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## Chinese Cultural Center

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# CHINESE CULTURAL CENTER

By  
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B. A., Central Academy of Applied Arts and Design,  
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Submitted to the Faculty of the School of the Arts  
of Virginia Commonwealth University

in Partial Fulfillment  
of the  
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Master of Fine Arts

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION	1—2
II. HISTORICAL CONCEPTS	3—8
III. FACTS	9—13
IV. NEEDS	14—15
V. DESIGN CONCEPTS	16—20
VI. BIBLIOGRAPHY	21—22
VII. DESIGN ILLUSTRATIONS	23—48

## 1. INTRODUCTION

During this period of high technology, designers are eager to create environments that have strong emotional appeal to people's physiology and psychology. Our exploration of the natural living space has become all the more an illusive search as modern technology advances. Interior design, in its concern for environmental engineering, endeavors to exploit the spiritual aspect of human resources. Through this message, people are inspired to higher planes of existence.

### A. PROJECT

To design a Chinese Cultural center.

### B. PURPOSE

1. To introduce the traditional and contemporary Chinese culture to western people.
2. To illustrate and describe the philosophies of Chinese life and thinking to visitors of the center.
3. To create a new space and form combining oriental and western design.
4. To incorporate the use of contemporary materials, structure and technology.
5. To integrate the interior and exterior environment, and the building into a total design concept.
6. To satisfy the functional requirements needed in an exhibition area, guest house facility, restaurant, gift shop, and office area.

### C. LOCATION

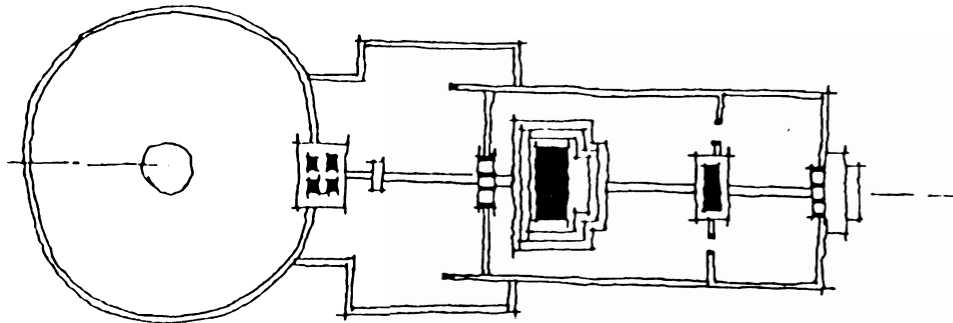
The center will be located approximately twenty miles South of Washington, D.C.. The site is bordered by private homes to the North, highways to the East, and the Potomac River to the West and South.

## II. HISTORICAL CONCEPTS

To reaffirm the value of history, ornamentation, and the vernacular, a symbiosis between past and future is important. Rather than introducing a style as an ornamental design, it may be better to restate the style through the invisible elements that contribute to the cultural tradition - the spirit, lifestyle, and spatial qualities. In some cases, we can choose forms from these elements as codes or symbols. By attaching new meaning to these forms, we can incorporate humanity and history into contemporary architecture. Chinese architectural forms offer distinctive design features that convey various layers of meaning.

### A. CONTINUOUS SPACE

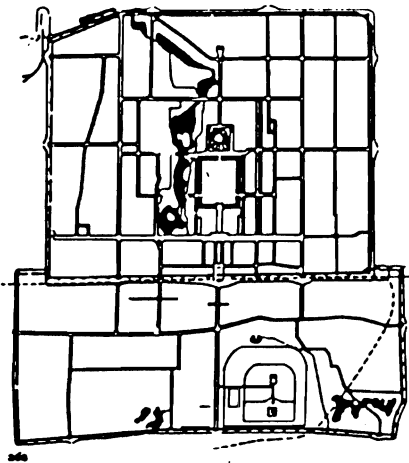
If Chinese culture could be described in a word, it would be "continuous". This concept plays a very important role in the development of China. Religion is one of the factors that makes the Chinese culture "continuous".



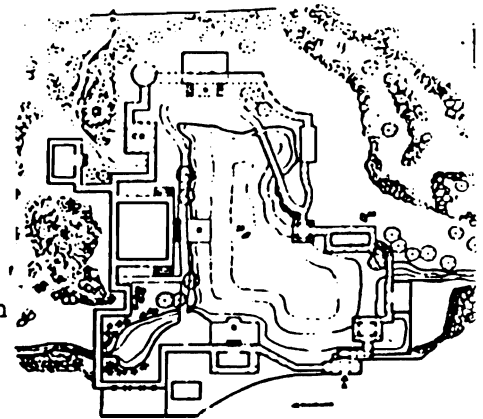
Plan of Tin Tain Temple, Beijing, China.

## B. CHINESE RELIGION

The basic Chinese religion teaches of the transmigration of souls, according to which all living things, including man, animals, and plants are part of a perpetual cycle of birth and death within a greater web of life. Fundamental to this philosophy is the belief that nothing is permanent, be it nature, man himself, or architecture. Thus both architecture and people, as part of nature, exist within the cycle of transmigration. Chinese architecture has been greatly influenced by both Confucianism and Taoism. The Confucian style of heavy straight lines, regularity, and symmetry, is seen often in residential houses and city layouts. The philosophy of Taoism also contributes to the dual and multiple aspect of the Chinese culture. Taoism teaches the Ying/Yang (positive versus negative). Symmetrical and asymmetrical are not at opposite poles, but live in a symbiotic relationship in which the former is an extension of the latter.



Plan of Beijing  
Ming Dynasty  
( 1368 - 1644 )

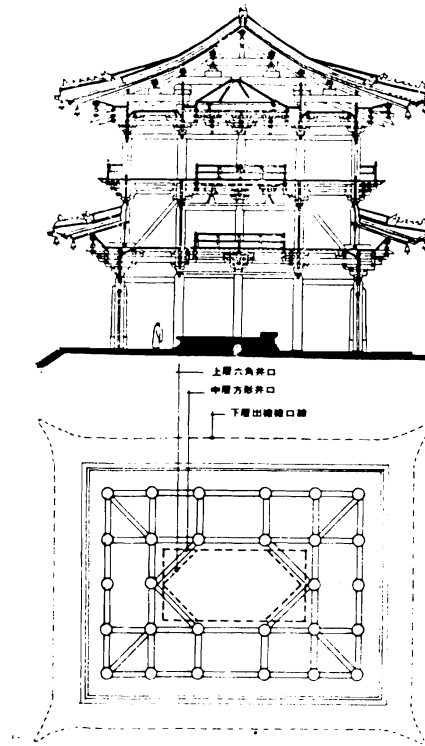


Plan of the Hsieh Chu Yuan  
in the Summer Palace,  
Beijing, China.



### C. INTERMEDIATE SPACE

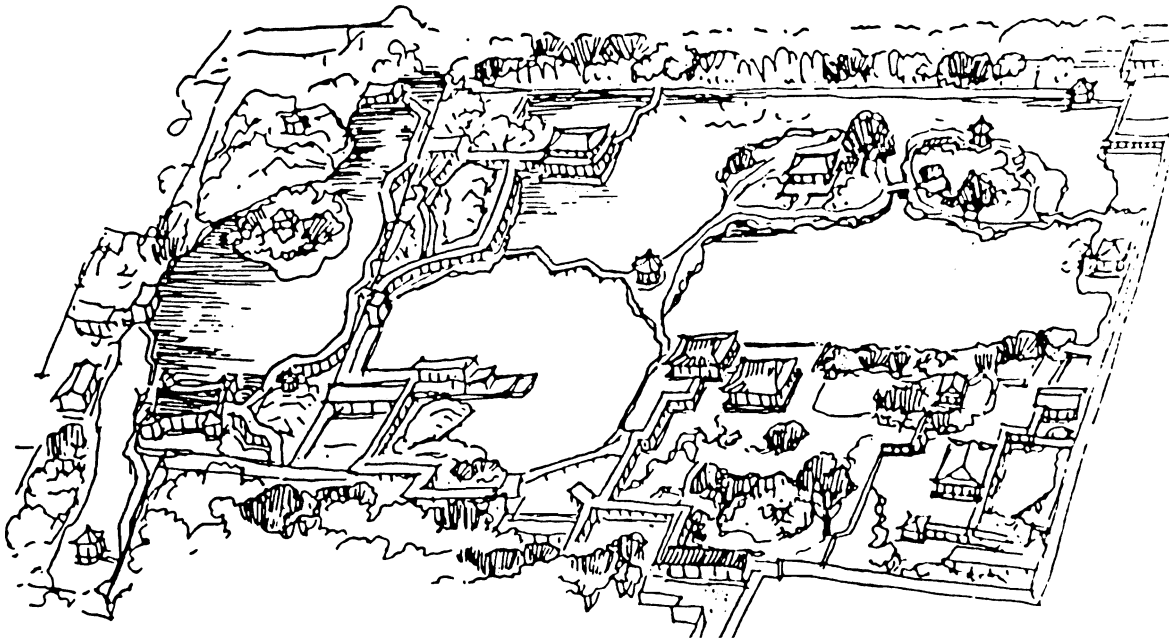
Egyptian architecture is the architecture of stone, and it is thus very physical, substantial, and three-dimensional. Therefore, its space is like a solid mass with openings made in it. Buildings are characterized by distinct shading, heavy forms, and rough textures. Space in Chinese architecture, from palace to residence, is created out of wood materials, and consequently does not convey an impression of physical mass like Egyptian architecture. Rather, like a stage set, each vertical side of a structure has its own viewpoint which provides spatial extension. The Chinese concept of space reaches out to embrace nature and to achieve unity and harmony with it. More significantly, there is always a conscious effort to allow inner and outer space to interrelate. The spaces under the eaves, the veranda, corridors, latticework dividers, and other such details of a building are all examples of intermediary spaces.



