

P4 REFLECTION

MEDIA CENTER

Rethinking Media Center Typology in Cuba

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Studio: Complex Project
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P4 REFLECTION ASSESSMENT

MEDIA CENTER

Rethinking Media Center Typology in Cuba

Research Question

How could urban intervention create a new alternative means to facilitate information accessibility?

Ambition Statement

Architecture as a means of mass media, reinforce information accessibility through information learning, sharing and producing

ASPECT ONE: the relationship between research and design

My graduation project starts from the research on the media situation in Cuba. While everywhere in this world has free access to Internet and information, only 5% of Cubans have access to Internet and most of Cubans still rely on an informal way of getting information. Since Cuba is now opened to the world and will embrace a digital age in future, a media center was designed to reinforce information accessibility and help Cubans transforming from a traditional print media situation into a digital future.

The selected site is located at the end of Malecon, Vedado District, next to a heritage building- Vedado Tennis Club. The Vedado District is the cultural heart of the city, with crowds of hotels, contemporary art galleries, restaurants and bars. Laid out on a rigid grid system, there're also different building types such as high-rise, commercial street which envision a modern and future economical center in Havana. As for the site Vedado Tennis Club, it is a landmark embodies with a historical and cultural value in Vedado. Before the revolution, sports aren't a political issue and Vedado Tennis Club was built as an entertainment place for the use of bourgeoisie. However, after the revolution, the recreation club was nationalized and turned into the Jose Antonio Echeverria Social Circle opening to the public. The transforming history of the site laid its cultural value and potential for revolution. As a reinterpretation of the site spirit, it became fitting to develop a project under the theme of media.

By looking at what Cubans have, it is found out that the equipment of state-owned media institute is out

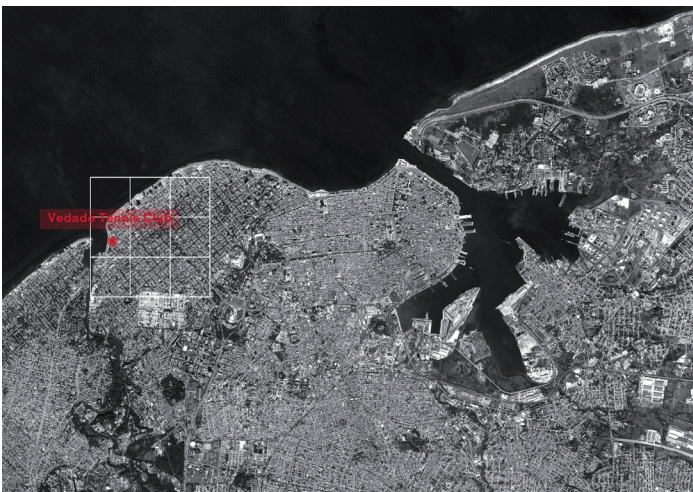


Fig. 01 Vedado Tennis Club location highlight in red



Fig. 02 Bird view of the site

of date and the Cuba government emphasize the computer science but lack of scope. As an architect, a focus should not only be put on what space should it be like, but also focus on how it will impact Cuba people. Since media is a new sector for Cubans, the media center is defined to emphasize the education and social factor. With the openness between different floors and a series of staircases, the building not only provides sight interactions but also creates series of spaces for the social interactions. Besides, with an open and flexible space, people are free to visit the media center for information sharing, learning and producing.



Fig. 03 Urban implementation plan of the urban intervention

ASPECT TWO: the relationship between the theme of the studio and case study chosen by the student within this framework

The theme of the graduation lab is based on Cuba's unique political and economic context. The ambition of the studio was to operate at many different scales and Cuba's unique context. Within the process of analyzing and research, it is essential to bring a critical thinking on how different programmes could bring people together, and what the inhabitants need to present a better future.

What kind of media center does Cuba need? To answer this question, I researched several typologies, the publishing house, information center, library and open stage. The most relevant examples which are similar to my goal of a Cuban media center are Sendai Mediatheque by Toyo Ito and Seattle Public Library by OMA. Both of them enable free information accessibilities not only with a digital identity but also with a collective goal. With a detailed study of the programmes in different cases, I decided to emphasize a media center focusing on sharing, learning and producing. By introducing the programme, learning center, publishing house and flexible space inside the building, the media center aims to achieve a collective goal and envision a media opening in Cuba.

