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The Lobby Lobby

Thesis Project

The Berlage

Center for Advanced Studies in
Architecture and Urban Design

The Lobby Lobby

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The Berlage
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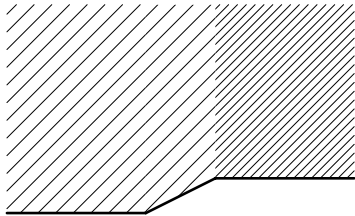
Introduction

This project lobbies for the lobby, as a generous space in corporate cities capable of reversing the trend of atomization.

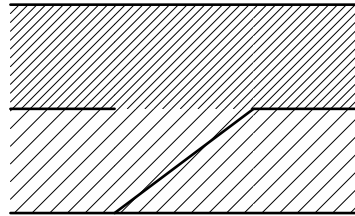
Originating in capitalistic societies, lobbies are oddly socialistic entrances to mundane, stratified private spaces above. Formed in the gap between the ground and a hovering tower, the lobby is a distinctly modern type, conjuring notions of transparency, coexistence, continuity, and universal hospitality. These ideals are today challenged in highly privatized cities, where commodification has fragmented space: ground floors are surrendered to retail, lobbies reduced to corridors. But as private space is increasingly compressed in dense cities, and no longer offers a comfortable refuge from the world that it once did, it is worth revisiting the lobby as a potentially relevant type once again. Hotels, offices and apartment blocks can no longer be improved through rentable space alone, but can benefit from the protective atmosphere of the lobby, distinct from the dysphoria of the city or the prison of the private cell.

A lobbyist uses specific projects to redirect a more general discourse. This project lobbies through the design of a lobby in Hong Kong, a privatized city where space is highly fragmented, a potential template of future cities. The ground floor of several office, hotel and residential towers are cleared of all shops and corridors to form a common lobby, combining circulation and space. Making a building publicly-accessible is beyond the agency of the architect, but it is possible to offer a clearing in the city.

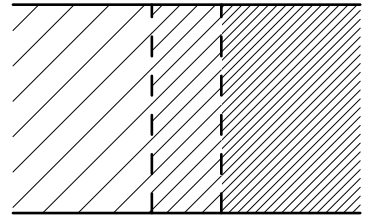
The project uses the frame to define spaces within a continuous interior. As opposed to other public interiors such as shopping malls or atriums, which enclose to negate the world, the lobby uses frames to allow foreground and background to coexist. The design of different frames with varying proportions, lighting, proximities and apertures constitutes a spectrum of spatial configurations. It is the one moment in a private development where space is designed in cubic meters rather than floor areas. The space is captured between the floor, a continuation of urban pavement; and the ceiling, the underbelly of the high-rise above. The grid emphasizes the seriality of the building and continuity through perspectival horizon, while mimicking the facade in the depth of its members. Sound-absorbing walls, ceiling heights and elevation changes create edges while maintaining an overall consistency.



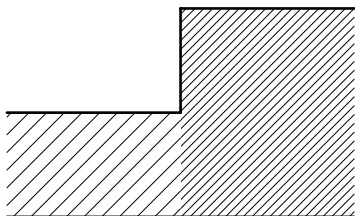
plinth



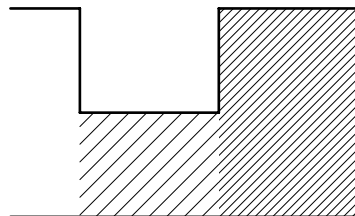
piano nobile



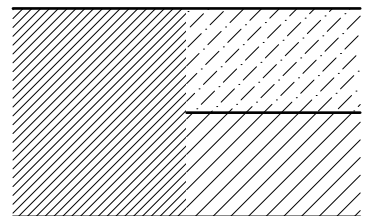
screen



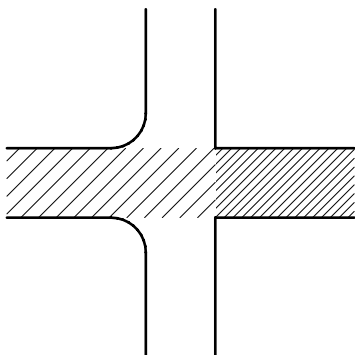
celestory



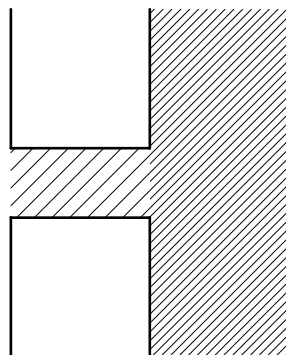
compression



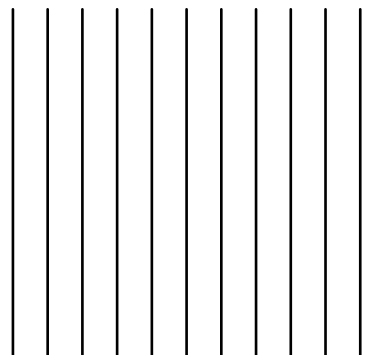
umbrella



axis



screen



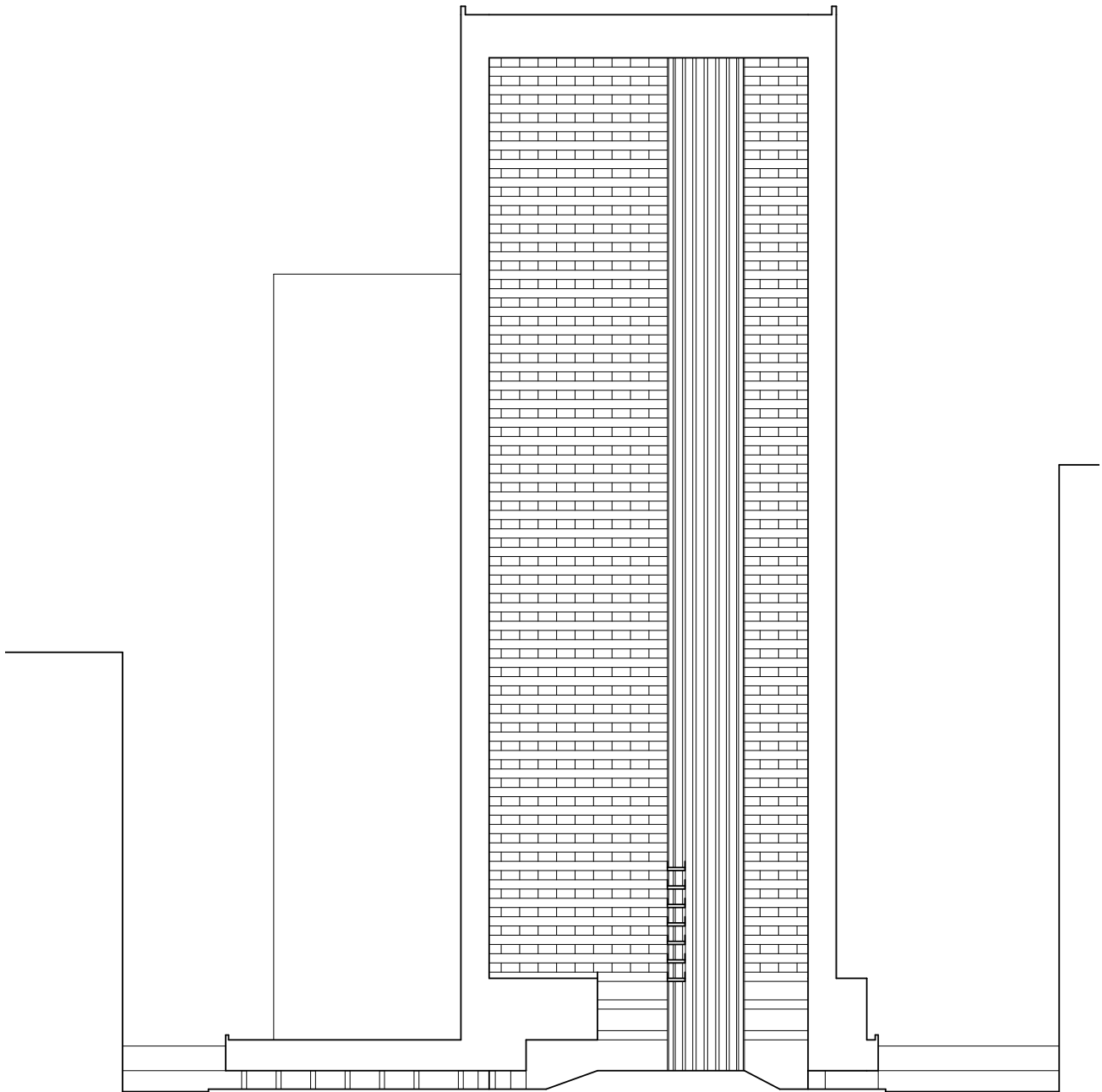
repetition

Operations

Case studies into canonical lobbies reveal tactics for ambiguously creating boundaries.

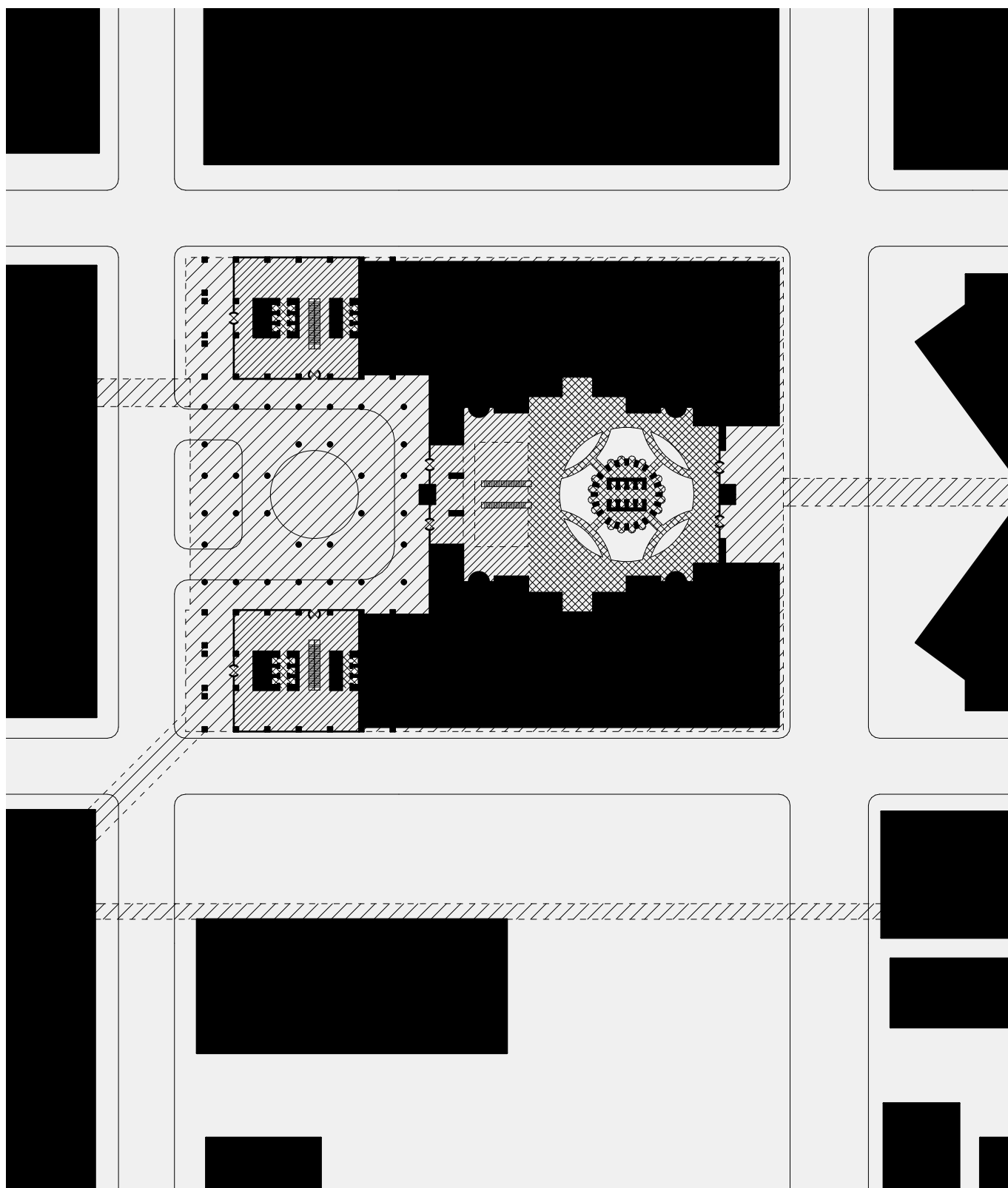
I. Case Studies

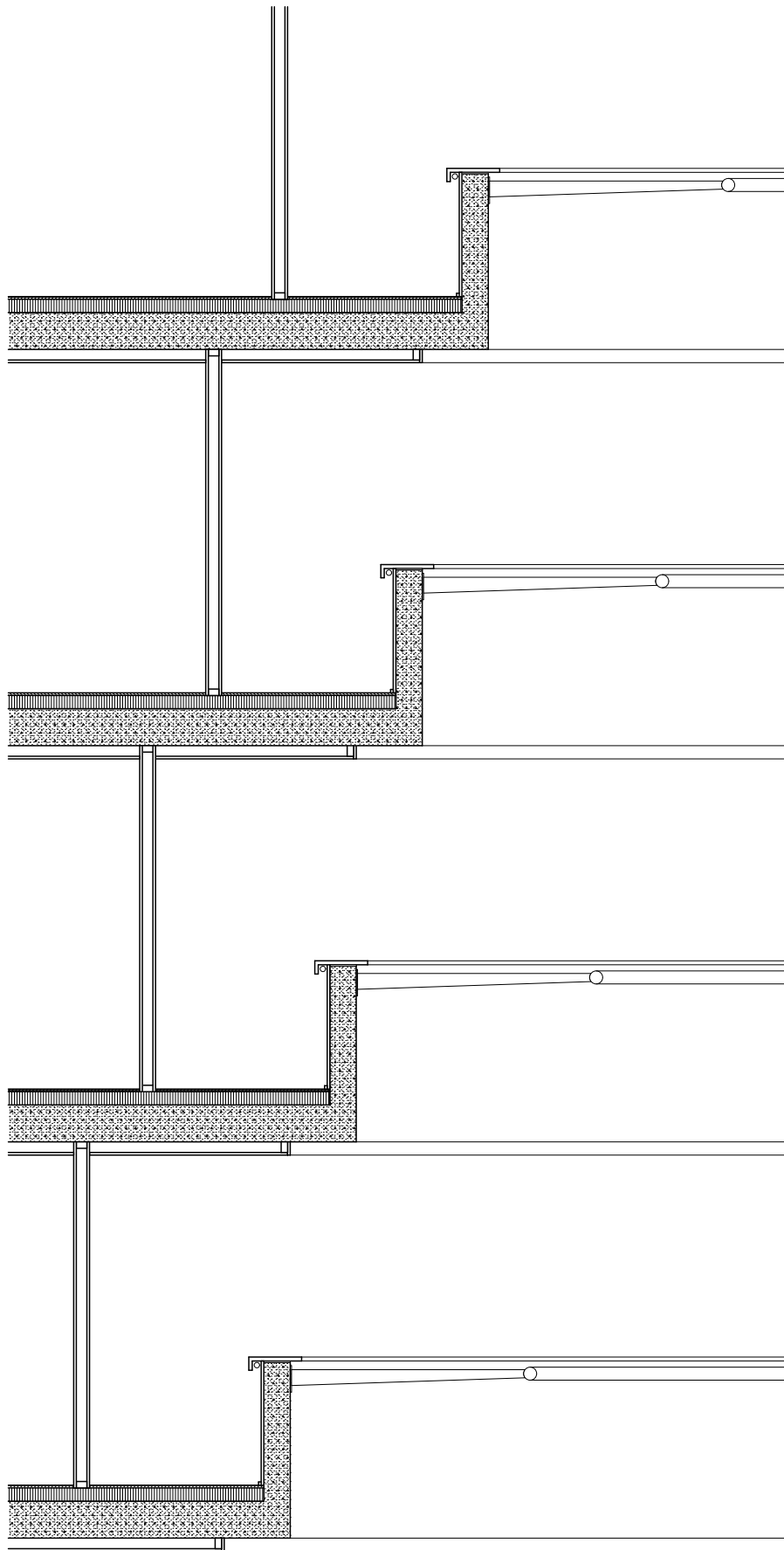
As canonical case studies are dissected, it is revealed that the lobby plays a two-faced game: serving the building by marking an entrance to claim autonomy, and serving the city by creating a public space. These attitudes are best captured through a lobby's details.



Atlanta Marriott Marquis

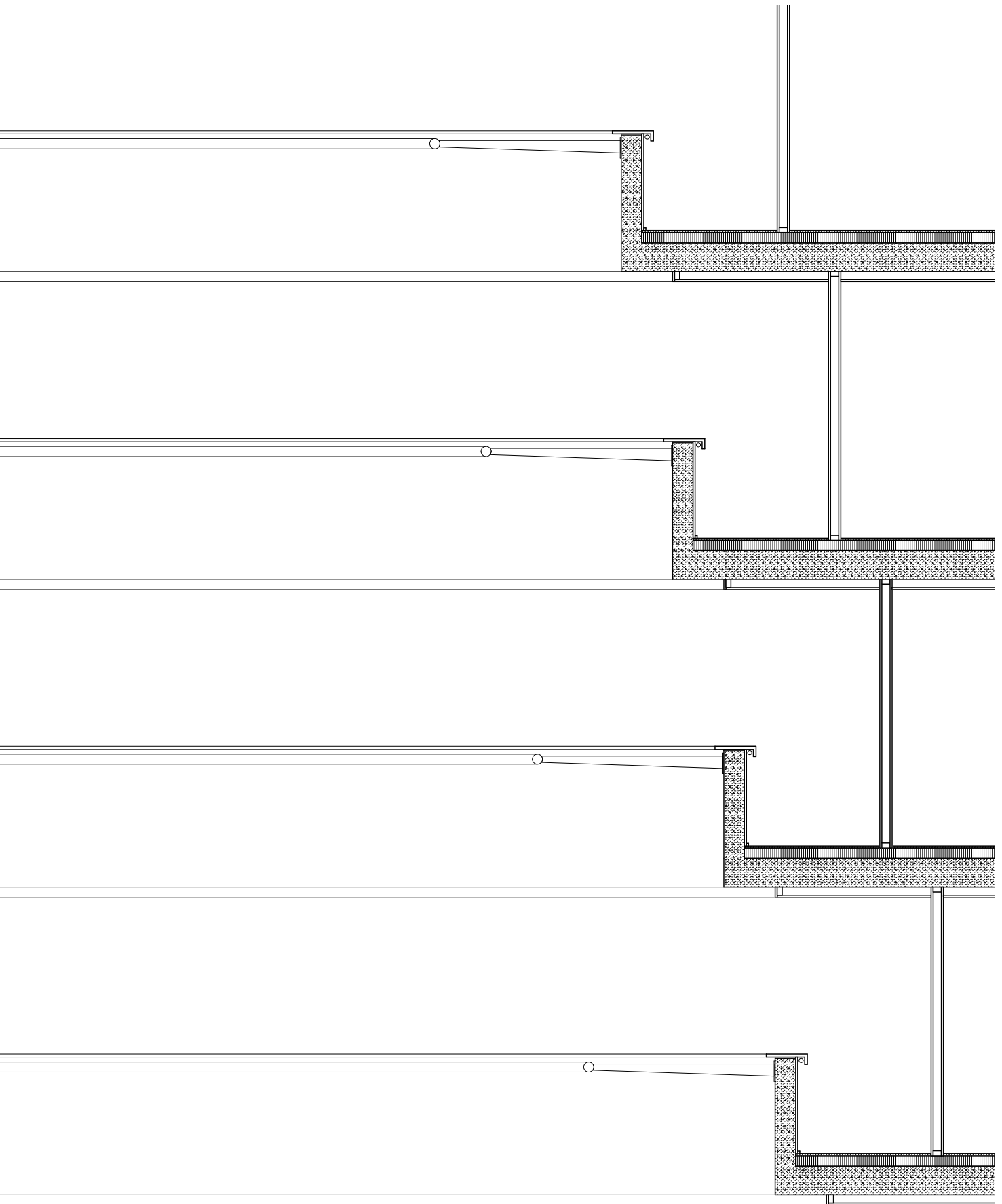
John Portman
Atlanta, 1985

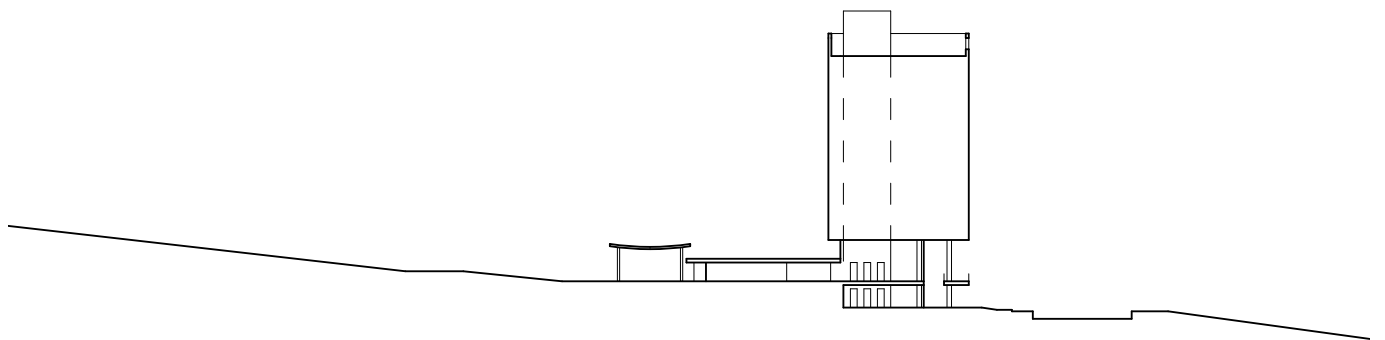




Repetition

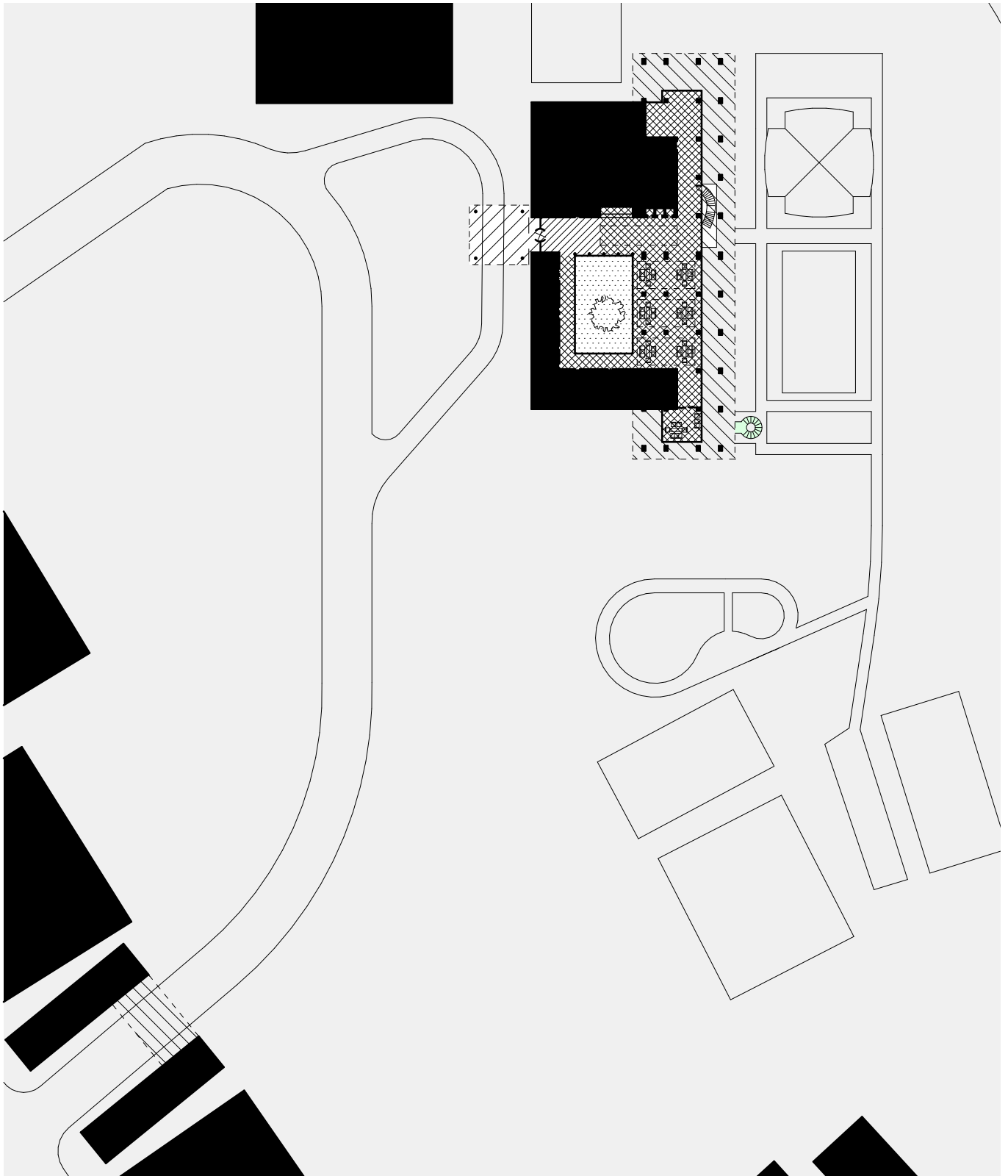
establishes autonomy though self-reference and symmetry.

