

ABSTRACT

Title of Document: ADAPTING AN IMAGE:
TRANSFORMING URBAN BUILT HERITAGE TO
[RE]CLAIM + [RE]PRESENT AN INHERITED
CULTURAL IDENTITY

Georgina Nicole Pinnock, Master of Architecture, 2012

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Perpetuated throughout the Caribbean diaspora as street parades and decadent festivities, Caribbean Carnival is an established social ritual that permits revelers to masquerade in extravagant costumes that simultaneously project an assumed character and protect the individual's identity. The wide variety of costumes predominately featured provide such a rich collection of forms and ideas suitable for the architectural exploration of contrasts – the revealed vs. the concealed, the old vs. new – that this thesis poses the question: can the analysis and application of the essential characteristics of Caribbean Carnival costume design be a reasonable approach for the architectural integration of a new cultural program into an established urban fabric? By providing infrastructure for Caribbean nationals active in their shared culture and facilitating continued connections with the wider community, this proposal seeks to innovatively transform a parcel of Washington, DC's built heritage to reclaim and represent an inherited Caribbean identity.

ADAPTING AN IMAGE:
TRANSFORMING URBAN BUILT HERITAGE
TO [RE]CLAIM + [RE]PRESENT AN INHERITED CULTURAL IDENTITY

by

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Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Raison D'être

First documented as the “West Indies” by Christopher Columbus during his voyages to the New World in the early 16th century, the Caribbean is an archipelago of tropical islands embracing the Caribbean Sea, framed by the North, Central and South American continents, and the Atlantic Ocean to the east. Although plagued by wars, colonialization, slavery and disease, a cohesive Caribbean culture began to arise at the brink of emancipation in the mid-19th century, in particular an annual festival of African customs and celebration of newfound freedom that was reminiscent of, yet distinct from, European Carnivals. The subsequent independence of individual colonies, the advent of global transportation options, and access to education and economic opportunities in foreign lands, spurred a mass exodus of Caribbean people towards large urban centers in North America and Europe in the early 20th century. They carried the newly evolved Caribbean-style Carnival with them, and have continued in this tradition to this day.

The Caribbean population has grown in large numbers throughout the diaspora. In the United States, in a similar fashion to other minority groups, have made homes amidst the urban fabric of large cities such as Boston, New York, Atlanta, and Washington, DC. According to the 2010 US Census, approximately 2.5 million (0.8%) people claimed West Indian - a widely accepted and alternate title for people from the Caribbean - ethnicity, with the largest reported numbers coming from Jamaica, Haiti, Trinidad & Tobago and Guyana, and a sizable number claiming “West Indian” alone as their heritage¹. In relatable ratios,

- 1 in every 4 Latino-Americans, and
- 1 in every 15 Black Americans, and

¹ Selected Social Characteristics in the United States < <http://factfinder.census.gov/> >

- 1 in every 31 people living in the US is from the Caribbean, or of Caribbean descent (if Hispanics are to be excluded from this comparison, the ratio is 1 in every 125 people).

Washington DC as the seat of the nation, is symbolic of democracy, unity, a functioning conglomerate, accepting of all its parts in order for the whole to function. Carnival, to Caribbean nationals, is a celebrated social tool of unity and togetherness. With just under 62,000 Caribbean people and their descendants now residing in Washington, DC², it is appropriate to consider a platform to honor, remember and celebrate the many aspects of this centuries-old culture. Although these numbers may not impress a person unfamiliar with the popularity and draw of Caribbean culture, it must be noted that the annual street parade and festival, known as DC Caribbean Carnival, attracted close to 3,000 costumed revelers and well over 300,000 patrons, in June 2009³.

Architecture and the built environment have been used to express ideas of personal, social and cultural identity for centuries. In recent years, practitioners have moved beyond the idea of merely signifying value, status and belonging, to express more complex and provocative issues surrounding notions of identity. In light of growing popular interest towards sustainability, utilizing a local cultural and built heritage simultaneously can be mutually beneficial, as opposed to looking for new resources for inspiration or opportunities. The foundations of Caribbean Carnival is rooted in an adaptive culture, making the most of what's at hand, to become a highly regarded and celebrated tradition. By identifying the cultural universal themes of Caribbean Carnival, it is proposed that a suitable architectural solution can be designed based on these elements to preserve and portray the rich history of the local Caribbean population,

² Selected Social Characteristics in the United States < <http://factfinder.census.gov/> >

³ Cultural Tourism DC ,“DC Caribbean Carnival” <<http://www.culturaltourismdc.org/things-to-see/attractions/dc-caribbean-carnival-inc>>

within the parameters of the 100-year-old built fabric of a Washington DC neighborhood also in search of a viable link between disparate nodes and ideas.

Cultural Identity

Culture is an assortment of shared attitudes, behaviors and beliefs that are characteristic of a community that are continuously evolving through interactions between people; "cultivation of individuals through the agency of external forms which have been objectified in the course of history" according to Georg Simmel.⁴ Increased globalization, integrated economies, and immediate accessibility encourage cultural assimilation, and as a result have deterred the retention of human and built cultures. However, culture, as a tangible and intangible resource for its people, will continue to be a source of pride and meaning for its people, a tool for creating communities. Through the means of transmitting culture – music, dance, cuisine, visual art, literature and film – sensual stimulations of the intellect will foster continued cultural preservation.

Culture as an architectural design generator stems from the premise of cultural/built heritage preservation as essential for continued transmission of a built and personal identity, even if through a mediator, like clothing – allowing as necessary for temporary transformations and seasonal fluctuations.

Caribbean Carnival

A fusion of invented and inherited traditions, Caribbean Carnival is a celebration and display of a collective culture; a ritualistic renewal of the city and reclamation of the streets by its people. The temporary transformation of the public realm continually

⁴ reference here

presents challenges to the “containment” of this annual re-invention of the community, and the individual, towards a collective identity.

Carnival has been a proven social instrument for the transmission of Caribbean culture within the region, and throughout the global diaspora. With the primary objective of remembering and sharing a uniquely communal history, the primary element - the masquerade, or “Mas” – has evolved into a colossal parade of vibrant color, a moving optical illusion of a created world of fantasy, complete with pulsating rhythms, decadent food and unusual arts & craft. The spectacle encourages extremes, particularly pushing the envelope of what can be considered public and private.

From a variety of sources, due to over four centuries of colonialization and trans-continental slavery, each island’s celebration possesses a unique interpretation of the individual and the community. Regional nuances exist, but common themes run throughout the Caribbean Carnival tradition. While Carnival did not begin in the region, the essential elements that are universal are present – the masses of people freely coming together as revelers and spectators, the energetic music commanding dancing and merriment, as well as the vibrantly colored and creatively assembled costumes – but what makes Caribbean Carnival different is the climatic build-up of the parade towards the stage. On the stage, these elements are intensely concentrated into a brief, energetic show of groups in order for judges to determine which group best embodied the spirit of Carnival. In many cities, there is a substantial monetary prize and yearlong bragging rights awarded to the leaders of the chosen group.

European traditions, derived from the pre-Lenten Italianate festival *Carnevale*, translated as *farewell to flesh*, is evident in “pretty mas” – the planned portrayal of cultural icons, natural forms, and parodies for the enjoyment of the reveler and spectator alike, often referred to as the beads, bikinis & feathers spectacle. West African traditions

are probably the most apparent in the heavy beats of the pulsating music, and the devilish, mischievous characters portrayed in “dirty mas” - the improvised costuming of locals with found objects and readily available resources, such as paint, oil and mud, to personify evil spirits. Popular characters today are Jab Jab, Jab Molassie, and the Moko Jumbie, characters assembled in a break-of-dawn street ritual called *J’Ouvert*.

There are at least ten (10) annual festivals around the world that attract over 300,000 spectators, and more Caribbean-style Carnivals are initiated regularly, such as CaribFest in Virginia Beach, VA beginning in the summer of 2011, enabling a renewed sense of community while encouraging local tourism.

- Trinidad Carnival, week leading up to Shrove Tuesday
- Jamaica Carnival, week beginning Easter Sunday
- Toronto Caribana, end of July
- Boston Carnival, end of August
- London - Notting Hill Carnival, end of August, bank holiday
- New York City - Labor Day Parade, beginning of September, Labor Day
- Atlanta Carnival, Memorial Day Parade, end of May
- Barbados, Crop Over Festival
- DC Caribbean Carnival, end of June
- Miami Carnival

