SECOND YEAR PORTFOLIO

Ainsley Kraft

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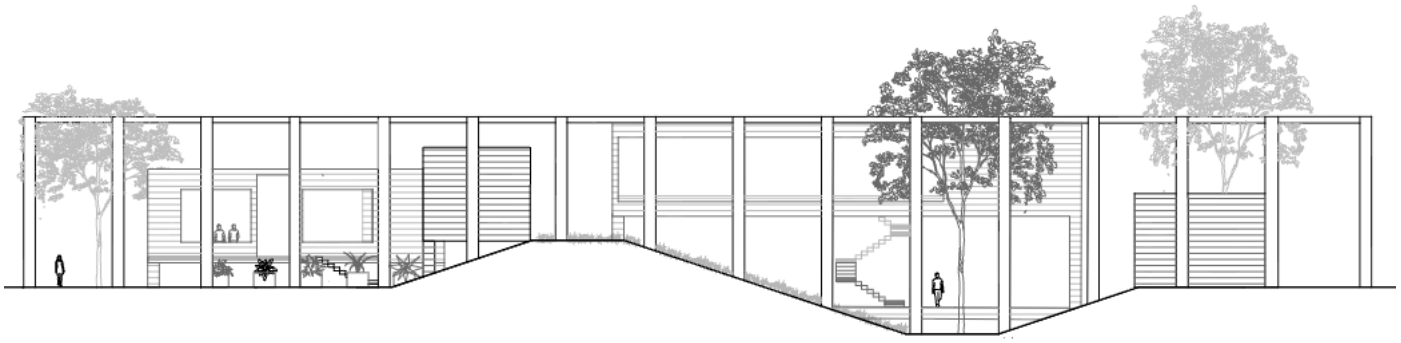
EARTH + FRAME

Summer Design | Hybrid Design Eames House + 25 Columns

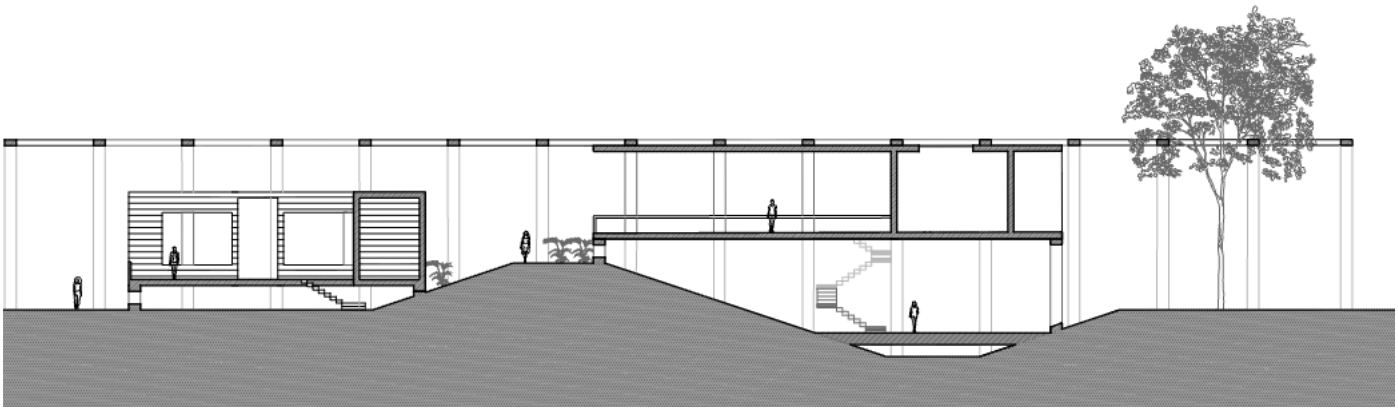
This project explores how structure, landscape, and repetition can shape spatial experience through the combination of 25 Columns and the Eames House. The design is organized as a long, sectional composition that moves with the ground, taking direct inspiration from how 25 Columns responds to site and topography instead of sitting as a single object above the landscape. The building steps and embeds into the terrain, using changes in elevation to guide movement and create moments of compression and release throughout the project. Topography plays a major role in organizing circulation and spatial relationships. Interior and exterior spaces are connected through gradual shifts in section, allowing movement to unfold naturally as people move through the building. These sectional changes help create framed moments where users can pause, look out, or transition between spaces, emphasizing experience and sequence rather than form alone.

A repetitive structural system establishes rhythm and clarity across the project, drawing from the column logic of 25 Columns while remaining open and flexible. This system is paired with an outdoor framed structure derived from the exposed frame of the Eames House. Instead of acting as an enclosure, the frame defines space through structure, creating a canopy that organizes circulation, provides shade, and frames views across the site. Transparency and openness allow the building to feel light, even with a clearly expressed structural grid. The relationship between inside and outside is intentionally blurred through layered planes, framed thresholds, and visual connections across the site. Circulation is driven more by section than by plan, with movement shaped by structure, topography, and views. Overall, the project shows how studying and translating precedents into site-specific strategies can lead to a cohesive design that prioritizes spatial experience, clarity of structure, and connection to the landscape.

Physical model showing building and ground relationship

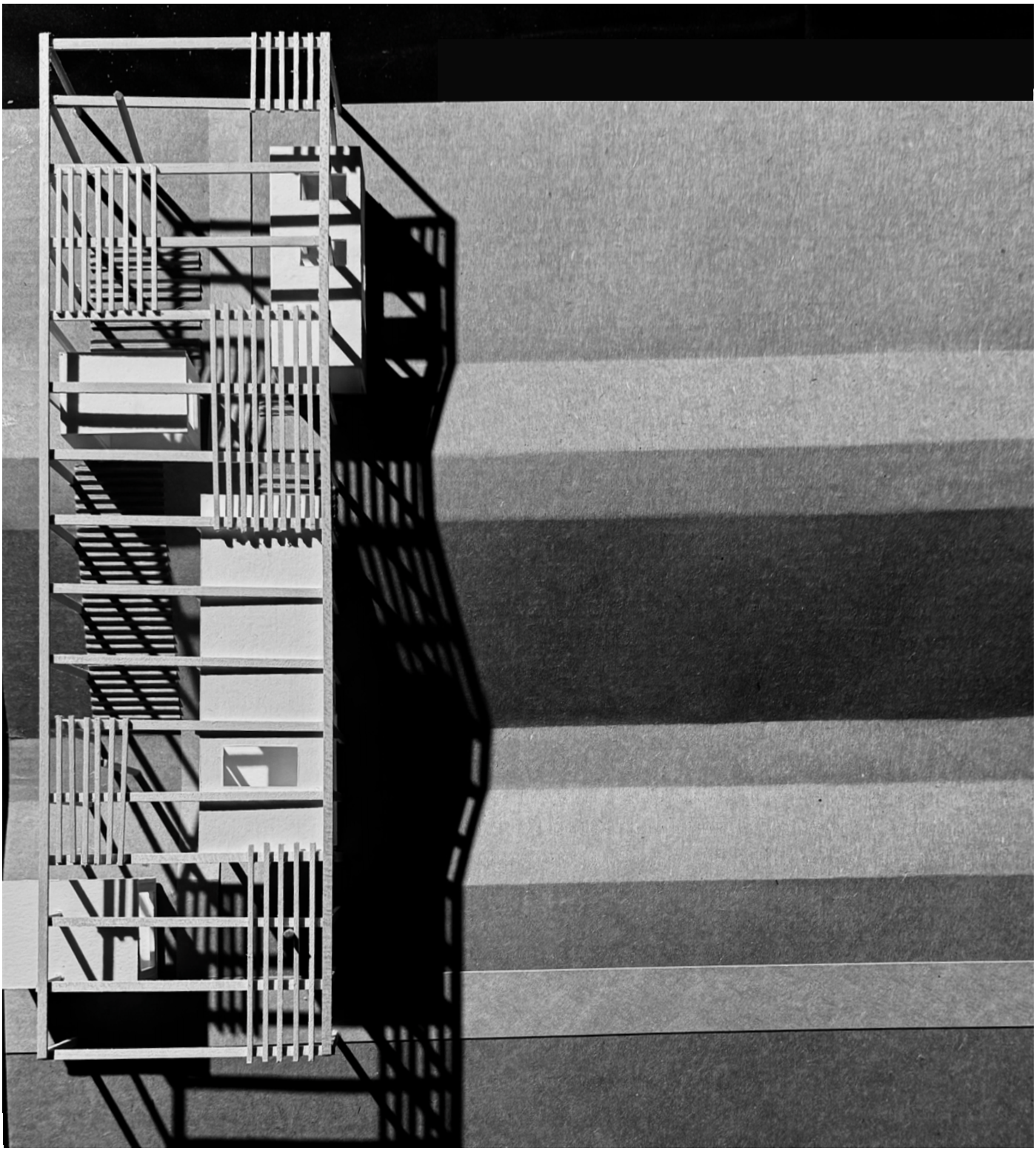


South Elevation 0 20' 40'

