

EXODUS
The Disappearing Rural History of Alberta

by
Tyler Dixon

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Architecture (First Professional)

at
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Dedication

In memory of Leonard Ratke and W. G. "Bill" Dixon.
Ingenuity sprung forth from empty pockets.

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Abstract

Alberta has undergone a number of large shifts over the past half century. The foundations of Alberta's prairie lifestyle, as well as the microcosm of the family farm, have been affected in the wake of these changes. The idyllic prairie is not what it once was. Machines now manoeuvre around the ruins of once finely crafted wood houses and barns, lying buried in their own collapse. Industrial and managerial positions lure the population away from the fields with promise of oil wealth.

Through my travels around Alberta and Saskatchewan, I have tried to document the abandonment of homesteads scattered in the countryside, in hopes of achieving a better understanding of our rural history - now threatened by extinction under the pressures of Alberta's modern economy.

Although the scale of the situation is province-wide, I will use the County of Parland No. 21, west of Edmonton, as site and case study to illustrate common issues across the prairies.

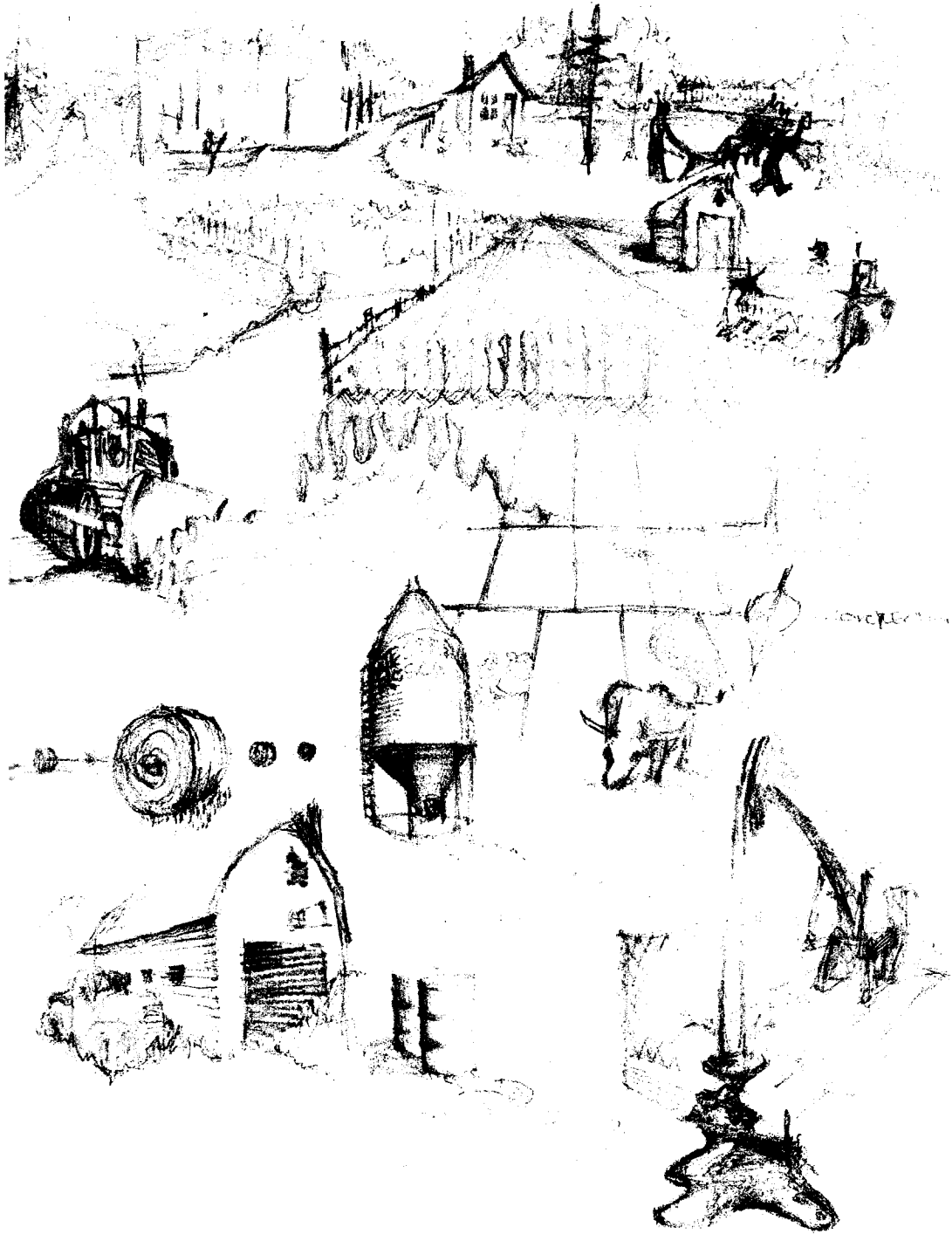
I believe examination of past and present is necessary to provide hope for the future. While architecture can not propose any one solution to such a complex problem, it can reflect and anticipate changes. This thesis then becomes a collection of studies and possibilities of the role of architecture in the Rural West.

Acknowledgements

This happened as a collaborative effort with family, colleagues, friends, and interested strangers. Everyone's opinion is delightfully different and opened my eyes to a vast world of options I alone would never have uncovered.

Thesis Question

What role should architecture take in facilitating a transitional period of complex socio-economic decay?



memory sketch: chronology

<i>Water - in the trees</i>	<i>Look harder</i>
<i>Water - in the ground</i>	<i>Find another water</i>
<i>Cut the trees</i>	<i>Darker,</i>
<i>Push the ground</i>	<i>Thicker</i>
<i>Lose the water</i>	<i>Forget the trees</i>
<i>Wonder why</i>	<i>Forget the ground</i>
<i>Dig deeper</i>	<i>Move to the city</i>

Introduction



Remaining buildings moved from original Keephills townsite sit in a yard a few miles away

Rural Western Canada is a vast wealth-creation machine. If you throw a stone in a rural area, you hit an oil field or a grain field; a potash, uranium, diamond, coal, or gold mine; a herd of cattle; or a stand of timber. This great wealth, however, is not captured within rural areas. Instead, rural areas are struggling: farmers are facing bankruptcy, stores are closing, schools are increasingly empty, young people are leaving, roads are disintegrating, and the economy is contracting. - **Darrin Qualman (Epp and Whitson, 28)**

As the costs of farming continue to grow beyond profit margins - spurred by droughts and mad cow scares - Alberta farmers are often left with the choice of either taking on supplementary jobs, or abandoning the homes they had built over generations to oil donkeys and decay.

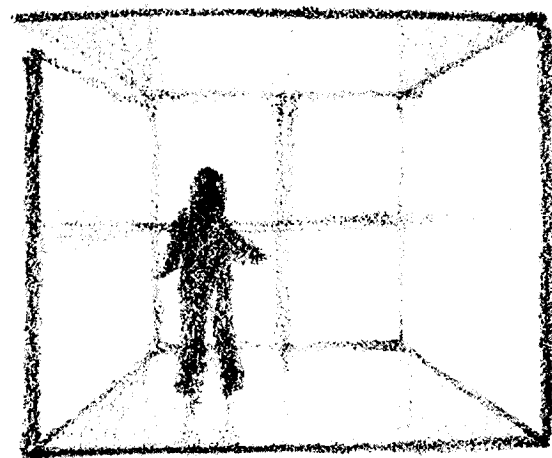
These pastoral monuments are a disappearing part of Canadian heritage which, as a result of the ongoing rural exodus, will be forgotten before being preserved. There is currently no incentive to return to these areas. The memories recalled within these yards have ceased, following the exodus, or passed on.

People have irreparably altered this landscape, taking up massive scales of land. One house leaves an enormous footprint. The remaining farmyard is now a symbol of decay: it disintegrates as humans come, set up home, take available resources,

and move on. There is also an irreversible loss of inhabitation - the house becomes a monument to a memory of an extinct way of life. Currently, the vacant ruralscape becomes an inverted graveyard - one where rotting corpses adorn the landscapes to signify the stones lying below.

Architecture is just a container, one creates memories within. The virtual reality of architectural drawings, of movies and photos - these only work in cooperation with our imagination. Memories are not scaled in feet and inches. The imagination is more effectively provoked by mere hints of visual reminders rather than concrete images.

Vagueness allows for interpretation. Sounds, smells, tastes, feels, and looks are all familiar phenomenological stimulants of memory.

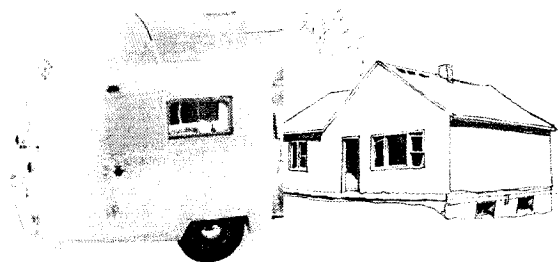
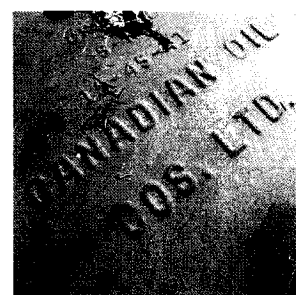


sketch: infinite room: virtual architecture/ stimulant

Section One:

Case Studies

Albertan Architecture



The Story Goes



- Stony Plain
- Onoway
- Keephills

map: Central Alberta

My parents grew up on farms west of Edmonton: my father just north of the town of Onoway, and my mother west of the hamlet of Keephills. Both of my parents left the farming life after graduating from high school, realizing the opportunities offered by the resource and utility industries. And so, the rural exodus for me begins here. I grew up in a small town founded as a collection of amenities serving the farming community surrounding it. Because of its vicinity to the highway and distance from Edmonton, it has torn down its grain elevators to make room for the spread of single-family suburbia. The town thus manages to sustain surrounding farmers as a consequence of the needs of residential bedroom communities.

For communities outside of Edmonton or Calgary's wake, deterioration has been a common phenomenon. After the installment of big-box stores in the urban outskirts, their goods substantially cheaper with greater variety and availability, the local, rural merchants were no longer viable. The hardware and general stores eventually close, forcing owners to move on. After private businesses deteriorate, the public sector quickly follows suit. Schools and medical services downsize - amalgamating into larger complexes that serve entire counties



former pastor's house, Keephills area

rather than small communities. Hamlets and towns disband, moving to areas where opportunity still exists. As a result, access to amenities outside of big-box parks is much more difficult.

Due to the devaluation of farming and the ensuing scarcity of opportunities and amenities, the younger generations are increasingly unrooted from their connection with the land. Rather than focusing on the traditional lifestyle of community building and land ownership, there is a transition to mobility - an allegiance toward lucrative large-scale, corporate industrial sectors.

The lifestyle shift of following industrial demand has a direct effect on domestic architecture, and the idea of the 'home'. Generations-old family homes are replaced by the functional, temporary trailer parks meeting fluctuating housing demands around the resource areas.

With the waning population of traditional farmers, corporations move into communities to set up large-scale outfits which invest in technology rather than local labour and interests. The effects of this have been detrimental to the remaining independent farmers as highly concentrated outfits have managed to take control of prices and market access - not to mention the polluting effects of

untreated manure at the scale of small cities and chemical dependency of fields pushed to extremes.

* * *

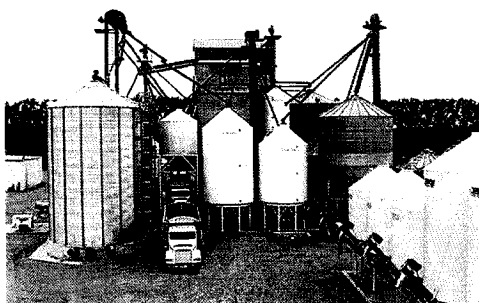
Four stories follow, outlining different perceptions of how this phenomenon has come about and how it may be interpreted in order to be developed into architectural manifestations. In the end, these stories will come together, presenting a design overview and a demonstration of prairie life cycles.



collage: the industrial map

Industrial Mega-Farms

When the farmer began to grow crops to make money, he forgot the real principles of agriculture. (Fukuoka, 113)

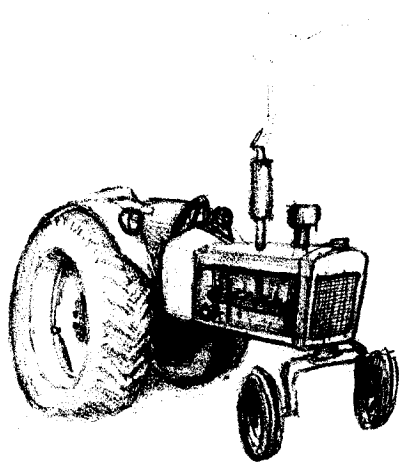


O'Toole Seed Farm, Morinville

The traditional farm is undersized. Perfectly suited to provide for the family and local community, it is too small to compete in the global community. Market access requires the farmer to produce far more than a family operation is capable of. Therefore, the current trend within Alberta is to establish intensive operations, either livestock (ILOs) or grain based.

It has now become a debate of vast dimensions. The 20% of "productive" farmers perceive land as a Google image - a game of Risk.¹ Previously, farmers had regarded their own quarter-section as a world in and of itself - there was an intimate understanding of every piece of dirt, every swell, dry, and wet spot - and the land would be dealt with accordingly. This basic agricultural wisdom has been replaced by profit-conscious, environmentally unsound chemical practices which capitalize on simplistic, short-term solutions.

¹ A description of the comments of a vice-president of the Royal Bank of Canada illustrates this economic transition: "20 percent of farm operations - the big, technology-savvy, credit-worthy ones - are responsible for 80 percent of production. It is the relatively unproductive majority of farmers who, in his view, cannot compete in a climate of agribusiness consolidation and are continually clamouring for government assistance." (Epp and Whitson, xxxii)



sketch: tractor

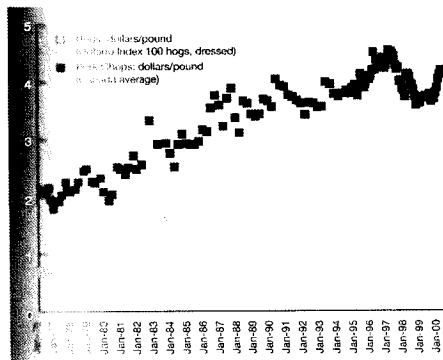


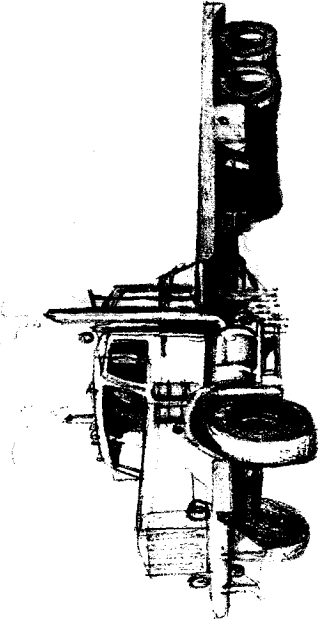
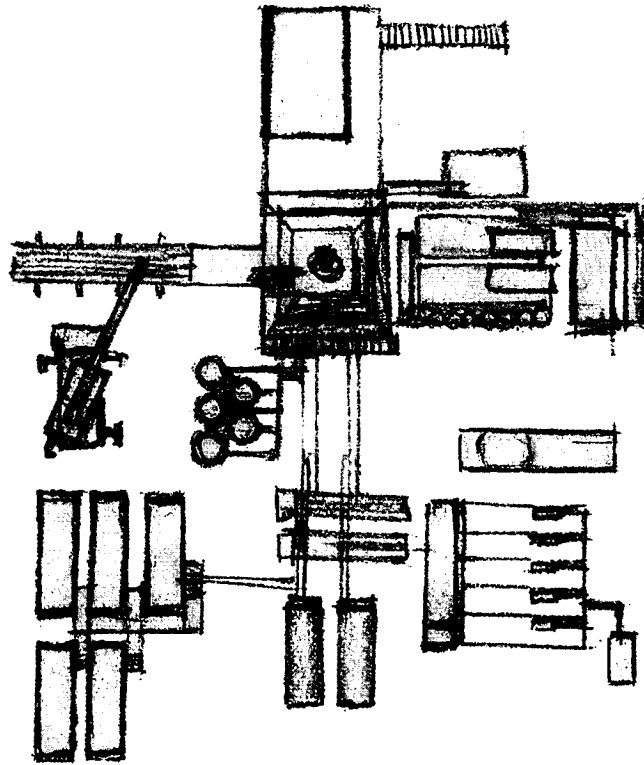
FIGURE 3. HOG AND PORK CHOP PRICES: 1976-2000
 Sources: *Consumer Prices and Price Indexes*, Statistics Canada Cat. # 62-010 and *Livestock*
Statistics, Statistics Canada Cat. # 23-603.
 hog and pork chop prices: 1976 - 2000
 (Epp and Whitson, 35)

The slogan inviting one to Alberta as it is “open for business” has created an influx of these operations under the umbrella of larger corporations whose head offices are seldom within the prairies at all. These companies include, but are certainly not limited to Maple Leaf Foods, Taiwan Sugar, and the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool/Heartland Corporation. Vertical integration, a means of developing relationships between feed mills, producers, and packing plants has allowed these companies to all but phase out the family farm as a productive member in the modern farming arena. These relationships have provided backing to drop out the actual prices of production by placing those profits at different points of processing which are inaccessible to the ‘average’ farmer. Darrin Qualman points out that “It is interesting to note that few, if any, of the prime movers behind hog production expansion in Western Canada rely on making a profit in their barns.” (Epp and Whitson, 26) Instead, these profits can be realized by consumers at the supermarkets. Even though the prices of wheat and hogs have not increased by a margin even worth mentioning, the prices of bread and pork chops have increased astronomically. At the end of the day, the farmer still has to buy pork chops at these higher prices, even though the pigs were sold for very little by comparison.

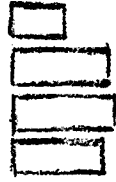
The result of this has been a loss of faith in the ideal, tight-knit farming community. Instead, competition and industrialization have pushed

farmers to dehumanize their operations. Investments are now made in technology and chemicals. Due to this transition, real profits of farming go to companies like Bayer and John Deere, instead of contributing towards the establishment of a network of neighbours and friends. Previously, this latter interdependency created a sense of community - one as powerful as vertical integration. If one family suffered particularly worse than others in the community, there was a moral sense of community to offer assistance. Now, competition has caused this to be regarded as opportunity for remaining farms to push out the struggling individuals in hopes of acquiring a larger share of the market.

Traditionally, living and farming were symbiotic. The industrial farm is no longer a place to raise a family; instead, it has evolved into a mere office, separate from home. Workers come in hopes of earning a living, making their contributions to a larger machine. Because ownership of the land is no longer held by workers, attachment to it is strictly monetary. Quite often, seasonal workers are used in this type of farming, having contracts expiring within the year, benefits need not be provided. Workers often become transient, searching for the best pay each season, seldom in the same field more than once. The resulting unrooted family lacks community ties and a sense of belonging while they fend for themselves. Through architectural involvement, assistance could be provided through these changes.



ACCESS TO ROAD



OIL DRILLING RIG

sketch: plan of typical oil derrick

Oil Drilling Rig



active well near Rocky Mountain House

Alberta is booming. There is more demand than there are people, and the work pays well. For the February 2006 period, Alberta recorded a 3.2% unemployment rate - less than half the national rate. A labour income increase of 11.7% doubled the national change from 2005. **(Statistics Canada)** Ralph Klein's government is entirely dedicated to the continued profiteering created from oil revenues. Subsidies and funding are being reinvested to develop oil-sand extraction technologies for sale to other companies around the world. Occasionally, farmers are given rental payments for wells set up on their fields; however, this is not a huge profit. Farming is not a feasible income when compared with trade work and the oil industry, and the rural youth is well aware of that fact.

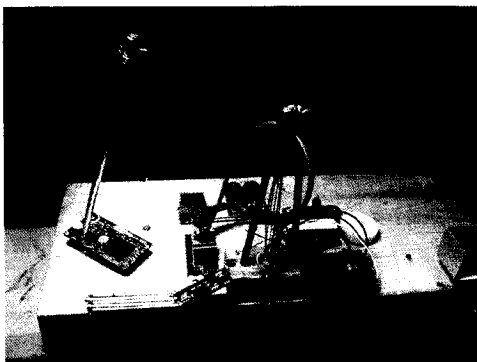
A drill team operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week until achieving the desired depth. The entire unit is a mobile kit of parts, used over and over for different well sites. The speed and efficiency of set up, use, and take down is the epitome of mechanical advent.

An oil rig's relationship with the land becomes one of combat. The natural elements of the site - trees, water, topography - are often regarded as obstacles to the drilling process and indiscriminate environmental destruction

often occurs. Because of this, the rig team has to familiarize themselves with every possible condition and be prepared to encounter both uncommon and difficult natural circumstances without delay. Although nature becomes an opponent, respecting and understanding each site allows the rig to succeed in its endeavour, much like the farmer.

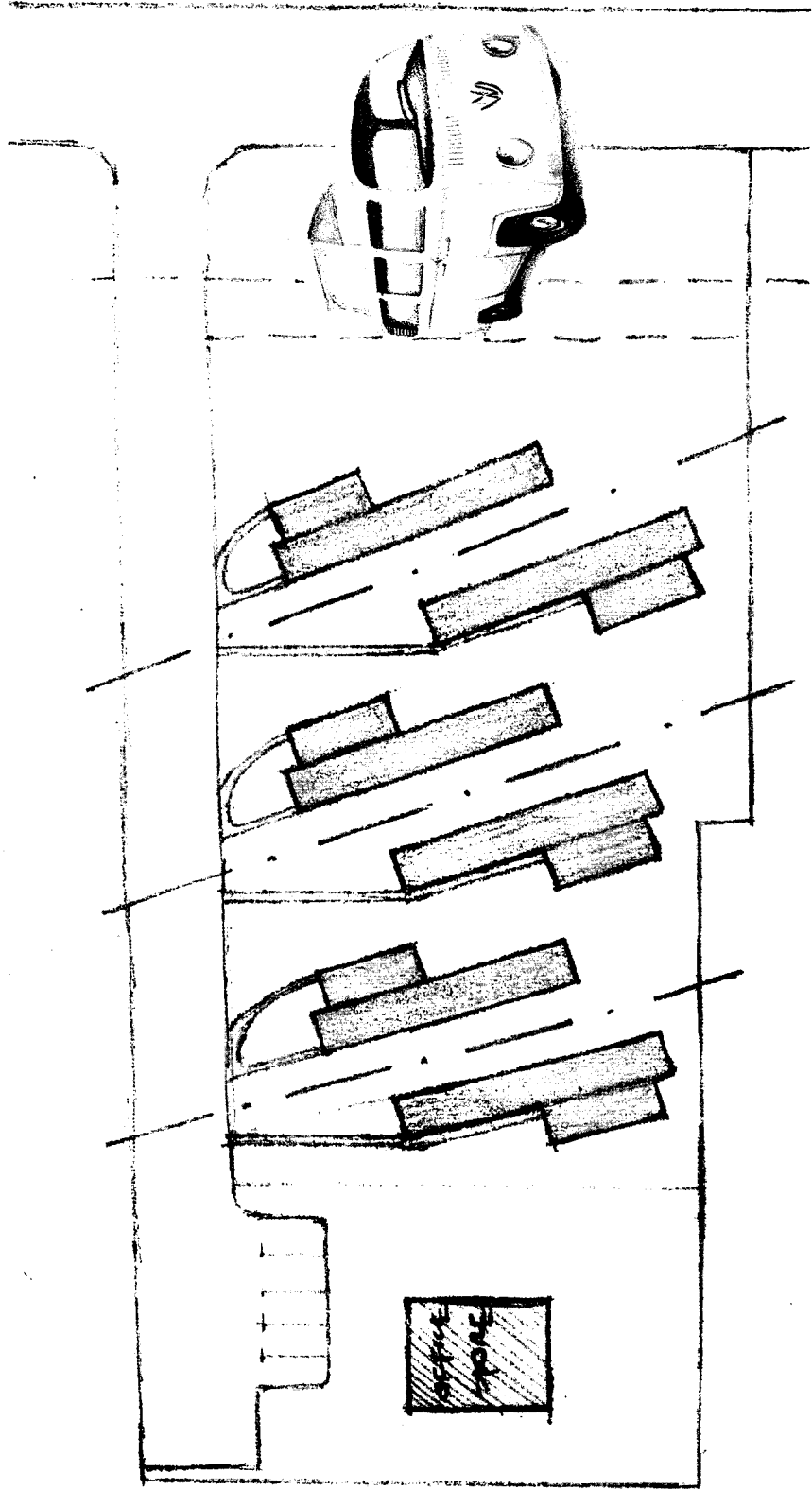
Oil industry labour is viewed as highly expendable as a result of the dangerous conditions for work. There is a trend towards manufactured homes to reflect this high turnover rate of the working population.

North of Edmonton, outside of Fort McMurray on the Athabasca River, development of the oil sands has demanded a population boom which has put great strains on infrastructure, construction, and the environment. Factoring in a harsh climate and remote location, turnover rates are even more extreme. Attachment to location is virtually non-existent; therefore making the establishment of community and concern for the immediate environment difficult.



model: derrick breaking through ground

These oil sands are being regarded with an increasing interest. They will continue to draw future labourers and trades workers in Alberta's near future. By reflecting on past and present conditions, architectural involvements with the resource industry can help define new alternatives to assist the migrant lifestyles.



"MOM & POP" PARK PLAN

sketch: plan: typical trailer park layout (Drury, 1965)

Parkland Village (Spruce Grove)

Antiquated infrastructure has crippled the Rural West. Roads are left ungraded, let alone paved. Cable and telephone companies refuse to offer necessary, contemporary services such as high-speed internet or proper cellular coverage due to low demand.

To illustrate the available services, two examples follow the needs of my grandmothers: Every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday my Granny must wake at five in the morning in order to be driven into Edmonton for dialysis at the Royal Alexandra Hospital. Although this exhausts her, mentally and physically, she maintains her home on the farm - in a familiar setting - the area she has called home for over 60 years.

Onoway, a town barely 20 minutes from her home has been completely stripped of the infrastructural supports which would save her the arduous trip thrice weekly. No longer able to hold a license, she is only able to keep her home out of a dependence on children and grandchildren.



Parkland Village - just north of Spruce Grove on Century Road, Highway 16

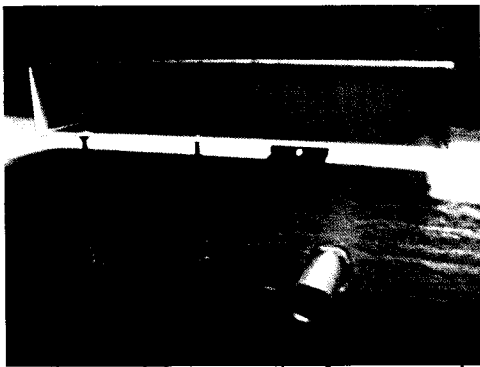
On the other side of the family, my Grandfather needed to be moved into permanent care facilities in Edmonton two decades ago. Having never held a license, nor having those around to assist in making up for inadequate

inadequate infrastructure, my Grandma made the move into Stony Plain from Keephills.² From this location, she was close enough to necessary amenities and had modern infrastructural support. Other family members could reach her more frequently and easily to assist with everyday needs.

The trailer park has evolved in response to this lack of infrastructure. According to architect and theorist, Rem Koolhaas, next to suburban sprawl, “[t]he second fastest growing category of housing in America over the last two decades was mobile homes. More than one in seven of the nation’s residences is mobile.” (Koolhaas and Boeri, 537) A trailer home was never conceived as a mobile unit in order to venture out and be anywhere. On the contrary, it is mobile in order to come to where it will receive support - it must find the utilities to plug into because the utilities refuse to make a move of their own.

The difference between a trailer park and a campground dedicated to leisure travel trailers is a subtle sense of separation. Everyone in a campground is there for the same reason - to relax, to escape, to dream. The recreational traveler knows when and why he will move on from the campground. For the trailer

² Keephills is a hamlet which was technically ‘moved’ by TransAlta Utilities in 1975 due to upcoming strip-mine plans intersecting the townsite. 30 years later these plans have yet to take course and numerous buildings sit abandoned.



section model: separation from ground

park, these decisions are made less by the inhabitants than by the conditions which have required them to move to the trailer park - work opportunities, etc.

Working in Parkland Village to maintain the 'manicured' vacant lots between inhabited lots - cutting down small trees, levelling uneven grounds, sterilizing any hints of previous inhabitants and removing all possible signs of uniqueness - an understanding of living in this context became apparent. The park and its sites are owned and rented out to the owners of the trailer; therefore, the connection of a trailer to the ground is minimal. The tires, the levelling stands, and the services are the only elements which root a trailer to a specific site. This becomes unsettling to the inhabitants, compelling them to skirt the issue with a flimsy screen and an illusion is created to show the trailer as an extension of the ground. There lies a sense of both exposure and cover-up.

The trailer park itself is uncompromising in its ability to reach the aforementioned sense of equality. There are a few amenities provided allowing the driving traffic to pause as they pass through, but no seats are given for anyone to actually stop. Therefore, by not welcoming those who live closeby, everyone is equally unwelcome. Sidewalks are non-existent and playgrounds are made of the vacant lots - but can not be assured in their

The Farm of Leonard Ratke



for my entire life, livestock were no longer a part of the farm and the barn always acted as a workshop - the meticulously junk-stocked universe of an informal inventor

It is my understanding that diversity determines an area's ability to succeed or fail. The original rural homestead consisted of a complex, self-sufficient series of relationships between different elements. Farms managed to succeed by having a mixture of animals, vegetables, pasture lands, and grain fields. The entire family would take part in ensuring that work and home were in perfect balance by relying on one another and their own abilities. Industrialization introduced numerous innovations into farming technology and globalization increased demands on both the land and people. Tractors and implements of ever-increasing dimension, along with fluctuating world-market prices, have altered the process of farming from one embracing diversity to that of mass production and profit margins.

Farmers are abandoning particular aspects of their diverse practices in order to focus more intently on what is market competitive. Wheat may need to be stored in pig barns and held until prices are once again suitable, requiring pigs to be sold to someone who could handle something more diverse. These pig farmers need their cattle barns for extra pigs, and so, sell cattle to the next person in line, etc. In reality, this process has evolved over many years with a similar end result. Farms are no



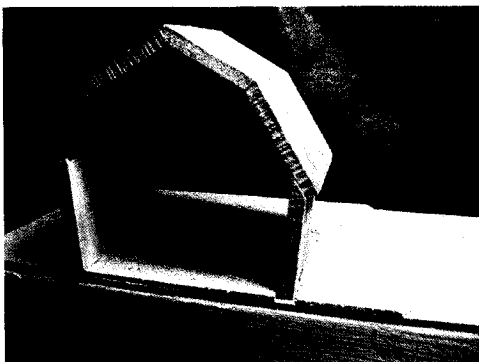
the farm house:

longer a complex series of interdependent circumstances, but are part of a larger industrial process where each farm serves one-piece of the global economy.

