

ARCHITECTURE AND AWARENESS OF SELF

An Inquiry into the Relationship between the
Experience of Built Places and the
Establishment of Personal Identity

by

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S.B., Massachusetts Institute of Technology
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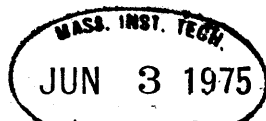
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Abstract

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James Vincent Czajka

Submitted to the Department of Architecture on May 9, 1975
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An exploration of the usefulness of basing design decisions
in clearly articulated personal experience. In the first
part, Description, a personal history of reactions to built
places is written. In the second part, Theory, the personal
history is analyzed, categories of places and the design
attitudes they suggest are described. In the third part,
Application, these design attitudes are applied to a design
problem: housing the MIT Drama Program in the MIT Walker
Memorial Building. The program is discussed, the site
analyzed, and the design method explained.

Thesis Supervisor: Donlyn Lyndon
Title: Professor of Architecture, Head of the Department

Architecture and Awareness of Self

A city is a place where a small boy, as he walks through it, may see something that will tell him what he wants to do his whole life.

Quoted in Louis I. Kahn
by Vincent Scully Jr.,
New York, Braziller, 1962.

Louis I. Kahn

Anyone who seriously intends to become a philosopher must "once in his life" withdraw into himself and attempt, within himself, to overthrow and build anew all the sciences that, up to then, he has been accepting. Philosophy - wisdom - is the philosopher's quite personal affair. It must arise as his wisdom, as his self-acquired knowledge tending toward universality, a knowledge for which he can answer from the beginning, and at each step, by virtue of his own absolute insights.

From Cartesian Meditations,
The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff,
1970 (original 1929).

Edmund Husserl

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Preface

In working on what soon evolved into a highly personal study, I found the support of my friends invaluable. Don Lyndon, my advisor, was insightful and encouraging; he has my special thanks. My readers, Ben Snyder, Jack Myer, and Rob Manoff were generous with their time and their ideas. Pete Gurney, my "client" for the test design, was always enthusiastic and warm. John Fresina and Bill Maclachlan of the MIT Safety Office were patient and useful. Lastly, my fellow students, and especially my fellow thesis students, were helpful and understanding.

I thank them all for caring so much.

Introduction

My thesis is rooted in the simple idea that built places become exciting and memorable when they tell us about ourselves. It began as an attempt to show that the experience of built places and the establishment of personal identity are intimately related, and that the study of that relationship can lead to a new understanding of the meaning of architecture. I assumed that such a new understanding would have technical implications; the new attitudes toward design suggested by the study were to be exercised and explored in a test design problem.

The task soon proved to be a large and complex one; it seemed for a good while that my thesis could serve only as a prologue to a larger study. As I completed pieces of the work and discussed them with my advisor and readers, however, we discovered that I was doing more than outlining an extensive research effort. The work was addressing somewhat different issues and seemed to have a value and coherence of its own. The import of that work and the relationship it bears to my original thoughts and goals can best be seen by looking carefully at the evolution of my work plan and methods.

I planned to start my research by writing a detailed account of my remembrances of, feelings about and reactions to built places I have inhabited, thus gathering a body of "empirical evidence" on the experience of architecture. On completing that account, I was to go back and examine it closely picking

out important overall themes, looking for categories and seeing in general what it could teach me. Running parallel with this personal history was to be a systematic review of research done by psychoanalysts, environmental psychologists and philosophers on identity and especially on identity and architecture.

It was hoped that the comparison of the personal history and the research on identity would yield a great deal. The connections made and conclusions drawn from that comparison were to serve as a basis for a number of arguments: that places often did tell me about me and that I reacted strongly to them; that my feelings and reactions on occasion approached the universal, that I could assume others would react like me; that I could therefore develop a framework or attitude set for architectural design in this context which could be tested and revised by applying it to a design project.

Though these tasks had been arranged in a linear fashion, I soon found that the need to circumscribe the larger problem within a limited time frame demanded that I proceed in a plural way; during the first weeks I wrote pieces of the personal history, recorded and developed general observations about my experiences and did the initial programming and first sketches for the design problem. In reviewing this preliminary body of work at the midterm review, my readers found me addressing directly a variant of the original problem: I was exploring the usefulness of basing design decisions on clearly articulated personal experience. The history was seen as "a laying out of my appreciative system", a device that would allow both me and my client access to a source of my knowledge and feelings about built places. The set of general observations was seen as approaching a personal set of design attitudes, one that would allow me to transcend the specificity of the history. I was encouraged to follow this line of thought by continuing work on the design problem.

I felt at first that my newly defined effort was a detour from my original plan, but on reflection I found that the problems were in fact closely related. The relationship might best be seen by considering a double meaning of the thesis title Architecture and Awareness of Self. I originally intended to show, through self examination, that the experience of architecture has helped me know myself: architecture leads to self-knowledge. I have worked instead on showing that I can better design and better communicate, to myself and to others my design attitudes by carefully considering and explaining my past experiences: self-knowledge leads to architecture.

This study has indeed helped me get in touch with myself; I now better understand the relationship between what I have come to feel about built places and what I have been taught about architecture. It can perhaps serve as a model for others to do the same. I am also convinced that if it were supplemented by other analyses of experiences of built places, those in literature perhaps, and matched with detailed work on personal identity formation, it can work as a core of the larger study.

The thesis has been organized into three sections. The first, titled Description, contains the articles and diagrams about built places I have inhabited that make up the personal history. The second, Theory, contains an analysis of the history in which I pick out important categories of places and make overall observations. The third section, Application, contains the test design. In it, the design problem is described and the design method explained.

1 Description

A Personal History

Introduction

I now turn to the writing of a personal history of reactions to built places. Both a cataloguing of places I have inhabited and a chronology of my increasing awareness, this part of the study is an attempt to collect a body of "empirical evidence" on response to architectural form. Having compiled this evidence, I will attempt in the second section to discern patterns and relationships found therein. We know that the issue of human interaction with form is vastly complex; this process of recording observations, making correlations and attempting analyses is one that does not deny this complexity, but rather tries to work with it.

I have started by dividing this history into four sections. These sections are set in chronological order and are titled by a name for my residence or home at a given time. Each section begins with a description of the general area I lived in, of my residence (the place I mainly inhabited), and of other places that I feel I had come to inhabit in some way during that time (e.g. schools, churches, stores, homes of friends etc.). I also try in the beginning of each section to describe my state of awareness of architectural form during that time. I base these descriptions on thoughts I had written down at given times and on recollections of conversations and experiences in which I sensed my state of awareness had changed.

Having described a given area, my set of inhabited places, and my state of awareness for a given section, I go on to

describe and analyze in detail small sections of or special conditions in these inhabited places that I found especially meaningful (e.g. rooms, corners, paths). This set of descriptions and analyses of my reactions to these special places, ones which I shall call key experiences, will be at the core of my attempt to understand the meaning of my reactions to built form especially with respect to the formation of personal identity.

The special nature of the places in these key experiences were revealed in a variety of ways. Some places were immediately evocative and exciting; one, perhaps, showed very clearly an aspect of the physical structure of the place, or another allowed its inhabitant a sudden and clear new perspective on his immediate environment. The contemplation of a particularly striking aspect of one of these strongly evocative places often led one to see and appreciate a subtler version of the same aspect in a place less immediately exciting. Other places took on special meaning only when experienced in some extraordinary way; aspects of the commonplace were made clear partly because that were put in some new perspective. Again, we can learn from a place newly encountered, and we can project our new thoughts onto other places. Using this process the entire set of special spaces is described.

It is hoped that the discussion of experiences of special places, the ones I can safely say were at the base of my decision to study architecture, can lead to the understanding of general aspects of place, those that are part of the nature of any piece of architectural form.

The personal history begins with an overview, the articles that follow are organized within a nested structure. Descriptions and reactions to special places within a building (or set of buildings) are preceded by a description of and followed by a reaction to that building; descriptions and reactions to buildings within a neighborhood are preceded by a

description of and followed by a reaction to that neighborhood. The set of articles on each neighborhood is preceded by a transition statement. The following outline may help make this structure clear.

Outline

Overview

1 Transition to the First Neighborhood Centered at "The Old House". Awareness Statement

1A General Description: "The Old House" Neighborhood

1.1A General Description: "The Old House"

- 1.1.1 The Porch
- 1.1.2 The Old House Attic
- 1.1.3 The Old House Basement
- 1.1.4 The Upstairs Window
- 1.1.5 The Old House Bar
- 1.1.6 The Storage Closet

1.1B Reaction to "The Old House"

1.2A General Description: The Neighbors' Homes

- 1.2.1 The Veranda
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1.3A General Description: My First Grade School

- 1.3.1 The Art Room
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1.3B Reaction to My First Grade School

1.4A General Description: Public Places and Other Special Spaces

- 1.4.1 Z's Bridge

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1.4B Reaction to Public Places and Other Special Spaces

1B Reactions to "The Old House" Neighborhood

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2.1A General Description: "The White House"

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- 2.1.10 The Shanty
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2.3A General Description: The New Grammar School and the Church

2.3.1 The Gym/Auditorium/Stage

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2B Reaction to "The White House" Neighborhood

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3.1A General Description: "The New House"

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- 4.3B Reaction to General Public Open Spaces

- 4B Reaction to "The Fraternity House" Neighborhood

Overview

I have spent my life primarily in two major geographical areas in the United States. I lived for eighteen years, throughout my childhood and adolescence and up to my graduation from high school in suburbs south of Buffalo, New York; I have lived for the past six years in the Boston/Cambridge area of Massachusetts. In each of these geographical areas I have lived in three different residences. I write here about all three homes in Buffalo and about my first home in Boston.

Although I have lived in these four residences for varying lengths of time and under vastly different conditions, my memories of all the physical spaces I have inhabited are invariably keyed to my residence at the time of each such association; this as opposed to being primarily keyed to other reference frames in my life (e.g. my grade in school). Thus, this personal history is divided into four sections each titled by a residence and each referring to the general set of places I inhabited while living at that residence. This division by residence is especially applicable in my case because often a change in home has coincided with another important change in my life; two transitions in residence occurred exactly when I changed schools.

The first three residences were family homes. In each of them I lived with my mother, my father, and my two sisters, one two years older, the other two years younger than I. The last was a student residence, a fraternity house I shared with 25 others.

Except for the very first residence which was torn down four years ago, all of these residences stand. My parents live in our third home, and still own and maintain our second home which is next door and which is rented to a family friend. I visit Buffalo fairly often and still inhabit and feel strongly attached to these places. The fraternity house has been sold and its use has been changed; my ability to inhabit that place has been abruptly cut off. The fraternity

is presently housed in a new building which I have visited but which I have never come to know well.

It is important here to note that the "neighborhoods" associated with each of the family residences, i.e. the set of built places around each which I was able to inhabit generally coincide. However, my relationships to these neighborhoods changed importantly each time I moved. With each transition in residence, new spaces would become immediate, nearby, or remote, (both physically and emotionally) and the whole neighborhood would thus be experienced in a new way.

The First Neighborhood

1

Transition to the First Neighborhood Centered at "The Old House". Awareness Statement

When I was about three years old, my father decided to try his hand in the restaurant and bar business, firm in the conviction that he could only get ahead by working for himself. My parents bought an old tavern building in a suburb south of Buffalo, named it "The Old House" and moved into the apartment on the second floor. Our home in the old house is the first I remember. (We had lived previously in "The White House", a home to which we later returned. None of my remembrances of that place, as far as I can make out, date to our earlier stay there). We stayed at the old house for five years.

There is no reason to believe that my level of awareness of architectural form during our time at the old house was different in any way from that of other children my age; neither my parents nor any other adult I knew was involved in architecture or the arts.

1A

General Description: "The Old House" Neighborhood

The old house was on the corner of a large suburban block; the street in front of it, Seneca Street, was one of the more heavily trafficked in the city, the street beside it, Hilldale Avenue, was a short, steep residential street that linked Seneca Street with another major road above it. The lot to the west of the old house was a long narrow one which had one house on the street, another house directly behind it and a rather large garden behind that. The lot to the north had one house facing Hilldale with a garage behind it.

My sense of "immediate" physical neighborhood (i.e. places directly accessible) went little beyond that place where our

backyard and those of our immediate neighbors merged; this area extending up to and sometimes including the neighbors garden. Seneca Street was an absolute barrier. We often walked up Hilldale to an ice cream store at the top, but still thought of that as a minor excursion. My sense of "nearby" spaces (which I would here define as spaces whose positions relative to my residence were known, but ones which I could not reach unassisted) was fairly limited. I remember the field of the local high school and the location of a shopping center we often visited. The "remote" set of spaces in this neighborhood (consisting of those spaces which I often inhabited but whose position relative to my residence I did not understand) included my grammar school, and the homes of some family friends.

Nearly all the places about which I felt strongly then were within my "immediate" neighborhood. They were included in the old house itself and in and around the houses of our neighbors, all of whom we knew well.

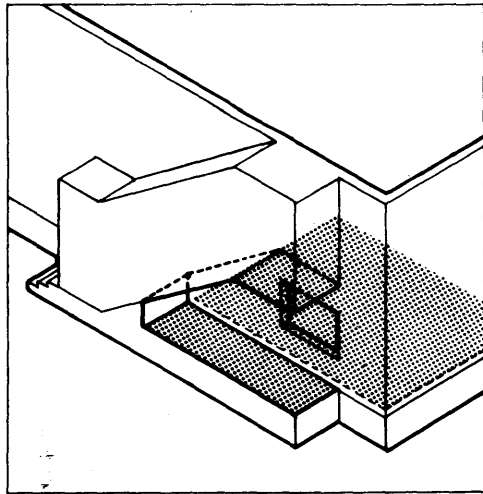
1.1A

General Description: "The Old House"

Though the living quarters in the old house were quite small (the second floor of a three story building) we children had pretty much the run of the entire building and were thus seldom at a loss for space for any activity. The third floor attic of the old house, under the mansard roof, was an open, windowed, unpartitioned space that ran the full length of the building. We discovered many years after we had moved that our attic had often been used for town dances in the early 1900's. We used it mainly for storage, the basement having been completely usurped by storage for the restaurant and bar. Though often too hot or cold for use, the attic was an important place for play in the cool fall and rainy spring.

The second floor living quarters consisted of two bedrooms, the larger for the three children, the smaller for my parents, a bathroom, a large kitchen, and two small common rooms, one a living room, one a play room. The second floor had a private entrance from the ground through a closed exterior staircase. The front three quarters of the first floor was the public part of the restaurant. The back quarter was the kitchen. Though not physically connected to the second floor, the restaurant kitchen was used as an extension of the living quarters; we often ate there or came there after playing outdoors. The basement ran the full length of the building. It was used exclusively as storage space for the restaurant.

1.1.1. The Porch

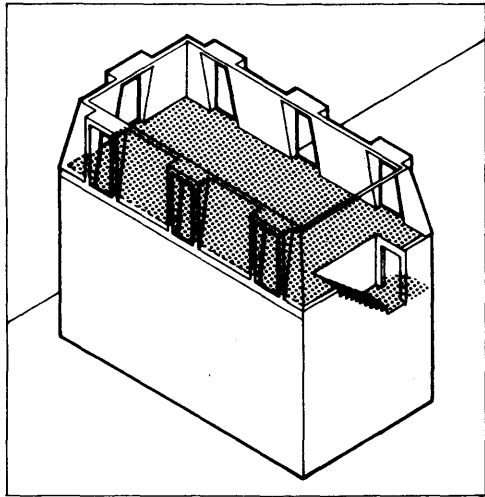


There was a porch on the east side of the old house. No door led to it from the interior and no steps led up to it from the ground; it was a simple open exterior platform, its wooden floor was at the same height as the floor inside the restaurant, its ceiling the bottom side of an enclosed exterior stair leading to the second floor apartment. One window faced the porch; inside the window a restaurant table came right up to the height of the window sill.

That porch is the most memorable place for me at the old house; I remember especially enjoying being and playing there. I would go there to get away from the other children. Huddled in the corner, I could see anyone coming before he could see me. An easily "defensible space" the porch was a frequent site for games of "king of the mountain". It was also a great place to get caught during a thunder storm, with its adequate enclosure, unobstructed view, and inviolable privacy. And most exciting, on rare days when the window was open, the screens weren't up and someone familiar was sitting at the table within, we children were

able (and occasionally allowed) to talk with our friends as they dined.

1.1.2 The Old House Attic



The attic in the old house was an uncommon one. It was very large, very open and very light. My familiarity with other people's attics at that point was not extensive, so I imagine I took that huge funny room upstairs for granted. There were special corners of the attic, however, that I remember very well and that I found especially exciting.

The stair that led to the attic fascinated me. Unlike the one that led from the ground to the second floor, a closed tube with doors at both ends, this stair came directly up to an open platform. When going upstairs in a group I especially enjoyed running up and back around the railing to peer down on those coming up after me. When going up alone I would stand at the bottom of the stair and look up at the ceiling which was two stories but which felt several miles away. Climbing the stairs felt like emerging from a dark but protected crevice to the light but unprotected surface of a moon. That sense of unprotected openness of the attic floor was reinforced by the detailing of the windows. I vividly remember how close they came to the ground (the sills perhaps a foot off the floor) and how they jutted out from the sloped walls of the mansard roof in a way that made them appear to be falling outward. I used to go near them with mixed emotions of fascination and fear; I was excited by a view I could get from nowhere else and frightened by being at the very edge of the building at such a dizzying height.

1.1.3 The Old House Basement

The flight of steps that led down to the basement was wide and open to facilitate the delivery of stock. However, given the nature of the basement, windowless, dank and labyrinthine, I found that flight of stairs particularly forbidding; I seldom ventured down alone.

When attended by my father, though, I enjoyed exploring the basement. Cases of beer and liquor covered every wall and often formed other walls as well. Niches in the beer-case-walls were made when some of the top cases were taken upstairs. Using the cut-out handle holes as steps, I would often climb into a niche and sit there while my father took inventory. Occasionally I would follow him into the deeper recesses of the basement where large coolers set slightly into the walls increased the complexity of the basement edges. The exact configuration of the basement must have been a mystery even to my father. I remember finding with him a niche high in a basement wall where our cat had gone to give birth regularly for the past three years. The fact that we had lived there for so long and had never been aware of that place before amazed me.

1.1.4 The Upstairs Window

It was on the second floor of the old house, in the living quarters proper that I spent most of my time. Strangely, my remembrance of it is not at all clear and there are few corners in it which I would term special. One element that was important was a window on the west side of the building that offered a view of our main play space. That was the window at which my mother and father would call down to us at bedtime or mealtime. It was important because I got to know it well both from the inside and from the outside. When outside, I answered to the window when called, when inside I went to it when asked to call my sisters. It was a place on the second floor used in conjunction with though

not physically connected to a place on the ground. I remember sitting at the window (or looking at it from the outside) and thinking how funny it was to live up in the air, on top of something else.

1.1.5 The Old House Bar

Though we were seldom allowed in the restaurant at the old house during its hours of operation and thus couldn't come to know any corner of it well over time, my memories of parts of it are still strong. Most exciting was the bar itself. It was a straight bar about fifteen feet long and set out about four feet from the wall. It turned and met the wall at one end, and was open at the other. The open end could be closed off by a hinged piece of counter-top that could be flipped up for the bartender to get through; we children could get in simply by stooping under it. My younger sister was, at first, short enough to get through this bar-gate without stooping; she would often run full speed from the other corner of the restaurant into the bar missing the counter-top by a quarter inch (this much to the amusement of the clientele). When she grew too tall to do this it was generally agreed that an era had passed.

Once behind the bar, I was too short to see the counter and so would stand amid the bottles, glasses, mirrors, taps, sinks, knobs and kegs amazed that my father could go about his work so effortlessly, remembering where every glass was and what every knob did. When I asked how he did it, my father told me it was just a matter of becoming and remaining "organized". Well planned storage systems impress me to this day.

1.1.6 The Storage Closet

At the back end of the restaurant, in front of the kitchen was a walk-in storage closet. The small room was completely lined with shelving except for a spot directly opposite the door where a small translucent window covered by a black iron grill had been installed. The window was recognizable from the exterior; I remember noting that I could tell where the storage room was when I was outside the building. My memory of this room is particularly strong. I can remember quite vividly how the room smelled (dusty/sweet) and quite specifically what was kept there. (extra liquor, decorations for Christmas and Hallowe'en, noisemakers and confetti for New Year's Eve). The room was kept locked so I got in only rarely and for brief periods of time. The fact that the effects of other seasons did not simply appear when appropriate but rather had to be stored, cared for and re-used amazed me. I began to see the room as a treasure box filled with very special things that quite necessarily needed to be kept under lock and key.

1.1B

Reaction to "The Old House"

In retrospect I can see what a rich world I had in the old house as a young child; I had the complete run of a mysterious, unending basement, a very public and often intensely alive restaurant, a family apartment, and a very large, very private attic. But although I had grown attached to certain places within the building, I don't think I had developed a sense of, let alone an affection for, the building as a whole. The walk around the outside of the building, for instance, seemed unending; there always appeared to be a corner or a window I hadn't noticed before. The relationship in space between one corner and another was also usually unclear to me; only a very special event would remind me that one place was on top of, beside or below another. My parents calling me from the second floor window was one such event; a midnight car veering off the

road and crashing into the restaurant window directly below my bedroom was another.

1.2A

General Description: The Neighbors' Homes

The built places most immediately accessible to me after those in the old house itself were those in and around the homes of neighbors. The A's house, directly west of the old house was one I got to know particularly well because a friend of mine lived there. It was a simple single-family house, its box-like shape altered only by the addition of a sun porch in front (the veranda) and a set of basement doors at the back (the hatch). The P's house was north of the old house and faced east. From our back door we looked straight out over our yard past a fence to the P's garage. We often played around that garage and Mr. P, who was among other things an ice man, would occasionally take us in with him to his walk-in freezer (the ice house).

1.2.1

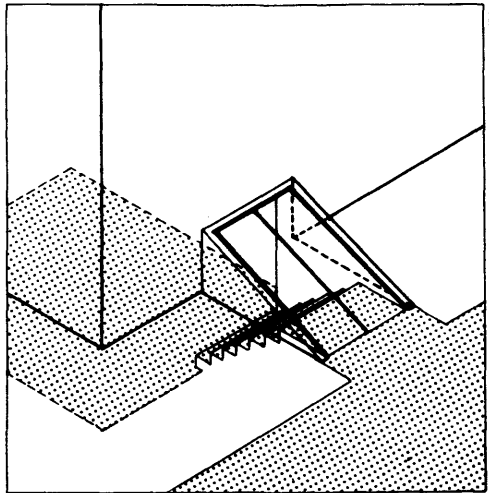
The Veranda

I enjoyed playing in the A's front porch more than in any other indoor place I can remember. It had become exclusively the territory of my friend, Joey, the youngest in a family with eight other children all of whom were much older than he. The veranda was filled with children's stuff that had accumulated over the years and that had all been inherited by Joey.

I remember being as excited by the form of the veranda as by its contents. It had a glass-paned door that went directly to the outside. The door was at the ground level and one reached it from the inside by going down three or four steps from the veranda floor into a little stair-well just the

width of the door. During all but the summer months, the door was kept tightly closed. The little stair-well became a recessed and protected place where we could sit and watch what went on outside. Since we were so close to the ground it felt as though we were outside, yet we were warm and protected. In the summer, when the door was used, we suddenly had a private entrance to our own place. The veranda took on a clubhouse quality; we easily forgot it was part of a larger whole.

The veranda had yet another exciting quality. Since it had been added to the house at some point after the house was built, its back wall (the front wall of the original house) had windows in it that opened into interior rooms. One of these rooms was for a while Joey's room. We never tired of climbing through the window, sitting on the sill or using it as a table, each of us in a different room. This entirely new spatial condition both puzzled and delighted me. I could never figure out quite how or why it had happened, but was very pleased that it had.



1.2.2 The Hatch

The entrance to the A's basement was not in any way uncommon. It was a hatch, triangular in section with two hinged doors that opened upward to reveal a stair that went directly from grade to basement level. When the doors were shut, we often played on the ramp they made. When open, the stairs and cellar became a natural extension of our outdoor play space. The cellar became a cave, a place of protection from the sun or rain. The steps became a small stadium where we could sit and watch Mrs. A do her canning and laundry.

I think I became aware at this point that most homes at most times could be entered only in a very restricted and formal way (up to the stoop, through the side door, into the vesti-

bule, etc.). But at very special times of the year, and at very special places (the veranda door, the hatch) entrance was suddenly made natural and easy, and exciting places were revealed.

1.2.3. The Ice House

Though we were rarely allowed in the freezer Mr. P kept in his garage, we often ran out to the back fence to watch him load and unload his ice. When he did let us take a few steps in, after warning us repeatedly of the dangers of not being careful, I remember being amazed by a steaming silvery world; the shiny sheet metal walls made the ice look like it went on forever. That such a magic world existed in such an ordinary garage and in our own back yard impressed me greatly. When showing a new friend around the yard, the ice house was the feature always mentioned first.