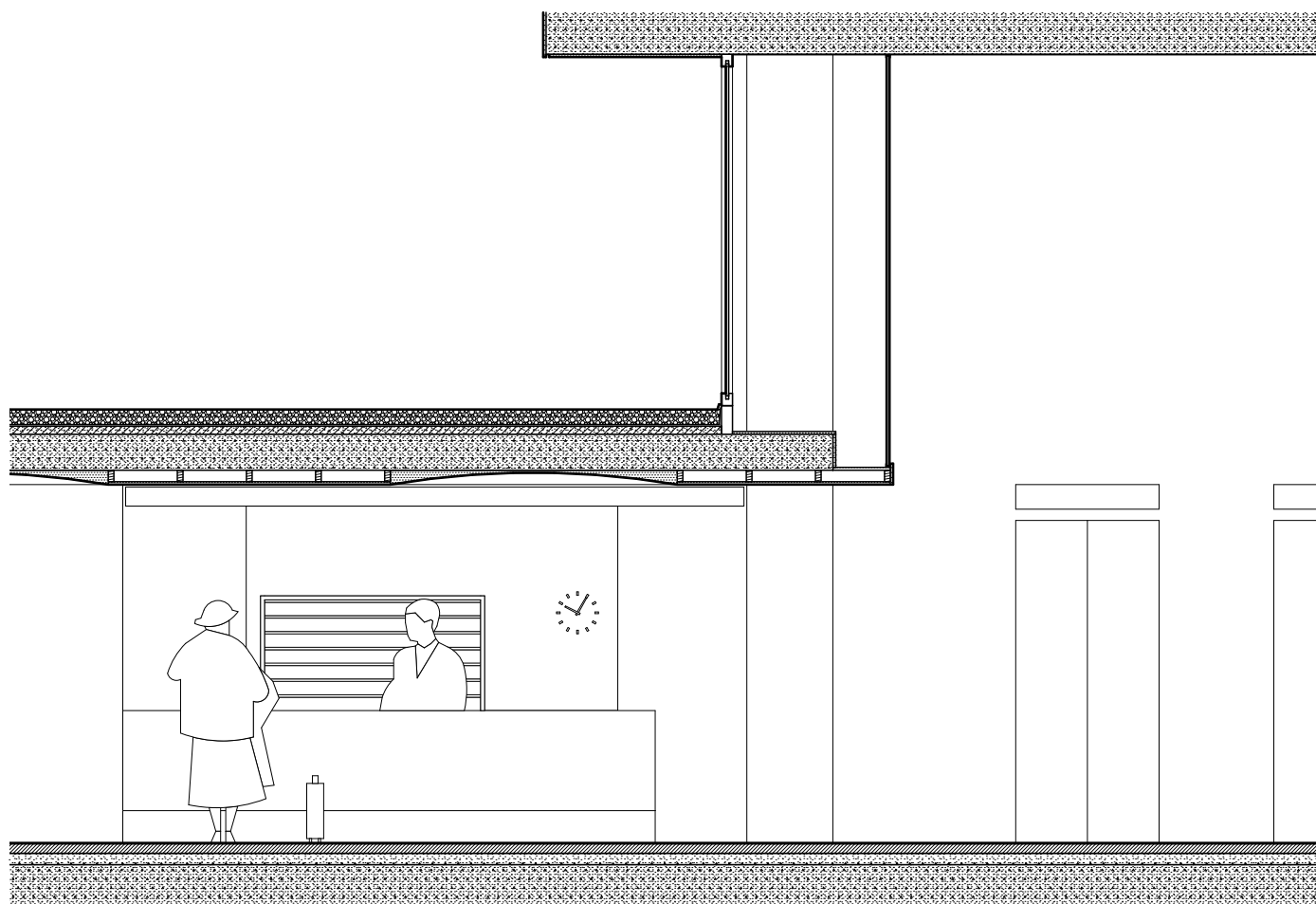




Istanbul Hilton Hotel

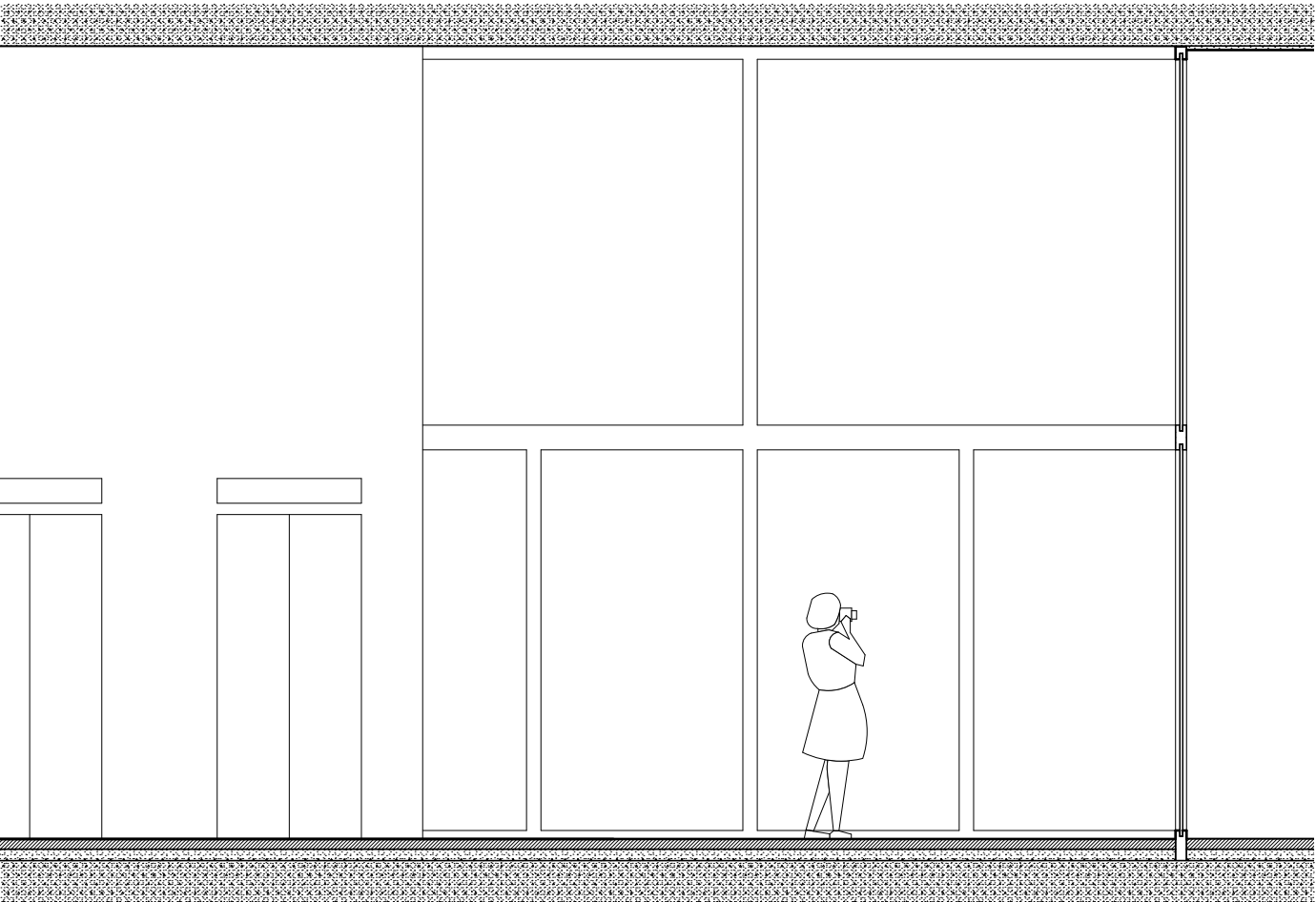
Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, Sedad Eldem
Istanbul, 1955

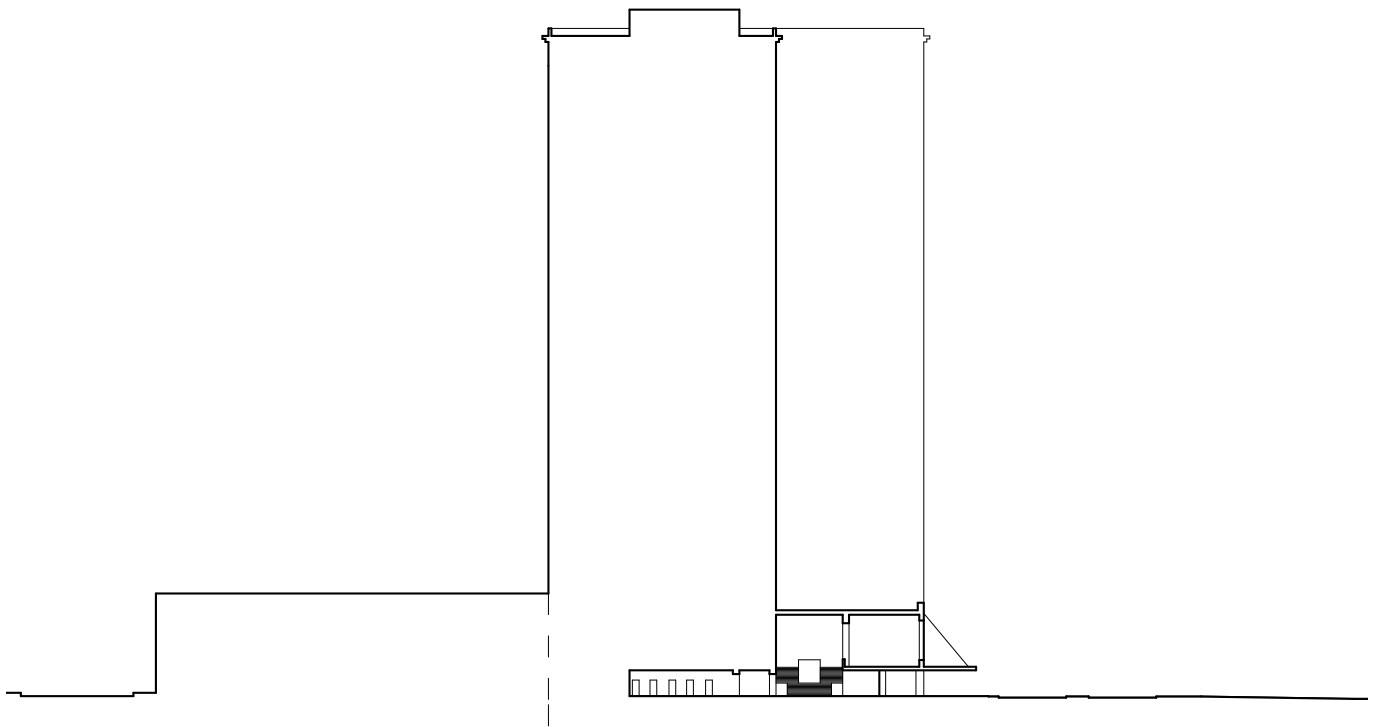




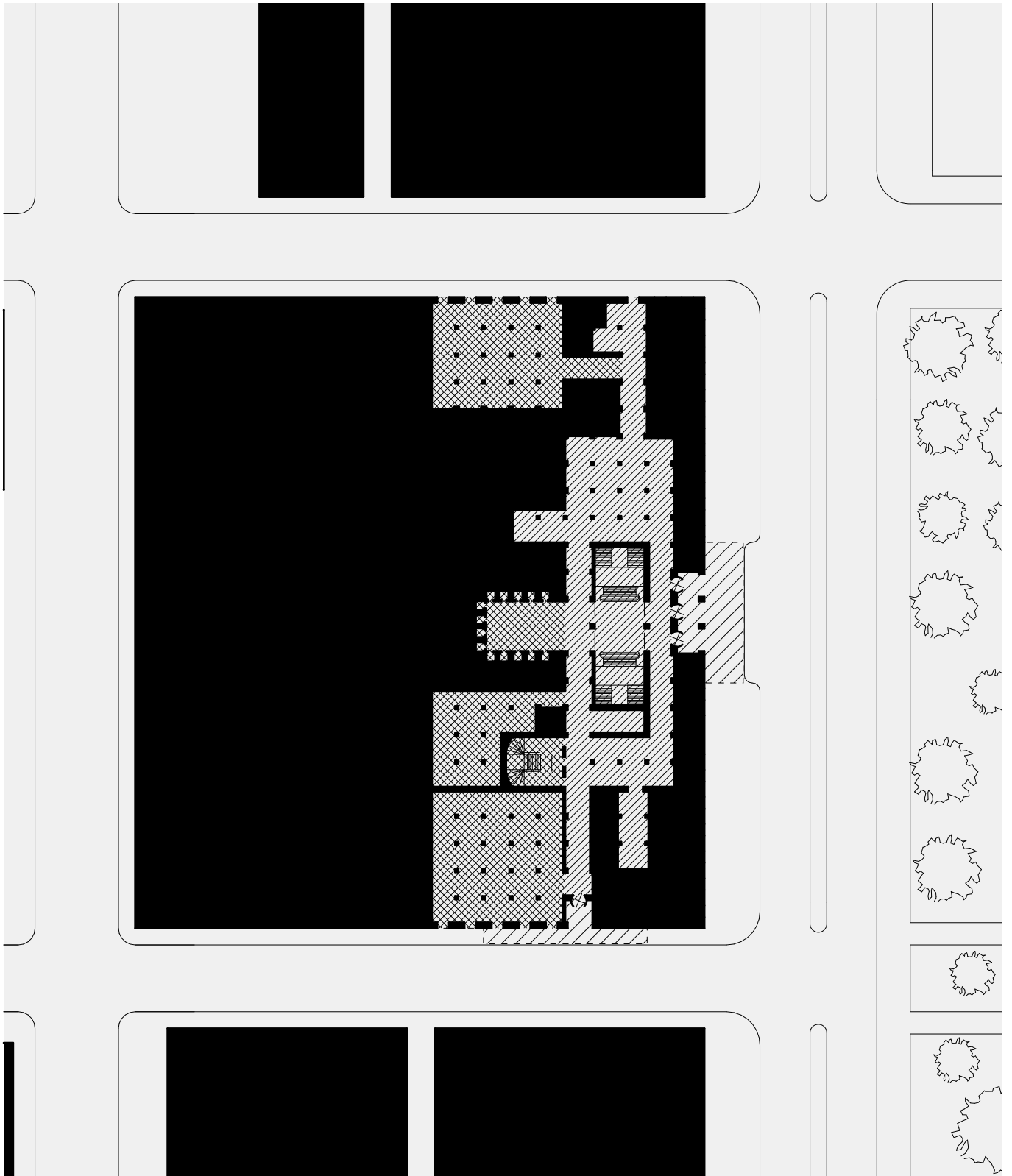
Clerestory

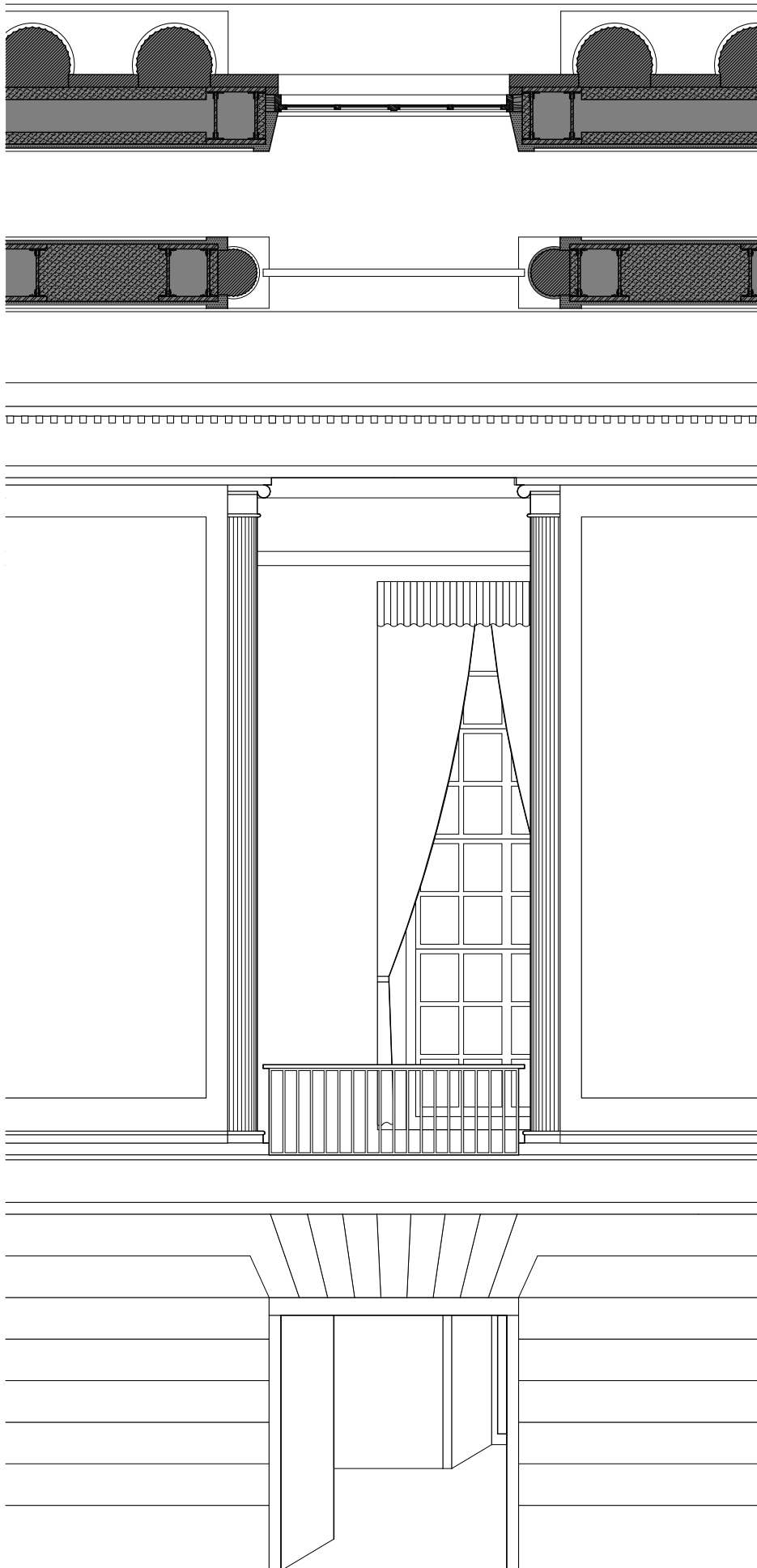
presents a moment of arrival (with a view over the Bosphorus) after a moment of compression (check-in).



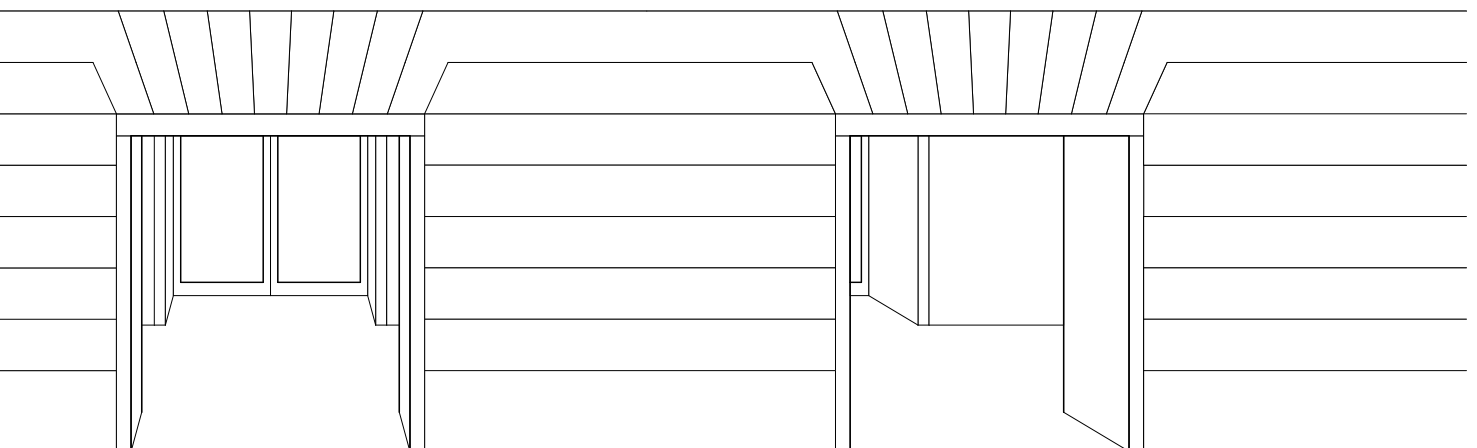
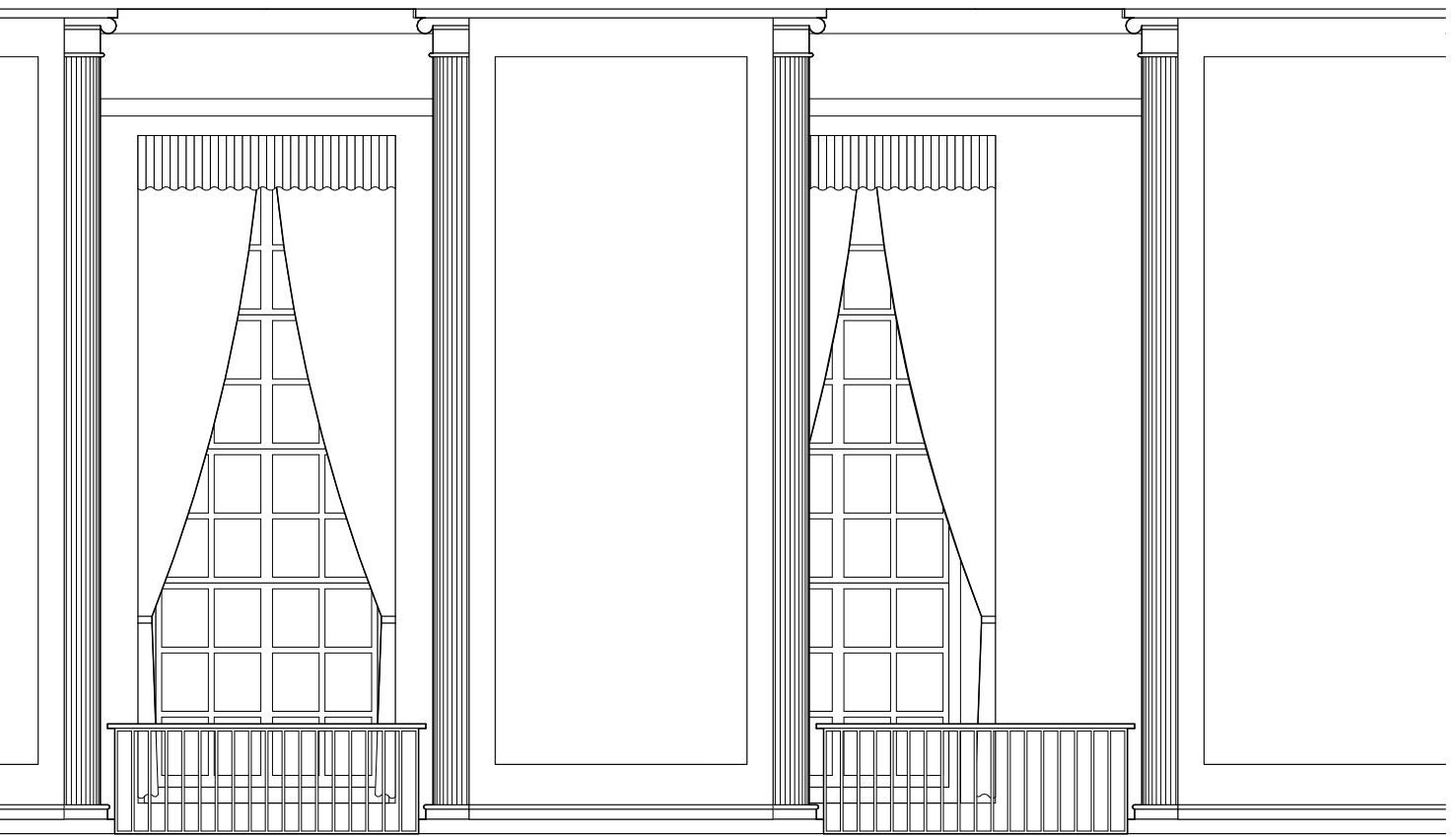
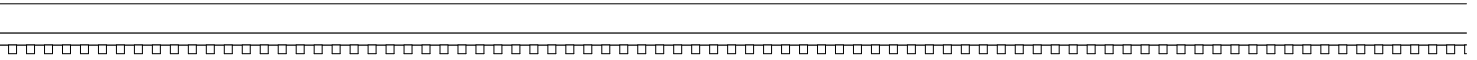
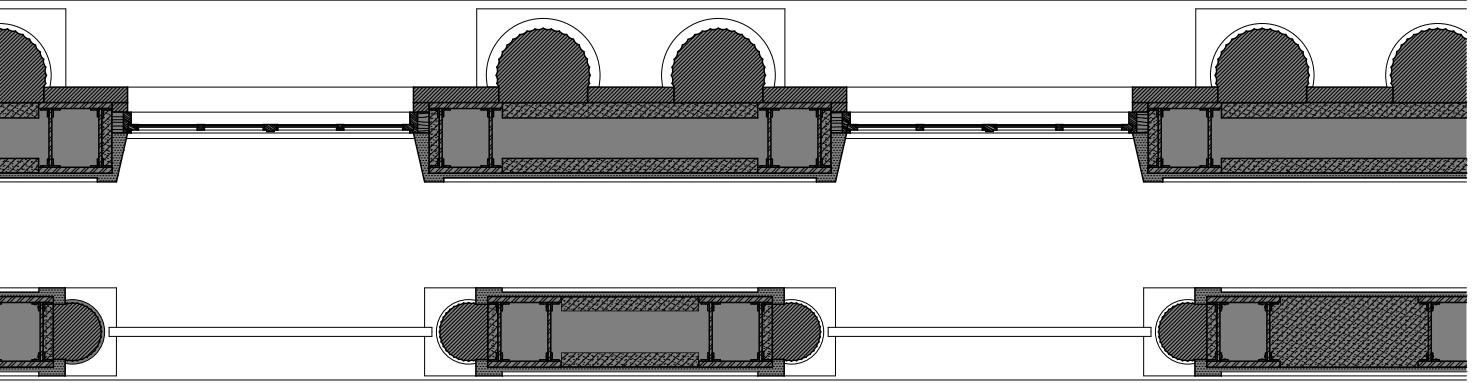


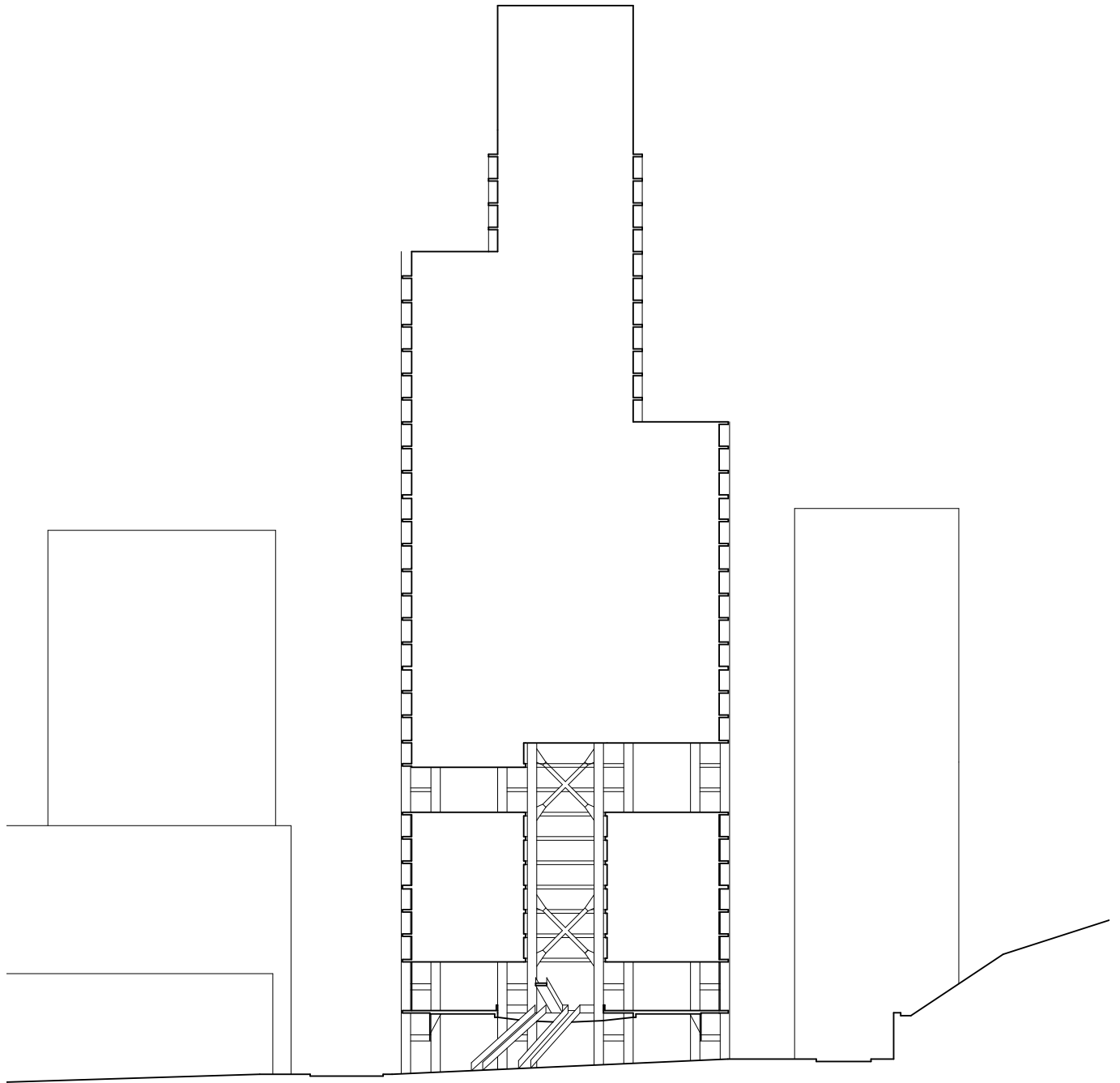
Stevens Hotel
Holabird & Roche
Chicago, 1927



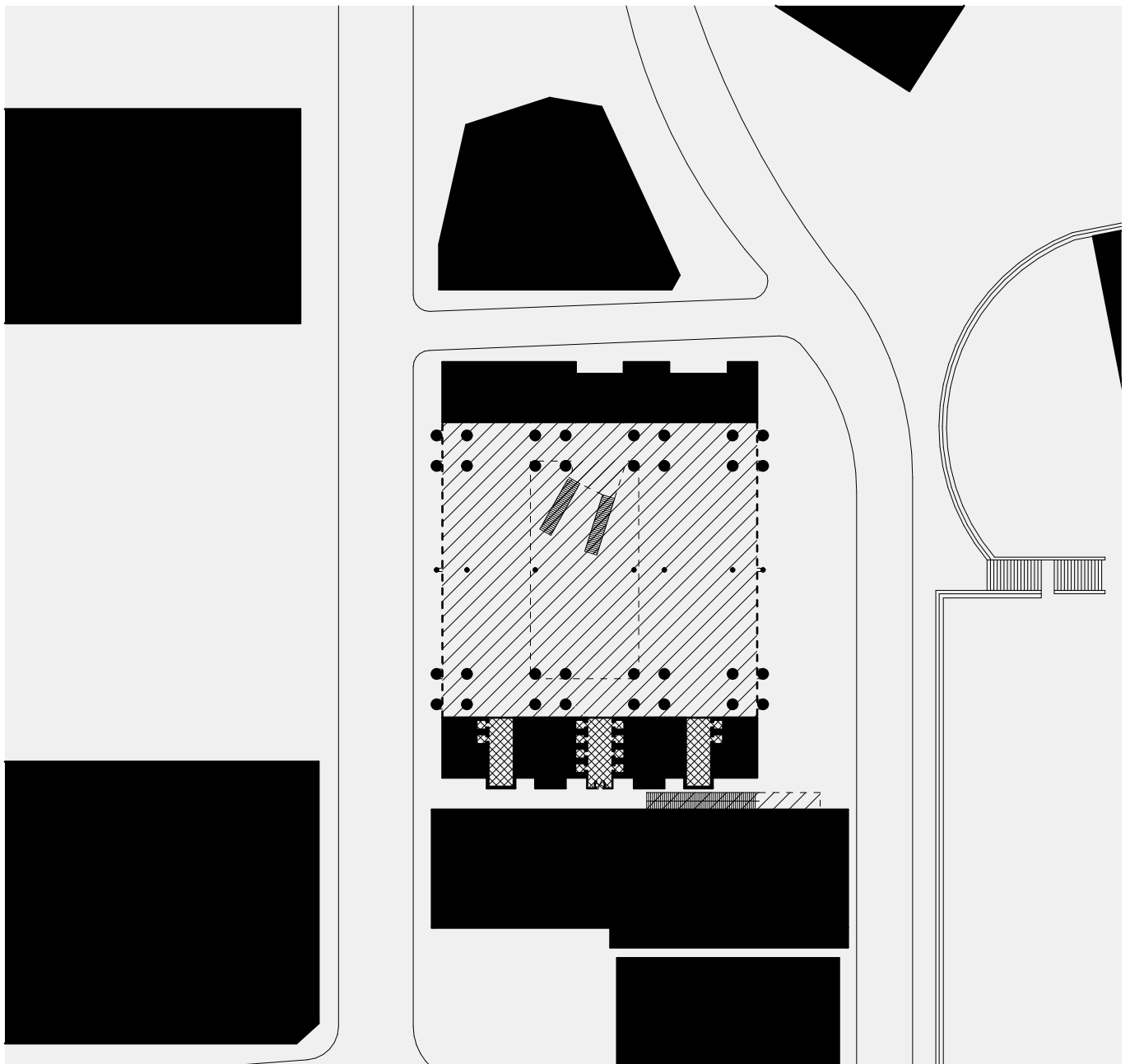
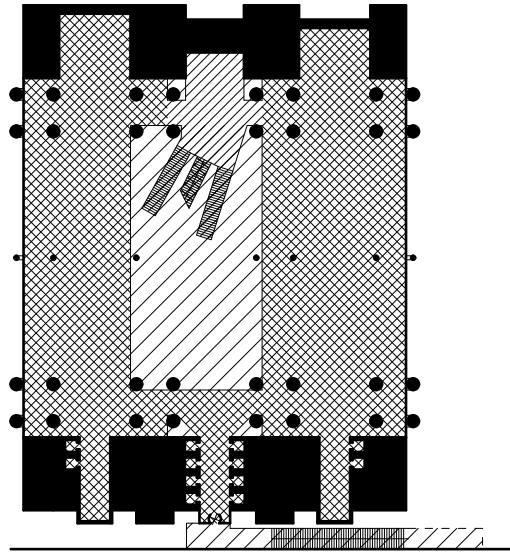


Screen
creates autonomy through a layered
filtering of the city.



