FREMONTWORKS: AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE SPACE BETWEEN
ARCHITECTURE AND URBAN INFRASTRUCTURE

by

GEORGE ALEXANDER PERCY

B.A., The University of British Columbia, 1988

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF

THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARCHITECTURE

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

School of Architecture

We accept this thesis as conforming to the required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

May 1997

In presenting this thesis in partial fulfilment of the requirements for an advanced degree at the University of British Columbia, I agree that the Library shall make it freely available for reference and study. I further agree that permission for extensive copying of this thesis for scholarly purposes may be granted by the head of my department or by his or her representatives. It is understood that copying or publication of this thesis for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Department of SCHOOL of ARCHITECTURE

The University of British Columbia
Vancouver, Canada

Date MAY 12, 97

ABSTRACT

The thesis has evolved into a search for a spatial construction that lies at the juncture of two types of spatial articulation: architecture and urban infrastructure. In the case of the North American city, built infrastructure has become the accepted background to the urban condition, sublimating itself almost invisibly into the consciousness of our everyday experience. Ed Ruscha, describing the gloss of its homogenizing effect, used the term 'visual noise.' This thesis seeks to understand infrastructure not merely as a by-product of the built city - mere systems of service or as the common language of repeatable structures - but as a productive apparatus that mediates space. Understood in this way, the physical infrastructure of the city has the capacity to both produce new types of space and re-territorialize already existing conditions of space. These operations work in several ways, and at various scales. First, the making of infrastructure is motivated by a need to establish physical connections within the city. This has a two-fold effect: it both delimits new boundaries and configures radical new contiguities, impressing a new language of *difference* into the urban landscape, based on a logic of connectivity. Second, the making of infrastructures aggressively alters the physical shape of the city, catalyzing our thinking about the artificial and constructed conditions of 'ground' within the morphology of the city - the conditions of above, beneath, beside, on top and so on that form the physical surfaces of the city. Finally, if infrastructure can be understood as a language of difference, its syntax becomes the important measure in defining difference - columns, retaining walls, lamp-standards, handrails, bollards, telephone poles, signage all begin to assert territorial allegiances.
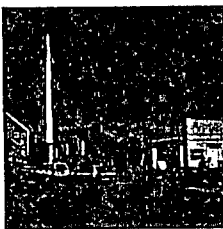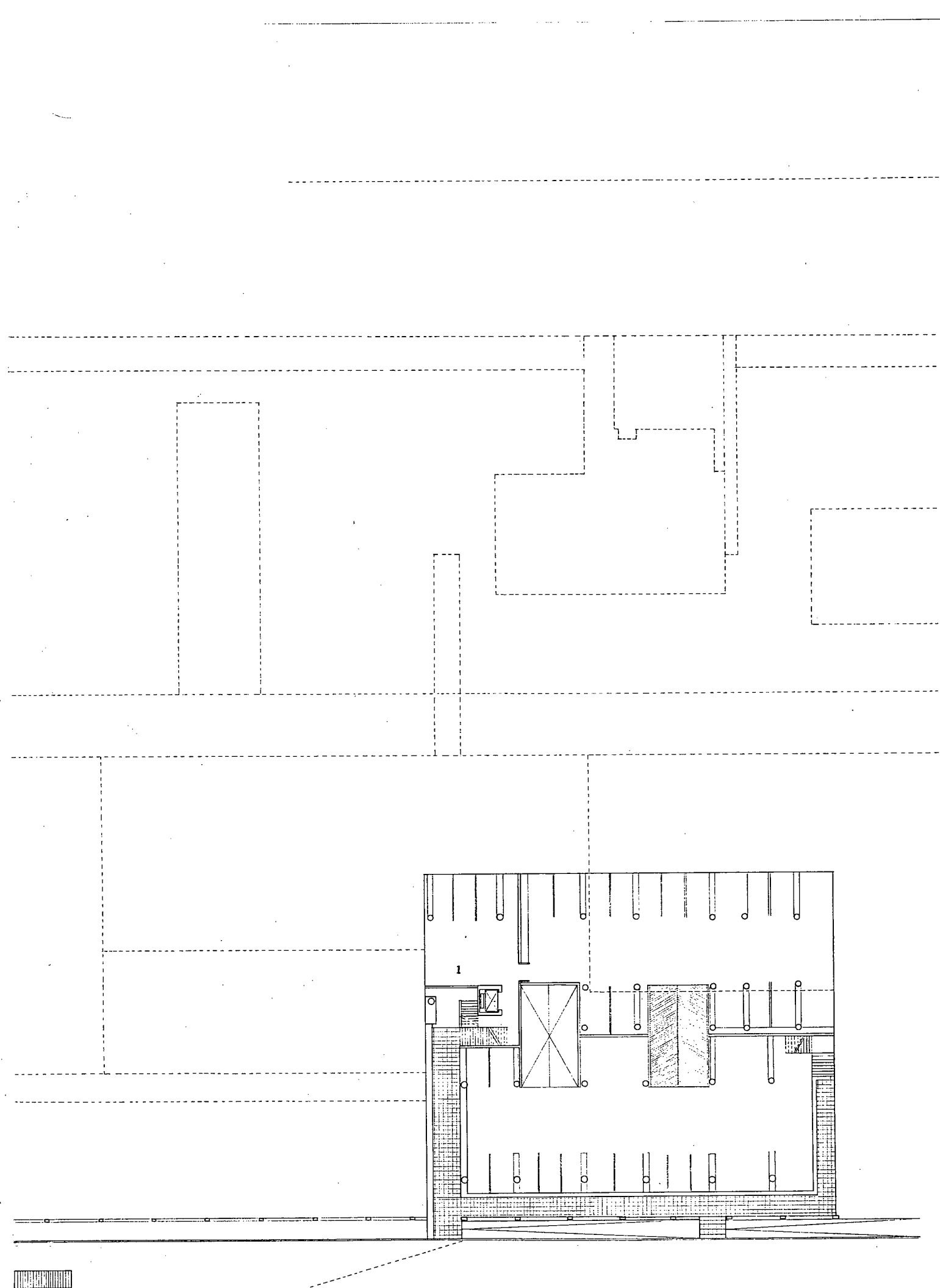
If infrastructure can be seen to mediate *urban* space in these ways, the intention of this thesis is to generate a design which employs this thinking at an *architectural* and site specific level. To make this sort of space tangible means looking at infrastructure not merely as a language but as a perceptual register. In other words, to articulate the visual possibilities of an infrastructure's form, material and finer distinctions of grain, color, and juxtaposition in order to lend the 'language' a more perceptual character from the point of view of the subject. In this way, the spatiality of the project might at once betray the 'dumbness' of infrastructural form while striving for the finer character of architectural form.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

