RICE UNIVERSITY

The Parking Garage Apartment Park,
a proposal for accommodating the increasing density of Los Angeles

by

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A THESIS SUBMITTED
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

Master of Architecture

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MAY 2008

ABSTRACT

The Parking Garage Apartment Park.
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Los Angeles is landlocked but its population continues
to grow steadily. These conflicting geographic and
demographic pressures have created a unique low-
rise, high-density suburbanism; a car-centric region
with a major housing shortage and an acute lack of
public parks.

Like Downtown mega-projects and illegal garage
apartments, this project houses new population growth
by intensifying land currently dedicated to car storage.
However, this thesis proposes a distributed model for
densification that creates both new housing and new
parks throughout the Los Angeles region.

Focusing on the suburban city of Alhambra, this
project is sited on a large supermarket parking lot. It
replaces surface parking with a new park and adds
eighty housing units while still accommodating the
high automobile density lifestyle currently found in
Southern California.

Thanks

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Introduction (locating oneself)

Conclusion (a friendlier mix of cars and people)

ENTRY?
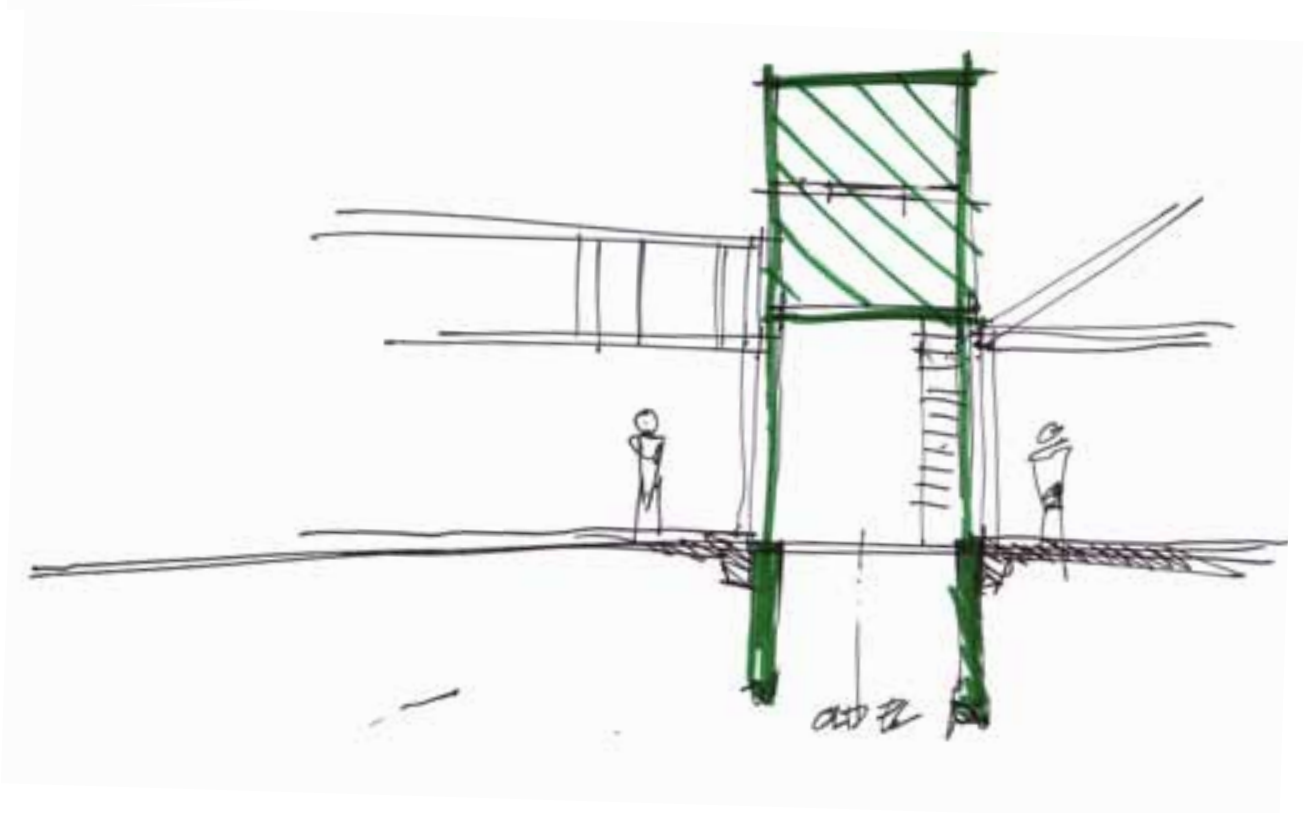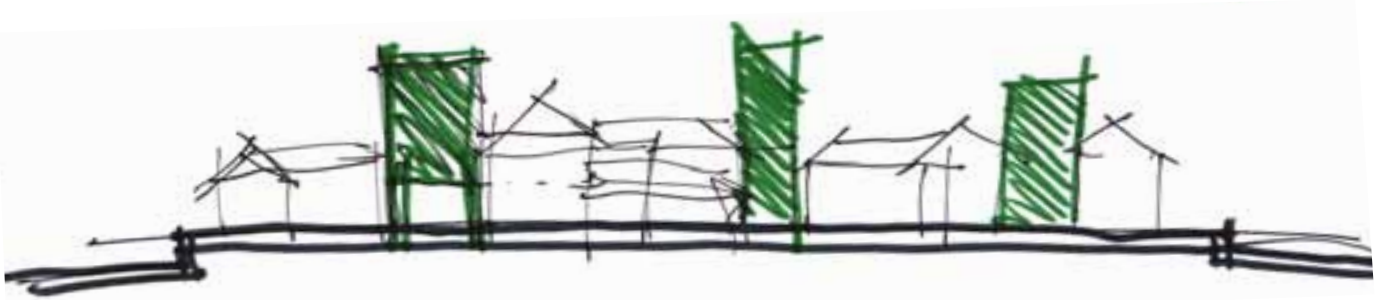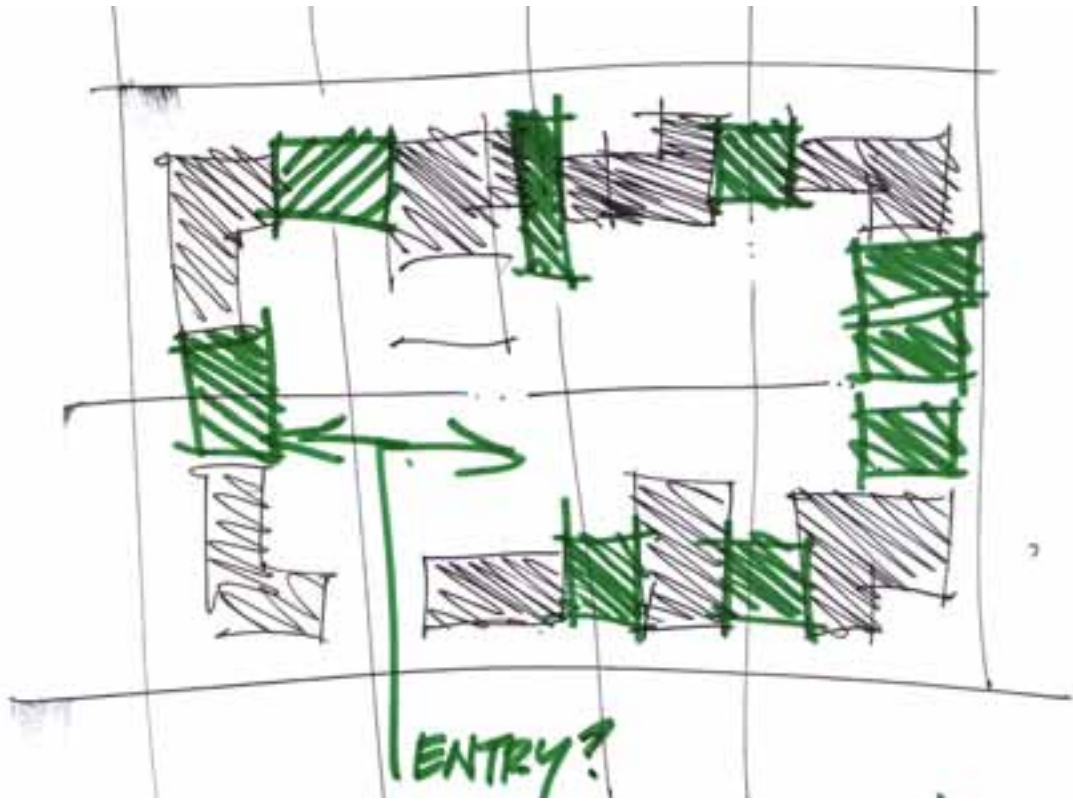
Introduction

While the argument of this thesis book can be discerned through the abstract and table of contents, I wanted to begin with the narrative of this thesis process. As one can see from the prethesis proposal in the appendix, the research of spring does not forecast the project completed in fall and winter, and the route is never as linear as the final arguements.

The original thesis idea that had been bouncing around my head for the past few years was to develop a kit of parts that could be attached to existing single family houses. I envisioned a semi-informal, piecemeal approach to densifying and energizing suburbia. However, this potentially interesting solution needed an equally interesting problem. The search for the problem led me to Los Angeles.

Los Angeles is different from many suburban cities because density is not a smart growth agenda item but a continually increasing reality. New developments are densely built and older neighborhoods are densifying. Unfortunately, this phenomena also meant the Angeleno suburban landscape was not particularly exploitable in the way I had envisioned – the kit of parts are already being installed. Even so, the question of increasing density in a dense suburb was more interesting than my initial idea so I dropped the solution and kept the region. The kit of small parts became a "Parking Garage Apartment Park."

As with any architecture thesis, there are many similar semi-arbitrary decisions that are made long before one begins to speculate on the design project itself. In the end, I wanted to work on something concrete, to play with the potentials of a "building" within an existing city fabric. There are a lot of big issues embedded in the ethos of project, but I had to leave many of them outside of its specifics – in the end, four hundred thousand square feet of building inside a four acre park is big enough for my thesis.

1

25,000,000
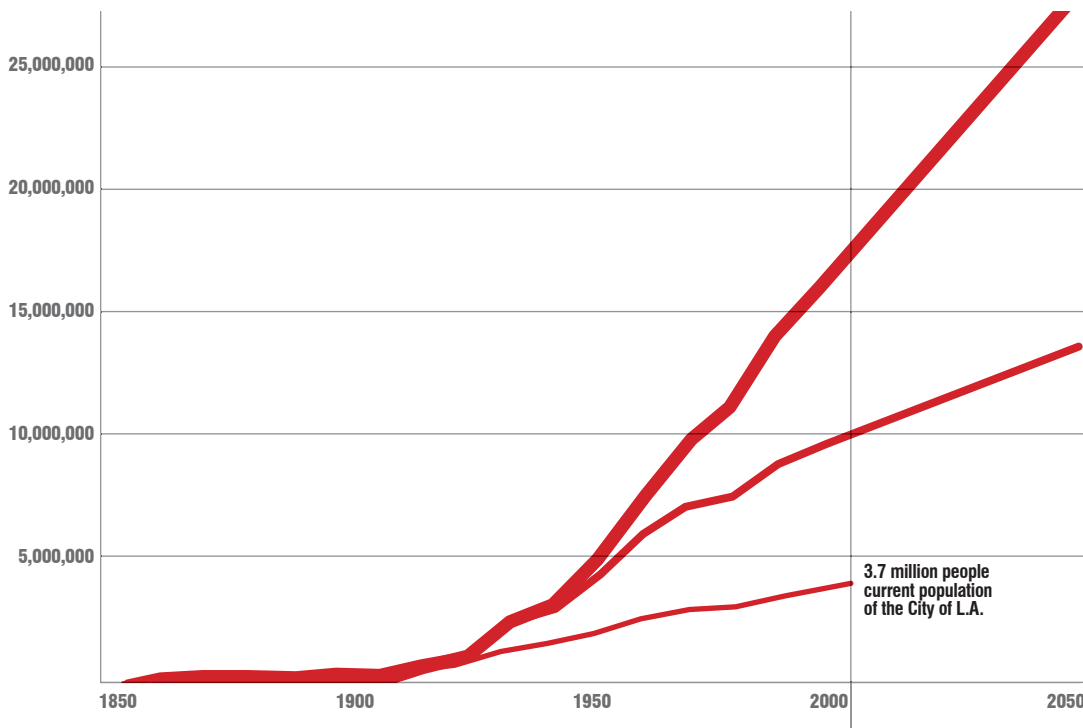
The Southern California Region will grow 63% by 2050

20,000,000

15,000,000

L.A. County has a projected growth of 3.6 million people

California Dept. of Finance

10,000,000

5,000,000

3.7 million people current population of the City of L.A.

growth is not a choice
migration + babies = Population Growth

1850   **1900**   **1950**   **2000**   **2050**

If you want elbow room, move to Atlanta or Charlotte or the countrified suburbs of Washington, **you probably aren't going to get it in the West.** There, if you and your neighbor lean out your windows, you can hold hands."

Robert E. Lang

running out of room
dense sprawl

FEDERAL LANDS

DESERT

MOUNTAIN

MOUNTAIN

MOUNTAIN

MOUNTAIN

MOUNTAIN

DESERT

OCEAN

CAMP PENDELTON

The Southern California Urban Condition

Southern California is a unique region with many urban problems, population growth being one of its most pressing. Even during the tumultuous 1990's, a time of natural disasters and social upheaval, natural population growth far outstripped the negative migration numbers. Such growth is projected to continue steadily. According to the California Department of Finance, Los Angeles County is expected to grow by 3.6 million people over the next forty years.

Such population growth needs to be housed, but there are significant geographic barriers to unhampered suburban sprawl. Unlike many cities along the Atlantic Coast and in the South, the Southern California landscape (along with much of the American West) presents significant challenges to limitless expansion of the suburban fabric. The Los Angeles region is bounded by the Pacific Ocean, mountain ranges, and Camp Pendleton, a Marine base. Extensive deserts and federal owned lands behind these topographic barriers hinder easy hop scotching development. Los Angeles can only expand east aggravating already long commutes and pushing the limits of the desert infrastructure.
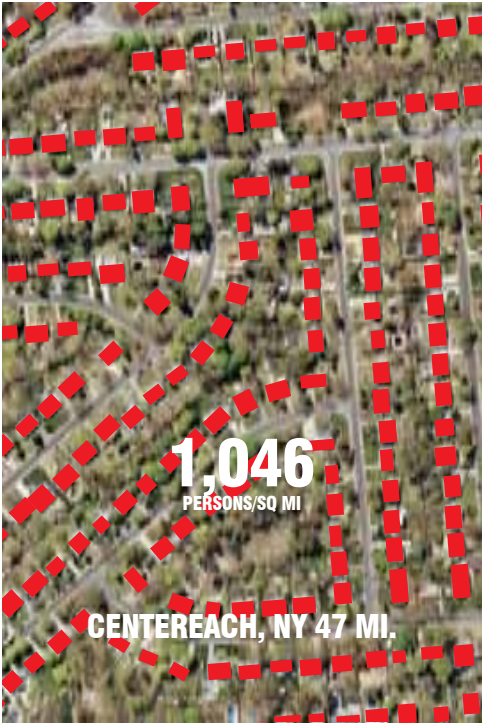
1,046
PERSONS/SQ MI

CENTEREACH, NY 47 MI.

New York
looks like
Hong Kong
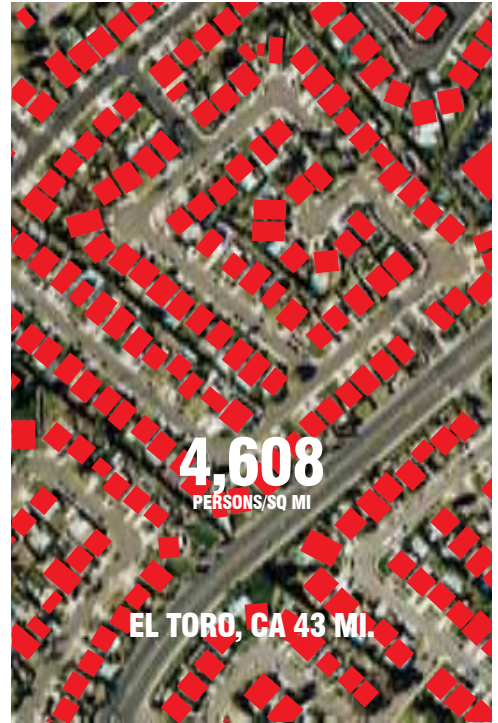surrounded by
Phoenix,

Los Angeles
looks like
Los Angeles
surrounded by,
well,
Los Angeles.

growth+limits=density
Los Angeles Urbanized Area = 7,009 persons/sq. mi.
New York Urbanized Area = 5,239 persons/sq. mi.

4,608
PERSONS/SQ MI

EL TORO, CA 43 MI.

(there is more commercial office space in Manhattan than in the total urbanized area of Los Angeles)


auto-urbanism
cars everywhere!

The result of continued population growth constrained by geography has been a surprisingly dense "urbanized area". Unlike humid zones along the Atlantic and the South, any outward sprawl in the arid West involves larger infrastructural entities, often making higher density developments an economic imperative while also ruling out the particular type of low density development that depends upon drilled wells and septic tanks. Furthermore, the suburban pressure in the West has traditionally been rooted in the populist desire of middle class families searching for their own mini-castles with fewer upper class estates.

In spite of Los Angeles' surprisingly high density census statistics, everyone intuitively knows that the urban shapes of Los Angeles and New York are very different. As expected, New York, is like a big thumbtack, with a towering center of density in Manhattan that quickly decreases as one exits the boroughs. Unlike popular perception, Los Angeles is not completely homogenous, instead it has several dense central business cores that have developed along its major boulevards. But, unlike New York, Los Angeles suburban development maintains a relatively high density all the way to its borders.

This high density suburbanism has created a unique set of circumstances and problems. The most obvious and stereotypical is the city's love affair with the car. More than many other cities (from personal experience, even more than Houston), Los Angeles is a city that truly demands a "one car per adult" automobile proliferation policy. It is a city where everything is forty minutes away on the freeway. The fetish with the car has manifested itself in many ways, its notorious congestion and smog being among the most prominent. Unlike projects in other cities, any Los Angeles project needs to accommodate a high density of cars.

"Urbanized Area" is a United States Census Bureau density statistic that measures the a central city and its developed suburbs, excluding rural areas. The threshold is 1000 people per square mile, about one dwelling every two acres. Admittedly this is a low threshold, but this density is high enough to preclude many agricultural land uses.
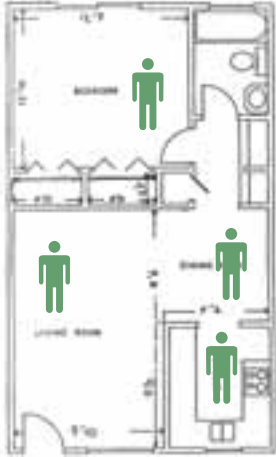
1 out of 4 households are overcrowded or severely overcrowded

(864,000 households vs New York's 622,799)

this is not crowded
"don't build it and they will cram"

The census defines "overcrowded" as more than one person per room. It would take five or six people in this one bedroom apartment to become overcrowded, seven or more to be severely overcrowded.

overcrowding
"don't build it and they will cram"

severe overcrowding
one out of six households live with 1.5+ people per room
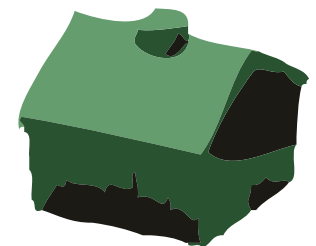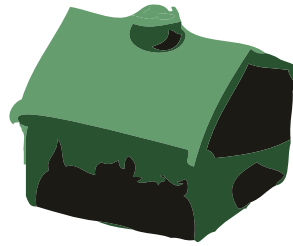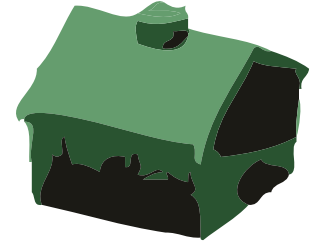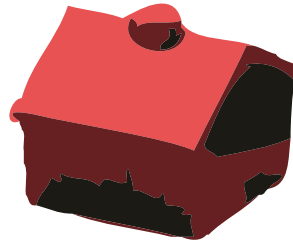
Two-thirds of kids in Los Angeles live outside of walking distance from a public park

Furtherwmore, Los Angeles spends less per capita on their parks than any other city in America.

parks
dense sprawl without playgrounds

NY $99

LA $33

One of the most pressing needs of the region is the need for affordable housing. An increasing population density needs an adequately high housing density. As Mike Davis chronicles in "Homegrown Revolution" in *City of Quartz*, when Los Angeles grew in the 1970's, many early suburbs were subjected to high density redevelopment which became the focus of home owner associations throughout the region. Fearing that densification would lower property values, these associations crafted anti growth zoning regulations throughout the region. These "if you don't build it, they won't come" regulations bore fruit between 1998 to 2006 when the cost of housing tripled while wages stagnated.

During the 1990's one housing unit was built for every two new families, and the rest of the growing population crammed itself into the existing housing stock creating an aggravated case of overcrowding. The census defines "overcrowded" as more than one person per room, so a "one bedroom" apartment with a kitchen, living, dining, and bedroom would not be "overcrowded" until there were five or more people in the apartment; "severely overcrowded" is defined as more than 1.5 people per room, seven or more people. One in four households in the Los Angeles Urbanized Area lives in severely overcrowded conditions, even though this urbanized area has half the population of New York, Los Angeles has almost a third more overcrowded households.

The third aspect of urban development in the region has been a notable lack of resources committed to its park system. The area's acreage of parkland per capita is inflated through the designation of many surrounding, undevelopable mountainous areas into green preserves. However, in other metrics, Los Angeles' park system is quite lacking. More than two-thirds of children in Los Angeles live outside of a walkable quarter mile distance from a park. Furthermore, the city that is forced to devote so much of its resources to the automobile is unable to compete at all in terms of dollars per resident per year on its park system.

Paris has its Champs-Elysees. New York has Rockefeller Center, Times Square and Central Park, **now Los Angeles will have a grand boulevard and urban park, providing millions of people each year the opportunity to walk, shop and play while enjoying downtown at its best.**

Eli Broad

grand avenue
2 billion dollars for 400 affordable units

Out West, a Paradox: Densely Packed Sprawl
Blaine Harden,11 August 05, Washington Post

[Nine out of the] ten municipalities in the nation average with more than four people per household are in greater Los Angeles. In these mostly older neighborhoods of tract houses, density has a way of turning **garages into illegal apartments,** while strangling public schools, overwhelming parks and choking streets with cars.

garage apartments
urbanizing at a hundred bucks a square foot

Gehry and his Garage Apartment

In my research I found two opposing solutions for the city's housing crisis: Frank Gehry's Grand Avenue Development and the informal Garage Apartment.

Frank Gehry's Grand Avenue Project is located in the heart of downtown Los Angeles, next to his Disney concert hall. It is a two billion dollar project, backed by Los Angeles' richest developers and supported with almost sixty million dollars in tax subsidies. Eli Broad has promoted it as a the Champs-Elysees, Rockefeller Center, Times Square and Central Park for Los Angeles. Along with a couple hotels and a new park, the project proposes 2,800 housing units with 400 affordable units. A another mega-project is happening south of Downtown Los Angeles near the Staples Center, home to several professional sports franchises.

In a region of single family residences on their own plots of land, many older subdivisions were built as houses with detached garages, and many of these detached garages have now been converted into living units. Where such handy auxiliary buildings are not available for intensification, the house itself may be converted to accommodate extra units. The house I grew up in El Toro has had several such additions, including one in the front where one can easily see a refrigerator through the window, a sure sign that the house now contains at least one extra unit.

Apart from size and formality, however, there is a bigger question at play. While Gehry's proposal is a large scale mixed use proposal with a substantial public zone running down the middle, it is still just one project in a highly dispersed and far flung city. Even though Downtown LA might be the appropriate location for a mega-project, Los Angeles has consistently poured money into its Downtown development at the expense of its further more impoverished edges. On the other hand, the garage apartment is the ultimate in decentralized intensification; it is

Adding one unit to 3 out of 4 existing single family detached units would absorb the projected growth of LA County.

Or you can build 403 more Grand Avenue Projects, including 1,600 new 30-story towers. New York City has 1,719 towers over 20 stories.
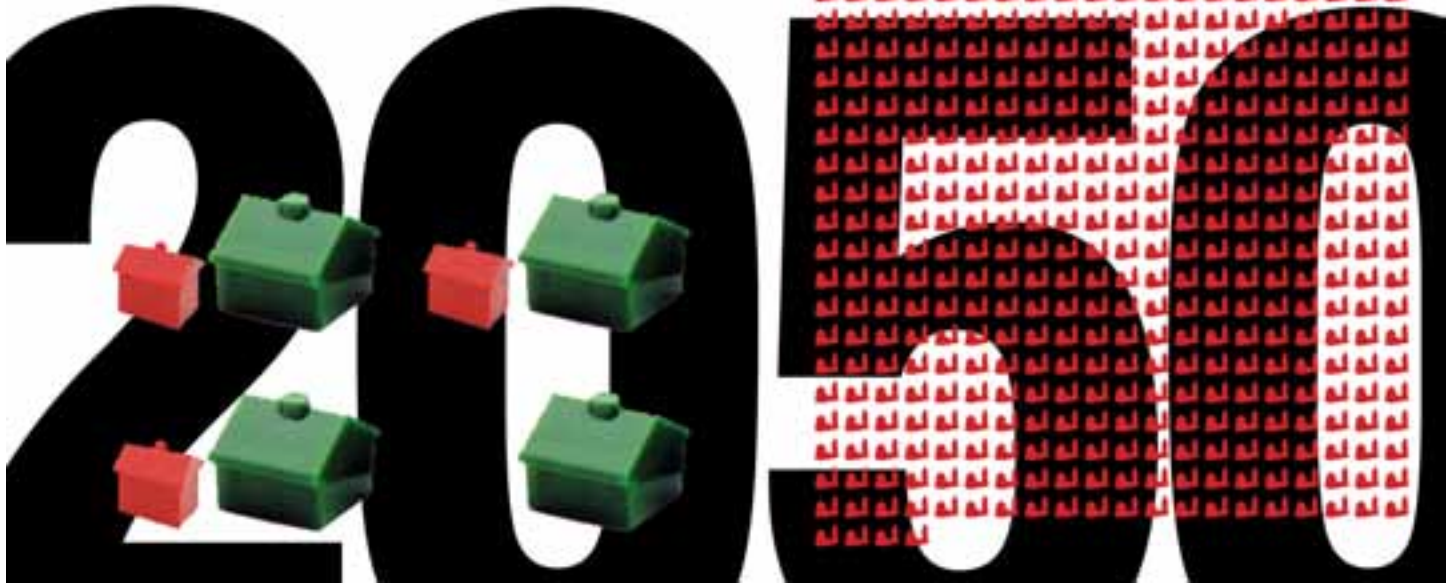
Harold Meyerson
of Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy

Our number-one problem is no longer overdevelopment and underdevelopment (the progressive program ten years ago). Its our immense disparity in incomes. It's that we've become the **simultaneous capital of shit jobs and insulated affluence.**

intensifying car storage
big & ubiquitous

a private (often illegal) retrofit to increase the value and income generation of a property. While effective, such informal densification is truly quick and dirty; it rarely provides any additional amenities to the city at large and often adds stress to an overloaded infrastructural system.

If one were to extrapolate the numbers, it would take four hundred Grand Avenue Projects to house the projected future population growth. This would involve more than 1,600 thirty-story towers (New York has currently has only 1,700 towers of over twenty stories tall). Or the same population growth could be absorbed through adding one extra unit to three in four single family units in the Los Angeles Region. While such wide scale conversion of single family housing to duplex or main+auxiliary arrangements would be massive, such dispersed densification seems as plausible as 400 two billion dollar projects.

These two projects seem diametrically opposed: highly planned versus informal, city block versus auxiliary project, government subsidized versus illegal, centralized versus dispersed, new major parks versus hidden infrastructure burden. Even so, these projects meet in their site. A "garage apartment" is self evident, and the Grand Avenue project sits on three city blocks that are currently parking lots. Both projects are the intensification and reprogramming of land formally dedicated to parking spaces. In a city that has hit its geographic boundaries, a metropolis that has already thoroughly packed its subdivisions with free standing little boxes, there is one final frontier, one bastion of underutilized land. Land we devote for the sole purpose of parking our cars.

Is there a new housing typology that can be developed to house future growth and provide public amenities in this high density (human and automobile) urbanism?
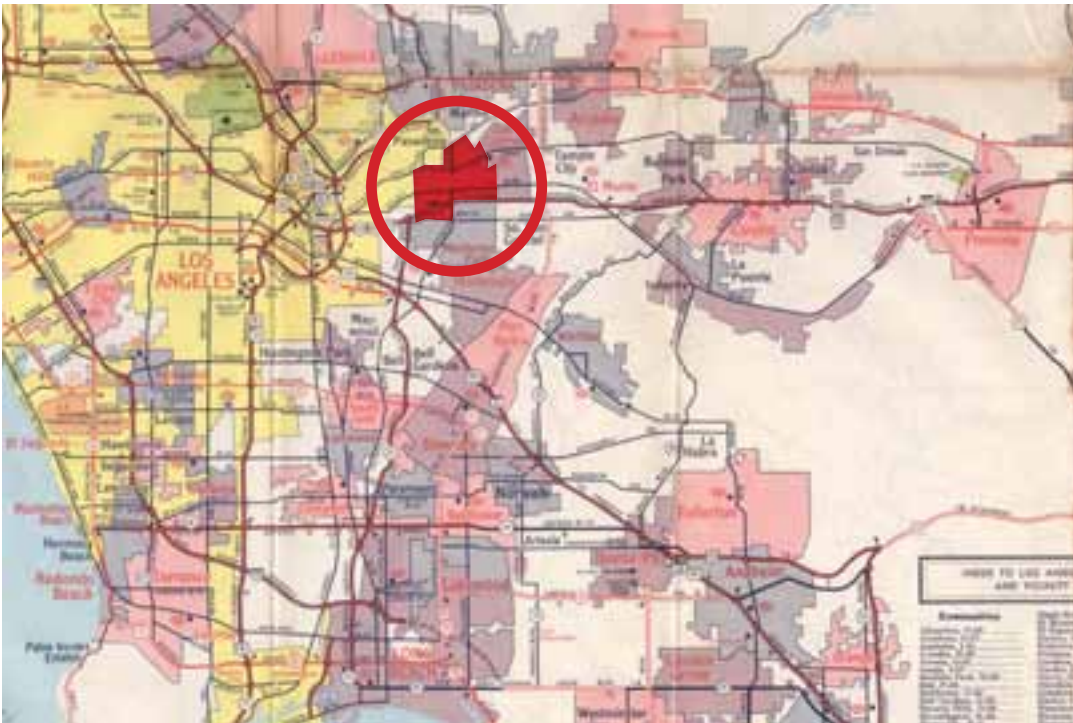
The rest of the metropolitan constellation [outside of downtown] **is also densifying, but at a much different scale.** The prototype for most of this growth in Los Angeles and Orange counties is **Pasadena**, which has a texture of **three- to five-story** buildings, a fabulous mix of **housing, retail, office buildings, cultural institutions, a lot of parking garages and great "walkability."**

alhambra
"Gateway to the San Gabriel Valley"
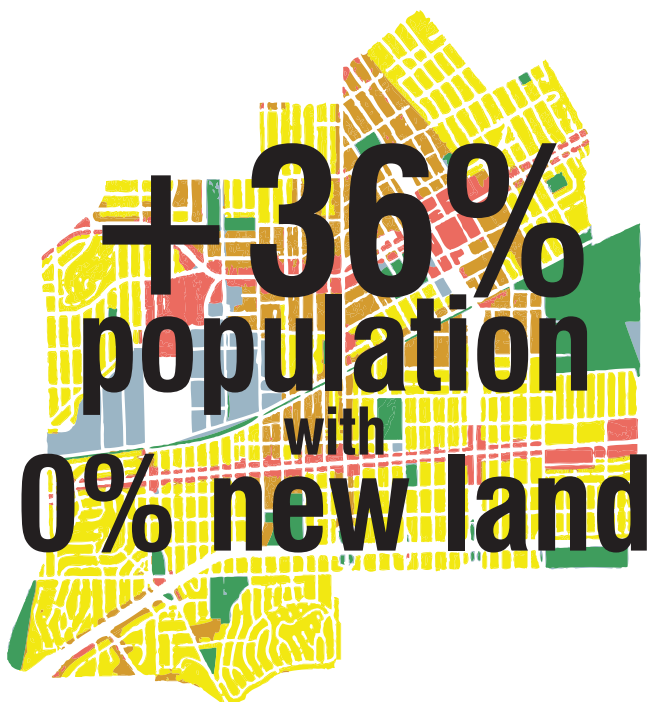
+36% population with 0% new land

Through their success, and that of those who came before them, Los Angeles demonstrated the efficacy of a new model of urban growth – dispersed, multi-centered and largely suburbanized. **The next chapter of Los Angeles' history will be how to build on this legacy, providing a true quality of life. Trying to become a faux New York, or a sun-drenched Paris, is not our mission. Having developed the predominant global form of dispersed urbanity, Los Angeles needs to show how to make that model work.**

Joel Kotkin

Alhambra – Urban Speculations

I focused on the city of Alhambra, a 7.6 square mile suburban city adjacent to the city of Los Angeles. At its smaller size, it was easier to analyze and it was an interesting example of high density suburbanism (an urban condition that has been overlooked due to a myopic focus on Downtown Los Angeles). In spite of Alhambra's higher than average density of 11,260 persons per square mile, the city fabric is still primarily single family residences.

Alhambra is a microcosm of the regional problems that have been previously mentioned. As a municipal entity it is landlocked on all sides with a paucity of parks. The problem facing Alhambra is similar to that of the region – it has no greenfields to expand into, its fabric of single family residences is saturated, and yet it is facing a projected growth of 36% over the next forty years (Southern California Association of Governments).

As the "Gateway to the San Gabriel Valley", Alhambra has a variety of land uses beyond residential. The city's commercial base runs along two major boulevards. Main Street is a more traditional automobile/retail development based on the Rodeo Drive model. Valley Boulevard is a continuous strip of small strip malls, which is less aesthetically pleasant than Main Street but arguably a more vibrant business area as an extension of the Asian American boomtown of Monterey Park. Currently, the City of Alhambra is focusing much of its redevelopment efforts on the defunct industrial plots of the western half of the city near the train tracks. One can see all this in the maps of the parking lots

My grandparents used to live in Alhambra, and I was also drawn to the population's high proportion of Asian and Latino Americans. In the end, the project had enough problems of its own that I chose not to deal with racial issues.
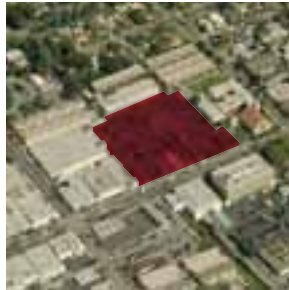
Alhambra's off-street parking requirements are higher than those in Houston.

305 acres of parking lots

parking lots > .5 acres
intensifying underutilized land

.5   1mi.

XL
big boxes and industrial areas

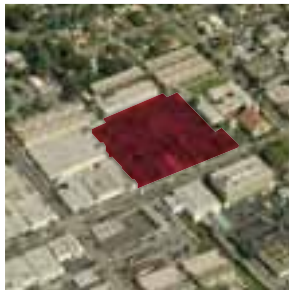**L**
shopping centers

M
small stores, small lots

XS
a garage in every oven

XL
district making

L
larger mixed use park complexes

the Parking Garage Apartment Park

M
infilling above
fragmented parking lots

XS
informal, atomized densification
everywhere

When I was visiting Alhambra, I instinctually began to see the city's parking lots as the most promising potential site. After returning from my trip, I found out that Alhambra requires more off street parking in than Houston, and aerial photographs revealed that the only source of "empty" developable land are the parking lots throughout the city.

In total, there are 305 acres of parking lots over half an acre in Alhambra.

After mapping the parking lots more than half an acre (which I defined as contiguous surfaces of asphalt devoted to parking irrespective of property line ownerships) I discerned three basic sizes of parking lots, (medium, large, and extra large) as well as three types of parking lots (multi-function, backstage, and front façade).

- Medium Sized lots are the smaller strip center parking lots devoted to one strip center, often even just one business. In many cases, these lots are inadequate to meet current parking requirements for their buildings.

- Large lots are the lots that are found in conjunction with more recent shopping centers. These developments are often larger than older strip centers while also having to accommodate current higher off street parking requirements.

- There are only a three Extra Large lots in Alhambra. Each of these are in redeveloped industrial areas on the western half of the city. One is a parking lot for a Costco big box wholesaler, another for the only high rise office buildings, and the third is still affiliated with an industrial facility.

Not all parking lots are just for parking cars.

In this aerial are a couple car dealerships and their parking lots. For these dealerships, parking lots are areas for sales and storage.

The other major cluster of service parking lots are in an industrial part of town. Many of these paved areas involve parking cars, but are clearly used for other purposes.

Another type is the church/school yard. There were several asphalt zones that were parking lots, but were also play areas.

multifunction lots
all kinds of stuff!

