

5.2 Your position surrounded: atmosphere

The project does not begin with an image or a form; it starts with the inherent potential of the site – the *terrain vague*. Ignasi de Solà-Morales Rubió uses the term *terrain vague* to explain the post-urban residual spaces of abandoned industrial terrains:

The relationship between the absence of use, of activity, and the sense of freedom, of expectancy, is fundamental to understanding the evocative potential of the city's *terrain vagues*. Void, absence, yet also promise, the space of the possible, of expectation” (Daskalakis & Perez 2001:79).

The design sets out to recognise the industrial archaeological nature of the terrain, without inhibiting the creation of a recognisable place in this ill-defined terrain. The form-giving process is an attempt at examining the relationship between objects and its surrounding field. Premised is a collapsing of the indoor-outdoor dichotomy; a form that is at once a threshold, platform and background.

Fig. 86 *Terrain Vague II* - Constant Nieuwenhuys, 1973, oil on canvas, collection Ton Berends, The Hague (Wigley 1998:224)

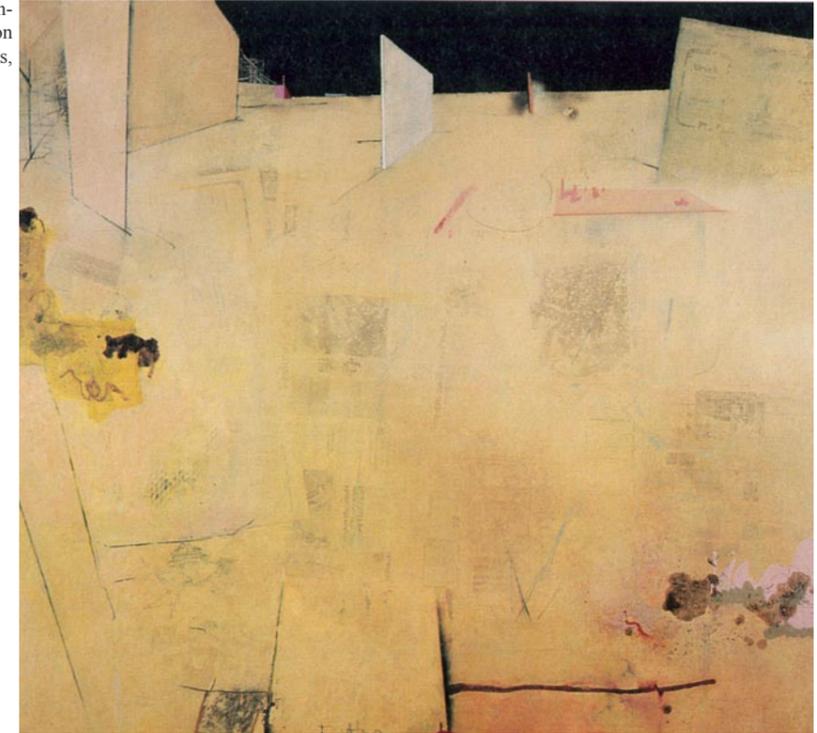


Fig. 87 *Terrain Vague III* - Constant Nieuwenhuys, 1973, oil on canvas, collection Ton Berends, The Hague (Wigley 1998:224)



5.2.1 Model 1: invisible infrastructure

Public space is the primary focus of this model. From the side of the suburb, only a platform rising towards a view of the city is visible. It is the view from the railway tracks that reveals the architecture. The notion of architecture as invisible infrastructure is explored.

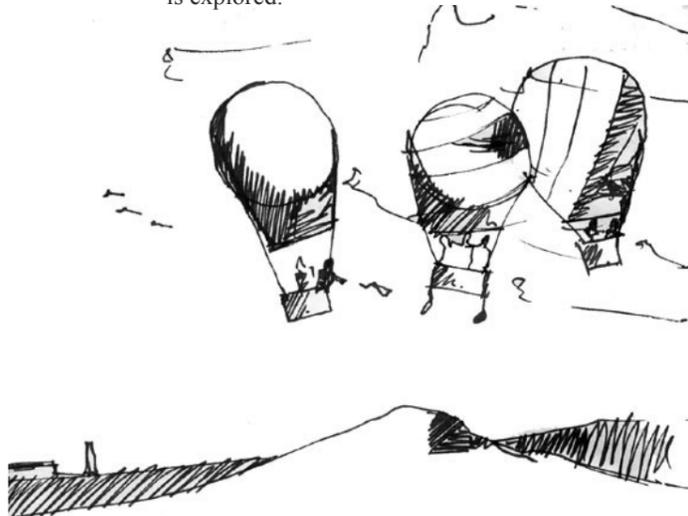


Fig. 88 Events, February 2006, pen (Author 2006)

