Regional Reuse: Regenerative Adaptation of the Former Provincial Museum of Alberta

by

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Dalhousie University is located in Mi'kmaq'i,
the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq.
We are all Treaty people.

To Rosalyn, for your patience, respect

and unwavering love.

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Abstract

Edmonton's abandoned Provincial Museum and Archives of Alberta demonstrates a history of Western building practices in the 20th Century shaped by the colonial frontier mythology, a reliance on resource extraction, and the dissolution of humans from their surroundings. After over a century, the city's architecture has become stretched between extremities of systematic patterns of *tabula rasa* developments and inauthentic historic preservation, resulting in a placeless urban landscape.

Through the former museum and archives, the thesis creates a regenerative architecture institute that redefines the roles and practices of architects to celebrate ephemerality, pluralism, and a connection to place. The thesis uses a paratactic as a methodology and a tool to inform a fragmentation and combination of the existing building and salvaged parts from local buildings slated for demolition. Informed by adaptive reuse and regionalism, the design imagines a new post-colonial vernacular for Edmonton based on non-extractive building methods.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The area now known as Edmonton is first and foremost an area of land that is ecologically equipped to support life. The monumental glacial flow that shaped this terrain provided essential factors to make this area habitable: protected views from flat grasslands onto a diverse ecosystem, a valley breeze that provided cooling and protection from insects, and a network of biodiversity that existed collectively (Goyette 2004, 11). For a long period, humans in this area viewed themselves as part of the land, intertwined within a complex network of ecological systems (Eliade 1959, 140). However, since post-colonial development, Alberta's ecological network has changed, and valorization of property, resource extraction, and rampant human exceptionalism is now prevalent.

Sparked by a colonial Wester Frontier mythology, Edmonton's settlement began with a chase for dominion over its resources (Goyette 2004). The Frontier mythology is a belief in a self-appointed conquest over the prairies, brazenly taming the wilderness, and digging for any

21,000 yrs ago, a 1.5 km layer of ice carves hills forming the valley, and deposits the Saskatchewan sands and gravels in the channel of an ancient river.

Industrial Edmonton collage.

resources that could be turned for profit. Resource extraction fueled an economy to establish infrastructure for the settlers, while simultaneously forging a gap between humans and their surroundings. Alberta's oil boom in the mid-1900s fueled economic prosperity that swept over the province, generating a swell of new civic institutions designed with abstract forms and foreign materials. This surge of 'newness' entailed urban demolition; replacing historic buildings with new architecture made from new materials that spoke to

contemporary universality and a chase of an idyllic image of the city (Boddy 2007, 9). With each demolition, a new urban frontier was created that recycled the patterns of control and prospect. In 1967, The Provincial Museum and Archives of Alberta was built, offering the luxury and leisure of a world-class center to the citizens of the blue-collar city. Decorated with imported materials, the museum spared no expense, as if it were trying to manufacture a justifiable outcome to distract from the ecological exploitation of land and its resources.

From its lavish origins, the Provincial Museum and Archives of Alberta now perches over the Edmonton River Valley, vacant after the city vied for a new 'downtown' museum in 2017. In its abandoned state, it cracks and withers as it waits for an inevitable decision to be erased or embalmed in time. The here-today-gone-tomorrow mentality of the early settlers evolved to the continued development of the city leading to a discontinuous and placeless urban landscape where humans have become inseparable from patterns of demolition and inauthentic preservation.

Man's ruthless exploitation of natural resources for a temporary and socially limited profit economy creates a pattern of urban development that results in a dried-up, placeless urban landscape (Mumford 1967, 452). A common solution to placelessness is a return to regionalism, vernacular and pre-industrial buildings; to ground the community in their historical architectural identity. However, considering the dominance of industry as a catalyst for Edmonton's post-colonial epoch, the identity of this city will always be linked to its participation in fur, coal, and oil extraction. To appropriately reintegrate humans with their surroundings, architecture in Edmonton needs to reconcile

with a history of ecological exploitation and provide a regenerative alternative.

Connecting back to a place requires one to perceive a landscape, not connecting to an internal image, but engaging perceptually with an environment that is itself pregnant with the past. Landscapes around the world, to varying degrees, have been built upon themselves, perpetually layering materials and memories in an everlasting state of becoming. Connecting with a landscape is about acknowledging these layers and accepting them in a continued state of development. Acceptance of a ruin in our landscape is significant, as their presence engages our feelings about where we see ourselves in time, the temporality of our existence and our feelings of how things may (or may not) last. A ruin is a stimulant to the imagination, its broken forms expand architecture's allegorical and metaphorical potential. They act as tools for us to perceive our landscape and the materials and memories that contribute to a place. Unfortunately, ruins are often victims of new development, as they are evaluated under functional standards, and are often erased, perpetuating an everlasting state of new.

Regionalism instead could be a response to the industry through a non-extractive alternative, engaging in a dialogue with built heritage and connecting with a collective memory of the past. An alternative to contemporary building is ecological communities, where irregular oscillation produces a continual 'self-tuning' of the system, where adaptivity and flexibility thrive (Brand 1995). Dispersing design power to the individual users of a building suggests a 'bottom-up' approach to the building's human hierarchy. The argument for adaptability in a building is that it's more

Provincial Museum and Archives of Alberta collage.

future-responsible, adjusting becomes a part of the rich intricacy of an emerging whole.

An outlet of exploration, testing, and understanding is required to spark a movement of adaptability and 'bottom-up' building within the community. An architecture institute that is simultaneously restoring, self-tuning and demonstrating studies to a place's built heritage can be the seed that flourishes a change in its surrounding environment. The potential for a design institute is that it actively reaches

out beyond its walls to other individuals in the community, making the composure of the building quite organic in the way it adapts over time. An architecture institute can confront a contemporary Western building practice, targeting its influences, and providing solutions that respond to the indeterminate future it faces.

Edmonton's abandoned Provincial Museum and Archives of Alberta demonstrates a history of Western building practices in the 20th Century shaped by colonial frontier mythology, reliance on resource extraction, and the dissolution of humans from their surroundings. Through the adaptation of the building into an architecture institute, the thesis emphasizes architectural ephemerality, redefines new architectural practices of non-extractive architecture and demonstrates an alternative to cyclical patterns of demolition and inauthentic historical preservation. Opening its doors to the surrounding community, the institute provides insight into Alberta's past and provide explorations into its future, connecting individuals back to the essential surrounding environment that initially made this area home.

Chapter 2: The 'New' City

The area now known as Edmonton is first and foremost an area of land that is ecologically equipped to support life. It was initially the indigenous meeting place and ceremonial ground known as Beaver Hills House. Stemming from competition for land and resources between the Northwest Company and the Hudson's Bay Company in 1795, Edmonton was established by colonial settlers (Goyette 2004, 25). Initially engaged in fur trading, Edmonton's economy soon practiced coal excavation from mines along the North Saskatchewan River Valley and was ultimately connected to the sprawling oil extraction by the mid-1900s.

A surge of 'new' swept the province, following many similar settlements across North America, as successful development relied on the establishment of new institutions, infrastructures and ways of living that often imposed themselves over an existing landscape. Edmonton's rapid and uncoordinated development resulted in several neighbourhoods that seemed separated and disjointed. Creating a new city focused attention on new development and often ignored related existing social and recreational issues (Kuban 2005, 27). The mentality of 'newness' continues to occupy the epicentre of Edmonton's development as Edmontonians come to hate their recent past with a vehemence that does not exist elsewhere, and willfully demolish the "best building from each of its decades" (Boddy 2007, 9). This mentality is formed through settler-colonial frontier mythology, a separation of humans from their surroundings, and a reliance on extractive resource economies. It forms cities that lack an attitude of authenticity as they constantly look for new ways to reinvent themselves and fail to generate a place for those to recognize as home.

1890

1900

1920

1940

1960

1980

2000
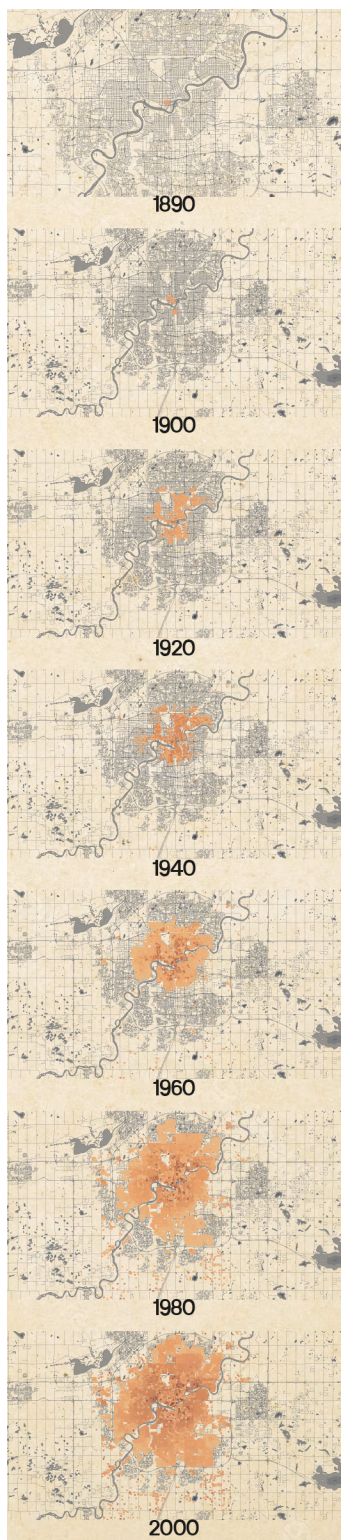
Edmonton development since 1890. Exponential growth after Leduc striking oil in 1947.

The Frontier Mythology

Western Frontier Mythology had a major influence on Edmonton's development. At the turn of the century, writer Frederik Jackson Turner wrote *The Frontier Thesis* (1893) in which he argued for the advancement of westward settlement over 'untamed' lands, the human conquest of the wilderness and the development of a city from primitive economic and political conditions (Katerberg 2003, 6). This development was supported by policies that foster individualism as well as the construction of industry infrastructures that impose themselves over a natural landscape. The wealth of untouched land and resources was the advertisement necessary for colonial settlers to expand across the relatively harsh Northern landscape. It is highly resonant imagery bound up with economic progress

American Progress depicts symbols of colonial conquest over untamed lands. Elements on the right side of the painting contrasting the left side by showing the Westernized development on the right with the raw untamed lands on the left. The figure located at the centre represents the ideals of Frontier mythology sweeping across the land (Gast 1872).

Early depiction of Edmonton after colonial settlement and the construction of Fort Edmonton on the plateau ridge of the North Saskatchewan River. Painting idealizes the landscape to invite settlers to this region (Kane ca.1849–56).

and historical destiny, rugged individualism and romance, danger, national optimism, race, and class superiority. The sharpness of the geographical frontier was an excellent conveyance for the historical difference between past and future, the economic difference between existing market and profitable opportunity (Smith 1996, 189). Observing Paul Kane's picturesque panoramic depiction of *Fort Edmonton* (1849), one can uncover how his methods of painting are situated within an imperialist ideology. The depiction of the high fort walls, the river and the teepees of local indigenous groups were framed carefully to recognize a relationship between the empire and the colony (Gehmacher 2014, 26). The romantic artistic style, contemporary at the time,

was appreciated by the Hudson's Bay trading post for its realism and truth to nature (Gehmacher n.d., 45), however, its glamorization of the rugged landscape can be seen to idealize a place to generate an inflow of populace for economic development. The painting can be understood as a contribution to the frontier mythology that was generated for the North American West.

The use of frontier mythology to justify the reappropriation of land can be linked to the ensuing gentrification in North American cities and the continued practice of new frontier urbanism (Granzow and Dean 2007, 100). As developers and officials seek new opportunities for municipal development and profitable avenues, it often comes at the cost of the displacement of existing communities. This practice is what some would classify as new frontier urbanism, which beckons the initial frontier mythology that was used as a tool to colonize these lands, and now uses them to continually frame places with existing cultural significance as a blank slate that can be manipulated. New frontier urbanism not only displaces existing communities, but it amplifies a technical *tabula rasa* development strategy where buildings are torn

blank slate　　new construction　　derelict building　　demolition　　blank slate
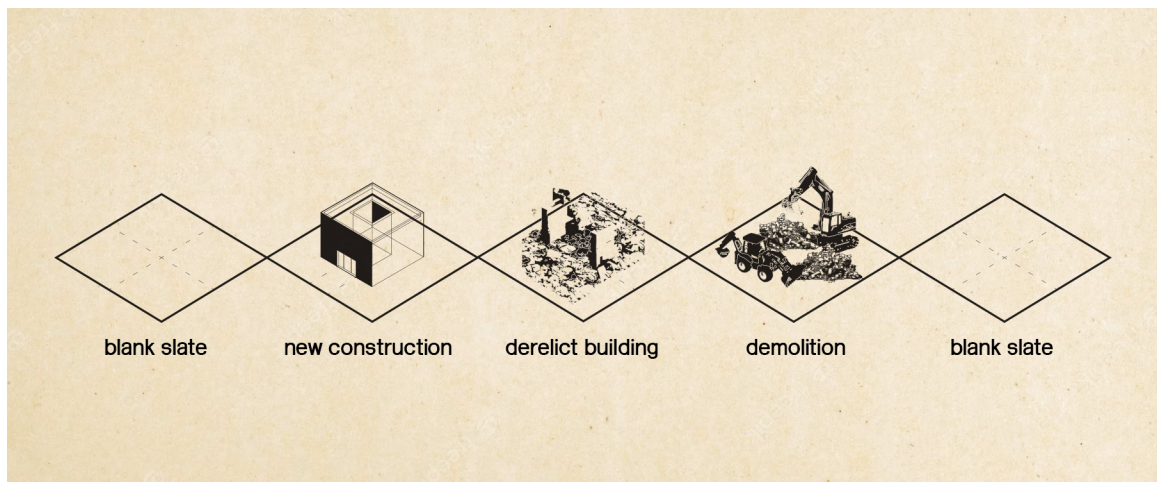
Technical *tabula rasa* development strategy. The blank slate that was taken for development soon returns to a blank slate without maintenance and care in the typical building pattern.

down to create a blank slate for new development. It is in this practice that frontier mythology has contributed to the Western building practice of the 20th century. Each wiping of the slate clean, is a demonstration of a desire for new solutions, an attitude of neglect and opting for the simple solution of waste, rather than the difficult reconciliation of place.

Unbuilding

The transfer of land ownership brought with it a new vision for the land, its people, and their future. It reflected the Industrial Revolution unfolding across the Western world and involved significant methods of industrialization and mechanization of human processes (Kuban 2005, 3). Mumford explains the notion of Unbuilding or *Abbau* as resource extraction presenting an image of human discontinuity (Mumford 1989, 450). Land being irreplaceably altered for the sake of economic gain was accompanied by a general disordering of the communal environment. He uses mining as an example to explain the notion of unbuilding where resource extraction completely alters the social network of a city and leads to lives that lose their complex character and evolve towards a simpler less finely integrated organism. The here-today and gone-tomorrow mentality creates a pattern of urban development that results in a depleted, dried-up urban landscape that can be traced back to the Western man's ruthless exploitation of natural resources for the sake of a temporary and socially limited profit economy (Mumford 1989, 452). Extractive resource economies and the mechanization of the natural world created a dissonance between humans and their surroundings, viewing themselves above their surroundings, and providing a false sense of justification for their ecological exploitation.
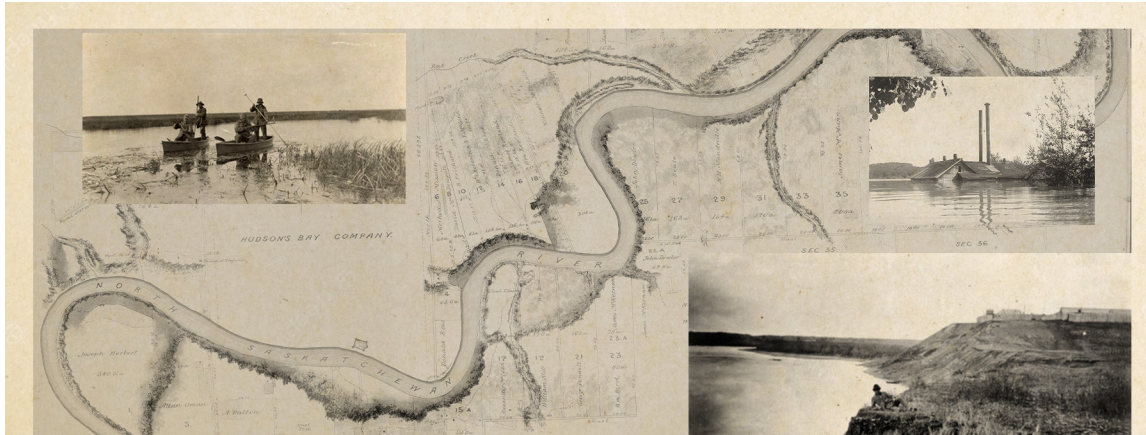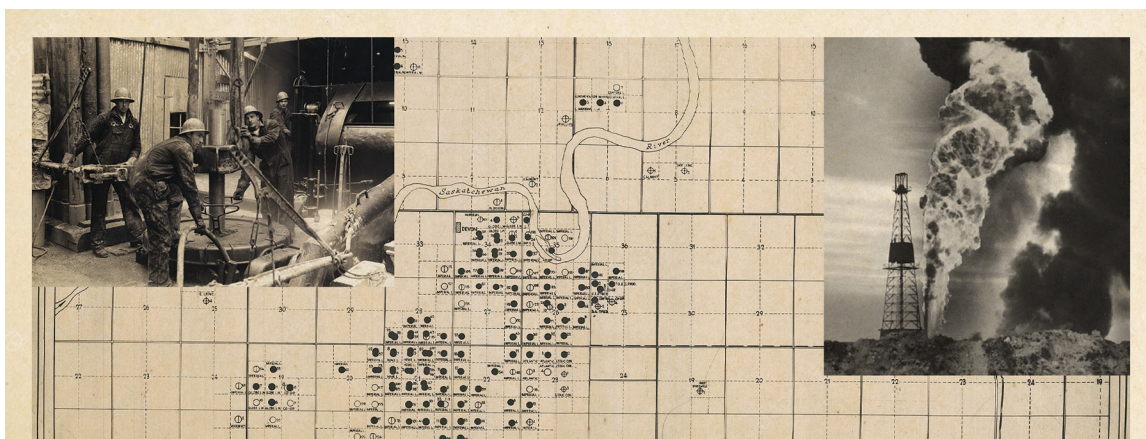
Fur trading was extremely reliant on the North Saskatchewan River for transportation. Map of Edmonton, 1883 (City of Edmonton Archives 1883).
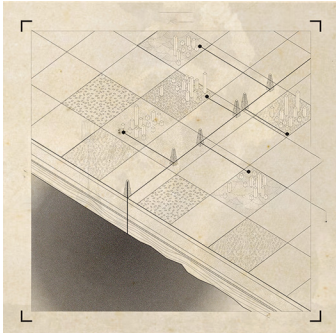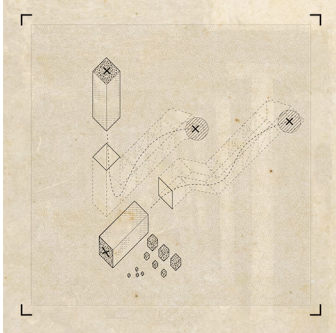

Coal mining was also reliant on the river valley as shafts were dug into the ground along the valley ridges. Map of "Clover Bar" coal system, 1910 (City of Edmonton Archives 1910).

The map of Leduc oil field (City of Edmonton Archives n.d.) removes many details focusing solely on the oil records and plotting of land.

As Edmonton developed from a settlement into a city, one can study how the shifting dominant resource economy altered the socio-economic systems, infrastructures, and a general dissolution of human connection to the land. Considering the age of Edmonton's establishment in 1904, it has seen a shift from the fur trade, coal mining and oil excavation as dominant industries occupying the landscape. With each new industry, new infrastructures and support systems were put in place, often replacing the previous infrastructure with a new one. In its young history, Edmonton has been constantly trying to keep up with a global system, making its identity constantly in flux and reliant on a network outside its control. The latest universal architecture continually sweeps into overdeveloped pockets, leaving crumbling gulfs between them. Land valuation and ownership of property emerge, as places are viewed as a means to an end, rather than part of a cohesive entity.

Resource Extraction

The former 'flat wasteland' of the prairies that was originally not deemed suited for a settlement soon became a place of rampant human exceptionalism where land was viewed as incomplete without the human hand of conquest to render raw nature into resources that enable a limited short-sighted profit and growth (Katerberg 2003,4). Land which had historically been linked as an existential part of human experience was separated as an object for profit. As a result of a booming oil economy during the 1950s in Alberta, both Edmonton and Calgary grew exponentially, experiencing a rise in urban development and an inflow of universal design. The ethos of modernism was key to the transition of Edmonton's settler past into a resource-exploiting future (Boddy 2007, 7). With a new civic center, downtown core and

Diagrams of hunting, coal mining, and oil extraction.

Collage of mid-1900s Edmonton civic development.

airport, Edmonton's landscape was relentlessly populated with modern architecture accompanied by a newfound enthusiasm for internationalism and multiculturalism (Mohammadi 2022, 357). The increased petrochemical industry prompted new cement company plants outside the city to fuel the rising developments. Precast concrete panels and structural systems became dominant in Edmonton as a "bland monochromatic cityscape" (Goodstein 1988)

was formed, further distancing the architecture from its surroundings.

The boom/bust economy formed Edmonton's identity as it constantly sought to reinvent itself with each new boom to forget the previous bust (Boddy 2007,9). "Cruel Optimism" exists when something you seek becomes an obstacle to your flourishing (Berlant 2006,1). In the context of Edmonton, a rising quality of life and a city's growth were promised by the exploitation of fossil fuels and natural resources. The binding optimism of fossil fuel extraction despite the ecologically devastating effects can be understood as "Crude Optimism" (Richards 2019,450). An ironic obstacle where the practice of ecological exploitation inhibits the city's ability to create a meaningful connection, and instead fosters violence to the land. Crude optimism made it seem like the relentless

Jasper Avenue (Edmonton's major downtown street) looking west from 103rd Street (City of Edmonton Archives 1961).

Crude Optimism collage.

extraction of resources was always justified, as it provided the means necessary to improve Albertan's (and Canadians) quality of life.

What drew settlers across the world to live in the 'gateway to the North' was faith in the illusory promise of a good life (Mohammadi 2022, 396). Crude optimism promised the life of a metropolitan city, and for a time this faith in oil extraction coalesced in architectural formations. However, since that time the 'good-life fantasies' (Berlant 2006,1) have been difficult to maintain, and the modes of extraction failed to keep their existential promises.

As Edmonton moved into the 21st century, the crude optimism that propelled the faith of a never-ending fuel economy waned with global environmentalism and depletion of resources. Resource extraction in the prairies had created a reliance on a way of living that entailed waste, neglect, newness, and ecological violence. This way of living is beginning to expire and Edmontonians are looking for a new identity that can respond to the oppressive modernity that washed the city.

