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A COMMERCIAL/RESIDENTIAL
BLOCK IN ANACONDA, MONTANA

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A COMMERCIAL/RESIDENTIAL BLOCK IN ANACONDA, MONTANA

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A COMMERCIAL/RESIDENTIAL BLOCK IN ANACONDA, MONTANA

by

PAUL POPOVICH

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

of

BACHELOR OF ARCHITECTURE

in

Architecture

Approved:

Advisor

Thesis Coordinator

Director, School of Architecture

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY
Bozeman, Montana

March 1980

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

THESIS STATEMENT 1

INTRODUCTION 2

TEXT 4

CONTEXTUAL IMAGES 10

CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS 18

CONCEPT DRAWINGS 26

BIBLIOGRAPHY 33

THESIS STATEMENT

The role of drawing in architecture can provide insight for the translation from principle to form.

INTRODUCTION

An architect is both a problem solver and an artist. The functional problems of building and the poetics of form both must be synthesized in the final product, architecture. Drawing is a design tool which translates technical, planning and programmatic principles into form. This thesis is about the design process and the role drawing plays in translating principle to form.

The analysis of an architectural problem may conclude that certain principles become primary determinates of a building's form. Through drawing, those principles may be found to be unclear. A drawn image makes specific that which we understand in our mind in general. Drawing is a visual rationalization of a problem. As we develop a project from general to specific, the formal configuration becomes more taut through the intelligence of successive decisions. The reworking of a plan from thumbnail sketch to construction document demands an increasingly finer degree of specificity and detail.

Another significant attribute of drawing which makes it such a valuable design tool is its reciprocal property. When we make a mark on paper it takes on a life of its own. The marks play back into our mind and, consequently, bring forth further elaboration. Drawing is by nature more tentative than other representational devices. It is a more fragmentary or open notation. It is this very lack of completion

which contributes to its speculative nature.[1] Through a successive reworking of drawings we can determine how to put into use the principles which were previously determined as important.

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[1]Michael Graves, "The Necessity for Drawing: Tangible Speculation," *Architectural Design*, London, June 1977, P. 384.

TEXT

This thesis project is concerned with the development of a city block in downtown Anaconda, Montana.

Anaconda is an industrial copper smelting town located in south-western Montana. It was founded in 1880 by a mining engineer named Marcus Daly. He developed it through the need of his mining operation to have a non-restricted place to smelter ore from the mines of Butte. The abundant water supply and strategic land configuration were factors which Daly found ideal for his smelting operation.

The Anaconda Copper Mining Company, as it expanded operations in Anaconda and Butte, became an influential force affecting the affairs of the entire state. There was a time when Anaconda was literally dependent from an economic standpoint on the Anaconda Company. In 1903 nearly three-quarters of the states wage earners were either directly or indirectly working for the company. Until the 1960's Montana was regarded, by the company, as the hub of its corporate empire. The Anaconda Company has been a principle influence in the economic and political arena of the city and the state as a whole. Today the company remains as the sole industry, thus the economic backbone of the city.

The citizens of Anaconda, for the most part, are blue collar workers who are directly or indirectly providing labor to maintain

the smelting operations. The citizens are predominently of Irish, Yugoslav and Italian descent. Their grandparents and great grandparents immigrated from Europe at the turn of the century, and were subsequently hired on as laborers to work the mines of Butte and the copper smelting operations in Anaconda. Anacondans are proud of their heritage and of their city.

The downtown central business district has many interesting brick buildings built in the 1880's and 1890's. The Montana Hotel, built in 1888 by Marcus Daly, attracted visitors, businessmen and politicians to the city. It was meant to symbolize what Anaconda could be. Not just a mining town, but a city with a cosmopolitan character and a future (Figure 1).

The Bank Building at the northeast intersection of Main and Park Street housed the offices of the Hoge, Daly and Company Bank. Both proprietors were key personalities, influencing Anaconda's financial growth and building development. The two story brick building has granite trim and two engaged columns at either side of the corner entrance. The semi-enclosed foyer addressed this important downtown intersection and the town as a cornerstone. The substantial weightiness of the building gives it a sense of permanence. An important quality to display in a growing town (Figures 2, 6).

The Electric Light Building, as it is called, gives its title to the continuous string of outdoor lights which once illuminated the main street and east commercial facades. Although the incandescent

bulbs are now removed, the electrical circuit and individual sockets remain visible just beneath the building's roofline. In 1883, under Anaconda Company management, the offices of the Electric Light and Railway Department, the Waterworks Department and the Townsite Department centralized downtown in this structure. It is an example of a building displaying the functions housed within in a rather unconventional way. It is this sort of delightful detail which makes Anaconda's downtown area interesting (Figure 5).

Many of the buildings in Anaconda are deteriorating due to their age. The Urban Renewal Agency in 1973 acquired funds to revitalize the central business district. Their project called for the razing of almost all buildings on essentially six square blocks of downtown. The property was to be developed into a large internal circulation suburban-type mall. Intersecting streets were to be removed. Asphalt parking surface was to surround the structure. Allocation and removal of buildings took place between 1974 and 1979. There was much opposition to the project, both from a feasibility standpoint and as to its architectural appropriateness. Approximately two and one half blocks were razed before the developers found it uneconomical to pursue due to the low price of copper, thus copper production and the employment picture. Businesses which were located on this property relocated in available commercial space or rebuilt around the periphery of the mall site. Other revamped schemes have since been proposed and thrown out.

It seems evident that the entire concept of a suburban-type mall was inappropriate for Anaconda.

The size and economic realities of Anaconda cannot sustain such a large scale project.

The phasing of demolition and construction did not allow for a smooth transition from old to new causing businesses which may have been mall participants to relocate or rebuild elsewhere.

The idea of a mall with central pedestrian circulation, although a convenient relief in adverse weather conditions, turned its back on the existing street activity future deteriorating street vitality.

Peripheral parking would destroy the existing building/street relationship pattern.

The mall project was geared to a car oriented suburban condition in a close-knit downtown which has significant pedestrian traffic.

An introverted single use mall composed of retail shops would close at night further detracting from a diverse downtown. Many people presently live above shops in Anaconda. Older people who enjoy the convenience of living within walking distance of amenities and people who wish not to be encumbered with maintenance problems such as lawn work.

The project selected for this thesis is the development of a vacant city block within the designated mall site. There is a desire to maintain the integrity of the block, to develop it in whole, to again address the street as an important activity place, to create a

continuous urban framework which would become accessible to many kinds of usages and to respect the existing buildings in the area. The aesthetic attempt is to retain individual vitality on a small scale, that which is so needed in an urban environment, and at the same time create an urban continuum which makes a statement the idea of downtown and the city of Anaconda.

Downtown is an important contributing element of Anaconda. It is full of people doing different things with different reasons and destinations. It is an interweaving of human patterns. The richness of human variation is what gives the street life its vitality and color. Buildings rhythmically march continuously creating a formal building/street relationship. A diversity of functions and human activity in close proximity gives a town its urban qualities.

The most important principle for this project is diversity. The mingling of different uses in a district, the mixture of buildings, uses and scenes are necessary for successful downtown districts. Diversity of uses offers the possibility of displaying differences of content through signage, window display, lighting and the handling of entrances.

When there is a multiplicity of functions in a district, there is the presence of people who go outdoors on different schedules and are in the place for different reasons. People are out at different times which insures safety and the economic effect can boost the commercial aspect. For example, the close proximity of a cinema near a restaurant.

With a diverse mixture of usages there follows three types of people using such facilities, feeding off each other; the residents who live there, workers manning the shops and businesses and thirdly, people attracted to the area from other parts of town. The total effect adds vitality to downtown.

In a diverse urban solution it is important that people be able to walk. The more various and concentrated the diversity in an area, the more walking takes place. Even people who come into a lively diverse area from outside, by car, should be able to participate in pedestrian street traffic.

Dwellings should form a part of downtown. The people who live downtown also form a large share of people who use the street, and the uses of the places.

The formal character of the street should be maintained as the activity setting. The building facade becomes a stageset, a backdrop to what happens on the street. Signage and display windows make known the various functions within the building. In total the facade gives itself to the street, to Anaconda.

CONTEXTUAL IMAGES

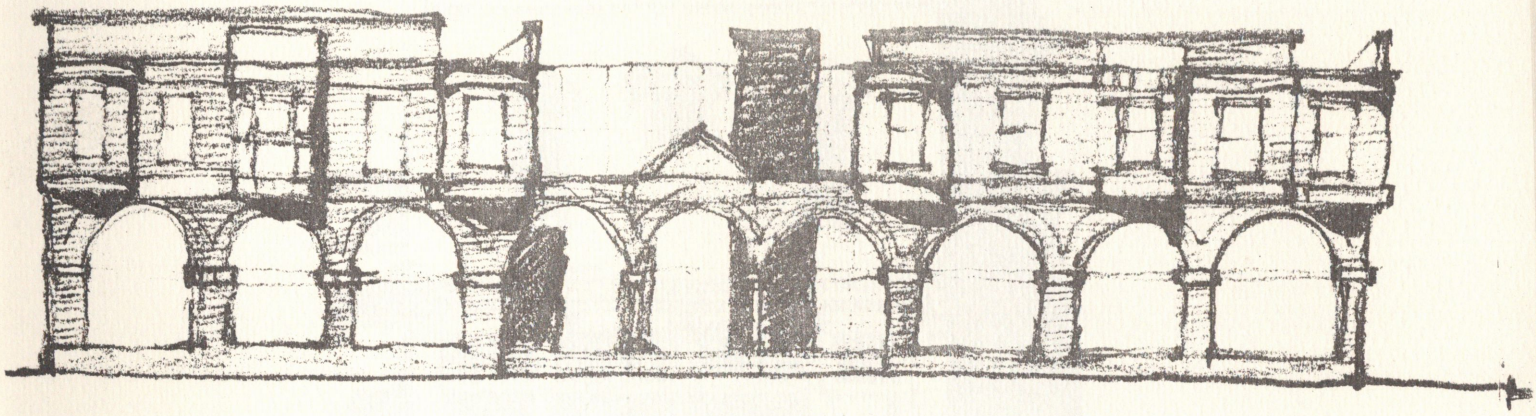


Figure 1
MONTANA HOTEL

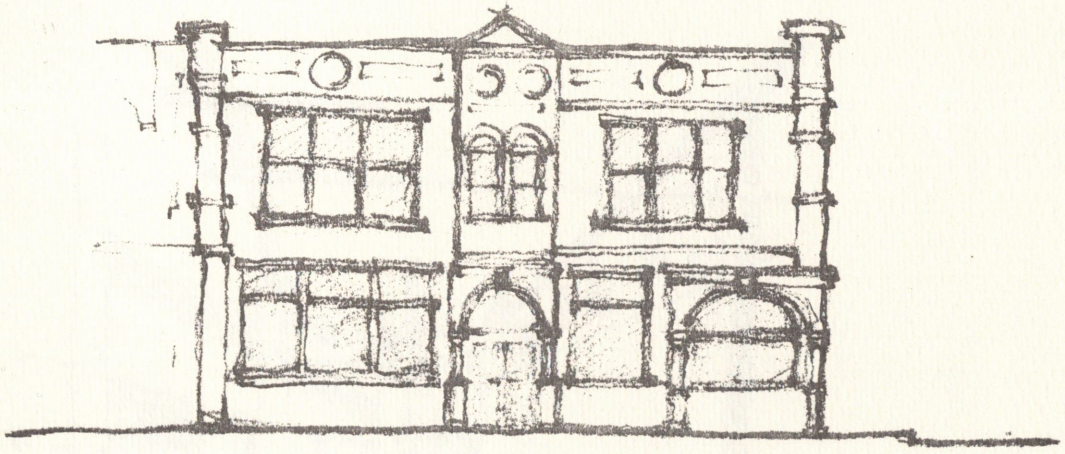


Figure 2
BANK BUILDING



Figure 3
CARPENTERS UNION HALL
Commercial Street, 1923

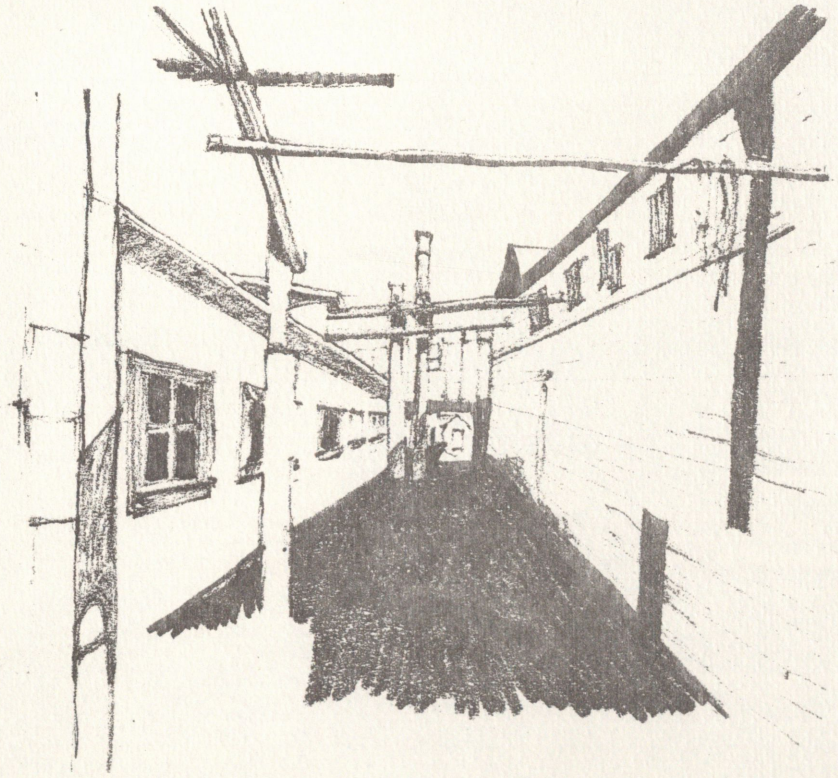
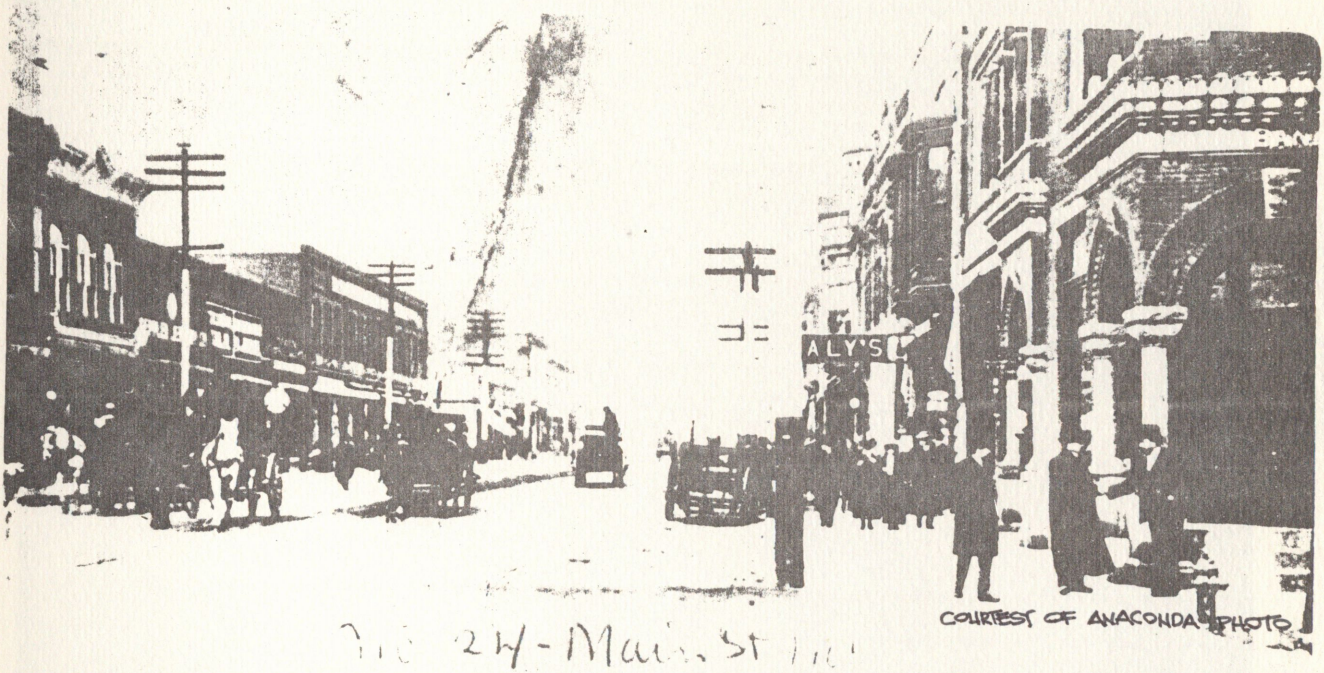