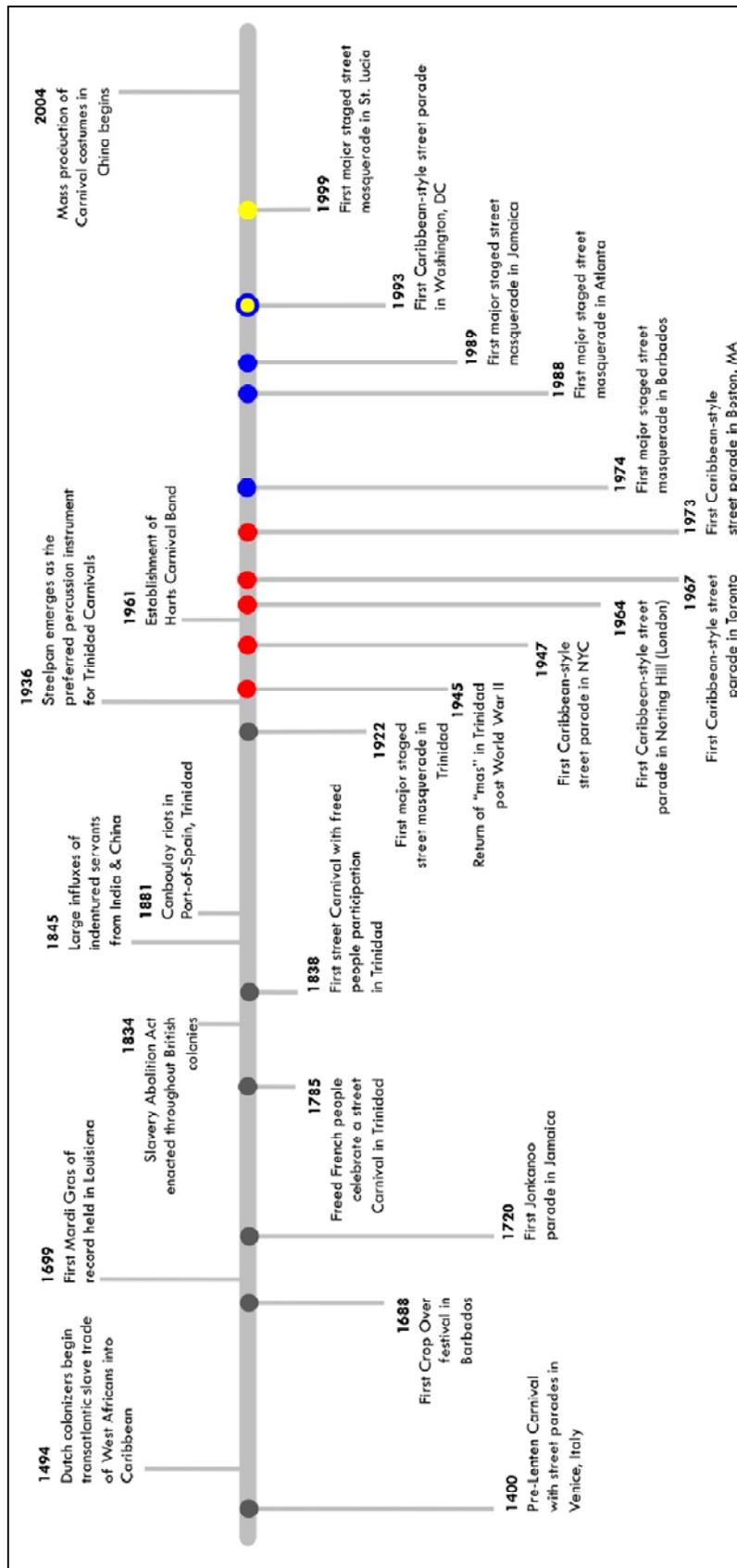


Figure 1: Timeline of Caribbean Carnivals

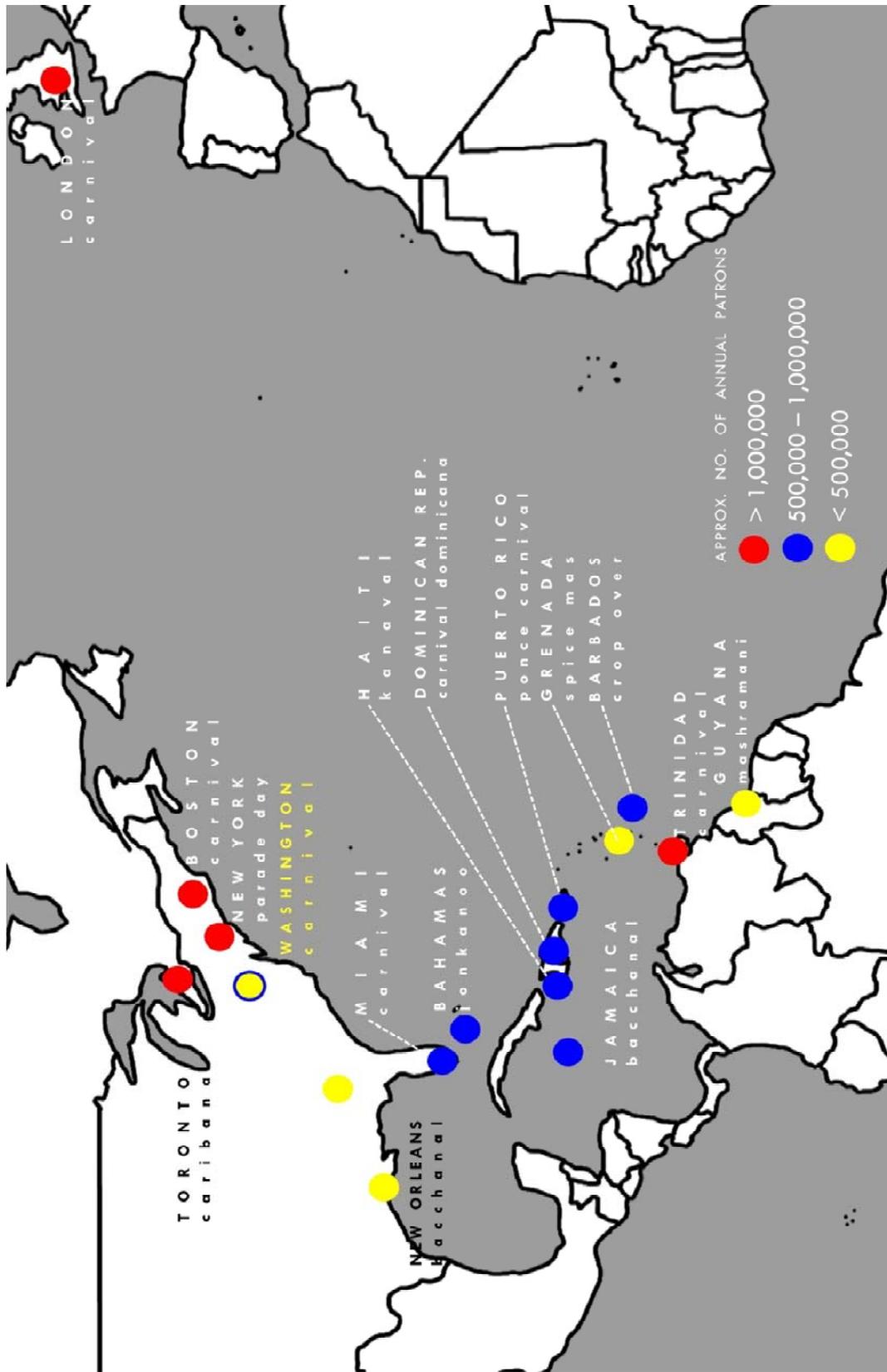


Figure 2: Map: Numbers of participants in Caribbean-style Carnivals across the world

Caribbean Carnival proves to be richly meaningful as an architectural generator for its dependence on the organization and cooperation of a variety of “kit-of-parts” assemblages. The primary set of distinct yet synergistic elements necessary for the celebration’s success occurs at the urban scale – the colorful composition of dramatic costumes, pulsating music, and masses of people. Within each set, additional groupings of elements produce the effect of a mass gathering for celebrating life and our commonalities, rather than our differences.

A contraction of “masquerade,” *mas* has been transformed colloquially, within the Caribbean, to identify more than just a costumed public parade or event, but rather a style of revelry and debauchery that overwhelms the senses and one’s sensibilities. Carnival parades are comprised of thousands of people, most as spectators or patrons, and the costumed participants known as revelers, organized into mas band. A mas band can range in size anywhere from 10 to 10,000 people. They remain identifiable by the common theme used to determine that year’s costumes. As an example, the band leader of the elite Trinidadian Carnival mas band known as Tribe chose “Birds of a Feather” as the theme, for which sixteen (16) highly detailed sections of costumes were designed to emulate a specific bird, including Humming Bird, Flamingo and Brazilian Macaw.



FIGURE 3: An image from the Tribe 2009 Mas Band’s costume brochure⁵, showcasing designs (from left to right) for Brazilian Macaw, Bird of Paradise, Humming Bird, Kiskadee, Caged Canary, Green Honey Creeper and Wild Parrot.

⁵ “Tribe Costume Brochure” <<http://www.trinidadcarnivaldiary.com/2008/07/tribe-costume-brochure.html>>

To build on an already rich tapestry, costume designers then have additional nuances to make between the basic, intermediate, advanced and specialty costumes. The occurrence of each of these categories is specific to a section – most sections have two or three variations at the most – so the detailed, extravagant costumes designed for a dedicated reveler are opportunities for bandleaders and costume designers to break barriers while exploring new possibilities and extremes.



FIGURE 4: Some of the variety in costuming seen at the Toronto Caribbean Carnival⁶ and at Carnival in Port-of-Spain in Trinidad.

As illustrated in the above images, there are several levels of variation allowed within the mas band, but the most prevalent are:

- Level 1, with just enough cover to convey the essentials of the theme,
- Level 2, with attached extensions in conjunction with the essential costume, and
- Level 3, where the reveler is dwarfed by an idealistic amplification of the theme.

These categorizations can be applied to contemporary costumes featured both in pretty mas and dirty mas as, and will be utilized in simplified analogies:

- Pretty Mas
 - o Level 1 as the floor member or backliner,
 - o Level 2 as the Frontliner or Individual, and
 - o Level 3 as the King or Queen.

⁶ David Cooper “Caribbean Carnival” <<http://photogallery.thestar.com/1032780>>



FIGURE 5: The 3 levels of costuming – floor member, Frontline⁷ and Queen⁸ - for the Galactic Tango section of the Louis Saldenah mas band in Toronto, Canada.

- Dirty Mas

- Level 1 as the J’ouvert reveller or Jab Jab,
- Level 2 as the Jab Molassie, and
- Level 3 as the Moko Jumbie.



FIGURE 6: The 3 levels of costuming – j’ouvert reveler⁹, Jab Molassie¹⁰, Moko Jumbies¹¹ – during the 2011 Caribbean Carnival in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad.

It should be noted that due to the level of financial and time that must be invested to produce a competitive King or Queen costume, the contemporary mas band no longer features Level 3 for

⁷ Louis Saldenah Mas-K Club “2011 costumes: Galactic Tango” <<http://www.saldenahcarnival.com/>>

⁸ Scotiabank Caribbean Carnival Toronto 2011 photos <<http://beautyisdiverse.com/2011/07/scotiabank-caribbean-carnival-toronto-2011-photos/#more-41054>>

⁹ Joshua Yetman “Jab jab: pour it on” <<http://www.flickr.com/photos/joshy55013/3883913093/>>

¹⁰ Daleon Listhrop “Blue devil: the Jab Molassie” <http://www.flickr.com/photos/dlistfotos/5521073539/>

¹¹ Leslie-Ann Toney “Moko Jumbie” <<http://studiolafoncette.com/2011/02/09/the-call-them-spirits-ancestors-we-call-them-moko-jumbie-bdc-536/>>

each section on a regular basis, but will produce a few contenders for DiManche Gras or the formal competition for King and Queen costumes preceding the road march.

With a wide variety of costumes, themes and messages being portrayed, the question of “Who is watching whom?” must be asked, as the merriment of a Carnival parade frequently absorbs the spectators into its fold. Although not formally costumed, many patrons become just as excited and energized as the revelers. Here, the Trinidadian word “Maco,” derived from a French patois verb meaning 'to mind other people's business,' offers an insider’s perspective on the Caribbean tradition of enjoying the everyman and the everyday as a voyeur, which is most indulged during the many spectacles created during the Carnival season.

Adaptive Reuse

As an alternative to demolishing the abandoned and underused structures that sit as modern day remnants of past eras on prime real estate within our cities today, adaptive reuse is an architectural response to the redevelopment needs of well-established urban centers. Most of these buildings do not possess exceptional historic or aesthetic credentials, but often compensate through a character that comes from age, location and use – replacement with modern constructions would disturb legacies and existing connections with the surroundings, but these morsels of an intangible culture can be retained through a reflective and intelligent plan for reuse. Although renovation can be costly, it is often cheaper than demolition and reconstruction, and frequently secures premium sites for those choosing to redevelop a building that is protected by, or related to, a local preservation ordinance and sensitively adapting it.

Factories, warehouses, garages and docks of former industrial areas are often perfectly suited for alternative uses as they are centrally located, well built and impressive in scale, capable of renewed roles as contemporary exchanges for culture, business and urban living. Adaptive reuse should be a consideration when looking to create a new space that meets modern requirements, but admittedly may not always be the best solution. However, in this project, the potential cost savings and sustainable benefits, including harnessing embodied energy, enabling

transformative design and the possibility to utilize prime urban locations, make adaptive reuse a viable option for development, providing an example of the relevance for creating new uses out of built heritage.

Chapter 2: Context

Washington, DC

Washington, DC is located along the Eastern seaboard of the United States, immediately north of the confluence of the Potomac and Anacostia rivers of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. The first formal urban design of the city as the nation's capital was proposed by Pierre L'Enfant in 1791, revised by Andrew Ellicott in 1792, under commission of the President, George Washington. When Senator James McMillan commissioned a team of professionals to revise the city in 1900, the McMillan Plan expanded the grandiose, broad diagonal boulevards overlain on a grid street network into what is known as "The District" today.

