

TRANSFORMATION OF THE ARTIFACT:  
ADAPTIVE REUSE OF THE  
LASALLE COKE TOWER IN  
MONTREAL, QUEBEC

by

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B. Arch., The Frank Lloyd Wright School of Architecture, 1993

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 1998

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Vancouver, Canada

Date May 11/98

## ABSTRACT

The LaSalle Coke Tower is an existing structure located on a fifty-five foot strip of land bordering the south edge of the Lachine Canal and the north side of St. Patrick's St. (Montreal, Quebec). The railway passes through the structure at its base. Built at the turn of the century, the crane was used to hoist coal from barges to an elevated conveyor that carried it across the street to Côte-St.-Paul Gas Works. It is approximately 15 storeys high (167'). The Lachine Canal serviced the cause of industry from its completion in 1824 to the opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway in 1959 at which time industry slowly began to abandon the Lachine Canal area.

The basic premise of the design project revolved around both preservation and development of Tour LaSalle Coke (LaSalle Coke Tower). Regarding preservation, it was the state of abandonment that was to be preserved, allowing for a sense of mobility, vagrant roving, free time, and liberty. Architectural production within the abandoned site must respond to the rhythms and flows of the passing of time and the loss of limits. The two principal components include a provision for discovery (architecture as a heuristic device) and an archive component housing historical documents relevant to the tower and its surrounding context (the Lachine Canal).

The essence of the project was to develop this type of site without destroying its character and without detracting from its historical significance. Careful consideration was essential to negotiate between development and preservation. A broader interpretation of heritage preservation was necessary: moving beyond the isolated monument to include territory which characterizes a particular place. In this instance the place consisted of the extreme linear space of the canal and its adjacent properties in addition to the remnant architectural artifact of the tower. The state of abandonment is a part of the history of the site.

The provision for discovery is made through the use of stairs and an elevator, allowing visitors uninhibited access to the tower. This provision allows for multiple levels of interaction with the artifact, from the short visit to a more comprehensive survey of the object. The archive component is a small-scale intervention thereby minimizing the impact of specialized components (or private spaces) which limit the sense of mobility, vagrant roving, free time and liberty. For the same reason, the food service and primary toilet facility is located 'off site' approximately 320 feet to the east. The goal was to retain the basic features of the artifact while providing for a means of discovery and documentation of a National Historic Landmark.

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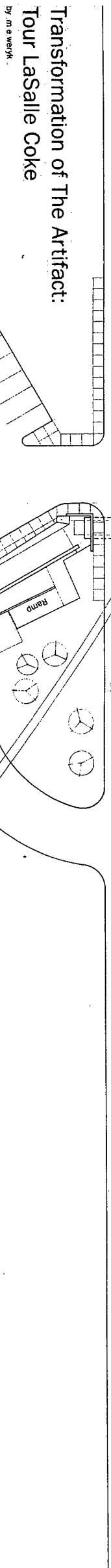
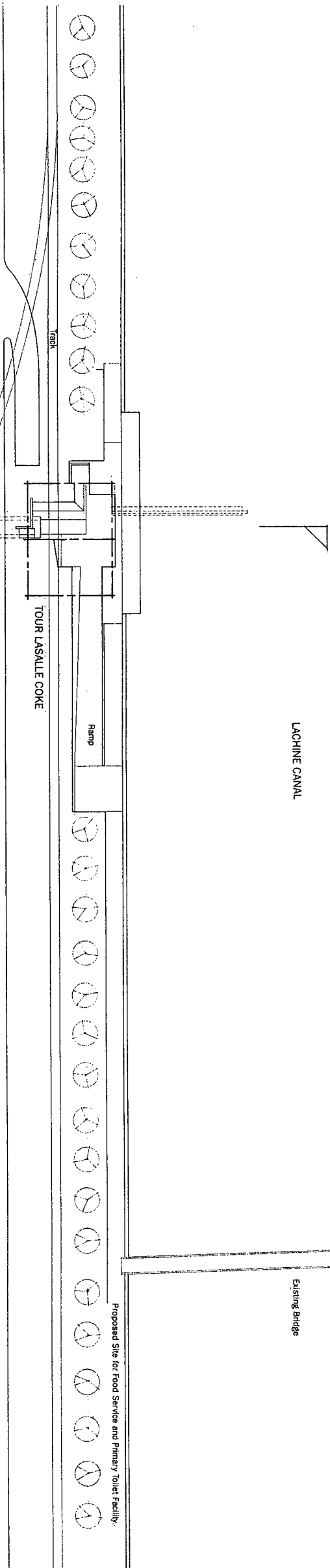
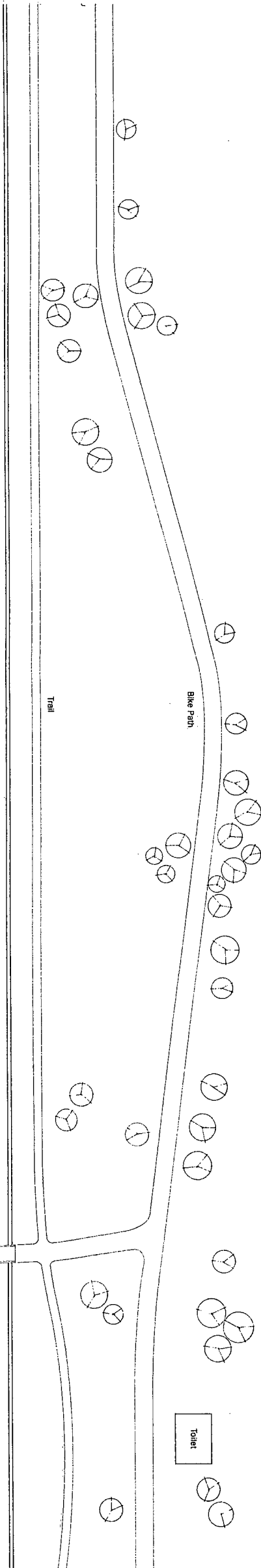
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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to thank the staff at Parks Canada in Montreal, Quebec. Specifically Paul-Emile Cadorette, Robert Pepin and Jean Audet for their help in gathering information on The LaSalle Coke Tower. Special thanks to those who contributed time in preparation of the thesis presentation: Annabel Vaughan (tower model), David Carter (model base), and Gordon Martyshuk (site model). I would also like to thank my committee members, Andrew Gruft (Chairperson), Sandy Hirshen, and Bill Pechet for their insistence on clarity and restraint. Finally, I would like to thank Tara Gronlund and Robert Dare for their contribution and enduring support.