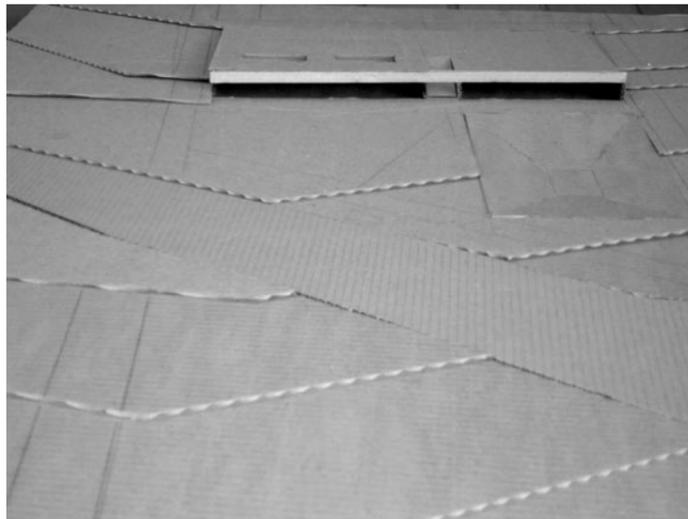


Fig. 89 Concept model 1, May 2006, corrugated cardboard (Author 2006)

