

/ Two Years ... Four Months ... One Day:
Constructing Architectural Narratives in the Transient City /

by

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ABSTRACT

In pre-industrial societies, the acts of building and dwelling were so integrated that the history of a place and its inhabitants could be *read* in their built spaces. Following the Industrial Revolution, increased mobility and changes to the building process severed this intimate connection. The North American city, in particular, has been shaped by mobility, although its inhabitants maintain connections to their origins elsewhere. This thesis questions whether it is still possible to formulate meaningful ways of building and dwelling in the post-industrial city, in harmony with both the transient mode of dwelling, *and* which allow for the inhabitants of the city to participate in the making of it, without reverting to nostalgic building practices. Specifically, this thesis explores the potential of *narrative*, *fiction*, and *storytelling* as poetic forms of *making* capable of responding to the conflicting attractions of origin and home, and the freedom of movement and migration.

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INTRODUCTION

Nineteenth-century author and social commentator, Victor Hugo, argued in his novel *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame* that between the invention of the printing press in 1451, and its widespread use during the Industrial Revolution, the role of architecture changed. Hugo observed that prior to the Industrial Revolution, “during the first six thousand years of the world’s history … architecture ha[d] recorded the great ideas of the human race … architecture was the principal, universal form of writing.”¹

However, the Industrial Revolution marked a major turning point in the way that Western societies build and dwell. Changes that took place during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries impacted technological, economical, and social aspects of life, which in turn impacted the making of architecture. Manual labour was replaced by industry and manufacturing, new modes of power allowed for increased production, and the resulting surplus of goods expanded trade, leading to the development of better transportation systems. While the “advancements” of the period were numerous and complex, this study is primarily concerned with two developments that significantly impacted the making and inhabiting of architecture. The first development was the reduction in social building practices—and consequently the making of social spaces; the second, the effect of increased mobility on the relationship between people and places. The impact of these transformations will be examined specifically in the context of the North American city.

Inhabitants of the North American city have a long history of displacement and migration. In fact, arguably, the North American city’s origin is *predicated* upon

displacement and migration. The constant uprooting that North American dwellers face has changed their relationship to their homelands and ancestral origins. Despite this, connections to these places of origin often seem stronger than attachments to the new cities they call home. This thesis argues that connections to place are more difficult to form in the North American city because of the lack of social building practices and the frequent movements and migrations of its inhabitants. This is not intended to suggest a return to a fixed mode of dwelling, or to old forms of social building, rather that we consider Hugo's suggestion that architecture's role has changed, and explore new ways of social building, that both allows for the mobility that exists in the city, as well as the making of places in which to feel at home.

CHAPTER 1: PLACE-MAKING

1.1 Pre-Industrial Society

In order to shed light on how architecture might respond to the conditions of dwelling in the post-industrial, North American city, it is important to first gain some understanding of the relationships that *pre*-industrial societies had with their built environments.

It is often the case that the history of a pre-industrial community and a specific geographical region are one and the same. Because movement over vast distances was difficult, groups tended to remain in one place or within a narrowly defined boundary for hundreds of years and numerous generations. The isolation caused by this condition meant that their histories, the remains of their ancestors, and their built works literally became embedded in the layers of the earth upon which they dwelt. As outside influences were limited by the narrow range of possible movements, pre-industrial societies were primarily homogeneous, sharing similar values and beliefs. Their building practices, traditions, beliefs—their identities—were deeply rooted in their sense of place, evolving slowly over time. Social geographer Yi-Fu Tuan has suggested that the inhabitants of these pre-industrial communities were often more conscious of their built environment than many modern societies:

Nonliterate and peasant societies are conservative. Their shelters show little change in the course of time, and yet—paradoxically—there may be greater awareness of built forms and space in a traditional than in a modern community. One cause of such awareness is active participation. Since nonliterate and peasant societies do not have architects, everyone makes his own house and helps to build public places.²

The pre-industrial appreciation for architecture and social space came about, at least in part, from this “active participation” in the act of building; cities and villages were built by their inhabitants. The construction of buildings was inherently a social activity because the help of everyone in the community was required. This is still evident in modern vernacular practices, such as in the Amish tradition of barn raising. Even though the completed barn might be owned privately, its creation takes place in the public realm. In an essay on vernacular architecture, contemporary author/architect Daniel Willis notes that this activity not only results in the completed building, but also in the formation of a sense of community. “Because building, the group activity par excellence, promotes social bonds, dwelling—feeling at home—is rather naturally its result.”³ In such communities the social aspects of building were not limited to small-scale or private constructions.

When Chartres [Cathedral] was being built … 1,145 men and women, noble and common people, together dedicated all their physical resources and spiritual strength to the task of transporting in hand-drawn carts material for the building of the towers. Such accounts suggest that raising an edifice was an act of worship in which the feelings and senses of a people were deeply engaged.⁴

Because the community was relatively homogenous, and the majority of people shared the same values and beliefs, the construction of the cathedral had collective meaning. Although it involved physical labour, building was not relegated to a particular social class, but had a spiritual role that united the community in a common purpose.

The relationship of sacred spaces to the larger structure of the community often had strong symbolic significance that organized space and created a sense of place for the buildings and their inhabitants (figs. 1 and 2).

spatial relationships
are established &
understood by all
members of the
community.
boundaries are
clear.

THE
FUTURE
FOREST

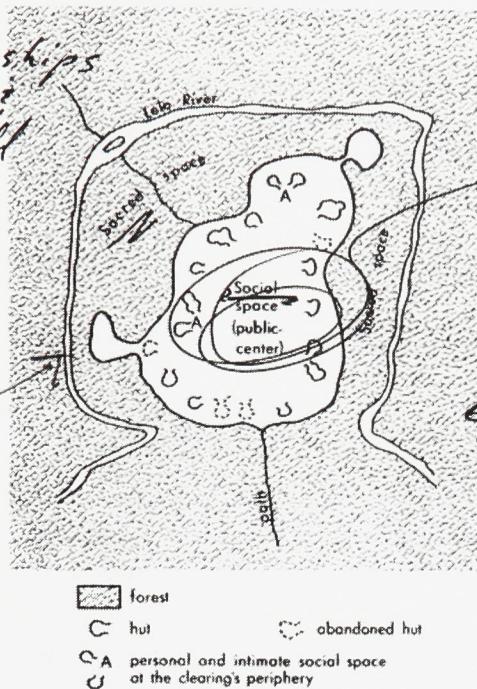


Figure 1. Yi-Fu Tuan, 1997, Typical arrangement of a Pygmy camp in the Congo rainforest, showing personal, sacred, and social space. Adapted from Colin M. Turnbull, "The Lesson of the Pygmies," *Scientific American*, vol. 208, 1963, 8. (*Space and Place*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977, 115).

centralized around sacred space:

archaeological
evidence shows
history of sacred
spaces on this
site - layers
of meaning are
accumulated in
the earth .

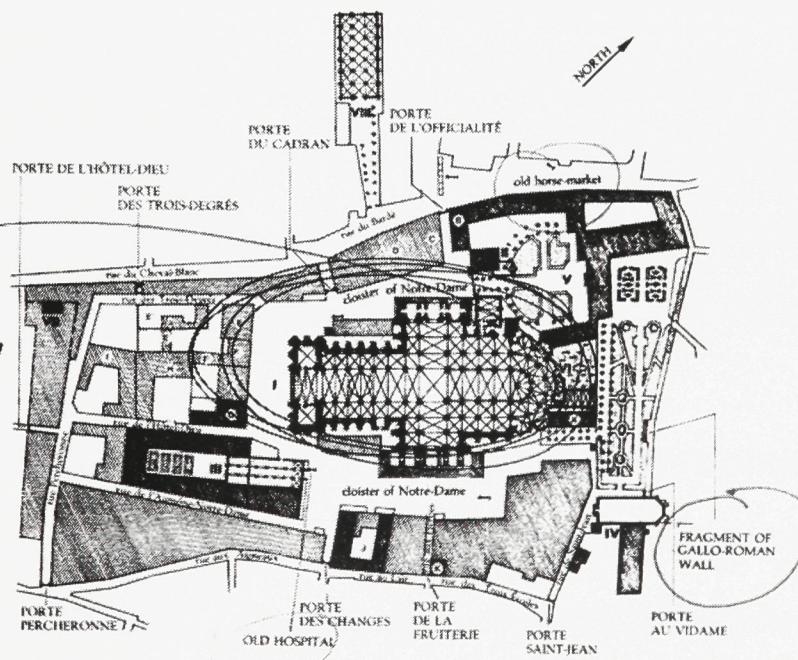


Figure 2. Map of city centre, Chartres, France. Extract from 1730 plan.
Source: Adapted from Yves Flamand, "Architectural Plan and Sections," in Jean Favier, *The World of Chartres*, 176 (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1990).

Practices such as these developed over long periods of time until becoming traditions that directed everything from the overall organization of the city, to the orientation, form, and materiality of the buildings being constructed.

Where shall one build, with what materials, and in what form? Such questions, it has been said, do not worry builders in preliterate and traditional societies. They work from ingrained habit, following the procedure of unchanging tradition. They have, in any case, little choice since both the skill and the materials at hand are limited.⁵

The observation of rituals and traditions often meant that the same structure was built repeatedly over time. However, any limitations imposed by the available resources also necessitated their creative and efficient usage.

Vernacular constructions often exhibit an economy of material that even modern technologists can appreciate. The intimate relationship between the lives of the villagers and their natural surroundings would dictate that they not squander nature's gifts.⁶

Traditional building practices illustrate the time-tested bond between the land and its inhabitants through their built works, as well as the significance that the act of building itself held. Participating in building traditions once performed by their ancestors was a compelling indication of the strong connection between their place on earth and their history. "The builder, far from feeling that he is doing routine work, is obliged by the ceremony to see himself as participating in a momentous and primordial act."⁷ Both the physical participation in the act of building, as well as the spiritual and historical aspects, connected people to their homeland; their place and identity in the world were clear.

What this brief survey reveals is that a sense of harmony existed between the acts of building and dwelling in pre-industrial societies. This harmony was reinforced and nurtured by the collective history, memories, values, traditions, and practices shared by the inhabitants of these isolated and homogeneous communities, as well as through the active engagement of the inhabitants with their built spaces. Because the activities of

building and dwelling occurred in a distinct *place*, their history and identity were inextricably bound in the identity of that place and its built spaces. The history of the place and the community were therefore inseparable, and could be “read” in the built projects of the community.

1.2 From Social Practice to Industrial Production

The first major shift that impacted the pre-industrial relationship between building and dwelling was a primary change in the existing mode of production. In *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame*, Hugo predicted that the industrialization of one field in particular would have a direct affect on architecture. He argued that as the printing press would allow the book to record history in a more efficient and enduring manner than the building, architecture would no longer hold its traditional role in society as the primary form of writing. His prediction that “the book will kill the edifice”⁸ is perhaps the best-known line of this work—at least in architectural discourse. While the printing press was a catalyst for changes taking place, it was only one example of how the dominant mode of production was changing from manual to industrial forms of making.

Like many occupations and practices, building became an increasingly specialized activity. In place of *social* building practices there emerged new and more efficient *manufacturing* processes. In place of *ritual* there emerged the increased flow of *information* made possible by the printed word. With ever-increasing information, specialization became the standard, and where previously everyone had understood the traditional building practices, building “experts” (architects) emerged. This had a significant and ultimately negative impact on individual and community involvement in the process of building:

Active participation is much reduced. In the modern world people do not, as in nonliterate and peasant societies, build their own houses, nor do they participate even in a token manner in the construction of public monuments. Rites and ceremonies that focus on the building activity, which used to be thought of as the creation of the world, have greatly declined so that even in the erection of a large public edifice there remain only the rather wan gestures of laying the foundation stone and topping.⁹

Participation in traditions and social practices, once considered to be acts of *creating the world*, which consequently created strong feelings of ownership and belonging to a particular place, were no longer central to architectural making.

While the specialization of information and industrial forms of production were considered advancements leading to efficient and economical new building practices, renowned social theorist Henri Lefebvre notes the limitations to this type of production:

As for the question of who does the producing, and how they do it, the more restricted the notion becomes the less it connotes creativity, inventiveness or imagination; rather, it tends to refer solely to labour.¹⁰

In other words, building reduced to a functional and specialized activity, rather than an activity that unites people in the act of making, lacks the ability to enter into the collective imagination. It is not social, therefore it does not promote social bonds. As building practices tend towards labour and mass production, the relationship between the making of a place and the inhabitation of it begin to alter. It becomes more difficult for people to feel “at home” in the “modern” city.

1.3 Building and Dwelling

The significance of the relationship between building and dwelling was notably articulated in 1951 by the German philosopher Martin Heidegger in a lecture entitled “Building, Dwelling, Thinking.” In it he discusses the nature of these three human actions, noting that in order to *dwell*, by which he means to feel at home in a space, one must build.¹¹ Heidegger also clarifies his use of the term “building,” explaining that it does not refer solely to the construction of spaces, but also to acts of cultivating, preserving, and nurturing.¹² Both types of building proliferated in pre-industrial societies: physical acts of building, as well as the cultivation of the earth *and* of traditions. From what we know of pre-industrial societies, the relationship between building and dwelling was strong, as the community was consistently engaged in the building and cultivation of public as well as private space.

However, since the majority of inhabitants in the post-industrial city no longer participate in the making of architecture, either through physical or through ritual acts, it is more difficult to establish a strong relationship between building and dwelling. Without arresting the process of industrialization in an effort to return to social practices that are both nostalgic and impractical, is it possible to formulate meaningful ways of building and dwelling in the post-industrial city? This question is further complicated by the changing relationship between people and places brought on by increased mobility, also a consequence of the Industrial Revolution. If identity in the pre-industrial city was inseparable from the *place* in which it originated, and all the practices and rituals associated with that location, is it still possible to develop a strong

relationship to place—to feel *at home*—in the post-industrial city, when we do not participate in the making of it?

Eighteenth-century Enlightenment philosopher Giambattista Vico would argue that this cannot be so. “As opposed to the idea that the making and understanding of a place is a *natural* or *native* ability, the rhetorical idea of place treats these as arts, similar to the skills one learns to live in the world of human language and action, *praxis*.¹³ Vico would argue that people cannot *inherit* their identity or sense of place, but “may know the truth of only those things that they have made (*verum ipsum factum*).”¹⁴ If this is the case, then making becomes increasingly important as the post-industrial relationship to place becomes transitory and uncertain. However, it is unrealistic, and not the intention of this discussion, to suggest that the social building practices might take the same form in the transient city as they did in the pre-industrial city. The goal of this thesis is not to restore the relationship to what it was in the past, but to look for ways in which building and dwelling can share a more synchronous relationship in the context of the transient city.

CHAPTER 2: MOBILITY

2.1 Movement and Migration in the Post-Industrial City

The expansion of trade routes, made possible by new modes of power and transportation that emerged during the Industrial era, led to an increase in mobility for both economic and leisure purposes. Travel became possible for a much larger cross-section of society, and the opportunity to visit, discover, and escape to new places captivated imaginations globally and locally. However, world travel was not a neutral activity relative to architectural production. The ease of mobility that allowed people the freedom to travel to distant and remote places also produced disturbances in the established social order of those places. In his essay “The Foreigner”, writer and professor of sociology Richard Sennett explains:

The Foreigner is perhaps the most threatening figure in the theatre of society. An outsider calls into question society’s rules … the foreigner exposes the sheer arbitrariness of society’s script, which insiders follow, thinking its lines have been written by Right, Reason, or God.¹⁵

As travel became a widespread phenomenon, the implications of cultural mixing on established practices became increasingly significant. This was caused not only by tourism, but the increasingly common tendency to relocate, or *migrate* to new places, while trying to bring along old traditions and practices. As cities became more diverse, groups with conflicting ideologies could be found dwelling side by side, each trying to maintain their traditional spatial practices. To use examples from the previous chapter, imagine the organization of a typical Pygmy community, where *social* space traditionally occupied the centre and *sacred* space occupied the periphery, and the organization

around a Gothic cathedral, where these spaces were traditionally reversed, both trying to maintain their spatial practices in the same location. While the resulting interaction between cultures must be considered one of the greatest benefits of mobility, it also threatened to transform old customs, as the boundaries between the two groups gradually blurred.

Migration transformed the demographics of established communities, challenging existing practices and introducing new ones. Perhaps even more significantly, it created an entirely new social condition in places like North America, where whole populations have been uprooted and displaced from their origins. These changes required a new approach to social space and practices, one not based on traditional spatial notions, such as those found in the pre-industrial city. As the newly-found freedom of mobility seemed to be the common bond, it took on a significant role in the formation of the North American city.

2.2 The Transient City

“Historically speaking, the spaces of the modern city have been formed from the logic of mobility; a logic which targets the uprooting of things and places in favour of allowing universal mobility ...”¹⁶

While the pre-industrial city could be characterized by its stability and longevity, the post-industrial city is provisional and unpredictable. The pre-industrial city had a sense of permanence: it was slow to change, rooted in a shared identity and a strong sense of place, all of which had accumulated over time and could be read in the layers of landscape and built works. On the other hand, as a European trying to come to terms with the Western world, philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre observed that American cities

have always been *temporary*: “I came to understand that the American city was, originally, a camp in the desert”¹⁷ and that they have never become permanent settlements:

Frail and temporary, formless and unfinished, they are haunted by the presence of the immense geographical space surrounding them … You feel, from your first glance, that your contact with these places is a temporary one; either you will leave them, or they will change around you.¹⁸

Sartre’s observation suggests a temporality about the modern city that cannot be overcome *even* if one were to stand rooted in place. In contrast to the Europeans, who Sartre contends “change within changeless cities,”¹⁹ it is difficult for North Americans to avoid being migrants, moving through cities which themselves are mobile.

As all inhabitants of North America have experienced displacement in their past, and increasingly, in their recent past, they lack the sense of rootedness experienced by pre-industrial dwellers, who inhabited the same land as their ancestors. Most North Americans have not only left their historical “homeland,” but also their childhood home, neighbourhood, or city. Migration and relocation are everyday occurrences in the North American way of life. “Never before our time have so many people been uprooted. Emigration, forced or chosen, across national frontiers or from village to metropolis is the quintessential experience of our time.”²⁰

In comparison to the fixity and rootedness of traditional societies, inhabitants of the modern city are transient. This transient mode of dwelling, underpinned by various degrees of migration, changes the modern city dwellers’ relationships to their homeland, their ancestors, their origins, and their sense of place in the world.

Faced with a loss of roots, and the subsequent weakening in the grammar of ‘authenticity’, we move into a vaster landscape. Our sense of belonging, our language and the myths we carry in us remain, but no longer as ‘origins’ or signs of ‘authenticity’ capable of guaranteeing the sense of our lives. They now linger on as traces, voices, memories and murmurs that are mixed in with other histories, episodes, encounters.²¹

In the diverse space of the modern city it is impossible for any one world view to take precedence. This diversity does not only affect the composition and structure of the city, but the idea of *home* itself:

The house is no longer a text encoding the rules of behavior and even a whole world view that can be transmitted down the generations. In place of a cosmos modern society has splintered beliefs and conflicting ideologies.²²

Even the intimate space of the home has been unravelled in these cities of “conflicting” traditions. When one considers the complexity of the transient city, caused by its diversity and constant migrations, it is easier to understand why Hugo felt that the printed word would be a more efficient way of recording history than architecture. The modern city moves at a pace too fast even for new and efficient building technologies to keep up. In the transient city, multiple stories take place side by side, their boundaries and edges becoming indistinct and blurred.

Because the architecture of the modern city no longer involves the intense social participation of pre-industrial building, the inhabitants of the city no longer take part in the making of it and, therefore, their ability to “know” or dwell in such places is all the more tenuous.²³ Despite the fact that both building and dwelling have become increasingly temporary conditions in the North American city, the symbiotic relationship between the two is severed. There is a discord in the transient city that did not exist between building and dwelling in the pre-industrial city.

It is significant that despite the turbulence of these changes, and the social upheaval associated with a transient way of life some sociologists, such as Richard Sennett, argue that there must also be benefits to mobility and migration, whether voluntary or otherwise:

...this cannot be the whole story, for the foreigner may also gain another knowledge through his or her own exile, denied to those who remain rooted to home; knowledge about living a displaced life.²⁴

In order to gain something from these migrations, the modern city dweller's identity and sense of place can no longer be based solely on his or her place of origin and the traditions associated with it. In other words, a transient way of life offers the possibility to see oneself and the world differently. This new "knowledge" of the world, as Sennett puts it, demands a different approach to building; even if traditional social building practices had prevailed in the modern world, fundamental differences between the pre-industrial city and the transient city have changed the mode of *dwelling*, which in turn necessitates an appropriate change in the mode of *building*.

Hugo suggested that as the printed word had taken over the architect's role, that architecture should take over the role that literature had played before the printing press: "The respective position of the two arts will be reversed."²⁵ As literature before the press most often took the form of *storytelling*, this suggested that architecture should become more transitory itself, like a story that changes with each telling.

2.3 Architecture in Response to Mobility and Migration

An authentically migrant perspective would, perhaps, be based on an intuition that the opposition between *here* and *there* is itself a cultural construction, a consequence of thinking in terms of fixed entities and defining them oppositely. It might begin by regarding movement, not as an awkward interval between fixed points of departure and arrival, but as a mode of being in the world. The question would be, then, not how to arrive, but how to move, how to identify convergent and divergent movements; and the challenge would be how to notate such events, how to give them a historical and social value.²⁶

How *has* architectural making changed to correspond with this new way of dwelling in the world? If we understand migrancy to be the primary mode of being in the North American context, then do our built spaces give "historical and social value"

to our various movements? Has architecture found a new role in place of its former one as the “universal form of writing”?

Imagery and Form

New technologies inspired by speed, efficiency, and revolutionary modes of transportation created an atmosphere of great enthusiasm for mobility. One response to this was to *imitate* or transplant the imagery associated with industrial forms and vehicles of mobility into architecture. Futurists in the early twentieth century in particular, adopted speed, movement, and technology, as the driving forces behind their work. While expressing a desire for a more appropriate architecture for the industrial era, without nostalgic reference to old forms and in celebration of the dynamic, uprooted forces of the modern city,²⁷ the Futurists also tended to conceive of buildings already directly involved in industrial processes, such as factories, train stations, and airports (fig. 3). Their projects focused on expressing the functional and dynamic processes and forms of movement, and rarely addressed the more fundamental social issues of migration and dwelling in the new industrial city.

Another notable example was Le Corbusier’s infatuation with the industrial forms of ships, cars, airplanes, and factories during the 1920s (fig. 4). The streamlined, machine-like elements of such vehicles of mobility became commonplace in his architecture of the time. In addition to Corbusier’s obvious interest in the visual and symbolic elements of mobility, he was also fascinated by the standardization of industrial elements and their mass production, something that he equated with the classical orders of ancient Greece. After studying industrial production and efficiency,

Corbusier attempted to use similar strategies while designing a standardized building system to solve the post-war housing shortage, which resulted in his Maison Citrohan of 1922 (fig. 5). In the name given to this house, Corbusier was referring to the name of the French car manufacturer, Citroën—and its general shape has been said to mimic the shape of a car from that company.²⁸ Le Corbusier hoped that this house would facilitate a way of dwelling that was free from the pastiche of bourgeois architecture of the time, a “machine for living in,” stripped down to its essential functions.

Even in more recent times, the forms and images of movement are commonplace in architecture (fig. 6). While the imitation of movement in the built form can result in interesting and dynamic spaces, and the transplantation of industrial forms and processes into architecture underscored their importance in the modern city, these metaphors fell short of a true understanding of the new social conditions of dwelling in the transient city. While the images created appear dynamic, they freeze movement, documenting, like the printed word, rather than allowing new meanings and readings to be generated.

central hub of movement in and out of city - every space is a space of movement, industry & technology - where is social space?

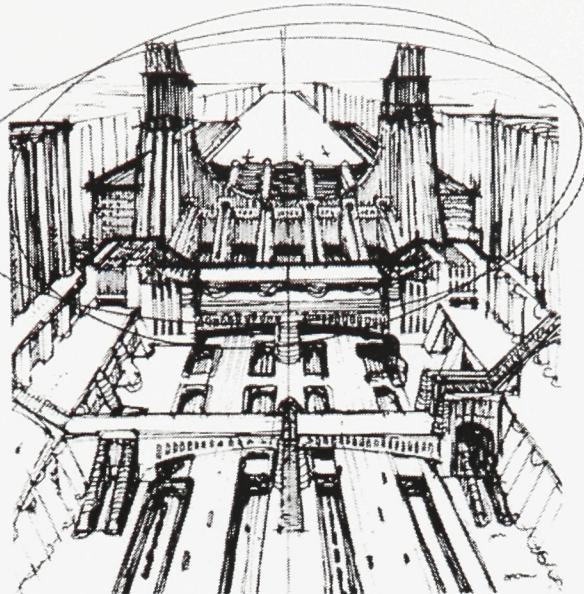


Figure 3. Central Station Project for Milan, Antonio Sant'Elia, 1914.

Source: Adapted from Isabelle Hyman and Marvin Trachtenberg, *Architecture from Prehistory to Post-Modernism/The Western Tradition* (The Netherlands: Harry N. Abrams, 1986) 518.

use of imagery
elements of mobility extended
into architectural representation,

but merely initiated
these forms.

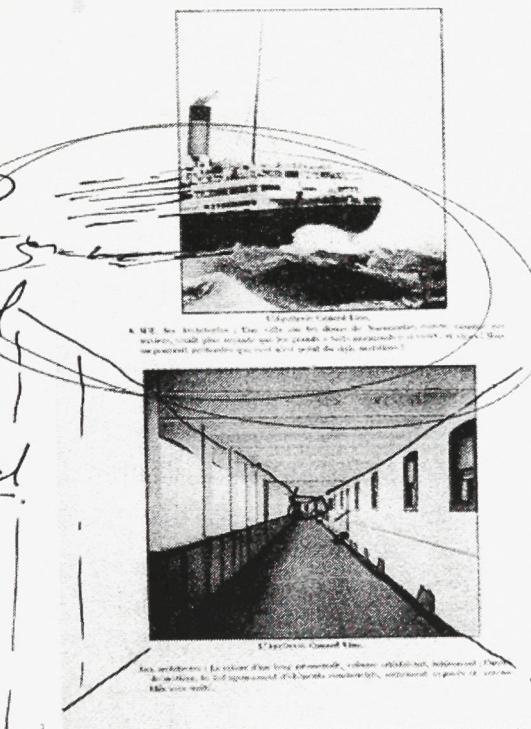


Figure 4. Ocean Liner, from Vers une architecture, Le Corbusier, 1923.

