

**“Architecture is a social act and the material theater of human activity.”**

**Spirov Kostov**



**Architecure is a Social Art Form**

**Jeremiah Cahill**



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*The spatial perspective of human society has become widely recognized as an influential force in shaping human behaviour and societal development. The design of our everyday spaces, which we interact directly and indirectly, impact on our social progress as a society and as individuals. As designers of the built environment we must understand the social standing of our work and its interaction with the people who use, inhabit or simply view it. I will hope to investigate and design this interaction between people and the built spaces on a social and physical level.*



## Introduction

Architects have a responsibility to the public. We influence social, cultural, environmental, economic and legal conditions in order to improve the built environment, its inhabitants and society. The civic responsibility then is to design a built environment which is socially responsive to the macro and micro scales of the public domain. There are two scales at which works of architecture can have an influence over the area it's situated in, regional and local. We as the designers of the built domain have to fully understand the importance of how our work interacts with the conditions of locality in which they are positioned. We have to produce work which is of a greater standard of understanding than the banal, mediocre, market driven works of the majority of the built environment. This other work has created a series of consequences due to its lack of thought for the surroundings. The idea of society in architecture is not a new idea but one that has been evolving steadily for the past century and a half alongside other disciplines such as philosophy, art, and literature. In my opinion, the social aspect of architecture has become overshadowed by the focus on the aesthetics or intellectual debate on the theories of architecture. It has distracted attention from the idea of architecture being a social art form. Henri Lefebvre observes that, 'Too often, architecture is designed (and consequently comprehended) as a purely aesthetic or intellectual activity, ignoring social relations and rendering people passive.'<sup>1</sup>

This idea could be coming to the fore again though recent architecture moves such as groups like 'Architecture for Humanity'<sup>2</sup>, 'Small Scale, Big Change' exhibition in MOMA recently<sup>3</sup> or even the recent SEED<sup>4</sup> (social economic environmental design) development in USA. These are the high profile moves of recent years but there have always been and will continue to be, an urge to build for the betterment of

**'Too often, architecture is designed (and consequently comprehended) as a purely aesthetic or intellectual activity, ignoring social relations and rendering people passive.'**<sup>1</sup>

mankind. The evolution of modernity came as a result of the social and political revolution occurring at the turn of the 20th century. The technological revolution, occurring at the same time, became the vehicle for changes in modern design with early modernism incorporating the ideals of social organisation and socio-technical advancement.

**'A house is a machine for living in'**<sup>5</sup>

Modernism failed not due to its social ideals but in how it practised them with its overbearing heroic movements which became ever more disconnected from the everyday social world. It was naive of the modernist movement to believe that the enlightened social reasoning behind their totalitarian architectural constructs was strong enough to stand against the intrinsic local problems that are in conflict with them. The grand schemes of Le Corbusier<sup>(fig.1)</sup> or architectural organisations like CIAM were found to be inhuman and elitist in design with reactionary modern groups trying to counter these criticisms, such as new empiricism<sup>(fig2)</sup>, with its more humble scale.<sup>6</sup>



Fig.1  
Plan Voisin,  
Le Corbusier

1. Borden et al, *The Unknown City: Contesting Architecture and Social Space* (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2002), 4

2. <http://architectureforhumanity.org/>

3. <http://www.moma.org/visit/calendar/exhibitions/1064>  
Andres Lepik, *Small scale, big change: new architectures of social engagement* (Basel: Birkhäuser, 2010 )

4. <http://www.seed-network.org/>

5. Le Corbusier, *Toward an Architecture*, (Getty Research Institute; 1st edition, October 15, 2007) 151





Post-modernism emerged in the 1970s from these reactionary movements in architecture to revive the broad social ideals of modernism that had been lost in the universal plans of the modernist movement. Postmodernism seemed to be freed from the overarching heroic rhetoric of modernism to produce works of increasing diversity which did not have to fit into a universal framework. Postmodernism's critique of modernism though, rarely extended beyond the aesthetic sphere for instance in the works and writings of Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown. They concerned themselves more with the aesthetic values like ornamentation revival rather than a revival of the social and political power of early modernist thoughts and ideals.<sup>7</sup>

For the past century and a half there has been a recurring movement in architecture towards the utopian ideal of creating a life that is better for all and the social premise has been held back and developed by the discipline arguing over which representation is the truest form of this ideal. Bryan and Wakeford write,

'Both modernity and postmodernity have failed to deliver on their respective emancipator promises. Each in its own way promised to free the individual from repressive regimes, to improve social standards, and equitably to distribute access to our social and physical landscapes.'<sup>9</sup>

**'Architecture's "star system" validates novelty and arrogance, at the expense of what Lefebvre saw as the initial value of modernity; its relentless questioning of social life.'**<sup>8</sup>

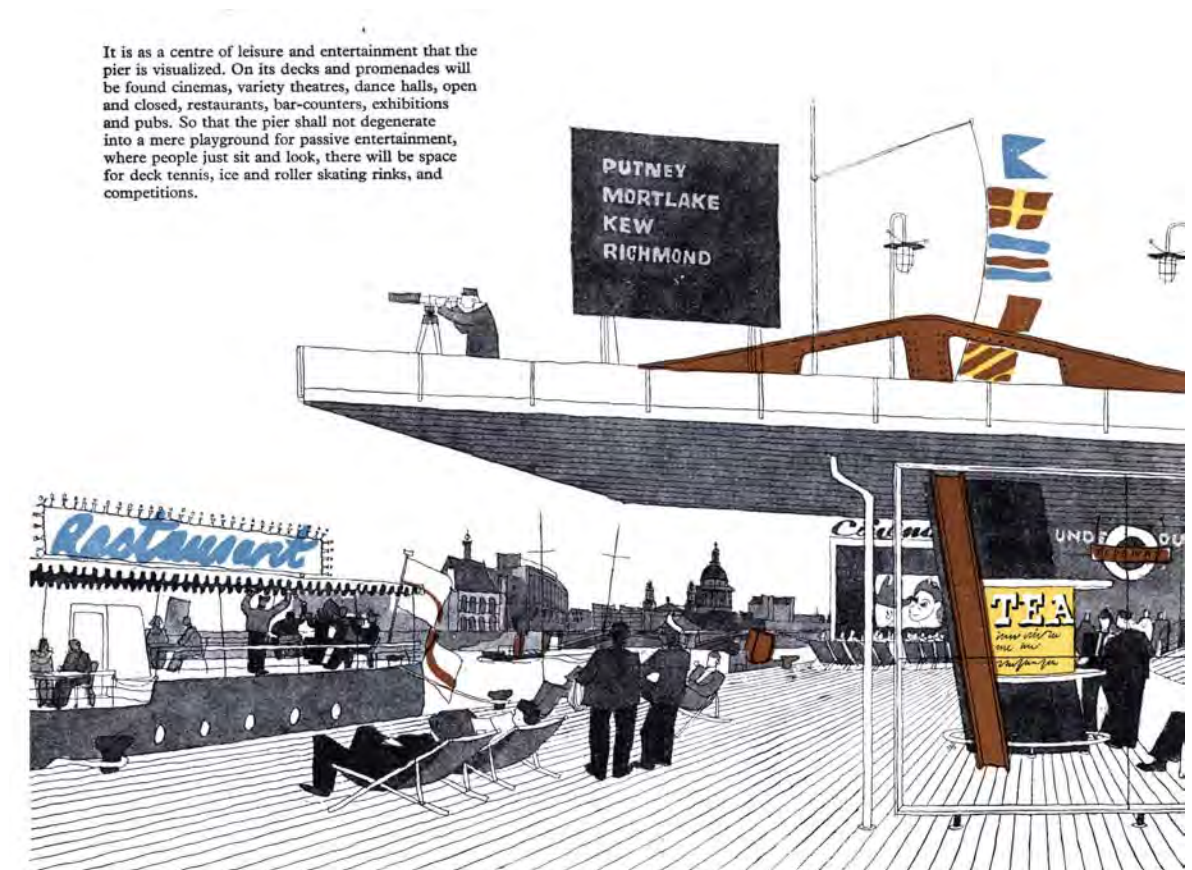


Fig.2  
London,  
Gordon Cullen

6. Robert Gregory, HEROISM versus EMPIRICISM, *The Architectural Review*, (Jan 2000)

7. Steven Harris and Deborah Berke, *Architecture of the everyday* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1997) 24

8. Steven Harris and Deborah Berke, *Architecture of the everyday*, 27

9. Bryan Bell and Katie Wakeford, *Expanding architecture: Design as activism* (New York: Metropolis Books, 2008) 20





Although I have been critical of the overemphasis on aesthetic values, I am not advocating the removal of them from the discourse of architecture (we are a design profession after all). I only ask for us as a profession to give equal emphasis on the conditions of the project at hand. In Alan Colquhoun's *'Collected essays in architectural criticism'* he brings up the question of whether architecture is a 'self referential system' or is a 'social product'? 10 Is it the internal or external forces that exert the most power over the design? He sets up design as a process 'involving two variables- the socio-economic system and the aesthetic rule system'. 11

He brings up the facade as a physical representation of this argument with the case of facadism and frontality, as building's facades are the appearance of the interior and were not concerned with the interface with the exterior condition. It brings forth the problem of the relation of public and private and the transition from outside to inside (which is something I am looking into in my project). Alan Colquhoun comes to recognize the need for both forms of architecture together as one, with which I agree, that incorporates the external forces without compromising the importance of existing aesthetic designs and concepts. 12 Alan Colquhoun puts forward the idea that,

**'The dichotomy posed earlier (architecture as an internally or externally referential system) should be replaced by a less simplistic concept – that of a dialectical process in which aesthetic norms are modified by external forces to achieve a provisional synthesis.'** 13

**'Space, Lefebvre postulates, is a historical production, at once the medium and outcome of social being. It is not a theatre or setting but a social production, a concrete abstraction-simultaneously mental and material, work and product- such that social relations have no real existence except in and through space.'** 15

