

Material Urbanism

Building Distinction in the Fremont Urban Village in Seattle, Washington

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Abstract

Material Urbanism: Building Distinction in the Fremont Urban Village in Seattle, Washington

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Seattle's Urban Villages are at risk of losing the distinctive characteristics that make them interesting places to live. Under the city's Comprehensive Plan, urban villages are targeted for increased population density.¹ To reach target levels of density, much building development is happening.

The urban villages often contain many small, older buildings that house locally owned retail businesses. These older buildings offer a scale of use that is conducive to small business. Often, these small buildings are demolished through the course of building larger developments. The result is that small businesses are unable to stay in the neighborhood. This leads to a loss of character and social distinction in a neighborhood.

This thesis proposes implementing a small scale of use in new mixed-use buildings as a way to maintain an atmosphere that supports local retail in the Fremont Urban Village in Seattle, Washington. Concentrating many small retail spaces creates a social intensity that lends distinction to a neighborhood. The concentration of small businesses creates a culture of economic reciprocity.² Money spent at a local business tends to circulate within the community longer than money spent at large chain or franchise stores. This results in a stronger retail community and a more distinctive built environment.³

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Chapter 1

The Problem and the Thesis



"A city becomes and stays real through growing meaningful connections, not through quick cosmetic fixes or through massive razing and rebuilding of large swaths of the existing urban fabric."⁴ Nan Ellin 2006

The Problem

As a result of increasing population density and subsequent building development, Seattle's Urban Villages are at risk of losing the distinctive characteristics that make them interesting places to live. In 2004, the city of Seattle implemented a 20-year Comprehensive Plan as a way to manage sustainable growth and an increasing population.⁵ One part of the Comprehensive Plan is to target areas of Seattle for increased population density. Most of the concentration of increased density is slated to occur in Seattle's Urban Villages.⁶

A major goal of the Urban Village in the Comprehensive Plan is to increase housing and employment opportunities to a level of density that supports pedestrian-oriented communities. Urban Villages are targeted for increased density because of their existing levels of population, amenities and activities. One of these areas is the Fremont Urban Village. Concentrating growth in already dense neighborhoods preserves the fabric of lower-density and single-family neighborhoods throughout Seattle.⁷

Many of the urban villages are walkable due to the small scale of buildings and the heterogeneous mixture of primary uses and building types that have developed over the years. New buildings in these areas are typically mixed-use with a residential component and a commercial/retail component. Often, new buildings are an amplification of the current uses in the neighborhood. The residential/retail mixed-use building type can help to increase population density while placing people within walking distance of employment, transit, commercial services and retail amenities.⁸ Mixed-use development can also increase vitality and intensity of an area by fostering a variety of primary overlapping uses.⁹

In Seattle, recent mixed-use development typically takes the form of the 5-over-1 building type. This is a hybrid structure consisting of multiple residential or office floors constructed of wood framing built on top of 1 or 2 street level commercial/retail floors constructed of concrete. This hybridization of two traditional construction systems is popular with developers and contractors because it is less expensive to build than using all steel or concrete. A walk or a drive through any of Seattle's urban villages reveals the mass implementation of the 5-over-1 building type. This building type is favored by developers and it helps to achieve density goals set forth by the city's comprehensive plan.

The problem in continuing to develop this way becomes apparent as neighborhoods lose some of the distinctive characteristics that make them interesting places to live. A distinctive characteristic of some neighborhoods is a fine-grained, walkable texture composed of smaller, older buildings that house local retail, such as in the Fremont neighborhood in Seattle.

Many mixed-use developments are built on parcels assembled from several smaller parcels. Often times, several smaller structures housing local retail are demolished to clear the way for one big building. This often affects the pre-existing fine-grained scale of the neighborhood as many and varied small businesses are displaced by large, single-use retail spaces. New developments are typically disproportionately larger than older adjacent structures. Continued growth in this fashion can lead to a homogeneous scale of the built environment that detrimentally affects the texture of a neighborhood. Walkability can be severely effected as bigger, uninterrupted facades replace the many and varied facades of the smaller, older structures.¹⁰

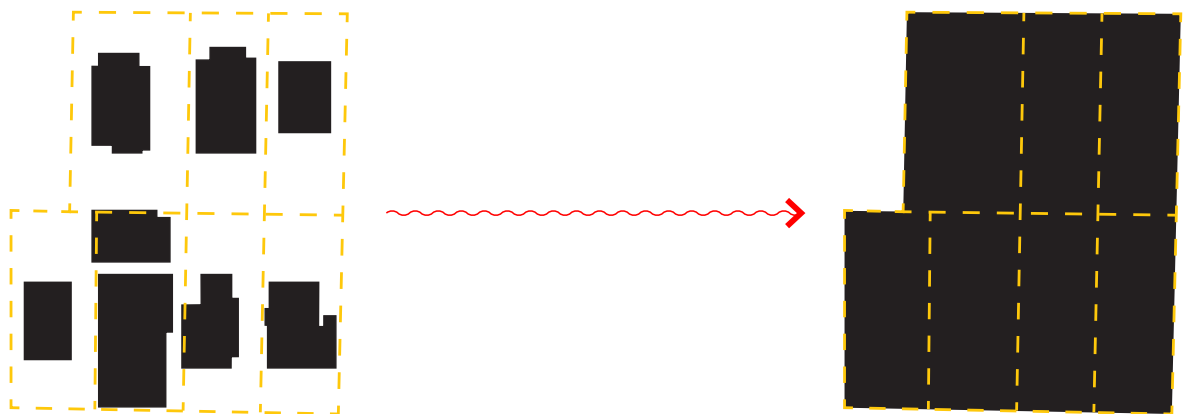


Fig. 1 Loss of Granularity

Redevelopment of large parcels of land disrupts the fine grain that is conducive to walkability and intense mixtures of use.

Dozens of 5-over-1s have been erected all over Seattle since the 1990s when Seattle's building code first allowed for them, and in "most cases new buildings...are repetitive, flat and featureless."¹¹ (Hinshaw, 2015) The proliferation of featureless buildings with large, expensive retail spaces results in a drastic change in the scale of use in a neighborhood. These buildings increase the size of singular retail space, but reduce the number of spaces available. These buildings typically focus on the perimeter of the building while privatizing the core. Public interaction becomes limited to the street level stretch of the facade that is turned over to retail space. This can result in loss of distinction in the neighborhood.

Scale of use is important in maintaining distinction in a neighborhood. Previous to being replaced by a big block development, an area may have several small independent retail shops that are locally owned. Independent locally owned retail relies on small spaces with affordable rent. New buildings should contain many small and affordable retail spaces.¹² Many of the spaces that offer the scale and affordability that are conducive to local retail are contained in smaller and older buildings.¹³ The types of businesses developers seek to place in new buildings are usually large national chain retail. Oftentimes, the various and varied goods and services offered by several small independent retail businesses (such as in Fremont) are replaced by a single store offering less variety. The physical scale of the built environment increases, and the diversity of services previously available in the neighborhood decreases. The scale of singular use and large physical scale of many new buildings can greatly diminish the heterogeneous mixture of scale and use that lend distinctive characteristics to the Fremont urban village.

In the urban village of Fremont, there have been rapid and dramatic changes over the past several years that relate directly to big block development. The big developments have drastically changed the scale and characteristics of the neighborhood, inviting chain and franchise businesses but also corporate and medical offices. Some of these developments resulted in a loss of distinctive characteristics pertaining to scale and usage.

In addition to rapid change, there has also been slow change. This slow change illustrates a flexibility of building usage as businesses and ownership change hands within the same smaller and older buildings that have been in existence since the early 20th century. Gradually, over the last 20 years, Fremont has transformed from a predominantly industrial and artist area with some restaurants and bars to a vibrant district hosting an intense variety of uses. Fremont is a highly textured neighborhood with popular nightclubs existing side by side with light industrial businesses, restaurants, boutiques, and corporate and medical offices.

Traditionally an industrial center with a mix of retail, Fremont has recently seen more residential integration through mixed-use and other types of development. As of April 2015, Fremont has seen 140% of its 2024 target growth. The nearby neighborhood of Ballard has seen 284% of its targeted 2024 growth.¹⁴ These statistics speak to the popularity of the area. The Ballard example illustrates that the desirability of a neighborhood can lead to rapid growth that greatly exceeds expectations. Rapid growth can lead to the loss of many small-scale buildings that contain independent locally owned businesses.

*“Supporting local independent retail is critical for places to have a sense of distinctiveness and local character and for keeping money localized instead of sending it back to some remote international headquarters.”¹⁵
Nan Ellin 2006*



20,000 sf

One east coast business replaces 3 storefronts. Including a long standing restaurant and lounge.

Money and distinctive character leave the neighborhood.



CVS/pharmacy® \$

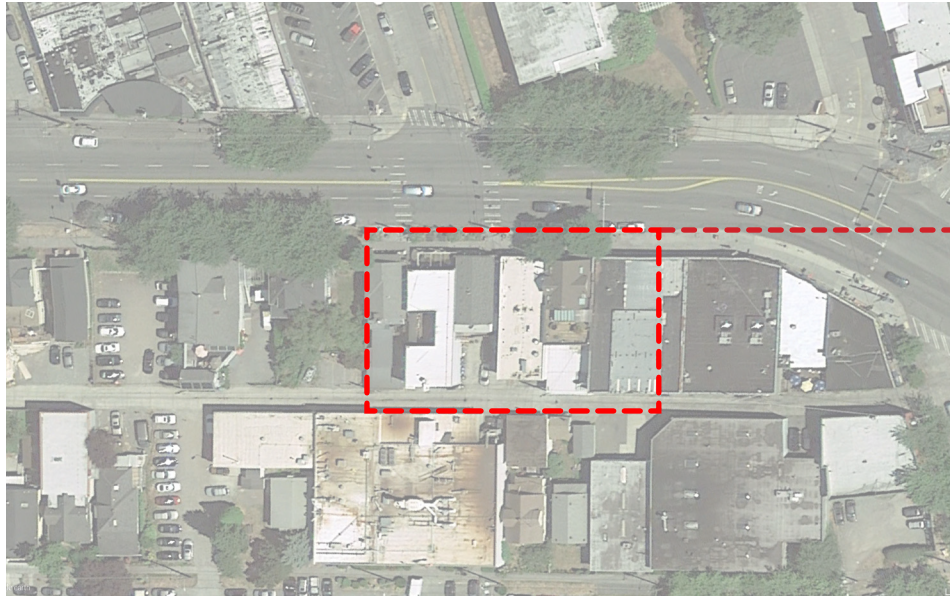


Fig. 2 The CVS Example and the Fremont Counter Example

This case is an example of intensity of use. Three businesses used to sit on this 20,000 sq ft site in the nearby urban village of Wallingford. The lot is currently being redeveloped. One east coast business is replacing 3 storefronts. A larger single storefront offers less variety than several smaller spaces. This results in a loss of distinction and character.

As a counter example to the lot in Wallingford, here is a 20,000 square foot site in Fremont. This area contains 12 local businesses including night clubs, restaurants, retail, manufacturing, artisan spaces, a dance studio and a fitness training studio.

The intense concentration of mixed use and the variety of patrons these businesses attract gives distinctive character to the neighborhood. The intensity is due to the small scale of the buildings and spaces and the types of businesses that typically occupy this type of small space.

20,000 sf
 12 local businesses including night clubs, restaurants, retail and manufacturing.
 Distinctive character is maintained in the neighborhood.