1.2B Reaction to the Neighbors' Homes

Again, in retrospect, I see that the relationship to built places not part of my own home at the old house was a rich one. We were only allowed to play in places which could be seen from our apartment, but that area included the yards of three other homes each with its own special places and conditions. Although there were boundaries between yards (fences, bushes) we penetrated them easily and no one seemed to object. The accessible built places in our neighbors' homes felt, for the most part, like extensions of our built places at home.

1.3A General Description: My First Grade School

My first grade school was in the remote part of the old house neighborhood. I walked across the street to catch a bus, I got on, and in fifteen minutes I arrived there. It was a new school built out beyond the suburbs, surrounded by fields and by a few farm houses. I remember only that it was a sprawling one story building and that it was built in the shape of a Y. There, I attended kindergarten through third grade.

1.3.1.

The Art Room

Although I remember almost nothing about the configuration of the art room, I remember being impressed by it because it was so intensely and brightly equipped. I remember the kiln in the special corner room, and the shelves of plastic bottles filled with tempera in primary colors. I have been told that art was a favorite subject of mine even then, and I do remember getting special pleasure out of sticking my drawings up on a wall. The walls in the art room not used for storage were used for tack space and were always covered with student work.

1.3.2

The Playground

On the whole, the playground at my first grade school was no more special than any other I have known. It was made exceedingly memorable, however, by one important feature, a slide between fifteen and twenty feet high, widely known as "the biggest slide in Erie County". Climbing to the top was in fact exhilarating, partly because it was usually preceded by a long wait in line. But the slide was more important as a symbol and a point of reference. Groups of us would plan to meet at the slide, directions would be given with respect to the slide, and the school itself was often referred to as

"the one with the slide".

1.3B

Reaction to My First Grade School

It surprises me that I remember so little about my grade school given the amount of time I spent there. I do remember its facade and, again, the fact that it is Y shaped in plan (the lower grades in one branch of the Y, the higher ones in the other). But I don't connect strongly with the place as a whole.

1.4A

General Description: Public Places and Other Special Spaces

This category includes all other special places in my remote neighborhood other than my grade school. Two are places at the homes of relatives and friends whom we visited frequently but who lived a good distance away. The other is a space at a shopping center we often visited.

1.4.1

Z's Bridge

We had good family friends who owned a summer cabin on a rural wooded lot south of Buffalo. During the summer months we often visited them on weekends. We would park at the edge of the road, cross the creek that ran along its side, climb a small hill and hike to the clearing where the cabin stood. The event I remember best in this sequence was crossing the creek. We would walk down to the spot where the stream narrowed to about fifteen feet in width and cross by stepping carefully from stone to stone. Early one spring we heard that Mr. Z was building a bridge over the creek. I looked forward to visiting the cabin as soon as possible

to see it; I remember having developed a very strong and complete image of what it would be like. When we finally made the trip out, I was completely shocked by what I saw. The bridge seemed huge. Not only did it cross the creek, it also connected the road level with the top of the hill on the other side. My disappointment at not seeing my image made concrete was far surpassed by my excitement at the new opportunities offered by this structure. I could now stand well above the water and fish, I could play on the newly sheltered river bank under the ends of the bridge, I could dash directly from the car to the clearing at the top of the hill. The bridge revealed to me the fact that a cabin and the road were almost at the same level; this was quite a surprise.

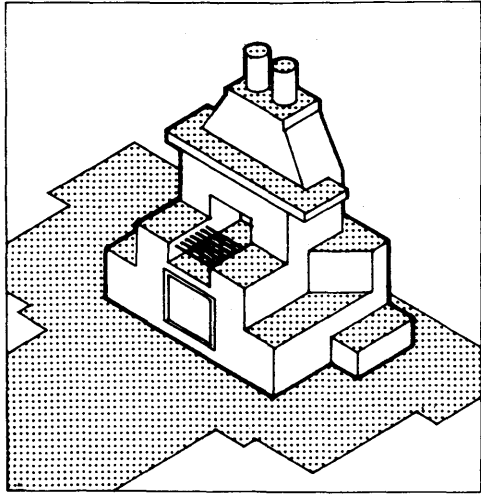
1.4.2

The Shoe Store

Although we visited the local shopping center frequently, I remember only a few special places there, among them a shoe store. What I especially remember about it was a small carpeted stage that jutted out of the middle of one wall and was accessed by two or three steps. I imagine the little stage was there for people to give their new shoes a test run: up the stairs, over to a low mirror and back down. I remember wanting very badly to go up on the stage to see how the store looked from there (I became almost as tall as my mother) and at the same time being frightened by the fact that others would see me on display. I was fascinated by the place that caused these conflicting emotions. On occasion I ran to the top when no one was looking, but never stayed there for long.

1.4.3

Aunt F's Fireplace



My aunt had a home fairly distant from ours, but we visited her often. The only place at her home I remember well was the fireplace or barbecue out back behind the house. It was a large hearth hand made of brick with a small iron grill and a stone coal oven in its center. The brick surfaces that flanked the grill on either side were fairly broad and reached down to the brick paved ground in a series of ledges and steps; a chimney rose to a height of about six feet at the back. This somewhat eccentric and oversized fireplace was the focal point of our play in the back yard. We would climb over it, sit on it and talk, scale the chimney, hide things in the coal oven and, on rare occasions, watch my uncle cook.

1.4B

Reaction to Public Places and Other Special Spaces

I don't believe that at this point I had formed opinions of the public spaces I could access, nor did I think of special spaces in the remote homes of relatives as anything but places I went with my family to visit. I don't recall, for instance, comparing the homes of relatives in any way favorably or unfavorably, with my home. I seemed to find my immediate environment rich enough such that excursions to places in my remote neighborhood, though enjoyable, were not really essential.

1.B

Reactions to "The Old House" Neighborhood

There is little I can remember to show I had developed an attitude toward the first residence and the first neighborhood I had inhabited. I do know that when it came time to move to "The White House" I was very excited and regretted only that I would have to change schools (I am certain I had grown attached to the people at my first grade school, and

not to the place). Our cat, however, refused to move; she managed to find her way back to the old house on two occasions so we finally let her stay with the new tenants there. This surprised and disturbed me. I remember my father explaining that people too often become so strongly attached to a place that the thought of moving is unbearable.

The Second Neighborhood

2

Transition to the Second Neighborhood Centered at "The White House". Awareness Statement

Though my parents had fared well in the restaurant business, they found the work involved physically and emotionally exhausting. After five years they decided to lease the building and business and to return to "The White House", a building my father owned in his old home town. We had rented out the apartments in the white house while we lived in the tavern. We had often visited the white house during that time, we children accompanying our parents when they collected rent, made repairs and kept the grounds. I was very familiar, then, with our second home and its surroundings well before we moved in. I knew that we had lived there when I was very young and often felt that it was our real home, our stay at the old house being only a temporary leave of absence. Thus the transition was a smooth and easy one.

I was eight years old at the time we moved to the white house and again must say that I was not specially equipped to understand and deal with architectural form. During the last of the three years we stayed there, however, my parents built a new home next door. It was during this first strong and direct exposure to the building process that I began to look carefully and critically at buildings and built places.

2A

General Description: "The White House" Neighborhood

The white house had been built on the east side of a road that was once an important rural route in our town. On either side was a string of houses that had also been built as homes on small farms. As the town grew the road became a major street and its west side became dotted with small homes on tiny lots. Small residential roads sprouted from

the main street and housing developments rose in what had been the back fields of the area. The white house now sits on its three acre lot next to a few of its old neighbors engulfed in this sea of suburban homes.

The white house lot is a long rectangle of double width. Its short side, about twenty five yards wide faces the road; it extends back about two hundred yards to its eastern boundary, a small creek. On either side are single lots both of which used to run all the way back to the creek. The southern one still does; the northern one, however, has been divided up, its back two thirds having been sold in small pieces for new houses. The houses on these two lots adjacent to the white house lot are owned by members of the same family.

My "immediate" physical neighborhood at this point consisted mainly of the spaces in and around our home and the homes of our two neighbors. We had grown to know these neighbors very well; we let our back yards merge and we used each other's outdoor places freely. As I grew a little older my immediate neighborhood began to include places in the homes of friends across the street and the fields beyond them. The places I now term "nearby" are those whose locations I knew and which I could reach alone by bike or on foot but not without parental permission. These included our church and my new grammar school, both about a half-mile south down the road, and a few small corner stores, two or three blocks away. In my "remote" neighborhood, consisting of places we visited frequently but which I could not reach alone were the homes of other relatives and friends, distant stores and shopping centers and public buildings in our town: the library, the post office, the large church in town called the Basilica.

2.1A

General Description: "The White House"

The white house was originally built as a large single family home, the first floor containing a large living room, a dining room, and a kitchen, the second floor consisting of four bedrooms and a large bath. The attic and the basement, both of which ran the full length of the building were originally used exclusively for storage. When my father bought the house in the late forties, it had already been converted into a two apartment building, part of the living room having been used to make a separate entrance for the second floor apartment. An enclosed sun porch running the full width of the building had been added in the front and, to increase the area of the first floor apartment, my father built a one story shed addition in the back. This addition contained a bedroom, a bath, and a new first floor entrance.

2.1.1

The Front Porch

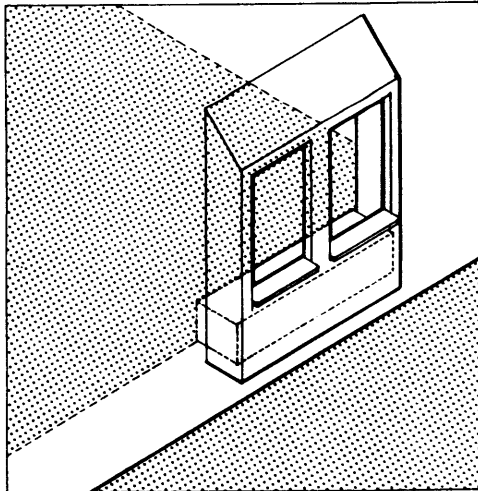
The front porch in the white house was not unlike the veranda (1.2.1) in our old neighbor's home that I had enjoyed so much; I was familiar with that kind of space and was excited about having one of my own. It was accessed by one interior door from the living room and an exterior door (the front door) that we rarely used. It was our main play space, unfurnished except for a storage bin or two for children's things and a huge out-of-tune piano.

I remember enjoying the room because there was enough space to spread out and move around. It was one place in the white house where I could remain for long periods, in comfort and among all my "equipment", without being distracted or disturbed; a kind of pre-adolescent studio. There was a great deal to watch from the porch including the street and the yards of all our neighbors. We could watch all of it unseen and unheard.

off. We children missed it very badly. The day when the porch opened again was for me the first day of spring; the hottest days, when all the windows were swung open (some without screens) were the peak days of summer.

I remember finding the window walls in the porch especially handsome and wondered why other walls in our home were so plain in comparison. Sunlight would play across the window mullions and piers in the most exciting ways; shadow patterns on the floor were endlessly entertaining. It was a surprise to discover that those window walls were not purposefully made beautiful, that instead the rules of window construction dictated that there would be ins and outs, sills and ledges, handles and hinges all along the wall.

2.1.2 The Window Seat



There was a small window seat in the room that had become the master bedroom of the apartment; it had originally been the focal point of the dining room. The window seat was set into a rectangular bay that formed a niche two windows wide and a foot and a half deep in the wall of the bedroom. This bay jutted out from the plane north wall of the white house. It was in fact the only protrusion of its type anywhere on the house.

That the window seat was so specifically identifiable from the outside certainly helped make it a special place. It in some way stood by itself, disassociated from the rest of the house. Any other window seen from the outside was keyed to a particular room; these windows were not associated with the bedroom but to the window seat. This quality of the window seat as a separate place, not merely a feature in a room was as important on the inside. Although there were constraints on how we children might use the master bedroom, there was never any question about our right to use the seat.

The fact that it now was part of a bedroom, as opposed to the dining room, was also important. The bedroom was seldom used during the day and thus it acted as a kind of buffer space or huge anteroom between the small person-sized window seat space and the more intensely used spaces of the rest of the house.

2.1.3

The Bedroom Windows

There was a set of windows in the small childrens' bedroom that we termed "French" because unlike all the other windows in the white house, save a few in the front porch, these were hinged at the sides and opened in the middle. My father had found the set when he was building the addition to the house and decided to install them instead of an ordinary double hung window. I think he has regretted it ever since. The windows were drafty and noisy, and no matter how he tightened and refitted them we children would play with them until they were drafty and noisy again.

I especially enjoyed this set of windows, I think, because I could effortlessly open our small room to the outside. Unlike our other windows, the whole of this one could become open space. On laundry days, my mother could easily remove the screen beyond the windows and put wet clothes out on the line that ran through a pulley attached to the wall just beside the opening. On those days, I could sit at the window inside the house and feel as though I were outside. Also, the window was fairly close to the ground, so we could use it as a stage for puppet shows for our friends. The hinged windows provided a much more dramatic means of opening and closing our little stage. And, again, the fact that it could be used in these ways only during special times of the years made it a marker of time and a signpost of seasons.

2.1.4

The Milk Door

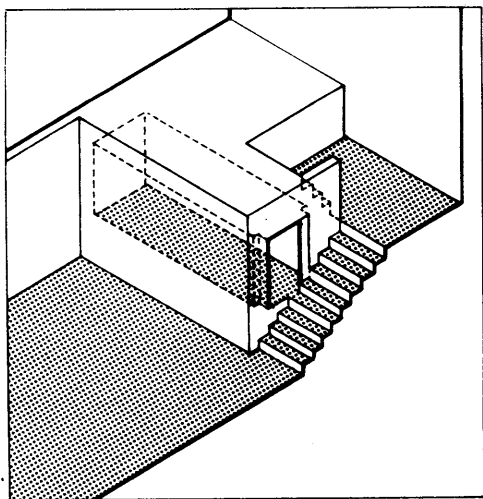
The white house had a fairly common feature for a building of its time, a milk door, next to the side entrance of our apartment. It was an opening in the wall about a foot square and about four feet off the ground in which the milkman could leave his deliveries and we could leave our empty bottles and orders. There were doors on either side that could be operated independently. I remember finding the milk door a fascinating device; it inspired countless games. We could hide things in it, use it as a counter for playing "store", or use it as a "magic box", making things disappear before the eyes of our bewildered, uninitiated friends. It was this "magic box" quality, this kinship with some sort of Chinese puzzle that I reacted to most strongly. The milk door space could form a niche in the exterior wall, a niche in the interior wall, or a ledge open to both the inside and outside. When both doors were shut flush to the wall, the inside space ceased to exist.

The very fact that there was usable space within the surfaces of a wall was exciting; the milk door somehow made this point in a clearer and stronger way than did a window ledge or a threshold, this probably because it was a new form for me. It also revealed something more about how the wall was built and, since its moulding was very simple, showed how thick the wall was. When we began building our new house next door, and I began watching construction, I soon realized that the size of the milk door had been defined by the distance between the studs.

2.1.5

The Cubby Hole

All of the basement in the white house was full height space except for a small section at the back which was closed off



from the rest of the basement and which had a floor raised about four feet above the main level. This space, about four feet high, six feet wide and fifteen feet long was called the cubby hole and was used exclusively, and quite intensely, for storage. The cubby hole could only be accessed from our basement stairwell; about halfway down, the wall beside the door opened onto this space, its floor level with one of the middle steps. An adult would have to turn, stoop and crouch inside the cubby hole; we children could quickly and comfortably go in. My father had lined the place with storage cabinets and had filled them with all kinds of things. So much stuff filled the place, in fact, that it became hard to tell exactly what its boundaries were. At the end of the cubby hole was a basement window, its sill almost level with the ground outside.

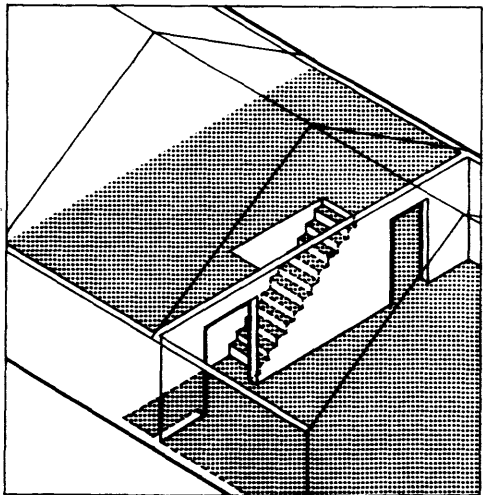
The cubby hole became a special place for many reasons. It was, first, a treasure box; anything and everything could be found there. It seemed fitting that a place so full of surprises should itself be a surprise; it was always exciting to find the place halfway down a set of stairs having grown used to steps that start somewhere and end somewhere with nothing in between. Its dimensions were like those of no other room I had ever seen, just the right size for a kid (although I soon outgrew it; for a while I could only stand up straight if I put my head between joists). And the window offered a strange opportunity: I could sit on the floor of the cubby hole and look out with the ground exactly at eye level. Probably most important was the fact that it served well as a hiding place. It was a place neither upstairs nor downstairs, fairly hard to get to, full of interesting things and just my size.

2.1.6 The Dark Room

hole was a room that had originally been used for coal storage and had since been converted into a darkroom by one of our tenants. It was a long, narrow room with a small window at one end and it was filled with counters, shelves, and equipment. It was a special space not only because it was so thoroughly equipped, but also because it was dramatically darkenable. The window, which was equipped with a hatch-like cover, faced south, and on bright days sunlight would pour into the room. With one quick push on the window hatch, the room could be made completely black; no matter how long I stared and blinked, no trace of light would appear. I remember finding the room as frightening as it was fascinating. Something about the completeness of the blackness and the ease with which it was attained disturbed me.

2.1.7

The Stairs to the Attic



The set of stairs that led to the attic of the white house is one I have very seldom used since it started in an out-of-the-way corner of the second floor apartment and since the attic space has always belonged to the second floor tenant. I remember it well, however, for it was always a special treat to use it. The beginning of the stair was hidden away inside the closet of the main bedroom. If you looked casually into the closet you would almost surely not notice it. Even if you looked at the floor toward the right where the stair began, the steps would probably read as shelves; they were always piled with boxes and racks. It was only the initiated who would know enough to push aside the winter coats, move the boxes over and ascend the found stair. The existence of the hidden stair never failed to amaze me. Most of the closets I had experienced up till then (and most since) have been dark nooks where infrequently used possessions tended to dead-end. That such a lifeless place could be a gate in disguise was delightful;

I remember feeling the white house was complete because it came equipped with a secret passageway.

2.1.8 The Front Steps

The front steps of the white house led up to the door of the front porch. That door was rarely, if ever, used but the steps were well worn nonetheless for we children never tired of playing on them. Most often they worked as a kind of grandstand; we would sit there and watch the world. Sometimes they suggested a game, or some form of acrobatics, but in general they served as an outdoor homing place. We would meet at them before an excursion and return to them afterwards; we would look there first for a missing sibling or a lost skate key.

2.1.9. The Rock Garden

South of the white house opposite the side entrance and across the driveway was a small rock garden. It had been there since we first purchased the house and my father never lagged in keeping it as rich, well trimmed and beautiful as it was on the first day he found it. We children used it as a kind of "doll" landscape. We could take miniature walks in the woods meeting each other at a crossing, circling the knoll on top where the brush grew thick and the way hazardous, choosing the path that looked most inviting that day as a means of egress. Since the path doubled back on itself our walks could be of unlimited length, and our choice was broadened further by stepping stones in the planted areas. The rock garden was both sacrosanct and inviting. It was not special as a contemplative space, there was no place to stop along the path, but it invited a slow walk. Unlike other flower beds I have known it did not edge a place, it

was a place. As I got older I realized that the paths had been placed such that no clump of flowers was beyond arms reach. That purpose was gently concealed by the simple, seemingly off-hand design.

2.1.10 The Shanty

Behind the white house stood the shanty, a small one room building with a most curious roof. A kind of primitive barrel vault, the shingled roof came down to within two feet of the ground. The front and back were clapboard as were the small side walls. We used the shanty for equipment storage and over the years it became jammed with stuff. The general kinds of articles stored in the shanty remained constant: old motors and parts of motors, tire rims, rakes and hoes, etc., and we all developed an acute sense of what belonged and what did not belong in there. Thus it never worked as a treasure house, nor was it any type of contemplative space; there was hardly room to stand inside. I think the shanty grew special, almost venerable, because it was so constant and dependable a space. Its form has never been particularly distinguished, and it has been subjected to a number of alterations: my father poked two holes in the back wall (and installed a pair of locomotive lantern covers in each making one foot round porthole windows that could be clamped shut or swung open); we moved it from its original site to one quite different in the yard; we've recently painted it brightly and added large graphics. It has endured, however, and still casts a quiet air of authority over our yard.

2.1.11 The Willow Tree and The Willow Tree Table

lection of built spaces only because later it was to become part of a built space. We had in the back yard of the white house a gigantic seven trunk willow tree. Its trunks met and merged at the tree's base forming a compound trunk eight feet in diameter. A child could easily step up between pairs of trunks, which met about one foot above ground and stand in a small flat center spot in the middle of this base. Since there were seven trunks, someone inside leaning against one of them would be facing an opening, thus there were seven framed views from this small person-sized space. Occasionally two of us would clamber up into the tiny, massively defined place, lean back against different trunks and intertwine our legs so we could stay there in reasonable comfort. Three or more children could use the place only as a type of jungle gym, entering and leaving the tree in any number of ways. Thus the tree could be a node for play, an intimate meeting space for two, or a quiet all-alone place for one.

It was this combination of massiveness and permeability, of a tiny place within a giant tree, that made the space special. This was strongly reinforced by the magic of being able to enter the tree, to look straight up and see trunks, branches and leaves flying outward in every direction, to feel at the heart of the whole natural system.

It was with understandable regret that we watched the tree be cut down. Its massive root system was wreaking havoc on sewer lines in the newly developed neighborhoods; branches falling during storms posed a constant threat. We were left with a stump that came up about three feet above the ground. We spent years trying to decide how to deal with it. Finally my father built a large, hexagonal top for the trunk, with no real ideas about how it might be used. To our delight, the "trunk table" has served as a bench, a dinner table, a stage, a workspace, and a planter. It remains the focal point of our yard.

2.1B

Reaction to "The White House"

I have said before that the white house had always felt like our real home, that moving back into it seemed completely natural and easy. This seemed to override the fact that our living there was seen as a temporary measure; we spent most of our time in the white house in planning and having constructed "the new house", our soon-to-be new home next door. My associations with the white house are among the strongest I have experienced.

Still, my remembrances of interior corners are discrete; I don't remember having developed a sense of the interior place as a whole. The totality of the building as experienced from outside, however, was very clear. I could, and often did, draw pictures of the whole place, and was intensely aware of what it felt like to be beside any part of the exterior of the building. I remember the place adjacent to each of the building's four sides as separate and distinct. The front yard of the white house seemed very public, and except for places like the front steps (where we watched things) and the crawl space behind the bushes (where we hid), it could not be comfortably inhabited. The back yard was an extension of our interior spaces. The low windows in the back shed made communication from inside to out seem natural and easy. The south area of the house was the car's domain; out door activity seldom spilled onto the driveway which effectively cut the south lawn off from any in-house activities.

The space north of the white house, however, seemed very special. The north side of our house faced the south side of the neighbor's and formed a fairly wide, well defined passageway paved with grass and linked with flowers and bushes. Since no building entrance faced this corridor, it was quiet and rarely used. Though it did not invite stopping, this place seemed to encourage a slow, ambling walk

one that allowed for looking at flowers, checking the condition of the house paint, or glancing into a basement window. When our new house was completed, we could approach it from the school bus stop by walking along the south side of the white house on the driveway or by walking along its north side down the grass corridor. When alone, I often chose the corridor. There was something appealing about ducking out of view for a moment before reaching home. I had an opportunity to collect my thoughts or to pull something important out of my school bag before reaching our door.

2.2A

General Description: Homes of Neighbors, Relatives and Friends

When we reached the white house, we children had begun to reach the ages where we could go off and play unattended. Enjoying this new sense of freedom we most often chose to play away from our home and the homes of neighbors, finding places in the fields nearby. This tendency to play in places away from our house was reinforced by the size and openness of our lot and the layout of our new neighborhood; the houses were dispersed and often hidden by fences and trees. Thus, the spaces here discussed are not outdoor corners that, for instance, defined the boundaries of our yard but rather interior corners, places that on occasion we were invited to inhabit. The B's awning and the neighbor's stairs were places within walking distance of the white house, the other places were in the distant homes of relatives and friends.

