

Williston Kepler

WillistonAKepler@gmail.com
415.408.1706
WillKepler.com

Selected Works

Malibu Ocean Front Overlay Zone
Plinthcore
Audioteca
Regent Street Remodel
Assorted Furniture



at a glance:

Williston Kepler is a designer based in Northern California focusing on Architecture and Furniture with an interest in writing.

education

Cal Poly San Luis Obispo - 2023

recognition

Received the Henry Adams Medal from Cal Poly - 2023

Thesis Award - 2023

Best in Show - 2021

currently

designer at Manual Labor - an Architecture and Furniture studio in Berkeley, California.

SELECTED WORKS

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| 3. Audioteca | <i>18-25</i> |
| 4. Regent Street Remodel | <i>26-29</i> |
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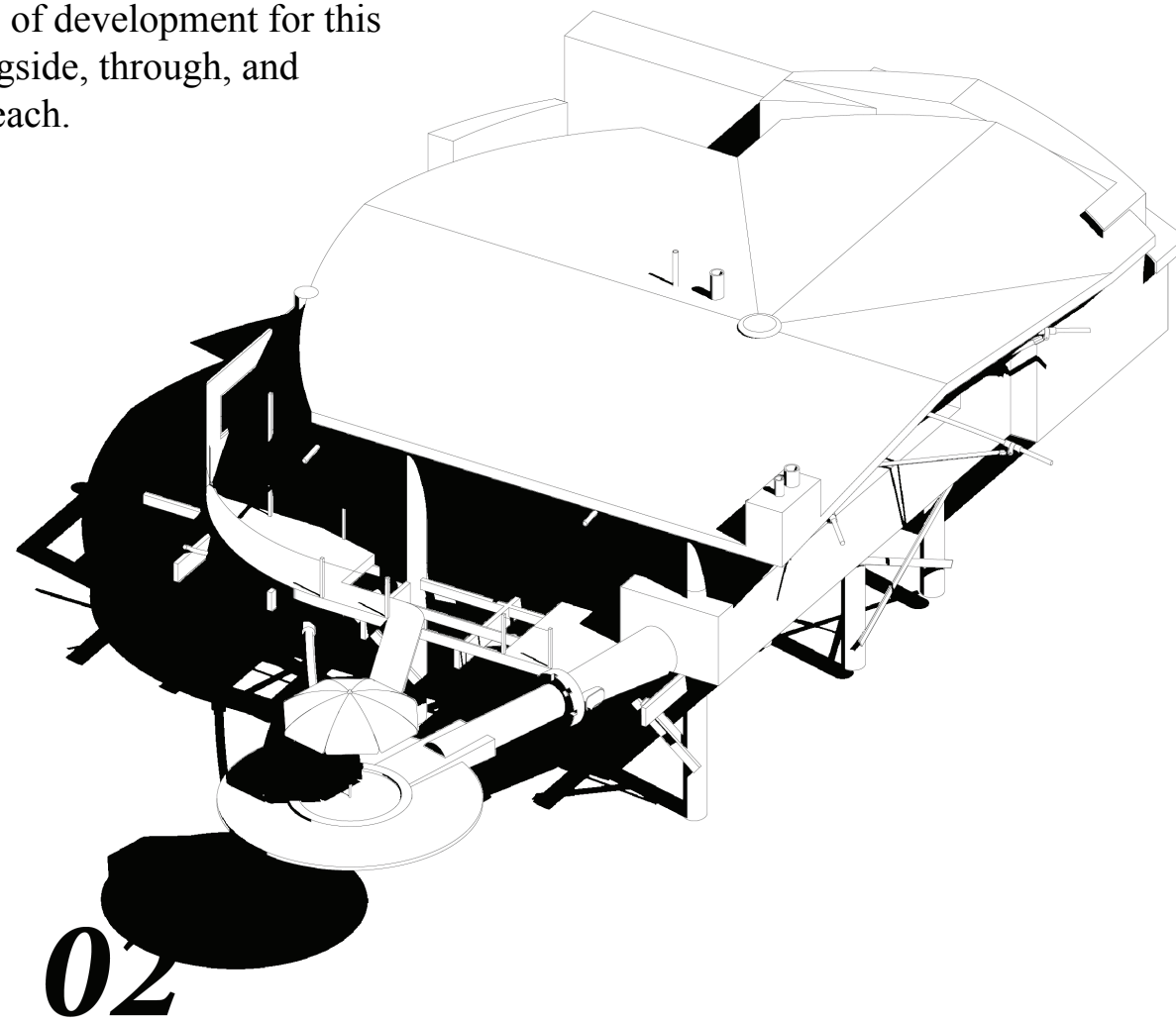
MALIBU OCEAN FRONT OVERLAY ZONE

The beach is broadly viewed as a public, democratic, space for relaxation. For many groups throughout history, however, the beach has been a site of violence, resistance, and segregation. Systems of control such as zoning, building code, redlining, restrictive covenants, and physical boundaries are embodied in the built forms of seaside dwellings - attempting to isolate transient, ephemeral public spaces through absurdly fixed formal and programmatic barricades.

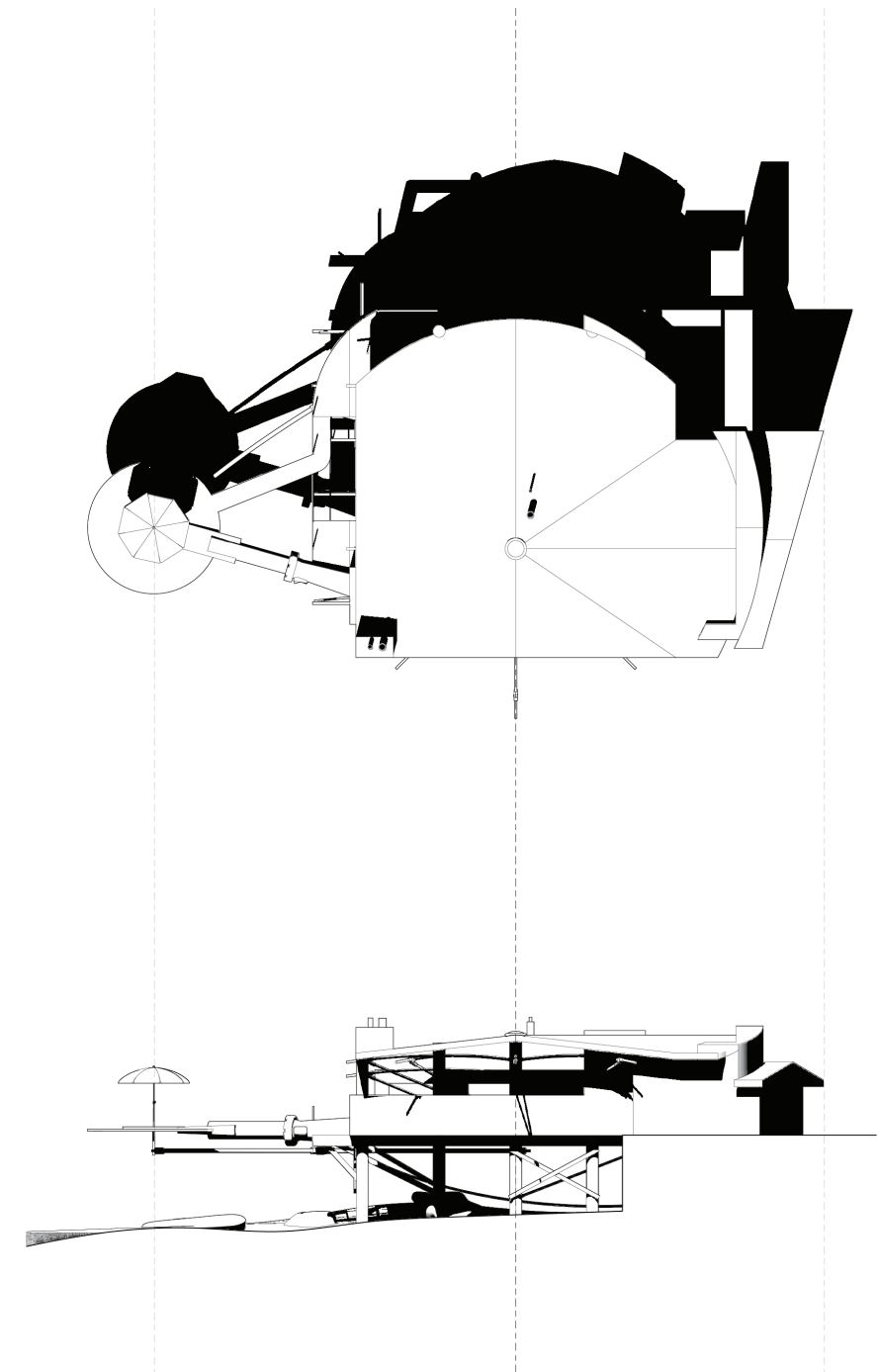
This thesis proposes a new overlay zone in Malibu California, utilizing the ideas of posture, form, and stance to create a new type of development for this unique condition, creating engaging public space alongside, through, and interwoven with private residences along the public beach.

Not unlike the way placing an umbrella in the sand creates an unspoken space beyond the shade under the canopy, private residences claim far more than their physical footprint as their own when abutting public spaces.

My discussion (*perhaps fascination*) surrounding the beach umbrella aims to highlight a mundane artifact and introduce the topics and the site this thesis investigates. While umbrellas are far more simplistic than buildings, for many reasons, it is important to recognize the broad impacts of claiming a point and what kinds of spaces experience an umbra of privacy beneath, around, or within several miles of the site of action.



