

A HYBRID COMMERCIAL / LIBRARY BUILDING
FOR THE RESORT TOWN
OF WHISTLER

by

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ABSTRACT

The hybrid nature of the building's program became the central idea behind the design of the project. The combination of office, retail and library functions was an attempt to investigate the possibility of integrating a public amenity space directly within a private building. The implication of such a collision of uses was not only the potential for public cost savings and the promotion of public construction, but as well a possibility of the creation of a symbiotic relationship between these two forces. The private spaces of the building could make use of some of the public, while the public spaces could make use of some of the private.

The project took on a diagrammatic and abstract nature early on, detached architecturally somewhat from surrounding site conditions in order to investigate the possibilities of connecting and overlapping the building's public and private uses. An early series of diagrams and sectional sketches began to shape the building in its beginning. The three major elements of the program (office, library and retail) were initially separated vertically in space. The retail occupied the ground floor, the library the second, and the offices the final and third. However, the idea of interrelation of the spaces required a greater extent of overlapping and mixture. Thus, the strategy of a split-level scheme started to emerge. The three separations remained somewhat intact, however separated by intermittent split levels. These split levels contained spaces which could relate to either the floor directly above or below. The idea was that these 'shared' spaces could contain elements of the program which could be used by both library and retail, or by both office and library. The net result was a 'saving' of space, as well as a mixing of public and private functions.

Yet, with the mixing of public and private uses came the architectural issue of building security. How could a public book enter and leave a retail store? How could a private office be contained from public access? Would the separate retail units truly relate with the library space? Were there more possibilities for more double uses?

The library took on the role of both public amenity and private retail enterprise at this point in the project. The move seemed to satisfy both issues of security and interrelationship between public and private functions. The security system of the library would double as the cash desk; the library stacks would contain both borrowable books and commercial retail goods for consumption; the seating for the library would also provide for the in-house cafe-bar; library staff would also function as staff for the shared smaller offices on the second floor. In this sense, the combination of private and public functions not only reduced the need for excess (publically funded) space, but also presented the idea of a saving of maintenance and operational costs.

The location of the building in Whistler village was done for two main reasons: the town, at present, is currently without a permanent library for a rapidly growing full-time population; and the town, as a resort municipality, relies heavily on its commercial activity in order to energize its main, public pedestrian outdoor mall. The specific site of the building was a point in the village which related both directly to this pedestrian mall as well as an adjacent shopping centre, intended for the vehicular traffic and use of the more full-time residents of Whistler Village. Here the full time residents coming in to use the library could perhaps discover its second commercial nature, while tourists may make use of the public use of the building while going in solely to shop. The building would then be a place where both full-time residents and incidental tourists could both come, interacting within the same building for an array of different reasons.

Architecturally, the building was a modest success: the issue of security had been addressed and overlapping of private and public functions was explored in the building. However, the notion that a library would become a highly commercial retailer still seemed improbable; even in an age of decreasing government spending and reliance upon the private sector for public services, the difficulty in motivating a traditionally public sector into an entrepreneurially self-sustaining enterprise prevented the likelihood of its construction.

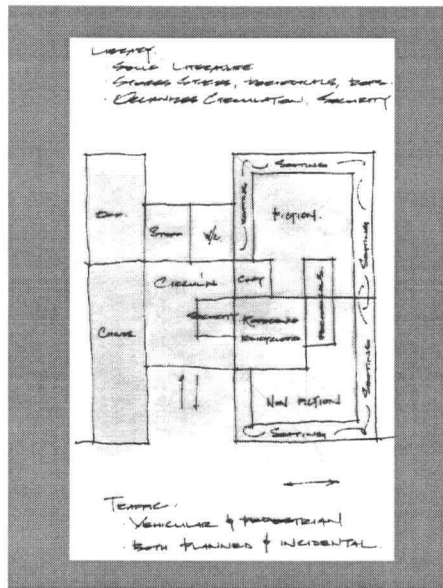
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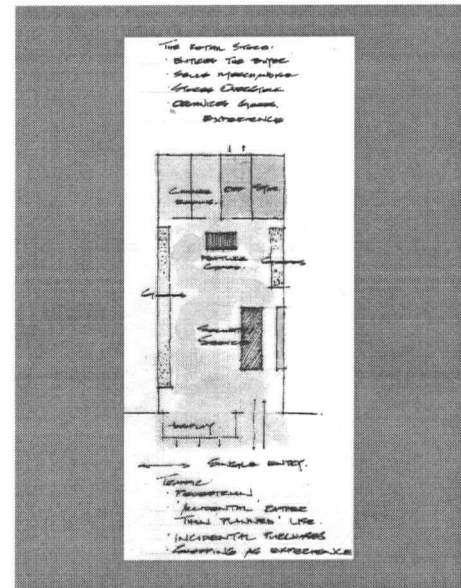
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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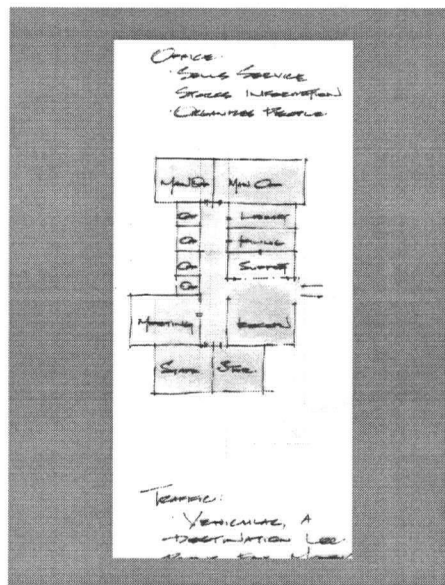
early diagrams



