

ADAPTATIONS: AN OFFICE BUILDING  
IN VANCOUVER

by

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Vancouver, Canada

Date 30.09.98

## ABSTRACT

This thesis project began with an interest in how architecture provides for both permanence and temporality and how contemporary conditions may impact upon architectural form. An office building was chosen as the subject of exploration due to its ubiquitous nature and the requirement that it be adaptable to the changing needs of its occupants. The need for a flexible and economic architecture also presented the problem of anonymity and a lack of experiential richness. The intention of the investigation was to discover in what ways, if any, the permanent and temporal elements of a building might act in conjunction to create an enduring artifact which could respond to and register the complexities of everyday life.

The project was inspired by observations in the city of Vancouver where development has occurred in a rapid and often irregular manner. The eastern part of the downtown centre and Yaletown were identified as particular areas of study. Patterns of development exhibit many smaller sites left empty or used as parking until being developed. These sites revealed an opportunity for the design of a medium-sized building which might maintain the smaller grain characteristic of these areas. As a "type", it could be adapted to the particularities of its location as well as the changing requirements of its occupants. A number of sites from four to six lots in width were identified in the study area. Various configurations were then devised to adapt the building model to particular site conditions including double party-wall versus corner locations and different orientations.

The final project consists of the adaptation of this type to a site located on Homer Street near Pender Street. It is adjacent to an alley which marks the change in grid orientation in the area and allows three elevations of the building to be explored. The building employs an asymmetrically situated atrium and a core divided into two separated pods which would allow for increased penetration of natural light and ventilation. Structure, envelope and space dividing elements operate independently. The building envelope is separated out into two layers: the interior layer consists of a four foot wide grid of openings which may be filled with birch clad panels, bookcases or glazed panels or fitted with operable louvered windows. Random placements of panels allow the human inhabitation to be registered on the exterior of the building. The exterior skin then superimposes a composition of glazed panels which responds to the scale and order of the city and deals with environmental elements. A carved out entry lobby and two storey terrace along with landscaped roofdeck provide gradations of public and private common areas.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my committee, for their guidance throughout the project:

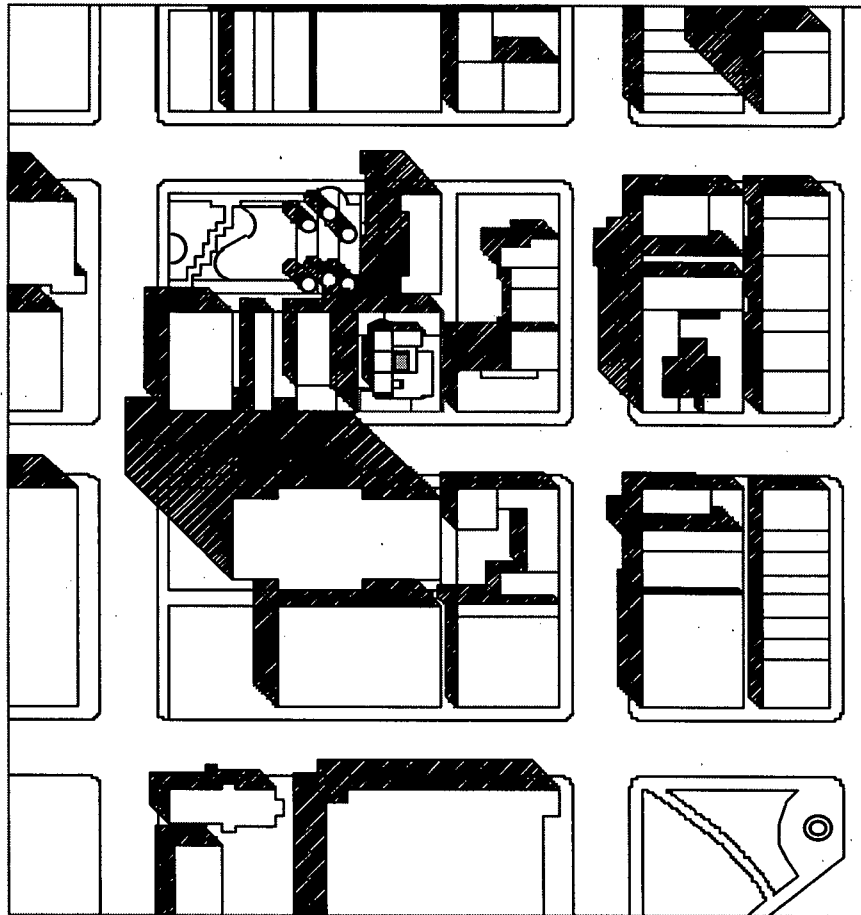
Christopher MacDonald (chair, Architecture 549)

