

'A Homeless Perspective,

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Abstract

This thesis concerns the inclusion of the homeless into the development of buildings and the city. As a means to accommodate multiple class groups into a single neighbourhood and community, proposed is a mixed income apartment building within the city of Ottawa that contains luxury and subsidized housing units, as well as long term housing for several homeless individuals.

Theoretically, the exploration is geared towards the possible differences of ideological perspective regarding the homeless. The major question that is being asked is whether the homeless can, or need, to be normalized through housing reform, social programming and subsidy. As a framework for this, gentrification, and therefore development, are examined with regards to their impact on homelessness.

The attempt made in this thesis has been to confront and learn from the legitimate aspects of so-called 'homeless culture', 'normative culture', and the complex relationship that connect them. Furthermore, this thesis argues that architecture can initiate relationships between disparate populations, and subsequently aid in the transformation of those relationships in new and positive ways.

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Preface

This thesis is based on the presumption, that inherent in the needs and desires of both the individual and society is also a want for balance. If a definition of this balance is needed, it would have to involve comfort, happiness, security, and an all-encompassing understanding of things.

To further explain this idea, it may be helpful to use a metaphor of an equation: $A^2 + B^2 = C^2$ for instance. Inserting variables into one side of the equation will typically result in an outcome on the other side. The equation will yield a balance that the user has an understanding of, feels comfort in, and is happy about.

If this equation is representative of an individual, city, or society, the want is still in balance. However, when certain variables are added such as madness, criminal occurrences, or homelessness, the sense of understanding and comfort can be outweighed by a sense of negativity and confusion.

The fact remains that phenomena such as madness and homelessness do exist. Furthermore, society's ethical and moral conscience is beginning to reveal that homelessness and even madness, while stigmatized, are not evils, and do play an active and probably even a positive role in cultural evolution. Not only have they directly influenced the arts and philosophy, they indirectly influence day to day life through their relational quality. (For example, Nietzsche was apparently mad, and still had a great influence upon the world. Why then, is it sometimes presumed that the homeless person on the street corner has no influence?)

With this thesis, the intention is to explore the ways that architecture can allow homeless and non-homeless populations to coexist, and subsequently engender some type of conception of balance. As an initial step, I suggest that we as members of larger society begin to reflect on the ways that society has perceived and acted towards the many 'other' populations it has encountered throughout history.

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We have yet to write the history of that other form of madness, by which men, in an act of sovereign reason, confine their neighbors, and communicate and recognize each other through the merciless language of non-madness...¹

Introduction

Foucault, in questioning the relegation of madness, by civilization, to a position outside of normal action, language, and reason marks the opening of a door which allows for the questioning of perceptions regarding numerous other aberrations to social and cultural norms. In this thesis, the concern is the anomalous nature of homeless populations within the western context and the role of architecture in describing and determining those perceptions. Theoretically, the differences between normal – economically and socially collective – non-homeless populations and homeless populations can be evaluated and seen as simply structured conclusions. The election of a homeless lifestyle by many individuals instead of the ‘normal’ lifestyle² – defined as productive and accountable members of society – should suggest that it is not simply a matter of *us* and *them*. However, with regards to any implementation of a real and practicable architecture that would allow homeless and non-homeless populations to move past their differences and together occupy buildings, neighbourhoods and cities, the mentality of ‘us versus them’ prevails and suggests that this coexistence is not entirely possible. If anything is indicative of an underlying intention to dismiss the validity of a homeless lifestyle, it is the architecture, especially residential architecture, of a developing city. To introduce an architecture that can aid in questioning the relegation of the homeless to this position of other, the development of cities, buildings and spaces needs to take

¹ Michael Foucault, Madness and Civilization, (New York: Random House, 1965), ix.

² The report, Describing the Homeless Population of Ottawa-Carleton, Susan Farrel and Tim Aubry (University of Ottawa, 2000), suggests that up to 23% of individuals are homeless solely because they reported having a ‘transient lifestyle’.

into account many things, as will be discussed in this thesis. To begin, the obvious should be stated: differences in lifestyle do affect one's perceptions towards people and things, and additionally, that common practices of developing the city are first and foremost for those defined as the accepted norm.

To question the way in which the homeless are acted upon (affected by actions of non-homeless populations), even if those actions are passive side-effects of the operations of normal life, there must be an attempt to come to terms with the possibility that homelessness is a societal inevitability. Homelessness is an age-old occurrence of western culture. Historical recounts describe beggar and vagabond populations (as well as reactionary efforts to deal with these populations) in European capitals such as Paris and London for close to a thousand years.³ I argue that homelessness is an inevitability; a better way of putting it may be that it is presently a *certain* factor in western, if not the majority of cultures. By recognizing that definitions of the homeless population in urban North America consists of more than those without a home – the physically and mentally handicapped, the economically misfortunate, as well as anarchist individuals that elect to be homeless – the certainty of some form of homelessness is established. The homeless, as individuals relegated to a position *other than the norm*, suggest and enforce a dichotomy between things *normal*, and things *other*. This is the inevitability that is important to this thesis, and at present it is this certainty that registers in the architecture of the city.

³ An indispensable source has been Foucault's book, Madness & Civilization, in which the historical paths of leprosy, beggars, the insane, medicinal and incarceratory practices, and 'normal' civilization have been textually intertwined.

While 'control' may be an extreme description of how normal populations relate to the homeless, the socio-economic structuring of power, in North America as elsewhere, does ensure that the homeless other is affected if not controlled by societal actions, be they intentional or not. Capitalist society, the forces of economics, the markets – money essentially – and additionally, aesthetic⁴ and political intent, informs operational systems that effectively set the stage for the dynamic between non-homeless and homeless groups. For instance, when differences in lifestyle and class exist, the mental image of a dirty, smelly and insane homeless person harassing people for money on a street corner is enough for many to legitimize anti-panhandling laws on city streets and within neighbourhoods⁵. Similarly, the capitalization of space in the typically money-centric North American society, guarantees stability of the gap between those who can afford a spatial foothold in society and those who cannot.⁶ Use of the commercially-public realm (a coffee-shop for instance) is limited to socially accepted (not insane, not dirty) individuals with enough money to afford the services offered. Such differences between the homeless and non-homeless populations define a relationship, and are defined by a relationship, biased in favor of established societal operations and preferences.

Of all the factors that have influence upon the homeless, architecturally, the process of gentrification is the most significant. It is through architecture – the establishment of buildings, cities and spaces – that social hierarchies, beliefs, and values are given form. Gentrification, the process of redevelopment with the intention of bringing prosperity to areas of the city, encourages the influx of a socially valued segment of society – individuals and businesses that are able to

⁴ By "aesthetics" I mean 'relating to the sensations', *The American Heritage® Stedman's Medical Dictionary* Copyright © 2002, 2001, 1995 by Houghton Mifflin Company. Published by Houghton Mifflin Company

⁵ As has been achieved in Ontario through the implementation of the *Safe Streets Act*, (Government of Ontario, 1999).

⁶ Deutsche, 113.

operate within a zone of increased rent and real estate prices.⁷ Usually, with the influx of more affluent populations, the design of the new developments discourages and deters the use by those considered socially unacceptable, particularly the poor and homeless. This is done actively, as reflected in gated communities, barricaded alleyways, as well as guarded and patrolled grounds. It is also done passively, seen in the lack of seating in public spaces and the use of harsh lighting and plantings to suggest uninhabitable spaces. Class differences are established through the privatization of space and the use of video surveillance, which make clear that some individuals are not entirely welcome or welcome at all. In short, urban development and redevelopment, in fact any change in the built world, has certain (or uncertain) repercussions on those within, as well as outside, of established society.

In light of economic parameters – the economy of a market and capitalist society – and of social parameters – politics and aesthetics – it would seem that rethinking the homeless/non-homeless relationship would require a revolution of ideology on a mass scale. To be sure, one only need remember the demolition of a squatter settlement in Thomson Square Park, New York city, or the recent demolition of a building occupied by squatters in downtown Ottawa.⁸ Whenever a serious homeless presence emerges within a societal setting the normal outcry is generally two-fold. In line with aesthetics, economics and politics, the effort is usually to extinguish the homeless presence.

⁷ “In the hands of estate agents, journalists, and urban geographers it [gentrification] has been transferred from people to things, and is used to describe the social uplifting and prettifying of previously run-down residential areas. For social historians gentrification is something which happens to individuals and families, the social uplifting and prettifying of the upwardly mobile as they seek to move from some previous more lowly social position and pass themselves off as gentry. There is, also, a third sense in which the term is used, when cultural historians speak of gentrification as a process which transmits a particular set of values, or even imposes them, through schools, universities, and the pervasively infiltrating power of elite opinions and manners.” Thompson (Gentrification and the Enterprise Culture, p45)

⁸ Janet L. Abu-Lughod, From Urban Village to East Village, (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1994), 82; Ron Corbett, “246 Gilmour”, (The Ottawa Citizen Oct. 2004), E4.

Simultaneously however, the same situation of homeless presence and subsequent disruption often arouses a surprising level of support for the homeless cause. In fact, in the latter it could be said that there is an emergence of a sense of community that conditionally includes homeless individuals in the mix. There are many instances where associations and relationships between these populations can be drawn. Through the implementation of homeless services and volunteer programs, new communities, relationships and reliance emerge. In the same way, healthy neighbourhoods do exist with economically and socially mixed populations.⁹ For instance, lower income neighbourhoods often house more affluent individuals and families who are attracted to the sense of community and lower costs in lifestyle. Demonstrated here is not the potential for revolution, but evidence that small transformations can occur and can hopefully affect an evolution in the relationship between homeless and non-homeless populations, possibly even engendering a sense of community and developing neighbourhood ties between these disparate groups.

As a way of examining the ways in which architecture could allow for differing populations to coexist, the design proposal in this thesis is for the residential development of a site within Ottawa Ontario, currently in the early stages of redevelopment and potentially of gentrification. In an area already containing a mix of homeless, poor and wealthy inhabitants along with commercial, institutional and residential programs, there exists a developmental push to significantly increase the population of middle upper-class residents. Taking into account the existing neighbourhood, efforts can be made in this architectural proposal to find ways of programmatically integrating these

⁹ Brett Williams, Upscaling Downtown: Stalled Gentrification in Washington DC, (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1998), 134.

mid-high income residential developments so that the existing poor and homeless do not necessarily have to be displaced, marginalized or relegated to a position of other.

The attempt in this thesis, while proposed as an investigation into the architectural means for creating a homeless/non-homeless cohabitation, in reality ends up as a one-sided endeavor. The givens which I referred to earlier – self-automated functions of commercial interest, aesthetic desires, and hierarchical structuring – are products of ordinary and everyday situations. The inability for society, as a whole, to change these things suggests a situation where the ambition would be along the lines of developing an architecture that promotes inclusion of the homeless population into the inherent structures of culture, society and the city. Simply speaking, it seems to be a question of normative societal activity – in this thesis, architecture – taking homeless populations into consideration, not the other way around. However, I would like to see such a reversal. I would like to see ‘normal’ society desire to be included into homeless ‘culture’. Though given those self-automated functions of commercial interest, aesthetic desires and hierarchical structuring, the possibilities are undoubtedly limited. Looking too from the alternate perspective (and remembering that some homeless are elected), ‘normalization’ cannot be expected. Given those small possibility, architecture, in establishing viewer/viewed relationships, programmatic and user juxtapositions, as well as differentiating the public and private realm, does not have to be used as means of suggesting the ideal, demonstrating the means of change, or outright integration of the homeless population into ‘normal’ society. The architecture in this thesis can be used non-overtly in a way that might influence all inhabitants of the city; it can attempt to address and question an individual’s perception and understanding of the *other*, be they homeless or non-homeless.

In establishing an undercurrent of questioning within the design proposal of this thesis, it is important first and foremost for people to use and inhabit the architecture. Apart from pragmatic concerns and functionality in the building, it is assumed here that the concept of constant questioning of one's perceptions – and potentially oneself – would not be the most inviting, or comforting situation in a residential building. *Veiling* is used to keep such concerns in check. It also comes with an acknowledgment the advertisement of discrepancies in lifestyle and image do not generally perpetuate neighbourly relations. Alternatively, with the understanding that an individual's perceptions cannot be willed through the architecture, but rather develop of their own accord, the intent of this design is to create a network of spaces that *reveal* through situation those relationships between individuals who are otherwise veiled from one another's private realm. It is at these public and semi-public overlaps, where individuals can share space and experience, that architecture has the potential to encourage an individual reassessment of perception and preconceptions towards others, and set the stage for redevelopment based upon those who actually use the space.

In addition to describing the architecture that could allow for these differing populations to coexist in the same building and neighbourhood, the sections of text that follow are attempts to explore issues of gentrification, homelessness, and society in a way that describe the inconsistencies that are bound to our current perceptions and preconceptions towards this subject. Homelessness is not a qualifiable thing; and it is quantifiable only from a privileged position. Inconsistencies though do emerge in the attempt to come to terms with the inevitability of a homeless population. A closer look at those discrepancies that emerge in the generalization of the homeless subject is the

proposed means to question the deeply engrained perceptions held against homelessness. And, while no solution can effectively cover all the issues involved, circumventing the attitude of apathy distance towards the situation, by establishing interaction, generating the crossing of paths, and at times even designing confrontation, is a possible way out of a seemingly hopeless situation.

A Homeless Question

These individuals are consigned to the periphery of public consciousness because by failing to conform they violate social norms and offend public sensibilities. We deal with them by disassociation, distancing ourselves to minimize or displace feelings of resentment, fear contempt, guilt, shame, or conflict. In doing so a cycle of disinterest and disaffection is generated, allowing us to shun collective responsibility. We compartmentalize and place barriers between 'us' and 'them'. We tend to see some things and to ignore others.¹⁰

To not have a home, to not have any money, to be apathetic towards life, to be carefree, to be deranged, insane or handicapped; to be an anarchist, a freeloader, unambitious, a victim of the system, a tragedy of life: some or all of these qualities could be called into a description of a homeless individual or group. More importantly to note however is that these qualities could be used to describe anyone. Similarly, to frame a definition of the homeless population based upon the notion that a homeless individual is *without a home* for instance, ignores the complex intertwining of factors that deserve a place within a discussion of homelessness.

Generalizing human nature: as homelessness is almost always defined by their position as an outsider, our definitions – and even our overall understanding of the issue – rely upon a deeply rooted perspective inside 'normal' society. Existing simultaneously within and separate from the social fabric of society, the population of homeless is usually small in comparison and has little immediate control of power. In such a scenario, ideas of the *have* and *have not*, or using more specific terms, the *homeless* and *non-homeless* emerge.¹¹

¹⁰ Gerald Daly, Homeless, (Routledge: London, 1999), 8.

¹¹ Ibid, 9.

The question as to why the homeless exists and why populations considered anomalous, if not deviant, have always existed, (be it in the form of lepers, beggars or the mad¹²) is not answered easily. With reference to Alain Badiou and the discussion in his book, Ethics and the Understanding of Evil, one can infer that homeless populations are an entity (or evil) from which society can define and constitute a common good: “Evil is that from which the Good is derived, not the other way round.”¹³ An interesting example Alain uses in his text concerns the church: “...it was always easier for church leaders to indicate what was forbidden – indeed, to content themselves with such abstinences – than to try to figure out what should be done. It is certainly true that every politics worthy of the name finds its points of departure in the way people represent their lives and rights.”¹⁴ While good and evil may be exaggerated comparisons made in regard to the homeless situation, I argue that such notions -- or even right/wrong, appropriate/inappropriate -- do constitute a large part of societal structuring. Whether anomalous populations are necessities of human nature, making people feel better about themselves, or are a built in check, assuring that societal development occurs with a perspective not only of where it is going, but also of what it is, the part played by homeless other has an importance because of its relation to the norm.



– This simple relationship between normal and other is helpful because it indicates the origin of that perspective and this relationship’s central problem: those who consider themselves the norm define that which is considered other. (figure 1)

¹² Foucault, 7.

¹³ Alain Badiou, Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil, (New York: Verso, 2002), 9.

¹⁴ Ibid, 10

Submitting to this relational definition – normal/other – also has its difficulties: for how do you define who or what is ‘other’? For instance, by choice many individuals – without sickness, mental derangements, or addictions – take to the streets to participate in a *homeless culture*. The benefits of doing so may not be universally perceivable, though in electing to be homeless is a choice made by individuals from all walks of ‘normal’ life. These individuals, in electing to be homeless, in disrupting the definition of homelessness based upon economic, physical and mental stability create a crisis when it comes to understanding and addressing the homeless. Reasonably, at one time it was possible to define the *good* of normal society against the world’s deviancy, however, when good people choose to be deviant (or simply have no choice in the matter), the definition of deviancy has to change.

– In part to address the problem that arises when the other is defined by the Normal(Self), and partly because that is the case, this chart proposes another way of understanding the issue. Note that the positions are dependent entirely upon ones perspective (ie. point of reference). Note also the other seemingly polar opposites that over time society have come to terms with. (figure 2)

Other	Normal(Self)
The Homeless	The Non-Homeless
The Non-Homeless	The Homeless
Consevative	Liberal
Liberal	Conservative
Female	Male
Male	Female
Gay/Lesbian/Transgendered	Straight
Straight	Gay/Lesbian/Transgendered

In my opinion – an opinion that is currently based from one perspective inside ‘normal’ society – there is virtue in the existence of a visible homeless population. Noted less in its individual manifestations, the importance of a homeless culture is more discernable in its role as a counterpart to ‘normal’ society. Homelessness as an abstract entity can play an important role because it exists in relation to normal society, because attempts to think about society in terms of a utopia – as a perfectible scenario of life – always come up against a wall of things that don’t quite fit those concepts of perfection. Even if not altogether intentional, there is an anarchist underpinning to homelessness. In both its intention, [and sometimes in] its inability *to not be what it is supposed to be*, silent criticism is made towards that which it is supposed to be.