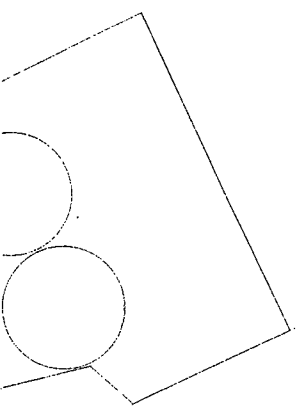
EXISTING CONDITION      VIEW LOOKING EAST



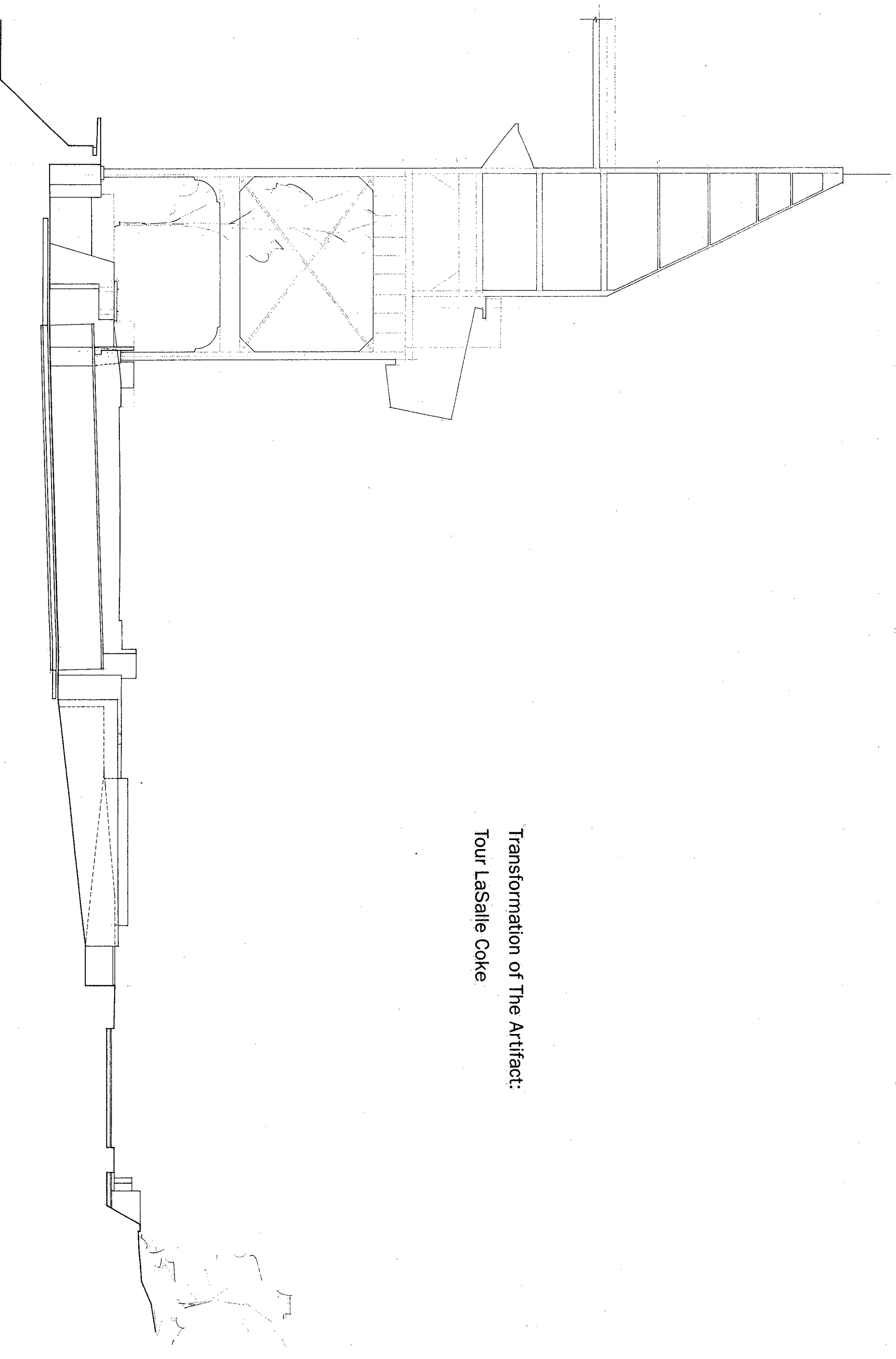
Transformation of The Artifact:  
Tour LaSalle Coke  
by m e w r k

SITE PLAN

1:20'



Transformation of The Artifact:  
Tour LaSalle Coke

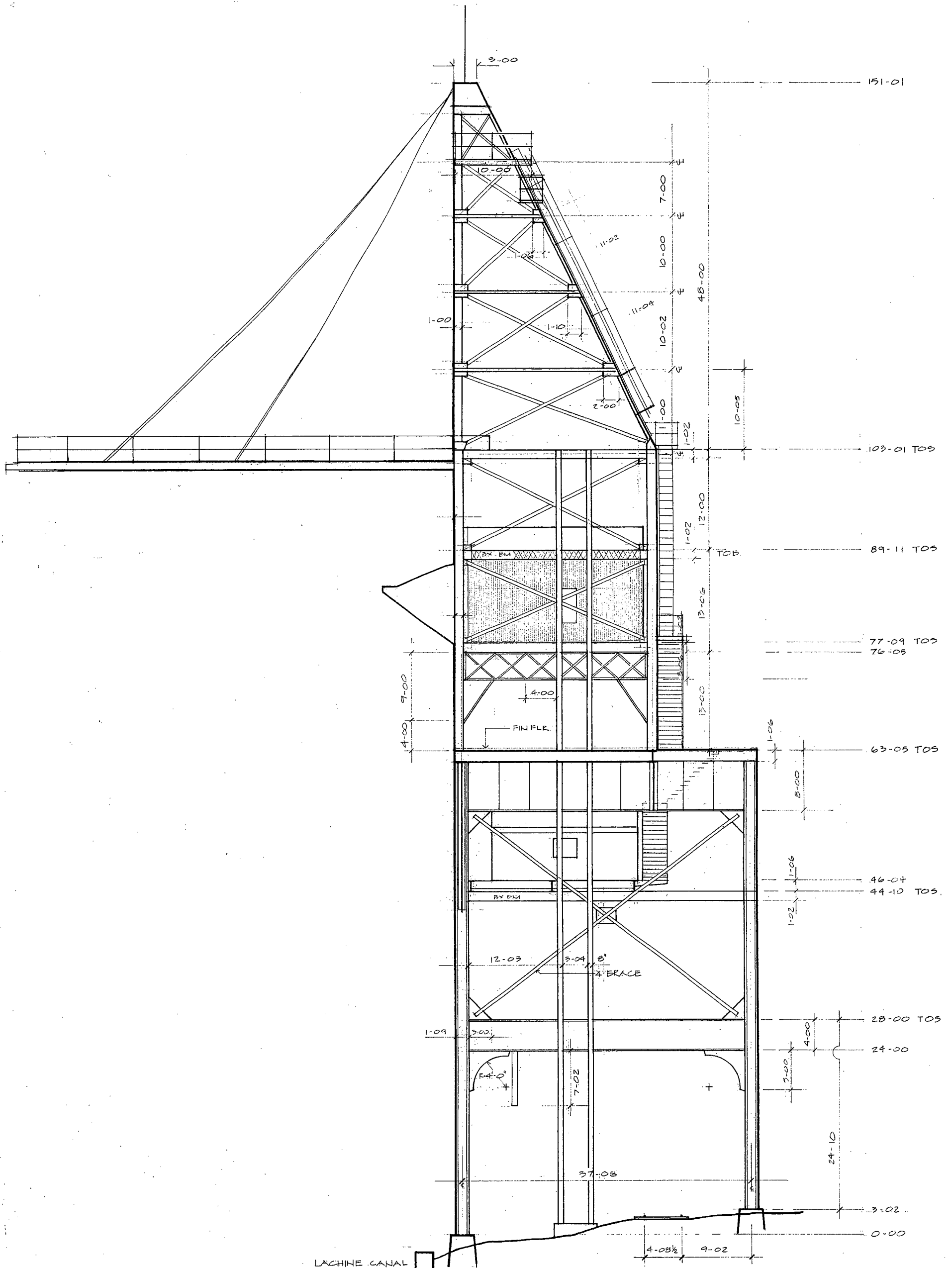


SITE SECTION

1/8"=1'-0"

