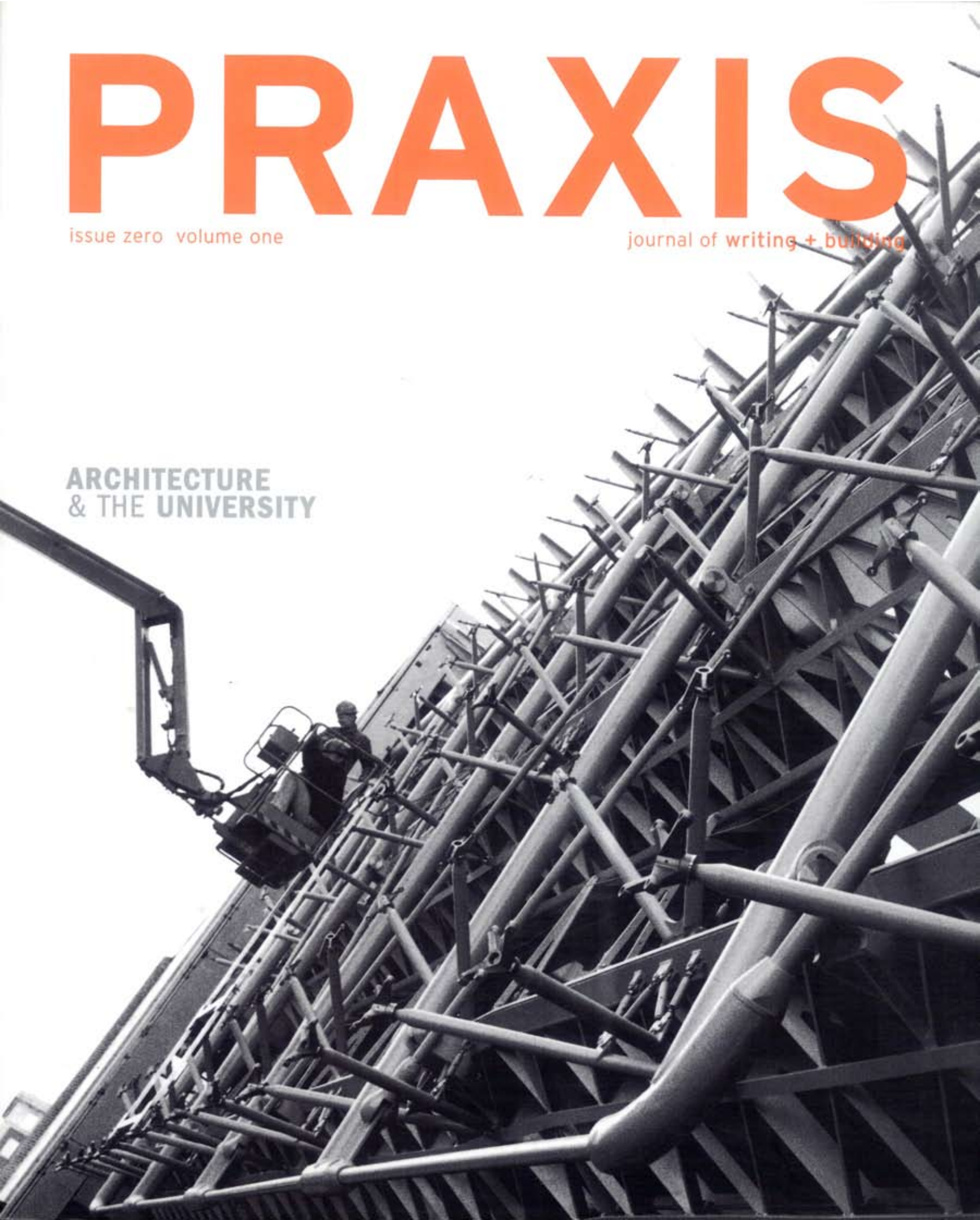


# PRAXIS

issue zero volume one

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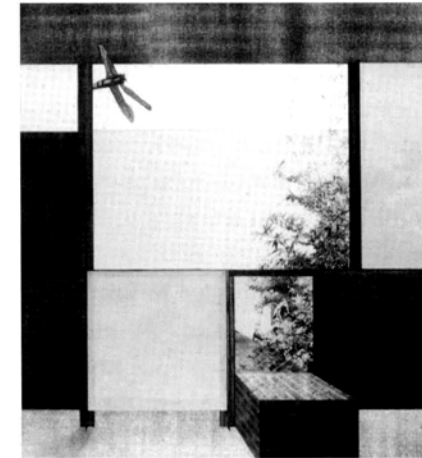
ARCHITECTURE  
& THE UNIVERSITY