Developed along Rodeo Drive, the model of a pedestrian (retail) streetscapes backed by strips of parking, was adopted along much of Alhambra's Main Street.
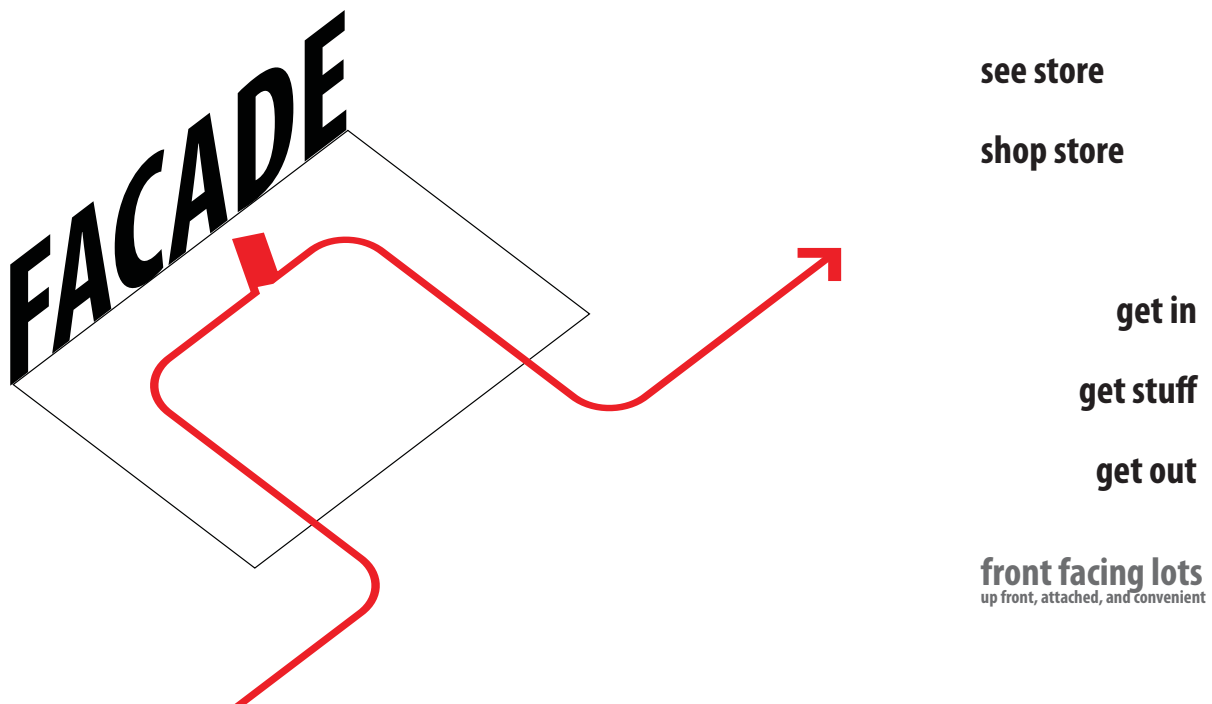
In the foreground is an example of what happens when this development model collides with modern parking requirements.

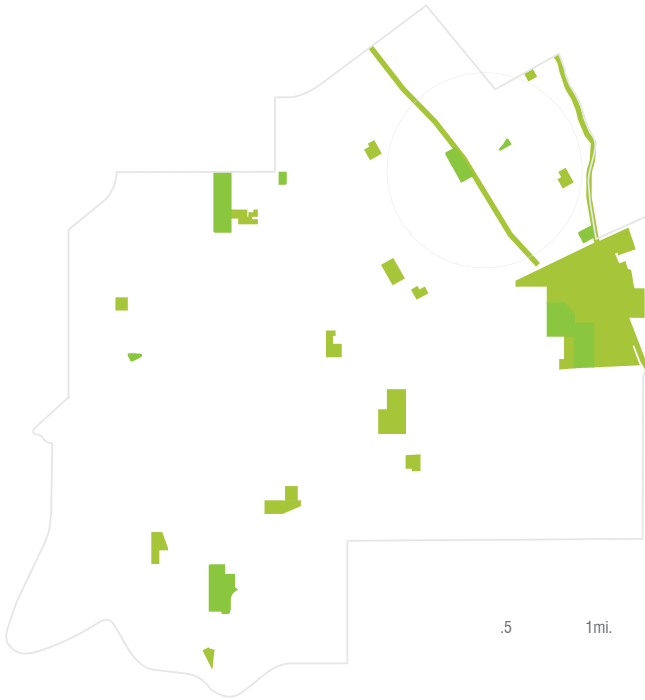## Alhambra requires more off-street parking than Houston.

the rear parking lot
parking at its purist

The other type of parking lot categorization is based on how these lots interact with the street and immediate context.

- The multifunction or service lots are usually tucked away from the street frontage and have several uses such as parking and playground (church) or parking as storage (car dealership).

- The backstage lot is a result of hybridizing automobile and pedestrian retail. While the street front looks like a typical pedestrian retail district, the façade of businesses are supported by a string of parking lots behind.

- While front facing façade parking lots are less aesthetically pleasing than an old town pedestrian retail districts, this street model allows for much more street visable retail perimeter as well as actually being more convenient for vehicular traffic.

FACADE

see store

shop store

get in

get stuff

get out

front facing lots
up front, attached, and convenient

70 acres Public Parks
195 acres Semi-Public Parks

churches, schools, municipal golf course

265 acres of "park"

3.1 acres per 1,000 pop.
San Francisco: 7.8 acres/1,000 pop.
Los Angeles: 6.2 acres/1,000 pop.
New York: 4.6 acres/1,000 pop.

existing parks
here and there

.5   1mi.

115 acres of new housing
distributed on the parking lots

(from a study placing 160 large parking garage

apartments (.75 acres each) throughout the city)

a scattering of projects
M, L, XL

.5   1mi.

For contrast, I also mapped the parks in Alhambra. There are 70 acres of "public" parks which are dispersed throughout the city. In addition, there are also 195 acres of "semi-public" park – limited access recreational open space. I included churches, schools (whose yards are not accessible outside of school hours) and the municipal golf course. In total there are 265 acres of "parks" in Alhambra resulting in a remarkably low 3.1 acres of parks per 1,000 population.

If one applies the numbers from the Gehry versus Garage apartment case study, it quickly becomes clear that Alhambra is under a similar population pressures as the rest of Los Angeles. It would take three and a half Grand Avenues (fourteen 30-story towers in a city with nothing over a hundred feet tall) or the intensification of two-thirds of the single family residences.

With these maps I played with different scenarios of housing prototypes I was developing. If the parking lots were to absorb all projected the population load, I would need a density of 30 units/acre, and I settled on the scenario that assumed a reasonably high amount of housing on these parking lots. As such, I hypothesized a future where 115 acres of these parking lots would be developed; leaving 190 acres of unbuilt land to be park. Parking lots become housing developments, and the residual surface parking would be a network of surface parks.

In the end, my final project had a density of 20 units per acre. While I spent much of the semester trying to attain 30 units per acre, I eventually decided to lower the density of the project due to contextual concerns and the realization that it was actually more reasonable to assume that the rest of the city fabric would have to densify a little bit along with the city's parking lots instead of relying solely on the parking lots to absorb all the population growth.

.5   1mi.

305 acres of (e)parking lots
− 115 acres of (n) projects =

190 acres of (n) parks
+ 265 acres of (e) parks

=

455 acres total parks

all together!

In discussions with fellow classmates and during critiques there were always questions about how to position my project in the speculative future. Architecturally, the minimum square footprint of my variations came out to 30,000 square feet and I felt three-quarter acre footrint "prototype" buildings was somewhat implausible for an infill urbanism. Adding a park into the premise of the project allowed the thesis, which originally only focused on the problem of housing, to conceptually situate itself as a "demonstration project" in a very site specific fashion. Of course, "believability" in the end is a very fluid term – go ask the Clintons.

Is there a **new housing typology**

that can be developed

(to house future growth
and
provide public amenities)

in this high density [human AND automobile] **urbanism?**

a distributed solution

not centralized

but large enough to create **public amenities**

project in a nutshell:

NEW housing (with parking) over
EXISTING parking lot =

apartments with triple the parking

in a NEW park
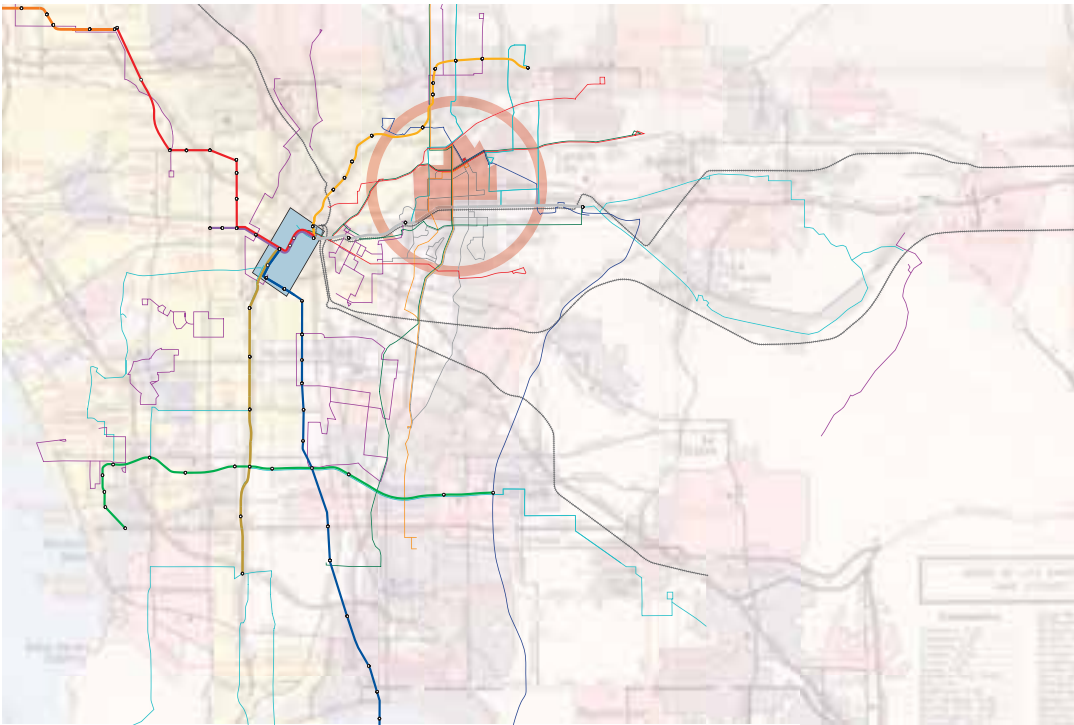
part of the metro
"Gateway to the San Gabriel Valley"

Main Street is one of the few public transportation arteries connecting Downtown with the San Gabriel Valley.
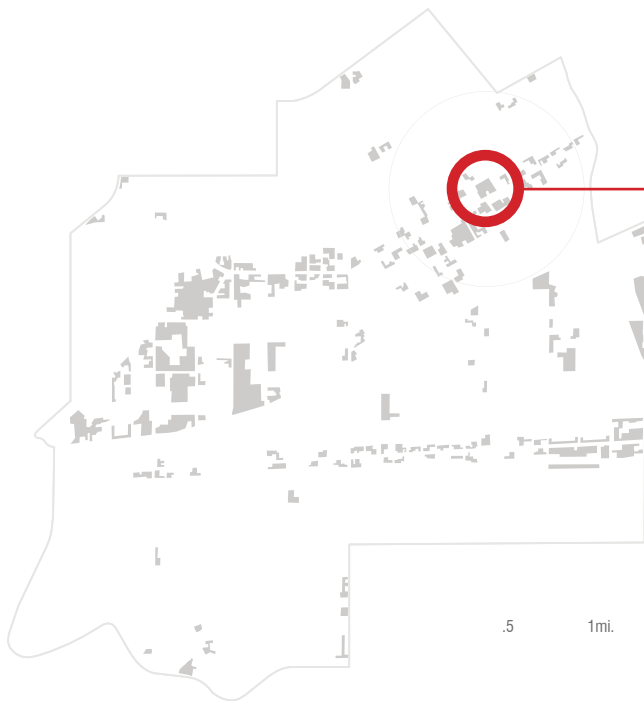
441 East Main St.

3.6 acres of parking
demonstration site

.5   1mi.

The project itself.

For the architectural project, I chose a "large", "front façade" parking lot as a site because it was set in an interesting context and its large size gave me more freedom to play with different iterations. An "extra large" site would have become a project in district-making, urban design, while a "medium" site would be overly constrained possibly forcing a solution that might not be as easily generalized into other contexts.

I was also interested in the challenge of intervening on a site that depended on the parking lot as crucial part of its street frontage, it seemed to be a more complex problem than infilling some service parking lot tucked away behind car dealership. Furthermore, 441 East Main Street is surrounded by several land uses. This site is a relatively new development in the area, a large shopping center parking lot built in the mid-1990's. It is anchored by a supermarket and a pharmacy (now empty), with a five or six small stores and a large restaurant. Along the northeastern edge are the First United Methodist Church and a small school for public school children unable to study in the standard public school environment. An existing storm culvert runs underneath the parking lot.

The front facing parking lot is an anomaly along Main Street, which is a pedestrian facing retail street with rear parking lots. The five story AT&T office across the street follows this pattern by sitting on the street with parking behind. Immediately surrounding the shopping center are a couple townhouse developments, beyond which are the typical fabric of free standing single family residential units.
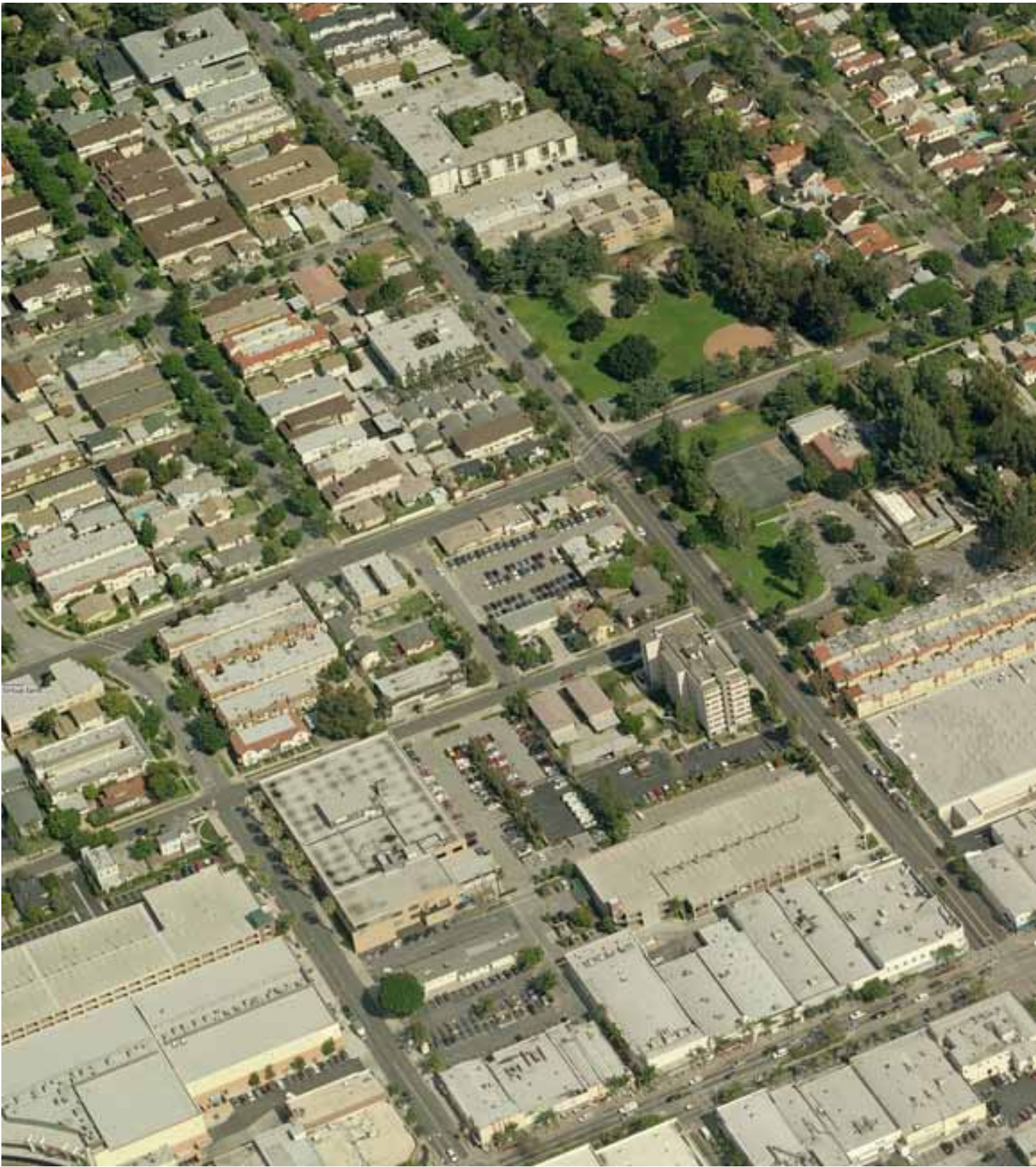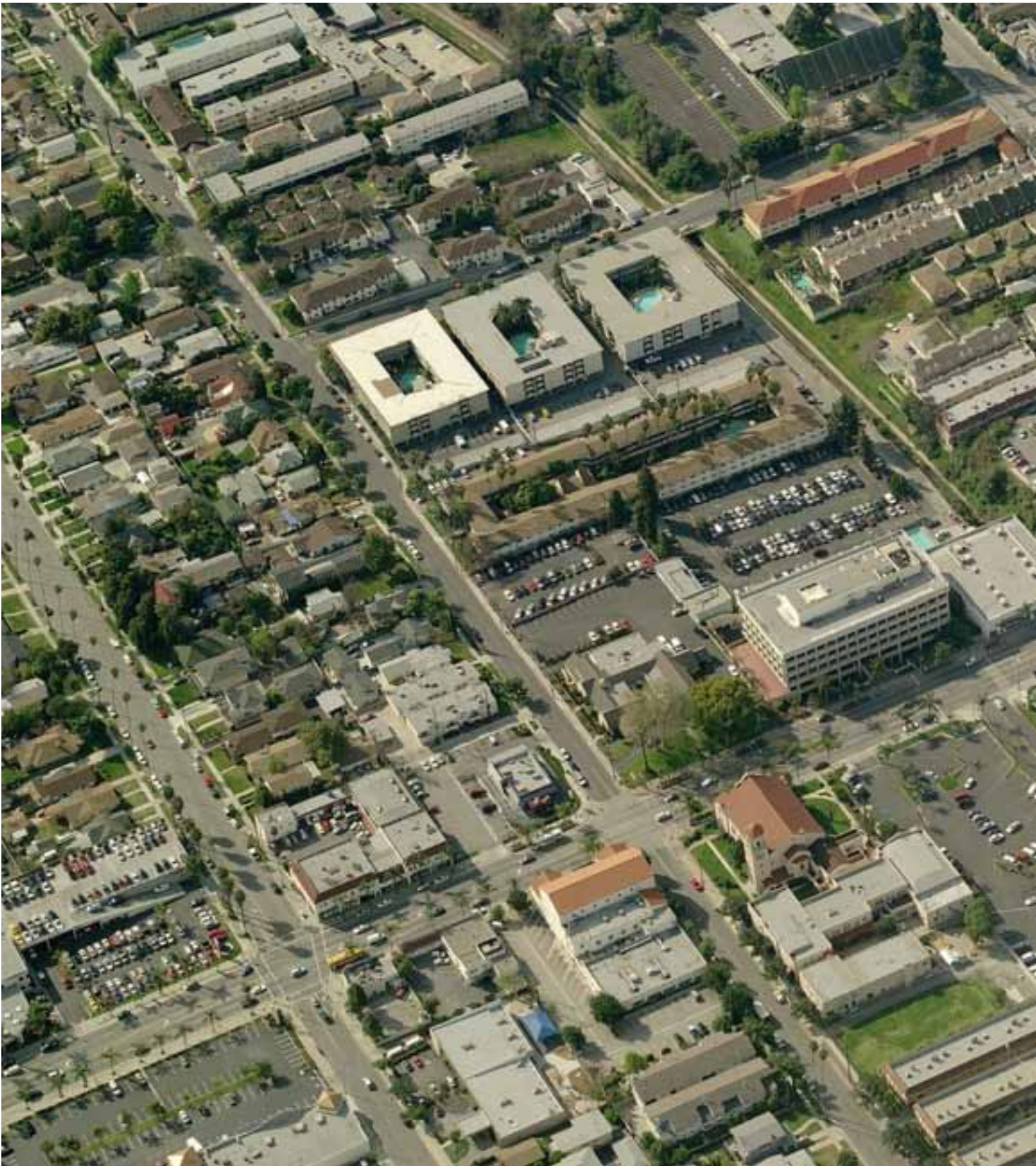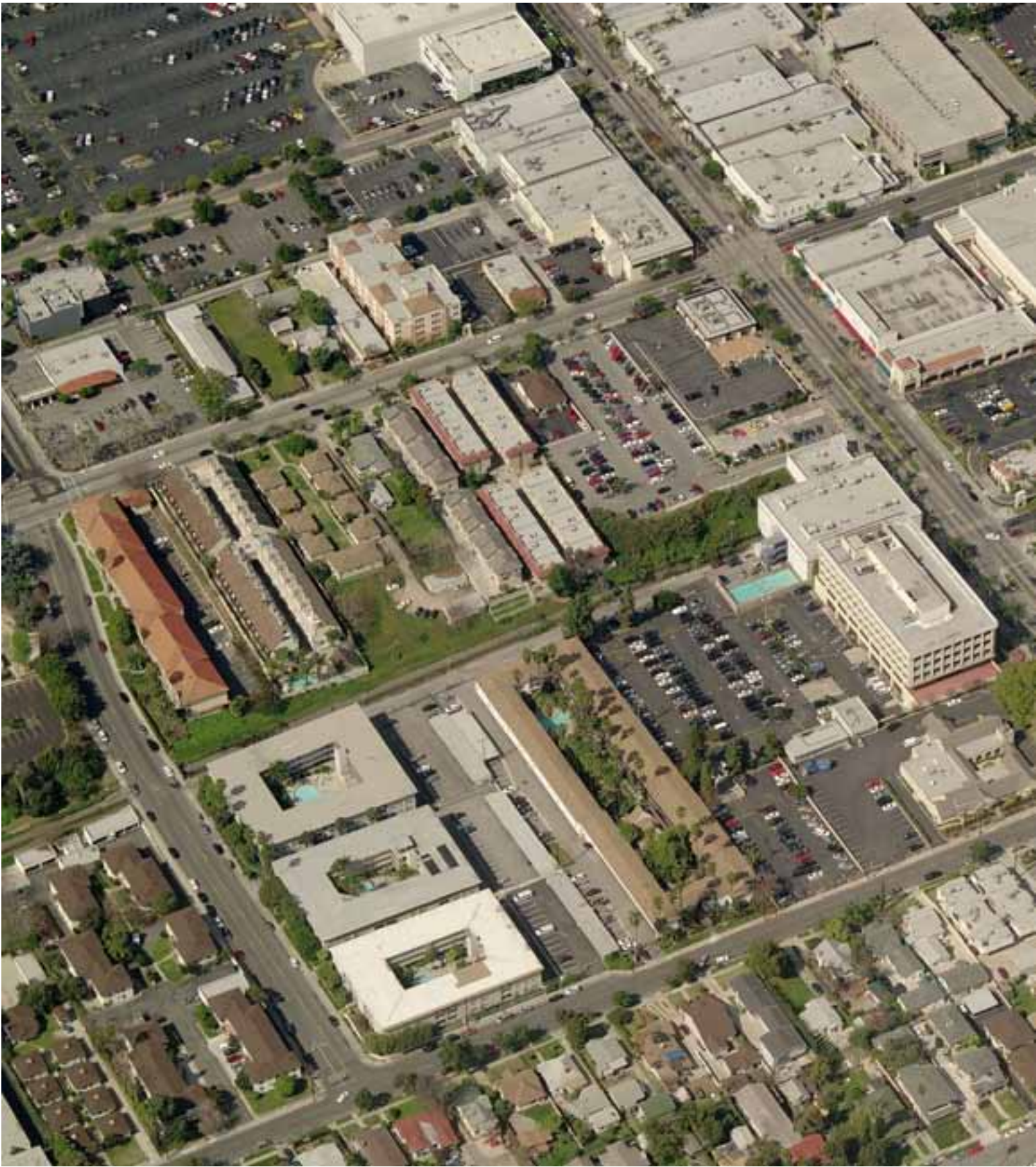
looking north
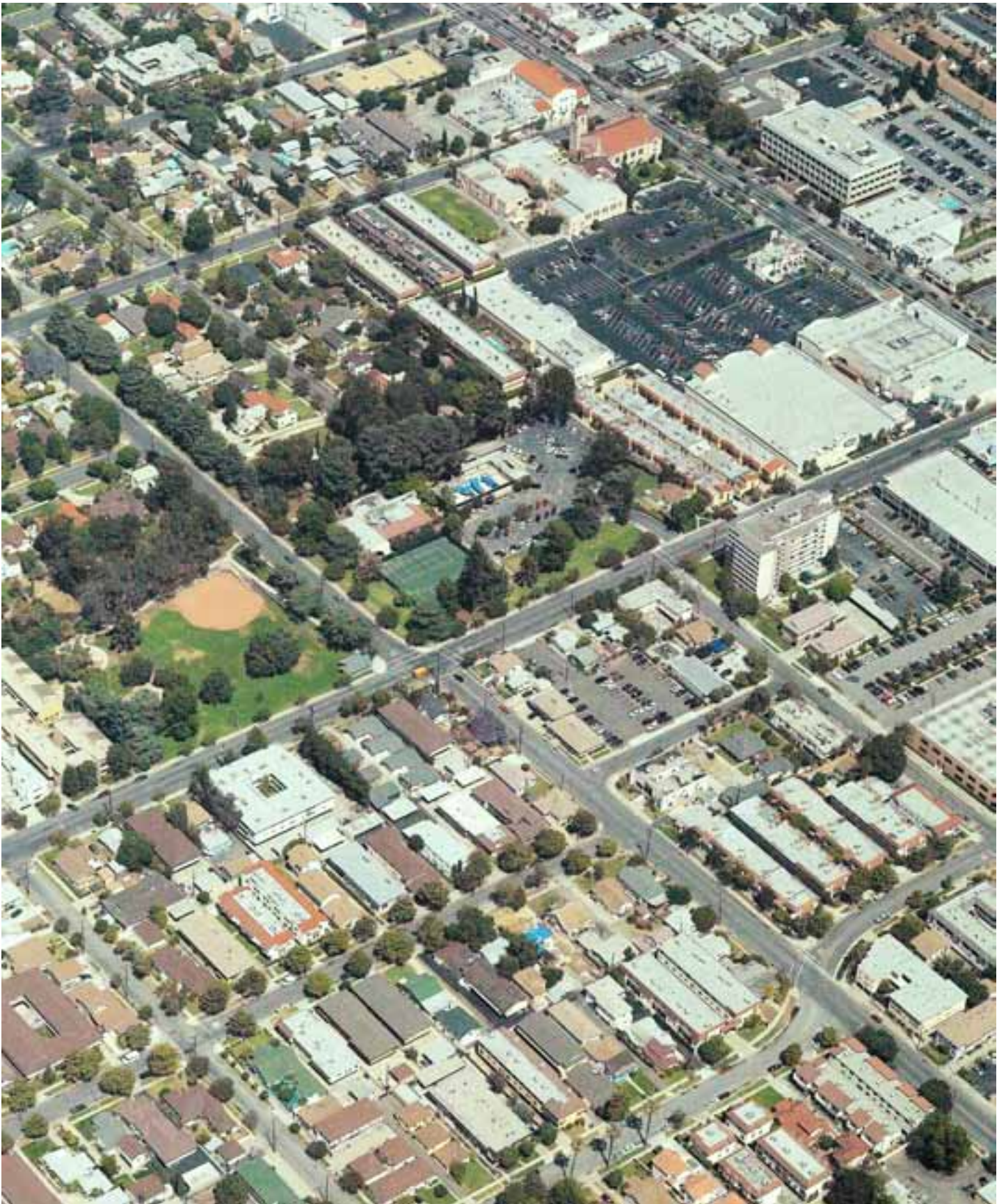
looking east

looking south

looking west

31

the neighborhood park

the culvert, looking south towards the site

the park, looking south towards the site

looking north towards the park, the culvert is running under this lane

the view from the side of the church

39

looking towards the church and school

two ways of looking at Ralph's and the small stores

RALPH'S SUPERMARKET   **RESTAURANT**

facing EAST   site panoramic

EMPTY PHARMACY   **TOWNHOUS**

facing SOUTH

45

TOWNHOUSES BEYOND   PRIVATE SCHOOL

facing SOUTH   site panoramic

CHURCH

facing WEST

AT&T (ACROSS MAIN ST)

ARBY'S

site panoramic

S DRIVE THRU   **SMALL RETAIL**

facing NORTH

49

the view from Arby's

the view from across the street

CULVERT

HOUSES

PARK

TOWNHOUSES

SCHOOL

SHOPPING CENTER

CHURCH

RETAIL STREET

OFFICE

CULVERT

This site is a typical shopping center with a large supermarket (along with a now defunct chain pharmacy). There is also a large restaurant and several parking-lot-orientated small businesses and an Arby's at the street front. On the eastern edge is a church and a parochial school.

Immediately behind the site is a large townhouse development. Which then leads to single family residences further in. There is also Story Park, and a culvert that runs under the parking lot.

Across the street is a five story AT&T office complex and a Baha Fresh that has outsourced its parking in the lot around the bank.

441 e. main street
the site, 323 spaces, 420'x385' (3.6 acres)

park

retail

School

church

retail

retail

underground fastfood

main street

(to San Bernadino)

(to downtown LA)
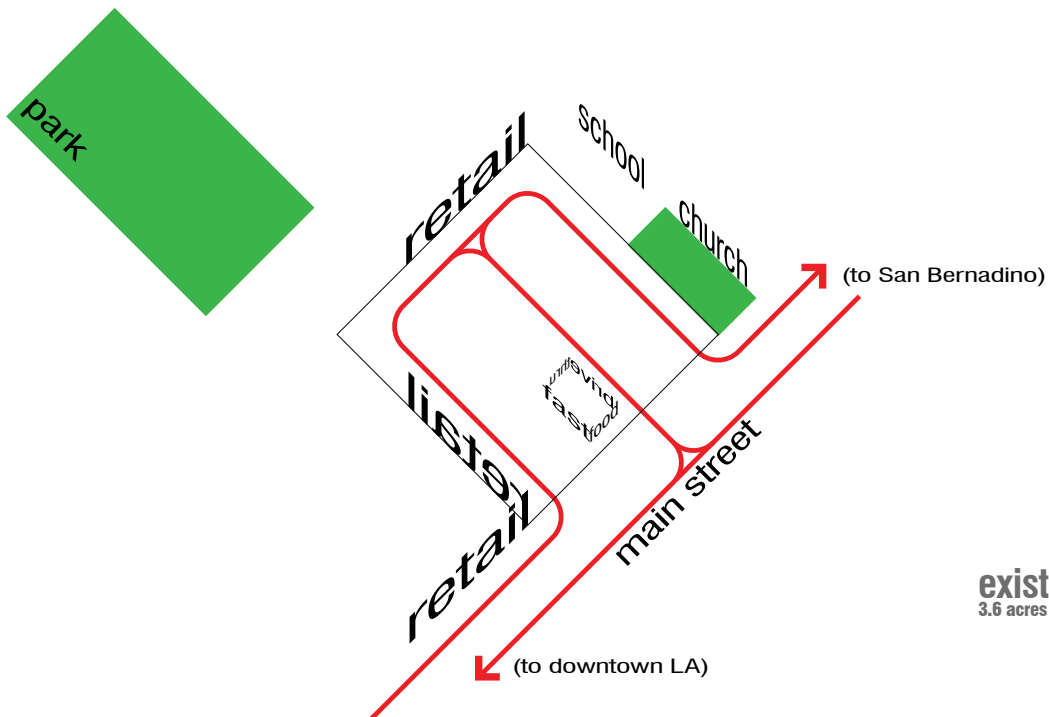
existing conditions
3.6 acres of asphalt happiness

Site strategy
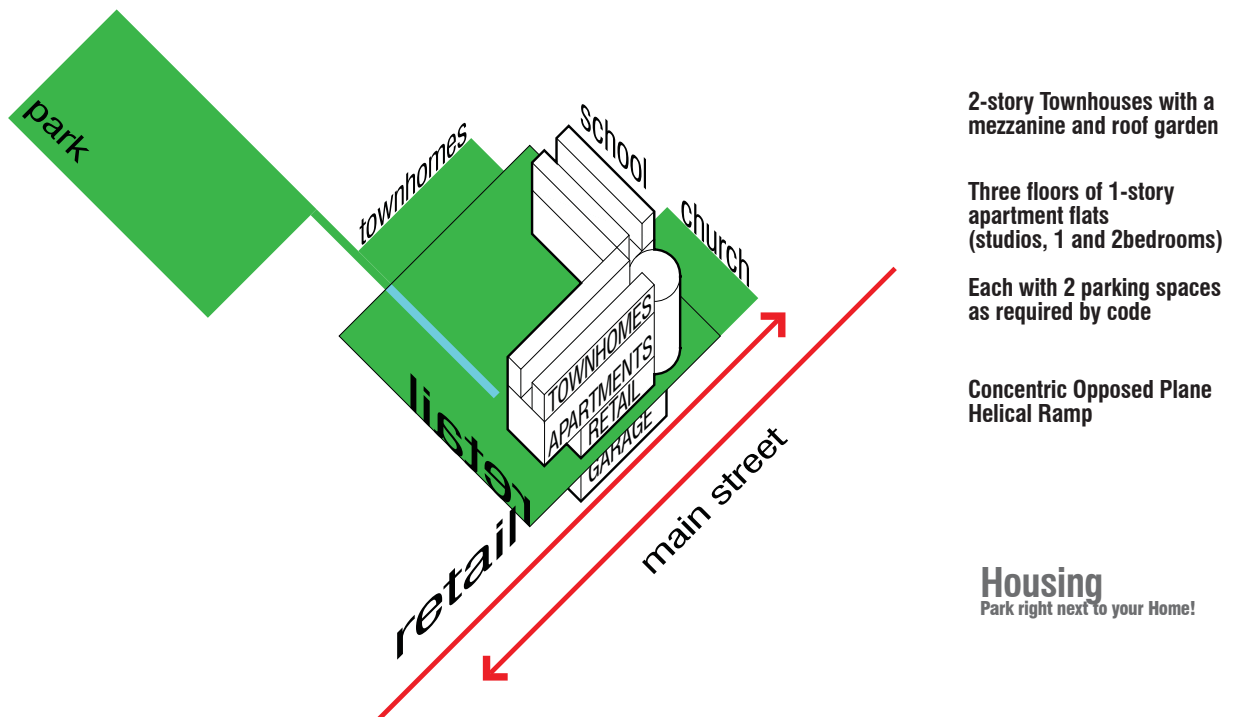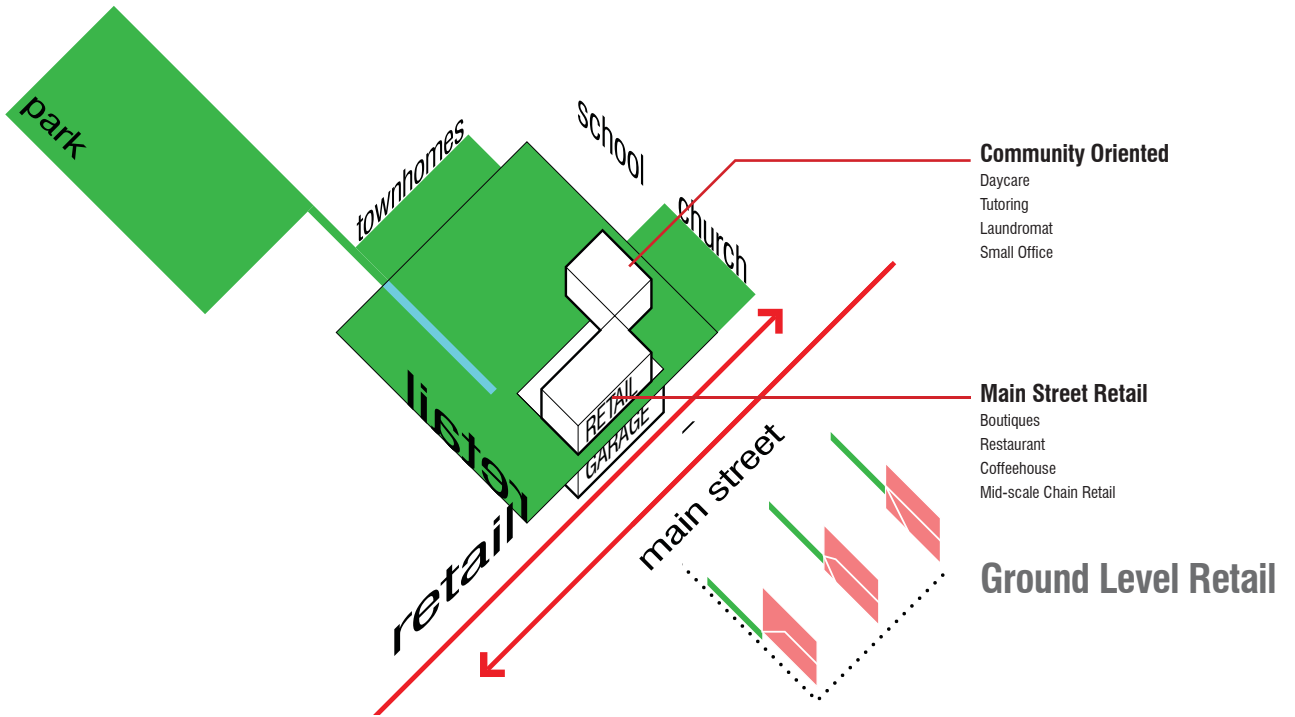
1) This site is unashamedly a front facing parking lot. While the church and school are oriented towards the streets, the other buildings clearly depend on the parking lot for the visibility of their primary elevation (along with the fast food restaurant in the middle). This lot emphasizes the easy vehicular access and its central artery circulation is managed by a street light on Main Street.

2) The first move would be to designate the whole area as "park" open space. Along with the existing surface parking, the rear retail building would also be demolished. The project would to open up to the neighboring townhouses as well as creating a much stronger connection to the existing park.

3) The existing retail and church parking load would be accommodated through an underground parking garage.

4) Taking advantage of the existing retail Main Street, new ground floor retail would be built along the street front. There would also be retail space that faces the existing church plaza. This would be programmed as either an extension for the existing church or be more destination and community oriented (as opposed to retail traffic oriented) businesses.