M E W P K

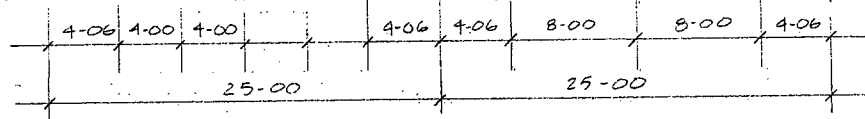


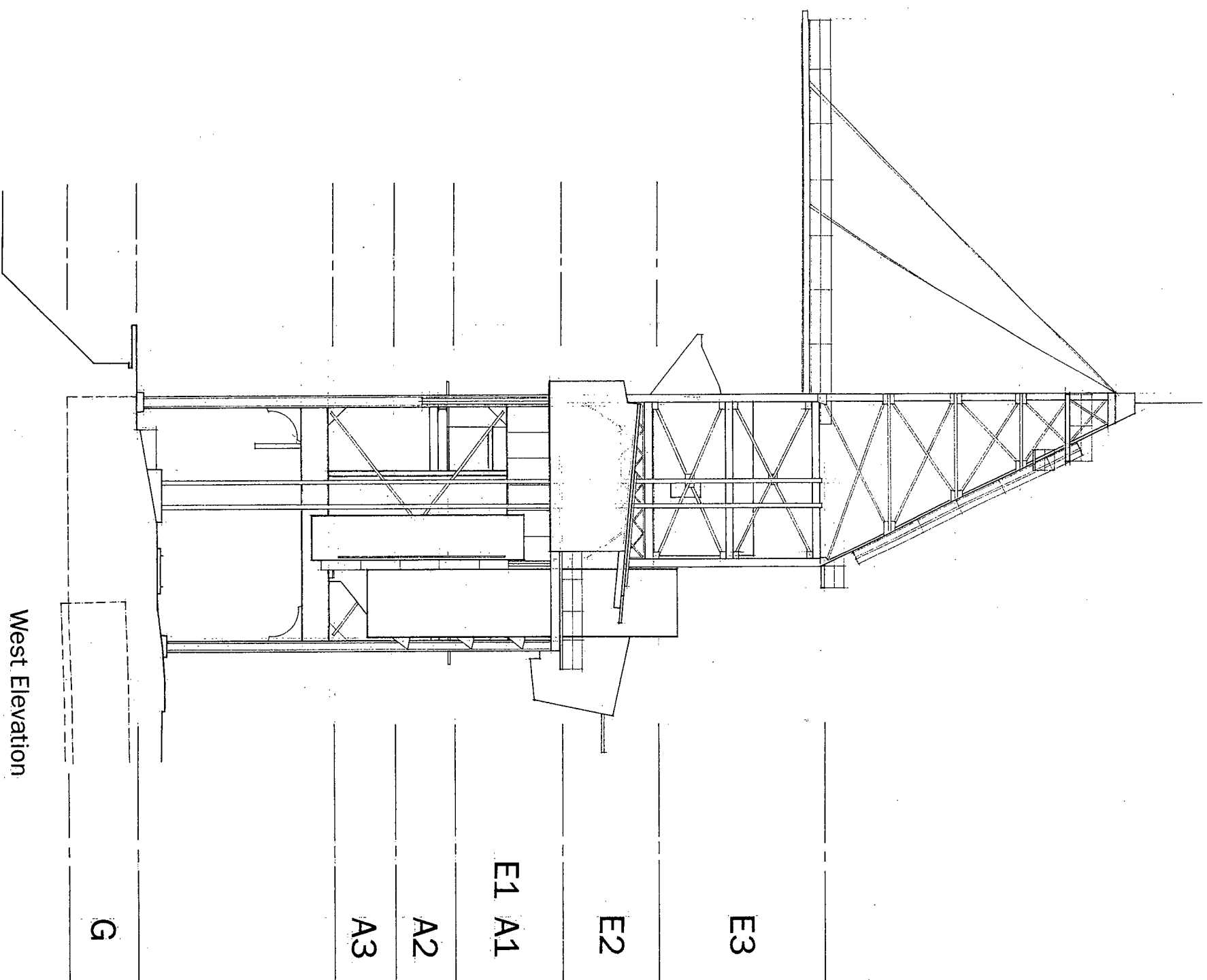


# EXISTING CONDITIONS West Elevation

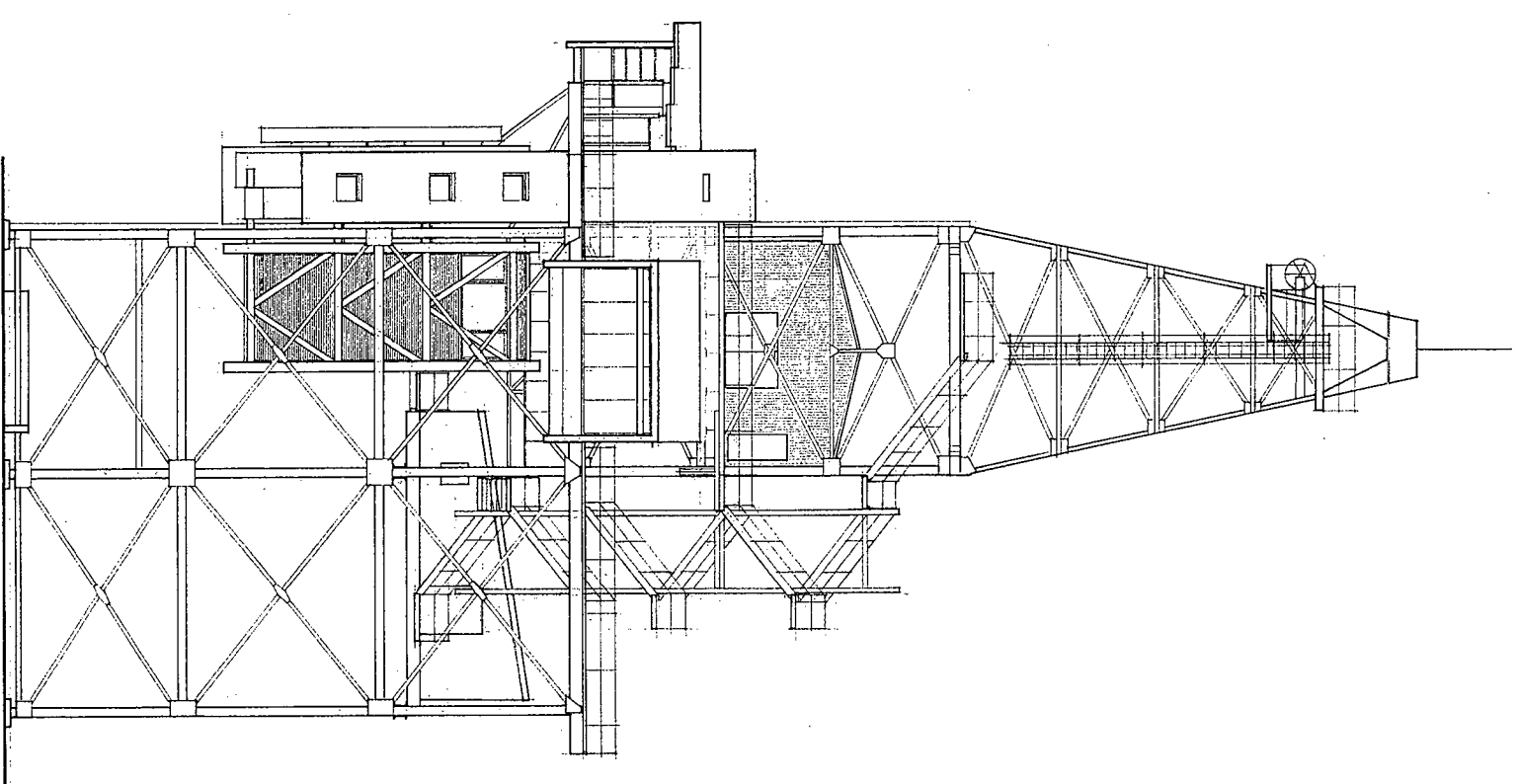
1/8"=1'-0"

m.e.weryk.





