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**ON THE THRESHOLD:  
ARCHITECTURAL RESPONSES TO GENTRIFICATION IN  
CHICAGO'S NEIGHBORHOOD OF PILSEN**

by

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## ABSTRACT

By programmatically and spatially addressing inclusiveness through social architecture, the negative impacts of gentrification happening in Chicago's neighborhood of Pilsen - through loss of culture and displacement of residents - is addressed. This thesis explores concepts of land usage, density of amenities and housing, and provides a framework allowing varied appropriation through a set of architectural principles. New interventions including a multi-use community room and co-op housing will benefit the community as well as reinforce its ethnically diverse culture through spaces that foster varying appropriation and collective use.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Many thanks to Terrance Galvin, Frank Palermo, and Grant Wanzel for your guidance and most valued perspectives on the potentials of social architecture.

## INTRODUCTION

There is a quality even meaner than outright ugliness or disorder, and this meaner quality is the dishonest mask of pretended order, achieved by ignoring or suppressing the real order that is struggling to exist and to be served. (Jacobs, 1961:123)

The effects of gentrification are felt by all developing cities. While it can stabilize declining areas, increase property values, and encourage further development, other factors inherent within its capitalistic framework often serve political and financial bodies. These negative effects are: displacement through rent increases, loss of social diversity, culture and homelessness.

Loretta Lees defines gentrification as:

...A process involving a change in the population of land users such that the new users are of higher socio-economic status than the previous users, together with an associated change in the built environment through a reinvestment in fixed capital. (Lees, Slater and Wyly 2008: 258)

A key to marginalizing the impacts of changing land users is developing a framework of housing and community space that not only caters to a lower income demographic, but also addresses these pressures through promoting community discourse. A varying economic demographic does have the potential to be healthy for a neighbourhood provided it follows the ideology of an on-going process of mixing programs, incomes, and typologies, rather than displacement. Within a capitalistic economy, it is community awareness and participation that becomes critically important.

Areas that have been under sustained pressure from gentrification provide a unique opportunity for exploration. When public awareness, well developed community groups, alternative forms of housing and progressive concepts of exchange value are present, there exists the opportunity to emphasize a community architecture based on

inclusiveness. These factors can act as a framework for new architectural interventions in the public realm and its collective use by a variety of groups. While programmatic possibilities are numerous, collective spaces can act as social condensers. It is through these collective spaces, both on a private and public level, that we begin to discover new ways of building that emphasize the social realm as opposed to privatized space only.

This work is a compilation of studies and analysis regarding site, program and building within the context of how a culturally sensitive neighbourhood - Pilsen, Chicago - can thrive by architecturally promoting collective space in an effort to foster community discourse and awareness. The site is located on the northeast edge of Pilsen, known today for the Chicago Art District, an up and coming area that is showing great potential for investment. Proposed is a mixed use building of low rise, medium density co-op housing as well as a flexible community space at ground level to serve a variety of community uses. The present population of predominantly Latino residents can benefit from an architecture that is based on inclusiveness with respect to both program and the built environment.

The overall intent of this thesis is to examine how architectural propositions can provide a framework allowing various types of appropriation within collective spaces. It is this framework at the detail, building, and urban scales that seeks to facilitate Jacobs' "real order" that shows life on the street and speaks to variety and inclusiveness within the community.

### **Thesis Questions**

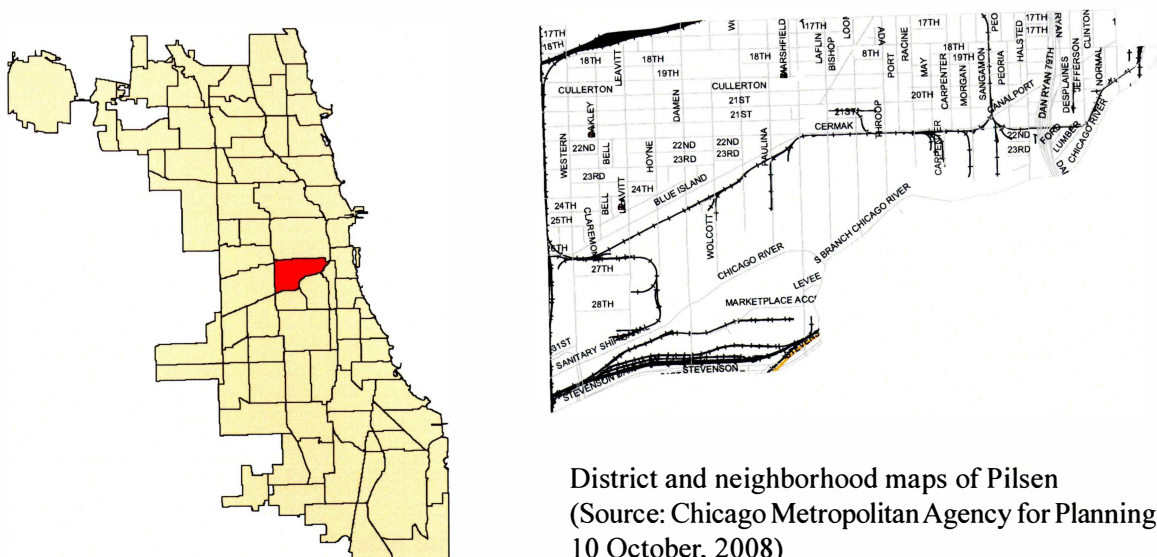
Can architecture promote social interaction and varying appropriation through collectively shared space? How can architecture respond to gentrification through a commentary on collective space versus private space? What if community

awareness was treated as a catalyst for architects to explore and promote alternative frameworks for housing and collective space based on inclusiveness?

## PILSEN - PAST AND PRESENT

Built between the late 1800's and early 1900's as a neighbourhood for the working class, Pilsen has always been home to immigrants. Populations from all over the world came as a result of the many well paying, entry level jobs available in the South Loop railroad hub as well as the industrial corridor of the Chicago river forming the southern border of the neighbourhood. Pilsen survived the Chicago Fire of 1871 and has maintained its status as a working class neighbourhood to this day. Pilsen is also recognized as the labour movement centre of Chicago which was a critical city in the U.S. Labour Movement since the late 1800's. In the 1920's, Pilsen was home to over 85,000 immigrants representing countries of Czechoslovakia, Poland, Lithuania and Italy. Beginning in the 1950's demographics in the area began to shift and reflect an expanding Latino population, predominantly from Mexico.

Many Latinos fled to Pilsen as a result of being displaced by the developing University of Illinois at Chicago. By 1970, Pilsen became the first majority Latino community in Chicago (The Chicago Fact Book Consortium, 1984: 86). Displacement as a result of city development is a common thread along the timeline of Latinos in Chicago.



District and neighborhood maps of Pilsen  
(Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning,  
10 October, 2008)



The Chicago Arts District is located in Pilsen on South Halsted Street. Since 1914, local businessman John Podmajersky has been a supporter of the local arts through his investment in properties that contain various live/work spaces for artists. Still existing today and in its third generation, Podmajersky Inc. is a major factor in the continuing success of Chicago's Art District being its major sponsor (Welcher, 2005). Through its commitment to community development and fostering a variety of housing types, this company is a valuable resource for the area. By consistently promoting the unique culture of Pilsen, a network of socially aware businessmen could provide great leadership as Pilsen develops in the coming years.

In developing a network of galleries and small businesses, local entrepreneurs have had the opportunity to attain investment to start small businesses (Welcher, 2005). This ongoing commitment presents potential for supplemental funding when a community-based architectural project is proposed. Making use of this financially capable and socially aware network that has promoted Pilsen and its Latin American residents is key in its struggle against the pressures of development.



Map of art galleries along Halsted Street. Site shown in yellow.

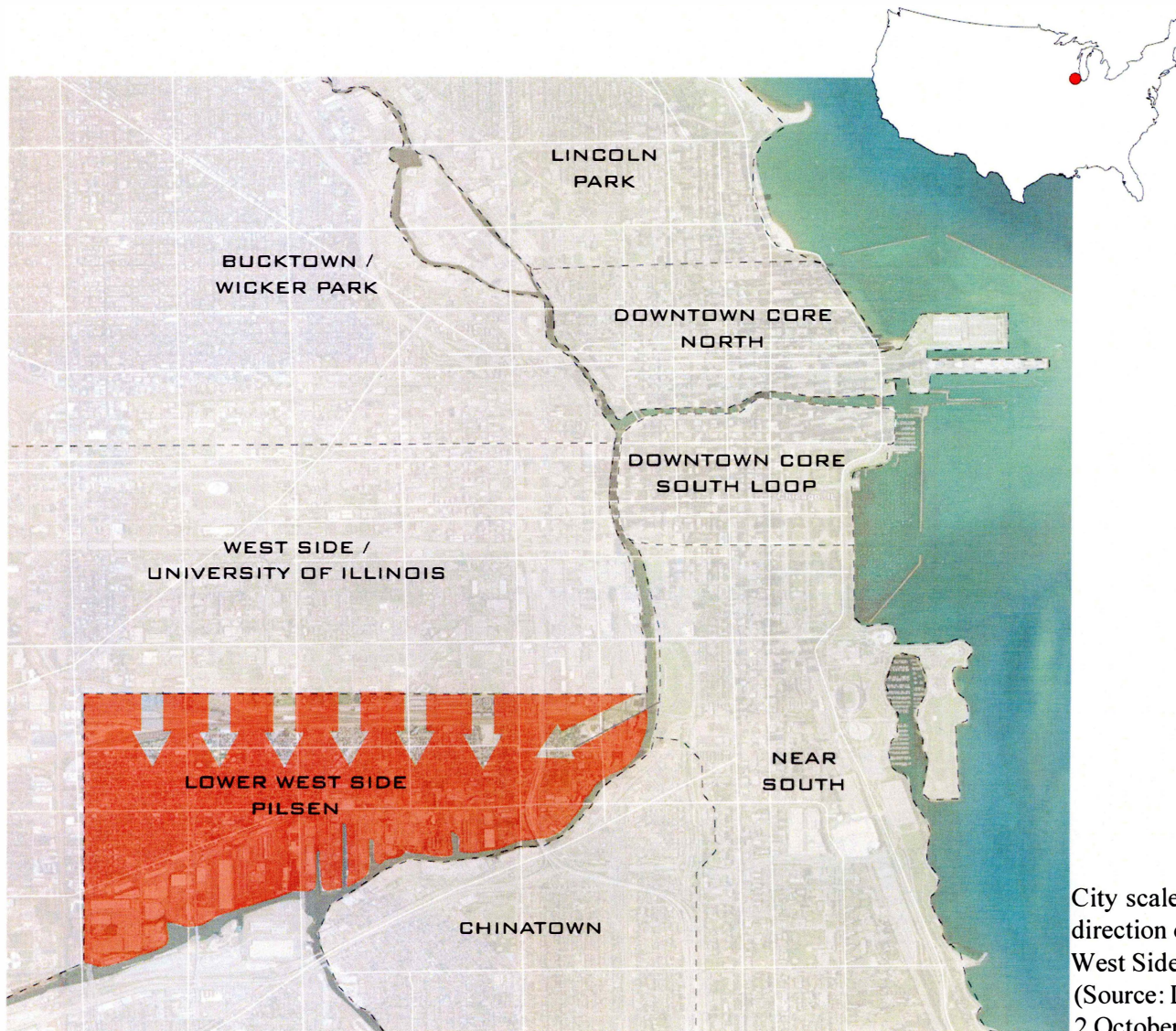
## Pilsen Pressures

According to the US census, Pilsen is 88.9% Hispanic with almost half of the resident population being foreign born (Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2008). With its close proximity to major expressways, ample access to bus and train routes that connect it to the Chicago transit system, as well as its close proximity to downtown, land values are on the rise and development is encroaching along the north and east regions of the neighbourhood. As a precursor to development, the city of Chicago has already begun a process of commodification of the Latino culture as a promotional tactic to entice interest and investment within the community. Local tours describe Pilsen as an “up and coming area” being unique for its distinct Latin American culture.

This culture can be seen throughout the region in various Mexican shops and restaurants, art galleries and community centers that house a growing record of Latinos in Pilsen. Widely known for its elaborate murals, these outlets of collective expression tell the story of the residents, their ancestors' journeys and the history of the place including its plight against encroaching development leading to displacement. The community has a long tradition of community organization and resistance to development pressures.



Mural in Pilsen (Welcher, 2005)



City scale map of Chicago identifying direction of gentrification in the Lower West Side.

(Source: Live Search Maps, 2 October, 2008)



Images of Pilsen today

These murals and many forms of graffiti are slowly being erased, as new property owners are all too eager to protect their property values from “degradation”. In his account of returning to Pilsen after several years, photographer Paul D’Amato marks a noticeable difference between the Pilsen he knew and the Pilsen that now exists:

The place just feels more subdued and less colorful-figuratively and literally. There’s brown paint everywhere like some infectious skin disease covering anything that’s ever been unofficially written on the walls and garage doors. I know it’s not as if someone went into the Sistine Chapel with a paint roller, but all of this graf’, some of which was truly beautiful, was a direct reflection of the life of the place. I wonder, is gentrification the sociological equivalent of the color brown? (D’Amato, 2006: 122)



Image - erasure of the collective voice

With recent pressures to gentrify, the community of Pilsen has been mobilized through various community groups, that advocate and work against the gentrification movement. This history of resistance is largely due to developments by the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) over the past forty years. Both major developments have been responsible for great unrest and displacement among many residents of the Lower West Side. Although many culturally distinct areas have been marginalized or even erased, a key precedent for what gentrification has done to the Lower West Side has been the “renewal” of Maxwell Street.

## Maxwell Street Market

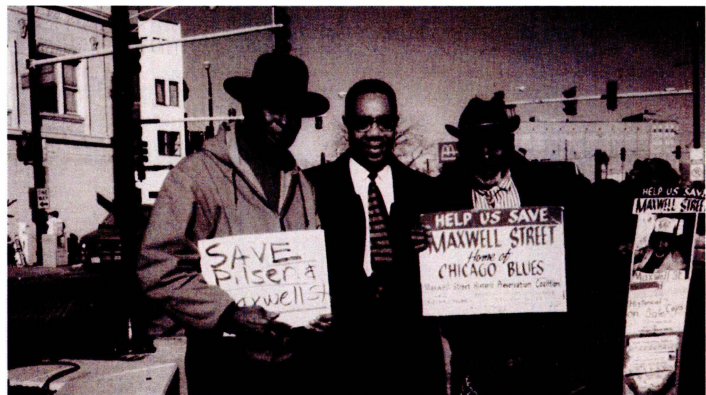
Maxwell Street is located six blocks north of the chosen site and is a culturally significant area within Chicago. The Maxwell Street Market began in 1912 and is still today a significant attraction on Chicago's South Side. For almost one hundred years, working class vendors from all over would come to Maxwell Street to sell their wares. Produce, baked goods and dozens of ethnically specific foods could be bought and sold. It was considered a showcase for the ethnic diversity within Chicago and the surrounding areas until the mid-1990's (Grove, 2002: 34).