2.2.1

The B's Porch and Awning

were few children our age around us. There were four who lived directly across the street, however, and we got to know them very well. In front of their house was a small porch covered by a large red aluminum awning. We rarely used the porch for play; the restrictions and constraints that came with playing near the house were too many. But at very special times, the porch became an inviting and exciting place. We would use the porch (to play cards or tell stories) on those rare days when it rained hard and straight for a long while. The air would have to be warm and the wind slight in order for us to remain comfortable and dry. The sound of the rain on the awning was usually fairly loud, and sometimes deafening. It was exciting, though, because it allowed us to gauge very accurately the rate and force of the rain. We would listen carefully in order to tell exactly when we could run out across the street and back home without getting wet.

The porch was exciting, then, because it was a place that offered enough protection to keep us comfortable, but not so much that it disallowed one becoming involved with and excited by the weather. That it faced squarely our house across the street was an advantage; I remember few other times or places so conducive to contemplation of my home and my life.

2.2.2

The Neighbor's Stair

In a house about three doors away from the white house was an architectural feature that both surprised and excited me. Though I only visited the house on two or three occasions, my memory of the place is very strong. The house went up about two and a half stories. From the first floor kitchen a stair rose to a landing, turned to the left and continued up to the second floor. At the landing, however, another stair opposite the first one descended back to the

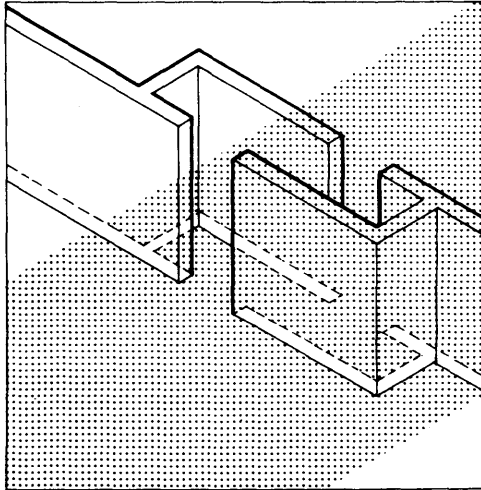
first floor into the living room. Thus it was possible to go from the kitchen to the living room in two ways: through a door and small vestibule, or up a half flight of stairs and down again. The presence of this small hill within a building really delighted me. I remember my first ascent up the kitchen stair and my reaction to the sight of the living room space opening up in front of me: this condition had arisen as a result of a number of changes within the building; I think it had once been converted to a two-family home and then changed back again. I remember that even then the redundancy of the feature struck me, though it did not in the least detract from my enthusiasm about it. In pointing out features of our neighborhood to friends, I would inevitably talk about "that funny house" explaining in detail its most important feature.

2.2.3 Aunt L's Attic

My aunt and uncle had a small home in a neighboring town where they had raised three sons. These particular cousins were much older than I and thus I did not come to know them well when they lived at home. In later years, though, when I visited my aunt and uncle fairly often and came to know their home well, I became very familiar with how my cousins had grown up (what their interests and activities had been) for they left a good deal of evidence behind. Their domain within the house had been the attic; a large room, a small room, a bath and a stairwell had been lodged under the rafters and dormers of the small bungalow. Here was where my cousins had played, studied and slept. Access to the attic was by way of an enclosed stairwell. The door at its bottom looked like a closet door so the fact that the attic space existed was not strongly evident on the first floor. This was first exposure to a house where a whole set of living spaces could be shut off from the main rooms of the house. It was a hidden away world over which my cousins

had had full reign. My aunt and uncle had preserved it as a live-in storage area where remnants of another time remained: cases full of school books, chests full of boxes, closets full of old clothes and sports equipment. The recreations I had made of the lives once lived there were doubtless romantic and overblown, but they made my interest in the place intense.

2.2.4 J's Closet



A feature of another friend's house was a simple but extremely memorable one. A closet entered in one room led through to a closet that faced another room. Again, the opportunities for play were endless; people and things could be made to appear and disappear, and messages could be passed from room to room with complete secrecy. I remember, though, finding the experience of the space most exciting when I used it alone. I never really understood how the place had come to be, and spent little time wondering why. I was excited by the magic quality of the connection; I couldn't help but feel I had walked through a wall. It was impossible to see from one room to the other, and there was a section in the passage that was completely dark. That section seemed the very center of the wall.

2.2.5 T's Trailer

A friend of ours who lived in town owned a mobile home that he kept in a trailer park near a Lake Erie beach. I remember vividly the first time I walked through its intricately packed interior. I remember wondering not why the place was so particularly small, but rather why our home had to be so terribly large. I also found the difference between the exterior and interior amusing. I somehow ex-

pected to enter a truck or van, and instead found myself in a knotty pine kitchen. Probably the most remarkable of the places in the trailer was the bath. A small cubicle with a toilet and wash basin, the bathroom doubled as a shower stall. A spigot was installed high on a wall, and when turned on, it sprayed water on everything: the toilet, the wash basin, the bather. I found this bizarre inversion of space; from shower stall within a bathroom to bathroom within a shower stall, impossible to understand but exciting to use.

2.2B

Reaction to Homes of Neighbors, Relatives and Friends

Whereas at the old house the spaces in and around the homes of others seemed extensions of my own home (partly because I could not venture far from my home and partly because I would, at that age, tend to call any space I was in my own), the spaces in homes of others I experienced while living at the white house were seen as distinct and separate from my own home. I remember finding deficiencies in my own home, and thinking how much better it could be if I had a porch like the one across the street or an attic like my aunt L's. Conversely, I was surprised and dismayed to find homes less complete than ours; homes with no basement, homes that did not have direct access to the ground. In short, I think at this point I began to look at house critically. I began to develop ideas on which features of a house were important, which luxurious, which essential.

2.3A

General Description: The New Grammar School and the Church

My church and grammar school, though unaffiliated, sat next to each other on a fairly small site about three quarters of a mile up the road. Although the walk to the site was

easy and pleasant (we walked to church each Sunday) we had to take the bus to school each weekday. I got to know the short route well, having traversed it so often on foot, and by bike, car, and bus. The school was a small box of a building; classrooms and offices were organized around a central gym/auditorium core. The church was a small red brick building connected by a passageway to a rectory.

2.3.1

The Gym/Auditorium/Stage

The most memorable place in our grammar school was the large space at its center. It was used for three purposes; as a general space for the kindergarten class, a gym space for older students and an auditorium space for assemblies. I remember noting that it seemed much larger than usual when filled with people for plays and graduations. The most special section was the stage, a kind of black box filled with curtains, equipment, boxes and rope. I remember it as dark, quiet and formless. It was rarely used for its main purpose and had instead become an interim storage place. We children treated it with a sense of awe; we never walked inside without hushing our voices and slowing our step. Its walls and openings were complex; doors opened on to it from hallways and adjacent rooms, an open stairwell descended from it, and, of course, one wall had a large multi-curtained stage opening. On rare occasions, I was able to explore this curious node space and discovered it was the heart of the building. That it was only occasionally open to public view, and then only with great ceremony seemed fitting.

2.3.2

An Outside Corner

The ground met our school building at the first floor level at the front, it then sloped down suddenly to reveal the

basement at one side and at the back. At one corner, two doors on different sides of the building could be seen, one a main entrance, another a basement exit to the playground. The exterior path from one to the other was straightforward; down two or three steps from the entrance, a quick turn around the corner and down a short flight to the basement door. The interior path, however, was more complex. A series of vestibules, winding hallways and a stairwell led from one entrance to another. I remember being continually surprised at reaching the basement stair, looking outside and discovering how close I had come to the entrance. The path down had just enough changes in direction and just few enough points of reference to keep me from staying oriented to the building. I developed the sense that the building was much more spacious and roomy than it appeared to be. The interior spaces contradicted the box sense gained from the exterior and, in a way, transcended it.

2.3.3 The Church Window

On special holidays our church often grew very crowded and it was sometimes necessary to stand through the service. I used to enjoy standing, especially if I could stay near a window. I found one window particularly appealing. It offered a view of the brick passageway that connected the church and the rectory. I experienced a sense of completeness as I stood by the window: I both stood within the building (I could see the interior) and stood outside it (I could see the exterior). The tinted, wavy glass served to reinforce this sense: the way in which I saw the exterior was affected by my place within the building. I remember realizing at that point that the church was among the first buildings I had experienced that turned back on itself, i.e. was more than a simple box. I found that sense of completeness and total envelopment reassuring.

2.3B

Reaction to the School and Church

The school and church were among the first institutional buildings I had come to know well. Opportunities for intimate knowledge of the places within them were, however, limited. I had fairly little freedom to roam about unattended; I was more often required to be involved in a given activity in a given room at a given time. I usually felt a general sense of relief and freedom on leaving them, despite the fact that I found a few of the interior spaces exciting.

2.4A

General Description: Public Places and Other Special Spaces

As I grew older, more spaces outside my immediate and nearby neighborhoods became accessible to me. Outings with families of friends and school field trips introduced me to more and more types of spatial conditions. Few impressed me greatly, however; I again guess that my inability to seek out and inhabit these places alone caused me to identify with so few strongly.

2.4.1

The Science Museum Overlook

The Museum of Science in Buffalo was one of the first museums I had ever visited. I remember being somewhat overwhelmed by the place, it seemed cavernous and endless and was filled with relics, displays, and models. What I remember best about it, though, was not anything on display, but rather a spatial condition which, in retrospect seems quite simple. The Museum consisted of a set of galleries on two floors organized around a large double height central hall. All of the second floor galleries were closed off from the hall except one. In that one, a large opening cut

into the wall above a set of display cases offered a view down onto the central hall. I came across that opening first by surprise; engrossed in the display under the counter glass (I was, as I remember, examining carefully some insects) I looked up to discover the whole museum laid out before me. On the ground floor I had run haphazardly from one exhibit to the next. At the overlook, however, I could see the organization of the museum was orderly and clear. I stood at a high point on the main axis of the building looking straight forward to the main entrance over a perfectly symmetrical central space. In later trips to the museum I always found myself heading toward that place first.

2.4.2

The Architect's Home

The one meeting I had with an architect in my years before college took place during my stay at the white house. My family had hired an architect to design our new home and we visited him at his house in a nearby town. I noticed immediately that his home was different from most I had seen. Instead of consisting of a set of box-like rooms, his house was more a single open space; dining, living and kitchen areas were distinct but continuous. A most remarkable feature was a stair that descended from the living area. It began in the middle of the room and descended two short flights to a basement room. When I remarked that I had never before seen such a stair, the architect noted that originally it had not existed. After he had remodeled the basement, he decided that easier downstairs access was necessary so he cut a hole in the floor and installed that stair. I think I was more impressed with the fact that the architect had made this change happen than I was with the feature itself. That such major changes in houses were feasible excited me.

2.4B

Reaction to Public Places and Other Special Spaces

As with a few other spaces mentioned above, these in my remote neighborhood began to help me look critically at other built places. The Science Museum overlook impressed me with the fact that a larger organization of spaces is sometimes used, and that coming to know that organization can be useful. The architect's home showed that change in the built environment can be made, and that a world of possibilities existed outside of the conventional features in homes.

2B

Reaction to "The White House" Neighborhood

There were a number of reasons why the white house neighborhood felt freer and larger than did the old house neighborhood. First, as I was a slightly older child, I was more able to go off on my own. The fact that my new neighborhood was somewhat more rural than my old one reinforced this sense of independence: I had fewer worries about crossing heavily trafficked streets, penetrating fences, and crossing yards of hostile neighbors. I seemed also to be getting out into my remote neighborhood more often. I think at this point I was beginning to see that buildings were man-made objects. My first environment was fairly dense; almost all parts of it were built. Now I was able to stand in fields and look out on buildings as objects in the landscape. This, along with my first exposure to the larger organization of buildings and to the fact that a person can, with relative ease, change his built environment, helped me to see built places in more analytical way.

The Third Neighborhood

3

Transition to the Third Neighborhood Centered at "The New House." Awareness Statement

After three years in the white house we moved next door to "The New House." This was an event we had planned for and talked about for as long as I could remember. Our move next door coincided with another important change in my life; my graduation from grammar school and promotion to junior high. My new school was in a distant corner of town and my new classmates had, for the most part, attended other grade schools. Thus, though my "immediate" neighborhood remained about the same after this move, my home spaces, my "nearby" neighborhood, and my social environment had all changed markedly.

At the time of our move to the new house my interest in and awareness of built places had been significantly heightened. Our building a house next door had afforded a rare opportunity for watching closely the building process and for exploring and inhabiting given spaces at a number of stages in construction. Having had the chance to study carefully a floor plan and then to watch it take physical form was invaluable. I remember being particularly surprised that spaces always seemed to turn out larger or smaller than I had imagined. I was impressed by the consequences of making "simple" changes; a closet that we repositioned completely altered the shape of an adjacent room and changed the size of a hallway on the floor above. The strongest feeling I associate with the building of the new house, however was one of disappointment. The building was most exciting when it was completely framed but unsheathed. The locations of doors, windows and passage ways were clear, but views and movement into spaces through studwalls, up through the rafters or down through the joists were not disallowed. As the brick went up, and the floor boards and sheetrock were applied, the house suddenly became simple and ordinary.

One other aspect of our transition to the new house was of real importance: the very act of moving out and moving in. We children, now old enough to help, spent days pulling things out of rooms and closets, carrying them across the driveway and finding a new place for them in the new house. The process seemed to take forever. I was amazed at the amount of stuff our family had managed to collect over the years, and was further amazed at the way in which each piece had found a suitable home in the white house. The smallest and most infrequently used items had somehow found their ways to the tiniest and most hidden away nooks and crannies. It was as though our possessions were our roots; they had bound us tightly and complexly to our home.

3A

General Description: "The New House" Neighborhood

The new house was built south of the white house and was set well back from the road. Its exact site was determined by the location of the rock garden and by a tall evergreen tree, both of which we wanted very much to save. My "immediate" neighborhood coincided with that of the white house again consisting of our yard, those of neighbors and the corner stores. My "nearby" neighborhood had, however, become much larger, this because my daily commute to the Junior High School and later to the High School took me to other sections of the city where I became familiar with new stores, restaurants, churches and city buildings. My "remote" neighborhood began now to include places in Buffalo proper: stores, libraries, museums and public buildings.

Over the six years I lived in the new house the set of places within my nearby and remote neighborhoods grew considerably. As I grew older and became increasingly mobile I had new opportunities to seek out and inhabit places on my own initiative. Although I have identified this third neighborhood as "centered at 'the new house,'" it differs from the first

two in that its most memorable places are not primarily associated with my home but rather with other important buildings, most notably my schools. This shift in emphasis seems in keeping with my growing sense of independence during that period and was reinforced by the fact that I liked the places and activities associated with school very much.

3.1A

General Description: "The New House"

The new house is a two story building with a full basement and a small attic. Our family spaces are on the first floor and in the basement. The first floor consists of a living room, a kitchen and dining room, three bedrooms and two baths all organized around a central corridor; the basement contains a large recreation room, a laundry and work room, a bath and a small piano practice room. On the second floor there are two small apartments which we rent, for the most part, to single people or young couples. The form of the new house is simple; it is a large rectangular box appended by a small side entrance and a large front porch covered by a brown canvas awning.

3.1.1

The Basement Cabinet Labyrinth

The architect of the new house was careful not to include nooks and crannies in his design; within the large brick rectangular prism he had lodged a series of simply connected box-like spaces. In the basement, however, he had no choice. The stairway down defined a small crawl space that extended behind the furnace and water heater and continued into the back of a closet. This tiny labyrinth is the only "secret passageway" in the new house; it immediately became our new cubby hole (2.1.5), a kind of walk-in tool chest where we stored anything and everything. Part of its significance was precisely the fact that it reminded me of our old cubby

hole. It was one thing to take pieces out of the old place and bring them into the new, and quite another to recreate whole spaces in a new physical setting.

3.1.2

The Piano Room

We three children were all to start piano lessons at the time we moved into the new house and my parents thought it prudent to have a practice room isolated from the rest of our living spaces. We built a small room in the basement, treated it with acoustical materials and equipped it with a tightly fitting door, moved in a piano and started playing. At first, the room didn't seem to work at all. Piano practice was often a chore made worse by the fact that it had to be carried out in a small and silent room. As we progressed, however, our setting for music became increasingly acceptable; the room became associated with concentrated work and study, and was often occupied between practice times by a student with a deadline to meet. Its primary function, however, that of being a place for music, has never been challenged. When lessons stopped, and music became for me most important as an escapist activity, the room was perfectly suited to its use. The route from the first floor down to the piano was a fairly complex one, thus the room seemed completely dissociated from upstairs activity. It is tempting, by the way, to guess that the reason I find music such a potent form of escapism is because I learned to love it in private.

3.1.3

The New House Stairwell

The stairwell up to the second floor was a simple one, but it was memorable because it was the tallest space in the building and because it had a small overlook that invited a pause. There was a window high on its exterior wall and, on the

interior wall opposite, my father had installed a rectangle of glass blocks to allow light into the upstairs hall. This panel of glass was of special interest because it was the only feature on an interior wall that was strongly identifiable from both sides of the wall. The experience of the panel from one side differed greatly from that of the other. In the upstairs hall, the window was just off the floor, its sill at knee height. In the stairwell, however, it was high up on the interior wall, its sill a full six feet up from the landing. The window as a kind of puzzle made a little tougher by the fact that the blocks were translucent; a number of our tenants noticed that they had lived upstairs for a good while before they realized that the two block windows they passed each day were, in fact, one and the same.

3.1B

Reaction to "The New House"

The reasons why I did not find the new house particularly full of wonders are probably complex. As I have noted, I had grown older and had become much less home-oriented when we moved in, and also I had found the finished new house much less exciting than I had expected. There were aspects of the whole place, however, that engaged me. The building was fairly large, and since it was set well back from the road behind an evergreen tree it seemed quite regal. Thus, though our living spaces were modest, the qualities of the house's exterior made them seem larger and more important. On the whole the house was well suited as a home for a family with three teenagers. The first floor living spaces were efficiently planned and easy to keep in order. The basement spaces were roomy, comfortable and well equipped; they provided spaces for longer term projects and for activities that required privacy.

3.2A

General Description: Junior High School and High School

I spent three years each at the Junior High School and the High School in our town. The Junior High had once been the High School and was located, as I have noted, in a far corner of town. The High School was a relatively new building located much closer to my home. Although the High School and Junior High School accommodated roughly the same number of students (approximately one thousand), the form of each building was markedly different from that of the other. The Junior High School was a small, three-story block of densely packed spaces on the main street of town. Though after a number of building additions were completed there was no open space left on the site, the building stood near a public park which we often used for gym classes. The High School, in contrast, was a low, sprawling building that was rarely built up above one floor. The plan of the building was loose and somewhat haphazard; a few long blocks of classrooms were appended by an auditorium, a pool, a gym, a library and a cafeteria. The building was surrounded by playing fields, parking lots, and open space.

3.2.1

Junior High School: The Gym Balcony

Since its small facade suggested that it contained a well-ordered set of classrooms, many visitors were surprised to discover that the Junior High School building contained a full-size gym as well. The large rectangular gym was sunken; more than half its volume was below ground level. One of the school's front entrances led directly to a balcony that overlooked the gym. I remember that entrance and the balcony as very special places. On entering the building, one arrived immediately at a powerful vantage point; the floor dropped away and a space often filled with noise and activity was revealed. There was something exciting about having reached so

important an overlook with such little effort. It was a comfortable place to be for it allowed its inhabitant to become involved with the activity below without interfering with it. The balcony as experienced from the gym floor was also important. That we could see a space meant specifically for visitors and non-participants made our gym space seem inviolable.

3.2.2

Junior High School: The Locker Room

Under part of the gym balcony and recessed from its front edge were the locker rooms. Viewers on the balcony had no idea where the players were coming from, they simply appeared and disappeared below them. The locker rooms each occupied two rooms, one on top of the other. The room level with gym floor contained lockers, benches, and toilets. The space above it, reached by a winding stair, was the shower room. I had been at the Junior High School for months before I discovered that the shower room was actually on the first floor, that I walked past it each time I used the balcony entrance, and that its small, funny translucent windows were the same ones that could be seen on the lower part of the buildings facade. I found this small space, accessible only from below and leading nowhere else, the most fascinating in the building.

3.2.3

High School: The Auditorium

The auditorium was the largest of the set of spaces I had come to know best in our High School: the theater spaces. I speak here of the public section of the auditorium, the entrance alcoves, the aisles, the fixed seating and the stage apron. When I first experienced the place, solely as a member of the audience, I found it straightforward, ordinary and generally unexciting. When, however, I became involved

in the High School drama group, and began visiting and using the auditorium with small groups for rehearsals and meetings, the place suddenly became very special. At those times the hall was dark, quiet and cavernous. Invariably our small group would huddle together and speak in hushed tones. The absolute stillness was sobering; we often spent long periods in silence. Spending long afternoons in the auditorium somehow made us feel closer, and more dependent on each other.

Even more affecting, however was experiencing the empty hall alone. On days when I arrived early for a meeting, I would find a way into the school and head toward the auditorium. Once inside I would let the door close behind me as I stood still and allowed my eyes to adjust to the dim light; a small lamp always burned on stage. I would find the beginning of an aisle and slowly walk toward the light. The walk to the stage in the near blackness seemed endless. After a few steps I would lose the sense of "going to" the light and feel suspended; I seemed to move silently and to go nowhere. I came to expect and enjoy immensely that brief suspension in time; it became a period of transition from real to unreal, from ordinary to special, and from structured and confining to open and free. When I reached the stage I felt a strong sense of aloneness and separation from the rest of the world.

Thus, the auditorium was a place that became meaningful and memorable only when experienced in an extraordinary way. The sense of isolation and suspension that I enjoyed so much when experiencing the place alone was in direct contrast to and, perhaps, strongly reinforced by, the sense of publicness and chaos I felt when sharing the space with a thousand others.

3.2.4

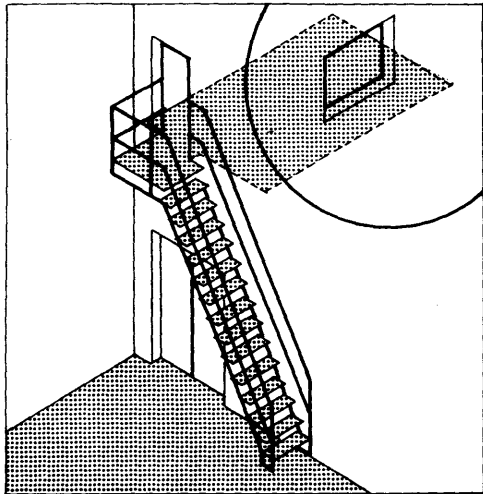
High School: The Back Stage

The back stage was a set of dark, amorphous spaces filled with curtains, flats, lighting fixtures, ropes and equipment.

Together they comprised a vast maze that served primarily as a transition space between the world of the audience and that of the performer. It was appropriately ambiguous and complex. Curtains went up and disappeared, walls turned corners and disappeared, people came suddenly from everywhere and, just as suddenly, disappeared. I did not find the strangeness of the place disconcerting for I, too, could lose myself within it, feeling alone, unassailable, and at one with my surroundings. The sense of connection I felt with this world, the inability to tell where it was I left off and where my environment began, affected me greatly. I was reminded of being in other dark and solemn places (walking alone in dark woods; kneeling in a confessional) where I felt a similar sense of boundlessness.

3.2.5

High School: The Light Booth



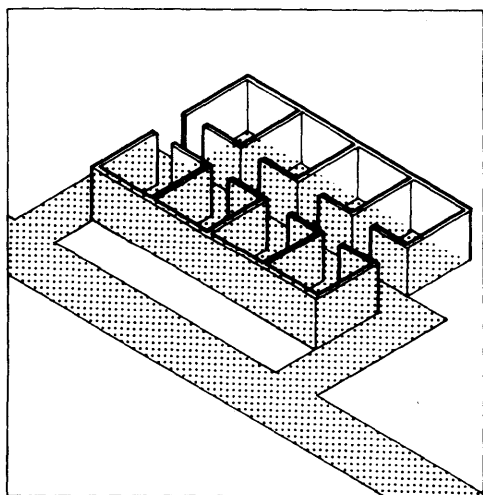
High on a back stage wall was the entrance to the light booth; it was accessed by the most striking physical feature of the backstage area, a tall steep metal stair. That its entrance and some of its equipment were clearly visible from the back stage floor and that its stair was so direct and dramatic were aspects of the light booth not in keeping with the fact that it was a highly specialized and technical space accessible to only a few qualified students. The very existence of the light booth served, for me, as an impetus to become more involved with theater; one day I guessed that I too would be allowed to inhabit that space. The light booth was both a goal and a symbol. It suggested that there were other places, less dramatically visible, that would also open to me as I worked in and became more familiar with the theater spaces.