Figure 4
ALLEY IMAGE



Electric Light Building

Figure 5
MAIN STREET, Looking South (1910)



Bank Building

Figure 6
MAIN STREET, Looking North (1905)

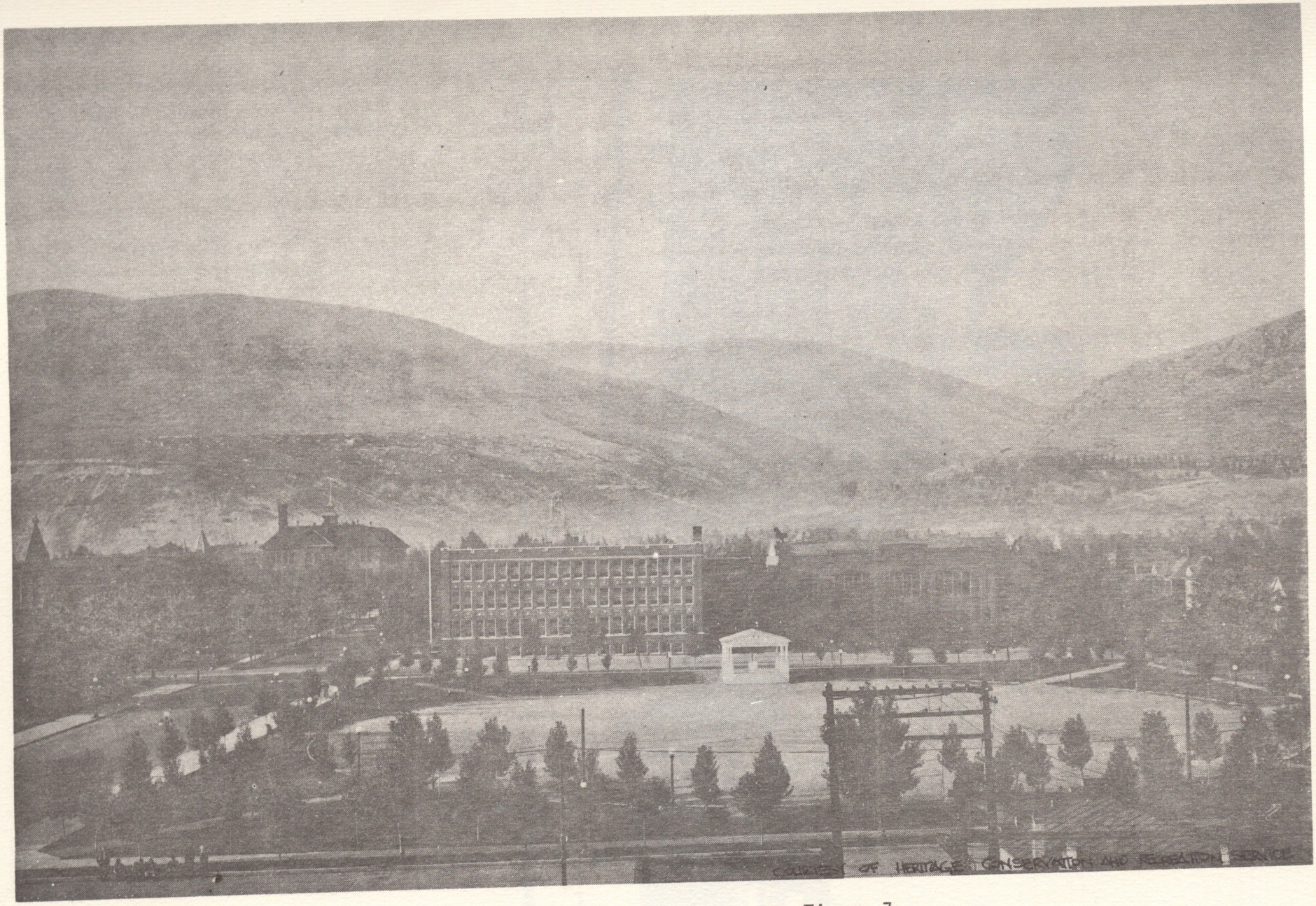


Figure 7
KENNEDY COMMON
Main Street Between Third and Fourth Streets

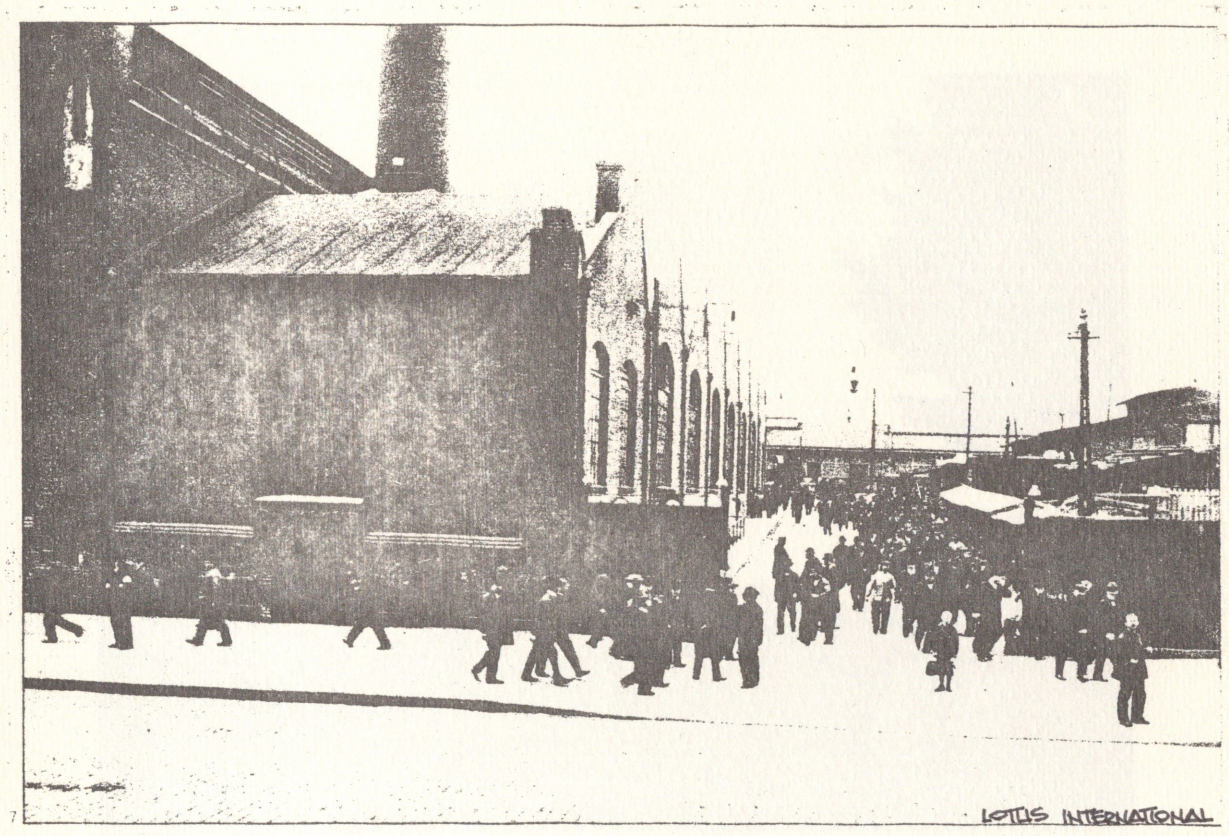


Figure 8
FOUNDARY IMAGE

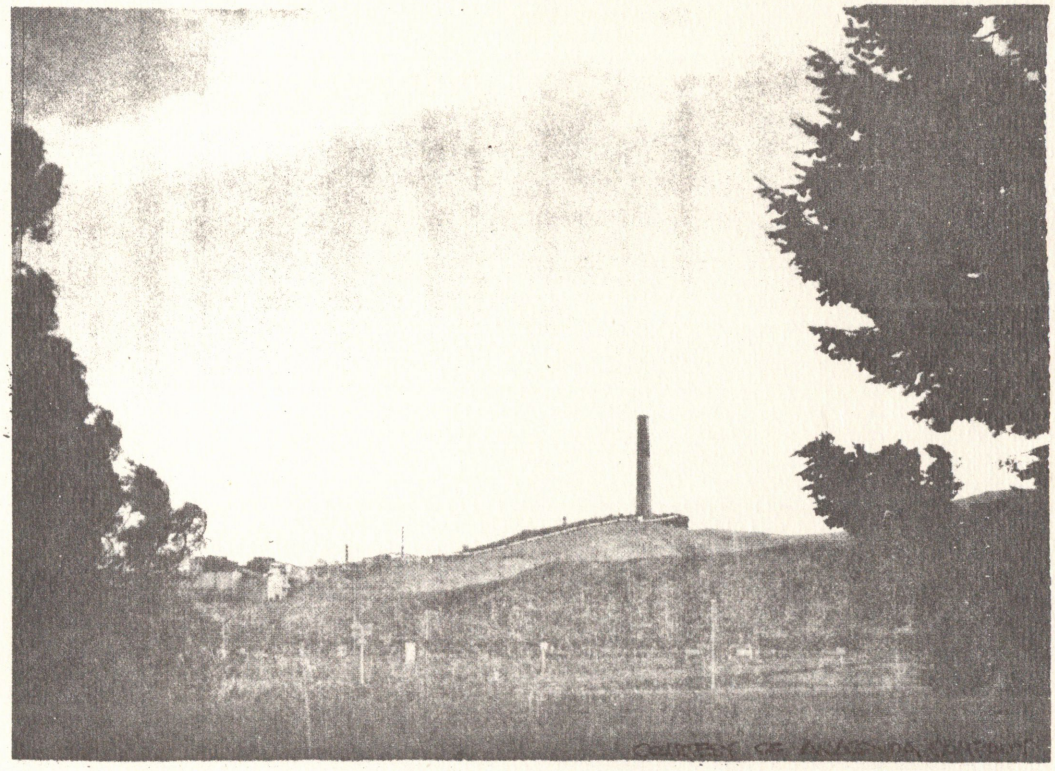
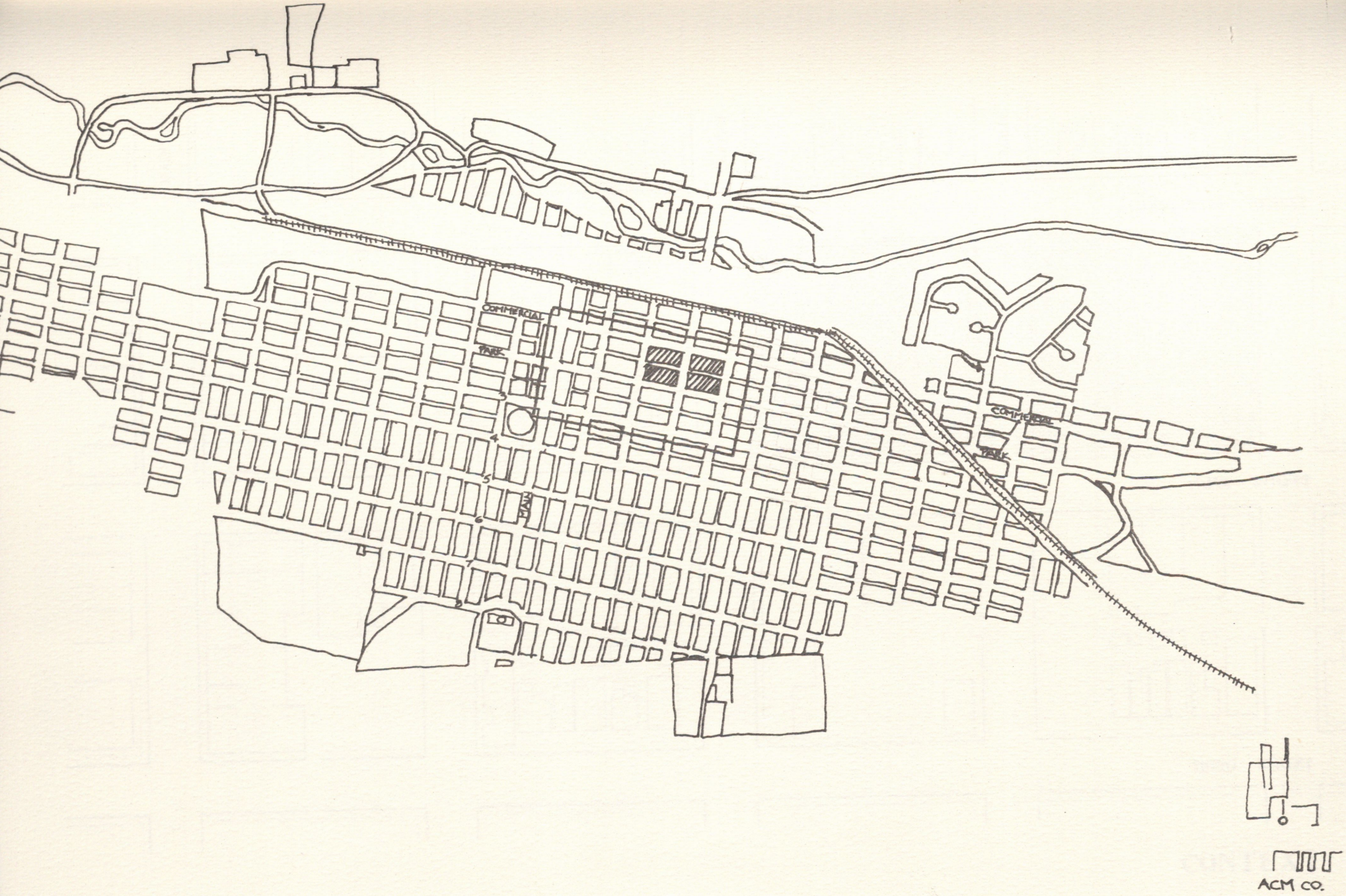
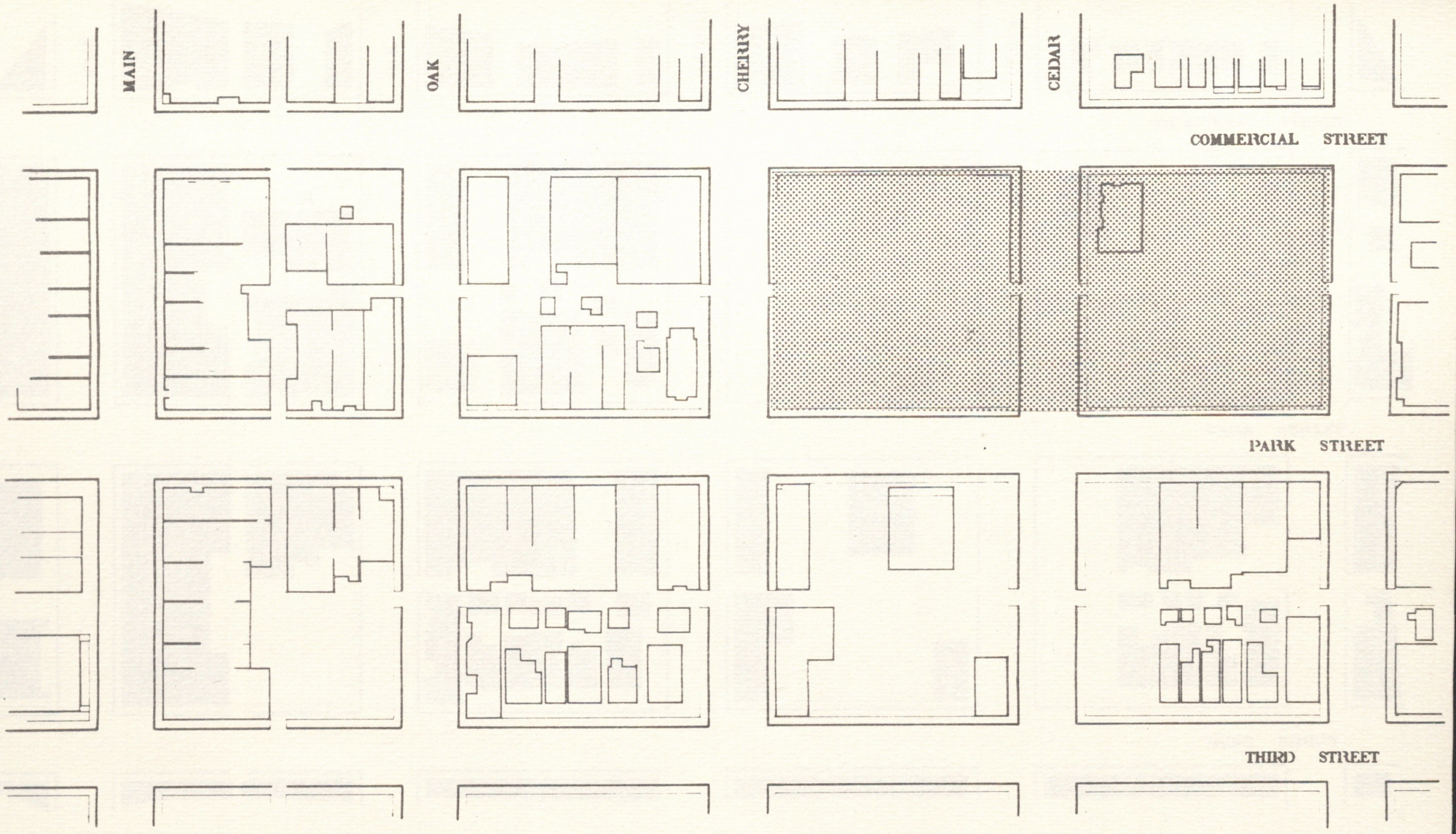


