Re-Urbanize:
extracting themes from resettled areas
to inform urban development

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CONFERENCE PAPER

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Introduction

"Gentrification" was coined by sociologist Ruth Glass when studying middle-class resettlement in 1960's London. After a period of disinvestment in inner city neighborhoods, involving middle-class out-migration in the first half of the 20th century, there is a shift towards resettlement. In the initial waves of gentrification, it is small, owner-occupied, sweat-equity-based revitalization. However, after these initial resettlers pioneer neighborhood revitalization, its popularity and momentum quickly drives other property values higher. This leads to increased rent for existing working-class populations occupying these neighborhoods. This group is incrementally displaced, and the perceived social character of the neighborhood—the notion of an economically and culturally diverse community—disappears. The area becomes completely urban middle-class, with thriving housing, retail, and entertainment catered to their preferences.

This phenomenon is not limited to London—most western cities experienced similar movements beginning in the 1960's.[1]   While gentrification is understood as working class displacement, the phenomenon represents a creation of middle-class communities within a dense urban fabric. When these resettlers choose an urban neighborhood over typical suburban developments, they are choosing a different way of life. These preferences invite an architectural and planning response. New development could focus on engendering both the density and adaptability present in gentrified areas, rather than relying on artifacts of 19th century land use practices in creating urban middle-class habitats.   Determining some of the features that make gentrified spaces functional and appealing is critical to this response. This paper aims to look at the aesthetic and lifestyle preferences of urban resettlers and use them to inform an analysis of the property structures and physical forms of gentrified spaces. Then these preferences and physical features can inform new urban development that can be functional, appealing, and adaptable.

Methodology

Urban resettlers embody a certain aesthetic that offers insight into what physical features make places attractive. A desire for variation, or a lack of hegemony, is central to the resettler's aesthetic. The consistency of suburban space and of consumerist retail has generated a strong desire for differentiation. Since these gentrified areas have changed over time, there is a temporal variety in these places. These resettlers also want to create a certain type of lifestyle. Closer proximity to work, transportation, retail, and entertainment are benefits of inhabiting dense urban spaces. However, it is not purely a functional decision—there is also a social component. Urban resettlers are comfortable with proximity, but not universal socialization. They do not want an urban village where everything is public, but conversely there is not a hostility to close proximity and interaction.

Understanding the physical forms and property structures of resettled spaces is necessary to creating new places. In three different case studies at differing scales, aspects of parcel size, usage, and age will demonstrate the current urban fabric of resettled spaces. The first case study is an area around Alamo Square in San Francisco, which is largely a residential neighborhood. Anne Moudon's extensive 1986 study of the site is the basis for this analysis. The second case study is a one-block area of Greenwich Village in New York City, and the third

is a two-block area of SoHo, also in New York City. Greenwich Village is a dense mixed-use area with five to seven-story development, while the SoHo site, while also mixed use, is more densely built, with five to twelve-story development. In both of the New York case studies, first-hand observation and public GIS data is utilized.

The potential historic causes for the current urban form are useful in creating development analogous to resettled areas. Looking at the scale, parcel size, adaptable typologies, and property structure at the date of construction provides useful concepts for implementing spaces that can or will embody the urban middle-class aesthetic. Also, since the causes for many of these patterns are grounded in 19th century practices, recognizing that this aesthetic is partly based on obsolete practices is necessary to move beyond blind copying.

The conclusion looks at ways to reconcile these aesthetic and developmental patterns with current architectural and planning practices. Discussing potential methods of property structure, focusing on legal and physical severability of developmental units, will inform plans that allow the scale of initial development to be different than the scales of future change. The last section is also a springboard for further work in a Master of Architecture design thesis.

The Resettler's Aesthetic

The aesthetic values of middle-class urban resettlers are central to understanding gentrified areas in their architectural or planning context. The study of these areas has largely been limited to economics and social justice.[2] This literature on gentrification is a narrative of class struggle, economic displacement, and the commodification of urban space, with little attention given to the individual agency of resettlers. While the problems of displacement are serious, focusing on the non-economic or cultural factors that encourage resettlement allows for a discussion of urban space instead of urban economics. These aesthetic values, or what the urban middle-class choose for their environment, are critical in creating places that can attract and develop in ways similar to gentrified areas.

These urban resettlers have a desire for diversity and variety. They are against the hegemony of the suburbs where everything is similar and aesthetically flat. This includes aspects of lifestyle— the suburbs represent one exclusive way of living, involving traditional families, careers, spending habits, and social mores.

Sharon Zukin views the standardization of modernist architecture as an influence towards gentrification. "When every new building looked like the same big glass box, old redbrick buildings and cobblestone streets gained cultural distinction."[3] Zukin is speaking in an urban context, but the concept can also be applied to suburban areas, office buildings, and housing. Through interviewing gentrifiers in Toronto, Jon Caulfield found they "…like the age and the look of old city houses, the "feel" of downtown neighborhoods, the juxtaposition of different architectural styles along inner city streetscapes."[4] Blurring the distinction between culture and physical variety, Zukin notes that the early New York gentrifying population of "SoHo, the East Village, and Williamsburg confirmed these areas' distinctive appeal and emphasized their otherness to the enforced homogeneity of both the suburbs and the city's corporate center."[5] Ultimately, the heterogeneity integral to the gentrification aesthetic is both physical and cultural.

The appeal of gentrifying areas is also connected to a sense of variety over time. Kevin Hetherington sees these spaces as embodying a different perspective on time:

> The Greeks called it *kairos*; a sense of the past that intrudes into and challenges the present. It's different from *chronos*, our usual sense of time as a simple unending arrow of progress from yesterday to today and on to tomorrow. The streets and buildings of the East Village are reminders of an alternative time that doesn't make the present look like the culmination of the past.[6]

This sense of time and change that is not uniform or linear is present in many gentrifying areas. The disinvestment, reinvestment, cultural changes, and historic forces are not part of a straightforward progression. The present character of these places does not make perfect logical sense. These areas have multiple, conflicting narratives that have not been unified, flattened, or whitewashed into a coherent vision.

In 1970 Richard Sennett addressed the development of communities that were from various marginal groups in New York City. His "survival communities" were anti-hegemonic places, where groups and individuals had to coexist, negotiate, and develop community. Sennett notes that in contrast to the stability and hegemony of the suburbs, densely packed urban areas have a great deal of population movement. This provides a "medium of diversity and instability" that allowed his "survival communities" to function.[7] Writing in 1970, he was observing the early communities that ultimately led the gentrification in parts of New York City. While there is certainly a degree of homogenization in fully gentrified areas, his observations about urban places fostering heterogeneity are still relevant.

In addition to the cultural and physical aspects of the gentrification aesthetic, there is also the decision to choose a specific way of life. Caulfield summarized the prevalent view of his respondents in Toronto:

> The central issue is a cluster of specific qualities of life that older urban places are perceived to engender....They believe that walking is not just more convenient than driving, but is qualitatively different, that the intensity of human activity bred by density and mixed land use is a desirable feature of daily life, that inner-city retail districts have qualities of place in contrast to the functional space of facilities like shopping malls…. Among most of the respondents interviewed, preference for inner-city residential locales represents not instrumental concerns but the choice for a lifeworld.[8]

This is a conscious choice for a different way of living—ultimately an urban way of living. Caulfield compares cultural place to functional space, indicating that resettlers move to urban space because its environment goes beyond functionality and convenience. It possesses something other than the functional conveniences of personal transportation, shopping mega-centers, and quiet residential areas. These urban areas are made of layers, history, and heterogeneity that have developed over time.

Gentrification literature has recognized these aesthetic attributes, but with a cynical perspective. Urban resettlers are not seen as engaging in an honest search for identity or place. Instead, they are participating in a narrative of consumerism. P. A. Redfern claims that: "Fashions exist in clothing, obviously, but also in music, in restaurants, in leisure pursuits, in automobiles—everything, in short, that is offered to us in commodity form, including domestic property. We want our homes and our neighborhoods to 'say something' about us, just as much as we do our attire."[9]   Zukin has a similar view of consumerist image chasing, saying that "many urban dwellers today find their subjective identity in this particular image of urban authenticity."[10] While mass consumerist culture cannot be completely discounted, it seems that the complete shift in lifestyle from sparse suburban to dense urban is rooted in something more than images of authenticity or fashion. This becomes more convincing when considering the historic precedent for urban lifestyle when compared to the suburban, suggesting that the gentrification aesthetic could represent a human habitat that has evolved over time, especially when it is chosen by the middle-class—a group that has some luxury of choice.

Case Studies

To create tools for development based on gentrified spaces, we can look at existing areas that have become fully gentrified. The end goal is not to replicate the gentrified spaces themselves, or to replicate the specific historical processes that created them. Instead, by understanding the physical, legal, and typological forms in these places, we can create new places that can have similarly functions, even though they do not result from identical historical processes. Since these case studies all analyze gentrified areas, they possess some common features. They are all walkable, compact, dense, and are all aged. The metrics for these case studies will be their street width, lot size, street frontage, setback, height, use types, and building typologies.

Alamo Square, San Francisco

The first case study is the Alamo Square neighborhood in San Francisco. The data is based solely on Anne Moudon's extensive analysis of the area.[11] The area is iconic San Francisco, home to the "painted ladies," a row of six Victorian-era houses facing Alamo Square Park. It has the smallest scale of the case studies, with the greatest proportion of residential units, and the lowest building density. Its more residential quality contrasts the larger scaled New York sites.

The area's lot sizes were based on an expanding street grid, which began on the northeastern corner of the peninsula, and expanded westward. The layout is based on a 25-vara (68'9") grid. The streets are all one unit wide, and the blocks are six units wide by four units high. The blocks were initially divided into 50x50 vara parcels (137'6" square). However, these large lots were split again into units similar to eastern precedents. Widths of 25', 27'6", 30', and 37'6" were some of the most common variations. These created the long narrow lots, which worked well with the Victorian house typology. Or conversely, the imported typology in the young city determined the lot size.

The early (Victorian) houses often have setbacks. The sloping topography often required a land base, or a platform to level out the site for the box composition of the Victorian houses. They needed a setback from the street in order to create this base. Between the street and the house there are typically steps and a small garden. Even though the area is primarily residential, there are currently a number of commercial uses in the section that once served as the land base. It is not uncommon to see a storefronts topped by Victorian homes. The Victorian houses, whether they have commercial ground floors or not, currently contain differing configurations, with single family unit, flats, and apartments carved out of their flexible typologies. The Victorian typology was the initial building form, and while many have remained, there are other, later developments that break from the single, narrow lot format. However, any typology that has been built since has been influenced by these initial units. The creation of a defined "cell" of urban development has made it difficult for later projects to grow beyond two or three of these units, except in publically funded urban renewal projects. This then limits the scope and speed of change in the neighborhood, lending stability to the urban fabric.

Figure 2: Greenwich Village Case Study Diagrams

Greenwich Village, New York City

The second case study is a one-block area of Greenwich Village in New York City. This area represents an intermediate scale of gentrified architecture. Starting from the northwest, the block is bordered by West 3rd Street, Sullivan Street, Bleeker Street, and MacDougal Street to the north, east, south and west, respectively. This block was chosen for its mix of uses, with a majority of the buildings having commercial ground floors and residential above. The block also contains a mid-rise dormitory for NYU Law School. The bordering streets are all 50' wide and the block itself is 200' x 500' oriented north to south. Lot size is based on an original layout of 25' x 100', with eight lots facing the north and south streets, and twelve facing the east and west. However, it appears some of the north and south lots were truncated to allow an extra east or west facing lot to be inserted into the block. The typical street frontage is 25' per lot, but on corners, the lot frontage is potentially a combined 125'. Since its initial development, there have been some joining of parcels in groupings of two or three modules, but not larger (with the exception of the NYU dormitory, which combined most of the parcels along the north edge). The majority of the units are dumbbell style tenements, with some examples of double and railroad tenements. There are no setbacks except for the NYU building, which has a front garden or plaza space. Many of the tenements have a tiny rear yard or passageway, but otherwise the land is completely built up. Building height is typically five to seven stories, and again, the NYU building is the exception at fourteen stories. The FAR is still a fairly low 5.21, even with the taller building raising the average. The NYU building creates a stark contrast with the much older tenements. It was built in 1987, while all of the other buildings on the block were built near the beginning of the 20th century.   There are differences in construction technology, but there is also a difference with how the NYU building interacts with the street. The older, small-scale architecture has openings or communication with the street at a maximum distance of 25' while the NYU building has two public entrances for its 200' frontage. Also, unlike the earlier architecture, it does not combine commercial space with residential on the same parcel; and while it has non-residential functions on the ground floor, these functions are turned inward, making them fully private spaces. With the exception of the NYU building, current property boundaries correlate to the San Francisco case study, where the initial division and construction has determined the scale and use of the space. However, the imposition of the NYU dormitory shows that this cellular urban fabric can easily be destroyed by larger organizations.