Section and plan of a traditional building.

#### D. CHINESE GARDEN

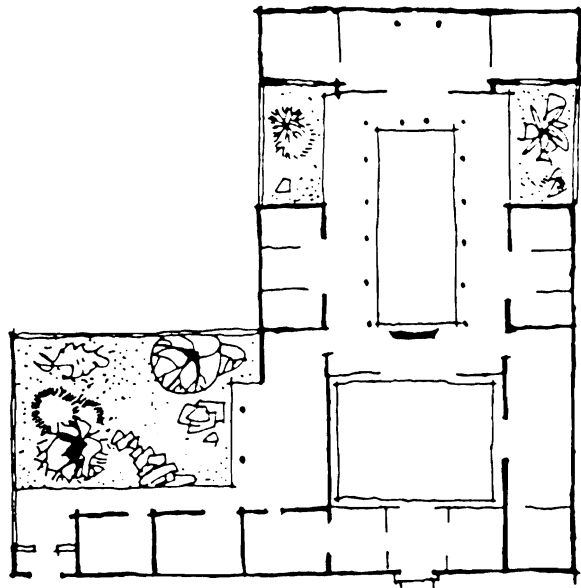
Chinese gardens have a long history of development, and display a distinctive character. With buildings, landscaping, and different kinds of flowers and trees, the gardens become integrated works of art that are lyrical and picturesque. From this image of wild nature, principles are derived that mold the style of the garden - the straightness, seeing to the end of anything, the modelling of levels, the placing of rocks, and the constant introduction of water. The garden is viewed as a succession of incidents. It recreates the experience of wandering or rambling in a vaster landscape, a result of the influence of Taoism which is characterized by irregular and curvilinear forms.



View looking down on the Chinese garden at Chi Chang Yuan, Wusih, China.

## E. THE PARTS AND WHOLE

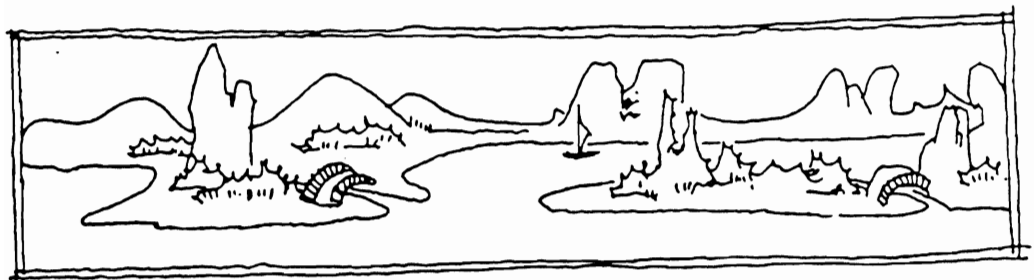
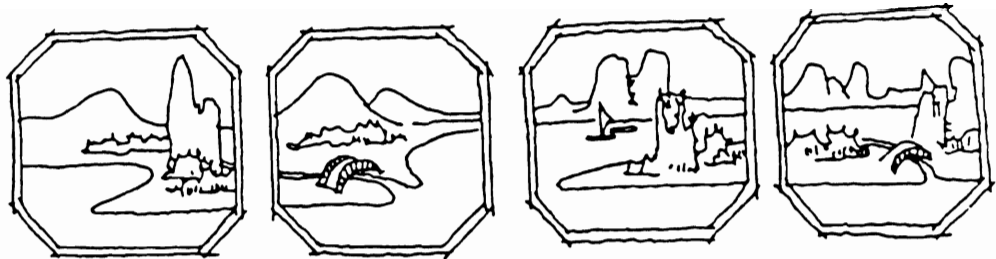
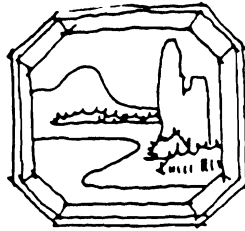
Individual spaces may not be equal within a whole, but flow and develop from the context of an ordered unity. The exterior envelope articulates simplicity for an interior that reflects the diversity and complexity of human existence. Frequently, the result forms an asymmetric and dynamic shape.



Plan of a traditional garden house in the south of China, located in an old residential district of the city.

## F. TIME AND SPACE

Time is ever changing, and unfolds along a linear axis. Space is, by the nature of its temporal existence, a constantly changing reality. The judicious organization of plan, form, volume, and decorative members as well as the programming of patterns constructed by light and color, elicit a temporalized space which actually "moves". Space, in this situation, simulates the beat of a pulse synchronized within a human body.



When the factors of time and space are considered, they become part of a continuous dynamic picture.

### III. FACTS

#### A. EXHIBITION AREA

1. Space Requirements: A typical exhibition area totals approximately 9000 square feet of space, which comfortably accommodates the display of about 100 art objects and 300 people.
2. Circulation: Visitors must be able to circulate in and through the space easily, along a direct viewing path. Access to upper levels should be provided through stairs or elevators. At least two exits should be provided on opposite sides of the overall space.
3. Display: Wall panels should offer flexibility in size and placement. Pedestals should be provided for three-dimensional objects, and appropriately placed for viewing.
4. Lighting: A variety of lighting systems should be incorporated into the overall design, and include natural light, incandescent lighting ( track lights, wall washers, and eyeball spots ), and fluorescent lighting.
5. Maintenance: Materials and finishes should be selected for ease of maintenance. Consideration should be given to the use of linen fabric on wall panels, level loop carpeting on floors, leather /vinyl upholstery on benches, anodized steel trim on all window frames, and glazed, energy efficient glass for exterior windows.

## B. GIFT SHOP

1. Space Requirements: A typical small gift shop should total approximately 600 square feet of space which comfortably accommodates a display of various gifts and about 30 people.
2. Circulation: Circulation is based on a knowledge of merchandising aimed at arousing and maintaining customer interest. The location of merchandise must be carefully coordinated with customer paths of travel (aisles) and service areas, such as cashier, wrapping, and information counters. Storage should be located close to cashier and wrapping counters.
3. Display: Merchandise is grouped into three major categories that determine department and subdepartment arrangements.
  - a. Impulse merchandise consists of expensive luxury items placed in obvious spots in a gift shop.
  - b. Convenience items are not always high profit, but encourage customers to return to buy more. These are placed near the impulse items.
  - c. Demand items are staple merchandise for which customers frequently return. These items are placed in the center of islands or counters and along side walls.
4. Lighting: A variety of lighting systems should be incorporated into the overall design, and they should include natural light. Track lighting should focus on display areas, highlight merchandise, and provide general lighting for aisles.
5. Furnishings: Typical furnishings include adjustable display shelving, glass showcases, and window display.

### C. RESTAURANT

1. Space Requirements: A typical restaurant should be designed with a minimum of 18 square feet per person. Restaurant space for 80 people should be estimated at 1500 -- 2000 square feet of space, and the kitchen and preparation area should be about half this amount, with an ancillary storage area of one and one half times the kitchen area.
2. Circulation: A foyer space should be established at the entry to set the mood for the restaurant. It is important to provide a host station near the entrance as well as a waiting area. A clear definition of seating areas is needed to separate them from circulation aisles, service stations, and host areas. Each table should have some privacy from other tables.
3. Lighting: Restaurant should be illuminated by a variety of lighting systems, and as well as natural light.
4. Safety: At least two exits on opposite sides of this area should be provided.