Figure 9
ANACONDA COMPANY SMELTING OPERATION

CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

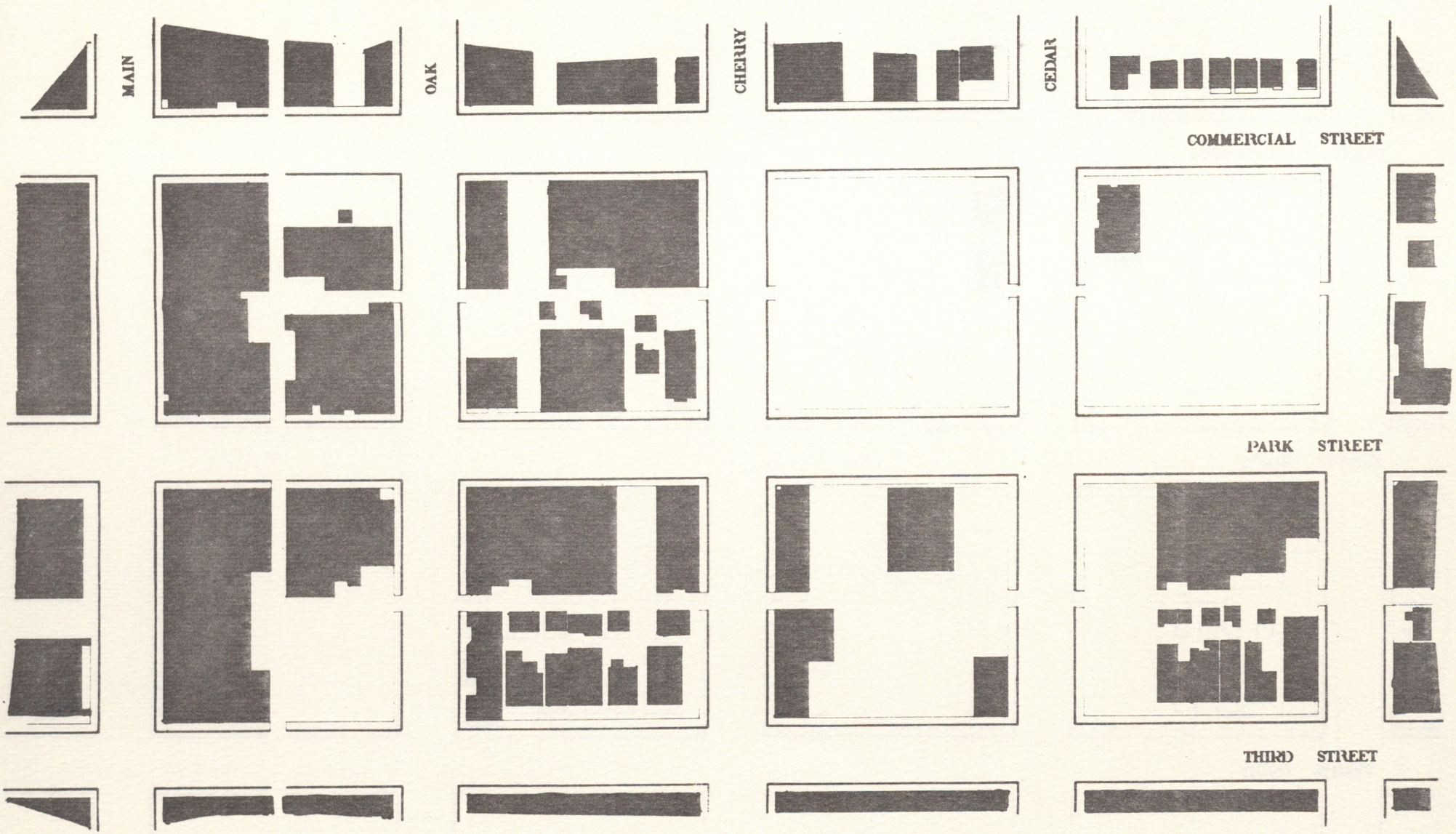


ANACONDA TOWN SITE

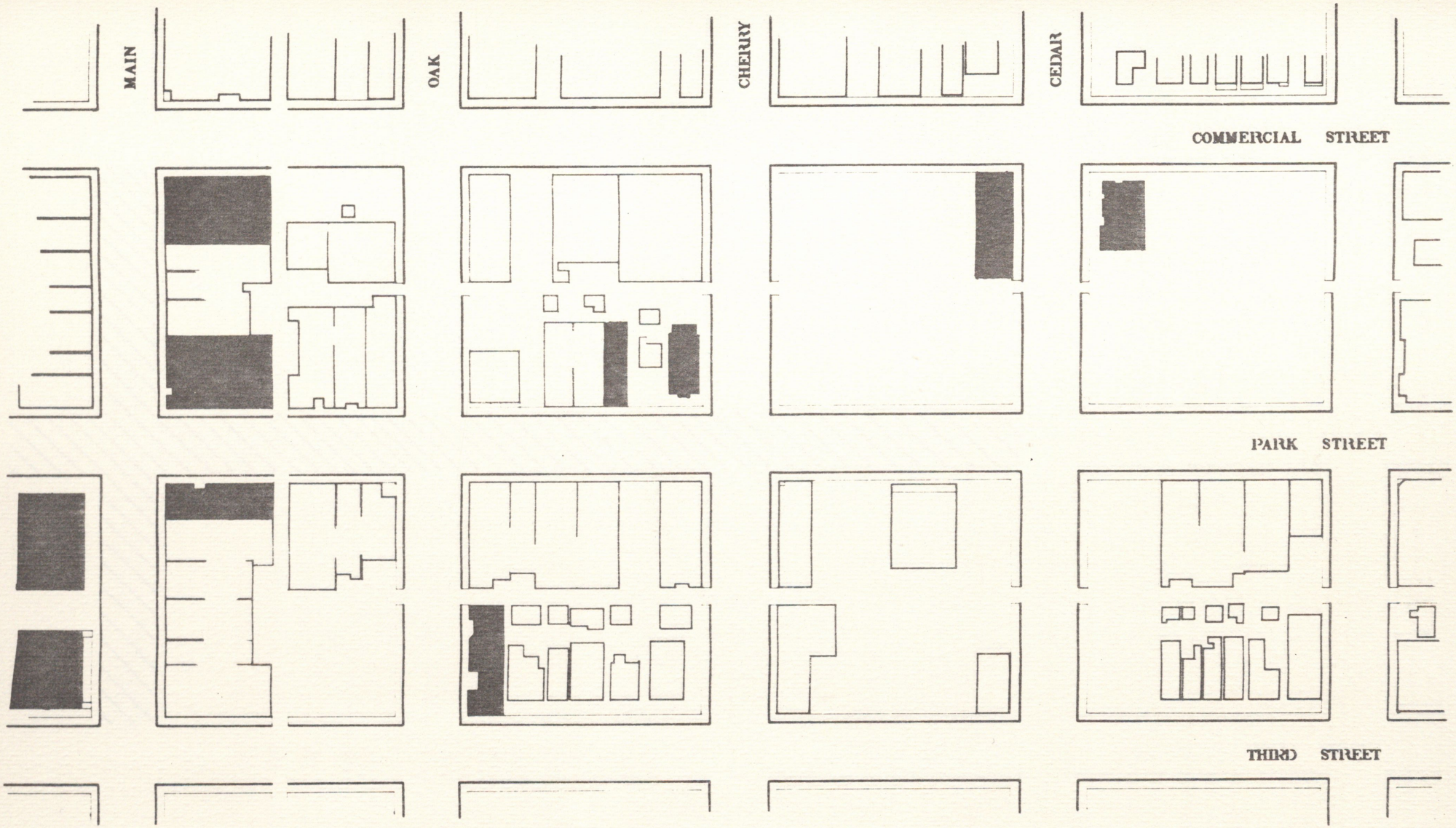


CONTEXT

SITE

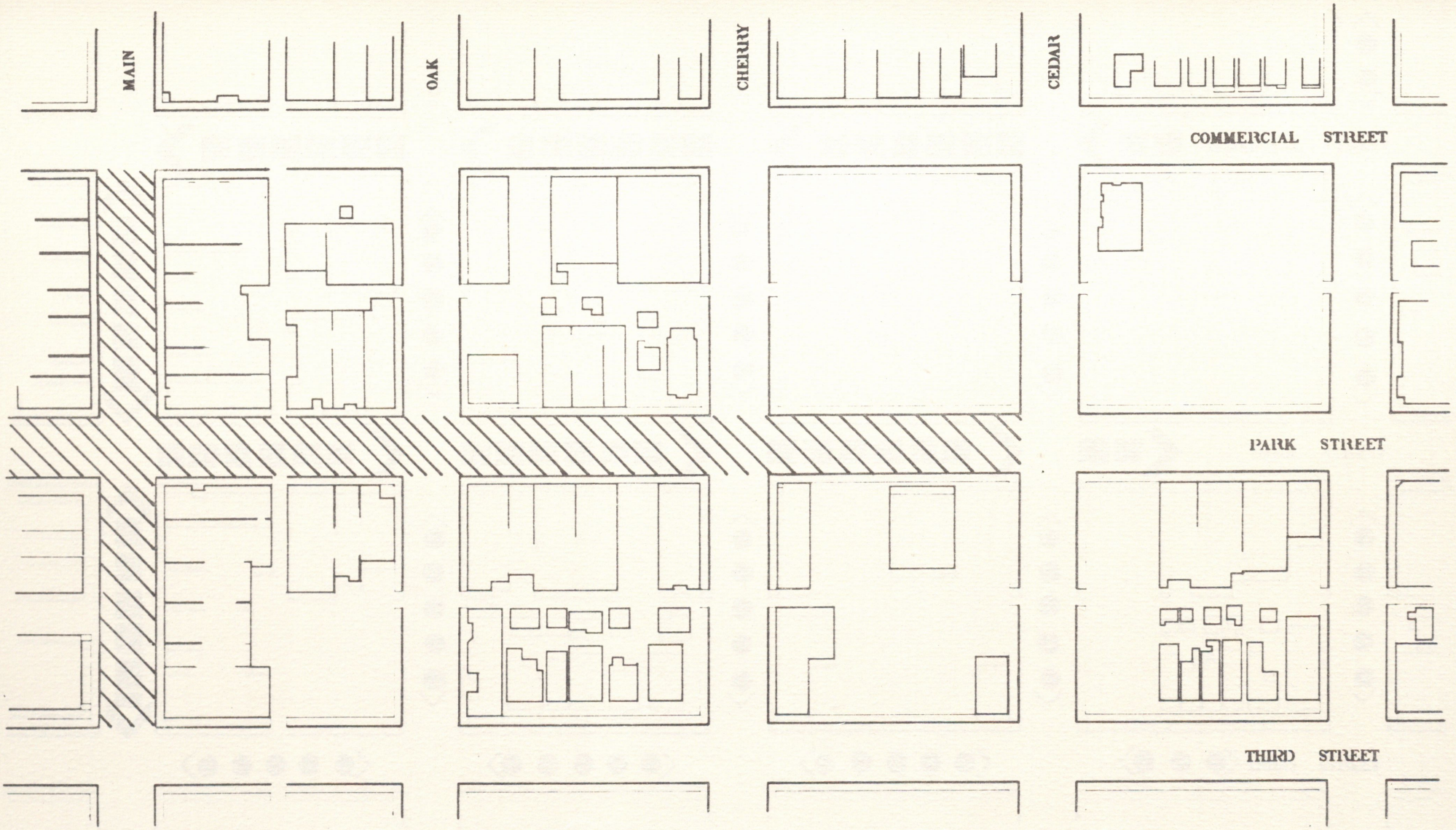


BUILDING/STREET RELATIONSHIP



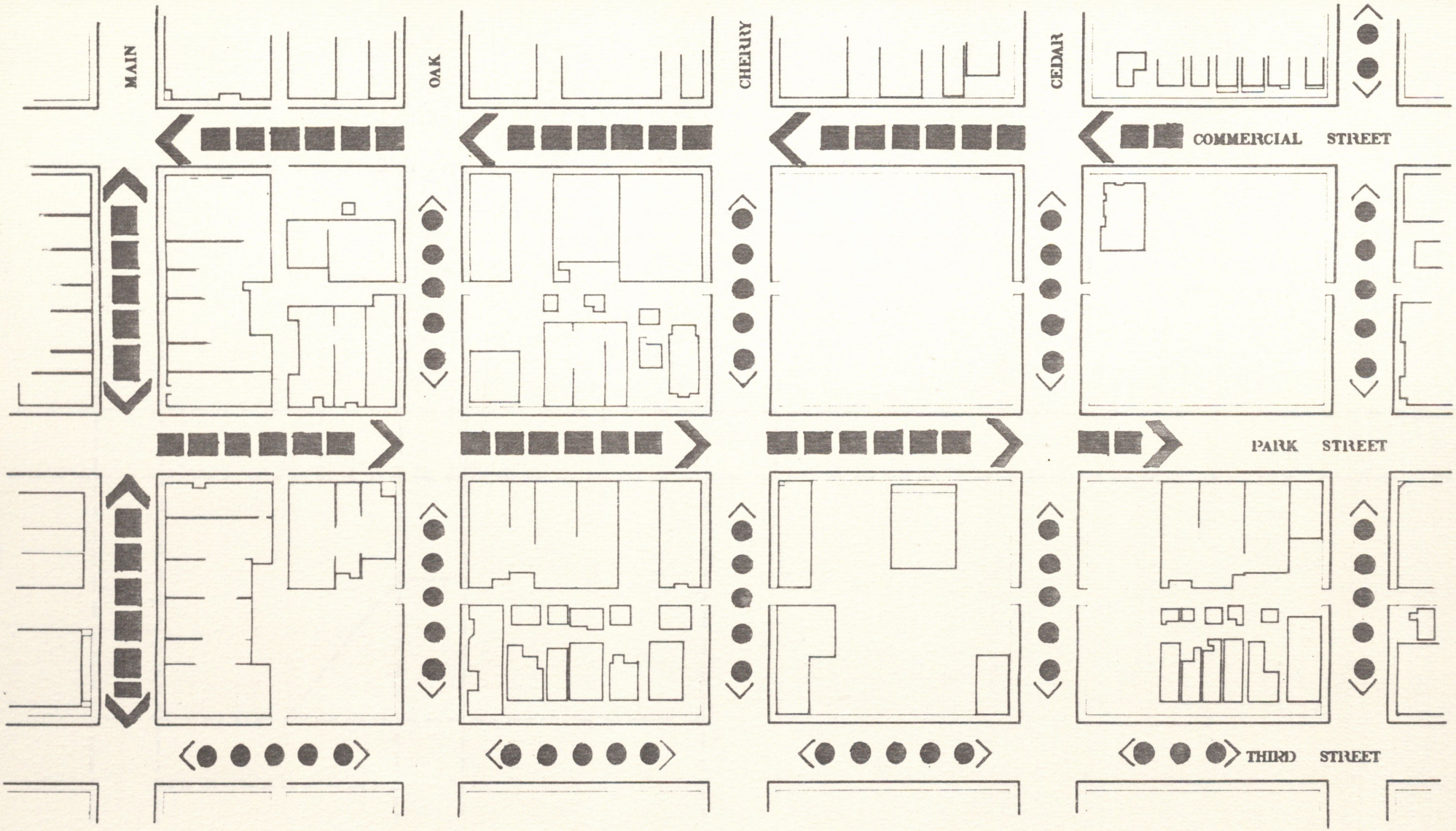
CONTEXT

HISTORIC BUILDINGS



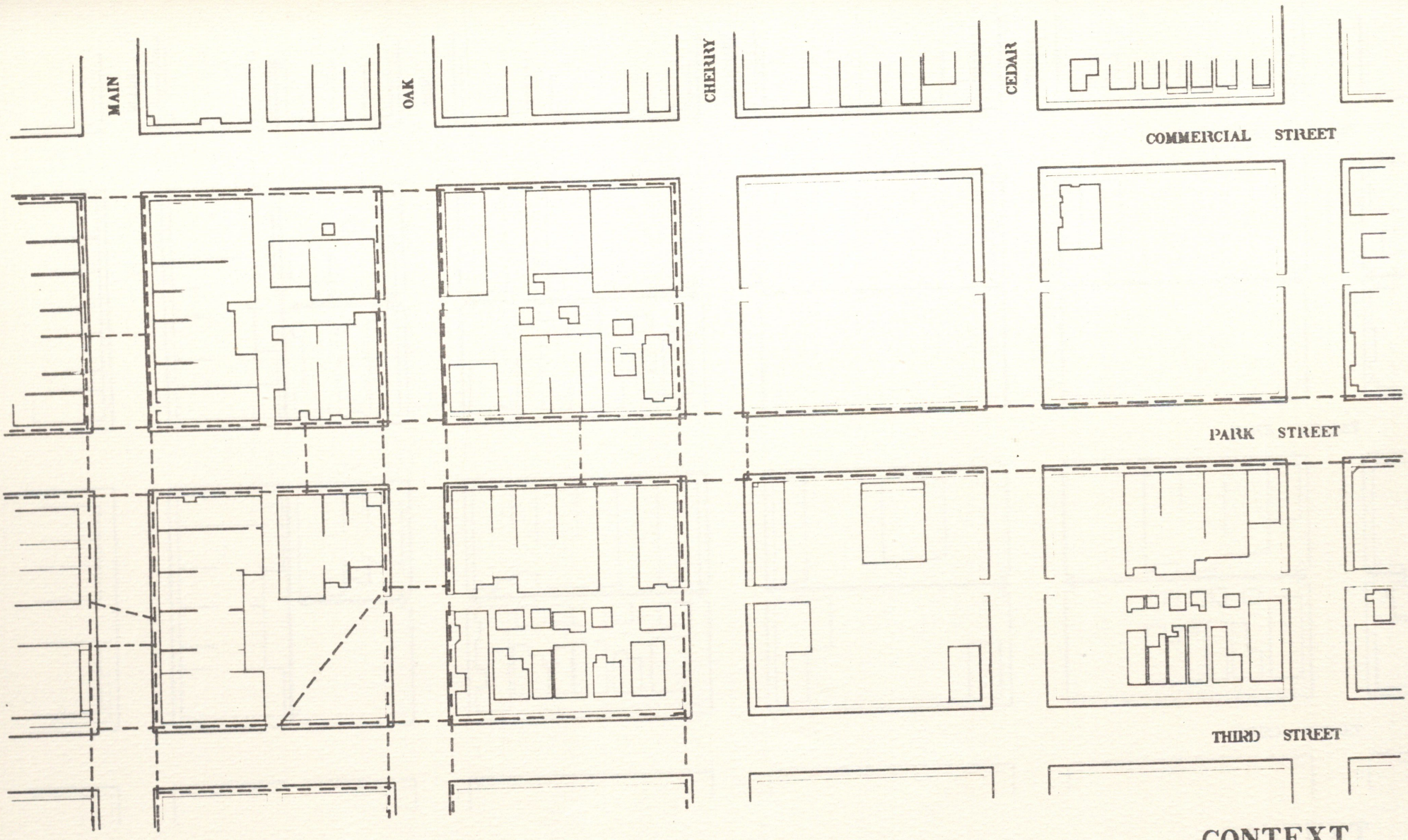
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RETAIL AXIS