Figure 3: SoHo Case Study Diagrams

SoHo, New York City

The last case study is a two-block area in SoHo, also in New York City. With its larger, and sometimes through-block buildings, SoHo has the largest scaled architecture of the case studies. Starting from the northwest, the two adjacent blocks are bordered by Prince Street, Broadway, Spring Street, and Greene Street to the north, east, south, and west, respectively. The blocks are separated by Mercer Street running north and south. This area was selected for its scale, age, and fine-grained urban fabric in spite of the larger scale of construction. Additionally, when much of the current building stock was created, it was clearly more affluent, or in higher demand, than the two other case studies, evidenced by greater density and a greater attention to facades. Here, most commercial uses are not an afterthought or addition, but integral to the original use.

SoHo's blocks are also 200' x 500' and oriented north to south. The bordering streets are 50' wide, except for Broadway, which is 75'. Lot size is irregular. In many places, there is a 25' width module, but lot size was not built up as rigidly as in Greenwich Village. Most properties are in multiples of 25', but there are oddities such as 37'6" (three 25' modules split in half). Properties range from 100' x 200' to 25' x 100', with any combination in between.

Similar to Greenwich Village, there are no setbacks, and every part of the property (including the space under light shafts) is built upon. The FAR in SoHo is higher than Greenwich Village at 7.13, but still modest when compared to Midtown or Downtown. The buildings range from five stories to thirteen, with a few outliers that are one or two stories.   Two lower buildings were built in 1940 and 2001, and they must have profitable tenants, otherwise they would have been redeveloped. Uses are more widely varied than in the other case studies, with parcels zoned for office, residential, industrial, and obviously commercial uses. The buildings between Broadway and Mercer Street tend to be the tallest, with the more intensive commercial and office activity along Broadway, while the buildings between Mercer Street and Greene Street tend to have residential above with commercial below.

Most of the buildings were built near the beginning of the 20th century, especially the larger, through block buildings. The Scholastic Building and 92 Greene Street are notable exceptions. The Scholastic Building, designed by Aldo Rossi in 1995, is a ten-story through-block building that does not try to match the architectural style of the area, but it does match the typology. 92 Greene Street, built in 2005, focuses on fitting into the urban fabric both in form and style. At first glance, it's impossible to tell that it was built a century after its neighbors because of its similar scale and because the detailing matches the cast iron facades of the early 20th century.

Common Themes

Across the three different scales of case studies, there are common themes that shaped the current urban fabric. The most obvious is street frontage and lot size. The frontages were 25' modules for New York and ranged from 25' to 30' in San Francisco. Frontage shaped the streetscape and allowed possibilities for mixed uses on ground floors. The separation between buildings is an economic and physical break that allows buildings or parcels to change usage independently from their neighbors. If blocks had been built as monolithic structures, then any change in use or function would have to be accommodated by the entire structure at one point in time. Parcel size becomes engrained in the urban fabric, and cannot be wiped clean without institutional, governmental, or large-scale development. In all of the case studies there is a specific scale, in both architecture and property, that allows adaptation, reuse, and resettlement.

Another common aspect was street width. In the New York examples, 50' prevailed, with Broadway at 75', and in San Francisco the streets were set at 68'9". All three places have very narrow streets by current standards. However, street width does not immediately make places walkable. Instead, it limits vehicular traffic or makes it inconvenient. Since vehicles are not privileged, pedestrian traffic is encouraged.

One final aspect is the mixed-use quality of the gentrified areas. There is a spectrum in the intensity of mixed use moving from San Francisco, to Greenwich Village, and then to SoHo. However, the common feature is that their property structure allowed for, and required, street access at very close intervals. Combined with minimal or zero setback, this proximity to public space allowed retail, commercial, or even manufacturing to occur wherever it was needed, in stark contrast to current land use planning. These properties in gentrified areas are able to change, and this ultimately helps them avoid obsolescence and redevelopment.

Conclusion

Looking at the gentrification aesthetic and the urban fabric of gentrified areas is not making the argument that "if you build it, they will come." It is the economic and cultural life of the city makes these places successful. However, these patterns of land use and scale seem adaptable over time. The sheer quantity of 100-year-old building stock that has survived in these gentrified areas is attributable to adaptation, not purely sentiment. While this urban fabric cannot create or automatically engender the gentrification aesthetic, it is a suitable framework for the aspects of age, social diversity, density, and adaptability that constitute middle-class urban life.

This paper, as a precursor to a design thesis, is geared towards using new development to create places that will accommodate the urban middle-class, or a gentrification aesthetic. Potential sites are disused industrial areas adjacent to existing urban fabric. However, this is the 21st century, and these industrial sites are huge. At the turn of the 20th century, land was sold and developed 25' at a time. Each property would be constructed independently, and that could create the urban fabric that gentrifiers cherish. The present reality is that remediation and redevelopment of an industrial site would only be carried out by large-scale development processes. The challenge for a design thesis will be to bridge the gap between current practice and historic results. There needs to be a way for the cellular structure of 19th century land patterns to come out of a 21st century development and construction practice. To that end, buildings would need to be built so that they could be considered physically and legally independent units. Even if they were part of a larger construction project, they would need to follow principles developed from the case studies. Namely, they would all need equal access to the street, they would all have to have divisions at, or in multiples of a specific module, and they would need to be able to be changed, demolished, or rebuilt without affecting their neighbors.

To paraphrase Sennett's perspective:

> The city must be conceived as a social order of parts without a coherent, controllable whole form. The creation of city spaces should be for varied, changeable use. Areas that during one era serve as commercial places should be able serve in another era as living places. The creation neighborhoods must not mean that socioeconomic level or activities are frozen by zoning.[12]

Future research directions include Paul Lukez's concepts from *Suburban Transformations*.[13] This work is helpful towards integrating his concepts of reading, writing, and erasing into flexible building structural typologies. This could enable the buildings (as multiples of the urban module) to have more functional and aesthetic possibilities while still remaining part of the urban fabric, as opposed to becoming an object in a landscape. Buildings could morph without permanently limiting their adaptability and without disrupting the urban fabric around them. This would push the already adaptable urban typologies beyond their 19th century predecessors.

Citations & Notes:

[1]Lees, Loretta, Tom Slater, & Elvin Wyly. *Gentrification*. New York: Routledge, 2008.
    The brief overview of gentrification is summarized from this book, which was invaluable to understanding the political and economic research on gentrification

[2]Caulfield, Jon. *City Form and Everyday Life: Toronto's Gentrification and Critical Social Practice*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994, x.
    Caulfield conducted interviews of gentrifiers in Toronto in the 1990's with a focus on understanding gentrification from an individual, rather than an economic perspective. His study was not meant to be fully representative or provide clear conclusions. Instead, because of the lack of sociological studies towards gentrification, he saw it as a springboard for future researchers

[3]Zukin, Sharon. *Naked City: The Death and Life of Authentic Urban Places*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011, 14.
    Zukin, a sociologist at CUNY, has been focused on gentrification since the early 1980's and has approached it from both a sociological and economic perspective. This work focuses on the images of authenticity that have shaped New York City in the last twenty years, where the cultural image of a neighborhood or area gains momentum through marketing and consumption of a neighborhood's image. While I don't disagree with Zukin's assessment, there is more than living in urban space than inhabiting and consuming an image.

[4]Caulfield, *City Form and Everyday Life*, 191.

[5]Zukin, *Naked City*, 16.

[6]Hetherington, Kevin. "The Time of the Entrepreneurial City: Museum, Heritage, and Kairos." In *Consuming the entrepreneurial city : image, memory, spectacle*, by Anne M, & Kevin Hetherington, editors Cronin, 273-297. New York: Routledge, 2008, 101.

[7]Sennett, Richard. *The Uses of Disorder*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970, 153.
    Writing in the late 1960's, Sennett was in the midst of radical social change from the 1968 DNC riots to the Situationists in Paris. His "survival communities" in places like Greenwich Village and the East Village were places that eventually became recognized as gentrified. In using his work, I am not implying that these places have a strong relationship to the avant-garde or the political radicalism of their past. While the residents may have a nice feeling that their neighborhood may have been counter-cultural at one point, they really do not want that confronting them on a regular basis or be counter-cultural themselves.

[8]Caulfield, *City Form and Everyday Life*, 193.

[9]Redfern, P. A. "What makes Gentrification 'Gentrification'?" *Urban Studies* (Routledge) 40, no. 12 (November 2003): 2351-2366, 2364.
    I include Redfern because he summarizes the core position of most gentrification literature. Because everything is part of a consumerist society, then any personal decisions must be related to commodity fetishisms. How one lives is just another aspect of this principle where one exists as consumerist images of authenticity.

[10]Zukin, Naked City, 18.

[11]Moudon, Anne Vernez. *Built for Change: Neighborhood Architecture in San Francisco*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1986.
    Moudon's work provided information for a case study that differed from the extremely intensive development in New York. Also, in a broad sense, it helped in understanding the relationships between initial development and urban forms. This understanding then informed the analysis of the New York City sites.

[12]Sennett, *The Uses of Disorder*, 142.

[13]Lukez, Paul. *Suburban Transformations*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2007.

Image Credits:
  Figure 1: O'Neill, John, Alamo Square with "Painted Ladies" Photograph, 2012. Wikipedia.org http://tinyurl.com/8bhok27 (accessed 15 SEP 2012)
  Figure 2: Diagrams produced by author using New York City GIS data (nyc.gov/citymap)
  Figure 3: Diagrams produced by author using New York City GIS data (nyc.gov/citymap)