Along with displaying food, sporting goods, clothes and countless other goods, Maxwell Street is known as the birthplace of Chicago blues. At any given time, one could experience all that the budding arts community in the area had to offer. Artists such as Jimmy Rogers, the Moody Jones Band and most notably Muddy Waters were all regulars that performed on Maxwell Street. In the mid-1950's, while still showing an ethnic mix, the area became more concentrated with Latin Americans who added to the diversity. For decades, Maxwell Street was a vibrant and culturally significant area for the working class of Chicago.



Maxwell Street looking east c. 1940 (Source: Grove and Kamedulski, 2002: 17)

Signs of change within the area would appear in the mid-1960's when University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) was sold a large plot of land on the South Side north of Roosevelt Avenue. As a predominantly working class area of African American and Latin American residents were faced with gentrification as they were forced to move further south into Pilsen. Maxwell Street became a venue for community meetings and demonstrations fighting the pressures of displacement.



Images of protest (Source: Grove and Kamedulski, 2002: 119, 120)

In 1990, UIC announced their plan to purchase land south of Roosevelt Avenue (including Maxwell Street) for their South Campus extension which would include a new college of business, sport fields and a new University Village. Immediately, city sanitation was cut and police staff decreased as the university began to fence off and destroy property. Demonstrations to save Maxwell Street were widespread as the residents of the area, now predominantly Latino, were once again being forced to move further outside the city center.



As one examines the images of a vibrant Maxwell Street and compares them to the Maxwell Street of today, the difference is telling. What was once an outlet for collective expression of Chicago's working class is now a mundane and bare example of "revitalization" in aesthetic terms which lacks the spatial complexity and potential that existed before. Today there are high end apartments and townhouses that former residents could only hope to afford. While some mixed use still exists, areas for gathering are rigidly defined and sparse. The market was subsequently relocated farther east where it remains today.

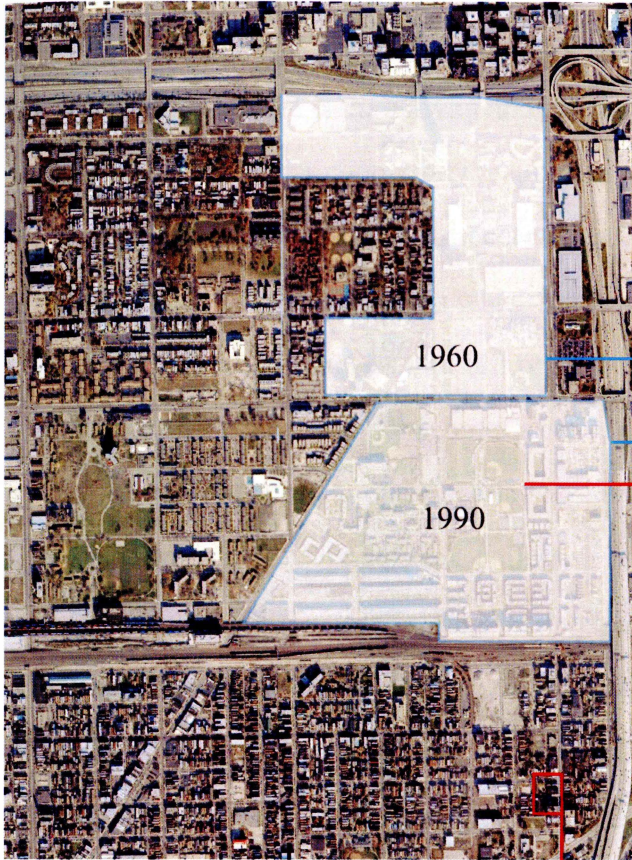
Architecturally speaking, what made Maxwell Street a cultural icon was not a prescriptive method of building but a framework of buildings, sidewalks, stoops and alleys that were appropriated by users in varying ways. This is evident in the life of the place that only documentation now shows. How a sidewalk of appropriate dimensions can become a market, and a stair can become a place for viewing are all ways simple architectural devices can become so much more through appropriation by a user. These spatial considerations along with programmatic mix and density are important factors in an attempt to reinforce community values and life on the street. The critique of Maxwell Street and its redevelopment as an example of erasure, contributing to the pressures facing Pilsen today, form a position for the proposal that follows.



Maxwell Street life looking east c. 1940  
(Source: Grove and Kamedulski, 2002 : 17)

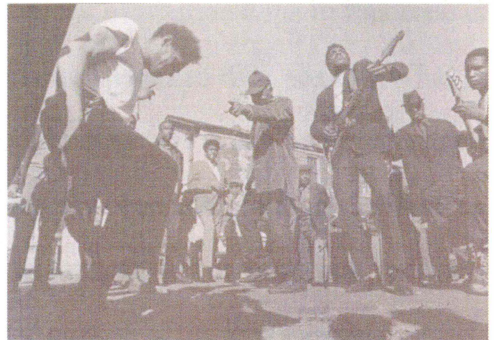
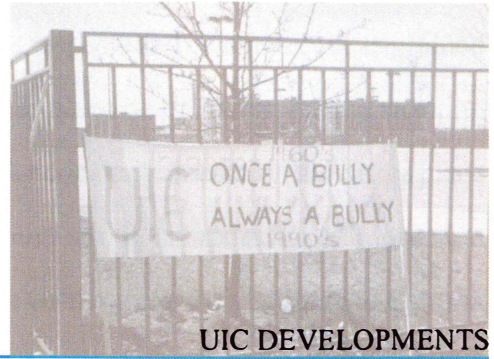


Maxwell Street looking east, 2009  
A bare street today



SITE

Land areas and dates of UIC developments  
(Source: Live Search Maps, 2 October, 2008)

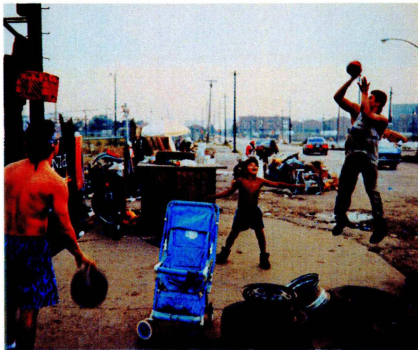


Images of Maxwell Street  
(Source: Grove and Kamedulski, 2002: 50, 64, 82)

## DESIGN STRATEGIES

### Street Life

The central precedent in striving for an intervention that respects and celebrates the engrained Latin American culture is the activity and life that takes place on the street. In this working class neighbourhood, the community is strong due to the constant interaction that takes place on the front steps, side walks and streets of Pilsen. These strong components of interaction within the culture are principles on which many urban cultures can thrive. There is a strong component of resourcefulness and utility as we can see how a milk crate can become a basketball net, a concrete wall becomes a canvas, or an open fire hydrant creates a place of gathering on a hot summer day. Creating a prescriptive set of relationships in this case is futile as users will appropriate their collective and private spaces as they see fit. What is possible is to establish a “scaffolding” through spatial devices which can be appropriated and possibly even changed depending on the inhabitants. By proposing four spatial devices as scaffold - street, plinth, landing, and balcony - accompanying appropriate program considerations, architecture can begin to frame how the culture of the area expresses itself, as seen in the case of the former Maxwell Street.



Images of Pilsen (Source: D'Amato, 2006: 67, 71, 80)

## The Site

The task is to promote the city life of city people, housed, let us hope, in concentrations both dense enough and diverse enough to offer them a chance at developing city life.  
(Jacobs, 1961: 221)

Located on Halsted Street, the site is a vacant lot at present surrounded by several small cafes and art galleries. Given its varying surrounding demographics, by proposing an increase in mixed use amenities that can be readily used by a varying population base, it is the intention that the neighbourhood as a collective will be reinforced. Reinforcing the collective translates into the promotion of social discourse and awareness. In analysing the density and amenity of the site within a 5, 10 and 15 minute walking radius, the immediate area shows a moderate level of density in the form of housing, cafes, art galleries, elementary schools, etc. This in turn, informs and reinforces the programmatic potentialities of a central community room catering to a wide variety of community needs and functions. By introducing the concepts of street, plinth, landing, and balcony, a framework is put in place that emphasizes collective space as part of a medium density cooperative housing project.

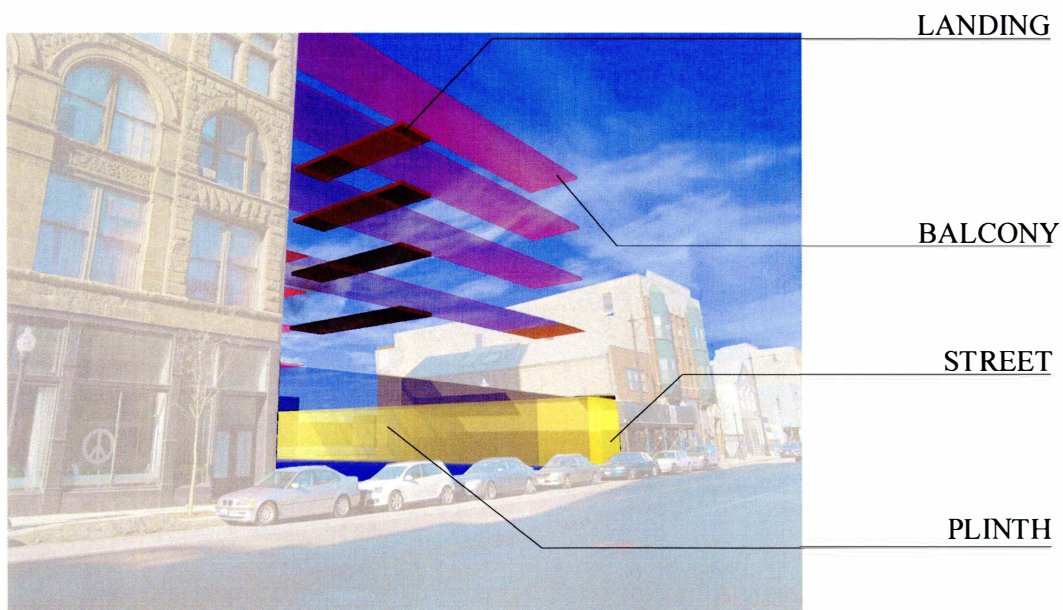
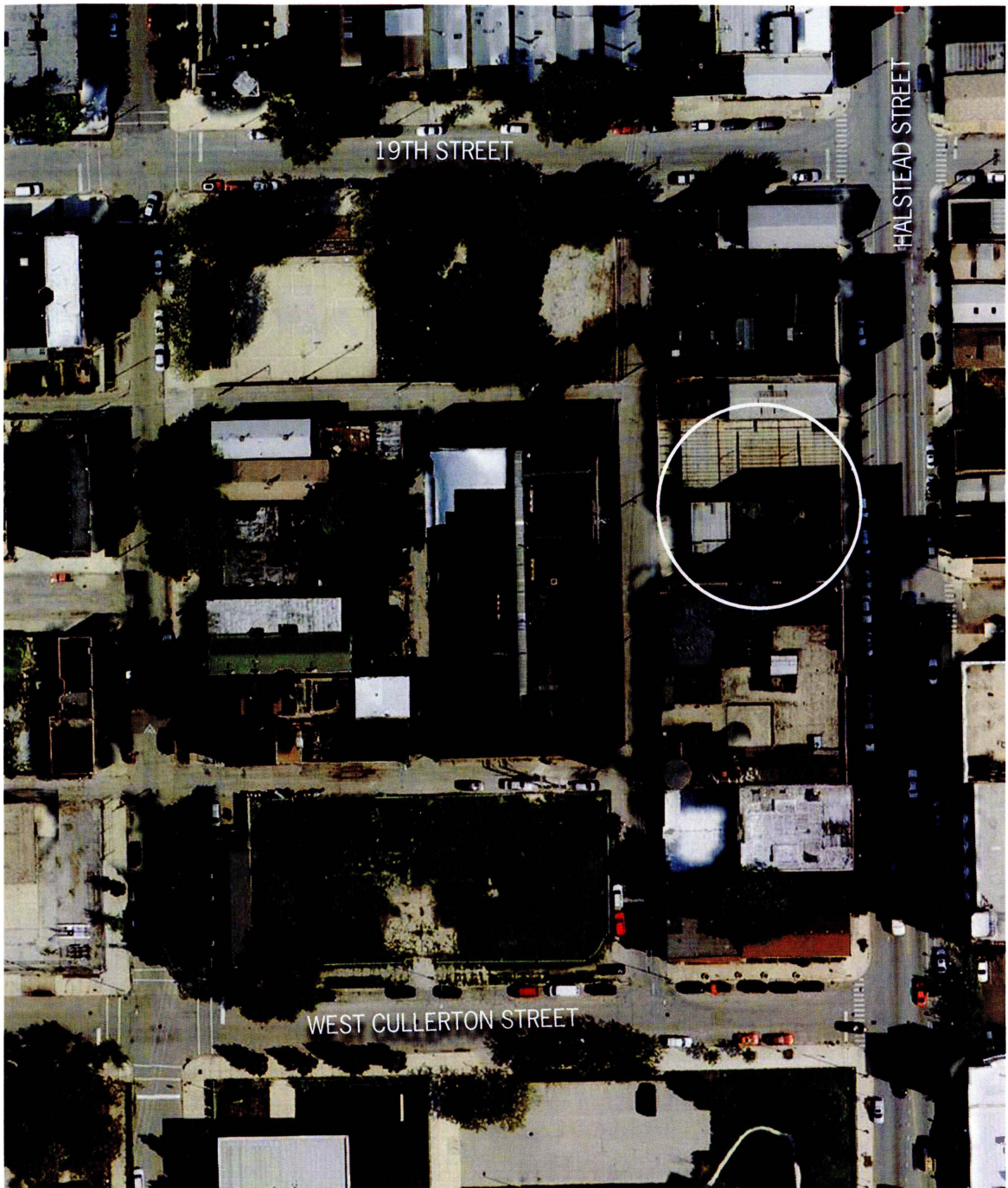
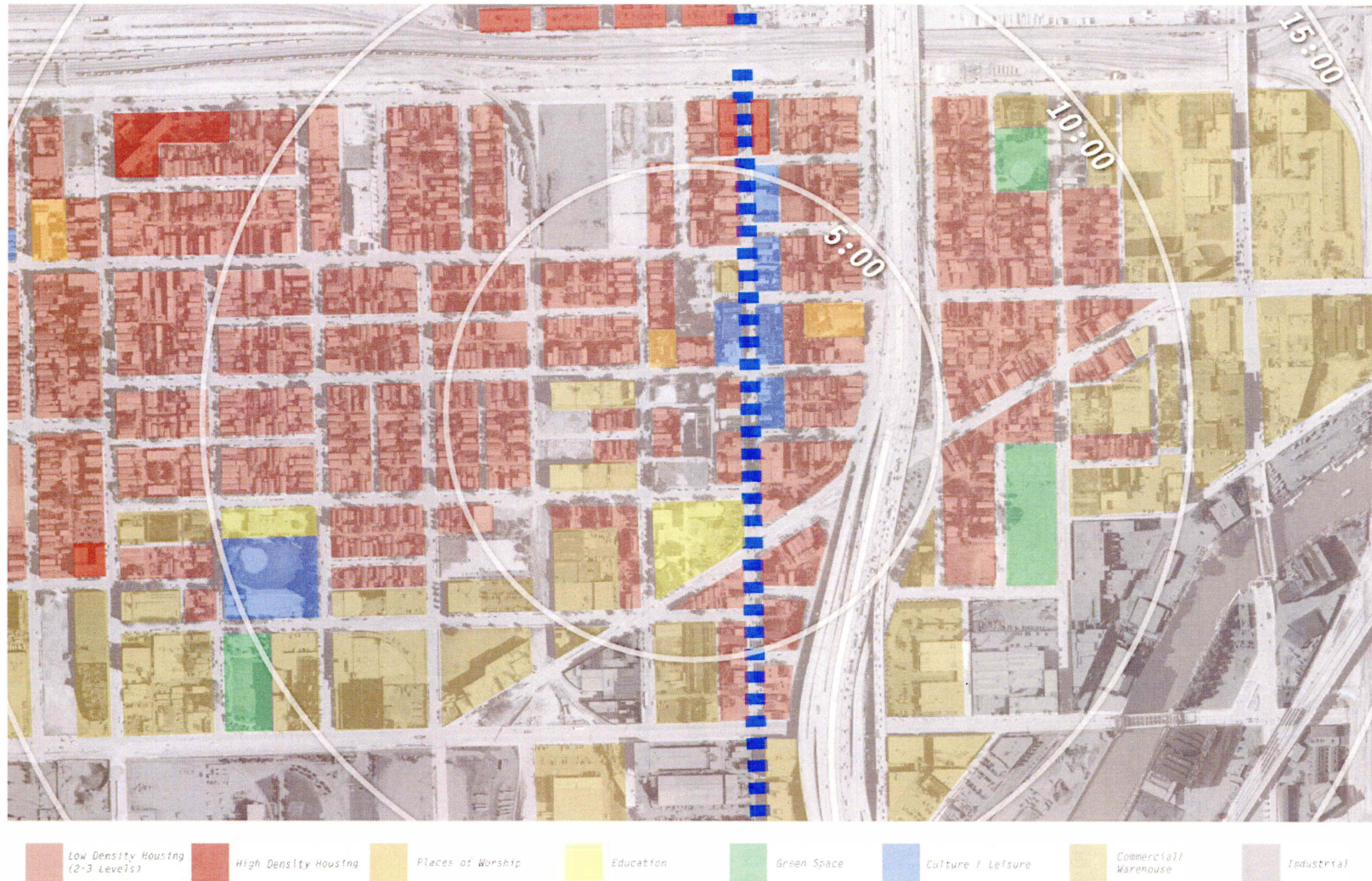