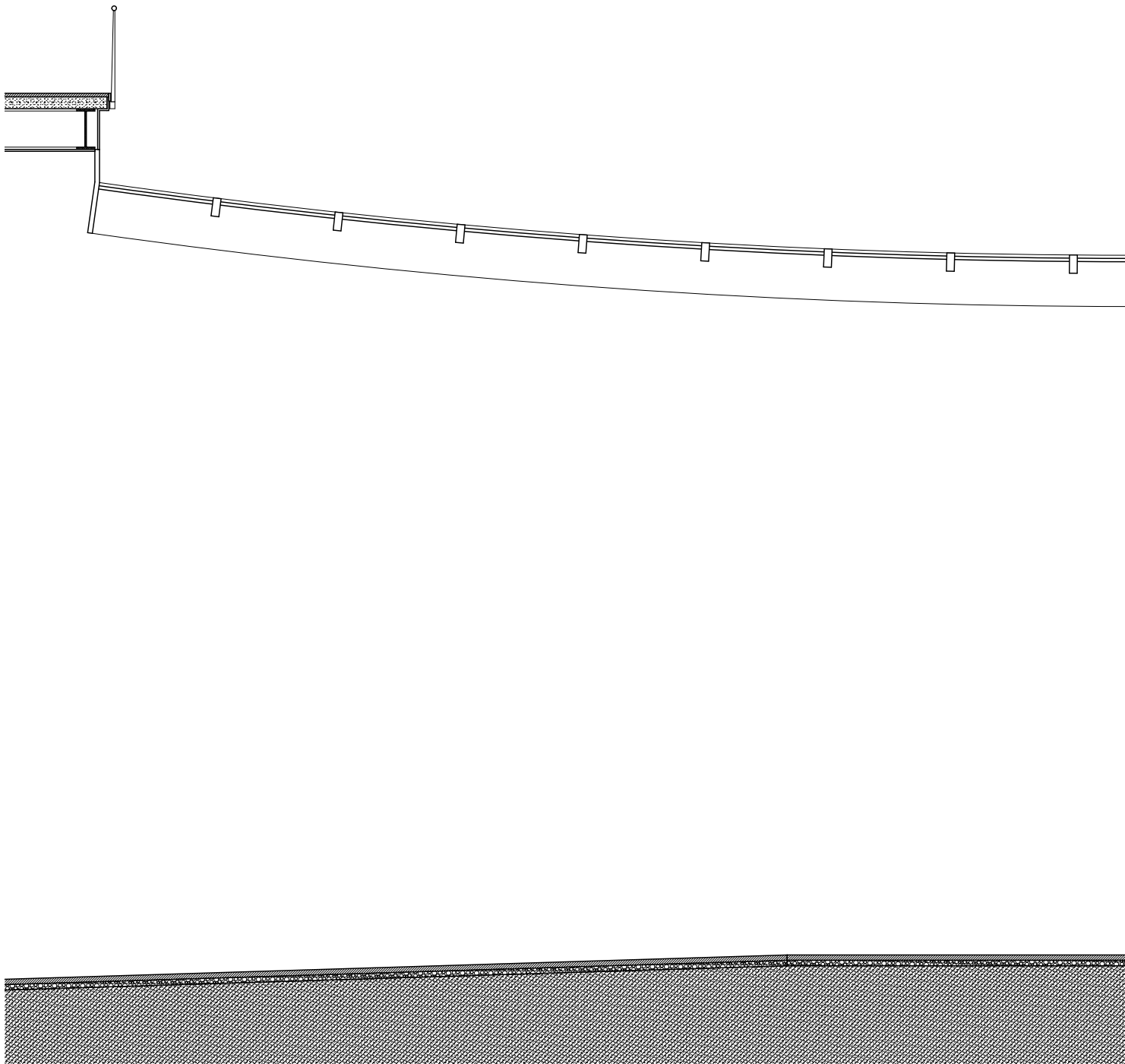


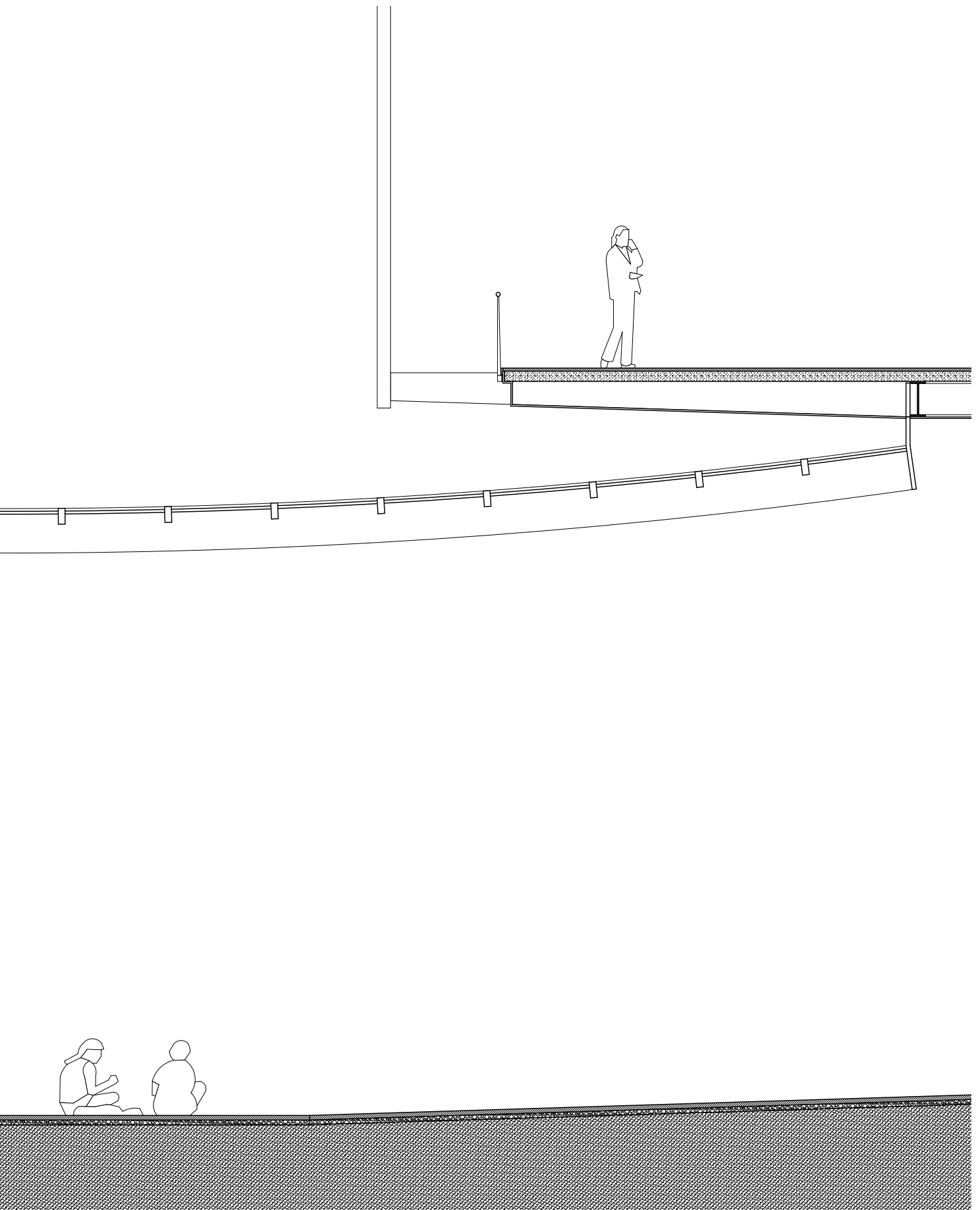
HSBC Building
Norman Foster
Hong Kong, 1985

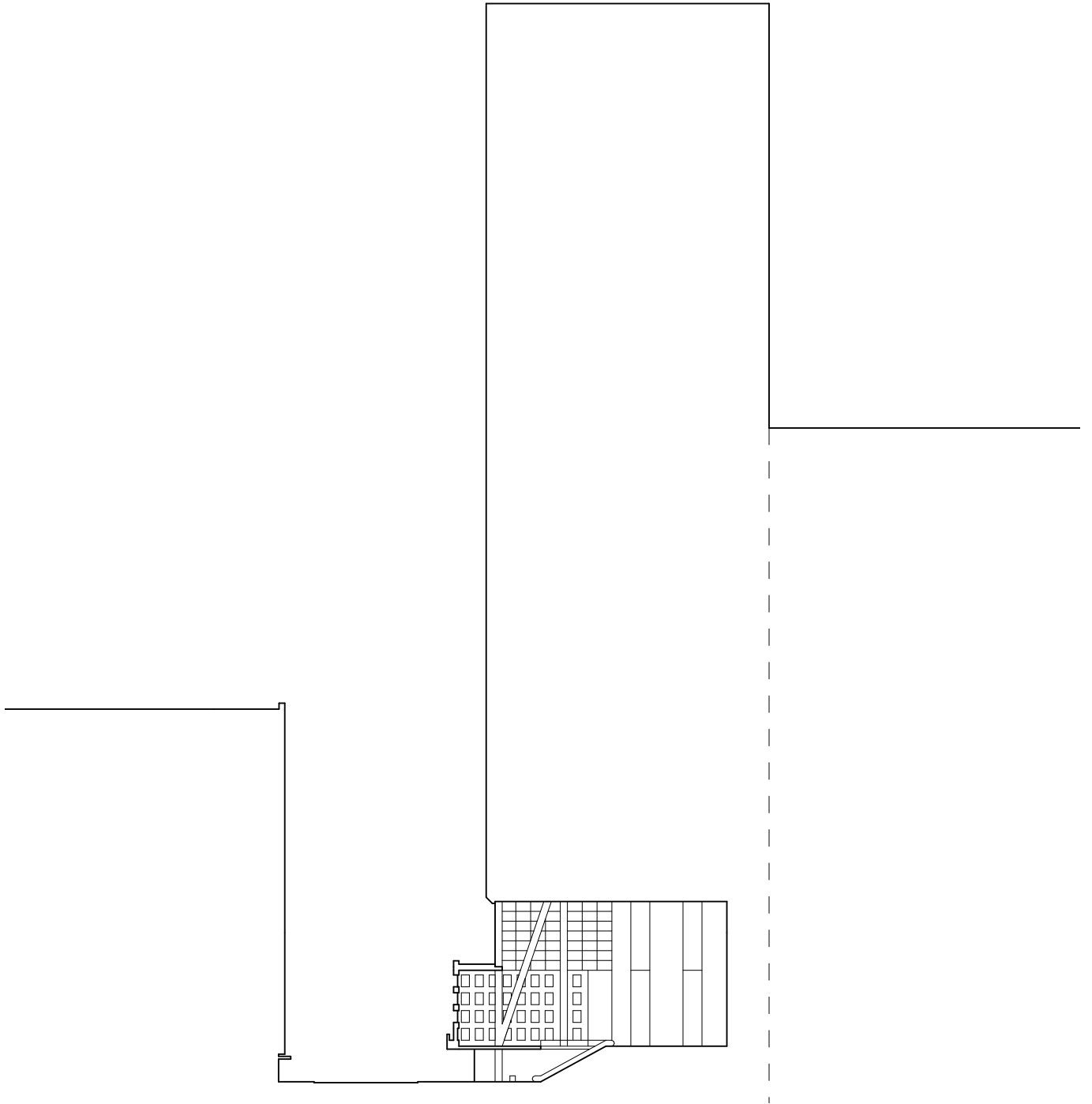


Glass Ceiling

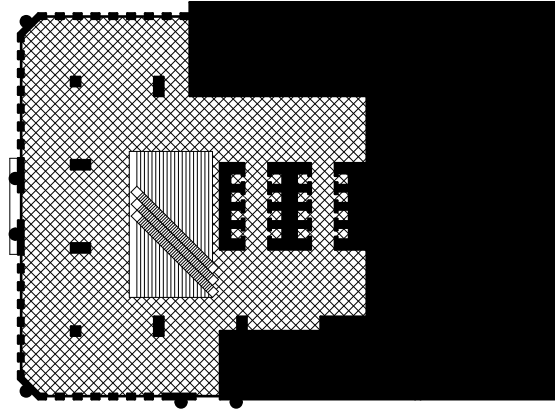
divides the lobby from the public level in section.

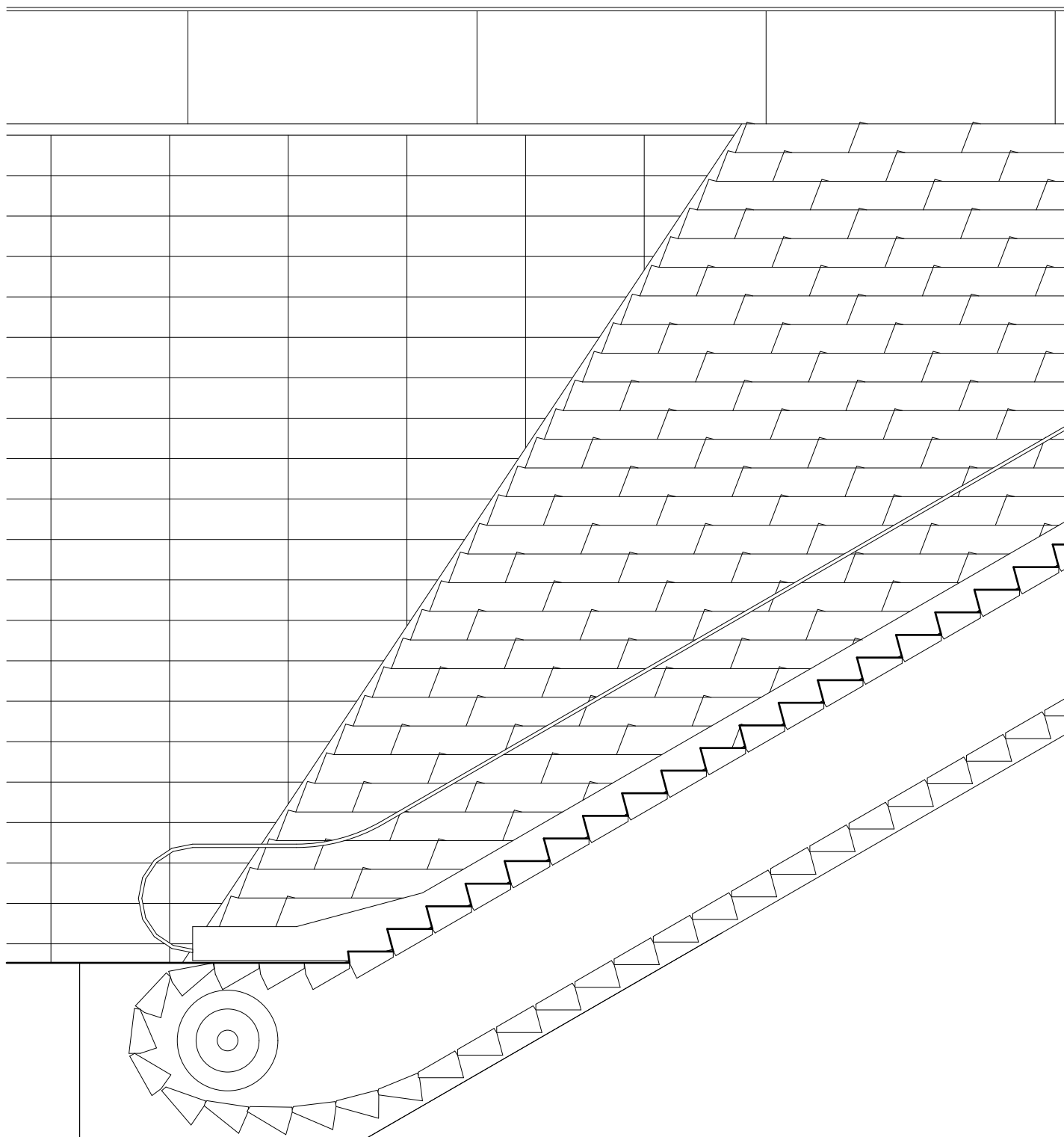






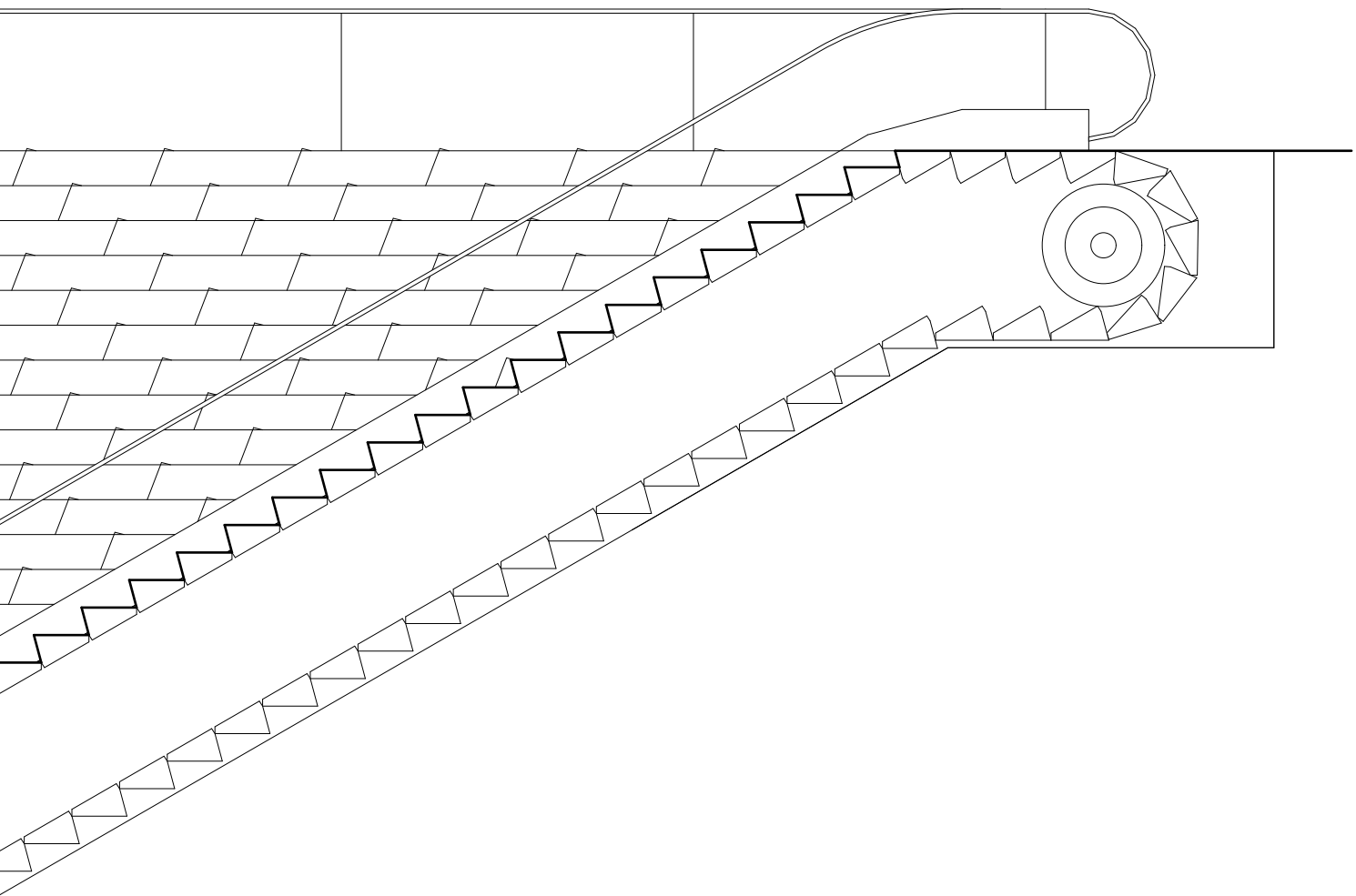
Hearst Tower
Norman Foster, Gensler
New York, 2006

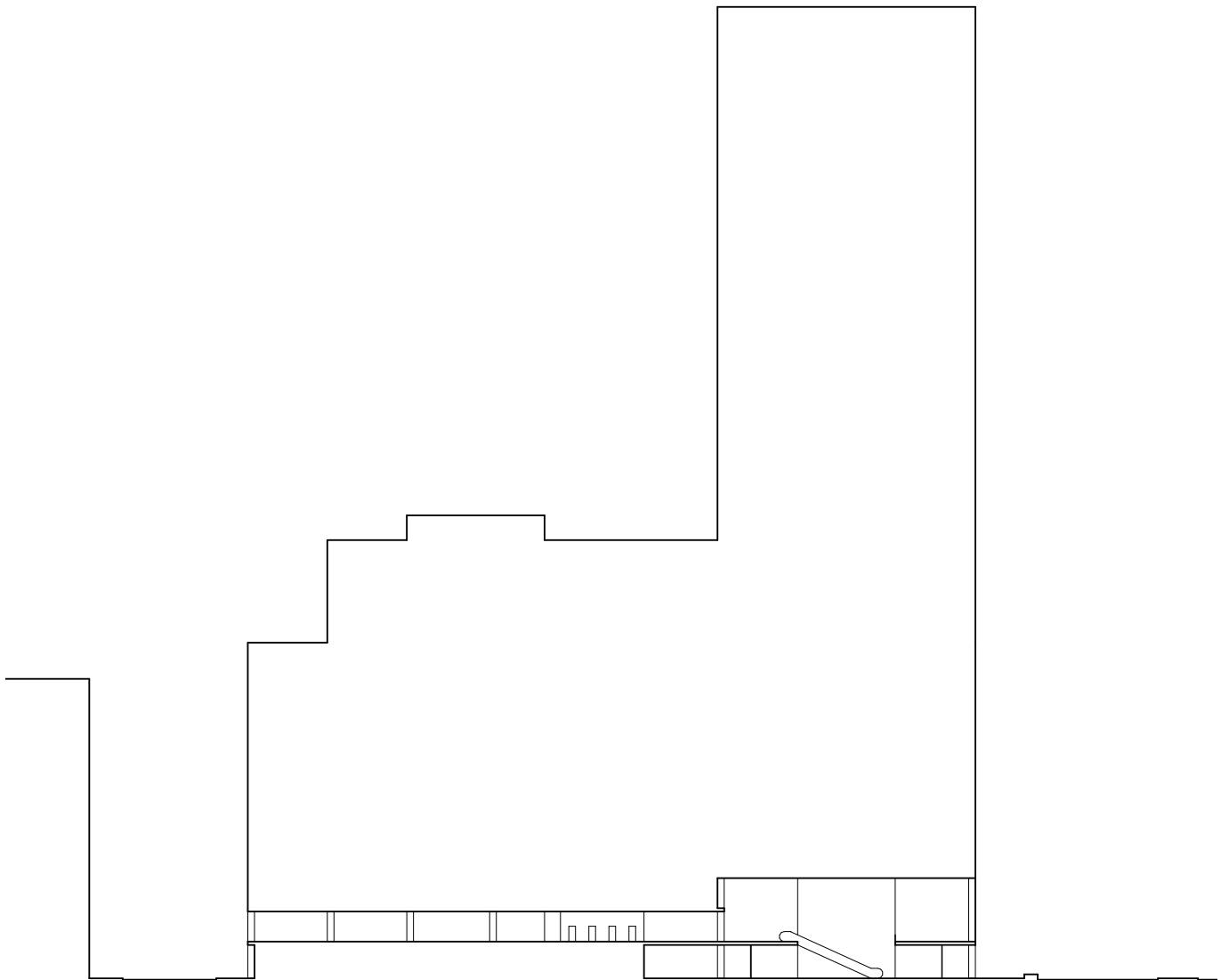




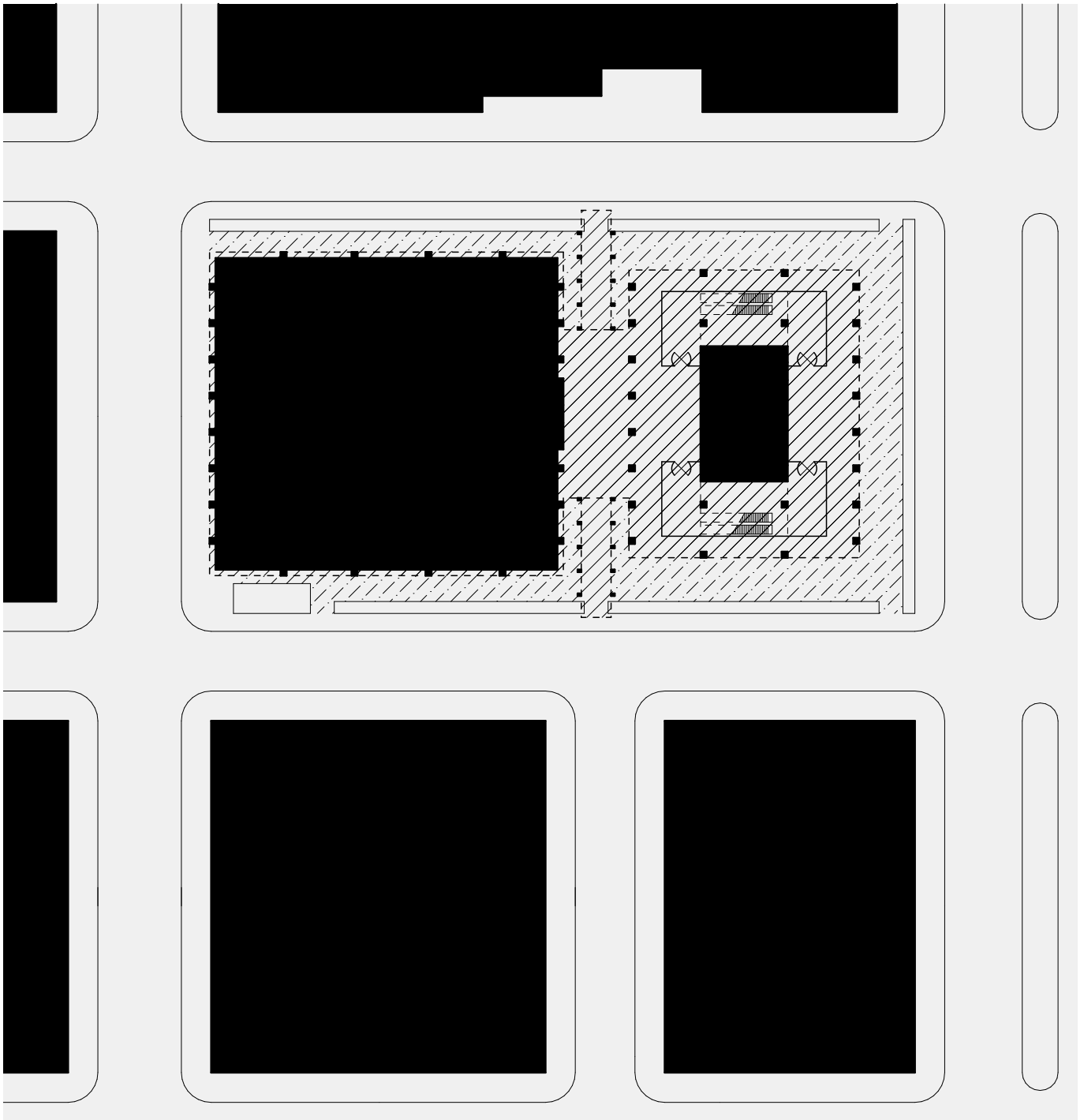
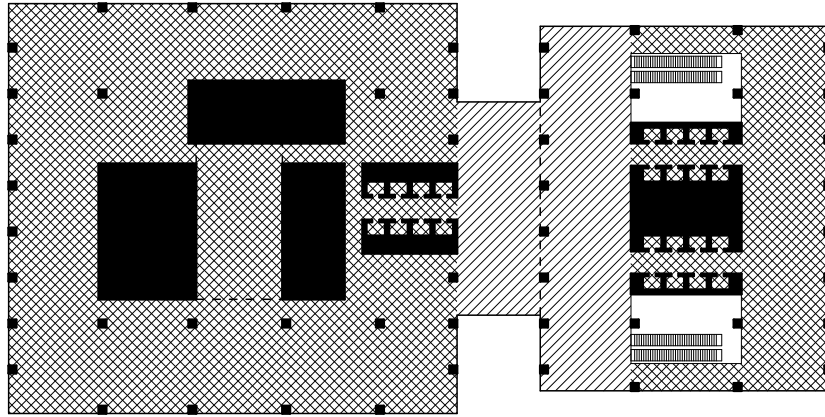
Piano Nobile