**BELOW**  
Interior rendering of dormitory facade treatment.

**FACING PAGE**  
South corner lounge of the "ranges" housing block. Scogin, Elam and Bray conceived the 330 bed complex as four related, but self-contained communities.



**Project Team**  
Mac Scogin, Merrill Elam, Lloyd Bray

Ned Frazer, Allison Reeves, Beth Morris, Dustin Linblad, Juan Du, Denise Dumais, Tim Harrison, Kathy Wright, Kevin Cannon, Martha Henderson Bennett

**Associate Architect**  
Wayne Troyer

**Structural**  
Kulkarni Consultants

**Client**  
Tulane University

**Design**  
1995-1997

**Construction**  
1998-1999

**Completion**  
Fall 1999

**Building Area**  
108,000 square feet

**Budget**  
\$12 million

# WILLOW STREET DORMITORY

SCOGIN, ELAM AND BRAY

NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA, USA

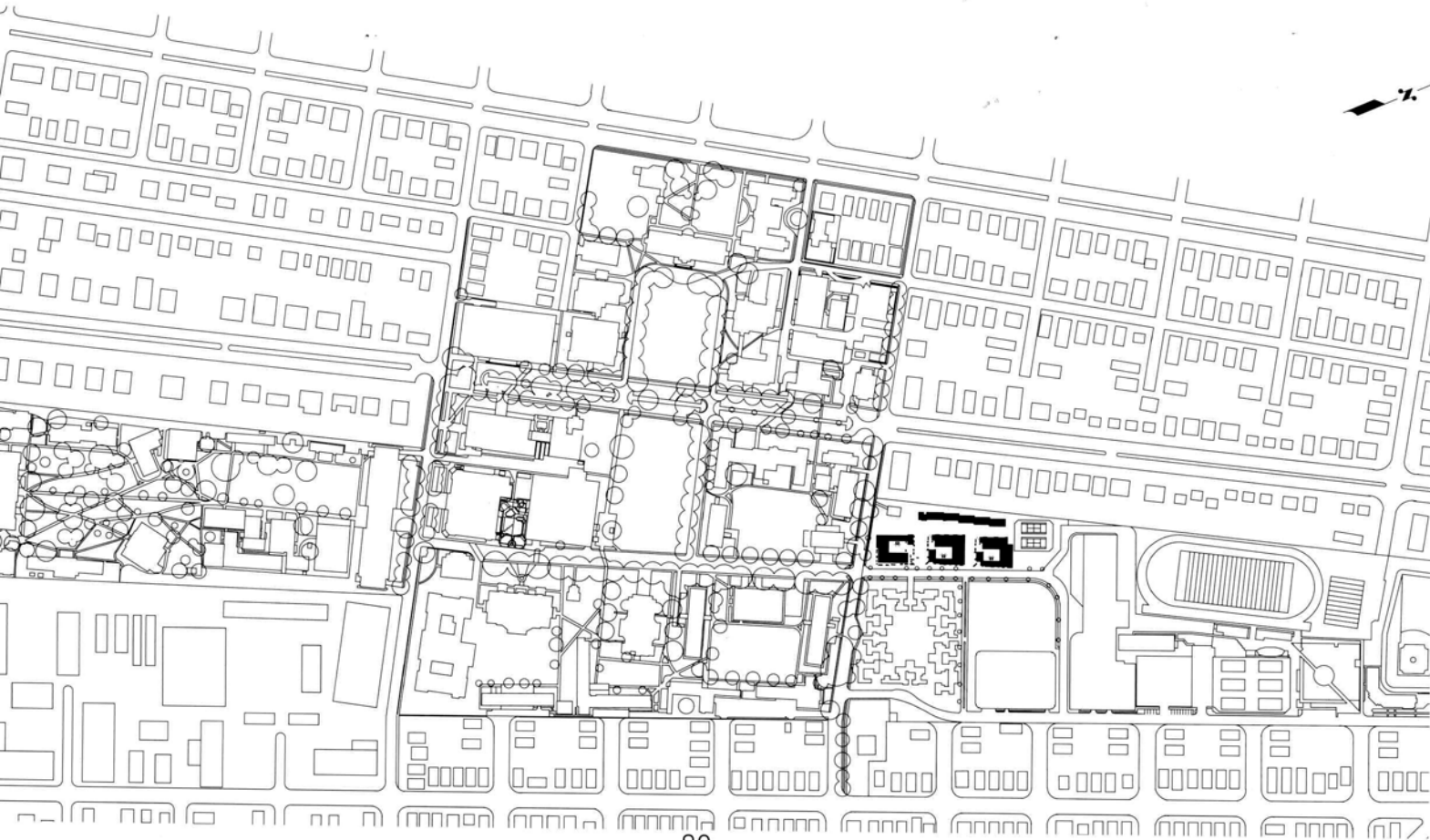
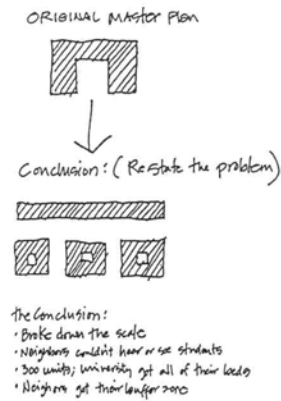
The Tulane University campus in New Orleans lies on St Charles Avenue, surrounded by residential neighborhoods of varying character and size. Situated north of mid-campus, the Willow Street Dormitory functions as a mediator of student and community interaction, balancing habitation at the scale of the individual with the institutional urban scale of the campus, as well as with the residential scale of the neighborhood beyond.