SITE ANALYSIS
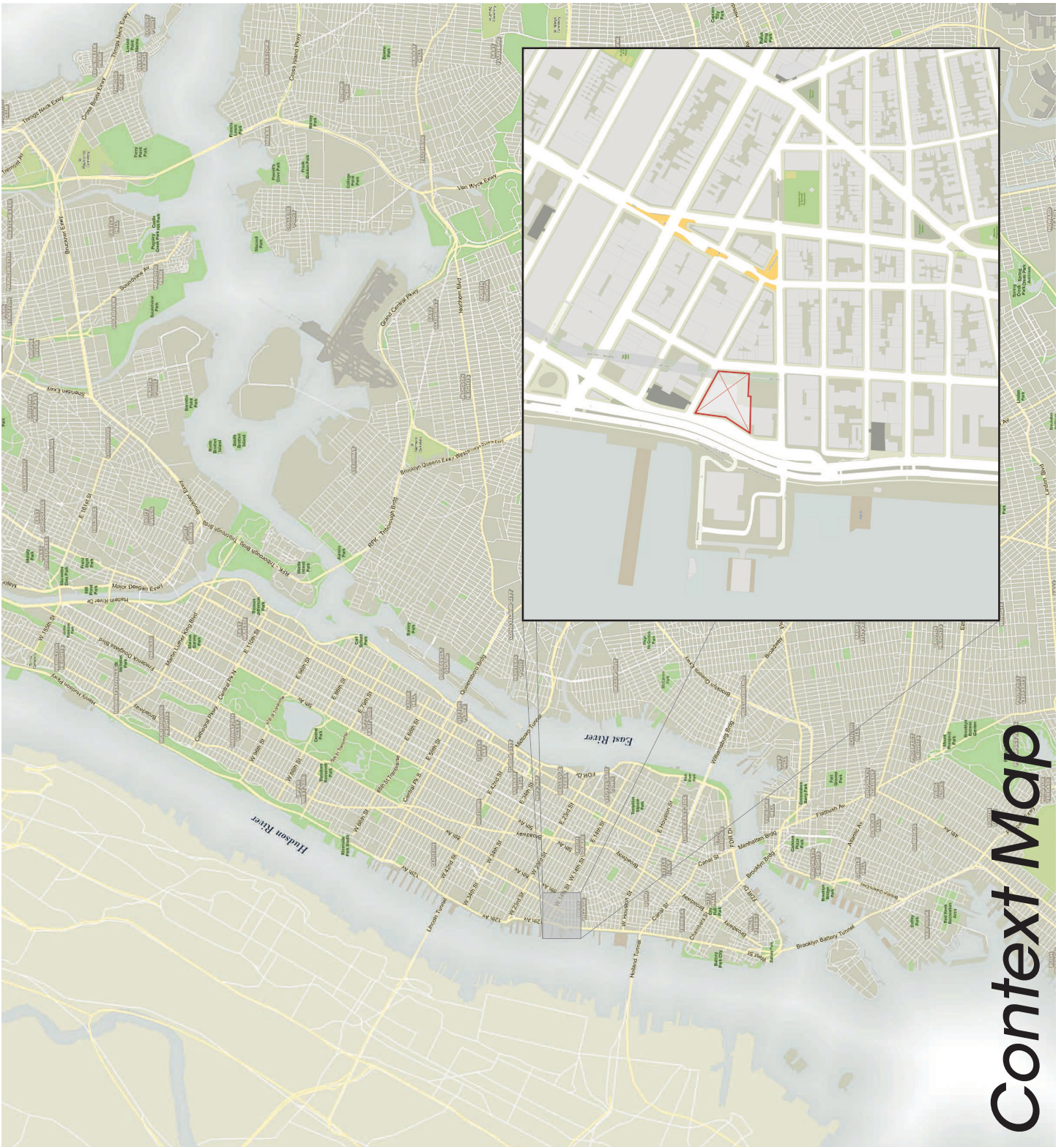
Context Map

Aerial Map
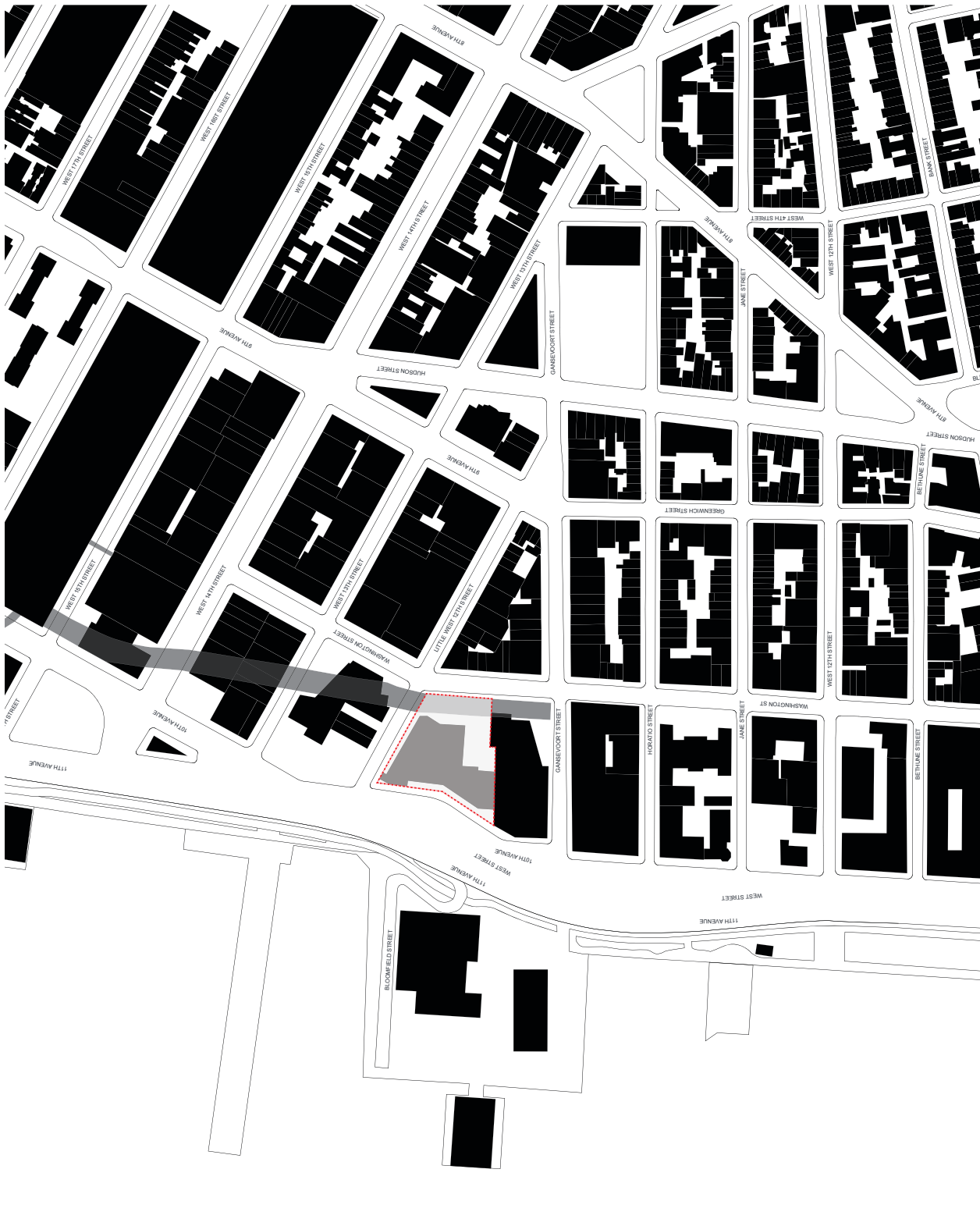
Figure-Ground Map

Sitte-Type Map

Land Use Map

Legend:
- 1 & 2 Family Residential
- Multi-family Residential
- Mixed Use
- Parks & Public Lands
- Commercial
- Institutional
- Industrial
- Parking
- Transport & Utilities
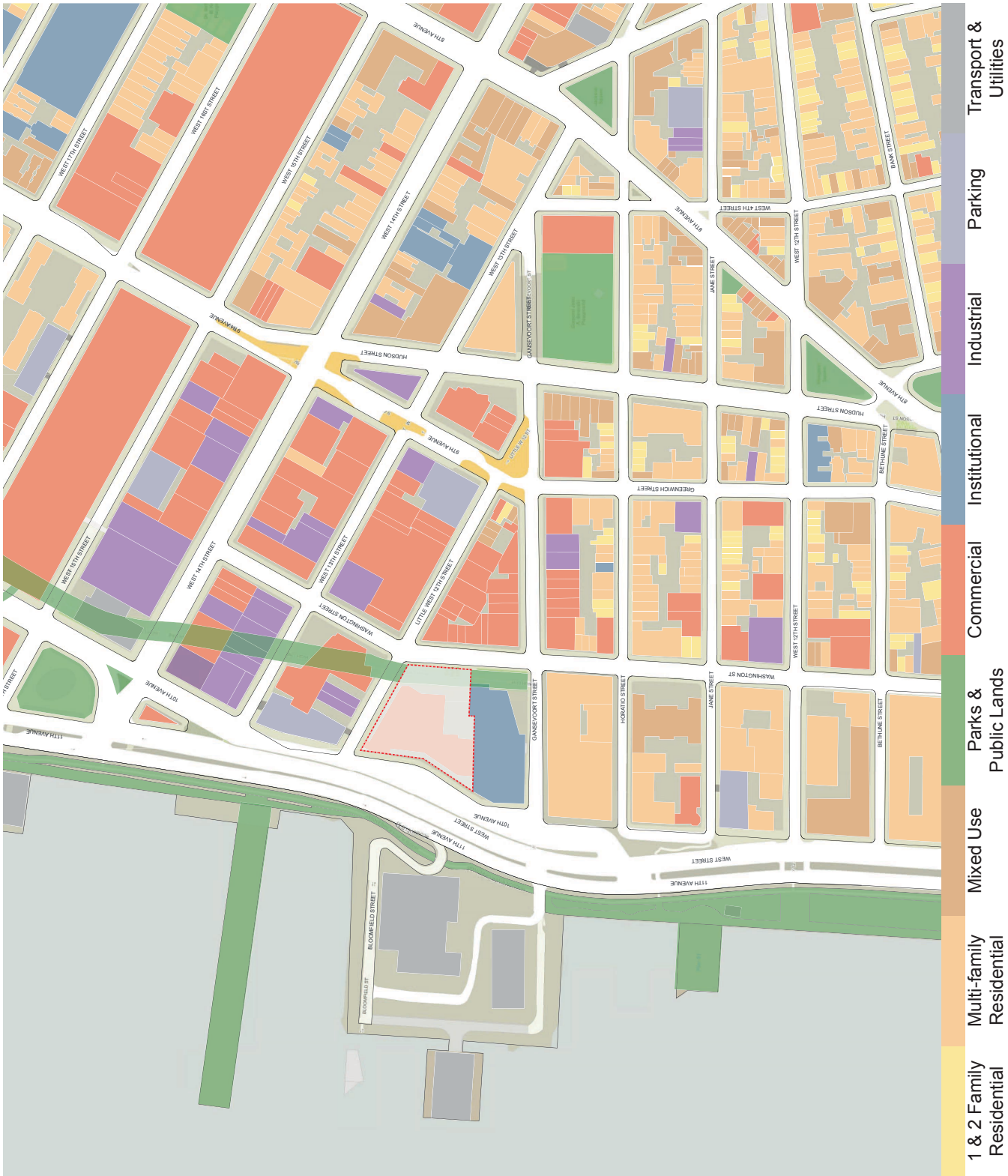
Zoning & Historic Districts

Residential | Commercial | Industrial | Parks | Historic District | Historic Building

GREENWICH VILLAGE HISTORIC DISTRICT

GANSEVORT MARKET HISTORIC DISTRICT

Building Height Map

1 Floor 2 Floors 3 Floors 4 Floors 5 Floors 6 Floors 7 Floors 8 Floors 9 Floors 10-15 Floors 16-20 Floors

The High Line Elevated Park

WEST 15TH STREET

WEST 14TH STREET

WASHINGTON STREET

WEST STREET

GANSEVOORT

East Elevation

South Elevation
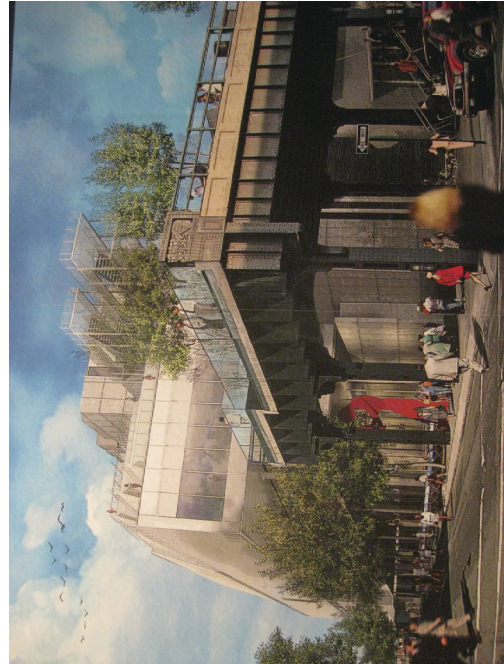
North View From The Standard Hotel

The Standard Hotel

The New Whitney Museum

Adjacent Landmarks

Area Map & Context Photos

WEST 14TH STREET

W 14 ST

WASHINGTON STREET

W 13 ST

WEST 13TH STREET

W 13 ST

9 AV

9 AV

HUDSON STREET

LITTLE WEST 12TH STREET

W 12 ST

9TH AVENUE

9 AV

W 12 ST

GANSEVOORT STREET

VOORT ST

GANSEVOOR

HORATIO ST

HORATIO ST

ST

LITTLE WEST 12TH STREET

10TH AVENUE

Height Unlimited

High Line Easement

Height Limited to 87'

Height Limited to 38'

The Whitney Museum

WASHINGTON STREET

GANSEVOORT STREET

Height Restrictions:
Air Rights Purchased by the Whitney

North Boundary - Little West 12th Street

north north west

north

north north east

West Boundary
10th Avenue

East Boundary
Washington St.

