

Please Disturb!

Exploring the Virtues of Dysfunctional Architecture

by

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ABSTRACT

When did architecture lose its courage? How have we allowed our buildings to precipitate dreary and sterile experiences? Conventional architecture at its best yields indifference when it very well could be our best tool to advocate the opposite. The rules by which architecture plays are rigid, conservative, unimaginative and far too reasonable. Could it be time we make mischievous architecture, and might this architecture be uncooperative?

So, forget efficiency and comfort. Consider instead the possibility of dysfunctional and impractical architecture and how it might offer a more enriching experience next to its obvious counterpart. Imagine the possibilities of an architecture whose agenda is not to compensate for the complexities of life, but to exploit and provoke them through the twisting and flipping of convention.

Might we suggest an architecture aimed at disturbing daily life rather than accommodating it? By deliberately offering the unfamiliarity of discomfort, might disturbance make for an appropriate resistance against conventional architecture? Might disturbed architecture make for a valid architecture?

To my sister, Dominique Boulet

"Cold and hunger seem more friendly to my nature than those methods which men have adopted and advise to ward them off."

- HENRY DAVID THOREAU, "LIFE WITHOUT PRINCIPLES" (1863)

ABSTRACT

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This project stems from a fascination with a café not far from my apartment in Ottawa, Canada. A “coffeehouse” as they call it. Modest in size, aesthetically anodyne, perfectly located on a street corner. It is not the architecture that intrigued me but the peculiar social dynamic that occurs naturally within the space at every moment of every day.*

* The activity within this coffeehouse is not unlike most cafés around the world, but for the sake of this exploration I narrow my studies and observations to these particular conditions that struck me as especially interesting.

I wonder why, being able to brew coffee more efficiently and more economically at home, people displace themselves to this coffeehouse for a beverage. In a world of fast-food, instant messaging and sixty-hour work weeks, I am especially bemused at the number of patrons electing to have their coffee “for here” rather than “to go.” As for our reading places, it seems we have replaced our libraries, parks, and personal balconies for a table inside the coffeehouse or a patio chair along its streetscape. Now with the introduction of free internet access, all are plugging-in for hours and using this public space as a satellite workstation.

In truth the coffee is not all that much better. The seating is not especially comfortable, either. The noise from the crowd hardly makes reading easier and the cramped seating far from conduces an ideal working environment. So why do we all flock to the local coffeehouse?*

* Of course not every person of the neighborhood frequents this particular coffeehouse, but by all, I am referring to the astonishingly high number of regulars that have made this space a part of their routines.

Homeliness referring to a simple, cozy place; unhomeliness being its opposite, typically associated with Anthony Vidler’s *The Architectural Uncanny* (1994) which will be discussed later.

Why bother leaving the comfort of our private realm and relocate ourselves in a public and unhomely environment? Are we so desperate to be a part of the collective? The café seems to afford a way out of our routine - out of our comfort zone - facilitating a vulnerability to all sorts of unexpected events

and functioning as a container in which a slew of varying lifestyles can collide. These collisions make for infinite combinations of events and reactions and provide an exposure we so desperately require.

At any given moment: a photographer shows her portfolio to a potential client; at the table next - not a foot away - three young adults loudly recount their last night; two people awkwardly meet on a blind date; an elderly man falls sleep while working on his daily crossword; a student takes notes while discussing with her PhD advisor; four women await their post-yoga lattés; a young mother deals with her wandering toddler; all while a homeless man whispers about Wall Street and cancer. It is practically impossible to go about one's business in this coffeehouse without being disturbed every other moment.

Though deeply routed in the social and psychological, this phenomenon - of people converging into one space deliberately wanting to clash lifestyles - is very much of architectural interest. The truth is, we need the awkward moments, the bizarre scenarios, the confusion. My fellow coffeehouse go-ers not only accept the disturbance brought on by this space, they welcome, expect, and even rely on it as a nurturing inconvenience in their lives.

And so this begs the following questions: If we innately fancy disturbances in our lives as in the social context of the coffeehouse, why are we so adamant in making architecture founded solely on efficiency, comfort, and functionality? If richness in life is exposed through awkward, unfamiliar territory, then why not design such territory? Instead of compensating for the natural disturbances in life, might my coffeehouse expose and provoke such activity? Surely social disturbances could be manifested

* Manuals can be found on how to properly design train stations, restaurants, churches, even houses! Square footage can be calculated with formulas and percentages while wall colours, countertop heights and width of corridors are predetermined for practically every program.

For the answer to this question take a voyage through Paul Shephard's *What Is Architecture?* (1994).

architecturally, where conventional spaces are deliberately toyed with in order to yield offsetting experiences!

The architecture outside of academia that I have come to know seems to reduce our practice to a set of conventions and is content with being the functional solution to a spatial problem.* Architecture in its truest form is no solution at all. Without getting into the myriad of possible answers as to what architecture might be let me suggest that we think of it as the intrinsic potential of space, or the many ways in which space can be played-out.

In the case of the coffeehouse, we see space providing an escape from our sterile and repetitive lifestyles. It offers a context of diversity, unpredictability and discomfort - a context of constant disturbance - preventing participants from ever falling into monotony. Let us consider architecture that provides the same escape. Architecture that resists the banality and rigidity of convention. Architecture that, though not comforting, nor accommodating, nor efficient, nor practical, provides an experience that is at least more representative to our true reality. An architecture that, at the very least, can be said to provoke some real sensation.



VIEW OF BARRISTA GRINDING COFFEE BEANS AT THE LOCAL COFFEEHOUSE. TO THE RIGHT, A COUPLE PATRONS STAND IN LINE TO ORDER.
IMAGE SOURCE: CEDRIC BOULET



GAZE PAST A NEWSPAPER TO A GROUP OF CUSTOMERS NEAR THE BACK OF THE COFFEEHOUSE WHERE THE BEST VIEW OF THE ENTIRE CAFÉ IS AWARDED.
IMAGE SOURCE: CÉDRIC BOULET

While the idea of using architecture to disturb might be a new one, disturbances in general are fairly commonplace outside of architecture. In understanding the varying definitions of disturbances we might more affectively put them into architectural practice. Generally, a disturbance is anything that interrupts a normal condition. Disturbances would likely find company in words such as inconvenience, interference, alteration, contamination, perversion, contradiction, and disobedience. They would, at the same time, repel association with tranquility, balance, settlement, order, arrangement, etc.

Something can be disturbed naturally, unintentionally, or deliberately. The disturbance ultimately undermines the structure of a system causing it to perform differently. And by perform *differently* we typically mean in a diminished capacity - in a way that compromises the system's objective. Despite the negative language associated to disturbances, it is crucial to look past their immediate effect to the rather favourable impact they have in the larger scheme. Freeing disturbances of pejorative assumptions, could we make room for the disturbed and find a way to use it strategically?

First, let us consider our beloved DND - Do Not Disturb! The phrase that screams "leave me alone!" DND is hung on hotel bedroom doorknobs and placarded near our private apartment buildings. A great number of people hate to be bothered; to have their lives in any way lodge off-track by external influence. In fact, it is illegal to disturb someone. They so cleverly call it "disturbing the peace." This offense mistakenly

dis•turb |dis'tərb|verb [trans.]
1a: to interfere with normal functioning of; **b:** to alter the position or arrangement of; **c:** to upset the balance of; **2a:** to destroy the tranquility or settled state of; **b:** to throw into disorder; **c:** to alarm; **d:** to put to inconvenience.
 "DISTURB." MERRIAM-WEBSTER'S ONLINE DICTIONARY. NOV. 13, 2009. <[HTTP://WWW.MERRIAM-WEBSITE.COM/Dictionary/DISTURB](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/disturb)>

Disturbing the peace is an offense charged to someone making too much noise, fighting, or using profanity in public or residential areas, in such a manner "as to annoy, offend, disturb, injure or endanger the comfort, repose, health, peace of safety any reasonable person of normal [...] sensitivity." It's worthy to note that it is the lowest level of offenses - almost always forgiven immediately and without permanent record. "DISTURBING THE PEACE." LAW & LEGAL DEFINITIONS. 2008. USLEGAL, INC. NOV. 18, 2009. <[HTTP://DEFINITIONS.USLEGAL.COM/D/DISTURBING-THE-PEACE/](http://definitions.uslegal.com/d/disturbing-the-peace/)>

★ I suggest reversing the infraction: ticketing or arresting those who, in the span of a year, have not caused the slightest of disturbance. It ought to be criminal not to bother our neighbours.

Mental disorders are any disturbances of emotional equilibrium, as manifested in maladaptive behaviour and impaired functioning, caused by genetic, physical, chemical, biological, psychological, or social and cultural factors.
MOSBY'S MEDICAL DICTIONARY, 8TH EDITION. ELSEVIER: 2009.
ALSO SEE DSM-IV-TR DEFINITIONS 309.3/309.4 (DIAGNOSTIC AND STATISTICAL MANUAL OF MENTAL DISORDERS).

★ Some more obvious examples include Vincent Van Gogh and Mozart, but the list of 'disturbed artists' could easily include Charles Dickens, Jackson Pollock, and less famously, Stephen Wiltshire, a man able to recreate famous city skylines in massive drawings after only twenty-minute helicopter rides.
ARE THE BEST ARTISTS ALL CRAZY?, WISE GEEK. MARCH 2, 2010
<[HTTP://WWW.WISEGEEK.COM](http://www.wisegEEK.com)>

A single line from Michel Foucault's Madness and Civilization (1965) makes the point that madness is necessary: "Men are so necessarily mad, that not to be mad would amount to another form of madness."

★ NEW AND REVISED NURSING DIAGNOSES (APPROVED), NANDA, 2005-2006.

assumes that public order is uncompromising and that 'peace' is in effect synonymous to absolute order. It also assumes we strive for an un-disturbed society. Dare we imagine a world of perfect behaviour? Of utter regularity? Of absolute tranquility?★ Do we not, at least deep down, crave the mischievous?

But beware! Those who act against their (supposed) well-being or out of the ordinary run the risk of being diagnosed as mentally or emotionally disturbed. By psychiatric definition, counter-productive behaviour that in any way strays from normal functioning can be deemed disturbed. This of course raises the slippery topic of 'normality as sanity' and the equally ambiguous parameters that determine psychological disturbances. We could all admit that some of the most appealing and quirky personality traits border on the scientific definitions of disturbed. History testifies to the (so-called) madness that often accompanies brilliantly creative minds. Many artists, musicians, and writers were at some point labeled mentally or emotionally disturbed given their abnormal conduct.★ If it were possible, would we rid our world of their madness? Should we not appreciate our disturbances, however minor or serious?

Disturbances describe dysfunction in a range of disciplines. Energy field disturbances,★ for instance, identify disharmony in the mind and body which is caused by the disruption of a person's flow of energy, or aura. Still, the definition is not clear. The diagnostic terms of these disturbances - "perception of changes in pattern such as movement, temperature or visual changes..." - are so relative to normality they have left much of the scientific community doubtful of their legitimacy.



Fountain (1917) was Marcel Duchamp's most influential readymade; an ordinary urinal submitted to an art show, placed in such a way that its significance was altered and reconsidered. It was a "calculated attack on the most basic conventions of art" - a prank on a group supposedly promoting avant-garde projects.

"MAKING SENSE OF MARCEL DUCHAMP." UNDERSTANDING DUCHAMP. 2008. ANDREW STAFFORD. OCT. 20, 2009. <[HTTP://WWW.UNDERSTANDINGDUCHAMP.COM/](http://www.understandingduchamp.com/)> IMAGE ABOVE: ART N STORY.ORG

E.E. Cummings (1894-1962) attained great popularity in the United States for writing with simple language, but experimenting playfully with its assemblage, and addressing controversial topics such as war or sex.

"E.E. CUMMINGS." POETS.ORG. 1997-2009. THE ACADEMY OF AMERICAN POETS. NOVEMBER 18, 2009.



Ecological disturbances are intense environmental stresses occurring over relatively short periods of time but causing significant changes. Natural disturbances include volcanic eruptions, hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes, wildfires, or floods. They can also arise from human activity, either accidentally or deliberately (for forest or agricultural management).

"ECOLOGICAL DISTURBANCE." SCIENCE ENCYCLOPEDIA. 2009. NET INDUSTRIES. NOV. 18, 2009. <[HTTP://SCIENCE.JRANK.ORG/PAGES/2125/DISTURBANCE-ECOLOGICAL.HTML](http://science.jrank.org/pages/2125/DISTURBANCE-ECOLOGICAL.HTML)>

Some have described Marcel Duchamp's *Fountain* as having disturbed the conventions and standards of fine arts. The satirical nature of his urinal interfered with what was otherwise, in the early decades of the twentieth-century, a functioning order within the art. It impelled a re-calibration of the means and purposes behind making art. We might also suggest that the preeminent 20th century poet E.E. Cummings produced disturbed english writings, where the convention of the language was understood and acknowledged but deliberately interfered with. Cummings' poetry lacks capitalization, punctuation, and often includes idiosyncratic splitting and joinery of words. What is important to recognize is his disregard for syntax as intentional and calculated; using the disturbances strategically to heighten the already abstruse nature of poetry.

Perhaps the disturbances most relevant to architecture are the those occurring naturally. Ecological disturbances, though devastating to the natural community at the immediate level, prove to be absolutely vital to the ecosystem's long term survival. Occurring sinusoidally whenever a system turns stagnant, ecological disturbances ensure diversity by keeping the system responsive, adaptive, and in a constant state of amelioration.

While architecture hardly grows naturally or reacts sinusoidally, would there not be virtue in purposefully disturbing architecture that has hit stagnancy? As in the case of ecological disturbances, architectural disturbances must be considered beyond their immediate and relative effects. We ought to be able to gauge the possible virtues of disturbed architecture holistically; how it may also

ensure that its participants stay responsive, and how it could support an architectural practice of constant amelioration.

All of the disturbances above mentioned can essentially be attributed to a move away from what is acceptable, functional, and/or typical of a system. And so let us break convention and deliberately make architecture that is dysfunctional. By doing so, might we not precipitate an experience that is more imaginative, enriching, and ultimately more 'true' to reality?

dys•func•tion•eal |dis'fə ŋg k sh ənl| adjective
1a: not operating normally or properly;
b: deviating from the norms of social
"DYSFUNCTIONAL." MERRIAM-WEBSTER'S ONLINE DICTIONARY.
MAR. 13, 2010.



THOUGH SEEMINGLY DEVASTATING, NATURAL DISTURBANCES SUCH AS FIRES ARE ESSENTIAL TO SURVIVAL OF FORESTS AND OCCUR WHEN GROWTH BECOMES STAGNANT.
IMAGE SOURCE: WWW.CCRAPETV.COM



NATURAL FLOODS ARE AN EXAMPLE OF ECOLOGICAL DISTURBANCES OCCURING IN ORDER TO
KEEP AN ECOSYSTEM ADAPTIVE AND RESPONSIVE.
IMAGE SOURCE: WWW.PANORAMIO.COM

* Though *disturbed*, *disturbance*, and *disturbing* can vary in implications, all can be used within this exploration: 'disturbed architecture' being the kind of architecture philosophy proposed; 'architectural disturbances' being the separate and specific moments where convention is disrupted; and, 'disturbing' being an adjective of the architecture's behaviour.

There being numerous ways to define disturbances - the disturbed - and disturbing - it is best to clearly establish a framework under which disturbed architecture might exist.* Perhaps the most effective way to define disturbed architecture is to identify precisely the liminality of this framework. That is to say, making the distinction between architectural disturbances and all other disruptive methods or conditions in architecture that fall outside of this exploration.

Without yet being specific, let us state that disturbed architecture is a spatial circumstance deliberately set-up to interfere with a person's normal experience in hope of achieving a more dynamic and fulfilling relationship with their surrounding. There are three things to take from this preliminary definition: a) disturbed architecture is directly based in experience - the actual moment when a person's routine is interrupted; b) disturbances are the direct intent of the architect - not the repercussion of external conditions; and, c) though immediately setting forward inefficient and discomforting circumstances, the disturbances are ultimately meant to enrich our lives.

Call it sensory, haptic, interactive, disturbed architecture targets our visceral relationship with space. It is only justified by the experience it yields: the event of a person clashing with an architecture that behaves improperly or in an unaccommodating manner, and the participant having to reconsider and re-negotiate their relationship with the architecture. Without the clash - the visceral confrontation - and a re-negotiation, the effectiveness of architectural

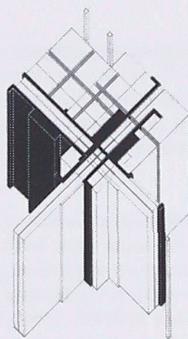
visceral |'vis(ə)rəl| adjective
1a: relating to crude, elemental emotions;
b: deep inward feelings; **2:** not intellectual
 "VISCERAL." MERRIAM-WEBSTER'S ONLINE DICTIONARY. DEC. 2, 2009. <HTTP://WWW.MERRIAM-WEBSITE.COM/Dictionary/VISCERAL>

☆ Of course all architecture is at some point conceptual and is to some extent worthy of theoretical discussion, but the point being made here is that disturbed architecture is not rooted in, nor is developed within, the realm of theory and concepts.

Restaurant Gnocchi

2 cups **Dining** cheese
 2 chilled large **Vestibule** lightly beaten
 1/2 oz. **Kitchen**
 1 tbsp. **Receiving**

NGO, TOM. THE DINNER ADDRESS: A VENTURE INTO
 ARCHITECTURAL ABSURDITY. OTTAWA:
 CARLETON UNIVERSITY, 2008.



House VI, built in 1975, in Cornwall, Connecticut, remains one of Eisenman's most influential projects. The house which has been acclaimed by architects for its heroic attempt to manifest architectural theory, has at the same time endured criticism from the more pragmatically-oriented minds on the bases of its inconsideration of domestic use and atrocious construction.

disturbances is void.

By necessity, then, disturbed architecture is not founded in the theoretical or conceptual.☆ It does not look to reconfigure the way we generate architecture; it is not a disturbance of the methodology behind architecture, but a disturbance of the front-line behaviour of the space. In other words, we are not discussing the 'disturbed architect' - the architect looking to play havoc with the process of making architecture, by irrational, abstract, generative, mathematical, or conceptual operation.

Tom Ngo comes to mind as a recent example of a disturbed architect. His *architectural absurdity* rejects convention by doing away with it altogether. Ngo develops a conceptual model of irrationality, generating architecture in a nonsensical manner in an attempt to free the architect's creativity and imagination. Having establishing a new "set of rules," cooking recipes are used as architectural formulas to design a restaurant. Randomness is achieved by combining the cooking instructions with architectural elements such as "corn vestibules" and "storage flakes." The result is unusual spatial arrangements and a new understanding of both gastronomy and architecture. Though it would certainly yield unorthodox dining experiences, the purpose of Ngo's absurd architecture is not to deliberately disturb his patrons, but rather to intellectually challenge the methodology and processes of designing a restaurant.

Perhaps the maddest of all them all - the godfather of 'disturbed architects' - is Peter Eisenman. His *House VI*, often described as "the unlivable house," is an early example of a built project showing evidence of architectural disturbances. However, it should not be classified as disturbed architecture since it

☆ Eisenman does unintentionally generate some interesting moments that could be used as architectural disturbances if done so strategically and deliberately, including a column interrupting a dinner table, a window only looking out to a wall, a bedroom preventing a couple from sleeping together, and washrooms hidden in small closets.

★ FRANK, SUZANNE. PETER EISENMAN'S HOUSE VI: THE CLIENT'S RESPONSE. NEW YORK: WATSON-GUPTILL, 1994.



☆ Eisenman eventually had to deal with (at least some of) his clients' programmatic concerns, though he certainly would have preferred not to compromise. At first, the architect had not made space for a washroom, but finally allowed for a toilet to be crammed in one space and a sink to float in another corner. Some of the program deficiencies were later resolved by the clients themselves: building a closet indoors and a shed outdoors to store the kitchenware unable to fit the kitchen drawers; replacing their half-fridge (initially put in for tectonic fluidity) with a full-sized fridge; and overruling the glass slot piercing their bed in half that had forced the couple to sleep separately for years.

The relationships between use, program, and purpose in architecture are complex and rather sticky. This fact that we often consider them more-or-less interchangeable or equivalent is problematic, as discussed in the following chapter.

★ Consider the house's name: numbered as being the architect's sixth, rather than titled under its owners. Consider Eisenman's own writing, referring to the house as an experiment and never associating his process to the end experience of his clients. Consider, also, that even after years of residing in the house, the Franks still call it "Peter's House" rather than having developed a relationship and sense of ownership over it.

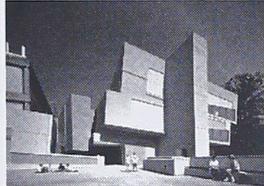
☆ "Form... is blind to persons. Form answers only to itself."
EISENMAN, PETER. HOUSES OF CARDS.
NEW YORK: OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS, 1987.

is only the product of a disturbed architect whose twisted methodology happens to yield architectural disturbances.☆ Eisenman's plot for House VI was to reduce architecture to mathematical abstraction and to have a design emerge solely from the conceptual process.★ In this case, the process was the constant manipulation of four intersecting planes until reasonable spaces began to emerge.

Most spaces coming from Eisenman's abstract methodology are unconventional, but their almost arbitrary nature places them outside of our definition of disturbed architecture. Firstly, in an attempt to record architectural process, Eisenman chose to disregard program and entirely ignore the 'use' of the spaces☆ in favour of his conceptual system. In contrast, program is essential to disturbed architecture. Buildings are typically assigned programs that come prepackaged with rather strict conventions regarding design and use, and it is this very predictability of program on which disturbed architecture feeds. Eisenman's House VI, a theoretical triumph, could be considered practically *non-functional* with a few desperate programmatic Band-Aids, while disturbed architecture should be designed as *dysfunctional*, deliberately meant to challenge use, program, and purpose in architecture.

Secondly, Eisenman and his house have little concern for the subjects, or the participants, as I prefer to call them. The disorder of the house belongs to Eisenman, not to Dick and Suzanne Frank, the couple who commissioned, funded, realized, and then struggled with living in the house.★ In this case one is meant to admire the architectural manipulations but not necessarily expected to take part in them actively.☆ Though critical of Eisenman's insensitivity,

★ Case in point: the drawing on the cover of the Franks' "Client's Response" book is printed upside down! There could be no clearer indication that the abstraction employed by Eisenman cannot be fully grasped by the participants of his house, and that the disorder is not directed at the experience of his clients but at his own interest in architectural process.



The Aronoff Center for Design and Art, Cincinnati, Ohio, 1996. IMAGES BELOW: ENTRE VISTA: A ROUTE TO PETER EISENMAN. MARCH 21, 2010. <[HTTP://WWW.VITRUVIUS.COM](http://www.vitruvius.com)>

☆ The ACDA falls somewhere in between Ngo's irrational approach in his architectural absurdity - where the spaces are nonsensical - and Eisenman's own House VI - where program is entirely ignored for a conceptual process and purity of form.

* Frank Gehry has suggested that Eisenman's conceptual process is less interesting or valid than his actual spaces, which is concerning if the latter are generated only by the former: "The best thing about Peter's buildings is the insane spaces he ends up with... All that other stuff, the philosophy and all, is just bullshit as far as I'm concerned."

EISENMAN, PETER. PETER EISENMAN: 1990-1997. MADRID: EL CROQUIS EDITORIAL, 1997.