Source: Adapted from William Curtis, *Modern Architecture since 1900*, 3rd edition (London: Phaidon, 1996) 169.

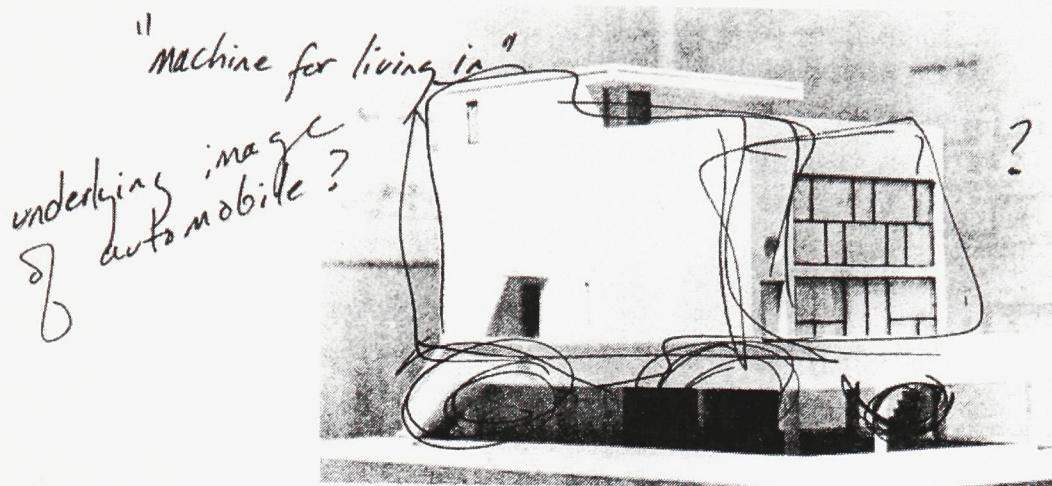


Figure 5. Citrohan House, Le Corbusier, 1920-22.

Source: Adapted from Isabelle Hyman and Marvin Trachtenberg, *Architecture from Prehistory to Post-Modernism/The Western Tradition* (The Netherlands: Harry N. Abrams, 1986) 529.

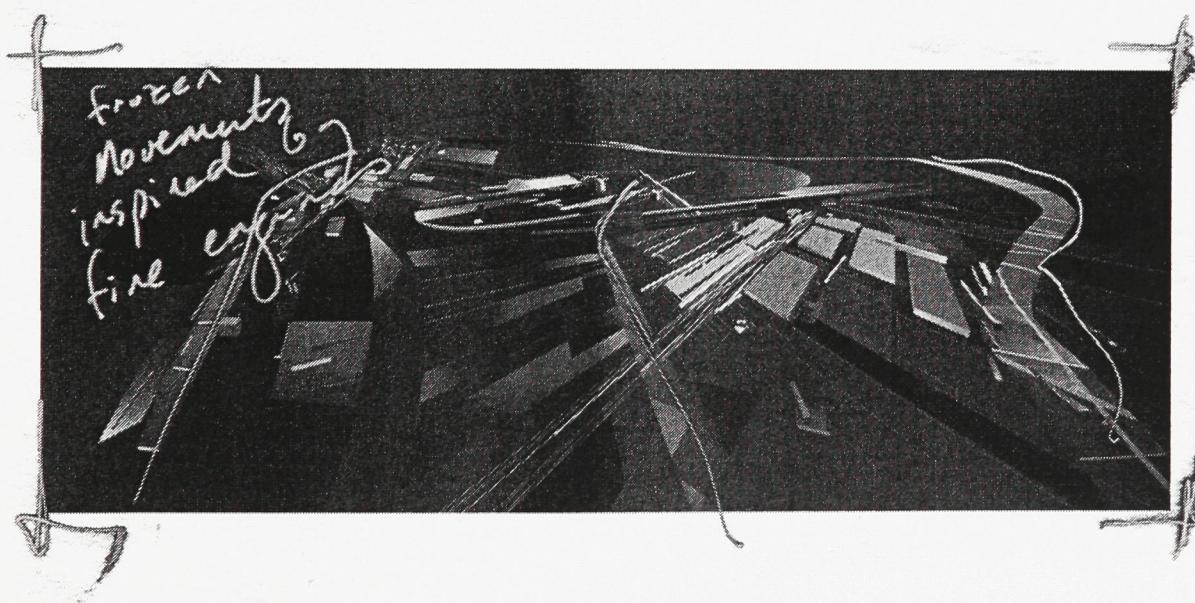


Figure 6. Aerial Site Plan, Vitra Fire Station, Zaha Hadid, 1990-94.

Source: Adapted from Betsky, Aaron, *Zaha Hadid: The Complete Buildings and Projects* (New York: Rizzoli, 1998) 64.

The Modern Approach to Portable Dwelling

After exploring the imitation of movement, architects in the mid- to late twentieth century soon began examining the possibilities of architecture that was actually mobile. This strategy was in fact more of a *re-examination* of mobile architecture using modern resources, as nomadic lifestyles and portable architectures were common in pre-industrial times. Much like these precedents, mobile architecture in the modern era quickly focused on domestic space, as the scale of architecture most receptive to mobility.

The mass-produced mobile dwelling unit was a strategy that attempted to respond literally to the conditions of mobility, which involved frequent movements and migrations. Mobile dwelling units were not necessarily on wheels, but were designed in such a way that they could be easily transported and constructed anywhere in the world. Three examples that show variations of this strategy and demonstrate the expression of this condition in architecture are Buckminster Fuller's "Dymaxion House" (fig. 7), the conceptual "Plug-in City," designed by Archigram's Peter Cook in 1964 (fig. 8), and Moshe Safdie's "Habitat '67" in Montreal (fig. 9).

The Dymaxion House, designed by Buckminster Fuller, an engineer more concerned with function and efficiency than style, was not intended to be symbolic, or to self-consciously mimic forms taken by previous portable architectures. Rather, it was an experiment in the use of new building materials and technologies. Fuller's design focused on the optimization of materials and spaces, and he intended it to be compatible with any site or environment and to use resources efficiently. While many elements of the house functioned as Fuller had planned—it was lightweight and mass producible—

the design never progressed beyond its state as a prototype. Just like images borrowed from steamships, it simply mimicked the movements of its inhabitants, rather than providing a new frame through which to understand them.

Some proposals, like the Plug-in City designed by Archigram's Peter Cook in 1964, were based on armatures into which pods or cells of different size, function, and scale could be fit in and moved around, within and amongst different structures and in different locations, along with their inhabitants. While it employed similar strategies of production and portability, the Plug-in City proposed something more akin to a community setting that could provide enhanced services and resources to its inhabitants. However, perhaps because it was a conceptual project, the technological and structural aspects of the Plug-in City tended to overwhelm any attempts that it made to address the more subtle social issues of its own migration.

A project with similar goals in terms of production and mobility, but one whose construction was realized, is Moshe Safdie's Habitat '67 in Montreal, a building composed of prefabricated modules that were organized on-site to construct a large-scale apartment-type dwelling. Like the designs of Fuller and Cook, the intention was that Safdie's modules might be transported all over the world to create similar dwelling places.

Despite these and various other attempts by architects and designers, these three projects are representative of the ultimate failure of portable architecture in the modern city. The new technologies that allowed the dwelling units to be mass-produced and lightweight for ease of movement, also rendered their transportation redundant and impractical, as they could be produced anywhere in the world more easily than they could be moved. Similarly, the modules were intended to follow the movements of their

inhabitants, seemingly in harmony, but ultimately, they were cumbersome appendages to movement. As this was intended to be their primary contribution to the dialogue between building and dwelling in the transient city, these projects were unsuccessful in both intention and realization. Mass production and the speed of mobility made it seem that building and dwelling had made similar transformations following the industrial period, and yet the two were no longer inseparable. Superficial expressions and imitations of movement failed to notate mobility as a mode of being in the world in a way that contributed to people's sense of feeling *at home* in the transient city.

Ultimately, ideas of autonomy and mass production prevailed, while attempts to provide insight into mobility in domestic spaces was widely discarded by the public in favour of "disposable" housing, i.e., the suburban house and the generic apartment unit, which could be abandoned without hesitation. As Sartre put it, in North America "the 'house' is the shell; it is abandoned on the slightest pretext."²⁹ While very literally harnessing movement, at least these early attempts at modern mobile architectures held both a latent potential for movement and pause. They strove to find a harmony with movement as a form of dwelling, and, at least in the case of the Plug-in City and Habitat '67, there was also the suggestion of a connection to some larger network of dwelling, and the possibility of new social relationships being established and explored.

The residence moves
but doesn't need
to its new context.

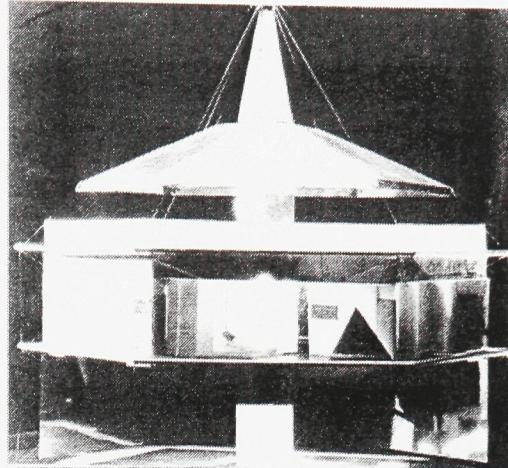


Figure 7. Buckminster Fuller, Dymaxion House. Source: Adapted from William Curtis, *Modern Architecture since 1900*, 3rd edition (London: Phaidon, 1996) 266.

Movement of modules has
impact on the structure
of the community.
Nameless/faceless
inhabitants in a
technological
environment.

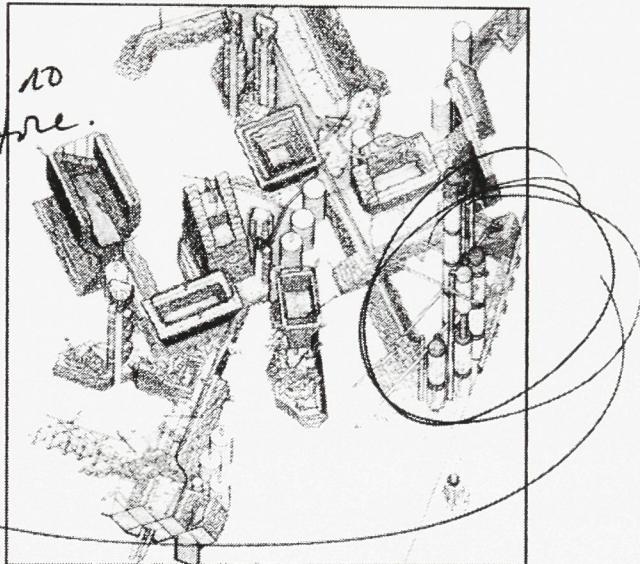


Figure 8. Peter Cook, Plug-in City, 1964. Source: Adapted from William Curtis, *Modern Architecture since 1900*, 3rd edition (London: Phaidon, 1996) 538.

Module can be
produced anywhere
:- no need to
move it.



Figure 9. Moshe Safdie, Habitat, 1967.
Source: Adapted from Société de développement de Montréal, "Old Montreal," http://www.vieux.montreal.qc.ca/plaque/horizon/port/eng/port_5a.htm (accessed August 26th, 2006).

The Transient City [Revisited]

Autonomy and mobility were closely linked in their impact on the organization of the typical North American city. North America was seen as the frontier of freedom, both in terms of its social policy and its size. Whether to protect themselves from what they felt was the threatening “other”, simply because there was enough space to spread out, or because sheltering walls were no longer required for protection, North American cities were organized around the needs of the individual. More so than anywhere else in the world, North American buildings were largely conceived as objects in the landscape, even in urban settings, connected by routes of mobility. With the automobile, transportation became individualized, causing the need for more roads, and more separation between the inhabitable spaces of the city.

One of the first objectives in organizing the North American city was the early onset of efforts to realize efficient movement. Projects dealing specifically with transient inhabitants, for example, hotels, airports, train stations, and their related infrastructure, were primarily concerned with making movement from one place to another *easy*, in order to facilitate movement into, out of, and around the city. While these spaces of mobility have been considered by some as the social spaces of the transient city—some of the only spaces in the North American city that one can enter without restriction—they also require little or no awareness from their inhabitants. They are merely spaces to pass through, non-places, as described by social theorist Marc Augé: “If a place can be defined as relational, historical and concerned with identity, then a space which cannot be defined as relational, or historical, or concerned with identity will be a non-place.”³⁰ Sartre argues that this is the type of space that North Americans want:

This roving city village is no exception; in the United States, communities are born as they die—in a day. The Americans have no complaint to make; the main thing is to be able to carry their homes with them. These homes are the collections of objects, furnishings, photographs, and souvenirs belonging to them, that reflect their own image and constitute the inner, living landscape of their dwelling.³¹

However, continuing to see the North American city in this individualized way prevents us from the knowledge to be gained by experiencing its diversity. It prevents, rather than facilitates, coming in contact with the “other,” and therefore with the social spaces of the city. Anthropologist and architect Franco la Cecla notes that we have been reduced from active participants, builders, makers, creators, to *consumers* of space:

Street life in the last two centuries has been forbidden, prosecuted, deleted ... The only place the dwellers are allowed to handle has become the interior of the apartment. Building code, inspectors, bureaucracies and professional corporations have criminalized every creative intervention of citizens outside, and greatly reduced those inside their domiciles. We can walk through the streets of the city, cross its sidewalks, enter its buildings, stay in the rooms of various apartments, yet leave no trace of our presence, no individual or collective mark. The activity of the modern citizen is not an activity of inhabiting, of creation of localities. He is only a consumer of space.³²

What Cecla’s statement argues is that the spaces of the post-industrial city do not allow us to dwell, or to create a sense of place, or to participate in the making of the city. In this consumer culture, we have freedom of movement, but are restricted in our ability to build. While one may be able to find creative ways to dwell in the suburban home or apartment, all aspects of social building, or building that takes place in the public realm, have become increasingly difficult, not only because of laws, and a mode of production that discourages social building, but by planners and architects who seek to make *spaces* that are easy to pass through, rather than *places* where we might notate and become involved in making the city through our movements.

Unlike pre-industrial cities, which accumulate in layers over time, and can be read as the narrative of the city and its inhabitants, North American cities are hardly

given the chance to accumulate before they are abandoned—at least by one set of inhabitants for another.

2.4 Migrants or Monsters?

While contemporary architects and builders have clearly recognized the transient nature of life in the modern city, many architectural responses that have been explored have tended to trivialize the transitory experiences of the migrant/traveller, rather than imbue them with meaning. This trivialization occurs when buildings and spaces are designed to *reduce* the impact that such movements have on both the migrant and the city, for example, in luxury hotels that make it possible to stay in a city, without actually visiting it.

It is important to note that making movement less quick and more meaningful does not mean that the bureaucratic processes of travel and migration should be more difficult, or that the spaces involved should be complicated to move through. Rather, the places that we travel through should not be mute, but we should be able to navigate them in such a way that the experience contributes to our sense of identity and our knowledge of the world. In his book *Migrancy, Culture, Identity*, author and scholar of postmodern studies, Iain Chambers, reminds us that:

Getting oriented, like getting lost, is a cultural experience. It is the acquisition, the building, the discovery or the lack of a network of references. It is an activity that we usually share with other people. Or it can put us into a pre-existent social and cultural context.³³

Acts of orientation can therefore be seen as acts of social building.

Ultimately, any act of making, even those that attempt to notate *movement*, constitute a certain degree of fixity, in essence, the making of a *place*. While there is knowledge to be gained in displacement and migration that cannot be learned while rooted in place, this learning cannot take place without the counterpoint of fixity. The two exist in a relationship, just like the mythological Greek figures of movement and stillness, Hermes and Hestia (identified, respectively, as Mercury and Vesta in Roman Mythology).

Greek gods and goddesses are often linked with others in complementary relationships that create a sense of balance. So Hestia, goddess of the hearth and home—the centre, stillness, intimate space, internal space, and the space of the self—was paired with Hermes, messenger of the gods, protector of travellers and boundaries—the endless wanderer, constantly in motion, representing exterior space, and the space of encounter with the other. In the Greek imagination there was an important balance between these two figures, who not only coexisted, but relied on each other to give meaning to the spaces over which the other resided. “They are everywhere where people make fire, trace limits, build walls and a roof over their heads. Together, they are the gods of orientation and of the tracing of limits”³⁴ and they provide “an archetypal representation of living in and exploring the world creatively, yet always returning to the role of protecting the hearth.”³⁵ While they represent opposites—internal and external space, stillness and motion—some of their roles are contradictory. For example, Hestia reigns over the giving of gifts, an exchange that involves contact with the other—something that would usually fall under Hermes’ jurisdiction.³⁶ Similarly, Hermes, although he was the protector of boundaries, was also notorious for crossing them. However, the one barrier that he never crossed was the most sacred threshold

into Hestia's home. For these reasons, Hermes' movements can only be understood in terms of his relationship to the stability and constancy of Hestia. Their contradictions become resolved in their relationship with the other.

This philosophy seems particularly important in understanding the modern relationship between mobility and a sense of place. While our primary mode of dwelling in the world may be as migrants, our relationship to place, our origins, and our homelands are always present.

None of us can simply choose another language, as though we could completely abandon our previous history and freely opt for another one. Our previous sense of knowledge, language, and identity, our particular inheritance, cannot simply be rubbed out of the story, cancelled. What we have inherited—as culture, as history, as language, as tradition, as a sense of identity—is not destroyed but taken apart, opened up to questioning, rewriting and re-routing.³⁷

Thus, it becomes clearer why the task for architecture in the post-industrial, transient city is not to *record*, but to find ways of making that are always in progress.

Because displacement is a characteristic largely inherent in North Americans, even in Native groups who have been forced from their ancestral lands, they have a unique and difficult relationship to their origins. The North American and, more particularly, the Canadian desire to both preserve differences of origin and foster a national identity, creates a crisis even for those who were born here. Immigrant and writer, Neil Bissoondath argues in his book, *Selling Illusions*, that the Canadian policy of multiculturalism causes people to hold on too strongly to their origins, and prevents them from becoming true citizens of the country.³⁸ Constantly defined by roots in places they may never have seen, and encouraged to foster a national identity in which they are unsure of their role, modern city dwellers become uncertain about where they have come from and their place in society.

Although movement and migration may be critical modes of dwelling in the North American way of life, all migrations begin with displacement, which, whether forced or chosen, cannot occur without a place from which to be displaced. In his essay “Universal Civilization and National Cultures” twentieth-century philosopher and phenomenologist Paul Ricoeur envisions the consequences of a completely rootless experience:

We can very easily imagine a time close at hand when any fairly well-to-do person will be able to leave his country indefinitely in order to taste his own national death in an interminable, aimless voyage. At this extreme point, the triumph of consumer culture, universally identical and wholly anonymous, would represent the lowest degree of creative culture.³⁹

Ricoeur argues for a culture in which we can both take root in the past, as well as move forward. Only by finding a way to both keep the particularities that give us unique perspectives and traditions, as well as embracing forward movement, can we maintain a culture that does not simply settle on the lowest common denominator--in this case, that of consumer culture. “The problem is not simply to repeat the past, but rather to take root in it in order to ceaselessly invent.”⁴⁰

In an essay entitled “The Weight of Architecture,” author Daniel Willis explores how ideas of “lightness” and “weight” are manifested in architecture both literally and figuratively. In his discussion he equates *lightness* to freedom and the absence of burdens, while *weight* involves limitations, history, and fulfillment. While he does not specifically refer to place and movement, his discussion could easily be expanded to include them.

What Willis is questioning is whether the desire for freedom—lightness, mobility, the absence of historical roots—is really able to fulfill us. If the goal of the transient city dweller is to become completely free from roots, from carrying the burden of attachment to any place, then these movements become weightless. Spaces generated

by this desire for freedom are designed to prevent us from experiencing or learning anything from our travels.

In Marco Frascari's discussion of monsters in architecture, he makes use of Giambattista Vico's explanation that "... children born of prostitutes are called monsters, because their origin is in an uncertain union."⁴¹ If we apply this description to modern city dwellers, then they too could be considered monsters, because their origin—their identity—comes from the uncertain union between their historical homeland and the migrations in their life. Constantly torn between their historical identity and the identity formed by their own movements, the modern dweller is forever shifting roles. Similarly,

... the monster changes its form, assuming different aspects in response to diverse stimuli and within varying contexts ... the idea of monsters baffles any precise conceptualization; nevertheless, monsters are recognizable as enigmas better left unsolved.⁴²

The complexity and often grotesque appearance of the monster is difficult to comprehend and its assortment of fragments cannot be resolved with ease, just as the conflicting claims of origin and migration make it difficult to resolve a cohesive sense of identity.

The grotesque body is a body in the act of becoming. It is never finished, never completed; it is continually built, continually created; and it is the principle of others' bodies. The logic of a grotesque image ignores the smooth and impenetrable surface of the neoclassical bodies, and magnifies only excrescences and orifices, which lead into the bodies' depths. The outward and inward details are merged. Moreover, the grotesque body swallows and is swallowed by the world. This takes place in the openings and the boundaries, and the beginning and end which are closely linked and interwoven.⁴³

This process is well illustrated in one of the underlying narratives of the Oedipal myth. In this story the physical body becomes the site where the origins and migrations of a life find resolution.⁴⁴ While the story of Oedipus is also marked with the spiritual weight of a prophecy that predicts terrible events, it is his body that ultimately bears the scars, and consequently, Oedipus literally becomes monstrous in appearance. In his

essay entitled *The Foreigner*, Richard Sennett explores the implications of this aspect of the Oedipal myth in modern society.

In the story, Oedipus' body is first marked by his father, who tries to kill him by piercing his ankles with nails and leaving him to die in the wilderness. This first scar on his body is a memory of his origins. Instead of dying, Oedipus is saved by a servant, but taken from his homeland and raised by foster parents. He grows up unaware of his origin and the prophecy that requires him to kill his father and marry his mother. Later, when Oedipus unknowingly fulfills the prophecy, he is identified by the scars on his ankles. Sennett notes that, "Despite the great migrations of his life, his body contains permanent evidence about who he 'really' is ... His migratory experience counts for little, that is, in relation to his origin; in his origins lie his truth."⁴⁵ However, when Oedipus learns the truth of his origins he blinds himself by gouging out his eyes. It is this second scar, Sennett argues, which allows Oedipus to continue living, because it marks his body with his own journey and understanding of the world. "Since the king blinded himself, he has not lost faith in the world: rather he sees it in a new way, as a place of provisional loves, temporary attachments, insecurity ... The second scar has allowed him to dwell in the world, uncertainly, painfully, but aware."⁴⁶ Thus, the second scar is not the end of the story; it marks the beginning of a new phase in Oedipus' life.

Sennett explains: "The two scars on the body of King Oedipus represent a fundamental conflict in our civilization between the truth claims of belonging and origins versus the truths discovered by displacement and wandering."⁴⁷ However, Sennett argues that in the modern world people have stopped searching for their truth in the second scar, and have placed too much emphasis on the first scar of origins.⁴⁸ Sennett comes to the conclusion that in the modern city, "Indeterminacy [is] an

expressive achievement rather than blind chaos, an achievement in experience, requiring resolve, judgment, and art; this is our second scar.”⁴⁹

In addition, it is important to emphasize that the second scar is the one we make ourselves. Oedipus can only continue living once he finds a way to “notate” the tragic events in his life. Like Oedipus, it is difficult for us to continue making movements if we cannot discover some way to also mark the meaning in them. How and where this might be accomplished in architecture is also suggested by Frascari, in his discussion of monsters:

... the role of monsters is in the margins. There they transcend the text, first, by making the relationship between the parts and the whole an enigma, and second, by placing events within our vision that are capable of putting our thought out of place, of determining a buried but real possibility of meaning.⁵⁰

Just as monsters only exist at the edges, in spaces of shadow and confusion, in order for storytelling to take place in the city there have to be spaces left over, which the inhabitants of the city can fill in with their own narratives. These spaces, only momentarily resolved, allow the story of the city to pass from one person to the next, changing with each retelling. In this way inhabitants of the transient city are never in the process of simply *reading* the city, but always involved somehow in the *writing* of it. If architects attempt to complete the narratives they begin, then they arrest this “process of becoming,” which is the very life of the monstrous being. Therefore, buildings that are presented to us as complete, ironically, are insufficient in meeting the needs of the modern dweller. These considerations are central to the architectural proposal of this thesis, which seeks to explore how this narrative potential of architecture can create a form of social building in harmony with the transient mode of dwelling in the North American city.

CHAPTER 3: NARRATIVE IN ARCHITECTURE

3.1 Introduction

How is it possible for architecture to both facilitate and “notate” movements, *and* to create places in which to feel at home, without simply attempting to replace the rootedness of the pre-industrial society?

This chapter will explore how narrative has been equated with both the making of *place* and the making of *movements*. It is possible that narrative is capable, like Oedipus and Hermes, of containing contradictions within itself. As author and Professor of Architecture Daniel Willis explains, “Poetry and myth possess the ability to maintain contradictory opposites in a single image … they may actually make their differences appear more, not less, apparent.”⁵¹ This ability is similar in nature to the appearance of the monster. The monster is composed of fragments that can be clearly differentiated, yet it comprises a single being. For this reason, narrative has the potential to resolve the contending claims of place and mobility, without trying to make one like the other or hiding their inherent contradictions.

Narrative, as a form of making, allows for appropriations, transformations, variations, and exaggerations. This mode of communication reveals more about the present than the past; the storyteller might forget details, change or embellish parts of the story, or make things up, depending on the situation at hand, and in order to have the desired impact on the listeners. This type of narrative could be taken up and transformed by each subsequent storyteller, and the changes, rather than the

fundamental storyline, reveal the significant transformations taking place in the community.