north west

north east

west north west

east north east

west

east

west south west

east south east

south west

south east

Site Photos

DESIGN PROCESS

west 1.0

east 1.0

west 2.0

east 2.0

west 2.1

east 2.1

west 2.2

east 2.2

west 2.3

east 2.3

west 2.4

east 2.4

west 2.5

east 2.5

west 2.6.0

east 2.6.0

west 2.6.1

east 2.6.1

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west 2.6.21

east 2.6.21

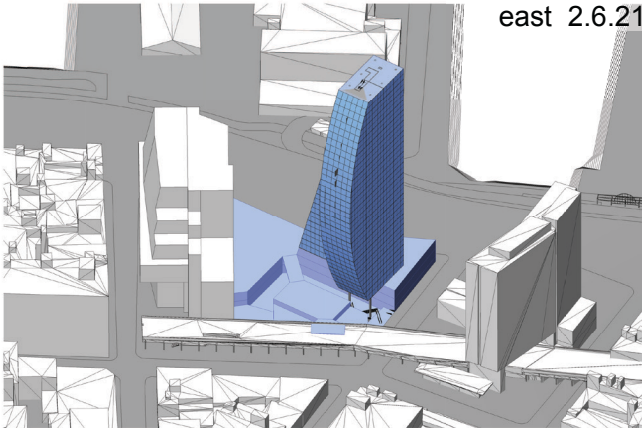west 2.6.22

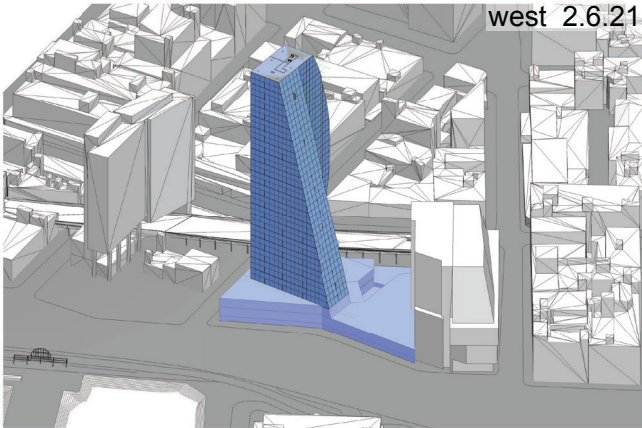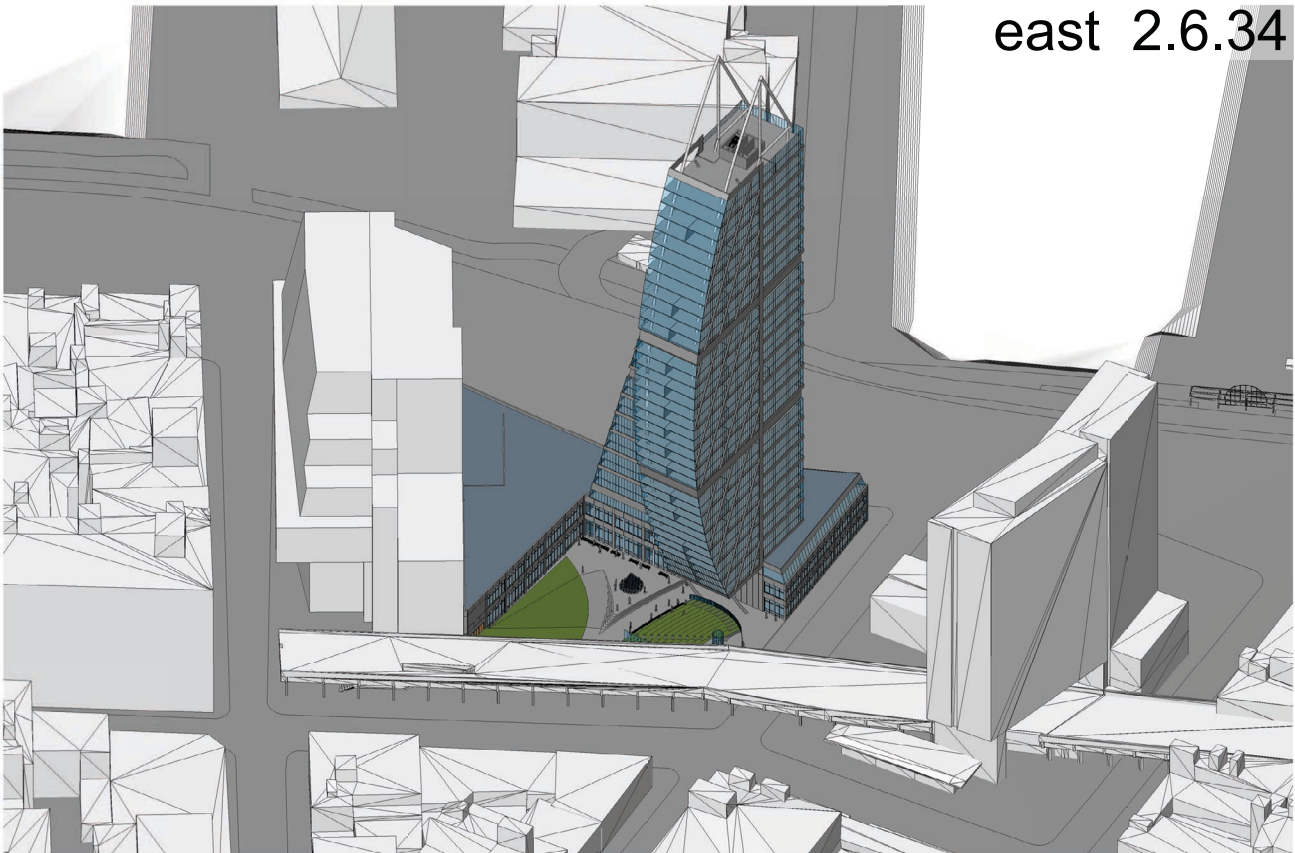east 2.6.22

west 2.6.24

east 2.6.24

west 2.6.25
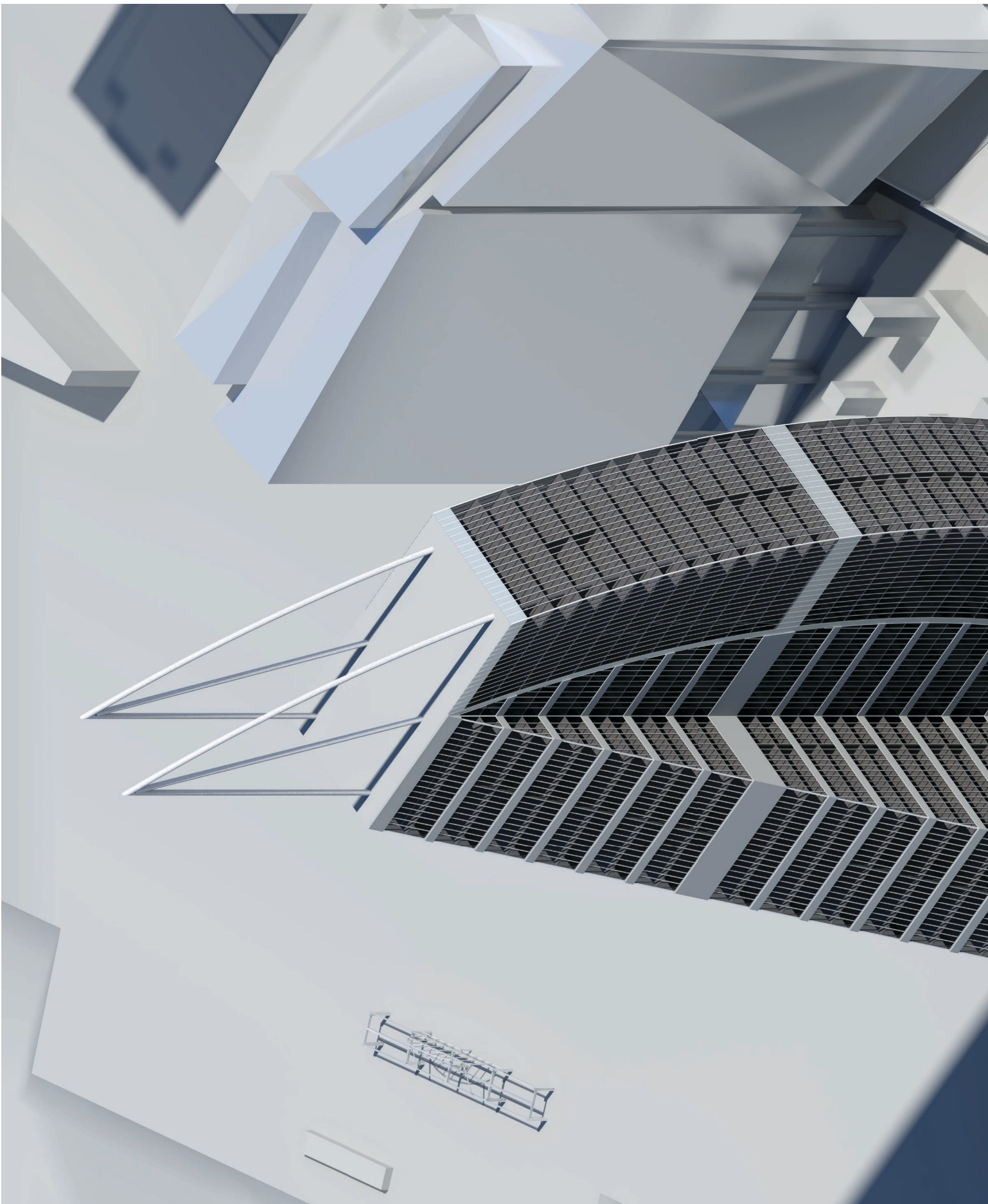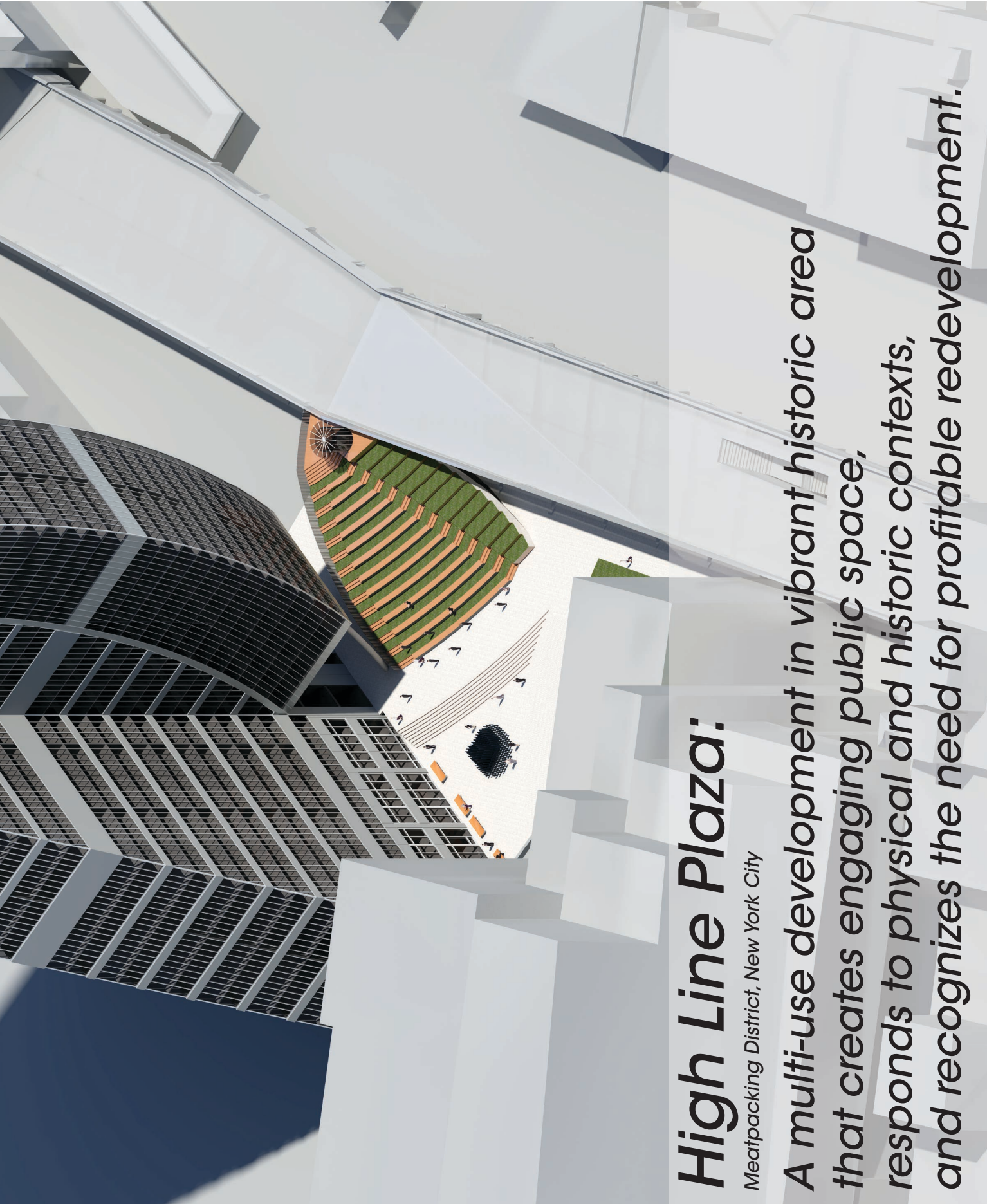
east 2.6.25

east 2.6.27

east 2.6.28

east 2.6.31
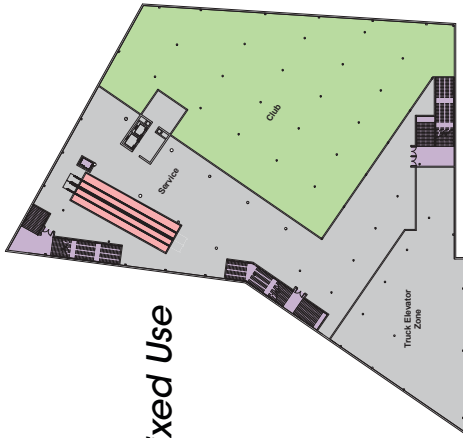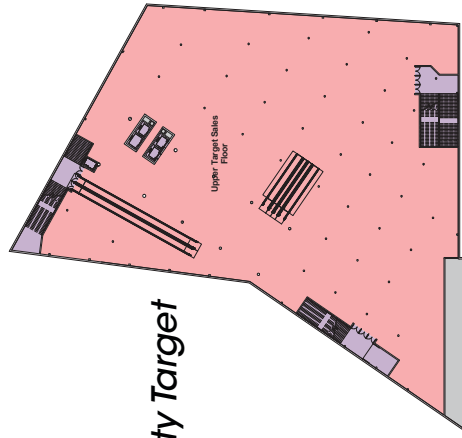
east 2.6.34

FINAL DESIGN

High Line Plaza:

Meatpacking District, New York City

A multi-use development in vibrant historic area that creates engaging public space, responds to physical and historic contexts, and recognizes the need for profitable redevelopment.