Recognition_
Cal Poly Thesis Award

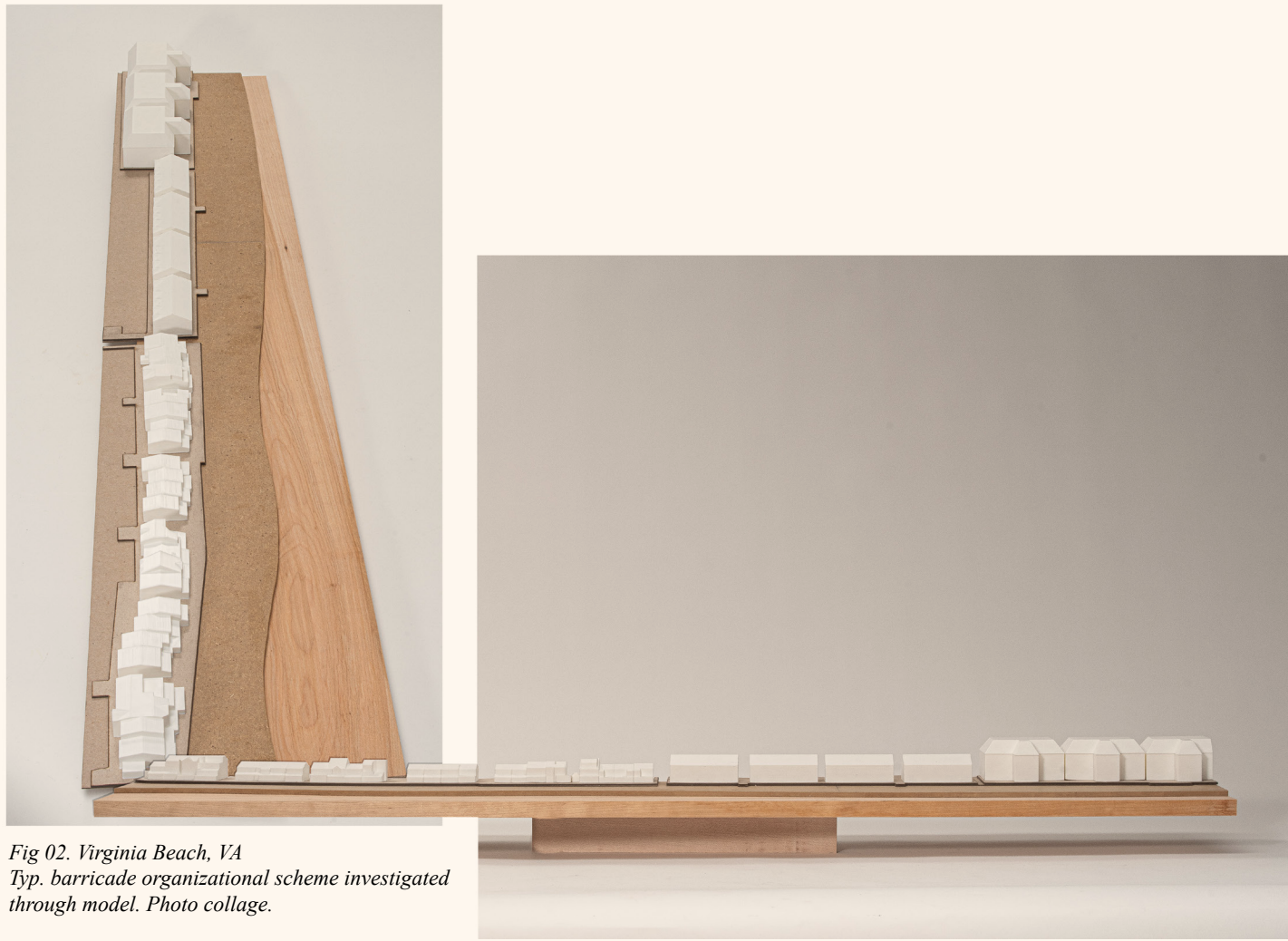


Umbrella House #2 - digital form collage w/ target beach umbrella parts and someones very fancy home.



Aggressive exclusionism is evident in the stance of coastal architecture. Beach homes stand tall with their backs facing the street, firmly on the ground, arms crossed, creating a barricade. In order to imagine a future where beaches are inclusive and accessible we must reimagine the way architecture positions itself into a more relaxed, beachy stance. Joseph Altschuler, in his work surrounding architectural companionship, asserts we can learn a lot about the way design impacts our world by flipping our typical subject-object relationship - considering built work as an architectural subject that has an impact upon human objects.

Fig 01. studying and documenting stance and posture through modeling selected specimens.

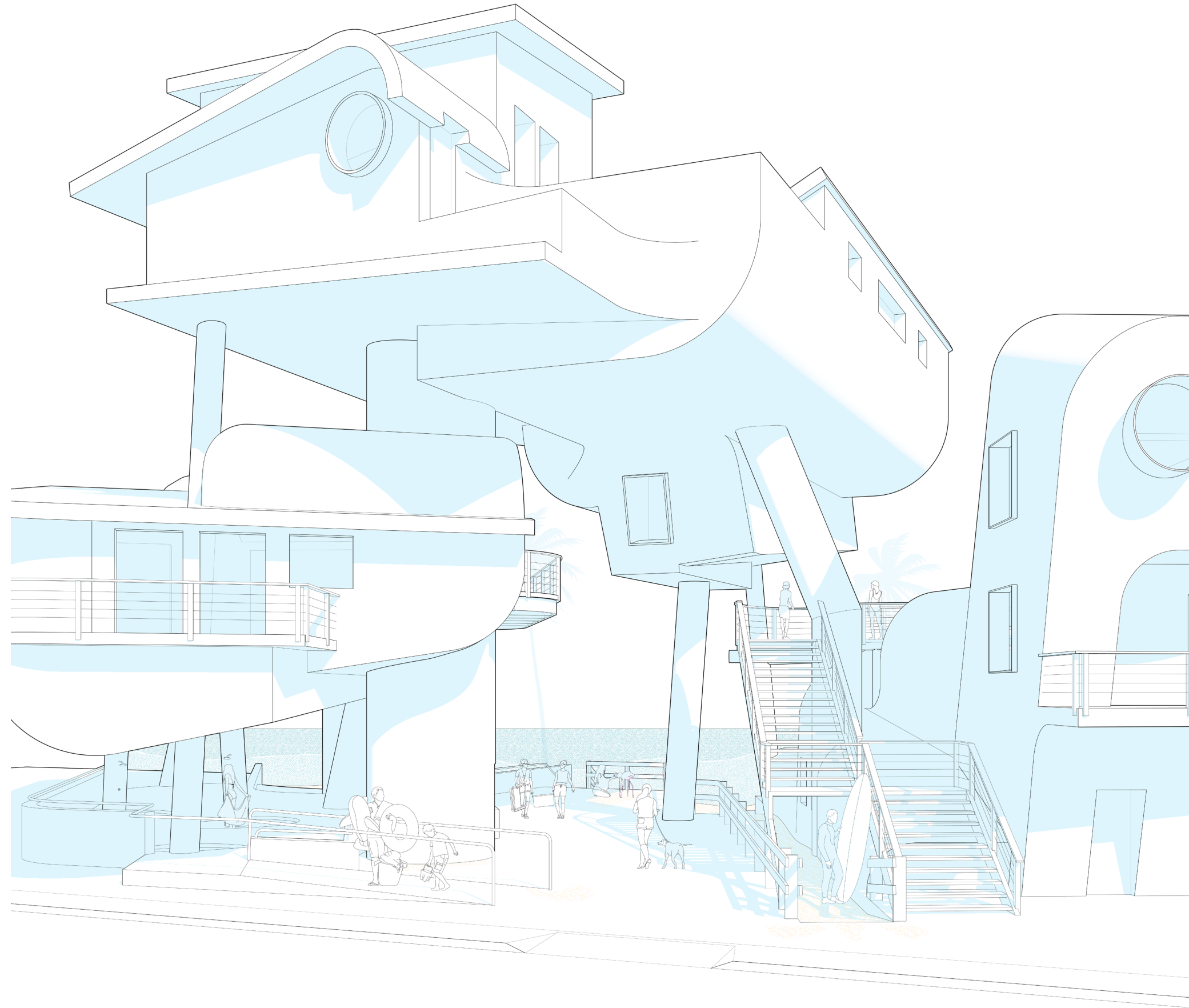


*Fig 02. Virginia Beach, VA
Typ. barricade organizational scheme investigated through model. Photo collage.*



3.4.1_Malibu Ocean Front Overlay Zone.

