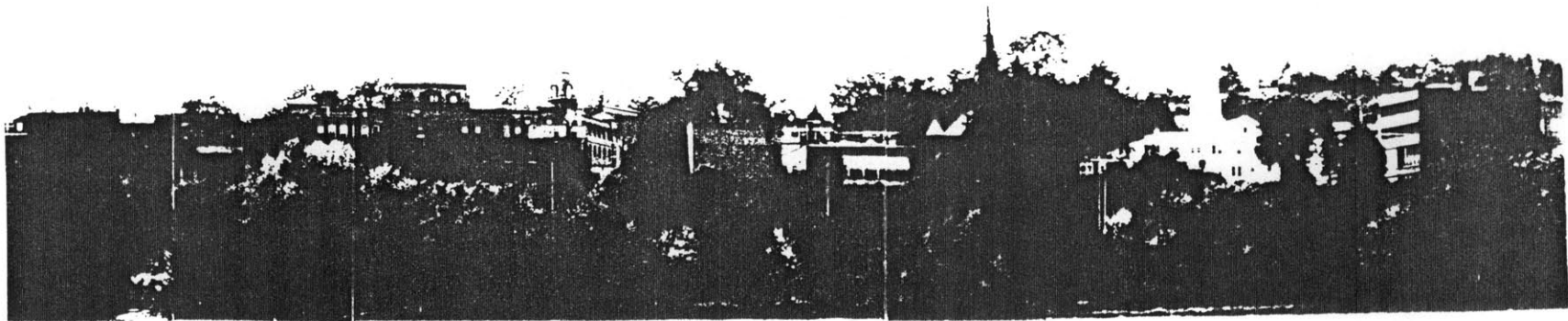




Part E

across the grain



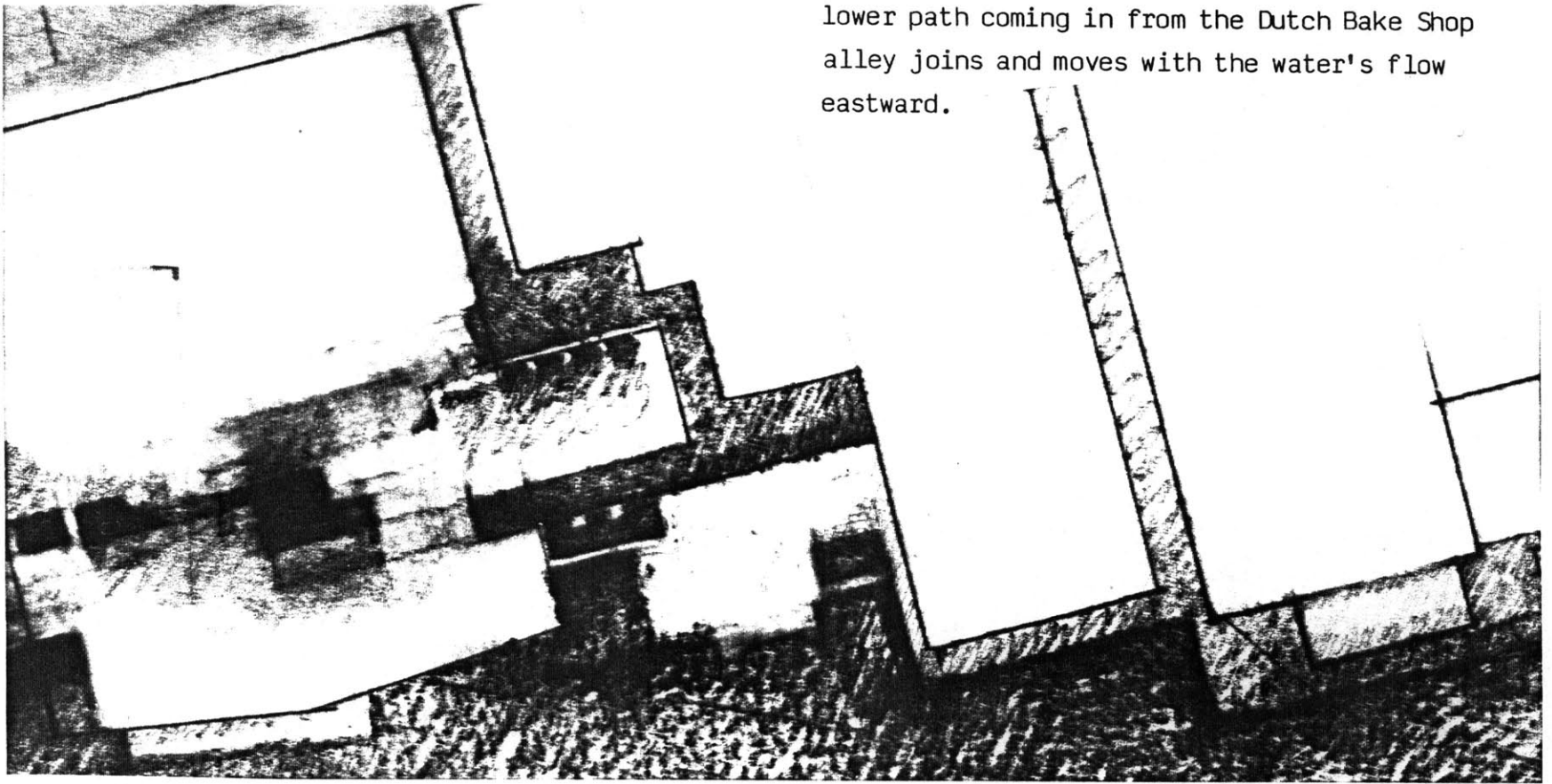


Intention: A crossing. The introduction of a major path-bridge across the predominant movement patterns. An alternative. A path to the riverside. Identification with the river. Connection with the earth.

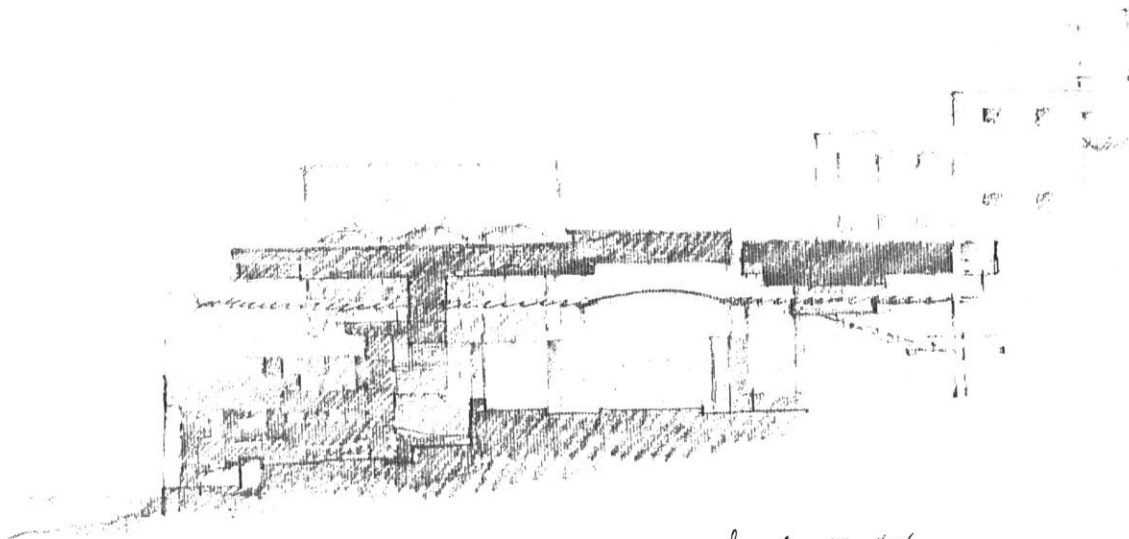
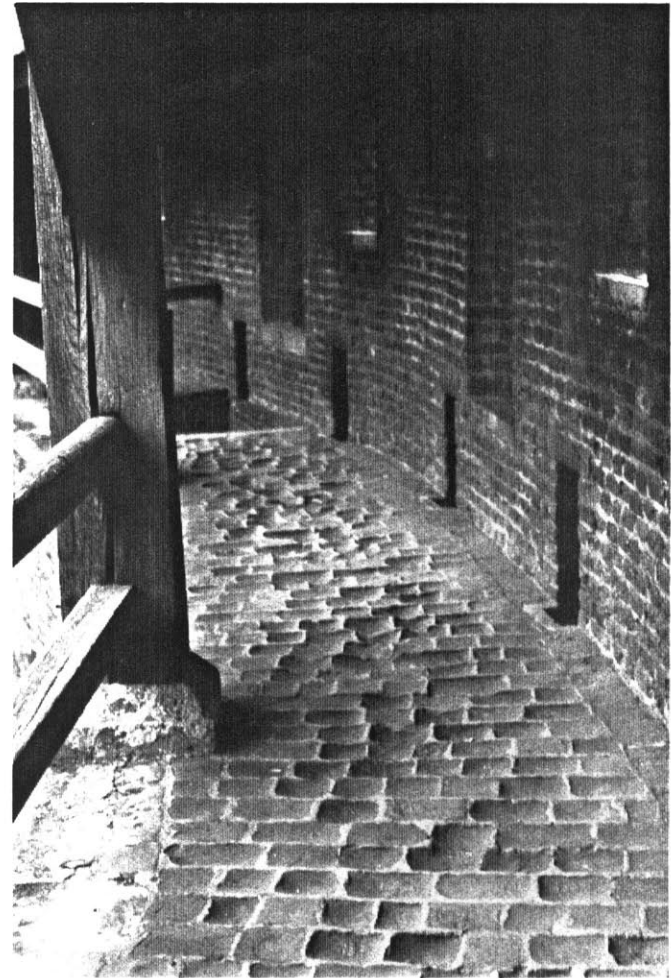
Section
Scale 1" = 40'

The movement across the grain (Part B) flows through the cracks in the wall and tumbles down along the terraces. Like water the path erodes the landscape.