The Thesis

Cities are made up of a gradation of grain and scale. As we zoom in, finer and finer detail is revealed. Re-development of finer grain neighborhoods can often disrupt this gradation and freeze it at a scale that is too large to maintain the character and distinction of a neighborhood. Big block development can be great at achieving density goals, but it does not necessarily increase the intensity of an area.

The analysis and research of this thesis shows that finer and finer scale is vital to maintaining the distinctive characteristics in the Fremont urban village. New building development should focus on increasing intensity of use by preserving the scale of use. The instances of these small scales of use should be increased.

This thesis investigates a designed building alternative to monolithic development on a compact under-utilized site in Fremont. As an alternative to big-block development, this building will increase the intensity of use in the area by offering more smaller spaces which will broaden the variety of uses.

The design will achieve this by increasing the amount of street level retail space. Instead of a building that engages the public only along the perimeter or street facade (which often is the case in new development), this design will turn the perimeter of the building inward. Visitors and tenants of this building will experience a through-block pedestrian corridor that more than doubles the amount of retail facade as compared to a traditional building.

Turning the perimeter of the building inward will achieve a few things. The increase in retail facade will allow for a variety of businesses with a more intense mixture of services. The through block pedestrian connection will also increase the walkability of the neighborhood. And finally, by taking advantage of the zoned height limit by building up, the public space integrated with the site and building is increased vertically.

Chapter 2

Scale, Heterogeneity, Local Retail, Walkability

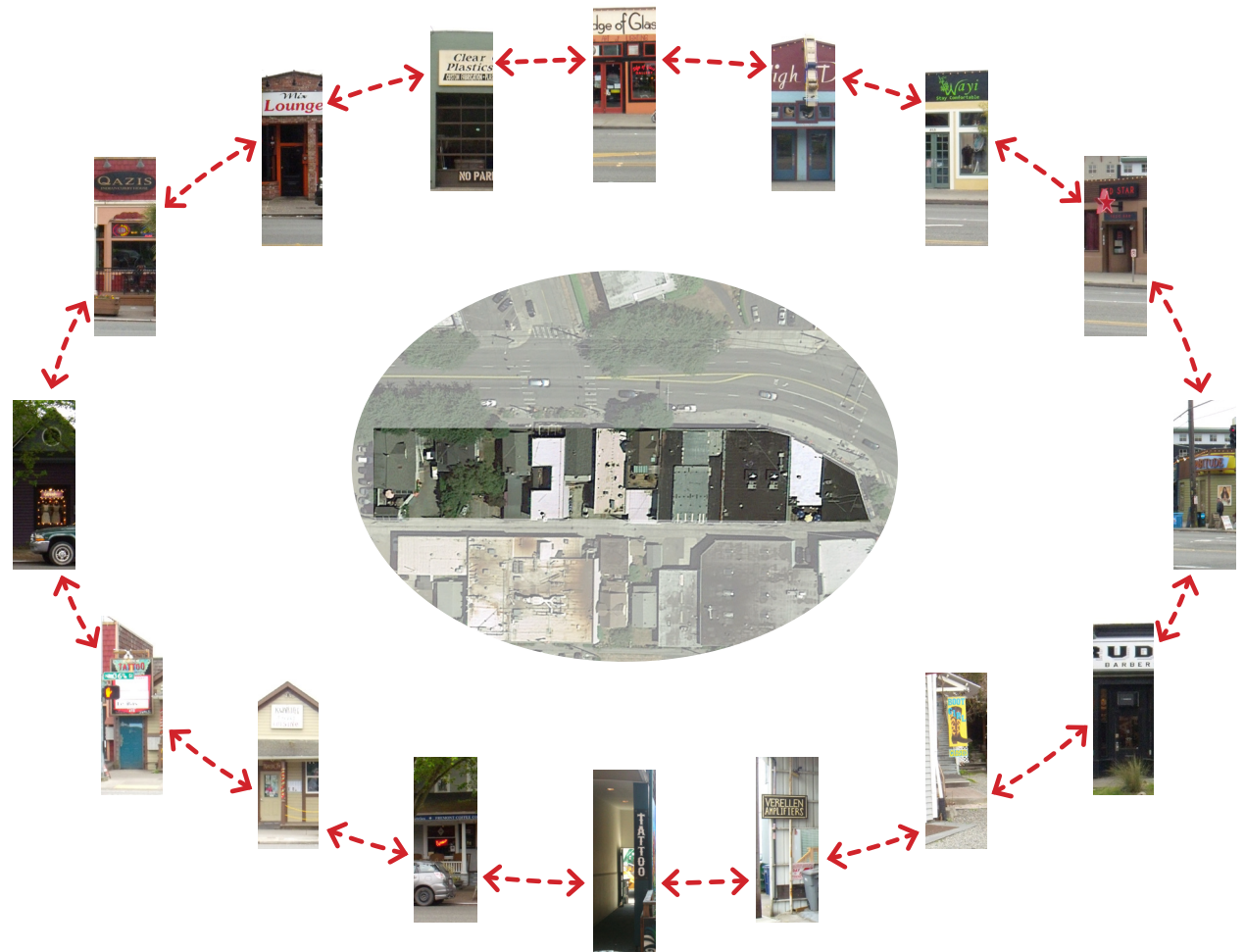
Proper scale is important in maintaining distinctive characteristics in the Fremont urban village. For a neighborhood to be walkable, the buildings should reflect the human scale in design and architecture. The observation and research work of Danish architect Jan Gehl supports this. His research reveals that humans typically walk at about 3 mph and this needs to be taken into consideration when building in a walkable urban area. Studies have shown that urban retail districts have the most success when facades or building fronts modulate every 16-20 feet. Narrow storefronts plus a 3 mph walking speed give pedestrians something new to look at about every 5 seconds. This scale has been shown to be effective in retail districts.¹⁶ When big block buildings are placed in neighborhoods that are already walkable, they disrupt the scale of buildings, replacing many smaller facades with one large monolithic facade. This affects walkability.

Modulating storefronts every 16 to 20 feet also has the effect of creating a heterogeneous mixture of use along a walking street. The narrow storefronts that make for the most successful retail streets afford opportunities for visual diversity and makes walking more interesting.¹⁷ Narrow storefronts can also mean more variety in services as well. Many and small retail spaces offer more affordable opportunities for local independent businesses.¹⁸ More and varied services at a compact human scale can make a distinctive and desirable neighborhood where people want to live.

Fig. 3 Retail Cluster (opposite page)

The tight cluster of various businesses creates a strong retail community that provides a mix of services and enhances walkability.

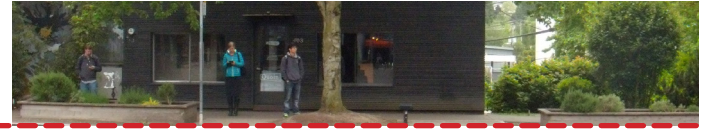
Having many and varied businesses in a compact area not only benefits the residents of a neighborhood, but it can also benefit the businesses as well. It can be imagined that an owner of one shop would patronize the business of a neighbor's shop. This creates an environment of economic reciprocity that keeps money circulating locally.¹⁹ The alternative to this happens when large chain and franchise stores are placed in bigger developments. Money spent in large chain and franchise stores (which are often out-of-state businesses) is less likely to be reinvested in the community. Money leaves the local economy rather than staying within it.²⁰



In *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, Jane Jacobs brings up the idea of pedestrian permeability. Having through block connections and options when traversing a neighborhood adds to its distinctive characteristics. The building site in Fremont for this thesis sits toward the middle of a long block. Site analysis will reveal an alley system that offers an alternative to traversing the neighborhood and there are several businesses that take advantage of this by engaging the alleyway. The building design will offer increased access through the block perpendicularly, traversing the alleyway and increasing pedestrian permeability.

The interrelated nature of scale, heterogeneous mixture of uses, local retail and walkability starts to draw a picture of what a neighborhood should look like. The buildings and spaces should be of a small scale that relates to a good human experience. This small scale lends itself to the infusion of many narrow storefronts.²¹ Many narrow storefronts can mean small, affordable spaces for local business.²² Many small, local businesses in a compact area can provide a diversity of services that make a neighborhood a desirable place to live.²³ And there should be good connections through blocks to enhance walkability.²⁴