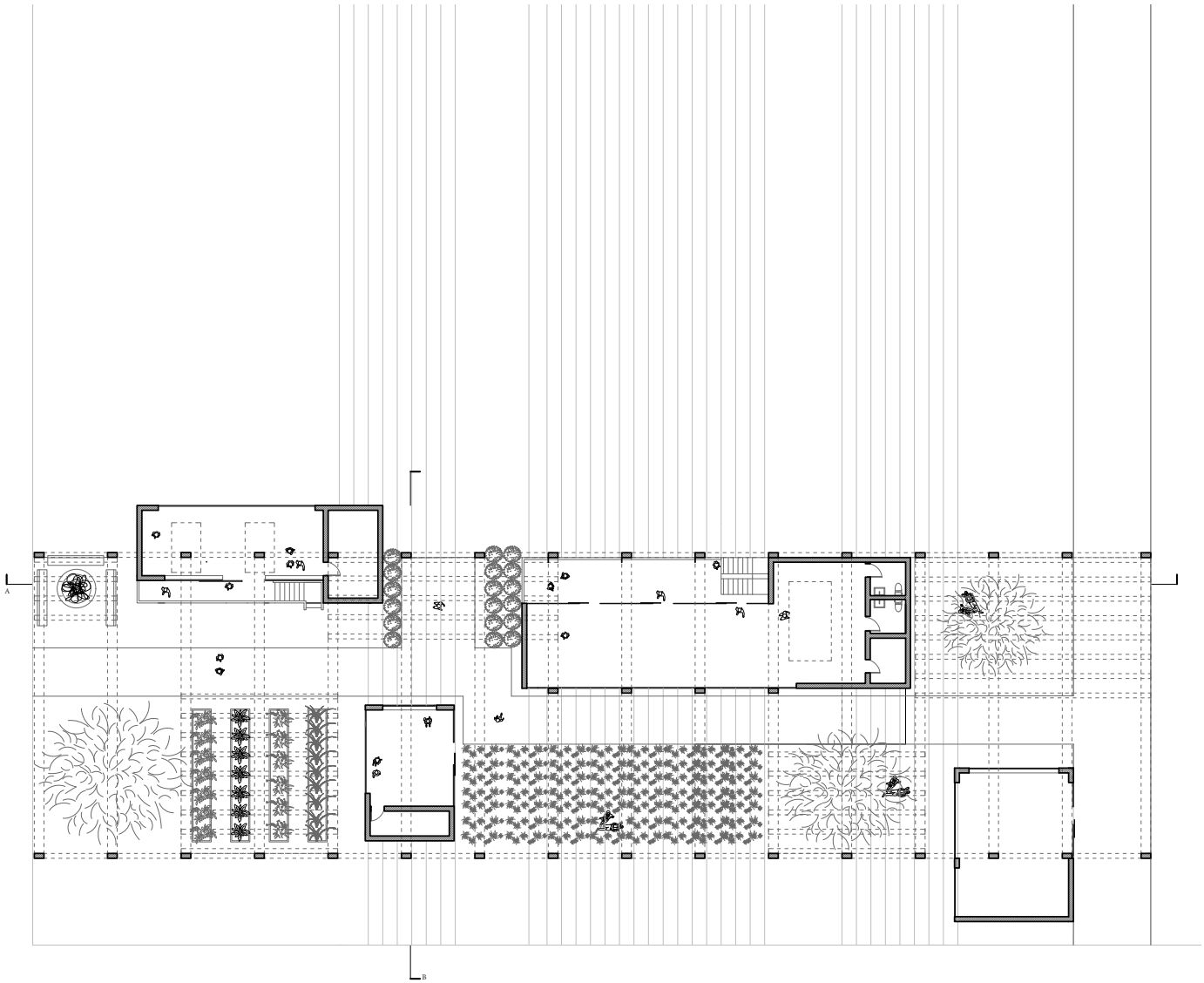


South Section A 0 20' 40'

West Section B 0 20' 40'

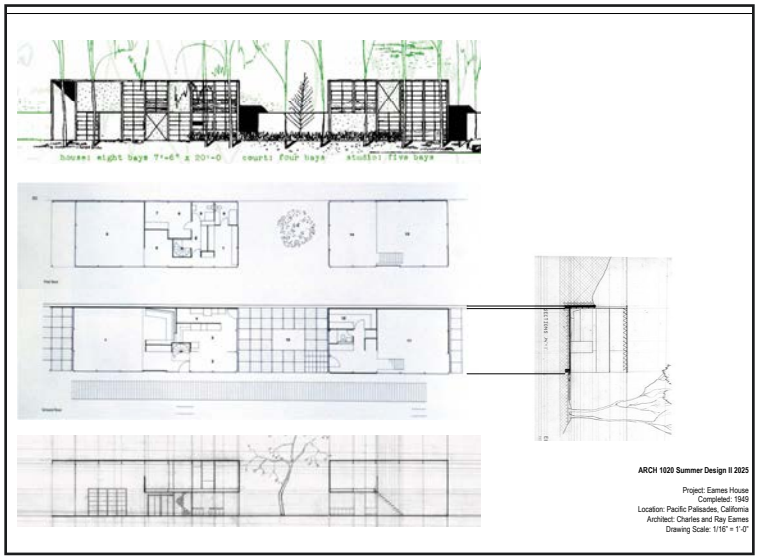


Physical model showing frame system and building layout

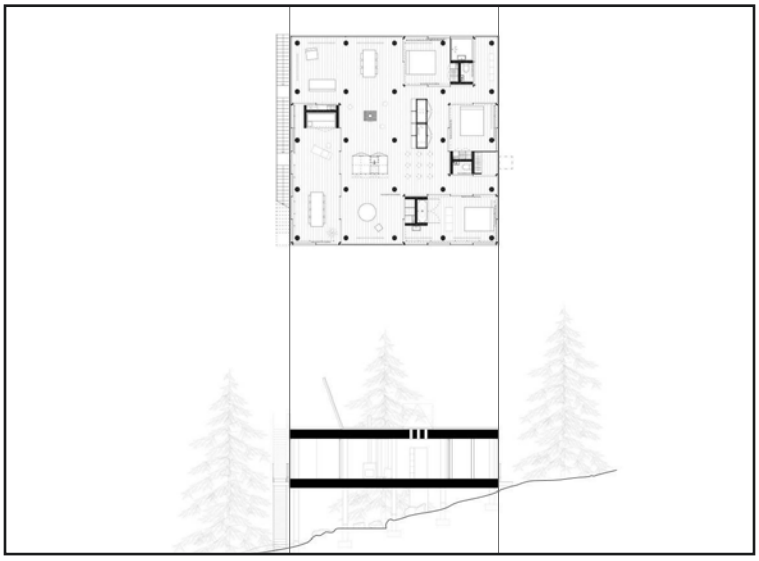


Overall Site Plan

This site plan illustrates the overall organization of the project and how the building layout is integrated with the landscape. The plan is structured around a clear linear axis, with building volumes arranged in sequence across the site rather than consolidated into a single mass. This strategy allows the architecture to respond to the existing ground conditions while creating a series of interconnected interior and exterior spaces. The building footprints are intentionally offset and separated to define courtyards, planted areas, and circulation paths between them. These open spaces are not leftover areas but are used to organize movement and frame views across the site. Landscaping elements such as trees and planted zones help reinforce spatial boundaries while maintaining visual openness throughout the plan. Circulation is primarily organized along the length of the site, with paths weaving between enclosed and open spaces. This creates a gradual progression through the project, emphasizing movement and sequence rather than a single point of arrival. The structural grid is legible within the plan, aligning building volumes and exterior paths to establish rhythm and consistency across the site. Overall, the site plan highlights the relationship between building, ground, and landscape, showing how architectural form, circulation, and outdoor space work together to create a cohesive spatial system.



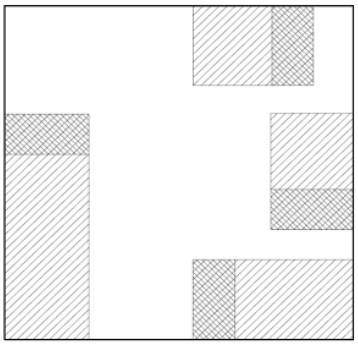
Eames House | Charles Eames & Ray Eames



25 Columns | OFFICE KGDVS

These precedents informed the project's approach to structure, openness, and site response. The Eames House demonstrates how an exposed frame can organize space and create strong relationships between interior and exterior. Its clear structural grid and lightweight construction influenced the project's use of a framed system to define outdoor spaces, circulation, and visual connections without relying on heavy enclosure. 25 Columns provided a contrasting approach rooted in repetition and responsiveness to the ground. The project's use of columns and minimal enclosure allows the building to move with the landscape, treating topography as a key driver of section and spatial sequence. This strategy informed the studio project's emphasis on adapting to the site and using structure to create openness and continuity across the ground. Together, these precedents shaped a design that uses structure as a primary spatial tool, balancing transparency, repetition, and integration with the landscape.

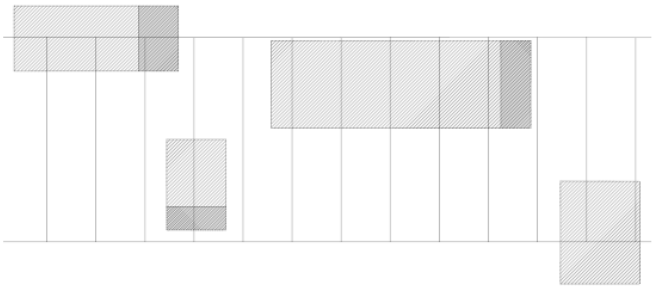
STRUCTURE & REPETITION
Eames House | Charles Eames & Ray Eames



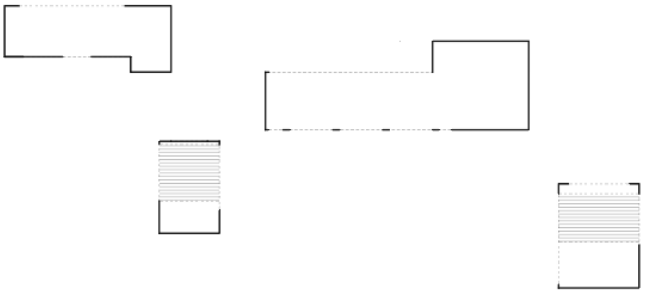
PRIVATE VS PUBLIC
25 Columns | OFFICE KGDVS

Precedent Analysis Diagrams

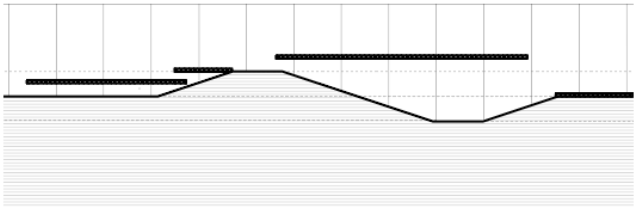
These diagrams abstract key spatial and structural ideas from the project's precedents. The Eames House diagram focuses on structure and repetition, emphasizing the consistent frame that organizes space and establishes rhythm across the plan. This clarity allows for flexibility while maintaining strong visual and spatial continuity. The 25 Columns diagram examines the relationship between private and public space through the arrangement of enclosed and open areas. Spatial hierarchy is created through placement and repetition rather than enclosure alone. Together, these diagrams identify core strategies that informed the project's approach to structure, framing, and spatial organization.



