
Mediation

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Abstract

In the language of urban planning, to plan is to anticipate and prepare the environment to allow for projected potentials. Yet in an environment that fails to provide a stable string of data that a designer can reliably respond to, the conventional “master-plan” approach is often insufficient. Such is the case in the evolution of Taipei, Taiwan. The architecture in this environment becomes obsolete the instant it is erected as it serves no purpose other than as an expensive reminder of the past. Recognizing the pressing needs of a developing urban core, the Government of Taipei invited, through design competitions, the international design community to propose implementation strategies for the development of the Main Station site. Using Taipei Main Station Development Project as a model, this thesis begins from this initiative. It investigates the unique urban condition through the analysis of parallel and intersecting experiences at various scales and explores a strategic design procedure that both speculates upon and stimulates the formation of architecture in an evolving city.

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Introduction

Recognizing the pressure to convert itself to a competitive contender internationally, it is not unreasonable for Taipei, an economically successful city, to propose a series of urban renewal programs that promise to drastically elevate its global identity and reputation. However, the problem is that the cohesiveness of Taipei's urban environment has been seriously overlooked during its evolution. A sudden rush of technology to speed up the modernizing process has overrun the initial promise of an ideal environment. As urban systems are being installed at a rapid rate we have come to realize that the suffocating city is unable to cope with the monumental changes. Indeed, after decades of negligence, the city simply does not respond well to the surge of new urban implementations drafted by the government. While the conversion of the urban space and hardware is imperative to the city's performance, one cannot simply overlay a new urban organization on top of a place where cultural and social formations have been firmly established. Nor can the interruption of the existing configuration ensure its optimal performance. Moreover, the task is further complicated by the unstable political nature of the country. The city is in a problematic position in which it cannot draft a planning strategy by referring back to the past nor projecting forward into the future, since neither provides a solid ground for the new ideas to be based on. The moment a plan is realized it becomes irrelevant to the current condition, the instant a building is built it becomes obsolete. As a result, conventional design and planning approaches would be unable to

deliver optimum results nor deliver the promises it originally set out to accomplish.

This thesis investigates the role of architecture in the erratic urban formation of Taipei and as an instrumental strategy that challenges the design and master-planning approach of an urban project in Taipei. Originally based on the international competition launched by Tourism Bureau, Ministry of Transportation and Communication, R.O.C. in 2003, “New Taiwan By Design: Gateway Series - Taipei Main Station Development Project”, the thesis discovers the city’s intrinsic crisis and envisions a sensible design process local to the paradoxical characteristics of the site. Evidently, a unique architectural proposition is much needed to prevent the built systems from being phased out like trendy commodities. Moreover, its application theoretically extends beyond as design principles, acting as a stimulus that both motivates a healthy development pattern and promotes positive collaboration of different systems, users and environments.

When Kenneth Frampton wrote of “critical regionalism”, he advocated the notion of embodying the historical importance and embracing the transforming characteristics of the site in a project. This conception of viewing architecture as a localized entity that responds to the immediate environment outlines the essential qualities of a new architectural and planning proposition for the city. Utilizing the programmatic curriculum of the design competition, the thesis fundamentally questions the validity of the city’s implementation of multiple urban planning modes and the adaptation of these systems in the formation of an urban

environment. Sequentially, the thesis is structured by the study of Taipei at three specific scales: urban, intimate and intermediate (architectural design). At each phase of the investigation, urban issues and architectural propositions are understood in their corresponding scales and perspectives (points of view). By exploring the topic at multiple angles, the thesis attempts to enable the comprehension of the complexity of the project and to allow the grasping of the numerous conflicts that exist in different modes of inhabitation in the city.

The shift of perspective is necessary in analyzing the situation, as it institutes a formation of concepts that are responsible for the respective viewpoints. These viewpoints are independent, indicating specific design potentials relevant to the overall scheme. At the same time, they are also dependent on each other, reflecting points of interaction and moments of collision that are essentially part of the organization patterns in the formation of the city. The study conducted in this thesis identifies the urban dysfunction at its source and formulates a critique of Taipei's urban evolution pattern. It is through these findings that the elemental relationships can be extracted to structure a framework for a design proposition local to the site while providing an original architectural mode of thinking/making applicable to the entire city for years to come.

Chapter One: Urban Scale

Evolutionary Overlay

For an urban planner, *city* is an organic mechanism. It functions on the level of response and appropriation: it responds to the social, cultural and economic formations and appropriates itself to accept these changing values.¹ A city's physical environment and growth are governed by the means of planning. When an improvement is needed in the city, a planning solution is applied to address the issue. Likewise, when an idealized condition is desired, a planning strategy is employed to direct the course of urban growth. The idea of urban planning thus operates on these two actions. Historically, urban planning in Taiwan had solely been focused on essential needs: houses were built to accommodate the population growth and roads were added to cope with the traffic increase. For every urban problem discovered there was a related "fix". This planning pattern persisted for two decades, and ultimately the problem-driven solutions were insufficient to manage the multi-dimensional growth of the city. Over the years, the role of Taipei has been elevated from the political and economic core of the island to the international gateway for the country. The City Government sees the potential of developing Taipei into an iconic urban figure that establishes a sense of *value*. Often, value is a concept that quantifies the potential of a subject. For Taipei's government, value is a symbolic gesture that

¹ 曹啓平, 台灣城市議題 [Urban Issues of Taiwan]. (台北: 財團法人台北市都市計劃文教基金會, 2002) 10.

represents the city's cultural and social significance and reflects its commercial and industrial capabilities – certainly a superb image to be associated with.

One obstacle, however, stands in their way: A weak urban structure, which the inferior planning pattern has unfortunately created. The city can no longer benefit from a problem-driven planning tactic. A forward-looking planning strategy that addresses not only the physical improvement but also the quality of urban lifestyle is therefore needed to recapture the cultural identity that is slowly slipping away.

In this chapter, the planning guidelines for Taipei and the Taipei Main Station Special District are explained and the issues restricting the city's progress are described at an urban scale. The text underscores the enormous task the planning program has been designed to accomplish and describes an optimistic application of the plan. A theoretical base is then formed for the design phase and a projected urban system is constructed for the critique of the city's formation and future development. These planning principles convey the potential outcome of an ideal implementation, visualizing the city as a receptor that would ultimately be adjusted to fit the new programs. Yet, on the other hand, these begin to reveal a possible detachment between the two scales of perspective as the thesis develops into the next phase.

1. Urban Planning Taipei: Prospects of the 21st Century

Recently, the City Government has set up Planning Guidelines for the City of Taipei. With a population growth cap of 3.5 million in the target year of 2010

these guidelines address numerous concerns including the protection of conservation areas, the preservation of water resources, the management of the natural environment, the prevention of environmental pollution, and resolving current transportation issues.

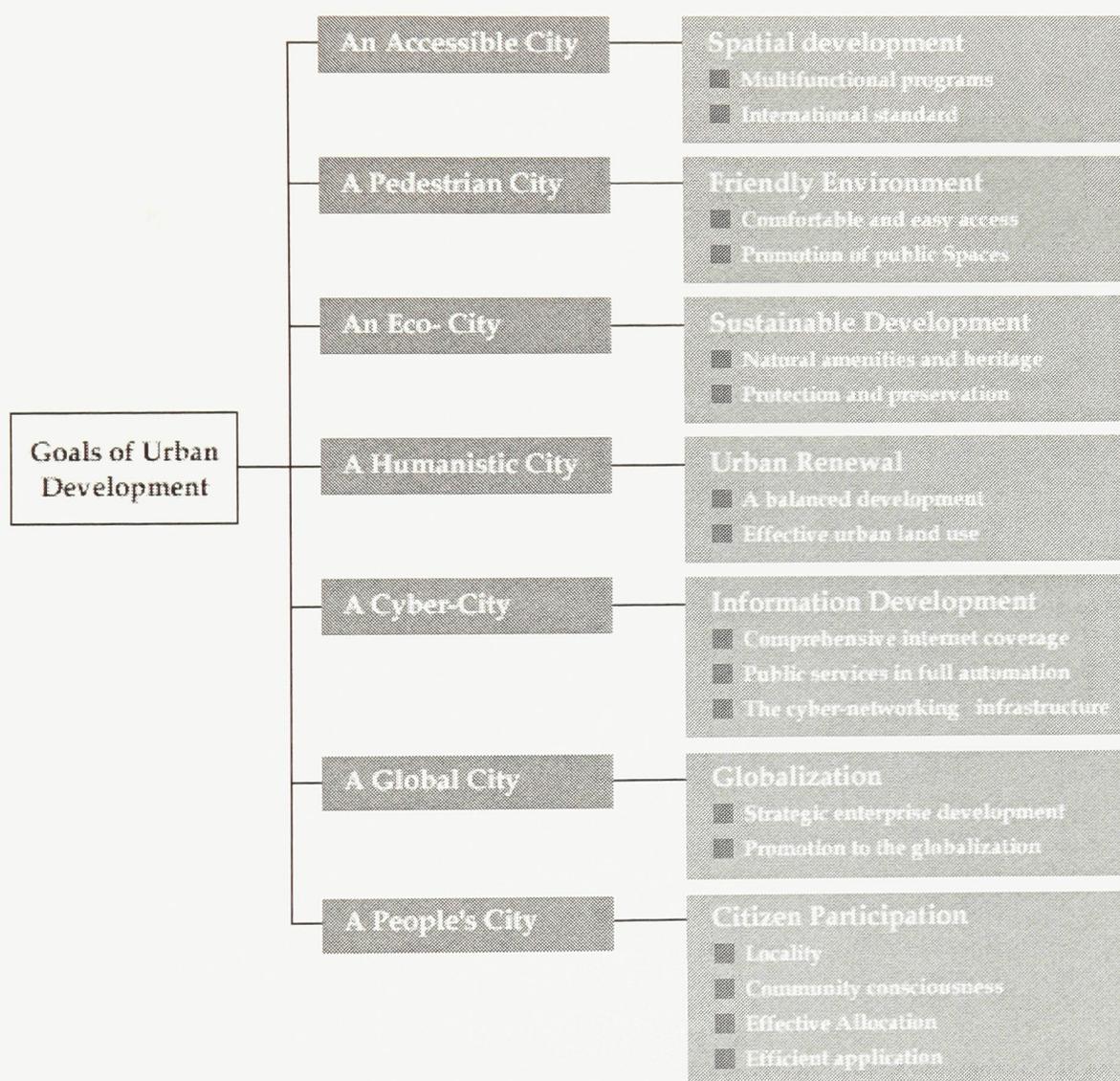


Figure 1.1. Taipei City 2010 Comprehensive Development Plan.

The basic elements of the long-term development plan include internationally competitive infrastructure, attractive urban life, efficient

governance, profitable business environment, and trans-national linkages.

Furthermore, the city government will take actions to establish an amalgamated association of the Greater Taipei Metropolitan Area with the surrounding townships in the northern region of Taiwan. This association will be formed in order to strengthen the unique position of the city as the cultural, financial trading, industrial, information, academic research, and political centre of Taiwan.

Moreover, the city intends to act as a trans-national link to other major cities in the Asia-Pacific region, in order to develop as the Research and Development hub in informational technology and the centre of choice for the location of headquarters of multi-national corporations in Asia. This level of growth is expected to open new opportunities for the city and its people, but will also bring enormous changes and challenges that the city has never experienced in the history of its urban development. This new political and social situation raises questions and concerns that have never been seriously addressed in the past.

Also, there are obvious reasons why the past and existing planning patterns and guidelines cannot be applied to the fundamentally complex conditions the city has been experiencing of late. The new and arguably unique situation, accentuated by the impacts of the recently installed urban hardware and infrastructure projects as well as the specific public attitudes and needs, thus stimulates the necessity to conduct a well-rounded set of planning strategies that are sensitive to the existing conditions and at the same time flexible and adaptive to future changes and inputs. Therefore, the Taipei City Government has formulated seven long-term planning guidelines that represent a full-scale

transformation of the city that will underline the city's already promising attributes and elevate its image and capacity to better facilitate the city's population growth and commercial and economic needs. These strategic guidelines address different aspects and interests of the 2010 long-term planning project and govern the current developments and constructions towards the project goals. They can be synopsized as follows.

1.1. Objectives

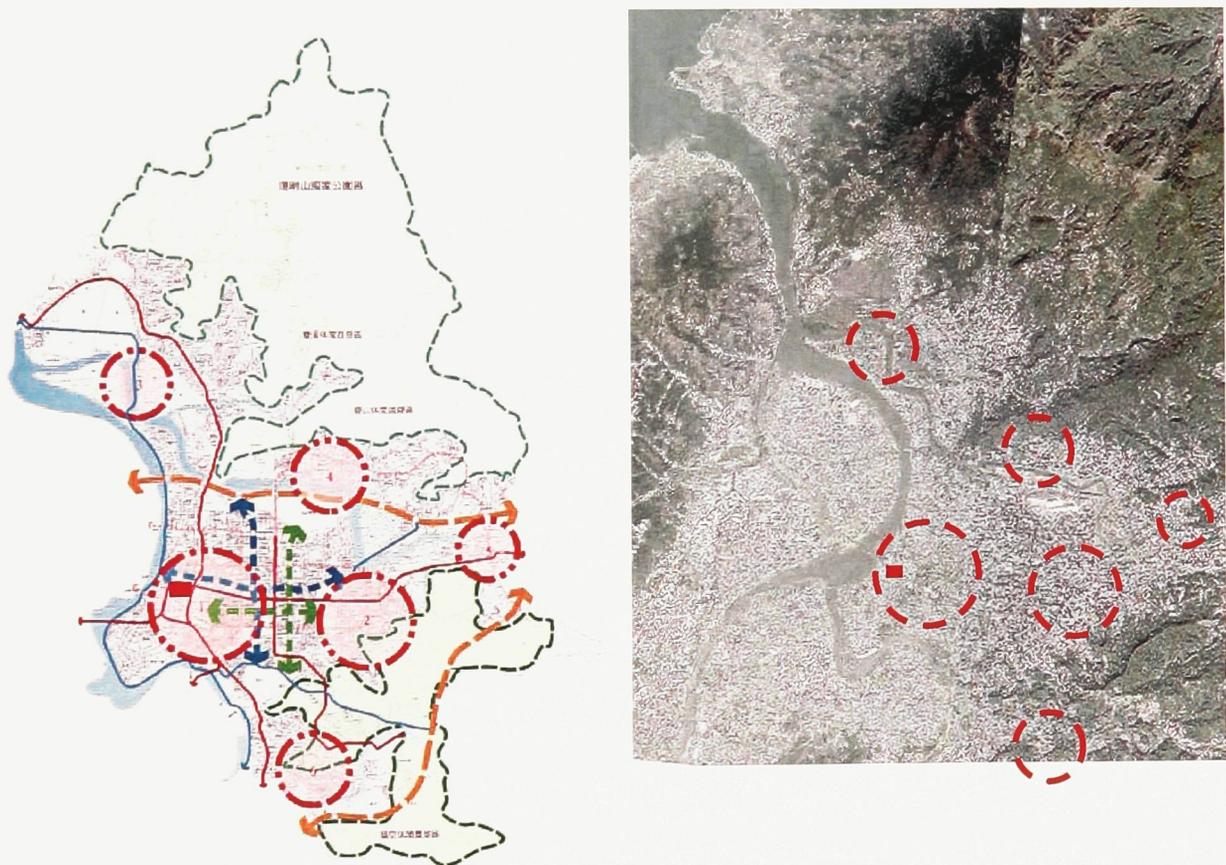


Figure 1.2. Taipei Development Pattern (left) Aerial Photograph (right).

Orange Dash Line – Inter-city Development Movement Through Taipei
Blue Dash Line – City Core Development Movement (Northwest)
Green Dash Line – City Core Development Movement (Southeast)

Red Circle – Localized Developing Areas
Red Shade – Taipei Main Station Special District
Red Solid Line – MRT routes
Green Dash Line/Shade – National Parks

1.1.1. The Accessible City

Taipei City is becoming a pluralistic, international metropolis ready to compete with all global cities. The city government is pursuing a new development model, different from the single nucleus. It involves a multi-nuclei plan able to correspond to the expected changes in development as a whole, while reducing the growth density in the core area of the city. The new land-use pattern will be facilitated by the mass-transit systems to promote more accessible inner-city transportation networks and improve circulation from the city core to the regional centres and/or points of international connection. Inside the city core, major roadways and the MRT (Mass Rapid Transit) system would serve as the major arteries for the primary traffic; the existing city buses system and the new MRT feeder buses will be coordinated in order to improve the accessibility of inner-city travel and enhance the flexibility of inter-system connections. By linking open spaces in the city between primary connection points, especially those distributed along the major avenues and boulevards, a comfortable walking environment for pedestrians would be created. Moreover, the new addition of airport light rail transit to the MRT system provides an alternative for travellers and local commuters to efficiently connect between the Taipei Main Station, the Taipei Domestic Airport, and the CKS International Airport. With the addition of the HSR (High Speed Rail), the entire collaboration of the Taipei transportation system will complete the regional-international transportation network of northern Taiwan. A detailed description of the city's transportation system is summarized below.

Railways

The national railway system, which goes underground from WanHua Station, Taipei Main Station, to SongShan Station in the City, provides services for both travellers and daily commuters. The Taipei Main Station serves as the main gateway and transit hub for the city, and has provided services for about 59,657,704 passengers in the year of 2002.³

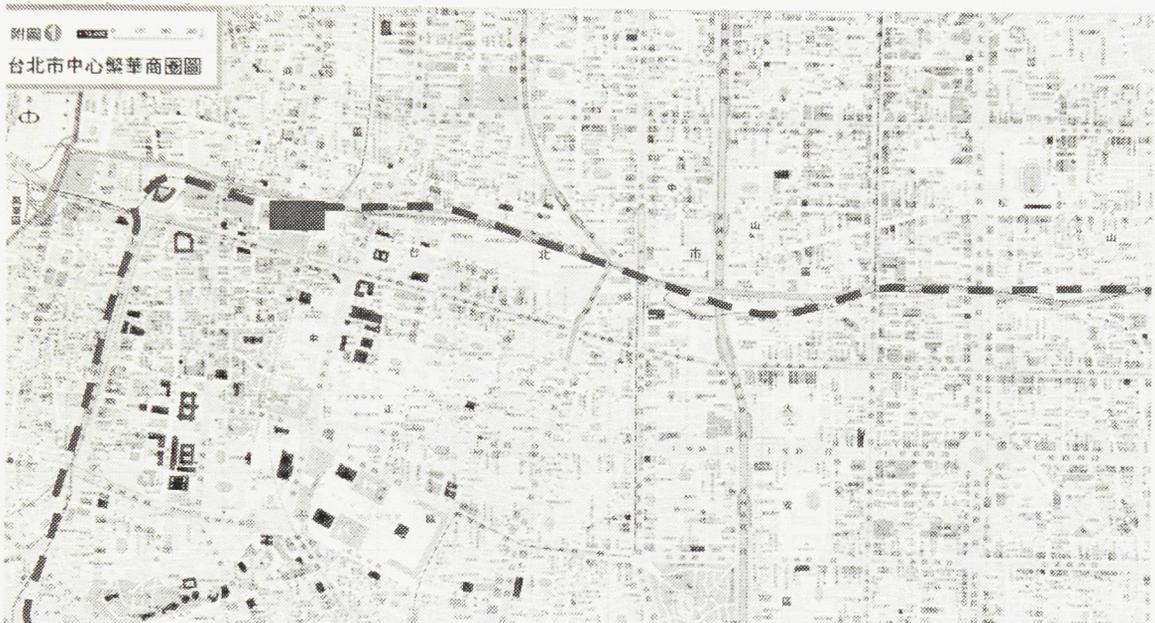


Figure 1.5. Taiwan Railway and HSR Routes, Taipei City Core.

HSR (High Speed Rail)

With the existing concentration of population along the West Taiwan Corridor, conventional intercity transportation options are showing signs of ineptness at coping with the increased traffic loads and this in turn is leading to deterioration in service quality. In view of the anticipated fast growing demand for intercity travel in the future, the HSR trains,

³交通部, 重要交通設統計 [Important Transportation System Statistics]. (台北: 交通部, 2004) 50-52.

characteristic of safety, mass transit, limited land use, energy efficiency, and minimal pollution, are expected to contribute significantly to the alleviation of overcrowding traffic and the balancing of regional development; making one-day commuting along the extensively developed west corridor a reality.⁴

Airways

The Taipei SongShan Domestic Airport is located in the northern end of the DunHua North Road, a major green and scenic artery of the City. According to statistics issued by the Civil Aeronautics Administration, Ministry of Transportation and Communications, this airport has offered 146,107 flights and serviced about 9,859,410 passengers for the year 2001. This domestic airport is approximately 50 kilometres away from the CKS International Airport, which is at a 40-minute driving distance via the National ZhongShan Highway and functionally also serves as the logistics base for the CKS International Airport in case of emergency.⁵

Roadways

At the end of 2002, the roadway system in Taipei City reached a total of 1,532 kilometres in length and 20,579,000 square meters in area. Also, there are about 1,649,219 registered motor vehicles in the City, which include 971,568 motorcycles. In addition to the ZhongShan Highway, the

⁴交通部, 重要交通設統計 [Important Transportation System Statistics]. (台北: 交通部, 2004) 53-56.

⁵交通部, 重要交通設統計 [Important Transportation System Statistics]. (台北: 交通部, 2004) 155-164.

Northern Second Highway, and the Belt Expressway System, there are six major corridors connecting Taipei and the neighbouring areas of SanChong, XinZhuang, BanQiao, ZhongHe, YongHe, XinDian, and XiZhi.⁶

1.1.2. A Pedestrian City

As a response to the overall deterioration of the urban environment in Taipei, projects for improving the pedestrian environment have been enforced since 1995 to specifically tackle problems such as dusty air, circulation confusion, and traffic congestion. Over the years, government policies have been initiated with the intention to create a friendly walking environment for urban residents. Projects in the past include the beautification of urban pedestrian architecture (sidewalks, streetlights, building fixtures and billboard regulation); these were then followed by a series of government-guided campaigns to educate city residents in the proper usage and care of public hardware, and to promote sensible development and renewals of the designated public areas.

Many areas within the city have seen immediate or progressive results from these initiatives with a positive response from the residents.

Successful examples include the Ximen Pedestrian District with a regulated local traffic arrangement



Figure 1.6. Ximen Pedestrian District.

