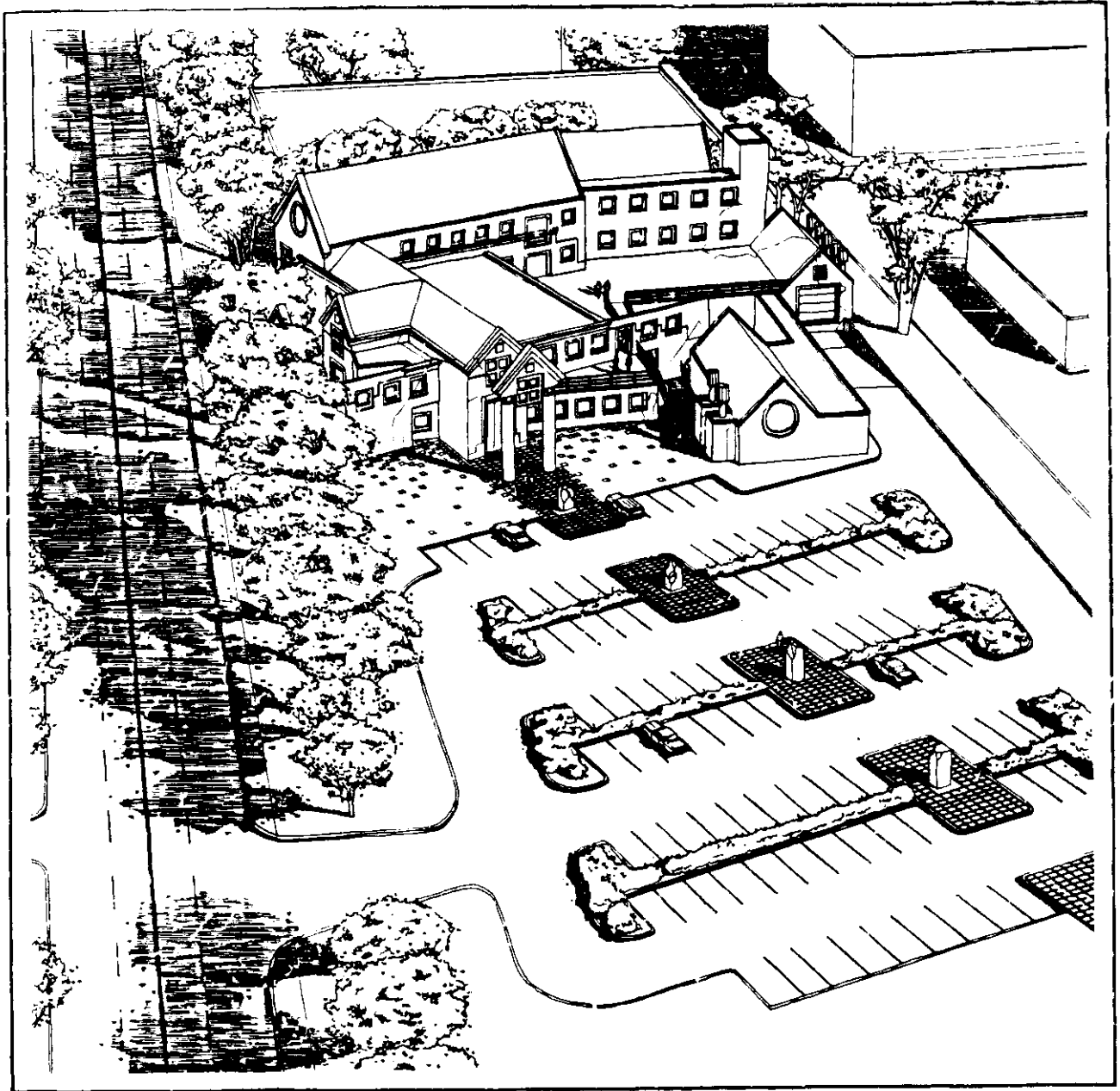


INDIANAPOLIS ART LEAGUE



AN ARCHITECTURAL THESIS

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Mark Allan Fishero

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College of Architecture and Planning

Ball State University

Muncie, Indiana

Handwritten scribbles and faint text, possibly including the word "Theater".

DEDICATION

To the memory of my father who taught me the importance of setting goals and the joys of reaching them. This one's for you Dad.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To my wife, Candy, for her never-ending support and sacrifice throughout not only this year, but also previous years. I couldn't have done it without you.

To my mother and stepfather, Pat and Jack Aikman, my sister Elizabeth, and my parents-in-law, Paul and Carol Taggart, whose constant encouragement and support kept me going through the good times and the bad.

To Joyce Sommers and Anne Nickolson of the Indianapolis Art League for their assistance in the early stages of the project.

To my studio critics, John S. J. Burke, J. Rodney Underwood, Jeff Culp, and Dean Rundell, for their consistent input and feedback throughout this academic year.

To my fellow classmates for their input and sense of humor which are so essential to one's sanity in the wee hours of the night.

And last, but certainly not least, I wish to thank the Lord for giving me the strength, the patience, and the will to be all that I can be.

PREFACE

This thesis book and the project which it addresses are the culmination of thirty weeks of effort which began with a series of meetings in which Joyce Sommers, Executive Director of the Indianapolis Art League, her Exhibits Coordinator, Anne Nickolson, and myself sat down and discussed the programmatic requirements of the existing Art League and the feasibility of expanding its scope to accommodate my needs. The result of these meetings was a hypothetical program based on an already existing organi-

zation. At this point I left the influence of the existing organization behind and began the process which eventually led to the solution proposed herein. The definition of thesis is "a proposition maintained by argument; a dissertation resulting from original research." Given this as a requirement for this project, I see the process by which it was created as the "argument" and the solution which I have derived as the "proposition." It is this process and its eventual solution which this book intends to discuss.