Ultimately though, in light of what is supposed to be (normal society), the *positive* aspects of homeless really are silent. From that perspective, it is much easier to be seduced by the image of homelessness as negative and problematic. No matter how potentially positive a homeless population could be regarded, the differences to the norm are difficult to ignore. As a result of such discrepancies, and due to the aforesaid origins of societal perspective, it should be clear why responses towards the homeless – architectural and other – are typically concerned with correction and/or reform. These responses are intrinsic to a definition of homelessness as atypical and problematic.

As much as I would like to posit a new framework for the understanding of homelessness, the reality is that our framework of understanding is deeply rooted in a set of circumstances that are both historically and currently very real and restrictive. A new and lasting perspective cannot be willed here in writing or subsequently in an architectural proposal. It remains that individuals who

want to reconstitute their understanding of homelessness will do so according to their own willingness and desire. What this thesis would like to impress upon the reader is an idea that perceptions and acts are contextual: individuals face the issues of homelessness in a way that is to varying degrees accepted as legitimate and grounded in both fact and reason. Furthermore, the examination of past practices does not only reveal derangements of moral or ethical rationale. If it is proposed that society challenge the current homeless situation, then present practices like past ones should be regarded as products of mutable ethical and moral frameworks.

Now, in order to frame the architectural intentions of this thesis, the following section describes the ways in which architecture influences and affects the homeless other. An interesting question to keep in mind while reading the next section concerns the shift that has taken place throughout time: "To what degree have people's perceptions of homelessness changed, and to what degree has architecture been used as a tool to shift those perceptions?"

Products of a Homeless Other

The existence of an *other* population – an anomaly situated against the norm can be said to be a historical constant in one form or another. Philosopher Michael Foucault in his book Madness and Civilization, while not explicitly directing his attention to the homeless or vagabond population, establishes that after the disappearance of leprosy throughout much of Europe, the same perceptions that held the leper in quarantine were reformulated and redirected towards other aberrant populations, namely vagabonds and the insane.¹⁵ There supposedly, the necessity of *otherness* – in the negative sense – found an immediate refuge with the populations that were as foreign as the victims of leprosy had once been. One learns from these historically occurring ‘other’ populations, the ways in which these differences have been dealt with.

Most prominent are records indicating tactics taken to outright banish communities of their aberrant populations. The same period of time that saw the discovery of the New World by Christopher Columbus was witness to the practice of banishing the deranged and insane upon *Ships of Fools*. On these ships, unwanted populations would no longer be any trouble to the communities from which they came. Furthermore, the responsibilities for care were transferred into the hands of a crew and environment; which at the time were presumably a necessarily uncertain and controlling set of circumstances.¹⁶

Other examples of ‘dealing’ with homelessness can be found. For instance, in the late sixteenth century in Paris – a city of 100,000 inhabitants – there were thirty thousand beggars. The solution

¹⁵ Foucault, 6.

¹⁶ Ibid, 11.

for this situation came in 1606 through a parliamentary decree that, 'ordered the beggars of Paris to be whipped in the public square, branded on the shoulder, shorn, and then driven from the city'. Following this one year later, a command was given that positioned archers at the city gates 'to forbid entry to indigents'. Worthy to note is that as effective as this resolution would have been at the time, the problem resurfaced again by the middle of the century.¹⁷ More than simple banishment, this example is demonstrative of extreme attempts to establish levels of tolerance for a society regarding vagabond populations.

The continual presence of homelessness and the continual attempt to deal with the homeless presence inevitably begins to register in the fabric of the city. Robin Evans in his text, Rookeries and Model Dwellings, establishes such a connection in 19th century London. "Numerous attempts to trace the influence of unhealthy surroundings on the moral as well as the physical condition of the poor confirmed that the lowest morality was always found in the worst-constituted dwellings and neighbourhoods, that the filthy habits of life were never far from moral filthiness, and that where there were bad homes there were bad hearts and bad deeds also."¹⁸ Hence the 'social housing' of the time, and arguably, housing design since, was based upon responses to the social criticisms of the poorer classes under assumption that a level of control could be established through architecture.

What the preceding examples demonstrate is the degree to which homeless activity has been controlled by society in the past. In many ways too, homelessness is 'controlled' here and now in

¹⁷ Foucault, 47.

¹⁸ Robin Evans, "Rookeries and Model Dwellings", Translation from Drawing to Building and Other Essays, (London: Architectural Association Publications, 1997), 95.

the western world. When the homeless can be fined for panhandling on specific streets or denied access to public spaces, it is a form of control that is being applied. Furthermore, this control can be given visible form through architectural maneuvers. At a small scale this again relates to denial of access, whereby entry and usage of buildings and spaces is controlled entirely or implied by other means. Examples of outright barring would be gated or secured communities, neighbourhoods, buildings, shopping districts, parks, lots, or as can be typically seen in large cities, the use of barbed wire to prevent access into alleys and urban nooks, and crannies. Alternatively, implied deterrents include design decisions within the city such as lack of seating, plantings or harsh lighting which restrict the inhabitation of space, or video cameras that signify a monitored space.

Social critic, Rosalyn Deutsche, in her essay, "Uneven Development: Public Art in New York City," criticizes current outcomes regarding the creation of public-spaces in the hands of private sector businesses and corporations. In linking the creation of such spaces to exclusionary principles that disallow the use of public spaces to individuals unable to pay to use that space, Deutsche is illustrating architecture's ability to control. Furthermore, she demonstrates the dilemma of how the homeless other is powerless: "Consequently, redevelopment proceeds, not as an embracing development [to all], but according to social relations of ascendancy, that is, of domination."¹⁹

Still, there is a certain difficulty in the battle against these active and implied tactics of control. Acts of homelessness are largely non-participatory and anti-societal, and as it has been

¹⁹ Rosalyn Deutsche, "Uneven Development," *Out There: Marginalization in Contemporary Culture*, ed. Ferguson, Russel et al. (New York: MIT Press, 1990), 108.

established already in this thesis, existing systems of societal power relegate the homeless to a position of non-control. Even with the best intentions then, in this scenario, approaches towards the homeless situation will always reinforce the non-homeless/homeless dichotomy and power structure. Shelters, soup kitchens, half-way houses, counselling and rehabilitation as modern day approaches in dealing with homelessness in our societies are all affected by that power relationship and simultaneously contribute to its structuring.

Subsequently, it could be suggested that services aimed towards aiding the homeless have the side effect of perpetuating the generalized view of the homeless as a vagabond and troubling group. Despite the relative good that is done in providing aid to those who need it, these services absorb the populations from the street, and ultimately fall in the same light as the homeless populations living on the streets. Homeless services as they are, take on the image of the street homeless and consequently are perceived simply as a facet of a larger homeless other. The aim here is not to critique the aid or the means of providing aid that charitable organizations offer to homeless individuals. Though in questioning the relationship that exists between the societal norm and the homeless other, it does become necessary to question these charitable institutions as well.

It has been proposed that 'Compassion is really little more than the *passion* for control'²⁰. For a large part the relationship that has developed between these disparate populations has emerged because homeless services reach out and create a relationship with the homeless populations. As a result of that relationship, hierarchies have been established. Social encounters on the street may happen every day and to varying extents, but these services effectively establish links of

²⁰ Daly, 7.

economy that assist in the institutionalism of the homeless. In linking religious organizations, public volunteers and most importantly the municipal, provincial and national levels of government, this *other* population is unquestionably in a position that is under control. However, that is at best an unmanageable occurrence.

Considering the existence of a controlling/controlled relationship, all which is left to investigate is the intent for which control occurs. From a European society focused upon the leper as other, to the subsequent replacement of the homeless and insane populations as other, a pattern emerges primarily focused upon dealing with and solving the problems that arise with deviations to the norm. Understandably we often look back on the past acts of society towards aberrant populations with horror and shame. Questioning the present tactics of dealing with the homelessness however demonstrates shortcomings now as well. The intent of solving the homeless problem has never seen a definitive solution, however, ignoring the homeless as a factor in day to day life (especially in the development of the city) has resulted in acts that many now look upon with horror and shame. As will be discussed in the following section, the practice of gentrification is a prime example of common practices that actively and passively affect populations other than the norm.

Gentrification

Much has been written within the last twenty years on the subject of gentrification in an attempt to question the process as a legitimate practice.²¹ Defined as the process of changing an area from being poor to being prosperous, the criticism against it generally relates to the fact that during the development process, little consideration is given to existing populations within these neighbourhoods.²² A discussion of gentrification is significant to a thesis that proposes the coexistence of homeless and non-homeless populations, because it brings up notions of subjectivity: that is, reasonable attempts to develop a city and make it prosperous do not (and possibly can never) satisfy all parties involved.

The fact that gentrification has come to be considered negative in its societal effects, makes it interesting that it is generally an architectural pursuit to take advantage of it, profit from it and perpetuate it. Urban theory written by Jane Jacobs often speaks about the vitality of a city; the placement of roads, parks, and shops to create 'harmony' in a city.²³ Earlier, in the nineteenth century, Paris was completely revamped under the rule of Napoleon III by Eugène Haussmann. Derelict neighborhoods were torn down, new streets were laid, and new street facades were erected "aimed at the amelioration of the state of health of the town".²⁴ Now, within the last few decades, much attention has been drawn towards gentrification practices in large cities such as

²¹ Neil Smith, Peter Williams (Ed.), *Gentrification of the City*. (Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1986), 1. This source reveals that early into the 1980's the common definition involved: 'restoration of deteriorated urban property especially in working-class neighbourhoods by the middle and upper classes.'; soon after, the definition stated that gentrification entailed: a 'movement of middle class families into urban areas causing property values to increase and having secondary effect of driving out poorer families.'

²² "Gentrification." *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*.

²³ Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, (London: Jonathan Cape, 1986), 377.

²⁴ Sigfried Giedion, *Space, Time and Architecture*, (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1954), 648.

New York, specifically those areas of the city that once offered affordable housing to the poor and lower classes.²⁵ What is interesting is that moral concerns for deviant acts have and still do mold cities like Paris and New York, while ethical concerns for human suffering historically and currently seem to remain outside of developmental practices.²⁶

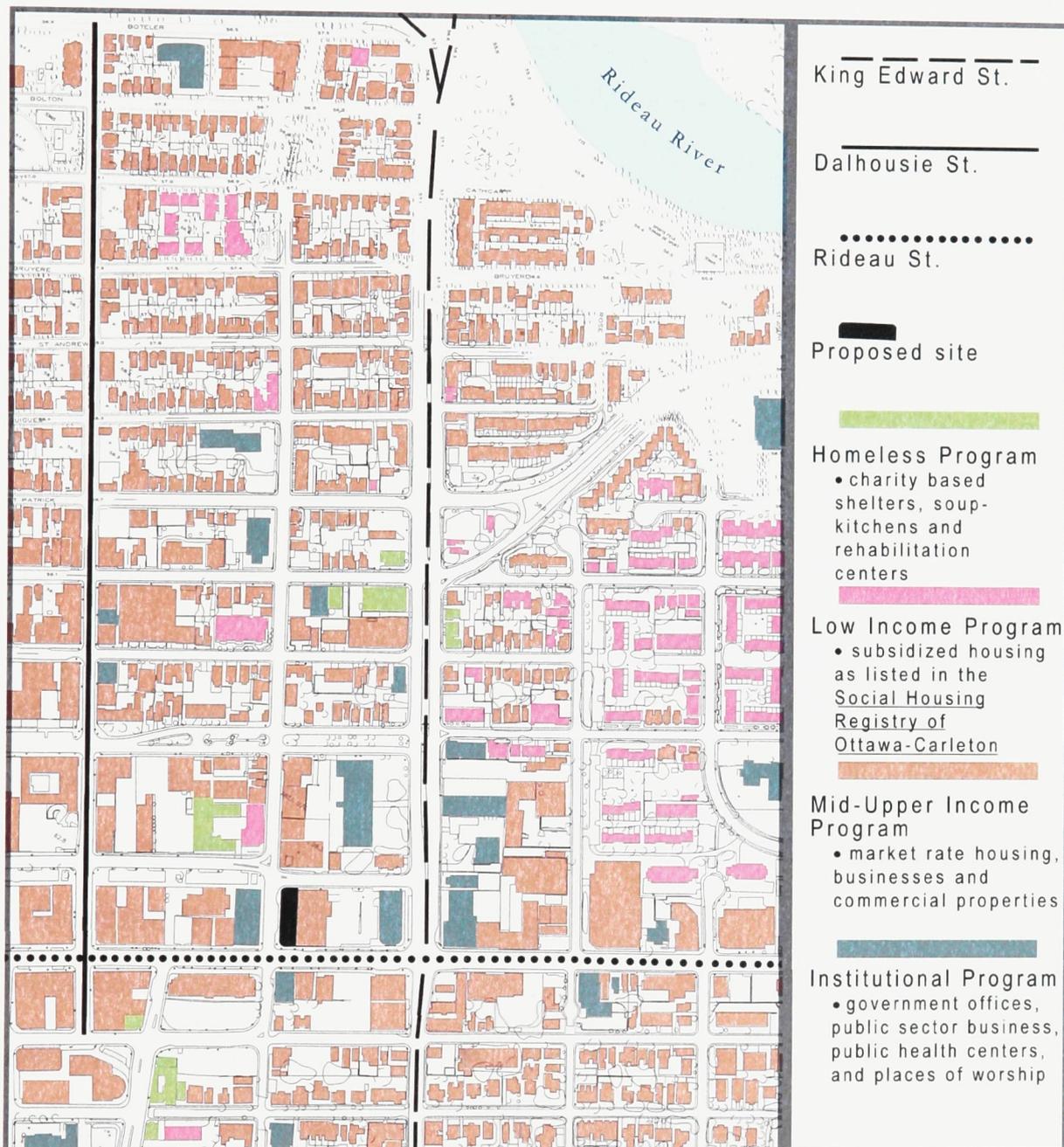
In Ottawa, gentrification also occurs as a side effect of developmental processes. Development may proceed along different lines than it would in other cities for a number of reasons. For instance, the relatively low population density and sparse density of the urban fabric do not encourage major developmental projects, and therefore displacement and marginalization of peoples is not such a dramatic act as it is elsewhere. At the same time, because the city is the nation's capital, with the location of the federal government within the city, the operations of the National Capital Commission (NCC) ensures that the image of the city is thoroughly considered. The perpetuation of the capital image by the NCC however is twofold: on one hand, undesirable populations are displaced emphatically from national property, on the other, more efforts and funds are allocated to absorb homeless and poor populations into the city.

Due to our capitalist society and our market economy in North America and many parts of the world, gentrification and its effect are no longer influenced solely by the political will of the government. A network now exists of investors, architects, politicians and a diverse clientele who all have a hand in this process of shaping and reshaping the city. The most notable effects of gentrification in Ottawa, as in other cities, have stemmed from the redevelopment of various

²⁵ Abu-Lughod, 17-18.

²⁶ I include these references to these cities because practices of gentrification have to a degree made them the places that they are, and are partially responsible for some of the novelty associated with them.

neighbourhoods within the city. Parts of Ottawa's Lowertown, also known as Bytowne or the Market, have in recent years been subject to a revitalization movement in efforts to clean up the appearance of the area. This, not surprisingly, involved removal of the visible presence of prostitution, homelessness and the poor who were centered mainly around Dalhousie Street.



Programmatic Mapping of area surrounding the proposed site
 – King Edward (slated for redevelopment), and the neighbourhood to the east now mark the areas of lower-town considered low income and problematic. (figure 3)

The dichotomy in regards to this thesis and the cohabitation of divergent groups is that to make something 'nice', we must remove all that is 'not nice', and redevelop it in a way that suits market and popular tastes. The redevelopment of Dalhousie street now makes it a viable part of Ottawa's major tourist area and has triggered an increase in business as well as mid-high end residential occupancy. Gentrification is a bad thing in the sense that it objects to, and therefore uproots, all which is considered not nice. Included in this displacement are the urban poor, homeless, prostitutes, families, immigrants, and small businesses unable to compete: anyone and everyone without the means to keep up with or counter the sweeping economic forces of such transformations.

While the criticism towards gentrification can be directed towards the displacement of populations and the perpetuated marginalization of groups and individuals, it seems that very little can be done without the marked effort of all that have power in the process.²⁷ The major setback towards the consideration of those individuals and populations affected by gentrification can be best understood in trying to understand the homeless. As it is, the persistent charge towards redevelopment without concern for gentrifying effects, makes it seem as though those with a hand in the process assume that the problems generated by displacement and marginalization are self-solving. In a political, societal and economic system based upon capital and markets, success – defined here as generally as possible – requires participation and effort on the part of the individual. The homeless, either in electing to be homeless, or because of circumstances beyond their control do not assume a normal and active role within these processes. The image of a

²⁷ Rosalyn Deutsche, 7.

homeless lifestyle then as one without a home, not necessarily needing a home, and in some ways self-sufficient, presents a non-issue when it comes to dealing with the effects of developing towards the homeless. In short, the ability of the homeless to find means for survival in alternative ways – sleeping under bridges, in boxes, abandoned tunnels, homeless shelters, begging for money or the use of charitable sources – assumes that responsibility for the homeless from the outside is at times unneeded.

Regarding the displaced non-homeless populations, the gentrification process and the subsequent relegation of various populations elsewhere has mainly been countered through the construction of subsidized housing. While such endeavors are valuable to the few individuals that actually are granted housing (in Ottawa for example, the demand still greatly outweighs the supply²⁸), the byproduct created through redeveloping property for the market still has the effect of marginalizing a large segment of the lower class. One indication of this is the inclusion, or often exclusion, of retail and business space into developments. Generally if the openings exist, they are for larger and higher profile operations, and inappropriate for business endeavors by anyone of middle or lower class. Again, the development of the city succeeds and profits from the displacement and exclusion of these classes. The problem is that in a capitalist and market society the practice is quite rational and appropriate.