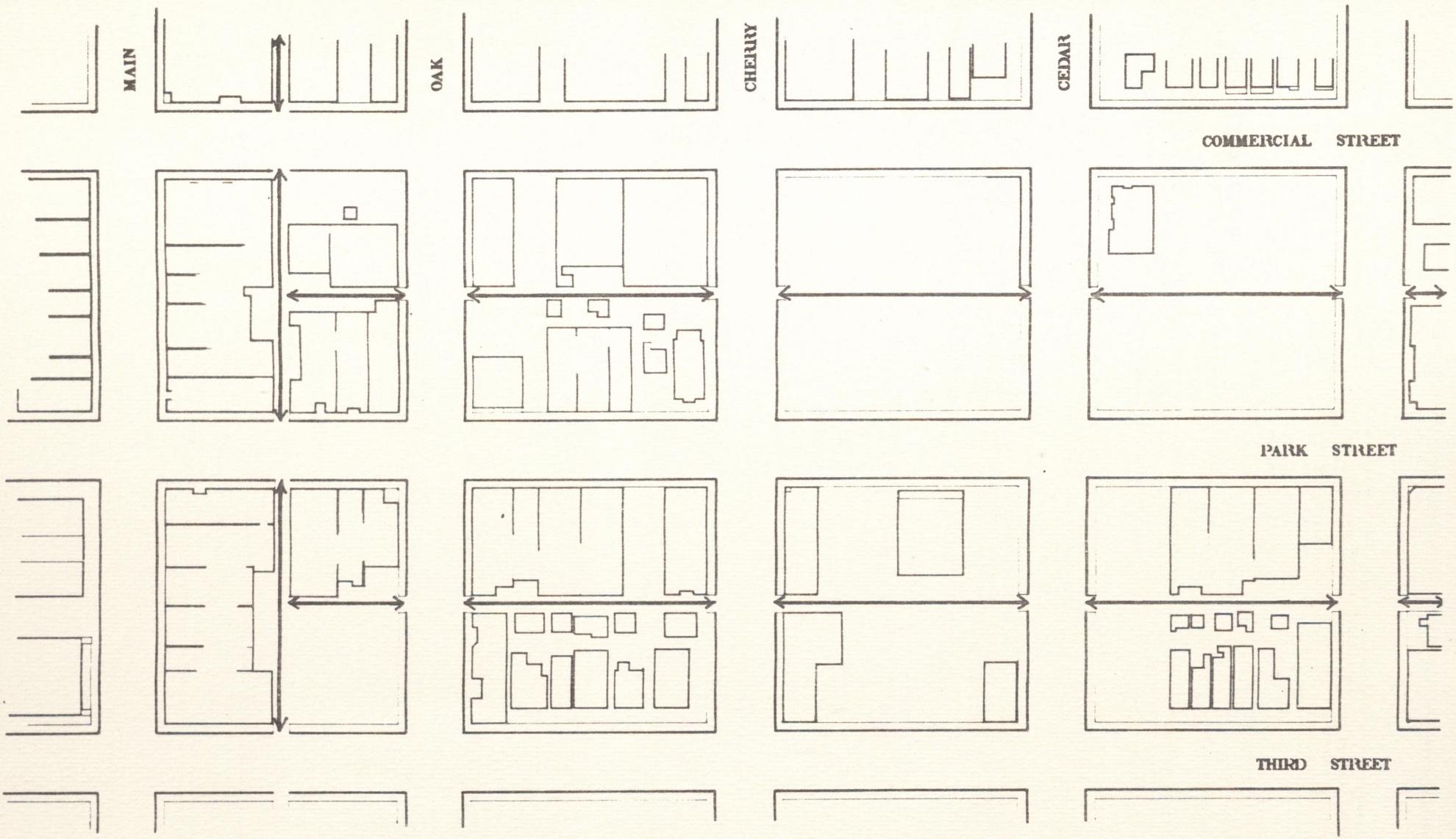
CONTEXT

AUTOMOBILE CIRCULATION



CONTEXT

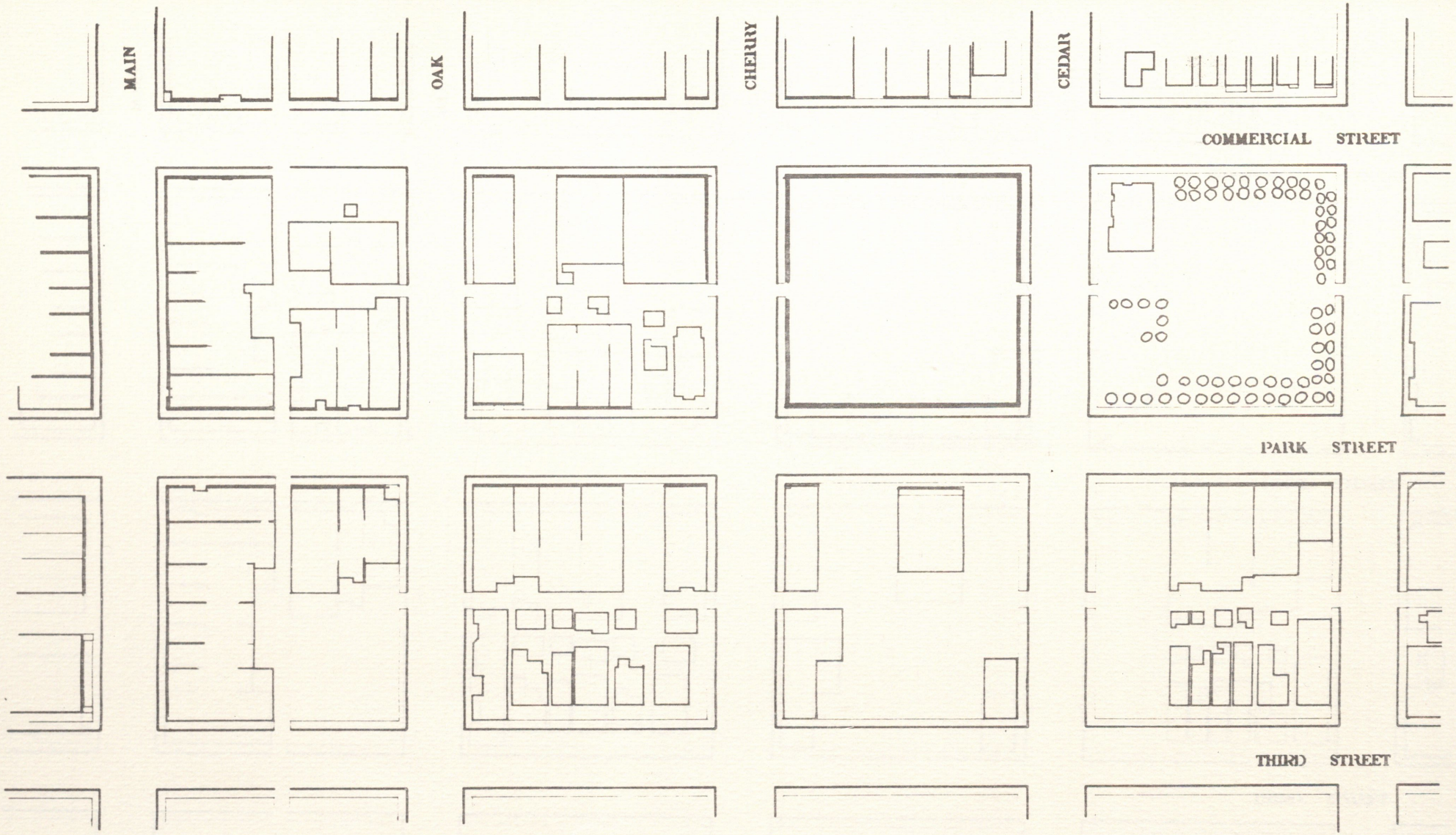
DOWNTOWN PEDESTRIAN WAYS



CONTEXT

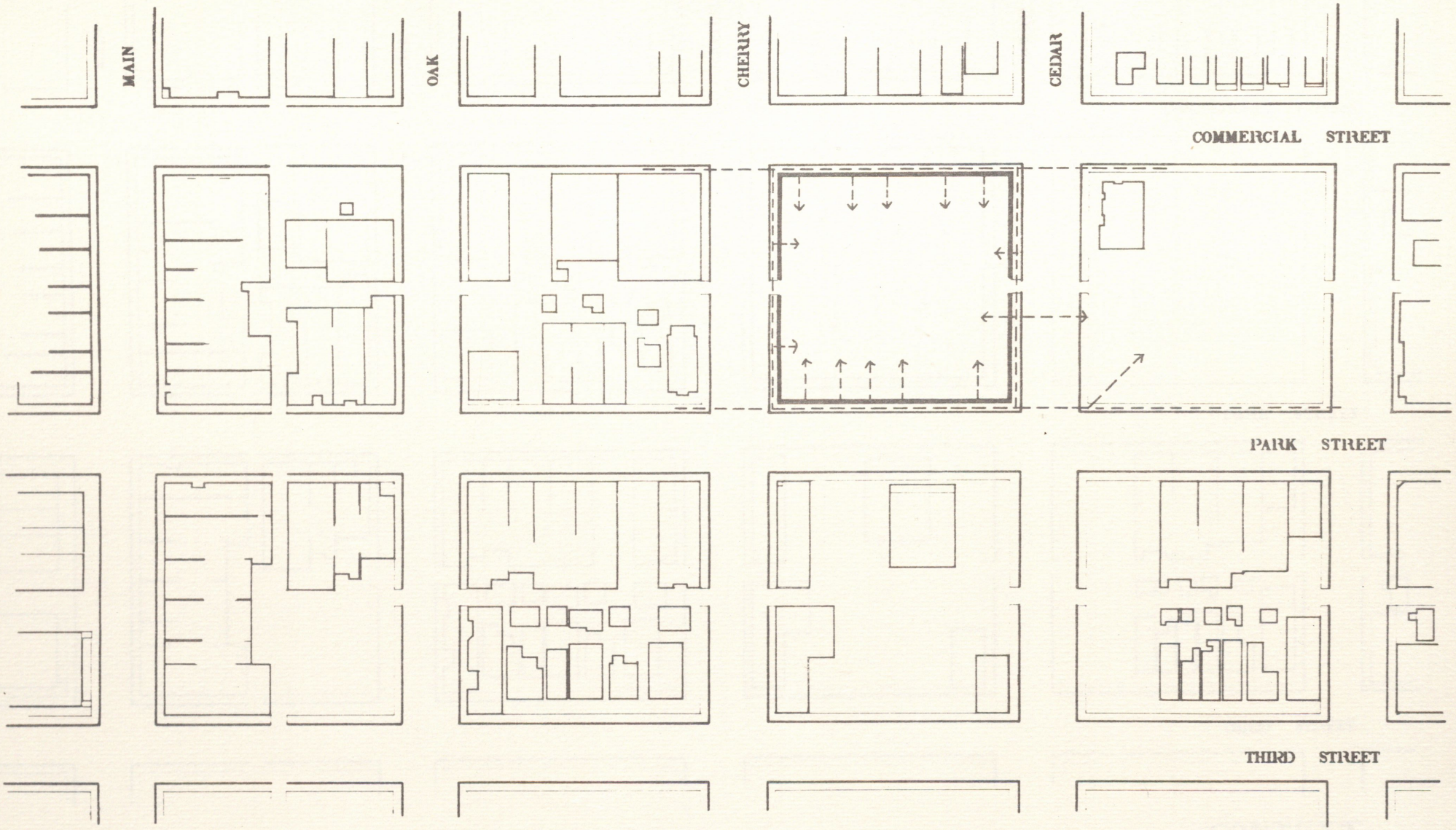
SERVICE ALLEYS

CONCEPT DRAWINGS



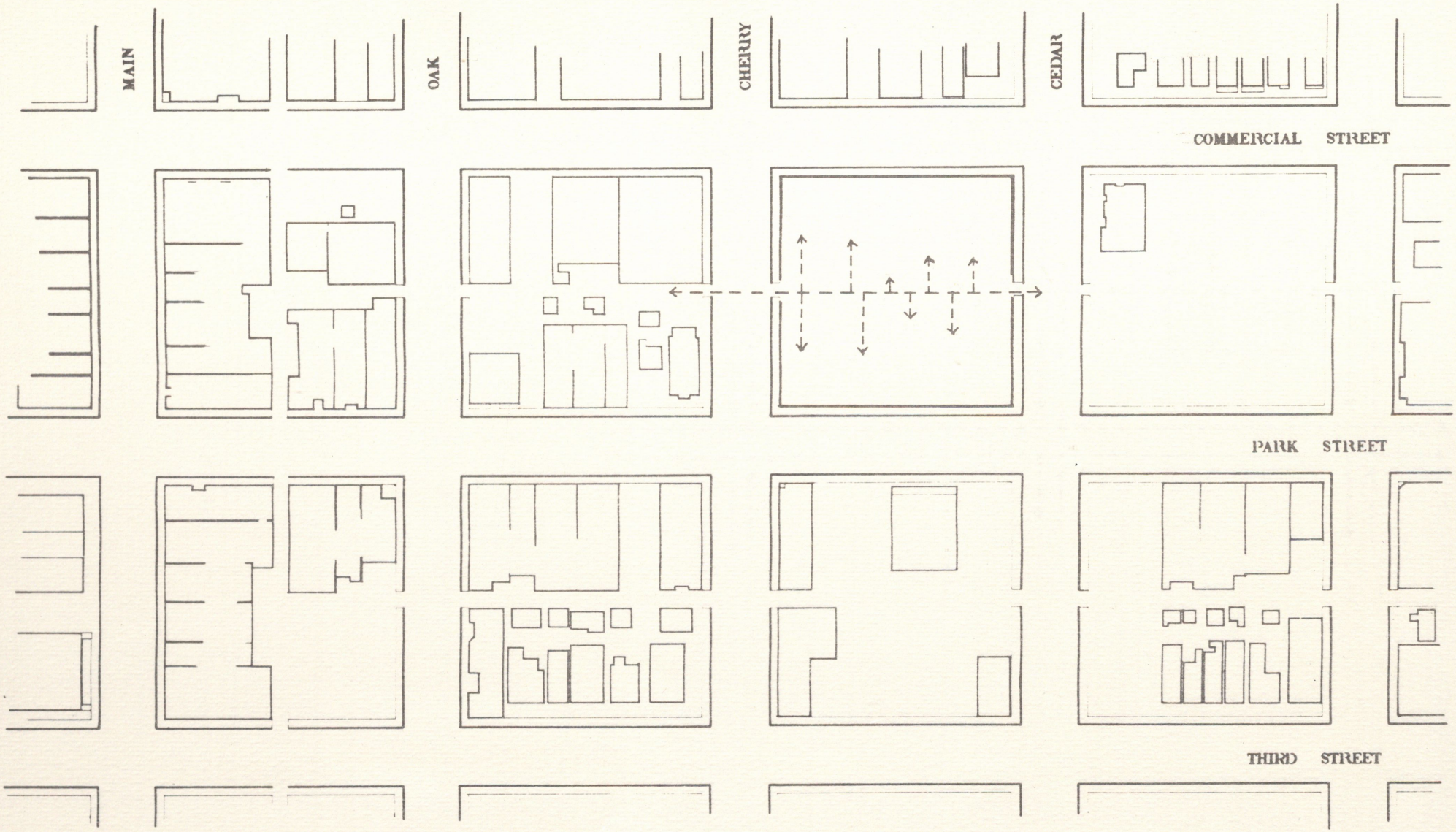