★ ROGERS, CHRISTY. ARONOFF CENTER FOR DESIGN AND ART BY PETER EISENMAN. GALINSKY, 1998 <[HTTP://WWW.GALINSKY.COM/BUILDINGS/ARONOFF/](http://www.galinsky.com/buildings/aronoff/)>

Deconstructivism can be traced back to a New York exhibition curated by Philip Johnson and Mark Wigley in 1988, featuring works by Eisenman, Tschumi, Libeskind, Gehry, Hadid, and Coop Himmelb(l)au. Generally, deconstructionism is associated with a move away from Louis Sullivan's "form follows function" credo and into tectonic experimentation where geometry, composition, and manipulation of form dominate the design process.

the Franks admirably appreciate the house's role as a theoretical abstraction of architecture and find living in it more interesting than living in an ordinary home. Their appreciation, however, is a cultural one - the same kind that affords us an esteem for bizarre art works - rather than a spatial one. Eisenman's intellectual play, in the end, is very difficult to understand and exists in an entirely separate arena from the participants' experiential interpretation.★

Peter Eisenman flashes his madness again years later with the design of the Aronoff Center for Design and Art. This time the disturbed architect wishes to have his subjects "re-conceptualize architecture" and achieves this by producing spaces of confusion and disorientation.★ But again Eisenman's intent is to test the conceptual and theoretical grounds of architecture, not to deliver specific experiences.★ This time too, the participants seem to develop a negative relationship with the building - finding it frustrating, inconsiderate, arbitrary and, most importantly, no more fruitful or stimulating than conventional buildings.★ Where House VI deviates in process and absence of program, the ACDA deviates with seemingly arbitrary, exaggerated, and excessive form. The slanted walls, odd-shaped windows, shifty corridors and jagged protrusions definitely keep the students from taking the building for granted. However, the spaces can only be considered 'disturbing' because of the building's aggressive tectonic presence rather than their deliberate intent to interfere with the common experience.

Without embarking on the already congested discourse of post-functionalism and deconstructivism, it should be stressed that formalistic deviations do not make for architectural disturbances. Certainly,

☆ I think back to my first experience of a Frank Gehry building as a young architecture student: Walking up First Street in Los Angeles to the Disney Concert Hall, being awed by the untamed majestic shapes, rushing inside the building to discover what sort of spaces such shapes would carve-out, only to be disappointed by a very conventional, rectilinear concert hall. I returned outside and took my photographs of the facade reflecting the California sun, just like everybody else.

Vidler's "The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely" (1992) covers all sorts of unstable examples of contemporary architecture and discusses their resistance to modern thought (many of them deconstructivist) but his arguments almost always come back to how their form relates to a feeling of the haunted, the frightening, the deranged, the supernatural, etc.

Unhomely refers to the opposite of "homely" which essentially suggests the qualities of a home: comforting, cozy, simple, natural, and familiar.



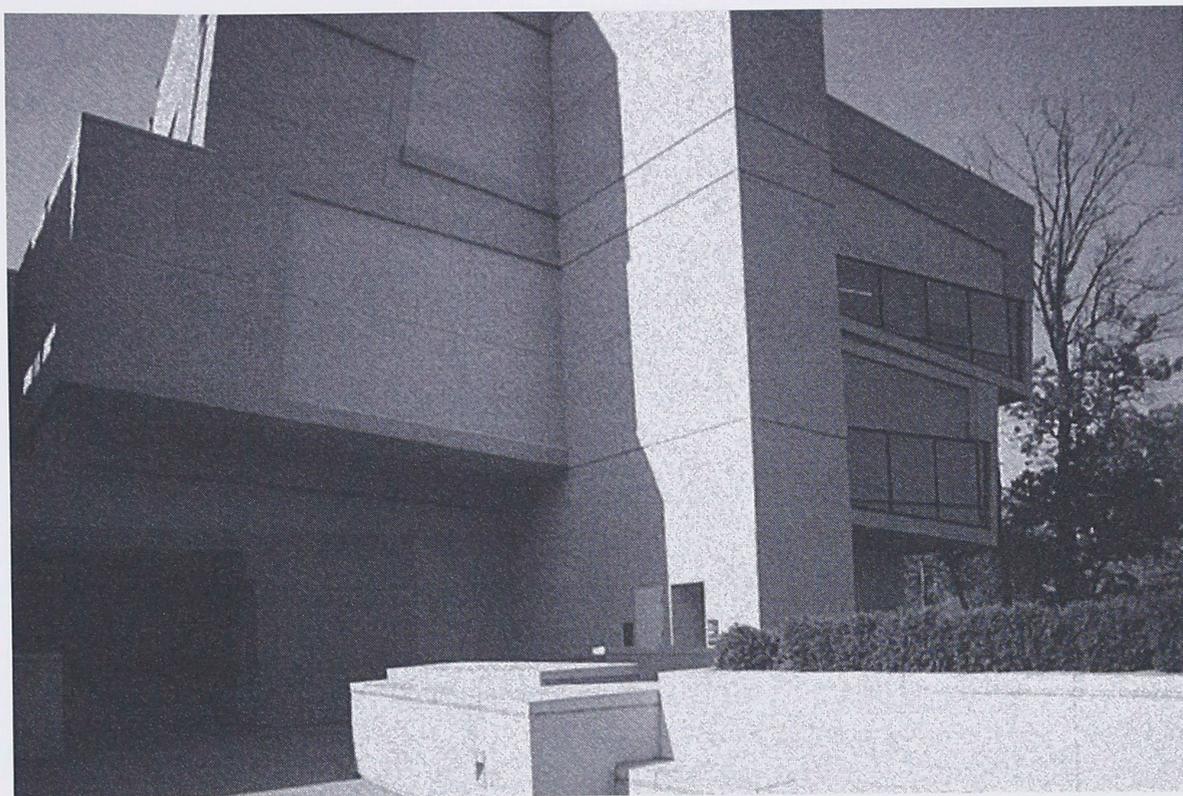
Haunted houses are more effective than haunted cemeteries, because the home represents comfort and safety while the cemetery is already associated with the scary and ghostly. The greater the clash, or instability, the more effective the disturbance - to be discussed in Chapter 4.

IMAGES ABOVE: DEVIANT ART HAUNTED HOUSE STOCK, MARCH 26, 2010. <[HTTP://FAIRIEGOODMOTHER.DEVIANTART.COM](http://FAIRIEGOODMOTHER.DEVIANTART.COM)>

the manipulation of geometry often generates unconventional and impressive buildings, but the disruption is typically tectonic, ultimately admired visually - much like a sculpture - and rarely affecting the way in which the architecture is used.☆

Some may come back from visiting a tectonically distorted building and recount having had a "disturbing" experience, but this would likely be a reaction to the bizarre, out-of-this-world, even mysterious characteristics of the forms. In his "The Architectural Uncanny" Anthony Vidler discusses the unhomely as being the kind of architecture meant to destabilize the conventions of traditional architecture in a way that is "particularized, embodied in architectural form." His theories feed off of Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis, where the uncanny is understood as a "peculiar kind of fear." Essentially, the architectural uncanny suggests buildings and spaces that induce a sense anxiety, or even terror.

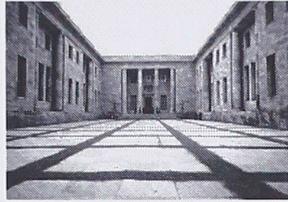
Let us establish a third point: that architecture whose behaviour is eerie, sinister, or even frightening is not the sort of "disturbing" pertinent to this exploration. Consider the haunted house - the "most popular topos" of uncanny architecture - loaded with mythical and supernatural implications. The haunted house might be described as "disturbing" but it serves to unnerve or even frighten rather than to strategically interrupt an anticipated experience. An uncanny architecture does not encourage a negotiation between space and participant, preventing a richer appreciation and relationship between the two. It also fabricates supernatural circumstances, going against disturbed architecture's intent to exploit or intensify the most rudimentary complexities of reality.



THE ARONOFF CENTER FOR DESIGN AND ARTS (1996), LIKE MANY OF PETER EISENMAN'S BUILDINGS, IS AN EXAMPLE OF TECTONIC MANIPULATION, WHERE THE CONFUSION FELT IN THE SPACE IS ONLY THE BYPRODUCT OF THE ARCHITECT'S THEORETICAL EXPERIMENTATION RATHER THAN A DELIBERATE ATTEMPT TO DISTURB NORMAL EXPERIENCE.
IMAGE SOURCE: WWW.BLUFFTON.EDU



ARCHITECTURE THAT IS EERIE, FRIGHTENING, OR SUPERNATURAL, SUCH AS THE HAUNTED HOUSE, SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WITHIN ANTHONY VIDLER'S *UNCANNY ARCHITECTURE* (1992) AND OUTSIDE OF THIS EXPLORATION OF DISTURBING ARCHITECTURE.
IMAGE SOURCE: WWW.DEVIANTART.NET



The New Reich Chancellery in Berlin, was commissioned by Hitler in 1938, who gave his favourite architect Albert Speer the task of designing a building that displayed the power of Germany and made a strong impression on the people. It was completed in less than one year, as per Hitler's request, and having no budget, costing today's equivalent of over billion dollars. After being severely damaged by the soviets toward the end of the war, it was demolished in 1945.

FEST, JOACHIM C. ALBERT SPEER: CONVERSATIONS WITH HITLER'S ARCHITECT. POLITY: CAMBRIDGE, 2007.

★ This anecdote can be found in Deyan Sudjic's *The Edifice Complex* (2005) under the chapter "The Long March to the Leader's Desk."

To further clarify the definition of disturbed architecture, I suggest looking at one example that demonstrates conditions falling within the framework and others that fall outside of it.

The example is that of Adolf Hitler's New Reich Chancellery, more specifically an anecdote published on the potency of its architecture.* In short, it is the story of the Czechoslovakian Prime Minister who, having to meet with Hitler, is required to walk through the entire chancellery - a dreaded journey to say the least. Albert Speer, the architect, designed the hallways unnecessarily high and long with sequences of massive space after massive space. The material is described as "unforgivably hard," with no furniture or carpet. Finally, a large doorway opens into an impossibly gargantuan office with "blood-red walls." After moving through the entire chancellery, it takes the Czech Prime Minister nearly a minute to walk across the office to Hitler's desk, at which point he apparently breaks down and has a heart-attack! He survives, conveniently, and is able to sign-off his country's surrender. This anecdote illustrates architecture's capacity to evoke specific responses and generate experiences outside of the norm.

Firstly, disturbed architecture does not relate to the "disturbing" feeling we associate to Adolf Hitler and the Holocaust. As mentioned, eerie and frightening architectural impressions like those felt towards Nazi Power belong to Vidler's 'uncanny' and to a lesser extent to Freud's psychoanalysis. The idea of a Building For Hitler is already loaded with sinister, "disturbing" preconceptions, regardless of the architecture it presents.*

That said, there are some consistencies between

★ Today, the site is a parking lot around a set of uber-banal condominiums, but if visited with the knowledge of its history - that it was the Hitler's place of suicide - one cannot help but feel eerie and slightly terrified. This exemplifies a 'disturbing' phenomena that exists outside and independent of the architecture, not to be confused with our definition of disturbed architecture.

★ The purpose of disturbed architecture is not to instill fear, but the consistency with Speer is the intention to disrupt an otherwise normal spatial condition, to strategically make an architecture accordingly, and to anticipate a certain kind response.

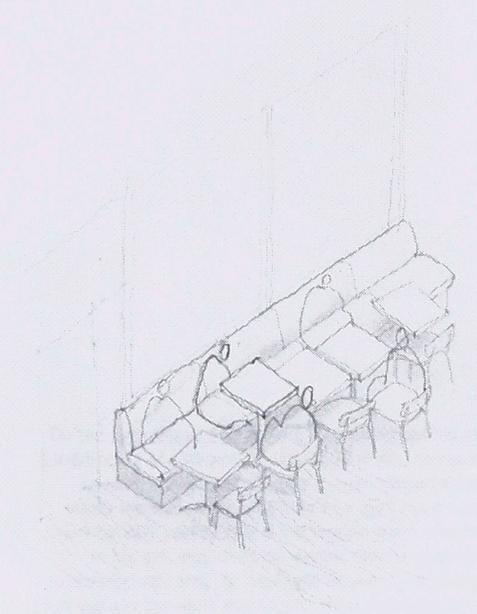
the New Reich Chancellery and disturbed architecture, namely, the architect's intent. Albert Speer's design of the chancellery was not driven by the conventions of efficiency or functionality, nor by any traditional style, but by an interest in choreographing intimidating experiences.* Speer puts together a sequence of architectural disturbances - moments that go against normative architectural experience - in an effort to shift the subjects out of their comfort-zone and into the mercy of Hitler's authority.

Speer found the most effective way to disturb his subjects to be through long, monumental hallways, oversized doorways, and a harsh material palette. This of course, does not mean that massive hallways made of marble entail architectural disturbances, or that enlarged doorways embody a disturbed architecture, but in this case the tectonic and material deviations are justified by the final, disturbed experience. Speer's architecture is deliberate, intentional, and strategic in preventing a routine experience and in exaggerating existing circumstances - precisely what disturbed architecture advocates.

In order to make a connection between disturbed architecture and the New Reich Chancellery anecdote, we must forget for a moment the sinister implications of Hitler, put aside the tectonic exaggerations of the building itself, and look specifically at the architect Albert Speer's intent to use architecture to disrupt his visitors' visceral relationship with the space. By making the halls 'unnecessarily' long and high, by adding numerous 'useless' massive spaces that connect them, and by enlarging Hitler's office to the point of ridiculousness, Speer undermines efficiency and functionality, derailing his subjects' interpretation of the space, making them vulnerable to a

new - in this case, intimidating - experience.

TABLE TOP TROUBLE:
AN EXAMPLE OF A MODEST BUT EFFECTIVE DISTURBANCE: A
TABLE IS RAISED SIXTEEN-INCHES. THE PERFECT HEIGHT TO
MAINTAIN A LEVEL OF INCONVENIENT USEFULNESS, AND AT EYE-
LEVEL CAUSING AN INTERFERENCE WITH THE NORMALLY EASY
ACT OF CARRYING A CONVERSATION.



Consider a more modest scenario of disturbed architecture. Imagine a café with a row of tables, and one table exhibiting a slight disturbance. Instead of its normal, comfortable height of thirty inches, the table top has been raised to forty-six inches, but the accompanying chairs remain their usual height. This table is likely left unoccupied most of the time, but when the café fills two customers reluctantly take a seat. The nature of the architectural disturbance suggests they should still use the table to rest their coffee cups, keys, and books, but forces them to reach awkwardly. The table also rests inconveniently at their eye-level, interrupting their line-of-sight and making for unnatural conversation.

The raised table is a rather minor and simple change but the complexities it opens up are precisely what disturbed architecture seeks. The participants affected by the disturbances are forced to reconsider the purpose of the table, recalibrate their relationship with architecture and, most interestingly, negotiate with the space a new way to hold a conversation at a café - an event we take for granted.

For our purpose, architectural disturbances are thus any kind of adjustments made deliberately to interrupt an expected experience. Disturbed architecture interferes with the conventions of efficiency and practicality and sets-up dysfunctional environments - causing discomfort, confusion, awkwardness and inconvenience.

Why would we ever want our conversations, our work, our leisure *disturbed*? Why should we suggest an architecture so dysfunctional that it works against our everyday life? Might there be virtues in making architecture that behaves like a pest - like the shin-kicking kid at recess? Why an architecture that intentionally interferes with the very order we have all worked hard to establish?

The concept of disturbed architecture was originally inspired by a rather obscure project by German architect Günther Feuerstein titled *Impractical Flat*. In his proposal, Feuerstein, frustrated with his mechanically-stifled life, redesigned his apartment as a architectural nuisance, an apparatus of torment and displeasure, a place especially difficult to live in.

Several fundamentals were extracted from Feuerstein's proposal and projected into the exploration of disturbed architecture. First is questioning the very way we live: challenging our tolerance to dullness and our willingness to lead automated lives. Having had enough with the mechanized world,* Feuerstein was desperate to feel something - *anything!* - rather than being spoon-fed unstimulating experiences. Observing that the world was fixated on practicality, he responds with the opposite: *impracticality* - favouring the latter for its genuine and original output.

The idea that we are living too conservatively and close-mindedly is hardly a factual one, but educators, philosophers, sociologists as well as architects have written a myriad of texts accusing people of being ideologically dominated by their own system

On the *Impractical Flat* project: "...ripping out his air conditioning and throwing open his windows, he could swelter, shiver, and struggle to hear himself think above the roar of the city; later he might bump and hurt himself against one of the myriad sharp corners in his flat, and sit at his wobbly table and on his uncomfortable sofa. Or he might unwind by throwing paint against the walls and drilling holes through them, filling out his flat with traces of his own ideas and history..."

FEUERSTEIN, GUNTHER. "THESEN UBER INZIDENTE ARCHITEKTUR." SPUR, NO. 5, SPEZIALNUMMER UBER DEN UNITAREN URBANISMUS. MUNICH: JUNE 1961.
as quoted in
SADLER, SIMON. THE SITUATIONIST CITY. CAMBRIDGE: THE MIT PRESS, 1998.

* Coming into the 1960s, Feuerstein uses the term "mechanization" as the cause of a diminished quality of life, though today, we would likely place the blame on something else - be it convention, technology or politics.

impractical |im'praktikəl| adjective
a: incapable of dealing sensibly or prudently; b: not adapted for use or action; c: not sensible or realistic
"IMPRACTICAL." MERRIAM-WEBSTER'S ONLINE DICTIONARY.
APRIL 2, 2010. <HTTP://WWW.MERRIAM-WEBSTER.COM/
DICTIONARY/IMPRACTICAL>

★ While Feuerstein designed a small space within a city that would prevent him from living comfortably, Thoreau literally left the common life and immersed himself in the woods, an environment he was utterly unfamiliar with. The Harvard academic had to teach himself to build a small house, hunt and cook in the wild, survey and map his land, and live with his own thoughts.

★ “Most of the luxuries, and many of the so called comforts of life, are not only indispensable, but positive hinderances to the elevation of mankind.” and “There is an incessant flux of novelty into the world, and yet we tolerate incredible dullness.”

THOREAU, HENRY DAVID. WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS. BOSTON: TICKNOR AND FIELDS, 1854.

peril |ˈpɛrəl| noun

a: the difficulty or danger that arises from a particular situation

NEW OXFORD AMERICAN DICTIONARY, 2ND EDITION, 2005.

To quote Thoreau directly: “We should come far, from adventure, and perils, and discoveries, with new experience and character.” where perils come-up again in the text.

Sola-Morales' **Weak Architecture** essay (1976), based on Gianni Vattimo's 'weak ontology' proposes peripheral and vulnerable strategies for an architecture that discreetly defies a strong, central system.

From my own essay, titled *Disturbing Architectural Logic: An Aggressive Alternative to a Weak Resistance* (2010):

“Disturbed architecture actually shares the same conviction as weak architecture, only it addresses the issue in a much more acute way, tackling the very idea of logic and convention in architecture assertively, almost belligerently. (...) In an aim to oppose dominant reasoning in architecture, both the ideas of weakening and disturbing reject an absolute truth in favour of open-ended alternatives. Where the weakening of architectural logic suggests a divergence from the central system in a rather passive and almost unprompted manner, architectural disturbances are intentional and aggressive interferences with what is considered properly functioning.”

★ Metaphorically, Thoreau writes:

“We do not ride on the railroad; it rides upon us.”

THOREAU, HENRY DAVID. WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS. BOSTON: TICKNOR AND FIELDS, 1854.

SCHMIDT, JEFF. **DISCIPLINED MINDS: A CRITICAL LOOK AT SALARIED PROFESSIONALS AND THE SOUL BATTERING SYSTEM THAT SHAPES THEIR LIVES**. MARYLAND: ROWMAN & LITTLEFIELD, 2001.

of order. Instead of accepting life's peculiarities, it seems we have devised strict conventions by which the unfamiliar, the discomfoting, and the eccentric are altogether avoided. There is a certain correctness to doing things now, and we have called it the *normal* way. But normality has short-changed our experiences of any real challenge or new stimulation where the true complexities of life are allowed to flourish.

Over one hundred years before Feuerstein's project in Germany, Henry David Thoreau escaped the city of Boston for a two-year sojourn in the woods.★ Thoreau, much like Feuerstein, was frustrated with people living for comfort, security, and predictability rather than for adventure, perils, and self-development.★ His choice of the word “perils” here is crucial. Throughout his writings, Thoreau cherishes above all his struggles, his most unexpected and difficult experiences. It is through such struggles that one learns, or at the very least - that one *lives*. The problem with establishing a system that ensures comfort and peace is that it must be rigid rather than open-ended, strong rather weak, and consistent rather than adaptive. And so, many people would side with Thoreau's opinion that the very system set-up to improve our livelihood ends up impeding or sterilizing our most valuable experiences.★

More recently, author Jeff Schmidt has written on this system in his book *Disciplined Minds*, and as his subtitle describes, the study takes a “critical look at salaried professionals and the soul-battering system that shapes their lives.” According to Schmidt, we are groomed into a system from early on, being especially affected during our university studies and then through our professional careers. By the time we believe we have reached our goals, to be on the “right

track," many of us have unknowingly become complacent to a predetermined ideology. This, of course, inhibits any real development of our Self and our society. The strict conventions set by professionalism have broken down our society which, according to Schmidt, is defined by and made-up of relationships. The author explores the possibility of reshaping society, and asks who and what has "the power to affect the nature of these relationships?"

Could architecture be one way of shaking things up a little? Might challenging conventional architecture force people to question their own lives, their relationship to space and to others?*

Unfortunately, recent architecture has been victimized by convention and has shamefully contributed to the banality of our daily lives. A reluctance to be more daring, imaginative, or provocative is primarily the result of a strict set of rules set half a century ago. In an effort to break free from tradition, modernists such as Le Corbusier championed a rational approach to architecture eventually known as Functionalism. Functionalism advocates buildings stripped of superfluities and designed purely for their purpose - here the purpose of a building is its ability to efficiently fulfill a program. Institutional rules evolved into a blind and uncritical application of convention, where efficiency and cooperation were all that was asked of architecture.* No longer are buildings clever, creative, bizarre, teasing, or in any way idiosyncratic.* Our fixation on functional architecture has since led to archetypical programs: predefined ways of designing gas-stations, cinemas, shops, offices, and even houses. By subscribing to a convention, a building

★ The trick may lie not only the resistance of convention but in a conflicting architecture, an antithetical tactic much like Feuerstein's impracticality.

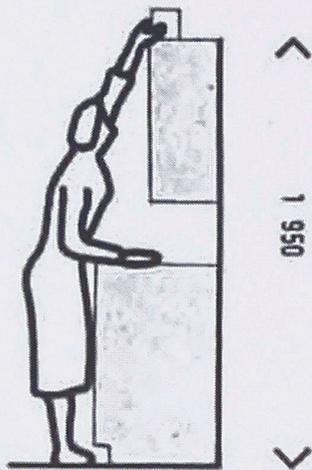


The nature of this exploration does not call for a complete understanding of the modern movement nor of Le Corbusier's influence, but the examples that follow will be presented as resistances to the functional, rational strategies introduced by the modernists.

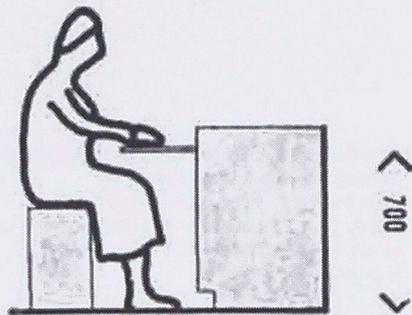
PHOTO ABOVE: VILLA SAVOYE (1929) BY LE CORBUSIER.
SOURCE: "SAVOYE", APRIL 2, 2010. <[HTTP://SILLABOX.WORDPRESS.COM](http://sillabox.wordpress.com)>

★ The modern movement had good intentions, meant as a strategy to resolve social issues in a humanist manner. But, as the Situationists argued, the progress it eventually generated came at the expense of individual development and the at the loss of a poetic lifestyle.