FREMONT
WORKS

ALEX PERCY U.B.C. ARCHITECTURE 1997

1
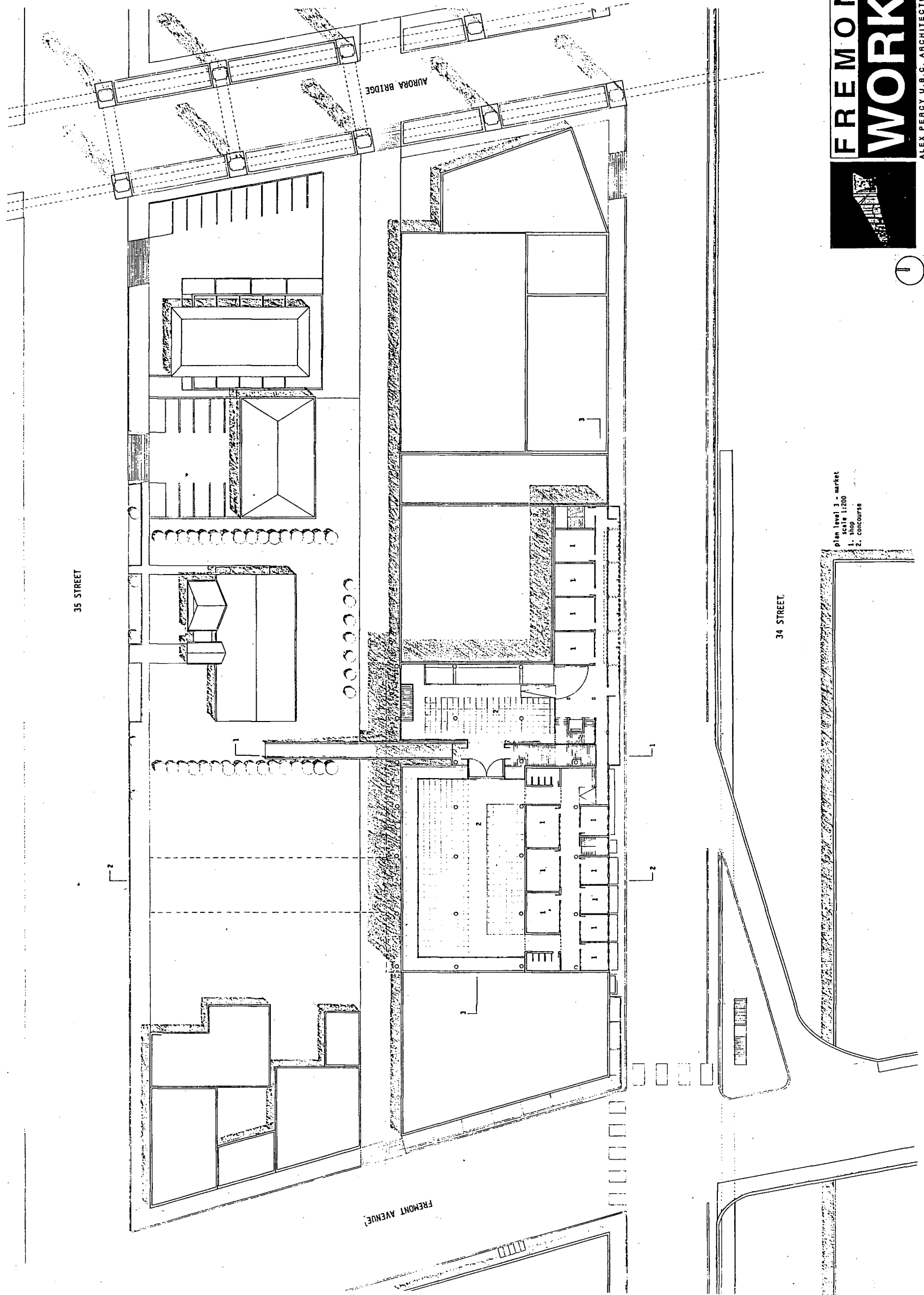
park & ride plan
scale 1:200
1. storage

6

5

1

1

1

3

4

2 2 2 2
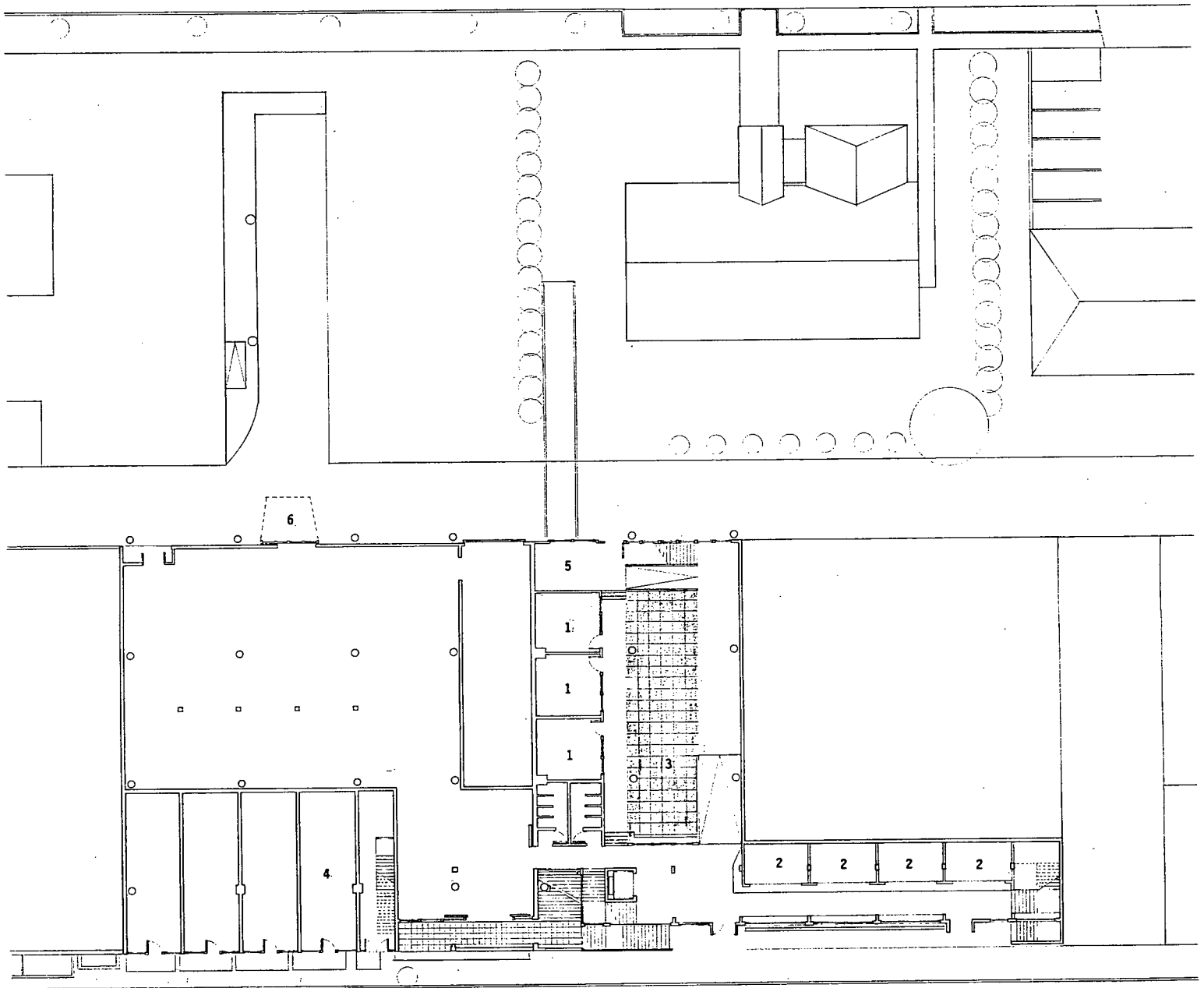
plan level 1 - market
scale 1:200
1. shop
2. stall
3. concourse
4. pcc co-op
5. loading bay
6. loading dock