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BOUNDARY



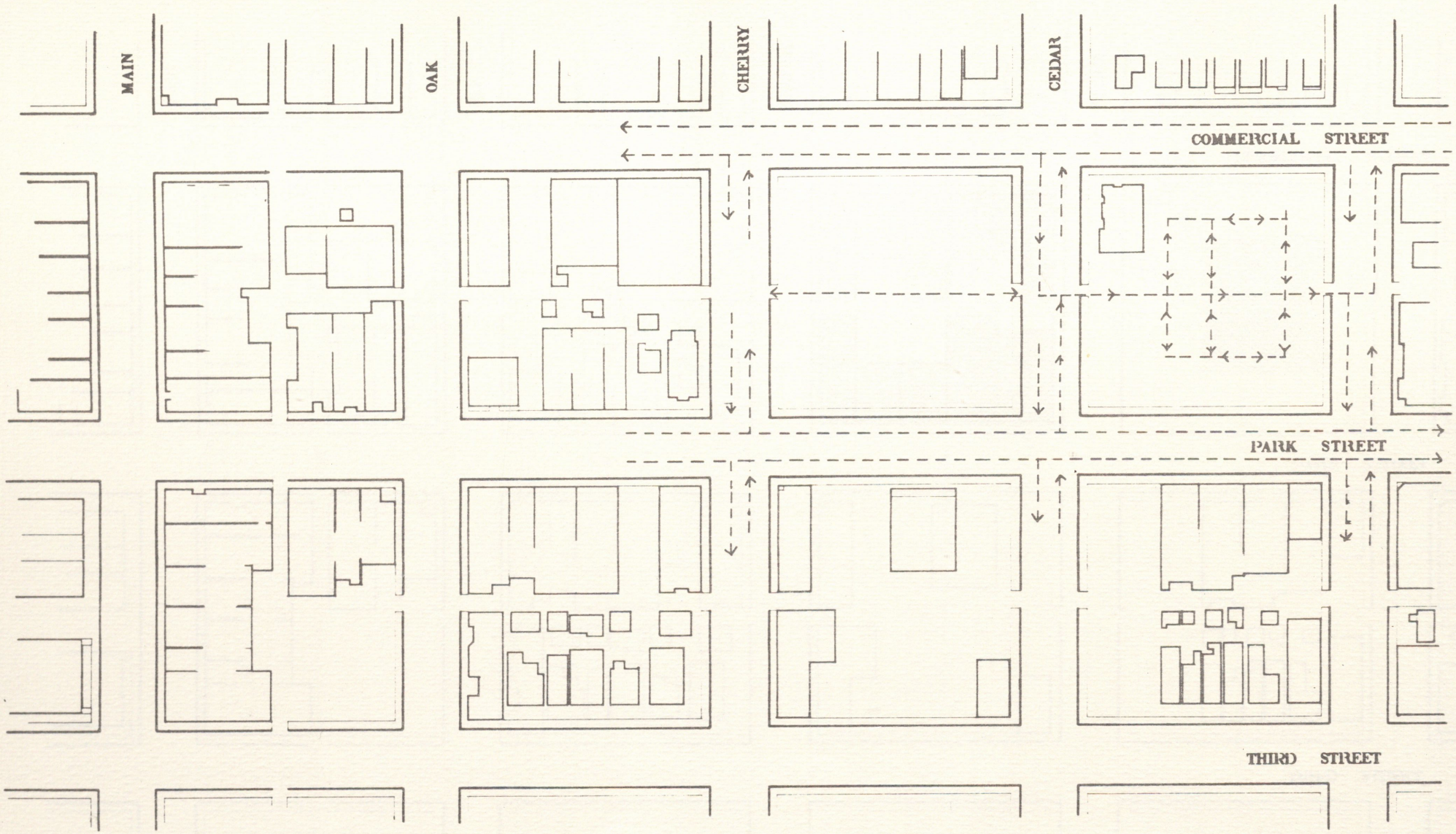
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ENTRANCE



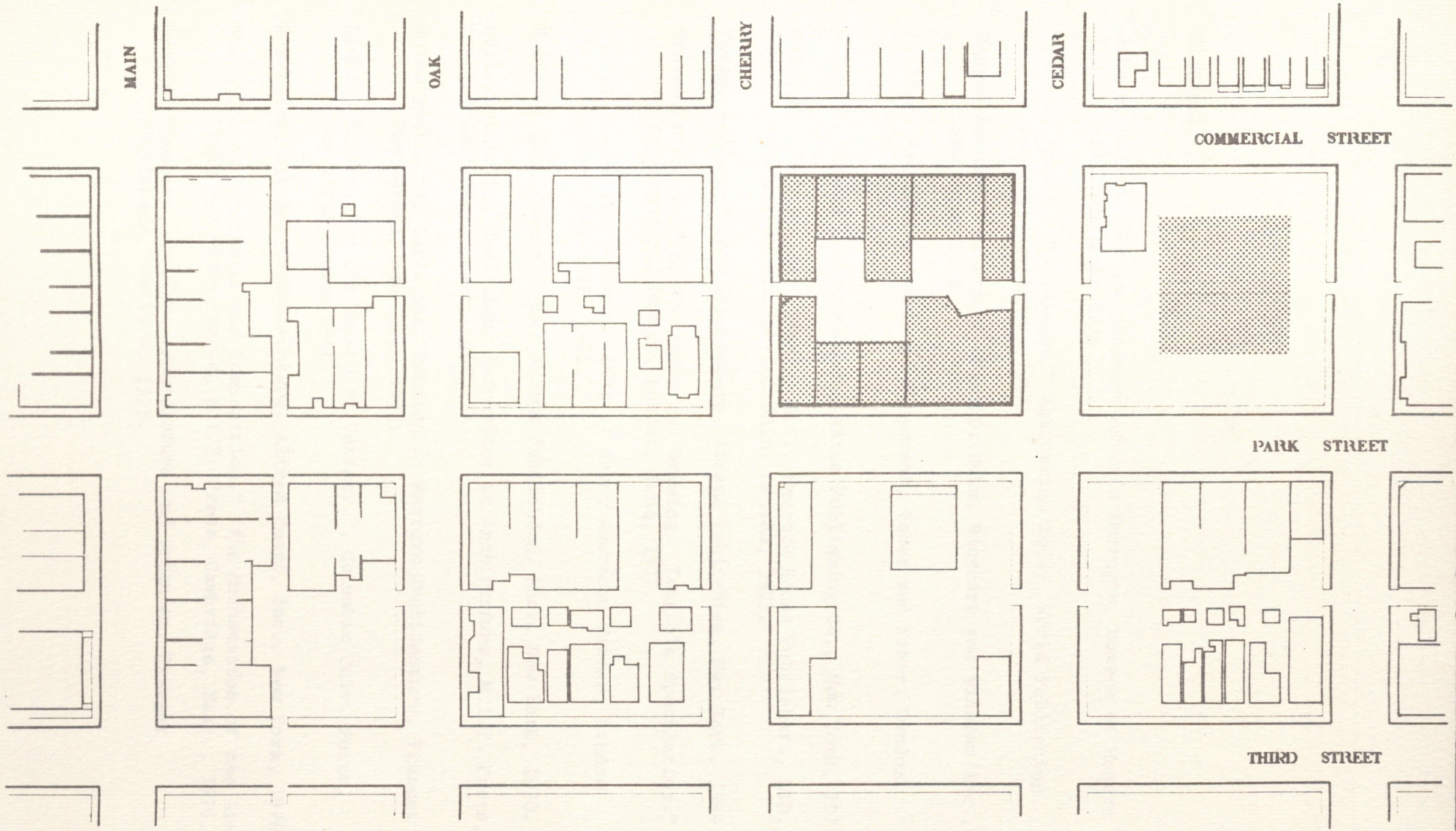
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SERVICE