Leonard Ratke was born and raised on the same farm where he lived out the remainder of his 68 years until early 2005. The house and all of the outbuildings were constructed by the hands of Leonard, his brother, sister, and parents. Before passing away, his mother had sold the land rather than passing it onto her son who was running the farm at that time, and Leonard had been renting since.

Throughout his lifetime, Leonard and his family members acquired the many diverse practical skills needed for the farming lifestyle by becoming a self-reliant family unit.

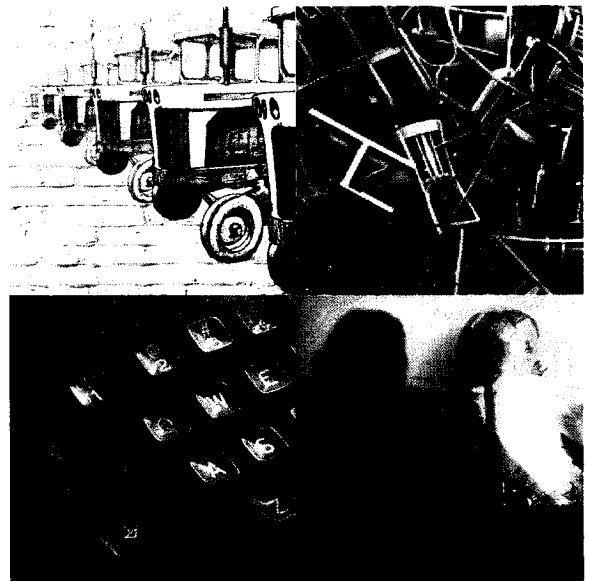
Last April, Leonard passed away. All of his children have moved away from the farm although still emotionally attached to it as their first home; however, his wife, Judy, can not manage the maintenance of the entire yard herself. Soon, the Ratke farm will be reluctantly left behind to meet the same fate of abandonment that is now common in Alberta.



section model: settled on the ground

Section Two: Prairie Life Cycles

Occupying Architecture



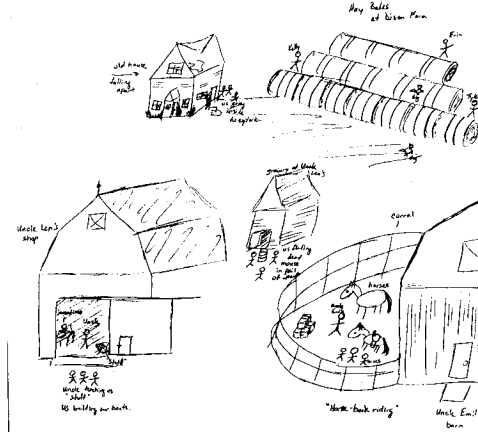
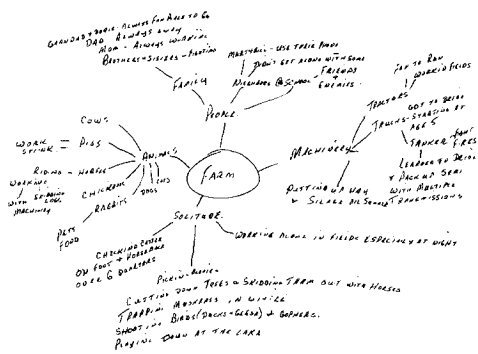
Memory

We are unable to relive duration that has been destroyed. We can only think of it, in the line of an abstract time that is deprived of all thickness. ... Memories are motionless, and the more securely they are fixed in space, the sounder they are. (Bachelard, 9)

Physical memory is the most apparent - it is absolutely tangible. It cannot be ignored until it disintegrates. The physical memory of a farmyard is manifested through delapidated buildings and machinery, deliberate tree-planted wind breaks, and overgrown tracks of people, animals, and vehicles. A trailer is remembered by a series of disconnections by which it is parasitically attached to the site - a sewage line, a water line, a gravel pad. The physical memories of the oil industry and industrial farmers are the scars left on the landscape.

Photographs indicate the obvious elements of a current, visual story. An exercise of having numerous people complete a small literary and visual memory sketch of what the word 'farm' implies to them personally compiled an entire world beyond photogenics (fig.). Each of these bubble diagrams gives only a brief insight into an infinite number of stories, thoughts, and emotions contained within the author. These personal memories complement the physical memories to help develop an understanding of what the idea of a farm is comprised of.

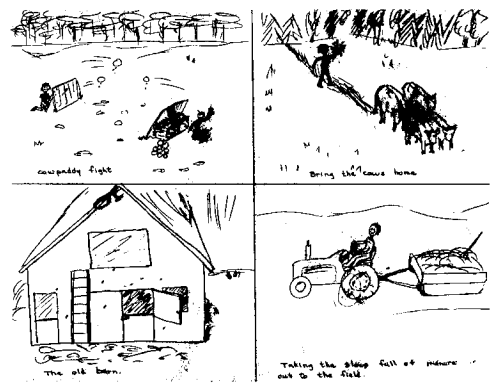
As the reality of the rural exodus unfolds however, these personal experiences quickly fade from the collective memory of the prairies, leaving only ruins as physical reminders.



My first thoughts about the farm was bringing the cows in from the pasture for evening milking. This was my job, and I enjoyed it. The peace and solitude gave me lots of time to think and ponder and sing out loud all the songs that I knew or made up. I always had a branch with lots of leaves to keep the bugs off me.

Also we always seemed to be able to make up entertainment for ourselves. We built many forts in the hay (much to my Dad's anger). We also had forts in the bushes and meadows. Another thing we did was, "cowpatty fights". This carried on until someone got hurt or Mom found us. She didn't think this was the best way to entertain ourselves. After all she had to do the laundry.

Milking cows could be fun too, except when we had to explain why there was milk all over. Spraying the cats or each other.



memory sketches: top two - Erin Vollick (Dixon), bottom two - Adrienne Dixon

Clone Life Cycle



chickens in a large barn are provided with warming lamps as substitution for sunlight (personal collection)

Humans have consistently been attempting to increase productivity. Henry Ford made huge advancements in the fields of mass production and interchangeability which have been adopted into an endless number of consumer products and corporate structuring. These advancements have been successful towards productivity; however, as Peter Kropotkin describes in his book *Fields, Factories, and Workshops*, “the agricultural labourer, who formerly used to find a relief from the hardships of his life in the home of his ancestors - the future home of his children - in his love of the field and in a keen intercourse with nature, even he has been doomed to disappear for the sake of division of labour.”

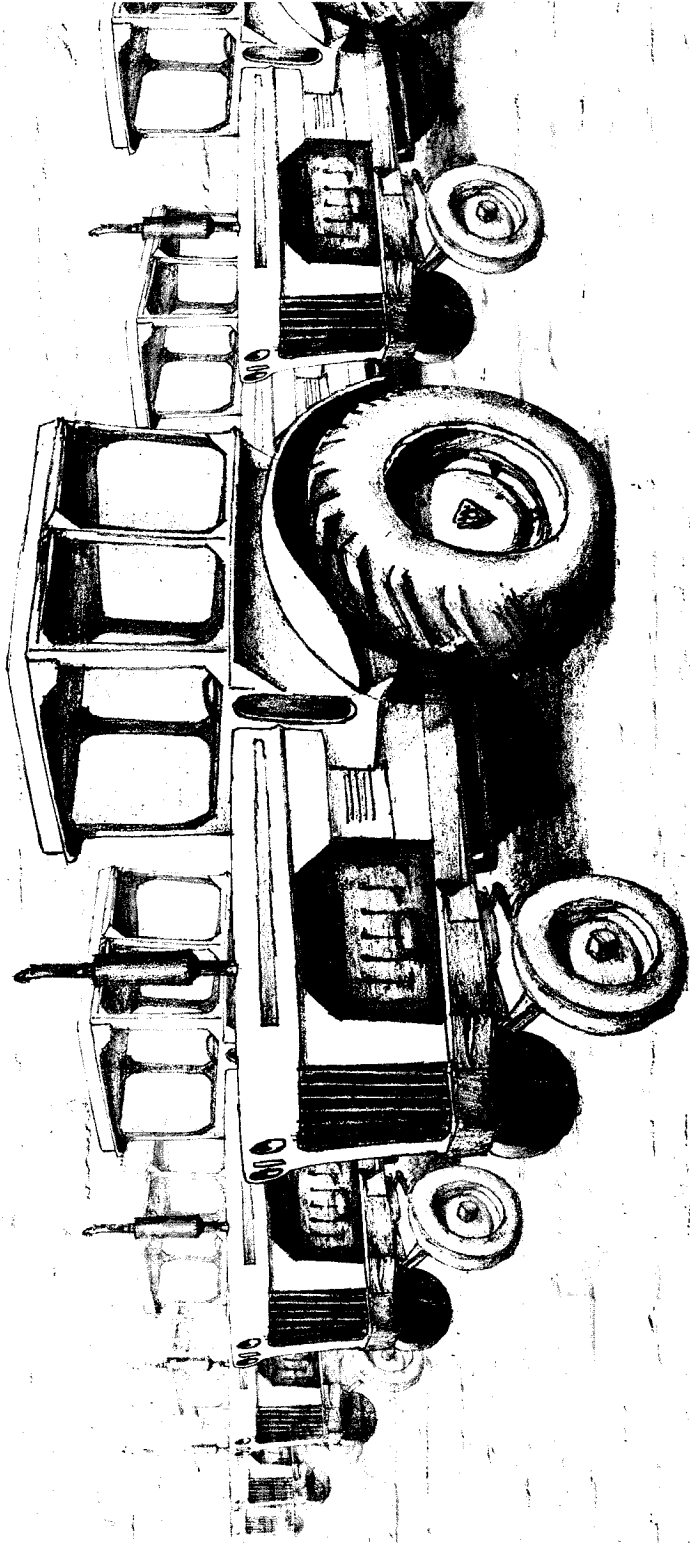
(Kropotkin, 24)

No longer symbiotic with nature, the farmer is becoming more dependent on the knowledge of others (chemical and farm implement companies) and the application of the same movements in mass quantity rather than relying on an intimate understanding of the landscape and applying a series of diverse, smaller scale movements. This departure eliminates the ‘jack-of-all-trades’ quality common in the traditional farmer, replacing it with the blind use of tractors, computers, and genetics - complexities beyond the necessary scope of a farmer’s comprehension. The

traditional farmer is thus transformed as Kropotkin describes:

...the modern ideal of a workman seems to be a man or a woman, or even a girl or a boy, without the knowledge of any handicraft, without any conception whatever of the industry he or she is employed in, who is only capable of making all day long and for a whole life the same infinitesimal part of something ... mere flesh-and-bone parts of some immense machinery; having no idea how and why the machinery performs its rhythmical movements. (Kropotkin, 23-24)

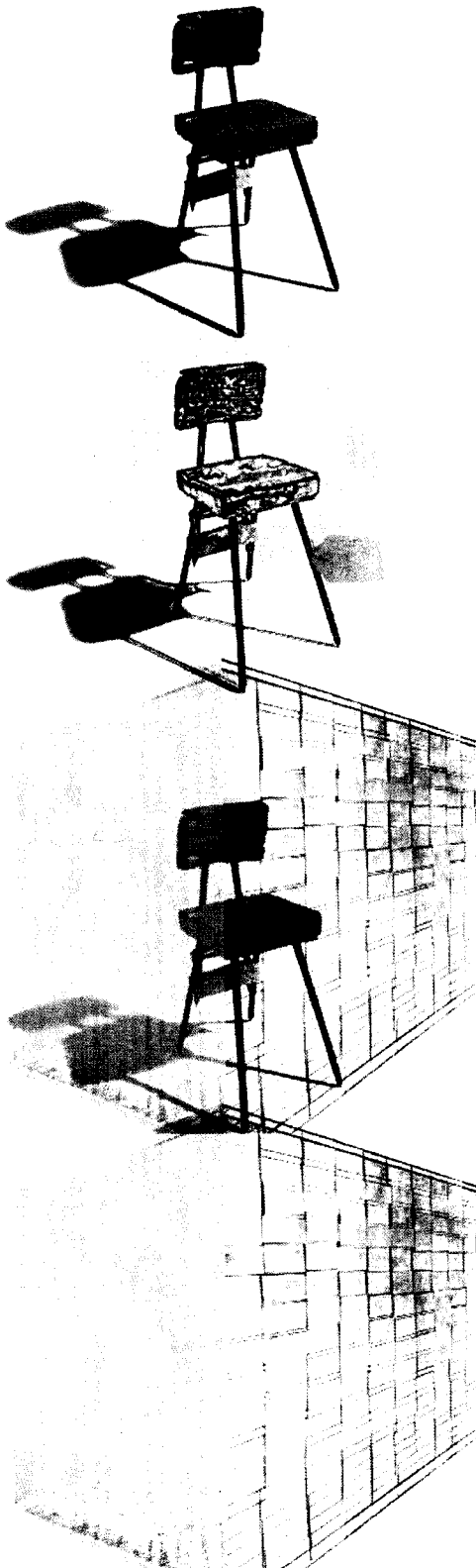
The concept of cloning, as embraced by the large-scale farming industry, allows the ability to provide innumerable iterations of the same moment. The endless repetition of these moments ensures success while the interchangeability of parts provides efficiency. The value of each individual component or process is therefore rendered worthless in comparison to the whole. The farmer relies on these methods to supply the demand and the consumer, by demanding indiscriminatory consistency in quality, partakes and perpetuates the mass production cycle.



sketch collage: clone life cycle

Value Life Cycle

1. an abandoned chair sits in disuse
2. the chair is discovered and used by someone else
3. the chair is taken and sold for profit as an antique
4. the chair is enclosed within a glass box as a museum piece
5. the glass box becomes an item of importance
6. the chair is abandoned
7. the chair is discovered by an artist and incorporated into a larger whole



model collage: life of chair



artist installation, Istanbul (personal collection)

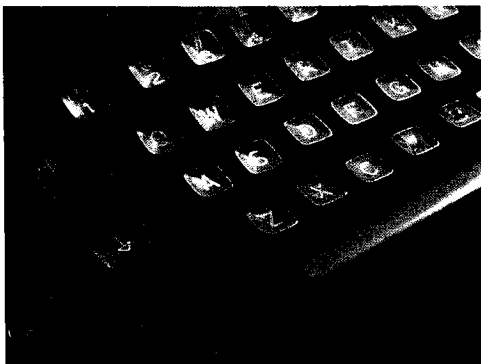
North American society is increasingly dependant on disposable items. Certainly, numerable recycling programs exist to ease the effects of our population, but Canadian waste per capita still tops the world. The ease of the Albertan to discard items can be seen at many levels - over-packaging of consumer goods, common demolition of perfectly sound buildings, and the abandoned ruralscape itself to name but a few. This references proportionally the current economic situation. It makes more economic sense to retain items of high value and reject those of lesser value; however, understanding and appreciating value strictly by a monetary basis becomes unsustainable. This shift of judgement coincides with the clone lifecycle - attempting to produce quantity over quality.

Environmental and economic issues aside, there evolves a sense that history and heritage are being discarded. Modern disposable items do not carry the scars or patina from which stories can be recovered. Sifting through the items left behind by departed families in the houses and barns of many forgotten farmyards, I found numerous items providing evidence to reflect a long history. Here, scattered all around me, lay a multitude of memorable objects with the potential to be rearranged and revalued. This experience raised a personal issue for me - can we learn to attach value to seemingly worthless objects even if they are expendable or easily replaced?



a filing cabinet sits amidst the recovered items from an abandoned garage recently the victim of arsonists

Substitution Life Cycle



I have this old typewriter. The letter '1' has given up for some time. For awhile, frustration drove my nose into the depths of my thesaurus and dictionaries, constantly searching for those 1-less words. Eventually, after a long struggle finding a synonymous term for a particular word, I began nervously tapping on the typewriter. As the number one has always been a faithful companion of mine, the tapping had provided me the simple answer to the 1 dilemma with a simple vision of six ones in a row.

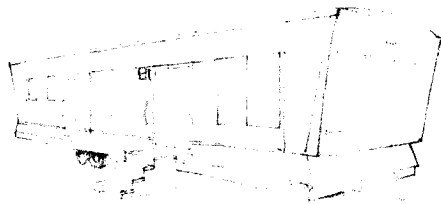
11 1 111

Seldom does the substitute equal or surpass the item it has replaced. Instead, it usually comes across as a temporary solution to compromise former with future. Unfortunately, the temporary nature, that hope for the future, does not always present itself - leaving the stand-in prevalent.

They cling to life as they have already experienced it, and this habitual attachment brings fear of death. Paying attention only to the past, which has already gone, or to the future, which has yet to come, they forget that they are living on the earth here and now. Struggling in confusion, they watch their lives pass as in a dream.
(Fukuoka, 162)

As Fukuoka describes, it is difficult to give replacements a particular space to occupy in memory. It seems logical to live in the present; however, it is impossible to define when the present physically exists. The substitute is locked within this limbo of time - it is not expected to have a past or future. Its ephemeral nature fits in perfectly with an elusive present, therefore, it continues to exist. As Anne Troutman explains:

The word "dwelling" itself contains in its root the sense of a transitional space. "Dwelling" has its origins in the Old English word dwellan, which means "to go astray, to hesitate, to delay." **(Troutman, 147)**



sketch: single-wide 'Kropf' mobile home, circa 1970. alignment of doors allowed this unit to be replicated in double and triple-wide configurations

The mobile home is a reality of substitution. It attempts to bridge a gap, providing temporary solutions for nomadic existence.

Ghost Life Cycle



a lady's shoe sits amongst other rubble in a vacated house near Keephills



although this pig barn has not been used for over 30 years, numerous indicators exist to describe the daily events that would have taken place during full operation

If the sun were to burn out, we would not see it fade for roughly eight minutes. During those eight minutes, sunlight appears as an illusion as the reality would no longer exist. Between actions there exists a delayed reaction. In the moment of delay, the ghost becomes a reality.

The 'ghost' is the ultimate embodiment of memory. It is an elusive manifestation: a myth, a legend. Resting on the cusp of believability, the ghost is often associated with fear.

Physical apparitions remain in the past tense: pictures, stories, footsteps, scratches, and marks. Their memories, however, continue through the inherited imaginations of future generations.

On the farmyard, ghostly images appear everywhere. Rutted, overgrown tracks recall the traffic which has depressed the earth over many years, many paths. The faded paint of outbuildings and barns recall annexes and sheds long removed. Abandoned furniture, dishes, and personal items indicate forgotten tastes, eras, and numerous other qualities of ghost inhabitants.

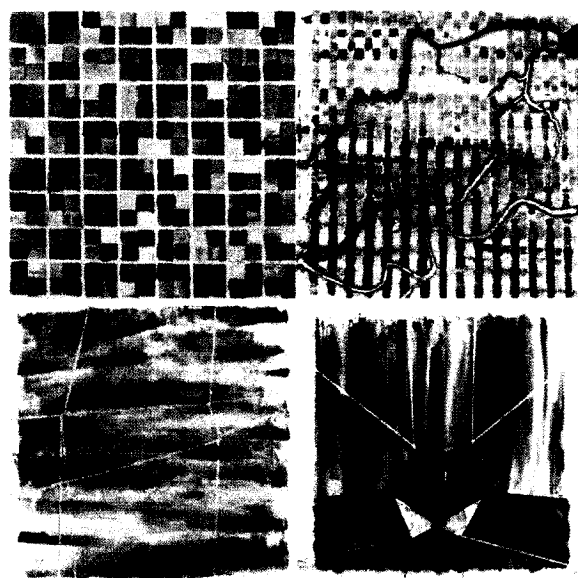
An inventory of these remnants provides an understanding of the ghost's formal role in history. Fear and myth dissolve into poetic evidence that can help inform future development.



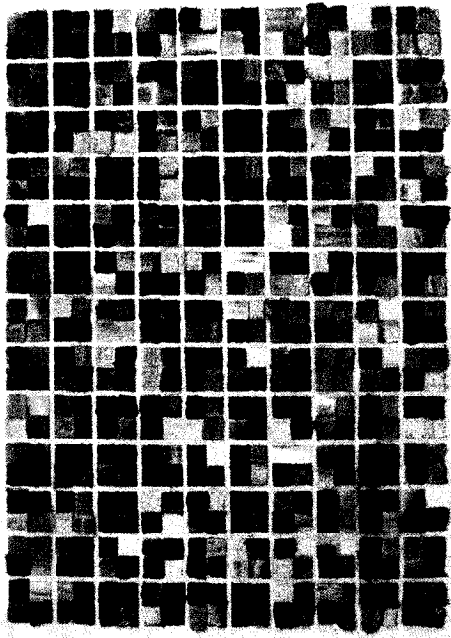
photo collages: ghosts: two abandoned buildings in Keephills

Section Three: Landscapes Abstracted

Consequential Architecture



Industrial Landscapes



painting: aerial abstraction of farm plots

The most pervasive construction on the prairie is the square grid superimposed on the land. Roads, boundaries, streets, and lanes follow the grid. A road can be seen to run a grid line into a water-filled ravine, only to have it reappear on the other side.

Again the interminable grid as text and subtext. It is the most modern and ancient of devices. If the structure of land allocation and city building can be divided into two general categories, the first may be said to be a pattern of landholding and town building that follows the contours of a terrain and accretion by use over a long period of time; witness the medieval cores of European cities. The second is a pattern that is consciously willed into existence at a given moment in time. It is founded on the use of an orthogonal grid to proportion space in a non-hierarchical and extensible manner, regardless of the nature of terrain. (Charney, 153)

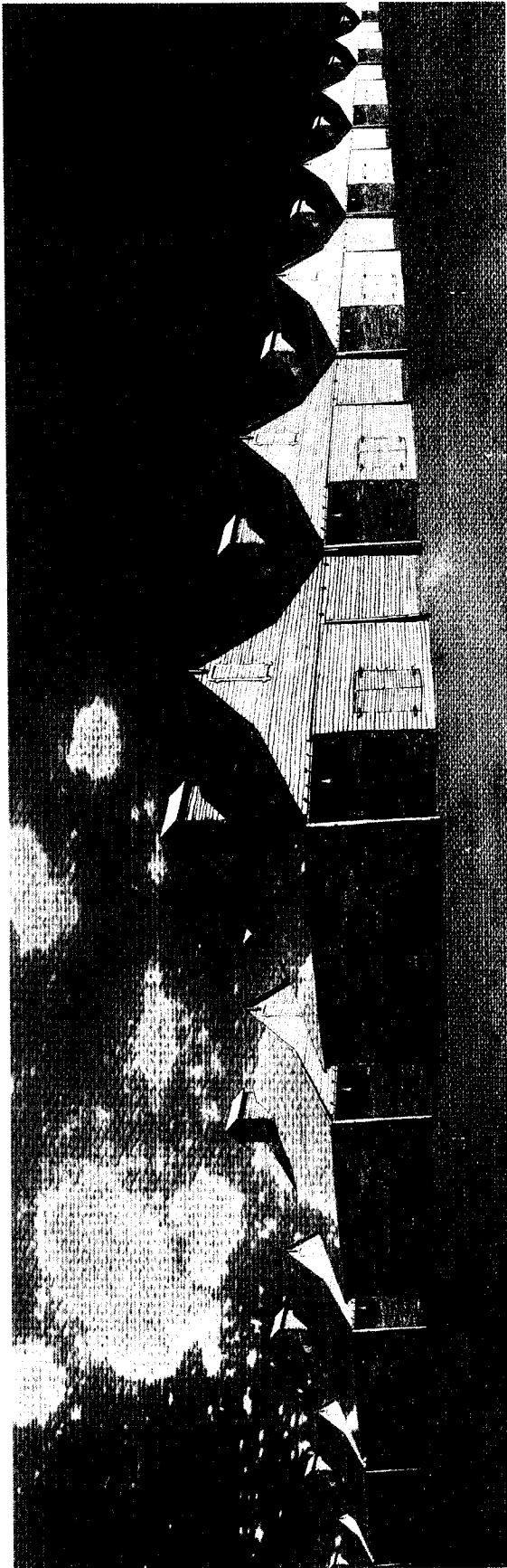
As Charney points out, the grid is absolutely unforgiving, unprejudiced, and unbending. Alberta's one-by-two mile layout is only interrupted by the occasional correction line, tightening the structure's belt as the province narrows to the North. Approaching the mountains, farmers have continued to 'break' the land in order to maximize the arable area within each section. Flying in from British Columbia, a harsh line becomes visible defining a boundary between forest and farmland - natural and manipulated.

This method of land division does not acknowledge particular issues such as water distribution, soil types, existing vegetation, or changes in climate from one area to the next. Instead, the farmer has to compensate, relying on the cloning methods outlined earlier: fertilizers, pesticides, tractors, and sprinklers only begin to hint at the manipulation of the landscape required by industrial farming practices. Many farmers are growing less interested in producing high quality grain, instead focusing on producing high yields. This phenomenon becomes apparent simply through the types of grain being sown: there has been a huge shift from planting high quality wheat (red variety) to high yielding, lower quality wheat (new 'prairie' variety). **(Epp and Whitson, 15)**

For livestock, constructed landscapes are taking over. Lilydale Chicken's Edmonton Hatchery is located on Highway 16A between Stony Plain and Edmonton. For the 18 years my parents have been living in Stony Plain, I have driven past this farm countless times. Every single time I pass the numerous rows of windowless, corrugated steel barns, perfectly aligned to the North-South axis of the grid, I always see only one chicken. Unfortunately, this particular chicken is nothing more than painted wood, forcing my imagination to make the connection between its vibrant colours and the mysterious silence of sterile steel cabinets

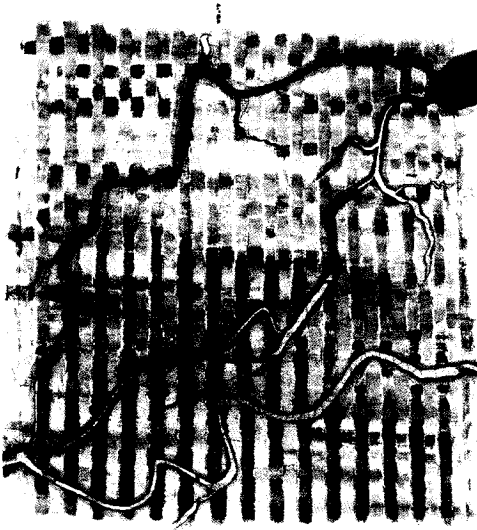
behind it. I cannot smell, hear, or see anything to offer a link between the barns and signage - only a painted smile and vacuum-packaged poultry in the grocer's freezer are available for public view.

Industrial farming builds visual and sensory barriers into their practices, and so further obscures the relationship between the consumer and their food.



sketch/painting collage: industrial landscape

Scarred Landscape



painting: Athabasca, North Saskatchewan, and Bow Rivers have transformed from being providers of water to contamination spreading pollutants due to the diligence of resource industries

Lake Wabamun, one of the larger lakes around Alberta's Central West, is undergoing an interesting shift in occupation. For many years, this lake has been teeming with leisure activities. At Seba Beach, the annual regatta succeeded in bringing enough tourists to quadruple the hamlet population each summer. The entire lake has been surrounded by beaches, provincial parks, and private cabins to enjoy the beautiful setting. In the summer, boats and swimming are popular, while ice fishing and snowmobiling dominate winter recreation. Unfortunately, enjoying these simple pleasures is becoming increasingly more difficult.

On August 3, 2005, 43 CN rail cars derailed along the Wabamun shore. "Twenty-six of the cars that left the track contained bunker fuel oil, a heavy oil used to run ships, said CN spokesman Jim Feeny. Some of the containers are leaking into the ground and Wabamun Lake, he said Lubricating oil is also leaking from another car, Feeny said." (CBC) The fuel spread quickly in the Lake due to high winds. Well water was affected, some of the local population requiring evacuation until booms could be set up to clean up the spill. As the lake thaws this spring, cleanup will continue. The regatta will most likely have to be relocated for the 2006 year.

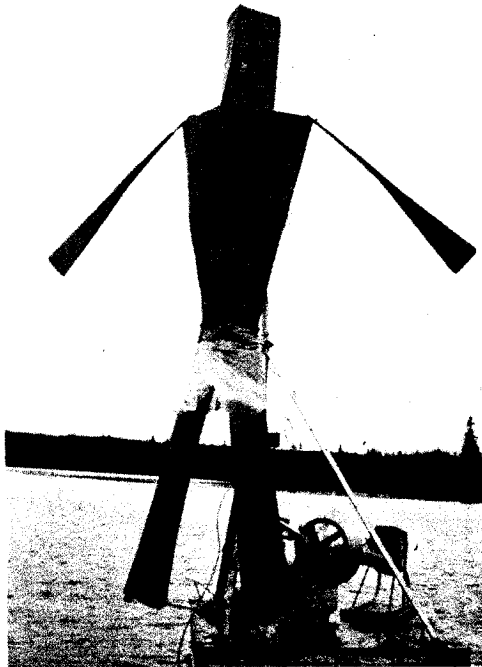
Although under terrible pretenses, this disaster actually put some perspective on the Wabamun area by placing it in the environmental spotlight. Sundance, Keephills, and Genessee generating stations are large employers for the area, providing jobs and electricity (TransAlta Utilities and Edmonton Power respectively). All three of these power plants are visible from Wabamun Lake, two of them using the lake water to cool the process. In recent years, ice has no longer been safe for traveling across particular areas. A few skidoos can be found on the lake bottom.

These plants are dependant on a vast supply of coal surrounding Wabamun. Huge draglines are constantly clawing at the ground, day and night, along highways 16 and 627, dwarfing the large crawlers and trucks driving the circuit from mine to plant. Countless farms have been consumed by the enormous buckets of these draglines as they slowly turn the earth inside-out. Flying over the region gives a view most would be disturbed by. Billowing smoke, fluorescent cooling ponds, blackened mine scars, flattened trees, miles of fencing, and an array of power lines radiating to infinity.