Placelessness collage (Image taken in Quarters neighborhood, Boyle Street Community, Edmonton, August 2023).

Placelessness

The focus on developing a new city can ironically prevent one from ever recognizing any sense of place that has existed. Placelessness is a condition of an environment that lacks a significant attachment and authenticity, caused by effects of modernity (Rogers, Castree, and Kitchin 2013). Through the abandonment, demolition and general disregard for maintenance and care for buildings, many
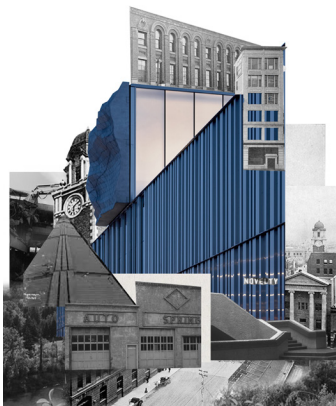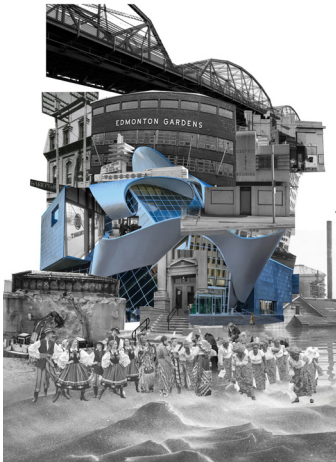
Context collage critiquing the missing architectural identity and the continual search for universal semblance.

cities are developing a sense of placelessness as noticeable landmarks are removed or replaced with contemporary alternatives. The growing sense of placelessness is a signifier of an inauthentic attitude to a place and a neglect of the deep symbolic significance of cultural identities (Relph 1976). A place can be defined through its relationships to land, history, and identity. A non-place is a space that is severed from itself in a way that inhibits its ability to connect back to its origin (Augé 2008, 63).

While the endless expanse of the Prairie grasslands may evoke openness, freedom, and possibility it can also be interpreted as the liberating force of non-place (Mohammadi 2022, 328). The architecture of Edmonton gives built evidence to the cultural insecurities, lack of identity, and assorted urban neuroses of Alberta's development (Boddy 2007, 7). Edmonton's urban landscape was shaped in an uneven, inauthentic manner, fostering placelessness as spaces were foreign to their regional context. A common solution to placelessness is a return to vernacular and pre-industrial buildings, to ground the community in their historical architectural identity. However, considering the dominance of industry as a catalyst for Edmonton's post-colonial epoch, the identity of this city will always be linked to its participation in fur, coal, and oil extraction. Placelessness is the outcome from the inauthentic efforts of making a new city. A different approach is required, one that recognizes and understands the past, and uses it as a tool for making the present, rather than chasing an idyllic image of a city. Using recent examples of Edmonton's building practice, and collaging portions of Edmonton's missing historical architectural identity provide a critique to the building practice being used and the general disordering

of the urban environment. The chaos that ensues provides a dialogue to the ambiguous architectural identity of the city and the unwillingness to reconcile with the tension of the current building practice.

Chapter 3: The 'Old' Building

The authenticity to which an urban environment attempts to generate a sense of place is of utmost importance. However, in building preservation, it is not uncommon for an embalming to occur, where a building is paralyzed in an idealized version of history, flashing an unchanging perception of the past to portray an artificial layer to a place (Relph 1976, 101). In examples such as Fort Edmonton Park and the Alberta Hotel, landmarks have been completely dismantled and removed from their original placement and artificially recreated elsewhere. Treating the materiality of an "old" building as history can be misleading and serve as an example of destroying a sense of place and contributing to a

Collage of Fort Edmonton's initial placement, demolition and reconstruction South of the river.
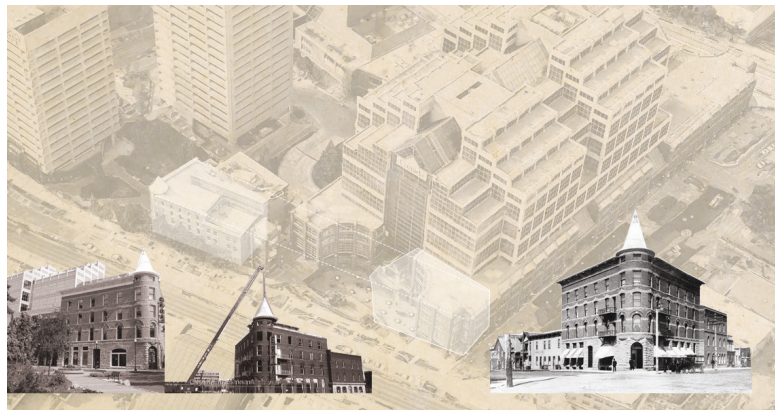
Collage of Alberta Hotel displacement.

sense of placelessness. Connecting back to a place requires one to perceive a landscape, not remembering an internal image, but engaging perceptually with an environment that is itself pregnant with the past (Ingold 1993, 152). Landscapes around the world, to varying degrees, have been built upon themselves, perpetually layering materials and memories in an everlasting state of becoming (Bouchard 2020, 91). Our actions do not transform the world; they are part and parcel of the world's transformation itself. Another way of saying that they belong to time (Ingold 1993, 164). To reconcile our connections to the landscape, we must look to notions of regionalism for the critical perspectives to conditions of place and community.

Regionalism

Bernard Rudofsky's exhibit *Architecture Without Architects*, showcased several examples of communities, celebrating vernacular building throughout different parts of the world (Rudofsky 1964). Architecture was portrayed as a necessity that was shaped by the essential conditions of their habitat. Local materials and techniques were produced by the nature of the material existence and the ingenuity of the inhabitant's need for them. Regionalism in this exhibition created intrigue as it demonstrated an idea of architecture signifying a deeper connection to a place that had been studied before. Architects throughout the mid-1900s studied regionalism, with varying methods and arguments of connection to a place. For some, regionalism spoke to returning to traditional building techniques, materials and forms, for others it was more centred on a response to the surroundings. Situated as a response to industrialization, Mumford argued that regionalist architecture must overcome the deep unbridgeable gulf between peoples of

the earth (Lefaivre 2012, 117). Regionalism had to help people come to terms with the conditions of life and make them feel at home with their surroundings (Mumford 1967). Mumford's argument of regionalism was for the organic city, one that is disassociated with the industrial, where people are brought back to an earlier state of dwelling that was more connected to the cycles of an environment. 40 years later, Frampton argues for a cultural self-consciousness – a critical awareness of a culture's current placement concerning a global society. In his view, regionalism is to mediate the impact of universal civilization with elements derived indirectly from the peculiarities of a particular place (Frampton 2002, 82). 'Critical regionalism' is a process that not only deconstructs the view of the global system but also deconstructs its local systems interdependencies on the global system to properly understand how it can create a critical dialogue with the site in question (Frampton 2002,82). It begs one to question what regionalism truly means, and what a regional connection to a place entails. From these two interpretations, regionalist architecture reflects the

Regional Edmonton collage. Depicting the critical reflection; outside the mirror the Edmonton river valley, inside the mirror an oil refinery on the outskirts of town.

nature of a place, creating an authentic mirror through which the collective memory of the past can be used as a tool to shape the future. A regional connection to the land is not necessarily a connection to a tangible entity (such as building materials or techniques) as some regional advocates would argue, but for a connection to immaterial entities (such as collective memory and communal belonging). For a place like Edmonton, regionalism should reflect the identity of their environment, and considering their reliance on industry as a means of birthing a post-colonial city, it should come to terms with a past of displacement, extraction and placelessness. Regionalism instead could be a response to the industry dominance through a non-extractive alternative, engaging in a dialogue with built heritage and connecting with a collective memory of the past.

The Ruin

It is typically understood that a building's success is measured by its ability to resist elemental forces, climate, nature, and time; its longevity signifies its durability, and
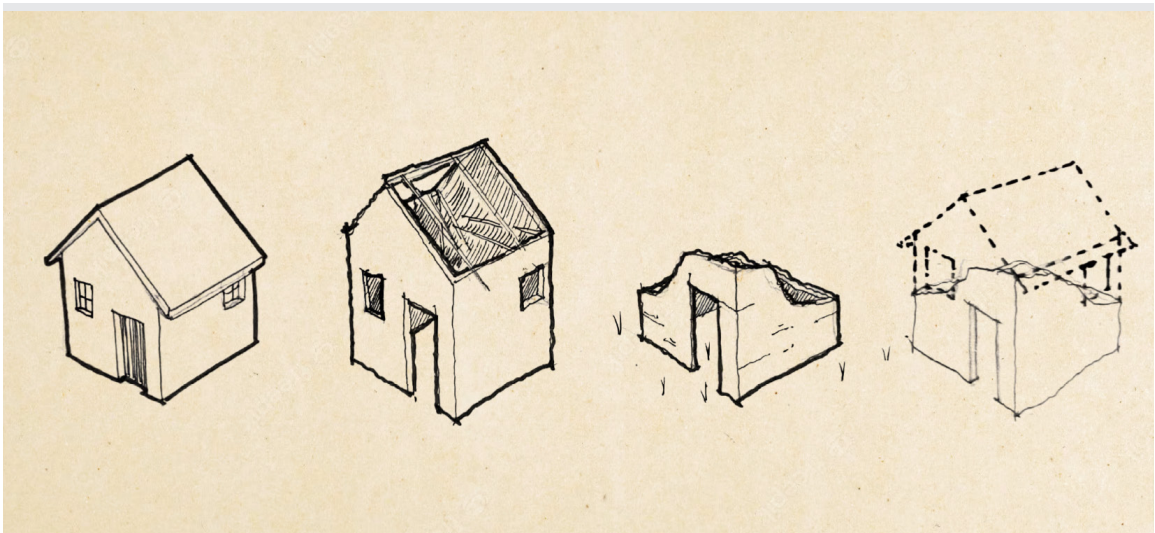
Phases of ruinification. Enabling the imagination of the viewer.
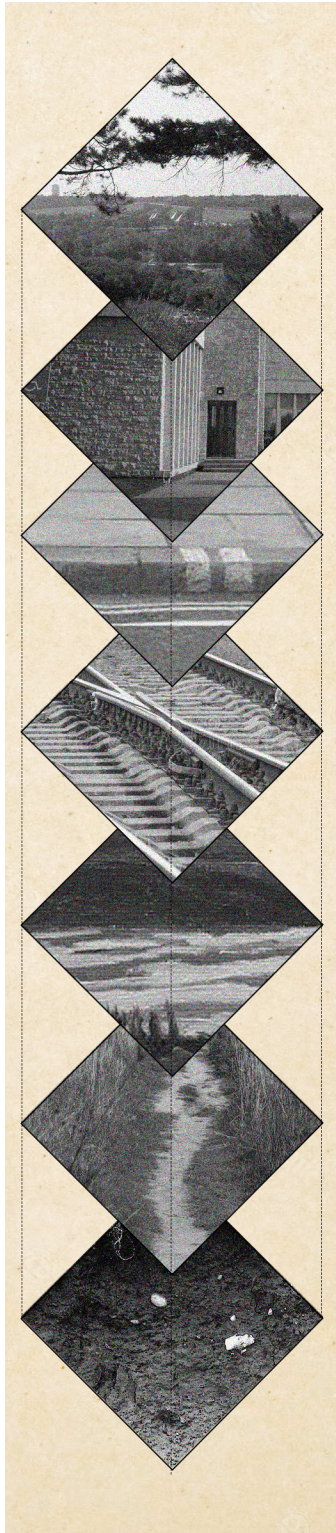
Layers of the past culminating to inform a landscape that is filled and continually changing.

the ruin of its failure and decay (Hill 2019, 3). However, a separate interpretation of a ruin exists, one that connects to a greater significance of the collective memory they capture. In Jonathan Hill's *Architecture of Ruin* (2019), he explains that a building design, occupied and imagined as a ruin acknowledges co-production, its existence it is shaped by multiple human and non-human contributors, symbolizing a hybrid of nature and culture (Hill 2019, 3). The acceptance of ruinification in urban environments is a significant development, as their presence engages our feelings about where we see ourselves in time, the temporality of our existence and our feelings of how things may (or may not) last (Harbison 1991, 99). They contain a continuum of interpretations that is shared by all who have interacted with them. A ruin is a stimulant to the imagination, its broken forms expand architecture's allegorical and metaphorical potential (Hill 2019, 294). Working with an existing ruin is working with the *tabula scripta* – a landscape that keeps rewriting its memory the more it ages (Bouchard 2021, 20). Its existence allows us to interact with our built environment as an ever-changing palimpsest of layers that contribute to an understanding of past, present and future. Emphasizing that meanings are not fixed, produces a fragmented composition that is a truer reflection of contemporary society than a completed one. However, in Edmonton's history of building, a ruin is often overlooked and treated with neglect to the inscribed memories that exist within a place. Many buildings are one disaster away from being deemed beyond repair. They fail to reach a point of longevity, where their duration becomes a contributing element to the place where they exist. Their demolition erases their contribution to the collective notion of a place that exists and continues to be

reshaped. Some would argue a building can become more interesting as it leaves its original function behind. Being reanimated by the present, the changing program often turns into a colourful story which becomes a matter contributing to place in its own right, "the building succeeds by seeming to fail" (Brand 1995, 104).

Adaptive Reuse

Adaptive reuse is one of three destinies for existing structures, in contrast to demolition and preservation, however, it perpetuates a continuum of continual growth and change (Wong 2017, 30). Adaptive reuse is essentially taking a space and making changes to it for a new or added function. Emerging in the present to preserve cultural significance
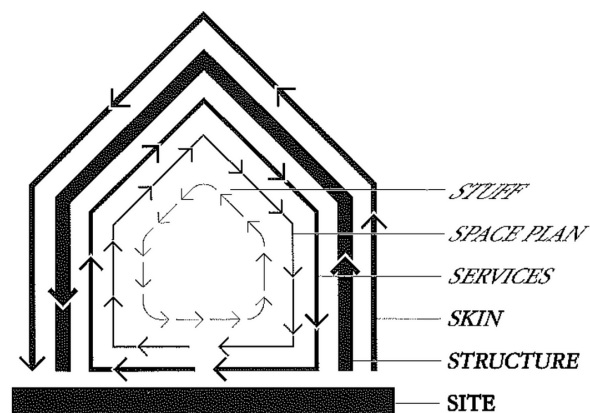
SHEARING LAYERS OF CHANGE. Because of the different rates of change of its components, a building is always tearing itself apart.

Shearing Layers of Change demonstrate how a building's reuse target various layers over different periods of time making the adaptability a continual process rather than a definitive solution (Brand 1995).

and used in building practice to capture embodied carbon in the reuse of materials, adaptive reuse has become more

frequent among architects. However, one could argue that this practice of adaptation, maintenance, repair and reuse is as old as the practice of building (Brand 1995). It targets an essentialism that exists within us all, as we humans have a taste for things that not only show that they have been through a process of evolution but which show they are still part of one (Brand 1995, 11). These living buildings rely on a continual self-tuning of the system, where adaptivity thrives, and considerable design power is given to the individual users of a building while they are using a space (Brand 1995, 188). The dwellings shown in *Architecture Without Architects* demonstrate this power of building, where the space is shaped by the inhabitants in a way that directly reflects the conditions of their surroundings. Adaptive reuse accepts ruinification and uses it as an opportunity through which it can shape the present. The rich intricacy of adaptive reuse lies in the patterns of space that have no patterns at all; that are only sequences in the unfolding of a nontemporal order that exists only for the precise moment of its presence (Woods 1997, 30). Analyzing the Adaptive Reuse form diagram of Francoise Bollack one can see how the varying methods and strategies for adaptive reuse can lead to numerous interpretations of the final work
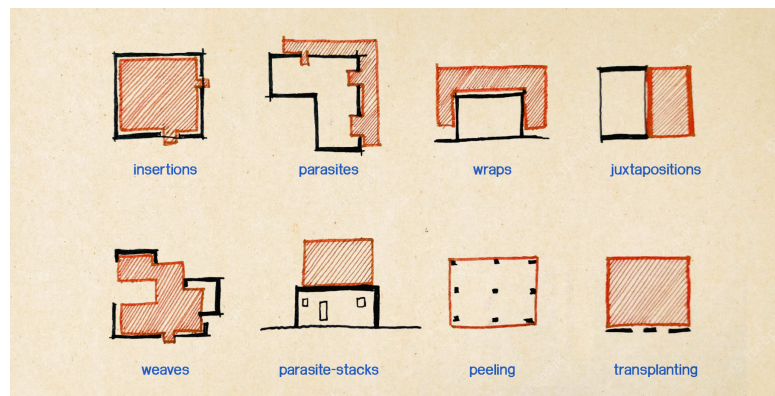
Sketch informed by Francoise Bollack's diagram of adaptive reuse form strategies.

(Bollack 2013). Taking insertions as a strategy for urban development, there are growing patterns of "shell and guts" developments where exterior facades are preserved, being supported by a new form within. These interpretations leave one to question the limits of authenticity and preservation and engage them critically in the practice of building that is unfolding.

Relational Design and the Geopark

Helen and Hard, Geopark, Stavanger, Norway, 2008.

Helen and Hard's design of the Geopark (2008) utilizes fragments of industrial infrastructure from Norway's oil and gas industries to create a playground in the image of the Troll field oil reservoir. The design engages people in play through the creative reuse and recycling of previously used elements, transforming the Stavanger Waterfront into a cultural program (Braathen et al. 2012, 199). Considering the offshore oil extraction that Norway has economically profited from, the installation provides a critique through the transmutation of forms. Helen and Hard's practice identifies this methodology as *relational design* where a site can viewed through a set of complex relations that often develops a self-reflexive commentary (Braathen et al. 2012, 16). Taking something historically linked to the ecological exploitation of our environment and turning it into a relic through which a community can take back parts of the urban environment from the rotting industrial infrastructure.

Accepting Ruinification at the Hedmark Museum

Sverre Fehn, Hedmark Museum, Hamar, Norway, 1967.

In Sverre Fehn's design for the Hedmark Museum (1971) transformed the ruin of a dilapidated barn into a historical museum. The ruin of the barn was still functional however derelict it may have been. The reuse strategy considered the materiality of the barn as equal to the new inclusions

of concrete, timber, glass, and steel (Tanberg 2021). The design considers the connection between these two entities, paying respect to the nature of the existing structure, allowing it to exist as an element that belongs to time as it weathers and ages. The additions distance themselves in a way that leaves space for visitors to respect the gap and appreciate the confluence between different materials from different times. The intention of Fehn's bricolage approach appears as part of the continual change that has occurred to this barn throughout history.

A Living Archive at Sala Beckett

Flores and Prats, Sala Beckette, Barcelona, Spain, 2019.

Sala Beckett (2019) represents how adaptive reuse can demonstrate an authenticity toward a place. In Flores and Pratt's extensive design process for the reuse of the former cooperative Pau I Justica in Barcelona they undergo a practice of cataloguing and inventorying the materials, patterns, and design of many elements present on site. In many instances the stripped-back layer would reveal another, creating a mosaic of multiple interpretations of the former cooperative throughout time. Their practice meticulously investigates an existing site with care that extends into the reuse strategy and character of the drama center. The effect of the completed project is that it captures the memories of a place, like an archive, where those who continue to use the space can begin to reinterpret and inscribe the place with memories of their own (Casares et al. 2020). The experience in Sala Beckett becomes a journey of discovery as every part feels unique to each viewer.

Chapter 4: The 'Abandoned' Museum

History

The Provincial Museum and Archive of Alberta opened in 1967 as one of many examples of new architecture chasing after an idyllic image of the city. As both Canadian and Albertan economies flourished from oil extraction in Leduc and Pembina, it seemed fitting that the funding for the museum was a joint venture, split between the Federal Confederation Memorial Centennial Program and the Government of Alberta (Boddy 2007, 109). The building is a prime representation of the misguided attempts of Edmonton architecture to define itself on an international stage. Using a brutalist design – the pervading universal architectural fashion of the time – to symbolize a fortress of artifacts being protected from the people, light and climate (Boddy 2007, 109) insinuates manipulation and control of the built environment that stems from the strong-arming of