5) Three stories of apartment flats would be built on top of the retail. The parking would be adjacent to each unit. The top floor would be a large townhouse development where the parking would be part of the unit footprints.
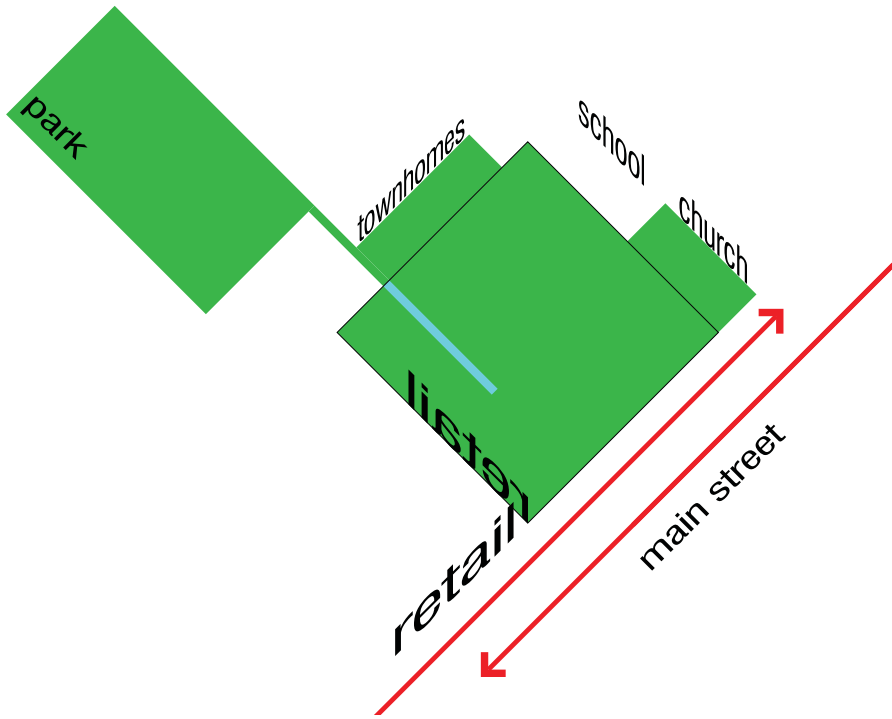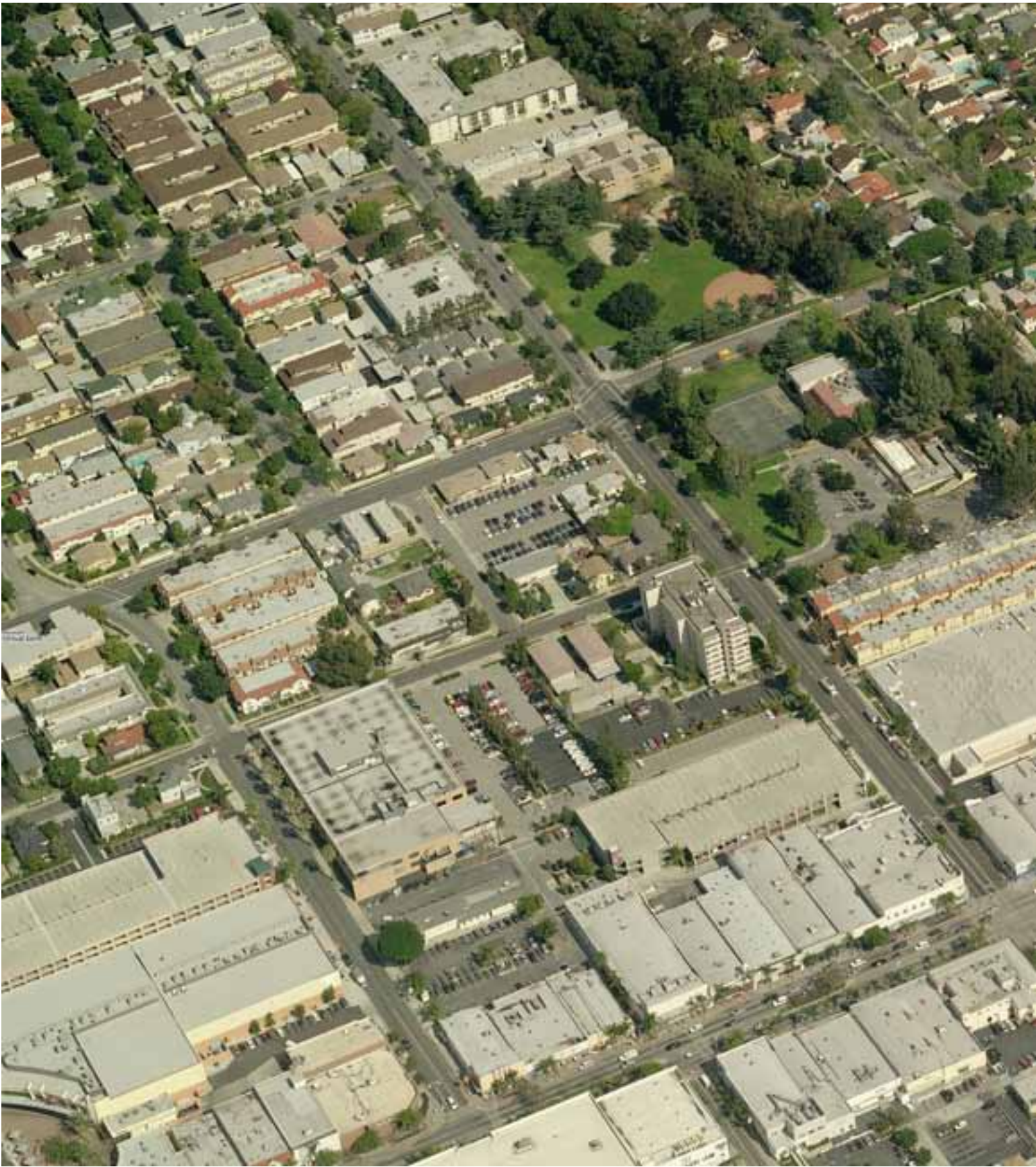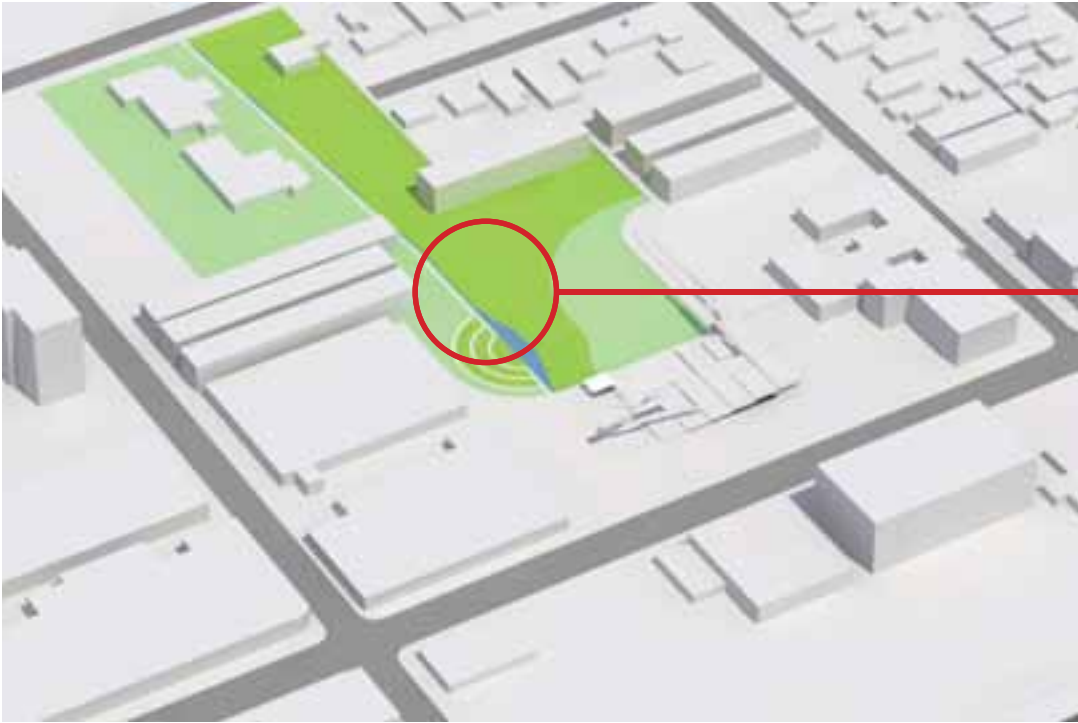
New Park
connecting to the old one

park

townhomes

School

church

retail

retail

main street
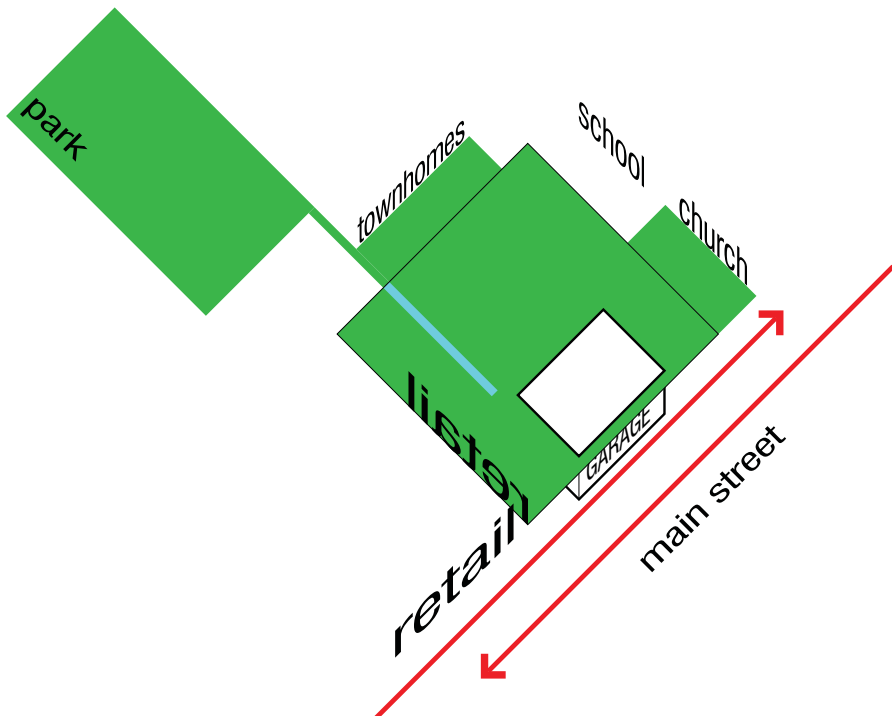
Parking Garage
3 stories of parking, 400 Spaces

park

townhomes

School

church

retail

retail

GARAGE

main street

park

townhomes

School

church

listen

retail

retail

RETAIL

GARAGE

main street

Community Oriented
Daycare
Tutoring
Laundromat
Small Office

Main Street Retail
Boutiques
Restaurant
Coffeehouse
Mid-scale Chain Retail

Ground Level Retail

park

townhomes

School

church

listen

retail

retail

TOWNHOMES

APARTMENTS

RETAIL

GARAGE

main street

2-story Townhouses with a mezzanine and roof garden

Three floors of 1-story apartment flats (studios, 1 and 2bedrooms)

Each with 2 parking spaces as required by code

Concentric Opposed Plane Helical Ramp

Housing
Park right next to your Home!

Daylight the Stream
Open up existing culvert.
Connect to Story Park

New Park
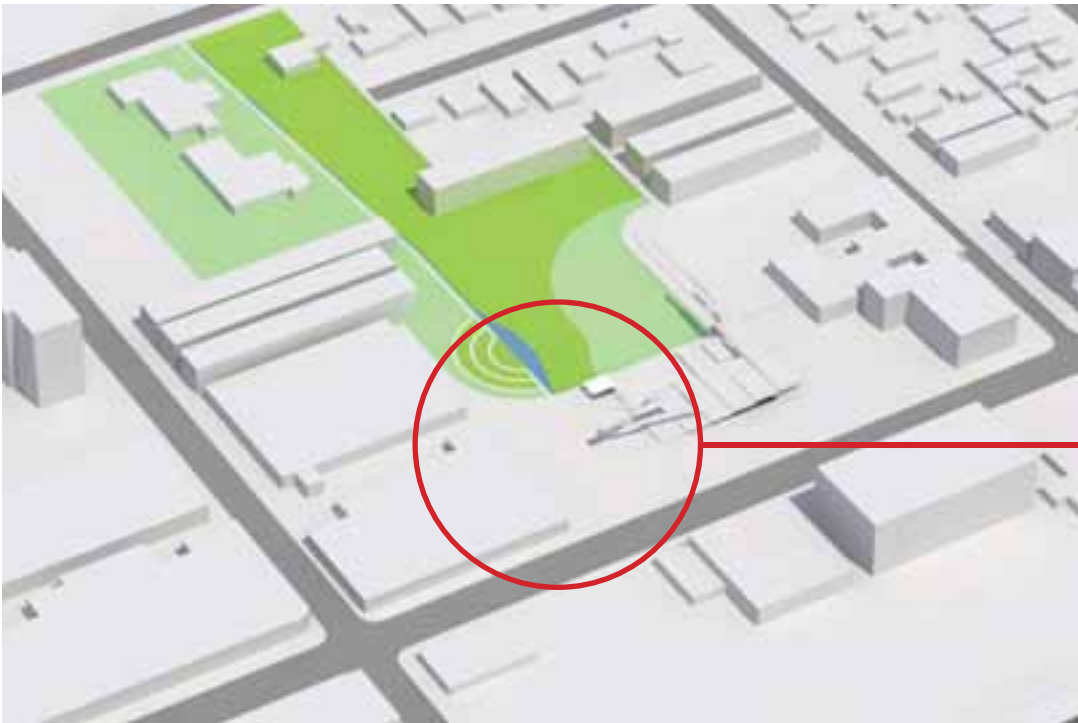
Hardscape Market Plaza
Market Hall off Main St between old and new retail.
Manicured Lunch Terrace
Easy Parking Garage Access

New Park

Park

The Park itself is composed of five parts. Besides providing "open", "green" space, the park also meshes the project with the different programmatic pieces that surround the site.

1) The initial move is to daylight the stream. The daylighted stream is different from the culverts preceding and following the site because it would actually be accessible by the public. Along with being the explicit connection to the neighboring park, the stream also draws a boundary between the more cultivated retail plaza and the more naturalized landscape.

2) The hardscape Market Plaza is an outdoor space that connects and draws the pedestrian traffic into the existing parking lot facing retail. With the supermarket as an anchor, this open area can be used for farmers and flea markets. Directly in front of the supermarket would be a manicured lunch terrace mirroring a bulge in the daylighted stream culvert.

3) The area opposite the plaza would be a children's play area broken into several sections. The day-lighted culvert and the area connecting/buffering the park with the existing townhouses is a feral landscape. There is also a flat lawn, large enough to accommodate a junior sized soccer field. Next to the existing school and church are basketball courts, along with a skate park in the open area under the building.

4) Tying the building and the landscape together are a large terrace and cantilevered stairs leading to the residences above. A certain amount of terracing behind the building is necessary to accommodate the access to the underground parking garage. By stepping upwards, the new terrace is able to connect to the second floor of some of the retail units as well as providing

Childrens' Play
Hard play courts and soft playing fields
Skate Park under the building
Feral Landscape as a buffer for townhomes
Interface for Church and School

New Park
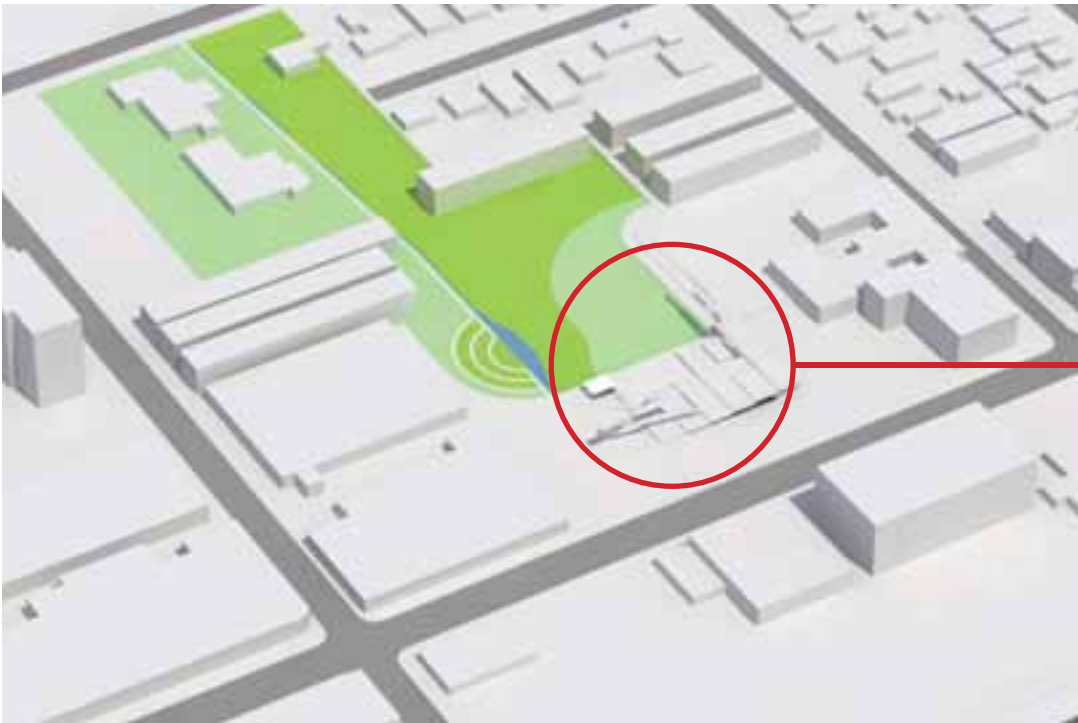
Terrace and Stairs
Terrace over Parking Garage
Connect to send floor retail
Draw a green connection upwards to Residences

New Park

natural boundaries for different restaurant and retail outdoor places. The terrace would also provide raised seating for the soccer field.

Connecting the residences to the park is a set of outdoor stairs cantilevered from the main structure creating an open pubic pedestrian passage. Furthermore, "green" would be literally dragged up the walls with a green screen for climbing plants. The landing for the stairs would provide a wider gap for views, airflow, spaces for guest parking, and a place to do a three point turn in a car if necessary.

5) Finally, the streets of the Parking Garage Apartments are themselves considered parks. Based upon the Dutch idea of the woonerf where streets are shared equally between people and cars, the alleys between the units would be open space that could be exploited for more intimate activities, a community barbeque or for young children to play within view of their parents.
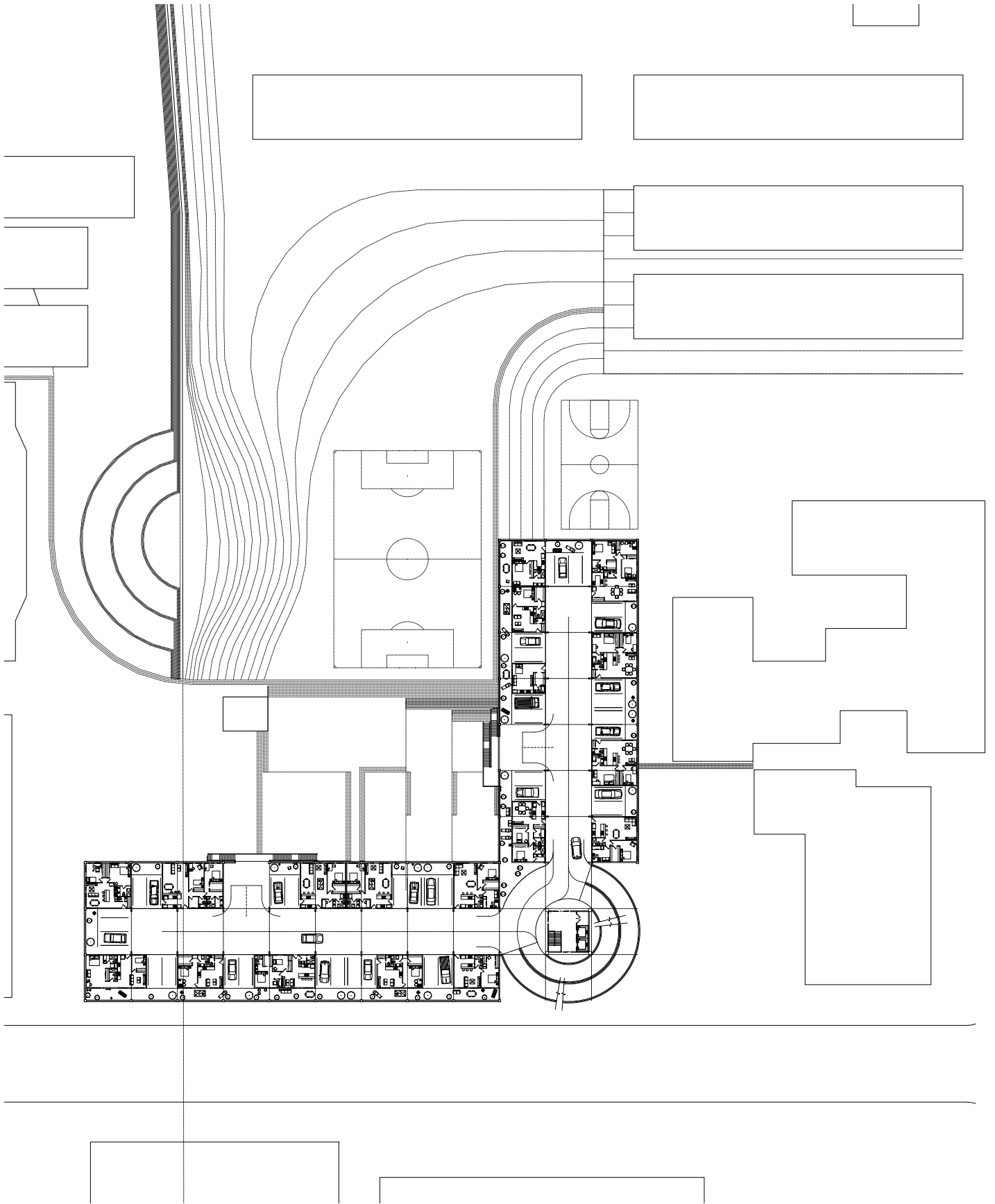
model thanks to Jing Gu, David Jefferis, Stephanie Millet, and Peter Stanley.

thanks to Stephanie Hsie for her extensive help in these two renderings!

park

townhomes

church

TOWNHOMES
APARTMENTS
RETAIL
GARAGE

RESIDENTS

PUBLIC

retail

main street
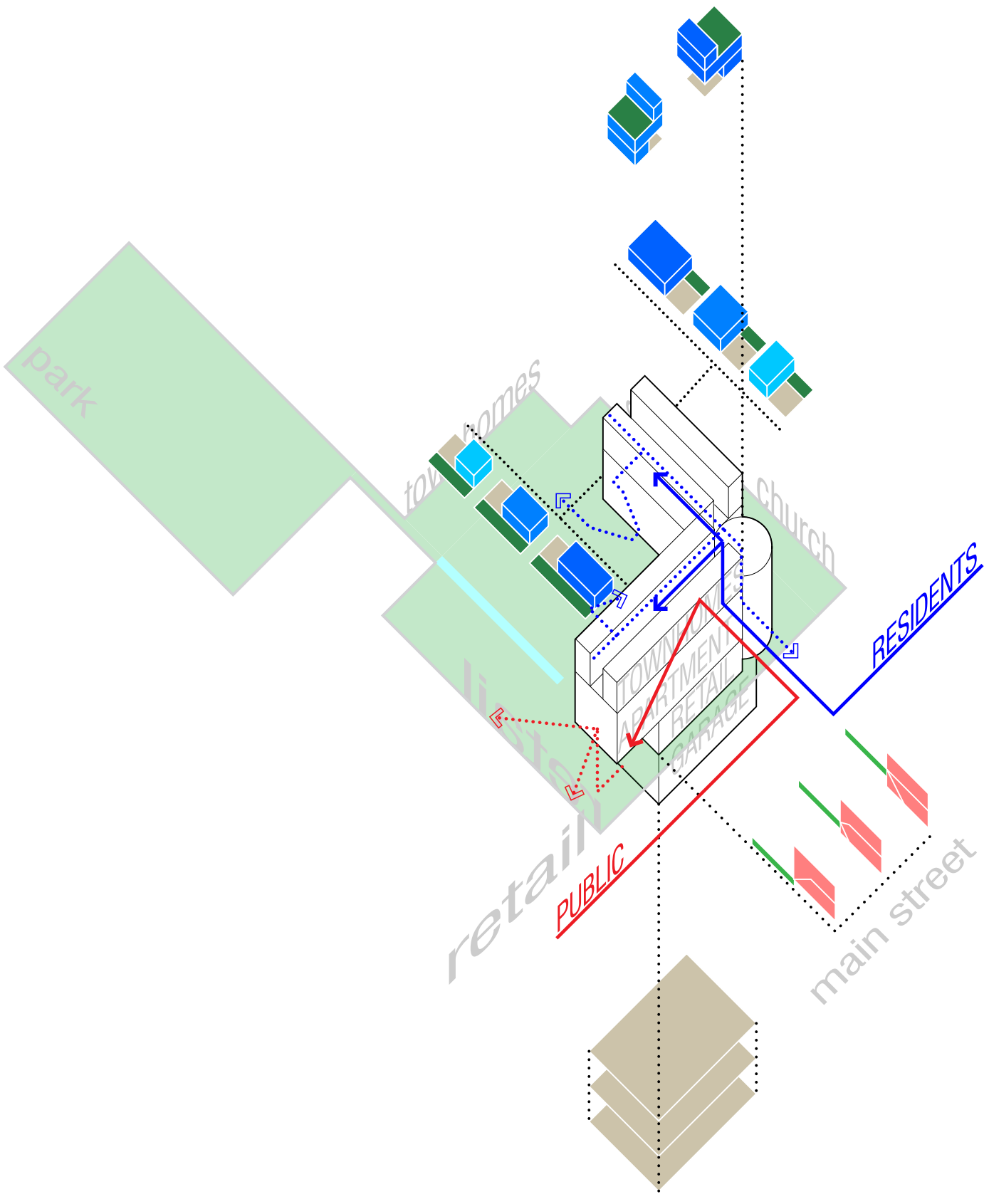
The Building

The overall building is a fairly simple structure, a site-cast two-way slab and beam building with columns on a 30' x 30' grid. The perimeter columns are 18" square to contribute to a grid like façade (with 12" beam + 6" slab horizontals). The interior has thinner 9" x 36" rectangular columns which work better with for vehicular traffic. I had originally planned to stack the apartments to allow for standard vertical plumbing chases. Unfortunately this arrangement was an aesthetic disaster, creating a relentless monotony inside of a concrete grid. As such, I redesigned the plumbing chases using the open car ports to redirect the chases.

Each unit has a regular plumbing chase (located 6' x 10' off of the column) that stacks vertically with any apartment below it. Each of these chases run vertically until they hit a carport where the pipes are then redirected and bundled under the interior streets. These all then lead to the central vertical artery located in the center of the ramp helix (along with elevators and a trash chute).

There were two basic types of housing units – apartments in the middle and townhouses on top. As per Alhambra's requirements, each of unit was provided with two parking spaces.
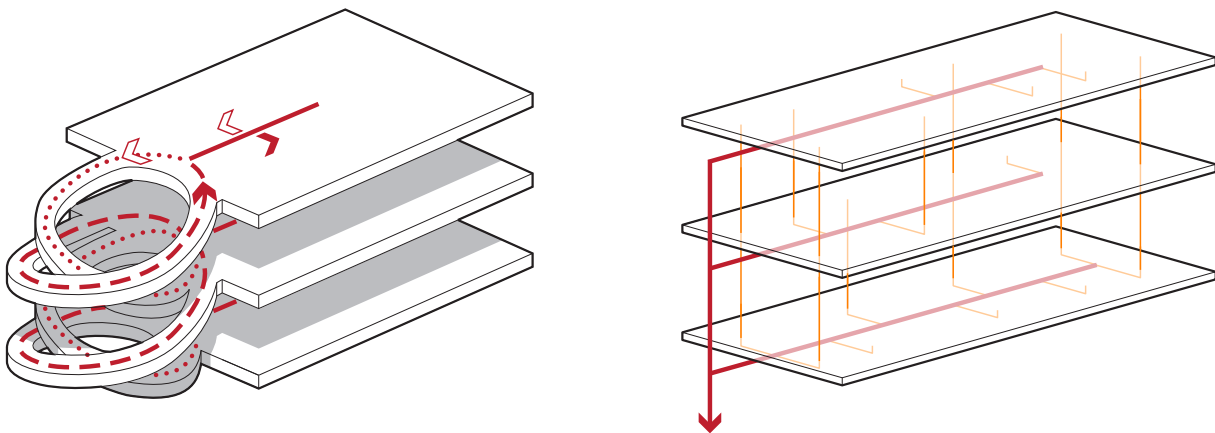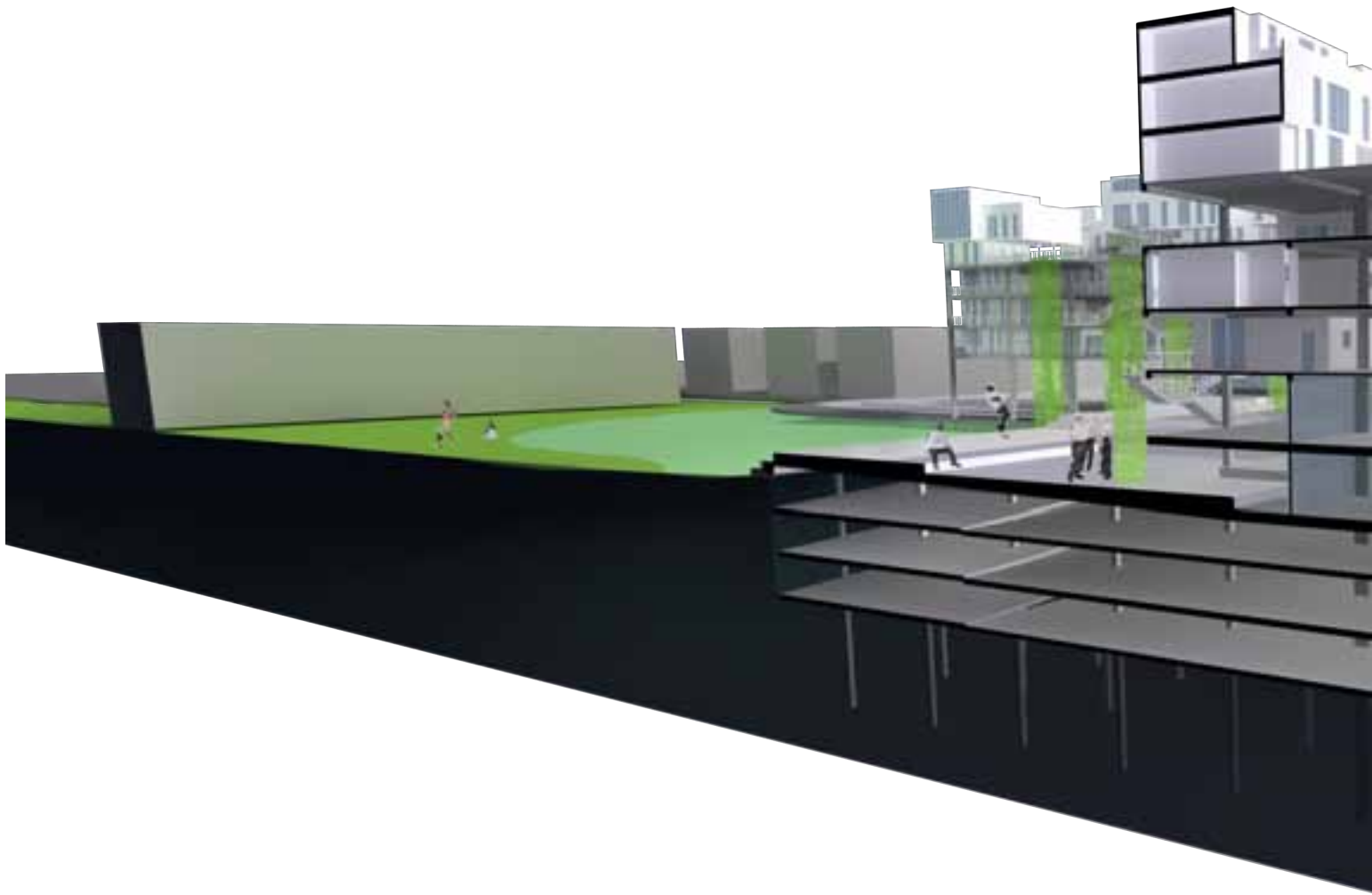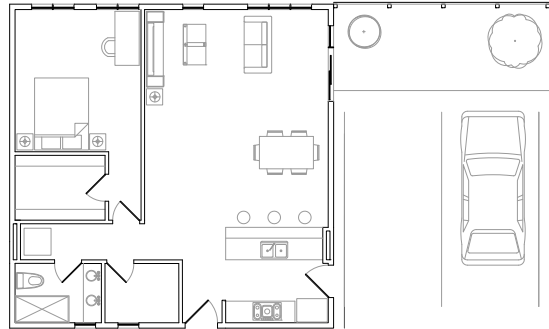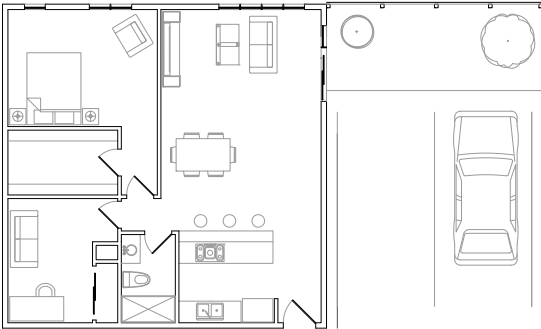
Scalies by Vic.™
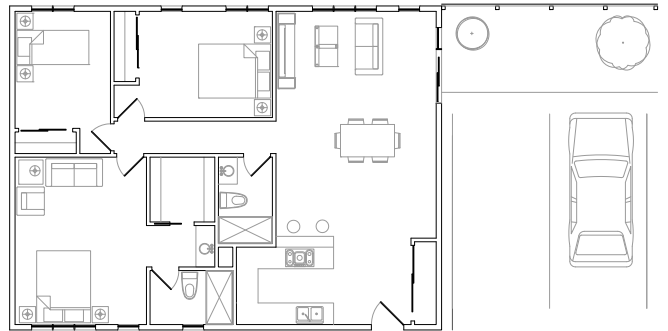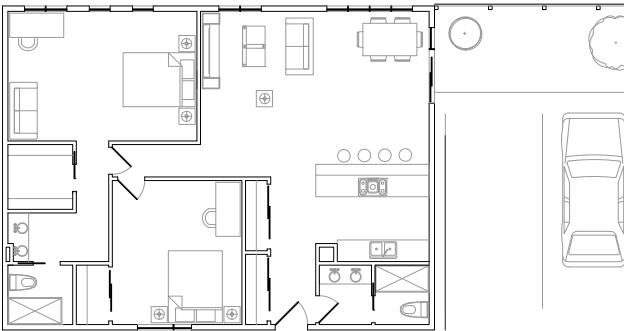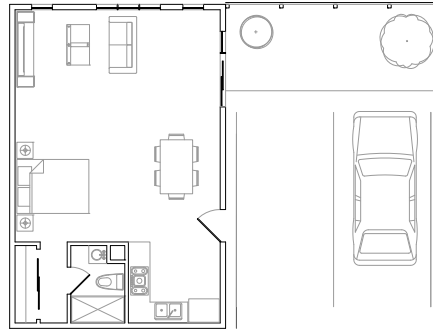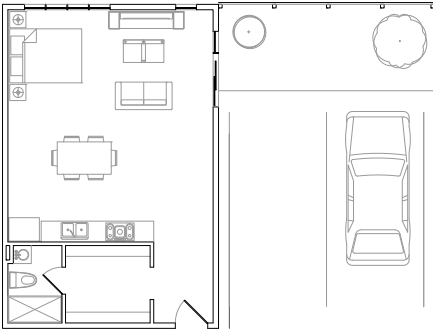
Middle Apartments