I think we are all aware of the abysmal conditons which last century pitted man against nature in hellish shafts of narrow space. ...Without further human suffering, surely the open-pit is a more humane hole. (Darden, 118)

Four years prior to this incident, CN was in the headlines again, being accused of creating sparks which set off the massive Chisholm fire of 2001. This wildfire “consumed 1,045

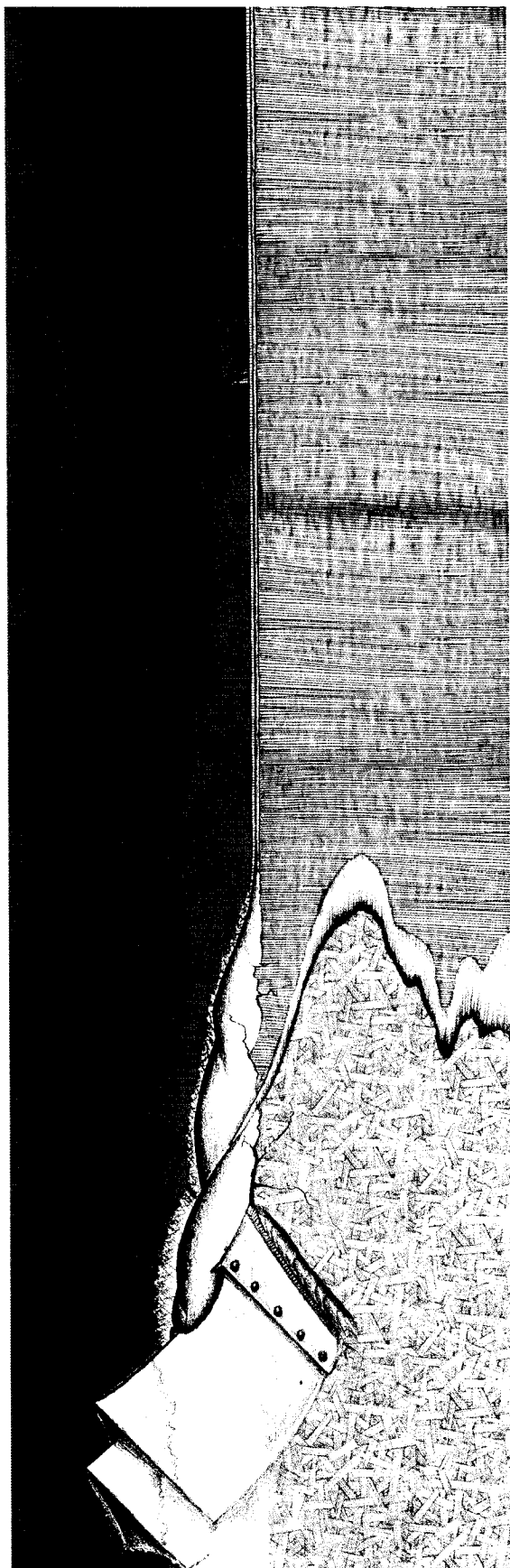


an oversized scarecrow floats around a tailing pond in Fort McMurray to deter birds from landing in contaminated water (McRory, 74)

square kilometres of forest and wiped out about a dozen homes and other buildings” (Macdonald).

At Fort McMurray, tailing ponds create hazards to bird populations on the surface while leaching toxins into the groundwater and the Athabasca River. Recovered mined land is of no vegetative value and has to be artificially stimulated in order to grow natural grasses or trees. Sulphur dioxide is released from stacks at high enough altitude to keep from being poisonous before reaching the human level (McRory, 74-76) - but what of trees and birds already at that height?

Unintentional environmental misfortunes put human activities into perspective. The resource industries have drained the environment. There seems to be government and corporate decisions to overlook environmental problems and poor living conditions in favour of profits and industry. Trees have been cut down and harvested. Rivers have been dammed and water supplies contaminated - all of this deliberate. If progression continues unabated, consequences into the sheltered human bubble are inevitable.



sketch/painting: the section of Alberta has been manipulated and pushed to extremes

Bound Landscapes

'We can plant a house, we can build a tree. I don't even care if we can ever breed,' she said. - Kurt Cobain



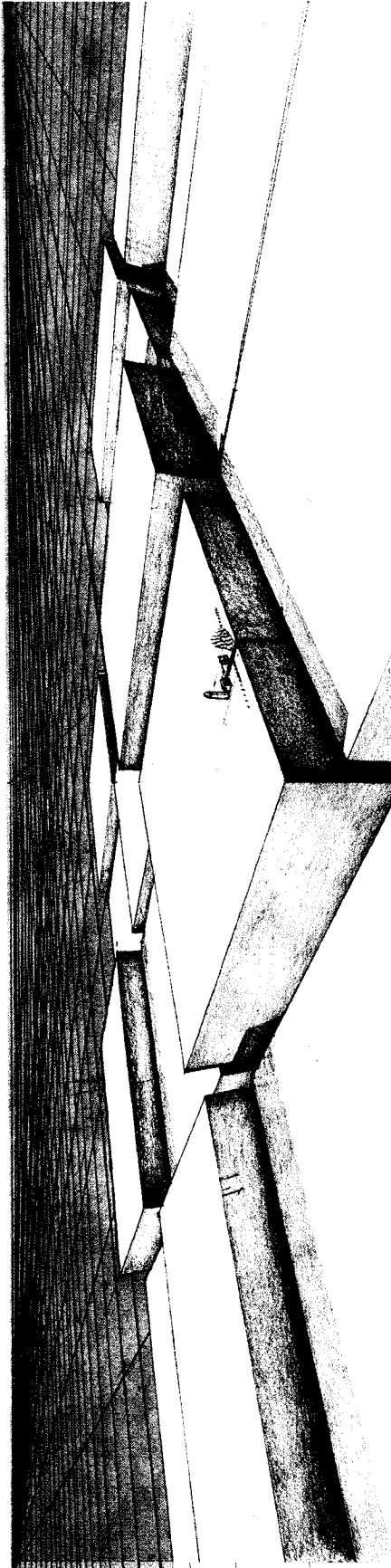
painting: on a prairie of vast dimension, the most active object is the amazing, tumultuous sky

The vastness of the prairies is overwhelming. At once, everything appears infinitely large, while individual items remain infinitely small. The entire world seems to present itself right before your eyes, almost within reach, but always removed. The fences, the separation and the containment of the landscape has also kept it out of reach. The illusion of infinity is foreshortened by gaps and obstacles fading into the horizon.

The domestication of nature has humanity struggling to compartmentalize landscapes, determining 'proper' organizational methods for the natural order. This is obvious at a variety of scales: from fenced fields and pruned fruit trees, to potted plants and bottled water. Natural items almost frighten us, due to uncertainties whether human contamination has gotten into our resources. These fears perpetuate a strange new definition of *natural*.

...the common belief has been that natural food should be expensive. If it is not expensive, people suspect that it is not natural food. One retailer remarked to me that no one would buy natural produce unless it is priced high....If a high price is charged for natural food, it means that the

merchant is taking excessive profits. Furthermore, if natural foods are expensive, they become luxury foods and only rich people are able to afford them. (Fukuoka, 91)



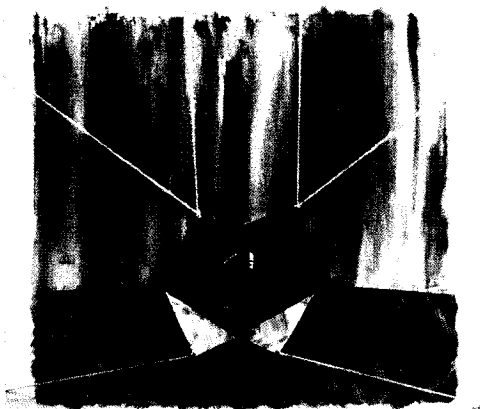
perspective: as the infrastructure crumbles, the support of each farm becomes its bind: stranded islands in the middle of nowhere

According to Fukuoka, there is no better substitute for the natural order than nature itself. Rather than binding nature and attempting to control it, promotional methods to encourage natural relationships create a successful balance.

As current farming practices continue to move away from the natural provisions (fresh water, sunlight, trees, etc.), reliance on crumbling modern infrastructures (water delivery, electricity, oil, etc.) results in further separating each farm within its own confines. A balance between modern and natural worlds needs to occur in order to prevent further isolation of the remaining rural citizens.

Constructed Landscapes

A dwelling is an in-between space, containing me as it divides me from the rest of the world; inside, it contains other in-between spaces, dividing and connecting my inner and outer selves, unconscious and conscious fears, fantasies, desires. Sometimes, within the protection of the house, the boundaries may be erased.
(Troutman, 147)



painting: the home is created to burrow away, safe from the elements, safe from the wild - a domestic space

From the interior perspective, the landscape is something to be sheltered from. A wind break establishes an initial barrier from the elements, a well trimmed lawn buffers the encroaching dirt and wildlife, while the house provides an enclave of safety.

The house is a manifestation of the desire for an internal landscape. It is dry. It is cool in summer. It is warm in winter.

In almost every case, the houses I came across in my travels were boarded up, although barns and graineries were not. Abandoning a home becomes something of significance: there is a ritual which signifies the sense of closure required to move away. The boards are a symbol of the home's vacant status - its transformation from 'home' to an object in the landscape.

Your house is your larger body.

It grows in the sun and sleeps in the stillness of the night; and it is not dreamless. Does not your house dream? and dreaming, leave the city for grove or hilltop?



a bird's nest niched inside a corridor shows the natural tendency to reinhabit

Would that I could gather your houses into my hand, and like a sower scatter them in forest and meadow. (Gibran, 34)

Slowly, nature regains authority over the man-made remains. Wind and rain begin to strip and obliterate the traces of past habitation. Its future is clear as spreading mold, bird nests, and moth-eaten draperies adapt its existence to one of decay.

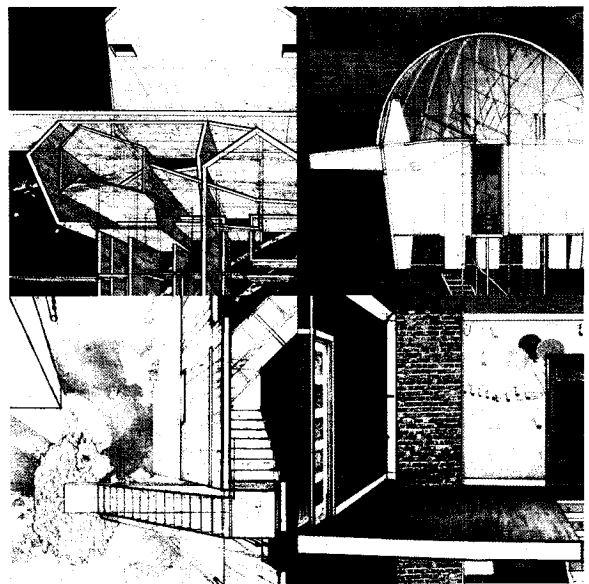
The tree becomes a symbol of time, while the papers are an assortment of memories. As the 'leaves' fall to the floor, they become scattered, forgotten. Eventually the trunk of time consumes the house as well as its memories.



sketch: abandoned buildings naturally shed themselves of frivolity

Section Four: Landscapes Interpreted

Monumental Architecture



The Site: Acheson - RR 264, Hwy 16A



most rural roads stop short of Highway 16 to control traffic flow - allowing for back-tracking on parallel dirt service roads

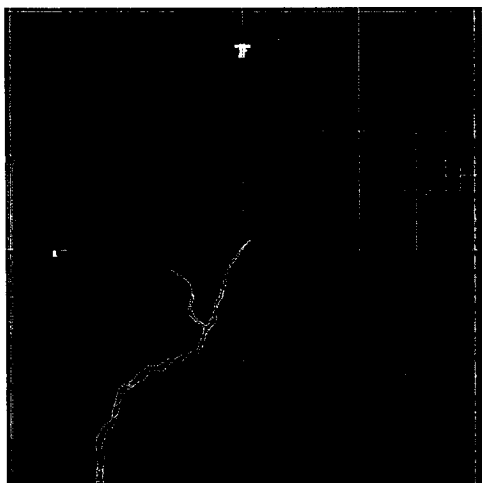
On the south side of Highway 16A, midway between the outskirts of Edmonton and Spruce Grove, a small farmyard sits in disuse. Directly north of the site is the Acheson Industrial Area, containing a series of large concrete elevators along the CN Rail line which replace the older, wooden elevators torn down in virtually every small town west of Edmonton. Closer to where the railway and highway intersect, a Lilydale Chicken hatchery sits to the Northwest. On the eastern stretch of highway, two landfills are increasingly spreading their area north and south to accommodate the city's growing population. Along Highway 60 -a north-south secondary highway connecting Acheson to Devon- a natural gas plant can be seen for miles in every direction with huge flames spurting from stacks to burn off waste gases. Further south on 60, sits the Enoch Indian Reserve, roughly 3 miles away, complete with golf resort and casino. All through this area, numerous oil wells can be found, donkeys nodding slowly in a struggle to pump up oil.

The vicinity of this site to cities, highways, and examples of the outlined issues of abandonment makes it ideally suited for the location of the four monuments. They would be visible from the highways; however, access would require entrance from the southern Township Road. Coming up Range Road 264

through a long corridor of spruce trees, one finds the site to the east.

The monuments themselves are scattered in an open field. Each one allows differing perspectives for the reflection and projection of landscape and memories. The nature of the prairie pulls them apart, causing them to exist as islands in a sea of brown, green, yellow, or white depending on the seasons.

The quarter section plot is divided, again, into North-South and East-West axes for the alignment of buildings. North, the horizontal monument is most visible and recognizable to the highway traffic. It becomes a beacon for the passers-by. South, the vertical monument takes another role as clock, marking the movement of the sun with a long shadow cast upon the field. In the west, the underground monument takes position where the original house would have been, directly behind the windbreak of spruce. Finally, the internal monument has been divided and subdivided - pushed all the way to the back of the eastern edge of the section. The relationship of these elements reflects the rigidity of farmyard organization while emphasizing the scale of the abandonment phenomenon and the human footprint on landscape.

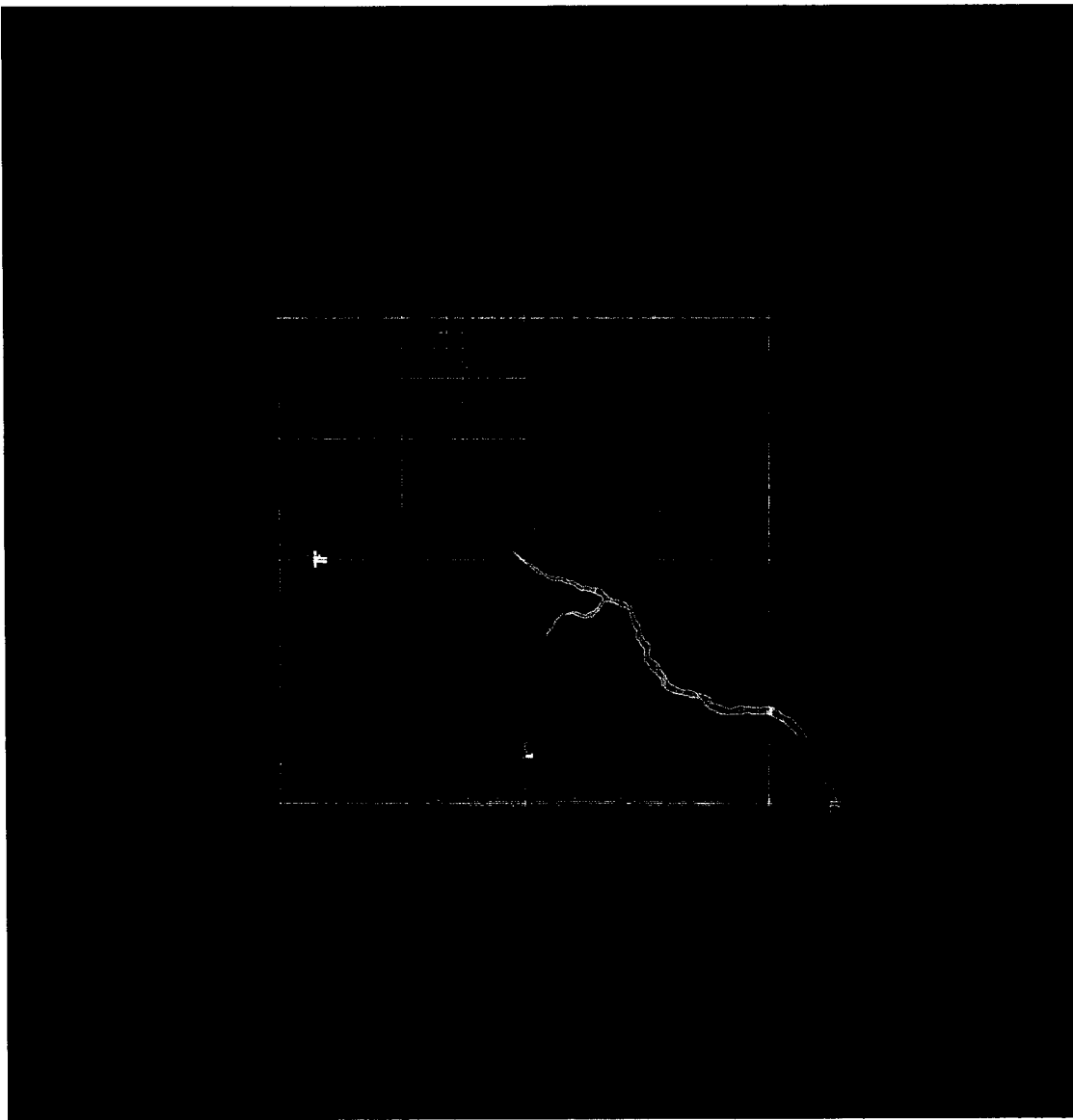


site plan: division of the quarter section



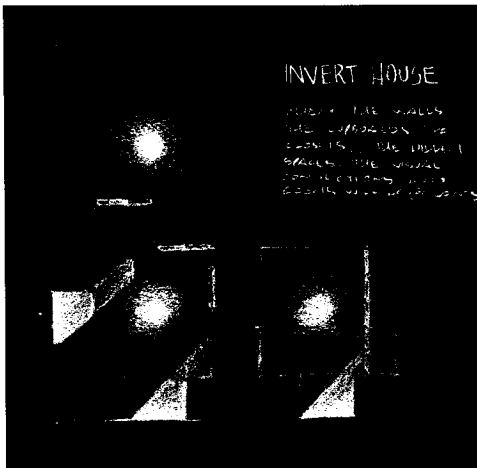
proposed monument site:
range road 264
6 miles west of edmonton
6 miles east of spruce grove
highway 16a east
highway 60 south

site plan: photo collage of larger context



site plan orientation of the monuments on half mile square

The Horizontal Monument: **Maze**



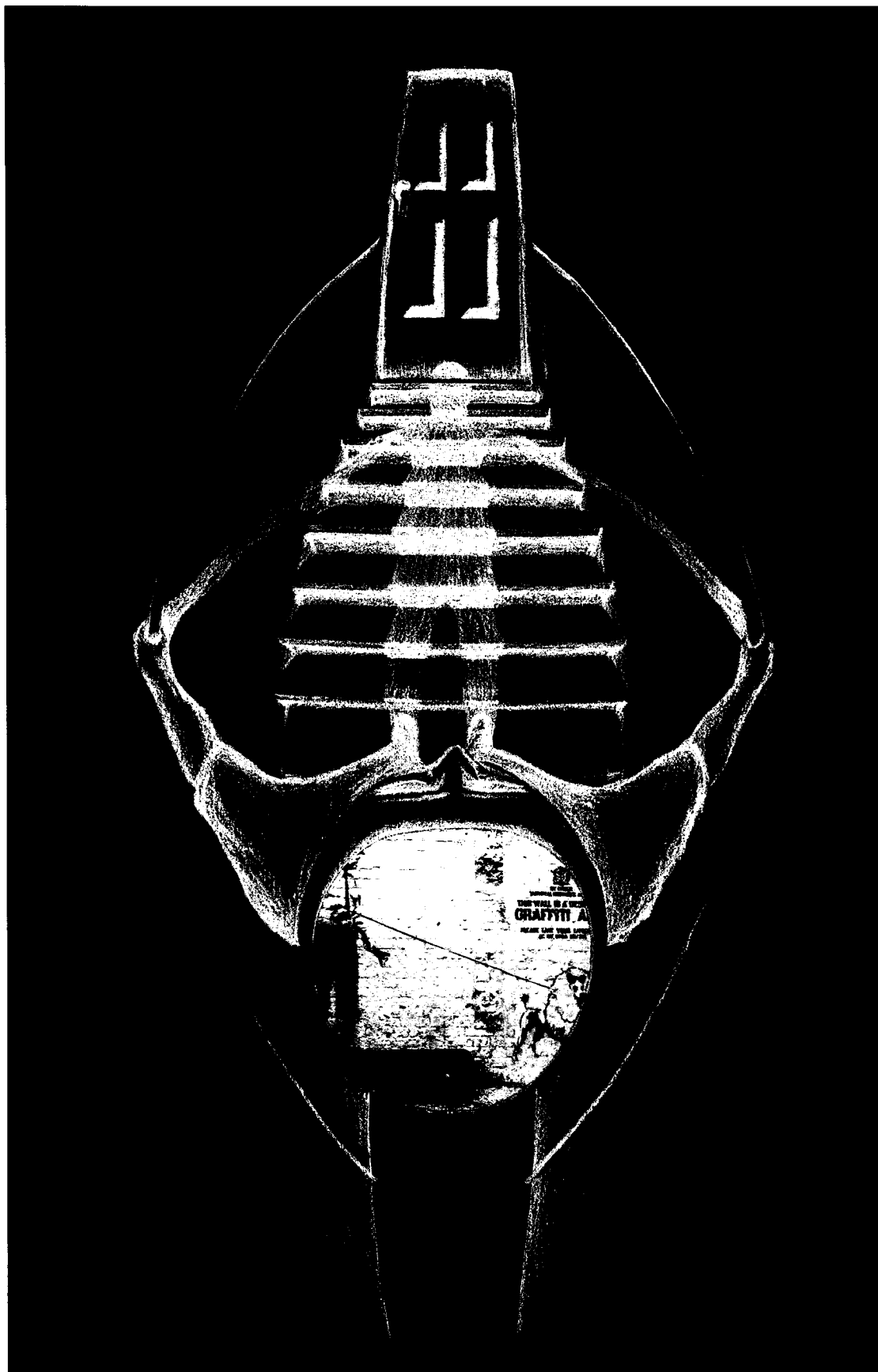
sketch: plan: invert house plan

In this hollow between the self I know and see and the one I do not know and cannot yet see, but sense, I test my own limits and learn my own secrets. In these hollow walls dwells the unknown, the in-between, the impossible, the unseen.
(Troutman, 147)

The inversion of architecture would reveal everything normally captured beneath covers and cloaks, within cupboards and closets, behind curtains and cases.

Perhaps it would be appropriate to expose those items normally excluded from the public view in an effort to understand the associations between source and destination. This becomes an exercise to reveal the inner workings of buildings and processes, raising awareness of all that has been taken for granted. This could provide depth and honesty normally contained within the inaccessible.

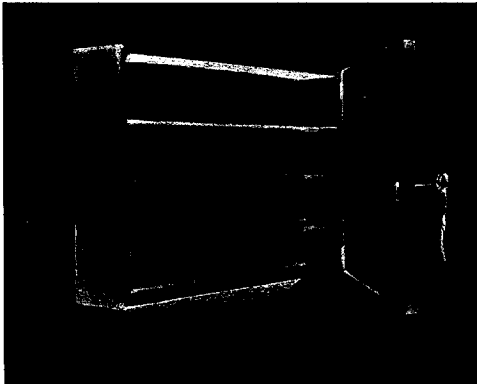
Sarah Winchester, heiress to the Winchester Rifle fortune, built a mansion in 1898 which took 38 years to complete. Winchester believed herself to be haunted by the ghosts of those who had been killed by the invention her name carried. Because these ghosts were the intended inhabitants, peculiar architectural elements pop up: doors open into walls, rooms exist without floors, and stairs lead to the ceiling. **(May, 71)**



sketch/photo collage: imagining the beyond

This is not so peculiar from another perspective, however. The stairs and doors have real purposes and genuine destinations which one will not know or understand without privilege. In the case of the Winchester mansion, this 'privilege' is death by bullet fired from a Winchester rifle.

The mystery of what hides behind locked doors is intriguing. The concept of varying levels of darkness and the unknown excites the imagination in a means that provisions of light and information attempt to avoid - fear and anxiety.



mysterious spaces:
 the cellar,
 the loose floor board where you hid money
 from your parents and siblings,
 the void under the stairs,
 the treasures stored in the rafters of the
 shed,
 the attic

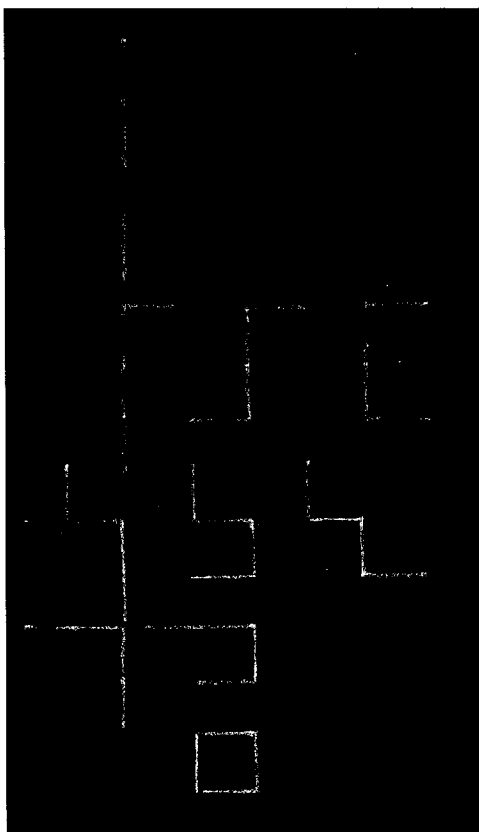
*At the door of the house who will come
 knocking? .
 An open door, we enter .
 A closed door, a den .
 The world pulse beats beyond my door.
 (Biot, 217)*

The outbuildings of a farmyard were never intended for inhabitation by humans. They were meant to house animals, grains, machinery, inventions, and the unsightly. The life of the inhabitants of these buildings follows the path of a grain of wheat - from being planted, to harvest, to storage. The entire yard serves this yearly routine.

Navigating the Horizontal Monument

By appropriating and inhabiting the outbuildings of a farm, the ordinarily mysterious rituals reveal themselves as they become accessible. Overlaying all of the buildings creates a maze of intersections. Because the building material becomes duplicated, these intersections require the cutting away of excess; therefore, opportunities for light can be introduced at these moments. The containment of light within intersection enforces the role of the corner as mediator. As Bachelard describes:

...the corner is a haven that ensures us one of the things we prize most highly - immobility. It is the sure place, the place next to my immobility. The corner is a sort of half-box, part walls, part door. It will serve as an illustration for the dialectics of inside and outside... (Bachelard, 137)



unfolding a square: variations of space

As one meanders the maze, there is an experience of being both caught within one or more elements while being shut out of others. This space, being both before and beyond the normally expected 'room', is undefined and discomfoting. The resulting element becomes an exploration of secondary spaces and their inherent, although unobvious, connections. A series of processions exist which reflect the lives existing behind the scenes: the literal being a procession of utilities from source to delivery. It is a maze that must be deciphered to determine the exits. Framing the landscape becomes almost



experiencing the in-between - in the wall

random at first glance, although, reflection of the distance should inform the user of escape and lead the procession. The relationship of those immediate surroundings and what is being framed creates a dialogue, local and regional, and intensifies the realization of the spaces we do not normally inhabit.

As I have described, light entering the maze is contained at the junctions of overlay. By limiting the visual experience, other senses become heightened. Responding to this, the existing smells and textures of surfaces take on a new importance for interpretation. By exchanging a consistent, solid floor for one that reflects the history of the buildings (be it covered in grain, dirt, or wood), variations create instability - pushing through the maze.