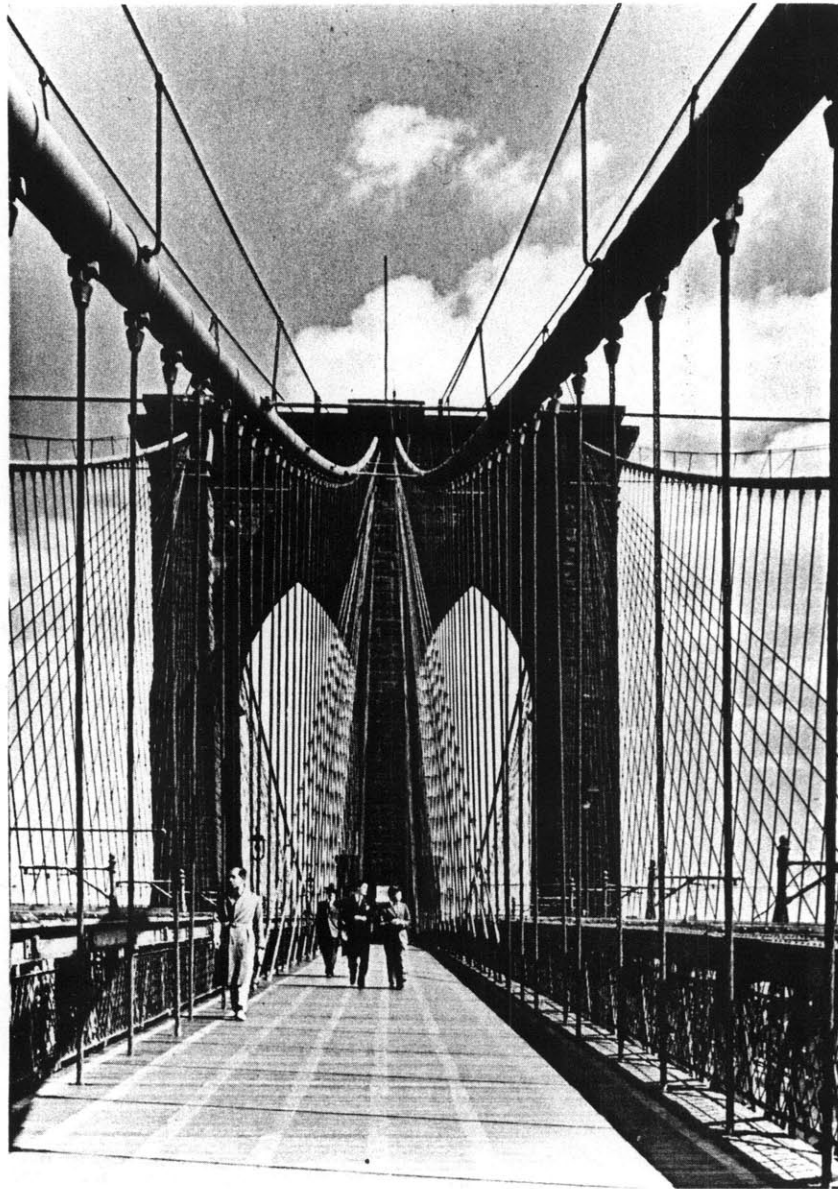
It would feel right to discover the same movement pattern at a crossing of the upper path by the waterfall (Part C). A lower path coming in from the Dutch Bake Shop alley joins and moves with the water's flow eastward.



As it moves toward the river, this pathway and water course erodes the upper path, forms a channel and creates a bridge above itself.



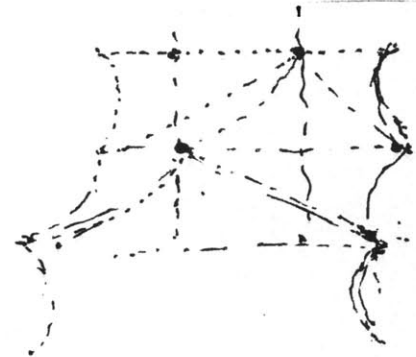
Scale 1"=40'

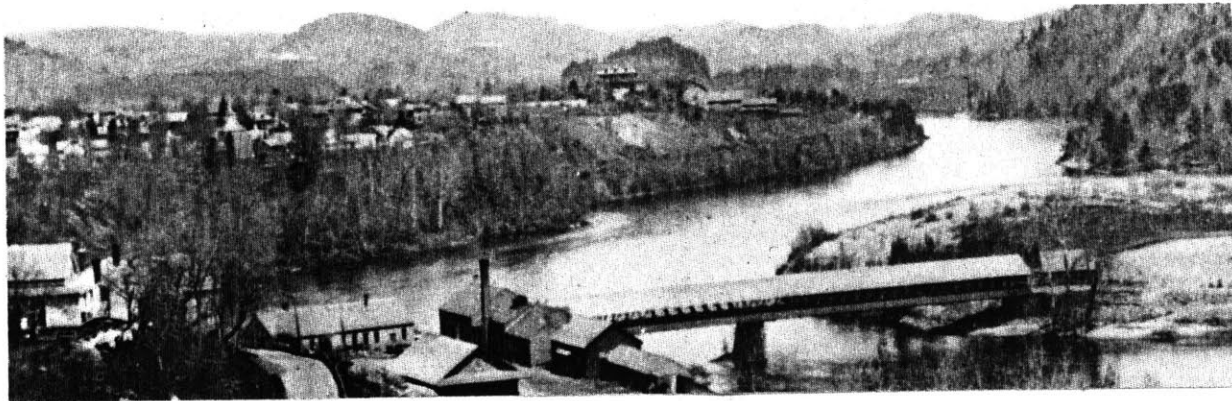


A larger bridge can be created by continuing this direction right over the railway. We are clear of the tracks by 22 feet (Tunnel height according to Architectural Graphic Standards). A railway crossing in the air.

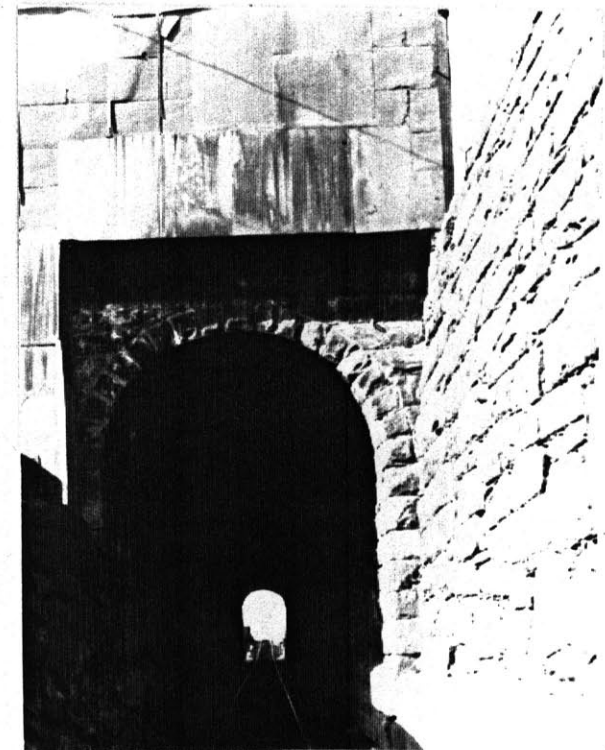
Such a bridge can suggest a gateway. It creates enclosures to the south and north by dividing an amorphous long run of riverbank. It gets you over to the riverside from the street level in a surprising leap.

The bridge can take many forms. 1) Web-like cables spanning between the rocks.