Having finally been granted permission to use the light booth, I soon found it an exciting and important place for still another reason. The light booth allowed a full view of the

stage from a completely private and hidden space. During performances, off-stage actors could run up and watch other sections of the play. Having this opportunity to be both actor and audience was revealing and exhilarating. We were allowed both to be doing something and to be made acutely aware of our doing it. I remember feeling a sense of completeness when using the booth in this way; I was able to experience our productions in a whole and tangible way. Access to the light booth proved well worth the wait.

3.2.6

High School: Dressing and Storage Rooms



North of the auditorium and stage areas, beyond a public corridor was a set of spaces used to support theater activities. This section included a group of small cubicles organized around an interior corridor and used, at different times, as storage rooms, dressing rooms and practice rooms. The doors to the corridor were most often kept closed; only an initiated student knew the cubicles existed. Thus, the rooms were special because they offered a rare opportunity for complete privacy within a very public building. The fact that the suite of rooms itself could be closed off added a new dimension to that privacy; a group of us could feel alone in the suite, and each of us could feel further alone in a single room.

Access to these special rooms offered a further advantage. Their secluded quality made them seem safe for rare and delicate things. They were often used as temporary headquarters for visiting performers and as storage places for special equipment. I remember once coming upon a room being used as a practice space by a visiting harpist; I was treated to a private recital. I was delighted to have earned the right to happen onto such wonders. The existence of such intimate spaces, spaces to which one could aspire, seemed to make long term interaction with my high school environment rewarding and worthwhile.

3.2.7

High School: The Green Room

The green room was the place among the theater support spaces where we built and stored sets and waited for hours during rehearsals and performances. It is the theater space I remember best. We spent countless Saturday afternoons in that place, talking, studying or just sitting quietly surrounded by bits and pieces of our past theater experiences. As our group grew older and had a larger number of productions behind it, the green room began to mean more and more. Flats from old sets that had belonged to forgotten plays were slowly replaced by flats we had once made. Bits from different past experiences came together in curious and often revealing ways. The room seemed to treat my experience in High School theater, which I occasionally found disjointed and uneven, as one long continuous uninterrupted event. I found the place reassuring in that way; it told me that experience in the arts was cumulative, that past activities can work as foundations for future ones.

The green room had a set of windows that could be easily identified from outside the school. Thus, in later years, I could pick out the exact location of the green room as I drove by the school. I still find that sight strongly affecting; it brings me back immediately to a time and place when and where I found introspection easy and enlightening.

3.2.8

High School: Mr. D's Office

The auditorium was slightly fanned in shape, its interior walls growing further apart as they moved back from the stage. It was built, however, within a rectangular prism; this resulted in the formation of two wedge-shaped pieces of leftover space between the interior and the exterior walls of the hall. Originally used for storage, these spaces remained

locked and unseen until our new director of drama decided to appropriate one for an office. This strange small windowless room defined by a pair of walls that seemed to approach each other asymptotically behind Mr. D's desk immediately became a mecca for members of the drama group. I especially enjoyed the room because it seemed to have been created out of nothing; before its conversion I had never guessed the space existed. It was comfortable sitting within the guts of the building; somehow the addition of a few small chairs and a couch was all that was necessary to make the dark, dusty space habitable. Inside, the building exposed itself unadorned making me feel more "at home" than I had ever felt in the carpeted, padded, dressed-up audience space just beyond the wall.

3.2.9 High School: The Trophy Corridor

The rear of the auditorium faced on to a node in the High School circulation system called the trophy corridor. At this node, the main corridor widened slightly and met the narrow hallway that ran in front of the auditorium. The seldom used main entrance of the school led directly into this node as did a set of doors from the south end of the gym. The only feature defining the edges of the node that was, in fact, not a door or entrance was the trophy case, a fairly small glass display case embedded in the south wall. The corridor was an awkward space, too large and undefined a public space to be used comfortably by any student group during the day, and too small and congested a place to work well as a lobby for auditorium and gym activities at night. Despite its barrenness, it did offer one special place to be: the standing space just in front of the trophy case. That space always seemed quiet and still, even when the area around it was filled with people. The reason is probably a simple one: that patch of ground was the only one in the node not on a route from one door to another. An aimless walker in the corridor would be bounced about until he reached it. Finding oneself at that spot was exciting for the trophy

case was filled with treasures. The relics, pictures, silver cups and banners there contained were endlessly entertaining. Together they comprised the heart of the school. It seemed fortuitous that its setting should encourage us to stand near it and get involved with it.

3.2.10

High School: The Grandstand

The grandstand beside our High School was a simple and elegant structure. A set of bars and rods had been put together complexly but sparsely to form a large inclined plane. This was topped with rows of wooden planks that served as seats, steps and foot rests. There was a magic quality about the structure: when viewed from the ground it seemed light and fragile. Since the planks were seen on end, the structure seemed made completely of lines, it contained no surface and no mass. When I climbed up on the grandstand alone, however, my sense of the structure changed completely. Looking down from the top bench I saw a solid corrugated wooden surface. Since no supports were visible, the wooden surface seemed a continuation of the ground. That the grandstand could seem so transparent and inconspicuous when not in use and so solid when inhabited amazed me. Its responsiveness to user needs was made even more clear when it was covered with a carpet of people. It provided minimal but adequate support for its inhabitants and then encouraged each to use the bodies of others as back rests, arms rests, pillows and wind breaks. I found the economy with which our grandstand worked greatly impressive.

3.2B

Reaction to the Junior High School and the Senior High School

Our Junior High School was a memorable building because it contained any number of intricate, surprising and incongruous spaces. I sense in retrospect that this was largely due to the fact that the building was once a high school; its spaces

had been designed and equipped to accommodate a much older set of students. Thus we often had English classes in old Biology labs and gym classes in the old cafeteria, using the equipment of old activities to accommodate our new ones. Other old spaces seemed incapable of being put to new use. These, including an auditorium that was no longer structurally sound, were shut off and accessible only to an occasional venturesome student. I don't remember our use and non-use of these old spaces as being at all uncomfortable; I rather liked knowing that I was sitting in a room my father had once used as a student, and using the same desks, shelves and equipment albeit for different purposes. The shut off rooms lent an air of mystery to the building; I have noted above that the interior of the building seemed to hold much more than its facade would suggest, the locked doors seemed to point to even further unseen space. Thus I found the Junior High School a complex and surprising world, and though I don't believe I ever came to grasp it fully, I did enjoy it immensely.

The qualities of the high school building were quite different. It was a new building whose organization and layout were clear from inside and out. I came to it an older student tentatively committed to architecture as a field of study. I had a full general understanding of the building in a matter of days; my next three years there were spent exploring its subtleties. It was the first large building I came to know intimately, and I soon found that I had grown attached to it as a place. This seems curious in a way for few of the building's spaces were out of the ordinary. Most were simple block rooms that related to one another in the simplest and most obvious ways. Most often I grew to relate to them not because they were physically special but rather because the circumstances under which I came to know and use them were special. The auditorium and green room, for example, were not designed as small meeting and discussion rooms. When we used them for that purpose, however, they became very special: they influenced the nature of our discussions in them in important ways. My inhabitation of our high school taught me that power of

juxtaposition in the choosing of settings for activities. Simple spaces took on special meaning when experienced in an extraordinary way, just as simple activities became uncommon when they took place in a strange setting.

3.3A

General Description: Public Places and Other Special Spaces

I came to know a large number of public spaces and places during my stay at the new house. Most, however, were in my remote neighborhood and so I got to know only a few of them well. Probably most important was the Basilica, a large handsome Catholic church that had been built in the early 1900's in our town. Located near our Junior High School, the Basilica was used as a meeting place for courses in religion. Though I belonged to a different parish, I had ample time to explore the Basilica and to become familiar with it.

Most other places of interest were located in downtown Buffalo. Of them only an art gallery, the Albright-Knox, which I had occasion to visit fairly often, impressed me greatly.

3.3.1

The Basilica: The Portico

The Basilica was designed, in the main, in the style of the Renaissance: its nave, dome, side aisles and apses were simple and pure geometric forms assembled in clear straightforward ways. The facade, however, was Baroque in character, being much more complex and ornate. Its highly textured surface undulated both in section and in plan, and it was appended on either side by a curved colonnade or portico that enclosed a small plaza adjacent to the street. I found being in the portico at the edge of the plaza an immensely comfortable and enjoyable experience. On stepping up to the portico I felt as though I had entered the church: I was

above the ground in a protected and richly defined space. Yet since I could see the Basilica proper in its entirety, I felt as though I were still outside. I was, then, both inhabitant and observer. It was also a meaningful place to be with respect to the plaza: I was not in front of or behind the plaza edge, I was within it. I could become involved in activities on the plaza and remain at the same time protected and partially hidden. That the portico could perform so many functions so well (entrance gate, covered passageway, park bench, plaza edge) never ceased to intrigue me.

3.3.2

The Basilica: The Interior Plan

Before I first entered the Basilica, I had become familiar with a number of smaller churches in the area and had found them to be generally similar in form. Most were rectangular in plan with alcoves in the back wall and along the side walls. The back wall alcove usually housed the main altar, the side recesses smaller altars and shrines. I had expected the Basilica to be a set of larger spaces organized in the same simple way. I was very surprised when I saw its complex interior and thought at first that it bore no relation at all to the smaller churches I had known. The space intrigued me and I examined and explored it carefully. After a good while I discovered a secret of its complexity. It was, in fact, planned in the same basic way as our church, but since it had been scaled up, its main recesses from the nave had now gotten large enough to have secondary recesses of their own. The side apses were no longer sites for small altars, they were now large enough to contain aisles, seating and other public space. The plan of public space had now grown complex and multi-directional (there was even a public corridor around back of the main altar), thus causing the experience of the Basilica to be occasionally confusing but always exciting.

This lesson in the importance of scale affected me greatly. I remember imagining churches that contained recesses within recesses within recesses (and later was duly excited by my first look at Bramante's plan for St. Peters). Most significant was the fact that I had found the key to a complex space. I never tired afterwards of searching for the method behind the design of other complex and intricate built environments.

3.3.3

The Basilica: The Basement

The basement of the Basilica, which we used for most of our class meetings, seemed a much more solemn and sober place than the church itself. Most of its spaces were windowless and dimly lit and were separated one from the other by dark stone piers and arches that supported the walls and columns above. The stone piers were, in fact, so numerous and large that few additional partitions were necessary. That was the aspect of the Basilica basement that engaged me most: its intricate and intertwined spaces were formed not by design but by the need to support adequately the structure above. The labyrinthine plan that resulted contained a series of appropriately mysterious but easily identifiable spaces; the shapes and organization of the enclosing piers usually reflected the nature of the particular church space it supported.

3.3.4

The Art Gallery Stair

The one built place in Buffalo that impressed me greatly was the large outdoor stair at the back entrance of the Albright-Knox Art Gallery. Like many famous urban stairs, the one at the Albright-Knox was more than a simple set of steps. The stair invited pausing and sitting at a number of points between the entrance portico and the street. Steps would occasionally expand forward and form platforms and

podiums. These, like the larger landings often were equipped with stone benches and sculpture. I especially remember a step extending out laterally and becoming the plinth of a neo-Greek porch on the building. Because it constantly encouraged its user to stop and sit, or to venture out from it onto podiums and ledges, the stair seemed to me vibrant and alive. I always got the sense that it had changed some since I last saw it. At its base, it was separated from the street by a fountain that lent a sense of enclosure and completeness. The steps were so inviting a place that we often ended a high school evening by driving into town just to sit there and watch the fountain.

3.3B

Reaction to Public Places and Other Special Spaces

Although I came to know a great number of public places in the time I lived in the new house, I don't think I ever developed a feeling for that set of places as a whole. Buffalo is not a particularly spatially coherent city nor is my home town a carefully organized one. Individual places did, however, continue to excite me and to teach me. My examination of the interior plan of the Basilica was especially useful; I can with confidence say that my interest in analysis of design method began there. Special exterior places, like the Basilica portico and the art gallery steps were equally important. The fact that both features were highly specific and carefully designed, yet useful for and suggestive of any number of activities, impressed me in an important way.

3B

Reaction to "The New House" Neighborhood

By the time I had reached the last year of my stay in the new house neighborhood I had access to the largest set of private, semi-private and public spaces I had ever known.

The center of my neighborhood had, as I have pointed out, switched from home to school. Perhaps I felt more at ease in my school environment because I had a larger and more varied group of spaces to appropriate and inhabit. More likely is the guess that many of the activities I then found important could only be accommodated somewhere outside the home. There was also a group of public spaces that I could then visit and use on my own initiative. I got to know only a few of these places intimately, however, for few were within easy walking or driving distance.

On the whole, then, my sense of this third neighborhood was that it was dispersed and disjointed. I greatly enjoyed a number of activities in a number of places (playing the piano at home, rehearsing a play at school, seeing an art show in the city) but I found the relationships among these activities strained if at all existent: unlike my first two neighborhoods, both polarized around the home, my third neighborhood did not allow for my activities and interests to reinforce one another.

The Fourth Neighborhood

4

Transition to the Fourth Neighborhood Centered at "The Fraternity House". Awareness Statement

My move from my third neighborhood centered at the new house to the fourth centered at "The Fraternity House" was easily the most important environmental transition I have ever made. Everything changed: my immediate, nearby and remote neighborhoods, my school and classmates, my home and intimate social environment. It surprises me now that the move into a student residence in a new city was initially such an easy one to make, this despite the fact that I had been preparing myself for "going away to college" for years. There were, however, far-reaching and unexpected implications of the change that revealed themselves slowly. Each time I returned to my home town, for instance, I saw my old environment in a new way. Although it had some features I missed, it seemed, for the most part, empty and dull. I soon grew very fond of city life.

When I first arrived in Boston, I was extremely excited about and aware of my built environment; I had chosen MIT as a school specifically because its architecture program was open to undergraduates. During my first few months, however, I was overwhelmed by the complexity of my new school and city. My concern for doing well in rigorous freshman courses and for slowly and carefully coming to know the city's wonders tempered my initial excitement and enthusiasm. Always fearing a type of sensory overload, I moved slowly at first and tried to explore and understand each built place fully before going on to the next. Later on, I was able to move more freely. The set of general ideas and attitudes toward places I developed through my work, reading and observation helped me sift through larger numbers of places and pick out the ones deserving special attention. In short, over the period of my undergraduate years, my ability to perceive and analyze built places was sharpened and refined. In the following discussions of special places my subjective reactions may often be colored by my more objective analyses.

4A

General Description: "The Fraternity House" Neighborhood

On arriving at MIT I moved directly into the Kappa Sigma Fraternity House, a row house on Bay State Road in lower Back Bay Boston. To the north, the fraternity house faced the Charles River Basin; its small back lot was separated from the park that surrounded the river, the Esplanade, by an expressway. The buildings of MIT were sited across the basin in Cambridge, a fifteen minute walk away. My "immediate" neighborhood now consisted of all the places I could easily access while going about my daily business. These included most buildings of MIT and a few shops in Cambridge, the streets and open public spaces in Back Bay, paths and places along the Esplanade, stores and restaurants in Kenmore Square, and the other student residences along Bay State Road. My "nearby" neighborhood, consisting of all those places I could reach easily and quickly was vast. It included virtually all parts of Boston and Cambridge and extended out into the suburbs as far as the rapid transit lines could reach. My "remote" neighborhood included places that required an investment of some time and effort to reach. These included places in cities and towns outside Boston the most important of which were on other college campuses. Strangely, my acquisition of a car during the fourth and final year of my stay at the fraternity house did not significantly alter my sense of neighborhood. Most of the places I wanted to visit frequently were most easily approached on foot or via public transportation.

The fraternity house and my personal spaces within it were decidedly at the center of this fourth neighborhood. This does not represent a significant departure from the school-oriented third neighborhood, it must be remembered that the fraternity house was linked to and in many ways dependent upon MIT. But my sense of connection with the fraternity house was reinforced by another factor: I was, for the first time, significantly in control of my environment and I came

to feel responsible for the successes and failures of our private and communal spaces. Over four years, my privileges and responsibilities in house environmental matters increased such that at the beginning of my senior year I was able to carve out and inhabit a place of my own within it. The opportunity to become intimately involved with a building and to be able to act upon the ways its spaces were defined and experienced was an invaluable one. This involvement was made more powerful and meaningful by the fact that it was allowed to expand and intensify over time.

4.1A

General Description: "The Fraternity House"

The fraternity house was a four story brick row house with a full basement, a fifth floor penthouse and a roof deck. Once a town house, the fraternity had large living spaces with projecting bays in the front and back thirds of the building; its middle third contained a grand open stairwell, landings and side closets. A small stair led up to the front entrance on the first floor and a small outdoor vestibule protected the back door entrance to the basement.

Few major revisions were necessary to make the house a suitable home for thirty male MIT undergraduates. The basement contained a large bar in front, a kitchen in back and a number of utility rooms in the middle. The front two-thirds of the first floor contained an entry and mail area, a large living area, a piano and a hearth. The back third contained a dining room and a pantry with a dumbwaiter connecting it to a kitchen. The second and third floors contained student rooms of various sizes organized around the stairwell. Some were used for sleeping, some for studying, and some for both. The open stairwell did not continue above the third floor; the fourth floor and penthouse were accessed by smaller auxiliary stairs. There were more sleep/study rooms on the fourth floor, but the penthouse consisted of one large room used solely for sleeping. The stair up to the penthouse also led to the entrance to the roof deck.

4.1.1

The Fraternity Bar

The fraternity bar was a fairly large room tucked away in the basement. Its access from the first floor was somewhat strained: down the tight back stairwell, through a cramped vestibule, down a dark narrow path through utility spaces, and into the small bar door. The bar had once been the most important social space in the house. Isolated from sleep and study areas, it was an ideal spot for louder and somewhat more raucous activity. Over my four years at the fraternity house, however, the nature of our social activity changed greatly. Formal, well-defined carefully planned bar parties were replaced by impromptu get-togethers that could only happen and grow in public and visible places. Many suggested that the bar be remodelled for some new activity noting that it had become a dark, hidden away, infrequently used, obsolete space.

I remember growing immensely attached to the bar for precisely these reasons. It was indeed an outmoded space; it was permanently equipped with a bar and with built-in seating along the window alcove and around the hearth, and was furnished with a large tavern-style table, leather chairs and couch, and an old upright piano. It was wonderful being alone in that large secluded room amidst the setting of another time. I found its air of constancy and permanence reassuring. Though the character of most other rooms changed frequently, the bar always remained the same. Even on the hottest, most hectic spring school day, the bar was cool, dark and still. It became, for me, the most important place in the house for quiet thought and concentration.

4.1.2

The Tool Room

The tool room was a small windowless storage room in the middle section of the basement. It was a leftover space that

had been closed in and lined completely with shelving. The tool room was always absolutely full of stuff: paint cans, tools, hardware, and equipment of all sorts sat on the shelves, lay on the floor and hung from the ceiling. I remember being impressed by the fact that once I got to know it well, I could use it extremely efficiently. It was a kind of magic space as well. Two steps inside and one to the right, and I was in the middle of a world of tools. That such a small room could hold so very much and that it could so quickly give the illusion that it was a boundless environment of equipment with no apparent means of access or egress constantly amazed me.

4.1.3 The Kitchen

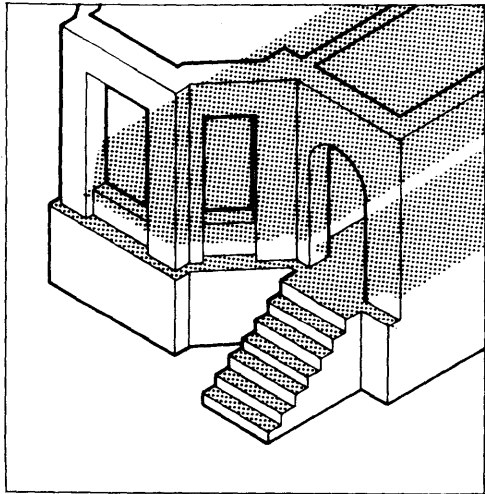
I remember at first finding the kitchen of the fraternity house a bizarre and uninviting place. A large basement room at the back of the house, the kitchen contained sinks, shelves and monstrous pieces of food preparation and storage equipment organized around a huge central work table. It had a set of windows high on its rear wall that faced our parking lot; at night, car headlights would occasionally shine into the darkened kitchen and cast an eerie glow. A dumbwaiter installed next to the entrance door had a curious way of moving silently up and down, always startling me by making appear or disappear a set of dirty pots and pans. In all, I found the kitchen more an unsettling than an intriguing place. It was with reservation, then, that I accepted the job of cook offered me senior year (five or six of us did the house cooking each term).

I quickly discovered that, for a cook, the kitchen was not at all a bad place. From my station at the work table opposite the entrance door I could work comfortably, yet keep aware of all that was going on. I had a view out the window to the back door where I could watch for deliveries, I stood directly opposite both the dumbwaiter and the entrance door and could thus know exactly who and what had entered "my kitchen"

and I had all my supplies and equipment within a few steps reach. Suddenly the form, layout and character of the room made sense. This particular kitchen was not meant to be a gathering place, it was a workshop in which one person could, with efficiency and ease, prepare three meals a day for thirty people. The elaborate set of control conditions necessary was elegantly met by our kitchen. It earned my greatest respect.

4.1.4

The Fraternity Front Steps

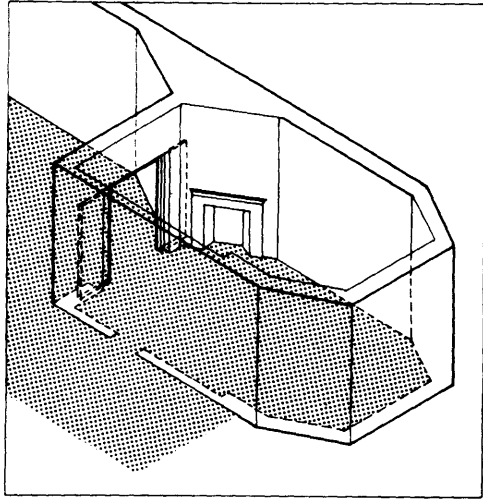


The front steps of the fraternity house were extremely simple in design. They were special however, for a now familiar reason: they occupied a place that related both to building and street, an area where indoor and outdoor activities could merge. This quality was especially strong in the fraternity steps because it was reinforced by the shape of the building. Though not covered, the front steps were flanked on either side by the bay of our building and that of our neighbor. An inhabitant of the front steps was out of doors but set back within a built niche. Moreover, an inhabitant of the front steps could often relate to a person on the front window seat of the living room. On warm days the front windows were often left open such that someone in the living room could converse freely with or even climb out to join someone else on the front steps. The fact that a bay window seat which usually felt like a far, secluded corner of the living room could on occasion, become an extension of the front steps always delighted me.

4.1.5

The Dining Room

The fraternity dining room, on the back third of the first floor, was a memorable place. It had three large windows in its bay that looked out over the river, a small door that led



to the pantry and dumbwaiter and a set of large sliding doors that led to the living room. The nature of the relationship between the dining and living rooms as defined by the sliding doors was very special. When the doors were open the dining room was a continuation of the living area; it was a kind of large alcove set slightly apart from but completely open to the rest of the first floor. When the doors were shut, however, the dining room became a completely self-contained room that closed in neatly on itself. This magic ability was due in part to the nature of the doors: they were massive paneled doors that formed a wall when closed and that slid completely out of sight when opened. The dining room also felt whole and separate because its interior wall reflected, in part, the shape of its exterior bay wall, and thus defined a coherent, symmetrical and deliberate space. It amazed me that the dining room could work so easily both as a whole, and as part of a larger whole. Moreover, it was surprising that such a carefully designed cellular room could be lodged within the larger structure without creating awkward leftover spaces. I began to see that the "tricks" behind the dining room (the use of doors that worked as walls, the placement of a hearth such that it chamfered a corner and rounded out the room) demonstrated a virtue in design: economy.

4.1.6 The Pantry

The pantry was a small storage and service room that supported the dining room. It was lined with cabinets and shelving for plates, linen and silver, and it housed a sink and dishwasher. It was connected to the kitchen by the dumbwaiter. It was a special and memorable place because it could be so efficiently and intensely used. Just before dinner, the pantry would be a bustling place. Two or three people would be working quickly assembling plates and silver, filling pitchers, unfolding table cloths, and putting serving spoons in platters sent up from the kitchen. Even when unoccupied the pantry seemed a

live and animate space: the automatic dishwasher could be turned on and left alone, the dumbwaiter, again, seemed to appear and disappear of its own volition. The pantry seemed the life force behind the stately, quiet and unhurried dining room. Both an outpost of the kitchen and an adjunct to the dining room, it was always at work serving both well.