Where gentrifying processes succeed in the economic and demographic transformations within the city, the effects do not necessarily have permanent implications toward the homeless

²⁸ In Ottawa, there are more than 12,500 families registered on a list waiting for adequate, affordable housing to become available. *City of Ottawa website*, "Housing and Homelessness: A City of Ottawa Snapshot," (Ottawa, 2004).

population. Just as the problem of homelessness cannot necessarily be solved in current North American society, theoretically neither can these populations be eradicated by means of gentrification. Neighborhoods ultimately exist or emerge for poorer inhabitants just as the homeless frequently return to roam and beg in prosperous neighborhoods. Until all areas in a city are gentrified (and the means to maintain that gentrification are in place), the ghetto or poor neighbourhoods will always emerge somewhere unless other and more definitive measures of control are brought into play. As gentrification acts through displacement, it ensures that an excluded population will remain, and it is with this population that other modest neighborhoods can potentially expand and new ones emerge.

The influence of these two things upon each other – the presently certain existence of a derelict population, and gentrification, as the will to improve the city/society, creates a cyclical condition that in its own way does allow for a non-homeless/homeless coexistence. Unfortunately, the displacement of populations from disenfranchised neighborhoods implies a re-habitation of that population elsewhere. Seemingly, the only way for such divergent populations to exist with one another would be through such means of displacement and distancing – as occurs now. This is most apparent with the homeless and registers architecturally in the endorsement and placement of homeless services. Shelters, soup kitchens, half-way houses while not only providing for the homeless, are accepted as beneficial *because* they provide 'outlets' that can absorb this unwanted population.

At this point the situation recurs: the areas that absorb these populations through the relocation or establishment of new shelters, soup kitchens, or half-way houses are themselves often regarded

as potential locations for future degeneration. Gentrification is problematic not only because of its immediate marginalizing effects; the act is part of a larger problematic that ensures the long-term perpetuation of marginalization and segregation. Most important is the notion that economic motivation does not give these processes legitimization. Developmental effects are not unavoidable results of uncontrollable factors, rather they emerge when those who participate in the developmental process fail to consider all those involved.

Alternatively then, the development of new architecture has a place in the rethinking or reconsideration of existing populations. The first step comes in proposing the question: What would be involved in developing architecture that could consider both the requirements of larger economic and market forces as well as the requirements of existing, albeit, less influential populations? The answer to this, as will be discussed in the following section, is one that concerns limits: particularly the extent to which existing populations would accept the changes, and the degree to which newer populations would accept those existing populations.

A Homeless Design

Having established important issues regarding gentrification, homelessness and the present systems of 'treating' the homeless population, attention must now shift towards architectural alternatives that would allow for the homeless and non-homeless to co-exist in neighbourhoods and cities in more equitable ways. The endeavour to have disparate populations abide side-by-side involves two major considerations: First the selection of an appropriate neighbourhood appropriate to fostering such relationships. Secondly, architecture is needed that utilizes and encourages systems of reliance between the differing groups within the building and encourage possible opportunities for these populations to redevelop their perceptions towards one another. It is through the integration of various programs, and therefore users, of the building, neighbourhood and city, that the social intentions of this thesis can be implemented.

Before any immediate steps are taken, it must be recognized that an architectural proposal for homeless populations will most likely differ from architectural proposals for the non-homeless. Primarily, one must come to terms with the idea that the homeless are, voluntarily or involuntarily, in a position that somewhat rejects typical architectural endeavours. The self-motivated aim of acquiring wealth, property, and standards of living seems to differ from non-homeless populations to some homeless populations (the exception being those homeless whose homeless state is unavoidable). Furthermore, the extent and ability of architecture to convey a message or a relevant meaning is questionable with relation to the homeless. This is not to say that the homeless individual is any less capable of realizing the message of architecture. I am, however, saying that in light of outright rejection or apathy towards societal values by homeless populations

with the case of elected homeless and considering the stigma of the homeless other in general, the value of a formal architectural meaning as it is understood to have on society is presumably as unimportant.

At this point, considering the unimportance of architecture's formal meaning, it becomes necessary to determine the role of architecture in allowing these distinct and disjunct populations to find a common ground. To begin it is through *architectural experience* that this is possible. Homelessness as it is, is perceived in a number of ways – with disgust, shame, indifference, compassion – and vice versa. Ideally people would view with credibility *all* of the ways that individuals choose to live. There is a dilemma in this however, because for many non-homeless members of society, the way many homeless individuals live is foreign or if not unacceptable. Likewise, the ultra-rich are sometimes held in contempt, be it from jealousy or out of disdain for their 'unreal' lifestyle. The intention of the architectural proposal is to demonstrate the validity of a way of life and furthermore, to provide the environment capable of being occupied by these ways of life. Therefore a main concern is *how* to convey the validity without compromising an individual's ability to live.

One approach might be to allow for 'cultural' juxtapositions to speak for themselves. The extent however, that the juxtaposition of contrasting images could change perceptions is questionable in comparison to the extent that they would simply reinforce current understandings. This is because people will think what they want to think when they want to think it. For instance, a wealthy businessman or politician living next to the quarters of a homeless person would probably not induce compassion in him towards his homeless neighbour, only warrant thick blinds. Similarly,

spaces for the homeless and non-homeless designed to be shared would most likely become spaces to avoid. Rather than coming to terms with these seemingly hopeless dilemmas, it seems that a simple theme could be taken from this central point of conflict and used throughout the building. The design has been approached with the notion that individuals will redevelop their own perceptions about things different to them as they see fit; they will confront the other when it is relevant to them. The architecture therefore becomes a system that through experience can suggest or hold places of encounter. In these spaces, exist opportunities for individuals to encounter or involve themselves with the other occupants. Rather than overtly confronting the inhabitants with conflict, the system is one based upon individual intention and individual motivation.

Additionally, the architectural focus is not based solely upon a homeless/non-homeless relationship. The way in which the homeless other is regarded by societal norm is not entirely unlike the way in which people regard their unknown neighbours and coworkers. Like racism and sexism, classism can be regarded as an instinctual behaviour, usually kept in check by hindsight.²⁹ Setting the stage for redevelopments in perception can no longer be centered only at the threshold between homeless and non-homeless programs; for the problem of classism, and the problem that one's perceptions of the other are based on similarity and difference, occur at every moment of encounter. With this, architecture takes on a role of mitigating at all points of occupation. The entire building can hence be seen an assembly of relationships between *viewer/viewed*, *self/other*, regardless of who is involved. This is not to say that the occupancy has no bearing on the

²⁹ This line of thought, specifically that of racism, has been taken from a class seminar on *Orientalism*. Sexism and classism are additions I think are relevant to this thesis. Philip Thurtle, "Introduction to Cultural Studies," Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Carleton University, 2004.

realization of this architectural endeavour: the fact that a homeless person occupies the same building as economically upper-class residents requires certain considerations. What is contested here is the notion that these immediate differentiations need means of architectural expression. In the context of redeveloping perceptions, it is more appropriate for the architecture to be considerate and reductive in its ability to frame and express people and their lifestyle, and more importantly, only to do that where those being framed have a choice as to what is shown and when that would happen.

Two terms, *veiling* and *revealing* are used here as a description of my architectural and social intent in this thesis. To the extent that confrontations cannot be understood as the only ongoing pressure towards a perceptual shift in the attitude of the individual, the idea of the *veil* is used to blur immediate discrepancies between populations. In denying moments which overtly describe the other within the building – populations, neighbours, programs – the effort to mitigate the relationships between occupants on a subjective basis is made. Alternatively, moments of revelation can be introduced into the architecture as the means towards a redevelopment of relations between the occupants; and done so in ways that can allow perceptions and expectations to be developed in alternative ways.

A Neighbourhood

The possibility for a redevelopment of relationships between homeless and non-homeless populations is invariably linked to the potential of existing neighbourhoods and the existing members of such neighbourhoods in allowing this to happen. Unfortunately this type of coexistence is not generally the typical aim of most neighbourhood inhabitants. Established neighbourhoods see the homeless and poor as a threat to commercial and residential appeal, not to mention the viability of the area.³⁰ For a coexistence of homeless and non-homeless populations to occur, the area in which it could happen would have to have certain characteristics. Primarily, these neighbourhoods would require major openings that could allow for the influx of both populations, and the eventual influence of both these populations upon the neighbourhood.

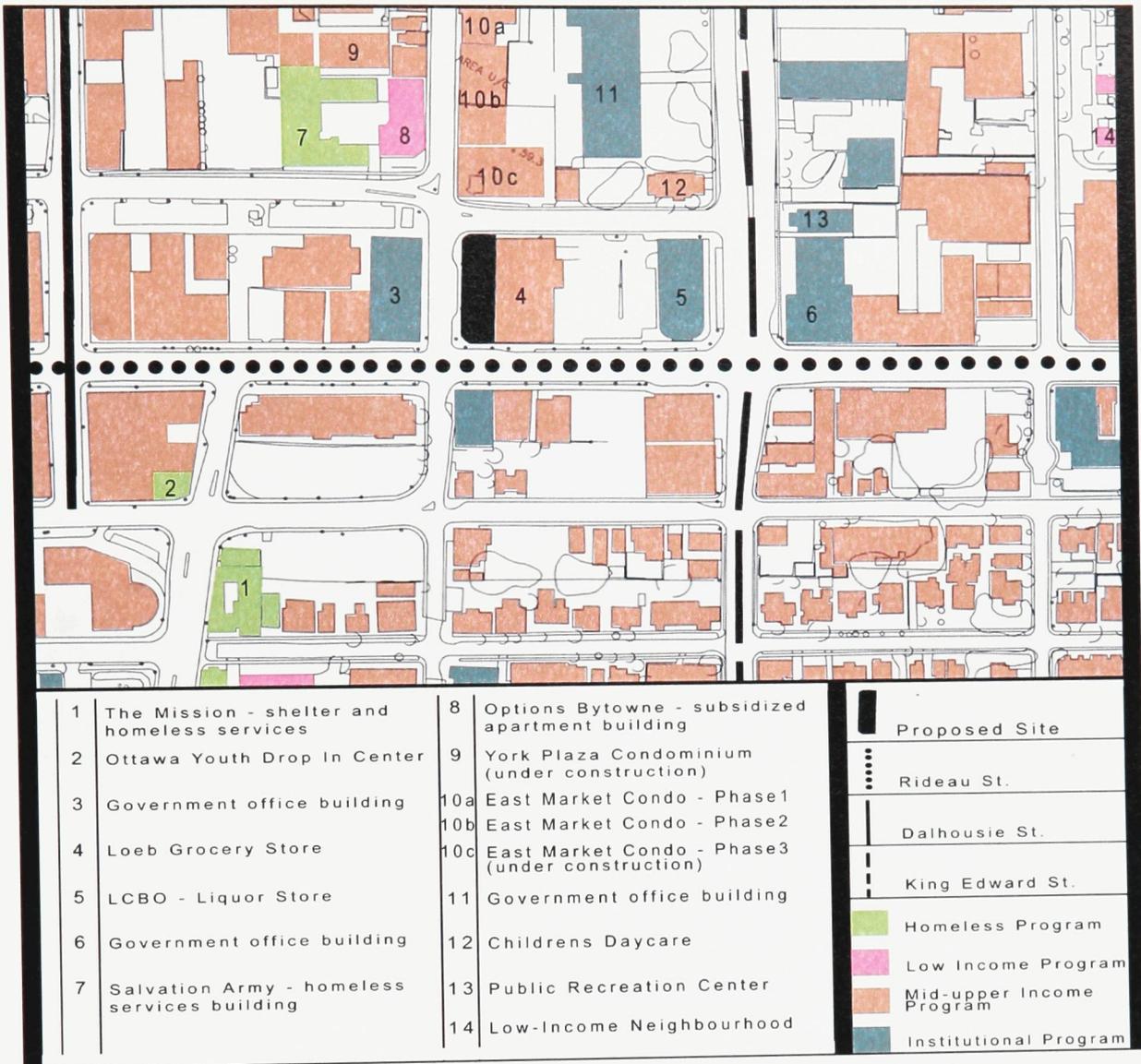
Taking cues from existing neighbourhoods, the cyclical nature of redevelopment, gentrification, displacement and marginalization are generally a result of ongoing economic forces. Redevelopment usually finds root, and gentrification subsequently happens, in existing poor and marginalized areas. Marketability, and likewise the viability of development in such areas, happens because it *can* happen in those areas. This point of conception, the initiation of redevelopment, should be seen as the opportunity for this new mentality of co-existing to be implemented. By initiating these ideas at the time and place that the redevelopment of neighbourhoods begins, it can be ensured that there is an acceptance of these ideas on the part of those who will eventually come to inhabit these areas. Rather than imposing these ideas upon established neighbourhoods

³⁰ Michael H. Lang, Gentrification Amid Urban Decline, (Cambridge: Ballinger, 1982), 60-61.

and populations, the viability of coexistence can now be aided *through* the implementation of buildings and spaces.

As was discussed in the earlier chapter on gentrification, Ottawa's Byward Market has recently gone through redevelopment (and gentrification) namely along Dalhousie Street. Juxtaposed against this redevelopment to the east, is an ambiguously defined low-income neighbourhood that currently houses a number of the city's homeless services. It is now in this area, with its nearness to the market and the downtown core, that another sweep of development and gentrification is taking place. As it is, the section of this area nearest to the market has seen the most aggressive redevelopment and has recently been coined by developers as the 'East Market'. In the future, plans also indicate the development along the King Edward corridor.³¹ In terms of neighbourhood, it is very likely that this area will continue to be developed as one of upper-income urban living.

³¹ King Edward Avenue Renewal: Planning and Environmental Impact Study Report, 2002



– Current Developments and existing building use in area surrounding site (2004). (figure 4)

This proposal is an examination into the use of architecture as a means of tying together separate parts of society; and at its basis is the encouragement of a sense of sustainability, reliance and relationship between different people and things. The site chosen for the architectural proposal is a combination of many disjointed, in fact disparate programmatic elements. To begin, the area contains three governmental office buildings directly adjacent to the site that provides the area with a huge daytime population. A large-scale grocery store (Loeb) and liquor store (LCBO) also provide an influx of daytime usage. As it is, the relatively low density of residential fabric in the

area requires that the usage of both the governmental buildings and commercial programs be supplemented by outside populations. This necessitates an increase in vehicular traffic and parking in the area, and maintains the immediate neighbourhood as one that is inconsistently occupied and a disruption from its surroundings.



– Site Conditions showing (from left to right) government offices, LCBO, parking lot, Loeb grocery store, proposed site, and more government offices. (figure 5)

Here, in midst of a number of high-density residential projects currently underway, the ideals of this thesis can best be tested. The influx of high-income residents into an area already containing both homeless and low-income populations establishes conditions that are suited to developing an architecture that could provide a space of co-inhabitation for these various groups. Primarily, the proposed increase in density potentially could allow for an equilibrium to be reached that would neither see the total gentrification of an area nor alternatively its ghettoization. Secondly, the existing low density of the neighbourhood and the inconsistency of this area's urban fabric provide an appropriate opening for reconsidering typical acts of development. Aside from this, the area provides an opportunity to look into ways that architecture in a high-density area can engender a sense of community and cooperation between classes within the population, as well as amongst the various programmatic elements found both in this neighbourhood and surrounding environs.

Similar to the lack of balance in living and working populations, the large number of homeless individuals and services in the area has effects on the investment in and development of residential and commercial endeavours³². Seen in the high-density developments currently underway, the viability of the area seemingly can only be increased through aggressive gentrification tactics. Here, as a means towards the coexistence of different groups, the design of this proposal attempts to see that the displacement of the homeless population is avoided. In terms of neighbourhood integration, this proposal calls for homeless services that could be incorporated into the already existing organizations that offer homeless services in the area.³³ Also, the building proposes to house both high-end residences and subsidized low-income units so that a diverse range of the social spectrum remains within the area.

At this scale of a neighbourhood and the city, this architecture in allowing differing populations to coexist also needs to take into account the perceptions of the inhabitants who live, work, and visit such spaces. The development of the architecture of this proposal accounts for the influence that existing commercial, governmental, residential and homeless programs in the area have on such an endeavour. By providing underground parking spaces that can be rented or sold, the potential is created to accommodate more users into the neighbourhood, and also frees up space for new building activities. Also, establishing a commercially-public space at the building's ground level that houses a laundromat and coffee bar, the building programmatically ties into its surrounding neighbourhood and creates a node of activity and use.³⁴ Most importantly, the building supplies

³² The population in this neighbourhood is in proportion to the rest of Ottawa.

³³ The Salvation Army homeless services building

³⁴ nodes: thought of here as distinctive spaces where a convergence of activity and use occurs.

the neighbourhood with 17 upper-income residences, 9 subsidized units for individuals, couples and families in financial need, and 10 units allocated to selected homeless individuals (hereby referred to as the resident homeless). The aim of such densification is that it contributes to an increased responsibility on the part of the individuals in living with and encountering one another. Also the potential is created to address and alleviate the harsh discrepancies between those who have and who have not; for here the poor and homeless other are not entirely separated from the norm.

Generally speaking, the architecture acts as an extension of the surrounding neighbourhood, creating links and reliances between people and programs. Now, to do these things requires a sense of community to develop that encompasses these disparate populations. And, regarding the homeless, specific attention can be geared towards what architectural measures it would take to see this population, in its various manifestations, actively involved in this common community.

A Community

The definition of community is, in specific terms: “A body of people having common rights, privileges, or interests, or living in the same place under the same laws and regulations”; in general terms: “Society at large.”³⁵ The homeless are, through the associative acts of panhandling, the use of homeless services, or simply because of their ‘felt’ presence, part of a societal community. Though, the constant effort put towards ‘dealing’, ‘helping’ or ‘solving’ the situations and problems surrounding homelessness, takes away from the sense that this population plays an integral part of a larger community. Considering the long history of homelessness in general, and Ottawa’s current homeless situation specifically, questions arise as to *how* plausible it is to change the relationship between the homeless and non-homeless? Is it even possible to establish a community out of these two different populations?

