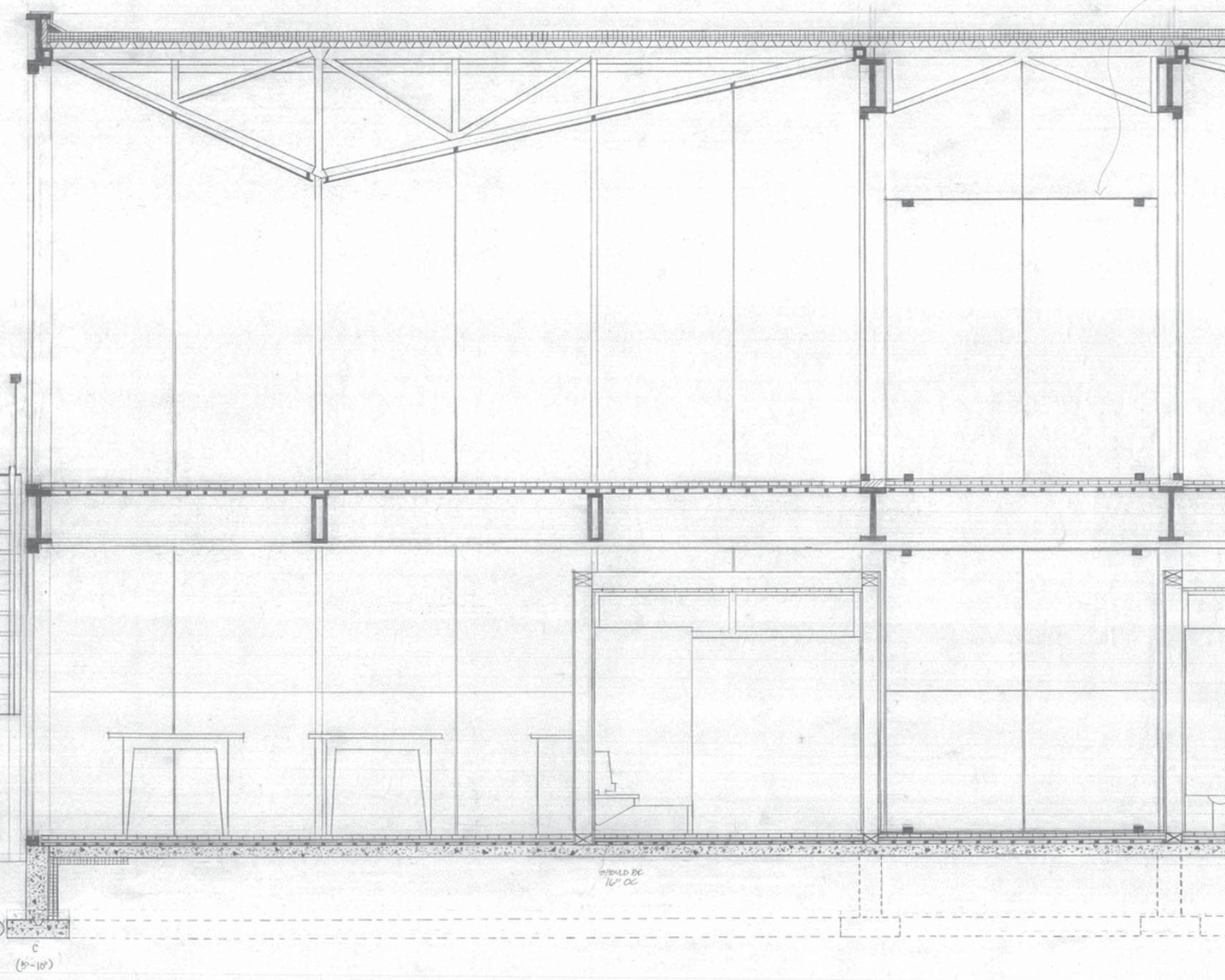


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DEC



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SHOULD BE
16' OC

barboursville ruins

thinking within architecture

t h i n k i n g w i t h i n a r c h i t e c t u r e

Thesis submitted to the faculty of Virginia Polytechnic
Institute and State University in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Architecture.

blacksburg, virginia

november 2002

v. hunter pittman, chairman

william w. brown

william u. galloway

c l a u d i a h a r r i s o n



a b s t r a c t

With historic ruins as a project vehicle, this thesis investigates connections to an existing structure through materials and spatial relationships. The proposed intervention, guided by design elements and preservation methods, reflects a sensitive approach and provides a transition between our built heritage and an adapted form of architecture.





With sincere gratitude, I wish to acknowledge those people whose support and friendship have made this experience possible.

my thesis committee (hunter pittman, bill brown, bill galloway):
for their guidance and encouragement throughout the masters program and their special vision for this project.

my cowgill hall colleagues:
for the sense of community that I felt in studio and the experiences we shared in discovering architecture.

my son (josh sahrmann):
for his love and continued support, and the many sacrifices made during these years in virginia.

my friends:
for their patience and support in helping me realize this important goal.

Thank you for opening my eyes to many new possibilities.

c o n t e n t s



barboursville ruins

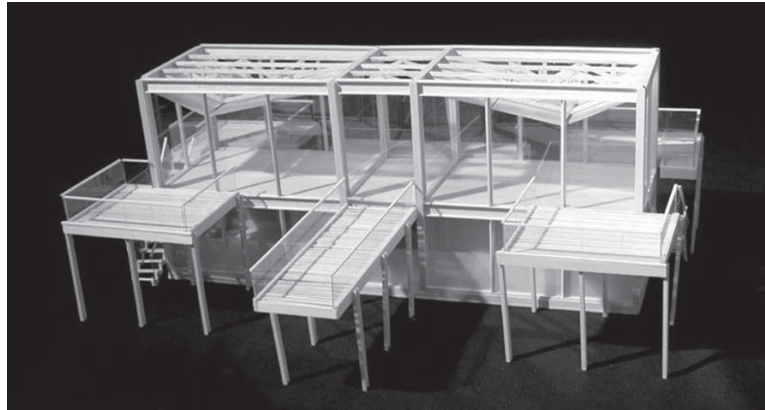
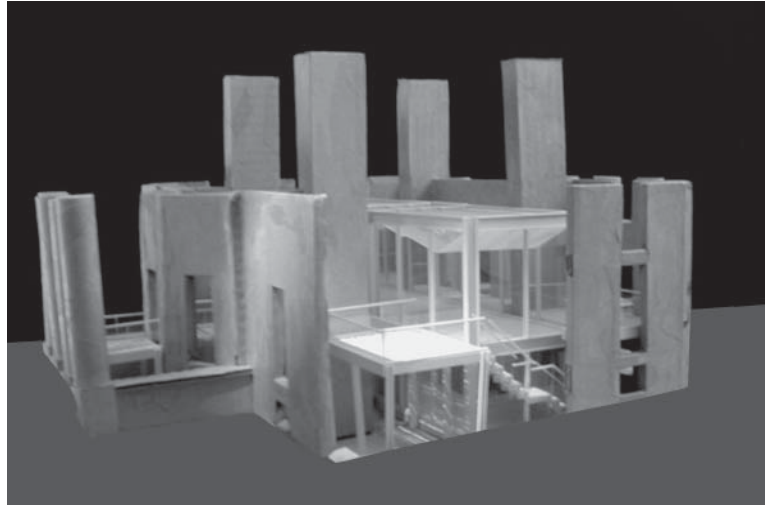
abstract.	09
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i n t r o d u c t i o n

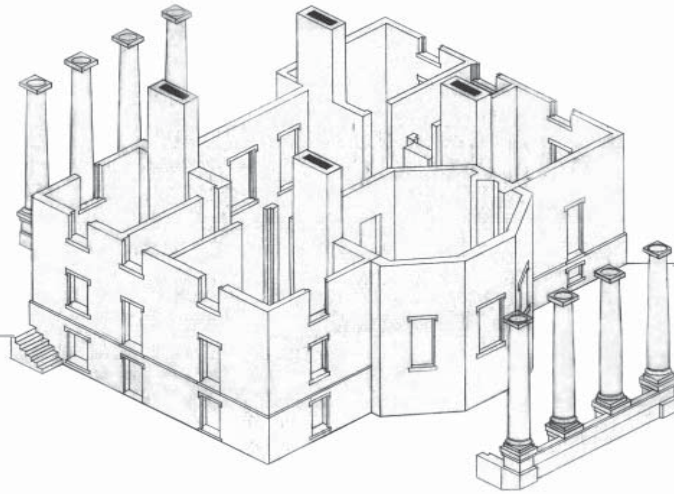
Experiencing Barboursville ruins, a visitor is drawn into their presence and a natural curiosity or inquiry begins to emerge. This thesis study began by trying to understand what defines this experience of place and how it could be further discovered and enjoyed by those who encounter its beauty. As a starting point to the investigation, a record of the existing structural and contextual conditions was made and preservation/program limits were established for guidance during the design process. Of concern was the question of how to respect the architecture of the ruins and their historic fabric while bringing their use into the present. But most importantly, the goal of the project was the preservation of the experience, not the preservation of the building. While precedent studies and elements of discovery helped to inform my work, the development of a design strategy for the intervention was created. The focus of this thesis examines these important questions about the transformation of place by **thinking within architecture.**

"I see architecture not as a form that contains space, but as an experience a passage."¹ Maya Lin

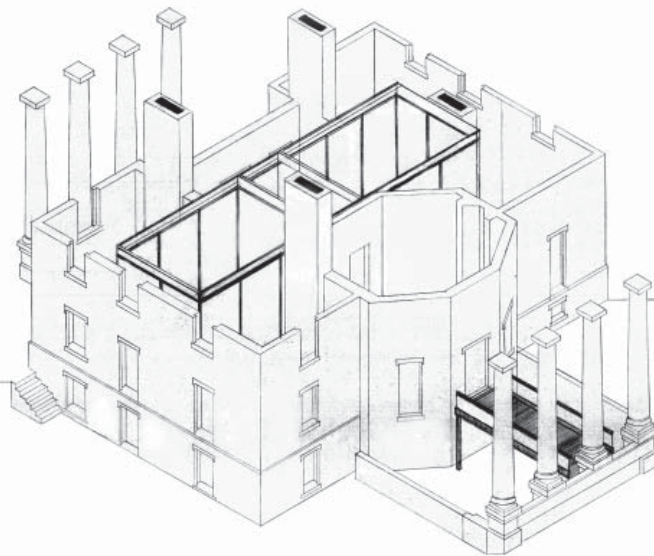


“Every new work of architecture intervenes in a specific historical situation. It is essential to the quality of the intervention that the new building should embrace qualities which can enter into a meaningful dialogue with the existing situation. For if the intervention is to find its place, it must make us see what already exists in a new light. We throw a stone into the water. Sand swirls up and settles again. The stir was necessary. The stone has found its place. But the pond is no longer the same.”²

Peter Zumthor

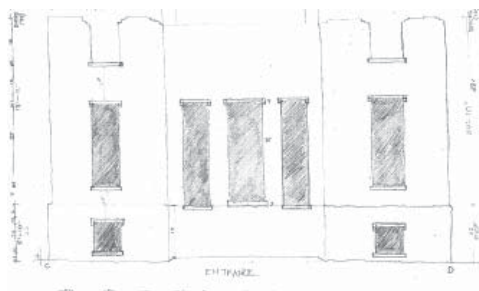
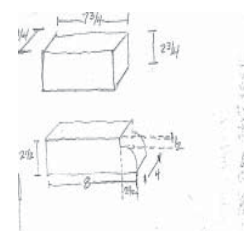
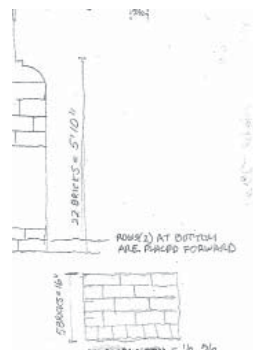


axonometric view of existing building

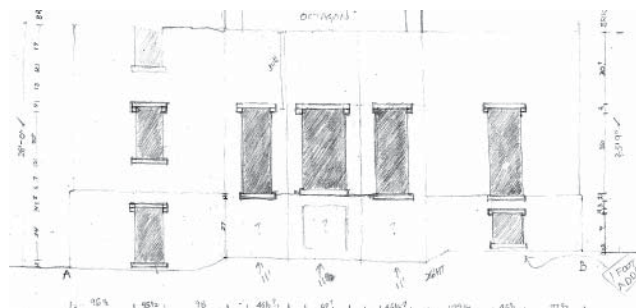


axonometric view of proposed intervention

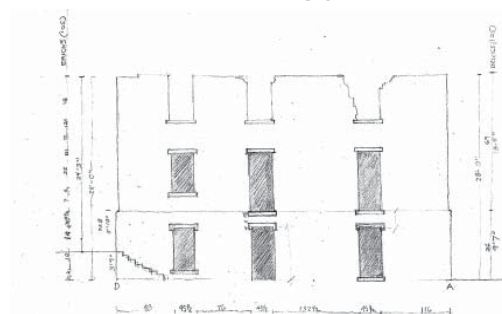
barboursville field notes



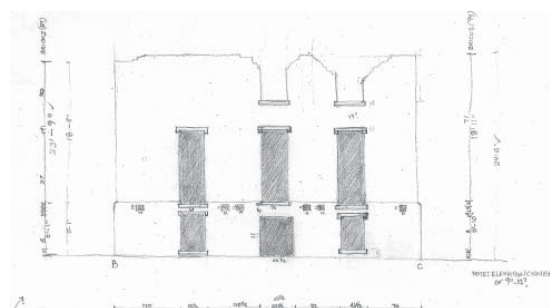
north



south



west



east

these initial sketches with measurements represent existing conditions of the structure