⁶交通部, 重要交通設統計 [Important Transportation System Statistics]. (台北: 交通部, 2004) 65-75.

shared between cars and pedestrians as well as the development of pedestrian facilities. This example provides an appropriate case study to better model other improvement areas. The plan to intensify the generation of friendly pedestrian environments will continue and will include a list of planning methods to respond to the more recent urban changes and needs. The program includes the implementation and installation of public art, the preservation and development of green areas, the installation of street lighting and other related nightscape visual programs, the zoning and designation of exclusive pedestrian districts and neighbourhoods; the upgrading of street facilities, the renovation and beautification of sidewalk surfaces and pavements; the application of tighter building regulations.

1.1.3. A Humanistic City

Like all distinctive cities, Taipei succeeds by being a place where its people can find a qualitatively unique living condition that promotes a positive attitude towards life. This is an elusive yet fundamental characteristic that must be sustained in future planning.

The development patterns of Taipei originated from its west end, and these slowly progressed eastward as the city continued to grow and expand. In order to redirect interest and focus to the recently neglected city core away from the highly established commercial district on the eastern outer ring, new development programs will need to address the numerous density issues that have been previously been avoided in favour of urban sprawl. This objective is

intended to balance the unsynchronized urban growth and restore the commercial interests and psychological faith in the old urban areas. Strategic urban renewal and revitalization projects in selected communities and neighbourhoods, including the cleaning-up of slum areas, along with the preservation of historical sites, will increase real estate values and developmental potentials and eventually improve the overall building facilities managed by the public. Moreover, the Bureau of Urban Development has also designed programs to attract citizens, the private sector and national groups to participate in these urban revival projects. The programs identify priorities, strategies and investments in urban issues such as: community interaction and bonding, public recreation facilities, arts and heritage development, employment and financial assistance, public health and sanitary attention, long-term urban care and maintenance, security and safety, and emergency and protective services. While the goal of the programs will ensure a higher quality of life for the residents, the economic benefits could be achieved to positively stimulate the commercial interests and development in these central areas.

1.1.4. The Cyber City

Following the vision to transform Taipei into a Cyber City, the city government drafted the "Cyber City Plan." This plan corresponds to three major actions that will encourage and improve the interaction between the residents and the public hardware and information networks. Included in this initiative is the internal integration of information technology into the operations of city

government, exploring the possibility that Internet technology can help improve the current services offered to the citizens, and providing non-governmental related information through a public interface network. Various community networks for public services are already in operation to better service the end users' needs and requests and cover a wide range of community-based resources including public safety, voluntary service, healthcare and medical services, community services, welfare and assistance, life-time learning programs, and private-sectors services. The Cyber City Plan has identified five primary goals, namely - to increase the use of internet, to decrease the use of roads, to provide equal access to internet services for all, to view internet services as public utilities, to create a ubiquitous network of public services, to promote Taipei's competitive advantage by increasing accessibility to internet networks, and to incorporate the cyberspace interface into the existing urban hardware. These will be promoted as a part of the urban renewal plan aimed at constructing a more interactive and user-friendly city.

1.1.5. To Forge a Global City

With the implementation of the new urban infrastructure and transportation systems, the city's hardware performance has accelerated faster than the pace of urban development as a whole. The transformation of the urban structure needs to be co-ordinated with the activity, behaviour and image that the city is putting forward. Therefore, the city government will develop strategies to adjust the city's internal growth to correspond to the recent planning changes. With this

recognition, it is important to promote and enforce a beneficial and economically friendly environment so that local industries and interest groups can cultivate unique and competitive abilities that will allow them to enter the global landscape as strong contenders and partners. Major urban plans and projects, such as the Nangang Business Park, the Taipei Media and Culture Park, the Taipei Main Station Special District, and the Sher-Z Island Development Plan, have been initiated to update and respond to the new development changes; they synchronize the growths in various endeavours and coordinate the changing trends that are leading to the international globalization of the city.

1.1.6. To Constitute A People's City

As of now, the official urban planning procedural guidelines in Taiwan provide limited opportunities for citizens to participate in the process. Currently, citizens could only propose written statements to the local government during a 30-day public exhibition period after the specific urban plan has been reviewed at the local level. Such restricted access to the source and the lack of transparency during the planning process often generates unnecessary frictions and disappointing end results. The city government is attempting to fill the absence of public participation in decision-making as a healthy interaction between the end users and the planning groups could ensure the quality of the development and generate more satisfactory results. However, the majority of the public lack professional knowledge and practice in the area of urban planning and false judgment and involvement of the public could negatively affect the outcome.

Two channels are thus introduced to the citizens by the city government: the Neighbourhood Improvement Program, which focuses on the physical environment and technical issues allowing residents to develop a fundamental understanding of the current challenges, and the Community Planner Program, which targets the community consensus and raises awareness of community interaction and bonding.

1.1.7. Toward an Eco-City

The quickened pace of development over the last few decades has had a devastating impact on the eco-diversity of the Taipei Basin as rapid urbanization pushes outward into the basin's natural edges. Natural habitats and landscapes are diminishing; and the balance of the eco-system is being destroyed. In addition, the heat generated by excessive and unevenly regulated motorized vehicles directly affects the urban microclimate and contributes to the extreme climate condition. The problems are further magnified due to Taipei Basin's unique geological condition, which by its concave profile traps the excess heat. Thus urban development in Taipei must be sensitive to the surrounding environment and consider the climate variations and their effects on people and city operations. Currently, planning of parks and green axis routes and planting of vegetation have been practiced in the urbanized areas and in natural habitats, and preservation measures and regulations have been carried out to effectively restore the balance of the ecosystems of the Taipei Basin. To further extend the parameters of the eco-city program, policies have been drafted based on four

fundamental ideas: the improvement of trash collection and waste management, the promotion of public transportation to minimize single driver vehicle usage, planning for easy access to nature, and monitoring and regulating future urban growth. Furthermore, a user-friendly public transit system and an efficient urban infrastructure will encourage the usage of mass transportation over private motorized vehicles, thus showing environmental improvements in the long run and contributing to the ecological development and the overall sustainability of the city and its adjacent areas.

2. Taipei Main Station Development Project

2.1. Overview

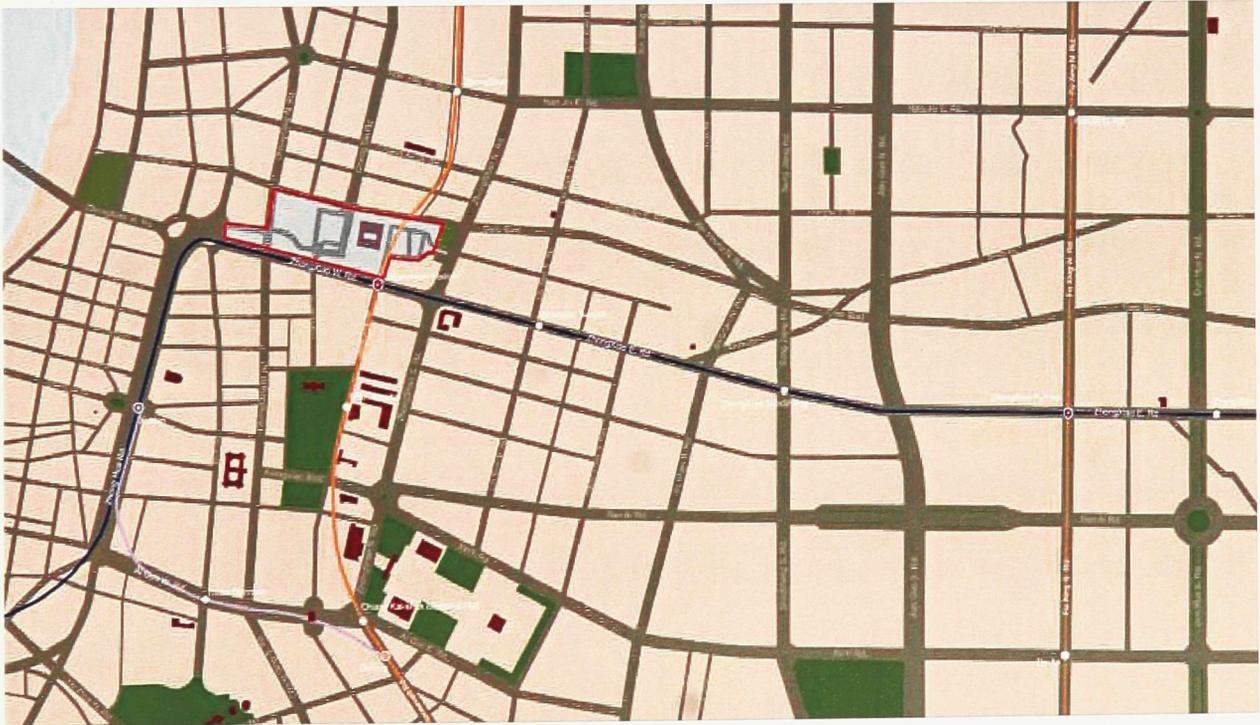


Figure 1.7. Taipei Main Station Special District, Taipei City Core.

Blue/Orange/Purple Lines – MRT Routes

2.1.1. Taipei Railway Station Special District

The Taipei Railway Station Special District is located in the core of the city and represents not only the node of all systems of transportation, but also the converging point of the diverse cultural districts that have participated in the evolution of the site and its surroundings. The area is a microcosm of Taipei's urban condition with its active and dense flow of automobiles and pedestrians on a street grid that orders numerous generations of development above and below ground, including multiple layers of transportation systems. The site thus presents a unique urban condition and an enormous challenge to the planning committee. Geographically the site, located in the western part of Taipei City, is almost flat, with altitudes of 3.0m to 4.7m. Originally the district was used for the Taiwan Railway, Taiwan Railway Administration offices and dormitories, railroad yard, and bus terminals. When the Taiwan Railway system was sent underground two decades ago, rail yards and station areas were released for commercial development and urban public spaces. This Special District is the city's main gateway to the world and the primary focus of the urban planning strategies explained previously. As a development "template", it will influence adjacent townships and districts that emanate from the Taipei Main Station area. The planning strategies for the Special District will correspond to the city government's urban renewal guidelines and the site will be rezoned to respond to and facilitate the recent implementation of urban infrastructure and transportation systems.

2.1.2. Extent of Design Competition Site



Figure 1.8. Taipei Main Station Special District, Aerial Photograph.

- | | | |
|--|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 02 Former Taiwan Rail Admin. Headquarter | 23 Elevated Civic Avenue | 24 Taipei Rapid Transit Station |
| 06 Rail Police Station | 09 Parking (Underground) | 12 DN174A Project |
| 07 Inter-city Bus Terminal (W) | 25 Inter-city Bus Terminal (N) | 11 Luggage Station |
| | 10 Taipei Main station | 13 Sun-Yet-San Memorial |

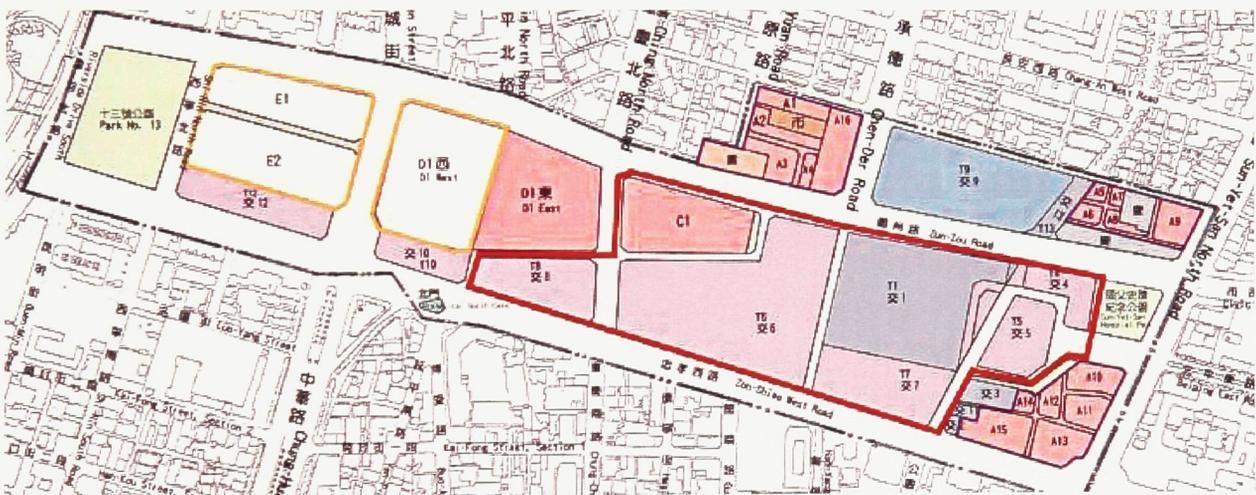


Figure 1.9. Taipei Main Station Special District

Red Line – Extent of the Site

Light Blue Dash Line – Future Urban Renewal

Blue Shade – Transportation

Purple Shade – Transportation Plaza

Pink Shade – Commercial

Orange Line – Temporary Reserved Area



Figure 1.10. Site Photographs.

Lot No.	Zoning	Existing Uses
T1	Transportation (Taipei Main Station)	Station is six stories above ground. Taiwan Rail and High Speed Rail will share underground Level 2 platform, Mass Rapid Transit Lines run through the area at Underground Level 3. There is also a proposal to build an Airport Rapid Transit Station to the north of the Station within the next 10 years.
T4	Transportation Plaza	A part of the East Transportation Plaza
T5	Transportation Plaza	East Transportation Plaza; two basement levels are used as parking lots. At ground level there are bus stops and taxi queuing areas.
T6	Transportation Plaza	West Transportation Plaza; two basement levels are used as parking lots. At ground level there are inter city bus stations and taxi queuing area.
T7	Transportation Plaza	DN174A project (underground shopping plaza) is about to be completed. At ground level it will be plaza, and its basement level is connected to the Station to the north and to the underground shopping street to the south, and to the east it is connected to the Rapid Transit Boulevard, and also to an underground commercial street.
T8	Transportation Plaza	Partially covered with retail shops.
T10	Transportation Plaza	Partially covered with retail shops
T12	Transportation Plaza	Partially covered with retail shops
C1 D1 East	General Commercial	Empty Lot, but covered with simple greenery treatment.
D1 West	General Commercial (Temp. Reserved)	Co-owned by public and private sectors. There is an inter-city bus terminal planned on the east side for intermediary purposes
E1 E2	General Commercial (Temp. Reserved)	Co-owned by public and private sectors. Taiwan Rail Administration Offices and Dormitories

Figure 1.11. Taipei Main Station Special District: Zoning and Existing Uses.

2.2 Planning Challenges

2.2.1. Gateway to the City: the Creation of a Public Domain

Taipei's Main Station projects the image of the city and its appearance is a direct reflection of the state of the city. However, the endless construction activity since the railway was placed underground two decades ago and the recent implementation of new transportation systems has plagued the site and produced an unwelcoming environment, which is having a negative impact on the immediate context. The problem is magnified by the congested traffic and confused circulation patterns at the site. The stark and unpleasant appearance of the environment is antithetical to the desired image of the city and denies the potentially important face that could be presented at this gateway. In addition, the site in its present state fails to provide the services and needs of its residents. These numerous problems must be seriously addressed, especially when the construction present at the site, the chaotic, disorderly, and inconvenient state of the site is making residents and foreign visitors hesitant to engage with the place.

Leisure and recreation activities are now being emphasized in urban life, and a well-planned public facility could play a part in contributing to the interaction of people beyond the provision of essential transportation services. While the primary function of the Main Station area is to provide important transportation connections for commuters, human comfort and aesthetics within this public space should also be considered in order to elevate the experience of travel. Beyond strict urban planning, new facilities, must relate to the public's

concerns for appropriate and pleasing spaces of engagement. Public art, architectural design, historical preservation, landscaping, facilities for the disabled, and venues for cultural events all relate to a higher standard of urban lifestyle and contribute to a improved international image of the city.

2.2.2. The Impact Of HSR and International Airport Access MRT System

Both the HSR and the International Airport Access MRT System will change the way commuters travel in Taiwan, and redefine the commuting experience by dramatically shortening the travel time and enhancing travel comfort. The HSR will be sharing the existing platforms with Taiwan Railway at the U2 Level (Underground level two) of the Main Station.

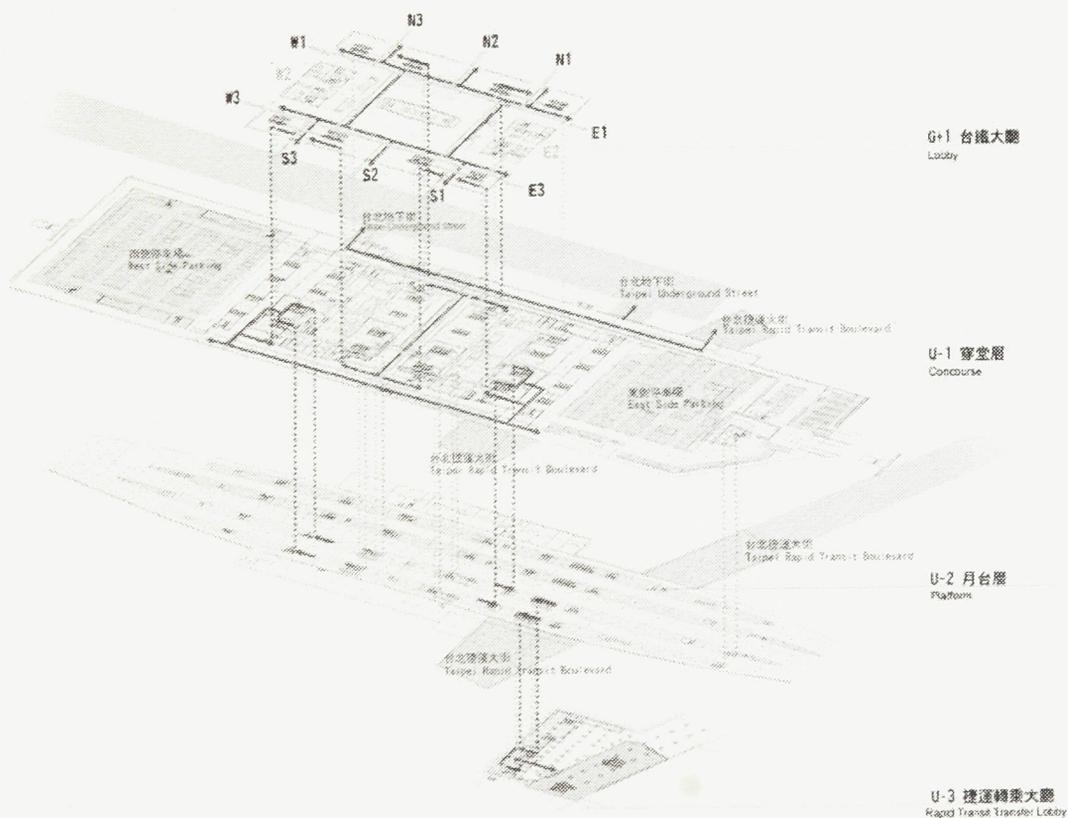


Figure 1.12. Taipei Main Station Circulation. Axonometric.

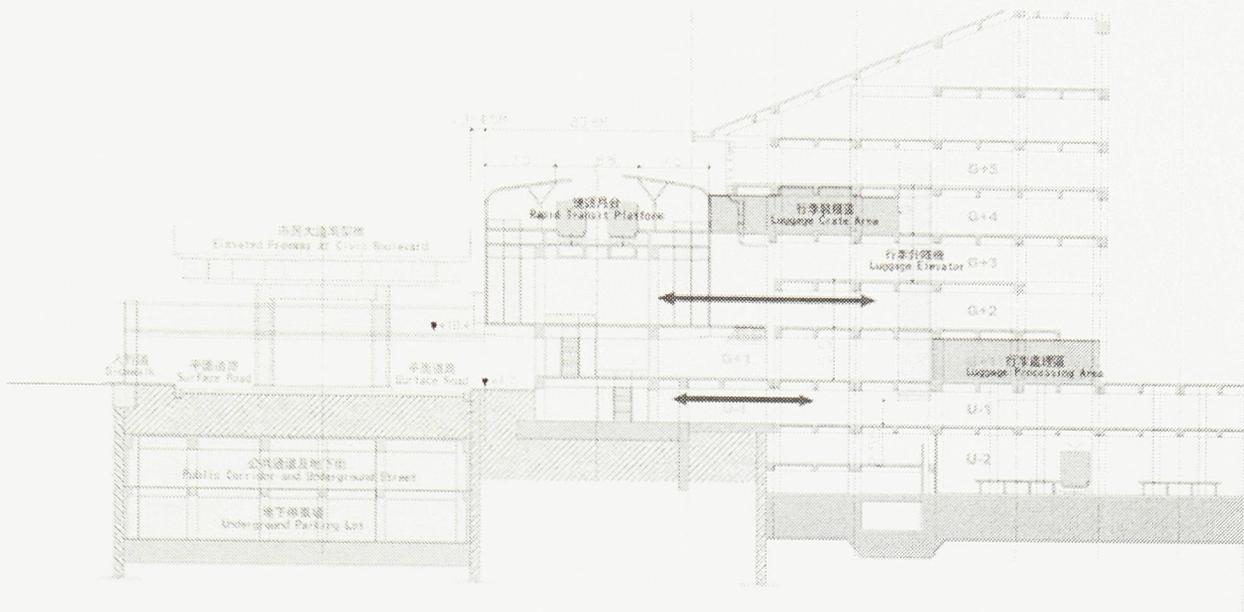


Figure 1.13. Taipei Main Station, Airport Transit Proposal. Cross Section.

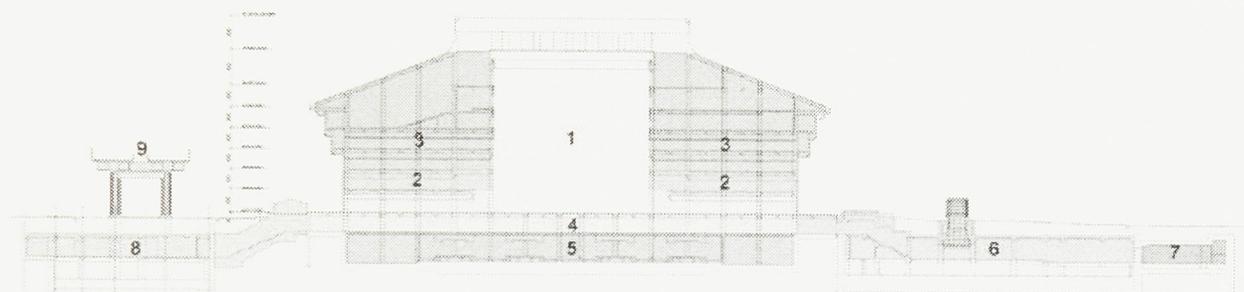


Figure 1.14. Taipei Main Special District. Cross Section.