The answer to this is two-fold. On one hand it should never be expected that a complete understanding between these groups could happen: homelessness has and will most likely always exist and similarly, disdain, if not fear and hatred, will most likely always exist on some level towards the homeless by the more fortunate. Alternatively though, because perceptions of the homeless and non-homeless are not universal this creates potential where certain members of the homeless and certain members of the non-homeless can find common ground. For instance, if one follows trends of redevelopment and gentrification, it is often these relationships that encourage such processes. One or two individuals moving into poor and homeless neighbourhoods often encourages a larger influx of people including artists, musicians, and

³⁵ “Community.” *American Heritage Dictionary*.

students, which encourages the establishment of restaurants, galleries, clubs, retail stores – in short, gentrification. The usual result however, is that any idea of community between the homeless/poor and non-homeless is eventually destroyed. Still, such ties did and can continue to exist. Considering other circumstances, a sense of community can be seen to develop along other lines by means of the various homeless services. The workers in soup kitchens, shelters, and half-way houses, whether they are hired staff or volunteers often get to know each other and the clientele on first name basis. Here the rapport is regulated by the codes of conduct institutionalized by the organization, though one can assume that the relationship might periodically extend outside of the institution walls.

As a means to the establishment of a community which can include homeless and non-homeless populations, this thesis proposes the development of a small site of land at the intersection of Rideau Street and Cumberland Street. As it is, this site measuring sixty three meters by approximately seventeen meters is a pay-by-use parking lot. The reasons, in terms of community potential, for this choice in site stem from the level of developmental activity currently underway in the neighbourhood, and also because in this neighbourhood a sense of community is lacking.

What exactly is meant by *lack* can be described by in the ongoing developments in the area. On one hand, the four major condominium developments adjacent to the site are supplying the area with over 500 living units, which are going to greatly aid in the economic vibrancy of the area as well as viability of new and existing commercial/business endeavours there.³⁶ Considering the way that population density can develop a sense of community in the neighbourhood, the proposed

³⁶ Approximation based upon culminative figures of major development projects in the area – York Plaza (130 units) and The East Market (396 units).

building for this thesis would have to fulfill the primary requirement of increasing the population of this neighbourhood. In terms of architecture influencing community however, these developments currently underway fall short in their ability to generate sustaining social/community integration or ties. Predominantly high-income, the architecture of these buildings suggests a distinct separation between the public neighbourhood on the street, and the internal world of the private living units.



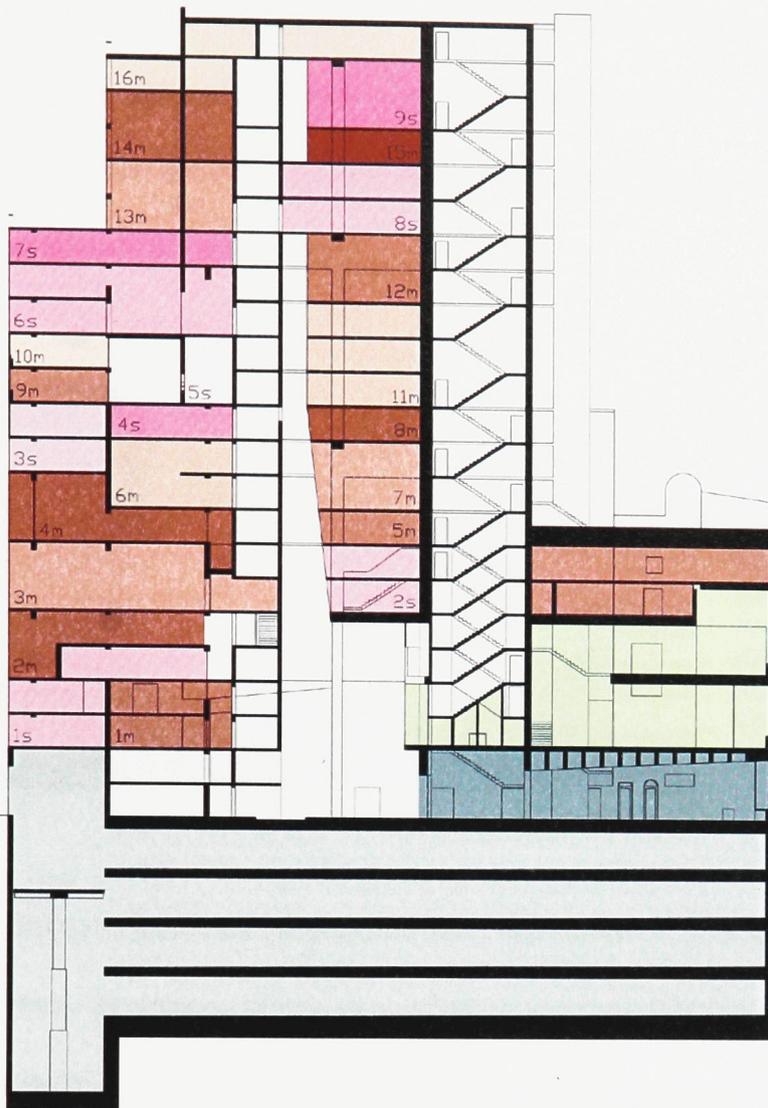
– York Plaza Development has a distinct separation between the public realm of the street and the private realm of the dwellings. (for location, refer to p31, key 9). (figure 6)



– East Market Developments at the ground level has space for only three small businesses. The rest of the ground floor space is used for private games rooms, laundry, storage lockers and for the garage entrances. (p31, key 10a–c). (figure 7)

Also, the major concern of most developments is one of economy: the potential for an investment to generate money. As a result, most developments are aimed at getting the greatest profit from the money invested. Condominiums are economically viable because their location is usually ideal, and as a result buyers will pay more money for small pieces of property. Alternatively, low income subsidized housing and homeless services typically rely on government or charitable funding and are not considered economically profitable for developers, governments

and philanthropists alike. The proposal with the architecture of this thesis, is to team up business and government so that government and charity resources can be supplemented by the high profit margin enabled by high-income unit sales and long term parking sales/rentals. The market driven costs of high-income apartments and parking spaces could be put towards the homeless programs and subsidized residential units. Alternatively, the subsidized housing of the building would encourage the presence of low-income families in the social and economic fabric of the neighbourhood. At the ground floor, the space shared by a 24hour public Laundromat and coffee bar also gives access to the residential lobby for the market and subsidized dwellings. Here, the programmatic overlap and interrelation of the building proposes to tie the various aspects of society together, rather than perpetuating marked differentiation.



- Long Section through building indicating programmatic relationships and integration.

- *grey* indicates lobby and parking garage

- *green* indicates homeless program

- *pink* indicates subsidized residences

- *brown* indicates market rate residences

(figure 8)

This approach taken towards the programmatic choices for the building is based on the idea of generating reliance. Furthermore, it is these programmatic reliances that aid in establishing multiple relationships between the various users and occupants within the building. The dynamic relationship that exists in the city – and allows for potential relationships between everyone, not just those of a particular class – can in a neighbourhood or building be utilized to allow differing populations the same opportunity. For instance, very close to the proposed site, is a homeless services building located adjacent to high income residences, a vibrant bar/club, and retail stores: a visible, audible, and physical closeness is maintained on the street. Taking cues from those

existing neighbourhood relationships and conditions, my building consists of seven different elements: high-end residential units, subsidized low-income residential units, homeless services (a soup kitchen, and long term residences), parking, and ground floor retail with space for a public Laundromat and coffee bar.



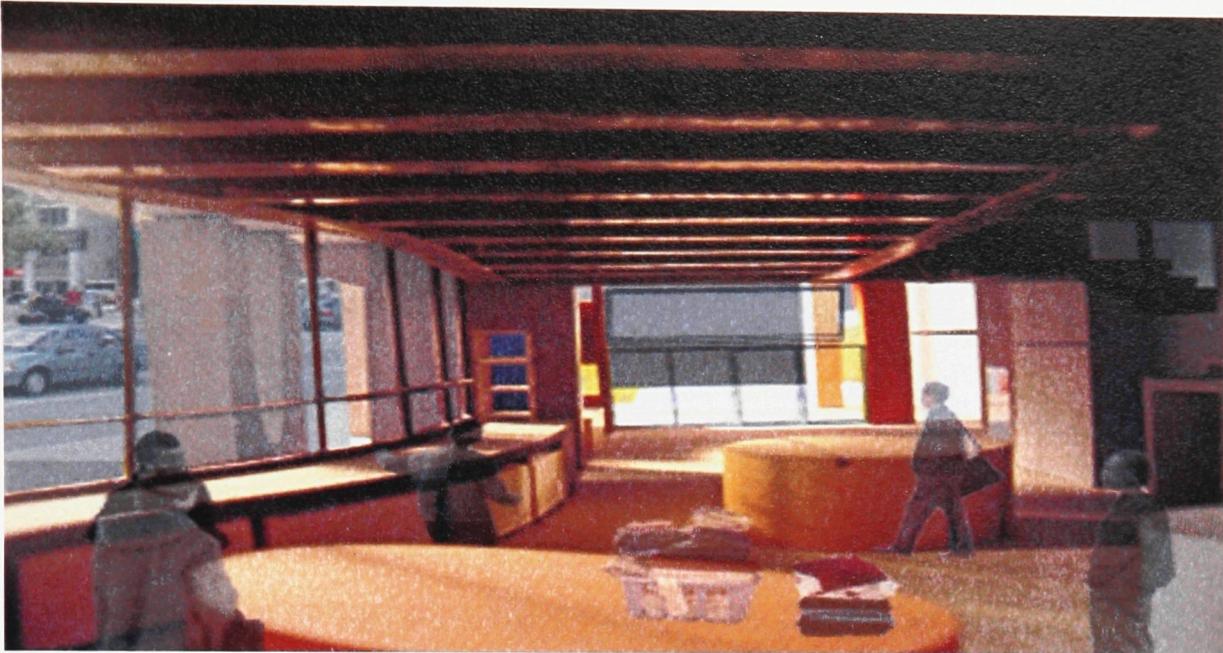
– Section cut at York Street demonstrating a very close relationship between the users of the Salvation Army homeless service building (green) and those who own apartments in the high income residence across the street (brown). Not too far in the distant back ground is the Market which is both a vibrant tourist destination and entertainment district. (figure 9)

Moving now past simple programmatic reliance, and in an effort to engender a larger sense of community between homeless populations and ‘normal’ society, the principle idea here was to take advantage of real diversity that exists in both populations. Regarding the homeless, there is a degree of expectation by society that at least some of the homeless can and want to be re-integrated into ‘normal’ society. The homeless services in this program are designed to take advantage of this assumption. Operating under a parent organization – perhaps the Salvation Army located across the street – several homeless individuals would be carefully selected to occupy ten private dwelling in the building and be placed in charge of operating the soup kitchens, as well as two vegetable gardens integrated into the building. A dynamic would be established in the building that would relate the homeless clients of the soup kitchen, the workers in the building

and public/homeless volunteers that could assist as needed, in the growing, serving, and cleaning operations of the building.

Most importantly, the homeless individuals who participate in this project, and want to reintegrate themselves as participatory members of society, are situated within a building housing normal members of society – who themselves would want to be associated with homeless populations. The desired sense of community therefore works under the assumption of a willingness to experience people and situations other than their predefined norm - an assumption that can be made because this willingness already exists in economically and socially diverse neighbourhoods, as well as because it is a prevalent belief in social theory.³⁷ The faction of homeless unwilling to participate in normative culture, and those non-homeless wishing to maintain distance and separation from the homeless are not addressed directly through this proposal. These individuals and populations add to the healthy quandary surrounding the homeless issue, in that they guarantee the implausibility of a solution. Their existence also gives basis to the architectural intentions of this thesis: that the architecture should not demonstrate *how* one should view the other occupants in the building. It is not for the architect to say the homeless should not be homeless or that the non-homeless should like the homeless. Rather, the architecture gives potential for these encounters to happen in the largest degree that is possible.

³⁷ The argument of RosayIn Deutsche encourages art practices which engender difference as well as discourse and confrontation that arises out of such differences. (109)



– **Vignette of the ground floor laundromat, coffee bar and residential lobby. Primarily a public space, this area has the potential to accept a diverse range of users including high income residents, homeless individuals, and people from the surrounding neighbourhood. (figure 10)**

The primary means for developing the aforementioned community and potential relationships, as will be discussed in the following section of this thesis, rely on instances of *veiling* the other populations in the building and subsequently *revealing* these differences at selective moments. Keeping in mind that a utopian hope for a community consisting of such drastic differences can never be expected, it seems only appropriate that the coexistence that I am discussing here necessarily takes into account expectations of safety, freedom and privacy, and the aspirations of the individuals who live there.

Veiling

“All we can do is remind ourselves that seduction lies in non-reconciliation with the other, in preserving the alien status of the Other. One must not be reconciled with oneself or one’s body. One must not be reconciled with the other, one must not be reconciled with nature, one must not be reconciled with the feminine (that goes for women too). Therein lies the secret of a strange attraction.”³⁸

In regard to the current position of homelessness in typical society, Baudrillard’s want of seduction does not necessarily resonate. Simply stated, the problem that we now face with the homeless situation, is not that the homeless aesthetic and image are reconciled with the non-homeless population. The homeless as an other *is* non-reconciled – assuming that reconciliation (in terms of acceptance and resolve and normalization) both at the societal scale and the individual scale would see the end to homelessness as we know it. At the same time however, it could be posited that homelessness is reconciled to *too* large of a degree. This argument would be founded on the basis that our perceptions regarding the homeless are based on apathy and passivity.

Regarding Baudrillard then, architecture that could contain a coexistence of disparate lifestyles needs to disrupt reconciliation (in both the sense of normalization and apathetic impartiality) and attempt to seduce one with the other. Accepting such possibility for the normal individual to be seduced by the homeless other (or vice versa), a means of addressing preconceived, stigmatized, and distasteful sentiments towards these people needs to be found. For this purpose I am introducing the notion of a ‘veil’ into the discussion.

³⁸ Jean Baudrillard Screened Out, (New York: Verso, 2002), 56.

Conceptually the idea of the veil is to address the problems that emerge out of difference. Veiling provides the opportunity for the potential abstraction³⁹ and de-contextualization⁴⁰ of notions regarding homelessness. If there is validity in the homeless lifestyle and the right for the homeless to have a place in society, other than in a marginalized sense, then it is the homeless aesthetic that stands in the way. Generalizing 'the homeless', they can be sensed – seen, smelled, heard, and felt – to be different than the norm. In dealing with these and other factors, architecture provides some potential in allowing such discrepancies to be surpassed. And, as interesting as it might be to confine these populations in one space to see what kind of relationship emerges, I do not think it would contribute to long-term possibilities. (That is a question that could be more readily answered by a reality TV program) Individuals, if they are to establish a lasting sense of *home*, to a large degree require a space of privacy and non-confrontation.⁴¹ Veiling, as the act of abstracting the activity or existence of the other, allows for the potential redevelopment of the threshold between the internal space of the inhabitant and the internal space of the other inhabitants in the building.

Subsequently in its ability to abstract those things that are hidden or understood as other, the idea of the veil re-enforces the unknown. Knowing one's neighbour is both a passive act and an active act. In the proposed architecture the distinction between the *normal* residents and the

³⁹ abstraction: The act process of leaving out of consideration one or more properties of a complex object so as to attend to others. *Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary*.