TOP COPY
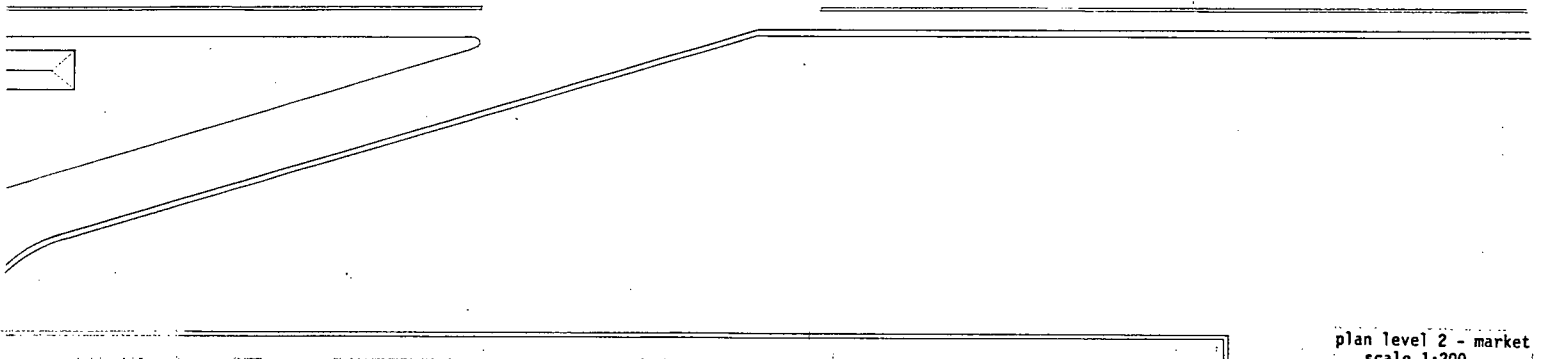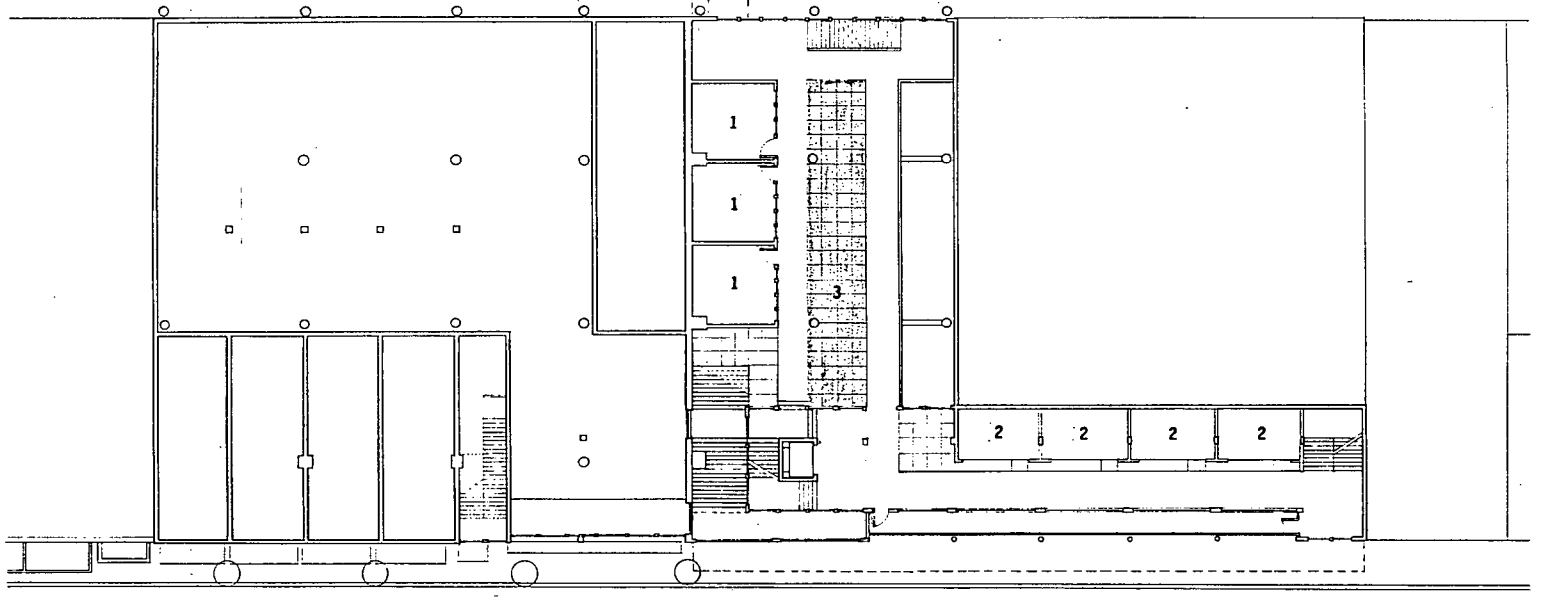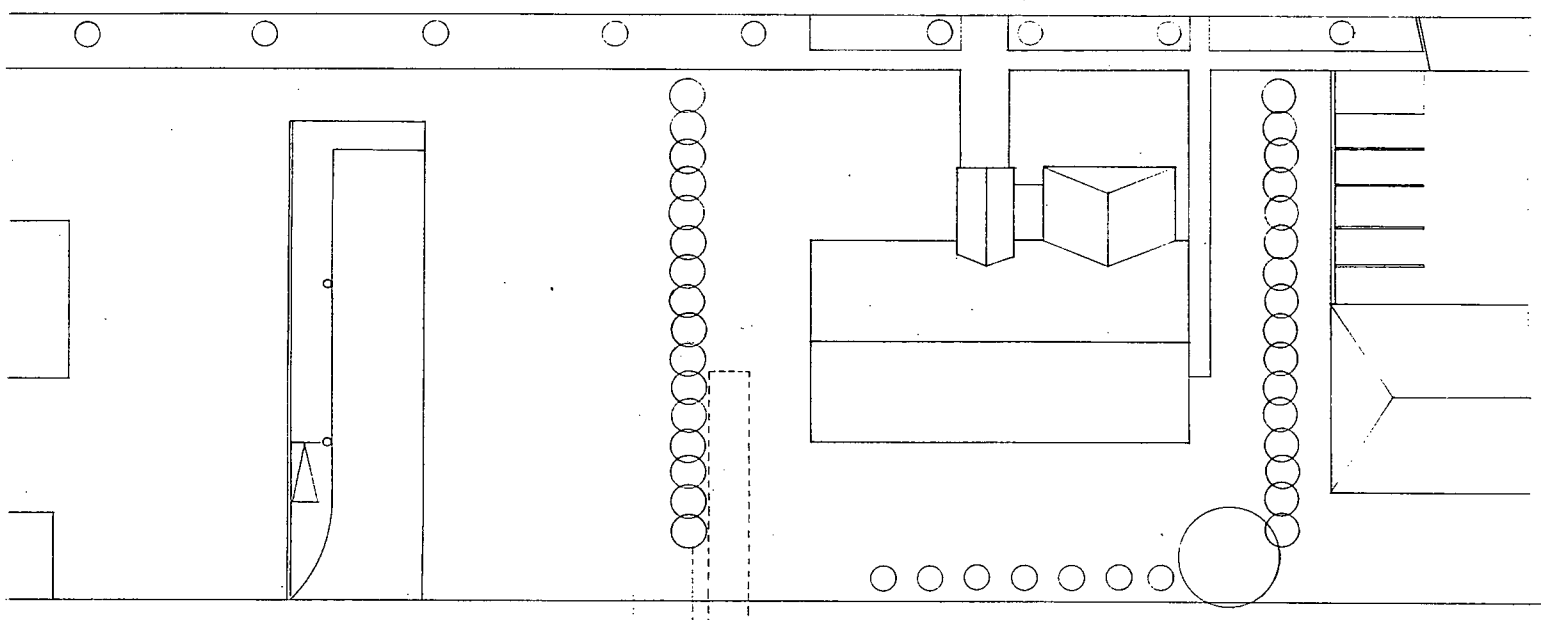