Scale



Heterogeneity



Local Retail



Walkability

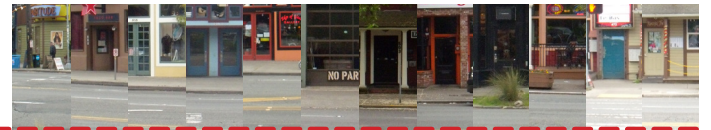


Fig. 4 Interrelated Dimensions



Chapter 3

Analysis: The Site, Platting, Demographics and Zoning

Material Overlay, Alley Connections

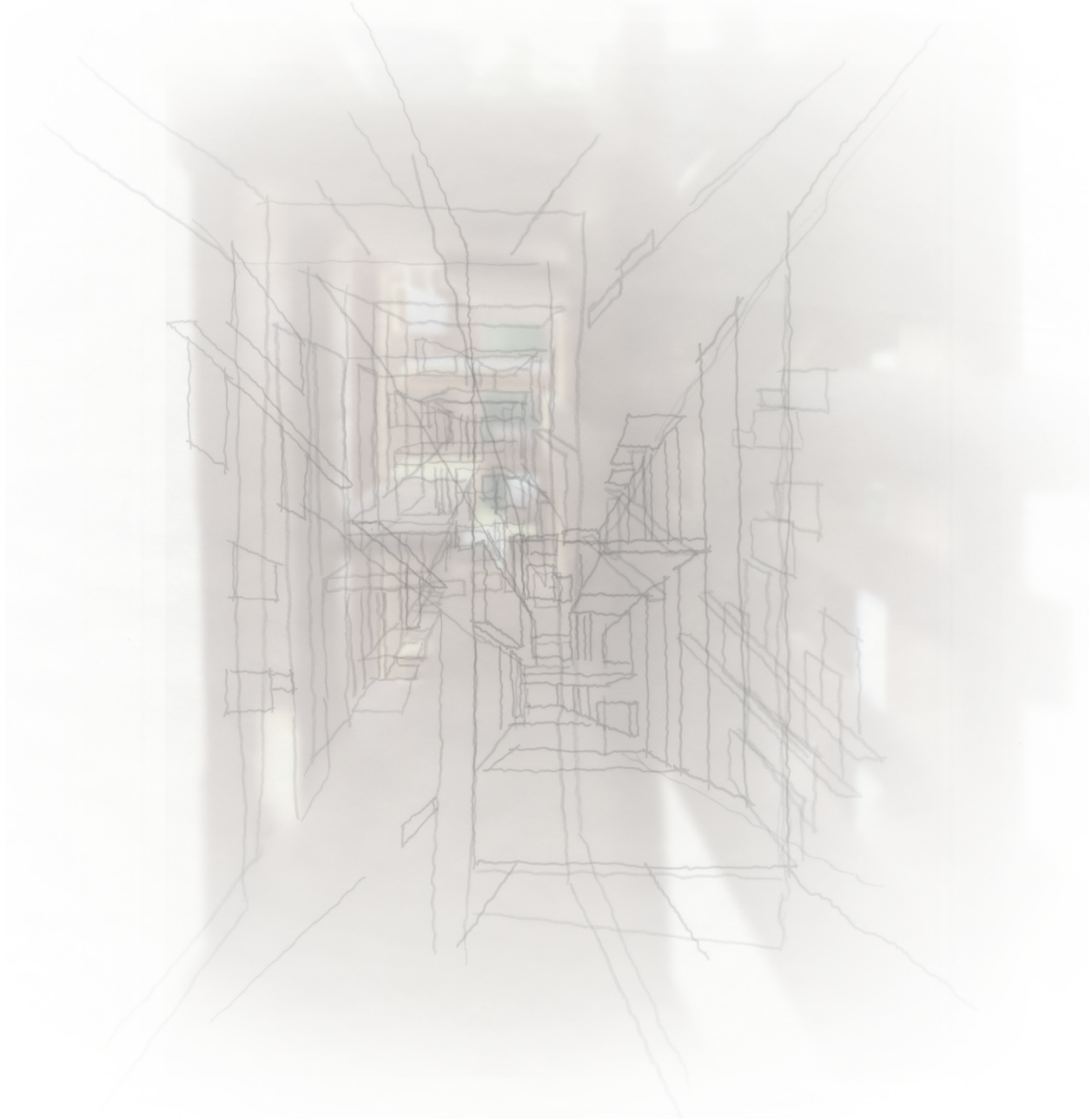


Fig. 5 Early Conceptual Image

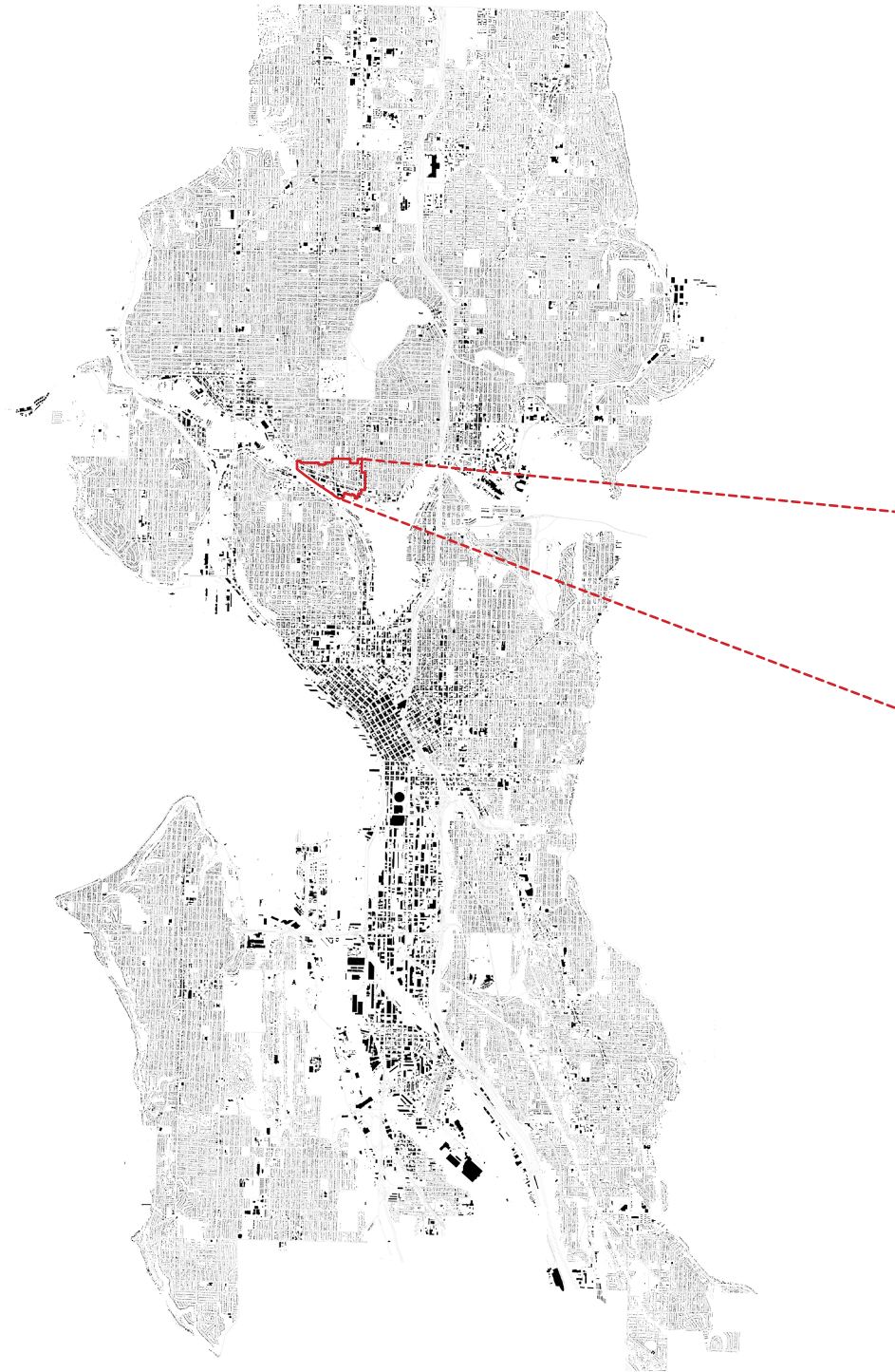


Fig. 6 Seattle

Site Selection

The site was selected because of the criteria dictated by the proposed problem and thesis solution. It is in an urban village with compact mixed uses. It is an area of distinction that is potentially at risk of losing its characteristics through new building development. The area can possibly benefit from an architectural intervention that reflects the current scale of use that is prevalent in the neighborhood.

The Hub Urban Village of Fremont is generally bordered by North 39th Street to the north, 3rd Avenue NW to the west, Stone Way to the east and the Ship Canal to the south. The building site will encompass two underutilized parcels between N 36th St and N 35th St between Francis Ave N and Dayton Ave N.

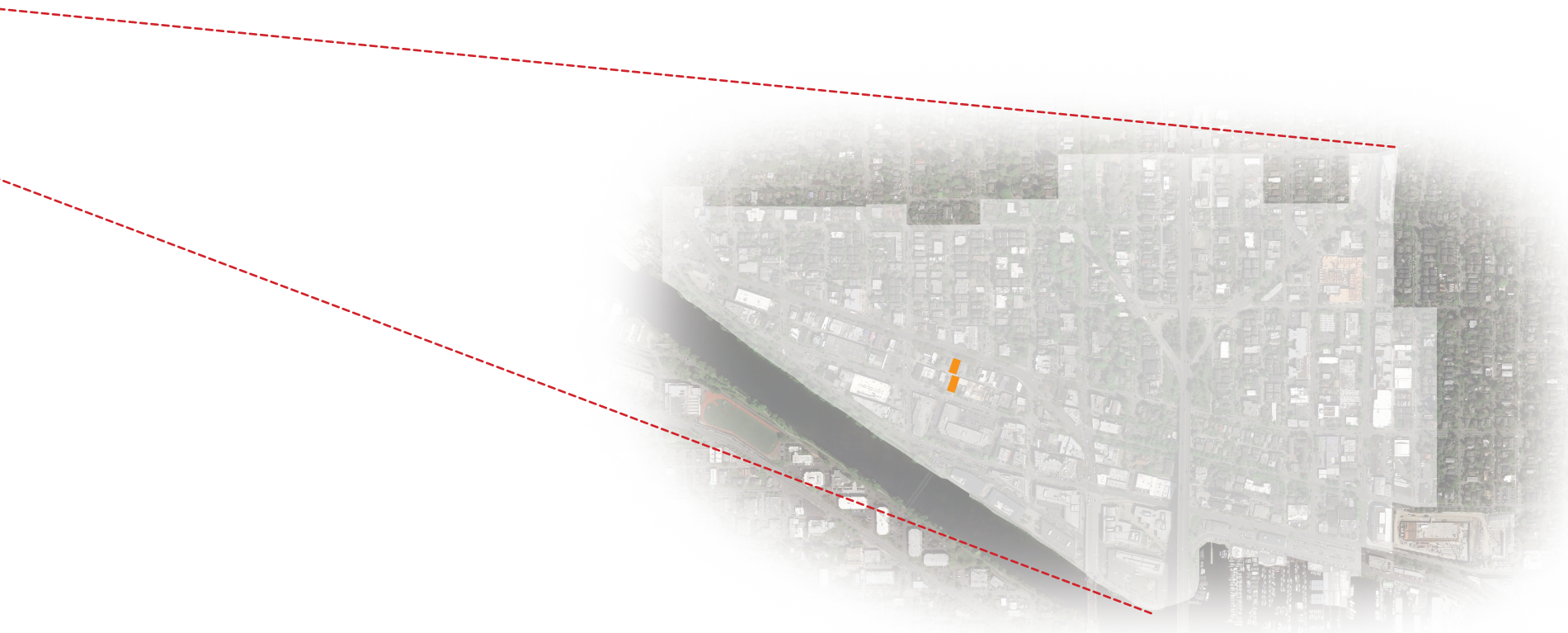


Fig. 7 Fremont Urban Village

The Effect of Platting on Scale of Use

Some of the older buildings in Fremont reveal a diversity of use that has evolved over time. Diversity of use has added to the distinct character of the neighborhood. Much of the distinct character comes from the older buildings that house small local businesses. Many of these buildings have been in existence since the early 20th century and are still in use today. This illustrates the importance of small scale buildings that are flexible in use.²⁵

Fremont was originally platted in 1888. The pattern created by the plats was continued through many of the buildings built in the early 20th century. The continued use of these structures preserves the fine grain characteristics along N 36th St.

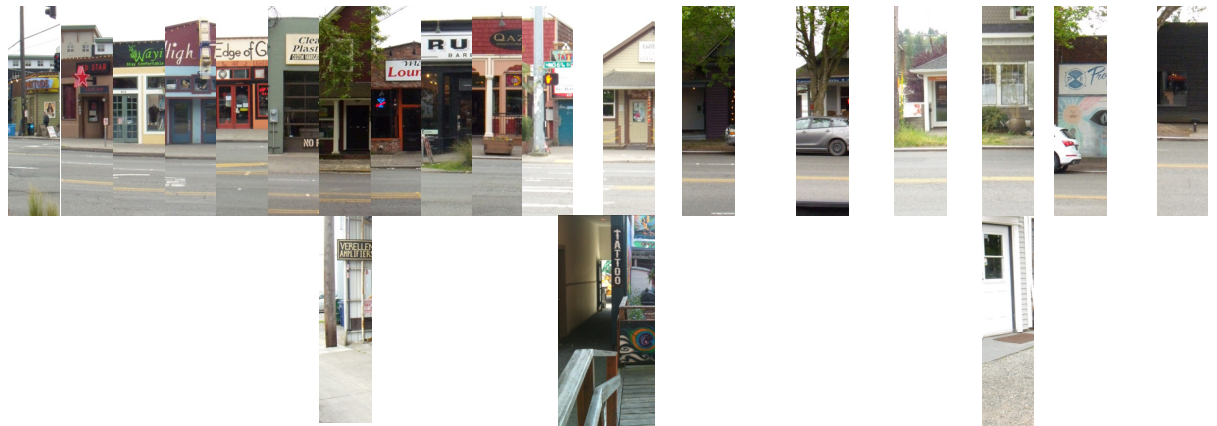
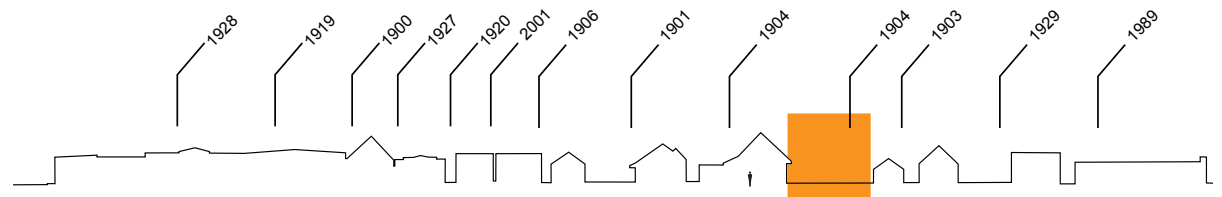


Fig. 8 Temporal Element

There is a temporal dimension that relates to scale of use and fine granularity. Neighborhoods that develop slowly over time and containing structures that are flexible in their use tend to retain their granularity. Many of the businesses in Fremont occupy converted single family residences that were built at the turn of the 20th century.