PRECEDENT SYNTHESIS



GALLERIES AS APERTURES



SITE STRATEGY

SEQUENCE

Conceptual Diagrams

Perspective view showing framed structure and outdoor circulation

This perspective illustrates how the project's framed structural system creates layered exterior space and supports social activity beneath the building. The elevated volume is supported by a regular grid of columns, allowing the ground level to remain open and flexible. This creates a shaded gathering area that connects circulation, landscape, and program while maintaining visual continuity across the site. The overhead frame extends beyond the enclosed volume, reinforcing the rhythm of the structure and framing views of the sky and surrounding landscape. Movement occurs both above and below the building, with stairs and paths linking different elevations and encouraging interaction between interior and exterior spaces. The integration of landscape elements softens the structure and emphasizes the relationship between architecture, ground, and social use.

Interior perspective showing framed structure and gathering space

This interior perspective shows how the framed structural system organizes a flexible gathering space beneath the elevated volume. The exposed columns and overhead slab define the space without fully enclosing it, allowing light, views, and movement to flow between interior and exterior areas. The structural rhythm creates a clear spatial order while supporting informal social activity. Material contrast between the concrete ceiling, wood frame, and stone wall helps ground the space and reinforce its connection to the landscape. Open edges and large glazed openings maintain visual continuity with the surrounding site, while the framed canopy above filters light and creates a comfortable, shaded environment. Overall, the space emphasizes openness, adaptability, and the role of structure in shaping social interaction

Model view highlighting structural rhythm and light

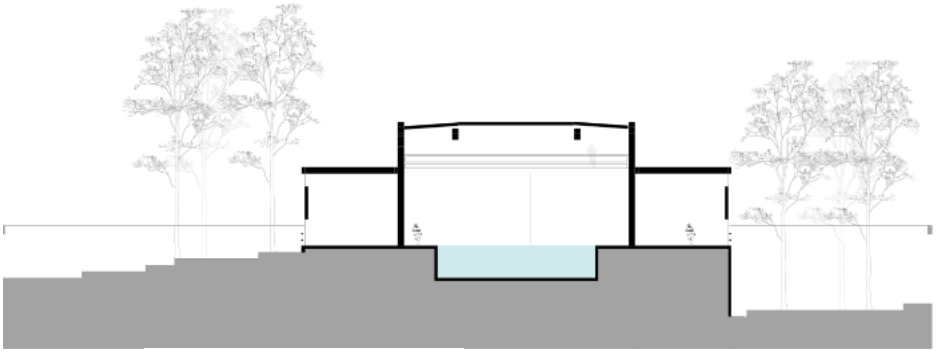
INHABITED SLOPE

Second Year Studio | Natatorium Project

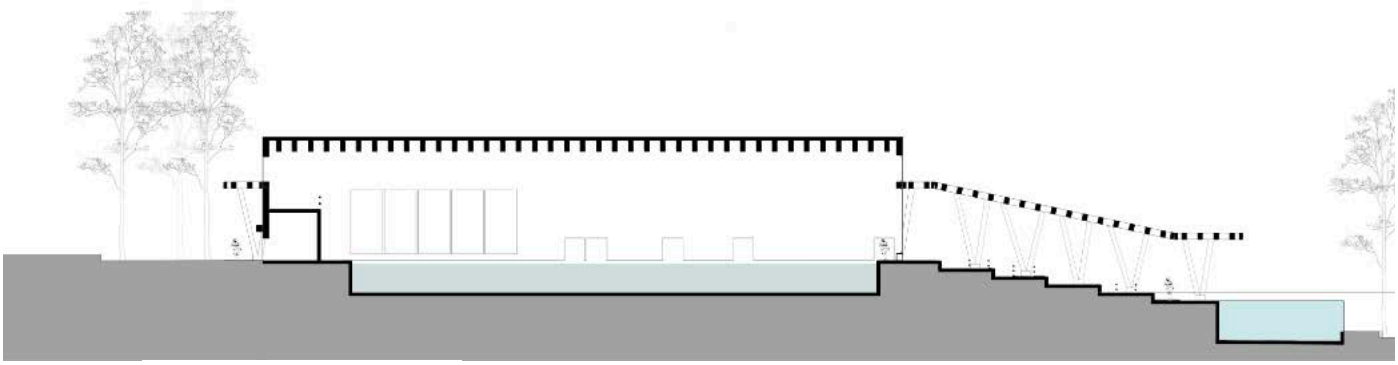
This natatorium is conceived as an inhabitable landscape, using the Ghat House as a key precedent to organize the project through section, procession, and stepped ground rather than a singular architectural object. The building is embedded into the sloped site, allowing the ground plane to rise, fold, and transform into occupied architecture. Programmatic spaces are layered along this slope, creating a continuous sectional sequence that moves gradually from enclosed, controlled environments to open, landscape-driven spaces. An indoor Olympic-sized pool anchors the upper portion of the project within a more solid architectural volume, providing a year-round swimming environment and establishing a clear point of arrival. From this interior space, circulation unfolds through a series of stairs and social stairs that act as transitional zones rather than simple connectors. These stepped spaces are intentionally oversized to support gathering, viewing, and informal seating, reinforcing the natatorium as a social and communal environment rather than a purely athletic facility.

As the section continues downward, the architecture becomes increasingly porous and merges with the landscape. Grass steps extend the interior logic outward, forming informal terraces that overlook the outdoor pool and create flexible spaces for lounging, spectating, and rest. A timber sun-shading overhang spans above these terraces, providing filtered light and protection from direct sun while maintaining openness and visual continuity across the site. The structure frames views and reinforces the rhythm of the stepped terrain below. At the lowest point of the site, an outdoor zero-entry pool completes the sequence, emphasizing accessibility and reinforcing water as the focal element of the project. The gradual transition from indoor pool to exterior terraces and finally to the outdoor pool reflects the spatial logic of the Ghat House, translating its relationship between ground, movement, and water into a contemporary recreational setting that integrates architecture, landscape, and social life into a unified experience.

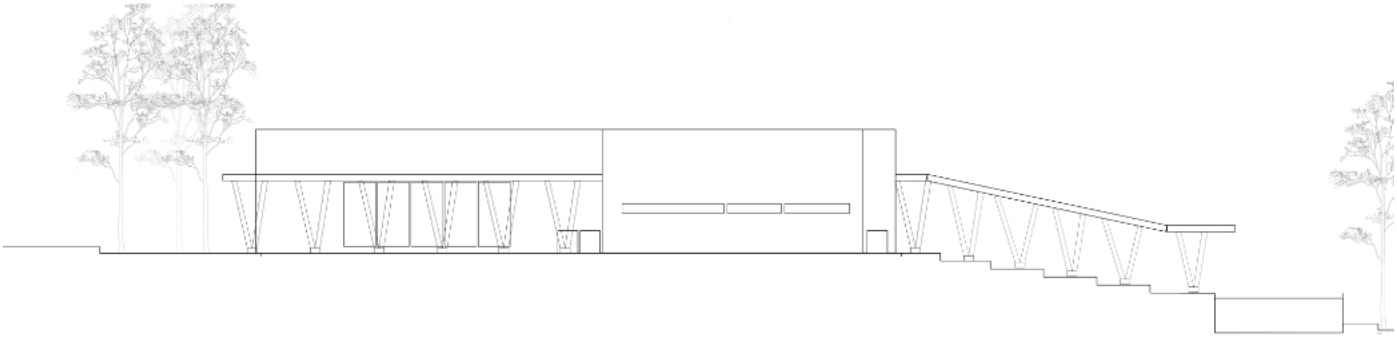
Physical model illustrating stepped ground, sectional circulation, and the timber canopy system.