plan level 2 - market
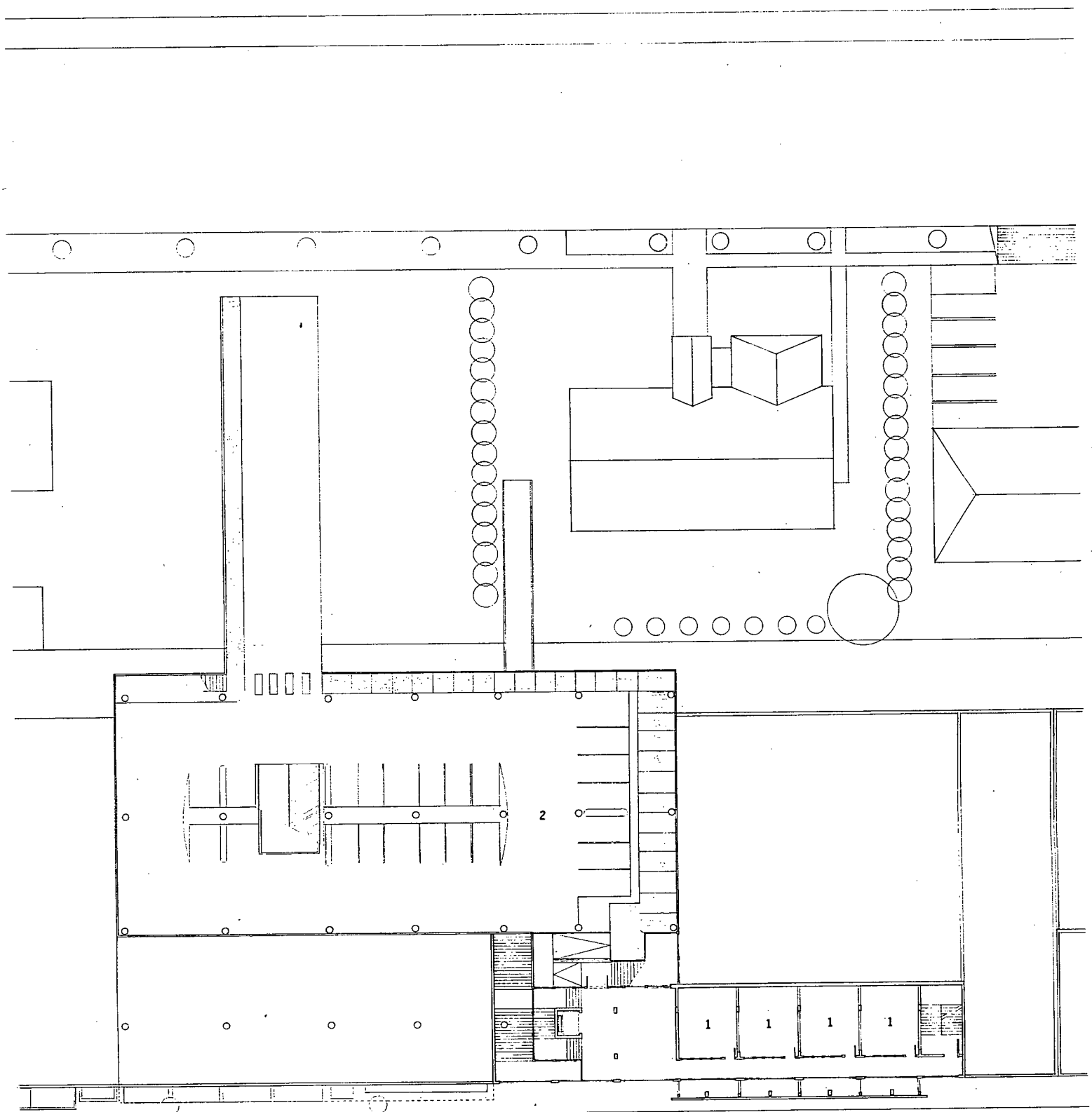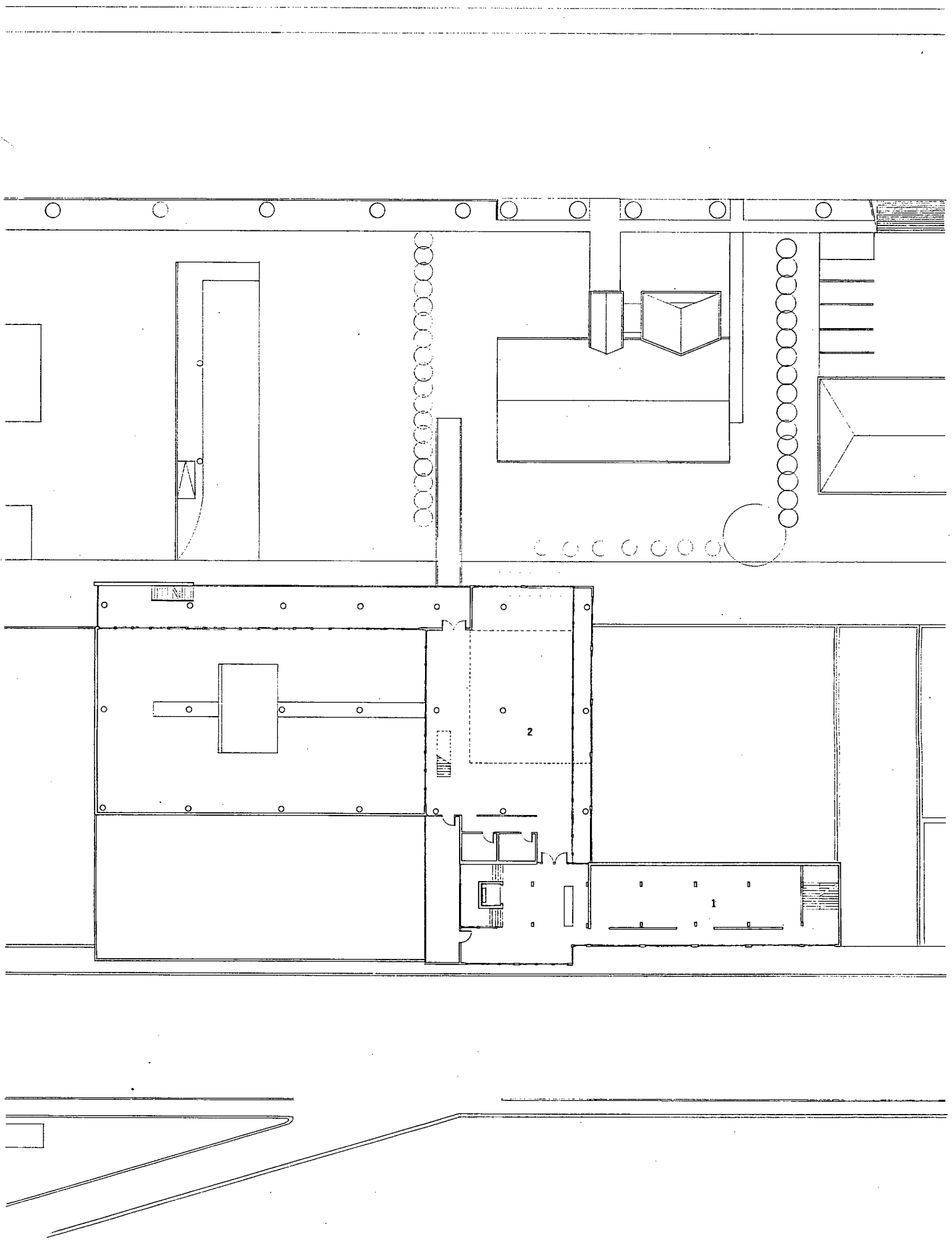scale 1:200
1. shop
2. stall
3. concourse