The specific site is relatively flat east to west following N 36th St. This is important because it is conducive to pedestrian activity east to west. Retail spaces, restaurants, pubs and nightclubs along this corridor receive a good deal of exposure. There is rapid gain in elevation to the north and a gentle decline to the south where the neighborhood meets the Lake Washington ship canal. The Burke-Gilman trail runs east to west along the ship canal and carries a significant amount of bicycle and pedestrian traffic through and into the area.

The building site has significant grade change from N 36th St dropping 10 ft or more to a parking lot and alleyway. Because of the geography and street and alley access, the site has interesting program potential that speaks to the compact, walkability of the neighborhood.



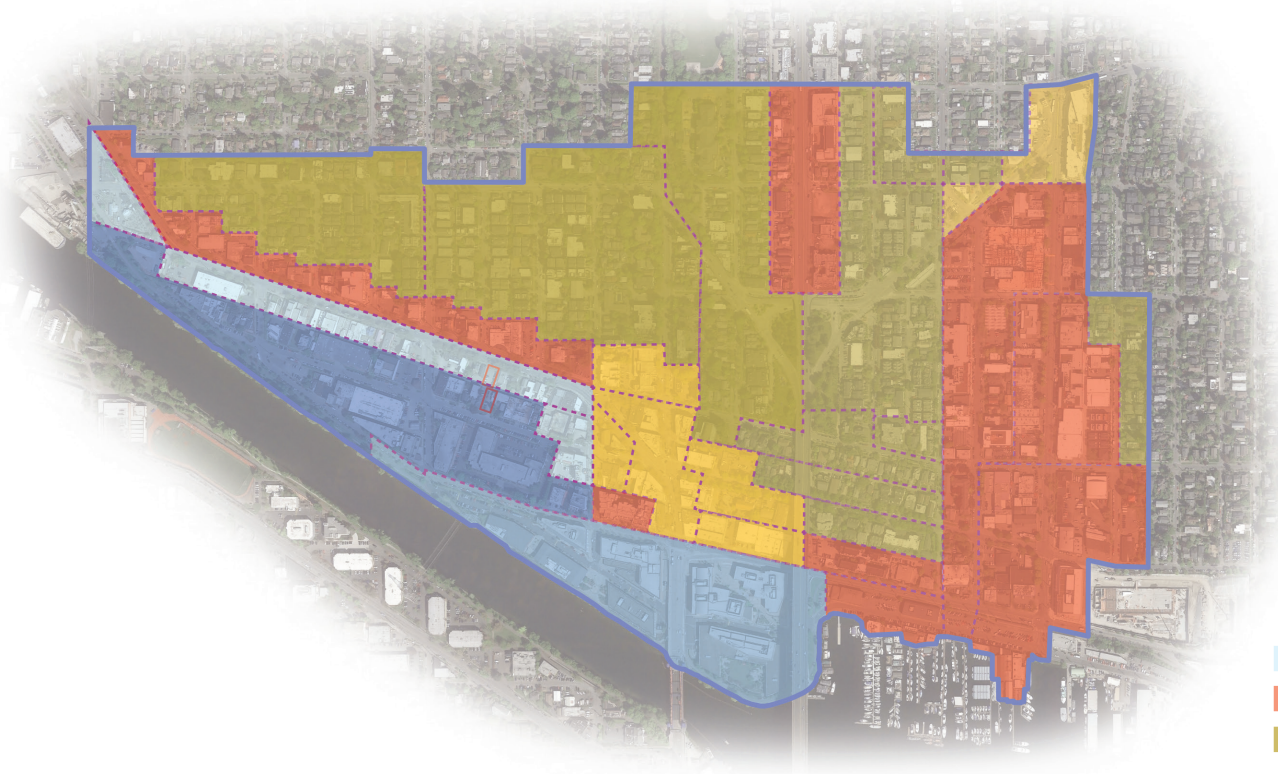
Fig. 9 The Site and the Plats

The building site is in orange. The red outlines depicts how the block was originally platted.

Demographics and Zoning

According to 2010 census data, Fremont Hub Urban Village has a residential population density of 18.5 people per acre. The median age is around 34 with predominantly renter occupied households. With a mix of industrial, corporate, medical, retail and food businesses, Fremont has a dense, daily work population. Some businesses open early in the morning while others, like nightclubs, close late at night giving this area a broad mix of primary uses.²⁶

Conceptually, Fremont appears to be a suitable site to investigate for this thesis. It is an area that has a distinct character that has developed incrementally over time. A walk around the neighborhood reveals the dimensions discussed in Chapter 2. Jane Jacobs (1961) wrote about elements that make for lively cities and good urban spaces. Essentially, the elements she highlights make up a rich mixture of “primary uses.” Fremont already has a heterogeneous mixture of uses. Much of this is due to many adjacent zones being in a compact area. There are solutions to the problem already in existence in Fremont. These solutions, which have developed over time, can be used as a basis to inform the design of the building.



- | | |
|---|---|
|  Industrial Buffer |  Industrial General |
|  Commercial |  Industrial Commercial |
|  Lowrise |  Neighborhood Commercial |
| |  Tax Parcel |

The land usage and building usage in Fremont is at a variety of scales that lends to the heterogeneous nature of the area. There is a large, locally owned grocery coop, large corporate office spaces and industrial businesses. As a counter to this, there are many small retail spaces. This thesis will focus on supporting small-scale retail, but adjacent large-scale businesses bring in a daily workforce population that might help support the small businesses.

The mixed and varied retail environment is dependent on the small building scale that permeates the neighborhood. Many of the independent business in Fremont inhabit small, older freestanding buildings or are in small spaces in older bigger buildings. Small spaces are conducive to independent ownership of business.²⁷ Existing spaces in Fremont display flexibility in use that allows for change. Allowing for change is important, as the values in a community are constantly in flux. Part of the impetus for change can be the demands of the consumer. Sometimes businesses are opened to fulfill a missing consumer niche, other times businesses are opened to create a consumer niche.²⁸ Essential to this constant flux are small, flexible, affordable retail spaces.²⁹

Fig. 10 Zoning

Much of the fine grain built fabric of Fremont has been preserved by the limitations of zoning and land use. The site sits in an industrial buffer zone that limits usage to primarily industrial. With industry being diminished in the area, the current uses include restaurants, entertainment, boutique shops and tech businesses with an increasing integration of residential.

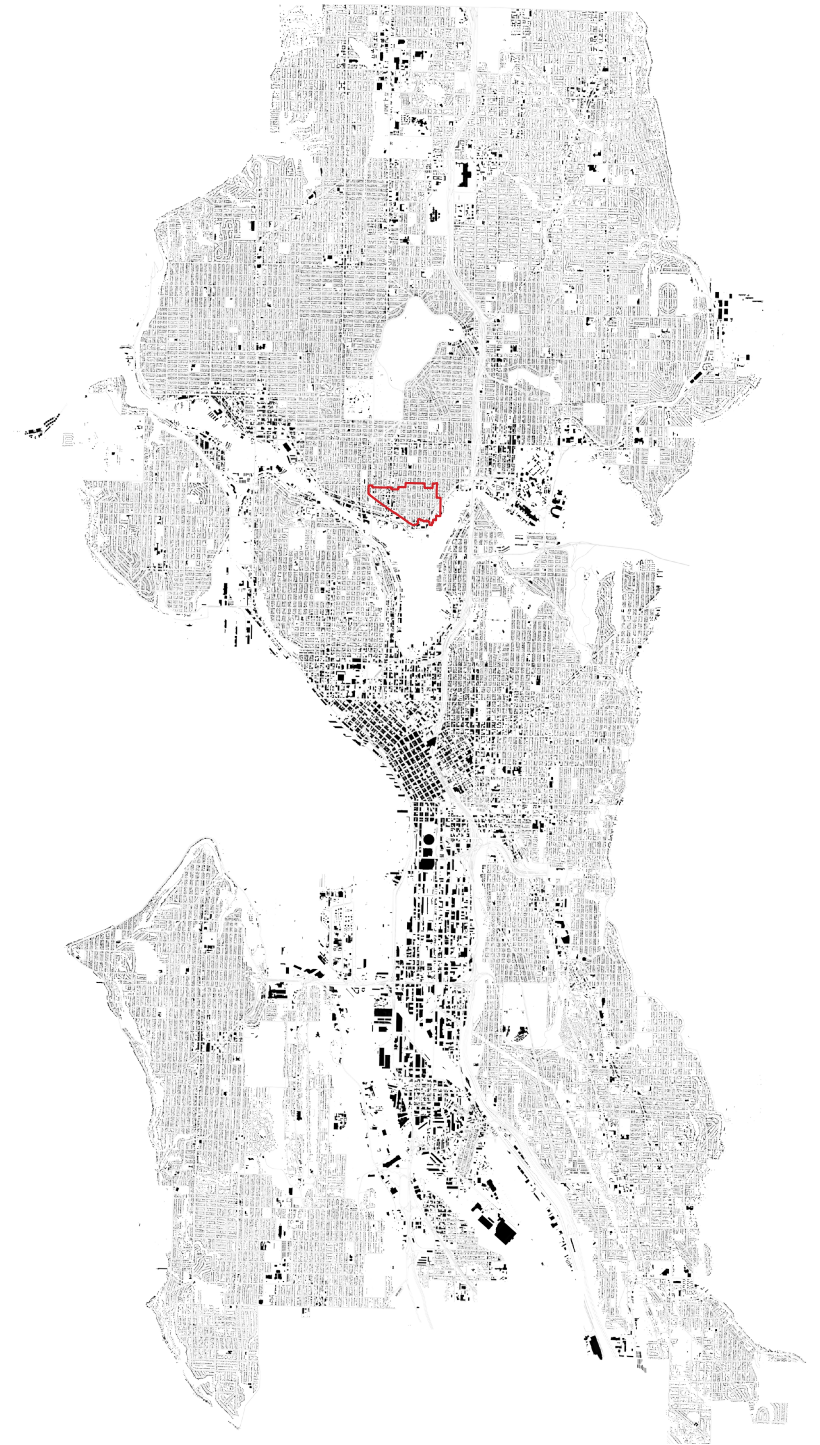


Fig. 11 Figure Ground of Seattle

This figure ground image of Seattle displays the variety of granularity throughout the city.