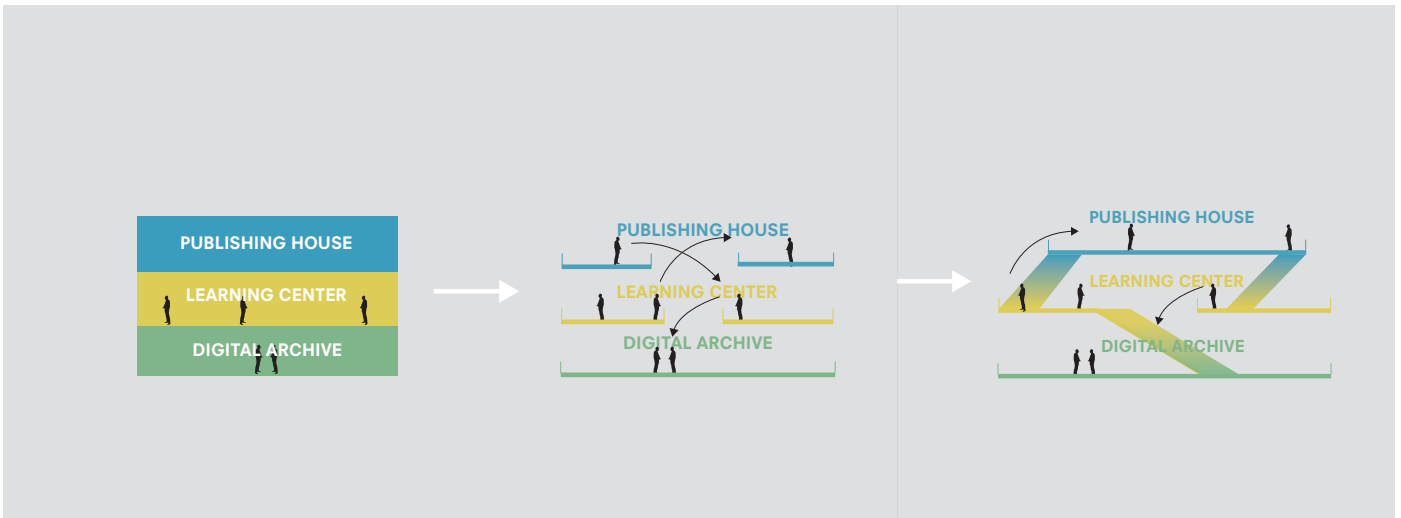


Fig. 04 Concept Diagram

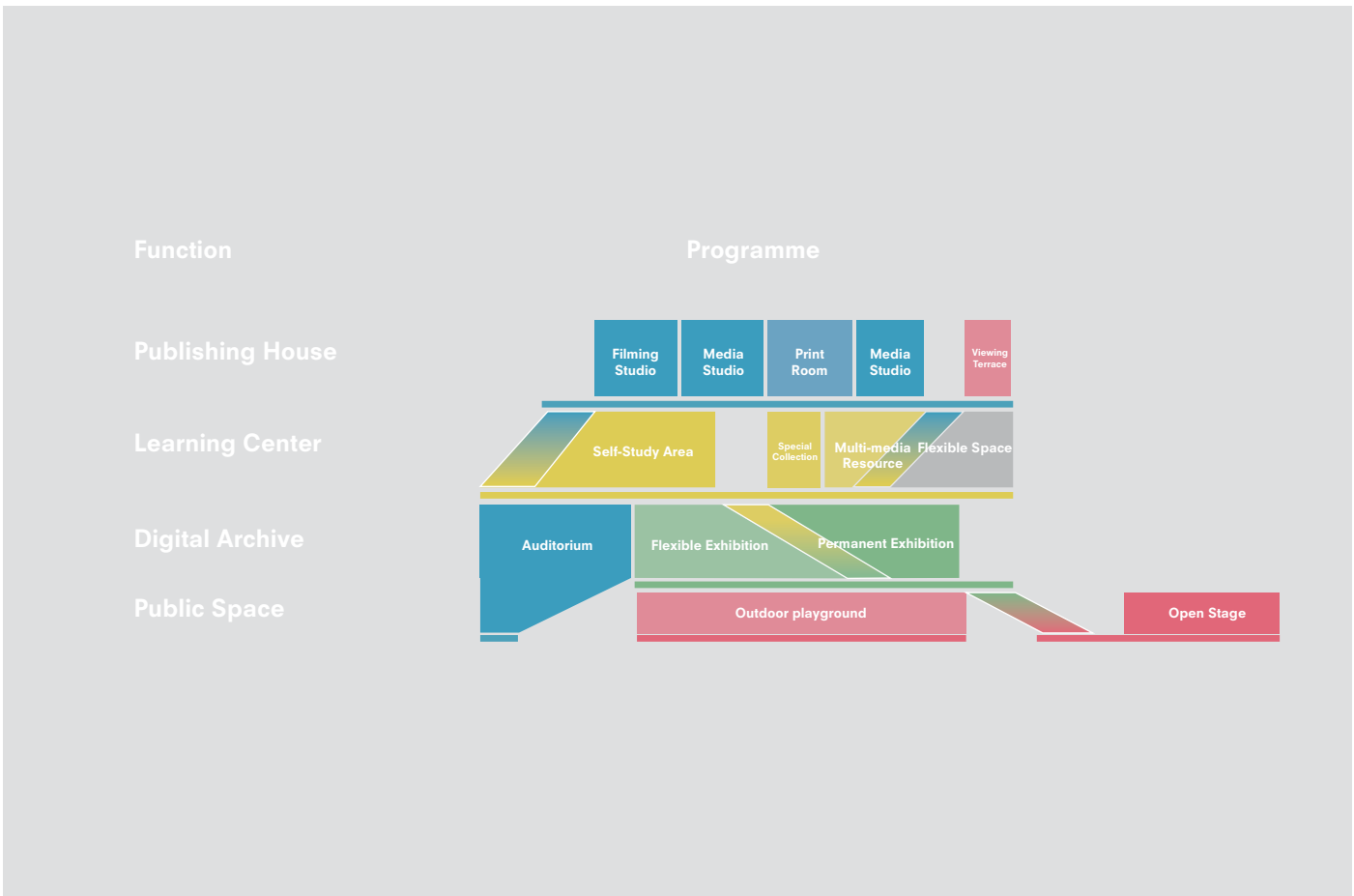


Fig. 05 Programme distribution of the media center

ASPECT THREE: the relationship between the methodical line of approach of the studio and the method chosen by the student in this framework

The Complex Projects line of approach is based on a multilateral attitude of architectural interventions within urban context. With an emphasis on having an awareness of the complexity of the world, the objective is to make something complex into a simple clear spatial proposal which could contribute to the citizens and the future development of the city.

As for an individual approach, I first asked myself three questions: What is the most important space inside the building? How could people use this building? Why would people still want to go to this media center while several years later more Cubans can have more information accessibilities? To find the answer for these questions, models and technical drawings were introducing in the design process. At last, I was able to build up a comprehensive picture of a media architecture both on a building scale and an urban scale. On the level of a building scale, the social space plays a dominant role inside the building. With the application of staircase, it provides several communal spaces with multiple functions and different views. On the level of an urban scale, a new public space prototype for Cuba was created on the site. In Vedado's rigid context, the use of curve lines allows different spaces for physical activity and sports, performances. Besides, this way of designing public space could be applied to the empty spot along Malecon, to create a new type of urban space along the sea road for Cubans.