U-01/Mixed Use

Club

Service

Truck Elevator Zone

U-02/City Target

Upper Target Sales Floor

U-03/City Target

Lower Target Sales Floor

G/01/Mixed Use

Club Entrance

Retail

Plaza Retail A-1

Plaza Retail B-1

Plaza Retail C-1

Shared Retail Storage
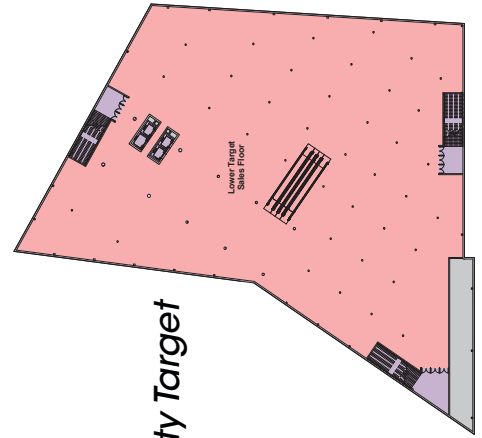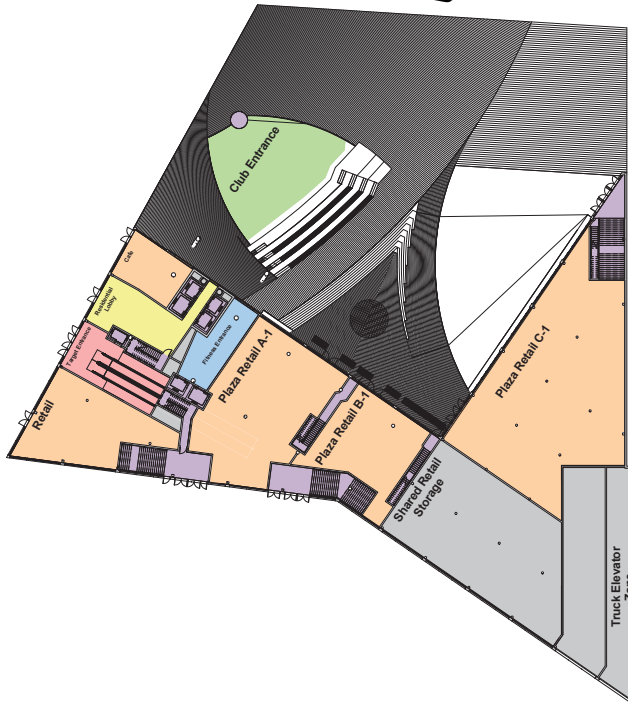
Truck Elevator Zone

Residential
Fitness Center
Ground Retail
Nightclub
City Target
Circulation
Service
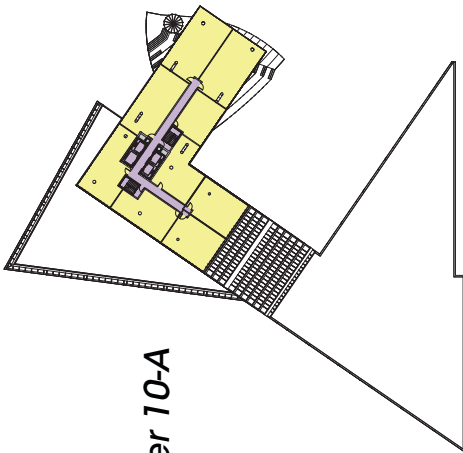
23/Tower 10-A

03/Fitness Center

Fitness Center Level 2

02/Mixed Use

Fitness Center Level 1

Plaza Retail A-2

Plaza Retail B-2

Plaza Retail C-2

Plaza Retail C-2

New Elevator to Street Level

Leased Spaces for Food Vendors (along street)

Existing Stair to Street Level

New Connection to High Line

Planters with Integrated Benches to create path through columns

Benches on Terraces

Stairs to High Line

Stairs to Street Level

Leased Spaces for Farmer's Market (below High Line)

Ramp to Plaza

Lawn for Venue & General Use

Cafe

Residential Lobby

Target Entrance

Fitness Entrance

Plaza Retail A-1

Retail

Fountain
Venue Focus
Stage Area

Plaza Lowered 4'

Plaza Retail C-1

Shared Retail Storage

Truck Elevator Zone

Site Plan

South-North Tower Section

West-East Tower Section

42 Tower Roof
428' - 0"

41 Tower 18-B
418' - 0"

40 Tower 18-A
408' - 0"

39 Tower 17-B
398' - 0"

38 Tower 17-A
388' - 0"

37 Tower 16-B
378' - 0"

36 Tower 16-A
368' - 0"

35 Tower 15-B
358' - 0"

34 Tower 15-A
348' - 0"

33 Tower 14-B
338' - 0"

32 Tower 14-A
328' - 0"

31 Tower 13-B
318' - 0"

30 Tower 13-A
308' - 0"

29 Mechanical
298' - 0"

28 Tower 12-B
288' - 0"

27 Tower 12-A
278' - 0"

26 Tower 11-B
268' - 0"

25 Tower 11-A
258' - 0"

24 Tower 10-B
248' - 0"

23 Tower 10-A
238' - 0"

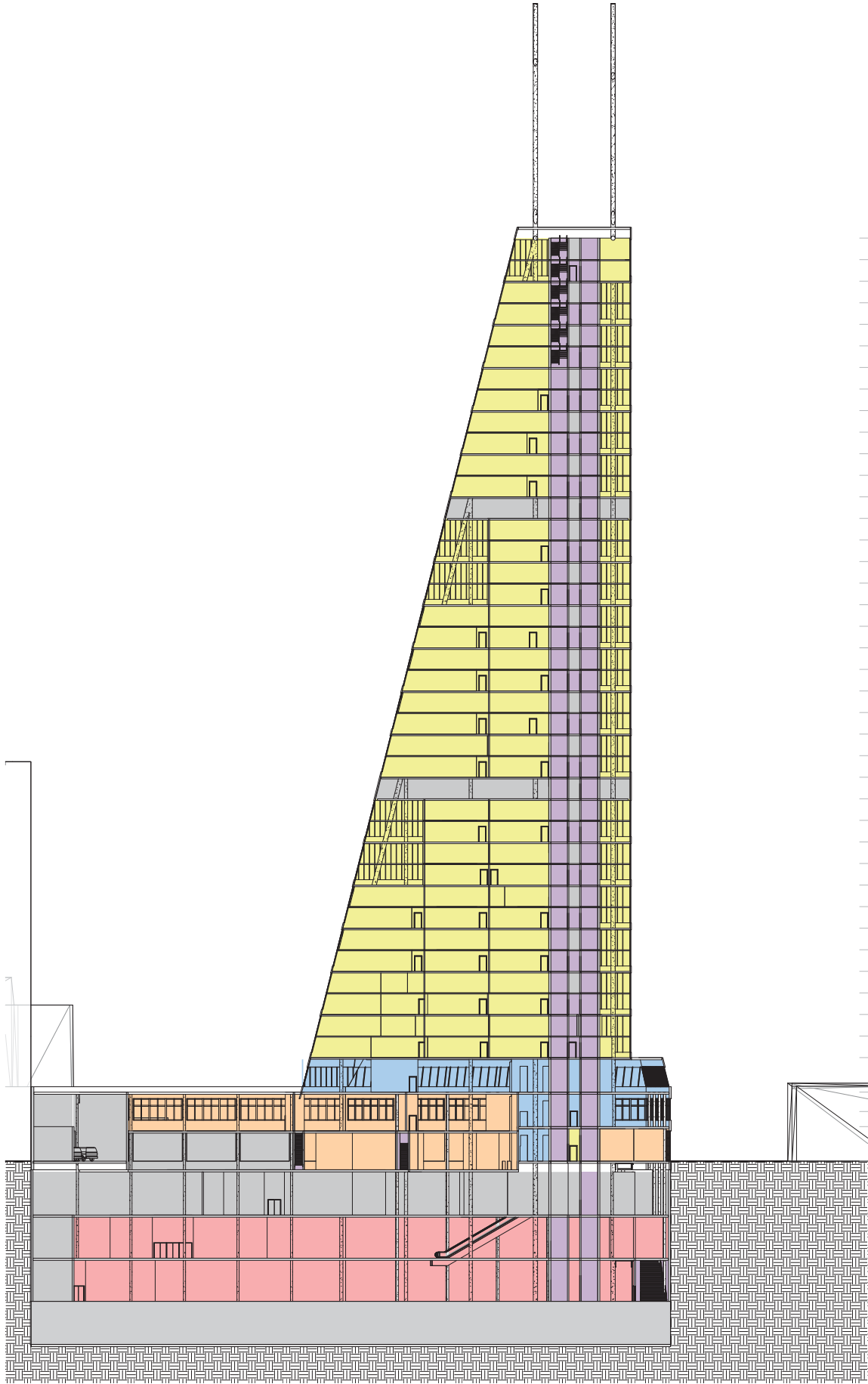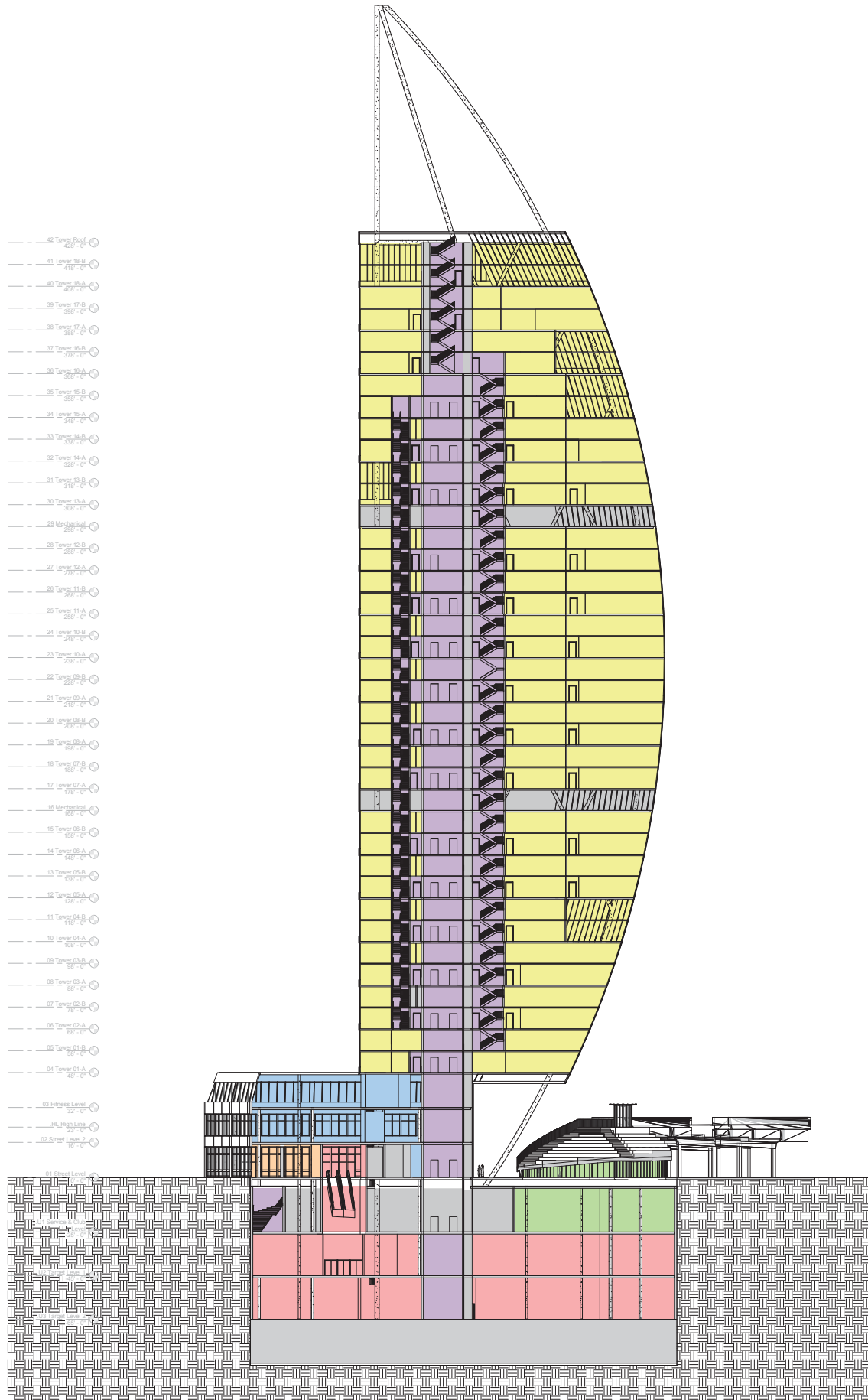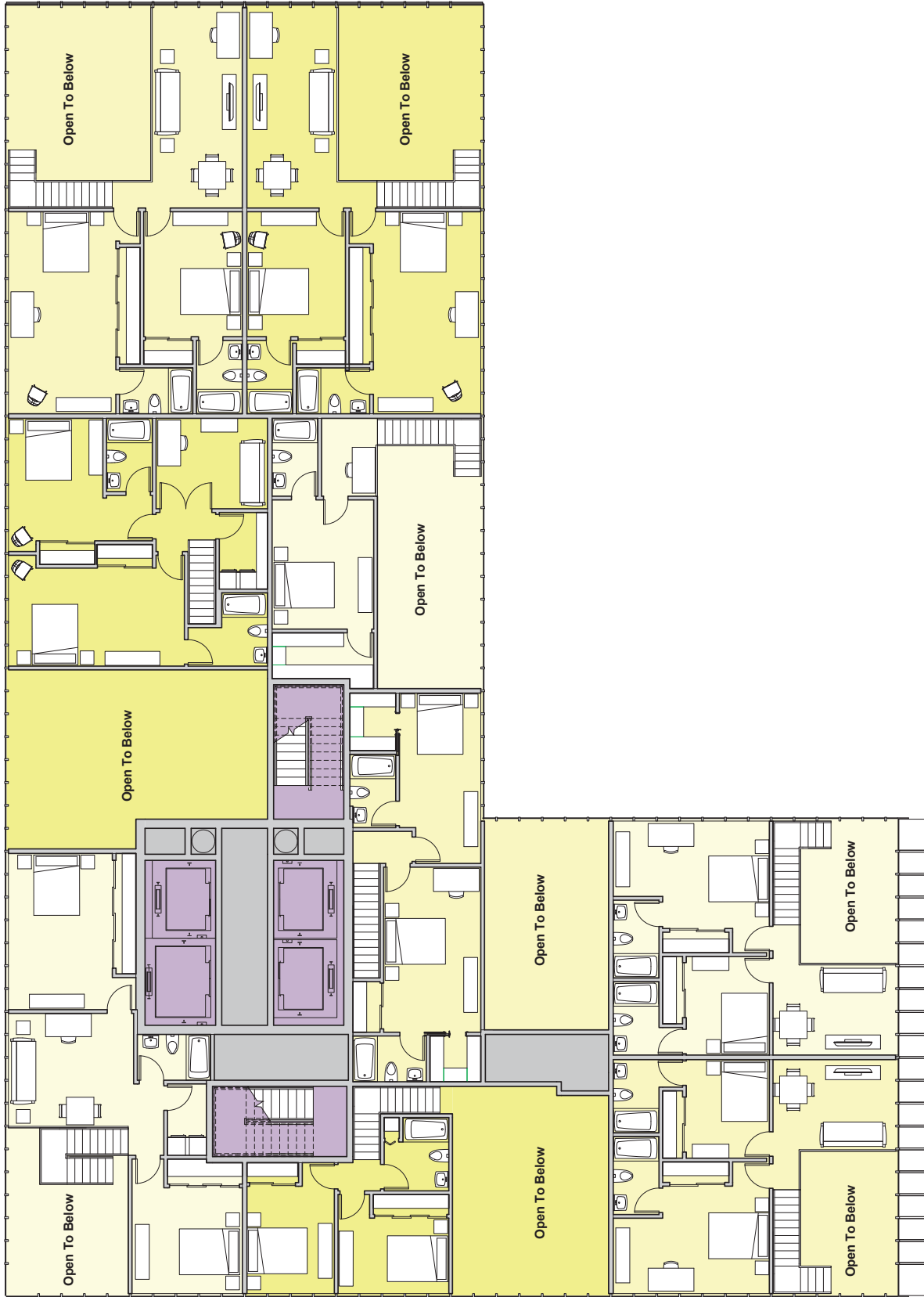22 Tower 09-B
228' - 0"

