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MAY 2, 1989

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THESIS TOPIC & POSITION

Choosing an architectural thesis topic can be a very difficult decision to make. There are so many areas and related subjects; the possibilities are endless. But doesn't a thesis have to be something personal? Shouldn't it be something that can be related to by other parts of a person, not just the brain? Maybe it should involve the heart, the memory, or the soul. It's not possible to just pick any subject at random; it must have some connection to the person. This connection helps to keep the thesis alive and to give a different perspective to the problem. Even if the connection isn't directly to the "soul" but is merely a strong interest, it is still vital. This is why I have chosen a thesis topic so closely related to myself: the transplantation of a culture into a foreign environment.

After spending six months in the city of Paris, I was very fascinated by the impact of a transplantation that is occurring in this city. For many years there have been large numbers of North African people coming to France and particularly to the cities of Marseille and Paris. They come for many different reasons such as economics and

education. But the reasons for coming are not as important to this thesis as are the impact to the city and the transformation of the individual by his new environmental and spatial experiences. These elements of impact and transformation can manifest themselves in either positive ways such as learning and understanding between two cultures or negative ways such as destruction and prejudice.

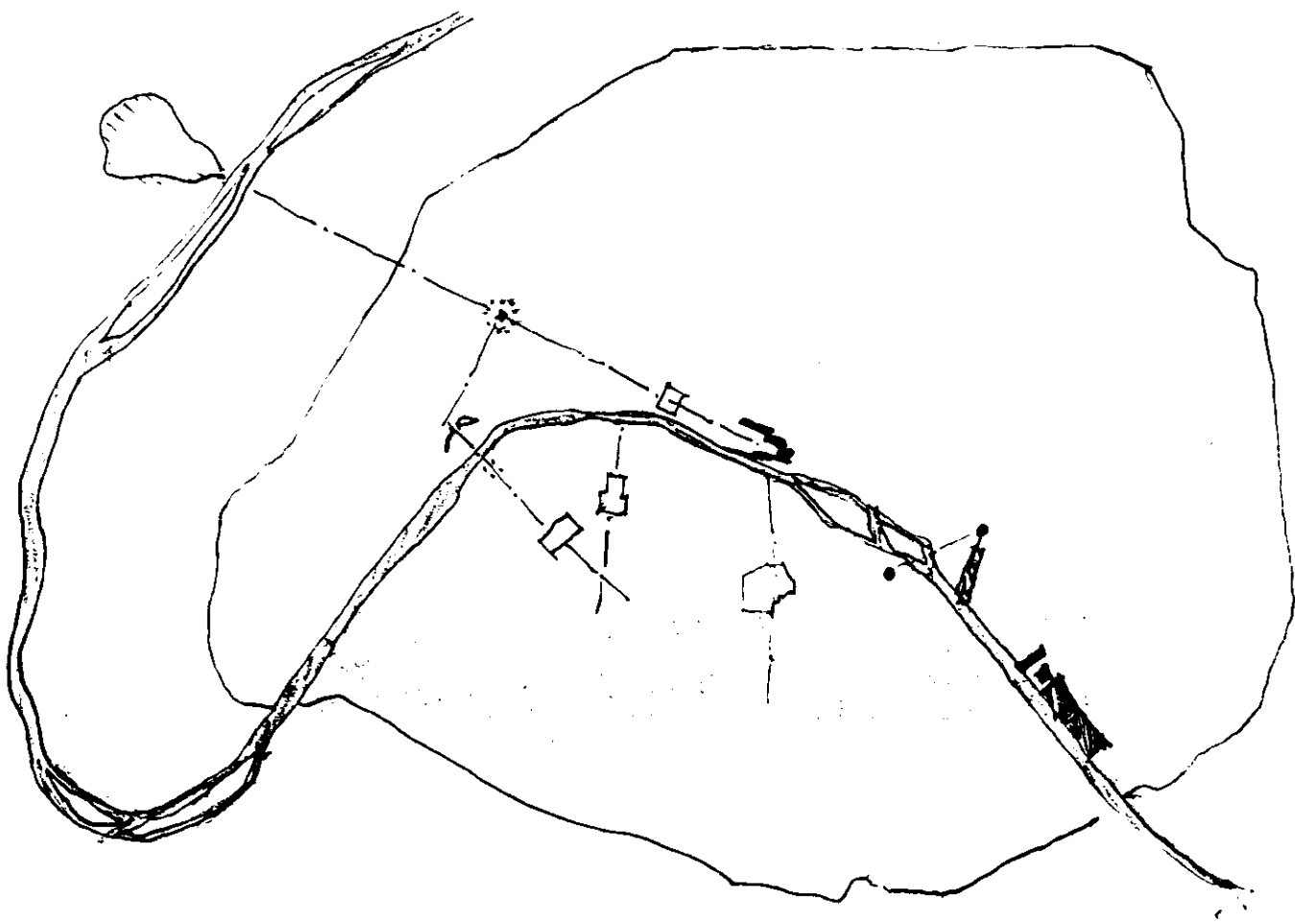
Often other cultures in our environments are overlooked or simply ignored. It is the responsibility of the architect to recognize certain cultural issues and respond to them architecturally; not just to simply impose a standard architecture from his or her own culture.

Where do I begin with this big issue? What vehicle will best let the cultural similarities, differences, and even tensions between the French and the North Africans, in particular the Moroccan people, be discovered and expressed? Housing seemed like the natural conclusion to this question. In this type of environment these cultural issues can be seen and maybe seen more clearly than in a less personal situation, like an office building.

SITE

The site for the housing complex is located at the lower east edge of Paris on the north bank of the Seine river. The space adjacent to and including the site is called Bercy. Historically this was the place where all the wine entered the city. It was housed here and then distributed. Bercy was a small village in its self with its warehouses, offices, train tracks connecting it to the river's edge, and even houses all forming a series of charming little brick paved streets.

In the summer of 1987 the city of Paris held a design competition to change Bercy into a park. Because of my involvement in the competition, I have come to know the site very well. This was one of the reasons for my choosing Bercy as the site along with the fact that it contains one of the last large spaces left in the city. This fact alone opened up some possibilities for the thesis project that might otherwise be confined and not possible, such as the inner space of the complex. The third reason for its choice was the condition of the area. In general it is sparse and barren in comparison to the rest of the city.



PROGRAM

HOUSING FOR TRANSPLANTED NORTH AFRICANS AND THE FRENCH

* VARIETY OF APARTMENT SIZES

3 bedroom --- 140- 150 sq. meters
2 bedroom --- 120- 130 sq. meters
1 bedroom --- 65-75 sq. meters
studio ----- 40- 50 sq. meters

* COMMERCIAL SPACE - ground level
- street edge only

* DENSITY - 2 1/4 sq. meters of ceiling for every 1 sq. meter of floor

* MAIL & TRASH AREA- ground level

* CULTURAL ISSUES:

