

THE CASCADE

RECONNECTING SAINT PAUL WITH THE MISSISSIPPI

Entry ID: 54754

Cities around the world are defined by their riverfronts—places that offer expansive natural views, opportunities for local businesses, and inviting public spaces. Kellogg Park gives Saint Paul the chance to cultivate all of this and more. From the bluff above, the city opens onto sweeping views of the river, while the lower portion of the park provides a direct connection to the water's edge. This difference in elevation creates a natural opportunity for a cascading structure that links the two experiences.

When Saint Paul residents were asked what they wanted their riverfront to become, the most common responses focused on economic development and community growth. The Cascade directly responds to those desires. Its location leads seamlessly into downtown, with existing sidewalks and bike lanes forming an established corridor. The Cascade builds upon these paths, using them as the primary circulation routes throughout the site. Spaces closest to downtown would feature permanent covered shops created along the existing promenade. Their proximity invites downtown workers to visit for lunch, after-work dinners, or weekend outings—providing a steady economic base. The shops and restaurants would also benefit from iconic views of the Mississippi, a draw in itself.

From the promenade, guests can reach the riverfront in three ways: by either of the staircases framing the promenade or by strolling down the gently sloping hill. Despite the site's steep grade change, the hill is shaped into a soft descent, offering room for walks, picnicking, and even winter sledding. Its angle provides views of both the plaza below and the historic lift bridge on the horizon.

At the base of the hill sits the site's major addition: a large community pavilion. Stepped to match the descending grade, the pavilion features a simple structure of crisscrossing beams and columns that extend the architectural language of the promenade above. It is designed to host a wide range of community events—markets, weddings, expositions, and more. Its angled form opens naturally onto the plaza, blending indoor and outdoor spaces. Clerestory cuts through the hill and windows along the staircase bring natural light deep into the pavilion.

The main plaza, framed by the hill, staircases, and natural bluff, provides a flexible gathering space suitable for movie nights, concerts, running clubs, and other large events. To give the plaza a direct connection to the river, the existing railroad tracks and divided highway were rerouted away from the site. The Grand Round bike trail is also extended to pass through the Cascade, strengthening the link between the Mississippi River and the broader Saint Paul community.

Ultimately, the Cascade is an investment in Saint Paul's economic vitality and social life. By building on the site's existing assets, it introduces new gathering spaces that emphasize connection—to downtown, to the Mississippi, and to one another.

Site Plan
1" : 200'

The existing Kellogg Park is maintained, while the existing river-adjacent roads and train tracks are removed. Decades ago, the city tore down the existing buildings that blocked the view of the river. This decision was honored for the new site design.

The existing downtown roads and pathways are maintained and emphasized as the main entrance to the new park.

Promenade Plan
1" : 50'

With a balcony extended on the other side of the original columns, the existing promenade is closed off to create rentable spaces. The balcony is an opportunity for outdoor seating and great views of the river and plaza below.

Having the staircases on the end encourages guests to walk the entirety of the balcony before descending. The hill begins at the balcony and cascades downward till reaching the level of the water.

Plaza Plan
1" : 50'

The existing parking lot becomes the new community plaza, with connection to the river, Grand Round bike path, and promenade above.

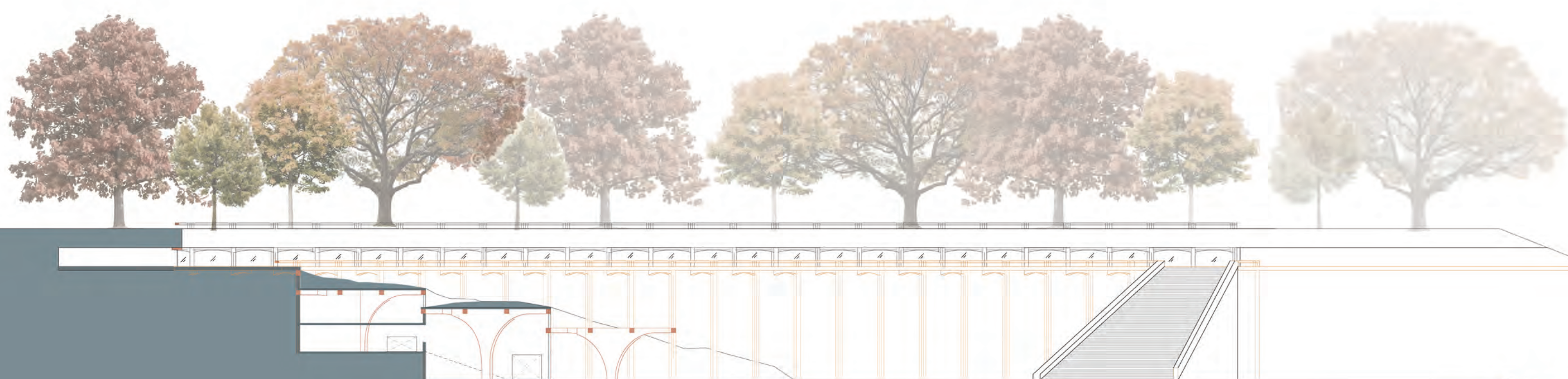
The plaza is directly connected to the indoor pavilion, to allow for flexible indoor and outdoor activities. The pavilion and plaza are situated to maximize views of the river and lift bridge.

Reusing the form of the existing columns acts as the pavilion's roof structure and outdoor pergola.

