

**Implicit Ordering: A Tribal Center to Connect  
Land, Community and Creativity**

by

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Submitted to the Department of Architecture  
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MASTER OF ARCHITECTURE  
AT THE  
MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

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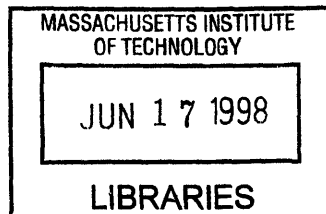
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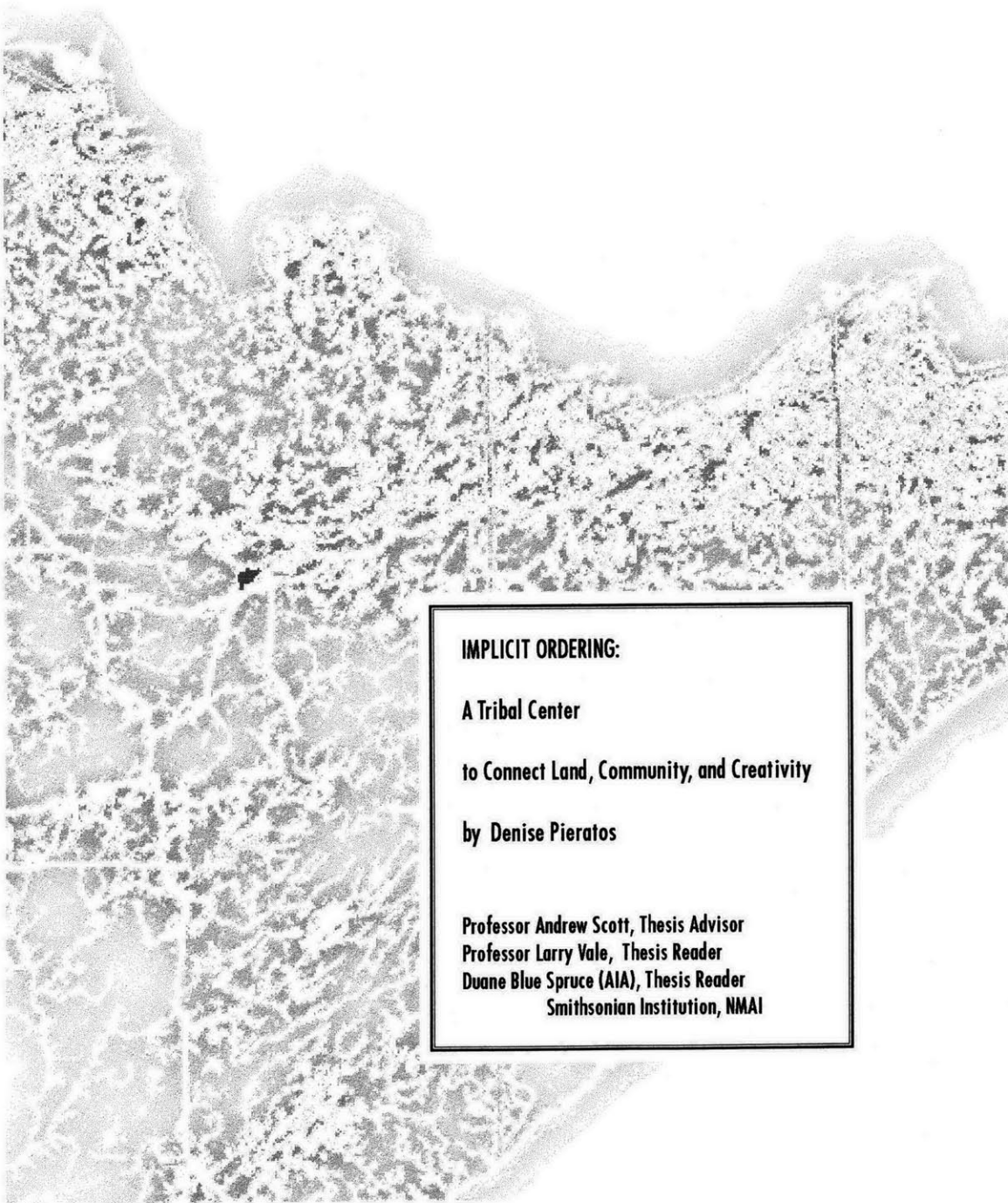
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Photo



**IMPLICIT ORDERING:**

**A Tribal Center**

**to Connect Land, Community, and Creativity**

**by Denise Pieratos**

**Professor Andrew Scott, Thesis Advisor  
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**ABSTRACT**

A design proposal was developed for a new tribal center to meet the current and future needs of the Anishinabe community on the Lake Vermilion Reservation, Bois Forte Band of Minnesota Chippewa, in northern Minnesota. At issue in the development of the design were issues of cultural usage of space, cold climate design imperatives, site selection, and programming considerations. Several considerations in the design of the center itself were site specific: a limited building footprint, primacy of view within the center versus climactic considerations, and the provision of access to the center given the steep topography of the land adjacent to the peninsula. Others were less easily defined, but imposed quite specific obligations. Anishinabe, for example, need to have a building in which they are spatially aware of their connection to the greater environment.

The final design was sited on a peninsula set aside by the Band for community development and not built upon to date. The peninsula is located within easy walking distance of the public housing area and near to the reservation's best swimming beach. The new tribal center will integrate its future parking facilities with those of a proposed beach park. In addition to the main road, a walking trail will connect the beach and tribal center to the housing area. A secondary ceremonial road will preserve the established ritual of burial by connecting the new center to the tribal gravesites. The center itself houses a community hall for festival gathering and dancing, an auditorium for town meetings, a medical clinic for visiting physicians, a small library and student study space, a communal kitchen and dining area, and tribal offices.

Thesis Advisor: Andrew M. Scott  
Title: Associate Professor of Architecture

TABLE OF CONTENTS

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|  |         |
|--|---------|
| foreword   | page 5  |
| introduction   | page 6  |
| the tribal community center                          | page 6  |
| the status of the contemporary<br>indian reservation | page 7  |
| design objectives                                    | page 10 |
| methodology  | page 11 |
| program and precedents                               | page 12 |
| site and regional positioning                        | page 15 |
| design and process                                   | page 16 |
| plans and sections                                   | page 26 |
| perspectives   | page 29 |
| model  | page 33 |
| conclusion   | page 36 |
| bibliography   | page 37 |

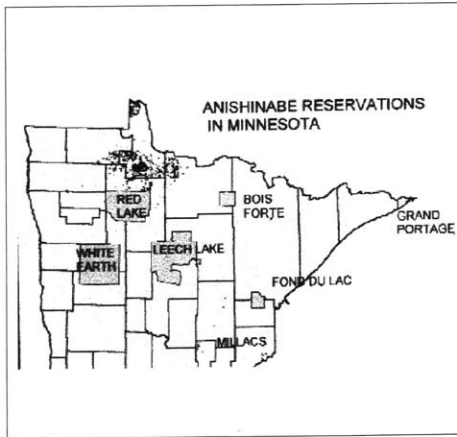
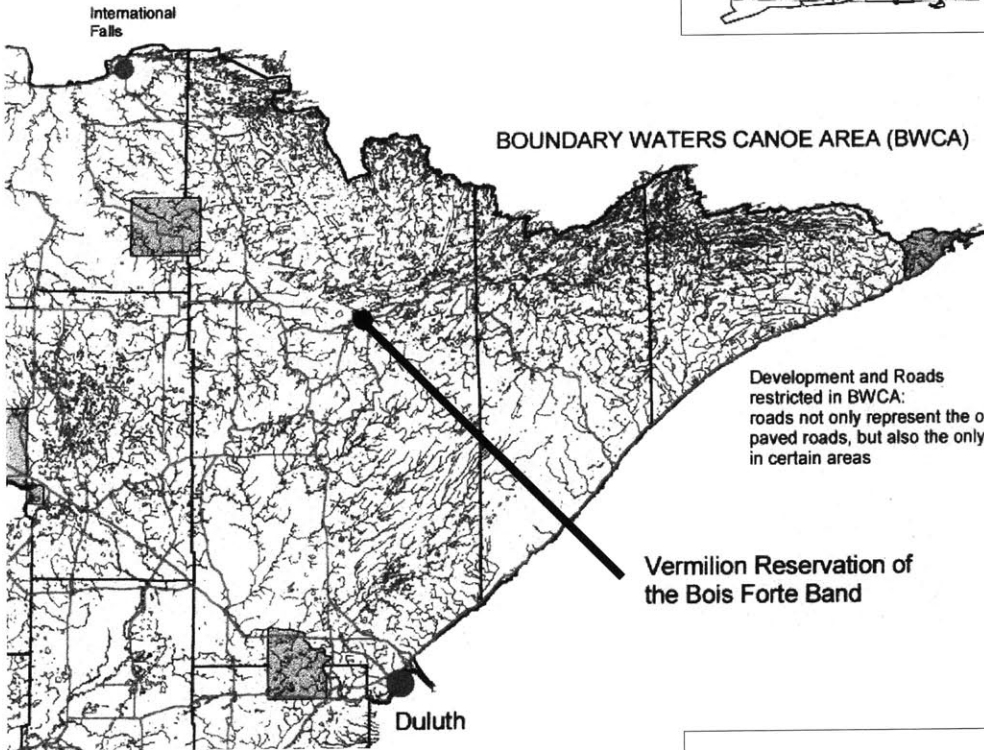
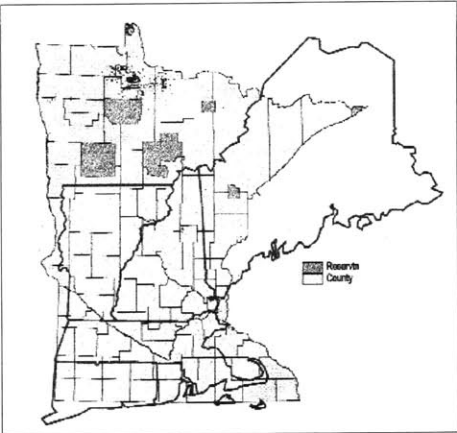
## FOREWORD

All architects design from prejudice. Whether designing an office tower for a corporate entity, retail space for a clothing boutique, or a private home for monied clientele, architects do not, in the normal course of a project, seriously question the cultural foundations on which they premise their design proposals. A thorough cultural understanding offers a degree of latitude that allows designers to immediately engage in design specific issues. The crux of this thesis, the design of an Anishinabe tribal center by an Anishinabe tribal member, however, requires an explanation of how cultural issues were addressed. This thesis does not attempt to offer a bibliographic survey of Chippewa/Ojibwe/Anishinabe ethnographic studies as the basis or justification of design decisions. While a list of such studies is offered for further reading, these sources do not offer insight into the way in which contemporary Anishinabe culture would react to and claim architecture. They are written from outside the culture looking in and are a further removal from the culture by the simple fact that they are written. Anishinabe culture was and is maintained by oral tradition.