Site Criteria

An urban site is the primary requirement for this thesis, a site with Public Accessibility that would enable transit-oriented development, to ensure the longevity of this program. Second is Community Connectivity, the proximity to large numbers of Caribbean nationals. According to the US Census information made available in 2010, there were a number of residents claiming West Indian ancestry:

- up to 8,915 within the District (1.4%)
- up to 53,385 in the DC Urbanized Area (1.2%), and
- up to 60,415 in the DC, MD, VA, WV Metro Area (1.1%)¹².

Third is a site with Flexibility, restorative or rehabilitative potential, preferred to emphasize concepts of revitalization, preserving embodied energy, and preserving urban forms.

¹² District of Columbia: Selected Social Characteristics in the United States 2005-2009
<factfinder.census.gov>

Site Selection

Upon investigation, neighborhoods along Georgia Ave, in Washington, DC and in the immediately adjacent Maryland jurisdiction of Montgomery County, arose as the preferred location for this proposal. As the main thoroughfare between the Downtown DC area and Montgomery County, Georgia Avenue traverses through numerous residential, commercial and cultural districts. Several cultural aspects are unique to the area and of historic value to the African-American community. As an advocate for Washington DC's cultural, historic and natural assets, Cultural Tourism DC features Georgia Avenue as an artery through several historic districts, knitting together a variety of distinct cultures¹³. The DC Caribbean Carnival is a prominent feature in their promotional material, recognized as "the ultimate annual parade," - it is an organization that is growing in size and popularity, with over 2,000 participants in 9 mas bands, and over 300,000 spectators¹⁴ in June of 2010.

As an essential aspect of both New Urbanist and Smart Growth theories, access to a variety of mass transit options is also an enabling factor for development along Georgia Avenue. Pedestrian proximity to existing WMATA Metro stops (Georgia Ave-Petworth, U Street, Shaw-Howard U, and Mount Vernon), as well as proposed public bicycle paths and several DC Streetcar terminals between the Shaw-Howard U and Georgia Ave stations, greatly enhance and focus the appeal of sites along Georgia Avenue.

The majority of Washington DC residents claiming West Indian heritage on the 2010 US Census live in neighborhoods permeated by Georgia Avenue. Four possible sites were identified for this proposal, each featuring major street frontage on Georgia Ave or 7th St. NW.

¹³ < <http://www.culturaltourismdc.org/things-do-see/historic-neighborhoods/georgia-avenue> >

¹⁴ DC Caribbean Carnival, About Us <<http://www.dccaribbeancarnival.org/AboutUS.html>>

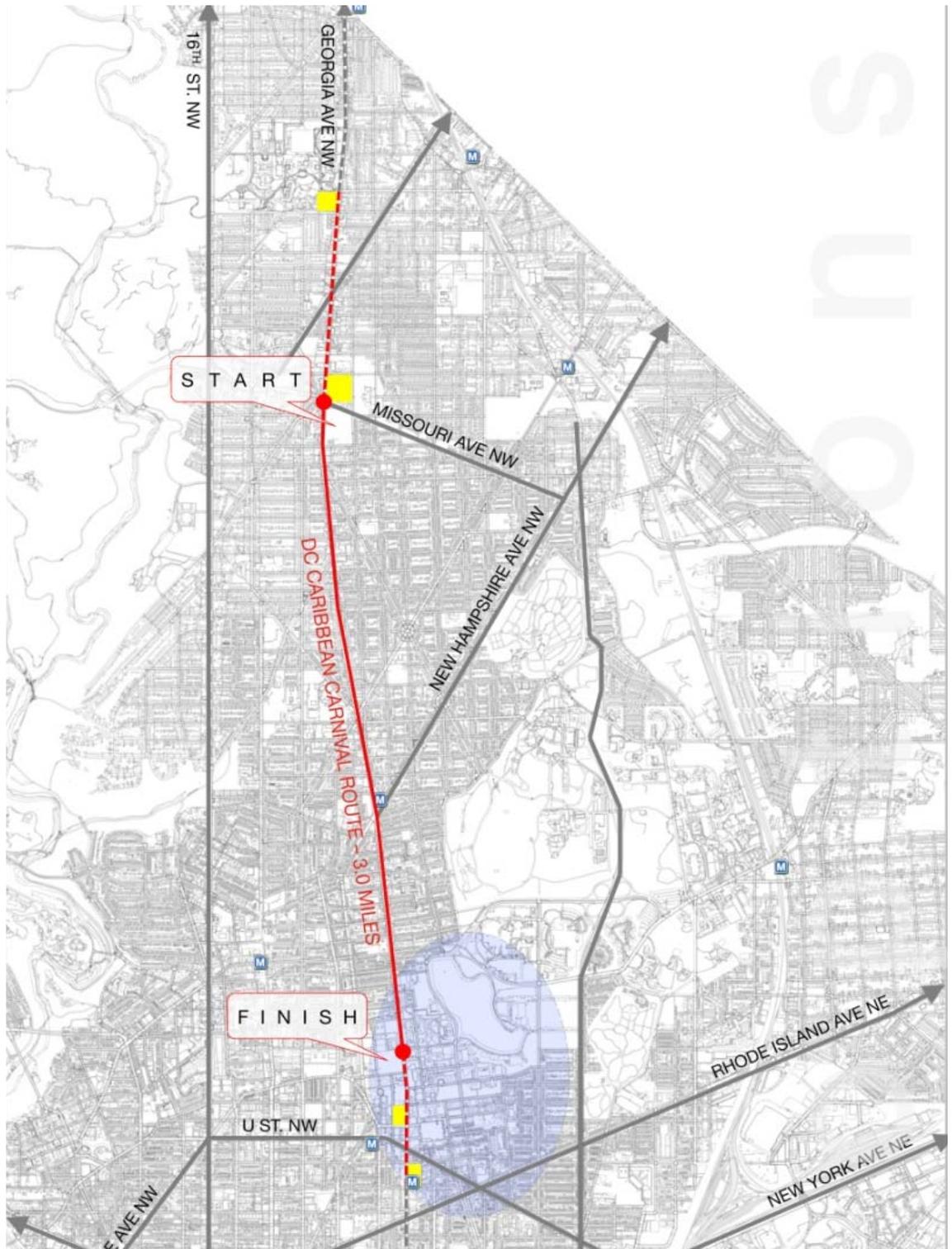


FIGURE 7: Map showing the urban context of the sites in consideration (by author).

Site A – west 2100 block of Georgia Ave (between V and W Sts. NW), closest to current end of DC Caribbean Carnival parade route, unrecognized historic fabric on-site, 5-minute walk to Shaw-Howard U and U Street metro stations, as well as directly adjacent to proposed bike paths and has a DC Streetcar terminus directly in front of site¹⁵ at Georgia Ave and W Street NW.

Site B – east 1800 block of 7th St. NW (between 7th and 8th Sts. NW),

Site C – east 5900 block of Georgia Ave (between Missouri Ave and Peabody St. NW),

Site D – west 6800 block of Georgia Ave (between Aspen and Butternut Sts. NW).

¹⁵ <<http://parkviewdc.wordpress.com/2010/05/05/update-on-lower-georgia-avenuestreetcars/>>

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO SITE SELECTION				
	Site A	Site B	Site C	Site D
Accessibility				
Metro Rail Station	●	●	○	○
Metro bus Stop	●	●	●	●
DC Streetcar Stop	●	●	○	○
Bicycle Path	●	●	○	○
Pedestrian-friendly	●	●	●	●
Community				
Caribbean community	●	●	●	●
Educational Facility	●	●	○	○
Other Cultural Use?	●	●	○	○
Residential community	●	●	●	●
Nearby Retail	●	●	●	●
Flexibility				
Existing Building	●	●	●	●
Historic District	○	●	○	○
Contributing Building in District	●	●	○	○
Adaptive Reuse Potential	●	○	●	●
Appropriate Size/Scale	●	●	●	○

Table 1: Factors considered during Site Selection

Selected Site

Site A is on the western side of the 2100 block of Georgia Ave NW, located on the edge between the Howard University and the Greater Shaw/U Street neighborhoods. Historic information available to date records both structures being completed in 1930. The original structure to the south was a bus garage for the now-defunct Washington Railway and Electric Company, designed by a local architect Arthur B. Heaton. To the north is an impressively intact structure that was the Bond Bread factory, designed by an expert factory architect, C. B. Comstock of New York. It was a state-of-the art \$650,000 facility of the General Baking Company for close to forty years. The factory had been out of commission since 1968, and was sold to the DC government in 1971. It was then leased to the People’s Investment Commission, a federally financed anti-poverty group that was given a 30-year tenancy. The original exterior designs for both buildings still exist today, with some modifications and additions.



FIGURE 8: Map of the selected site on the 2100 block of Georgia Avenue NW, by author.

Currently, both lots are owned by Howard University (since 2008), listed on their property keys as Howard University Hospital (HUH) Service Center to the north, and Howard University AIDS Clinical Trial Unit (ACTU) to the south. Both structures are built to the extent of the property lines, including their shared boundary line, and are a minimum of 1-storey tall (at east elevation), but mostly 2-storeys throughout, and 3-storeys as described above in the original factory design. The garage to the south features dark varieties of terracotta-brown brick, predominantly in Common or American bond, with some Herringbone patterns. The factory to the north is covered in a light, crème-colored brick; all façades are punctuated by protruding structural columns with slightly pointed concrete caps, and molded concrete neo-classical trim, particularly at the formal entrance. Large, black-painted metal framed windows and HVAC exhaust grilles exist throughout, with most windows to the south and west recently shuttered by painted sheet metal. Stylized double-fixture streetlamps are present at sidewalk/street edge, as is featured on additional blocks north and south of site on Georgia Ave only.

Of note, the sustained vacancy of this large block may have contributed to an interesting discovery: none of the neighborhoods directly adjacent to this building currently claim it within their boundaries.

Previous Studies

An extensive analysis on the historic, cultural and development qualities of this site exist in the study entitled “Duke: Draft Development Framework for a cultural destination district within Washington, DC’s Greater Shaw/U Street.” This 60-page proposal is mostly concerned with promoting cultural tourism initiatives based on the rich African-American historical and cultural assets of the area that will bring economic development opportunities for local residents and businesses. In the proposal, emphasis is

placed on the Florida Ave/U St. NW east-west artery, and Site A has been identified as a street-level retail, multi-story residential project to establish the heart of the included “Howard Town Center” district, but this thesis will explore an alternate distribution of building uses, place emphasis on Georgia Ave as a north-south thoroughfare, and utilize Site A as a public, cultural, gathering place. An additional study by Group Goetz Architects PC, based on the “DUKE” proposal, featured 550,000 sf of mixed-use retail, commercial and residential complex is significantly larger in scope than this thesis will consider, but provides notable site approaches at street level, addressing the grade change.