1. Sectional Public Right Of Way
 - a. Beachfront properties may be subject to Malibu City Local Coastal Ordinance 42.03.02c. 30% of site area at grade or 40% above 12ft must be left empty and available for purchase as an “over/under structure sectional easement” by the city. See 42.03 exhibit a. Public walkways and amenity spaces will be constructed by the city in these conditions.
3. Garage Doors.
 - a. Garages and driveways are not permitted. Raised comunal parking pads will be constructed and allotted for residences by the city (see MCLCO 42.03.02c).
4. Folding and Bending.
 - a. Residences shall not have straight continuous walls of a length more than 60% of the allowable buildable length. This also applied to walls running parallel with a jog in or out of less than 6 ft. Continuous surfaces must be broken with a bend or curve.
6. Super Legs
 - a. The structure shall perch on the site with long spindly legs. These legs may be shared between structures above, below, or beside (see Aggregation).
 - i. Each leg shall be no wider than 10% of the site’s maximum width at a maximum of 6ft unless applying for variance 3.d for a lift accessed structure.
 - b. No Residence or Structure, including satellite dish antenna, shall exceed 48 feet for a flat roof and 52 feet for a pitched roof if 90% of the site surface area is maintained as open space up to 20 ft above sidewalk grade measured at the lowest protrusion.
 - c. Tilt. Legs beyond 8 ft in length must be splayed or bent beyond 10° for more than 30% of their length. See figure 03.1.
 - d. Legs may exceed the 10% site width maximum and ignore the tilt minimum in order to accommodate a lift for residence access. They shall not exceed 8 ft in diameter. These “oversized legs” may be shared like the other legs between residences in order to minimize street-level impact and cost.
7. Predominant Seaward Area.
 - a. The “predominant seaward area” shall be that portion of a structure closest to and/or facing the ocean, which has an area (i.e., the surface which is facing sand and water).
 - b. Residences in the MOFO zone shall have a predominant seaward projection of at least 150% the typical frontage area, as described as (the lot maximum width x allowed height). See article 7.08.4a “Folding and Bending”.
 - c. MCLCO 42.03.02c conditions use the reduced site footprint to determine the required area.



The code itself is broken down into 9 sections, creating new regulations from public amenity easements and legs to garage doors and fenestration.

The language was derived from a series of translations (*not shown*). Beginning with text descriptions of beachy postures and creatures. That language was then placed in a blender and applied to architectural forms, before translation back into dry, codified language.

You might find something vaguely sexy, plover-like, loungy or sealion-esc about these odd massing outcomes.

*Exerpt for portfolio purposes. For complete language please refer to your local AHJ for municipal code information

The creation of an overlay zone for this condition is not only a way to reshape the way we develop within it, but also acknowledges it as a distinctly different condition than a standard suburban street. Acceptable activities, clothing, and behavior are entirely different from the sand to the city - why would we treat that threshold the same as any other urban development?



In Iman Fayyad’s publication, “On Flatness: The Virtual Turn,” she explains that when we represent architecture in a flat manner we lose information, intentionally obscuring information from the viewer. When we manifest flatness in built work, beyond it being a limitation of our representational tools, we force a building to be experienced in only one way at only one time, excluding non-residents from any sort of engagement with the space between the beach and the street. The current organization of beach houses has created a flattened condition, reflecting the values of the residents - privacy and exclusion - denying information of what is in-between or beyond.



A big ole model - demonstrating potential conditions created in the MOFO Zone.

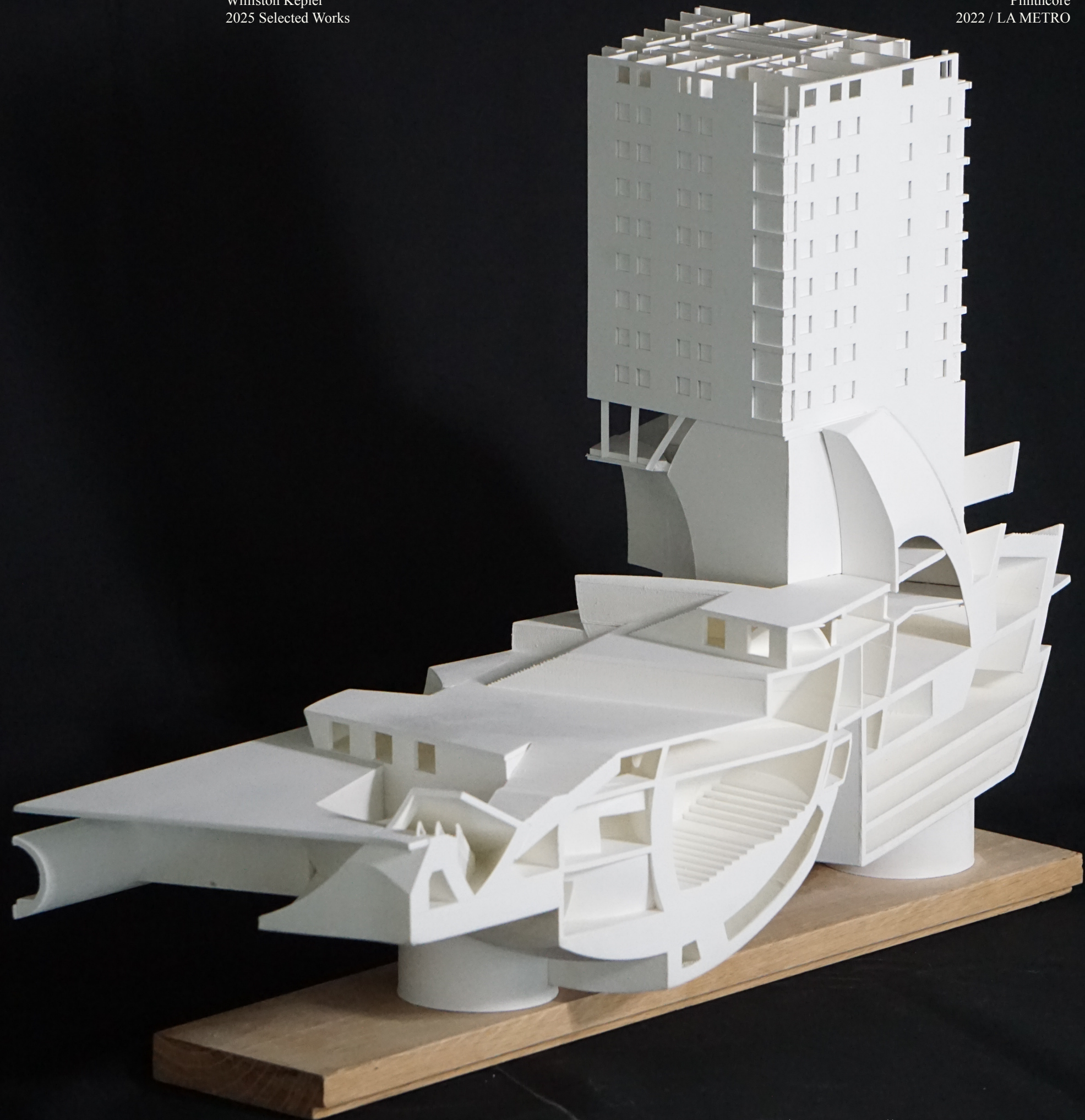
"SUPER LEGS" table held the model and book for exhibit.

PLINTHCORE

Growing from the collisions of many spheres, this 1.2 million square foot mixed use behemoth critiques and offers alternative ideas to the (real) proposed housing development above the Westlake / MacArthur Metro Station in Los Angeles, California.

I struggled immensely with this project. Early, purely formal studies were expected to be called upon to create a “housing” project on this sensitive site. The existing plaza is the home of informal open air markets formed by a distinct blend of Latin American and Korean communities who largely represent the residents in the surrounding neighborhood. I frankly disagreed with the given program scale, and location of prompt our studio was given in any form. The entire studio created massive alienating objects in a neighborhood that necessitates a far less gargantuan approach.

That being said - I have placed it in my selected works. I took it as an opportunity to explore my own limits of sculptural form, spatial organization, and programatic head scratchery. Even the act of revisiting the project to lay it out here was a nice moment to look back on this project and continue to formulate opinions about the process and experience at Cal Poly’s LA METRO program.