⁴⁰ de-contextualization: by this, I mean the perceived distancing of the homeless individual from the stigma that necessarily defines him or her as homeless

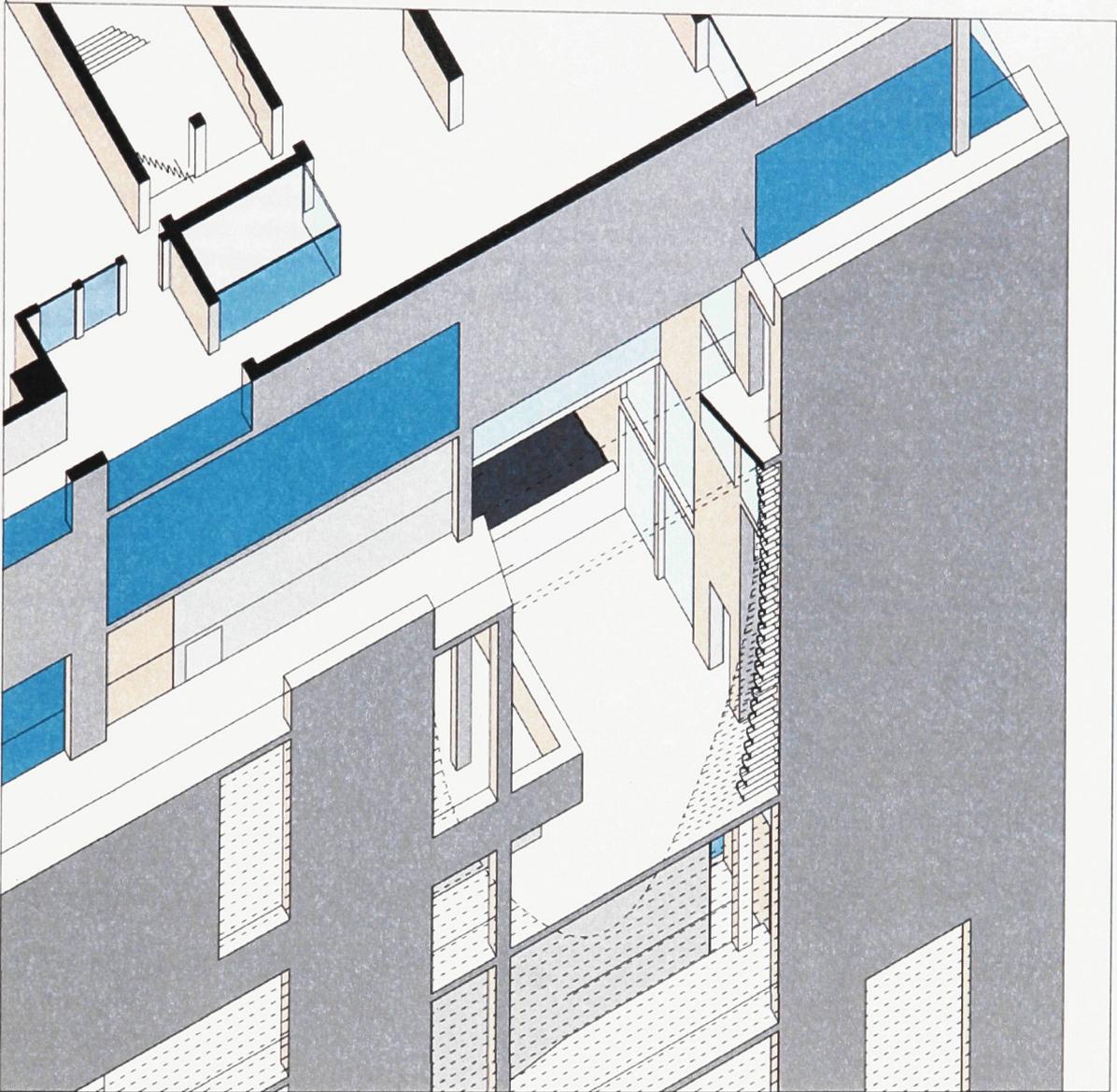
⁴¹ I do not want to delve too deep into the meaning of *home* or what it means to *dwell* within this thesis. The simple fact that I am speaking about homelessness should be enough to demonstrate that these definitions vary greatly from individual to individual. I would though, state that Heidegger's notion of dwelling would be more appropriate than Norberg-Schulz discourse, for the latter introduces notions of settlement that includes an "acceptance of common values", an idea that again does not mesh with ideas of homelessness (Christian Norberg-Schulz, *The Concept of Dwelling*, (New York: Rizzoli, 1985), 7. Furthermore, Heidegger in his essay, "*Building, Dwelling, Thinking*," talks about the inevitability of 'homelessness', in the sense "that [mortals] *must ever learn to dwell*". Martin Heidegger, *Basic Writing*, (New York: Harper Collins, 1977), 363. Notably, in regards to this thesis, the idea of questioning normal actions against other potentialities comes into play.

homeless residents becomes blurred – it is now a distinction between one's own space and the space of the other. Regarding passivity then, the veil reduces the discrepancies between neighbours, and furthermore, the architectural use of the veil requires that *knowing* one's neighbours is an active act.

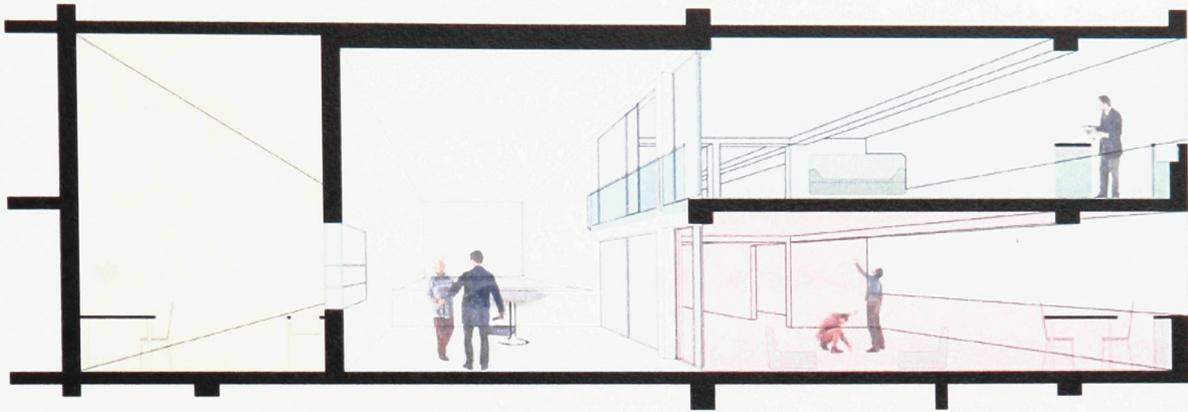
It is at this point that other important issues regarding Baudrillard's intentions with seduction need to be addressed. As I have mentioned before, homelessness will potentially always exist, and in some regards might need to exist. Others, be them homeless or anarchist, provide that essence which is counter to the norm, which is questions normality, and can be questioned by the norm. This building that I am developing, yes proposes the normalization of homelessness, but at the same time can never entirely succeed in doing so. Why this cannot happen is because some homeless will refuse it – normalization can be, and short of some revolutionary ideological shift, will be refused. That is why I insist in an inevitability of homelessness, and why I believe Baudrillard insists on the relationship between non-reconciliation and the potential for seduction with the other: the sense of incompatibility to even the smallest degree has always existed (leprosy, homelessness, madness, man/woman, individual/society), and presumably will always exist.

This makes more sense when thinking of the homeless situation and the veil at a larger scale; because it takes into account factors such as money, personal preferences/tastes and social norms. At a smaller scale – taking into account individuals ability and willingness to compromise, think logically about a situation, and even be seduced – it should be possible for classes can live side by side, just as individuals of the same class can live side by side. This can happen, if the internal structure and operations of an individuals own space remain internal. The typical design of

residential architecture exemplifies this in the strict division of public/private, internal/external, family/neighbour, self and other. To move past this now, and understand the ways that living side-by-side with the other can influence and shift individuals perceptions, even possibly be seductive, there has to be intention as to what the architecture reveals.



– Axonometric Drawing describing the layers of material, skin and space that separates the various private realms. Note the water collection system incorporated into the openings of the party wall. The intent of this system is to screen the spaces within the building from direct views, as well as extreme wind, rain, and snow. (see page 77 for detail) Standing in the central space and looking into the space would reveal the section in the following image. (figure 11)



- Detail Section describing relationship between three apartments. At left is a subsidized bachelor apartment, while the two apartments on the right are market rate bachelor apartments. A garden terrace acts as a physical separation between the dwellings., and its usage would be dependent upon the relationship that develops between the individuals. (figure 12)

Revealing

The points of revelation – where it becomes clear who and what occupies other spaces in the building – are intended to provide the stages on which individuals can begin to (re)develop their own perceptions of that being revealed. Again, it should be stated that the quality of that perception should not pre-established by the architecture, but variable to the individual. In the proposed architecture for this thesis, these ideas are found in the network of interrelating private and semi-public garden/terrace spaces. Returning to Baudrillard, these points of revealing lack fixed definition regarding who occupies those spaces, and how these users can be objectified. The result is that a residual *unknown* lingers, and knowing requires an active involvement on the part of the viewer.

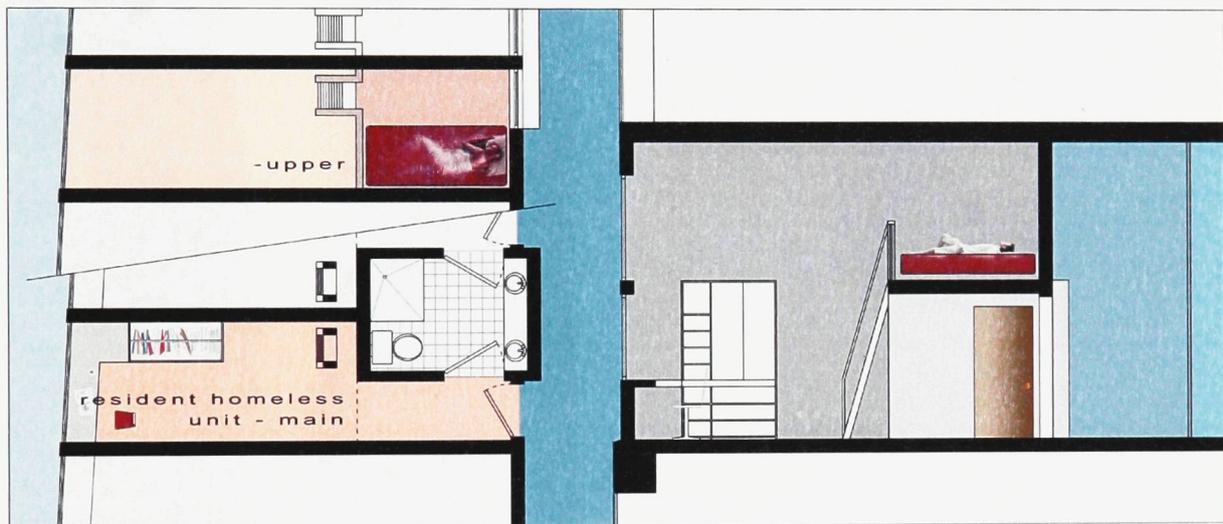
Outside of the privacy provided by the living unit, degrees of 'public-ness' afforded through semi-private gardens and terraces as well as the buildings circulation systems are proposed as opportunities for social spaces to emerge. Considering the pragmatics of viewer/viewed relationships and architecturally defined power structures in the building, an intricate network of these spaces define a realm in which the perception from each space becomes a result of its own microcosmic conditions. Private garden and terrace spaces have their own spatial and climatic conditions, and exist in various degrees of semi-privacy or 'public-ness'. Furthermore, the programmatic complexity of these spaces results in conditions which change with usage, occupant, season, and fluctuation of personal motivation in maintaining the space.



– **Axonometric Drawing (from preceding page) describing the semi-private/public network created through the integration of terraces, garden spaces, and internal views. (figure 13)**

As much as the intention in this project is to limit the segregation of groups such as the homeless and the non-homeless in theoretical terms, in practice this type of separation is necessary for pragmatic reasons. Effort however, was made to find the moments in which the respective programs could afford to reveal their usage and occupancy. For reasons of safety and security, the homeless programs have their own entrance and circulation sequence, and do not physically

share internal spaces of the building with those who have paid for market-rate and subsidized units. The living space for the resident homeless consists of ten private units that these selected individuals have permanent and unrestricted access to. Each pair of neighbouring units share a bathroom with a sink, toilet and bath, and all of these units have access to a communal kitchen, dining area, and two large garden spaces on the roof of the proposed building and the neighbouring Loeb grocery store. It is hoped that these individuals would form a small community unto themselves and with the administrative help of the neighbouring Salvation Army services, potentially open up their dining area as a homeless soup kitchen.



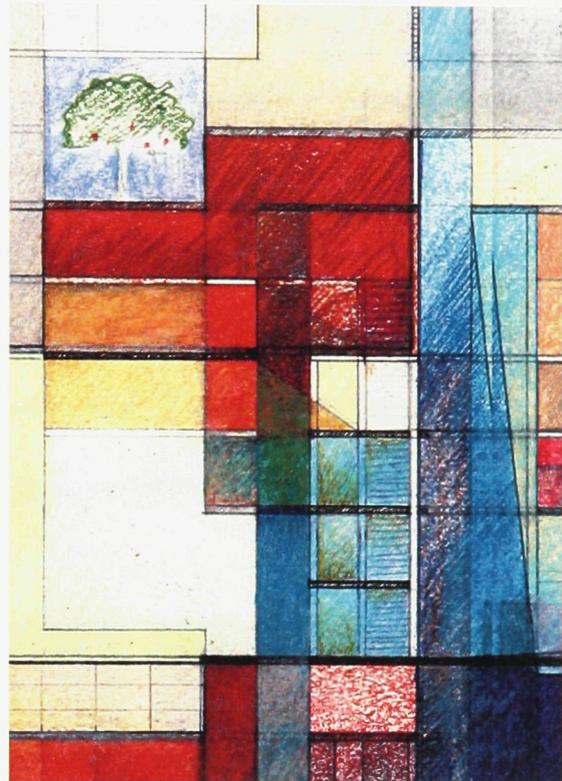
- Plans and Section of the units for the resident homeless. Each unit is allocated to a homeless individual, and provides long term shelter, storage and basic facilities. The above drawing describes a typical unit, however other units are provided for those requiring additional accessibility requirements, as well as couples. (figure 14)

The integration of the homeless programs with the entire building is achieved again in a garden space. The two rooftop garden plots that are used to grow food for the resident homeless and the public soup-kitchen, also provide a certain image of the homeless relative to the various residential occupants in the building and others in the surrounding neighbourhood. Similarly, the perspective of the resident homeless towards others stems from the same network of interrelated private/public

terrace and garden spaces. Like a backyard space or rear window with a view to another semi-private space, the onus to develop an image for that space is placed on the occupant.(see Naples balconies) Here, by leaving the individual occupants responsible for the spatial qualities of the building, the questions in regard to formal architectural intentions of this building (such as, is this private terrace too public?), can be location specific and dependent on immediate relationships.



– **Balconies in Naples** create a very public sphere that is linked to the private realm of the apartments through the balconies. (figure 15)



– **Conceptual Section/Facade** exploring the possible spatial relationships between the different apartment units. (figure 16)

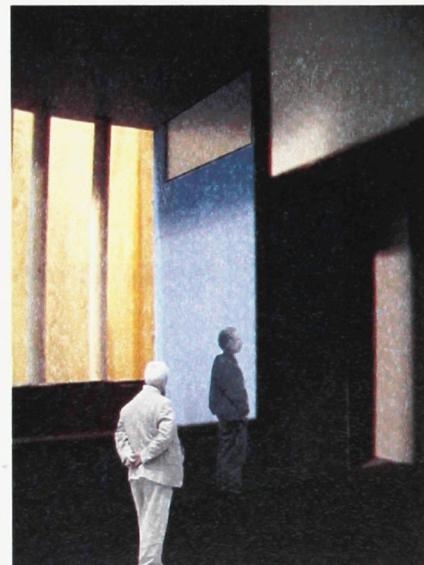
This is evident in the conceptual drawings began initially as studies on programmatic juxtapositions and the possible spatial and physical thresholds between those programs. (see conceptual drawing) The ability for individuals and programs to be situated relative to one another is entirely dependent on the threshold. Threshold, thought of in terms of distance, nearness, occupancy and use. The idea is that space can be broken down into private and public

requirements, and furthermore, that the division between the two can occur through by the ways that the spaces are inhabited and used.

With the type of revealing that the architecture is responsible for now established, it is possible to understand how notions of veiling and subsequently revealing usage come to define other spaces in the building. For instance these moments occur in the systems of circulation. Apertures in the elevator shafts are placed so that people in certain spaces have indication of their usage, location and movement. Similarly, openings in the elevator cabins are placed so occupants also have momentary views outwards and the potential understanding of spaces inaccessible to the elevator users. Also, with regard to circulation, the two major stairwells in the building are double loaded scissor stairs, which on one hand ensure the required number of exits in the building, and, additionally through the placement of glazing in these stairwells hint towards the occurrence of programmatic overlaps.



– Laundromat on ground floor. Doors in back wall provide access to two semi-public washrooms. Rectangle opening indicates placement and movement of the elevator for the homeless programs, and the stairwell to those same programs can be seen at the upper left. (figure 17)



– Resident Homeless area with views outside and a frosted aperture into a private dwelling. (figure 18)

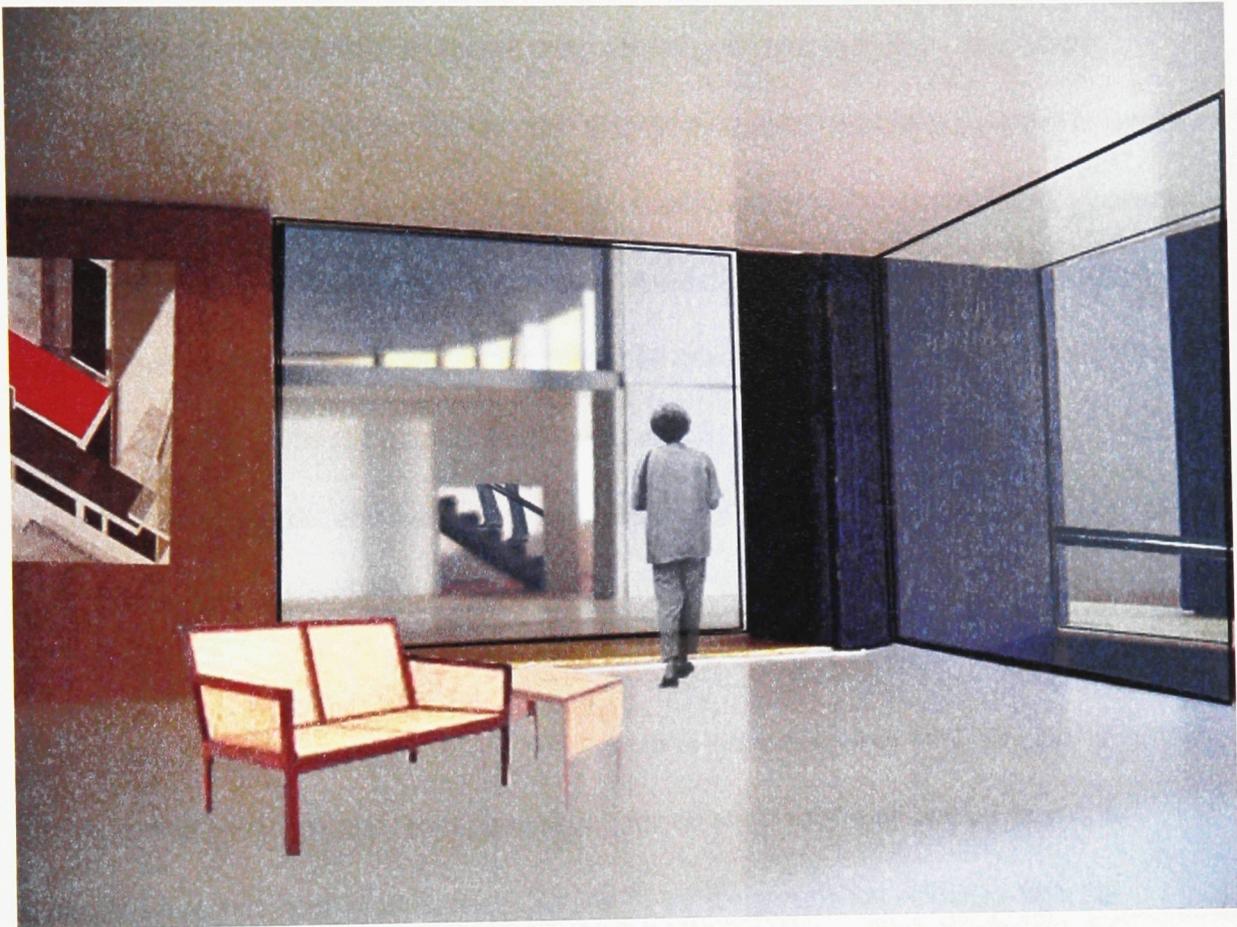
On the ground level, something similar happens. The main access to the upper-income residences and subsidized residences is in a space shared by a public Laundromat and coffee-bar (itself having an outdoor seating area existing in the network of semi-private residential terraces). Potentially, this could be a space where individuals of all incomes could coincide. Wealthy individuals may not do their laundry in this space, but might grab a morning coffee on their way out of the building. Individuals living in subsidized units may use the Laundromat until they can afford a set of appliances within their apartment. The fear that the resident homeless would turn the space into something undesirable could be kept in check by trained door-staff and employees of the coffee-bar. Revealing oneself here, like in the rest of the building, is done in a context that has the potential to ensure no major problems arise.