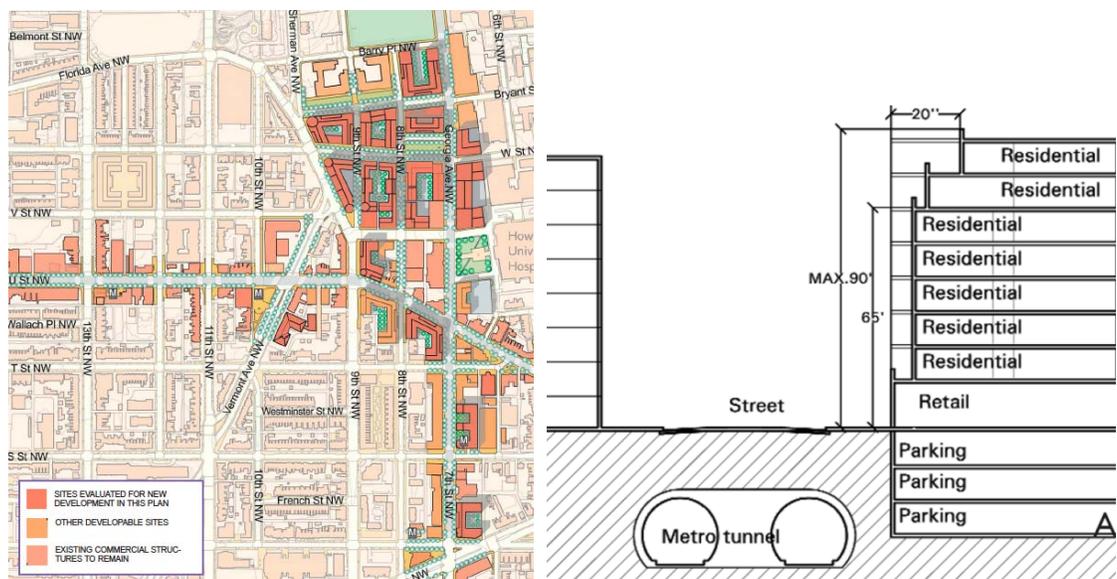


FIGURE 9: The contextual map and street section diagrams from the DUKE redevelopment proposal¹⁶.

Design Parameters

¹⁶ Duke: Draft Development Framework for a cultural destination district within Washington, DC’s Greater Shaw/U Street.

The project site is approximately 225'-0" east to west, and 405'-6" north to south, oriented due north. Located uphill from the downtown DC central business district, the approximate gradient change is 8'-0" drop from NE to SW corners.

As it is currently developed, the site does not possess any major physical features. Analysis of existing contours reveals a notable slope of up to 10'-0" from the NE to SW corners. Neighborhood drainage is accommodated by street-level openings to the municipal storm sewer system. There are 5# 15' to 30' trees to the east and 3# 10' to 20' trees to the west, on site, in sidewalk planters. These do not appear to be unusual or site specific, and can be considered for removal.

Historic information available to date records both structures being completed in 1930. The original structure to the south was a bus garage for the now-defunct Washington Railway and Electric Company, designed by a local architect Arthur B. Heaton. To the north is an impressively intact structure that was the Bond Bread factory, designed by an expert factory architect, C. B. Comstock of New York. It was a state-of-the art \$650,000 facility of the General Baking Company for close to forty years. The factory had been out of commission since 1968, and was sold to the DC government in 1971. It was then leased to the People's Investment Commission, a federally financed anti-poverty group that was given a 30-year tenancy. The original exterior designs for both buildings still exist today, with some modifications and additions.

Currently, both lots are owned by Howard University (since 2008), listed on their property keys as Howard University Hospital (HUH) Service Center to the north, and Howard University AIDS Clinical Trial Unit (ACTU) to the south. Both structures are built to the extent of the property lines, including their shared boundary line, and are a minimum of 1-storey tall (at east elevation), but mostly 2-storeys throughout, and 3-storeys as described above in the original factory design. The garage to the south features

dark varieties of terracotta-brown brick, predominantly in Common or American bond, with some Herringbone patterns. The factory to the north is covered in a light, crème-colored brick; all façades are punctuated by protruding structural columns with slightly pointed concrete caps, and molded concrete neo-classical trim, particularly at the formal entrance. Large, black-painted metal framed windows and HVAC exhaust grilles exist throughout, with most windows to the south and west recently shuttered by painted sheet metal. Stylized double-fixture streetlamps are present at sidewalk/street edge, as is featured on additional blocks north and south of site on Georgia Ave only.

Of note, the sustained vacancy of this large block may have contributed to an interesting discovery: none of the neighborhoods directly adjacent to this building currently claim it within their boundaries.

According to the DC Office of Zoning online map service¹⁷, the following zoning details apply to the lot: Zoning: CR (Permits matter-of-right residential, commercial, recreational and light industrial development to a maximum lot occupancy of 75% for residential use, 20% for public recreation and community center use (up to 40% with Board of Zoning Adjustment – or BZA – approval), and 100% for all other structures, a maximum FAR of 6.0 for all buildings and structures, of which not more than three (3.0) may be used for other than residential purposes, a maximum height of ninety (90) feet for all buildings and structures and forty-five (45) feet for public recreation and community centers. An area equivalent to 10% of the total lot area shall be required at ground level for all new development, and rear yards shall be provided for each residential building or structure.)

According to DCOZ, project should occupy less than 55,000 sf at ground level, with a height of 45 feet at public and 90 feet at residential or other allocated spaces.

¹⁷ <http://maps.dcoz.dc.gov/>

Reference will be made to scale of schematic projects and drawings included in the “DUKE” and “Howard Town Center” proposals, which contradict DCOZ height limitations, up to 65’-0” at the street edge and 90’-0” with 1:1 setbacks.

To date, neither property has been listed as a historic resource. This may be understandable considering how many other bakeries, bus garages and Heaton structures have been included on local and national registries. However, the combined neo-classicist and Art Deco architectural features of the Bond Bread building present a unique façade and structural form that is atypical of 1930’s factory typology. As several other Bond Bread factories exist across the country, with very similar form, colors and detailing, it is worthwhile to consider a strategy for conservation of the form or fabric, to maintain that connection with the past. This thesis will address the most valuable features of these structures, as they become fundamental to the success of the project.

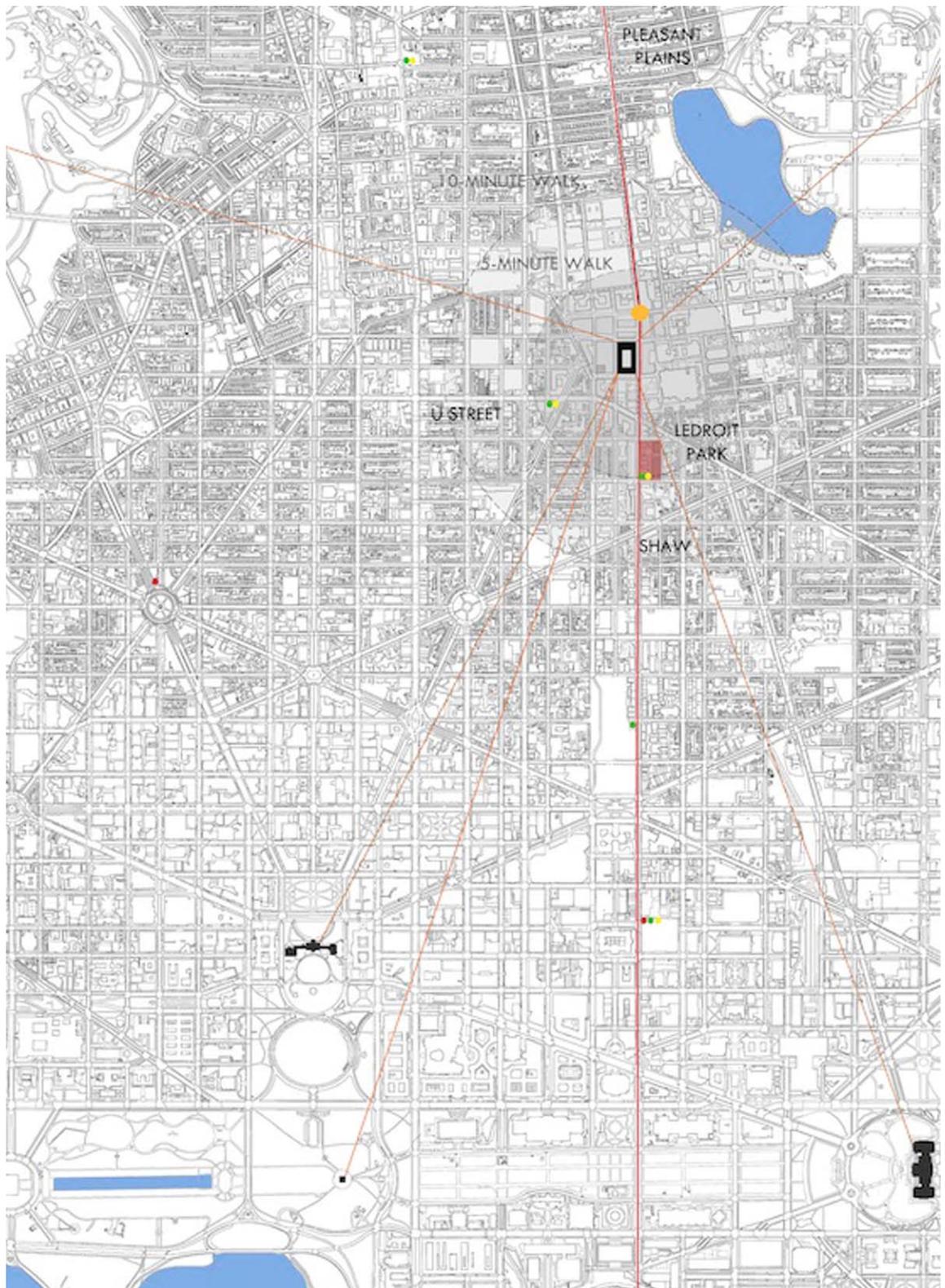


FIGURE 10: Map showing the broad urban context of the selected site (by author).

Chapter 4: Concept

The rich presentation inherent in every Carnival experience is a result of the coming together of three essential elements – the seductive music, the masses of people, and the adventurous costumes – but it is the stage as the fourth element makes it truly “Caribbean.” While not as formalized as the *Sambodromos* of Rio de Janeiro Carnival, the stage is the location where costumed revellers are expected to exert as much energy as is possible, while a selected panel of judges decide which of the mas bands will be awarded the coveted “Band Of The Year” title, and the spectators are at their most passive. The stage presents an opportunity for architecture to create a backdrop as dramatic as the spectacle, or the alternate case – architecture as a backdrop, supportive of the custom and its many rituals.

Additionally, the stage presents a showcase for celebrating and displaying the costume, possessing the strongest potential for architectural exploration and expression in this thesis. As the primary classification of costume types, the hierarchy of mas band participants by the level of flamboyance of their costume poses direct architectural analogies, particularly in relation to the ideas of transformability and transparency.

5.1 Design Goals

As a starting point, there are four fundamental goals of this thesis:

1. Transformability – manipulating image, shape, volume of the architecture to dictate or accommodate changing from year-round activities to the center of DC Caribbean Carnival once a year
2. Flexibility - adaptable spaces, public/private image, ability to accommodate multiple audiences and forms of activity

3. Sustainability - reduce energy requirements/waste production, reuse building and materials, recycle water/waste
4. Transparency – visibly open to the public, open in plan, layers of screens for manipulating visibility where needed

The resulting design approach must enable the development of hierarchical architectural skins that differentiate public and private space, while facilitating the development of an appropriate and flexible kit-of-parts.