This thesis project will therefore examine how the qualities of narrative can potentially be used in the formation of spaces to both “notate” movements in a meaningful way and create places where one can feel at home in the transient city.

3.2 Narrative and Making

“What does it mean to look for a place in which to settle? What gestures are to be made to settle? The word *settlement* stands for an action, a process and a dynamic.”⁵²

Historically, settling in a new place involved not only the building of new homes and temples, but also the practicing of rituals that would protect the new city and its inhabitants. In pre-industrial societies, migrations, when necessary, were never trivial, for the earth that was left behind had already been marked by ritual acts, and was the sacred ground of ancestors. These origins had tremendous importance to the inhabitants of the pre-industrial city. “The hearth of any city had a claim to being considered its primary altar, the birthplace of its identity and the spring of its religious life.”⁵³ Although the origin was sacred, architectural scholar Joseph Rykwert describes an ancient Greek custom that explains how relocation was still possible:

... religion forbade the abandoning of a place where the hearth had been fixed and the deified ancestors rested. In order to be absolved from all impiety each of them had to make use of a fiction by taking with him, in the form of a clod of earth, the sacred ground in which his ancestors were buried ... No one could move without bringing his earth and his ancestors with him.⁵⁴

In a similar Greek tradition, “when a city launched a new colony, a fire was brought from the host city’s sacred central fire, to the newly created city’s central fire.”⁵⁵ When movement was necessary, a symbolic act of relocating the origin took

place. The place of origin could not be abandoned, and in spirit, it never was; by bringing a symbolic piece of earth or fire to the new ground, the connection to the ancestors was preserved. A “fiction” was created through which the origin was transplanted from one place to another, thus the original dwelling place never became a source of longing, because it had not really been left behind. It was an origin symbolically displaced, and not a people.

While this tradition literally involves transporting a piece of earth, or a flame from a fire, social philosopher Michel de Certeau suggests that it was not the physical act, such as these, but the *fictions* that truly allowed new ground to be settled, and new spaces to be created. “The story’s first function is to authorize, or more exactly, to *found*.⁵⁶ While the act of bringing the piece of earth or fire is specific to Greek traditions, the concept of the story can be applied much more universally. De Certeau argues that the story as an act of foundation differs from more isolated (ancient, or pre-industrial) rituals because it is fragmented (not unique and whole, but increasingly heterogeneous), miniaturized (happens not on a national scale, but at the level of the family unit or individual), and polyvalent (the mixing together of so many personalized stories creates new meanings in different groups).⁵⁷ As such, the idea of the fiction as an act of foundation can be more readily appropriated by the transient city dweller than any specific tradition borrowed from history.

The word *narrative* is often equated with the term *fiction*. However, fact and fiction both make up the spectrum in which narrative operates. History and the “tall tale” could be viewed as points at opposite ends of this spectrum, but neither functions without elements of the other. Even in the most “complete” history there are elements that are unknown and puzzling. Even the wildest story must have its basis in reality in

order to truly capture the imagination. In fact, "... narrative, as opposed to analysis, has the power to mimic the unfolding of reality. Narrative is selective, and may be untrue, but it can produce the feeling of events occurring in time; it seems to be rooted in reality."⁵⁸

Paul Ricoeur goes even further to suggest that the knowledge gained from this type of narrative, the poetic rather than the historical, can be more enlightening because "... stories reveal universal aspects of the human condition and that, therefore, poetry is more philosophical than the history of historians, who are too dependent on anecdotic aspects of life."⁵⁹ This is not to suggest that history and analysis have no value in society. However, if the printed word now plays the most dominant and enduring role in conveying history, then architecture, rather than fighting for its former role as the "universal form of writing," is free to move towards the realm of the subjective, or the fiction; perhaps these are the most fertile grounds for making architecture in the post-industrial transient city.

Many architects have considered narrative and fiction in their work, even focusing on specific works of literature when designing spaces. One striking example of this is the unbuilt project by the early twentieth century architect, Giuseppe Terragni, known as the "Danteum." In the project, a monument to Dante and his work, Terragni proposes to construct a sequence of spaces directly relating to concepts found in the *Divine Comedy*. Movement through the building corresponds to the journey in the story, taking visitors through the spaces of the Inferno, Purgatory, and Paradise, respectively. In the space relating to Paradise, where materiality and form were considered least important due to its utopian character,⁶⁰ Terragni's gestures deconstruct, rather than eliminate, materiality and form. For example, in his design for this room there is a series

of glass columns that support a transparent frame open to the sky, in order to give the whole space a sense of floating (figs. 10 and 11). This approach is consistent not only with Dante's description of Paradise, but also with the writing style of this part of the text itself, which is widely held to be the most theological and mystical of the three parts.

This project, while it faithfully adheres to the specific narrative content in question, only exploits characteristics of storytelling that exist at the analytical and historical end of the narrative spectrum. Part of the beauty of poetry and fiction is their ability to suspend disbelief and carry us into worlds of the imagination. Certain liberties can be taken; "authentic lies" can be told. These "authentic lies"—so-called by contemporary author and architect Daniel Willis—are "poetic constructions made of tangible things that re-present universal qualities in ways that deviate from literal imitation, in order to demonstrate a new consciousness of polyvalent meanings."⁶¹ Conversely, Terragni's project seeks to construct an experience as close to that of the *Divine Comedy* as possible, whereby "the ultimate response to the project would require no intellectual activity on the part of the observer."⁶²

Spaces tell
specific story
of Dante's
journey through
the Inferno,
Purgatory &
Paradise.

SPECIFIC NARRATIVE
CONTENT

NOT
NARRATIVE
QUALITIES

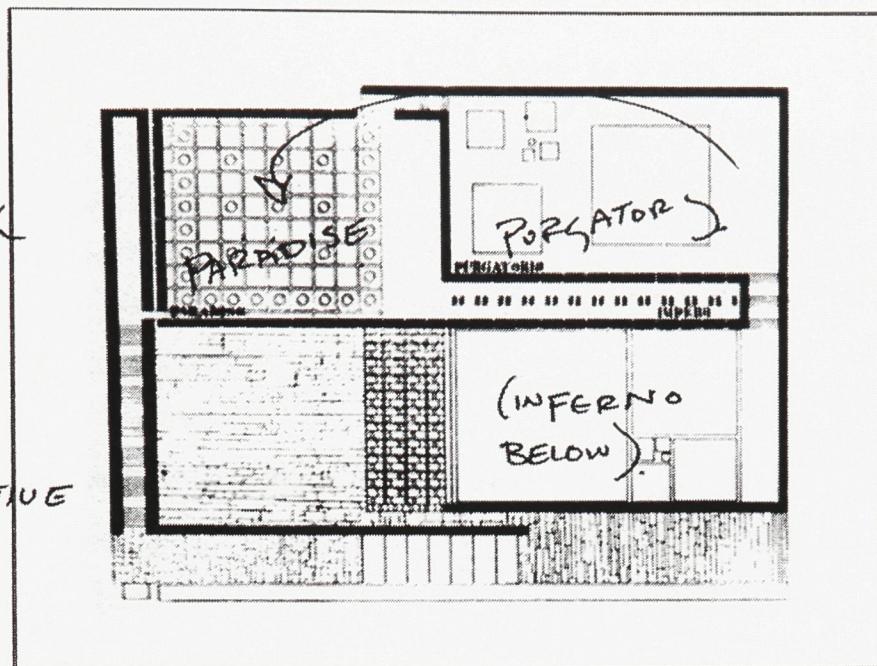


Figure 10. Plan of the Danteum at topmost level

Source: Adapted from original drawing by Giuseppe Terragni, in Thomas L. Schumacher, *The Danteum*, 34 (Princeton: Princeton Architectural Press, 1985).

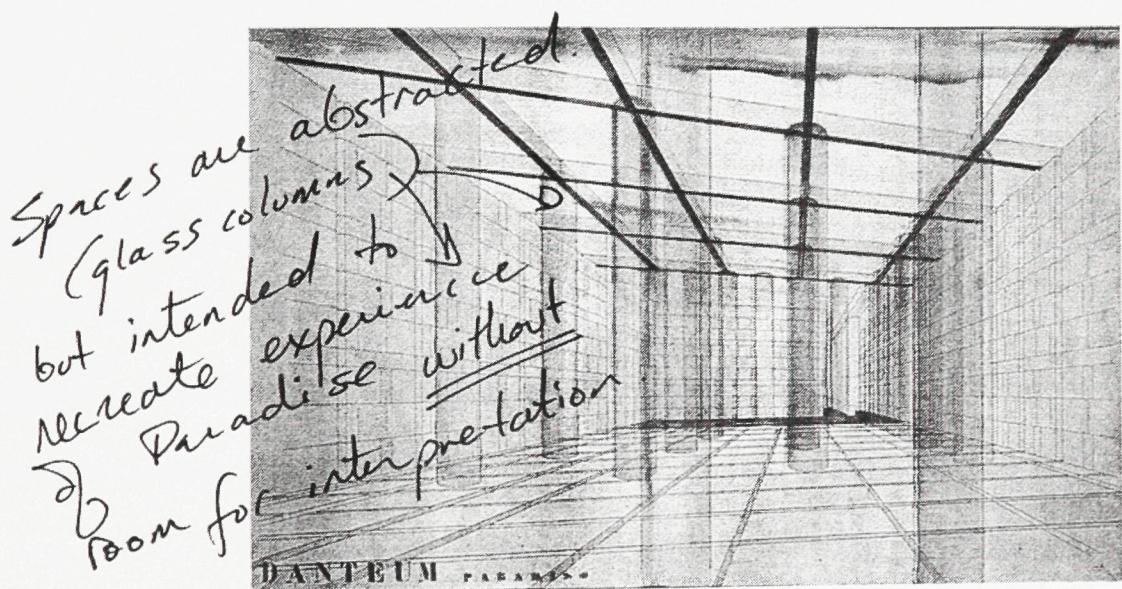


Figure 11. Room of the Paradise

Source: Adapted from original watercolour by Giuseppe Terragni, in Thomas L. Schumacher, *The Danteum*, 123 (Princeton: Princeton Architectural Press, 1985).

Where the Danteum uses a specific narrative to construct a singular and linear journey, other projects have explored the qualities of fiction that open up and expose the gaps and inconsistencies between accepted facts, allowing for the creation of multiple meanings.

Stories, however valuable, may be puzzling as well as engaging. Often, even the greatest story may fail at the task it sets for itself—and this applies as much to movies and plays and novels as it does to folk tales handed down from our ancestors. Stories ostensibly begin in order to explain something, or make an event clear. They turn an incident this way and that, throw several kinds of light on it, surround it with a certain mood—and then put it back in its place, still unexplained.⁶³

This “puzzling” and polysemous quality does not absolve the architect of such stories of their responsibility in terms of the juxtapositions and relationships that they create in search of meaning. In fact, as architectural historian Alberto Pérez-Gómez suggests, the architect is not only responsible for the narrative that he or she constructs, but also for encouraging the reciprocity of the inhabitants of these buildings in making new meanings:

[It is important] ... to consider seriously the potential of narrative as the structure of human life, a poetic vision realized in space-time. The architect, given such a task, must also write the “script” for his dramas, regardless of whether this becomes an explicit or implicit transformation of the “official” building program ... Only by accepting this responsibility will it be possible for his work to invite the radicalized “individual” of the late twentieth century to exercise, with his/her freedom, a reciprocal responsibility to “participate” in the re-creation of a work of art...⁶⁴

The participation of this “radicalized individual” of postmodernism in exercising his/her freedom is also, paradoxically, a social gesture, because he/she is participating in the creation of social space. Where buildings do not encourage this type of participation, and

...where stories are disappearing (or else are being reduced to museographical objects), there is a loss of space: deprived of narrations (as one sees it happen in both the city and the countryside), the group or the individual regresses toward the disquieting, fatalistic experience of a formless, indistinct and nocturnal totality. By considering the role of stories in delimitation, one can see that the primary function is to *authorize* the establishment, displacement or transcendence of limits...⁶⁵

Without the establishment of a sense of place the transient dweller runs the risk of having no place to pause, no way of slipping out of his/her individual movements and into the public realm; without a sense of place, the city has no social realm. What Pérez-Gómez points out is that without boundaries, which can be both established and transgressed, the world becomes an immense, continuous, and uniform space.

A project that is conscious of the boundary between public and private space, the slippage between them, as well as the potential social narratives that result is Carlo Scarpa's Brion Cemetery in San Vito d'Altivole, Italy. Although the cemetery was a private commission, when designing the project Scarpa himself explained that he tried to "approach death in a social and civic way."⁶⁶ While Scarpa's design of the cemetery was influenced by his reflections on landscapes found in literature, such as those of *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* and Raymond Roussel's *Locus Solus*, he goes beyond simply representing these narratives. Rather, he was influenced by particular aspects, such as the image of the female body in the landscape, a prominent theme found in both literary works.⁶⁷ Consequently, the female body is found throughout Scarpa's drawings of the project, although not as imitations of the narratives mentioned, but as a mode of exploring potential relationships and narratives related to his own design concerns (*figs. 12, 13 and 14*). His intense attention to this corporeal experience of the space sets up the possibility for other types of narrative encounter to take place. An example of one such moment in his architecture can be seen in the entrance to the Meditation Chapel, which is a private place of contemplation within the larger cemetery grouping.

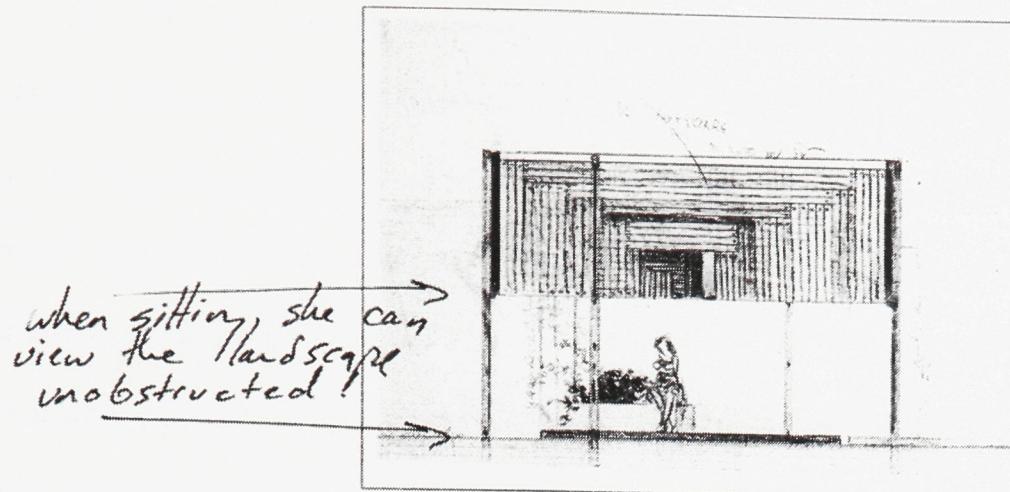


Figure 12. Woman sitting in Meditation Chapel

Source: Adapted from original drawing by Carlo Scarpa, c1970-74, in *Carlo Scarpa, architect: intervening with history*. Nicholas Olsberg et al., 140 (Montreal: Canadian Centre for Architecture, 1999).

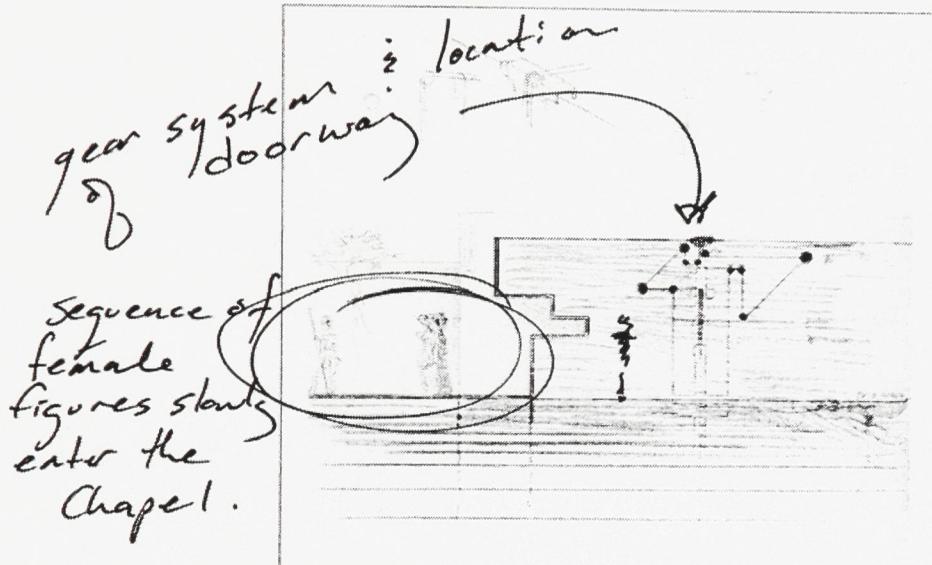


Figure 13. Elevation of entry and gear system wall.

Source: Adapted from original drawing by Carlo Scarpa, in *Carlo Scarpa Opera Completa*, eds. Francesco dal Co and Giuseppe Mazzariol, 292 (Milano: Electa, 1984).

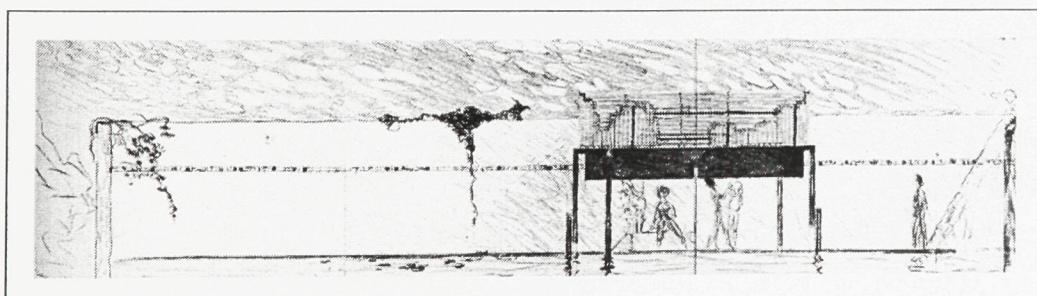


Figure 14. Female figures entering the Chapel

Source: Adapted from original drawing by Carlo Scarpa, in *Carlo Scarpa Opera Completa*, eds. Francesco dal Co and Giuseppe Mazzariol, 303 (Milano: Electa, 1984).

Approached via the central passage, the chapel is visually separated from the entrance by a long wall. Visitors desiring to enter the chapel must pass through a glass doorway that is pushed downwards into a pool of water. A system of gears and counterweights, visible on the reverse side of the wall, return the door to its original position once someone has passed through (fig. 15). What this series of moments reveals about the chapel is its own inhabitation. Narratives of the space can be constructed through “hints” that are present in the architecture. One such hint is left when the door to the chapel is opened—it becomes soaked with water. When someone approaches the wet door, they can deduce that the chapel is either currently, or was very recently, occupied.

This establishes a sense of connection to other people who might come to reflect or meditate in the space. Similarly, if someone did choose to enter the chapel, anyone inside would be notified by the audible gear system, announcing that their solitude is being broken. Since the wall of the passage extends slightly past the location of the door, the inhabitant(s) inside would have a moment to collect themselves before their moment of reflection was intruded upon (fig. 16). The narrative established by the architecture elongates time and space, stretching the moment between the opening of the door and the entering of the chapel.

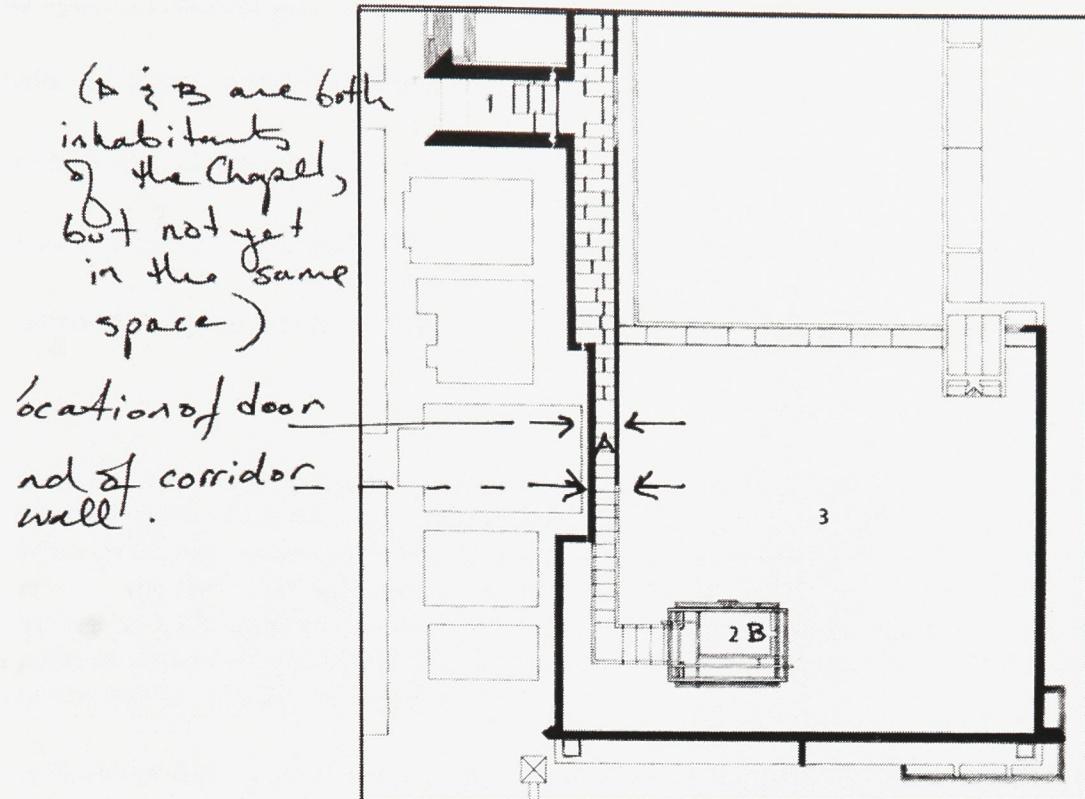


Figure 15. Partial plan of Brion Cemetery including Meditation Chapel (2) and surrounding area. Source: Adapted from Plan of Brion Cemetery, Firm of George Ranalli, 1999, in Carlo Scarpa, architect: *intervening with history*. Nicholas Olsberg et al., 127 (Montréal: Canadian Centre for Architecture, 1999).

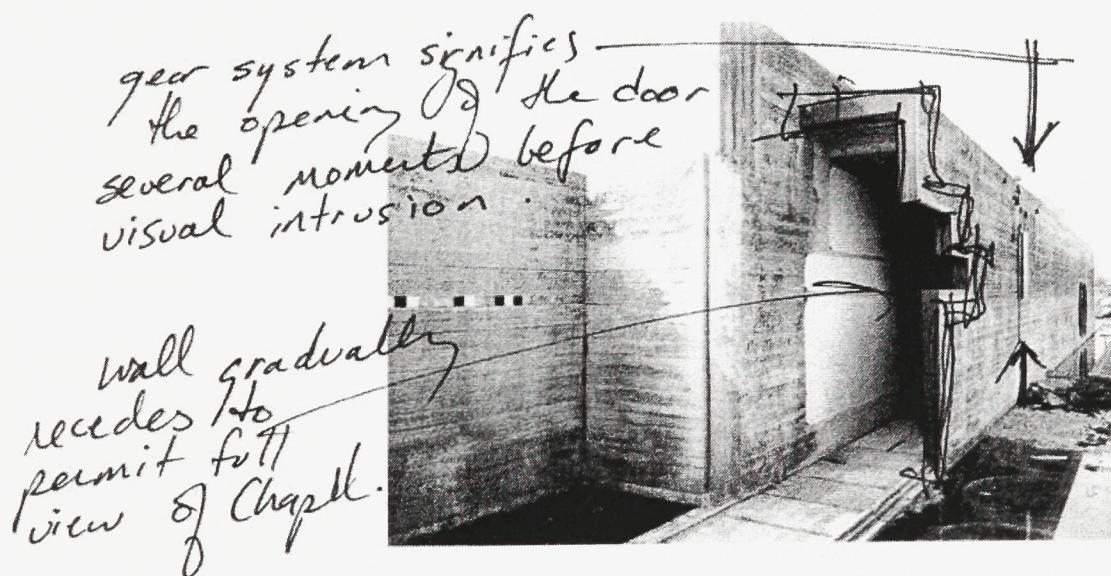


Figure 16. Photograph of entry to Meditation Chapel showing wall and gear system.

Source: Adapted from Propylaeum, Guido Guidi, photograph, 1996, in Carlo Scarpa, architect: *intervening with history*. Nicholas Olsberg et al., 193 (Montreal: Canadian Centre for Architecture, 1999).

This space demonstrates not only an intensely sensitive approach to the transgression of the boundary between public and private space, but also the involvement of the inhabitants in understanding the place in its social context through narratives in which they themselves become involved. Viconian scholar Donald Kunze, makes a distinction between spaces like these, and those that are purely didactic in nature:

...where the landscape as a text containing the signs of facts always leads back to the isolated thoughts of the scholar, the landscape as rhetoric is like a play where the audience gradually becomes aware that they themselves are characters in the drama they observe ... the rhetorical approach to place transforms the observer-as-scientist into an active role as a philosopher, poet, and architect, whose relationships to place are dialectic. As a philosopher, one must understand the cause of the humanly made world through some knowledge of what making involves...⁶⁸

Narratives that involve, and in fact, require inhabitants to engage spaces in meaningful ways enable them to participate in the act of making places.