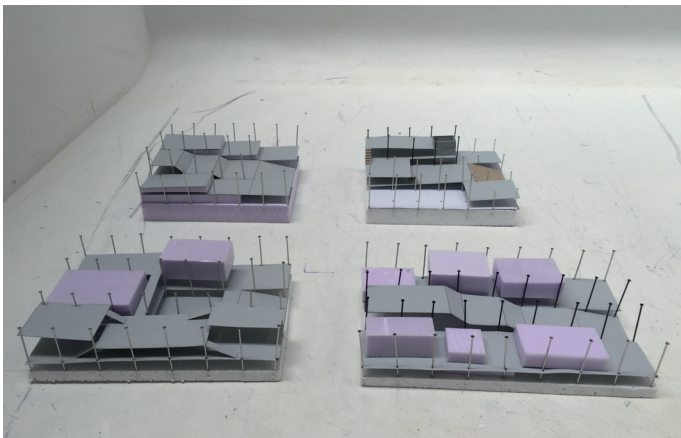


Fig. 06 sketche models photo during process

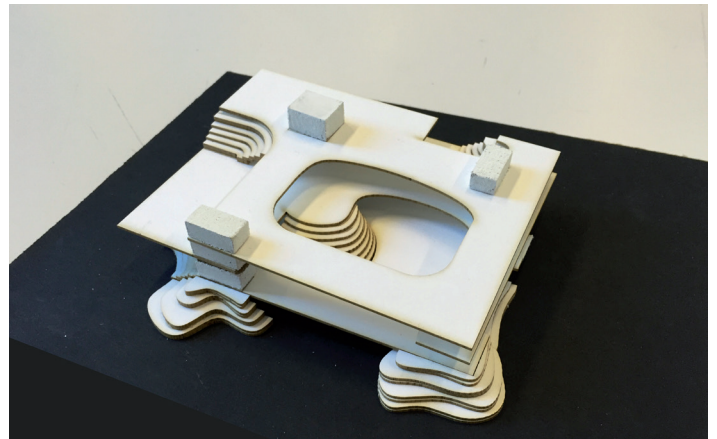


Fig. 07 Conceptual model of the design

ASPECT FOUR: the relationship between the project and the wider social context

The method of creating a new urban intervention from the research book was successful in its aim. As a manifestation of media opening which the research was indicated, the building helps form a social network based on information sharing, learning and producing. Also, the building plays a pioneering role in the definition of a new Cuban society, act both as a symbol of media opening, being a place for collaborative and present Cubans a better future.