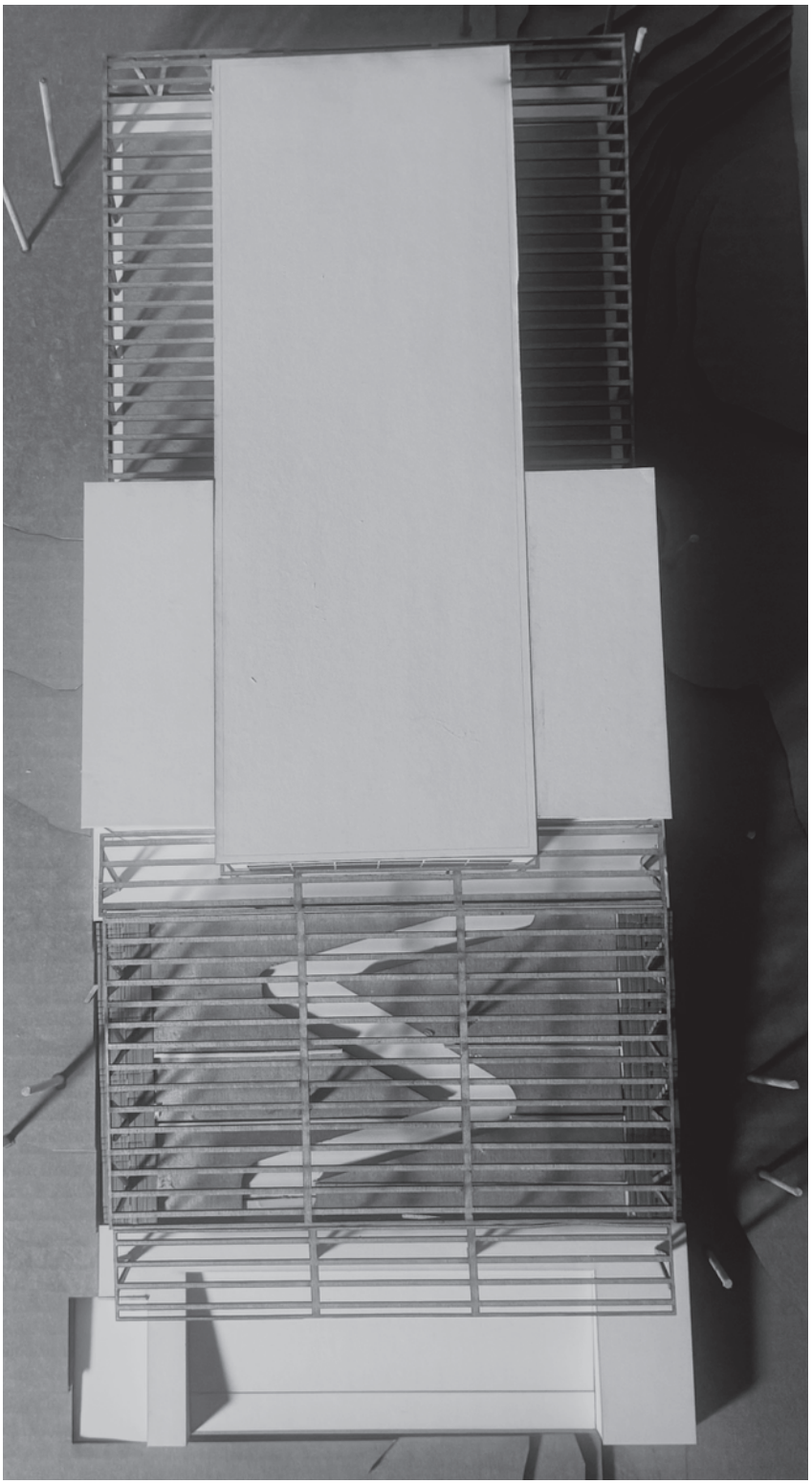
South Section 0 20' 40'



West Section 0 20' 40'



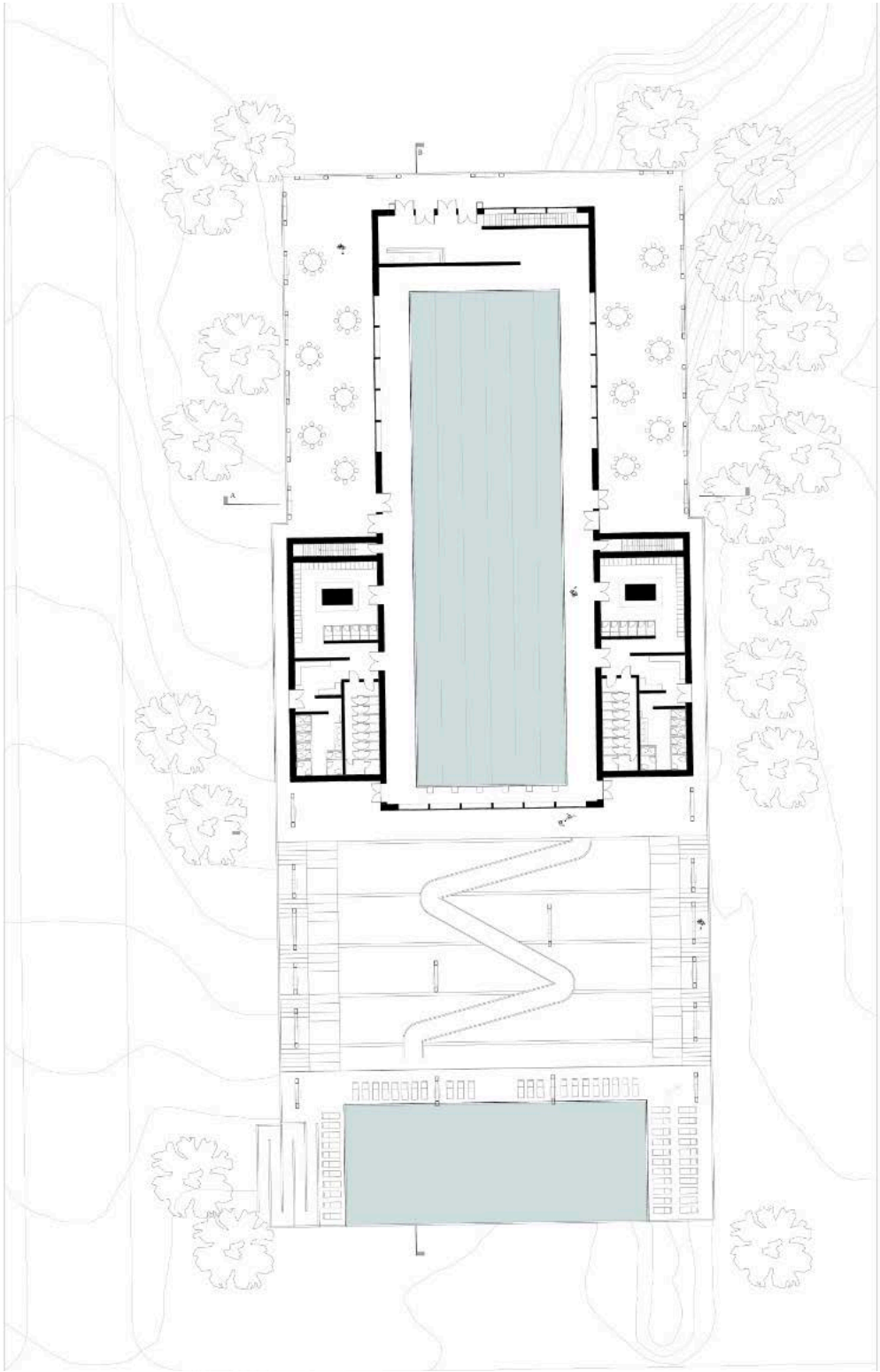
West Elevation 0 20' 40'



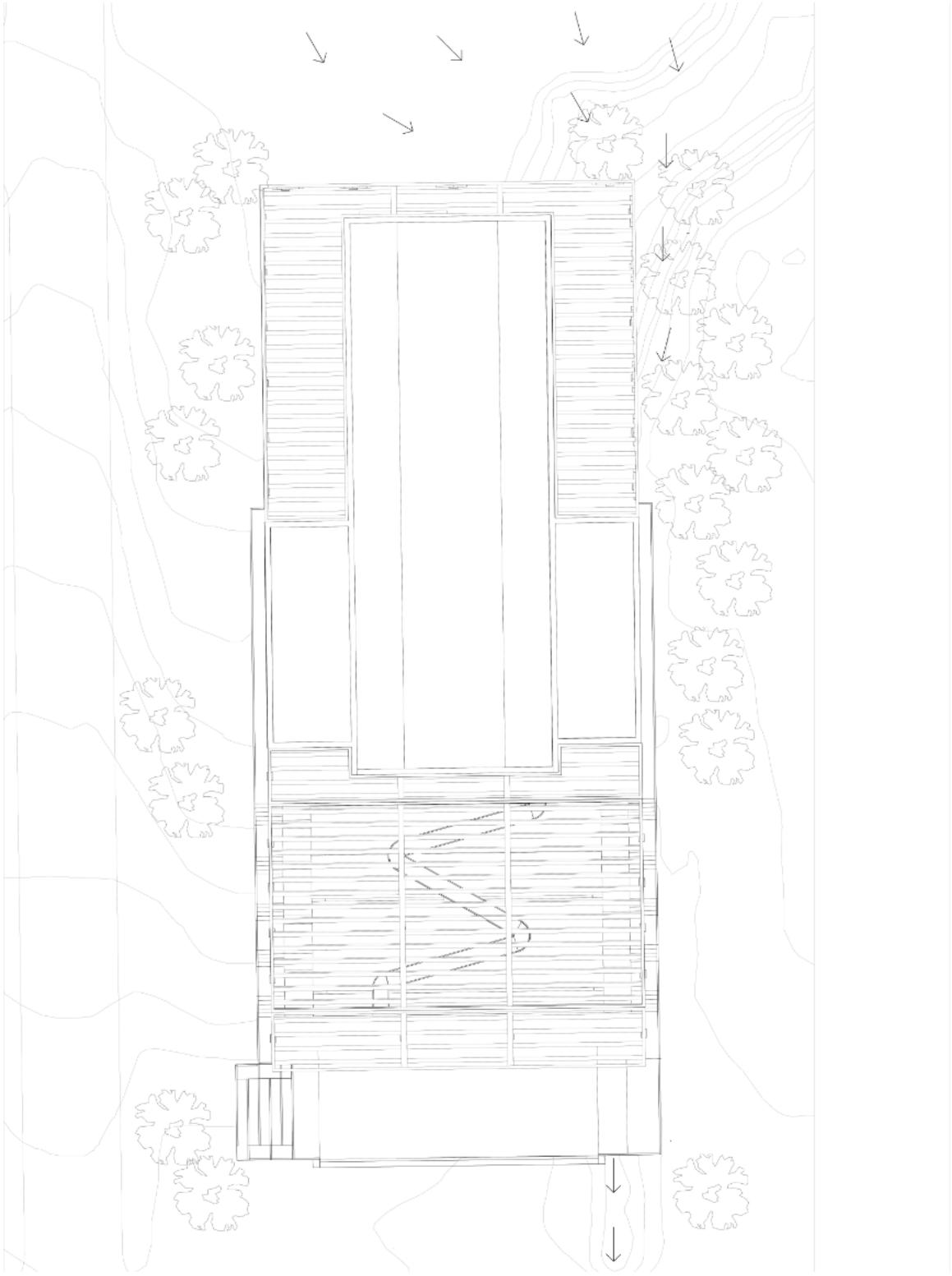
Top view of physical model showing structure and spatial organization

This top view photograph of the physical model highlights the overall organizational logic of the natatorium project, focusing on the relationship between massing, structure, and circulation. The central pool volume is expressed as a dominant rectangular form, establishing a clear primary axis that organizes the rest of the project. Surrounding volumes are offset and layered to support programmatic needs while maintaining a balanced and legible composition. The model emphasizes the role of the roof and framing system as a defining architectural element. Repetitive linear members extend beyond the enclosed pool volume, creating covered exterior zones and reinforcing the transition between indoor and outdoor spaces. These elements clarify circulation paths and gathering areas, while also revealing how structure shapes experience rather than acting solely as enclosure.