21 Tower 09-A
218' - 0"

20 Tower 08-B
208' - 0"

19 Tower 08-A
198' - 0"

18 Tower 07-B
188' - 0"

17 Tower 07-A
178' - 0"

16 Mechanical
168' - 0"

15 Tower 06-B
158' - 0"

14 Tower 06-A
148' - 0"

13 Tower 05-B
138' - 0"

12 Tower 05-A
128' - 0"

11 Tower 04-B
118' - 0"

10 Tower 04-A
108' - 0"

09 Tower 03-B
98' - 0"

08 Tower 03-A
88' - 0"

07 Tower 02-B
78' - 0"

06 Tower 02-A
68' - 0"

05 Tower 01-B
58' - 0"

04 Tower 01-A
48' - 0"

03 Fitness Level
32' - 0"

HL_High Line
23' - 0"

02 Street Level 2
16' - 0"

01 Street Level
0"

Open To Below

Open To Below

Open To Below

Open To Below

Open To Below

Open To Below

Open To Below

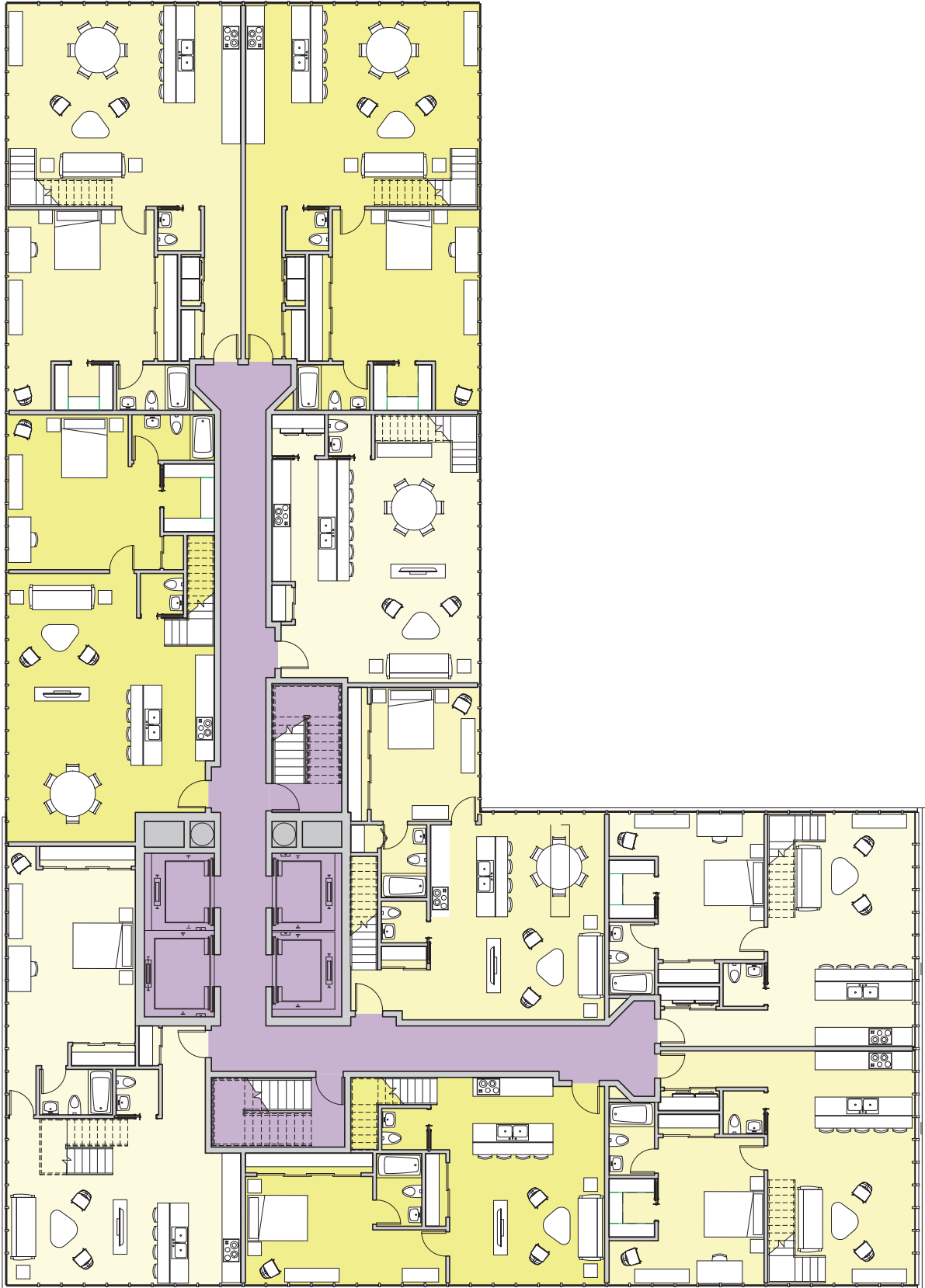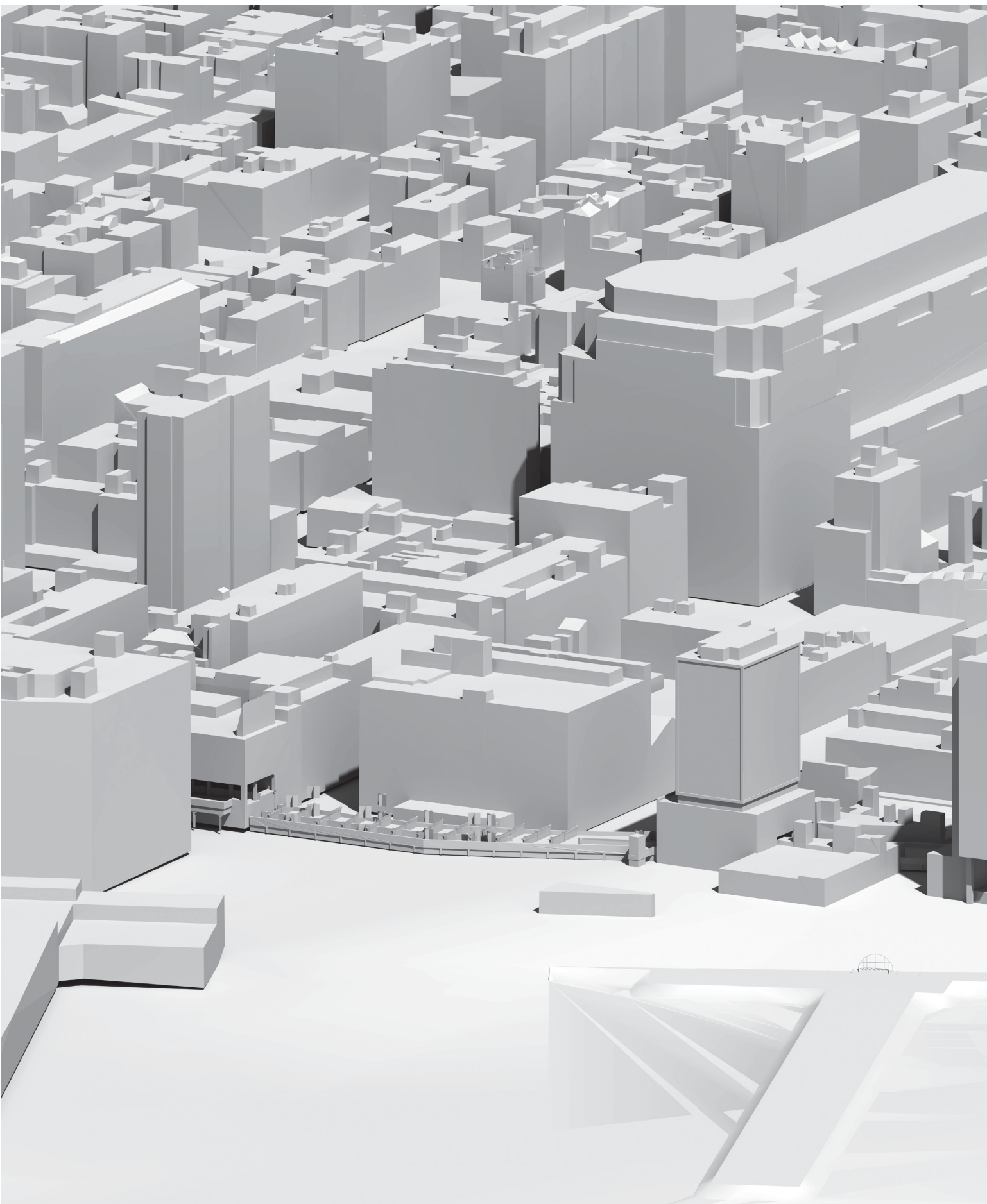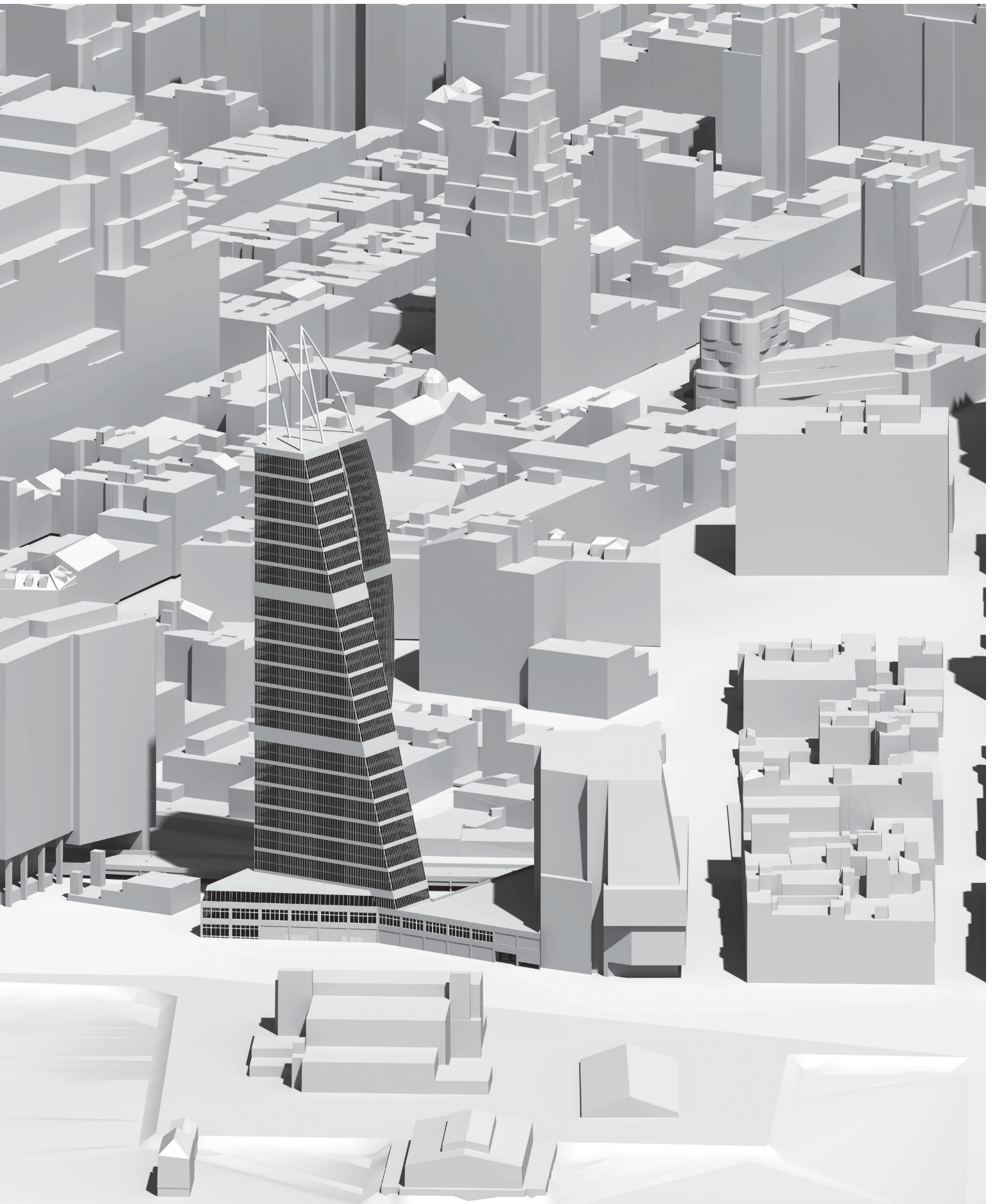Open To Below