The new dormitory complex organizes varying patterns of movement and stasis by juxtaposing architectural elements of public and private, exterior and interior, circulation and residential occupation, and creating unique sectional and social relationships by challenging traditional student housing protocols.

Tulane University's location in New Orleans creates a unique condition of both inclusion and exclusion for the Willow Street Dormitory. The city's diverse cultural and recreational activities hold a strong attraction for young Tulane students, but also create issues of security. Tulane's

administration realizes the competition they face in drawing students both to the university, and to its on-campus housing. As a result, Scogin, Elam and Bray faced the challenge of creating a collegiate community as vibrant and attractive to the student as is New Orleans at large. Simultaneously, the dormitory had to create clear zones of security to address the concerns of students and parents.

The Willow Street Dormitory is located at a junction in the university plan where the north arm of the campus meets the main body. The dormitory's site was home to the university stadium until its razing in the early 1980s to accommodate campus expansion. The development of the "back campus," has been more suburban than collegiate, distanced both geographically and formally from the central campus.



Directly west of the dormitory site lies an upscale, historical neighborhood. Populated with residents who are sensitive to the possibility of 330 students residing adjacent to their back fences, they placed enormous pressure on the university to suspend work on the project. Rethinking the original masterplan, Scogin, Elam and Bray created an edge condition on the western side of the site that re-orientates the back campus to the university and creates a boundary between the students and the residential neighborhood beyond.

The Willow Street Dormitory consists of a 330-bed residence halls divided among four buildings. The university has capitalized on the creation of four smaller communities within the complex by designating them as living environments for students with special academic interests. The Leadership Village occupies the row along the western edge of the site, adjacent to the residential neighborhood. These "ranges," a term borrowed from the second tier of buildings off the lawn at the University of Virginia, serve as a garden wall to the west, creating a comfortable edge for the upscale neighbors, and mediating between an urban campus density within to a residential neighborhood density beyond.