From above, the sequence of spaces becomes clear. Entry, movement, and gathering zones are organized around the central pool, with circulation unfolding longitudinally through framed paths and transitional spaces. The contrast between solid masses and open structural grids highlights the project's sectional strategy, where moments of enclosure are balanced with openness and light. Overall, the model photograph communicates how the natatorium is organized through clear geometry, repetition, and layered structure. It demonstrates how the project integrates program, circulation, and social space into a cohesive architectural system that extends beyond the pool itself and engages the surrounding landscape.



Ground level plan showing pool layout and circulation



Roof plan showing structural framing and site response

Precedent perspective illustrating inhabitation of slope through section and shading

This image of the Ghat House demonstrates how architecture can be shaped by topography rather than imposed upon it. The building is embedded into the hillside, using stepped sections and terraced platforms to follow the natural slope of the site. Movement through the project occurs gradually along the terrain, making changes in elevation an integral part of the spatial experience. Shading elements and roof extensions emphasize the angled ground condition, visually reinforcing the slope while creating comfortable transitional spaces between interior and exterior. These horizontal elements frame views and define circulation without acting as primary structure, allowing the building to remain grounded and responsive to the landscape. Solid volumes anchor the project into the hill, while lighter elements extend outward to maintain openness and connection to the surroundings. The Ghat House served as a key precedent for understanding how section, circulation, and shading can work together to create an architecture that inhabits the slope. Rather than flattening the site, the project highlights topography as a defining spatial and experiential feature.

Rendered exterior perspective showing shading strategy and response to sloped site

This rendered exterior perspective illustrates how the studio project adapts strategies from the Ghat House into a contemporary natatorium design. The building steps with the landscape, using terraces and platforms to organize program and circulation along the slope. Movement occurs through gradual changes in elevation, allowing users to experience the building as a sequence of spaces rather than a single object. The wood-framed elements shown are used as shading devices rather than structural components. These horizontal shading frames extend over exterior circulation and gathering areas, highlighting the angled slope of the site while providing filtered light and visual rhythm. By aligning with the terrain, the shading system reinforces the direction of the slope and strengthens the connection between architecture and landscape. Primary structure is expressed separately through the building volumes, allowing the shading elements to remain light and open. Together, the massing, shading, and topography work as a cohesive system that emphasizes section, movement, and environmental comfort. This perspective highlights how the project uses shading and landscape strategies to translate precedent ideas into a site-specific architectural response.

Interior perspective of competition pool and daylighting

Exterior perspective showing stepped landscape, social pool, and shading canopy

Ainsley Kraft

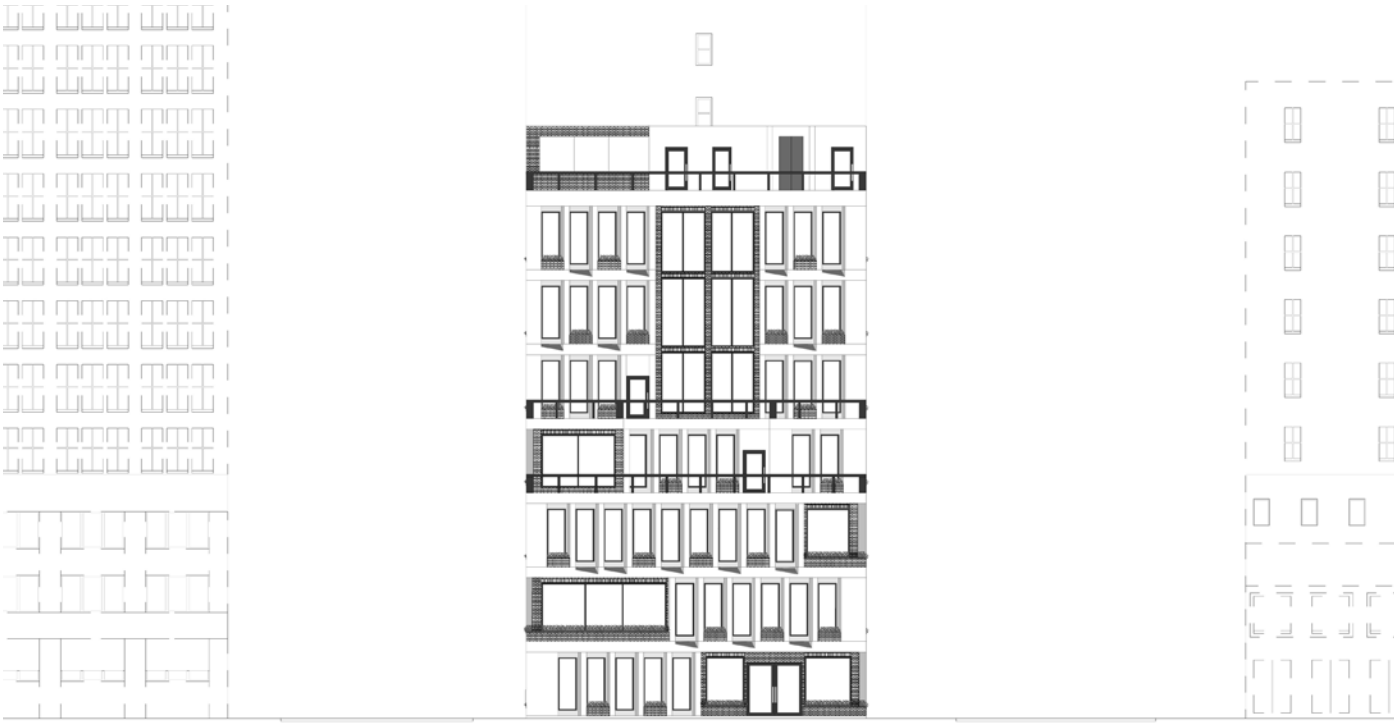
URBAN TRASITION

Second Year Studio | Reflecting Printer's Row's Roots

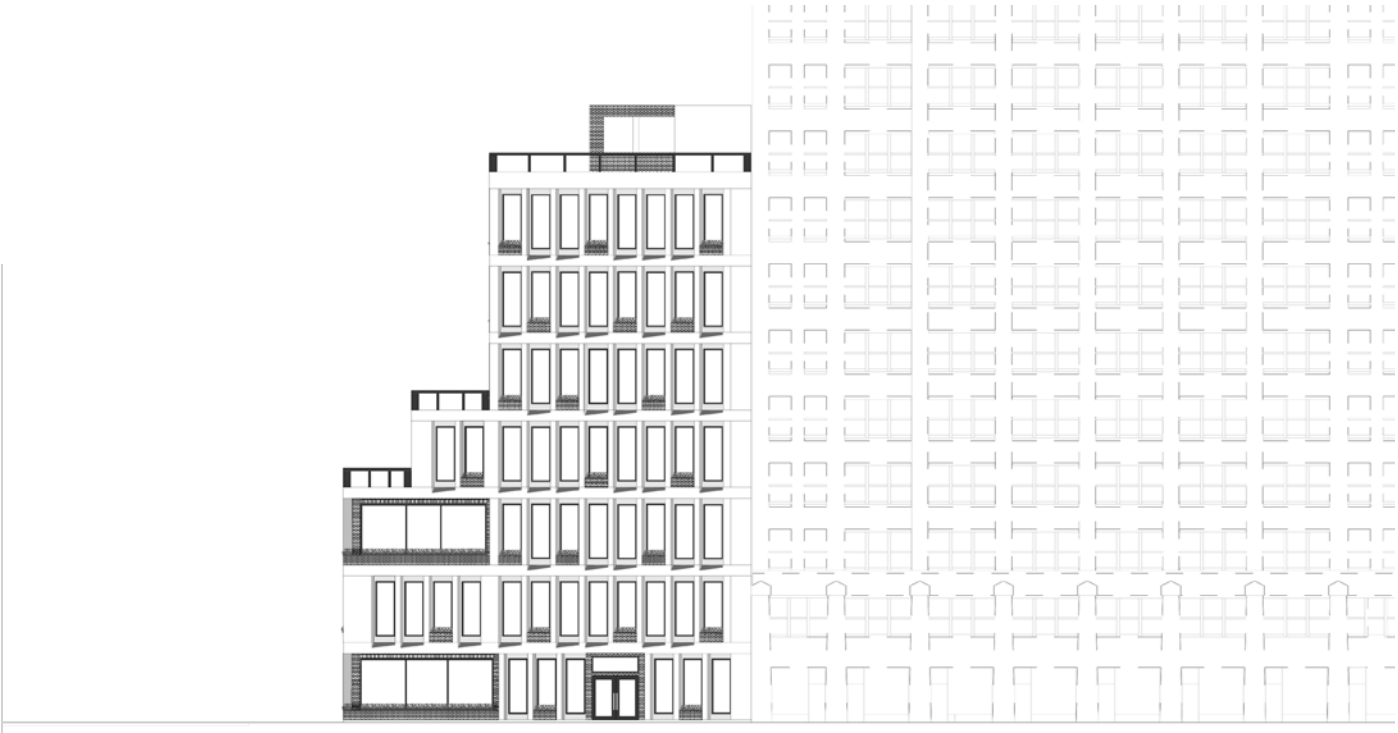
This project reinterprets the material and structural character of Printer's Row through a contemporary lens, responding to the neighborhood's layered architectural history rather than replicating it. Drawing from the Chicago Athletic Association's interplay of stone and brick and the Monadnock Building's monumental massing and load-bearing logic, the design uses colored concrete as a modern interpretation of stone that transitions into brick where the surrounding urban fabric shifts. This calibrated material move allows the building to register its context while remaining clearly of its time. The façade is defined by a heavy vertical rhythm, with thick walls and deep-set openings that recall Chicago's early masonry construction while maintaining a restrained, modern clarity. These elements emphasize weight, depth, and solidity, reinforcing the building's structural expression rather than treating the façade as a surface. Massing decisions are closely tied to solar orientation and environmental performance. Angled window insets along the southern façade reduce glare and heat gain, while stepped volumes pull daylight deeper into lower levels of the building. Terraces carved into the south side provide shaded outdoor spaces and extend interior programs outward, reinforcing a strong connection between inside and outside.