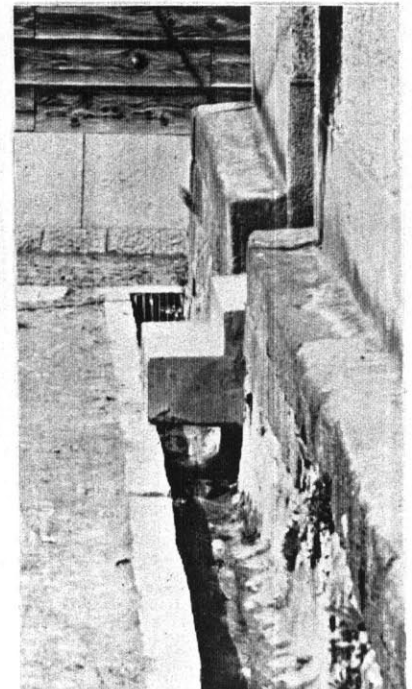
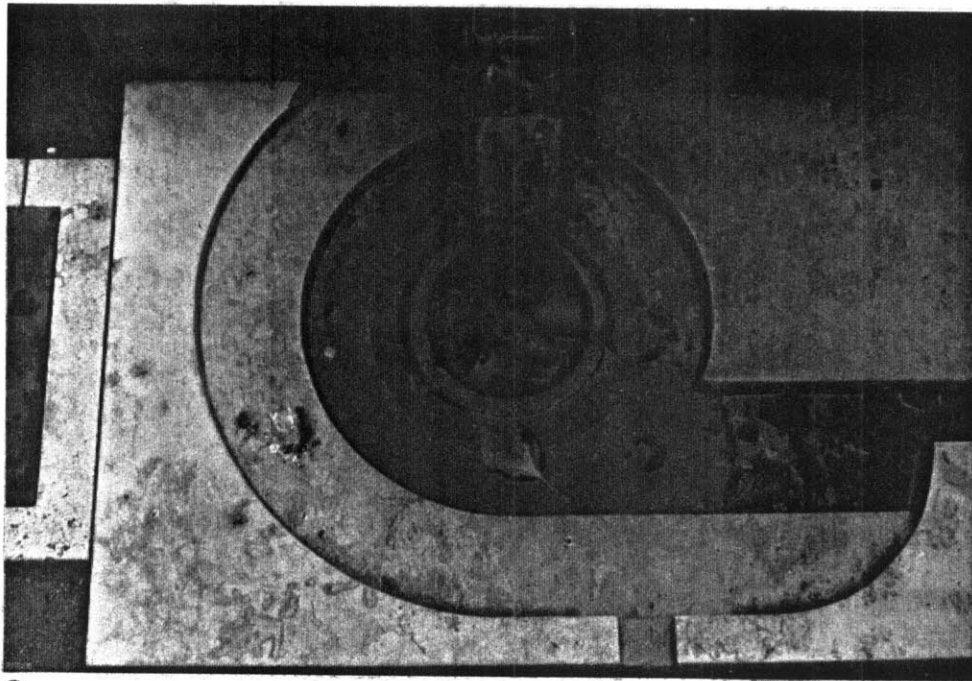
This is a reminder of the cable tent structure possible beside the pool house as well as the ice-skating shelter (Part F) and a tent form that could be set up as shelter for a farmers' market in the Riverbend parking lot. 2) A continuation of the pathway--here reminiscent of covered bridges.





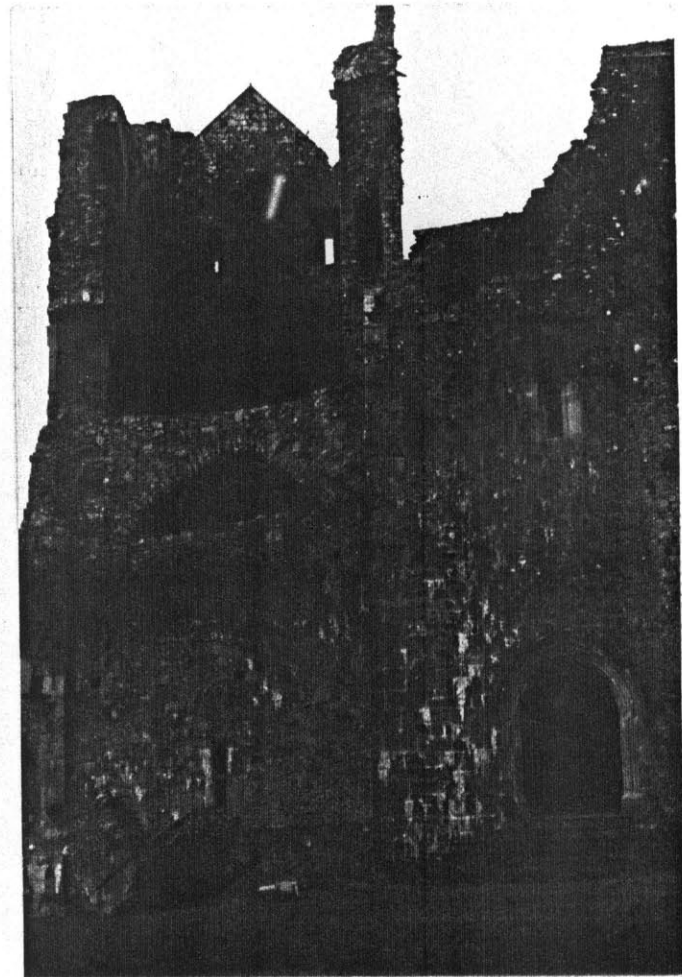
The water channel can follow the bridge across the tracks--at gutter height or boardwalk height. Icicles will tumble over its sides in the winter.

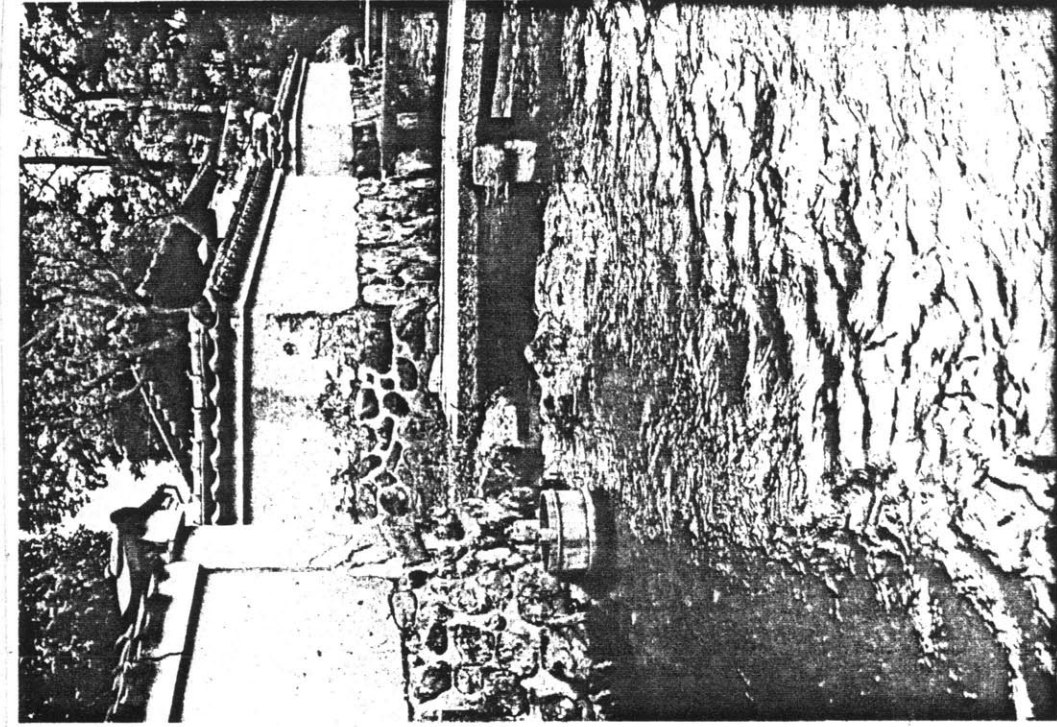
The bridge is met by a stone support/wall enclosure.



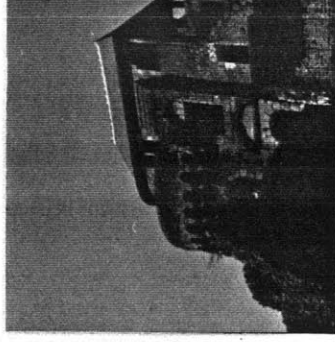
The water moves in, then under the walkway, and sprays down the side of the wall. A north walls' waterfall would keep the ice sculpture for a longer time in the spring. A south waterfall would fall inside the greenhouse--and into the pool at the bottom.

The wall that meets the bridge, if it's a thick wall, can gradually enclose the path as it goes east.