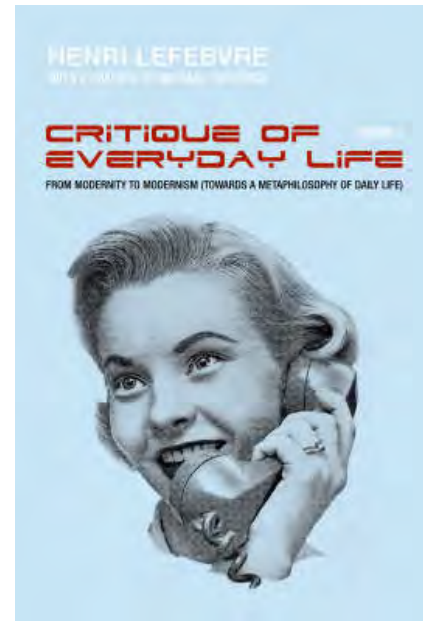


Fig.3  
Critique of Everyday Life,  
Henri Lefebvre

#### Rational versus Irrational

Henri Lefebvre presents the arguments of how the city is a social producer of man and in this way people make places and places make people. He recognised how the city impacted on the psyche of the everyday man and called for greater urbanity, centrality, street life, residential participation and opportunities for spontaneity. He actively sought an architecture and urbanism that invited collective understanding with buildings and spaces that were "multifunctional" and "transfunctional" to generate new forms of urban contact and sociability. 14

'Space, Lefebvre postulates, is a historical production, at once the medium and outcome of social being. It is not a theatre or setting but a social production, a concrete abstraction-simultaneously mental and material, work and product- such that social relations have no real existence except in and through space.' 15

Lefebvre also puts forward the point that the city is not the product of planners and architects but a myriad mix of them, private and public groups, that create the public realm. There is a contradiction between the rational government urban planning and the irrational, fragmented private property. It poses the question of whether architecture should be focusing more on reactionary projects in the urban environment that already exist but are dysfunctional.



Fig.4  
Production of Space,  
Henri Lefebvre

10. Colquhoun, Alan, *Modern architecture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) 52

11. Colquhoun, Alan, *Modern architecture*, 54

12. Colquhoun, Alan, *Modern architecture*, 55

13. Colquhoun, Alan, *Modern architecture*, 56

14. Steven Harris and Deborah Berke, *Architecture of the everyday*, 27

15. Borden et al, *The Unknown City: Contesting Architecture and Social Space*, 15



## Space and Spatial Justice

The idea of space and its relation to the urban environment were central in thoughts of Lefebvre and his attempts to describe and eventually achieve a new urbanism. His idea of these new urbanised buildings and spaces that increased social interaction were a counter to the banal and mediocre built environments which are products of market forces and also the heroism and machismo of much of contemporary architecture. The developments of economically driven projects rarely concern themselves with the social spectrum but it is the failings of architecture's 'star system' or 'starchitects', which validates the novelty and frivolity of aesthetic dominance over projects that is much more at fault. This is all at the expense of what was the intrinsic value of modernity with its constant questioning of how to improve social life.<sup>16</sup> This is not to say all contemporary architecture is guilty of divorcing the social aspect from the built form but that some neo-avant-garde architecture, such as the scale-less works of Frank Gehry<sup>(fig.5)</sup> and some others, is ignoring the energy that is inherent in designing with the person or humanity to the forefront. Their work seems to be trying to bridge the divide between art and the common man while I would be more

concerned with how to bridge the divide between the common man and the built environment. I am concerned that some modern contemporary architects neglect the relation of the man to the built surrounds. The importance must be given to improving the interaction amongst the person and their surroundings.

In the primer projects in Shannon, Berlin and University of Limerick, I attempted to explore the social relationship between people and the built conditions that surround them daily. The primer project in Shannon was where I had my initial idea of creating architecture that was socially responsible and had a positive impact on the surroundings and public in which it was placed. I was also concerned with how architecture could work on a local and regional basis in addressing social issues. In the SNN primer there was also intent to create a building of social standing which in my eyes at the time was to create a building which upheld the above principles. The way in which I tried to achieve this in the SNN Primer project was by re-establishing the link the town had with the River Shannon by reopening the path along the river from

the edge of town to the golf club. I tried to make the pathway successful in a social context by placing places of interest along it culminating in a large building which housed the brief of cold storage and community spaces.<sup>(fig.6)</sup>

The week long Berlin project gave a chance to re-evaluate the thesis by concentrating more on the social and architectural aspects of the places I propose and to have a closer look at what I truly meant by social architecture. I centred the project on the idea of social inclusion and enhancement of the park. I again began by creating nodes of interest in the area and this was to create some structure in which people could enhance the use of the park in underused areas. There was also the idea of inclusion which by creating these new uses that they would attract new users to the area and this would be enriched by placing a new connection across to an area cut off from the park currently and placing attractors to the other residential areas around the park. Throughout the week I moved from the attractors being many small and then large objects of my design to creating a bottom up structure by providing workshops for the parks users to enhance the park with structures as they saw fit.<sup>(fig.7 & 8)</sup>

In the short University of Limerick project I again investigated the connection between creating an attractor and how this could be a socially inclusive piece in the area. The creation of simple place to eat without it being a place without a commercial retail entity attached to it. It was to be placed in the centre of the main building where it would be centrally located in the college. It would be placed upon a green space behind Plassey House, the upper administration offices of UL, which is pristine in its upkeep but rarely used. I hoped to make this a fully accessible and universally used space that would create new connections in the university.<sup>(fig.9)</sup>



Fig.5  
Guggenheim,Bilbao  
Frank Gehry

16. Steven Harris and Deborah Berke, *Architecture of the everyday*, 29

17. Nili Portugali, *The act of creation and the spirit of a place: a holistic-phenomenological approach to architecture* (Stuttgart : Edition Axel Menges, c2006) 12

