ENCLOSURE: Hybrid providing office and apartment space in San Francisco.
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This book is dedicated to my family which has always supported and believed in me.
The house and its associated essential feeling of home has become a desire making suburban sprawl so successful today. This project proposes an urban hybrid within the historical district of downtown San Francisco. The hybrid consists of office space and apartments. The design develops a new type of urban housing introducing the architectural concept of the house to the highrise.
1.11 thoughts
One of the architect's greatest challenges is the phenomenon of "Wahrnehmung". It is the ability to see and understand things in their true nature. It is the task to create a conceptual understanding of life captured in situations and celebrated through architecture. To define what exactly a situation demands architecturally is often unclear and complex. The notion of "situation" in this context is created through emotional, cultural and spiritual components and architecture always is part of what defines a situation. Although spatial conditions may suggest certain obvious situational tendencies, architecture often redirects many aspects of a situation, toward a result that cannot be easily predetermined. The first challenge of a building may seem its structure, the beauty of its appearance, the perfection of a detail...but after all I have realized that all this just serves a higher purpose of controlling and defining a situation for a building. Situations that will remain in people's memories.
1.13  Threshold

The paintings of Edward Hopper are very impressive because of their strong sense for the outside landscape and relationship it encounters with the inside of the house. Simple openings like a door or window shown in his paintings become elementary for the relationship the house encounters with its surrounding landscape. The study of these paintings made me understand how essential the articulation of the inside and its surrounding outside is.

Thresholds are important even though we are not always consciously aware of them. The articulation of thresholds play a very large role for our understanding of building. A threshold defines and addresses the relationship between changing conditions in many ways. Conditions that may become important socially or culturally.

A threshold does not necessarily occur within a building. It can already be the path that leads to the building and establishes a first visual contact with the building. It could be the smell of wood as you enter the building or the change of acoustics and light.
Is it possible to achieve such pure beauty within architecture? The appearance of architecture is based on desires. Within the design process desires are analyzed and all their realization as architectural elements are justified through their functionality. There seems to lie a lot of danger within this process of filtering. Often buildings turn out to be without any kind of "soul" when "desires" and "functionality" are reduced to a simplistic utilitarian level. Architecture will always be the complex product of mankind.