3.3 Narrative and Movement

In modern Athens, the vehicles of mass transportation are called metaphorai. To go to work or come home, one takes a “metaphor”—a bus or a train. Stories could also take this noble name: every day, they traverse and organize places; they select and link them together; they make sentences and itineraries out of them. They are spatial trajectories.⁶⁹

Movements—actions—are inherently the stuff of stories, which organize a series of events in order to create meaning. Narratives must select a point of beginning and arrange specific movements into a sequence with the intention of reaching some type of end. However, there is a difference between movements that involve a return to the place of origin and those that involve forays into an uncertain future. As previously mentioned, sometimes even the best stories fail to provide answers. Rather, they involve

the careful examination of a subject from many angles—and often—the creation of more questions, more confusion. In his essay, “Life: A Story in Search of a Narrator,” Paul Ricoeur notes that the examination of the story of life is essential, referring to the Socratic maxim “the unexamined life is not worth living.”⁷⁰ This is exactly why the migrations of life, such as those of Oedipus, must be notated and given social value.

Migrancy... involves a movement in which neither the points of departure nor those of arrival are immutable or certain. It calls for a dwelling in language, in histories, in identities that are constantly subject to mutation. Always in transit, the promise of a homecoming—completing the story, domesticating the detour—becomes an impossibility.⁷¹

Just as the second scar on Oedipus’ body does not mark the end of his journeys, a narrative need not come to a definitive or totalizing conclusion—it need not define identity or prohibit the further transformation of identity (the “completing of the story”). Ricoeur explains that this is because “... the meaning of or significance of a story wells up from the *intersection of the world of the text and the world of the reader.*”⁷²

The recently completed Canadian War Museum in Ottawa (a joint venture project between Moriyama & Teshima Architects of Toronto and Griffiths Rankin Cook Architects of Ottawa) contains two rooms that offer the opportunity to compare spaces that specifically exploit narrative and movement, bringing together the world of the text and the world of the reader, each to a different effect. Both rooms also utilize, or at least contain, texts that describe certain design elements in their respective spaces.⁷³

The first room, called the Regeneration Hall, is a tall narrow room entered at the second level. The windows in the hall frame a view of the nearby Peace Tower on Parliament Hill. As one descends the staircase, the opacity of the glazing changes, obscuring the exterior view and redirecting attention to a plaster statue called Hope, placed at the lower level of the hall. The text, which is located in the upper level,

explains how the space is designed so that as one loses sight of "Peace," "Hope" comes into view (figs. 17 and 18).

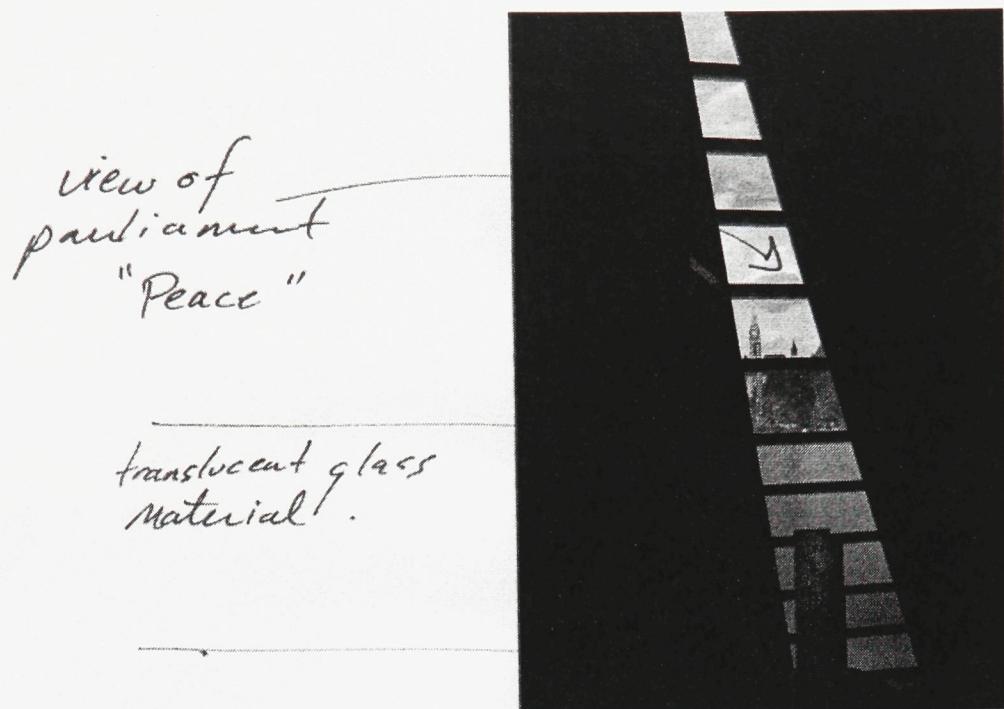


Figure 17. Regeneration Hall, Canadian War Museum, Moriyama & Teshima, and Griffiths Rankin Cook Architects, 2004.
Source: original photograph, 2006.

only sky visible
above .

statue of
"Hope" →
illuminated .

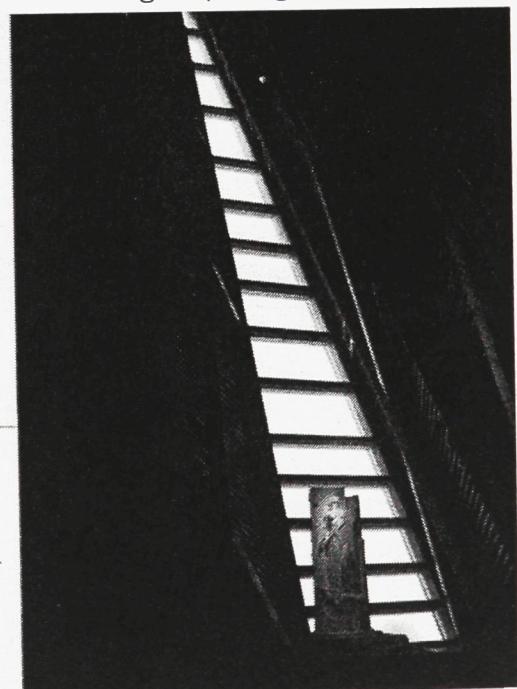


Figure 18. Regeneration Hall, Canadian War Museum, Moriyama & Teshima, and Griffiths Rankin Cook Architects, 2004.
Source: original photograph, 2006.

The second space, Memorial Hall, is a small room containing only one artifact—the headstone of the Unknown Soldier from the First World War. Each Remembrance Day, November 11th, at 11:00 a.m., (when the weather obliges) a ray of sunlight shines into the room, illuminating the headstone (fig. 19).

*- narrative is predetermined/predictable, but visitors
rather experience it - they imagine it - completing the
story themselves.*

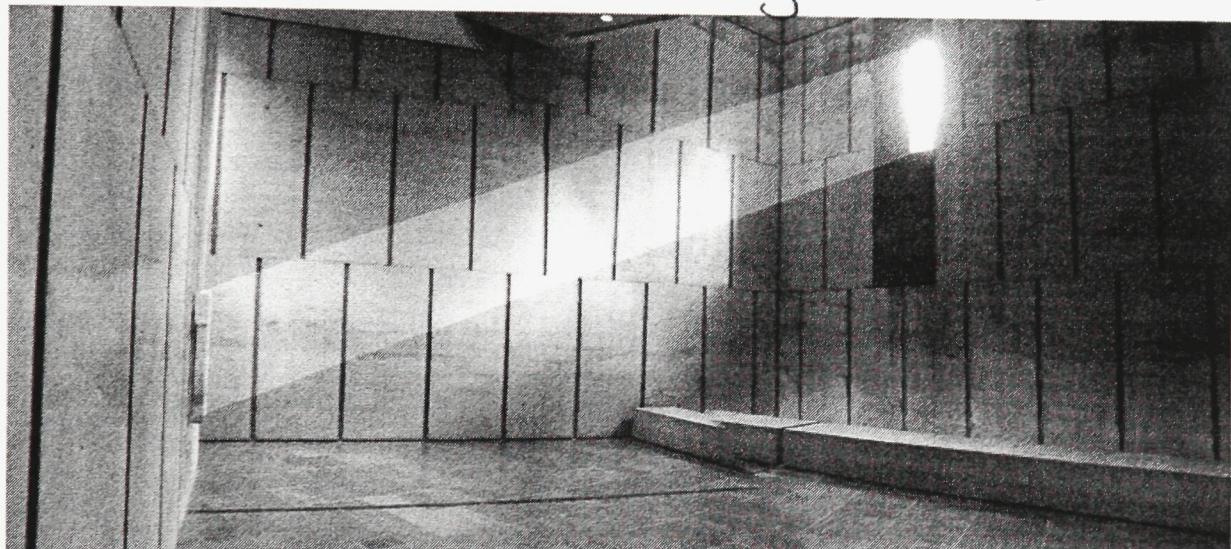


Figure 19. Memorial Hall, Canadian War Museum, Moriyama & Teshima, and Griffiths Rankin Cook Architects, 2004.

Source: original digital collage, 2006.

The Memorial Hall exploits processes that current knowledge tells us are predictable: the rotation of the earth and its movement around the sun, which regulate day, night, seasons, and the angle of the sun at any given time of year. These movements follow rules and trajectories that can be predetermined and mapped. However, while human beings are bound by gravity and other laws of physics, their movements in general are typically individual and unpredictable. The first space,

Regeneration Hall, attempts to prescribe to its visitors' movements a very specific meaning by limiting their path, narrating a unified experience of the space that ultimately restricts the re-creation or interpretation of meaning, and is therefore an *unproductive* gesture in architecture. This space could be considered *landscape as text* (to use Kunze's distinction, as quoted in the preceding chapter) because it requires a prior knowledge of the symbols in question, and the inhabitants remain observers, merely watching themselves go through the motions prescribed by the space.

On the other hand, Memorial Hall could be considered *landscape as rhetoric*, since the event that is the basis for its design is not likely to be actually witnessed by the overwhelming majority of visitors to the museum. Hence, it requires that its visitors use their imagination to complete the experience. While the room is far too small to *physically* contain a significant number of people at the moment in question, it is *conceptually* open enough to enter into the collective imagination of the public. In fact, on every November 11th at 11:00 a.m., the space could potentially contain an infinite number of people through a narrative that directs the visitors' attention to a specific and predictable event, yet still demands their participation in the creation of it, and therefore makes use of movement to create a *productive* space.

In his book *The Practice of Everyday Life* Michel de Certeau notes that while movements such as walking through the city can be transcribed onto a map, the record that is left behind reveals only trajectories, while the *practice* of walking is absent: whether people were wandering, window shopping, or rushing to get somewhere.⁷⁴

What the map cuts up, the story cuts across. In Greek, narration is called "diegesis": it establishes an itinerary (it "guides") and it passes through (it "transgresses"). The space of operations it travels in is made of movements: it is *topological*, concerning the deformations of figures, rather than *topical*, defining places.⁷⁵

De Certeau points out here that the narrative can both “guide” and “transgress.” Like Hermes who was responsible for both creating and transgressing boundaries, a story can have both a precise “itinerary” and allow for flexibility of movement at the same time:

To write ... although seemingly an imperialist gesture, for it is engaged in an attempt to establish a path, a trajectory, a, however limited and transitory, territory of dominion of perception, power and knowledge, can also involve a repudiation of domination and be invoked as a transitory trace, the gesture of an offer: a gift, the enigmatic present of language that attempts to reveal an opening in ourselves and the world we inhabit.⁷⁶

The design of the Memorial Hall in the War Museum manages to do just this: it carefully guides movement in order to generate a narrative, yet leaves the narrative open enough to allow for it to be appropriated into the collective social imagination.

3.4 The Narrative Hinge

This duality of narrative arises from its position as the hinge between places and movements: it is the actions and events in life—the movements—that generate stories, which in turn explain the creation of identities or, more specifically in this context, places. As such, the oppositions between place (fixity) and movement can be resolved by narrative, without blurring or compromising their inherent distinctions. “Stories thus carry out a labour that constantly transforms places into spaces, or spaces into places. They also organize the play of changing relationships between places and spaces.”⁷⁷

The following architectural proposal of this thesis seeks to utilize this quality of narrative in order to put forth the possibility of a more synchronous relationship between building and dwelling in the transient city. It seeks to find a way for

inhabitants of the city to participate in its making, regardless of how long they dwell in it, in order for them to feel at home while they are there. It also seeks to generate new movements and find ways to make migration meaningful, by providing a framework through which to view the processes of displacement in which the modern city dweller takes part.

CHAPTER 4: ARCHITECTURAL PROJECT [Two Years ... Four Months ... One Day]

The thesis project builds upon an existing proposal that seeks to commemorate Canadian literary history in the City of Ottawa. The project, which proposes to focus on the *history* of narrative at the scale of both the city and nation, provided the ideal opportunity to also explore the idea of *storytelling* in the city, and the potential for narrative in the architecture itself.

4.1 Existing Proposal: The Poets' Pathway

The “Poets’ Pathway” is an urban planning proposal currently being put forward to the City of Ottawa by the Greenspace Alliance of Ottawa to create a walk around the city that will commemorate Canadian literary history. The pathway will connect (and protect) existing green space currently owned by the National Capital Commission, beginning in Beechwood Cemetery and ending in Britannia Woods (fig. 20). The proposed 30-km pathway circles the central part of the City of Ottawa, and connects to other paths such as the Trans-Canada and Rideau Trails. The project places specific emphasis on two literary groups established in Ottawa in the late nineteenth century: the English-speaking Confederation Poets and a French-speaking group of poets and authors called “*Le Mouvement Litéraire*”. The writings of both groups were considered to have been inspired by a strong sense of place and admiration for the “untouched” Canadian landscape. The continued enjoyment and simultaneous protection of these dwindling landscapes is therefore considered vital to the project.⁷⁸

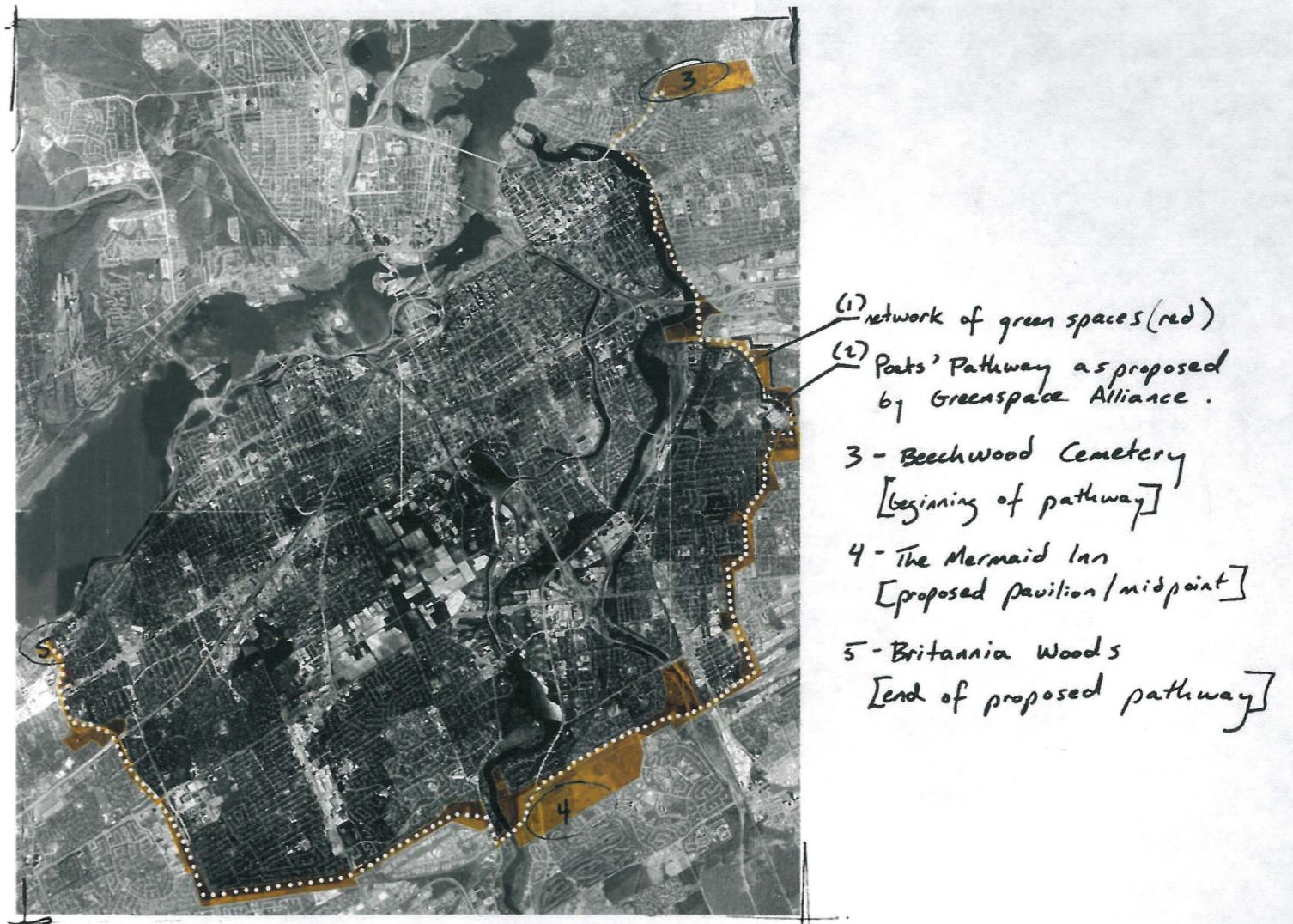


Figure 20. Plan of proposed “Poets’ Pathway,” 2006, created by author based on maps on the Greenspace Alliance of Ottawa webpage, <http://www.flora.org/greenspace/poetspath-1/index.shtml>

Critique

While the existing Greenspace Alliance plan proposes a fairly conventional approach to commemorating the literary community, where plaques would be erected and statues would be placed along the length of the pathway, it is notable is that it seeks to build on the sense of place by entwining itself with movement. By proposing that the commemoration take the form of a pathway that connects to existing infrastructure in the city, rather than building a museum, the project conveys its own sentiments about the current importance of movement in the context of the transient Canadian city.

Unaware of its own latent potential, the proposed project could do much more than simply protect and memorialize Canadian landscape and literature. It is an opportunity not only to look backwards, but also to engage in narratives of the present—perhaps written down and recorded by an author, but also explored through architectural space. Expanded in this way, the project has the capacity to expose questions of place and movement integral to our contemporary understanding of the city, and the stories that take place there. This thesis project therefore builds upon the Greenspace Alliance proposal for the “Poets’ Pathway” to better engage not only the commemoration of literature, but the *making* and understanding of the Canadian narrative evoked by both places and movements.

4.2 Introduction to Thesis Project

The thesis design project proposes to add to the program of the Poets' Pathway by creating a place that not only commemorates literary history, but that celebrates the broader notion of narrative in the context of the contemporary Canadian landscape. As narratives of movement and migration have been introduced as central to the very idea of Canadian-ness, the project brings together three different transient groups: Five writers invited for two [2] year residencies, space for up to thirty-two families of recent immigrants who can reside on the site for up to four [4] months while they are getting settled in the city, and travellers who might stay for one [1] day or night as they journey along the Poets' Pathway. These three groups represent not only different durations of stay in the city, but also different perspectives on viewing movement and place.

The project will offer residences for each of these different groups, as well as services and spaces that seek to engage these inhabitants in the process of *building*, *making*, *writing*, and *retelling* stories in the city—regardless of the duration of their various stays—rather than allowing them to remain as solely passive onlookers.

Preliminary Revisions

In its existing state, the proposal intends to look solely at the commemoration and recording of literary history, and the linearity of the path—its clear beginning and end points—demonstrate this approach. Some simple modifications to the overall plan can open the project to the broader spectrum of narrative possibilities, as well as place the project into a stronger relationship with the existing fabric of the city—both landscape and urban space.

This thesis proposes that the pathway be expanded—the “start” and “end” points connected—to create a loop. This path would have a more ambiguous relationship to the linearity of history, consistent with this search for storytelling and fiction within the City. It also connects the pathway to the scenic waterfront landscapes of the Ottawa River and the National Archives building on Wellington Street—an institution already devoted to the preservation and collection of works by Canadian authors.

As both the original proposal and the extended proposal of this thesis involve the commemoration of literary history, and the examination of the landscapes of the area, it makes sense that the pathway also connect to existing spaces of relevance to this function. The revised map (fig. 21) shows the extension of the pathway in order to connect to the National Archives of Canada, as well as the scenic waterfront spaces on the Ottawa River.

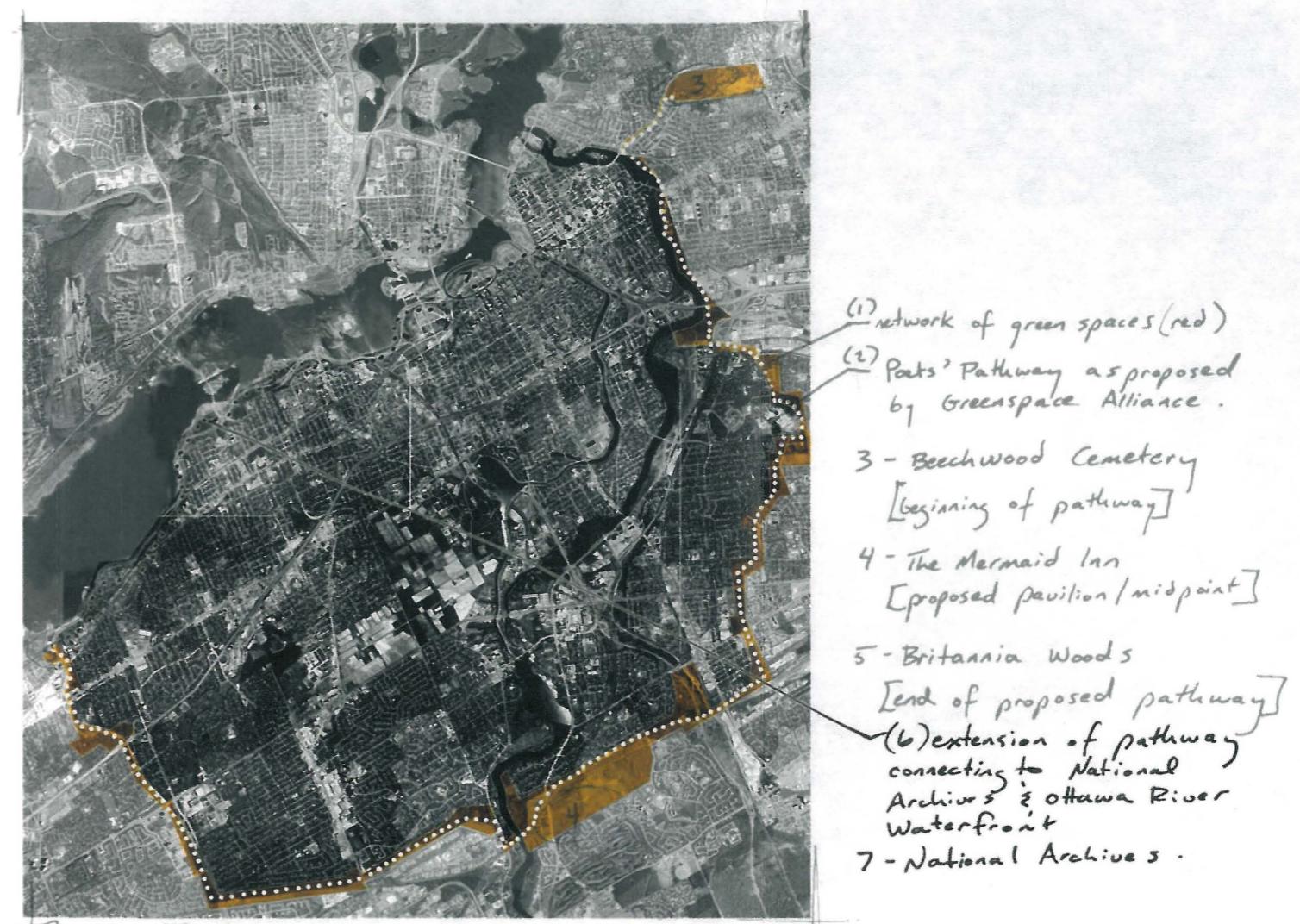


Figure 21. Revised plan of the Poets' Pathway, 2006, created by author.

4.3 Site Selection

As both movement *and* place are important in the thesis exploration, the exact location of the project along the proposed pathway was critical. The selected site, Vanier Park, is located near the beginning of the Greenspace Alliance proposal for the Poets' Pathway, along the Rideau River between Beechwood Avenue and Montreal Road, and bounded on one side by one end of the Vanier Parkway (fig. 22). The tranquility of the park space acts as a counterpoint to the sense of movement evoked by the pathway running through it.

Beechwood Avenue to the north and Montreal Road to the south both provide proximity to a wide variety of services necessary for the new inhabitants, including restaurants, grocery stores, laundromats, and bus routes.