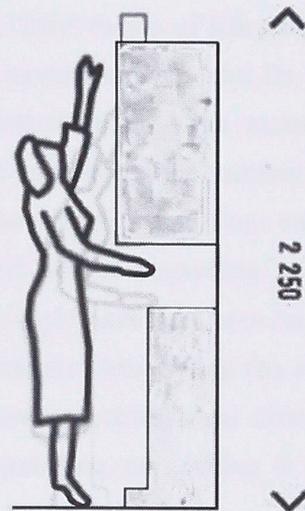
★ Add to all of that the political stranglehold on architecture: uncompromising safety codes, the official and formal approaches to design, conservative city officials and worse of all, economics - and we can start to appreciate the difficulties in building interesting environments.



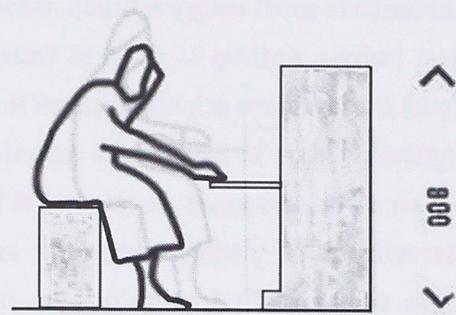
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Ernst Neufert's Conventions (1980)



< 800 >



...disturbed (2010)

NEUFERT DISTURBED: A SIMPLE ERNST NEUFERT DRAWINGS ON EFFICIENT AND FUNCTIONAL ARCHITECTURE IS DISTURBED.
 IMAGE SOURCE: STUDIO GEBÄUDELEHRE VORLESUNG SS 2003, MARCH 3, 2010.
 <HTTP://PLOTTEGG.TUWIEN.AC.AT>

☆ It was Peter Eisenman who once compared conventional architecture to a spouse's fat, saying that after a while, you just don't see it anymore. Brilliant. Sometimes the fat is a beautiful thing that ought to be appreciated, other times it should not be ignored, but worked off...

can be designed quickly, constructed economically, and can then be categorically recognized and used accordingly by the people. Conventional architecture has become so familiar to us, so commonplace, that we no longer acknowledged its presence.☆

Currently, our fault lies in treating the complexities of life as *problems*, and then attempting to use architecture as a *solution*. Firstly, as argued, some of the most real or "true" facets of life subsist in its vicissitudes, in its inconveniences and its struggles. Therefore, life's disturbances - the moments that prevent us from living on cruise control - should be accepted and cherished rather than suppressed. Secondly, we should not be regarding architecture as a solution. This logic assumes knowing what is best, what is correct, and prescribes the same dose and treatment to every architectural circumstance. The result is disappointing, as nothing is ever truly solved.

Instead of making architecture that compensates for life's intricacies, could we gain from architecture that exploits them? Instead of getting carried away with the notion of functionality in architecture, might it be worth exploring the virtues of a *dysfunctional* architecture? If it is true, as suggested, that we live automated lives of comparatively little diversity and stimulation, an occasional disturbance might enrich our routines. Antithetical to the efficient and accommodating architecture that we are used to is uncooperative architecture, the kind whose purpose is not to function but to interrupt and force new ways of use.

Being disturbed by certain architectural scenarios might help us lead less complacent lives. There may be a possibility of yielding richer and more dynamic

dys•function•al |dis'fəŋkʃənəl| adjective

1a: not operating normally or properly;

b: deviating from the norms of social

"DYSFUNCTIONAL." MERRIAM-WEBSTER'S ONLINE DICTIONARY.

MAR. 13. 2010 <HTTP://WWW.MERRIAM-WEBSITE.COM/

DICTIONARY/DYSFUNCTIONAL>

Consider dysfunctional families, and how most of us would think of our own family to be - at least to some degree - dysfunctional. People are not usually excited to claim that their family is entirely normal, free of any quarrels, secrets, or complicated relationships. It would probably be safe to say that we cherish the dysfunctionality of our families and consider those eccentricities to be nurturing.

experiences by intentionally setting-up architectural disturbances. Such a disturbed architecture may hold the potential to provoke an entire re-evaluation of our daily experiences and develop more complex and challenging relationships with space, and, more importantly, with those with whom we share space.

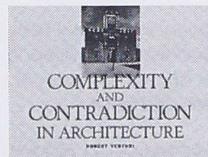
The Modernists' use of architecture fell short of its near-utopic goal* and so the ensuing resistance was naturally less rigid and less matter-of-factly auspicious. Rather than employing positive strategies for architecture - strategies promising to solve the world's problems - architects began suggesting latent qualities within architecture that would have usually been considered unfavourable. These 'negative strategies', as we could call them, made a move away from the need for all-is-good-architecture and looked to mix things up a little. The language used to formulate these strategies were adverse in vocabulary but usually made the argument for a better, more rewarding experience.*

And so negativity in architecture - as in the case of disturbed architecture - is nothing new. There are numerous architects who have left the positivistic playground for the more adventurous dark alley. Lightly touching on some of these past theories and projects may add support for disturbed architecture:

We must first look back to Robert Venturi's *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* (1966) which was probably the most effective rebuke to Le Corbusier's *Vers une Architecture* (1923) and would open-up architecture to a whole new way of thinking. It was meant as a manifesto* outlining the true strengths and potentials of architecture, insinuating that the previous school of thought on architecture

* This position is taken by many thinkers, including Guy Debord and his posse of Situationists. (More to come.)

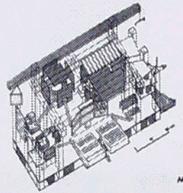
* Take Feuerstein's impractical architecture, where the term 'impractical' has a negative connotation, but his intent is to have the architecture provide conditions that are superior to what is already being offered. Consider, too, Thoreau's choice of the word 'perils', which by literal definition is negative, but is used to describe constructive, beneficial experiences.



VENTURI, ROBERT. *COMPLEXITY AND CONTRADICTION IN ARCHITECTURE*. NEW YORK: MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, 1966.

* A *gentle* manifesto, mind you. Le Corbusier had been fairly aggressive with his modernist manifesto, and so Venturi was sure to criticize even the attitude being taken to architecture.

Venturi's fundamental arguments of post-modernism would, like the modernists' manifesto, eventually be used insensitively. Post-modernism is now often associated to unused porticos, plastic bricks and all things pastiche, but Venturi's theory was meant mainly to allow for non-pure, multiple-meaning spaces.



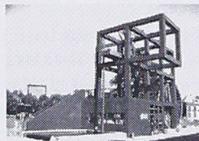
★ In fact many have argued that Cedric Price's disregard for form or aesthetics, as evident in the Fun Palace (1961), was spoiled by the post-modernists' reinstatement to ornament.

IMAGE ABOVE: FUN PALACE (1961) BY CEDRIC PRICE.
SOURCE "FROM BRAIN DRAIN TO THE KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY",
AUDACITY, MARCH 22, 2010. <HTTP://WWW.AUDACITY.ORG/
SM-26-11-07-01.HTM>

★ PRICE, CEDRIC, HANS-ULRICH OBRIST. RE: CP. BASEL: BIRKHAUSER, 2003.

★ Years later Tschumi writes that architecture cannot "change" society, but can accelerate a movement already underway or encourage the start of something new.

* TSCHUMI, BERNARD. ARCHITECTURE AND DISJUNCTION. CAMBRIDGE: THE MIT PRESS, 1996.



★ Tschumi's renown Park de la Villette (1984) project supports this belief, as many of the pavilions designed for the park are unprogrammed and open to multiple uses.

IMAGE ABOVE: PARK DE LA VILLETTE (1984) SOURCE: FLICKR PHOTOS, MARCH 27, 2010. <HTTP://WWW.FLICKR.COM>

was too restricting and unrealistic. Venturi set in motion post-modernism by advocating architecture of ambiguity rather than purity, favouring "richness of meaning over clarity of meaning." This permitted architecture to play a little, allowing it to purposefully cause tension and uncertainty. Venturi suggested that by moving away from obvious and clear architecture, the ensuing "struggles and hesitations for the observer... make his perception more vivid."

The resistance to pure architecture did exist prior to the post-modern movement.★ Cedric Price, for instance, with projects like the Fun Palace (1961) proposed anti-utopian architecture. Reality was no utopia, and so Price instead made claims for an architecture indistinguishable from the ordinary. Ordinary, was, for Price, synonymous to reality, where the real was raw, ugly, and imperfect. In Price's designs we see a rejection of architecture as a mere formal strategy to improve our lives, but instead as a critical device to look at how we behave. Comfortable and pleasant spaces only take into account a small portion of human delights, and Price's architecture explored our entire range of sensations.★

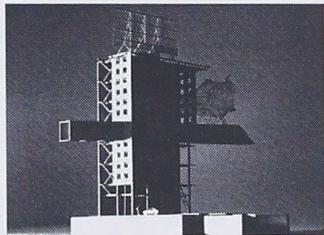
In 1968, the french architect and thinker, Bernard Tschumi joined a group of young architects looking to change society through their architecture.★ Tschumi used what he called "counterdesign" - a strategy where he designed the conditions, rather than conditioning the design.* Architecture, to Tschumi, should be like the world: unstable and ever-changing, and so the idea of making determinate and stable architecture was thus counter-productive.★

Tschumi would later introduce the idea of violence in architecture, where the word 'violence' is used metaphorically for the clash between a human

An extra-narrow corridor would be an example of architecture violating a body. Architecture can violate itself, too, if the same corridor pierce through a series of otherwise conventional rooms, compromising its order.

☆ Truth has it that we actually *desire* to be violated by space sometimes. Spatial aggression, according to Tschumi, is "painful - but pleasurable." Still, he points out that architecture should be used as a peaceful social instrument, not one that disturbs the peace.

TSCHUMI, BERNARD. ARCHITECTURE AND DISJUNCTION. CAMBRIDGE: THE MIT PRESS, 1996.



* VIDLER, ANTHONY. THE ARCHITECTURAL UNCANNY. THE MIT PRESS, 1994.

Coop Himmelb(l)au's admits their Hot Flat project (1978) was driven by efficiency and economics, like most other housing projects. They added a strange twist by designing an abstracted flame which was meant to contrast the accommodating feeling of the rest of the building.

IMAGE ABOVE: HOT FLAT (1978). COOP HIMMELB(L)AU, PROJECTS, FEBRUARY 12, 2010
<[HTTP://WWW.COOP-HIMMELBLAU.AT](http://www.coop-himmelblau.at)>

The manifesto reads: "Architecture must burn. It must be a flame that shines out of the drabness of our daily existence... It must explode our indifference, revealing the unseen constructions that we take for granted. More often than not our buildings are bland translations of conventions, functions and convenience. They are built affirmation of what we already know, how we always do things... Architecture can make sense of the world as much as it makes us at home in its confusion."

BETSKY, AARON, ERIK ADIGARD, AND ARTHUR WELLS. ARCHITECTURE MUST BURN. THAMES & HUDSON: LONDON, 2000.

* HAYS, MICHAEL K., AARON BETSKY, ELIOT NOYES, AND LAURIE ANDERSON. SCANNING. THE ABERRANT ARCHITECTURES OF DILLER + SCOFIDIO. WHITNEY MUSEUM: ROTTERDAM, 2003.

body and the order of space. Instead of using architecture for contemplation, he considers using it as a perverse instrument.* This sort of theory begs the question: why are architects so concerned with comfort and not more interested in exploring the possibility of orchestrating - as Tschumi puts it - "disturbing architectural tortures?"

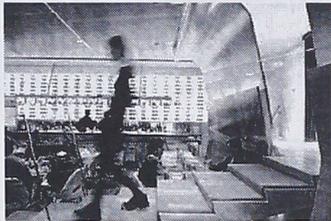
Coop Himmelb(l)au, the Austrian group headed by Wolf Prix, refusing to accept the notion of a comfortable living, suggested *non-accommodating* architecture. Since the 1960s the group has explored architecture's capacity to elicit a wide range of psychological response from its participants. Their non-accommodation, however, is explored primarily through tectonic manipulation, with "hard, angular, brutal, throbbing, cavernous"* forms, as evident in their Hot Flat project.

It was Coop Himmelb(l)au's phrase "architecture must burn" in 1968 that would resurface in 2000 as a manifesto written by Aaron Betsky. Frustrated that architecture has not been able to reach its poetic potential, the critic and curator Betsky submits architecture that is difficult to inhabit, that fights back by being inefficient and useless. The text accompanying the manifesto seems to side with formal manipulations like those of the deconstructivists, where architecture flashes its puissance sculpturally rather than spatially.

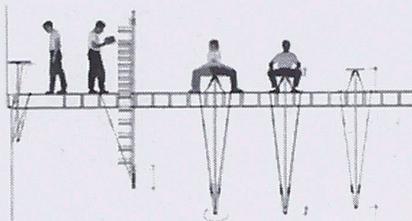
It was Betsky who used the word "inefficient" while writing approvingly of Diller & Scofidio's work.* The husband and wife team has reached world-wide acclaim for their use of theatre, art, and technology to address social-architectural issues. Their buildings or installations hardly concern themselves with functionality or efficiency, but dedicate themselves to

The Brasserie, a restaurant in New York City's famous Seagram Building, aims at playing-up the idea of 'entry' into a space. First, the doors to the street are censored to trigger a video snapshots of people walking in, which are then displayed above the bar in the restaurant minutes later. Secondly, the stairwell descending into the space pierces the entire dining room, and the proportions of the stairs make for an awkwardly long, theatricized entry by any patron. This later use of inefficiency could very much be considered an architectural disturbance, given that most diners are interrupted and disturbed by the continuous arrival of others.

IMAGE BELOW: BRASSERIE (1975), DILLER & SCOFIDIO. FEBRUARY 12, 2010. <HTTP://WWW.ARCSPACE.COM>



☆ Recall the definition of ecological disturbances in Chapter 1.



During World War II, snafu - acronym for "situation normal all fucked-up" - was used to describe confusion and disorder caused by the very rules of the military.

Now it is applicable more widely to any breakdown within a system because of its own conventions. This notion resonates in disturbed architecture, considering the normal functioning of a space (to be disturbed) is entirely defined by its established convention.

★ LEWIS, PAUL, MARC TSURUMAKI, AND DAVID J. LEWIS. SITUATION NORMAL... IN PAMPHLET #21. PRINCETON ARCHITECTURAL PRESS: NEW YORK, 1998. IMAGE ABOVE: SECTION OF SLIP SPACE.

In the Slip Space project (1998), "three stools, a bookshelf, and a table were designed to tactically engage the presence of the basement located under a portion of the first floor gallery. The basement slips to the gallery as the gallery leaks to the basement, undermining the binary of the public..."

questioning the purpose and potential of space.

Architects are usually able to justify negative strategies because they tend to touch on what is truly at stake in architecture. Diller & Scofidio's Brasserie project is a perfect example where efficiency is jeopardized in an attempt to orchestrate a more dynamic and provocative restaurant experience. The inefficiency of the architecture is therefore trumped by the new, more rewarding architecture for which it allows.

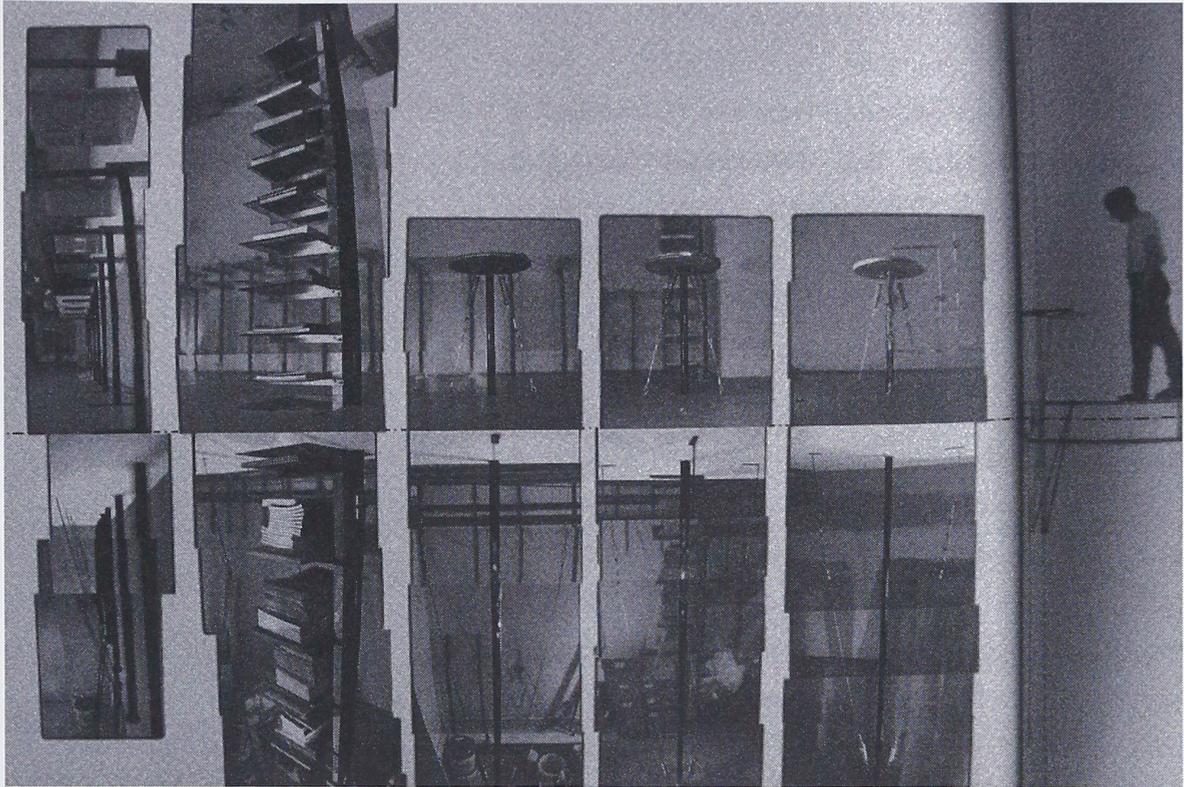
And so, like other negative strategies in architecture (be it inefficiency, impracticality, unaccommodation, violence, or contradiction), disturbed architecture is ultimately advantageous. Though its immediate effects may seem undesirable, its long-term and holistic influences are favourable - keeping both our experiences fresh and responsive, while progressing architectural practice towards adaptive and imaginative directions.☆

The argument is simply that convention has so numbed our architecture and our experiences that we should be desperate for disorder - for conditions outside of the norm. More sensibly, disturbed architecture works within the norm, using convention against itself - exploiting its obvious inconsideration and making use of what it has left out. Lewis Tsurumaki Lewis have framed a series of projects around snafus - confusions in order - allowing them to work "within the gaps and slips of everyday patterns."★ LTL used the snafu to develop Slip Space where unlikely reciprocity is established between a lousy basement and a public gallery space. Here architectural disturbance occurs the instant a person's activity in the basement is interrupted by someone in the gallery above, or vice versa.

In the end, we should not aim at living in absolute



THE ENTRANCE TO OLLER + SCOFIDIO'S THE BRASSERIE MIGHT BE DEEMED "INEFFICIENT" AS IT PIERCES THE SPACE WITH LONG STAIRS DRAWMATIZING A PATRON'S ENTRY AND INTERRUPTING THOSE DINING.
IMAGE SOURCE: WWW.CITYSEARCH.COM



LEWIS TSURUMAKI LEWIS' *SLIP SPACE* (1998) IS AN EXAMPLE OF DISTURBED ARCHITECTURE: SEATING IN A GALLERY PENETRATE INTO THE BASEMENT SO THAT ACTIVITY WITHIN EITHER SPACE AFFECTS THE OTHER.

IMAGE SOURCE: LEWIS, PAUL, MARC TSURUMAKI, AND DAVID J. LEWIS. *SITUATION NORMAL...* IN PAMPHLET #21. PRINCETON ARCHITECTURAL PRESS: NEW YORK, 1998.

comfort, nor design architecture that only compensates for inconveniences, as it may very well be the struggles and awkward moments that make-up our most real experiences. This exploration suggests there may be valid architecture in the exploitation of such discomforts, and that by deliberately disturbing people's routine we might offer them more insightful glimpses at the true unfolding of life.

Disturbed architecture simply investigates the possibility of using functionality against itself, where dysfunctional architecture, if generate intentionally and strategically, could offer a rich alternative to what we are used to. And given that what we expect of architecture is efficiency, cooperation and docility, then the opposite is warranted. The opportunity for architecture to purposefully interrupt a person's activity and interfere with their concept of space may be rather desirable should the architectural disturbance be as effective as envisioned.

The following chapter addresses the possible employment of disturbed architecture.

As it will be outlined in the next chapter, there is no diametric opposite to the way a space behaves, only a myriad of contradictory behaviours. That is to say, while convention may not offer a wide variety of experiences, anything going against a convention has many more options - hence the innate inadequacy of convention.

Disturbed architecture is not a manifesto. It is an exploration; a playful study not punctuated by a “eureka!” It is not ideologically imposing, nor meant to revolutionize the way we make architecture. Unlike the canon manifestos of Vitruvius, Le Corbusier, and Venturi, disturbed architecture does not present a universal way of practicing; it is not the way all architecture should be.

Disturbed architecture is an anti-solution. Its employment does not solve any problems. It is not a treatment for bad space nor a correct alternative to incorrect architecture. The grounds of the exploration is not to find any kind of answer or to confirm a statement, but simply to hypothesize, to challenge, and question the nature of today’s architecture - and most importantly, its effect on our way of living.

Recall that architectural disturbances are based in the visceral experience. As previously established, the dysfunctioning of architecture is justified by the confrontation between unfamiliar space and participants, where the latter re-negotiates their relationship with the former.* And so, by definition, disturbed architecture must be buildable, it must be worked out as though it could be realized.*

In practicing disturbed architecture, we would have license to trade efficiency for effectivity. What is most important is the way the architecture behaves: the kind of environment it offers and the unorthodox reactions that might follow. As in the case of the haunted house and a haunted cemetery, we recognize that the greater the disparity between normality

* See Chapter 2: Defining Disturbed Architecture

* Though this does not mean that it has to be reasonable. Too often architects associate buildability and construction to reasonability.

and the disturbance, the greater the effect. However, disturbed architecture does work within a certain framework, where a *juste milieu* must be found. Disturbances that are too subtle could blend in with normality, thus going unnoticed, while they could also be aggressive or unrealistic to the point of ineffectiveness, where the participants may elect to avoid them altogether.

Let us establish a spectrum for the practice of disturbance, where we might exemplify what is too subtle, what is too aggressive, and what kind of disturbance might sit in the middle ground.

Consider an existing disturbance in the café, where within a row of tables one has been raised by two inches.* This table stands out a little from the others, being a little less obedient to convention, but it would likely cause only a small level of discomfort if someone tried to type on their computer or write in their notebook. The disturbance in this case does not manifest past the point of irritation; it does not heighten the participant's sense of awareness, causing a reconsideration of the table and a re-negotiation with its use. Here, the roles stay the same, the activities stay the same, and the discomfort is too subtle and too easygoing to cause a real interference in the participant's routine.

For the strong side of the spectrum, we might refer to a scene in the film *Synecdoche, New York* where a house is disturbed by being perpetually on fire. The inhabitant of the house and her visitors find the flames disturbing but only minimally bizarre, and not at all menacing, eventually growing accustomed to the burning.* This kind of disturbance, should we consider it for architectural practice, is evidently unrealistic. Of course the idea of designing a building

* This example is being used in reference to the previous example given in Chapter 2, wherein a table had been raised by sixteen inches, causing an awkward inconvenience for those placing their coffee cups on it and trying to carry a conversation across from it.