The thesis exploration documented herein is, by necessity, a highly personal one. The filter of memory and experience, the intimate knowledge of the minutiae of a culture, quite simply, cannot be documented, although intellectual conceit would sometimes have it so. Such influence is indeterminate and will always be imperfectly communicated. Having stated this, however, this thesis will offer cultural explanations of design issues when at all possible, with the proviso that the reader is aware at all times of the complexity in which an explanation exists.

*Dwelling in Anishinabe culture was, and is still, a verb.*

It implies a connectedness that satisfies many planes of existence, be it individual, group, physical or metaphysical. It offers comfort in containment and group structure, peace in heightened awareness of place, creativity in collaborative effort, drama and consistency in texture, movement and ritual. Contemporary conditions on Indian reservations have not made obsolete the functions traditional structures served, but rather made critical the importance of living in implied order with the universe. A cherished place of gathering, one that serves as an icon of tribal cohesiveness, is needed to invigorate tribal life and is the objective of this thesis.



## INTRODUCTION

A design proposal was developed for a new tribal center to meet the current and future needs of the Anishinabe community on the Lake Vermilion Reservation, Bois Forte Band of Minnesota Chippewa, in northern Minnesota. At issue in the development of the design were the cultural usage of space unique to Native Americans, and to the Anishinabe in particular, cold climate design imperatives, site selection, programming, and the role of the center in the greater context of the reservation as tribal community. The design of the center itself evolved out of issues that were uniquely site specific: a limited building footprint on the peninsula, primacy of view within the center versus climactic considerations, and the provision of access to the center given the steep topography of the land immediately adjacent to the peninsula. Others were less easily defined; for example, the need to develop a building which spatially connects the individual to the greater environment was no less a design imperative than that of fenestration orientation.

This thesis proposes a culturally expressive model for the tribal center as archetype.

The intent is to explore how a contemporary tribal society, the Bois Forte Band of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe, can engage its past, transform its present, and embrace its future through its method of concourse, the tribal center. At issue is the hierarchical ordering of space and environment to establish rapport between individual, group and cosmos. Programmatic elements must not only meet current tribal needs, but emphasize and encourage dynamic cultural development. A new definition of tribal center must be established to address all components of tribal culture. Such a center must accommodate gatherings that fluctuate in accordance with seasonal and ceremonial practices, include the means for cultural preservation (artifacts, language, teachings), and develop spatial solutions that anticipate future change.

## THE TRIBAL COMMUNITY CENTER

Well-established as archetype on the reservation landscape, thanks in large part to the government community action programs of the late 1960's and early 1970's, the tribal community center was determined by little or no budget. Where its urban counterpart tended to house only community-oriented, social programs, the tribal community center that exists today needed to dispense a host of U.S. government services under one roof. CETA, Youth job services, medical clinics, commodity food distribution, elderly nutrition programs, Head Start, HUD, all of which, in an urban setting operated out of a number of buildings, but on the reservation vied for space and partitions in a small, poorly programmed building. In addition, the tribal center had to accommodate a government whose executive, judicial, legislative, and enforcement powers are subject only to federal intervention.

While some reservations have recently begun building separate buildings for each function served by their first center, others still require or prefer the versatility and cohesiveness of the "comprehensive" center. Such is the case of the design of the tribal community center for the Grand Portage Band. Able to afford any combination or separation of building programs on many viable sites, the tribe opted for one center that consolidates reception area, library, pre-school classrooms, day care, training center, conference and meeting rooms, tribal offices, youth center, gym, and garage. The approach of this thesis offers a variety of services in one building, thereby preserving the opportunity for interaction between all segments of the community.

The process of investigation and redefinition included a rigorous study of the context of the tribal center: its climate, its environment, its history, its current program, its spatial relationship to the community, and like precedents. Public and semi-public areas of interaction within the program must be established in dimension and material to invoke a sequential sense of place. Above all, the goal is to develop a referential relationship between the center, tribal members, and the greater environment. To that end, the process will include a mid-point dialogue in Minnesota with tribal elders, planners, leaders, and members.

#### THE STATUS OF THE CONTEMPORARY INDIAN RESERVATION

This decade will witness the greatest stresses to tribal communities in northern Minnesota than any other in tribal history (barring displacement to reservations). While the civil rights movement and subsequent affirmative action policies have been of direct benefit to minorities in the United States, the implementation of such policies on reservations has been manifested in ever-increasing dependence on government monies. Government jobs, homes, and food are the staple of reservation life. This dependence directly correlates to high rates of alcoholism, unemployment, domestic abuse, and criminal acts. The advent of the casino complex, a new tribal archetype, has been a mixed blessing for tribes and Bois Forte is no exception. On the plus side, it has provided employment for any tribal member willing to work at the casino and has financed an independent tribal school and other tribal buildings. It has also given tribal members standing in a regional community noted for its antipathy towards Native Americans by employing a large number of non-tribal members, contributing to the regional economy, and organizing and sponsoring a number of charitable and social events.

On the negative side, the infusion of casino wealth does not equate to a per capita payment for each tribal member, however much public perception believes it to be so. Many casinos, Bois Forte's included, were funded by outside investors who receive the lion's share of profits. What money available to the tribal government is either reinvested in the casino's holdings or set aside for development projects. Bois Forte's casino profits are minimal compared to those of casinos located near large urban centers. Its casino, Fortune Bay, is located in a sparsely populated area and its main business is the resort trade of the summer. The reality of casino wealth is that it has little impact on individual household incomes. Many reservation households have merely substituted the pay of a low-paying casino service job for welfare.



Like the mass-media-delivered promise of “the American Dream,” casino wealth is highly visible, but just as unattainable for most tribal members.

The casino complex, satired so subtly in Louise Erdrich’s *The Bingo Palace*, has come to represent just one more means of alienation from contemporary society. For the first time, however, this alienation has been brought home to tribal lands--a betrayal of the highest order for some tribal members. While tribal members work at the casino, they are not in positions of authority. Their salaries either preclude visits to the casino during off-duty hours or are spent there at the expense of family needs. Children, a necessary component of tribal society, are excluded from gambling establishments and their absence at the casino adds to its “unnatural” position in reservation life. As a built entity on tribal lands it also alienates. The complex--casino, bingo hall, hotel, restaurant, pool, marina, and nature trails--serves the paying public only. Loiterers are not welcome. Its extensive grounds spatially isolate land and water from tribal use. Its encroachment has limited hunting, trapping, fishing and netting areas. For tribal members who don’t gamble, the casino is a literal void on tribal lands and a figurative one in tribal life.

The lure of big money, coupled with a lack of education and business expertise, has resulted in heated contests to control tribal government. Tribal politics across the country are now fought on a federal level because each faction argues its rights directly to the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior, and U.S. Attorney General. Federal agencies, mandated by law to serve as fiduciary trustees for tribes, must attend to each request for intervention. At present, the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe, the governing body of 6 tribal bands (White Earth, Leech Lake, Grand Portage, Fond du Lac, Millacs, and Bois Forte), is under pressure to dissolve due to internal band struggles over casino control. At risk are numerous treaty rights guaranteed to the tribe as a whole. The greed and shortsightedness of these factions, accompanied by loud allegations and misrepresentations in the media, serve to further indict Native American gambling in the eyes of the public at large. The gambling solution, hailed as a “New Buffalo” to Native American economies, has not been as beneficial as its namesake.

Tribes in Minnesota also face increased threats to their environment and resources. In Minnesota, the growth of the Twin-Cities urban ring has strained the existing infrastructure and many municipal, corporate, and state agencies have approached tribal governments requesting air, land or water rights. Tribes in Minnesota have had to legally fight proposals that range from damming and rerouting water from the Mississippi River, to locating nuclear waste sites directly adjacent to tribal land and water and establishing uranium and copper mining operations on or near tribal lands. The Bois Forte Band, located over 400 miles from the Twin Cities, recently turned down a request from the City of Minneapolis to build an electrical plant which would have served as a conduit for high voltage lines from Canada to Minneapolis. Tribes have no control over existing threats to their watersheds. Granted exemptions to water quality compliance regulations by both state and EPA agencies, iron ore mines in northern Minnesota continue to dump tailings, the by-product of ore processing, into rivers and tailings ponds. The longest environmental trial in U.S. history, *The U.S. Government vs. Erie Mining Company*, was centered around the dumping of tailings, 40,000 tons per day, into Lake Superior. While this dumping was stopped--not because of

public outcry over the amount of tailings dumped, but because of the presence of asbestos, a known carcinogen, in the tailings sludge--the same company still dumps tailings today, with EPA and state approval, into the river that feeds into Lake Vermilion. The Lake Vermilion Reservation is located on the bay that this river feeds into. While the EPA and the state of Minnesota have yet to quantify or even acknowledge the asbestos risk in this approved dumping, they have issued a fish dietary advisory of no more than one fish per month based on the mercury levels in the lake. The advisory is not heeded. Tribal netting and fishing practices are seasonal and take in large quantities in the fall and spring for winter and summer consumption.

The iron mining industry in northern Minnesota has long served as a cultural institution for the cities that it spawned. The towns of Tower and Soudan, across the bay from the Vermilion Reservation, were created to house the crews of that manned the underground mine in Soudan. This mine, over 2 miles deep, was the first iron ore mine to be established in Minnesota and operated up until 1958. As high grade ore veins ran out, the mines switched to the open pit (strip) method. The largest open pit iron mine in the world, measuring over 1 mile across, is located near Hibbing, Minnesota, a 40 minute ride west from Lake Vermilion. This area, from Tower to Hibbing, is known as the Iron Range and "Rangers," the inhabitants of the former mining towns, are known not only for their work ethic, but also for their fierce ethnic identities. Whole villages and families came from central and northern Europe to work in the mines. "Rangers" lived and live by strict ethnic hierarchies, with the Finnish, one of the largest groups to settle in the area, near the top and tribes at the bottom.

Lake Vermilion is directly adjacent to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area (BWCA), a national parkland known for its limitations on human use (no building, roads, or vehicles allowed) as well as its size. This parkland comprised half of the original holdings of the Bois Forte, Fond du Lac and Grand Portage people and was created after the Treaty of 1854 moved the bands to the reservations. While the BWCA was created early in the history of Minnesota, the regulations limiting its use were not legislated until the late 1970's and early 1980's when environmental concerns were at the forefront of national politics and increased population sustained bureaucratic enforcement within the state. Up until that time, tribal members, while maintaining permanent homes within reservation boundaries, continued to camp, hunt, trap, and travel the same lakes within the BWCA that their parents and grandparents did. Because of increased enforcement within the BWCA, tribal members must now apply and pay for a limited stay permit to the park.

## DESIGN OBJECTIVES

It is in this context that the design of a community center for the Lake Vermilion Reservation must be constantly assessed. Unlike the casino complex, the tribal center will truly belong to tribal members and its design must encourage tribal gathering and community building.