Integrated planters along the façade act as small-scale environmental buffers, softening the building's mass while supporting a passive environmental strategy. Combined with the thermal stability of the thick concrete walls, these elements help moderate interior conditions and reduce reliance on mechanical systems. Programmatically, the building organizes multiple uses through distinct entrances to maintain clarity and independence, while shared amenities, a central social stair, and connected roof spaces create moments of overlap and interaction. Together, these strategies produce a layered sense of community within a unified architectural framework. Overall, the project blends historical material cues with contemporary structural expression and sun-driven form-making, resulting in a building that is grounded in Printer's Row's architectural legacy while looking forward in its approach to materiality, performance, and collective space.

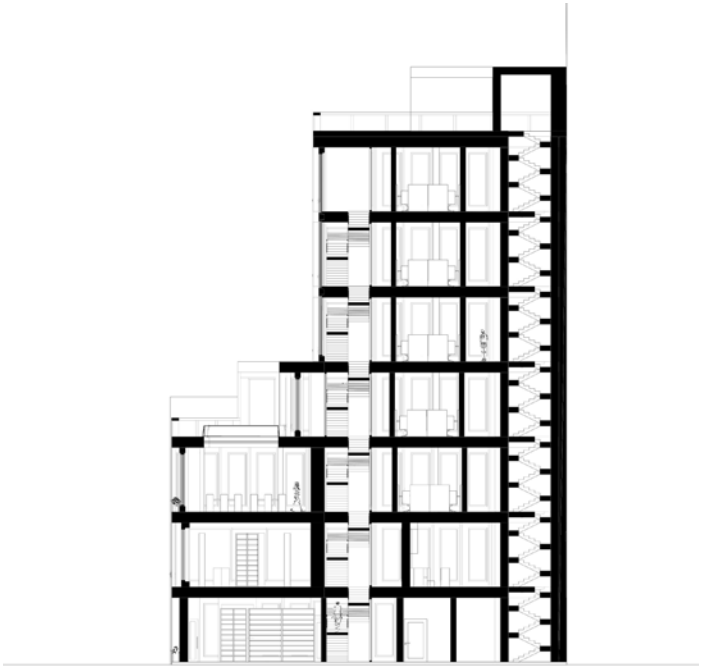
Exterior perspective, showing how the design fits cohesively into the stree streetscape



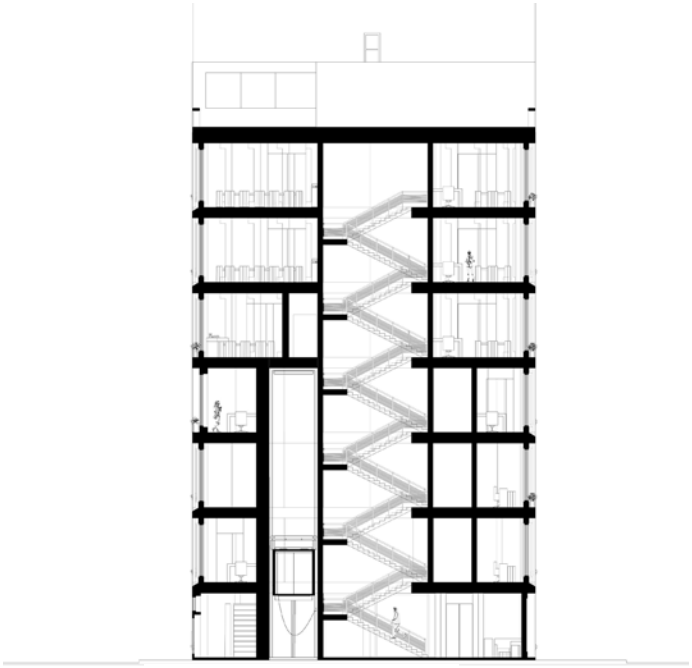
South Elevation



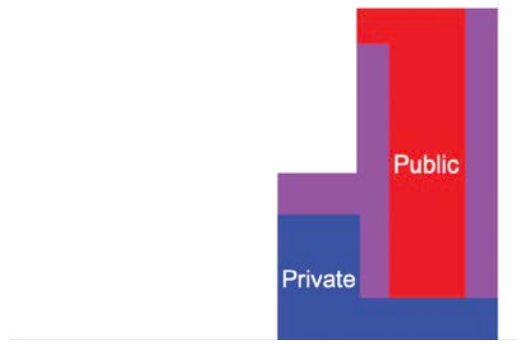
East Elevation



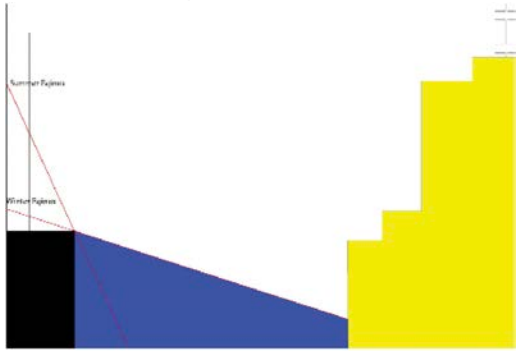
East Section



South Section

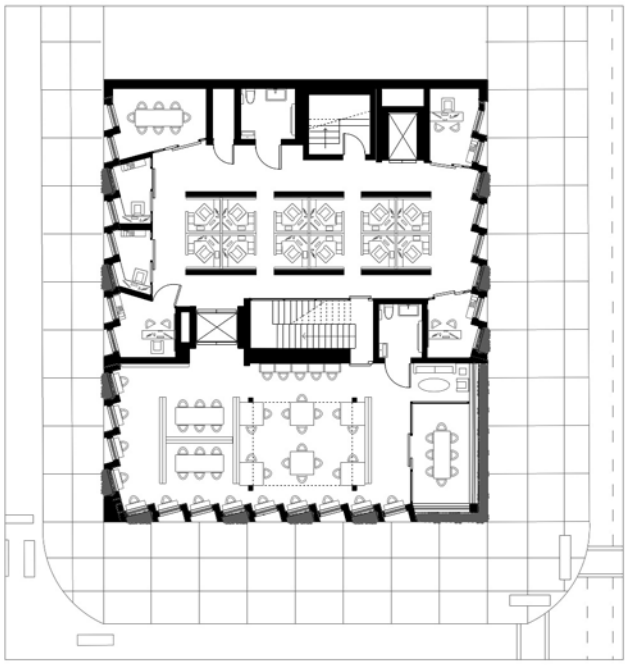


Public vs Private Diagram

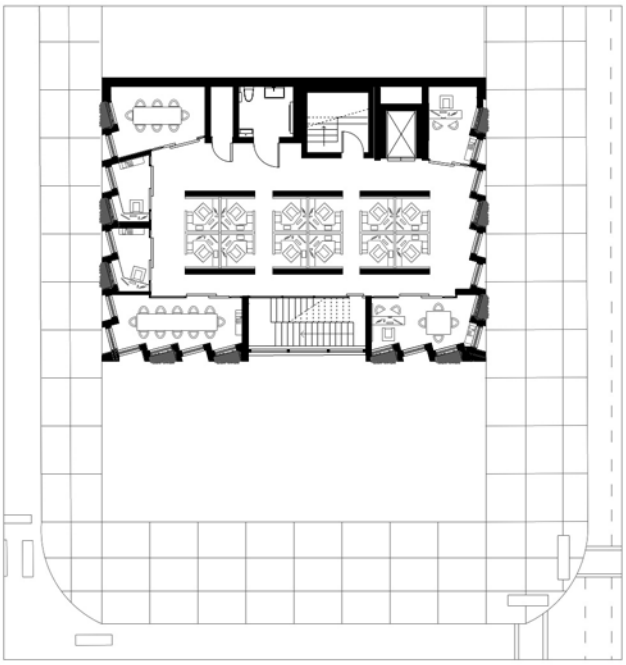


Site Sun vs Shade Diagrm

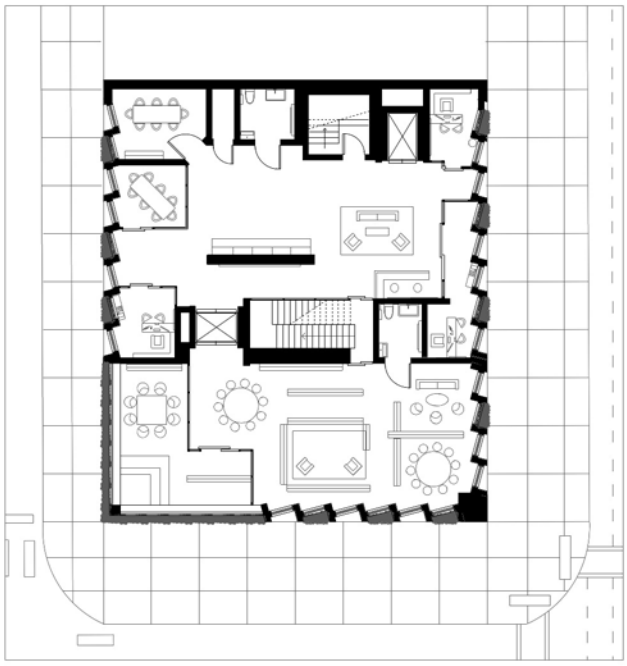
The building's structural system draws inspiration from the Monadnock Building's use of exterior and interior load-bearing walls, reinterpreting this historic approach within a contemporary framework. The reliance on thick, weight-bearing walls gives the building a sense of permanence and material honesty, referencing Chicago's early masonry architecture while avoiding surface-level ornamentation. Beyond its historical influence, this structural strategy supports sustainability and interior comfort. The thick exterior walls provide significant thermal mass, helping to regulate interior temperatures by absorbing, storing, and slowly releasing heat throughout the day. This reduces temperature fluctuations, limits heat gain from direct sun exposure, and lowers reliance on mechanical systems. By merging structural clarity with environmental performance, the building uses a historically grounded system to meet contemporary goals of efficiency and climate responsiveness.