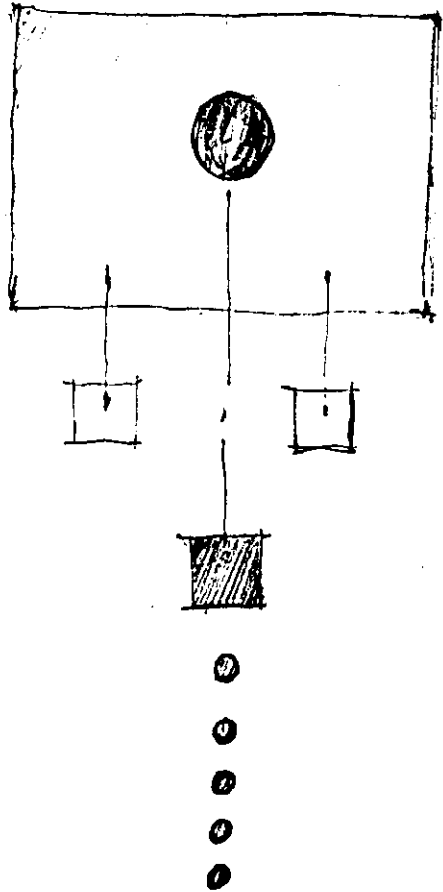
Entry Spaces

site scale
building scale
apartment scale

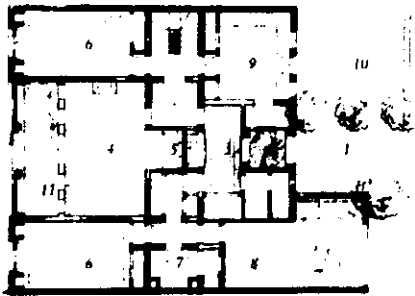
Gathering Space

social
religious
economical (market)
garden extension

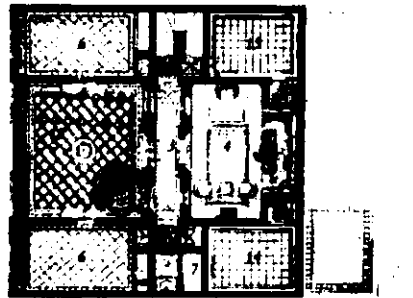
PROCESS



RESEARCH

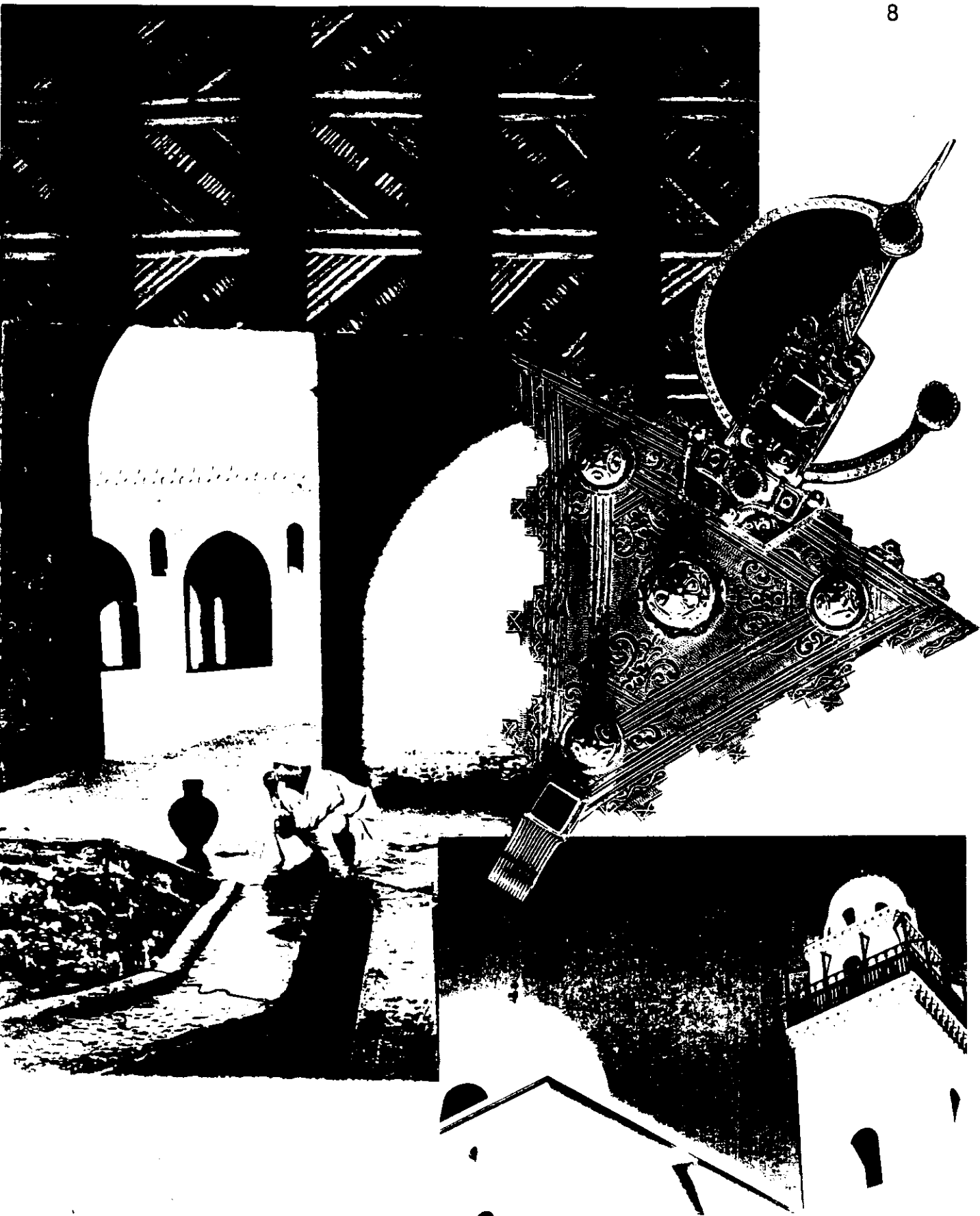


Ground floor plan of a row house.

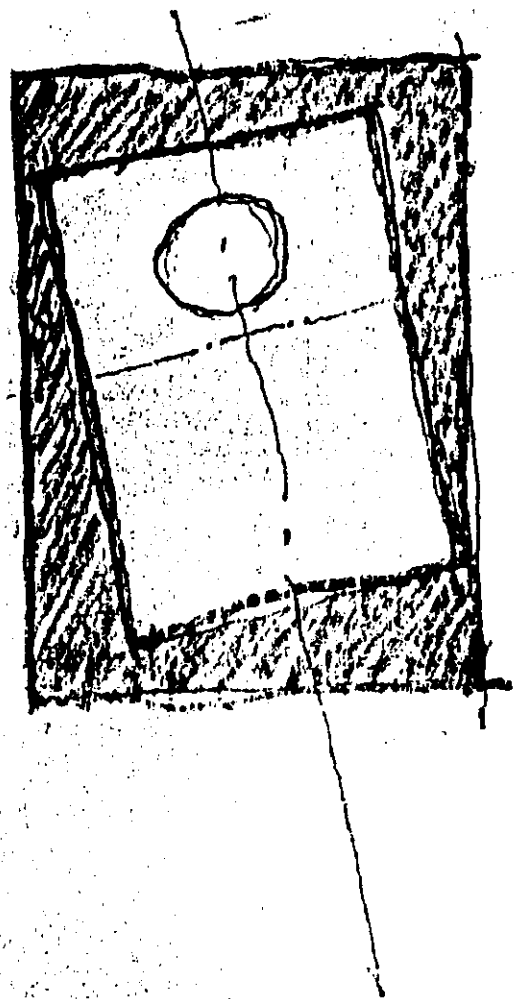
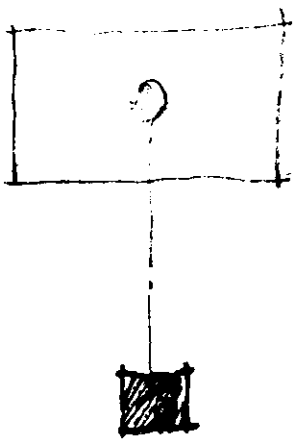


First floor plan.