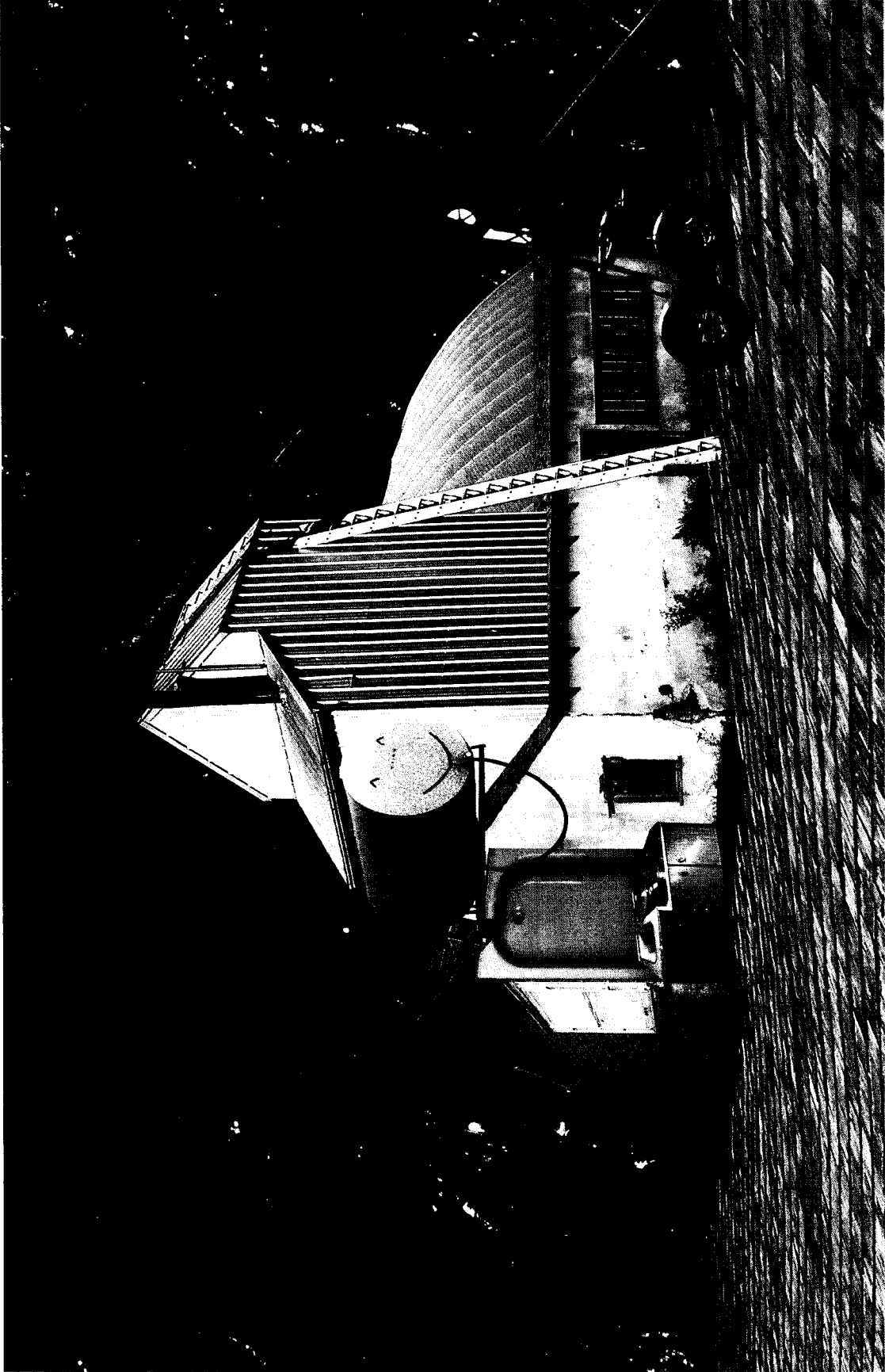
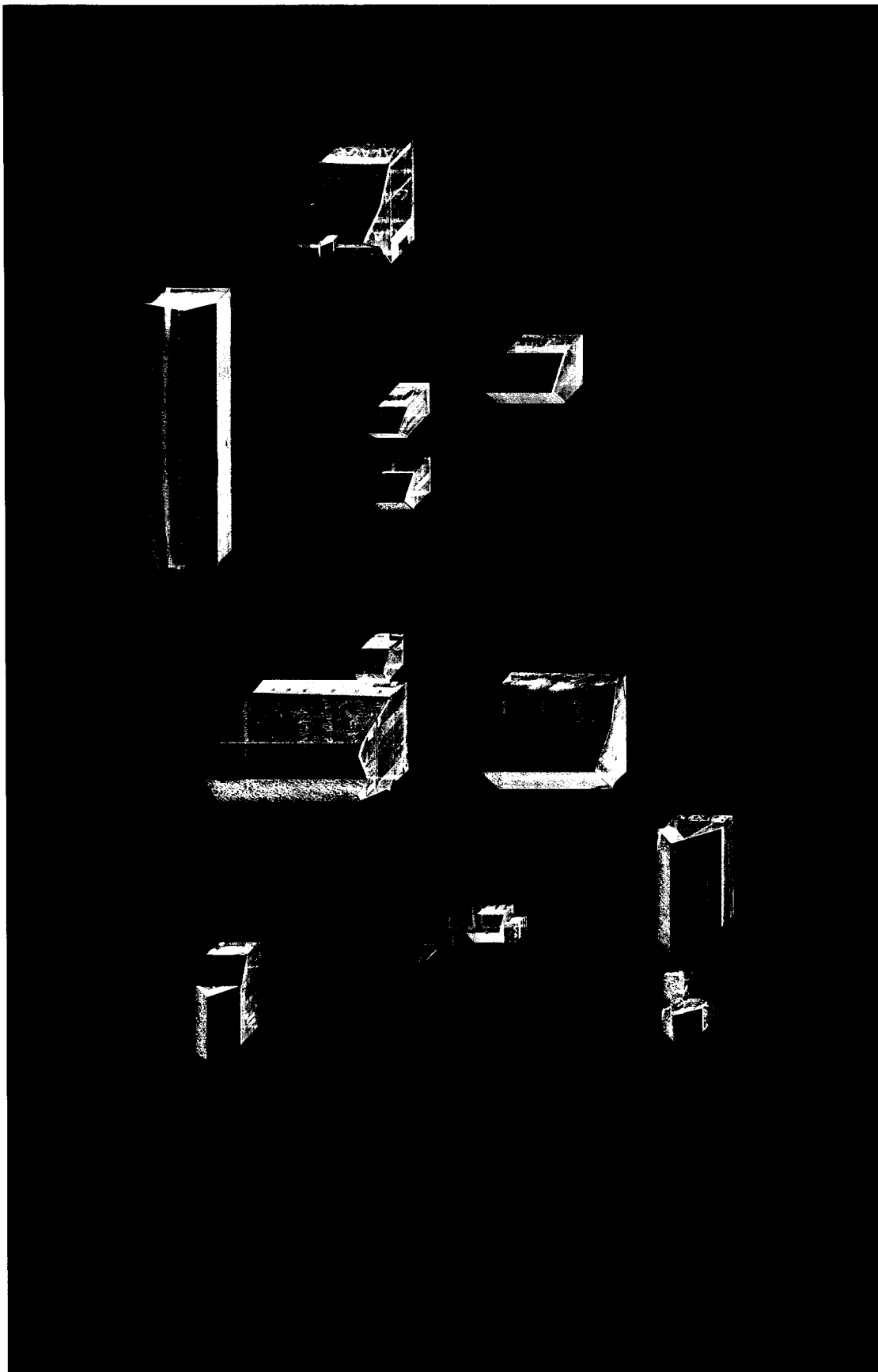


photo collage of farm components into one building, still exhibiting the 'farm' characteristics



sketch/photo collage: aerial oblique: extruding the typical layout of outbuildings

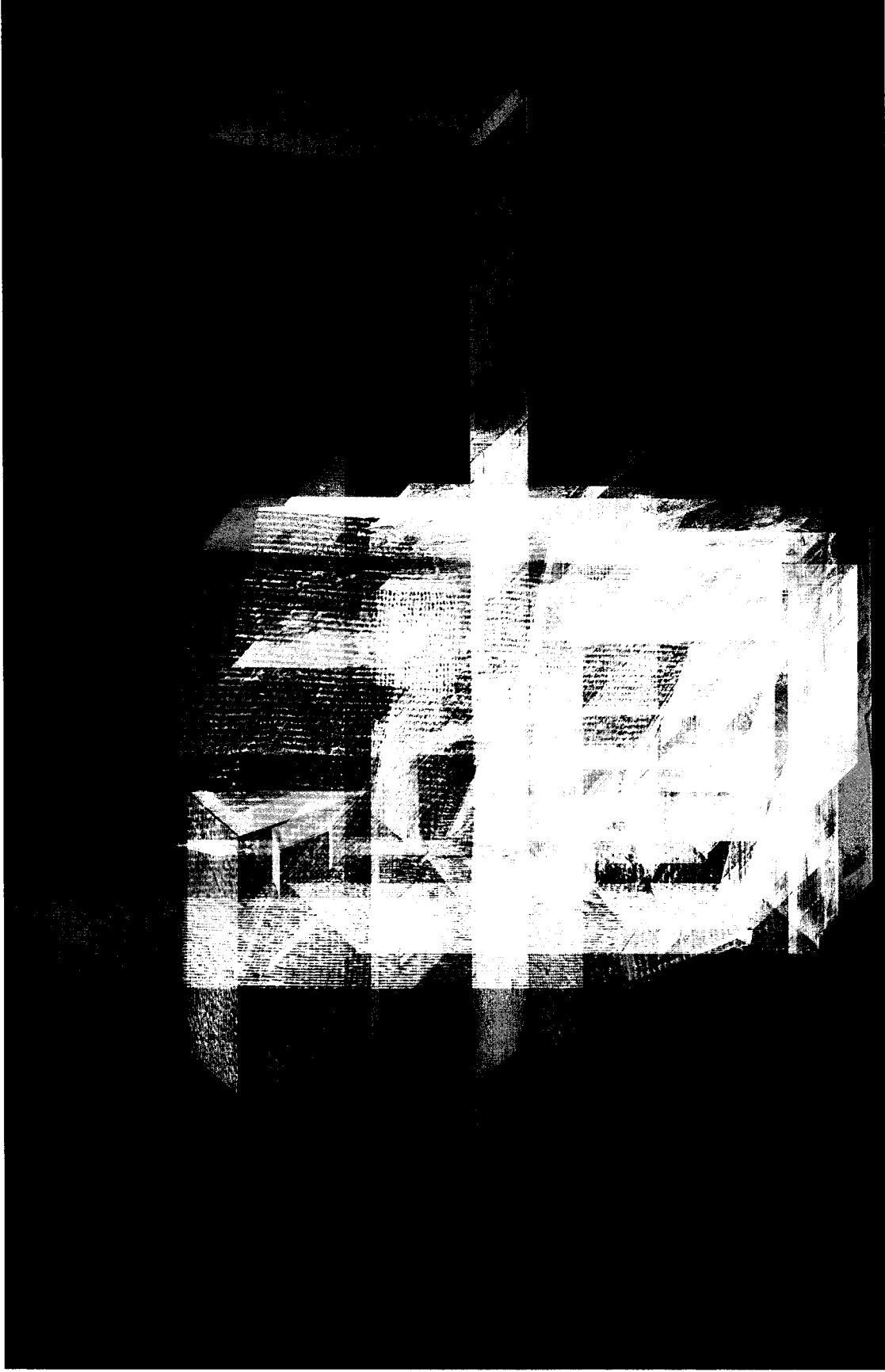
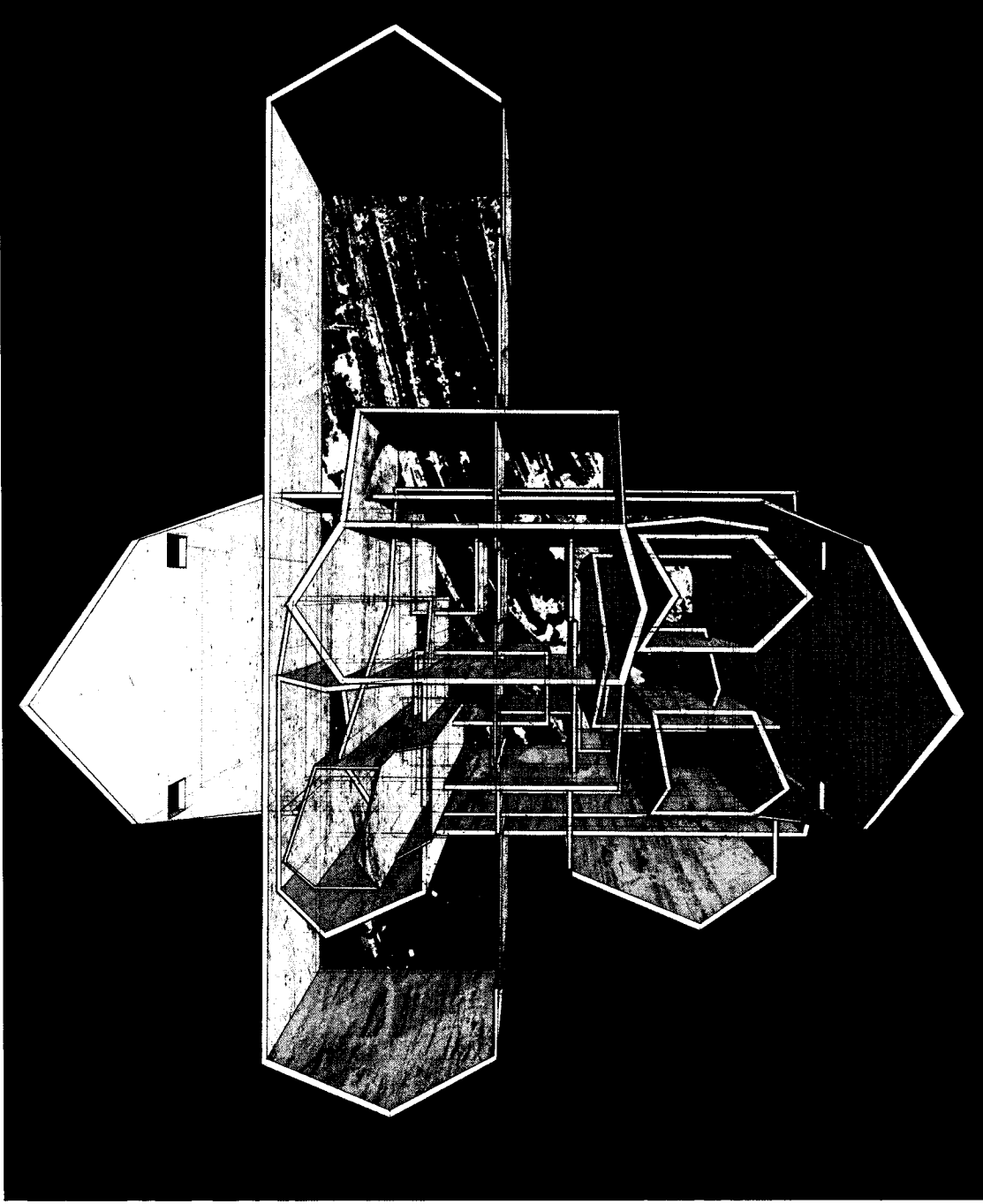
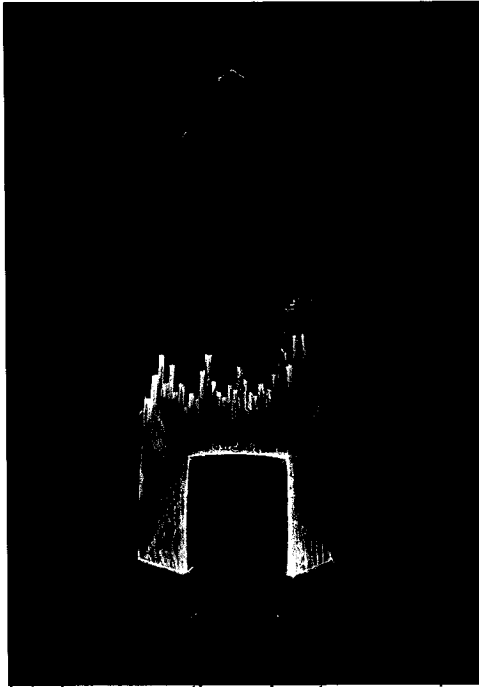


photo collage: overlaying all of the buildings into one form - areas that overlap more will have more opportunities to allow light at the vertices



aerial perspective: the complexity of the maze becomes an inhabitable space, in and out transpose themselves

The Vertical Monument: Telescope



interior perspective: elevator memories

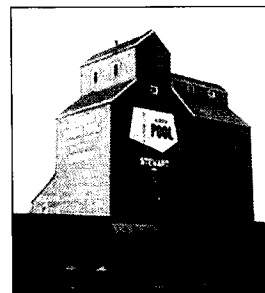
Grain elevators are disappearing at an alarming rate. The ability of these giant structures to vanish overnight is baffling. Once considered the prairie lighthouse, these beacons are no longer demarcating the centre of small communities. Instead, their demolition foreshadows the collapse of rural community in favour of a global one.

Rarely does one have the opportunity to look down from an aerial perspective. The relative flat plain allows views to extend well into the collision of field and sky. From the elevation at the top of a grain elevator, one could see everything for miles around. By demolishing the elevator, a symbolic sense of shame develops. No longer is there an opportunity to look at what is going on around us.

Construction of a wooden elevator uses an immense amount of timber and lumber. Walls are solidly constructed with stacked lumber on the flat dimension, tying walls with heavy timbers to withstand the outward pressure of grain. The following list outlines the amount of wood used in the construction of an elevator in Stewart, Alberta with one annex.

Summary For The Following Lumber Shopping List:

The elevator lumber requirements listed below are for an elevator built in 1978 that's like our elevator but with only one annex instead of the two found on the Craddock Elevator. The Stewart Elevator photo to the right shows this type of elevator.



The Stewart, Alberta, Elevator

Information compliments of Agricore United.

Total Spruce Lumber Required: 394,066 FBM*
Price quote for lumber in the late spring of 2000: CD\$197,703.00
Total Estimated Spruce Lumber Required For Craddock Elevator: 562,951 FBM*
Estimated Cost to purchase lumber for Craddock Elevator at year 2000 prices: CD\$282,432

***FBM: Foot Board Measure and means the same thing as Board Feet.**
This price only includes the lumber and doesn't include the cement foundation, nails, shingles, metal siding, miles of wire or any of the equipment that goes into the elevator. With everything thrown in it would more than double the costs.

**Agricore United Single Leg - Grand Centre Elevator
 Single Fully Hoppered Annex.
 130,000 Bushel Elevator**

May 24, 1978

No. 3 Spruce Lumber-S4S				FBM
400	1 x 6	Drop Siding	Aprons	400
4,000	1 x 6	Shiplap	Driveway & Office sheathing	4,000
10,800	1 x 8	Shiplap	Driveway & Office Sheathing and cupola	10,800
5,000	1 x 8	Common	Roof Sheathing & bin floor	5,000
3,000	1 x 10	Common	Roof sheathing & bin floor	3,000
3,000	1 x 12	Common	General use	3,000

Pieces				
110	1 x 2 -16'	Common	Stripping	293
220	1 x 4 -16'	Common	Stripping and general trim	1,174
50	1 x 6 -16'	Common	general trim	400

No. 1 Spruce Dimension - S4S

Pieces				
300	2 x 4 - 16'	General framing		3,200
250	2 x 6 - 16'	Driveway framing		4,000
50	2 x 6 - 20'	Driveway studs		1,000
50	2 x 8 - 16'	Framing and decking		1,067
22	2 x 8 - 20'	Cupola joists		586
30	2 x 10 - 12'	Work floor joists		600
10	2 x 10 - 14'	Stairs		234
15	2 x 10 - 16'	Stairs		400
10	2 x 10 - 12'	Stairs		300
12	4 x 6 - 12'	Driveway framing		288
6	4 x 6 - 14'	Driveway framing		168
4	4 x 6 - 20'	Driveway framing		160

Spruce Cribbing (Full 2 Inch)

2 x 8	Random Lengths	68,000
2 x 6	Random Lengths	138,000
2 x 4	Random Lengths	109,000

Sub Total F. B. M. Spruce Lumber 355,070

list: lumber used in the construction of grain elevator in Stewart, Alberta, 1978 (Agricore United c/o http://waltonfeed.com/elevator/build.html)

Fir Dimension and Timber- Elevator Portion --
130,000 Bushel Elevator Fully Hoppered Single Annex

No. 1 Fir Dimension S4S

Pieces			F. B. M.
32	2 x 4 - 16'	Cupola Rafters - cut 8 ft.	341
120	2 x 6 - 14'	Cupola Studs	1,680
110	2 x 6 - 16'	Cupola Studs & main roof rafters	1,760
64	2 x 6 - 18'	Main roof - rafters	1,152
29	2 x 6 - 24'	Driveway rafters	696
32	2 x 8 - 12'	Cupola joists	512
52	2 x 12 - 12'	Stairs, office floor, joists etc.,	1,248
28	2 x 12 - 18'	Cleaner floor joists	864
4	2 x 12 - 20'	Head bracing	1,400
20	3 x 6 - 14'	Driveway decking	420
12	3 x 10 - 10'	Driveway joists	300
10	3 x 10 - 14'	Driveway joists and decking	350
10	3 x 10 - 16'	Driveway joists	400
10	3 x 10 - 18'	Driveway joists	450
3	3 x 12 - 14'	Door track planks	126

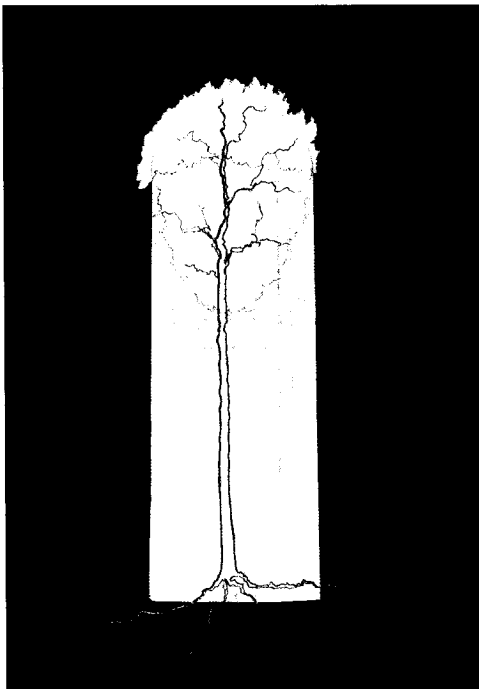
Rough Fir Timbers (20% Std. or Better)

6	4 x 6 - 20'	Cleaner shed posts	240
2	4 x 12 - 14'	Overhead timber at leg	112
2	6 x 8 - 10'	Hoists timbers	80
5	6 x 8 - 12'	Garner timbers	240
10	6 x 8 - 14'	Cleaner bin timbers	560
20	6 x 6 - 16'	Driveway postings & cupola timbers	960
2	6 x 10 - 10'	Hoist timbers	100
8	6 x 10 - 12'	Full hopper timbers - trackside	480
1	6 x 10 - 14'	Hopper timber over walkway	70
12	6 x 10 - 16'	Full hopper timbers	960
20	6 x 10 - 20'	Full hopper timbers- driveway side & central bins	2,000
4	6 x 10 - 20'	Cut 10' full hopper timbers	400
1	8 x 8 - 12'	Hopper scale timber post	64
1	8 x 8 - 14'	Cap timber	75
1	8 x 8 - 18'	Hopper scale timber	96
8	8 x 8 - 20'	Cap timbers & cleaner shed posts	853
7	8 x 8 - 10'	Basket hoppers and false wall timbers	467
9	8 x 10 - 12'	False wall & hopper scale timbers	720
5	8 x 10 - 14'	Overhead bin bottom timbers - cut 7 ft.	467
2	8 x 10 - 16'	False wall timbers	213
10	8 x 10 - 20'	Basket hoppers	1,334
1	8 x 14 - 16'	Cap timber	150
12	10 x 10 - 10'	Basket hoppers & hopper timbers driveway side	1,000
18	10 x 10 - 12'	Mud sills & hopper timbers - trackside	1,800
4	10 x 10 - 14'	Mud sills	467
32	10 x 10 - 16'	Mud sills	4,267
10	10 x 10 - 18'	Hopper timbers - Centre bins	1,500
4	10 x 10 - 20'	Basket hoppers	667
5	6 x 8 - 20'	Timbers under driveway	400
2	10 x 12 - 10'	Overhead timbers - by leg	200
10	10 x 12 - 14'	Overhead timbers - workflow	1,400
2	10 x 12 - 18'	Hoist timbers	360
1	10 x 16 - 14'	Overhead timber - direct spout	187
1	12 x 12 - 10'	Timber over walkway	120
11	12 x 12 - 14'	Timber over walkway - cut 7 ft.	1,848
1	12 x 12 - 14'	Timber over walkway	168
2	12 x 12 - 20'	Timber over walkway	480
8	12 x 16 - 14'	Overhead throat timbers	1,792

Total Fir Lumber & Timbers F. B. M. 38,996

Grand Total For All Sections F. B. M. 394,066

Demolition of the elevators does not consider their board value. Instead, the structures are felled like trees - gouged at the ground until the entire building is instable enough to be pulled down. Afterwards, the rubble, dried out and covered with explosive grain dust, is either burned or trucked away. Occasionally, these elevators are saved by a community which recognizes their significance. Unfortunately, after being saved, they often sit empty and unmaintained, icons of the global shift rather than a hole in the fabric of memory which will quickly be absorbed and forgotten.



sketch: section: silo, tree, oil derrick

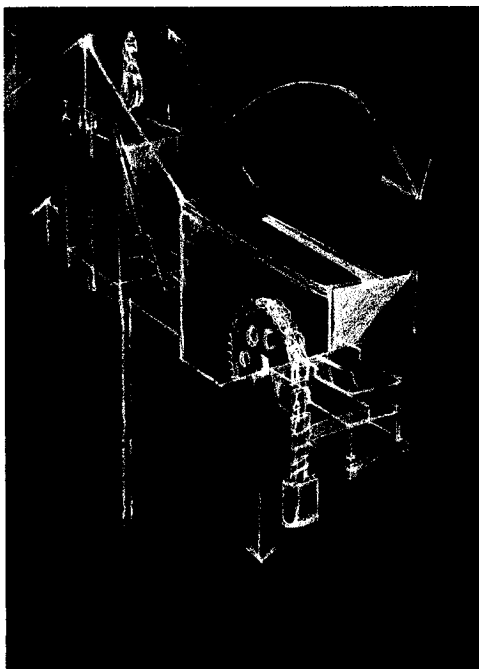
By collaging a tree and an oil derrick within a silo - the main remaining vertical elements recognized on the prairie - an ideogram takes shape to form this monument. Ephemerality is recognized in each element: the tree will grow and eventually die; the oil derrick is a nomadic unit constructed as a kit of parts; and the silo, using prefabrication of staves, allows assembly, expansion, repair, and removal through simple addition and subtraction of similar elements.

Ascending the Vertical Monument

A large poplar tree is found along the southern edges of the site, its old limbs reaching nearly a hundred feet in the air. The silo is relocated to ring around this tree, a gap left in the south allows direct sunlight to drift around the interior space. The tree pushes against the silo staves, forcing out the occasional concrete block, but contained as a whole.

The grainery shifts to metaphor - a compressed air, hydraulic passenger lift raising people, one at a time, from ground to viewing platform. From this perspective, the landscape may be viewed from a vantage point seldom understood or appreciated. As the lift nears the top, arms push against shutters to close off the platform and restrict openings. The views through these windows align with corresponding human-exploited natural elements around the site.

If the user wishes to see unobstructed views from the platform, the elevator must be sent back to the ground level. As the pressurized air ballast used to power the lift is relieved, the cab lowers allowing the shutters to rotate into the ceiling cavity. The user is then provided with views in all directions, at a height which will easily peek into Edmonton's city limits.

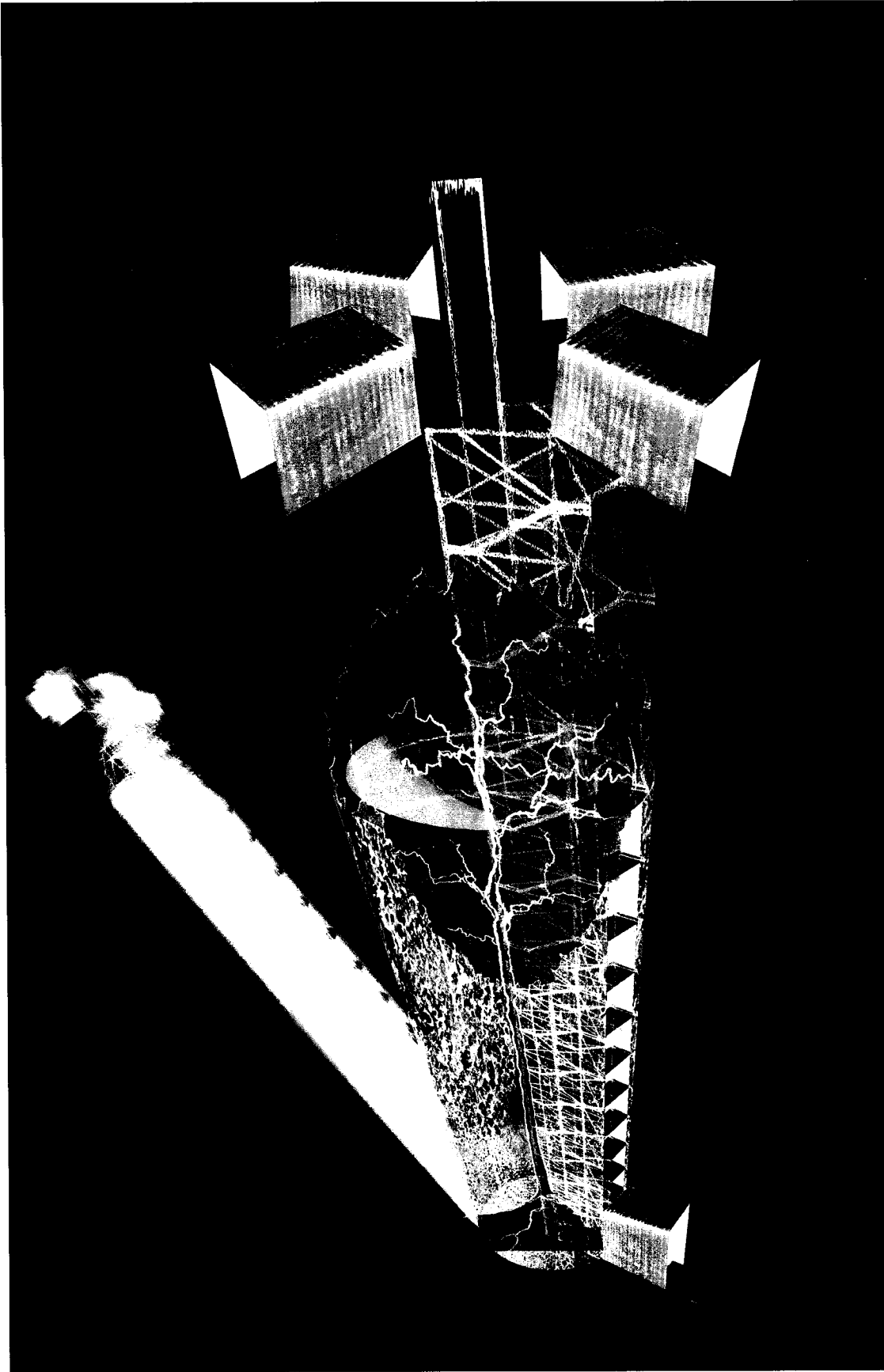


sketch: lift-dependent shutters isolate views

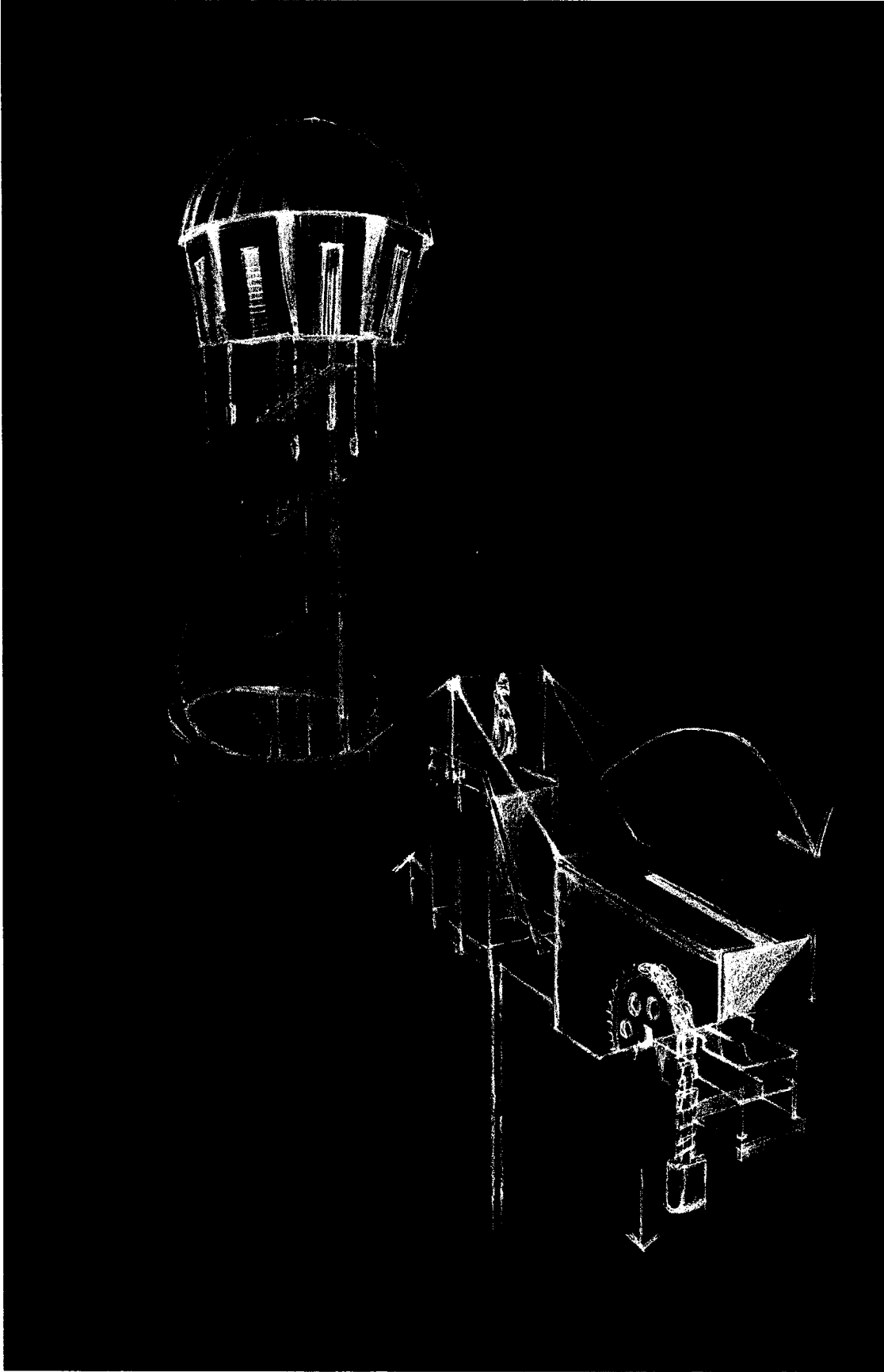
The consequences of this action will be an unpressurized, inoperable elevator which can only be reset from the ground. Realization of being stranded will follow, requiring the user to descend many flights of scaffold stairs, screened in vertical timbers reclaimed from a demolished grain elevator, as they spiral down the lift shaft, through the poplar canopy, into the void of the silo where the user will eventually return to the ground.