4.1.7

The Stairwell and Back Stair

There were two sets of stairs that connected the floors of the fraternity house. The large front stair went from the first floor up to the penthouse winding in a complex and ever-changing fashion around an open well. The back stair, in contrast, was tightly organized within a narrow, closed shaft that extended from the basement to the fourth floor. Each stair was important and memorable, the front because it was open, spacious and filled with places to pause, the back because it offered an express route that drastically shortened the distance from fourth floor to basement. Each stair, through contrast, made clear and exciting the qualities of the other.

Simply being in any room adjacent to the open stair was exciting. One was able to at any point on the first three floors to be aware of the public activity at any other point. This provided a sense of unity and completeness that made the house live and breathe as a whole. Though noise was occasionally a problem, I thought we were more than compensated by having the opportunity to sit in a corner of the third floor, secluded and private, yet faintly aware that the party in the living room was well under way.

Using the stair was equally important. A trip from the first to the fourth floors invariably included a number of stops. Since the stair path went directly by most rooms it was easy to happen in and see what was going on. There were, of course, meetings on landings, and at railings, and lengthy

discussions held from floor to floor. The stairwell was an information spine. It was hard to ascend or descend without learning something.

I found the physical form of the stairwell especially meaningful. Most stairways I had known were like the back stair, repetitive and confined; it was impossible to tell a segment at the second floor level, say, from one at the third. The fraternity front stair was, for a number of reasons, highly identifiable. This was due partly to the fact that it changed form so often: each flight or subflight had a different rise, shape, direction and side and cover condition. In addition, since the stair was built around an opening, it was visible in its entirety at every point. Thus, a section was identifiable both because it had unique form and because it could be seen in place in the context of the other segments. Complementing this segmentation was a sense of wholeness and completeness. The stair would occasionally return on itself, the underside of one flight forming the roof of the one below it. Also, certain features remained constant: a wood paneled railing ran a continuous irregular spiral from the first floor up beyond the third. Thus the experience of the stair was a rich one. It was continuous and coherent (always the same) yet each of its segments was unique and identifiable, (always different).

The back stair, with its compactness, repetitiveness, and directness offered few of the opportunities of the front stair. There were no places to stop or linger, no revealing overlooks and few inviting adjacent rooms. It had, however, its own specialness and power. The steps were just wide enough for one person to pass alone, and just deep enough for one person (my size) to dash down with the absolute minimum number of steps. I grew to greatly appreciate its spareness and effectiveness.

4.1.8

The Side Closets

In the middle third of the fraternity house on the second through fourth floors opposite the grand stairwell were the side closets, long rooms that contained a narrow hall flanked by rows of closets and bureaus. Each fraternity member owned a station in one of these side closets, usually consisting of a closet and bureau, and shared the full length mirrors at either end of the interior hall. The side closets had a number of special qualities. They were, again, spaces that could be efficiently and intensely used. Four or five people could shave and dress comfortably within them, each with all his personal possessions within arms reach. Though impressive and exciting when full, the closets were equally important when empty. A deserted side closet was a curious and surreal space, a wall of doors facing a wall of drawers and mirrors over a narrow walk space. The mirrors would often expand the tight space; a pair of wall mirrors at either end of the hall could make the row of doors expand to infinity. This feature was consistently surprising; it was made further remarkable by the fact that the spell could be broken simply by leaving a door ajar. That these illusive spaces should occur in the narrow windowless center of the long row house seemed fitting.

4.1.9

Second Rear

The large rooms of each floor in the fraternity house were titled by a floor number appended by "front" or "rear". Thus the room facing the river on the third floor was "third rear." Occasionally, two rooms on the same floor faced the same direction; the two on the third floor that faced the street were titled "third front" and "little third front."

Unlike most fraternity members, I spent my first three years at MIT living in one room: second rear. Second rear had a

number of disadvantages. It was a five-man study room, each of its residents having a bed up in the fifth floor sleeping room. It was the room closest to the highly public first floor and thus its residents were subjected to continual invasions of privacy. Despite these problems and despite the fact that its basic form was that of every other large room in the house, I preferred second rear. I somehow found it a grander and more inviting place (and guessed it was due solely to the oriental rug). As I lived in the house longer, however, I began to discover other important factors. The ceiling of second rear was slightly higher, its moldings and window trim slightly wider than those of the other rooms. The main door to the room was a glazed french door; with it we could establish a range of degrees of privacy between the room and the hall. The panelling was handsome; its thick planks met in deep grooves that easily received hooks for picture frames and rails for shelving. It was, then, the detailing of the room, the fine-tuning of its form that made it special. The existence of the other similar rooms only served to make more apparent these features.

There were other reasons why I grew to enjoy second rear. A relatively small place for five students, it required careful thought in the arrangement of its furnishings. One soon discovered that a chair or desk not only occupied space but shaped the space around it. Slightest changes in position could significantly alter use patterns of the room. When the room finally reached a comfortable and workable form, each of us having a private work space and easy access to communal space, the place became an immensely satisfying one to inhabit. Each of our space-use patterns tightly interlocked but did not interfere with those of the others. A single person could inhabit the space as comfortably as could five, the furnishings of others forming thick edges to his own private space. Again, the economy of the room was impressive.

4.1.10

Little Fourth Rear

At the beginning of my last year at the fraternity, I moved to little fourth rear, a small room seven feet by nine feet by eleven feet high. It had a main door that led to the top landing of the back stairwell and another door onto the much larger adjacent room, fourth rear. Up till my moving in, little fourth rear had been used as a two-man study, its two desks, desk chairs, and corner seat just barely leaving room to walk. Armed with a set of plans for a loft, I managed to convince my fellow fraternity members that L4F was best suited to inhabitation by one person. After weeks of work, I settled into our fraternity's first "single."

I have never lived in a room more memorable than little fourth rear. It was endlessly adaptable; I could with the slightest effort move within it or operate on it to achieve a setting fitting my mood. I had, for instance, installed a port-hole window in the main door. Its transparent, semi-transparent, and opaque inserts allowed for a full range of edge conditions between my private space and the public landing. The room's other door opened onto a four-man room. I could swing that door fully open and suddenly be within an alcove of that room. My bed loft, which ran the full width of the room, was built just above the entrance door. From my intimate person-sized sleeping niche, I had a full view through the window to the river and the Cambridge shore, yet I was invisible to people just below me. No matter what the condition of enclosure of the walls of my room, the sleeping niche was a secluded and secure spot.

I find a can't say enough about my living in little fourth rear. I planned it, built it, and inhabited it; it responded by offering more opportunities for spatial experience than I ever could have imagined. Though always a tight, economical and highly personal space, it could easily accommodate a larger group when its doors were open and it worked as an

extension of public space. Suffice it to say that its magic, chameleon qualities were a source of constant delight.

4.1.11 The Roof

Back of the fifth floor penthouse was a small roof space. The views it offered of Cambridge, MIT, the Charles River and the roof scape of Boston were richly varied and exhilarating. The roof space was neatly defined: its floor was a slatted wooden deck painted a bright red, its back wall was formed by the penthouse and its side walls were tall, wide brick chimney stacks. The resultant sense of enclosure made the roof space seem protected and secure. Since there were always patches of shade and shelters from wind, the roof space was perennially habitable.

I found our roof deck immediately appealing because it existed within an uncommon setting. The roof scape of our row of houses on Bay State Road was intricate and bizarre. Vents, chimneys and skylights sprouted from the terraced roofs forming a built forest complete with intertwining paths, occasional dense underbrush and small clearings.

My initial excitement about the roof never faded; it came to mean more and more to me as a place as I lived at the fraternity house. Like the bar, it offered a permanent setting of solitude and seclusion strongly conducive to reflection and contemplation. Its remarkable view strongly reinforced this. Each time I looked out across the river I discovered something new. At first, I was able to pick out places I had visited and had come to know. Then I started noticing relationships and themes that unified sets of elements. In short, I never tired of the view. It served both as a source of information and as a gauge of my learning about my new neighborhood.

4.1B

Reaction to "The Fraternity House"

Just as the elements of each space described above came together in economical, multivalent and supportive ways, so did those places come together to form the house: the whole of the fraternity house was much greater than the sum of its parts. Certainly there were a number of factors other than physical form that made me grow intimately attached to the fraternity house: I was, at the time a student of architecture who had come to be extremely aware of his built environment, and I was given free reign to act upon and change that environment as I saw fit. But the fact that the building seemed to encourage and reinforce those changes cannot be denied. More often than not, the implications of a given change were richer and more far-reaching than I had guessed.

I noted very early on that our fraternity has moved from its Back Bay house to new quarters on the MIT campus. The new fraternity house, with its single enclosed stairwell minimally connecting its identical floors, its small box-like rooms and its discrete, segmented communal spaces, makes clear by contrast the qualities that made the old fraternity house joyously habitable. Despite the fact that the old fraternity house was built within rigid rules of composition, it was remarkably differentiated and non-uniform. Though the plans of each of the floors were quite similar, no two corners of the house were even remotely alike; the approach to, the entry into, and the experience of each house "place" was unique. These house places were successfully organized to transcend the limited boundaries of the building: I was amazed when drawing plans to discover that I had lived for four years between two brick firewalls set twenty-five feet apart. Thus, it had a quality of sameness and of tight, logical organization that made the house read and work as a whole but was characterized locally by an individuality and differentiation that made it a constantly surprising and always delightful place. Though I eventually tired of the social environment of the fraternity house, I never grew disenchanted with the house as a physical place.

4.2A

General Description: MIT

During the full period I lived at the fraternity house I attended MIT. Its buildings were organized in a linear fashion along the Cambridge edge of the Charles River Basin. They were, for the most part, long low interconnected buildings in which classrooms, offices, laboratories, libraries and lecture halls were uniformly distributed. There were occasional separate and discrete buildings; these tended to be as isolated, self-contained and single-purposed as the connected buildings were homogenous, monotonous and undifferentiated. I approached MIT daily on foot via the Harvard Bridge, attended classes in the main group of connected buildings and returned home. I would on occasion return in the evening for extracurricular activities or library work, but most often tried to avoid a second trip.

4.2.1

Rotch Library: The Lower Floor

The libraries of MIT were among the few places on campus I could inhabit comfortably. The Rotch Library of architecture and planning, especially its section on the lower floor, was particularly memorable. The library was lodged within a section of the main buildings. It was entered on the second floor where it had a space that ran the full width of the building. From this space, a stair led down to a smaller room on what was the first floor of the building. Though adjacent to a public first floor corridor, the lower space was accessible only from the room above. Rotch Library had a large collection to house in a set of fairly small places. In order to preserve adequate working space, the librarians had to resort to storing books in high stacks arranged with absolutely minimal circulation space. Wandering through the stacks became an intense and private experience; a browser could feel alone and lost in a world of books yet be only a few feet from the main circulation path.

This sense of seclusion within a rich world was more strongly felt on the lower floor. One descended into a small, quiet, private space in which stacks of books, files of photographs and racks of drawings had been carefully and tightly organized. The lower room was especially delightful because, since it was on the first floor, and came equipped with large first floor windows, it was a fully light and open space. I found the descent into a room that was hidden and still but airy and bright a constant surprise. I can think of no MIT place I found more conducive to thought and work.

4.2.2

Hayden Building: The Bay Windows

The Hayden Building was a classroom, office and library building located along the river edge. Its two libraries were large, rectangular and generally dull rooms made special only by their spectacular river exposure. Sitting in one of Hayden's bay windows that jutted out toward the river was an exhilarating experience. It was easy for an occupant to lose the sense of being surrounded and supported by physical structure. The resultant feeling of suspension in space was complemented by the sense of suspension in time that the stillness of the library made possible. It was a good while before I realized that the library bay windows were the only corners on campus where such a complete and full experience of the river was possible.

4.2.3

The Walker Memorial

One set of spaces on the MIT campus of which I grew particularly fond were these within the old student activity building, Walker Memorial. Walker had been built along with the other buildings on campus when MIT moved to its present Cambridge site in the early 1900's. A small separate three-

story building symmetrical and formal in design and Neo-classic in spirit, Walker was once the home of the Athletic Department, the student library, and all extracurricular activities. Most of these activities have left the building. Its large third floor gym space is now used mainly as an exam room, its small spaces, including a few squash courts, are now used as small meeting rooms.

I think I initially connected strongly with the Walker building because it fit more closely my image of "a college building" than any other one on campus: though my exposure to college campuses before entering MIT had not been extensive, I had somehow come to expect buildings that were discrete, formal and surrounded by open space. I remember being taken aback, at first, by the density and interconnectedness of the rest of the MIT campus. Walker's interior spaces were in keeping with the image I had formed in viewing the exterior; the formal dining space on the first floor, the thick-walled rooms with heavy doors on the second, and the well-worn gym, squash courts and locker rooms on the top floor all read as spaces that had once been, and in some cases still were, enthusiastically inhabited. That I came to experience them infrequently and out of their original context did trouble me some, but I nonetheless enjoyed the sense of history and tradition they made possible.

4.2.4

The Pavilion Lecture Hall

There was, in fact, one lecture hall on the MIT campus that I found memorable. Located at the end of a wing of the main building, it was a square flat room with windows on three of its sides; one faced south across the river, the others faced north and west onto the largest open green space on campus, Killian Court. I found the room exciting and the experience of approaching and exciting it complete and fulfilling because the position of the room within the MIT complex was

specifically identifiable from the outside. The face of the building the hall occupied had been treated as a squarish pavilion by the architect; this was done to bring that particular wing to an elegant and finished end. When walking to a morning class, I caught sight of the pavilion after walking a few yards toward MIT on the Harvard Bridge and it stayed in sight for the full ten minute walk. The sense of defining, striving toward and achieving a goal was strong.

4.2B Reaction to MIT

It surprises me that I grew excited about and attached to such a small set of corners in MIT buildings. During my undergraduate years I don't remember ever feeling particularly comfortable or "at home" anywhere in that environment. A strong sense I had then was that habitable, supportive spaces did exist there (I remember glimpsing into laboratories and research areas that looked like exciting environments) but that I never had access to them. The places I was allowed to use were either one step removed from a main corridor and thus highly public, or buried in a corner of a separate activities building and thus highly isolated. I did develop an affection for the view of the exterior of the buildings, especially the view from across the river. The excitement of that view, however, was for the most part dissociated from my direct experience of the place.

4.3A Description: General Public Open Spaces

Although I came to know a number of public buildings in and around Boston and Cambridge well and I came to inhabit and enjoy places within them, I was much more taken by the built public open spaces in my new neighborhood. My fascination with the habitable outdoor places around me was probably due

to their newness: my previous neighborhoods had offered few important outdoor places outside of those in my back yard. Most immediate were the streets and alleys of Back Bay. Even more memorable, though, were the places around the edge of the Charles River Basin and the bridges that crossed it and defined, in part, its boundaries.

4.3.1 Bay State Road

Our fraternity house was located on Bay State Road, a Back Bay street lined with row houses that ran for about a half mile parallel to the river edge. A straight and fairly narrow street with well defined beginning and end points and no major intersections, Bay State Road worked as a quiet, unified and eminently habitable linear space. I grew very fond of Bay State Road; I remember feeling as though I had arrived home when I set foot on any part of it. There were probably a number of reasons for my developing this sense of belonging. Bay State Road had, over the years, become a popular site for student residences: there were seven or eight MIT fraternities and any number of Boston University student houses there. The street often felt like a student ghetto, having the best qualities of both the campus and the city worlds.

Its form reinforced this sense of belonging. There was an air of containment and protection about the street; it was a place that was partially but carefully enclosed by the buildings as walls and the trees as roof. Through the small side streets that pierced the north building row, one could catch glimpses of the vast Charles River Basin just beyond; this a sight that made the careful boundedness of the street more special. The qualities and completeness of its enclosure changed constantly. In the winter, bare branches defined a roof, but let in all the dark light. In the summer, the thick foliage formed a shaded, secluded space.

The qualities of constancy and change in the street's roof were reflected, in a different way, in the street's walls. The basic pattern of building, four of five story row houses with baywindows, remained fairly constant along the street. The detailing, however, was marked by constant variety. Thus, at any point along the street, I felt as though I were in a comfortable, known place, yet in taking careful note of my surroundings I could invariably find, delight in, and learn from local peculiarities. As a resource for a student of architecture, Bay State Road was inexhaustible.

4.3.2 Esplanade Places

The Charles River Basin was a widening of the Charles River bounded on the west by the Boston University Bridge, on the east by the Longfellow Bridge and crossed in the middle by the Harvard Bridge which spanned its widest section. Both my residence and my school faced onto the basin, the buildings of MIT on its north shore in Cambridge, my fraternity house on its south shore in Boston. I thus had easy access to the public open green space that ran all the way around the basin edge. Called the Esplanade, this green ring was a continuous chain of places defined by the river edge, the shore, grass and trees, and small pieces of building including walkways, benches, and pedestrian overpasses. I found walking around the Esplanade, stopping to sit in or be near these places endlessly enjoyable. I was amazed at the wide range of feelings edge places could evoke, especially given the fact that the underlying condition of each, that is, water meeting land meeting buildings, remained constant. Some places felt alive and busy even when empty, others felt expansive or desolate even when full; some places that thrust slightly forward felt suspended and free, others that receded felt protected and secluded. I remember then discovering that, to a large extent, places of markedly different character defined and supported one another. An elevated, open pedestrian overlook

caused a sheltered place to appear below or behind it; an intensely active node often reinforced the solitude of the places around it. This notion of complementarity helped explain how such a variety of places could be achieved with such spare means; its discovery greatly increased my awareness of and enthusiasm for the places along the Esplanade.

4.3.3

The Harvard Bridge

The Harvard Bridge was a flat, simply designed bridge about one-third of a mile long. I used to cross it daily on foot on my way to and from school. The walk usually took seven minutes or so and, when the weather was favorable, the walk was enjoyable. There was a curious phenomenon that I associate with the walk across the bridge. In crossing it, I used to discover that after two minutes or so, I had lost the sense of "coming from" Boston without yet having attained the sense of "going to" Cambridge. During that middle part of the walk, I felt as though I were suspended in time. Since the design of the bridge was so simple and it was easy to become unaware of structural support, I remember feeling suspended in space as well. During this period of gentle rhythmic movement, I found myself doing a great deal of reflecting. It became a time to change hats, moving from Boston resident to MIT student and back again.

4.3B

Reaction to General Public Open Spaces

In many ways, the public spaces in and around Boston and Cambridge seemed like extensions of my home spaces. I felt I could use them freely and safely, and I grew strongly attached to many of them. This feeling was utterly new to me, buildings had always been separate and identifiable and I rarely sensed that space had been formed by the exterior of

two buildings. My sense of open public space had changed similarly. Parks and playgrounds were places to visit, they were never the means of getting from one place to another. I greatly enjoyed my ability to experience outdoor places as I went about my daily life, not simply on special occasions. I was thus able to come to know these places intimately with little effort.

4B

Reaction to "The Fraternity House" Neighborhood

My fourth neighborhood centered at "The Fraternity House" was marked by a richness, coherence and completeness that I had never before experienced; in contrast, my first three neighborhoods seemed random and unorganized. These qualities can be seen in examining the ways in which parts of the neighborhood related to the whole: my tightly organized room was in an equally complex and compact house on a narrow unified street within a dense and complex city. All of the spaces on each level of habitation related in some way to the center of my neighborhood, the vast but enclosed opening of the Charles River Basin.

The Basin made dramatically visible the layout and organization of places within the city. Since MIT, too, faced the Basin, I could experience all the important places in my life both as objective observer and active inhabitant. Because the spaces in the city and my activities in those spaces interlocked and supported one another, I was afforded the opportunity to be aware of and involved with each of them, in changing ways, at many times. This led to my soon feeling that the entire neighborhood had become my home.

2 Theory

Analysis and Design Attitudes

Introduction

The analysis that follows is a first attempt at placing in order the thoughts and ideas about built places discussed in the personal history. I started the analysis by looking for general patterns, recording those qualities of spaces that I found myself reacting to and talking about most often. Having compiled a large number of themes, I used them to establish a set of categories of spaces and then read carefully back over the history putting the places I had discussed into as many categories as each seemed to fit. I then wrote briefly about each group of spaces trying to define more carefully the quality that held the group together and that made each space in the group special. I also wrote briefly about the attitudes toward design that some of the categories suggested.

It was my original intention to work further with these themes, patterns and categories and to show that they can be seen as part of a larger theme, one that involves notions of personal identity as influenced by the experience of built places and one that supports the idea that places are important to us because they tell us about us. This was to suggest a style of synthesis for which the personal history could serve as a body of examples. A sketch of how the categories might fit together is appended.

The present analysis is necessarily skeletal and provisional. I found writing about design attitudes when not addressing a

specific design problem difficult and hoped that as I moved on the design problem I could begin to key back to and elaborate upon experiences in the history and themes in the analysis. This has, in fact, begun to happen; the writing in the third section serves both as a mapping of the course of my design decisions and as a first development of the context-dependent structure outlined below.

Category Lists

The Upstairs Window (1.1.4)
The Storage Closet (1.1.6)
The Playground (1.3.2)
The Window Seat (2.1.2)
An Outside Corner (2.3.2)
The Church Window (2.3.3)
The New House Stairwell
(3.1.3)
The Light Booth (3.2.5)
The Green Room (3.2.7)
The Pavilion Lecture Hall
(4.2.4)

The Stairs to the Attic
(2.1.7)
The Locker Room (3.2.2)
The Light Booth (3.2.5)
Dressing and Storage Rooms
(3.2.6)

Category Descriptions

1 Identifiable Places

There is a large set of places described in the personal history that can be termed identifiable. Often, these are places that can be located and easily pointed out from outside a building as well as inside. In other examples, identifiable places are ones that are differentiated from similar places around them. In either case these spaces become places both for observer and inhabitant. I found the experience of strongly identifiable places, ones that I could pick out from afar, approach in a fairly direct manner, and enter and inhabit particularly full and complete. I sense a strong analogy to the perception of, the striving for and the achievement of goals. The importance of the identifiability of built places could serve, perhaps, as an argument against repetition and sameness in architecture, and an argument for the designing of places that can be experienced in a multiple set of ways.

2 Initiated Places

The places I term initiated are often, but not always, hidden away or doubly-removed places. They are ones that require special knowledge, privileges or qualifications to access and inhabit. I think the excitement of using these places stemmed from the fact that they had been discovered, be it through hard work or sheer luck. Finding a new corner within a familiar environment was particularly exciting; it suggested

that a given place was richer and more complex than it had at first seemed, that other unseen places might someday be found and used.

3 Doubly-Removed Places

There are a number of examples in my narrative of places that exist within other places; most often they take the form of rooms that are doubly removed from a public space. I find among these places ones that were most conducive to contemplation and concentration. A number of them demonstrate that using first variants of basic spatial configurations, highly personal and secluded places can be achieved even within tight and crowded or open and highly public built environments: a range of privacy conditions can be achieved in a simple set of ways.

4 Storage Places

I found that closets, storerooms, attics and basements were the places I remembered first and best in most of my homes. I think such rooms were a constant delight because they imparted so much unexpected information. We would bring our possessions, pieces and symbols of our lives, together in often haphazard ways; this resulted in juxtapositions that were always revealing and often startling. This "collage effect" seemed to operate in storage spaces of all types and on all scales, from medicine chest to library. One simple attitude toward design is immediately suggested: built places should be claimable. If inhabitants can add to, modify and otherwise invest themselves in places, those places can respond in often surprisingly supportive ways.

The Window Seat (2.1.2)
Aunt L's Attic (2.2.3)
The Piano Room (3.1.2)
The Locker Room (3.2.2)
Dressing and Storage Rooms
(3.2.6)
Rotch Library: The Lower
Floor (4.2.1)

The Storage Closet (1.1.6)
The Cubby Hole (2.1.5)
The Shanty (2.1.10)
Aunt L's Attic (2.2.3)
The Basement Cabinet
Labyrinth (3.1.1)
The Green Room (3.2.7)
The Trophy Corridor
(3.2.9)
The Tool Room (4.1.2)
The Pantry (4.1.6)
The Side Closets (4.1.8)

The Old House Bar (1.1.5)
The Art Room (1.3.1)
T's Trailer (2.2.5)
The Gym/Auditorium/Stage
(2.3.1)
The Back Stage (3.2.4)
The Kitchen (4.1.3)
The Pantry (4.1.6)

The Hatch (1.2.2)
The Bedroom Windows (2.1.3)
The Dining Room (4.1.5)
Little Fourth Rear (4.1.10)

The Veranda (1.2.1)
Aunt F's Fireplace (1.4.3)
The Milk Door (2.1.4)
The Dark Room (2.1.6)

...

5

Equipped Places

I often mentioned places filled with equipment in the history. Most were intensely equipped and could be used with ease and efficiency. Perhaps they were memorable because they told something about the size and capabilities of the body. Along with describing what a body could do (how high one could reach, how hard one could pull) these spaces often amplified those capabilities. Through an elaborate system of ropes, pulleys and counter weights, for instance, I was able to raise and lower enormous backstage backdrops with moderate effort; through an equally complex and incredibly compact system, my father as bartender could serve large groups of people with ease.