West Elevation

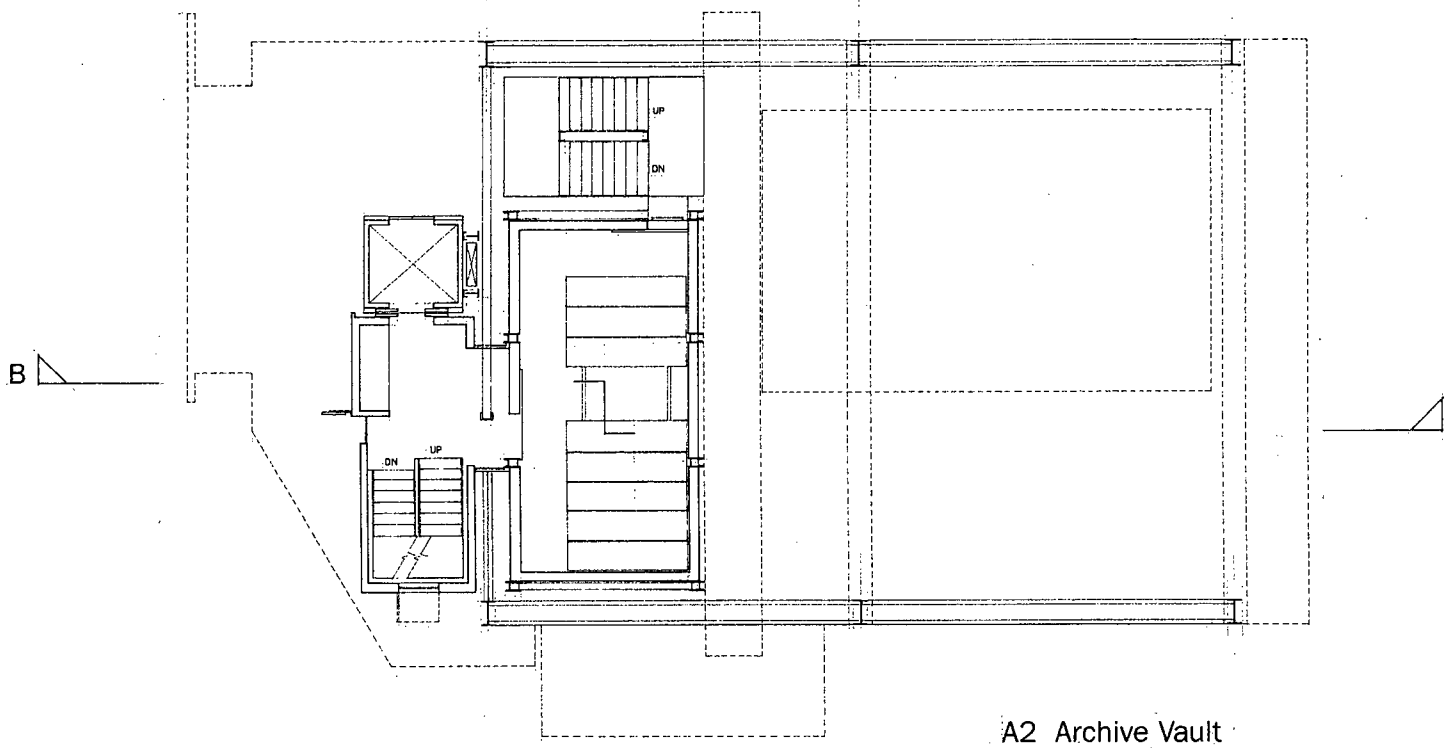


South Elevation

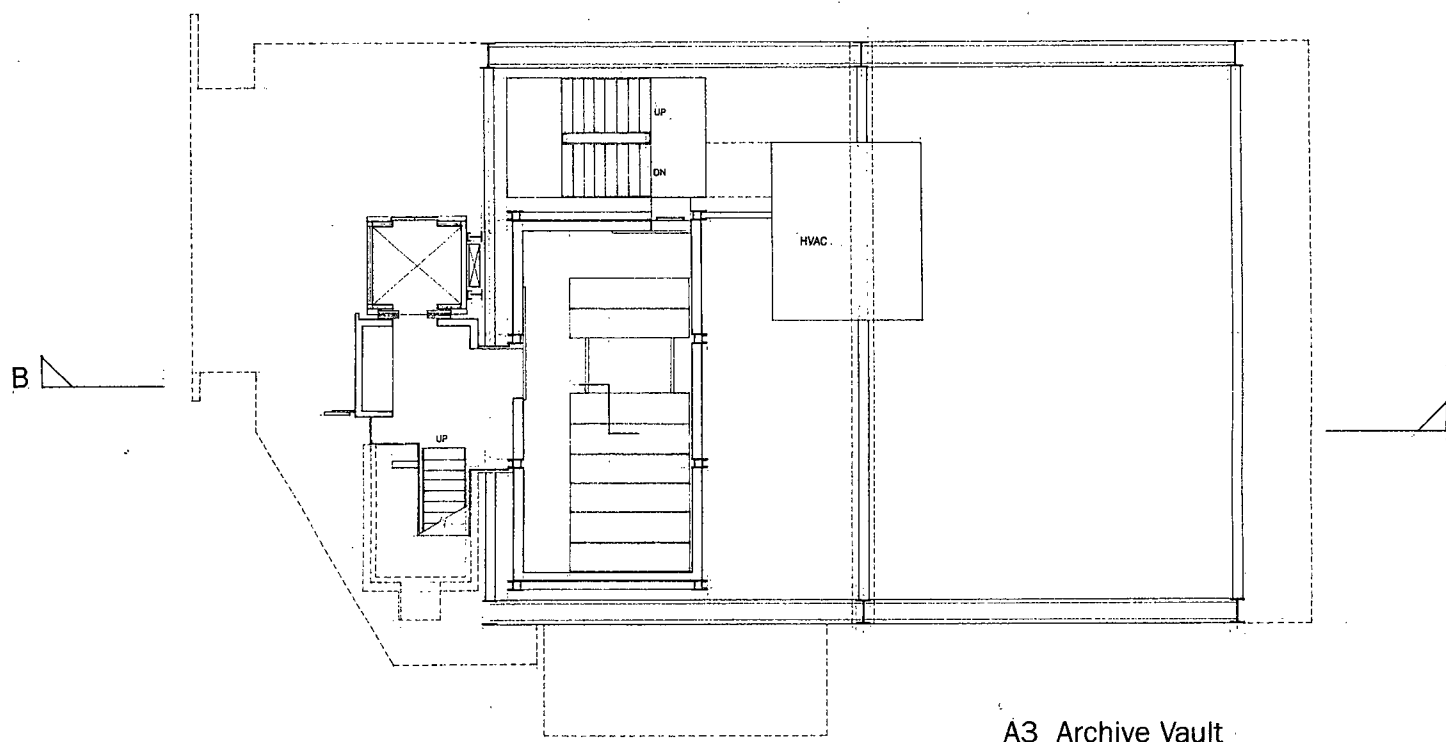
# KEYED ELEVATIONS

1/8"=1'-0"