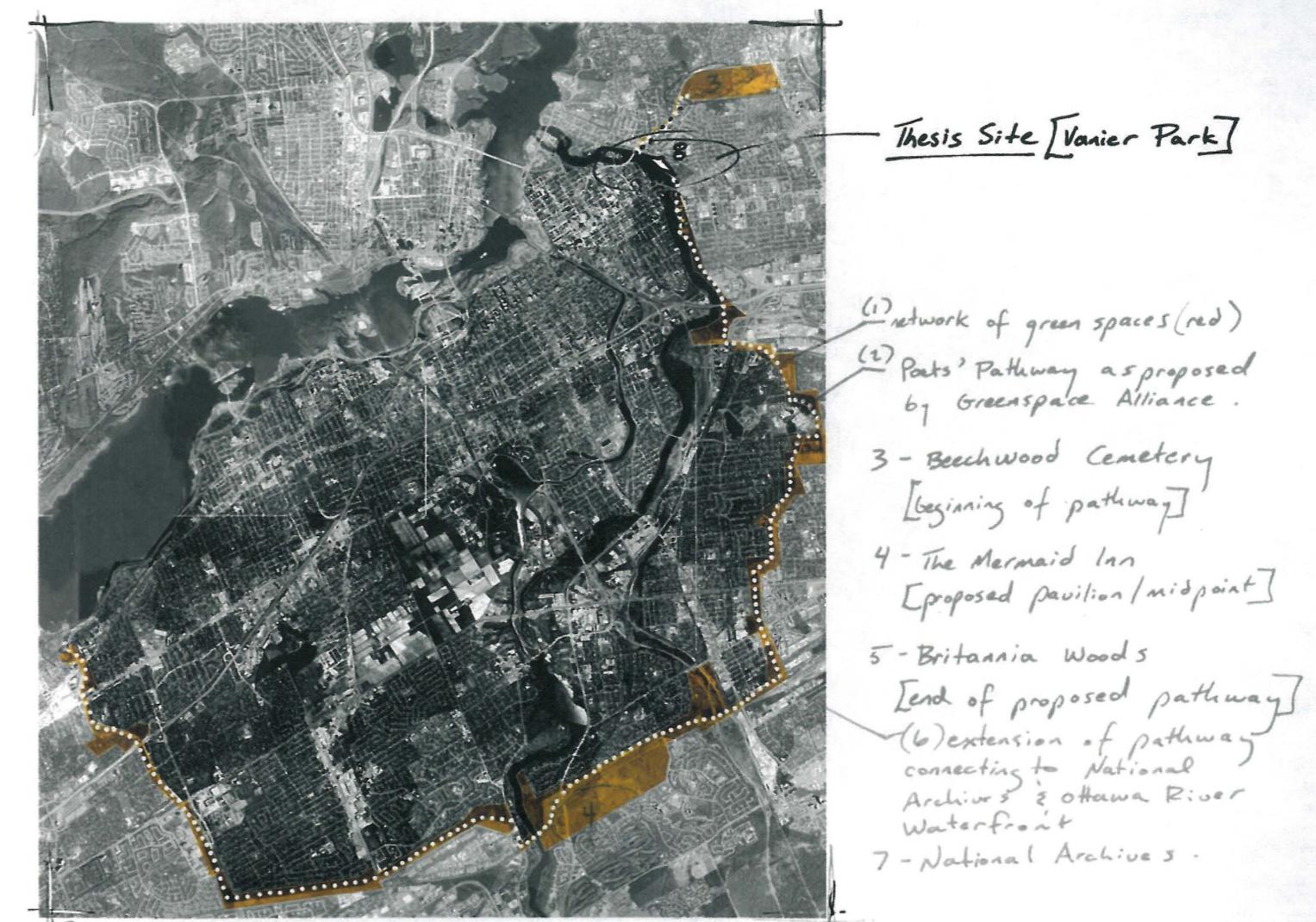


Figure 22. Map of "Poets' Pathway" showing location of Project Site: Vanier Park, 2006, created by author.

The park is currently a relatively un-programmed space with a small network of walking and biking trails (fig. 23). The green space that connects it to the north has a playground for young children, while the park connecting to the south is equipped with a diverse range of recreational programs including a basketball court, baseball diamonds and tennis courts (fig. 24). While Vanier Park was chosen because of its lack of intense programming, the intention is not to disrupt the current activities on the site despite adding and integrating the new programs. However, it also important that the project engage with the *landscape* in some way as this is one of the critical elements in the Poets' Pathway proposal, which identifies it as one of the key inspirations of early Canadian writers. This was also important within the context of the city, because the extensive green spaces within and around Ottawa make up a large part of the city's identity, and therefore play an important role in the narratives of the city.

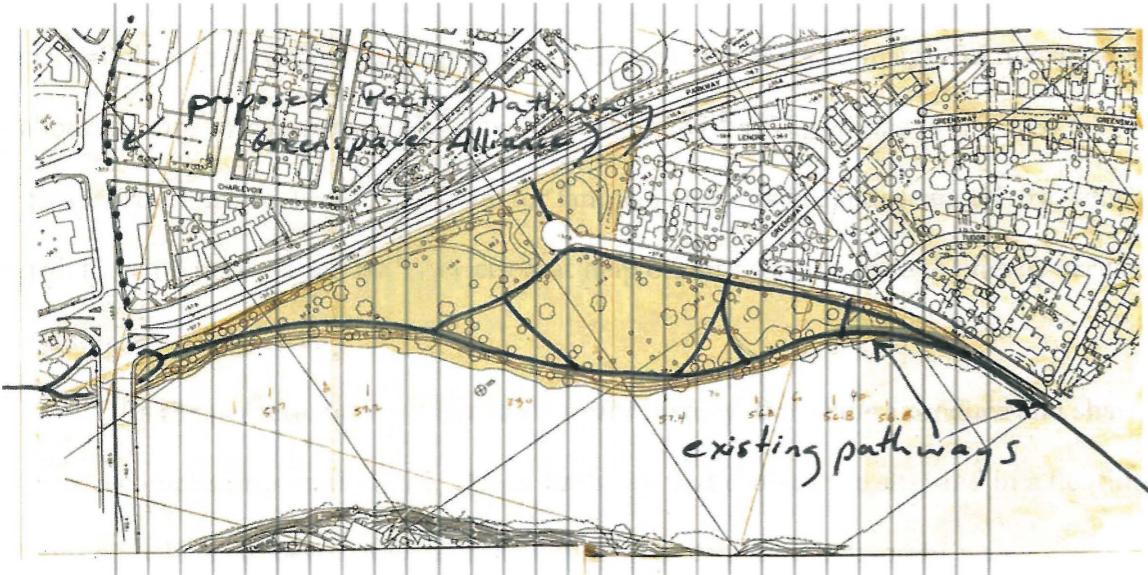


Figure 23. Map showing existing pathways through site, and connecting to Poets' Pathway, 2006, created by author.



Figure 24. Programmed green spaces connect to the site to the north and south, composite drawing, 2006, created by author.

4.4 Program

The program is comprised of *residential* and *institutional* components, sewn together and integrated into the city through their relationship to the landscape.

The residential component consists of transitional housing for the three groups: Canadian writers, recent immigrants, and travellers. As each resides on the site for a different period of time, and has different expectations and requirements for dwelling, there are three different conditions within the dwelling units that respond to their varying needs.

The institutional aspect of the program focuses on spaces that have the potential to bring these groups together at various times of the day and year, and for different purposes.

The writers, as the residents of the longest duration and perhaps always already critical observers of their environments, offer both practical and insightful information about the city to the new immigrants. Each of the writers' dwellings is attached to public programs, such as a classroom for language lessons and a daycare centre, which provide vital information and services that help orient and introduce the newly arrived immigrants to the city.

As the perpetuators of Canada's literary history, the writers produce and share their accomplishments along the Poets' Pathway that crosses the site, and in a floating pavilion, which connects to each of the writers' residences in a different way.

The travelers, whose relationship to the landscape (both green and urban space) is one primarily of leisure, meet the immigrants in gardens and social spaces in which they can share their stories of travel and home, writers of the city in a different way.

Table 1 Program Breakdown

Flexible Residence Building		Immigrants and Travelers	[4 months & 1 day]
Rooms*			64 (with various square footages)
Kitchens			32
Bathrooms			32
Complete Units (including kitchen and bath)	1 bedroom 2 bedroom 3 bedroom or combination of the above		32 maximum 32 maximum 16 maximum average 25 units
Shared Space	living rooms, kitchens, bathrooms, children's paddling pool, and adult lap pool		360 m ²

*The residence is composed of rooms that can be connected to facilities (kitchen and bath) to make a complete unit. The number of rooms incorporated into the unit is based on the needs of the resident [4 months]. "Leftover" rooms are rented out to overnight guests [1 day] who can then use the kitchen and bath facilities that are not incorporated into complete units.

Writers' Residences and Docks		Writers and Immigrants	[2 years & 4 months]
Writers' Residences			5 @ 110m ²
1	Poet		
2	Children's Author		
3	Playwright		
4	Author of Fiction		
5	Author of Non-Fiction		
Public Space/Docks**	Café/Coffeehouse Children's Daycare & Playground Playhouse/Outdoor Theatre Classroom Exhibit space		
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

** Docks contain public spaces that provide essential services for the immigrant population on site, but are accessible and open to all inhabitants at different times.

Floating Pavilion		Writers and Travelers	[2 years & 1 day]
Boardwalk	"Poets' Pathway"		620m long
Pavilion	Attaches to docks to provide temporary additional space for their various programs		1

Table 1. Point form breakdown of programmatic elements telling how many of each type of residence there will be etc. and spaces shared by different groups.

4.5 Site Strategy

Path

As mentioned, certain attributes of the existing park are to remain as intact as possible. The existing pathway, currently used primarily as a recreational biking and walking trail connecting to Ottawa's network of green spaces, plays a vital and animated role in the narrative of the city. It retains this role, although adding to it, where the location of the existing path is shifted, either making way for, or engaging with, the new interventions. This is the first and *functionally* most direct pathway, although it meanders through the site, taking its cue from the curves and bends of the Rideau River (fig. 25).

A second path was created by drawing a straight line from one end of the site to another—from the “entry” point, to the point of “departure.” This path negotiates both the shoreline *and* the river, acting as a boardwalk or bridge that, instead of connecting opposite sides of the river, draws the urban space of the city into the landscape in order to provide a new vantage from which to experience the landscape. This second path distinguishes the project site from the rest of the pathway by establishing a different relationship to the landscape. Although it very literally has a linear and well-defined itinerary, it opens up a dialogue with the immediate landscape and the city. It also intersects the public spaces, or “docks” which relate to the program of the Poets’ Pathway, thereby enticing moments of pause along the way (fig. 26).

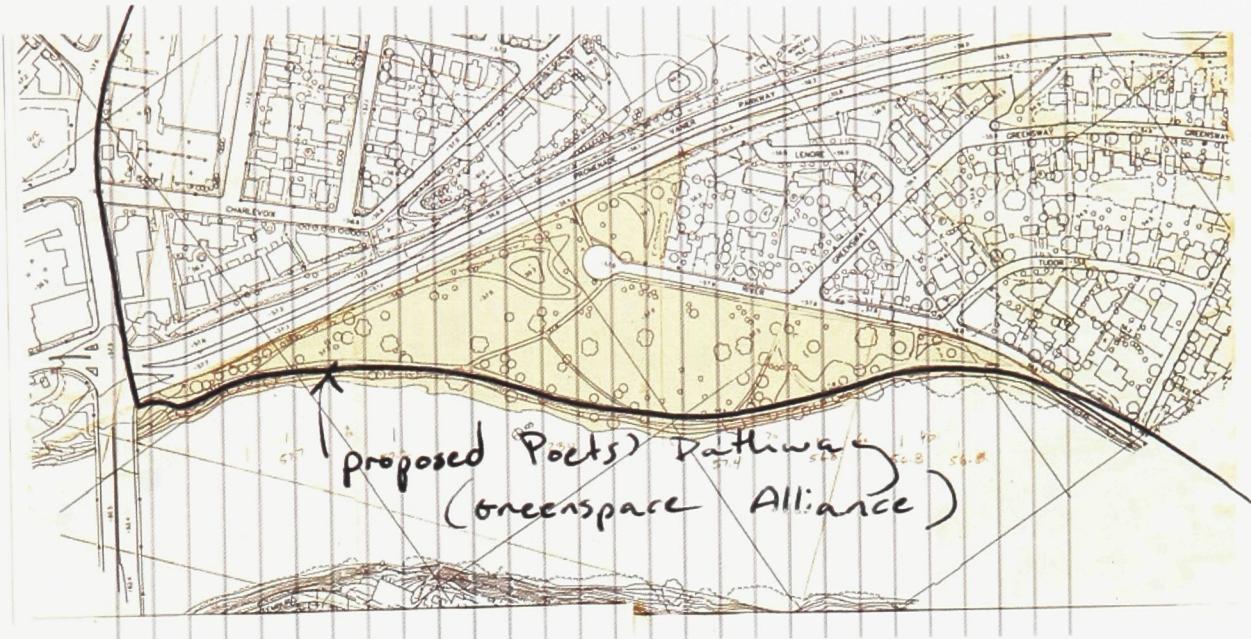


Figure 25. Existing path through site following landscape, composite drawing, 2006, created by author.

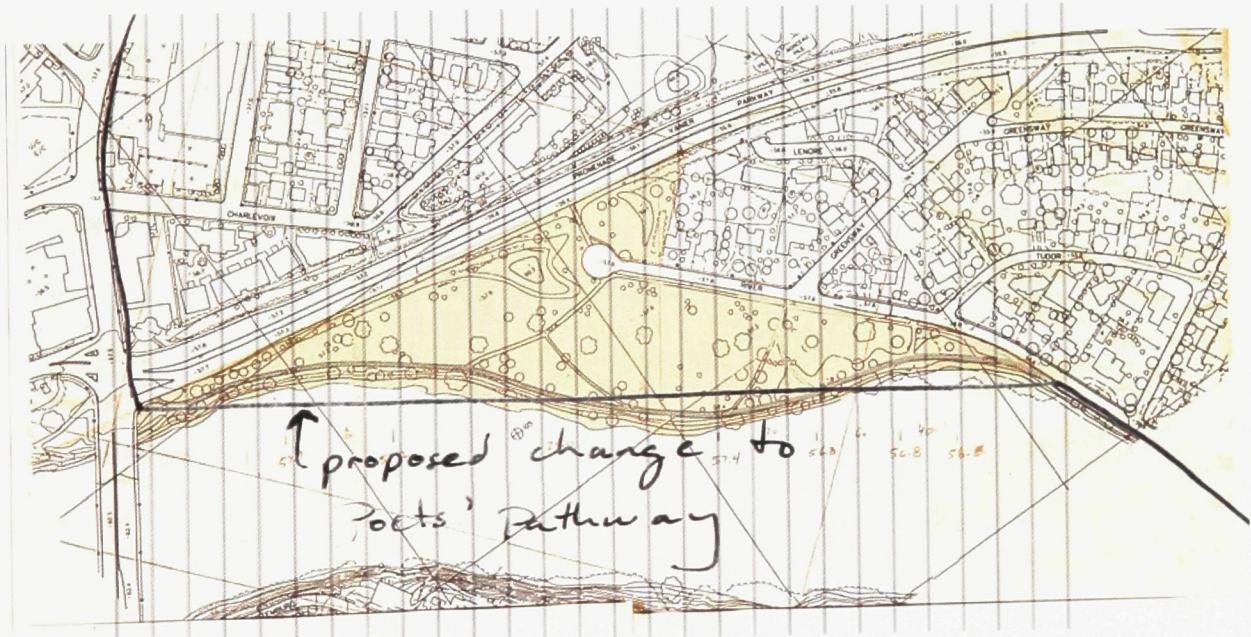


Figure 26. New path through site, moves transgresses boundaries of landscape, composite drawing, 2006, created by author.

Segmentation

Perpendicular to the linear path the site is conceptually divided into equal segments in order to begin to break down the understanding of the site as a single entity, and to suggest the temporal nature of the city itself (fig. 28). If narratives of the pre-industrial city can be read in the archaeological layers of the earth built up over time, then narratives of the transient city follow movements that occur in subsequent layers across the surface of the earth. These conceptual “scars” begin to mark the shift in the modern relationship to place, by suggesting the incomplete and transient nature of the site itself, and open up space to the possibility of multiple readings.

Segmenting the site also serves to decentralize the space and prevent a single spatial hierarchy or identity from dominating the project, while still providing a distinct organizational structure. The primary spatial interventions originate within the boundaries formed by this stratification, and yet, are not restricted by them. Spatial hierarchies are determined by the residents and visitors—depending on who they are, how long they stay, and what time of the day or year they are there—more so than by *a priori* architectural design. These factors determine how the space is experienced based on the individual movements of the inhabitants.

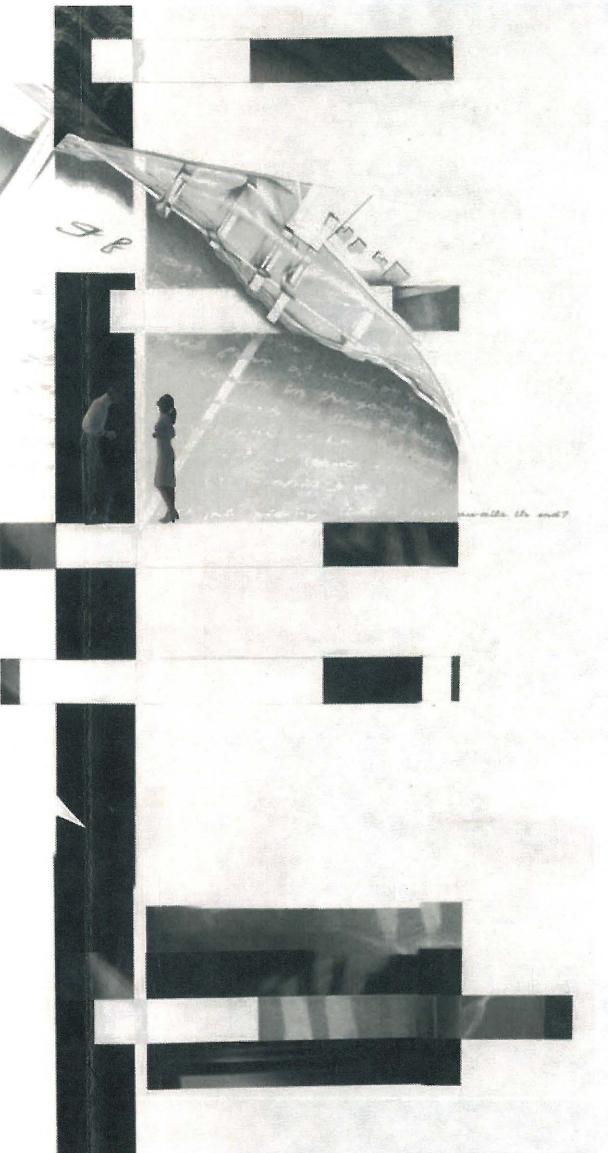


Figure 27. Early conceptual drawing of site segmentation, collage, 2006, created by author.

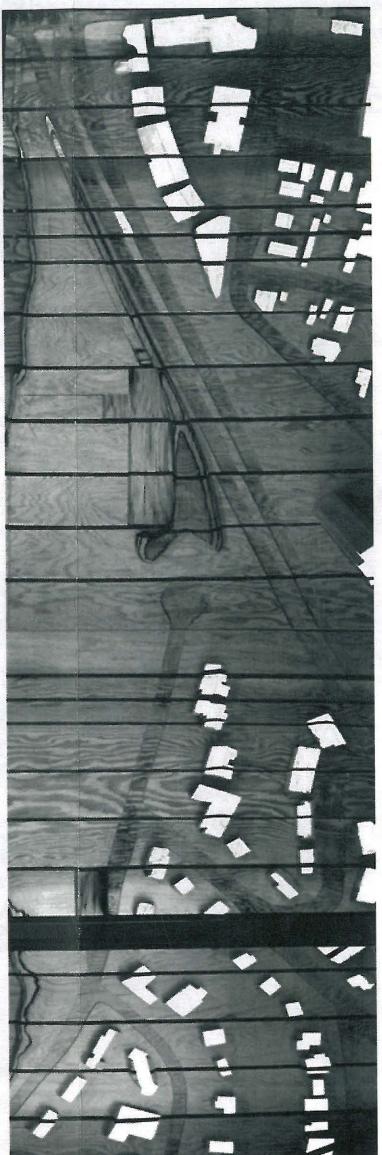


Figure 28. Segmentation of site perpendicular to new Poets' Pathway, composite image of site model, 2006, created by author.

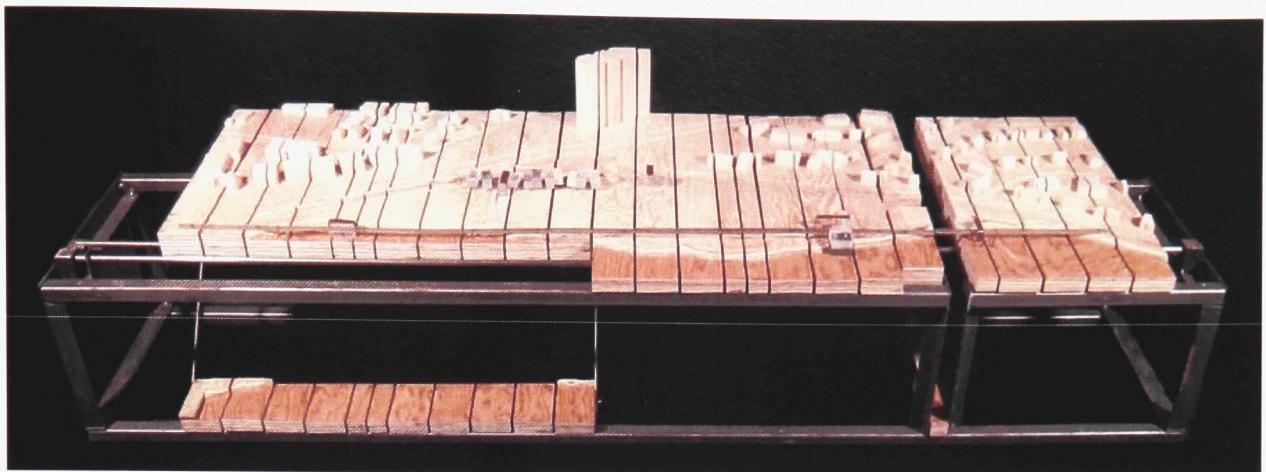


Figure 29. 1:500 site model, 2006, created by author.

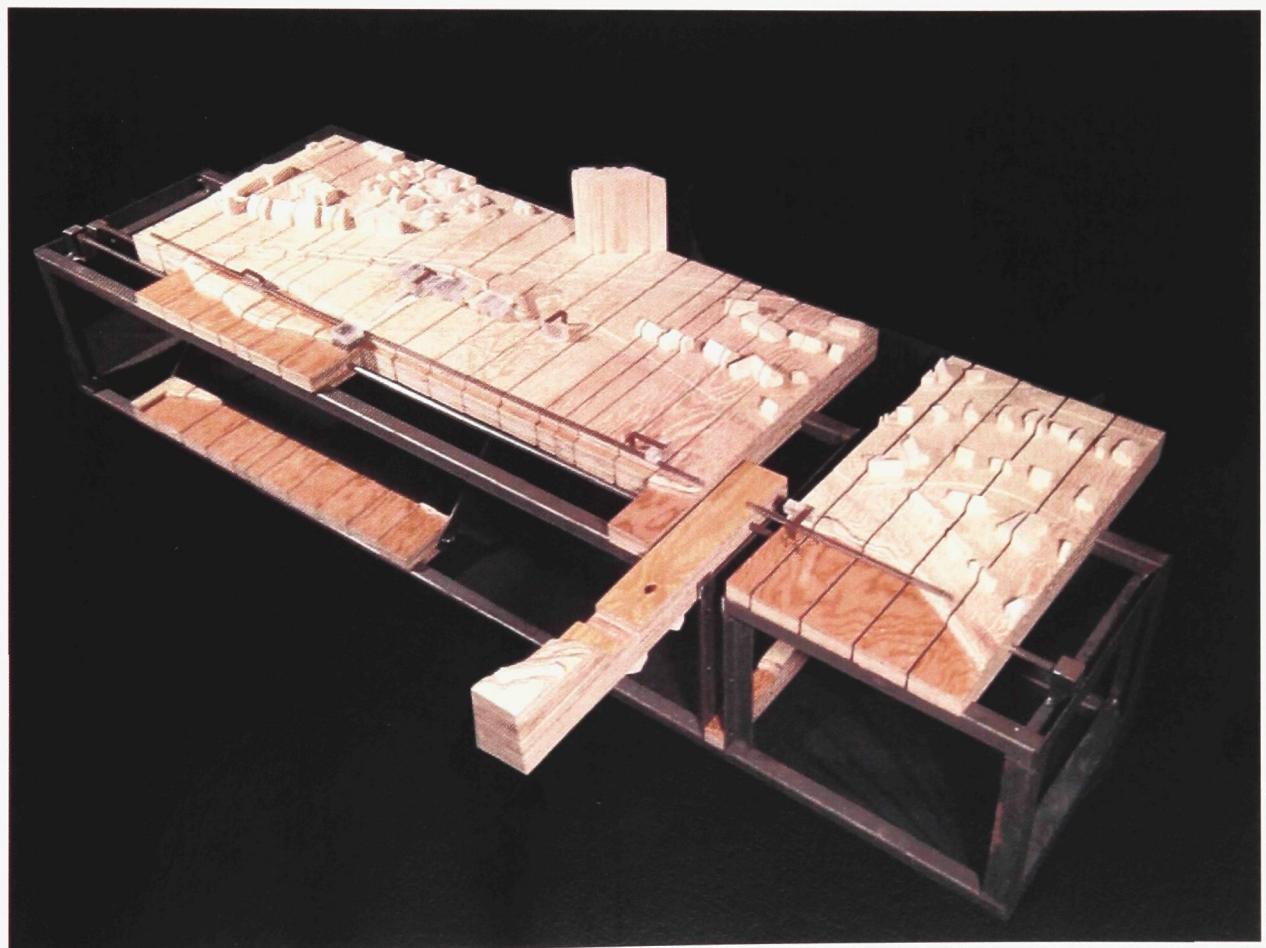


Figure 30. 1:500 site model flips open and moves to reveal the site, 2006, created by author.

4.6 Traveller and Immigrant Residences

Location

Both the urban condition and the existing conditions of the park space were considered in terms of the actual placement of the residences. Although Vanier Parkway (a major traffic artery through the city) comes to its conclusion to the north of the site, its proximity causes both visual and auditory interruption to the park and its relationship to the urban fabric. The portion of the site adjacent to this street is currently seldom used, and was selected as one of the primary sites of intervention. This became the site for the main residence, housing both the immigrant [4 months] and traveller [1 day] populations (fig. 31).

Locating the main building here extends the urban edge of the city into the park, in a gesture that protects the landscape from the road, but also necessitated the construction of a retaining wall to shelter the inhabitants of the residence. This retaining wall reinforces an existing berm to create inhabitable spaces adjacent to the road (figs. 32 & 33). These two gestures, the residence and the retaining wall, act to both draw the city into the park, as well as protect the park from certain aspects of the city.