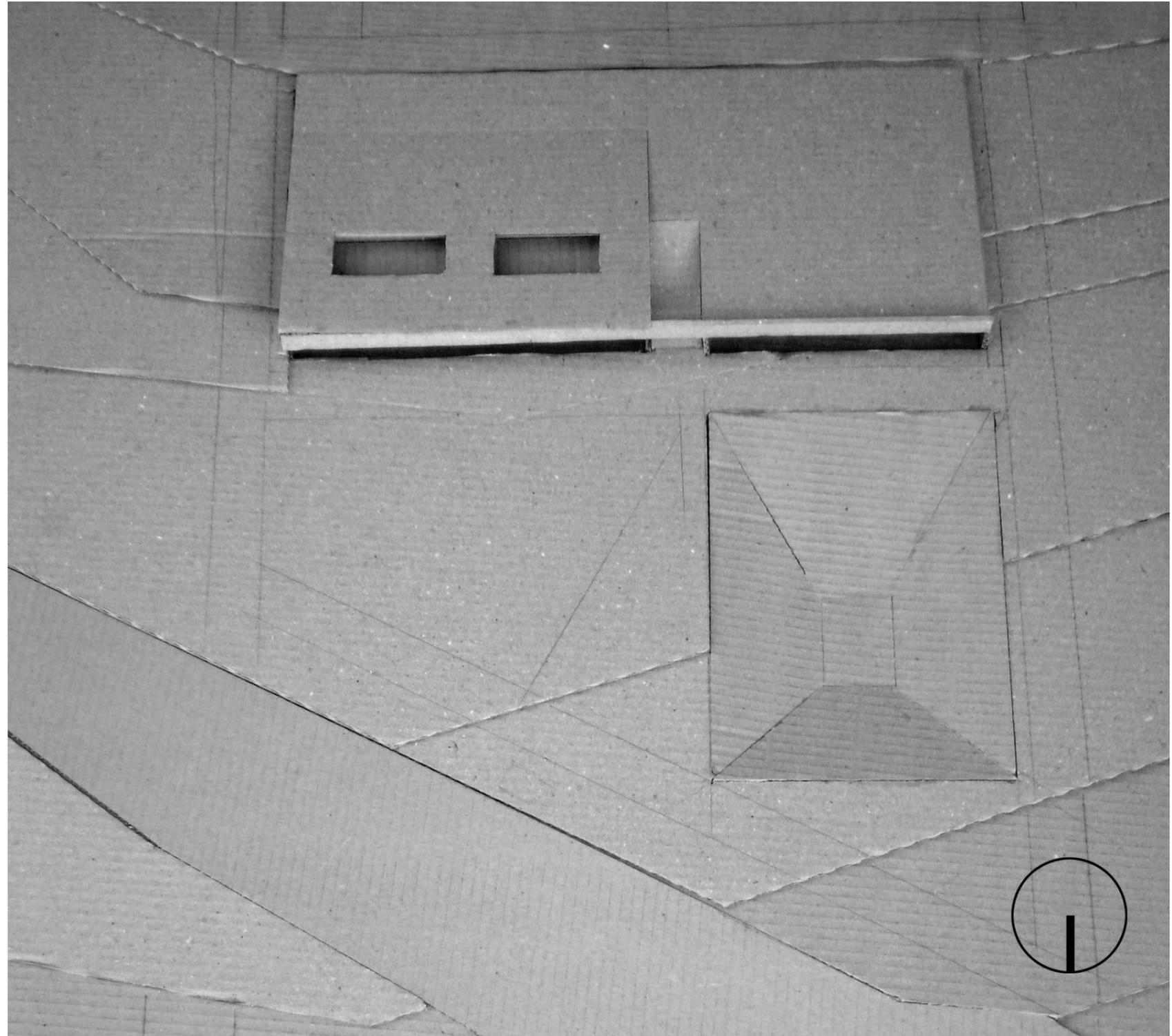


Fig. 90 Concept model 1, March 2006, corrugated cardboard (Author 2006)

5.2.2 Model 2: polite urbanism

More enclosure is provided than the previous design. What emerges is an urban perimeter-block typology, acknowledging the city street grid beyond the railway tracks and absorbing proposed routes through the site. However, this proposal ignores the existing nature of the terrain.