Photograph of people gathered around one of the larger dinosaur exhibits of the museum that offered the ability to reach out and touch the bronze sculpting. c. 1967 (Royal Alberta Museum 2021).
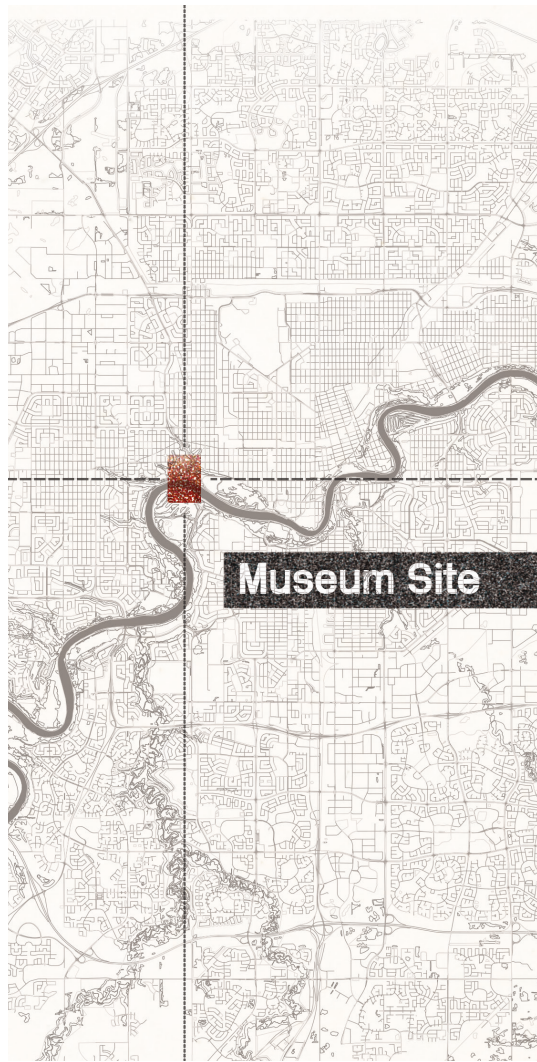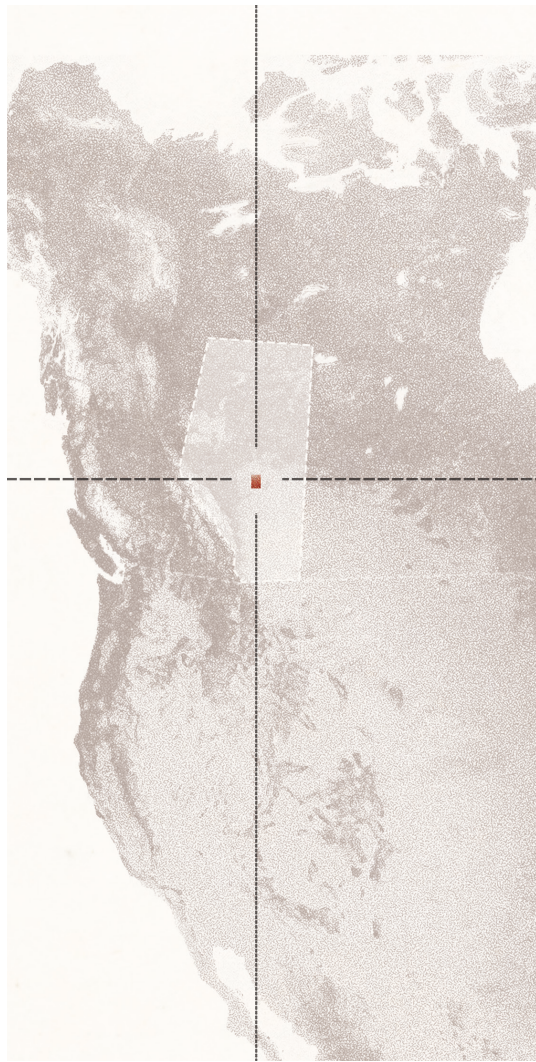
Location of the Provincial Museum and Archives of Alberta in relation to the city of Edmonton, and to the country.
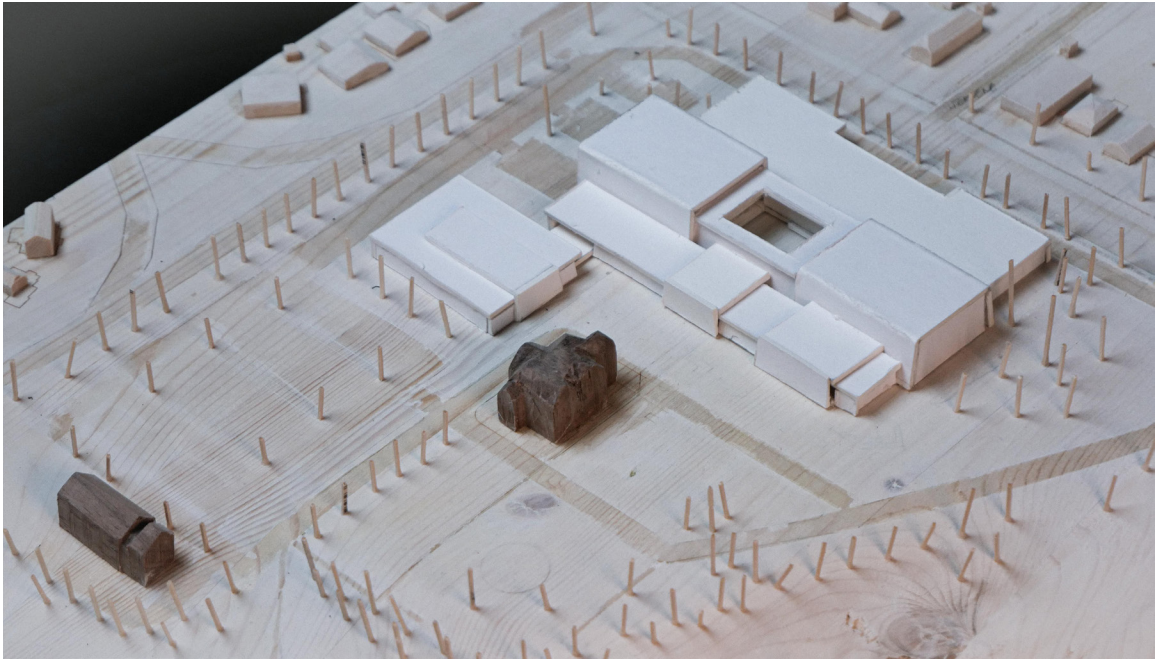
Site model showing the former museum in white and the Government House and Carriage House in dark brown.
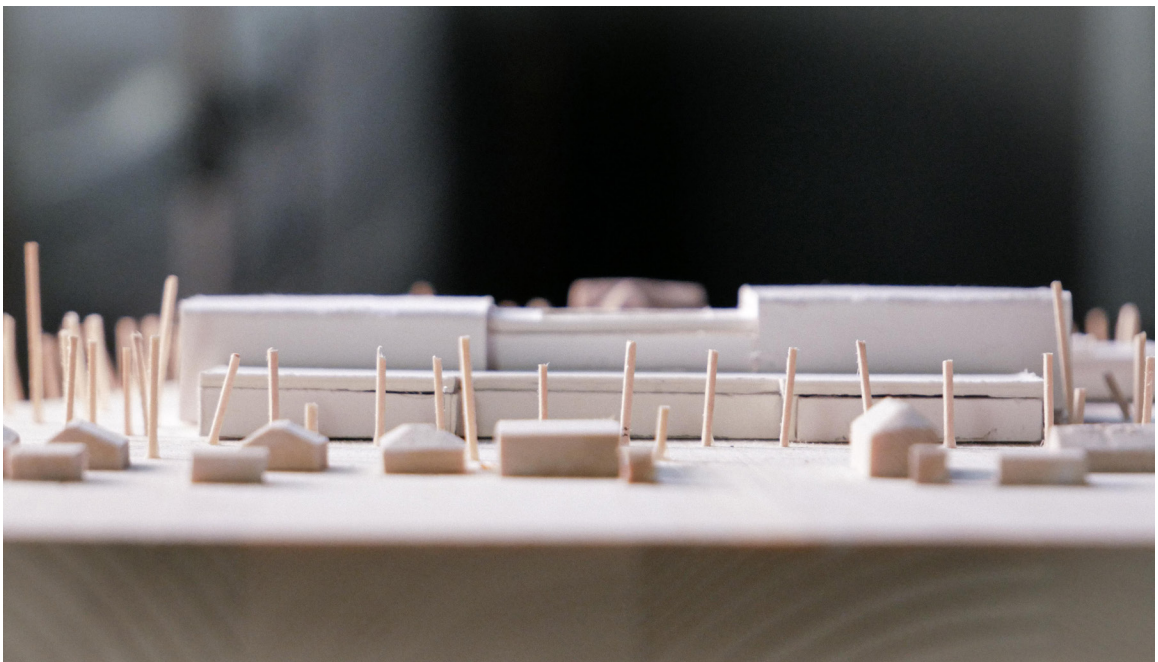
Northern elevation was closed off to 102nd street through the use of trees and solid facades. The choice for a southern primary entry was to bring the visitors closer into the space before entry.

land and resources economies that sparked Edmonton's development.

The introduction of the museum in Edmonton signified an emerging middle class out of a predominantly blue-collar workforce. The average annual income in Alberta had more than doubled in the decade since it had struck oil in 1947, the population increased, and the Albertans were finding the promised personal freedom as well as leisure time (Kuban 2005, 73). The museum's construction was one of many civic institutions (Edmonton Art Gallery, Paramount Theatre, Jubilee Auditorium) that were driven by the economic influx from the oil industry and representative of crude optimism.

The site of the museum had previously been the outdoor gardens surrounding the government house. Following the early Beaux-arts movement of architecture in Edmonton during the early 20th century, the gardens surrounded the house, organized around a series of pathways that circulated people through various displays of nature, either local or imported. Before it was built upon, the site was untouched by colonial settlers, and was most likely used by a variety of First Nations groups in the area as it provided a advantageous view over the river below and distant views across the flat plains. The site was chosen among other established park spaces in Edmonton to house the proposed museum that was integrated with the Centennial Confederation Program. The program was celebrating a century of the nation's existence with a fund associated to developing architecture of a regional identity. The decisions made by the planning team was included within the initial proposal now held by the Provincial Museum of Alberta. In it they describe the choice to keep as many trees as possible, to bring visitors into the heart of the site before

Rendering of the proposal of the Provincial Alberta Museum, the Archives and Centennial Pylon (Department of the Provincial Secretary 1964).

entering, and to foster a degree of friendliness and intimacy in the treatment of the façade elements. The museum was proposed with two phases of development, one with a two-storey massing, and a subsequent one that would expand the exhibition wings and archive storerooms, however, this second phase never came to fruition. Also included within the bid was the proposal of a Centennial Pylon which would provide a 240 ft. elevated lookout over the surrounding river valley, and a considerable amount of landscape work to enhance the experience of being on the site. The pylon was never built, and the landscaping only extended to the extents of the parking lot to the south.

Symbolism

Perched above the river valley, overlooking the surrounding landscape, the museum was a monumental display of architectural dissonance from land. The proud separation from the landscape followed a modern trend of independence from its surroundings (Lefaivre 2012, 118). This notion is supported using a marginal curated courtyard located at the center of the building, a liminal representation of the expansive natural landscape that could be witnessed beyond the walls of the building.

As a museum and an archive of archeology in Alberta, the museum represented a practice of cataloguing the past into a curated display of pre-settlement, and colonial conquest. In the taxidermy of animals and staging of found artifacts, the work is displayed as if it were a prize from the hunt that had preceded it. The identity of the building will always be linked to the Western Frontier Mythology of the Prairies during the early settlement and the notion of man's dominion over the natural world.

Staff entrance.

Main entrance looking to archives.

Main entrance.

Recreated carvings originating from Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump World Heritage Site.
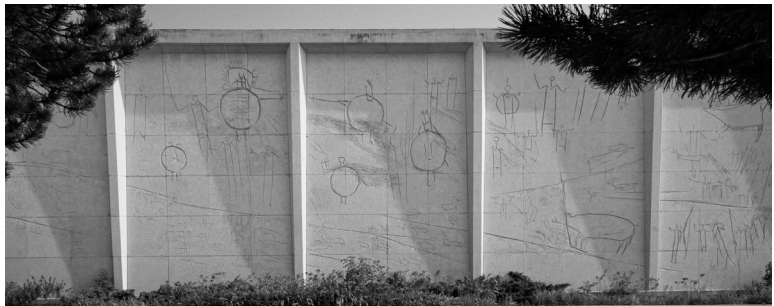
Relief sculpture on exterior facade.

Images of the museum in its vacant state (August 2023).

Following the oil discoveries in nearby settlements and subsequent economic gain, the museum is inscribed with optimistic fantasies and palpable representations of abstract notions of oil extraction through its materiality and form (Mohammadi 2022, 368). The very materiality of the building communicates a process of extraction, refinement, displacement, and use.

The plan of the museum demonstrates control and staging of visitors and workers alike. The rigid compliance to orthometric grids dictates the divisions and separations of one department from another. Like many building plans, this coalesces into a series of staged experiences separated from one another. The separation very rarely relinquished in the plan, as spaces are only used for their predetermined program with clear entrances and exits. The notion of using a space for a unique activity, or free space is not shown in this building plan. As a central corridor runs the length from the West end of the building to the East, the division of space between public and private is evident. These architectural gestures signify control systems and separation from land.
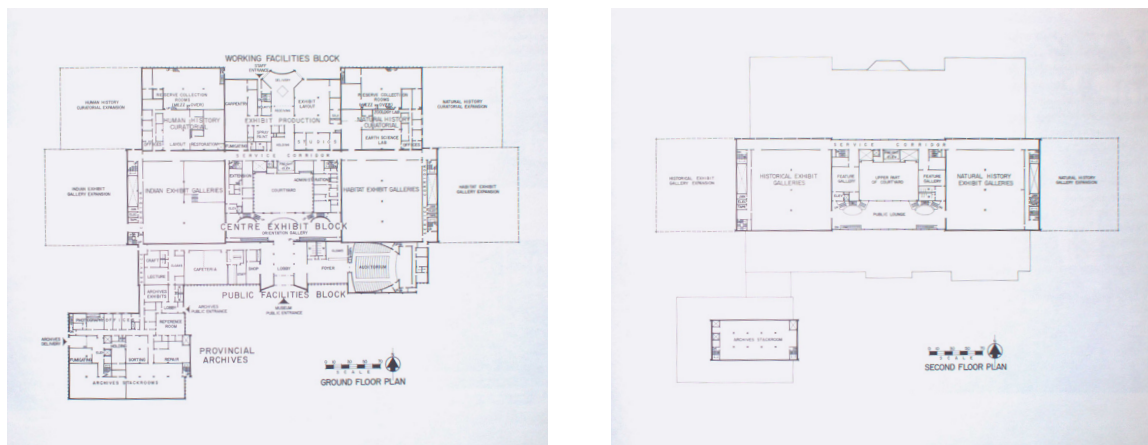
Plan of Museum and Archives (Department of Provincial Secretary 1964)
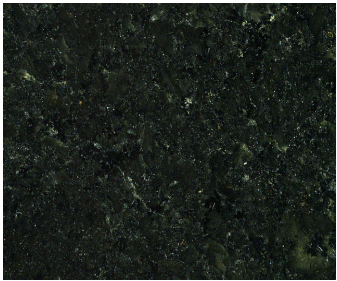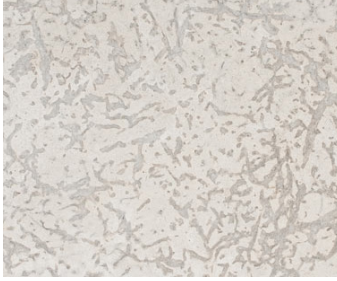
Tyndall Stone from Southern Manitoba. Granite flooring from Quebec. Quartzite interior panelling from unknown location.

Looking closer into individual elements from the museum, one can see how the selection and treatment of materials demonstrates how contemporary building practices of the time are inscribed with a culture of extraction. The materiality of the building can be traced back to the museum's relationship with the province's practice in extractive resource economies. "The very materiality of the building, in other words, functions and continues to function as a spatiotemporal matrix of extraction practices and petroleum-based aesthetics" (Mohammadi 2022, 369). The museum boasts its use of Tyndall stone from Southern Manitoba, a local limestone that artifacts traces of fossils and ancient sea creatures, to create a sense of regional connection in its use of Canadian-local materials. This inclusion, however, signifies both the disconnection with the region of Edmonton, a valorization of exoticized mined resources from other parts of the world. Other examples of this type of material attraction are visible in the museum's exhaustive effort to include granite flooring from Quebec, decorative marble and wood panels laminating the interior, and ornate brass hardware.

Abandonment

The museum was left vacant in 2017 after reparations were decided to be too costly, resulting in a replacement building being constructed closer to the downtown core. The former museum's monumental size now serves to demonstrate a local building practice stretched between extremities of cyclical demolition and rigid preservation. As a direct result of the boom/bust cycles of the resource economy, Edmontonians come to hate their recent past with a vehemence that does not exist elsewhere, and willfully demolish the "best building from each of its decades" (Boddy

Edmonton Gardens
1913 - 1982

Misorcordia Hospital
1906 - 1959

Old Canadian National Rail Yard
1928 - 1996

Mosher Ryder Block
1911 - 2013

Tegler Building
1912 - 1982

Pantages Theatre
1913 -1979

Salvation army citadel
1925 -1976

Dunvegan Rail Yards
1912 - 1981

Arlington Apartments
1912 - 2005

Edmonton Remand Centre
1979 - 2023

Agency Building
1911 - 1972

Canadian National Railway
Station
1928 - 1965

Capitol Theatre
1918 - 1972

Civic Block
1912 - 1995

Edmonton Courthouse
1912 - 1972

Edmonton Post Office
1910 - 1972

Art Gallery of Alberta
1969 - 2005

El Mirador
1935 - 2022

Empire Block
1905 - 1963

Gariepy Block
1898 - 1960

Gem Theatre
1913 - 2010

Hudson Bay Company
1892 - 1943

Imperial Bank
1907 - 1951

Merchants Bank
1906 - 1956

Location of the Provincial Museum and Archives of Alberta in relation to the city of Edmonton, and to the country.

2007, 9). Alternatively, misguided attempts to preserve a post-colonial settler past provide an architecture that fails at connecting with an honest identity associated with the city. Examples such as Fort Edmonton and the Alberta Hotel serve as models of preservation driven by an imperialist urge to recreate an identity of post-colonial settlement of the 'undeveloped' land. Relph would describe it as the act of "museumization of place" - the form of preservation of an idealized history; an immutable dream image of the past (Relph 1976, 101).

What's worse than a building being demolished is a building that lives on in a lobotomized form (Lari et al. 2023, 24). In its state of abandonment, could the former Provincial Museum and Archives of Alberta serve to represent several similarly monumental buildings from the post-oil boom that are now weathering, vacant, slated for demolition, or gone from the public image altogether? In this spectacle of abandonment, the building has an opportunity to provide a critique necessary to Western building practice; by coming face-to-face with its past frontier settlement, reconciling with the extractive resource economies and connecting a community back to their surroundings.

Collage of weathering on exterior portions of the existing building.

Chapter 5: The 'Reused' Institute

Regional Reuse synthesizes the terms of regionalism and adaptive reuse, creating a method for a design that is engaged in a critical dialogue with its surroundings and provides a regenerative adaptation to existing buildings. Regionalism in Alberta has been pursued under the notions of the picturesque and cohesion of the local community, however, I would argue regional architecture in Edmonton has failed to accurately come to terms with the conditions of life in a particular place (a community-built on frontier mythology, human exceptionalism, and resource extraction). Coming to terms with the past layers of a place can provide a clear understanding of a region and develop a more authentic approach to the building practice. The terminology of adaptive reuse has increased around the world of architecture in recent years, conveying a sensible method for sustainable development, however, some would argue that this practice of adaptation, maintenance, repair and reuse is as old as the practice of building (Brand 1995). Regional reuse entails an understanding of humans as whole living organisms indissolubly engaged in their surroundings (Gibson 2015). Place is viewed not as an element that can be controlled, demarcated, traded, or exploited for a short-sighted end to economic gain. The term entails a potential post-oil economy of reuse and non-extractive architecture. Through a regenerative architecture institute roles and practices of architects can be redefined, celebrating ephemeral characteristics, engaging in adaptations, and rediscovering a sense of place and belonging.

Regenerative Architecture Institute

In 1990, the Berlage Institute was formed in Amsterdam by the Dutch architect Herman Hertzberger as an educational workshop. The institute functioned as a laboratory for speculative design research and global urbanism (Ockman and Williamson 2012, 209). Working on a global scale the institute acted as a forum for visiting architects to exchange ideas because of a growing internationalism in architecture education. It brought together different ideas and exposed the contrasting natures of the educational disciplines people had come from.

An architecture institute that is simultaneously restoring, self-tuning and demonstrating authentic approaches to regenerative adaptation can be the seed that flourishes a change in its surrounding environment. The potential for an architecture institute is that it actively reaches out beyond its walls to various individuals in the community, making the composure of the building quite organic in the way it adapts over time.
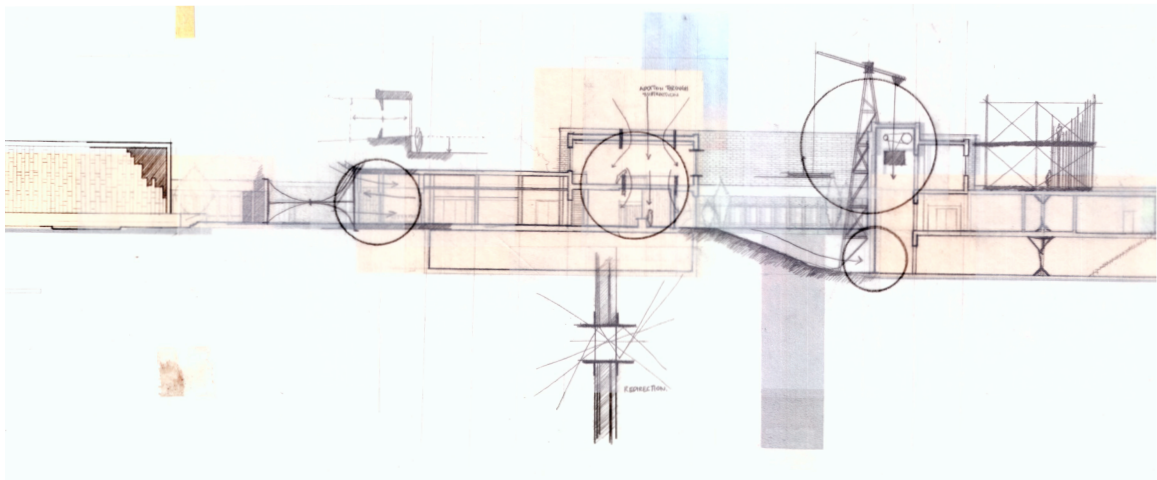
Sectional diagram the former museum being used as a test site for building adaptation.

A regenerative architecture institute would focus on non-extractive methods of architecture, redefine the existing roles and practices of architects, and function as an archive uncovering the layers of Edmonton's built history. The institute can confront a problem of building in the modern world, targeting its influences, and providing solutions that respond to the indeterminate future it faces.

Looking to the novella Architecture Without Extraction (Dzierzawska and Malterre-Barthes 2021), the use of future indeterminism as a source for speculative fabulations creates a realm of storytelling that reimagines the roles and responsibilities of architects after the moratorium of new construction. In the novella, roles such as "wood radiography" and "brick cartography" were described to open viewers to a new future of architecture that isn't reliant on the paradigm of extractive resource economies. The novella provides insight into the roles and responsibilities
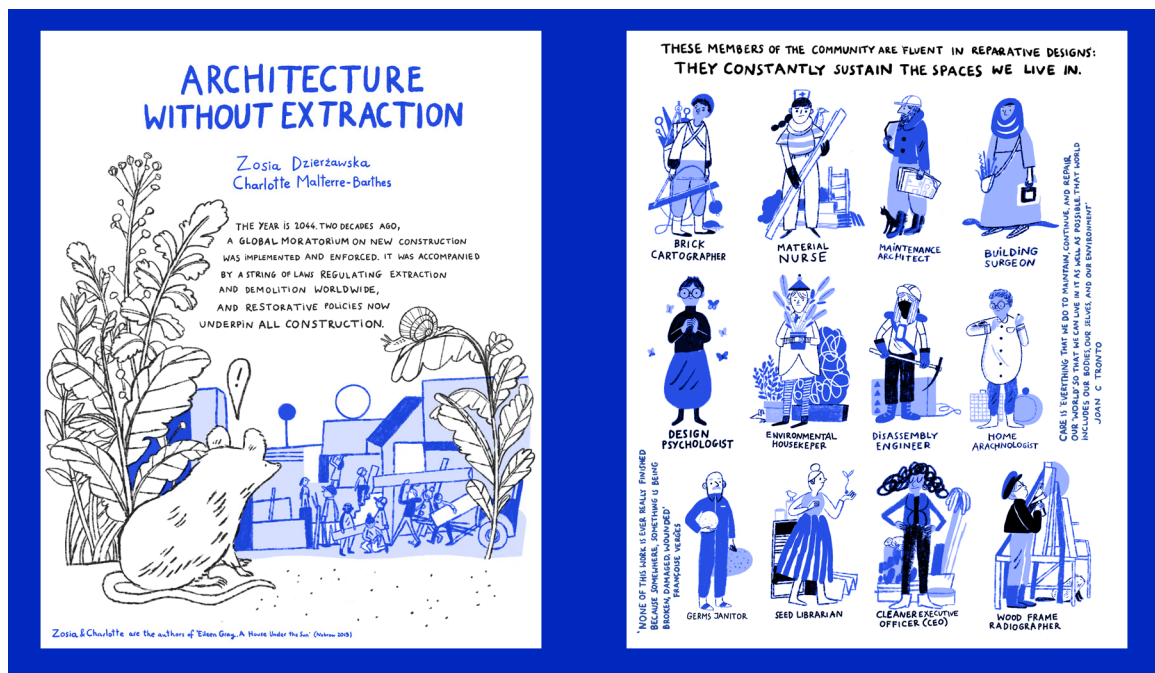
Panel from Architecture Without Extraction demonstrating the speculative new roles of architects in a future where a moratorium on new construction has been placed (Dzierzawska and Malterre-Barthes 2021).

of the institute and the opportunity for storytelling that can emerge out of such speculation.