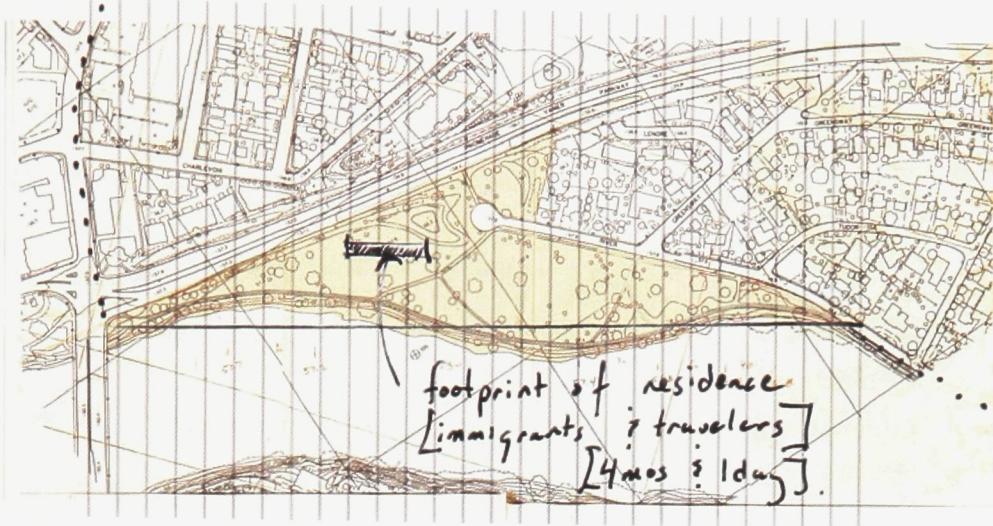


Figure 31. Map of site showing location of Immigrant and Travellers Residence building, Photoshop drawing, 2006, created by author.



Figure 32. Existing berm, 2006, drawing created by author.

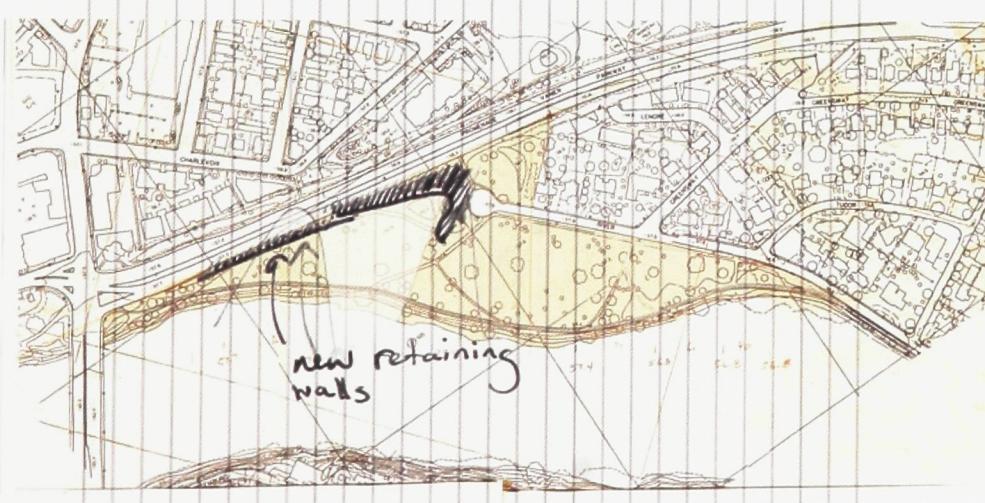


Figure 33. New retaining walls, 2006, drawing created by author.

Design

The main residence building, which provides the immigrants and travellers housing on the site, is composed of 5 pairs of raised modules, each with their own vertical circulation system. The residential spaces are flexible, composed of a series of open rooms and services. For the immigrant residences, these spaces can be closed off to create units of 1 bedroom, 2 bedrooms, 3 bedrooms, or even more if necessary, depending on the needs of each particular resident. The remaining rooms are rented out to travellers for overnight stays. These residents share the services that have not been absorbed into units of immigrant housing (fig. 34).

The rooms are organized around a double corridor system (fig. 35), and when units are opened and closed as inhabitants move in and out, the circulation through the building can change. The corridors can either be absorbed into the private spaces of the apartment units, or function as circulation space throughout the building. All of the rooms can be, depending on the configuration, both immigrant or traveller housing, and all corridors can function as both public and private space.

Between each residence module are external patios that can be accessed from the two adjacent rooms. These semi-private outdoor spaces provide the opportunity for meeting neighbours, and the possibility of bringing together the immigrant and travelling inhabitants on an intimate scale.

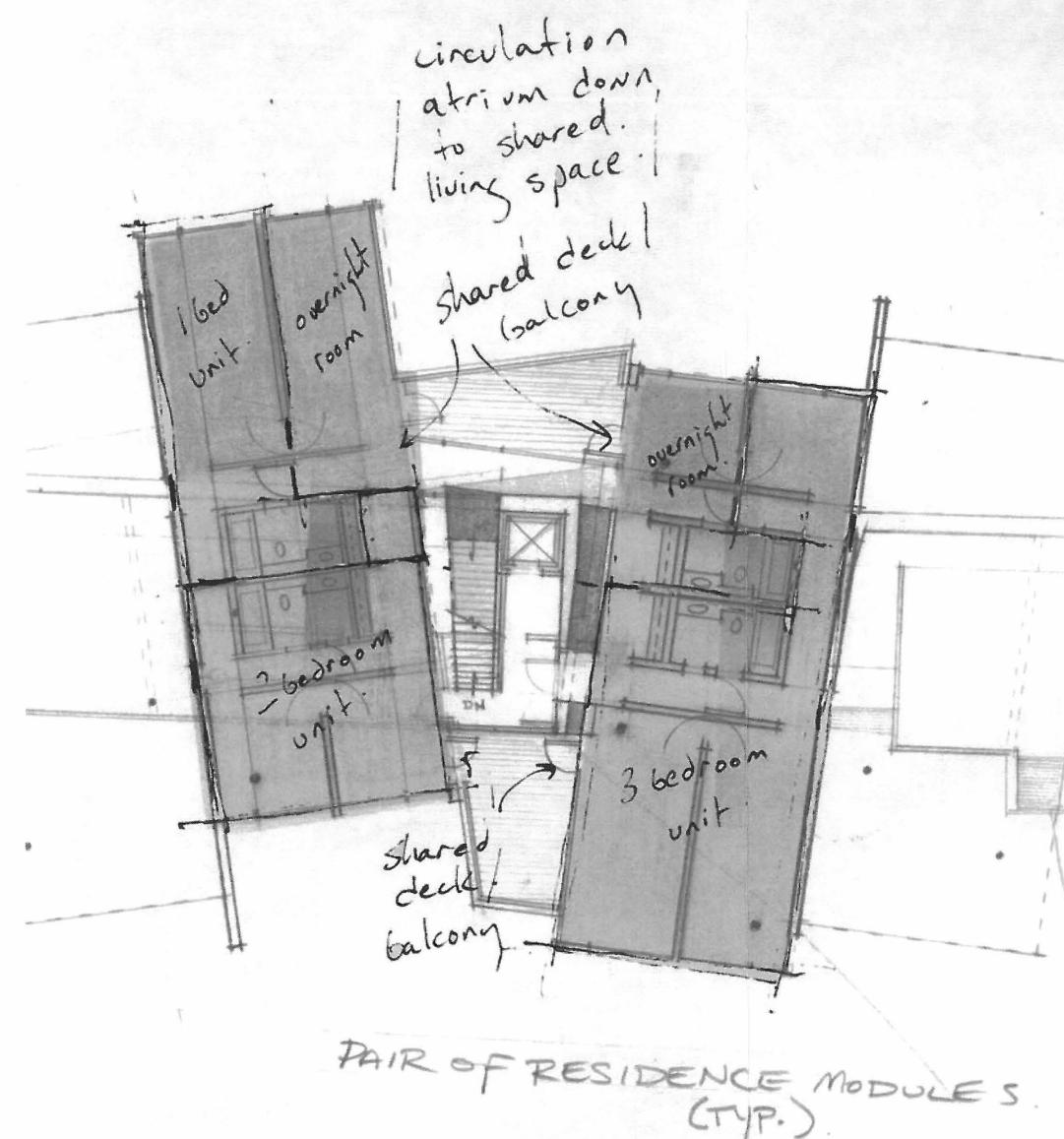


Figure 34. Two residence modules showing configuration of different rooms and services, 2006, drawing created by author.

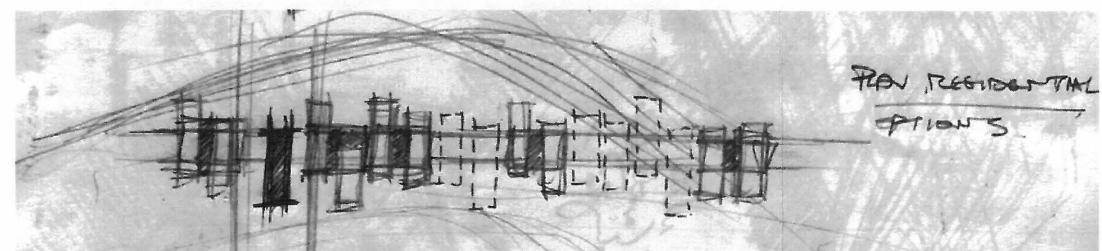


Figure 35. Early parti showing double corridor system, 2006, created by author.

While the rooms themselves can function as bedrooms at night and living spaces during the day, common living rooms, both interior and exterior, were also provided at the ground level (fig. 33). The interior living spaces are lit primarily from above, in the light well/vertical circulation areas between each pair of modules. As the inhabitants circulate vertically through the building, they shift back and forth between the flexible residential space and the open light wells. Each pair of modules is skewed, creating a forced perspective looking out into the landscape. Four of the pairs open out towards the river, while the fifth opens out into a garden space between the retaining wall and the residence building, where the public entrance to the residence and garden are located (fig. 36).

Directly adjacent to the roadway, the garden is a space that tries to make habitable the uninhabitable. Therefore, while it can be accessed at all times, the garden is primarily a nighttime and winter garden. Organized around a series of fire pits designed to encourage gathering and the telling of stories, the space allows the inhabitation of the park at times when it is normally most abandoned, by providing shelter, warmth, and light.

During the daytime, the ground floor living spaces are lit from the exterior by sunlight coming in through the light wells. At nighttime, the firelight, also from the exterior, creates a play of light in these interior spaces. The residence wall that faces the garden is intended to act as a secondary barrier against any sound from the road, and is therefore quite solid and opaque. The retaining wall and the rear wall of the residence appear to shelter and protect the landscape from the city, but by their very presence, also draw the urban space of the city into the park. The residence wall that faces into

the park is more transparent, fading into the background, so that the modules of the residence appear to float in the landscape with the city beyond.

Finally, the rooftops of the residences are rain collectors that provide easy access to water for putting out the fires in the winter garden, as well as to hydrate the green areas of the landscape. One pair of the rooftop modules has been lowered to create a children's paddling pool and rooftop water garden, which look across the park towards the river.

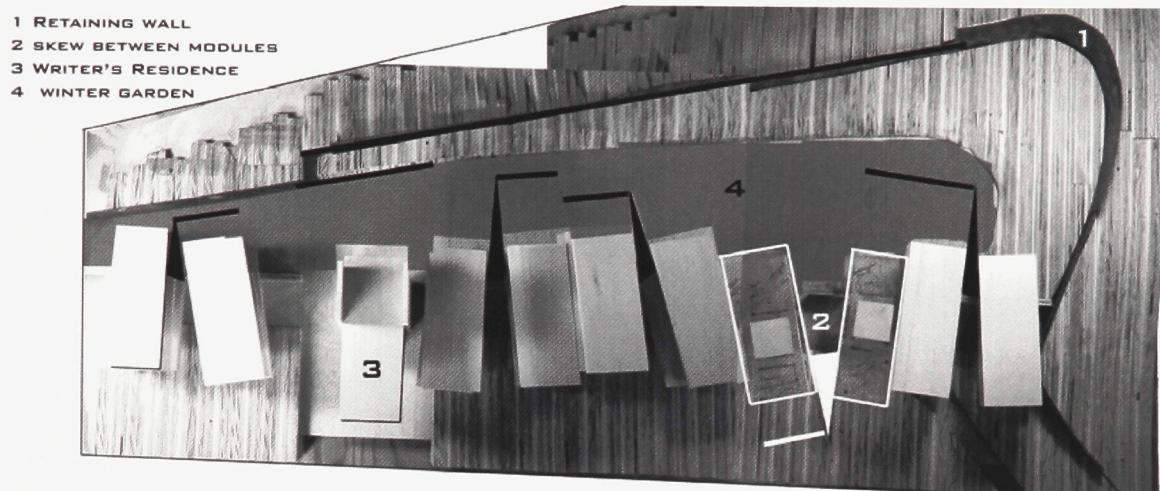


Figure 36. Site plan of Residence Building showing modules and retaining wall, photograph of wooden model, 2006, created by author.

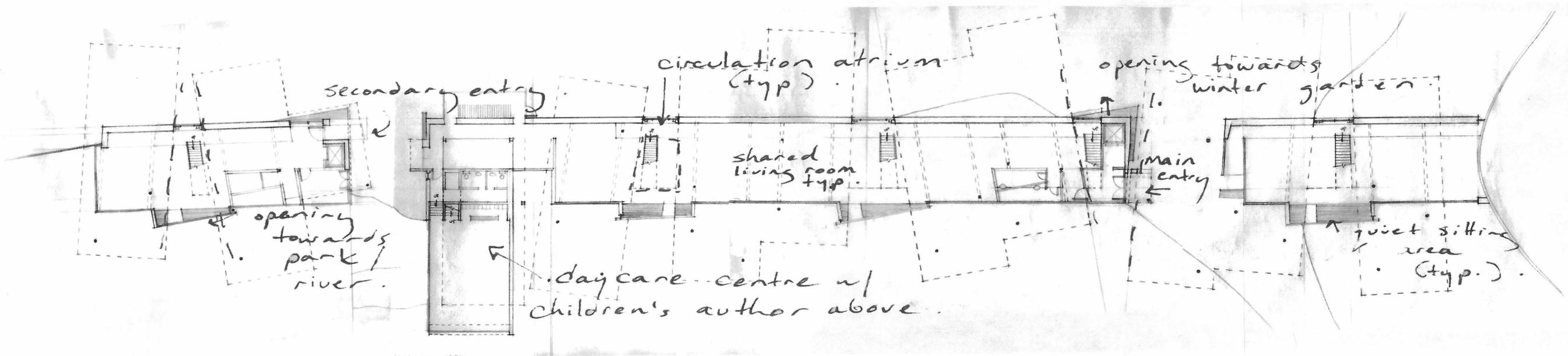


Figure 37. Ground Floor Plan, graphite drawing, 2006, created by author.

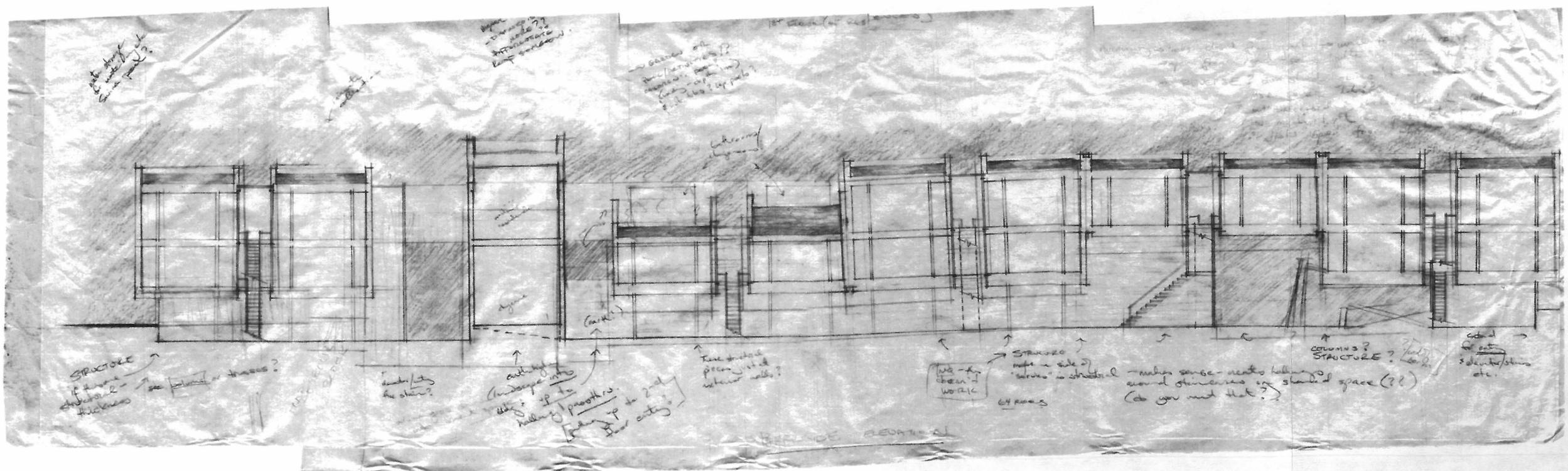


Figure 38. Early longitudinal section through residence building, 2006, created by author.

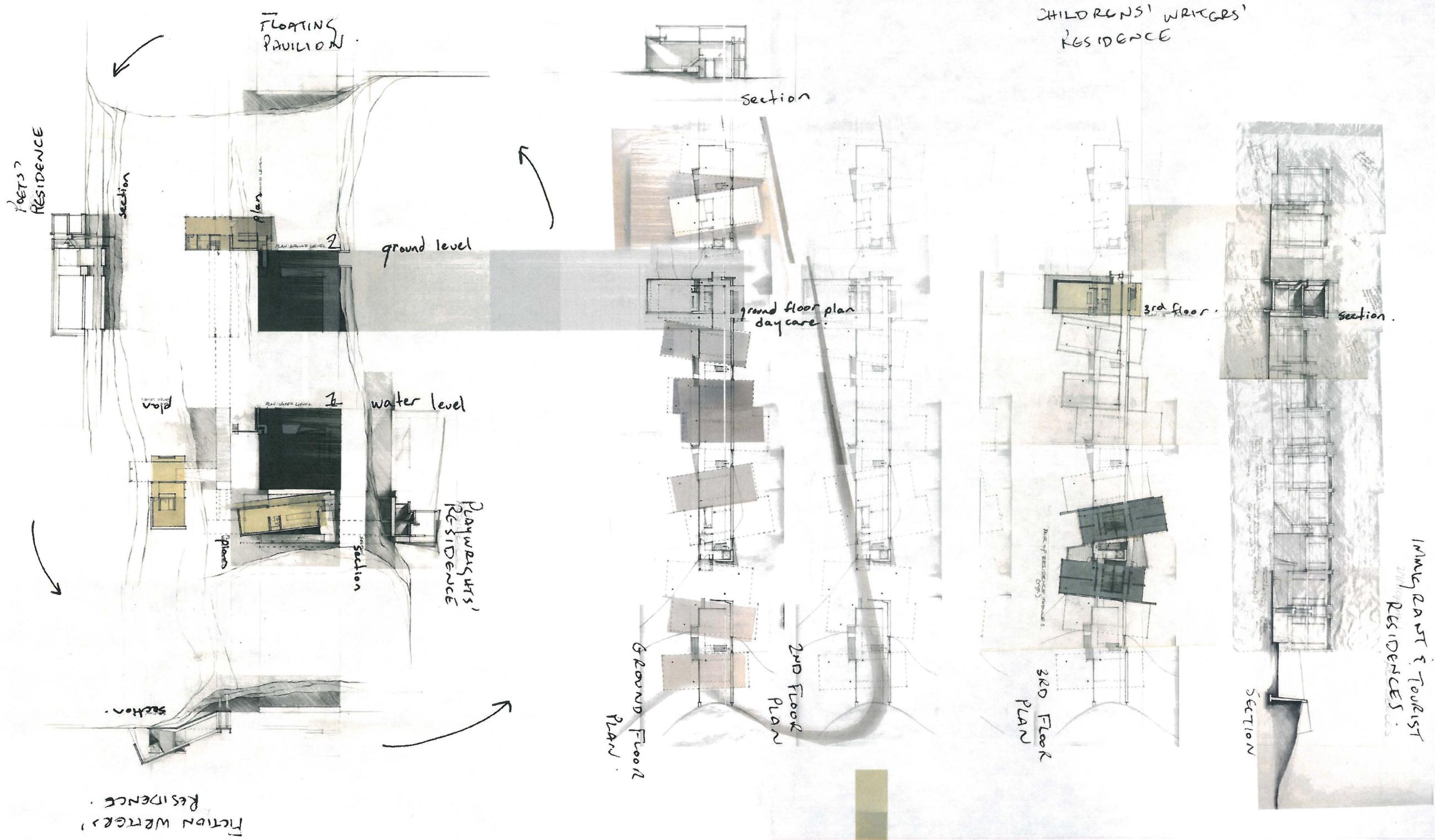


Figure 39. Plans and sections of showing how each fixed building connect to floating pavilion, composite drawing, 2006, created by author.

These residences are a simple and pragmatic solution to creating flexible space for variously sized families with different cultural requirements. More importantly, however, the spaces of the residence are always in the process of being made and unmade, the boundaries between public and private space established and transgressed, on a daily basis. The intention of these flexible residences is not that the inhabitants are necessarily aware that they are making, unmaking, establishing, or transgressing boundaries in the chaotic moments of their arrival or departure, rather, particularly in the case of the immigrant residents, that the architecture gradually reveals the process of which they are a part, and in which they have already participated. The architecture both allows a distinct place to be established for a period of time, and yet depends on the movements of the inhabitants in order to reveal this process. The residence building becomes a *landscape of rhetoric*, as defined by Kunze, where “the audience gradually becomes aware that they themselves are characters in the drama they observe.”⁷⁹

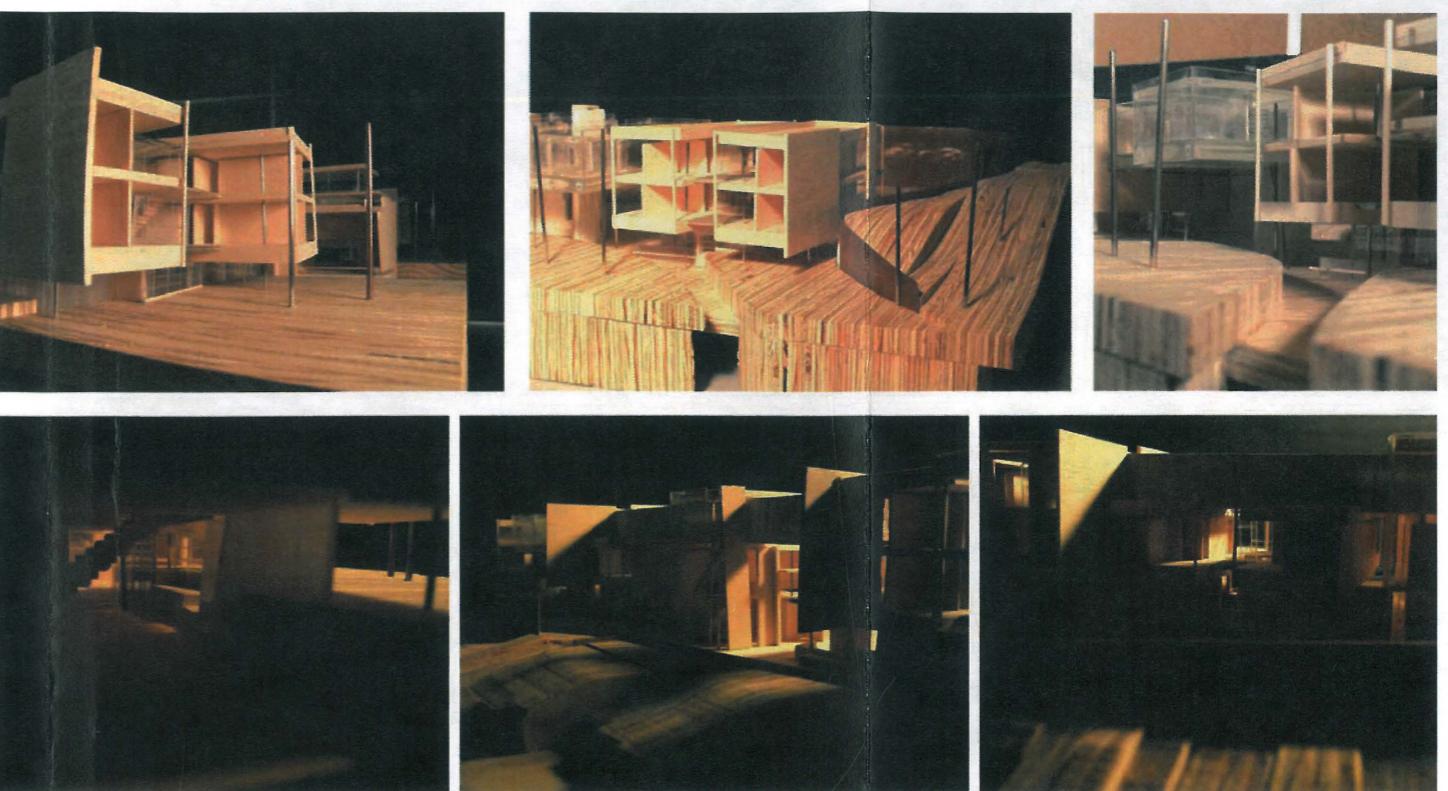


Figure 40. Residence building, photographs of 1:100 wooden model, 2006, created by author.



Figure 41. Residence Building Elevation, photograph of 1:100 wooden model, 2006, created by author.

4.7 Poets' Pathway, Docks and the Floating Pavilion

Writers' Residences

Each writer in residence is provided with his/her own individual dwelling, including living and workspaces, for their two-year term (fig. 42). Each residence incorporates public spaces that contain services for the immigrant and traveller populations, relating to each writer's specialization. The residences and associated public spaces become docks where the floating pavilion can be moored in order to temporarily extend and enhance their services (fig. 43). For example, it becomes a stage attached to the resident playwright's residence, or a storytelling space when attached to the residence of the children's writer.