Diagram of spatial devices within the site on Halsted Street



(Source: Live Search Maps, 2 October, 2008)

Site aerial - Halsted and 19th



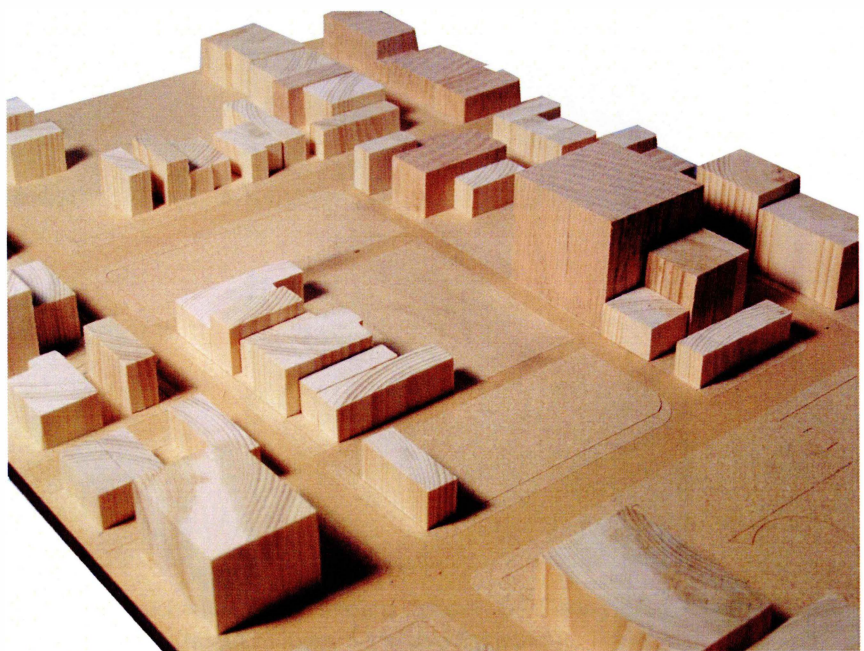
Urban study identifying available amenities within a 5, 10 and 15 minute walk from the site. Chicago Transit Authority bus route represented as dashed line. (Source: Live Search Maps, 2 October, 2008)

## Density and Site Massing

In this design proposal, it is critical that the strategy of replacing rather than displacing be developed. The northeast area of Pilsen - being the area under the most pressure to develop - has a large quantity of vacant lots. Vacant areas should be promoted and considered first for development rather than destroying and displacing a population that is showing effective use of land. Such regulations could be promoted and enforced by local community groups along with the municipal government.

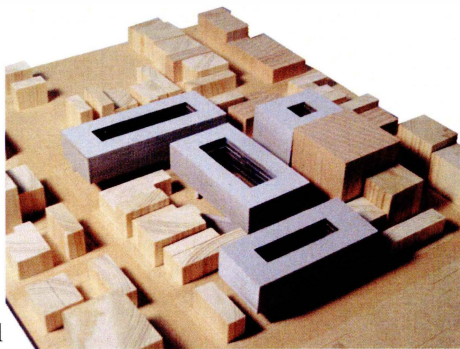
Crucial to the success of a walkable neighbourhood is its density of housing and mixed use. A major characteristic of the site's larger block is its lack of density. The block currently has approximately 6,070 square meters (1.5 acres) of vacancy. If this were approached by the Jane Jacobs minimum density requirement for a vibrant urban community of 100 dwellings per acre (Jacobs, 1961: 212), the block should accommodate at least 150 dwellings. With no more than approximately 80 people currently living within the block, it is clear that

Site model looking northeast, showing density characteristics of site.

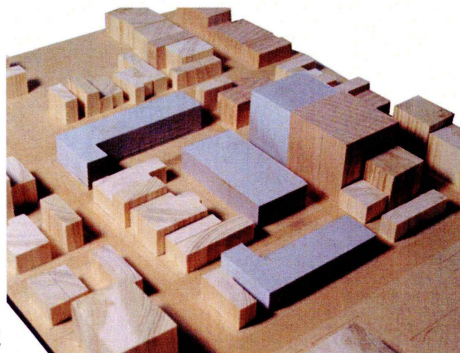


for the area to maintain its presence, density must be gradually increased. By providing a density of 27 units per 1020 square meters excluding other programmatic components (on the selected site), and assuming that this is maintained throughout the future development of the block, Jacobs' benchmark for density can be attained and surpassed by 20% if we take into account the existing buildings on the site .

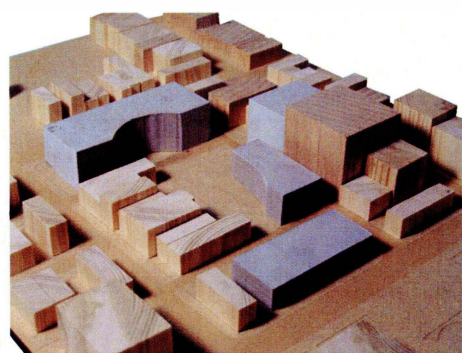
One must consider the many ways in which an increase in density and its subsequent massing, orientations and design considerations affects the surrounding urban fabric. Below are several schemes examining design ideas, their subsequent massing, and the potentials



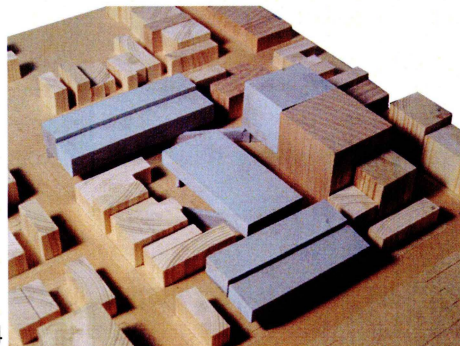
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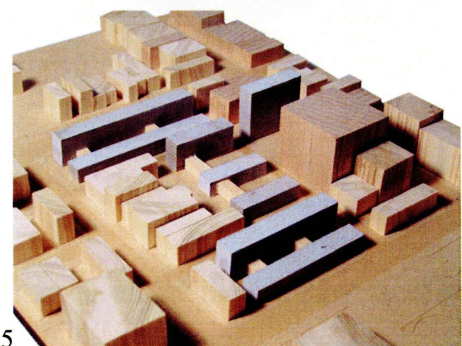
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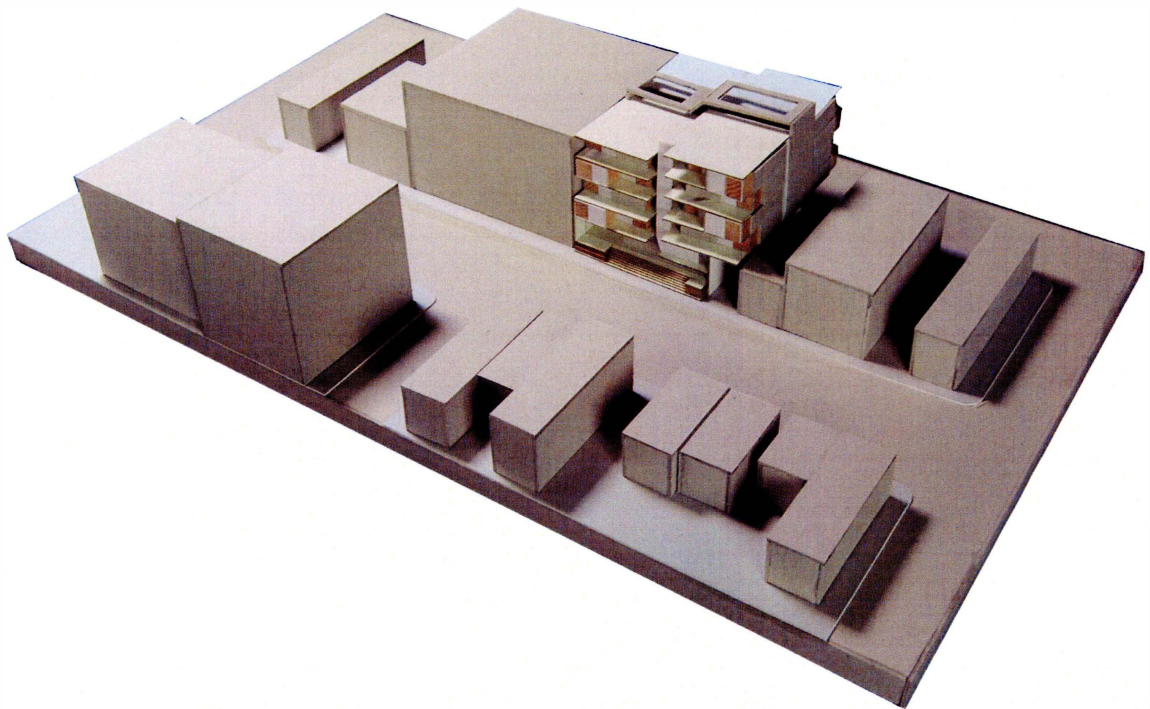


5

Massing studies illustrating potential schemes for increasing density ( 1-Courtyard, 2-Central Space, 3-Maximum Surface Area, 4-Maximum Street Frontage, 5-Passive Systems)

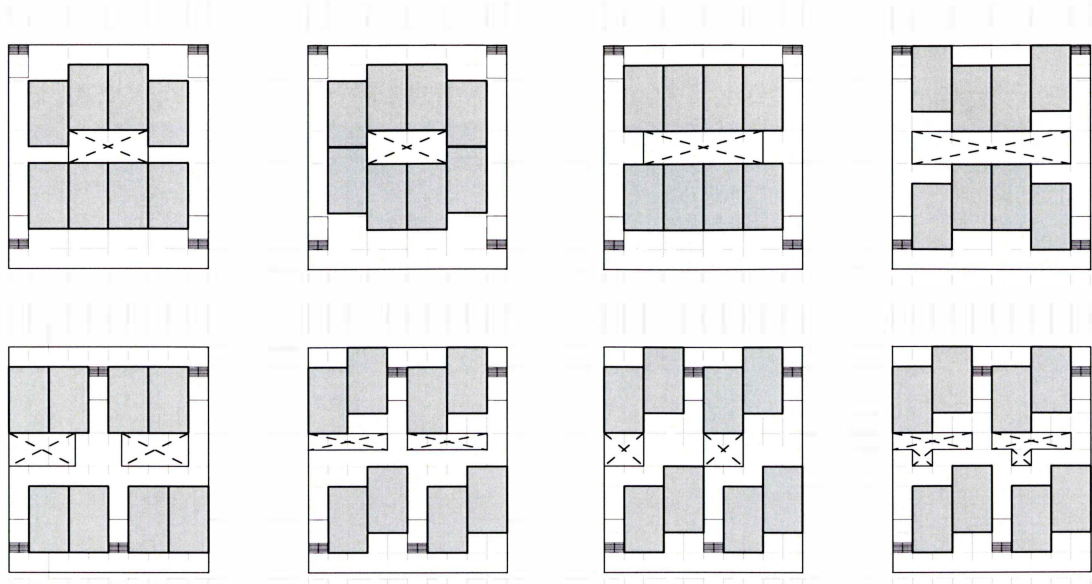


inherent in each configuration. Concepts such as courtyards, organization around a central exterior space, maximizing area, maximizing street frontage, and a pro-passive system using environmental orientation are proposed. Each scheme has its own inherent advantages and disadvantages when density, site coverage, access and functionality of the block are considered. Courtyards promote passive building systems as well as improve quality of life and day lighting. A central exterior space could serve as an effective meeting space but takes a considerable amount of site area in turn, decreasing density. A pro-passive scheme maximizes daylight and natural ventilation potential, but increases surface area. Arriving at appropriate massing responses with respect to building and site is dependant on a balance of all these concepts.



Massing model with surrounding urban conditions

The block typologies of northeast Pilsen within the area of the site show promise for increased surface area and density given their lane ways that could serve a variety of functions from service corridors to places of social mixing.



Diagrams of potential floor plans considering units, atrium spaces, and circulation.