Pavilion Section
1" : 50'

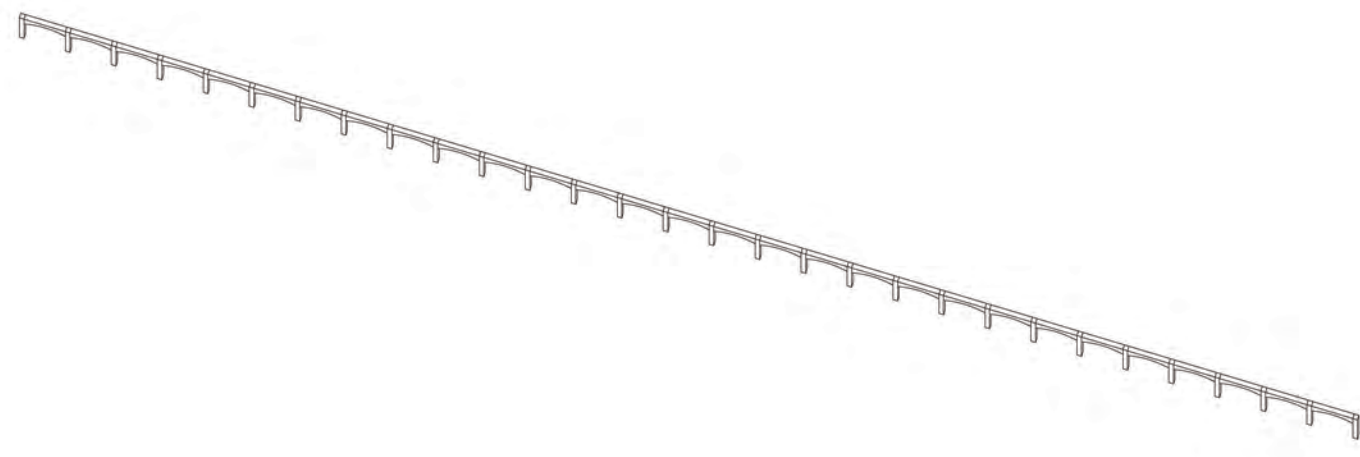
The floors of the pavilion descend at the same rate of the adjacent staircase, with the hill above sharing a similar slope. Clerestory windows are found in the roof structure to allow natural light to enter the pavilion interior.

The extension of the existing promenade columns to reach the level of the plaza elongates the form of the site. The addition of the hill balances the structured columns with a more natural element.

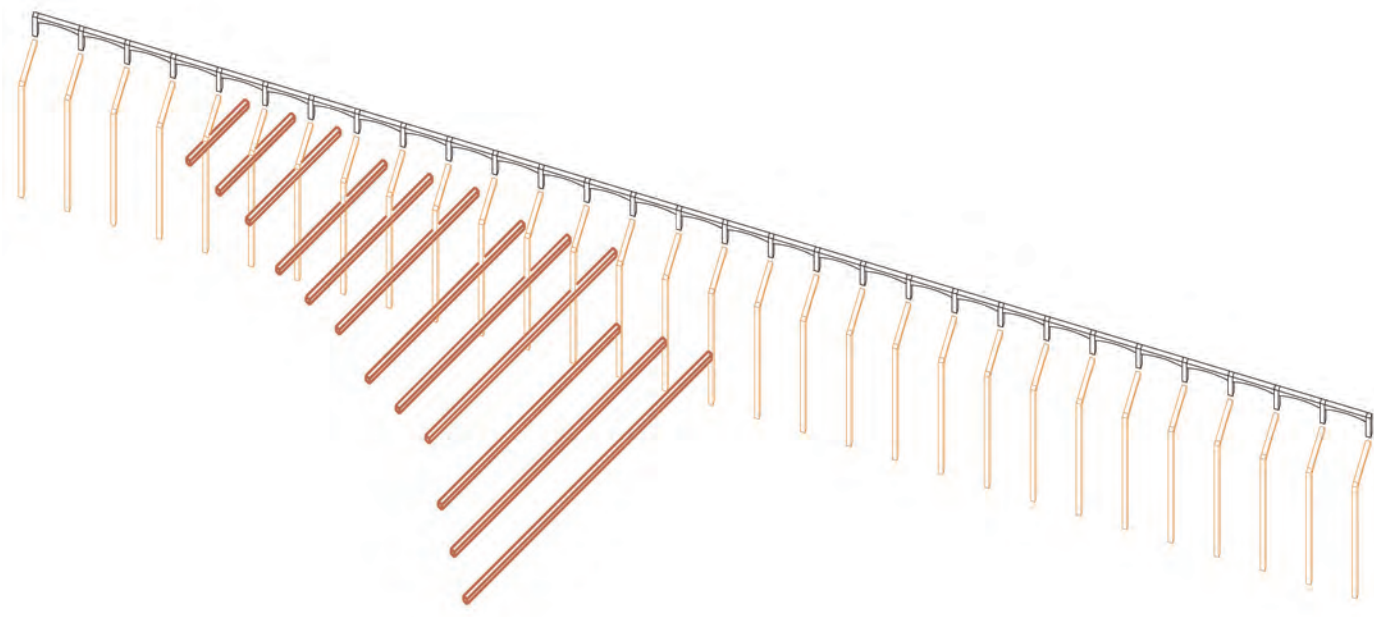


FORM DEVELOPMENT

1: Isolate existing promenade columns and arches.