Conceptual Strategies

It is the balance, or interplay, between direct and indirect influences that achieves a quality design product. The primary objective of this thesis is to create a flexible platform for the sustainable preservation and portrayal of the Caribbean Carnival culture in a foreign country. Considering that the Carnival parade is the incarnation of the meaning behind this project, the intensity of the masses of people occupying Georgia Avenue, and the limited width of Georgia Avenue. Conceptually, the design proposed will enable the following strategies:

- an emphasis on the revelation of public places vs. concealment of private spaces
- engagement with neighboring context, in particular, the Georgia Ave development corridor

The Public/Private Threshold

The main purpose of Carnival costumes it can be said, is to make the sensuous nature of a “farewell to the flesh” publicly presentable. Therefore, costume designers and revelers alike are accepting of the innate freedom to indulge in the suggestion of public

nudity. Consider the Level 1 costume – the floor member or J’Ouvert reveler. These costumes are intended to cover only the essentials necessary for privacy, and draw attention to what is left exposed. The vivid colors of the costumes portray the image of the character, but also serve to simultaneously highlight and distract from that which is private.

Suggestive forms and placement to indicate hierarchy, and the ability for outsiders to view what can be exposed, should identify and enhance public spaces within this project. A large public realm, shaped to accommodate large numbers of people, will allow for the containment of select Carnival activities with dynamic, flexible elements that help to change the shape, openness and possibly even the color of the volume. In contrast, a visual screen, which will shield the spaces within with the required level of seclusion, in contrast, will cover spaces with select and private access.

Engaging the Context

Utilizing the inherent connection to the origins of Carnival in Venice, the original architecture on the site can be manipulated as a mask for containing this imported cultural program. Most noted for the prevalence of ornate and creative masks, Venetian Carnival was also a major cultural event, from which several types of masks evolved, to meet the needs of the social circles involved. As opposed to its face-covering counterparts, which rendered the wearer mute and expressionless, the *columbina* mask is of particular relevance to this thesis, as the shape of this type of mask only covered the essentially recognizable elements of the face – the eyes and nose – allowing the wearer to freedom of expression and sustenance. In an architectural analogy, it is proposed that by carving away at the existing fabric, and maintaining only that which is essential or recognizable, the remaining carcass will function as a mask for the new program. This remaining fabric

will preserve connections with the eighty-year-old history of the immediate context, and enhancing the value of other 1930's bread factories and trolley garages that still exist throughout the city.

Diagram

The selected site parti - Vessel or C-Diagram - features recesses along the Georgia Avenue facade for maximal public access, creating the most flexible massing, but presenting some complexity in the resulting circulation. It also maximizes on the building's organization strategy of flexibility of usages, manipulated and shaped by mutable skins or operable architectural devices.

“The only configuration of space that grows well and subdivides well is a rectangle... If you start boxy and simple, outside and in, then you can let complications develop with time, responsive to use. Prematurely convoluted surfaces are expensive to build, a nuisance to maintain, and hard to change.”¹⁸

Precedent

National Academy for the Performing Arts, North [Port-of-Spain, Trinidad]

A permanent (420,000+ sf) home for the development of talent in the performing arts¹⁹, with particular focus on the national instrument, the steel pan. The architectural design is reminiscent of the national flower of Trinidad and Tobago, the Chaconia. Seating for 1500 in acoustically designed performance hall; 2 practice halls; teaching rooms; multi-purpose stage design; hotel for visiting performers.

¹⁸ Brand, Stewart, “Built for Change” *How Buildings Learn* p. 192

¹⁹ <<http://www.udcott.com/>>

National Carnival & Entertainment Center [Port-of-Spain, Trinidad]

Locally designed as the setting for the vast array of celebrations that are the highlights of a diverse national cultural calendar²⁰. Seating for 15,000 – 18,000 people; Artist suites and workshops; Dressing rooms for performers; VIP and media accommodations; Concession area for food and drink with modern conveniences; Art and exhibition space; Acoustically-enhanced theatre and performance space.

From these programmatic examples, this thesis proposes spaces for celebrating the annual festival, theater spaces for performances, presentations and fundraising events, exhibit spaces for community art and emerging Caribbean artists, spaces for interaction with memorabilia and media, spaces for community meetings and events, public space for the neighborhood, family-centered learning environments and spaces for opportunities to develop the neighborhood's citizens.

Program Tabulation

The proposed program that follows, although substantial, still does not include accommodations for all aspects of the Caribbean culture. Understandably, as the scope of the project was to embody the regional tradition, a significantly larger site and additional experience would result in a more comprehensive complex. This project, however, does focus on the history, production, reuse and celebration of the Carnival costume, the key international and regional readily relatable element.

²⁰ Ibid

A. Public Access [68,000 sf]

Plaza 600 patrons at 15 sf each, approximately 20,000 sf

Central courtyard; open-air marketplace with landscaping, pathways, delineations, etc

Mobile Room 70 ft x 50 ft = 1,200 sf

Storage and display of “kit-of-parts”; large slide away doors

Performance 500 patrons x 15 sf each = 7,500 sf

Formal performance and event space; stadium seating (flexible); mezzanine level

Events 400 patrons x 15 sf each = 6,000 sf

Informal performance and event space; flat floor, elevated stage; access to plaza

Galleries Suggested square footage = 12,500 sf

Paintings/sculpture/photography exhibits; double height lobby; admin spaces

Multimedia Lab Paper, analog and digital = 7,000 sf

Stacks, workstations, music catalog, listening/reading rooms, archives, offices

Institute Admin Reception, Archives, Offices = 2,500 sf

Public face to Institute; reception, information, registration; file storage

Classrooms Learning spaces for the Institute = 8,500 sf

Sewing rooms, lecture hall, meeting rooms

[Re]Store Costume regeneration and redistribution = 1,500 sf

Collection, disassembly, storage of costumes and parts; resale booth; displays

Retail Regional cuisine, coffee shop, memorabilia = 2,500 sf

150 patrons at 25 sf each; food prep and storage areas; lounge

B. Select Access [27,000 sf]

Workshops 4 stations at 2,500 sf each = 10,000 sf

Interconnected and adaptable rooms (ability to change from 4 to 2 or 8)

Administration Headquarters Offices and Conference = 5,000 sf

Reception, admin support, staff offices, conference rooms

PR/Diplomats 20 offices @ 500 sf each = 10,000 sf

conference/meeting rooms, view of elevated courtyard

Garden Terrace Elevated courtyard overlooking Culture Yard = 5,000 sf

Green roof; outdoor lounge with trellis or pergola

Lobby Reception for residential component = 2,000 sf

Reception, waiting area, mail room, storage, game rooms

C. Private Access [27,000 sf]

Artist Studios 24 patrons at 1,000 sf each = 24,000 sf

Two-storey two-bedroom units; study and balcony; skylight

Artist Commune Communal Area = 3,000 sf

Located adjacent to primary access to residential component; lounge and roof terrace

Subtotal [122,000 sf]

Support Space Storage, Toilets, Janitor, IT Support = 10,000 sf

Circulation @ 20% Entry, Stairs, Elevators, Ramps = 27,000 sf

Mechanical @5% HVAC, closets, chases = 7,000 sf

TOTAL PROGRAM [225,000 SF]

Sustainability Goals

Project should exceed standards set by the Washington DC Green Building Act of 2006.

How? By addressing stricter guidelines set by LEED version 3 for New Construction

- Maximize open space, including green roofs.
- Maximize potential for daylighting and views (internal views > green walls? elevated courtyards?); use of a courtyard, an atrium or skylights allowing natural light to enter internal spaces – it is diffused, reflected and redirected through a series of screens, light shelves and colored glass. Daylighting transitions space over time, changing throughout the day and seasons, introducing rhythm and movement to a potentially static space.
- Minimize floor plate for HVAC efficiency & maximal daylighting
- Onsite energy generation (BiPV, bifacial panels, solar thermal)

Structural/Mechanical Implications

- Occupancy Groups: A-2 > Apt. houses, Bars, Restaurants; A-3 > Art Galleries, Auditoriums, Community/Lecture Halls, Libraries, Museums, Public Areas; A-5 > Outdoor bleachers, grandstands, stadium seating; B > Business Offices, Training Facilities; E > Educational Facilities; M > Markets, Retail, Stores
- Reinforced concrete column grid in place, number to be retained in further study; additional structural system as rigid-joint steel, to minimize on-site assembly
- Concrete floor assembly in place, quantity to be retained or reused under investigation; additional floors to be of similar construction
- Georgia Avenue façade will be punctuated with glazed openings, engage pedestrians, in order to meet DUKE plan requirements; historic fabric will require further study and adjustments for watertightness and weathering

- HVAC system will be implemented to accommodate changing needs and sustainability goals; controllability via VAV boxes for enhanced independence where necessary

Design issues

Preservation vs. Adaptive Reuse: What is worth preserving: the form or the fabric? Property not listed on National Register, so external modifications are possible. Adjacency of two dissimilar forms demands emphasis or an equalizer for desired aesthetic.

Maximum occupancy: DC Caribbean Carnival crowds upwards of 250,000 per year, which participants should be targeted? Revelers? Spectators?

Apertures in perimeter walls: How much permeability is necessary? What happens at ground level? What occurs at the periphery?

DUKE plan requires 14'-0" ceiling heights at the pedestrian level (16'-0" to 18'-0" floor-to-floor) with retail (storefront?) or engaging resources (cultural? culinary?) fronting the main street.

Embracing economy: How can dynamic, flexible spaces with multifunctional skins be affordable? Kit-of-parts assembly may lessen cost and enable easy maintenance.

Chapter 5: Design

Site Planning

The site selected is located within a century-old urban context, and presents opportunities to maintain and engage the street edge, which can enable connecting with the community, while granting users access to public transportation options.

Structural Systems

Taking cues from the stilts that elevate moko jumbies, the vertical structure of the new program is round steel columns. The decision to use steel as the structural system, as opposed to reinforced concrete, stemmed from the culture of wire-bending that has survived in authentic Carnival costume design and construction, allowing for increased levels of transparency and adaptability. A similar notion applies to this steel structure, as visual access and openness are important characteristics achieved through long span technology and curtain wall systems.

Materials

In order to present a visual and tactile experience, the materials used in this project highlight their physical attributes with the occasional exposure of the structural system and infrastructure, contrasted with rich textures and bold colors of the finishes. The material palette for this project includes brick, glass and steel for the primary structure, as well as architectural mesh and a prismatic metal billboard system for the secondary screens.

Brick, coincidentally the most natural material, signifies established connections with the history of the existing buildings. Up to 50% of the brick removed from the

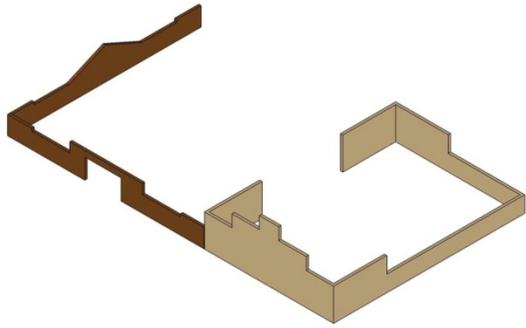
existing building to facilitate its new program is re-used in the pavers for the culture yard, and the remainder interspersed with new brick for the five (5) storey walls along the South façade. The original crème and dark brown colors of the 1930's buildings are, however, barely distinguishable as part of the aggregate in the staggered 20' x 5' courtyard slabs, but capitalize on an opportunity for material reuse.