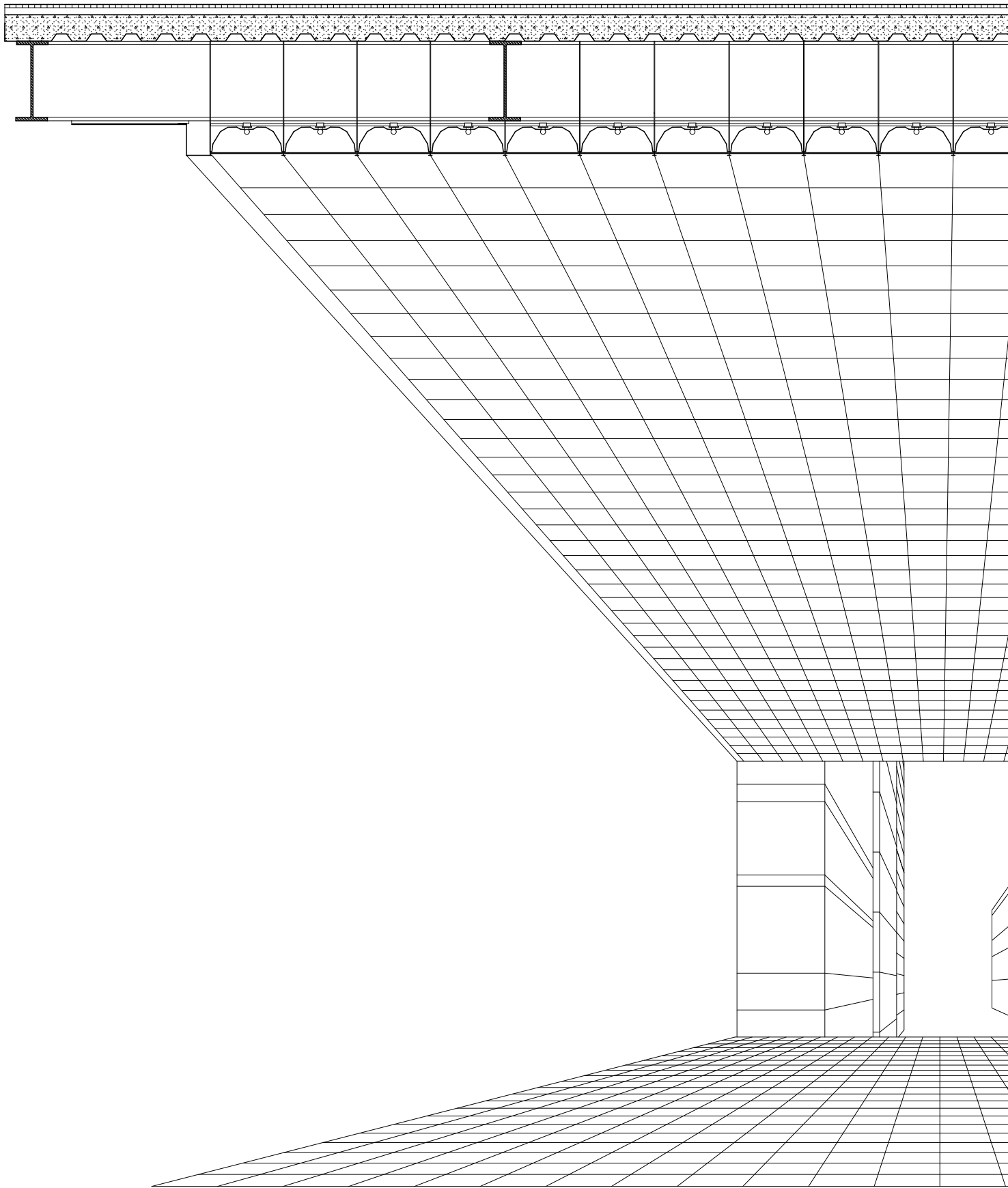
distinguishes the lobby from the street in section.





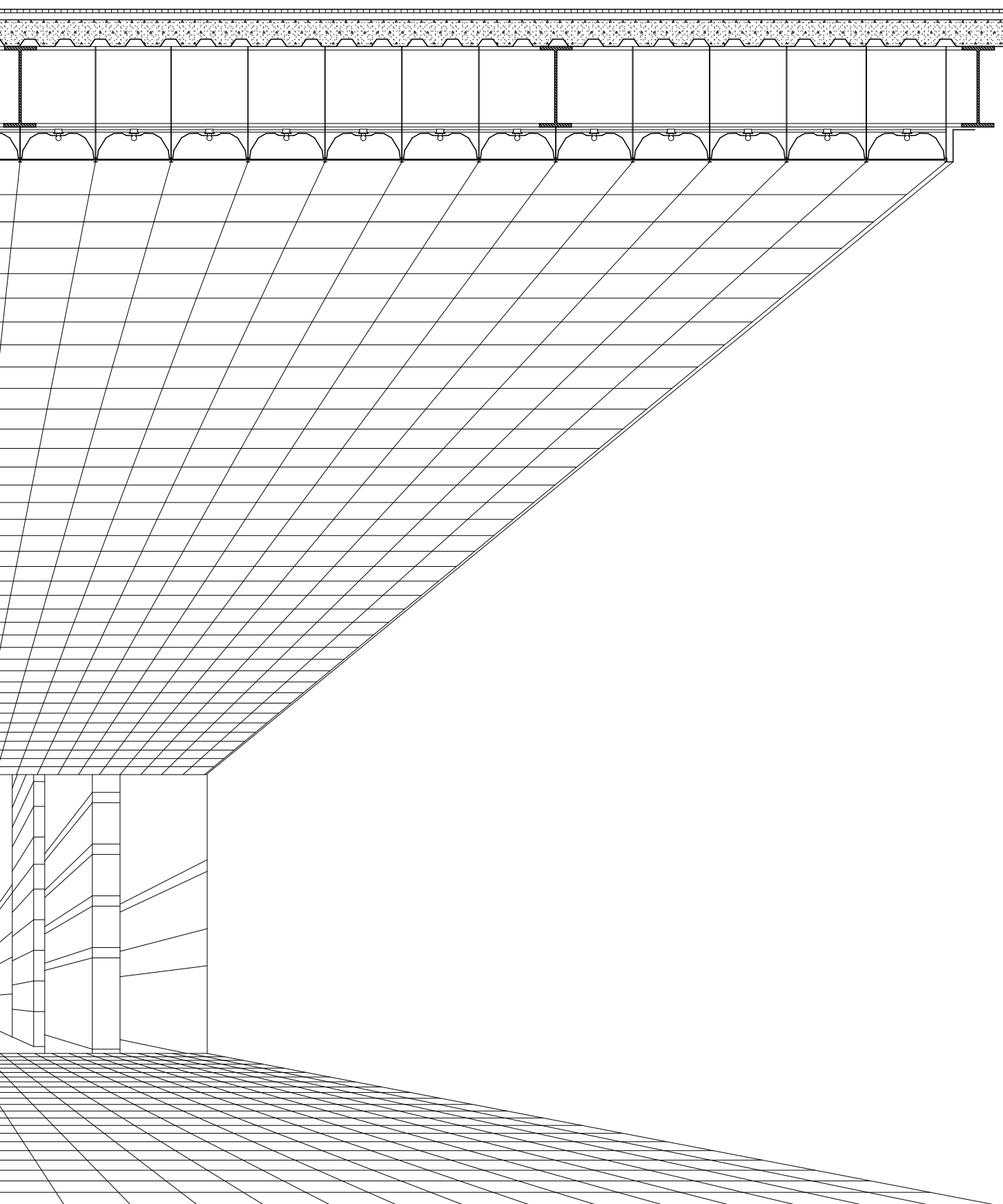
Union Carbide Building
Skidmore, Owings & Merrill
New York, 1961

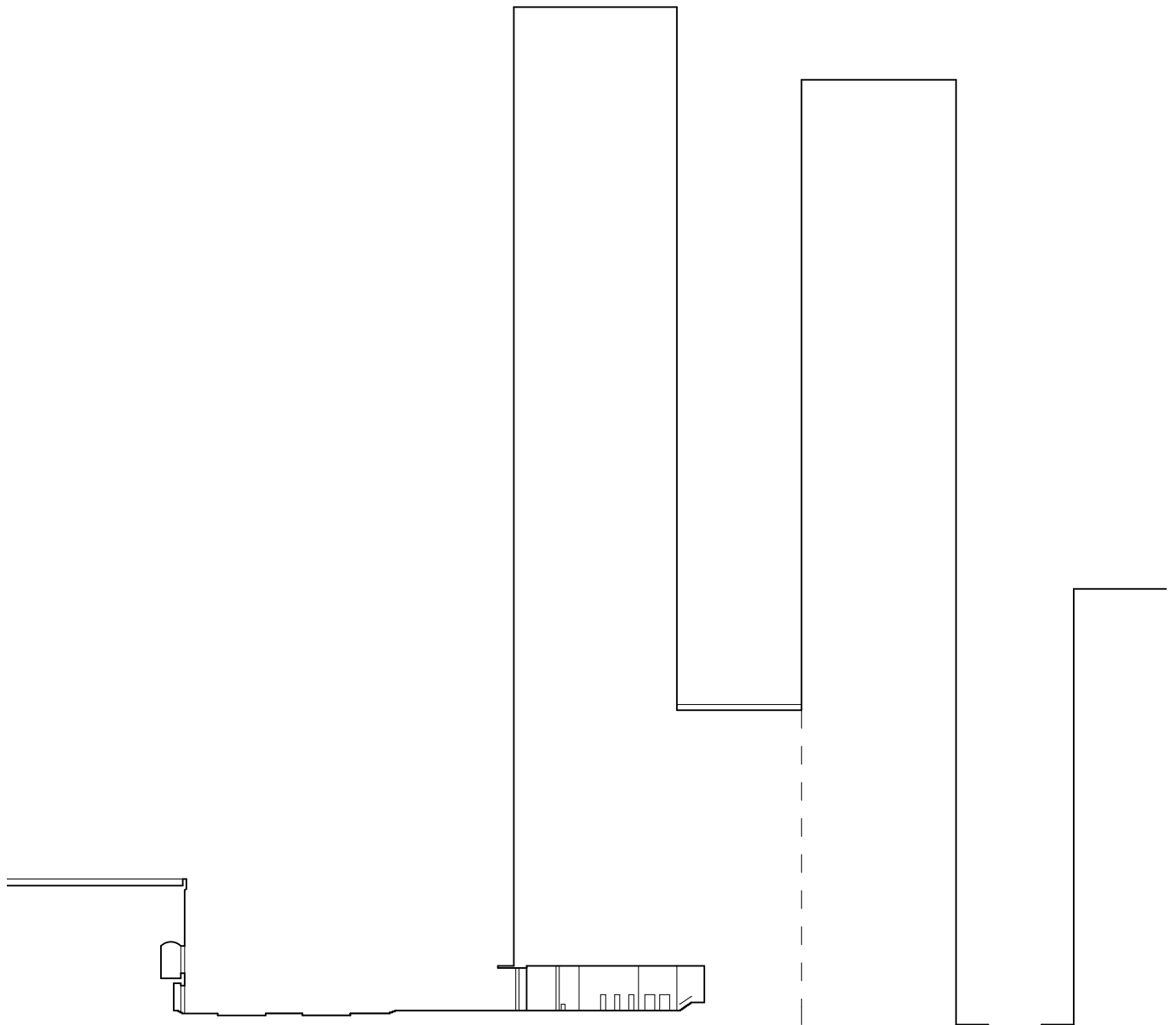




Axis

re-presents the city from an elevated, silent vantage. This axuality of building tectonics coordinates with the view.



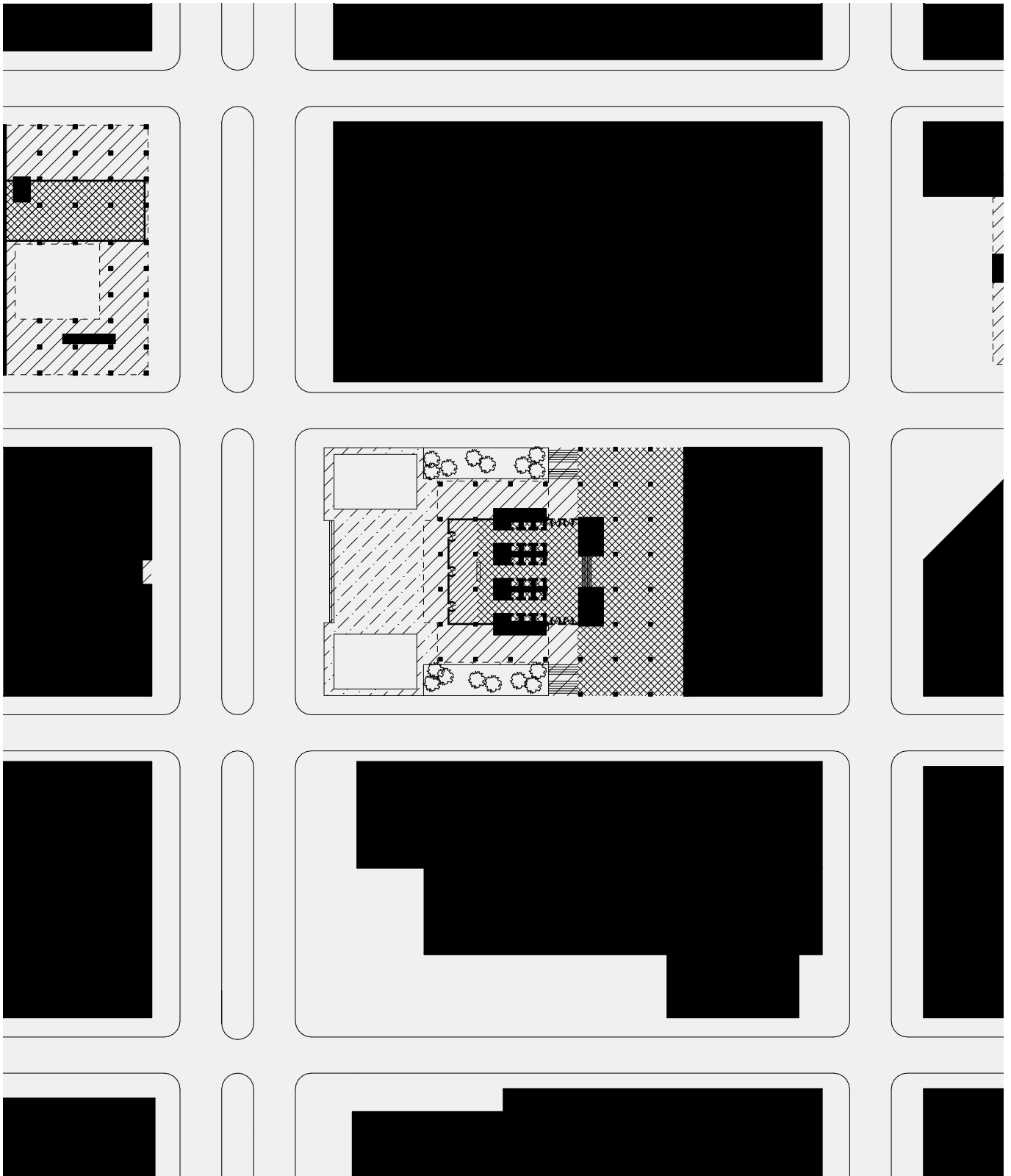


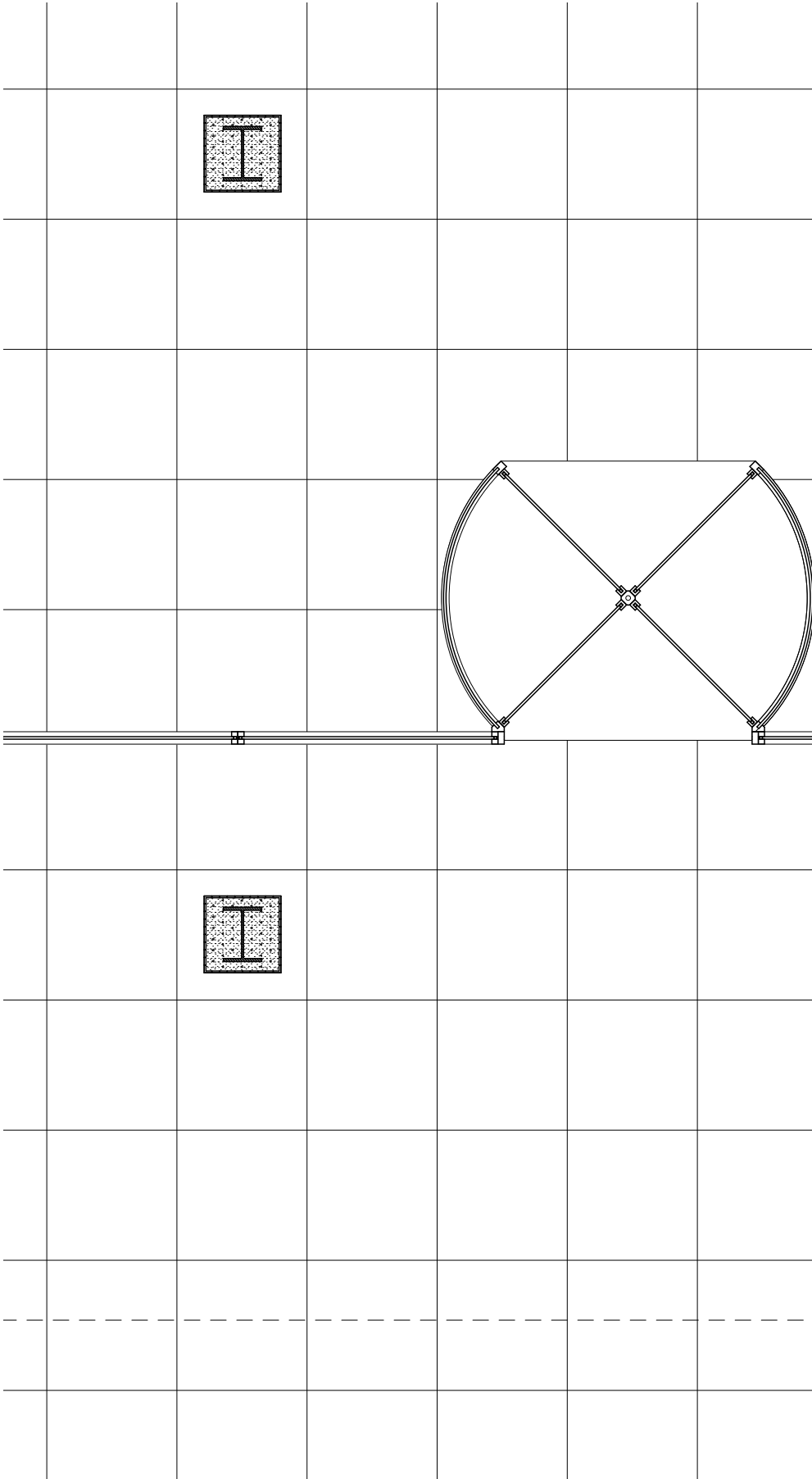
Seagram Building

Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Philip Johnson
New York, 1958

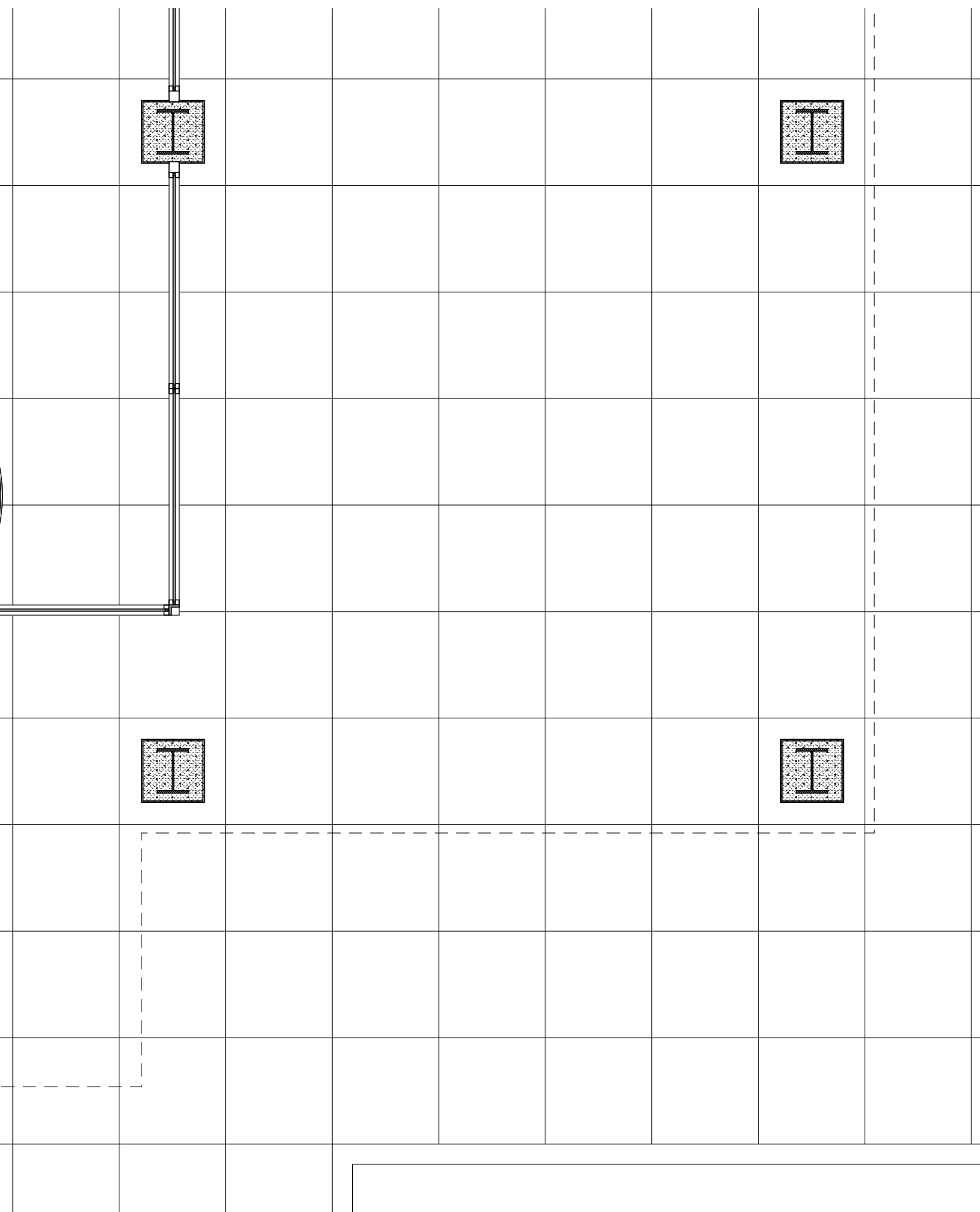
“Philip, we will not turn the elevator banks no matter what that does to the practicality of the rooms above. You must walk from the street to your elevator.”

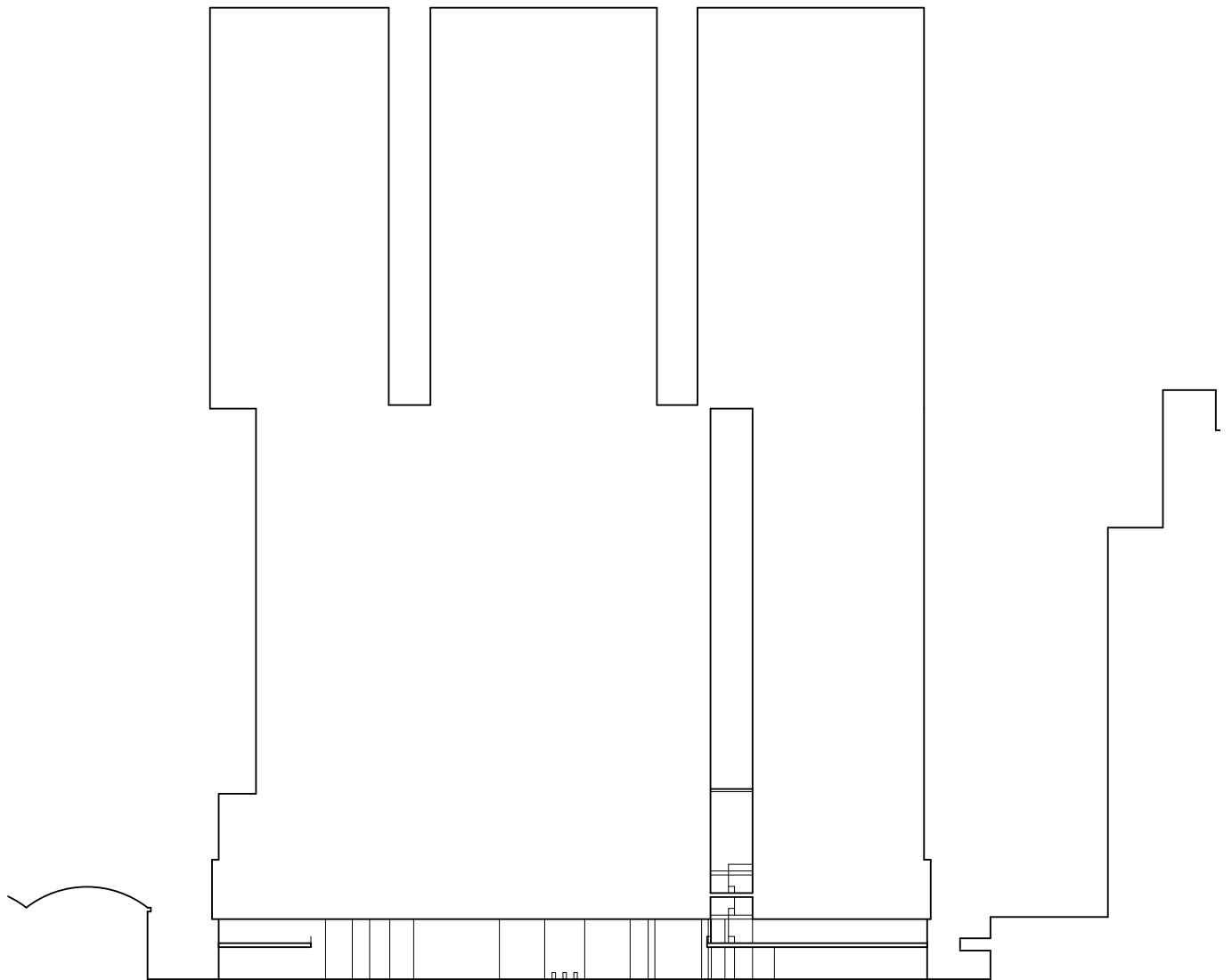
Lambert, Phyllis. Building Seagram (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 85.