Collage

Returning to Bollack's diagram of adaptive reuse strategies, but instead focusing them on the abandoned museum to collage how each one of those approaches could appear with the building, sparked an approach to cutting and clipping portions of the abandoned building and combining them with ambiguous shapes to construe a new meaning and architectural form.
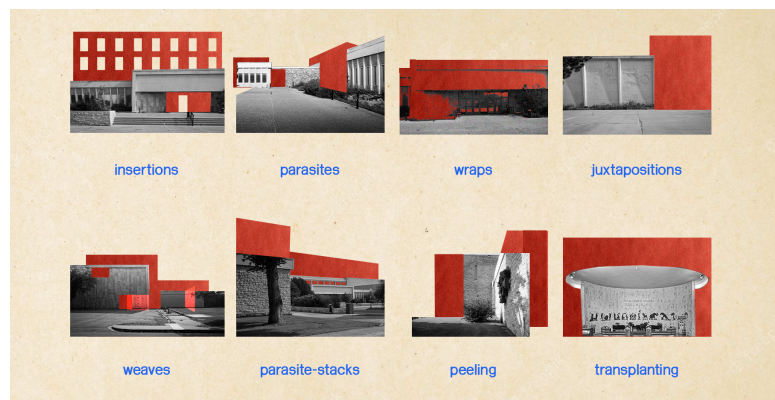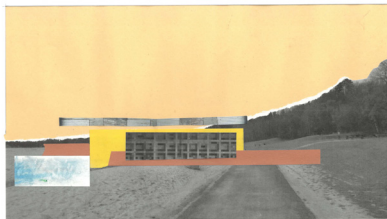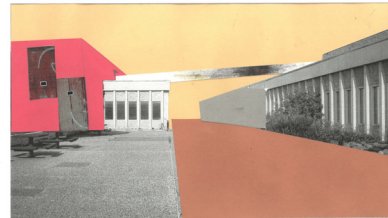

Collage informed by Francoise Bollack's diagram of adaptive reuse form strategies shown using the former museum.

This diagramming led to a study of collage, where spaces from the site were evaluated and critical gestures of particular areas were made. A sensitive radicalism began to emerge as an attitude of adaptations to the existing building, attempting to preserve what could be while offering new spaces. Fragmenting large portions of the building generated ideas in which the existing building could be seen not as something to fix but as something that can be transformed. The displacement of the pieces challenged existing notions of the building and opened the opportunity for speculation. Fragmentation of an existing entity allows designers to engage not only with the separate pieces but
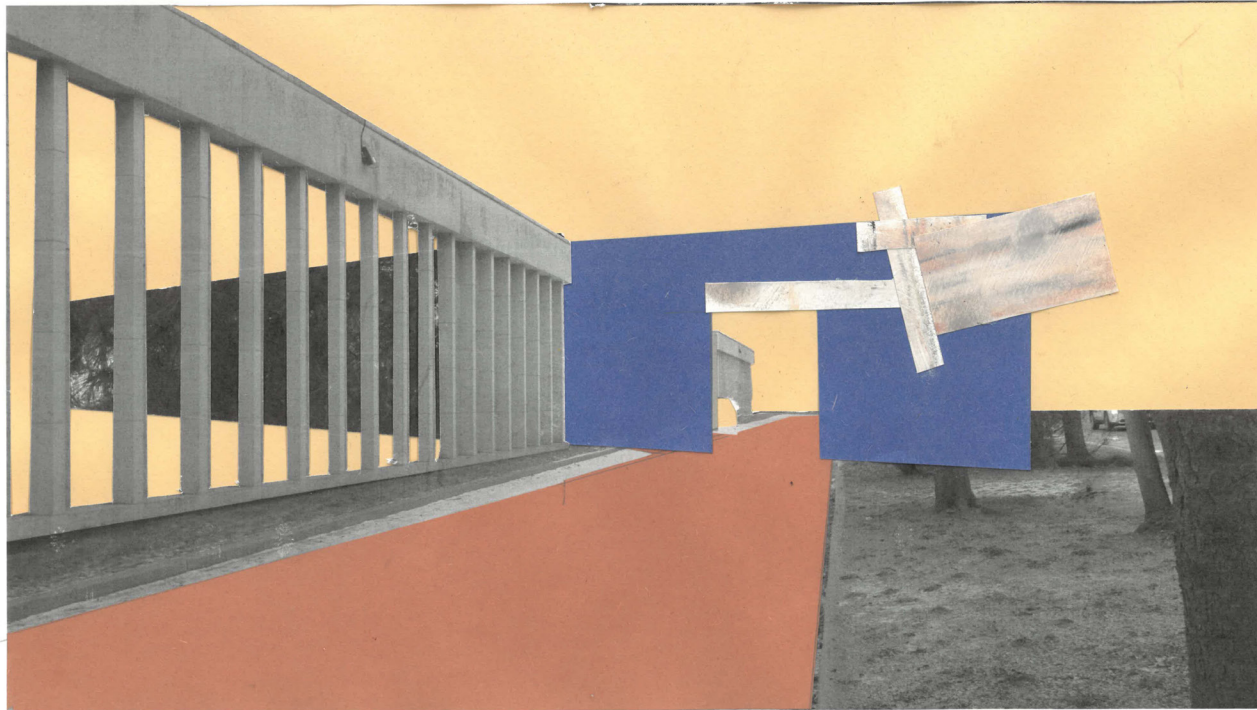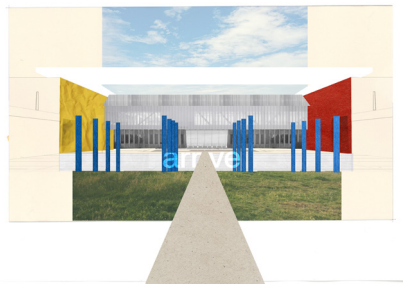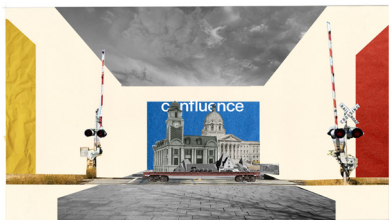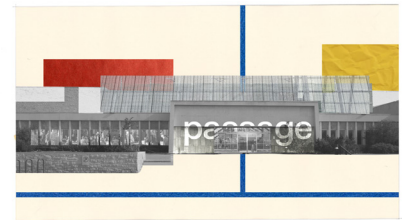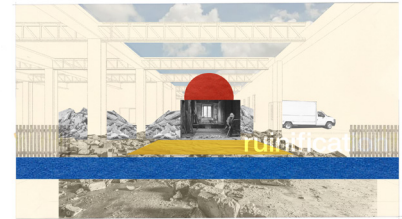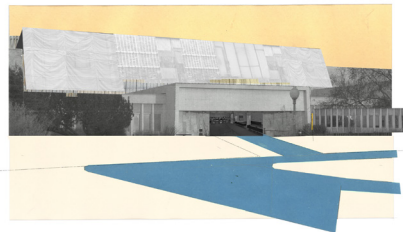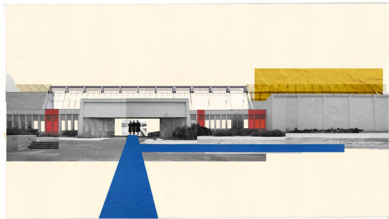
Collage of Northern facade. Cutting and contorting the original image and added ambiguous shapes opened the possibility to various interpretations.
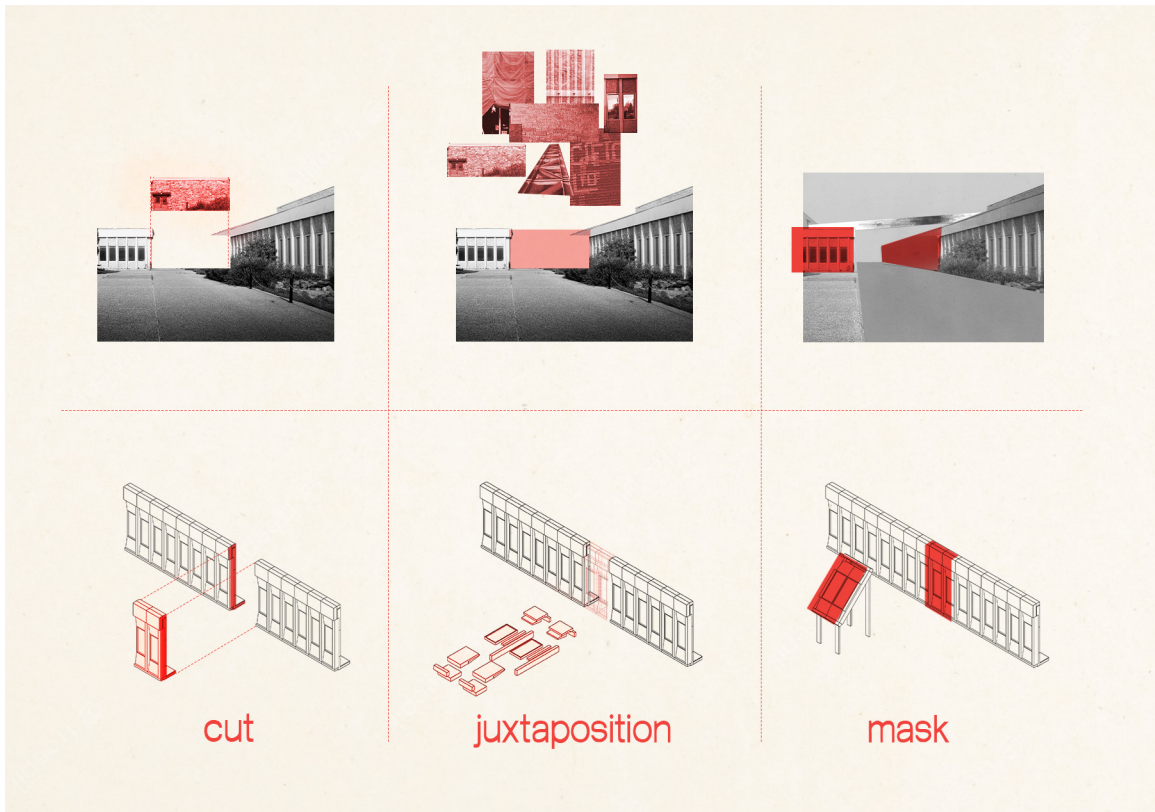
Initial collage studies.

the cracks and seams in between. In the reorganization of pieces, a plurality began to emerge from the fragmented pieces.

Collages framed the building as a series of fragmented moments, rather than informing a strategy for a complete whole. Responding to the abandoned museum, the building's maintenance and care do not necessarily need to be an overhaul of the space, but a continued practice of repair and recognition. The outcome becomes a rich interface of various entities. The accumulated remnants of the past are important elements but exist only to be transformed into the material of the present (Woods 1997, 26). Their humble existence before reuse allows them to be incorporated into a plurality of existence with other similar pieces.

Digital collage of the former archive wing. Using computer drawings, cut images, text and figures to begin to more accurately communicate the narrative of the space.

Digital collage studies.

Methodology diagram.

Methodology

The collage studies initiated a methodology for this project. Distilling gestures from the collage studies, the cut, juxtaposition, and mask captured moments where things had been removed, revealed, displaced, transmuted, and concealed.

The cut, juxtaposition, and mask contextualize the gestures on the site and begin to create a lens through which the building can be viewed and designed. Cuts are a strategy of separation, where pieces are removed from their initial placement. In the separation, they reveal layers that were once hidden before in the seam of the splitting. The portions of the building that are removed a used as tools to continue the design of the building.

Juxtapositions are a collision of old and new. By taking existing portions of the building that have been cut and displacing them in a new location, taking elements of one function and transmuting them to another, or replicating an element from the old building with new materials juxtapositions are performed.

Masks conceal and reveal portions of the building to those who inhabit it. It is important for the building to be comprehensible to those who inhabit it, to perceive the cracks and understand their roots. Masks are used to brace portions of the building, to conceal the gaps, and to frame activity within the building. The masks have a temporary nature, that can be added to or removed altogether.

Additionally, the collage began to inform several personas that could be imagined inhabiting the space at different capacities. Three personas were used to help chart routes of experiences. The blue figures represent the Passenger, a member of the public. The institute opens itself to them, extending its critique of contemporary building practice directly to those surrounding them. With spaces that are open to the public, the passenger is given agency through curiosity to the revealed fragments within. The red figure is the Salvager, representing half of the institute that is concerned with regenerative materials and building practices in demolition and construction. The yellow figure is the Caretaker, they act as a tool through which regenerative adaptive approaches are studied, exhibited, and archived. They speak to the emerging new roles and responsibilities of architects in the 21st Century, and their responsibility to the institute is to ensure that it continues to layer itself in an everlasting state of becoming.

Passenger Persona.

Salvager Persona.

Caretaker Persona.

Mask

Juxtapose

Cut

Exploded Axonometric
Scale 1 : 500
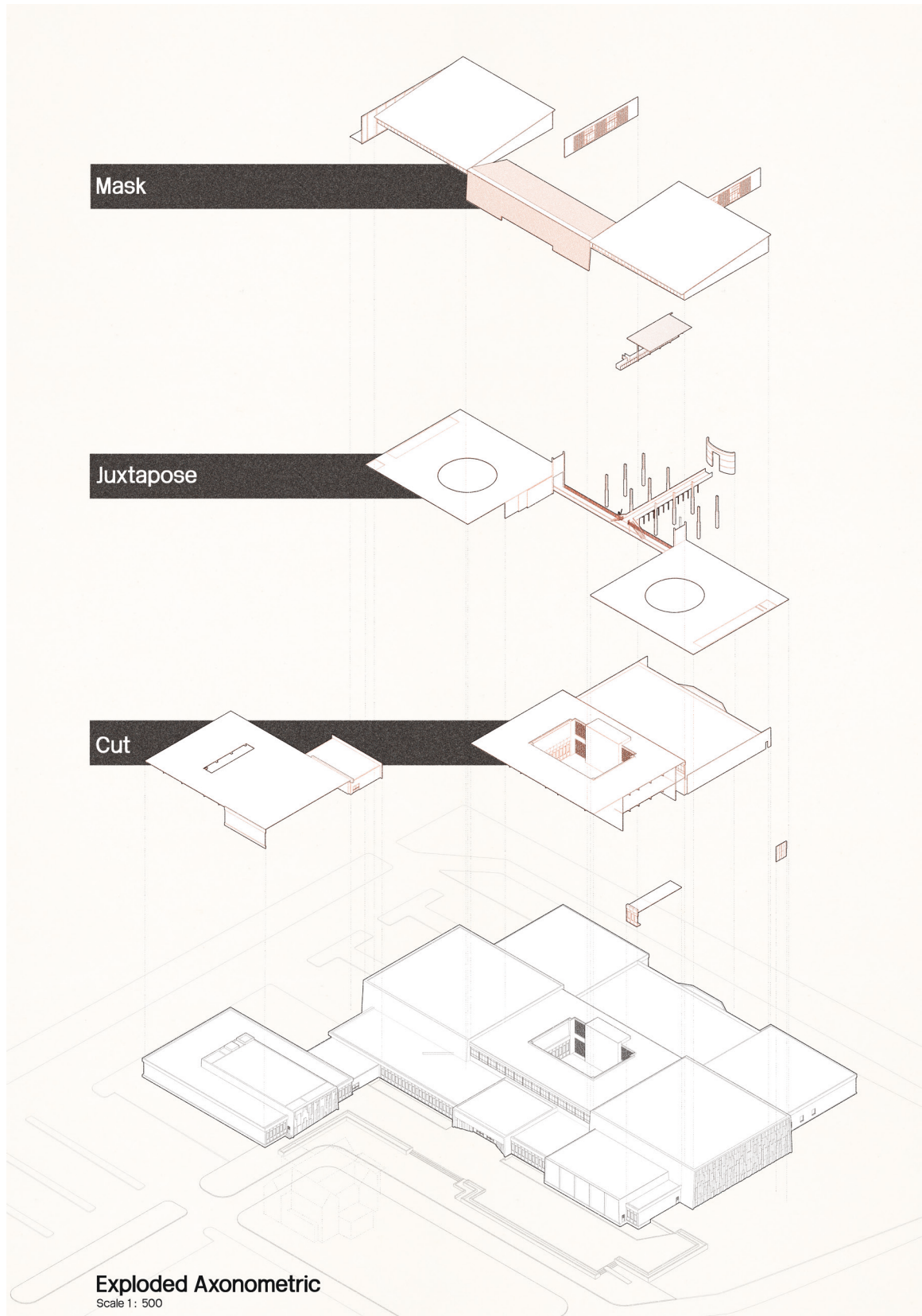
Exploded Axonometric diagram frames the methodology onto the existing building.
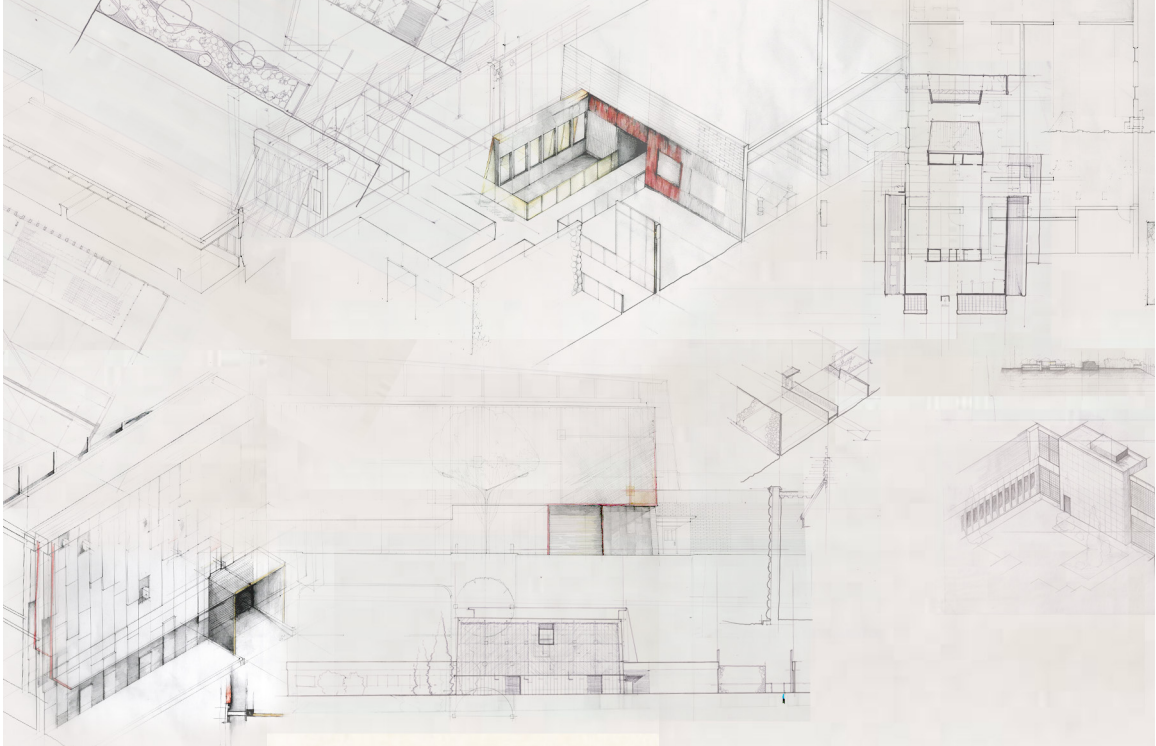
Paratactic Drawing, ink, graphite on trace.
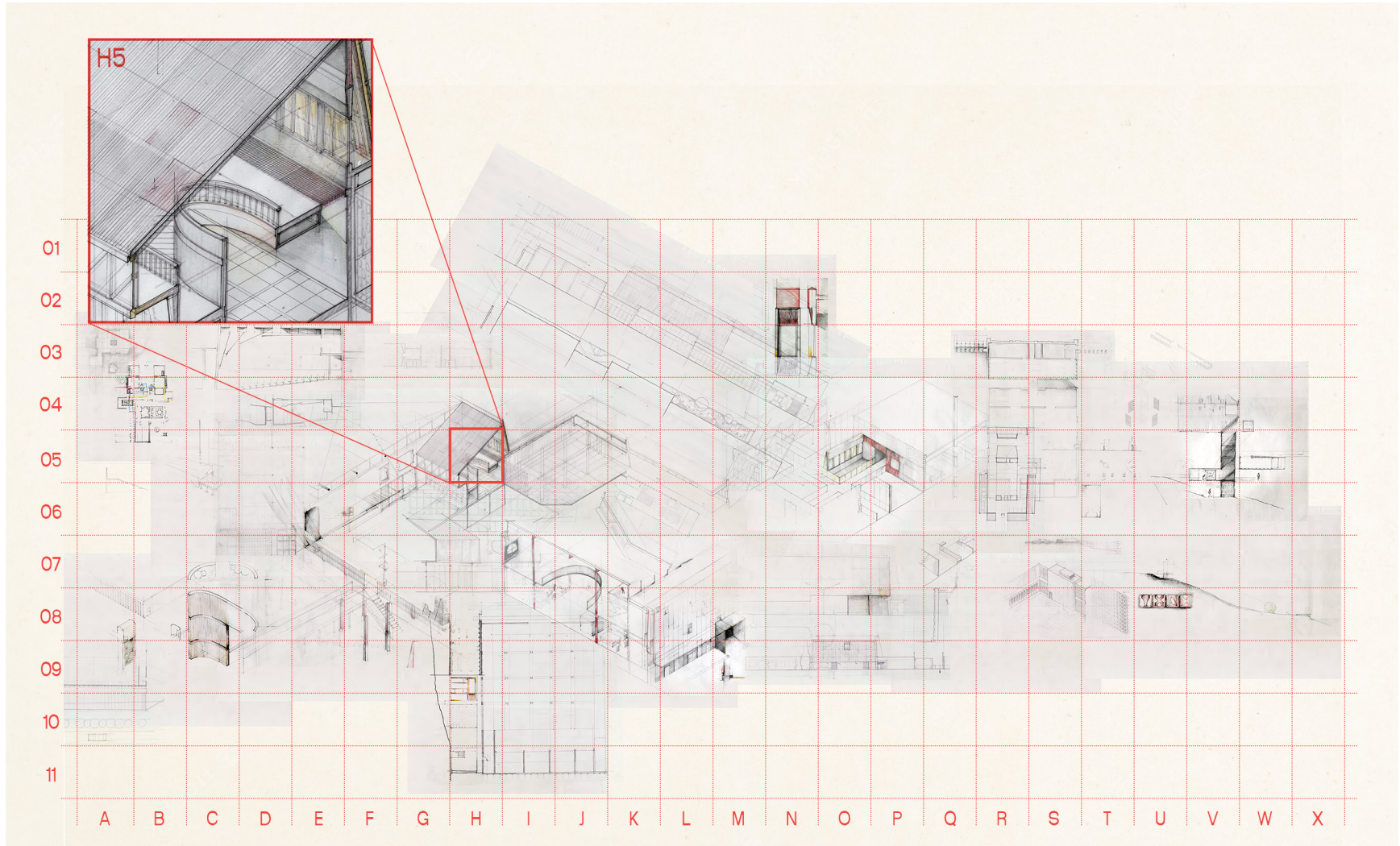
Paratactic Drawing