ABSTRACT / SUMMARY

The Indianapolis Art League is a privately funded organization to which, for a small fee, anyone can become a member. Scheduled classes are held during both the day and evening with some classes also conducted on Saturday mornings. The staff consists of an executive director and several coordinators. The faculty is entirely temporary and consists of practicing artists and faculty from other arts institutions. The students are expected to supply their own materials while the league provides the studio spaces and large equipment necessary for a variety of art disciplines. The league maintains a public gallery, free of charge, and galleries for student work and artwork available for purchase by the public. Also included in the public resources is an arts library possibly tied into the public library reference system.

The league is currently located in an 11,600 square foot structure at 920 East 67th Street near the

center of a community known as Broad Ripple. I chose to relocate them for two reasons. Firstly, the image of this organization is such that it should be perceived as a "public" entity. At its present location, it falls painfully short of that image. Secondly, by moving it to the new site, the league will be making not only a cultural contribution, but also a contribution to the urban health of the city by helping to revitalize an important but decaying area of the city.

Without doubt, the most important issue in the design of this facility is that of an improved "public" image. Throughout the design process a myriad of other issues presented themselves, the more significant of which are discussed in this book.

It is my sincere hope that those who read this thesis will find it as enjoyable and educational as I found the experience of creating it.

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PERSONAL GOALS

To create a fresh piece of architecture by looking at the various facets of architecture in different ways.

To exploit the informality and spontaneity of the artistic process in a built form, a form which houses an organization (Indianapolis Art League) that stresses that process as much as, if not more than,

the product.

To, within the protective, "nest" of the academic setting, investigate for myself the ever-changing limits of my abilities as a designer without some of the more extraneous but inevitable restrictions which become a frustration in the "real world."

PROGRAM

CLIENT HISTORY

The Indianapolis Art League is not new to the city. Its beginnings can be traced back to 1934 when it served as a visual arts teaching center. The league remained a small and relatively insignificant organization until 1976 when it moved into its present facility at 820 East 67th Street in the Broad Ripple area. The Art League membership has increased from 600 to 1,600 since 1976 and has manifested itself into an expanded mission of an important exhibition program and special projects that complement the city's cultural efforts. Seven hundred and twenty students are now enrolled in sixty, fifteen-week studio classes. During the past year, 106,000 people passed through the Art League's doors to

attend gallery exhibits and classes, and to participate in special events sponsored by the League. Special classes and events for children, including those mentally and physically handicapped, alone drew 3,100 children last year. In recognition of such service and vitality, Mayor William Hudnut in 1978 presented the Art League with the coveted TRACI Award as Indianapolis' "Outstanding Arts Organization."

But with such rapid growth both in size and public appeal, the art league has rapidly outgrown its present facility. Not only does it need a much larger facility, but it needs to be relocated to a new site not so far removed from the "public eye."

CLIENT GOALS

The major goals of the Indianapolis Art League Foundation are threefold: to provide a comprehensive practical program of art education for children, youth and adults--from beginning students to advanced--through studio art classes, to exhibit and assist regional artists to attain and maintain professional status primarily through an ambitious exhibition program and innovative projects, to serve as a community resource arts center by sharing the facilities, volunteers, and staff of the Art League so as to expand the ways in which artists and the arts can be utilized as a helpful community resource.

The current image of the Indianapolis Art League as perceived by the public is certainly positive, but it is lacking a very crucial element--accessibility. Its existing location in the Broad Ripple area is fine for Broad Ripple, but I believe that both the Art League and the city of

Indianapolis would benefit greatly from a move to the proposed site. The image that the league strives for is that of a progressive arts facility and arts catalyst for Indianapolis and Central Indiana. A facility in which young and old alike can learn about and participate in the arts, and which provides facilities in which serious area artists can both create and exhibit their works. The league is committed to working in concert with and to activate the corporate, civic, educational, and art communities by networking and collaborating for a vital cultural environment. They do not intend to compete with the existing arts facilities already established in the city, namely the Indianapolis Museum of Art and the Herron School of Art of I.U.P.U.I., but instead hope to complement these facilities by providing different contributions to the whole.

SITE ANALYSIS

It has become increasingly apparent as Indianapolis' downtown area has begun to attract a feeling of "boosterism" and resurgence of commitment from the City's civic leaders and corporate community that an important component for a vital burgeoning city is its cultural heritage and vitality. It is my feeling that by relocating the art league to the proposed site the benefits would be two-fold: the "presence" of a crucial link in the cultural vitality of Indianapolis would be greatly increased and an area of the city which is in need of a "facelift" would be gaining a strong new partner in the battle against urban blight. More specifically, the problem lies in the missing link of the Meridian Street development. From Monument Circle to Fall Creek (currently under development according to the "North Meridian Corridor Development Plan") the activity is fairly intense and from 38th Street north (soon to become a historic district) the turn of the century suburban homes are something to behold. But it is the gap between these two areas that needs some help. The area from Fall Creek north to 38th Street, in which the proposed site is centrally located, is riddled with decaying public housing and other

poorly maintained buildings with the only two exceptions being the Indianapolis Children's Museum and Winona Memorial Hospital. It is my feeling that the Indianapolis Art League would not only make a great contribution to the city culturally, but would also, in tandem with the Children's Museum and Winona Hospital, help to bring new life to an important but decaying area of the city.

The site encompasses the area which was previously the athletic practice field for Shortridge High School. Just over a year ago Shortridge fell victim to a declining attendance and school board budget cuts and was closed. The school building itself will eventually be reused for an unknown function. A strong possibility is that it might be adapted into a continuing education center for the Indianapolis public schools. For the purposes of this project, that assumption will be made. As previously discussed the surrounding context is in poor repair, but another important facet of the area is that it serves as a transition from the commercial area to the South to the residential area to the North. It also lies along Meridian Street, a major north/south thoroughfare and the northern gateway to the downtown area.