This combination will produce an enormous amount of traffic flow and scheduling challenges. On the other surface, the airport transit system will enter the area in an elevated fashion parallel to Civic Avenue from the west of the site. With the addition of HSR and airport transit, the intensity of commuter travel in the area as well as the importance of Taipei Main Station will be enhanced. New design proposals therefore must consider the integration of the architecture and landscaping, the connection of two new transportation modes to the Main Station facility and the new circulation patterns for the entire complex.

2.2.3. Consistent Qualities In Urban Infrastructure

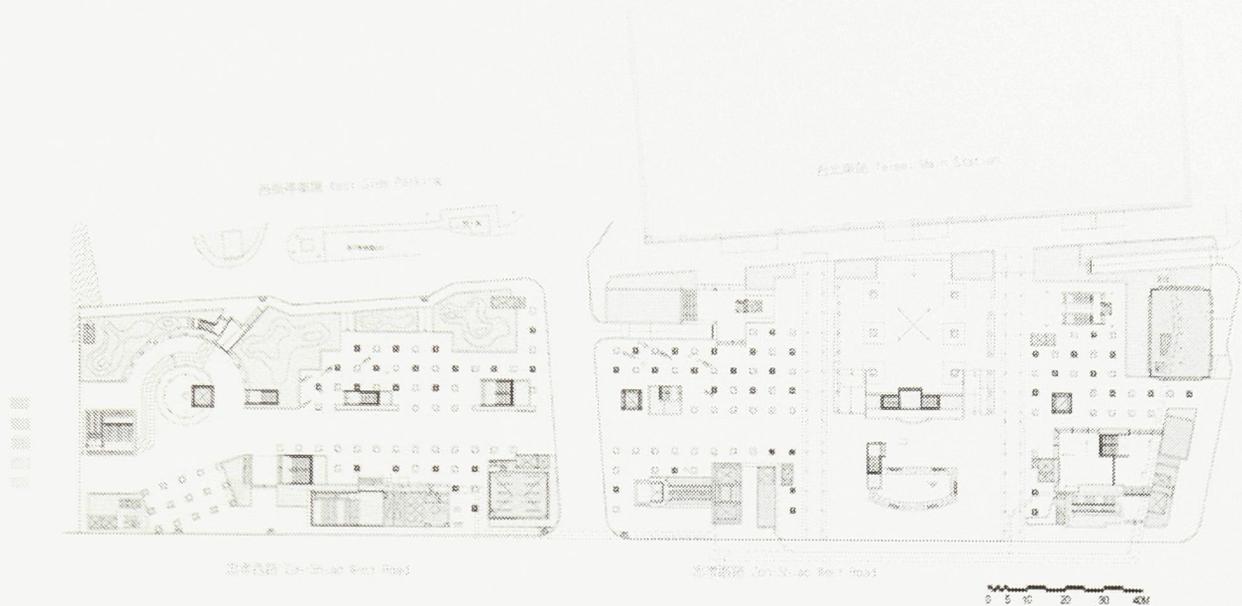


Figure 1.15. DN174A Project. Plan.

Currently the DN174A underground commercial project is entering its final phase of construction. Upon completion this infrastructure will connect various, existing underground spaces, including Taipei Underground Street (Civic Avenue Underground Concourse), and Taipei Rapid Transit Boulevard (Taipei Main Station Underground Concourse, and ZonShiao West Road Underground Concourse) forming a complete underground public space. In recent years the city government has been treating the improvement of public spaces as singular units, creating an inconsistency across the entire site as well as transition problems between different public spaces. An integration of circulation systems and pleasant spatial qualities are desperately needed to complete the ring of various spaces above and below ground. It would be beneficial to all current and future developments and additions to establish a physical connection between all

facilities and to encourage public activities and interaction by incorporating a number of flexible spaces that maximize the usage of the facility.

2.2.4. Comprehensive Planning

Two decades ago, the Taipei Main Station was re-designed to facilitate traffic growth. With population growth and the addition of recent infrastructure and transportation systems, the station's inability to cope with the increased traffic flow is beginning to surface. While new systems are continuously being introduced and planned for the future, there has not been a comprehensive planning strategy to integrate all the transportation modes. These and the interchange systems required to link them are exerting a tremendous demand and stress on the dated station. Furthermore, the sheer volume of traffic circulation generated by the addition of the new transportation systems will drastically affect movement around the site and demand a planning strategy to address the landscaping issues that have been neglected by previous redevelopment projects. A sensible landscape design strategy is needed to integrate the existing environment with the new facilities as well as to anticipate and respond to future changes. As well as providing a flexible platform for the expansion of the Main Station, the environment around the station could offer recreational spaces to the public. The multi-functional landscaping program thus would correspond to the general urban renewal strategies to integrate the hardware and to create a humanistic urban environment. This landscape should also reroute the inner traffic patterns within the study site for better pedestrian

circulation and a more efficient co-existence of the many systems/functions at the site. Such a landscaping strategy is critical to making the entire site and all of its components a unified environment. This is especially important when the city has been and will be introducing new construction or transportation elements to the site.

2.2.5. Preservation Of Historical Buildings

Given its rich historical background, the Main Station site is surrounded with historical monuments such as the North Taipei City Gate, the Taipei Post Office, the Sun-Yat-Sen Memorial Hall, and the former Taiwan Railway Headquarter and Complex. These historical buildings represent the evolution of the city at various stages in its history and illustrate the conflicts and challenges behind each transformation of the urban core. The preservation of these buildings is to be extended beyond the strict protection of the architectural artefacts; therefore, the program should be developed functionally to meet the city's goal to construct a place that is not only technologically advanced but also rich with cultural identity.

2.3. Planning Goals

Planning goals for the Taipei Main station Development Project can be summarized in four guidelines: 1) To provide a continuous space for out-door activities, 2) To improve the aesthetics of this part of the city, 3) To stimulate

commercial activities in the area, 4) To make this area Taipei's multi-model transportation hub.

As the previous discussion suggests, the focus of the project will be directly addressing the integration of and the interaction between the existing and the new systems while specifically laying out a long term planning solution to accommodate the future commercial and public activities at the site. The site's unique combination of historical presence, human growth and technological evolution represents Taipei's entire urban fabric in a microenvironment, reflecting not only the challenges and issues that have arisen during each stage of development, but also presenting potential possibilities and solutions for future planning in the city. The significance of the site as a model for developing the rest of the city cannot be overlooked and the challenges should be addressed as a complete package in order to best accommodate the complexity of the project.

3.0 Outlying Areas and Cities: HSR Station District Plan

The HSR line runs 345km from Taipei (Taipei Main Station) to Kaohsiung (Tsoying Station), passing through fourteen major cities. High Speed Rail stations will be built or incorporated into the existing facilities in eleven locations: Taipei, Panchiao, Taoyuan, Hsinchu, Miaoli, Taichung, Changhua, Yunlin, Chiayi, Tainan and Tsoying. Among them, five locations (Taoyuan, Hsinchu, Taichung, Chiayi and Tainan) will be developed according to the HSR Station District Plan. The development plan responds to the characteristics local to the sites and expands their programmatic potentials accordingly. The guidelines for

these newly developed districts constitute to a consistent development across the island and collectively act as a planning study model for the development of Taipei Main Station.

Please refer to Appendix A: Outlying Areas and Cities: HSR Station District Plan for additional information.

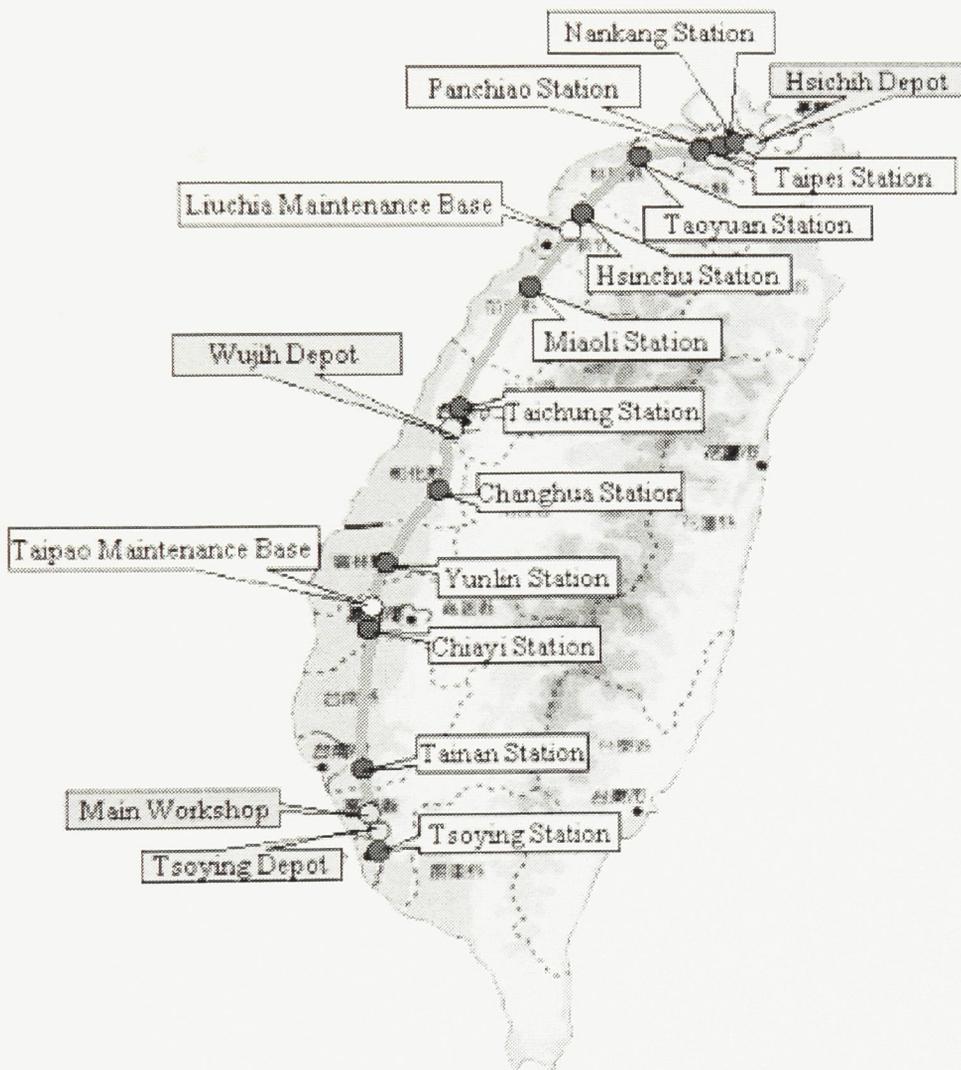


Figure 1.16. HSR Route, Taiwan.

Chapter Two: Intimate Scale

Human Perception

The graphic novel in this chapter describes the receiving end, the inhabitants of the planning program as the characters negotiate the different systems (and each other) in the urban setting. Delivered at an intimate scale, and from a contrasting perspective to the preceding chapter, the graphic novel begins to identify conflicts and interactions between different elements in the city. As the story progresses, the significance of human perception in the urban transformation is underlined; and the experiences encountered form a critique of the city's evolution, scrutinizing the adherence of the City's planning ideas and hardware within the urban fabric.

Graphic Novel

Trading Town

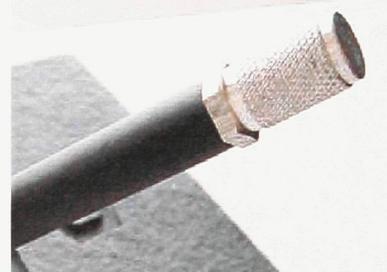
How much will you give up in your life in exchange for something you want?

Mind? Body? Freedom? Morality? Hope?

The Tao philosophers believe in the state of equilibrium in all things and in all beings: Gain compensates for loss; loss remunerates gain.

Likewise, the higher you climb the harder you may fall. The history has seen its share of political and economical super powers rising and falling. Such is the law of nature that governs the balance in life and restores it when either end of the scale is tipped. The change can be subtle yet the process based on your choice cannot be reversed. Some have fallen into the never-ending streak of changes to make up for the things they have lost. Some resist the change, pondering what life would become if the change had been made and fearing the consequences that might follow. The question of *what if* provides the necessary element that fuels hope and drives our anticipations in life. The game of balancing the gain and the loss is in all of us; and we process the equation of balance to arrive at a desirable solution all the time, tinkering with the variables while assessing the givens and the unknowns.

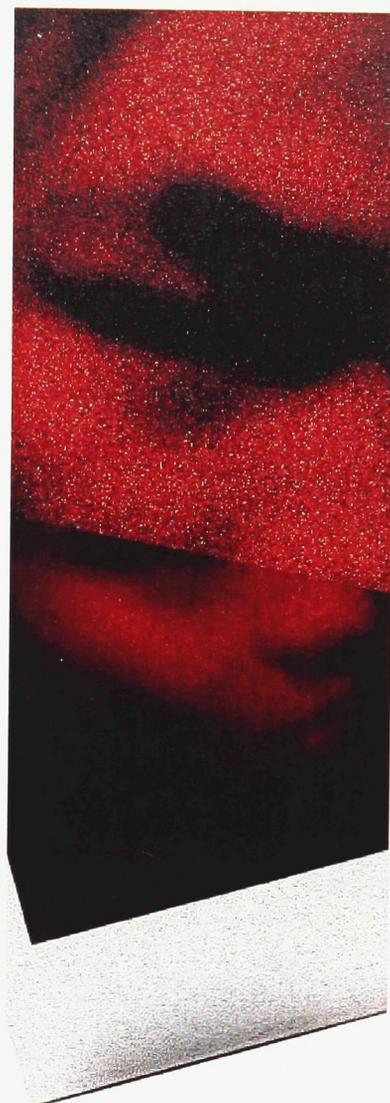
This morning I have again lost a few hours of sleep because of the construction next door to my apartment. The tight alley echoes and magnifies the noise. It is annoying, but not entirely unbearable. It has been two weeks that I suffer from the lack of quality sleep, but I have



suffer from the lack of quality sleep, but I have not yet figured out what I have gained from the loss of brain cells. I lie in the bed as usual, staring at the ceiling, following the patterned decor left by the previous owner. The gloomy sky releases a sudden sunny break. With the sunlight I can see how dusty the air is. My room faces east, as a monk recommended a year ago when I visited a temple in Taipei County. This orientation would suit my life better he had said. Was he talking fengshui to me? Or was he just an observant individual who picked up the subtle puffiness around my eyes and thought that I could benefit from a more regulated sleeping habit. He was right. If I were not to wake up to the sharp sunlight that casts in at six o'clock in the morning, my sleep would surely be interrupted by the sudden rise in room temperature. It worked and the puffiness is gone. Now I wish the monk was here to tell me what to do with the noise outside. I am still in bed, slowly drifting into sleep again. The years in the school residence have trained me to cope with the frequent fire alarm. And it does not take long for me to adjust to that noise. As irritating as it may be, once you have found its rhythm the noise can be as beautiful as music. Just when I am humming to the rhythmic pounding of the excavator, my alarm goes berserk.

This is my cue to get up...

It is still early, but the bustle of life on the street has already begun. The breakfast carts are receiving line-ups of desperate students who are late for the seven o'clock morning tutoring



session. I seem to live in a different time zone from all of them, where the clock ticks ridiculously slowly. It has been a month since I moved back to Taipei and I am not yet used to the city, even though I was born and raised in this very place. Ironically the girl from Oregon living across my unit is having the best time of her life. I run into her occasionally at garbage collecting time every Tuesday evening. The American girl teaches English in a private tutoring academy. The exchange-teaching program she joined right after high school put her here for three weeks but now the pay is too good for her to head back home. She tells me that she is living a Taiwanese dream and that life could not be better for her. True. I agree, especially when you factor in the fact that a recent high school graduate is earning twice as much as the local English literature PhD's who are coworkers in the same academy.

Before I have managed to button up my shirt the breakfast carts have fled the scene; another regiment of carts have moved in from the north to set up their lunchtime sales. I skip breakfast again this morning. With all the sleep time I have lost, my appetite is gone as well. My fridge is quite empty. It's got a few bottles of Evian water, some fruit and the bento I didn't get to finish last night. The Seven-Eleven's fifty dollar, a thousand-calorie bento is a quick microwave version of my childhood memories. Once in a while the market demands a nostalgic twist to the modern day, and this marketing strategy proves to be a winning formula each and every time. Things change fast on this small



island and many old things are cleared to make way for the new. The corporate boys think we've moved forward enough and hit the market with yet another limited edition old-time bento series that targets those of us who grew up on the pre-computer era food. And it works. Ah, it tastes just like the old times, except it is now in an environmentally friendly paper box and a little on the salty side.

My empty fridge is not alone. The five hundred square foot room has nothing more than the basic IKEA furniture. It comes fully assembled and delivered directly from the warehouse. It is the kind of service everyone expects in this place. No one here has the time to bolt together a few pre-cut pieces, let alone locate them in the self-serve warehouse, and carry them all the way home. The term self-serve is almost non-existent. Money does buy time here; but time is never plentiful in this city. My money also buys the plasma wide screen television on the wall and the integrated entertainment set. It is a huge contrast to the banal room even with the furniture named MIKKA and PULU that promise to define my personality and add a burst of flavour to my living quarter. There is not much to watch on TV this early in the morning except news and stock analysis. Both prepare you for your inclusion in the real world, and prompt your mind to maximize the profit-of-equity ratio in life.

My cellular phone vibrates violently on the glass MIKKA coffee table. Despite the sparkling new entertainment set, my phone is archaic, no fancy 36-bit musical tunes or built-in



camera. It's big, and crudely taped up to keep it from falling apart. I've dropped it too many times and the ringer is no longer working. But I don't miss the limited selection of analog ring tones anyway.

My phone vibrates the second time.

"Hello?"

"Hey, you are up already? Ok.

Remember the restaurant I told you about last time?"

It's Kei, a high school friend, and he sounds awfully excited.

"I just got up. What restaurant? The two ninety-nine dollar yakiniku?"

"No, no. The one we saw on the eight o'clock news last week, from Hokkaido?"

"Hmm...what about it."

"They just opened this past weekend and my coworkers were there for the opening. They said it's real good. I am getting off early today, let's go. You don't already have plans do you?"

"No, not really."

"Alright, meet me at Shin-Kon Mitsukoshi at three."

"Which one?"

"The station front."

He hangs up. Kei is a small town mid-Taiwan farm boy, who now works in Taipei after being discharged from the army a year ago. He served at the Kinmen naval base just off Mainland China. During his three years service, he met Wu Chao His, the owner of Chin Ho Li Steel Knife Factory, and was offered a job to promote their products in Taipei. Mr. Wu and his steel knives



are a legend. During World War II, there was a serious lack of resources on the small Kinmen Island; steel in particular was hard to come by. Inheriting the Chinese mastery of iron casting and forging in the Chin Dynasty, the local third generation knife maker Wu Chao His turned to the artilleries abandoned by the U.S. and the Allied Forces and collected the scrap steel to make his first Kinmen steel knife. And so the legend was born. On August 23rd, 1958 the island suffered from a devastating artillery bombardment from Mainland China historically known as the *823 Artillery Battle*. The bombing left millions of shells that later became an abundant source of material for the steel blades. The story of Maestro Wu and his artillery forging art travels. Kei told me the story at a cultural exhibition in Taipei and sold me a set of kitchen knives at the spot. They are very good knives and the story does give them a sentimental sharpness and cultural value.

The restaurant Kei and I will be going to this afternoon also boasts a story of its own. The young chef Chiro Shinto, a Musashi culinary school graduate, has won six major culinary competitions on TV. The media exposure has perfected his skills and rocketed his success and made him an instant celebrity figure in the profession. At the age of twenty-four, he owns ten restaurants and his name has become a synonym of northern flavour miso-based ramen in Japan. The fame travels across the Japan Sea all the way from Hokkaido to the core of Taipei city. It has caused quite a stir in the city long before his arrival. And like many others, we simply cannot



resist going. Taipei is a place full of stories, real and fictional. No one cares how truthful they are, but everyone agrees that they make this place more interesting and living here more exciting. It should not surprise anyone that a salesman holds the most popular job in this city. They can never run out of products to sell, and stories to tell. The words never settle and the actions never cease.

The room is incredible dusty lately. I have to wipe off my shoes every now and then, but only to find them covered again in fine grey dust. The construction has taken a toll on the air quality around this neighbourhood. It does not matter how I seal myself in, the dust still creeps into my room through the vents, the gaps and the tiniest leaks undetectable by human eyes. Much like thousands of stories that make up this island, the dust in the air never settles. There is constant agitation in the city to keep it afloat.

It wasn't always like this. Taipei was a trading town, the action calm and subtle. Fortified walls were erected for defence but their endurance was never tested. The place was changed forever the day the Imperial Army marched down from the land of the rising sun and conquered the place without shedding of single drop of blood. They were shown the way in with a bamboo ladder by a lady selling rice pudding bowls. Soon after the change of power, the walls were torn down for urban expansion; houses, theatres, and shops were built and the retail signs were put up. The dust in the air has never settled since. The new arrival of power jumpstarts the city and awakens the ghosts within for the very first time. The ghosts of the



trading town do not sleep; they wander through space and time, creeping into people's bodies and feeding on the desires in their minds.

Break

Every morning the pounding of the jackhammer breaks the dawn; the workers start another day of beating on the crust of Taipei Basin, making way for the new pillars for the monorail in Park No.13. The elevated expressway beside it is given a cheap coat of green paint to break the monotonous urban fabric and to make up for the loss of greenery in the city. The lifted rail tracks depart the station on the park's east side and clear everything on the way to the airport in Taoyuan. Neither the park, nor the cities and towns the transit system is scheduled to cut through pose any resistance to the demolition team; no one does. Fortunately for Park No.13, the pain will be short and the scars are minimal. In exchange for a small loss of greenery and air space in the city, the people get faster service. They cannot seem to remember the last time a crane was absent in the city; something faster is always under construction, something new is always being built. On the perimeter of the site, two temporary billboards are being lifted into place. It is a computer rendering of what Park No.13 will be after the tracks make a surgical cut through it. Superimposing the picture that looks like a scene out of a Spielberg sci-fi movie, the Chinese text reads "Taipei Main Station to Taoyuan CKS International Airport in twenty minutes: better service and faster connection;



opening in 2008.”