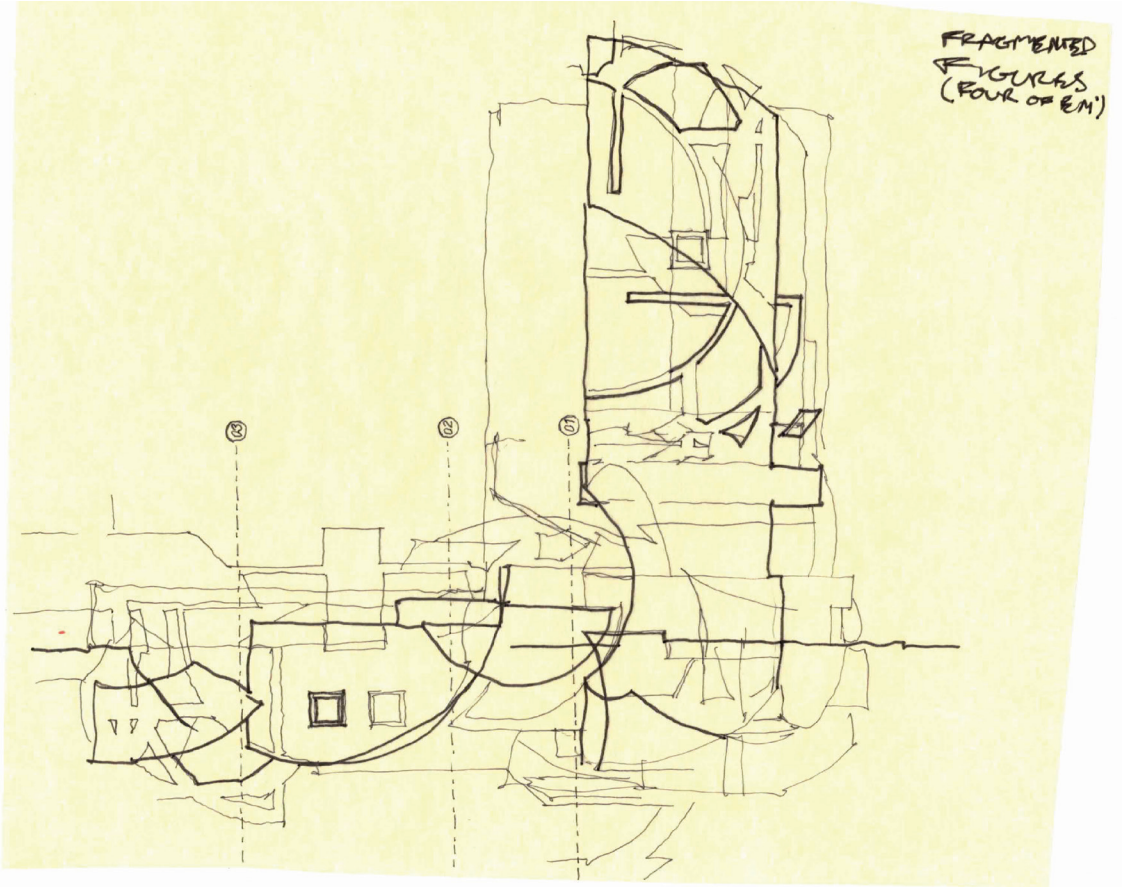


Fig 01. Early Sketch - Geometric Collage



Fig 02. Metro, theater, parking, plaza collision in chunk

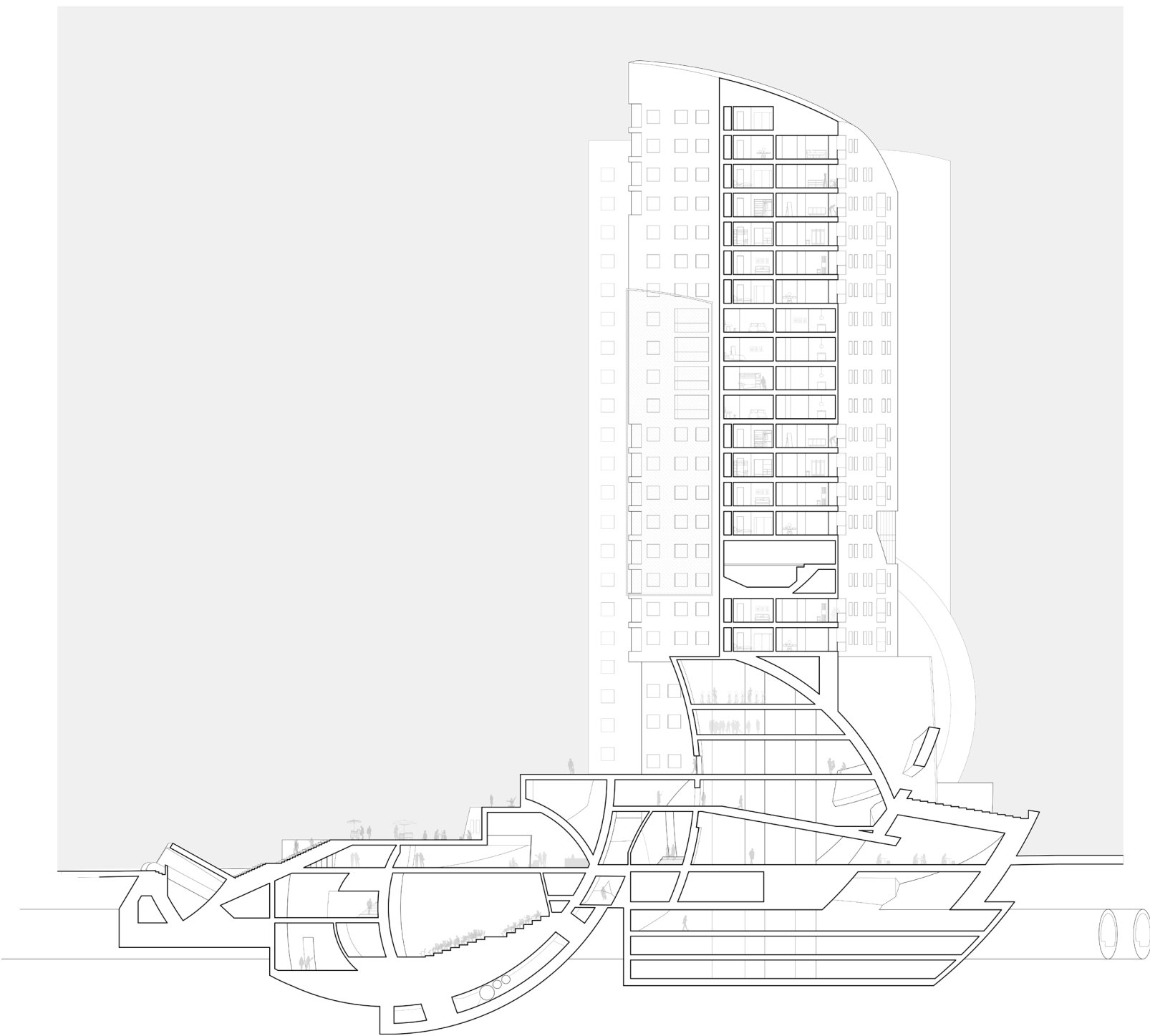
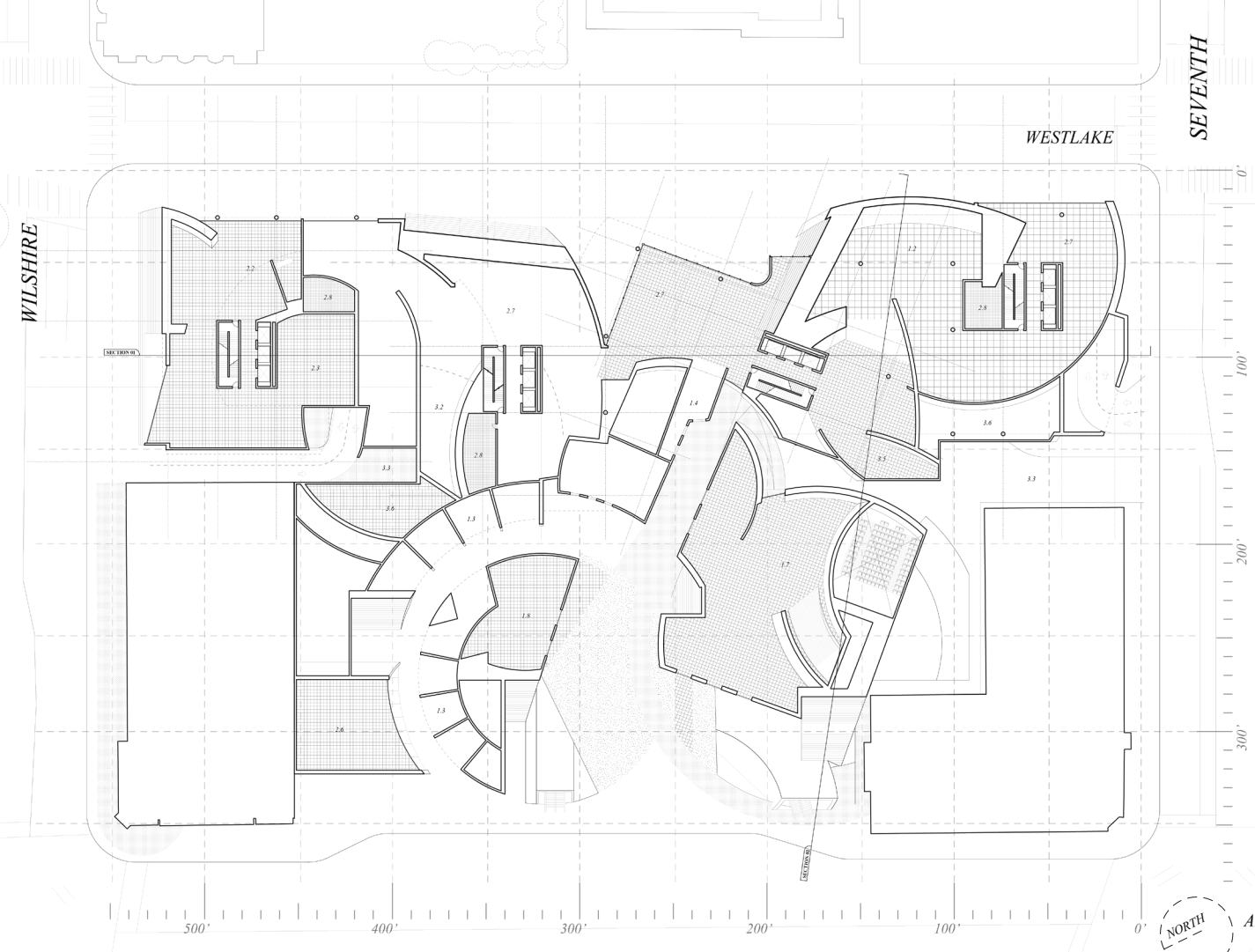
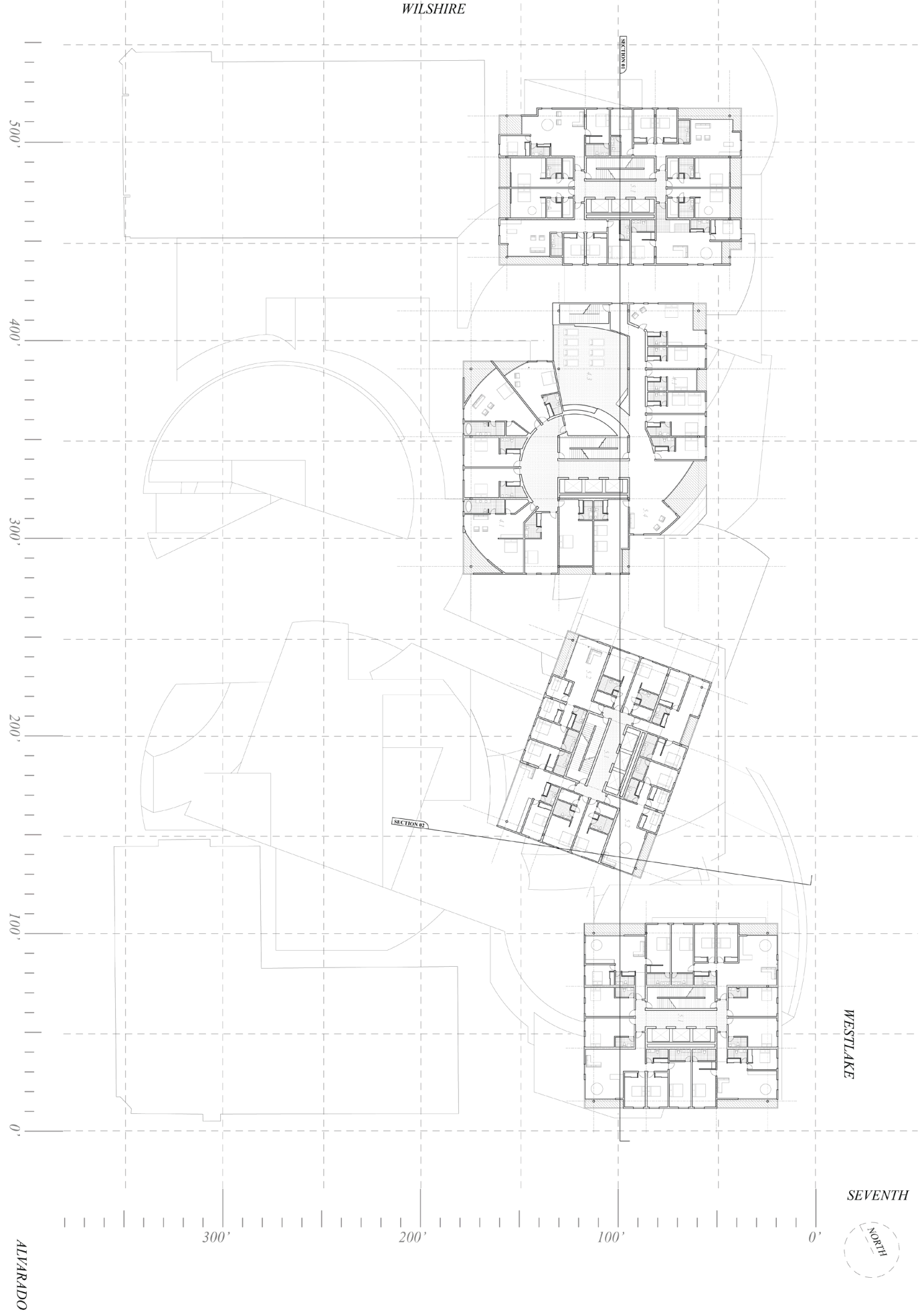