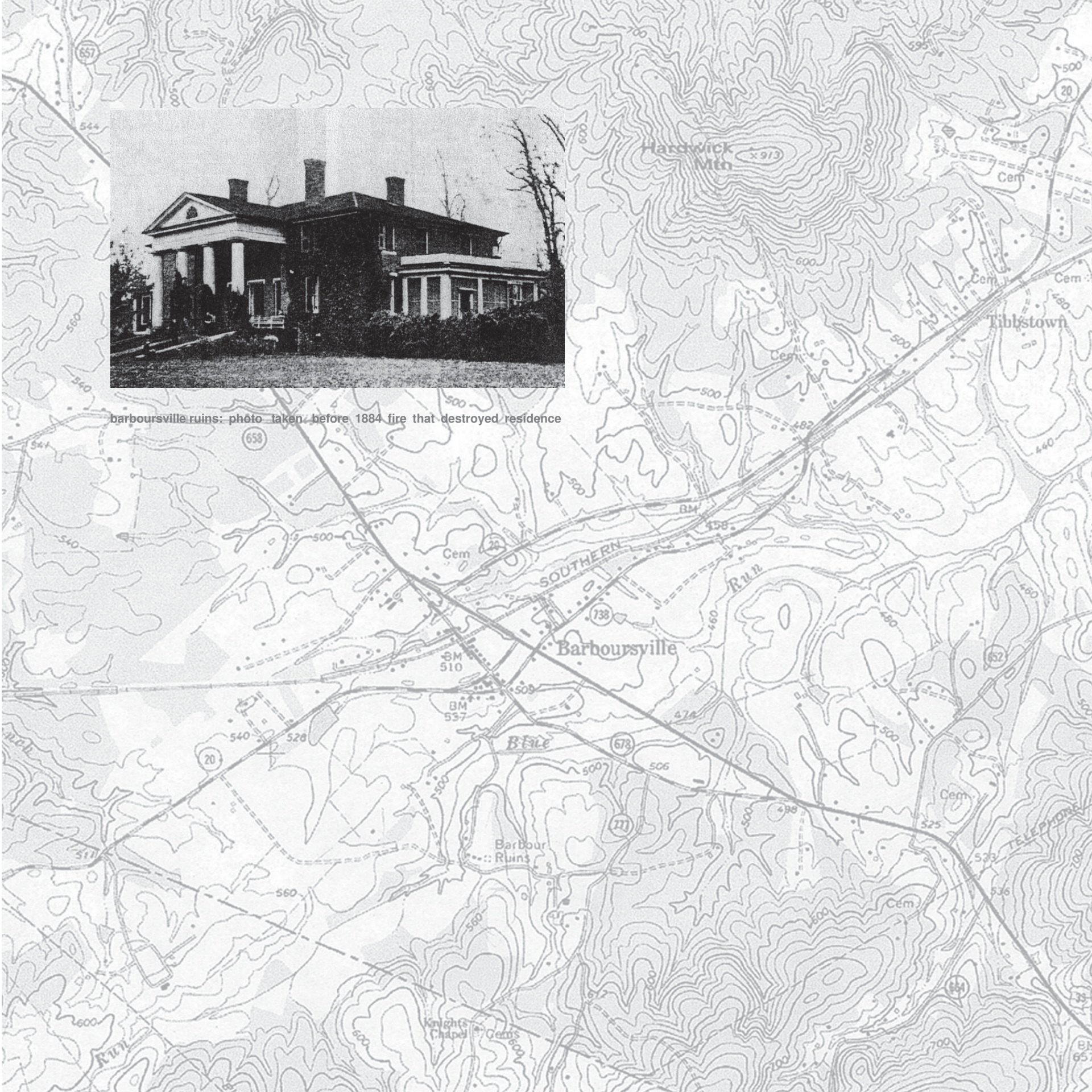
t h i n k i n g

This project, an intervention within the ruins of an historic building, is located in Barboursville, Virginia, a small town, northeast of Charlottesville. This region is bounded on the east by the small Southwest Mountains and on the west by the Blue Ridge which lie in the Piedmont region of the state. The estate was considered to be one of the grandest buildings in Orange County. The original structure was built as a private dwelling between 1814-1822 and was designed by Thomas Jefferson. By exploring the historical context, we witness the many factors that might have influenced the final design. Architecture depends on the materials, techniques, and structure of a given time and reveals how Thomas Jefferson, James Barbour, and Andrea Palladio contributed to this remarkable place.



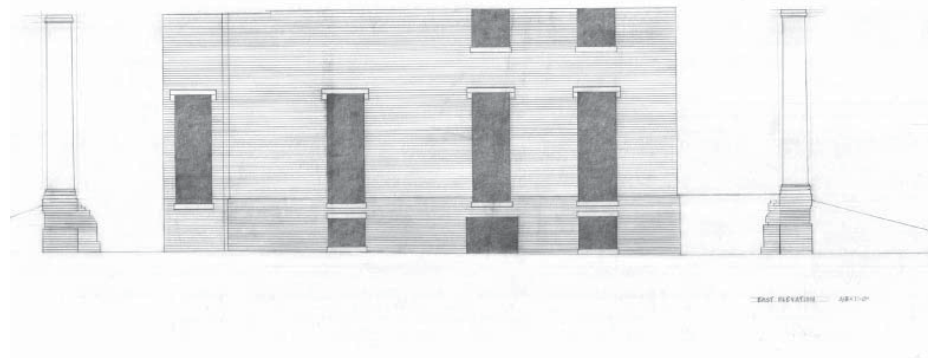


barboursville ruins: photo taken before 1884 fire that destroyed residence



james barbour**barboursville, virginia**

James Barbour is significant in Virginia's history as a dedicated statesman and respected lawyer. His many contributions and service to his country are widely recognized, including the Governorship of Virginia, held between 1812-1814. Barbour's political ties and his position as a wealthy landholder of some 5,000 acres in Orange County elevated his social status. Barbour enjoyed his prominent role in Virginia and sought to create a plantation that reflected his love of farming and his status as a country gentleman. Barbour's friendship with Thomas Jefferson grew out of their shared interest in farming, politics, and architecture. Both gentlemen admired the villas and estates of Europe and modeled their plantations after classical examples. Barboursville plantation was composed of a main dwelling, several outbuildings, and slave quarters which represented a well-run farming enterprise, and in some respects, resembled a small, self-sufficient community. Jefferson's design for this important country house gave testimony to the latest style and technology of the time.



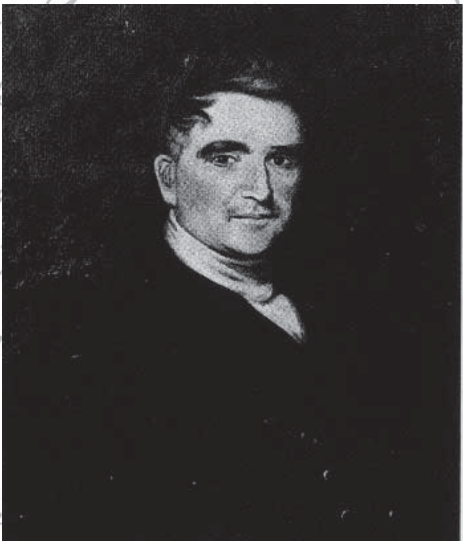


james barbour to thomas jefferson
barboursville
march 29, 1817

“The bearers of this, James Bradley and Edward Ancel, are the undertakers of my building-the former a carpenter the latter a bricklayer. I have resolved on the plan you were good enough to present me and for which I return you my sincere thanks. You were kind enough to accompany the plan with a suggestion that it would be well for my workmen to see your building and receive such verbal explanations as might facilitate their labors. To that end I have directed them to repair to Monticello...”³

Dear Sir

Barboursville March 29th - 1,

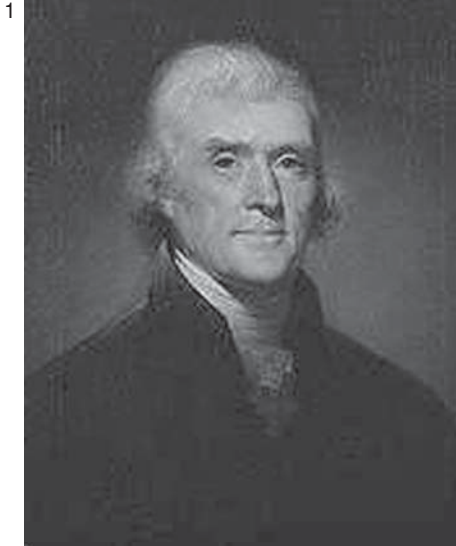
The bearers of this, James Bradley and Edward Ansel are the undertakers of my building - the former a Carpenter the latter a bricklayer. I have resolved on the  enough to present me and for which you were kind suggestion that your building and facilitate their repair to Monticello

enough to present
-ew thanks -
the plan with a
workmen to see
explanations as might
e directed them to
secured the trouble

I give you tho I am conscious I take your kindness very heavily - If you ^{have} anything in the said way ~~from~~ you would recommend and which is not common you will oblige me by sending it

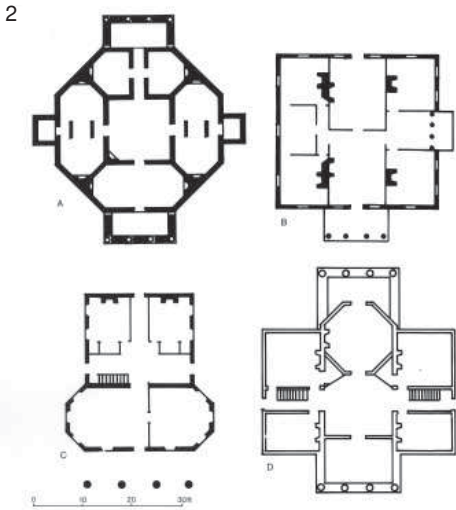
I tender you my best respects

J. W. Barbour

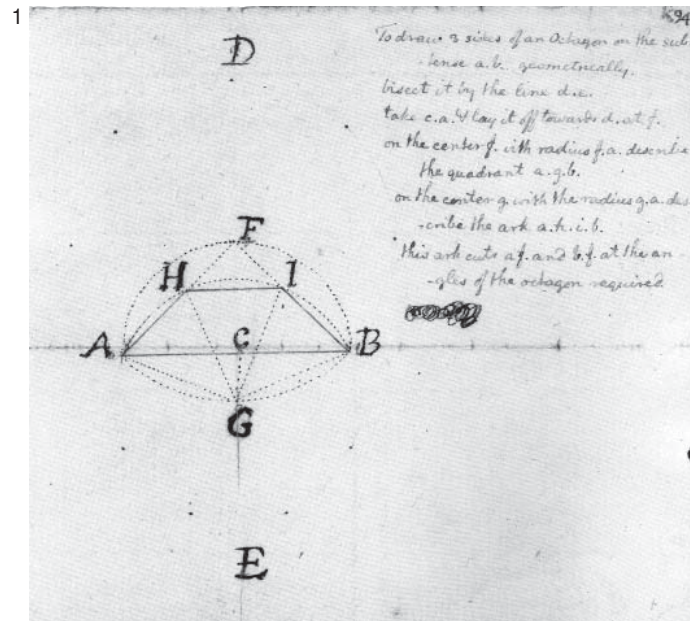


thomas jefferson shadwell, virginia

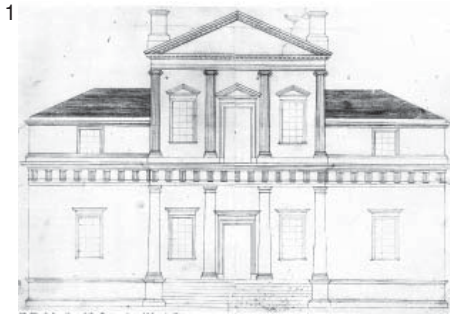
Thomas Jefferson is known through his legacy as a founding father of our country and through his many contributions made to our early history. His incredible character is reflected through his teaching, writings, and his leadership which laid the groundwork for the establishment of our democratic society. Although these accomplishments are celebrated, his influence on our culture through his dedication to the arts is also noteworthy. Being born into wealth and of the gentry class of Virginia society afforded Jefferson a position to study and nurture his intellect and natural curiosity. His love of education and keen interest in the classics developed his mind in many directions. To every field of study he brought a fresh and inquiring mind. His formal training during his years in Williamsburg prepared him to practice law, but it is during this time that his interest in architecture blossomed. It has been written that his first book on design was purchased from a cabinetmaker near the college he attended. He also acquired books from England and borrowed any others that he could find on the subject of architecture. Jefferson's early creative design inspirations were drawn from these books and other British publications which introduced him to the work of Andrea Palladio. Palladio's classical designs, based on models from antiquity, were derived from rules of proportional systems which stimulated