The plumbing system enables a lot of flexibility for locating units in the middle apartment section. The basic module is 10' x 30' with studios being two spaces wide, one bedroom with three spaces, and two bedrooms with four. Each unit have an additional 20' x 30' slot that provides 20' x 20' two car parking and a 10' x 20' balcony area (which could also house the air conditioning condenser units). Even though the layouts are fairly typical apartment arrangements, the restrictions of stacking the chases and connecting the living rooms to their balconies, resulted in nine different basic floor plans.
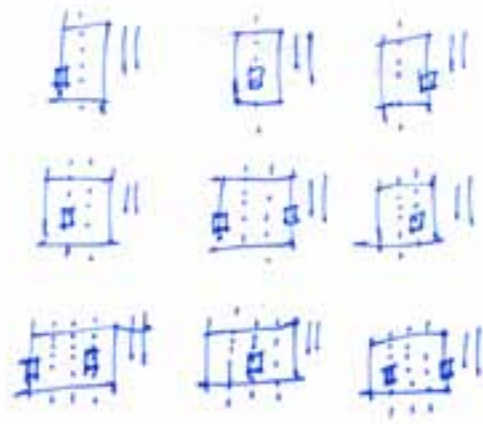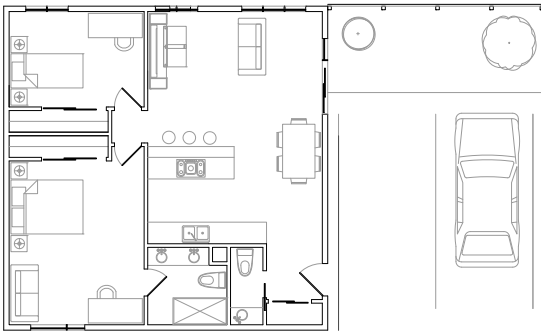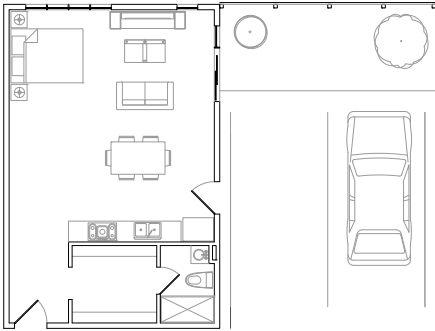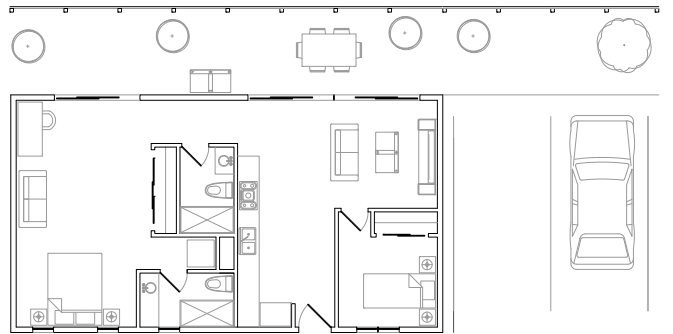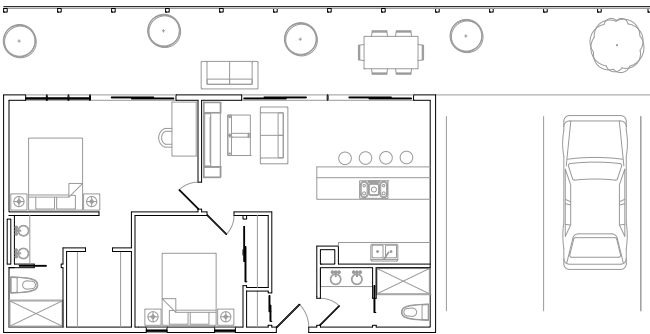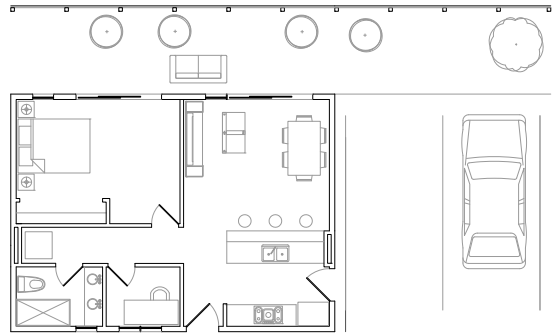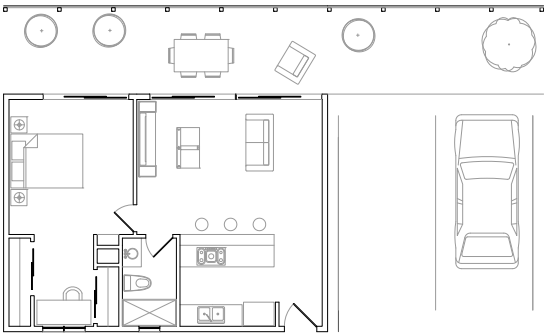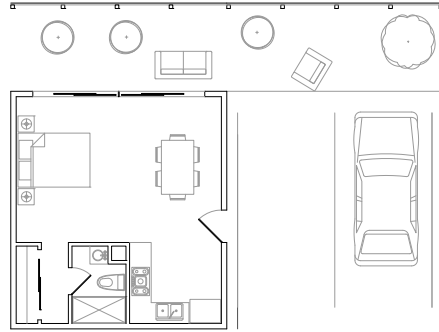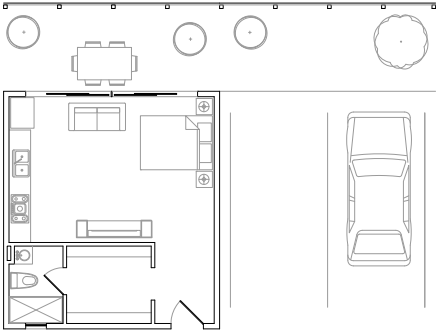
A second basic unit type sits along the southwest and southeast elevations. The Southern Californian sun is quite relentless in summer, and a 10' outdoor room strip was designated along the facades (inspired by Craig Ellwood). As such, the interior spaces of units are based off of a 10' x 20' module and required another set of unit plans. Even though any modern development in Southern California comes with air conditioning standard, the arid climate allows for a reasonably comfortable lifestyle with very little air conditioning if windows and fans are used judiciously.
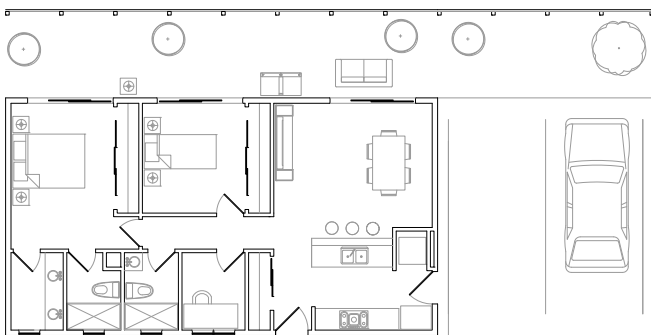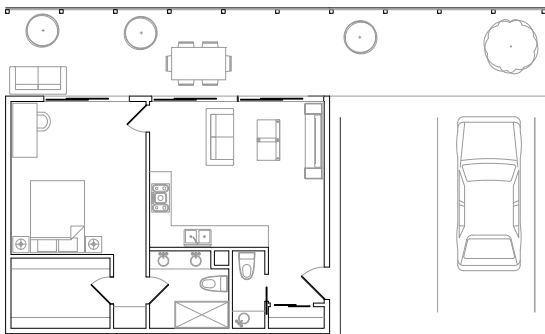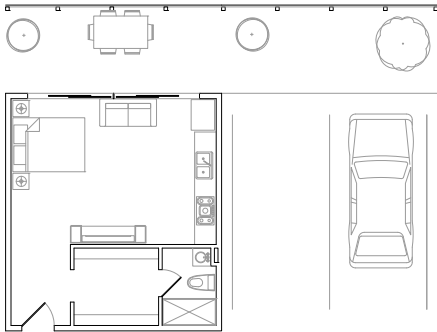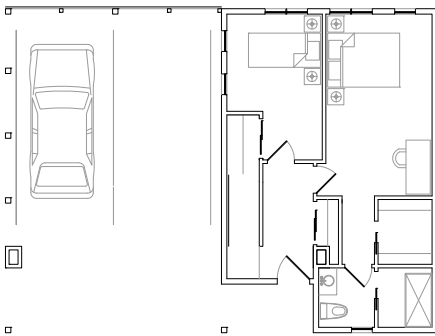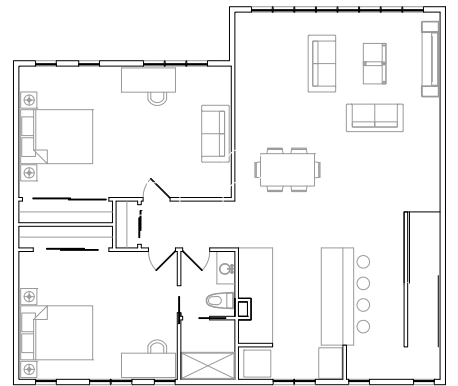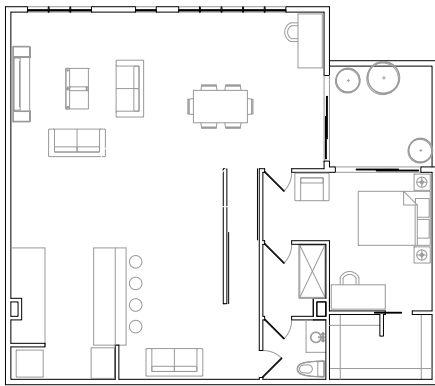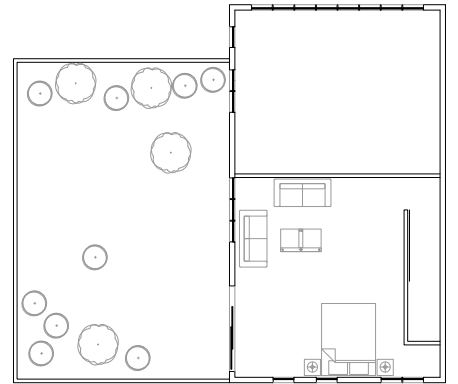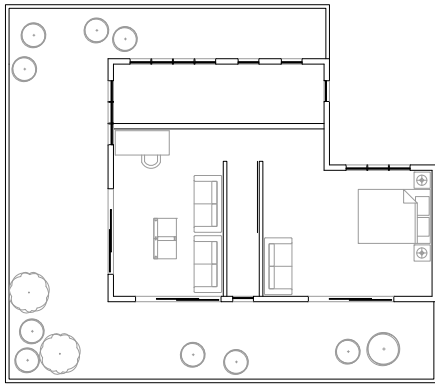
Townhouses
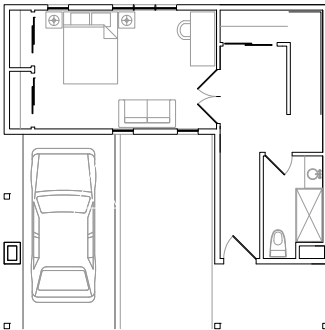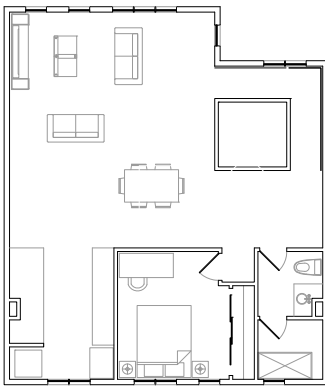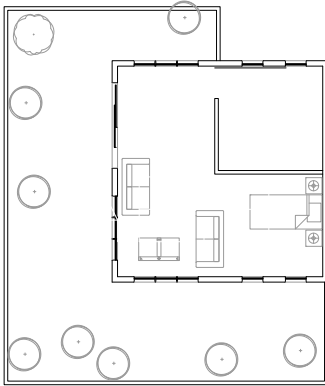
The townhouses are considerably less constrained. These units are stick frame construction on top of the concrete structure. While zoning and building codes were not major generators of the project, the IBC requirement for a 75' maximum floor elevation for "low rise construction" and the Alhambra Zoning 110' maximum building height created a condition where one could build two-story townhouses with a mezzanine level (enclosing less than a third of the footprint) and roof garden on top, slipping between both requirements.

The pipes affected some layout, especially at the first level, but with stick frame construction, plumbing was not as major determinant on the overall form. Unlike the concrete grid of apartment units, a visual volumetric and rhythmical flow became the major determinant in the design of these units were designed.
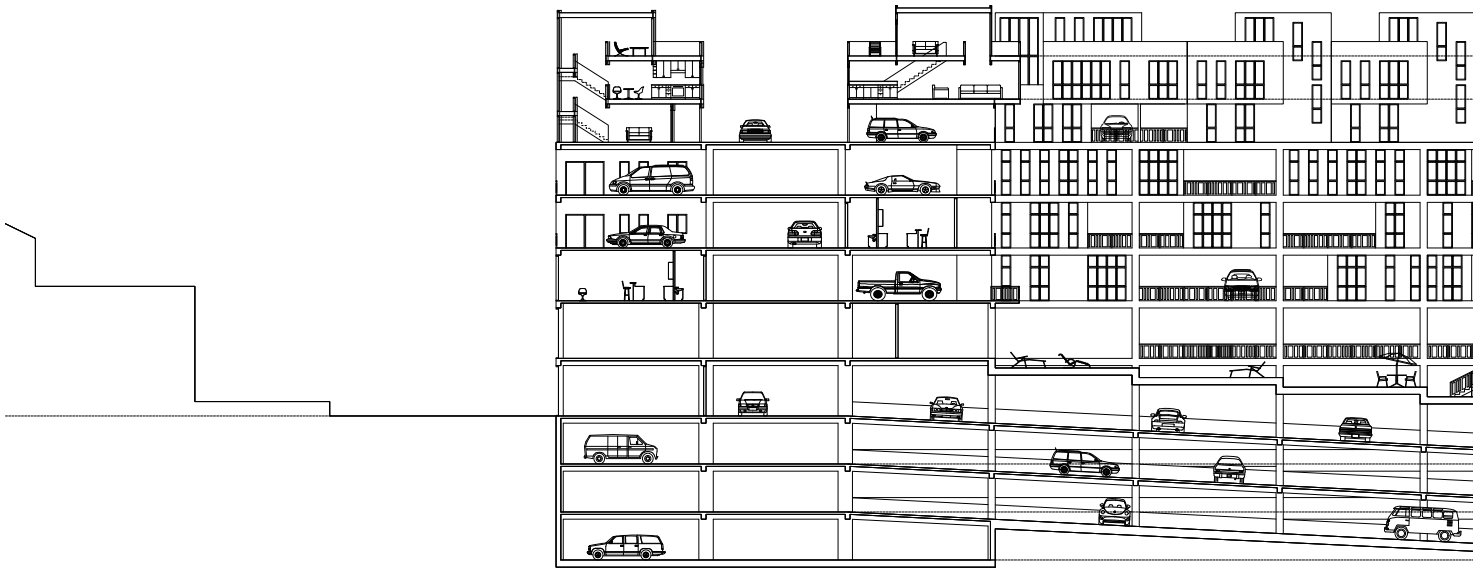
section A through the Garage looking towards Main Street
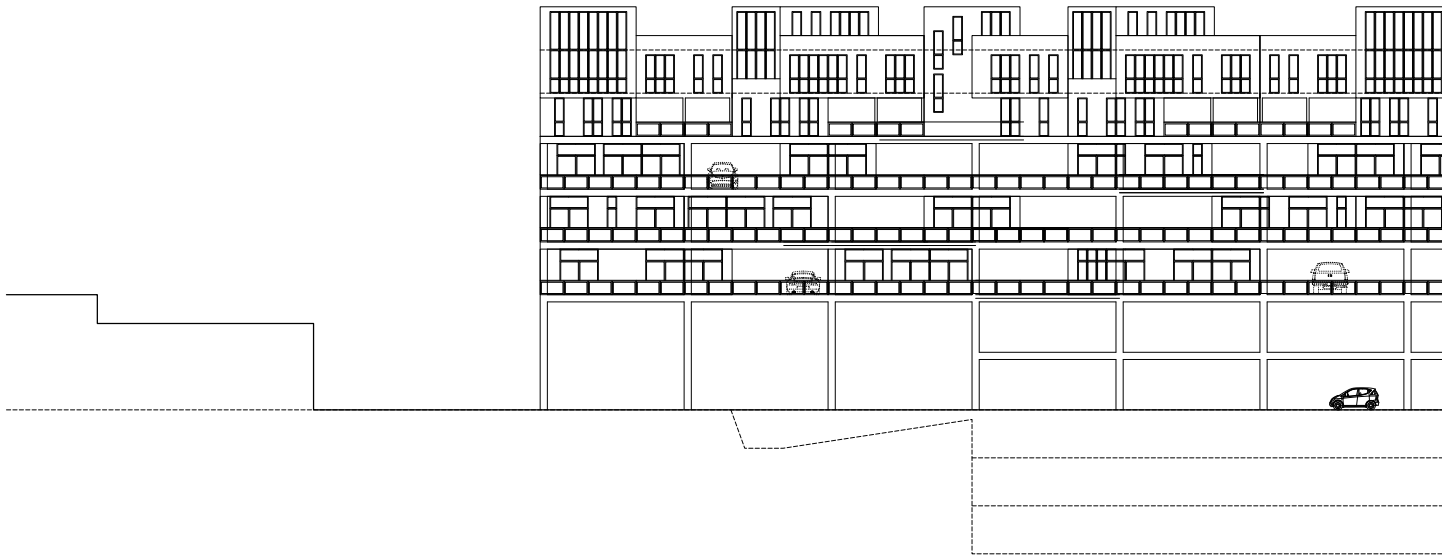
elevation B along Main Street
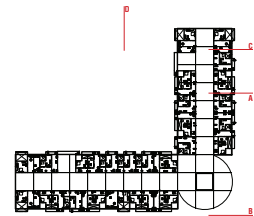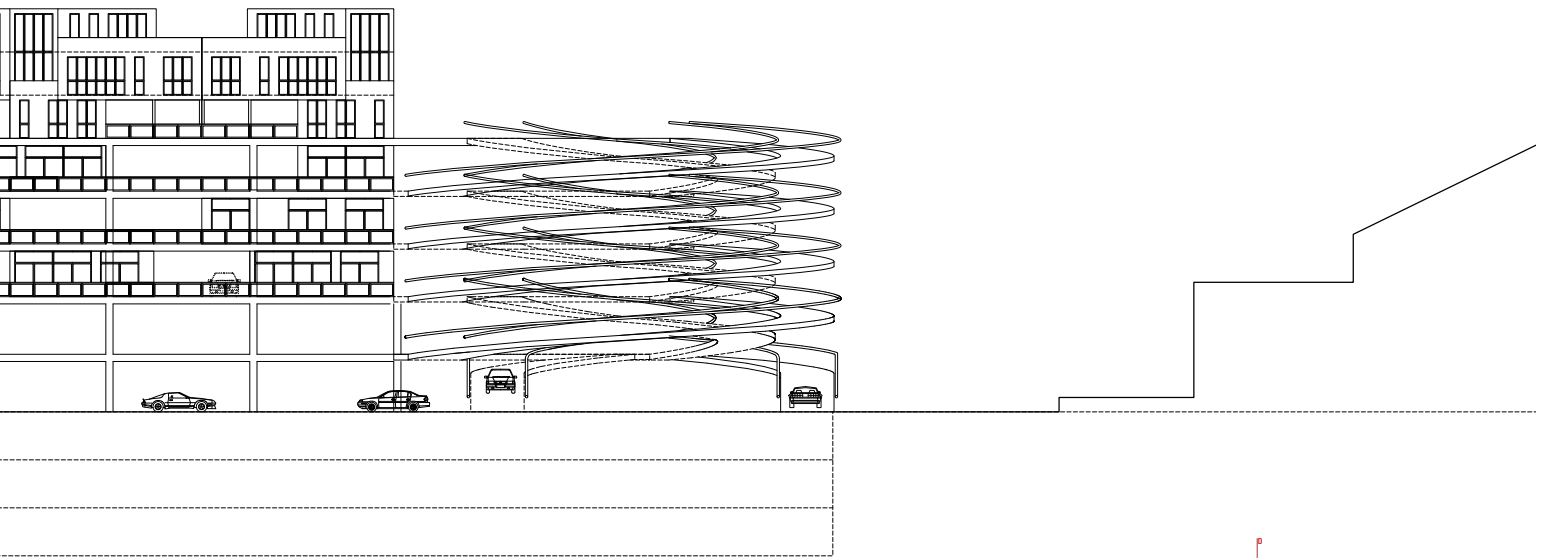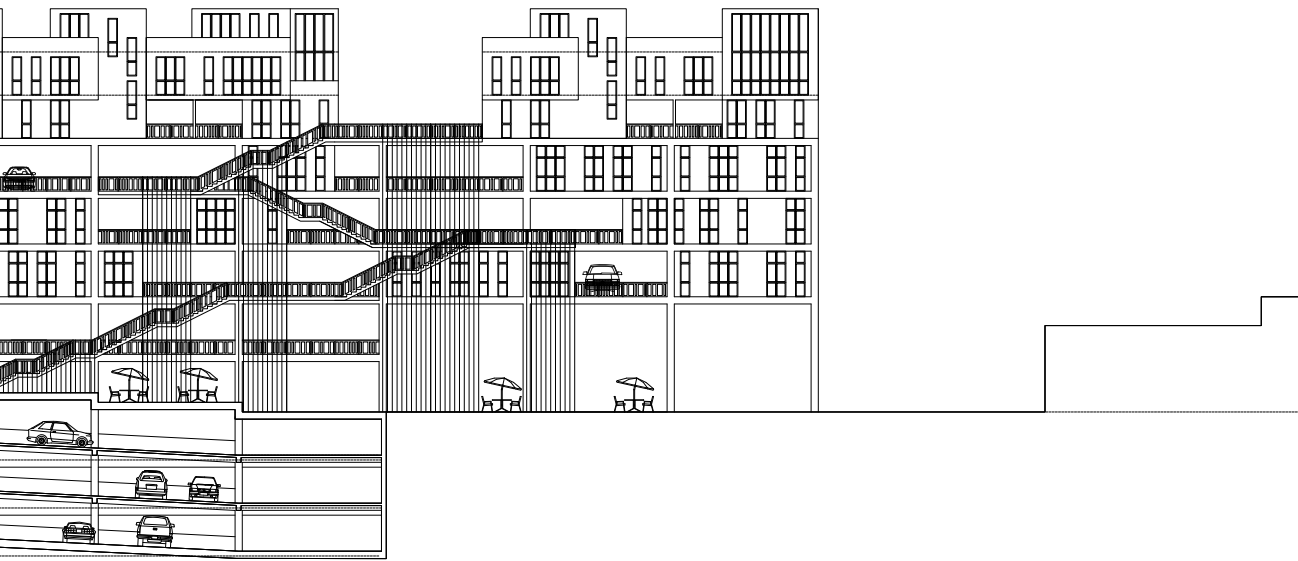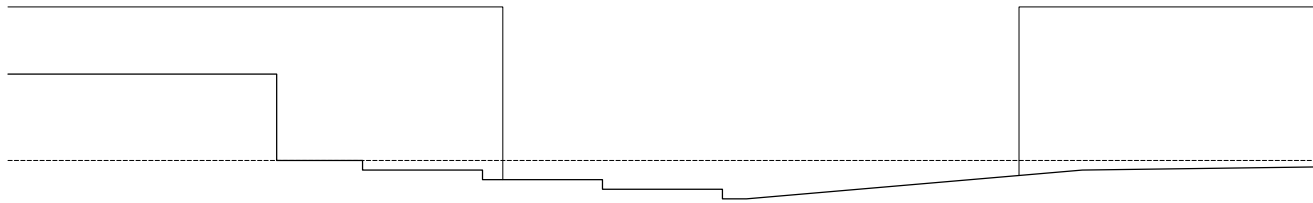
section C through the Park looking towards the townhouses
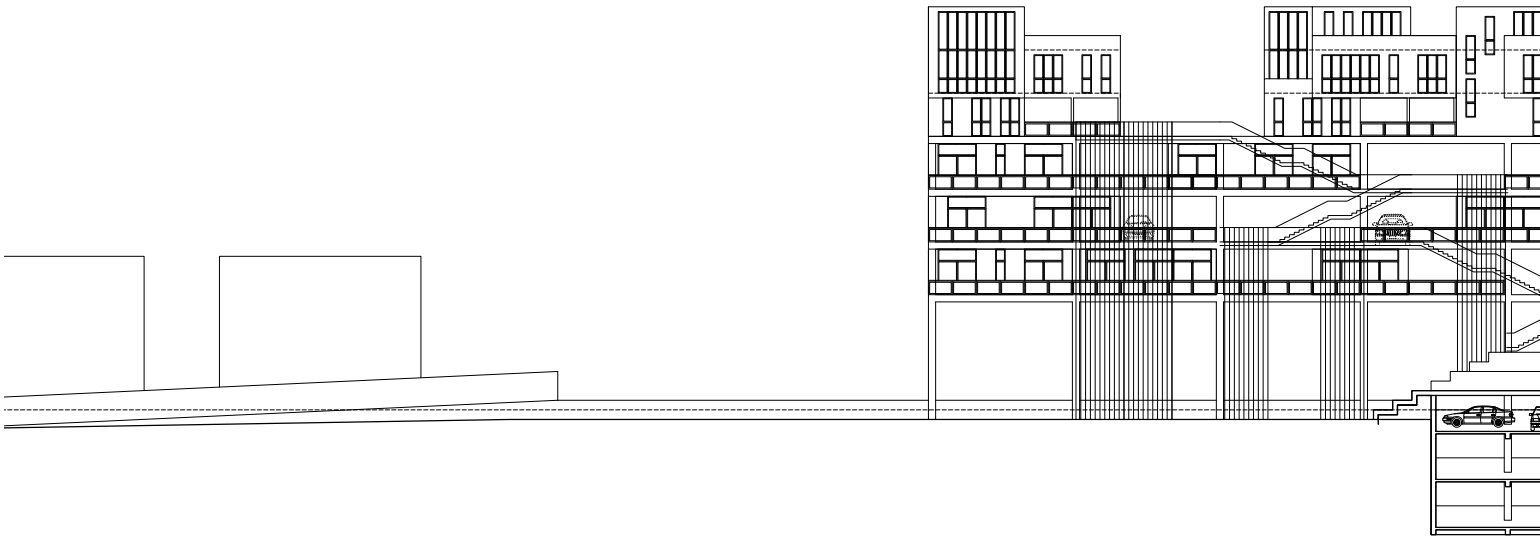
section D through the Terrace looking towards the church
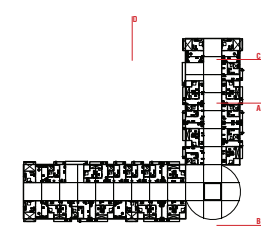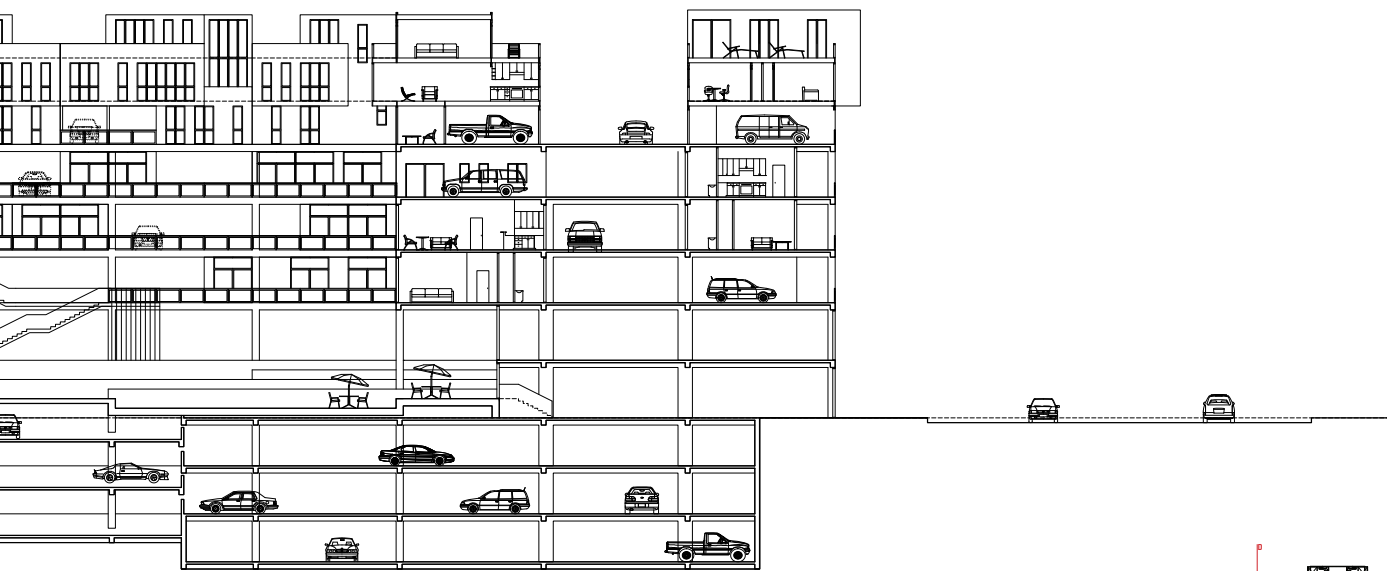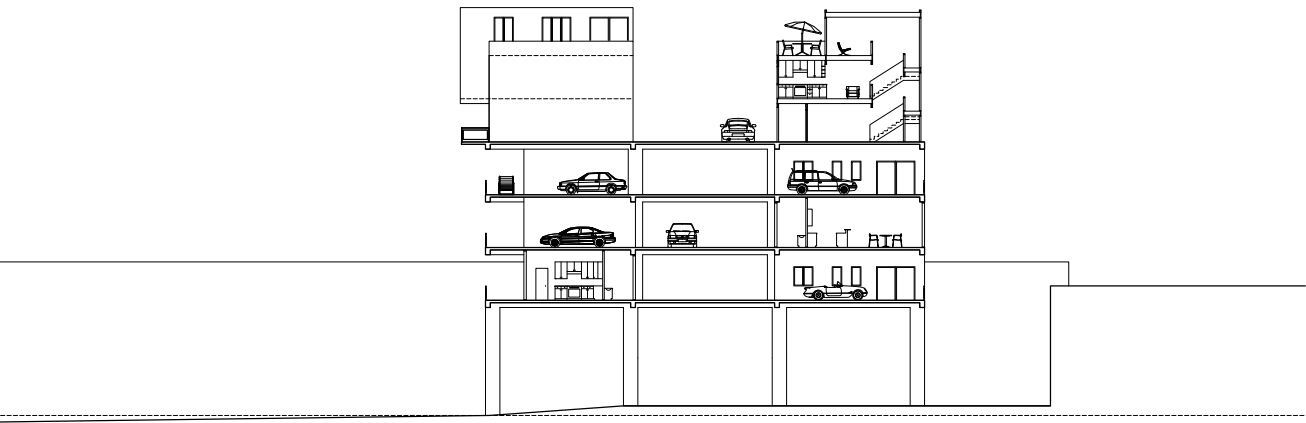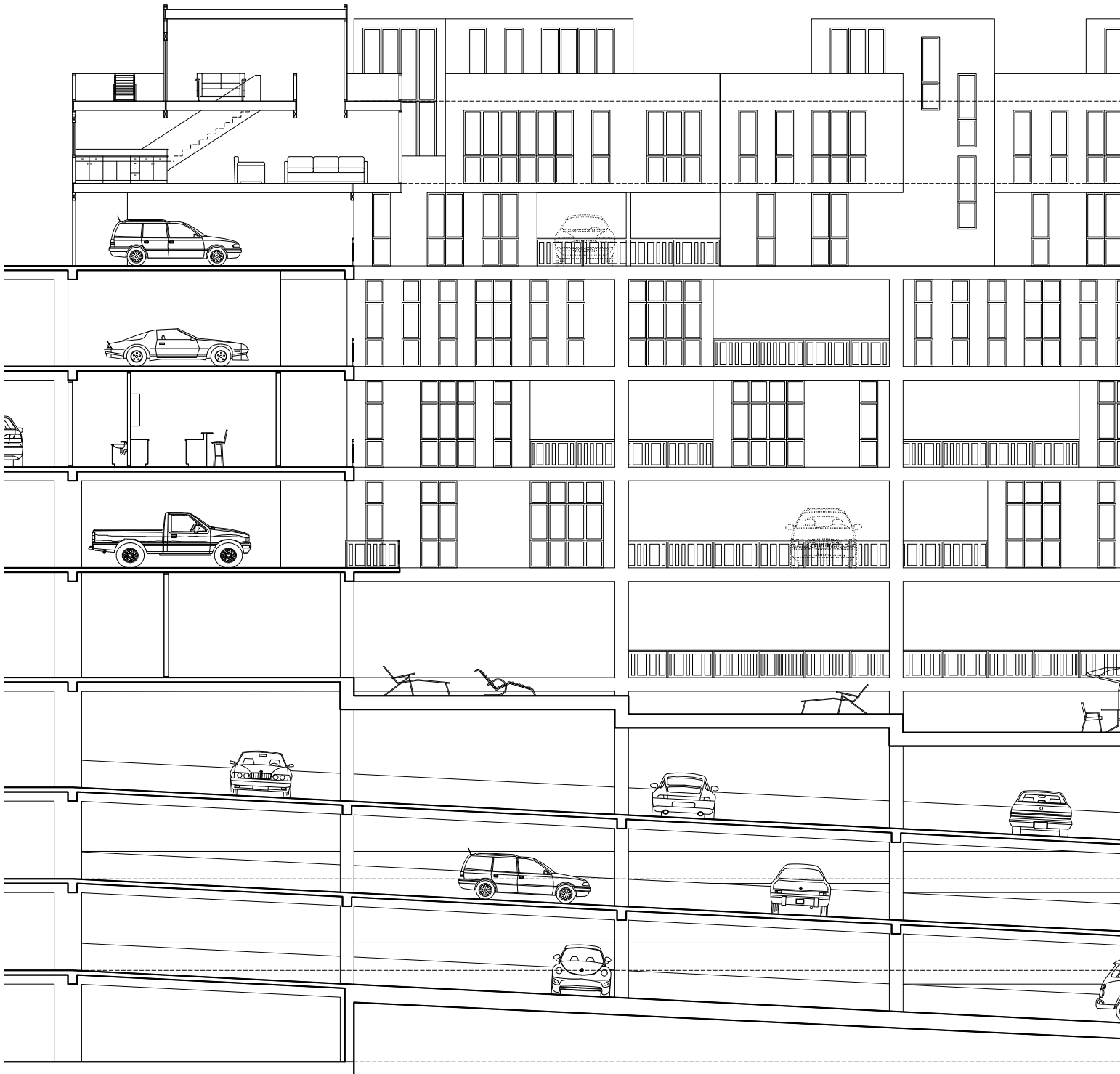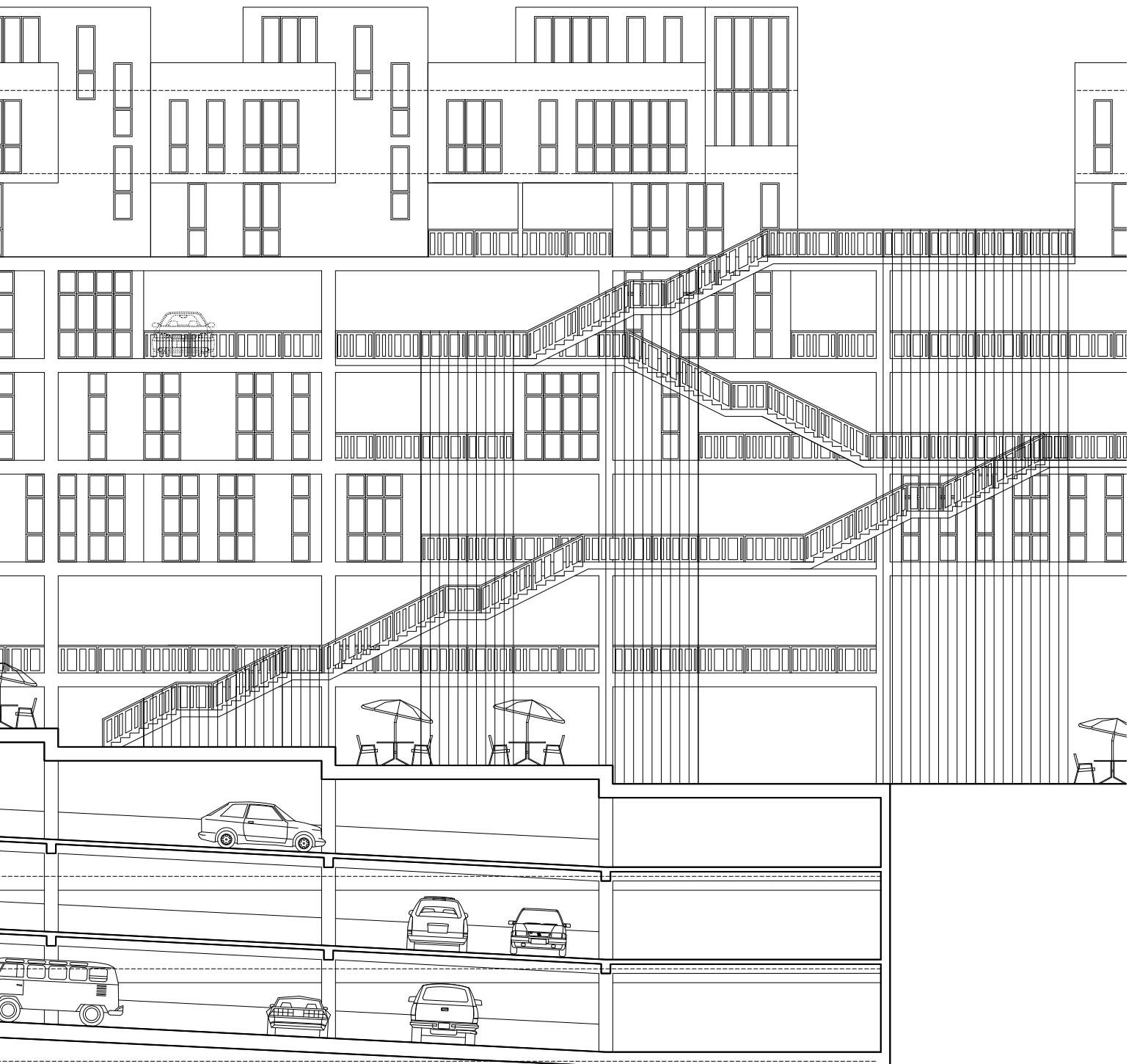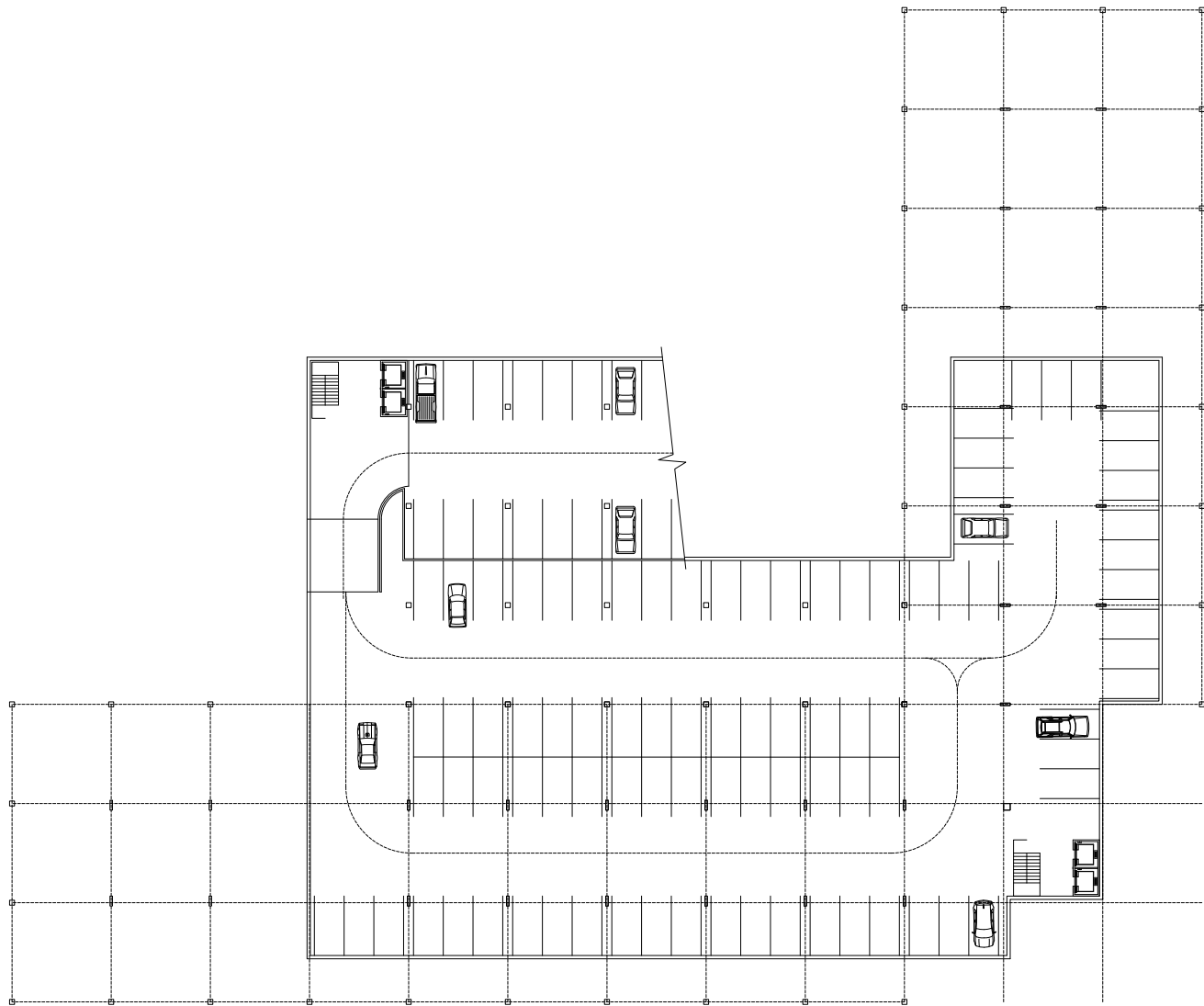
Garage -3
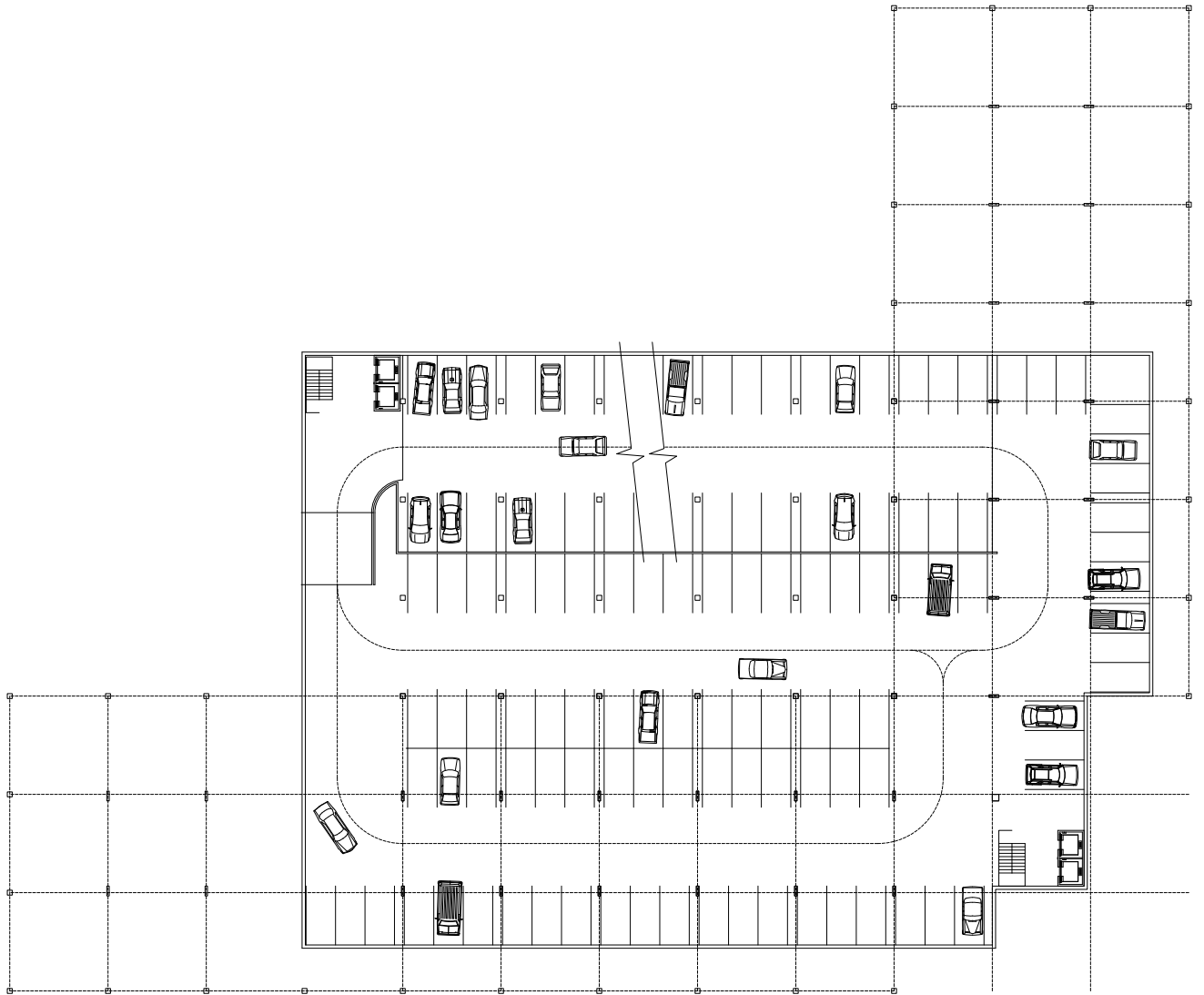
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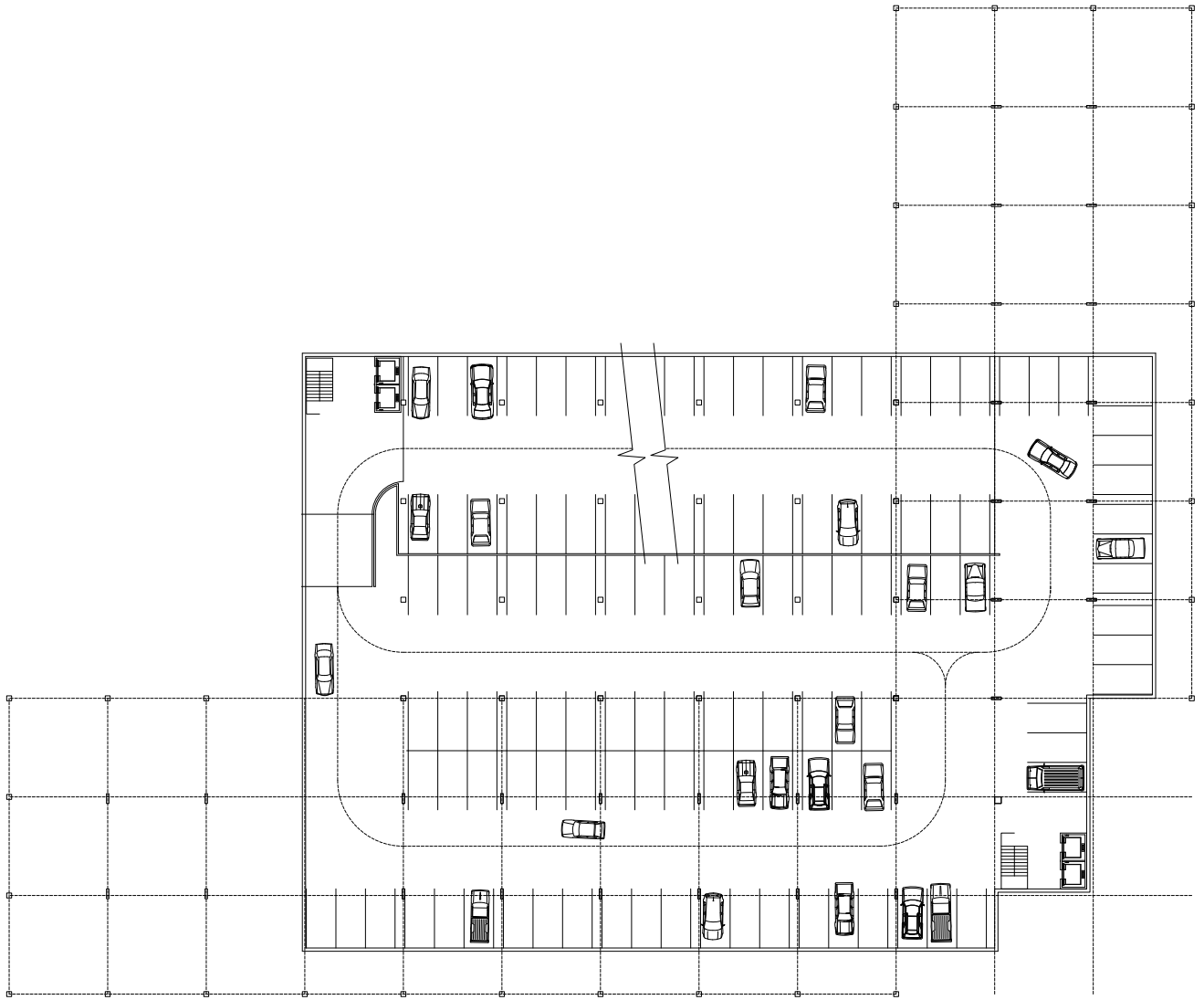
Garage -1
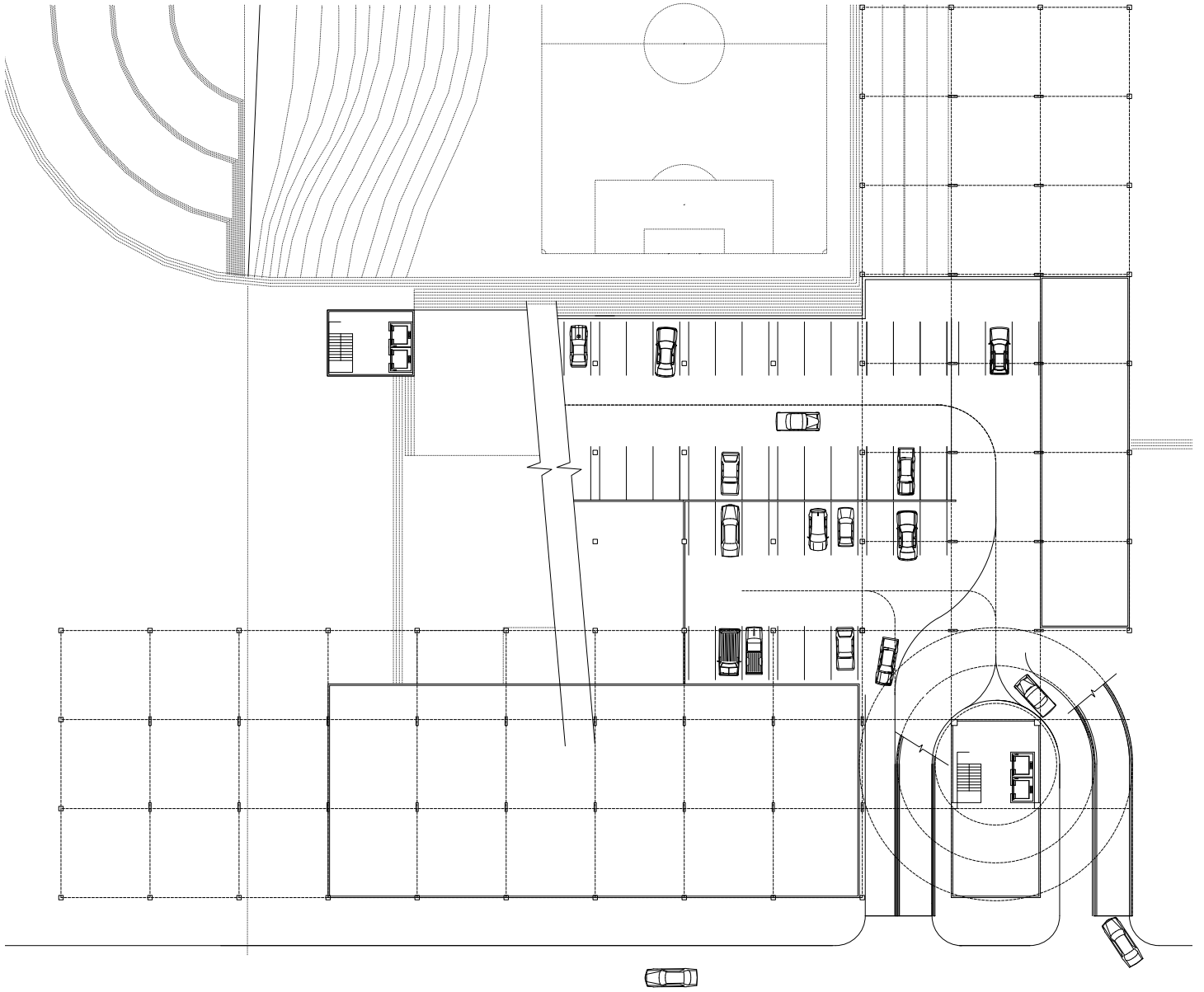
Retail 1