CONTEXT

AUTOMOBILE



CONTEXT

PROGRAM 1

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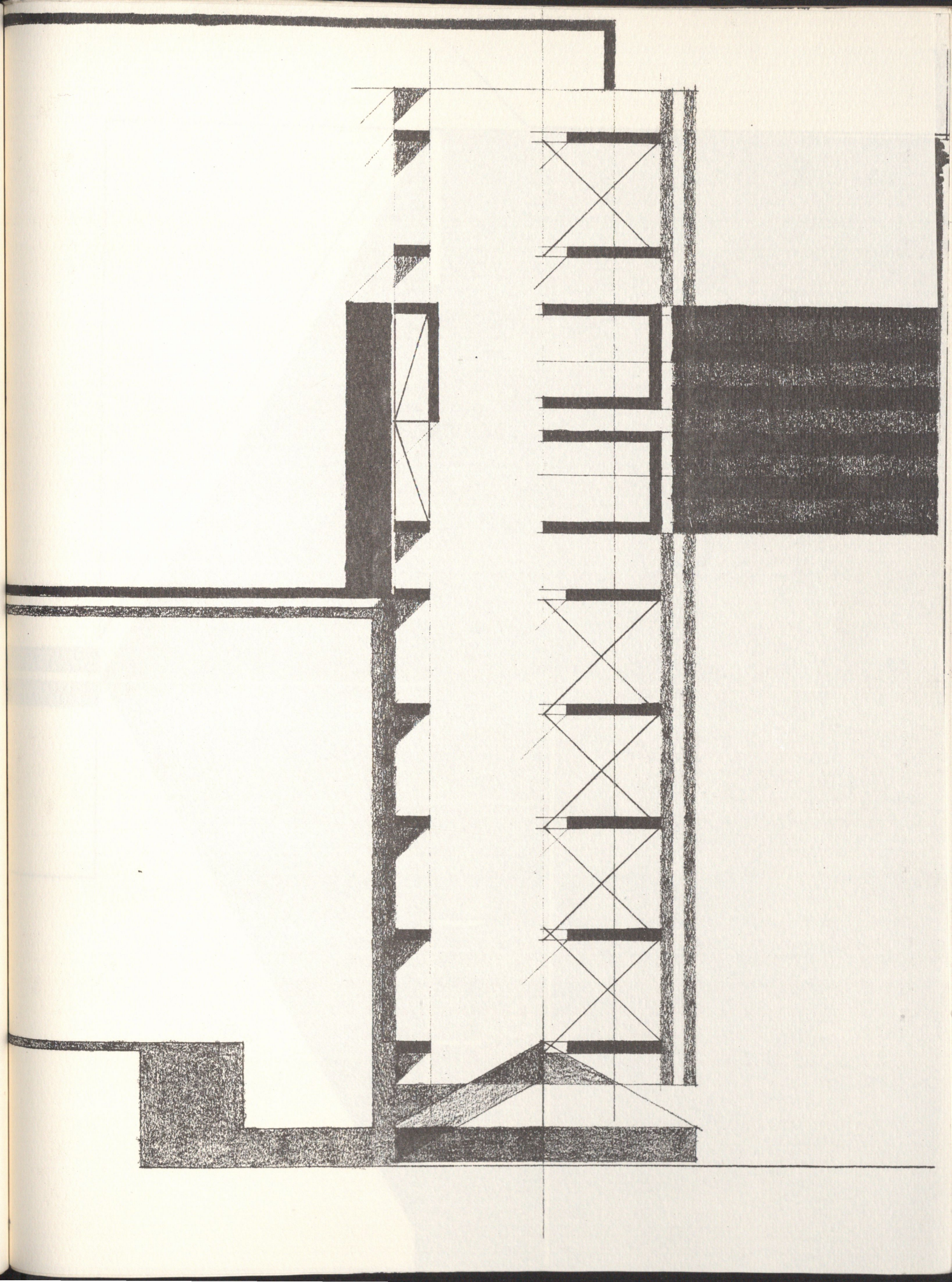
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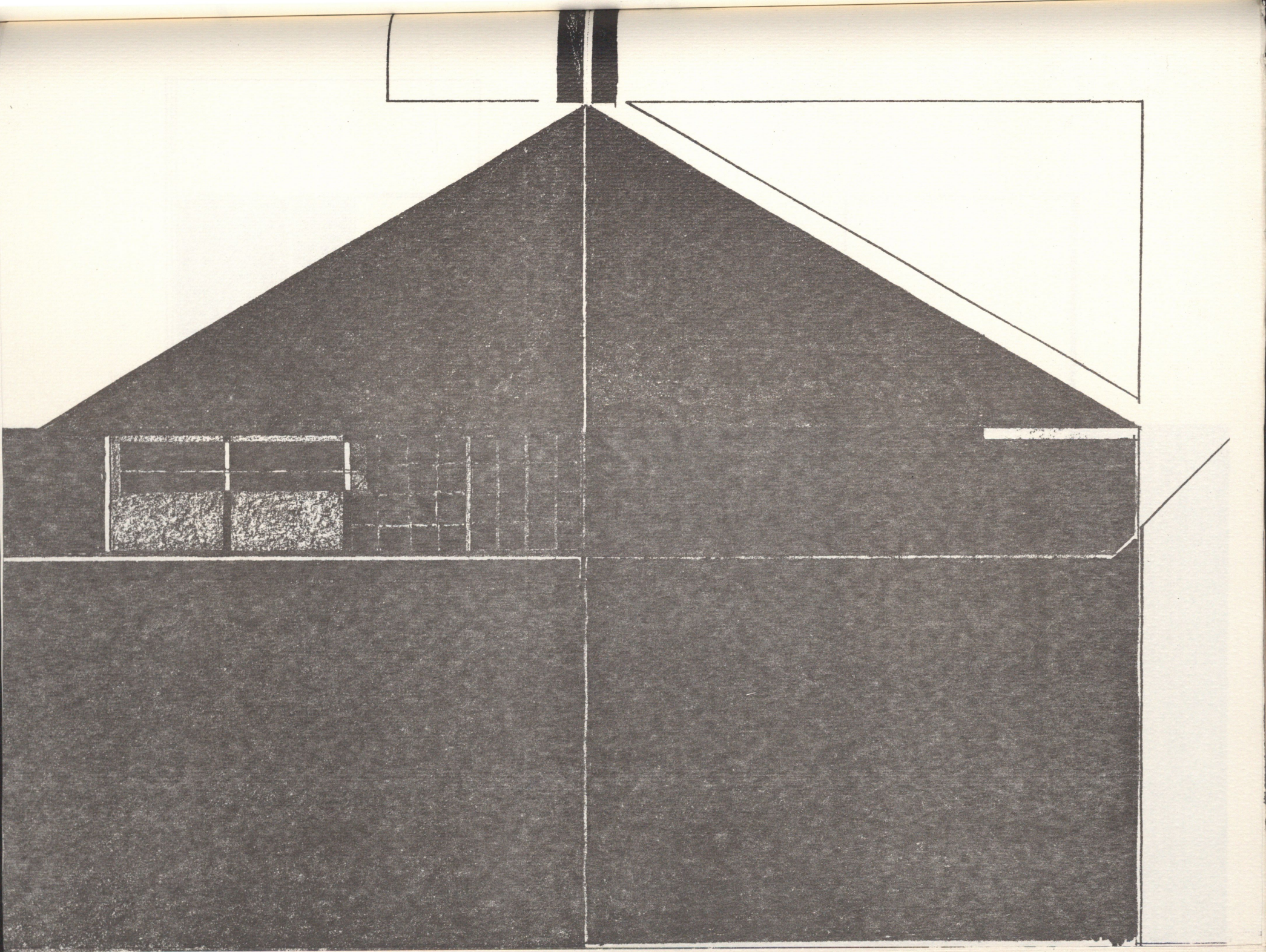
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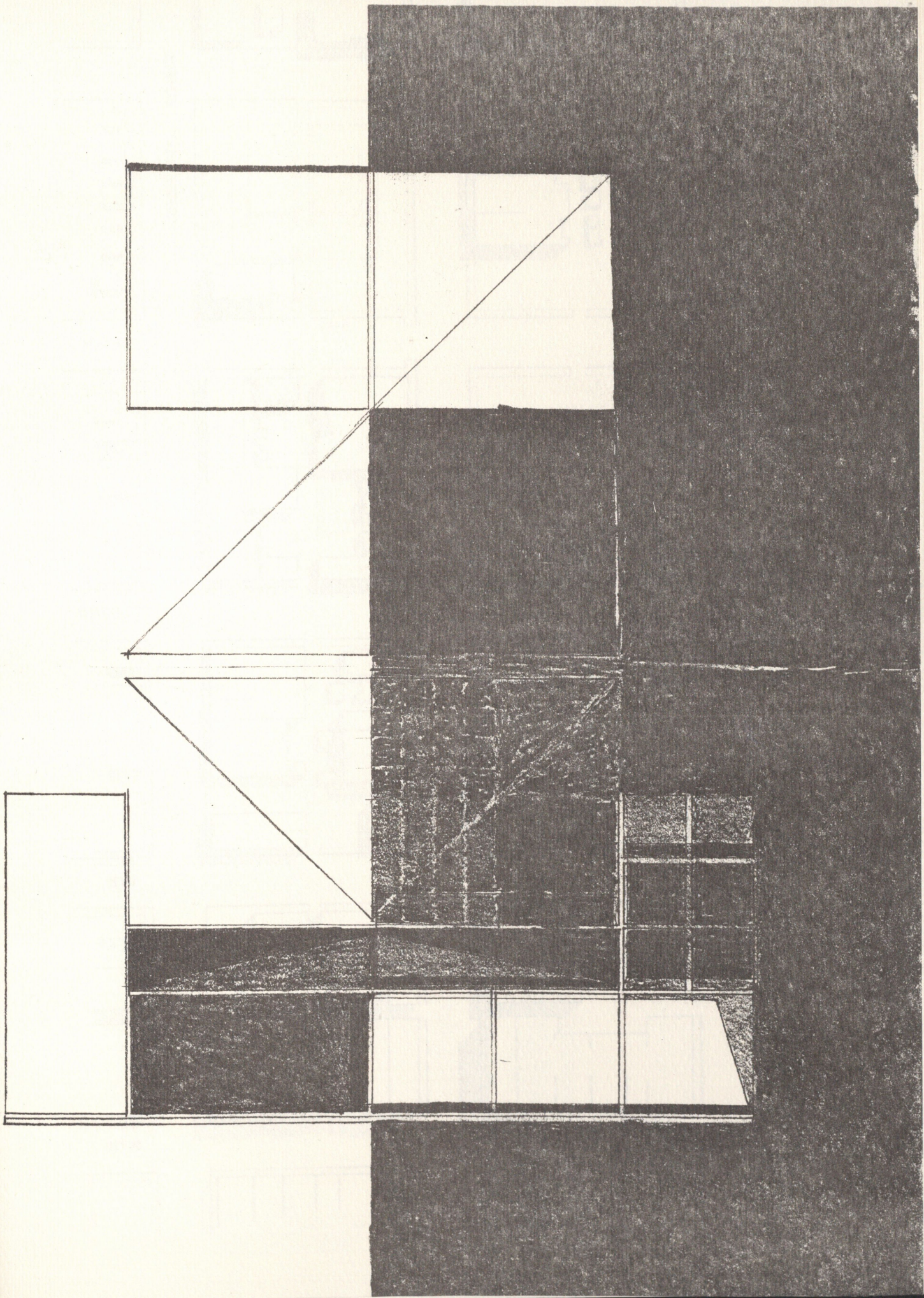
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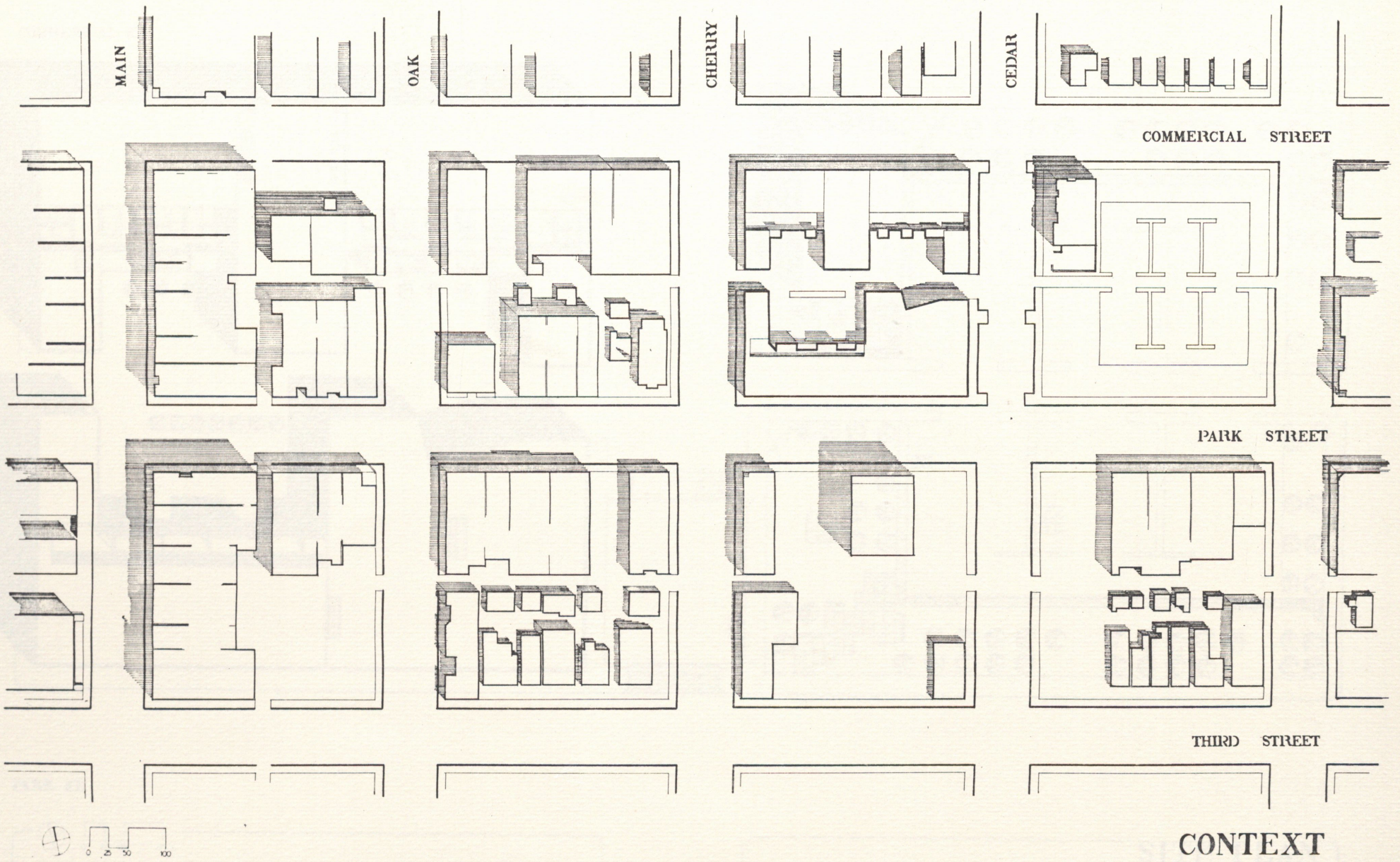
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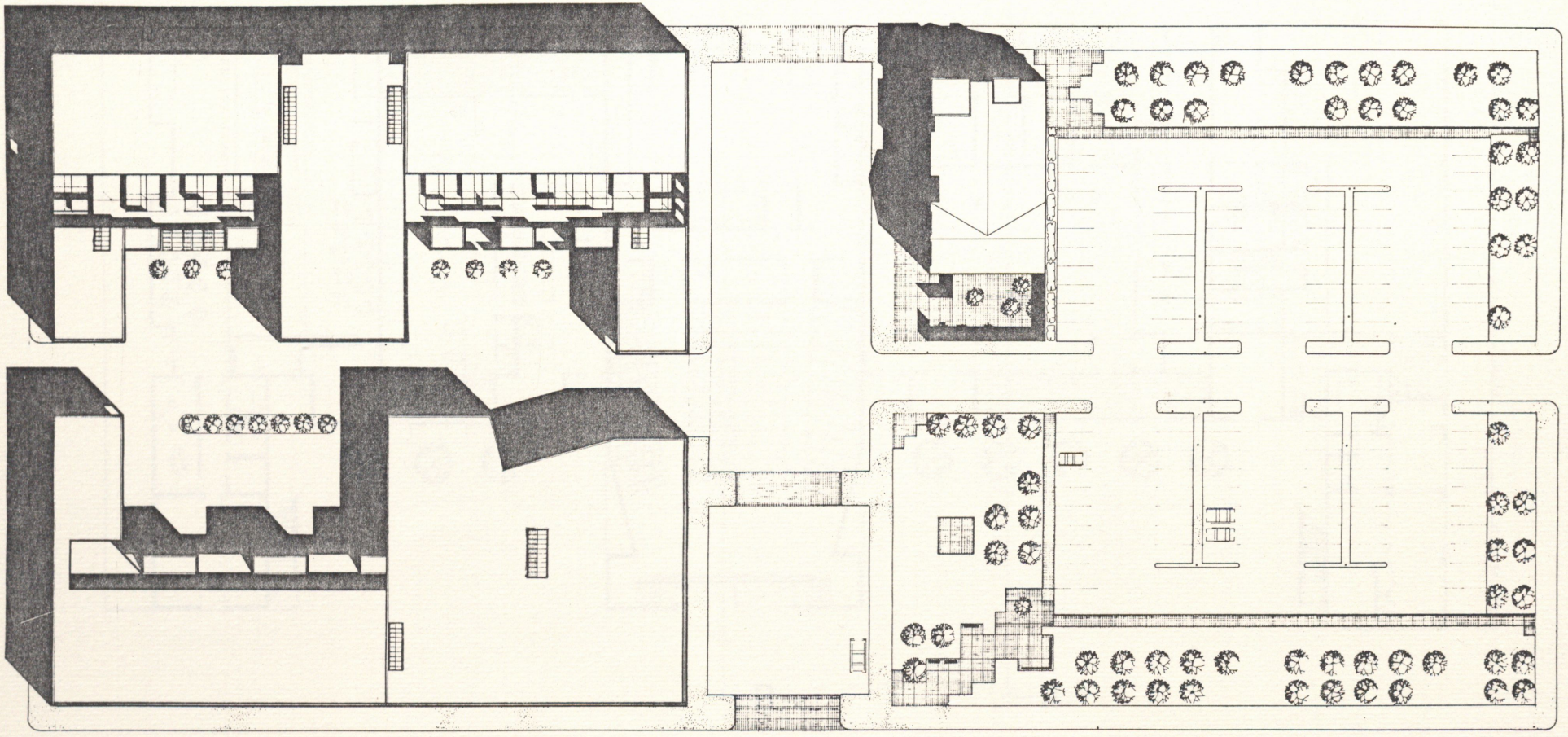