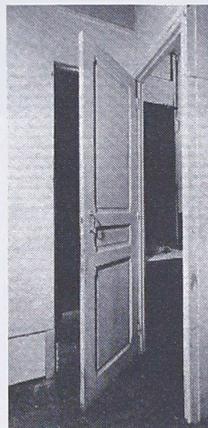


In the Charlie Kaufman film *Synecdoche, New York* (2008), a woman is shown a house by a real estate agent - and the house is on fire, but it is as if nothing. They walk around the occasional flame and through the smoke, and discuss - over the crackling of the wood - the affordability of the house due to its disturbance. In a later scene the woman invites a man over for drinks and they sip cocktails while the flames continue to burn and the smoke contaminates the house.

* The burning of the house is much like the Coop Himmelb(l)au and Aaron Betsky's manifesto "Architecture Must Burn" (see Chapter 2) made possible by cinematography.

Marcel Duchamp's *Door 11, Rue Larrey* (1927) was meant to address the notion of ownership in art, but it is particularly appropriate as an architectural disturbance given the artist's remark about the project: "Il n'y a pas de solution parce qu'il n'y a pas de problem." ("There is no solution because there is no problem.")

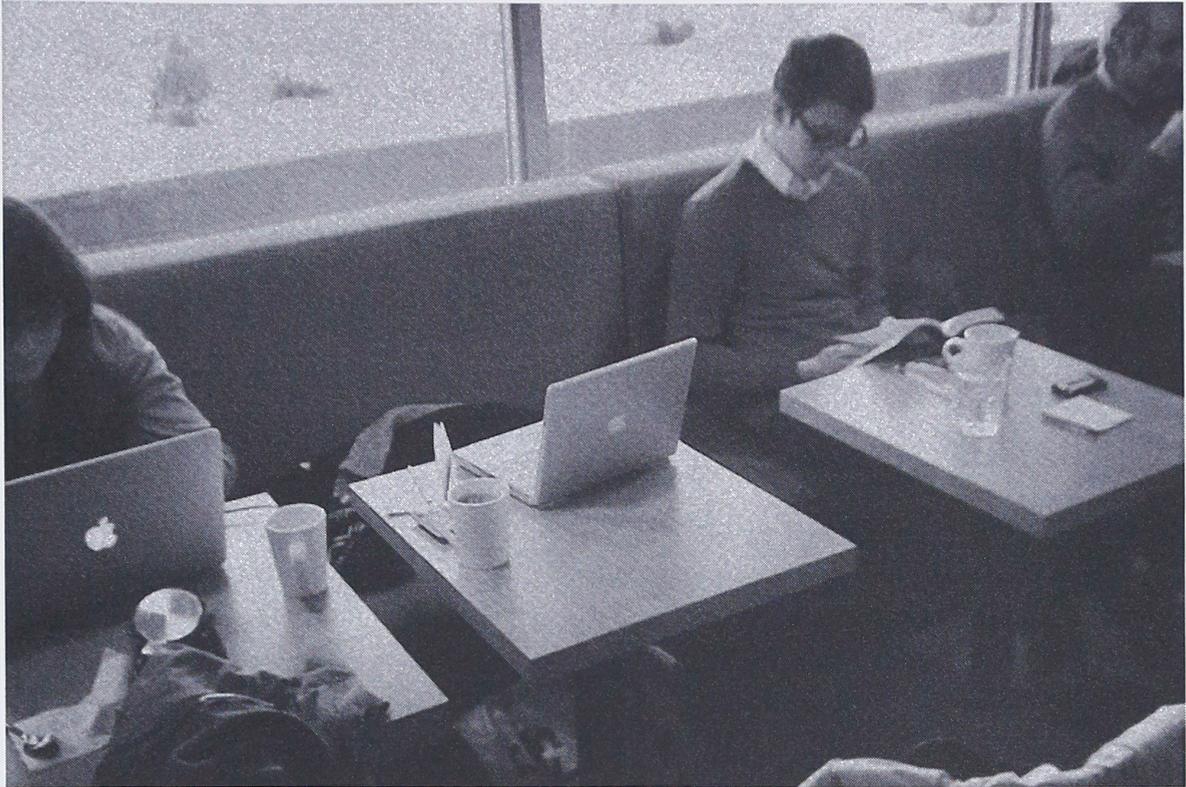
IMAGE BELOW: DUCHAMP, MARCEL. DOOR, 11 RUE LARREY. ART SCIENCE RESEARCH LABORATORY: MARCEL DUCHAMP STUDIES ONLINE JOURNAL, INC. APRIL 4, 2010 <[HTTP://TOUTFAIT.COM/](http://toutfait.com/)>



that is on fire, but not *catching* fire, seems difficult, and the argument that a building in flame undermines convention is a little farfetched given that it is not because of convention that our buildings are not inflamed. In this case the burning architecture disturbance is just too antagonistic to be effective.

The *juste milieu*, where disturbances are most effective, might include Marcel Duchamp's *Door 11, Rue Larrey*. In this project, a door serves two perpendicular doorways at a corner. Therefore, if one doorway is closed the other must be open. Duchamp submitted this as an art piece, but architecturally it serves perfectly as a disturbance: not allowing the participant full control of the space and forcing a re-negotiation between the entry to each room. If the piece was used as an architectural disturbance it would undermine the functionality of the two doorways and would evidently cause some inconvenience. The counter-efficient dysfunction of the door would likely cause some confusion amongst participants at first, but the relationship that would have to develop between the two would prove far more dynamic and stimulating than a conventional door system.

There are no regulations or order ensuring the effectiveness of disturbances. There is no correct way of disturbing architecture, other than using convention against itself for the benefit of a more enriching experience. But the idea is not simply to dismiss convention, to make inefficient spaces or to make people uncomfortable, but to disturb their routine strategically, even if at the expenses of these so-called architecture fundamentals. If there is no proper way to disturb then there is only an intention from the architect whose design is particular to unique spaces

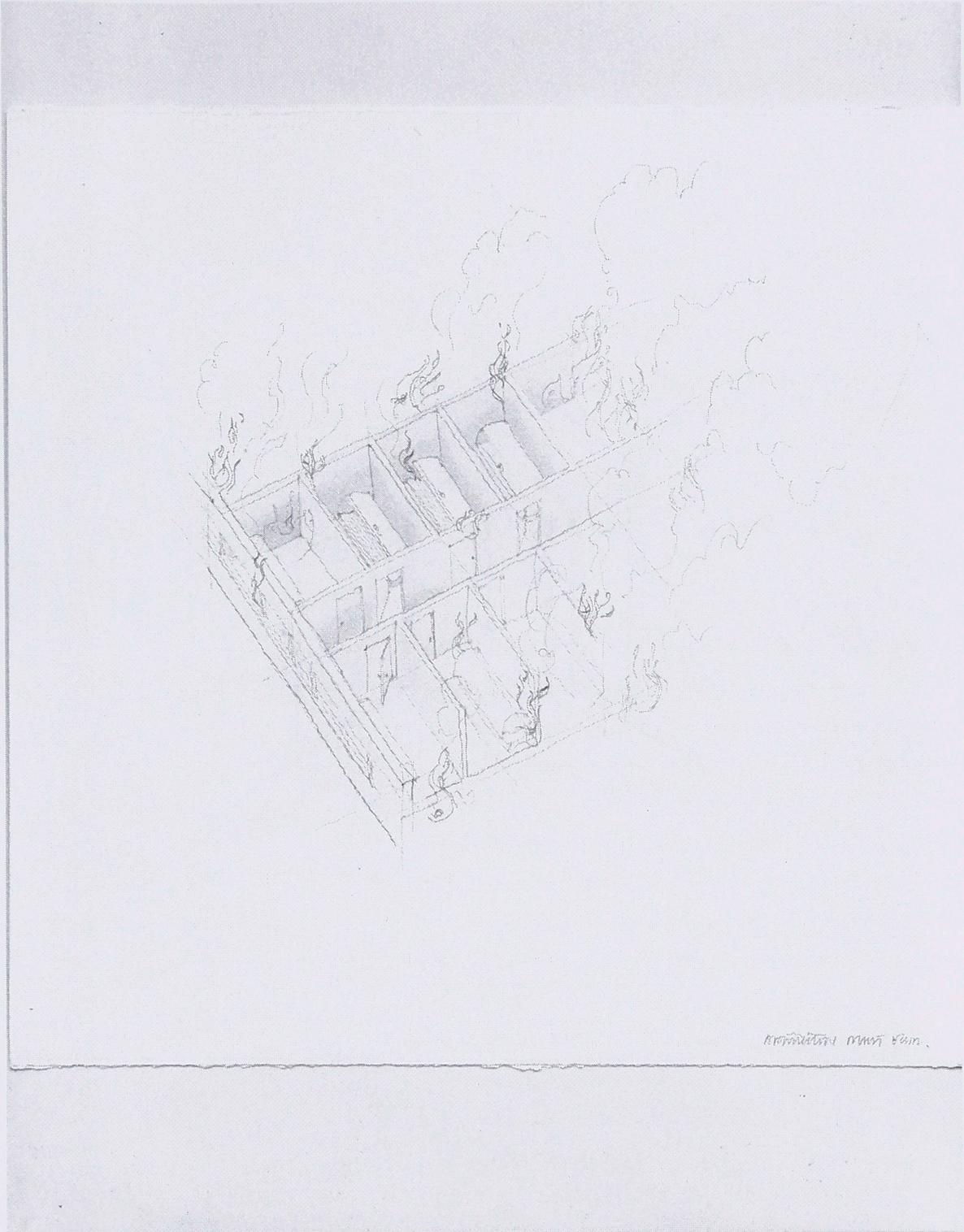


ONE TABLE HAVING ONLY A ONE OR TWO-INCH DIFFERENCE IN HEIGHT IS TOO WEAK A DISTURBANCE TO BE EFFECTIVE AS IT DOES NOT INTERFERE WITH THE NORMAL FUNCTIONING OF THE SPACE, NOR DOES IT FORCE A RE-NEGOTIATION BETWEEN PARTICIPANT AND ARCHITECTURE.

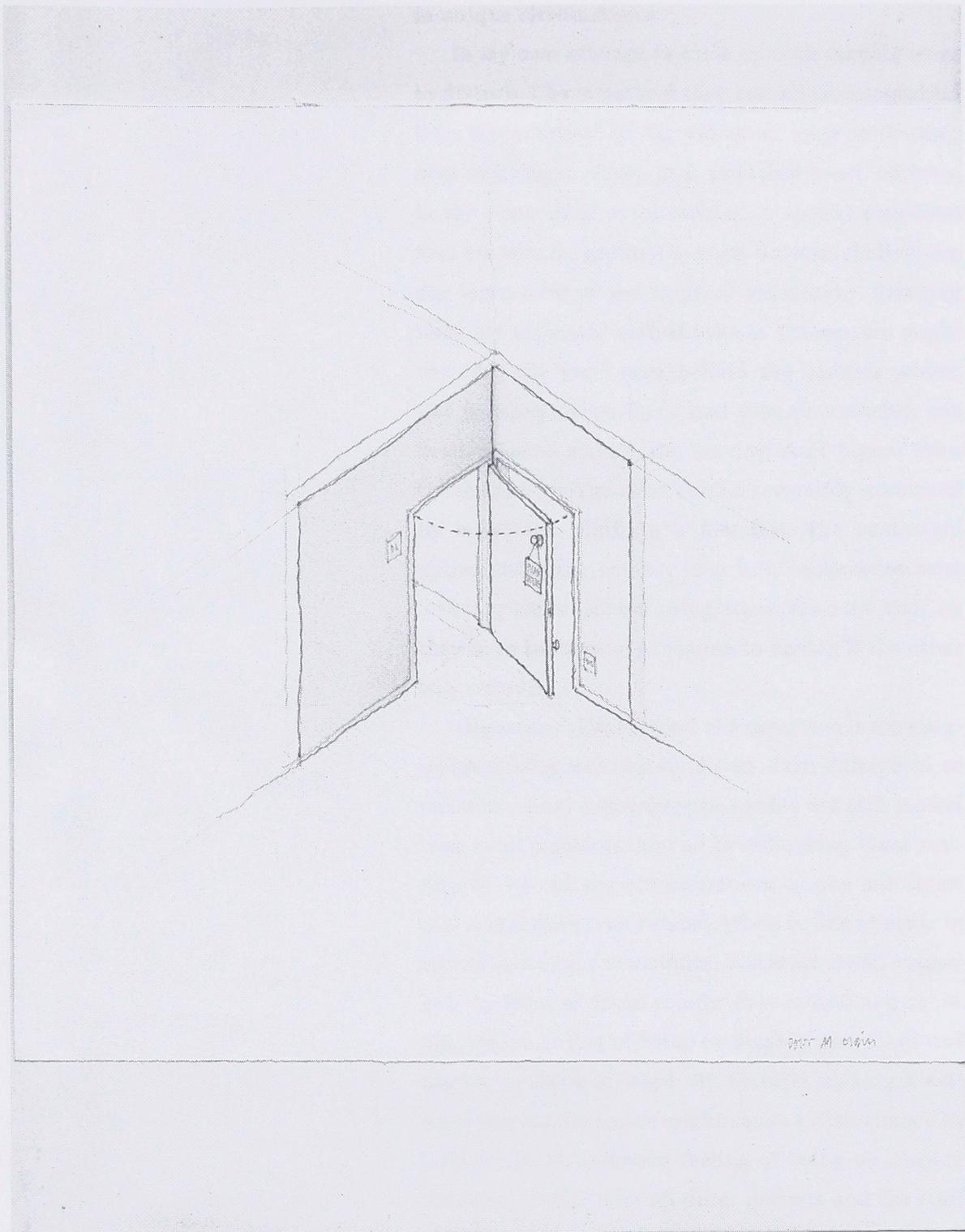
IMAGE SOURCE: CÉDRIC BOULET



THE IDEA OF HAVING A HOME PERPETUALLY IN FLAMES AS SEEN IN THE "HOUSE ON FIRE" FROM THE CHARLIE KAUFMAN FILM *SYNECDOCHE, NEW YORK* (2008) IS TOO AGGRESSIVE AND UNREALISTIC A DISTURBANCE.
IMAGE SOURCE: *SYNECDOCHE, NEW YORK* (2001).



TANNING SALON MUST BURN:
A TANNING SALON DESIGNED TO BE CONSTANTLY IN FLAMES RUNS THE RISK OF BEING TOO AGGRESSIVE TO BE AN EFFECTIVE DISTURBANCE. EVEN IF IT WERE POSSIBLE TO CONTROL THE FIRE, PATRONS WOULD LIKELY RUN SCARED OF THE DANGER, RENDERING THE DISTURBANCE USELESS. THE CONCEPT IS INSPIRED BY A SCENE FROM THE CHARLIE KAUFMAN FILM SYNECDOCHE, NEW YORK (2008) AND IS A NICE PLAY ON THE POPULAR MANIFESTO ARCHITECTURE MUST BURN (COOP HIMMELB(L)AU 1968 AND AARON BETSKY 2000).



DOOR, 11 RUE ELGIN.
AN IDEAL DISTURBANCE: TWO CORNERING DOORWAYS SHARE ONE DOOR, FORCING ONE TO BE OPEN IF THE OTHER NEEDS TO BE CLOSED. THIS DISTURBANCE CAUSES A RE-NEGOTIATION BETWEEN THE ARCHITECTURE AND THE PARTICIPANT AT THE EXPENSE OF PRACTICALITY. BASED ON MARCEL DUCHAMP'S DOOR 11, RUE LARREY (1927), THIS DRAWING ALSO INCLUDES DOOR-KNOBS AND LIGHT SWITCHES PLACED UNUSUALLY HIGH AND UNUSUALLY LOW TO FURTHER THE DISTURBANCES OF THESE THRESHOLDS.

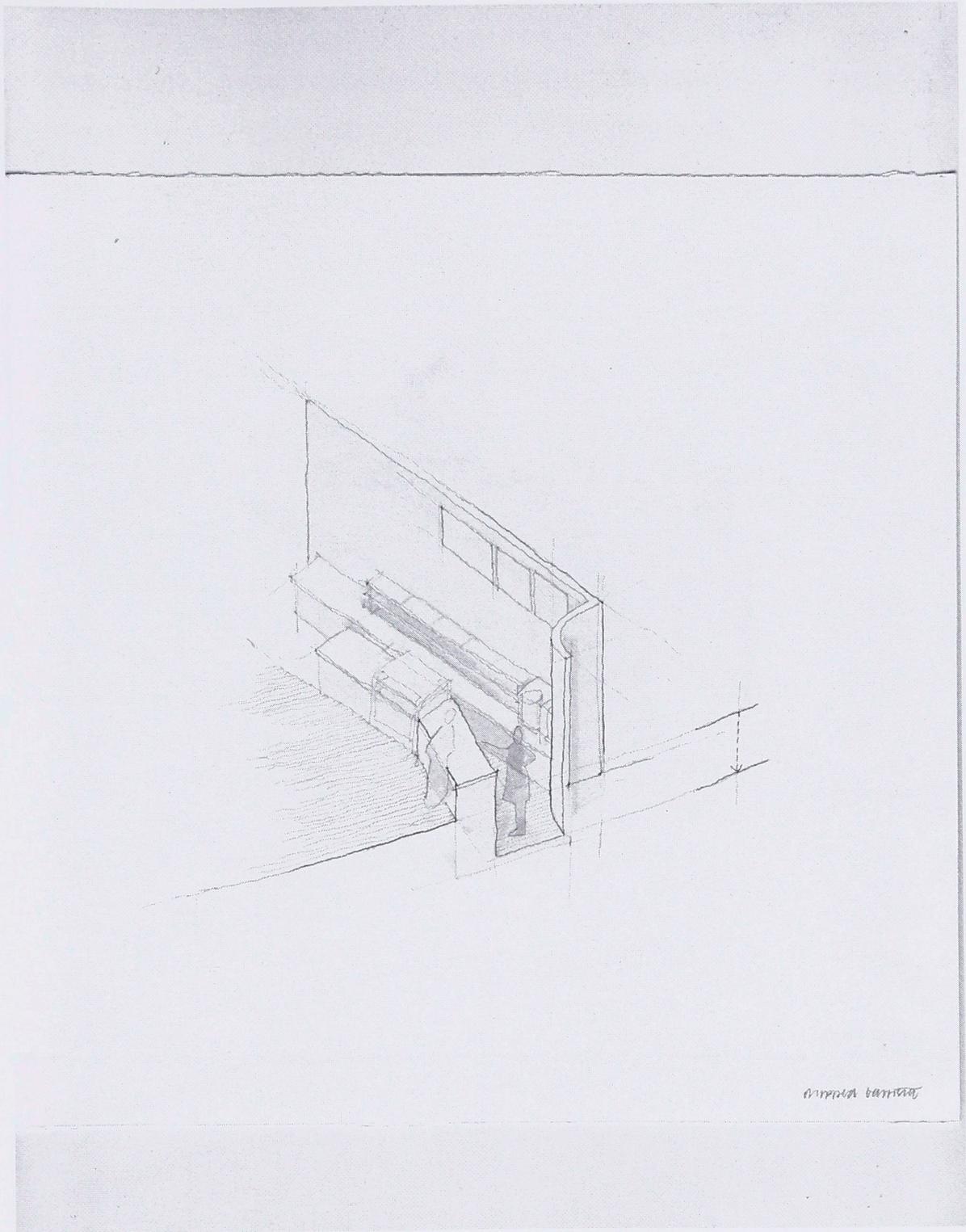
in unique circumstances.

In my own attempt to come up with varying ways to disturb, I have noticed they can all be categorized into three 'types' of disturbances, each with their own behaviour. First, and probably most obvious, is the *reversal* of a convention. A spatial condition that we take for granted is made inverse, challenging the legitimacy of the original convention. Bringing back my esteemed coffeehouse in Ottawa, we might consider the staff area behind the counter which, like in many shops, bars, and even pharmacies, has been raised to elevate the serving staff higher than the customers. The raise can be reversibly disturbed by lowering the platform a few feet. The customers approaching the counter may have to question why it is they feel awkward being higher than the staff, as they have become so accustomed to having it the other way around.

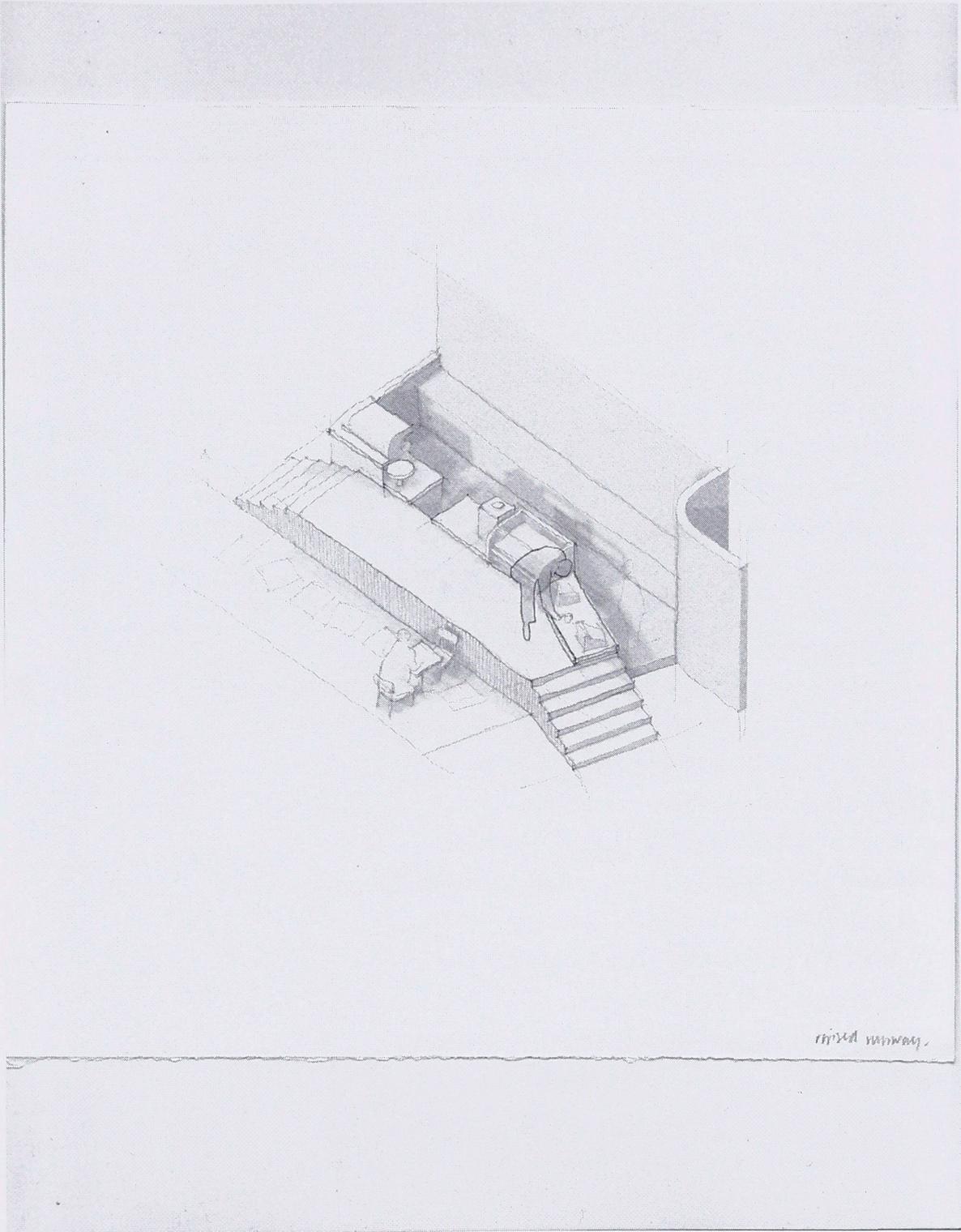
Opposite to the reversal of a condition is the *exaggeration* of an existing condition. Even if they look to mitigate social awkwardness, spaces are still loaded with such moments, and so by enhancing these conditions we rid the circumstances of any subtleties and reveal their true potency. When in line to order in my coffeehouse, for instance, one must stand vulnerably in front of those comfortably seated at a table. The feeling is that of being on display, on a stage and unable to move forward. By literally making a catwalk-like condition, we might cause a disturbance by enhancing the awkward feeling of being on display. Standing higher than all other patrons and the staff would certainly make the simple task of ordering a coffee an embarrassing experience.