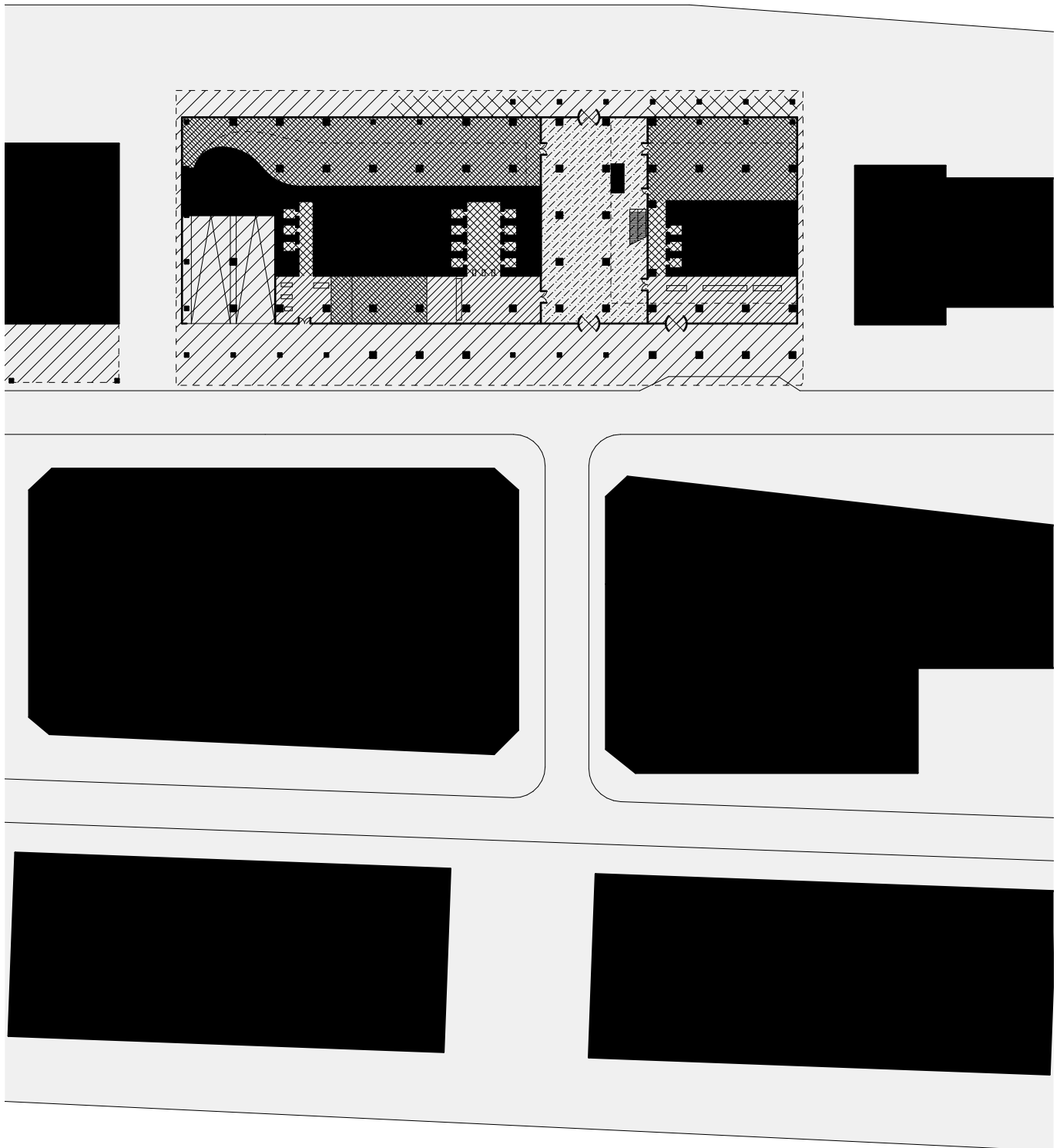


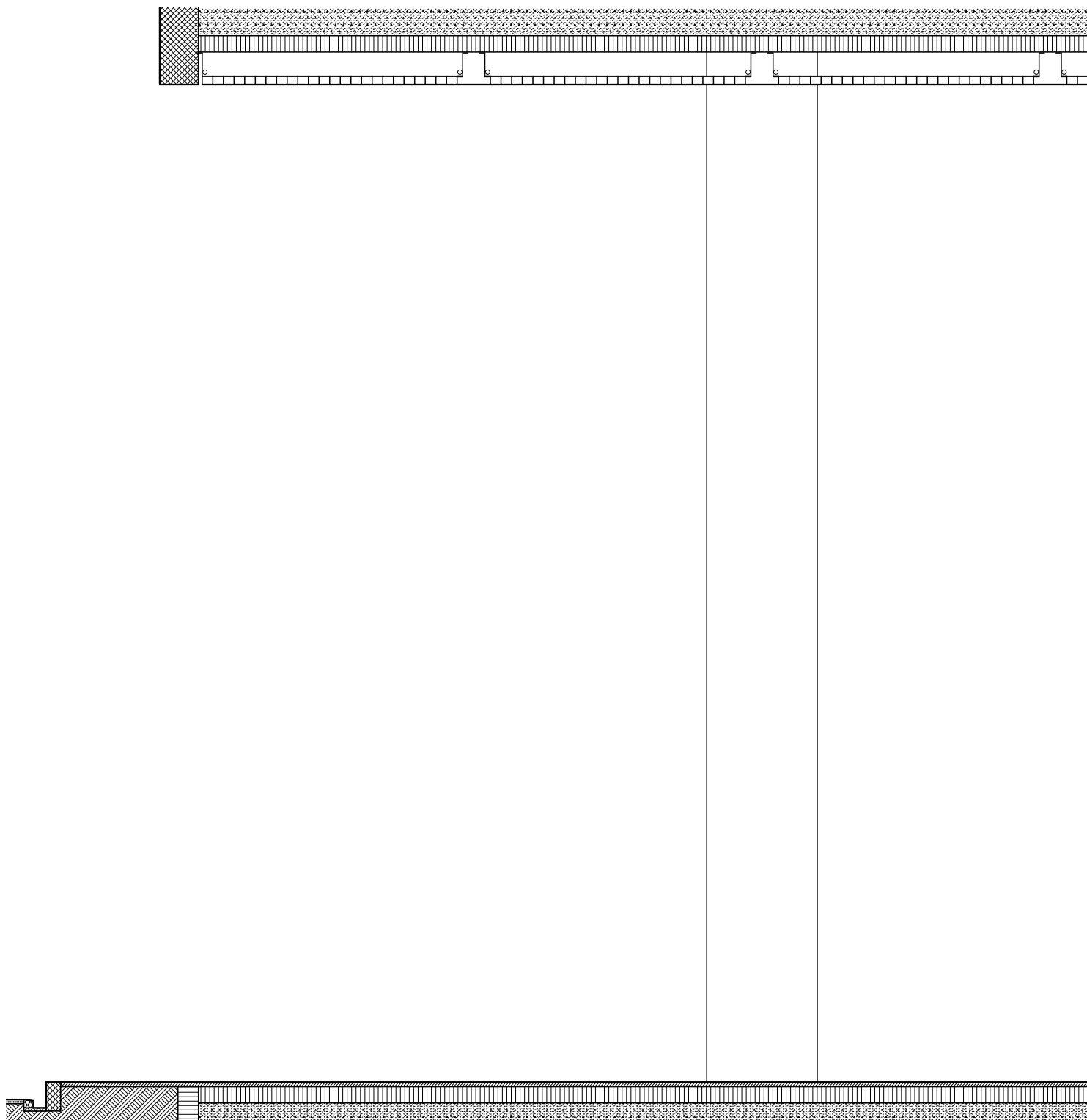
Plinth
starts well beyond the lobby, establishing
first contact at a slightly elevated level.





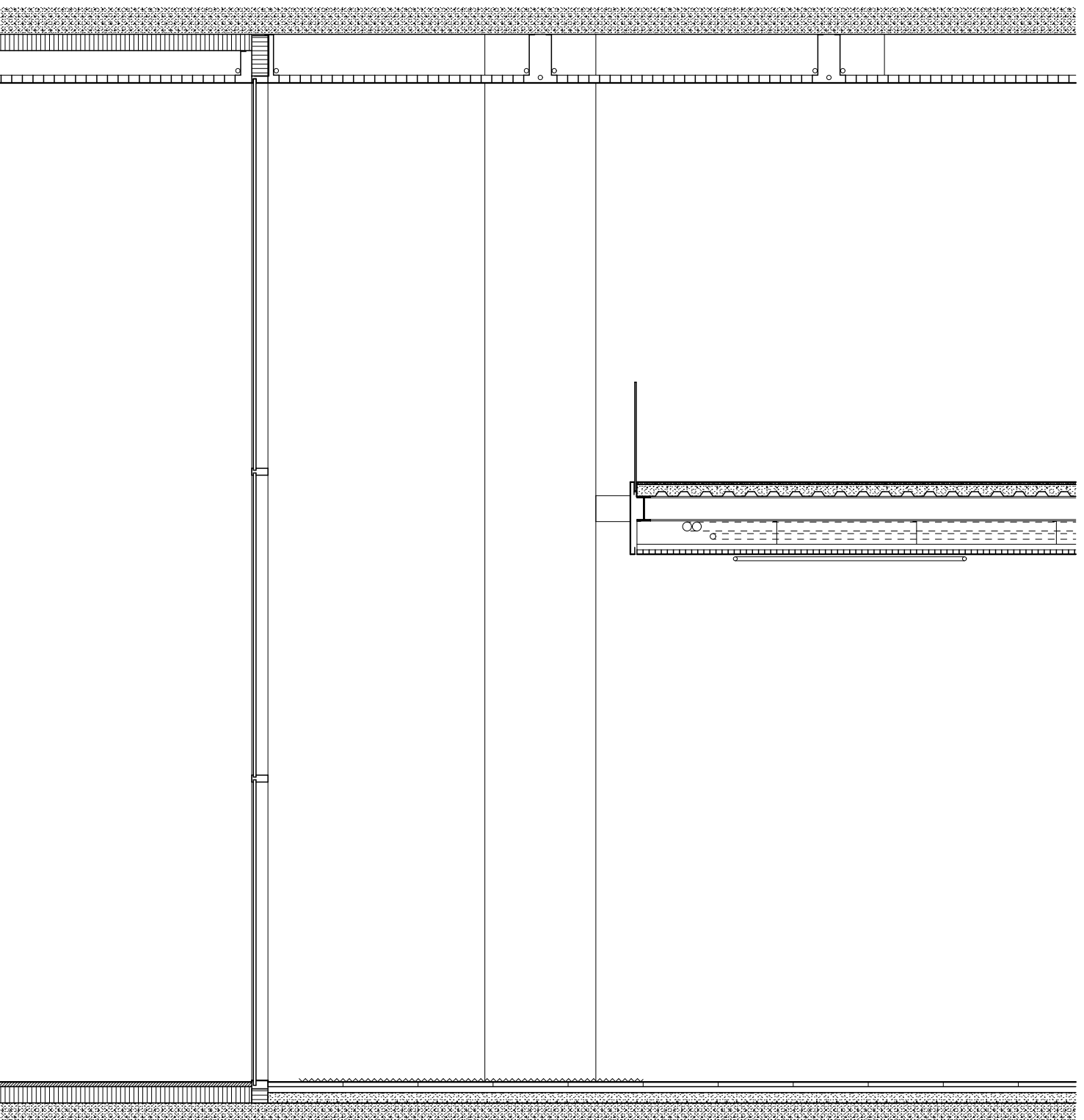
De Rotterdam
OMA
Rotterdam, 2013

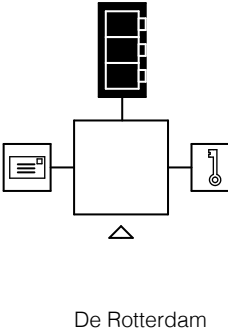
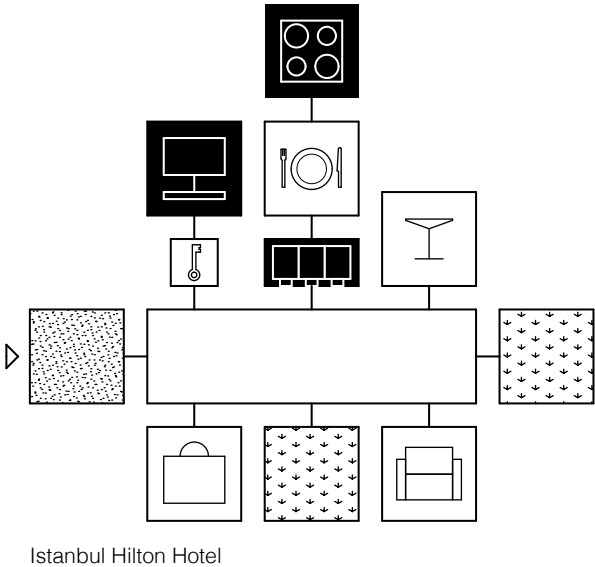
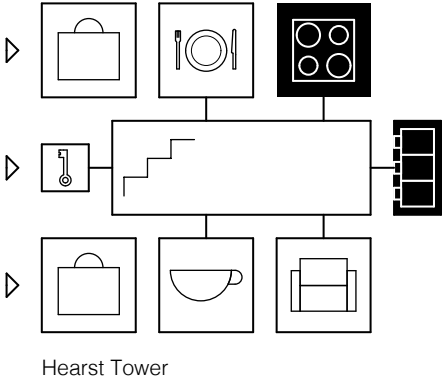
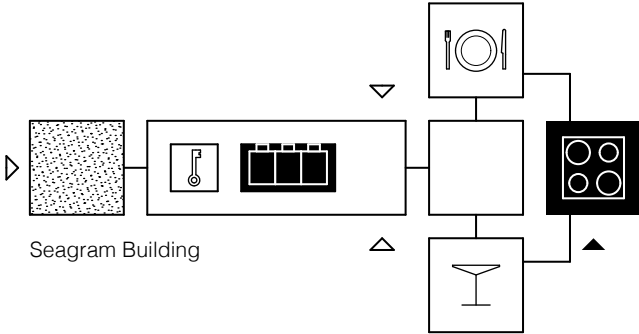
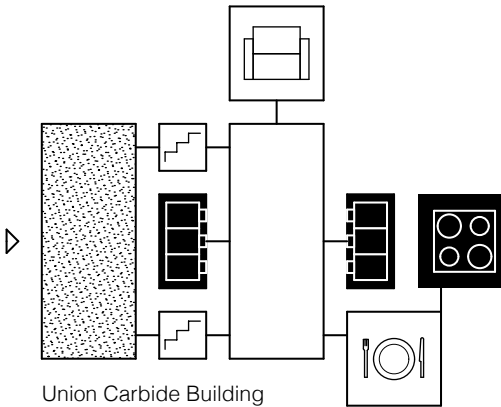
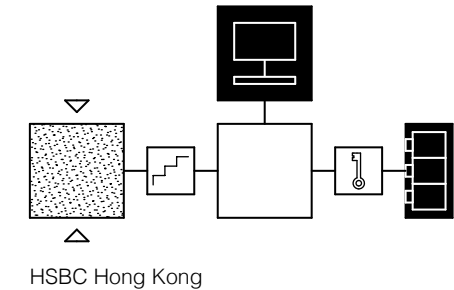




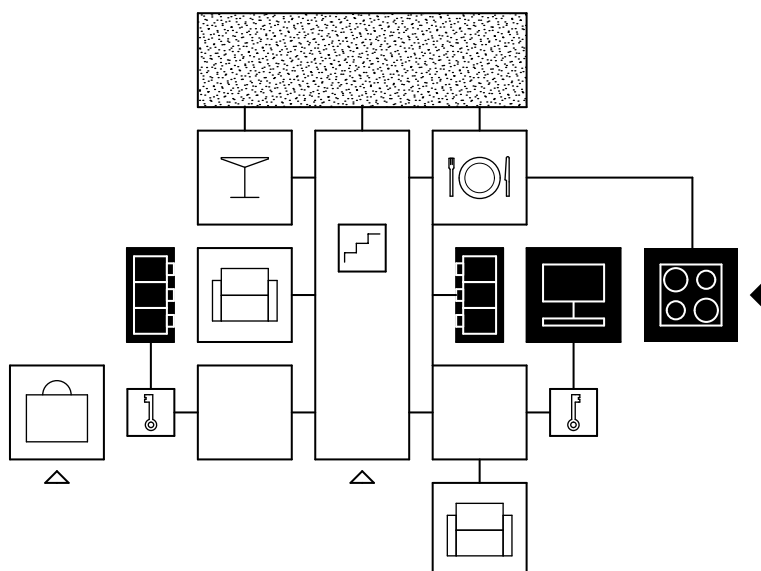
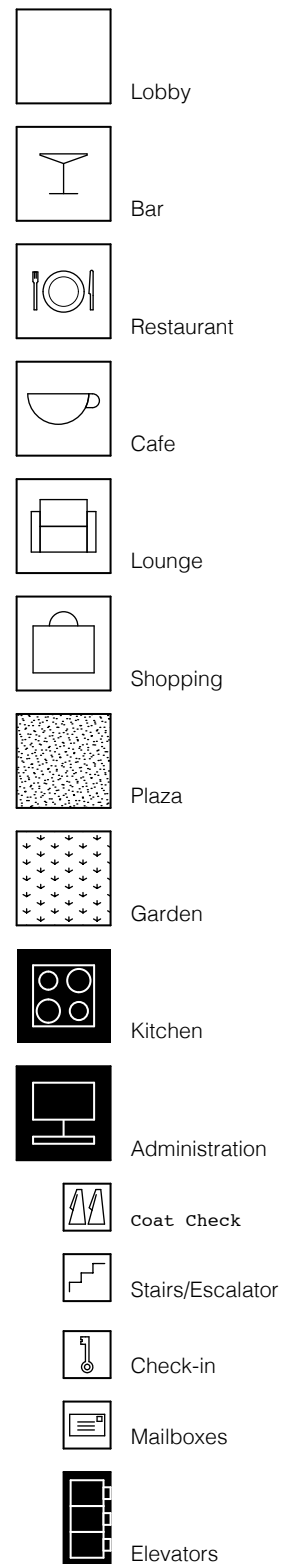
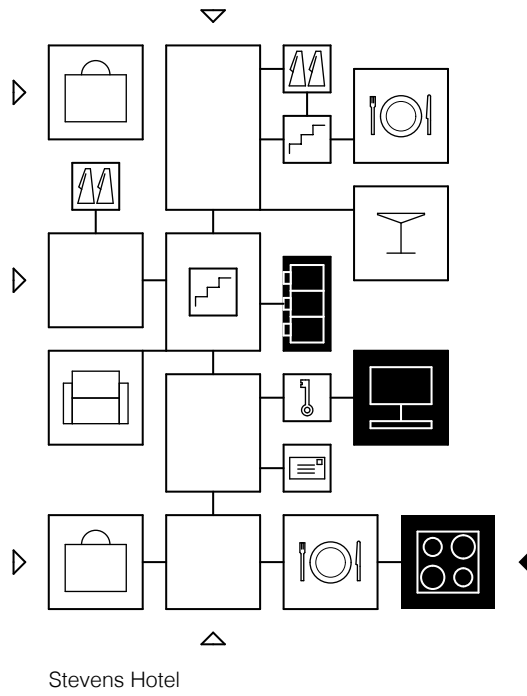
Umbrella

shield the entire ground level, from arcade to lobbies and lounges. A steel-frame mezzanine and carpet establish a secondary layer of intimacy.





Program Circuits



II. Trends

Since the “golden age” of the early-mid twentieth century, lobbies have waned as ground floor areas are surrendered to un-related programs, mainly retail. However, there are hints that the lobby may become relevant again: from hotels to corporations, businesses are interested in the attention a lobby receives.

Hong Kong is chosen as a case study: as a highly-privatized city dependent on interior urban space, it is potentially a future template of cities. Its disorienting networks of passages, lacking any spatial quality, were designed on the logic of retail. But as retail rents drop and other real estate soars, the model of large lobby / small private space may be a viable solution.



Bürolandschaft

The Wiener Verwaltungsgebäude, the first curtain-wall in Austria in 1962, converted into Hotel Daniel in 2012. Returning to 19th century approach to the interior, the redesign fills the sparse space with an overload of representational objects.



Ace Hotel

Free wifi and space is available to the public. This model of hospitality gives the hotel chain the image of a “hub,” generating popularity through word of mouth and social media.

Spaces are divided with cubicle-like partitions.



Willemswerf Office Building Lobby

Powerhouse Company

Rotterdam, 2014

Intended to help attract tenants, the lobby is designed with generous space and materials. The line between hotel and office lobby is blurred.

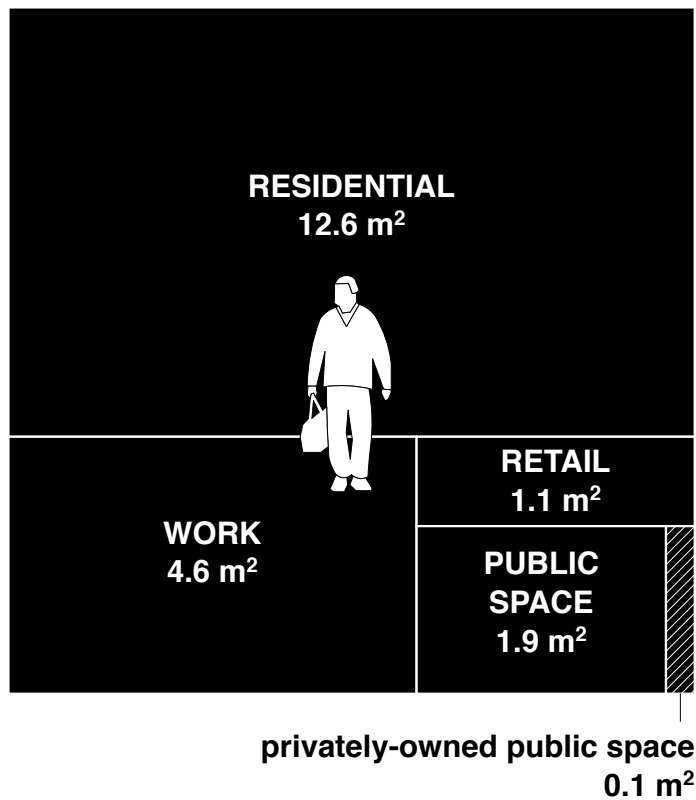


Amorepacific Headquarters

David Chipperfield

Seoul, 2017

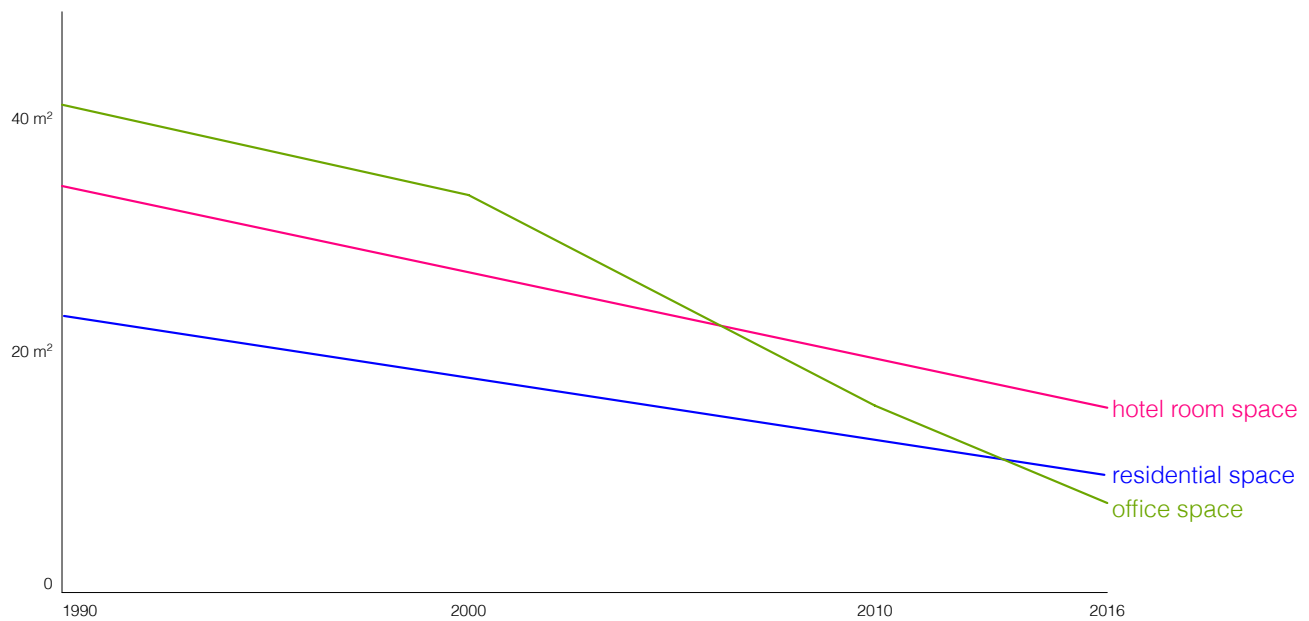
The publicly-accessible lobby is considered a gesture of corporate patronage.



Space Per Capita

Hong Kong residents live in extremely close quarters, with a lack of open space.

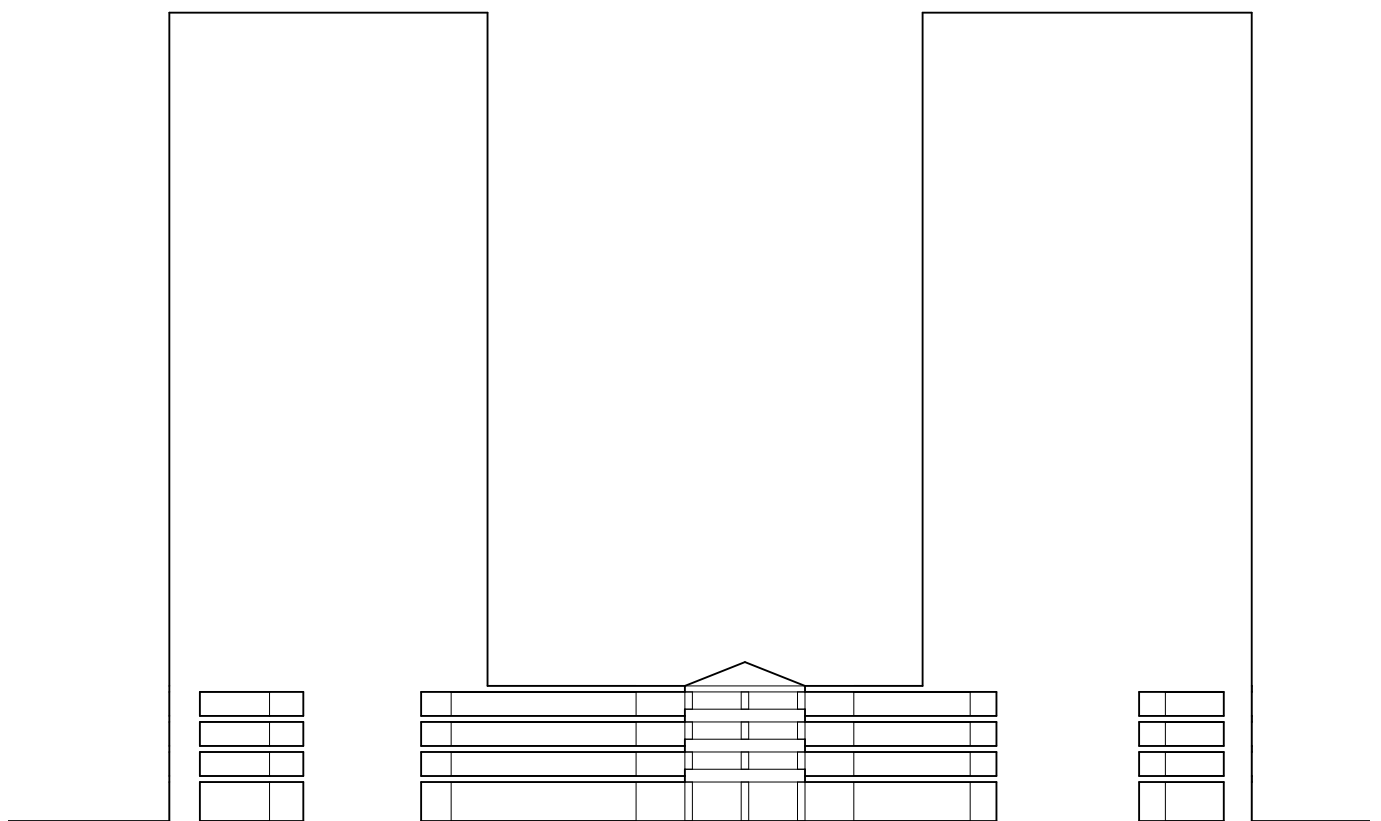
source: Civic Exchange, Steelcase, Urbis



Declining Personal Space

Real estate booms in major cities like Hong Kong have compressed personal space to the minimum. The traditional model of big lobby/small room can be adapted to fit today's extreme situation.