This morning a mobile crane is been escorted to the site. The traffic chaos starts forty-five minutes earlier than usual today. Two forklifts plough the path clear, relocating overnight parked cars and scooters sitting in the way of the crane. On the north side of the park, a cab driver wakes up in the rear seat, confusion on his face, murmuring to himself with aggravation in his eyes. He reluctantly drives a few yards forward and goes back to sleep. The passenger side window is rolled down to let the air in yet the rumbling noise has no effect on his. The cab is registered to Hsinchu County. Apparently this driver can legally make a few extra dollars from the Hsinchu municipality-approved faster counter and higher starting fare here in Taipei. He owns the cab and has put a few items in the car to make his one hundred thousand-kilometre per year job more enjoyable; DVD player with retractable touch screen LCD panel, A/C cushion seats and variable massage programming, a deck of cards, a magnetic Chinese chess kit, a pillow and few travel magazines.

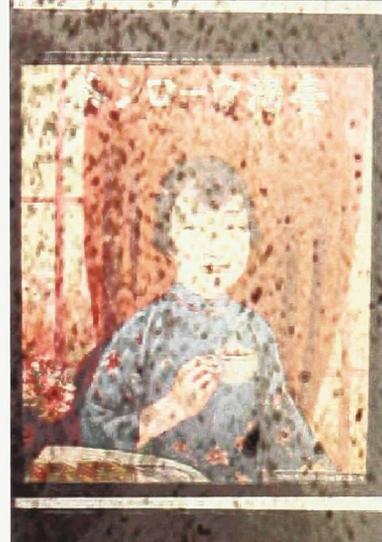
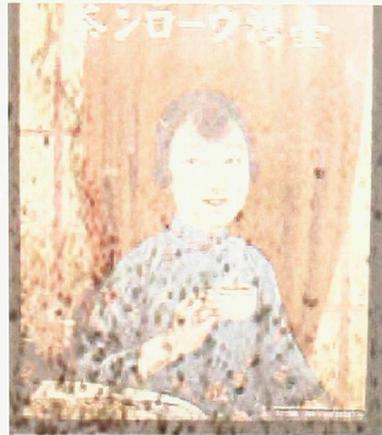
To few people, a day goes by without agony and pain. Their bodies and minds are persistently drained and beaten, until they no longer function nor possess a purpose in life. And for the rest, this is a fresh new opportunity to re-enter the world once more, burying and replacing those who have fallen through the cracks. The taxi driver used to be the chef and the owner of his own lunch bento service; but the pressure from the food-chain competitors who opened next door



to his restaurant drove him out of business. He spent the next three months feeding on his savings and job-hunting without much success. He does not drink or smoke, but his low morale is eating him alive. Driving a cab is not the most glorious job, but it pays rather well. At the age of fifty-six he takes the plunge and starts his own cab service. Fortunately for him, his life and self-esteem are back on track. He does not talk politics or take sides in any social issues like most cab drivers do. In the past, he would talk to his customers and the fellow drivers about his restaurant reminding himself and others that it was the pinnacle of his life. He had been in absolute control and confident about his future. He was an artist of fire and heat, but his enthusiasm in the kitchen is now being redirected to the steering wheel in a confined Toyota. It is a change he has to make, as his fiery and sizzling passion can only take him so far in life.

Exhaustion

My apartment is a few blocks northeast of the train station. It takes me no more than five minutes of casual walking and two subway stops to meet Kei. My place is just off the perimeter of *Little Japan*; *Korean Town* is not far from here also. This area has a high concentration of high-end massage parlours, lounges and hotels, all intended for foreigners, especially Japanese businessmen. I once made the mistake of walking into a restaurant only to find myself in a room of well-suited businessmen with a wall of menu in katakana calligraphy. No one there spoke nor



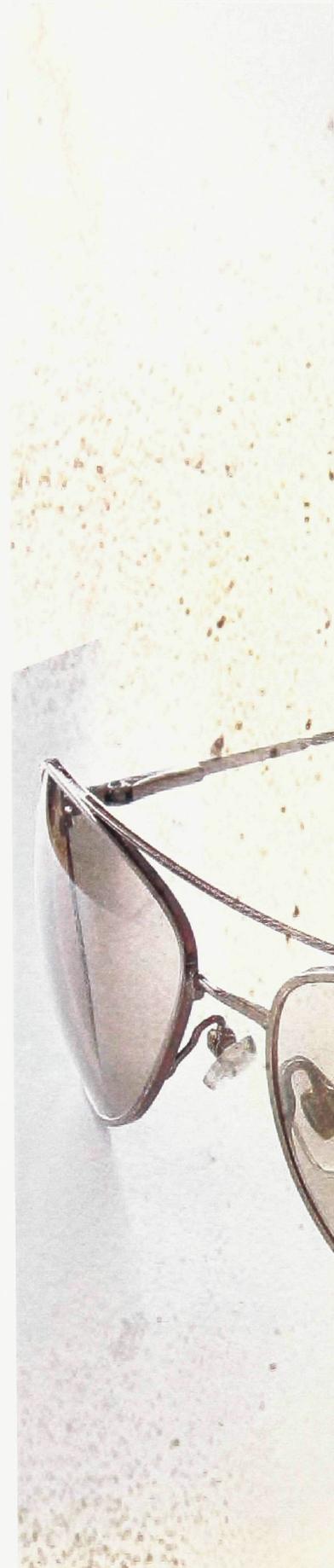
understood mandarin, and in a panic I spat out few broken Japanese words I picked up from my grandmother. The food was great there, authentic Osaka flavour; but I have never returned.

I decide to skip lunch today and put much of my faith on Kei's words. I hope the food lives up to its hype. Eating this late in the afternoon buys me half a day to do some shopping of my own before meeting him at the station area. I go down the stairs and out onto the street. There I see the workers crouching down on the sidewalk chewing down the breakfast they bought earlier from the carts: pan-fried egg rolls, rice balls, and soy drinks. Today is an unusually warm winter day. The depressing grey ceiling finally gets a sunny break, but the humidity keeps the temperature slightly moist and chilly. I walk to the main street to catch a cab. A step onto the curb and a gaze into the traffic is enough to get the cab drivers fighting for the ride. Two seconds later an early 90's Nissan compact pulls a stunt-driver's U turn, cuts off two scooters and stops in front of me. The door kicks open.

"morning sir. Where to?" The driver speaks in a heavy southern Taiwanese-accented Mandarin.

"Kwanghua retail centre."

I step into the car. The car is heavily weathered and battered, inside and out. The fare counter appears amazingly high-tech in the older cockpit. He turns on the counter and drives off. A small bundle of flowers hangs off the neck of the stick shift. The knob is a miniature wooden Buddha encased in a glass shell. And that is about



the extent of the changes he has made to the interior. A sticker that reads, "Hello, you can speak English to me." is on the back of the front passenger headrest. A month-old tabloid has been left on the rear seat. The cover shows the controversial military funding issue that has been putting on quite a show on the news every night. The driver looks at me through the rear view mirror. I hope he is not about to start a political debate with me.

"From out of town?" he says, in Taiwanese this time.

"Yeah."

"I thought so, where?"

"North America."

"Ah I see. Kwanghua? You going to buy a computer there?"

"Electronics."

"You young people know about these computer gizmos." He breaks out an embarrassing chuckle, "my son brought me a player with some sort of drive to put music in."

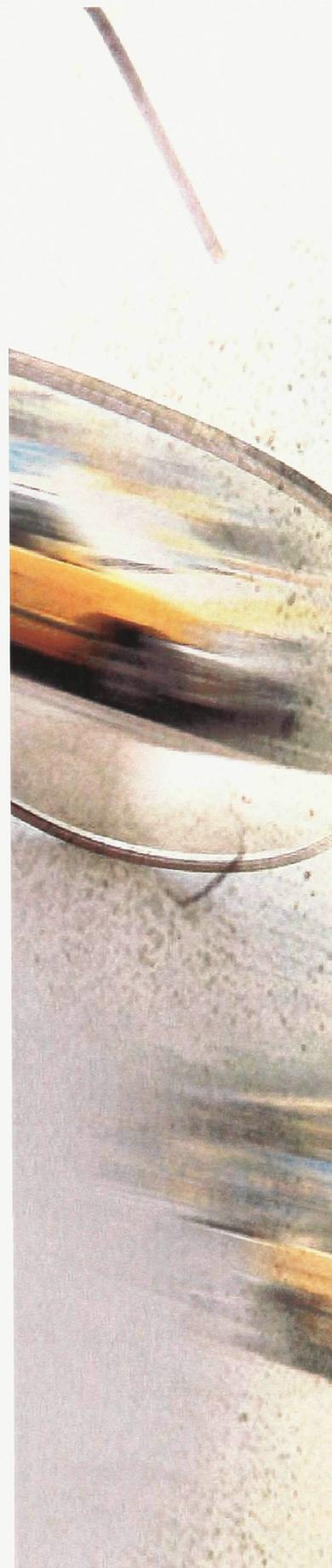
"MP3 player?"

"Yes, something-3. Do you want to see?"

He points to the left of his steering wheel; a small digital display is neatly tucked into a custom made receiver.

"Here it is. My son also wired it to play music in this car."

He goes on to tell me about his son. From his description, the son is about my age, married, has two kids and works in an auto body shop. The man pours out half of his life story in a mere fifteen-minute ride. The cheerful grandfather gets



so carried away with his family that he forgets to make the turn.

“Ah, I am sorry. Let me turn back. Can I drop you off at the side entrance? Less traffic from that direction.”

“Sure, that’s fine.”

He sways to the left cutting off the traffic behind us and attempts another U turn. Checking blind spots obviously is not part of the driving school curriculum in Taipei. All he needs is a little confidence in the drivers behind, counting on them to avoid us on their own. He stops on the side of an aged two-storey building neatly tucked under an overpass. It fills the dark void and creates a commercial zone that supplies the entire city’s technological fetish. Thousands of people are roaming the area, acquiring a quick fix for their electronic addiction.

“Here we are. That will be one hundred and ninety dollars.” He turns over with a smile, “Hundred and fifty will be fine young man, sorry about that.”

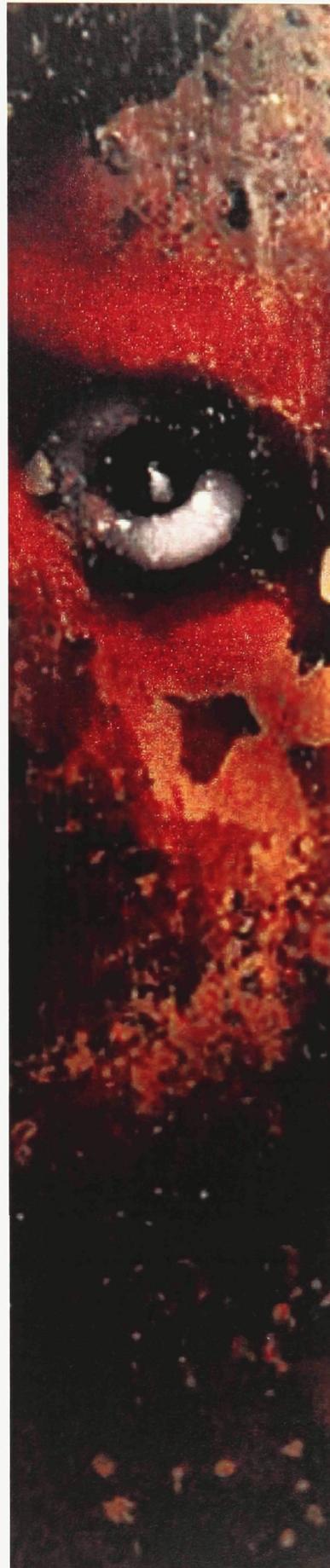
“Don’t worry about it. Thanks for the ride.”

The temperature rises considerably at this intersection. The steamy snack carts, the crowd, and the cars stuck in traffic all contribute to the heat. Over the years the technology obsession has spread out to the adjacent blocks. A dozen new stores are opened every month to meet the overwhelming demand. The hub of this high-tech market is Kwanhua retail centre. The shoddy construction is not reflective of the life and gleam contained within the chipped concrete walls. No



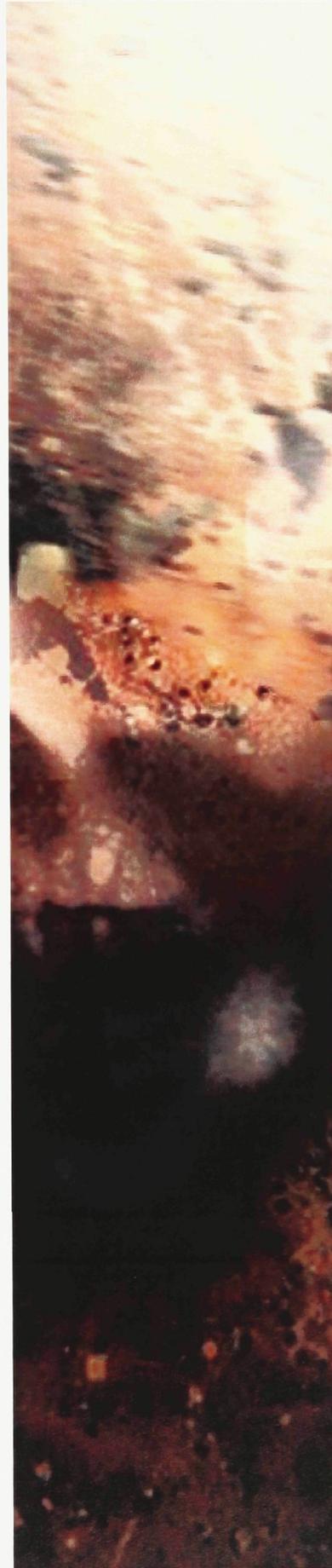
less than a hundred booths and stores are cramped into the building. The action inside is intense. Vendors shout out prices and the special deals of the hour. Buyers occupy every walkable space, browsing and hunting down the bargains. The poorly ventilated building has no windows or seating areas. The undersized entrances prohibit any penetration of natural light. Once entered, the mind loses track of time, the body forgets hunger and exhaustion, and the legs just plough through the meandering corridors around and around. The experience is not for the weak-hearted or anyone who suffers from the slightest claustrophobia.

I enter the west side entrance and squeeze through boxes and packaging material piling up along the already tiny corridor. Two girls approach and hand me a parts price list of the store they represent. I do not have a particular purchase in mind, but more often than not I leave with a lighter wallet. For the addicts, this is wonderland; for the rest, the atmosphere alone is sufficient to crumble their guard and free their cash flow. A mini digital video recorder catches my eyes as I negotiate the tight turns at the back of the retail centre. It is a new pocket-size digital camcorder. Unveiled only a month earlier in Seoul, it storms the Taiwanese market by force and has been on backorder for two months since the day it hit the shore. The limited availability marks up the price considerably. The couple beside me are eyeing the same digital camcorder; they too are unhappy about the mark-up. Stubborn on the price, the storeowner is besieged by three of us. I give up, and the owner didn't



even break a sweat. I must admit that I have not had much success in bargaining. Unable for us to agree on a deal I leave empty handed. Upon exiting the building I am approached by a salesman with a white inch-thick three-ring binder in his hands. He greets me and asks if I would be interested in some cheap software. I thank him and move on. The college student behind me is not so lucky. The hunter has found the prey and he will not set him free easily. The student is blocked, pulled, and begged to browse the catalogue. These software salesmen hunt in packs. His partner sees the immobile prey and moves up to push a sale. I flee from the feeding frenzy without a scratch.

My mind does not recognize how tired my body is until I venture out of the shade. My brain wakes up from the overflow of carbon dioxide and registers the light and fresh air so urgently needed. I wave down a cab and direct the driver to Shin-Kon Mitsukoshi, station-front branch. It is the peak of lunch rush hour. The cab weaves through the congestion but his efforts are quickly extinguished as we near the station. The driver is a man of few words. Uninterested for a conversation, he pulls a hand of cards on the dashboard and starts sorting them. He occasionally looks up to see if the traffic had cleared. On our right is another cab; the driver and the passenger seem to be engaged in a heated discussion. It is political. Their gestures give it away. There are many people who still prefer cabs to metros. Some like its door-to-door service that requires no walking; some prefer the



conversation with random individuals. Every driver-passenger relationship is unique. The temporary and often brief bonding of people in the compressed space yields unexpected story development. The plot unfolds in a spontaneous experience that is shaped by both characters' input, or by the lack of involvement, as I am experiencing at the present moment. I really should have taken the subway.

Adaptation

When learning of my origins, people like to ask me what my hometown is like. Assuming that Taipei has sparked an interest. I can see myself spending the next few hours explaining to them the infamous tourists-attracting-scooter-phenomenon and the ice cream-music-playing garbage collecting vehicles that are sure to exact a shocking response each and every time. "Is it like Tokyo, Hong Kong, or Shanghai?" They tend to summarize the descriptions in terms of these better-known places. Sure, I could cut out the description of these places from tourist brochures, paste them onto a blank sheet and sell it as the complete survival guide you could bring with you. Sometimes I wish there was such a guide for the people who live here, for those who are unknowingly lost in their own comfort and false assurance. In Taipei, it is not unusual even for a local resident to get lost in the rapid exchange of information. The words and actions often appear to run out of sync as nothing here functions at the same speed or on the same plane. That does not seem to bother them; the people here have



developed the ability to adapt to the seemingly random occurrence of events. They live by the excitement of randomness on a daily basis, not that they would have the choice not to do so. Perhaps they do not know when they might inhale their last breath, and will therefore live every moment as if it were the last seconds of their lives.

This city does not sleep; it simply refuses to. It is a place of constant action and noise. There is more activity here and more restaurants open at four o'clock in the morning than in downtown Montreal at high noon. This is an insomniac's city. I once heard someone say that this is the only place in the world where if you left the Pope here in the middle of the night he would be obligated to have confession the next day. For the new comers, "Lust, temptation, and indulgence", served chilled, is the complimentary mixed drink for this city. Rules need not to be applied here, common sense does. It is not exactly the most chaotic place you would encounter in your life-long travels; in fact, here you will be greeted by some of the friendliest urban dwellers. These are intuitive people, not relying on strict logic in interpreting the world around them. Relationships come first and foremost, with other elements following behind in importance. To the cabdriver, we are bonded in the short fifteen-minute drive. As soon as I step into the backseat, I have entered his home and become part of his family. However, under the urban lifestyle and activities there is an enormous build up of pressure you do not see. Most of them



are in the race of their lifetime. It is an endless race for survival in the city where staying *in* the game is the sole objective *of* the game. No winners are ever chosen but losers are filtered out everyday to make room for the people who are earning their space in this place.

It is also a place where it is second nature to develop a keen commercial instinct. Spy something that is potentially profitable and the next day it could be seen selling everywhere in the city. Soon the hype quickly dies out and something more promising emerges and is hurtled into the marketplace to take its place. That is how fast the cycle repeats itself. Locals have developed an immune system impervious to the urban surroundings and are prepared to face the unpredictable. For many, such confidence is often backed by money. “With enough money, you could even get the ghosts to work for you.” This is the rationale that has possessed the people in this place since the Japanese left the island. It’s a sickening thought, and also an encouraging pat on the back telling its disciples that nothing is impossible. The idea literally serves as the backbone of Taiwan’s economic wonders. The lavish lifestyle advocated by media and the millions of testimonials on this island cannot be wrong. Prosperity is the model of life. Taiwanese are often criticized for being overly focused on money. You cannot blame them. The economic miracle for the country has finally come to be and materialist seduction is at its highest alluring scale. As a matter of fact, a man’s rights to life would be compromised if one could not afford a



Mercedes-Benz limousine and a Louis Vuitton-ized pretty face. To live a life in Taipei is to survive financially; after all, all creatures become fair game in this playing field. It is a city created for pleasure yet only those who break through financially can truly enjoy it.

This is Taipei. And before us, is the side of city I have yet to mention: the traffic. My quick shuttle service has turned into an ordeal. My driver pulls the parking brake and draws out the cards he had tucked under his thigh earlier. The meter ticks away and we are not gaining any ground. When he is finished with the hand and ready to deal another one, the traffic breaks loose and we are free. He reluctantly sets the cards aside and drives forward. The train station in front of us is undergoing a colossal makeover. Peeking over the shoulder of the front seat I sense his annoyance for the equally enormous scale of jumble the new station brings. The cab merely moves forward half a city block and is stopped again. This time he is not picking up the cards. Aggravated, he turns over and asks me if I would mind getting out and walking from here.

Pilgrim

The dusty air of the construction site carries down the entire boulevard. Out of the vehicle I can see the faint outline of the station and Shin-Kon Tower in the distance and hundreds of frustrated drivers between here and there. The buildings are within walking distance. Thirsty, I walk into one of the six convenient stores on the side. I overhear a man complaining to the store



clerk about the traffic mayhem that never seems to go away. As the store clerk accurately puts it: “We are both the victims and the beneficiaries of the circumstances.” I agree. The man is not alone and his pain is certainly well understood.

Victims? Or beneficiaries? Despite of the mega-dollar-technologically-superb investments that would literally put Taipei onto the top of the world rank neck to neck with Tokyo and Shanghai, I am walking to meet Kei. I have come to understand the fact that all of us fall somewhere between these two polar opposites, and change our roles from time to time. At this moment, I am a victim. My legs are put to use more than I would like and I am certain that this is not what the government envisioned when speaking of a more walkable city.

Buses, cars, scooters, and pedestrians, myself included, are all marching towards the station. Every step forward, the flow amplifies. The station area seems to possess a mystical quality that attracts this urban pilgrim. It may very well be its function as the hub for connecting all major arteries in the city. Perhaps it is more than that. We orient ourselves in this urban mess with it. It is a natural reference point, which everything in the city, regardless of scale, size and type, relates to. Its dimension, complexity and history are frequently used to measure and describe other things because the station exists in an urban language all of us can comprehend and convey.