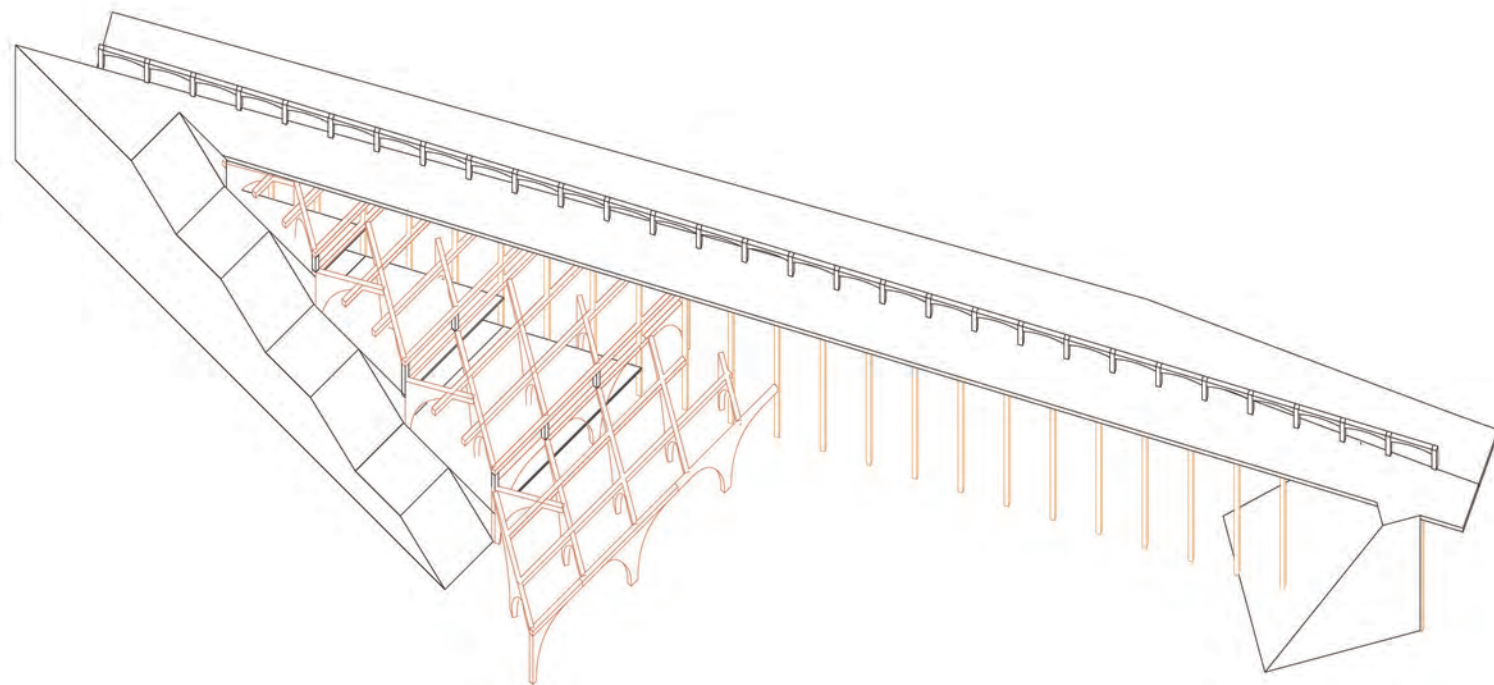
2: Extend columns downward to the level of the water, and offset them so that they support the new balcony above. Use their existing spacing as guides for the roof beam placement, which are rotated to maximize views of the water and lift bridge. Each level of beams aligns with three column bays.