Fig 03. Transverse section. Highlighting the folding and cascading of many plinths. They work on a gradient from site and plaza, up to private residential programs organized around central cores.



- Program**
- 1 Commercial
 - 1.1 non-profit offices
 - 1.2 coffee shop
 - 1.3 local stalls
 - 1.4 yoga studio
 - 1.5 hip and cool bar
 - 1.6 co-work space
 - 1.7 "cinplex"
 - 1.8 Pizzeria Salvadoreno
 - 2 Services+public works
 - 2.1 metro station
 - 2.2 health clinic
 - 2.3 social services office
 - 2.4 public baths
 - 2.5 sound bath
 - 2.6 community event space
 - 2.7 Lobby
 - 2.8 Public Restrooms
 - 3 Logistics
 - 3.1 Custodial Storage
 - 3.2 Mail Room
 - 3.3 Loading
 - 3.4 Parking
 - 3.5 Resident Storage
 - 3.6 Mechanical
 - 4 Hotel
 - 4.1 boutique hotel
 - 4.2 transitory hotel
 - 4.3 Recreation
 - 5 HOUSING
 - 5.1 mkrt + affordable housing
 - 5.2 transitional family units
 - 5.3 CoLiving
 - 5.4 Communal Space
 - 5.5 Laundry

18th Floor (STANDARD UNITS)



Ground Floor + PLAZA

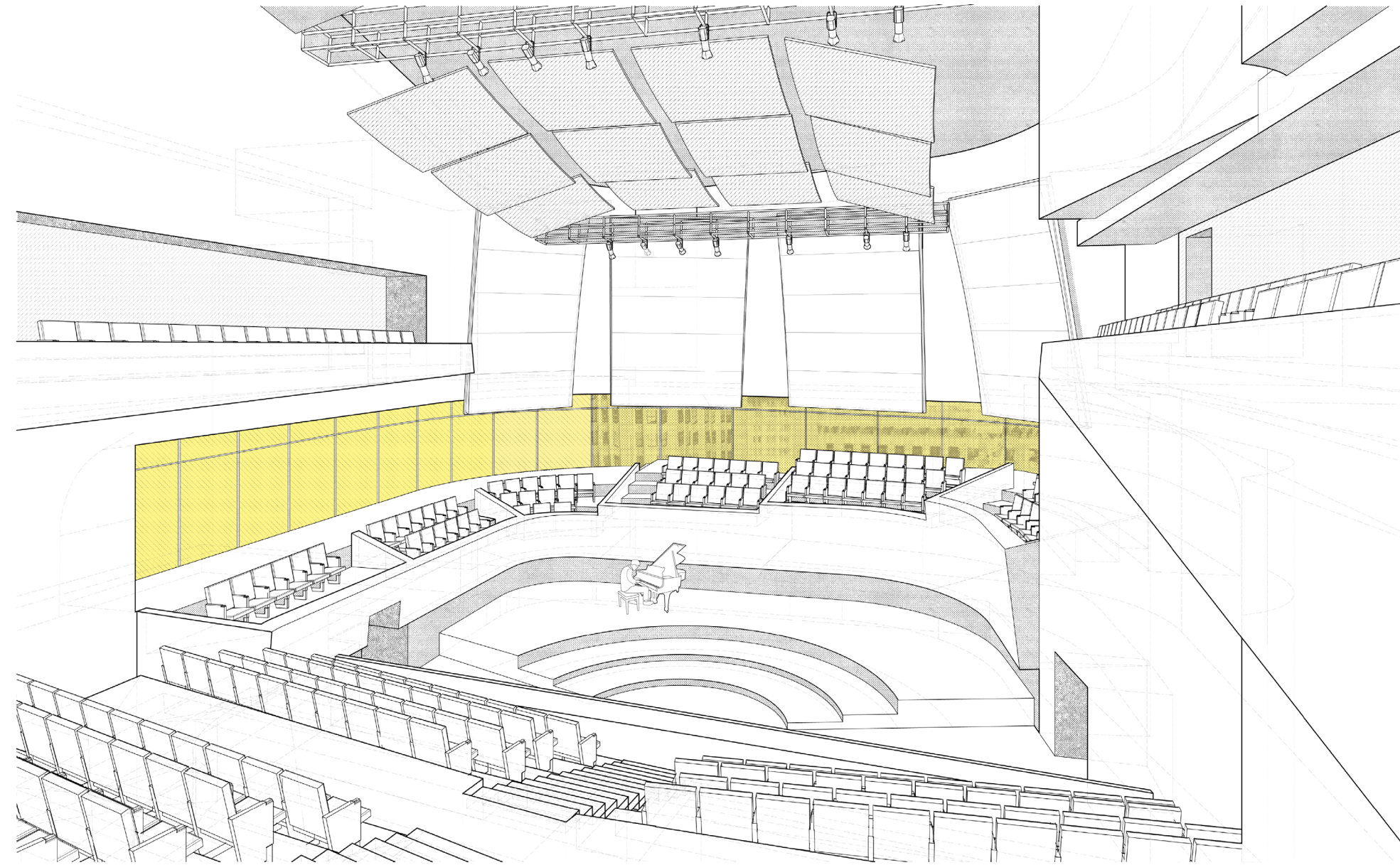
AUDIOTECA

The Audioteca is a public un-library. It serves as a transit hub as well as a performance and audio center for the city of Los Angeles. Contrasting a traditional library, the Audioteca is meant to be filled with noise and movement. It is imagined as an instrument of the urban soundscape; blending local performance with the screech of the metro train, begging a hurried commuter to take a second to stop and listen.

Located directly south of Pershing Square, it responds to the newly proposed landscaped version of the square by fronting the street with performance spaces, public services and passageways of exploration. It holds on its more intimate and less flashy program in a slablike backboard of mass for individuals seeking resources in recording, listening, or discovering. The central core is held open with a large atrium that gathers noises, sounds and light, bringing users up from the metro and encouraging visitors to engage with the space around them.

Recognition_
Launch Pad - BEST IN SHOW

this project was completed in a close partnership with Aidan Mahony.
in our makeshift covid sunroom studio on murray street.



Roy Donk Symphony Hall, 4th floor
a young man sound checks before his first solo performance later that evening.