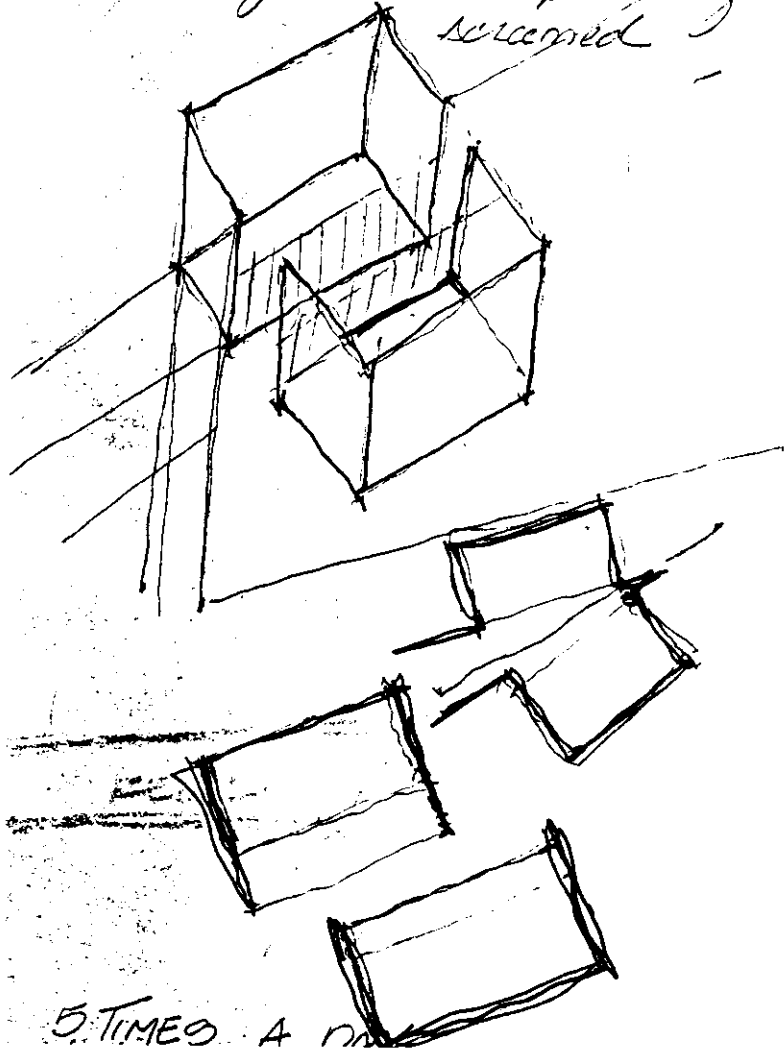
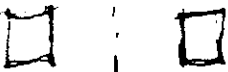
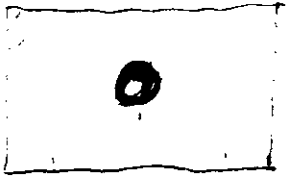
CONCEPT