Façade Composition

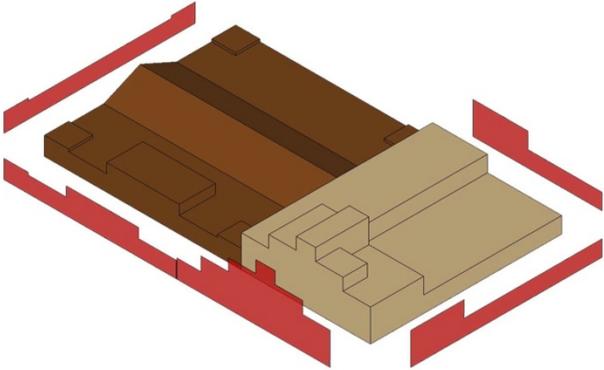
The architectural realization of Carnival costumes, as they have been discussed in this thesis, is manifest in the façade, which must embody the three hierarchical levels of costume design. In order to allow for adequate daylighting and views out, the architectural costume must acknowledge relevant levels of transparency, while communicating the image of Caribbean Carnival. First, as the building envelope itself is synonymous to the human skin, it must function as a thermal and waterproof barrier. A water-tight metal rain screen curtain wall system comprised of modules in multiples of four foot (4'-0") heights and six foot (6'-0") width sets the stage for a building skin that can accommodate a variety of nuances with reveals, glazing and extensions. The color and texture of these panels are tan and smooth to subtly contrast with the crème and dark brown brick of the existing building, with tropical orange accents in areas of architectural interest. On top of this envelope, the architectural screens developed are liberated to function as ornament, as a canvas for the creation, or projection, of imagery.

Closely mirroring the geometric profile of the rain screen panels, the *cover screen* module and is attached directly on top of the surface of the envelope. The iridescent orange architectural mesh panel sits within the metal frame, functioning simultaneously as a solar screen and visual distraction. Under direct light, the iridescence distorts the visual access of the façade material as well as the building interior, resulting

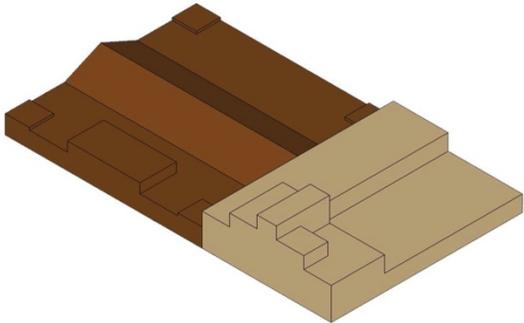
in a varying appearance depending on the time of day, lighting in use, and the observer's proximity. Acting simply as a cover screen, these panels are prevalent throughout the Culture Yard interior elevations, infusing the void with the subtle warmth of its resultant glow, and creating a visual reference for the public domain. When backlit, the mesh panels appear to be moving, or dancing, adding a layer of dynamism not possible with the alternate façade modules.



Building as Mask



Identified Value



Existing Building

FIGURE 11: Diagrams illustrating extracted value from the existing façade.

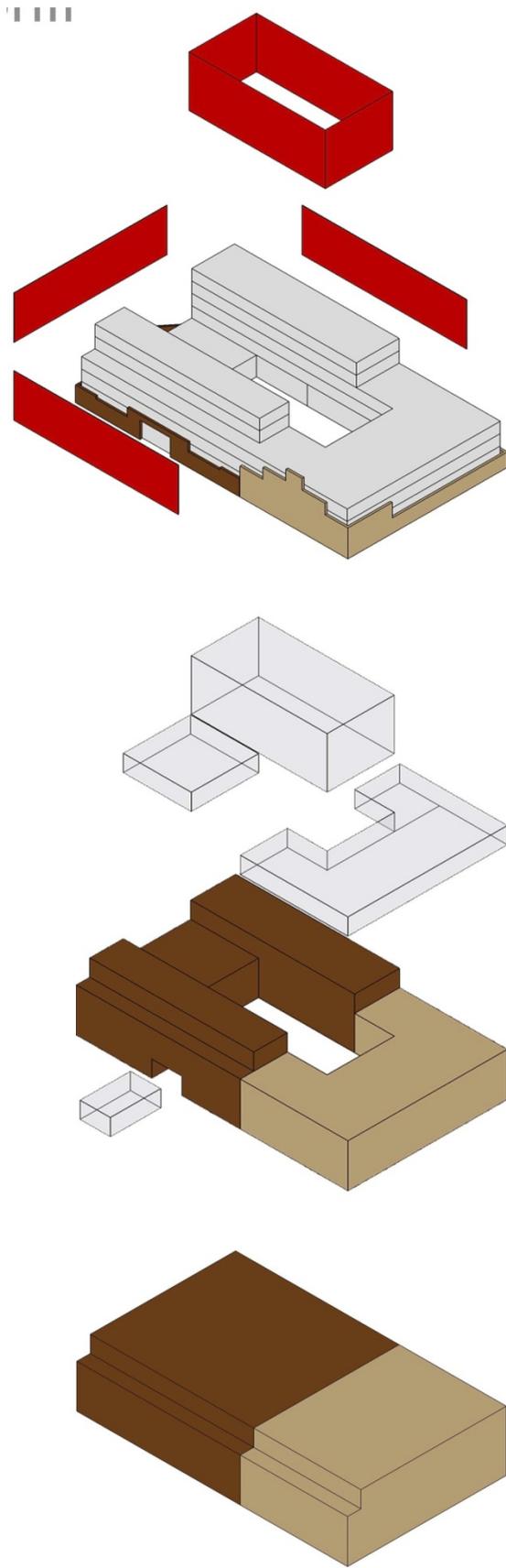


FIGURE 12: Diagrams illustrating generation of form, and the resulting opportunities for façades.

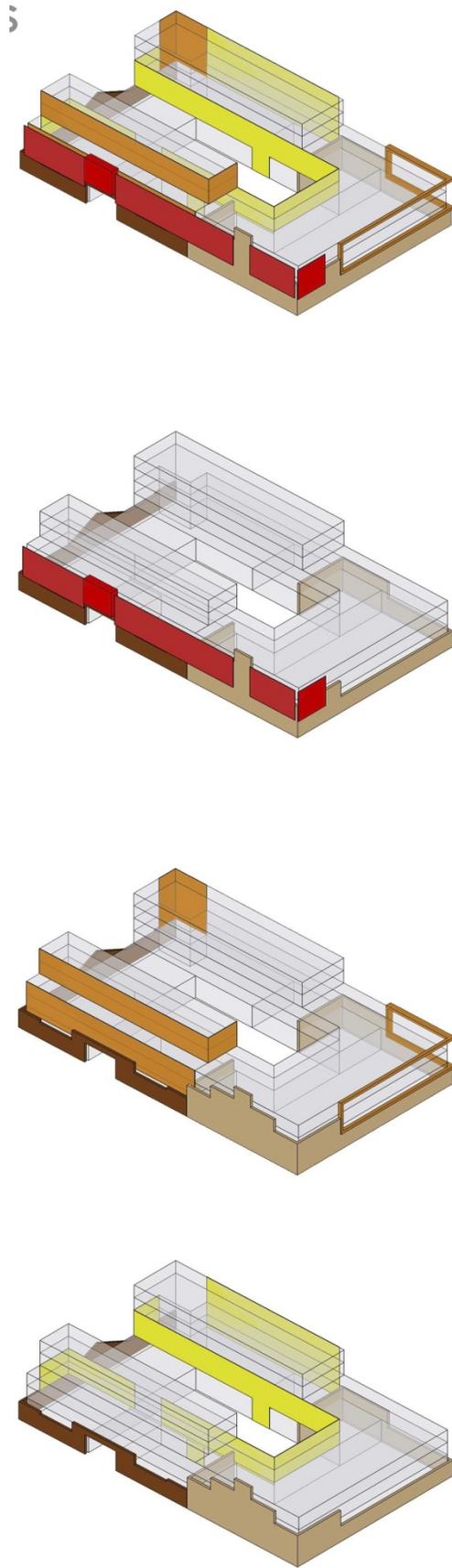


FIGURE 13: Diagrams illustrating cover, extension and amplification as considered for the façade.

The *extension screen* module, however, takes the visual transparency to another level. Contained by a large metal brace offset from the rain screen panels by 1'-6", each module is comprised of a pair of six by eight (6'-0" x 8'-0") fabric panels in a variety of colors. The density of the fibers is increased, reducing the visibility inward and outward, but these panels, unlike the cover screens, are adjustable when adjacent to an occupied space. A sliding track mechanism allows for one-directional movement when visual access becomes more desirable than solar shading. As the assemblies of sliding panels are individually controlled, the resultant image is constantly changing, subject to occupant influence. Extension screens are prominently featured adjacent to the stairwells and occupied outdoor spaces along the southern exterior façade.

For the third level of costuming, the screens occupy the Georgia Avenue façade in the most prominent position. The *amplification screen* had to be capable of transforming with the seasonal image of the project – as an institute for higher learning, as the center of DC Caribbean Carnival, as an entertainment venue – while allowing visibility from the interior into the street below, adequate daylighting and solar shading. Continued interaction with the public edge, and a reasonable level of maintenance expectations were other characteristics that inevitably resulted in the selection of tri-vision billboard technology. For the majority of the year, the site hosts students, artists, entertainers and visitors invested in Caribbean Carnival culture at some level. During this time, the predominant message is to sustain interest – animated LCD imagery projected by one face of each billboard prism is guaranteed to grab the eye, particularly when featured on 10 forty-eight foot (48'-0") tall panels, suspended at a slight angle over the public street edge. As a toned-down alternate, the second face of each prism will project a static message with the institute's emblem and the name "House of Carnival" emblazoned in

iridescent orange and tan hues, for occasions that cater to substantial crowds for a unique purpose, such as a food festival or the inevitable mas band launch.

Most important to this thesis is how the amplification screen *transforms* during the actual DC Caribbean Carnival parade – the third face of the billboard prism is a modest white, to highlight the intensity of colors, people, costumes and energies that will occupy the street below. The tri-vision billboard is comprised of eight by twelve foot (8'-0" x 12'-0") modules with fifteen (15) mechanically operated metal prisms, featuring either LCD's, static messaging and a plain white surface across each face. As an unexpected highlight, Panels 2 and 5, which overlook Georgia Avenue through the billboard screen, also operate like bi-fold doors in the two sections closest to the street, propped up by elongated supports. This characteristic is only deployed during the parade, to expose and enhance the visual connection between the revelers in the street and the spectators within the building. With the tri-vision billboards masking the uppermost edges of the existing building along Georgia Avenue, the primary reading of the project's façade only changes during the street parade, momentarily changing the screen's function from a unified backdrop to an optional void for this specifically framed view.

As the amplification, extension and cover screens wrap around the building's envelope from the South East corner towards the North West, the level of visibility increases, terminating in the gallery and exhibition spaces with its protruding framed outline. With little to no direct sunlight, this double-height glass feature presents the most exposed surface of the façade, permeated by a fritting pattern to temper the intensity of daylight entering within. Extending into the gallery and exhibit space are metal protrusions attached to the mullions. These protrusions suspend 6' x 8' panels of the same architectural mesh used in the cover screens, but project white on either side. This

system helps to minimize solar gain while maximizing on reflected daylighting, and performs as a backdrop for displayed art.