24/Tower 10-B Second Level Plans

23/Tower 10-B Entrance Level Plans

Southwest Corner of Plaza
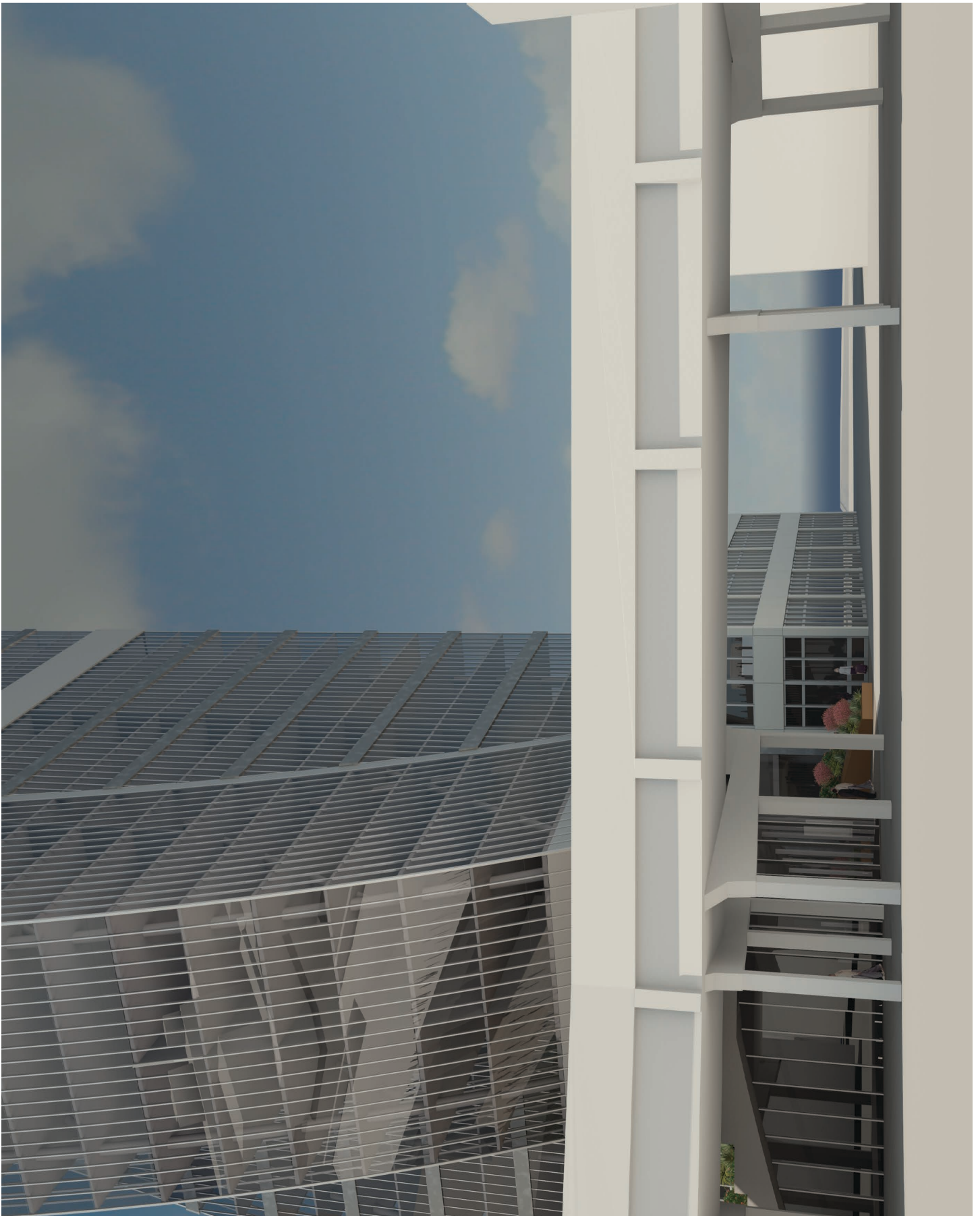
Southeast Corner of Plaza
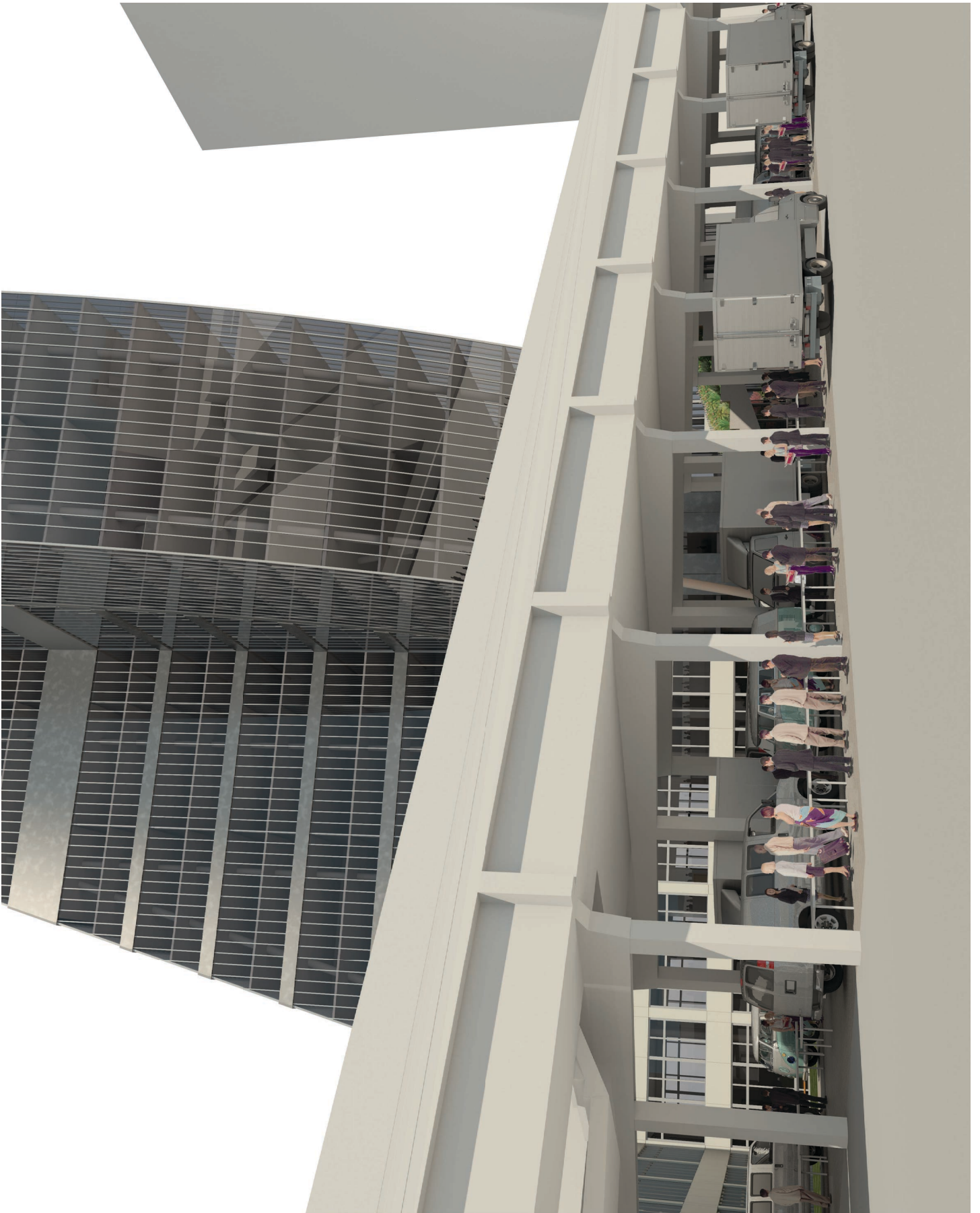
High Line Towards Terrace
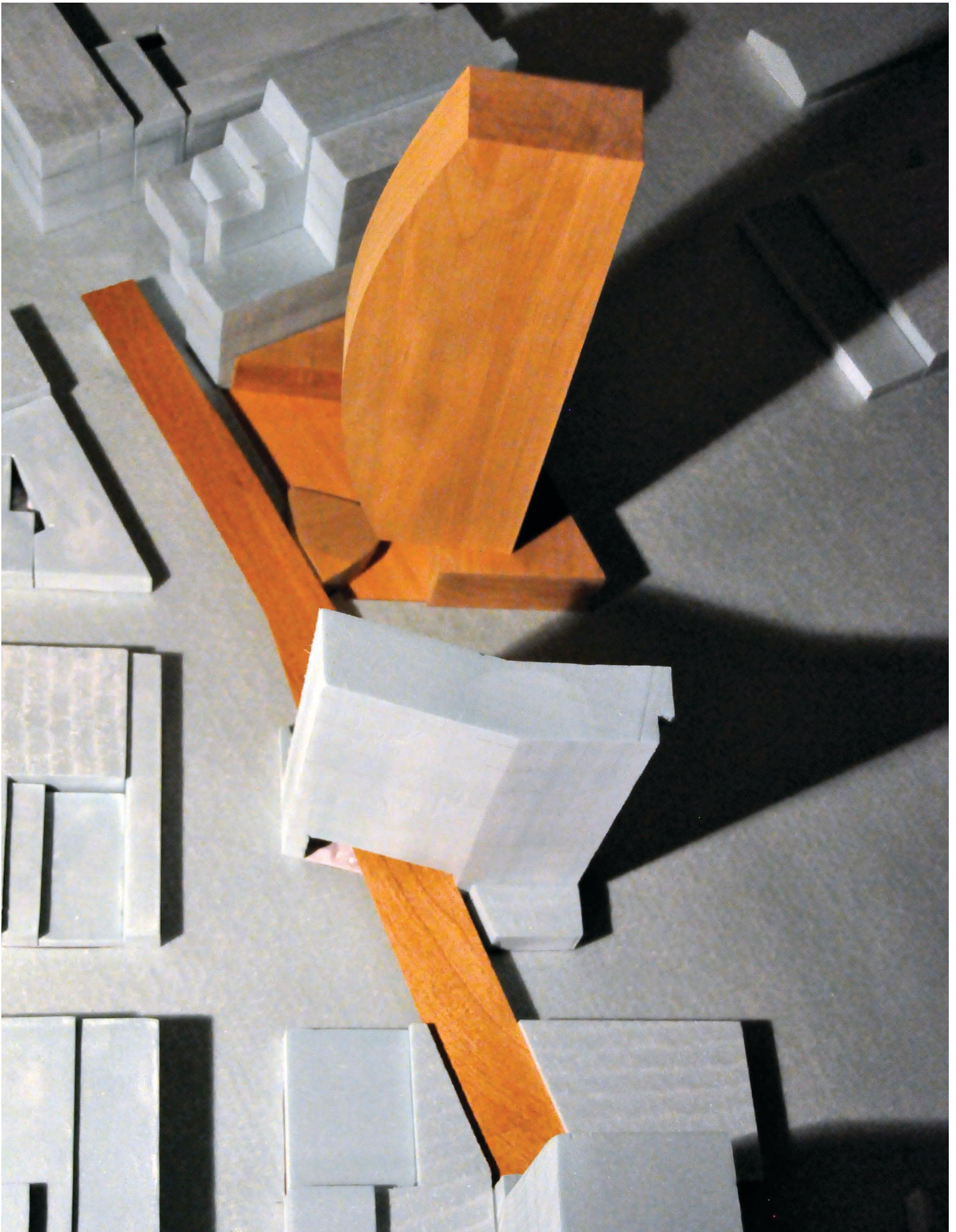
Terrace Towards Plaza