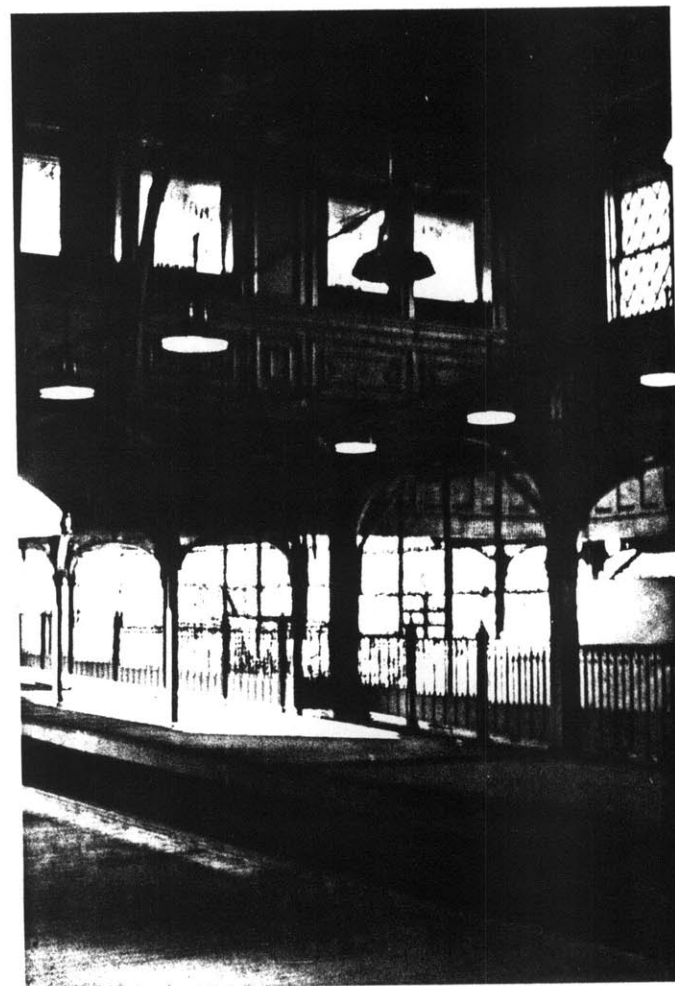
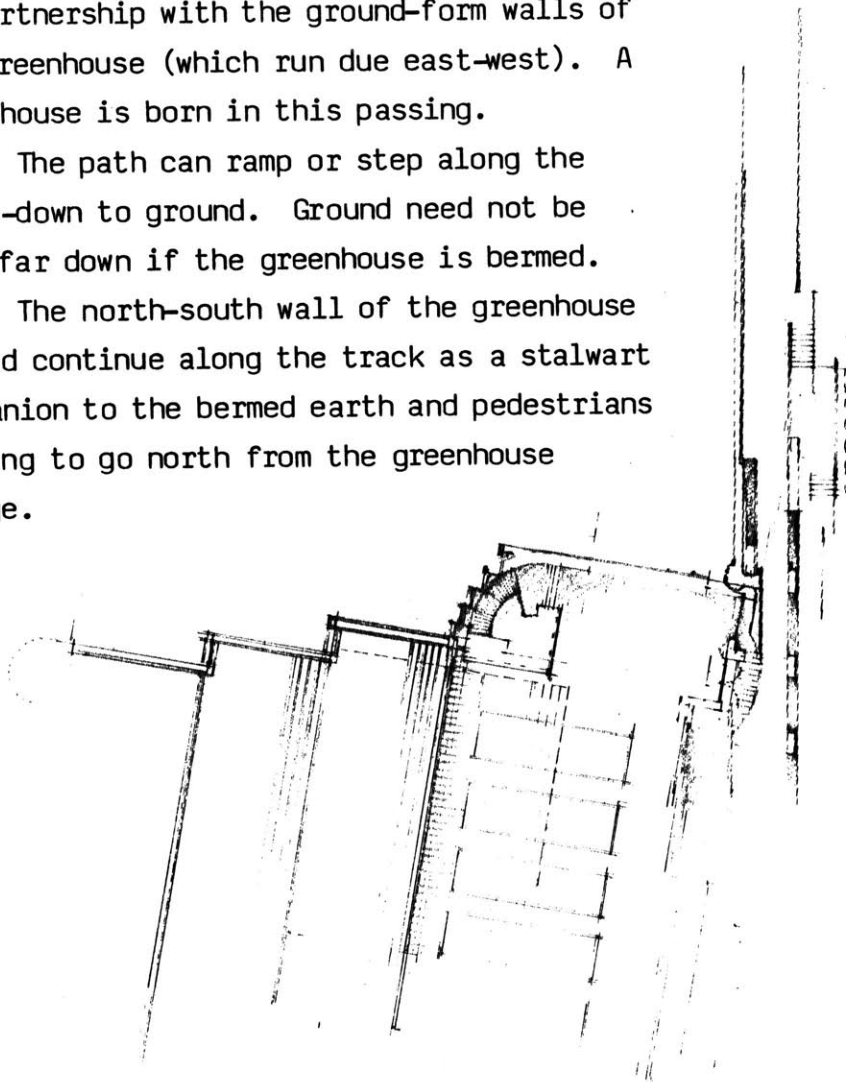
Outer walls of Shinto priests' residences, Kamigano Shrine, Kyoto.

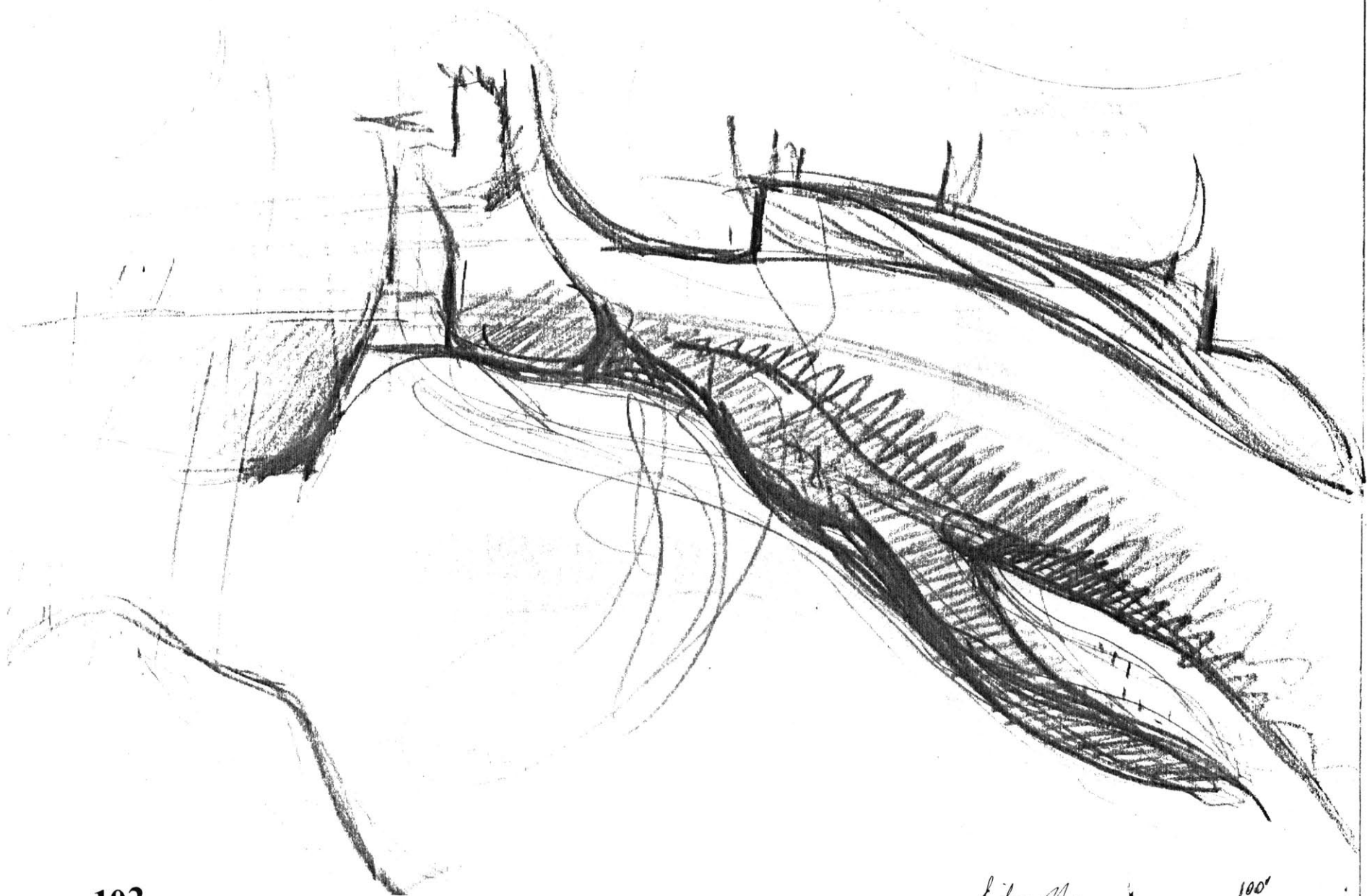


Here the path moves from an orthogonal direction with respect to the town to a dance in partnership with the ground-form walls of the greenhouse (which run due east-west). A greenhouse is born in this passing.

The path can ramp or step along the wall--down to ground. Ground need not be very far down if the greenhouse is bermed.

The north-south wall of the greenhouse should continue along the track as a stalwart companion to the bermed earth and pedestrians wishing to go north from the greenhouse bridge.