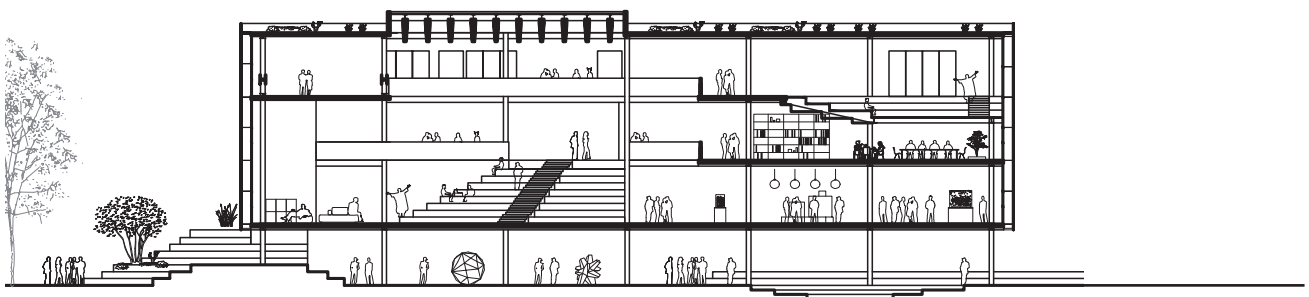


Fig. 08 section of the bulding

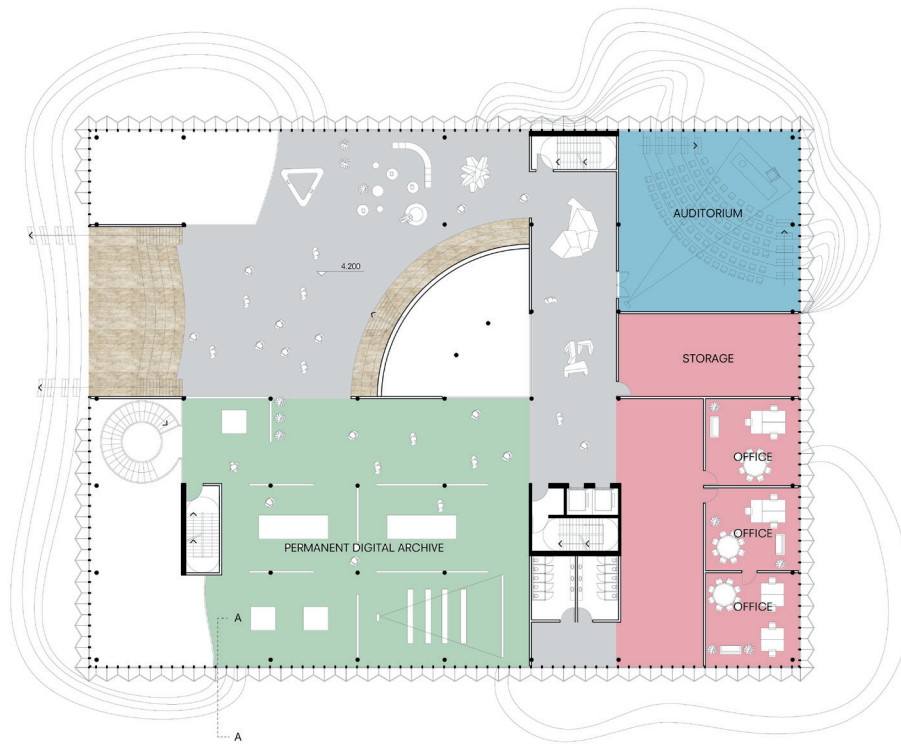


Fig. 09 First Floor Plan