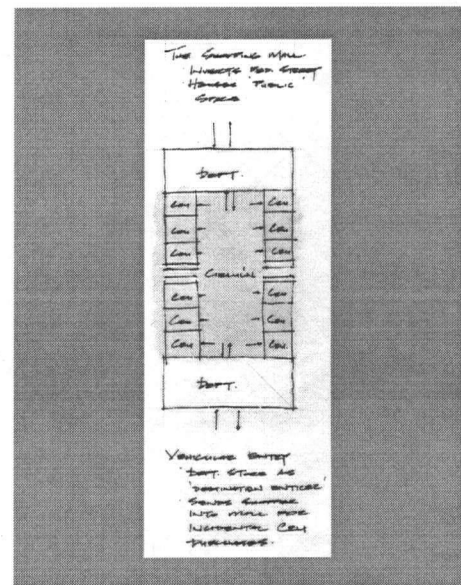
basic relationships of the program for a branch library.



basic relationships in the program of a retail store.



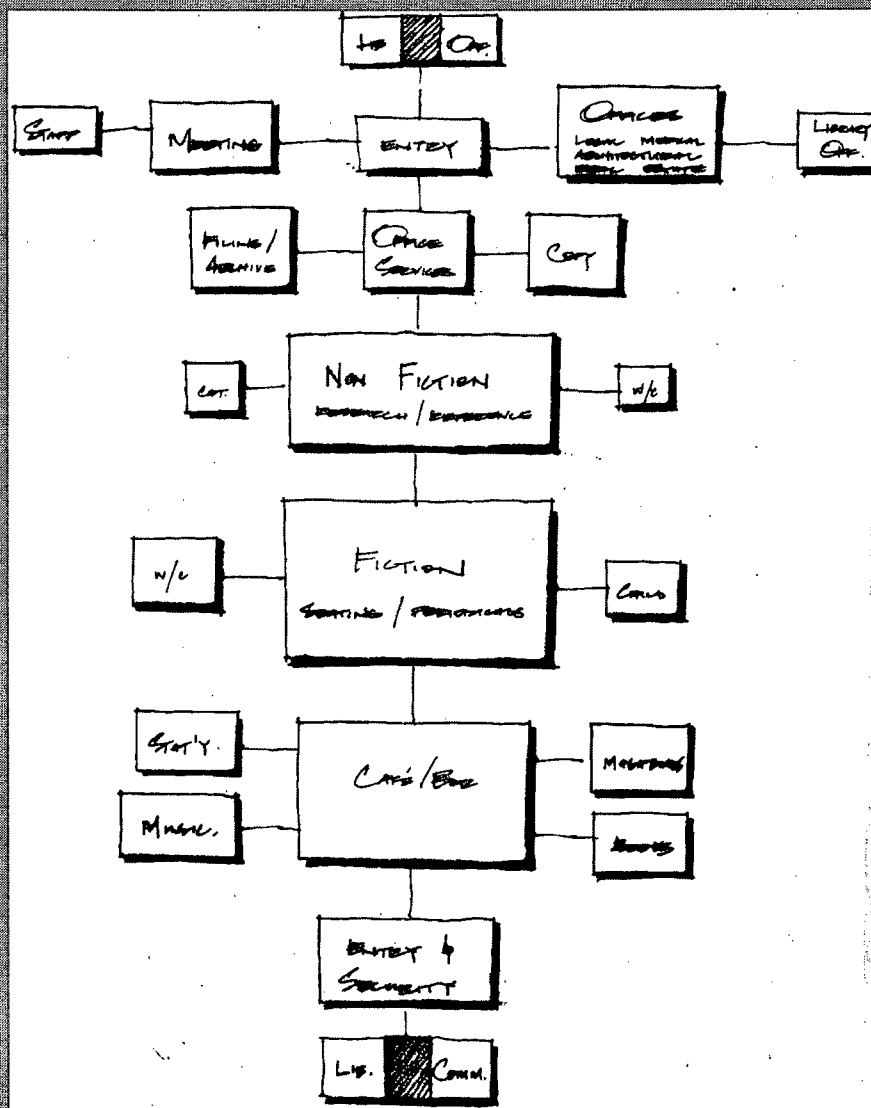
the basic relationships of elements of the program for a typical office.



basic relationships between units of a suburban mall.

four early sketches showing the separate elements of the program of the project and a possible model for the spatial arrangement of the scheme: the library, the retail outlet, the office and the mall.

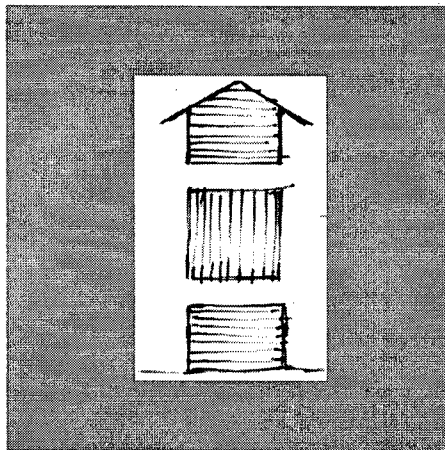
early diagrams



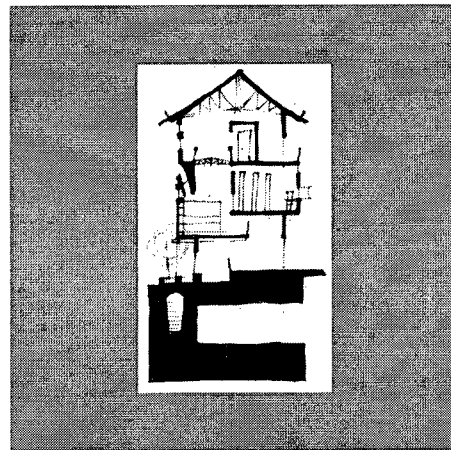
the program elements in a vertical organization.

a diagram describing the overlapping of uses in the project: some rooms reach inot both office and library, while some parst of the commercial are parts of the library as well. the result is a double use of space, staff, and products.