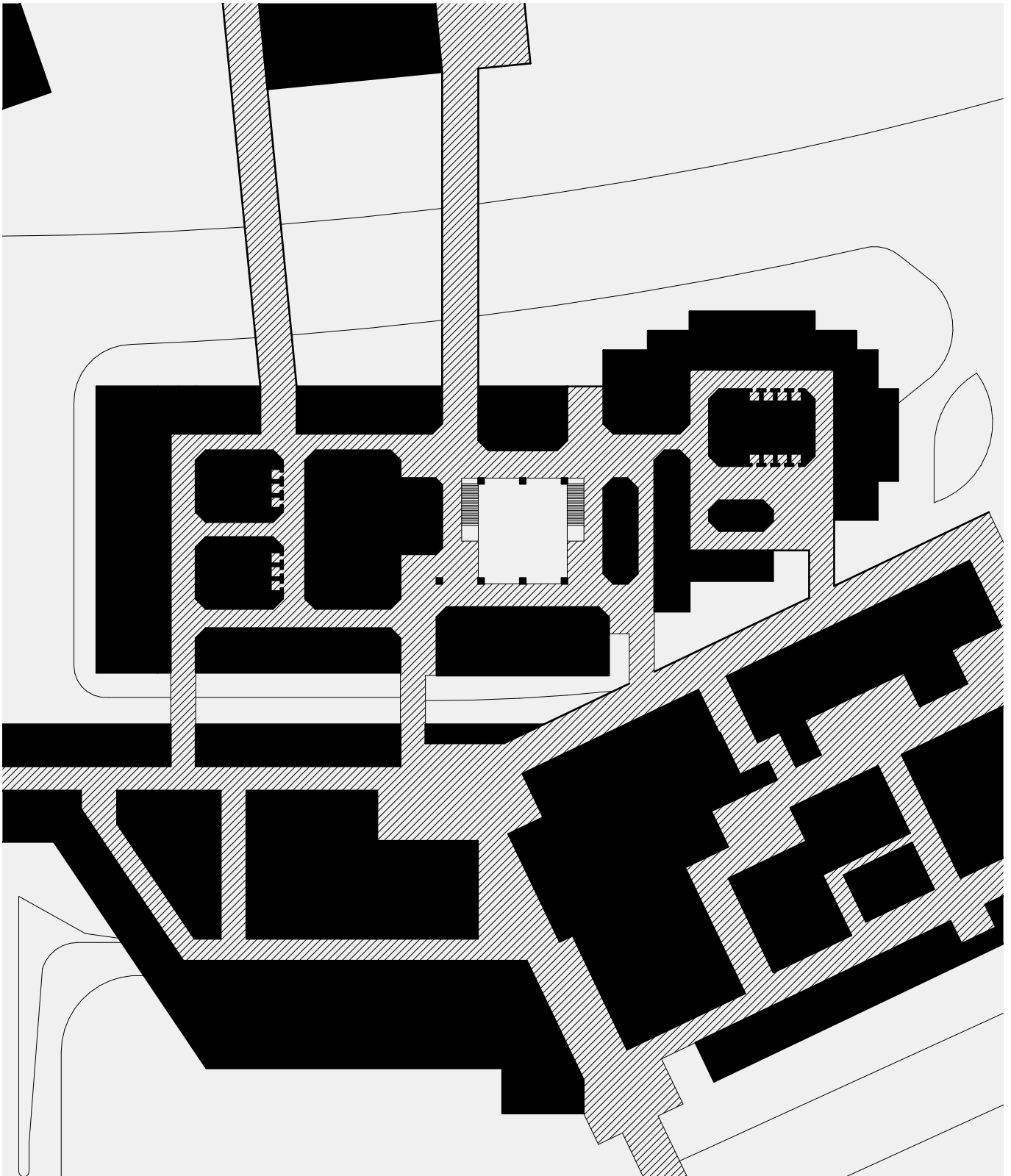
source: Hong Kong Housing Authority, O'Rourke Hospitality Management, CoreNet Global

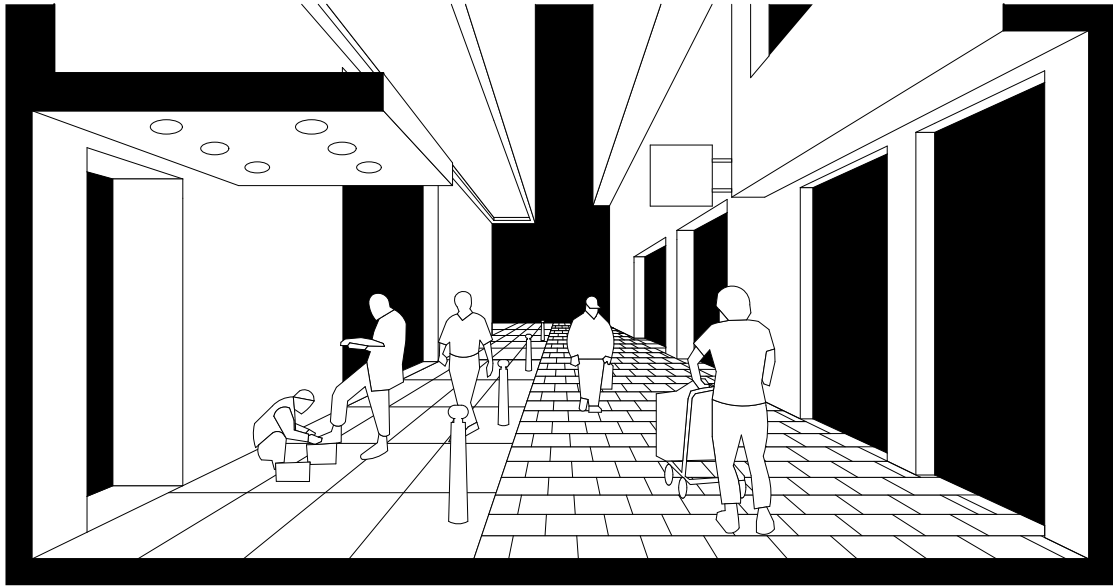


Admiralty Building

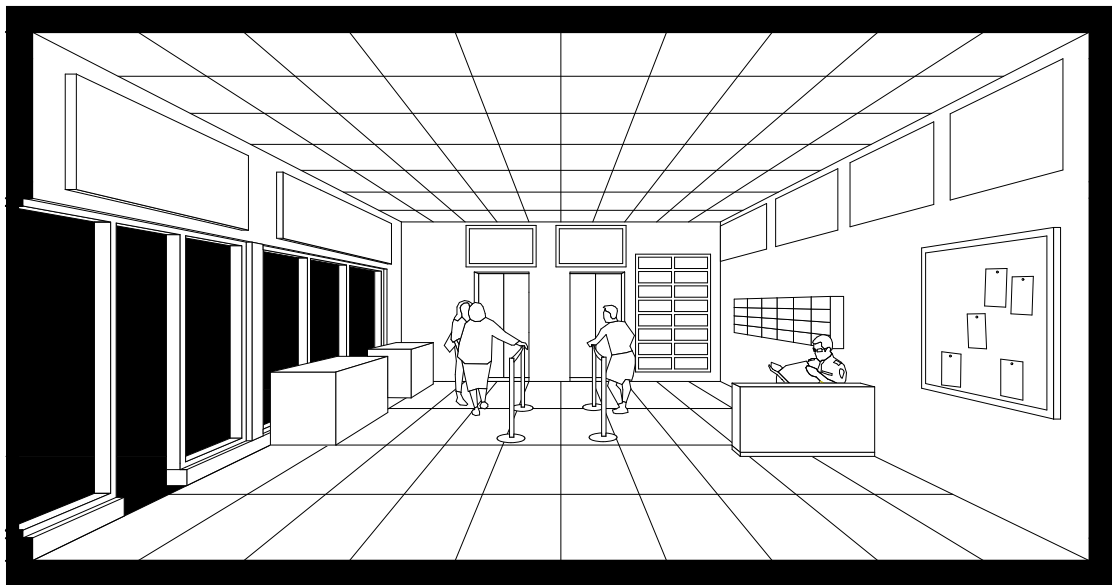
Wong & Ouyang
Hong Kong, 1980

A typical Hong Kong development, the lobby is within a shopping mall, giving no break from the speed of the city.





Theatre Lane

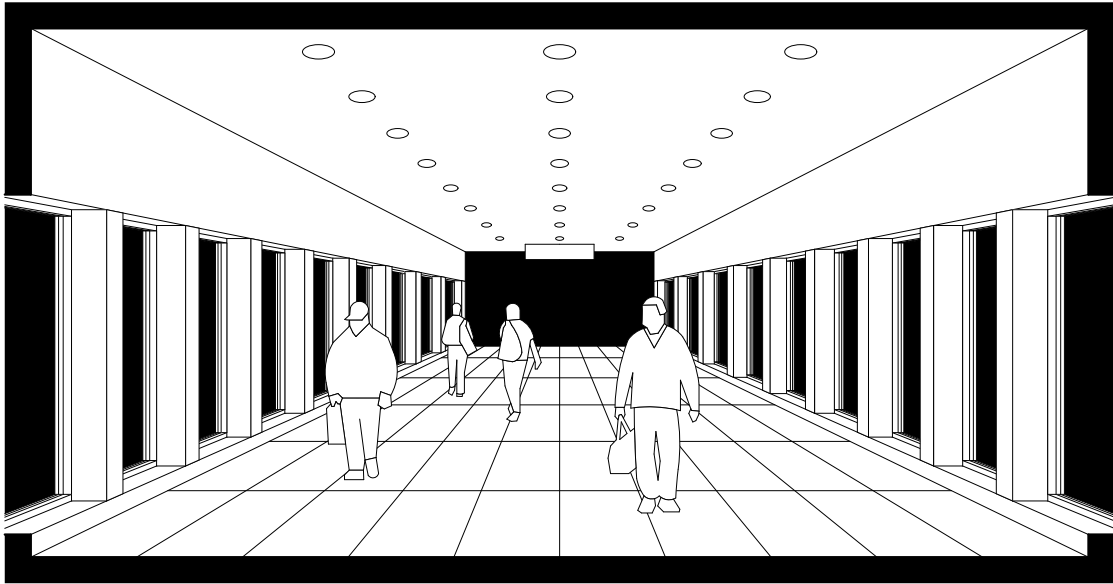


Lobby, Chungking Mansion

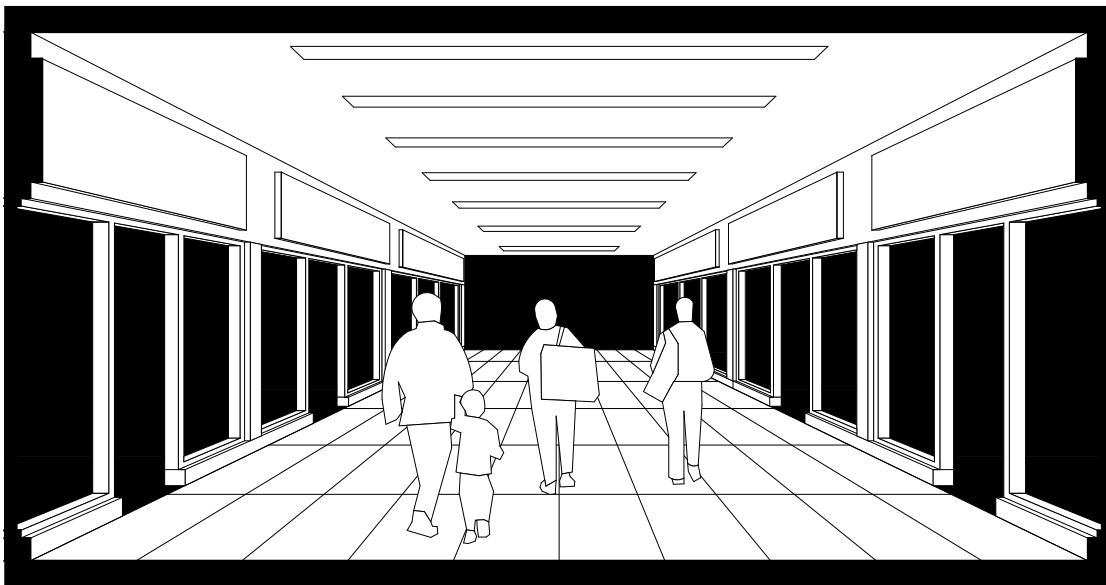
Conduits

Much of Hong Kong's urban environment is experienced in narrow conduits: alleys, elevated pathways, tunnels, lobbies, and arcades. As shopping is the modus operandi of this urban development, spaces emphasize continuous movement and offer little in terms of occupiable space.

However, in recent years the retail industry has suffered as Hong is no longer the centre of shopping in Asia. This shift presents an opportunity to lobby for a return to lobbies of generous proportion and atmosphere.



Elevated Pathway, Alexander House



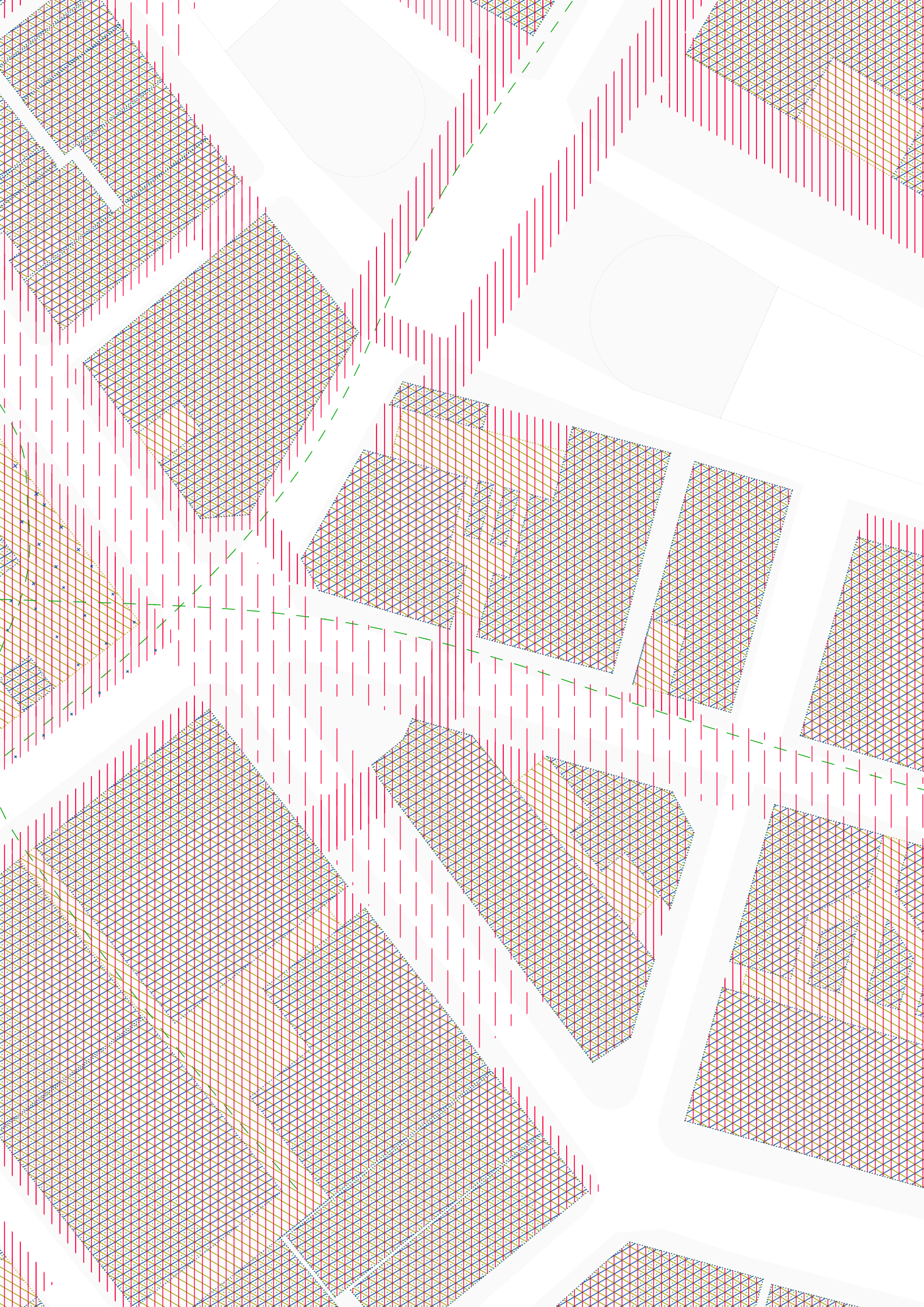
Shopping Arcade, Telford Plaza

III. Project

A lobbyist uses specific projects to redirect a more general discourse. This project lobbies through the design of a specific lobby in central Hong Kong. Though the site gives it specificity, the issues it addresses are present in many dense, corporate cities: a lack of space and a complex figure ground composed of many layers.

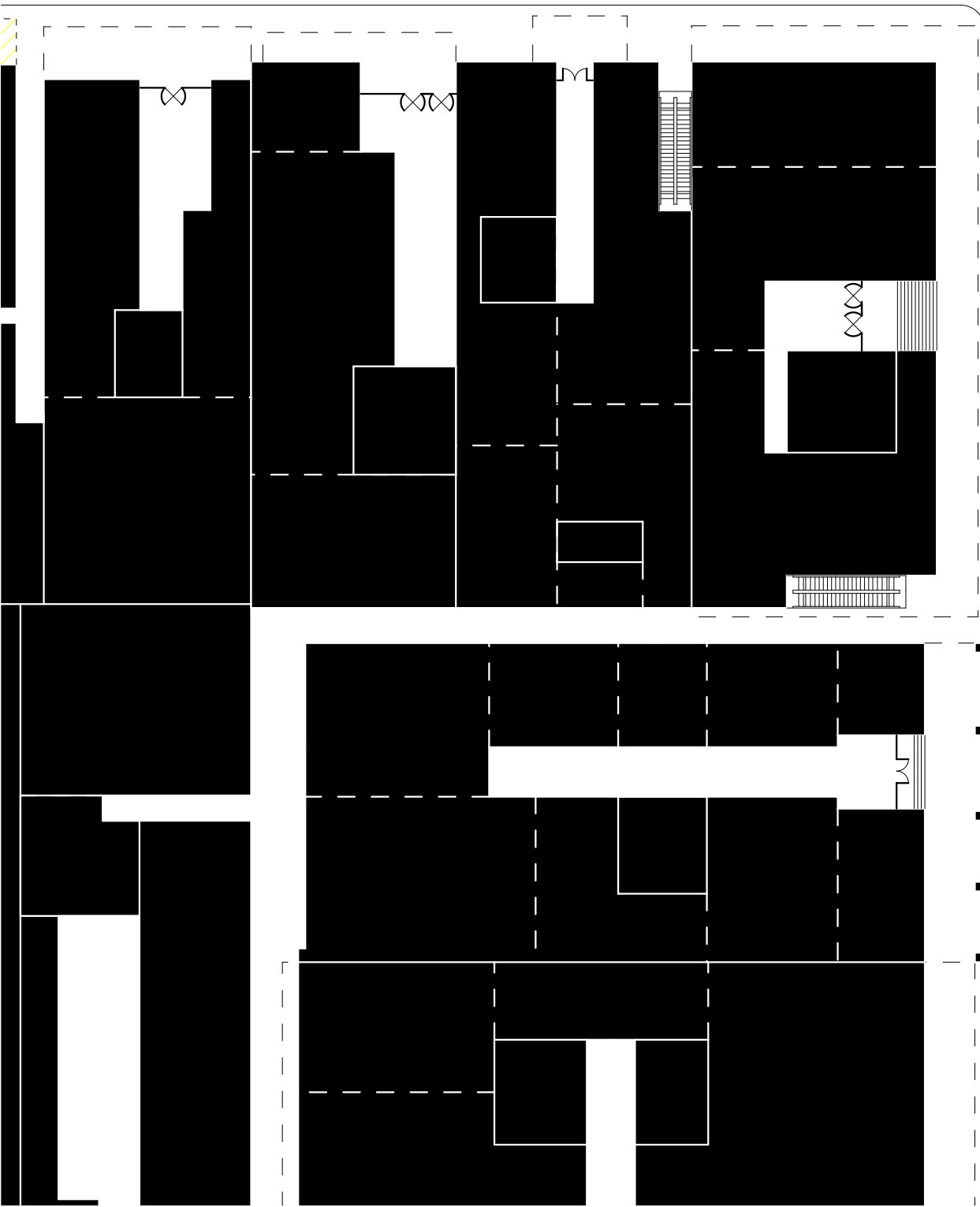
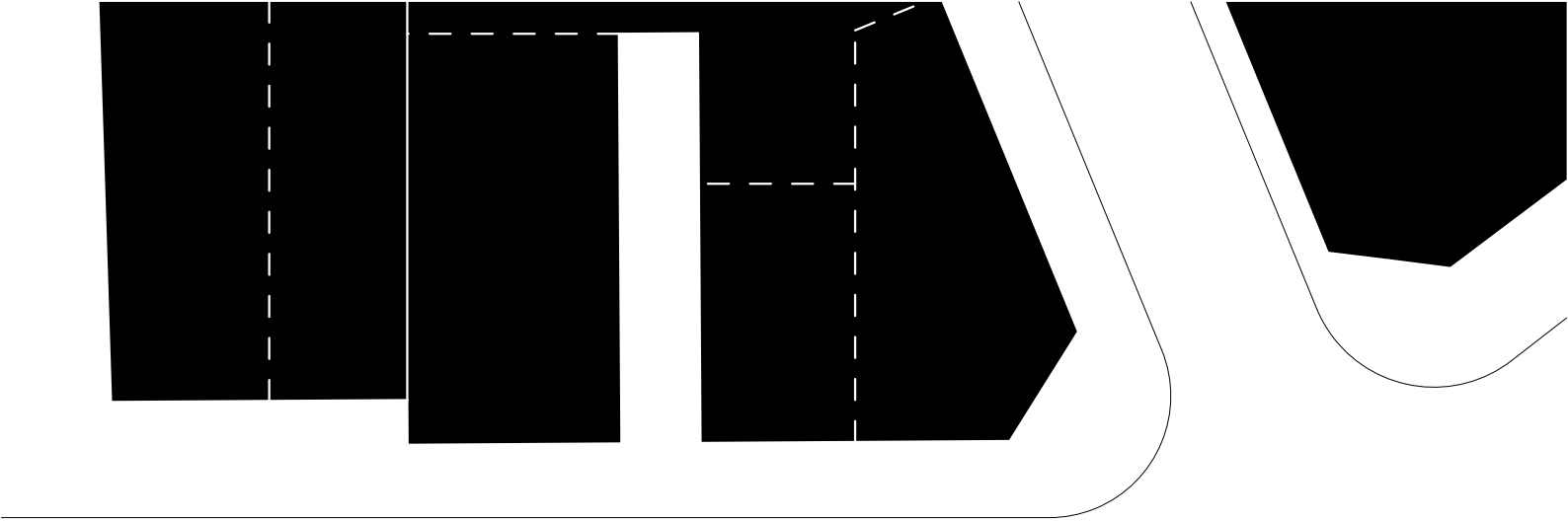


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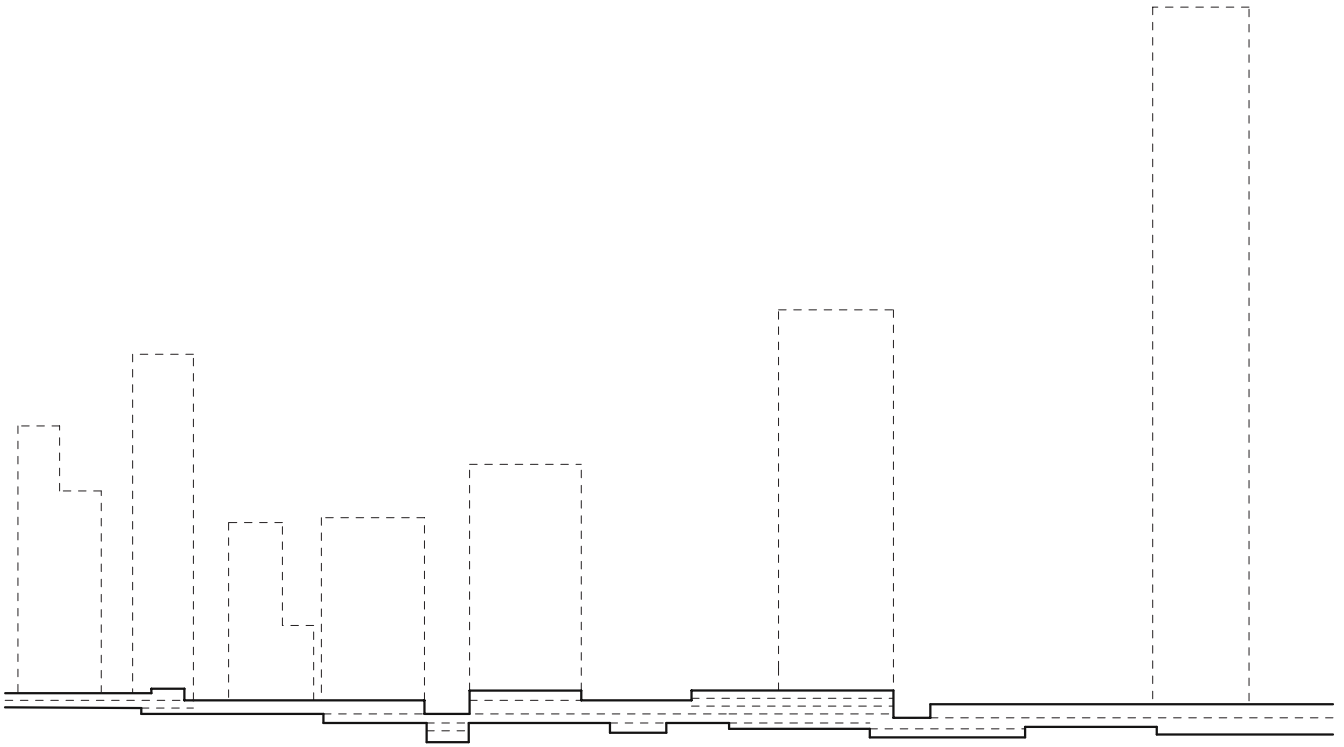
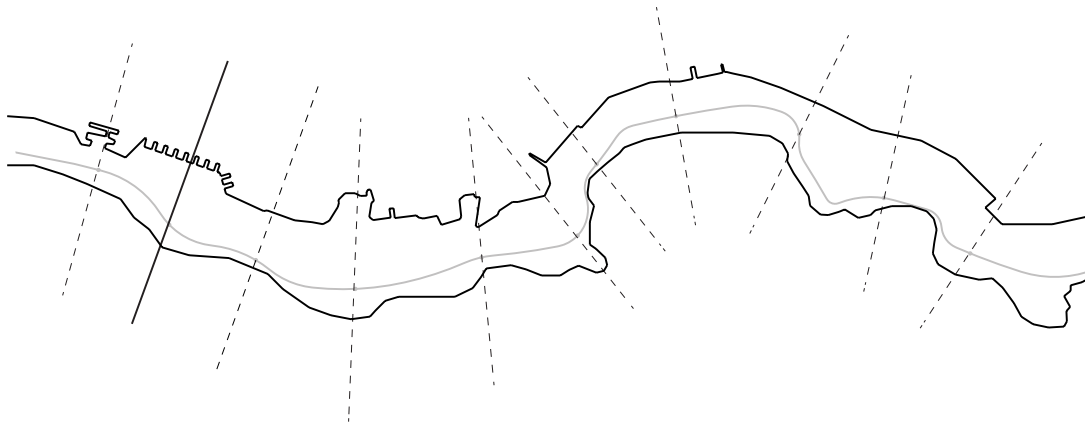
Existing Site 1:500

A typical block in Central Hong Kong is chosen.
Composed of individual high-rise blocks, its ground floor
is a complex of various shops, alleys and corridors.