6

Operable Places

The operable places were the ones among my memorable places that were capable of and often invited change. Probably the most memorable were the spaces that could be the most significantly changed with the least amount of energy. The key issue here may be responsiveness: I felt comfortable in places that could be altered to fit my mood. And, like equipped spaces, operable places often said something of the capabilities of my body.

7

Chameleon Places

In the narrative, I have often referred to chameleon places as "magic." I was here pointing to the ability of a number of these places to change character suddenly and completely, often without being operated upon. The grandstand, for instance, turned from light metal structure when viewed from

J's Closet (2.2.4)
The Gym/Auditorium Stage
(2.3.1)
The Grandstand (3.2.10)
The Portico (3.3.1)
The Art Gallery Stair (3.3.4)
The Dining Room (4.1.5)
Little Fourth Rear (4.1.10)

The Veranda (1.2.1)
The Hatch (1.2.2)
The Front Porch (2.1.1)
The Bedroom Windows (2.1.3)
The B's Porch (2.2.1)
The Fraternity Front Steps
(4.1.4)

The Shanty (2.1.10)
The Fraternity Bar (4.1.1)
The Roof (4.1.11)
The Walker Memorial (4.2.3)

Aunt F's Fireplace (1.4.3)
The Rock Garden (2.1.9)
...

afar to heavy wooden landscape when viewed from on top; the milk door could easily become a niche in the interior wall, a niche in the exterior wall, or a hole through the wall. They thus were responsive places that at different times could be and mean different things; many were memorable because those changes coincided closely with a user's needs.

8 Seasonal Places

I term seasonal those places whose use was dependent on the weather or on the time of year. Most common were those that became summer places, the ones that opened up to bring the outside in. Most memorable were those that were quite different in winter and summer; they were always special for changing reasons. These places became important as markers of time. They reminded us of how we had changed in a year and urged us to look forward to other summers.

9 Constant Places

Constant places are tools of reference; they offer a known and unchanging setting in which we can gauge our progress and change in other things. I found a number of these places strongly conducive to contemplation.

10 Stage Set Places

A few places I've mentioned are exciting because they are tiny worlds. They work as small scale landscapes on which one can "act out" journeys, meetings and events. They were all constant, highly articulated settings that suggested a surprising

The Willow Tree Table (2.1.11)
The Art Gallery Stair (3.3.4)
The Fraternity Front Steps
(4.1.4)

The Upstairs Window (1.1.4)
The Milk Door (2.1.4)
The Outside Corner (2.3.2)
The Science Museum Overlook
(2.4.1)
The Architect's Home (2.4.2)
The New House Stairwell
(3.1.3)
The Gym Balcony (3.2.1)
The Locker Room (3.2.2)
Mr. D's Office (3.2.8)
The Fraternity Front Steps
(4.1.4)
The Stairwell (4.1.7)
Second Rear (4.1.9)
Rotch Library: The Lower
Floor (4.2.1)
Esplanade Places (4.3.2)

The Auditorium (3.2.3)
The Back Stage (3.2.4)
The Fraternity Bar (4.1.1)
Hayden Building: The Bay
Windows (4.2.2)
The Harvard Bridge (4.3.3.)

range of activities. The fact that I found these places important and memorable reaffirms an important design precept, that high specificity in a built place can reinforce the diversity and richness of its use.

11 Revealing Spaces

I list as revealing spaces those that allowed a view of the larger or smaller organization of a given world. The milk door, for instance, told me something about the construction of a wall; the science museum overlook, something about the layout of the building; the esplanade, something about the layout of the city. I could, in these places, gain a new perspective on my environment: I knew where I was with respect to everything else. The experience of these places was analogous to the experience of solving a problem: first there are bits of seemingly unrelated data, then there is the opportunity to take a closer or broader look, and suddenly, everything comes clear.

12 Suspending Places

The experience of a number of places mentioned in the personal history involved the sensation of suspension, both in time and in space. Strangely, I never found these places disconcerting; I rather enjoyed short periods of dissociation from the physical and temporal world. I would now guess they were special because they allowed me to see things in perspective, from outside my ordinary space and time frame. They were especially important places for concentration and introspection.

The Milk Door (2.1.4)
The Cubby Hole (2.1.5)
The Front Steps (2.1.8)
The B's Porch (2.2.1)
J's Closet (2.2.4)
The Gym Balcony (3.2.1)
The Back Stage (3.2.4)
The Light Booth (3.2.5)
Mr. D's Office (3.2.8)
The Portico (3.3.1)
The Fraternity Front Steps
(4.1.4)
The Pantry (4.1.6)

The Neighbor's Stair (2.2.2)
J's Closet (2.2.4)
The Tool Room (4.1.2)

The Ice House (1.2.3)
The Dark Room (2.1.6)
T's Trailer (2.2.5)
Mr. D's Office (3.2.8)
The Side Closets (4.1.8)
...

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13

In-Between Places

I mention a large number of in-between places, ones that are neither inside nor outside, neither up nor down, neither "onstage" nor off. I most often mention that being in them is comfortable; the reason, I would now guess, is that they are "low commitment" places. From them, one has the choice of going either way. I would also guess that they represent a temporary freedom from role and, again, allow for introspection and self examination.

14

Disorienting Places

There was a small set of places among my most memorable ones that I characterized as consistently disorienting. Again it is curious that I found none of them unpleasant; they were small and simple enough places to be amusing without being annoying. That simple twists in form could confuse and trick me over and over again is telling: these places must have been breaking rules that I took for granted in the experience of places.

15

Bizarre Places

The places in the history I here label bizarre were those made special by spatial illusion. These places were seldom as large or small, as simple or complex as they seemed. Since it was often impossible to perceive these spaces correctly, even when the mechanism of the illusion was known, they went beyond the disorienting and became, in a sense

The Roof (4.1.11)

Z's Bridge (1.4.1)
The Front Porch (2.1.1)
The Basement Cabinet Labyrinth
(3.1.1)
Mr. D's Office (3.2.8)
The Basilica: The Basement
(3.3.3.)

T's Trailer (2.2.5)
The Grandstand (3.2.10)
The Tool Room (4.1.2)
The Dining Room (4.1.5)
The Back Stair (4.1.7)
Second Rear (4.1.9)
Little Fourth Rear (4.1.10)
Esplanade Places (4.3.2)

The Stairwell and Back Stair
(4.1.7)
Bay State Road (4.3.1)
Esplanade Places (4.3.2)

other-worldly.

16 By-Product Places

Among these spaces are ones that came to be when other places were built. These left-over places had to be discovered and could often be put to excellent use. Often, these places grew complex and exciting because the rules of construction so dictated. The notion of by-product places suggests a design attitude that can work at a number of scales. Buildings carefully sited can define and shape outdoor places; building elements carefully assembled can enliven and enrich interior places.

17 Complementary and Economical Places

These were places that had been built with the "by-product" notion described above used as a basic design precept. They displayed an awareness both that one form could be used for many things, and that any form implies another. I found inhabiting places of this type enormously fulfilling: the complexity and overlapping qualities of spaces' elements reflected the interdependence and interconnectedness of my daily activities.

18 Variation on a Theme Places

All the above categories were formed by developing a response found common to a set of places individually experienced. I found other places exciting precisely because they were part of a larger set. In my most recent experience I have grown especially attached to those place sets that, using a limited form vocabulary, cover a range of spatial conditions that

evoke a similar range of response. This economy of means leads to a sense of unity among places in a set, but makes more striking and special their unique qualities.

Relationships Among Categories

I here offer first thoughts on how groups of these categories may fit together to form subtopics of a larger theme involving awareness of self. Most simply, the establishment of personal identity involves the resolution of a set of questions: we ask who we are, where we are, and how we are changing.

The first three categories, identifiable, initiated and doubly-removed places, all contain places that invite us to discover them. Some allow us to be aware of them both as objective observer and inhabitant; they tell us forcefully where we are. Others remind us of our achievements and skills and thus begin to tell us who we are.

A next set of categories, storage, equipped and operable places, all consist of places that invite us to operate on them and thus to use them in an intense and personal way. Since they then begin to carry information about the size, capabilities and needs of our bodies and, in the case of storage spaces, about our history, they too help tell us who we are.

The places within the categories labelled chameleon, seasonal, constant and stage-set were all special because they changed in a regular or delightful manner or because they remained constant. Since they all can help mark and measure progress, they serve to show us how we are changing.

A last set, consisting of revealing, suspending, in-between, disorienting and bizarre places, all contained places that raised questions about or told clearly of our position with respect to the rest of the world. They thus begin to make us conscious of where we are.

The category lists and the themes that relate groups of them are laid out in the diagram that follows.

Places that invite us to discover them

Identifiable Places

The Upstairs Window (1.1.4)
 The Storage Closet (1.1.6)
 The Playground (1.3.2)
 The Window Seat (2.1.2)
 An Outside Corner (2.3.2)
 The Church Window (2.3.3)
 The New House Stairwell (3.1.3)
 The Light Booth (3.2.5)
 The Green Room (3.2.7)
 The Pavilion Lecture Hall (4.2.4)

Initiated Places

The Stairs to the Attic (2.1.7)
 The Locker Room (3.2.2)
 The Light Booth (3.2.5)
 Dressing and Storage Rooms (3.2.6)

Doubly-Removed Places

The Window Seat (2.1.2)
 Aunt L's Attic (2.2.3)
 The Piano Room (3.1.2)
 The Locker Room (3.2.2)
 Dressing and Storage Rooms (3.2.6)
 Rotch Library: the Lower Floor (4.2.1)

Places that invite us to act upon them

Storage Places

The Storage Closet (1.1.6)
 The Cubby Hole (2.1.5)
 The Shanty (2.1.10)
 Aunt L's Attic (2.2.3)
 The Basement Cabinet Labyrinth (3.1.1)
 The Green Room (3.2.7)
 The Trophy Corridor (3.2.9)
 The Tool Room (4.1.2)
 The Pantry (4.1.6)
 The Side Closets (4.1.8)

Equipped Places

The Old House Bar (1.1.5)
 The Art Room (1.3.1)
 T's Trailer (2.2.5)
 The Gym/Auditorium/Stage (2.3.1)
 The Back Stage (3.2.4)
 The Kitchen (4.1.3)
 The Pantry (4.1.6)

Operable Places

The Hatch (1.2.2)
 The Bedroom Windows (2.1.3)
 The Dining Room (4.1.5)
 Little Fourth Rear (4.1.10)

Places that invite us to measure change

Chameleon Places

The Veranda (1.2.1)
 Aunt F's Fireplace (1.4.3)
 The Milk Door (2.1.4)
 The Dark Room (2.1.6)
 J's Closet (2.2.4)
 The Gym/Auditorium Stage (2.3.1)
 The Grandstand (3.2.10)
 The Portico (3.3.1)
 The Art Gallery Stair (3.3.4)
 The Dining Room (4.1.5)
 Little Fourth Rear (4.1.10)

Seasonal Places

The Veranda (1.2.1)
 The Hatch (1.2.2)
 The Front Porch (2.1.1)
 The Bedroom Windows (2.1.3)
 The B's Porch (2.2.1)
 The Fraternity Front Steps (4.1.4)

Constant Places

The Shanty (2.1.10)
 The Fraternity Bar (4.1.1)
 The Roof (4.1.11)
 The Walker Memorial (4.2.3)

Stage Set Places

Aunt F's Fireplace (1.4.3)
 The Rock Garden (2.1.9)
 The Willow Tree Table (2.1.11)
 The Art Gallery Stair (3.3.4)
 The Fraternity Front Steps (4.1.4)

Places that raise and answer questions

Revealing Spaces

The Upstairs Window (1.1.4)
 The Milk Door (2.1.4)
 The Outside Corner (2.3.2)
 The Science Museum Overlook (2.4.1)
 The Architect's Home (2.4.2)
 The New House Stairwell (3.1.3)
 The Gym Balcony (3.2.1)
 The Locker Room (3.2.2)
 Mr. D's Office (3.2.8)
 The Fraternity Front Steps (4.1.4)
 The Stairwell (4.1.7)
 Second Rear (4.1.9)
 Rotch Library: The Lower Floor (4.2.1)
 Esplanade Places (4.3.2)

Suspending Places

The Auditorium (3.2.3)
 The Back Stage (3.2.4)
 The Fraternity Bar (4.1.1)
 Hayden Building: The Bay Windows (4.2.2)
 The Harvard Bridge (4.3.3)

In-Between Places

The Milk Door (2.1.4)
 The Cubby Hole (2.1.5)
 The Front Steps (2.1.8)
 The B's Porch (2.2.1)
 J's Closet (2.2.4)
 The Gym Balcony (3.2.1)
 The Back Stage (3.2.4)
 The Light Booth (3.2.5)
 Mr. D's Office (3.2.8)
 The Portico (3.3.1)
 The Fraternity Front Steps (4.1.4)
 The Pantry (4.1.6)

Disorienting Places

The Neighbor's Stair (2.2.2)
 J's Closet (2.2.4)
 The Tool Room (4.1.2)

Bizarre Places

The Ice House (1.2.3)
 The Dark Room (2.1.6)
 T's Trailer (2.2.5)
 Mr. D's Office (3.2.8)
 The Side Closets (4.1.8)
 The Roof (4.1.11)

By-Product Places

Z's Bridge (1.4.1)
 The Front Porch (2.1.1)
 The Basement Cabinet Labyrinth (3.1.1)
 Mr. D's Office (3.2.8)
 The Basilica: The Basement (3.3.3)

Complementary and Economical Places

T's Trailer (2.2.5)
 The Grandstand (3.2.10)
 The Tool Room (4.1.2)
 The Dining Room (4.1.5)
 The Back Stair (4.1.7)
 Second Rear (4.1.9)
 Little Fourth Rear (4.1.10)
 Esplanade Places (4.3.2)

Variation on a Theme Places

The Stairwell and Back Stair (4.1.7)
 Bay State Road (4.3.1)
 Esplanade Places (4.3.2)

3 Application

A Test Design

Introduction

In this final section I describe a design problem and discuss and illustrate first steps toward its solution. I began work by setting down those attitudes discussed in the above analysis that seemed, for the given problem, most appropriate to keep in mind. As I moved forward, I keyed design decisions to these attitudes often recalling more specific descriptions found in the personal history. I hoped this exercise would help me revise and refine my general attitude framework and understand and measure its usefulness.

The design problem grows from the MIT Arts Environments Study, a research effort with which I have been associated for the past year. In general, the AES looks at the facilities needs of all the arts programs at MIT. It aims to develop a master plan for housing these programs both in renovated quarters of the old MIT complex and in new buildings such that all will be more visible and accessible to the MIT community and each will be able to support and reinforce the other. For the purpose of this thesis, I have chosen to examine an arts program, Drama, and a campus site, the Walker Memorial Building, that have not previously been carefully explored and that seem, at first glance, to be a good match. Thus, the writing that follows begins with two general articles, one on the aims, resources and needs of the MIT program in Drama, and one on the important qualities of Walker Memorial. A case is then made for housing part of the Drama program (along with parts of the Dance and Video programs) in the

third floor of Walker to form an Acting Workshop.

In discussing the development of the design, I proceed in a linear way, first explaining overall circulation and use diagrams, then discussing more specific use and movement patterns, and finally looking at a section designed in detail. In working through the problem I could not, of course, move in such a straightforward way; often a notion about a highly specific condition defined, in part, a much more general pattern. I did, however, step back from my work at regular intervals and tried objectively to evaluate my progress and redefine my motives. Notes from these sessions serve as a basis for my discussion of the design.

Drama at MIT

The present program in drama and theater studies at MIT has both curricular and extracurricular components. Courses in drama, the majority of which deal with the study of drama as literature and thus have no workshop segment, are offered within the Literature Section of the Department of Humanities. Studies in production i.e. acting, playwriting, theatrical design, etc., can also be undertaken usually in conjunction with Dramashop, a student theater group. Dramashop, however, functions primarily as an extracurricular activity; most participants do not receive academic credit for their work. The present student enrollment and interest in theater studies is high, this indicated by increasingly crowded classes and large turn-outs for Dramashop auditions. The drama group offers no degree or joint degree but undergraduates can, through their humanities concentration requirement and their free electives, effectively minor in theater gaining experience and skills in acting, playwriting and literary analysis. There are also opportunities for interdisciplinary work; students can, for instance, combine programs in drama and creative writing and will soon be able to work in drama and video, and drama and film.

There are at present two members of the Faculty involved primarily in the drama program: Joseph Everingham, Professor of Literature and Director of Drama, and A. R. Gurney, Professor of Literature. Prof. Everingham heads the Dramashop and is involved first with production. With the help of one full-time technical assistant, Ed Darna, and other part time assistants in set design, costume design, and acting, he schedules and supervises a series of student productions each year. These usually include two major productions and four sets of student directed one-act plays. Prof. Gurney has been first committed to the teaching of drama as literature and has, on occasion, taught playwriting. Most recently he has had the opportunity to plan courses that will involve students in learning the techniques of theater through the use of video.

Most people involved in the drama group at MIT feel there is a great deal of room for improvement in its programs and facilities. A specific set of deficiencies and needs has been set down most recently in the Murray Report Drama at MIT of April, 1974. This report reflects the feeling that the study of the theories and techniques of theater can be of immense value to students in all disciplines at MIT, but that present constraints on faculty, funding and space make such a broad program impossible. Studies in theater, especially the study of acting and production techniques, are presently inaccessible to all but the most committed students. The Department of Humanities has reacted to this problem by hiring a new faculty member to teach acting starting in Spring Term 1975, and Prof. Gurney has just received a grant that will allow him to teach drama in connection with video, as mentioned above. The problem of space however, insofar as it restricts the development of drama programs, remains. Along with finding and outfitting temporary accommodations for these new branches of theater, plans must be started for a complete and coherent set of spaces for drama, one that will allow each of its programs to achieve its full potential.

The spaces presently available to the drama group are inadequate because they are, for the most part, shared spaces that are cramped and ill-equipped, and are all but invisible to the rest of the MIT community. The fact that most of the space is shared means that drama has no "home" space. Activities like rehearsal, set construction and costume design must be carried on in places that are "owned" only for a few hours or a few days; all the effects of those activities must be brought in and then taken back to storage places. There is, then, no place where students and faculty can go to try out ideas and think through plans with their tools around them, no place where experiments can be carried out and where projects can evolve. Such space is certainly necessary to remedy the problem Murray labels as drama's "tenuous presence" on campus.

The spaces that the drama group uses most often are poorly planned. The Kresge Little Theater, though its audience capacity is about right and its acoustics are good, imposes real restrictions on the types of plays that can be produced. With no wing space, no fly space, and an awkward lighting system, the range of possibilities for scene changes and stage effects is severely limited. The stage is small and the seating fixed, thus all but the simplest audience-actor relationships are impossible. That the Dramashop has achieved wonders in the Little Theater is evidence that it could use a better planned theater extremely well.

Another problem that contributes to drama's "tenuous presence" on campus is the remoteness and invisibility of its spaces. The bulk of the work in production occurs in windowless basement rooms of Kresge Auditorium, a building isolated from the more active parts of campus. There is no way at present for students to come aware of the drama program by "happening" onto an ongoing rehearsal or by watching the construction of a set. There is certainly a need for private working spaces for the drama group, but the establishment of some type of public face consisting of places where certain working processes of theater could be exposed, would be of benefit both to the casual observer and to the committed student.

It is necessary then not only to improve existing facilities for drama, but also to provide new types of spaces. These spaces could both support and reinforce ongoing activities and make possible new ones. Both Prof. Everingham and Prof. Gurney have spoken, for instance, of a need for an experimental theater, some kind of rough, flexible space to be used for teaching acting and for staging informal theater pieces. There is also a need within the present program for more rehearsal, classroom and office space.

Prof. Everingham has noted that movement among theater spaces must be simple and direct, and that though publicly visible and accessible places are important, they must be complemented

by working space that is both private and soundproof. The newly developing program in drama is one that encourages on-going student-faculty projects; there must be appropriable space within the drama district where such projects can take root and grow. There has also been much said about the educational value to drama students of working with visiting professionals in theater. Support space for such resident artists need be provided. Also, there is interest in the drama group in encouraging interdisciplinary activity. Important links can be made between drama and video, film, creative writing, music and design. This requires that drama be near these other programs or that it be near appropriable space where such activities can be supported.

A tally of spaces necessary to accommodate the programs and activities in drama outlined above follows.

Drama: Current Program
Accommodation

Office Space	1 Office @ 200	200
	3 Offices @ 150	450
Classroom Space	Seminar Room	300
Studio Space	1 Rehearsal Room @ 1000	1000
	1 Rehearsal Room @ 500	500
	Student Reserve Space	300
Specialized Space	Scene Shop/Office/Receiving	1500
	Green Room	400
	2 Dressing Rooms @ 400	800
	Set Design Workshop	300
Support Space	Costume Workshop/Laundry	500
	Scene/Prop Storage	1000
Performance Space	Costume Storage	400
	Main Theater	6000
Library Space	Experimental Theater	2000
	Small Library	400
TOTAL		16050

Walker Memorial

Building 50, Walker Memorial, has great potential as a home for arts activities. Walker was once the center of student activity on the MIT Campus; it housed among other things the student newspaper, portions of the athletic department, a library, and a number of student organizations. With the building of the new student center and new athletic facilities, most of these vital activities have left Walker; the gym is now used mainly as an exam room, the other spaces as storage rooms and small meeting rooms. It has become, in essence, a "boarding house" for the smaller student groups; in places other than the dining areas its halls are empty, its doors locked and its public places unoccupied.

There is another reason why Walker Memorial is ripe for rehabilitation and reoccupation. A recent report by the Safety Office shows that the egress requirements of the building are currently not met; plans for the construction of a new stair are now being considered. This construction, if planned in conjunction with a study of the space needs for a particular set of arts activities could result in the building of a set of superior spaces for the arts, ones that have been inexpensively tailored within an old, rich, easy-to-inhabit building.

It is also important to note that the site immediately east of Walker, the tennis court site, is soon to be developed. This new development will almost surely include facilities for the arts; these facilities could well be planned to complement new arts spaces formed within the Walker building. A connection of the two buildings, especially at the basement level, is probable.

See Plate 1, page 135

Walker Memorial is on a highly visible, easily accessible, and well-trafficked site. Located along the river on Memorial Drive, it is adjacent to classroom and office buildings, student housing, and McDermott Court, the largest public open spaces east of Killian Court. It is at an important hinge point on campus; when the East Campus development is

completed, Walker will be at the very center of MIT's academic world.

See Plate 2, page 136

Building 50 contains a set of spaces that vary widely in size, shape and degree of privacy. The first floor, containing the dining hall, kitchen, and rooms for the Graduate Student Council and the Black Student Union, is a highly public and often crowded place. The north section of the second floor containing Pritchett Lounge is moderately public; the south section, however, containing two activity rooms and a large empty lounge is much less lively. The spaces on the third floor are at present completely isolated from public circulation; its north and south sections are separated by the gym which, since it is often kept locked, isolates each from the other. The basement, like the third floor, is not at all public despite the fact that it can be accessed directly from the outside. It houses a few hidden-away student activities and contains a number of storage rooms.

This set of privacy conditions in Walker, ranging from the intensely open and public spaces on the first floor to the more closed and secluded places in parts of the second floor, the third floor, and the basement, could well suit the needs of various arts programs. The activities that required continued privacy could easily be housed, the ones that demanded occasional exposure and "viewer input" could tap the flow of public occurring a few floors below.

See Plate 3, page 137

The third floor of Walker looks particularly promising as a site for the development of an interrelated set of arts facilities. The combination of the large, light double-height gym space and the two wings of easily divisible single-height space first suggest some type of large studio, exhibition or theater space flanked by offices, classrooms and workshops. The presence of a locker and shower room is fortuitous; it suggests that segments of the dance, drama, or environmental arts programs might be well situated here.

It is important to note that any new construction in the third floor space of Walker (part of a new circulation system, for instance) would almost certainly include some built connection between its north and south wings. Such a connecting passage has great potential for becoming the core or spine of further space definition in the gym space.

Important features of the third floor space are labelled with numbers on Plate 3:

1

Present location of locker room facilities.

2

Present location of four squash courts.

3

Location of north stairwell.

4,5

Windows that open to north and south roofs.

6

Favored site for location of auxiliary exterior stair (adjacent to key rooms, close to exterior circulation).

7

West terrace; can be expanded and developed especially in conjunction with construction of exterior stair.

The Acting Workshop

In examining the needs of the drama group and the opportunities offered by the Walker Building it became immediately evident that the match between program and site was a close one. Available square footage on the third floor was adequate for all the needs of the program, and the general spaces themselves seemed, as mentioned above, to suggest a large central workshop (a theater space) surrounded by smaller classroom and office spaces. The presence of the locker room facilities on the third floor and the Pritchett Lounge and Muddy Charles Pub on the lower floors seemed especially fortuitous.