The residences are all accessed by the Poets' Pathway, sometimes directly attached to the boardwalk, and sometimes receding towards the rear of the site. For example, the residence of the children's author and the daycare attached to it are connected to the main residence building at the back of the site, because its services are required on a daily basis. The intention is not that the writers would necessarily run the services, rather that their proximity can benefit both the writer, by being able to present their material, and the audience, who have a place in which to enjoy the literary work being created on site, and perhaps become inspired to become writers themselves. Each dock sits in a unique relationship to the landscape, designed to give insight into both the landscape, and the literary works. The pavilion connects to each dock when its associated writer or writers are presenting their works in-progress, when they want to learn from their audience, rather than produce. The presence of the pavilion, therefore, while it signifies that the space has become more public, by inviting people inside, also

marks a moment of stillness for the writers, when they are in fact not in the process of producing work, but presenting it.

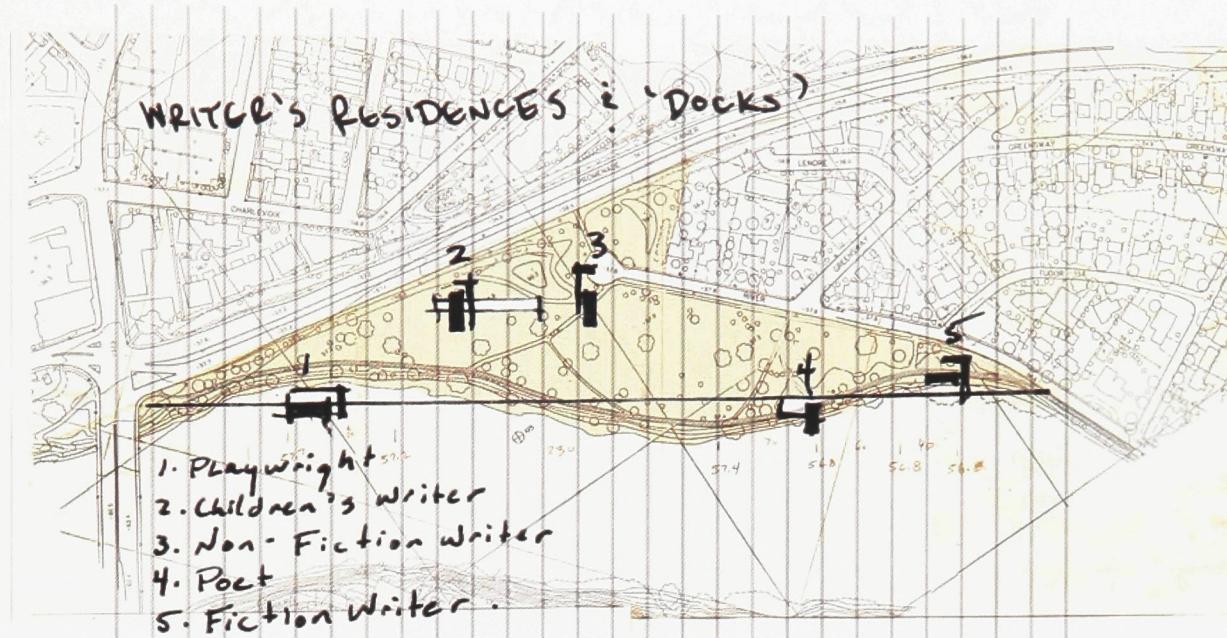


Figure 42. Map showing location of Writers' Residences, 2006, created by author.

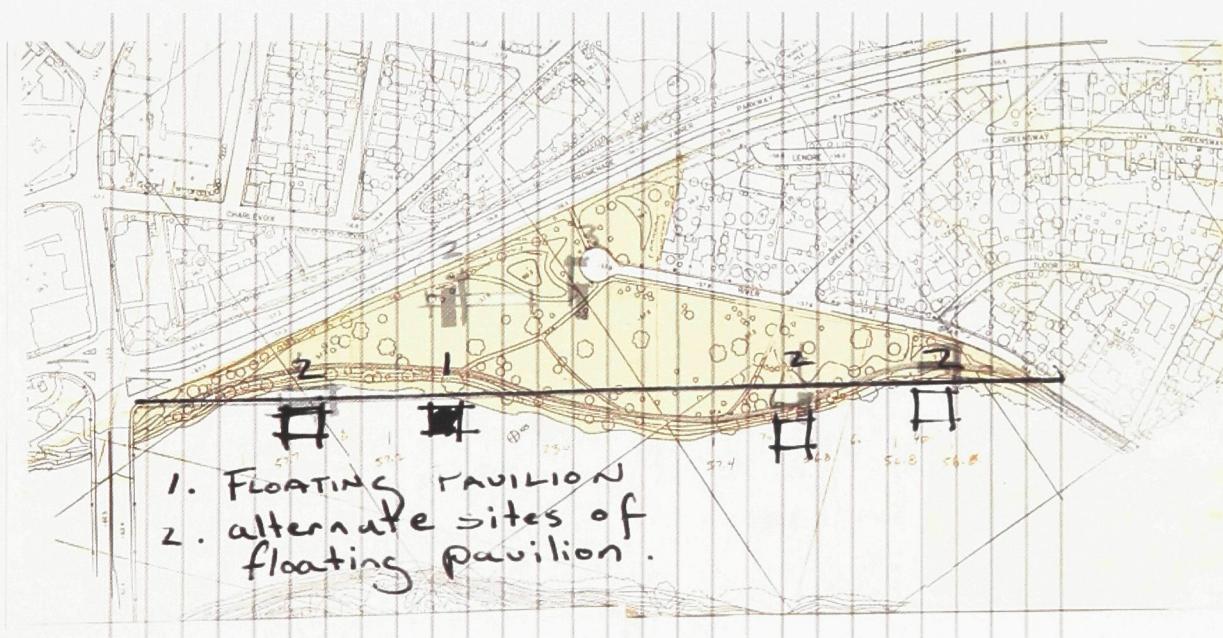


Figure 43. Map showing dock locations of floating pavilion, 2006, created by author.

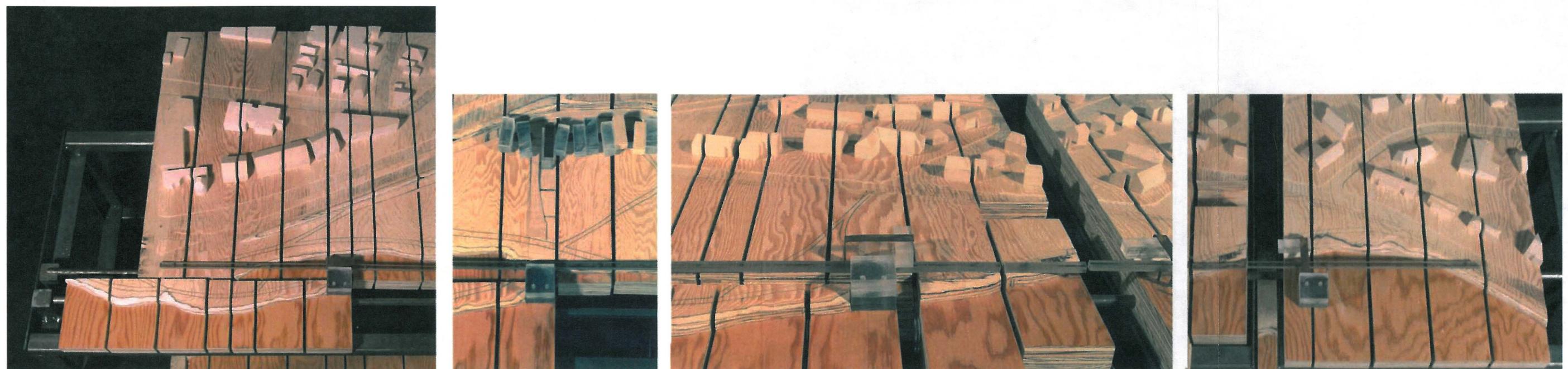


Figure 44. Connection of the floating pavilion to each residence, photographs of 1:500 wooden site model, 2006, created by author.

The Playwright

The Playwright's Residence is suspended below the boardwalk, just above the water level, with a small seating area above. When the floating pavilion is attached, it becomes a stage accessed from the Playwright's Residence below, and separated from the seating area by a small gap—an orchestra pit of sorts. In this condition, the Poets' Pathway and the shoreline are held apart, as the river becomes the backdrop for the play (fig. 45). The pavilion only connects to this dock for the specific purpose of showing or practicing a play, or part of a play.

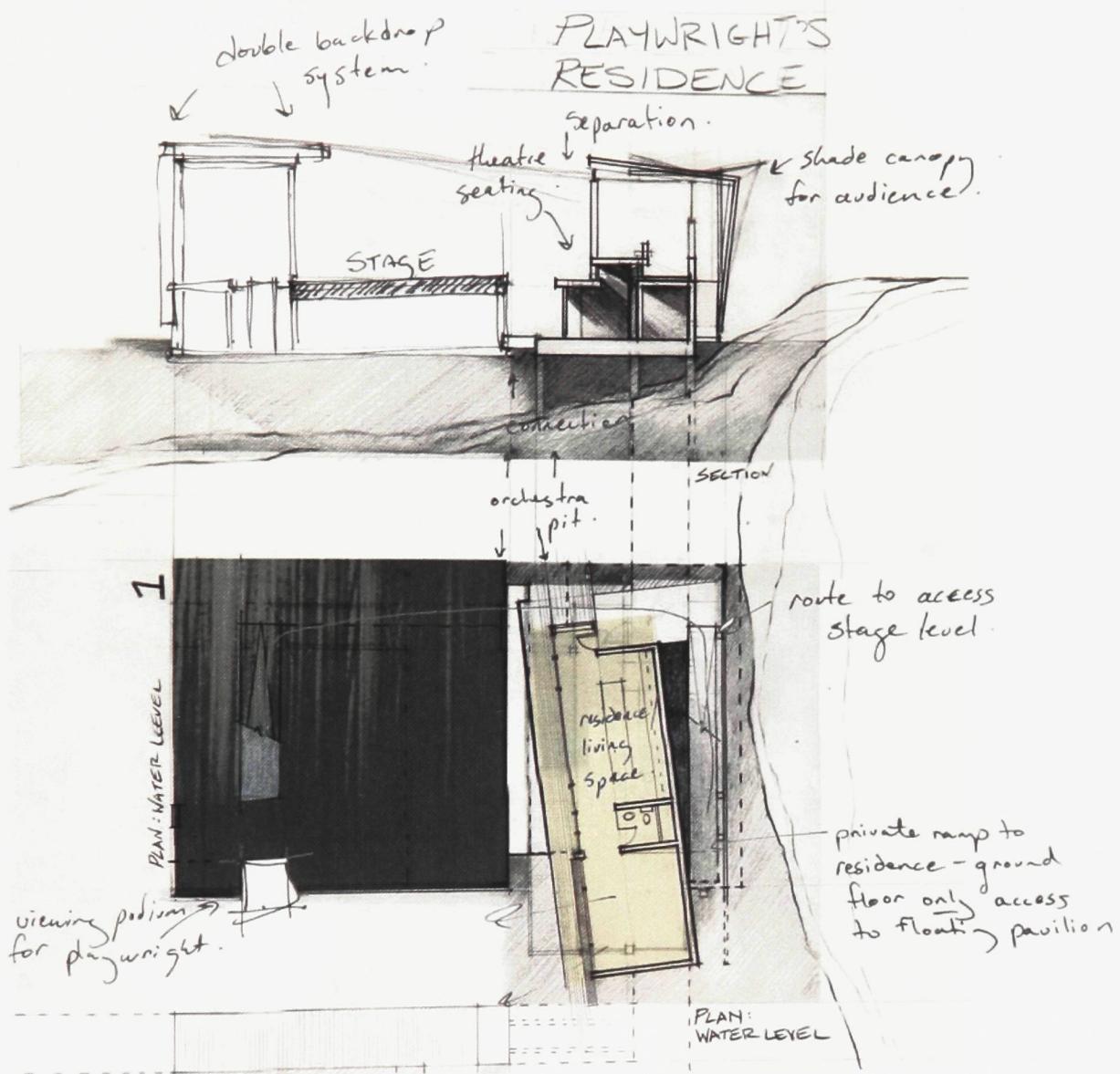


Figure 45. Plan and section of playwrights' residence and floating pavilion connection, 2006, created by author.

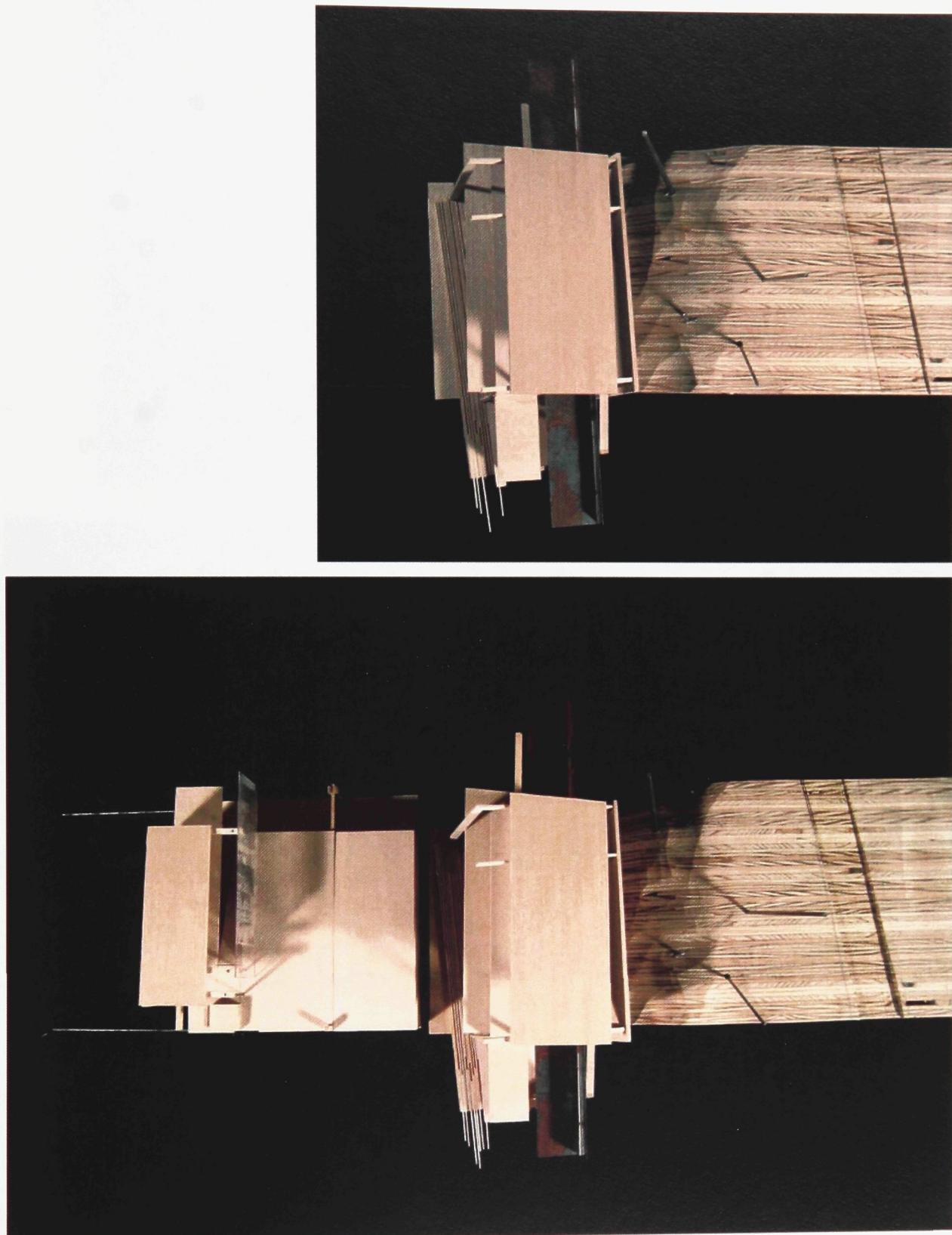


Figure 46. *Plan view of playwright's residence by itself and when attached to floating pavilion*, photographs of 1:100 wooden model, 2006, created by author.

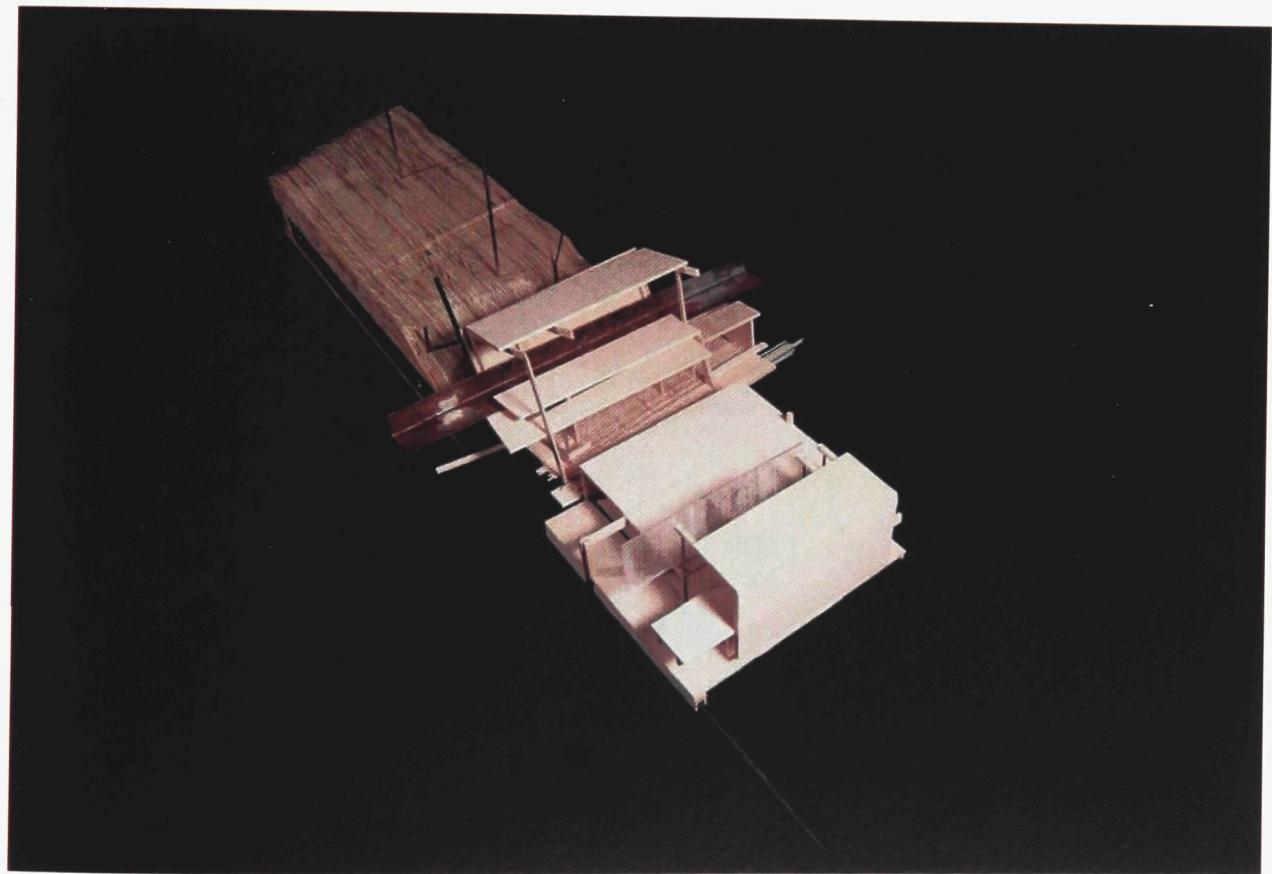
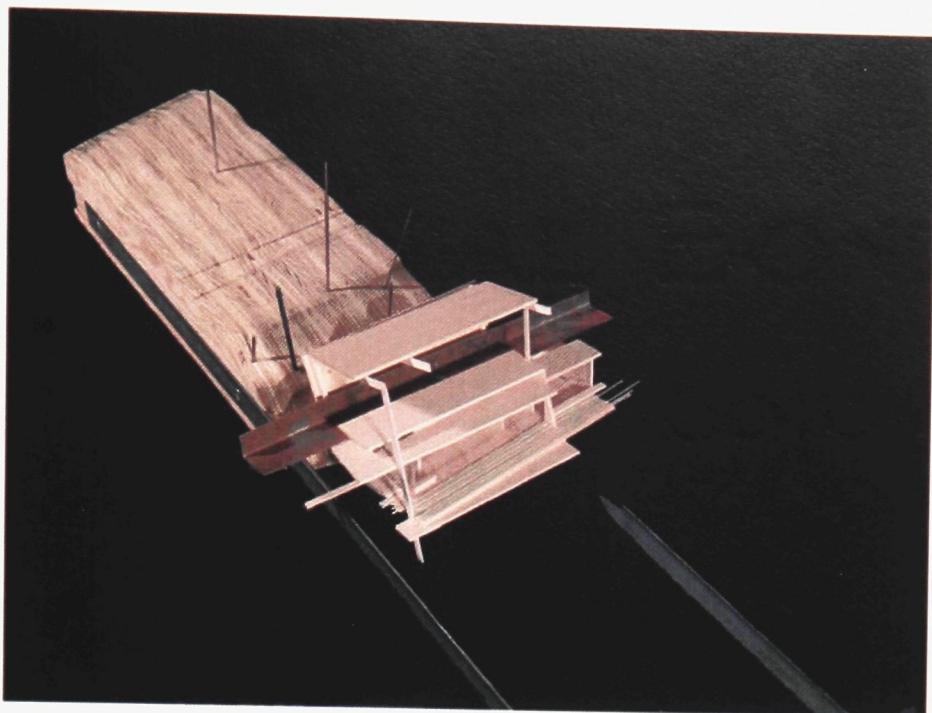


Figure 47. Aerial view of playwright's residence by itself and when attached to floating pavilion, photographs of 1:100 wooden model, 2006, created by author.

The Poet

The Poet's Residence is located where the new pathway/boardwalk crosses the land, at a small distance from the shoreline (fig. 48). The residence is located above a small cafe space, which is open daily, but expanded once a week for a night of poetry reading. Once a week, the café and pavilion are connected for this purpose, as well as for one week during the year when the pavilion and café are dedicated for use by The Ottawa International Writers Festival.

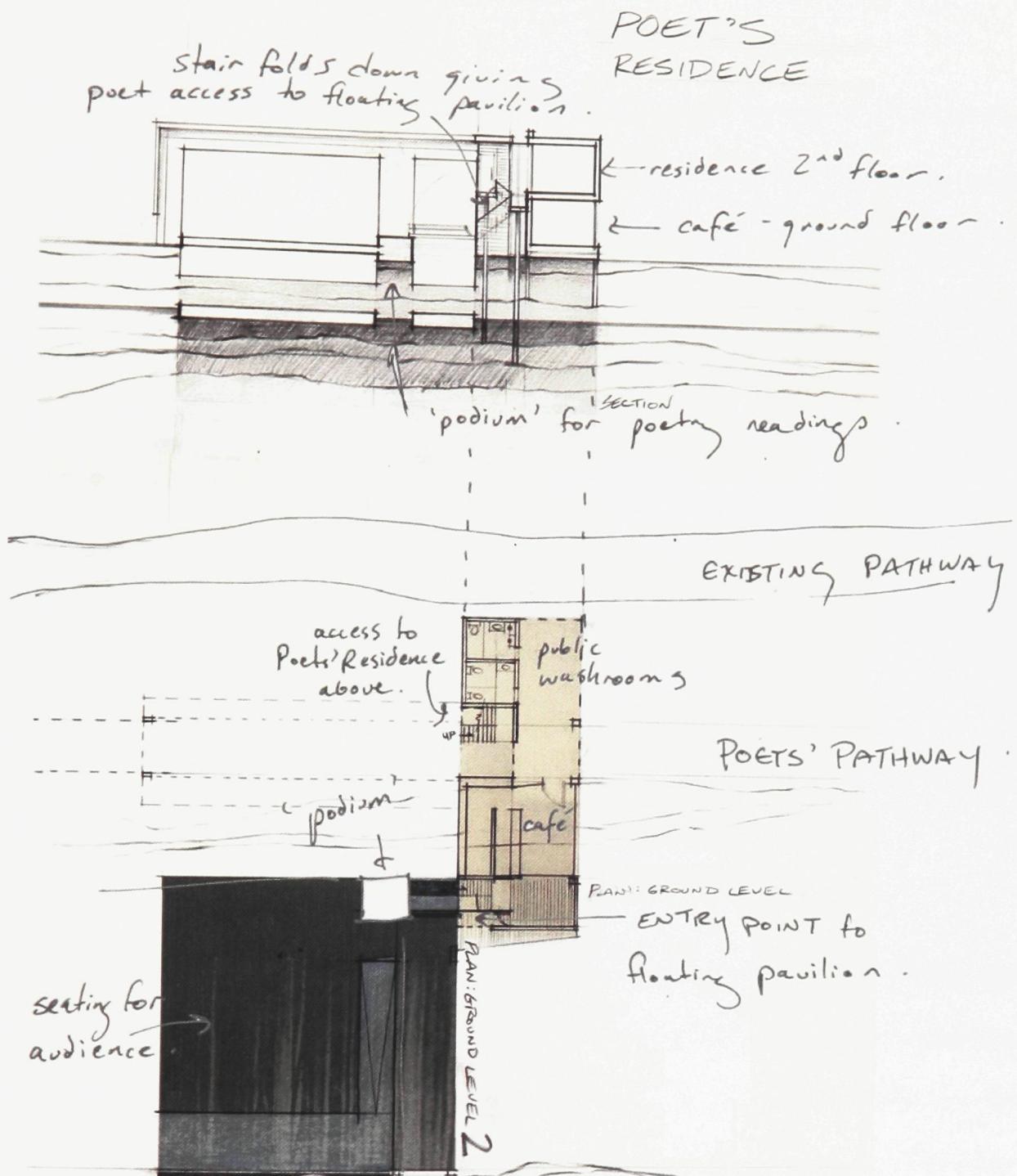


Figure 48. Plan and section of Poet's Residence and connection to floating pavilion, 2006, created by author.

The Children's Author

The residence of the children's author is connected directly to the third floor of the main residence building, with a two storey daycare below. This location provides easy access to the daycare service for the immigrant families, and the public arriving by car. Surrounding the daycare on the exterior, and extending towards the river, is a playground space. At the shoreline, where the ground descends to the river, the Poets' Pathway comes in contact with the landscape, providing a smooth transition between the play spaces of the children and the space of the floating pavilion. The floating pavilion becomes a quiet space for sitting and storytelling and occupies this location on a daily basis, as children are more often engaged in the act of playing, unlike adults, who feel the need to produce.