3

AURORA BRIDGE

35 STREET

34 STREET.

FREMONT AVENUE!

plan level 3 - market
scale 1:200
1. shop
2. concourse

2

1 1 1 1

FREMONT
WORKS

ALEX PERCY U.B.C. ARCHITECTURE 1997

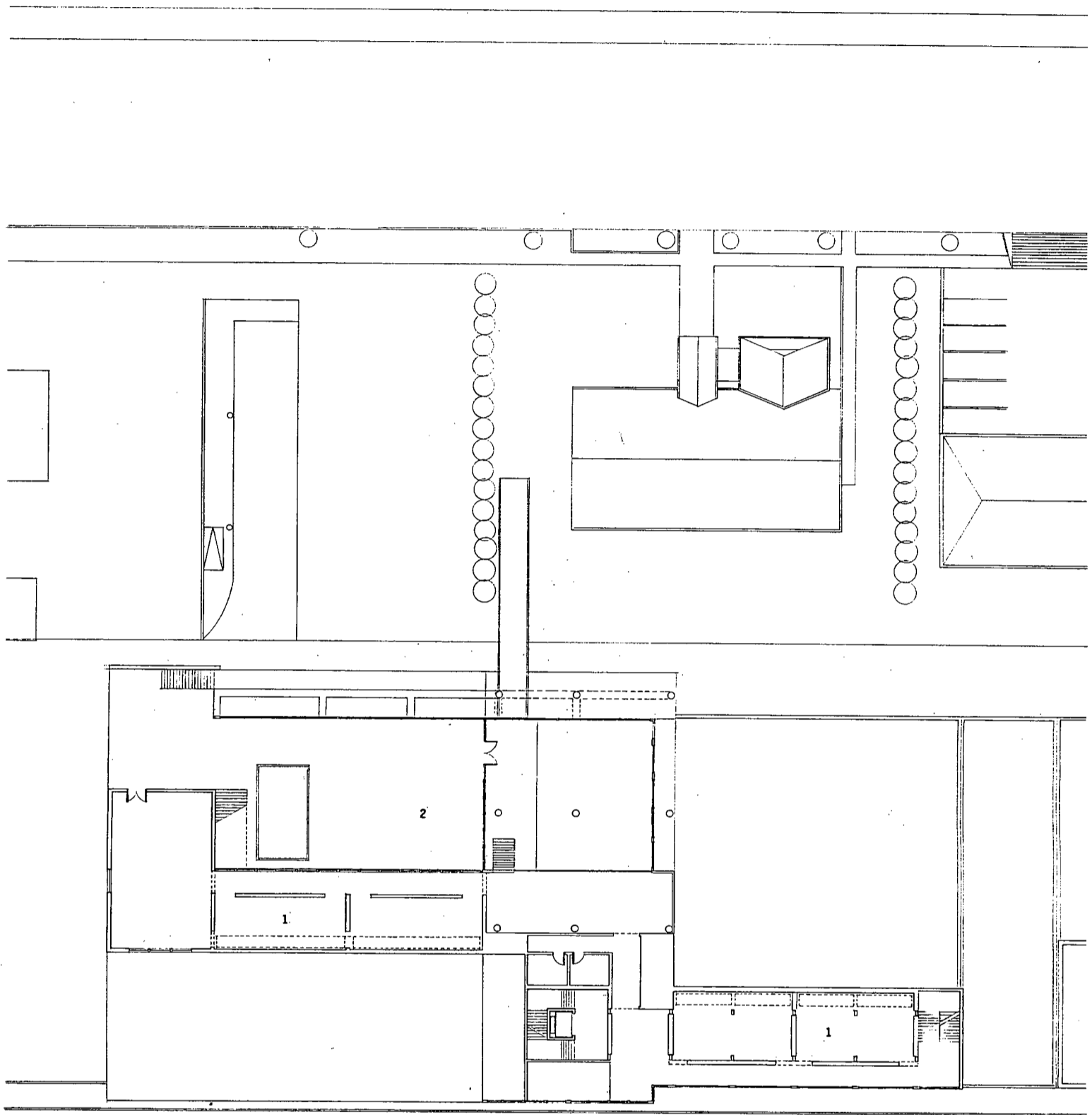plan level 4 - office/studio
scale 1:200
1. office/studio
2. parking
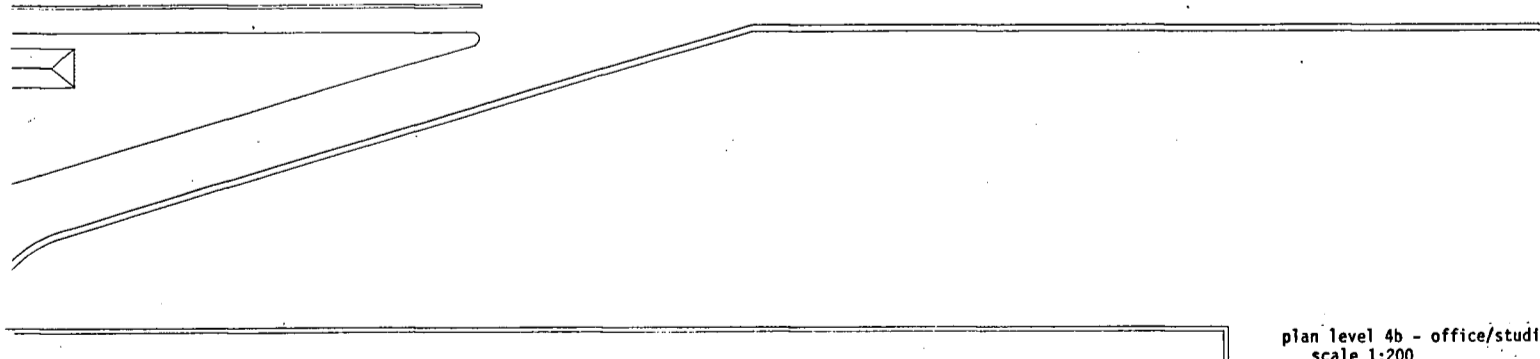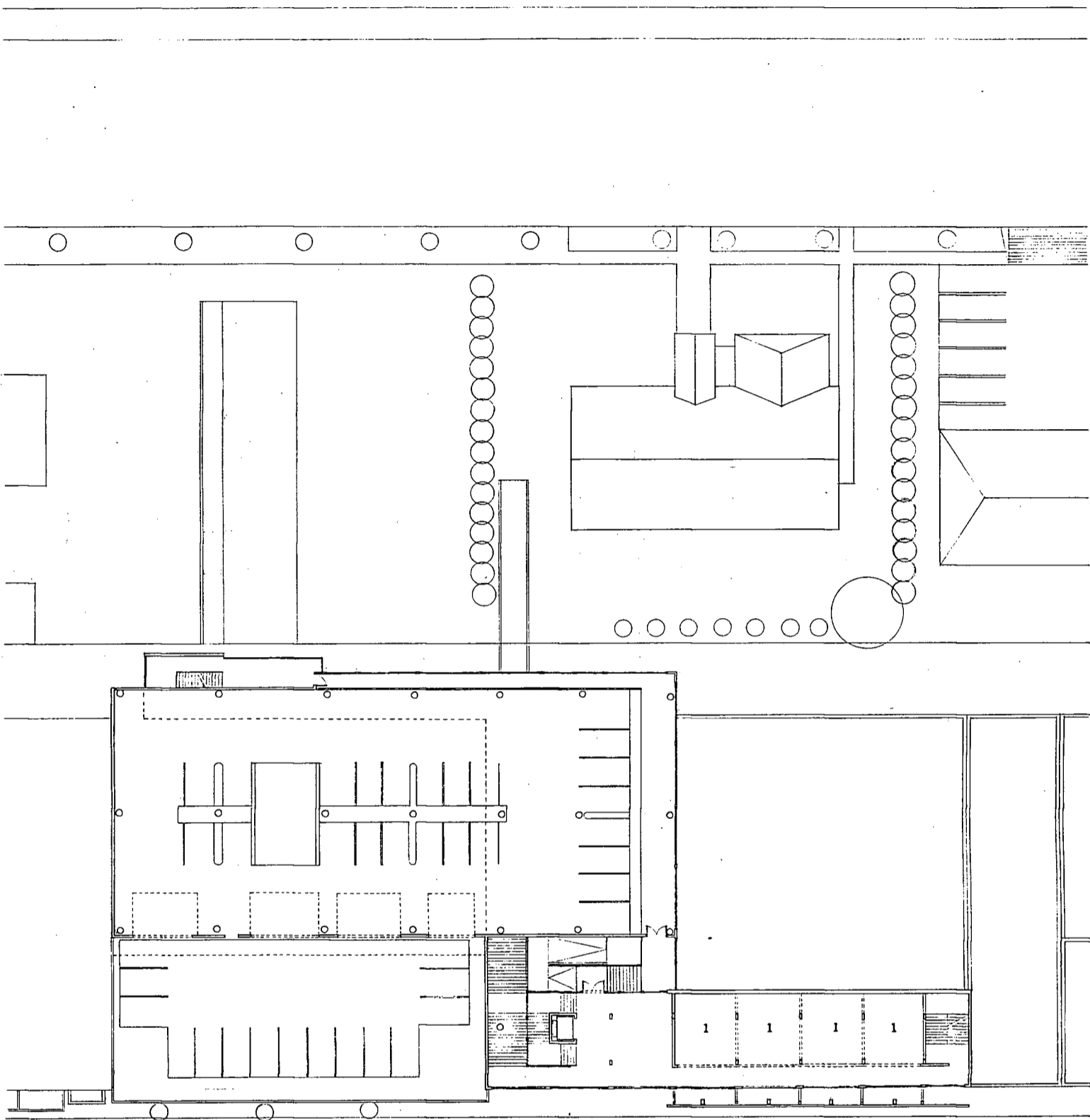
plan level 4b - office/studio