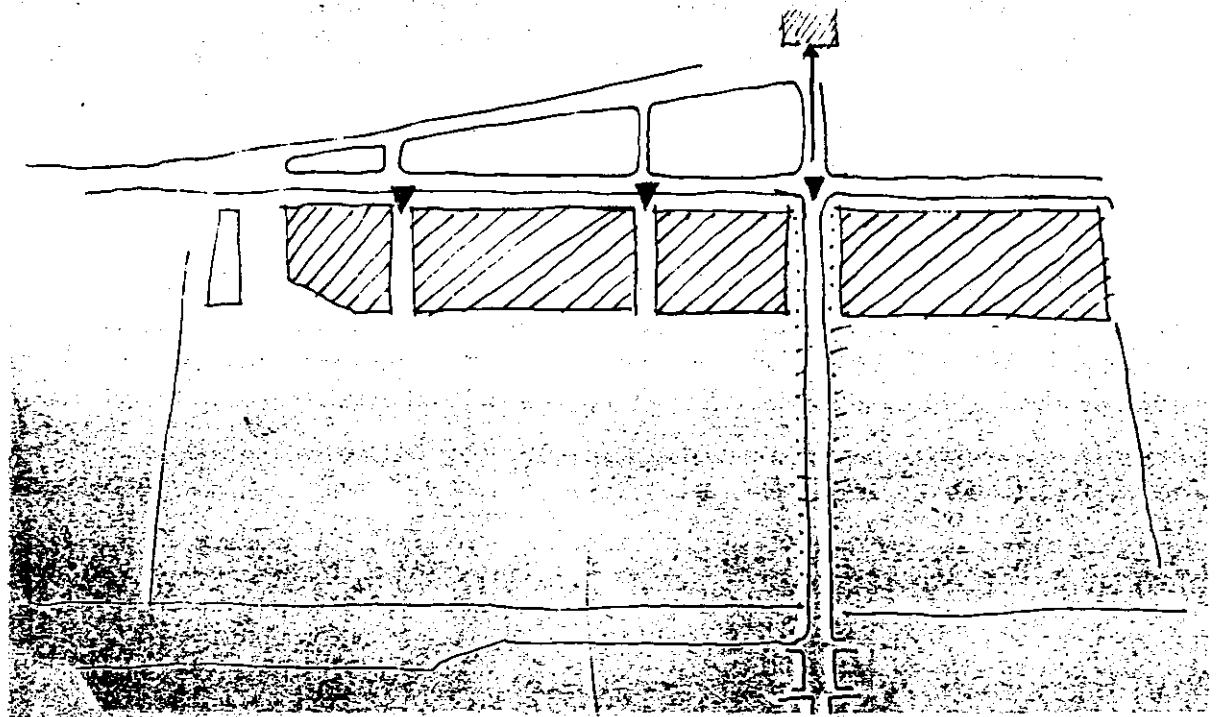
public entry

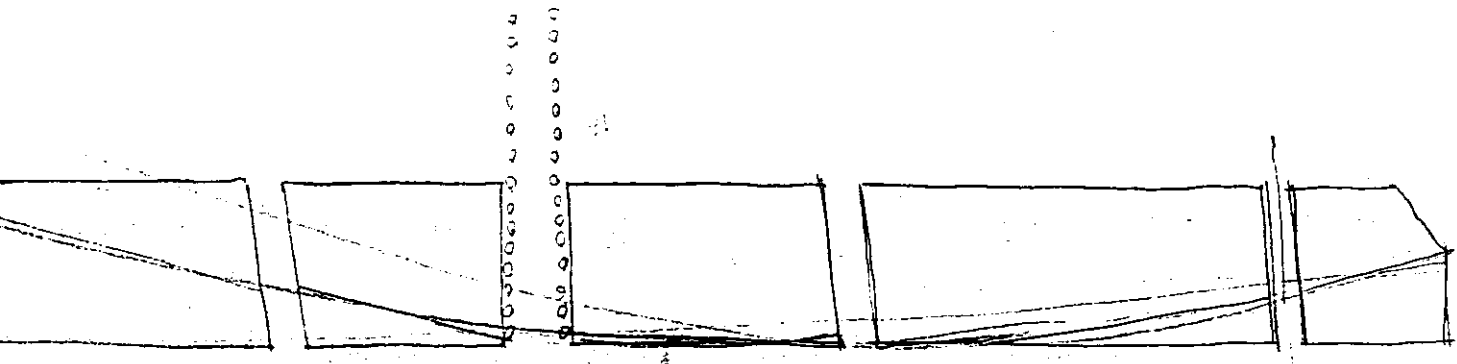
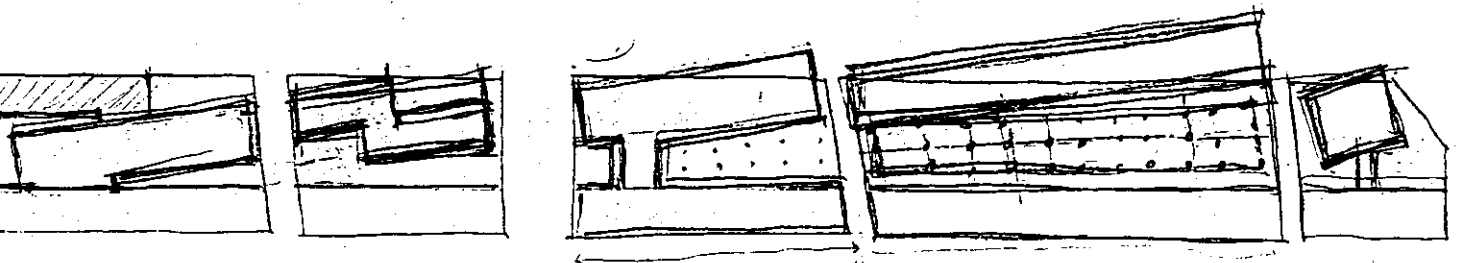
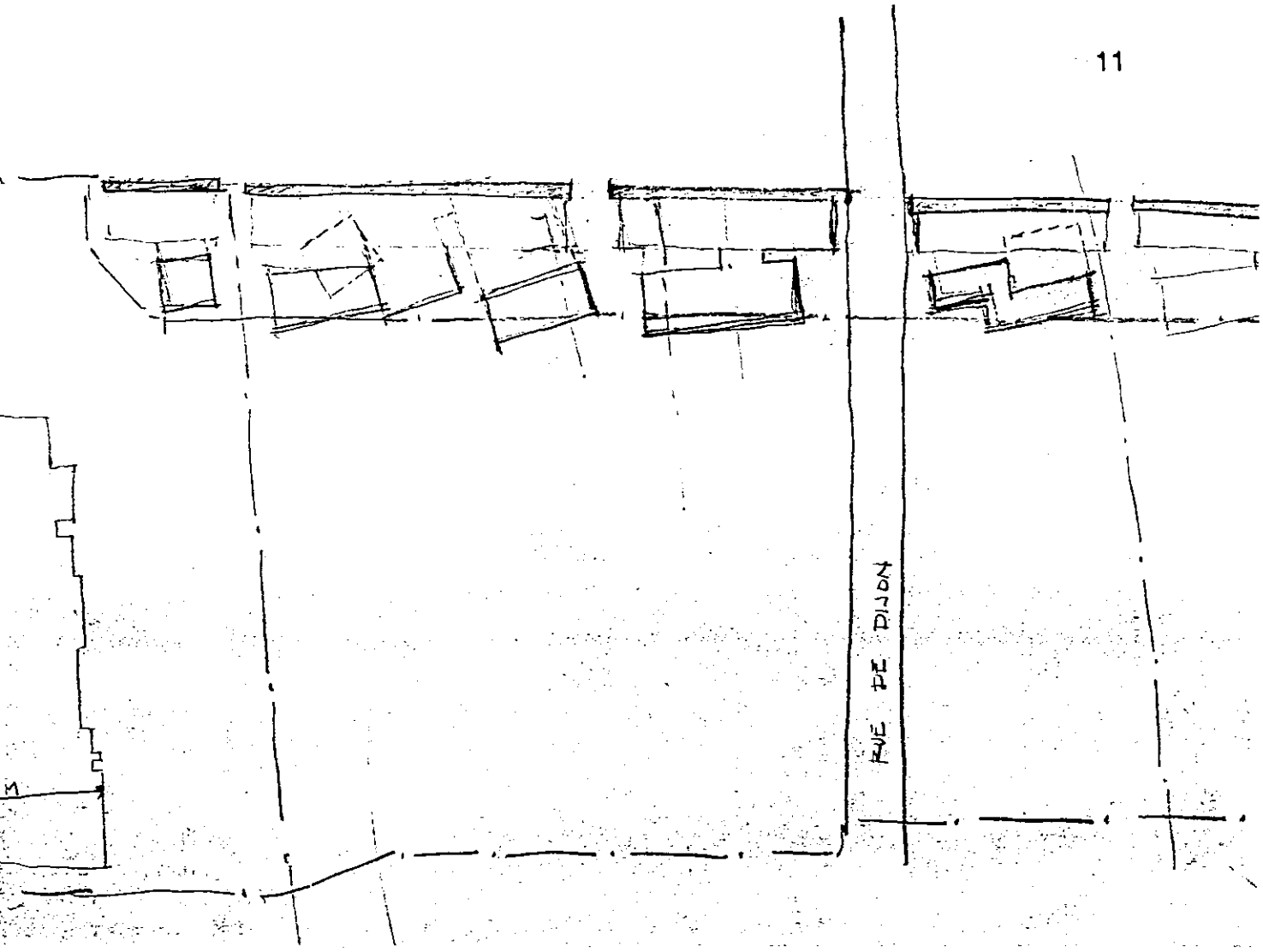
sky above or partially screened