SQUARE FOOTAGE REQUIREMENTS

Lobby/Waiting Area.....	300 Sq. Ft.
Administrative Offices.....	3,600 Sq. Ft.
Board Room.....	500 Sq. Ft.
Main Gallery.....	6,300 Sq. Ft.
Gallery Storage Area.....	2,400 Sq. Ft.
Public Lounge.....	500 Sq. Ft.
Studios:	
Painting (2 @ 1,100 Sq. Ft.).....	2,200 Sq. Ft.
. North light	
. Tabletop and easel work	
Drawing (2 @ 1,100 Sq. Ft.).....	2,200 Sq. Ft.
. North light	
. Tabletop and easel work	
Graphic Arts.....	1,100 Sq. Ft.
. Tabletop work	
Textiles.....	1,100 Sq. Ft.
Jewelry.....	1,100 Sq. Ft.
Printmaking.....	1,100 Sq. Ft.
Classrooms (2 @ 1,100 Sq. Ft.).....	2,200 Sq. Ft.
Photography.....	1,100 Sq. Ft.
. Light room	
. Darkroom	
Sculpture.....	1,600 Sq. Ft.
. North light	
. High noise and dirt level	
. Increased height and large access	
. Hoist	
Outdoor Sculpture Classroom.....	2,700 Sq. Ft.
Ceramics.....	1,200 Sq. Ft.
. North light	
. High noise and dirt level	
. Kiln requirements	
Student Lounges.....	1,600 Sq. Ft.
Auditorium	2,700 Sq. Ft.
Library.....	3,900 Sq. Ft.
Materials Delivery and Storage.....	1,600 Sq. Ft.
Restrooms.....	500 Sq. Ft.
Kitchenette.....	200 Sq. Ft.
Circulation.....	6,700 Sq. Ft.
Mechanical.....	<u>7,500 Sq. Ft.</u>
Total	55,900 Sq. Ft.

PROCESS

PHILOSOPHY

I would like to precede this portion of the book by acknowledging the fact that my personal philosophy is as yet unpolished. I do believe that my educational experience has given me a strong basis for growth, but my philosophy is in it's infancy. As with all things, an architectural philosophy cannot be considered viable without its first being tested. To some degree the academic environment is a place for testing one's ideals, but it is only a beginning.

My philosophy, in its current state, is probably best exemplified and illustrated through the project discussed herein. I believe that architectural design does not begin until after the functional requirements are fulfilled. By this I do not mean to lessen the importance of those functional requirements, in fact, I feel they are the foundation upon which quality architecture is built. But there is so much more to it than that. The architect and his architecture should relate to the client in an intimate manner, but should, at the same time, feel free to juxtapose functions, forms, and geometries. The result is a building which reflects the personality of it's owner/user while maintaining a personality of its

own. To attain this result, I believe that the architect should have both the freedom and the responsibility to gather ideas and concepts from a variety of styles and architectural theories. On a smaller scale, I do not believe that detail design can be separated from any portion of the design process. The architect must breathe life into every piece of the building; he must integrate the details in harmony with the whole.

Architectural decoration is a facet of architecture which has indeed been at the forefront of recent discussions. I feel that decoration is an essential element in architecture. Stripping architecture of decoration strips it of its personality. Given this, it becomes a matter of degree. I do not agree that architecture should be constructed decoration. I do feel that decoration is best achieved through the use of materials to the extremes of one's creativity.

As a comment on the topic of philosophies, I feel that to get too wrapped up in the intricacies of philosophy is to remove oneself from reality. One of the more published architectural philosophers, Peter Eisenman, is a prime example.

METHODOLOGY

The design methodology or process is an ever-changing entity. In order to know where to go the designer must know where he has been. For this reason, I adopted a policy of recording all (by that I mean as many as possible) of my design decisions and alternatives on paper and keeping those papers close by. I originally started out with an 8½" X 11" notebook and later moved to tracing paper overlays where necessary. The most important thing is not to throw anything away, and to constantly check back to previous ideas as a means of testing new ones. As a rule, I like to work on the large scale (overall scheme) and the small scale (detail design) at the same time. This helps me to stay aware of new decisions and their effects on the building/space as a whole. It also helps to break up the decisions into more manageable portions.

The first step in the design process is to examine the environment in which the building will exist, physically, socially, economically, etc. This study of the building's context should be done at both the macro and the micro scales.

One of the most crucial concepts, and to my mind one of the most lacking in today's architecture, is the building's personality. The architect's responsibility is to draw from the client the necessary information for not only square footage allotments and functional requirements, but also the key ingredients with which to create the appropriate spirit or personality for the building, and to maintain that per-

sonality throughout the design process.

A building's functional requirements must be the first problem solved, and in order to operate properly, they must be resolved. But that is only the skelton on which the designer works. From there, spaces may be manipulated, surfaces embellished, facades composed; in short, the building may be pushed and pulled, twisted and reshuffled, in the interest of creating the environment appropriate to the project. These adjustments to the building can be drawn from many sources.

I believe that there is nothing in the architectural world that has not been done before. This is not to say that we should simply attempt to copy verbatim what we have already created because there is nothing left to do. On the contrary, we should use what has been done in the past as a resource from which we can extract various concepts. The important thing is to refrain from simply pilfering from historical or even current architectural vocabularies. This somewhat eclectic vocabulary must be made into a coherent architectural language which respects not only the demands of the client, but also of society. I have found that by breaking elements and/or concepts down into abstract pieces and then redeveloping them into a new and relevant whole, I am not simply imitating the distant or immediate past and becoming stagnant, but am instead generating an architecture that looks at the past in a unique and personal way in the interest of the present and indeed the future.

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

The following are brief explanations and illustrations of the development of some of the more significant decisions made throughout the course of this project. Several of these "developments" saw their genesis in historical precedent while others were generated as a result of previous decisions. In any case, all of these "developments," and many

others not illustrated here, were designed with the others in mind and were constantly checked against a variety of alternatives to insure a harmonious whole. I have attempted to break these "developments" down into fairly simplified steps in order to illustrate where both this building and I, as the designer, are coming from.

PART I

After several meetings with the Directors of the Art League, in which I obtained the necessary programmatic information, and after a thorough analysis of the site and its surrounding environment (both micro and macro), I was ready to begin the process of designing. One of the earliest observations that I made was that the building needed to respect the surrounding urban/suburban fabric while also breaking away from it, thereby creating a dynamic relationship to the street (a major north/south corridor) and also creating dynamic interaction of spaces within the building. Through the use of skewed geometries and the resultant spatial integration, I sought not only to create unique spacial experiences, but also to create contact areas in which artists and art enthusiasts could interact and exchange ideas.