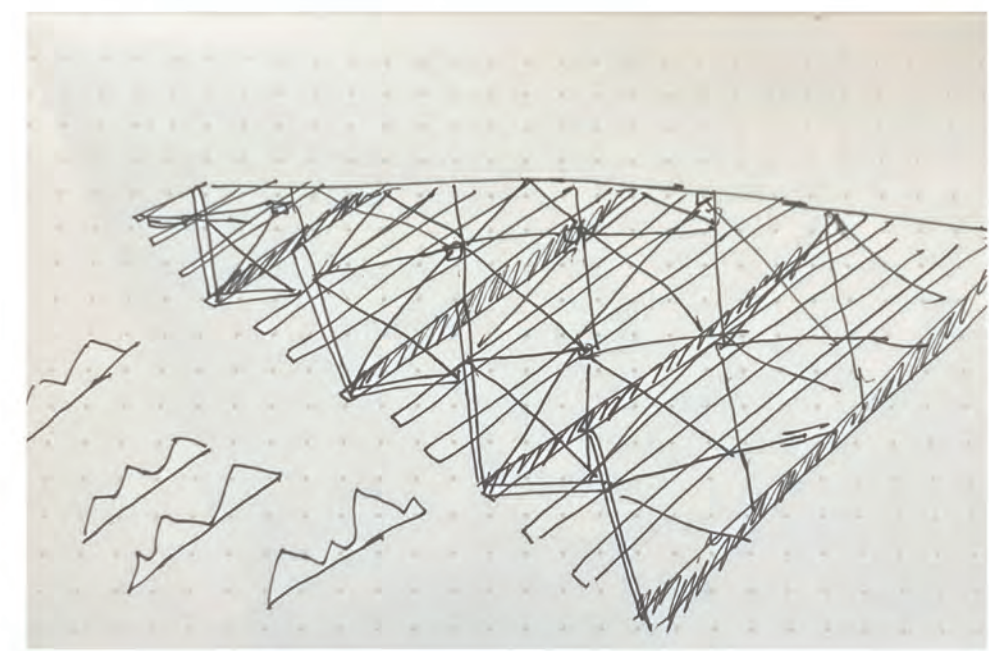
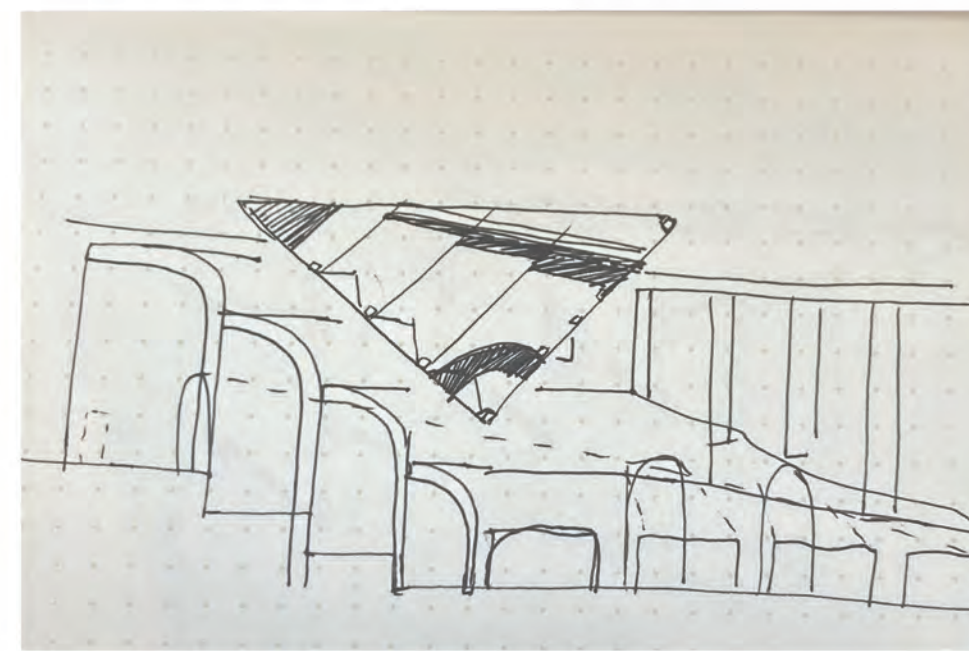
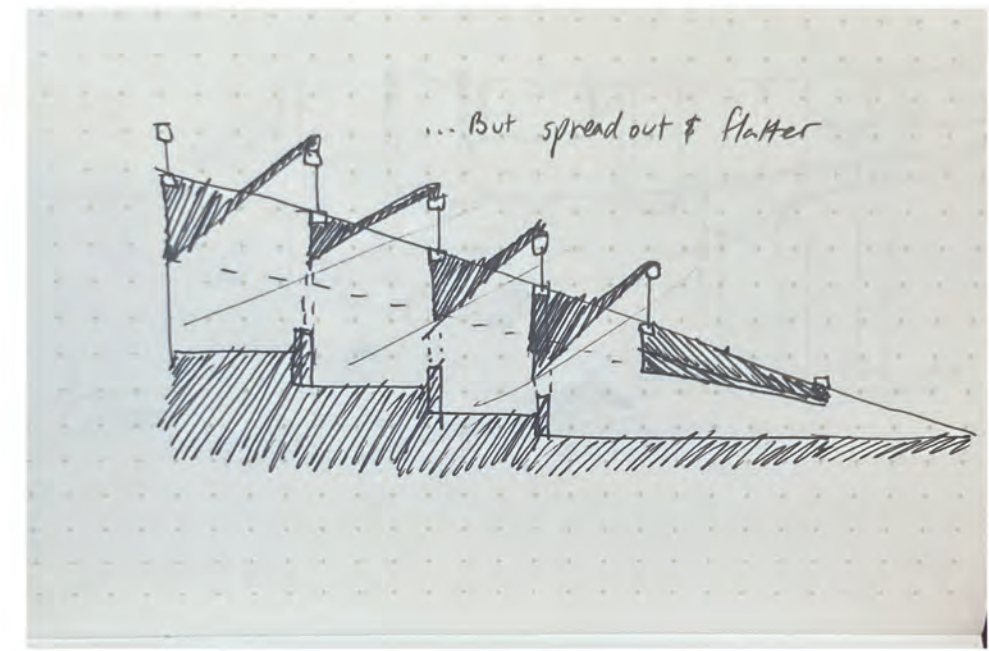
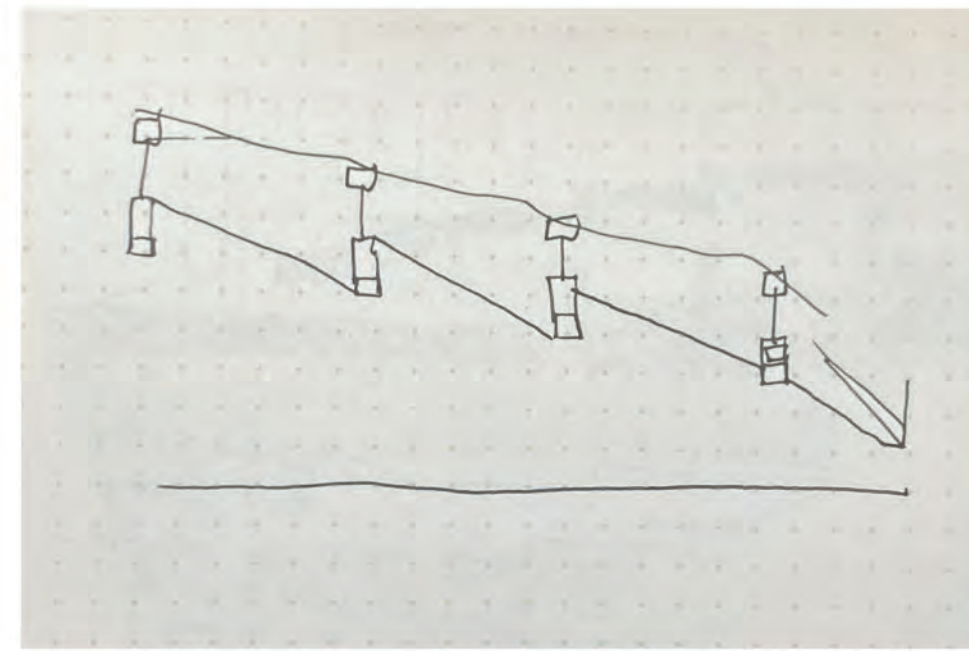
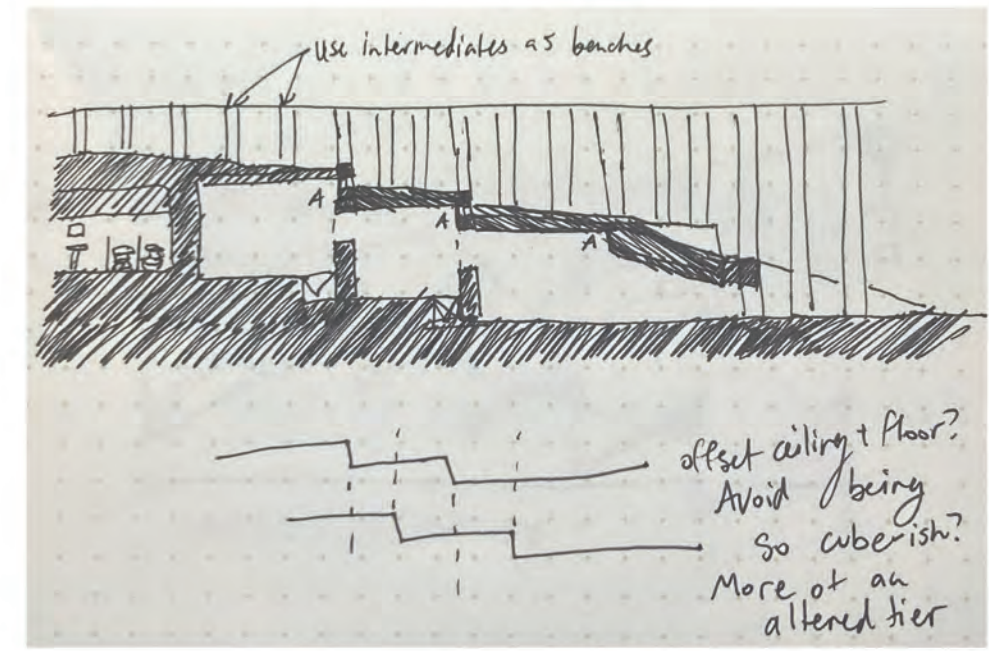