Sherry McKay (Architecture 548)

Shelly Craig

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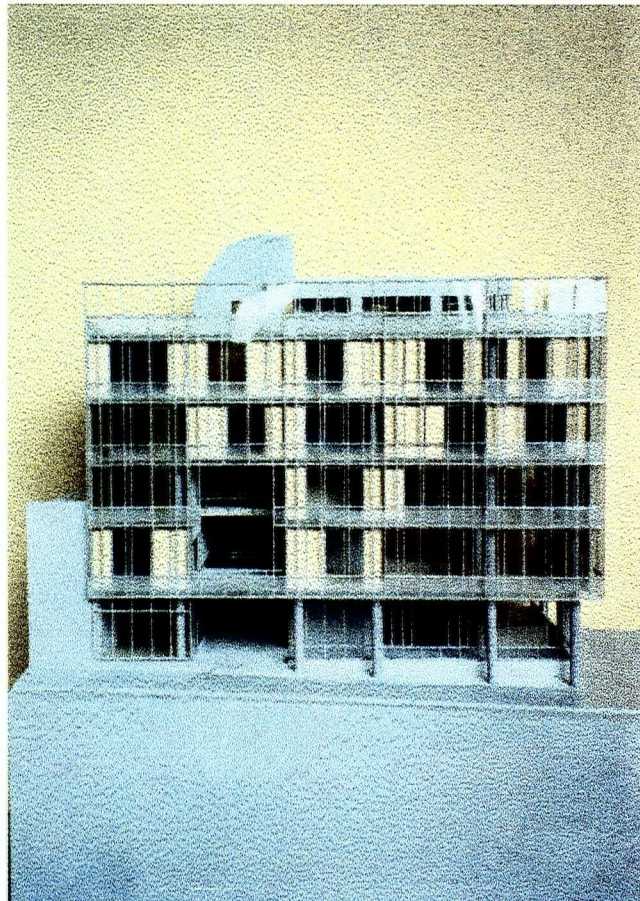


site plan

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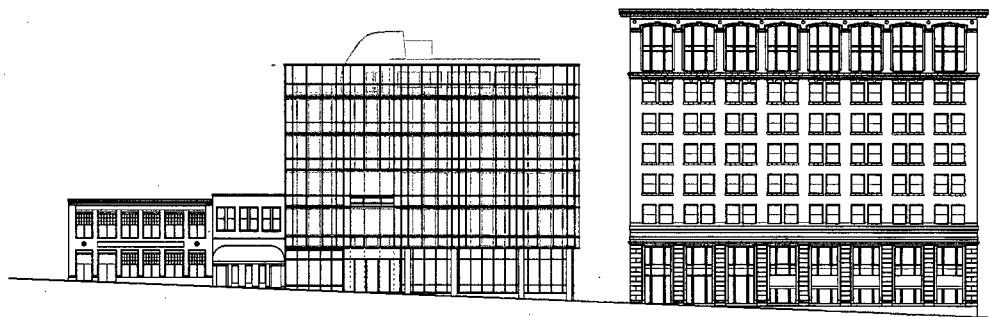
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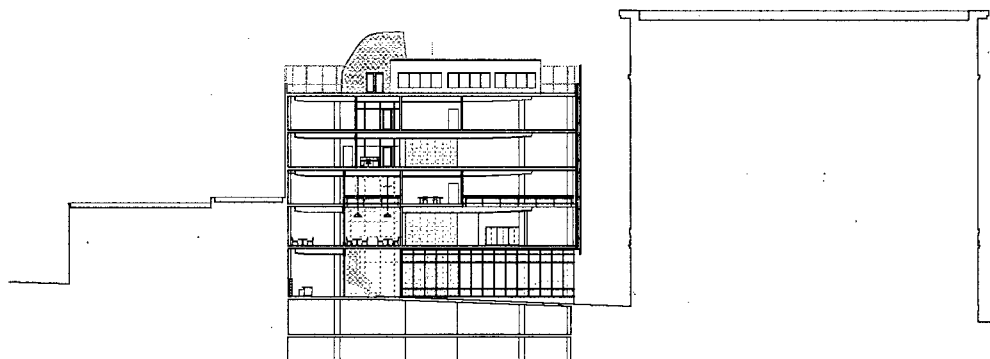
model: front view