Summary:

The pavilion connects to these first three docks and pavilions during the summer months, when it can move freely in the water. However, it is not these movements in-between that have the most significance for the travelers who are the primary inhabitants of the Poets' Pathway, but the more subtle, gentle motion caused by the waves of the river hitting the pavilion when it appears to be still—connected to one of the docks. This gentle movement always hints at the pavilion's more mobile character.

The Non-Fiction and Fiction Writers

The residence for the writer of non-fiction is located adjacent to the main residence building, and contains an office and a classroom. This is the registration area for the residences, and the classroom where language classes will be held. It is connected to the residence of the fiction writer by the existing pathways on site. The Fiction Writer's Residence is located on the Poets' Path, like the Playwright's Residence, where the boardwalk crosses the water, set apart from the shoreline. However, in this case the Fiction Writer's Residence acts to connect the shoreline and the pavilion, which becomes a space for contemplation, and the exhibition of the writers' works (fig. 49). The pavilion connects to this dock only once a year, in the fall, when one of the two authors prepares an exhibition of their work in progress (at the midpoint of their residency). The pavilion remains here all winter, as the river freezes around it, holding it in place. The pavilion, no longer gently floating, takes on another kind of movement—the installation of the writers' work presented on cutout panels, which the allow the sun to shine through, casting different words onto the ground over the course of the day, and season.

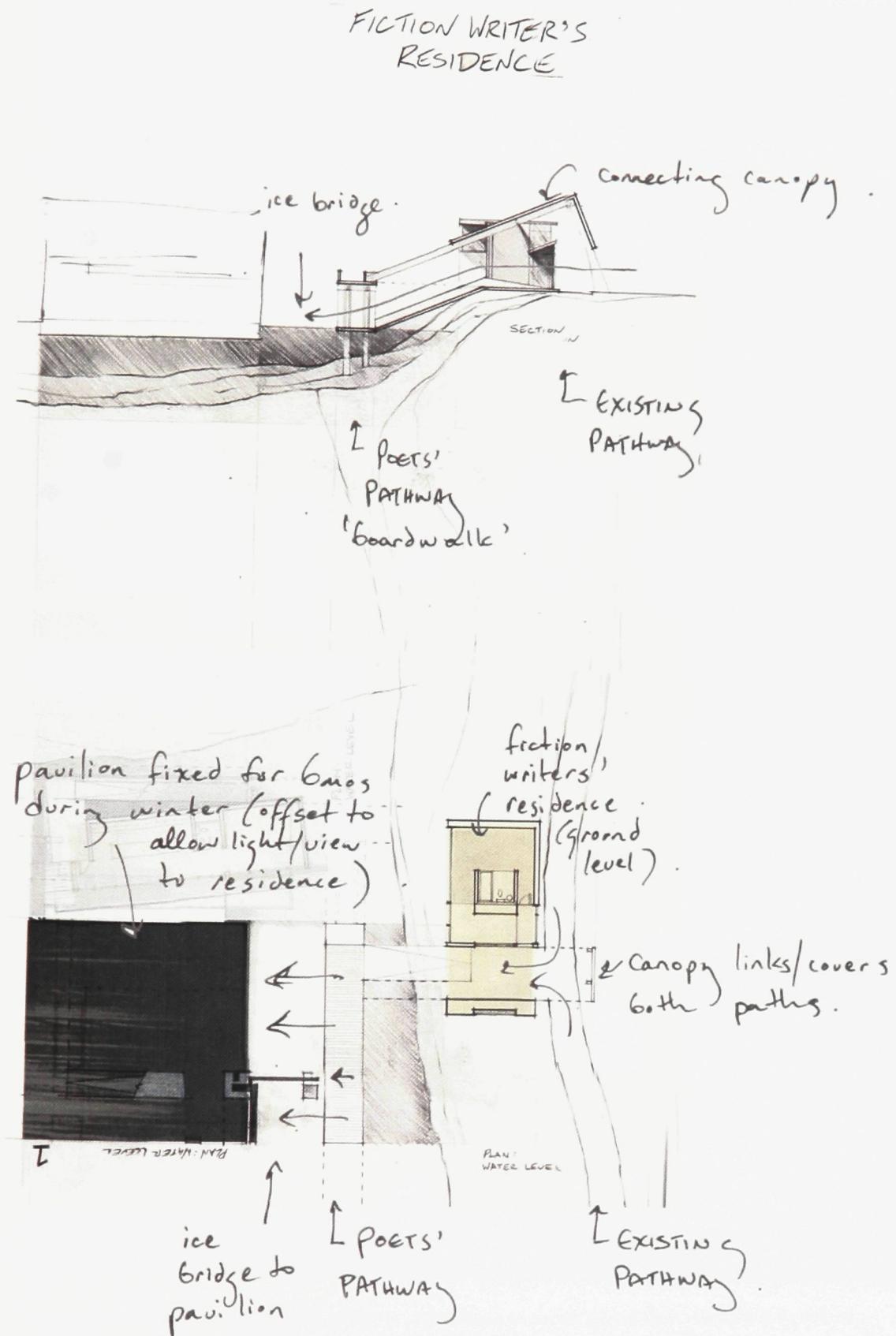


Figure 49. Plan and section of fiction writers' residence and floating pavilion connection, 2006, created by author.

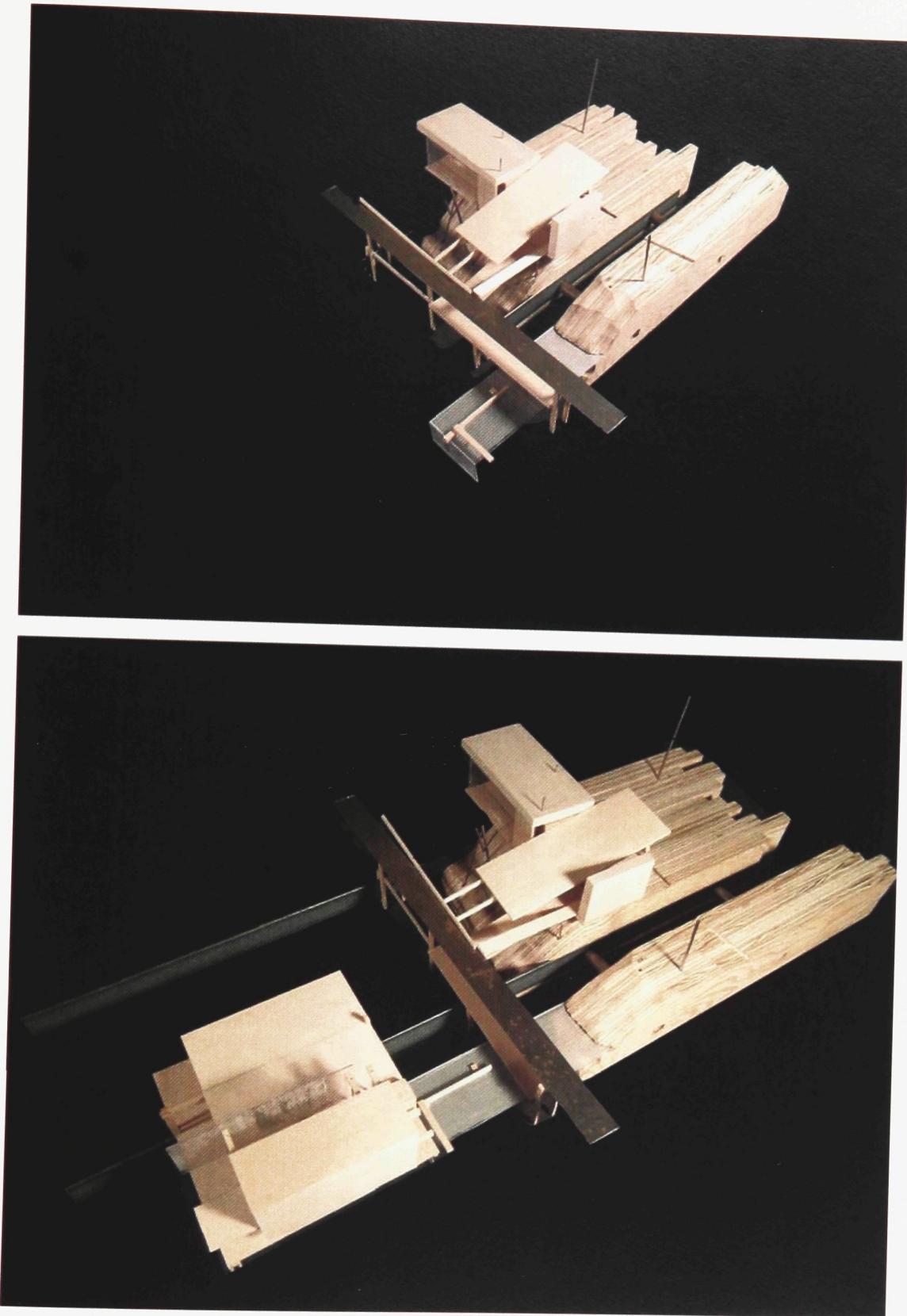


Figure 50. *Aerial view of fiction writer's residence by itself and when attached to floating pavilion*, photographs of 1:100 wooden model, 2006, created by author

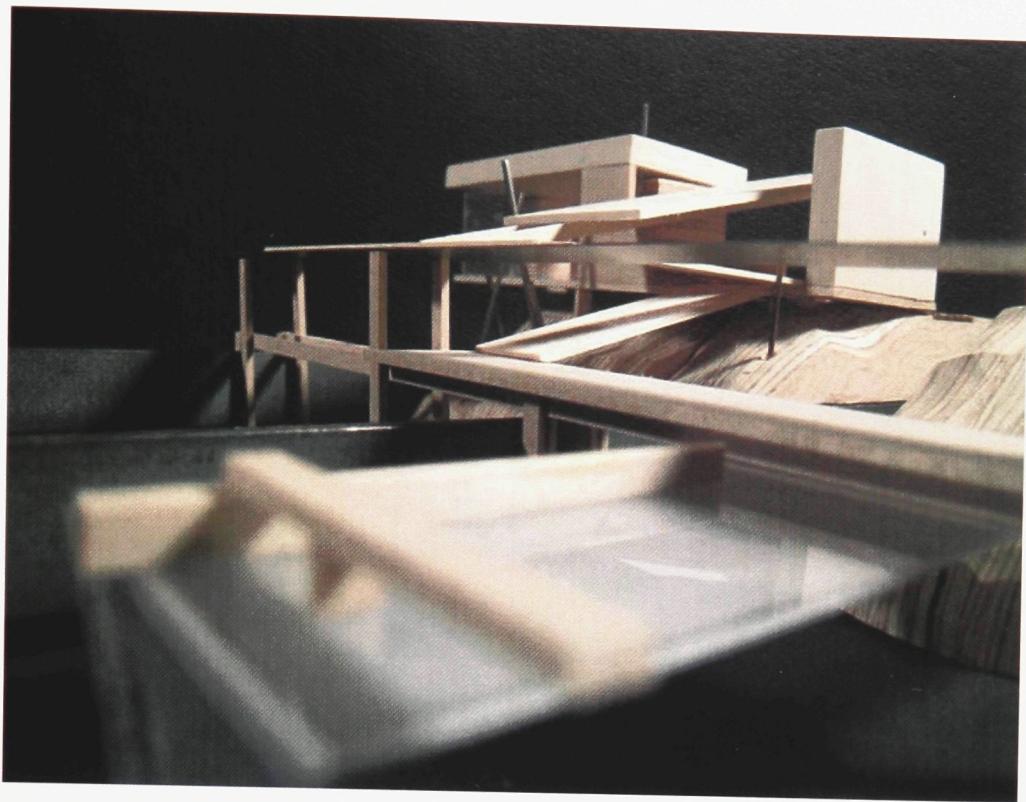


Figure 51. *Fiction writer's residence from water level*, photograph of 1:100 wooden model, 2006, created by author.

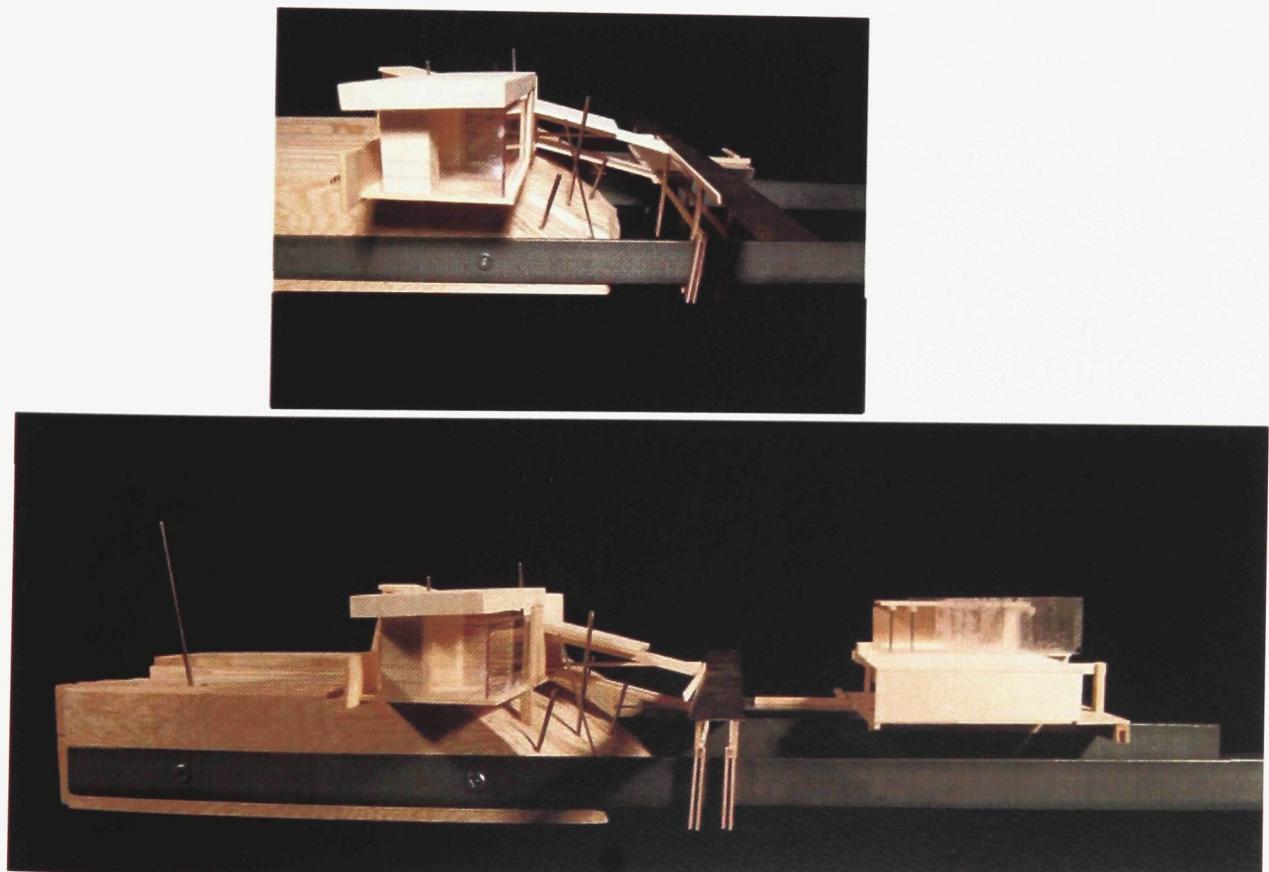


Figure 52. *Elevation of fiction writer's residence by itself and when attached to floating pavilion*, photographs of 1:100 wooden model, 2006, created by author.

Conclusion

In the end, this project does not find a way to notate *movement*, or even a new way to notate *place*. Rather, it begins to notate the transition between these states, where the shifting of roles takes place.

Just as in the Brion Cemetery where the time between opening the door and entering the chapel is extended, and in the Memorial Hall where, on November 11th at 11:00 a.m., the remembrance of the space becomes the inhabitation of it, the spaces proposed in this thesis attempt to set up *moments* in which unlikely relationships can be formed, and the *making* of the city can take place.

It proposes that the project site become the real start and end of the pathway, which connects and becomes continuous, unlike the distinct beginning and end points proposed in the original Greenspace Alliance plan. While the path becomes a circuit, it is never really complete because it is the place where narratives are generated, always involved in the process of renewing the rest of the pathway, by contributing to Canada's literary history. While the spaces of the pavilion are always literally dedicated to presenting works in-progress, the architectural spaces gradually reveal themselves as part of a process: habitually incomplete and always shifting roles from public to private, production to presentation, movement to stillness, in order for us to feel *at home*, and become part of the making of the city.

Making in the transient city takes on a new meaning—what we make need not endure, like the story written in stone, but becomes part of a larger process, like the story. Elements of what we make are carried on and transformed by the next storyteller.

These qualities of the narrative--its inherent incompleteness and inconsistency, its ability to transform depending on the situation at hand, its ability to resolve contradictions and cross boundaries without blurring the edges—when used to inspire the spaces of architecture, opens up moments in which the writing of the city can take place.

It may never be possible to be as sure of our history and role in the world in the transient city as it was in the pre-industrial city, yet our need to *feel* at home is still strong. Through narrative, fictions that are latent in the physical spaces of the architecture, the distance between *here* and *there*, can be eliminated, just as the Greek ritual of carrying the earth allowed a whole history to be transported. Of course, these fictions are not always realized, due to their inherent inconsistencies. The story is latent, but not definite. To force such encounters would be to script them too tightly, to write them, rather than allow them to be written. This is why, for example, each dock/writer's residence relates to the immediate landscape in a different way, revealing the different characters of the floating pavilion at different times, and even these characters cannot really be defined, only suggested. Each time the floating pavilion moves, each time one of the residential units is abandoned, the slate is wiped clean. There is no memory left in the architecture—it does not accumulate layers of meaning. Rather, it is the inhabitant who is left with the memory of a space that no longer exists, a space that was never permanent, but yet one that was part of a continuous process that had an impact upon other inhabitants of the space, and that may have been recorded by one of the resident authors.

Thus, rather than representing the loss, or the lack of traces left behind, this continual renewal allows each inhabitant to form his/her own story of the space, based on their own experience of it.

Just as narrative need not come to a definitive or totalizing conclusion, architecture need not attempt to impose identity, or prohibit the further transformation of identity. Architecture as *narrative* or *fiction*, rather than a form of *writing*, is flexible enough, and unresolved enough, to allow for moments where making can occur in the transient city.

ENDNOTES

Chapter 1: Place-Making

1.1 Pre-Industrial Society

- ¹ Victor Hugo, *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame* (London: Penguin Group, 1996), 177-180.
- ² Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977), 104.
- ³ Daniel Willis, *The Emerald City* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1999), 122.
- ⁴ Tuan, 106.
- ⁵ Tuan, 102-103.
- ⁶ Willis, 125.
- ⁷ Tuan, 104.

1.2 From Social Building to Industrial Production

- ⁸ Hugo, 174.
- ⁹ Tuan, 116.
- ¹⁰ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), 69.

1.3 Building and Dwelling

- ¹¹ Martin Heidegger, “Building, Dwelling, Thinking” in *Poetry, Language, Thought* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971).
- ¹² Heidegger, 145.
- ¹³ Donald Kunze, *Thought and Place* (New York: Peter Lang, 1987), 40.
- ¹⁴ Kunze, 78.

Chapter 2: Mobility

2.1 Introduction

- ¹⁵ Richard Sennet, “The Foreigner” in *Body and Building*, ed. George Dodds and Robert Tavernor, 191 (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2002).

2.2 The Transient City

- ¹⁶ Xavier Costa “Distracted City, Shapeless City” in *Present and Futures: Architecture in Cities*, ed. Ignasi de Sola-Morales Rubio, 184 (Barcelona: Centre de Cultura Contemporània, 1996).
- ¹⁷ Jean-Paul Sartre, *Literary and Philosophical Essays* (London: Radius Book, 1968), 107.
- ¹⁸ Sartre, 117.
- ¹⁹ Sartre, 111.
- ²⁰ John Berger *And Our Faces, My Heart, Brief as Photos* (New York: Pantheon, 1984). Found in Franco La Cecla “Getting Lost and the Localized Mind,” in *Architecturally Speaking*, ed. Alan Read, 34 (London: Routledge, 2000).
- ²¹ Iain Chambers, *Migrancy, Culture, Identity* (London: Routledge, 1994), 18-19.
- ²² Tuan, 116.
- ²³ Stress on the word “know” refers back to Vico’s theory of *ipsum verum factum*, by which men may only know the truth of those things they have made.
- ²⁴ Sennet, 191.
- ²⁵ Hugo, 187.

2.3 Architecture in Response to Mobility and Migration

- ²⁶ Paul Carter, *Living in a New Country. History, Traveling and Language* (London: Faber and Faber, 1991), 101.
- ²⁷ William J.R. Curtis, *Modern Architecture since 1900* 3rd edition (London: Phaidon, 2001) 109.
- ²⁸ Isabelle Hyman and Marvin Trachtenberg, *Architecture from Prehistory to Post-Modernism/ The Western Tradition* (The Netherlands: Harry N. Abrams, 1986) 529.
- ²⁹ Sartre, 109.
- ³⁰ Marc Augé, *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity* (New York: Verso, 1995), 78.
- ³¹ Sartre, 109.
- ³² Franco La Cecla, "Getting Lost and the Localized Mind," in *Architecturally Speaking*, ed Alan Read, 45 (London: Routledge, 2000).

2.4 Migrants or Monsters?

- ³³ Chambers, 31.
- ³⁴ Jean Robert, "Hestia and Hermes: the Greek imagination of motion and place," <<http://www.pudel.uni-bremen.de/pdf/HESTIA.pdf>> (accessed July 30, 2006), 2.
- ³⁵ Chaz Gormley, "The Goddess Hestia: An Archetype of Personal and Social Ecology," The Jungian Society for Scholarly Studies, <<http://www.thejungiansociety.org/Jung%20Society/Conferences/Conference-2003/Goddess-Hestia.html>> (accessed July 30, 2006).
- ³⁶ Robert, 3.
- ³⁷ Chambers, 24.
- ³⁸ Neil Bissoondath, *Selling Illusions: The Cult of Multiculturalism in Canada* (Toronto: Penguin, 2002).
- ³⁹ Paul Ricoeur, "Universal Civilization and National Cultures," in *History and Truth*, 278 (Evanston, IL.: Northwestern University Press, 1965).
- ⁴⁰ Ricoeur, "Universal Civilization and National Cultures," 282.
- ⁴¹ Giambattista Vico, *New Science* 3rd edition (London: Penguin Group, 1744), vi, 410. Found in Marco Frascari, *Monsters of Architecture* (Savage, Md., Roman., 1990), 15.
- ⁴² Marco Frascari, *Monsters of Architecture* (Savage, Md., Roman., 1990), 13.
- ⁴³ Frascari, 32.
- ⁴⁴ Sennett, 191-194.
- ⁴⁵ Sennet, 191.
- ⁴⁶ Sennett, 193.
- ⁴⁷ Sennet, 194.
- ⁴⁸ Sennett, 194-195.
- ⁴⁹ Sennet, 208.
- ⁵⁰ Frascari, 16.

Chapter 3: Narrative in Architecture

3.1 Introduction

⁵¹ Willis, 58.

3.2 Narrative and Making

⁵² La Cecla, 35.

⁵³ Joseph Rykwert, *The Idea of a Town* (London: Faber and Faber, 1988), 102-104.

⁵⁴ Rykwert, 124.

⁵⁵ Gormley, "The Goddess Hestia."

⁵⁶ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 123. By *fas* he is speaking of the mystical foundation which is in the invisible world.

⁵⁷ de Certeau, 125.

⁵⁸ Robert Fulford, *The Triumph of Narrative: Storytelling in the Age of Mass Culture* (Toronto: House of Anansi Press Ltd., 1999), 15. (It should also be noted that in this passage the term narrative is used in opposition to the term analysis, where I might substitute the word fiction, as in this text the definition of narrative encompasses history and analysis.)

⁵⁹ Paul Ricoeur, "Life: A Story in Search of a Narrator," in *A Ricoeur reader: reflection and imagination*, ed. Mario J. Valdés, 123 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, c1991).

⁶⁰ Thomas L. Schumacher, *The Danteum* (Princeton: Princeton Architectural Press, 1985), 25.

⁶¹ Willis, 77.

⁶² Schumacher, 136.

⁶³ Fulford, 8.

⁶⁴ Alberto Perez-Gomez, "Spaces In-between." in *Present and Futures: Architecture in Cities*, ed. Ignasi de Sola-Morales Rubio, 277 (Barcelona: Centre de Cultura Contemporània, 1996).

⁶⁵ de Certeau, 123.

⁶⁶ Nicholas Olsberg et al., *Carlo Scarpa, architect: intervening with history* (Montreal: Canadian Centre for Architecture, 1999) 129.

⁶⁷ George Dodds, "Desiring Landscapes/ Landscapes of Desire: Scopic and Somatic in the Brion Sanctuary," in *Body and Building*, eds. George Dodds and Robert Tavernor, 247 (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2002).

⁶⁸ Kunze, 33-34.

3.3 Narrative and Movement

⁶⁹ de Certeau, 115.

⁷⁰ Ricoeur, "Life," 121.

⁷¹ Chambers, 5.

⁷² Ricoeur, "Life," 126.

⁷³ It is important to note here that it is not certain whether these texts are present in the spaces because the client or the architect desired them to be there.

⁷⁴ de Certeau, 97.

⁷⁵ de Certeau, 129.

⁷⁶ Chambers, 10.

3.4 The Narrative Hinge

⁷⁷ de Certeau, 118.

Chapter 4: Architectural Project [Two Years ... Four Months ... One Day]

4.1 Existing Proposal: The Poets' Pathway

⁷⁸ Further information about the proposal can be found at: The Greenspace Alliance of Ottawa website, <<http://www.flora.org/greenspace/poetspath-1/index.shtml>> (accessed February 21, 2006).

⁷⁸ Kunze, 33-34.

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