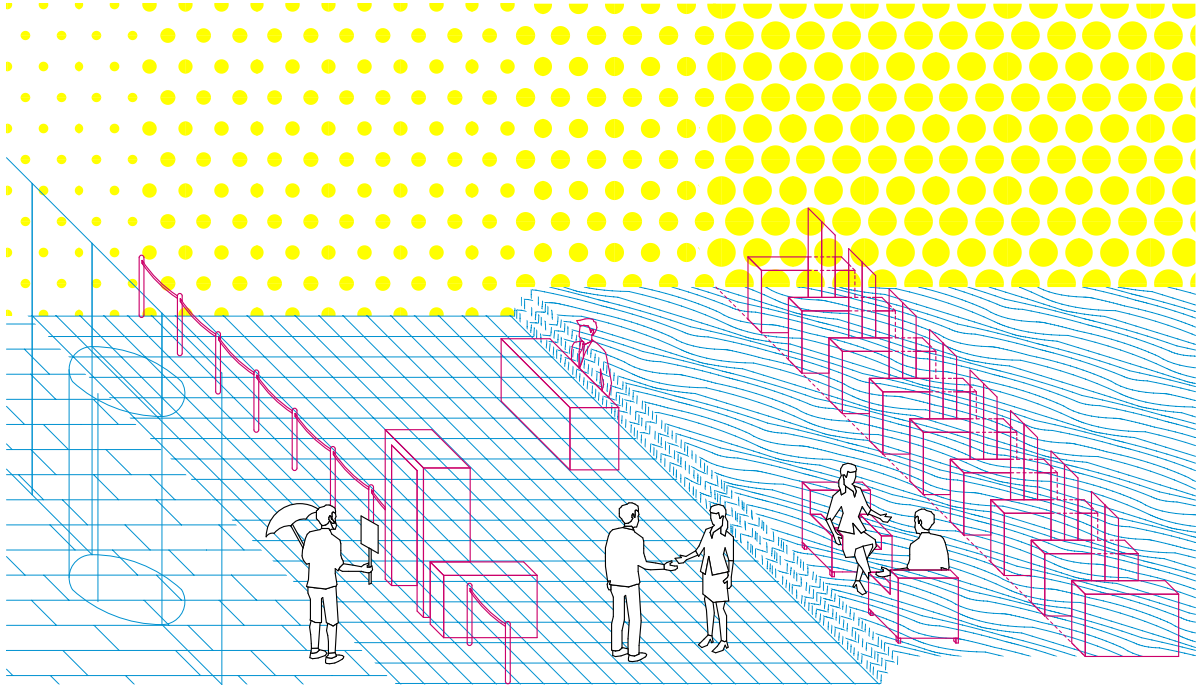
Hong Kong

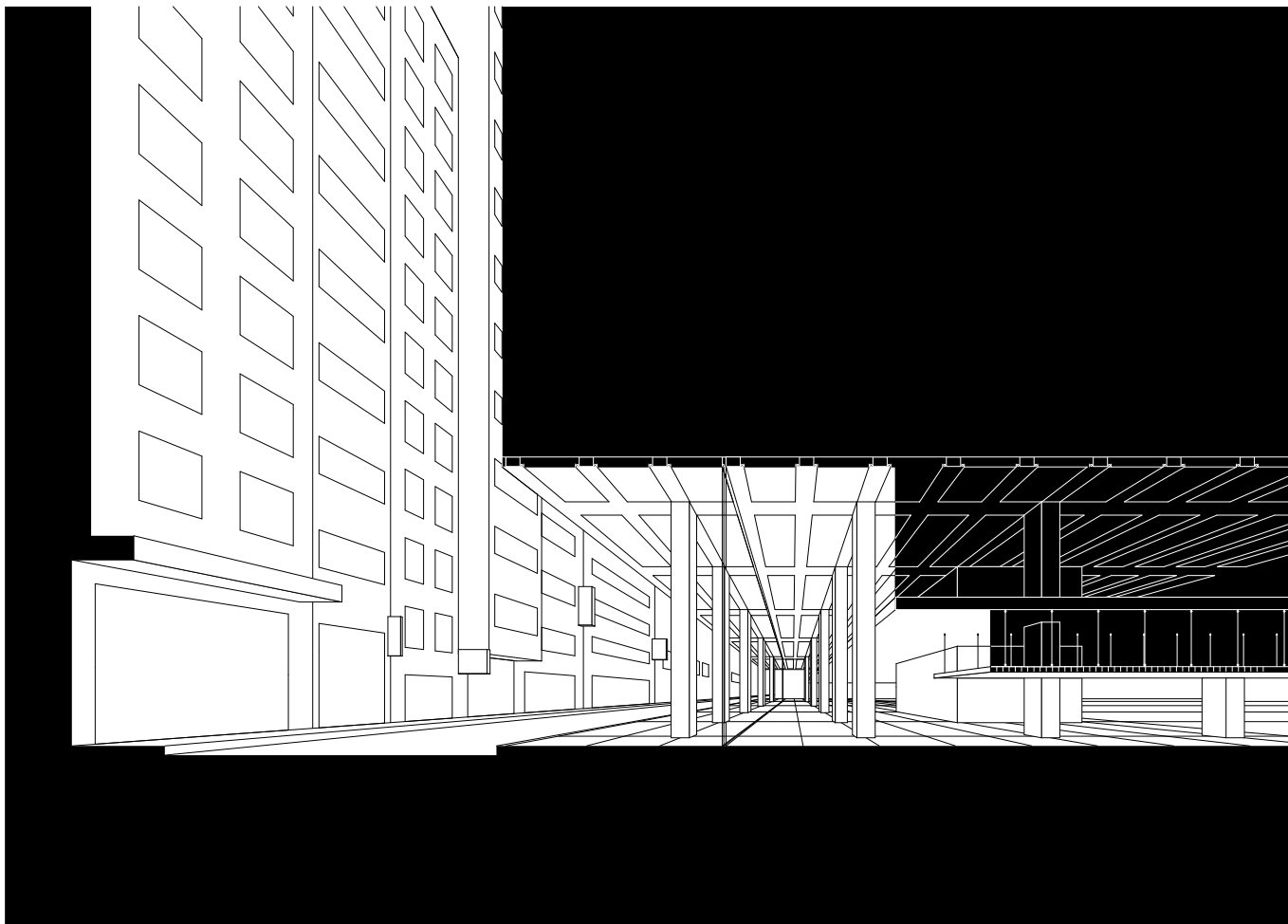
The extreme lack of open space puts pressure on Hong Kong's interiors to take on the traditional role of the street and square. "Privately-Owned Public Space," is ubiquitous, although its use and access is often subject to the will of property owners.



Barriers

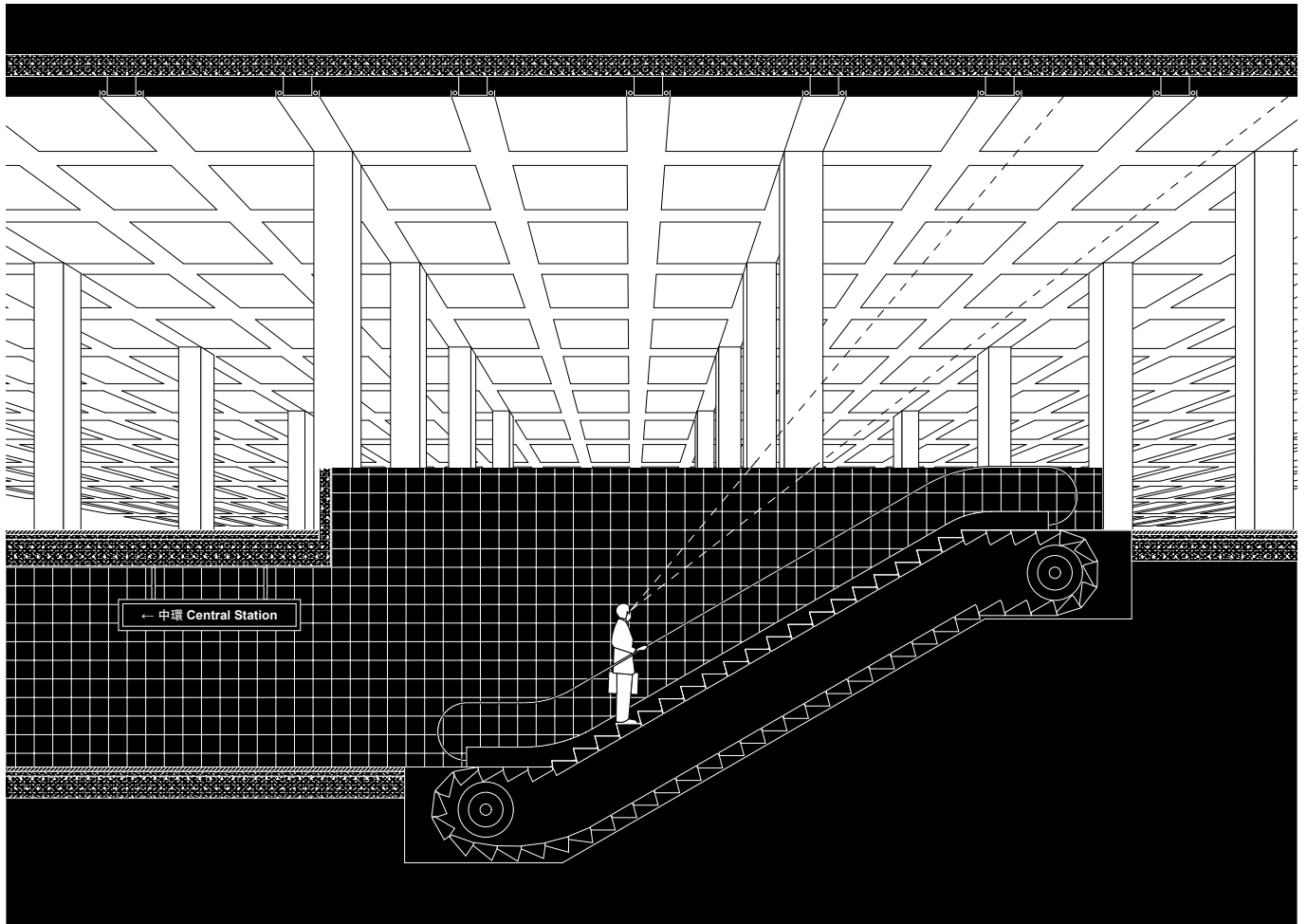
An early attempt of the project lobbied for the lobby as a public space, using its liminality to make an ambiguous border between accessible and inaccessible. However, this trajectory was aborted, as the control of public space is outside of the hands of architects. Rather, the project became about providing space, be it public or private.





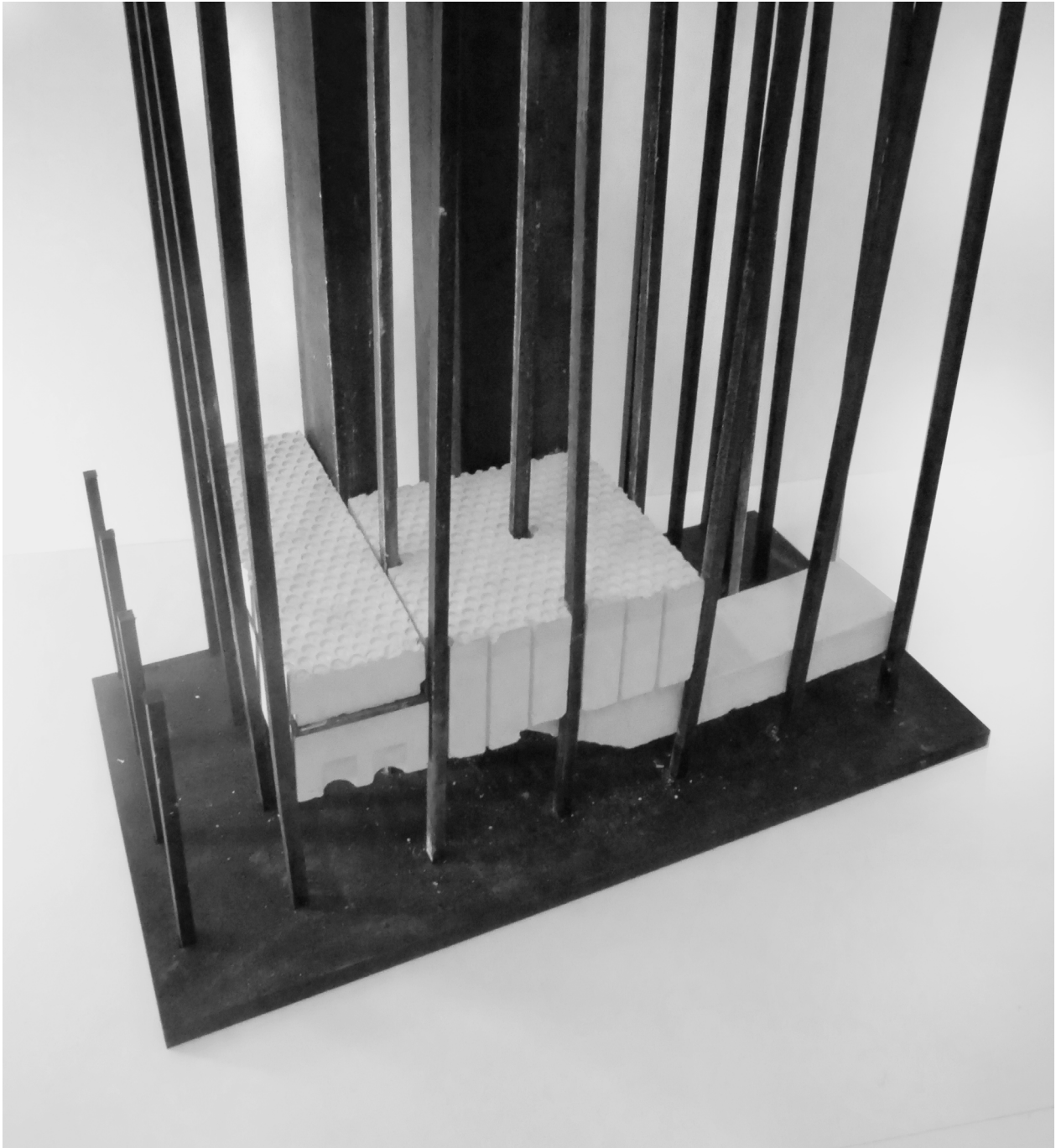
Sketches

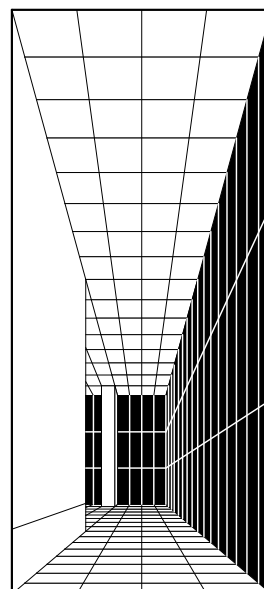
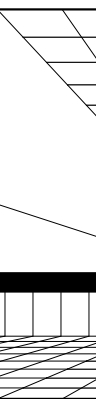
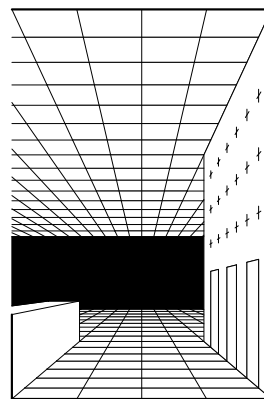
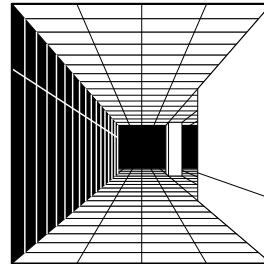
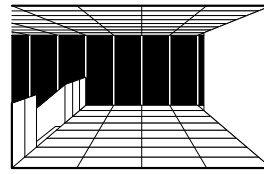
Early designs began by considering the thresholds between city - street, elevated passage, or metro - into the lobby. A diminishing ceiling height creates several zones of increasing intimacy. The ceiling is the first part of the lobby seen when approaching from underneath, and emphasized the horizontality of the space.



Study Model

One of the challenges of designing interior urban conditions is representation: complex three-dimensional space is difficult to represent without its container. Plaster “space-positive” casts of a lobby dissect the fluid, ephemeral space into discrete pieces. Proportion and the articulation of edges become the focus of lobby space.

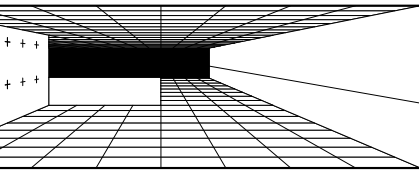




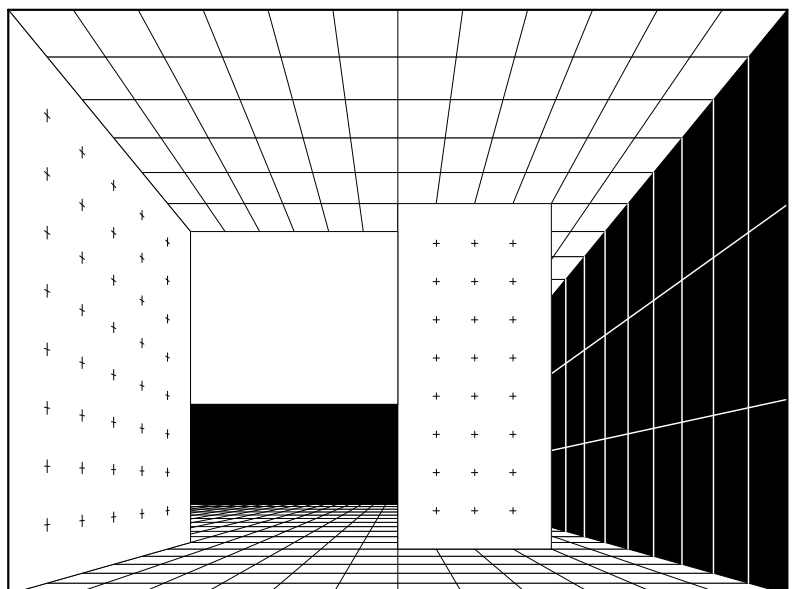
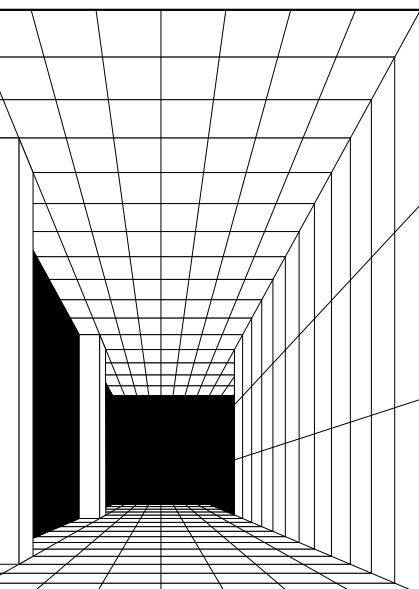
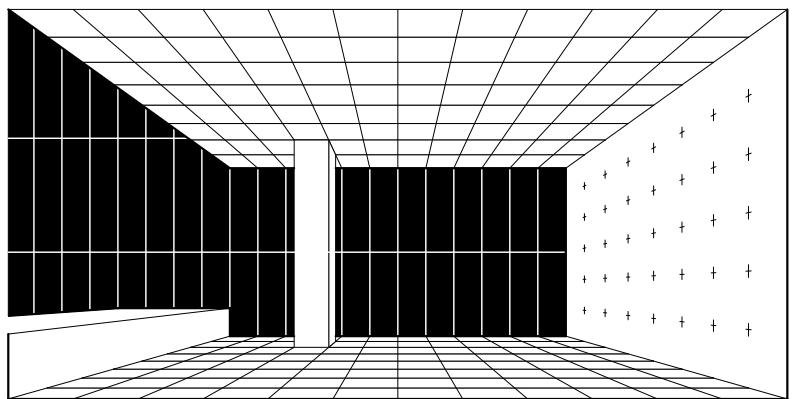
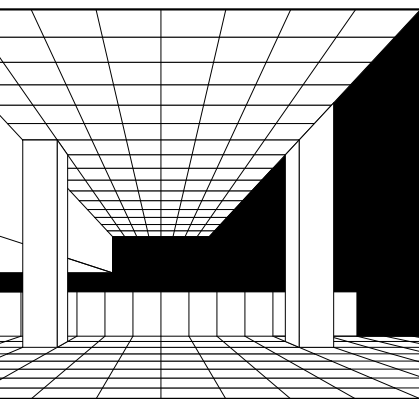
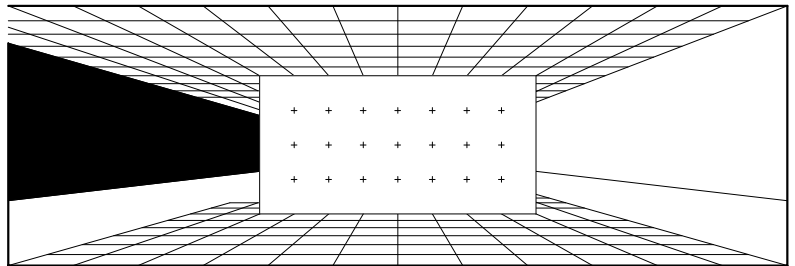
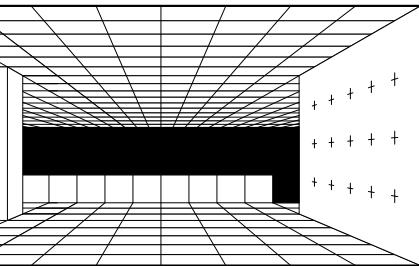
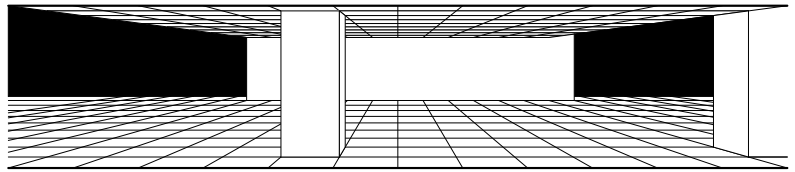
Matrix

To resist the homogeneous urban experience of Hong Kong, a spectrum of spatial proportions are developed using a matrix of heights and widths. Working alongside a flexible stage-set, these spaces are defined by a limited palette of elements: floors, ceilings, stairs, balustrades, benches, facades, and walls.

8m

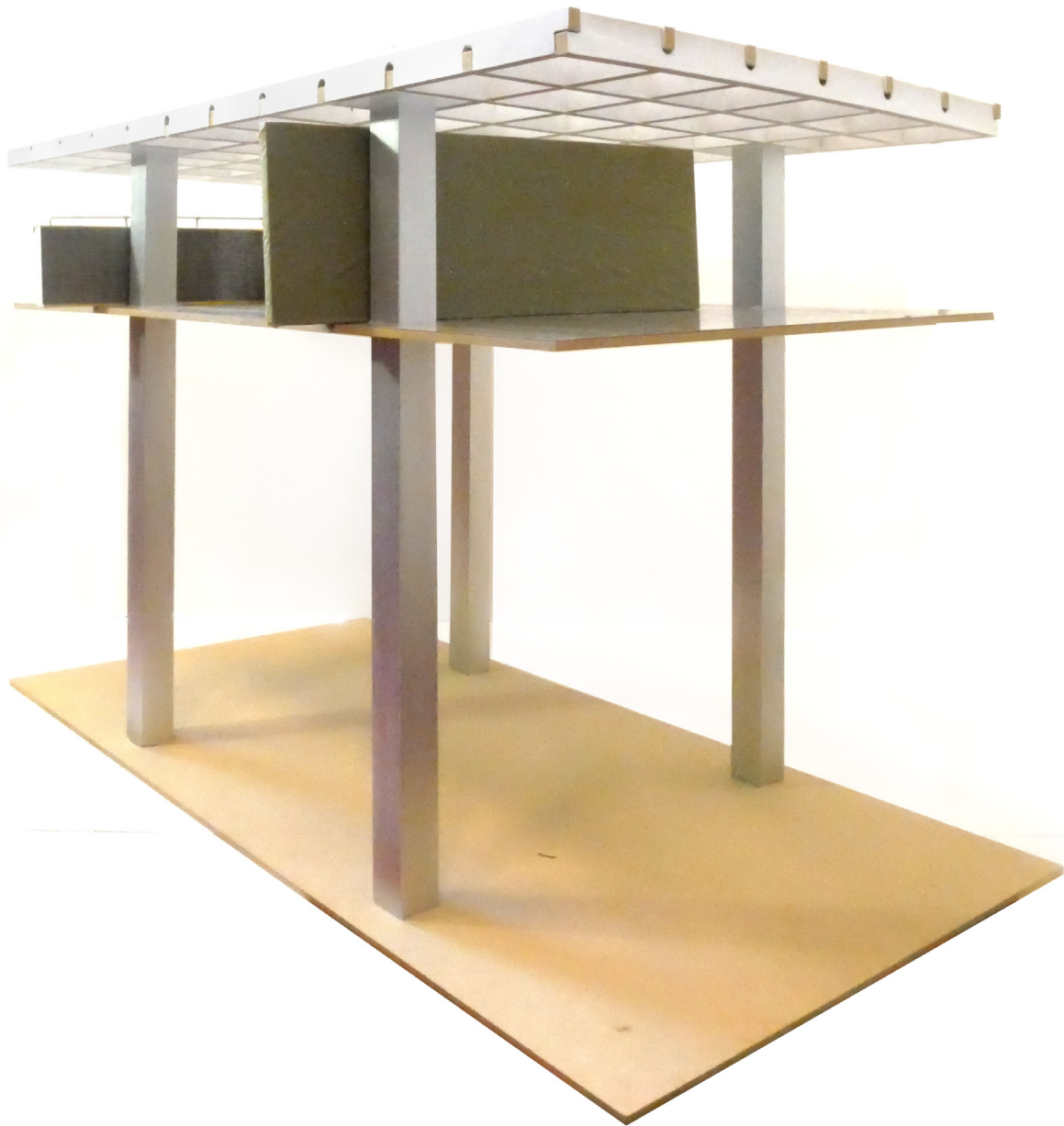


12m

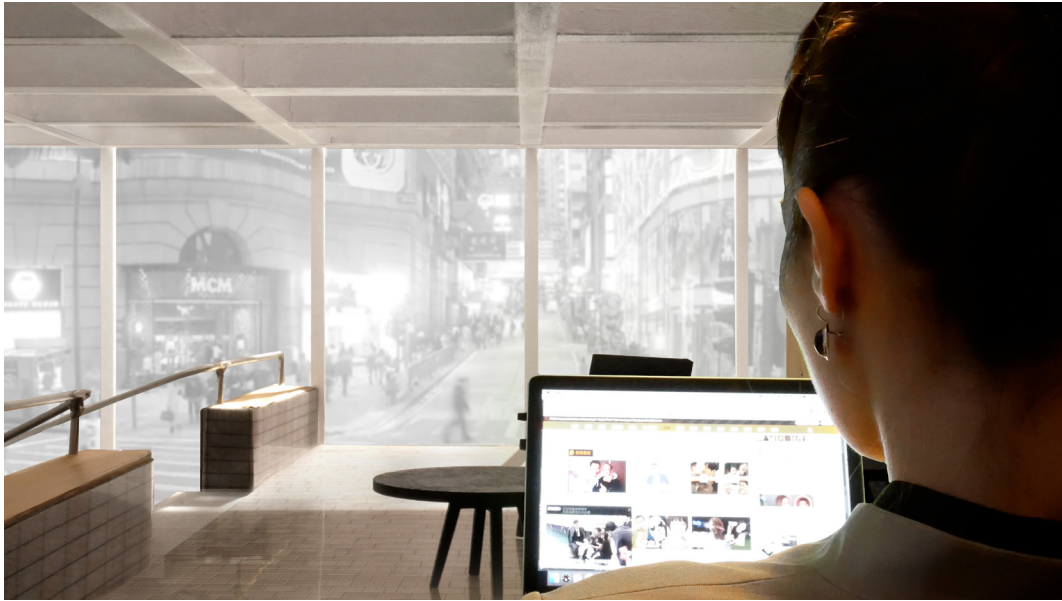


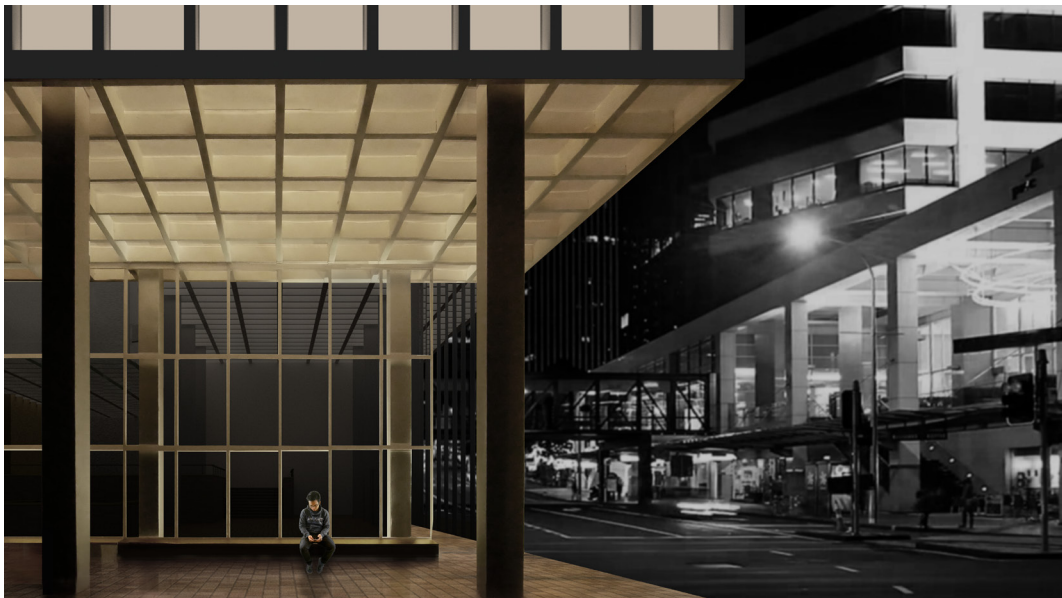
Stage Set 1:20

Composed of moveable elements, the model is used to create different perspectives. As frames, they are used as a middle ground between live actors, captured on green screen, and backgrounds of the city or lobby beyond.