– Ground Floor Plan indicating laundry area, coffee bar and seating area, residence entry, homeless entry, and parking garage. (figure 19)

To the extent that unfamiliar populations can live side by side with one another, the intention of this proposal is to understate the major distinctions between populations until the moments when a context is established giving individuals the choice to present themselves, and therefore present their differences, to those around them. At these points, the idea of community comes into play, for the social community that develops within the building emerges out of these instances. The image

of the occupants, accountability for the use of space, appropriate behaviour, in short, the individuals' lives in the semi-private and public realm all become linked, and are affected contextually by neighbourhood, community, and society. More than that, the context is one that will succeed when the poor, rich, and homeless inhabitants want to take part in it.



(figure 20)

Conclusion

If one can presume that architects have an ethical mission in regards to the social development within buildings, neighbourhoods and cities, then a major question to answer is 'what is the objective or goal of such a mission?' No consensus to the answer reflects the fact that no utopian ideals calling for egalitarianism and social congruency have come to fruition. Nor, where homelessness is concerned, can the divisions of class ever dissolve under a capitalist or laissez-faire economy. This inability to come to a utopia should suggest that when architects, planners and designers are concerned with homelessness and the architecture of the city, they cannot depend on or count on revolutionary shifts in societal practice. In order to assess the objective then, two givens must be accepted to the largest possible extent: first, the inevitability of a certain degree of homelessness; and secondly, the inevitability of everyday influences such as economy, aesthetics and social hierarchies on the development of the built world.

This is not to say that the existence of homelessness or the economic motivations of normative society cannot be questioned. Homelessness is not an entity unto itself and tendencies to generalize it as such should be avoided: the line that distinguishes the homeless from the non-homeless is in constant question and therefore flux. Similarly, the economy while powerful is not all-powerful, especially in a country such as Canada which has influential socially minded organizations and governments. In the end, it is through the careful considerations of all the factors (as well as by realizing the discrepancies in those things taken for granted) that possibilities lay in both developing the city, and considering the different and differing populations of society.

In addressing these factors and taking into account those discrepancies, the design proposal for this thesis has succeeded. First of all, accepting that some homeless individuals and some non-homeless individuals would/could co-inhabit a building, allowed me to realize architectural possibilities that went beyond the building as a utopia. Subsequently, by acknowledging the indefinite nature of the separation between homeless and non-homeless populations, it became possible to address a larger issue at hand. Namely, that assessing the relationship between the homeless and non-homeless in a spirit of equality, requires the need to think about what it means to be 'other' and what it means to be 'normal'. That is why in this proposal for a residential development, the conceptual focus and design focus dealt with perceptions. Specifically how these perceptions, preconceptions, and individual perspectives towards things (people and circumstances) outside of their 'realm', are both resultant of architecture and can potentially be shifted through architecture.

In the design for this thesis the perceptual shift within the individual, registered architecturally through the use of the *veil*. In establishing the 'other' as an unknown and ambiguous entity, a sense of wanting to know is instilled. I believe that it is this *want* to know, to understand, and to be familiar with, that has the power to shift relationships between things. In this sense, the architecture is used as a vehicle to generate that want. How things change from there, is entirely up to the inhabitants. As a stage for that redevelopment, a network of terraces and gardens provides a semi-private/public realm where the 'other' can be *revealed*. What is more is that in this realm, revealing oneself is a matter of personal initiative: the perceptions that are developed depend upon the use, care, and development of that space.

The difficulty inherent in rethinking homelessness in the societal context, however has registered strongly in this thesis. Most of all may be the fact that the stereotypes associated with homelessness are very strong, and stem from very real issues. In the design for this thesis, that has been a major limitation, and attempts to deal with the sometimes extreme nature of homelessness have led to a building where desired co-inhabitation has not been fully realized. The integration of the homeless programs with the non-homeless programs in a dynamic and symbiotic manner is a weakness in the thesis. Another issue that has risen from this separation, is that the bringing together of different populations has in this thesis happened mainly in visual terms. Whereas the 'public' realm between the high-income apartments and subsidized units are inhabitable spaces, the 'public' realm between the residences and homeless programs in the building is only embodied visually and from a distance.

The bridging of such a gap between historically and presently separated populations, as this thesis attempted to do, is difficult. What is believed in the end is that the differences between normal approaches to living in the world, and alternatively, other ways of living – as well as the perceptions established because of these things – can be questioned through architectural initiatives. In attempting this, and attempting to do it in a way that realizes the legitimacy of homelessness as well as realizing that homelessness probably should not only be reassessed from the position of the normative, I believe a productive step forward has been taken in this thesis.

Homelessness exists, some people fall into it, and some choose to be in it. Regardless, the ability to address the situation is in the hands of those that influence the development of the city. An ethical and moral stance towards this situation does need to be re-considered so long as gentrification proceeds and so long as of the consequences of that development are realized.

Appendix I

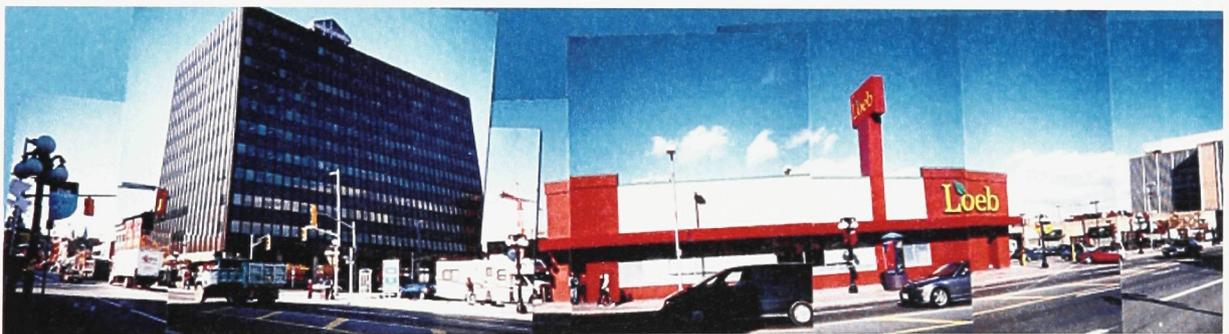
Site Documentation



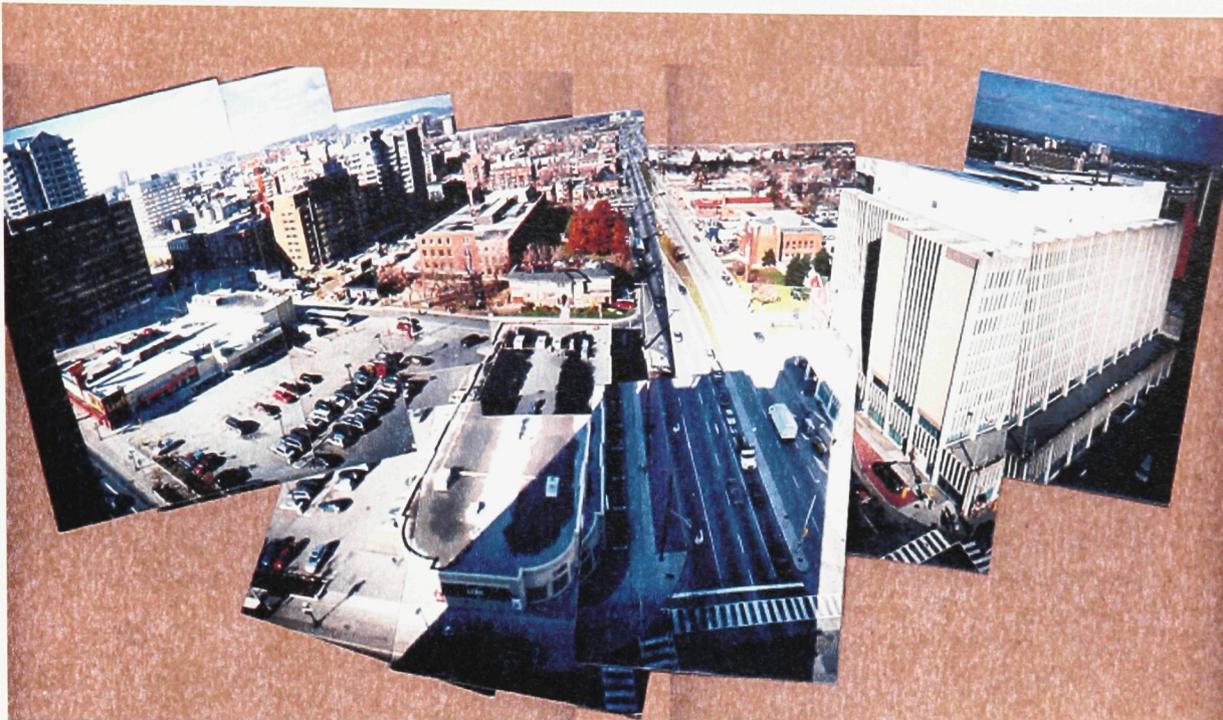
I.a – Site as it exists now as a pay per use parking lot



I.b – Site from street corner



I.c – Rideau Street Elevation



I.d – King Edward and Rideau Street intersection from above, site is located at far left.



I.e – East Market Developments looking towards site



I.f – East Market Developments and adjacent subsidized housing



I.f – Subsidized housing row housing



I.g – Subsidized Apartment Building

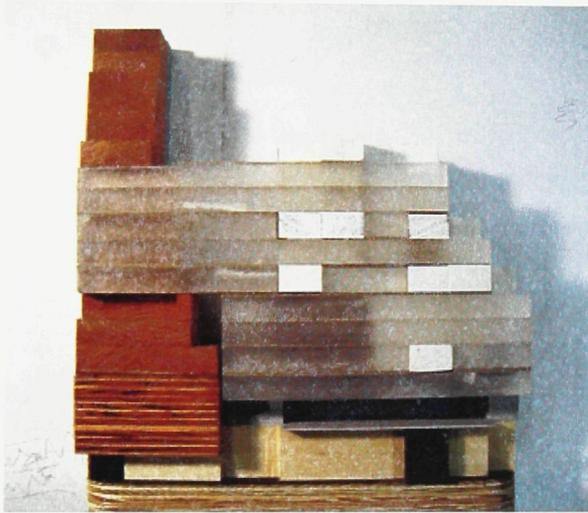
Appendix II

Process Work

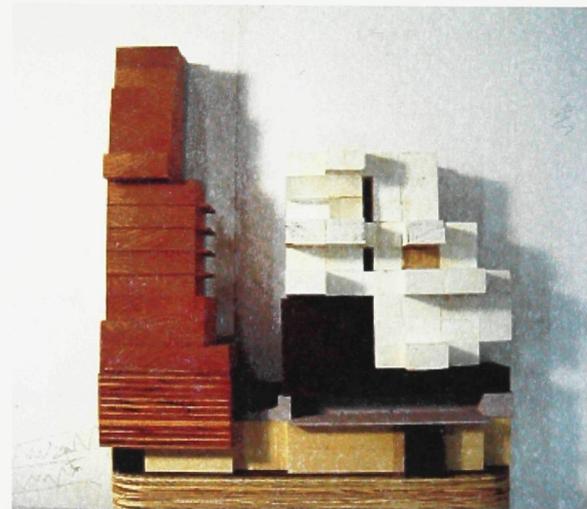
II.I Models



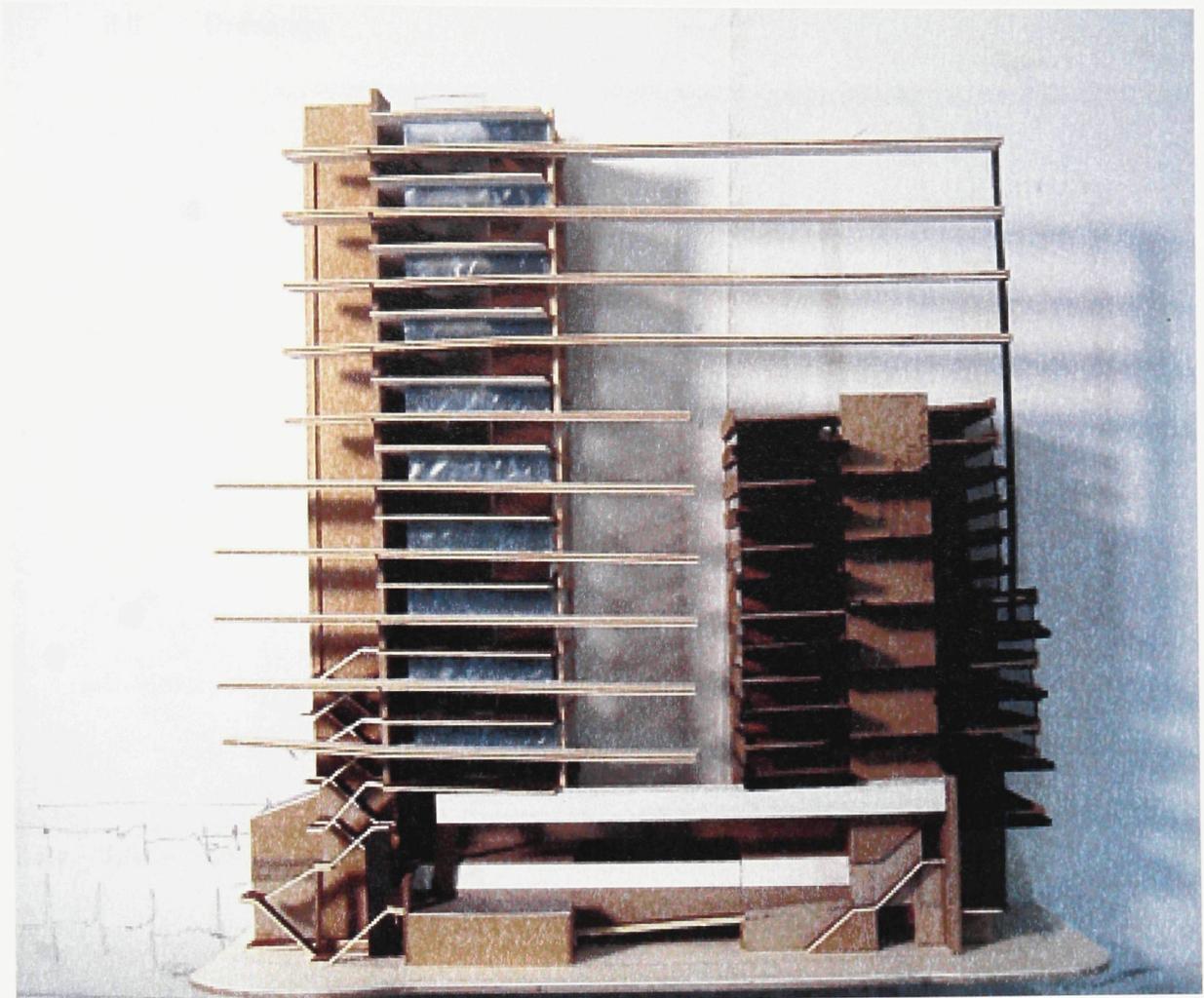
II.I.a – Clay Conceptual Model showing potential programmatic juxtapositions