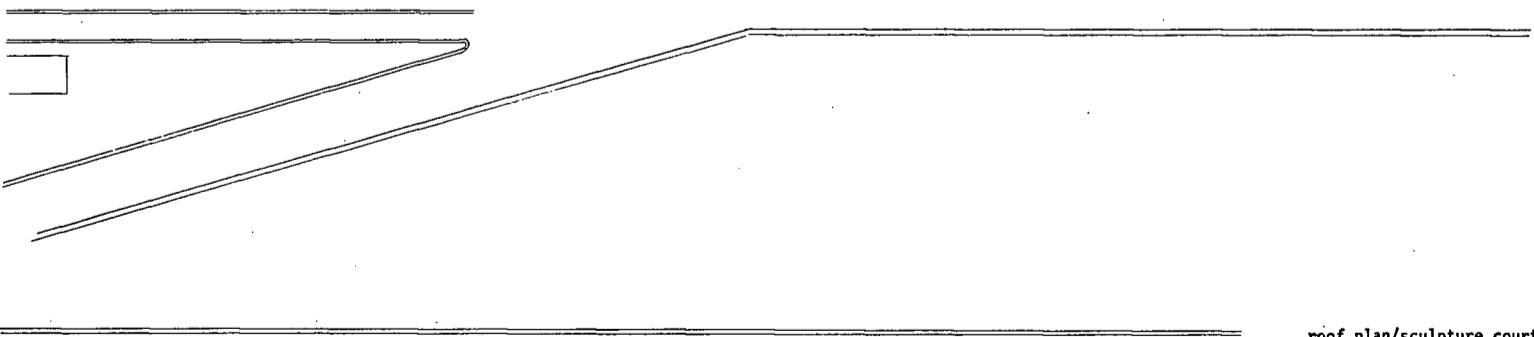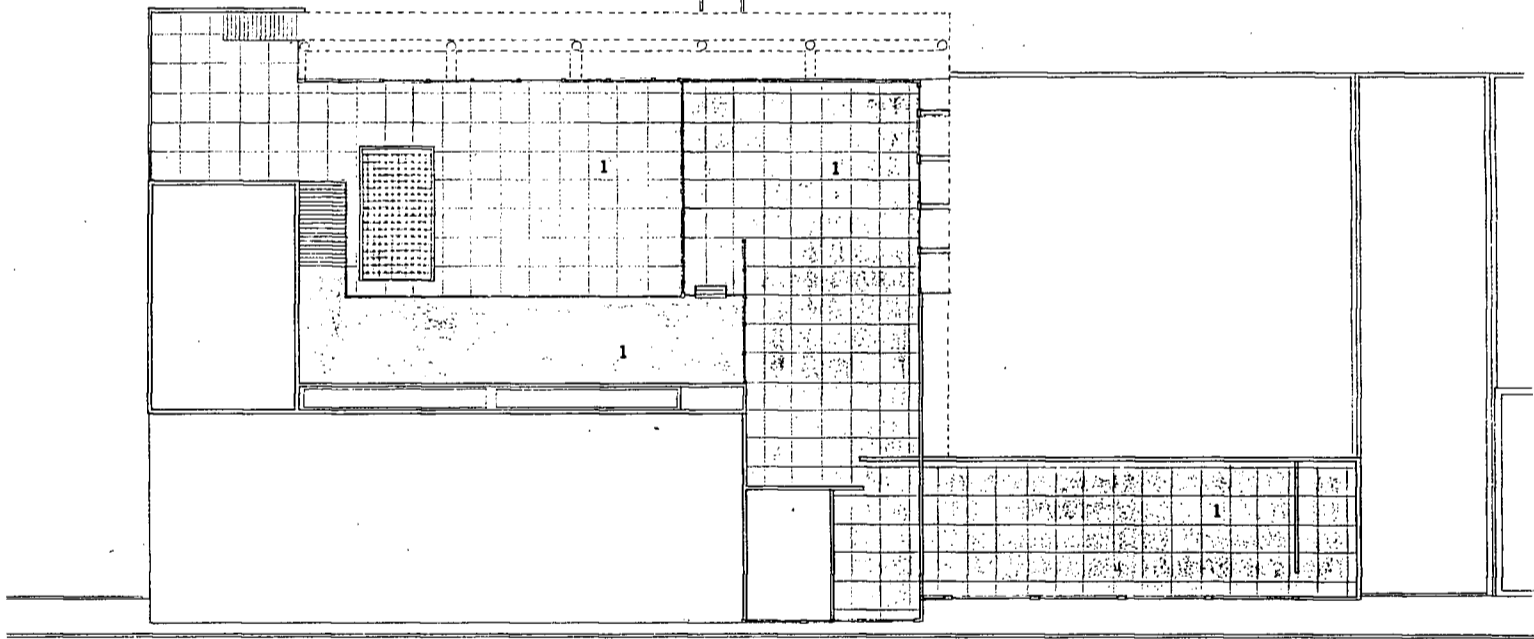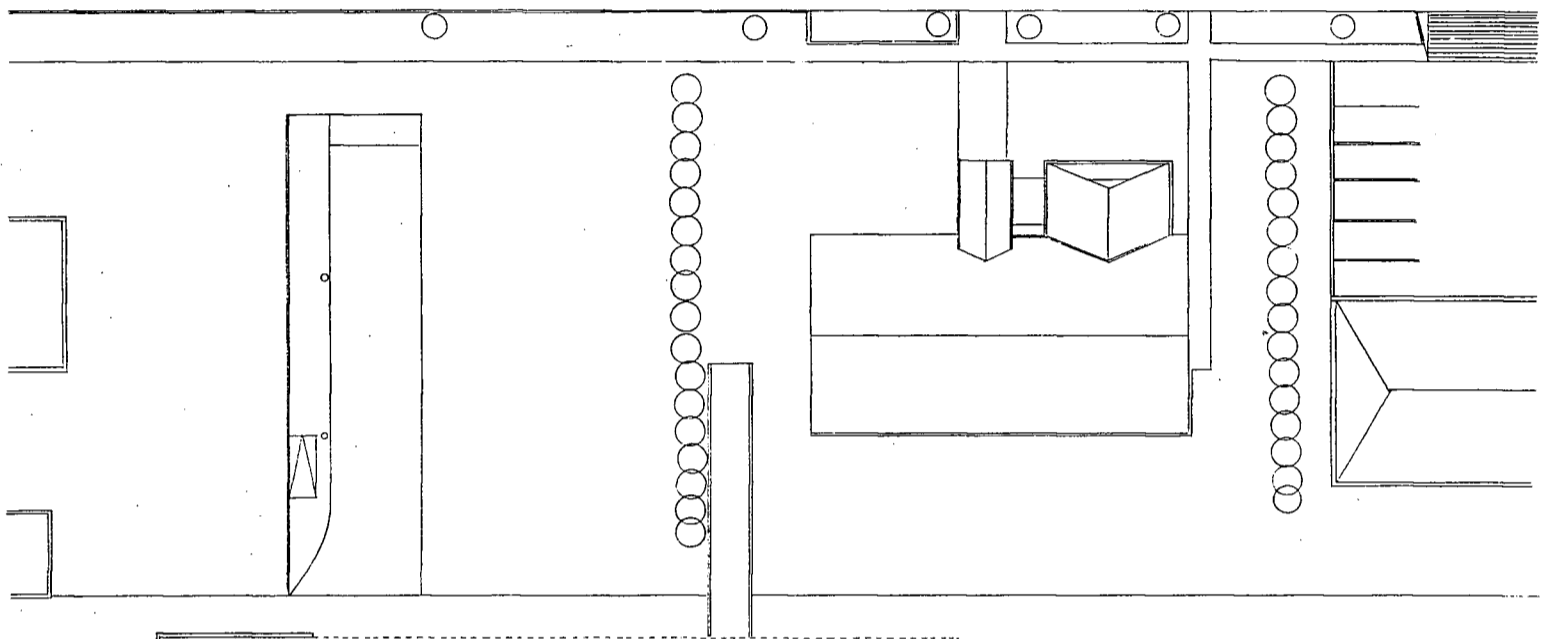scale 1:200
1. office/studio
2. parking
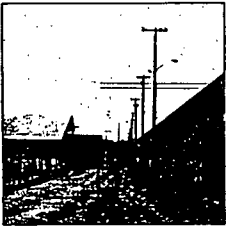
6