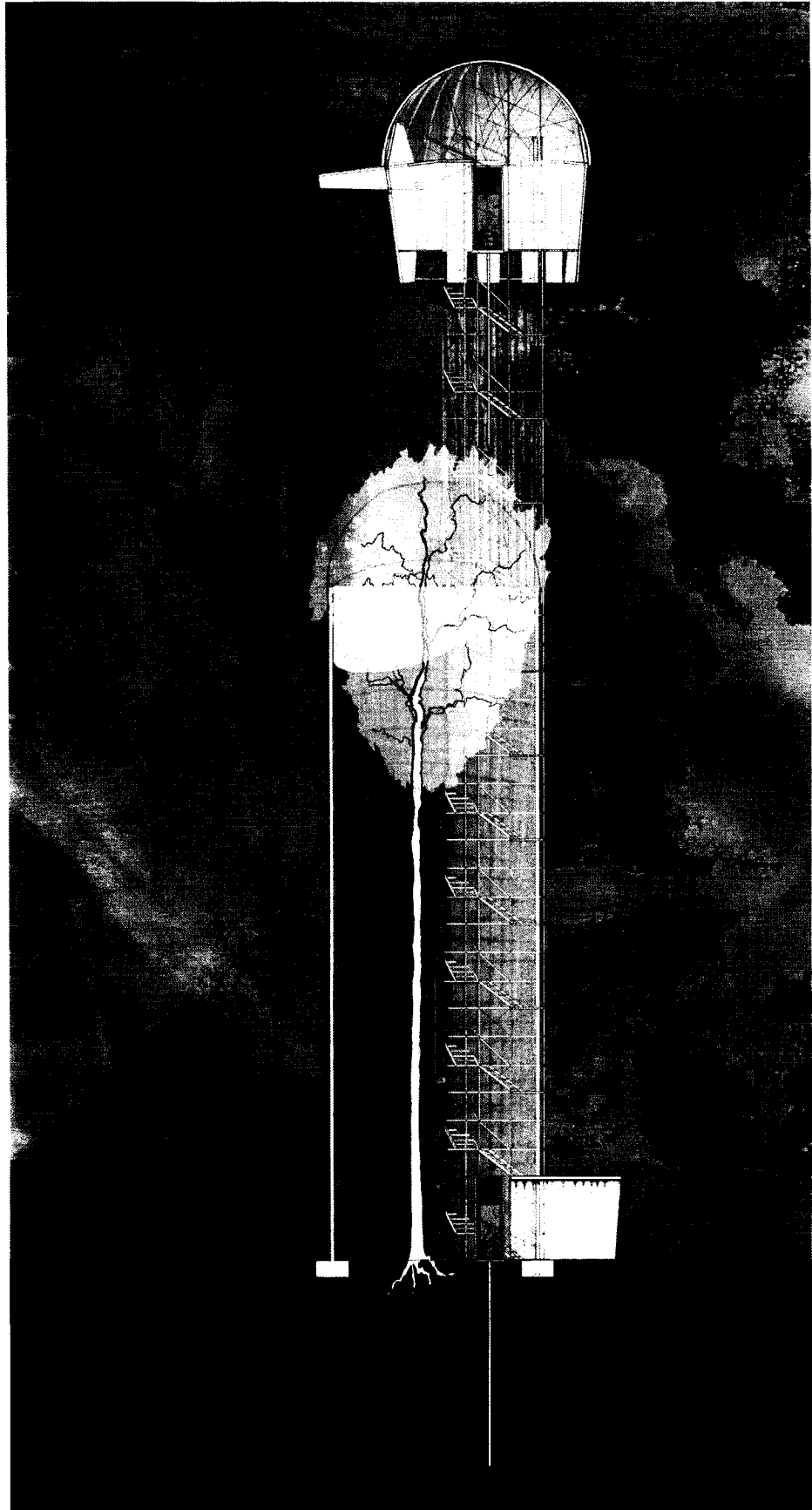
section: detail: descending the stairs



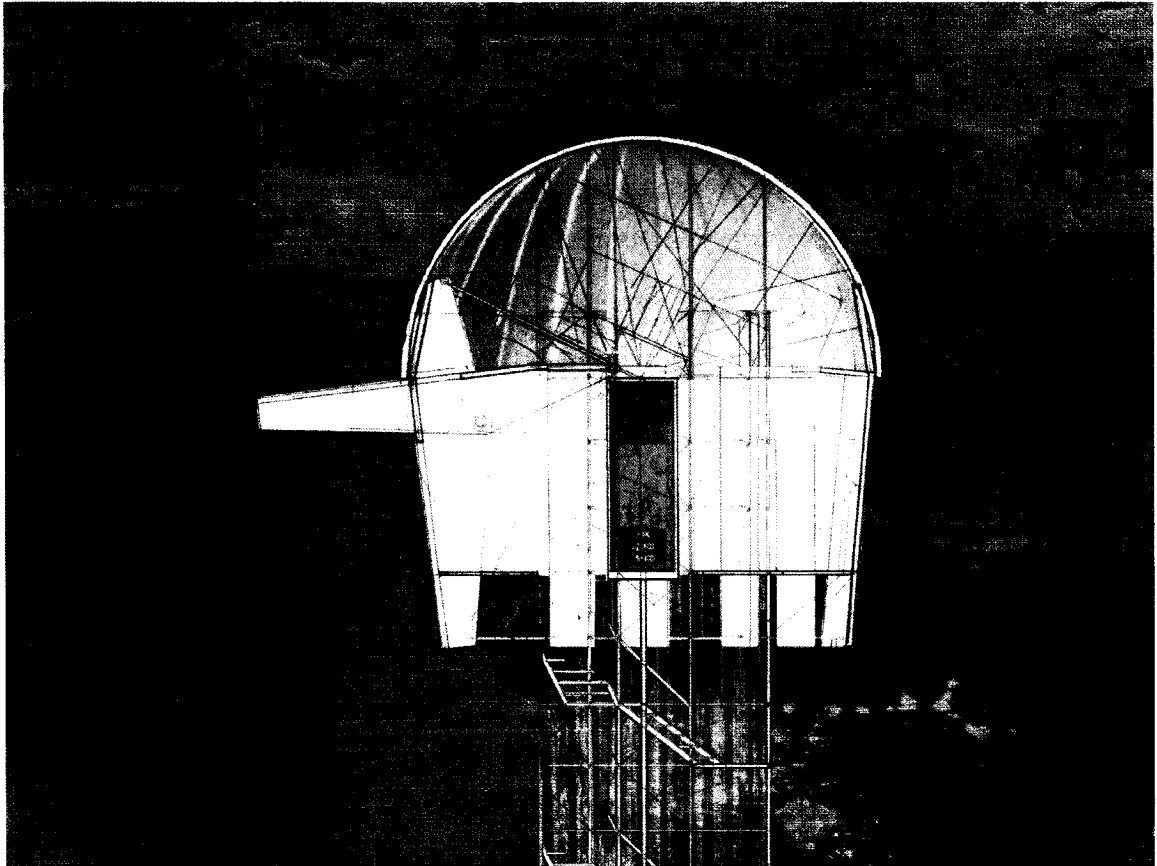
sketch collage: perspective: silo, tree, scaffolding, lift, shutters



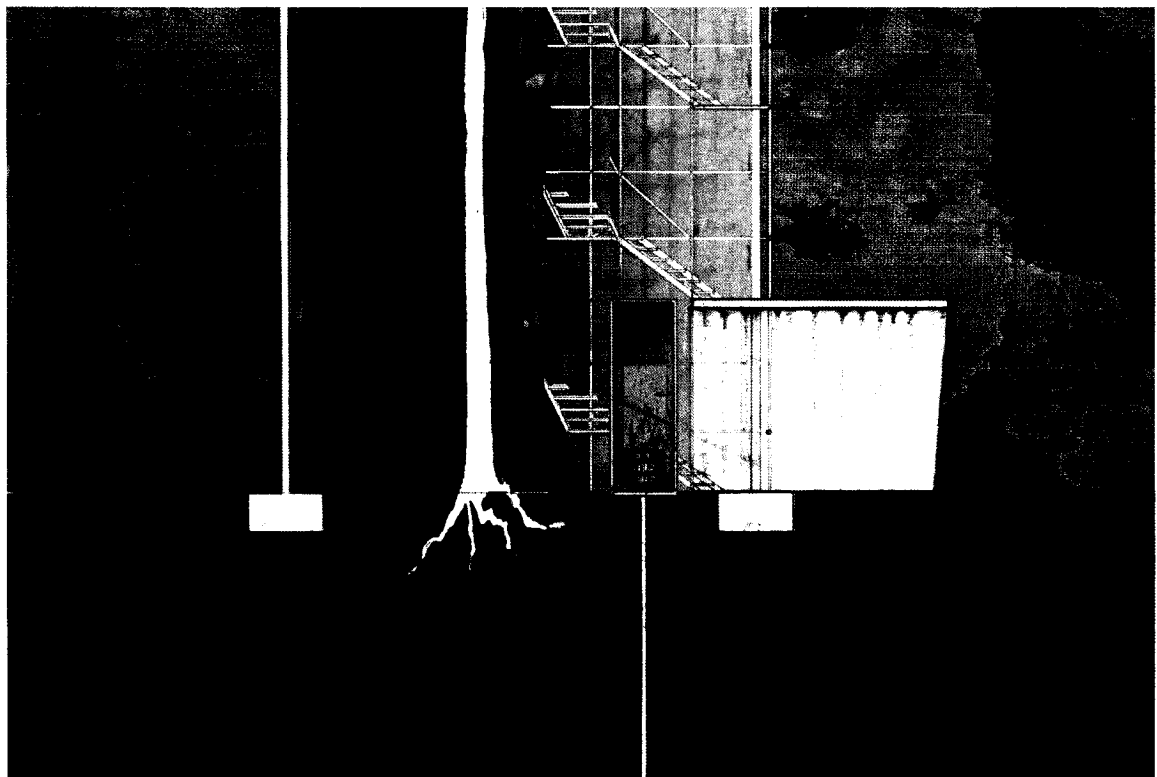
sketches: details of the viewing platform shutters: the doors close with the arrival of the lift to the platform, isolating predetermined views



section:



detailed section with plan underlay: viewing platform



detailed section with plan underlay: ground entrance

The Underground Monument: Well



the village of Seebe was closed in August of 2004 by TransAlta Utilities due to the automation of this dam - residents were required to relocate

They violated the separateness [my emphasis], of the work of art, and threatened to obliterate the aesthetic distance between it and the spectator. (Seitz, 23)

The 'everlasting' relics are constants that will remain long after their purpose has been served: the anti-ephemeral. Remnants that can persist include: concrete foundations, brick chimnies, partial staircases, steel water pipes, and wells. In certain moments, these relics become parasitic 'moments' for a trailer to feed off of. The nature of this action must respond to its disconnection and find a place to situate, looking to the existing infrastructure to act as host.

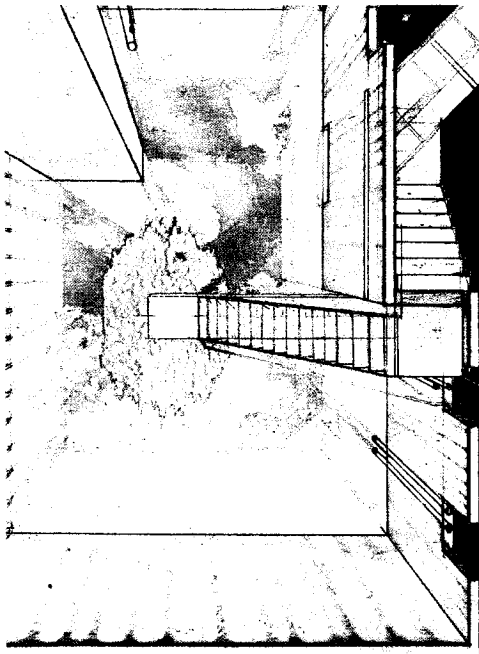
Foundations and a basement have been hidden in the field from all perspectives other than the vertical ascent (aerial). Stumbling upon this remain would be a moment of discovery. The stratified landscape is emphasized by encouraging water to seep through cracks. The reflective nature of water provides depth and becomes a physical obstacle to overcome in order to leave. This mirrored quality presents an illusion that one is within a 'complete' building, even though it has become impenetrable unless the physical world gives way to the imagined one.

Beneath the Underground Monument

At the first reading, the monument presents itself as something to be viewed only from above. Limited access to the flooded basement isolates the waters surface from the ground plane; thus creating a sense of detachment.

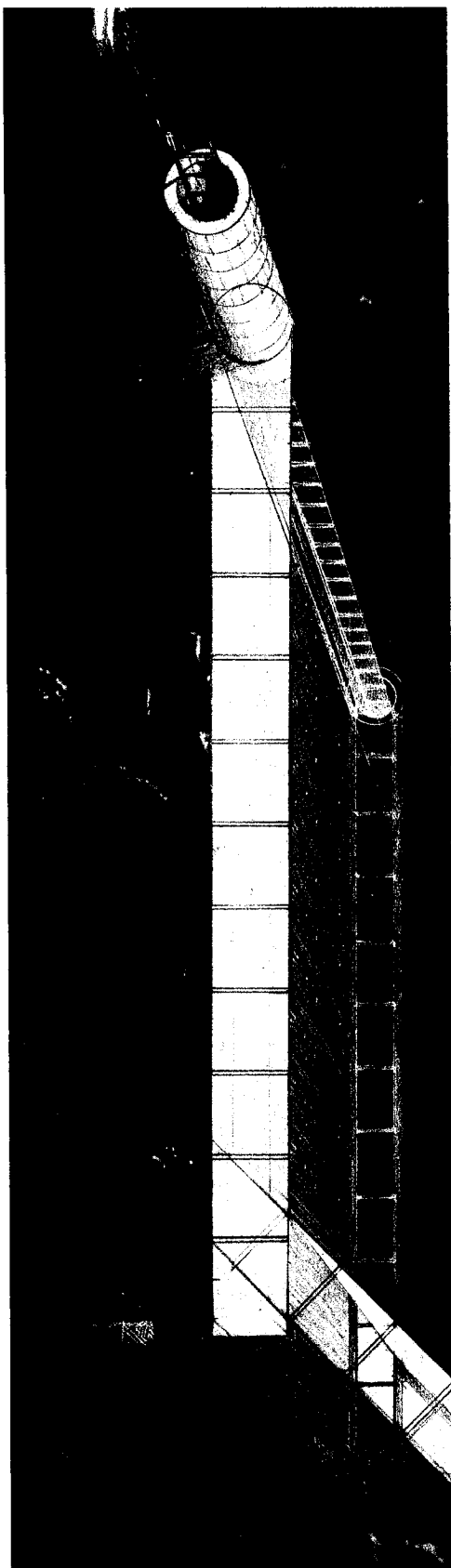
Climbing the staircase to the top of the foundation walls, a platform then extends partially across the void. The half-bridge gestures towards the front door on the other side of the monument. From the gesture, a view is provided through a wooden screen to frame the windbreak of spruce trees behind.

Upon walking toward the end of the platform, a weight shift occurs that causes the bridge to become a staircase, gently dropping down into the basement. Stepping off the bottom tread will return the platform to its level position.



perspective: staircase to coal landing

In the basement, a pile of coal provides an island to escape the flooding water. Coal nearly reaches the chimney, but drowns several feet short. In the reflection of the water, the sky becomes dominant, both above and below. The wooden screen now appears as a ladder; however, the depth of the water becomes confused with the depth of the sky. Wading towards escape is uncertain.



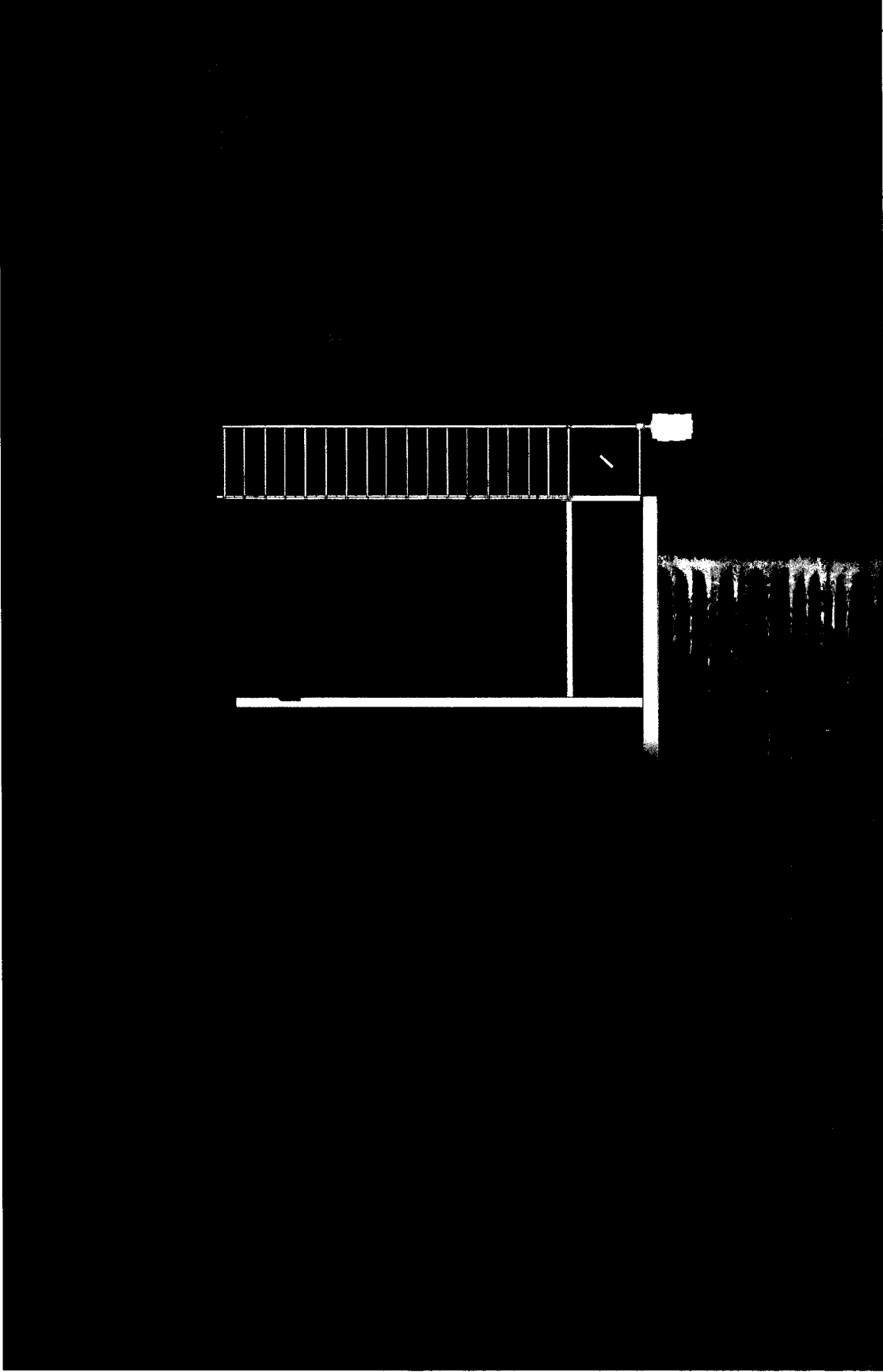
perspective: underground corridor to well

Below the raised staircase, a path leads to the other wall. Following this, an opening in the concrete wall creates an egress into an underground tunnel. This corridor follows the path of flood waters to their source, a connection not revealed by the initial darkness.

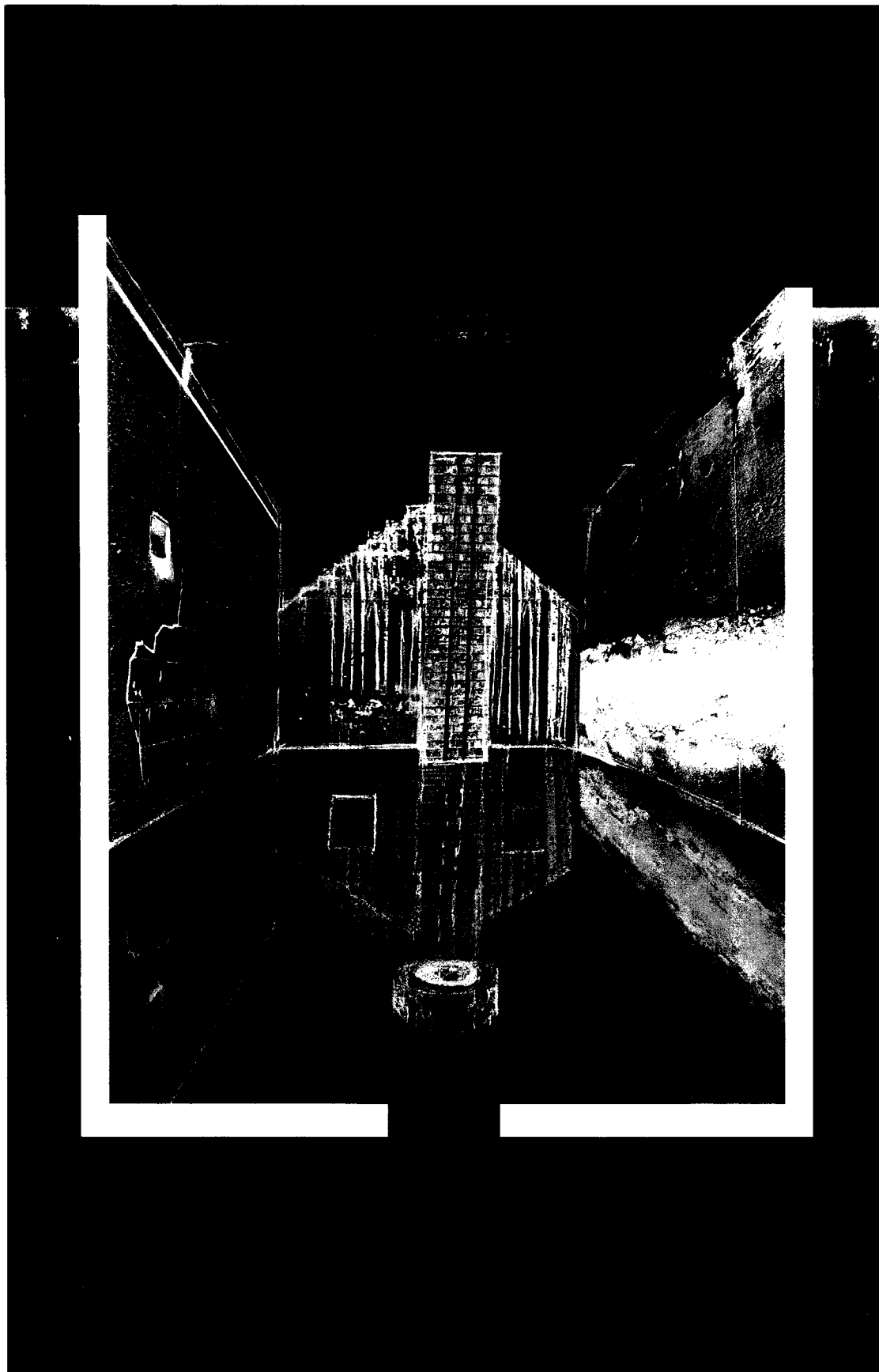
A well is introduced as an altar. It reaches into the depths of the earth to provide sustenance, but the quality of what is brought to the surface becomes questionable. The metaphor of a desire to bind nature, to bottle it, becomes apparent. The well, being the original infrastructural item, can no longer be trusted.

Travelling through the underground corridor, the well becomes accessible. Light coming from the surface indicates a means of escape. Within the well walls, a ladder allows the user to climb out from underground and return to the surface.

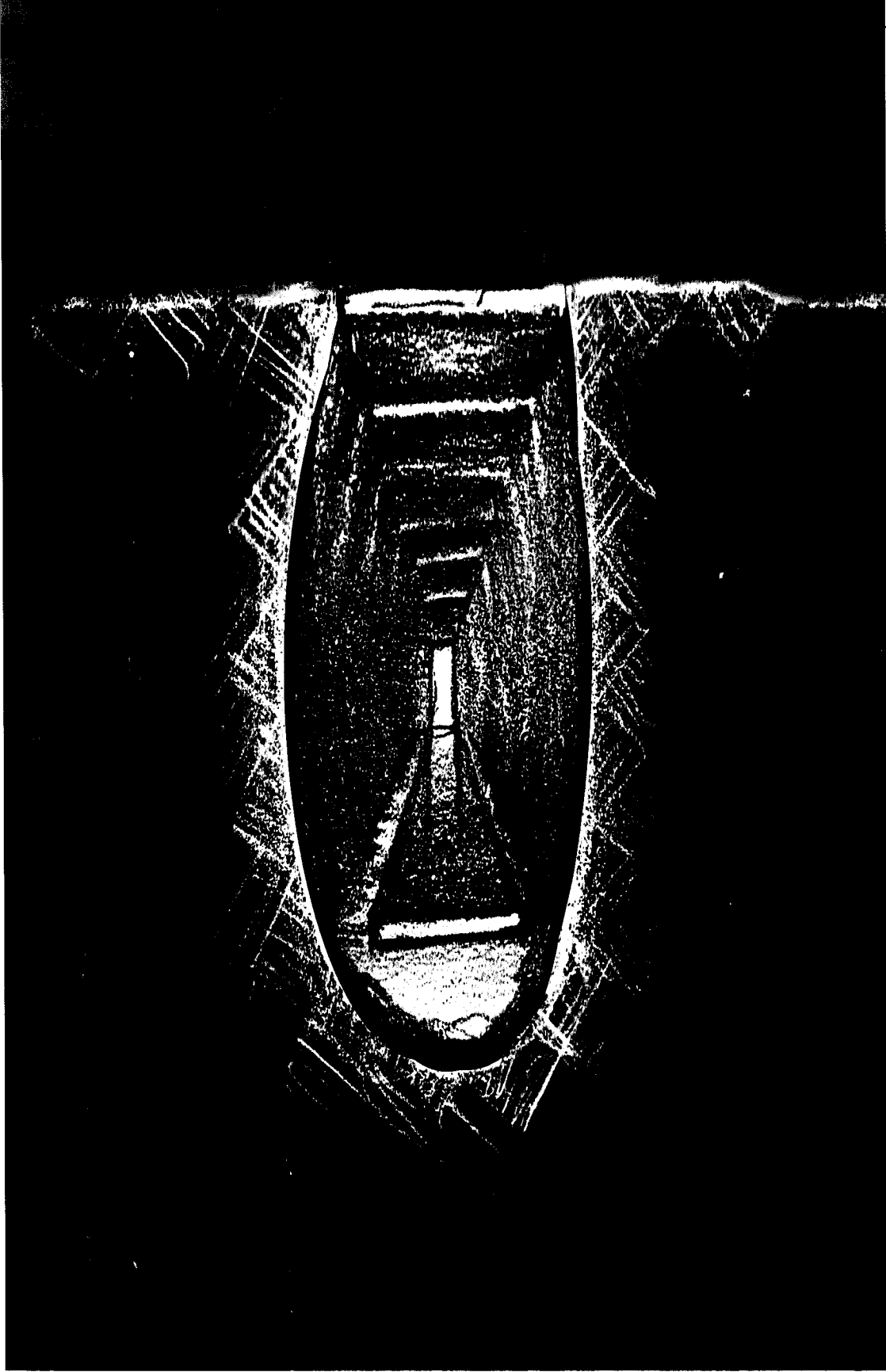
Although the choreography of this monument leads a procession through it, the user is unaware of the correct path before finding it. This sense of discovery slows the succession of spaces, providing time for reflection for the user to draw connections between imaginary and reality - surface and sub-surface.