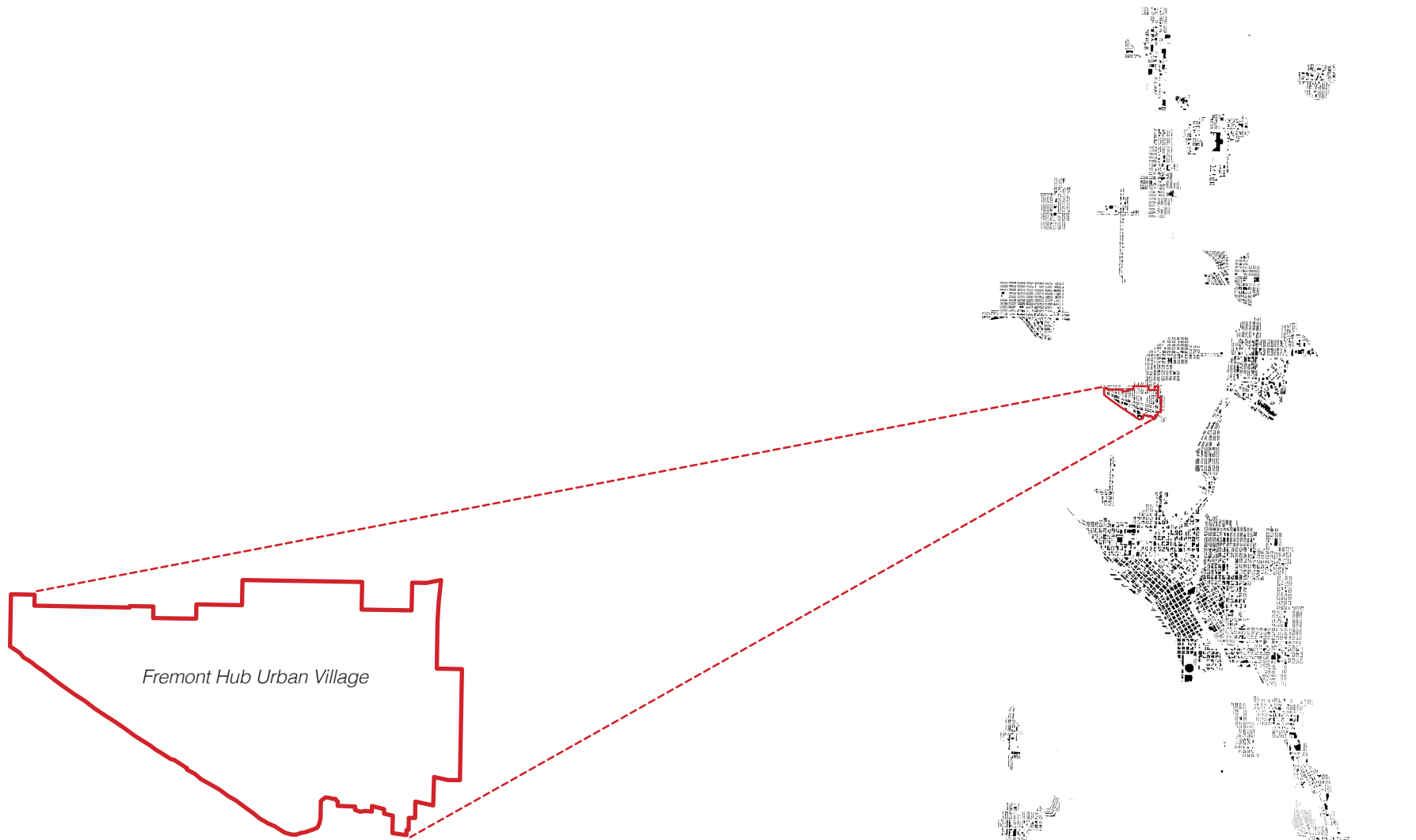


Fig. 12 Figure Ground of Urban Villages

With the single family landscape taken away, the image is left with the Urban Villages and commercial and downtown cores. Many of these areas contain a range of granularity from fine grain single family to large big block development. The gradation from fine to large grain primarily exists in the urban villages.

Material Overlay

The early design portion of the thesis begins with a materials based analysis. Low relief wood models were constructed as map overlays. The material overlays were executed at four different scales. The large or city scale focuses on the entirety of Seattle, the urban villages and the connections between them. The village scale focuses on the Fremont Urban Village and starts to contextualize the building site.



Fig. 13 Material Overlay at the Village Scale

Zooming in to the Fremont Urban Village, the range of granularity at the neighborhood scale becomes more evident. The material overlay illustrates some of the connections and accumulations within the neighborhood. The concentration of material in the areas of more intense use begins to take on a spatial dimension and suggests pattern, scale and intensity of use. Placing the site in context with the neighborhood, it sits in a transitional area of fine grain to large grain.

The vicinity scale zooms in even further and illustrates some of the connections and accumulations on the block directly surrounding the building site. Finally the small scale starts to suggest spaces within a building on site.

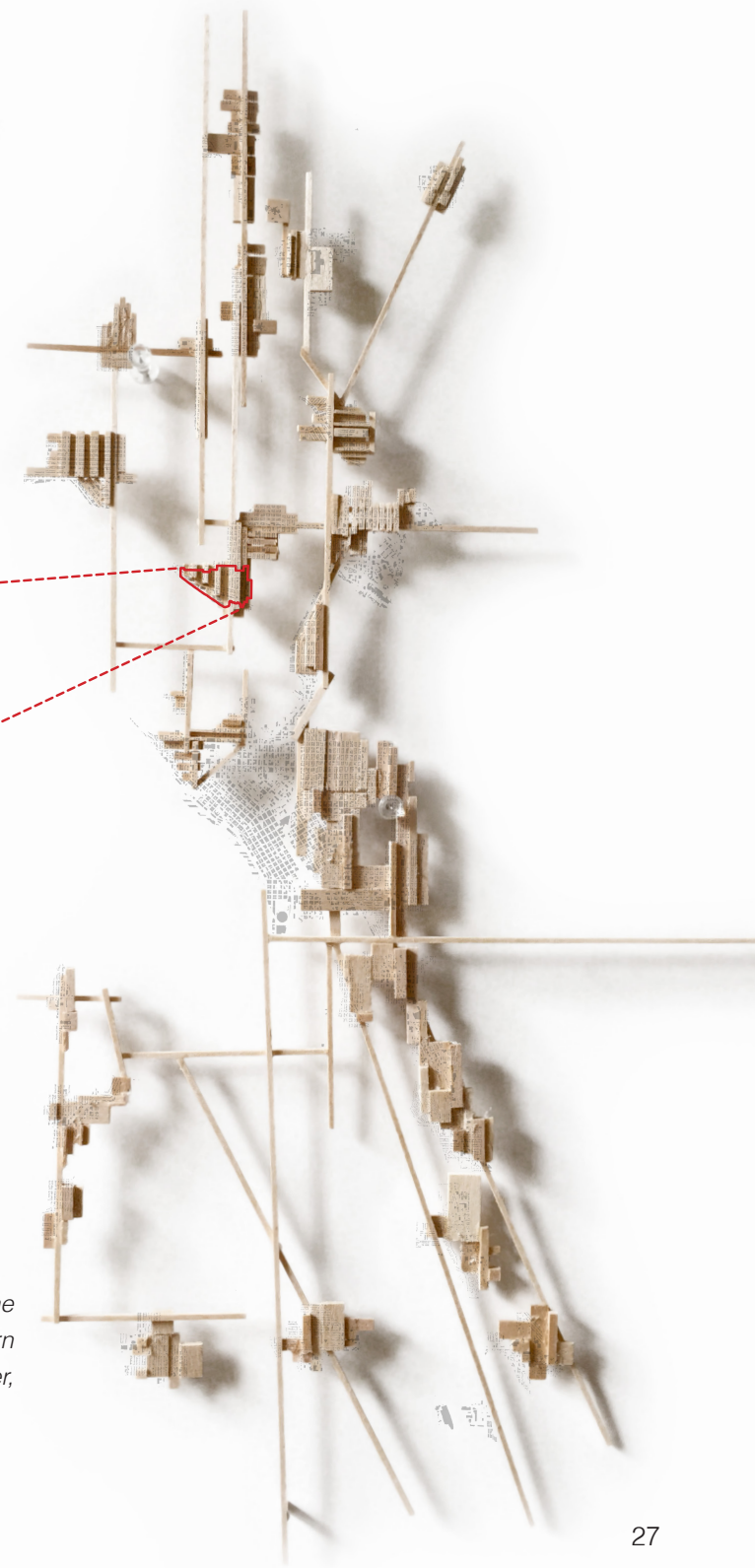


Fig. 14 Material Overlay at the City Scale

The material overlay at the city scale maps the connections between the urban villages. A pattern emerges in which the urban villages are denser, illustrating an accumulation of activities and uses.

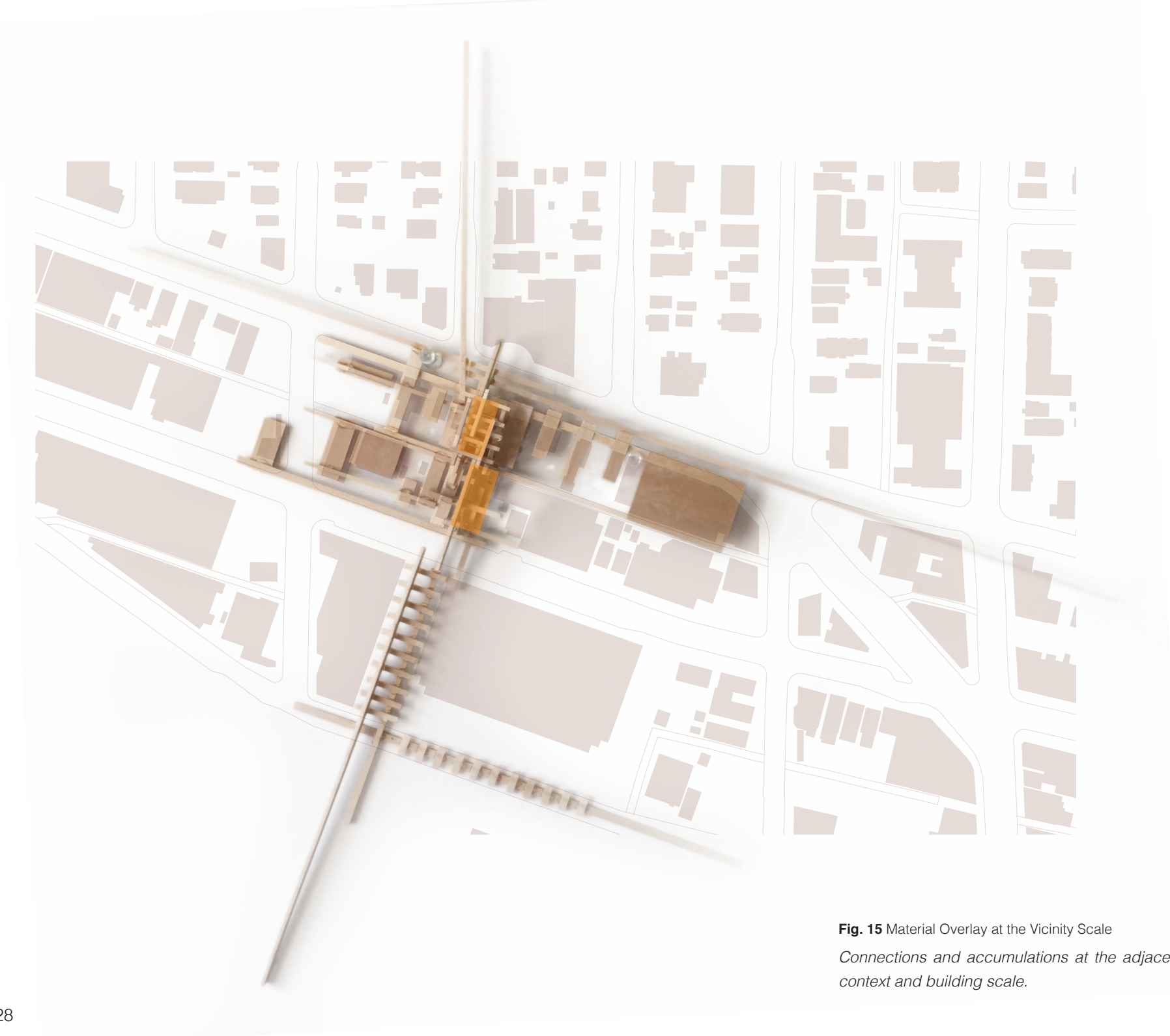


Fig. 15 Material Overlay at the Vicinity Scale
*Connections and accumulations at the adjacent site
context and building scale.*