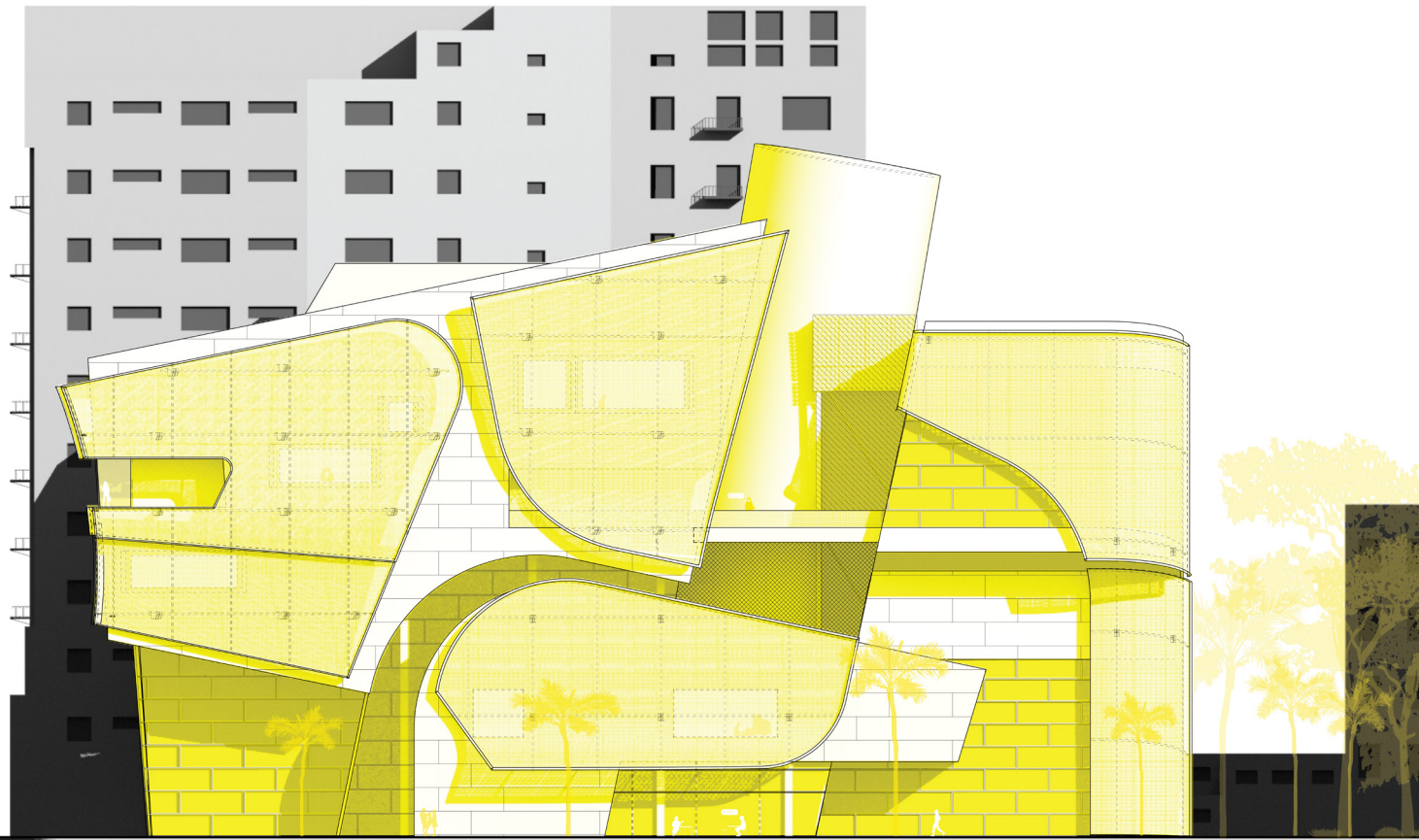


Fig 01. North Elevation towards Pershing Square. Masses and light controlling screens compose a variety of spaces - inviting visitors to explore within and between the variety of program types. see fig 03.

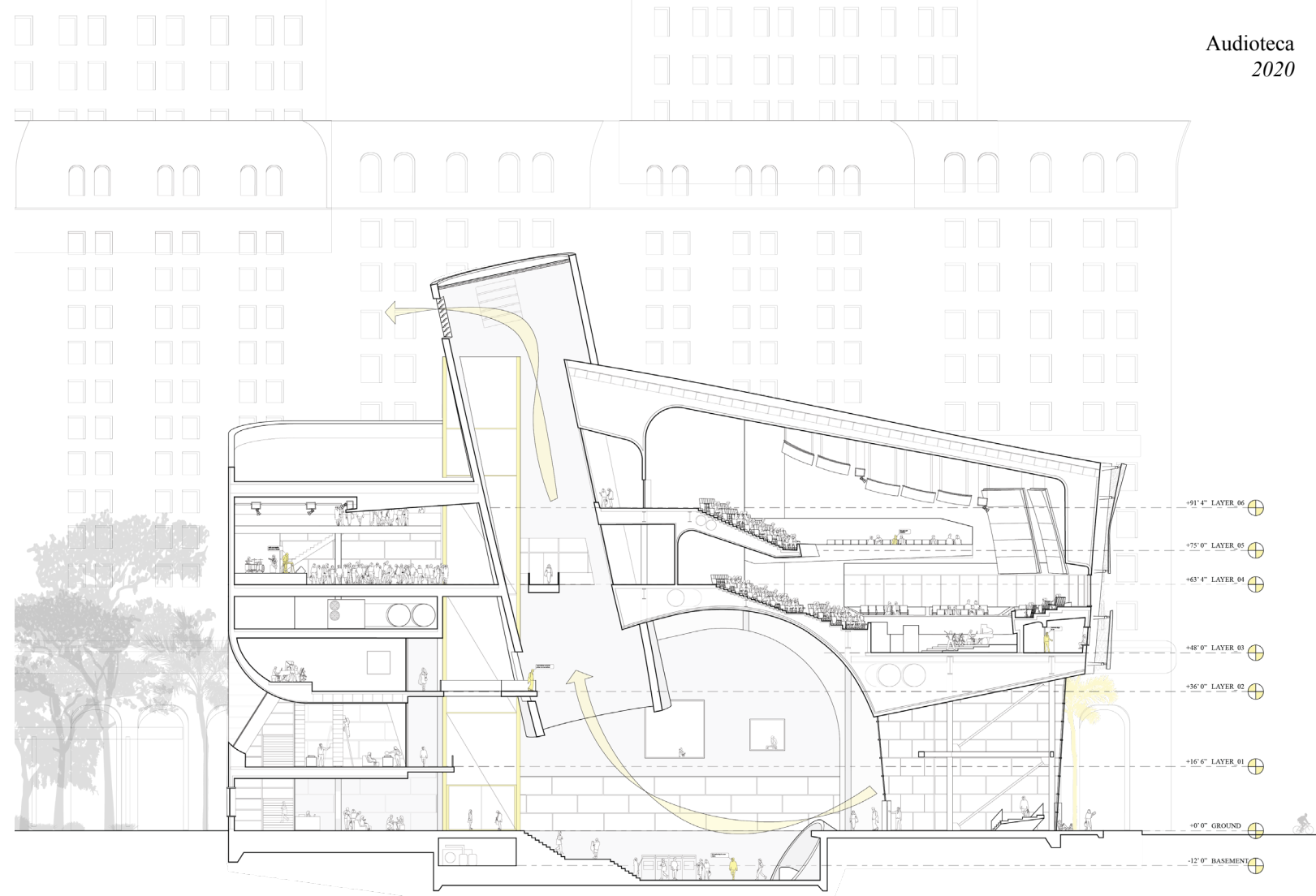


Fig 02. The longitudinal section highlights the masses surrounding the central void. The snorkel creates an atrium for ventilation and circulation, and the symphony rests elevated above a lobby and entrance.

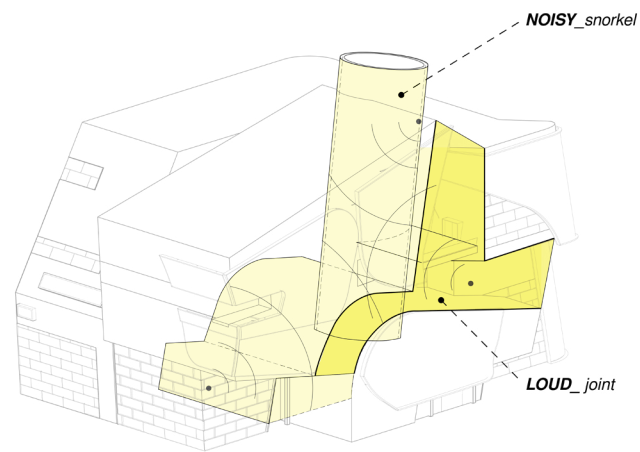


Fig 03. Noise. Sounds from sources leaks into the voids of acoustic breaks, filling the Audioteca with life.

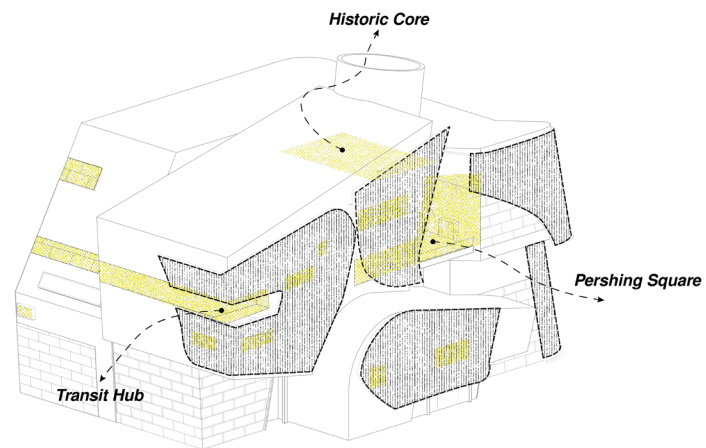


Fig 04. Feedback. The Audioteca aims to look out instead of in, connecting performance back to Los Angeles.