Tribal members must be able to easily read the language of the center--its dimensions, its lighting, its materials, its sequential story--as an extension of Anishinabe culture. At issue is how to do so with modern building techniques and materials. Driven in large part by the influx of casino dollars, but also by an increasing number of private enterprises, tribes across the country have in the last decade begun to build without the help of government agencies. What is being built, however, is the iconization of tribal culture and not its expression. The use of icons is not in itself inappropriate. Icons, by their ability to capture and communicate what words fail to, are direct expressions of culture. It is when symbols are used as a substitute for greater cultural understanding that buildings fail their inhabitants and their own potential for artistic interpretation and expression. Bright colors, beadwork patterns on walls, circular motifs and the exclusive use of wood, easily hung placards of tribalism, cannot replace spatial relationships that are a reflection of how a culture lives.

Aspects of tribal philosophy, history, and interpersonal relationships have been used to inform design decisions. Tribal leaders and elders want to be accessible, and not only to other adults. On reservations, children are allowed a freedom deemed excessive by many other cultures. They are allowed to go everywhere and in groups. Except for religious occasions, "noise" is not a negative attribute of a tribal gathering. Food also plays an important role in many tribal activities. It is served at almost every occasion, is itself a reason to gather and celebrate, and has its own unique requirements for spatial ordering. Most religious ceremonies, including burials and wakes, are conducted at the center. Depending on the occasion, gatherings can include as many as 1000 participants. The success of the tribal center as a cherished place of gathering will lie in its responsiveness these and related issues.

The design's response to northern Minnesota's harsh winter climate was always of paramount consideration. Because lows of minus 20 degrees F during the winter and shortened daylight hours in the fall, winter, and spring are the norm, design strategies to maximize psychological and physical comfort, as well as energy savings, influence every design scheme.

## METHODOLOGY

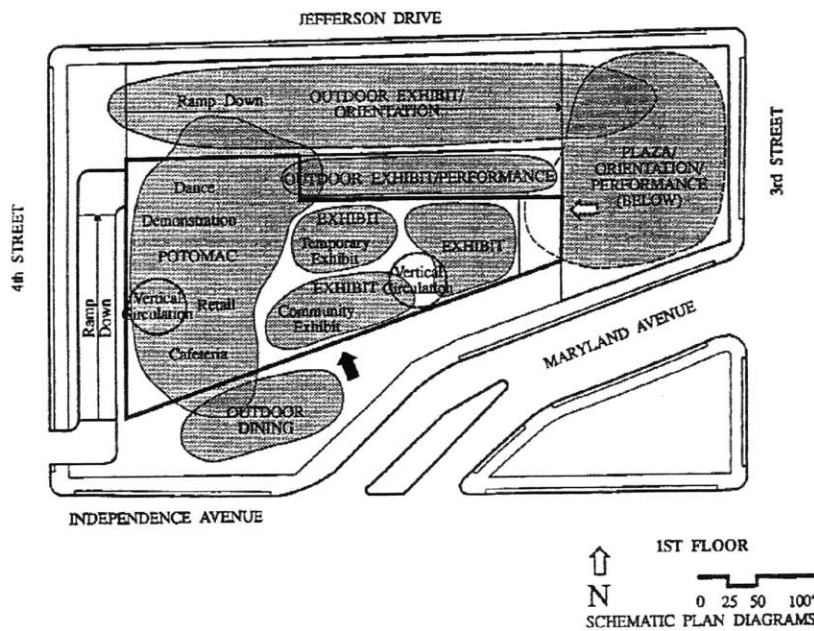
Endemic to the task of designing a tribal center for the Lake Vermilion Reservation of the Bois Forte Band of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe, is the need for the process to be synoptic in scope and holistic in detail. Not only is this approach in keeping with traditional Anishinabe (Chippewa) philosophies and practices, but it is also necessitated by the complexity of contemporary tribal issues. Tribal reservations at one and the same time function as single villages and as sovereign entities whose rights parallel and sometimes supersede those of states. The tribal center serves as the built expression of this unique political, cultural, economic, and social positioning.

To that end, and because a synoptic approach complemented the needs of the project. This thesis synthesized research of other Native American architects, tribal building precedents, Anishinabe history and culture, and cold climate design.

## PROGRAM AND PRECEDENTS

In order to emphasize and encourage dynamic cultural development on the reservation, the program of the tribal center must be more than a pragmatic solution to meet the present requirements of the community. Tribes today face rapid loss of collective cultural knowledge. The architectural design response was to develop space that encouraged group interactions. The importance of elders was ranked equal to that of children in daily life. The present needs and future needs of the of the reservation call for tribal government offices, lobby, medical and dental clinic, dining center and kitchen, a small library, conference and meeting rooms, youth center, small theatre/training classrooms, storage for large equipment, 1/2 court gymnasium, and small convenience store and storage. All of which with the exception of the gym and convenience store, were incorporated into the thesis.

One building precedent significant in its stated objective of designing for a constituency of Native Americans is the National Museum of the American Indians in Washington, D.C. While this building will also have a large Non-Native audience, many of its programmatic spaces were developed with Native dance, storytelling, and gathering activities in mind. Overlapping activity spaces were integral to concept development of this building as evidenced in the following diagram:



While the purpose of the NMAI scheme was to accommodate museum programming, it, curiously enough, places emphasis on overlapping areas of activity directly related to tribal gathering. Tribal performance spaces are privileged in the plan. Outdoor and indoor overlap is integral to all group gathering, as they are in the design solution of this thesis.

Two other precedents of note are the recently built tribal centers of the Grand Portage Band and Fond-du-Lac Band of Chippewa Indians. Both have been built with casino dollars and represent the two extremes by which the program could be developed. Space in the community center for the Fond-du-Lac Band is completely given over to tribal governmental offices, with tribal council chambers given the place of honor within the building.

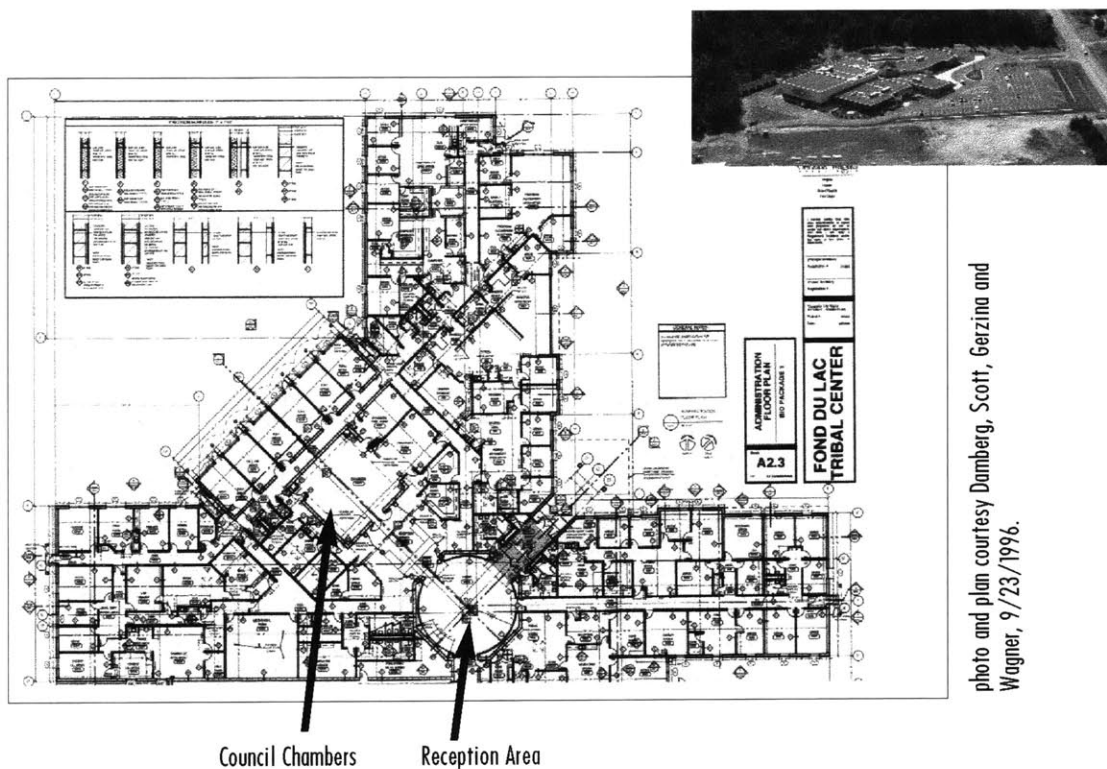


photo and plan courtesy Damberg, Scott, Gerzina and Wagner, 9/23/1996.

Fond-du-Lac operates two casinos near the largest urban area in northern Minnesota, the city of Duluth, and the revenue they generate has rapidly increased the size of Fond-du-Lac's bureaucracy. Thus the need for a prominent tribal center that serves to emphasize the importance of business of the reservation. The Grand Portage Band's center, however, was designed primarily for recreational activities. Grand Portage is located on the tip of Minnesota's Arrowhead country and is one of the most rural reservations in Minnesota. While it does have a casino, its casino is much smaller than Fond-du-Lac's and Bois Forte's. Its tribal government has not increased significantly since the early 1970's. Its center

is wholly devoted to recreation. It houses a swimming pool, gymnasium, day care facility, youth center, adult center, and small library.

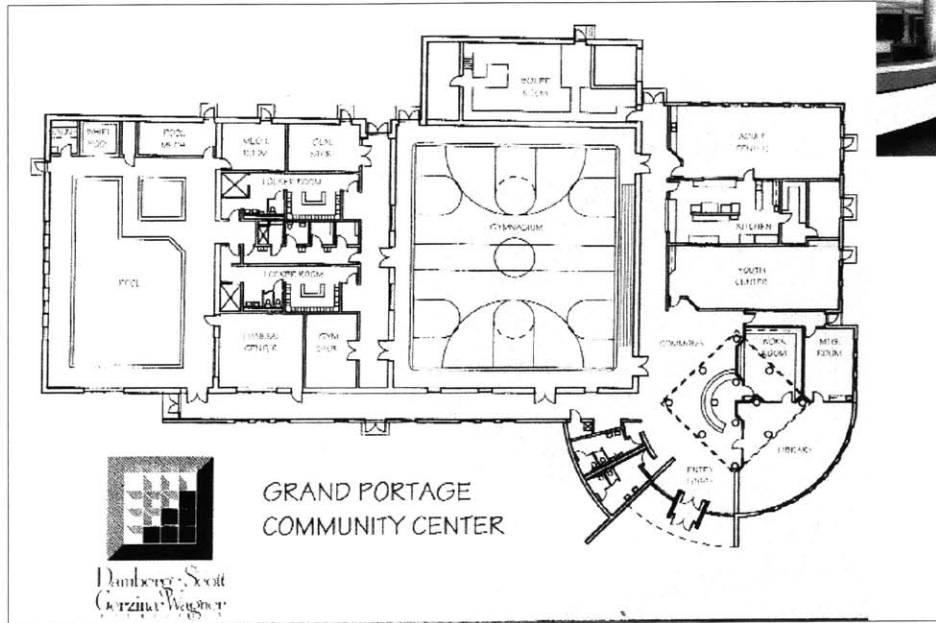


photo and plan courtesy Damberg, Scott, Gerzina and Wagner, 1996.

What is most curious is that both centers were built by the same architectural firm, albeit by two separate design teams. Both seem to directly represent the expressed wishes of each client.