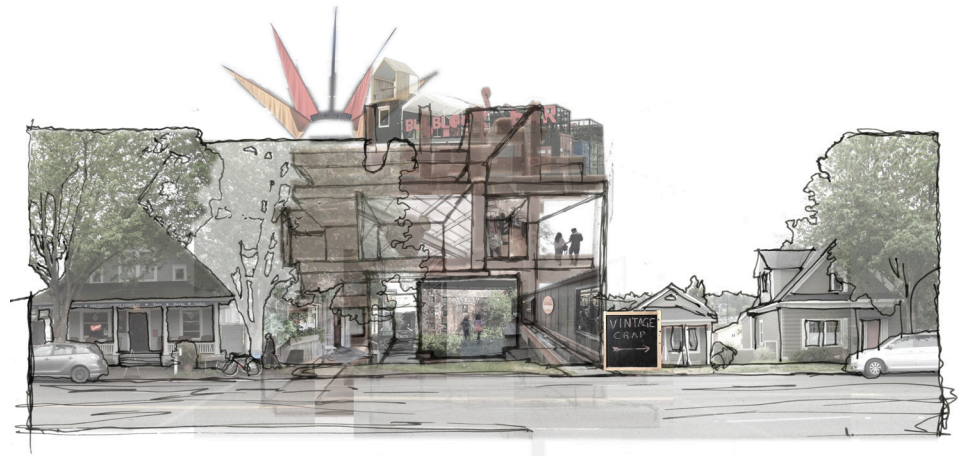


Fig. 16 Material Overlay at the Building Scale and Conceptual Vignettes

Material qualities and images suggesting space within the building start to emerge. The conceptual vignettes were generated from photographs of the building scale overlay.

Exploring Alley Connections

Fremont has a number of small businesses that front along the alleyways. This creates a network of alternative walking routes throughout the neighborhood. There is a connection that is a continuation of Dayton Ave N through the north half of the block that sits between N 36th St and N 35th St. This connection creates a pedestrian corridor between N 36th St and the alleyway at the Dayton Ave N intersection. Six businesses sit along the N 36th St facade and the pedestrian corridor. They exemplify the intense mixture of uses that can occur at a small scale. There are 2 restaurants, a tattoo artist, a dance studio, massage therapist, and a small fitness training studio sitting on a 5400 sq ft parcel.

The pedestrian corridor at Dayton Ave N is open only during business hours. And to occupy it even during those hours feels a little bit like trespassing. A more public feeling pedestrian path would tend to draw more people through and enhance mobility within the neighborhood.

The site for the thesis sits in the middle of the block between N 36th St and N 35th St at the Frances Ave N intersection. The current use is 2 parking lots. Though underutilized as urban space, the 2 parking lots suggest a through block connection. Adding a crosswalk at the intersection and leveraging the existing through block connection can enhance pedestrian mobility in the neighborhood and draw people through the site.

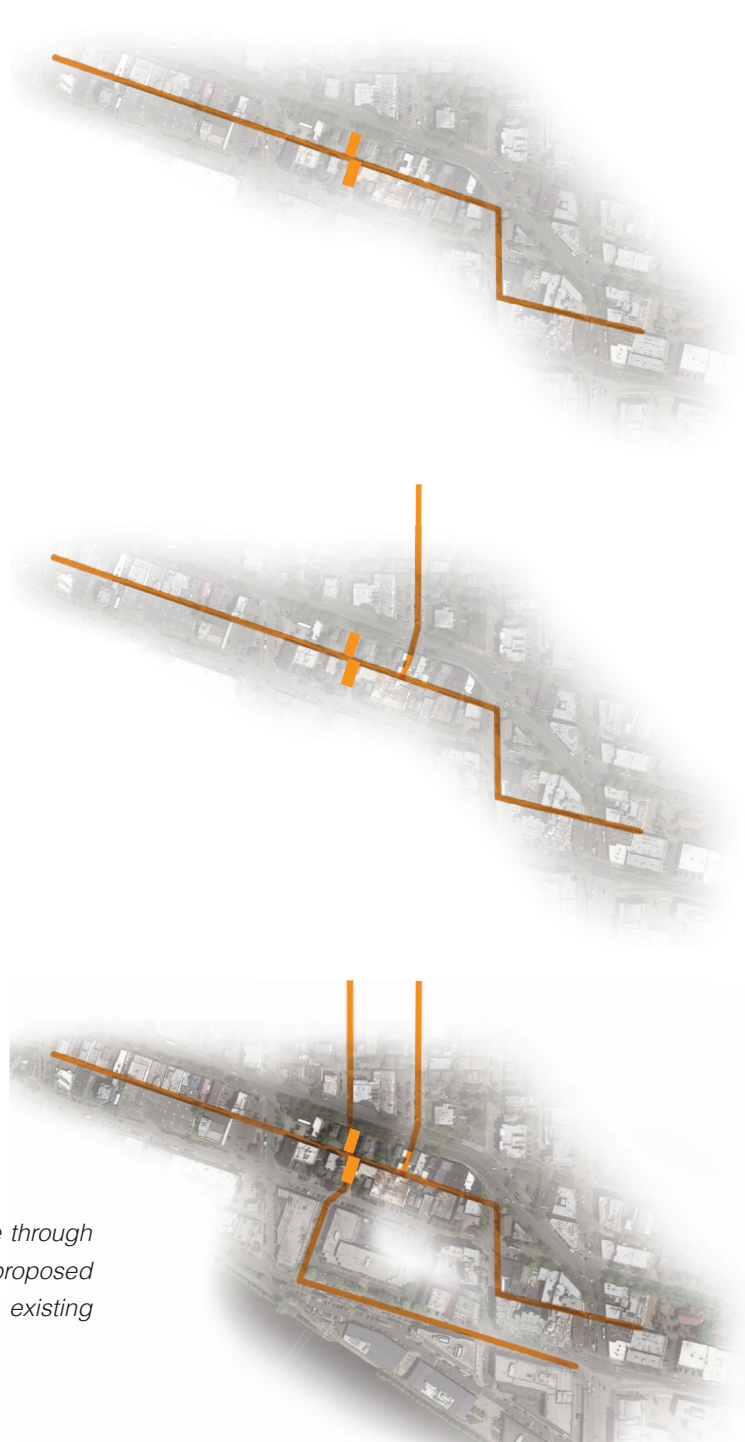


Fig. 17 Alley Connections and Shops on the Alley

Top to bottom: existing alley and shops, the through connection at Dayton Ave N. and shops, proposed pedestrian corridor through the site and existing adjacent activities.

Chapter 4

The Design: Strategy and a Building

Strategy

The goal of the thesis is to produce a designed alternative to monolithic development. Finding an alternative to big block development is necessary to preserve the distinctive characteristics that cultivate and evolve over time in a neighborhood like Fremont. The research for this thesis illustrates that much of what lends distinctive characteristics to a neighborhood is related to scale. When designing a new development in a distinctive area, one of the most important dimensions to consider is the scale of use. Or to ask a two part question: What is the current use of the buildings in the neighborhood and how much space is required in new buildings to maintain the current use while still allowing the neighborhood to develop and evolve? Another question to ask is: How walkable is this area? Neighborhoods and uses continually change. Specific program will not be a dominant consideration in this thesis. The design is an investigation of scale and walkability.

The design portion of this thesis looks at one aspect of scale that influences the small size of many of the building in Fremont. The fact that many of the smaller older buildings are still in use after over 100 years of existence reinforces the observation that small scale spaces are crucial to maintaining distinctive characteristics in a neighborhood. The other major aspect of the building is increasing alternative pedestrian connections in the neighborhood which makes the area more walkable.

This building will demonstrate a designed solution for broadening the mixture of uses within a compact city lot while enhancing the walkability of a neighborhood.



Fig. 18 Scale and Granularity

This image illustrates the variety of scales and granularity within the context of the site. The building will sit on 2 underutilized parcels that are currently being used as parking lots.



Fig. 19 Platting

The building sites (shown in orange) are each comprised of two plats. This will help maintain the pattern of granularity.

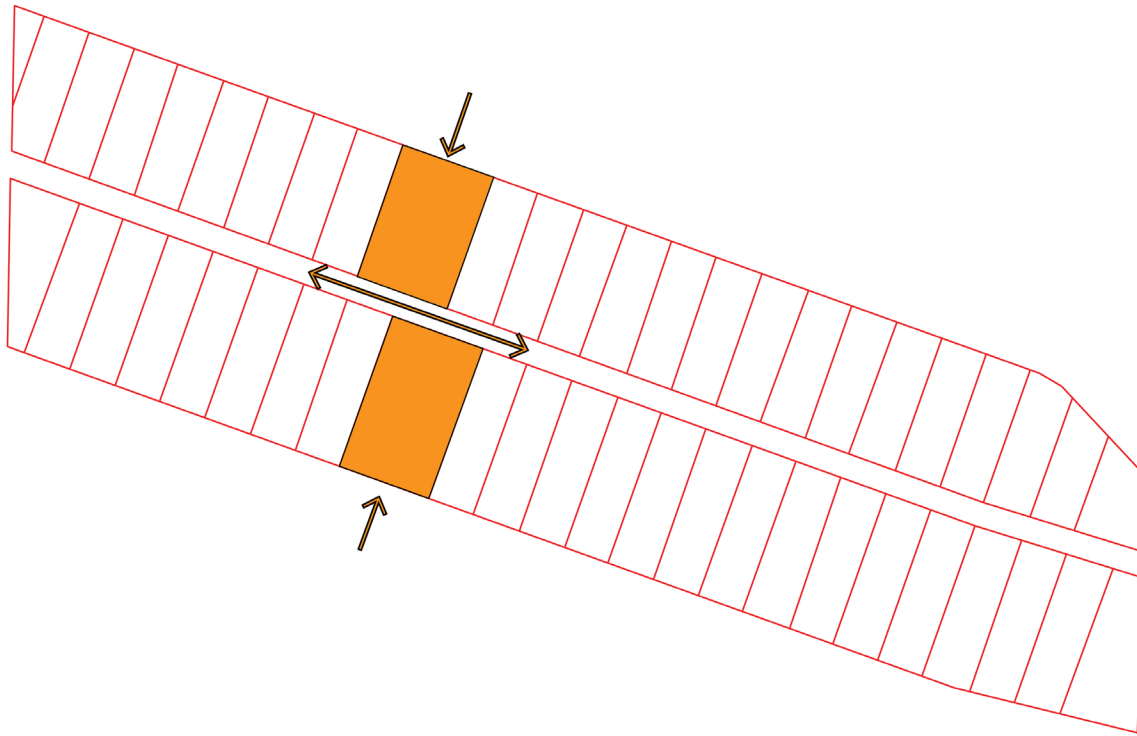


Fig. 20 Scale and Granularity

A typical development might address the site only from the perimeter. There would be public facade on the street with some access from the alley. Stacking floor plates can create density, but it would do little for maintaining the scale of use or intensity of use. This type of building is insular and does not properly engage the street.