Another reason for the skewed grid was to create a "picture window" along the vehicularly dominated street. This "window" could then be utilized as a tool with which the League could carry out its goal of "advertising" both the artistic process and the product. It was the combination of the skewed grids and the League's dual goal of acting as both an educational and an exhibitional organization that led to the basic organizing concept. In short, the building was to be a three dimensional representation of the philosophy of the League.

The programmatic functions were organized into two clearly distinct categories: exhibition (gallery,

library and auditorium) and education (studios and classrooms). The remaining support functions (administrative offices, storage areas, etc.) were then allowed to be flexible in regards to which grid they conformed to. The grids were then organized in such a way that the educational functions, in an effort to respect the surrounding urban/suburban fabric, were placed within a grid parallel and perpendicular to the existing buildings. The exhibitional functions were then integrated into the skewed grid and the two grids were allowed to intertwine or separate functions as required.

Perhaps one of the best examples of how this grid concept works is in the relationship between the main gallery and the student lounges. Here the two geometries overlap to create an opportunity for direct interaction between people. At the same time the overlapping forms create a more intimate gallery space in contrast to the larger gallery spaces and also create a relaxed and comfortable student lounge area adjacent to, but in contrast to, the more enclosed and work oriented studio spaces.

The building's massing was controlled by the need for an informal and relaxed family of forms which would, in a very real sense, be the anti-thesis of the "ivory tower" image that many art museums have invoked upon the general public. The gabled vocabulary of the roof forms also helps to reinforce this informal image.

STRUCTURE

The structure of the building was utilized in three ways: as an ordering device at the conceptual level, as a physical support, and as a usable entity. We have already discussed at some length how the structure was used as an ordering device.

As a physical support the structure is a combination of column/beam and bearing wall systems. The bearing walls are of standard concrete block in a running bond and the columns/beams are of steel. A simple joist system with a suspended

acoustical ceiling and enclosed mechanical plenum was utilized in the majority of the building.

The columns in the gallery space are designed so that they may be utilized as supports for ten foot square partitions on which two dimensional art can be displayed. The exhibitors would then have the ability to manipulate the flow of traffic and the spacial experience of the gallery by moving these partitions into an unlimited variety of configurations.

ELEVATIONS

The decisions made in the process of developing the overall concept had effects that carried over into many facets of the design process. One of these was the development of the elevations or building skin. As I have mentioned before, I believe that the use of decoration, in whatever form, is a crucial tool in projecting the building's personality to the user(s).

The materials chosen needed to be simplistic and unassuming, but they needed to be dealt with in a unique and playful manner. I chose to use standard concrete block as the "canvas" on which the personality of the building could be "painted." Other materials included blue ceramic tiles, reinforced concrete, white metal window and door frames, and black asphalt shingles.

Drawing from the decisions made during the parti development, I felt it appropriate to apply the exhibition/education concept to the development of the elevations. The "education grid" is entirely of concrete block and is the backdrop for the dynamically articulated, blue ceramic tile covered "exhibition grid." The fenestrations of the various surfaces were a similar idea in that they are a somewhat consistent and rhythmic field of square windows and doors from which the more important elements can be projected.

This technique of creating a rhythmic field or "plain vanilla" background from which elements can

be emphasized was indeed part of the idea behind the creation of the extended, freestanding wall on the south elevation.

Elements such as the white cornices were abstracted from historical precedent and redeveloped into a design which was compatible with the newly created architectural vocabulary.

An example of the synthesizing of the architectural language can be seen in the treatment of the western or street facade. The main gallery and entrance gables are projected from the "plain vanilla" background of the concrete block wall and the fenestrations on the gallery gable are a collage of the various fenestrations seen throughout the building: the square window (here made larger for the "picture window" effect), the subdivided window which echoes the entry gateways, and the round window borrowed from the ceramics studio. All of this constant interdependency of forms and surfaces serves as the unifying element for the building envelope.

The color scheme was derived from the basic artistic notion of the three primary colors: red, blue and yellow. Blue was chosen as the dominant color because of its compatibility with the grey of the concrete block and its relatively subdued brilliance. The yellow and red were then used as accents for elements such as piperaling and exhaust stacks.

GATEWAYS

The freestanding entry gateways are perhaps the best example of the process of abstracting elements to conform to a new architectural vocabulary. These gateways play a major role in creating the building's personality. They originated from the classical entry portico and were broken down into three major pieces: column, capital, and pediment/archway. Then, after several alternatives were developed and refined, the final design was developed. The columns are of reinforced concrete,

the capitals of red painted steel, and the pediment (which was designed to appear as if it were removed from the building surface) of concrete block covered with blue ceramic tiles.

The purpose of the gateway element is to heighten the entry experience, but the opportunity to reiterate the image of the League and to project the personality of the building became a major factor in its development.

ENTRY EXPERIENCE

One of the aspects of the experience of architecture that I feel is most lacking today is the entry experience. I think that the experience of approaching and entering/exiting a building is of equal, if not more importance than the experiences within the building. It is as one is approaching the building from the outside that the all important "first impression" takes place. It is also the point in time when the user begins to orient himself not only to the "front door" but to virtually all of the spaces in the building; consequently, I think that it is essential for the entry to be more than just a building form which says "enter me here." The building should extend itself beyond the entry plane and into the environment through which the user must pass before arriving at the "front door." In this particular project, and in fact in a vast majority of projects, that preliminary environment is a parking lot.