The new Taipei Main Station is on its third incarnation. More than two decades ago the



entire railway system was transformed under the city and a second-generation building was built. It was during a period in which the government in power persisted with the naive vision that one day they would go back and reclaim Mainland China. Of course that never happened. But their plan has rendered the entire city into a permanent construction zone. Urban planning was not on their minds and buildings were erected only to relieve the present condition. The shortsighted decisions have put the city in an awkward position for decades to come. Given the limited usable land, one would come to expect a city of this magnitude to be dominated by high-rises. Such is not the case in Taipei. The city is in a dilemma between balancing the past tendencies toward urban sprawl and the endless list of urban renewal projects that promise an improved urban condition. Regrettably, a reset button is not a possibility and the city canvas has already had a thick layer of paint, hard, dry and impossible to peel off or to paint over.

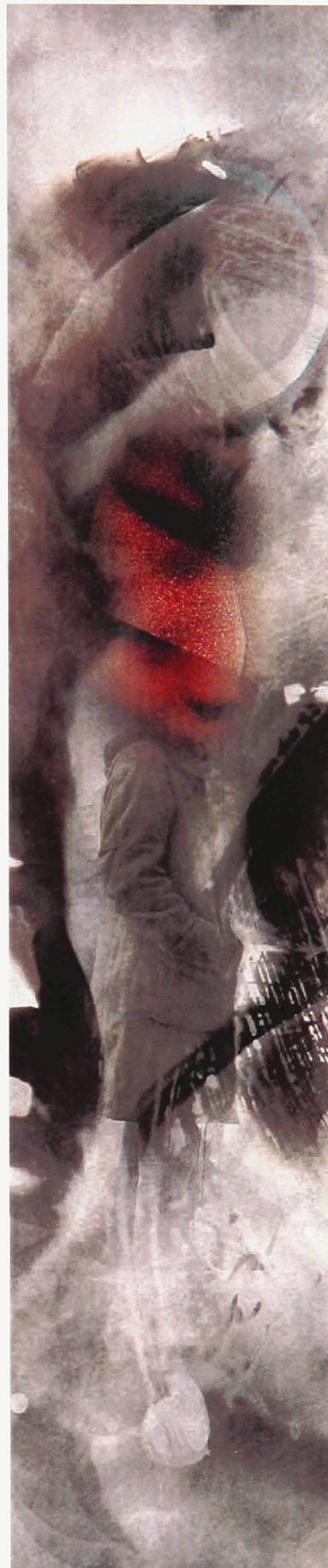
Since the retreat of the Japanese government in 1945, the island has been living under a threat of a full-scale military invasion. Taiwan, in China's view, is considered a breakaway province. The constant political tension between the mainland and the island has been dangerously tested over the years. At any given time, guided missiles have been targeted to destroy all political and military buildings and sites, potentially crippling the island's defence capability within minutes. Many believe that if the war were to break out it would not last more



than an hour. This is a fear that is often not spoken of, but something everyone has to bear from the day they are born, regardless of one's personal beliefs or political stance. It is an exciting and tenuous place to live, as no one can be certain that things will still be the same the next morning. Moreover, the constant economical fluctuations and commercial oscillations have made and broken more lives than missiles could have, and these do not include the accounts of fraud, homicide, rape, and kidnapping that seem to occupy a better part of the six o'clock news each day. The people here have either developed the capacity to cope with tragedy as part of the burden of life in Taipei, or trained their minds to ignore all the distractions altogether. Either way, it has made them more flexible and extremely adaptive to situations of all kinds, dodging dangers and striking back in the slightest moments of opportunities.

Pursuing whatever you believe life has to offer. This is the essence of the Taiwanese dream.

Realizing that everything in one's possession is only as permanent as the billboard ads, one has to continuously adjust the forward focus to balance loss and gain. The purpose of life shifts and flashes faster than the neon signs on a massage salon. Advertisements have had much effect on these people, not that they would make any pretentious promise like a cheap infomercial. Instead, they bombard receivers with graphic messages advocating the pleasure of living – be it a piece of Italian handcrafted jewellery or the latest fashion trend. It is not uncommon to spot



crowds lining up for hours in Taipei for things as minute as a cup of herbal drink. In the night market, lawyers and doctors who gave up their socially superior jobs and fancy suits are tripling their annual income selling lamb stew and oyster omelettes. On the finance channel, artists and sculptors who exercise their creativity are engaging reality in the form of capital investment. Things change; people are also changing to play catch-up. The trends emerge and fade away overnight; the hype shows no mercy to those who fail to keep up. Those who deliberately choose to reject the trend will find themselves drifting further apart from the rest of the herd, isolated and denied. For the rest of us who seem to follow the mass in this epic urban pilgrim, we accept the challenge and move on.

Hub

The hot spot, formed by the Shin-Kon Tower and the station, is where the pilgrimage ends. When I arrive in front of the main station, there is a surge of pedestrians released from all directions, above and below the ground. The new station has grown significantly of late, particularly the airport transit terminal high above the ground. Behind the fences, the cranes are hard at work assembling this giant jigsaw puzzle.

I cannot remember the last time I was in this area. But it does not matter how long I have been away, the sense of the place remains unchanged. It is the beginning and the end of many experiences, the converging and the diffusing point for many resources. While



strolling through the station area I can easily recognize the latest trends in fashion and accessories. Women garnish themselves with the same type of fashion wear. The men are dating the exact same type of women with similar hair, makeup and clothes. I sense that there is enough sameness in the air that makes each of us utterly unique, and at the same time remarkably similar. As a matter of fact, I cannot help to wonder why people have all chosen the very same spot as Kei and I did, the left entrance on the north side of Shin-Kon Mitsukoshi department store across the station to meet the others. I believe there *is* something profound in this very spot of the city that pulls all of us in, regardless of our difference.

I cross the street to wait for Kei in front of the department store. On the granite sitting areas beside the store sit two college girls, legs crossed, talking on their paper-thin cellular phones. Across the row of seats are three Shiseido counter ladies leaning on the wall, taking a smoke break, chit-chatting about the unexpected twist of a TV drama they watched last night. A few feet away, a couple walks out of the store, arms full of bags; while a tanned man in army uniform is running towards his girlfriend next to the store entrance. Three well dressed business men walk briskly out of the Line 262 city bus, dodging the wave of people rushing on to catch the other four buses that have just arrived. At any time, dozens of people are standing in this area, waiting, talking, gazing in the distance, or minding their own business. Among them, are a team of part-time students, conducting business surveys, and being



repetitively turned down. Not far from the entrance, stands an old lady selling umbrellas and mirrors on a tarpaulin on the side of the road. Right behind her, in the designated bus lane, a cab takes off barely missing a student, heavily engaged in her cellular phone conversation. She has no clue what has just brushed her skirt. Another young couple is arguing among these people; the man, a few minutes late for the date, is taking the blame. Right in front of the heat is a kid chewing down on a dorayaki and watching with amusement. Tired of sitting on the hard stone chair I get up to stretch my legs. A man spots the empty spot I leave behind and jumps at the chance. While I am approaching a woman to ask for the time my phone vibrates. It's Kei.

“Hey, I am on my way there. I will be a few minutes late.”

How long are few minutes exactly? How long will it take for a minute to become an agonizing and excruciating pain? I can easily stand in the store entrance with a café latte in my hand, enjoy a blast of warm air jetting down on my shoulders on a cool winter afternoon and let the drama unfold before my eyes. Every eleven minutes and forty-seven seconds, a herd of commuters emerges from the metro entrance leading down to the grand underground maze. Among them, businessmen and women, students, housewives and kids, foreigners trying to figure out where they are on a street map that makes no sense. And then there are people like me, who fall into the crack of time, progressing at our own pace and waiting for something to happen.



“Hey, there you are.” Kei arrives and breaks my Tuesday afternoon contemplation “Let’s go. It’s just around the corner.”

I get up and follow. We make a turn around the department store into a crowded street, leaving the station behind us. Passing through an open scooter parking lot we arrive in a narrow storefront in a strip building. A line of people forms in front of it. The line up, the waitress tells us, is a good forty-five minute wait. But no one is discouraged and anticipation mounts every inch we move forward. Kei is pleased that we have come on a less crowded afternoon. Less crowded? I quickly realize the truth in his statement when I catch a glimpse of the television set above the restaurant entrance, playing the recorded news clips and the scenes from opening day. I am stunned, and begin to appreciate the relatively short wait we will have to endure. Fifty minutes later we are finally granted entry. The restaurant is small but meticulously furnished and detailed. Our order, two bowls of miso flavour ramen, arrives soon after we are seated. The soreness in my legs and back are dissolved by the soup’s warmth. Expectation has been met, and exceeded. The noodles are good and the soup base is perfection. This is the highlight of my day. The pleasure is nevertheless short-lived. Our stomachs’ needs are fulfilled, yet we leave with emptiness in our heads.

We both walk back to the front of Shin-Kon Tower and Kei catches a bus home. Still recovering from the emptiness after the meal, I go back to the seat where I was waiting for Kei. The



sun is setting, casting its last warmth behind the silhouette of the station. It is then that I finally get a sense of time.

Face

Upon nightfall, beams of light illuminate the sky, revealing once again the dusty air and the crowd in front of the store. Many of them still remain, waiting. The light belongs to a city police ambulance exiting the train station. The siren does not usually accompany the light unless the ambulance is on duty. The ambulance is stuck in traffic, waiting for its turn to cut into the lane while casting light beams onto buildings and cars, blinding every passer-by. People walk with annoyance on their face and with hands on their foreheads, shading the light away. Yet, no one knows why or complains to the city about that the light is always on. Perhaps they think the city needs a little more colour. The city ambulance, still with no luck in making its turn, isn't the only one guilty of such show of illumination. The signs, the billboards, and the stores exhaust all possible combination of hue in the colour palette. The bridge on the west of the station has already gone through four decorative lighting patterns in a month; it is now being dressed with neon red patterns and gold lettering for the lunar new year in two week's time. The city needs these lights to remind its residents of their place in time in this cacophonous setting.

In the fall of darkness the city comes alive, shaking off the prosaic urban skin. In the night the ghosts in the city awaken, casting



charms into the air. Plazas become stages and sidewalks turn into catwalks. For ten hours under the absence of the sun, the inner beauty of the city is being displayed and its charm released. The mundane layer is zipped open, and stripped down, revealing the pressure that has been mounting since the break of dawn. Everyday this cycle is repeated. For ten hours a day, the laughter can be heard and one's self can be expressed. The irregularity of the motion accompanied by the flash and the pounding music, shake loose the dusty coat of the day.

Rush hour does not fade until the city's residents are obligated to sleep. Until then, the grey dusts remain afloat in the air, inhaled and quickly discarded by mechanical and organic systems. In the underground labyrinth of the station, noises are present and the actions never cease. The intensity is carried four layers down. The florescent lighting does not seem to wear down the excitement; instead, it shows the rare glimpse of lust in the eyes and lips that would slip through unnoticed in the darkness.

As the temperature drops I get up and immerse myself in the crowd down at the subway station. I hesitate to get on the train to my apartment. I turn away and hop onto a train that carries me away from home. Unsure what has lured me into this direction; I follow and let instinct take care of experience. The Pan-Nan subway line, on layer three, starts from the tallest building in the world and ends at the darkest part of the city, threading the distance of three generations and fifty years of separation between



east and west. It is on the train where one is shocked by the full spectrum of human life in Taipei as if every passenger were handpicked by God to correspond to each possible human archetype. The doors beep to signal the train's departure; the name of the next stop is addressed by a recorded voice in four languages. It takes off and snakes its way through the long left bend below the North City Gate. The short travel barely gives the recorded announcement enough time to repeat the next destination four times before doors beep to open again.

This is the Ximen Station, forty-seven seconds from and southwest of the Main Station. Above it is the Ximen District, the hub of teen fashion and youth hangout: the place that bears the most Nippon nostalgia in the city. A handful of pre-Taiwanese government buildings still stand in this area, even though most of them are gutted and the shells are used to house multi-storey stores or triple-tier movie theatres. Behind some facades, cheap motels and rooms are used for *enjokosai*, in which men pay or financially aid high school girls in exchange for their bodies. This is the latest incarnation of the Nippon culture in Taiwan and earning its popularity in the city. These girls just want a taste of the luxurious lifestyle, sporting the latest name brand bags, jewellery and fashion. Few hours and two supporters later, a Gucci purse is up for grabs. Materialism and schoolgirl fetish have all met their counterparts; temptations for both sides have never been this prevalent. Shops, restaurants, theatres, and karaokes, activities in the area have



not changed much since the day of Japanese occupancy; they have only been modernized and given a contemporary shade of colour to match and feed on the rapidly growing city.

The Pan-Nan subway line travels back in time westward, revealing and concealing the duality of the city's identity and compressed personality. Every stop it makes opens or seals a small part of the ongoing journey. It is on these underground vehicles where one would find the crack in time and penetrate through the dense skin of history and cultural evolution. Every station along the way signifies a portal to an independent microcosm within the city. The trains operate on parallel layers of planes and overlapped segments of time. As the Pan-Nan subway is treading its track back in time, above, beside and below it are three other trains tunnelling their own course through time and space.

Next stop, Long-Sheng Temple.

Blind Man

The train doors beep the passengers out again, and beckon another group in. This is a small station, a quiet one too. From a distance, a mellow sandalwood scent drifts across the space and is pulled to the platform by the sudden drop in pressure as the train departs, leaving an echo of metal squeaking in the emptiness. The scent is traced back to a Taoist incense shop adjacent to the northwest entrance above ground. The temple is only a block north. Calmly it stands with the bright yellow German made crane in its sight. Spotlights and machines hum into the night, their



structures gracing the public plaza by the temple. Evidence of countless urban evolutions along with scrap pieces of the old slum is piling up on the side of the crane as the bulldozer loads up its last shovel onto a truck. On one side of the square plaza, the narrow corridors are covered with crude weather sheathing, insulating the twenty-four businesses that are on their last legs in the old plaza before relocating to a new home. Sixteen fortunate teller stands, five food carts, two Taoist/Buddhism accessories stores, and one knife shop are still open, full with customers under the dim greasy bulbs. The fortune tellers, each conducting a specific method of reading, are charging four hundred dollars per topic. Some hang signs on the walls describing their proficiency in numerous languages along with certificates and celebrity photos. It is not a bad business considering the fact that a majority of the population wishes to glance into the future and to mark the perfect opportunity to pursue their dreams. There are now professional institutes offering instruction to those who wish to possess the ability and to start a career in this promising field.

When I enter the corridor. A woman in her late thirties is walking out from a concession stand with depression written all over her face, worried, nervous, and fearful. She couldn't care less about the advice received here, as these tellers are as much a tourist attraction as the temple beside them. I never visit these people because I am afraid to know too much of my future, if I had one at all. But it is tempting. Kei told me there is

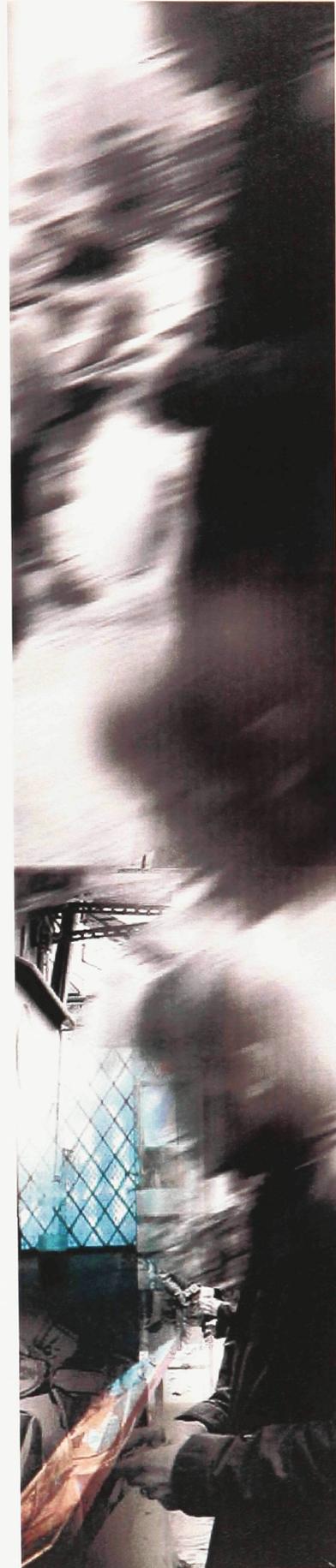


a blind man who wanders in the old alley behind the temple. He can often be seen in his faded blue pinstripe suit sitting beside the lady who pushes around a noodle cart. He said it is unlikely to miss him as the huge line up usually gives away his whereabouts. Rumour has it that the blind man, a bankrupt banker, sold his eyes to the mischievous sprit for the ability to see into the future. He is one of few words; but when approached, he would turn to his left shoulder murmuring and nodding to the void, and come back with the answers before questions are asked. The story is intriguing. But Kei is a salesman, and he tells extraordinary stories. That is how I have come to own the Kinmen steel blades.

He did not leave me any specific location to find this blind man. And I am not entirely convinced by his story. I go around the temple to a popular small night market, where food carts are abundant. I come across a man with an old lady and a food cart on the side. He does not have a suit and sunglasses on or has he any people lining up to see him. The old lady is selling herbal tea instead of serving noodles. His eyes are shut and there is a lady in front of him weeping. He lays his hand on her shoulder and speaks to her gently. The woman thanks him and leaves. The man stands up, asks for a cup of tea from the old lady. As he takes a sip of his tea he raises his head up and, from across the street, signals for me to come to him.

“Are you looking for me young man?”

The city remains a trading town much as it was before the many changes. The game of loss



and gain goes on. In any given day, trades are happening on all levels and scales. The question remains. How much are you willing to give up for something desirable in return. How much are you willing to risk making a change in your life. For two thousand dollars I am purchasing my assurance of the future. It may very well be the confidence I need to pursue what I do, or a sign of caution to bear in mind for times to come. Whether to believe the blind man or not is my choice; but I know his words will remain in me forever, possibly drastically altering my perception of life. Whatever it may be. I am ready.



Chapter Three: Design

Architectural Intervention

The architectural intervention occurs at a design scale. It is a variable proposition that responds to the two fixed scales in the preceding chapters and appropriates its application according to the relationship of the two scales.

Temporary Home

“The problem is this: mankind as a whole is on the brink of a single world civilization representing at once a gigantic process for everyone and an overwhelming task of survival and adapting our cultural heritage to this new setting... there is a problem precisely because we are under the strain of two different necessities which are both pressing.”⁷ In his essay “Universal Civilization and National Cultures”, Paul Ricoeur warns of the conflicts within urban conditions constituted by the rapid evolution of cities.

In the past decade, Taiwan has been transformed from a rapidly growing manufacturing-based economy into a steadily developing service-based industry. Since then, the country’s focus has been shifted to accommodate a balanced development across all spectrums of life; and the dash for quantitative expansion of the island has been replaced by a growing appreciation for quality in life. This change is reflected in peoples’ understanding and concerns of the issues around them: higher awareness and closer involvement in the discourse in all aspects of

⁷ Paul Ricoeur, “Universal Civilization and National Cultures.” History and Truth. (Evanston: Northwestern University, 1965) 271.

the development: political and cultural conflicts, studies in the humanities and in sociology, environmental and ecological issues, entertainment and fashion interests, and art and architecture movements. The general public has been paying significantly more attention to the crudeness and chaos of their urban environment resulting from the rapid growth of the country, and is showing interest in innovative approaches and attitudes towards these layered urban conditions.

Taipei, the capital of the country, thus becomes the immediate platform to exercise new urban planning strategies. The wide spectrum of commercial interests and the condensed experience of cultural and technological evolution in the city makes it a perfect candidate for an array of urban renewal projects. The city in many respects represents a compressed model of the entire island in which it demonstrates the strengths and the weaknesses of the country in an exaggerated fashion. Its response to the urban planning programs consequently demonstrates the compatibility of the strategies on a national scale and reveals the potential predicaments in the country's search for a long-term optimized strategy.

However, Taiwan's unstable political position on the world stage has also put it in an awkward situation when employing urban strategies directed at its land and people. The lack of international recognition in the political sense and the constant military tension with Mainland China cripples the country's capacity to administer any sensible urban development and has for nearly half a century. Hence, the few endeavours of the early Taiwanese Government were primarily

focused on resolving military threats and responding to propaganda. In 1949, two million Chinese retreated from the Communist Chinese revolution and re-established the early Taiwanese government in Taipei. Settlement on the island was not conceived as a permanent settlement but rather a temporary military bunker to regain strength to return and re-unite with China. Commercial development in the city commenced as a form of temporary survival. Crude residential units were erected along the commercial strips to accommodate a sudden burst in population. Yet years have gone by and while the political pressure from China lessens, the government has stabilized and the businesses have flourished. Economics began to accelerate and home-grown corporations have since successfully put the country on the world map of commerce and technology.

In the frenzy of this economic “miracle”, a fundamental flaw in the country’s urban development was revealed. Taipei, being blessed with abundant financial opportunity and freedom has outgrown the aged urban structure established by the Japanese and stressed the edges of the poorly conceived planning strategy created by the apathetic early Taiwanese Government. A severe and uncontrolled urban sprawl resulted.

In the Eighties, the city issued the first large scale urban renewal plan targeted at the city core of Taipei. It specifically addressed the urban sprawl issues in central Taipei and promoted the beautification of the cityscape. The planning strategy placed the extensive railway system, which spanned the entire length of the city, underground, in order to widen major boulevards and formulate

basic urban development guidelines. The overall appearance of the city improved and the general living quality was uplifted. The Underground Railway project also released much needed urban space in the city core and opened up a wide range of planning possibilities for future development.

In the Nineties the population and its personal wealth continued to grow in the outdated setting. As a result, a new urban phenomenon, namely traffic congestion, emerged. The city was once again in need of a long-term urban upgrade that would respond to the current conditions and provide an outlook towards the next phase of urban renewal. The city officials drafted a scheme outlining a network of travelling alternatives to the widely preferred privately owned vehicles: a network of transportation system that relieves the pressing traffic congestion and offers greater flexibility and connectivity in urban and inter-city travel. Doses of high-tech promises are injected into the heart of the city to create an efficiently functional environment: an elevated and underground mass transit system, a high speed railway system, a direct airport transit system, and an integrated city bus and connection network have all been implemented. The implementation of the new transportation networks, unlock a higher standard of urban living and planning potentials. The immediate goals of the string of urban upgrades have nonetheless been realised. However, the population's adaptation to the new systems is slow and less than desirable. The race to be in the league of technologically advanced global cities has, thus far, deliberately focused on the "hardware performance" of the city. The strategy was formulated out of the necessity to attend to the rapid degradation of Taipei's reputation, image and

increasingly apparent urban dysfunction. But the solitary attention to the hardware performance has created a notable detachment between these novel systems and their end users. Furthermore, the resolution of this disconnection has unfortunately been left to human adaptation relying on instinct in an environment that lacks clarity and cohesiveness.