91
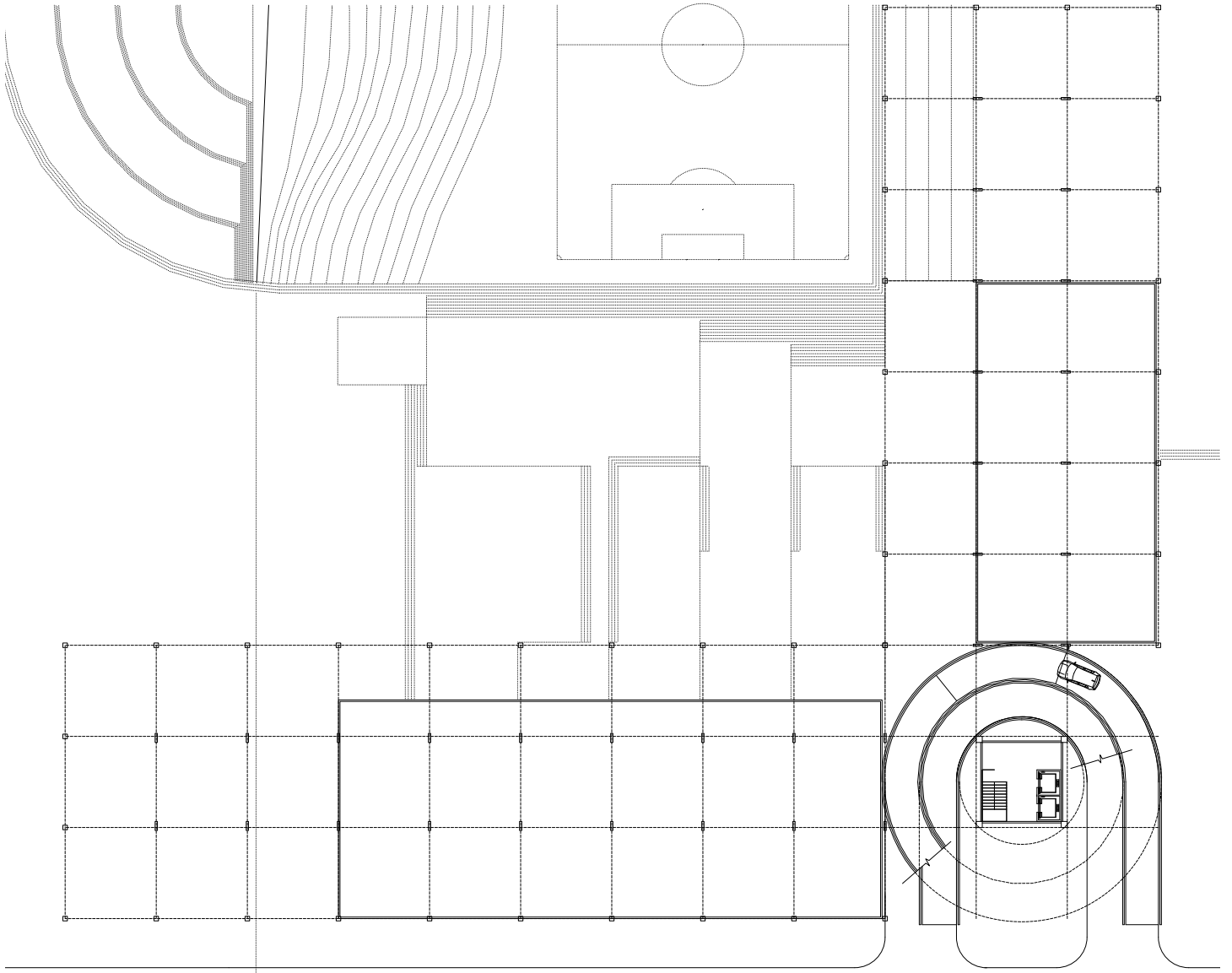
Retail 2

Residential 1

93

Residential 2

Residential 3

95
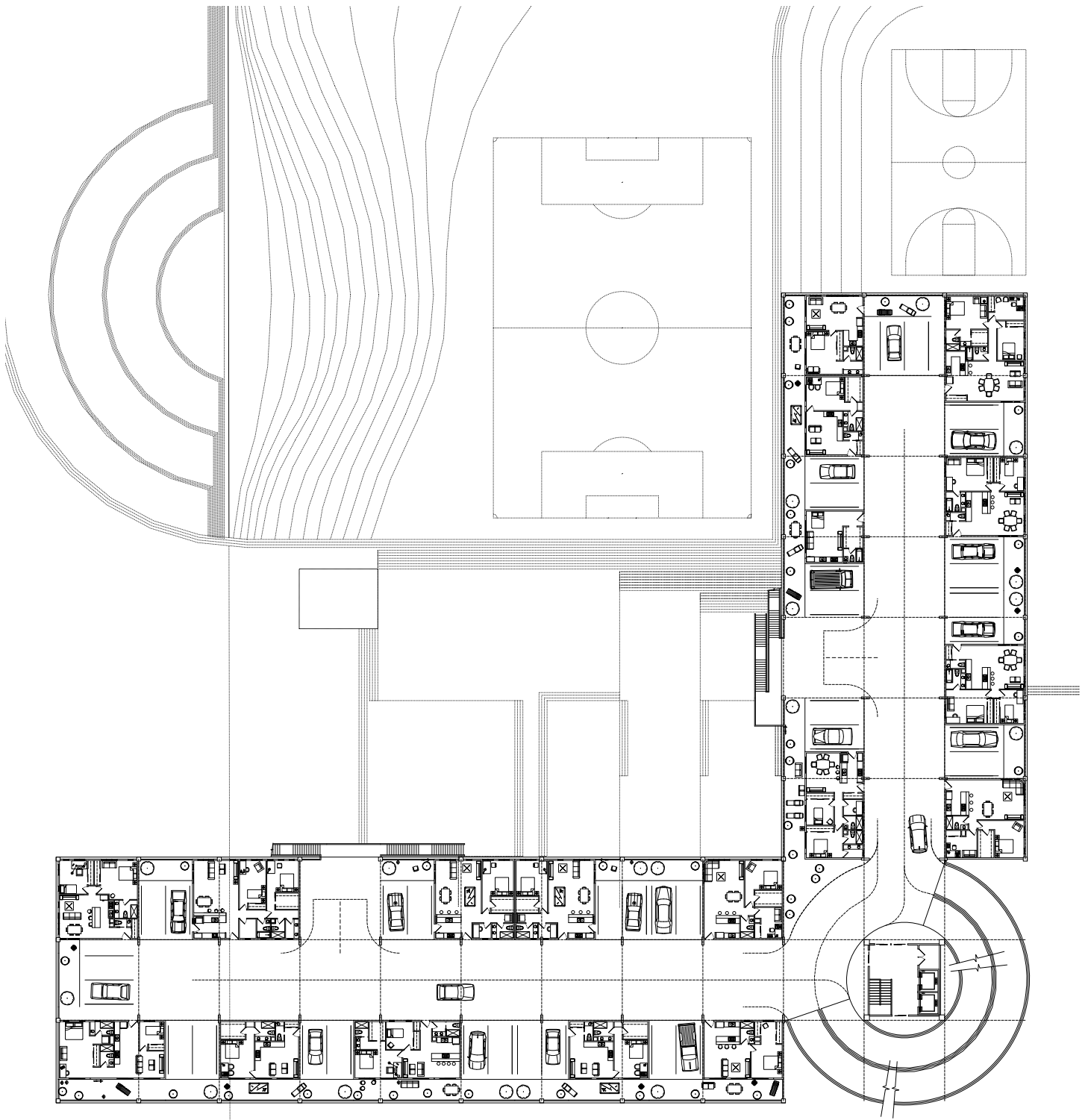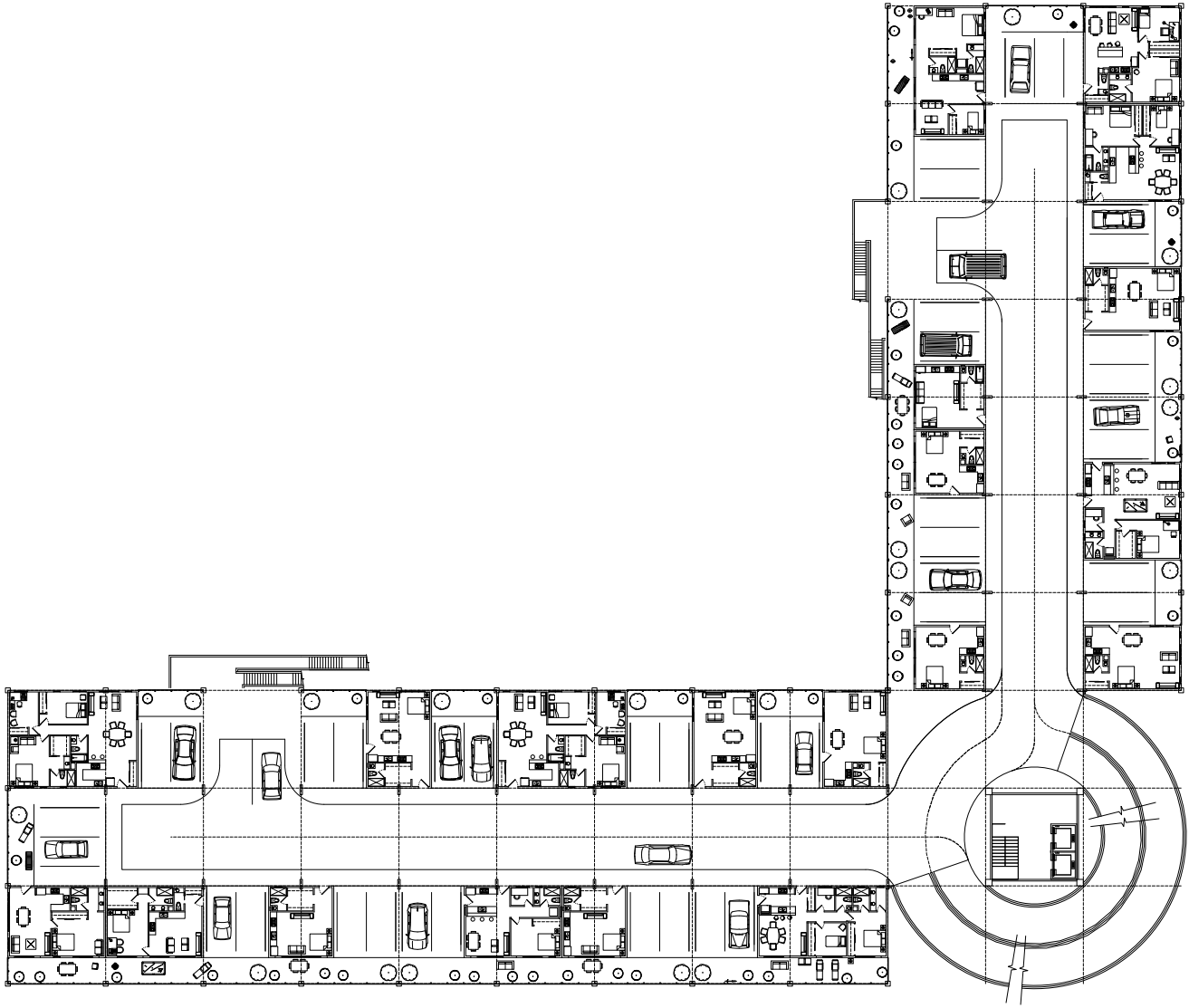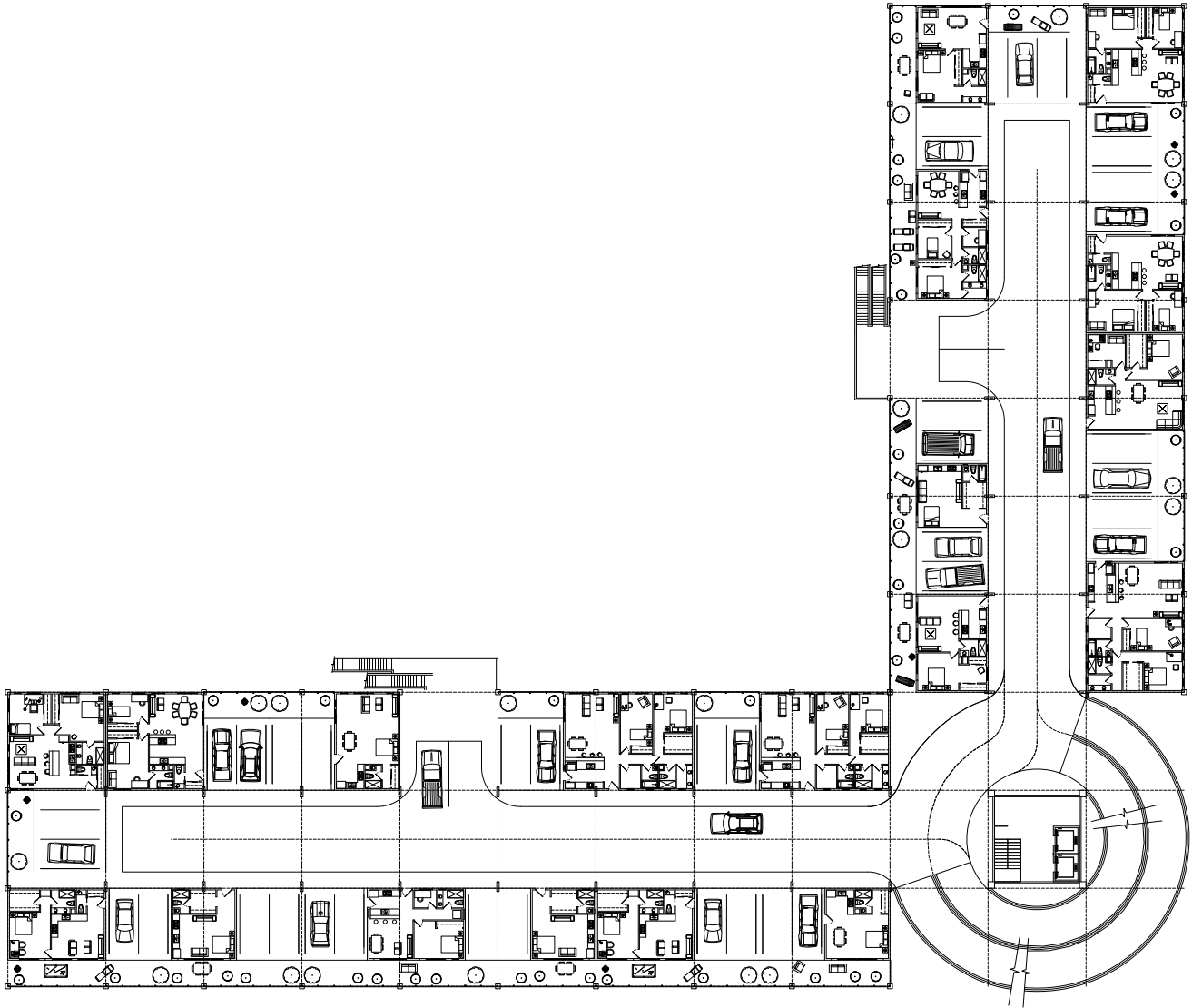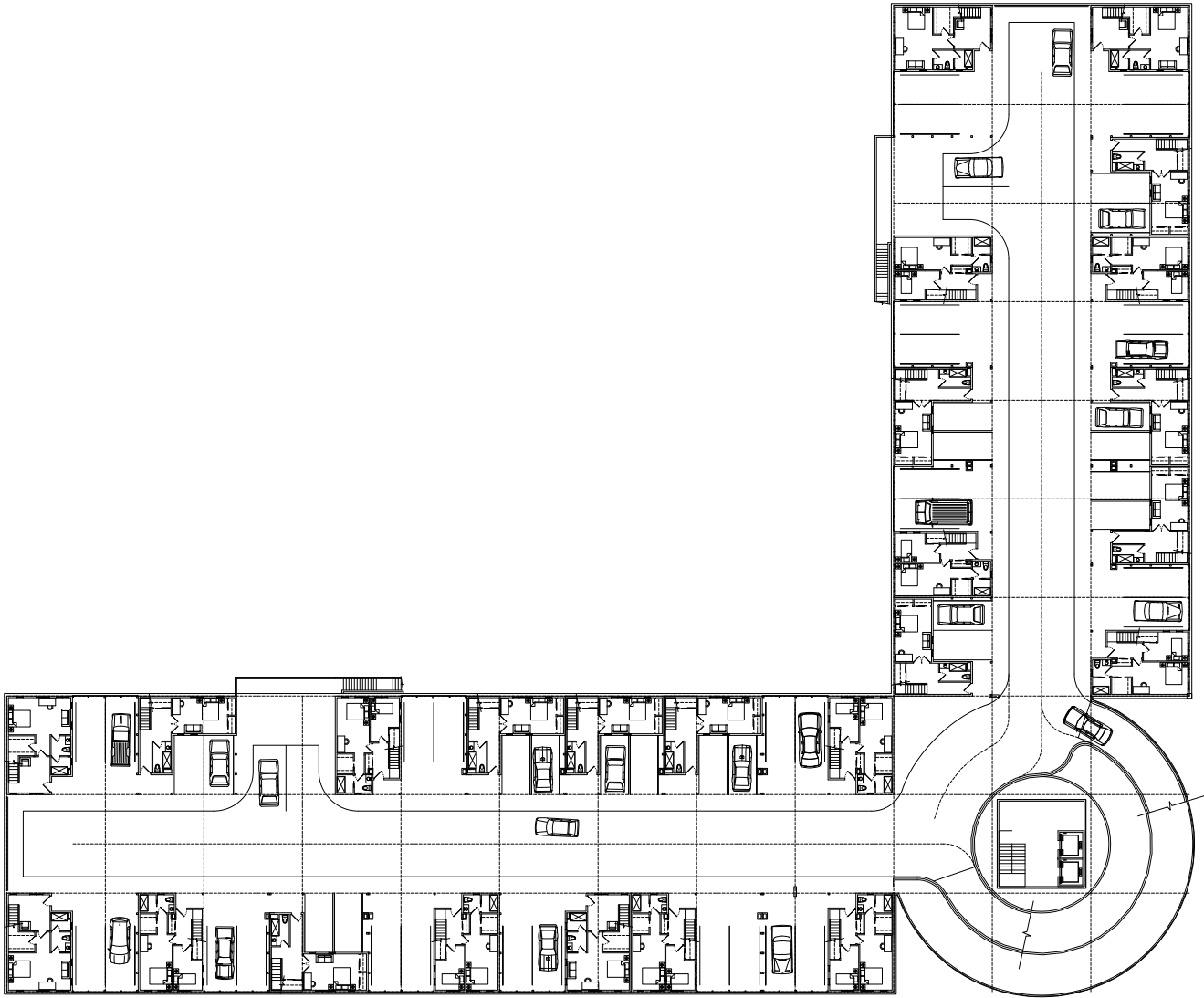
Townhouse 1