What I attempted to do in this building is to bring some of the outside in and some of the inside out, thereby creating a spatial flow from outside to inside and vice versa. The predominant mode of arrival to this building is the automobile; consequently, we must deal with a parking lot. Considering the fact that the parking area is of more

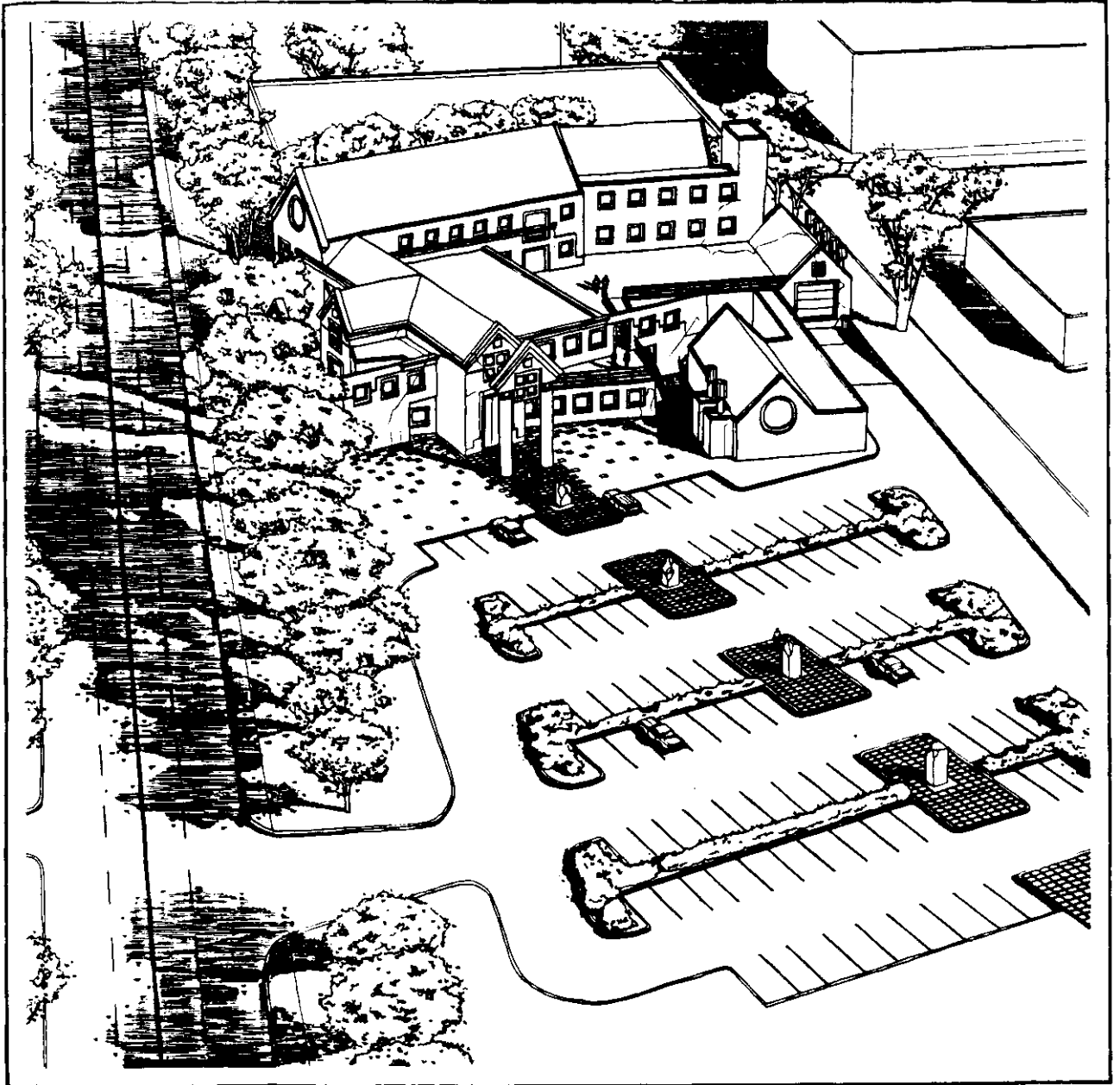
site square footage than the building, it seems that the designer should recognize that and go beyond simply pushing parking spaces around, and this is exactly what I did.

The concept of an inside/outside progression was one that seemed appropriate. The result of developing this concept is a major pedestrian spine which extends the geometry of the building through the parking lot. The axis is accented by a time-progression sculpture sequence which illustrates the process of sculpting a piece of art from the granite block at the farthest end of the walk, step by step, to the finished product just inside the building envelope. This progression is indeed even understandable as one passes by the site in an automobile. The result of this concept is that the visitor/user becomes involved with the artistic process even before he enters the doors of the building.