Most important, however, was the fact that the most general qualities of the third floor space, those relating to its position relative to other sections of the building and to the position of the building itself relative to the rest of the MIT campus were in close accord with the most general needs of the Drama program. In discussing this part of the match we can, for the first time, look back to the themes discussed in the second section. The MIT Drama program, like any theater program, asks that its spaces have a seemingly contradictory set of qualities. They must first be public spaces, easily accessible and highly visible; Prof. Gurney has noted that successful small professional theaters have invariably been located in the most bustling corners of the most crowded cities. There is, however, also a need for theater spaces to be private and secluded; rehearsal and coaching are most effectively carried out in places that are quiet and that offer little distraction. Using ideas discussed in the second section, we can say that drama spaces would do well to be "identifiable" in some way, and thus accessible to the MIT community at large, and to be "doubly removed" and thus suitable for the private and concentrated work of participants.

The appropriable spaces in Walker show great potential for displaying both these qualities. Since they are, for the most part, two stories up from ground level, and since their

means of access are at present less than clear, they are already private and secluded. But since they are lodged within a building that contains a highly public dining room and that will soon be at the very center of campus, their presence could easily be made more emphatically known to the public that walks below.

Although in general the match seemed highly workable, it soon appeared that the whole of the Drama program could not, in fact, be accommodated in Walker. Most importantly, fears that a fully equipped and fully operable theater could not, for a number of reasons, easily be built and used within the third floor gym space were very soon confirmed: the building code of the Massachusetts Department of Safety states that "no theater shall be constructed above or below the ground floor of any building." The engineers of the MIT Safety Office, however, noted that this regulation did not disallow the construction of a "theater laboratory" an informal drama workshop that could on occasion be opened to the MIT community for public demonstrations. This notion of theater as classroom fit closely with Prof. Gurney's ideas for an experimental theater; he mentioned the need for a small theater space, equipped with the simplest lighting fixtures and stage furnishings that would be used primarily as a classroom and occasionally for staging theater-pieces before a small audience.

Thus the theater lab became the focus of a new program for the third floor of Walker. In keeping with the spirit of the Arts Environments Study, which suggested that parts of different arts programs should be brought together when possible to support and enrich one another, I began to look for pieces of other arts programs in which the teaching of acting, speech, and movement was emphasized. I soon put together a program for what I called the Acting Workshop. Meant primarily as a "home for drama", it contained the studios, storerooms, classrooms and offices of the Drama program, a work space and support facilities for the Drama program, and

a set of studios and offices for the Video program. The Acting Workshop was to be a place first for study and teaching and second for performance. It was to work as an adjunct to and resource center for a large, fully equipped theater and for other performance and display places located throughout the campus.

A preliminary program for the Acting Workshop follows.

Acting Workshop: Preliminary Program

Office Space	1 Office @ 200	200
	5 Offices @ 150	750
Classroom Space	2 Seminar Rooms @ 300	600
Studio Space	Theater Laboratory	2500
	Rehearsal Room	1000
	Dance Studio	1500
	2 Video Studios @ 600	1200
	Student Reserve Space	500
	Faculty Reserve Space	500
Specialized Space	Set Design Workshop	300
	Costume Workshop/Laundry	500
	Video Equipment & Editing Room	300
	Locker Rooms	1000
Support Space	Theater Lab Storage	500
	Costume Storage	400
Library Space	Small Library	400
TOTAL		12150

First Decisions

Plates 4, 5, pages 138, 139

I started work on the design problem by developing a general circulation and space use pattern. In it, the locations of major spaces were identified and primary and secondary circulation routes connecting points of access and egress were laid out. Diagrams are shown on Plates 4 and 5.

The first and most important design decision involved the resolution of an egress problem: the rooms in the northwest corner of the building each had only one of two required exits. I chose to introduce an exterior stair and elevator tower, both to solve that problem and to provide a straightforward and easily accessible route to the third floor. The tower is also meant to help make the third floor a strongly "identifiable" place, here using as a model the light booth discussed in article 3.2.5 of the personal history. The analogy is a fairly remarkable one; the light booth was memorable both because it was a highly "identifiable" and a highly private or "initiated" space, these precisely the qualities necessary for the Acting Workshop.

It is important to note that engineers of the MIT Safety Office found the notion of an exterior stair tower much more attractive than an interior stair system which has been proposed. They pointed out that it would fill the need for new exits and better circulation, for a workable delivery system, and for the new access for the handicapped. Since it would better connect spaces in the Walker Building and would encourage activity, it would help solve the present security problem. Thus the tower would serve to make the third floor special and would, through its qualities of "economy and complementarity," become in itself special.

Having decided on an exterior stair and thus having established the most important entrance point to the third floor, I planned the interior circulation system. Starting from the premise that the north and south wings needed to be connected and that the entrances and exits to be related in simple ways, I established the most public circulation zones

(the darkest areas in Plate 4). The diagonally oriented upper leg of the circulation diagram suggested a number of opportunities: it defined a corner in the northwest part of the gym that could be developed into a main circulation node, a focus for the Acting Workshop's public space; it suggested that new building within the gym could also follow its new orientation and could thus be strongly differentiated from the existing building; and it suggested that activity in the north wing could be made to flow easily into the gym space. The diagram as a whole conveniently divided the third floor space into three general areas that could tentatively be assigned to the three different major programs. Remembering the importance of "doubly-removed" spaces, most specifically the dressing and storage rooms described in article 3.2.6, I planned a set of secondary circulation paths from which such spaces could grow. These paths are shaded in the lightest tones on Plate 4.

Along with devising the general circulation pattern, I located diagrammatically the main program spaces. The main dance studio was placed adjacent to the existing locker rooms, the video studios were located in the existing squash courts, and the theater lab was put in the corner of the gym opposite the new entrance. I then read back over the themes and categories I had assembled in the second section and found that a number of experiences I had written about reaffirmed decisions I had made in the diagram, and a number of others suggested ways to proceed.

The relationship of the theater lab to the video studios, for instance, was of special interest. Prof. Gurney had stated that the theater lab was to be used primarily as a place for teaching acting in the traditional way; it was to be a simple space, uncluttered by large pieces of special equipment. The possibility for using the space for occasional multimedia experiments and projects, involving video and film, was, however, not to be disallowed. The theater had to be planned such that video cameras, for instance, could quickly and easily be rolled into place and, as quickly, be moved back to

the video studios. The relative positions of the theater lab and the video studios in the diagram suggested that this possibility could easily be achieved; this was suggested by an analogy, the Fraternity Front Steps, discussed in article 4.1.4. The bay window seat mentioned in that account always seemed the farthest, most secluded corner of the living room. When, through the simple device of opening a window, it became an extension of the front steps, its character changed completely. In like manner, when the doors to the theater lab and to the video studios are thrown open to the south hall, each space can work with and become an extension of the other.

While the above remembrance supported a given design decision, others pointed to further design steps. The Hatch, for instance, discussed in article 1.2.2., is an example of a place that was exciting both in winter and in summer; it suggested that outdoor places in Walker, like the west terrace, be developed such that they carry different meanings at different times of the year. Other places, like Z's bridge in article 1.4.1., remind us that the imposition of a form in a given context can have unexpected consequences. This suggested that in developing the stair tower, its impact on the west terrace should carefully be watched. The opportunity to use the tower to call attention to the terrace and to develop its potential as a seasonal place was not be missed.

Design Development

In a second stage of design work, I brought the use patterns to a higher level of specificity, forming a three-dimensional diagram that contained all programmed spaces. The exact nature of the screens between spaces has yet to be determined; solid lines represent boundaries that are to be developed into more complex edges. I had, by this time, developed a strong attitude toward how, physically, the gym space would best be modified. A new piece of building within the gym was to be more than a set of diaphragms that divided up the space, it in itself was to contain habitable places and its edges were to carefully shape important corners of the gym. This attitude was meant to embody notions of "identifiability" (in this case, the ability to clearly pick out, approach and inhabit both new places and old, and always to retain the sense that one is "in the Walker Gym") and of "complementarity and economy" (the consequences of placing one form within another were to be carefully considered).

I was especially concerned with the way in which the theater lab was to be defined. A number of examples from the history, most specifically those listed under "Stage Set" places served well as analogies. All of the "Stage Set" places were highly specific and highly articulated. They provided settings that both supported and suggested a wide variety of activities. Once the general shape of the theater lab was defined, it was to be made specific by paying close attention to special conditions in and around it. Thus, its exits and entrances, its mechanical systems and the qualities of its adjoining spaces were to be carefully developed.

In the first floor plan, shown on Plate 6, the notion that the new building should be separate from the old is made manifest. The new building reaches out to touch the exterior walls and to capture a piece of interior space only in the southwest corner where the main floor of the theater lab is defined. West of the theater floor are a set of "in-between" places that fit, in part, under the main bank of the theater seating. Meant primarily to be used as seminar and student

Plate 6, page 140

reserve spaces, these spaces were meant also to serve on occasion as storage rooms and green rooms to support the theater. In the northeast corner is another group of rooms, the large one meant as a rehearsal room, the smaller ones as dressing or private practice rooms, that are also meant as "in-between" places. The large room, especially, can relate to other spaces in a number of ways. Its west entrance is directly opposite the entrance to the large dance studio in the north wing; it can easily work as an adjunct to that space. Its other entrance, however, faces the back alley of the theater spaces. When necessary, it can be an extension of the theater lab's private support space.

Plate 7, page 141

The mezzanine level, shown on Plate 7, overlooks the theater lab, and contains a reading room and space for faculty offices along the west wall, and a large rehearsal room in the northeast corner. It reaches out and touches the exterior wall carefully leaving a number of openings which allow light down to the open public space and occasionally into a private space below. The exact nature of these light wells have been carefully worked out and are discussed below. The most important element of the mezzanine level, the one that presents the largest set of opportunities, is the edge between the lower corridor and the theater seating. It could well be developed into a string of "in-between" places that could offer a range of ways to be involved in theater lab activity. Its development could result in a more articulated pattern of seating and platforms and could thus help make the theater lab a more varied and lively place.

Plate 8, page 142

The loft within the truss work of the gym, shown in Plate 8, could be used to house the costume and set design activities; the platform in the southwest corner is meant to serve as a light and projection booth for the theater lab. The loft is a "by-product" space in that it makes use of space that came into being as a result of the building process. The special qualities of the truss space have resulted in an irregular plan that suggests a variety of patterns for use. The need for access to the light booth has resulted in the addition of

a stair and platform that further enriches the theater lab space.

See Plate 9, page 143

The new development of the gym space suggested a geometry and orientation for the stair tower. A first design iteration had resulted in a bulky tower that, in elevation, competed with the north and south wings and offered few special corners. This new tower consists of an elevator used both for passengers and for freight, and a fire stair that moves diagonally forward toward the river and back towards the campus. The glazed landings are, then, a set of "revealing" spaces; they allow an inhabitant a striking view of outdoor activity, and an outside observer a glimpse indoors. At ground level, the stair frames an entrance to the west terrace and thus begins to mark it as a place. Though in line and proportion the tower reflects qualities of the Walker facade, in geometry and orientation it invites entrance and inhabitation in a new way and thus announces the use change of the third floor space.

A Detail

See Plate 10, page 144

I end the design discussion with an account of how a section of the workshop was designed in more detail. The set of large hemispherical windows along the upper wall of the gym space were most significant features. They offered the opportunity for developing a set of "variation on a theme" places; a range of ways to use and to be near the windows could be devised. Thus, the north window was made directly accessible from a public space and, since it led to the roof of the north wing, pointed to the development of a "seasonal" place. Two of the east windows were used to organize the theater lab and the rehearsal room, the first high on the lab wall, the second starting exactly at the floor of the rehearsal room. The central east window was made to light a main stair and to bring light and air to the mezzanine hall. The other theater lab window could be made accessible from the seating area and thus could lead to yet another "seasonal" space.

See Plate 11, page 145

The two free windows along the east wall were somewhat more difficult to use. Had they been given over to upstairs spaces, the main circulation path below would have been bereft of light; had they not the office space would have lacked both light and air. The problem was solved by running interior window walls up to the heavy end mullions of the hemispheres. The office spaces thus claimed only a small piece of each window; these could be made operable. The main part of each window thus remained in an open well and provided light to each adjacent office and to the hall below. It soon appeared that first floor spaces could benefit from this arrangement as well; interior skylights were devised for the student reserve and classroom spaces along the hall. Thus, these hemispheres could each be experienced in a number of ways. The development of the west light wall offered unexpected benefits. The upstairs offices had become "revealing" and "identifiable" places; the open wells, lined with transparent and reflective surfaces, were sure to become delightfully confusing.