#### D. OFFICE

1. Space Requirements: A typical office for one person should be designed with a minimum of 150 square feet of space. Office for 12 people should be estimated at 1800 – 2200 square feet of space, depending on functional requirements. Office space for 12 people should total approximately 2000 square feet.
2. Circulation: Entry to the office area should be provided through locked doors with direct access to a waiting area and reception staff. Visitors should then be guided to appropriate executive offices.
3. Lighting: Consideration should be given to a variety of lighting systems. The office areas may be illuminated by the use of downlights, task lights, and natural light. Suspended non-combustion ceiling systems with lay-in panels and a metal suspension grid are desirable.
4. HVAC Systems: Environmental comfort for office users is critical. It may be achieved by controlling fresh air, air movement, air filtering, humidity, and internal/external thermal loads.



## E. GUEST HOUSE FACILITY

1. Space Requirements: One room of a typical guest house facility should be designed with a minimum of 460 square feet of space. A guest house facility for 18 rooms should be estimated at 9000 square feet.
2. Circulation: Guests should come through the main entry, with direct circulation to the reception and waiting areas. Access to upper levels should be provided through stairs or elevators.
3. Lighting: Guest rooms should be illuminated by table lamps, wall fixtures, and natural light.
4. Furnishings: Furnishings should include a double bed, a lounge area, a dressing table, and work area, with chairs in each room.
5. Maintenance: Guest rooms require daily cleaning of all carpet, bath, and bed areas, with annual replacement of wall-covering and furniture covering.

#### IV. NEEDS

##### A. EXHIBITION AREA

1. To display Chinese objects d'art; moveable walls and pedestals; hanging space; and natural light.
2. Exhibition total square feet / 8000
3. Maximum number of people / 150

##### B. GIFT SHOP

Gift shop total square feet / 2500

##### C. RESTAURANT

1. To serve visitors to the the center.
2. Maximum number of guests / 100
3. Restaurant total square feet / 3899
4. Kitchen total square feet / 868
5. Ancillary storage total square feet / 1305

##### D. EXECUTIVE OFFICE

1. To coordinate and administer all activities that take place within the building. Personnel include a President, a Guest House Facility Manager, a Restaurant Director, an Exhibition coordinator, a Business/Facilities manager, and a secretarial staff.
2. Total number of people / 12
3. Approximately 200 square feet of space should be allocated per person. Additional space should be provided for public circulation and storage areas.

#### E. GUEST HOUSE FACILITY

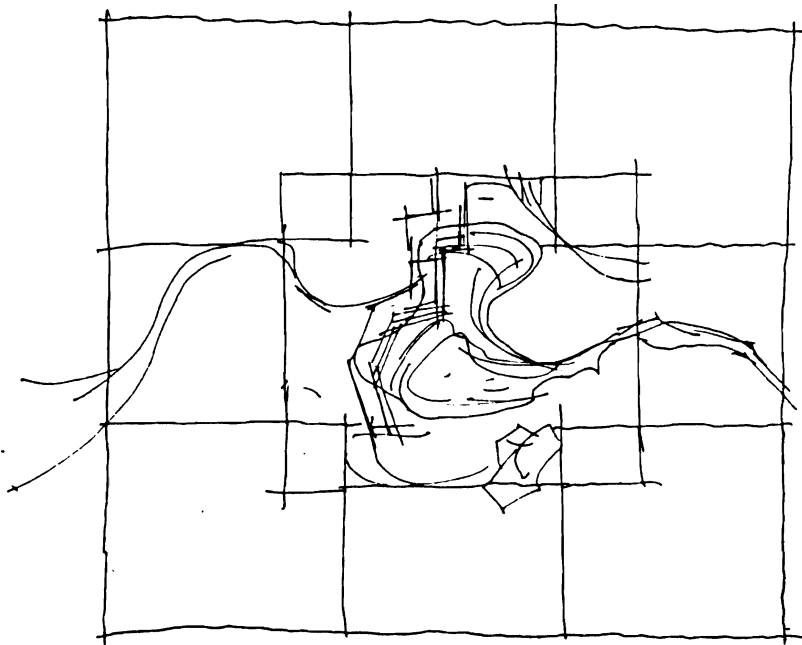
1. Guest House Facility total square feet / 10,800
2. Lobby area square feet / 1080
3. Number of guest rooms / 18
4. Gross guest room area square feet / 450

#### F. GARDEN AREA

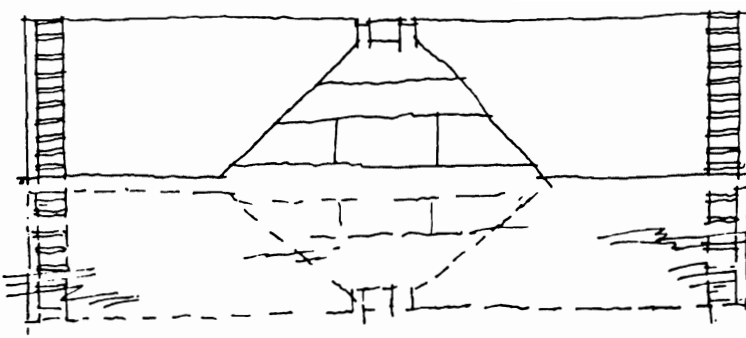
1. Garden area total square feet / 4700
2. Pond square feet / 2350
3. Two small bridges, covered walkway surrounds pond.

## V. DESIGN CONCEPTS

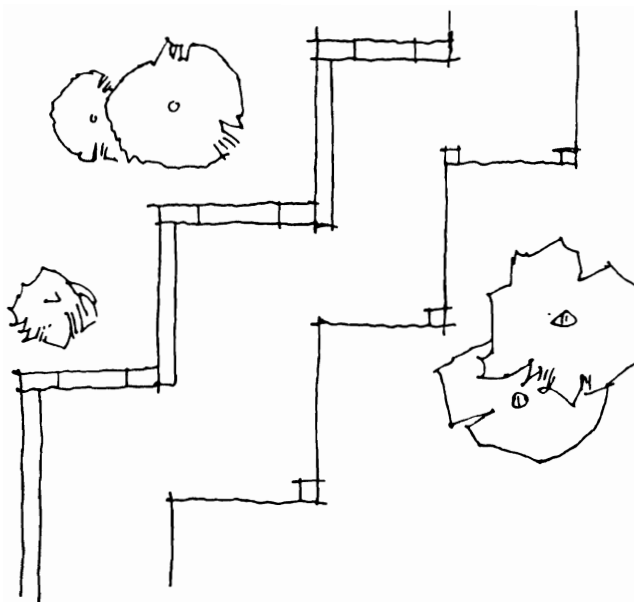
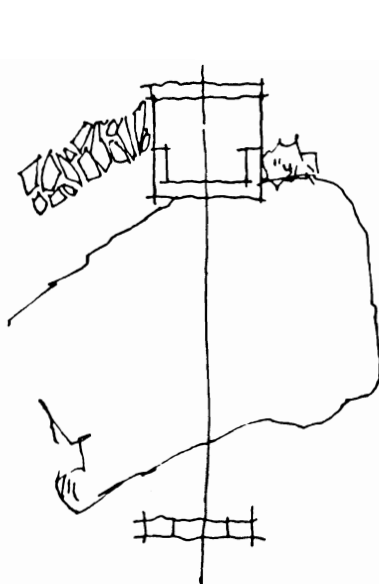
The plan of the Chinese Culture center is composed of symmetrical and asymmetrical balance. The asymmetrical suggests diversity of human activity inside, and reflects characteristics of Taoism. the elements of symmetrical urban order are the direct influence of Confucianism.