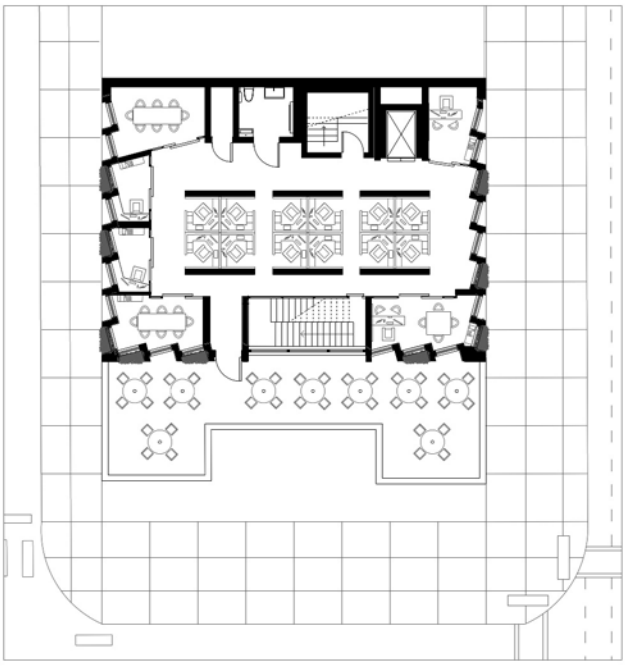
Third Floor Plan, Buisness & Adult/ Academic Floor of Bookstore



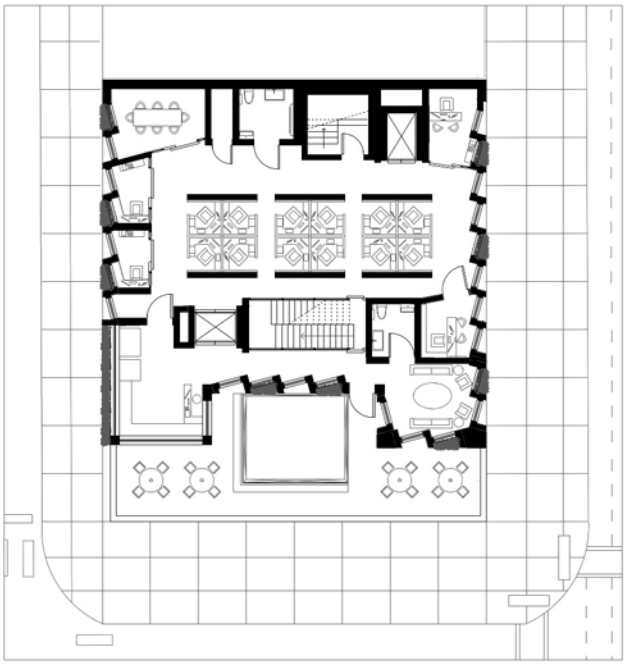
Sixth & Seventh Floor Plan, Buisness



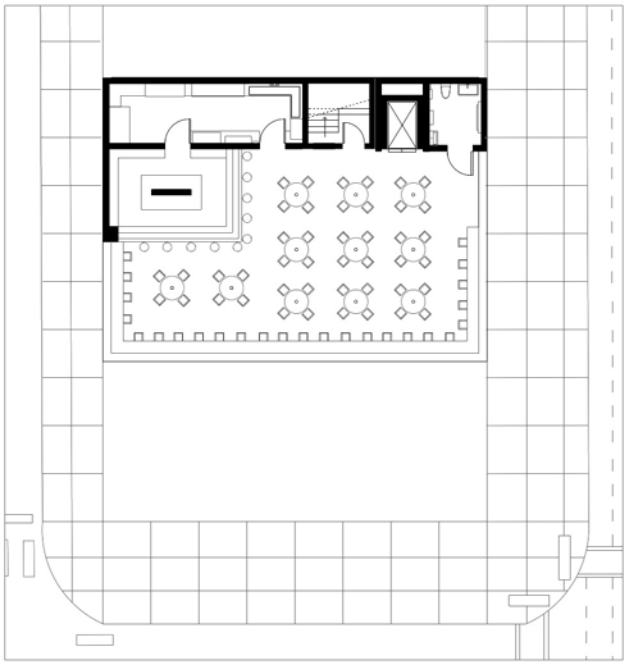
Second Floor Plan, Buisness & Childrens Floor of Bookstore



Fifth Floor Plan, Buisness and Terrace

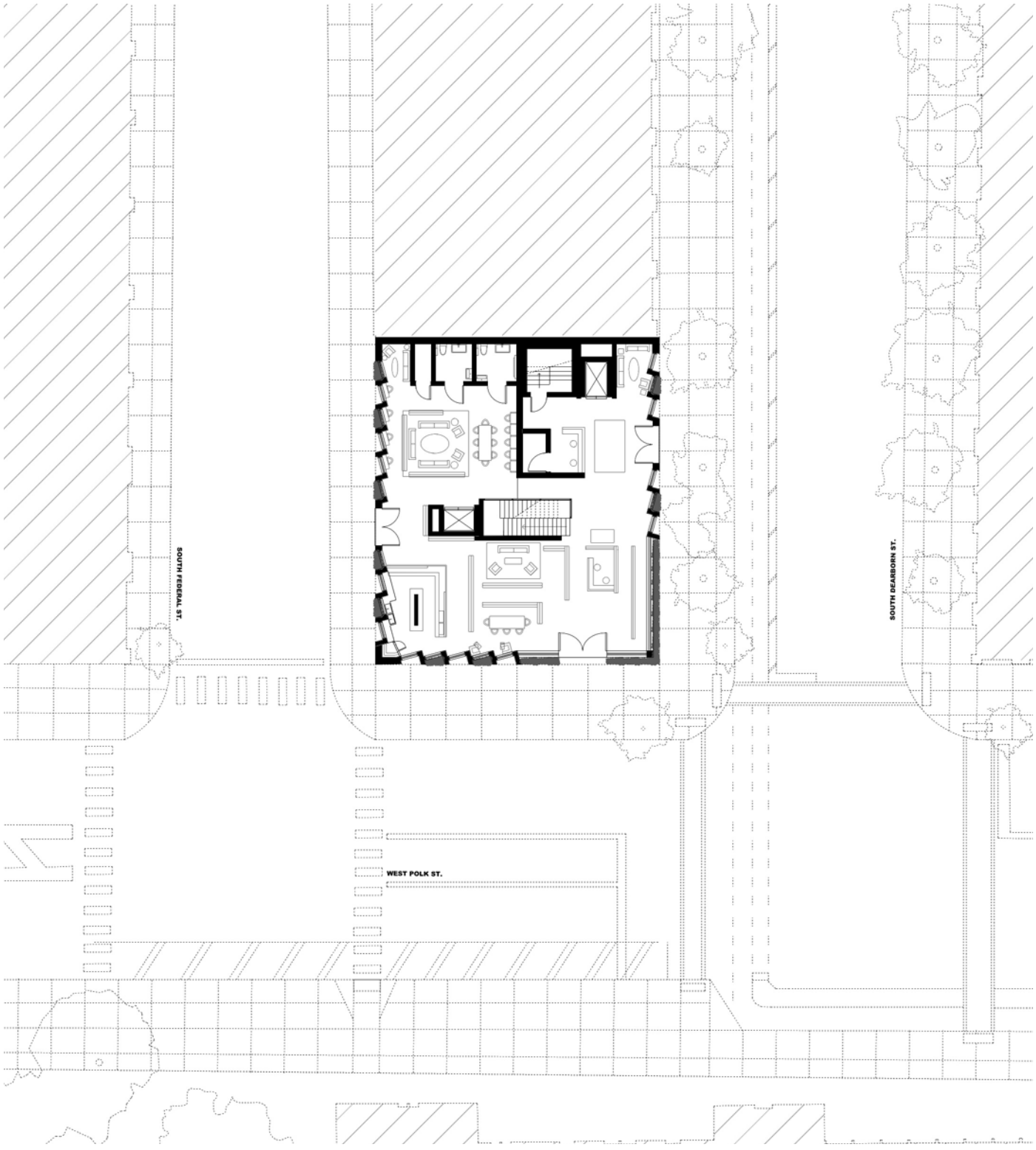


Fourth Floor Plan, Buisness, Public Mini-Mart/Lounge Area, Terrace



Roof Floor Plan, Terrace & Resturant

The top of the building includes a non-alcoholic rooftop restaurant designed as a shared space for both the public and the offices below. It supports lunch breaks, informal meetings, and private events while remaining open to the broader community. The space is intentionally non-alcoholic to address the lack of rooftop venues accessible to people under 21, especially in the evening due to liquor license restrictions. To maintain flexibility, businesses or event hosts can bring in a licensed caterer if alcohol is desired. This approach keeps the space inclusive by default while still allowing it to adapt to a wide range of uses and event types.