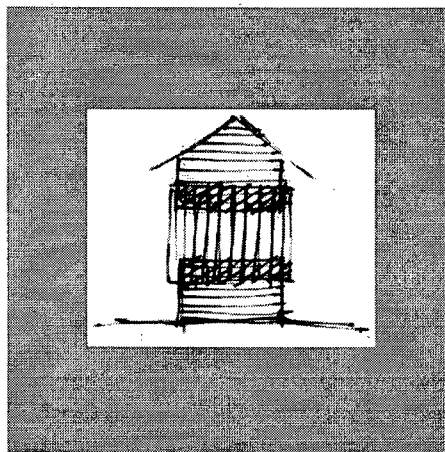
early diagrams



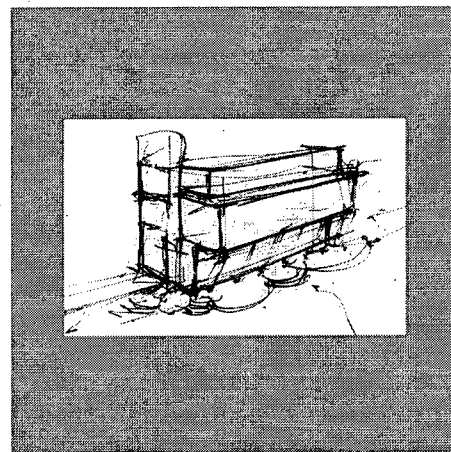
the beginning of relating the program to form in early diagrams. the crude section illustrates the separation of the three major elements of the program: the retail, on the bottom, separated by the office on top by the library in the middle.



an early sketch of a building section begins to illustrate the emergence of a split level scheme. the 'splits' are levels between the major elements of the program, where space is shared by the users above and the users below.



the same diagram as above, only with a collision of the elements resulting in two 'intersections' where parts of each overlap. here is where double use of program can exist between the various parts, leaving a net saving of space and direct relationships between that which is private and that which is public.



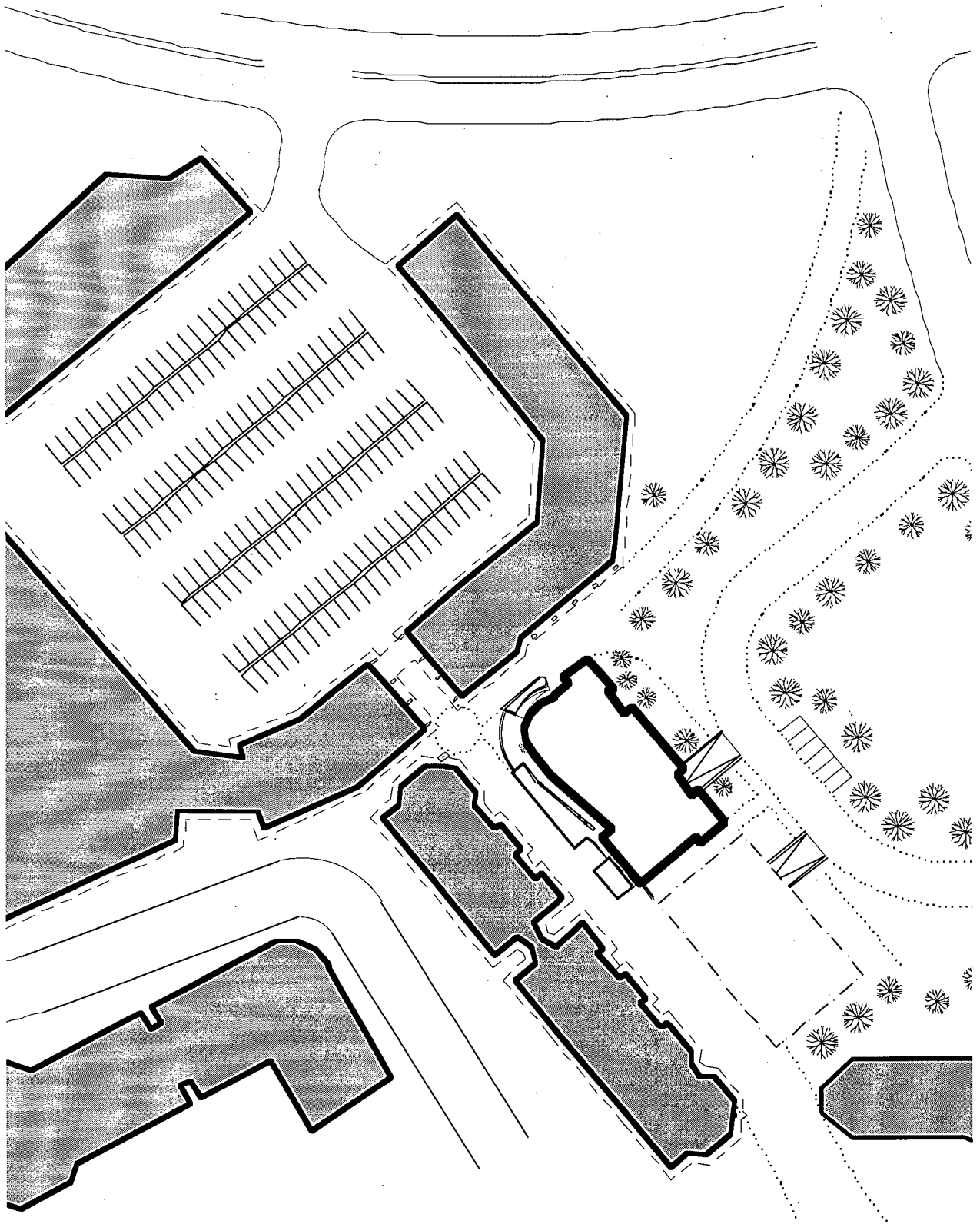
an early sketch the building in 3d. the library portion of the program juts out over the pedestrian walkway below at grade.

four early sketches showing the progression of the relationship between the building's elements of program. rather than separating the elements, the scheme attempts to overlap and mix the uses with the strategies of 'space-saving' through doubling of uses as well as interrelating directly public and private spaces.