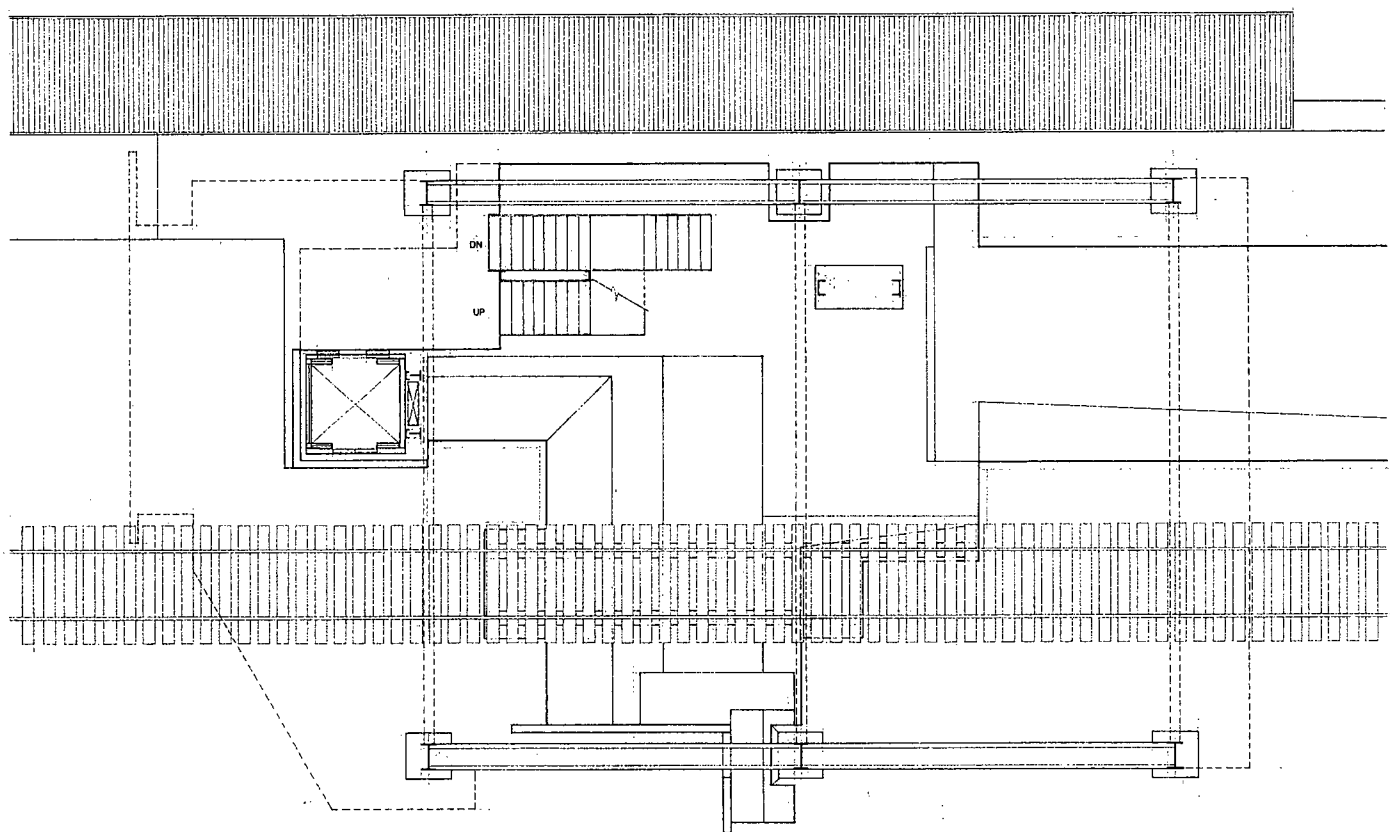
in e. work



A2 Archive Vault



A3 Archive Vault