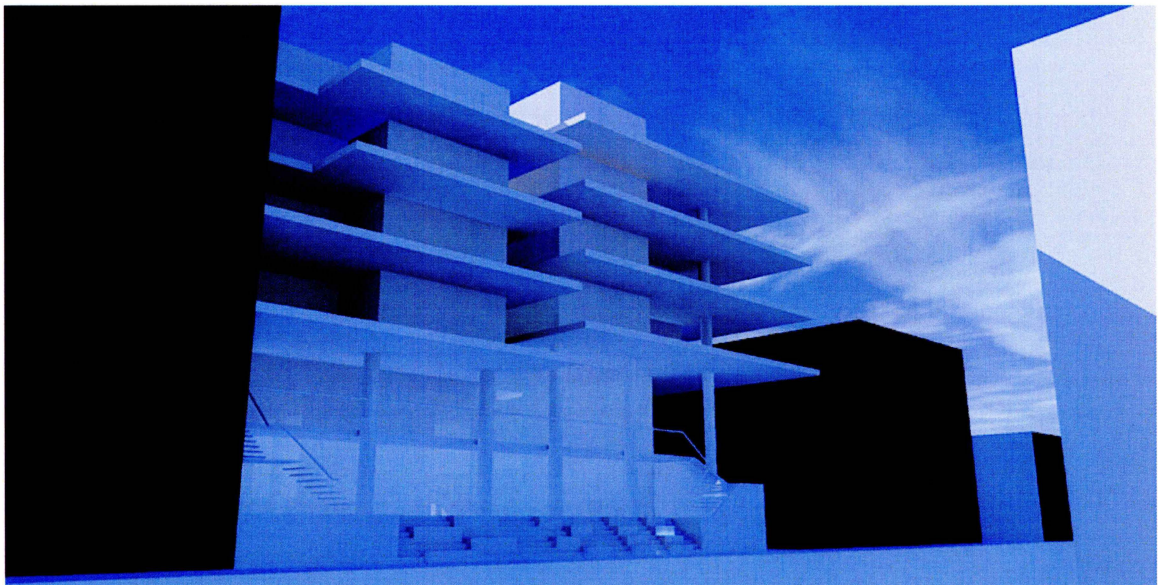
Urban strategy

EXISTING URBAN EDGE

NEW URBAN EDGE

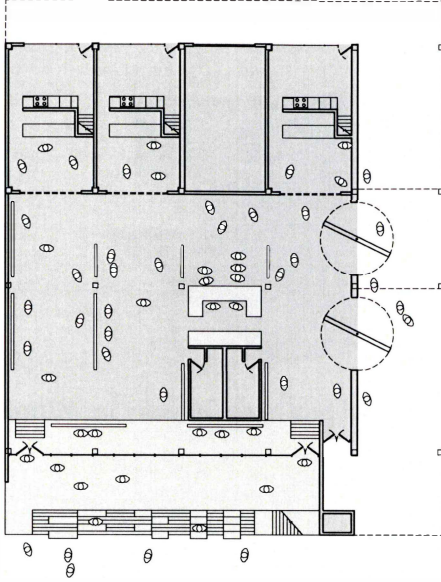
## Community Room - Ground Floor

Program potentials for a community room are diverse. Community gatherings to celebrate Christian holidays are frequent in the Latino community as are many Latin American holidays such as the Fiesta del Sol, which sees upwards of one million visitors pass through Pilsen for various events each summer. The Chicago Art District is in great need of a large exhibition space as it is continually expanding. Community groups such as the Pilsen Neighborhood Alliance as well as the 18th and Halsted Association would be greatly served by a space to meet and educate the surrounding community on issues related to economic development and gentrification in the immediate area. Other program components such as kitchen facilities as well as a place where residents can become informed regarding housing regulations and tenant rights would be an amenity. Creating an active space at ground level that takes place adjacent to the street will serve to reinforce relationships between inside and outside, and transitioning from street to building.

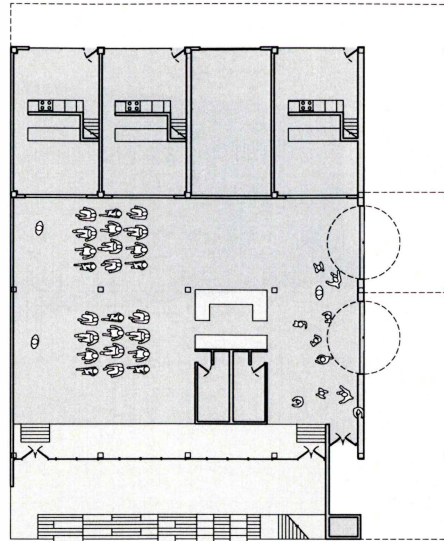


Early massing study of ground conditions and relationship to street

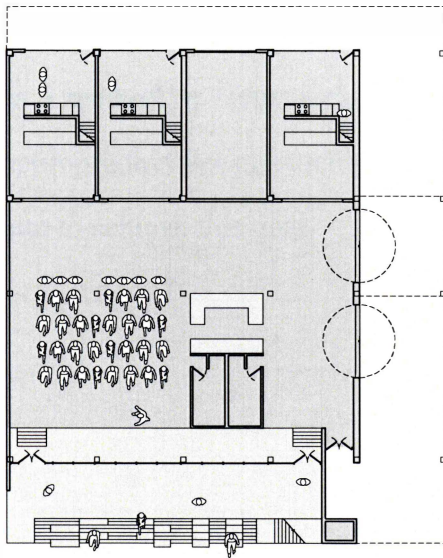
### ART EXHIBITIONS



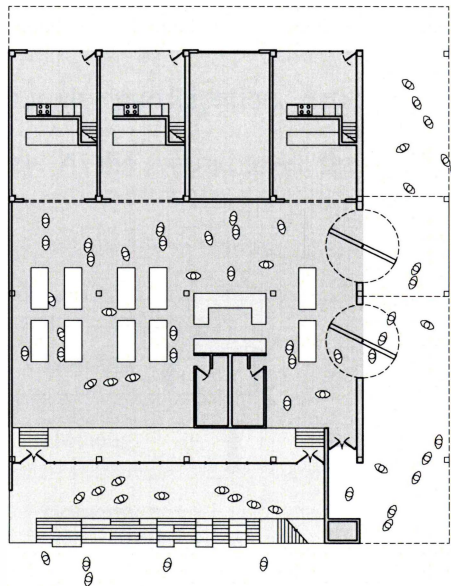
### ADULT EDUCATION / CHILD CARE



### COMMUNITY MEETINGS

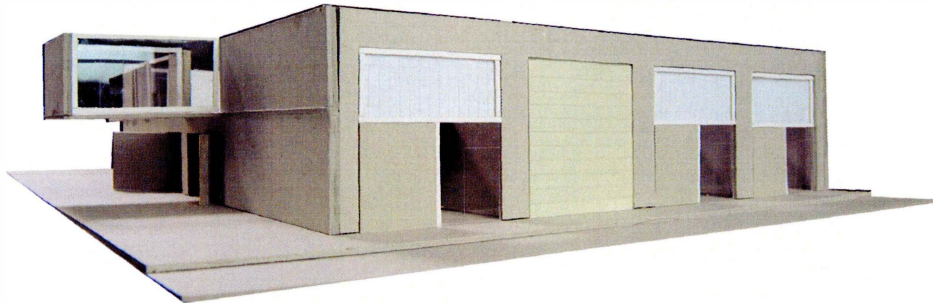


### COMMUNITY EVENTS



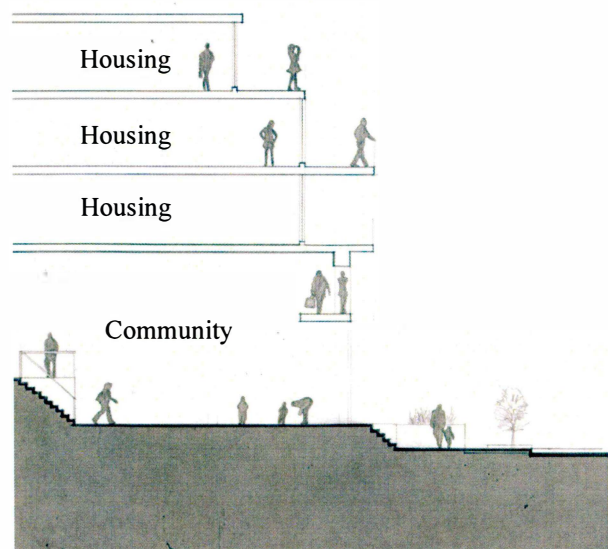
Program potentials for ground floor Community Room

Double height artist lofts would be located at ground level on the west façade. By acting to reinforce the artist's community, large sliding doors would open to connect small exhibition spaces with the larger community room.

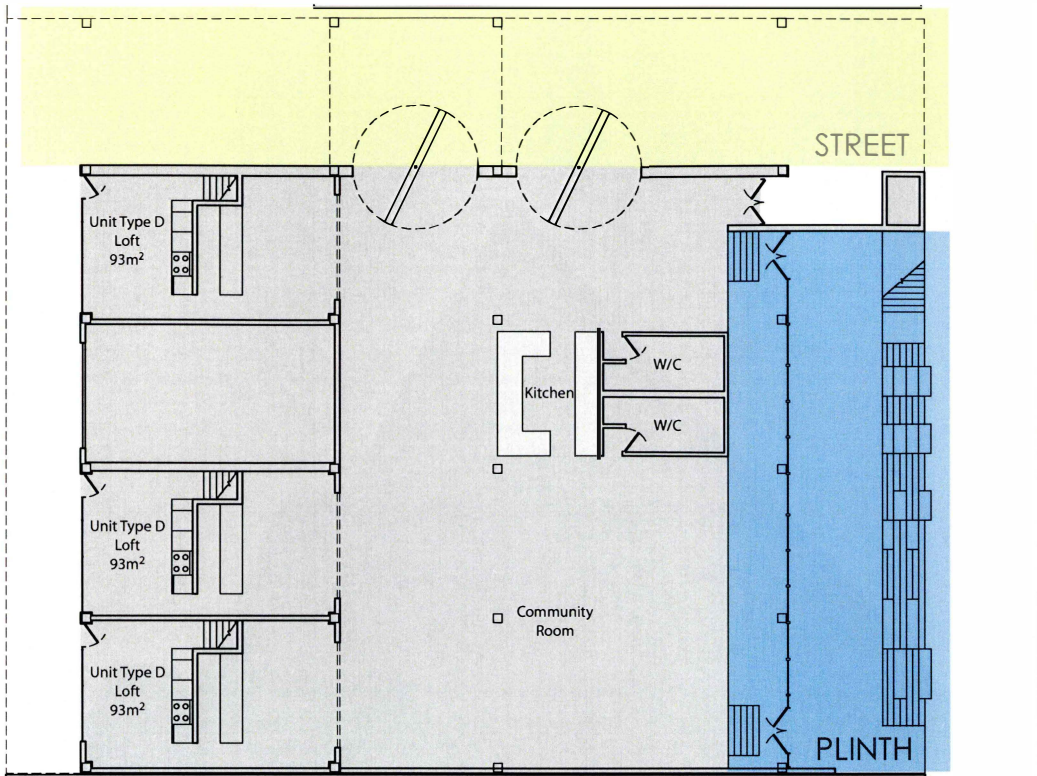


Northwest view of street and loft facades.

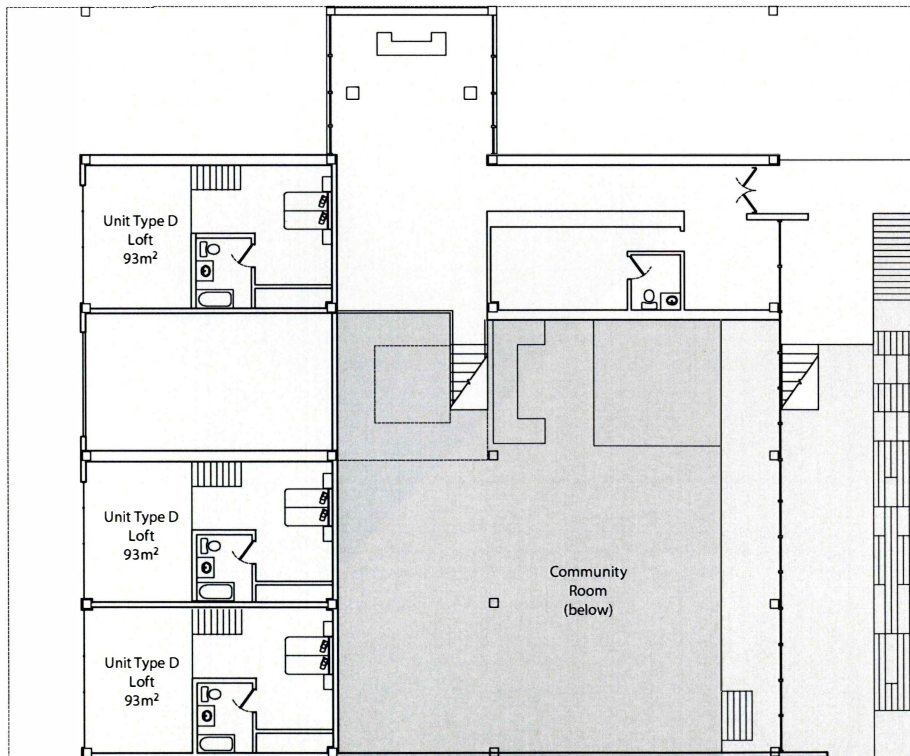
The sectional qualities for the community space should be multi-leveled and dynamic, providing spaces to view the activities within the building as well as activities outside and on the street. The building should make use of devices that display events and programs as a method to foster inclusiveness and community participation. Articulating a varied appropriation through architectural means is key. At the ground level, the plinth and street aim to achieve this goal.