18. Lisa Findley, *Building change: architecture, politics and cultural agency* (London: Routledge, 2004) Introduction

19. Lisa Findley, *Building change: architecture, politics and cultural agency* (London: Routledge, 2004) pxiii







Fig.7  
Berlin Primer Model



Fig.6  
Shannon Primer Proposal



Fig.8  
Berlin Primer Proposal

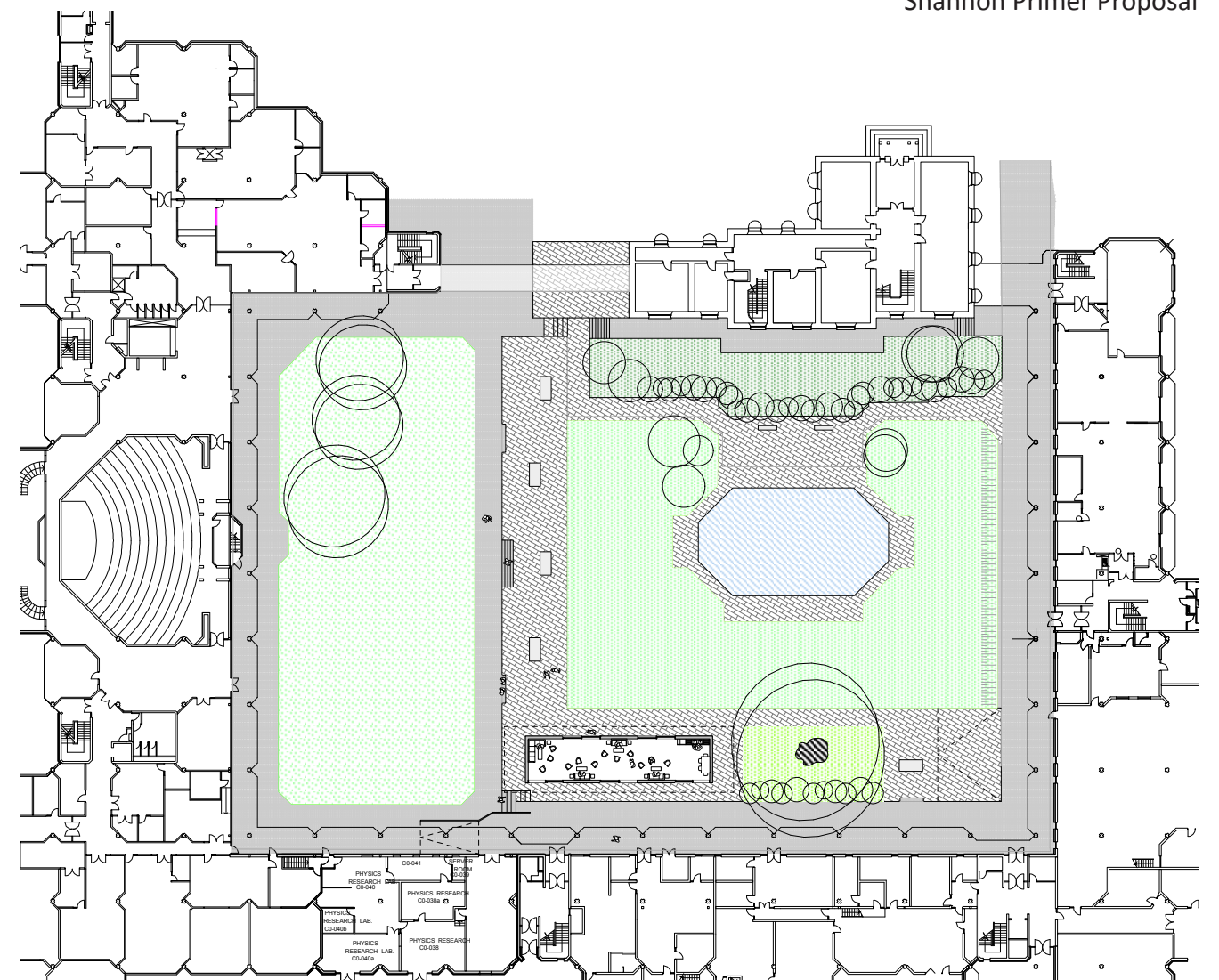


Fig.9  
UL Primer Project



The importance of placing the person in an equal and fair society by virtue of his/her environs is tantamount to understanding the future of modern town and city life. Perhaps never before has the spatial perspective of human society, particularly as it takes form in the modern city and the expansive global network, been as widely recognized as such an influential force in shaping human behaviour and societal development.<sup>17</sup> As the densification of most towns and cities continue into the future, lessons must be learnt from the mistakes of the past centuries of metropolitan growth and design. Society has, over centuries, created a physical form and configuration for its division in class and social constitution. The class structure of society is reflected in the physical structure of society. If the city is a social producer of man, as stated earlier, then the physical problems of segregation, isolation, marginalization, and many others manifest themselves into societal problems. The physical barriers and obstacles that have exacerbated the problem are beginning to be examined and recognized as a central piece in the detrimental effects on certain parts of society. There have been moves at social change through built projects such as Southern Poverty Law Centre<sup>(fig.10)</sup>, Uluru-Kata Tjuta Cultural Centre<sup>(fig.11)</sup>, Museum of Struggle<sup>(fig.12)</sup> and Tijbaou Cultural Centre<sup>(fig.13)</sup>, which make physical a shift in focus from built statements of power to egalitarian constructions. 18 These moves are proactive projects of social, political and cultural change and break down society's pre-existing barriers. These architectural projects are used to dismantle the social power order and offer,

'Opportunities for architects to leverage their production for social change and goals of a larger cultural goal'<sup>19</sup>

These projects are standalone buildings where their context mainly is to counter the social, cultural and/or political situation which they find themselves where as I am more interested in the urban context and how it is affected as a body by the physical representation of social transformation. The effects of social inequality appear to be more pronounced in the urban realm with the problems creating cities and towns divided by class, race and/or social structures. Whole sections of society are faced with the barriers of exclusion, territorial stigmatization which produce areas involved in a reoccurring loop of poverty and/or social degradation. Areas are systematically pushed to territories of concentrated dilapidation at the edge of society, physically and socially. Lisa Findley writes, 'There can be little doubt that (racial) segregation, where it prevails, radicalizes the objective and subjective reality of urban exclusion'<sup>20</sup> The ideas of space representing society and society being produced by our spaces mixed with the physical social inequalities culminate in the idea of spatial (in) justice. Spatial justice links the ideas of space and social (in) justice. It is a term used primarily by geographers and members of the social sciences and is rarely if ever used by architects yet it resonates heavily with social ideals in architecture. I came across this idea from the geographer and urban planner Edward Soja from his book Seeking Spatial Justice and how he perceived the idea of spatial justice. This book is and its idea of spatial (in) justice are an updated and

**'Spatial Justice - the analysis of the interactions between space and society is necessary to understand social injustices and to formulate territorial policies aiming at tackling them.'**<sup>23</sup>

adapted version of Henri Lefebvre's idea on space and society. The idea is an evolution of the proposal that people make spaces and spaces make people with justice and injustice being visible in space. Social Justice is the idea of creating an egalitarian society based on the principles of equality and solidarity<sup>21</sup>. Solidarity, by definition in the social sciences, is the integration, and degree and type of integration, shown by a society or group with people and their neighbours. It refers to the ties in a society that bind people to one another<sup>22</sup>. This is something that is withheld from certain sections of society by the design of spaces at macro and micro scales. It is when this happens that it is an example of spatial injustice. Spatial Justice - the analysis of the interactions between space and society is necessary to understand social injustices and to formulate territorial policies aiming at tackling them.<sup>23</sup>

**'Opportunities for architects to leverage their production for social change and goals of a larger cultural goal'<sup>19</sup>**

20. Lisa Findley, *Building change: architecture, politics and cultural agency* (London: Routledge, 2004)151

21. Definition, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social\\_Justice](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_Justice)

22. Definition, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Solidarity>

23. Definition, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spatial\\_justice](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spatial_justice)







Fig.10  
Southern Poverty Law  
Centre



Fig.11  
Uluru-Kata Tjuta  
Cultural Centre



Fig.12  
Museum of Struggle



Fig.13  
Tijbaou Cultural Centre



The theory of spatial (in) justice led me to investigate the area of Limerick city and its surrounding suburbs as a testing ground. The idea was to see whether the theory that injustice and justice were visible in built form around the city. I, initially, took two sites in the city of differing class areas. The site that represents the upper class area was situated in the area of North Circular Road<sup>(Fig.14c & 14d)</sup>, which is commonly seen as one of the more affluent parts of Limerick city. The site to counter this is situated on the Hyde Road in the Prospect area<sup>(Fig.14a & 14b)</sup>. This is much poorer area with a large amount of public housing. These were selected due to their similar distances from the city centre, similar housing density, but being of opposing sides of the economic divide. The physical representations of the two sites are very different in nature. The upper class neighbourhood was mostly housing with large walls facing onto the street allowing for privacy in the gardens behind them. The streetscape was of a personable scale with pedestrian paths on either side of a narrow road with a lush covering of greenery.

The site on Hyde road was almost polar in difference with a large main road bisecting the streetscape. This road was bordered by underused sparse green space which itself was sandwiched in between the main road and another smaller road. On the other side of this smaller road is a pedestrian path in front of a mid-height wall which doesn't provide privacy only another barrier between the house and inhabitants from the streetscape. This site showed spatial injustice in the form of isolation and segregation across the neighbourhood while the North Circular road site felt comfortable and personable portraying a sense of spatial justice. 'Where the structured disconnection between the house and the street, the street and the neighbourhood, the neighbourhood and the city arouses a feeling of detachment and alienation.'<sup>24</sup>

**“Where the structured disconnection between the house and the street, the street and the neighbourhood, the neighbourhood and the city arouses a feeling of detachment and alienation.”<sup>24</sup>**

The inherent spatial injustice in the area surrounding Hyde road directed me to investigate further into similar areas around the city. These were drawn from the areas designated by the Limerick Regeneration Programme; Moyross, Southill, Ballinacurra Weston and St.Mary's Park<sup>(Fig.14)</sup>. These are all areas recognized as being socially deprived and have been allocated for regeneration in the future. They all portray similar economic, social and spatial problems which were evident in the area around Hyde road. These have been highlighted as problem areas and areas in need of much transformation in the publications *Limerick Regeneration Programme*<sup>25</sup> and *Public Housing in Limerick City* <sup>26</sup>.

These publications together with physical investigations into the sites revealed the extent of the spatial injustice that is occurring there. Areas in Limerick have undergone huge change in the past few decades with areas becoming uninhabitable due to the problems faced to these areas. The spatial difficulties and barriers range from isolation from the city to design of unsafe housing conditions. Areas such as St. Marys Park<sup>(Fig.14i & 14j)</sup> exhibit extreme cases of isolation and segregation with the estate having only one road in and out and being on the outermost periphery of the city. This is not solely a problem in St. Marys Park with Southill <sup>(Fig.14g & 14h)</sup> also being placed at the very edge of the city with many physical and spatial barriers being put up in between there and the city. These include main roads, multiple underused and unused green areas, massive boundary walls and cul de sacs. The park suffers from the poor design of the Radburn estate formation which worldwide has become ghettoised. The estate is based on the Radburn layout

where houses face onto open greens and vehicular access is via 'back courts' which are nothing more than cul de sacs at the back of the house. This design results in problems of access by visitors and by key services, lack of security and privacy in the back courts.<sup>27</sup> Moyross <sup>(Fig.14k & 14l)</sup> also suffers from many of the same problems such as isolation, cul de sacs, massive boundary walls and unused lost green spaces. These physical barriers constantly reinforce the socio-spatial causality that people make spaces and spaces make people with detrimental effects on the residents of these areas.

I also looked at the spaces in which people felt comfortable, that portray the feeling of spatial justice in equal and opposite amounts as the estates mentioned above. These are a selection of streets and spaces that are simply better places to be in, to inhabit, to meet up with your friends or to do your daily occurrences upon. There are spaces in Limerick that bring a mix of people from all parts of the city regardless of class, race or social structure and exhibit spatial justice in its purest form. The spaces which do this are the ones that integrate people together for example the space such as the bus stop at Brown Thomas on O'Connell Street or the newly pedestrianized Thomas Street nearby. These offer the inclusive feel that is missing from the poorly designed estates and simple details such as the covering at Brown Thomas offer integration. In the same way as there are lessons to be learnt on how not to design for spatial justice, there are lessons to be learnt from the good examples from around the city that display spatial justice.