Townhouse 2

97

Townhouse 3

101
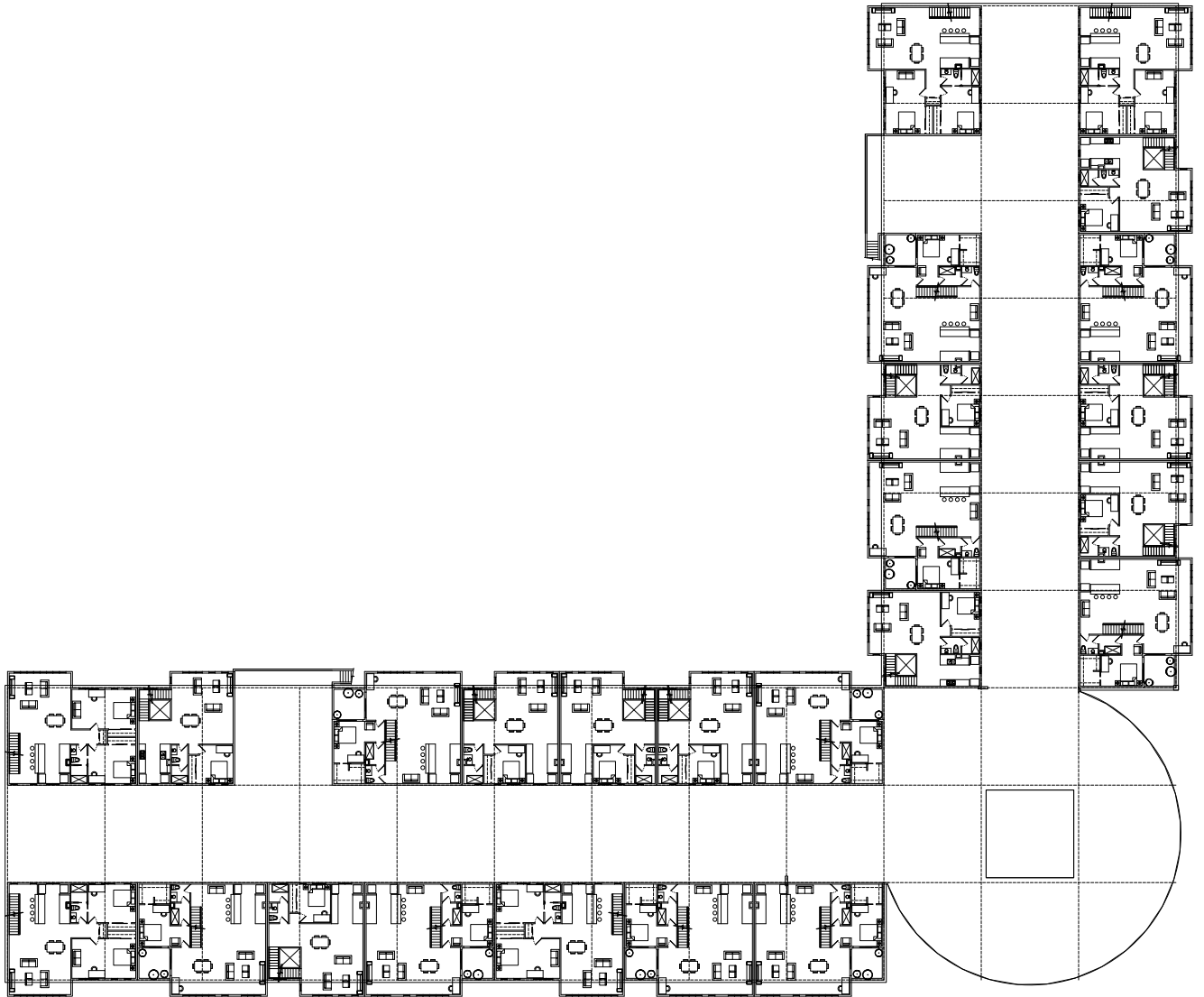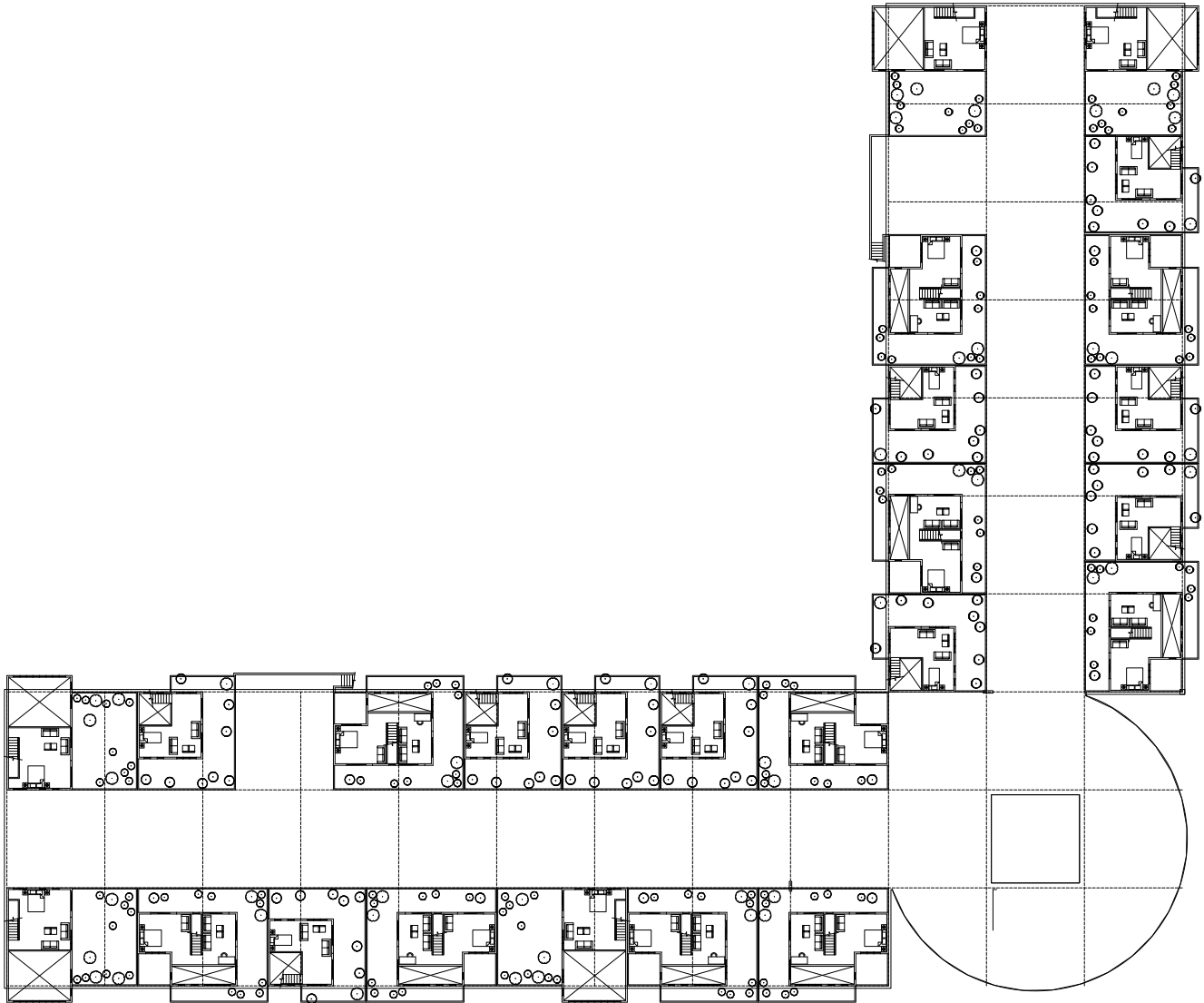
103
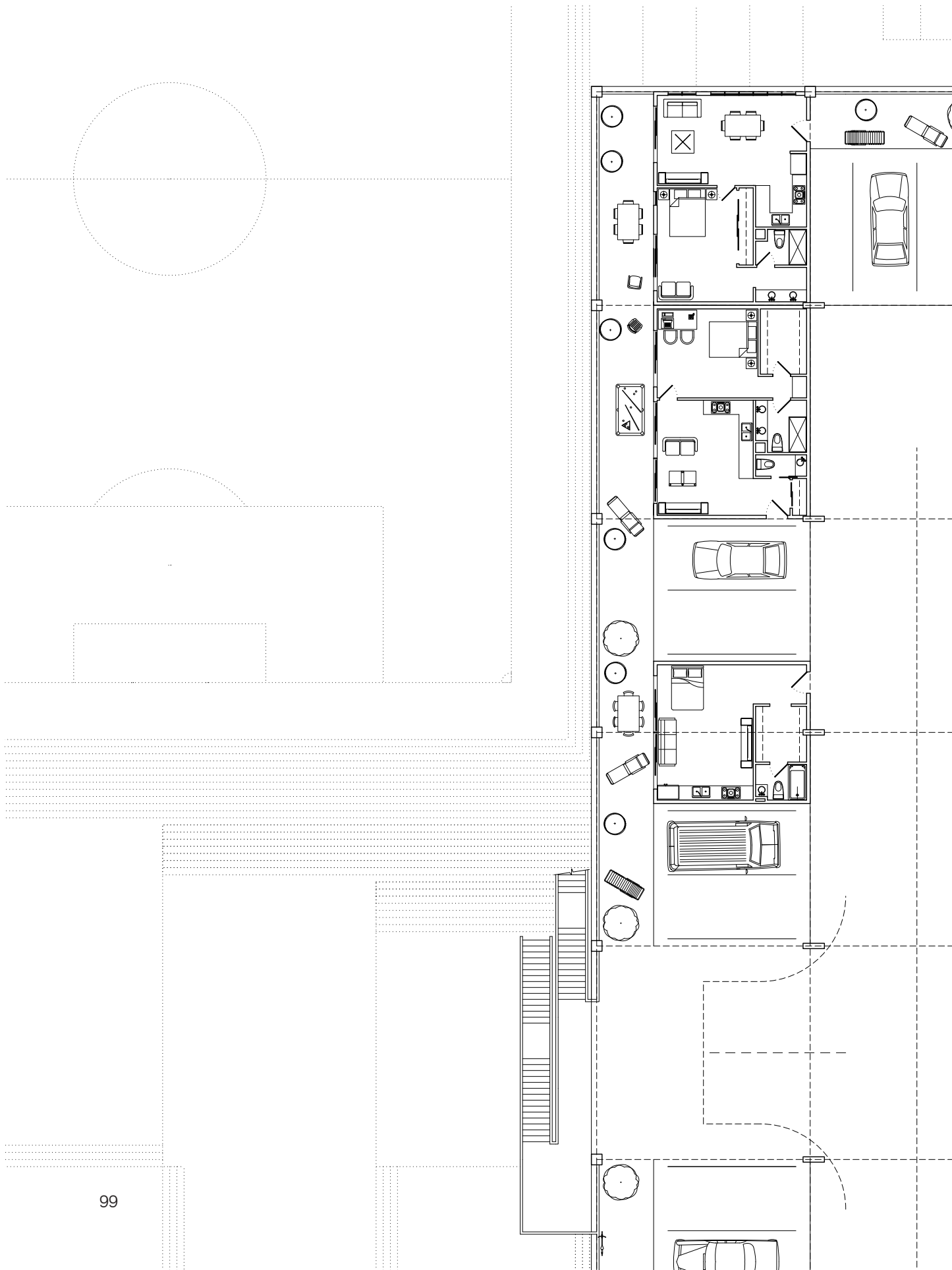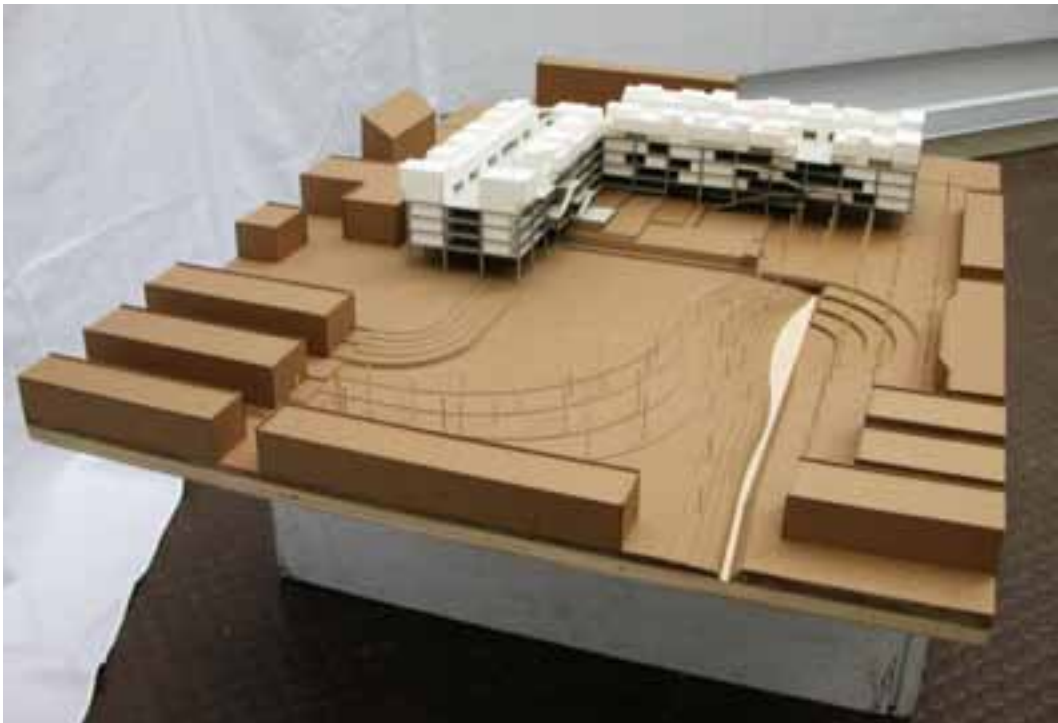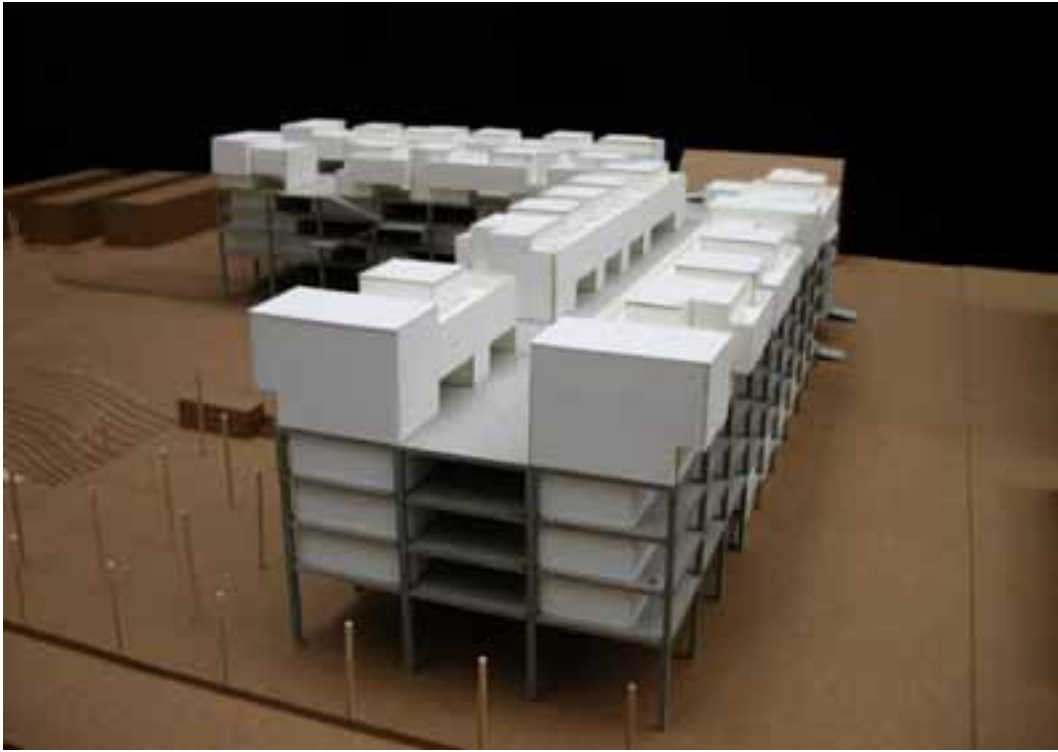
once again thanks to Jing Gu, David Jefferis, Stephanie Millet, and Peter Stanley!

111

park

townhomes

listen

retail
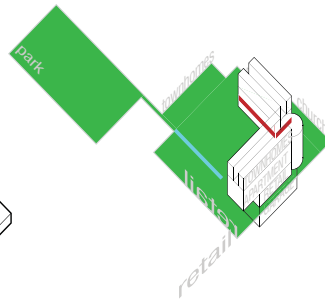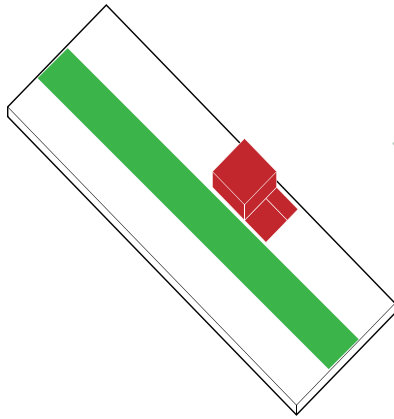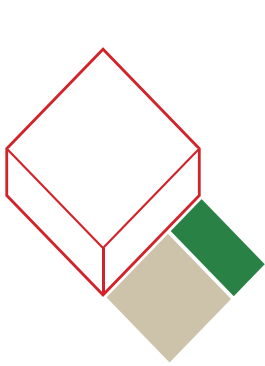
multiple scales
a friendlier mixing of cars and people

Apartment

**Parking
Garage**

Park

Conclusion

Instead of revolutionizing any given piece, this project focuses on organizing conventional pieces differently. The units are fairly standard, the park accommodates a range of popular uses, and the parking requirements are accepted as-is. The innovations are found in actively tying the parking with their apartment units, figuring how such a piping system can work, and imagining how one can retrofit the front facing parking lot within a new parking-lot park paradigm. It was through these little moves that the project was able to subtly reintroduce some of the sociological and political concerns raised in my earlier research.

Even though the car is often blamed for social isolation, this project tries to stimulate social interaction through respecting the demands of the car, exploiting the inefficiencies of the automobile infrastructure for creating slippage zones where daily informal interactions.

This project works in multiple scales for such informal interaction to create a friendlier mix of car and people. Each piece is connected to other pieces as well as the larger whole. The parking spaces give each unit a little distance but also open space for interacting with the neighbors. Through the woonerf, each unit is connected to their floors; the stairs and the park ties the different floors to the overall site; and each site is part of a new city of connected parking lots turned into a Parking Garage Apartment Parks.

Los Angeles is running out of land

but not people.

Density is not "if?" but how?

DESERT

MOUNTAINS

MOUNTAINS   FEDERAL LANDS

MOUNTAINS

CAMP PENDELTON

PACIFIC OCEAN
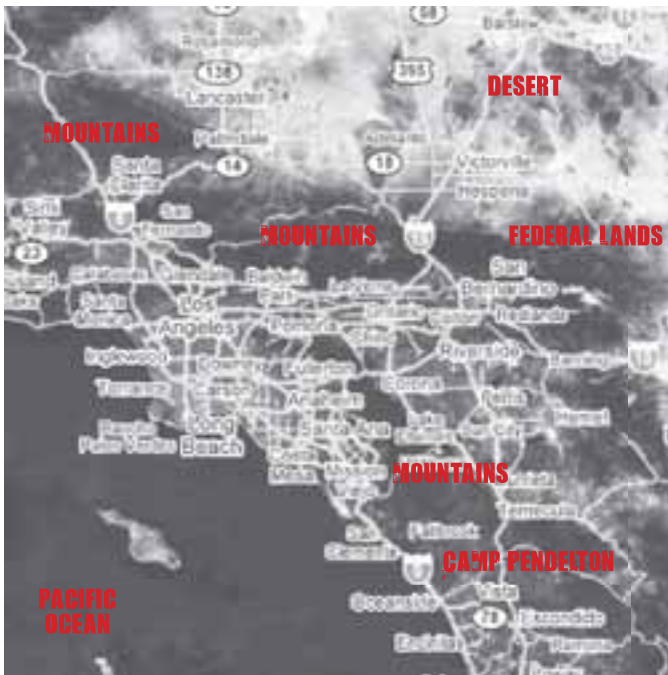
0.0 Introduction
density is not a choice
Migration + Babies + Limits = Density

With an increasing population the city has hit geographic and infrastructural limits to sprawl. **Densification is happening.** This thesis explores ways of making it happen.

This proposal is structured in two parts. The first part examines the spatial and political nature of Los Angeles. Historically, expansion has been car-based and actively segregated. These spatial-political decisions have intentionally created a fragmented city, isolating groups and individuals. **As spatial intervention, increasing density is inherently political**, new density will effect fragmentation – but it may exacerbate not integrate.

The second part looks at three architectural proposals, concluding that foreign, academic, and nostalgic typologies are incomplete, inadequate and inappropriate because they do not account for the unique Angeleno socio-spatial conditions and thus do not adequately address the unique problems found in Los Angeles. **I conclude with my proposal to operate on existing conditions for increasing density.** Instead of starting over, I intend to **infill** local Los Angeles typologies to increase density and explore the possibilities of de-fragmenting this deeply divided city.

Justus Pang 070418.2

Appendix 1 - The Process, from Prethesis Proposal to Final Boards

Through their success, and that of those who came before them,

Los Angeles demonstrated the efficacy of a new model of urban

growth – dispersed, multi-centered and largely suburbanized.

The next chapter of Los Angeles' history will be how to build on this legacy, providing a true quality of life.

Trying to become
a faux New York,
or a sun-drenched Paris,
is not our mission.

Having developed the predominant global form of dispersed

urbanity, Los Angeles needs to show how to make that model work.

"Don't Dismiss L.A.-Style Sprawl as a Failed Experiment", Joel Kotkin

7009
PERSONS PER SQ MI

DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES, CA

MORENO VALLEY, CA 59 MI.

MANHATTAN, NY

STONY BROOK, NY 46 MI.

5239
PERSONS PER SQ MI

1.1 Density as a Spatial Condition
#1 density
LA is 1.3 times as dense as NYC (urbanized areas)

Looking it another way, Paris city center is almost as dense as Manhattan. The difference in urban form in these city centers is analogous to the difference between the Los Angeles and New York urbanized areas, namely **an even mat can be as efficient as a towering needle.**

Beyond geographic constraints, two others reasons explain this disparity. First, desert development depends on major infrastructural and governmental support to provide and eliminate water. Unlike Atlantic and Southern states, it is impossible to start a subdivision by digging a well and installing septic tanks. Secondly, many Western cities have expanded to meet working class demands for affordable housing as opposed to creating suburban estate tracts for the upper middle classes desire for a piece of the country.

That said, Los Angeles is not an undifferentiated mat like Miami. **Los Angeles is a highly fragmented region with multiple autonomous cores.** Unlike Manhattan however, no single core holds the area together. Furthermore **polycentricity** is reinforced by its boulevard system that has strung office development linearly (though not as far flung as the freeways of Texan urbanism).

Justus Pang 070418.4

ITS NOT AS IF NO CHURNING AMONG CLASSES OCCURS IN LOS ANGELES. MANY OF THESE EXPERIENCES, HOWEVER, ARE LESS THAN POSITIVE: YOUNG PROFESSIONALS STEPPING OVER THE HOMELESS AS THEY STROLL FROM LOFT TO LUXURY CAR, OR LEGIONS OF LATINO HOUSEKEEPERS REPORTING TO WORK FOR WEALTHY WHITES IN PACIFIC PALISADES.

THEY ARE INTERACTING AS MASTER AND SERVANT.

fragmented isolation
Regionally, Racially, Personally

While pundits have overlooked the density of Los Angeles, no one misses the isolation and fragmentation splitting the city through multiple scales.

Regionally, Los Angeles is a collection of, "urban realms, folded into one. These realms bump against one another and may even overlap somewhat, **but their cores are largely autonomous.**"

Beyond regions, the city dissolves into cultural, economic, and racial enclaves cemented by a universal fear of crime by the others. These racial distinctions are then economically subdivided through satellite enclaves. For example, Chinatown was overshadowed in the 1980's by Monterey Park - which has been followed with another jump into Rowland Heights.

The glue that keeps this city rolling is the same that keeps it from gelling. With the car as the domestic buffer between private realms, there is little opportunity for incidental interaction between strangers outside of one's economic and racial brackets. "**Los Angeles is structured around individual control over personal travel.**"

quotes (text): Robert Lang, Edgless Cities, and Ed Soja, Postmetropolis
quote (image):"A Grand Vision for Affordable Housing" Rick Wartzman, Los Angeles Times
Justus Pang 070418.5
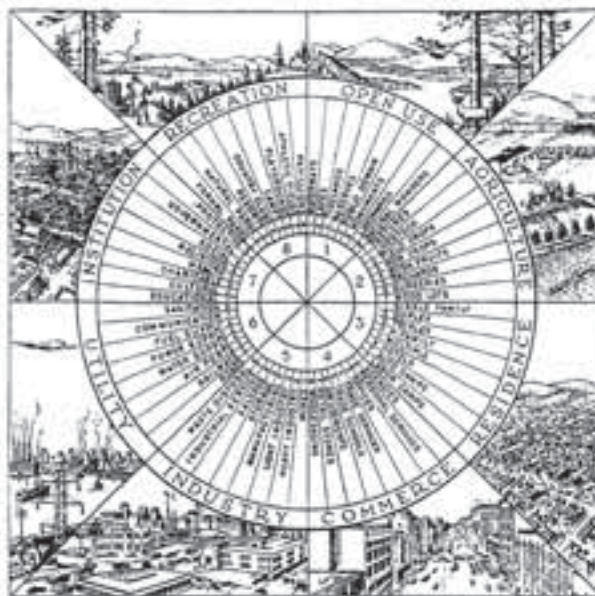
CLASSIFICATION OF LAND USES
Regional Land Use Planning Commision, LA County, 1920's

space is political
product and producer of hidden injustices

In 1904, Los Angeles became the first city in America to implement zoning. **The fragmentation of Los Angeles is an outcome not an accident.**

Mike Davis' reading of Los Angeles depicts **a city of exploitation and exclusion**, corruption and destitution. Through succesessive generations, power has used every means (culturally, racially, geographically, religiously), to create a city with a ready supply of cheap labor in barricaded proximity, nearby but never contaminated.

Furthermore, Ed Soja contends that reactionary postmodernists such as Ronald Reagan worked spatially to "hide consequences from us, [We must be insistently aware] **how relations of power and discipline are inscribed into the apparently innocent spatiality of social life**, how human geographies become filled with politics and ideology." Spatial readings of the city are important may unveiling "progress" as merely the creation of new forms of exclusion and exploitation that historicist approaches may overlook.

Steven Flusty's "Building Paranoia" article is a numbing catalog in how architecture and urban design is used in Los Angeles to restrict access. On the other hand, Norman Klein's "History of Forgetting" looks at how strategic erasures are used by the city to sculpt its identity.
Justus Pang 070418.6

no / slow growth
"don't build it and they won't come"

One of the clearest examples of the politics of density is the rise of homeowners associations and their slow growth campaigns.

Homeowners associations were established in the 1940's to influence zoning and maintain segregation. As neighborhoods experienced densification through multi-family construction in the 1960's and as suburban areas saw "their" hillsides being developed, middle class whites began to fume at a percieved decline in the quality of their lives. Of course, **the rhetoric of density didn't mean just space and lifestyle, it also meant segregation, both racially and economically.** These sentiments exploded in the early 1970's, and municipal governments and developers were buried under a "revolt of the rich against the poor," as the whole region erupted with referendums and growth restrictions.

These restrictions bore fruit in the 1990's when only one house was built for every two new families in the area. The median house price is now 11.4 times the median household income, **making Los Angeles the most unaffordable housing market** in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Australia and New Zealand.

Demographia.com International Housing Affordability (home ownership) Survey (2006)   Justus Pang 070418.7
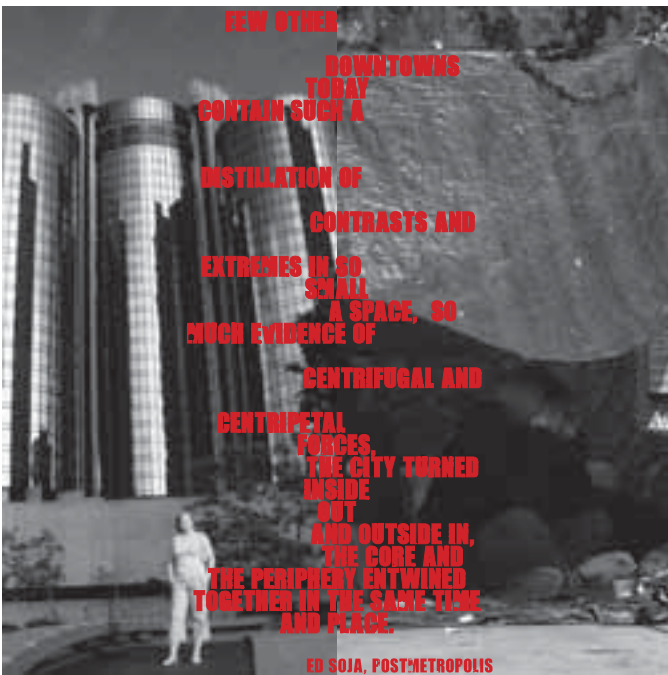
isolating densities
increasing densities in Downtown L.A.

Downtown Los Angeles experienced two very distinct densifications during the 1980's. Flush with cash, Asian capital heavily invested in Downtown sprouting skyscrapers at the same time Reagan heavily disinvested in social programs precipitating an epidemic of homelessness.

Given the network of existing services in Downtown, the homeless began to concentrate where city leaders have harbored dreamed of grandeur. With nowhere else to go, Los Angeles has chosen the non-solution, instigating a war of containment: concentrating them on Skid Row, constantly attacking the quality of life (such as demolishing the only public restroom on Skid Row) and generally hiding them from the desirable white collar workers whenever they aren't needed by downtown business establishment for their cheap and timely labor during peak moments of loading and unloading.

Architects have become complicit members in this battle, designing fortress like podiums and conspicuously guarded "public" spaces. **Increased density alone will not challenge fragmentation or isolation.** When the distance of space becomes too short to hide the poor, good design can help make them disappear.

Justus Pang 070418.8

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I knew a good deal about Idle Valley, and I knew it had changed a great deal from the days when they had the gatehouse at the

entrance and the private police force, and the gambling casino on the lake, and the fifty-dollar joy girls. Quiet money had taken

over the tract after the casino was closed out. Quiet money had made it **a subdivider's dream and if they didn't want you in**

the club, you didn't get to play.

It was **exclusive** in the sense of the word that
doesn't mean merely expensive.

I belonged in Idle Valley like a pearl onion on a banana split.

The Long Goodbye, Raymond Chandler

2.1 Contemporary Urbanisms
new urbanism
love it or hate it

It is impossible to ignore the importance and prominence of New Urbanism in contemporary American planning practice. How can one to argue with the concept of dense transit oriented development with lively mixed use and pleasant open spaces that promotes pedestrian activities?

However, "traditional" neighborhood design" raises a major question whose "tradition?", and is a 19th century white townscape applicable for a 21st century polyglot city?

That said, the guarded critique of Ed Soja in Postmetropolis seems appropriate: "New Urbanism can be easily dismissed as opportunistic interventions marketing hypersimulations of urban utopia to a middle class population... But it is increasingly capturing the contemporary popular and professional urban imaginary and affecting the practices of city building in nearly every post metropolis. **It must continue to be critically evaluated** to help preserve some of its most beneficial possibilities, for in many ways the New Urbanism represents a better future for the postmetropolitan built environment than many of its 'default' alternatives."

The statements and thesis of Michael Mendez, a proponent of "Latino New Urbanism," bring up an interesting possibility that the slippage of urbanisms across cultural norms may spur more interesting proposals and force NU shed its idealized romanticizations of white 19th century townscapes.

Justus Pang 070418.10

BIGNESS IS NO LONGER PART OF ANY URBAN TISSUE. IT EXISTS; AT MOST, IT COEXISTS.

ITS SUBTEXT IS FUCK CONTEXT

those crazy dutch
d00d! WOULDN'T THAT BE RAD?!?

With Rem Koolhaas' call for BIGNESS in SMLXL, the Dutch have become the flag bearers of a new super-modernism, most exemplified in the work of MVRDV in FARMAX and KM3. Through datascapes, code analysis, and exotic case studies their work proposes massive infrastructures **focusing upon quantifiable problems** (and solutions) such "compressing a population vertically and horizontally so as to give that population more space."

Unfortunately, their work relies heavily upon this compression to deal with social problems. **Their primary social ill is suburban monotony and long commutes and proposals tend to become disjunctive spectacles.** Such simple reductionism both ignores issues of capitalist spatial oppressions and overlooks details of urbanity. As Downtown LA has shown, "extreme mixes of program" might not produce extraordinary democratic mixture (nor for that matter, better and more useful green open spaces).

That said, the calculations and body of work in FARMAX are stunning, and I plan on playing with their rigourous methodologies to interrogate the potentials of existing and potential zoning codes.

Justus Pang 070418.11

MORE SKYSCRAPERS

PLUS

FANCIER CULTURAL PARKS

PLUS

AN OVERPRICED SUBWAY

EQUALS ?

centralizing downtown
Insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results.

"civic leaders have tried for decades without success to establish a central cultural hub downtown that would draw people from throughout the region."

The latest example is the $2 billion Grand Avenue Project which has been trumpeted as a **Champs-Élysées and Central Park**. Weaving several Downtown landmarks, the project includes 400,000 sq. ft. of retail, a boutique hotel, and 2,600 new units in "iconic towers" along with a 16 acre park.

Unfortunately such pursuits at imitating these images of high density urbanity ignore the network of infrastructural and social systems that have shaped those those other cities. For example, Manhattan itself has 140% the sq. footage of office space than the entire Greater Los Angeles region.

In a city with the least affordable housing and the fourth lowest park expenditure per capita in America, the massive government support and subsidies for the Grand Avenue Project's four hundred affordable units and new park in the midst of an already well endowed district betrays City Hall's terminal case of municipal penis envy.

"Grand Avenue Project Passes Go", Cara Mia DiMassa and Jack Leonard, Los Angeles Times
Justus Pang 070418.12

LOS ANGELES SHOULD CONSIDER WHETHER PUBLIC RESOURCES AND PRIVATE CAPITAL COULD BE MORE EFFECTIVELY CHANNELED INTO THE FAR-FLUNG NEIGHBORHOODS OF THIS CITY

WHERE MOST OF US ACTUALLY LIVE AND WORK.
JOEL KOTKIN
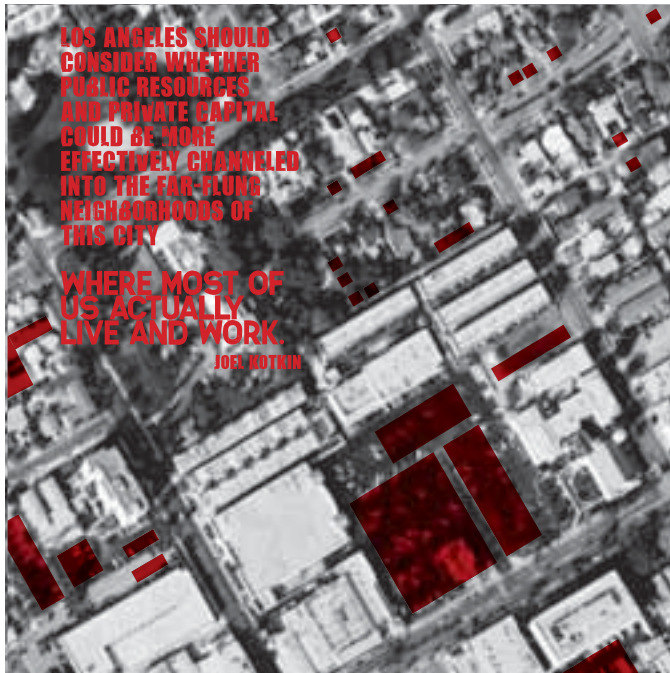
urban speculations
Lots of little densifications everywhere

Through importing foreign, academic, and nostalgic urbanisms, the previous proposals overlook what is already here in Los Angeles - what would happen if **we operated on existing conditions to increase density?**

Instead of searching for major influxes of capital and demanding large land clearances of prime sites, can one modify many existing sites each with relatively small influxes of capital? **Can widely adoptable densification solutions be developed?**

And how can this solution be more open ended, a problem exemplified in New Urbanism's disturbing sense of finality in their search for a nostalgic pedestrianism? **How can a deluge of small densifications alleviate the city's fragmentation?**

Much as the Homeowners Associations took the detached residential model and naturalized it with serious consequences, how can we **naturalize high density living?** And how can we do so in ways that can lessen the divisions and tensions that silently pervade this city?

Justus Pang 070418.13

PIMP MY TYPOLOGY
hot rodding the detached residence.

The doubling of LA's population in the next 20 years will create major stresses on the schools, the roads, the environment, and the social fabric. **Can an infill approach be more responsive to these major issues that manifest themselves locally?** Can prototypes be designed to sensitively mitigate the consequences of densification?

Strip malls and detached residences are two Los Angeles typologies that immediately come to mind, but through urban speculations, I may find other key sites and cruicial programs for infill densification. My inclination lies with focusing on the detached residence, but I think starting more holistically can produce intersections across different scales and programs. Maybe the new school in the supermarket parking lot will inform the additional garage apartment in the side yard.

In the end however, I believe this thesis will deal with specific design problems at specific sites.
Only through working through the idiosyncratic problems of specific parking lots or residential backyards in their sites can I begin to propose a dispersed model of small densification.

Densification is coming, where is it going?

Justus Pang 070418.14

Give us
the hammer
and the nails,
WE WILL REBUILD THE CITY.

Prethesis Postscript

One of the key decisions I made in early fall was to forego the political tone of this pre-thesis research and focus on density and housing – even though the research clearly shows that increasing densification does not necessarily lead to increasing social interaction nor alleviating spatial injustices. However, In a world of limited time and personal energy I realized that I could not reach my architectural goals while explicitly dealing with everything at once. It was a leap of faith that I could meet the social demands of my research while focusing on the architecture first. Unlike past semesters, this time I may have been able to pull it off.

123
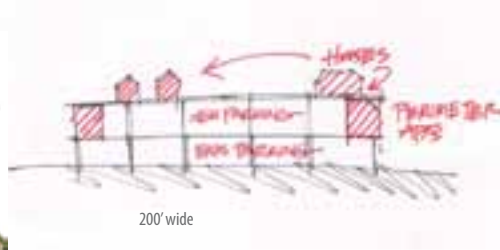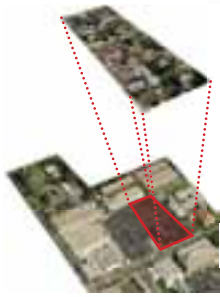
200' wide

60' wide

3rd story suburbia

parking on top

With the baseline of the garage apartment scenario, the site of 3.65 acres would need to house 55.65 units, which would avarage to 160 residents.

The following scenarios all average around **60 units of 1200 sq. ft.**

Each unit also comes with **2 parking spaces** (Alhambra Code) with each space taking an estimated 300 sq. ft. each.
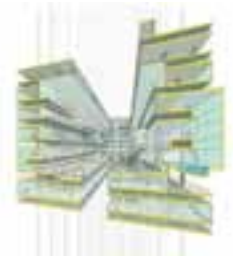
two towers
2 x 7 floors x 4 units per floor =56 units

housing garage

It may be worth noting that I had worked with a Bus Terminal project in Professor Doug Oliver's studio that was all about weaving vehicular traffic in section so I had already played with the idea of cars and parks flying all over the place.

September 21 – The First Review

For the first review, I had already selected the site and presented four rough schematic ideas.

The first two options would layer new housing and parking above the site. The "second story suburbia" created a new ground of single family units above a middle layer of perimeter apartments with a central parking space that would support both levels. The other option was a continuous line of double loaded corridor apartments with the parking and gardens on the roof. The existing parking lot would not be completely blanketed by the new development and this linear project could connect to other parts of the site or other parking lots.

While the first two ideas proposed a new field above the existing ground, the other two ideas placed objects within the existing parking lot field. The simplest and most efficient was to add couple towers to the site, but it did not seem to suggest any interesting ways of accommodating a high automobile density urbanism. The last option was to modify the existing parking garage typology to create a drive up apartment complex. After the review, I chose the final schematic because the parking garage is a familiar typology, "houses in the sky" is a common architecture trope, and combining the two seemed to be the most interesting way to develop a new prototype and address the primary concern raised at the review – "how would this project give back and energize the site?"

There were two paper projects which were early case studies. First, SITE's *Highrise of Homes* captured the imagery of houses in the air, but it did not address the centrality of the automobile in the American Dream. LTL's *Park Tower* is a gorgeous set of drawings, but further examination reveals it to be particularly uncooked, and their projection of a future based upon super clean fuel cell automobiles is noble but stunningly naive assumption.
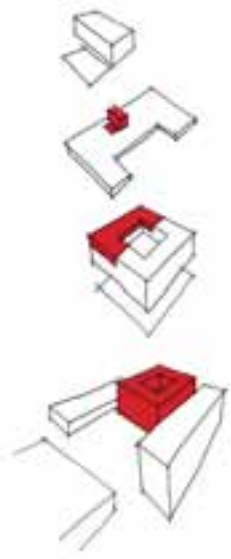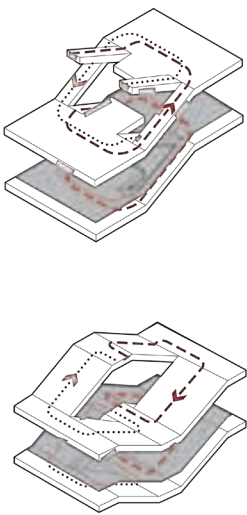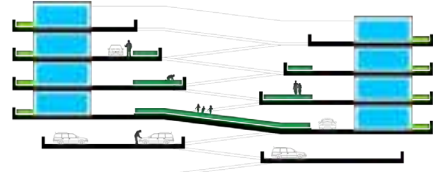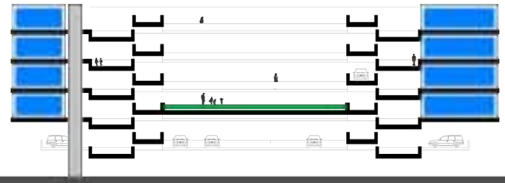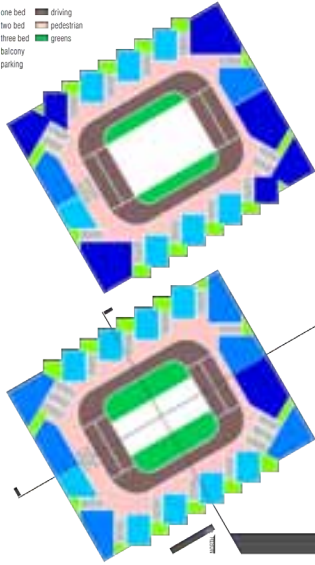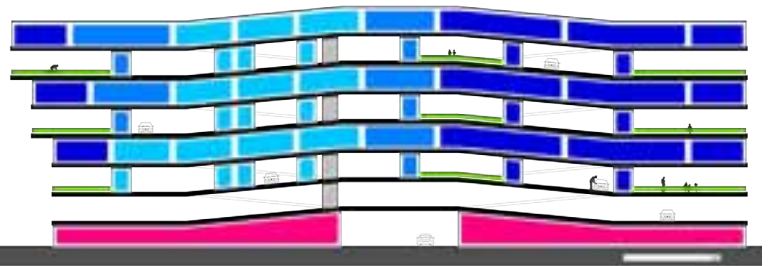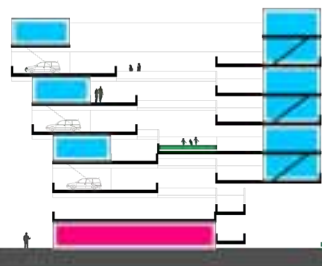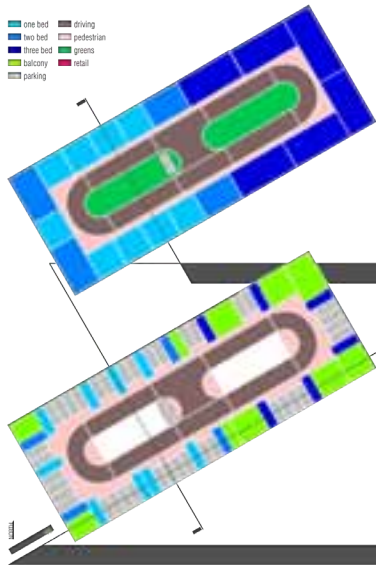
October 24 – The Second Review

I focused on two types of parking structures, one with a continuously parked ramp and one with shorter express ramps. These two basic types resulted in drastically different shapes, since each type had different constraints, proportions, and potentials. The occupied ramp was much more efficient in both number of units and unit size but the express ramp project suggested a much more vibrant interior courtyard. Furthermore, I preferred the look of the cranked units (which were turned 30 degrees for more favorable solar orientations).