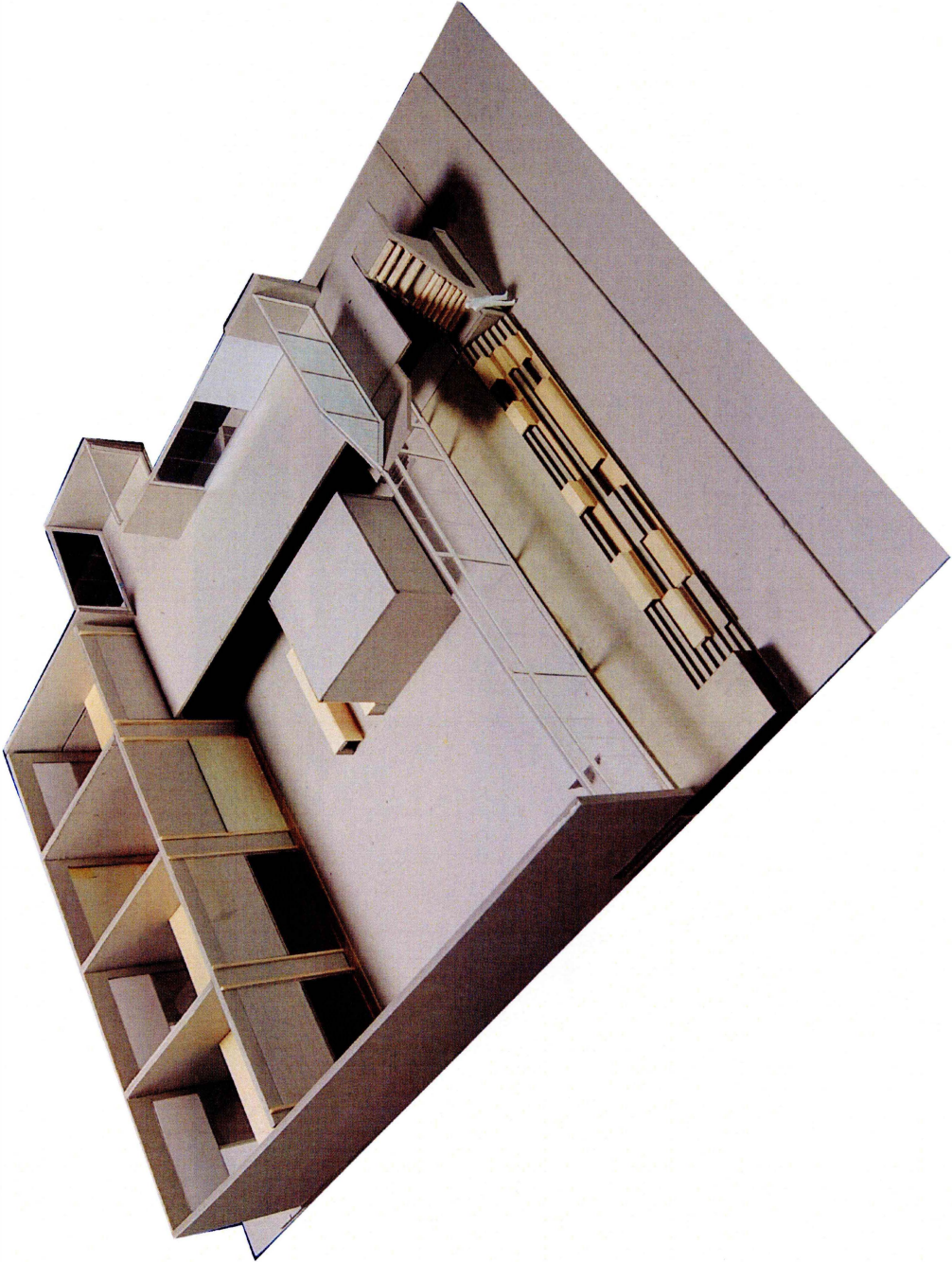
Section illustrating juxtaposition of housing with a community room and methods to reinforce connections to the street.



Ground floor plan - Community Room and lofts at left, plinth as porch on right and street in yellow



Mezzanine floor plan



Community Room model





Section through building showing Community Room at grade and housing above.

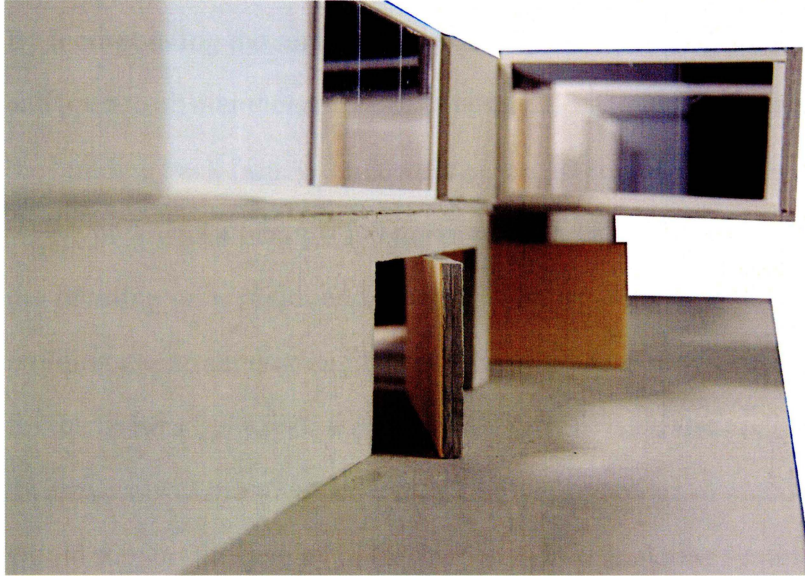
## The Street

Increasing the porosity of the block and creating new urban edges by optimizing laneways is the urban intent of the street. In doing so, walkability and variety is increased by creating a new pedestrian street that could serve as access to future housing and amenities. The creation of an east-west street on the north side of the building serves as an extension of the community room accommodating various programs. This covered space could act as a plaza for exhibition of graffiti and other artwork as well as a gathering space that could be used as a market. As an auxiliary space for the community room, various activities such as community barbecues, festivals and simple appropriations like children playing soccer or basketball are all activities that could potentially occupy the street. Large pivoting doors that serve to direct people into the community room act as markers that incite curiosity as to what might be happening on the inside.

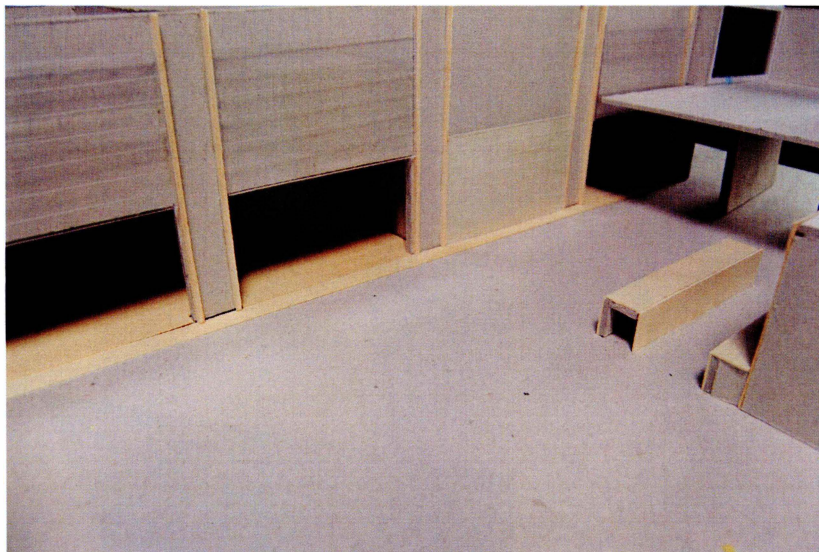


Perspective drawing of street

Material articulations in the street would serve to reinforce the act of moving into the community room. Once inside the community room, these materials then become articulations of significant programmatic elements. By cladding the inside of the pivoting



Model - Street and pivoting doors



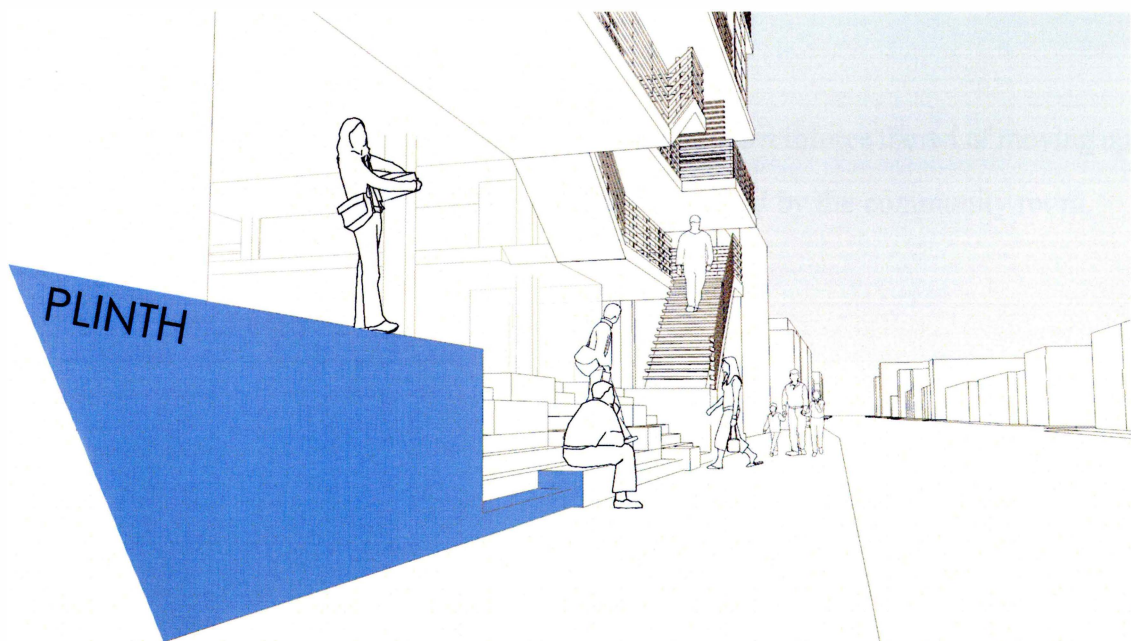
Model - Community Room materiality

doors with wood, entry is encouraged. Upon entering the community room, use of wood in the kitchen, art galleries, and garage door frames indicates a warm material in contrast to the hard materiality of the community room that acts as its own plinth related more to the materiality of the urban street.

## The Plinth

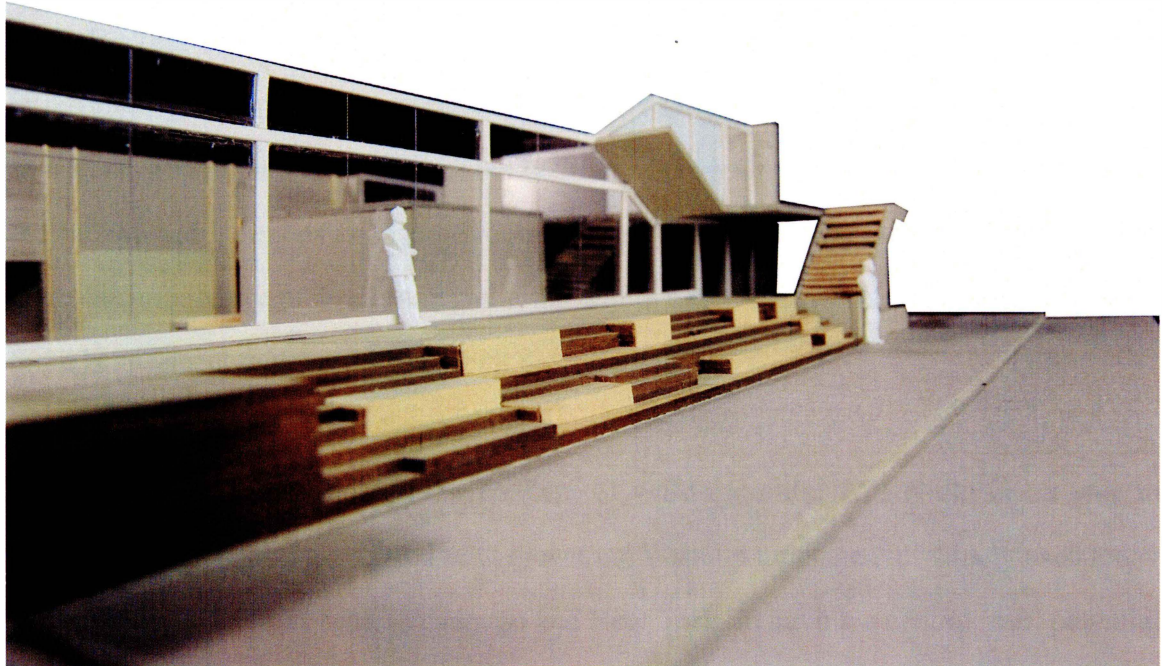
Instead the transition must be articulated by means of defined in between places which induce simultaneous awareness of what is significant on either side. (Smithson, 1968: 104)

By incorporating the same strategy used in the block, the community room would be porous and open to all members of the community. Strategies for accomplishing this would be setting the building back from the sidewalk as well as creating a series of steps, benches and terraces where people can occupy and animate the area in front of the building. By slightly raising the building on a plinth and creating a transparent façade, visual connection between the building and street is strengthened. The plinth also provides primary access to housing units for the tenants by way of the main stair. Given its location adjacent to the community room, its proximity to the street, elevation change, and range of potential appropriations, the plinth would support the display of life in Pilsen. In articulating seating and terrace treatments with wood to contrast the hard nature of concrete, use of the space becomes welcoming.



Perspective drawing of street

Material articulations on the plinth would act to encourage appropriation. As an urban element, the plinth would be “of the street” by being concrete. Seating elements would be incorporated into the plinth and the main stair. By wrapping seating elements with a softer, warmer wood to contrast the hard concrete, residents and community members are provided with a more comfortable surface to appropriate.



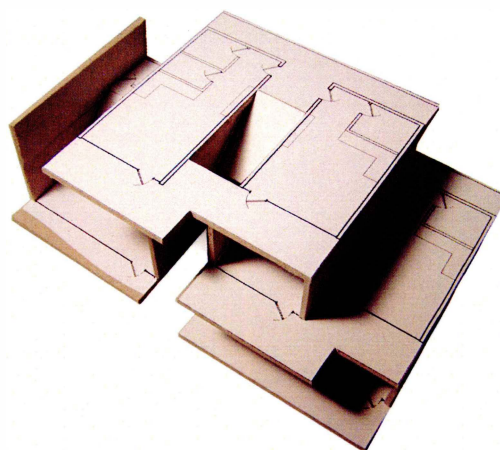
Model showing materiality of plinth

Through the use of wood for stair treads and railings, materials reinforce the act of moving up into the units or taking advantage of other amenities provided by the community room.