24. Nili Portugali, *The act of creation and the spirit of a place: a holistic-phenomenological approach to architecture* 23

25. *Limerick Regeneration Programme*, (Limerick City Council Publication 2009)

26. <http://limerickcity.ie/Publications/Thefile,219,en.pdf>  
Des McCafferty, and Angela Canny, *Public Housing in Limerick City: A Profile of Tenants and Estates* (Limerick City Council Inclusion Unit Publication, December 2005)

27. *Limerick Regeneration Programme*, (Limerick City Council Publication 2009)





Fig.14  
Analysis Sites









## Hyde Road

Fig.14a & 14b  
Analysis Site  
Hyde Road

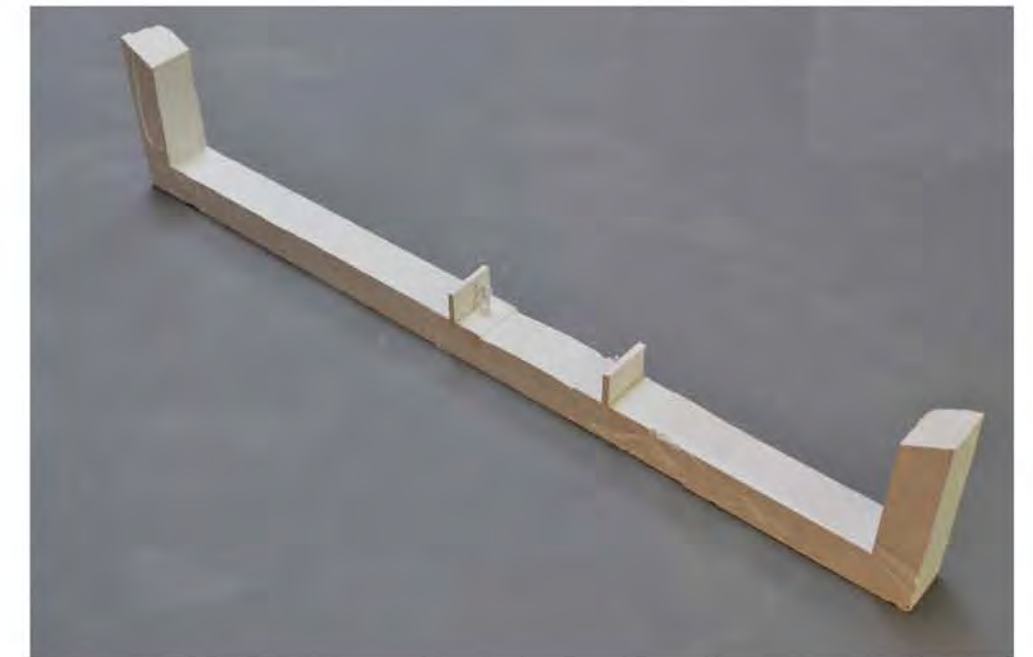
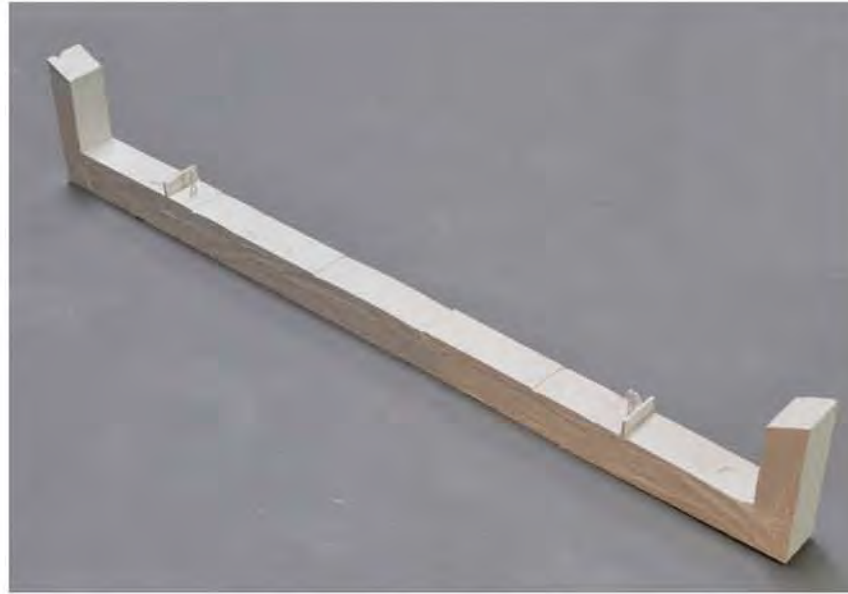
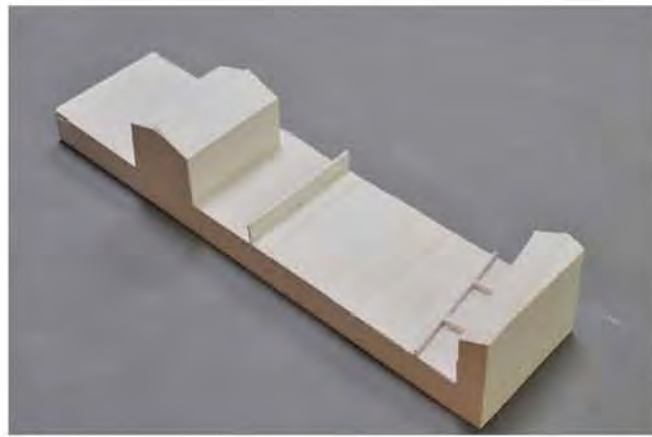


Fig.14c & 14d  
Analysis Site  
North Circular Road

North Circular

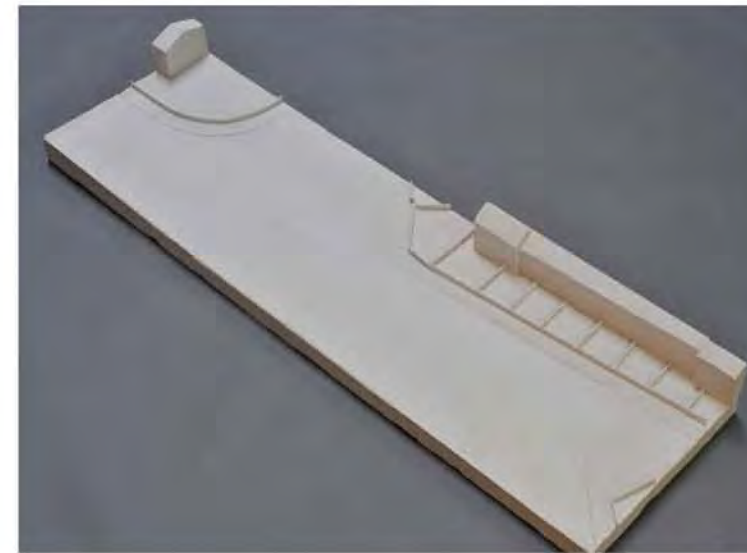






**High Road**

Fig.14e & 14f  
Analysis Site  
High Road



**St Marys Park**

Fig.14i & 14j  
Analysis Site  
St. Marys Park

Fig.14g & 14h  
Analysis Site  
Southill

**Southill**

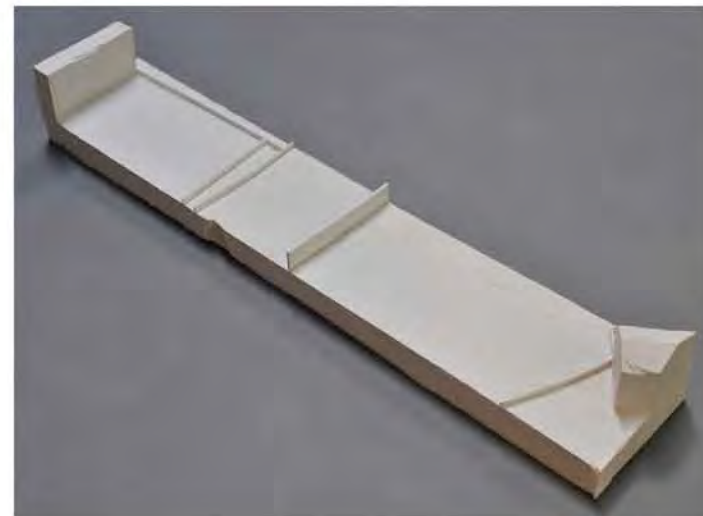


Fig.14k & 14L  
Analysis Site  
Moyross

**Moyross**







## The Site

The analysis brought up many sites in the poorer areas of Limerick city but one in particular caught my attention as a place which could contribute greatly to the areas around it and has many of the social and spatial problems found in the analysis sites. The site is located on the edge of the Georgian grid where it breaks down to an area in between the train station and the city's public housing suburbs. It is an area which is bound on either side by the large spaces of the People's Park and Jackman Park Stadium which, along with the site, provide a division between the city centre and the area of Ballinacurra Weston. It is a site which has the potential to integrate the outer areas of the city but at the moment is a hindrance to the surrounding area's integration. It had been a built up area at the turn of the 20th century but was cleared out under the Slum Clearance Act of 1880. Although this was a slum warren of small cottages it was a functioning part of the city connected through a range of trades but was cleared due to hysteria about the area over nefarious activities such as diseases, alcohol abuse and prostitution. It was knocked in the 1930/40's under the cleansing of cities under former Taoiseach (Prime Minister) Eamonn De Valera and has been left vacant since then with only a row of public housing to the east being built. The public housing is now boarded up and ready for demolition creating an even larger area of dereliction and segregation. <sup>Fig.15 &16</sup>



Fig.15  
The site

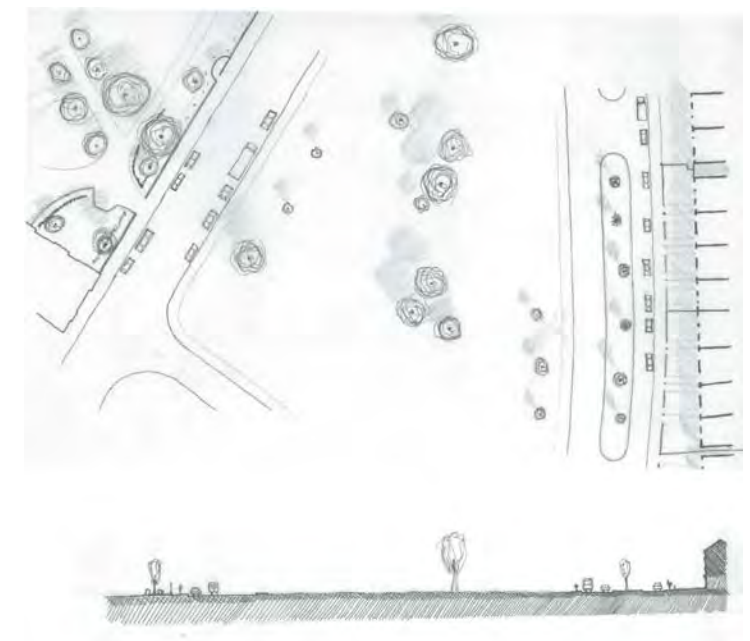


Fig.16  
The site





In studying the poorly designed areas and my site choice, recurring problems existed such as exclusion, dereliction, separation and unused lost green spaces. The research highlighted a lot of the spatial and social structures stunting the possibility for improvement in the lives of these people. In tackling this issue a political stance is made which is something that has been absent from architectural discourse for too long due to it going against the political blindness that is demanded by market architecture. We have to understand that to make space is a political act as in the same way that many political acts create much of the spaces around us. The spaces made by the inadequate policies of the state create many detrimental consequences that we as architects cannot ignore and we have to realise our abilities to repair them. A holistic and humanist approach to spatial planning should include all types of development from green spaces, open public space, public housing, or any designed environment. The question is how to design against the social injustices in built versions of territorial policies without falling into the trap of overbearing totalitarianism similar to the failed works of modernist architecture. We can and have to avoid this naiveté and it is through a method of working in unison for the betterment of the spaces of everyone but to be diverse in our production of solutions. I believe by employing the tactics of analysing the interactions between spaces and society architects can then accurately pinpoint places in which their projects can maximise potential social change with minimal upheaval.