1.14 Justification

The justification of elements and forms in architecture depends on how functionality is defined. Is something beautiful because of its functionality, or does something become functional because of its beauty? It clearly appears that in architecture functionality can be achieved and seen in all kinds of areas such as beauty, cultural, economical, constructional realms. The success of a good design seems to lie within how many different kinds of levels functionality can be justified. Goethe is overwhelmed by the Gothic style and its beauty. In those days he does not use the word functionality to describe the roots of its beauty. He refers to the word "Selbstzweck" which he had so far only observed in the beauty of nature. "Selbstzweck" can be verbally translated as reason itself. The form of the tree, the shape and color of its leaves are all results of its reason for existence. Its entire appearance is based on its survival and no secondary reason.
The largest discovery during my thesis was the idea of "home". It seems to be one of the most essential feelings provided by architecture. Home is desired not just as the place you sleep, but also the place you work and spend most of your time. It seems as if wherever we spend a certain amount of time, we have the desire of making it feel like home. This feeling does not seem to be limited to buildings. It can be felt for a country, state, city, person. Its components like culture, family, spatial conditions seem also to consist of a wide range. The house has always been the most classic successful archetype for home. What makes the house so successful compared to a flat is the quality of a single, individual object with the possibility of manipulating its outer appearance through architectural elements like front and back gardens, the porch, balconies, terraces and its cladding. It is a great challenge to offer buildings with the potential to become homes for their inhabitants even though they might be offices or hotels.
2.17  urban context
THE SITE is located on San Francisco’s northeast neighborhood near the waterfront, close to the financial district. The project consists of two urban blocks that face the bay. The opposing scales of the bay and the city architecturally characterize the site. The office space is located in the horizontal base in the L-shape of the building. The vertical component of the building consists of exclusive apartments with sky gardens. The base interacts with the neighboring park by making it part of the office space through courtyards. The two sides of the facade complement each other like that of a mask, forming the urban conceptual ideas.
THE BASE of the building provides space for parking and offices. The base is divided into four separate office spaces which are capable of expanding at anytime into two or three larger offices. The office space is defined by two elements: concrete volumes and courtyards. These massive volumes, which contain stairs, sanitation, and storage, are emphasized through open galleries, making them one continuous element reaching through all three floors. The courtyards inside the offices stretch into the neighboring park and the plaza. Terraces facing the plaza enclosed by the screen, provide an opportunity to step out towards the bay. The concrete volumes and glass enclosures define the ground floor. The surface of the outside plaza continues into the glass-enclosed lobbies and offices. The inside plaza beneath the building is defined by openings in the ground floor that allow natural light into the parking level below, establishing a dialogue between the two levels.
The courtyards allow light in the offices and the lobbies on the groundfloor. They are an extension of the park into the building. The groundfloor provides space for the lobbies, bike-rooms, garbage-rooms and stores.
3.23  structure
The vertical part contains one and two storey gardens interspersed throughout the building. These large subtractions from the mass of the building transform this vertical part itself into a "screen." From the slopes of the city, one can see the bay through the building. The three site-cast stairwells and elevator shafts provide lateral support to the four main load-bearing walls.
The L-shape footprint contains seven concrete volumes which house the mechanical functions, while designating the layout of the office and groundfloor spaces. The groundfloor has a direct relationship to the park and becomes part of the public space. Although the base rises only three levels in correspondence to the scale of the surrounding warehouses, the building’s vertical component responds to the scale of the nearby financial district. The private gardens offer views toward the wide open bay and the skyline of San Francisco.
THE SCREEN consists of 1x1 m perforated steel plates which are joined together on their folded sides; it encloses the entire L-shape void. The screen offers a special quality to the light and the view of the apartments. It protects the balconies and skygardens from wind drafts and gives the building a certain sculptural uniformity, while keeping a certain lightness as a result of its transparency. Structurally, the entire screen functions as a large scale Vierendeel truss, lending extra lateral support to the building during earthquakes. The enclosure of the building becomes an essential part in order to respond to the scale of the individual and of the city.
THE SKYGARDENS form the entrance into each apartment. A person arrives by elevator and crosses through their garden before entering the living space. When entering the apartment through the skygarden first, the effect resembles the distinctive feeling of possession and control felt when entering a house. The skygarden recreates this perception and adds intimacy to the singular unit which can usually be lost in the looming outer structure of a tall building. This entrance situation is at various scales the threshold condition throughout the building: through the public park, into the private garden, and into the apartment.
5.33 **THE APARTMENTS** form the vertical component of the L-shaped building. Conceptually it is a wall of stacked townhouses. Each house is enclosed on both sides by the screen which acts as an independent element with the spatial conditions of the apartment. The space responds with terraces behind the screen. The house switches its orientation on each level: the first level orients itself towards the garden; the second level either towards the bay or the city. Occasionally, the staircase serves as an axis offering a view through the entire house towards the bay and the city.
The apartments form the vertical element of the building. The building’s narrow mass gives them an abundance of natural light and allows the experience of the extreme difference between the horizon of the bay and density of the city. There are four different apartment types, which in different combinations, give each floor its own identity.
The project examines specific architectural concepts of the house and integrates them to further develop the design of a tall building. The high-rise purposefully and efficiently manipulates space creating a highly organized structure, which in turn decreases the sense of individuality characteristic of the house. In a tall building, rhythm and repetition dominate and determine the spatial organization of the apartments and facade. The house, on the other hand, through its distinct exterior and organization of interior space offers more than individuality but also associates feelings and social values such as family, neighborhood, security, wealth and a life within nature. Consequently, by creating spatial conditions belonging to the house within the tall building, the functional and rational architectural design of high-rises is challenged. More specifically when critical house elements, such as the garden, porch terrace, and other familiar elements are integrated effectively, in the structure and scale of the tall building, they can enhance the buildings restrictive spatial conditions to simulate social values and feelings through the individualistic spatial conditions of the house.
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bibliography

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except for
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