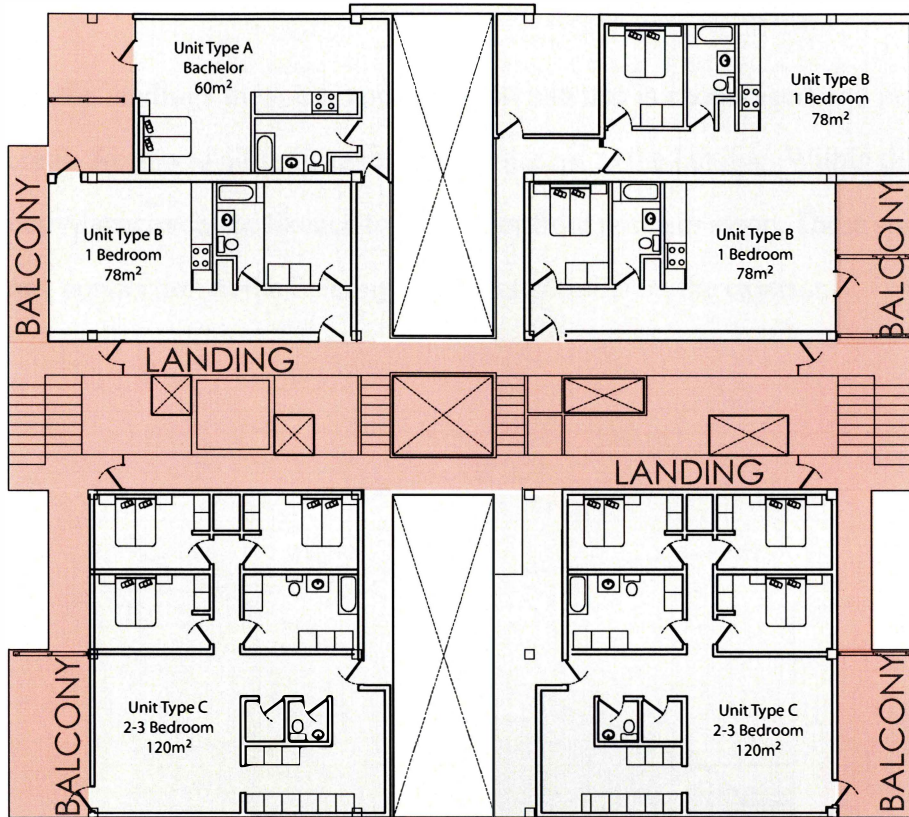
## Housing

Given the need to accommodate a variety of residents from single persons to large families within a co-op housing framework, economy of space is essential. In designing units to be economical in size, it is intended that collective spaces shared between all units will be looked upon as an amenity. Unit Types consist of Bachelor (Type A - 60m<sup>2</sup>), One Bedroom (Type B - 78m<sup>2</sup>), Two/Three Bedroom (Type C - 120m<sup>2</sup>), and Artist Lofts (Type D - 93m<sup>2</sup>). In developing unit plans, consideration has been given to unit widths, allowing space for an access corridor and an average sized bedroom. As an amenity to each unit and to offset the narrow width dimension, a large room adjacent to the street-facing balcony is provided given the importance of family and gathering within Latin American culture. A large flexible room is an aspect that would benefit all potential tenants.

Also specific to this project is the concept of walk-up units. This could be a way to potentially offset costs associated with elevators. Walk up units are still widely used today in large American cities such as Chicago and New York. In having a central stair, potential for interaction among residents is maximized as immediately adjacent to the stair on each floor is the third element - the landing.



Early study model exploring potential unit juxtapositions as well as shared stairs and terraces

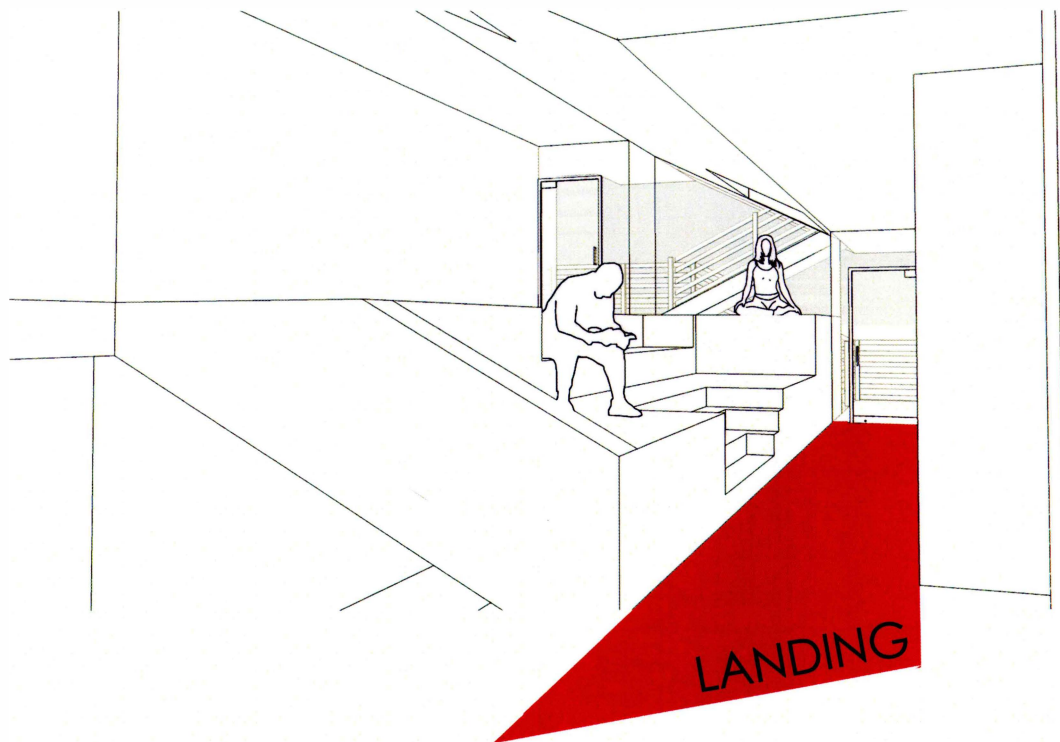


Residential floors and unit types

## The Landing

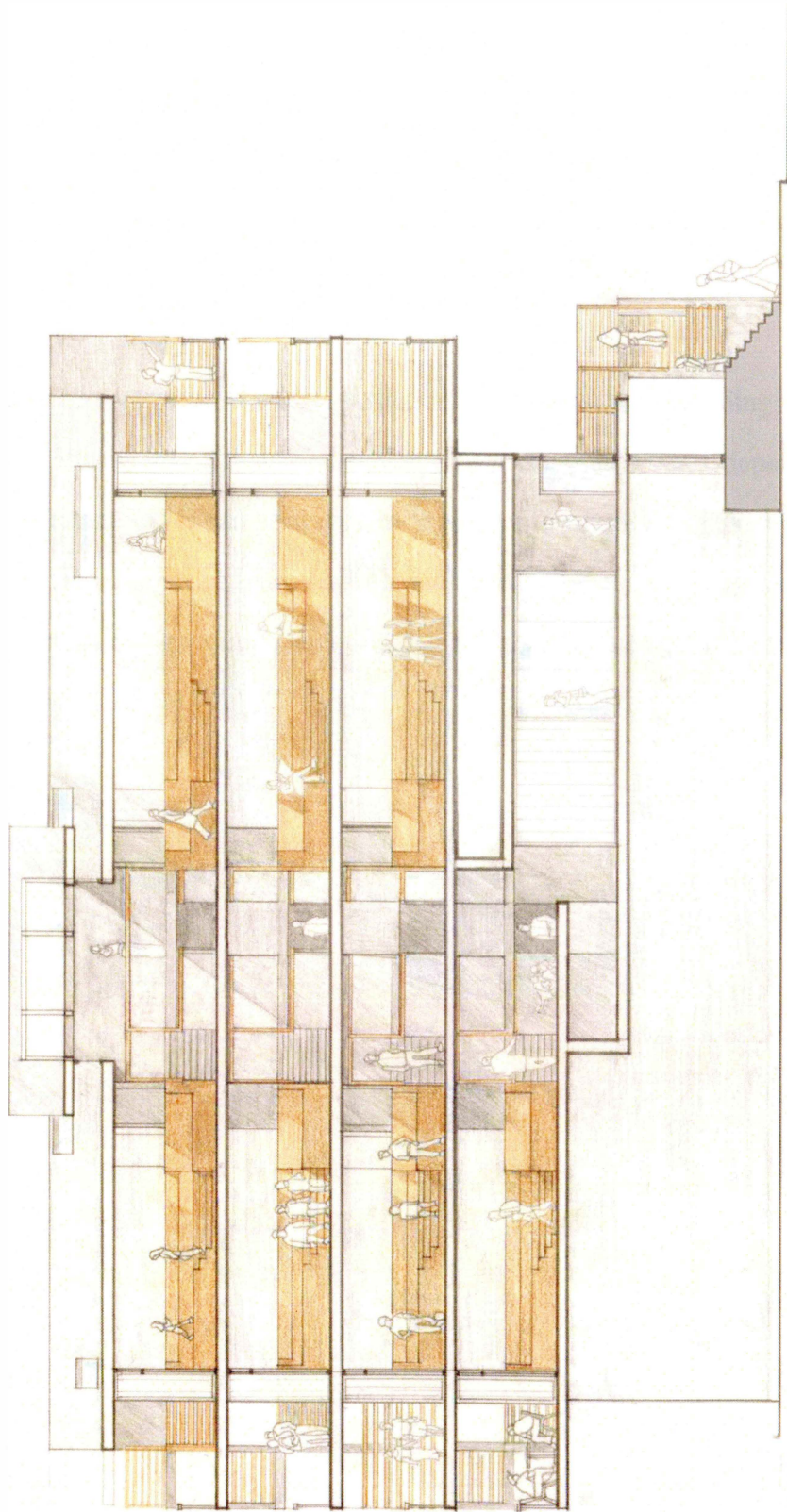
Also explored is the concept of shared spaces between units. The landing occurring at a 1.5-meter elevation shift in the floor plates would be dynamic spaces day lit by skylights and would provide spaces for individuals as well as group gatherings. In emphasizing the collective, it is the intent that these spaces will foster interaction between tenants.

By cladding the landings in wood, appropriation and use is encouraged and promoted by finer materials. Access to all units takes place adjacent to the landing. Within the building, these collective spaces can be likened to an interior front porch or stoop. These spaces would have a direct connection to the balcony that links all units on the exterior.



Perspective drawing of landing



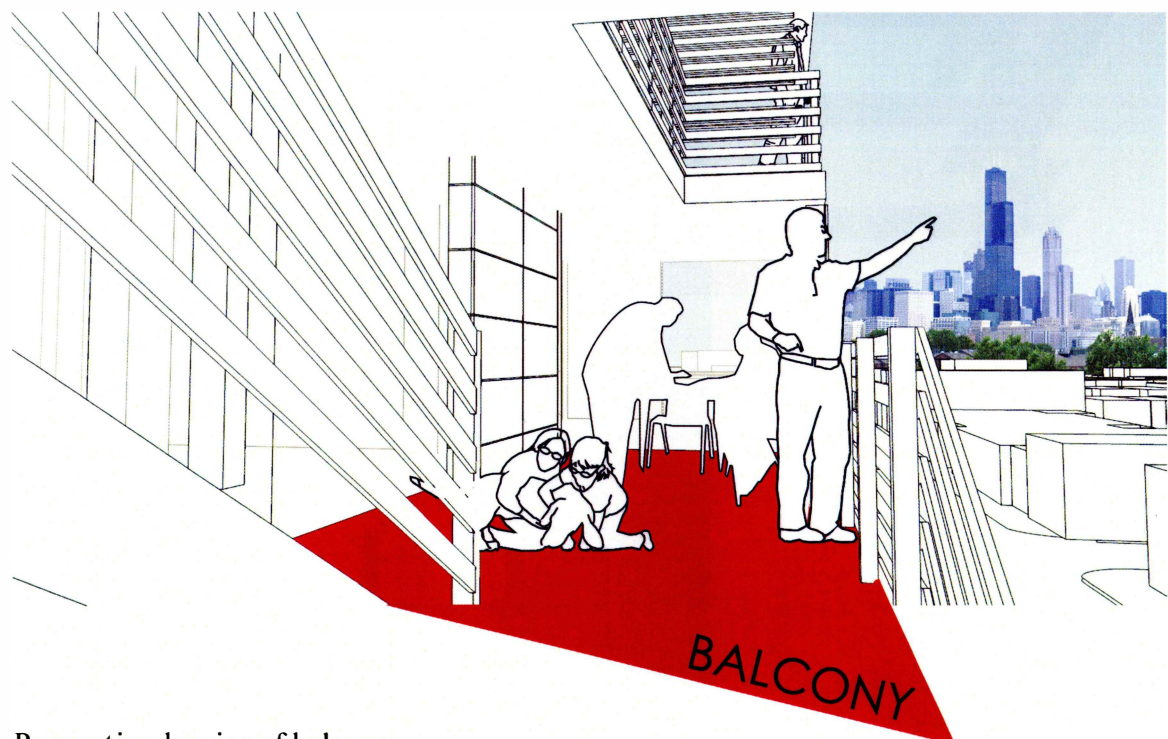


Section - Tenant procession from plinth to landing

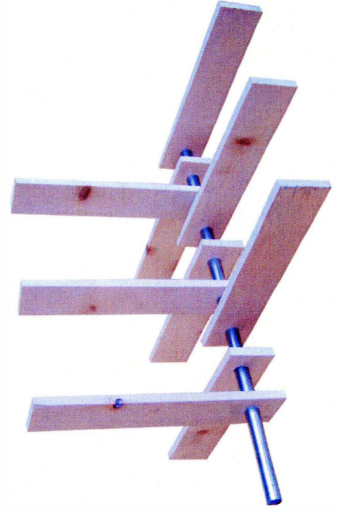
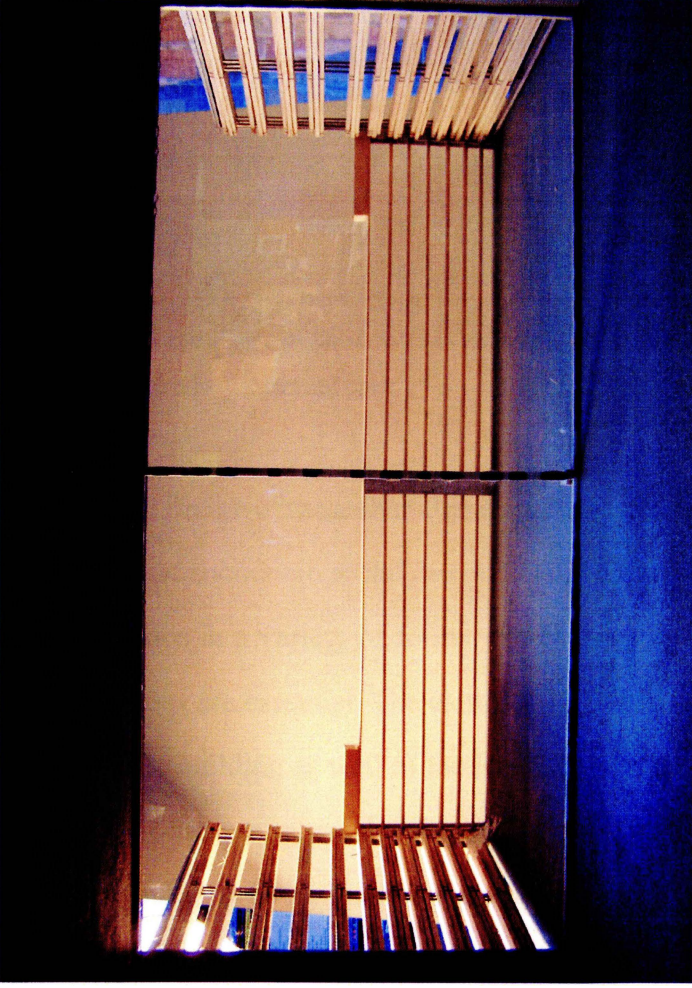
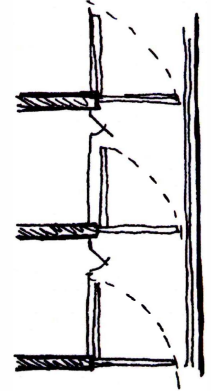
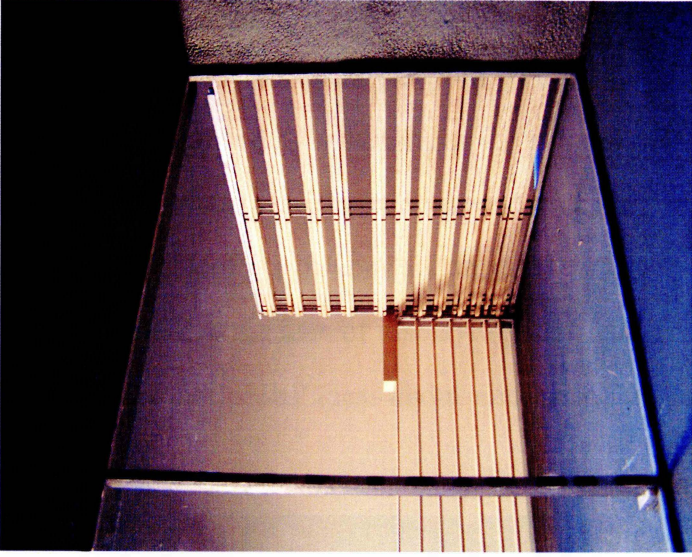
## The Balcony

The balcony system acts as a vertical street providing tenants access to all levels to take advantage of great views of the Chicago skyline and surrounding areas. As a result, all tenants have the same access to views on both east and west sides of the building. Simultaneously, it provides access to other floors as well as emergency fire exiting.

