The practice of geometry was an approach to the way in which the universe is ordered and sustained. Geometric diagrams can be contemplated as still moments revealing a continuous, timeless, universal action generally hidden from our sensory perception. Thus a seemingly common mathematical activity can become a discipline for intellectual and spiritual insight.

Robert Lawlor
Sacred Geometry: Philosophy and Practice 1982
Notes 20 April 2003

Axis mundi at the boundary between earth and water.

An inner square and circle are mapped as a representation of world order. At the center, a light shaft. At the four corners, the four elements from ancient times.

An outer square is defined by the circle representing the heavens and becomes the extent of the brewery’s construction as a caisson that provides structure for the hole to be dug. Its orientation and location determined by the ratio of 3:11: The diameters of the earth and moon in proportion as we witness the sun and moon as the same size in the sky. The diagram includes the three critical spheres in the thesis.
The use of geometry (sacred) in a project about weathering corresponds to man’s continuing fascination with time, the sun and moon, and the means in which we use them to track change. Weathered surfaces are the imbedded demarcations of this interest. For the project of a Brewery and Biergarten, both the sacred and alchemical origins in the making of beer warrant this kind of geometric investigation. The site is a boundary between water and earth. A circle with a diameter the same dimension as the site unifies these elements. The ancient measured ratio of 3:11 between earth and moon give rise to northern and southern limits of the main walls of the biergarten. The orientation, 7 deg. NE corresponds to the celestial influence the moon yields on the tidal Potomac River. The inner circle, squared, is a pure alchemical representation of the 4 elements, a diagram of world order. [an alchemical quintessece (beer) emerges from the union of air, fire, water and earth.]

Weathering is a phenomena of finish, imparted not by the architect, but by (or to) the 4 primary elements. Resulting in the creation of a fifth, alchemical element, unpredictable and complete. The role of the architect suggests potentially projecting beyond the momentary completion of construction in order to imagine the various effects of wind, sun, and water and how their various means of sedimentation and accumulation impart an intentional yet unpredictable character upon the building. As a result of this line of thinking, new methods of construction and detail have the potential to arise and have meaningful presence in the building.

+ Draw a circle with diameter 240° with center on the edge between water and earth
+ Diameter of that circle equals 753.6’
+ A square with an equal perimeter has sides 188.4’ long
+ The northern boundary of this square demarcates the northern limit of the parking deck construction
+ A circle can be inscribed within the previous square with a diameter of 188’
+ The perimeter of this circle equals 590.3’
+ A square with an equal perimeter has sides equalling 148’
+ This square defines the southern boundary
+ At the origin of the second circle draw another circle with a radius of 60.5’
+ Inscribe within it a square: This is the representation of earth. An alchemical diagram of the four elements.
+ From the center, draw another circle with radius equal to the silver fraction
+ Within this circle, draw another yet again with a smaller radius equating the silver fraction.

60.5 : 22 : 8.