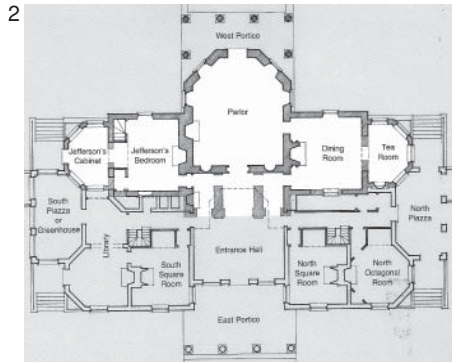
plans of country houses by jefferson
 a) poplar forest b) edgehill
 c) farmington d) barboursville



A page from Jefferson's notebook shows his method of calculation for the octagonal form which he used in many of his plans. This simple idea, which added additional light and air to a space, emphasizes his practical approach to design.

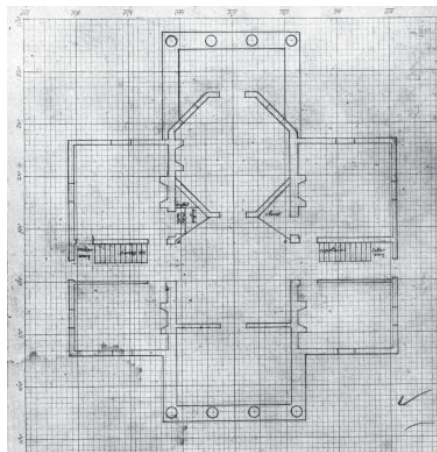
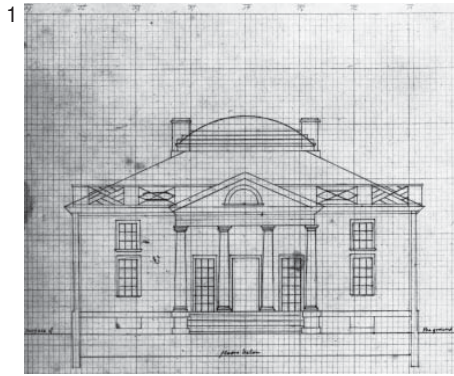


elevation study for monticello (1771)



enlarged plan of monticello with original walls of house shaded

Jefferson's love of geometry and engaged his sensibilities. He was driven by his own aesthetic and political ideals, which related to Palladio's own architectural and moral philosophy. Jefferson wanted architecture to represent symbolically the democratic spirit of our new Republic and to convey the highest values upon which he believed our society could be built. Having inherited more than 5000 acres in Charlottesville, Virginia, he was presented with an opportunity to combine his scholarly pursuits with the practical experience of construction. He began his drawings for his country house, Monticello (little mountain) in 1768. Jefferson's experimentation and innovation with architecture was to continue for forty years, stating that "Architecture is my delight, and putting up, and pulling down, one of my favorite amusements." His vision influenced domestic design by the built examples of his work which reflected an American interpretation of classical architecture. Sharing his design ideas with friends and neighbors, he advised them on the classical tradition and provided drawings for their houses.



jefferson's plan/elevation for barboursville

the plan which Jefferson executed for Governor James Barbour expressed this ideology about the villa or plantation house, adapted for the south, and was a direct model from Palladio. His plan of 1817, was an organized design for a large scale farming operation representing the business and family affairs of a wealthy landholder within the context of a country setting. The main dwelling was made of red brick, hand made on the site, using clay which was readily available. Jefferson, in his book, *Notes On the State of Virginia*, stated that wood was of inferior status and consisted of short lived properties; he advised strongly against its use. The structure was two stories with a proposed dome, which was never realized. The house had a portico attached to the south as well as the north elevation. The main floor contained space for an octagonal drawing room, hall, library, bed chamber, and a dining room. The second floor area included additional bed chambers for family members. The English style cellar was used for kitchen and storage activities, while other outbuildings and service quarters were included to accommodate plantation life. Jefferson, acting as architect had the most influence on the design for the house. Using materials, local building traditions, and models from classical architecture, he was able to reinterpret architecture to form a new language. Jefferson's spirit is embodied in the design, reflecting his ideals and many innovations.



TRENT

BELLUNO

FELTRE

VITTORIO VENETO

PORDENONE

BASSANO DEL GRAPPA

TREVISO

VICENZA

PADUA

MESTRE

VENICE

CHIOGGIA

ROVIGO

veneto region of italy

Adige

Cismon

Piave

Brenta

Tagliamento

Rovereto

Lugo di Vicenza

Asolo

Montebelluna

Oderzo

Portogruaro

Schio

Thiene

Conegliano

13

○

○

○●1

●14

○

Castelfranco

TREVISO

Roncade

S. Donà di Piave

●17

●3

●4

●12

Cittadella

Montecchio

16

MESTRE

ONA

Brenta Canal

11

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●6

Albano

●8

VENICE

Monselice

●7

Montagnana

Este

●9

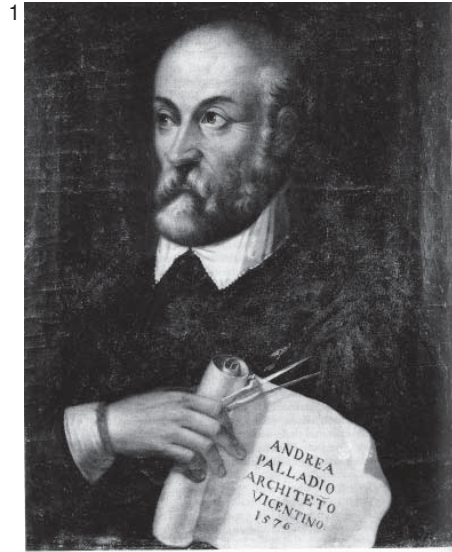
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●10

ROVIGO

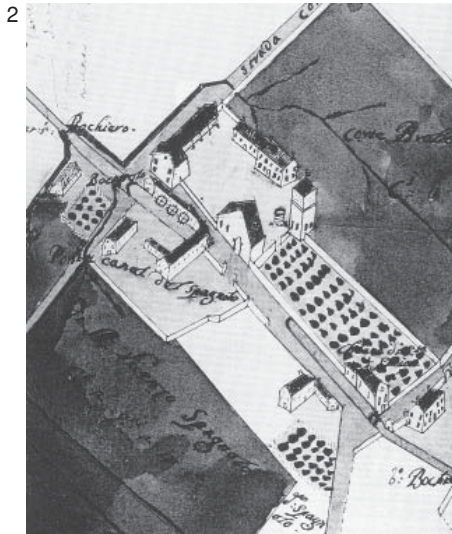
CHIOGGIA



andrea palladio

padua, italy

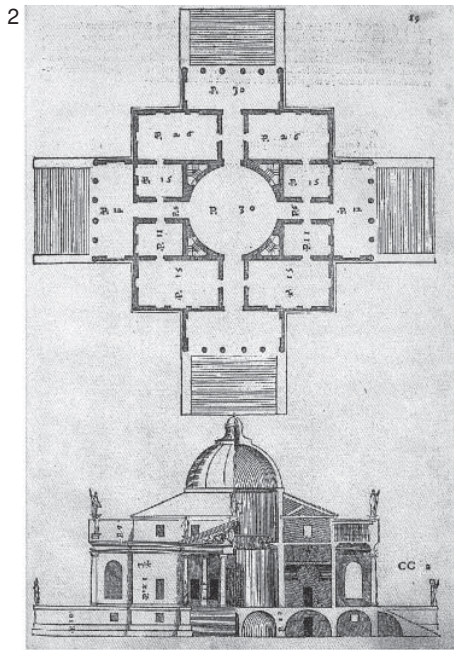
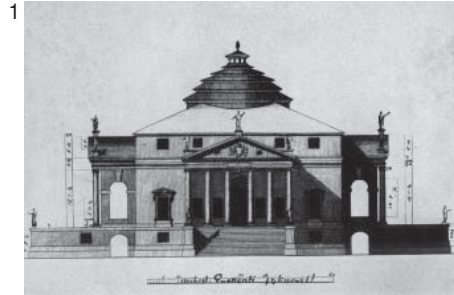
Andrea Palladio was an important figure in the history of the late Italian Renaissance period. His writings and buildings have significantly influenced the field of architecture and ultimately, the residence designed for Governor James Barbour. Palladio's work during the sixteenth century included church structures, urban palaces, public buildings, and private dwellings (villas), with many surviving examples remaining in the Veneto region of northern Italy. His design principles have been studied and interpreted by many scholars and architects throughout history, gaining admiration and respect for his ideology. His practice of symmetry, order and use of proportional relationships have been celebrated through several classical revivals of architecture. Although Palladio's beginnings were humble as an apprentice to a stonecutter, he later was introduced to Gian Giorgio Trissino, a scholar and humanist, who gave him his first commission as an architect; an addition to his villa. Trissino, acting as his mentor, introduced Palladio to classical architecture through the study of ancient structures and writings of Roman antiquity. Initially, Palladio's commissions were within the urban context of Venice, designing palaces for wealthy patrons. But as the social, political, and economic conditions changed in Italy, the Venetian aristocracy, whose wealth was from the business of trade, looked to new



vernacular farm complex (fifteenth century)

“Beauty will derive from a graceful shape and the relationship of the whole to the parts, and of the parts among themselves and to the whole...”⁴

Andrea Palladio



Villa Rotonda (1566-1570) Vicenza, Italy
 It's name, *sopra un monticello*, which means "raised upon a hill", was most likely the source of Jefferson's name for his residence, Monticello.

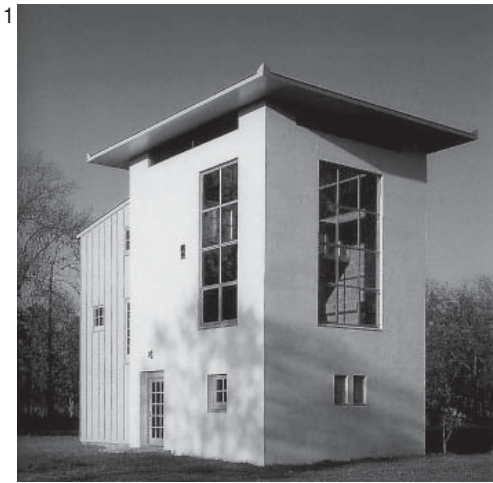
investment opportunities. The desire to own land and maintain control over boundaries was important to them. Palladio was able to design for these aristocrats an estate which would reflect the status and grandeur they desired and accommodate their needs for country life. By adapting the existing vernacular farm complex, he used scale, form, materials, and details through a special relationship to the open landscape to design a new type of country villa. Each building was site specific and related to the function or type of estate designed. Palladio's most influential villa design, Villa Rotonda, was unusual in form and use. It was designed as a retreat from urban life and not as an agricultural or working farm. Set on a hillock, outside of Vicenza, it consists of a cube structure with four identical facades with porticos. Facing the open landscape, it commands a view of the fields and beyond. The plan combines a circle and a square, where the *sala* (most important room), is located and is capped with a large dome structure. In addition to his built work, he published in 1570 an illustrated book of classical architecture, *Quattro Libri dell'Architettura* (Four Books on Architecture) which became a guide for American and English architects. Jefferson referred to it as "the bible", and it was used as a continuous source of design for him. Representing universal design principles, the treatise expressed the social and cultural side of villa life through his practical designs.

w i t h i n

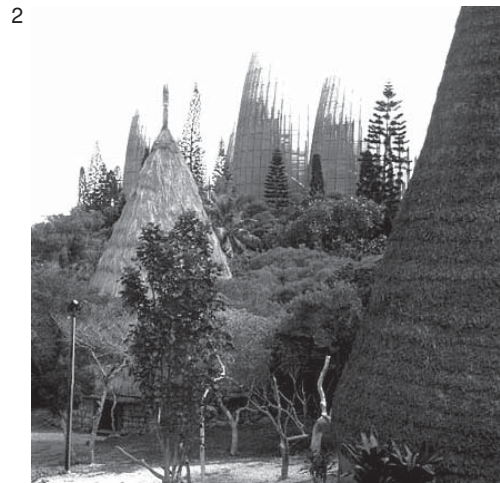
Working within the existing set of conditions informed many decisions throughout the design process. Knowing why and how Barboursville ruins came to be and perhaps what the meaning was to the architect and patron gave some perspective to the remaining context. It was important to let the building reveal itself carefully, which allowed many questions to be asked and new possibilities to emerge. The noted poet, Piet Hein once remarked “The shaping of the question is part of the answer”⁵. Allowing for this experience, permitted the act of establishing limits (preservation/program) and for a design strategy to develop. Through continued research, elements of discovery provided a sequence of study which included form, context, the idea of simplicity and an investigation of spatial relationships. In addition, precedent studies enriched the thesis project by providing perspective which enabled the formation of a design position, this furthering the development of the proposal for the intervention.