Paramount to providing spaces that foster interaction among tenants is providing a framework of spaces that are flexible in that they can become private or public spaces, depending on the desire of the inhabitants. This can be shown by the proposed system of balcony partitions. Dealing with partitioning space, sun shading, and water drainage, this system serves to increase space between consenting users creating the shared amenity of a larger exterior space.



Perspective drawing of balcony



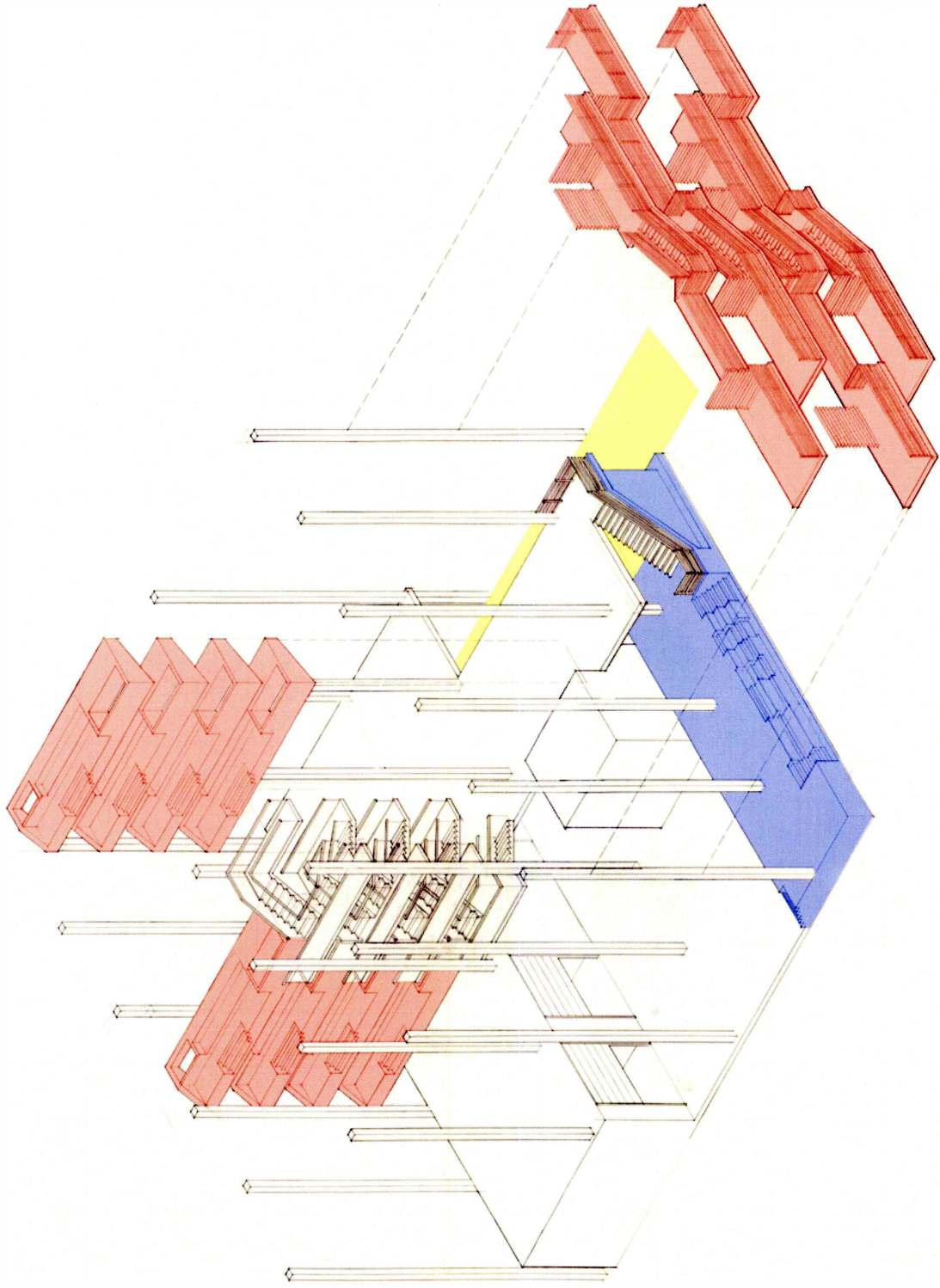
Model study, balcony partition design

As the primary formal feature of the facade, the balconies express various design considerations. By recessing portions of the 3 meter balconies to 1.5 meters, natural day lighting is enhanced by maximizing the amount of light penetration into the units below. These recesses also serve to articulate the main stair that connects the exterior shared spaces. Views from balcony to balcony and from balcony to the street are also enhanced. This in turn aims to reinforce the idea of displaying the life and varied appropriations of the building, supporting Jane Jacobs' ideas about eyes on the street (Jacobs 1961:35)

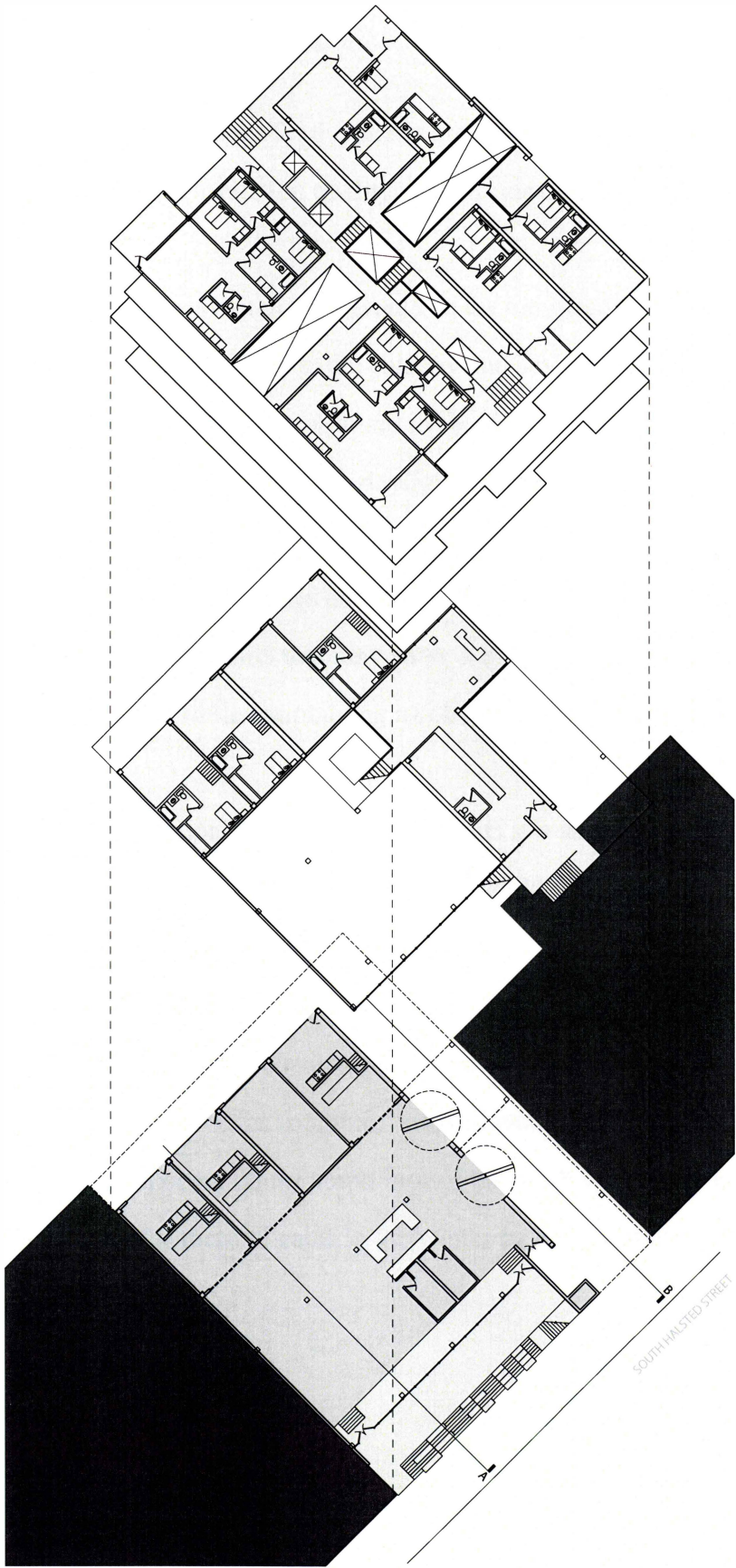


Balconies linked by external stair.

Through the design of these four elements, spaces are present in both community and tenant programs that encourage social discourse and community participation. This participation can take place in a variety of forms which is why spaces that foster maximum potential appropriations are essential. The elements of plinth and street at an urban level encourage engaging the building as well as the interior programs. Both landing and balcony create a framework of tenant spaces that foster interaction and collective use. These elements foster life in the building by emphasizing the collective as well as private space.



Exploded axonometric of building elements: street, plinth, stair, landing.



Axonometric

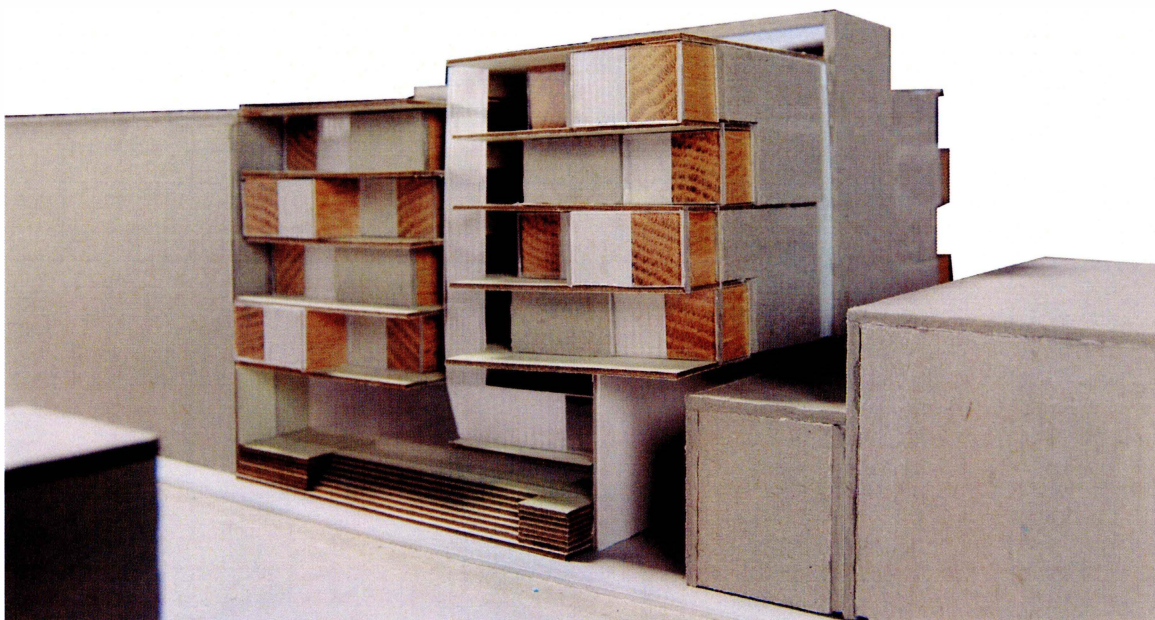
## **Facade**

Material considerations for the facade are driven by factors such as potential views, privacy, daylighting, and insulation quality. The facade consists of four main conditions.

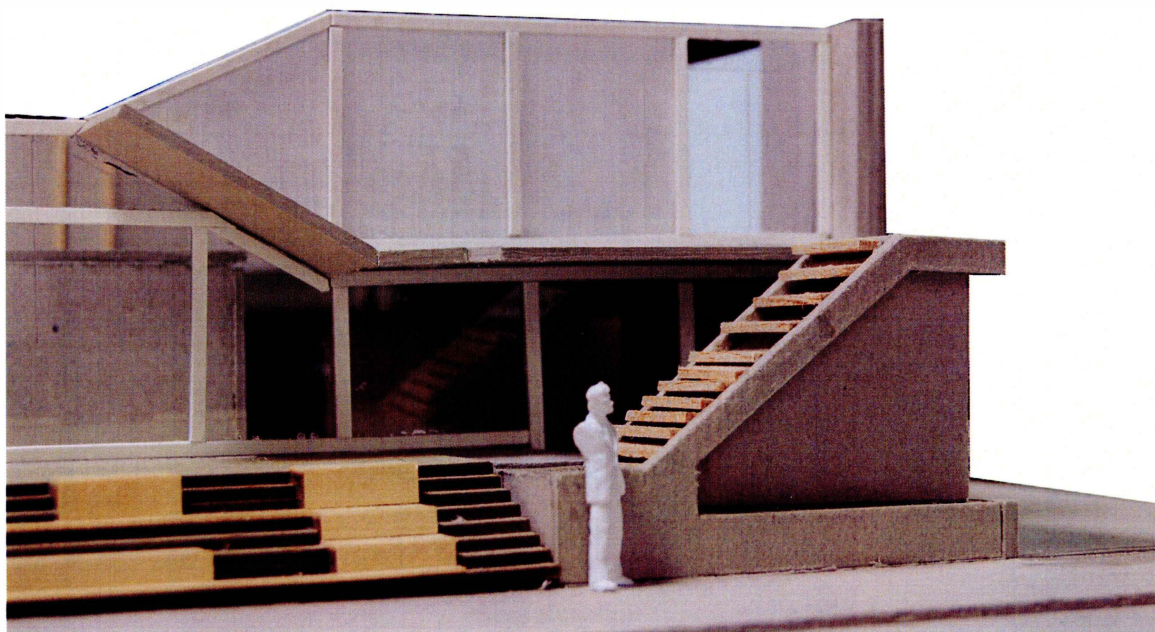
An insulated glass curtain wall would be the most transparent condition present in each unit serving to establish views to the balcony and beyond. A translucent linear channel glazing system is the other condition found in all units. This system is unique and very appropriate given the need for maximum daylighting given balcony projections. These panels are translucent yet can be insulated to a U Value of 0.190. This is an ideal application given its superior insulating qualities and its ability to allow passage of light. This wall system also acts as privacy for units that may share a balcony. In this case, privacy for interior spaces can be attained while maintaining a collective space on the exterior.