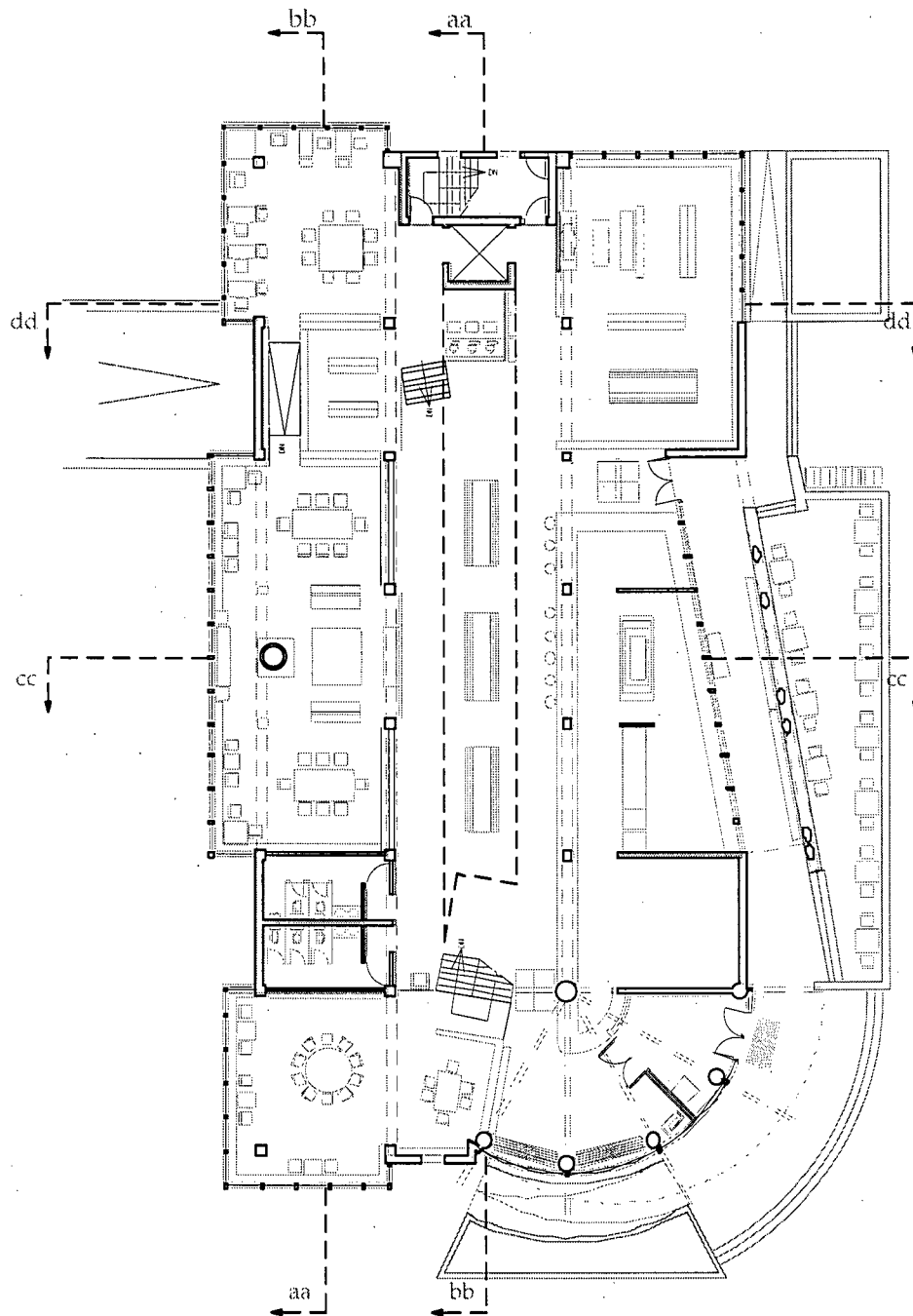
figure ground diagram



figure ground drawing of whistler village. the village is configured around a central pedestrian spine, upon which buildings 'face'; the 'backs' of the buildings interface with vehicular traffic. the library, as a hybrid, intends to serve both of whistler's publics: its full time residents and part time tourists.