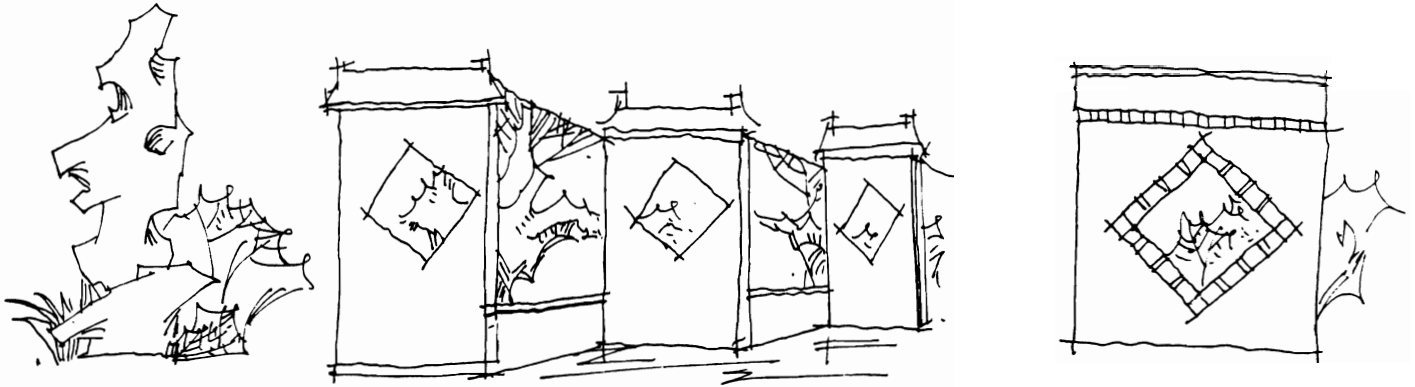
The use of water as a reflecting surface allows the viewer either a solid or void view.



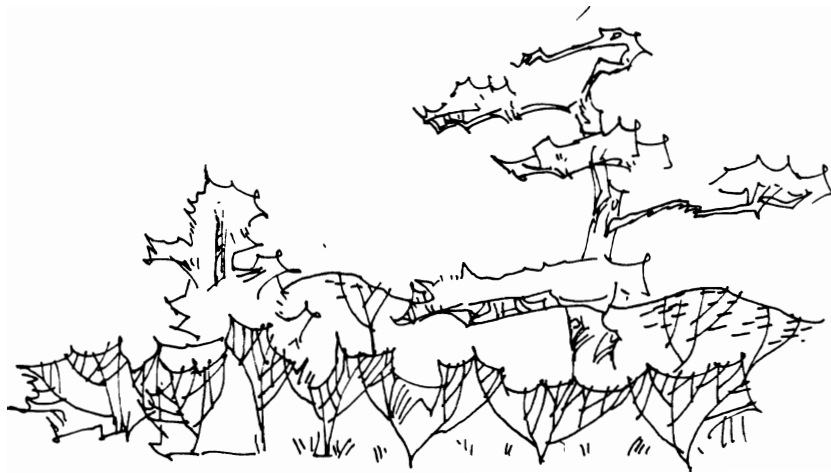
Dimensions are relative, but not absolute. Without "large" there is no "small", and vice versa. The more sparsely a garden is laid out, the more spacious it feels and the more changes within. This creates a sense of boundless space within a limited area.



A wall, a window, or a rock is used to evoke contemplation to interplay void with solid, implicit with explicit, so that there are layers of vision.



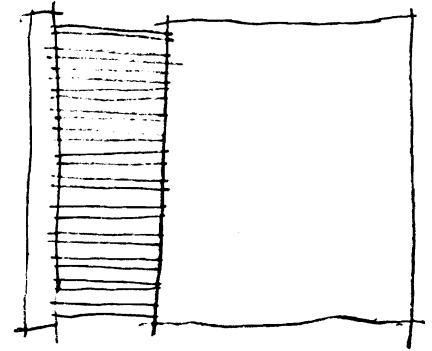
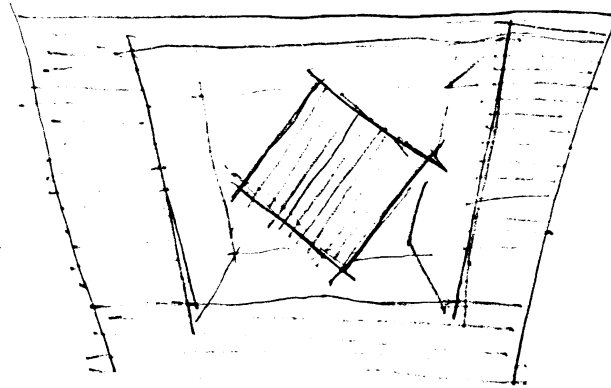
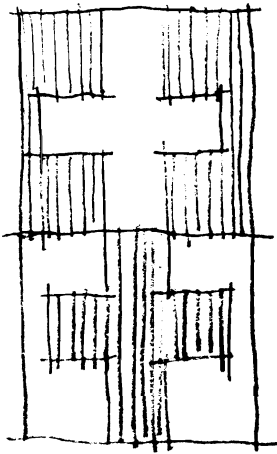
Trees are planted not only for their foliage, but also for their aesthetic appeal.



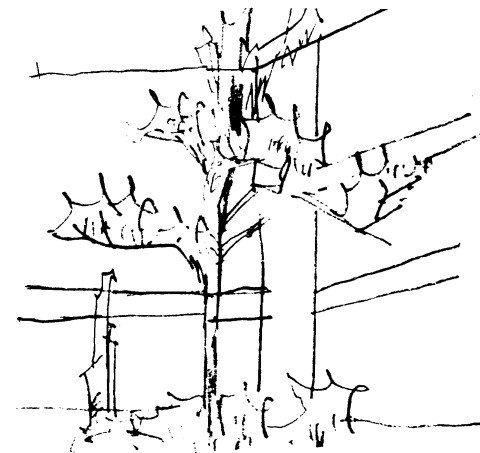
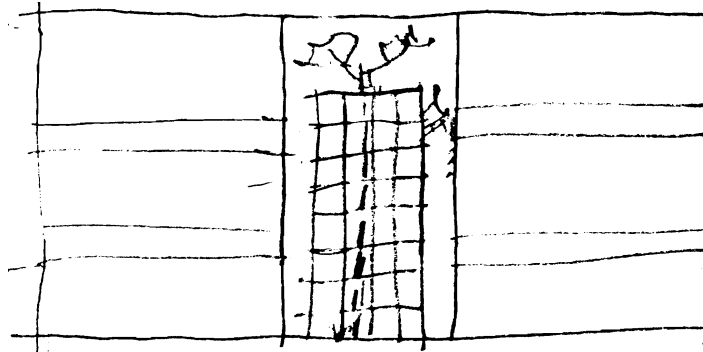
“ In order to remain intact, be dented.

In order to keep straight, be bent.

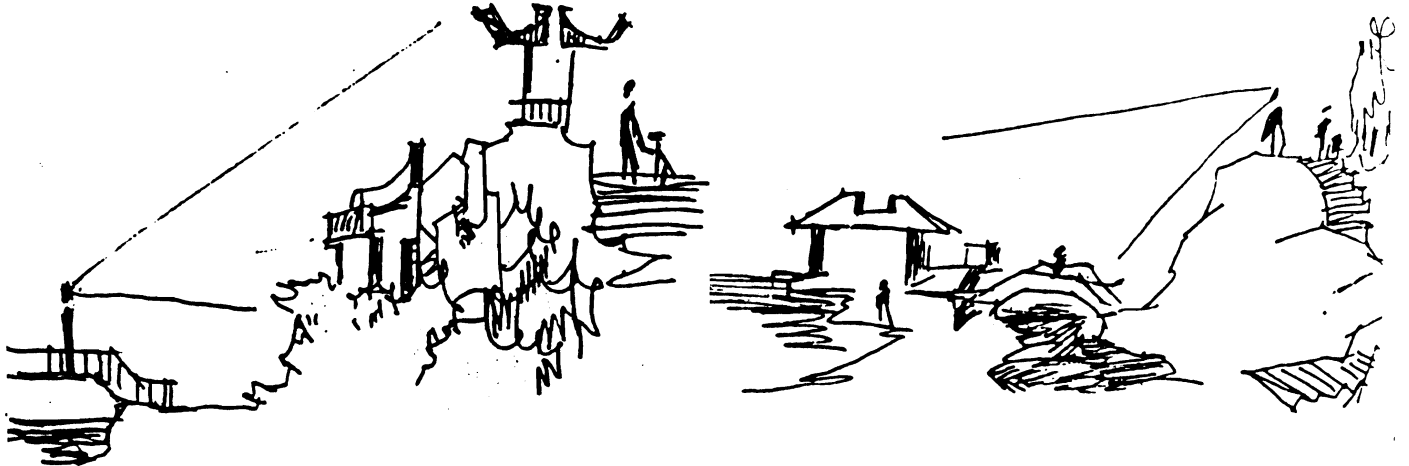
In order to be filled, be hollowed. ” In terms of design,  
the Ying/Yang principle can be simply interpreted as the  
rule of contrasts.



Verticality is inherent in nature through the forms of  
trees, rocks, and mountains. Vertical movement breaks  
the monotony of horizontality.



There are two types of garden scenery: one that offers panoramic vistas and the other that provides for viewing at close range.