The last disturbance 'type' addresses *reciprocity*, where new relationships are made or existing ones

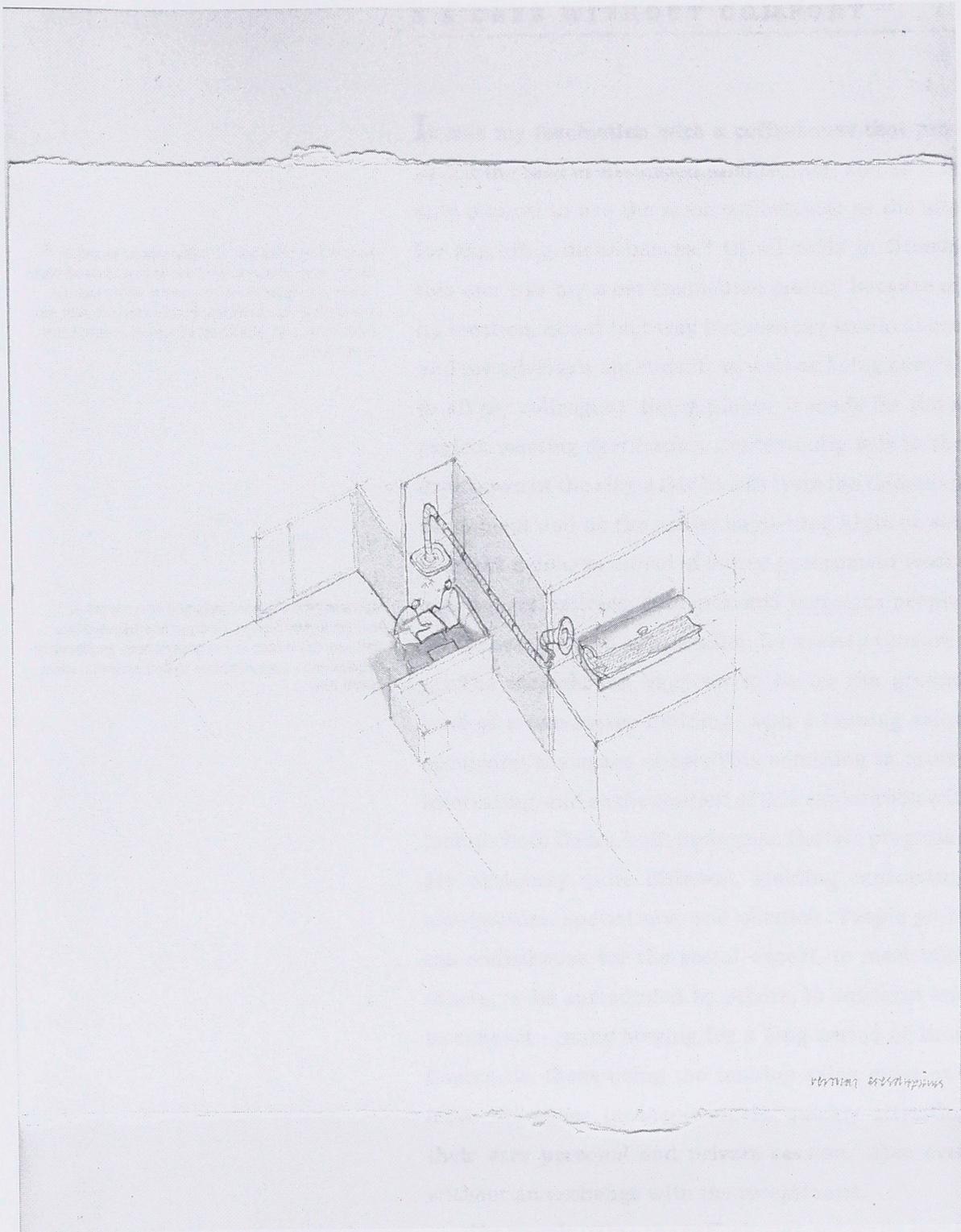
are broken. Disturbed architecture looks to heighten the awareness of not only our relationship to space but our relationship to others, and so architectural disturbance provide an opportunity to generate connections in ways that are typically unwarranted, or an equal opportunity to negate the relationships spaces usually foster. In the coffeehouse, where relationships to others are of the essence, we might disturb the privacy of a conversation by deliberately channeling the sound from a certain location to an arbitrary space in the above tanning salon. While someone is tanning they may be privy to a conversation carried by unknown patrons of the coffeehouse below. At the same time, if a tanner chose to play music during their session, it might channel to the lower level, interrupting a private conversation over coffee.



SUNKEN BARRISTA:
AN EXAMPLE OF DISTURBANCE BY REVERSAL - THE BARISTA AREA IS LOWERED AS OPPOSED TO
THE CONVENTIONAL STEP UP, NOT AFFECTING EFFICIENCY BUT DRASTICALLY CHANGING THE
STAFF-CUSTOMER DYNAMIC.



CAT-WALK LINE-UP:
AN EXAMPLE OF DISTURBANCE BY EXAGGERATION - THE SPACE DESIGNATED FOR THE LINE-UP
IS RAISED LIKE CAT-WALK, ENHANCING THE ALREADY AWKWARD VULNERABILITY OF BEING IN
QUEUE FOR A BEVERAGE.



Sketch by Cédric Boulet

LISTENING ARCHITECTURE:
RECIPROCITY - AN ARCHITECTURAL DISTURBANCE WORKS AS AN EAVESDROPPING DEVICE,
INTERRUPTING A PARTICIPANT'S TANNING SESSION WITH THE CONVERSATIONS FROM THE COFFEEHOUSE BELOW.

It was my fascination with a coffeehouse that propelled the idea of disturbed architecture, and so it is only natural to use the same coffeehouse as the site for exploring disturbances.* Of all cafés in Ottawa this one was my most frequented mainly because of its location. About half way between my studio space and my advisor's apartment, as well as being central to all my colleagues' living places, it made for the a perfect meeting destination. Contextually, it is in the downtown of the city, a few blocks from the Canadian Parliament and on the rather happening Elgin street. It draws a diverse crowd of suited government workers, joggers, retirees, students, and homeless people, all of them with an appreciation for social exposure.

The coffeehouse happens to be on the ground level of a two-storey building, with a tanning salon occupying the space above. This condition is rather interesting, and so the content of this exploration will include both floors, both programs. The two programs are obviously quite different, yielding contrasting architecture, spatial use, and clientele. People go to the coffeehouse for the social aspect; to meet with others, to be surrounded by others, to converse and to connect - many staying for a long period of time. Contrarily, those using the tanning salon enter and leave the space inconspicuously, quickly attending their very personal and private session, often even without an exchange with the receptionist.

The people using the coffeehouse generally come-off as open-minded individuals seeking culture and exposure, while those above indulge in an act directed at an entirely different image.* The architecture

* It should be stressed that disturbed architecture could be employed to any kind of space, be it offices, kindergartens, homes, cinemas, or grocery stores, and that the disturbances which will be employed to this coffeehouse are by no means the only possible outcomes.

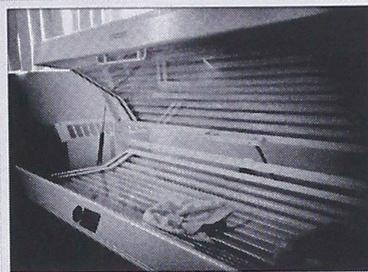
In Ottawa, the homeless crowd is comparatively well-behaved and hygienic. In fact, one of my first observations upon moving to the capital city was that many homeless people and/or beggars were equipped with iPods.

* Here, I admit to bias, being a regular to the coffeehouse and never in my life having artificially tanned. If my description of the people and the spaces seems stereotypical and rather simplified, it is because they are, unashamedly so.

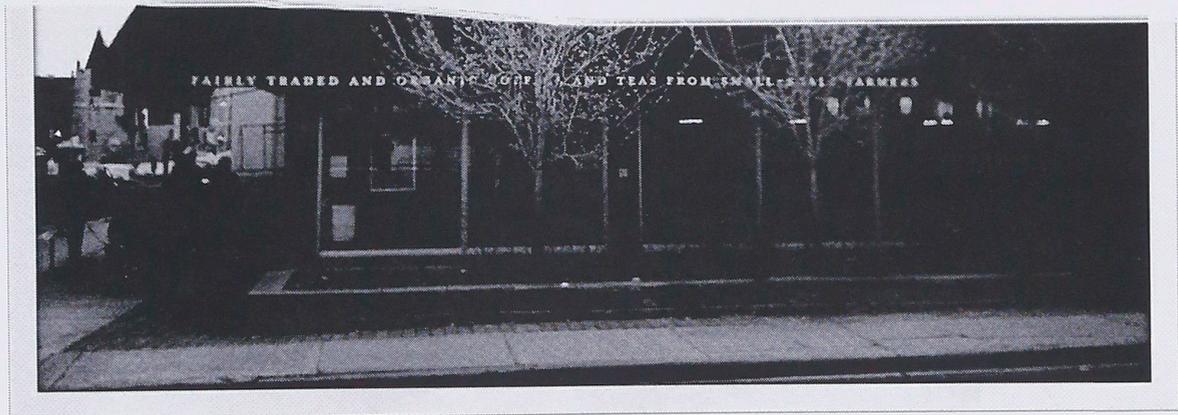
seems to echo the subjects. The downstairs space is open, with varying behaviour for varying personalities: a portion dedicated to watching the street passersby, a corner tucked away for those needing some degree of privacy, a central row for those wanting to actively take part in the commotion, and rear raised seating for those who prefer to watch without participating. The space upstairs is much more rigid and less designed. It comprises of a short, central, post-construction, low-height corridor flanked by five teal doors on each side. Behind the doors are ten small rooms each equipped with a tanning bed and a mirror. Commercial-grade blinds are permanently drawn and the teal carpet is complemented by dozens of posters featuring bronze men and women.

The normal functioning of both spaces is to be spoiled. The coffeehouse is vulnerable to social disturbance as we can interfere with what it usually means to stand in line for coffee, to order, to sit, and to carry out a conversation while being surrounded by others. The tanning salon, on the other hand, can be disturbed by jeopardizing the private sessions of the participants. The contrast between the coffeehouse and the tanning salon makes for an ideal context for disturbance. There is an opportunity to play-up the tension between the two spaces and to have the two programs effectively bother one another.

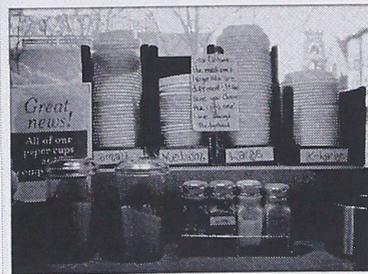
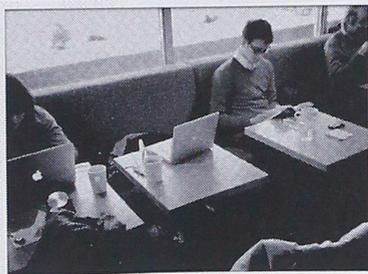
Following are some drawings of the existing spaces and additional sketches of disturbances within the coffeehouse and tanning salon.



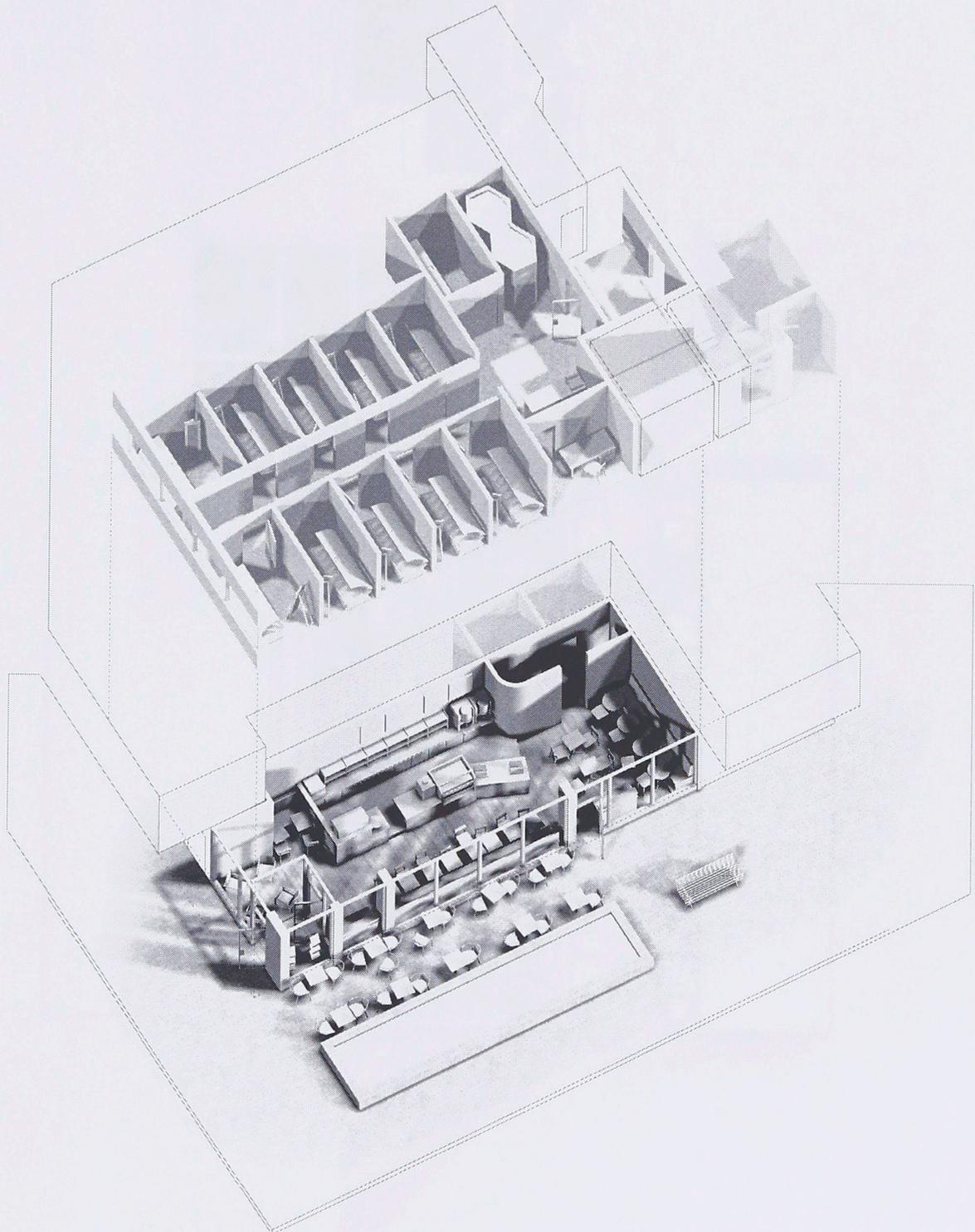
TANNING SALON



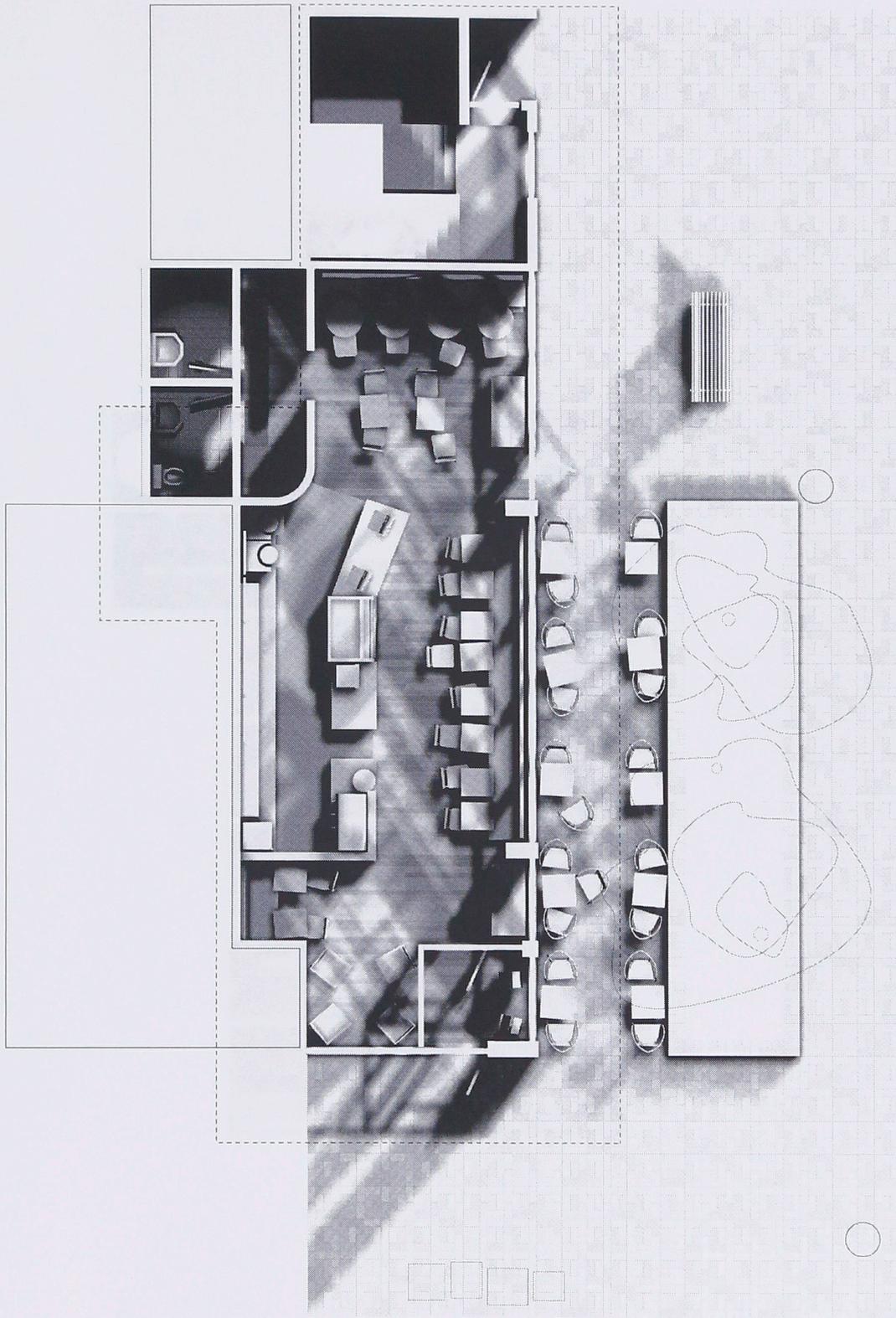
COFFEEHOUSE



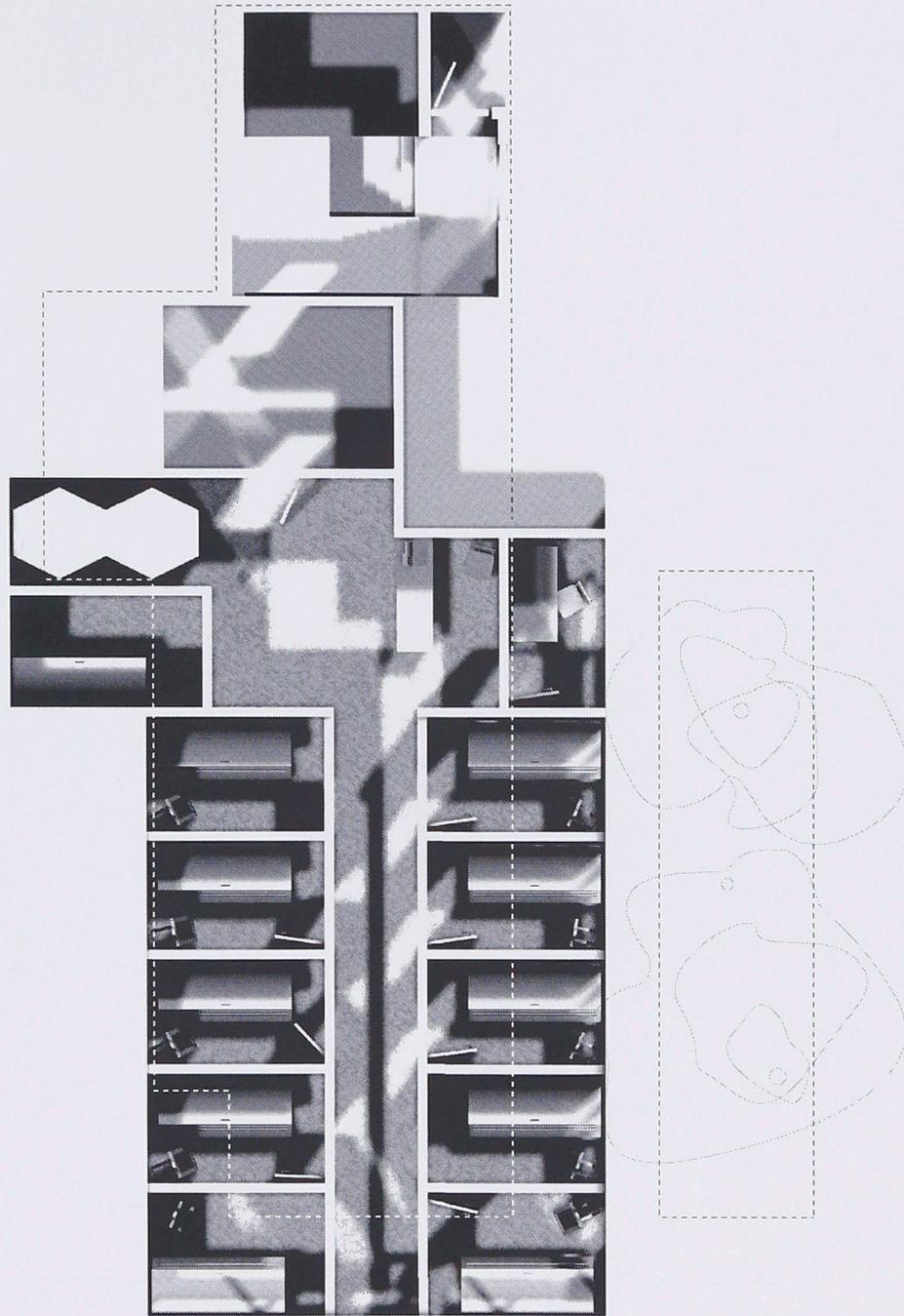
SITE PHOTOGRAPHS:
 THE TWO EXISTING PROGRAMS ON SITE - ABOVE: A TANNING SALON WITH A SHORT CENTRAL CORRIDOR FLANKED BY TEN DOORS TO TANNING BOOTHS; BELOW: THE COFFEEHOUSE FEATURES A MORE DYNAMIC ARRANGEMENT OF TABLES AROUND THE BARISTA'S SERVING AREA.