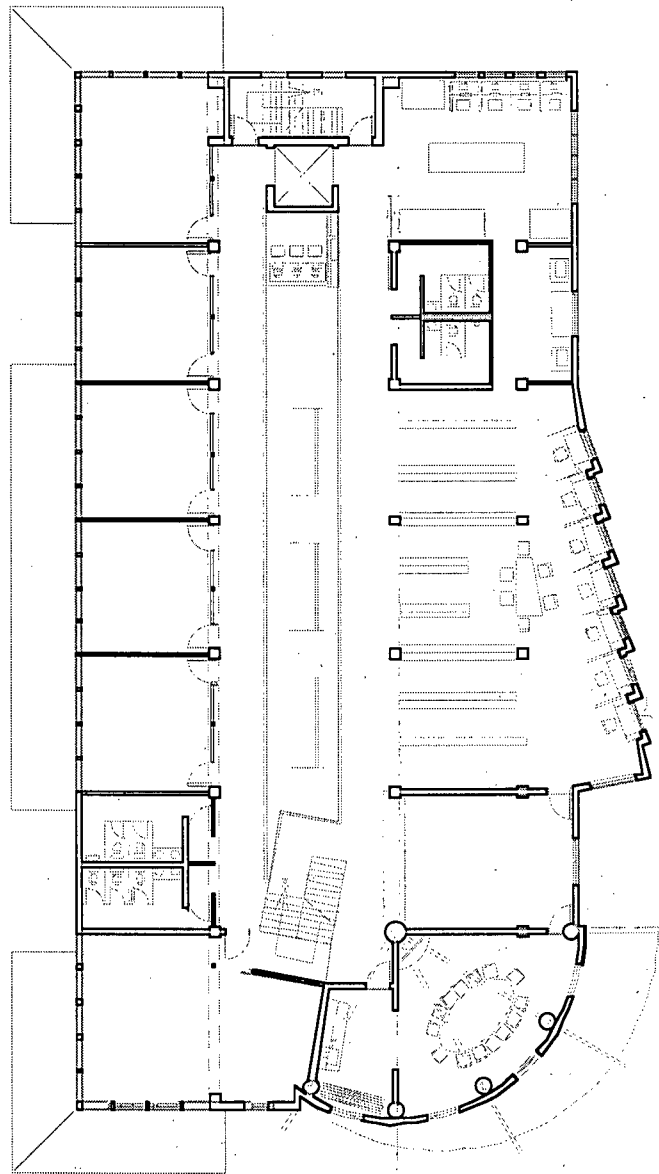


site plan



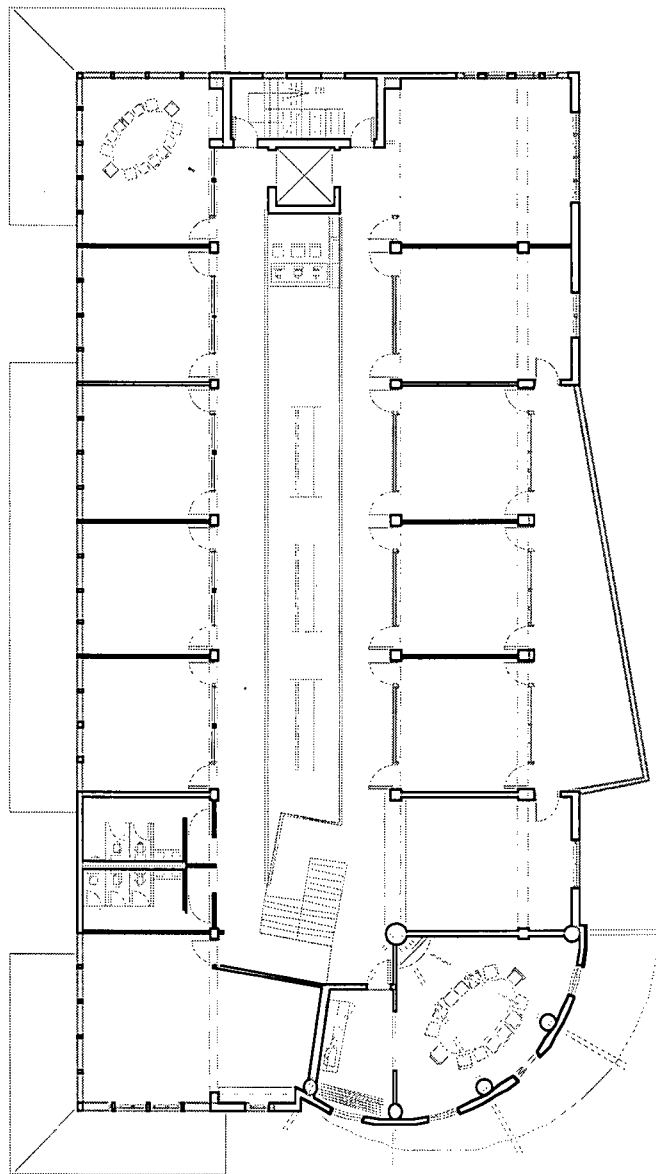
first floor plan

scale 1" = 25'