It is argued that the island itself is not yet ready for the advanced stage it has propelled itself into; and the acknowledgment of this ironic situation is being formulated and deployed into a series of strategies to re-establish the balance and re-define the unique quality of the traditional Taiwanese experience that has gone missing. The Taiwanese government therefore has initiated an urban renewal program to significantly revitalize and enhance the island in terms of its global identity and regional experience. Along with the improvements of the physical framework of the country, and as part of the political program, two international competitions – “New Taiwan by Design: the Gateway Series” and the “Landform Series” – have been held to identify the issues inherent in the current evolution of the country and to re-establish a new formal identity for it. This series of competitions was designed to enhance the qualities of public facilities and spaces, as well as to raise the awareness and discourse of the issues.

The “Gateway Series”, as one of the two international competitions launched in the year 2003, critically addressed the cultural and spatial experience of Taiwan. The five projects in the “Gateway Series” propose transportation related facilities that not only deal with the function-orientated

features of the architecture, providing physical gateways to the country and its cities, but also highlight the unique threshold condition and the transitory state of the architectural experience at these gates.

This thesis exploits the “Taipei Main Station Development Project” of the “Gateway Series” as a physical framework and is structured around the competition project’s unique geographical location and its inherently complex characteristics. The urban condition of Taipei demands an original response to many of the conflicting and pressing issues that have been raised in the past but have yet to be addressed critically.

In Search of the Constant

“In Taiwan, 40 years ago, most people still farmed... Now, the island is literally a great metropolis of 22 million people.” The Taiwan-based architect, Kris Yao identifies the unique condition inherent to the urban environment of Taiwan in the article “Architecture is”, “... The speed, the fickleness, and the instability that accompanies it (Taiwan’s urban condition) have become a way of life. To be able to respond and adapt to change is the necessary survival skill.”⁸

In fact, since the establishment of the Taiwanese government in 1949, the common belief that the island is a temporary settlement has created three permanent implications in the mindset of the people and their urban environment. Firstly, the people’s ability to adapt and sustain in a politically and environmentally unstable condition has provided a perceived sense of security

⁸ Kris Yao, “Architecture is.” *Archtech: Selected and Current Works*. (Australia: The Images Publishing Group, 2001) 16.

and stability within the city. The locals did not favour architecture and planning as a spatial and urban organization method. Instead, people's solutions at the time were solely driven by the immediate and essential needs of life. The solutions were often temporary and short sighted as no one recognized the need to plan for a transitory home. Secondly, the notion of a temporary settlement and the threat of potential military conflicts contributed to people's overly protective and insecure nature. In an environment that was unable to offer any guarantees in life, the inhabitants of the city sought enclosure and safety in their private properties. Public interaction has been minimal and the life's focus was projected inward towards family and personal wealth. Lastly, people's attitudes and the city's superficial approach to all things infrastructural persisted along with the inevitable evolution of the city, and led to an incoherent urban environment and erratic social behaviour.

While people's attitudes have begun to shift and their awareness of quality living and experience has risen following the implementation of a democracy with its guarantee of freedom of information, the residual side effects from the neglected urban sprawl remain. New urban structures are being pressed into the tired cityscape like trendy commodities in superficial attempts at renewal. They are often mediocre solutions or temporary obsessions that are unable to fundamentally negotiate the urban issues and are quickly discarded. In this condition, the context becomes a temporary stage-set for any built form. Likewise, architectural propositions and urban renewal schemes lose their focus and are rendered useless in the constantly shifting urban environment. The

syndrome is propagated and the problem complicated as additional layers of quick-fixes are continuously being coated onto the urban fabric.

In the Taipei Main Station Special District, such urban phenomena are intensified and magnified due to the area's complex layers of infrastructure, traffic systems and urban organization patterns. The implementation of the new transportation systems in the area provides new architecture and urban planning possibilities that respond to the cultural, social, and political transformations. However, it is imperative that any proposal avoids coating yet another glossy finish that momentarily hides the inferior urban conditions only to fade away or be replaced. Instead, the response's focus must be directed at the numerous layers from the crust to the core.

Architecture is not a solution to problems in Taipei, but rather, an adaptive process that appropriates existing forms and systems and speculates on the transformation of the found place(s). Yet for it to possess any meaningful existence, architectural speculation has to be constructed upon a solid *base*. This *base* is, metaphorically, a hub of infinite supply lines where design and planning seek inspiration. The search and identification of the constant *base* is necessary, and critical to the urban evolution of the city. It dissects the city's urban formation and focuses at the core issues contributing to Taipei's unfavourable building environment while forming a core idea to direct further design explorations.

Beneath decades of hectic build-ups, there is a constant *base* that inspires and governs the proposed changes and stimulates sustainable transformations.

The task is to identify the critical *base* and choreograph the progression of applied designs and planning strategies. Much like resolving an equation with endless variables, one has to identify the constants and assess the possibility of various sequences before the calculation can begin. Given the unique urban condition in Taipei in which incessant shifting of hardware, perception and values are regarded as part of the heritage and daily life, an architectural proposal here becomes a process-orientated comment that anticipates, identifies and initiates each move according to the situation presented. Every step of the design and planning process is unique, whilst the *base* remains constant and affects future decisions.

In Taipei Main Station Special District, layers of urban systems and infrastructures have been developed to serve various modes of movement and transportation. But their existence as mere connecting routes between different points renders them undesirable to inhabitation. With the recent addition of multiple MRT (Mass Rapid Transit) lines and HSR (High Speed Rail) underground and the future proposal of an elevated CKS International Airport Access MRT System, the entire network requires upgrades as the demands expand. The body of the Main Station itself exists as a control unit that regulates and facilitates the traffic and flow of the different systems. It too foresees a surge of usage as each adjacent and interconnected transportation system is completed over the next ten years. To accommodate the expansion, the facilities of the main station are transformed as the program changes.

The constant theme of the thesis project is service-based insertions that correspond to transitional experiences at different transportation thresholds throughout the Main Station site. Specifically, these insertions negotiate various spatial conditions including the gap between parallel high-speed zones, the place of collision between vertical and horizontal modes of movement and places where systems are juxtaposed announcing a change of program or use.

Initiation

Physically, the web-like transportation framework creates the primary threshold conditions. The conditions, though often hidden, consist of the elemental characteristics indigenous to the mechanical, electrical and technological environment. In an attempt to capture and represent this network, a series of digital collages was composed with photographs taken from the site. Through scaling and layering, localized components were identified while miscellaneous pieces were discarded.

Each collage identifies and represents a singular moment on the site. Together, they correspond to the layered complexity and the immediate relationships between various modes of existing systems. Furthermore, the activities in the various conditions are highlighted through the composition of the layered components; they reveal not only the very structure of the systems but the differences in speed, time, and space unique to each mode within the system. The collages at this point represent the design's base from which key relationships can be identified, extrapolated and plotted into hypothetical

environments where these relationships would manifest and respond to the activities present at the site.



Figure 3.1. Digital Collages. The relationships between various systems are identified.

In the drawn environments, possible structural configurations and formal transformations are explored as a speculation for future extensions. Scale is deliberately left out in the drawn analyses but the formal consistency is retained. The distilled relationships and the fictionalized settings construct a theoretical framework for the design phase as the study progresses. In these hypothetical

settings, the identified relationships are able to plot an environment that simulates spatial interaction and system confrontations at the site. Although fictional, and extensively simplified to ideally capture the potential integration of different experiences, the lines, forms, and colours inscribe a premise for the visualization of transforming events in the latter stages. The collages and the drawings provide a set of solid blueprints upon which the further studies are to be constructed. These preliminary studies mark a point of departure where an architectural transformation can then be initiated and the speculation begins.

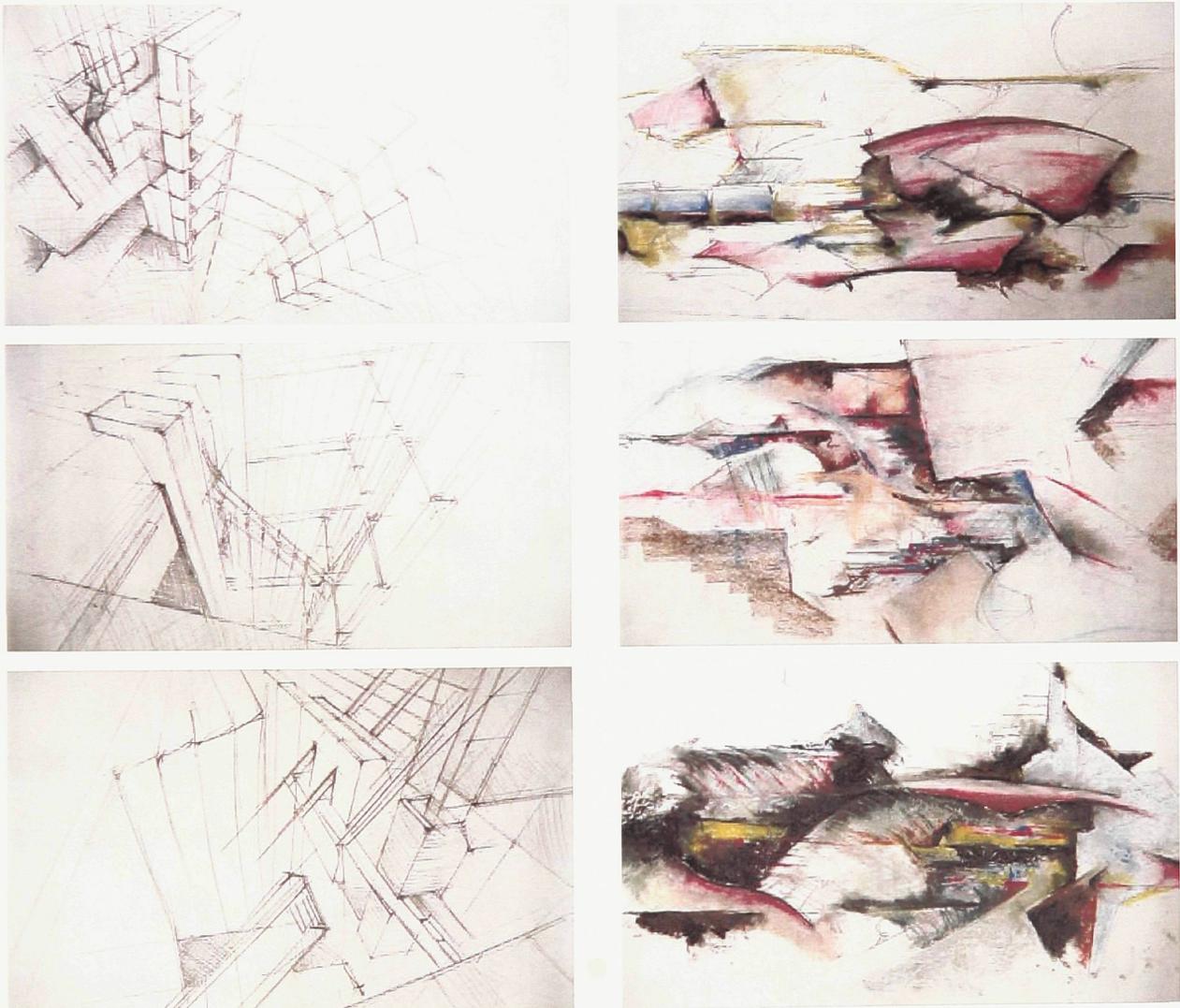


Figure 3.2. Drawings. Exploration of structural configurations and formal transformations.

Initiation is a design process supported by the analysis of and speculation upon the site conditions. Sequentially, it stimulates the transformation of the found conditions in order to perpetuate the process of design. A series of study models were assembled based on the analysis of the urban organization and experiences. They depict the moments of spatial confrontation and interaction, and identify the places of anticipated growth and change. The constructions (proposed and anticipated) are based on two fundamental guidelines: 1) the establishment of predominant systems and 2) the organization of spatial experiences. The red coloured elements in the models represent fixed conditions, such as the urban infrastructure, railway and transit systems, mechanical framework or any particular established hardware on the site. Additional elements are constructed and integrated into these fixtures to correspond to the experiences depicted/discovered by the collages and the drawings. Again, a precise scale is not applied to the models since these three-dimensional abstraction are to indicate a wide spectrum of experiences within a consistent language of representation. The study models are not grounded permanently; instead, the suggestion of ground plane in each model is incorporated to orient the multiple interpretations of the object.

Though fragmented, the constructed interpretations exhibit multiple constant bases local to the site and can be applied to stimulate the transformation of the project in the next phase. As an extended analysis, these models are further extrapolated digitally to demonstrate their design potential in a theoretical environment. In a similar fashion to the drawn experiments, the study

models are manipulated to explore the threshold experiences while starting to initiate a formal transformation of these moments.

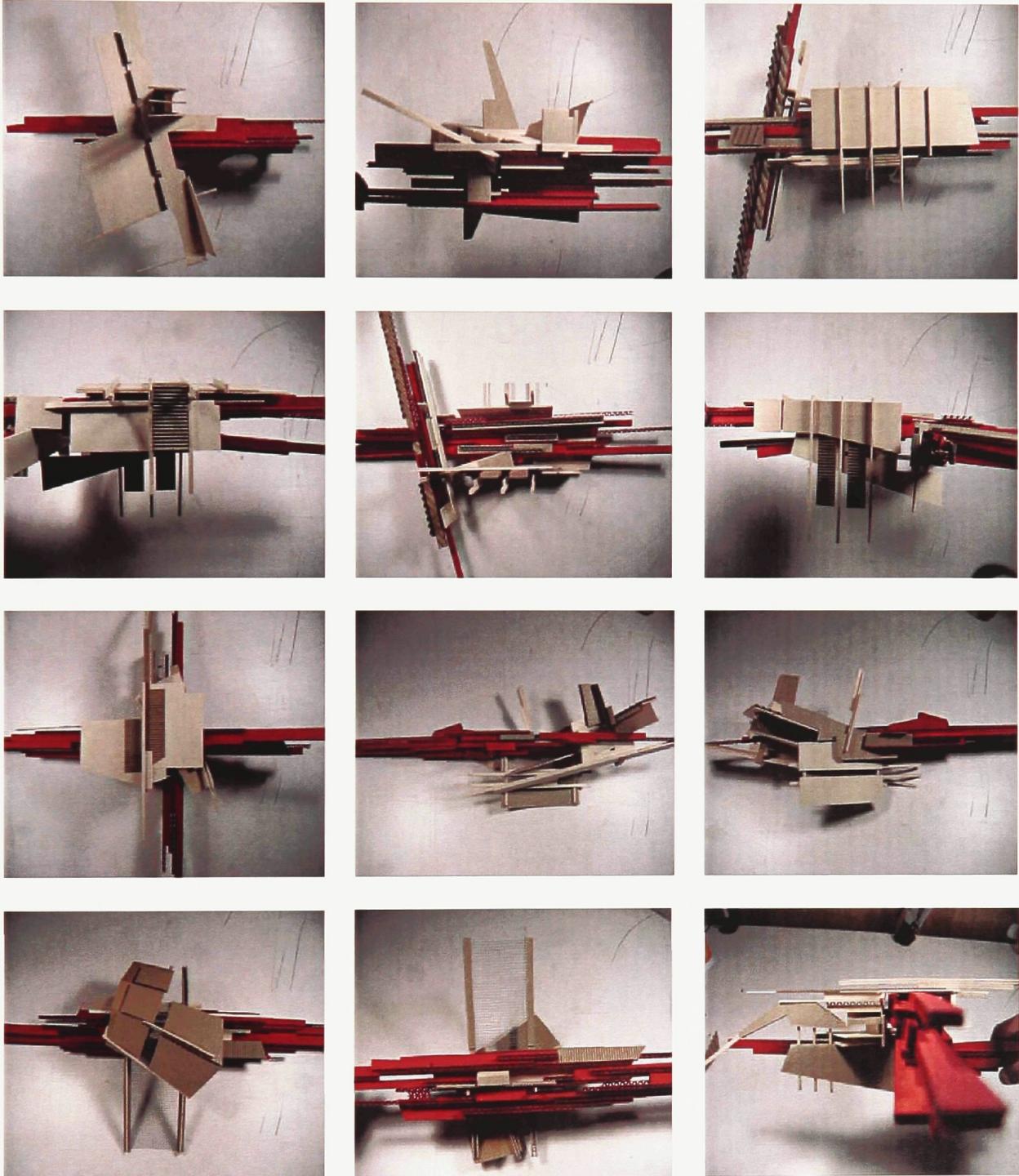


Figure 3.3. Study Models. Three-dimensional depiction of different spatial confrontations and systems (red notation) interactions suggested in the digital collages.

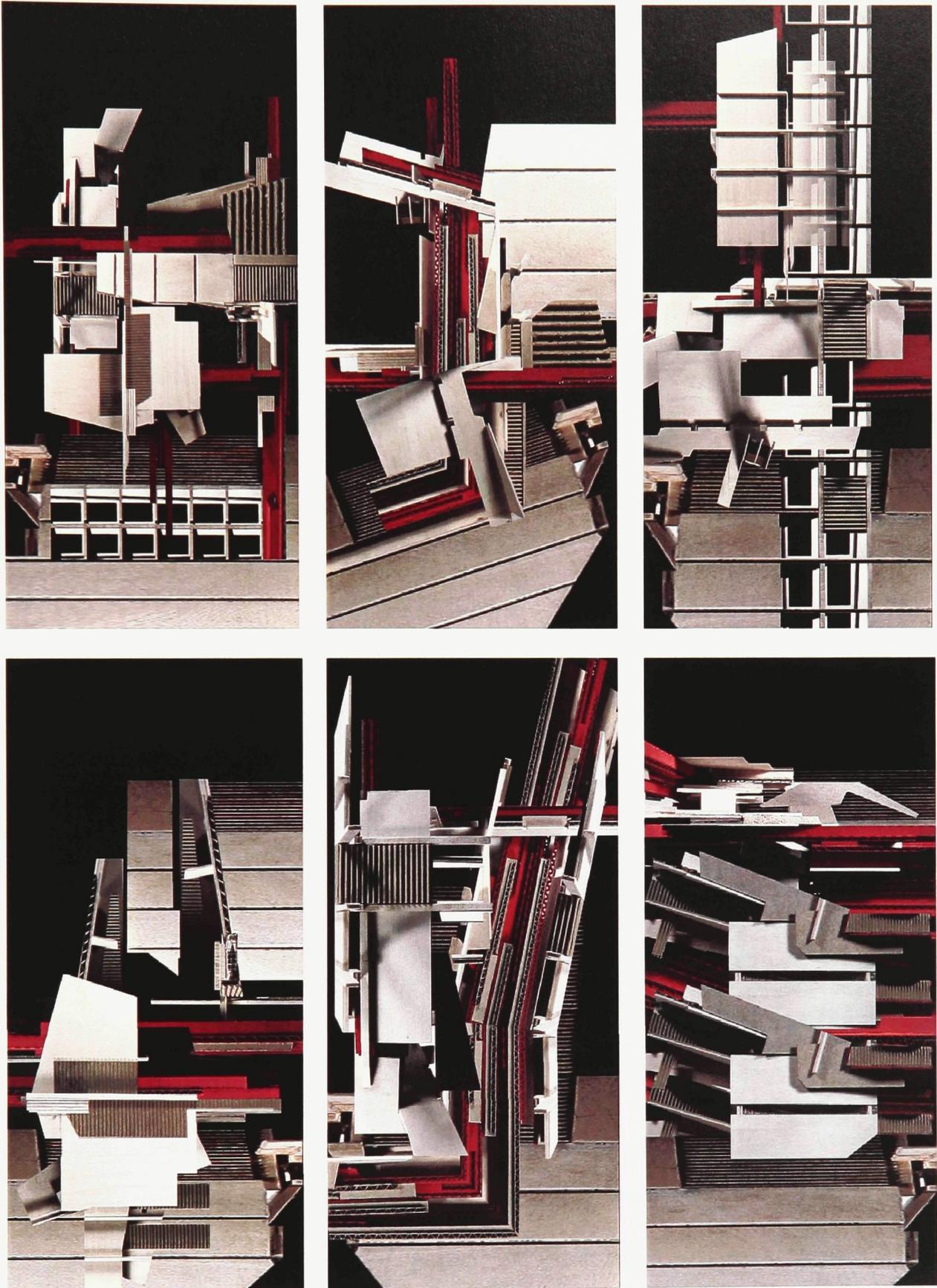


Figure 3.4. Vertical Puncture Study. Digital exploration of design potentials.

In the preceding stages of the investigation, transformations of multiple urban conditions are initiated in a theoretical setting. The site's inherent complexity and uncertainty inspire a sense of clarity by the initiation of another form. Different circulation patterns and system interactions are identified and negotiated. The hypothesis primes the surface and enables the second state of the initiation – a programmatic transformation and an architectural inhabitation.

The latest addition to the Taipei Main Station Special District is a direct airport transit system that links Taipei Main Station to in the CKS International Airport in Taoyuan. Originally proposed as a part of the full-scale urban renewal project, the CKS International Airport Access MRT System completes the network of transportation in Taipei and extends the transportation framework to neighbouring cities. The direct access between the Taipei Main Station and the CKS International Airport provides tremendous flexibility in connectivity and redefines the urban travel experience. It effectively shortens travel time between two important transportation nodes in the country and in turn transforms the human perception of space and time. Essentially the addition of new airport transit station to the Main Station body acts as a gate that links two dimensions of speed, scale, and experience and signifies the implementation of a unique new spatial and temporal experience.

As a case study for the thesis, a 1:200 scale model for an airport transit station demonstrates the study of the self-perpetuating design procedure. The construction of the model focuses on the service-based function of the station and its inherent ability to completely alter the threshold experience of the city.

The model begins as a platform that corresponds to the establishment of the proposed elevated track. Although proposed as an extension of the Main Station, its existence as an independent unit is recognized and used as the basis of construction.