The spatial properties of my project are centred on designing the person comfortably into the urban sphere where the built environment portrays a sense of spatial justice. Architecture is a physical embodiment of who we are as individuals and who we are collectively as a culture so I feel that the design should reflect this by putting the person first and foremost. In my proposal I have looked to create a series of spaces that work on a macro and micro level connecting the surrounding areas to each other while also connecting the person to their built surroundings.

I am more interested in a relatively modest aesthetic and political program with it being a rejection of avant-garde escapism, pretension, and heroism in favour of a more sensitive engagement with people's everyday environment and lives. The precedents I have researched are centred on similar ideas to my own on by creating a built environment that encourages socialising and strengthens communities in and around the area. The Irish social housing projects that I looked at; Derek Tynan's Santry Demesne<sup>(Fig.17)</sup>, O'Donnell & Tuomey's Timbryard and Gerry Cahill's Avonbeg<sup>(Fig.18)</sup> and Kilcronan projects, all have made great consideration on how the buildings overlook and interact with the spaces around them with great care taken for the interaction with the ground floor. 'The call to create an environment which would celebrate and stimulate the emotions of the individual represented a new attitude towards urban space -- the Socialist ideal of the democratization of space. Through this, planning was to be seen as a liberating social tool, rather than a boring discipline where statistics and zoning controlled and organized people.'

<sup>28</sup>

The importance of the relation of the building to the street and the spaces around it are paramount to how the built environment will be considered as a whole. Streets are more than public utilities or byways; they moderate the form, structure and comfort of urban communities. Their form and arrangement afford or deny light and shelter. They might focus attention and/or attention on one or many areas.

**'The call to create an environment which would celebrate and stimulate the emotions of the individual represented a new attitude towards urban space -- the Socialist ideal of the democratization of space. Through this, planning was to be seen as a liberating social tool, rather than a boring discipline where statistics and zoning controlled and organized people.'** <sup>28</sup>



Fig.17  
Santry Demesne,  
Derek Tynan

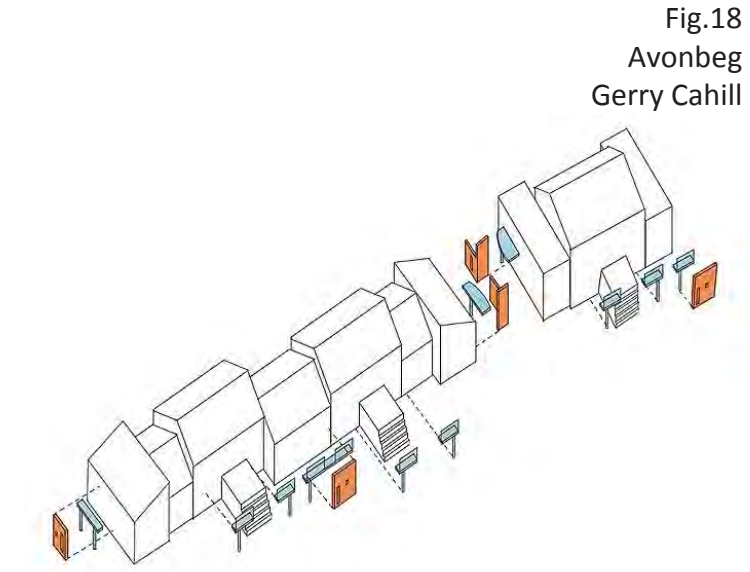


Fig.18  
Avonbeg  
Gerry Cahill

28. HEROISM versus EMPIRICISM,  
The Architectural Review, Jan, 2000 by  
Robert Gregory

29. Jacobs, Allan B., 1928- Great streets;  
Allan B. Jacobs. - Cambridge, Mass.; London:  
MIT Press, 1993 p11





They offer or prevent public interaction depending on the situation. They do all this and much more yet have not been thoroughly thought about as objects to design over the past century and have been left to planners to crudely arrange. Streets, lanes and byways make up such a large part of our built environment that we must truly design them and the buildings that interact with them with care. If we design and plan streets to be places of comfort, fulfilling places to be, community building places, attractive places for all people of cities and neighbourhoods, then we will have successfully designed a large part of the built environment with spatial justice <sup>29</sup>. We as a profession, in my opinion, have moved towards designing our own precious individual properties with our own unique design far removed from the city as a whole, especially over the past century. It is an attitude that places the importance of the object over the city. This attitude I disagree with. Although I agree that there has to be a desire to unique and individualised designs perhaps what is needed is not a change in style or form but a change in our view and approach to designing. The purpose of architecture, as I see it, is first and foremost, is to design a human environment for human beings.

**‘The architect should compose the city like a Beethoven symphony; it should become a great, dramatic experience to walk through a sequence of urban spaces pulsating in scale on either side mixing new with old, monuments with parks, all unfolding on a series of axes and contained vistas into exploding crescendo’<sup>30</sup>**

Camillo Sitte proposes the idea,  
‘The architect should compose the city like a Beethoven symphony; it should become a great, dramatic experience to walk through a sequence of urban spaces pulsating in scale on either side mixing new with old, monuments with parks, all unfolding on a series of axes and contained vistas into exploding crescendo’<sup>30</sup>

It is an updated version of the Albertian idea of the city’s streetscape to be dealt with like a series of rooms. This is something that greatly interests me and will be investigating through the project the most suitable form of this. This type of design of outdoor urban street spaces would probably come under criticism from postmodernists such as Charles Jencks for being nothing more than urban of street furniture.<sup>31</sup> This would be an easy and shallow condemnation of the possibilities that lie in developing to the highest standard the external spaces we inhabit daily rather than the continuation of the object culture and approach to design. Why can’t the urban panorama be as comfortable and enjoyable as anywhere else?