A paratactic is a method of representation that separately arranges each part of the figure to show the whole in a desired way. Charting the routes of different personas on the site creates a linear projection of experiences through the institute. These paths intersect and pass by one another, creating scenarios of rich complexity between multiple experiences. The paratactic takes these experiences and draws them through a method of orthographic drawing, however, the conventional approach is treated radically. As a result of the indeterminacy and spontaneity of the experience, the drawings are cut, displaced, and contorted as they weave between one another. In this way the paratactic accomplished the objective of representation, but also a demonstration of the methodology of design itself.
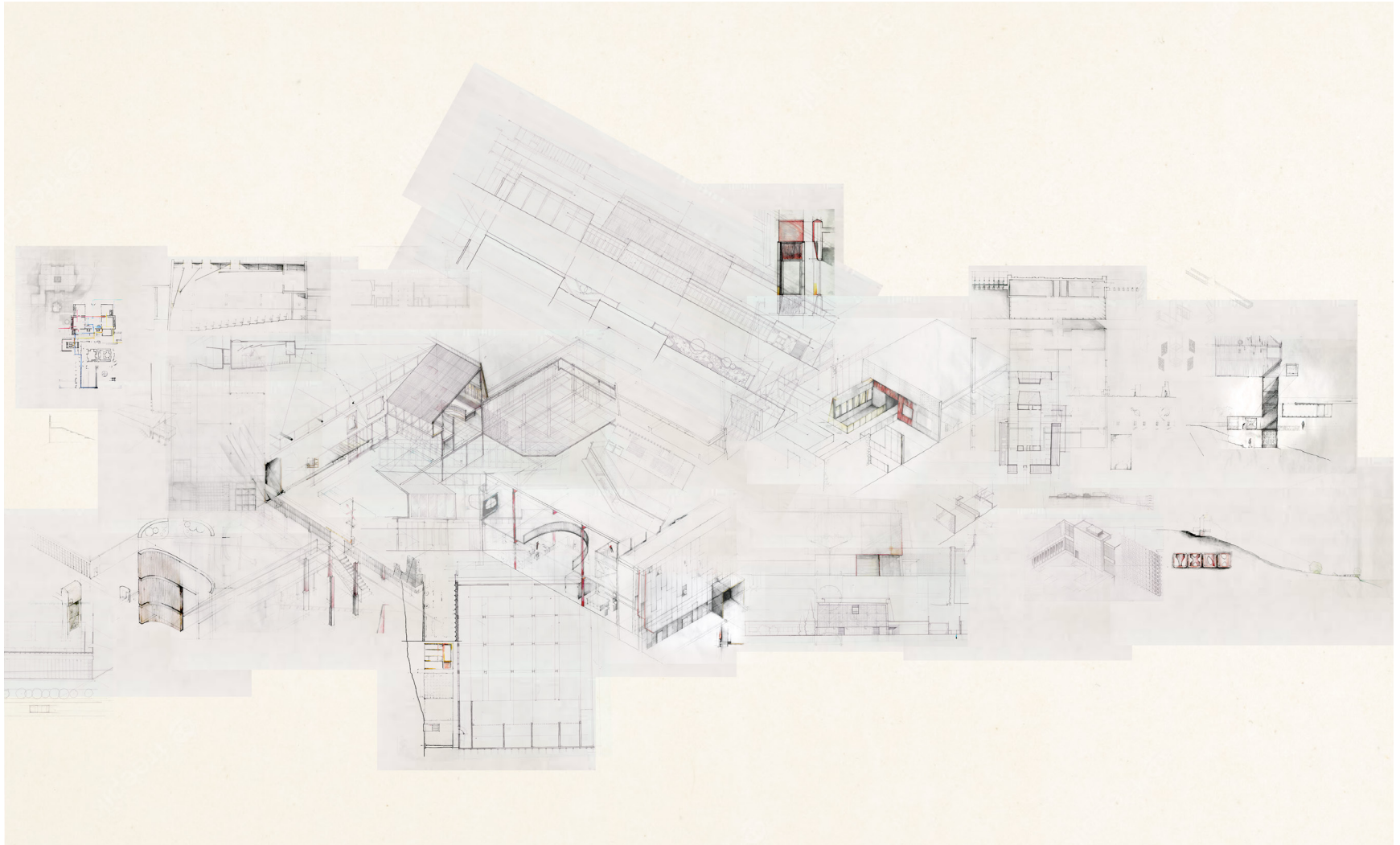
Paratactic Drawing.

Paratactic Map. Breaking the paratactic drawing into a gridded system allows the report to pull frames out of the full drawing to further explain.

Distilling the methodology being used, the paratactic acts as a tool for designing the spaces as the medium reflects the cuts, juxtapositions and masks being tested in the design while simultaneously representing the process of design. The paratactic drawing offers uncertainty to a determined end goal as layers of trace can be continually added or removed. It relies on the designer to be flexible as it is arranged on the wall, removing one piece could affect the support of multiple pieces surrounding it.

The central planning of the museum was to have two separate wings, one for the institute, a place of study, testing, and archiving; the other for the matter depot, a place where building components are rendered back into raw materials. The dynamic between the two wings provides a rich corridor that is often crossed and exposed to the inner workings within.

Focusing on the former courtyard concealed within the building, it felt appropriate to liberate the contained space to the surrounding region, while also providing a welcoming entry from 102nd Street, the previous backside of the building. Removing a large portion of the building to allow for this connection was not ideal, so as portions of the building are cut away, the displaced portions of drawings could either remain or be displaced. The cut does not imply an erasure, in the reuse of the building, components that are cut are simply waiting to reemerge. The drawings are never thrown out, they are only ever layered. In the courtyard, the steel columns and footings would remain while the roof and floor are cut, the area being returned to the surroundings by an imposition of natural terrain. The former service wing of the museum being altered into a courtyard allows a potentially passive pedestrian to feel welcome.
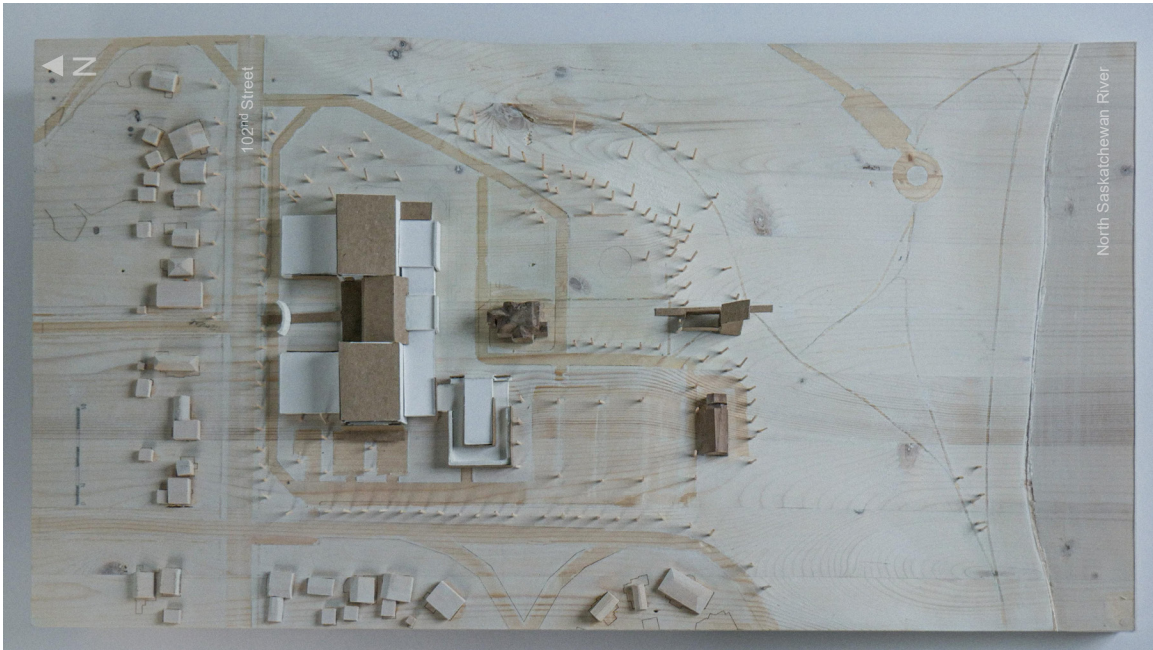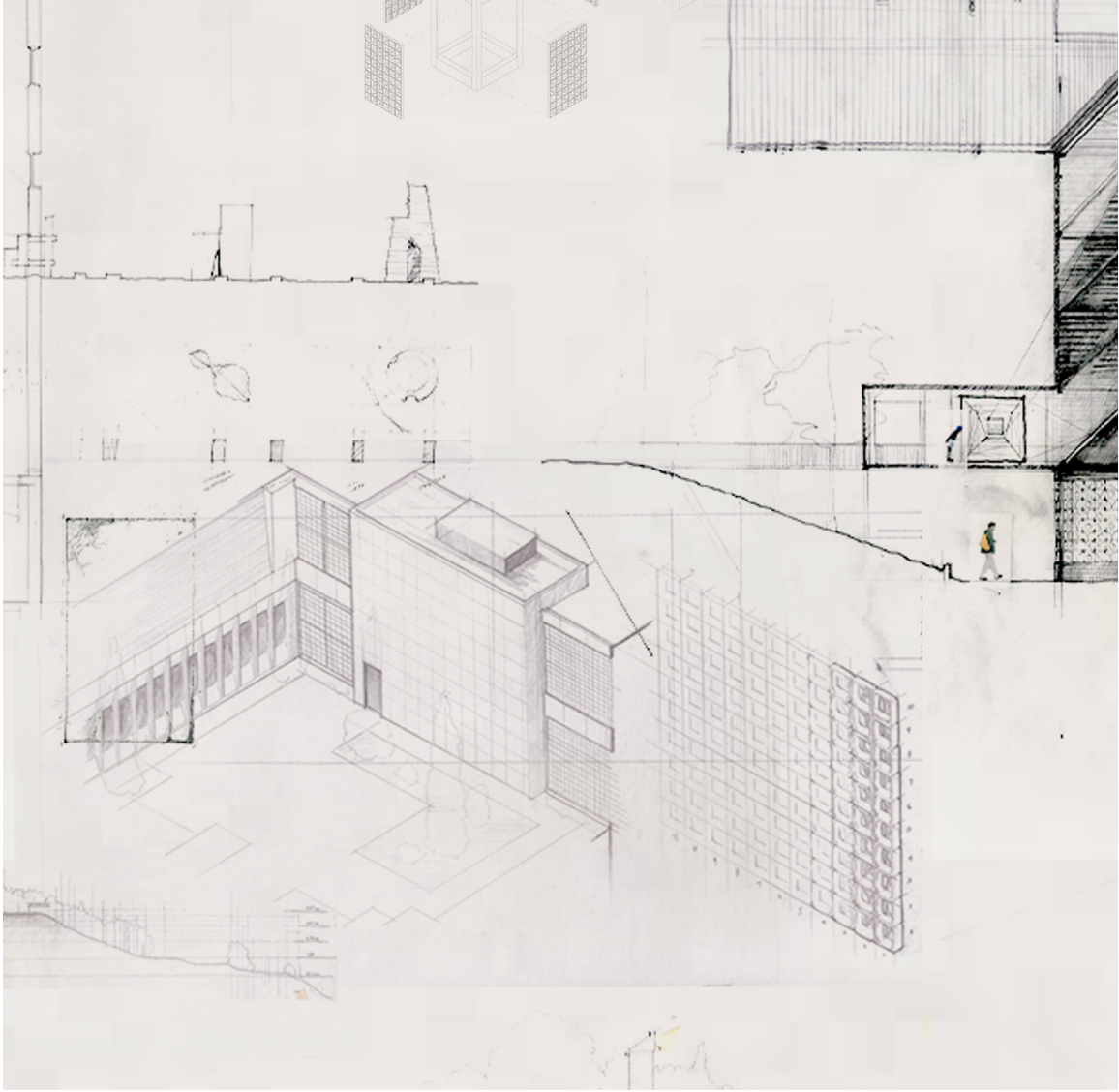
Site model representing the area between 102nd Street (left) and the North Saskatchewan River (right).
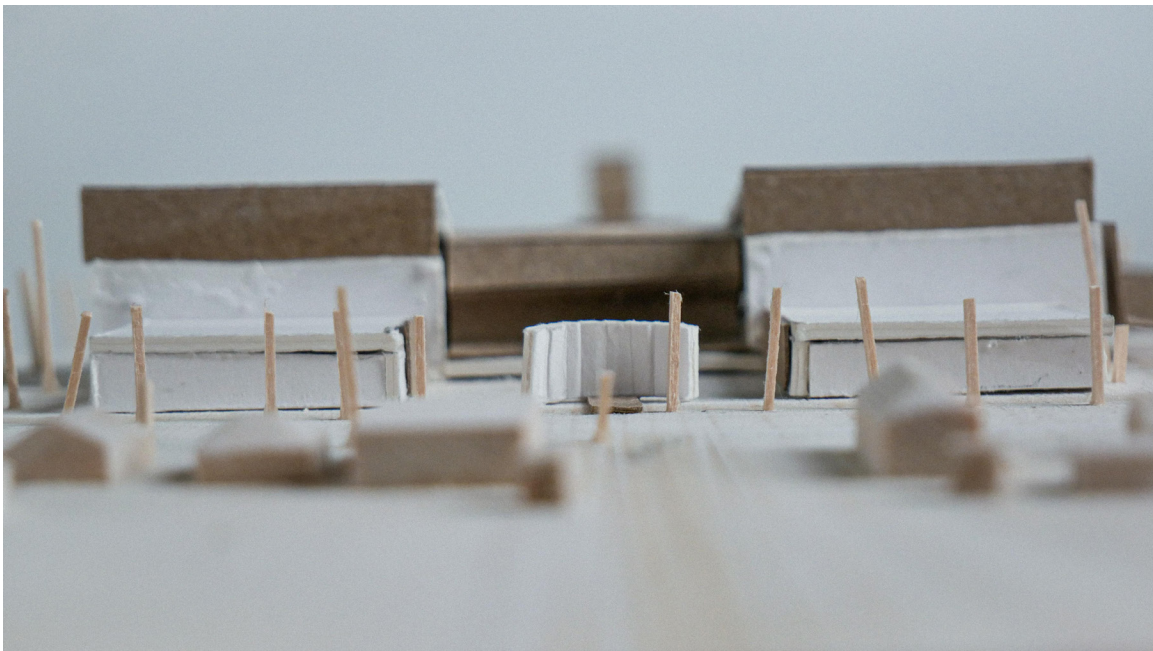
Opening the building to the street with a courtyard makes the building welcoming from both ends.

Portion of the drawing showing the displaced breeze blocks being used as a part of the base of the beacon on the hill (U5-V6).

Within the former courtyard, two mechanical ventilation shafts displayed several decorative breeze blocks. Cut from the building in the gesture to open the courtyard, their pieces were used as a tool through which other spaces could be designed. In their displacement and transmutation, the paratactic reveals the juxtapositions of the design. It creates a vibrant game of transformation in which all pieces can be reused.

Portion of the drawing showing the pocket doors and other fenestration techniques being studied (E5-G6).

The contortion of the drawing allows spaces to be drawn with more fluidity. As axo turns to plan and into section, the seams between the different pieces provide a rich intricacy to which details can be explored. Using various drawing techniques: ink, tone, and colour, moments can be studied and connections across the large format can be made. Between the plaza and the main open space of the institute, operable pocket doors are studied as a way of providing flexible thresholds connecting spaces in different seasons.
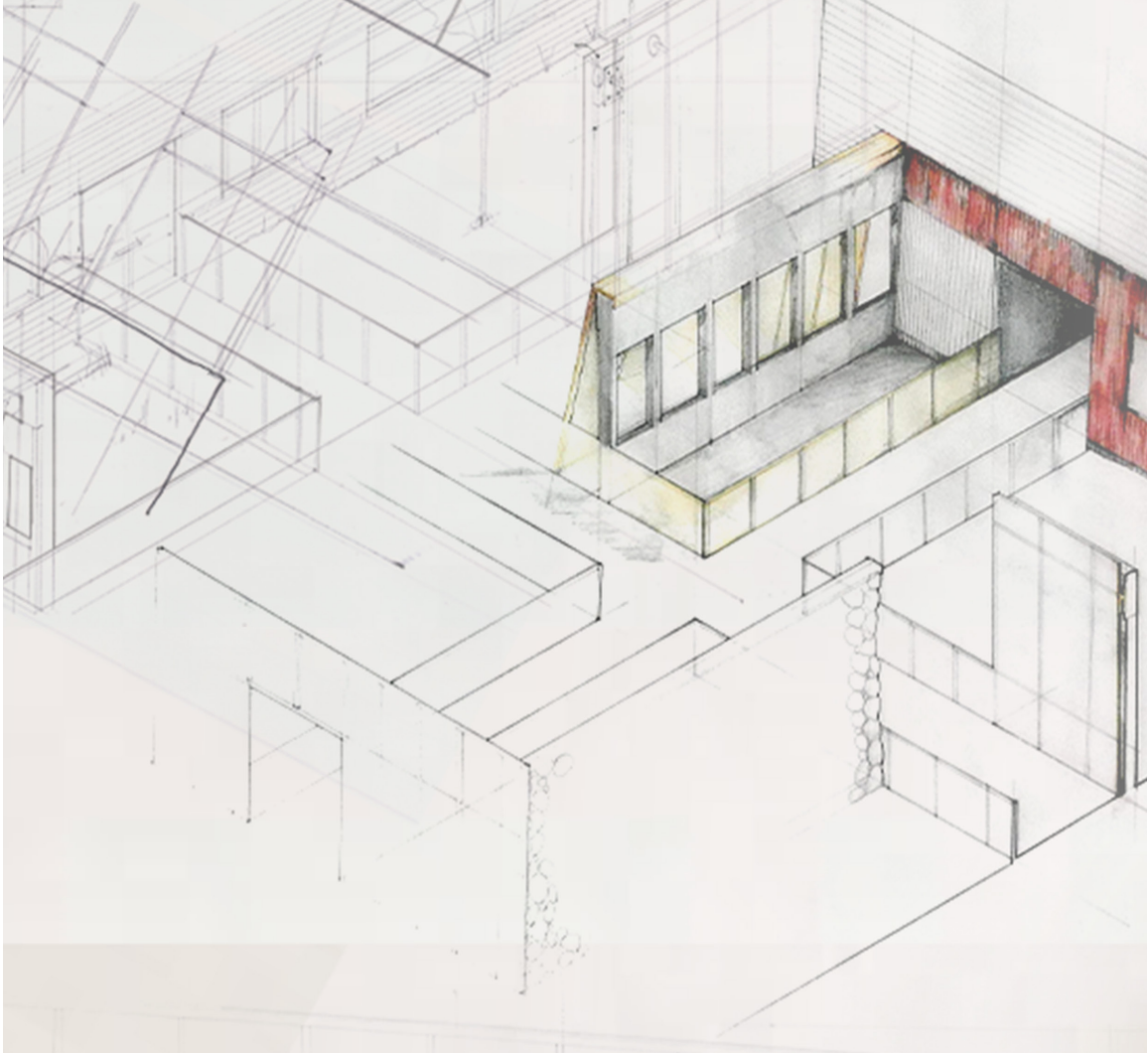
Facades are being masked through bracing structures that provide safety and observation (N5-O6).

The drawing is inherently masking in the layers of trace that superimpose over one another. Their complexity can often fog the layers underneath, creating a palimpsest effect on the drawing where old layers can be uncovered later. The design of the building uses several layering techniques. They act as a way in which elements can be concealed, revealed, and conjoined. Certain walls of the institute are deliberately masked in a way that accepts the aging of buildings and protects inhabitants from falling elements as seen on the Western façade and the supported walls around the institute.

The paratactic unfolds unpredictably sometimes. Elements you wouldn't think to consider can be brought to focus. Similarly, the moments that are left untouched imply an indeterminacy of what could potentially be drawn, or what never needs to be.

The paratactic replaces the need for conventional plans and sections to provide an overview of the design. The practice of adaptive reuse should focus on the individual moments, rather than the composition of the whole.

As the paratactic continues to evolve and change with each new or displaced drawing, it is important to have a tool to capture design. The use of fragment models allows spaces of rich overlap to be studied with an added element of realism. Whether materiality, assembly, light or effect need to be tested, the fragment model provides a tool through which the evolution of the design process can be captured as the paratactic continues to change.