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southeast elevation



section a

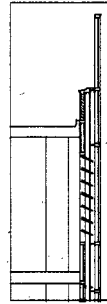
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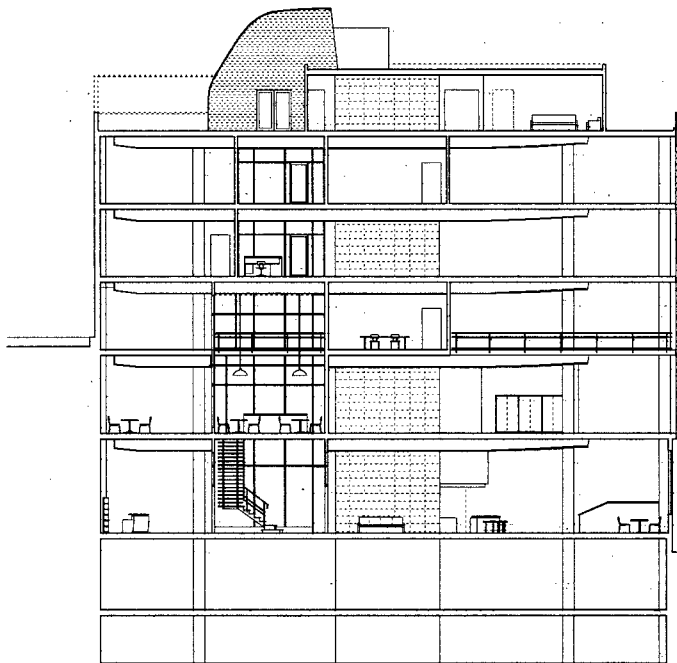
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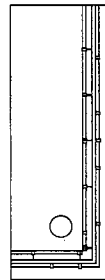