⁵“To run after the past is a futile pursuit. Only with the manifestation of the present can the past be induced to speak.”⁶ Sverre Fehn





reid house
john's island, south carolina



tjibaou cultural center
new caledonia



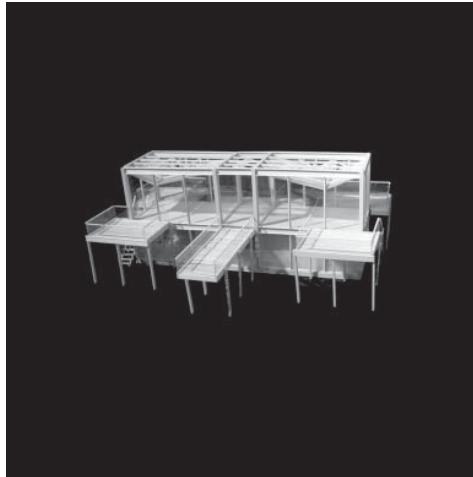
south burke ranch
zavala county, texas

These images reflect projects in which each architect was influenced by context. Their response to these given conditions, (which can be different each time), arise from form, structure, or materials. In each case, the architect reacted to earlier construction or local traditions, present in the region. The Reid house expresses an economy of materials and practicality of form, derived from local farm houses, tobacco barns and vernacular buildings of the area. The cultural center pays tribute to the local tradition of the hut-like form and the placement within a village-like setting. Local materials are elevated in detail and complexity to allow for modern technology. As a last example, the South Burke ranch uses commonplace materials and a form interpreted from early gabled structures along the Rio Grande River. These projects show how architecture can be transformed by regional or cultural precedents and how lessons from local building traditions can become an opportunity for design.

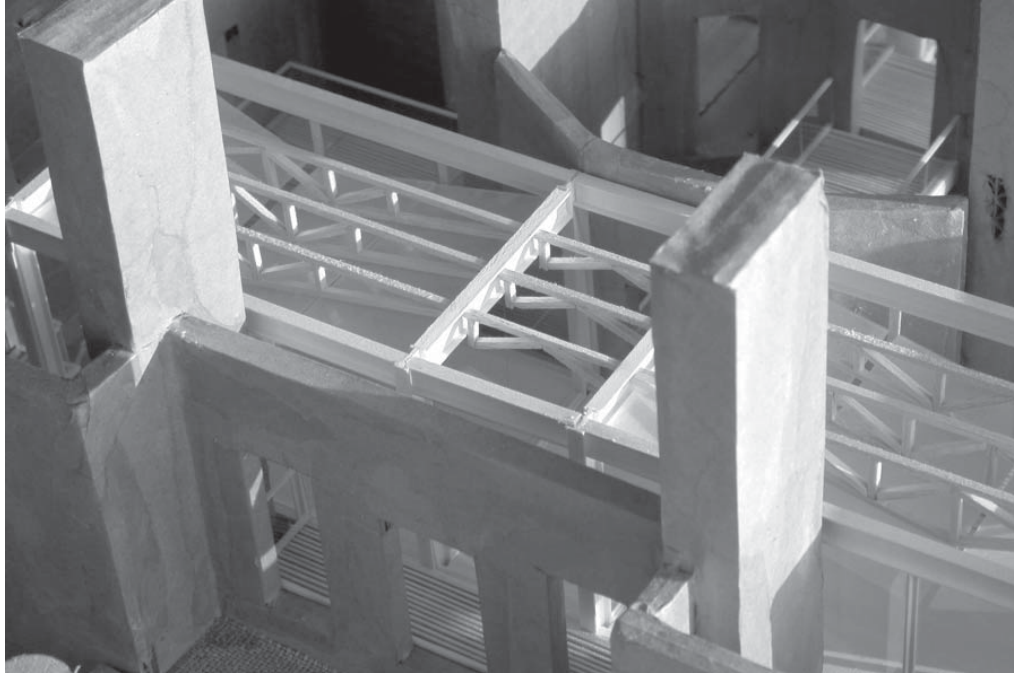
1



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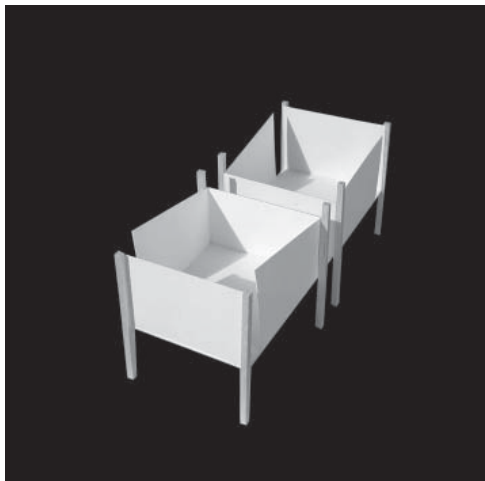
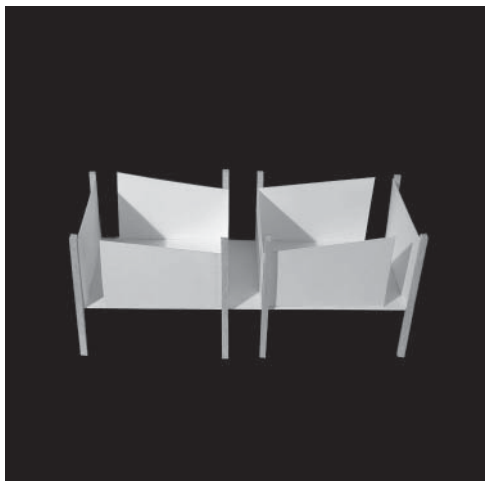
1 ruins with inserted structural form
2 new structural building form

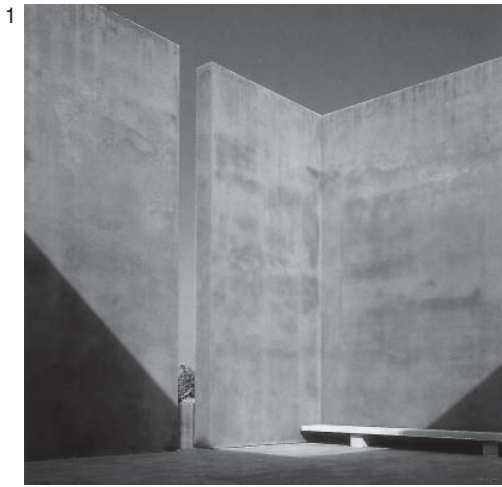


The physical reality of a new volume and how it might relate to the existing conditions of the ruins was the focus of the study of paper models represented on these and the following pages. While architecture exists in space and at the same time also encloses space, this relationship and organization of form (solid) to its field (void) was explored. Spatial boundaries, mass, scale, and volume were primary questions. Shape, as defined by vertical openings and the horizontal element of roof, were secondary decisions. LeCorbusier reminds us that mass is an element by which our senses perceive measure and are most fully affected. This understanding guided the role of the new building as a freestanding form and not as a continuation of the old ruins. Exerting its presence as a new structure within the context, it controls the space within, yet the space around it is shared with the old existing walls, by its light placement.

“Beauty springs from economy of form and material.”⁷

Thomas Moser

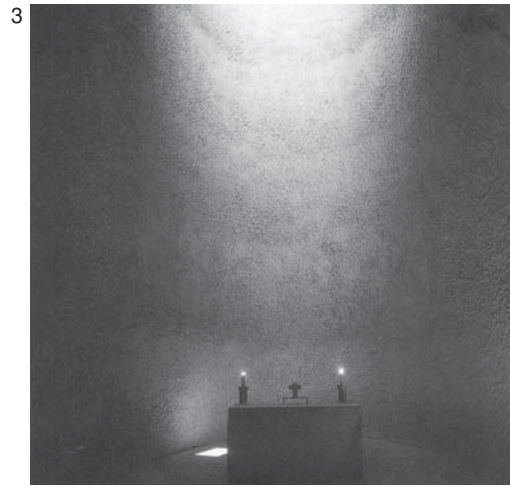




neuendorf house
majorca



shaker trustees' office stairs
pleasant hill, kentucky



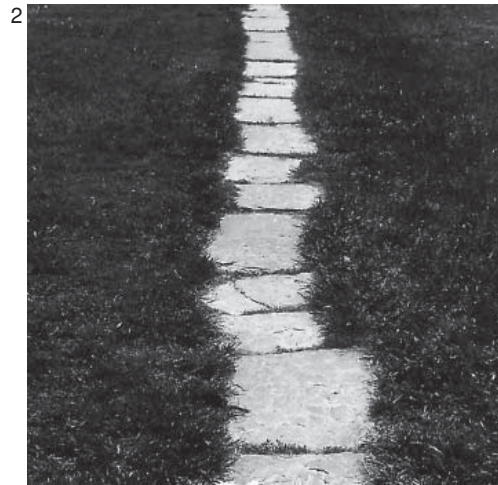
notre-dame du haut chapel
ronchamp, france

“A building is simple not because its shapes conform to elementary geometry, not because all of it is immediately visible, or because the logic is evident in its connections, but because all its parts voice their necessity, both reciprocally and with respect to the meaning of the specific architectural solution.”
“Architecture is not simple; it can only become simple.”^β

Vittorio Gregotti



lucy daniels school
cary, north carolina

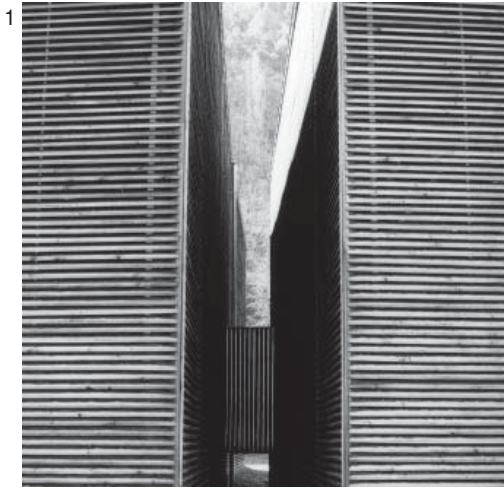


shaker village path
pleasant hill, kentucky

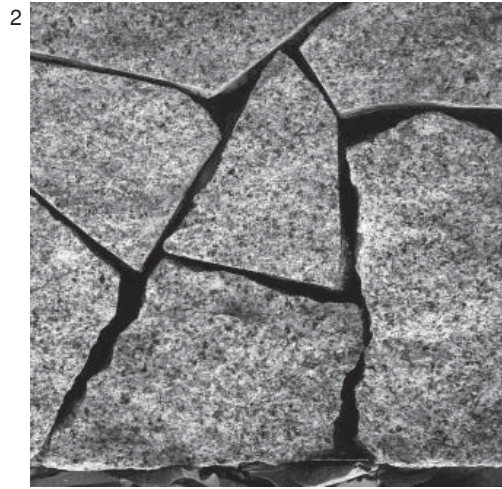


museum of contemporary art
chicago, illinois

These images of simplicity represent an idea of visual order or clarity, free from distractions, and yet are more than just an expression of utility or function. From the Neuendorf house where monolithic walls break with a vertical opening to allow light, to a Shaker fieldstone path, an honesty of form and material is present. Using a simple palette of materials and purity of form creates a sense of calm which allows for the architecture to speak for itself. Thus, by eliminating the inessential, what remains possesses a quality of importance.



roman archaeological site
chur, switzerland



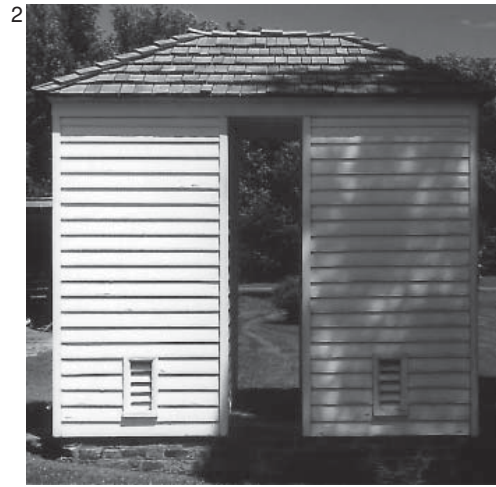
granite wall surface



boys shop and spin house at shaker village
sabbathday lake, maine



the inn at middleton place
charleston, south carolina



patrick henry outbuilding
scotchtown, virginia



carte blanche
rene magritte

These existing conditions convey the articulation of space which represents interstice. This relationship of elements (solid and void) in space produce a perception of tension or compression, depending on scale, proportion, distance between each other, and perspective. Each image of this in-between or void is contained by an amount and shape, thus, offering a visual transition that creates a dialogue. Allowing for this interstice between these boundaries creates a place for mediation and/or provides for the necessary visual release. In each situation, the architect or artist was able to control and retain the integrity of each of the solid realms by the placement of materials.