The development for the program of Lake Vermilion's tribal center is more a combination of these schemes, not as a means of compromise, but a recognition of the need of the tribal center to serve at once the need for daily congregation and the need for ceremonial, cultural-preserving, community-building, gathering spaces. While it does house governmental offices, and does include student study areas and a library, it was intended to reflect and encourage all aspects of daily tribal life. Recreational activities were centered on the development of the beach park. Winter sports, such as snowmobiling, ice fishing, and snowshoeing need no special community shelter, and are a large part of life once the lake freezes over. The emphasis on open spaces of gathering was meant to encourage the community in a freedom to inhabit any part of the space desired. Barriers were kept to a minimum so that children would feel free to roam the building. the enormous view of the lake and its distant shore.

## SITE AND REGIONAL POSITIONING

The tribal center will serve the Lake Vermilion Reservation of the Bois Forte Band of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe. Treaties with the federal government created two reservations for the Bois Forte Band: the Nett Lake Reservation (~150,000 acres) and the Lake Vermilion Reservation (~2000 acres), sixty miles distant from each other. Nett Lake, the seat of government for the Band, is home to new separate tribal buildings: a school, a medical and dental clinic, a day care, a social center, a gas station/convenience store, a tribal government center, and a tribal court and police building. With its smaller land base and population, the Vermilion Reservation is constrained to a microcosm of Nett Lake's programming.

The Lake Vermilion Reservation occupies a large peninsula in a 20-mile long lake near the Canadian border, eighty miles north of Duluth, Minnesota. The reservation is 10 miles away from the nearest town, 25 miles away from the nearest shopping center, and 80 miles away from the nearest major mall. Because of its isolation, the reservation needs a "full-service" center, one capable of supporting the community in the midst of a blizzard or hosting a large regional pow-wow. The resident population constantly fluctuates from 150-200 people as members move back and forth from urban areas to their familial home (many jobs in northern Minnesota are seasonal.)

The site for the new center is limited by the topography and boundaries of the peninsula itself, by past and present homesteading practices, by designated historic and burial sites, by the casino complex's development, and by official tribal council zoning. For much of the early part of this century, an Indian boarding school was located near the crossroads leading to the present center. Its ruin is designated as a historical site by the tribe. Surrounding the center today is an amalgam of buildings which represent the stages of government funding allotted the reservation over time: the old headstart/garage building, a newer garage, an unheated gym, the children's playground, and the new pre-school/day care building.

The peninsula site chosen for the project is zoned for community development and within easy walking distance of the HUD housing development. It is near located closer to the densest housing of the reservation. While it is located on a northern branch of the reservation's peninsula, this branch is protected from west and northwest winter winds by the larger and topographically higher branch of the peninsula that the housing occupies. The shoreline to the left and right of this peninsula present the means by which to connect the reservation's eastern and western housing areas (walking trails, beach and park development). The peninsula offers greater potential to incorporate frames of scenic beauty: large pine stands occupy the hills surrounding the peninsula as it juts out into a larger bay that the present center faces. In trying to fit the buildings around the present center--some of which are little more than tin and foundation--would have to be weighed against the cost of renovation and storage potential as well as energy and aesthetic considerations. The new tribal center will integrate its future parking facilities with those of a proposed beach park. In addition to the main road, a walking trail will connect the beach and tribal center to the housing area. A secondary ceremonial road will preserve the established ritual of burial by connecting the new center to the tribal gravesites.

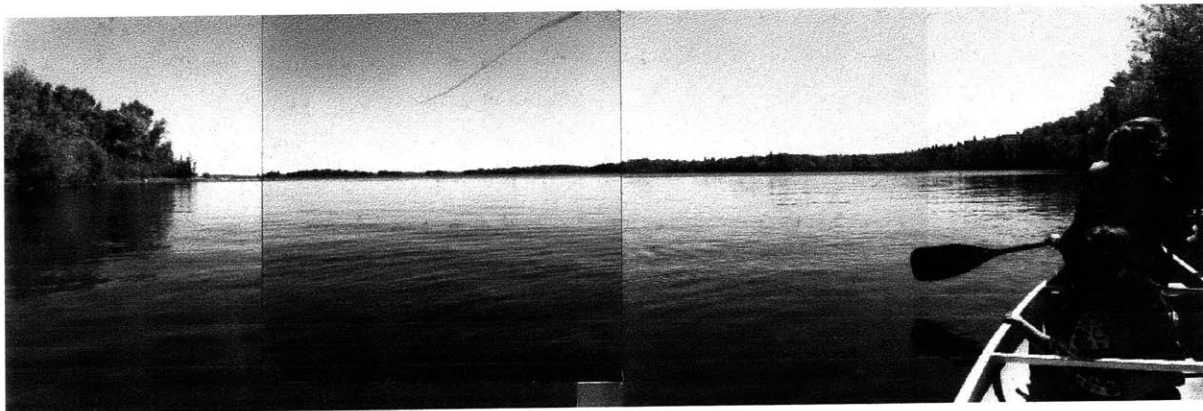


**A NEW TRIBAL CENTER FOR LAKE VERMILION**

Bay on left side of peninsula

Process Diagrams  
Site Plan  
Perspective Drawings

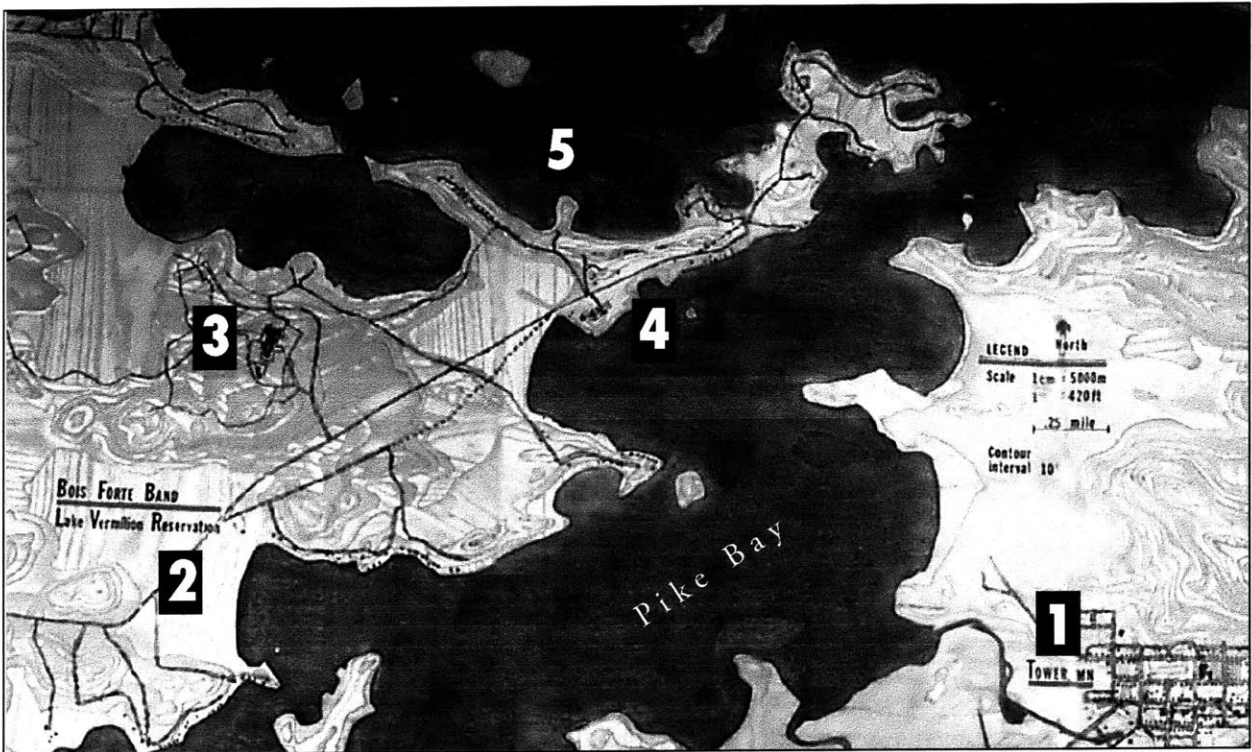
Building Plans  
Building Sections  
Model Photographs



Bay on right side of site peninsula

both author's photos





author's model

### LAKE VERMILION INDIAN RESERVATION

The reservation occupies the entire peninsula pictured above

- 1** Tower, MN, the nearest town is located directly across Pike Bay from the reservation, but is 15 miles away by road around the bay.
- 2** The main road into the reservation: from it branch off many of the band members private residential homes, as well as the casino complex, the present day community building area, and the road to the public housing area.
- 3** The Casino complex, Fortune Bay, occupies the largest area of zoned community development land on the reservation.
- 4** The site of the present community center and day care center
- 5** The peninsula for the new tribal center



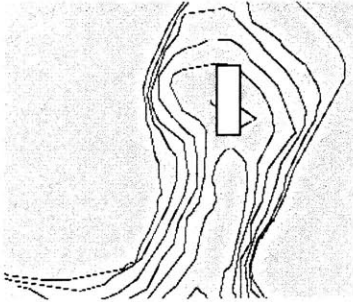
author's model

### COMMUNITY SITE MODEL

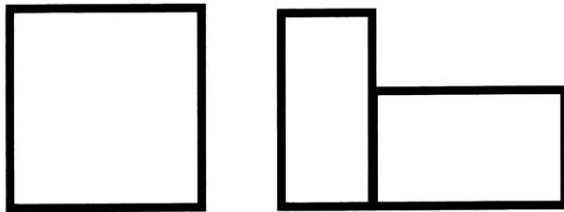
- 1** Proposed Site of New Tribal Center
- 2** Existing Community Center (built 1970)
- 3** Community Day Care Center (built 1996)
- 4** Farm Point Public Housing Community

**BUILDING FOOTPRINT**

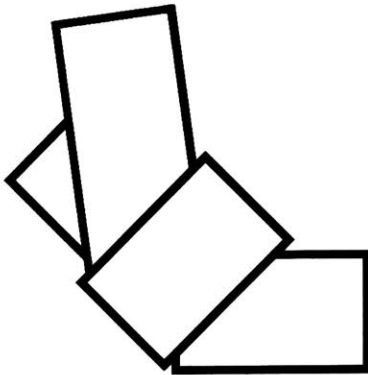
The site is limited by geography of peninsula and preference for 100' environmental buffer zone with water's edge.