II.I.b – Programmatic Block Study Model with garden wall

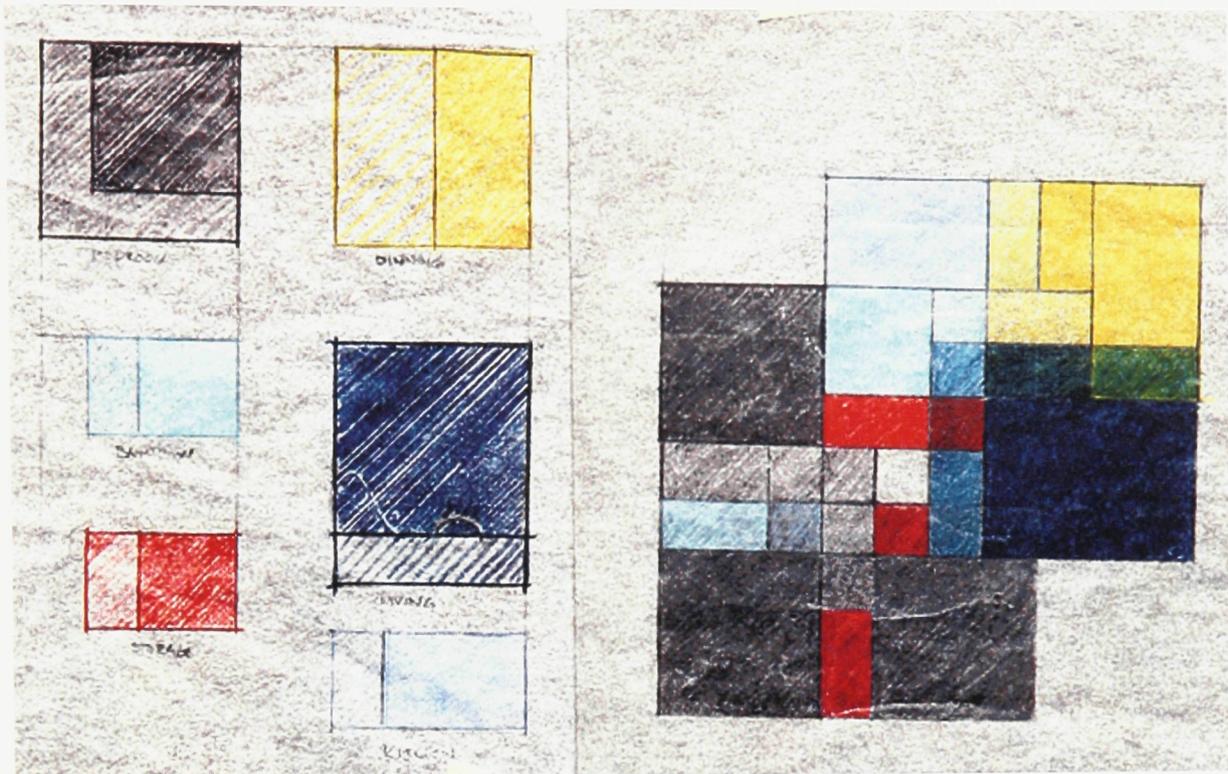


II.I.c – Programmatic Block Study Model with garden wall removed

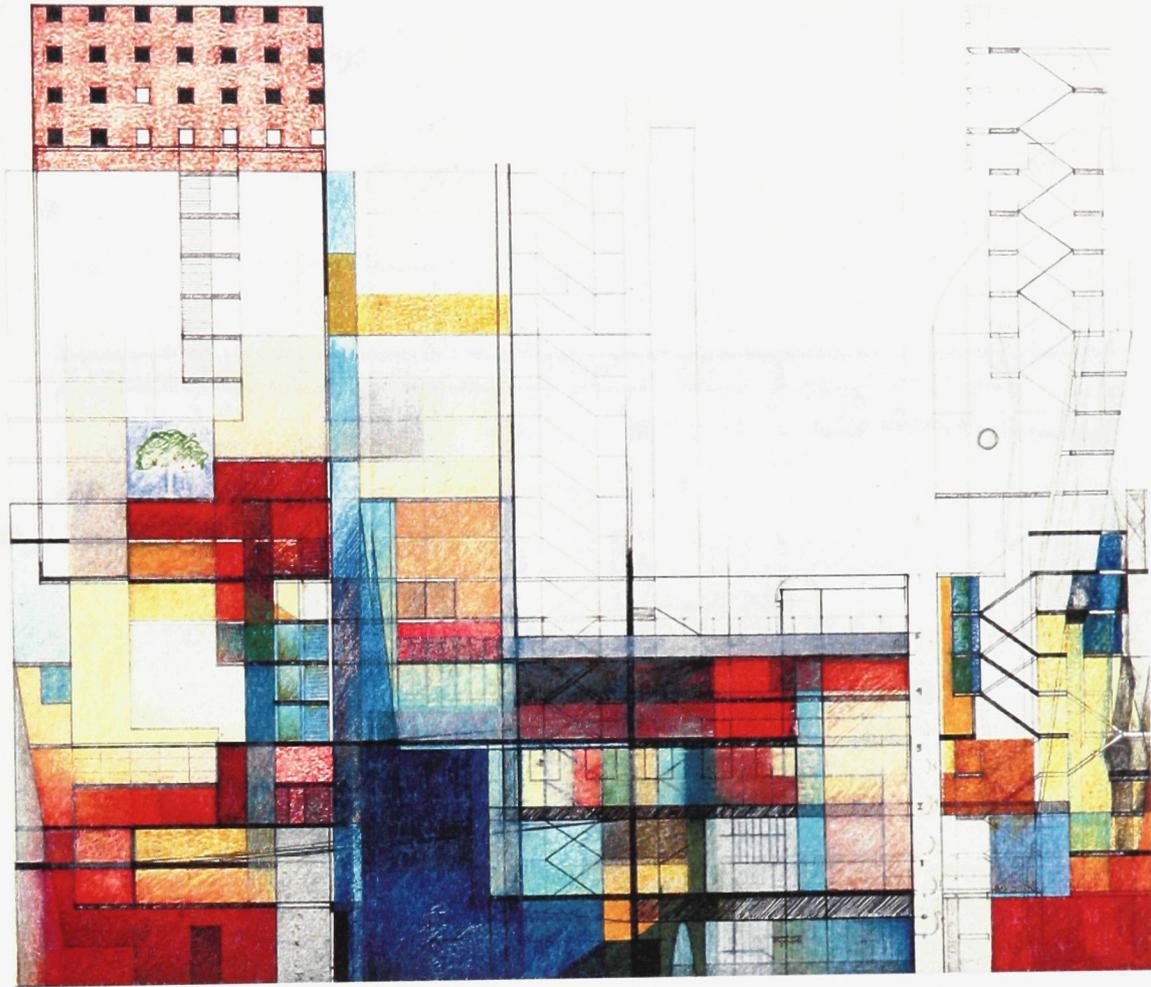


II.I.d – Study Model revised

II.II Drawings



II.II.a – Spatial Study for apartment sizes

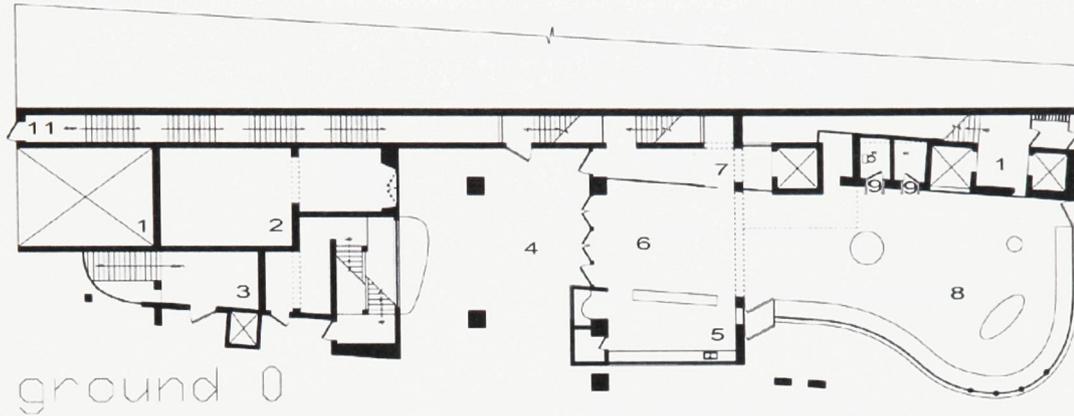


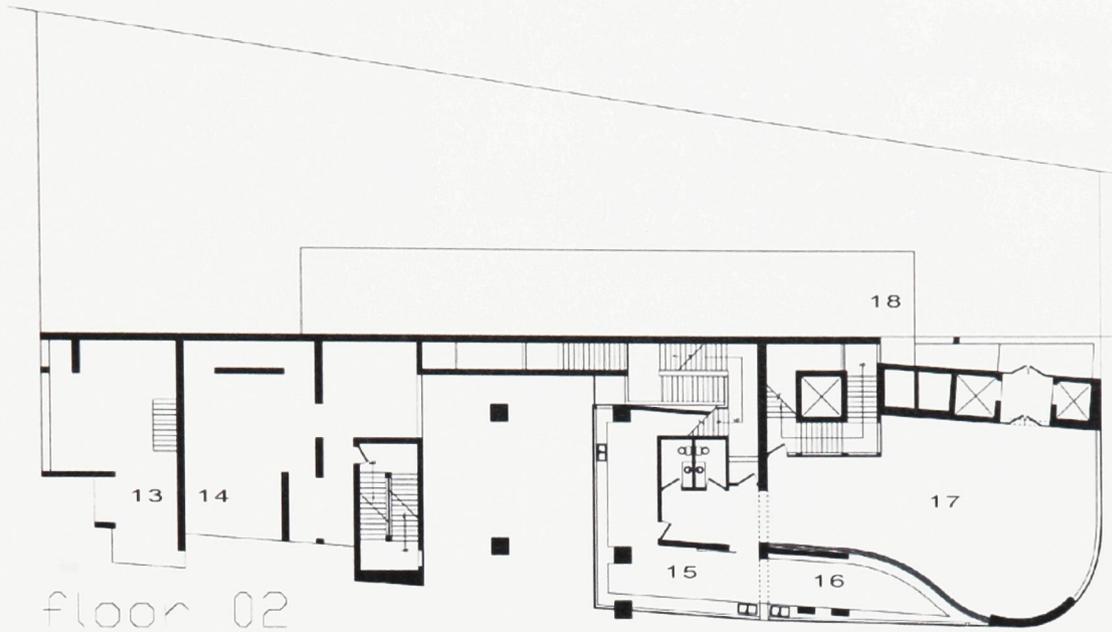
II.I.b – Conceptual Section/Façade Study