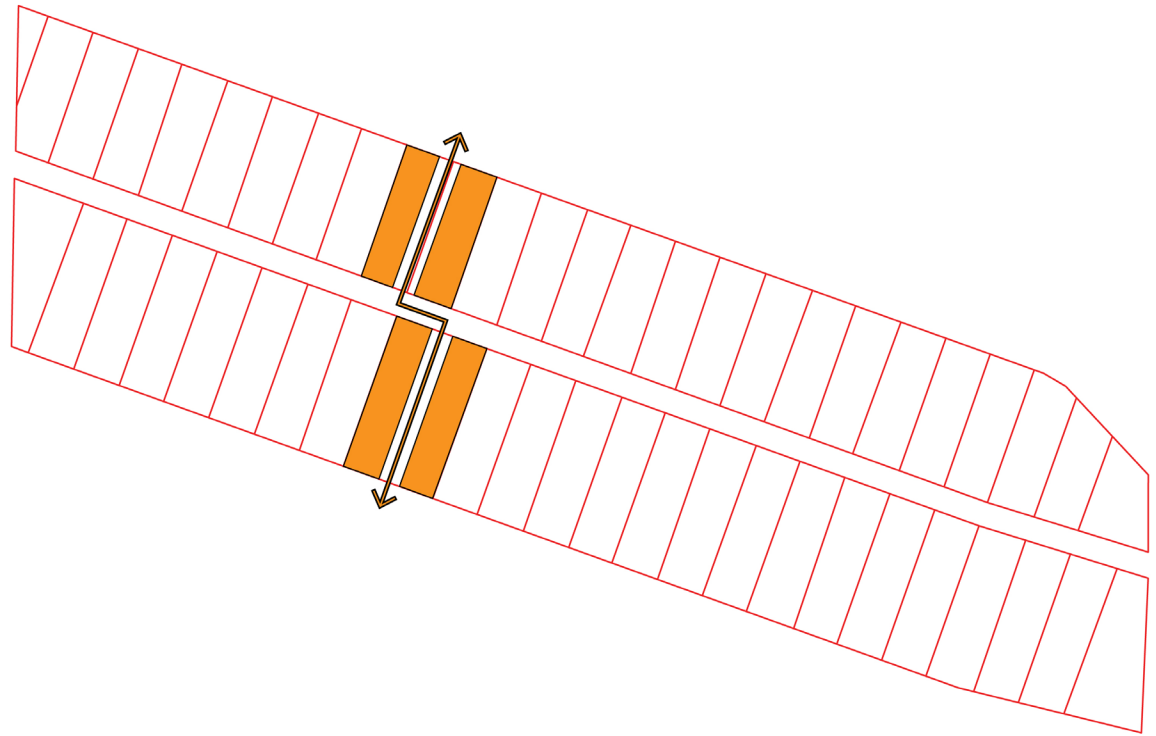


Fig. 21 Through Block Connection

This design proposes a through block pedestrian corridor which would increase the public space in the neighborhood and enhance walkability.

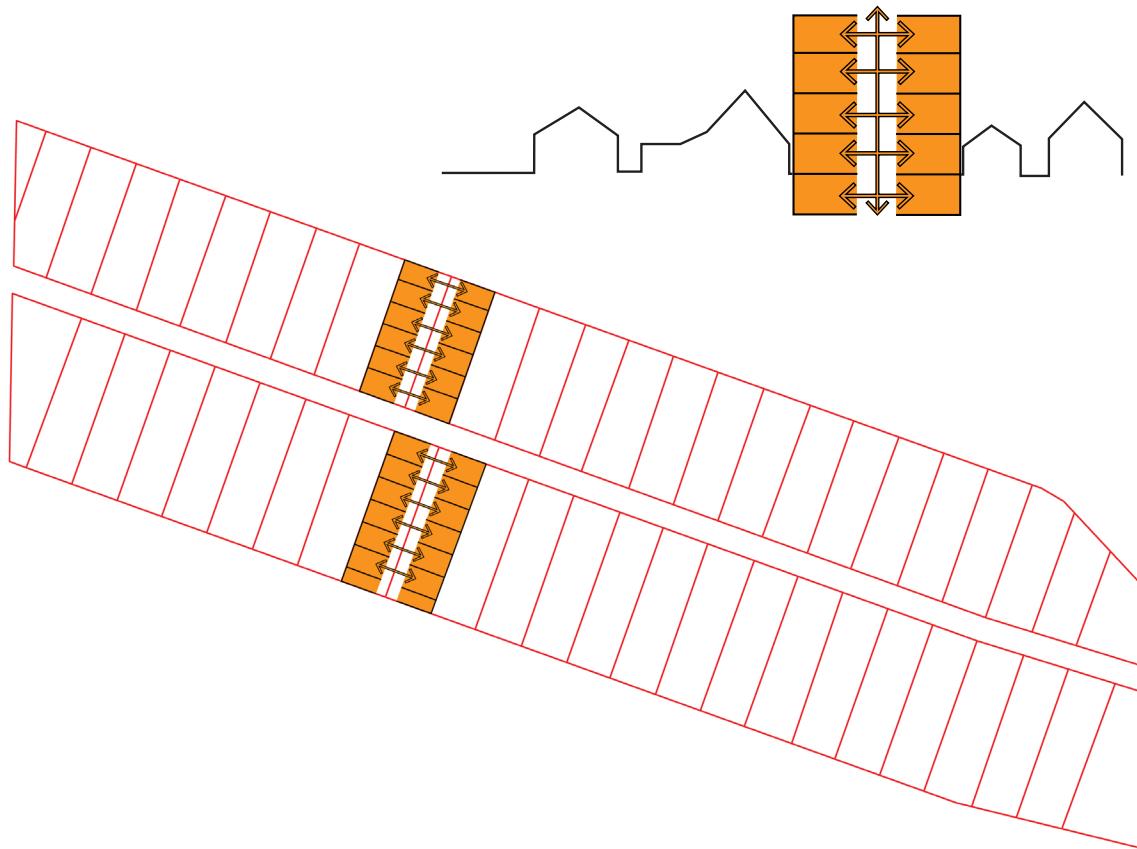


Fig. 22 Playing With Pattern

The scale of use in the neighborhood is largely dictated by the original platting. Since the platting telegraphs through many of the older buildings, this building will utilize that rhythm or pattern but at an increasingly finer grain. This fine grain will telegraph through the building becoming small retail and commercial spaces which will create and intense pedestrian shopping street. Taking advantage of the zoned height limit by building up will further intensify the mixture of uses on the site by lifting and repeating the pedestrian corridor to multiple levels.

The Building



Fig. 23 The Existing Site

The site is in the middle of a long narrow block. There are T-intersections at Francis Av N and Dayton Ave N. Pedestrian flow is disrupted at these intersections. There is a crosswalk at Dayton Ave N and N 36th St.



Fig. 24 Cutting Through the Site

The new pedestrian street cuts through at a bias and acts as a continuation of Frances Ave N through the site.



Fig. 25 Forming the Pedestrian Corridor

The site gets broken up even further as the edges of the pedestrian street are shaped by the building spaces, circulation and thresholds. The pattern of the pedestrian street is a play on the 15 ft x 15 ft grid of the building. The 15 ft x 15 ft grid is derived from the 30 ft x 90 ft plats. Each 60 ft x 90 ft building site is made up of two plats.



Fig. 26 The Spaces

The interior spaces are oriented to the pedestrian corridor forming an intense small scale shopping street with spaces for other small businesses on the floor above.



Fig. 27 Building Plan in Site

The addition of a crosswalk at Francis Ave N enhances walkability and access. With party walls built to the property line, the focus of the building turns inward. The pedestrian corridor through the building is accessible from N 36th St, the east/west alley and N 35th St. The building is accessible from these frontages which creates nodes of other activities.

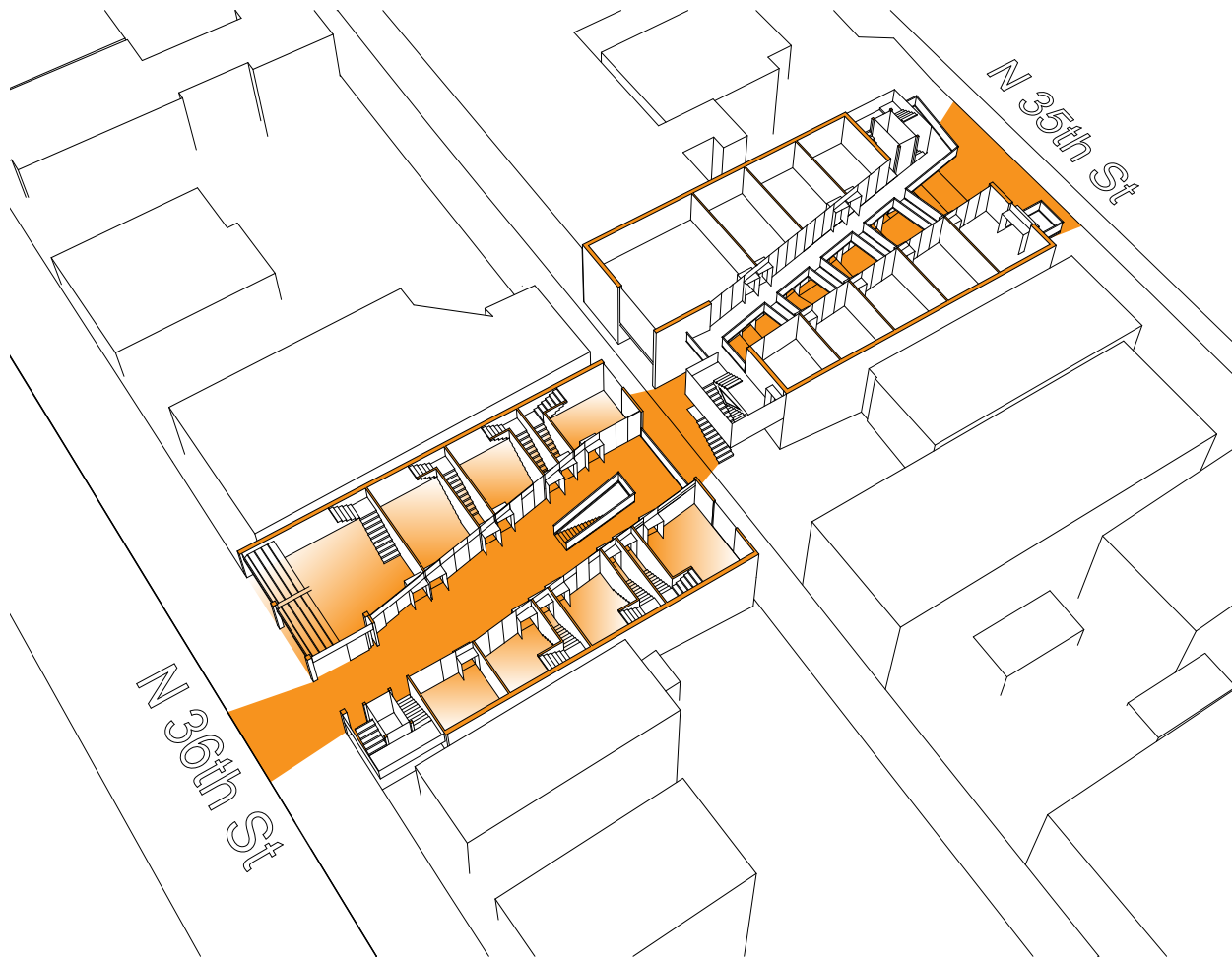


Fig. 28 A Different View of the Pedestrian Corridor

This image illustrates how the pedestrian corridor relates to the building and the site. Due to a grade change from N 36th St to N 35th St, the street level at N 36th St is the same elevation as the second floor at N 35th St.