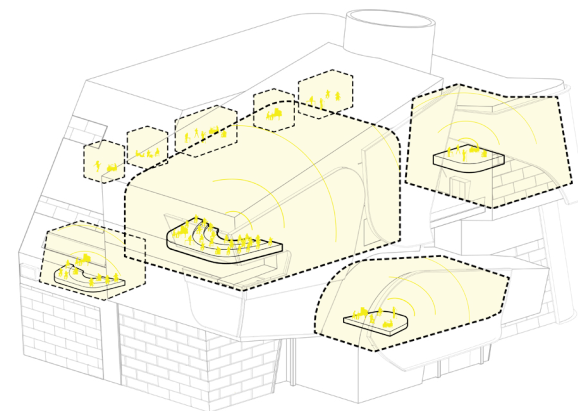


Fig 05. Source. Performance spaces are isolated tuned spaces that act as the source for noise and discovery

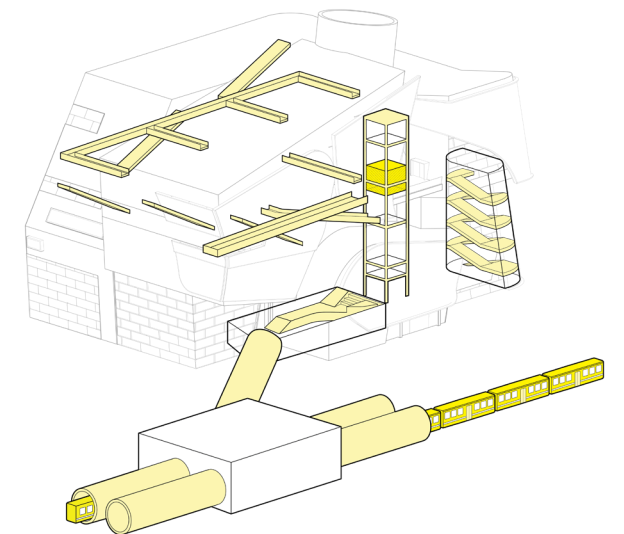


Fig 06. Circulation bobs and weaves through the un-library, taking visitors on a journey to discover new sounds

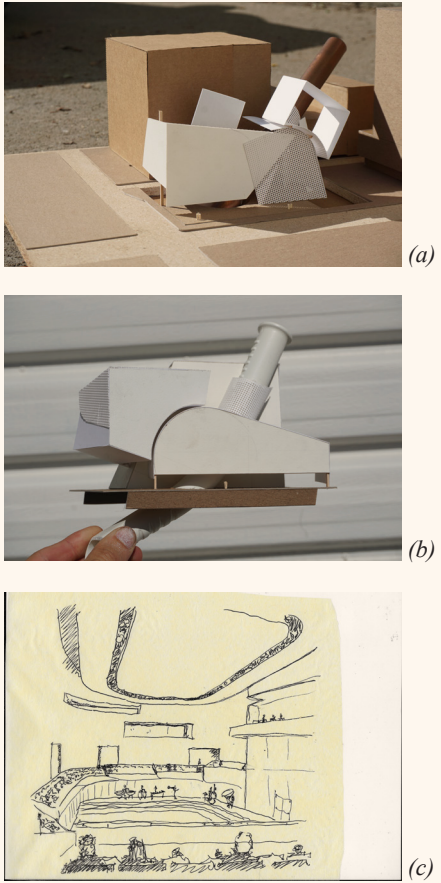


Figure 02 - Process Thumbnails. (a) shows a generative massing study model. (b) is the snorkel model. (c) is an early symphony development sketch on trace

Figure 01 - chunk model. Taking on where the symphony hall back of house meets exterior walkways, picture windows, rainscreen systems as well as an exterior perforated panel system on outriggers. see detail wall section.

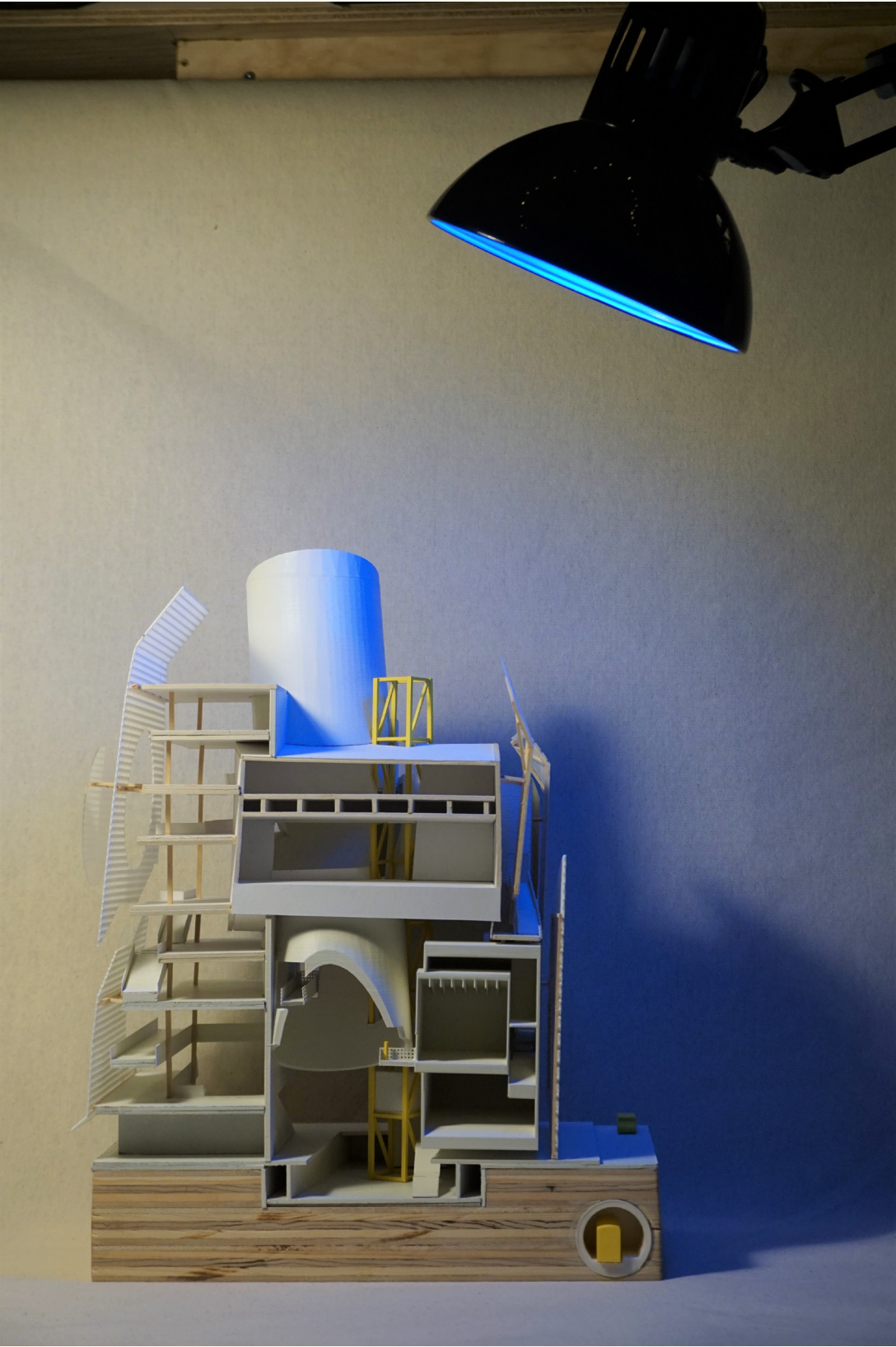
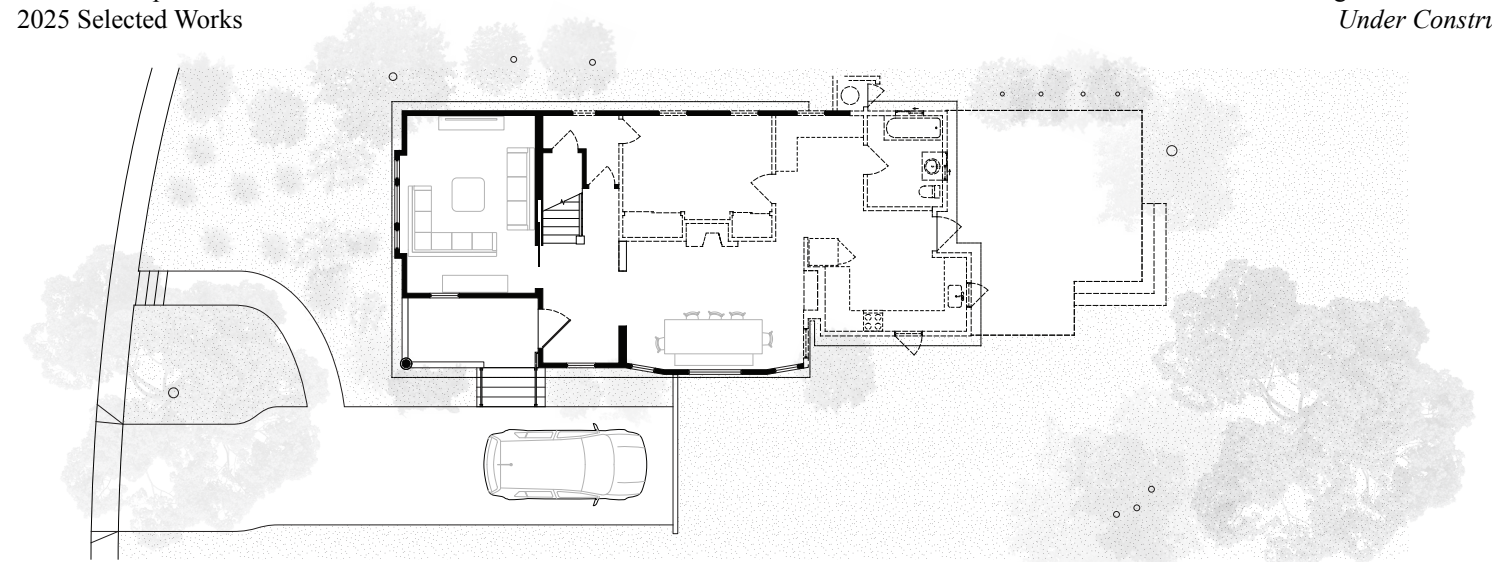