“...the reality of any restoration is change itself, whatever you do, you are both interrupting and participating in the process of historical change. We now know that restoration is cyclical and that whatever we do at the present will be stamped with the spirit of our own era.”⁹

Travis McDonald

The act of preservation seeks to build a relationship between the historical context (time, place, and physical record) of an existing situation and a new design construct; this transformation is a response to the needs of a community and enhances the experience of architecture. By developing this mutual respect and acceptance between the old and the new built environment, an understanding or mediation occurs which gives new meaning to both worlds. The old maintains a record of our past, while the new represents our place in time, expanding our frame of historical reference. Establishing limits for this intervention to Barboursville ruins helped to define a new role for the existing building and provide some insight and guidance for the design process. The following limits were used collectively:

p r e s e r v a t i o n

preserve experience of ruins and spirit of place by maintaining roof line below wall height of ruins, which allows chimney profile to remain unchanged

use of classical architectural language in new design, but not in imitation of existing design/material use

make judgement for identification/protection of what is historically significant

make distinction between what is old and what is new fabric of building

design/maintain new structure as a reversible entity

p r o g r a m

create a space for private/public gatherings by celebrating old, existing elements by contrast from new design/materials

enhance use of octagonal space within structure by adding catwalk/bridge for increased observance of building and historical interpretation, which becomes tangible experience

enclosure needed for service space to include kitchen, restrooms, and wine tasting facilities

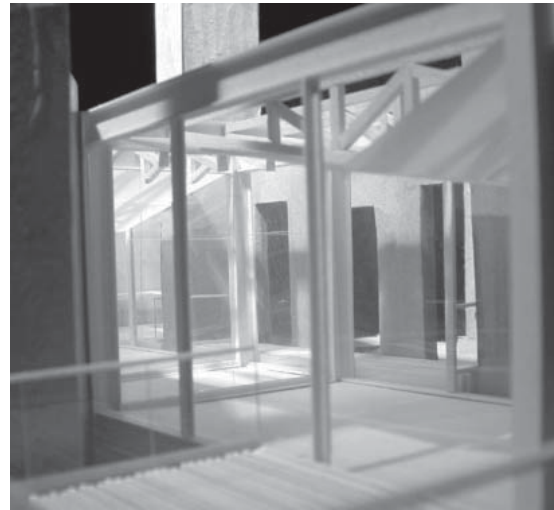
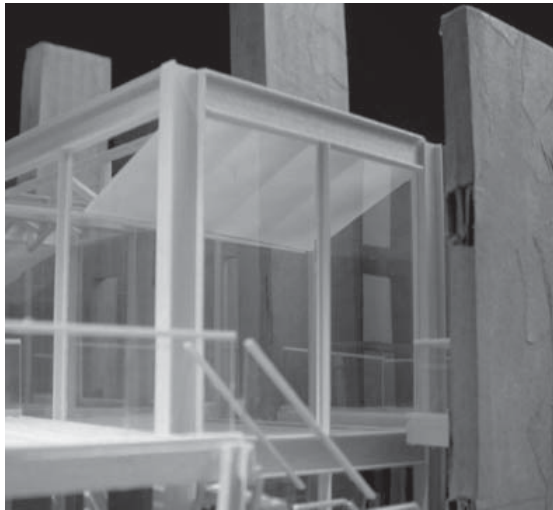
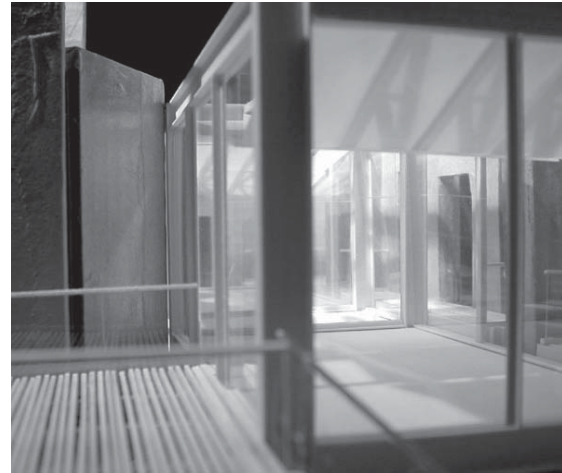
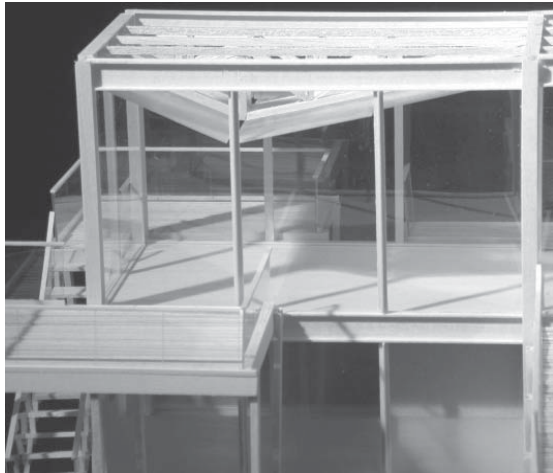
define entrance and make access to building with earthen ramps

provide extended indoor/outdoor space with platform areas



castelgrande bellinzona, switzerland

A complex of buildings and the ruins of a castle was the beginning for an architectural transformation. Starting with the historical context to draw from, Aurelio Galfetti's approach to this project was to preserve the fabric of the existing buildings and to rebuild within the structure by using information gathered from old documents. Upon arrival, visitors are greeted with the original facades which were required to remain untouched due to conservation guidelines. Wanting to bring modern elements such as a secondary steel structure into the design, he carefully removed the core area from the interior. The great hall is an area of beautiful contrast, where a steel roof structure rests on the old fragmented walls, allowing a dialogue of old and new to occur. The program for this project included gallery space, a public meeting hall and dining facilities. This project represents a transformation of architecture of the past into a place of the present, reflecting a new and valued use. According to Galfetti, the meaning of restoration is "making a link between existing form and its history on the one hand and the content required now-instead of the existing one-on the other hand".¹⁰



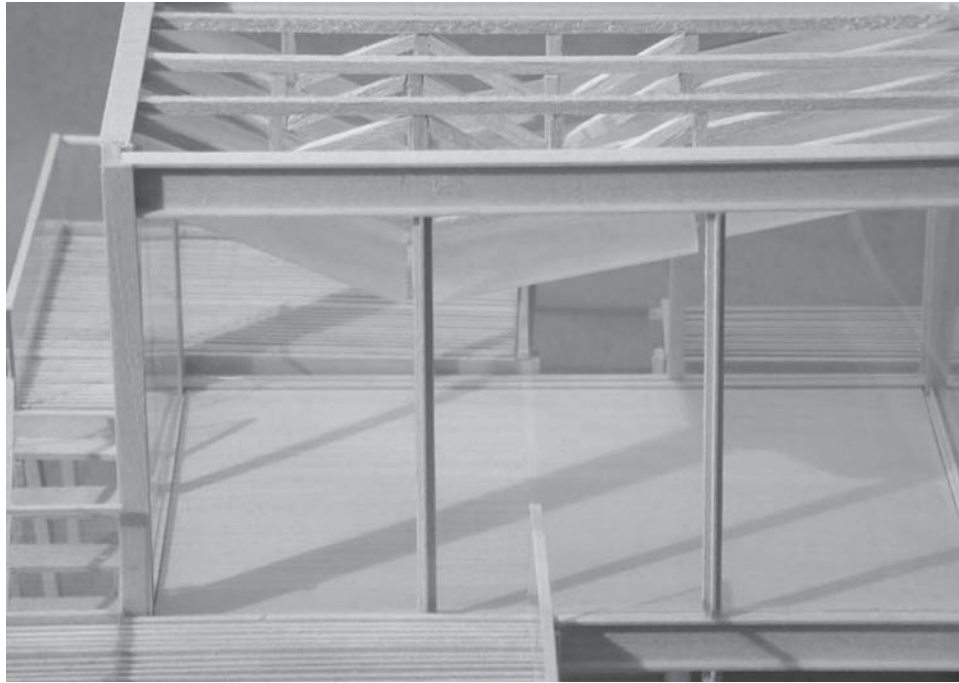
With a strategy similar to that used by Galfetti, the proposal uses a steel structure inserted into the core of the building. The light framework holds the glass box which acts as an observatory for the ruins.



ulmer hof library eichstatt, germany

Enclosing the south facing courtyard of the seventeenth century Ulmer Hof structure was the strategy used by architect, Karljosef Schattner. This public space was converted to library facilities by adding a lightweight steel roof system over the core of the old site. A dialogue between inside and outside takes place, while also creating a new use. The north wall of arcades was then left exposed to let in light and to open the view to the activities of the library. This elegant conversion celebrates the old by contrast rather than by imitation.



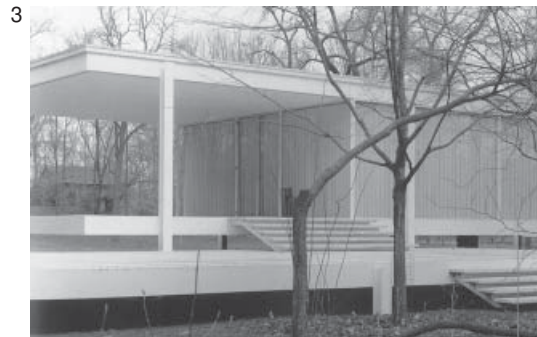


The inverted truss roof system of the new structure supports an etched glass ceiling that follows the angle of the framework and permits light to travel in both directions. This design is in memory of the roof profile from the original porticos which were attached to the north and south elevation of the dwelling.



farnsworth house **plano, illinois**

Simplicity and refinement are exhibited in this rectangular plan for a residence designed by Mies van der Rohe. Elevated from the ground plane, the expressed frame of steel supports floor and roof, eliminating the need for bearing walls. The roof which is carried by a truss system is supported by columns welded to outside beams. The freedom of uninterrupted space is enjoyed while the opportunity to use a curtain wall of glass is utilized. This transparent material provides the necessary shelter but without any visual boundary to the landscape, merging the interior space with the exterior world.