When assembled, the resulting form is imposing adjacent to Georgia Avenue, and demands attention at the end of the parade with animated imagery.

Chapter 6: Findings

Investigating the history, the prevalence and the elementary composition of Caribbean Carnival resulted in a wealth of ideas and concepts, with the strongest potential for architectural realization based on one element – the costume. The social dynamics of mas bands and the intentional hierarchy denoted by the costumes themselves solidifies the significance of costuming, and the innate manifestation of contemporary culture.

The question posed assumes simplistic task of distilling a two hundred (200) years old tradition native across thirty-five (35) different nations is feasible. This thesis was able to identify the essential elements, which aspect is uniquely Caribbean, and propose a single element for deeper analysis and application. The eventual intent of utilizing this information as a design basis for integrating new cultures into aging cities is capable of being realized, in theory, but the implementation methodology chosen for this project is only one solution. While I had hoped to develop an evocative and seductive architectural product, it is ultimately the imagery created that becomes critical, and not mimicry of the human form in movement.

In conclusion, although this thesis was originally conceived as the culmination of the annual cultural celebration, due to observations of spatial requirements, functions and adaptability of existing built fabric, the growing number of parade participants, and the practicality of year-round usage, this project is better suited to function as a centralized hub for Carnival-related activities, essentially a Mas Camp, for the Carnival season, and an institute for education and entertainment year-round. It is my opinion that this conceptual program and approach can be replicated in other cities with a thriving Caribbean culture, and help to sustain Caribbean Carnival into the future.