Once the basic transportation system is structured, key spatial relationships of the colliding systems (existing and new) and the threshold conditions inherent to the site are modelled onto the framework. Consequently, the preceding studies of systems relationships constitute an array of design gestures for the expansion of the airport transit station. As the original program of the airport transit station expands, spatial conditions multiply and generate a new set of experiences. The experiences manifest and in turn suggest possible programmatic extension of the transit station. Each added piece signifies an adaptation to the existing experience, and each fragment constructed initiates a new spatial configuration.

Starting out as an addition to the Main Station, the airport transit station is established and extends to the body of the Main Station in order to facilitate the programmatic changes the new addition has initiated. The nature of the design procedure is open-ended though grows in a controlled manner given the fact that the constants are maintained and their premises recognized. The cycle repeats itself simultaneously in various parts of the construction according to the configuration of the systems. They extend vertically to respond to the layering conditions of the site. They stretch horizontally to correspond to the linear development of the track layout. The study of the CKS International Airport

Access MRT System model demonstrates one potential design possibility. As a form of planning strategy, the design process can be applied to multiple parts at different scales. The design stimulus can then be activated, linking or juxtaposing with other as is seen fit.

Inhabitation

The graphic novel is an extension of the project that parallels and intersects with the site analysis and the design procedure. It discusses the inhabitation of the fictional setting at a human scale as a means to speculate on the transformation and to appropriate the design procedure into the unique conditions specific to Taipei. Up till the construction of the 1:200 scale airport transit station model, the issue of scaling, though suggested in various fashions, has been deliberately left out in various stages of the design process. The different experiments, both in three and two-dimensional representation, and in drawn, computer generated or constructed forms have been carried out with a central notion in mind: the stimulation and the speculation of the site transformation. Their goals are to pursue a clarified sequence of space (and time) to which the design procedure can be applied, as well as to represent relationships that can demonstrate the inhabitation of the new constructed environment.

The experiments inscribe the conditions of the premises, and the models become the setting where the experiences of the transformation unfold in the graphic novel. The graphic novel's approach to understanding the issues of

inhabiting the city provides a different perspective and perception of the contemporary social and physical urban evolution. Written in the first person, the novel explores a character's encounters during one day in the city. Urban dwelling in Taipei is best understood through the perspective of the intimate scale and the inhabitation of the numerous urban systems can thus be realized through a progression of time and the interaction of people and elements within various incidents.

The simple storyline describes the social evolution of the urban setting, while at the same time anticipates the potential development of the city at a different scale. The graphic novel explores the city's urban and social evolution as well as the complications in life that provoke transformations of the urban dweller's perspective. The theme fuses the existing daily experience with the speculation of new sensations. Each incident in the storyline describes potential conflicts or interactions within the urban setting and each character's decisions provide new perceptions of the city's urban fabric. Along with the text, images are used to orient the reader's progression through the story as well as to simulate and stimulate the perceived urban transformations. As a navigating tool, the graphics represent the sequence of a character's development as the storyline evolves. These graphic explorations respond to the self-perpetuating design cycle and investigate the transformation of the urban fabric in the language of the human scale. They chronologically map out the incidental interaction between various systems and ideas and reflect on the complex urban conditions from the dwellers' perspectives and attitudes. In this linear

progression of time and events, parallel and intersecting experiences are graphically explored. They present particular moments in the urban environment where possible design incisions can be made.

Throughout the story, these moments of opportunity can be observed in the juxtaposition of two scales: the urban and the intimate. The momentary collision of scales and elements is mediated by design implementations that in turn stimulate the programmatic (inhabitation) components of an area. For instance, the intimate experience of “a cup of tea in hand” happens around “a transit system exit” in response to the action of “standing”. A string of such experiences presents a “puncturing through” at different scales and describes/prescribes a localized pattern for a specific area. For that particular zone of interest, this is a constant basis, a solid theoretical ground where the design incision occurs. An architectural proposition, “a public space design”, can then be formulated to respond to the condition, resolving potential conflicts and/or enhancing current positive experiences. Once executed, the architectural implementation encourages inhabitants’ new adaptation of the environment: “people waiting and meeting” in the “transitory public space”. Furthermore, the inhabitation of this new setting promotes further programmatic developments and/or collaborates in the evolution of the larger design scheme. The self-perpetuating architectural proposition begins as a single element that intersects a local condition; through the process of stimulating and speculating it is transformed into a part of the integrated systems that operate on the same theme. In the example of “people standing with a cup of tea in hand at a transit

exit”, the experience is modeled into “a threshold to other urban systems as a commercial program that facilitates public activities.”

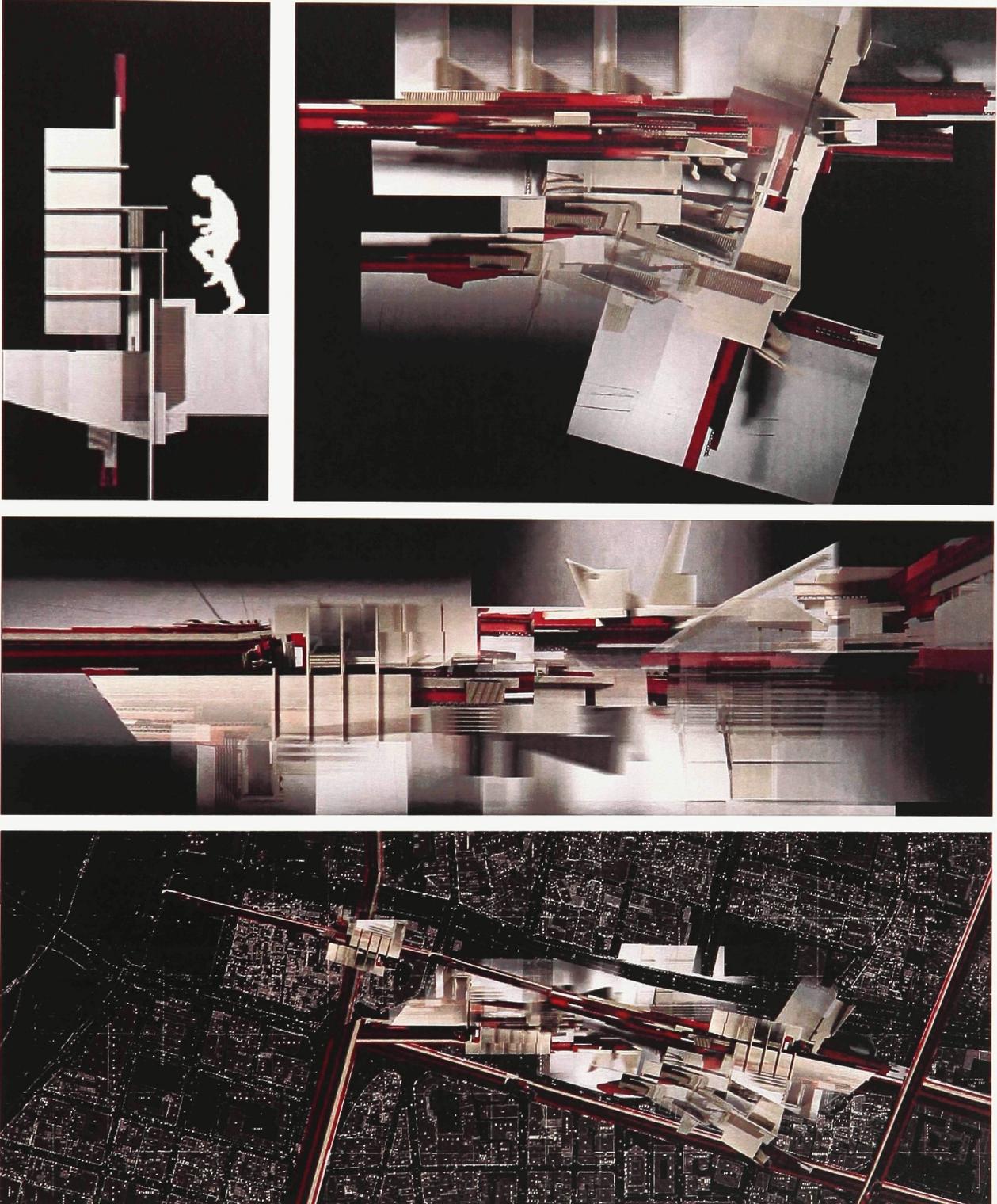


Figure 3.5. Human Scale Fixture (top left), Architectural Extension Study, Plan (top right), Section (middle), and Projected Main Station District Development at urban scale (above).

The condition in question illustrates a potential where a design intervention is possible. Hypothetically, the scheme is applicable to an infinite combination of scales and experiences in the city given the fact that a constant basis is established in the arrangement: From the relationship between a graphic interface and an individual that builds on the visual-ergonomic theme, to the addition of a major cross-city transportation corridor that literally alters the cityscape. This process-driven proposition is flexible and highly adaptable to different levels of development within the city. Individually, it stimulates an architectural potential to optimize the performance or heighten the experience of a localized place. As a collective system of strategies, they contribute to the overall developing pattern of the city ensuring a healthy fusion of people, ideas and hardware in the course of urban evolution.

Simulation: CKS International Airport Access MRT System

The simulated expansion of the CKS International Airport Access MRT System illustrates a programmatic development possibility with the implementation of a hypothetical design proposition. Taipei Main Station's airport transit terminal completes the eleven-stop direct access airport transit line, inserting an additional threshold condition to the Main Station body. This case study helps to visualize the incision and the transformation of an architectural proposal in reality. The development scheme both within its own premises and with the collaboration of other facilities on site is explained below in this section.

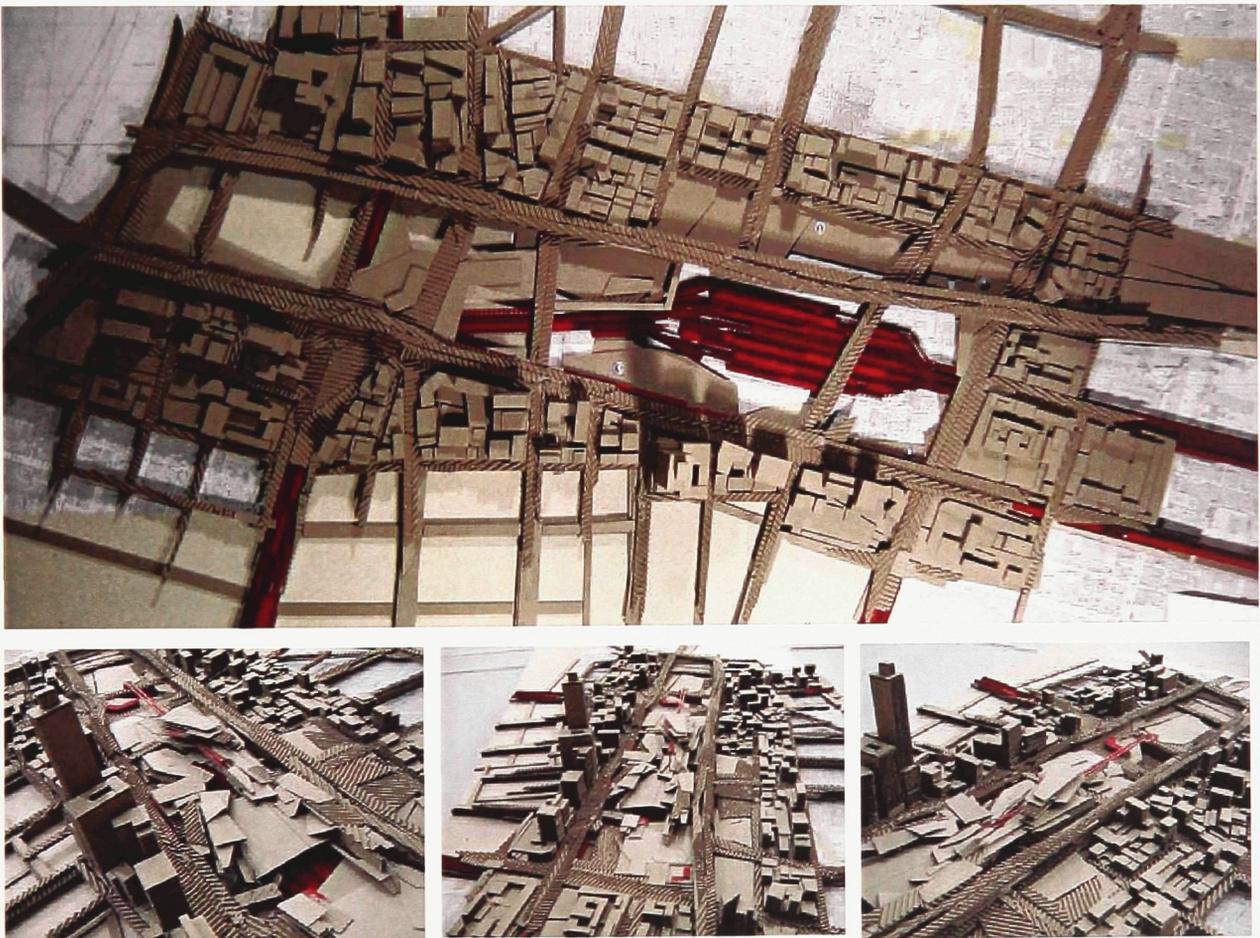


Figure 4.1. Site Model 1:1000 demonstrating the density of the site. Existing infrastructures (Taiwan Railway, MRT and HSR) are represented in red.

Phase One: Footwork – Elevated Station

The service-based airport transit terminal is positioned above ground; its tracks are elevated as well in the initial length of its course, clearing the flood bank of Tansui River and Hundnho South-North Expressway on the west of the Taipei Main Station Special District, and avoiding the railways and MRT lines below grade. Its elevated position creates a vertical threshold and a parallel horizontal extension of the site. In the first phase of the simulation, essential programmatic elements of the transit terminal are established. Beginning with the platform for the two-lane train tracks, the architecture is independently structured to service the arrival/departure passengers and train traffic flow above. A design possibility emerges where the elevated station is required to negotiate the vertical transition down to the Main Station body. An architectural incision can be made to facilitate the new circulation pattern in the transportation complex.

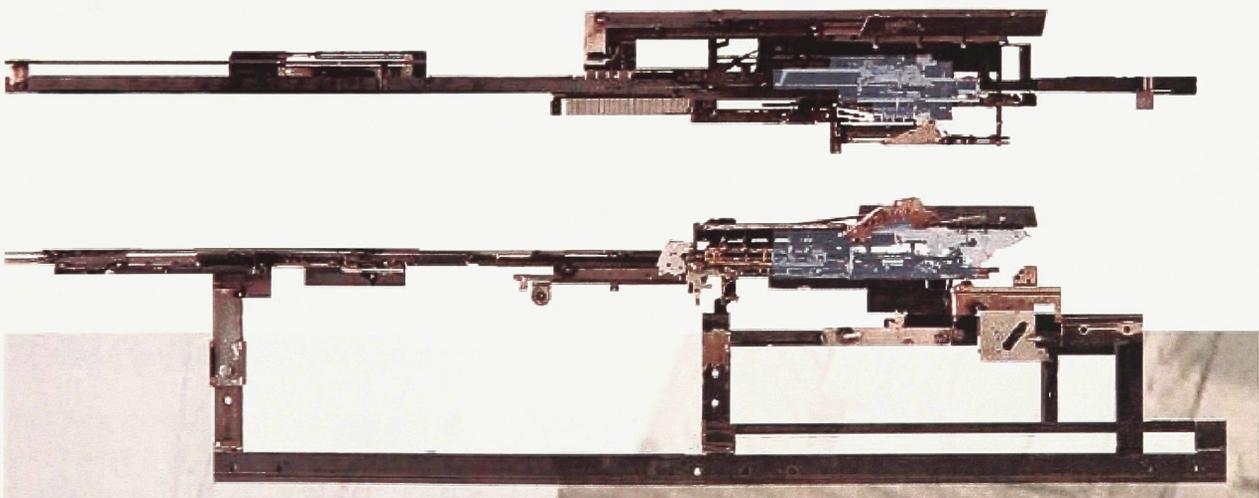


Figure 4.2. Airport Access MRT Terminal. Phase One. Plan (above) Elevation (below).



Figure 4.3. Airport Transit Terminal.

The inhabitation of the elevated station begins. The program requires a new circulation movement that connects the transit terminal and the Main Station. It in turn stimulates additional programmatic development around the platform once the new activity pattern has been established.

Phase Two: Ground Plane Development – Public Circulation

The elevated station creates a void underneath the tracks. Collaborating with the City's proposal to aesthetically enhance and develop additional uses for the empty sites to the west of the Main Station, an incision can be made here to introduce a new programmatic element. The predominant circulation flow from the north side of the Main station is through the transitory zone below grade (preferred over the elevated pedestrian walkway) because a majority of the commercial and functional activities were constructed underground. Moreover, the narrow transitory corridor is expected to reach its maximum safe capacity in 2007 when the airport transit terminal is completed and the entire operation of the ground transport service is moved to the development site north of Civic Avenue. Therefore, an architectural proposal can be inserted along the footprint of the elevated tracks, creating a multiple threshold condition that facilitates underground-aboveground movement, a north-south connection and Main Station-public space interaction.



Figure 4.4. Airport Access MRT Terminal. Phase Two. Plan (above) Elevation (below).



Figure 4.5. Public Circulation Layer (Below Transit Terminal).

The establishment of the elevated tracks stimulates a potential programmatic development on the ground plane. In this example, the architectural incision intersects multiple connecting layers above and below ground, providing a vertical puncture that clarifies the network of systems and promotes human inhabitation in the urban scale structure.

Phase Three (A): Horizontal Stretch – Multi-Use Programs

As the transit terminal is structured along the north perimeter of the site, it establishes a horizontal programmatic expansion along its initial path departing from the Main Station as described in the preceding phase. Given the fact that the addition of this transportation mode has dramatically improved the city's connection internationally, this linear stretch of development offers a wide range of programmatic potential to the area that was not possible because of limited accessibility. Extra programs that venture into different venues can now be inserted to benefit from the increased transportation efficiency. In return, the station complex can be modeled into a multi-purpose hub that oversees the exchange of information and ideas. Large-scale convention spaces and institutional programs in particular, would be valuable to the site's balanced and multifaceted growth, allowing the previously single-purpose station to actively participate in different sectors of Taipei's evolution whether cultural, educational, social and economical.

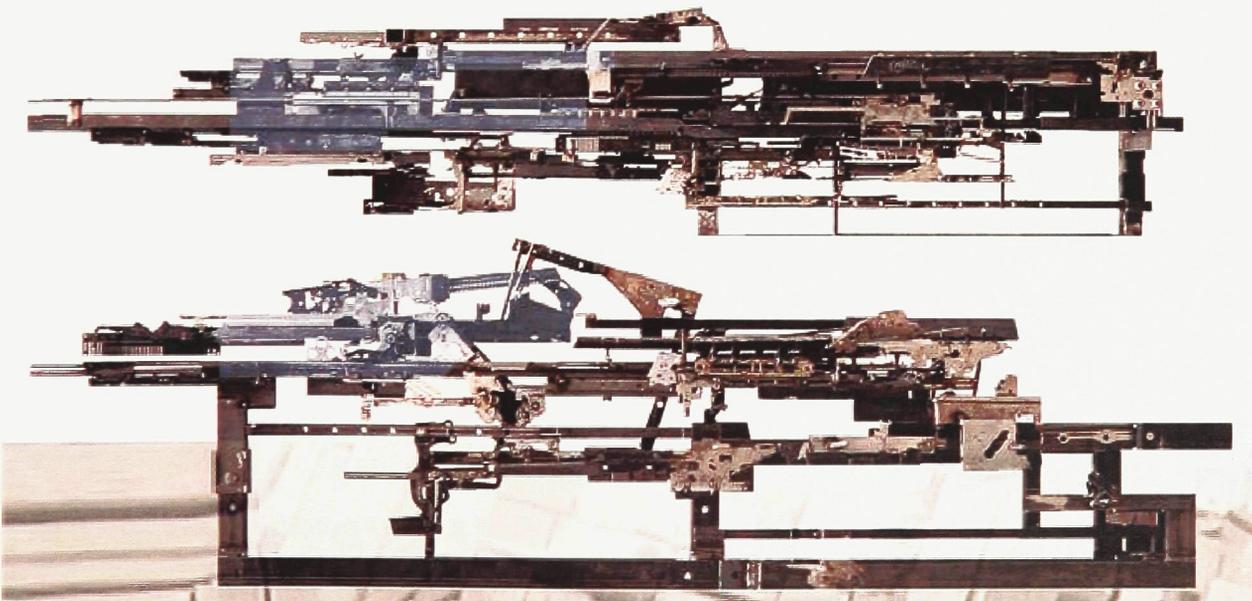


Figure 4.6. Airport Access MRT Terminal. Phase Three (A). Plan (above) Elevation (below).



Figure 4.7. Exhibition Space.

The horizontal extension of the transit terminal begins the incorporation of additional programs. This development introduces new activity to the site and in turn provides an opportunity to initiate specific programmatic usage and to facilitate and engage the public activities.

Phase Three (B): Vertical Exploration – Main Station Connection

The addition of the elevated transit station overlays a circulation pattern onto the existing movement, which was designed to handle a lower and simpler flow of passengers and trains. The extra layer challenges the Main Station's original service platform, relocating and altering current programs to facilitate this growth. Programmatically, spatial organization and efficiency are vital. Beneath the ground plane, the difference in passenger flow, train scheduling and service frequency in High Speed Rail and Taiwan Rails respond to their own micro transformations. Numerous vertical interconnections and punctures are to be expected as the localized transformations progress. As a result, the service layer of the Main Station, specifically the lobby at ground level is modeled to mediate between different transforming events while maintaining a framework to ensure a positive collaboration of the systems.