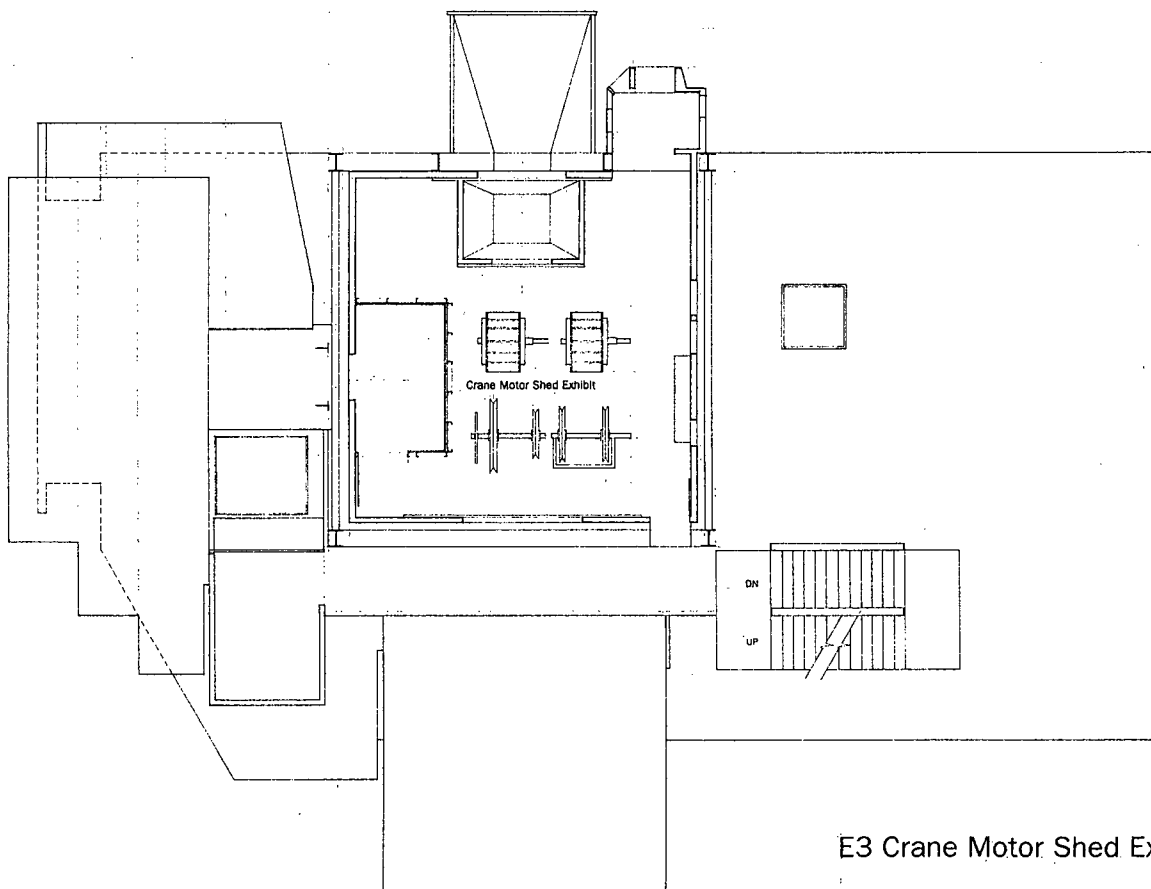
G. Ground Plan

# FLOOR PLANS

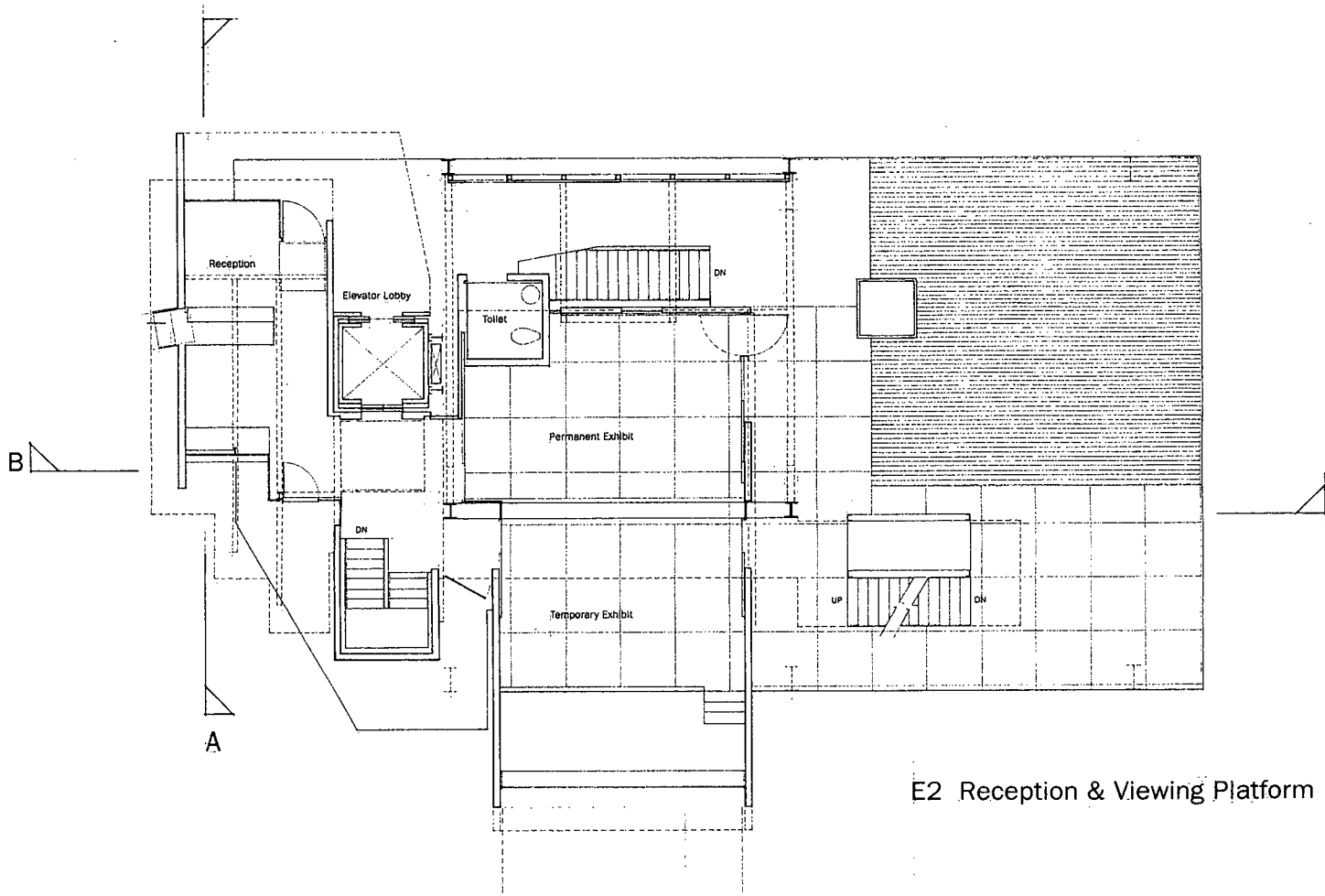
1/4"=1'0"