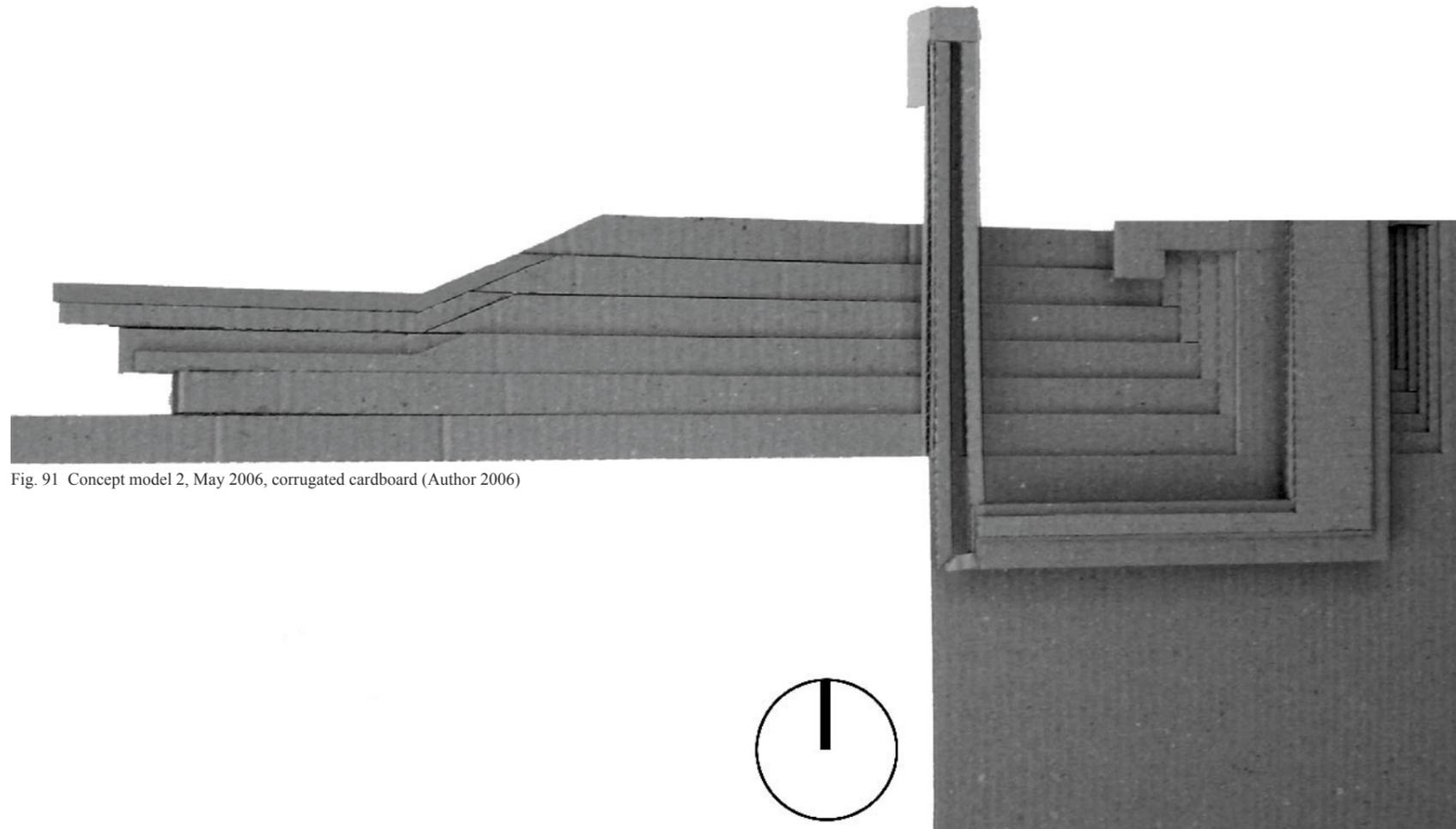


Fig. 91 Concept model 2, May 2006, corrugated cardboard (Author 2006)

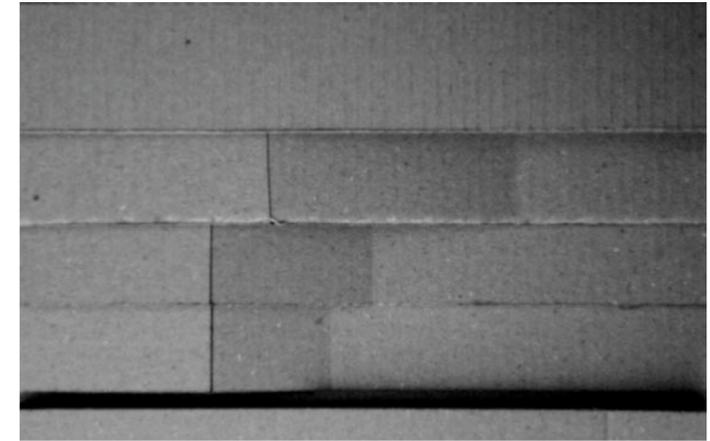


Fig. 92 Study for concept model 2, May 2006, corrugated cardboard (Author 2006)

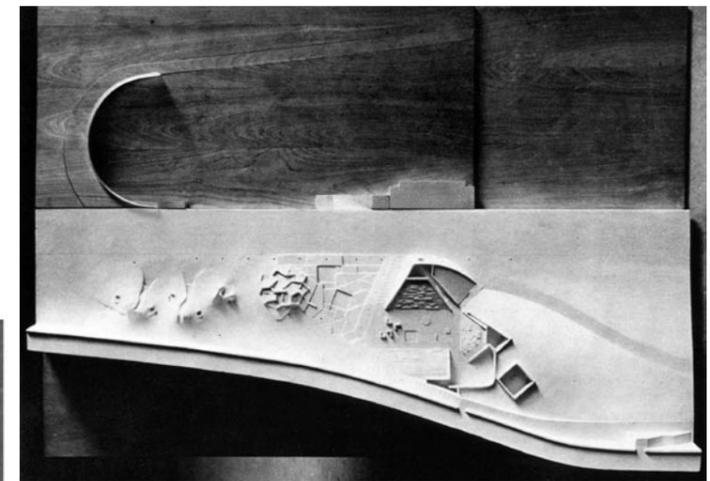
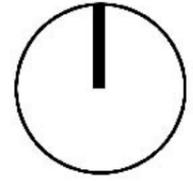


Fig. 93 Influences: Isamu Noguchi, playground planned for Riverside Drive Park, New York (with Louis Kahn), 1964, plaster model (Hunter 1979:59)



5.2.3 Model 3: landscape as text

Ground plane and building surfaces are marked with successive layers and textures. These layers contain information regarding the history of the site, while acting as route and suggesting future use patterns. The architectural 'objects' are scattered throughout the terrain to form composed views - an approach similar to the follies of the English and French *Picturesque* Gardens. A large amount of open area to building mass needs to be maintained to ensure the legibility of the terrain as a 'field'. Very few amenities exist in the area, thus containing the necessary functions in the small amount of buildings proposed by this model becomes problematic.