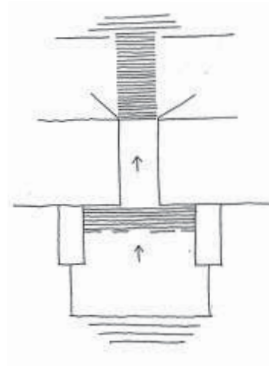
Light framing members of steel support floor and walls in the new building providing minimal intrusion for the grand hall space which accommodates public and private gatherings. The structure expands the space to the outdoors by the use of added platform areas on both levels, offering different vantage points and opportunities to explore and experience the transformed architecture.

a r c h i t e c t u r e

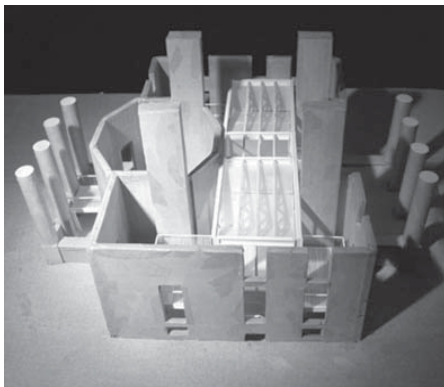
By responding to program and preservation limits, the idea of a steel and glass insertion into the core area of the ruins emerged, providing the elements to structure the space and the materials for the needed contrast. The relationship between the existing building and the new structure became heightened by this design strategy of opposing conditions. The primary example which reveals this difference is in the wall composition; the old material has a heavy, thick presence or mass, with texture and an association with the tradition of being hand made, while the glass panels are thin, smooth and are supported within a light frame born from the technology of steel manufacturing. This opposition between elements added to the complexity of the structure. While this proposal through tectonic means, transformed the experience of the ruins by the reinterpretation of the building's historical context; it also acted as a catalyst for public awareness and appreciation. This design solution allows for the preservation of the building while exhibiting it in a new, meaningful way.



portico
 bridge
 hallway
 interstice
 portico
 earthen bank



sequence of arrival



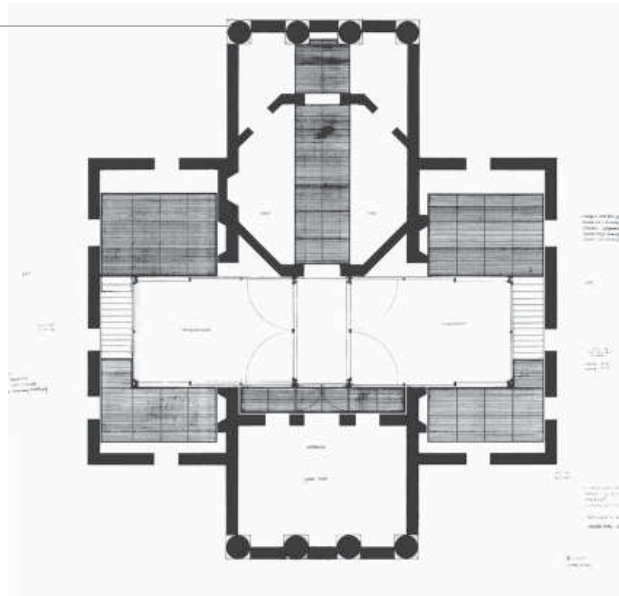
The sequence of arrival begins with the path to the earthen bank of the ruins. The appearance of wall fragments and a series of columns are the only material existence of the portico of 1822. By in-filling this area with soil, a level stage to greet the ruins is provided, becoming a replacement for the missing portico. This gesture creates a tangible place of arrival. Upon entering through the old threshold of the ruins, the thickness of the walls are revealed and a place of interstice is then perceived. This in-between space becomes an important place of transition which both connects and separates the old form and the new architecture. It is where the old gives meaning to the new and the new gives meaning to the old. Entering the glass enclosure through oversized doors, the vestibule space divides the grand hall and becomes a place to receive and greet guests. The hallway continues until it meets the catwalk which is located in the octagonal room; a space which functioned as a drawing room in the original dwelling. The elevated bridge overlooks what is now an outdoor room, within the ruins, and provides a place of observation where history can be interpreted first hand. While the bridge element suggests movement, most importantly, it strengthens the axial condition of the ruins as it continues through the south wall to the exterior of the building.

upper level

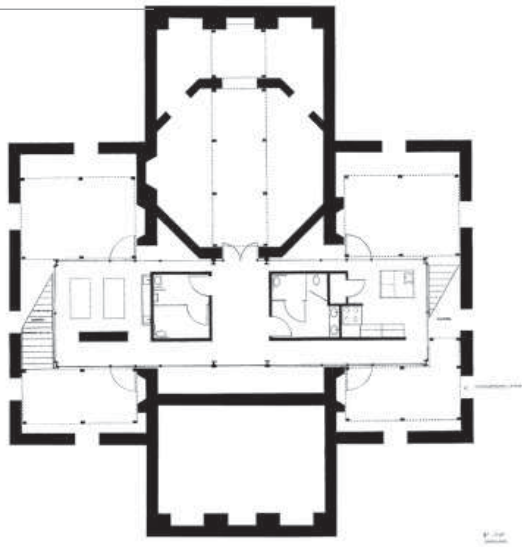
While a sense of enclosure is felt through the walled boundary of the outer building, another opposite experience gives reference to the openness of the sky. This level is scaled for public functions within the framework of the new structure. The grand hall occupies this space and is enclosed by pivot hinged doors and oversized glass panels which open to the outside. The grand hall acts as an observatory within the ruins because of its elevated, central placement. This space provides an opportunity for fragmented views of the landscape and beyond.

lower level

The presence of the ruined walls at ground level give a feeling of mass and permanence. Within these fragments are apertures which receive the light. It is modulated by the framework of the upper platform, creating shadows on the exterior ground surface. The transposed light then enters the glass panels, reflecting on the floor surface and washing the wall surface of the interior. This smaller scaled space provides a quiet and private area for the wine tasting room and other intimate gatherings. The lower level supports other services such as a butler's pantry for catering and rest-room facilities.

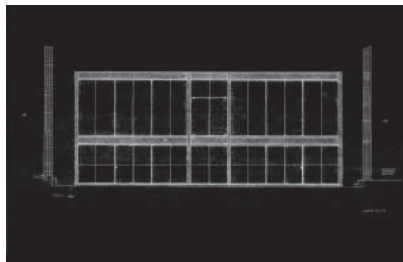
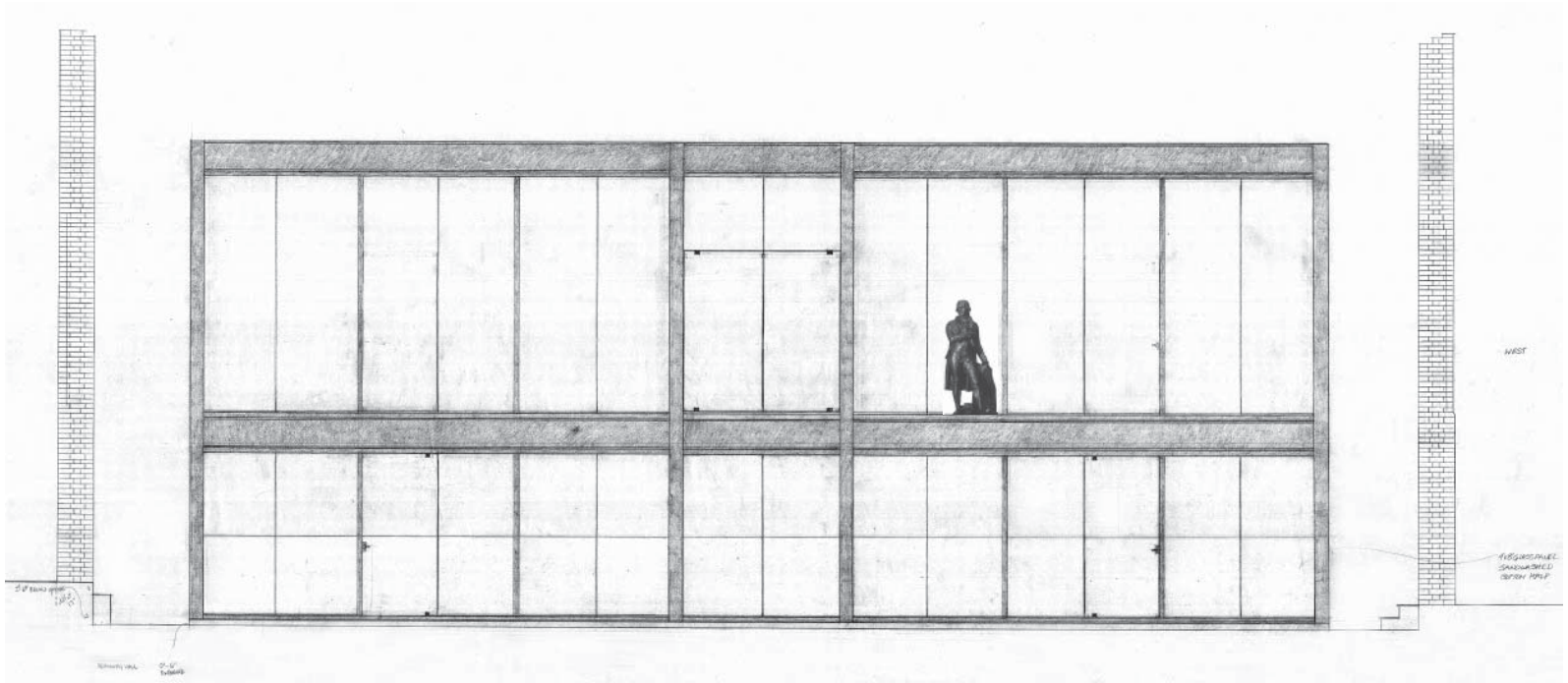


upper level plan

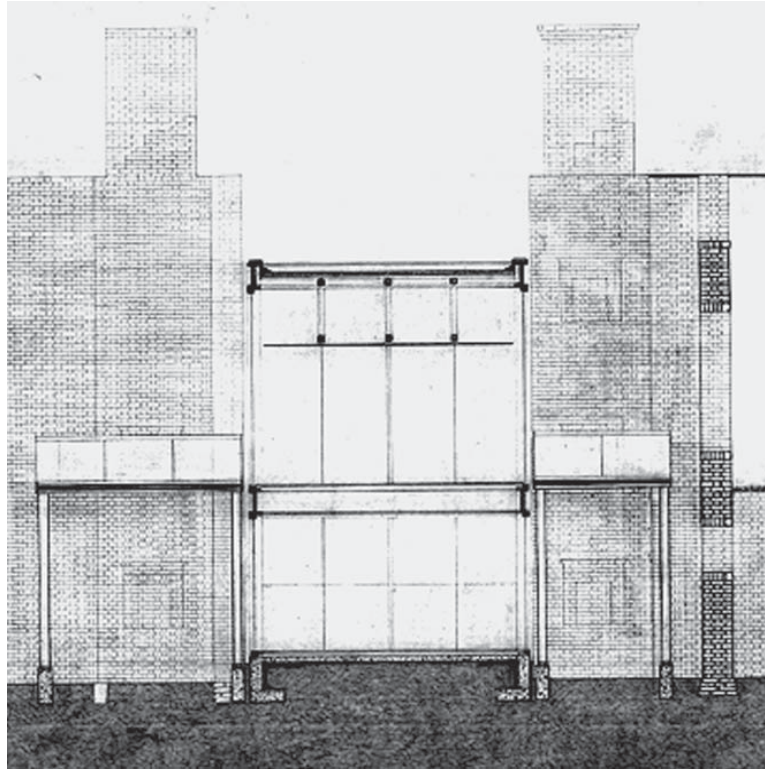


lower level plan

elevation.



At night, the new structure becomes like a lantern, lighting the in-between space while its glow falls onto the old wall surfaces of the ruins, reminding us of the layers of time present.

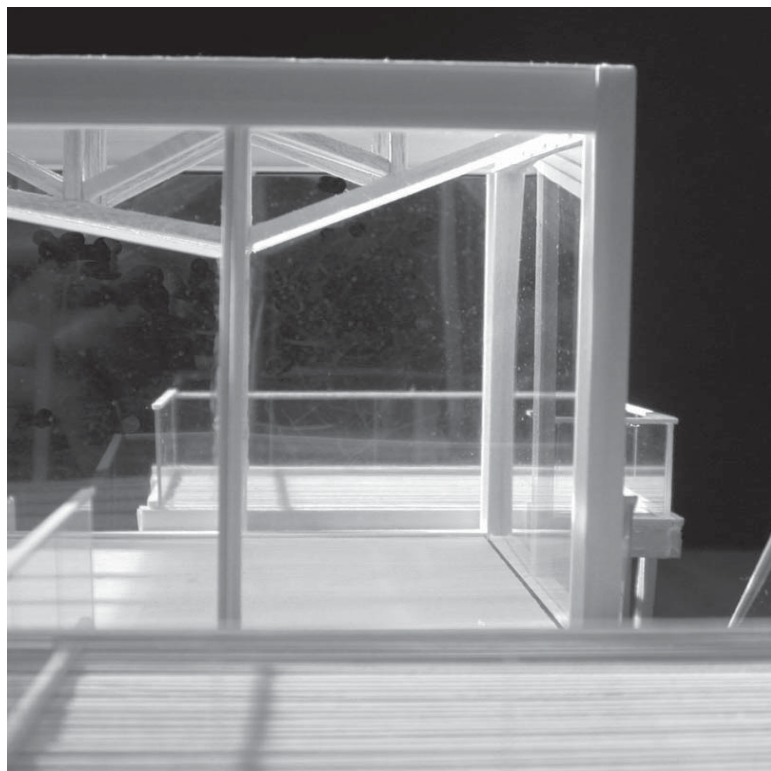


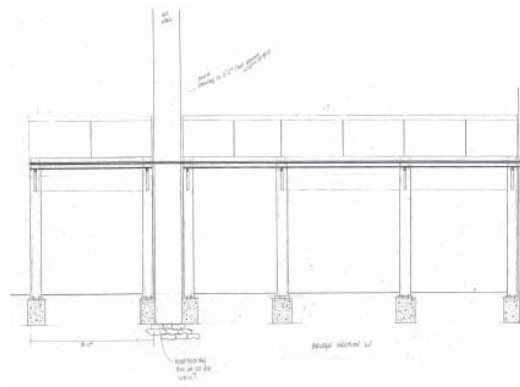
section

The large space of the grand hall is used for public gatherings and private functions. Enclosed by the historical skin of the ruins, the glass container is held by a light framework of steel, with a minimum of material.