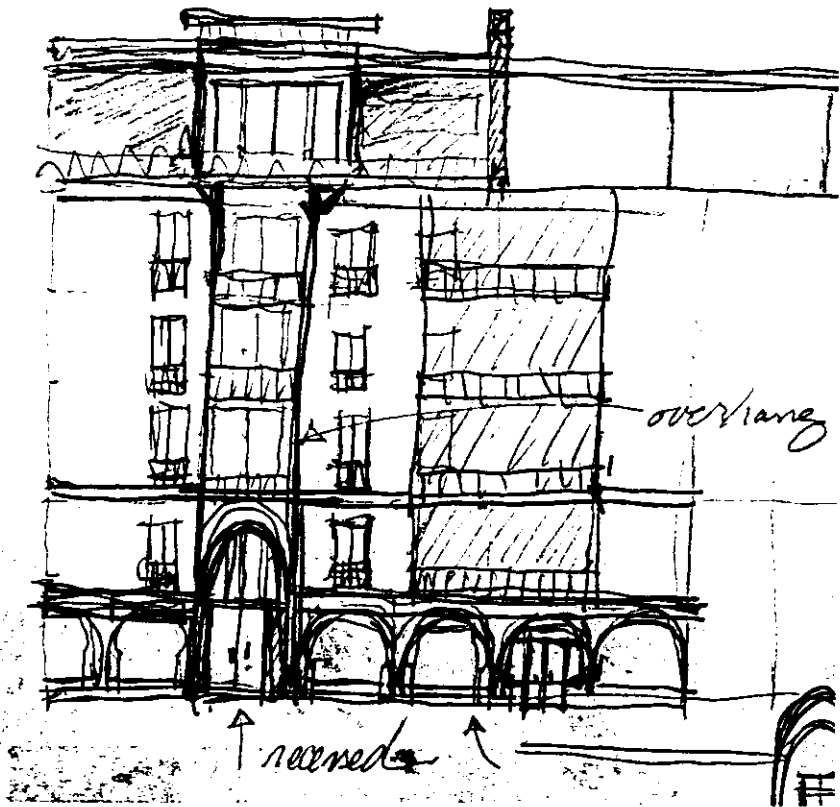
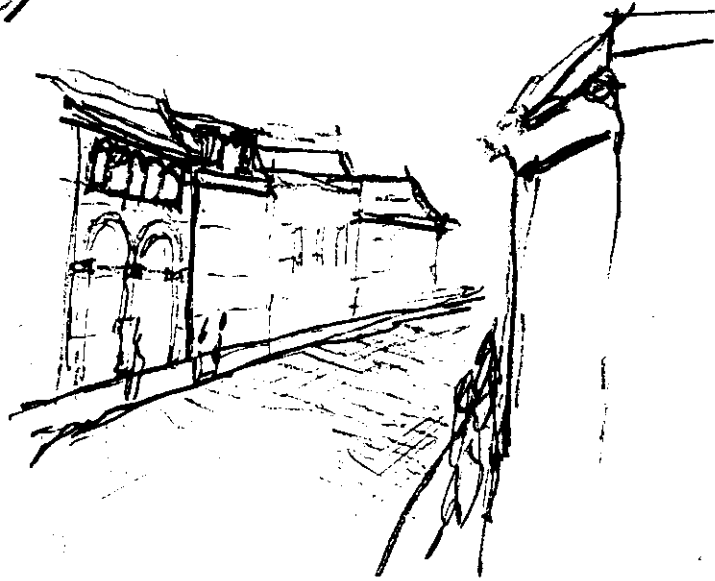
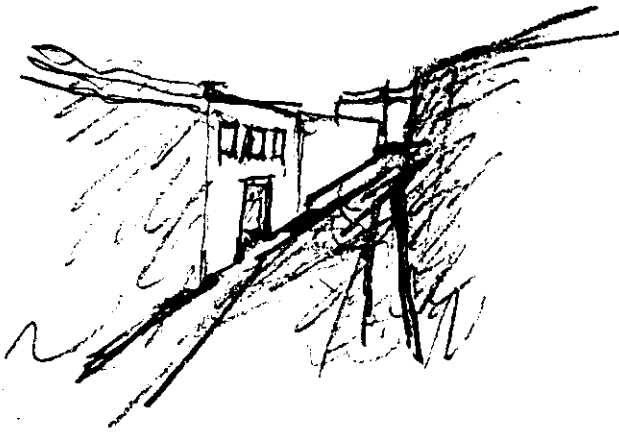
DEVELOPMENT