MAIN
OAK
CHERRY
CEDAR
COMMERCIAL STREET
PARK STREET
THIRD STREET
0
25
50
100

CONTEXT

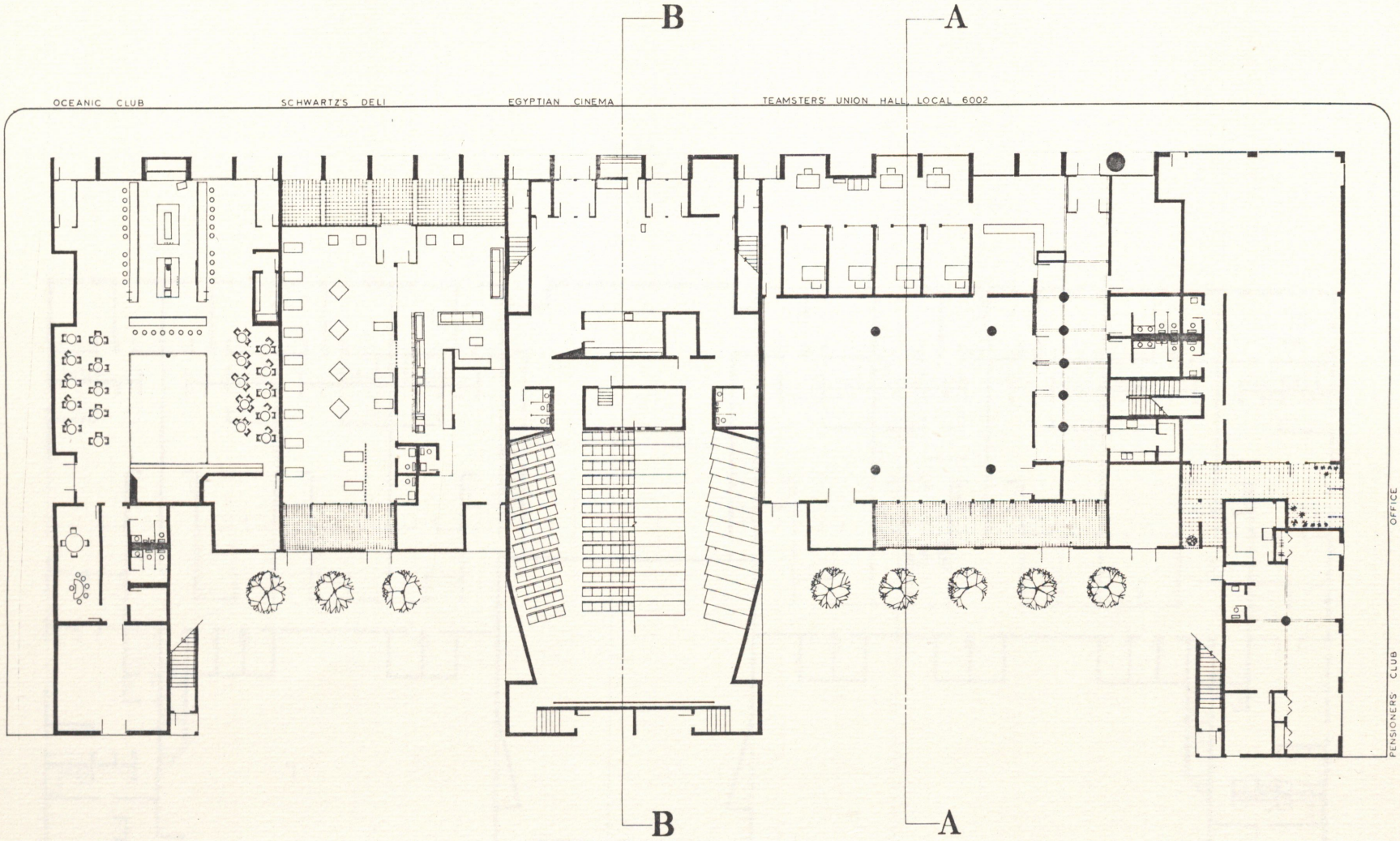
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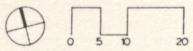


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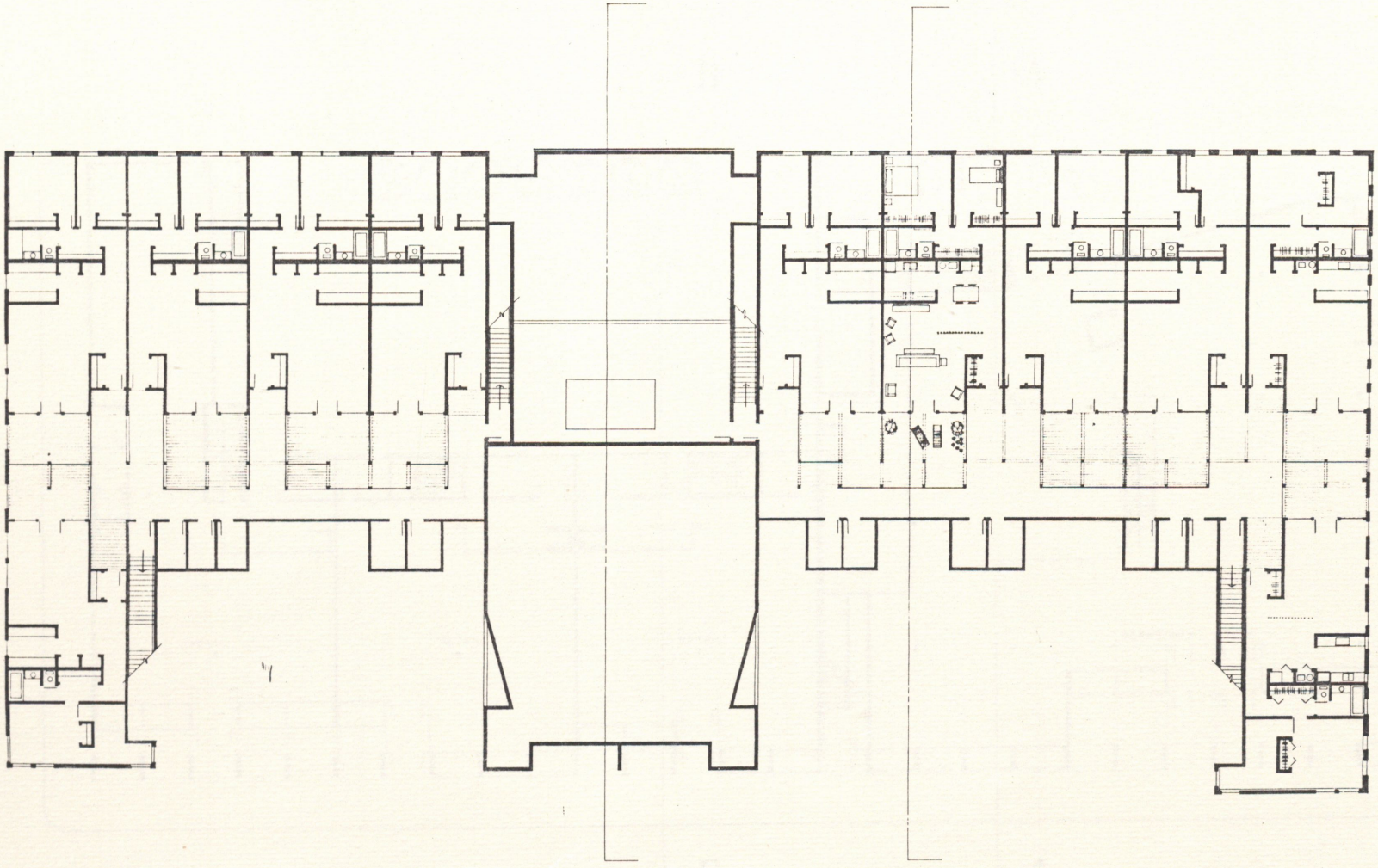
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SITE PLAN