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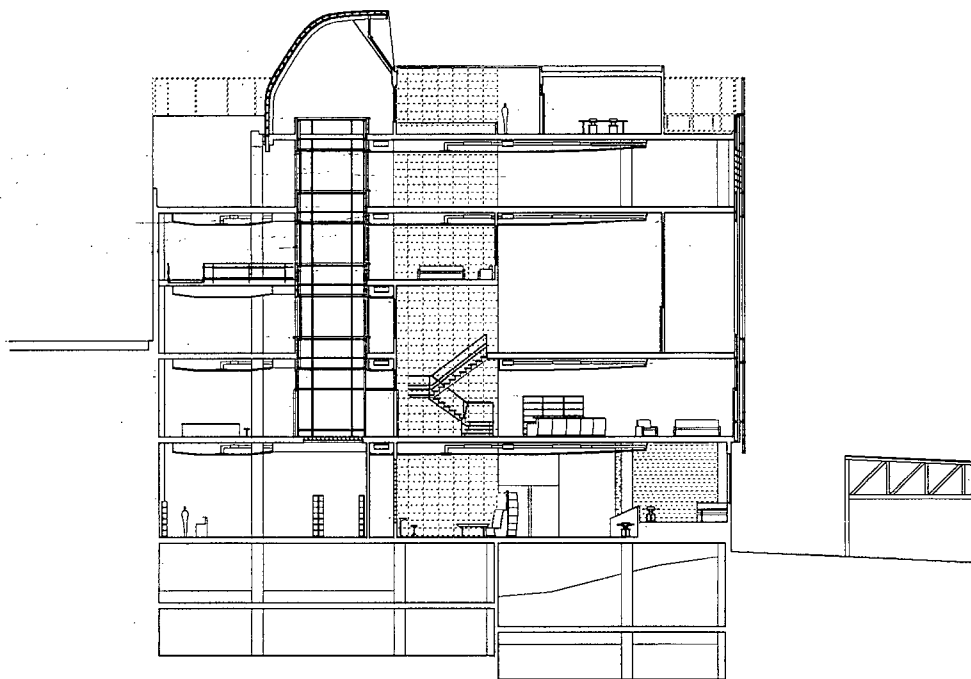
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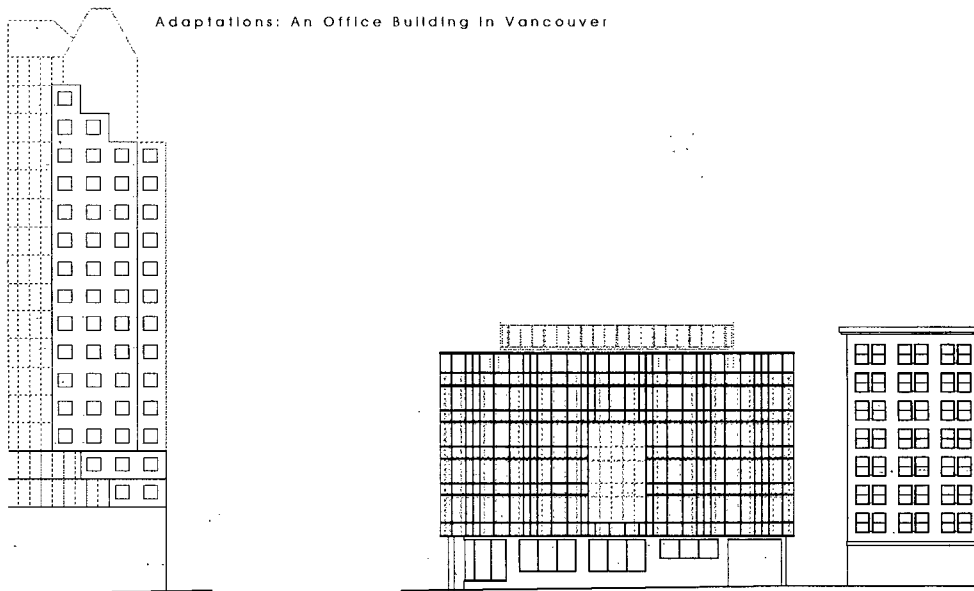