Appendix III

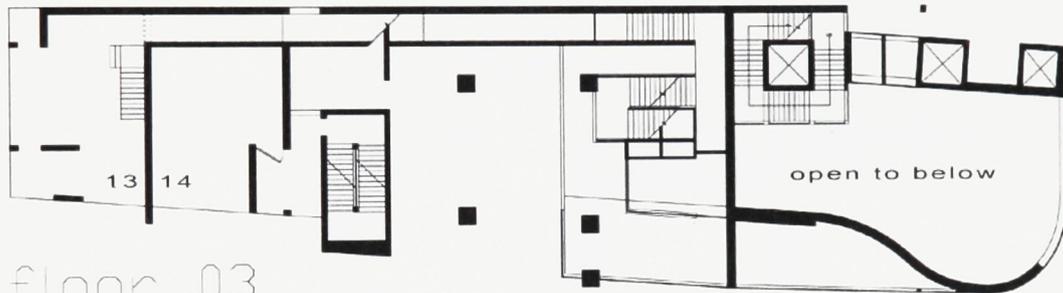
Final Design Drawings

III.1 Plans

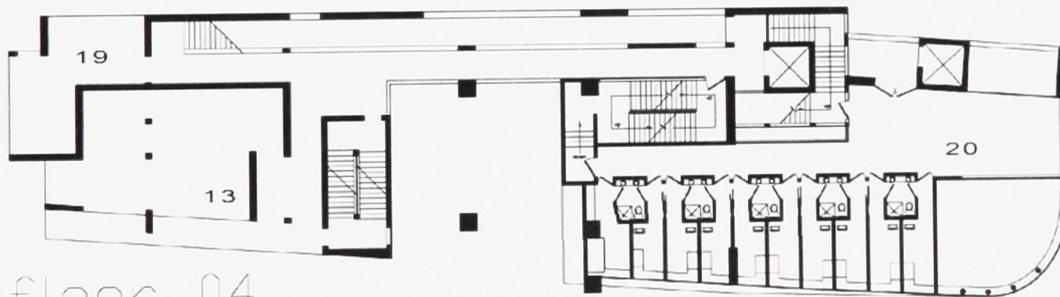




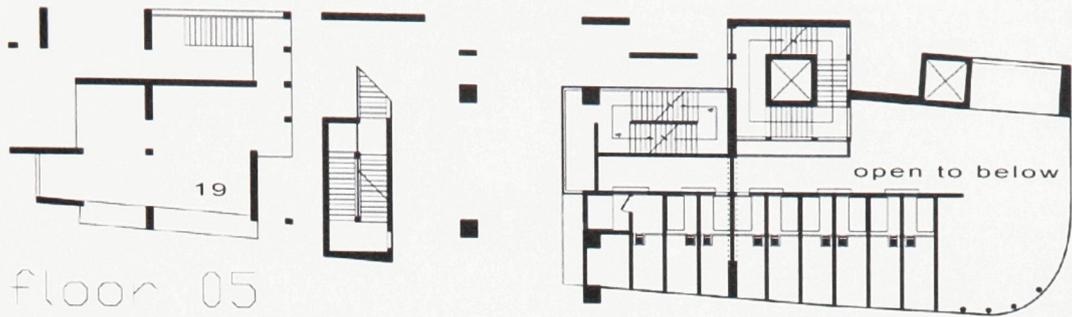
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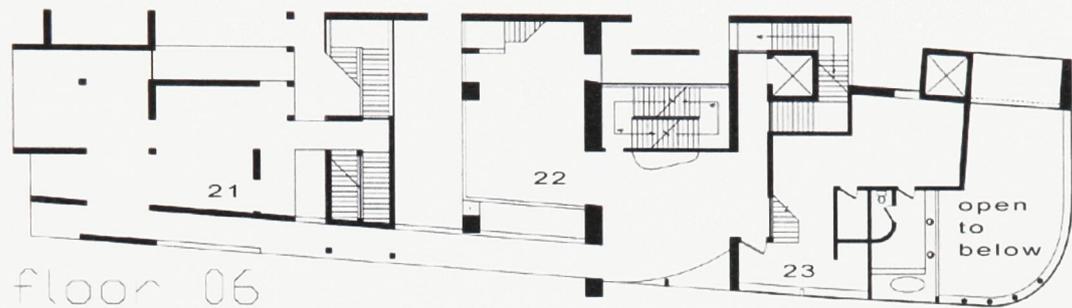
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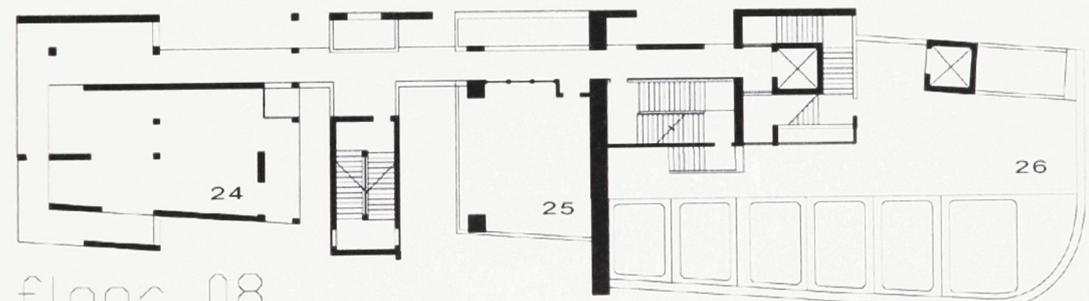
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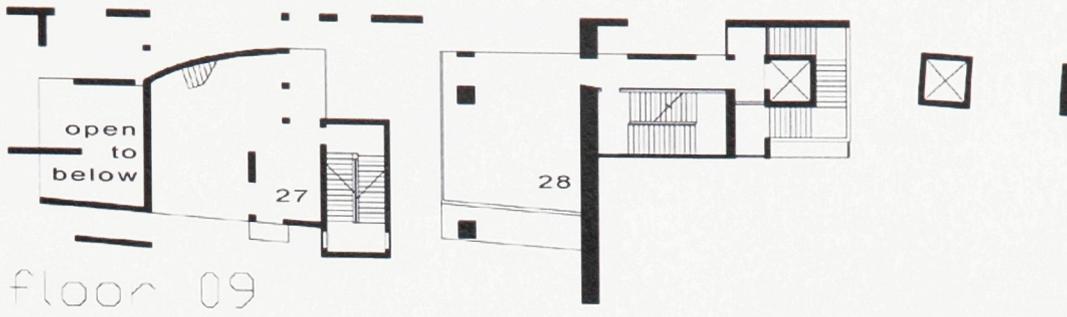
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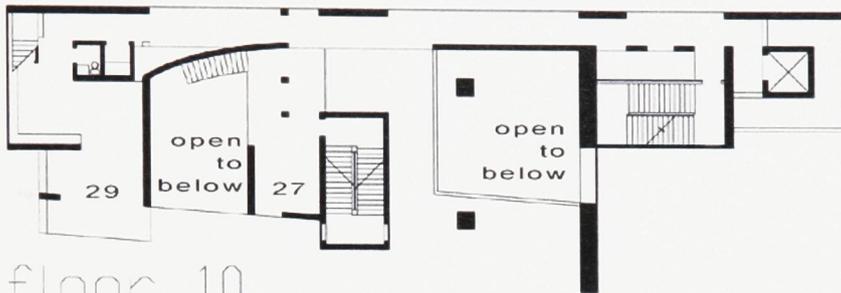
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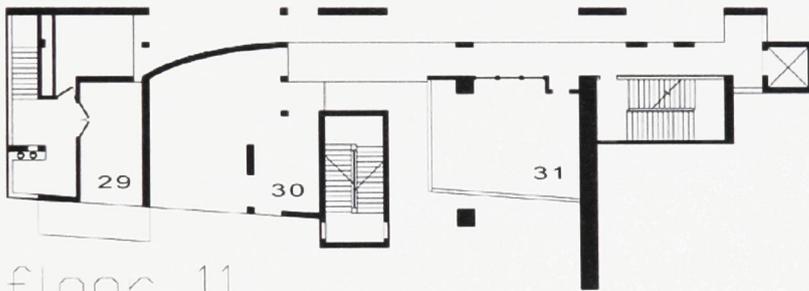
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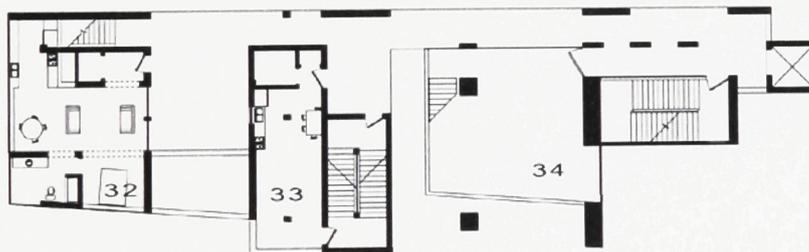
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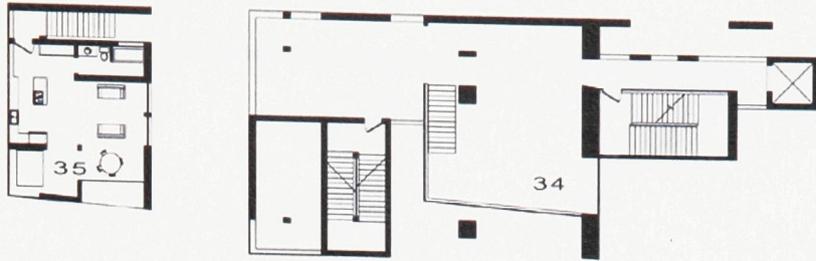
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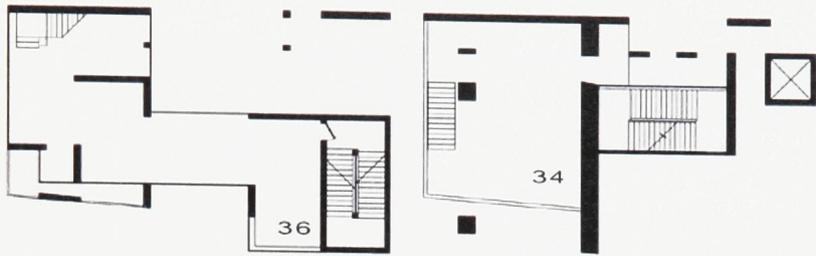
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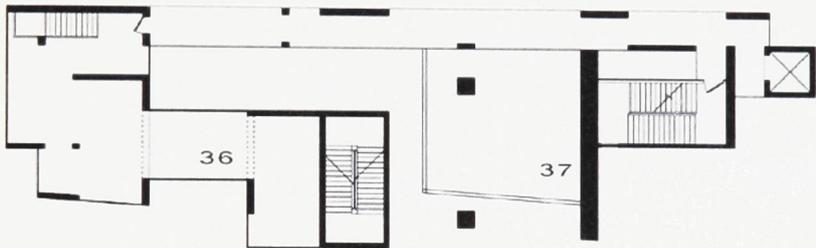
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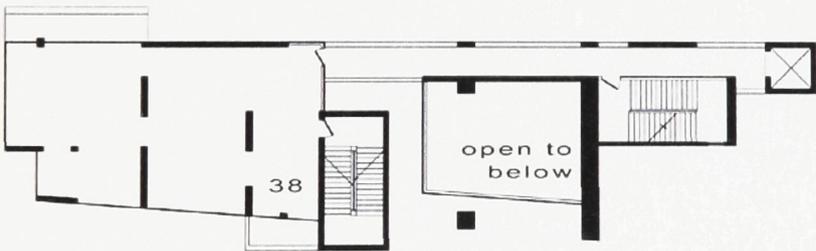
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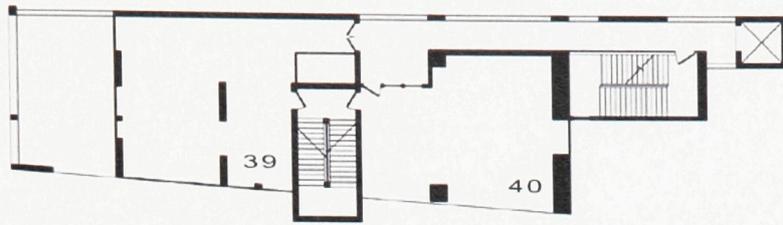
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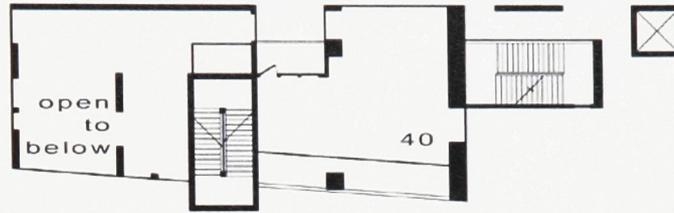
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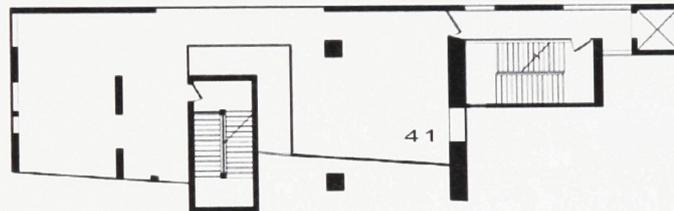
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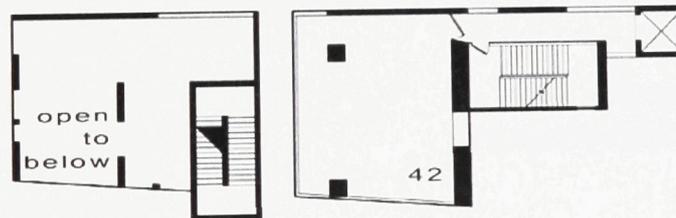
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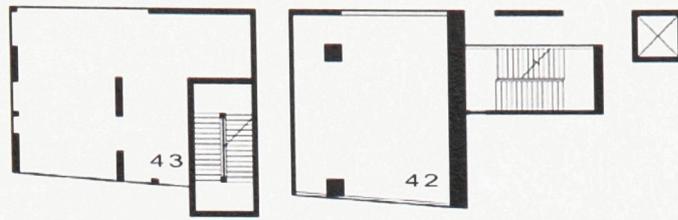
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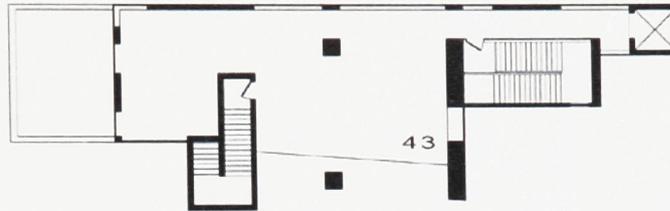
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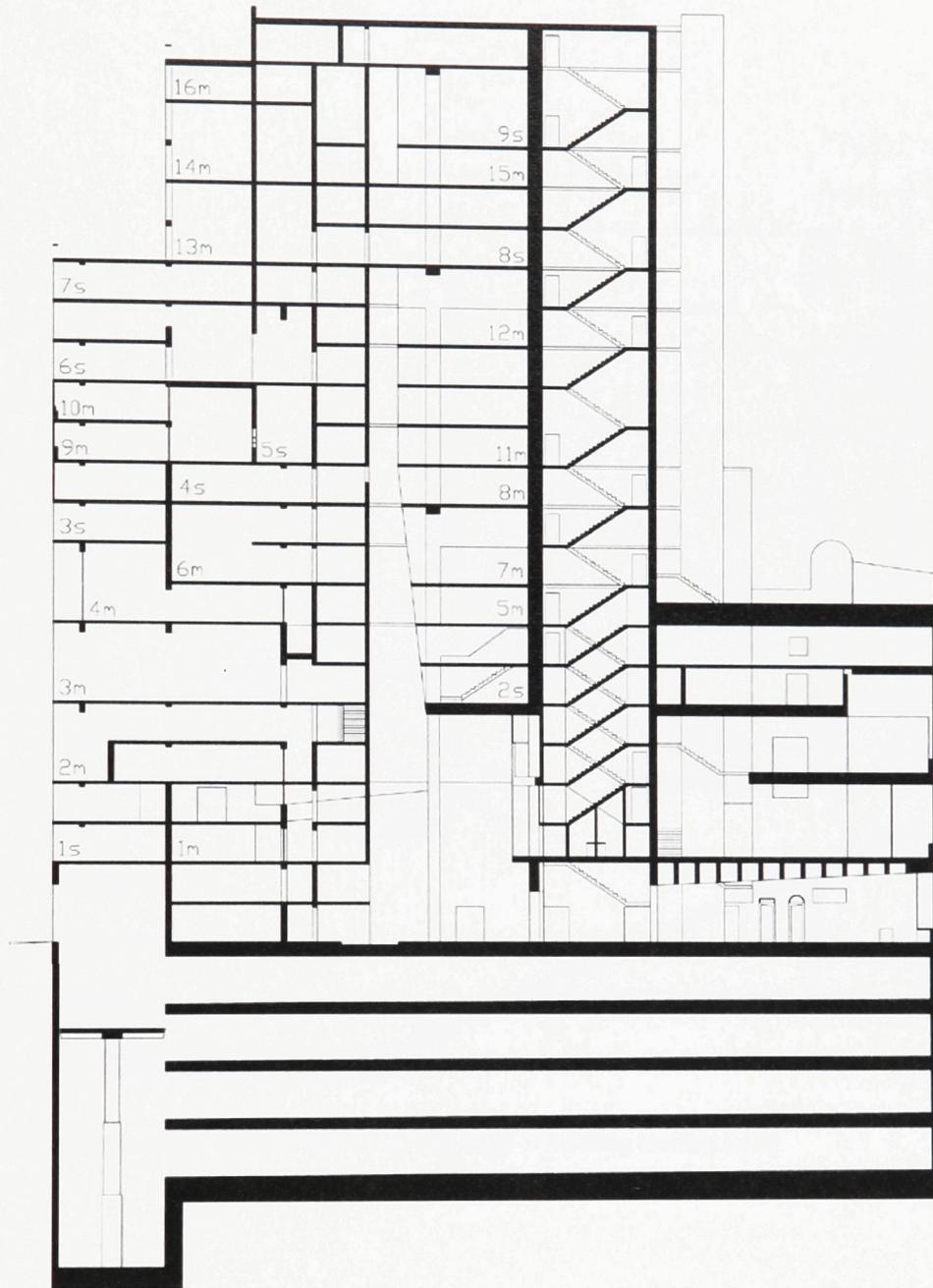
III.I.Key

No.	Description
1	Elevator down to Parking Garage
2	Mechanical
3	Parking garage access
4	Outdoor courtyard
5	Coffee Bar
6	Coffee Bar Seating
7	Residence Entrance
8	Laundromat
9	Washrooms
10	Entrance to Homeless Programs
11	Emergency staircase up from Parking Garage
12	Mechanical
13	Subsidized apartment <i>One</i>
14	Market apartment <i>One</i>
15	Resident Homeless Kitchen
16	Serving Counter
17	Resident Homeless Dining Hall
18	Loeb Roof Garden
19	Market apartment <i>Two</i>
20	Resident Homeless common area and individual units

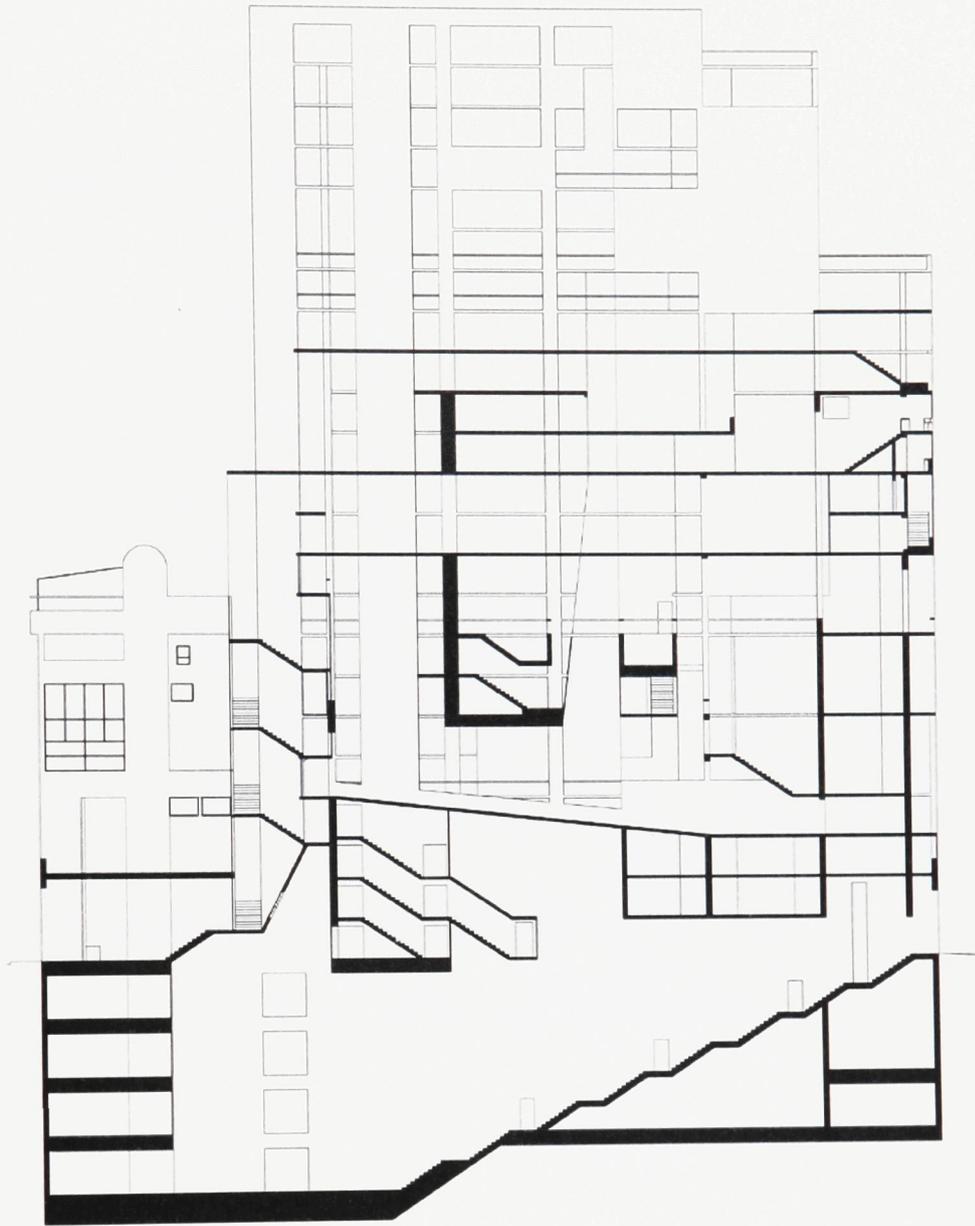
21	Market apartment <i>Three</i>
22	Subsidized apartment <i>Two</i>
23	Market apartment <i>Four</i>
24	Market apartment <i>Five</i>
25	Market apartment <i>Six</i>
26	Roof Garden
27	Market apartment <i>Seven</i>
28	Market apartment <i>Eight</i>
29	Subsidized Apartment <i>Three</i>
30	Subsidized Apartment <i>Four</i>
31	Market apartment <i>Nine</i>
32	Market apartment <i>Ten</i>
33	Subsidized apartment <i>Five</i>
34	Market apartment <i>Eleven</i>
35	Market apartment <i>Twelve</i>
36	Subsidized apartment <i>Six</i>
37	Market apartment <i>Thirteen</i>
38	Subsidized apartment <i>Seven</i>
39	Market apartment <i>Fourteen</i>
40	Subsidized apartment <i>Eight</i>
41	Market apartment <i>Fifteen</i>
42	Subsidized apartment <i>Nine</i>
43	Market apartment <i>Sixteen</i>

**note that some units are drawn incomplete (ie. missing internal walls, stairs, bathrooms etc.)

III.II Sections



-- Section cut through length of building (cut at middle of building looking east).



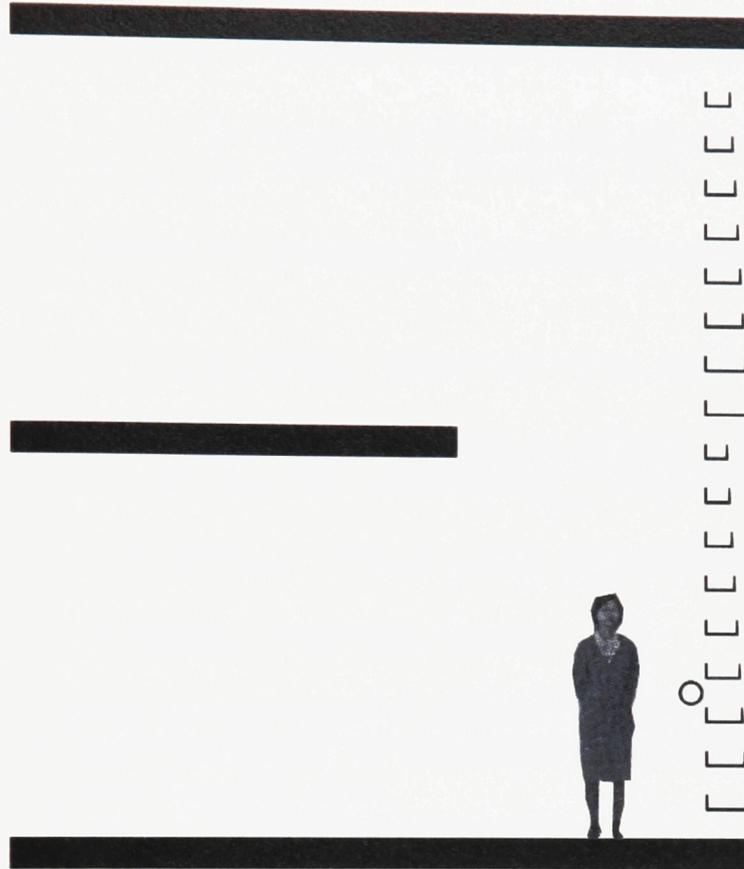
-- Section cut through length of building (cut at east edge of building looking west).

III.III Elevations



-- Elevation Drawings (Cumberland Façade and Rideau Façade).

III.IV Details



- Detail Section showing water collection system along the back façade.

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