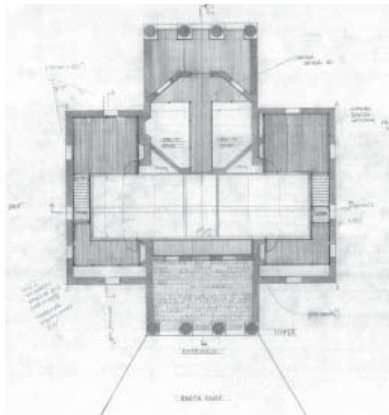


The glass wall panels appear frameless at the floor level, as a result of the frame being recessed into the flooring. This arrangement of glazing blurs the distinction between the interior space and the outdoors.



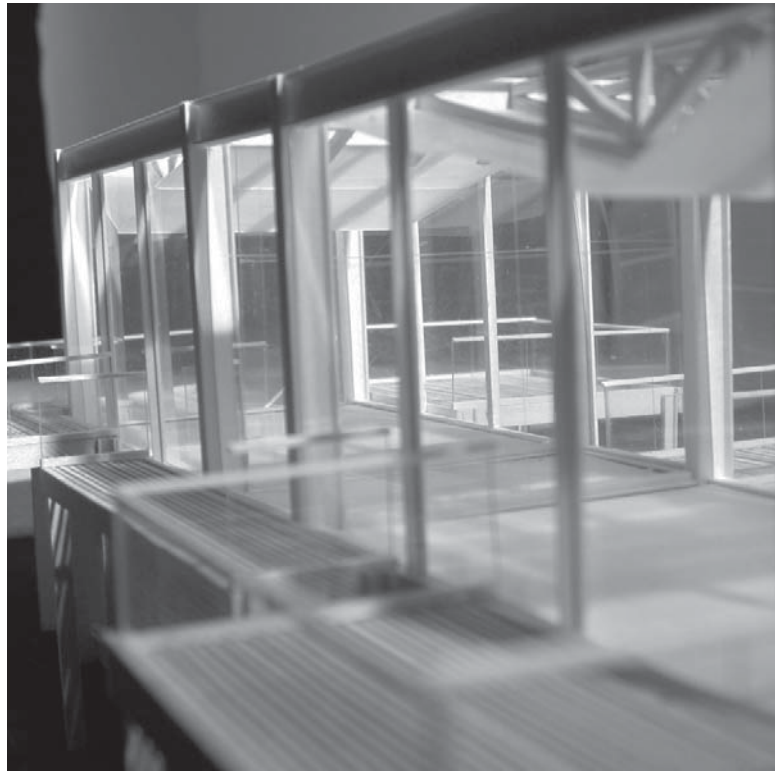


bridge section

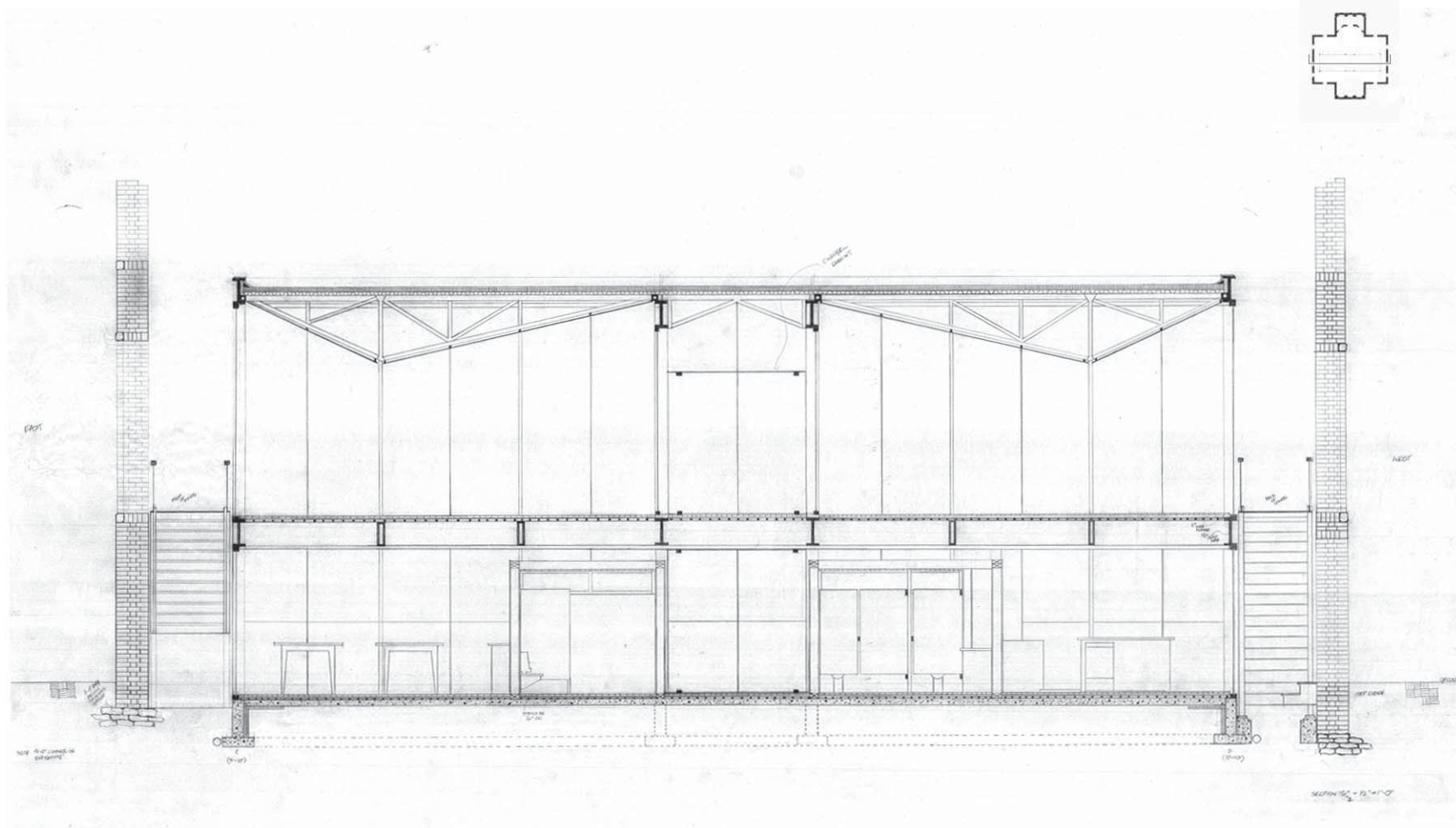
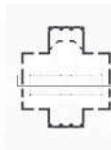


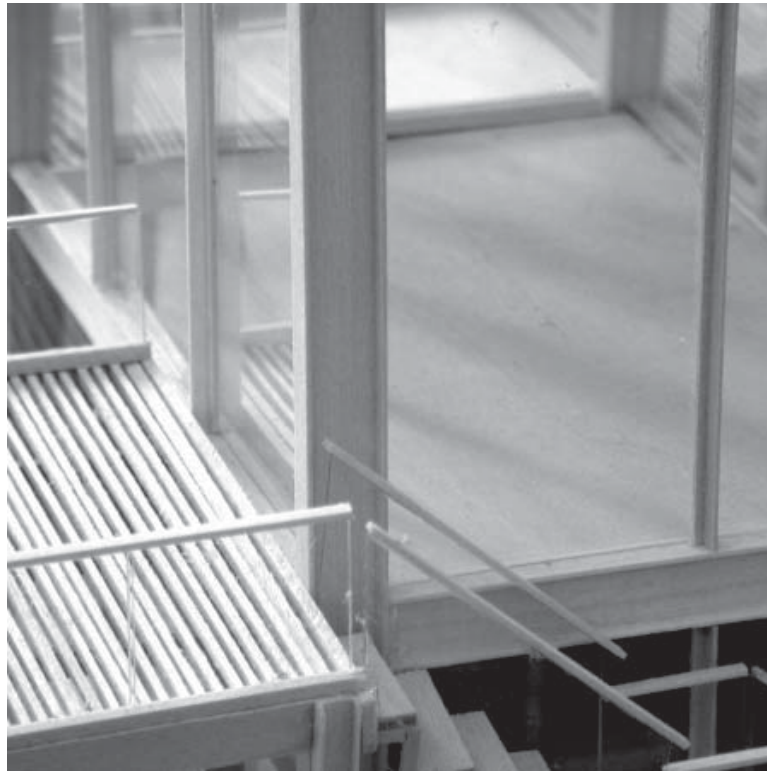
shaded areas indicate platform

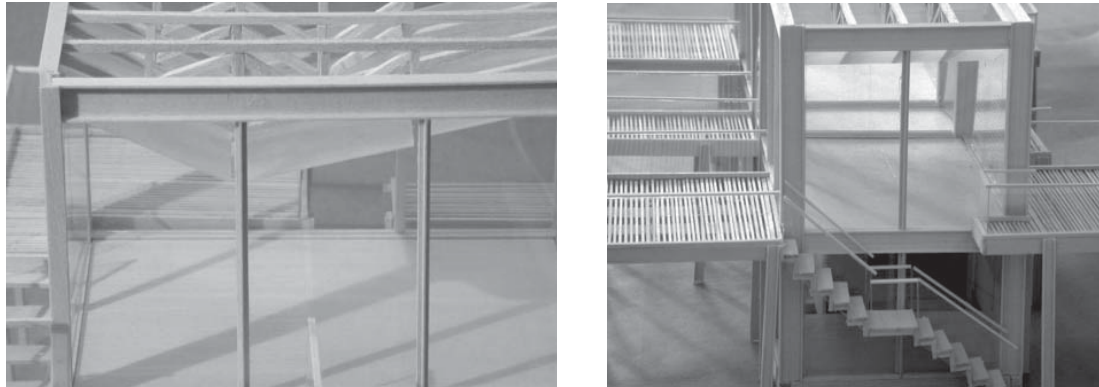
The platform areas connect the place of the in-between (with its duality of old and new architecture), by linking the buildings and creating an enclosed space to enjoy these contrasting conditions. This important place where contrasts merge is what W. G. Clark calls “[a place] that there may be some sympathy existence between neighbors, as well as times”.¹ This inner volume which is open to the sky, is like an outdoor room that heightens the senses by its physical reality. Its dynamic nature, as a result of changing light, weather conditions, and seasonal changes, intensifies the experience of the ruins.