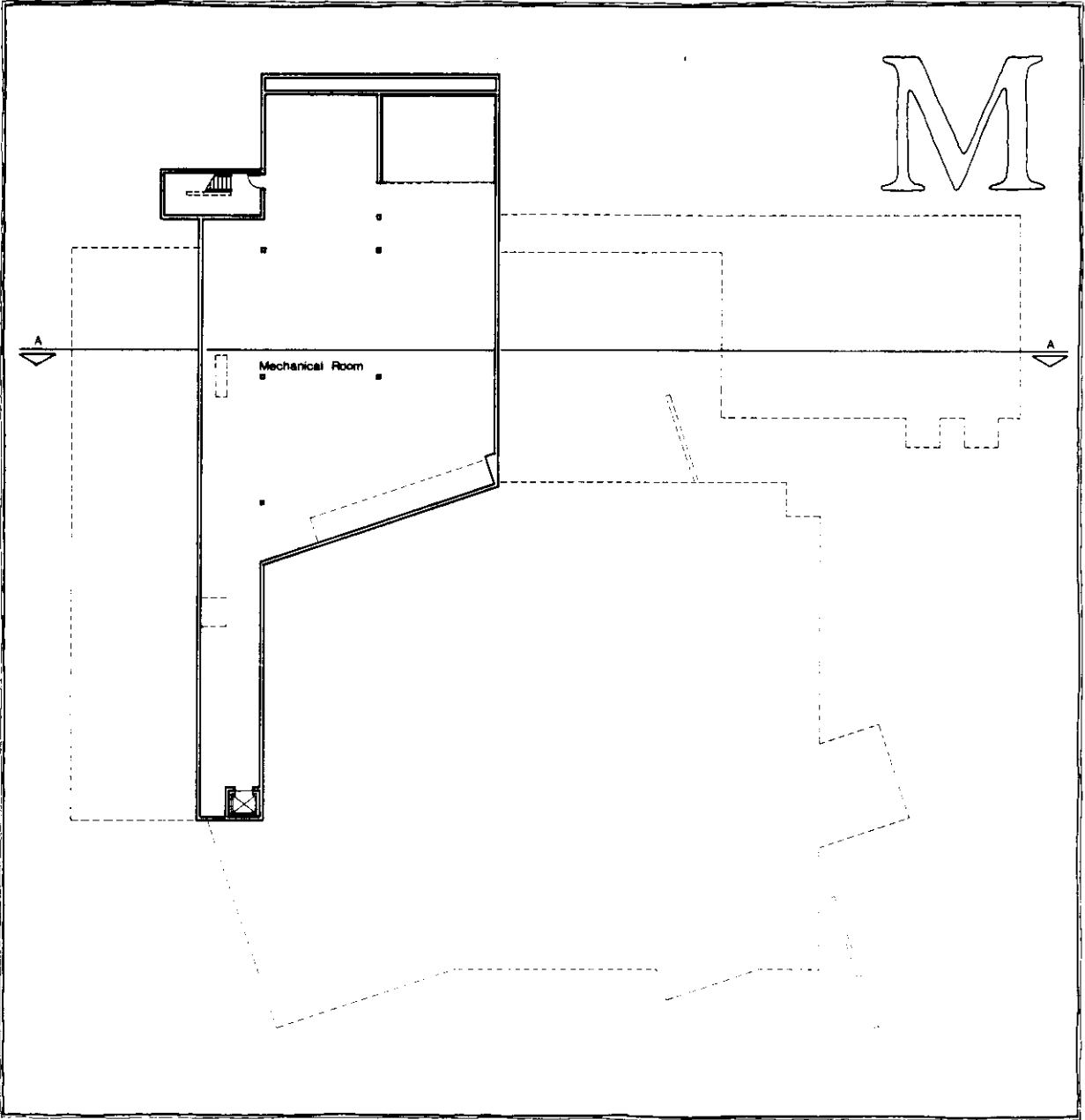
The same concept of a linear progression can be seen in the repetition of the gateway pediments from without to within the building envelope. Yet another attribute to this concept is that the visitor/user regardless of whether or not he is inside or outside, now has a datum with which to orient himself to other spaces.