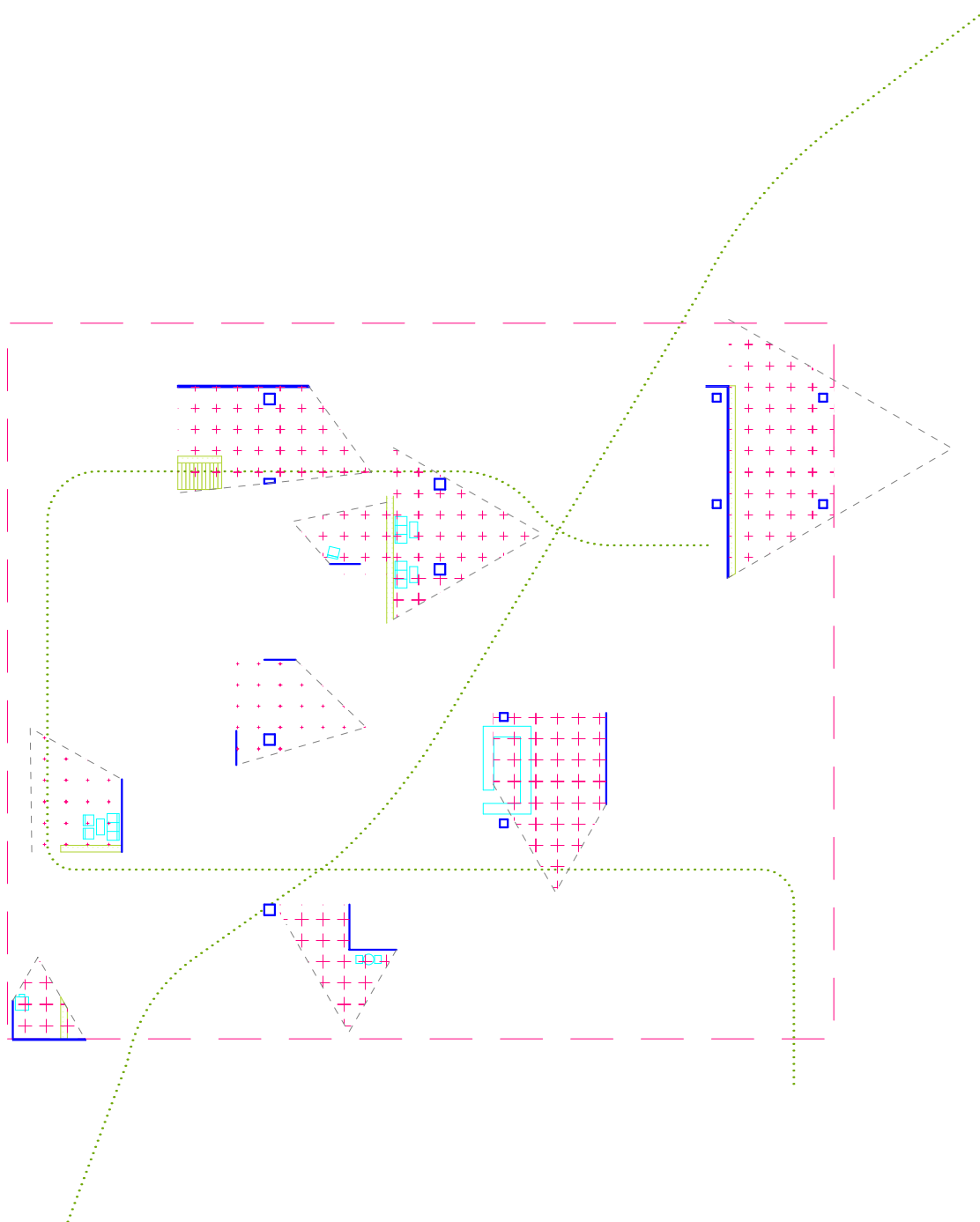






Scenes 1:500

Location of still shots and tracking shots within the lobby.



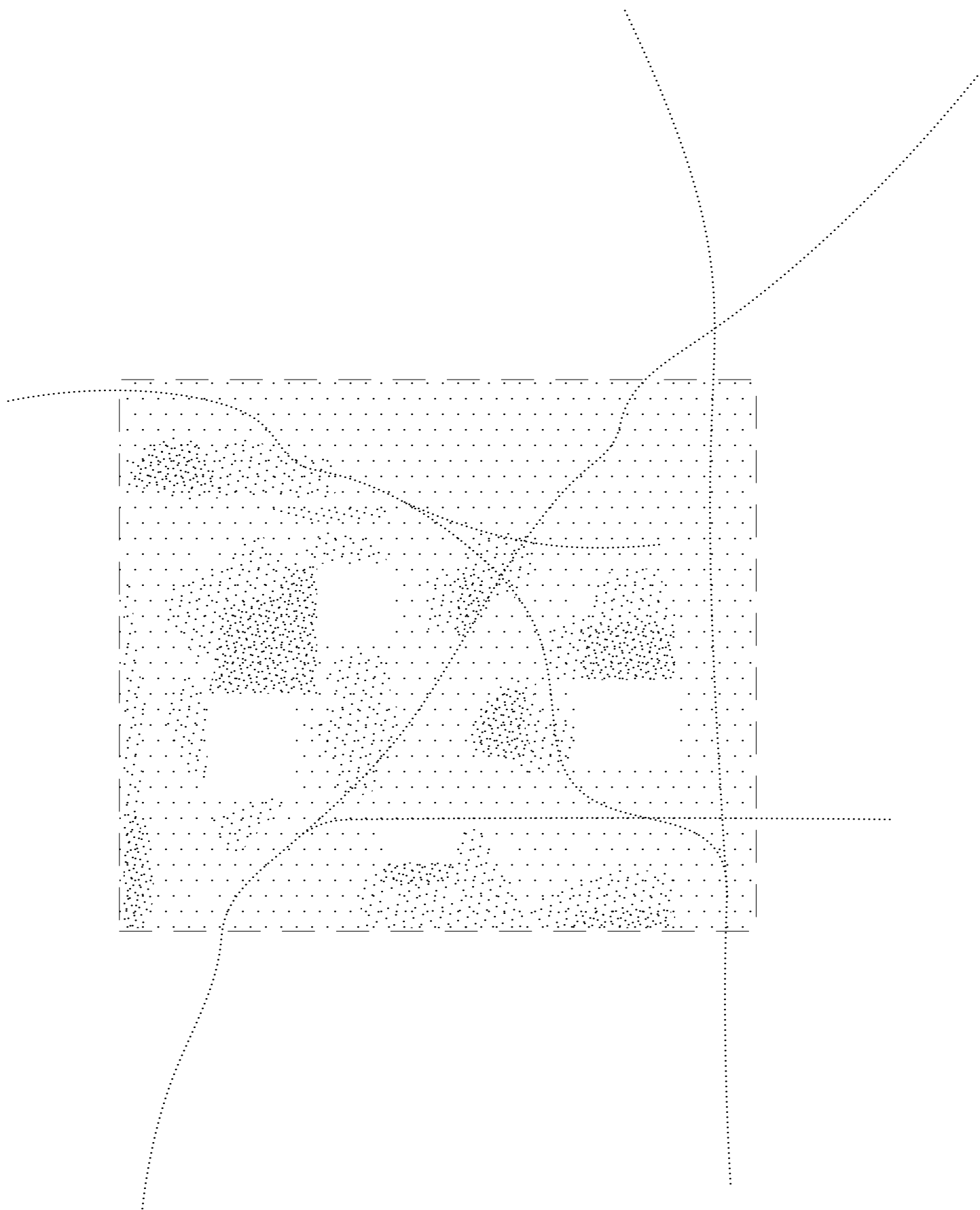
Floor Plan 1:500

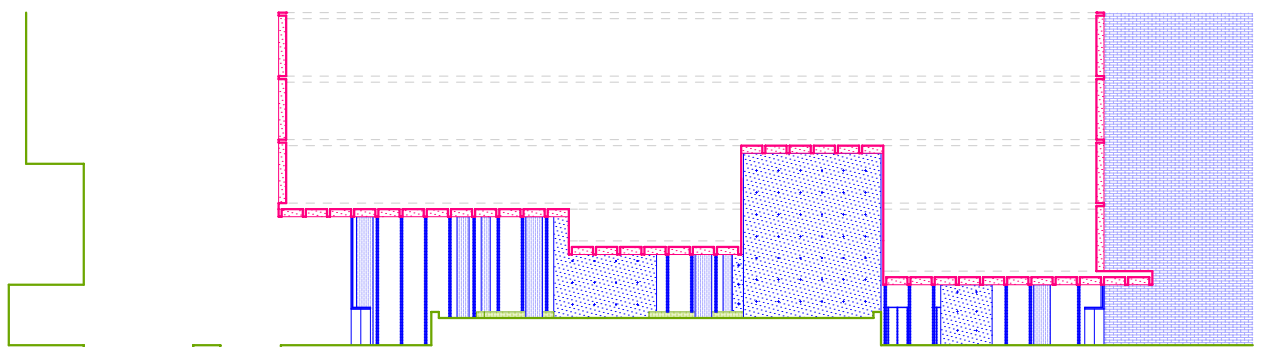
Clearing the ground floor of everything but the existing structure, the lobby joins three towers (a hotel, residence, and office.) Spaces are arranged according to still shots, with respect to dominant paths across the site.



Traffic 1:500

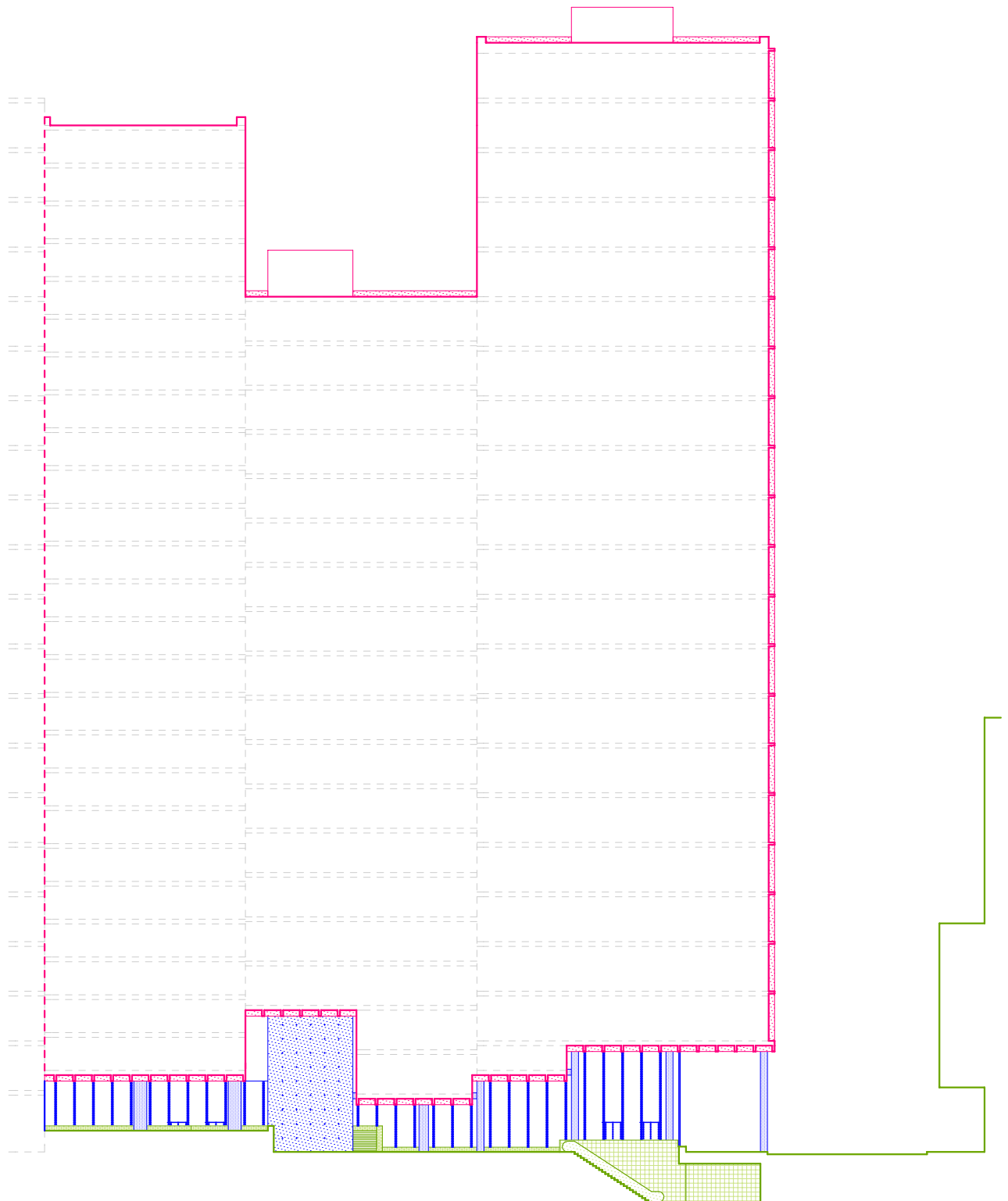
The frames create a series of moments where space is more static; giving individuals corners and edges to loiter. Other areas are more conducive to movement.





Sections 1:500

Framed between the floor and ceiling, the lobby is a sequence of space with varying heights. From the street towards the interior, spaces become increasingly intimate, and create compression that then emphasizes taller atriums.



IV. Appendix

August 24, 2016

Niels Jongerius

Lobbyist, Researcher
Transnational Institute, Amsterdam

Mr. Jongerius is a member of TNI's 'Economic Justice, Corporate Power, and Alternatives' program at the Transnational Institute (TNI). The advocacy group is funded by a mix of public and private foundations in Europe and the US, and produces research geared towards curbing corporate power and enhancing democracy globally. Mr. Jongerius has also worked at a non-profit in Shanghai, working with companies to expand their Corporate Social Responsibility strategies; was a consultant for the German Trade Union Federation; and was a media and action coordinator for the Dutch Socialist Party (SP) at the European Parliament. He has a BA in International Relations from the University of Groningen.

Mr. Jongerius was accompanied by Jurjen de Waal, Political Advisor for Food Watch, a Dutch NGO that campaigns for food-industry consumer rights and occasionally collaborates with TNI. He contributed to the discussion.

A think-tank is an institute which uses research to lobby for policy change. As opposed to corporate lobbyists (typically law firms representing corporations who use financial incentives as bargaining chips with legislators) think-tanks depend on their knowledge and expertise in specific fields for persuasion. For this thesis, understanding what lobbyists do is crucial to construct a working definition of "lobbying" in a broad sense, occupying a space between public and private. Moreover, learning how think-tanks push policy through research is central to developing a method of practice for this thesis project. Focusing on issues of corporate power, Mr. Jongerius has experience lobbying against privatization, as well as significant knowledge of how corporations lobby governments and the ethical implications thereof.

JH *First of all, would you consider TNI to be an organization that lobbies for issues?*

NJ We consider ourselves primarily a research-based organization, and our primary goal is to bring information out into the public sphere. (audio recording begins) For instance, right now we work a lot with coalitions, like-minded organizations, to see if there are points of intervention for our overarching ideas. As TNI, we are concerned with trade and investment policies, making sure they serve people and not profit. One of the more interesting and heated debates taking place currently is about free trade and investment treaties like TTIP and CETA. We give our opinions and appreciations of the things we know about to people involved such as parliamentarians and ministers. On the one hand, some of my colleagues might be better to speak to journalists, others are better to speak to parliamentarians, and some are better to mobilize activists and build coalitions. But all of it is in the same movement, these are just different positions within the movement.

JH *Are your research and publications ever geared towards specific parliamentarians or political parties?*

NJ Sometimes. But as an ideology, we see a triangle between decision makers, the academic community, and civil society activists. We would like to connect all three parts, so any research project that we do should consider be of interest to policy makers. But it could be that a specific publication, such as this one (points to publication *The Bioeconomy: A Primer*) is more for movements and academics than politicians when there is not specific policy framing taking place. But the other two (points to publications *Investment Court System Put to the Test* and *Public Services Under Attack*) are perhaps more for activists and politicians but less of academics because they might be too specific on topics and issues of interest now, not necessarily over a longer period of time. So it depends on the publication, but all our publications try to cover more than one part of that triangle. Usually politicians and policy makers are involved.

JH *It seems from our correspondence that you travel quite a bit in your work. As a researcher, what kind of people do you meet with?*

NJ Well, for myself, I started at TNI with a campaign for the referendum on Ukraine. We were part of the “NO” side, but being very different from most of the people on the “NO” side, we only chose to focus on the free trade aspect of the EU-Ukraine treaty, and not on all the other politics going on. We published a publication on that, done by Ukrainian

researchers already in our network. I was the only person from TNI involved in the project, so I went to Ukraine, I contacted with the researchers, I contacted other organizations such as the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation. I was not the “researcher,” but I was connecting those who had done the research to the issues at hand, and reframing it to fit the campaign purpose we wanted. On the basis of that publication, I intervened on behalf of TNI in the public debate: I went to radio shows, wrote op-eds, did TV interviews, and made sure the researchers were also interviewed. Now, I am mostly working on the TTIP/CETA campaign, which is a longer campaign. I have a bit more time and more colleagues: about two full time positions working specifically on trade and investment.

JH *With such a long-term project like TTIP, how do you establish strategies and goals?*

NJ Besides stopping TTIP, which would be awesome, for us it opens a window to have a wider debate about trade and investment policies. We try to intervene with specific subjects that we feel, even if we succeed in bringing down TTIP, will be important in the long run. We were one of the first to focus on ISDS (Investor-State Dispute Settlements). At first there were only very specific researchers who had known about this issue, but because we knew these researchers and activists, we told our community that this is something very important to campaign for. Even if we don’t stop TTIP, by making these types of discreet settlements part of the campaign controversial, we are influencing policies. So we single out topics that are more than just a few years of interest.

JH *So how something is evaluated on the long term is not necessarily the success of a campaign. With that in mind, what is the relationship between research, analysis, proposals and campaigns. Is it every linear?*

NJ I do not think it is ever linear, but we try to be more rigorous as we grow and expand. We are currently discussing this very much: how do you set goals, reflect on it, celebrate successes and evaluate what still needs to be done. We try to be quite rigorous in self analysis: “You spoke to a politician...,” “You organized a workshop with activists...,” or “You published a brochure with researchers...but what impact did it have? What topics were raised? Did you get feedback?” We are trying to track and evaluate these things. But you can never say “oh this works because it was mentioned in the media.” A few months ago, we had an annual meeting with our research fellows to discuss year-to-year topics. Just the day before that meeting we made front page

news with something concerning TTIP, they (the newspapers) mentioned TNI, it was a very positive thing. So at this meeting everyone thought that we are really making an impact. But you still need to consider if this might be a one time thing, or if this shows that we are really making headway. In social sciences it is difficult to evaluate cause and effect...

JH *When there are many causes and effects.*

NJ Yes. In this specific instance I had known journalists from previous work, we had established a very positive working relationship. If another journalist had been at that newspaper it probably would not have made front page news...It is difficult to evaluate these things.

JH *Would you say that TNI, which has been around for forty years, has a specific methodology, or is it always changing?*

NJ No, we are continuously changing, and it depends on the circumstances. We are currently expanding as we have gotten some donors, especially from the field of trade, who appreciate our work. For those specific donors, they have new requests- "How has your work been evaluated? Why are you successful? Please show it to us." Within the last few years, our analysis of these things has changed, also from the demands of society.

JdW *Could you compare what FoodWatch does to TNI, not in terms of policy and issues, but in terms of practice?*

JH From my perspective, TNI is more of a research-based organization, while we are more of a campaign-based organization. Probably no one (at FoodWatch) defines themselves as "lobbyists," because we are, as a small organization, mostly working through free publicity: trying to put pressure on issues by exposing practices by politicians and the food industry, and find ways to get the story out in the media. We hope that translates to some form of political action as well. We have some contact with members of parliament, usually because they invite us, not because we are trying to get our foot in the door there. We have larger goals and campaigns, and then we look for stories that are representative of the problem to get into the mainstream media, create awareness and mobilize people for political action.

NJ *From your biography, I understand that you have worked previously in the field of "Corporate Social Responsibility in Shanghai." Is there ever an advantage to working directly with the private sector, or is it never in TNI's interest?*

NJ Never. We own the building we work with, so the only time we work with private companies is when we buy or sell goods, and rent out space. There are no other links, supportive or ideological between us and private firms. That would go against the way we see society should function.

JdW That would be the same for us. Generally speaking, our focus is always political, as we want change to happen at the level of government: better laws, better regulations, better standards. We do not believe on self-regulation, you cannot as a government delegate the responsibility of taking care of the health of citizens to types of organizations. That being said, in this dynamic of campaigning and getting issues in the mainstream media, it does work for us to directly target food companies and supermarkets when we feel they are doing something wrong. JH: But that is something happening within the public sphere of discourse? JdW: Yes, and sometimes they themselves change their ways, and that is fine. But it is not the end-goal we are working on. If the businesses police themselves and agree to not use this substance, we are not satisfied, because we want the government to take responsibility to make a safe market for food. But it is a little complicated, as we are in touch with businesses. Sometimes they also invite us to talk with them, and we accept those invitations, but it is not that we are trying to help them as businesses to be socially responsible. There are NGOs that do great work there, but it is not our mission, which is getting change on a political level. We do not have many issues with food companies attacking suing or attacking us. They usually just want us to go away, or take some superficial measures. But we would like them to attack us, because that creates a fight that journalists find interesting.

JH *How does TNI establish credibility in new contexts, as a transnational institute? Does that require making your way up a lot of ladders?*

NJ Well, we consider ourselves to be part of the activist community, so there are a lot of points of convergence, such as the World Social Forum in Canada that some of my colleagues went to, or the Asia-Europe People's Forum in Mongolia that I attended just last month. There, where activist communities meet each other and discuss views, you meet potential partners. And word of mouth: an organization that is happy working with us might recommend us to another organization or say to one of their partners: "Oh, you're working on this issue as well? We know TNI, they might be of interest to you." Basically, building a network, a society of like-minded organization.

We (with Mr. de Waal) worked together in the anti-TTIP coalition. I would say one of our focuses is to enable partners in that community, we are not looking for a spot in the limelight. We are happy to do supportive work as well, which always helps build a network.

JH *The space in which these things happen is perhaps interesting. Do you think that the actual space of cities affects what you can do, in affecting these forms of interaction between groups?*

NJ Absolutely. At our fellows meeting we were discussing the Euro crisis and possibilities for Greek civil society to organize and resist what is being pushed on them. The discussion came to power and counter-power, hegemony, but also physical power. One of my colleagues mentioned that in Amsterdam, in the 80's the squatters' movement had locations, organizations, networks, printing presses. Physical infrastructure was obviously a necessity for societal organization in such a way that people can have power over their own life. We (with Mr. de Waal) were just discussing gentrification (before you came.) If rents rise, certain marginalized communities need to leave the city. I'm not saying cities are perfect, but at least they offer a place for interaction, discourse, debate, for organizing. It is definitely something to consider that we do not consider enough in the scholar/activist community.

JH Are there other big issues that might affect one's ability have power over their environment? We work with land rights- access to water, the sea, public services, the commons. We work with reclaiming spaces for engagement, rights for those who are part of a community to organize and control. Land rights is one of the bigger debates right now. Maybe in the future we will be more involved with cities and gentrification. Conceptually, the commons as a physical space, that is something we do research on with scholars.

JH *With all this privatization, maybe people accept it? Are you involved to make this an issue?*

NJ Yes, we contact communities, bring their struggles into a theoretical framework, connect their struggles globally, inspire others, and engage policy makers into a thought process where they identify it as a problem and try to help with solutions. When you look at land rights, it is not considered to be an issue at the EU policy level. There is no internal discussion about land grabs, while it is happening. Big agricultural corporations are literally taking land from peasants or the commons, spaces that were not

considered part of the private sector. By identifying the struggles, putting out brochures and research, and presenting it to policy makers, we are saying "look, this is a problem."

JH *What tactics do corporate lobbyists have, beyond throwing money at an issue?*

NJ Corporate lobbying in the EU is different than in the US. On the one hand, the US is better regulated, which sounds astonishing. But it has to do with the proportion of money being allocated to it. In the US, for instance, a lobbyist that lobbies to congress needs to publicly declare how much money is spent. Within the EU, such a thing is not necessary. In the Netherlands it is still voluntary and does not work. We are currently engaged in a process of starting a "lobby watch." We partner up with like-minded organizations to make transparency of lobbying an issue. As you rightfully point out, part of what we do is also lobbying, no one is shy of it. We are willing to give information to researchers about what we do, and keep track of what we do. But it would be prudent to see what the business community does as well, because they have much more funds and capacity. There are things that you do not necessarily connect with lobbying, but are part of the way the business community connects with policy makers. One of them is "revolving doors." The former president of the EU Commission, Manuel Barroso, just started with Goldman Sachs. Former ministers in the Netherlands of social democratic inclination are very much wanted in the board of Shell. Is it lobbying? It is not clear, but it is a way that the business community gains influence in the decision making sphere.

JH *You can't point your finger at something specific.*

NJ Yes, so what we want is clear rules and regulations in place about money being spent, transparency in the context these things are taking place, a "cool-off" period for people working there (in parliament), and a clear definition of when a company funds certain research that influences decision making. These things are quite necessary. I'm not saying corporations should not engage with politicians. But under certain strict rules and regulations.

JdW That is a very big difference- citizens having access to politicians and political power while corporations having it through lobbyists. What should these regulations look like, to avoid barring normal citizens access to power. If you create a long list of conditions that you need to meet to speak to a parliamentarian, it becomes difficult for a small activist group to have a voice.

NJ So you want to keep the system open, because that is part of what a functioning democracy should be. But it should be transparent for journalists and citizens to find out what is going on in places where decisions are being made. And how decisions come about.

JH *Do ever have exclusive access to information behind the scenes?*

NJ We have people that leak information, but when it is leaked we bring it out to the press because we want to create an open public debate. We do not get a private briefing from a governing minister that wants to keep us involved. If we get information, we check the validity of it and give it to the press.

JdW This goes for us as well, and for most organizations we work with. But in Brussels, there are forms of consultation with NGOs, where information is shared that they are not allowed to share in the public.

NJ Yes, there are stakeholder meetings, but those meetings are semi-public.

JdW (laughing) “Semi-public” does not exist.

NJ There is no video registration of it, but it is not a secret what is being discussed. But it depends on the kind of government. If government changes and is willing to discuss (in private) with TNI, I am pretty sure we would be willing to do it.

JH *If the government changes, does that immediately have an impact on your long term strategy?*

NJ Not long term. For us, having the focus we do, usually we have not been so engaged in the Dutch political sphere, although we do get a bit more now.

JdW Most of our campaigns are nationally or Brussels oriented. It would need to be a really drastic change that we have not seen in the last 20 years, and in the coming elections I do not expect things to shift radically in a different direction that would allow us to achieve something like half of our goals in four years.

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