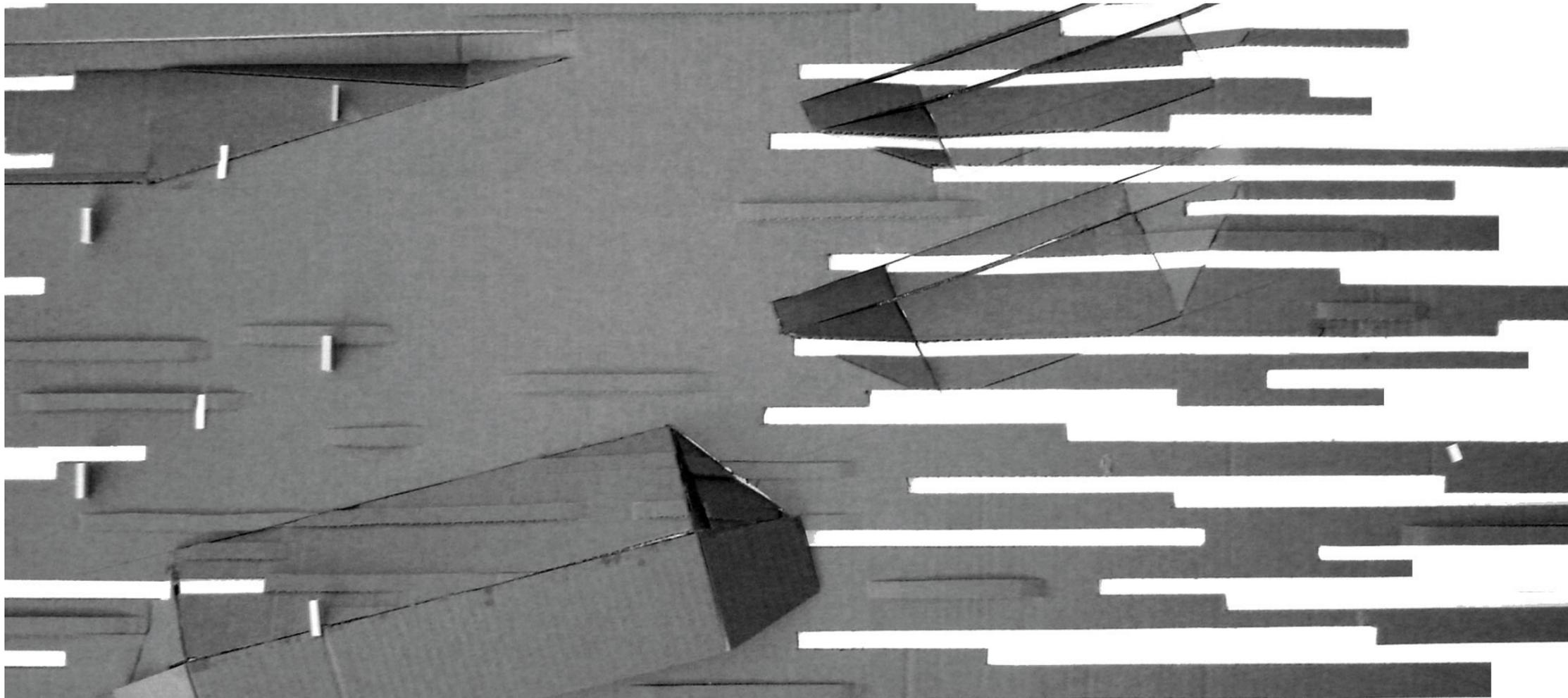


Fig. 94 Concept model 3, June 2006, corrugated cardboard (Author 2006)

5.2.4 Model 4: presence and absence

An appropriate balance between field and object is achieved. From the central public space, only the field is visible, whilst from the outside the supporting objects are prominent. By placing objects next to the railway tracks, the design brings the railway tracks into focus as significant objects within the landscape. This idea is carried through by framing the tracks between objects and in some instances displaying them behind glass (the exhibition). From the central public space the intervention is perceived as part of the field that surrounds it

(see fig. 99). From the street the buildings frame the sidewalks, creating a boulevard that can easily extend with the addition of conventional building typologies - thus responding to future development (see fig.104). Buildings are massed to align with the former position of the demolished sheds of the CSAR buildings. The question arises whether this is of any significance to future users of the site. Thus, a similar shape is employed, adapted to future movement patterns across the terrain. The result is evident from the final proposal