SOLUTION

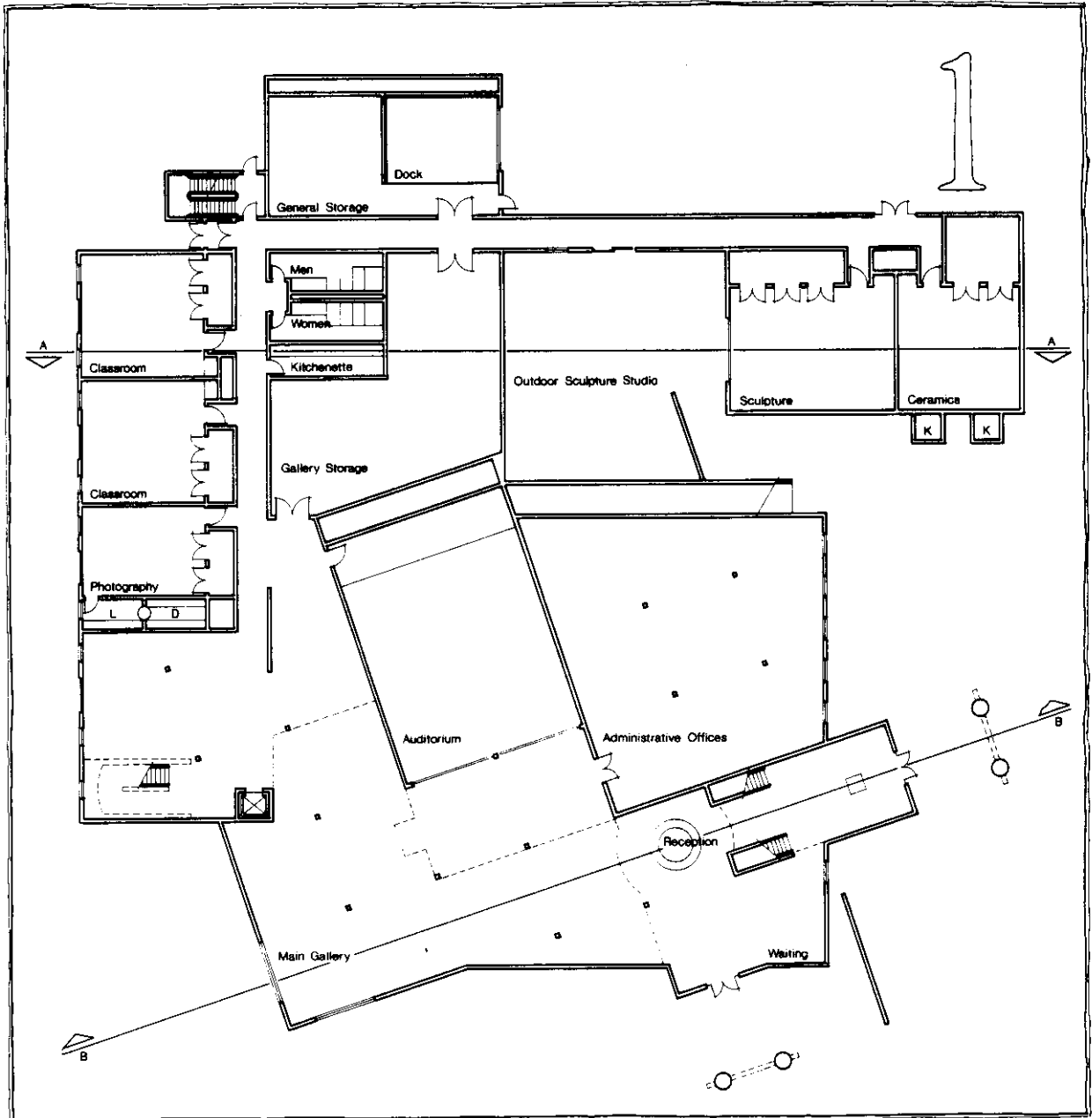
AERIAL PERSPECTIVE



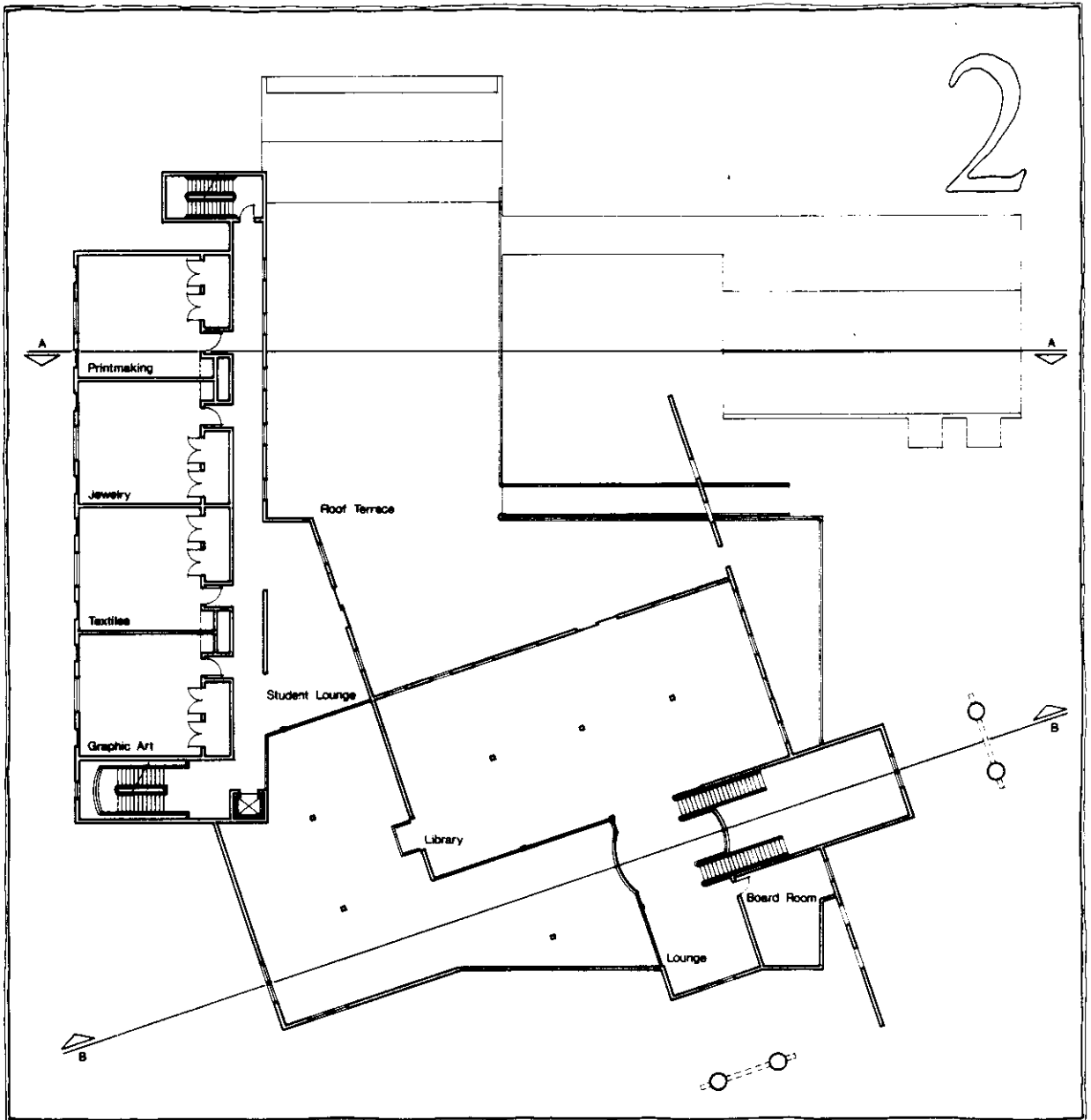
MECHANICAL FLOOR PLAN



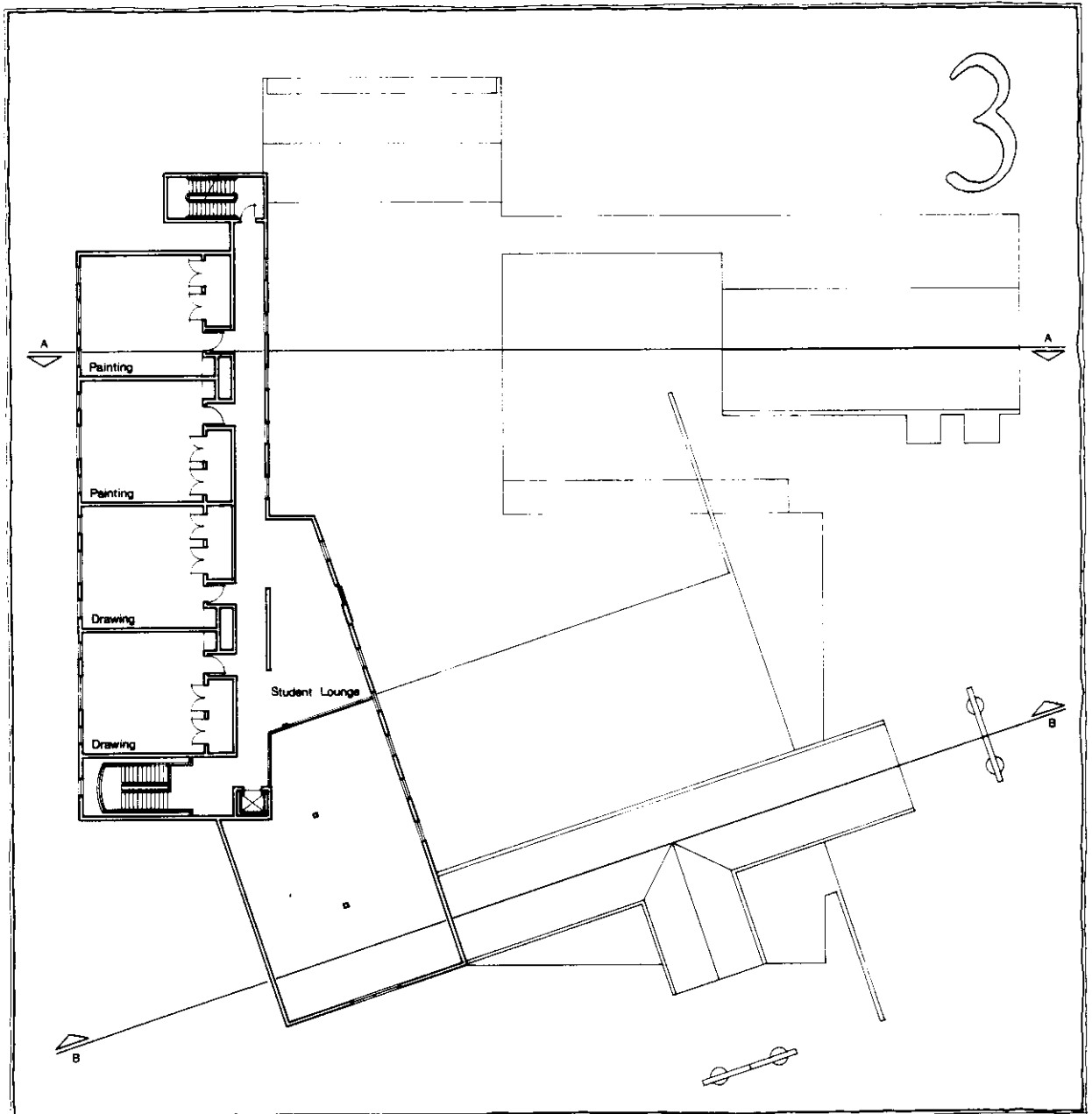
FIRST FLOOR PLAN



SECOND FLOOR PLAN