Additionally, the use of vignettes allows the designers to capture the effect of what individual moments could feel like. Together the drawings, models and vignettes come in a way that can begin to chart the experience through the adapted former museum and now regenerative architecture institute.
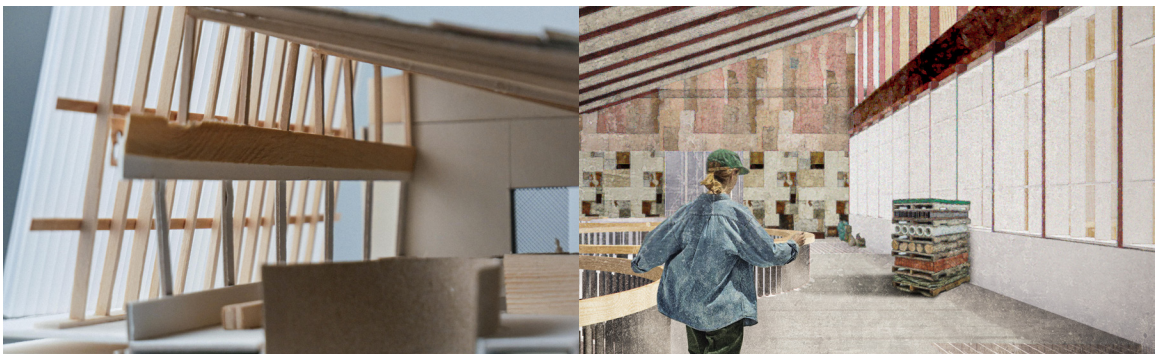
The use of fragment models and vignettes provide an outlet through which experiences can be visualized and progress in the paratactic process can be captured.
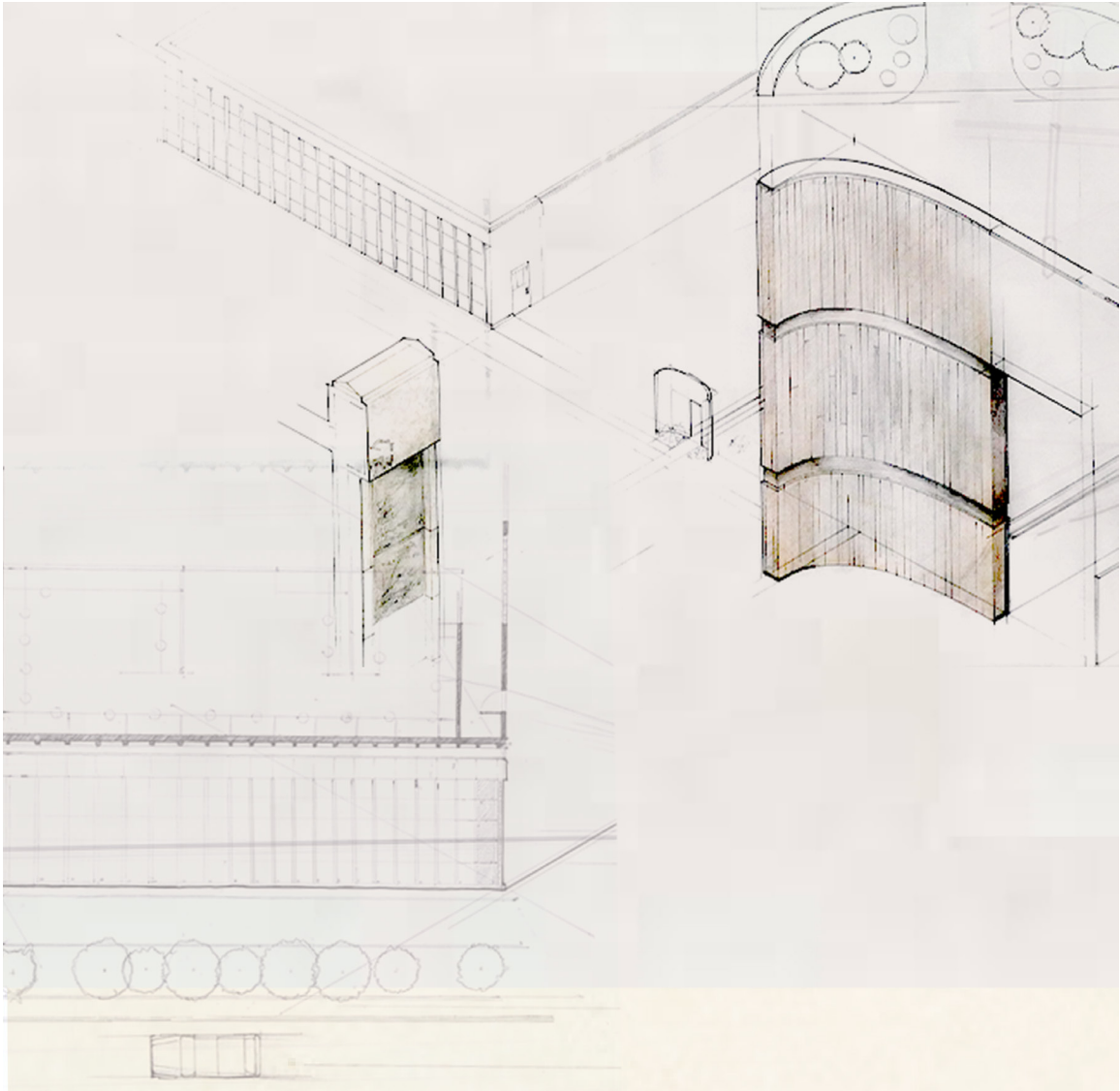
The predominant front desk originally situated in the lobby has been displaced to make a gateway to the new courtyard (A8-C9).

Pathways

The Passenger walks along the Northern façade. Interrupted by the displaced alcove that was once the monumental entry feature. The object now out of place begins to weather as it experiences the natural elements. Getting closer, the passenger sees the door frame cut into the curved wall, making an opening into the courtyard beyond.
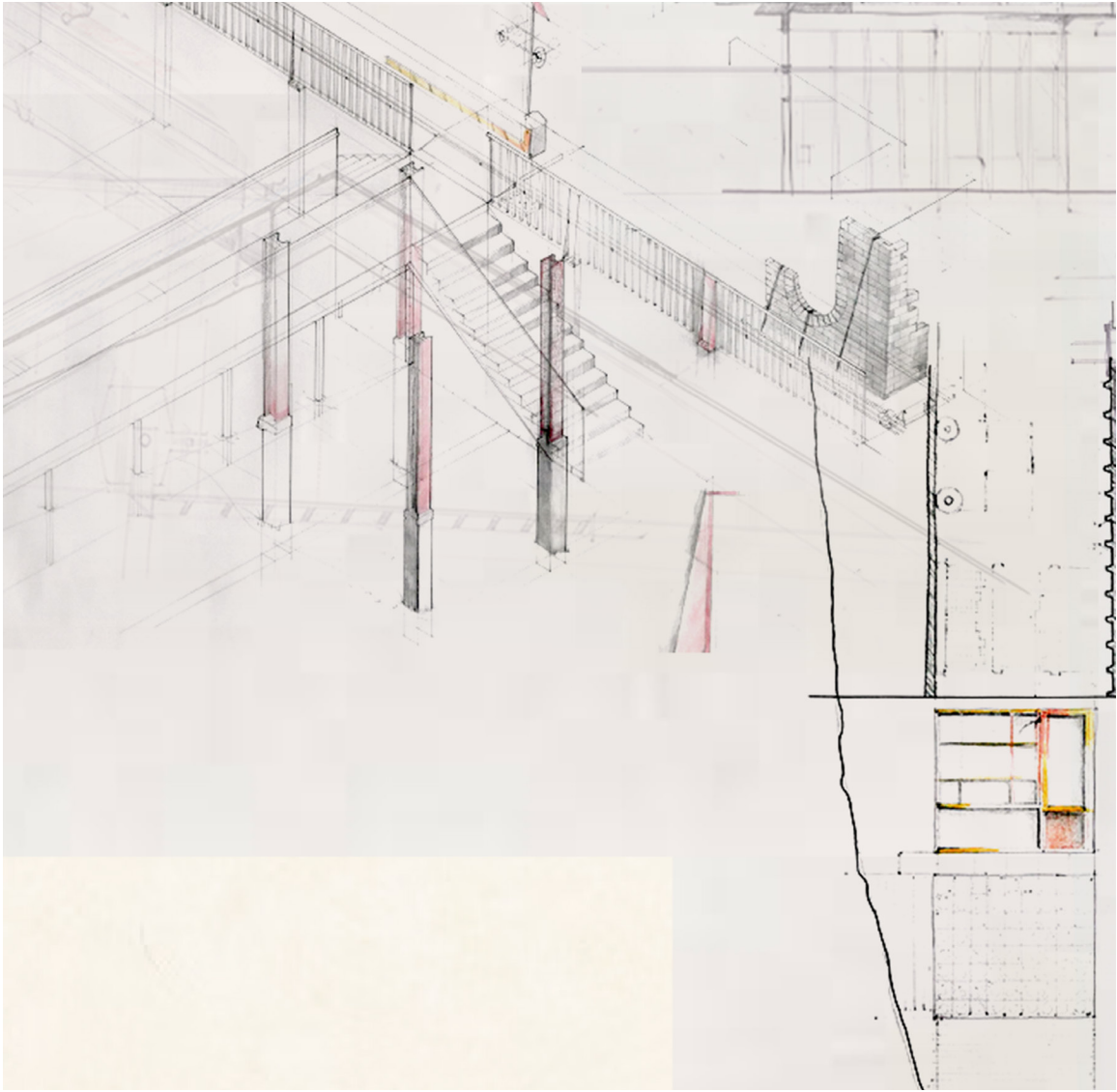
Entry from 102nd Street.

Curved wall opens to a pathway beyond.

Portion of the paratactic showing the isolated steel columns and composite window wall (F7-H8).

Sloping into the building, the courtyard displays a series of steel columns suspended on concrete footings. Between the columns a footbridge extends out to the curved wall, welcoming them further into the space. As the passenger walks along, they witness the fragmented walls on either side, made up of various windows, glass blocks and other reclaimed fenestration elements.

Approaching the end of the footbridge, they are halted as a rail crossing arm blocks their path. They look over to see bay

The pathway that cuts across the courtyard is framed by the exposed steel columns and the composite window walls on either side.
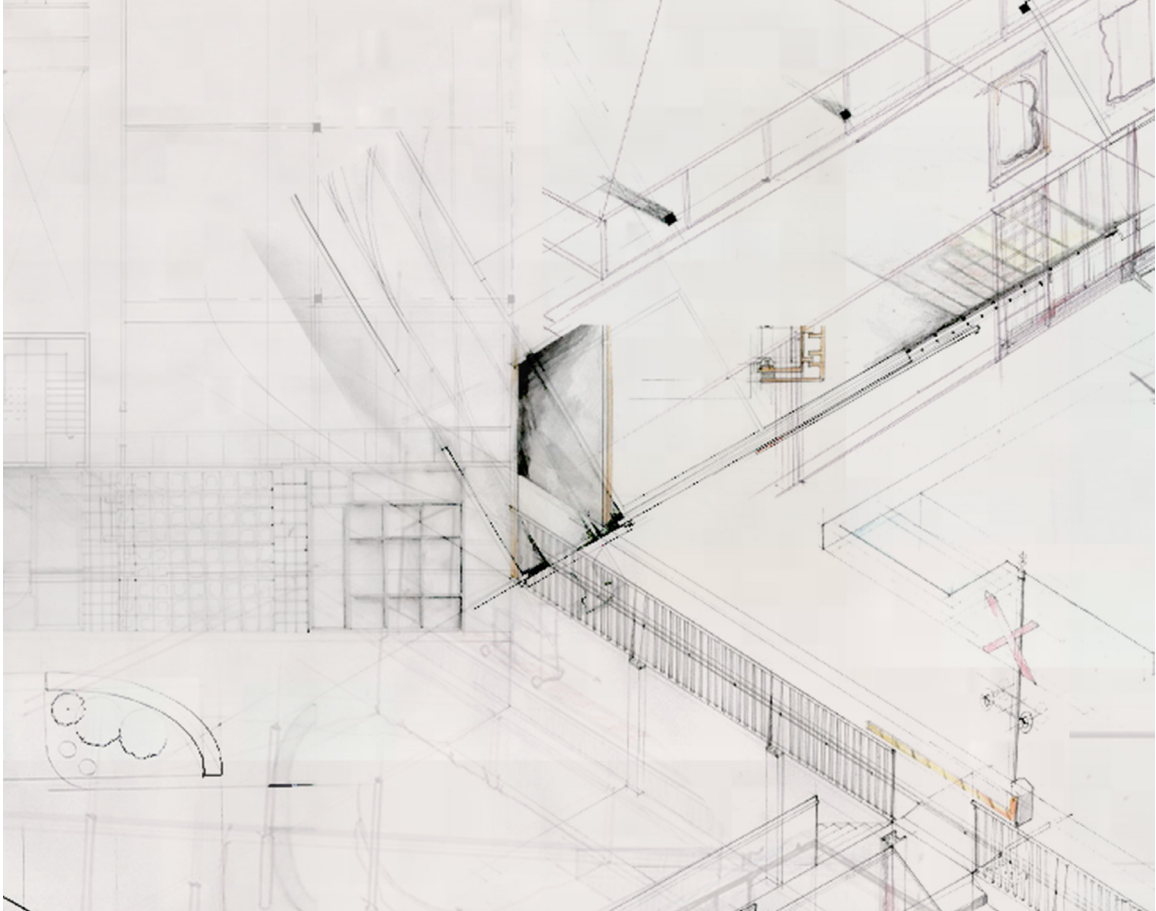
Bay doors raise to reveal a rail track connecting both ends of the building (D6-F7).

doors on either side rise, revealing a connected trackway between the separated wings. Emerging out of one, a flat train cart carrying a building fragment, a brick wall with a window profile preserved.

Further into the plaza, a recess into the ground contains a reflection pool – what was once the walls of the courtyard in the previous museum. Surrounded by different facades, and screens, the activity of the building begins revealing itself to the passenger. The building is stretched between these two wings, made to represent the practical methods of reclaiming and restorative building combined with the theoretical approach to archive and design of non-extractive architecture.
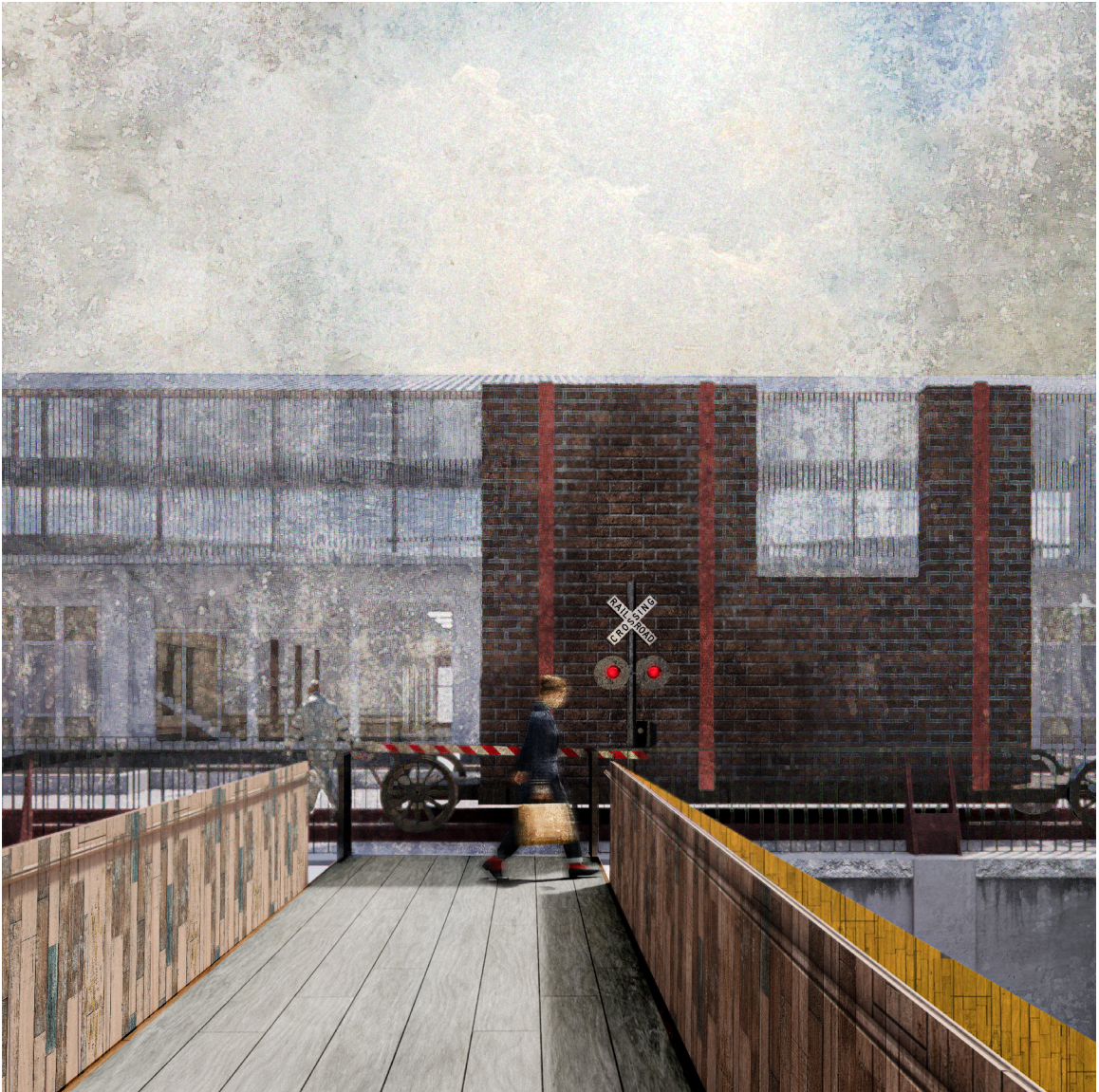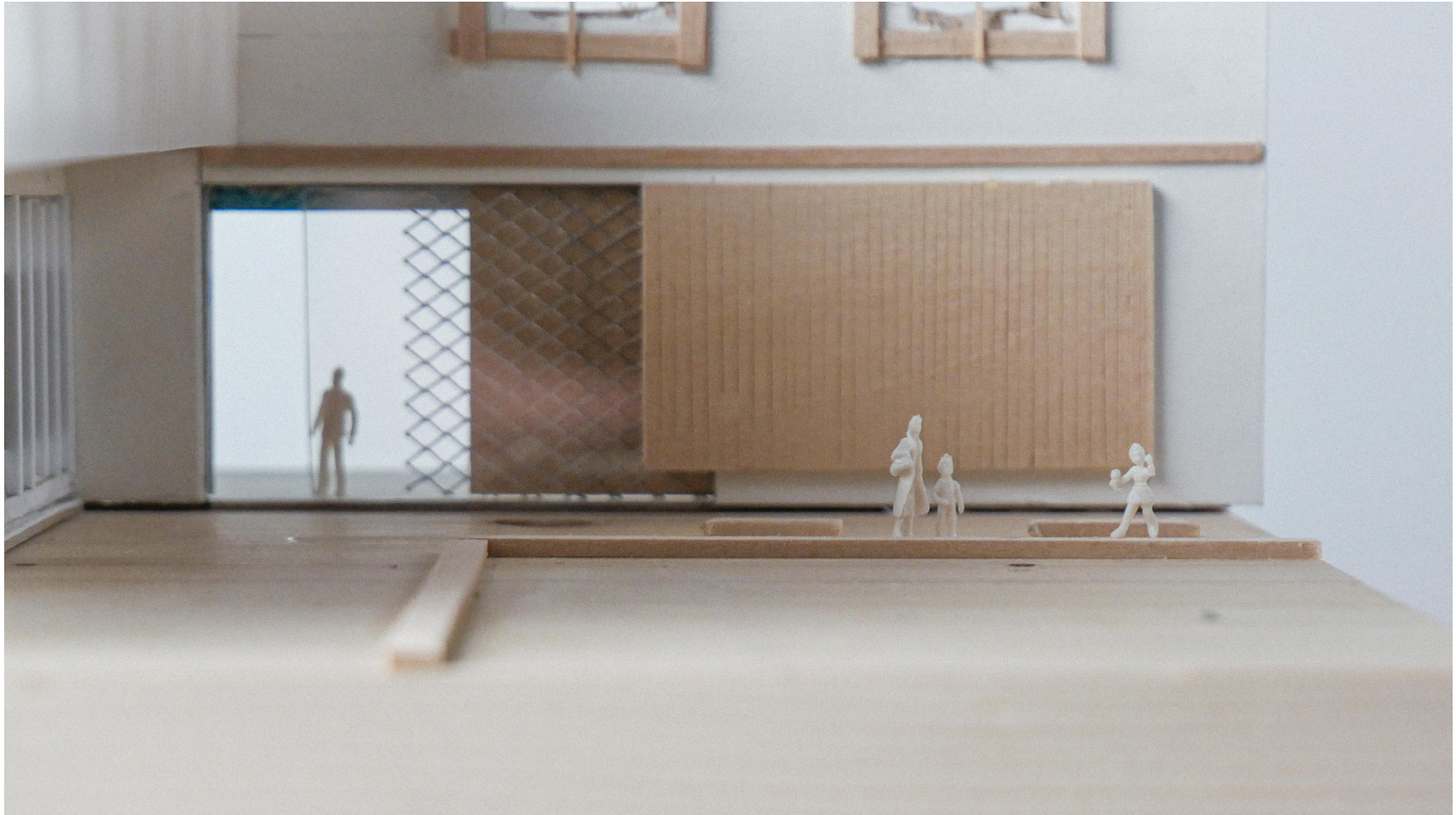
The rail crossing arm lowers to block the intersection between the rail line and the pedestrian route.
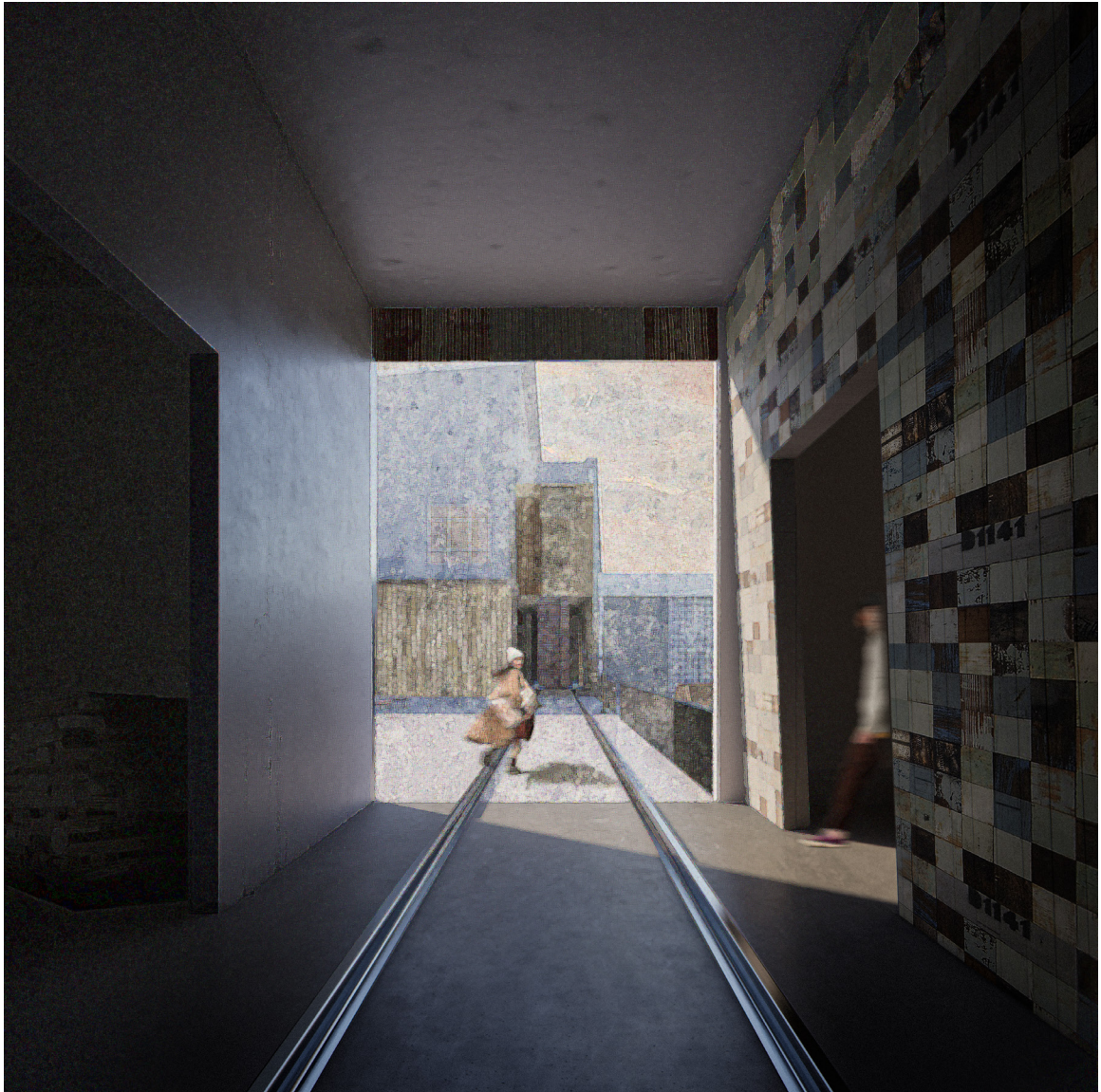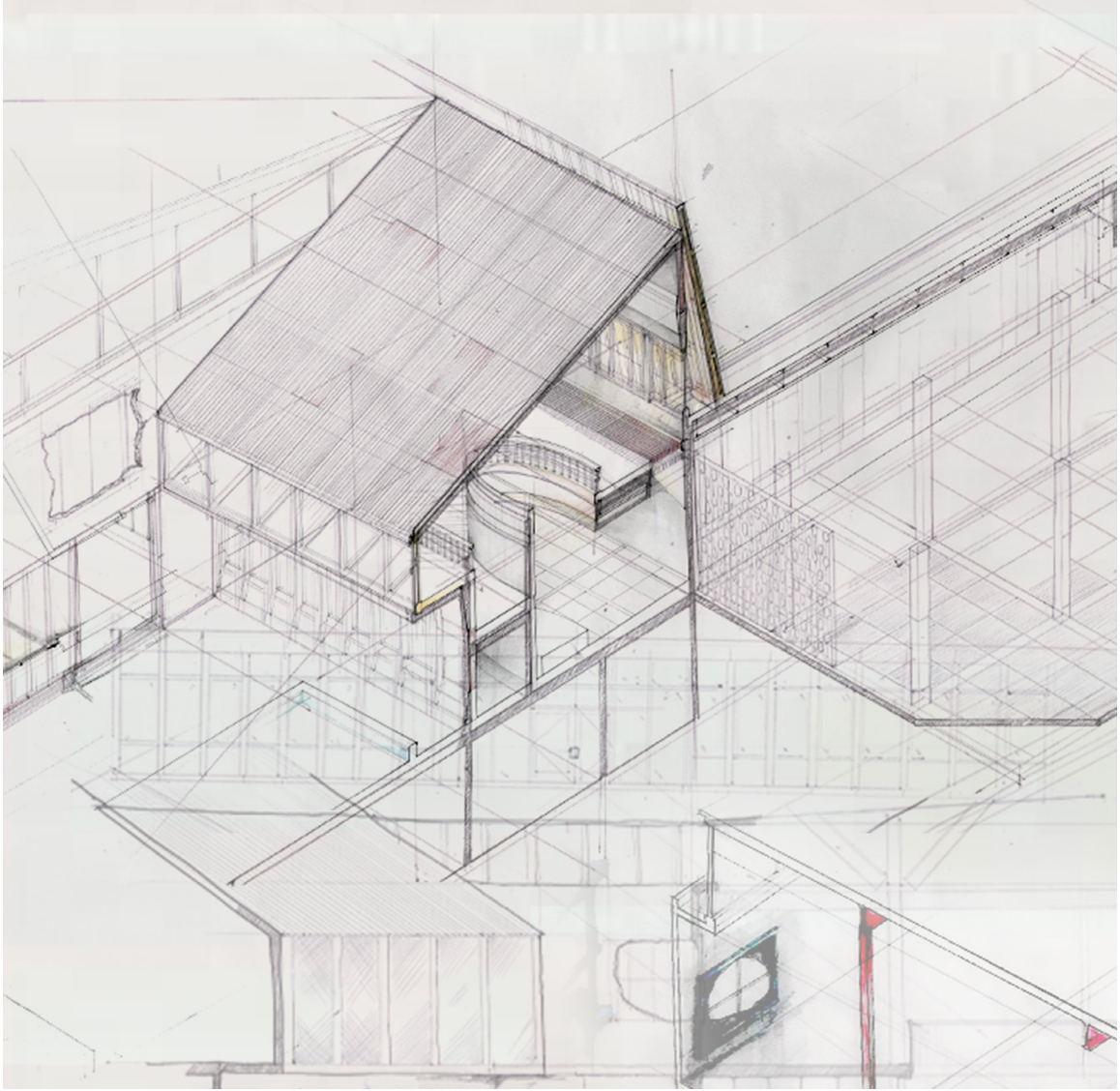
The materials are carted across the institute via a salvage rail section.