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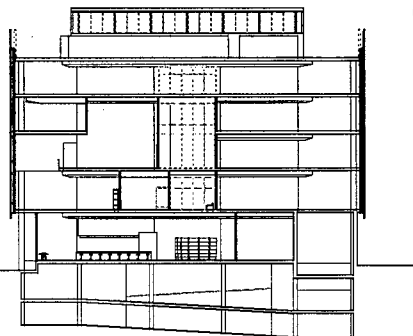
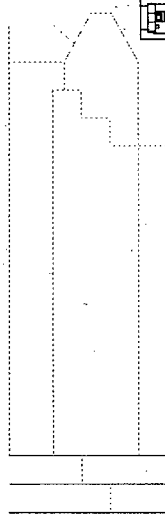
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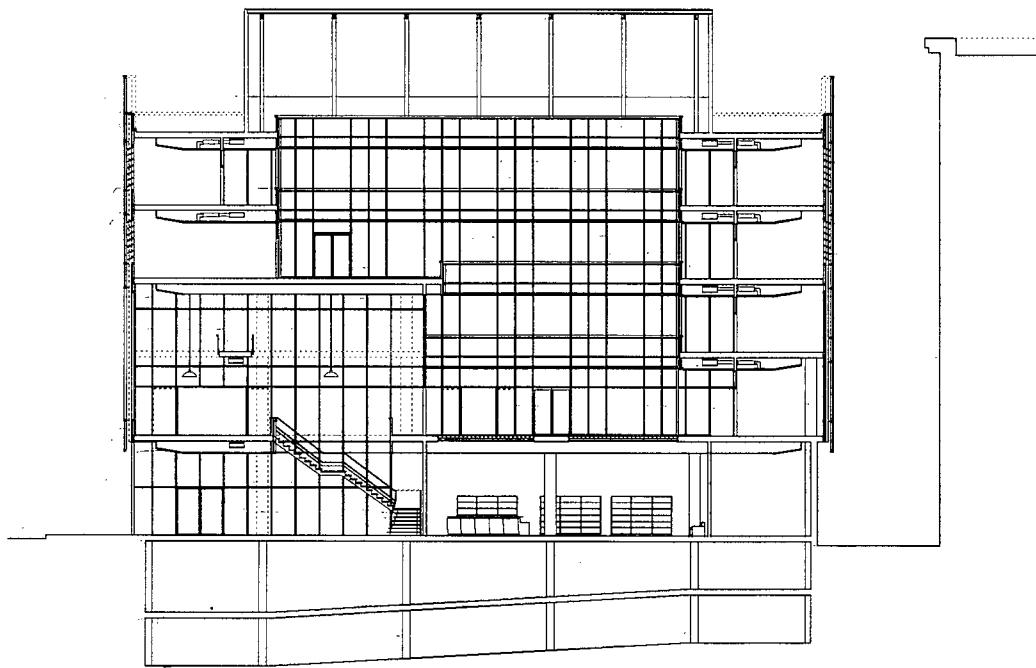
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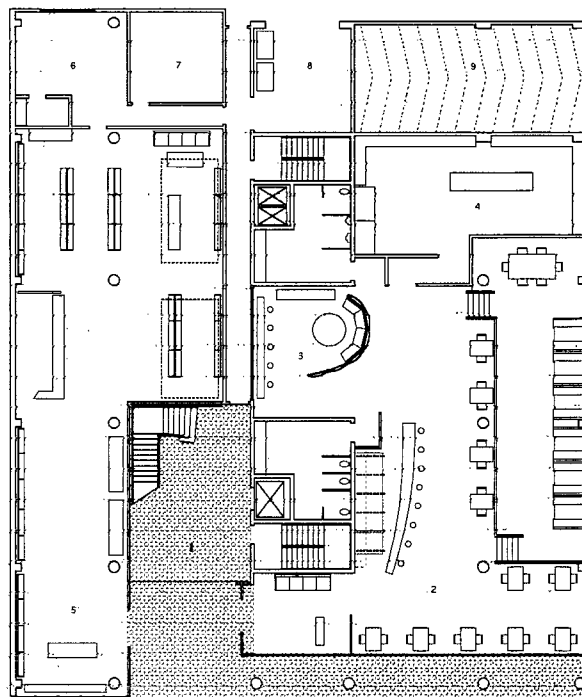
section e

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- 1 vestibule
- 2 restaurant
- 3 lounge
- 4 kitchen
- 5 bookstore
- 6 stair
- 7 storage
- 8 loading
- 9 ramp

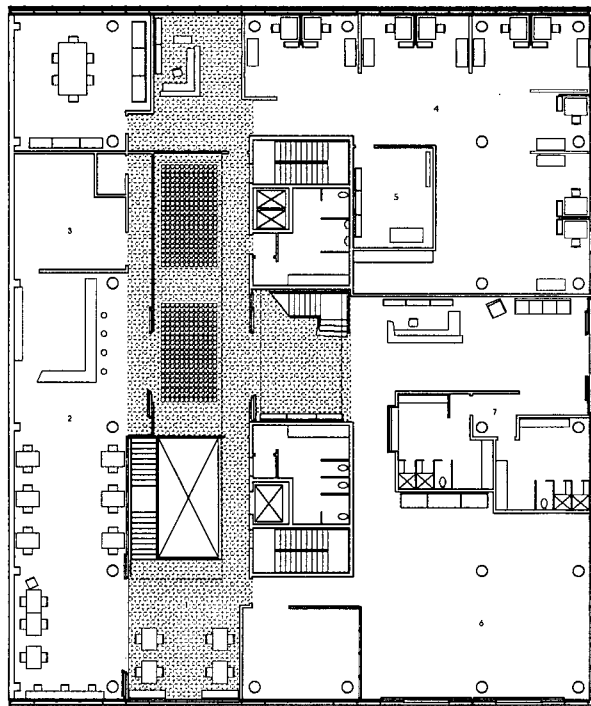


main floor

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- 1 terrace
- 2 cafe
- 3 kitchen
- 4 design firm
- 5 print room
- 6 yoga studio
- 7 change rooms