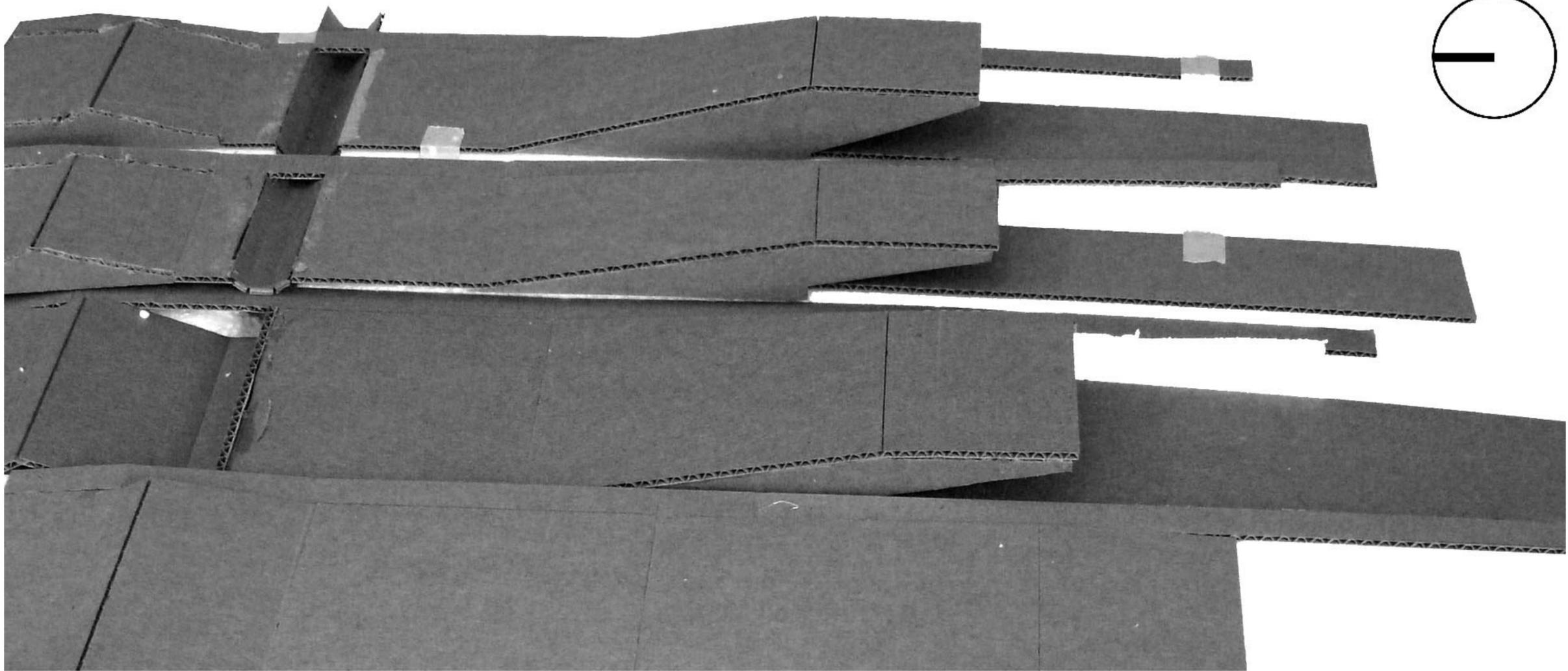


Fig. 95 Concept model 4, June 2006, corrugated cardboard (Author 2006)