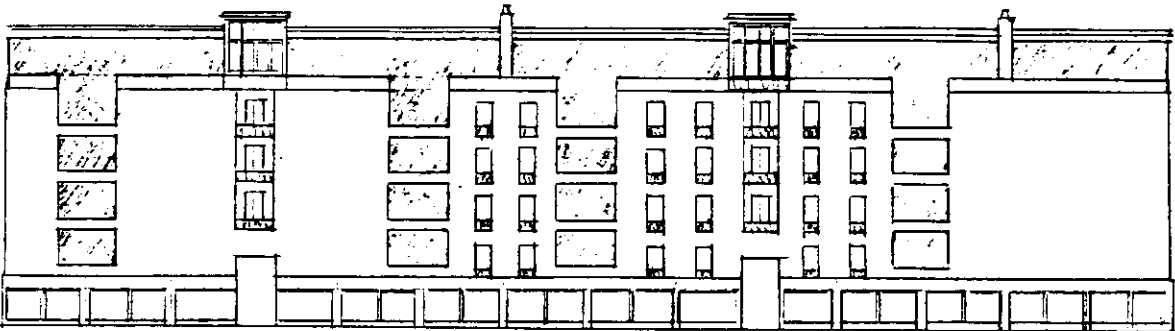


5 TIMES A DAY

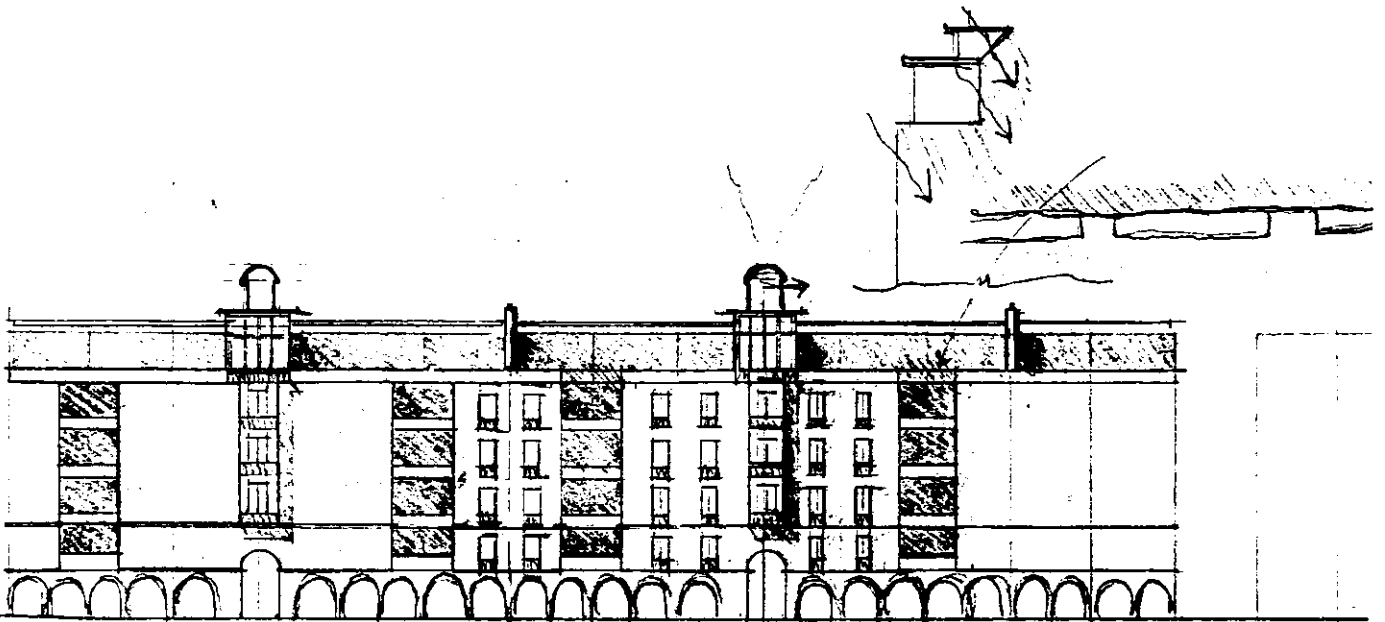


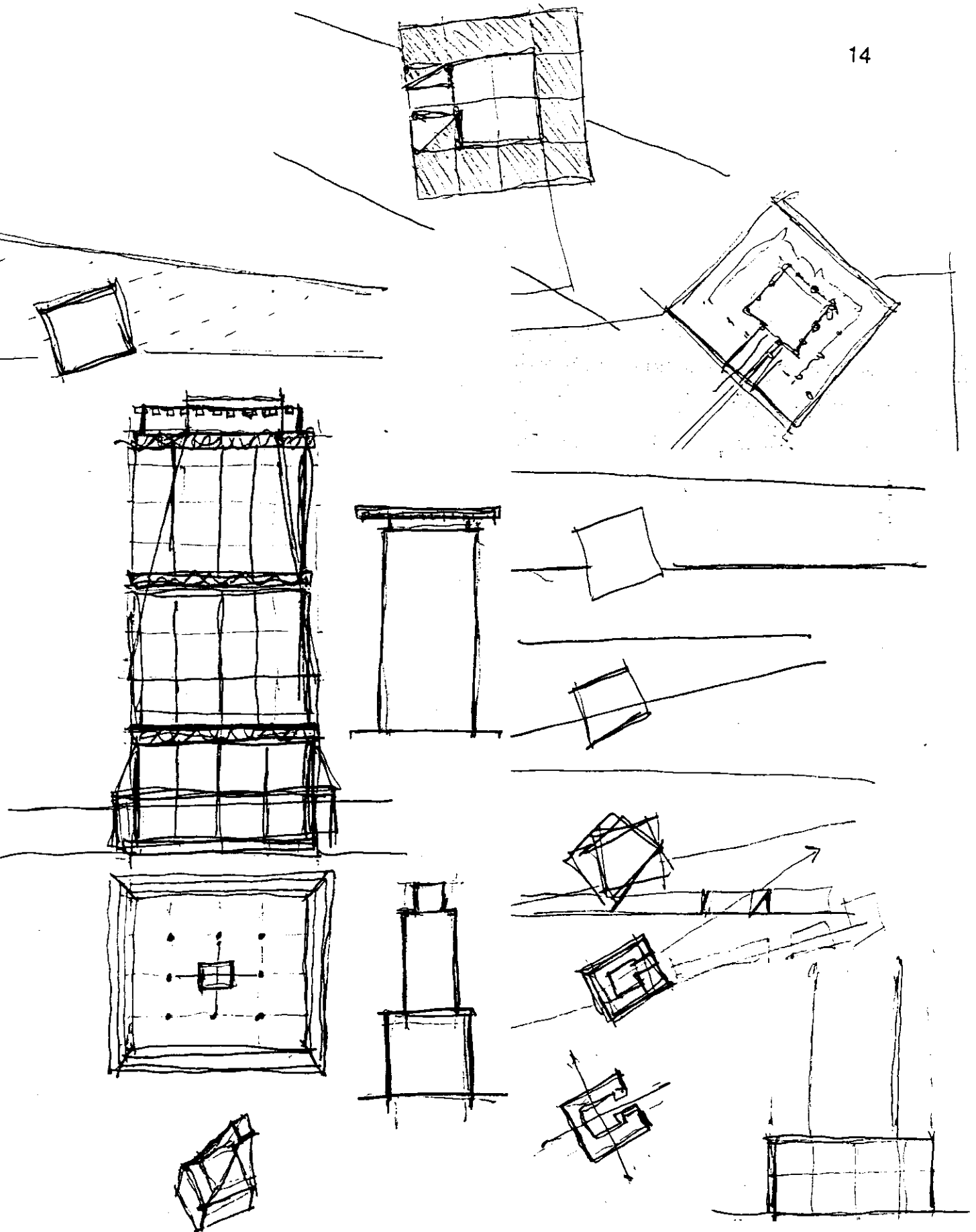


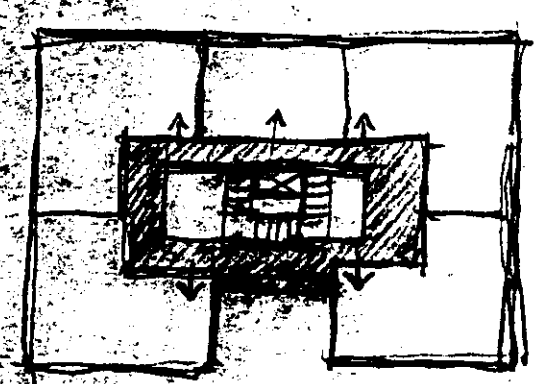
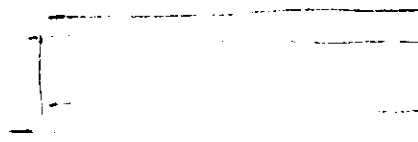
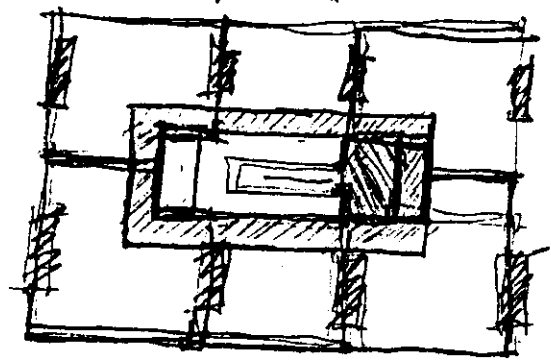
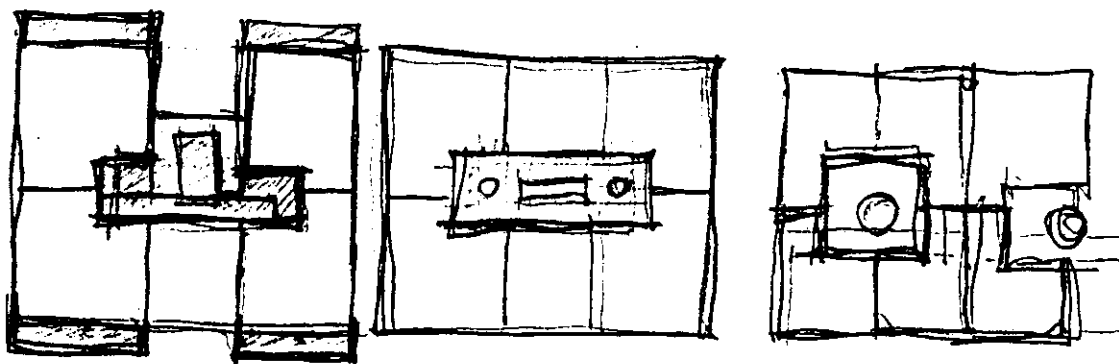