Design is derived from music.





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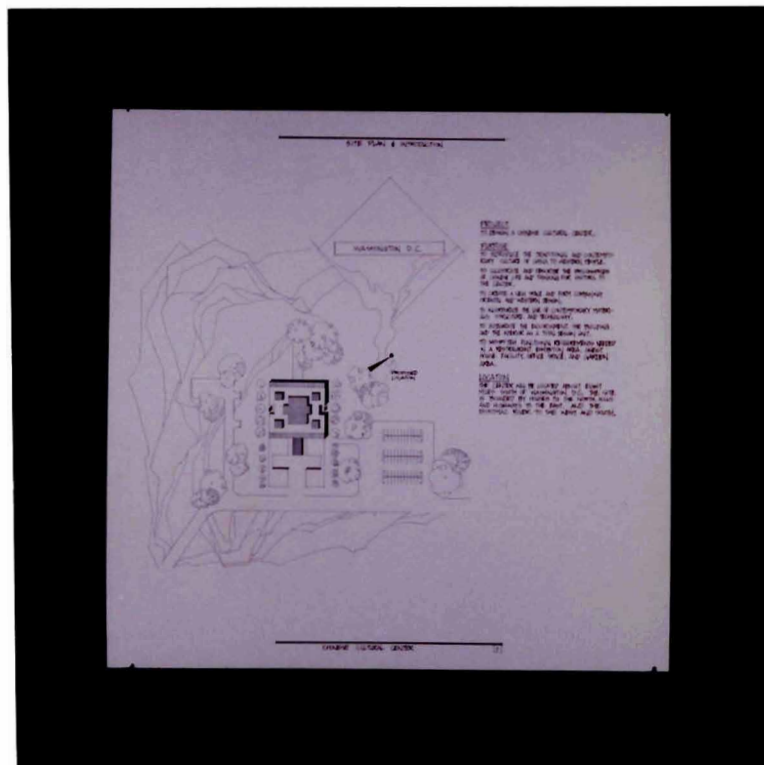
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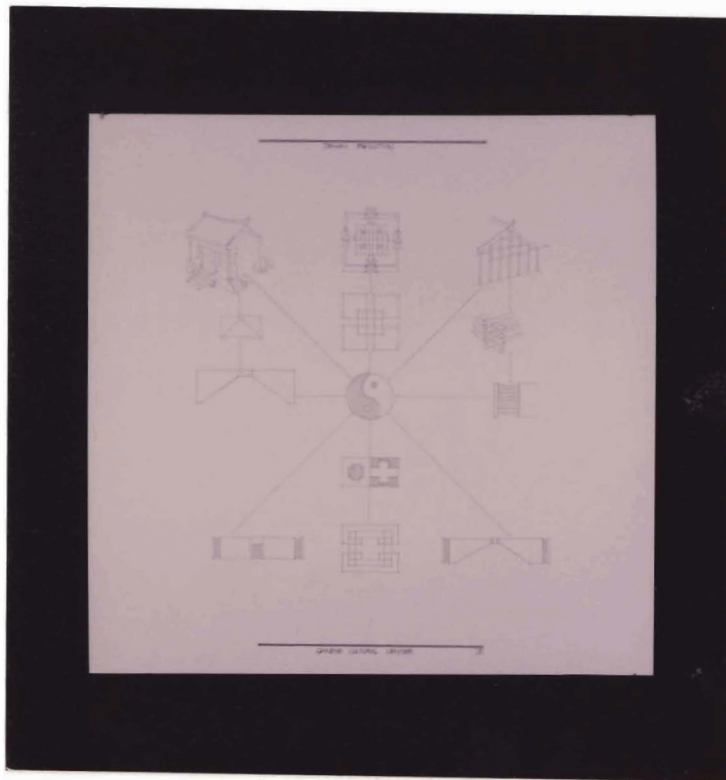
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Knoll, Steelcase.