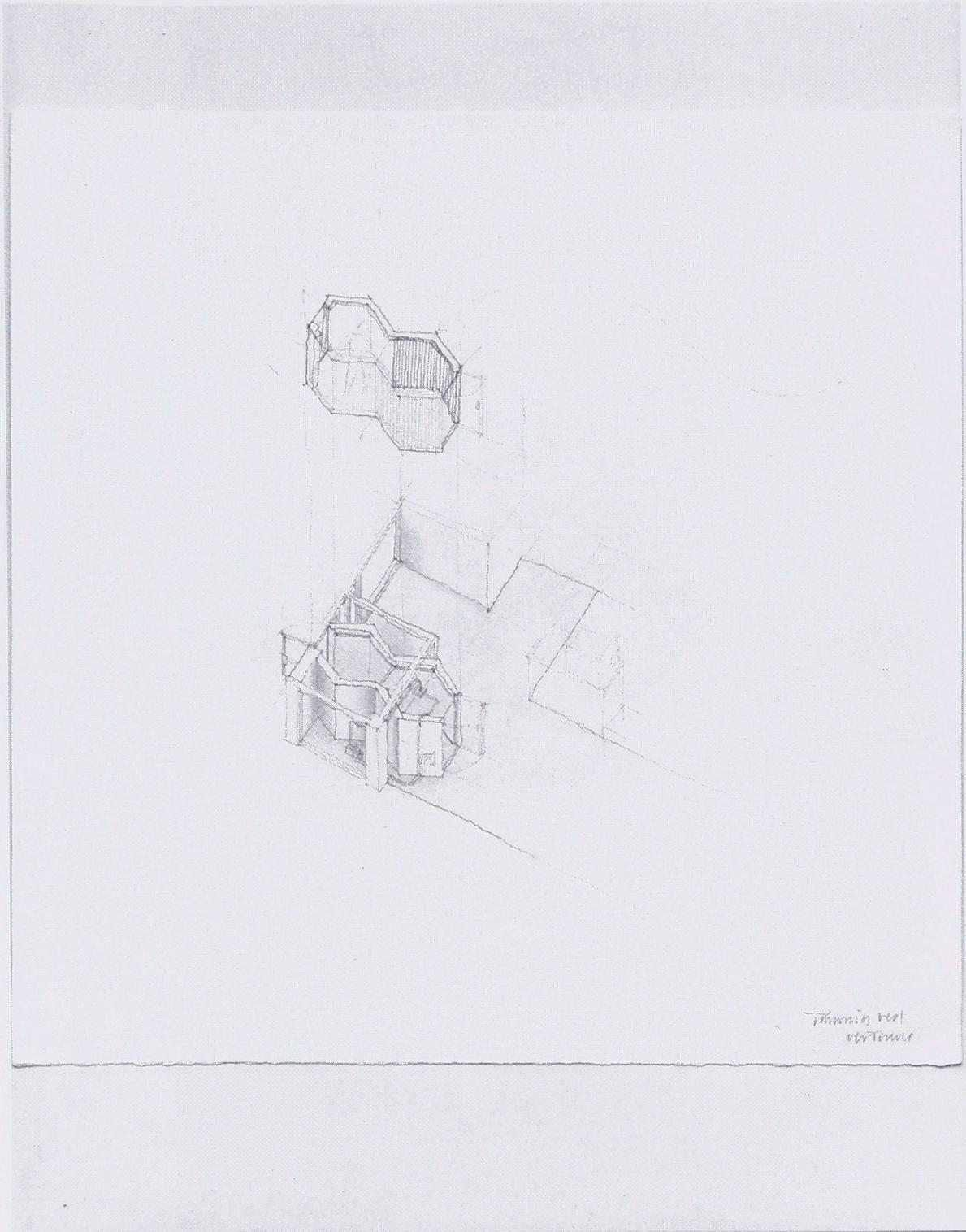
SITE AXO-EXPLOSION
TANNING SALON EXPLODED ABOVE COFFEEHOUSE.



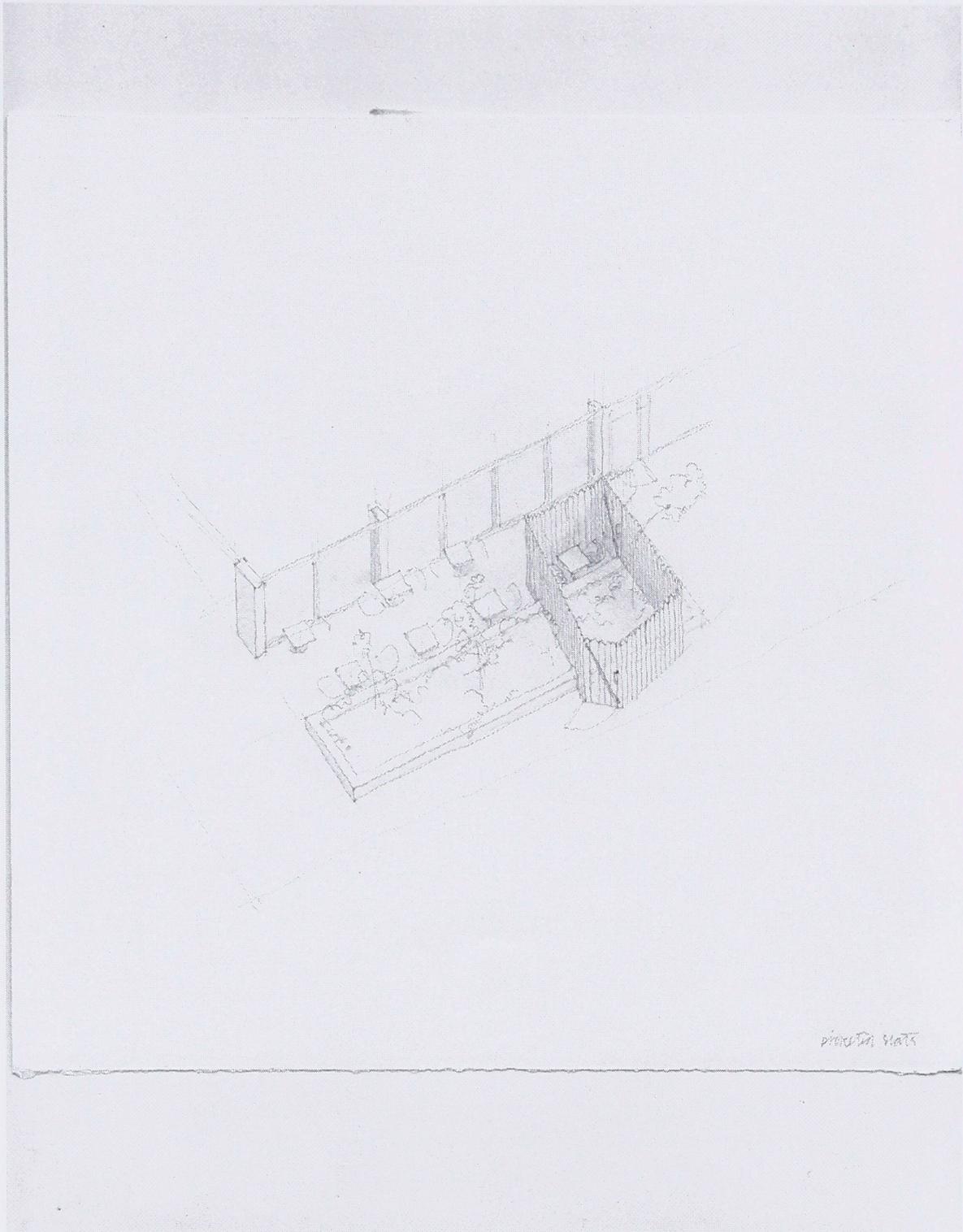
PLAN OF COFFEEHOUSE:
ENTRANCE FROM FRONT WITH CENTRAL CIRCULATION BETWEEN STAFF COUNTER AND ROW OF
TABLES. ADDITIONAL SEATING AT REAR, AT THE VERY FRONT, AND IN THE COURTYARD.



PLAN OF TANNING SALON:
ENTRANCE FROM REAR, SMALL RECEPTION AND OFFICE LEADING TO CORRIDOR AND TEN SMALL
TANNING ROOMS.

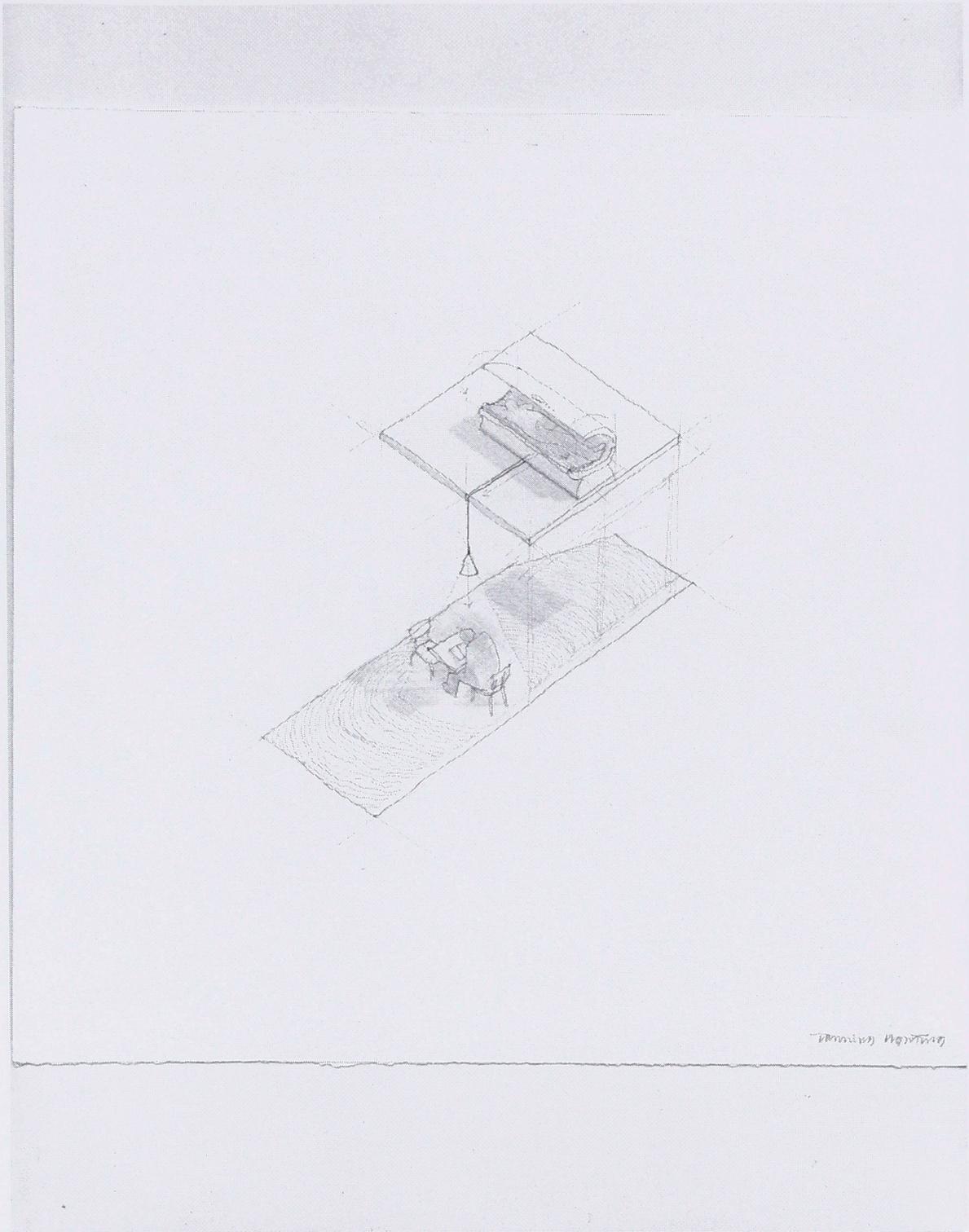


TANNING VESTIBULE:
STAND-UP TANNING BOOTH FROM ABOVE SALON IS DROPPED INTO THE VESTIBULE OF THE COFFEEHOUSE. PARTICIPANTS MUST GO THROUGH THE BOOTH TO ENTER THE SHOP, LIKELY CAUSING SOME HESITATION AND UNCERTAINTY AT FIRST. SOME MAY EVENTUALLY LINGER IN THE VESTIBULE FOR THE HEAT, OR EVEN FOR A FREE TAN!

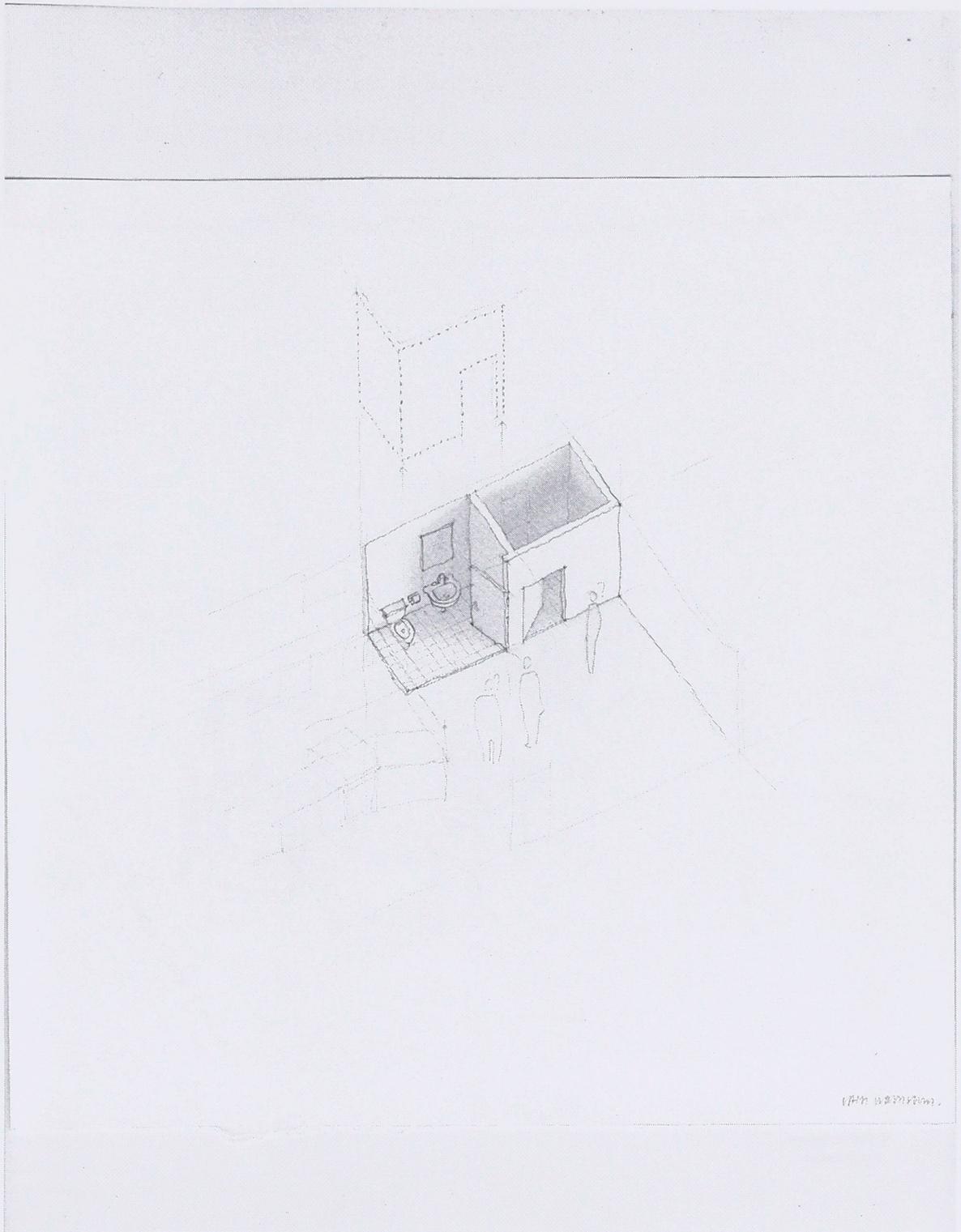


SEQUESTERED SEAT:

A LARGE FENCE IS INSTALLED AROUND A SINGLE TABLE IN THE OUTDOOR PATIO. THE IDEA OF BEING IN THE OPEN AND CONNECTED TO THE CITY IS DENIED. PARTICIPANTS ARE FORCED TO RECOGNIZE THEIR NEED TO CONNECT TO OTHERS. A WHITE PICKET FENCE MIGHT PROVE EVEN MORE EFFECTIVE GIVEN THE NEGATIVE SUBURBAN CONNOTATION.



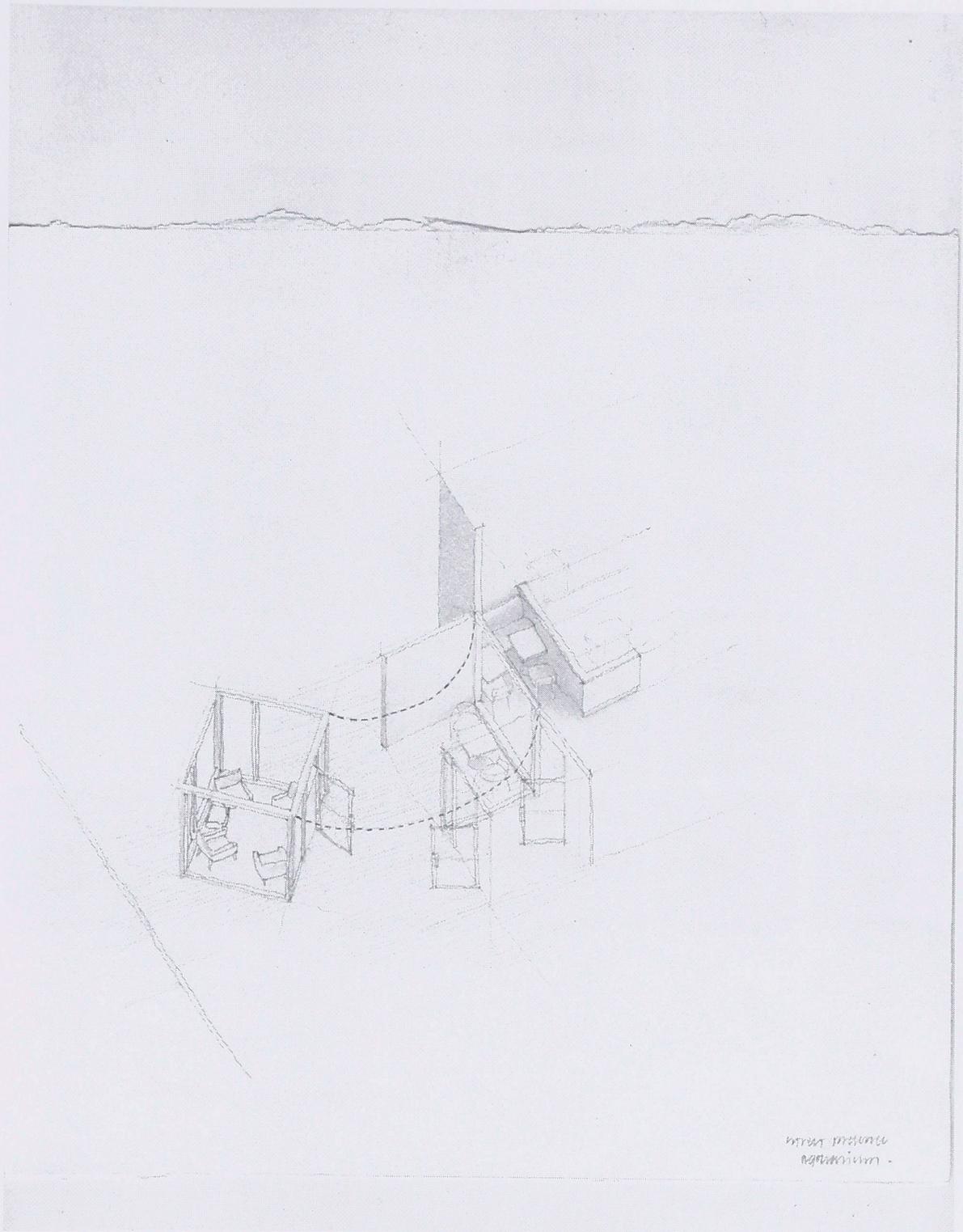
TANNER OF LIGHT:
THE READER IN THE COFFEEHOUSE IS DENIED LIGHT WHEN A TANNER OCCUPIES THE TANNING
BED ABOVE. THE LIGHTS ON THE GROUND FLOOR ARE OUT OF THE CONTROL OF THOSE IN THE
COFFEEHOUSE AND ENTIRELY DEPENDED ON THE ACTIVITY OF THOSE ABOVE, REGARDLESS OF
THEIR AWARENESS.