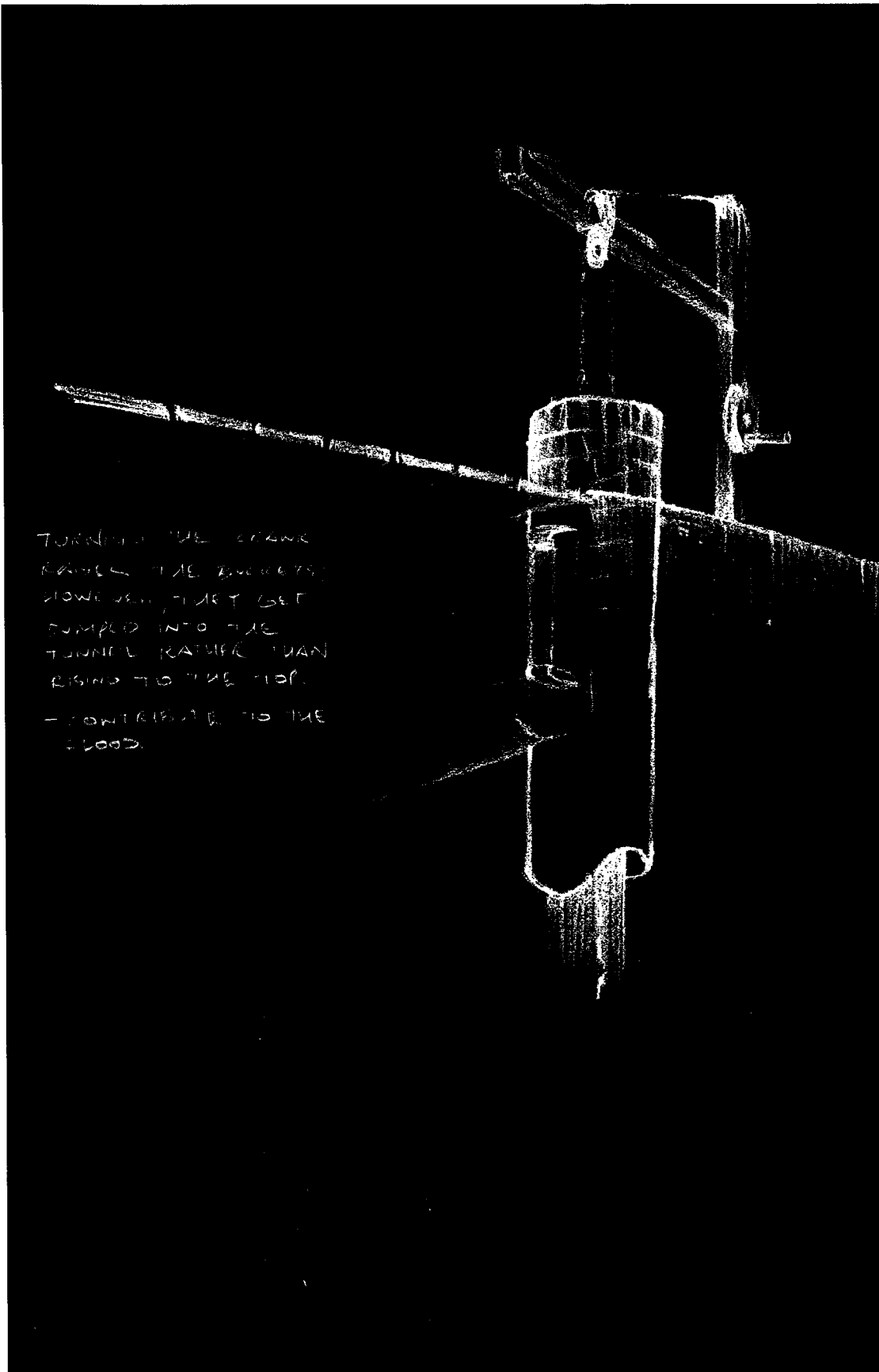
section: the staircase appears as platform until enough weight allows it to fall - after descent, stepping away will allow the stair to return upwards



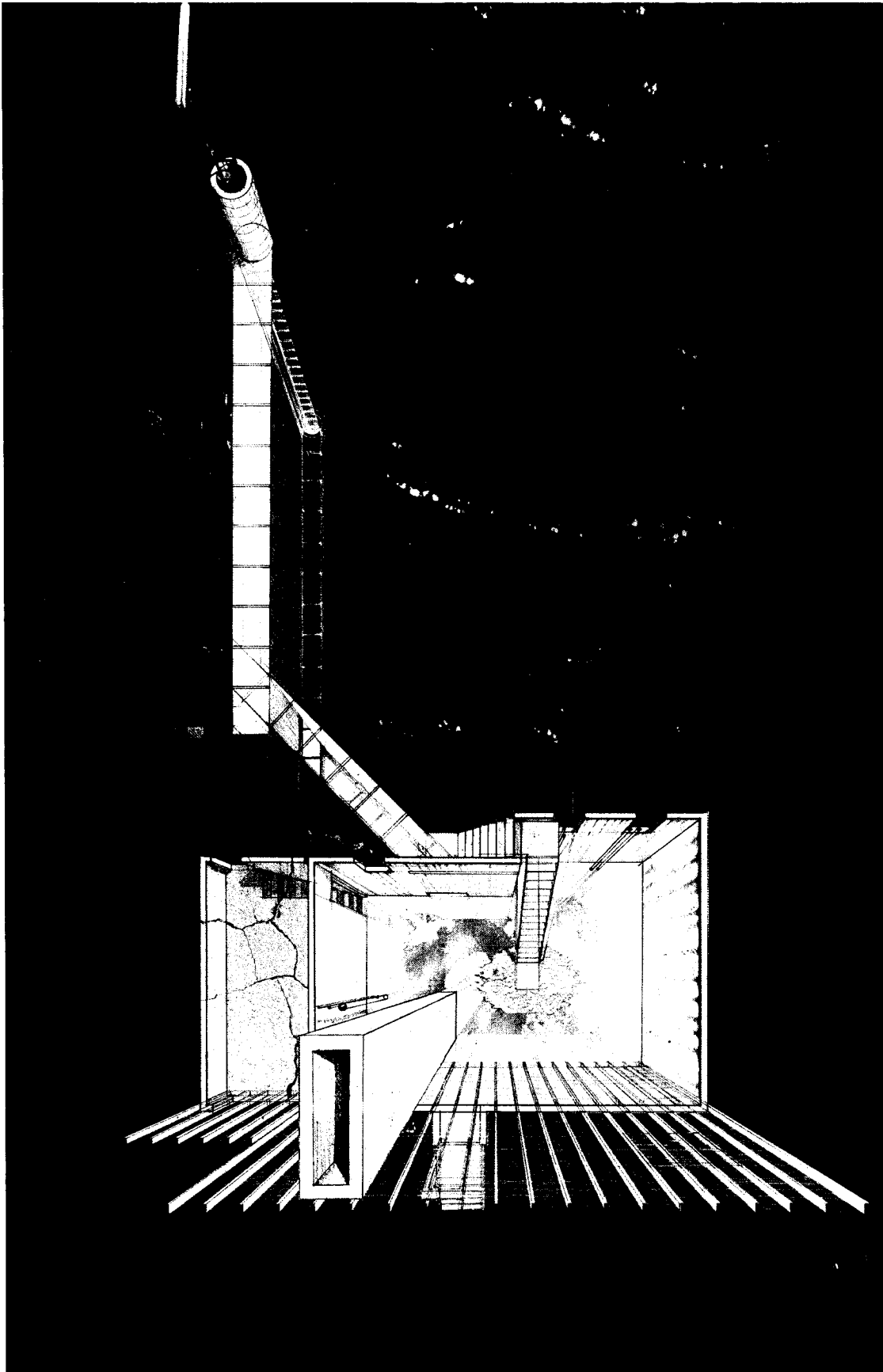
section collage: the basement is flooded, trapping one below while reflecting and doubling both the depth of descent and sky



section sketch: a tunnel leads from behind the staircase into the ground, lit only from above - between the cracks of the concrete pavers at grade

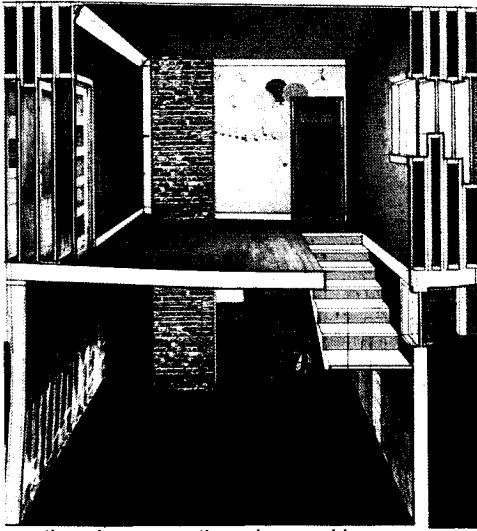


perspective sketch: the tunnel arrives at the well with a ladder attached to provide escape from the claustrophobic underground



aerial perspective:

The Internal Monument: House



sectional perspective: layered house

Of course, thanks to the house, a great many of our memories are housed, and if the house is a bit elaborate, if it has a cellar and a garret, nooks and corridors, our memories have refuges that are all the more clearly delineated. (Bachelard, 8)

A single room composition serves as a symbol of home, family, and community. Textures, smells, sounds, and sights provide an assortment of reminders which trigger memories. Doors and windows isolate the captured and manipulated quality of the landscape by providing views out, but not actually providing a means of egress. Instead, a door may only be opened from the exterior while windows are barred. Inhabiting the internal monument is meant to suggest the condition of isolation without infrastructure by evoking emotions of solitude: a sense of being neglected, forgotten, and abandoned.

These hidden spaces are "assimilated" into the visible house; they are the other side of the existing walls, doors, stories, etc. - accommodations of the unconscious. (Troutman, 153)

There are memories which still inhabit the voids, the dark corners, the walls, the foundations of the house. Eventually, they are obliterated and negated, as the remnants of the house collapse and are consumed by the earth; thus entering the timeless cycle of life and death.

Collapsing the Internal Monument

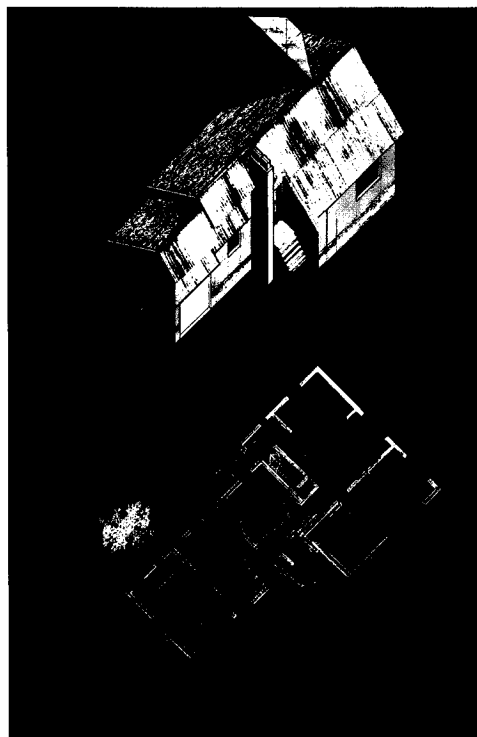
The following description outlines the process to shrink the house into the final monument:

The pioneer builds a house in anticipation of creating a home, a family, and a future. The house is constructed with rooms to house marriage, children, socializing, and personal reflection.

The back door is the common entry, the “front” door will never be used. It is a formality which may move about with no effect; however, it must exist for ease of mind. It will always provide another way in or out for emergency.



axonometric and plan: full house



axonometric and plan: less one child

After the eldest moves out, the door to that room is closed and locked. The room itself need no longer exist and will be amalgamated into the remainder of the house as a memory of that severance. The door itself remains as a reminder, retaining its image in the daily rituals so it may be reminiscent of the memories which still exist behind it.



axonometric and plan: less two children

The remaining children inevitably move out. Their doors are likewise closed and locked. The rooms are integrated further into the layers of the house. Communal spaces such as living and dining rooms are compressed in efforts to reflect the voids which exist without the extra inhabitants.

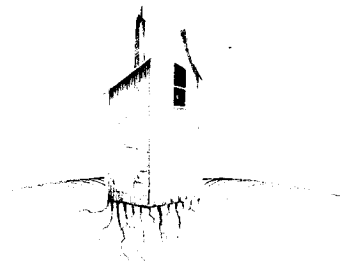


axonometric and plan: less family

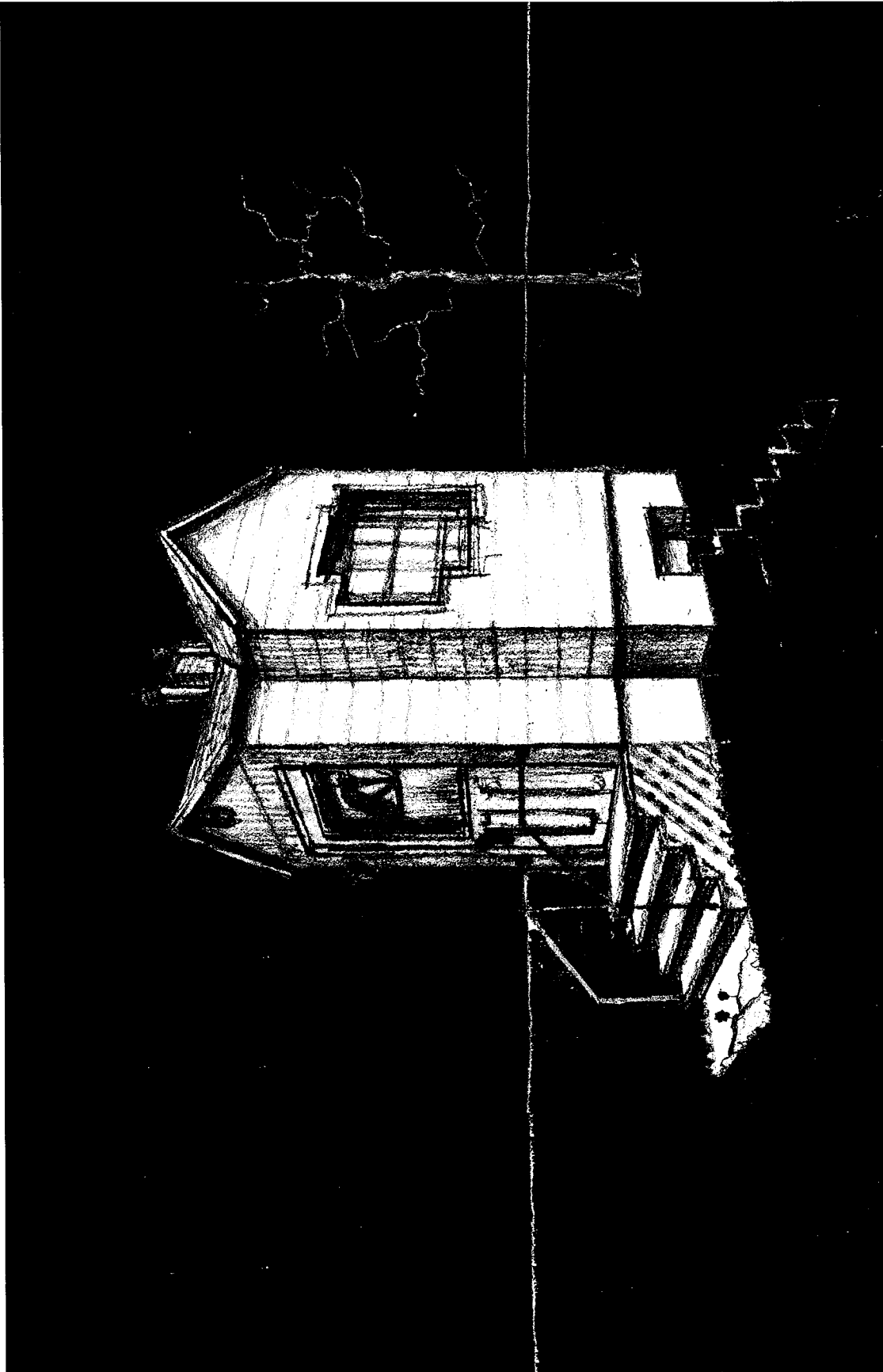
Once the spouse has passed on, the other halves of belongings and space become redundant and are therefore amalgamated. The bed is cut in half and stacked. What once served as common space is now nothing more than a room for solitary reflection.

Items have been valued and disposed accordingly until a concise, layered collection of the entire history of home is apparent. This room serves as a snapshot of family history in space and time, but can also be understood within a larger context of regional, national, and universal collective significance.

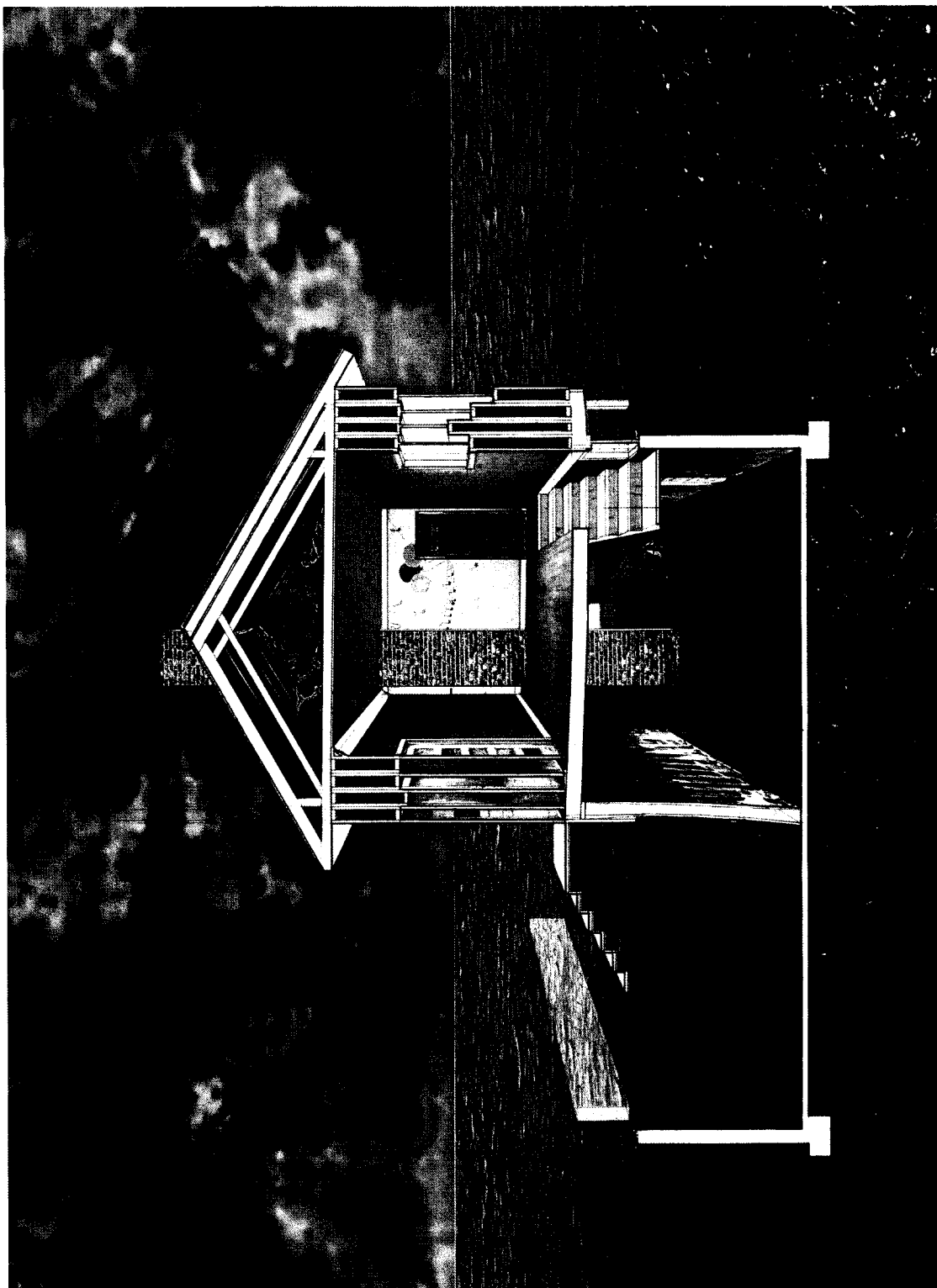
In the end, all that remains is the front door. It becomes the ultimate threshold for exchange. In death it becomes the final escape for the pioneer as well as a symbolic entrance for the new lives to follow.



sketch: compressed house



sketch perspective:



section perspective:

Tracing Exercise:

Despite the fact that we all may take our own path, there are inevitable moments of convergence - in the end, we are all here for the same reason and striving for the same end result.

This drawing reflects on the common practice of recording the change of a person's height over time. The traced individuals had a natural tendency to take the same position as previous people, even though I usually asked them to simply pick a comfortable position. Because of this phenomenon, a series of overlaps develop which allow the drawing to emerge as dynamic and complex.



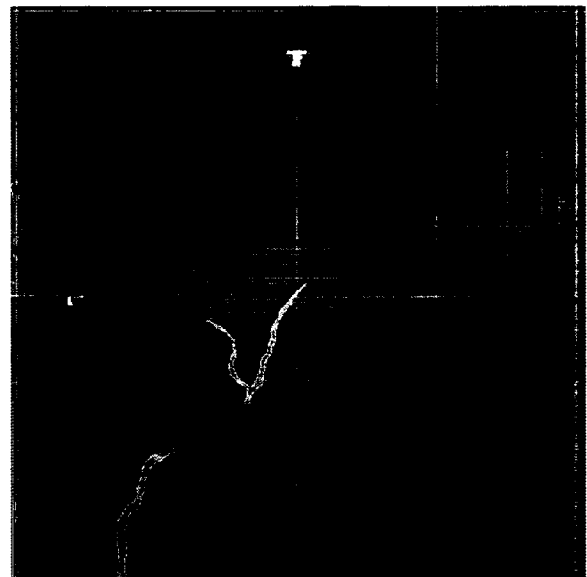
elevation: tracing the entire class

If clothing was made to suit the average result of this form, it is unlikely that it would fit anyone perfectly. Much like the story of Harrison Bergeron³, the landscape, the people, and virtually all oddities and variations falling outside the norms of mechanization, have been manipulated into square mile conformity on the prairies. No longer is diversity accommodated, leading instead to homogeneity.

³ *Harrison Bergeron*, a short story by Kurt Vonnegut, describes a future world in which equality is achieved by assimilating everyone through a series of fetters. The strong must carry weights in proportion to their strength. The smart undergo electro-shock therapy to prevent excessive thoughts. Everyone is brought down to the lowest common denomination of society as a policing strategy.

To account for differences, there must be flexibility, and this exercise quickly shows where flexibility is most needed and where rigidity is more acceptable by referencing areas of coincidence.

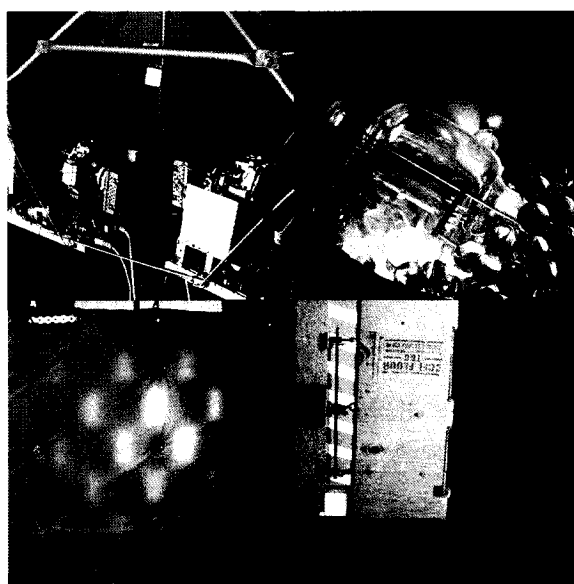
No paths have been marked between monuments, their discovery requires exploration. Traversing the distance between them becomes a solitary journey of anticipation, of reflection. Paths will be developed by the personal choices of each wanderer and remain undefined or regulated. After time, footprints, broken plants, and other traces will define the past users.



time lapse: paths reveal themselves

Section Five: New Skin, Old Bones

Prototype Architecture



Moving On

The four monuments act as provocation. From them, awareness can be raised to realize the significance of the past and derive a fresh approach to the potential role of architecture. Four models have been constructed as a possible response to the initial four issues described earlier - each of them becoming progressively more architectural.

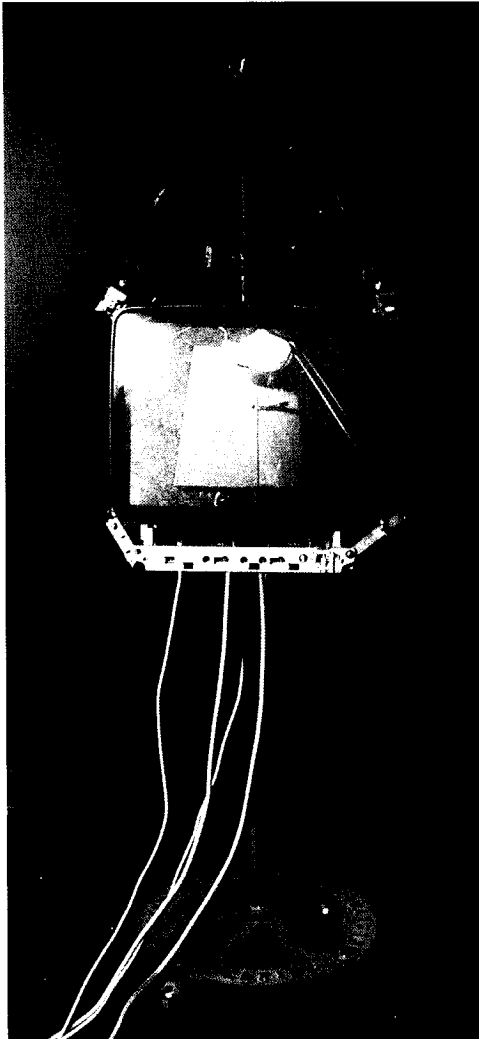
The industrial farm becomes a series of movies on modified televisions: the oil industry, a valuable piece of furniture created from salvaged materials; the trailer park, a mobile workshop providing infrastructure at the furthest possible outpost; and finally, the abandoned farm is enclosed within a flexible room with the ability to completely shrink or expand alongside the fluctuations of habitational needs.

Combinations of these four models facilitates the promotion of future programs and exploration of architectural approaches to the socio-economic decay of the Rural West.



provocation: natural gas plant burn-off - hwy 60

Model 1: T.V. Tree



model: it is only possible to view the monitors one at a time - even though everything has been exposed, views are still isolated and controlled

For leisure, now, the television is the center of attention, and there is no time at all for the simple pastimes which brought richness to the farmer's daily life. This is what I mean when I say that agriculture has become poor and weak spiritually; it is concerning itself only with material development. (Fukuoka, 111)

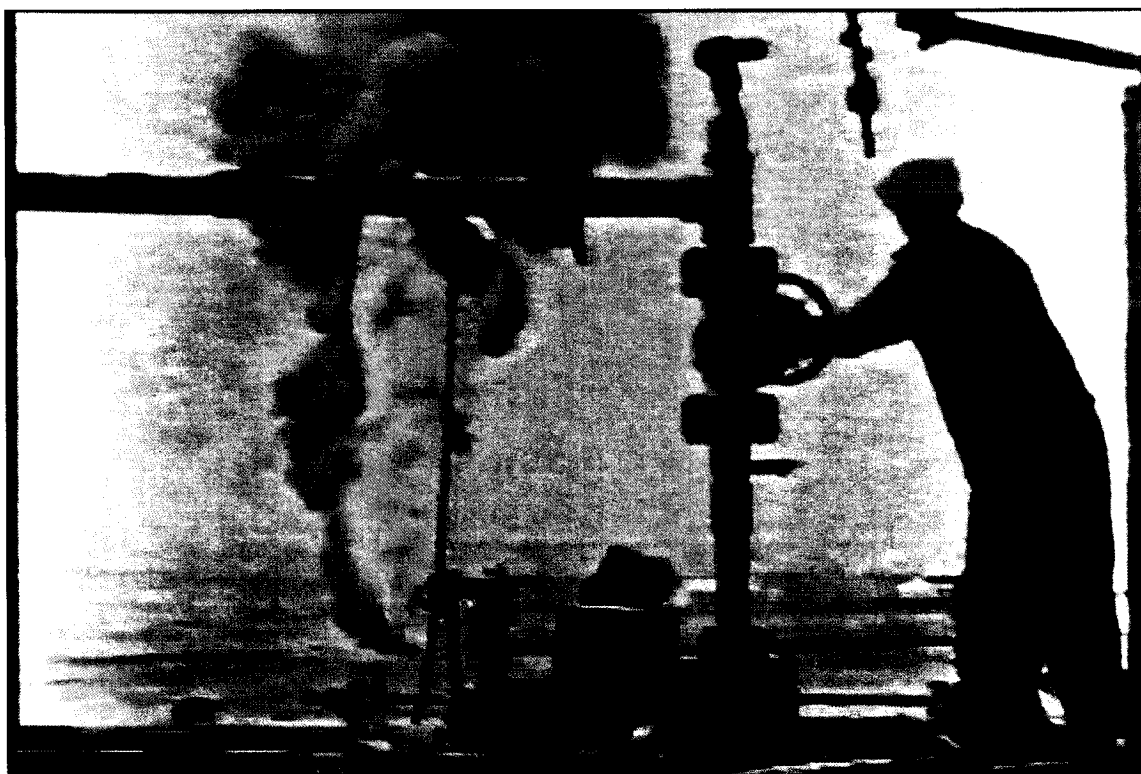
So, at the end of a day's work filled with boisterous shouting and relaxed chatter, they would all shut themselves up within their four walls and, surrounded by contemporary furniture emanating bad taste like a cold draft, stare at the refulgent television screen. They never paid one another visits besides dropping in on a neighbor for a word or two before supper. They all dreamed of moving into town. The country offered them nothing in the way of even a minimally interesting life. (Kundera, 283)

Two movies play simultaneously in opposite directions through computer monitors stripped of their plastic skins and precariously hung from a central pole. One movie describes the personal lives of prairie folk, their daily routines transforming from joy to sorrow and inevitable departure. The other describes the progression of technology in forming the modern, industrial Alberta we are familiar with.