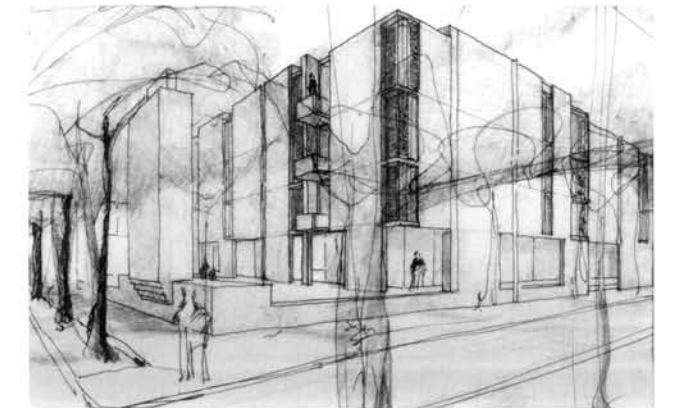
Encouraged by the university to create a distinct architecture within the city's character, the Willow Street Dormitory is informed by features of traditional New Orleans architecture. Courtyards within the three main

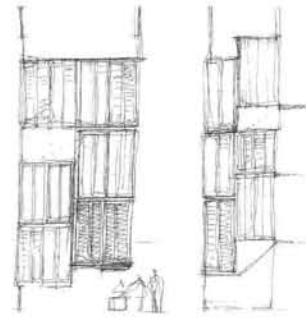
FACING PAGE TOP  
Initial sketch of original master plan and final solution.

FACING PAGE BOTTOM  
Site plan of Tulane University within its residential surroundings.

RIGHT  
Initial sketch of street edge condition.

BOTTOM  
Overall view of Student Housing at Willow Street, north-east corner.



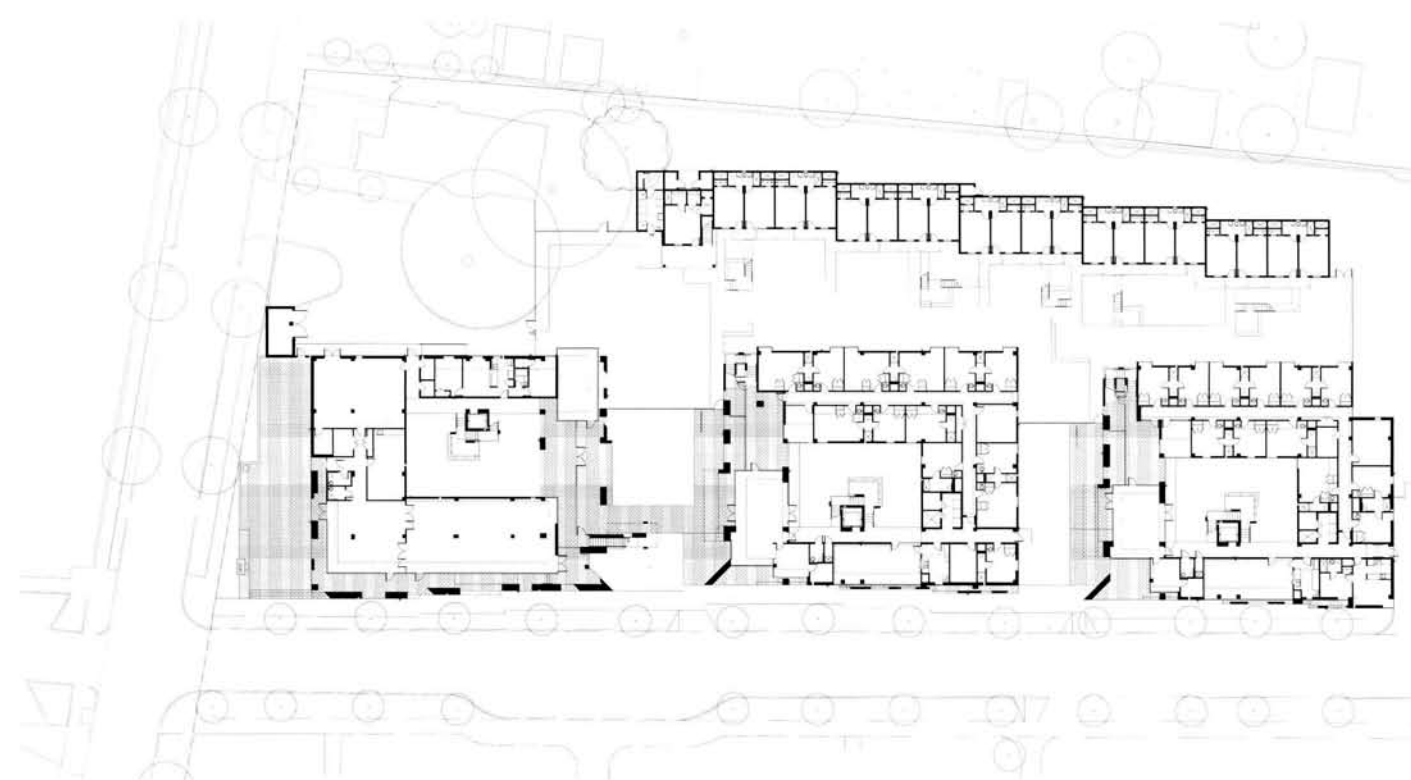
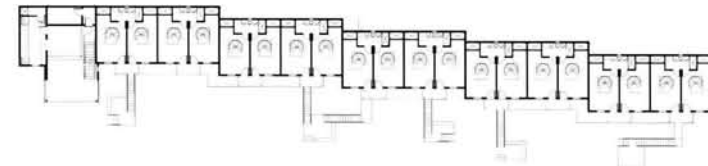