m o weryk

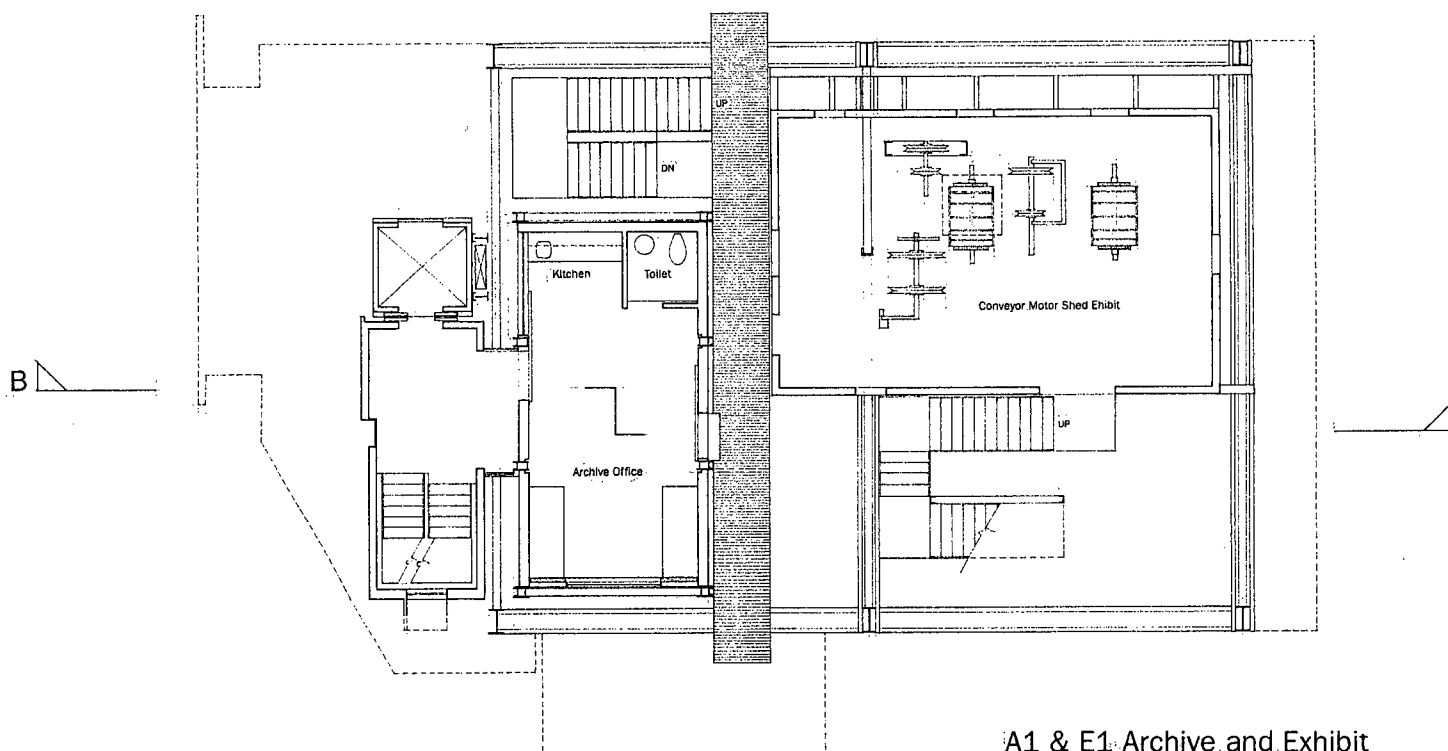




E3 Crane Motor Shed Exhibit



E2 Reception & Viewing Platform



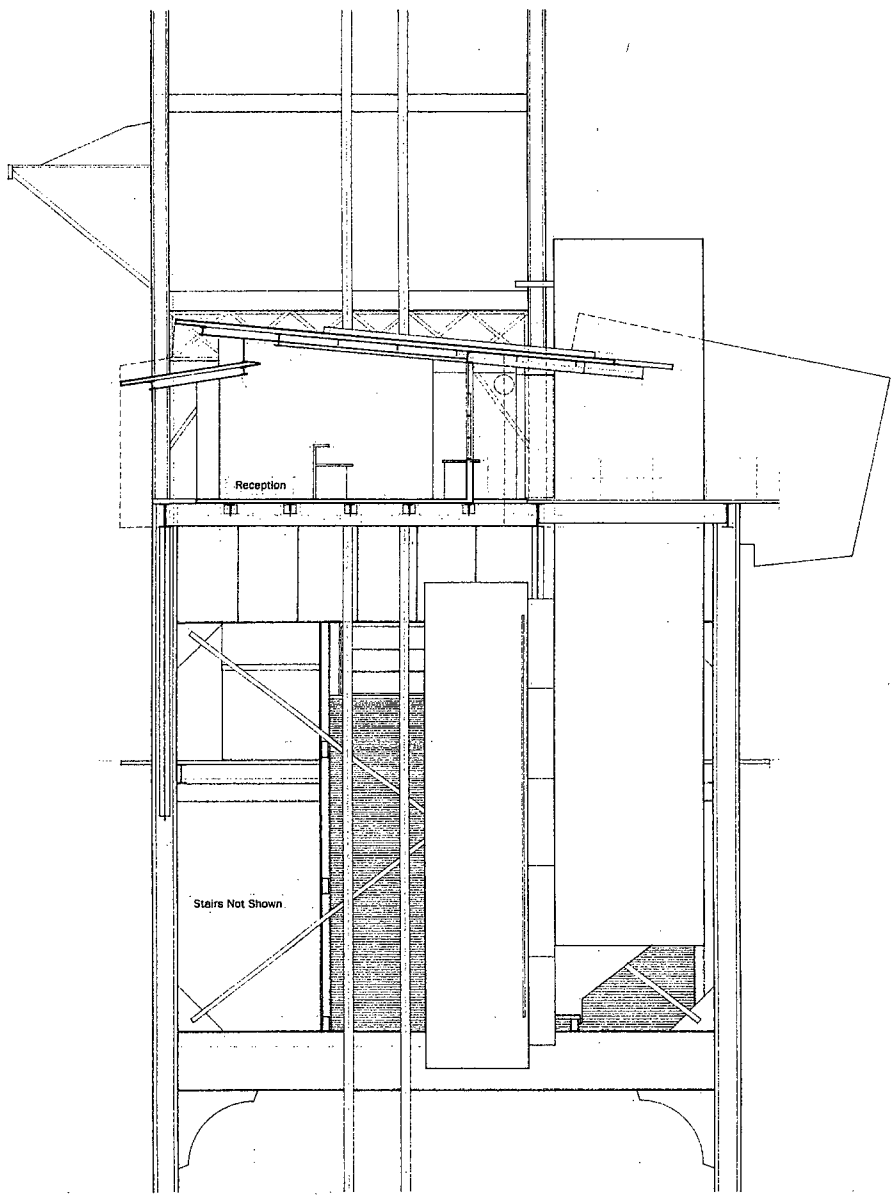
A1 & E1 Archive and Exhibit

# FLOOR PLANS

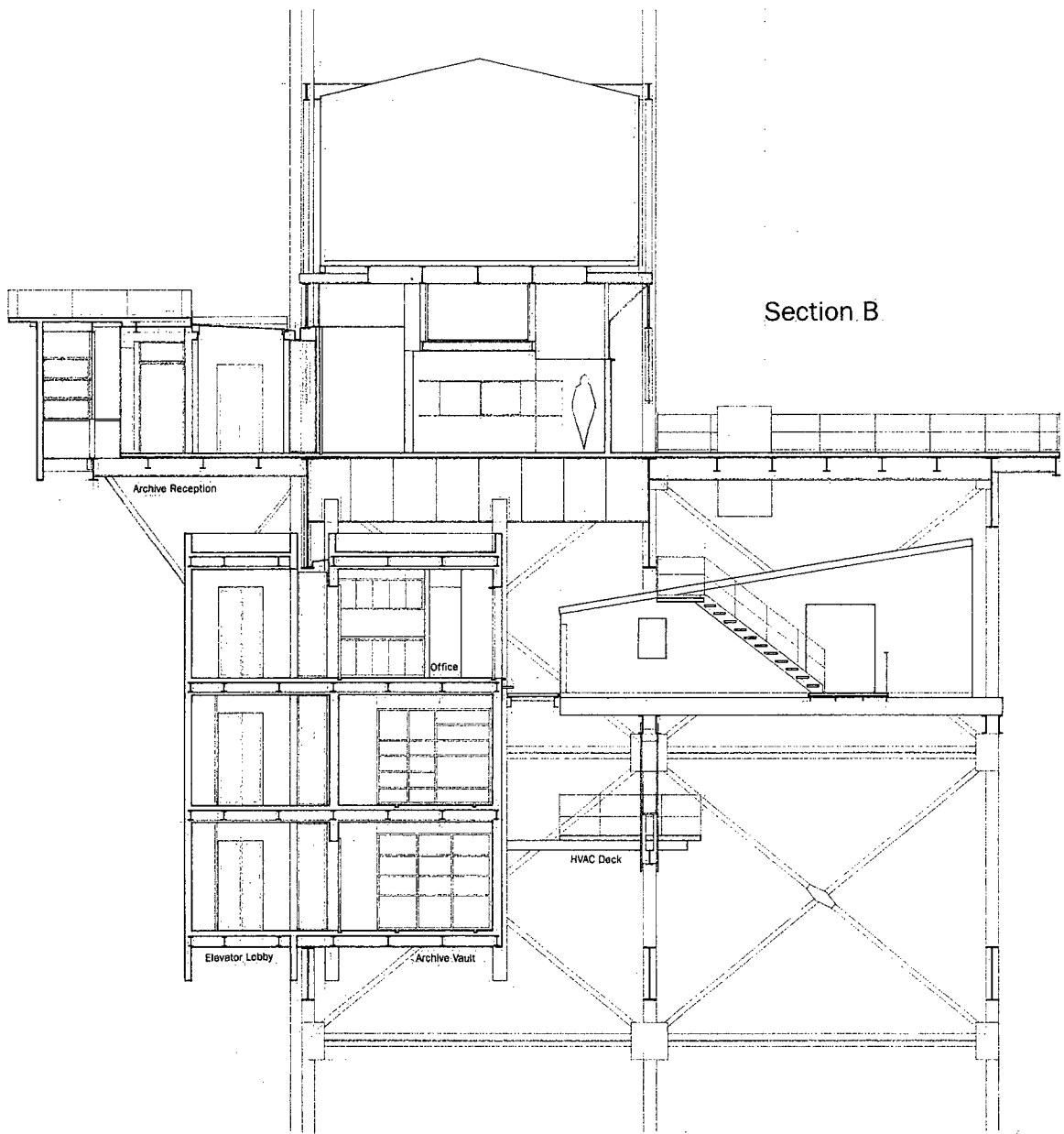
1/4"=1'0"