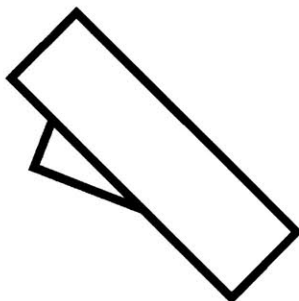
Initial response to limited building footprint was in direct response to predominant N-S length of site



2nd response was to concentrate axis of building on widest portion of site, when prioritizing southern fenestration



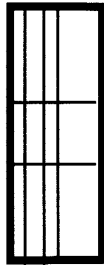
This scheme used a combination of orientations to take advantage of the site's limit



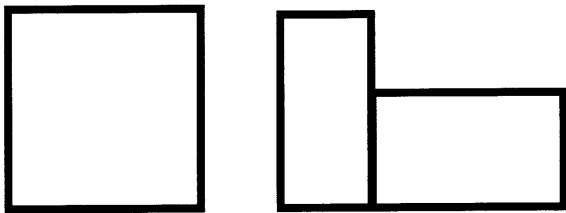
The final scheme returned to the original response to the site, but modified the axis to allow for more south and southwest exposure as well as provide for varying viewpoints

OVERLAPPING SPACES

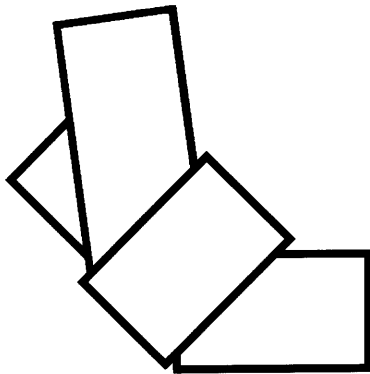
Priority in the design scheme was not given to any one programmatic element, but rather to the overlapping spaces of semi-public and semi-private areas in accordance with cultural preferences of gathering



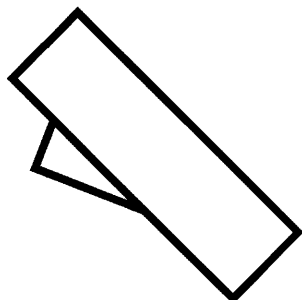
In the first scheme, a series of walls, programmatic elements and their connecting circulation filtered between the walls



The emphasis on overlapping space was considered as a gathering area between buildings as well as the W-E axis of arrival along the buildings' southern facade



Overlapping spatial activities was built into the geometry of the building

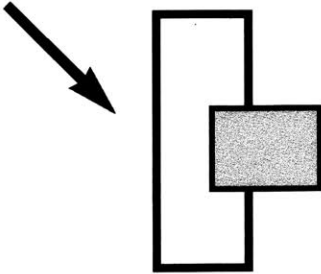


The final design places emphasis on open overlapping spaces of activity, much in keeping with traditional Anishinabe communal living

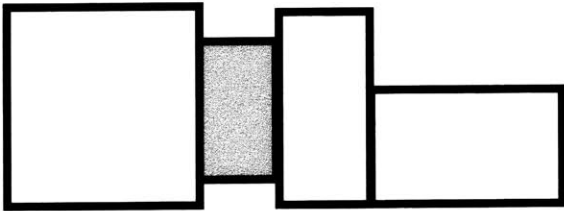
PROTECTED OUTDOOR GATHERING AREA

Although site is generally protected by Farm Point to the west, winter winds predominantly blow from the NW.

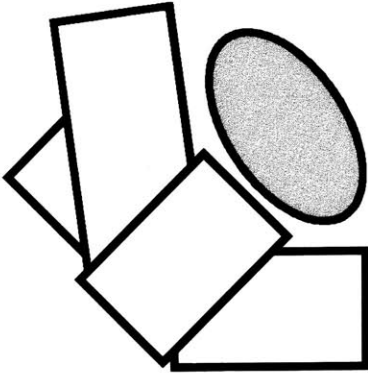
NW winter winds



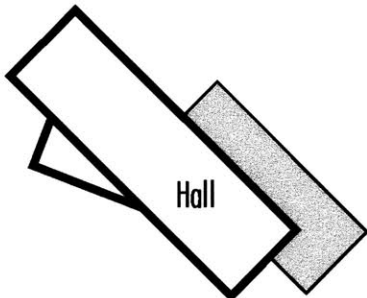
The outdoor gathering area was sited almost mid point of the building on the east side. It shared a transitional zone with the community hall of the building



The outdoor gathering area was placed between two buildings as the site's primary gathering space



The outdoor gathering space is located directly at the end of the community hall



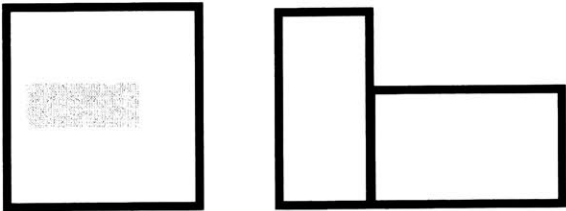
The outdoor gathering space is still directly adjacent to the hall but accessible to more of the axis of the building

LARGE GROUP GATHERING AREA

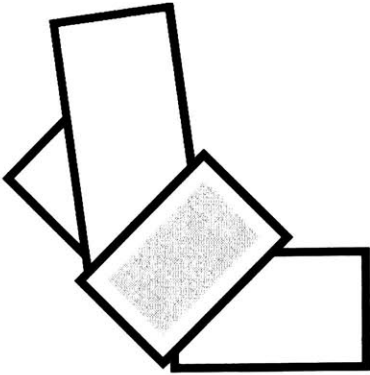
The most traditional Anishinabe space in the center's program is the Community Hall.



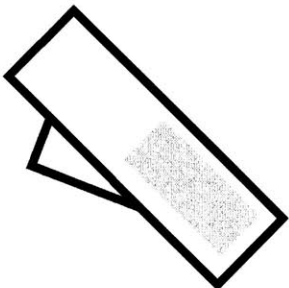
Community Hall centrally located in building, accessible on two levels



Community Hall placed in building with direct access to arrival and souther fenestration



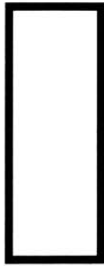
Community Hall given priority of access and arrival



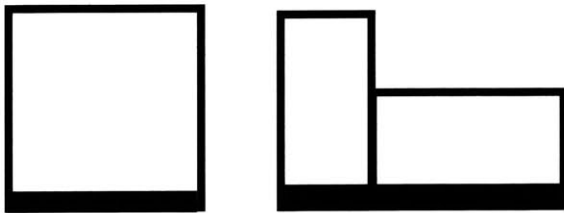
Community Hall as place of arrival and prominence

PASSIVE SOLAR HEATING

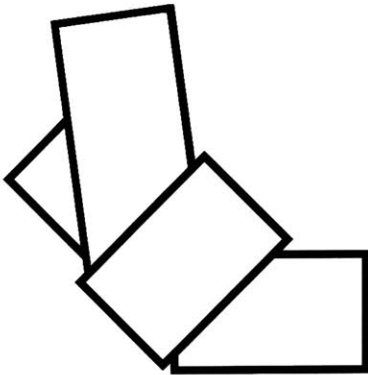
The site, predominantly N-S on axis, is at odds with the need for southern fenestration and passive solar heating opportunities



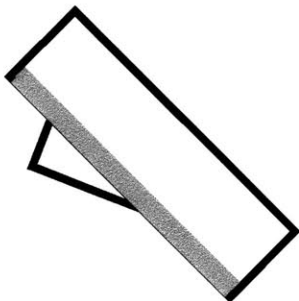
A N-S axis does not take advantage of passive solar radiation, but limits the northern exposure



Dense fenestration along the southern facade allows for maximum passive solar heating gains



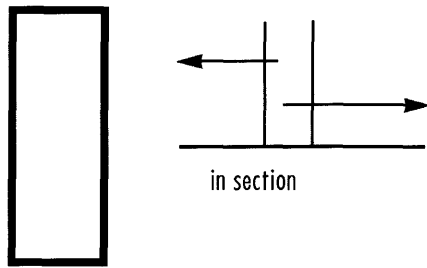
The complex orientation achieved a more SW facing windows to take advantage of perspective views in addition to solar gains



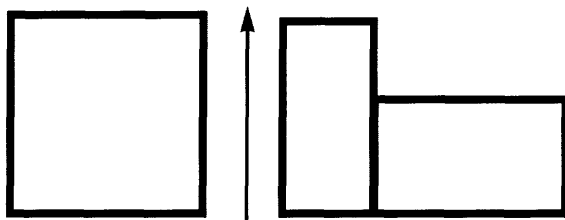
Two clerestories allow maximize SW solar gains

PRIMACY OF VIEW

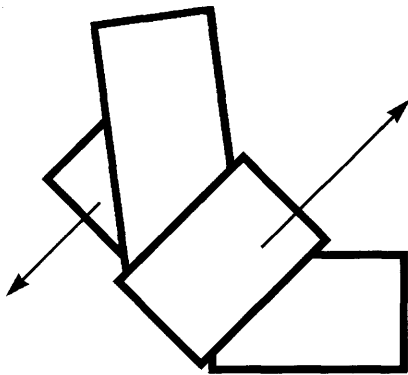
Because the site is on a peninsula, almost all views, except those directly south are viable



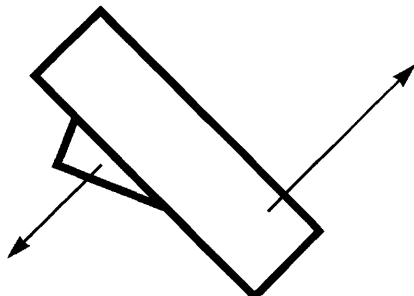
Varying levels provided many views both east and west



Priority of view given to axis of outdoor gathering area to emphasize the northern view of the 2-mile distant shore



SW view to bay is emphasized and the NW distant view of assorted islands and shoreline

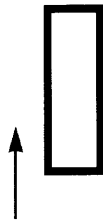


Emphasis on views toward bathing beach and arrival and the northern distance view is kept

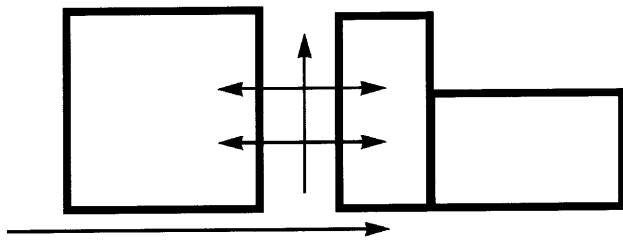


ACCESS

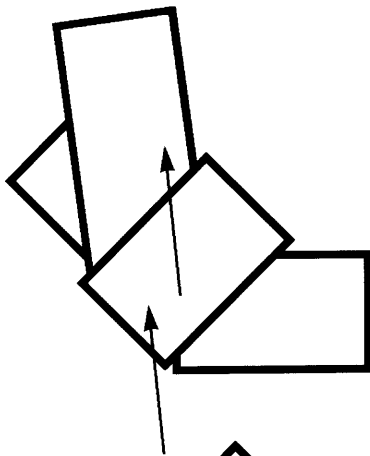
The N-S peninsula is directly adjacent to a steep ridge. Protected gravesite zoning further limits direct access from the east. Access much come from the west or directly from the south.