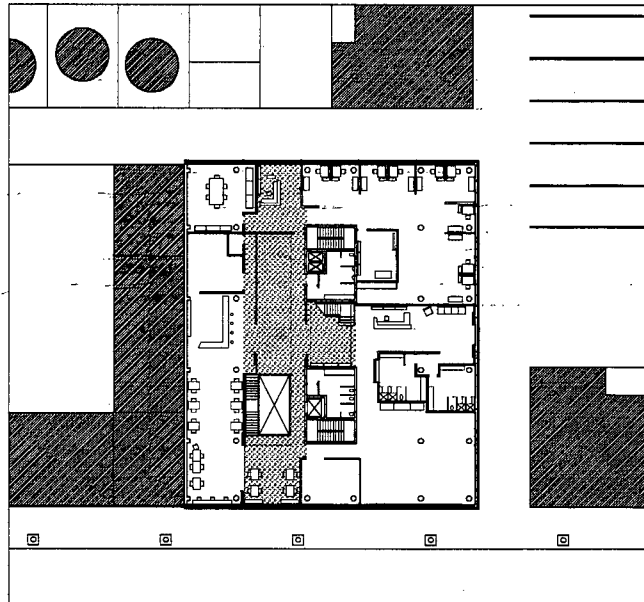


second floor

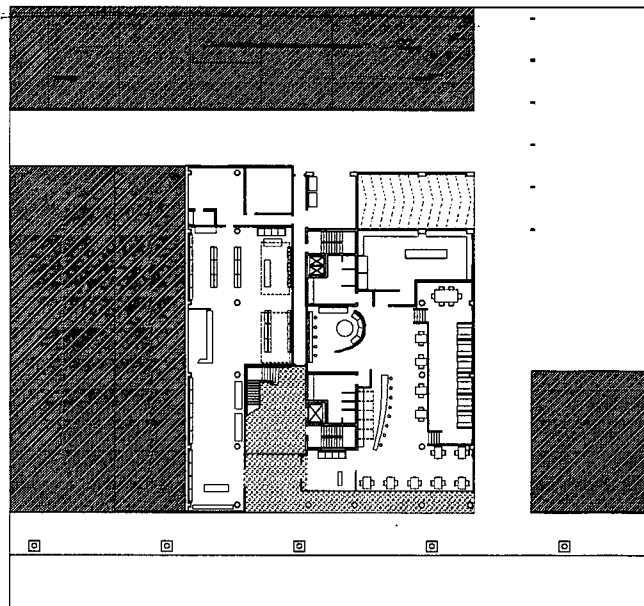
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second floor