Plates

Plate 1

100

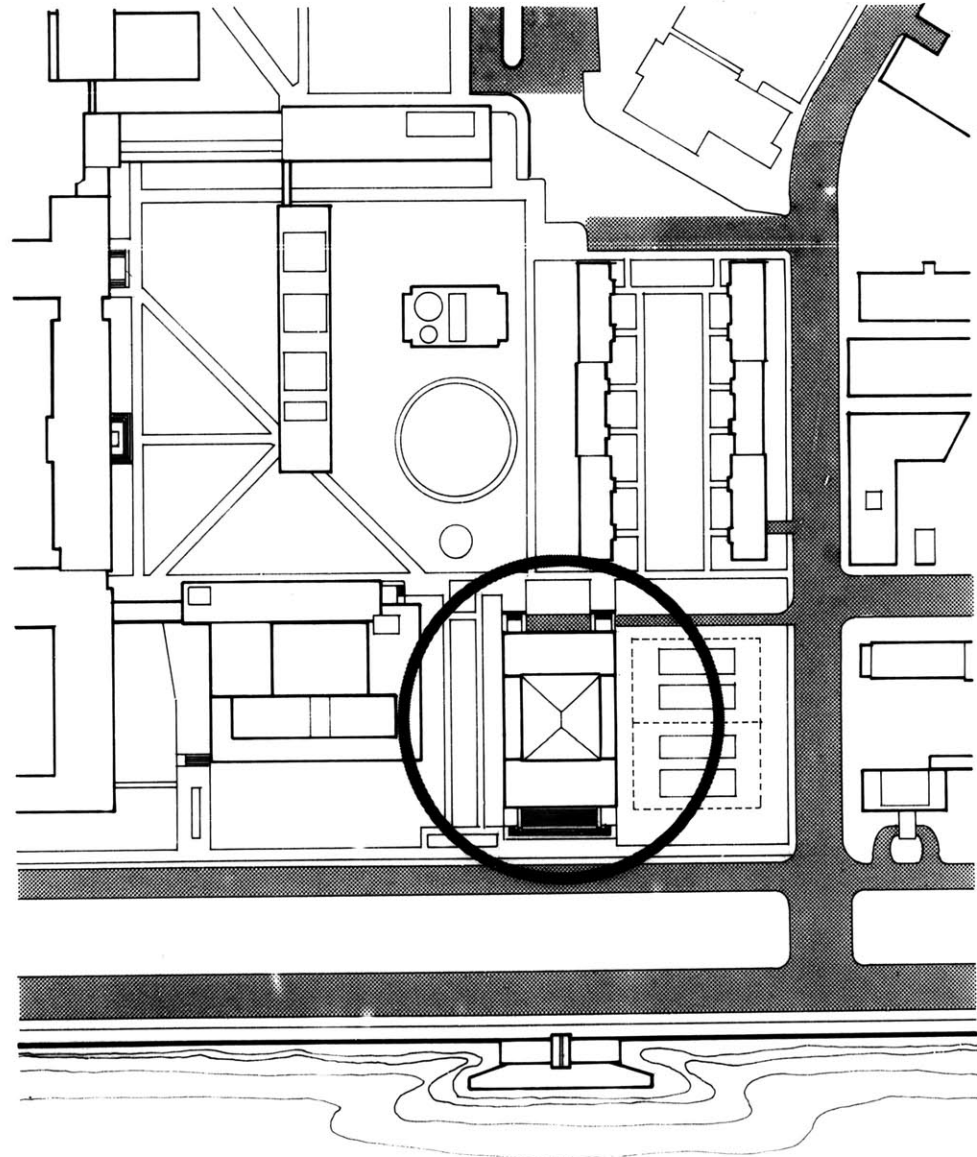


Plate 2

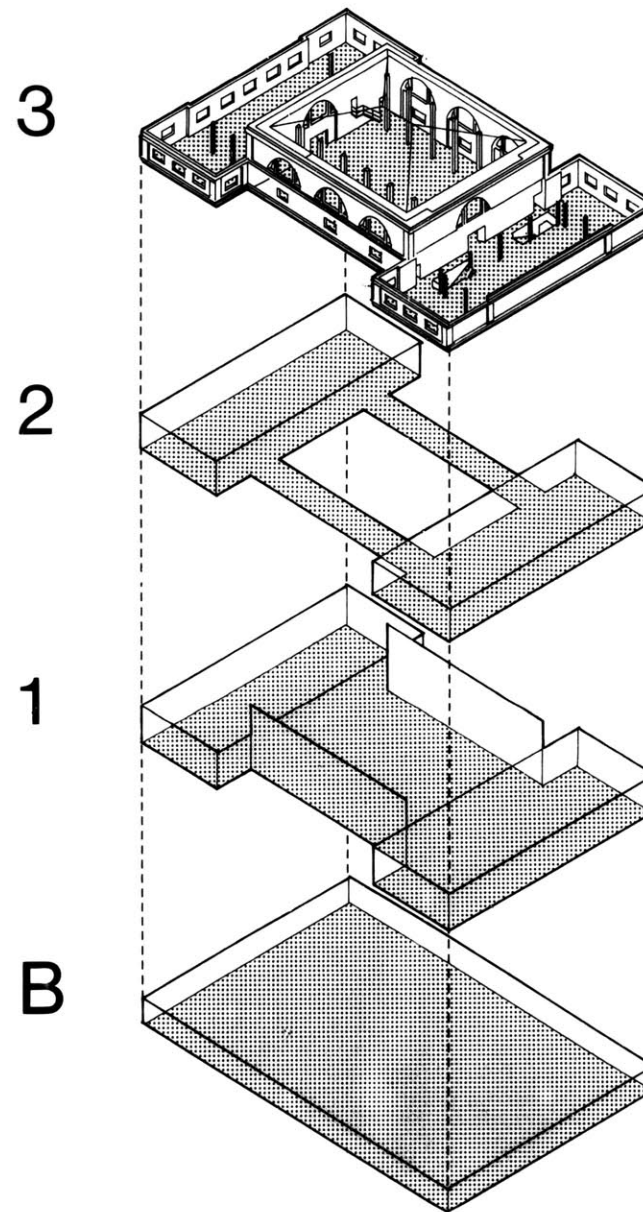


Plate 3

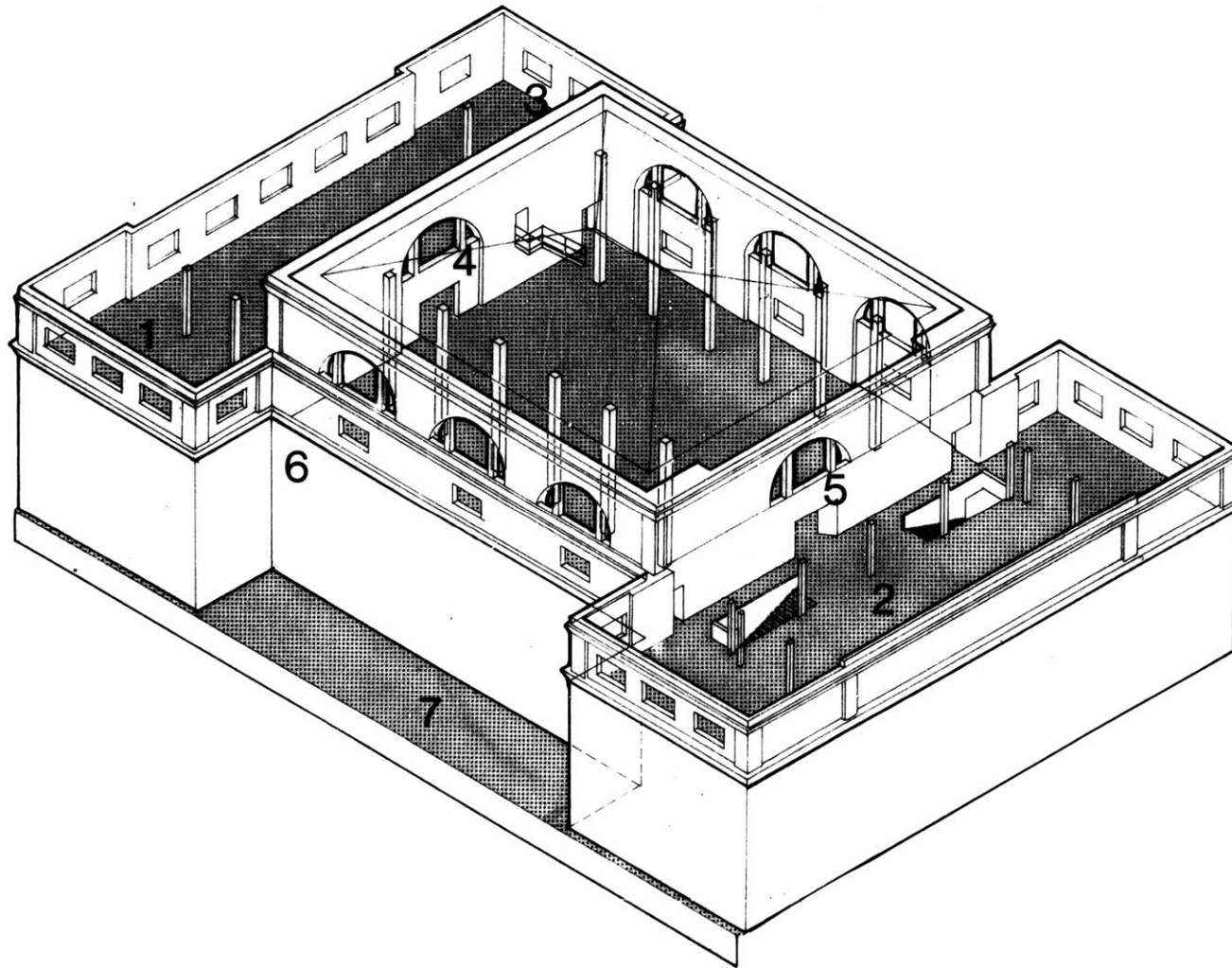


Plate 4

16

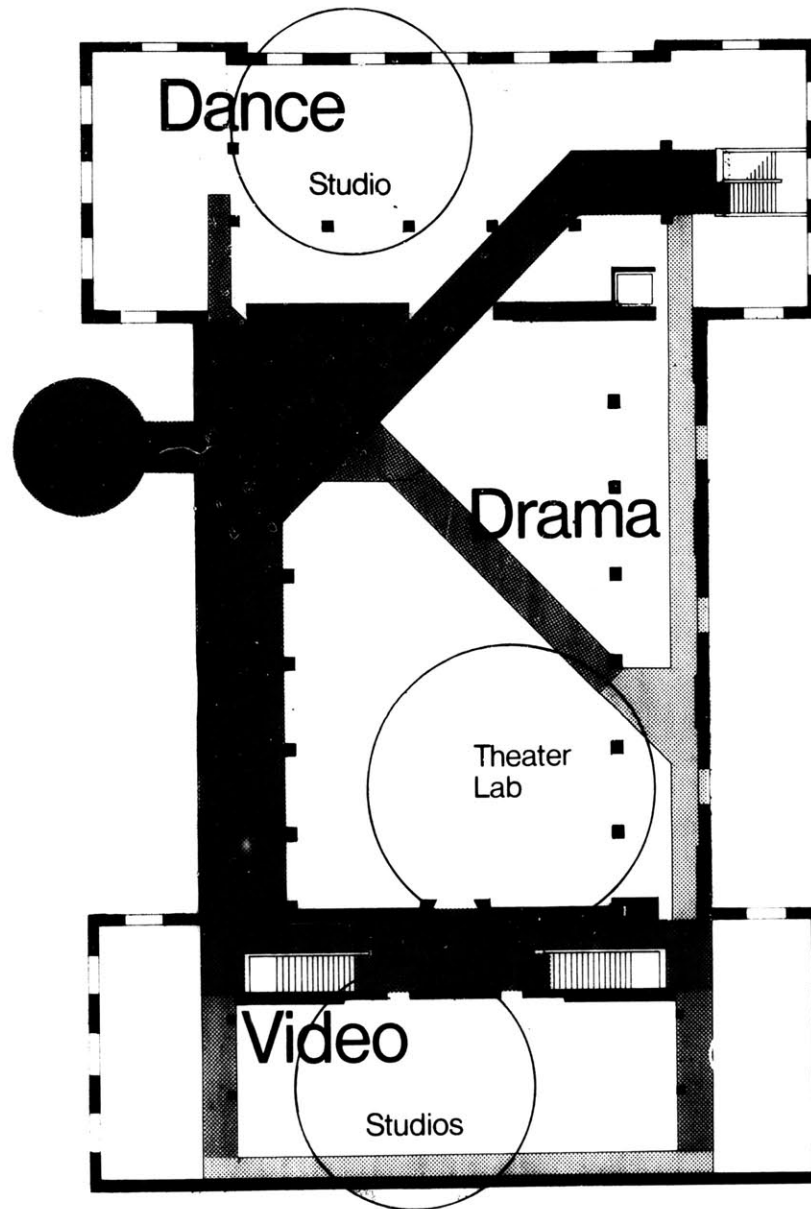


Plate 5

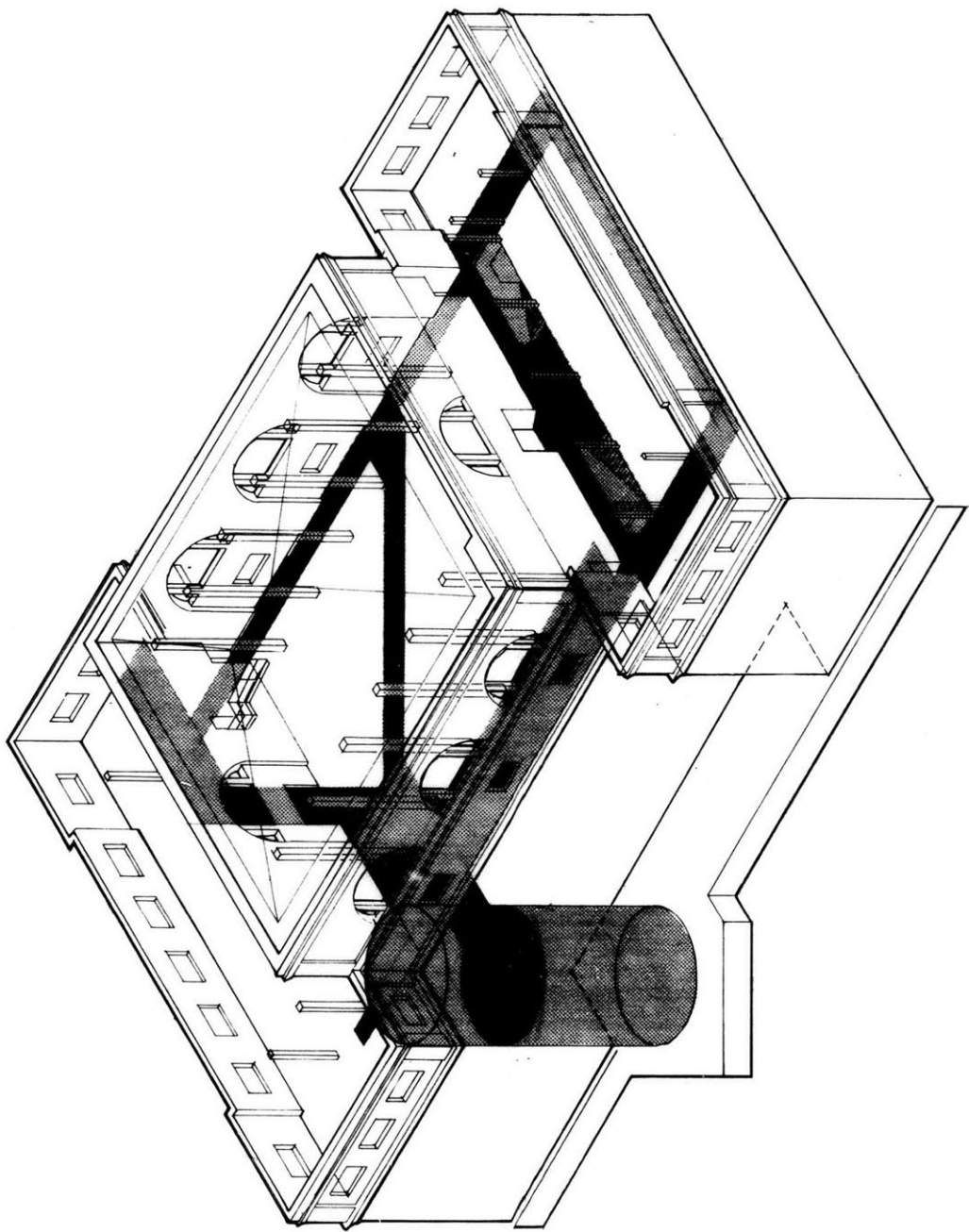
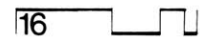


Plate 6



Main Floor

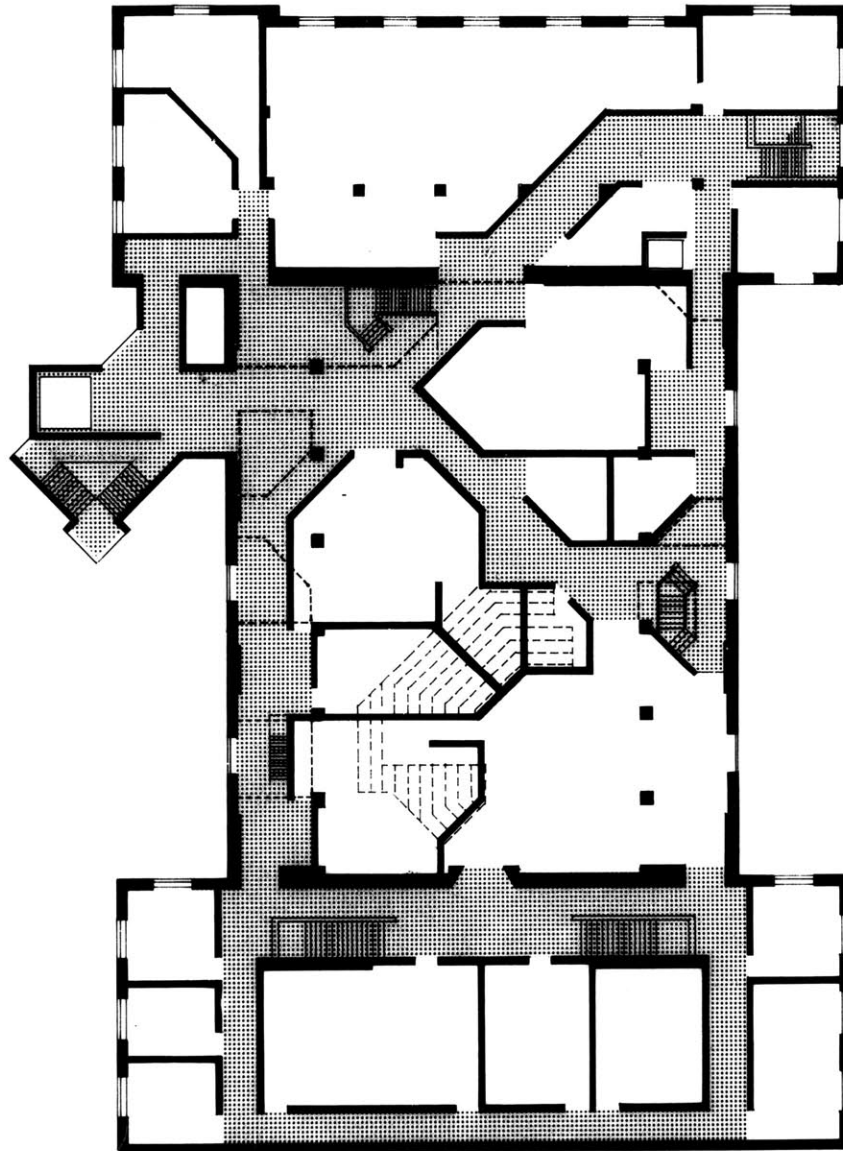


Plate 7



Mezzanine

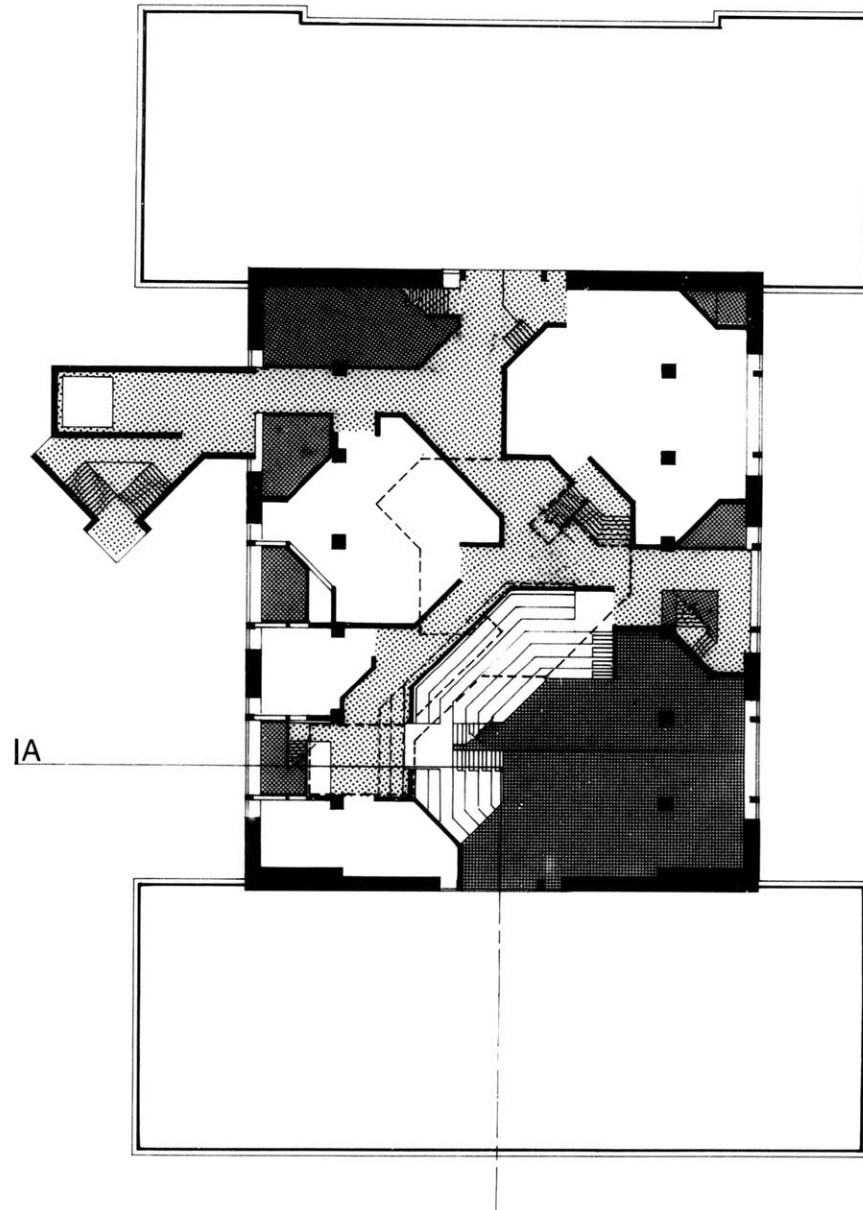
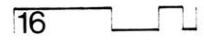


Plate 8



Loft

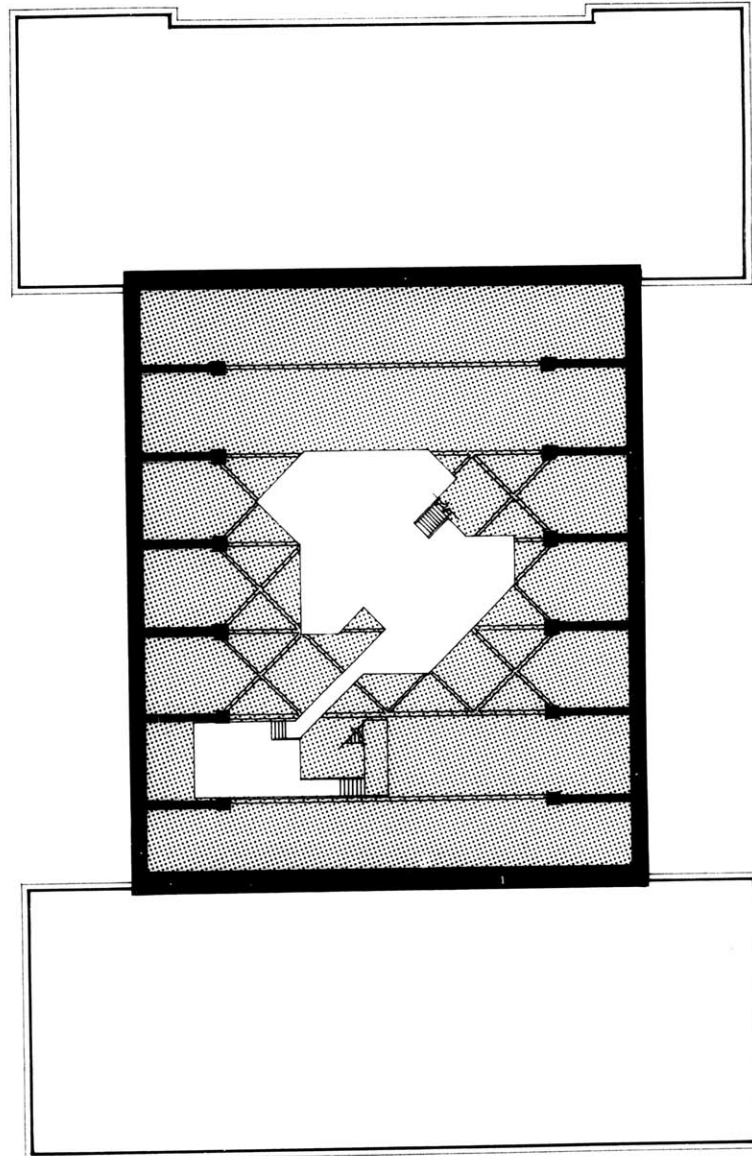
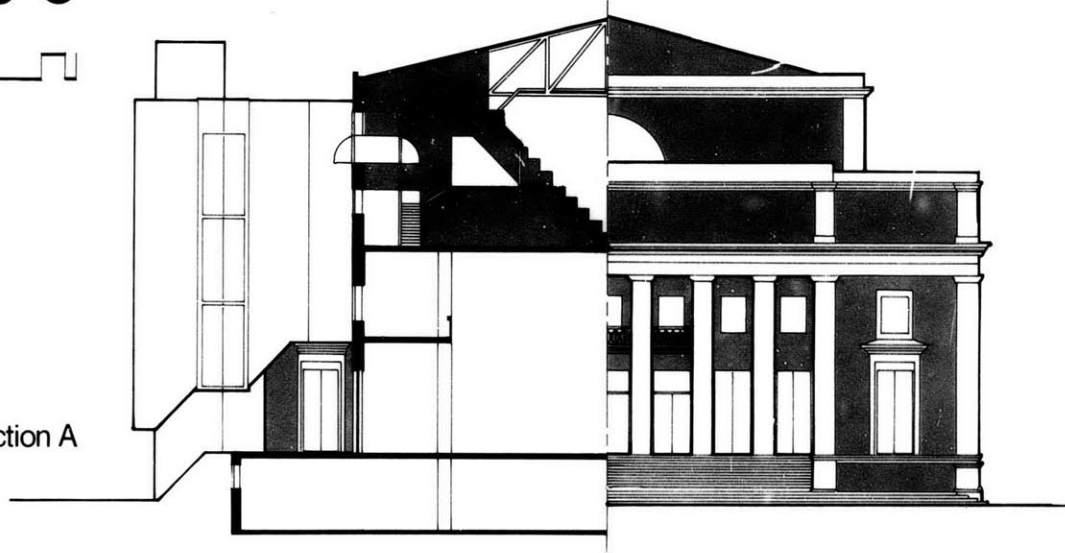


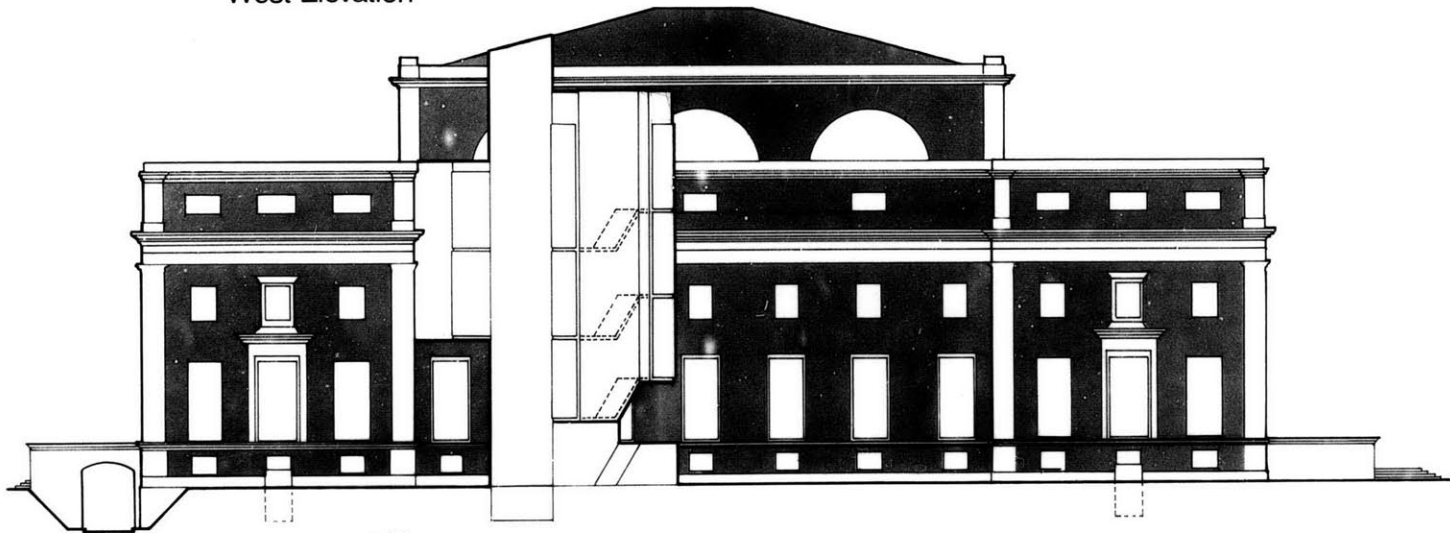
Plate 9

16

Section A



West Elevation



143

Plate 10

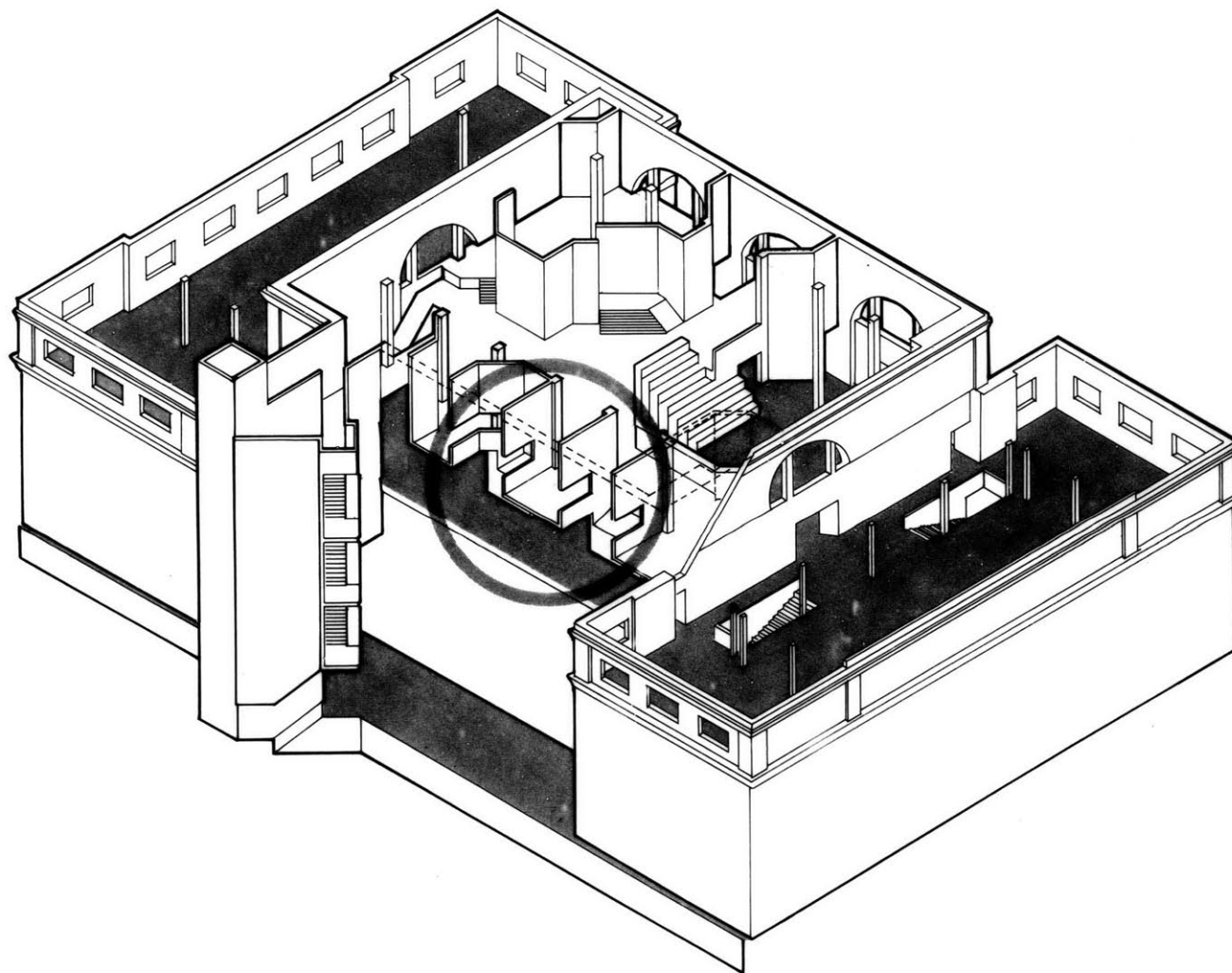
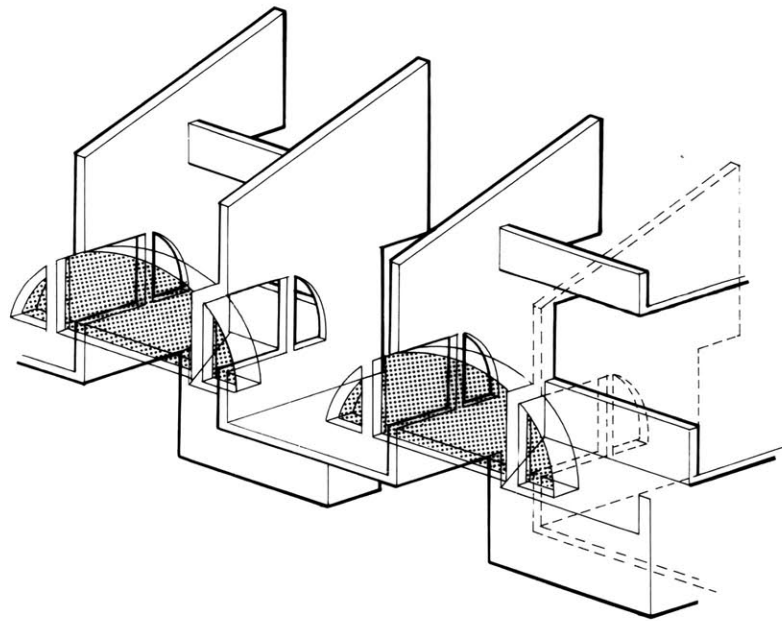


Plate 11



Postscript

I close by recording thoughts on how this study has proved useful and by suggesting directions in which it may grow. Along with giving me access to my knowledge and feelings about built places and allowing me to form a personal set of design attitudes, this exercise has helped me reaffirm design precepts I have been taught. Since I can now base these precepts in personal experience I have made them, in an important way, my own. I mention as examples two such ideas: that highly articulated form encourages richness and variety in use; that the building process is in itself of first importance for it offers opportunities at all stages of design that ought not be missed.

I feel strongly that I have only begun to discern the patterns of thought that run through the personal history. Having examined only one design problem in light of the history, I have perhaps been able to highlight only a single set of ideas. I now guess that by going through a number of problems and keying back as often as possible to my experiences I will soon understand more fully the meaning and import of my reactions. Other ways of developing and mining the personal history have been suggested. These have included comparing the history with other accounts of places found in literature and with similar histories written by other architects and by clients. I find all of these ideas rich and exciting and I look forward to exploring them in further work.

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