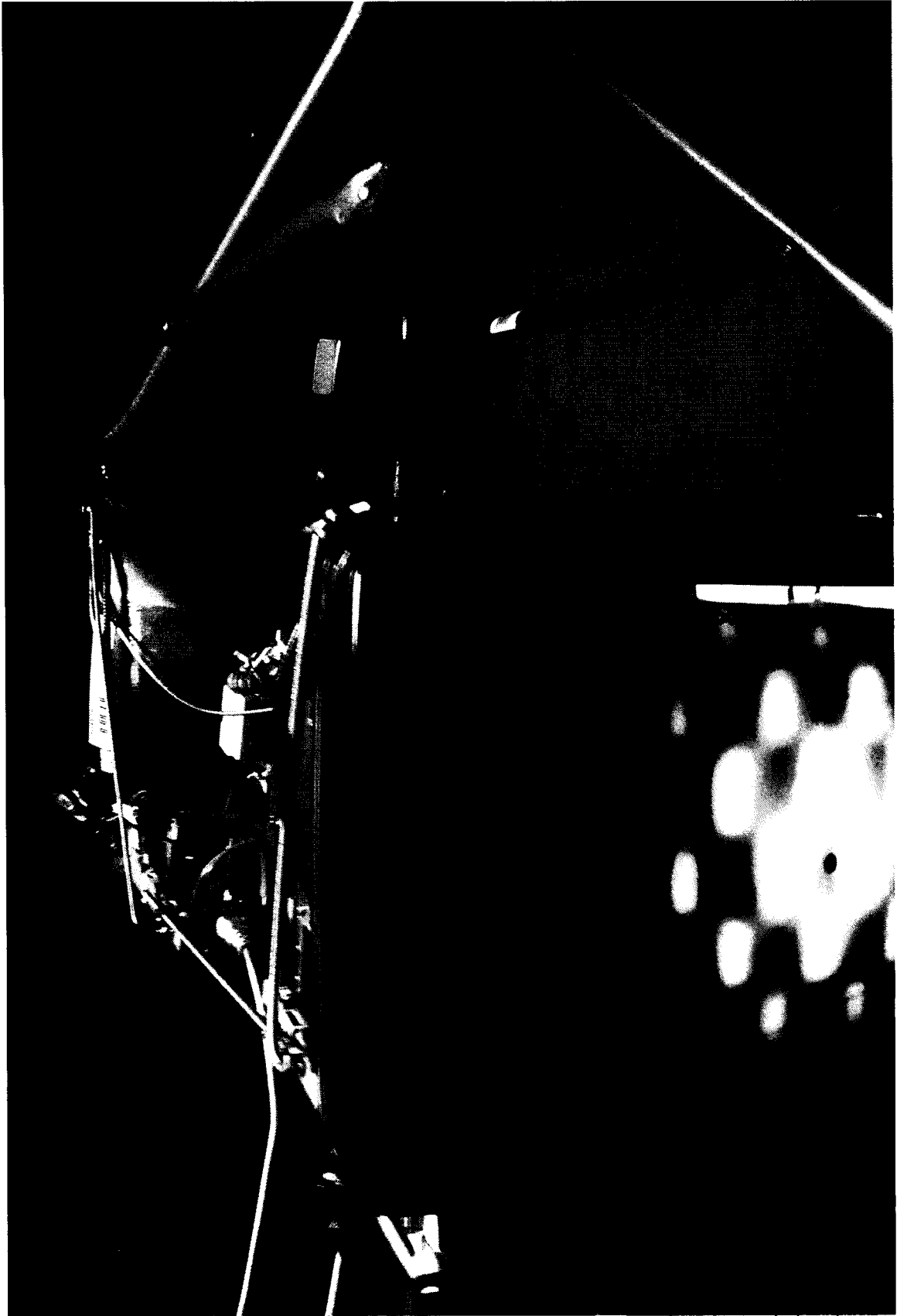
Because the screens are not encased by plastic, their unexpected working order makes representation contradictory. The rolling chassis speaks to an ephemeral nature, exaggerating the limited ability of the movie (or photograph) as storage device for memory. It is not enough to document the passing of history visually.



movie one: from settlers to vacancy

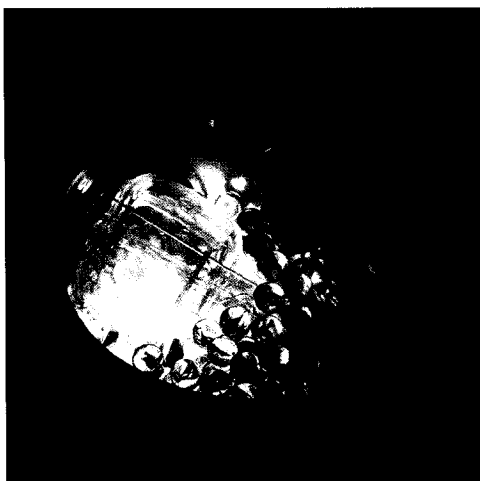


movie two: from scythe to crude



model: deceiving appearance, uncovered, unconcealed, unknown

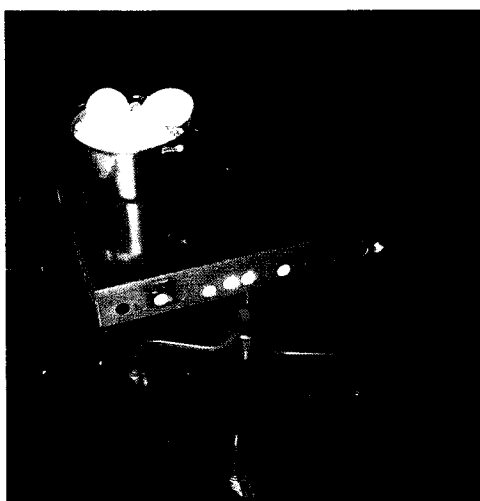
Model 2: Night Table



model: lamp detail

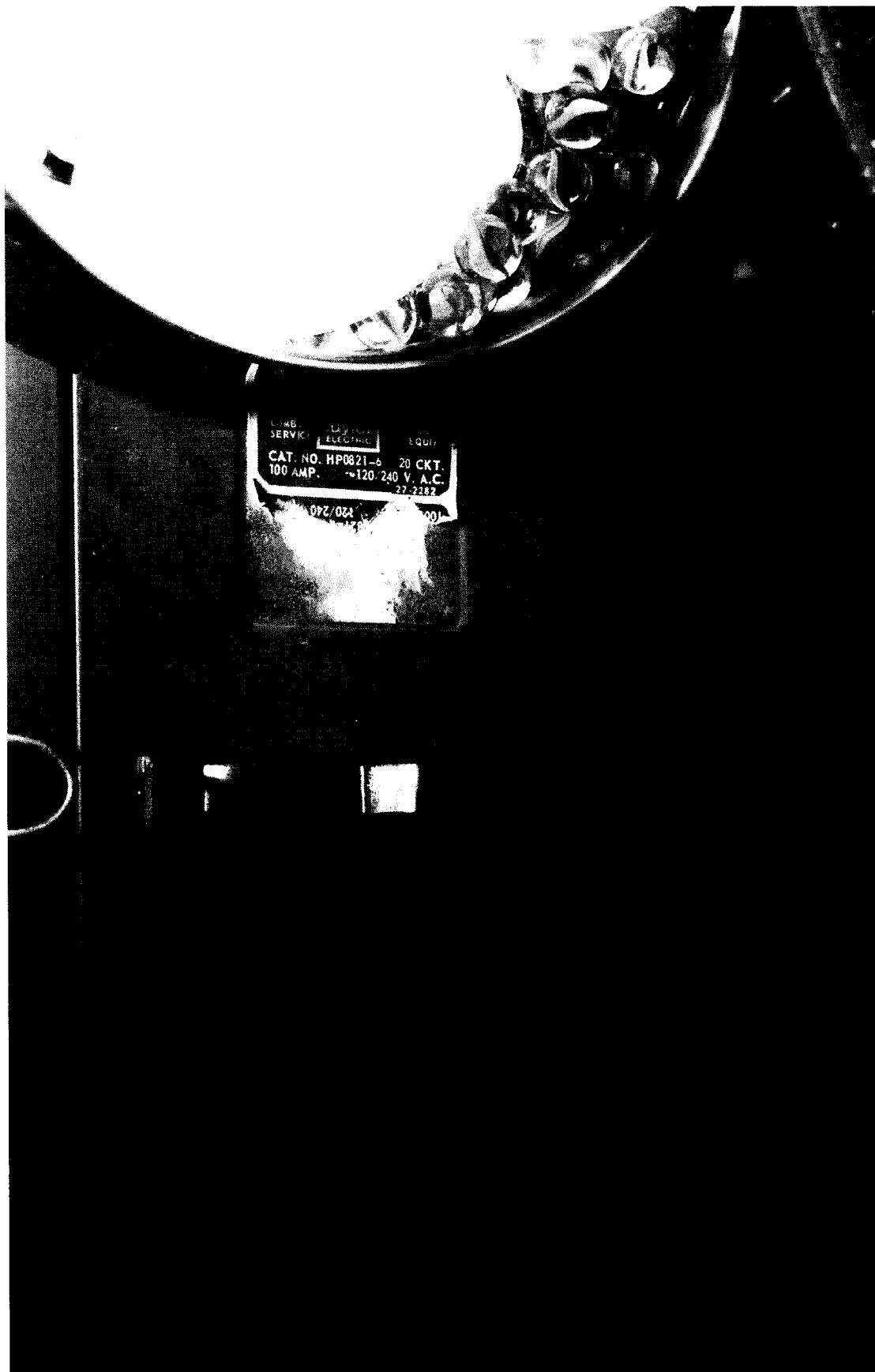
In opposition to the televisions, this piece of furniture conceals detail within three simple elements - base, table, and lamp. The inherent qualities of chosen items determine possible use - a breaker panel provides both switch and table, used light bulbs compile into lamp fragments, a pot to contain and direct them, and a casted chair bottom allows mobility and manipulation.

For this model, it is very important to use items as they are found, making only minor alterations. This allows for the possibility of returning these items to their original context if desired. In this vein, if the composition loses its efficacy, the objects are still whole pieces to be reconfigured - revalued - allowing the lifetime of objects to surpass the lifespan of their original, intended conception.



model: night table with lamp

Instead of nails and welds, screws and bolts providing connections between elements, moments of disconnection or reconnection need not deteriorate the quality of components. Much like the stave silo or scaffolding staircase comprising the vertical monument, joint details allow for items to be removed and replaced. The difference is that each iteration allows for diverse and unique compilations.



model: detail: existing breaker switch is rewired for use in illuminating the lamp - wires can be contained within the existing hollow chambers

Model 3: Mobile Workshop

In order to preserve the disappearing knowledge of family farming practices, a proactive approach to learning is necessary. Through acquiring relevant knowledge and skills, the younger generations might be encouraged to remain in the community.

Using existing farms as armature, a mobile workshop comes into the homestead and unfolds itself into the context. A low-boy trailer provides the ideal platform for this. Above the wheels, a mechanical room stays constant while the remaining bed expands into a barn or outbuilding with dismountable and sliding components. The resulting structure provides a series of modern infrastructural supports to the yard - electricity, tools, sewage disposal, fuel, etc - along with a lecture room to discuss its implementation by locals.

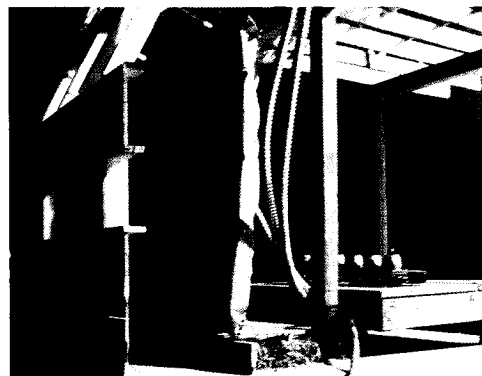
The insertion works with the state of the existing building so that the two achieve stability together rather than being completely separate structures. An in-between space is maintained so as not to compromise the qualities of the aging structure such as light passing through shingles or siding. Respecting this, a means of support must not be damaging. Clamps make the attachments, their grips using friction instead of puncturing the barn with fasteners. Rot is steamed and wrapped to prevent further decay.



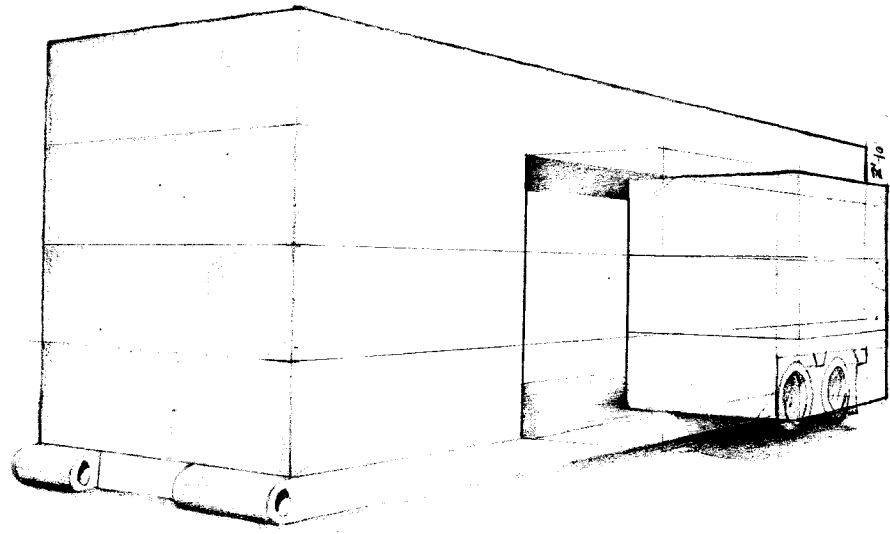
model: barn loft with operable skylight



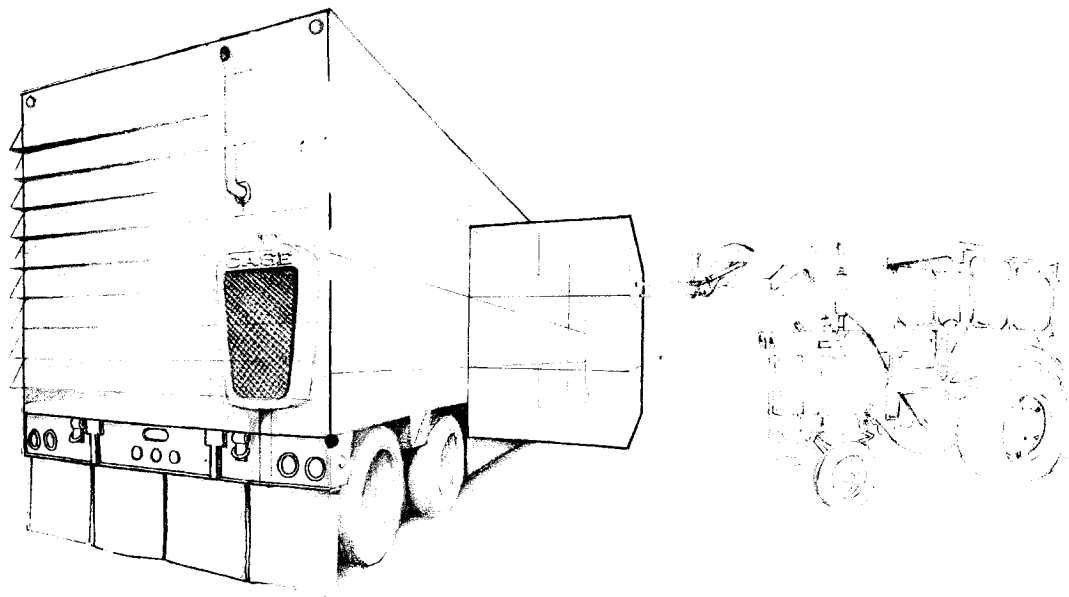
model: independent structures exchange support to prevent further collapse



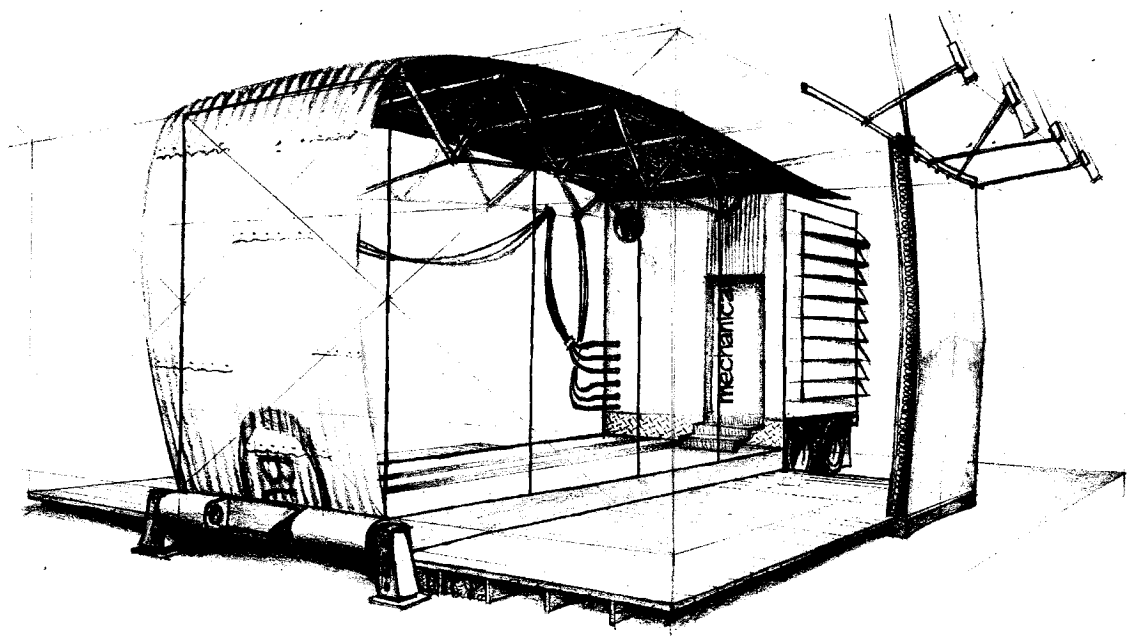
model: infrastructure extends as needed



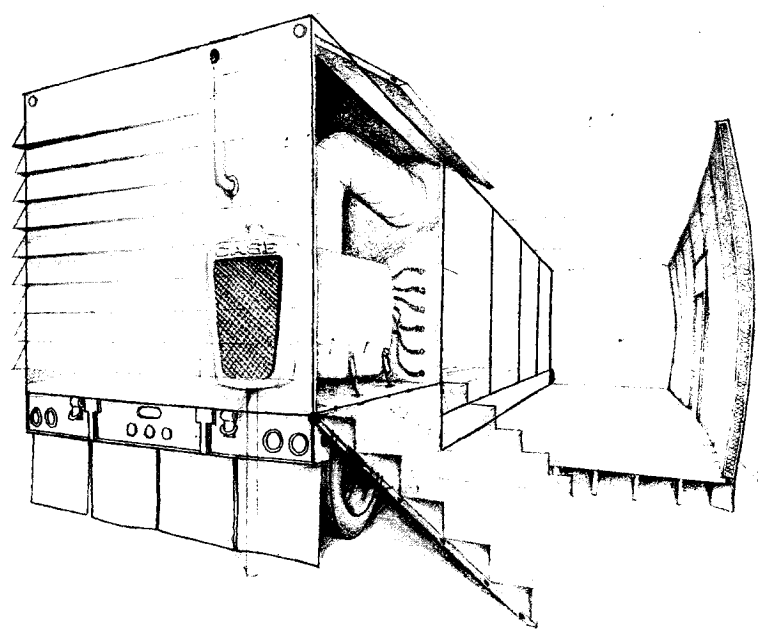
perspective: enclosed for travel mode



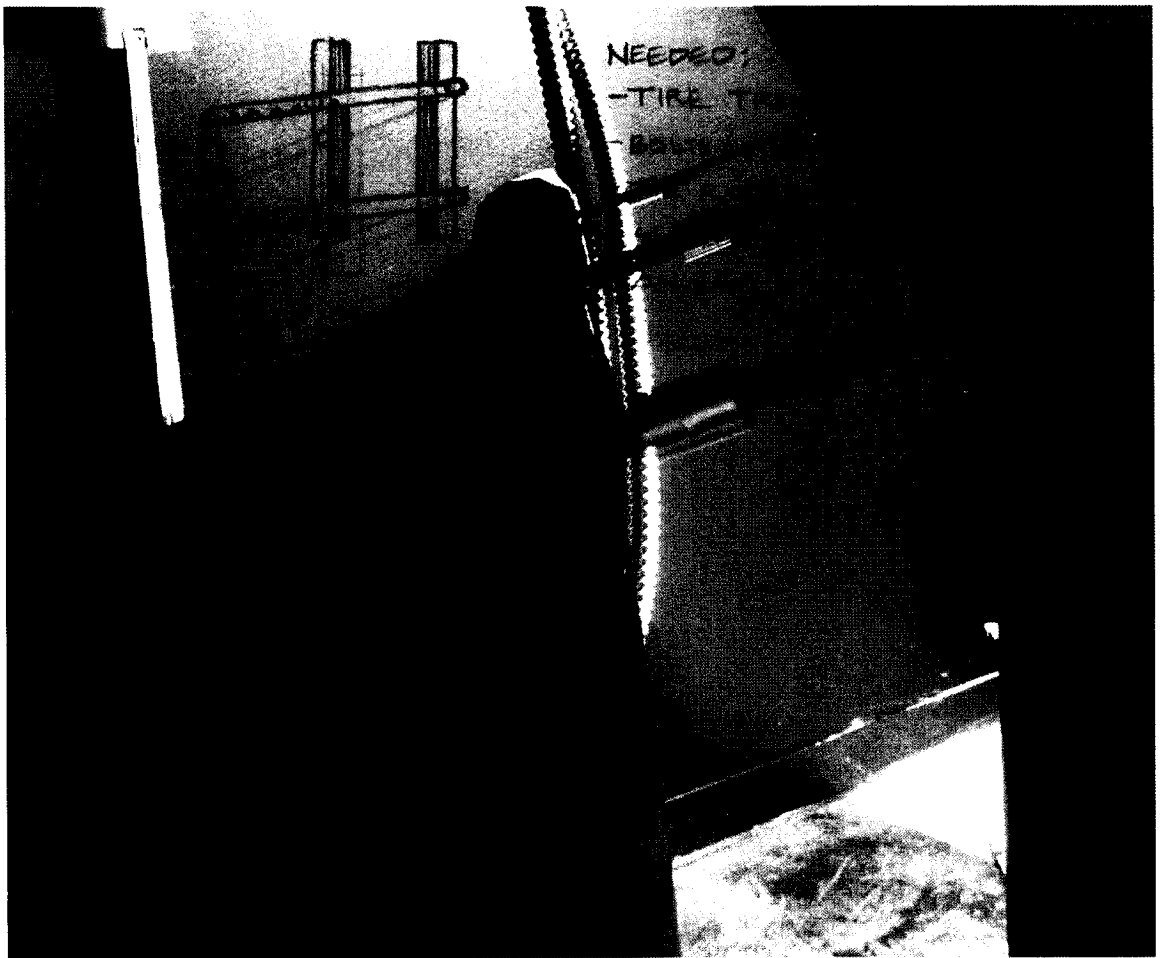
perspective: off-loading is kept to simple units which can be further unpacked without machinery



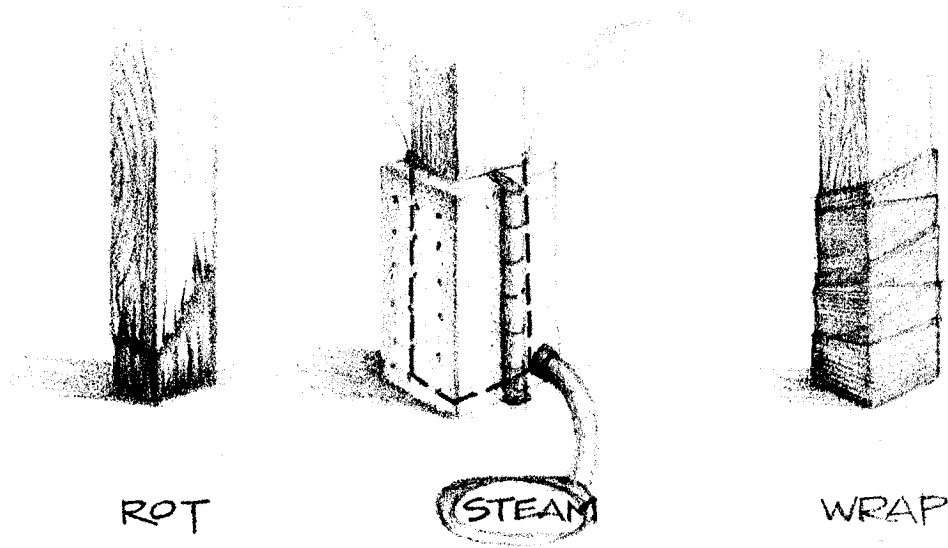
perspective: trailer assumes position within building, expanding as allowable



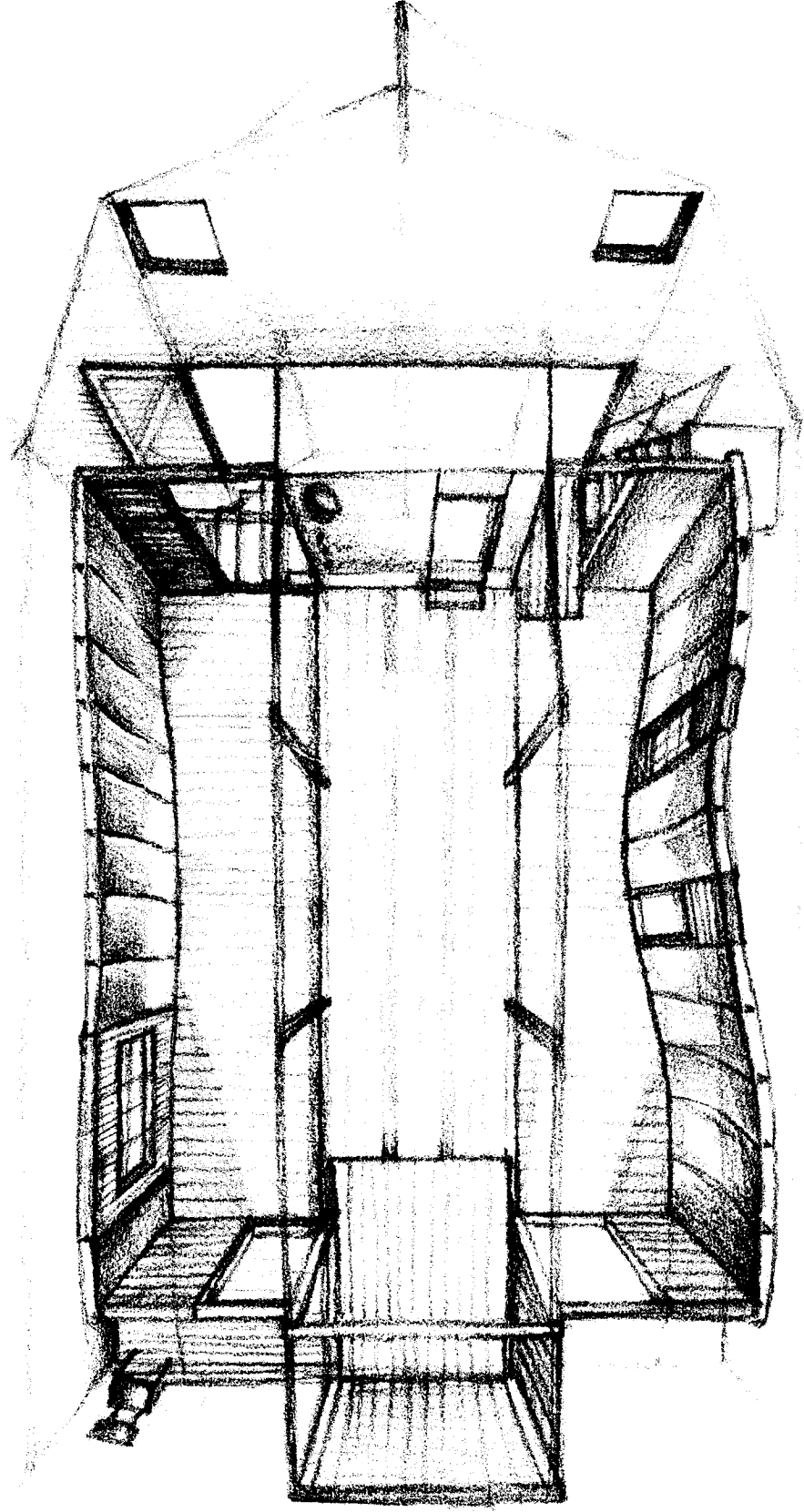
perspective: infrastructure unit remains over axles - tires act as insulators to prevent vibration



model: the clamps allow a non-destructive means of distributing loads between the two structures



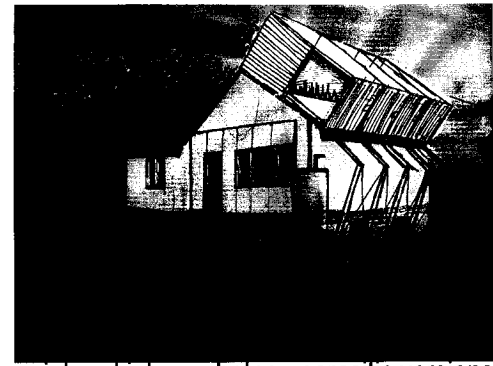
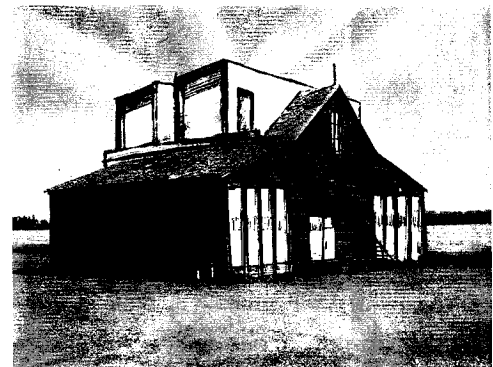
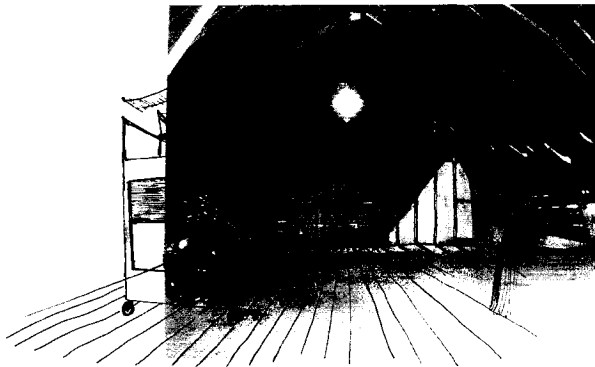
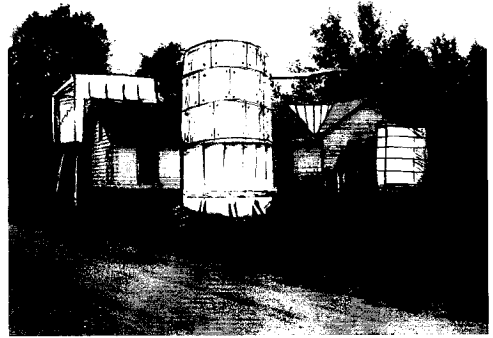
study: repairing the rotten wood to prolong the cycle of decay



aerial perspective: the insulated internal space acts as both parasite and host, merely accentuating the existing qualities of the inhabited barn



model: abstraction and reinterpretation illustrates the qualities of transparency and ephemerality



paint and ink on photos: parasitic versions

Model 4: Flexible Box



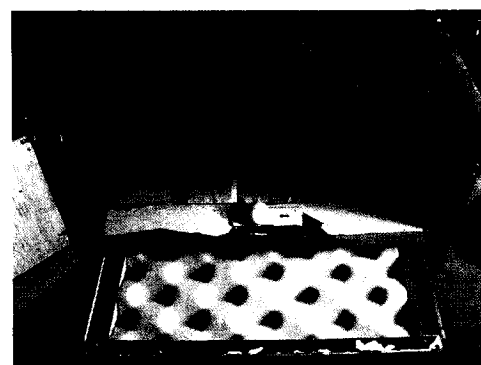
model: contained



model: open: storage cabinet



model: expanded: table



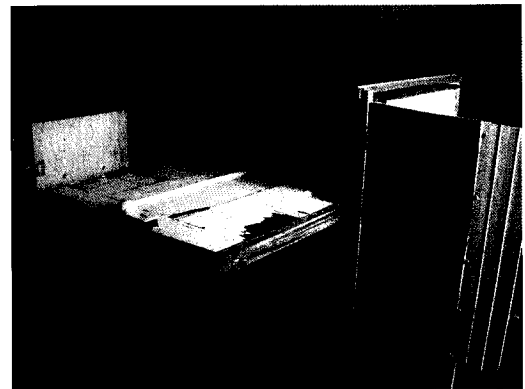
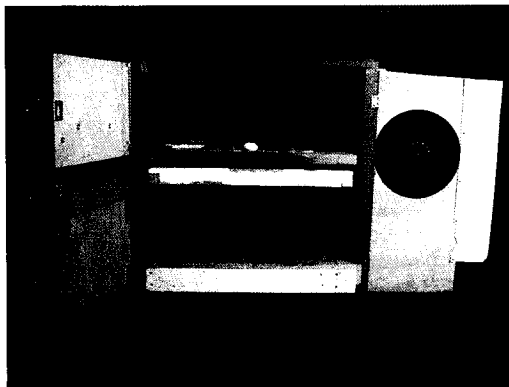
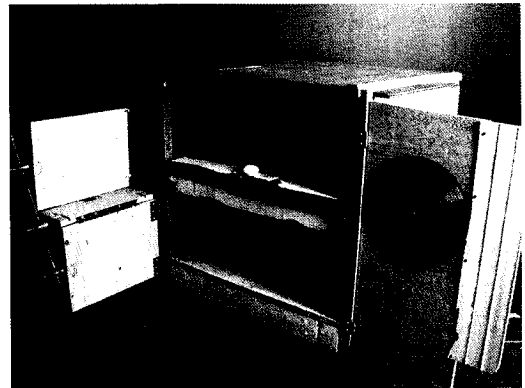
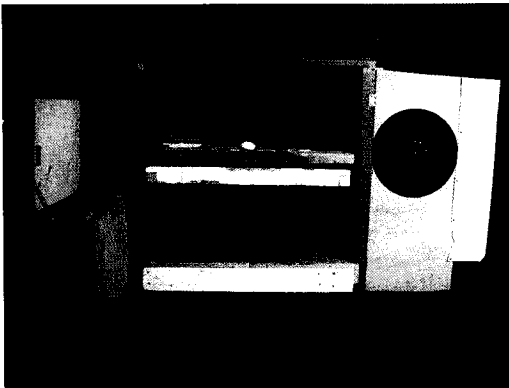
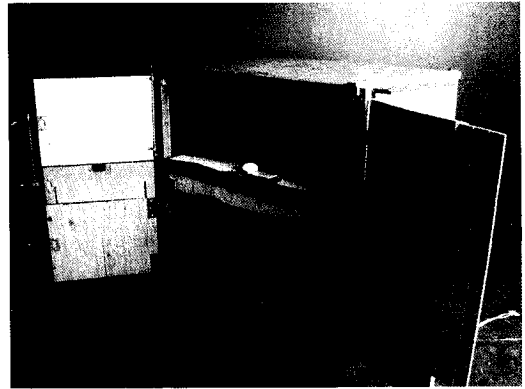
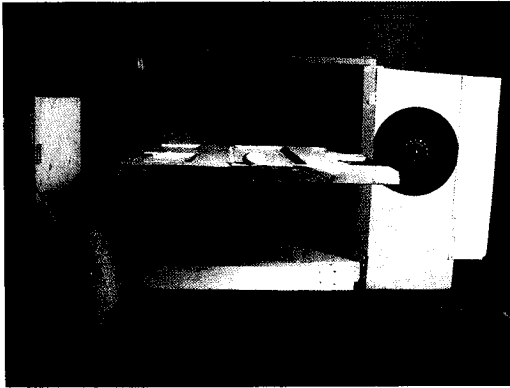
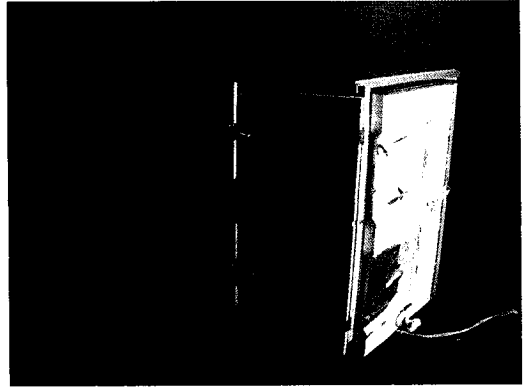
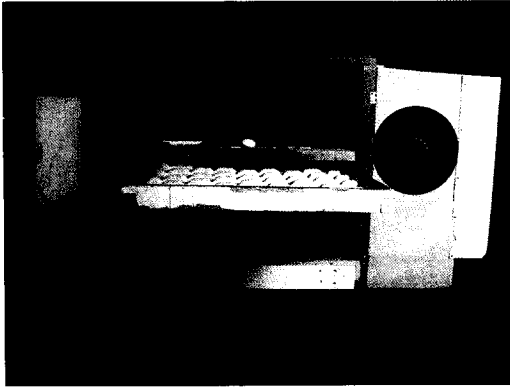
model: expanded: bed

The only piece of furniture, among all that he possessed, for which Carre-Benoit felt real affection was his solid oak filing cabinet... Here, at least, was something that was reliable... You saw what you were looking at and you touched what you were touching. Its proportions were what they should be, everything about it had been designed and calculated by a meticulous mind for purposes of utility. And what a marvelous tool! It replaced everything, memory as well as intelligence. In this well-fitted cube there was not an iota of haziness or shiftiness. Once you had put something in it, even if you put it a hundred or ten thousand more times, you could find it again in the twinkling of an eye, as it were. (Bachelard 77)

In a response to the process of the shrinking house monument, this box is able to both contract and expand according to need. An entire room room has been compressed into a container.