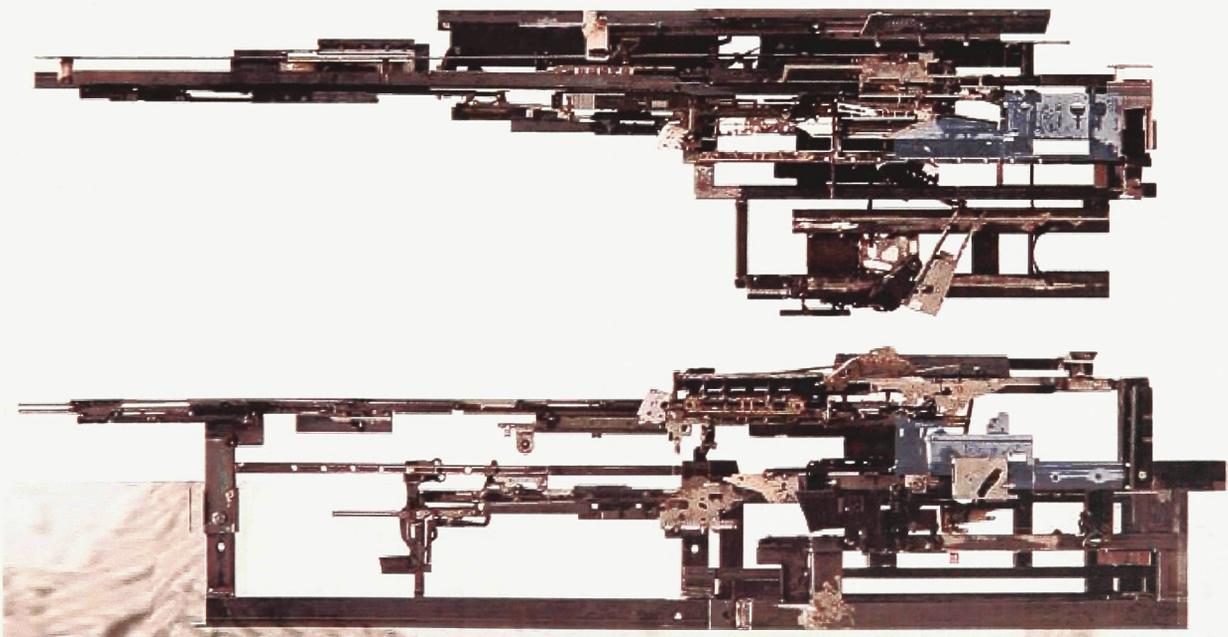


Figure 4.8. Airport Access MRT Terminal. Phase Three (B). Plan (above) Elevation (below).



Figure 4.9. New Threshold Condition.

The incorporation of the transit terminal to the Main Station is realized. The operation of different systems stimulates a new threshold condition that functions as a fusing agent for the programmatic differentials and also orients the users in the layers of the urban complex.

Phase Four (+): Parallel Collaboration – The Complex

Future design possibilities reside in the interstices where the two systems collide, intersect or overlap. The development of the airport transit terminal in the Special District promotes a series of programmatic implementations along the north perimeter of the site as demonstrated in phase one, two and three.

Working in conjunction with the HSR and the existing Taiwan Rail, the addition of the transit terminal entirely changes the urban and inter-city traveling flexibility and experience. A larger and more complex flow of traveller traffic is expected in the Main Station complex and an integrated web that incorporates multiple circulation patterns is necessary to facilitate the growth. When fully operational, the complex and its organization system will stimulate a new urban experience in the district, and in turn engage in public space development and inspire commercial expansion in the area.

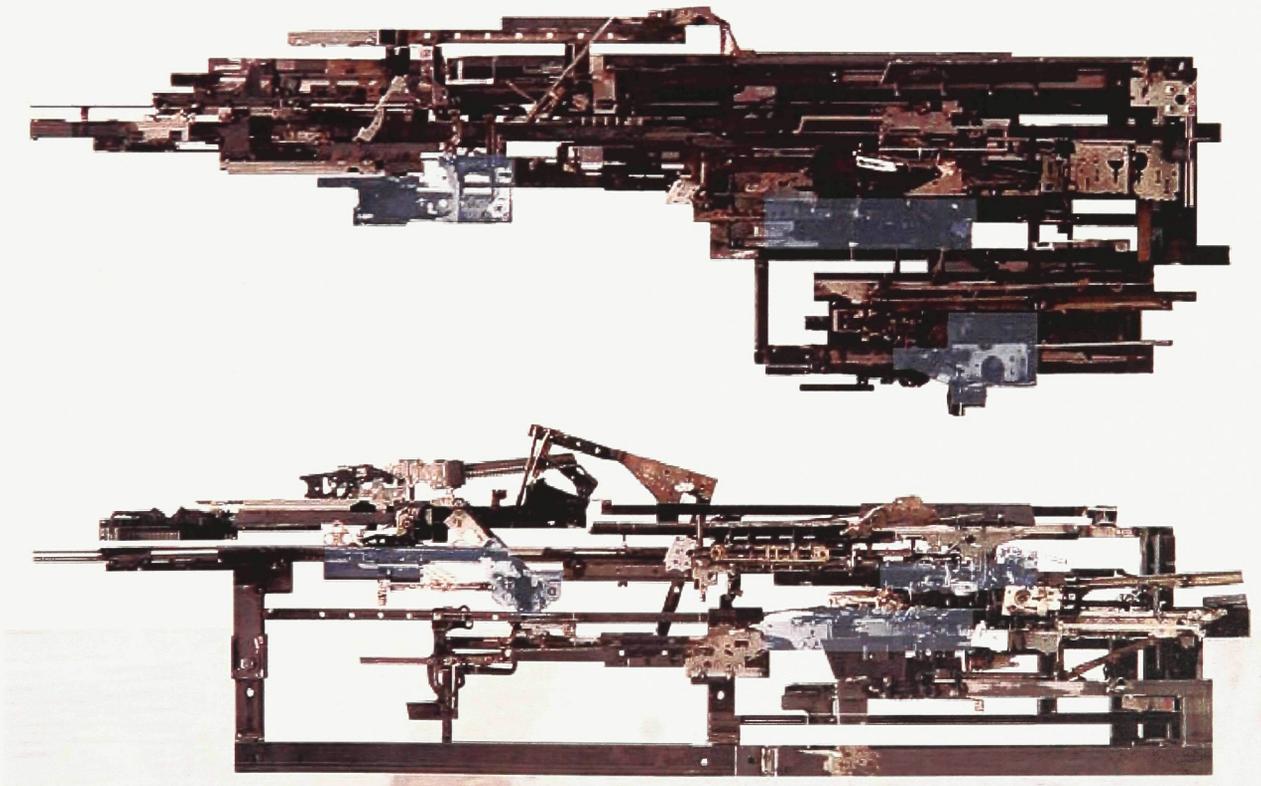


Figure 4.10. Airport Access MRT Terminal. Phase Four (+). Plan (above) Elevation (below).



Figure 4.11. Multiple Transformations.

Generated by the addition of the transit terminal and extra programs, the new public activity pattern in the Main Station complex further stimulates and refines the transformation sequence at multiple places. Operating under the same theme, these localized developments ensure a smooth human adaptation of the urban systems.

Conclusion

A paradox exists in the urban evolution of Taipei: How does the city continue to be updated in a competitive global market while at the same time maintain its focus. As the race towards being recognized as a technologically sophisticated and socially balanced city continues, the city struggles to keep up with the rapid change. Years of continuous acceptance of new ideas and technologies have nonetheless propelled Taipei to an advanced state, but one questions what the future might hold for the city. What happens when the city is terribly full from an accumulation of the continuous build-up and is unable to accept any more depositories of novelties? Balance is distorted and the evolution is threatened. The proposition presented within this thesis is not a solution to the urban issues, but rather an investigation that identifies the core concepts of urban phenomenon in order to fundamentally question the formation of the city.

For Taipei to thrive it has to search into the fundamental values upon which its culture and society are structured. While the primary focus has been on the urban scale, the coordination of movements, circulation and transportation in order to endorse a sound development pattern for the city, intimate pauses in the urban fabric have been programmed to ensure a human scale engagement within the city's many layers. This thesis is an architectural proposal that both speculates and stimulates. It proposes an architecture that intersects the observed phenomenon of life in Taipei while setting a framework for its future growth. The incision is active; it directly negotiates and engages the given

conditions of the environment. Not to be mistaken for its ability to ultimately set the course for urban development, this proposal is not a “master plan” that controls the growth of the city. Rather, it is a design speculation that intercepts the current evolutionary patterns in order to frame the urban qualities that exist and promote appropriate interventions yet to come.

Appendix A: Outlying Areas and Cities: HSR Station District Plan

(Source: <http://www.hsr.gov.tw/icons/station-eng/index.htm>)

A.1. In the Heart of the Gateway to Taiwan: Tao Yuan

Taoyuan is located in northwestern Taiwan adjoining the Greater Taipei area. With a mature secondary industrial complex, an equally thriving tertiary industry, and abundant economic activity, commercial and service industries are developing with great speed and vigour. In particular, the establishment of the international airport town around the CKS International Airport and the development of the major general commercial district make the Taoyuan rich with future business potential.

Zoning studies of the Taoyuan Technology Industrial Zone have been completed, with 320 hectares of land slated for development. The zone will be comprised of a circuit board zone, warehousing zone, precision electronics industry zone, vehicles and precision parts industry zone, and semiconductor industry zone, along with a residential zone and various public facilities. In addition, a major private corporation plans to construct a 100-hectare electric automobile manufacturing plant here, contributing to the elevation of Taiwan's auto industry.

In order of size, the five largest industries in the Taoyuan area are in electric and electronics, machinery equipment, metal manufacturing, textiles, and plastics manufacturing. Taoyuan's population density is 1,404.48 people per

square kilometre and is climbing at the highest rate among all of Taiwan's five largest urban centres.

Taoyuan enjoys enviable natural resources. Each of the four seasons is unique and can be experienced through Taoyuan's major points of interest, including the coastal scenic area, urban lifestyle area, Shihmen Reservoir scenic area, and the Northern Cross-Island Highway scenic area.

The Taoyuan HSR Commercial/Manufacturing Park is situated in the heart of the Taoyuan HSR Station District, 10 kilometres from downtown Taoyuan and within close proximity to the Sun Yat-sen Freeway interchange and CKS International Airport. Adjoining on the HSR rail station and Taoyuan mass rapid transit (MRT) station, the Commercial/Manufacturing Park not only brings the convenience and ease of the railway, MRT system and national freeway together in one area, but will in the future link via the CKS International Airport to all corners of the world. With 20 million passengers flying into and out of the airport each year, Taoyuan is truly the "gateway to Taiwan."

Transit times: Taoyuana Taipei ~19 min. Taoyuana Kaohsiung ~85 min.

Taoyuan Commercial/Manufacturing Park: 21.90 hectares / building coverage 40-60% / floor area ratio (FAR) 240%

A.2. Where the Best and the Brightest in Technology Converge: Hsinchu

Hsinchu, located in northwestern Taiwan, enjoys a temperate climate and abundant fruit yields each season year-round, with each town and village

seemingly having its own specialty. This is the foundation of Hsinchu's wealth by tourism resources. In recent years, the shift of the thriving electronics and electronics manufacturing industries from Taipei to Hsinchu has formed a unique electronics industry pocket. In particular, the Hsinchu Science-Based Industrial Park and the Hukou Industrial Park together form a symbiotic industrial juggernaut. Spurred by trade liberalization, Hsinchu and the Taipei-Hsinchu belt is constantly growing resembling similar high-tech zones such as California's Silicon Valley, Japan, and the mainland Chinese industrial coast to form a trans-regional economic order without national borders.

In the 20 years since the founding of the Hsinchu Science-Based Industrial Park in 1980, the high-tech industrial structure is now fully in place, in turn driving the thriving development of peripheral industries, fully demonstrating the high-tech community effect. Today, the arrival of the high-tech industry has helped make Hsinchu second only to Taipei in the volume and frequency of foreign visitors to Taiwan. These elements have combined to bring about the rapid exchange of information, and to raise the interest of investors in the recreation and leisure industries, making Hsinchu the home of Taiwan's technology core.

At this juncture, the Hsinchu County government has teamed up with National Chiao Tung University to integrate the area surrounding the Taiwan HSR Hsinchu station with the look and feel of the town and to plan land usage strategies. Fuelling overall local development through advanced planning and the execution of an overall urban vision while accommodating the spatial needs for

development of the National Chiao Tung University Chupei campus, national Taiwan University Chupei campus, and National Taiwan University of Technology's Chupei campus, a superb high-quality living area combining intellectual pursuit with all the amenities of modern life is imminent.

The 38.3-hectare Hsinchu HSR Commercial/Manufacturing Park is located on the eastern flank of the HSR Hsinchu Station District, closely adjoining the HSR station and MRT station, with the Hsinchu Science-Based Industrial Park lying just five kilometres to the south.

Transit time: Hsinchua Taipei ~31 min. Hsinchua Kaohsiung ~73 min.

Hsinchu Commercial/Manufacturing Park: 38.30 hectares / building coverage 40-60% / floor area ratio (FAR) 240%

A.3. Taichung: Vital Central Business Hub and Backbone of the Region

By the 1970s the city and region of Taichung was successfully transformed into a centre driven by small- to medium-sized manufacturing companies. Taichung ranks second among Taiwan's cities with 14,221 business units. In industry development potential, machinery equipment manufacturing, electric and electronic machinery equipment manufacturing, plastic and metal product manufacturing, are the backbone of regional development and exemplify the nimbleness and acumen of the small- and medium-size enterprises. Among these, the tooling manufacturing industry ranks fifth worldwide, becoming a largely export-oriented industry.

In addition, the Ministry of Economic Affairs has targeted Taichung as the centre for Taiwan's only aerospace industrial zone. When completed, it will attract such high-tech aerospace-related industries as precision machinery, electronic equipment, aerospace chemicals, electronics and information, premium aerospace chemicals, premium aerospace materials, and related maintenance industries. The aerospace segment carries broad ties to associated industries, offering high added-value, frequently adopting cutting edge technology while driving the enhancement of related fields and technology. By offering these advantages, the aerospace industry can help raise the proficiency of Taiwanese technology and enhance the industry's image, while driving related industrial development and promoting the health of the national economy.

Further, the government has taken initial steps in the planning of a central regional science park in the Taichung area, featuring a projected 100 to 300 hectares of property, with an additional 50 to 100 hectares of surrounding satellite areas. Further, with the expansionary trends in the high-tech industry and the interrelated characteristics of a centralized industrial region, a stage is set for the entry of hot industries such as optoelectronics, information, and biotechnology, while encouraging machinery and aerospace industry firms with a strong foundation to forge a diverse community of high-tech companies.

The Taichung HSR Commercial/Manufacturing Park, located in Wujih Township in Taichung County, is a major development centre on the southwestern flank of the Greater Taichung area. Comprised of four comprehensively planned bases adjoining the Taiwan HSR, Taiwan Railway station, and MRT

station, within close proximity to the freeway interchange and just 15 minutes by car from downtown Taichung, it is Greater Taichung's premium hub.

Transit time: Taichung to Taipei ~45 min. Taichung to Kaohsiung ~48 min.

Taichung Commercial/Manufacturing Park: 15.23 hectares / building coverage 60% / floor area ratio (FAR) 240%

A.4. Chiayi: Unrivalled Government Planning & Commitment

Located in south-central Taiwan and covering an area of over 1,900 square kilometres, Chiayi is an archetypal agricultural county boasting exceptional achievements in agriculture, fishery, and animal husbandry. One of the first areas developed in Taiwan, Chiayi still bears the signs of the dedication of past generations and a glorious history.

The present-day Chiayi County government has initiated a sweeping general development program around a sizable area of 555 hectares located adjacent to the HSR Station District. The plan calls for 250 hectares of fine residential areas, a 42.44-hectare central business district, and a 9.74-hectare community business area. In addition, an 8.84-hectare shopping mall tailored to serve modern consumers and the development of the new community is planned for the central business district. This expanded county-governed plan also includes an east-west expressway, a health care district, new institutions of higher learning, and the Machou Post-Industrial Zone; each injecting needed vitality into the neighbouring areas.

The world-renowned Ali Shan (Mt. Ali), the narrow gauge Taiwan forest railway, the historical streets, the salt flats of Putai, the broad sugar cane fields, the fresh seafood of Tungshih Harbour, and the colour of local dragon boat races are just some of the highlights of Chiayi's forestry, agriculture, fishery, salt mining and old city cultures. In this fertile environment, poetry, calligraphy, folk art and handicraft lend Chiayi an unmistakable cultural flavour.

The Chiayi HSR Commercial/Manufacturing Zone, adjoining the HSR station, is the most complete, most potential-packed street corridor within the Chiayi Station District. Abutting the Chiayi County Assembly and the health care district, the Chiayi HSR Station District borders directly on major thoroughfares and the light rail MRT station, creating an ideal transportation environment and setting the stage for steady community progress and tremendous development potential.

Transit time: Chiayia Taipei ~75 min. Chiayia Kaohsiung ~29 min.

Chiayi Commercial/Manufacturing Park: 9.84 hectares / building coverage 40-60% / floor area ratio (FAR) 240%

A.5. Tainan: Historic Capital Reborn as High Tech Hotbed

Tainan, which stretches across the Chianan (Chiayi-Tainan) Plateau from the mountains to the sea, has seen rapid commercial growth in recent years. The arrival of the Tainan Science Park and the southern branch of the Industrial Technology Research Institute are expected to breathe new life into the city's

economic structure. Historically, Tainan was not only the first city developed in Taiwan, but was also the birthplace of Taiwanese industry, with such key components as agriculture, fishery, salt, and sugar.

The Tainan Science Park was designed at a cost of NT\$1.814 trillion (approximate US\$51.8 billion). Under the planning of the National Science Council, the Tainan Science Park and Luchu Science Park will become a vertically integrated technology nucleus. Expected to generate a production value of NT\$500B by 2010, the Luchu Science Park will also provide 200,000 employment opportunities.

Ground has been broken in Liuchia Township on the southern branch of the Industrial Technology Research Institute, a breeding ground for top-level researchers and professionals. At the same time, the Tainan Science Park has obtained 79 hectares of forestland adjoining the Wushantou Reservoir, upon which the technology and resources of industry, government, academia, and research will come together in the teaching and training of professional personnel. In combination with the Tainan Art Institute, Wushantou is destined to become a national-class academic learning and research centre.

The planning strategy calls for the Tainan Commercial/Manufacturing Park, located in Tainan County's Kuijen Township, to be divided into six sectors. Just 12 kilometres from downtown Tainan and 25 kilometres from the Tainan Science Park, the Commercial/Manufacturing Park will benefit from the tremendous traffic provided by the large population of professionals employed at the Luchu Science Park. The future Tainan mass rapid transit system will provide

a direct linkage to downtown Tainan and the Tainan Technology Industrial Park and the Tainan Science Park. It's a can't-miss all-star prospect.

Transit time: Tainana Taipei ~83 min. Tainana Kaohsiung ~11 min.

Tainan Commercial/Manufacturing Park: 47.16 hectares / building coverage 40-60% / floor area ratio (FAR) 240%

Appendix B: CKS Airport Access MRT System Project

(Source: <http://www.hsr.gov.tw/>>. Path: English; MRT Planning; CKS International Airport Access MRT System Construction Project.)

B.1. Introduction

In view that "CKS Airport Access MRT Project" is the policy enacted by the government, and has been approved to be included in "Challenge 2008: Key National Development Program". It will improve the access traffic service for CKS International Airport, connect major transportation hubs: Taipei Main Station, CKS International Airport and the Taoyuan HSR Station, and build up a close link between international airlines and local transportation systems.

B.2. Route Plan

This route starts from CKS International Airport Phase II Passenger Terminal, run eastward to reach the Taipei Main Station District, and run southward, via HSR Taoyuan Station, to the junction of Chung Feng Road and Huang Bei Road in Jhongli City. The total length is 51.5km along with a total of 21 stations. The total construction budget will be NT\$93.6 billion (current currency value, excluding land price adjustment). By the result of cost effectiveness analysis, it will yield net present value of NT\$52.4 billion; internal rate of return 18.22%; benefit cost ratio 1.45; and operation (revenue /expense) ratio estimated about 1.18 during operation period.

B.3. Current Status

The outlined execution planning report has been examined and approved

on March 9, 2004. Furthermore, all relative payments are budgeted by the government annually, special budget with NT\$0.13 billion has been assessed in 2004 and NT\$3.75 billion is also under reviewed by the Executive Yuan. The succeeding works will be including fundamental design, detail design, urban planning modification, land acquisition, pipeline relocation etc.

B.4. Vision

- 1) To provide a safer, faster, more convenient, more comfortable and higher service level for the passengers departing and arriving at the CKS International Airport.
- 2) To incorporate the existing urban development plans along the line and to promote prosperities by balancing development between cities and townships.

Appendix C: Taipei Development History

(Source: <http://www.planning.taipei.gov.tw/Overview.htm>)

C.1. Frontier Era (1683 -- 1895)

1683 The township of Taipei founded

1790 Taipei's development initiated: MengJia (today's WanHua) encompassed the earliest developed areas of the city, and became the distributing center and the sole commercial harbor of the Taipei Basin.

1875 Establishment of Taipei's Prefectural Status: During this period, the earliest streets in DaDaoCheng were built. Construction began in the area bounded by Xingdrune, MengJia, and DaDaoCheng.

1885 Taipei designated as the Provincial Capital: Taipei designated as the Capital of a newly established Taiwan Province.

C.2. Japanese Occupation Period (1895 -- 1945)

1895 Japanese Colonial Government Established: Taipei remained the capital of the island and continued to construct modern architecture, commercial districts, transportation systems, schools, parks and power supply facilities.

1904 Removal of Taipei City Walls: Due to the rapid growth of the city, development could no longer be retained within the city walls. Thus the Old Taipei City Walls were torn down to allow expansions toward the east,

south, and north.

- 1905 A "City Plan" initiated: The City Proper Modification Plan mapped out Taipei as a city with a population of 150,000. This is the first proposal that embraced the integrated urban development concept for the city.
- 1932 The New Plan for Greater Taipei Area: The Japanese government announced the Plan with a target population of 600,000. By 1945, Taipei's population had reached 335,397.

C.3. Post-war Recovery Period (1945 -- Present)

- 1967 Upgraded to a Special Municipality: Taipei City has become the political, economic and cultural center of Taiwan, expanded its total area to cover 272.14 sq. km, with a population of 1,569,000.
- 1968 The Taipei Urban Planning Outline: Taipei was planned to accommodate 2,500,000 residents and the overall framework for Taipei's future urban development was prescribed.
- 1979 The First Comprehensive Plan for Taipei City: This Plan sketched out the long-range scheme for the city's development of the city to include 3,500,000 inhabitants.
- 2000 The Taipei City 2010 Comprehensive Development Plan: The plan incorporated the ideas of ecological sustainability, humanistic environment, globalization, and supporting the central government's policy of developing Taiwan into an Asia-Pacific Operations Centre.

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