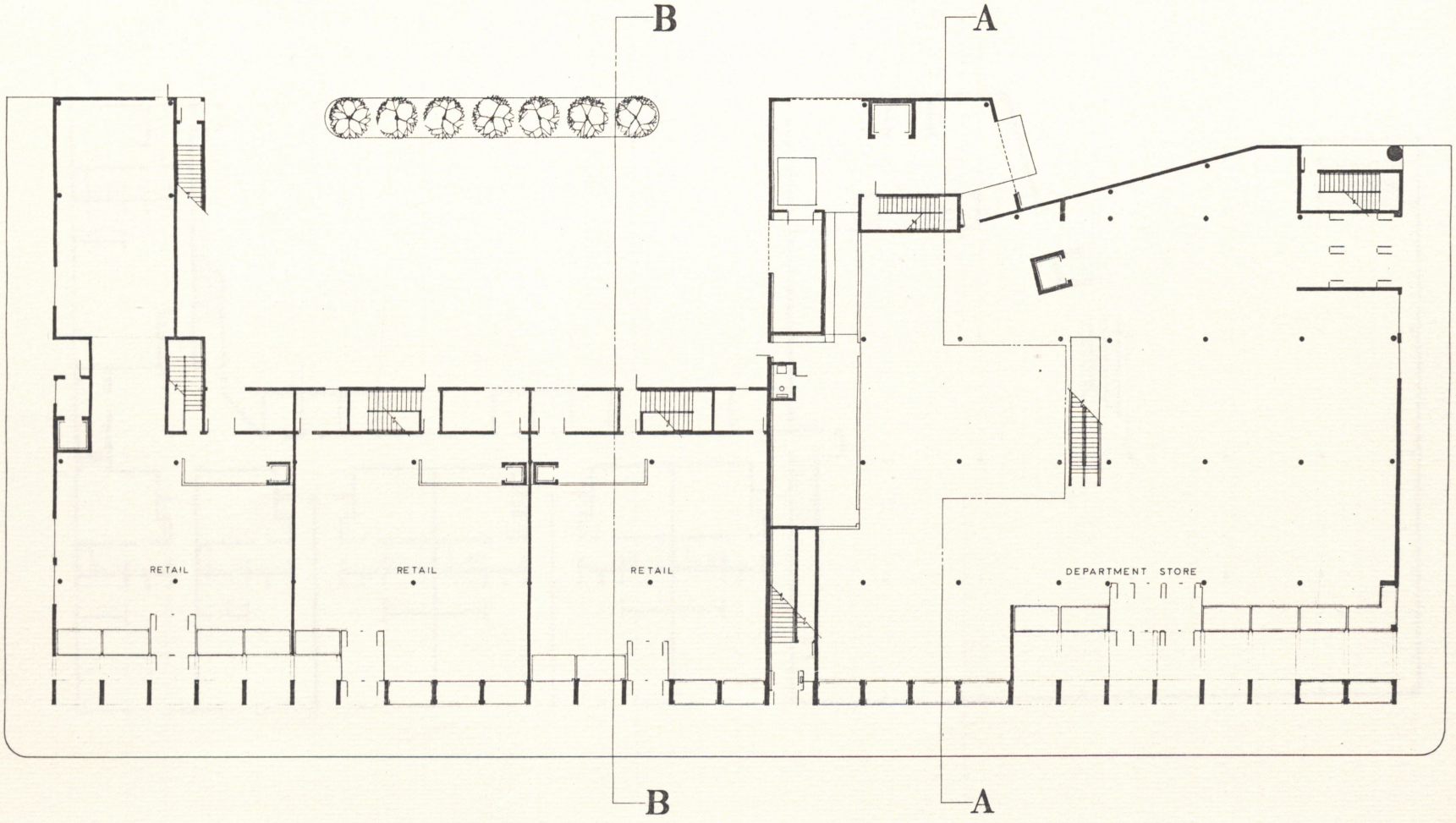




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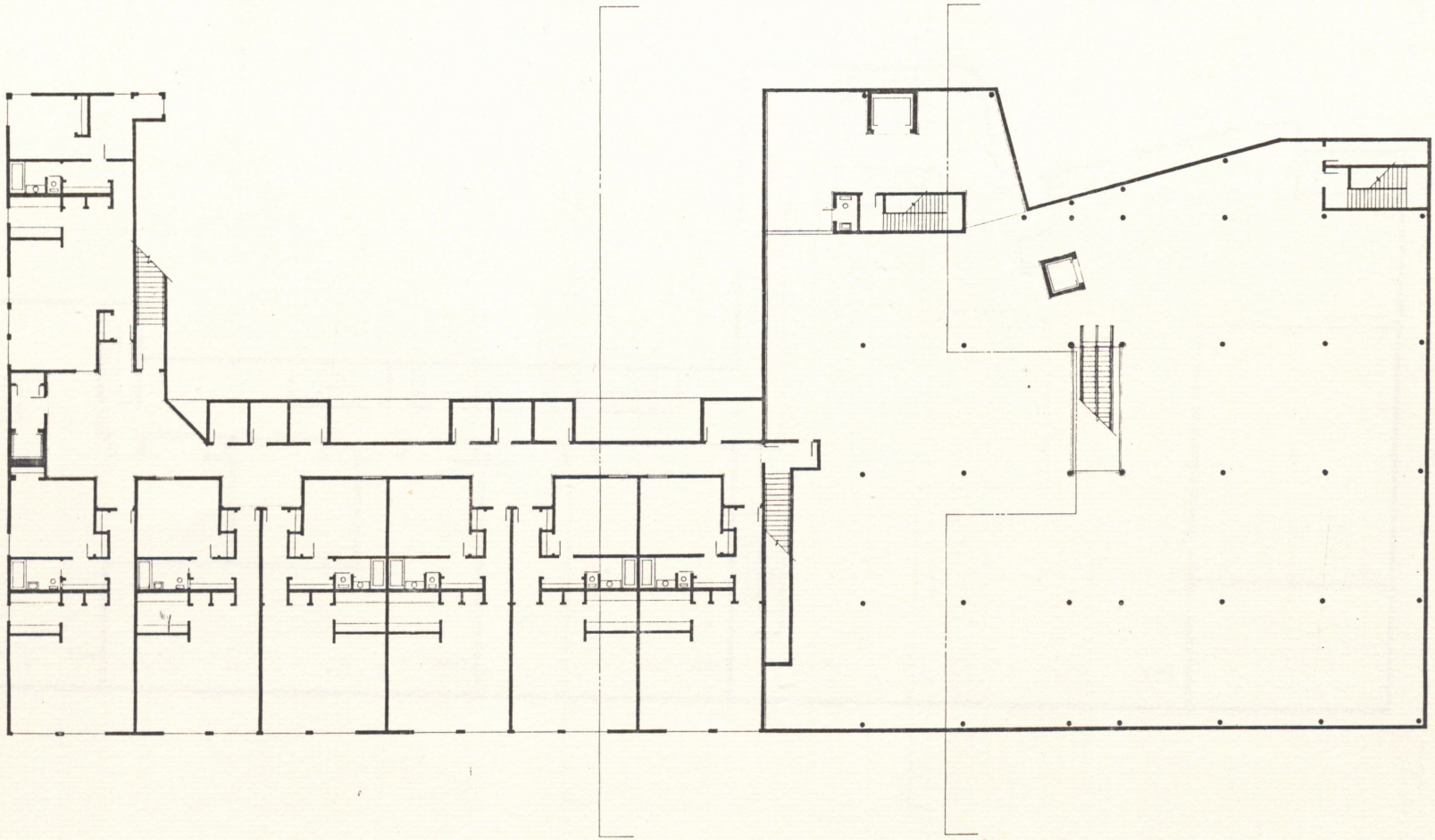


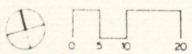
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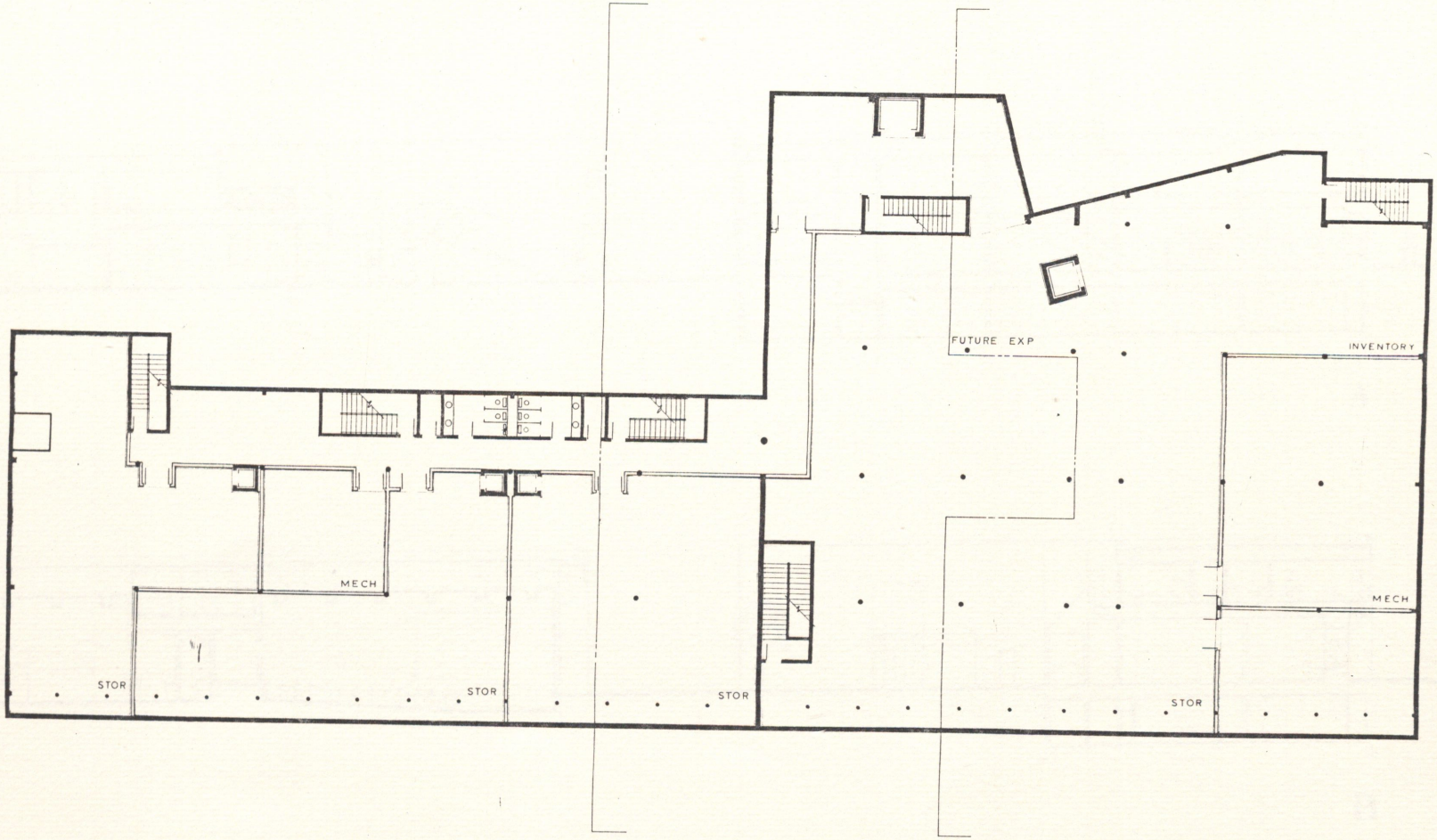
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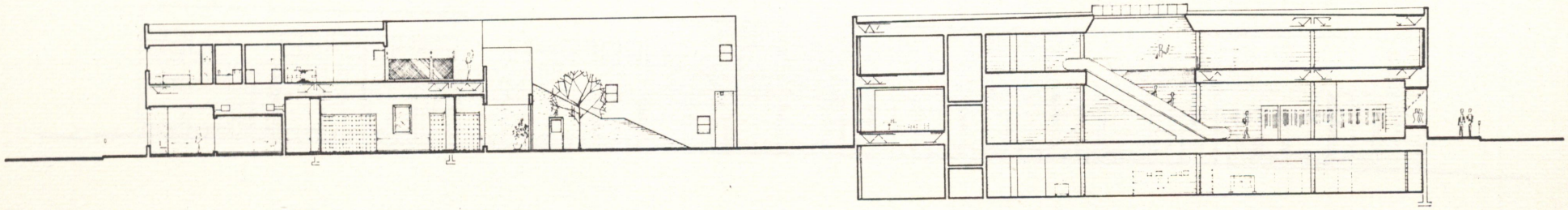




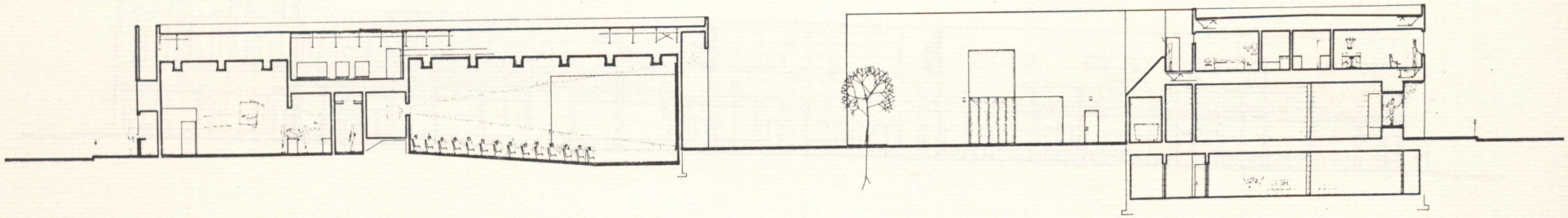
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LOWER LEVEL

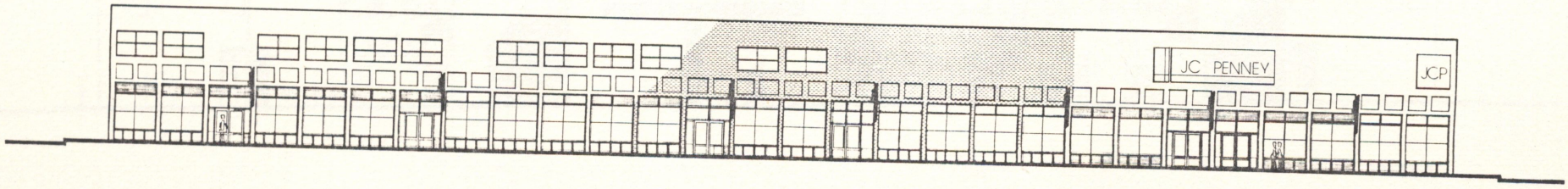


A

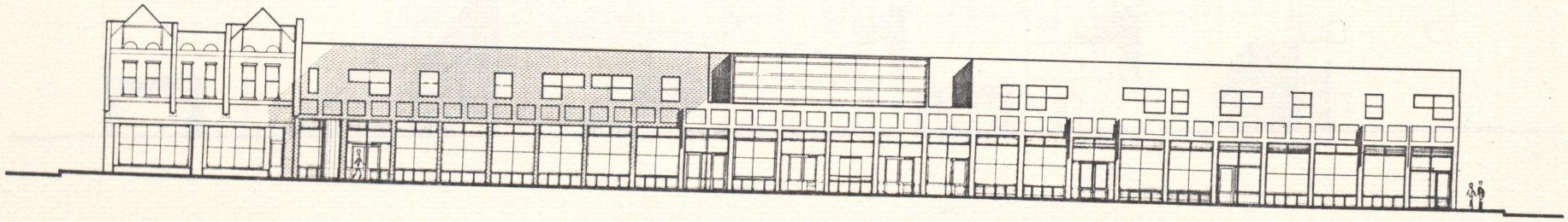


B

SECTIONS



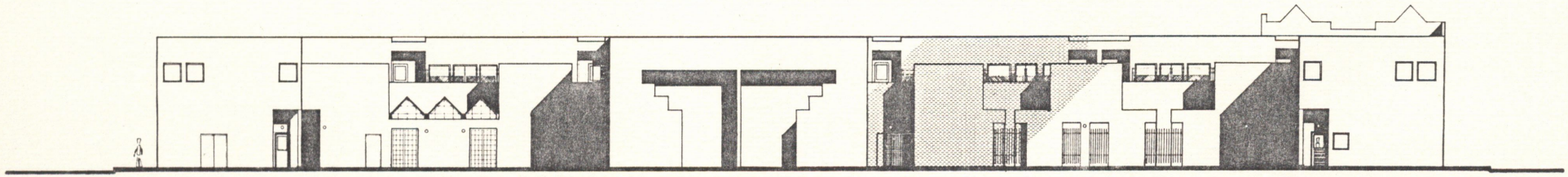
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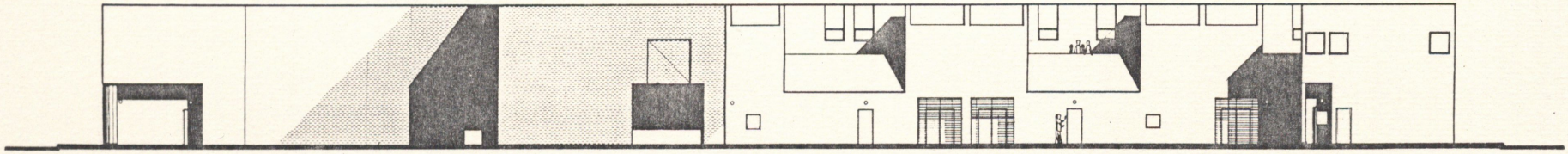
SOUTH

0 5 10 20

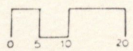
STREET ELEVATIONS



NORTH



SOUTH



ALLEY ELEVATIONS

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