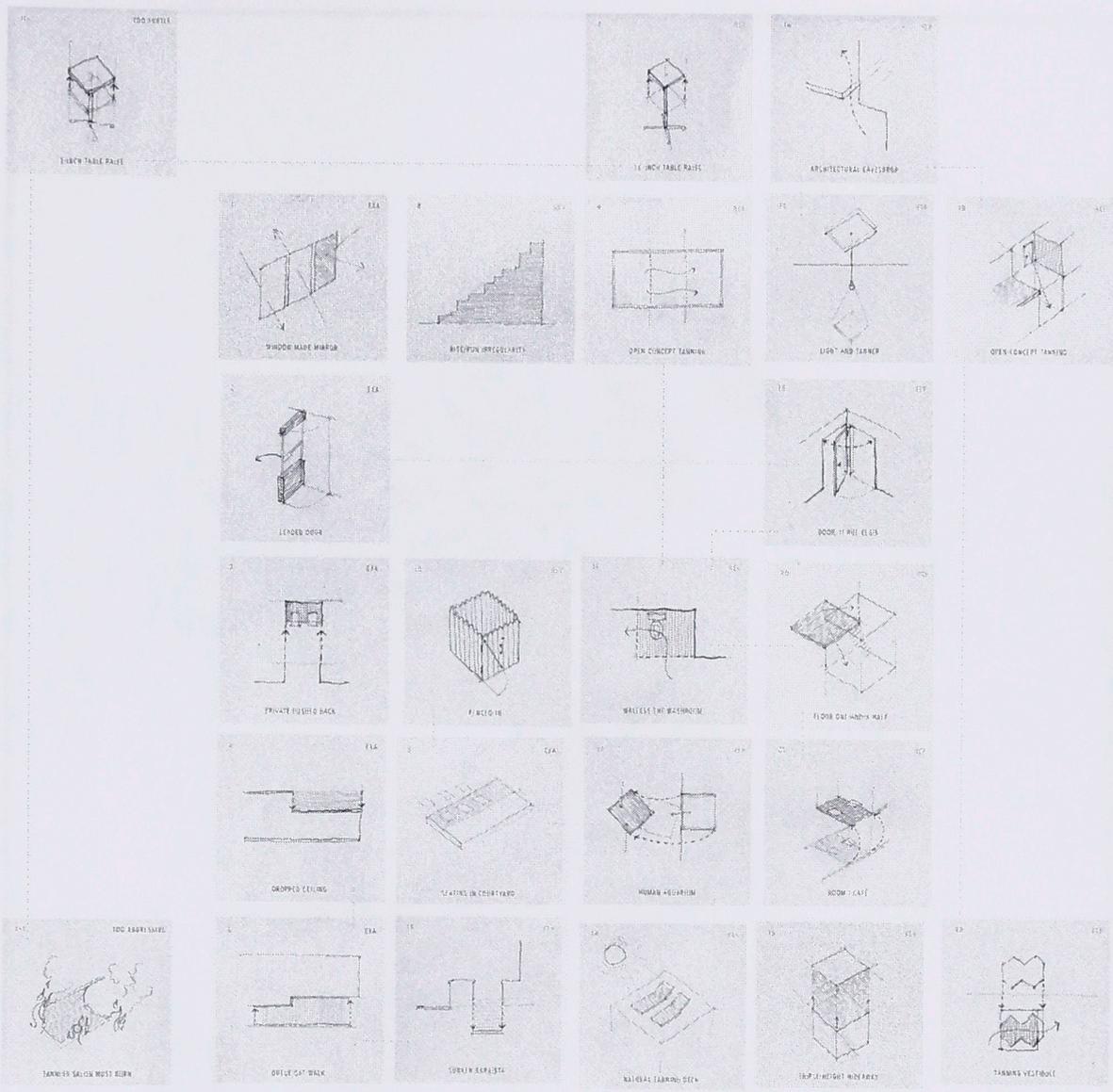
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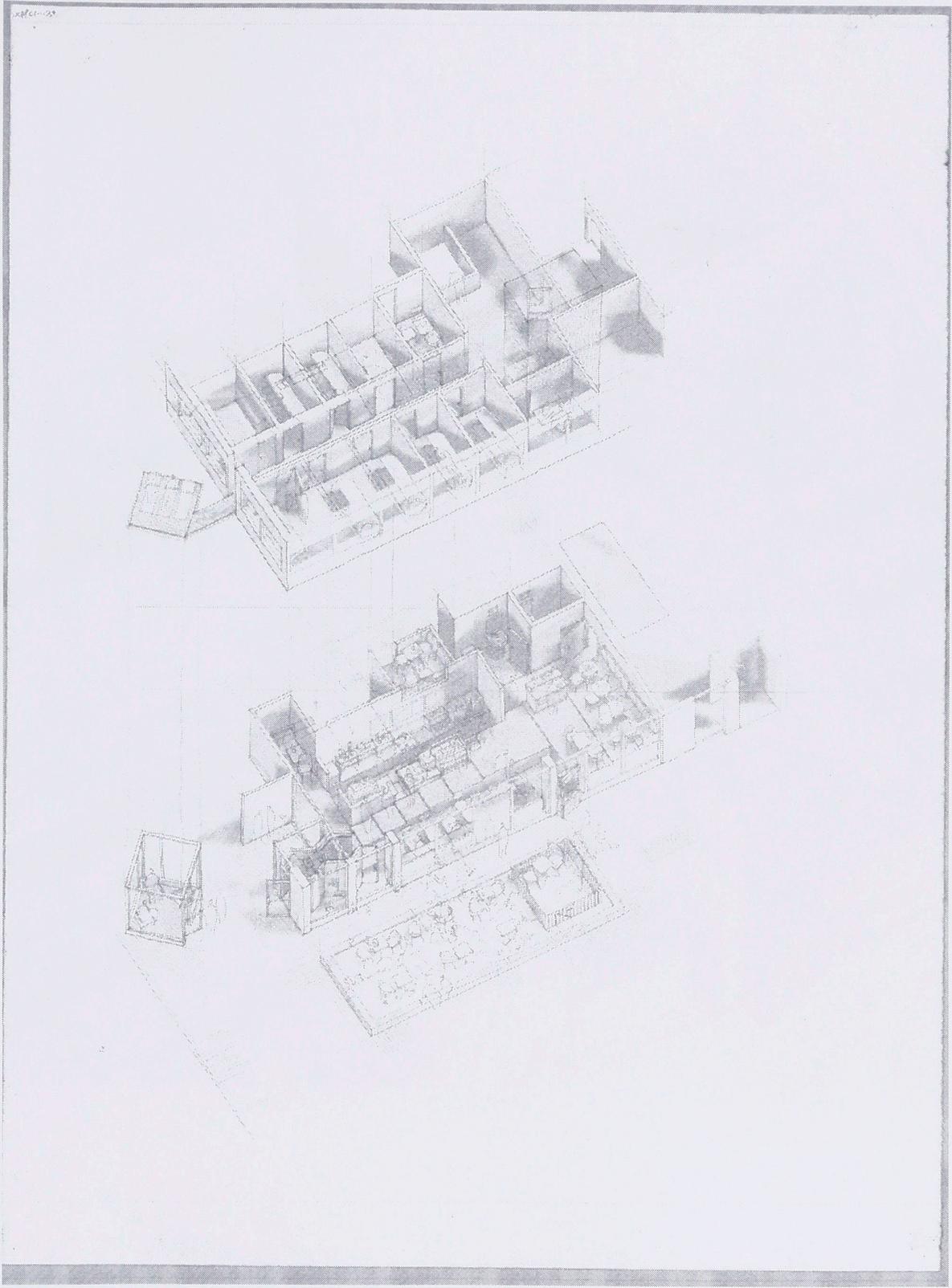
OPEN WASHROOM:

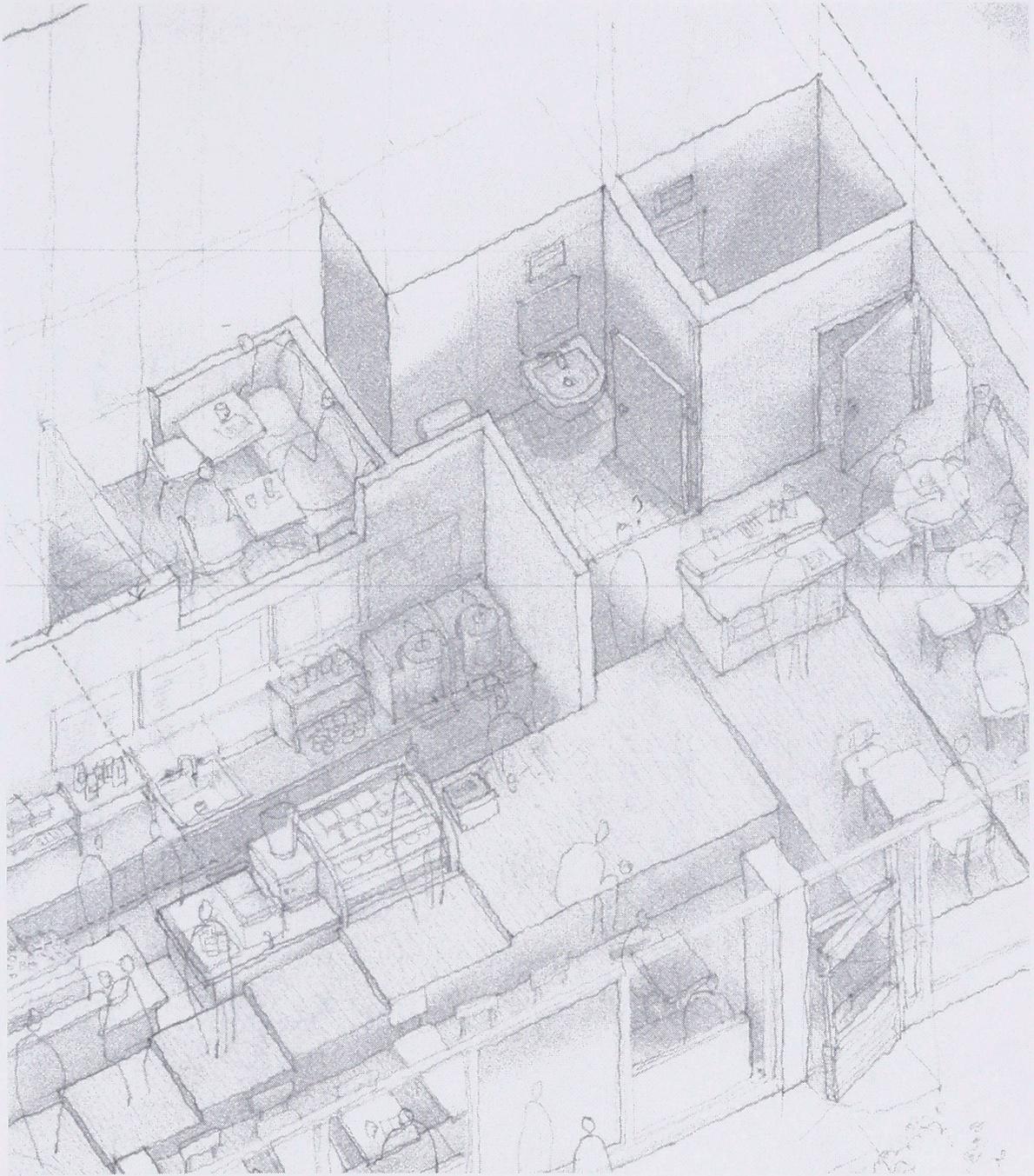
A FULLY COMPETENT WASHROOM IS RENDERED DYSFUNCTIONAL WHEN ITS WALLS ARE REMOVED. THOSE WANTING TO USE THE WASHROOM ARE REQUIRED TO WAIT IN LINE FOR THE SECOND WASHROOM RIGHT NEXT TO THE FULLY CAPABLE YET UNUSEABLE ONE. THE STAFF MAY BEGIN USING THE SINK FOR THEIR OWN PURPOSE, OR PERHAPS A CUSTOMER MAY USE THE MIRROR BRIEFLY AND UNCOMFORTABLY.

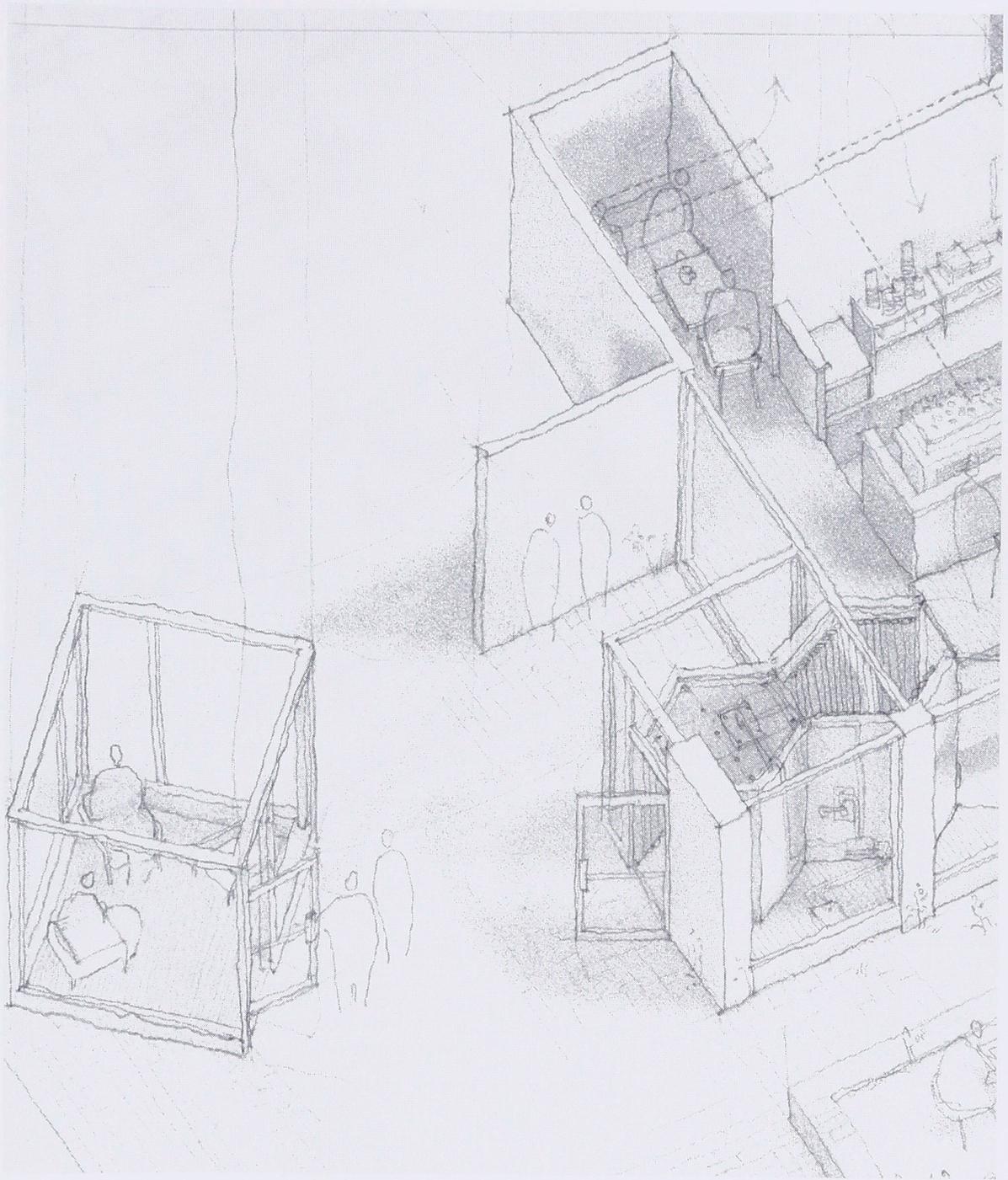


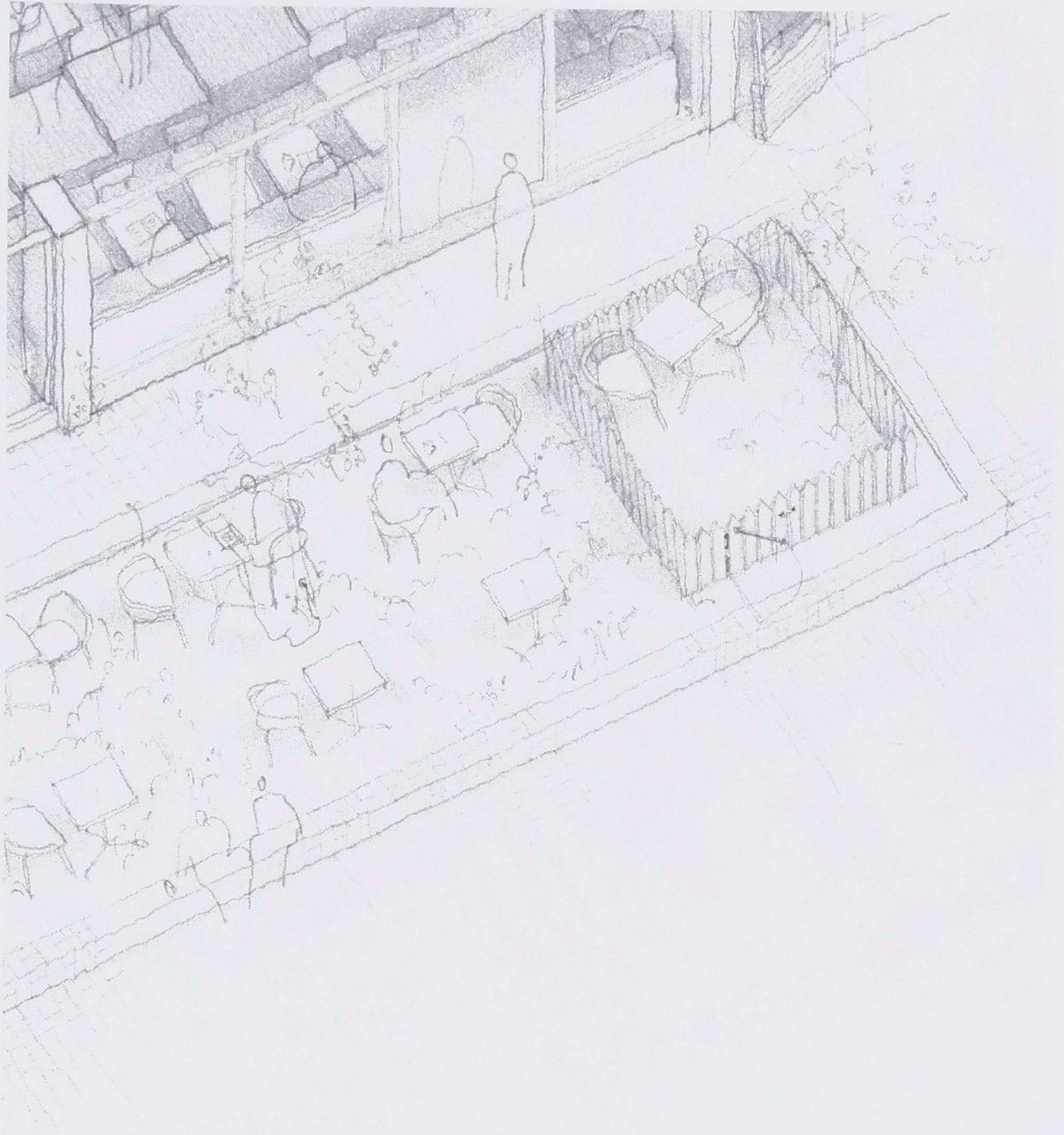
REAL SIDEWALK PRESENCE:
THE AREA ORIGINALLY DESIGNED TO FOSTER SIDEWALK PEOPLE-WATCHING IS LITERALLY MOVED
OUT ONTO THE SIDEWALK, PARTICIPANTS MUST FIRST PURCHASE THEIR BEVERAGE IN THE MAIN
SPACE AND THEN MAKE THEIR WAY TO THIS OBTRUSIVE SPACE ON THE SIDEWALK. THEY THEN
BECOME THE SUBJECT OF OBSERVATION AS THE CUBE ACTS AS A KIND OF AQUARIUM
FOR PEOPLE.