The third condition present in Type C units is a standard insulated wall with a composite panel rainscreen. This facade condition would take place at the most private conditions within the unit - bedrooms and bathrooms.

The fourth condition of concrete panels would occur on the north wall at the atrium condition. By projecting above the roof line, this wall would indicate a new spatial condition found in the atrium. In being on the south face of the north wall of the building, there would be the opportunity for thermal gains in the winter by energy attained from the atrium openings.

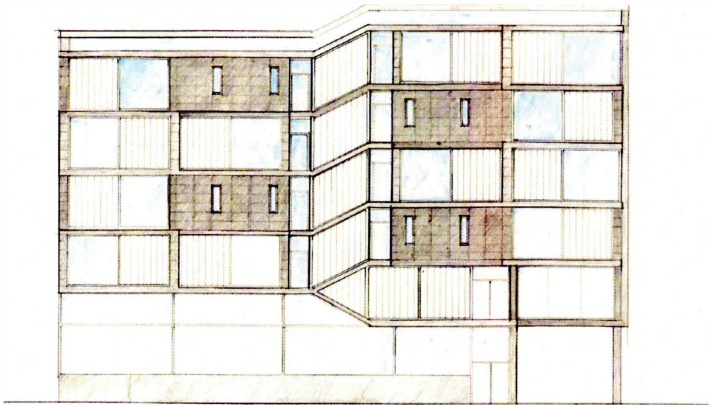


Facade study

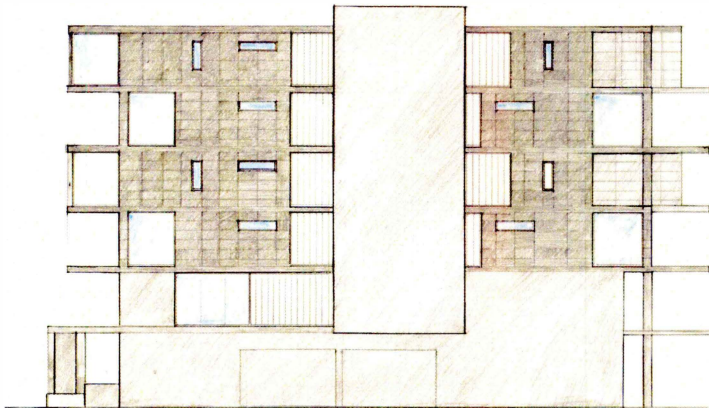


Ground level facade conditions

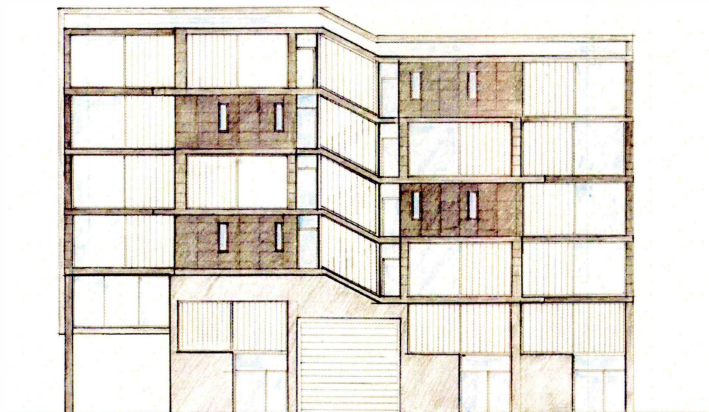




East elevation



North elevation



West elevation

Facade study showing clear glass (blue), translucent glass (white), and solid insulated walls (gray).



## SUMMARY

Pilsen will continue to face great pressure as the last undeveloped area closest to Chicago's downtown. The predominantly working class Latino residents will feel economic and financial pressure as they struggle to fight displacement and maintain their collective voice. This thesis seeks to address these pressures in designing a flexible community space and housing project as a way to encourage community discourse and awareness. By emphasizing collective spaces, it is the intent that the building may act as a scaffolding that the tenants and surrounding community members appropriate in numerous ways. These collective spaces promote the social vernacular of Pilsen. By emphasizing the "real order" through devices (plinth, street, landing, and balcony) that promote a range of appropriation, the life of the place is displayed on both building and urban levels.

These relationships are not unlike those that were responsible for the initial success of Maxwell Street, that are no longer present. While the proposed building is programatically different, it makes use of the same spatial ideas that promote varied appropriation. These threshold conditions have been developed from the precedents of sidewalk, alley and stoop.

The proposed building differs from new developments at the north end of Halsted Street due to the fact that it carefully considers community need and addresses it through a mixed program and a network of collective spaces. The building also addresses community need through cooperative housing and accommodates the artist community by integrating live/work lofts adjacent to the community room. The design promotes programs that are already successful while further promoting a socially active community.

Most importantly, how can one measure the success of such an architecture? Success does not come without a level of collective awareness and participation that serve to balance quality of life with development.

By following principles of Jane Jacobs based on density, program variety and “eyes on the street”, the proposed building seeks to promote a healthy development of social infrastructure based on participation, varied appropriation and inclusiveness. While this response in its program and design are site specific, these four spatial principles found in the four building elements could be used as a framework for future architects in an effort to further study and implement concepts of collective space in the area of Pilsen.

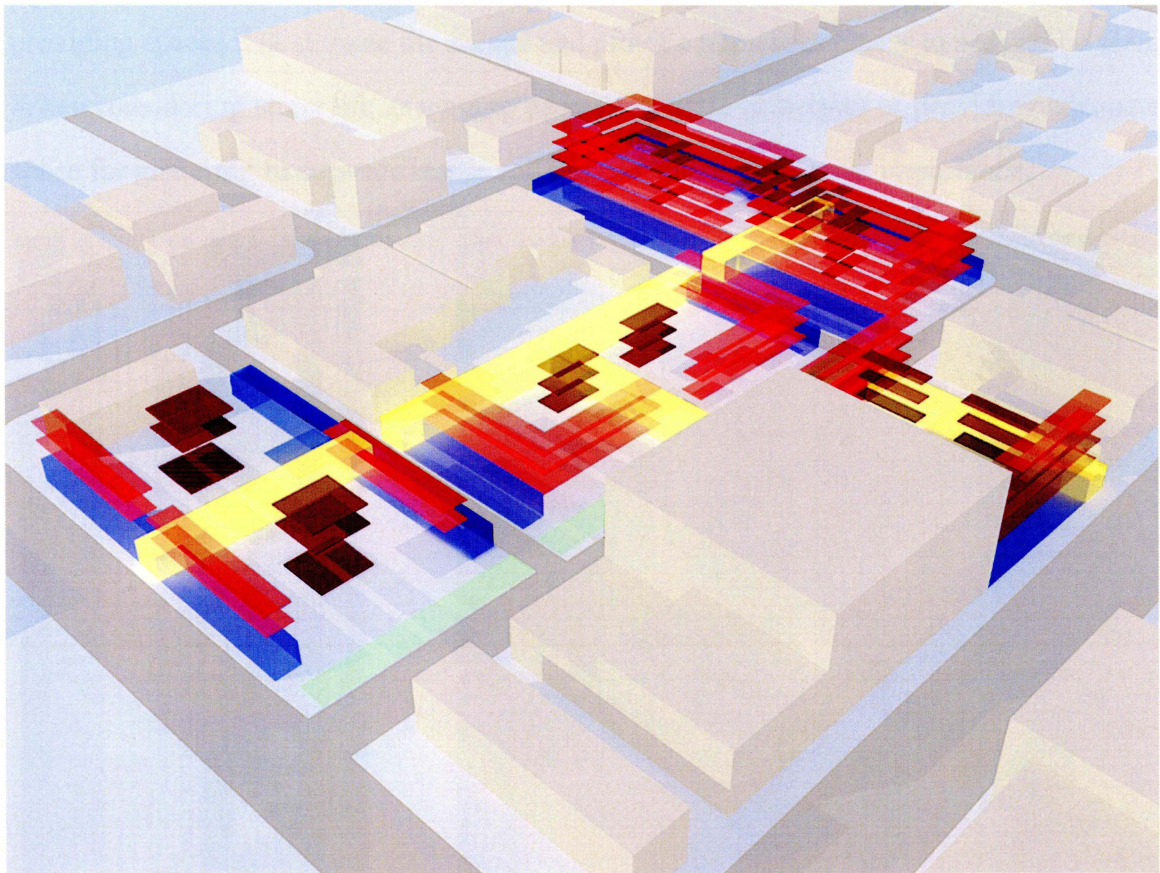


Diagram of spatial potential identifying plinth (blue), street (yellow), landing (red) and balcony (red).

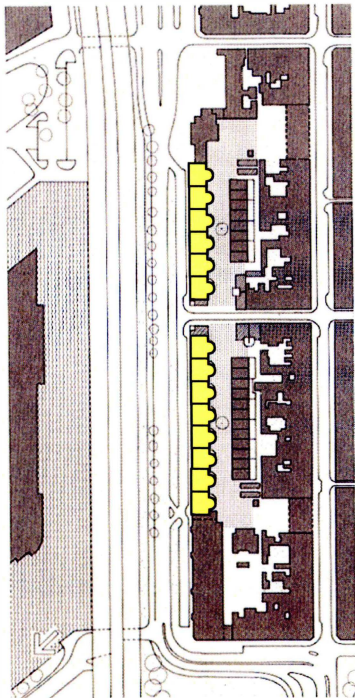
## APPENDIX

### HARLEMMER HOUTTUINEN

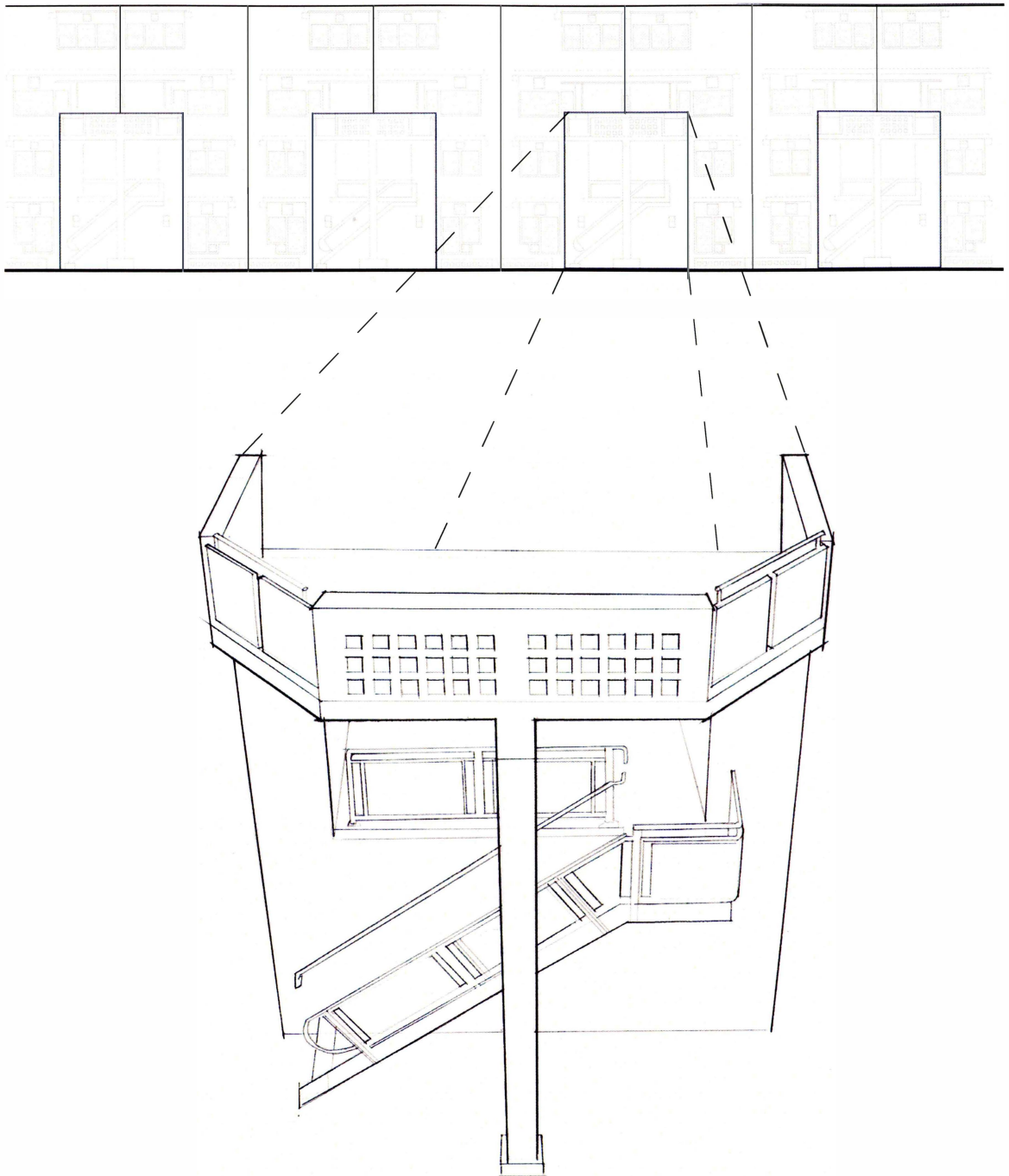
#### HERMAN HERTZBERGER

In this simple yet very effective project, Herman Hertzberger emphasizes the creation of a collective urban space. Backing onto a major highway in Holland, the Harlemmer Houttuinen housing project utilizes a buffer zone by creating balconies and access stairs that act as armatures in enhancing collective space.

These spaces of transition are a stark contrast to the adjacent development to which it shares the pedestrian street. By creating three levels of terraces, Hertzberger is successful in providing spaces that animate the facade and provide numerous places to see and be seen. When considering street life as a major precedent, these principles of providing adequate space for gathering in between inside and outside spaces is of great importance.



Plan and perspective (Source: Luchinger, 1987: 247)



Entry porch / stair analysis

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