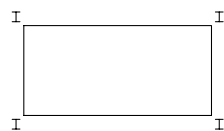
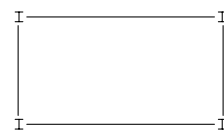
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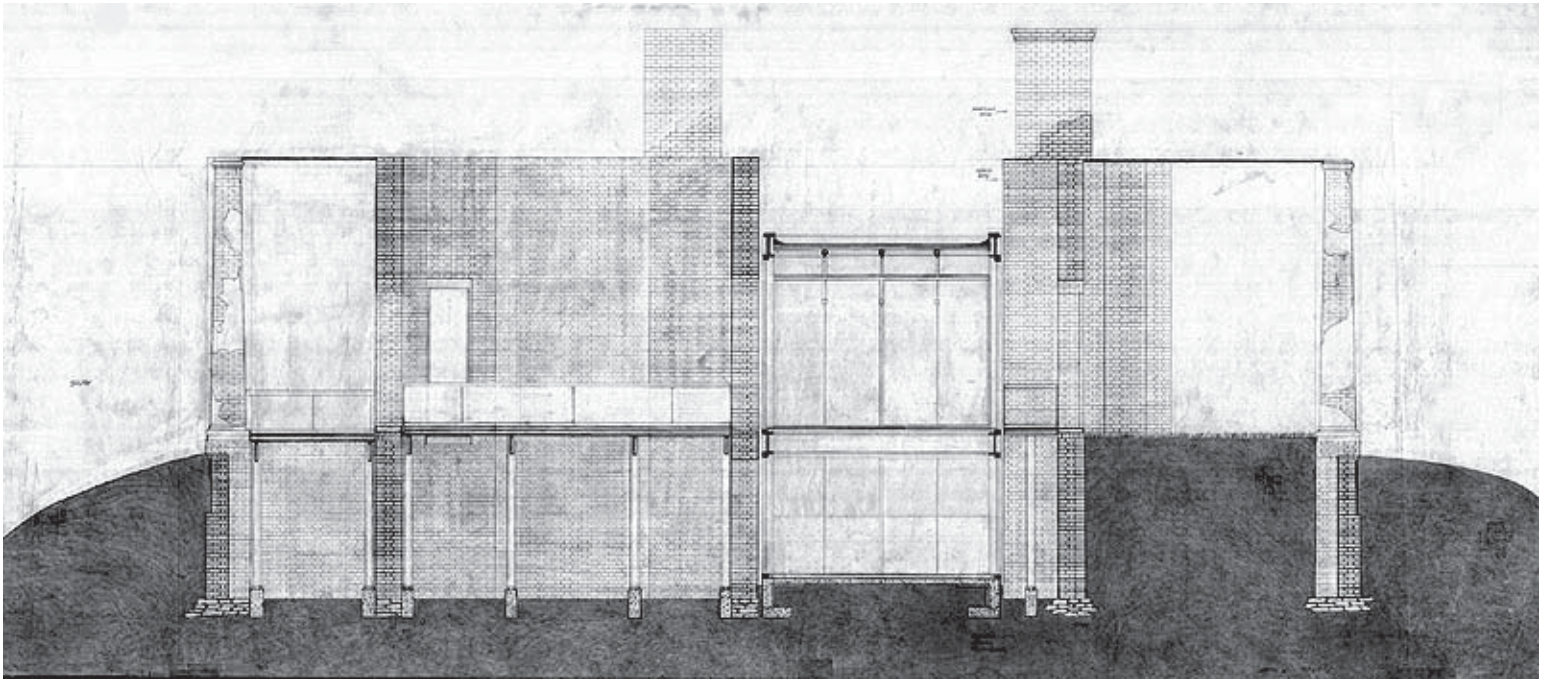
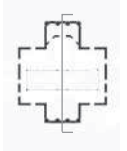




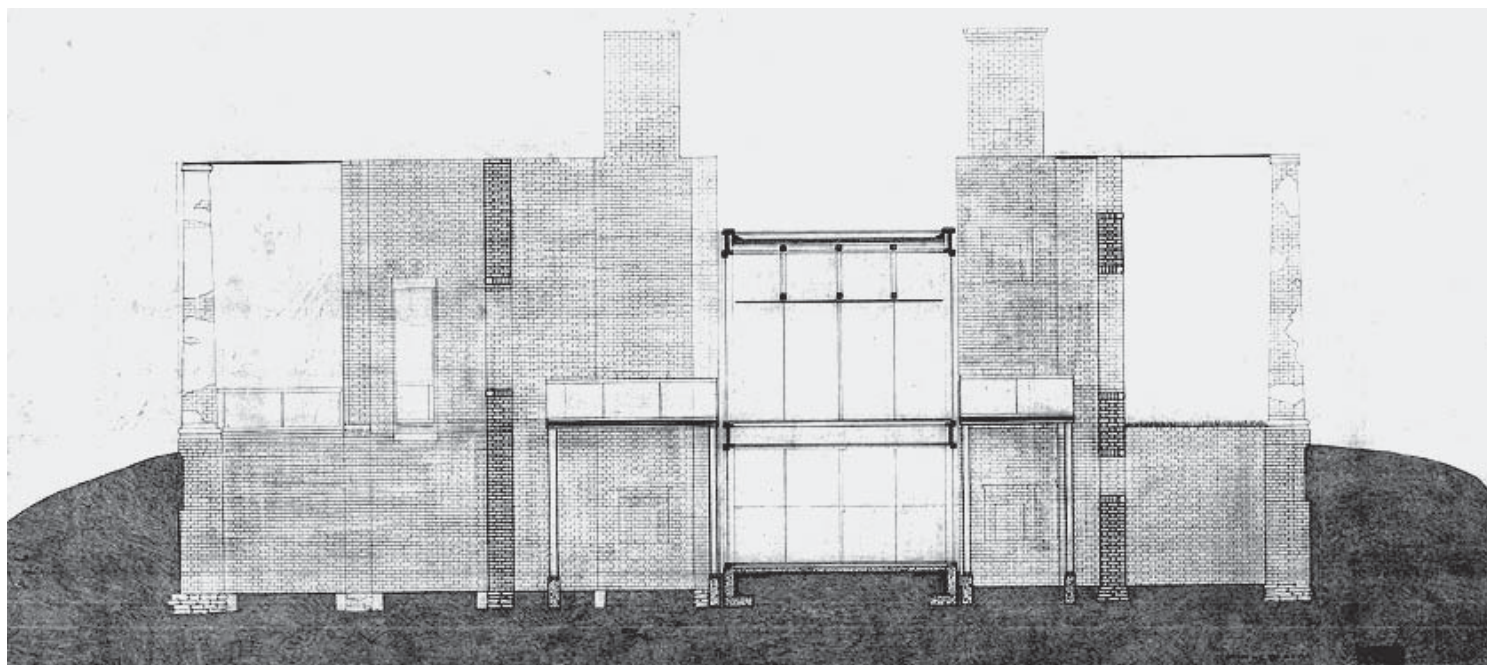
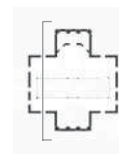
The frame of the new building consists of a simple design of steel elements which work in part as well as in relation to the whole system. The design attains maximum transparency by its light framework which corresponds to an eight foot grid, ordering its placement. Because the frame works as the support, the rectangular plan becomes free of columns, allowing the grand hall space to be open, only with a walkway to the outside, dividing the space. The inverted truss structure carries the roof system, which in turn is supported by outside columns. The choice of the enclosure could have been designed in any of three ways: wall placement *in front of* the columns, which then make all the facades alike, wall placement *within* the columns, which then make the front facades the same and the end facades alike, and finally, curtain wall placement *behind* the columns, which make the facades free to other design decisions. In the new building, the glass panels are set *within* the columns, on the same plane, acting as a curtain wall which encloses the building. While the north and south facades of fifty-six feet are the same, with a design of seven bays, the east and west facades are constructed with two bays of sixteen feet. This simple framework of steel holds the glass box with a minimum amount of material and provides for its light and purposeful placement within the ruins.

wall placement *behind*wall placement *within*wall placement *in front of*

section.



section.



The background is a grayscale photograph of a rural landscape. In the foreground, there are rolling hills with distinct, curved furrows in the soil, suggesting a recently plowed field. To the right, a large, leafy tree stands prominently. The sky is a uniform, light gray, and the overall scene is misty or hazy, creating a soft, atmospheric quality. The text is centered in the middle of the image.

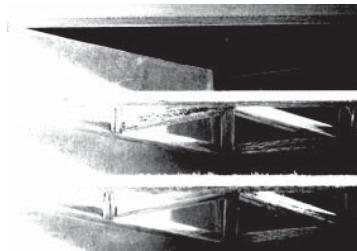
c o n c l u s i o n

Along the rolling hills and rich farmland of the Piedmont valley, your eyes pause at a break in the landscape. A mark on the earth is made visible where a mature thicket of boxwood signals settlement. Looking closer, your first glimpse of the structure appears; four chimneys silhouetted against the sky and standing ever so proudly. A strong sense of arrival is announced by a path which encircles the ancient walls, placing a boundary in remembrance of past visitors. There is a rhythm that exists here as well as in the planting of the vineyards. This experience reinforces the idea of place and reflects the joy of discovery which architecture can evoke. My thesis has been not unlike the experience of visiting this time honored ruin. Sometimes a closer look was required and at other times, a thoughtful pause was needed. Now, stopping to enjoy the view, I close with that same sense of discovery and the profound joy that architecture can realize.

claudia harrison

november 2002

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All photographs are by the author unless indicated.

c u r r i c u l u m v i t a e

master of architecture, virginia tech, blacksburg, va
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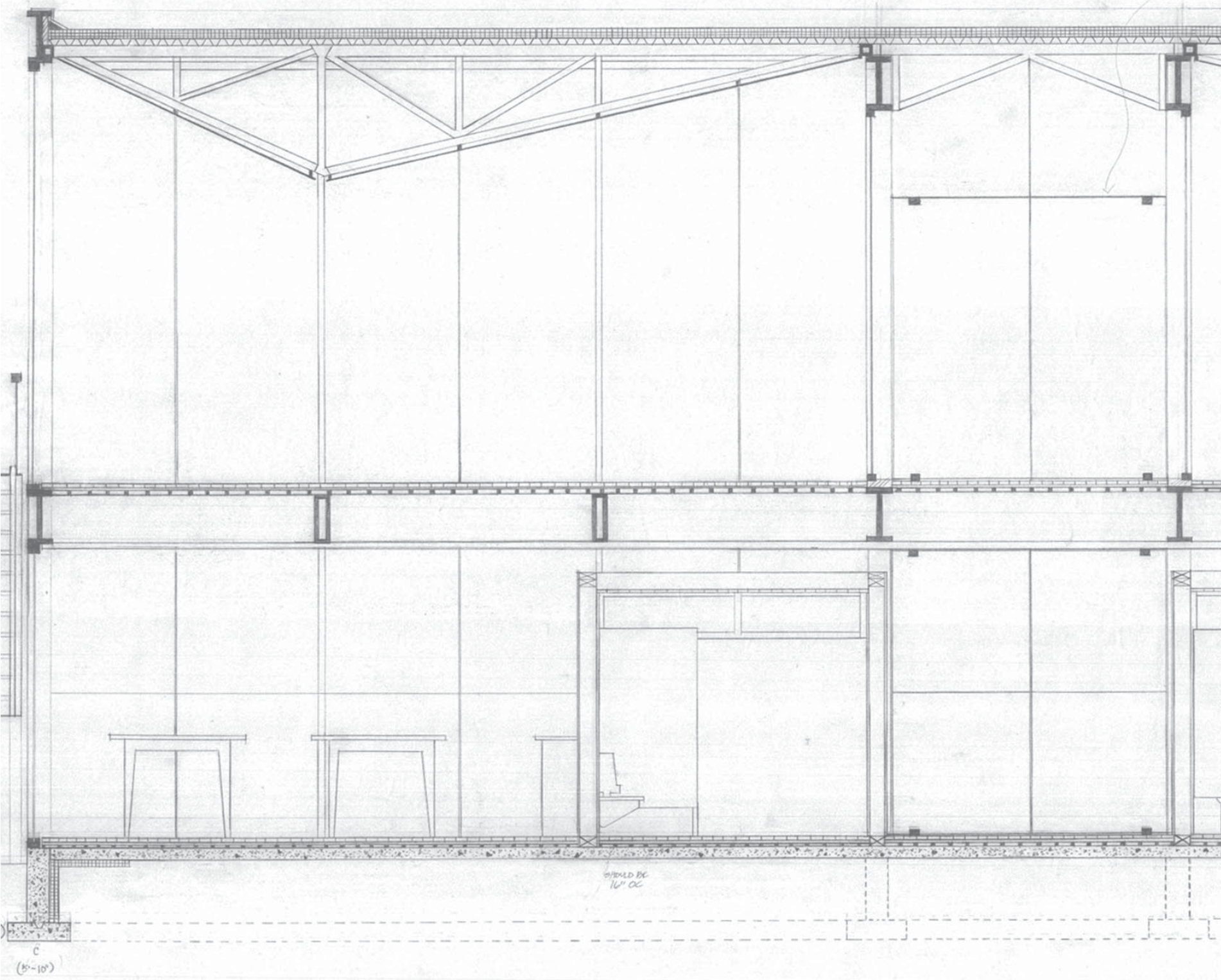
bachelor of science, business administration,
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c l a u d i a h a r r i s o n



“What we call the beginning is often the end
And to make an end is to make a beginning.
The end is where we start from.”¹² T. S. Eliot

a l l o r a



C/W

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