Fragment model showing reflection pool and the flexible pocket door system behind.

Bay doors raise to reveal a rail track connecting both ends of the building (D6-F7).

Continuing further into the institute, the passenger finds themself interrupting a group of students in the lobby as they making their way into a classroom. Hosting various classes, the institute welcomes students from various surrounding educational institutions, as well as workshop sessions for community members. The passenger peaks through the metal screen in one of the doorways, peering into the space inside.

Lobby from the second floor that serves to act as a footbridge between the institute and the matter depot.

Lobby from the ground floor where work can be displayed and students or community groups can find their way to classes and workshops.

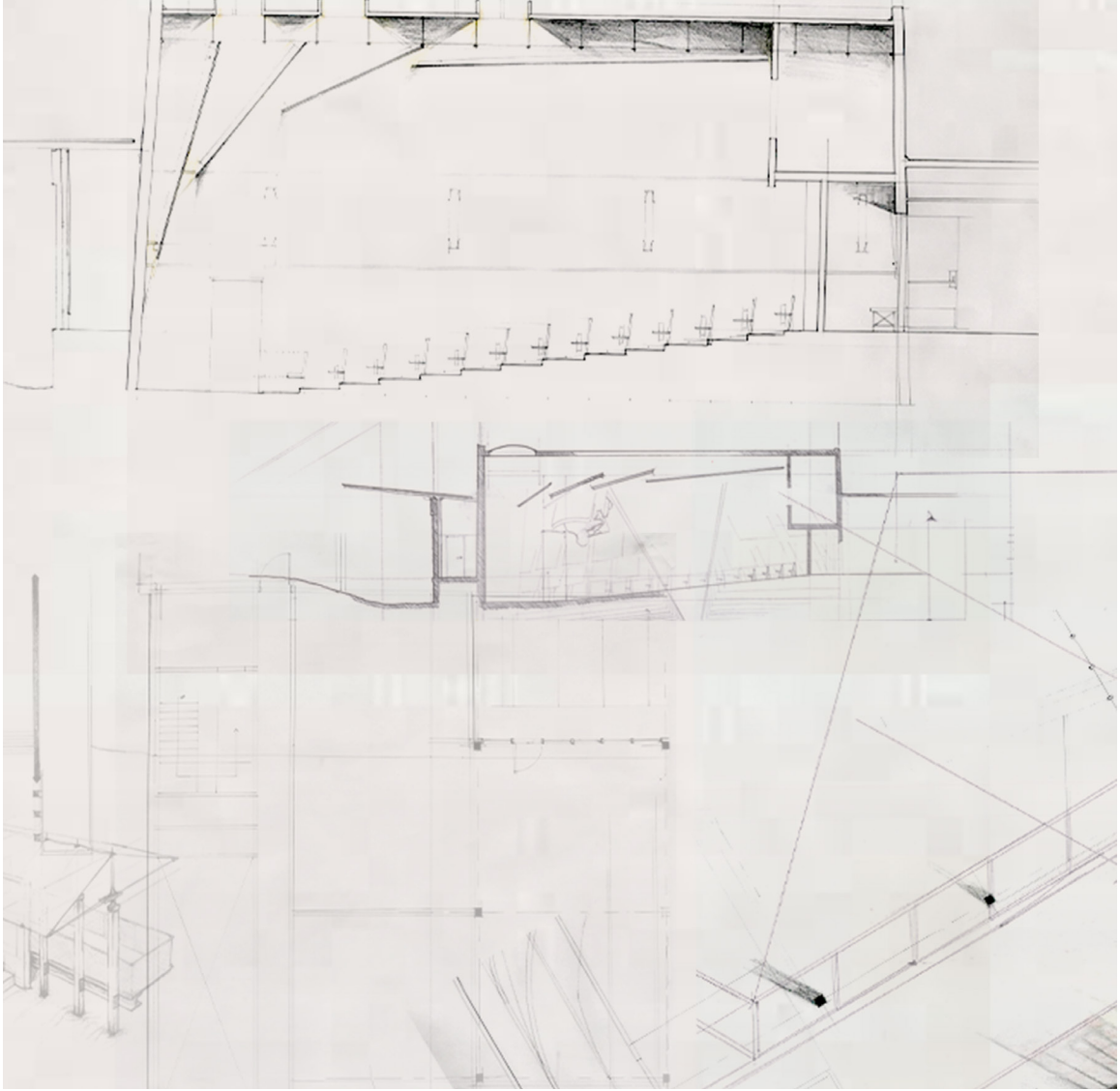Fragment model of the lobby opening into the connected spaces.

A new wall and roof masks the revealed edges of the cut portions of the former museum.

Structure of the former museum is combined with salvaged metal and wood to create a hybrid structure that opens the space to the surroundings.

Preserving the former auditorium the institute now uses it to host events and provide lessons on non-extractive architecture (C2-E4).

Within the institute, the Caretaker sees the transfer of the building materials from a locally demolished building. Directing the movement of materials into a concealed portion of the building. The Caretaker sees the space as a continual work in progress. They know every crack, every leak, every opportunity for a new study.

Located further into the lobby the building is more recognizable to the former museum, with granite flooring, marble tiles, and wood panelling. The Passenger makes
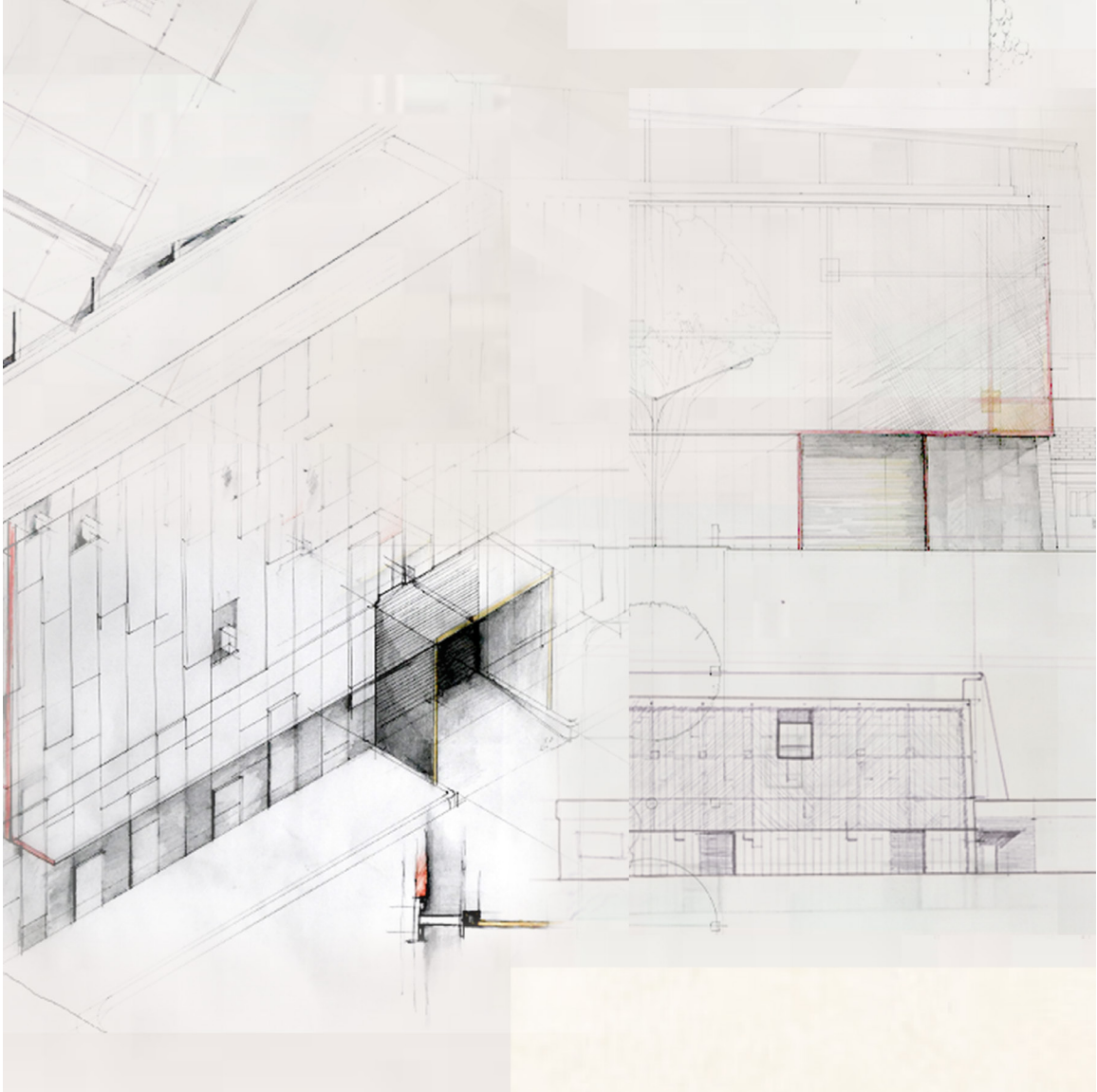
The existing shipping bay is enhanced for the Matter Depot. Screens and netting are fixed to the crumbling facade, inhibiting safe activity below (L8-O9).

their way to the front of the building to find the cafe. Meeting another passenger in this space, the two stay for their visit occasionally looking through the revealed portions of the wall into the other wing of the institute, the matter depot.

Making their way into the site with a haul of reclaimed brick, the salvager unloads the freight into the depot, stacking them alongside similar materials from other projects. Within this depot a material history of Edmonton is contained, showcasing a tradition of building techniques and materials.
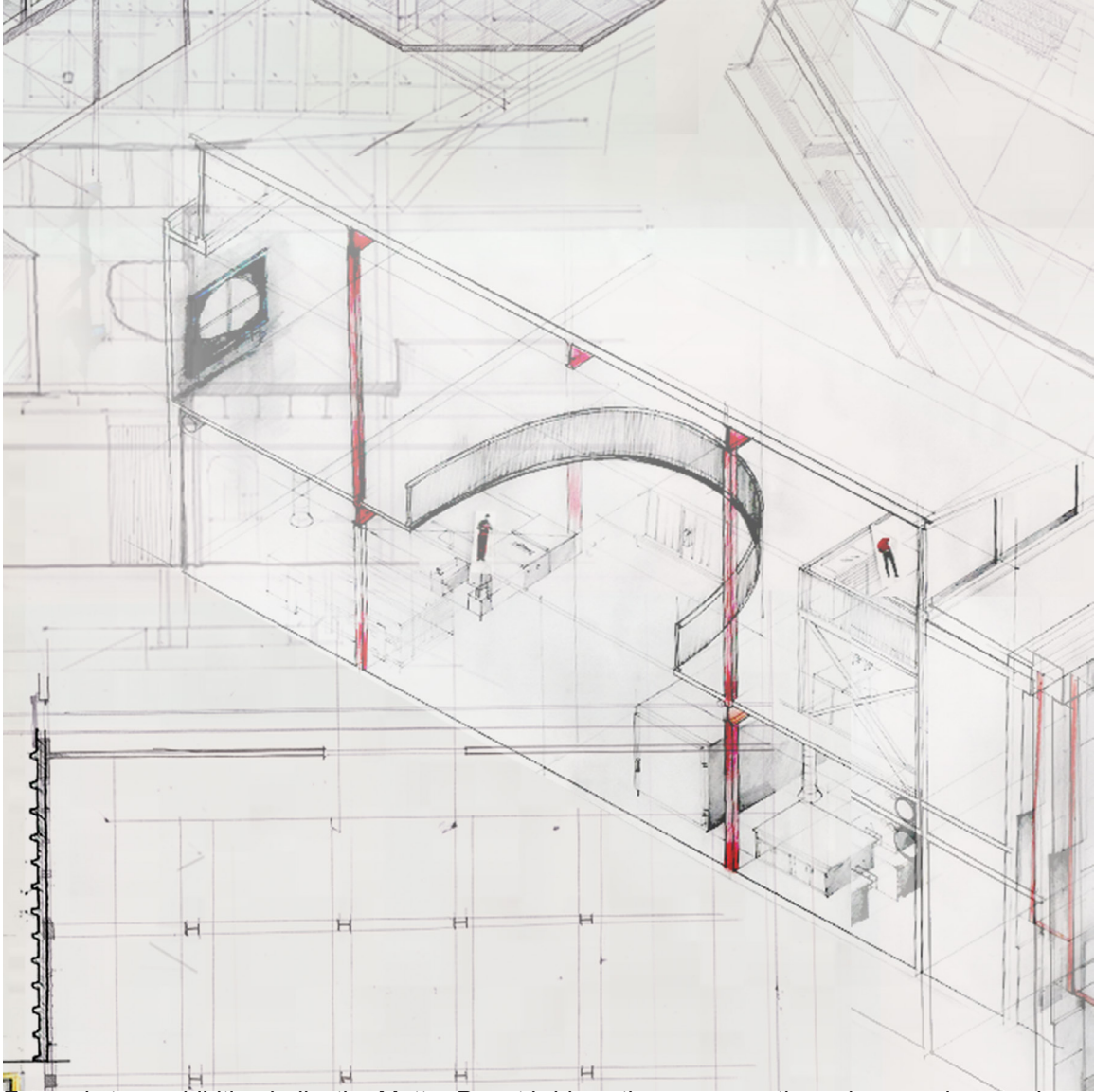
Formerly two exhibition halls, the Matter Depot bridges these spaces through an ocular opening that brings natural lighting down to the floor of the restoration workshop (I7-K9).

The salvager navigates further into the workshop where they survey the room and see timber being kiln-dried and glass panes being removed from window frames, common practices that render elements back into usable materials. A team of salvagers return from transporting building elements across the institute. The doors to the depot are often open to contractors and other builders in Edmonton, the salvager makes their way to the cafe as one contractor waits to be shown the stock.

The West elevation is transformed as the former staff parking lot is transformed into a place vibrant with activity as materials and artifacts are continually exchanged.
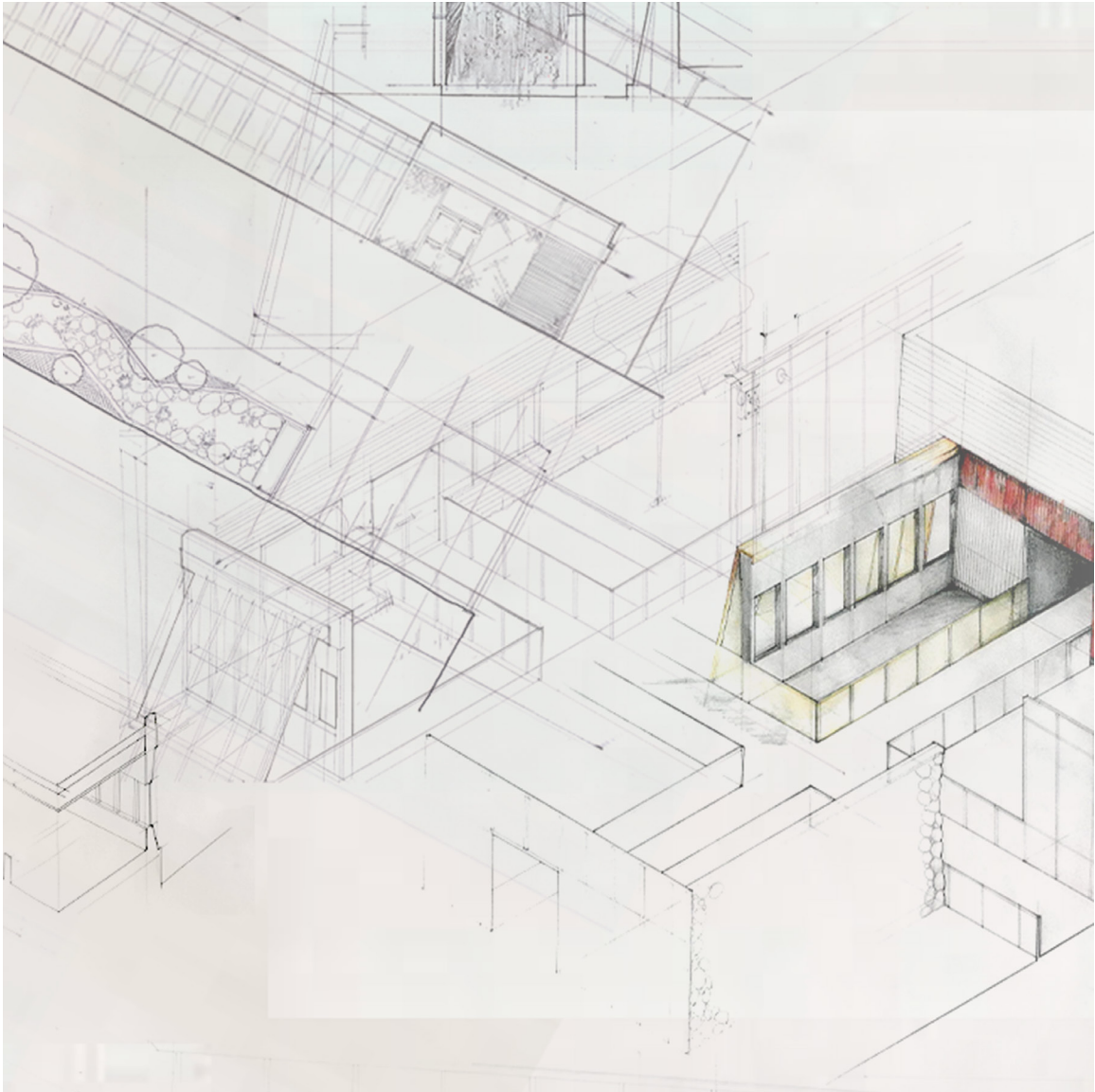
Between the cafe and the archive a network of pathways intersect (M5-O6).