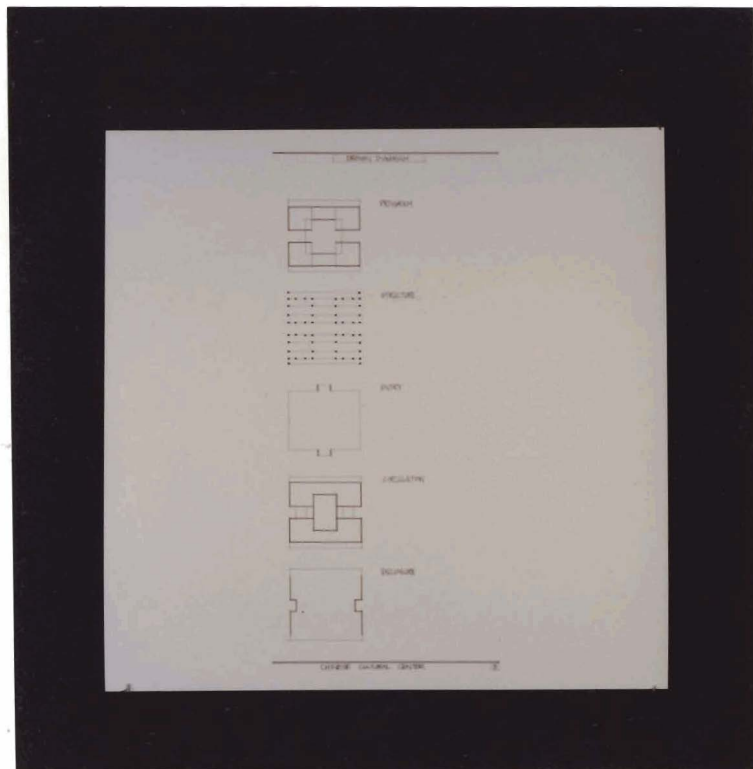
## VII. DESIGN ILLUSTRATIONS



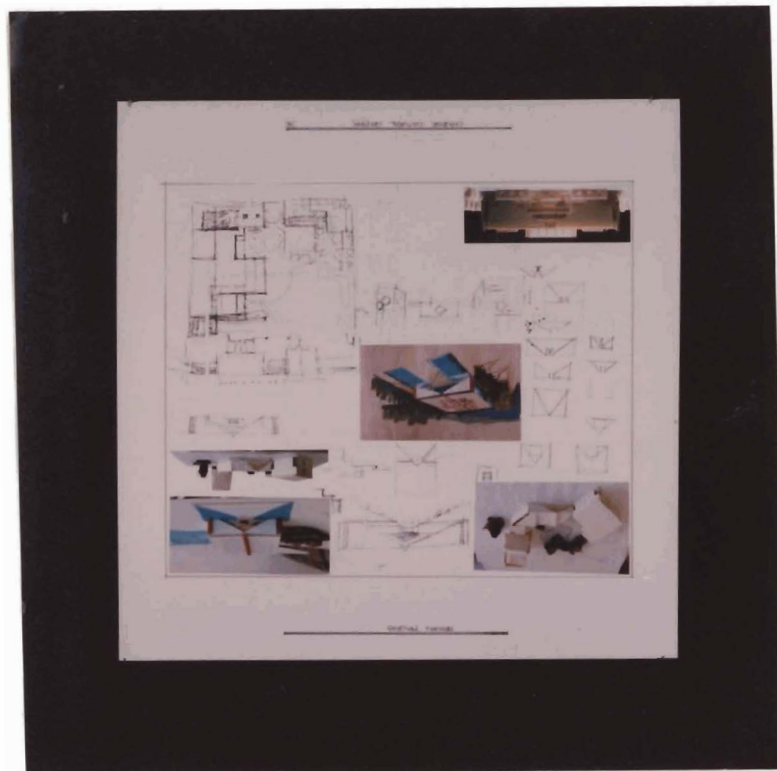
### 1. Site Plan & Introduction



## 2. Design Evolution



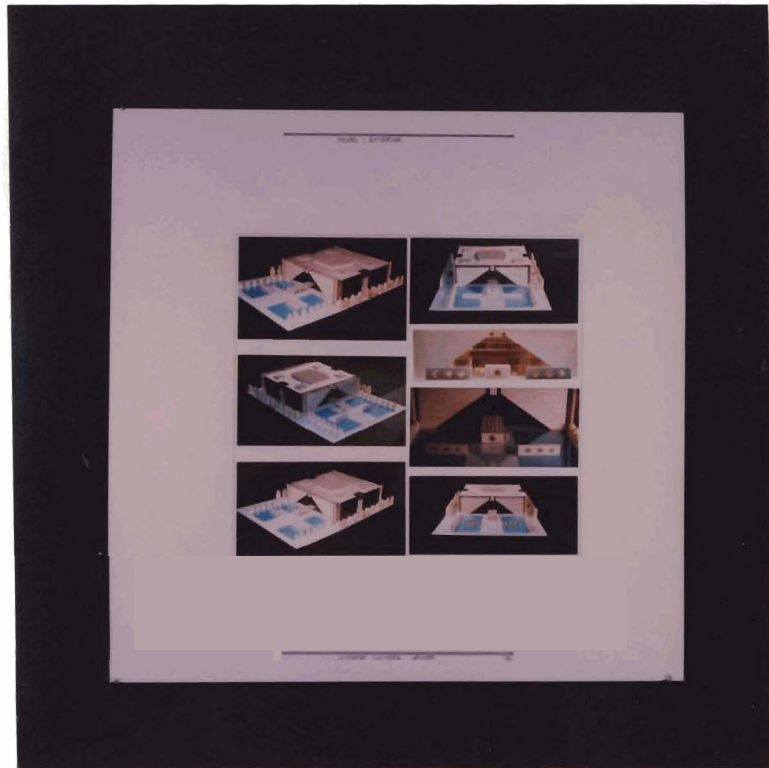
### 3. Design Diagrams



#### 4. Design Process



5. Perspective: Exterior

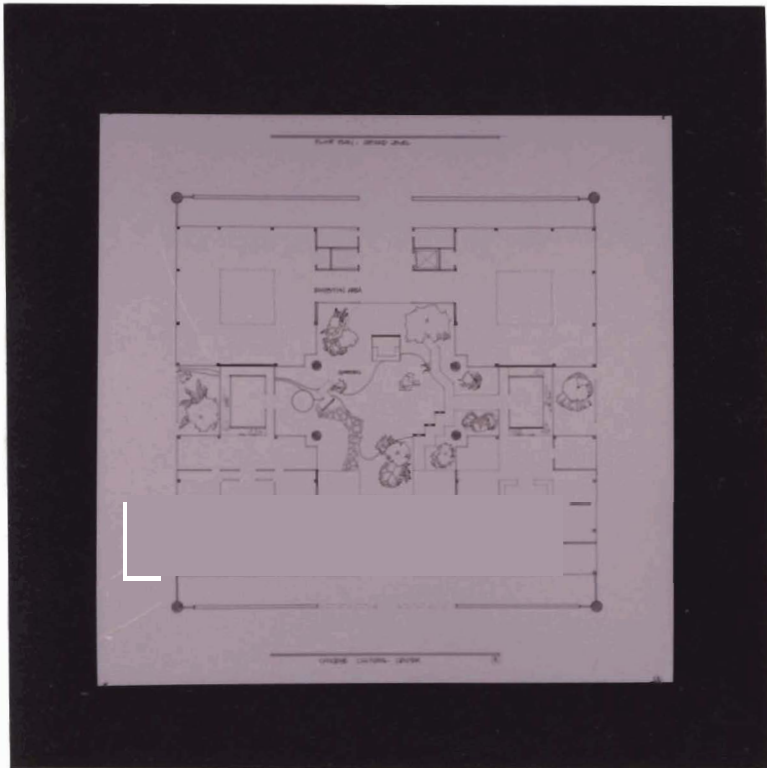


6. Model: Exterior

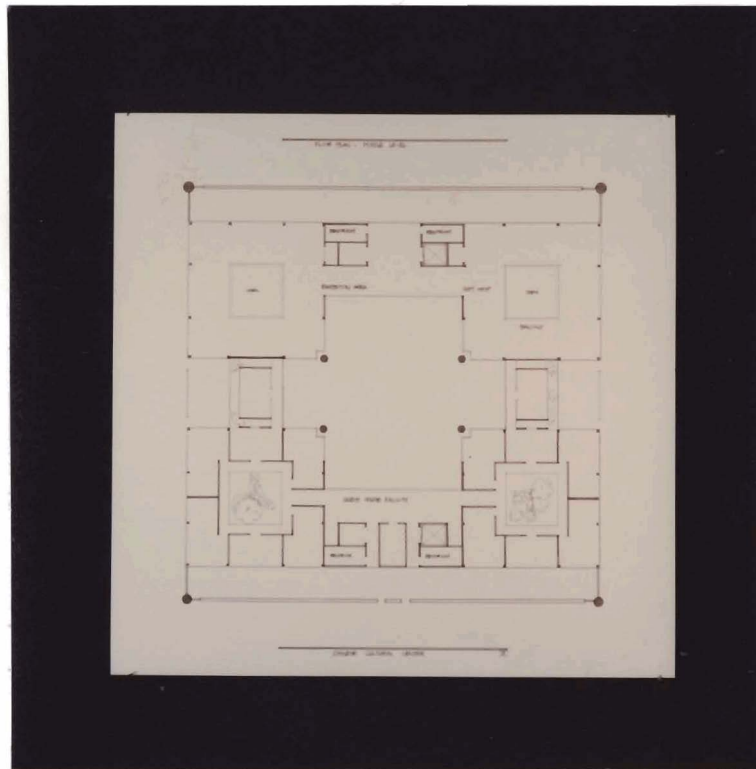




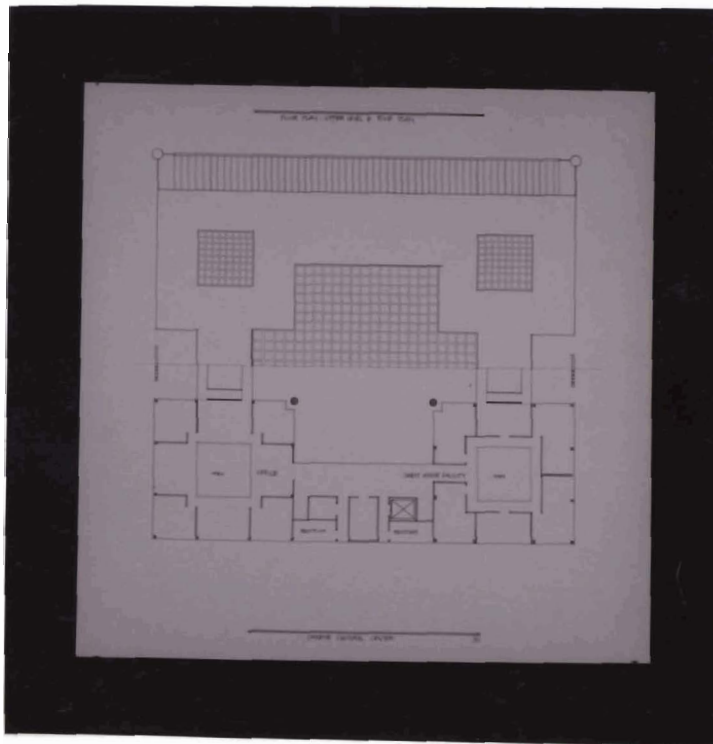
7, Model: Interior



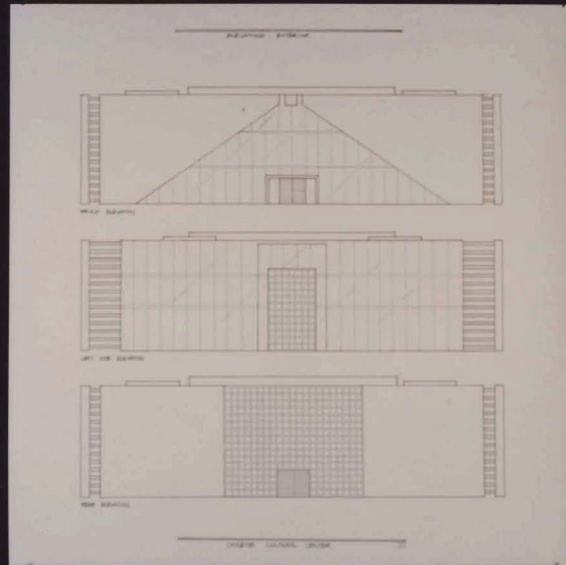
8. Floor Plan: Ground Level



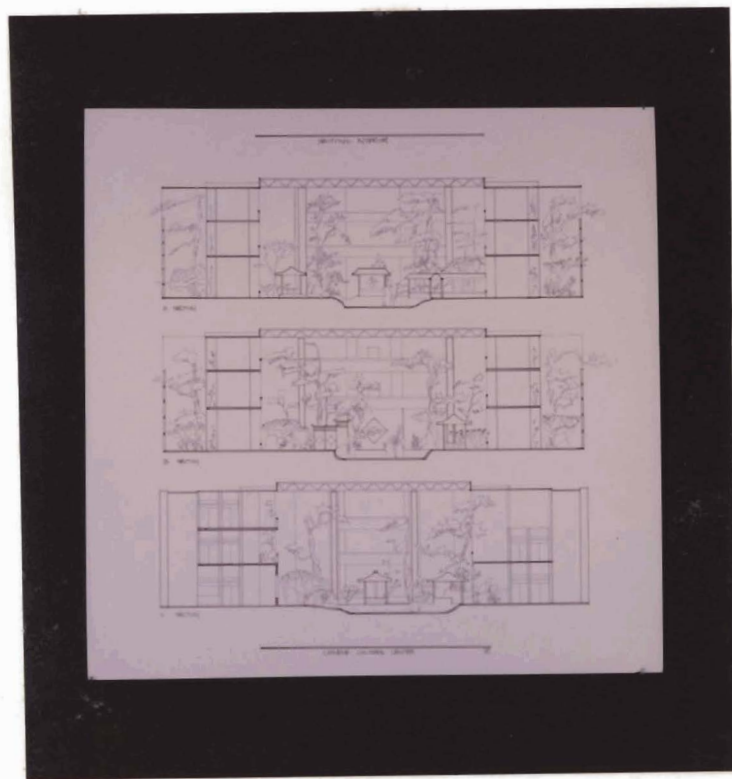
9. Floor Plan: Middle Level



10. Floor Plan: Upper Level & Roof Plan



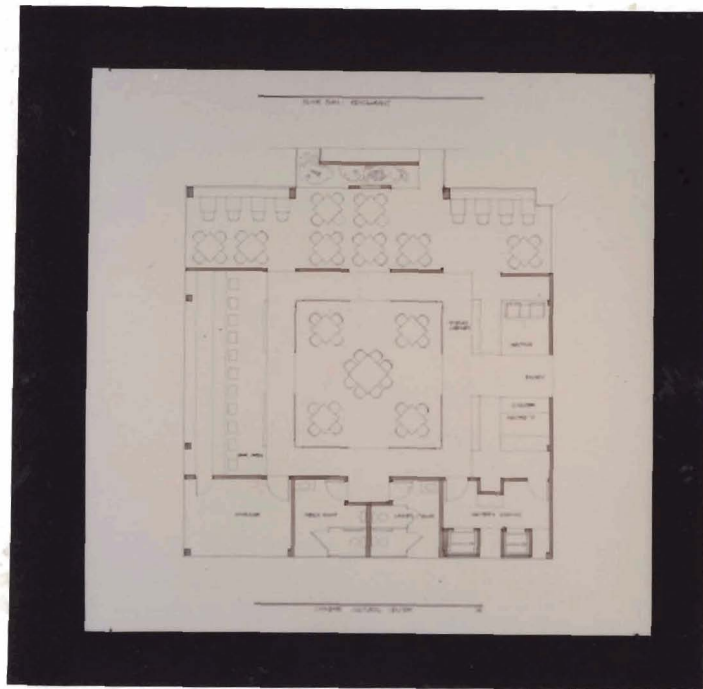
11. Elevations: Exterior