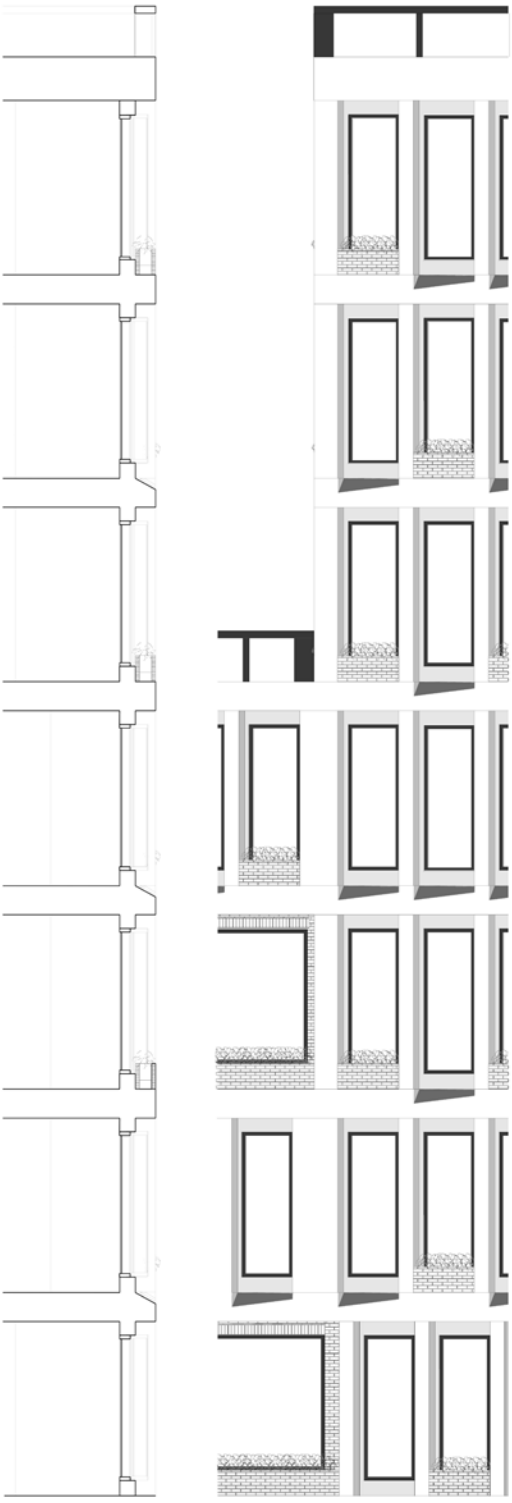


Ground Floor Plan, Buisness Lobby, Coffee Shop, Bookstore Lobby

Exterior View of Buildings Along S Federal and West Polk Street

Exterior View of Buildings Along S Dearborn and West Polk Street

This site is defined by a clear contrast in material character along either side of the block, which became a key driver of the façade design. One edge is lined with lighter stone and masonry buildings that reflect the earlier commercial and civic history of Printer's Row, while the opposite side is dominated by darker brick structures tied to its industrial past. This shift creates a noticeable break in the street's architectural language. In response, the project uses a blended palette of brick and stone-colored concrete to mediate between these conditions. Brick grounds the building within the industrial context, while the stone-colored concrete references the heavier masonry found nearby. This approach allows the building to work with the street as a continuous fabric, blending multiple architectural histories of Printer's Row into a single, cohesive, and contemporary expression.

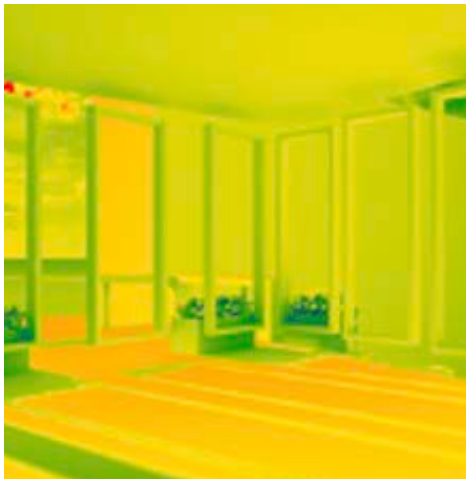


Facade expression revealing the building's structural system

Interior view of daylight through set-back angled windows, January 11 a.m.

This study demonstrates how the stepped massing and angled window design increase solar heat gain during winter conditions. In January, the low-angle southern sun is able to penetrate deeply into the interior through the setback façade, allowing sunlight and heat to reach occupied spaces. Compared to a flat façade with shading devices, the stepped form reduces self-shading and maximizes exposure when solar gain is most beneficial. This passive strategy improves interior comfort, supports thermal regulation through the building's mass, and reduces reliance on mechanical heating during colder months.

Solar heat gain into interior from set-back angles windows, January 11 a.m.

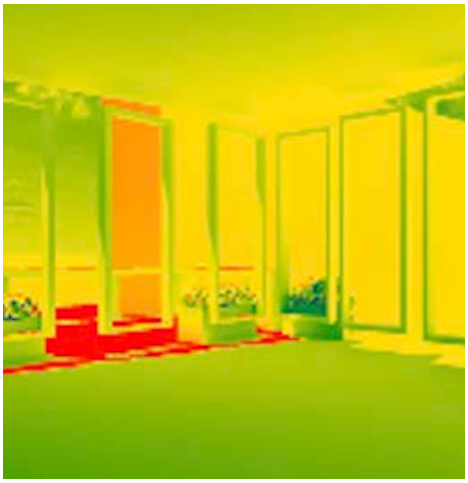


Solar heat gain into interior without set-back angles windows (shading device), January 11 a.m.

Interior view of daylight through set-back angled windows, June 11 a.m.

This study demonstrates how the stepped massing and angled window design limit solar heat gain during summer conditions. In June, the high-angle southern sun is partially blocked by the setback façade, preventing direct sunlight from penetrating deeply into the interior. Compared to a flat façade without angled setbacks, the stepped form increases self-shading and reduces exposure during peak sun hours when heat gain is least desirable. This passive strategy improves interior comfort, limits overheating, and works with the building's mass to moderate indoor temperatures, reducing reliance on mechanical cooling during warmer months.

Solar heat gain into interior from set-back angles windows, June 11 a.m.



Solar heat gain into interior without set-back angles windows (shading device), June 11 a.m.

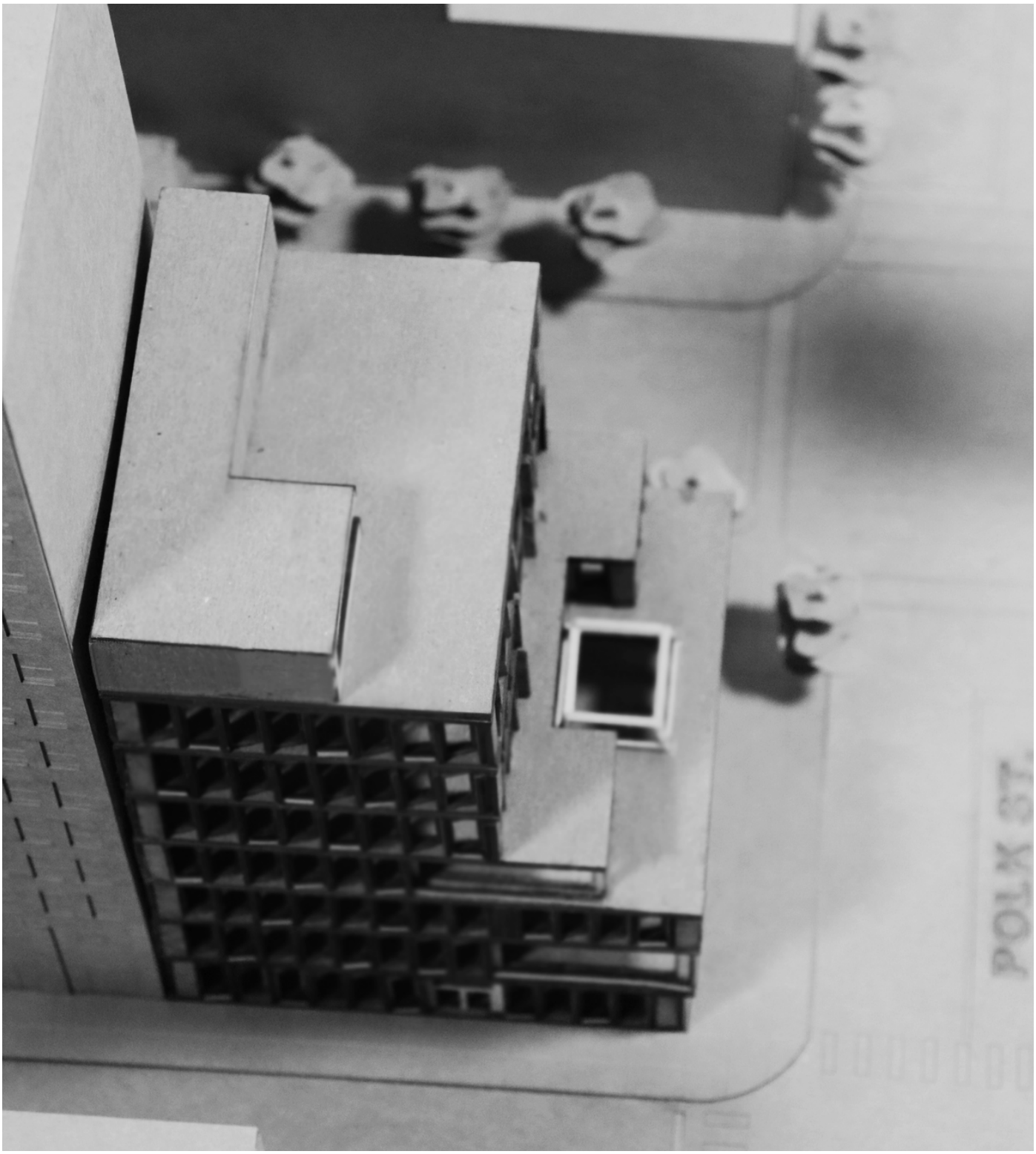
First Floor Perspective of Bookstore & Entrance

Façade detail with integrated planters

Interior View of Façade detail with integrated planters

Interior perspective highlighting study spaces and skylight

Interior perspective highlighting workspace and materiality



Top view of physical model showing roof forms and building footprint