BELOW  
Ground and Second Floor Plan.  
Stair cores positioned at building corners and within courtyards combine with lounges to form social epicenters. The "ranges" on the western edge of the site create a strong boundary and orient the housing east towards campus.

FACING PAGE TOP  
Exterior corridor created between two dormitory buildings.

FACING PAGE MIDDLE  
Exterior corridor created between stair and lounge areas.

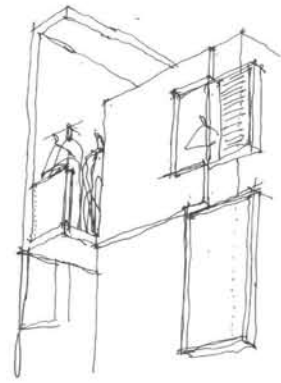
FACING PAGE BOTTOM  
Exterior corridor created between the "ranges" on the left and main dormitory buildings on the right.



dormitory blocks are of similar size and proportion to French Quarter spaces. The dormitory takes advantage of the city's year-round temperate weather to dissolve boundaries between inside and outside, personalize exterior paths of circulation, and create a formal vocabulary dependent on sun-shading elements, protective exterior massing, and a progression inward toward lightweight, open, and interconnected spaces.

A strong visual connection is made in the main dormitory buildings between stairs and lounges, while movement into and through the housing complex is mediated by a series of social spaces. Areas of mobility, such as the street and stairs, alternate with static areas of social interaction, such as courtyards and lounges. Each space is made stronger by its proximity to the next. Lounges control entry into the building and are activated by their juxtaposition to stairways. Conversely, stair cores are made visually open and welcoming by feeding directly into lounges. In the "ranges," a unique vertical relationship is established between residences sharing localized means of circulation, in contrast to the three main dormitory buildings which function at an intermediate scale of the small community. *±mf*





FACING PAGE TOP LEFT  
Initial sketch of balcony corner condition.

FACING PAGE TOP RIGHT  
Corner of dormitory with open balconies facing toward the street. Louvered sun shading controls harsh summer light while maintaining visual connection between interior and exterior public spaces.

FACING PAGE MIDDLE  
Elevation of main dormitories. Two of the buildings are occupied by students with particular areas of academic interest creating sub-communities within the larger complex.

FACING PAGE BELOW  
Exterior view of dormitory at night, with juxtaposition of stair and lounges. Transparencies between interior lounges to exterior circulation both encourages social interaction within the dormitory.

ABOVE  
East elevation of the "ranges." Long exterior balcony corridors easily spill onto stairways. The gradual and open nature of the stairs mediates the transition from public, to semi-public, to private. The visual connection between these spaces once again creates large zones of social interaction.

BELOW  
East view of the "ranges." The exterior wall creates a dense and visually complex urban facade, and projects student movement toward the campus.