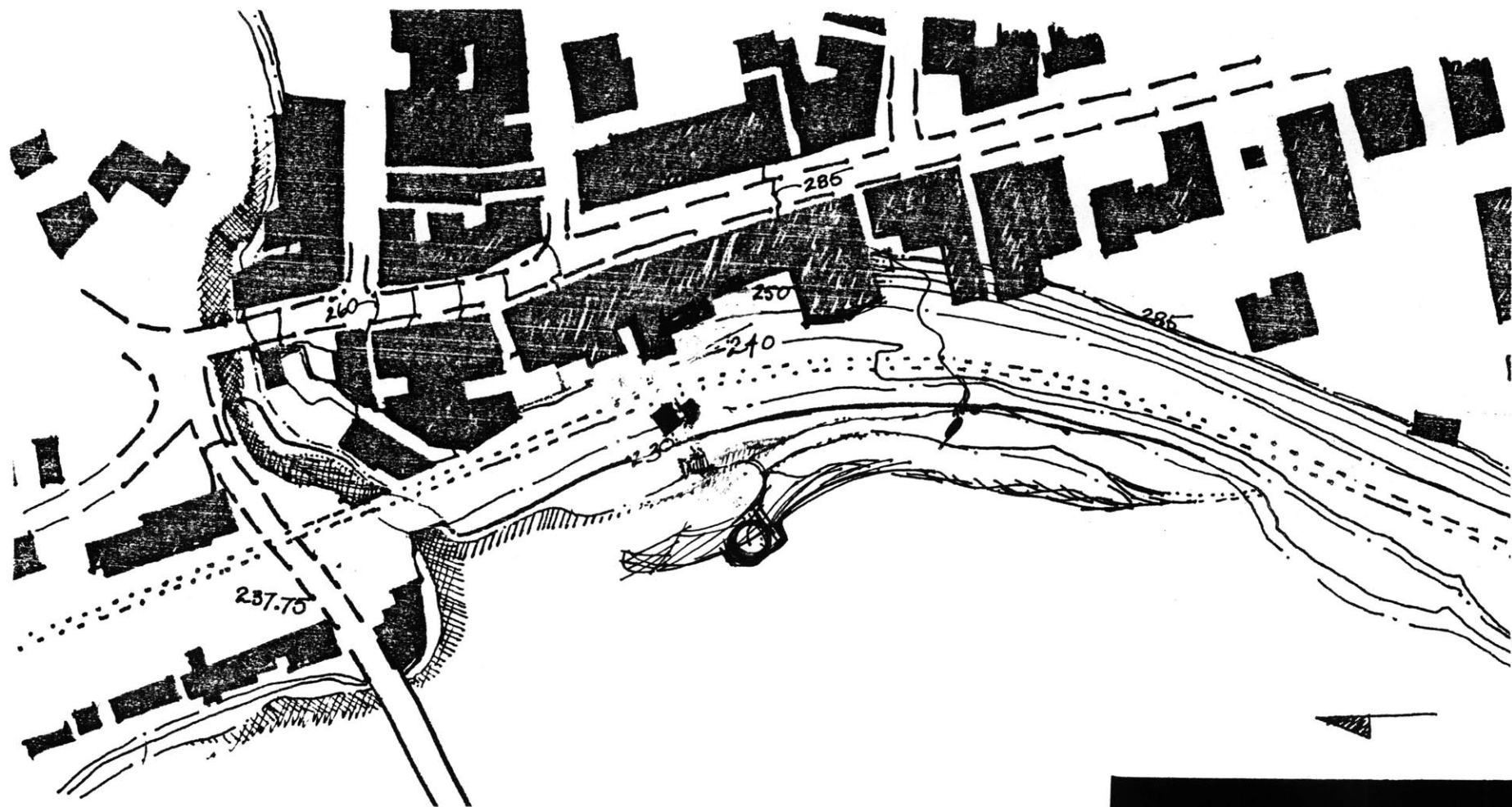


We have moved across the bridge and through the wall. Trees should screen us from the view of the town.

The sense of being in another world - a piece of our own environment that is unknown...that's a quality of experience that I am trying to bring to this place.

The river is a neighbor we've never met. An incredible resource for experience/education both passive and active.

How to unfold you?

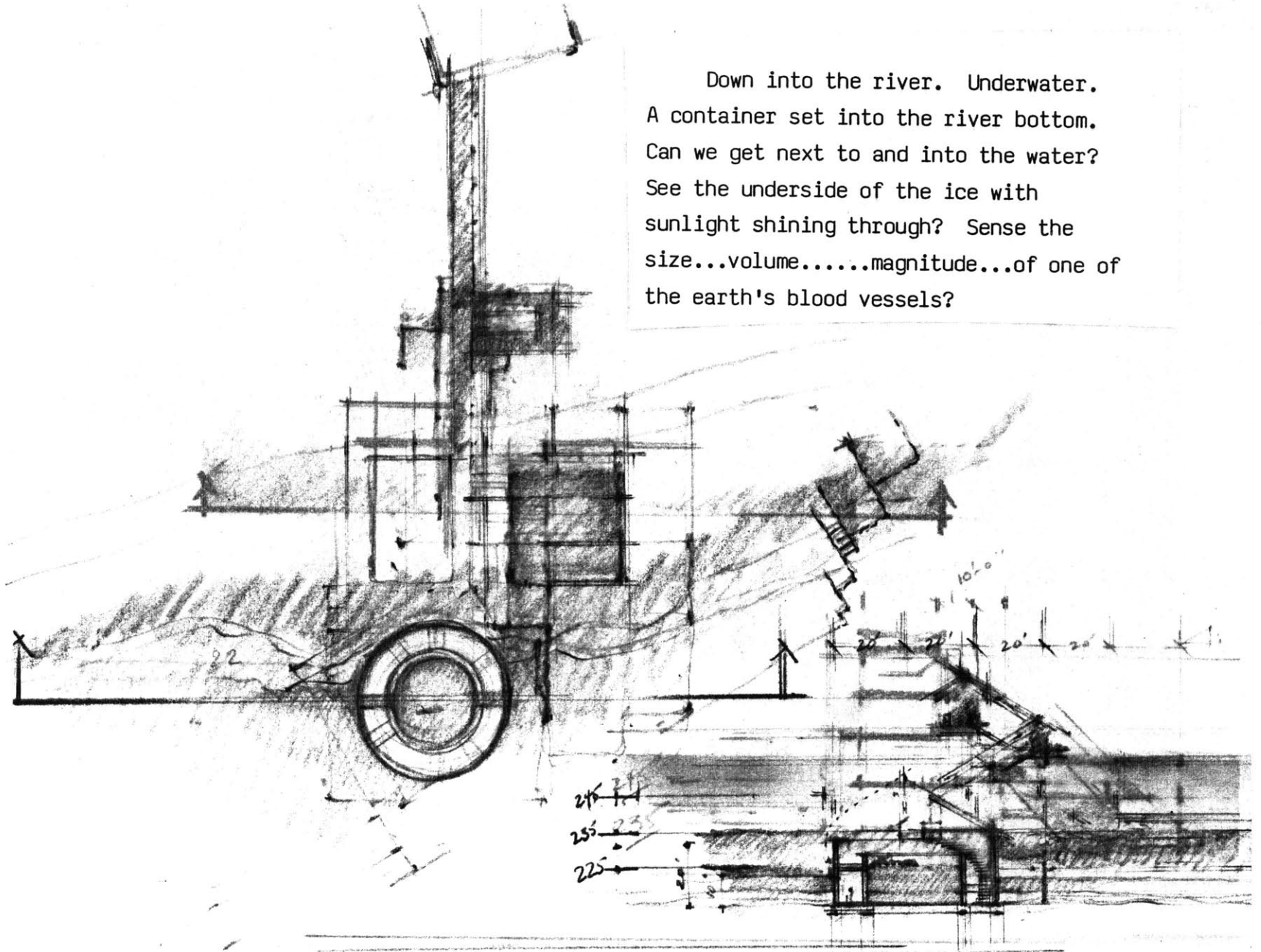


Remembering stories of a hill and tree with water beyond - studying the flow of the river and the lay of the land I come to an extension of the existing low penninsula into an island.

The island protects (screens) a curve in the river bank and creates a larger eddy - almost pond.

Granite sided - bulwark against the ice - on the river edge.

Down into the river. Underwater.
A container set into the river bottom.
Can we get next to and into the water?
See the underside of the ice with
sunlight shining through? Sense the
size...volume.....magnitude...of one of
the earth's blood vessels?



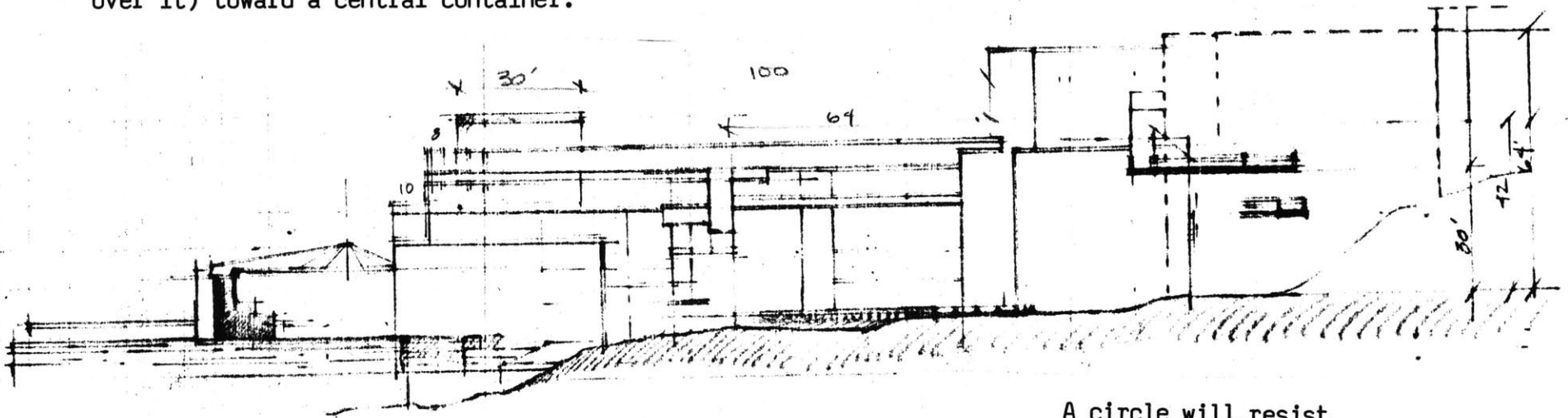
Museum of the Water's Cycle

From the greenhouse wall the walkway could continue - barely set down to ground and then step across a small canal to the mouth of a metal and stone enclosure..