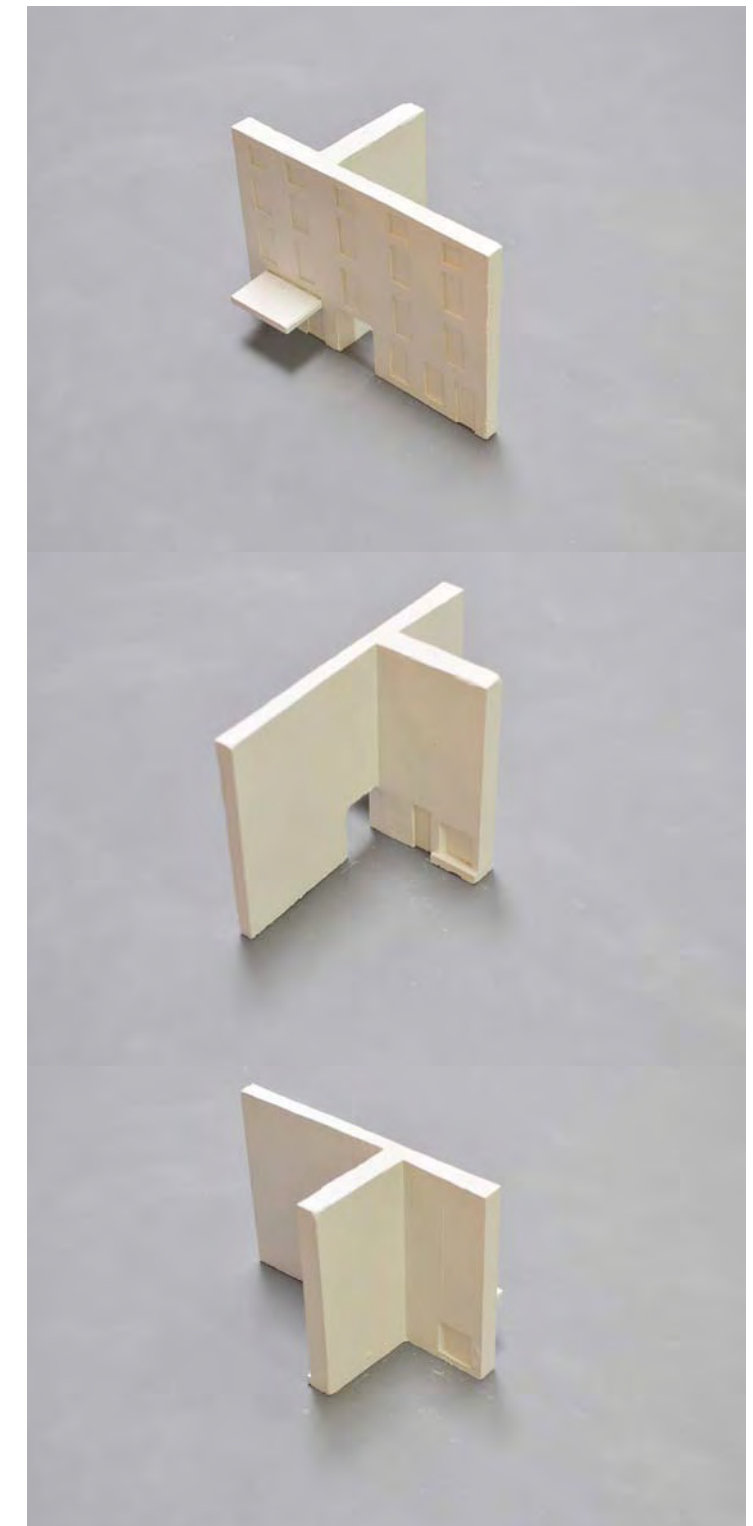


Fig.19  
Early theoretical spatial model

30. Charles Jencks, *Modern movements in architecture* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973) 246

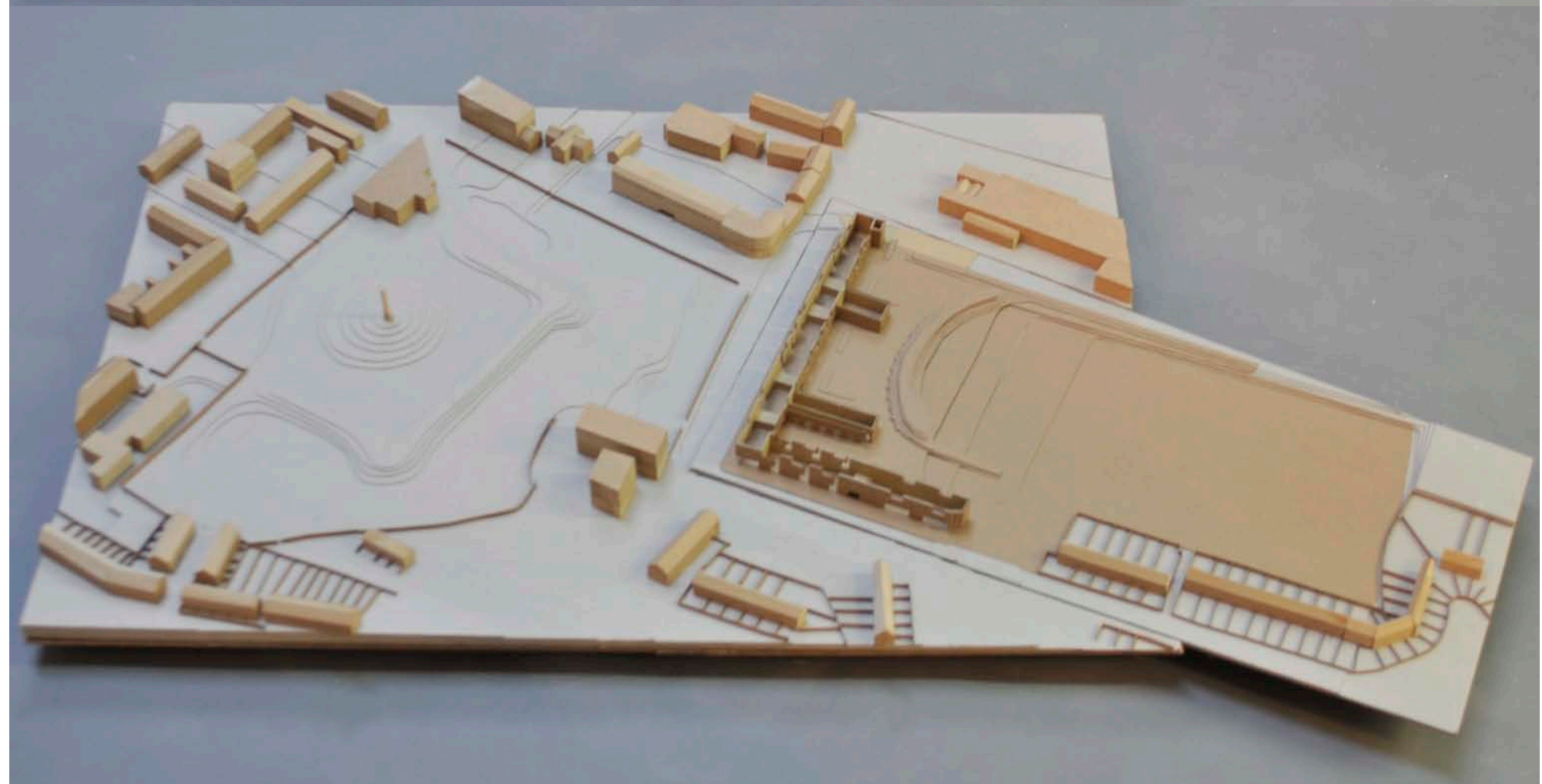
31. JCharles Jencks, *Modern movements in architecture*, 246