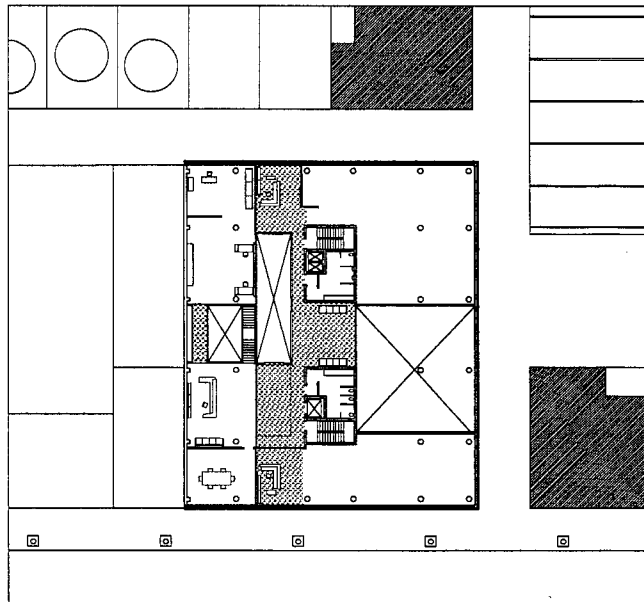


main floor

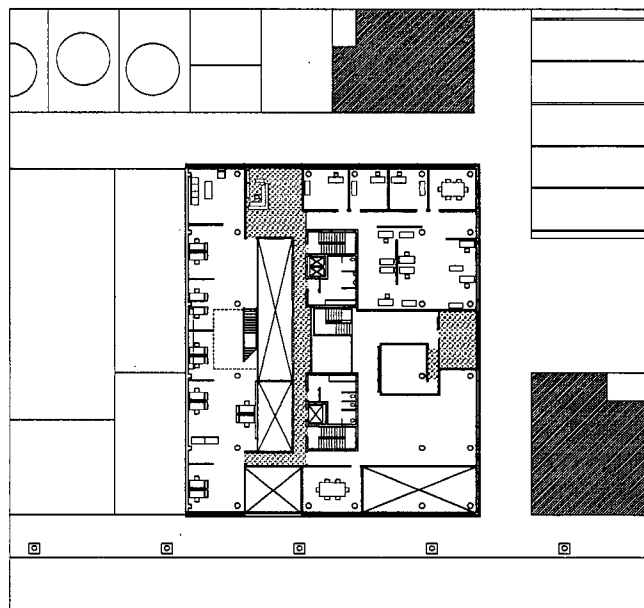
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fourth floor



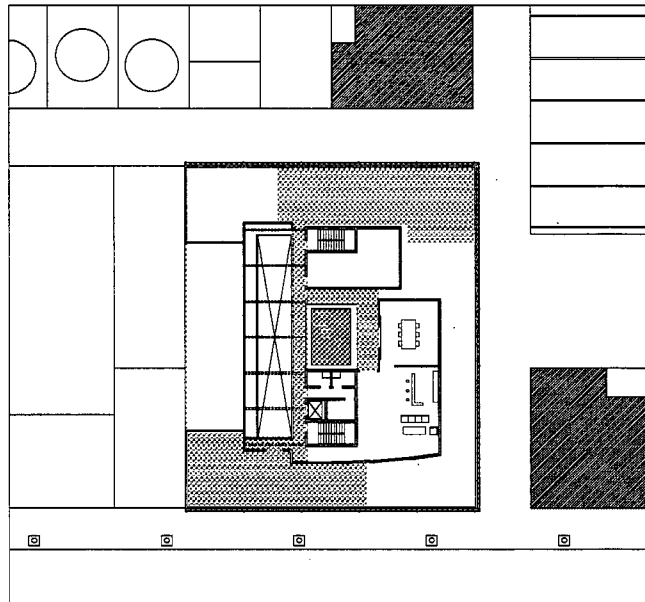
third floor

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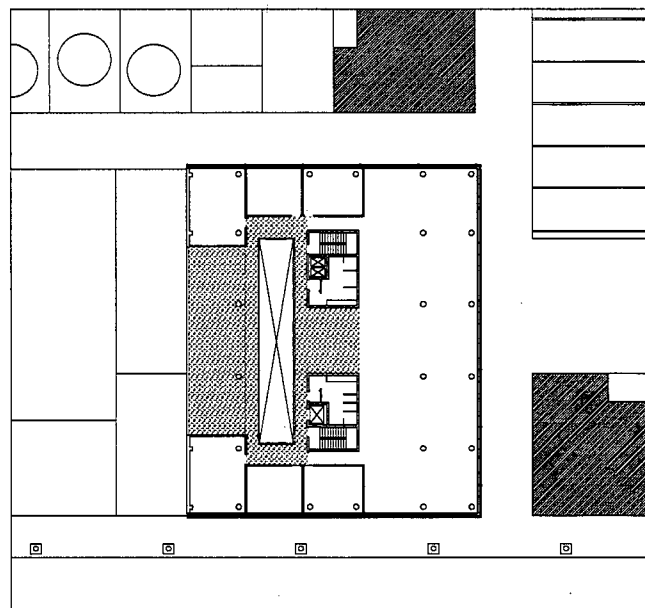
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penthouse



fifth floor

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