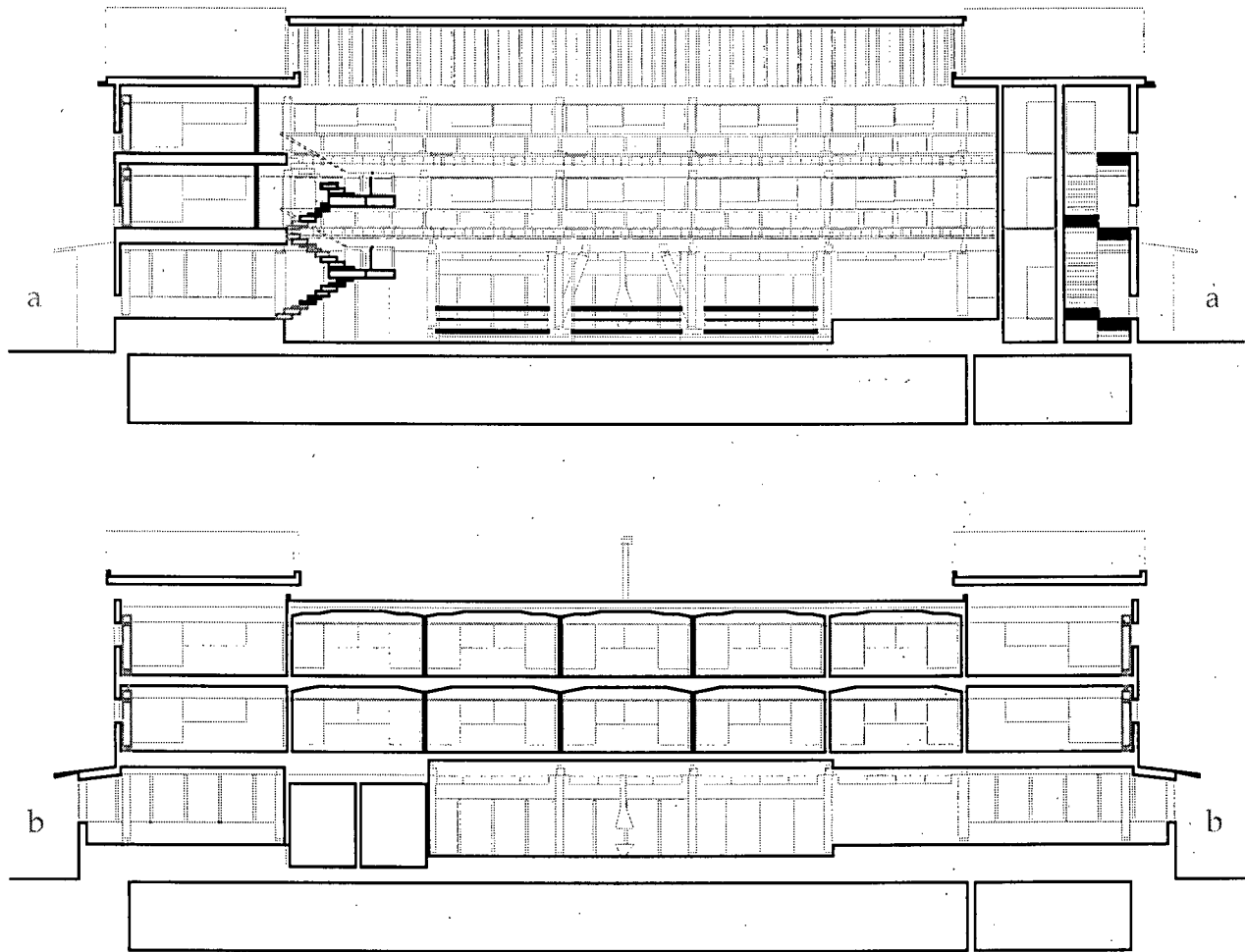
second floor plan

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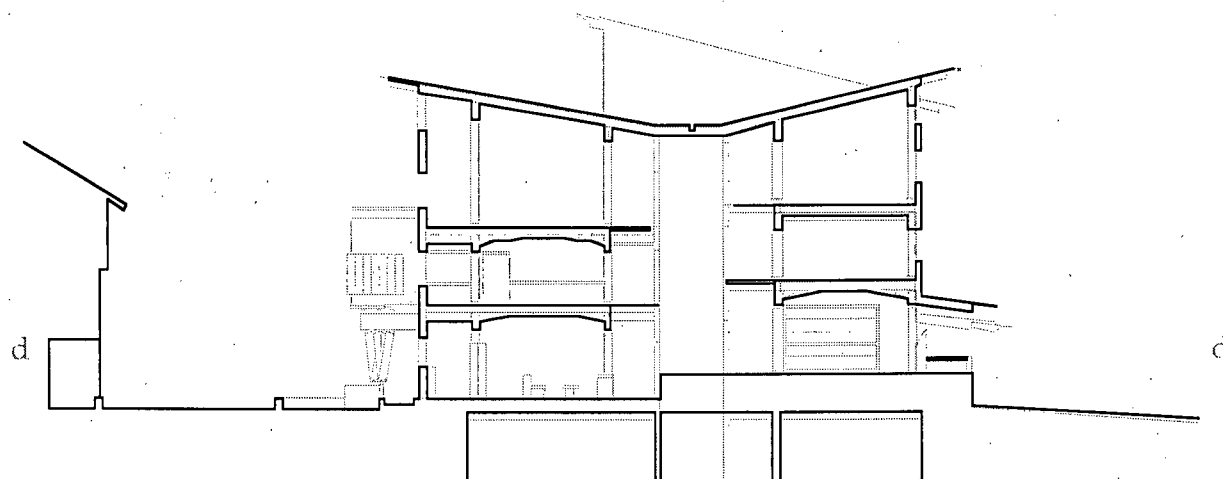
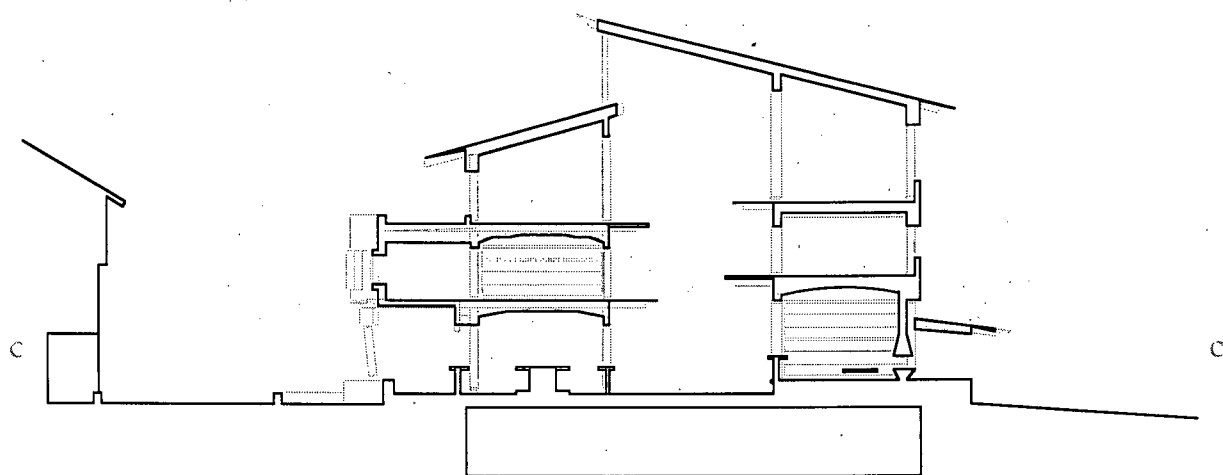
third floor plan