The critique at this review revolved around the charging the project with more program raised another major problem in Los Angeles land use planning – the lack of parks. This was a crucial moment. By turning the site into a park, the project was freed from the awkward site placements of the "prototype scenario" and became a site specific "demonstration project".
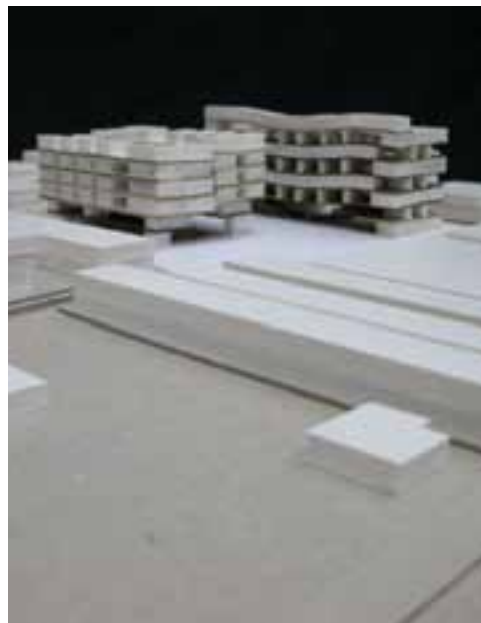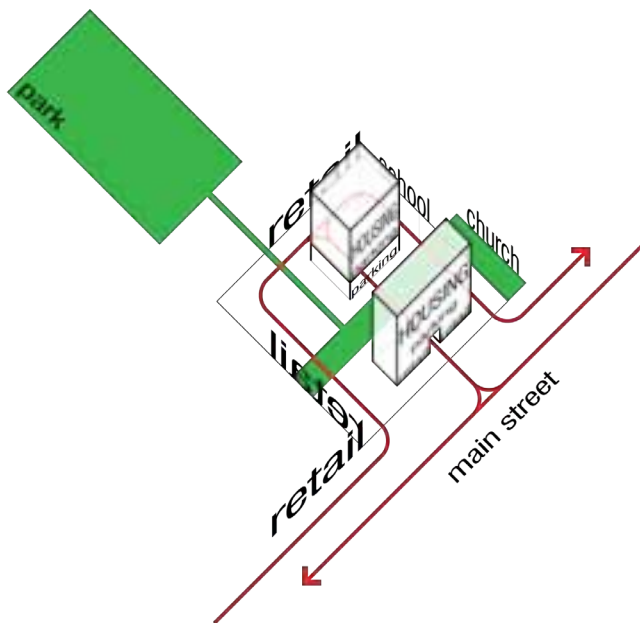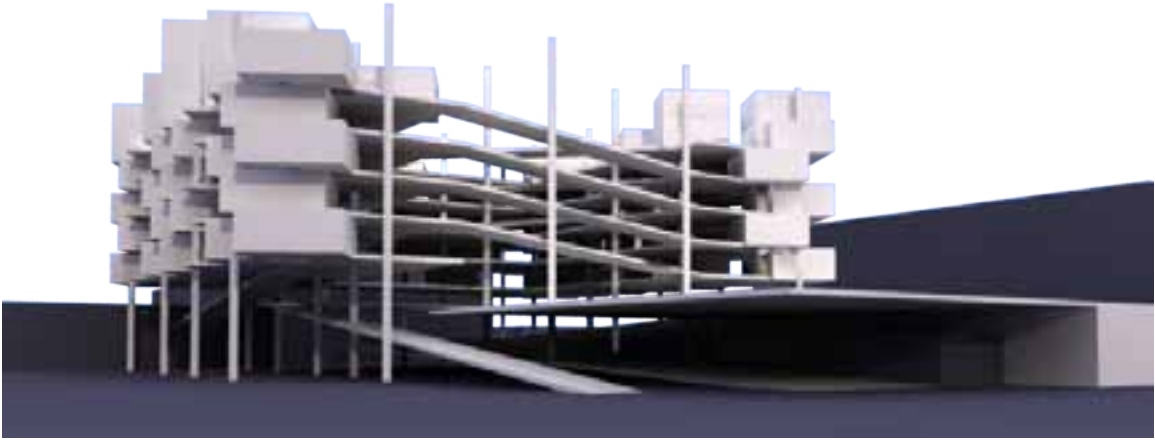
November 10 – Post Review

The first result of following with Professor Erdman's advice was to drop one of the prototypes and examine how the project could actually interact with the site if it was turned into a park. At this point, the "Parking Garage Apartment Park" was conceptually complete.

The first pass focused on the express ramp type. The park would slope up over the new street front retail and work its way up and into the courtyard. Even though it was creating some pretty impressive semi-public spaces and I really liked the prickly box aesthetic, the automobile circulation was awkward and the scheme was incredibly inefficient with both the number of units and the size of the units themselves (to the point where I toyed with adding a tower to get the numbers up). Sculpturally I think I still prefer this scheme (sans tower).
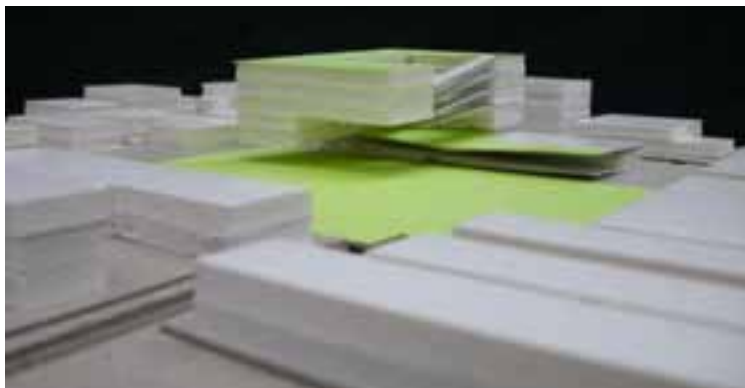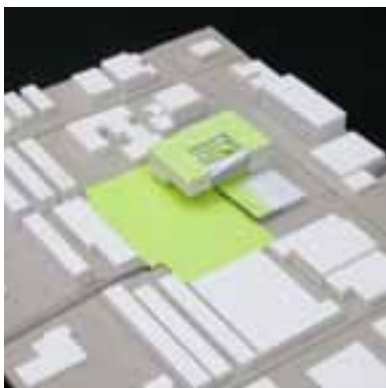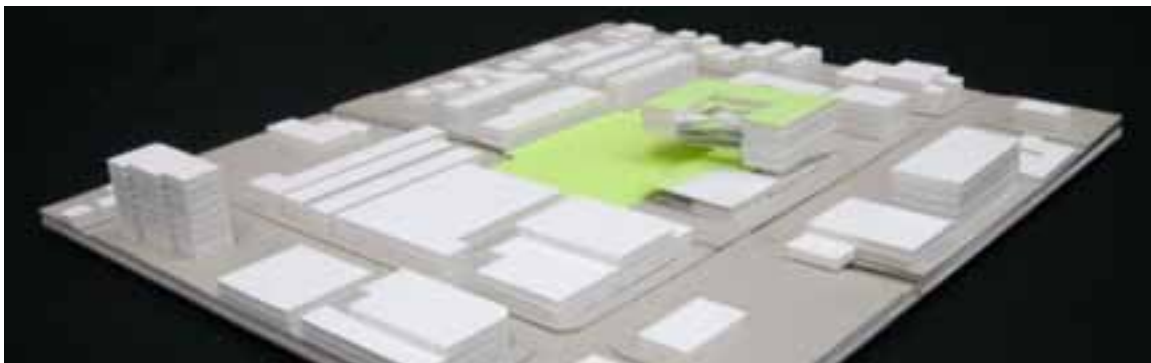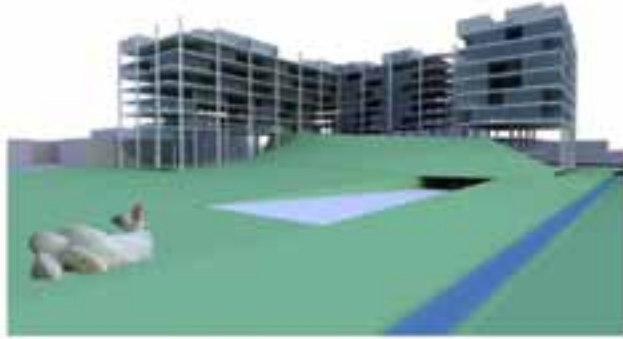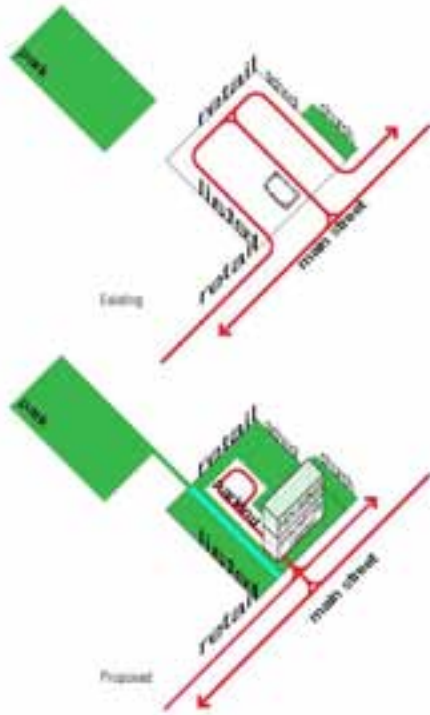
HAPPY HOLIDAYS
- from the guy who's spending this **merry season** to make this
Parking Garage Apartment Park Complex

THE AWESOMENEST PIECE OF ARCHITECTURE EVER!
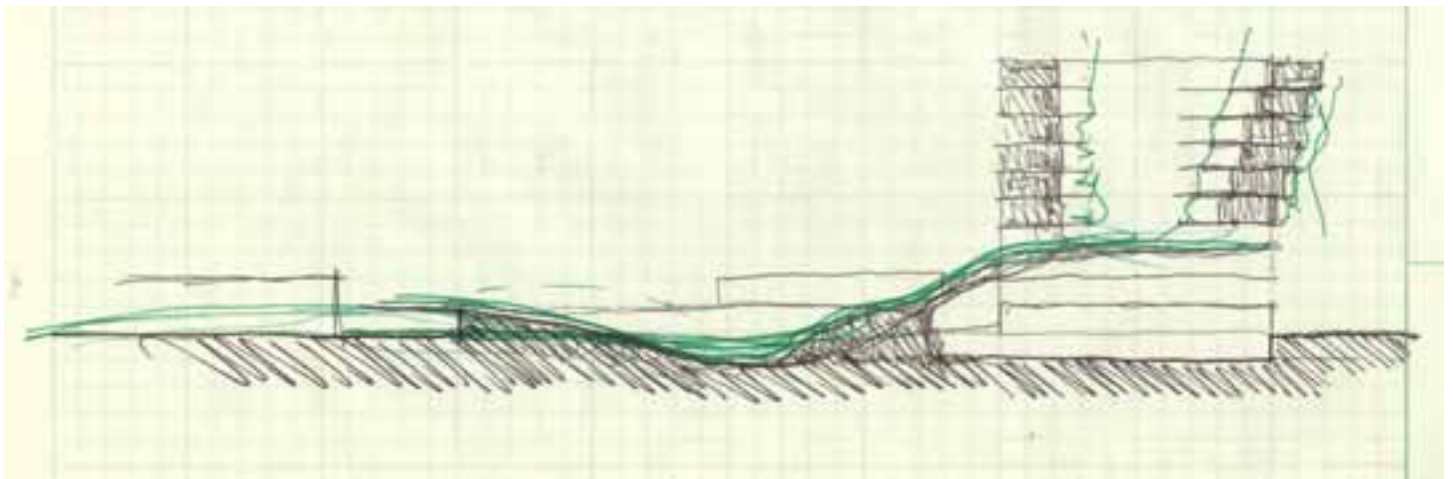
November 16 – Pass/Fail

A major breakthrough happened when the circulation was isolated onto a dedicated express ramp; instead of having to drive through the whole development to get to the top, each floor would be a cul-de-sac of houses. This design included a minimal amount of underground parking that day-lighted in front of the existing rear retail building.   Vertically, the building section was street-front retail, three floors of public parking (a continuous ramp) and then seven floors of parking apartments.   Like the previous and final schemes, the park would slope up and connect to the first floor of residential units.   The 10' x 30' apartment module was also established at this point.

I think this would have been a good final project for a normal pencils down. Fortunately (or unfortunately), there were a couple months still ahead. The primary critique at the pass/fail review questioned the idea of having the park come up over three stories of parking, and I was uncomfortable with the inefficiency of the single loaded garage apartment corridors.   Everything was still undercooked.
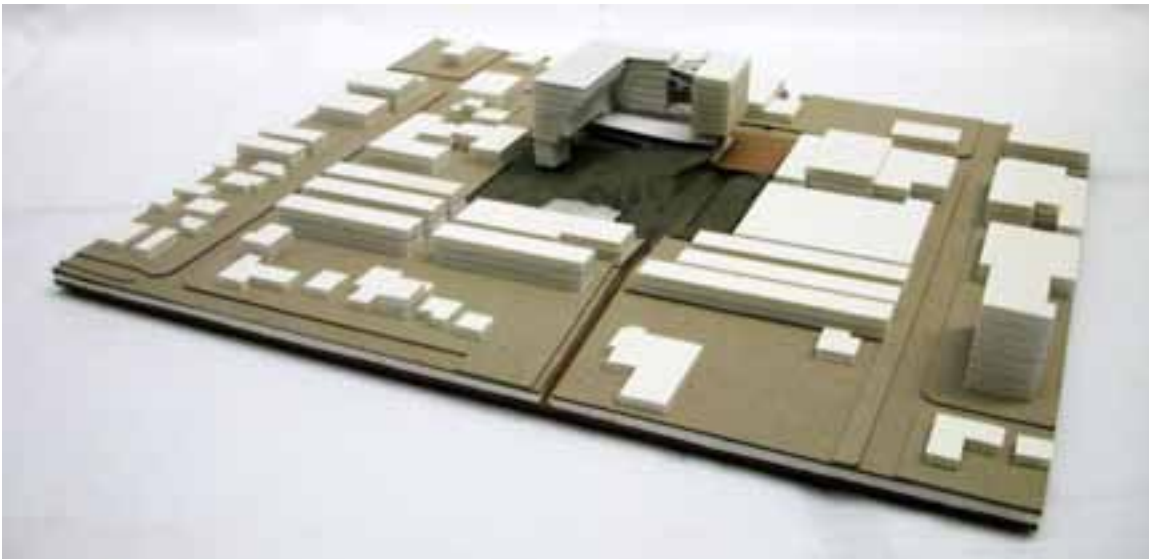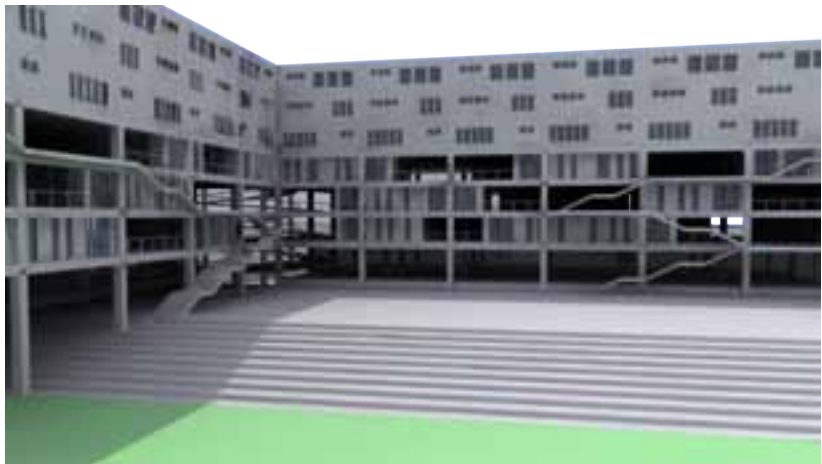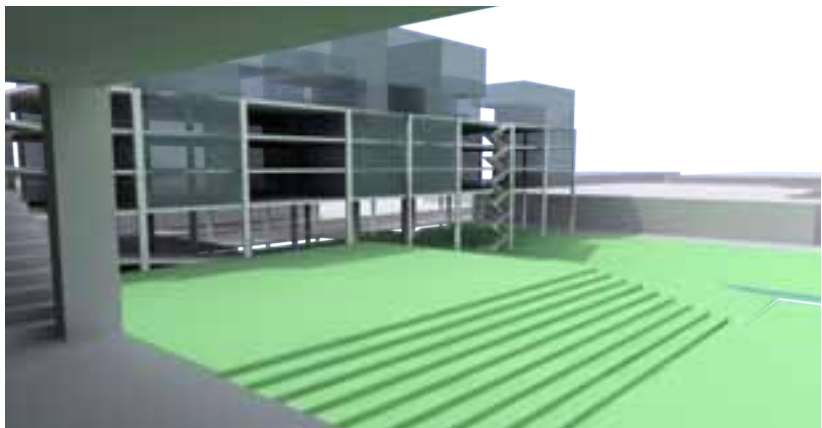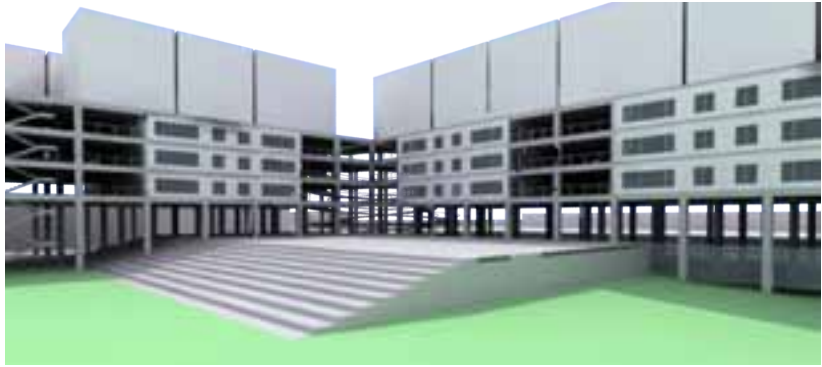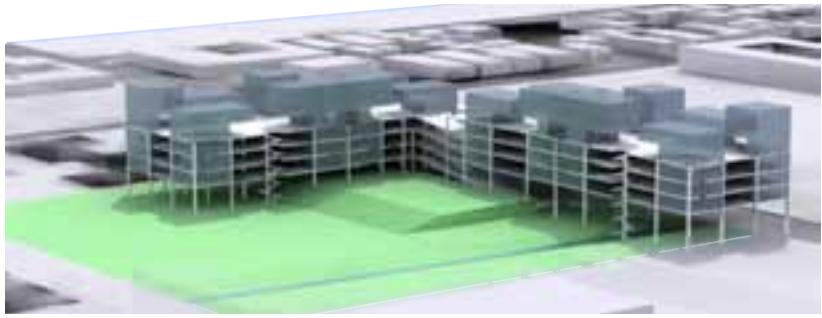
December 14 – Honing In

After pass/fail, I finally gave up trying to accommodate all 130 units on the site and I also decided to excavate below grade for the public parking. The next set of moves pretty much set the final design: moving the express ramp to the church side, turning it into a double helical ramp, getting rid of both pass/fail dog legs, and figuring out the damn plumbing system. The park was also designed and the rear retail was demolished.
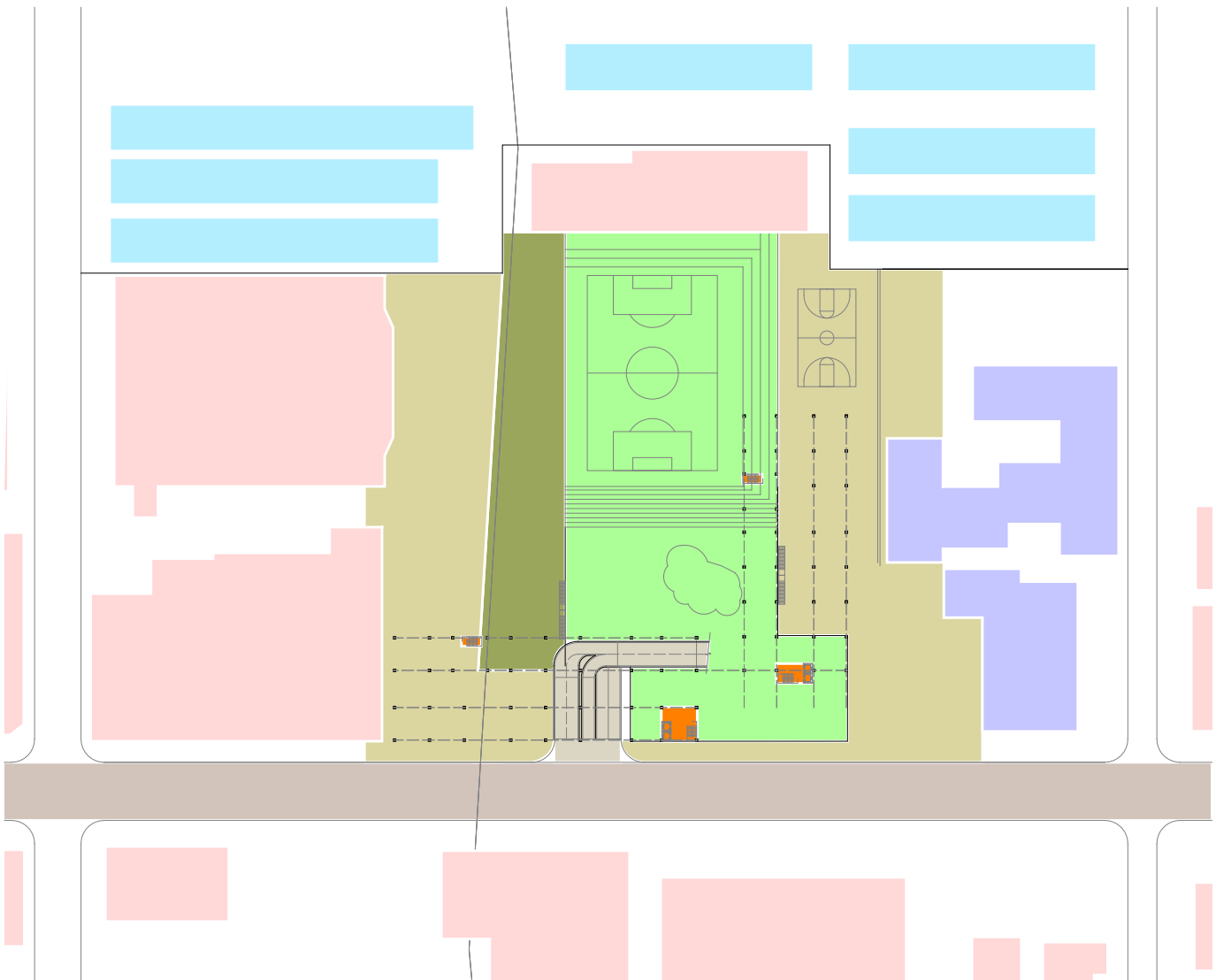
Thanks to Allison Kerckhoff for the photographs.

January 10 and beyond!

There were two primary critiques at the final review that brings up a couple things that I wish I had more time to work on.

The first critique was that it seemed to be a project frozen in time. The reviewers had hoped that I might present the project as having lots of open space and being space inefficient because then there would be room for further expansion as the population continued to grow. I agree, however I believe such responses highlight auxiliary benefits of keeping parking next to the housing instead of being the driving force of the scheme. That said, I believe that given more time I would have moved beyond designing for this site at this time. As such I would examine how the site could change over time as well as expand the scope of the "site" to its neighboring properties and play with how such a park network would actually "network".

The second major critique was that one of the reviewers felt that the park was almost stereotypical. I think the reaction was based partly upon the design of the park as a feature rich space providing many different places for kids to play. Unlike many parks that come out of architecture schools, it has no ecological aspirations and it was not designed for the viewing and perambulatory pleasure of the flaneur. Even so, if the process had unfolded differently and the park idea had come up earlier, I agree it would have been very beneficial to radically think about what "park" means in the high density human and automobile suburban environment.
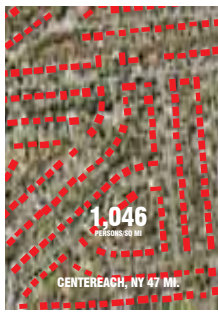
1,046 PERSONS/SQ MI

CENTEREACH, NY 47 MI.

New York
looks like
Hong Kong
surrounded by
Phoenix,

Los Angeles
looks like
Los Angeles
surrounded by,
well,
Los Angeles.

growth + limits = density
Los Angeles Urbanized Area = 7,009 persons/sq. mi.
New York Urbanized Area = 5,239 persons/sq. mi.

4,608 PERSONS/SQ MI

EL TORO, CA 43 MI.

Through their success, and that of those who came before them, Los Angeles
demonstrated the efficacy of a new model of urban growth –
dispersed, multi-centered and largely suburbanized.

The next chapter of Los Angeles' history
will be how to build on this legacy,
providing true quality of life.
Trying to become a faux New York, or a
sun-drenched Paris, is not our mission.

Having developed the predominant global form
of **dispersed urbanity,** Los Angeles needs
to show **how to make that model work.**

"Don't Dismiss L.A.-Style Sprawl as a Failed Experiment", Joel Kotkin

auto-urbanism
cars everywhere!

**1 out of 4 households
are overcrowded or
severely overcrowded**
(604,000 households vs New York's 622,730)

this is not crowded
The census defines "overcrowded" as more than one
person per room. It would take five or six people in
this one bedroom apartment to become overcrowded,
seven or more to be severely overcrowded.

overcrowding
"don't build it and they will cram"

severe overcrowding
one out of six households live with 1.5+ people per room
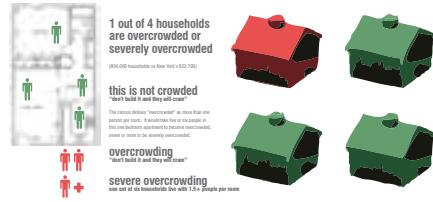
**Two-thirds of kids
in Los Angeles live
outside of walking
distance from a
public park**

Furthermore, Los Angeles spends
less per capita on their parks than
any other major city in America.

parks
dense sprawl without playgrounds

LA $33

RALPH'S SUPERMARKET   TOWNHOUSES BEYOND   RESTAURANT   EMPTY PHARMACY   TOWNHOUSES BEYOND   PRIVATE SCHOOL

facing EAST   facing SOUTH

Story Park

Concrete Culvert

Aerial Looking North

Main Street Panoramics

We're 'Pasadena-izing'
William Fulton, 20 August 07, LA Times

The rest of the metropolitan constellation [outside of downtown] **is also densifying, but at a much different scale.** The prototype for most of this growth in Los Angeles and Orange counties is **Pasadena**, which has a feature of **three- to five-story** buildings, a fabulous mix of **housing, retail, office buildings, cultural institutions,** a lot of **parking garages and great "walkability."**

CHURCH   AT&T (ACROSS MAIN ST)   ARBY'S DRIVE THRU   SMALL RETAIL

facing WEST   facing NORTH   Parking Lot Panoramic

Unit   Floor   Building   Park System
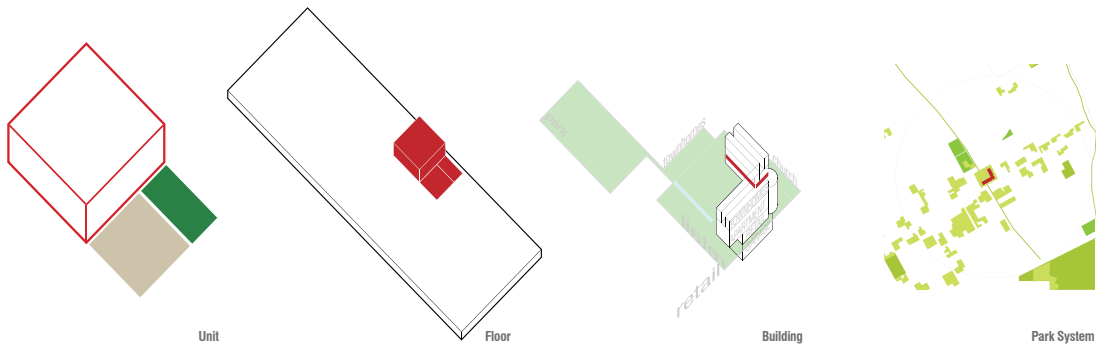
265 acres of Parks
305 acres of Parking Lots

115 acres new Housing
190 acres new Parks

(455 acres total new Parks)

N

Parking Lot Park Urbanism

Existing Parking Lots   Existing Parks   New Projects

Townhomes:
2 story + Mezzanine w/ Roof Garden

Apartment Flats:
Full footprint or
Setback with Large Outdoor room
(depending on orientation)

Retail and Commercial.
three distinct relationships
to the park and terrace

Parking Garage,
3-story with 400 spaces

RESIDENTS

PUBLIC

main street

park

townhomes

church

listed

retail

Unit mix:
15) Studios (600F)
30) 1+ Bedroom (800F)
12) 2+ Bedroom (1200F)

10) Smaller Townhouses (1700F)
15) Larger Townhouses (2200F)

Totals:
82 units (166 bedrooms)
164 private parking spaces
20 semi-public parking spaces

51,819F² footprint

4.5 Acre Park

Pipe Array

Concentric Opposed Plane Helical Ramps

Childrens' Play

Daylight the Culvert

Terrace and Stairs

Hardscape Market Plaza

Park Layout

park
retail
school
church
listed
retail
main street
(to San Bernadino)
(to downtown LA)

park
townhomes
school
church
retail
main street

park
townhomes
school
church
retail
main street

Main Street

Sectional Perspective

Apartment Woonerf
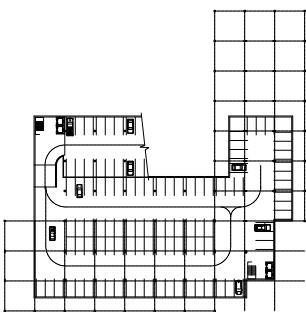
Garage 3
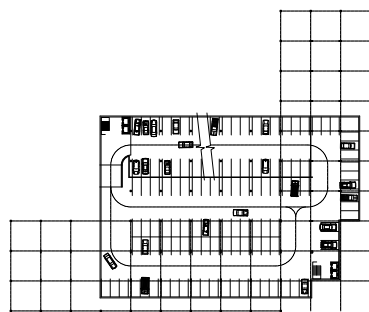
Garage 2
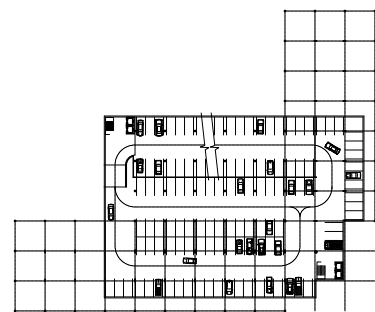
Garage 1
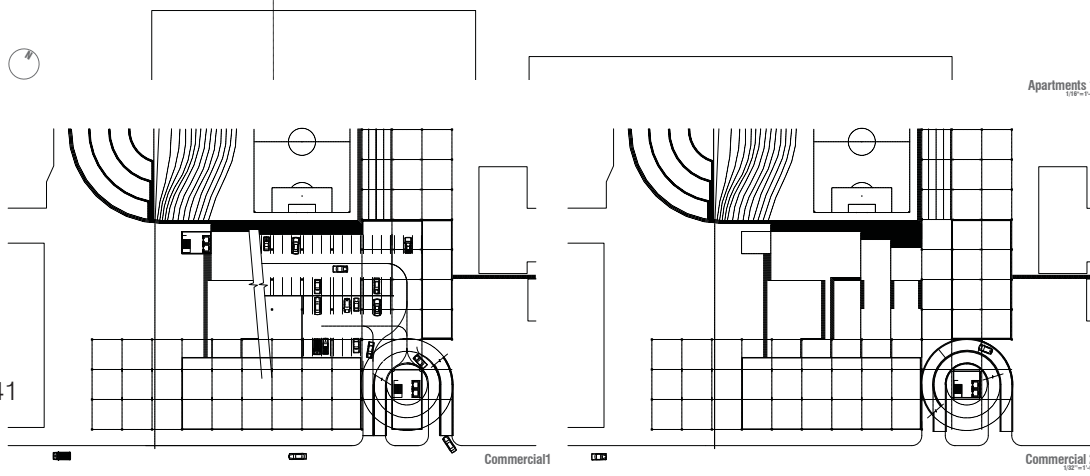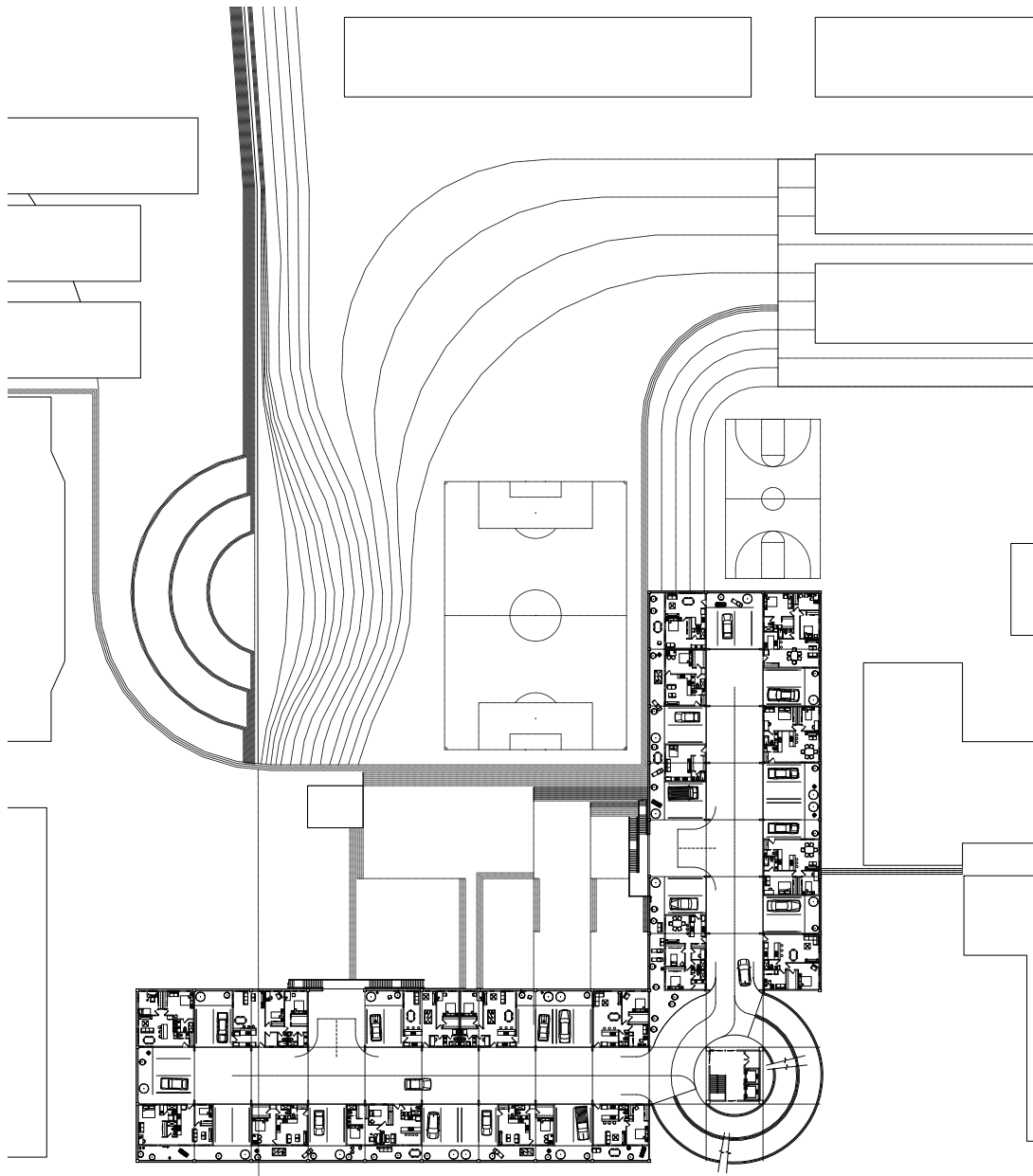
Apartments 1
1/16"=1'-0"

Commercial1

Commercial 2
1/32"=1'-0"