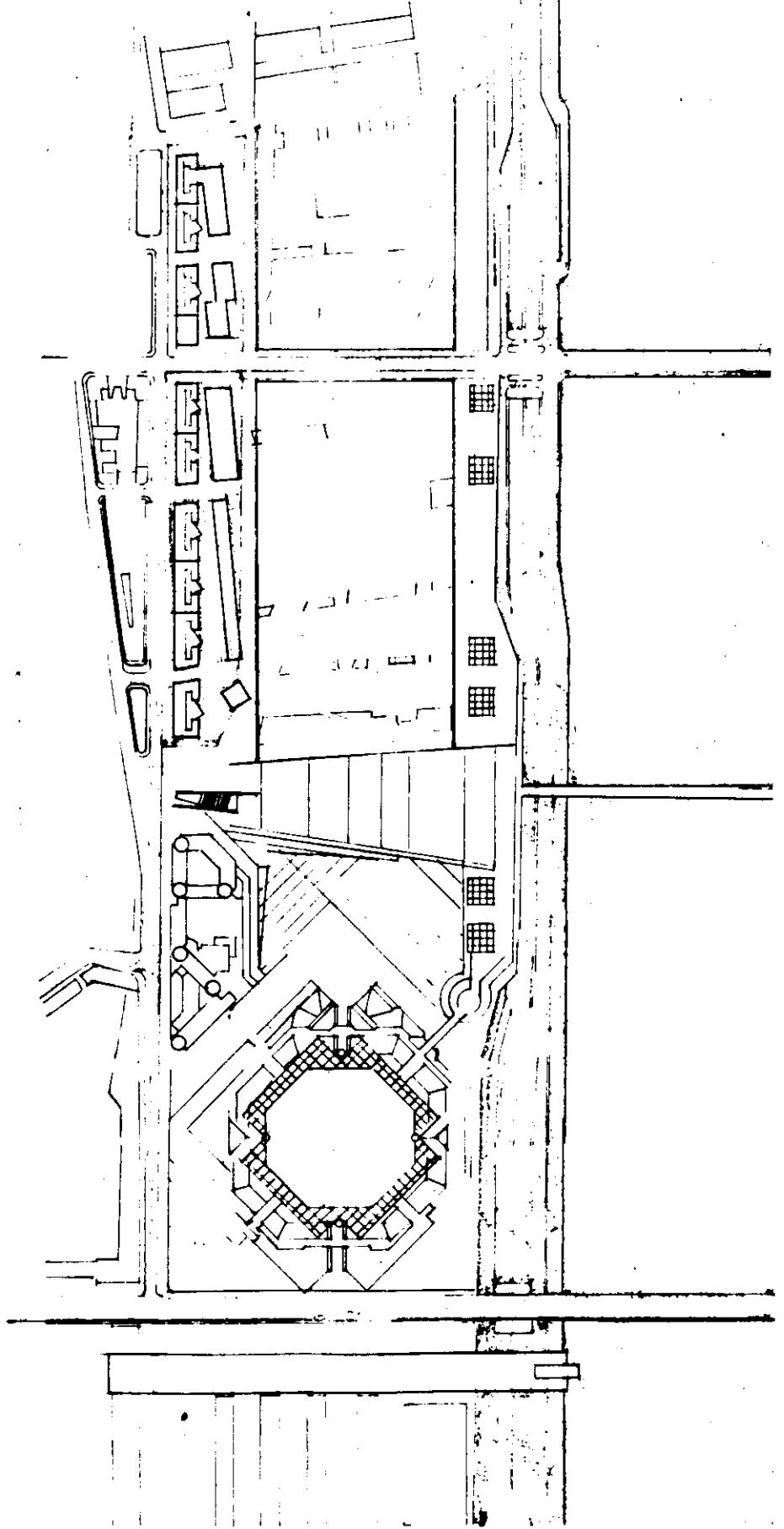


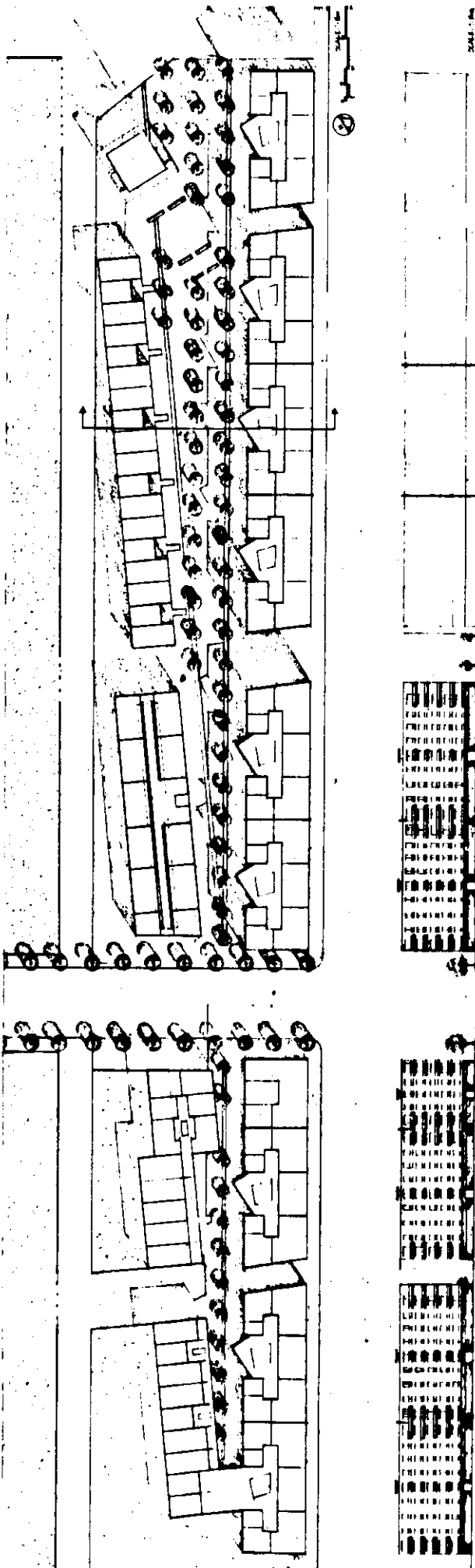
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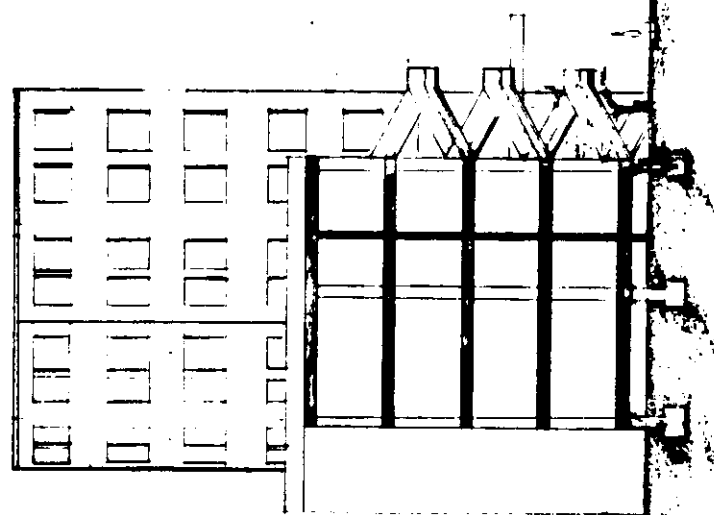
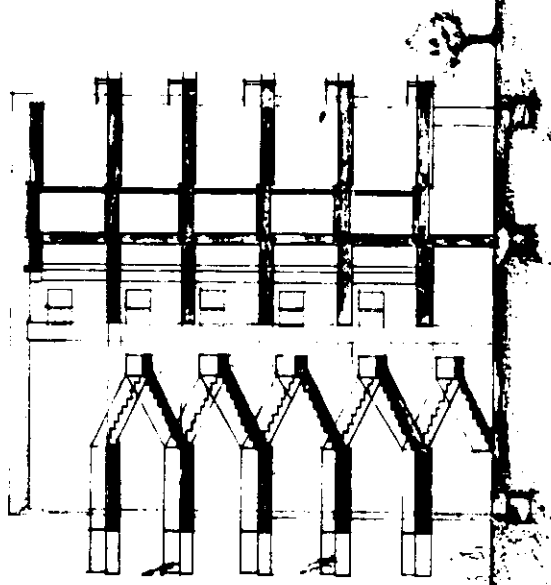