12. Sections: Interior

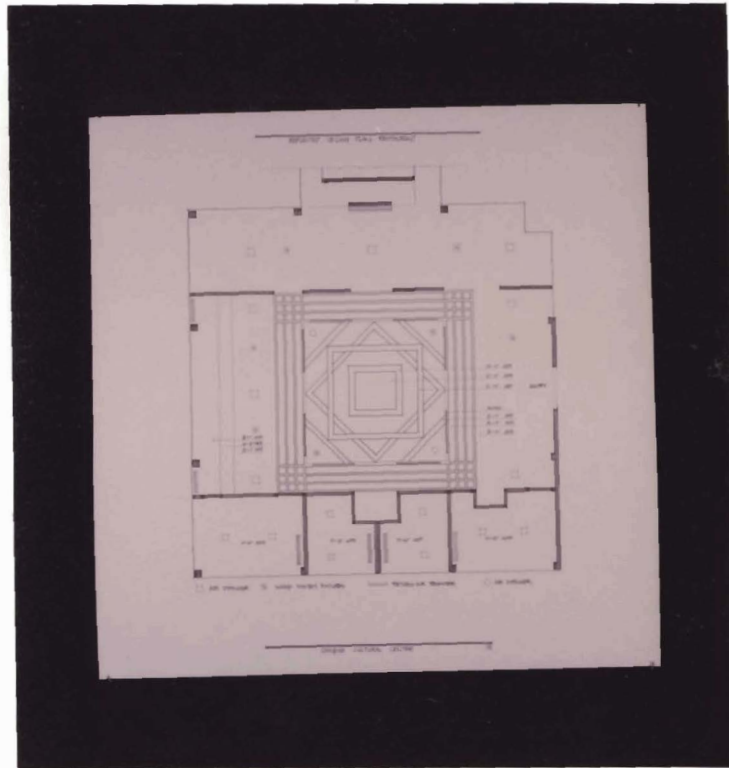


13. Perspective: Lobby

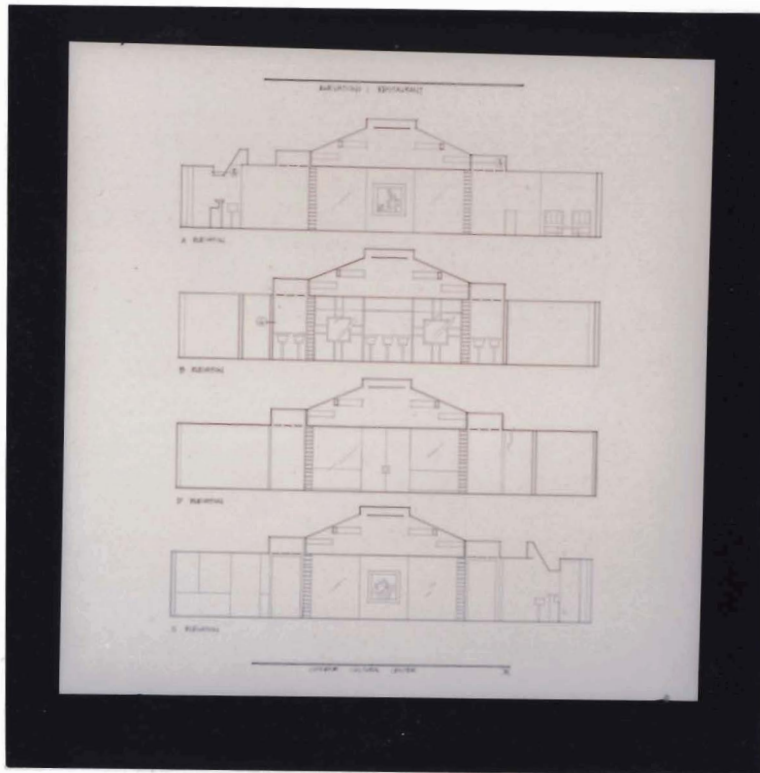


14. Floor Plan: Restaurant Area

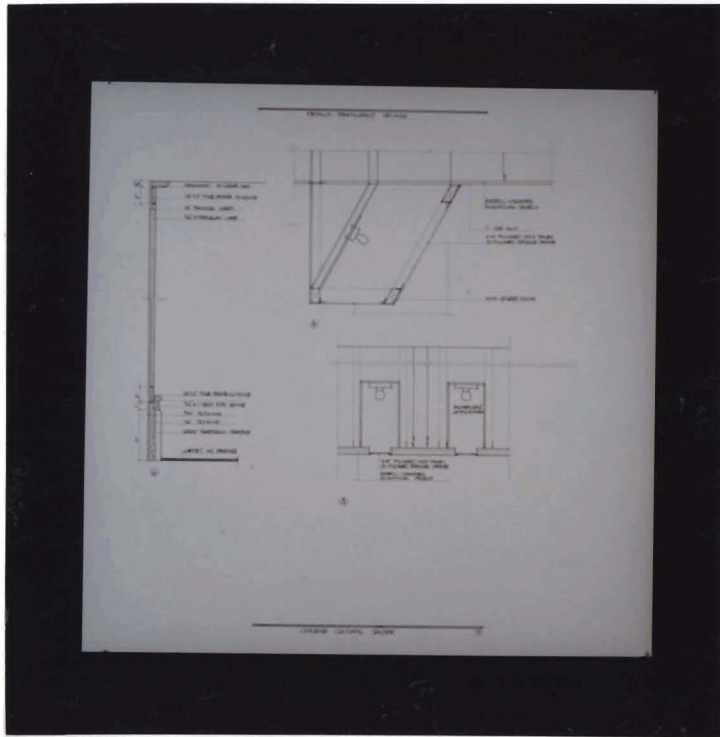




15. Reflected Ceiling Plan: Restaurant Area



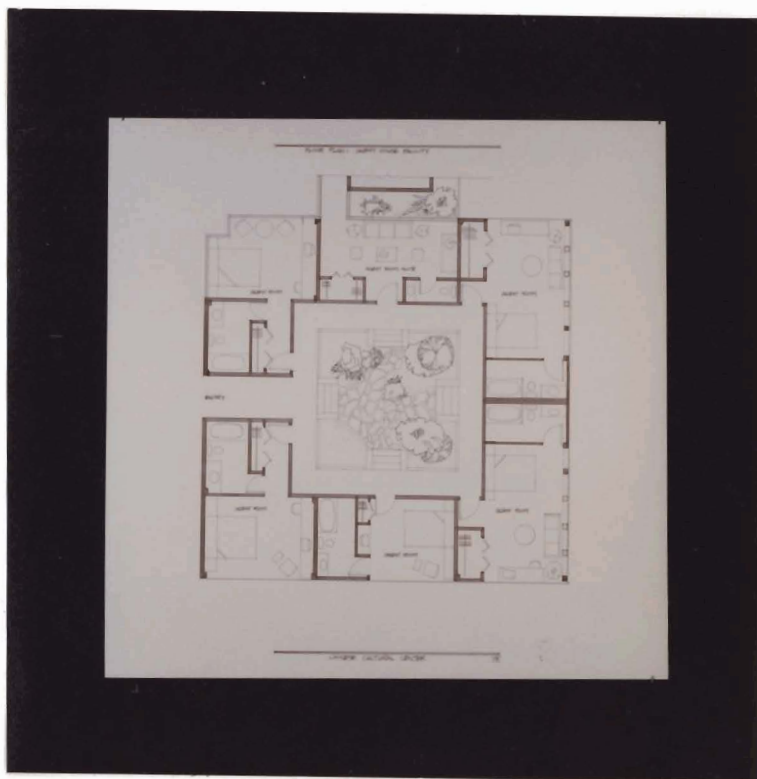
16. Elevations: Restaurant Area



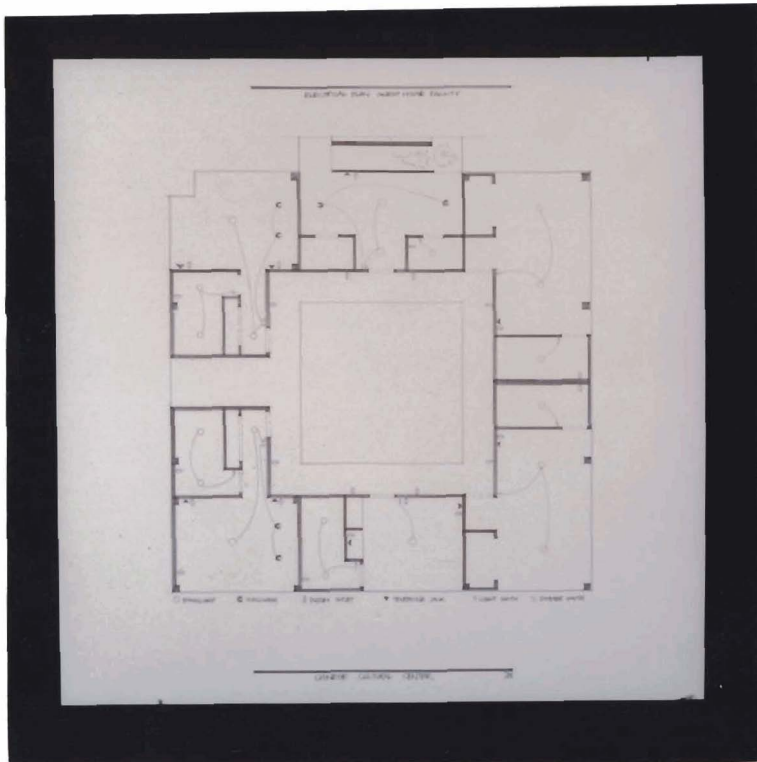
17. Details: Ceiling of Restaurant Area



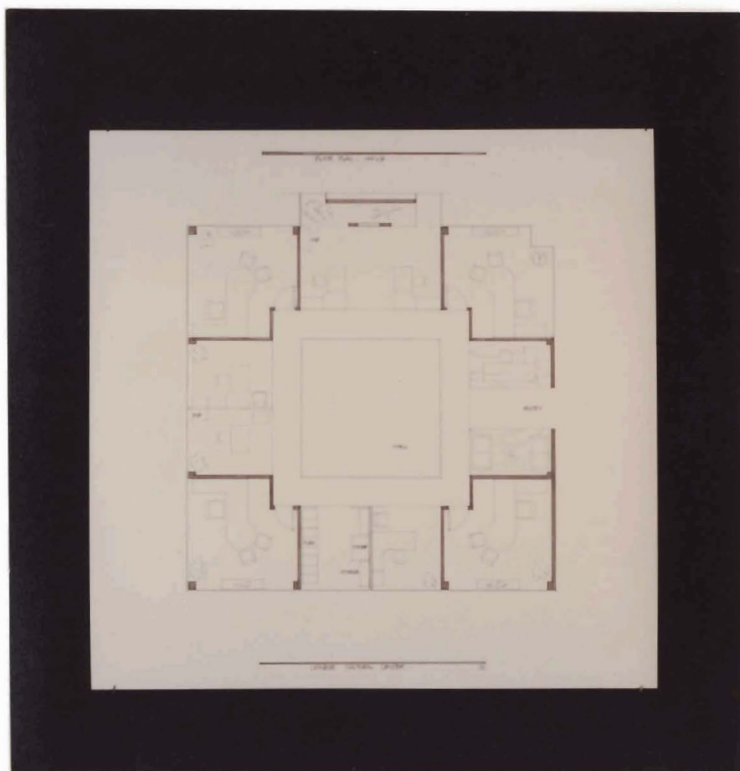
18. Perspective: Restaurant Area



19. Floor Plan: Guest House Facility



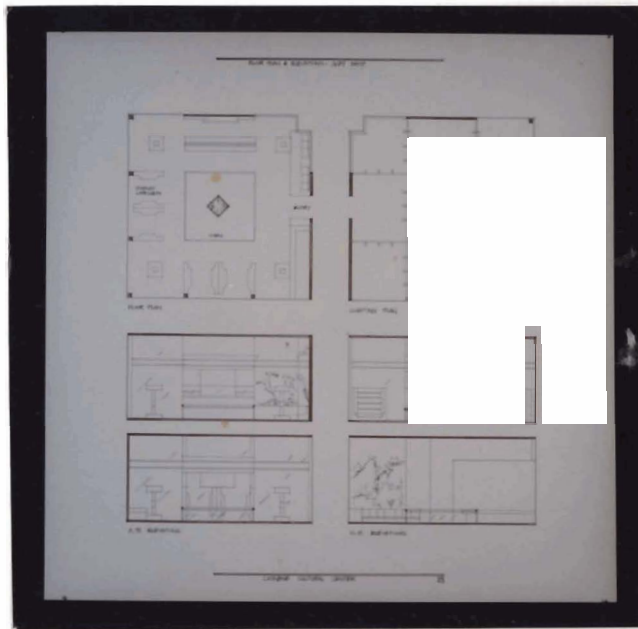
20. Electrical Plan: Guest House Facility



21. Floor Plan: Office







23. Floor Plan & Elevations: Gift Shop



24. Sketchs: Exhibition Area

## SLIDE CODE

1. Site Plan & Introduction
2. Design Evolution
3. Design Diagram
4. Design Process
5. Perspective: Exterior
6. Model: Exterior
7. Model: Interior
8. Floor Plan: Ground Level
9. Floor Plan: Middle Level
10. Floor Plan: Upper Level & Roof Plan
11. Elevations: Exterior
12. Sections: Interior
13. Perspective: Lobby
14. Floor Plan: Restaurant Area
15. Reflected Ceiling Plan: Restaurant Area

16. Elevations: Restaurant Area
17. Details: Ceiling of Restaurant Area
18. Perspective: Restaurant Area
19. Floor Plan: Guest House Facility
20. Electrical Plan: Guest House Facility
21. Floor Plan: Office
22. Sample Board: Office Area
23. Floor Plan & Elevations: Gift Shop
24. Sketches: Exhibition Area