Fig.20  
Site model with existing context



Fig.19  
Site model with proposed design









SECTION BB

SECTION BB

SECTION AA

SECTION BB

SECTION CC

VUE

CA





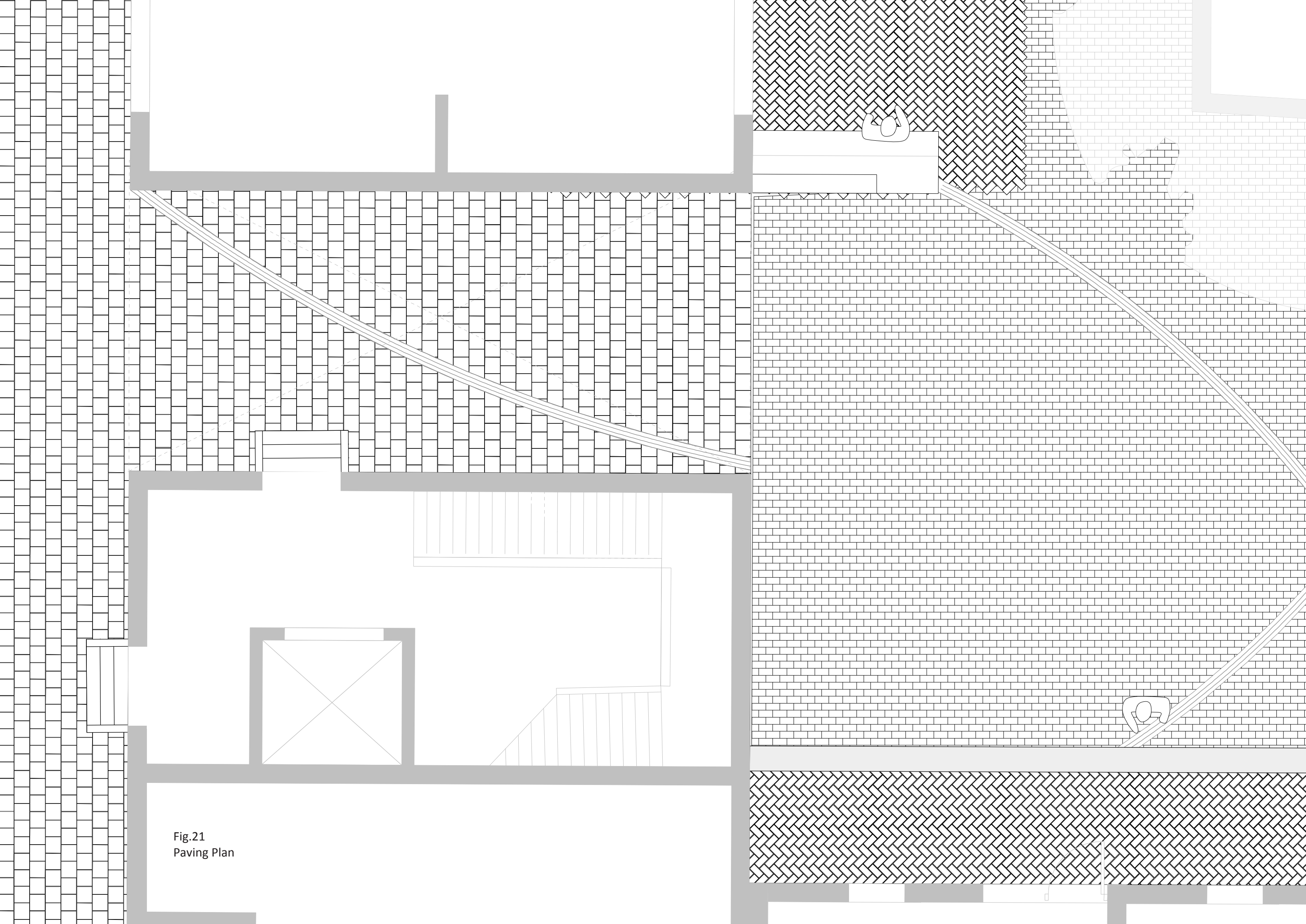


Fig.21  
Paving Plan





Fig.22  
Boherbouy Street view



Fig.23  
Careys Road view



Fig.24  
Limerick 37 FC Stadium view







Fig.25  
View up to the train station

Fig.27  
View through housing to the stadium



Fig.26  
Space to rear of housing









Fig.29  
Seating under stand roof

Fig.28  
Section perspective through  
housing street

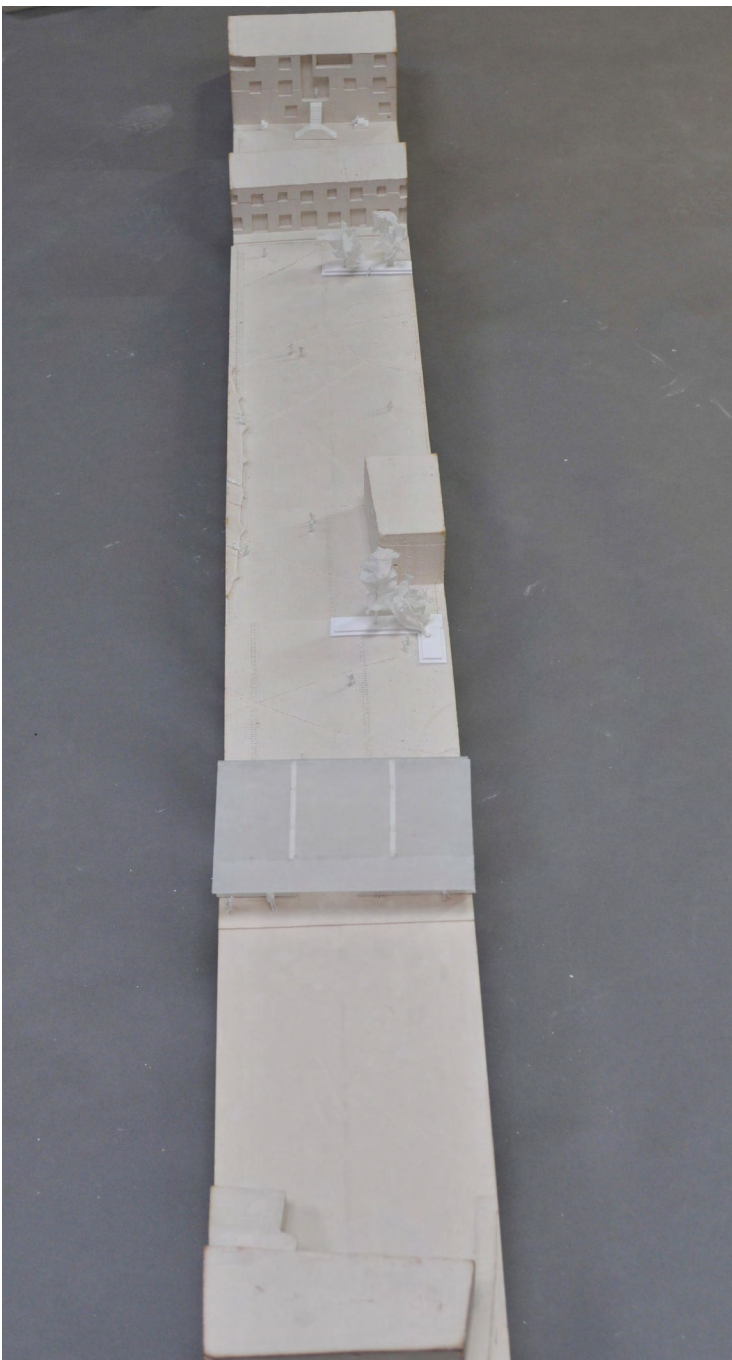


Fig.29 & 30  
1:100 Section Model

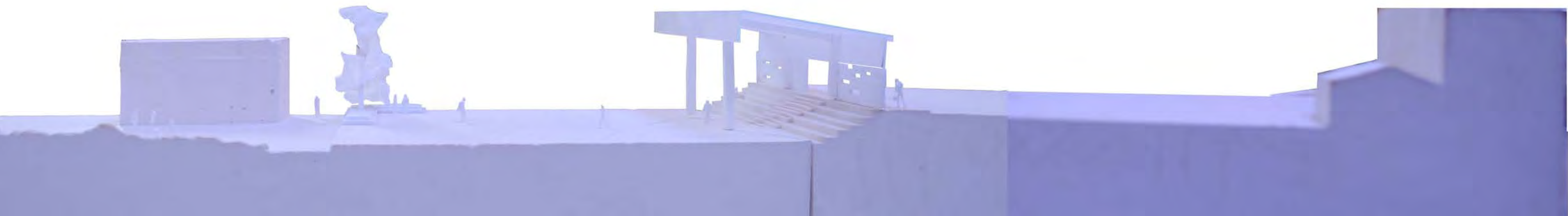