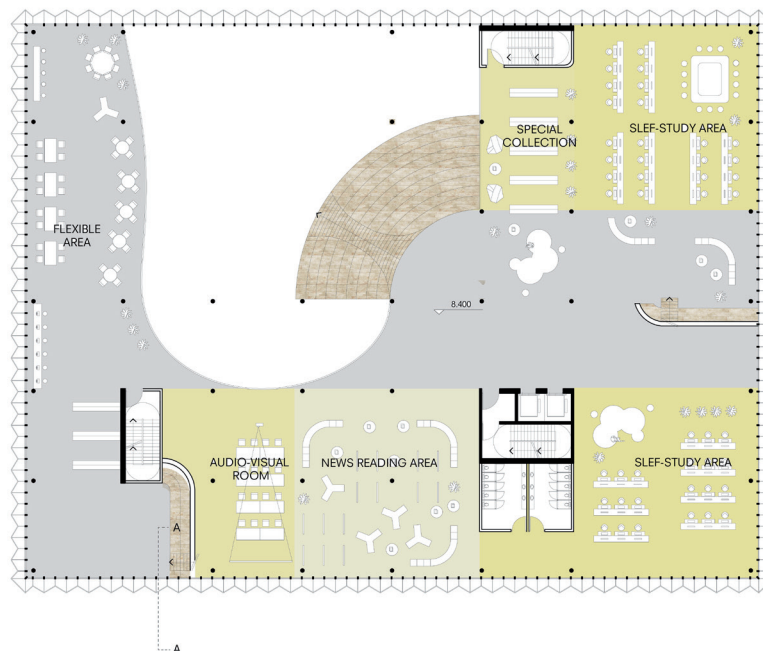


Fig. 10 Second Floor Plan



Fig. 11 Third Floor Plan

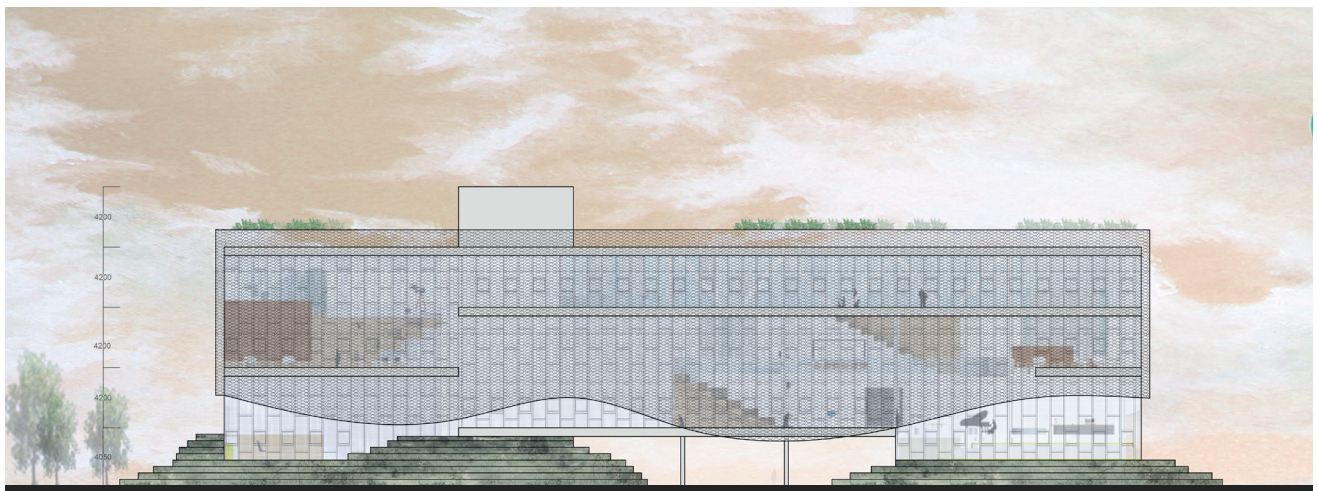


Fig. 12 East Elevation