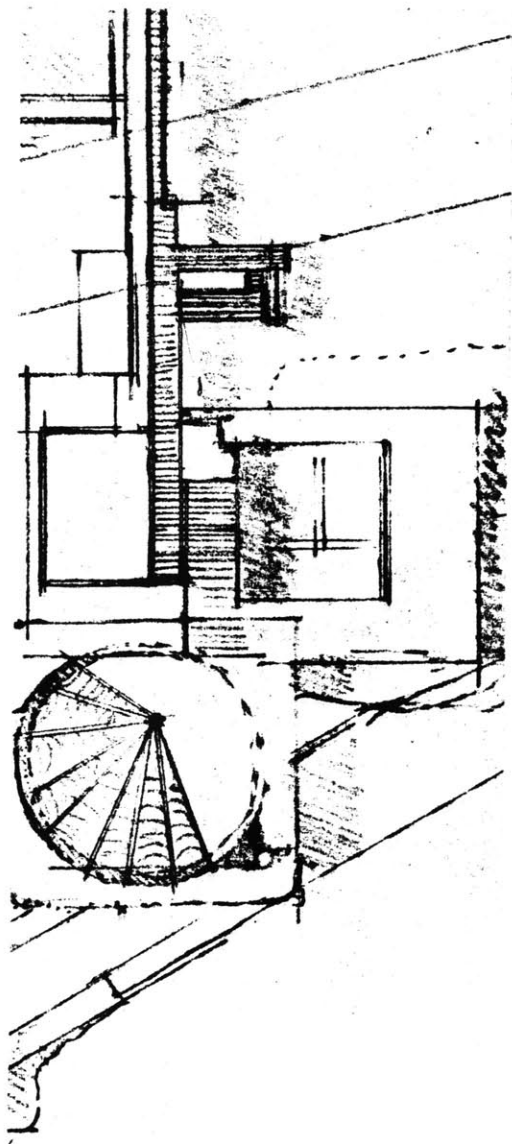
Stairs lead down into watery light. We are between the river, in a vessel? A tank? Difficult to describe. Smells damp. We can hear water flowing in a channel (as we bridge over it) toward a central container.

We are in/under water. Looking up, the sky is mottled by rippled glass. The room opens up to our right. We can see through the central tank. Outside the ^Dmus is layered along the sides of our shell. Like a hibernating turtle. Settled into the river bottom.

The rock has given way to shafts of glass between concrete columns. We are in kind of a reverse Guggenheim. Inside a nautilus shell. Moving past exhibits of marine life and the river's story. In an eerie, echoing, rippling quiet.



A circle will resist
multidirectional forces well.

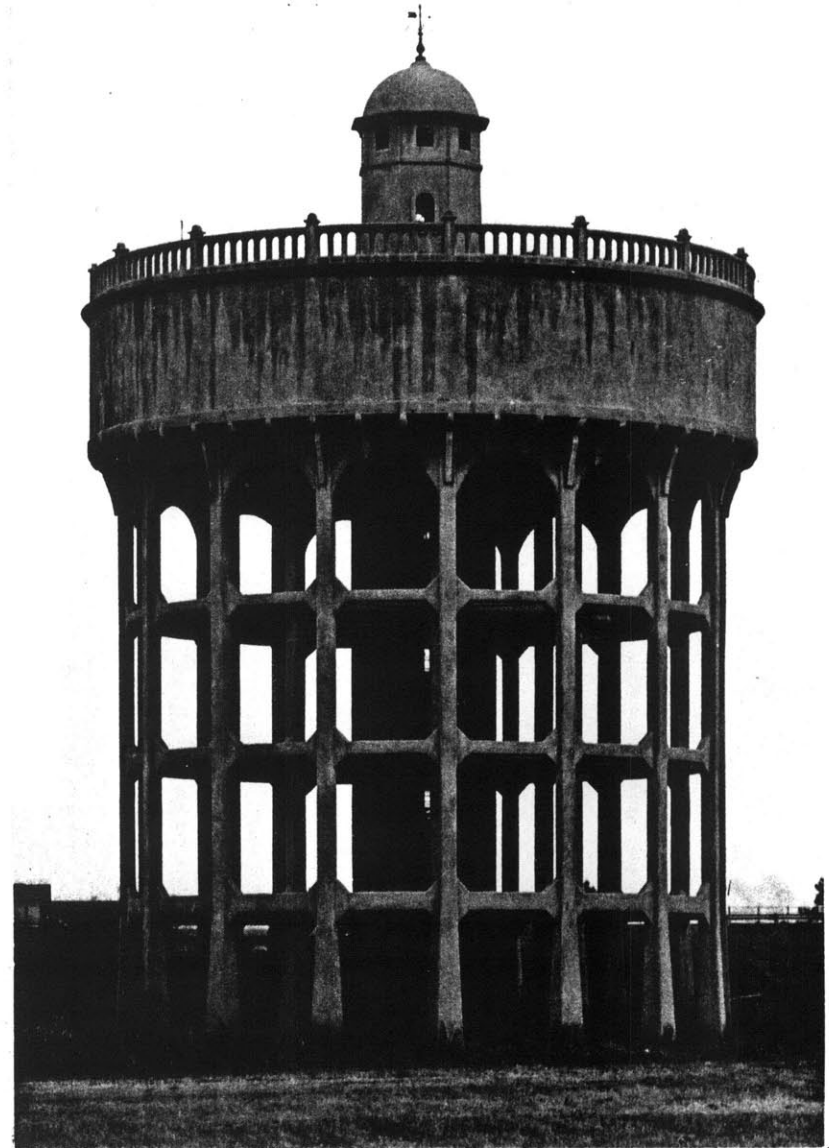
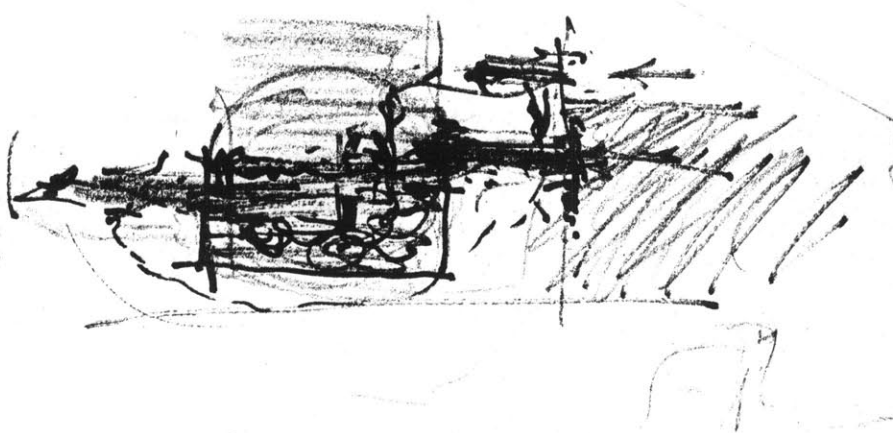


"For thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas; and the floods compassed me about: all thy billows and thy waves passed over me." (Jonah 2:3.) To be saved from the clutches of corruption and chaos, as Jonah was, is always interpreted as a rebirth; for the miracle of water is that it is at once both the eternal destroyer and the grand deliverer. Jung remarks: "Water is the commonest symbol for the unconscious. . . . Psychologically, therefore, water means spirit that has become unconscious. . . . The descent into the depths always seems to precede the ascent."

Bracing struts run up at gentle angles to the center cluster of columns. Giant trees with arms out to hold the radii of branch/rafters. The larger shell;s sides slope slightly out as they move down into the mud.

The roof seems far away. Channels of water flow above us (from river to outer shell) as we walk along the lowest level and return back up to earth...

Spiral out onto an island carved stone glides down into the water. Man-made. No apologies. We rest on a hill of earth above the river, surrounded by water.



Technically an underwater 'pipe' which allows visibility into the river and contains an inner tank for more controlled viewing and acoustic ^ontact with the water...is problematic

The sediment in the river, while insuring a rich nutrient base for the river's dependents, means low to no visibility for much of the year. The silt (loes) contains sm^l particles which would coat the glass and clog a simple filtering system.

A thin skin. Between the person and the river is a reverse ^Aquarium - with a reversal again with the inner circle: A tank within a tank.