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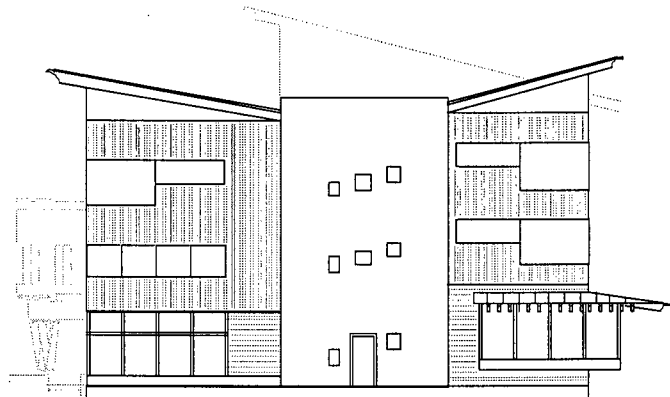
sections

scale 1" = 25'

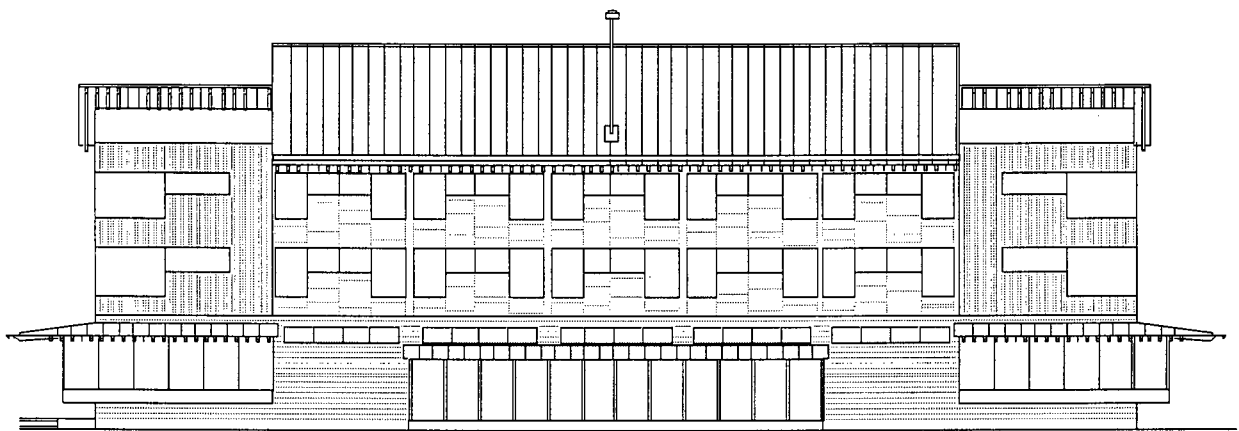


sections

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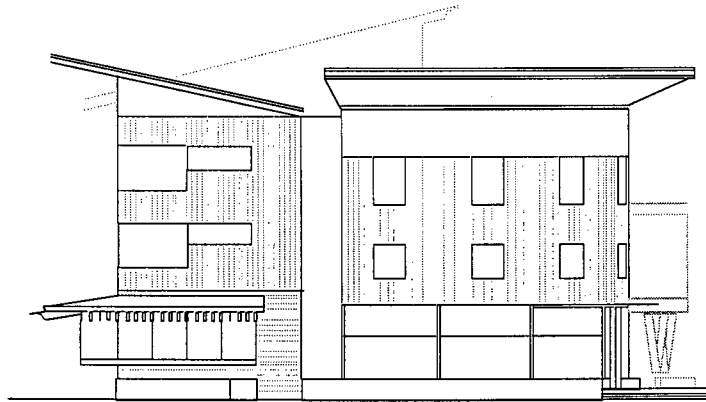
east elevation



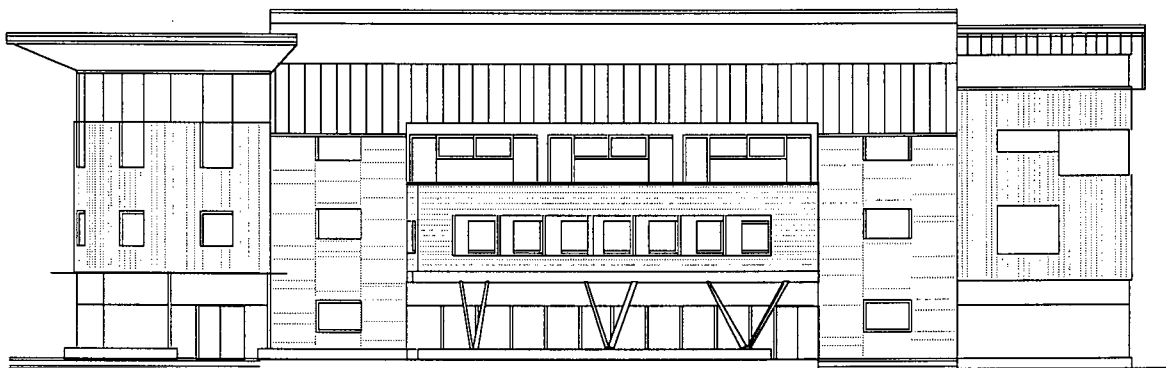
north elevation

elevations

scale 1" = 25'