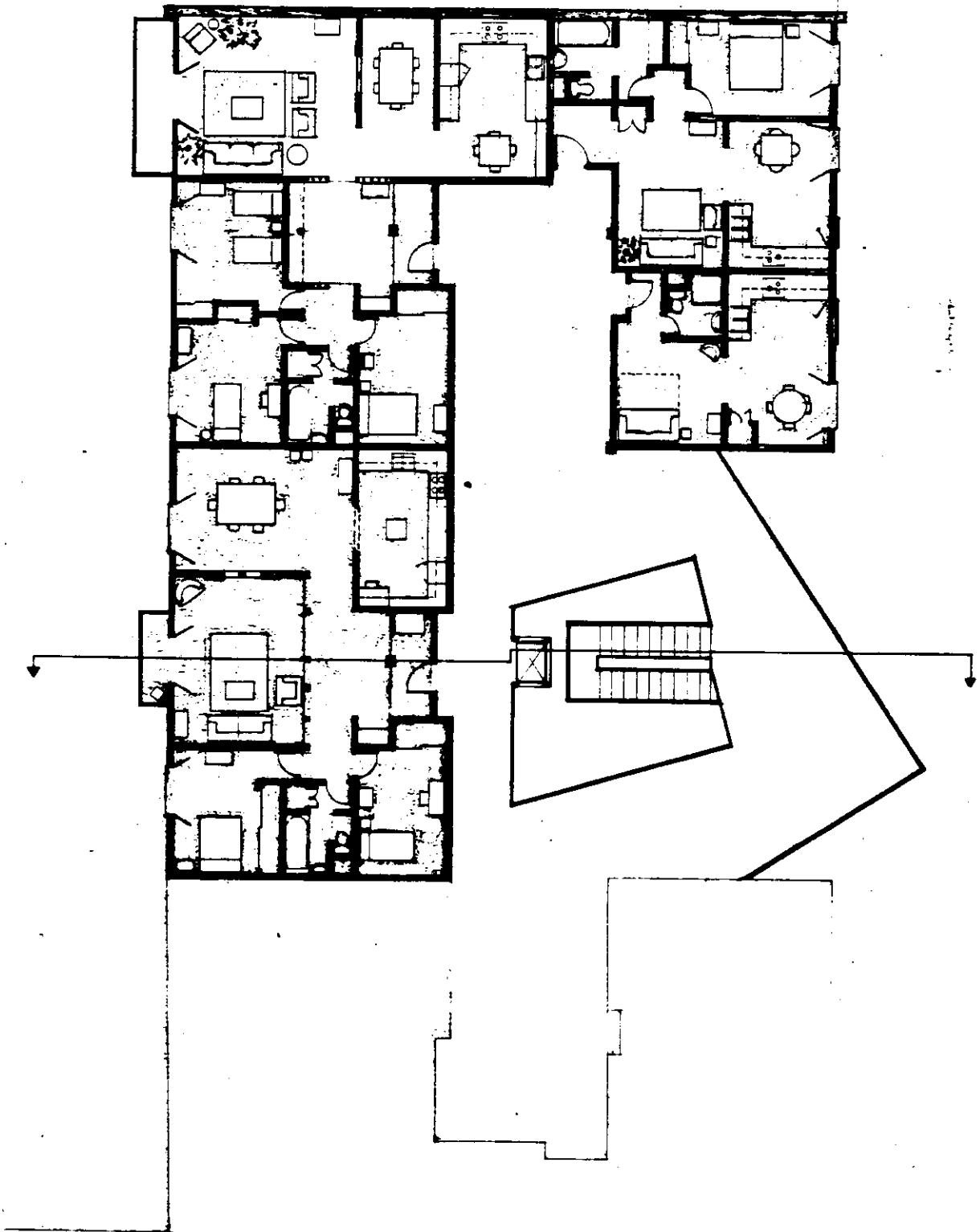






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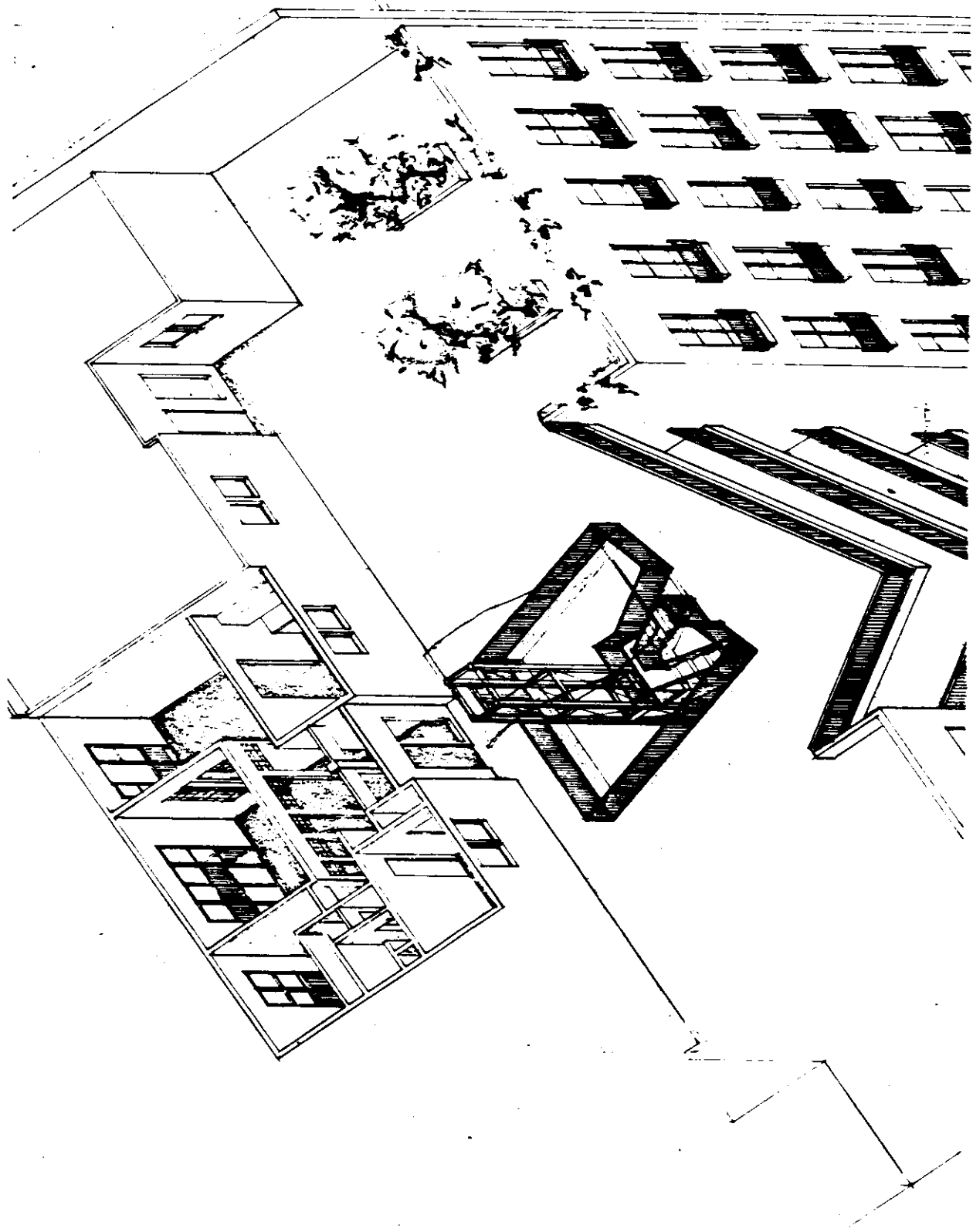




SCALE: 1:100

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SCALE 1/8" = 1'-0"



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