Ice dams are caused by obstruction to the ice's movement downstream during a thaw or spring break-up. The island is near the New Hampshire bridge and a bridge's abutments are enough to back up the ice for a distance and cause it to buckle and rise.

The element of danger - of entering a foreign environment is a part of the attraction of this idea and yet the real element of danger may preclude this structure..



Another possibility for this site:

The quiet contemplation of the water. Getting inside of the water through a projection and introspection cycle. Becoming receptive.

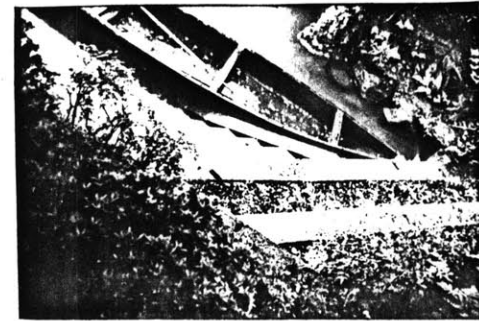
Leaning on our stout oaken walking sticks, our sacks on our backs, we climbed the cobbled road that led to Karyés, passing through a dense forest of half-defoliated chestnut-trees, pistachios, and broad-leaved laurels. The air smelled of incense, or so it seemed to us. We felt that we had entered a colossal church composed of sea, mountains and chestnut forests, and roofed at the top by the open sky instead of a dome. I turned to my friend; I wanted to break the silence which had begun to weigh upon me. "Why don't we talk a little?" I suggested. "We are," answered my friend, touching my shoulder lightly. "We are, but with silence, the tongue of angels." Then he suddenly appeared to grow angry. "What do you expect us to say? That it's beautiful, that our hearts have sprouted wings and want to fly away, that we've started along a road leading to Paradise? Words, words, words. Keep quiet!"

A Japanese garden walk.

The attention of the person can be kept to the walkway by rough granite pavers and gravel. After a walk of 250' (that's how long it took for me to get bored with a walk past chain-link fence) the path opens up. Plantings can modulate the light. The leaves and needles rustle in response to movement.



A place for silence. A seat of
stone and wood. View of the river is
framed by branches as one looks up from
that seat..

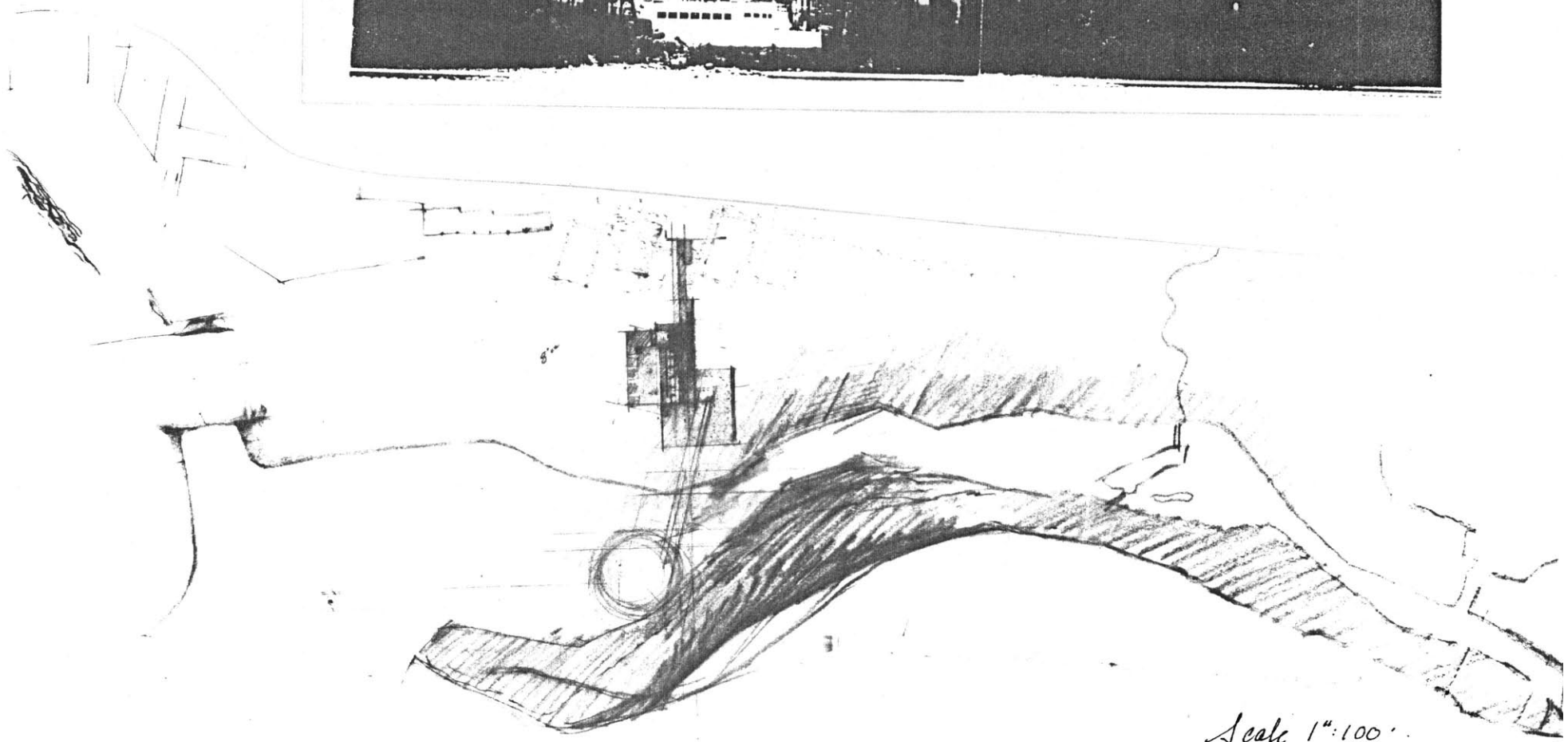
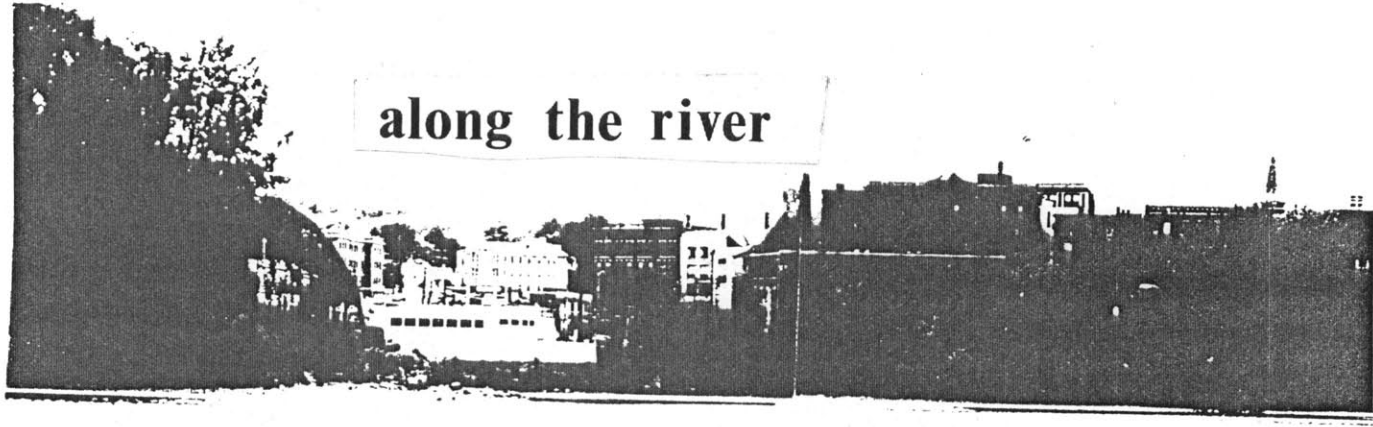


There is a kind of play common to nearly every child... a sheltered setting...and a fascination with the miniature shelter which excludes the elements by only narrow margins, intensifying the sense of security in a hostile world.* John Summerson in Heavenly Mansions.

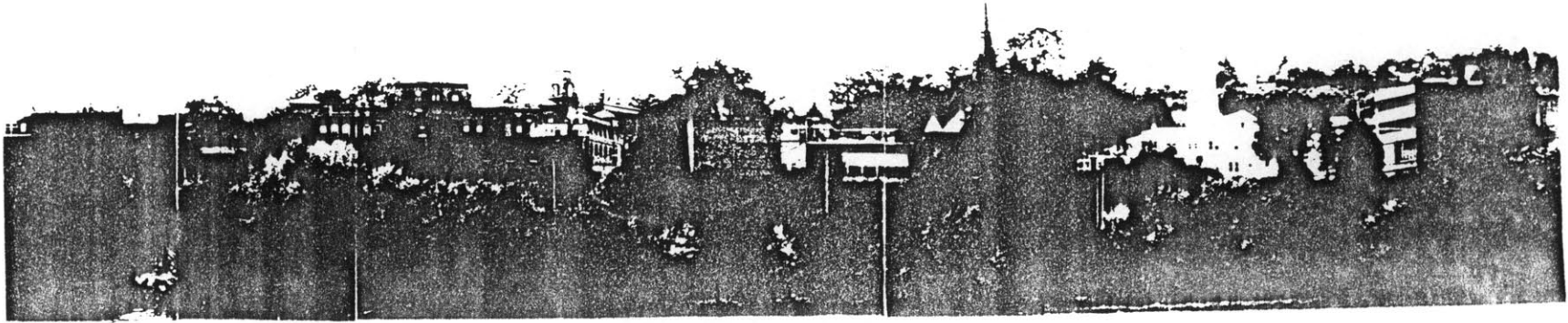
Serenity within/Wilderness and confusion without.