2

1

FREMONT
WORKS

ALEX PERCY U.B.C. ARCHITECTURE 1997

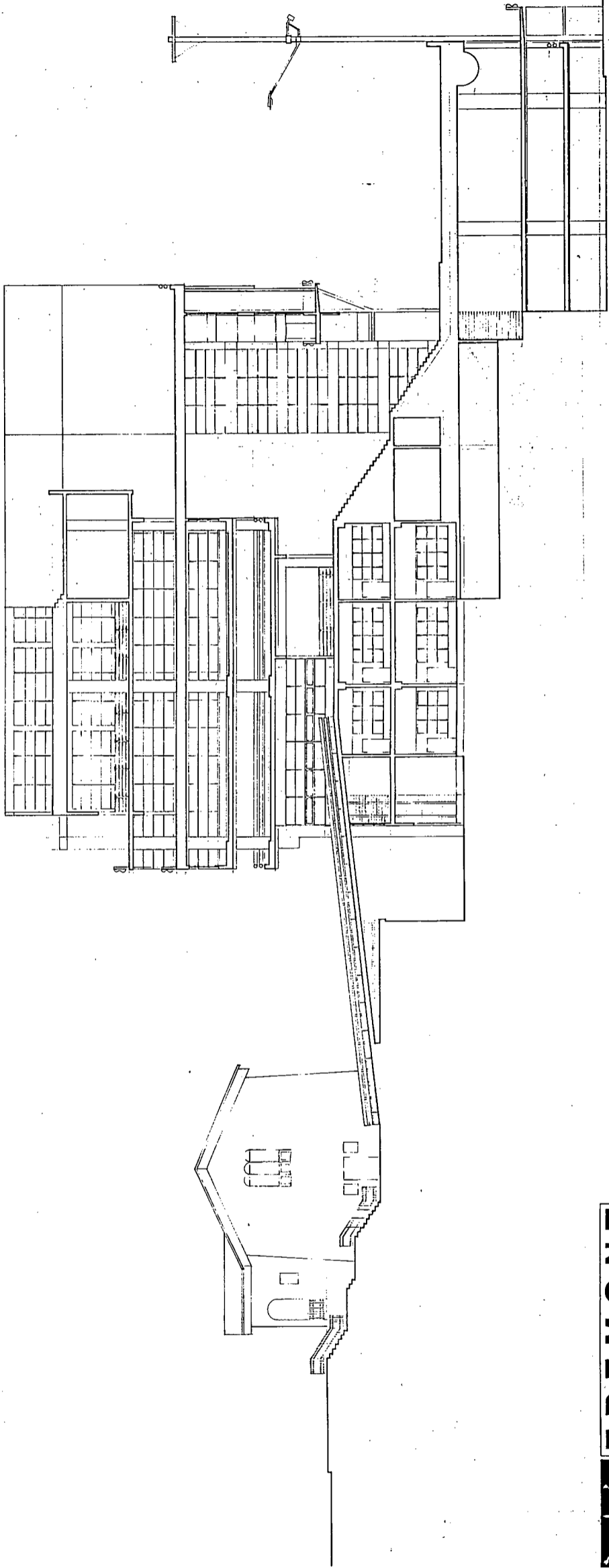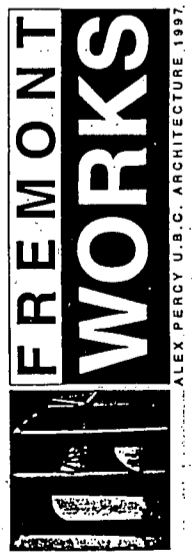plan level 6 - gallery/court
scale 1:200
1. gallery
2. court

roof plan/sculpture court
scale 1:200
1. court

FREMONT
WORKS

ALEX PERCY U.B.C. ARCHITECTURE 1997.

FREMONT
WORKS
ALEX PERCY U.B.C. ARCHITECTURE 1997

SECTION 2
SCALE 1:100

FREMONT
WORKS

ALEX PERCY U.B.C. ARCHITECTURE 1997

SOUTH ELEVAT
SCALE 1:2