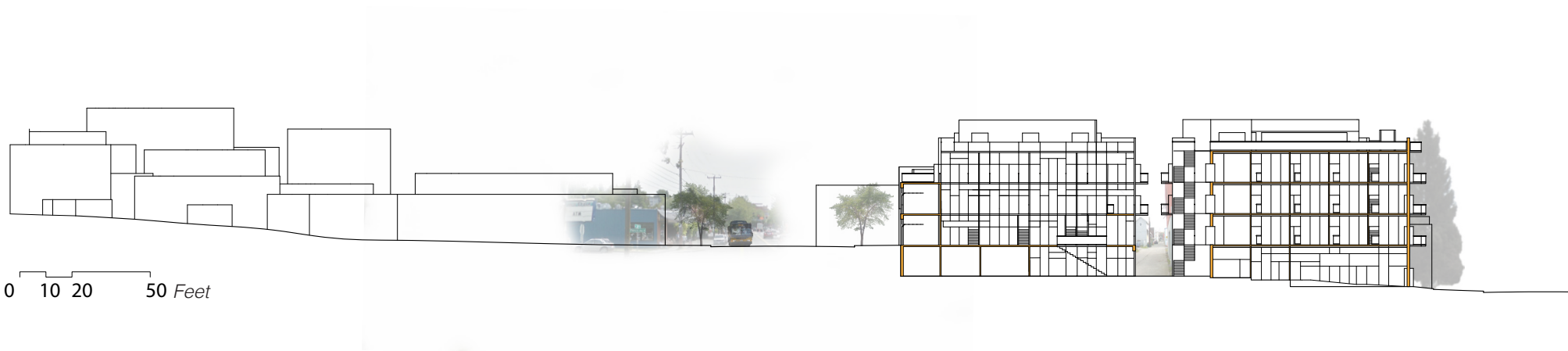


Fig. 29 Site Section

This image further illustrates the geography and places the building section in context with neighborhood scale and features.





Fig. 30 The Building

This image, looking southeast, shows the building at the corner of Francis Ave N and N 36th St. The building sits on a transit corridor and there is an intense mix of uses in adjacent buildings. Some of the adjacent uses are nightclubs, restaurants, cafes and small local retail. The proposed use of the building reflects this at street level. With multiple floor levels, the building can accommodate other commercial uses and neighborhood services.



Fig. 31 Restaurant and Sidewalk Cafe at N 36th St

Placing a cafe at the entrance intensifies the usage and street engagement. The turnover of customers throughout the day will bring a mix of people to the building.



Fig. 32 Pedestrian Shopping Street

The pedestrian connection through the site draws people through the building and engages them with the retail spaces bordering the corridor.



Fig. 33 Inside a Retail Space

The building contains many small spaces which are designed to be occupied by boutique retail and other neighborhood services.



Fig. 34 Transverse Building Section

This image illustrates the spatial relationship of the alley and 2nd and 3rd levels to the pedestrian corridor.

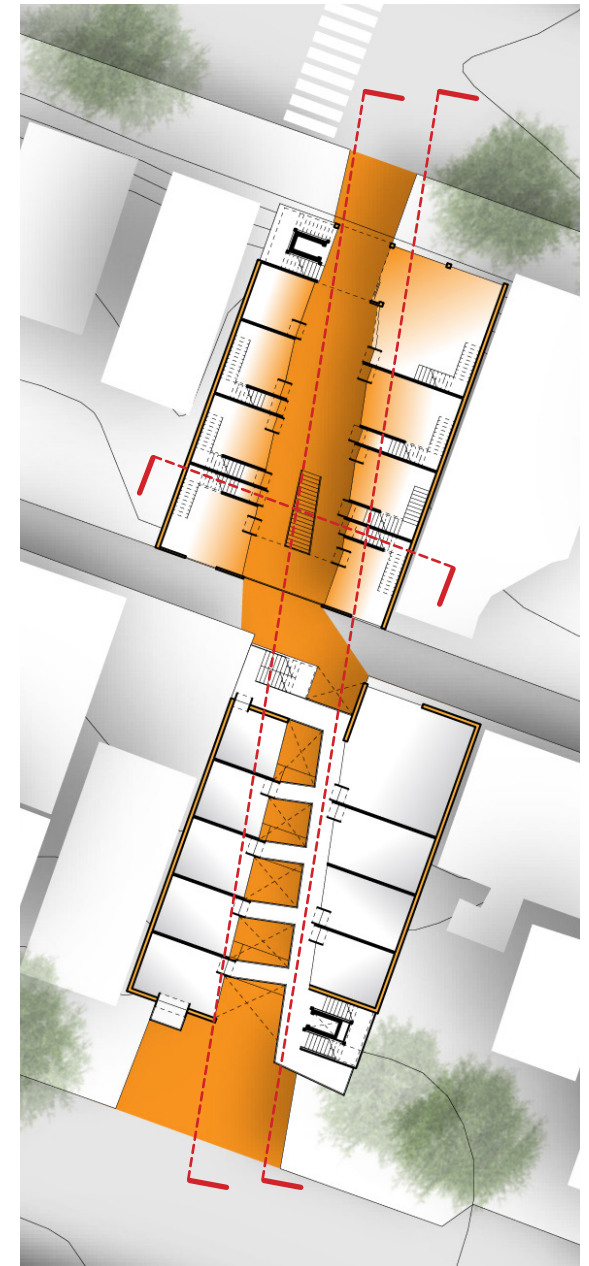


Fig. 35 Longitudinal Building Sections

These sections illustrate the longitudinal circulation through the buildings.



Fig. 36 Variety of Use

This image illustrates the variety of use that may be contained within the buildings. This vignette shows a scooter mechanic and dealership and the supporting activities.

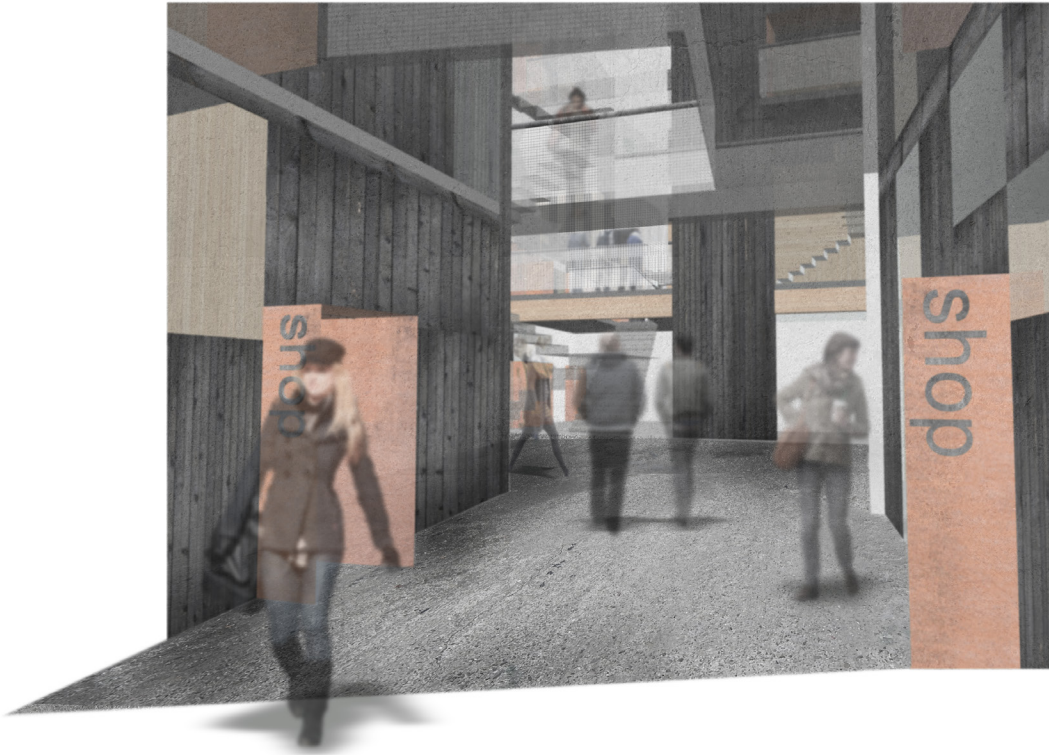


Fig. 37 Pedestrian Shopping Street

This image shows a continuation of the pedestrian corridor through the site. This view is looking towards the north building.



Fig. 38 View Looking North from N 35th St

This image illustrates the offices with balconies engaging the street. Also shown is the vertical public circulation with balconies engaging the street.



Fig. 39 Food Trucks

This image is looking north from N 34th St. The thesis buildings sit near the entrance to the Fremont Sunday Market, which takes place year round. The buildings offer a walking connection to the Sunday market and from the Sunday market to the neighborhood.

Chapter 5

Conclusion and the CVS Example

Conclusion

The intent of this thesis was to design an architectural intervention that allows for new development while preserving the character and distinction that develops in a neighborhood over time. The research and site analysis reveals that character and distinction are often related to building size and scale of use.

In Fremont, there are many small, early 20th century buildings still in use that illustrate the importance of fine grained scale in retaining character and distinction in a neighborhood. Since many of the smaller older buildings in Fremont are a reflection of the original platting in the neighborhood, the pattern created by the platting was used to establish the scale of the new building being designed for this thesis. By dividing the plats of the building site into even smaller patterns, the grain of the neighborhood is reduced to the site scale. The grain is scaled down further and repeated throughout the building. The edges of the pedestrian corridor are shaped by the building spaces and thresholds which are determined by repeating established patterns. This method retains the grain and scale of the neighborhood which helps to preserve its character and distinction.

The method of finding a common metric that determines the pattern and granularity of a neighborhood could have a greater application and be used in other parts of the city as well. If character and distinction are related to building scale and scale of use and those scales are in turn a reflection of the platting, granularity and pattern of a neighborhood, then granularity and pattern should always be a consideration when designing buildings that enhance neighborhood character.

The CVS example was used early in the thesis to establish the meaning and importance of scale of use as a concept. During the presentation of the thesis and ensuing discussion it was suggested that the CVS example could take on a greater dimension and help make the project more financially feasible. It was argued that to make 'material' more germane to the issue of character and distinction, CVS could be placed in the building but would have to forego the usual signage and merchandising and be made to adhere to the material characteristics that already exist in the neighborhood.

The infusion of a big-box retailer into a project like this could help make it more viable as a real world project. The big retailer is the anchor tenant that subsidizes the smaller retail spaces. By making the big retailer adhere to the material nature and scale of the neighborhood, distinctive character is maintained. If the big retailer eventually ceases operations in the area, then the neighborhood still has a building that fits in. If this project were to be further developed, the study of integrating big box retail while staying true to the characteristics of the neighborhood could be useful to the overall design method.

Continuing the CVS Example

Endnotes

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²*Davis, Howard. Living Over the Store: Architecture and Local Urban Life. Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2012. pg 93.*

³*Ellin, Nan. Integral Urbanism. New York and London: Routledge, 2006. pg 105*

⁴*Ellin, Integral Urbanism, 113*

⁵*Comprehensive Plan: Toward a Sustainable Seattle.*

⁶*Comprehensive Plan: Toward a Sustainable Seattle.*

⁷*Comprehensive Plan: Toward a Sustainable Seattle.*

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¹¹*Hinshaw, Mark. The New Seattle, Where Everything Looks the Same. Crosscut.com, 2015*

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¹³*Jacobs, Jane. The Death and Life of Great American Cities. Chapter 10.*

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¹⁵*Ellin, Nan. Integral Urbanism, 105.*

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¹⁷*Gehl, Jan. 2013. Cities for People, 1122-1129*

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