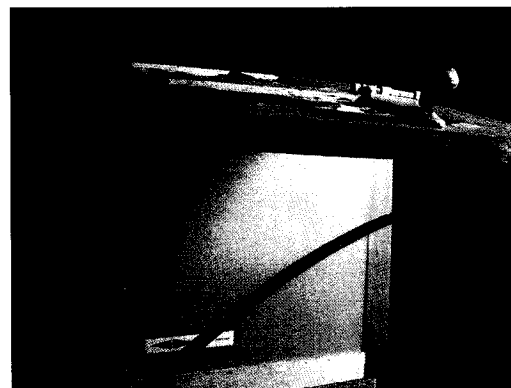
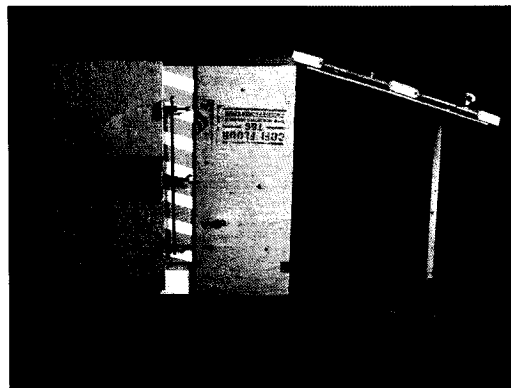
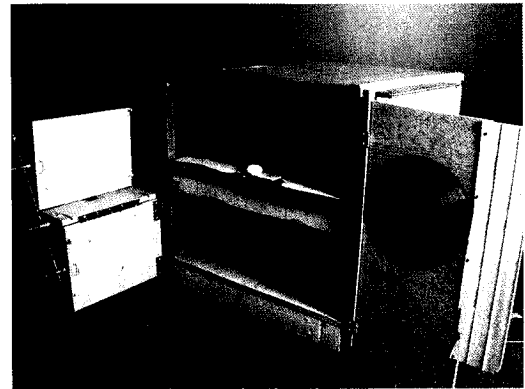
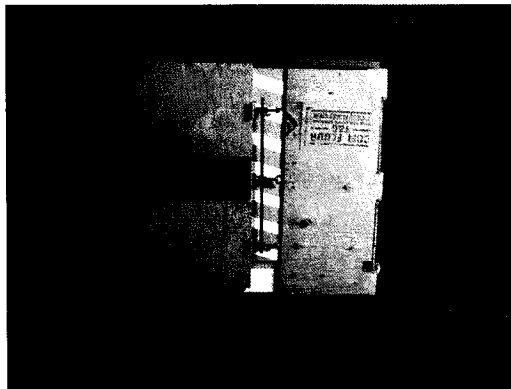
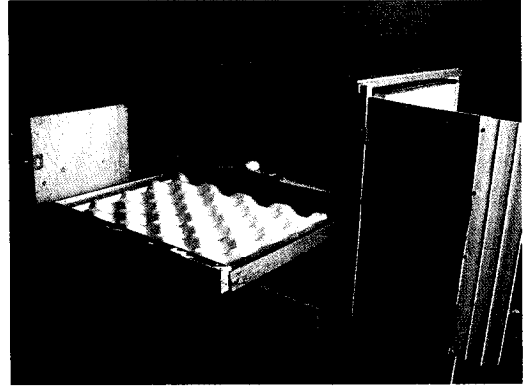
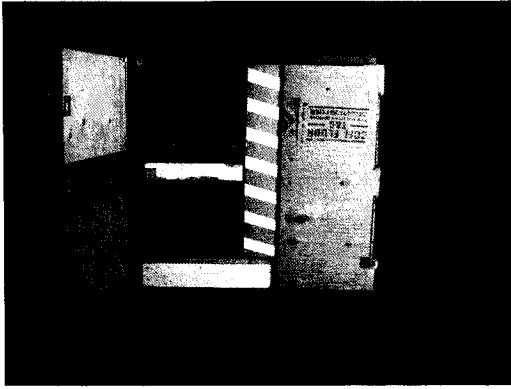
When not in use, the unit can be put in the corner, outside, or even second as a table or shelf. When opened, the doors unfold into chairs, a table and bed roll in and out on fixed sliders, and cupboards provide storage solutions when desired. The exterior panels fold out while supporting legs drop down allowing the box to duplicate its dimensions many times over.

This type of architecture considers and anticipates through flexibility the varying needs that fluctuating modern lives would seek.

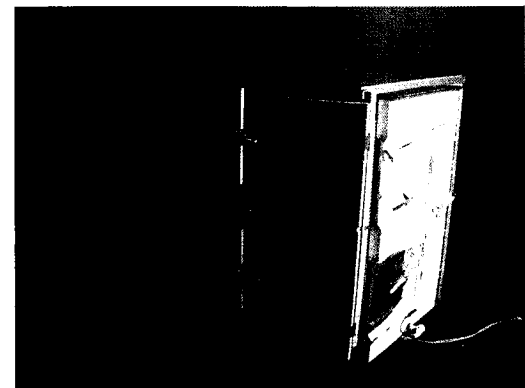


model: transformation series 1a

model: transformation series 2a



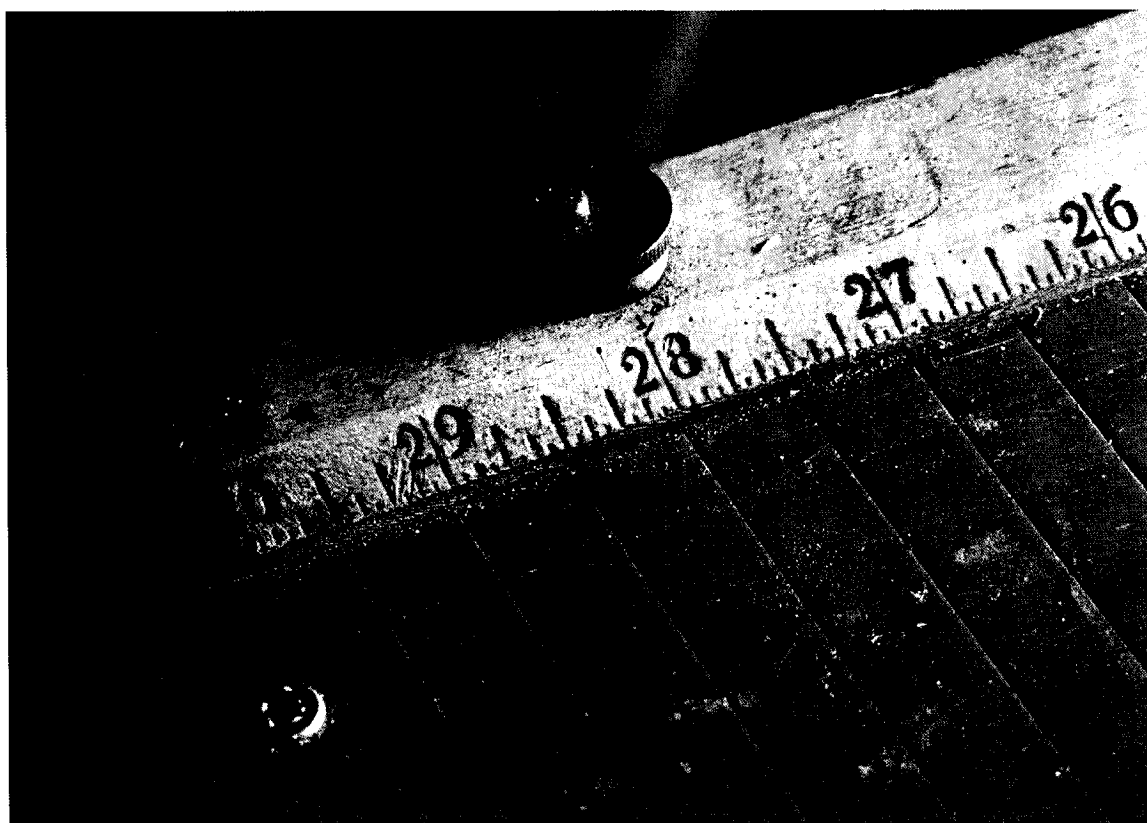
model: transformation series 1b



model: transformation series 2b



model: options for insertion of more elements - larger tables, storage, etc. - still in containment



model: details from the found materials are retained as features

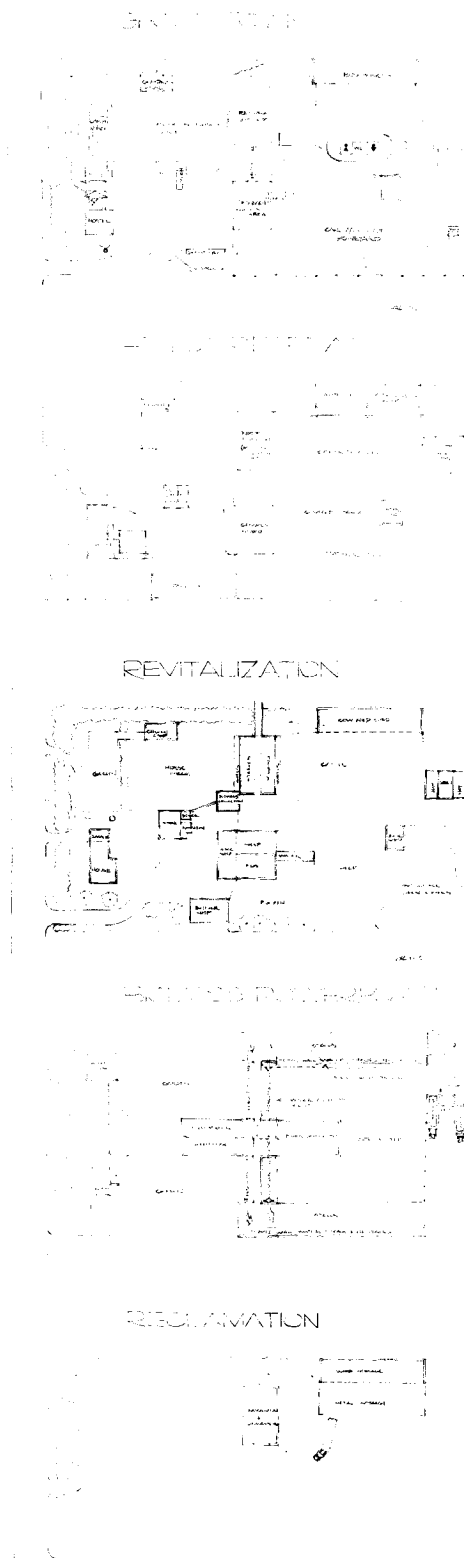
Programmatic Possibilities

A farm has the opportunity to evolve and adapt to changes due to its initial conception as a diverse system in and of itself; whereas, neither a trailer park or an oil rig lend themselves to interpretations beyond their intended functions.

Since this is the case, it should be possible to reintegrate the abandoned farm into a modern context by installing contemporary diversifications which allow the farm to continue on its evolutionary path rather than embracing a premature death. The work/live proximity adds the necessary complexities to amplify the importance of home and work on the farm above that of both trailer park and oil rig. Here, a sense of belonging would not be questioned. People's differences and eccentricities could easily be absorbed and worked into the conditions rather than being forced to conform.

Masanobu Fukuoka, a Japanese farmer and theorist, has been promoting through example his views on 'do-nothing' natural farming. In his rice fields, he does not cultivate the land, hold water, use pesticides, fertilizers, or prepared, composted manure.

As a scientific customs official inspecting outgoing Sunkist oranges, Fukuoka came to



plans: variations of the same farmyard

realize that technology has not necessarily been improving the quality of produce or farming.

“Humanity knows nothing at all. There is no intrinsic value in anything, and every action is a futile, meaningless effort. This may seem preposterous, but if you put it into words, that is the only way to describe it. (Fukuoka, 4)

As an alternative, he poses:

“How about not doing this? How about not doing that?” -that was my way of thinking. I ultimately reached the conclusion that there was no need to plow, no need to apply fertilizer, no need to make compost, no need to use insecticide. When you get right down to it, there are few agricultural practices that are really necessary. (Fukuoka, 15)

With the increasing popularity of organic and natural foods, considering the application of Fukuoka’s ‘do nothing’ farming techniques at the scale of the family farm on the Alberta prairie is an interesting proposal. In Larry Korn’s introduction to Fukuoka’s book, *The One-Straw Revolution*, he explains that the approach can “make it possible even for a ‘Sunday farmer’ to grow enough food for the whole family” (Fukuoka, xx). For Kropotkin, this verifies his anarchist utopian view. He and Fukuoka are in agreement about an equal distribution of labour and technology.

... if 100% of the people were farming it would be ideal. There is just a quarter-acre of arable land for each person in Japan. If each single person were given one quarter-acre, that is 1¼ acres to a family of five, that would be more than enough land to support the family for the whole year. If natural farming were practiced, a farmer would also have plenty of time

for leisure and social activities within the village community. I think this is the most direct path toward making this country a happy, pleasant land. (Fukuoka, 109)

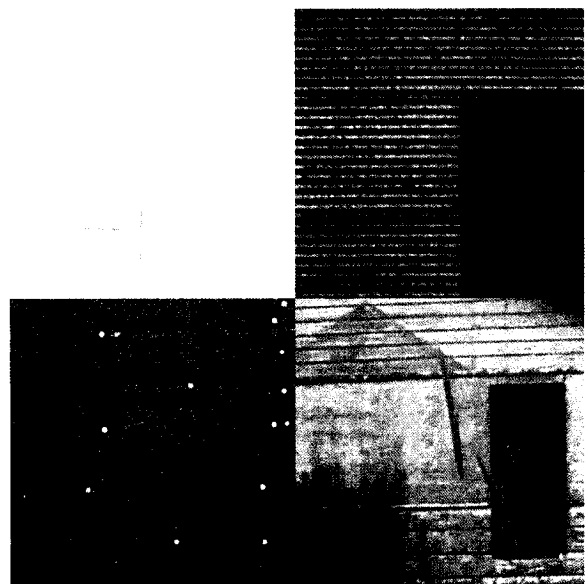
As the reciprocal of industrial farming, these methods invest in labour rather than technology to achieve results. To an outsider, this may seem primitive and illogical; however, as the television model described, this is an isolated view - these methods are far more complex than meets the eye. Following the population increase required to perform a labour intensive operation, a rural community would be rekindled, requiring the installation of infrastructure (enter the mobile workshop). The introduction of a slightly different program requires a reassessment of the value of existing items, buildings, and landscapes (enter the principles of the night table). To allow for future evolution and change, provisions should be flexible (enter the flexible box).

In this scenario, these principles contribute to the development of a natural farming community. A rural revival based on contemporary, 'healthy' consumerism is one possible avenue. Of course, the application of this scheme at the provincial scale is not feasible. As I have stated from the beginning, since lack of diversity has been a contributor toward rural exodus, there can not be 'one' solution to solve Alberta's problems. This is only one combination of many, perhaps a catalyst for future architectural interventions

Section Six:

Conclusions

Assigning Architecture



Summary

Architecture has taken three forms in the development of this thesis: the case study, the monument, and the prototype. Taken together, they form a circular pattern to reflect the past, present, and more sensitive future.

Strangely, though, I still find myself fascinated by that question: 'Why is the language of architecture so limited? Why does it historically, move forward a few centimetres in range, only then to have to retreat back a metre until, in 30 years time, it creeps forward a bit more?' (Cook, 32)

Marianne Ignace clearly describes the complexity of collective memory and future growth with respect to Aboriginal peoples in Kamloops, British Columbia, "In order for culture to carry on, it must re-invent itself in continuously new ways and forms." (**Garrett-Petts, 318**) The traditional farmer was formerly a jack-of-all-trades - capable of dealing with virtually every challenge that presented itself on a farm through invention and ingenuity.

If the architect is to become involved in the transition of the rural west, what role would one assume? Anthropologist, sociologist, economist, artist, poet, writer, social activist, provocateur, assistant, historian - the list goes on. Architecture itself is not a static act and must reinvent identity in lieu of unsustainable growth. The architect must act as composer to engage the faculties available, directing

stories and communicating the intangible in order to inspire the public of the importance of balancing memory with progress.

The drawings of architects... are much less purely instrumental, and quite often have nothing to do with getting anything done at all. Rather, they are imbued with meanings over and above what they appear to show... (Banham, 19)

Although the current architectural language is not effective in providing solutions to the complexities of a larger social condition, these 'imbued meanings' can be positive devices to spark public imagination. Architecture, as a medium, has the capacity to postulate imaginary worlds, and in doing so, comments critically on the palpable one.

Physically removed, I have encountered this process as an outsider: looking back at pictures and writings like postcards I had mailed to myself. Milling over questions, I fortunately now feel compelled to write back.

Appendix

A series of references have shaped the development of this thesis by providing a number of avenues already explored by the larger architectural society. The contributions of these references towards the areas of memory are outlined according to: the case study, the monument, and the potential.

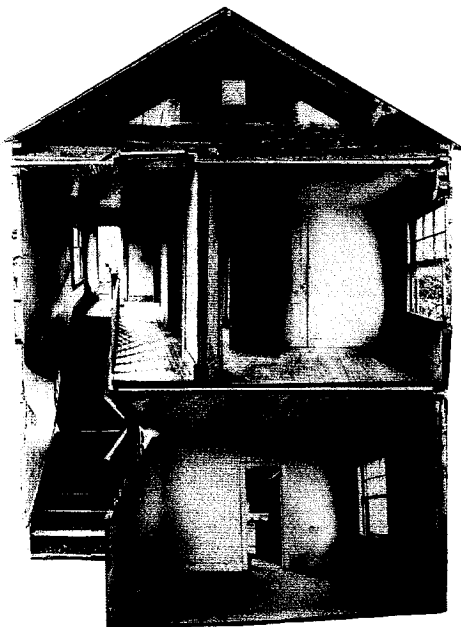
The case study:

Historian: Joseph Cornell, using the methods of collage and bricolage creates numerous memory boxes which provide deeply layered insights into the materials of which they have been constructed. Much like the traditional museum, value judgements have been made, and the entire collection has become concise to the point of contrivance. The glass jars criticize the museum's nature to remove items from context and place them in abstract and foreign situations which, inevitably, confuse their actual significance by the objectification of an archetype.

Archaeologist: Gordon Matta-Clark creates evocative situations by physically cutting and removing parts of buildings in order to reveal their inner qualities and layers. The perversity of these acts and the display of items as installations in public places creates a similar critique of museums, as well as one on abandonment itself.



Museum, 1944 (McShire, 211)



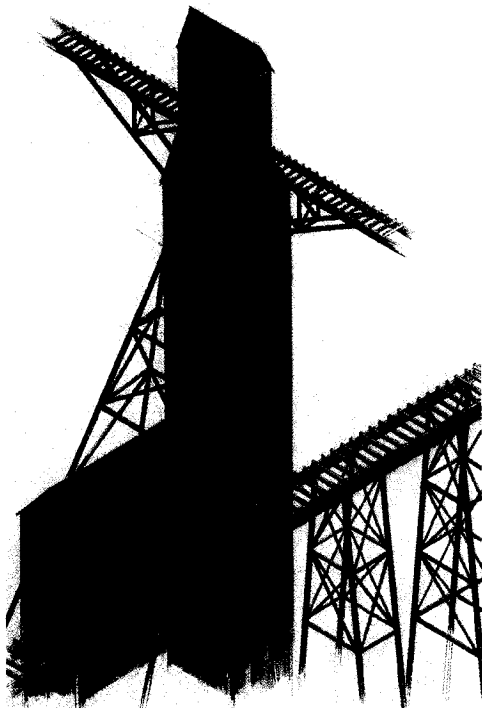
Splitting, 1974 (Diserens, 174)

The monument:

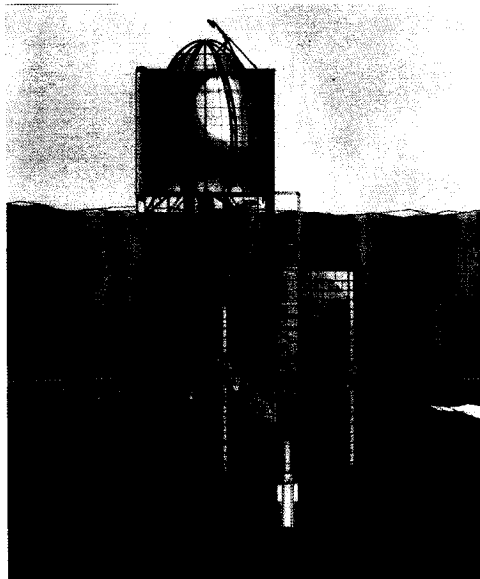
Charney:

There are many issues present in the work of Melvin Charney, an artist/architect whose distinctive qualities are due to his mastery of both realms and to his capacity to operate continuously within the complex interstices between architecture and art, with the constant tension between architecture as object and the objectification of architecture. - Alessandra Latour (Charney, 13)

Nostalgia is problematic. As Michel Foucault noted, "there is in fact no such thing as return." But in the strange, flattened simulations of architecture, Charney manipulated nostalgia's latent power to challenge the tunnel vision of urban planners charged with shaping modern Montreal on the ruins of the historic city. - Patricia C. Philips (Charney, 20)

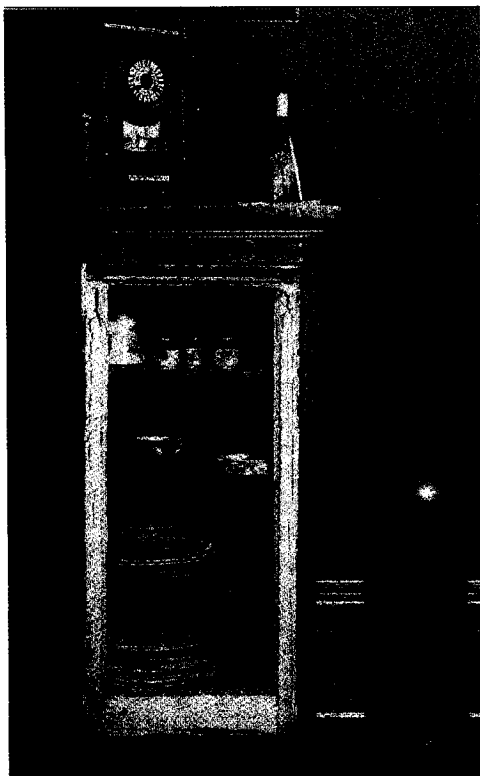


A Lethbridge Construction, No. 2, 1985 (Charney, 161)



Anatomical Section of 'Oxygen House', 1993 (Darden, 149)

Douglas Darden, for his *Condemned Buildings* has interwoven lyrical journeys and architectural forms into buildings which incite the imagination to recall and interpret an abstraction of history. Monuments remain as theoretical allegories - their power is contained within Darden's incredible representational abilities. These examples do not attempt to be literal, relying instead on interpretation. The shock factor of provocative drawings, tongue-in-cheek stories, and highly crafted models actuate within the viewer and reader a number of reactions and emotions. His hope then transfers to how the viewers will respond once his opinions become available for public scrutiny (of themselves or his work).



Cabinet with Window Door, 2000
(Corson, 127)

The potential:

Literal: Jennifer Corson's creation of *Renovator's Resource* provides a reclamation service to provide the building industry of Halifax Regional Municipality with authentic vintage items such as doors, hardware, wood, etc. With an in-house carpenter, the company also converts many of their finds into furniture pieces which retain the quality and memory of the items they are constructed from.

As a functioning museum, Upper Canada Village has collected numerous buildings and handicrafts together in one area to demonstrate how pioneers managed their lives and land many years before.

Embedded: Samuel Mockbee's development of the Rural Studio in Alabama has created a body of work, both sensitive and creative, which realizes the embedded potential of the material world. He and his students construct numerous built projects out of low-cost materials as potential options for the impoverished population.



Robert Motherwell in his Chareau-designed studio (Cummings)

Pierre Chareau's house for Robert Motherwell in New York shows the positive, low-cost solutions available in turning a quonset into an artist studio and house. By reprogramming the redundant, the quonset managed to exceed its intended life span. (Unfortunately, this conversion suffered a fate of demolition at the hands of present land owners)

Geoff Crosby's thesis, *Church*, describes the process of collecting, documenting, assessing, and reinterpreting existing materials for new, innovative purposes. Combined with a detailed list of individual resident's abilities, he managed an architectural solution the community could construct itself - with materials and ability at hand.

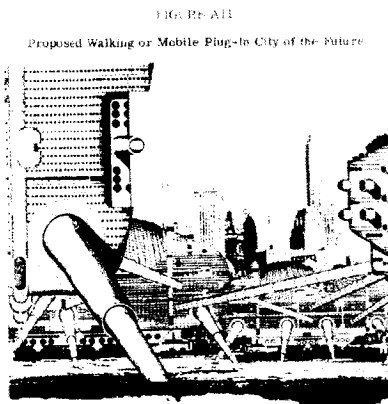
Richard Proenneke left behind the mainstream in his retirement to live in Twin Lakes, Alaska for his final years where he managed to craft a life with his own hands out of the items and inspiration available in this remote location.



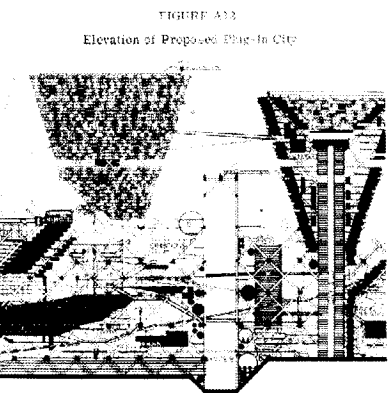
the Ecocentre of Craik, Saskatchewan incorporates numerous eco-sensitive design cues for public display to promote new ideas in rural living

Responsive: Craik Saskatchewan's transformation from decaying rural community into an enthusiastic eco-village has allowed it to move beyond fleeting memory with hope for the future. Diversity has been reintegrated into a community dependent on impermanent resources. Already, a British Columbian hemp company has a production facility under construction in the area thus giving farmers new alternatives to cereal grains.

Robert Kronenburg has edited numerous books including *Houses in Motion*, and *Transportable Environments (1 & 2)* which outline a variety of contemporary solutions to mobile living. The homestead provides a lesson in planning and establishing well-defined and considerate relationships which



Source: City of Atlanta, "Info+August, 1996," drawn by Bob Korman and Frank Berman.



Source: City of Atlanta, "Info+August, 1996," drawn by Bob Korman and Frank Berman.

Walking and Plug-In Cities (Archigram c/o Drury, 172-173)

may be transferred into a type of impermanent construction, or methods of construction, that can be responsive to existing, previous, and anticipated conditions. Mobility would allow for numerous pausing moments in the life of this architecture. Flexibility in form and function would allow for unique situations at each pause. Applying these to the nomadic nature of resource industries provides possibilities which compromise the rootedness of a farm with the detachment of the trailer.

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"How Things Have Changed." 9:43. 113C 0171 025. National Film Board of Canada. (movie)

"Paper Wheat." 57:41. 113C 0179 002 National Film Board of Canada. (movie)

"The Changing Wheat Belt." Dir. Joseph Koenig. 13:38. 113C 0166 051 National Film Board of Canada. 1993. (movie)

"Where Have All the Farms Gone?" 16:08. 113C 0169 128 National Film Board of Canada. (movie)