in a way





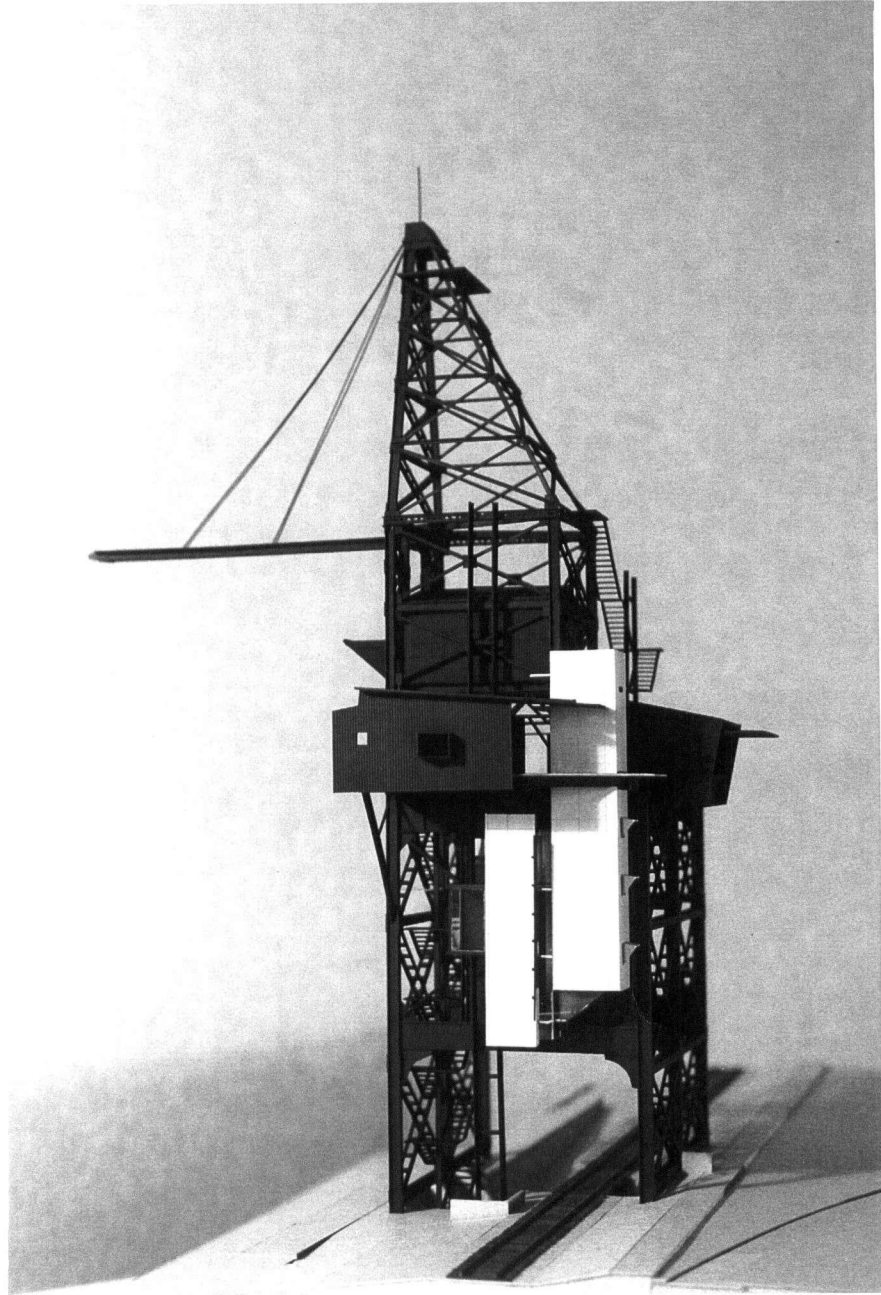
Section A



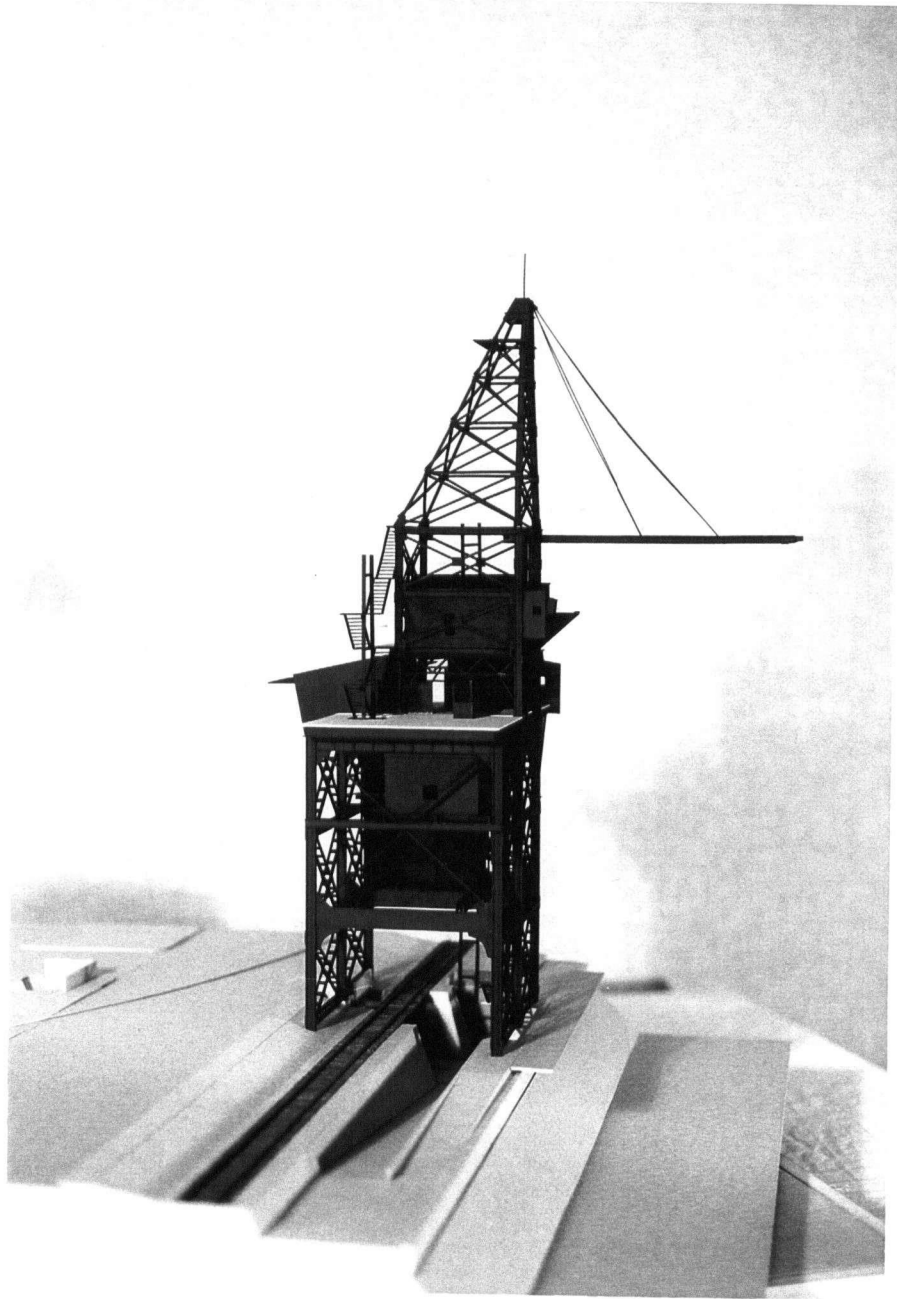
Section B

SECTIONS

1/4"=1'0" m e weryk



MODEL VIEW LOOKING EAST



MODEL VIEW LOOKING WEST





MODEL VIEW LOOKING SOUTH