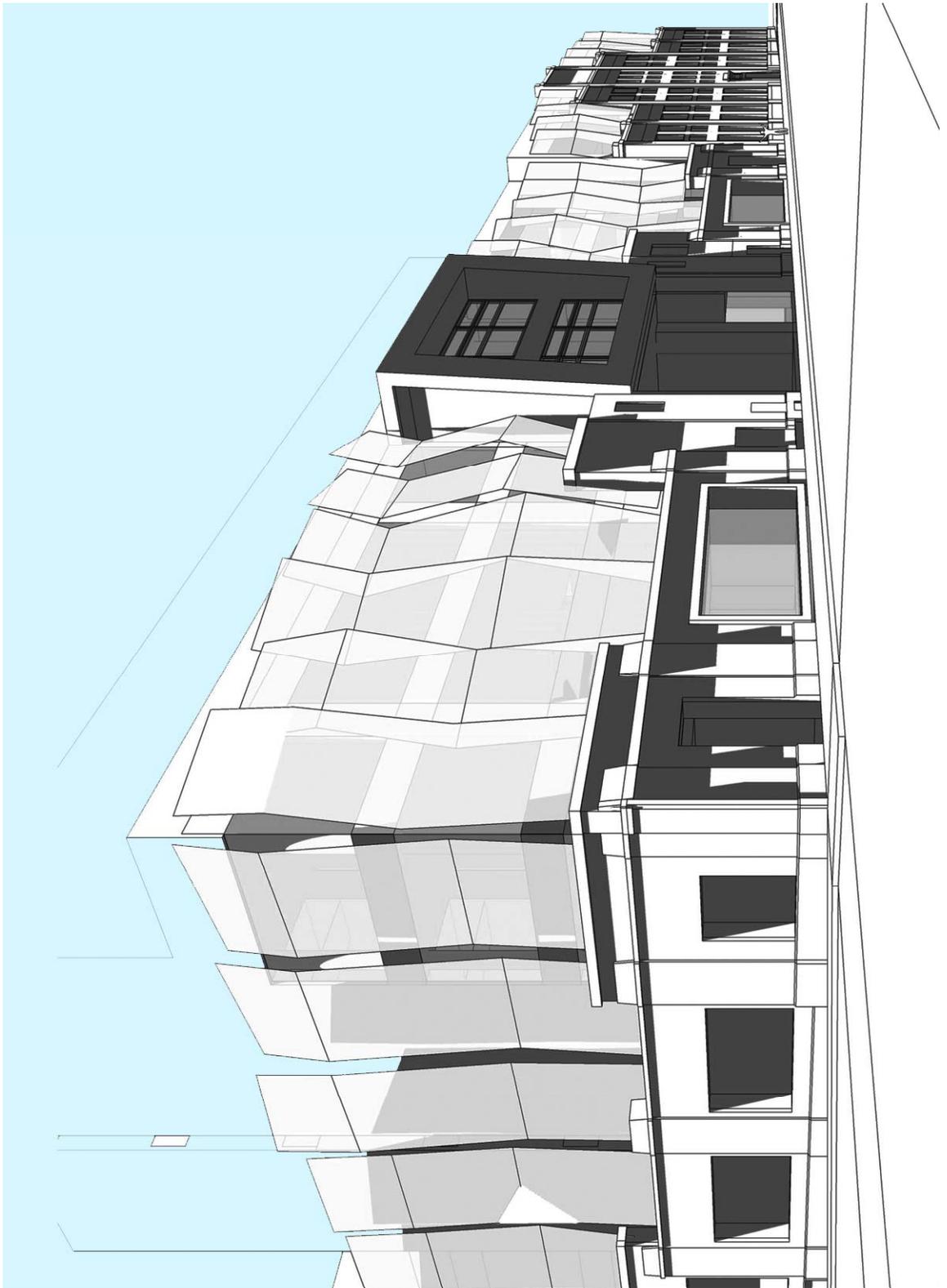


Figure 14: Preliminary façade development

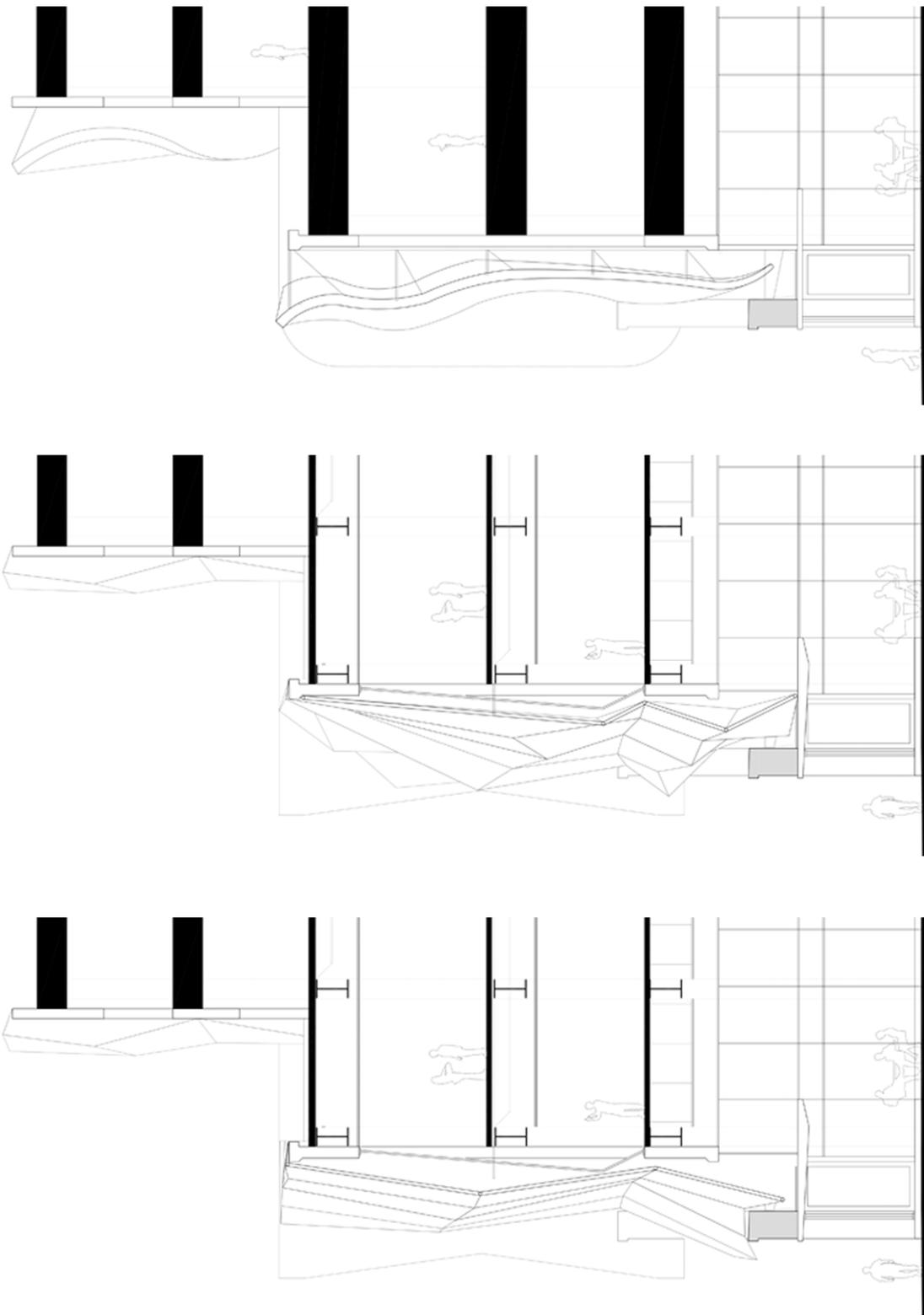


Figure 15: Wall section studies



Figure 16: Georgia Avenue façade on Carnival Day

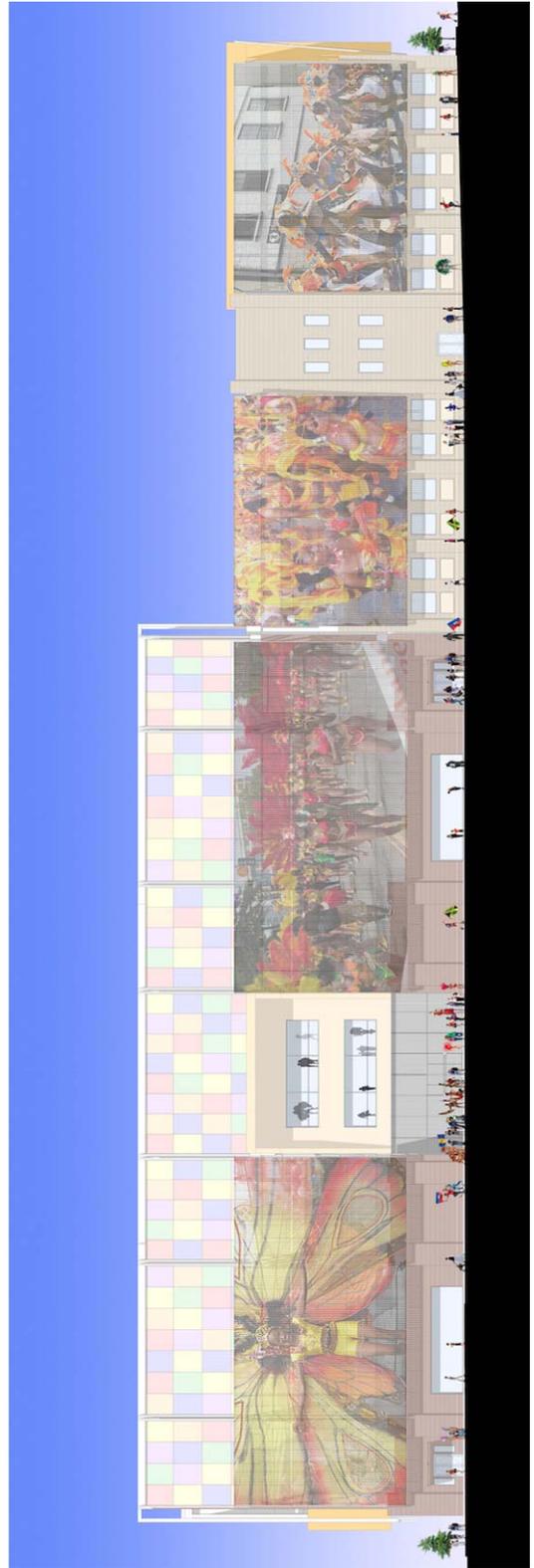
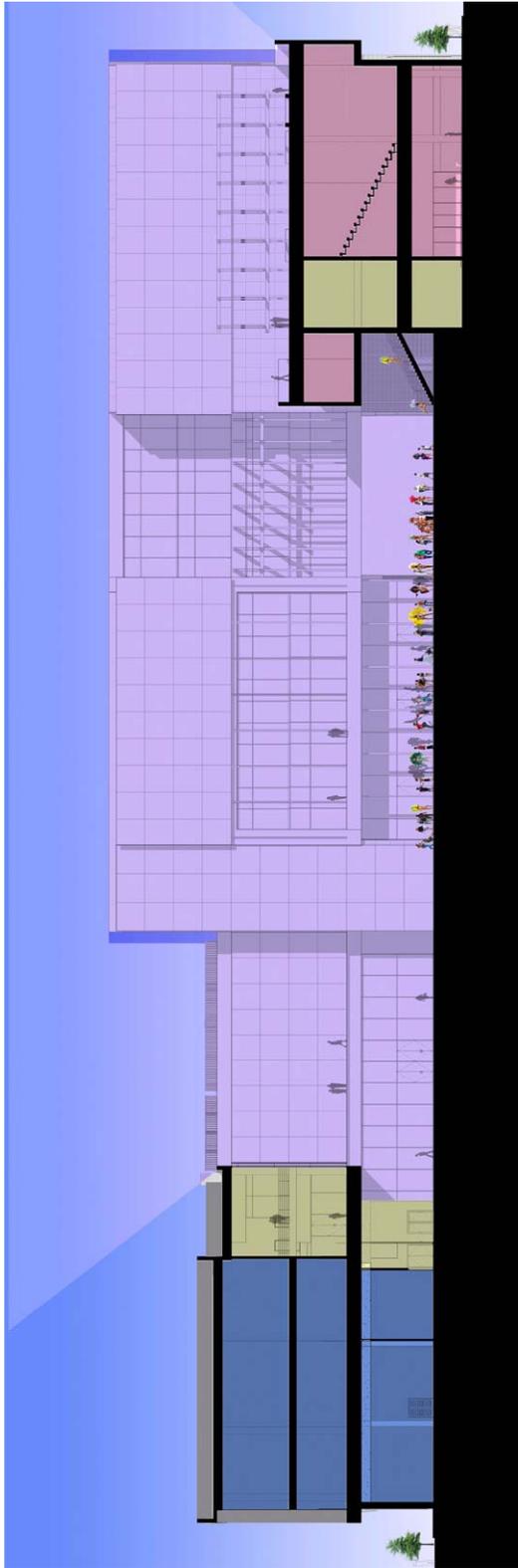


Figure 17: The primary façade and section

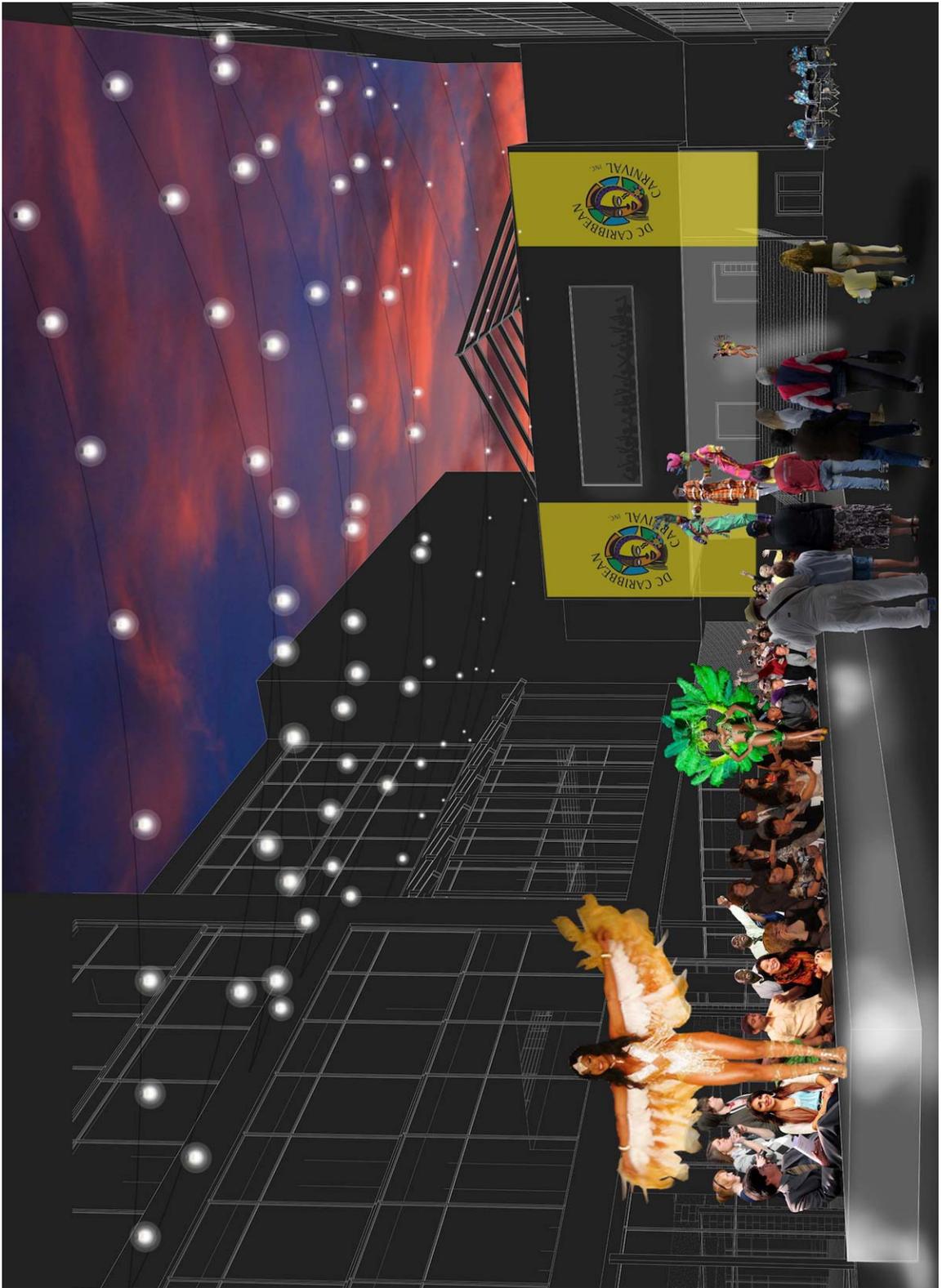


Figure 18: Mas Band launch in the central Culture Yard



Figure 19: Level 1 floor plan



Figure 20: Level 2 floor plan

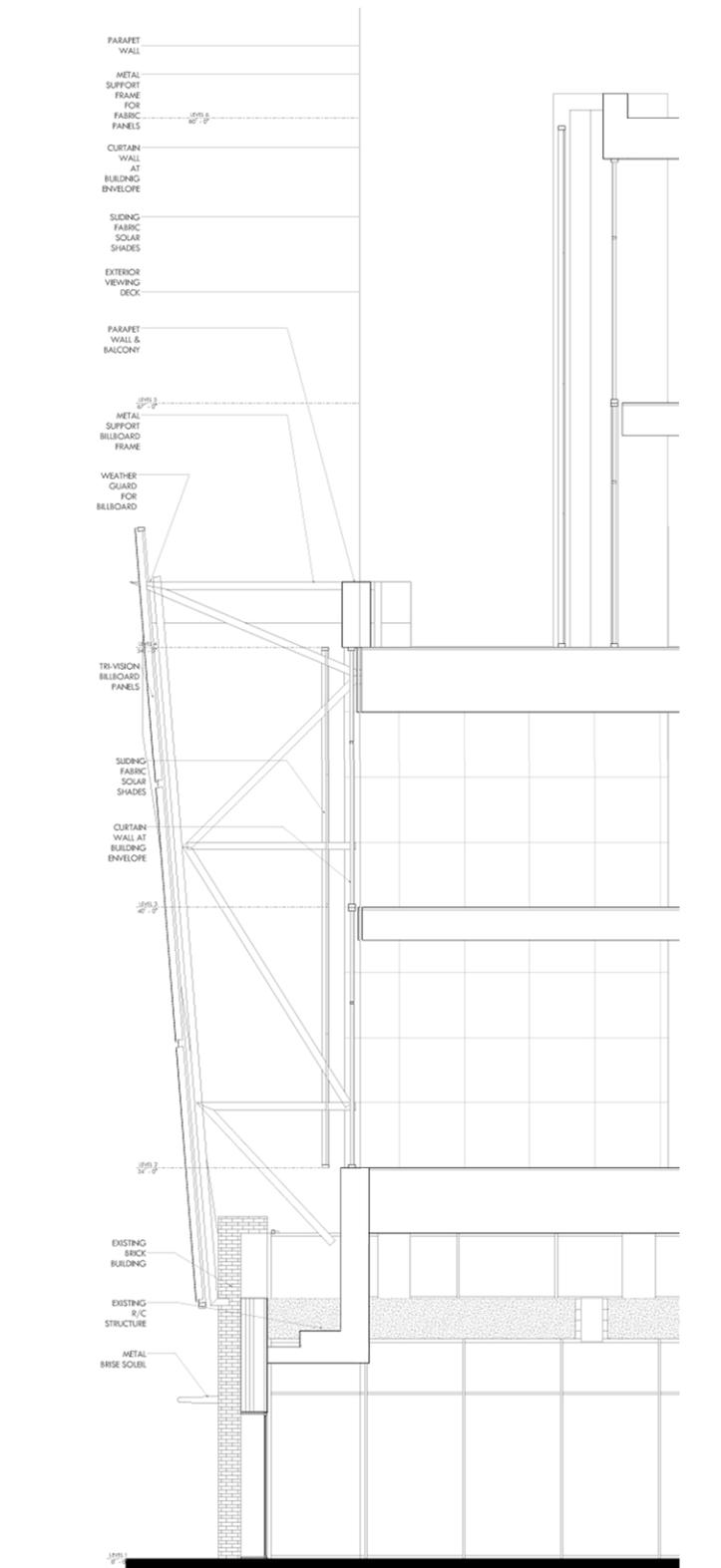


Figure 22: Detailed wall section at the Georgia Avenue façade

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