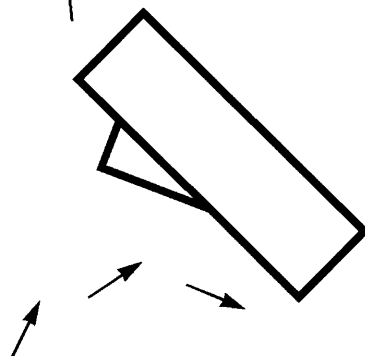
Access occurs on western edge of center directly from the south



Approach is from western edge of peninsula (from beach area). Building access occurs across the outdoor gathering space

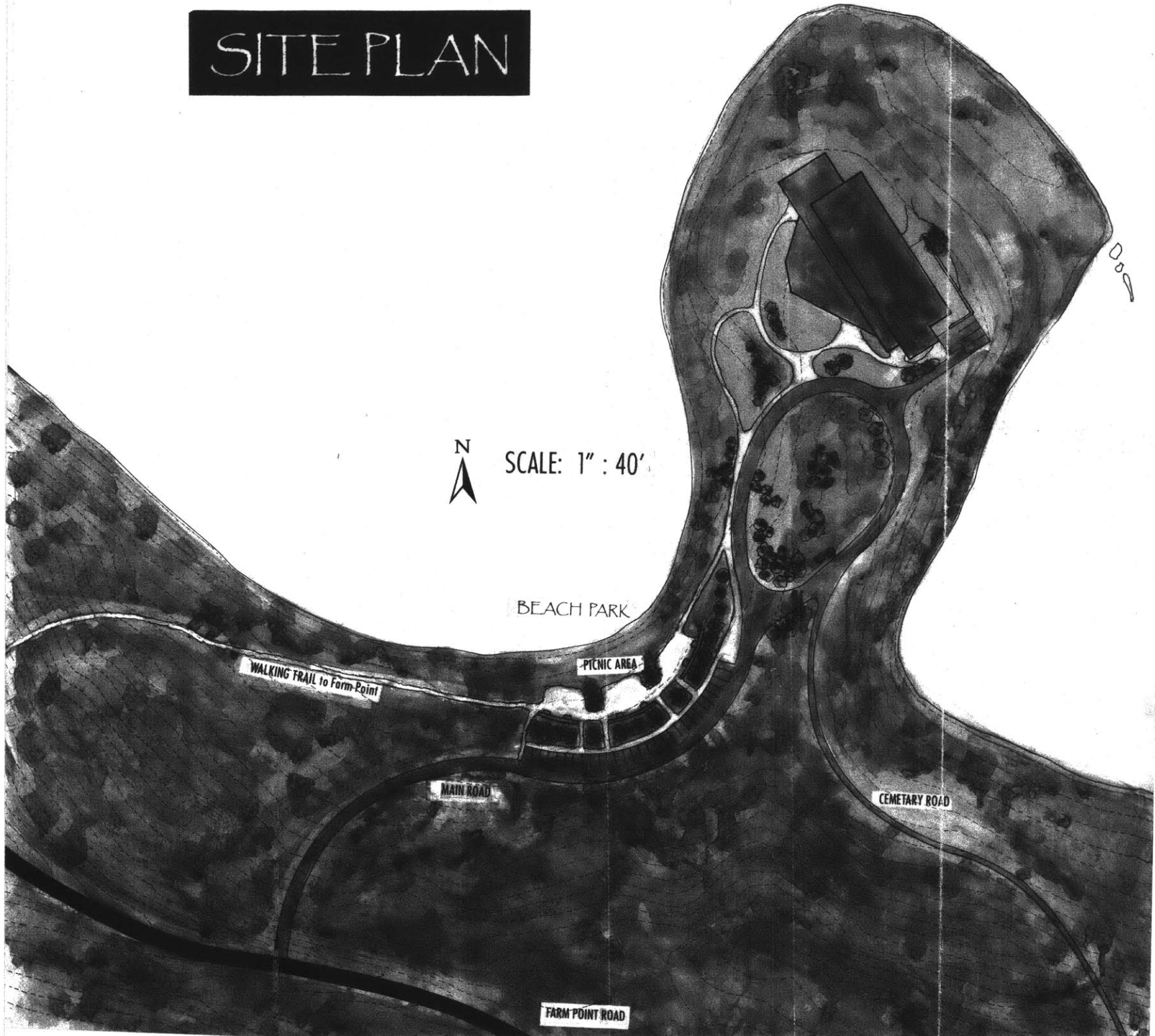


Access predominantly from the south. The axis continues through the length of the building



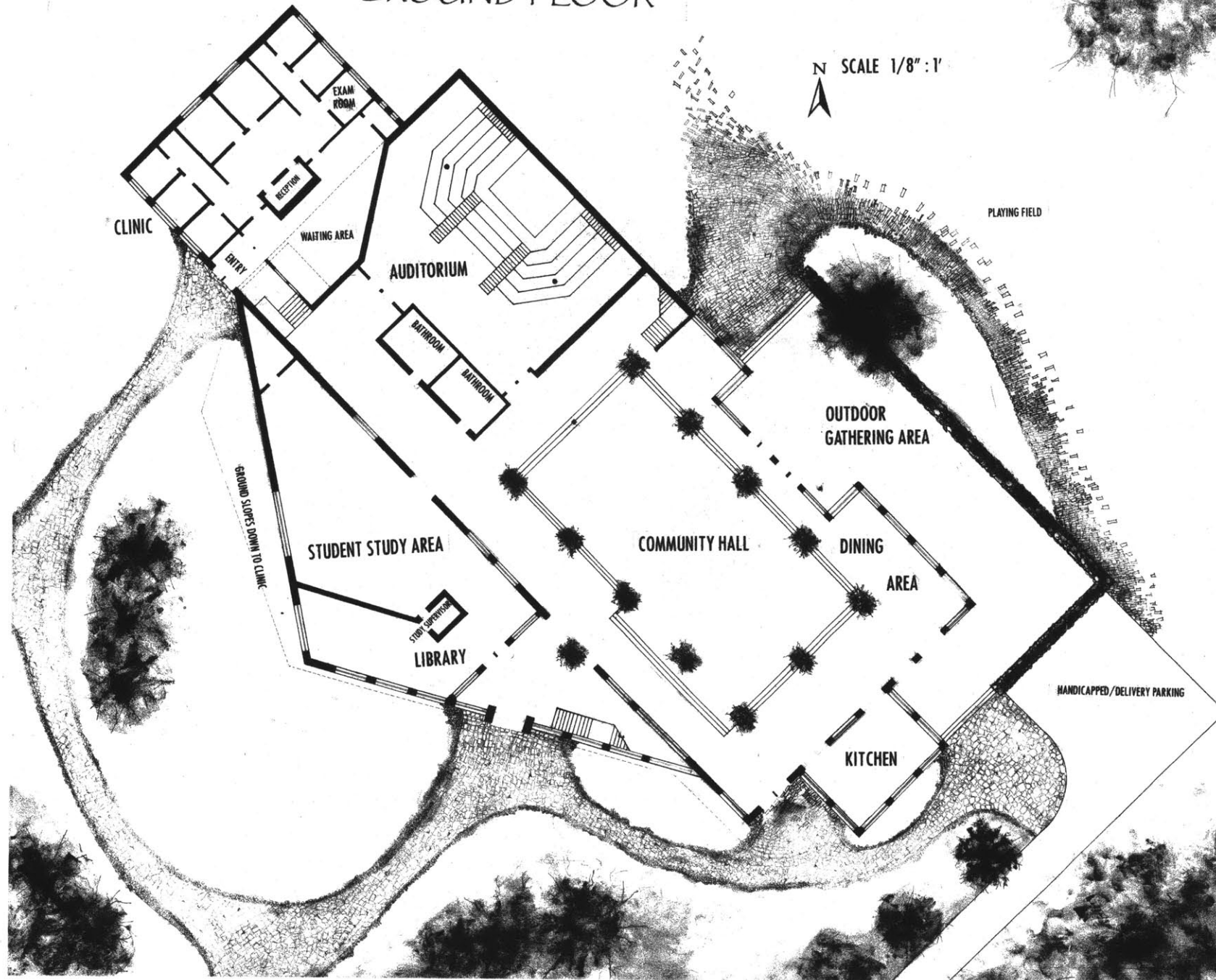
Axis is on a radial to the front of the building, allows for a gradual viewing of the building through landscaping and easy unloading