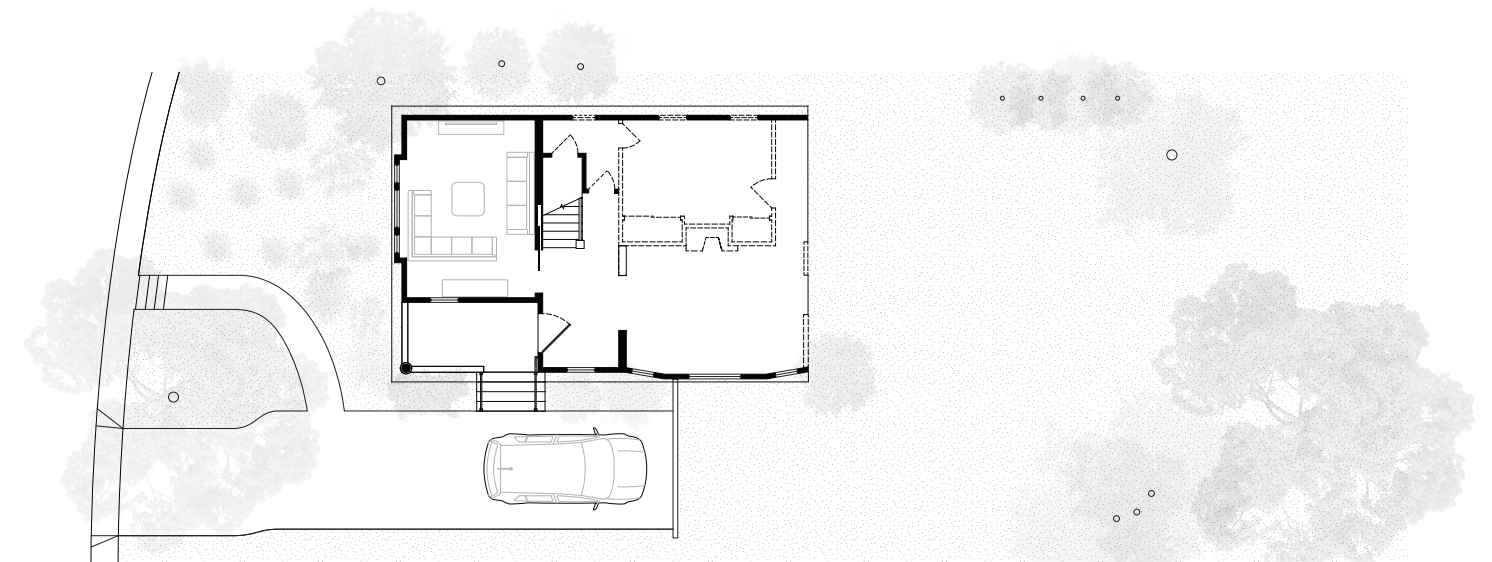
Figure 03 - chunk model. a deli slice right through the core of the project allowed us to study, chop up, glue back together the "floating" masses and the spaces and cracks between them.

REGENT STREET REMODEL

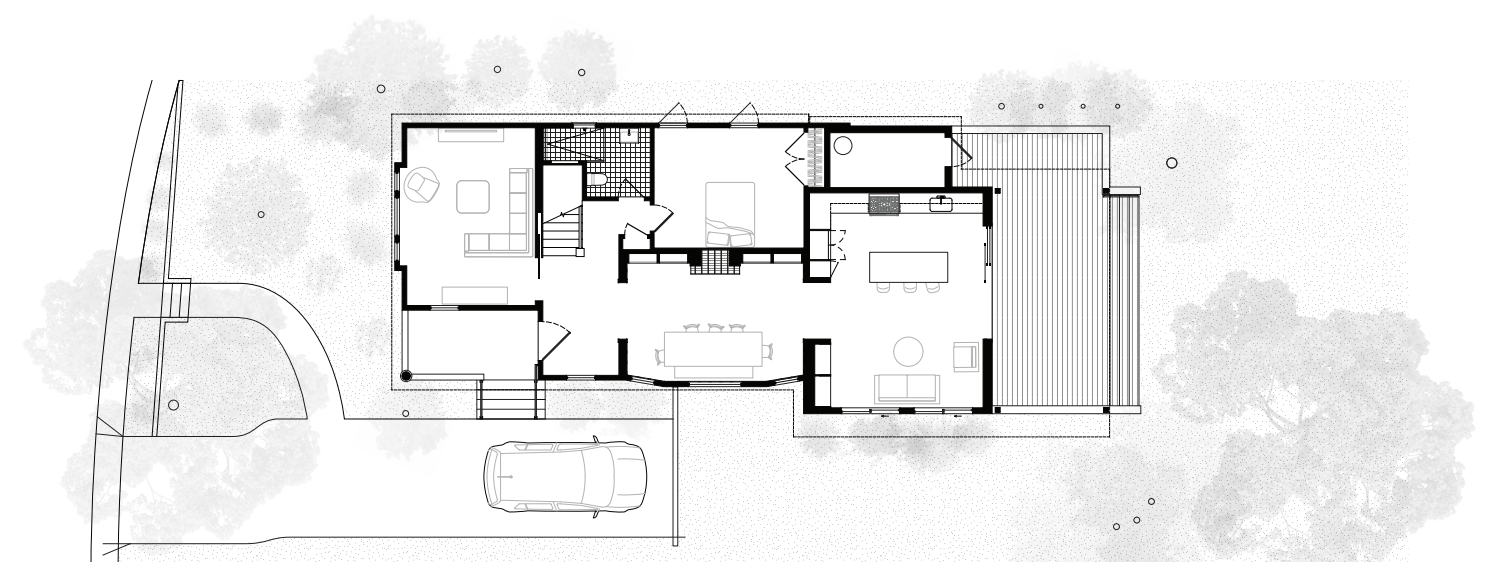
A remodel and addition onto a 1908 construction home in Berkeley California with a long history of slapdash renovations. Completed while at Manual Labor. I am the only designer in the Northern California office under Joseph Perez-Green - the founding principal. I was given a huge amount of trust and space to take on new challenges and responsibilities on this project as the only drafter and designer.



Existing - 1990s-ish addition to 1908 Craftsman



DEMO - Remove (E) 90's era addition and coal burning fire place/chimney



New addition - Contemporary kitchen / living space w/ large covered deck.

nerdy, but significant moments included gaining an understanding of plan check processes, being sent to an onsite OAC meeting alone, a simple clever solution to a foundation vent conundrum onsite, etc.

ASSORTED FURNITURE

Handcrafted objects, and the processes of making them, have always infatuated me. My primary focus is on architecture and design, but I believe that a deep understanding of fabrication and a connection to the act of making is essential. My work sample would not be complete without a few objects I made with my own hands.

FABRICATED AT
Manual Labor, Berkeley, California

This practice forces me to question why something should be put together any which way. Is it because it's the fastest way, or the most beautiful and bull headed way? Having to execute every small detail brings into hyper focus the realities of every seemingly insignificant round over or joint we may have the privilege to ignore, assuming someone more practiced and wise than ourselves will figure it out. I contend that generating shop drawings for personal use is perhaps the most effective method for learning to convey design intent. Without the luxury of simply returning to your computer to modify your Rhino model, will the final product align with your expectations? The experience of shifting perspectives to the fabrication side has been an invaluable opportunity for reflection and growth.



A round table with a 1/4" dish cut into the top. 31 hours of sanding (not shown).

DONUT TABLE

While it may not have a hole in the center of it - this 36" round Monterey Pine table's defining feature is its ring like edge profile. Grab it in rage when you're loosing a game of dominos - or grab a straw to slurp up the red wine that didn't end up on your white pants.

Designed and Built in the Manual Labor shop after hours By Williston Kepler. CNC milling program run by Devin Farrell



HOLCOMB STOOL

What began as a “simple request” from my mother for a vanity / bath stool - turned into a longer than anticipated design and fabrication process. Created entirely from white oak scaps found around the shop, this stool is as much informed by the stock at hand as it is a stylistic expression.

Inspired by contemporary forms it retains just enough oaky old time flaire to fit into a craftsman home nestled in the redwoods in Larkspur, CA.

Designed and Built in the Manual Labor shop after hours by Williston Kepler.