He goes on to propose the miniature temple (aedicule) as a subjective means of architectural expression...used to bring 'home' our dominion over a miniature world. These little houses we may enter in our minds...and delight in...knowing the while that the 'overseer' (our conscious self) will keep us safe - from the wild world without. We can enter and see our world from a new perspective.

Part F



Scale 1"=100'
Jorik + Wolf



F1 Intention: A pond. Passive summer and active winter--recreation place. Ice. Model of the riverside. Participatory by the town/schools--to give a sense of "individual" and "home" relative to "town" and river valley. Larger sense of At Home.

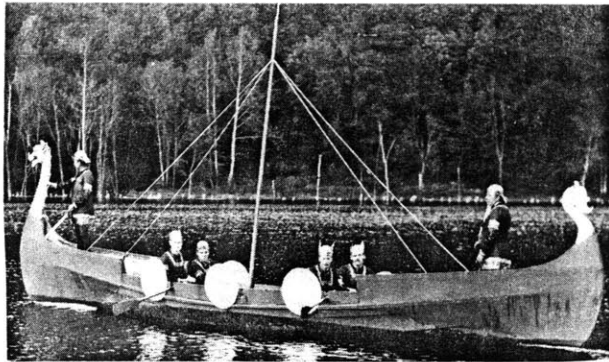
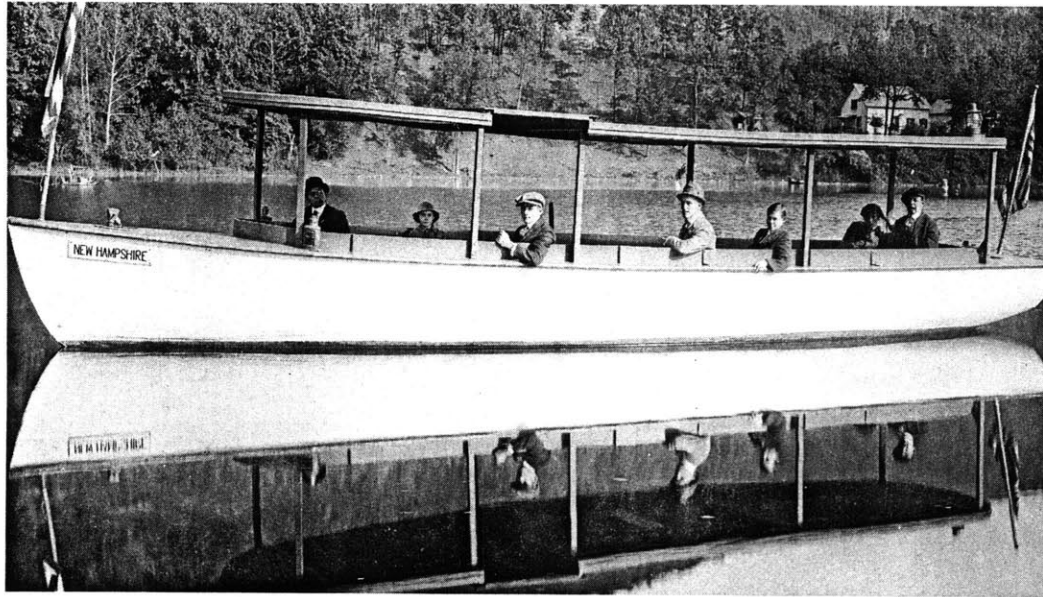
^{SUMMERSON'S}
Another aspect of ~~this~~ design
idea...miniaturization ... can give us a
sense of control over our environment.
Eagle's perch.

A model of the region could give an
experience of the area, a new
perspective and a sense of each person's
relationship to the whole pattern...

In the U.S. we have little common
ritual symbolism. Our common grounding
is not expressed overtly/not celebrated.

How to build a model? A granite
and tile replica of the town along the
pond's edge? (model railroad, doll
houses...literal model)...might be
appropriate. The scale of a model should
be big enough to allow for recognizable
houses (the smallest unit).

The model can be more abstract and
give a subtle sense of the place -
geologically...a stream of light in the
forest. Water grasped and guided by the
rock.



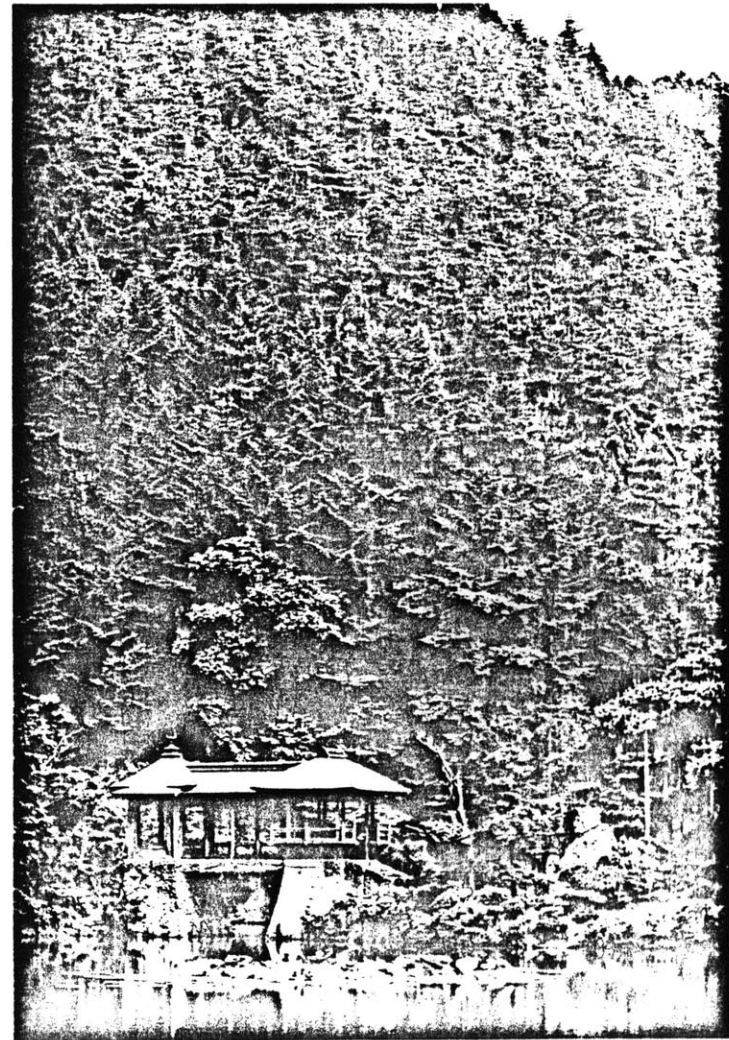
F2

Intention: A boat ramp, memory of Brattleboro's past Victorian era connection with the river. Seasonal dingy floats. Connection with the island. Recreation. Fishing. Water quality.

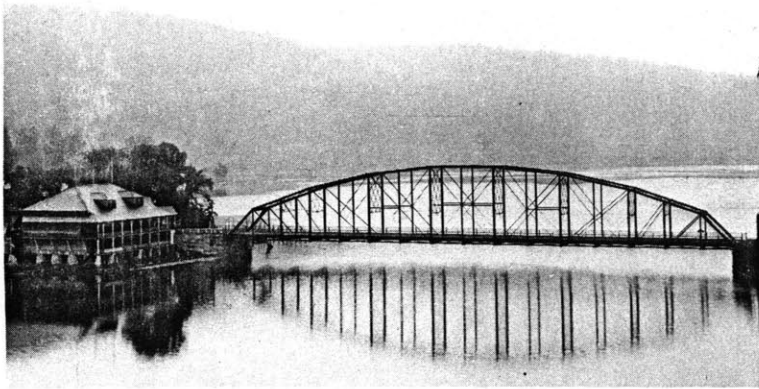
1) The thought of boat ramps has several roots. The town had a boat launch here in Victorian times. People would take a trip to Putney, or rent a dingy for a paddle up or down stream, or bring a boat to fish the river. Past.

2) The town could use a boat ramp here. Easy access. (It's presently hard to find a place to haul out near a road or an easy bank). Present.

3) The more people are aware of the river as a recreation place the more they'll learn to care about it as a resource. A water body not a sewerage removal service. Future.



Chinese-style bridge, Upper Garden, Shugaku-in, Kyoto.



F3

Intention: Retrospection from the island
view of the town. History of the town. The
ending--looking west.

Retrospection:

From the bridge and the island in Old Island Park. A quiet place - especially once the new bridge is built - bit further downstream from here. Minimal attention to a wildflower haven with indestrsuctable benches and a view of the town - and the setting sun.



Conclusion



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