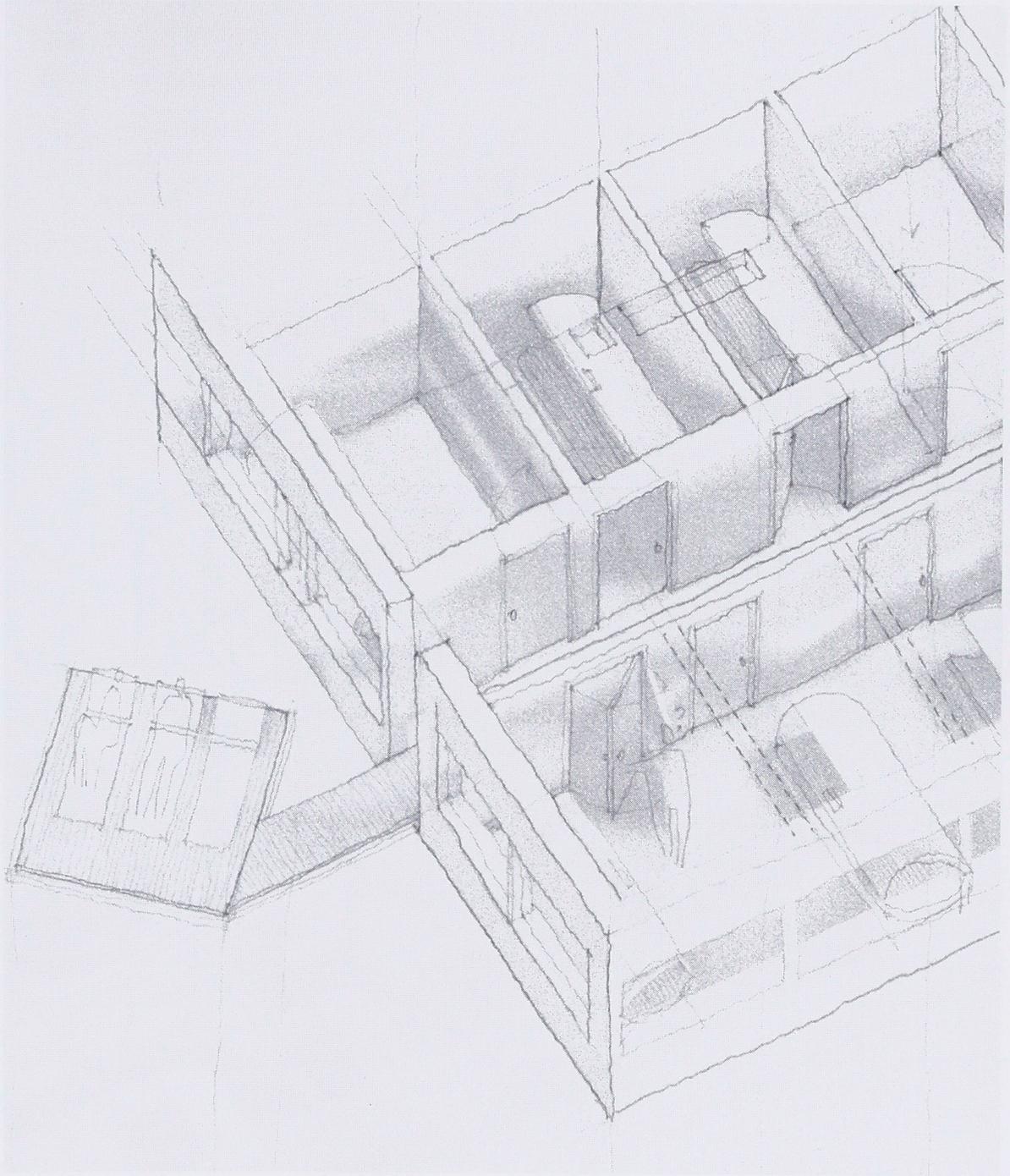


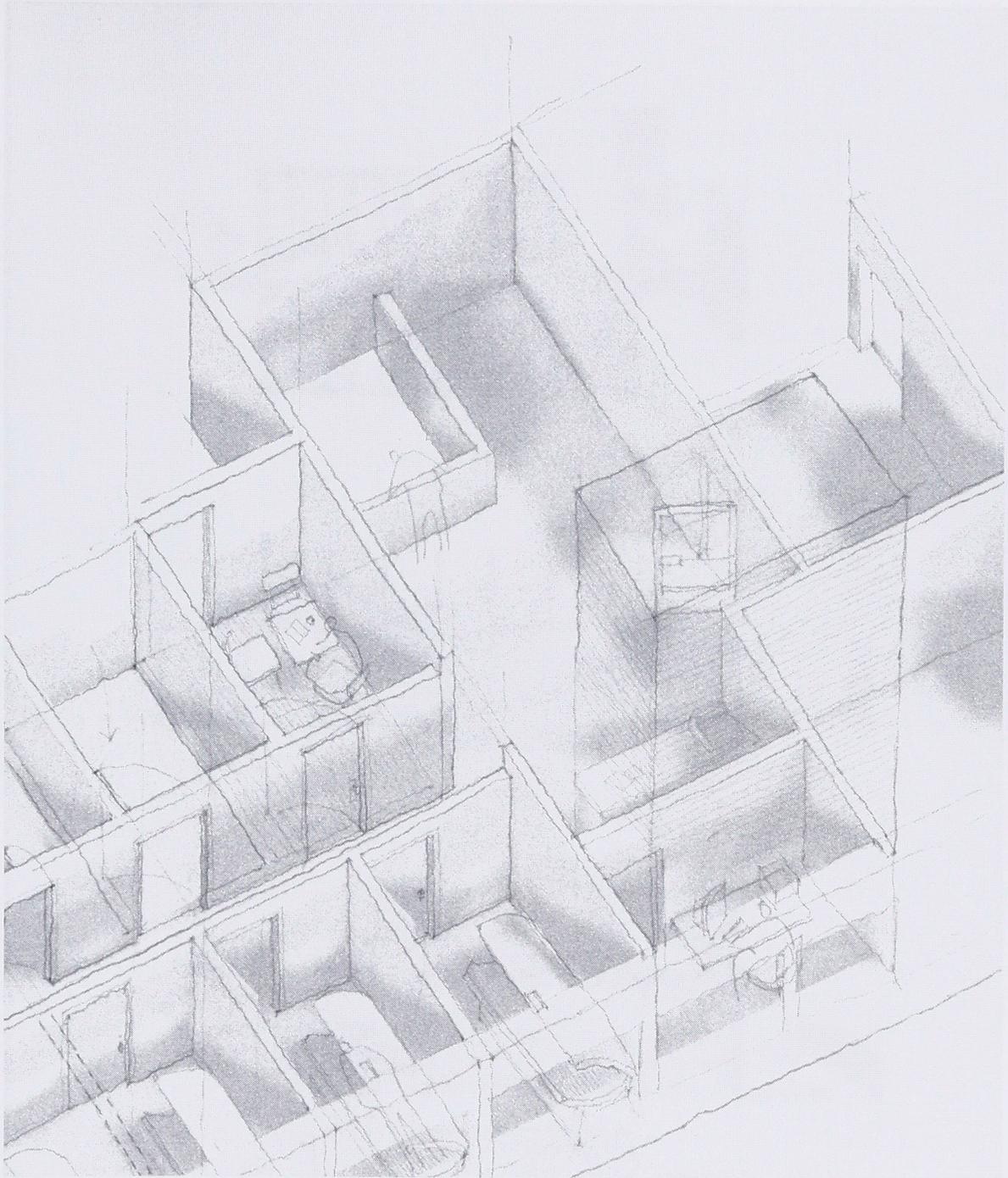


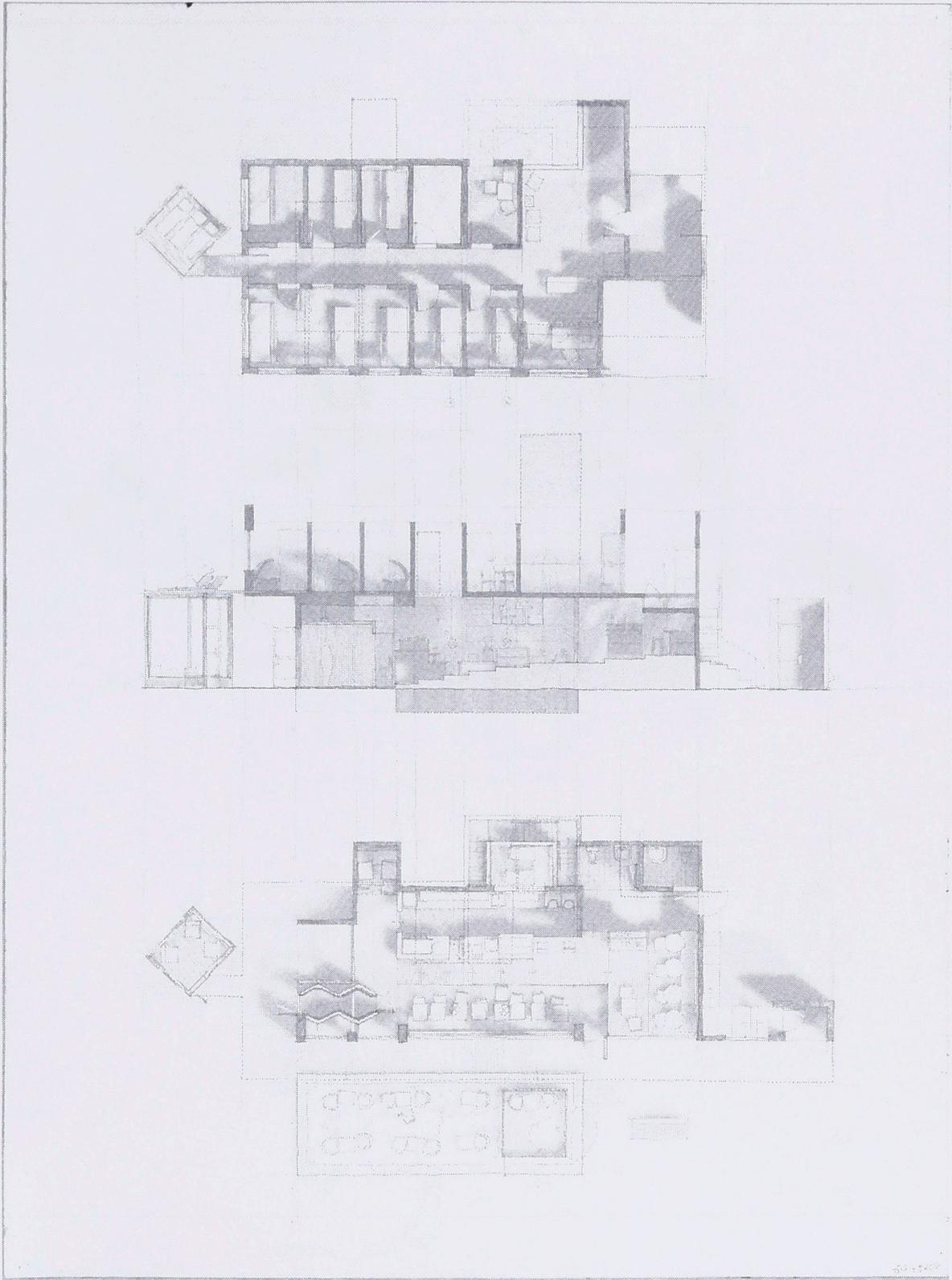


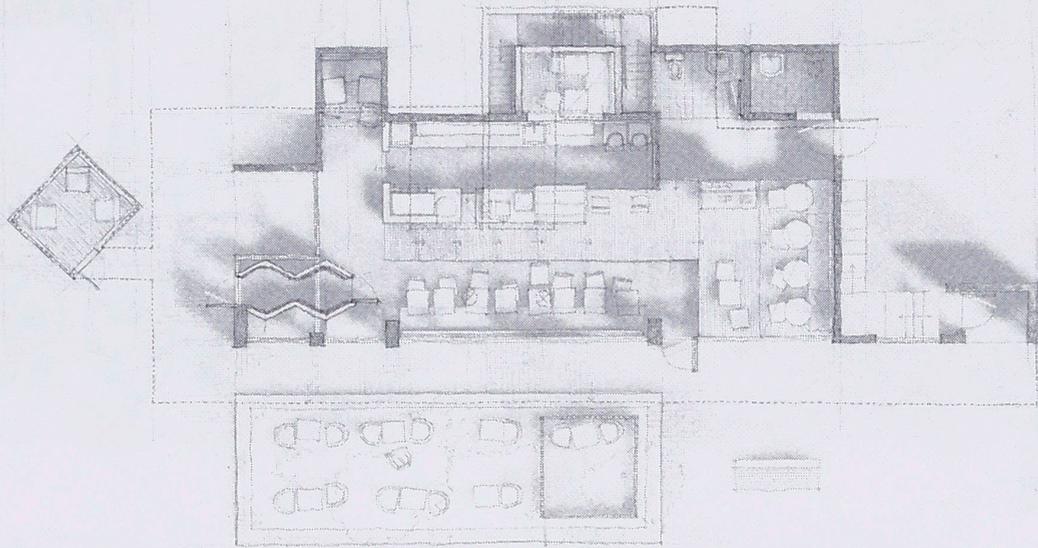


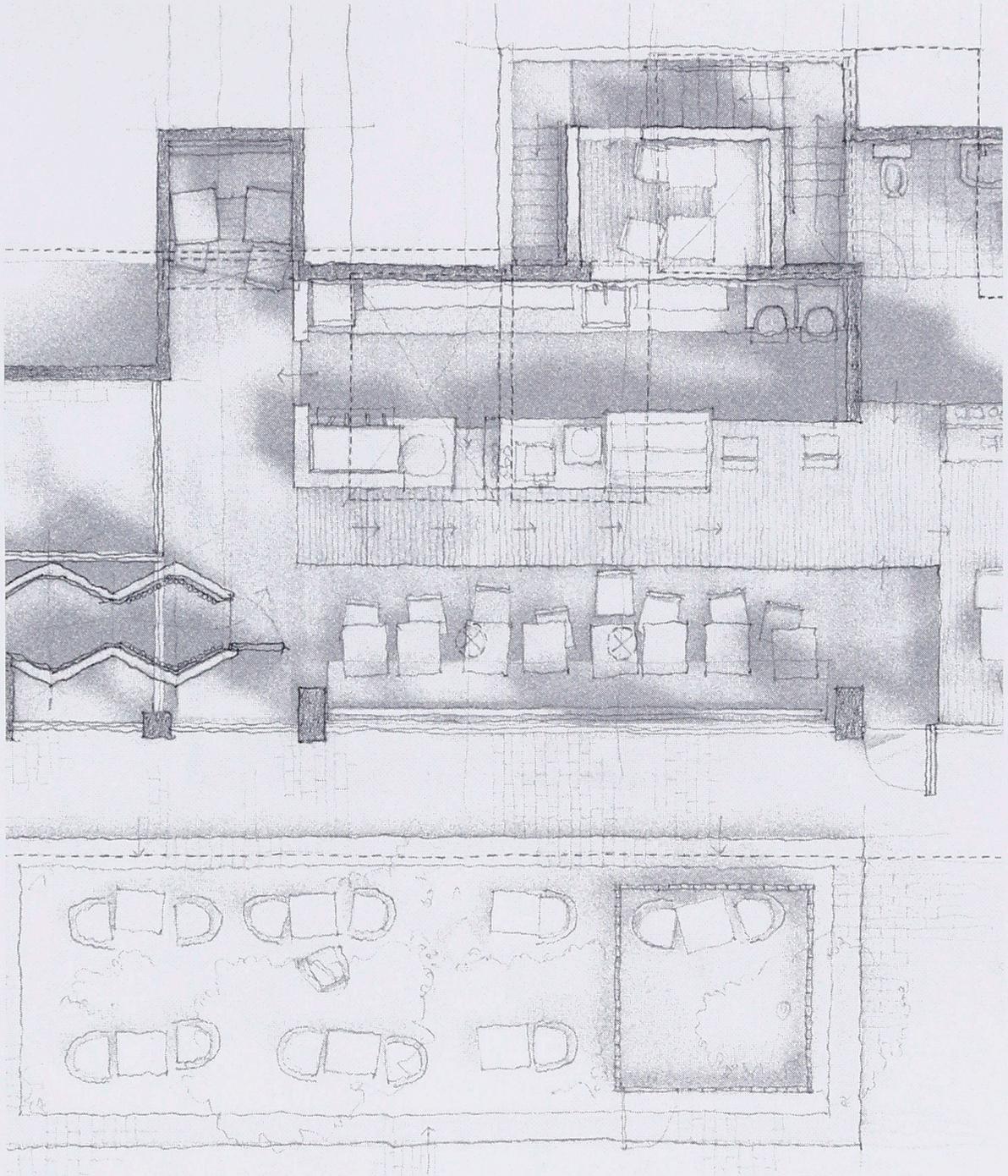


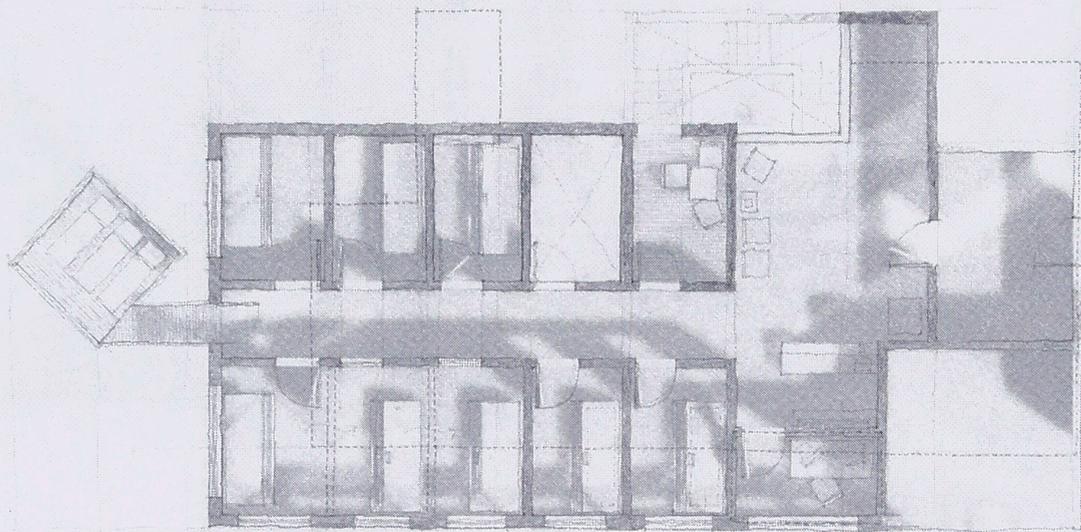


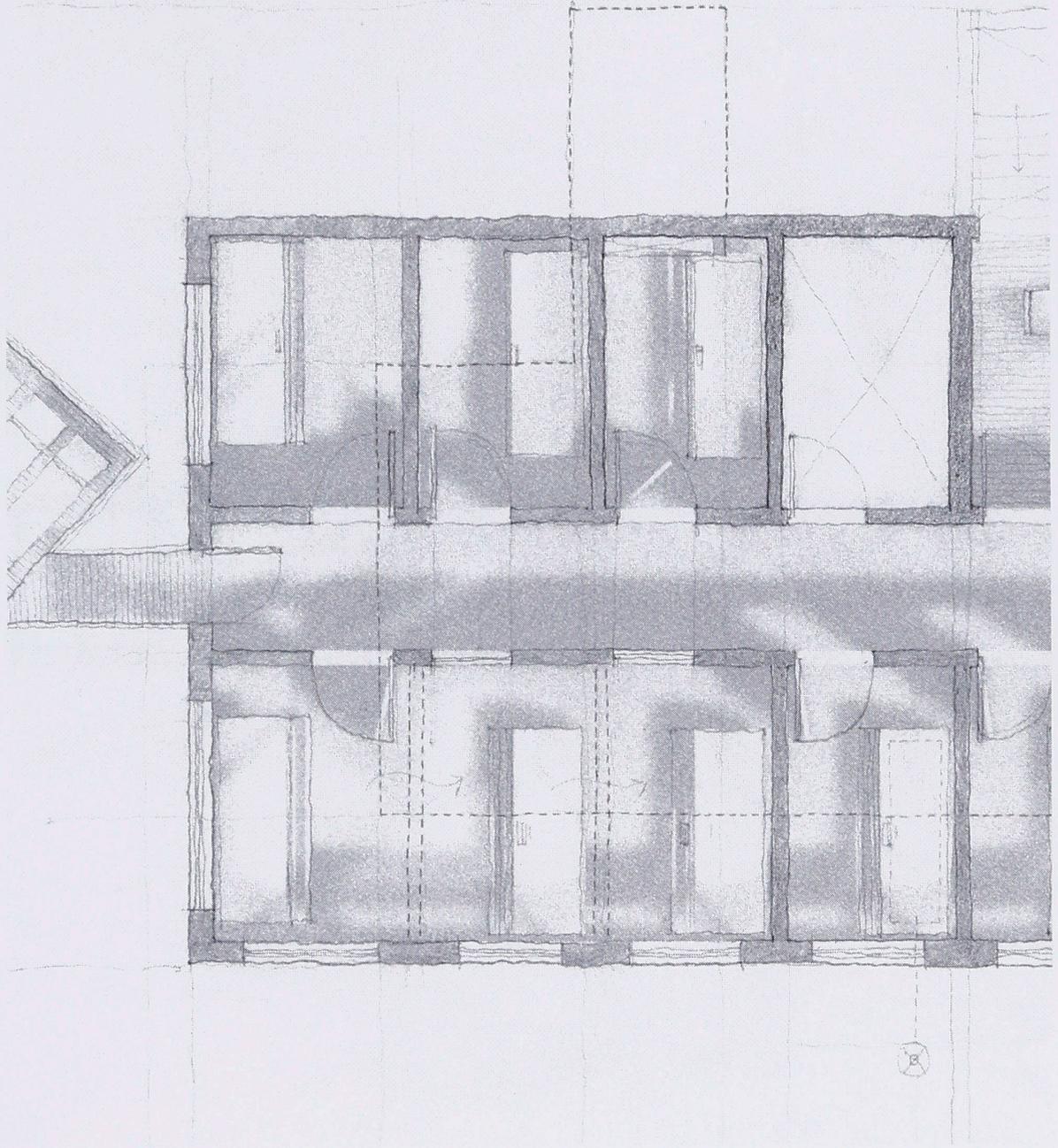


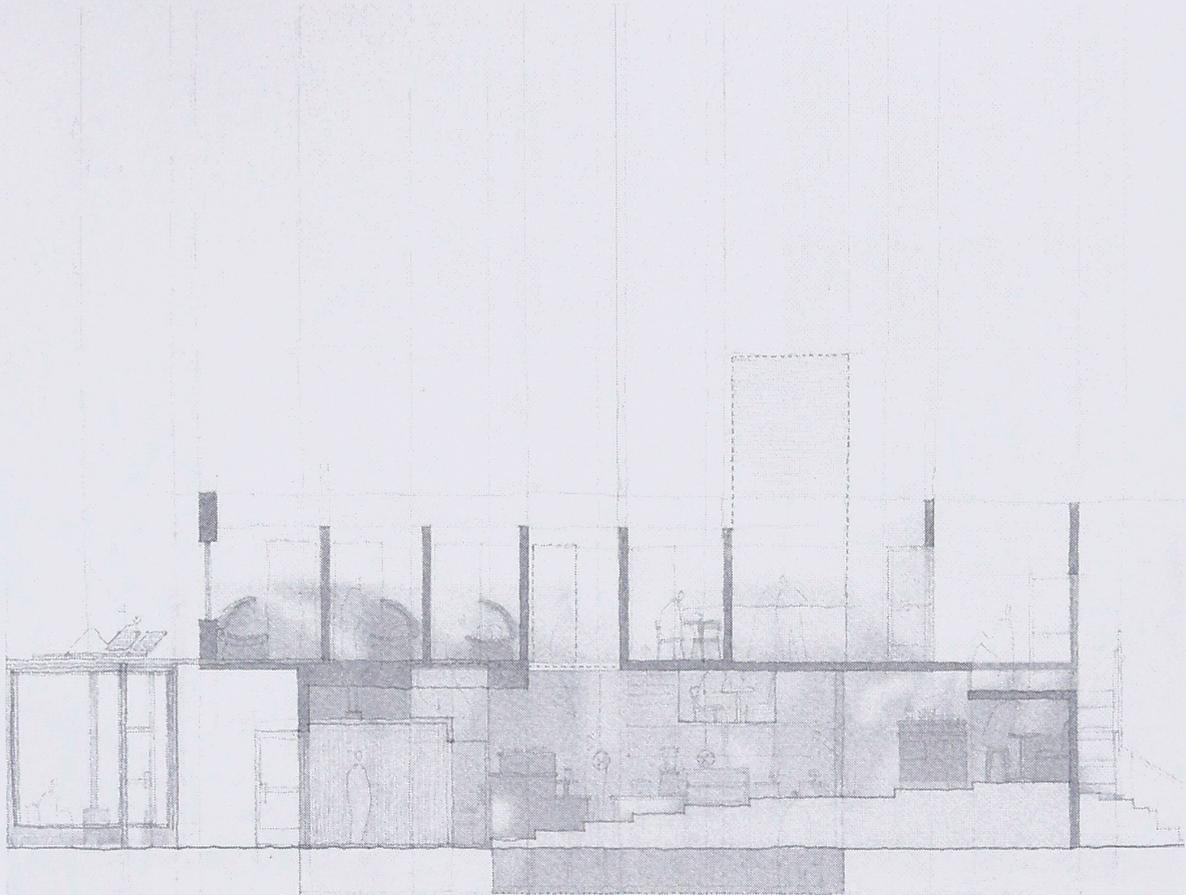


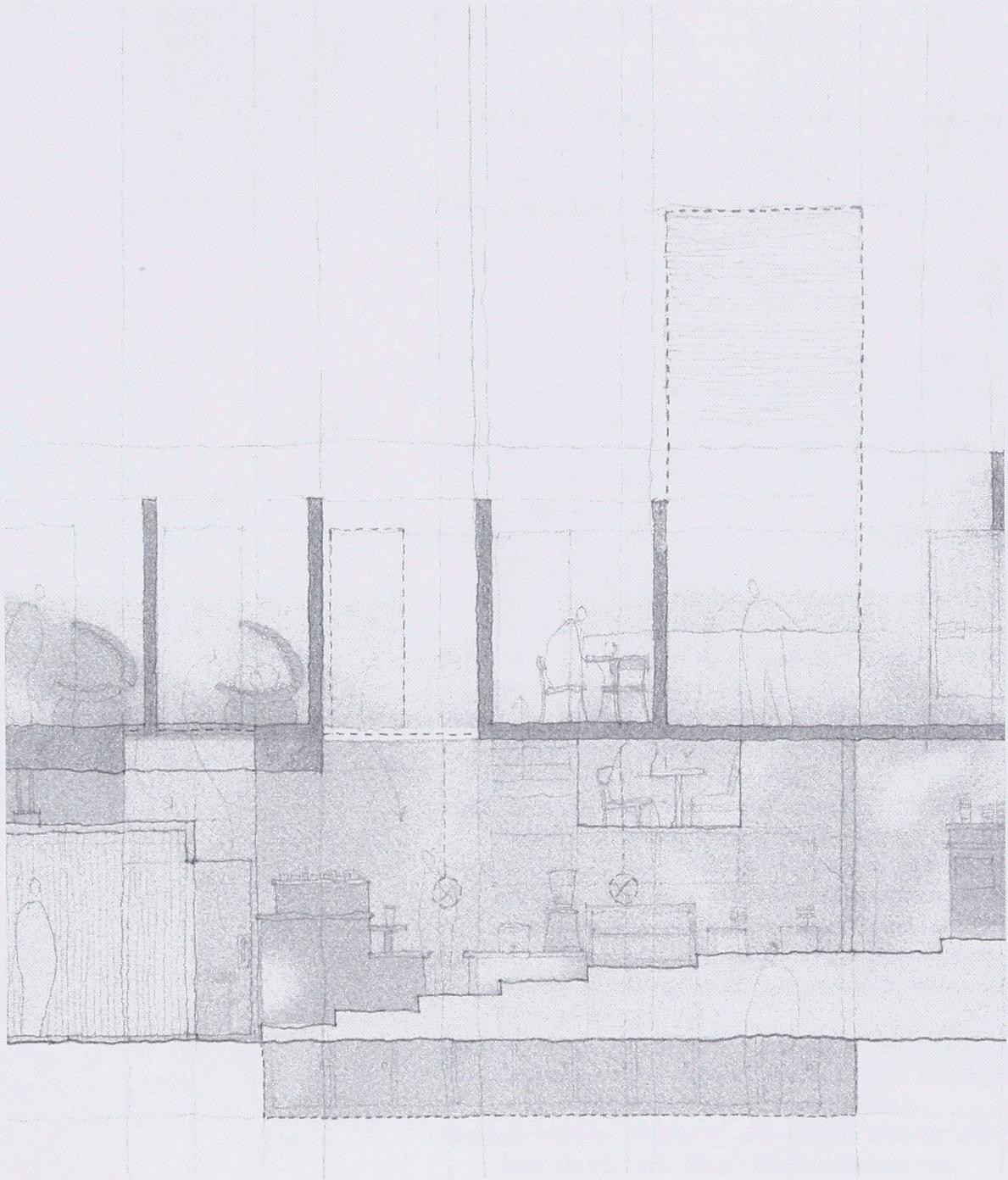












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If architectural disturbances are meant to refresh a stagnant system - to break us from predictable and monotonous experience - then how might disturbed architecture avoid becoming stagnant itself? Would my 'café without comfort' after some time, become less and less of an interruption in some participants lives?

Firstly, disturbances should be designed as openly as possible; that is, they should yield all sorts of responses rather than plan for specific experiences. All sorts of variables come into play: place, time of day, number of participants, types of participants, nature of the disturbance, etc. And so it should very difficult for disturbed architecture to turn stagnant.

Consider one of the earlier disturbances, where a coffee house patron loses their light when a tanning bed is occupied above them in the salon. One may come to understand the new complexities of the space, but still the normal functioning of the space is always interfered with. Tanning sessions could steal light for only four minutes or may do so for an entire half hour. A particular tanning bed may be used all day long or a week without use - entirely dependent on the behaviour of the participants in the salon.

Even if tendencies could be noticed (that one table's light seemed less bothered by the bed above than the others) and acted upon, then at least the relationship between the participant and the architecture is entirely out of the usual and of a challenging nature.

For the sake of argument, let us suggest that a

building that had earlier been disturbed has now run stagnant; that people came to expect the disturbances. Then what? The response is straightforward. If the behaviour of the space is expected and has become a convention of its own, then it is no longer considered disturbed architecture. If a space no longer interrupts one's normal experience - no longer *disturbs* - then it is very simply falls outside of the definition of disturbed architecture.

At this time there is a need for re-disturbance. Disturbing the disturbances. That is, employing again the tactics of disturbed architecture to what was once disturbed, but has since become predictable and normal.