# SITE PLAN

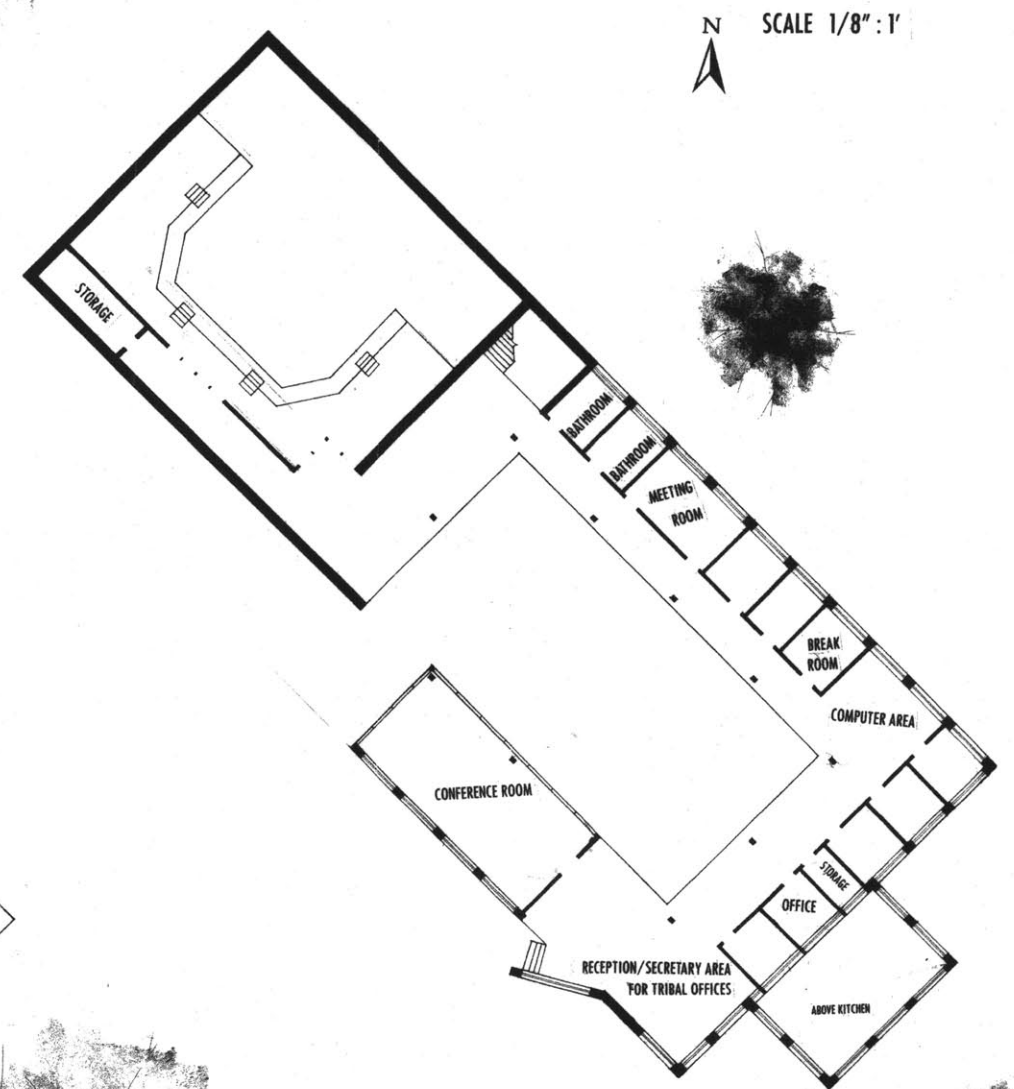


# TRIBAL CENTER

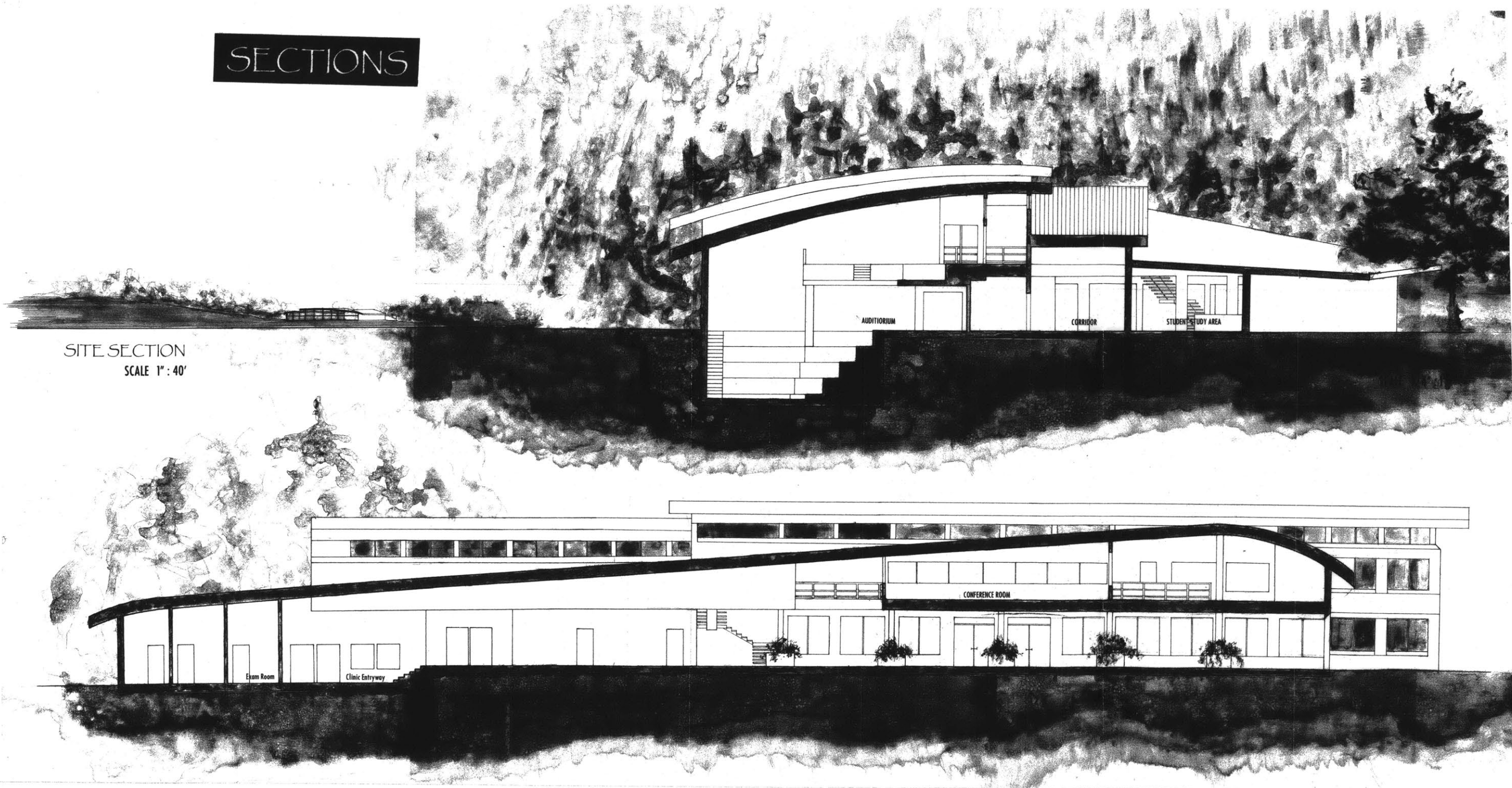
## GROUND FLOOR



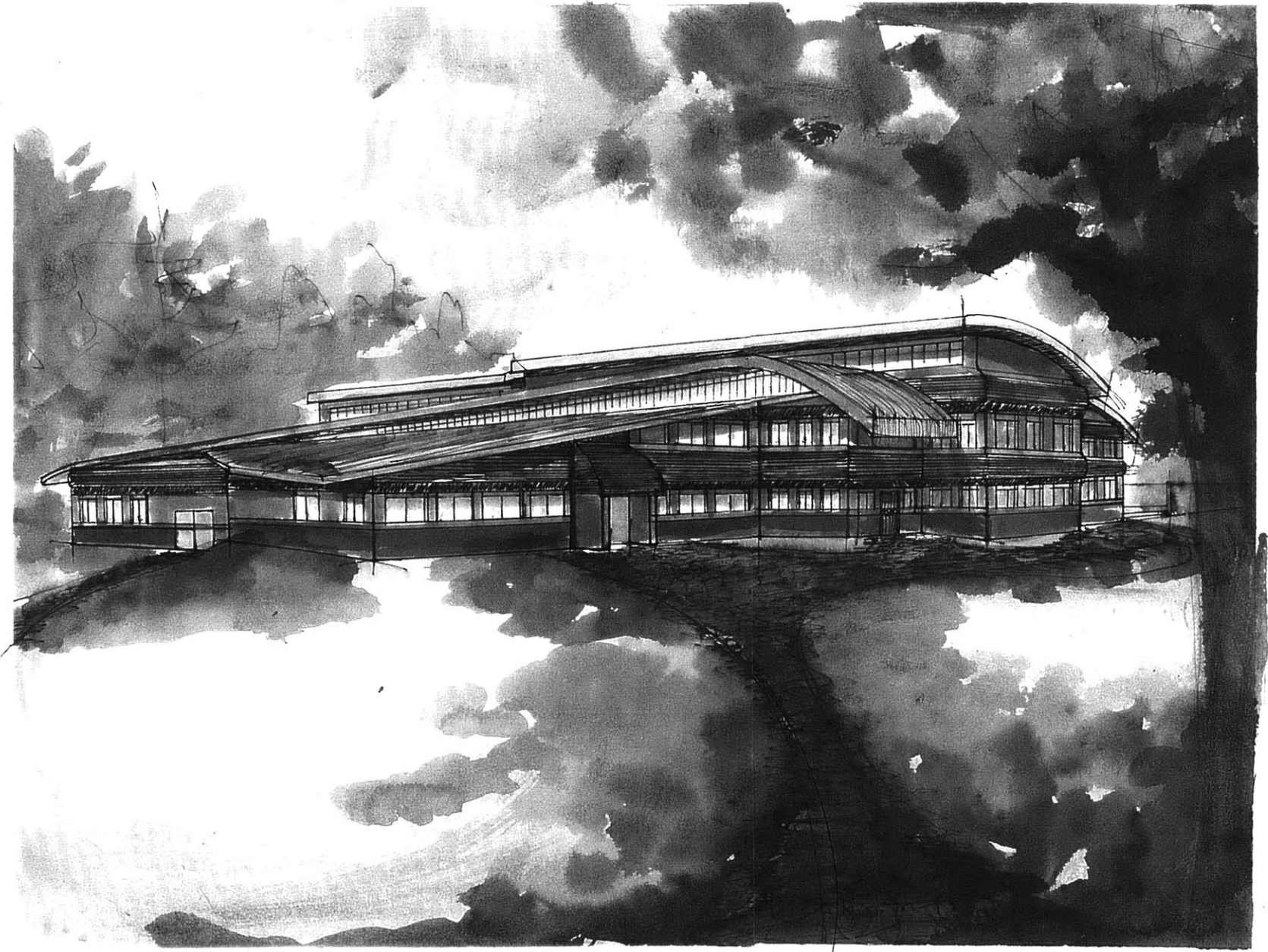
## SECOND FLOOR



# SECTIONS



SITE SECTION  
SCALE 1" : 40'