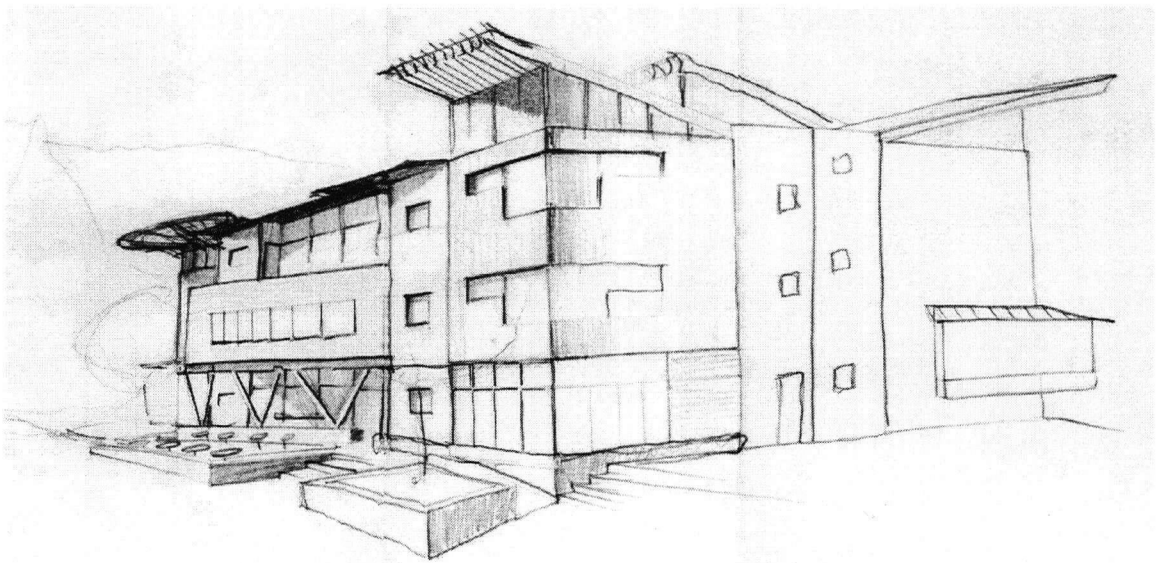
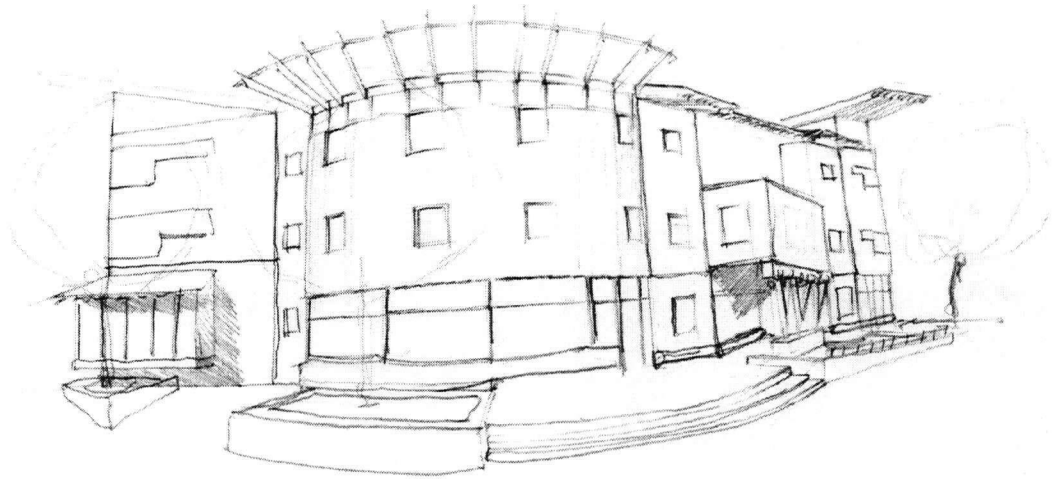
west elevation



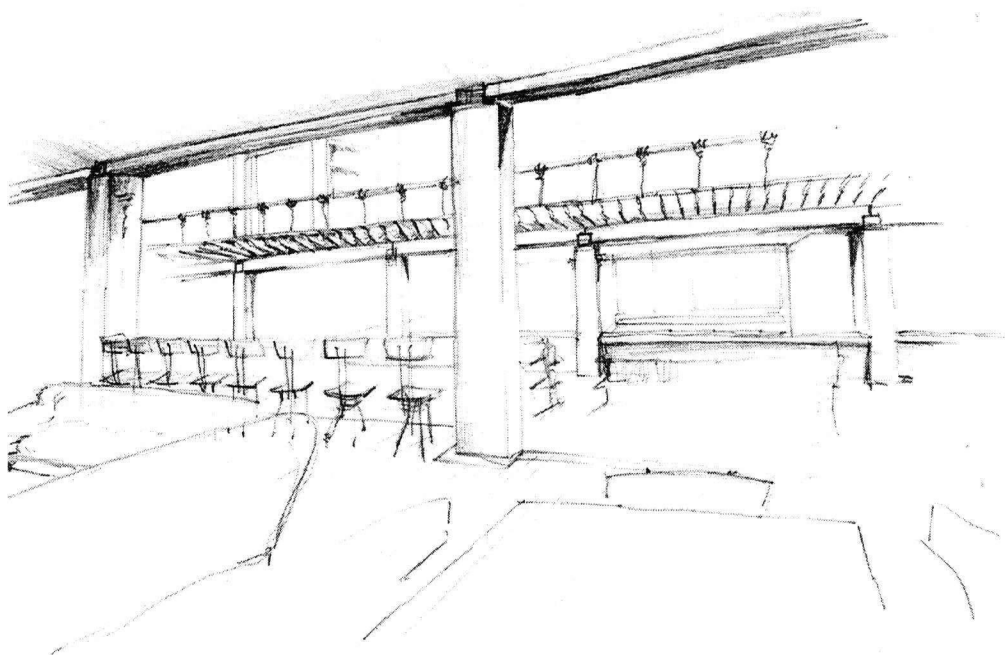
south elevation

elevations

scale 1" = 25'



exterior sketches



interior sketches