Fig. 31  
Underseat Lighting

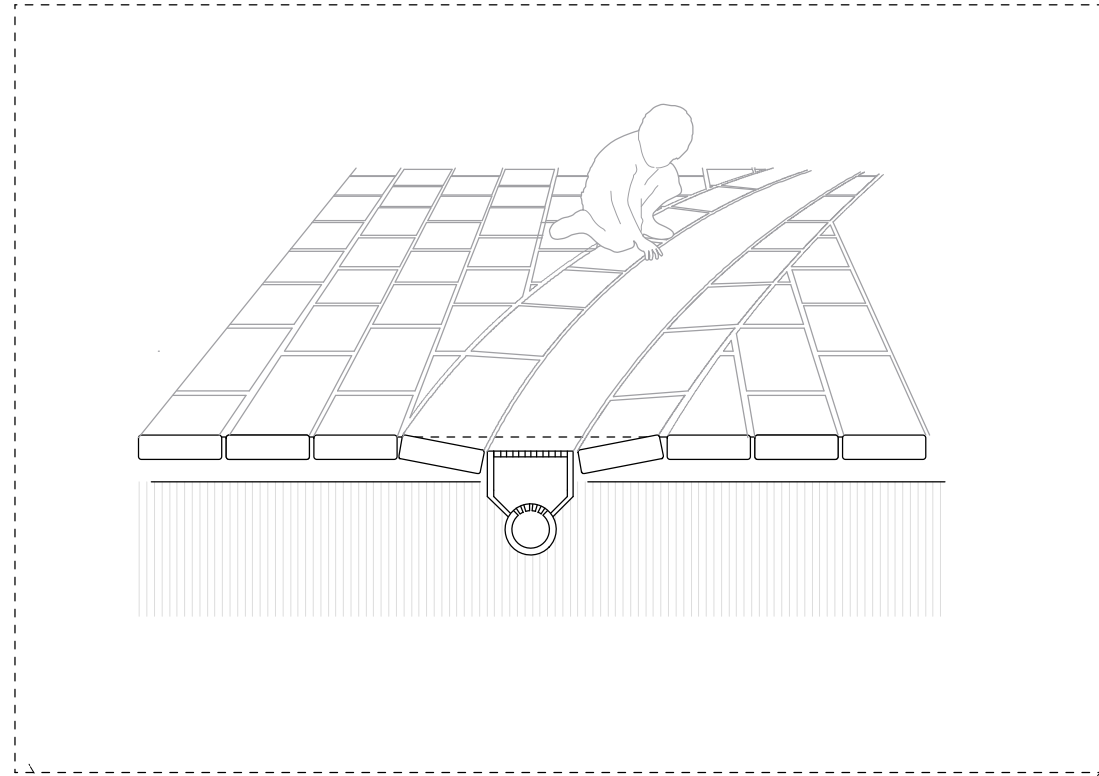


Fig. 32  
Curved drainage channels

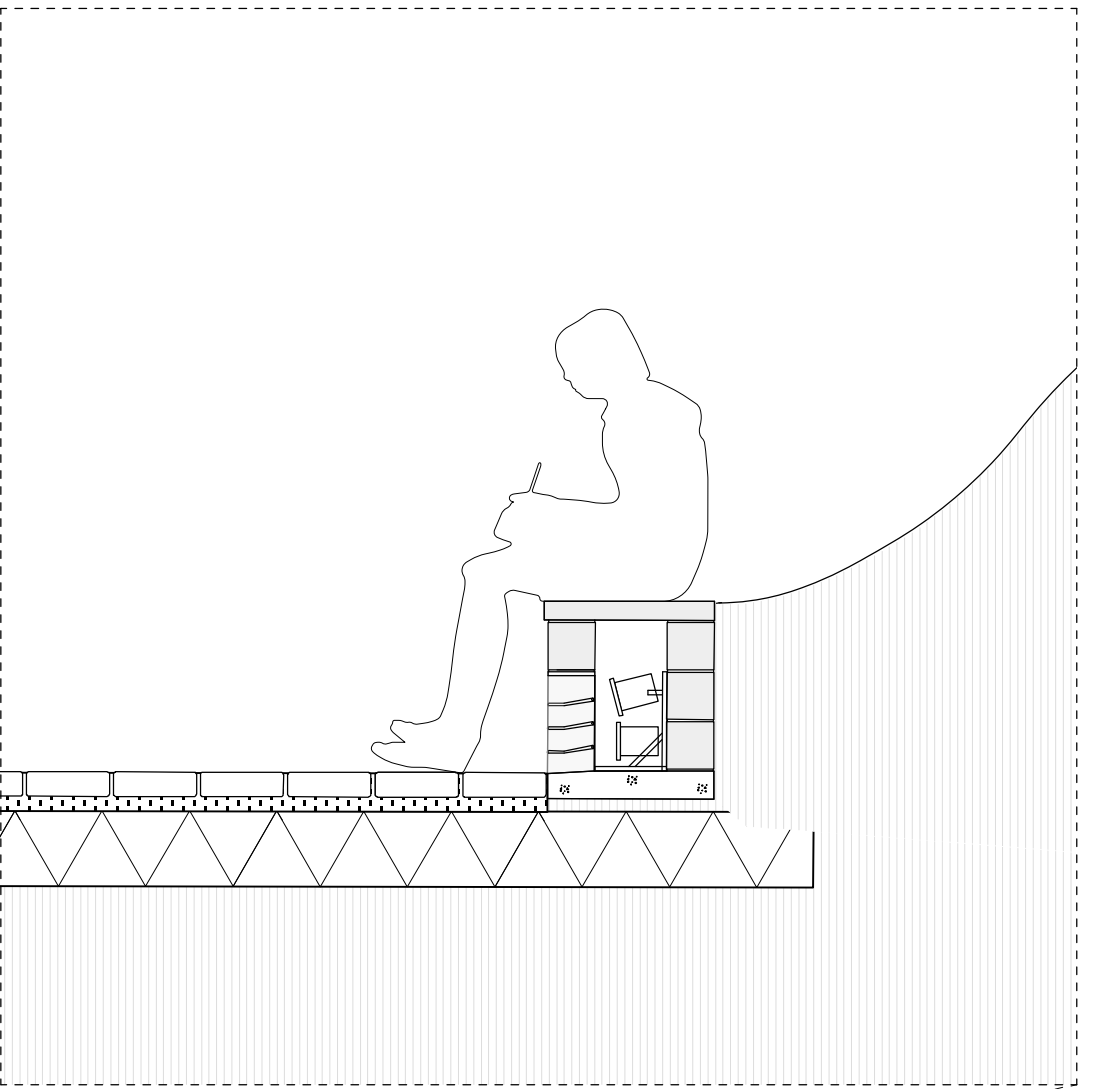


Fig. 33  
Underseat Lighting Section

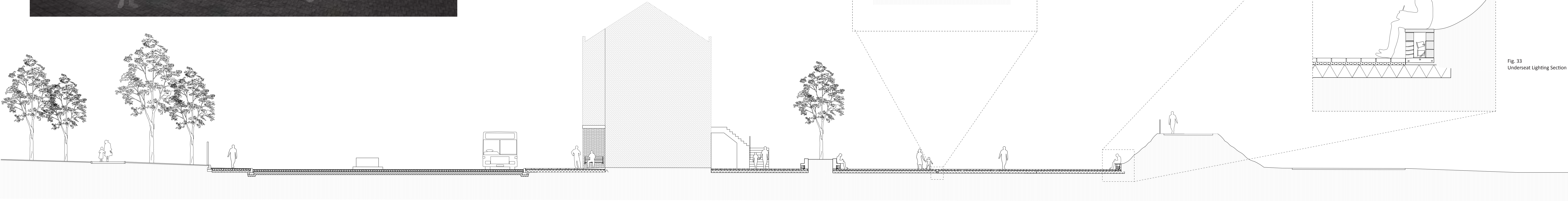


Fig. 34  
Section AA





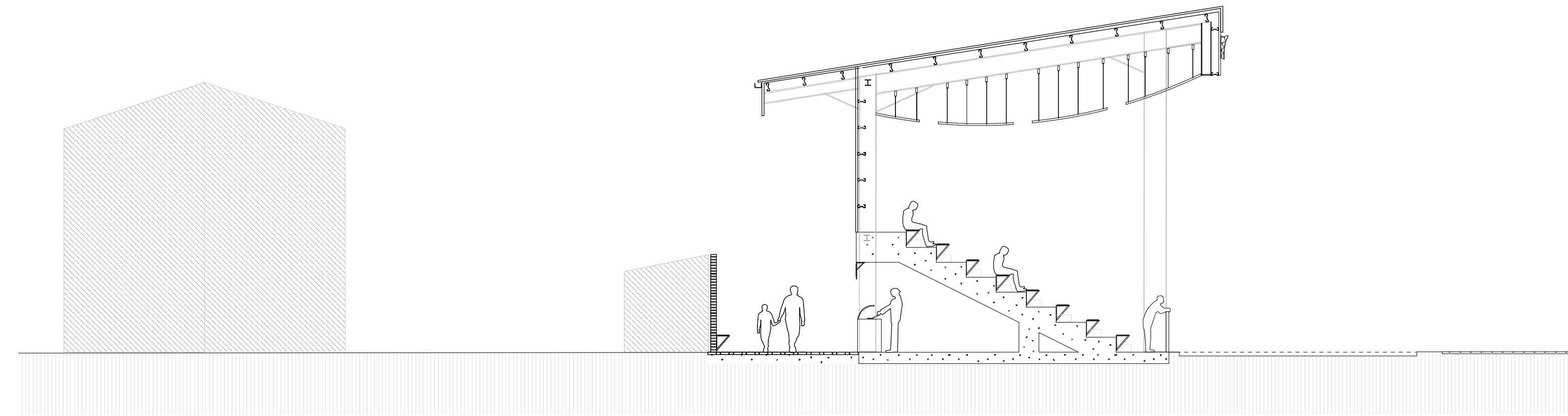


Fig. 35  
Scale

SECTION CC  
1:100

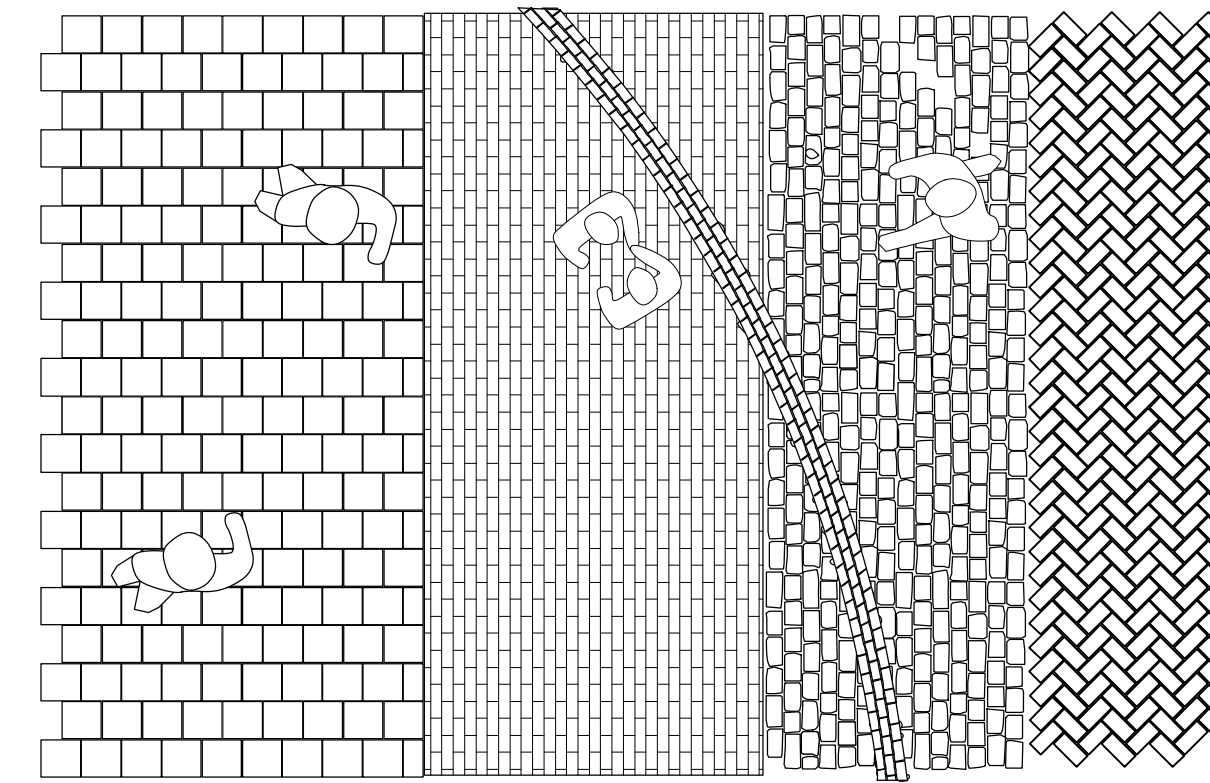


Fig. 37  
Scale

Paving varying on level of privacy  
1:20

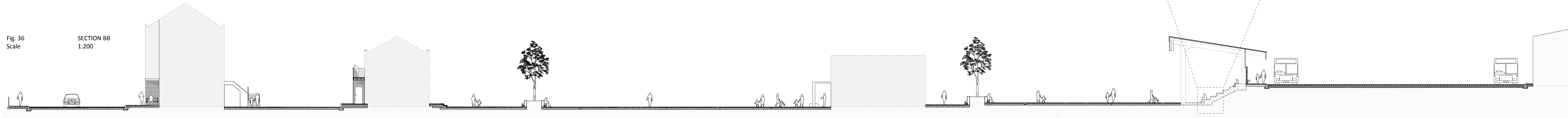


Fig. 36  
Scale

SECTION BB  
1:200

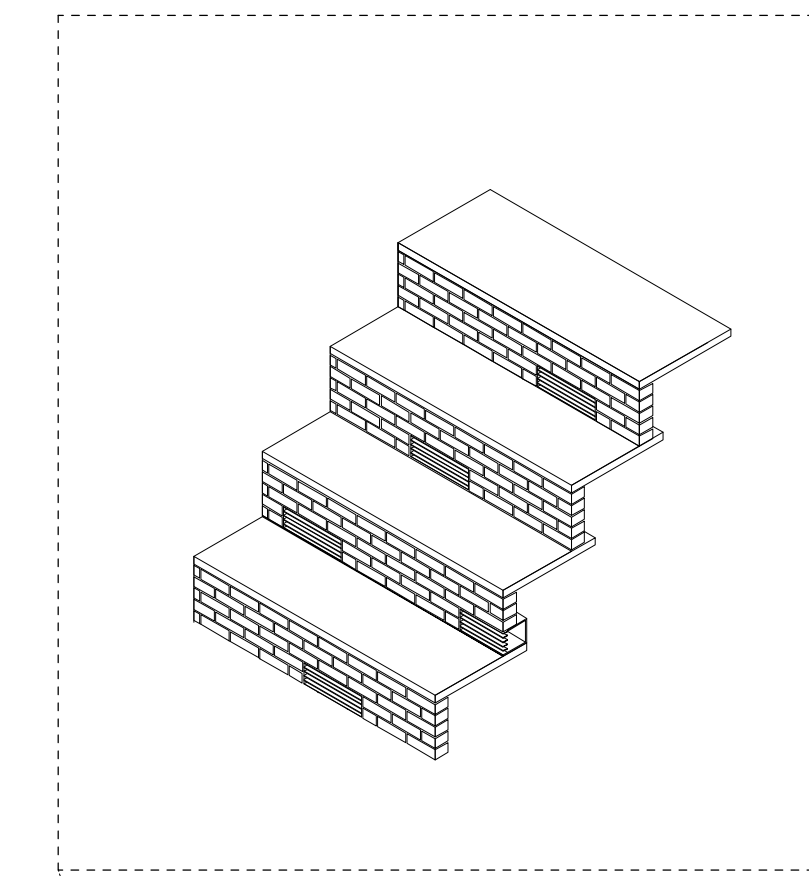


Fig.38  
Scale

Underseat/step lighting  
1:50



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