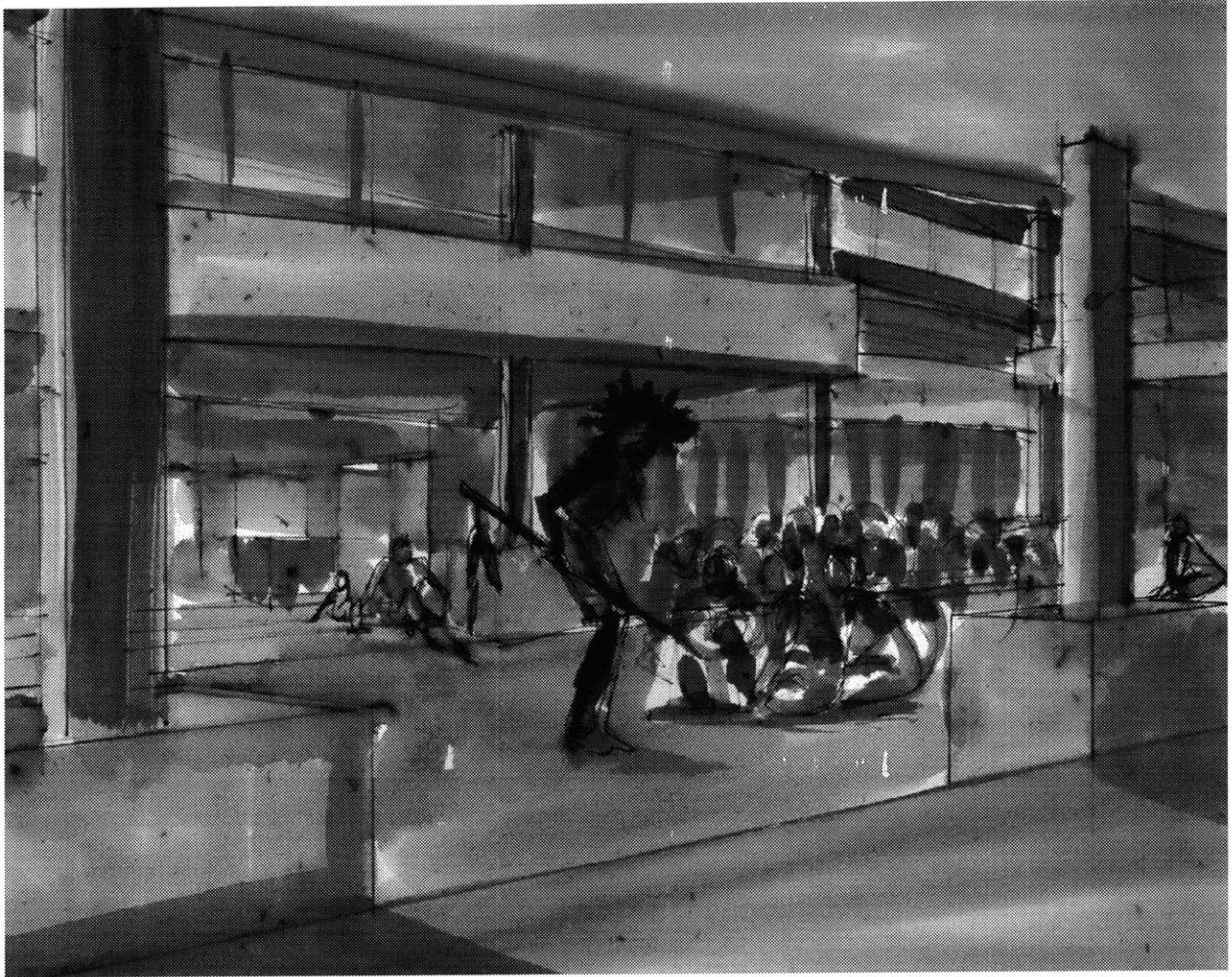
Author's perspective in watercolor

**Community Hall as Seen from tribal office balcony**



Author's perspective in watercolor

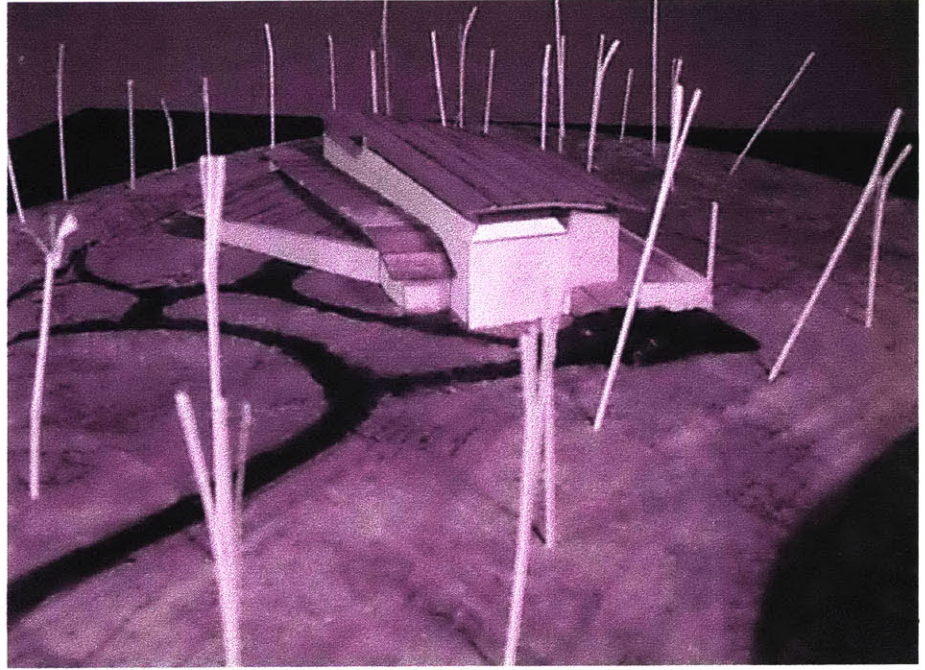
View down corridor as seen from clinic



Author's perspective in watercolor

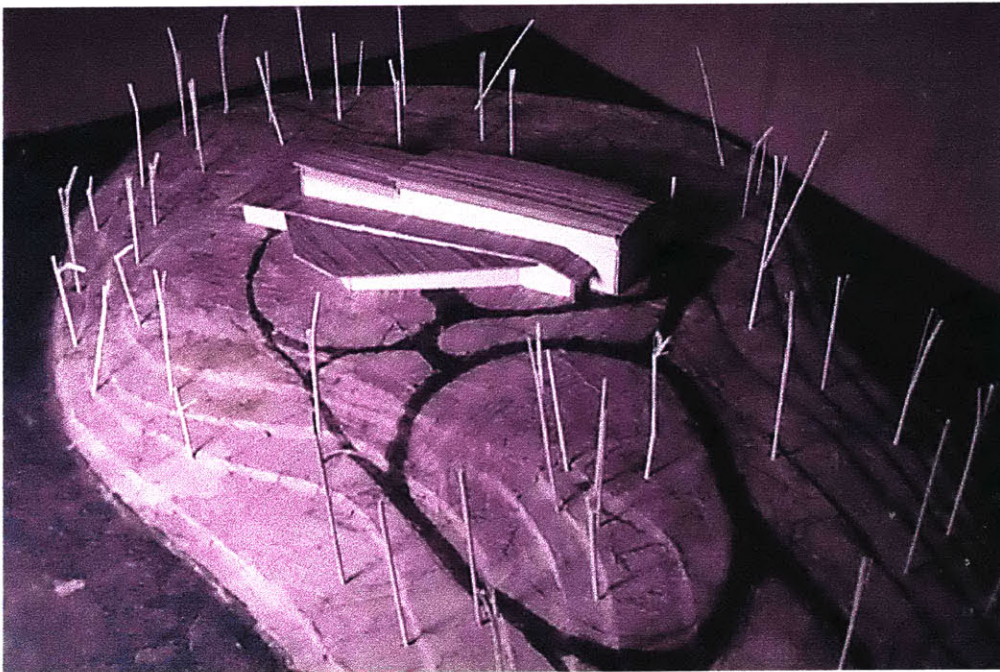
**View of Community Event (Storytelling) in Hall**



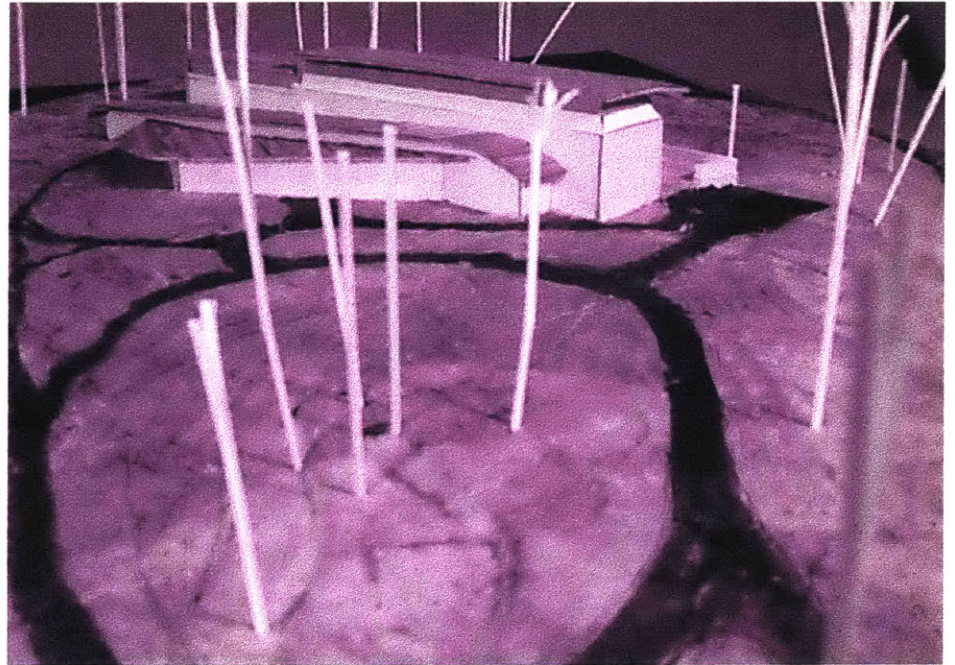


Author's model

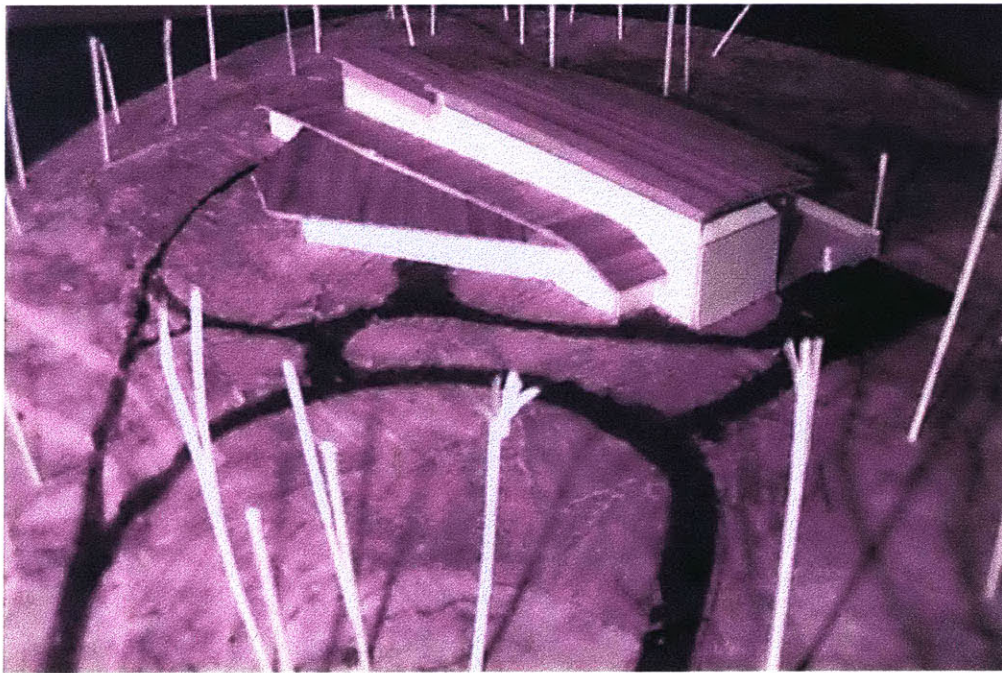
## Building Form and Site



Author's model



Author's model



Author's model



Author's model

## A Winter's Night on the Point

## CONCLUSION

As archetype the community center serves a broad range of building needs and its expression is eclectic, specific to the identity of the group for which it was intended. Even within quite specific and similar cultural groups, however, the range of programming and form can be quite extreme. Such is the case of the tribal center for the Anishinabe reservations in northern Minnesota. The design of the precedents presented, the tribal centers for the Fond-du-Lac and Grand Portage reservations, is not only an expression of how each community governs and views itself at this particular period in time, but also is indicative of the relationship of each community to its design team. In both cases, the needs and direct wishes of the client prevailed. Fond-du-Lac achieved its place of business and Grand Portage its place of leisure. What is needed is a more in-depth study of what should be accomplished by the simple act of gathering. In the case of this thesis the emphasis was placed on providing enough space for those greater community rituals of storytelling, dancing, performance, feasting and burial, as well as not being too cavernous for the daily interaction engendered by tribal government, elderly nutrition programs, schoolwork, and health care. For a community of 150-200, the space provided will work. For those rituals of large group gathering which take place in the summer, pow-wows and festivals, The whole peninsula can provide the stage for gathering. This proposal for a tribal center is about balance of community ritual, without which Anishinabe society is meaningless.

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