The two passengers make their way out of the cafe passing along the "archive" studio. Now inserted with studio spaces for resident architects, they are surrounded by the braced walls of the former archive. They slowly crumble and crack, inevitably left to fall over a period. Soon these walls will be footings of what used to be, surrounded by an overgrown green space that is taken back by the surrounding area.
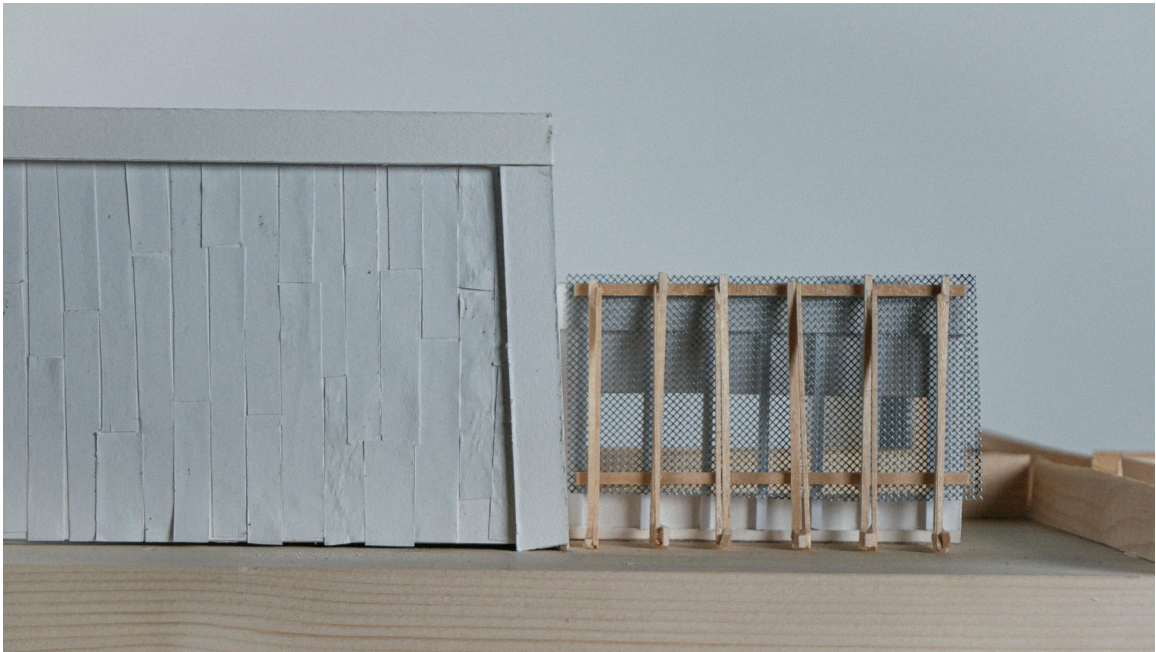
Fragment model of the "archive" studio.
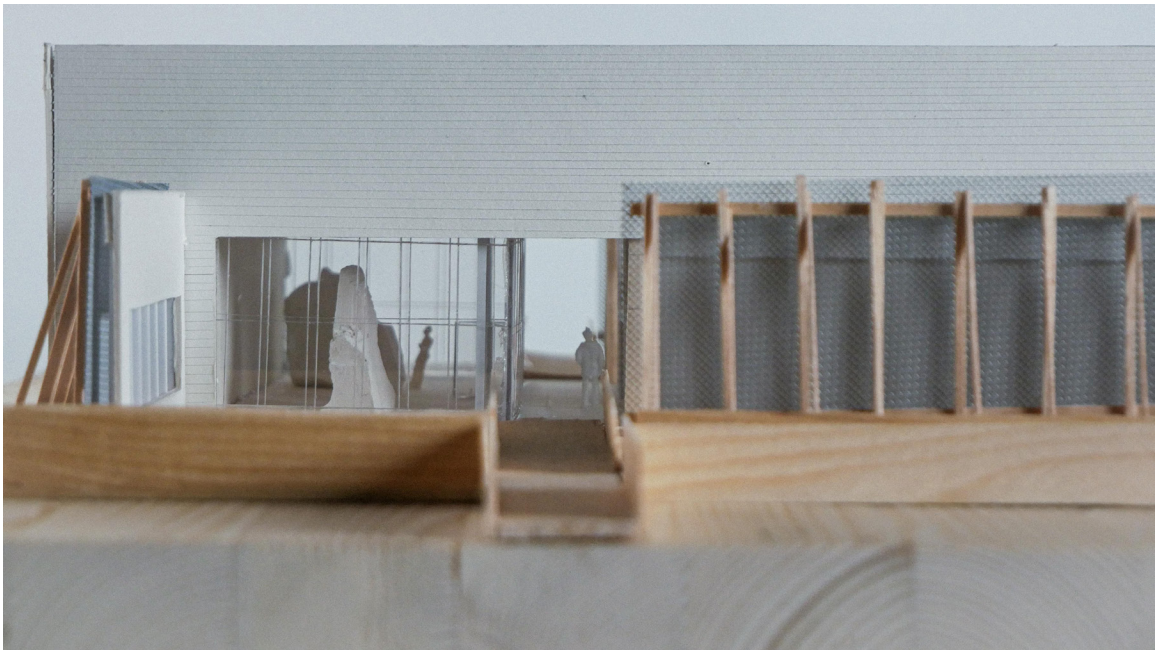
Connected by a series of pathways, visitors are provided generous route distanced from the crumbling walls through the centre of the resident architects office.
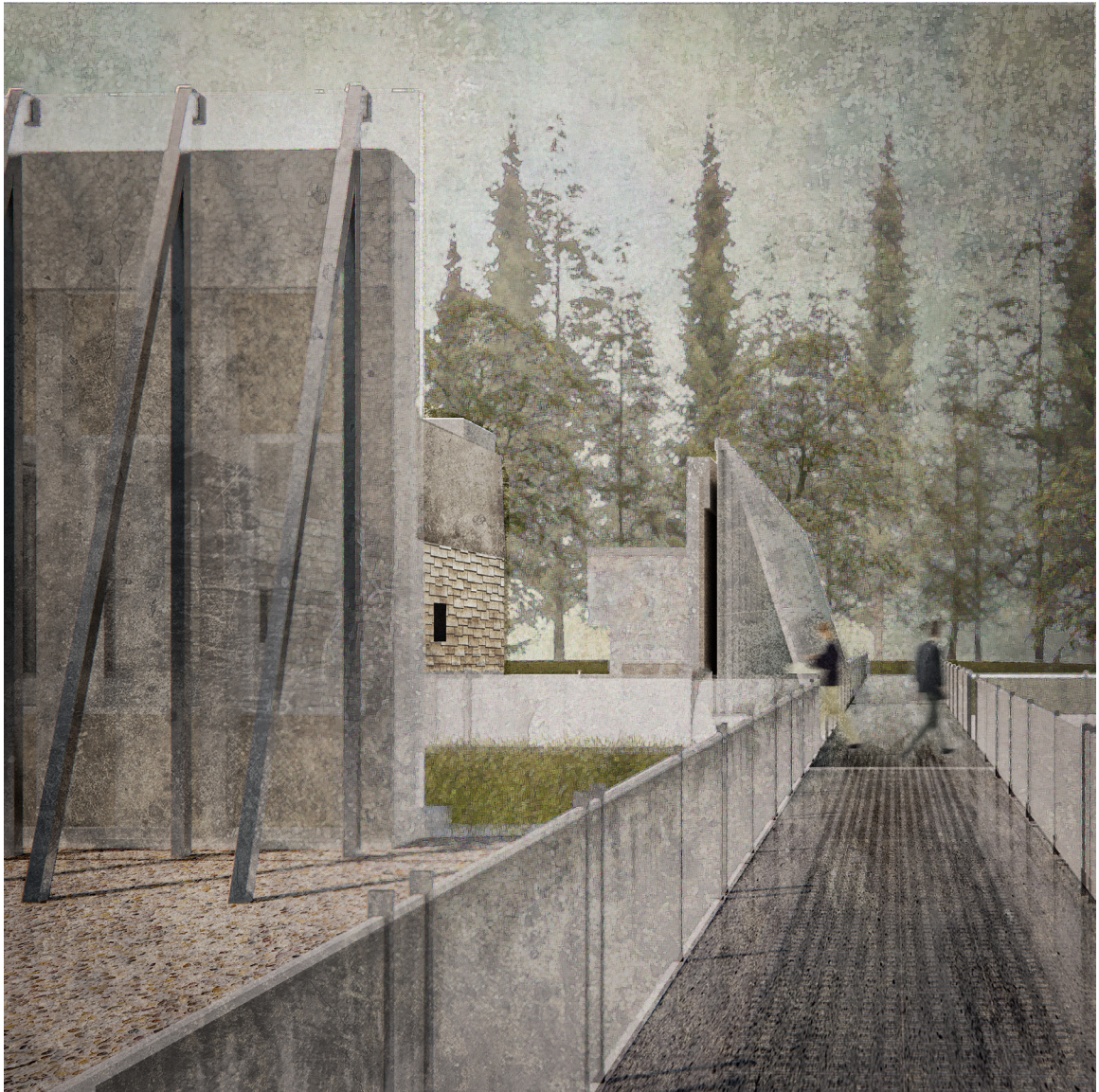
Pathway leading into the "archive" studio.
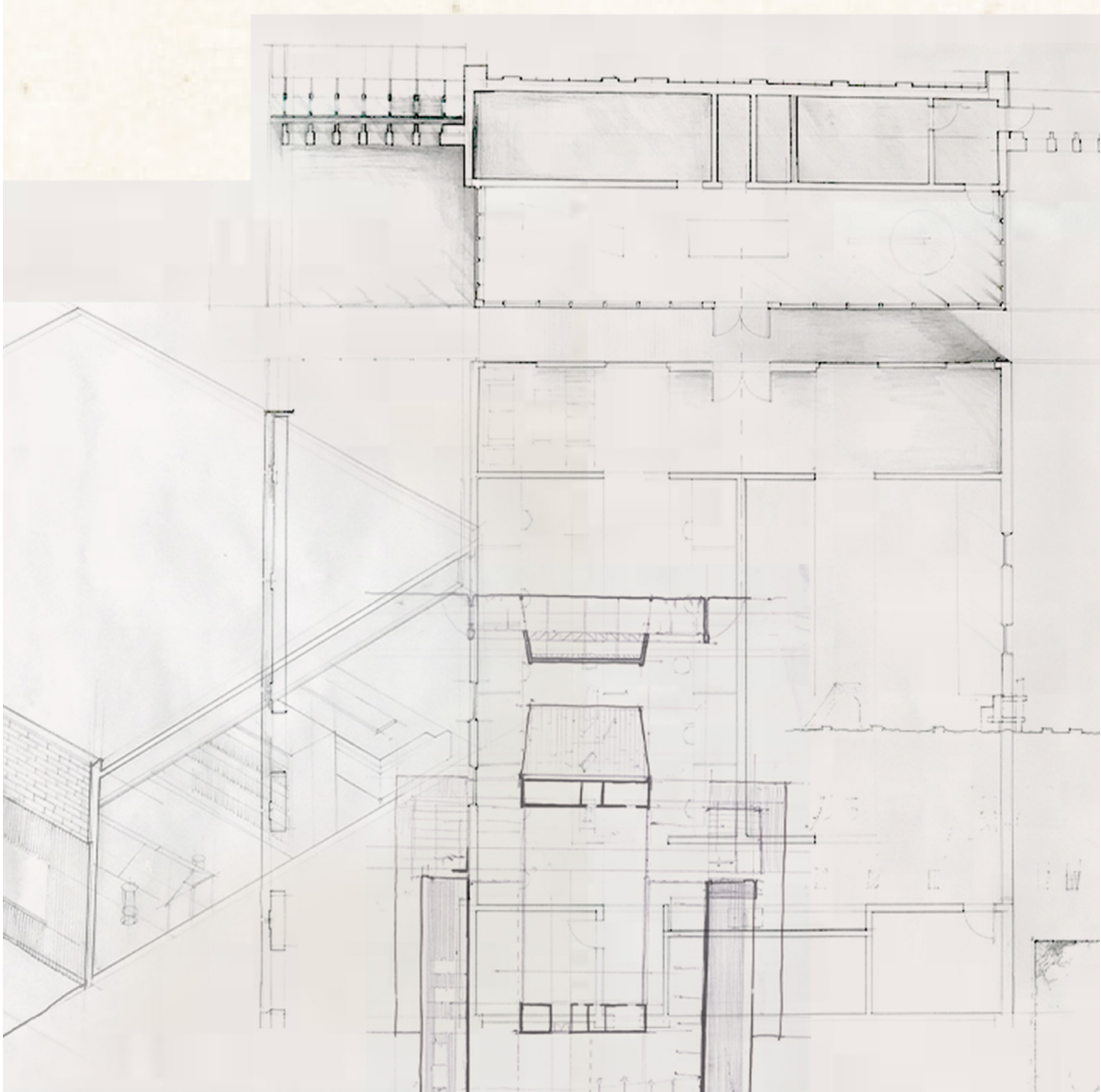
The walls of the former archive are braced to allow for a gradual decay (O4-R6).

Within the "archive" studio, the caretaker works with their team to continue the design of the institute. What areas need attention? What elements have been salvaged that can be included within these walls. They work around a series of drawings and models exploring how the institute can continue to unfold from a non-temporal order. Provided a space within the former archive, they use it as a way to make design accessible to visitors as a pedestrian pathway that runs through the building is always open.

Within the "archive" studio the caretaker evaluates the condition of the institute.

The pathway that runs through the "archive" studio provides access to non-extractive design to all visitors.

Within the "archive" studio the caretaker works from a paratactic drawing, continually adding and removing layers looking for ways to allow the building to respond to the ever-changing landscape.
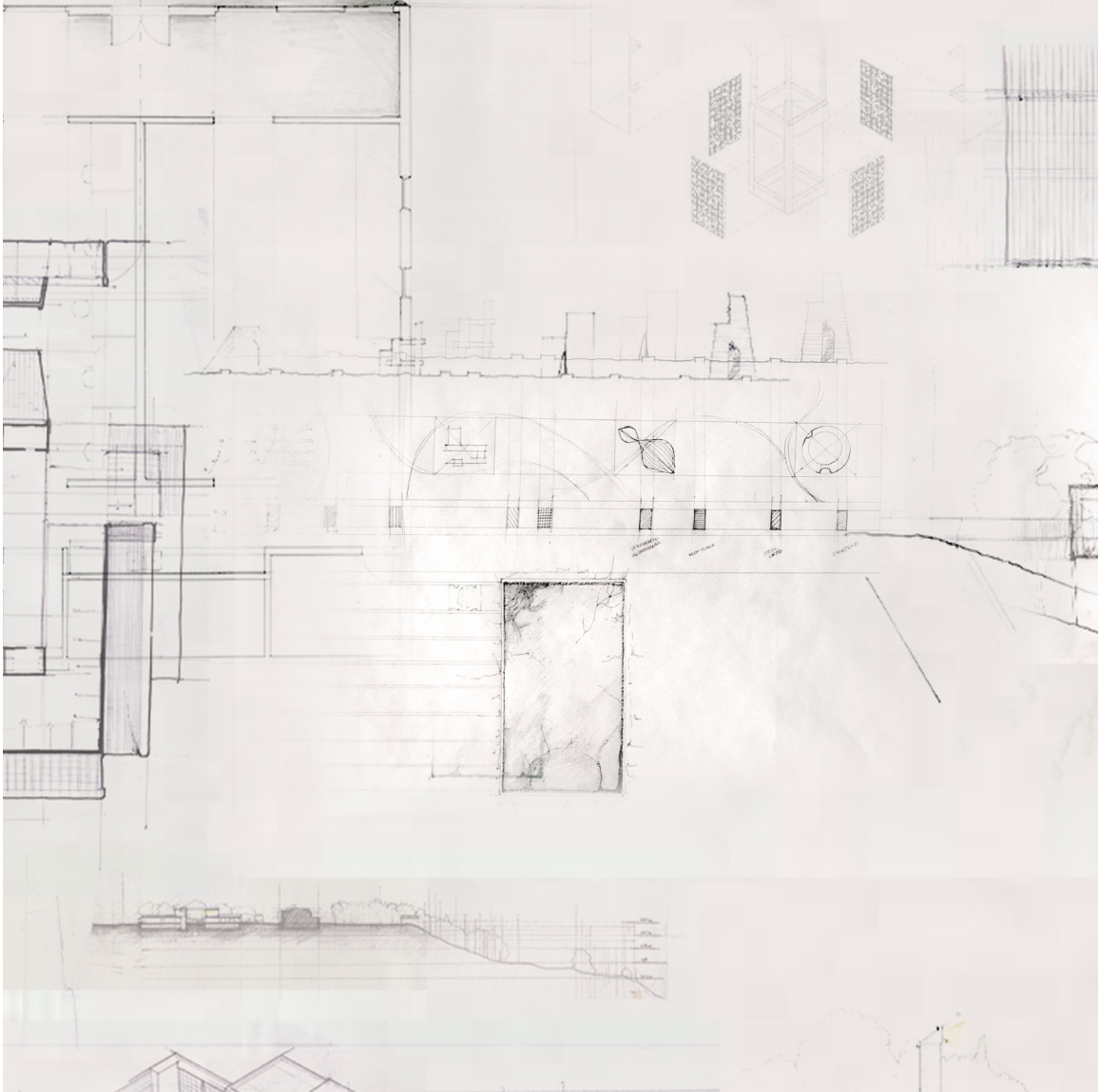
The walls of the former archive are braced to allow for a gradual decay (S5-U6).

The passengers make their way along the pathway, often interrupted by blocks of material embedded in the ground. The stepping stones display various materials in various states of decay. Wood, concrete, and steel are all left to weather under natural conditions. They lead up to the beacon located on the brim of the valley hillside.
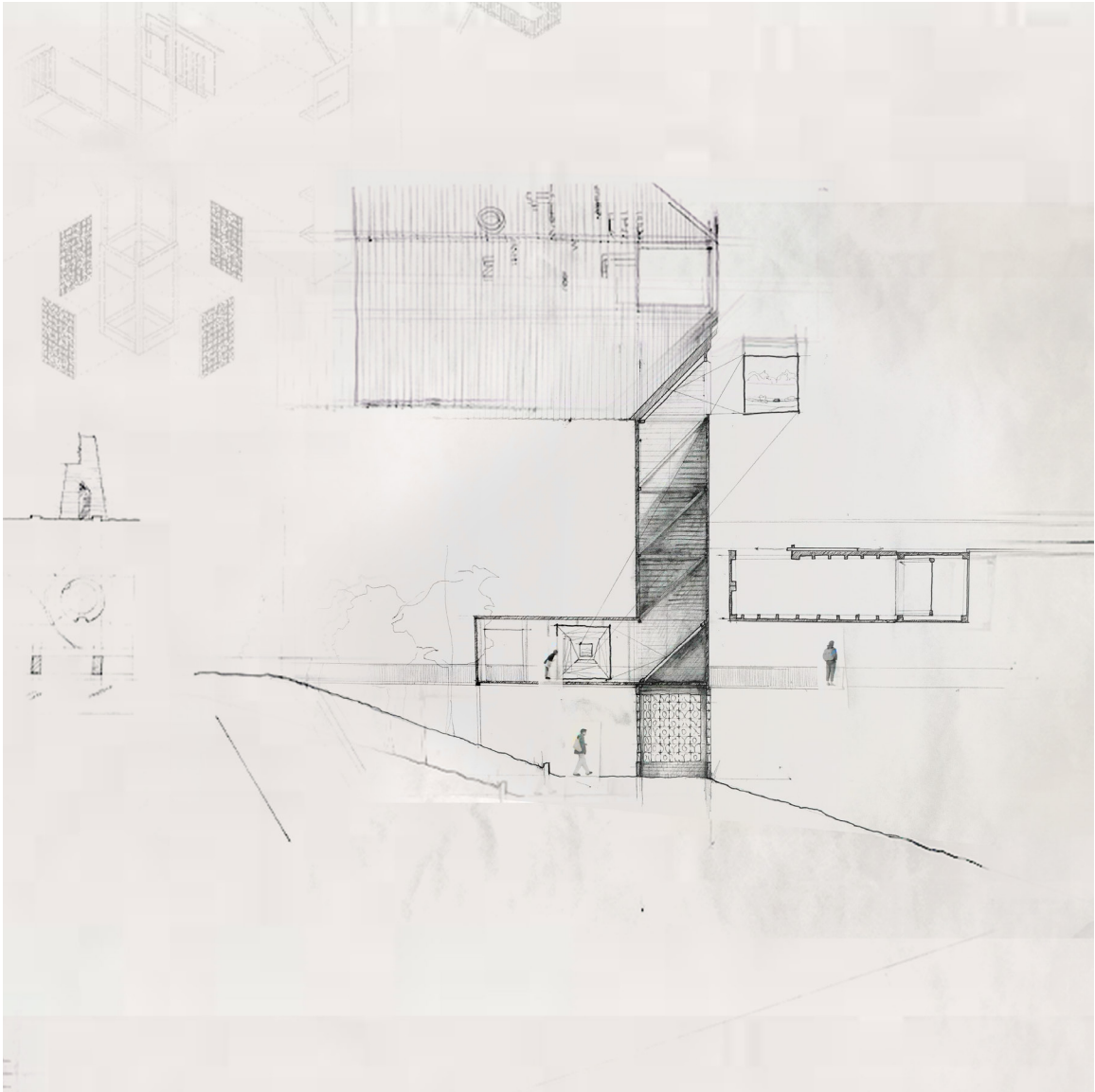
Beacon on the hill (U4-W6).

Heading towards the river valley trails, they pass by the beacon on the hill. Its head poking out amongst the surrounding trees, the beacon is clad in clapboard siding that used to be used on Alberta grain elevators. The faithful reuse of this siding displays the painted letters, now out of order, giving new meaning to each new interpretation. They enter the beacon they see a reflective pane of glass, a former curtain wall panel. It connects to another windowpane creating a periscope effect.

The beacon's head pokes out from the surrounding trees on the edge of the hill.

The distant attraction can be seen from both within the institute and the river valley, simultaneously bringing people in and out of the site.

The beacon is made up of various salvaged material from within the former museum (breeze blocks, brick, and structure) and materials from around Alberta (reclaimed grain elevator cladding).

The small room at the base of the beacon provides an intimate setting for visitors experience.

Elongation of the space created by the periscopic effect, making a barrel of salvaged material with the view of the river valley at the end.

The undistorted reflection creates a barrel in their view, surrounded by the beacon's structure and materials made from reclaimed components. This frame contains the juxtaposition of Edmonton's building past, the essential landscape that rendered this space habitable, and the impositions of human building.

Surrounded by existing pathways the beacon integrates into a system of routes and pathways.

Looking through the periscope, the *Passenger* is framed at the bottom of the beacon surrounded by the reclaimed clapboard siding.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

The institute is an architectural response to how architecture should evolve to reflect our notion of place. The project acts as a commentary on how the development of a city during the time of the European conquest of the Americas can alter a landscape in an irreplaceable way. It has the power to unfold a pattern of continued systems that govern and control the spaces we inhabit. Our access to architecture is growing more and more separate as practices are only able to offer their services to those who can afford it. Providing a model through which architecture can be seen less as a product to be marketed and consumed, but as an ecological approach to the building where portions of buildings are rescued, and design power is shared among multiple inhabitants of a place. In this thesis, the building was developed in a fragmented way to challenge the notion of what an architectural project can be, ever existing in a continued flux, adapting to the notions of those who inhabit it. It becomes the role of the institute to determine the census of the region, what materials are available, what buildings can be saved, and what changes the people would like to see in their built environment.

The study of the thesis was conducted in a way that questioned the necessity of completeness. An ephemeral entity is continually changing as it allows new ideas in and old ideas out. The notion of incompleteness offers flexibility for future use and a perception of an entity that invites participation. Framing projects as complete produces a lens of perfection that can no longer be interacted with. Many of the 19th century buildings are imprisoned to a particular

time period by only reflecting the conditions from the time it was completed.

We must consider how this fragmented architectural practice would actualize. To disperse design power to the inhabitants of the building, people generally need to be more engaged in the design and alterations of the spaces they inhabit. Society has grown accustomed to other people and services solving their problems, as a result of the modernization and digitization in the last century. The thesis pictures a world that returns to local systems of governance and agency. In these smaller, less global, systems I believe society can be reintroduced to enacting change to the spaces they inhabit. A reliance on the global model only continues to perpetuate the same bland placelessness. As a result, a pluralism of our urban environment can emerge and the buildings begin to tell a story of their own in the numerous layers of change they have experienced.

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