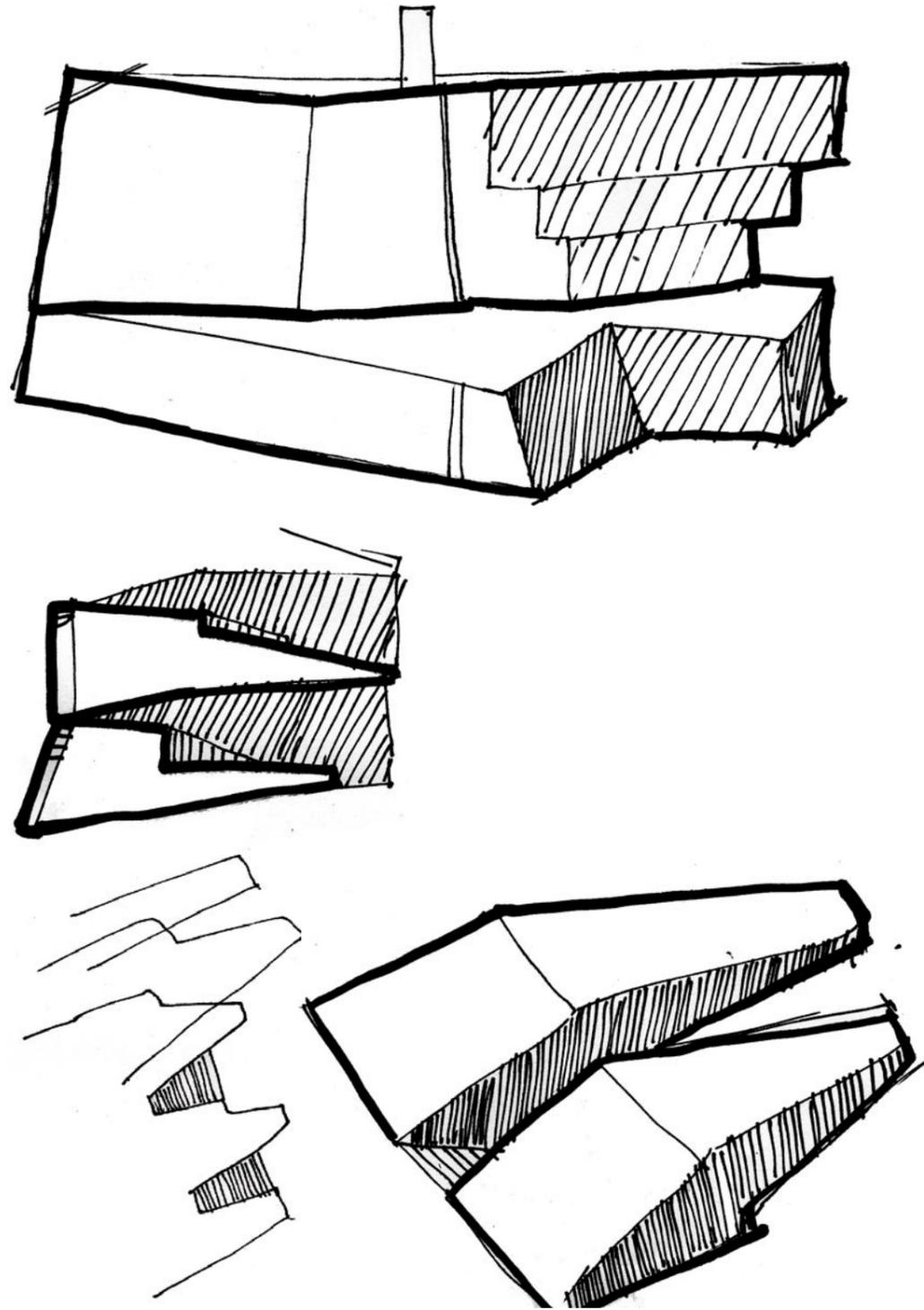


Fig. 95 Study for concept model 4, June 2006, pen (Author 2006)

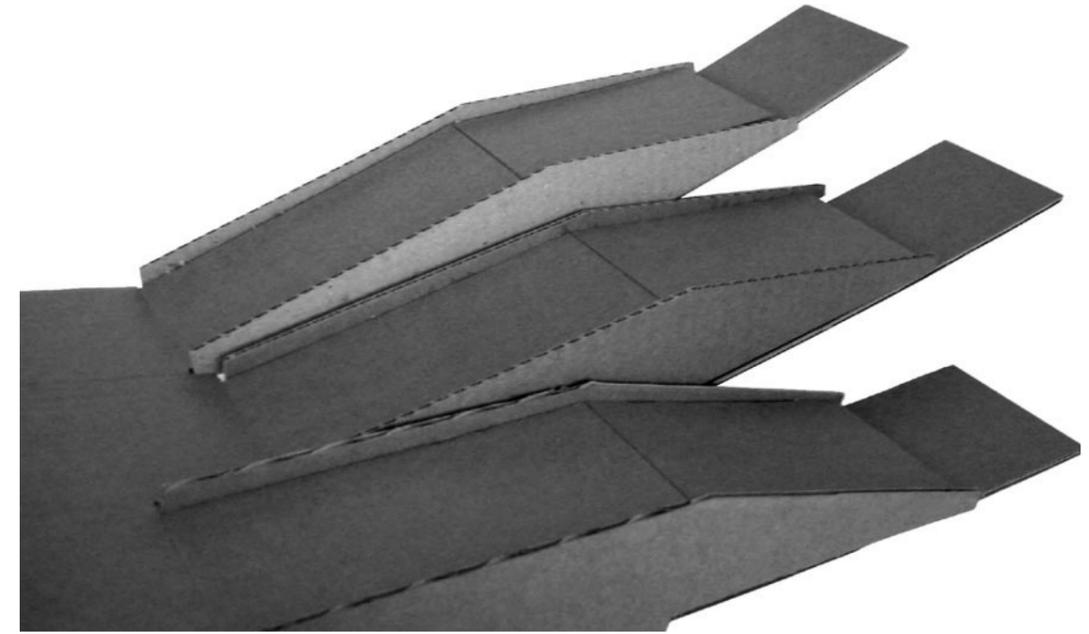


Fig. 96 Study for concept model 5, June 2006, pen (Author 2006)



Fig. 97 Study for concept model 5, June 2006, pen (Author 2006)

5.2.5 Model 5: Mnemonic field

The terrain is viewed as a palimpsest - traces of the history of the place are retained as metonymical objects. "Memory takes root only half in the folds of the brain: half's in the concrete streets we have lived along." (Lionel Abrahams as cited by Vladislavić 2006: vi) Where the unused railway tracks occur in the new intervention, the idea of movement is retained – the one set is used as a bicycle and skateboard track and the other as a future vehicular road; the tracks are preserved selectively. Demolished sheds are marked by variance in pattern and texture of surfaces.