View from Manicured Hardscape

Main Street Elevation B
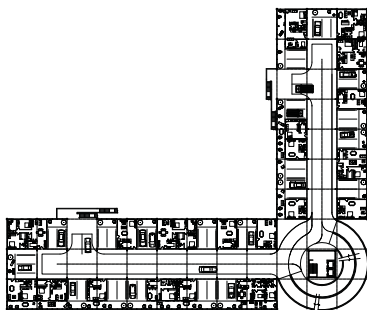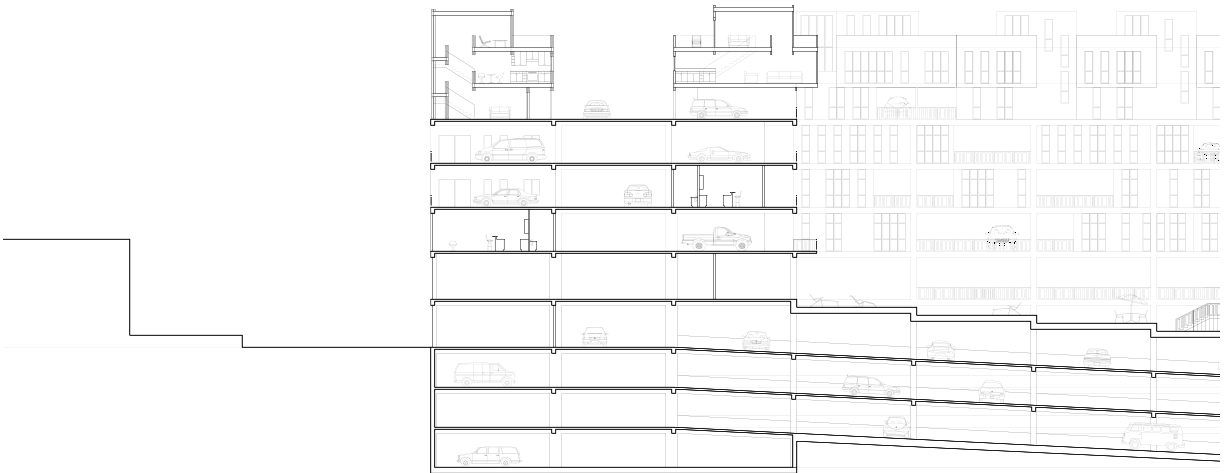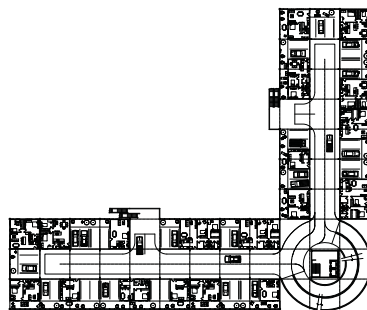
Apartment2

Apartment3
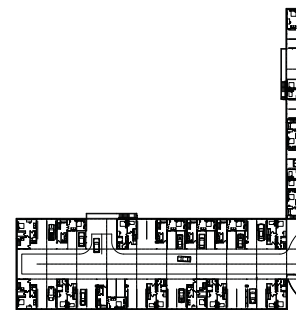
View from Manicured Hardscape

View from the Stairs
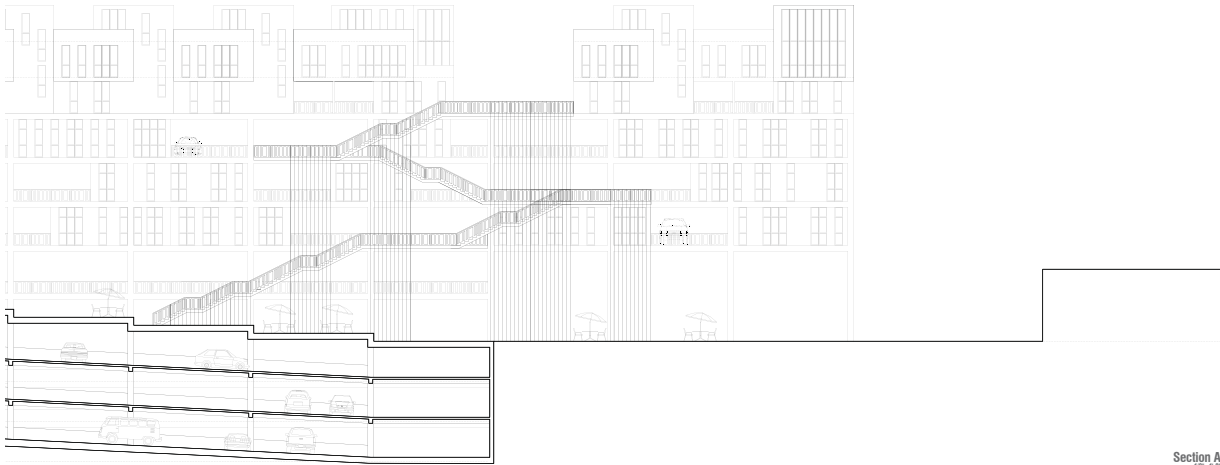
Section A
1/8"=1'-0"
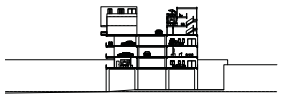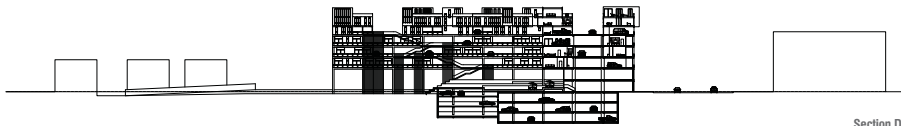
Section C

Section D
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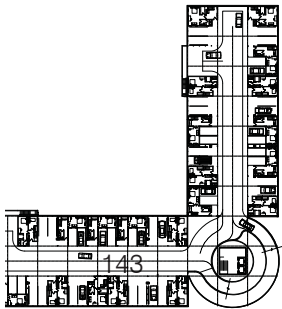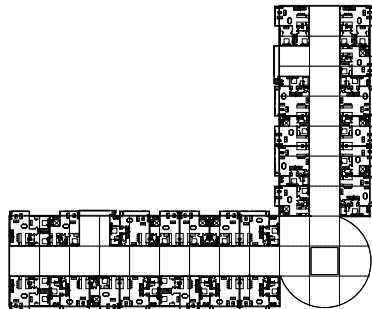
Townhouse2

Townhouse2
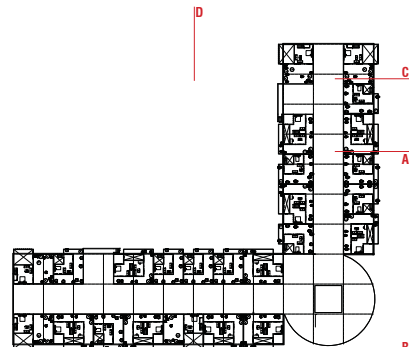
Townhouse3
1/32"=1'-0"
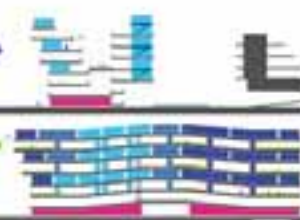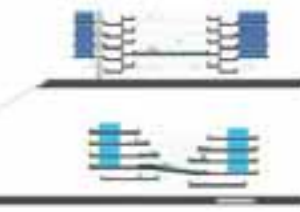
Sept 21

Oct 24

Nov 12

Nov 16

Dec 14

densification is here!

While big proposals are floated and debated, densification is quietly going and falls into three basic categories of development.

New Development, Sometimes pieces of land remain undeveloped for a variety of reasons (master planning, rural holdouts, etc.) As these valuable plots become available, developers find it more attractive to build high density projects.

Infill, With the exit of industry, formally unusable and undesirable land sometimes becomes the only place for extensive renovation and development as the pressures of rising land values overcome the safety, image, and potential toxic remediation issues and costs.

Subdivision, while usually (but not necessarily) symptomatic of overcrowding, this method is especially common in economically disadvantaged areas and areas of high land prices. Cramming more people into existing housing is the quickest and cheapest way of increasing density, but creates immense strains on existing infrastructures such as pipes, roads and schools, not to mention quality of life in the units themselves.

"Out West, a Paradox: Densely Packed Sprawl", Blaine Harden, Washington Post

Justus Pang 070418.20

multifamily buildings
a visual dictionary

Apartment/Condominium
Self-contained housing units, usually with a form of ownership with individual apartments and communal ownership of common areas.

Townhouse/Rowhouse
Houses in a row with sharing party walls, usually implies ownership of the land the house sits upon.

It is interesting to note that **the construction of flats, duplexes, in-laws, and garage apartments are at the scale of common home additions and remodels.** The flat and duplex are complicated by of zoning and ownership concerns.

Flat
An apartment, especially one taking up an entire floor of a smaller building composed of several apartment flats.
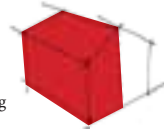
Duplex/Semi-detached
Usually the size of a large normal house, the duplex or semi-detached house is also often located on a singular parcel with one owner.

In 2002, the State of California passed a law forcing all municipal zoning boards to allow the bottom two types of housing arrangements - in effect recognizing the importance of regulating these informal (often jerry rigged) densifications. I, for one, used to live in an illegal garage apartment.
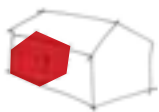
In-law unit/Granny flat
A secondary living quarter with a separate entrance but may share facilities with the main unit. Often regulated differently from duplexes.

Garage apartment/Garalow
A living unit on top or next to a detached garage. Often treated as an in-law unit for zoning regulations.

When I get back to Houston, I am very interested in looking up Teddy Cruz's proposals for subdividing McMansions common in the San Diego.
Justus Pang 070418.21

Appendix 2 - Other interesting research I never chased down more fully

Already Happening.

This Washington Post article was an influential discovery at the beginning. It confirmed my suspicions that not only was Los Angeles expanding in a dense fashion, but increasing densification was happening in the center. Furthermore, it warned that just letting the market accommodate such densification was resulting in either new high-end expensive housing or new slums with inadequate infrastructure.

Different types of Multifamily Housing.

I did not take it much further, it was a useful exercise to quickly diagram the different manifestations of multifamily housing. The range of available housing options is not just a duality of big apartments versus housey houses, there are many different shapes and sizes to multifamily living.

multiply

multiply

Low Rise Apartments.

This was my one big diagraming exercise. In looking at the different ways several units could fit into one building complex, I realized that there were two basic approaches – expand or multipily. One could either make a bigger building or add extra buildings. Furthermore, one can expand and multiply again for continued expansion. At some point one would have to start building upwards, but this diagram was about Low Rise solutions.

extend

extend

Some Low-Rise Apartments

149
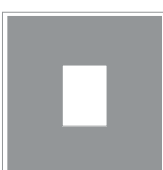
Housing

1$100 Million Housing Trust Fund
2More Affordable Housing
3Create Safe Housing
4Empower Tenants

The Urban Environment
1Formulate a Livable City Plan

2Ensure Right to Know/Access Decision Makers
3Rehab. Contaminated Land
4More Parks and Open Space
5Pursue Cleaner Air
6Improve Water Quality, Reduce Water Demand
7Reduce Toxins in Home and Neighborhood
8Encourage Clean Production
9Promote Clean Energy

Transportation and Land Use
1Safe and walkable places

2Improve Transit Sevice
3Expand Bus Service
4Promote Smart Growth
5Manage Sea, Air, Ground transport

Food and Nutrition

1Create a Food, Hunger, and Nutrition Action Plan

2Improve Fresh Food Access
3Promote Urban Agriculture
4Shore up Food Safety Net
5Make Schools healthy places to learn

Democracy and Participation

1Increase voter Registration
2Make it Easier to Vote
3Make Government More Representative
4Democracy through Inclusive Neighborhood Controls

Worker Rights

1Establish a Commission on Worker Rights
2Protect and Promote the Worker's Right to Organize
3Expand Living Wage Policies
4Strengthen Protections for Low-Wage, Nonunion, and Undocumented Workers
5Protect and Promote Public-Sector Union Jobs

Economic Development

1Consolidate Economic Development Agencies
2Hold Subsidy Recipients Accountable
3Procure and Invest Responsibly

a plea for action
a political request for spatial solutions

The late 1990's saw the remergence of progressive politics and in the wake of several political victories, the "Progressive Los Angeles Network" was formed. In April 2001 PLAN developed an "agenda for action".

I'm not sure why the plan does not address the deficiencies of education, healthcare and police management in the city, but what is interesting is the spatial aspect of so many of its goals. Even though there was no stated arrangement for its subject headings, **it is intruiging that Housing, Environment, Transportation and Land Use were foregrounded.**

As Downtown Los Angeles shows, there are may ways to spatialize responses to political conditions, and this document seems to be an invitation for the design profession to enter into the fray. Even though PLAN has pinpointed a specific set of issues to deal with, their vision is one of numbers and basic definitions.

How these goals are realized, what their physical forms are still up for debate and design. There is room for architects!

Justus Pang 070418.22

Bloods/Crips proposal for LA's face-lift

1Every burned and abandoned structure shall be gutted. The city will purchase the property if not already owned by the city, and build a community centre. If the structure is on a corner or vacant lot, the city will build a career couseling centre or a recreation area respectively.

2All pavements/sidewalks in Los Angeles are in dire need of resurfacing.

3All lighting will be increased in all neighborhoods. Additionally, lighting of city streets, neighbourhood blocks and alleyways will be amended. We want a well-lit neighbourhood.

5All trees will be properly trimmed and maintained. New trees will be planted to increase the beauty of our neighbourhoods

6A special task force shall be assigned to clean up all vacant lots and trashed areas throughout the deprived areas. Proper pest control methods shall be implemented by the city.

Blood/Crips Educational Proposal

1Maximising education standards in the low income areas is essential to reduce the possibilities of repeated insurrection.

2Reconstruction of all LAUSD schools; remodelling of classrooms, repainting of hallways and meeting areas; all schools shall have new landscaping; completely upgrade the bathrooms, making them more modern; provide a bathroom monitor to each bathroom which will provide fresh-up toiletries at a minimum cost to the students.

3A provision for accelerated educational learning programmes shall be implemented for the entire LAUSD to provide aggressive teaching methods and provide a curriculum similar to other areas.

4The LAUSD will provide up-to-date books to the neglected areas and enough books to ensure that no student has to share books.

5LAUSD will remove all teachers not planning to further their education along with teachers who have not proven to have a passionate concern for the students. All teachers shall be given a standard competence and psychological tests.

6All curriculums shall focus on the basics in high school requirements and it shall be inundated with advanced sciences and additional applied math, English and writing skills.

7Bussing shall become non-existent in our community if all of the above demands are met.

Blood/Crips Human Welfare Proposal

1Hospitals and Health Care Centres.: Federal government shall provide the deprived areas with 3 new hospitals and 40 additional health care centres. Dental clinics within ten miles of each community. The services shall be free and supported by federal and state funds.

2Welfare: We demand that welfare be removed from our community and be replaced by state

work and product manufacturing plants that provide the city with certain supplies. State monies shall only be provided for invalids and the elderly. The State shall provide a child welfare building to serve as day care centres for single parents.

3Parks & Recreation: Los Angeles parks shall receive a complete face-lift, and developed activities and programmes in the parks throughout the night. Stages, pools and courts shall be reconstructed and resurfaced, and the city shall provide highly visible security 24-hours a day for these parks and recreational centres. Programmes at the parks shall be in accordance with educational programmes and social exchange programmes developed by the city for adults and young adults.

Blood/Crips Law Enforcement Programme

The Los Angeles Communities are demanding that they are policed and patrolled by individuals who live in the community and the commanding officers by ten-year residents of the community in which they serve. Former gang members shall be given a chance to be patrol buddies in assisting the protection of the neighbourhoods.

Blood/Crips Economic Development Proposal

Loans shall be made available by the federal and state governments to provide interested minority entrepreneurs interested in doing business in these deprived areas. The loan requirements shall not be so stringent that it will make it impossible for a businessman to acquire these loans. These business owners shall be required to hire 90 per cent of their personnel from within the community.

In return for these demands, the Blood/Crips Organisation will:

1Request the drug lords of Los Angeles take their monies and invest them in business and property in Los Angeles

2Encourage these drug lords to stop drug traffic and get them to use the money constructively. We will match the funds of the state government appropriations and build building-for-building.

3We will match funds for an Aids research and awareness centre in South Central and Long Beach that will only hire minority researchers and physicians in the Aids epidemic.

Give us the hammer and the nails, we will rebuild the city.

Reconstructing LA
Crips' and Bloods Demands, post uprising, 1992

Justus Pang 070418.27

Two Manifestos.

In my pre-thesis research, I found two manifestos for action. The first was a progressive plan written in 2001, and the second was the 1992 gangland declaration that came from the truce between the Bloods and the Crips. These statements both emphasize the built environment as a major problem that needs improvement. The contrast between what is needed by the poor and what the Los Angeles AIA awards is quite stark, and it highlights how utterly solipsistic the academic's hand-wringing over the state of architecture might actually be.

DINOSAURS?

like we give a shit
Professional ignorance.

Given the open invitation for architectural involvement, one might hope that the progressive agenda would register in its architecture's discourse. If so, the comments from the 2006 LA-AIA awards (Thom Mayne, Chris Genik, and Sylvia Lavin jury,) concerning projects built in Los Angeles, would be very disappointing:

 "We see beautiful choreography of light and shadow, which takes the mundane ceiling panel to a new and unpredictable level of resolve." "This project puts an exclamation point on the 'everyday' in Los Angeles industrial complexes." "It's an intensely engaging, sensual experience. It addresses a completely different sensibility." "A wonderful warped landscape on steroids that tries to make space that blows you away." "The invention of this house is the examination of the building envelope."

"Here's a strong example of a simple idea utilizing state-of-the-art assemblage technology and narrative to create memorable public space." (Maximiln's Schell, Ball-Nogues Design)

"This project has clarity and integrity, and it represents the next project type where discussion of architecture in this city will be advanced." "We're seeing the emergence of a technology that will be with us in the future. This project sets a high standard for the pre-fab house." "This project fully exploits the recent shift of computational design to interior architecture. It is skillfully crafted with no missed opportunities." "It's a skilled building that exploits the potential of what a curtain wall can be. The façade and skin are amazing."

Justus Pang 070418.23

FOR LEASE

RN4P
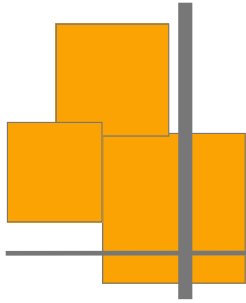
ALHAMBRA COURTYARD
NEQ Main Street / Chapel Avenue

Project Features:

➤ 68,000 sq.ft. downtown community center anchored by Ralph's Grocery
➤ 1,800 sq.ft. immediately available (no food)
➤ Sub-anchor space may be available in the near future
➤ Great population density and good average household income

Traffic	Main Street	30,100 CPD
	Chapel Avenue	19,300 CPD

Demographics	1 mile	2 mile	3 mile
Population	41,247	127,216	275,780
Average HH Income	$55,409	$66,996	$68,469
Daytime Population	14,712	50,859	95,093

Presented by:

Eric Knudson / Charlie Cangelosi
Retail Net Lease Properties, Inc.
360 N. Sepulveda Boulevard
Suite 1020
El Segundo, CA 90245
Phone 310-252-7656
Fax 310-414-0040
eric@rnlp.biz / charlie@rnlp.biz

Leasing Information. I never did much with it, but it is interesting to examine.

Trade Area: E MAIN ST AT N CHAPEL AVE, ALHAMBRA, CA 91801, aggregate
Trade Area: E MAIN ST AT N CHAPEL AVE, ALHAMBRA, CA 91801, aggregate
Trade Area: E MAIN ST AT N CHAPEL AVE, ALHAMBRA, CA 91801, aggregate

Description	0.00 - 1.00 miles Radius	0.00 - 3.00 miles Radius	0.00 - 5.00 miles Radius
Total Employment	14,712	95,093	305,972
Executive and Professional	4,998	33,998	108,780
Management	1,033	6,812	24,832
Sales and Marketing	1,737	11,959	36,973
Health-Legal-Social	664	4,998	13,971
Engineer-Science-Computer Professional	269	1,718	9,084
Educators	1,055	6,842	17,796
Journalists-Creative Professional	240	1,670	6,124
Administration and Support	4,103	26,485	91,089
Management Support	505	3,057	12,360
Admin-Clerical Support	3,073	19,754	66,440
Technical Support	524	3,673	12,289
Service Personnel	2,694	15,528	43,128
Health Care Personnel	472	2,184	5,189
Food and Beverage	1,544	8,713	24,048
Personal Services	486	3,030	8,682
Protective Services	192	1,601	5,209
Trade and Labor	2,917	19,082	62,976
Construction	290	2,237	6,901
Installation and Repair	1,085	6,167	20,347
Craft Production	154	1,103	4,459
Machine Operators	243	1,938	7,875
Assemblers	89	902	3,438
Transportation	516	3,067	8,474
Agriculture	112	813	2,615
Laborers	428	2,855	8,867

Trade Area: E MAIN ST AT N CHAPEL AVE, ALHAMBRA, CA 91801, aggregate
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Description	0.00 - 1.00 miles Radius	%	0.00 - 2.00 miles Radius	%	0.00 - 3.00 miles Radius	%
Population						
2010 Projection	43,395		133,589		290,812	
2005 Estimate	41,247		127,216		275,780	
2000 Census	39,168		121,326		261,596	
1990 Census	36,807		115,900		253,462	
Growth 1990 - 2000	6.41%		4.68%		3.21%	
Households						
2010 Projection	15,440		45,409		96,242	
2005 Estimate	14,783		43,555		91,577	
2000 Census	14,180		41,952		87,423	
1990 Census	13,560		40,681		85,494	
Growth 1990 - 2000	4.57%		3.12%		2.26%	
2005 Est. Population by Single Classification Race	41,247		127,216		275,780	
White Alone	11,708	28.39	39,600	31.13	89,545	32.47
Black or African American Alone	784	1.90	1,789	1.41	4,184	1.52
American Indian and Alaska Native Alone	306	0.74	874	0.69	2,004	0.73
Asian Alone	20,585	49.91	64,945	51.05	131,463	47.67
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander Alone	46	0.11	137	0.11	308	0.11
Some Other Race Alone	6,200	15.03	15,585	12.25	38,607	14.00
Two or More Races	1,618	3.92	4,286	3.37	9,669	3.51
2005 Est. Population Hispanic or Latino	41,247		127,216		275,780	
Hispanic or Latino	13,302	32.25	36,136	28.41	86,859	31.50
Not Hispanic or Latino	27,945	67.75	91,080	71.59	188,921	68.50
2005 Tenure of Occupied Housing Units	14,783		43,555		91,577	
Owner Occupied	4,537	30.69	17,811	40.89	40,987	44.76
Renter Occupied	10,246	69.31	25,744	59.11	50,591	55.24
2005 Average Household Size	2.74		2.88		2.96	

Trade Area: E MAIN ST AT N CHAPEL AVE, ALHAMBRA, CA 91801, aggregate
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Description	0.00 - 1.00 miles Radius	%	0.00 - 2.00 miles Radius	%	0.00 - 3.00 miles Radius	%
2005 Est. Households by Household Income	14,783		43,555		91,577	
Income Less than $15,000	2,274	15.38	6,111	14.03	12,782	13.96
Income $15,000 - $24,999	1,968	13.31	5,067	11.63	10,528	11.50
Income $25,000 - $34,999	1,997	13.51	5,102	11.71	10,491	11.46
Income $35,000 - $49,999	2,621	17.73	7,035	16.15	14,523	15.86
Income $50,000 - $74,999	2,573	17.41	8,048	18.48	16,716	18.25
Income $75,000 - $99,999	1,493	10.10	4,704	10.80	9,889	10.80
Income $100,000 - $149,999	1,260	8.52	4,330	9.94	9,484	10.36
Income $150,000 - $249,999	439	2.97	2,048	4.70	4,703	5.14
Income $250,000 - $499,999	116	0.78	635	1.46	1,467	1.60
Income $500,000 and over	41	0.28	475	1.09	996	1.09
2005 Est. Average Household Income	$55,409		$66,996		$68,469	
2005 Est. Median Household Income	$41,593		$46,721		$47,382	
2005 Est. Per Capita Income	$20,265		$23,257		$23,000	

*In contrast to Claritas Demographic Estimates, "smoothed" data items are Census 2000 tables made consistent with current year estimated and 5 year projected base counts.

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Area Map

Prepared For: Retail Net Lease Properties
Project Code:

E MAIN ST AT N CHAPEL AVE
ALHAMBRA,CA 91801
Coord: 34.096650, -118.123650
Radius - See Appendix for Details

★	Point
	Interstate Highways
	US Highways
	State Highways
	Major Highways
	Major Roads
	Roads
	Railroads
	Hydrography
	Airports
	State
	Ocean

0 miles   1.11   2.21

Prepared on: August 8, 2006
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Claritas Tech Support: 1 800 866 6511

SITEREPORTS

CLARITAS
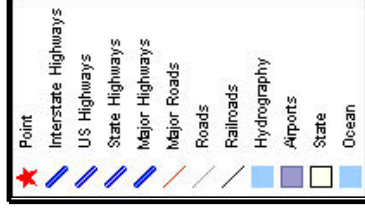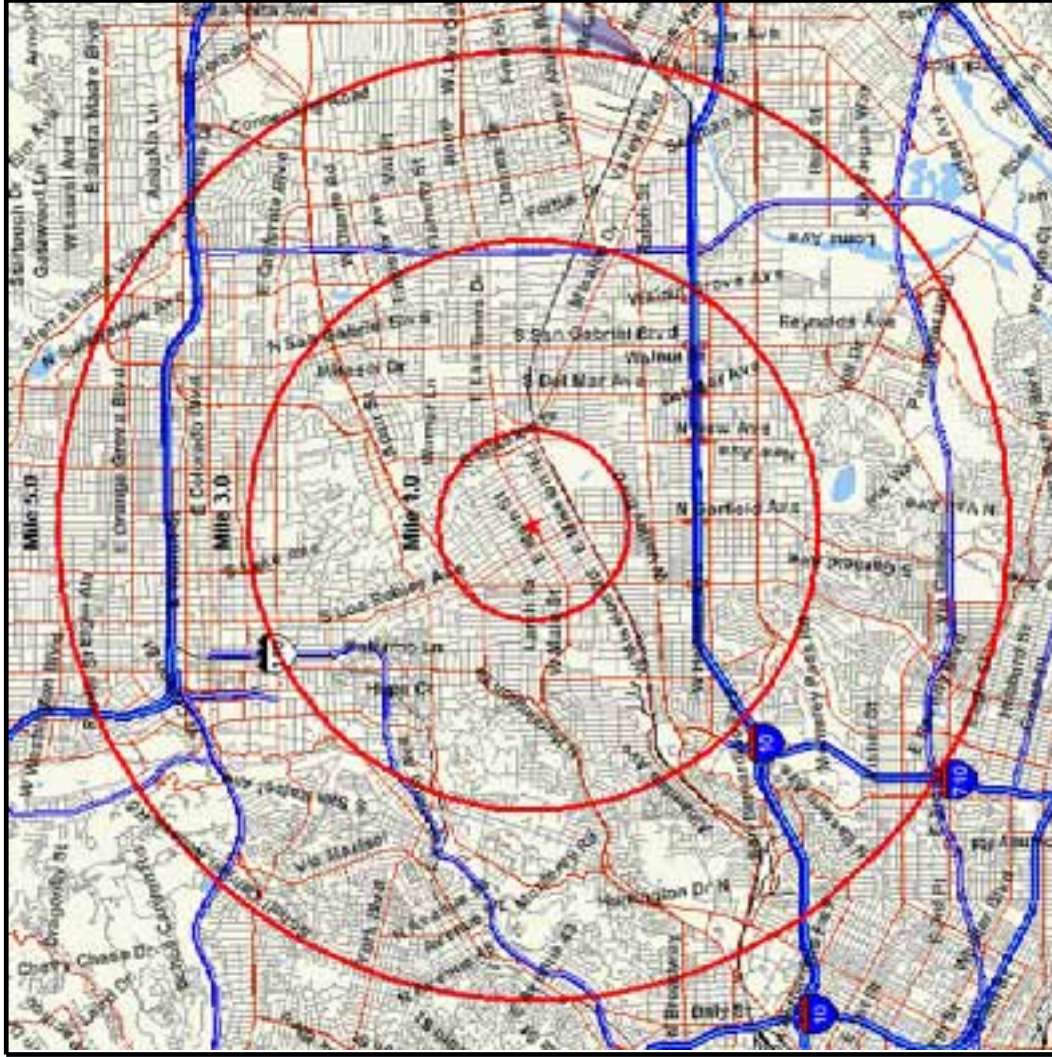
Alhambra Courtyard

NEQ Main / Chapel
Alhambra, California

Main Street

NAP

CVS Drug
10,000 sf

available
5,000 sf

Arbys

Ralphs

| A | B | C | | D | E | F |

Available-
1,800 sf
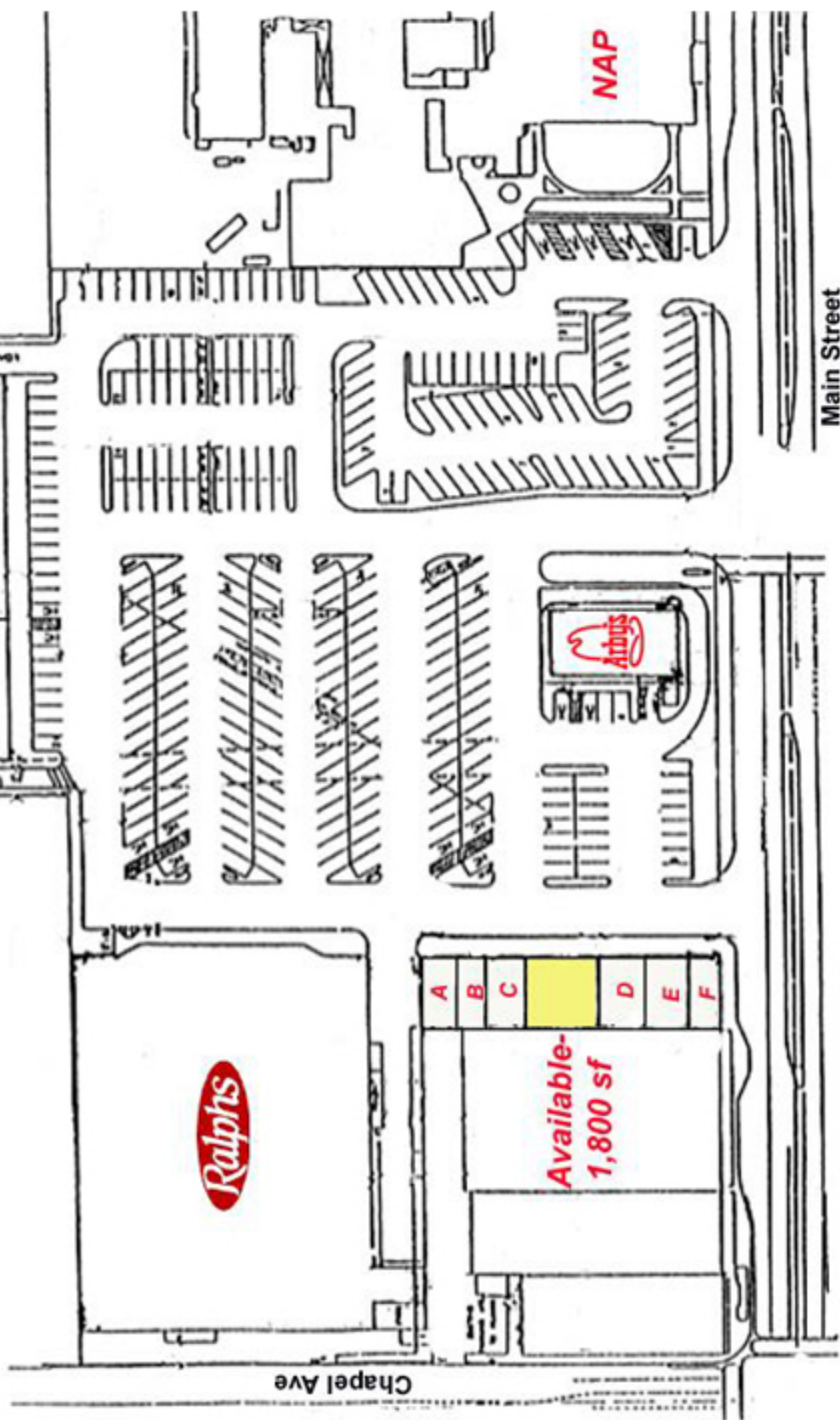
A - Advance America, Cash Advance
B - Krystal Jewlers
C - All-Well Dental Center
D - Tobacco Club
E - Proffesional Hair Design
F - Game Stop

Chapel Ave

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Annotated Bibliography

Urbanism

Los Angeles School of Urban Thought

Los Angeles the Metropolis

Los Angeles Architecture

Architecture

Miscellany

Urbanism

Bruegmann, Robert. *Sprawl a Compact History.* University of Chicago Press, 2006.

Hayden, Dolores. *Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History*, MIT Press, 1997.

Jackson, J.B. *A Sense of Place, a Sense of Time*, Yale University Press, 1996.

> His article "Working at Home" examined how people and programs are already densifying in the suburban detached single family residence.

Jacobs, Jane. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities.* New York, Vintage, 1961.

> Her work is constantly mentioned in urban texts and like the work of J.B. Jackson, the things she wrote were constantly in the back of my head.

Kotkin, Joel. http://www.joelkotkin.com/

> Excoriated as a shill for municipal governments boosting free market ideologies, this senior fellow at the New America Foundation presents libertarian ideas for continued urban growth, emphasizing the city's role as infrastructure provider.

Lang, Robert. *Edgeless Cities.* Washington D.C, Brookings Institution Press, 2003.

> Creating a category of urbanism even less centralized than the "edge cities" of Garreau, the book is also a treasure trove of statistics and provides useful snapshots of metropolises around the America.

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> Presents a historical model of New York as "pre industrial", Chicago as Industrial, Los Angeles as " late industrial" and Miami as "post-industrial;" tracing the transformation of metropolitan shape from highly centralized to constrained to fragmented to an undifferentiated plane.

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> Presents four models of urbanism: New Urbanism, Market-Based, Social, Academic; and tries to interweave the different models. These last two articles were particularly helpful in helping me pinpoint my own differing thoughts about urbanism as well as freeing me from feeling a burden to pick sides in the different urbanism debates.

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Banham, Reyner. *Los Angeles, Architecture of Four Ecologies.* Middlesex, Penguin, 1971.

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> Banham came first, both of these works celebrate the Los Angeles Vernacular as a legitimate object of study. Chase's work on "everyday urbanism" is more site specific and historically grounded; the "before and after image" of Craig Ellwood's Case Study house #17 remodeled by John Woolf is priceless (page 93).

Davis, Mike. *Ecology of Fear.* New York, Vintage Books, 1998.

Davis, Mike. *City of Quartz.* New York, Vintage Books, 1990.

> Love him or hate him, the Mike is the Shiznitz. Foshizzle.

Dear, Michael. *The Postmodern Urban Condition*, Oxford, Blackwell Publishing, 2000.

> Like Soja's books, this is a "general" urbanism text "based in" Los Angeles. Unlike Soja (who is focused on "space" in post-modern discourse), Dear asks what does a fully inclusive (feminine, racial, etc.) post-modern urbanism mean?

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> *Postmetropolis* proposes a postmodern approach to the field of geography and ends with two essays about Los Angeles. The latter book is his third in a trilogy and deals with more specific urban issues. He is less apocalyptic than Mike Davis and focuses on spatiality, especially in later books and articles.

Craig Ellwood's Case Study house #17, at 9554 Hidden Valley Road in Coldwater Canyon, in its original state as a temple of modernism. [Photo: Jason Hailey]

Case Study house #17 transformed beyond recognition in 1962 by John Woolf as a temple in the Hollywood Regency Revival style.

Los Angeles the Metropolis

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> Fulton points out that a higher density, midrise urbanism is already developing in Pasadena with both walkable streets and ample parking (garages).

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> Makes a strong case to daylight streams in Los Angeles when possible.

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> Studies parking requirements in Downtown Los Angeles and the financial consequences which further constrains development.

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> These two manifestos clearly show how much room there is for architecture to directly operate on problems in the city.

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United States Census (database) http://factfinder.census.gov/

Alhambra Zoning Code http://www.amlegal.com/alhambra_ca/

> All great sources for data-mining demographic information.

Google Maps http://maps.google.com/

Microsoft Live Maps http://local.live.com/

> It is quite amazing what is available out there on the internet. The Microsoft Maps had a birds eye feature that was constantly used and its area calculator was invaluable in mapping out the parking lots of Alhambra.

Los Angeles Architecture

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Pogrebin, Robin. "Los Angeles With a Downtown? Gehry's Vision", *New York Times*, 25 April 2006.

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> L.A. Now was a collaborative design initiative to focusing on Downtown Los Angeles. It involved UCLA architects under Thom Mayne, along with CalArts Graphic Design and Art Center students. The research was buried under layers of obtuse graphics and the projects invariably proposed mega dreams.

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Smith, Elizabeth. *Case Study Houses.* Koln, Taschen, 2006.

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> The mid-century Los Angeles look is a collision between high and atomic modernism. Neither vernacular nor academically tasteful, this style still has influence over the popular conception of the L.A. "look".

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> The contemporary book is nice for current looks but the really vibrant time with wacky ideas came much earlier when everyone was still figuring out standards. I relied heavily on *Graphic Standards* and the *Studio Companion* for basic parameters and dimensions.

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> One of the first articles I read as a freshman and one that I have consistently returned to for thinking about parking lots and how they are under-exploited in so many ways.

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Forster, Wolfgang. *Housing in the 20th and 21st Centuries.* Munchen, Prestel, 2006.

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> Picture books, nothing really intellectual but still inspiring.

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> While the graphic sensibilities of the Push Pin Graphics and Ed Ruscha are not visibly manifested in my work, these were the two books which I consistently relaxed into when I was taking a short break from my architecture design work.

Tony Valadez*, Recasting the Convivial Tool,* 2006.

Wang Shuo, *Enabling Wild Be[ij]ing,* 2006.

> Having known these two guys a couple years ago, I borrowed their books from the library and I found myself regularly looking at their books to see how others managed to survive this thesis process.

The Long Goodbye, Robert Altman, 1973.

Bladerunner, Ridley Scott, 1982.

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A Scanner Darkly, Richard Linklater, 2006.

> I am not a movie buff or else there would be many more, but these were some movies that captured imagery of Los Angeles which affected or reinforced those in my own head.

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"We had time, so we skipped the freeway and drove city streets south out of Alhambra, past its twin icons – automobile dealerships and Chinese churches – into Monterery Park…."

Bernie Ohls, *The Long Goodbye*, Raymond Chandler

You think those palaces in Reno and Vegas are just for harmless fun? Nuts, they're for the little guy, the something-for-nothing sucker, the lad that stops off with his pay envelope in his pocket and loses the week-end grocery money.

The rich gambler loses forty grand and laughs it off and comes back for more.

But the rich gambler don't make the big racket, pal.

The big steal is in dimes
and quarters and half dollars
and once in a while a buck or even a five-spot.

The big racket money comes in
like water from the pipein your bathroom,

a

steady stream that never stops f l o w i n g

Justus Pang 070418.39

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One last shout out to Dong and Chen,
and Corwin, wish you were still here.