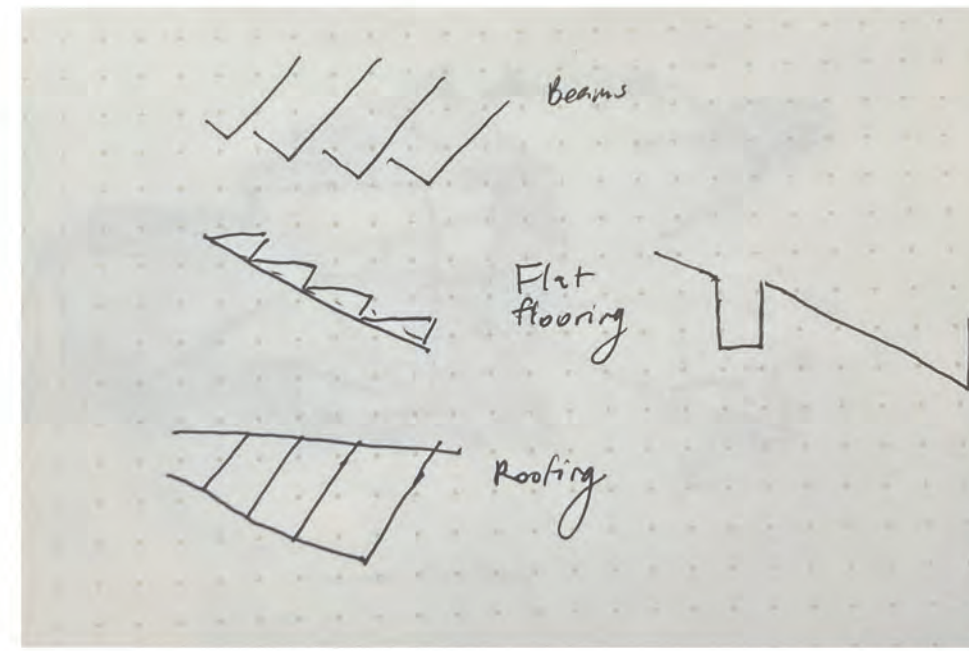
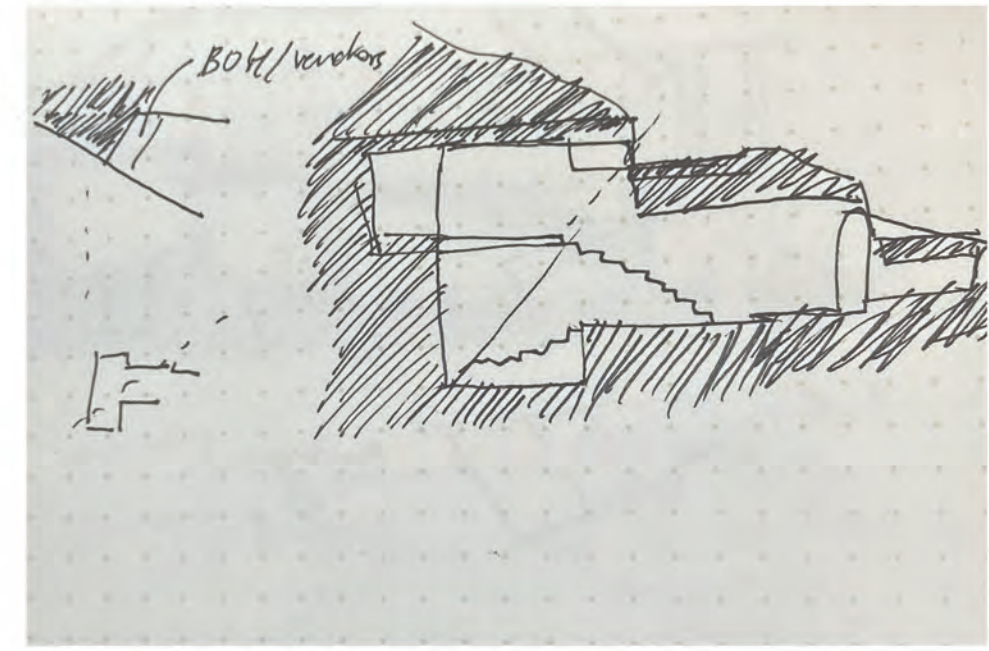
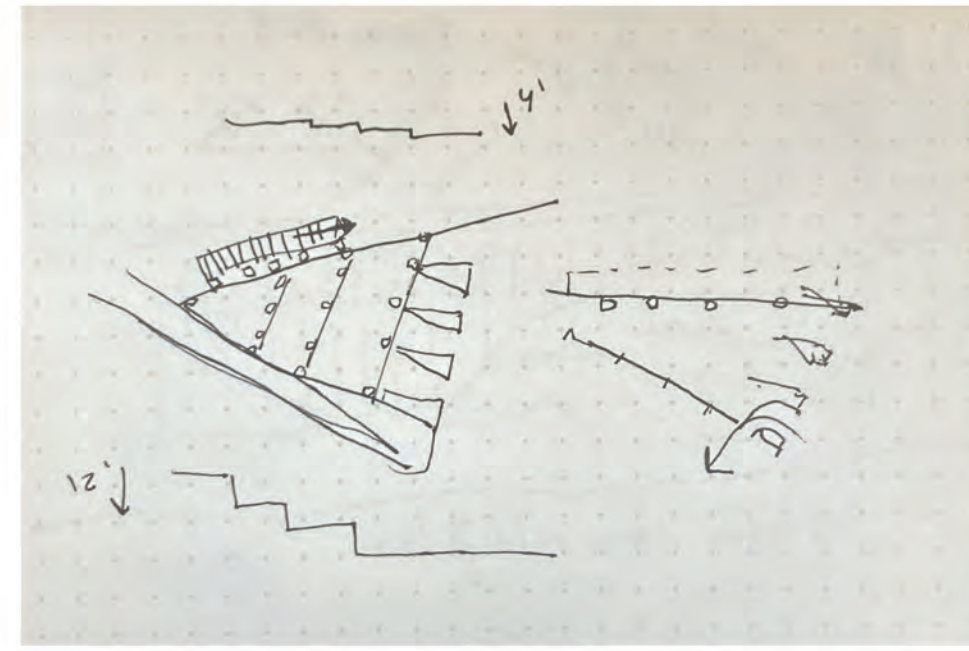
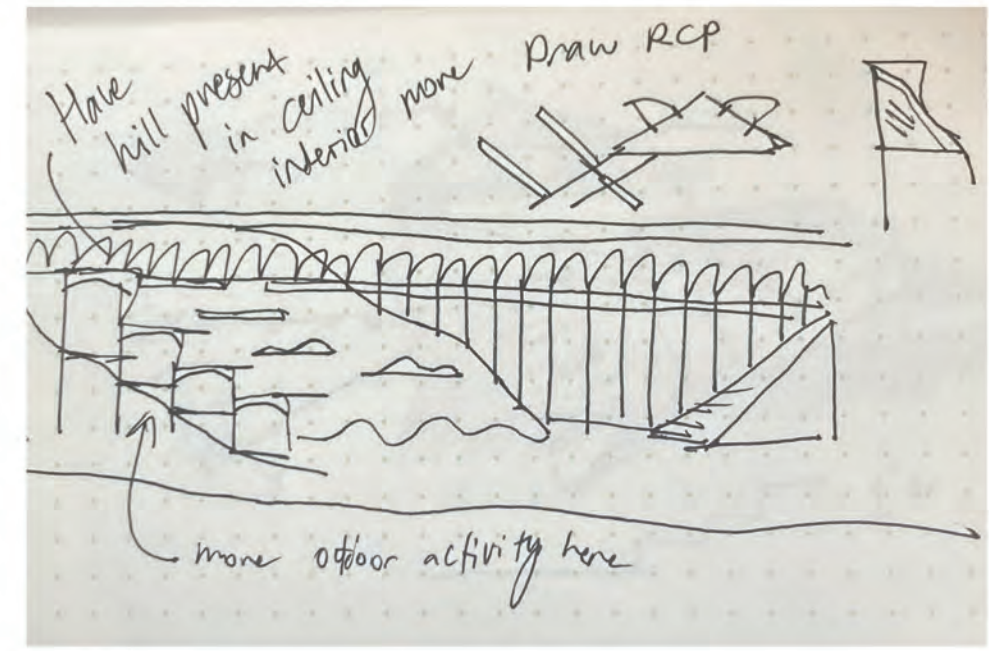
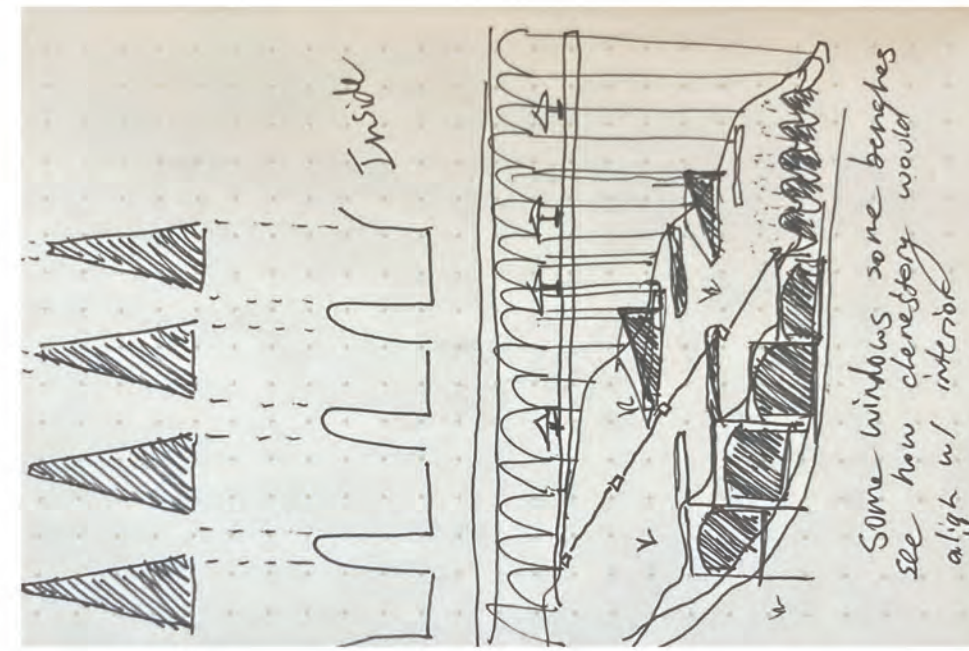