High Line To Northwest Passage
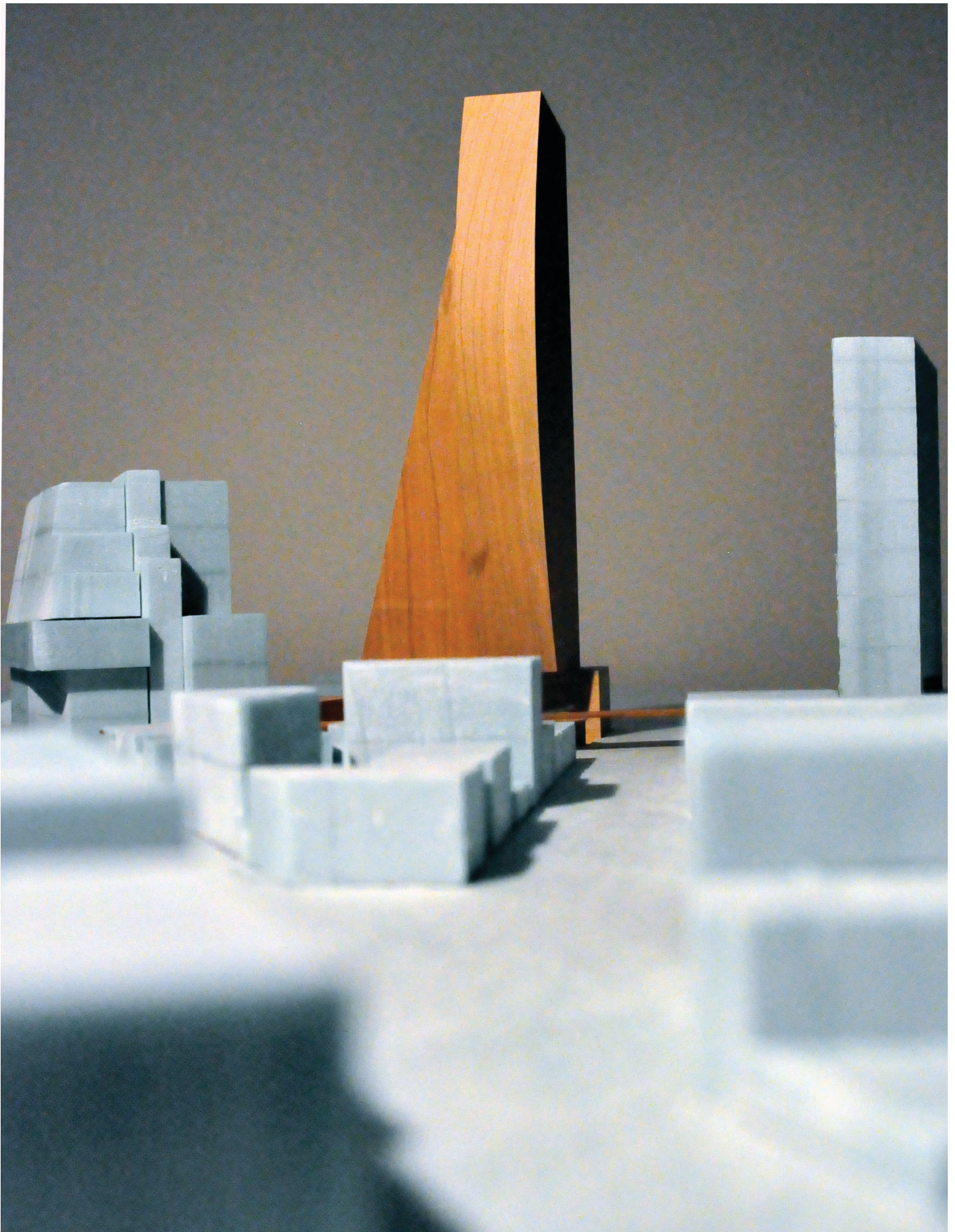
Looking West along Little West 12th
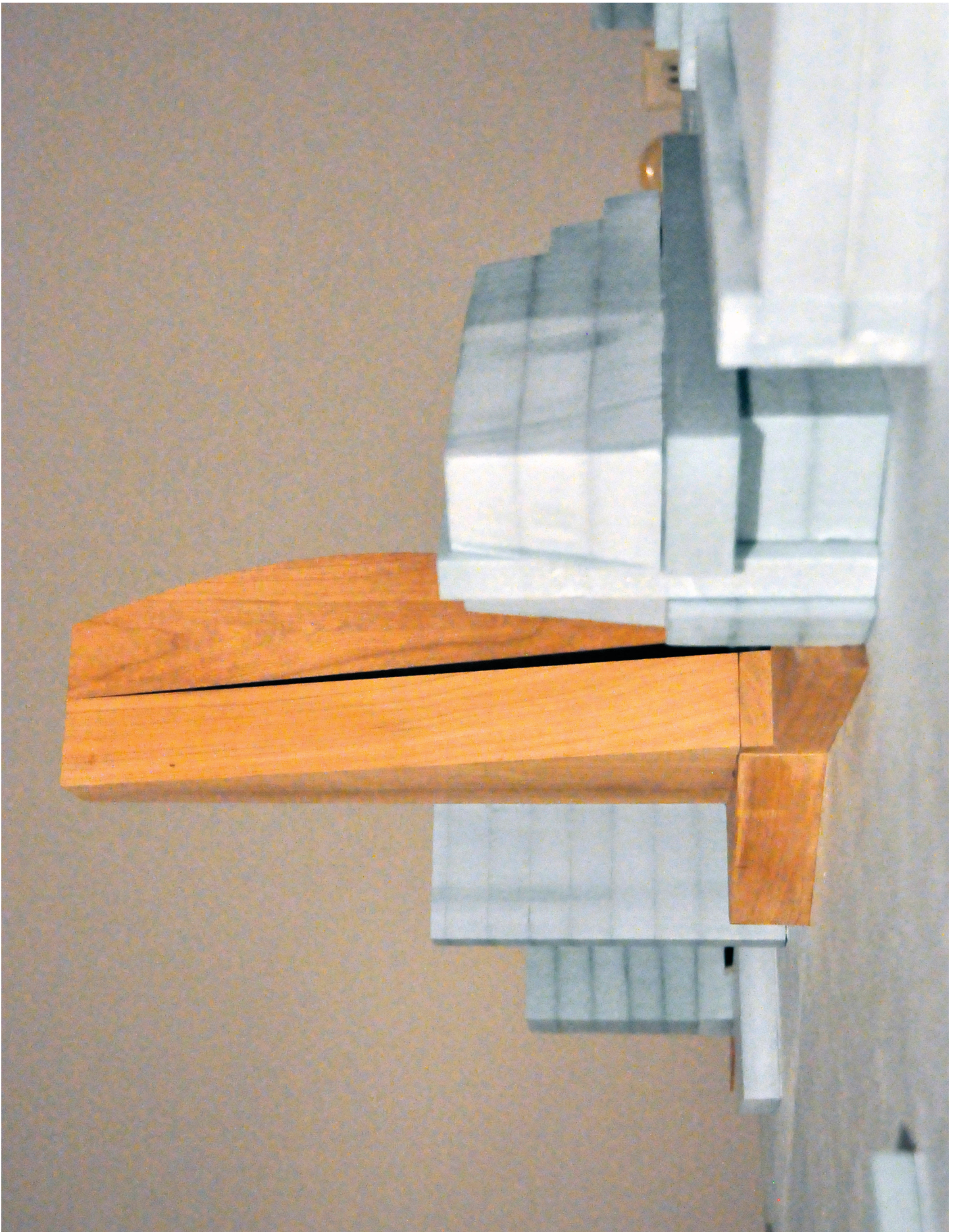
Farmers Market - Washington St N

Farmers Market - Washington St S

THESIS SUMMARY

Thesis Summary

ARC 636-700: The Paper Process

I am glad that I had the freedom and time to explore different aspects of urbanism issues from various perspectives. This allowed me to expand my knowledge base and gave me an appreciation of the complexity of the interrelated urban systems at work.

However, my earlier attempts to connect philosophy, economics and existing urban space were problematic. A lot of time that could have been spent researching was spent trying to make connections that were either over-reaching or irrelevant. Most of my early topics were grandiose and almost utopian ideals of urban space and interactions, so a focus on realistic intervention, not idealistic reconstruction would have been extremely valuable early in the process. That would have put me in the realm of build case studies, rather than in the world of subjective writing about the character and purposes of urban space.

While it is good to realize there is tremendous complexity, it also created a situation where the results of any intervention are un-determinable.   These systems are so complicated that to alter the structural framework of urban space to encourage certain goals might just be futile, and that spaces will behave in unpredictable ways, determined largely by individual users, trends, and tenants. All of these forces are outside the realm of architecture and design, and to try to affect a significant change through architecture is unrealistic at best, or purely arrogant at worst.

In retrospect, I should have chosen a much narrower aspect of the urban fabric, and then worked to find specific case studies to inform and support the design thesis. What resulted from my more dispersed process was an intriguing set of observations, but it really did not give me a roadmap for the design thesis.

ARC 701: The transition from paper to site and program

I had selected one site in New York City, and was then encouraged to try to have a multiple-site, distributed approach to urban intervention. The problem with this concept is that the primary site was so much more complicated and pivotal to the urban fabric than the other, smaller sites. The rationale that transferring FAR to the larger site in order to preserve the fine grained character of the Meatpacking District is not extremely strong. Connections to my written thesis became much more difficult after deciding to only develop the larger site, and it became a development/landscape/tower form project from that point forward. I had chosen a site that had many dynamic elements and influences, and to some extent my responses to those elements paralyzed my ability to interact well with my written thesis investigation.

Also, much of ARC 701 was spent on creating site analysis documentation, and I feel that my approach to this analysis disconnected it from preliminary or schematic design. If I had been more deliberate about integrating some programmatic, formal, and circulation elements of my design project into the site analysis, then it would have moved things along faster in the spring. However, the large scale of the site analysis was based on the distributed site concept, which was abandoned early in ARC 702, so in hindsight, things should have been done differently.

ARC 702: Trying to create a project

My final review was lackluster at best, whether it was the inability of some jurors to know how to engage and critique the project, or whether it was a fundamental disagreement with the transition from the thesis paper, there was not substantial discourse about my project. However, in a very critical and somewhat painful discussion with one of my consultants a few weeks after, I came to understand some of the potential problems that led to this reticence and silence in

the jury. Some of this criticism was that the whole of my project was not coherent either in a formal sense (big architectural moves) or as a response to my thesis (ultimately the interaction of streetscape and public space).

After ruminating on this criticism and thinking about my process through the semester, I've come to some judgments about my work. Through the semester, my project has moved through phases: the first was tower form, the second was ground floor retail, and the third was creating a plaza and connection to the High Line. The problem is that I worked on them sequentially.   I say problem, but they had to occur in sequence, because there is a certain hierarchy to them. However, the project fell apart somewhat because I was not able to deconstruct the component pieces and then reassemble them again, so that they could all support the larger architectural moves of the entire project. The three pieces were coherent within themselves, but their interactions with the others were weak at best. In spite of these criticisms, I stand behind the functional-typological moves of my project. For the most part the essential components were in the right places doing the right things. I understand that formally and conceptually they do need to become more integrated and communicate a more coherent perspective, and I could get there if I had been able to disassemble the pieces and reassemble them before it was finished.