THIRD FLOOR PLAN



NORTH & SOUTH ELEVATIONS

EAST & WEST ELEVATIONS

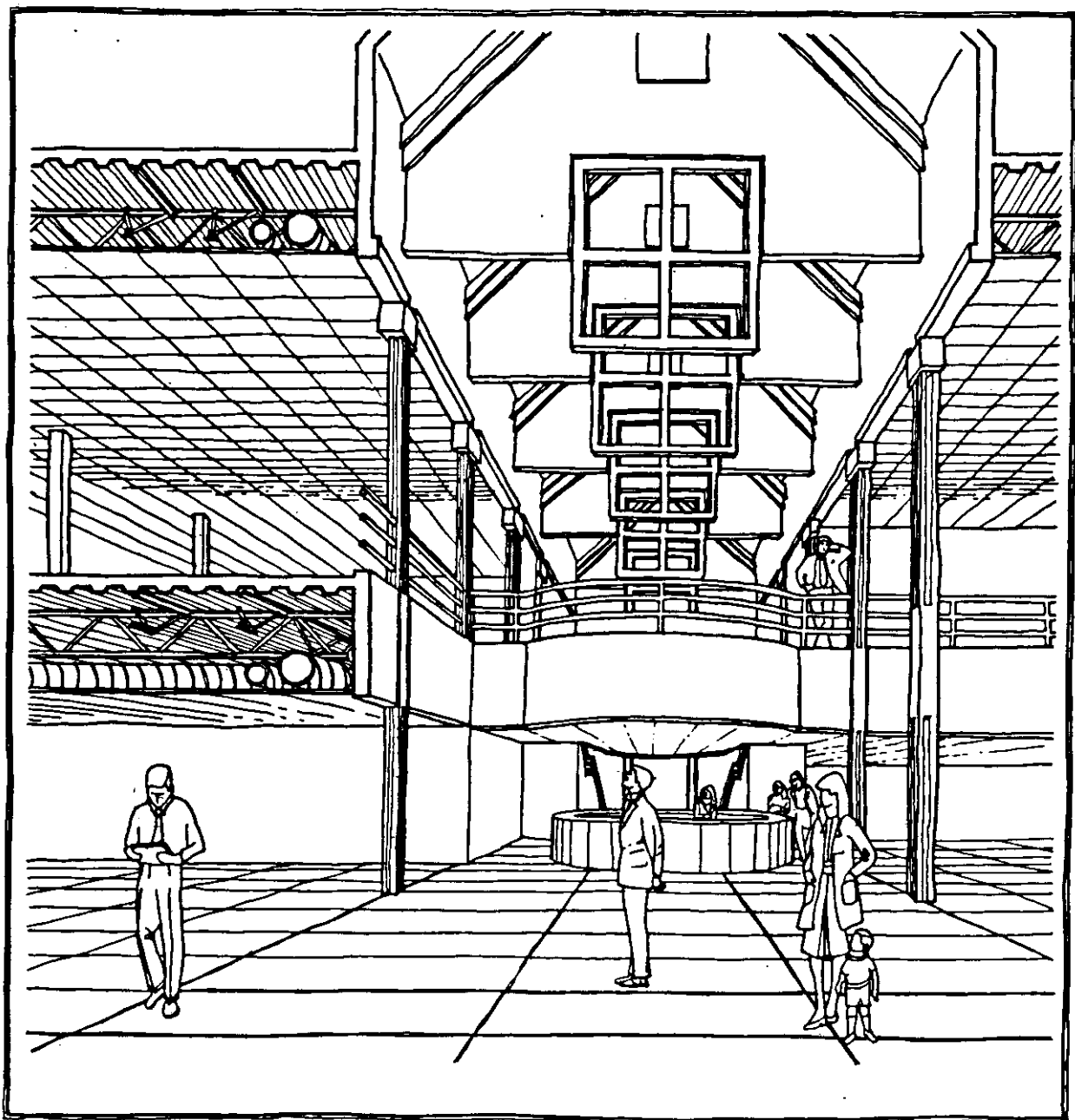
SECTIONS

SITE PLAN

ENTRY PERSPECTIVE

MERIDIAN STREET PERSPECTIVE

INTERIOR PERSPECTIVE



COLUMN/PARTITION DETAIL