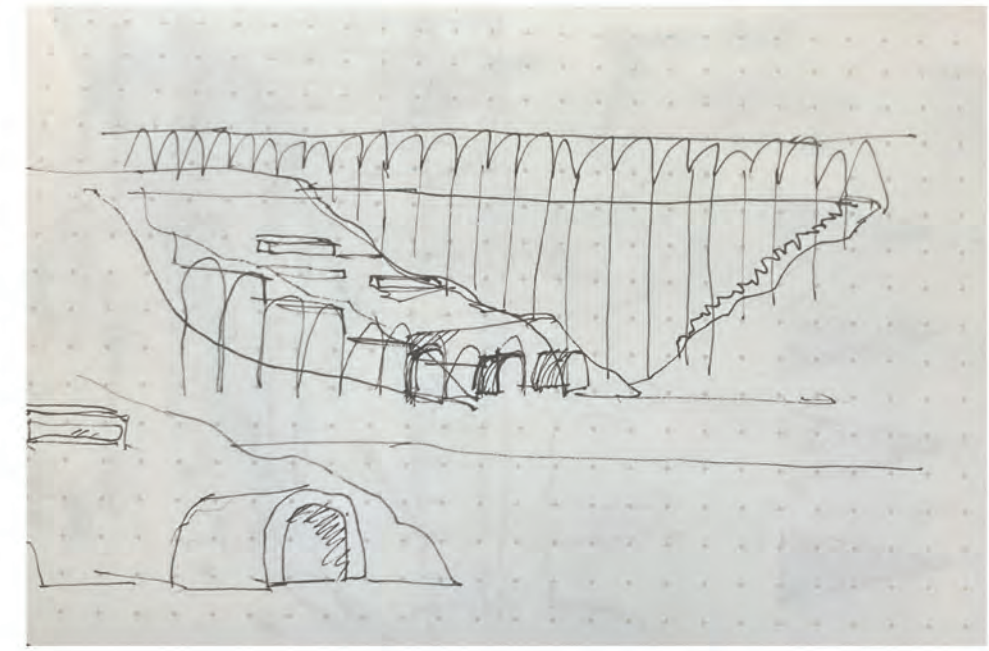
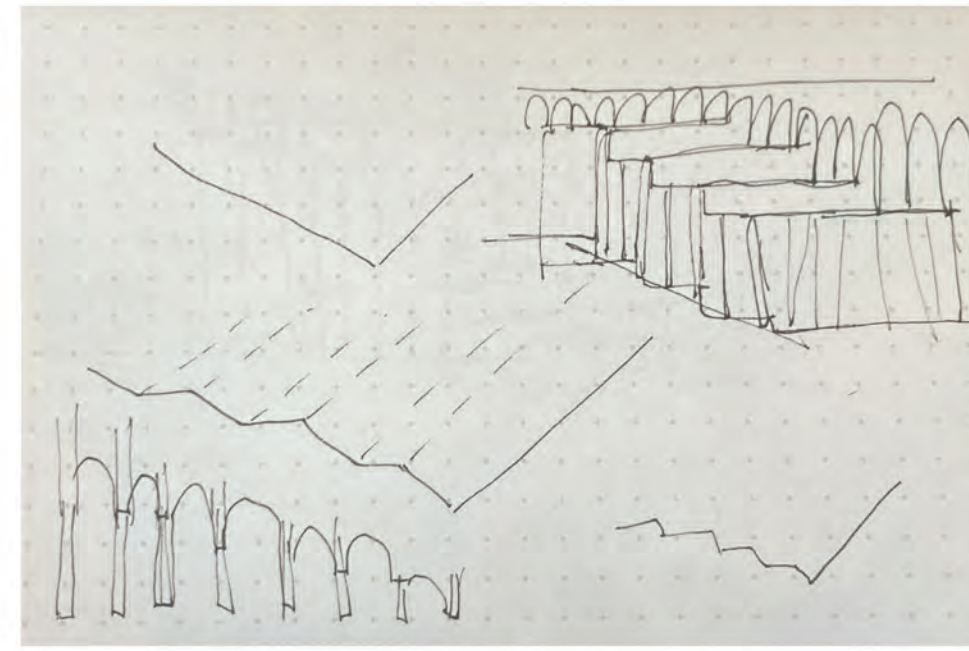
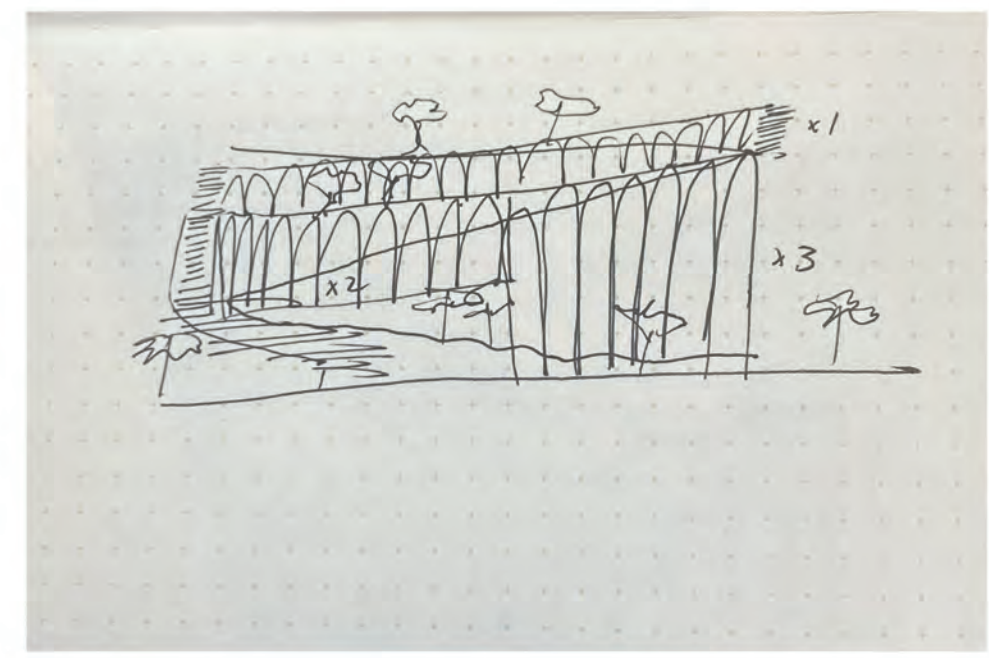
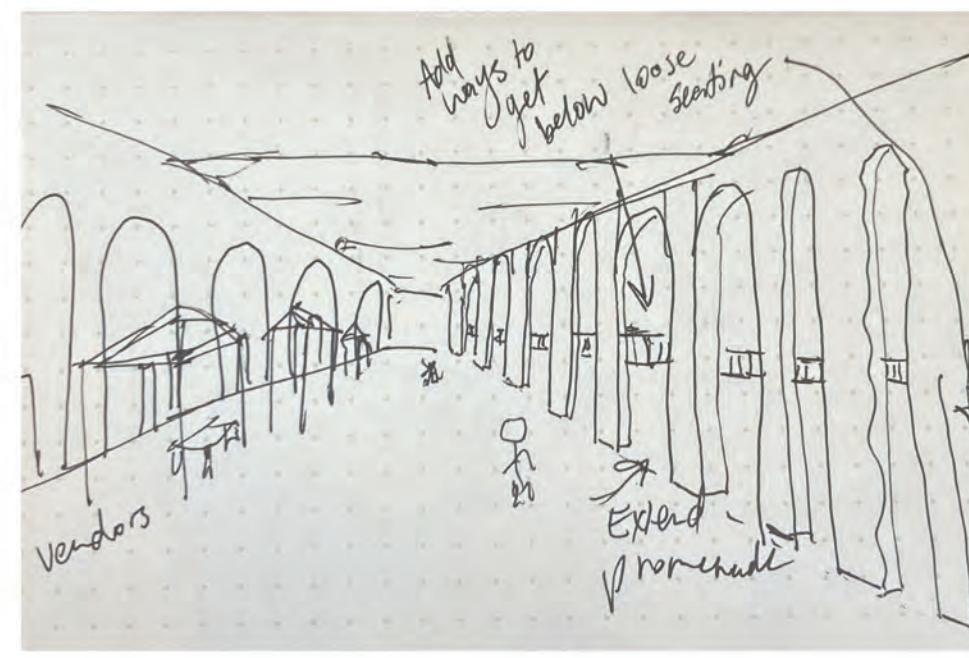
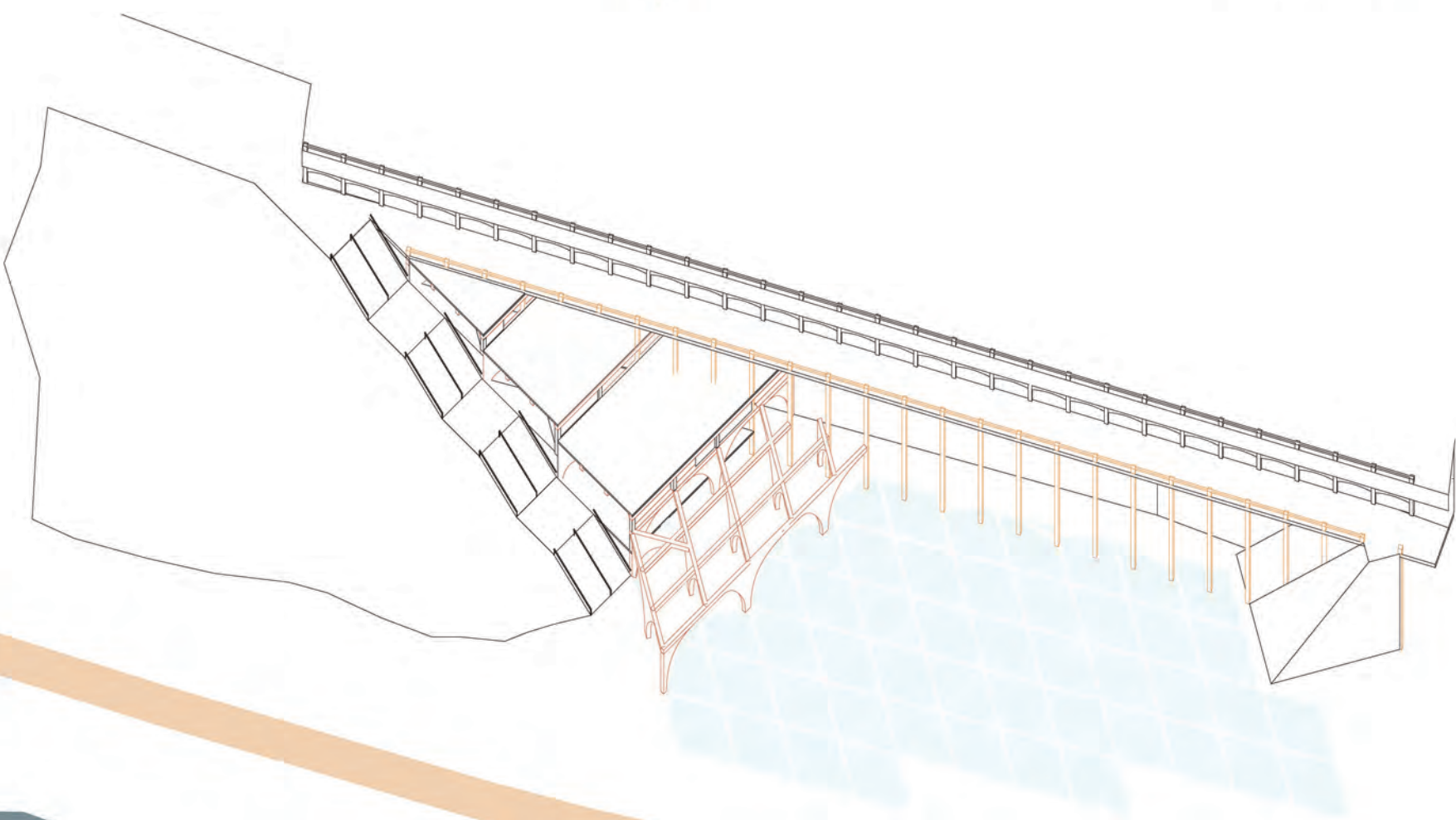
3. Add columns to support beam extensions, placed to create entrances and levels correlating to the staircase and plaza. Reuse arched forms between columns to soften the verticality of the structure.



4. Add existing bluff park, balcony, and staircases to connect the three main levels.



5. Add rooftop hill, bike path, and plaza to encapsulate structures and emphasize connection to the site.



View from Top of Staircase at Night