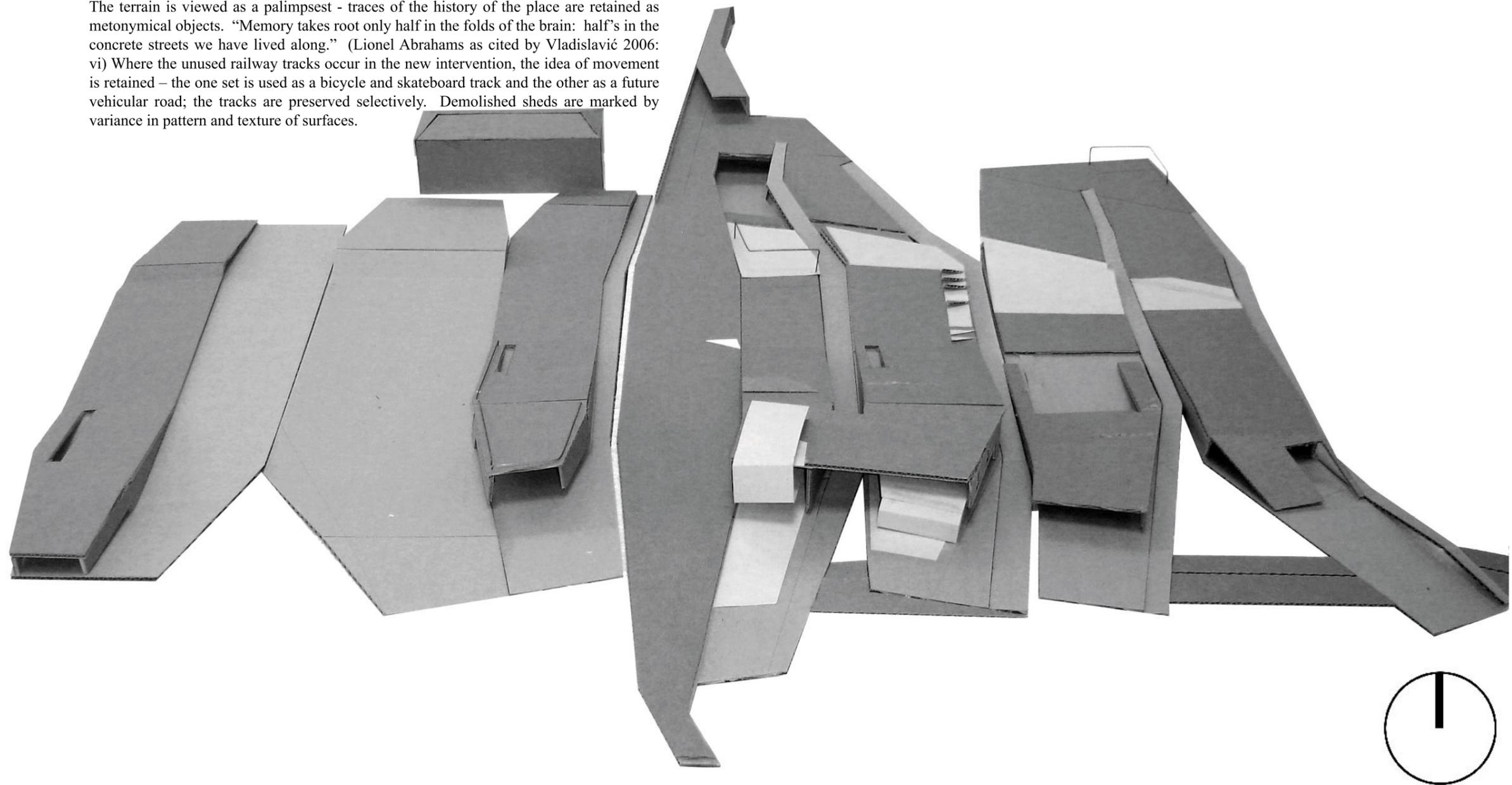


Fig. 98 Concept model 5, June 2006, pen (Author 2006)